

18 yrs without govt salary!

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Teachers and staff of Lenga Bazar Ideal College in Sadar upazila of the district are serving the institution without the government-allocated portion of their salary as the college is yet to get monthly payment order (MPO), 18 years after establishment.

Due to the situation, 18 teachers and ten staff of different categories are suffering with their families.

The college, set up with the help of local people, started academic programme in 1999, following permission from the authorities concerned.

"I have already passed over 18 years of my working life here, but the college is yet to get MPO, despite assurance from the education ministry on several occasions. Many institutions, set up much later, got MPO," said Asaduzzaman Palash, a senior teacher of the college.

"I have no other earning sources and the remuneration received from the college fund is too scanty to maintain a family," said Uzzal Sarkar, a lecturer.

"After spending so many years in this college, there is hardly any scope for me to change the profession," said Mahbub Rahman, another lecturer.

A teacher at Lenga Bazar Ideal College says the remuneration he receives from the institution fund is too scanty to maintain his family.

TIM Mizanur Rahman, principal of the college, said, "We are fighting for inclusion of the college teachers under MPO for years. Unfortunately, the authorities concerned are yet to grant the government portion of salaries for the teachers and other staff, despite submission of required documents."

"This is an intermediate level college and we cannot take initiative to open degree classes unless and until we receive MPO," he added.



Mustard growers of Thakurgaon and Panchagarh are happy due to good production of the crop and fair prices in the markets. The picture was taken from Dakkhin Bathina village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila on Sunday.

PHOTO: STAR

Bumper mustard yield, good price

Growers in Thakurgaon, Panchagarh happy

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

Mustard farmers of Thakurgaon and Panchagarh are happy due to good production of the crop and its fair prices in the local markets during the ongoing harvesting season.

Mustard was cultivated on 8,840 hectares of land against the target of 10,023 hectares, with production target of 12,328 tonnes in Thakurgaon, said Deputy Director of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Thakurgaon Maududul Islam.

The crop was cultivated on 1,694 hectares in Panchagarh

against the target of 2,100 hectares, with production target of 2,100 tonnes, said an office assistant of DAE in Panchagarh.

Farmers have cultivated mainly six varieties of mustard -- BARI Sarisha 9, BARI Sarisha 11, BARI Sarisha 14, BARI Sarisha 15, Tori 7 (a local improved variety) and Bashori (Indian).

Harvesting began from the first week of February, farmers said.

Narayan Chandra Barman, 42, of Dakkhin Bothina village in Sadar upazila said he cultivated mustard on 50 decimals at a cost of Tk 3,300 and got eight maunds, which he sold in the local market for Tk 12,800.

Md Masum of Moidandighi village in Boda upazila said he got six maunds of mustard and made profit of Tk 7,000.

