

Organic beef fattening shows prospect ahead of Eid

SHYKH SERAJ

Since the independence, people of Bangladesh sought many ways to become self-reliant. And the contribution of rural community behind Bangladesh's turning around has been supreme. As you all know, farming is the backbone of our economy, and as this sector stood on its ground firmly, Bangladesh has established its identity in the world map. The performance of the country in food security is way better than other countries around the world. After the independence, farmers have done tremendously well in paddy and jute cultivation; tried out diverse fruits and crops; fostered cattle and poultry. Most importantly, the youths have greatly contributed to the positive changes in the farming sector. They have spread all across the country with success. Many farmers have become millionaires. Bangladesh is also facing the wind of change of hi-tech farming. I'm sure we'll harvest the best results of the advanced farming very soon.

Dear readers, I would like to share with you the story of mid 80s. During that time, the general farmers of the country used to nurture their cows, feeding them with natural food. These cattle were their wealth, ahead of the Qurbani bazaar. However, as the demand for meat increased tremendously in the country, the concept of beef fattening came along. I featured these changing scenarios on BTV's Mati O Manush. The then head of livestock department of Bangladesh Agricultural University, Dr Saad Ullah brought into the light Urea Molasses Block, a cow feed especially suitable during disasters like flood. This was a brick-shaped solid food, which the cows used to eat by licking. Four to five years later, came Urea Molasses Straw technology (a mixture of water, urea, molasses and straw). This was meant for rapid beef fattening. I would also like to share a funny story regarding the fattening issue. A young boy sent me a letter while I was broadcasting these fattening techniques on BTV's Mati O Manush. He wrote, "If I eat urea, should I get healthier?" I didn't reply to his letter; rather, went straight to his residence in Mirpur to tell his parents that they must be

alert about their son so that he doesn't mistakenly do anything hazardous like this. I wanted to draw your attention just to share what some people thought about beef fattening in the country.

According to the Department of Livestock Services (DLS), there are now 5.5 lakh cattle farmers in the country. Altogether, they have 40 lakh cows eligible for sacrifice. The good thing is that consumers are now positively aware about cows' quality. Farmers, consumers and businessmen, all are now aware of

lenging matter to them as they are investing a lot in their farms. They are trying their best to fatten the cows by feeding pure, natural and organic food. Local production of cattle will be sufficient to meet the demand for sacrificial animals in Eid-ul-Azha this year, say livestock department officials.

I went to Gazipur's Konabari a few days back to see Subed Ali Agro Farm where cows are being raised with natural and local feed. There 200 cows are perfectly healthy and good-looking as farm-

thoroughly planned cattle farm.

"I not only give them good and healthy feed, but also bathe them with shampoo," says Monsur.

"These cows cost me Tk 2 crore. Along with that, the cost of feed and treatment is there. I expect to make a profit of Tk 40 lakh from this Eid bazaar," says a confident Monsur Ali.

This entrepreneur now spends most of his time in his farm although he has other businesses. He has a lovely bond with every animal in the farm.

the delight of Eid for half of the people of the nation. Bangladesh, as you know, is geographically a disaster prone country. So the country is always fighting against different natural disasters throughout the year as you definitely are aware of the extreme impacts of climate change, that's changing nature and the fate of people in many negative ways. We have to take measures keeping in mind the disasters that can affect us in future. There should be long term plans to save farming sector. We have to



The cows at Subed Ali Agro Farm in Gazipur's Konabari are raised with natural and local feed, making them ready for sale as sacrificial animals before the Eid-ul-Azha.

the harmful effects of fattening cows by growing them with steroid or other harmful chemicals. In the last few years, driven by the desire to make huge profit, many farmers and businessmen faced great loss as a result of adopting unscrupulous ways. Many consumers can not identify cows which have been fed steroids. Those cows are more calm and quiet. You would notice saliva dripping from some of them continuously. As these characteristics give the message that the cows have been fed steroid, farmers are now more cautious. In the past three years, it was observed that many of the cows that didn't get sold over doubts of having steroid died after a few days. Due to chemicals, the extra water that gets stored in a cow's body turns into poison after a certain period, making it hard for the cow to stay alive. These things are now clear to the farmers concerned. This is a chal-

lenging matter to them as they are investing a lot in their farms. They are trying their best to fatten the cows by feeding pure, natural and organic food. Local production of cattle will be sufficient to meet the demand for sacrificial animals in Eid-ul-Azha this year, say livestock department officials.

I have been extremely moved by farming. I also watched your programme on healthy beef fattening which has inspired me to come this far," says Monsur.

