

# Hobby turns to livelihood



Selim Reza holding a pigeon at his farm.

PHOTO: STAR

Selim Reza, 48, son of the late Nurul Islam of Kushumpur village under Moheshpur upazila of the district turned his childhood hobby of rearing rare pigeons into a livelihood. Bringing people from across the nation to his farm.

Selim passed his SSC in 1986, HSC in 1988 and BA in 1990, but did not want to get a traditional job due to being physically unfit. Instead he rears 70 different species of local and foreign pigeons on a farm in his house.

Selim has always had a long cherished desire to rear pigeons. He was inspired from a doctor who rented his house. At first Selim tried his hand at rearing hens but incurred losses. Later, the doctor advised him to collect local and foreign pigeons.

Accordingly, he insisted that his father buy him pigeons if he wanted him to go to school. When he was in class two his father bought seven pairs of pigeons for

him for Tk 14.

In 2009 he purchased ten different species of foreign pigeons at Tk 23,000 from Natore.

Similarly in 2010, he heard that gigantic foreign pigeons were available at Rajshahi. At the time he was not in a position to buy such valuable pigeons.

He sold his only cattle at Tk 32,000 and purchased a pair of "Yellow Portar" a foreign species for Tk 30,000 from Rajshahi.

Now he possesses 70 pairs of local and foreign pigeons on his farm. Of them 35 pairs are local while the other 35 pairs are foreign.

The foreign species are Fresh Mondian (Holland), China Owl, Halud short, Murhead, White King, Yellow king, German Kuper, White Ran, Yellow Hena, Spangel, Mouri and White Bhukhari.

Selim said that it costs Tk 1,30,000 a year for the rearing of his pigeons while he makes Tk 3,30,000 per year. So he gets a profit of Tk 2,00,000 per year.

He added that he has employed a woman named Jelehar Khatun who looks after the pigeons. Her salary is Tk 3,000 per month. He is now very solvent. He spent Tk 90,000 for religious purposes last year. His only daughter Fahmida Reza is a HSC student of Jessore cantonment college.

He also said elite people come to his house time to time to buy rare species of pigeons out of curiosity.

An elderly person named Sayeed Ali, 72 of the village said Selim is well known in the upazila for his expensive and rare species of pigeons. Army officers, doctors and other such elites throng to his house for purchasing the pigeons.

Selim's wife Fahima Reza said they are very happy with their daughter and that they have no further wants.

Swarupur union chairman Abdul Alim said Selim is very fond of rearing pigeons and that he has collections of different species while maintaining his family in a solvent way.



Rare species of pigeons at Selim Reza's farm in Kushumpur village under Moheshpur upazila in Jhenidah.



# Farmers pick cotton over tobacco

Farmers in Jhenidah have yet again moved to growing cotton instead of tobacco in the hopes of getting higher rates than previous years. Moreover, the variety they cultivated fell victim to pests while production quantity per bigha failed to reach its mark. This year the new variety will yield a double harvest and be free from pests. As a result farmers will enjoy a higher profit from cotton farming this year.

The Cotton Development Board (CDB) officials said, farmers usually cultivated the CB-9 and CB-10 varieties of cotton seeds in the past which never exceed the production target of seven tons per hectare.

The cotton plants are used as raw material as threads for garment factories, while the seeds are used as fish food.

The Lalter and supreme seeds of China varieties are expected to offer 18 to 20 mounds.

Cotton Development Board (CDB) of Jhenidah said, in the 2013/14 cotton farming session, the target for cotton farming was 5,500 hectares. However, farmers from three districts (Magura, Jhenidah and Faridpur) could just achieve 4,015.

This session (2014/15) the target was set at 5,200 hectares but farmers could only harvest 4,056.

The break wise statistics of three districts are as follows: in Magura the target was 1,000 hectares from which 723 was achieved, 4,050 hectares in Jhenidah from which 3,231 was harvested while in Faridpur the target was set at 150 hectares while 102 was achieved.

