

Reduce taxes on hilsa fish, say Bangladesh, Indian traders

Bangladesh's exporters have made common cause with Indian importers to urge Dhaka to reduce taxes on the prized hilsa fish and place it on par with frozen shrimp and other marine products it exports to other countries.

Slackening export of Bangladeshi hilsa to India would make way for cheaper hilsa from Myanmar, besides affecting the lives of over 600,000 fisherfolk and traders on both sides, they said at a joint media conference.

Hilsa, considered to be a delicacy, is being exported to India under the South Asia Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA), but Indian importers feel discouraged as the price of Bangladeshi hilsa is higher than the Myanmar hilsa, the Bangladeshi exporters argued.

Bangladeshi hilsa has a huge market in India where it is the preferred fish, not only for Bengalis, but for all those who are used to eating river fish.

Relaxation of laws, improved transport facilities for the highly perishable commodity and overall relaxation of trade laws has helped.

Making out a case for better fish trade were Bangladesh Fish Exporters Association (BFEA) president Ajit Kumar Das, India's Fish Importers Association president Atur Chandra Das and Bangladesh Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry director and hilsa fish exporter Ebadul Haq Chan.

The BFEA president demanded review of Bangladesh Bank rules on 10 percent cash incentive for the exporters of frozen shrimp and other fish. He wanted that hilsa exporters should also be provided with the same facility, United News of Bangladesh (UNB) news agency reported.

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