



भा.कृ.अनु.प. - केन्द्रीय मीठाजल जीबपालन अनुसंधान संस्थान  
ICAR - Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture  
आईएसओ ९००१ : २०१५ प्रमाणित संस्थान  
An ISO 9001:2015 Certified Institute

### **Inauguration of ICAR-CIFA Aquaculture Field School at Shyamnagar, West Bengal**

An Aquaculture Field School (AFS) of the ICAR–Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA) was inaugurated on 20 January 2026 at Shyamnagar, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, at the farm of Mr.MritunjayBarua (S/o PradipBarua), operating under Pranam Bangla Fisheries. The Field School has been established under the NFDB-funded project *Innovative Projects-4/2024–25* (NFDB/D-III/Innovative Projects-4/2024-25; dated 27.03.2025) implemented by ICAR-CIFA. The inauguration was carried out by the respected Director, ICAR-CIFA, in virtual mode, in the presence of the CIFA QRT Team–2026: Prof. B. Manimaran (Chairman), Dr. A. Pal, Prof. T. J. Abraham, Dr. G. Gopikrishna, Dr. S. Dam Roy, and Dr. R. Singh; SIC of RRS-Rahara Dr. S. Adhikari, Pr. Scientist Dr. R.N. Mandal of RRS-Rahara, and members of the NFDB project team: Dr. A. Hussan, Dr. S. Srakar, Dr. A. Das and Dr. F. Hoque.

The Aquaculture Field School has been envisioned as a hands-on learning and demonstration platform to promote scientific aquaculture practices, particularly in catfish culture and seed production. The AFS will facilitate farmer-to-farmer learning, on-field training, and real-time problem solving, thereby strengthening the outreach and extension mandate of ICAR-CIFA.

The Field School has been established at the farm of Mr.Mritunjay Barua, an engineer by profession who left his corporate job to pursue fish farming. After an initial crop failure in 2017 while culturing Indian major carps in a 0.30-acre leased pond, he sought scientific guidance from ICAR-CIFA and underwent more than 16 training programmes. With improved knowledge, he restarted carp–catfish farming in 2018, gradually expanding his culture area to about 2.50 hectares. Following advanced training, he entered catfish breeding in 2020 and later established a commercial hatchery with 26 tanks in 2023, adopting ICAR-CIFA technologies including the Portable Flow-Through System (FS-CSR).

By applying scientific hatchery and breeding technologies, his farm has achieved successful seed production of important catfish species such as *Ompok bimaculatus*, *Mystus gulio*, *Mystus cavasius*, *Heteropneustes fossilis*, and *Clarias magur*. During 2025–26, under the NFDB-supported *Ompok bimaculatus* project, he produced and sold nearly 25.0 lakh catfish seeds, generating a gross revenue exceeding ₹30 lakh. The farm has also emerged as a local training hub, where over 1,200 fish farmers have been trained through free capacity-building programmes.

The establishment of the ICAR-CIFA Aquaculture Field School at this site recognizes Mr. Barua’s achievements and his role in farmer-led extension. The AFS is expected to serve as a model centre for scientific aquaculture, demonstrating how institutional support, technology adoption, and perseverance can transform aquaculture livelihoods and inspire new generations of fish farmers.

