Sylhet Agricultural University takes a step forward



Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET is well known as the 'land of 2 leaves and a bud' for ages for its tea farming on the scenic hills. Picturesque natural carpet spreads all over the region. Just beside the Sylhet Agicultural University, there is the forest department's Eco Park, which attracts people from all over the country.

Surrounded by a number of small and large hills, Sylhet Agricultural University is located at a unique and natural location. The public university is the latest addition to the country's higher education in the field of agriculture. Spread over 50 acres of land, it is just 3 kilometres off the Sylhet city centre. Journey of the 4th agriculture university began on 2 November 2006.

In 1990s, the government started two Veterinary Colleges, one in Chittagong and the other in Sylhet with a view to bringing change in the neglected discipline. The Sylhet veterinary college was upgraded into a university in 2006. Another 15 acres of land at Khadimnagar on the Tamabil-Fenchuganj bypass was added to the original campus later.

The newly started insitution got some additional facilities at the very beginning due to the location of some of the government establishments around. Government dairy farm, poultry farm and *Black Bengal* goat farm was already there in the campus. Besides, the government-run Artificial Insemination Centre is also there to help the students' practical lessons.

In addition to the Honours courses under the Veterinary, Agriculture and Fishery faculties, MS courses have already been introduced in 10 disciplines. These are, Anatomy, Physiology, Microbiology, Pathology, Medicine, Animal Science, Nutrition, Poultry Science Pharmacology, Animal Breeding and Genetics.

With a great vision for bringing the huge uncultivable lands in the greater Sylhet region, the university has been running a decent job. On the other hand, with a view to opening a new era through raising the fish production in the resourceful low-lying region of this part of the country, the university has started the Fisheries faculty from 2007-08. Besides, Bio Engineering and Technology department is going to be opened very soon.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Md. Iqbal Hossain said, Sylhet Agricultural University campus would be prepared in the format of the Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) of Mymensingh, which had already achieved a lot as an institution of international standard. Already we have started 36 departments under 3 faculties, Prof. Hossain said. The process to set up a modern library and computer lab with latest facilities for research for the students and teachers have already started.

For contributing to the nation achieving food autarky through producing quality agriculture professionals, we are working hard, he added and in the near future we will start faculties like Agri business management, Agricultural engineering and Food engineering & Technology. Besides, we are working to start a fishery research centre at Sunamganj, the district which has huge water bodies known as haors and beels. It will largely contribute in the research for increasing fish production in a scientific way especially for protecting the local varieties of fishes, which are depleting fast, the VC asserted.

The writer is a Staff Correspondent of The Daily Star, Sylhet.