

Imrul's antibiotic-free smart poultry farm

SHYKH SERAJ

People often hear parents say, "My children don't want to eat fish." Children love chicken more than fish and it means the demand for chicken is increasing. But when it comes to safe food, people have different thoughts about chicken meat. Doubts over use of antibiotics in poultry farms is not at all an unreasonable subject of discussion. Not only chicken or all other meats, even eggs and milk are highly affected by antibiotics. If a medicine is given it stays in that animal's body for a certain period. Each medication has a specific 'withdrawal period' and it remains in the animal body till it elapses. The remains of medicine is called drug residue and residues of antibiotics are likely to remain in fish, poultry or cattle meat, eggs and milk. Although we are unknowingly taking it without hesitation, it poses a serious threat to our health. With this in mind, people now look for organic food and this is the time to overcome the uncertainty of safe food. The whole world is walking in that direction as the demand for organic food is gradually increasing. Over the years, a large market for organic food is taking shape across the world and many getting engaged in organic food production day by day.

Now, let's talk about computer Engineer Imrul Hasan. I met him recently. The young



Shykh Seraj talks with Imrul Hasan at his organic smart poultry farm at Baraitali village in Gazipur's Kaliakair upazila.

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

man becomes a true soldier in organic food production by starting a smart poultry farm, absolutely free from use of antibiotic.

The river Bangshai flows past Baraitali village in Gazipur's Kaliakair upazila. A few days back, I went to Imrul's two-storey ancestral house, situated on the river bank. After obtaining his engineering degree from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), he joined telecommunication sector. He has worked in the country for three years and six years more in the United States, Egypt, Philippines, Abu Dhabi and some other countries.

"I felt the urge to return to the country for two reasons. One is to take care my parents and my daughter's schooling as she was compelled to change her schools six times only for my job locations," Imrul said.

In October, 2014, Imrul returned to Bangladesh and was engaged in IT consultancy. Everything was going well till the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and things had changed since then. Imrul was infected with the deadly virus and had to take admission at a hospital. "Lying in the

hospital bed, I was thinking about our immune system. Our food is not protecting our health at all while food adulteration is destroying us invisibly," shared Imrul.

After returning home from the hospital Imrul started studying on organic chicken production. "In December, 2020, I started my organic chicken farm and so far I have received huge positive response from the customers," Imrul gladly added.

Imrul has temperature controls in his farm to determine proper amount of light, air and water management system, which we may define as smart farming. Everything on the farm is controlled by a computer. Imrul has broiler chicken in one section, which has enough space for the chickens to grow in a free environment. I remember seeing this method at a chicken farm in Japan. They were raising chicken in the shed but kept the chickens free so that they can roam around in open places. I have seen the same method at Linz Hall Farm in Newcastle, England. Imrul has 750 broiler chickens.

How can you be so sure that your day-old chicks are free from antibiotics since you buy those from outside? I asked.

"It is difficult to give any guarantee right in the start, but after 10 days there will be no residue that's for sure," Imrul replied.

What is the mortality rate at your farm? I asked. It is down to two to three percent now, he replied. "I am ensuring the chickens' health organically. I feed them apple cider vinegar, which boosts their immune system," Imrul said.

I saw chickens are being given granular food as well as red spinach, moringa leaves etc at Imrul's farm. There are 3000 coloured birds, in another side of the farm. He is also rearing around 150 chickens in free space. He's experimenting in many ways. Imrul is quite energetic. Thoughts are as clean as one's workplace. Three thousand more coloured birds in another part of the farm are quite large in size and very much suitable for sale. I wanted to know, the status of the market. He said that all his chickens are sold online. After slaughtering, cleaning and slicing them properly, his staff deliver those to the customer's home in a freezing van. "I am selling my chickens at Tk 250 (USD 2.9) per KG," he said.

Chicken is being sold at Tk 160 to Tk 165 (USD 1.9) per kg in the market, aren't you charging a high price? I asked. Imrul gave me the answer by taking me to the feed production area. It's a very old house. He has set two state-of-the-art machines for making poultry feed. "If you want to keep your chickens healthy in a natural way and without giving them antibiotics, you have to give them healthy food," he replied. The cost is thus higher to ensure healthy chicken production. However, we're still trying to figure out how to reduce the cost, suggested Imrul.

