

Marine Fisheries Academy, Chittagong



Oceans are repositories of wealth. They provide fish for food besides minerals, chemicals, oil, gas and energy resources.

To tap the resources of the Bay of Bengal, the Government of Bangladesh decided in December 1971, soon after its independence, to establish a professional training institute that would turn out skilled manpower.

Consequently, the Marine Fisheries Academy (MFA) came into being in Chittagong on 01 September 1973, with assistance from the former Soviet Union, as a project of the Bangladesh Fishery Development Corporation (BFDC). The only professional and national-scale training institution for fishery officers, the MFA provides skilled navigators, engineers and processing technologists for fishing fleets and fish processing industries.

The Academy's 10-acre campus sits on a beautiful landscape on the southern bank of the river Karnaphully, opposite to Sadarghat, Chittagong. It is about 10 km away from the Chittagong city center and about 350 km from Dhaka, the capital.

Since inception, the Academy has been training seafarers and fishers. It came under the direct administrative control of the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock from 01 July 1993.

The MFA's facilities

The Academy has 17 officers and 46 staff and is headed by the Principal. It is equipped with an administrative-cum-training block, an academic block, marine workshops, a parade ground, and laboratories for physics, biochemistry, biology and

information technology. It also has accommodation for cadets and officers, an inspection bungalow, plus a unique fish museum with some 375 types of fish species. This infrastructure is being expanded.

Mandate and vision of MFA

- To produce skilled manpower in the areas of navigation, engineering, food processing and preservation and thereby increase the harvest of fish, shrimp and other commercially viable sea animals; overcome the protein deficiency of the population; and earn foreign exchange through export of sea food.
- To organise human resources in the areas of navigation, gear technology, marine engineering, fish processing & quality control, so that they meet the growing demands of marine fishing in Bangladesh and elsewhere.
- To explore and harvest the country's marine resources and overcome protein deficiency.
- To assist friendly countries by helping train their cadets.
- To provide IT knowledge to the trainees.

- To increase the job opportunities of the cadets at home and abroad by enhancing their IT learning.
- To contribute to the national economy through trained human resources.
- To alleviate poverty, diversify exports, influence the policy environment.

Course & curriculum of MFA

The MFA is affiliated with the National University of Bangladesh. The university has designed the course and the curriculum for the academy's 3-year bachelor degree course. The academy at present has 144 cadets; 48 are recruited every year, of whom 20 are allotted the nautical branch, 20 others the marine engineering branch; eight take up marine fisheries.

Subjects for the nautical course: principles of navigation; ocean & practical navigation; terrestrial and coastal navigation; meteorology; general ship knowledge; engineering knowledge; electro-navigational aids; watch keeping; seamanship; signals; ship safety, environmental protection & personal care. In addition, general

Investiture ceremony at the Academy



English, physics and mathematics are taught to meet the requirements of the National University; physical training and parade training are conducted regularly.

The marine engineering course encompasses subjects like mechanics and hydrodynamics; thermodynamics and heat transfer; general engineering knowledge (general & motor); engineering drawing; marine engineering repair & mounting works; marine electro-technology; naval architecture and ship construction; ship safety, environmental protection & personal care. Besides, general English, physics & mathematics are taught to meet the university's academic requirements. Physical training and parade training are also compulsory.

The marine fisheries course includes elements of marine fisheries; coastal aquaculture; applied fisheries (fishing gear & resources management); fish processing engineering; quality control & HACCP management; seamanship; signals; ship safety, environmental protection & personal care. Besides, general English, general zoology and bio-chemistry are taught to meet the requirements of the National University. These cadets, like those of the other two courses, undergo physical and parade training.

All three courses are conducted together with practical work, industrial training and regular field work, as designed by the curriculum body set up by the National University. The course curriculum could be revised from time to time by the board.

Recent achievements of MFA

The course curriculum of the nautical and marine engineering branch has been so designed that cadets are fully equipped to serve both fishery and merchant vessels. Considering the pressing demand for marine officers all over the world, the cadets of MFA are this year being issued with the



Cadets in the Academy's laboratory

Continuous Discharge Certificate (CDC), which will facilitate jobs in merchant vessels as well.

To keep pace with technological developments, MFA cadets will be trained in IT. A new IT laboratory with 25 PCs has been established.

The Government has authorized the MFA to train three foreign cadets along with local cadets. From the session starting in 2009, the MFA is expected to receive three overseas cadets from SAARC countries.

Foreign collaboration

To develop infrastructure (like a swimming pool, various simulators, a drill shed for use in wet weather) and to update the course and

curricula, the Academy has been trying to obtain collaboration with JICA of Japan. It hasn't succeeded so far. The MFA is still looking for a collaborator.

The MFA and nation-building

In a nutshell: the MFA's output of skilled manpower strengthens the country's capabilities in navigation, marine engineering and fish processing and preservation. It increases production of fish, shrimp and other commercially viable seafoods, and strengthens food and nutritional security.

– Capt. M Makbul Hossain
(Principal, Marine Fisheries Academy)

Bay of Bengal News is a quarterly publication of the BOBP-IGO. Readers are invited to send their views and experiences on development of sustainable coastal fisheries in the countries surrounding the Bay. We also solicit scientific/popular articles on subjects related to coastal fisheries management. The articles should not exceed 4-5 typed pages and preferably with good illustrations/ colour photographs. Scientific articles will be subject to peer review and edited before they are published.

– Editor