

Vertical livestock farm on the outskirts of Dhaka

SHYKH SERAJ

Last year, someone called me before Eid-ul-Azha. "My name is Zakir Hossain, I have started my cattle farm in Jatrabari, inspired by your TV programme Hridoye Mati O Manush (Soil & People in Heart)," he said over phone. "I would love to have you at my farm once the corona is over, he added."



Zakir Hossain talks to Shykh Seraj at his vertical livestock building at Kajla in Dhaka's Jatrabari area.

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

farm there. Zakir Hossain has shown that such an upward expansion of livestock farming can also become a reality with a great commercial perspective. I was taken to the first floor, in fact to the dairy farm. The floor is only 2,940 square feet where 40 cows reside. Of these, 22 are giving around 300 litres of milk. The entire arrangement at Zakir's cattle farm is astonishing. The story behind the initiative is even more breath taking.

"Mr Seraj, I went to Singapore and stayed there for 21 years. What a hard time it was. I had to carry rod-cement on my shoulders and go up to 10 to 12 floors. I used to watch your programmes on TV and when I returned to the country, I thought I would restart everything with a cattle farm," said Zakir. Many return from abroad and do many things. Some start garment business, some start grocery stores. Zakir's dream was to start a cattle farm. His family didn't like his initiative. "Although I live in Narayangaj, I bought this land and started the cattle farm so that none of my family members get to know about this, shared Zakir. He had a food restaurant quite far from the cattle farm and when he used to return home, he would say them, "My restaurant is going on pretty well."

wife and son would never suspect anything.

It was really exciting to hear the stories of Zakir and I must see this man can crack jokes where every word comes out so lively. Zakir has been doing his farm for the past four years. He built his farm on four kathas of land (0.084 acre), which he bought at a cost of Tk 40 lakh (USD 47,202). One day Zakir took 40 litres of milk to his home. He asked his wife about the quality of the milk. She said it was great. Zakir continued to take home milk from his farm. Even his children liked it very much. My elder son noticed the name of the farm is Samrat Livestock Farm. Samrat is the name of my younger son so he said why the name is like this. I told him anyone's name can be Samrat. My elder son told his mother to visit the farm. I brought her here as well and she was also very happy to see the farm. Now, they are happier and know that this is my farm.

Zakir is a very optimistic and confident entrepreneur. He believes that livestock farming is more profitable than any other business. He has spent Tk 8 crore (About USD 1 million) to build a farm in a building. I wanted to know, how is the profit with the farm by spending so much? Laughing, he said, "Sir, how many crores of takas come in one Eid-ul-Azha (The festival of sacrifice) festival, you know?" In the last sacrificial season, cattle worth around Tk 3.5 crore (USD 4,13,000) were sold from

this farm. "The biggest bull that came to be sold at Shanir Akhra cattle market before last year's Eid-ul-Azha, was from this farm," said Zakir, the proud entrepreneur.

Stairs have been specially made for cows to go up and down. A separate staircase in the middle of the building for their movement has also been built. There is a surprise on every floor of this house. The calves are kept on the third floor. There is a specialized unit, especially for beef fattening. Every part of the venture has a different outlook, built with extreme love, dedication and a clear goal.

Zakir is truly fond of his mother, who has given him great confidence. His mother passed away. "Even the leaves of the trees will perish one day, but your money won't ever end," commented Zakir's mother. She suffered a brain stroke and was bedridden for 10 years. "My mother's blessings are with me and that is why I have been working so hard," said Zakir with tears in his eyes. I used to work for others, now 16 people are working at my farm and I want to provide more jobs to people.

There is one problem and that is other people are building houses all around Zakir's farm. How long will Zakir be able to expand this farm when this place will turn into a residential area? "No problem, I have another land in Birkampur where I will shift this farm," replied Zakir. I was roaming around the cattle building of Zakir. His office is located on the fourth floor of the building and he stays there when there is workload.

Dear readers, Zakir has certainly built a building as a vertical farm for livestock animals. He has got a biogas plant as well. Everything seems to be easy for Zakir, who is very hardworking and outspoken. Farm expansion is happening, the scope of dreams is increasing. He said, "This year the cows are no longer in the market and he will sell online. Time has gone digital. Zakir's dream is one day he will market this farm's milk as pasteurized and packaged. For this, he will build a chilling plant and packaging facility. At the same time, he will build his feed mill to ensure his cattle's quality food. Zakir has a big plan to fatten cows for the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha. This arrangement and dream reaffirm that the strong will of any farmer is as important as an investment in agriculture. Zakir's initiative for a vertical livestock farm must be followed. The country will move forward on the path of prosperity with the assistance of such enterprising youth like Zakir Hossain.