Imrul said, "I got the courage to invest in agriculture by watching your programme and you are the one who said if one goes for farming by understanding it properly, the fear of loss goes down. I am walking on with that inspiration."

Our chicken production has increased. If the educated young generation takes the lead in the farming sector, the picture of farming will change. Following Imrul, many others will come forward to build organic smart poultry farms. One day, safe food will be ensured through initiatives from such young minds like Imrul Hasan. The media has to stand by the side of young entrepreneurs alongside the government and NGOs. If one Imrul succeeds, more will get inspiration and healthy Bangladesh will stand strong in producing safe food.

Potholed road causing commuters' woes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

With numerous potholes and cracks, around a 20km stretch on Kaliganj- Kushtia road has become a bumpy journey for commuters, thanks to the negligence of the authorities.

Passengers and drivers said that the 20km stretch of the road is now in terrible condition. The road is riddled with potholes that make it difficult for vehicles to ply on it. Drivers of the vehicles have expressed their frustration at the difficulty of driving vehicles on the battered road.

Persistent rain this monsoon has caused extensive damage to the road.

Moreover, the potholes on the road have increased the risk of accidents, they said.

The worst affected spots are Bishoykhali Bazar in Jhenidah Sadar, Garaganj Bazar in Shilakupa upazila and Bittipara in Shilakupa of Jhenidah and Sheikhpara in Kushtia district.

Aminur Rahman, a bus driver, said, "We are driving the vehicles taking life risks. Fatal accidents may occur anytime due to the battered road. The authority concerned should take an immediate step in this regard."

A trucker, Abdus Salam, said that they were having great difficulty driving their vehicles on the road.

When the road was smooth, it would take only 90 minutes to reach Kushtia from Kaliganj but now it takes over two hours to cross the same distance, he also said.

Echoing the same, Ariful Islam, a CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver, said that minor accidents are occurring on the road frequently due to potholes.

Mukul Jyoti Basu, sub-divisional executive engineer of the Roads and Highways Department, Jhenidah, said that he has forwarded the estimated maintenance cost of the road to the concerned authority.

The road will be brought under maintenance after the allocation is made available, he added.



The pothole-riddled 20 kilometre stretch on Kaliganj-Kushtia highway has become hazardous for thousands of vehicles, causing immense sufferings to commuters.

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.



350 scholars ask for ban

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INDIA DOESN'T WANT WAR: INDIRA Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi said in Washington DC today that her country had no desire to provoke war against Pakistan and had no territorial designs either on Pakistan or on what she called "East Bengal." She studiously avoided using the term East Pakistan.

Indira said, "I should like to plead with the world not to reach a solution that would leave out the people of East Bengal. The solution must be reached through Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and through their elected representatives."

Alluding to president Yahya Khan and his military government, she said: "The nations of the world should make up their own minds as to who is more important -- one man and his machine or a whole nation."

Indira met again today with Nixon and members of his cabinet and other senior US government officials.

Later, Lakshmi Kant Jha, India's ambassador to the United States, said the Indian premier had gained the impression that president Nixon was "making a genuine effort to achieve a political rapprochement" in East Bengal. Indian officials disclosed, however, that Nixon had warned that the US influence on Pakistan was limited.

BHUTTO ON VISIT TO PEKING

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, as the head of a delegation comprised military commanders and diplomats, left Pakistan today for China for consultations with Chinese leaders, including premier Chou En-lai.

A Pakistan foreign office spokesman said that the delegation was invited by the Chinese government and would exchange views with the Chinese leaders about "recent developments in the subcontinent, among other things".

ON THE WAR FRONT

Mukti Bahini successfully drove the occupation troops out of Bantara and Mohanpur outposts today. The freedom fighters took control of these two posts. During their raids, Mukti Bahini killed one and injured another occupation soldier. Several Razakars were captured with two Chinese rifles, and LMG.

In Sylhet district, Mukti Bahini encountered occupation troops in Bagber area today. In that action, three enemy soldiers were killed. The freedom fighters also captured a Razakar.

