The food safety dilemma

The importance of finding the right method to ensure food safety in Bangladesh

SHYKH SERAJ

Apart from food security, 'food safety' is equally predictable. It has become a great concern to all around the globe, including Bangladesh. In the age of globalization, producing and exporting crops to the international market along with importing fruits and other agricultural products is definitely a key factor.

Recently the country has seen mobile courts busying themselves with the drives to detect formalin in produce. The courts destroy the foodstuff, but the devices they use leave them in a state of serious confusion. My family along with everyone across the country are in a state of panic, as health is surely a great concern and nobody wants to fall sick because of eating harmful the story within?

The imported fruits, especially apples that come from Brazil have high levels of preservatives in them. The importers say the fruits are monitored at a field level and get certified twice, first in the country of origin and then at Chittagong port. "What many people do not know is that it takes fruits from Brazil 40 days to reach our country and 55 if imported from Chile" says an importer from Badamtoli bazaar in Dhaka. The packaged fruits are sent in a refrigerated container (0-5 degrees Celsius) and are laden with preservatives to ensure they survive the long

ourney. After the products are released from Chittagong port, they are then fit to be sent across the country. This is done using trucks and motor vans, which lack temperature control. And now, the question pops up:



Development and Media Activist. He is an Ashoka Fellow and an FAO A.H. Boerma Awardee. At Channel i, he is Director and Head of News. He is also Director, Planner and Presenter of the popular Agro-Documentary "Hridoye Mati O Manush".

Shykh Seraj is an Agriculture

ally accredited pesticide free environment.

What most people are not aware of are the complaints and questions of retailers and farmers against the Formaldehyde Meter Z-300 machine, which has been used for the past two years to detect formalin in fish, fruits and vegetables.

Food scientists say this

machine/kit is meant to measure chemicals or gases in the air of laboratories, not in food items. Therefore, skilled personnel, up to date with technological advances are crucial at the moment of detection or else it will be an injustice to ruin famers' produce and deny them profits, in the name of formalin.

The holy month of Ramadan will start in just a few days and we know consumers like muri (puffed rice), cucumbers and eggplants for Iftar. I urge consumers not to buy the white puffed rice as it's injected with urea, but will they buy the red ones

instead?. My suggestion to the mobile courts is to use the IPM (Integrated Pest Management) properly in the field first and then move to the market, it would be best. It will definitely help the farmers more. And will also result in the mobile courts finding out who is insisting and forcing farmers to use pesticides and formalin.

I have spoken with farmers about these issues as we're trying to promote an environment friendly cultivation system using biopesticides like bracon, tricograma, sex pheromones, vermicomposting under the initiative of 'Grow Green'.

Another serious concern are the outbreaks of foodborne diseases, which have been documented and in many countries where the rate of illness increase significantly. Food safety is a public health priority and millions of people fall ill every year and many die as a result of eating unsafe food. We need a strong food safety system to ensure a safe global food-chain.

Last but not the least, the government has to work more intensely to minimize health risks from farm to table; consumers should be more aware and finally, the monitoring should start from the point of origin and extend to the core of the crisis, not where it ended so that farmers and traders

Kayesh: the star student footballer of Kaliganj

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah

Sincerity, untiring effort and courage can lead one to glory, even if that someone is a poor student from an underprivileged family of Bangladesh; such is the story of Kayesh. Sports in a poverty stricken nation like Bangladesh is nobody's first preference. Supporting a growing athlete is no silly matter. It is seldom seen by families as a profession, because of the high level of uncertainty involved surrounding success as a sportsman. For every single tale of success, there are thousands of those who have tried, wasted their lives and burnt out in the face of crushing poverty destroying their

Hasanuzzaman Kayesh,

22, son of Sihab Uddin of Kashipur village in Kaliganj upazila, has defied these odds till now. He is now a student of government KC College Jhenidah, Honours 1st year in Bengali. Kayesh was inspired by his father and decided to become a footballer at the age of 12. He started to play football when he was in Class Six. As a student of Baliadanga Secondary School in Kaliganj upazila, Kayesh played in the Interschool Football Competition 2005, where proved to be the star striker. He played 19 matches and scored 24 goals in the competition. He won the championship for Baliadanga Secondary School and became the man of the series. He was awarded a crest and certificate, but, to him, the real prize was the profound respect and honour he had earned on behalf of his school.

