

Evolve hybrid minor crops to meet nutrition requirement

Minister urges researchers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister M K Anwar yesterday called upon the researchers to evolve hybrid minor crops like vegetables and pulses along with major crops.

Speaking at a workshop as chief guest he said the minor crops can play an important role to meet nutrition requirement of people.

The workshop titled 'Bangladesh Country Almanac' was organised jointly by Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRR), Soil Resource Development Institute (SRDI) and International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre

(CIMMYT) in collaboration with USAID.

The minister said though the production of food grains has increased three times over the last couple of decades, a significant part of the people still suffers from malnutrition.

"We have evolved 350 varieties of major crops, but a significant number of minor crops, which have an immense potentiality in the country, are yet to be developed," he added.

It is not yield, rather the knowledge gap for which the farmers cannot grow adequate crops on their farmland, Anwar said, adding that education and proper training

for both can reduce the gap.

"We need to transmit agricultural information and supply adequate seeds to farmers at a reasonable price," he added.

The minister said data is the basic raw material for any kind of scientific research and output.

Bangladesh Country Almanac (BAC), a database of agricultural information, would help farmers as well as researchers to get adequate data for further development of agriculture, he said.

Kazi Abul Kashem, secretary to agriculture ministry, said BAC is an integrated package of GIS-based database, which will be helpful for getting information about agricultural research and natural resource

management.

M Anwar Iqbal, member director, planning and evolution of BARC, gave an overview of BAC.

The speakers also called upon researchers and agricultural officials to educate farmers for the development of agriculture.

They underscored the need for proper training from highest officials to farmers to ensure more production in this sector.

They said authentic data and information on agriculture can play an important role in this regard.

Walter E Shepherd, acting deputy director of USAID and DR M Nurul Alam, executive chairman of BARC also spoke at the workshop.



PHOTO: STAR

Mohammad Serajuddin, joint secretary of the health ministry, speaks at a roundtable on 'Youths participation and leadership' at the Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. On his left is Director General of the Department of Mass Communication Abdul Mannan, and on his right are UNFPA Country Representative Suneeta Mukherjee, Assistant Representative Nurul Ameen and National Programme Officer (Youth) Dr Noor Mohammad.

'Youths need proper guidance and training'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The youths are an asset and they can bring about a positive change in society if they are given proper guidance and training, speakers at a roundtable said yesterday.

"The youths are an asset, not a liability, but we do not know how to handle them," said UNFPA Country Representative Suneeta Mukherjee.

The young people have the energy and determination and new ideas to bring changes to society and the community should recognise their participation in nation-building activities and leadership, she said.

The UNFPA organised the roundtable on 'Youths participation and leadership' at the Cirdap auditorium in the city to mark the World Population Day.

Suneeta said the UNFPA has been providing training for the youths, aged between 10 and 24, on various issues such as safe motherhood, reproductive health, population and HIV/AIDS.

After the training, the youths will raise awareness about gender issues and violence against women and will be able to create pressure to uphold human rights, she added.

On Tuesday, the World Population Day, one million students will start working as scouts to raise awareness and each student will train ten more children in this regard, Suneeta mentioned.

Noor Mohammad, national programme officer (youth) of UNFPA, presented a paper on the condition of the youth in the country and their vulnerability.

BDR rescue five from traffickers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) members rescued five people including a child from traffickers at Mirganj border in Charghat, Rajshahi yesterday.

The rescued are Shah Alam, 50, his wife Sabekun Nahar, 32, Abul Kashem, 40, his wife Sakina Begum, 33 and their three-year-old daughter Kulsum of Edgar village of Ramu, Cox's Bazar.

They went to Bagha Shrine where traffickers took Tk 1200 from each of them to provide 'good job' in India.

They were rescued while boarding on a boat set for India, BDR sources said adding that traffickers Azrul, Zillur and Manik managed to flee away.

The rescued were handed over to police.



PHOTO: STAR

Two of the three muggers were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital after a mob beat them up for mugging and shooting a garment worker at Malibagh in the city yesterday. The other managed to escape.

2 killed, 31 injured in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least two people were killed and 31 injured in separate road accidents in Manikganj and Rajshahi yesterday.

Our Staff Correspondent from Rajshahi reports: One person was killed and 30 others were injured in a road accident at Rajbarihat in Godagari upazila on Dhaka-Chapainawabganj highway yesterday.

The dead was identified as Asadul Haque, a demonstrator of Arani College in Bagha. He died on the spot.

Of the injured, 12 were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Of them, condition of Sayeeda, Tarikul, Mizan, Ismail, Zaman, Rafik and Azimuddin are stated to be critical.

The accident occurred when a passenger bus from Chapainawabganj collided head-on with a speedy truck.

Our Correspondent from Manikganj adds: One person was killed and a motorcyclist was seriously injured in a road accident on Ghior-Daulatpur road in Manikganj yesterday.

The dead was identified as Tamsar Mollah, 70, of Shyampur village under Daulatpur upazila in Manikganj.

Police and witnesses said the accident took place at 7:00am at Mulakandi area on the road when a Daulatpur-bound motorcycle hit Tamsar while he was crossing the road leaving him dead on the spot and motorcyclist Nazrul Islam, 30, of Charmastul village under Daulatpur Police Station seriously injured.

Nazrul was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with head injuries.