A road being constructed ahead of Narendra Modi's visit to Orakandi Thakur Bari Temple, below, in Gopalganj's Kashiani upazila.

Orakandi Thakur Bari all set to receive Modi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit Orakandi, a sacred shrine of the "Matua" community in Gopalganj, and the Orakandi Thakur Bari is taking all kinds of preparations to welcome him.

The Indian premier is set to visit the Bangabandhu memorial in Tungipara to pay homage to Bangladesh's Founding Father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 27 and on the same day, he is expected to visit Orakandi temple. Subrato Thakur, chairman of Kashiani upazila parishad, and also a member of Thakur Family, said, "All the family members along with all the followers of Harichand Thakur, the founder of the "Matua" community, are very happy as the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit Orakandi. We the family members of Harichand Thakur are painting the temple."

Padmanav Thakur, president of Bangladesh Matua Mahacommission, said, "We came to know that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will pray at the temple of Harichand Thakur. He will also exchange views with the family members of Harichand Thakur." The government is constructing four helipads, 500 metres of road and a rest house on the occasion of PM Modi's visit, added Subrato Thakur. Md Habibur Rahman, engineer of Kashiani Upazila Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), said, "We have been making four helipads and 500 metres of HBB roads inside Thakur Bari. We have also been repairing eight kilometres road from Tilchor of Dhaka-Khulna Highway to Thakur Bari and 600 metres road from Rahut-Thakurbari entrance."

Md Azizur Rahman, officer in-charge of Kashiani Police Station, said "Primarily we have taken all kinds security measures as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit the Orakandi Temple."



Shykh Seraj is Bangladesh's pioneer development journalist. He received country's two highest civilian honours, Swadhinata Puroshkar and Ekushey Padak, respectively. He is a BIDS, Ashoka and Bangla Academy Fellow. He also received highest award for agricultural journalism from the United Nations, FAO A.H. Boerma Award, Gusi Peace Prize (Philippines) and many other prestigious accolades at home and abroad. At Channel i, he's the Founder Director and Head of News. He's also Director and Host of Channel i's popular agro-documentary, Hridoye Mati O Manush.

in my mind, are you kidding, cattle farm in a flat building? I entered the building to see what's inside. Zakir told me he has goats and sheep on the ground floor; on the first floor he has milking cows; on the second-floor calves and on the third he has bulls. I have been promoting vertical farming for a long time, but haven't thought for a bit that there would be a vertical cattle



Marking the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Thakurgaon district administration took a different initiative to rehabilitate 100 beggars by bringing them under social safety nets. As part of the plan 100 calves were distributed among as many beggars at a programme held at Thakurgaon Government High School premises on Wednesday.

PHOTO: STAR

বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক
হিউম্যান রিসোর্সেস ডিপার্টমেন্ট-১
প্রধান কার্যালয় ঢাকা
বিজ্ঞপ্তি নংঃ ১৮/২০২১
তারিখঃ ০১ জুইন, ১৯২৭
১৫ মার্চ, ২০২১
নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি
বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক 'অফিসার (জেনারেল)' পদে নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তে বাংলাদেশী স্থায়ী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে:

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Memo No. CEDP/PMU/P(IDG-1045)/95/2019-36
Date: 18/03/2021
e-Tender Notice: 01/2020-2021
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Fire guts 40 houses in Pabna
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna
At least 40 houses were gutted in a devastating fire that broke out in Hogolbaria area of Chatmohar upazila yesterday.
The fire incident left at least 12 families homeless.
Dathia Bamongar Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Nabir Uddin Mollah alleged that the fire originated from the kitchen of one Nantu Miah of the area around 2:00pm yesterday.
Due to dry weather, the fire soon spread in the nearby area and engulfed at least 39 other adjacent houses, the chairman said, adding that the extent of loss caused by the fire could be around Tk 1 crore.
They have already distributed dry-food among the victim families, Chatmohar UNO Soikot Islam said.