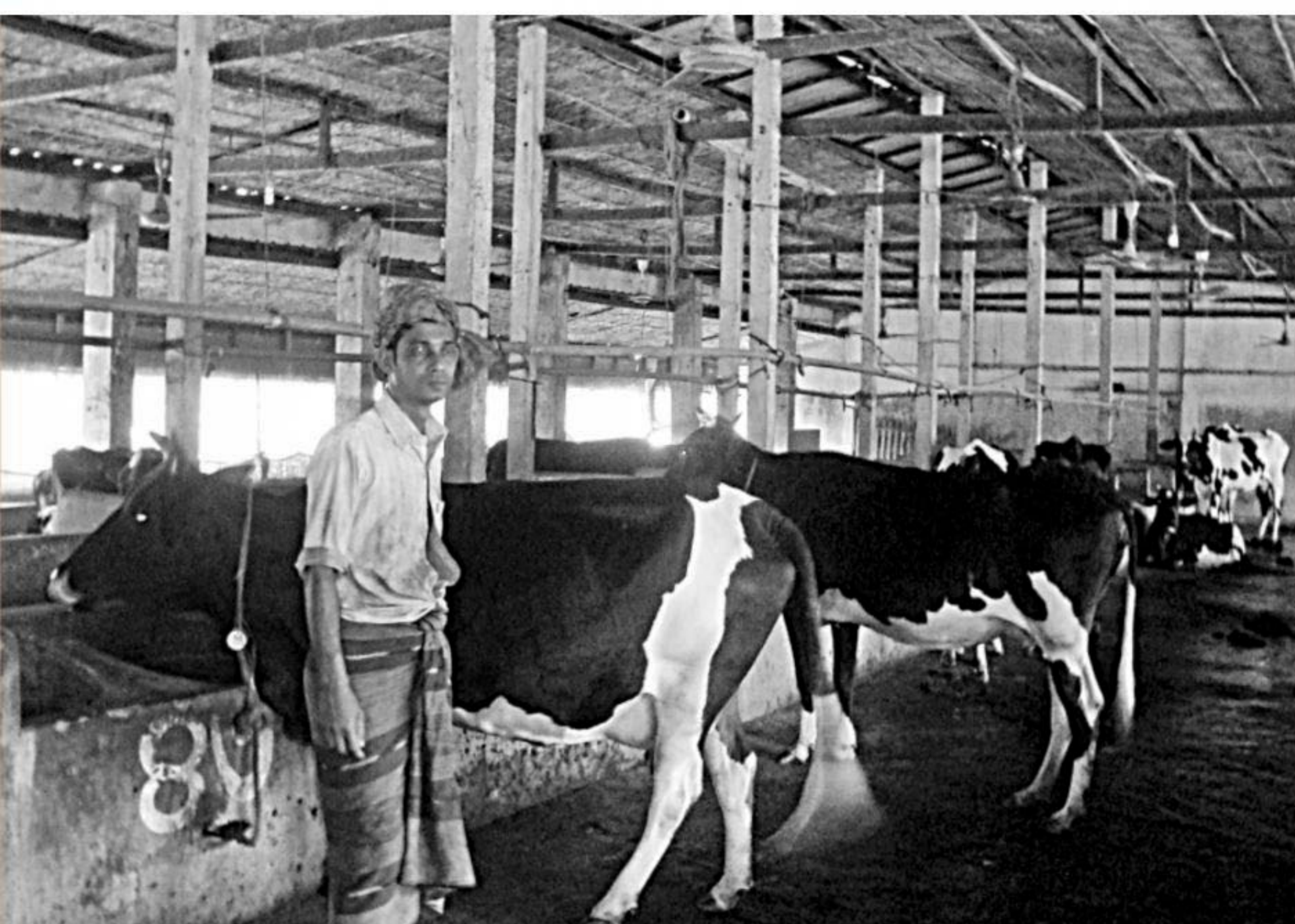
"Mustard cultivation requires only a little irrigation and is easier and less costly than cultivation of other crops, but it brings good profit. It is cultivated during the period between aman and boro paddy farming," said farmer Masum.

October to mid-November is the suitable time for mustard cultivation and it takes 65 to 70 days to get the yield, said DAE officials, adding that many farmers in Thakurgaon and Panchagarh cultivate the crop till late December as they get bumper yield and good prices.

The DAE authorities campaigned among the farmers for cultivating hybrid varieties of mustard developed by Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute (BARI) during the gap between aman and boro to get better profit.

The DAE, BARI and other organisations distributed quality mustard seeds while commercial banks disbursed agriculture loan among farmers in the two districts for cultivation of the cash crop.

Maududul said farmers have achieved the good yield of the crop due to good climatic condition, proper care and smooth supply of agro inputs.



A well-known dairy farm in Magura is on the verge of closure due to shortage of funds. The number of cattle in the farm has come down to only 30 from 450 a couple of years ago.

PHOTO: STAR

Sreepur dairy farm on verge of closure

AZIBOR RAHMAN back from Magura

A well-known dairy farm in Magura is on the verge of closure due to lack of sufficient funds.

The 3.5-acre farm at Sarangodia village in Sreepur upazila of the district is situated by the side of the Kumar river.

Owner of the farm Md Akmal Hossain of the village, who also owns a travel agency in Dhaka, said he built the farm in 2008 for the benefit of the jobless locals.

Caretaker Harun-ur-Rashid said 60 workers used to remain busy all day long preparing various types of sweetmeats, matha, ghee, curd, rasamalai and packet milk. The products were sent to many other districts of the country.

Ananda Kumar Biswas, who looks after the cattle, said there were 450 cattle in the farm, while there are only 30 cattle now.

Manager Abdur Rahman told this correspondent that IFIC bank sanctioned a loan but did not issue the money, so the owner of the farm could not release the equipment

imported from China due to fund shortage. Consequently, the farm is on the verge of closure. If the government takes initiative in sanctioning a loan a good number of jobless people will get their jobs back.

Owner Akmal said IFIC bank is responsible for the closure. "IFIC sanctioned a loan of Tk 5 crore which I spent on the farm. Later, they sanctioned Tk 14 crore loan, based on which I paid an advance to a Chinese company for high quality equipment. But the bank cancelled the loan and I could not release the equipment from the company. Thus, I incurred huge loss," adding that he has invested Tk 25 crore on the farm so far.

There are three sheds for cattle, office room, store room and lots of equipment along with refrigerators. If the government supports him financially he will be able to run the farm again, Akmal said.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Sreepur Ahsan Ullah Sharif told this correspondent that he joined there recently. "I will visit the farm as soon as possible and take necessary steps in this regard," he said.

Another held

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Kader Khan, a former Jatiya Party lawmaker from Gaibandha-1, was arrested in Bogra on February 1 for, what police say, planning the murder to fulfil his political ambition to be elected from the constituency again.