In the years that followed, he participated in five inter-district football competitions in Faridpur and Jessore and became



Hasanuzzaman Kayesh practicing football.

played at in the Uro Famous 2nd Division in Dhaka in 2008 and in the Sheikh Kamal Premier Team in Khulna. Kayesh went to Nepal in 2010 to participate in the South Asian Games at Pokhra in Nepal, representing Faridpur. Yet again, he proved his worth by scoring 3 goals in 4 matches and became the 'Man of the Series'. But that was just the beginning of his international exposure. In 2013, he went to Bhutan on behalf of Arambag and played with a club Mohonbagan in India, Nepal and Bhutan. He has been associated with Agrani Bank, Swadhinata club and most recently with Arambag

Kayesh is saddened by the poverty he experiences in his home and in his family. His father is a poor farmer. It is unrealistic for Kayesh to expect his father to be able to support him in

man of the series in each of the way that a budding them! In 2008 and 2009, he athlete needs in order to keep growing better and more competitive. He needs quality training under an expert coach, who knows, maybe he could even join Abahani or Mohammedan. Kohinur Begum, Kayesh's mother thinks that he son could have a bright future as a footballer if he is supported by the Bangladesh Football Federation Authority. She feels that her son deserves their support and can bring glory to the name of Bangladeshi foot-

> Ahsanuzzaman Jhantu, a coach with Bangladesh Football Federation, has seen Kayesh play and thinks that he certainly has the potential to be an expert footballer, if he receives proper guidance and training. He definitely has the speed, enthusiasm and foundation in the right place.

Dahagram-Angarpota Hospital

faults.

Indoor treatment stopped, outdoor services scanty

Markets are full of food

products which are dis-

tributed across the coun-

try using trucks and

motor vans without tem-

How can these fruits survive

the heat and still remain

edible when they reach the

market? This is where the

concerned authorities

should be probing to find

In addition, Bangladeshi

farmers (as we all know)

maintain international rules

and regulations when

exporting vegetables to

Europe and some countries

in the Middle East. These

exporters are assisted by our

government to ensure that

the farmers follow organic

methods and grow their

produce in an internation

perature control.

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Indoor services at the 10-bed hospital in Dahagram-Angarpota enclave under Patgram upazila of Lalmonirhat district has remained suspended for over two and a half years, much to the sufferings of the people living there.

The outdoor healthcare services of the hospital are also in a shambles.

With the fund of Asian Development Bank, Dahagram-Angarpota hospital was established in 1985 originally to give outdoor services to the

enclave inhabitants.

On October 19 in 2011, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the indoor service of the hospital and 27 staffs including four medical officers, a pharmacist, four senior nurses, four assistant nurses, a store keeper, an office assistant, two ward boys, two cooks, two night guards, two MLSS, two ayas and two sweepers were posted there, said sources at the District tal. Civil Surgeon's Office.

New X-ray machine, enclave people submitted

ambulance, beds and other written complaints regardmedical accessories were ing the matter to the local also arranged for providing MP and the health depart-

hospital. 15 staffs including three doctors of the enclave hospital were transferred elsewhere and the indoor

badly suffer as six of the 12 existing staffs including a medical officer remain absent most of the time, said enclave people Mansur Ali, Abdul Jabbar, Hamida Bewa, Ahela Khatun and others even the staffs of the hospital.

services virtually stopped.

The medical officer's mobile number remains off often, they said.

"With the help of some fourth class employees, I am struggling to maintain outdoor healthcare services at the hospital while the indoor services have remained suspended for long," said Zillur Rahman, sub-assistant community medical officer of the hospi-

On several occasions,

adequate services at the ment but to effect, they said. This correspondent failed But only after a month, to contact the medical

officer as his mobile was off.