Freedom fighters removed 200 metres of telephone cables between Hansadaha and Motchandpur. They also destroyed telephone poles between Chuadanga and Darsana.

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Five UN experts seek info

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requested the government to respond within 60 days.

Shanchita Haque, deputy head of Bangladesh Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva, said a response to the letter was submitted to the OHCHR based on an information note provided by the home ministry in Dhaka.

"We said Rozina's case is under investigation and that she is on bail. We also said that the Bangladesh government is committed to the freedom of expression," she told this correspondent yesterday.

Those who wrote to the Bangladesh government are Irene Khan, special rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Miriam Estrada-Castillo, vice-chair of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Mary Lawlor, special rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Nils Melzer, special rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; and Dubravka Simonovic, special rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences.

On May 17 this year, Prothom Alo journalist Rozina was confined to a room of the health ministry for six hours. Later, a case was filed against her under the Official Secrets Act and she was arrested.

After a week of imprisonment, she was freed on bail. While arresting Rozina, police seized her passport, mobile phone and accreditation card, and she is yet to get those back.

On Tuesday, she received the Free Press Award in the "Most Resilient Journalist Award 2021" category at The Hague from

the Netherlands-based Free Press Unlimited.

The UN experts said her detention comes a few weeks after Rozina had published investigative reports on alleged corruption and mismanagement in the health sector and irregularities in the purchasing of emergency medical supplies to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The alleged circumstances of her arrest raise further concerns that she may be prosecuted in retaliation of her critical reporting," the letter says, expressing concern at the use of the Official Secrets Act-1923, which is a broad and unspecified state security legislation and provides for harsh penalties.

They said use of security-related legislation in the context of investigative journalism into a public health issue, which is of immense interest to the public, has a chilling effect on media freedom in the country, and could be detrimental to the objectives of the government to build public trust in its efforts to address the pandemic.

The experts mentioned that Bangladesh's Right to Information Act and article 39 of the Constitution of Bangladesh that places an obligation on the state to disclose information of public interest and recognises the right to information as an integral part of the freedom of thought, conscience and speech.

They also urged that all necessary measures are taken to investigate the alleged violations and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person responsible for the alleged violations.

Psoriasis: Not just

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developed are the scalp, elbows, knees, and lower back.

Psoriasis is not contagious. But it can be hereditary. It is thought to be an immune system problem that causes the skin to regenerate faster than normal.

Just what causes the immune system to malfunction isn't entirely clear. Researchers believe both genetics and environmental factors play a role. Factors like stress and smoking can increase one's risk of developing psoriasis.

Complications associated with psoriasis include psoriatic arthritis, which causes pain, stiffness and swelling in and around the joints; eye conditions such as conjunctivitis; obesity; Type 2 diabetes; high blood pressure; cardiovascular disease; some autoimmune diseases; mental health conditions such as low self-esteem and depression.

Psoriasis cannot be completely cured. Treatment usually helps keep the condition under control. Treatments are determined by the type and severity and the area of skin affected.

Conventional treatments fall into 3 categories:

Topical -- creams and ointments applied to the skin.

Phototherapy -- skin is exposed to certain types of ultraviolet light.

Systemic -- oral and injected medications that work throughout the entire body.

Treatments are often used in combination.

Accused gives

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statement.

Arafat was arrested early yesterday around 2:30pm from Modhurchara-4 refugee camp in Ukhya, said Naimul.

With him, a total of 15 persons have so far been arrested in connection with the killings. But only Arafat has so far given a confessional statement.

At least six Rohingya were killed and eight others injured as a group of armed criminals attacked a madrasa inside the refugee camp early October 22.

Some refugees in the camps claim that the killings were executed by members of Arakan Rohingya Solidarity Army (ARSA), though police denied it and said they found no existence of ARSA in the camps.

Earlier on September 29 night, a Rohingya leader Muhib Ullah, chairman of Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights (ARSPH), was shot dead at his office.

Many believe that he was killed by vested quarters to foil the repatriation process.

Scientists create fuel

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like the current kerosene or diesel but are created synthetically, out of water and carbon dioxide and powered by solar energy.

Scientists have had some success in making the individual parts of such a system. But it has proven much harder to create the full thing, in a way that would be useable in real-world conditions.