Other items recovered include six bullets, a magazine, Kader's passport and a copy of a bus ticket used to send the killers from Bogra to Dhaka, said police.

Police also claimed to have recovered a licensed pistol and 10 bullets and that they were conducting raids on suspicion that Kader had more illegal fire arms.

They said they were looking for an office secretary of the upazila unit AL named Chandan Sarkar.

Data from Kader's phone suggest that Chandan had a good relation with him and that Chandan had informed the killers of Liton's location and of the circumstances being favourable for the attack, said police.

Liton was killed after unknown assailants opened fire on him inside his home in Sundarganj upazila on December 31 last year.

Later, police arrested three persons who allegedly took part in the murder. They are Kader's driver Abdul Hannan and caretakers of his house Shaheen Mia and Mehedi Hasan.

The arrestees gave confessional statements before a court and Kader was arrested on the basis of those.

Initially, police said to have pumped dry three ponds on the premises of Kader's residence and found nothing. They said Kader, while on remand, told them about the pistol which was found under the tree.

The gun's condition indicates that it had been buried for around two months, said the SP.

Police said Kader trained the killers at the residence on how to carry out the killing and use a gun and that the killers went to Liton's home from that residence.

There were initially six bullets in the magazine, said police. Kader had earlier accidentally fired one shot and police recovered the bullet from a wall. The remaining five bullets were used to kill Liton, they added.

Three arrested with firearm

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Detective Branch (DB) of Police arrested three youths with a shutter gun and one bullet at Mahamaya village in Sadar upazila.

The arrestees are Faruk Hossain, 22, of Mahamaya village, Liton Hossain, 20, and Rashidul Islam, 22, of the same area.

Daud Hossain, officer-in-charge of DB in Jhenidah, said on secret information, they raided the area around 12:30am and arrested the trio with the firearm and bullet when they were taking preparation for committing robbery.

Eviction threat to 4 Hindu families

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Members of four families of the minority community in Baufal upazila of the district yesterday alleged that they received threat of eviction by a local gang.

They told this at a press conference held at Patuakhali Press Club around 11:00am.

Satyaranjan, on behalf of the four families, read out a written statement and said a gang led by one Alam Peyada of the area is allegedly trying to grab their 10.58 acres of ancestral land forcibly.

Satyaranjan said after the death of their father Bhuban Mohan, four siblings--Bhaboranjana, Rasranjan, Swapan Kumar and he became the legal owners of the property.

The alleged grabbers threatened him of dire consequences as he resisted them when they tried to erect demarcation pillars around the land on February 8 and tried to cut earth from the same land the day before, added Satyaranjan.

A general diary (GD) was filed with Baufal Police Station in this regard on February 8, he said.

Alam Peyada told this correspondent over phone that he bought the land from Satyaranjan's uncle Lalit Mohan about 42 years ago.

A case is also running with a Patuakhali court over the matter for the last couple of years, Alam said.

Farmers eye good garlic production

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Farmers in the northern district are expecting a bumper production of garlic in the current season.

Moreover, encouraged by a good yield and fair price in the last season, garlic growers in 13 upazilas of the district are cultivating the item on vast areas of land this year.

Farmers in the district have cultivated garlic on 4,518 hectares of land against the target of 3,110 hectares of land this season with the production target of 30,496 tonnes, said Golam Mustafa, deputy director of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Dinajpur.

Growers said easy process of cultivation, lower production cost compared to other crops and a fair price last season is the reason behind exceeding the garlic cultivation by 1,408 hectares this season.

Although the item is usually cultivated in all the 13 upazilas of the district, the farmlands in Khansama and Chirirbandar upazilas are more suitable for garlic farming.

Farmers in Khansama upazila have cultivated garlic on 3,280 hectares of land against the DAE's target of 1,550 hectares this year, DAE officials said.

Farmers in the upazila got about 6.66 tonnes of garlic per hectare last year, against a production target of 7.3 tonnes.

"We are expecting a bumper yield and fair price of our produces this year as the item was sold at satisfactory price last year," said Anisur Rahman, a farmer of Ramnagar village in Khansama upazila.

"I have cultivated garlic on 50 decimals of land this season which cost Tk 90,000. I have already harvested 1600 kg of the item worth around Tk 1.85 lakh," said Mostakim of Kachinia village in the upazila.

Meanwhile, growers in the upazila urged the government not to import garlic till May this year for ensuring fair price of the item at local markets.

"If the item is imported before May, farmers in the region would be deprived of fair price," said Hussain Ali of Ramnagar village.



Farmers have cultivated garlic on vast areas in Kachinia village in Dinajpur's Khansama upazila, with a hope of bumper yield and fair price.

PHOTO: STAR