The information on cotton plots was gathered at the villages

of Enayetpur Roghunathpur, Pirojpur in Kaliganj upazila. Along with the villages of Baluhar, Solaimanpur, Panchpatila and Talsar in Kotchandpur and finally Habibpur village in the district's Sailkupa upazila.

The rate might be 2,200 to 2,400 this year and the production will be more than double this season.

Rubel Hossain from Fatikkhali village under sadar upazila said, he has cultivated two bighas of cotton this year instead of tobacco. He expects that he will get Tk. 2,500 per mound this year.

Chief Cotton Development officer Kutub Uddin of Jhenidah said, farmers are leaning more towards cotton farming than tobacco, since the price of cotton is higher than tobacco. Moreover, the farmers are also aware about the benefits of cotton.

# Zinc enriched paddy harvest in Sylhet

Zinc enriched paddy farming has generated much hype among farmers of Dakshin Surma upazila under Sylhet, since the new variety gave them a good yield this year.

According to Chunu Miah, he harvested about 17 mounds of paddy on a bigha of land this year. Chunu cultivated the variety for the first time on an experimental basis. The variety BRI-62, was released by the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) in 2013.

The crops were harvested at Noikhai village on Wednesday. About a hundred farmers of neighbouring villages attended the event as officials from the DAE spoke about the farming and preservation of the new variety seeds and the procedure to gain the highest yield.

District Agriculture Training Officer Abu Naser said, "BRRI scientists stated the BRI-62 paddy can be harvested within 100 to 105 days, after which the land can be used again during the winter for another crop. Had the farmers maintained their timetables



Farmers harvesting new variety of paddy at Dakshin Surma upazila under Sylhet district.

PHOTO: STAR

accordingly, they would have had a better yield."

Moglabazar union parishad chairman Mahmudul Haque chaired the event, while interested farmers shared their experiences with the new variety.

BRRI invented this breed, the world's first zinc enriched rice variety capable of fighting diarrhoea, pneumonia-induced

child deaths and stunted growth as zinc plays an important role in preventing intestinal diseases, said Sylhet region's additional director of the Department of Agriculture, Kazi Nurul Islam.

Each kilogram of this rice will contain 19 milligrams of zinc and a protein percentage of 9 which will ensure nutrition and help prevent diseases.

# High hope

FROM PAGE 16

63-member power-packed delegation, including Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali and top bureaucrats, reached Kathmandu yesterday afternoon.

With the two-day Summit set to begin this morning, the foreign ministry said Dhaka was ready to engage and sign three vital agreements should there is consensus among the Saarc countries in the areas of roads and rail connectivity and energy, especially electricity.

Hasina will address the inaugural session where she will lay out her vision of what she sees as regional cooperation in South Asia and Bangladesh's importance in connectivity, poverty alleviation, youth development, fighting terrorism and harnessing the development potential of the region.

Dhaka will focus on 10 core issues for strengthening cooperation. These are: youth development, poverty alleviation, improvement of connectivity, climate change, science and technology, education, women empowerment, food security and combating terrorism.

The visit will also have a substantial bilateral component when Hasina on the sidelines will hold bilateral meetings with most leaders, including her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi.

Modi, after becoming the prime minister of India, called for a stronger Saarc and there has been lot of enthusiasm among the member countries about what he brings to the table to make the eight-nation grouping a regional powerhouse and also raise hopes he would reinvigorate the block.

The Washington-based Brookings Institution recently said Modi had "boldly stroked new hope for the future of Saarc" after a dismal past performance that earned it a reputation as

the "unruly stepchild" of international organisations.

Expectations of progress at the summit have dimmed after Saarc Standing Committee meeting on November 23 as some states were yet to complete the internal procedures for signing of three key deals despite strong intent and political commitment among members.

The three deals are: Saarc Motor Vehicles Agreement for the Regulation of Passenger and Cargo Vehicular Traffic amongst Saarc member states, Saarc Regional Railways Agreement and Saarc Framework Agreement for Energy Cooperation (Electricity).

Today, the summit will be addressed by all Saarc leaders - Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Maldivian President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom, Nepalese Prime Minister Sushil Koirala, Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Nepalese PM Sushil Koirala will host a banquet for them.

