

ORGANIC CATTLE REARING

Swapan shows it can work in Bangladesh

SHYKH SERAJ

Lutfar Rahman Swapan had been abroad for a long time. After returning home, he started a cattle farm he had been dreaming about.

I heard so many stories about this young entrepreneur. I decided to visit his farm, SS Cattle Farm, in Dasherghaon area of Narayanganj's Bandar upazila. In my last article, I had promised a write up on the demand of sacrificial animals, market preparations and other relevant issues ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha. Today, I have the honour to introduce you to Lutfar Rahman Swapan, a dreamer of livestock farming in the country.

he carried out a lot of experimental work. He started tidying up the farm a couple of years ago with cent percent commercial thinking. This huge cattle farm has been built based on fine calculations of an investment oriented agro-industry. Out of his 360 cattle heads, 300 of local and foreign breeds are being reared in the farm built on 8 bigha (5 acres) of land. It also has dairy cows, buffaloes, goats and sheep. The unit for fattening cows is the largest. Cows of different breeds, colours and sizes are reared here considering the needs of all segment of buyers. This year, about 70 percent of the cows are ready for being sacrificed during Eid and most of them have been sold. Swapan said the news of organic fattening and business integrity have already reached the consumers and buyers. Experimental rearing of cows has been going on in the farm. There are cows of Nepali, Australian, Friesian and Brahma breeds in different sheds. They are of different shapes and



Lutfar Rahman Swapan talking to Shykh Seraj at his cattle farm in Narayanganj.

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

colours and they look really attractive. Also, there are small cows of native breeds. There are cows of Bhutanese, Goyal (mountain cow) and other dairy breeds. The cows are fed mainly grass, rice straw, khail (oil-cake), rice, rice husk, and pulses. Some other necessary

ingredients are being used in making the feed nutritious. All these conventional nutritious cow feed are playing a major role in organic fattening of cattle. Swapan says many buyers in the country are still sceptical about organic fattening or rearing of cows.

He blames dishonest farmers for bringing a bad name to this trade. He, however, said people are becoming much more aware of it nowadays than before. He firmly believes his farm will be fully organic. Despite being financially stable and quite established, Swapan has turned

to agriculture from his lavish urban life. He came home to start his farm drawing inspiration from many successful agricultural events.

Dear readers, Holy Eid-ul-Azha is an occasion of sacrifice. Purity or organic breeding is often forgotten because people are now desperate for doing business to earn more money by spending less. But Islam teaches us honesty, purity and sacrifice. A large number of seasonal farms are established across the country ahead of Eid-ul-Azha. I would like to say that those who love agriculture and building farms with a pure heart cannot take any harmful initiative in any way. But only a small group of people forgets about the welfare of the general people just to make a quick buck.

I believe that the situation has changed a lot. Swapan's conviction and his farm initiative give me the hope that many new farms will be built looking at his success and many will learn from his thoughts. People are not well in this pandemic. The country's farmers are still worried because online and offline (physical) sales of sacrificial cows have not received a good response so far. But I think the situation will change soon. Everyone hopes that the desired number of cows will be marketed at the last moment and cattle farmers will be safe from all crises. I convey Eid-ul-Azha greetings to all our farmers and my readers in advance.

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.



Khaleda, others committed

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surrender before the lower court in 15 days and asked the trial court to grant bail to them if they surrender.

The HC bench had also lifted the stay order issued in 2008 on the trial proceedings against Galib and Tanveer.

The HC said, "It transpires that though Gatco did not have any prior experience in handling containers, Gatco was shown as responsive and was recommended to be awarded with the contract by Technical Evaluation Committee in violation of clause 8.2.2(iii) of the tender. The Ministerial Committee recommended to float re-tender. The then Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia being influenced by her younger son, accused Arafat Rahman (Koko), declined to accept the recommendation of the Ministerial Committee.

"Allegedly, the accused-petitioner No.1 Syed Galib Ahmed during enquiry admitted in his confidential statement that he paid Tk 2,19,45,091.00 to accused Ismail Hossain Saimon, son of Lieutenant Colonel (ret'd) Akbar Hossain, the then minister of shipping as a condition to be awarded with the said contract and allegedly, the accused-petitioner

No.1 disclosed in confession that accused Ismail Hossain Saimon paid part of the said amount to accused Arafat Rahman (Koko) from time to time as demanded by the said accused Arafat Rahman (Koko) who is the younger son of the then Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and thus the accused-petitioner and others committed offences under sections 409/109 of the Penal Code read with section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947."

