

Hi-tech dairy farm in Munshiganj shows bright prospect

SHYKH SERAJ

A human being requires 250 millilitres of milk daily. But, at the moment, as per production, we're getting 165 millilitres. According to the Livestock Department, of the total demand for milk in the country, 64.68 per cent was produced in the fiscal year 2018-19. A large part of the demand is not being met. As a result, powder milk is being imported from abroad. So it is evident that there is potentially a huge market for milk in our country. On the other hand, the demand for safe organic food is increasing day by day. Consumers want assurance of safe milk. Given these factors, a large number of entrepreneurs are thinking about the potential of this sector. The Dutch Dairy Farm, set up on 102 bighas (33.71 acre) of land at Satgharia village in Louhajang upazila of Munshiganj, is a consequence of such innovative thought for development of local dairy industry. I had been thinking about going to the farm for a year. One morning in last December, I arrived there. Just as I thought, it looked like what I had seen in the Netherlands, Belgium and also in England. It has been truly fascinating. It is exactly how the industry should be planned and what it should look like. Started only one and a half years ago, the farm has already shown good output.

Once upon a time, when we heard the word 'cow farm', the sight of cows lining up in a rural farm always came to mind. I was wondering when we will use machines to collect milk in our country's dairy farms. Dutch Dairy Farm seems to point out the change. They understood that an international standard cow farm can be developed by maintaining certain rules and using modern technology. Although it is not new to the audience of 'Hridoye Mati O Manush'. Surely you remember the De Marke dairy farm in the Netherlands, or the latest cow farms in



Shykh Seraj with Gias Ahmed at the latter's ultramodern dairy farm at Satgharia village in Louhajang upazila of Munshiganj.

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

countries including England, Belgium and South Korea. You must have seen these modern farms in programmes of 'Hridoye Mati O Manush'.

On May 5 of 2018, 75 cows arrived from Sydney, Australia, at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on a chartered plane of Malaysian Airlines. Cows arrived in chartered aircraft before too, but in terms of number, this was a unique example. This farm started its journey maintaining an international standard with those 75 cows. More cows were added later. Now, the farm has more than 1200 cows. Dear readers, many of you have seen the smart farm of livestock. Specifically, you have seen the farms using IoT (Internet of Things) monitored by organizations called Digi Cow and Sunflower Limited. Information is easily received from a bolus in the belly or a chip on the neck of a cow to a mobile phone. One can get all the information related to the cow from any place. The use of the Internet of Things on this farm is another exception. In a few steps, the bolus is applied to the

belly (stomach) of the cow. As a result, any physical changes of the cow can be easily read. The information is more accurate. This keeps the cows healthy, reduces costs and brings more profit.

Mohammad Gias Ahmed, director of Dutch Dairy Farm, looks after the farm. He has been involved with the dairy farm business for almost two decades. After studying in agriculture in the UK and the USA, he received training in the Netherlands. He showed me the entire farm. He said that there are more 1200 cows, both local and foreign, at the farm. There is a cow mattress on the floor of the cowshed. It looks like a carpet. As a result, cows do not feel pain while moving. It is comfortable for sleeping too. Here, hardly any disease occurs. The humidity, temperature and air are automatically controlled in the cowsheds. There are also modern fans to give cool air to the cows. Gias Ahmed said that each cow in the farm is given sufficient solid food, grass and water. In the farm, cow feed is made from a mixture of nutritious items, maintaining

100 per cent quality. The grass is cut with automatic machines. Ideal feed is made by mixing raw corn with other ingredients.

There is a misconception that foreign cows will not survive in the weather of this country. Gias said that he has proved the notion wrong. Foreign cows cannot provide enough milk - is another misconception. You will be surprised to know that almost all the 600 cows here give milk. Each cow gives milk from 35 to 45 litres. If any cow's milk providing rate is dropped to 20 litres, then that cow is excluded. There is an ultramodern milking parlour. Milk can be collected from 12 cows at a time there. They are collecting an average of 15,000 litres of milk a day. Milk Vita, Rosh Sweets and Confectionery and several other enterprises of Dhaka collect milk from this farm.

At another shed, there are huge bulls. Those are for 'fattening'. The animals are raised in this shed for meat. I had a conversation with Asif Mridha, manager of the farm. He said they have further plans to enter the

international beef market.

For the last 10 years, I have been giving you glimpses of such developments in agriculture. Agriculture is becoming part of modern and smart trade of the big entrepreneurs. Our agriculture today is truly trade and investment-oriented. It is now the time to shape agriculture in the light of international quality. It is precisely from this realization that enterprises such as the ABA Group have started doing agriculture. This is quite promising. It has many possibilities as well as surprises awaiting Bangladesh's agriculture production sector. Especially in view of the fourth industrial revolution, the connection of information and communication technology is very much needed in any production sector. This new agricultural initiative has set a precedent for success in this regard. I believe that there will be more and more world-class enterprises in agriculture. Through this, farming will get better, marking a new era of safe food production.

Shykh Seraj is Bangladesh's pioneer development journalist. He received country's two highest civilian honours, Swadhinata Puroshkar and Ekushey Padak, respectively. He is a BIDS, Ashoka and Bangla Academy Fellow. He also received highest award for agricultural journalism from the United Nations, FAO A.H. Boerma Award, Gusi Peace Prize (Philippines) and many other prestigious accolades at home and abroad. At Channel i, he's the Founder Director and Head of News. He's also Director and Host of Channel i's popular agro-documentary, Hridoye Mati O Manush.