The following day, the leaders will depart by helicopter for a retreat session at Dawrika Resort in Dhulikhel after which they will come back to Kathmandu again and join the concluding session from where they adopt the Kathmandu Declaration.

This is the third time Nepal hosts the regional summit, follow the 3rd and 11th summits in 1987 and 2002.

Born in 1985 in Bangladesh, the Saarc is a regional association of eight South Asian countries - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Afghanistan joined Saarc as its eighth member state in 2007.



A farmer taking care of his pumpkin field at Durakuti village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

A large number of growers in different upazilas of the district are now cultivating chemical-free vegetables because of their high demand in the local markets.

# Demand for chemical free veg growing

It's healthy, also profitable

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

A large number of farmers in the district are now farming chemical free vegetables as they earn huge profit due to their high demand in the local markets.

Production cost of chemical free vegetables is also less than that of other vegetables, farmers said, adding they now need only proper care and assistance to increase their output.

Laksmi Kanta Roy, vegetable grower at Durakuti village in Sadar upazila, said he had been farming chemical free vegetables for the last two years and the demand for them was increasing day by day.

"Our family members grow these vegetables and sell them in the local markets. Many neighbours also purchase chemical free vegetables from my home everyday," he said.

"Now we are farming pumpkin, bitter gourd, carrot, beans, coriander, cabbage, cauliflower, spinach, brinjal, red amaranth and other vegetables without using chemical fertiliser or pesticide," said Atul Chandra Roy, a vegetable grower at Durakuti village in Sadar upazila.

"We get less production of chemical free vegetables but we earn a good profit," he said, adding he cultivated such vegetables on his two bighas of land this season.

Nazar Ali of Fulgachh village in the upazila said, they use vermicompost fertiliser for farming vegetables and never apply any pesticide to kill insects at the vegetable field.

"We use natural method like light trap to kill insects. For this we give huge labour and take proper care during farming chemical free vegetables," he said.

"I have already earned Tk 25 thousand by selling vegetables grown on my two bighas land and hope to earn more Tk 10 to 12 thousand this month," he added.

Farmer Hashmat Ali Khan of Kamlabari village in Aditmari upazila said that many customers wait for arrival of chemical free vegetables in the market and they purchase them at high rate.

Ashraf Ali, a village doctor at Chaparhat village in Kaliganj upazila, said he always tries to consume chemical free vegetables and for this he pays advance money to the growers.

Deputy Director of Agriculture Extension Department in Lalmonirhat Safayet Hossain said, farmers at many villages have already started farming chemical free vegetables while others are taking interest to grow those.

They just need proper care and labour for farming chemical free vegetables, he said, adding that these vegetables are good for human body, soil and environment.

# QUESTION PAPER LEAKING Five schoolteachers fined

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

A mobile court here on Monday fined five schoolteachers Tk 3,000 each for leaking question paper of Bangla to the candidates of Primary School Certificate (PSC) Examinations.

In default, they have to suffer three months' imprisonment, said police and court sources.

The convicts are Sonia Ansari, headmaster and centre secretary of Chowdhurani Government Primary School, Sirajul Islam, assistant teacher of the same school, Shahadat Hossain, assistant teacher of

Monglakuti Madhyapara Government Primary School, Sufia Begum, assistant teacher of Madhyapara Government Primary School and Aatur Rahman, assistant teacher of Kutubbas Government Primary School in Pargachha upazila.

Being informed, duty officer at the examination center Md Moniruzzaman, an official of Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) in Pargachha, caught them red handed while Sonia Ansari supplied answers to the examinees with the help of the four other convicts by SMS through mobile phone.

## Understand Your Pain

Most people assume that they just have to learn to live with pain in their joints such as the knees, spine, and hips as a natural process of ageing. The causes of joint pain may be due to inflammation, injuries, degeneration, infections, overloading or even genetic factors.

Instead of seeking professional advice, many turn to over-the-counter medications which may temporarily relieve pain. However, this may pose health risks such as stomach intolerance and kidney problems.

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