Contacted, Lalmonirhat Civil Surgeon Dr Mostafa Kamal said, "I will try to resume indoor services at The outdoor services also the hospital after talking with the authorities concerned of the health ministry. I will take departmental action if any staff is found irregular in duties."



PHOTO: STAR

FABER-CASTELL

Beds of Dahagram-Angorpota Hospital in Patgram upazila under Lalmonirhat district lie empty as indoor services at the treatment centre meant for the people living in the enclave area have remained suspended for the last two and a half years due to lack of doctors and other staff.

Joypurhat BNP leader shot, stabbed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A BNP leader was shot and stabbed by unidentified criminals in Akkelpur upazila of Joypurhat district Monday afternoon, police said.

The victim, Arif Iftekhar Ahmed Shams, 40, is organising secretary of the upazila unit of BNP.

Police quoted family members and witnesses as saying that a gang of six to seven called Arif out of his house at Jamalganj Bazar in the upazila at around 2.00pm.

The gang stabbed Arif and shot in his legs and neck and left the scene.

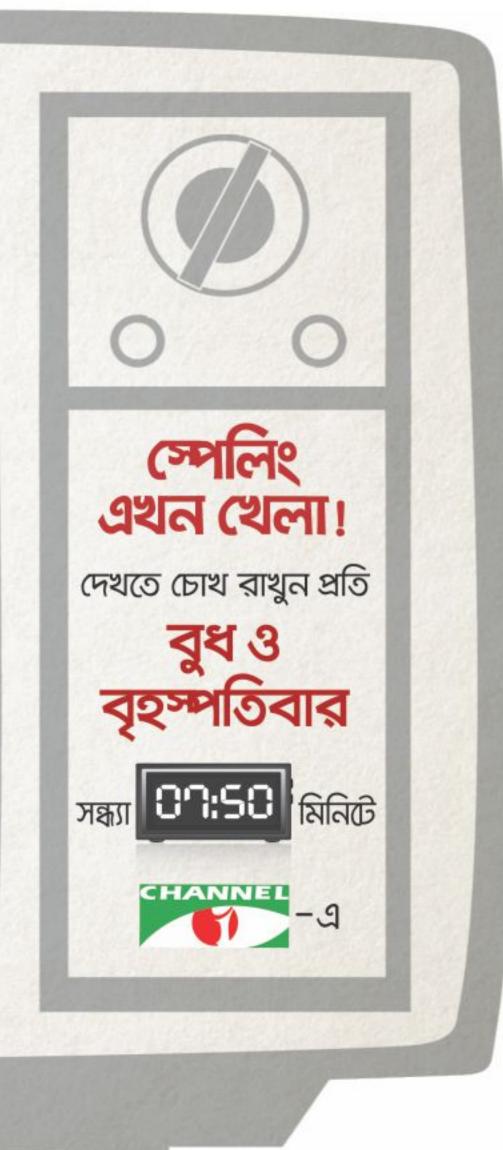
Locals took Arif to Akkelpur Upazila Health Complex but the doctors referred him to Joypurhat

Modern Hospital. Contacted, Officer-in-Charge Md Abul Kalam Azad of Akkelpur Police Station said they are trying to arrest the criminals involved in the incident.

However, none of the attackers was arrested as of filing of this report at 5:30pm yesterday.

Kamruzzaman Komal, president of Akkelpur Municipality unit of BNP, condemned the attack on Arif and demanded immediate arrest of the attackers.





BOGRA BOAT CAPSIZE One body found, 4 still missing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

The body of one of the five people, who went missing after a boat capsized at Doleshaw point of the Jamuna River in Shariakandi upazila of the Bogra district on Sunday, was found in Baniyajan area in Dhunat upazila yesterday.

Locals found the body of Arjun Begum, 25, wife of Shahidul Islam of Char

Dhonarpara under Shariakandi upazila of the district, at around 11:00am and recovered it.

The four others, who are still missing, are Mamuni, 3, daughter of Shahidul Islam, Rupshi, 4, and Bulbul, 2, daughter and son of Rafiqul Islam of Jamtola under Hatsherpur union of Shariakandi upazila, and Nayeb Ali, 25, son of Dolu Sarkar of Khatiamari area under Pakullah