WRONG QUESTION PAPERS

7 teachers discharged from SSC duty

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Seven teachers including the centre secretary have been discharged from the duty of the ongoing SSC examinations on charge of giving wrong question papers to the examinees at Nidarabad Union High School centre in Bijoynagar upazila of Brahmanbaria on Monday.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Meher Nigar confirmed the matter to The Daily Star.

The discharged persons are Abdul Ahad, centre secretary at Nidarabad Union High School, Gulam Zilani and Abdul Hannan, hall superintendents, Sajib Sarkar, Ziaur Rahman, Sohel Mia and Monir Hossain, invigilators.

During Bangla First Paper examination on Monday, the first day of the ongoing SSC examinations, question papers of 2018 framed for the irregular candidates were distributed among the regular candidates of 2020 and they wrote the answer scripts accordingly during the three-hour exam, the UNO said.

There were some irregular candidates of 2018 in that centre but all the examinees including regular students there had to write according to the old pattern question papers due to negligence of those on-duty teachers.

"Roll numbers of all the students who attended the exam with wrong question papers were sent to Cumilla education board," the UNO said.

Man held with gold bars

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in a drive arrested an alleged smuggler with 10 gold bars weighing around six kg from Sadiapur border station Benapole Port Police Station yesterday.

The arrestee was identified as Jihad Ali, 35, son of the area.

A case was filed in this connection, said Lt Col Salim Reja, commanding officer of BGB-49 Battalion.



Students of Government Shaheed Bulbul College in Pabna stage a demonstration in front of the institution yesterday demanding change of their Higher Secondary Certificate examination centre this year. The demonstrators said they apprehend harassment during the examinations as Pabna Government Women's College, their 'academic competitor', has been made their examination venue.

PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

National Library Day observed in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

National Library Day-2020 was observed in Tangail yesterday with the slogan "Porbo Boi, Gorbo Dosh, Bangabandhur Bangladesh".

The district administration and government public library in Tangail jointly brought out a colourful procession in the morning. Government officials and students of different educational institutions took part in the procession.

The procession, which was brought out from the Government Library premises, ended at the deputy commissioner's office after parading different streets in the town.

Later, a discussion meeting was held at the conference of the Library premises where Tangail Deputy Commissioner Md Shahidul Islam addressed as the chief guest. Mosharaf Hossain Khan, additional deputy commissioner (general) in Tangail, presided over the programme.

The DC urged all, especially the students, for making reading habit for keeping them away from all bad habits.



The district administration and district government public library in Tangail jointly bring out a colourful procession in the town yesterday on the occasion of National Library Day-2020.

PHOTO: STAR

Kazi Golam Ahad, senior district information officer in Tangail, and Sadia Mahbub, district library officer of Tangail Government Library, among others, spoke.

After the meeting, prizes were distributed among the winners of the book reading competition. Moreover, prizes were distributed

among three best non-government libraries in Tangail while gifts were distributed among the regular readers of the libraries.

The day was also observed in different educational institutions including Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University and Government Saadat College.

College boy among 3 murdered

STAR COUNTRY DESK

A college boy among three people were murdered in Tangail, Cox's Bazar and Bogura yesterday, report our correspondents.

A college student was murdered near Nazrul Sena Government Primary School in Tangail town yesterday afternoon.

Police recovered the body from the school area in the town around 4:00pm yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Tanvir Mahtab Ishrak, 20, son of Ibrahim Miah of Ashkepur area, and a student of Haji Abul Hossain Institute of Technology in the town.

Shafiqul Islam, additional superintendent of police in Tangail, said criminals hacked Ishrak in the area any time in the afternoon.

Being informed, a police team rushed to the spot and sent him to Tangail General Hospital where on-duty doctors declared him dead, said Shafiqul.

Reason behind the murder could not be known

immediately, said the police official.

Away in Cox's Bazar, a midwife was hacked to death in Chakoria upazila of the district in the morning.

Police arrested two women in connection with the incident.

The victim was identified as Sahida Begum, 60, wife of Nur Ahmed of Charabatoli village under Chiringya union, said police.

The throat-slit body was recovered from the embankment area near her house around 8:00am, said Md Habibur Rahman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Chakoria Police Station.

Two women called Sahida, who worked as midwife in the area, out from her house around 11:45pm on Tuesday saying she had to aid delivery of a pregnant woman, the OC said quoting family members.

Later in the morning, locals found the throat-slit body at the embankment and informed police,

he added.

Police arrested Rawshan Ara, 45, and Mina Akhter, 22, in this connection following the statement of deceased husband, who identified the duo, the police official said.

A case was filed in this regard, said the OC.

In Bogura, police recovered the body of an unidentified person, aged about 30, from Dupchanchia upazila in the district yesterday afternoon.

Locals found the throat-slit body in a jungle near Berunja village around 2:00pm and informed police.

They later recovered the body from the spot and sent it to a hospital for autopsy, said Inspector Md Shahidul Islam of Dupchanchia Police Station.

Criminals might have killed the victim and dumped the body in the jungle, said the police official, adding that the face of the deceased was disfigured by burns.



As if heralding the advent of spring, many mango trees are already in full bloom. The photo was taken from Pura area of the district town yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED