

UN Day celebrated

Agra: More than 100 foreign students and scores of local activists celebrated United Nations Day here on Wednesday with dance and song. Annually, October 24 - th anniversary of the Charter of the UN, is observed as UN Day to gain support for the organisation's work. IANS



Now, a technology to breed Cobia fish in farms, ponds

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CHENNAI: If you regularly watch channels such as National Geographic and Animal Planet, you may have seen a black fish (not sucker fish) with a prominent white bar on its body swimming alongside sharks and scavenging on remnants of fish hunted by the big predator.

A decade ago, Cobia (*Rachycentron canadum*) known as Black King Fish, Lemon Fish and Crab Eater, was not taken very seriously.

Today, it is one of the important fishes consumed and Chennai-based Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (CIBA) has achieved success in the controlled breeding of Cobia from pond-reared broodstock at its experimental station at Muttukadu near here.

Fish farming

"Cobia farming is done in cages erected in calm sea waters in countries like Vietnam. But in a country like India, where the sea is always turbulent, setting up cages is a difficult task. It is here our technology has paved a new path," said A.R. Thirunavukarasu, Principal Investigator of the project and Head, Fish Culture Division of the CIBA.

"Ten years ago the fish was nowhere in the picture. Now it has a bright future as a commercially valuable fish," Mr Sakthivel, former chairman of the Marine Products Export Development Authority, said. Mr.



COMMERCIALY VALUABLE Cobia broodstock at the experimental station of the CIBA at Muttukadu near Chennai. PHOTO: M. KARUNAKARAN

Thirunavukarasu said fish had characteristics such as fast growth (up to 10 kg in a year) and excellent texture and flavour.

It also fetches a good price in the domestic market and has potential for export.

Cobia has been identified as a fish for diversified farming in cages and ponds in marine and brackishwater ecosystems.

Dr A.G. Ponniah, Director of the CIBA, said the fish

The fish is called sea-chicken and in the market it costs around Rs. 300 per kg. ”

grew very fast and the growth was quite visible. "Since it is not easy for hatchery owners to set up cages in the sea, CIBA's technology will enable them to rear the fish in farms," he said.

Farmers can harvest a tonne a year from 100 juveniles while in the case of Seabass, it will require 1,000 juveniles to achieve the same result. The fish is called sea-chicken and in the market it costs around Rs. 300 per kg.

Mr. Thirunavukarasu said a Cobia would release millions of eggs during each spawning and these were fertilised externally by the male.

"At the experimental sta-

tion, we keep the female and male at the ratio of 1:2 and subject them to induced spawning.

For accelerating ovulation, female fish are given hormone injection.

When the female releases eggs, the males fertilise them by releasing a milk-like substance," he explained, even as workers at the experiment station caught the giant broodstock parents for displaying them to visitors. The juveniles can be reared in a nursery.