Monsur Ali is involved with agriculture for a long time now. This huge farm is on two acres of land. Inside, the works are being done in separate sheds. Under one shed, I saw large cows. Under another, I saw younger ones. Under a different shed, every day foods for these cows are being prepared. Outside, green grass is being produced. Altogether, it is a

The officers of DLS are saying the same thing. Neither is any growth hormone given nor any other unscrupulous method applied. Rather, scientifically approved feed is being provided to these cows. Konabari Sub-Assistant Agriculture Officer (Livestock) Anisul Haque says, sixty percent of the feed is grains, the rest forty is grass, straw and water. DG of Livestock Department, Dr Anisul Haque says, every cattle farmer is listed and under their strict monitoring and suggestions.

Marketing the farm's cows is definitely a challenge. Even the consumers have many doubts regarding beef fattening. Monsur's son Shamim Ahmed, an MBA from UK, is involved in marketing and now looks after his father's farm.

"I'm looking forward to using social media to sell these cows in larger scale," says Shamim.

Dear readers, flood seems to decrease

invent new farming technologies which would save our crops, fruits, flora, cattle and fishery, above all, the farmers from disasters. A constructive change is most needed at present. We can't look lightly on the efforts of Monsur Ali and 5.5 lakh farmers like him who rear their cattle through organic beef fattening. If they count loss, the rural economy will be affected, so will be the country's financial system. Keeping Eid-ul-Azha ahead, beef fattening is a great profitable and promising business sector. A large part of unemployment can be eradicated by expanding this sector. Livestock sector can play an important role in the country's economy, I'm sure. Finally, I hope the farmers and people of Bangladesh and South Asian countries recover from the flood losses before the Eid. My heartfelt Eid greetings to all of them.

'Try killers of Mukul in speedy court'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Speakers at rallies in Jessore yesterday demanded trial of the killers of slain journalist RM Saiful Alam Mukul in Speedy Tribunal.

They made the demand while attending separate programmes marking the 19th death anniversary of the journalist, also editor of Jessore based Bangla daily Runner.

Jessore Press Club Journalists Union of Jessore Mukul's family and Mukul Bandhu Forum chalked out programmes, including wearing of black badges, placing wreaths at his grave, doa mahfil and discussion.

A gang of unidentified criminals bombed and gunned down Mukul near his house in Bezpara area of the town around 10:00pm on August 30 in 1998.

Mukul's father Golam Mazed, founding editor of the daily, was also killed during the era of HM Ershad.

Jessore Press Club President Jahid Hasan, and former presidents Fakir Shawkat and Mizanur Rahman, also spoke.

Call to exempt tuition fees for flood-hit children

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Students of flood affected schools in the town staged a demonstration yesterday, demanding exemption of tuition fees for the next six months.

They also demanded supply of educational equipment free of cost.

Bangladesh Chhatra Union district unit organised the meeting at rail crossing point. They urged the people to help students of those schools.

They said prolonged flood badly affected schoolhouses and damaged educational equipment of students. In many places, students cannot attend classes as the schools are still submerged.

Guardians cannot procure new books for their children since they are going through financial crisis, they added.

The speakers urged the government to renovate flood affected schools.

Later, they handed over a memorandum to the deputy commissioner in this regard.

Chhatra Union district unit President Tapon Dev Nath and General Secretary Ashmani Akhter Asha spoke

Shykh Seraj is a Media and Agriculture Development Activist. He is an Ashoka Fellow and recipient of Ekushey Padak, FAO A.H. Boerma Award and many other prestigious accolades. At Channel i, he is Director and Head of News. He is also Director and Host of the popular agro-documentary, "Hridoye Mati O Manush".



Many patients released

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According to hospitals' officials, only 15 to 20 percent of doctors and nurses - mostly non-Muslims - will be on duty during the holiday. Patients will receive emergency services. Outdoor services will be closed.

Sources at the DMCH said the number of patients kept admitted on Sunday morning was 2,734, down from more than 3,600 last week. More patients would be discharged ahead of Eid, they said.

At Nitor, 473 patients were receiving treatment on Thursday, reduced from more than 550 a week ago.

Waiting for an auto-rickshaw in front of the NICVD on Saturday morning, Mahfuza Begum, 50, a female Ansar member, said she was worried about her health condition though released from the hospital.

She had come to the hospital on

August 23 with chest pain. "Had the doctors allowed me to stay, I would have stayed here... I feel very little improvement of my health," she said.

Some 752 patients remained admitted at the NICVD until Saturday from nearly 850 last week.

The situation at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital was similar with 780 indoor patients on the day while the usual number of such patients is more than 900.

At Mitford Hospital, Dhaka, 815 patients were receiving healthcare on bed tickets on Monday while the facility sees more than a thousand patients on any usual day.

According to hospitals' officials, ICUs, CCUs, post operative wards and gynaecology and emergency units will be open during the vacation.

Dr Samir Kanti Sarkar, director (admin) of the Directorate General of

Health Services, told The Daily Star outdoor services at the hospitals would be closed on Friday and Saturday.

Those will be open the day after the Eid day for three hours from 10:00am.

Since doctors and nurses will be on leave, patients whose condition is not that critical are being released ahead of Eid, Samir said. Besides, patients want to celebrate Eid at home and so their relatives ask for their release from the hospitals.

The DGHS director, however, acknowledged that some patients may face complication at home in absence of follow-ups.

The hospitals' authorities prefer to run the operations by non-Muslims doctors, nurses and other staffs at this time. If there are not enough non-Muslims staffs, health services will be continued by Muslim staffs, Samir added.

Kitchen market stable ahead of Eid

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said Md Ershad, a staff of Amania Store at the capital's Kaptan Bazar.

Jakir Hossain, shopkeeper of shop-53 at Karwan Bazar Wholesale Market, was found selling potatoes for Tk 20 a kg. "The price was similar last week," he said.

Manager Anwar Hossain of Prantika Traders at Karwan Bazar said the prices of other spices, like cumin, prune, mace, nutmeg, cashew nuts, peanuts and raisin, were steady.

"It's good for us that the price is steady. We [retailers] make marginal profits when the price shoots up because people buy less," he said.

Like the previous years, the prices of cucumbers and green chillies were

going up by Tk 5-20 per kg.

Rubel, a shop keeper at Kaptan Bazar, said he was selling cucumbers for Tk 50 a kg, which was Tk 40 in the last few weeks.

"I sold green chillies for Tk 100 a kg last week. Now I am selling it for Tk 120," he said.

Fearing crowded markets right before Eid, Nazia Aktar of Moghbazar went to Karwan Bazar to buy spices.

"It's good for people like us who have limited income. I hope the prices would remain the same until Eid," she said urging the government to monitor the market strictly.

Apart from high demand ahead of Eid, prices of commodities, especially spices,

have increased due to the flooding, bad condition of roads and traffic jams which are responsible for increasing transport cost, said Jewel Uddin, a spices trader of Mohammadpur Krishi Market.

"The flood hit both Bangladesh and India and damaged production of spices and hampered its transportation," he said.

Sohrab Hossain, a vegetable seller in New Market area, said, "Some essential commodities' demand is higher ahead of Eid, that's why the prices increase."

Another vegetable seller Jaynal Abedin said, "Prices are not that high when the devastating floods at different parts of the country are considered."

"শেখ হাসিনার উদ্যোগ-ঘরে ঘরে বিদ্যুৎ"

বিদ্যুৎ বার্তা

বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদন অত্যন্ত ব্যয়বহুল, ২০১৫-১৬ অর্থবছরে বিদ্যুতের প্রকৃত উৎপাদন মূল্য ছিল: ৫.৫৫ টাকা/কিঃওঃঘঃ এবং বিদ্যুতের গড় বিক্রয়মূল্য (বান্ধ) ছিল: ৪.৮৭ টাকা/কিঃওঃঘঃ। ফলে জনসাধারণের ক্রয়ক্ষমতার মধ্যে বিদ্যুৎ সরবরাহ করার জন্য সরকার ২০১৫-১৬ অর্থ বছরে ২৭৯৫ কোটি ভর্তুকী দিয়েছে। বিদ্যুৎ খরচ কম হলে সরকারের ভর্তুকী হ্রাস পাবে।

বিদ্যুৎ বিল কমাতে চান, তাহলে-

- অপচয় রোধ করুন এবং বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবহারে সশ্রয়ী হোন;
- ঘর থেকে বের হওয়ার সময় বিদ্যুতের সুইচ বন্ধ করুন;
- এসি'র তাপমাত্রা ২৫° সেলসিয়াস এর উপরে রাখুন;
- বিদ্যুৎ সশ্রয়ী যন্ত্রপাতি (লাইট, ফ্যান, এসি, ওভেন ও ফ্রিজ ইত্যাদি) ব্যবহার করুন;
- কম্পিউটার, ল্যাপটপ ও টিভি ব্যবহার শেষে সুইচ বন্ধ করুন;
- অপ্রয়োজনে আলোকসজ্জা পরিহার করুন;
- পোস্ট পেইড মিটারের পরিবর্তে প্রি-পেইড মিটার ব্যবহার করুন;
- বিদ্যুৎ সশ্রয়ী ভবন নির্মাণ করুন;

**বিদ্যুৎ দেশের মূল্যবান সম্পদ। বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবহারে সশ্রয়ী হউন।
আপনার নিজের বিল কমান এবং অন্যদের ব্যবহারের সুযোগ দিন।**

বিদ্যুৎ বিভাগ
বিদ্যুৎ, জ্বালানি ও খনিজ সম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়