The Anti-Corruption Commission filed the case with Teigaon Police Station on September 2, 2007 against Khaleda, Galib, Tanveer and 10 others, on charges of corruption in awarding the contract for container management at inland container depots in Dhaka and Chattogram to Global Agro Trade (Pvt) Co Ltd (Gatco), causing a loss of over Tk 1,000 crore to the state exchequer.

Lawyers Ajmalul Hossain and Ahsanul Karim appeared for Galib and Tanveer respectively, while lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan represented the ACC and Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik represented the state.

If not checked, health system may collapse

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As the "strict lockdown" has been withdrawn temporarily ahead of Eid, the minister urged everyone to strictly adhere to the health safety rules.

With the latest count, the total number of deaths reached 17,278, which is around 1.6 percent of all cases detected so far, according to a press release from the Directorate General of Health Services.

In 24 hours till 8:00am, 12,236 people tested positive, taking the figure of confirmed cases to 10,71,774.

Yesterday, the positivity rate declined to 27.23 percent from the previous day's 29.14 percent.

Of the 226 deceased, 140 were men and 86 women. Twenty of them died at homes and the rest in hospitals.

Like almost every day in the past few weeks, Dhaka division saw the highest 74 deaths followed by 52 in Khulna.

Among other divisions, 42 deaths were reported in Chattogram, 24 in Rajshahi, 13 in Rangpur, 10 in Mymensingh, six in Barishal and five in Sylhet.

Speaking at the programme yesterday, Zahid Maleque also said everyone above 18 years will gradually be vaccinated in Bangladesh.

"Arrangements are being made to gradually bring all citizens above 18

years under the Covid-19 vaccination programme to revive the country's education system."

The health minister said the government has 45 lakh doses of vaccines in stock. "We'll receive 29 lakh doses of AstraZeneca vaccine very soon. Besides, Pfizer vaccine doses will reach the country within next month."

"Our health sector has the capacity to store three crore shots of vaccines. So, there will be no problem in storing and distributing vaccines," Zahid said.

He added that a process was underway to recruit 2,000 doctors and 4,000 nurses to deal with the Covid situation. The government will

also appoint technologists across the country on a contractual basis, the minister said.

Talking about criticism against the health sector, he said those who were spreading propaganda against the sector to confuse people should be criticised.

"There's no food crisis in the country, industries are running and health services are available. Then why are there so many conspiracies against the health sector? These are nothing but conspiracies to undermine the achievements of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina."

Dhaka Medical College Hospital Director Brig Gen Nazmul Haque presided over the event.

Advertisement for Barishal City Corporation (বরিশাল সিটি কর্পোরেশন) regarding a public hearing (দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি) for the construction of a road. It lists various items and their estimated costs, and provides contact information for the corporation.

'ASSAULT' ON SI Court defers Jubo League leader's bail hearing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A Sunamganj court yesterday deferred the bail hearing of Jubo League leader Arindam Chowdhury Apu who is accused of assaulting a sub-inspector of Shalla Police Station.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Court's judge Shyam Kanti Singha set Monday for the next hearing, said Selim Newaj, court inspector of Sunamganj police.

However, the court granted Arindam bail in a separate drug case filed along with the assault case, he said.

Arindam, also former convener of Chhatra League's Shalla upazila unit, was arrested early Wednesday on charges of assaulting Sub-Inspector Shah Ali.

Police also arrested another accused Ratan Roy.

The family members of Arindam, however, have alleged that the arrest was part of a communal agenda connected to his sharing of an audio clip of former Hefajat-e-Islam leader Mamunul Haque on Facebook in April.

They also alleged that the Jubo League leader was tortured in custody.

The SI is undergoing treatment at Shalla Upazila Health Complex. Shah Ali accused Arindam, Bishwajit Roy, Polash Sarkar Paltu, Ratan Roy, Chandan Roy, and three or four unnamed individuals.

SI Al Mamun of the police station also filed a drug case against Arindam accusing him of being drunk and disorderly.

Md Nur Alam, officer-in-charge (OC) of the station, said, "The investigation is progressing and the other accused are on the run."

Advertisement for the 'Jyotita Foundation' (জয়িতা ফাউন্ডেশনের সক্ষমতা বিনির্মাণ প্রকল্প) regarding a public hearing (জয়িতা ফাউন্ডেশনের সক্ষমতা বিনির্মাণ প্রকল্প) for the construction of a road. It lists various items and their estimated costs, and provides contact information for the foundation.