The body was sent to Manikganj Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Election Olympiad starts in Rajshahi today

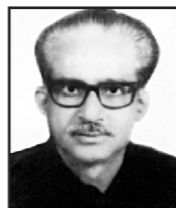
STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Election Olympiad, a countrywide knowledge-based competition for creating awareness about politics and elections, starts in Rajshahi today.

Eminent economist Prof Muzaffer Ahmed and member secretary of Sujon Dr Badiul Alam Majumder will be present on the occasion.

Sujon (Citizen for good governance) and Channel i have jointly organised the programme. Some 500 higher secondary and graduate students from different colleges and universities in the city and nine upazilas of the district are likely to join the competition at Zila Parishad Auditorium at 8:00am. They will compete in two groups, one for higher secondary and the other for graduate students. Ten students from each group will be selected from Rajshahi. Similar competition will be held in other districts in phases.

Death anniversary



Today is the 15th death anniversary of Advocate Shamsuddin Mollah, a veteran politician, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhawni, deslittue feeding, discussion and milad mahfil will be held at his Faridpur residence.

All have been requested to attend the programmes to pray for salvation of the departed soul.



Abdul-Muyeed Chowdhury, executive director of Brac, speaks at a seminar on 'Human resource development of SMEs in the area of accounting and financial management' in the city on Saturday. Continuing Education Centre organised the seminar.

CEC seminar on human resource dev

Continuing Education Centre (CEC) organised a seminar on 'Human resource development of SMEs in the area of accounting and financial management' in the city on Saturday, with Abdul-Muyeed Chowdhury, executive director of Brac, in the chair, says a press release.

Mahbub Mustafizur Rahman, Prashant Kumar Banerjee, AQM Kibria and Aqkun Nessa presented four keynote papers at the seminar conducted by Manzurul Islam Chowdhury of CEC.

Representatives of BASIC Bank, Bank Asia, Pubali Bank, Mutual Trust Bank, Brac Bank, Agrani Bank, Islami Bank and One Bank and experts from SME cell of the industries ministry took part in the seminar.

The speakers laid emphasis on human resource development and accounting training for SME entrepreneurs as well as field level bank officials.

60 held on charge of snatching mobile sets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective and Criminal Intelligence Branch arrested 60 suspected members of organised mobile set snatching gangs, raiding different parts of the city in the last two days.

The law enforcers also seized 78 mobile phone sets of different companies from the detained snatchers.

Police said the raid was conducted in the wake of a rise in mobile snatching incidents in the city.

'Form EC, CG on the basis of consensus'

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League presidium member Amir Hossain Amu on Saturday said both the Election Commission (EC) and the caretaker government should be constituted on the basis of consensus.

"The political parties, who have long been spearheading a popular movement demanding free, fair and impartial polls, must build that consensus in the greater interest of democracy and good governance in Bangladesh," he told the journalists at his residence in the city.

He said their movement is meant only for reforming the caretaker government and the electoral systems, not to remove anyone or force anyone to resign.

Amu said the Awami League led 14-party opposition combine has been continuing their struggle to realise their 23-point demand, including reforms of caretaker government and electoral systems, establishing a democratic government, which would drive out communalism, militancy and terrorism from the country.

GARMENT OWNERS-WORKERS' MEET RMG workers reiterate demand for Tk 3000 as basic salary

DU CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of garment workers at a view exchanging meeting yesterday reiterated their demand for Tk 3000 as basic salary for garment workers saying this is the minimum amount for a worker to keep body and soul together.

They said the country would not have experienced recent violence at garment factories if minimum wage for garment workers were declared.

Leaders of 16 garment workers' organisations articulated their demand at the meeting with owners' side of the newly formed wage board for garment industry and former BGMEA president Anisul Huq on workers' salary and recently signed MoU in this regard in the city.

At the meeting, they placed a draft wage for garment workers that included Tk 3000 as basic salary, Tk 1050 as house rent, Tk 300 as medical allowance and Tk 400 as transport and laundry allowances. Representatives of both the owners and the workers reached a consensus to exclude timekeeper and peon of garment factories from workers' category grade 1 and grade 2.

Talking to the workers' leaders Anisul Huq proposed for an open

audit to look into owners' cost and profits before fixing salaries for the garment workers.

He said owners are also inclined to increase workers' salary but they are to think of their capacity, adding that workers' salary should be fixed according to owners' capacity.

"Cutting and making cost has decreased internationally and for that reason a large scale increase in salary is not possible," he added.

"In our country most of the garment factories are of small and medium category, so we have to think that industries can survive and workers do not lose their job," he said.

Former BGMEA vice-president Shahidul Haque, General Secretary of National Garments Workers Federation Amirul Haq Amin, President of Bangladesh Garment Industry Workers Federation Tauhidur Rahman, President of Bangla Garments Workers Federation Kazi Mohammed Ali, General Secretary of National Knit Dyeing Garments Workers Employees Federation MN Zaman Chowdhury and General Secretary of Bangladesh Garments and Industrial Workers Federation Babul Akhter were present at the meeting.

WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Sylhet, Chittagong, Barisal and Khulna divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also likely at places, Met Office said in a forecast.

It said that day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Highest temperature 33.7 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sayedpur and Dinajpur and lowest 24.5 degree Celsius at Sandwip.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:50pm today and rises at 5:19am tomorrow. Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	31.7	26.4	76	90
Chittagong	27.2	25.0	96	91
Rajshahi	32.7	27.0	96	91
Khulna	28.0	25.2	98	92
Barisal	28.4	25.6	100	98
Sylhet	32.5	25.8	93	90
Cox's Bazar	29.5	25.0	100	100