No breach of law

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their death sentences. There was no breach of law in this process at all."

Asked, the law minister, who is also a criminal law expert, said the convicts' lawyers should have informed the Appellate Division about their criminal appeals challenging the HC verdict while it was hearing and disposing of the jail appeals.

The apex court too could have enquired about the pending appeals and could have disposed of those during the hearing of the jail appeals, he said.

"The appeals will now be declared as abated by the apex court when they will appear before it next time," he further said.

Responding to a query, the minister said this was the first incident where appeals of the convicts remained pending even after they were executed.

"The regular appeals filed through lawyers and jail appeals filed through jail authorities are usually heard and disposed by the Supreme Court at the same time," he said.

Earlier on the day, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin told reporters at his office on the Supreme Court premises that the jail authorities executed Mokim and Jharu after all the trial proceedings were completed.

As their lawyers informed about their regular appeals to the Appellate Division during the hearing of their jail appeals, the regular appeals remained pending.

About the incident of including two appeals of Mokim and Jharu in the Appellate Division's cause list on Wednesday, the attorney general said all things of the country have not been digitalised yet and many things are still going on in the analogue system.

"I hope all these will be digitalised soon and there will be no such problems in future," AG

Amin Uddin added.

Meanwhile, advocate Humayun Kabir, a lawyer for Mokim and Jharu, told this correspondent yesterday that he has already heard that the Appellate Division has heard and disposed of the jail appeals of his clients but he is not officially informed about it.

"I will mention the issue before the Appellate Division when the pending appeals will appear in the cause list and will try to know what actually happened," he added.

Humayun Kabir said the Supreme Court yesterday did not say anything on this issue.

Abdul Mokim and Golam Rasul Jharu, both hailing from Chuadanga, were executed at the Jashore Central Jail on November 16, 2017.

They were hanged after the Appellate Division bench of the then chief justice Surendra Kumar Sinha, Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Mirza Hussain Haider upheld an HC judgment on November 15, 2016.

In the judgment, the HC had handed the death penalty to Mokim and Jharu for murdering a former union parishad member of Chuadanga's Alamdanga, Md Manwar Hossain, on June 28, 1994.

The two convicts appealed against the HC decision, but the highest court of the country rejected their appeals, paving way for the execution.

All of a sudden, their appeals against the death sentence appeared on Wednesday's case list of the Appellate Division for a hearing, leaving everybody perplexed: Had the state executed two men even before their appeals were heard?

Humayun Kabir on Wednesday said he learned only a few days ago that his clients were executed. Their appeals were filed in 2013, it has been eight years since then.

'Unexpected' obstacles

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The magnitude of graft, lack of good governance and a vested quarter's interest in gaining benefit from the situation are among the key reasons for the challenges facing empowerment of female UNOs, he said.

The UNOs also faced challenges in providing secretarial support to upazila parishads. There were challenges from local public representatives which is unexpected as they are supposed to create a conducive working environment for the UNOs, said the TIB executive director.

The UNOs, he said, came under pressure from public representatives for refusing to cooperate with them in committing corruption and irregularities.

"This should be looked into deeply and necessary steps should be taken in this regard," Iftekharuzzaman told the press conference.

There were instances of creating obstacles by several related institutions or a section of their officials to bar female UNOs from providing administrative support and implementing government directives, he mentioned.

According to the TIB report, 78.3 percent of female UNOs mentioned facing various challenges in carrying out their duties.

It found that while providing secretarial support to upazila parishads, female UNOs came under pressure to commit irregularities in the distribution of relief materials (34.3 percent), not to scrutinise the rationale of expenditures (31.4 percent), approve false expenditure bills (28.6 percent), and commit irregularities in purchases (25.7 percent).

The study further revealed that female UNOs faced challenges in providing assistance to the upazila parishad chairmen. The challenges include lack of support from the chairmen (40.5 percent),

obstacles in taking steps against corruption (31.4 percent), pressure to carry out unethical activities (31.4 percent), and political influence from local quarters (31 percent).

It said there were also allegations of sexual harassment of female UNOs.

Ninety-eight percent of the 45 female UNOs said they faced challenges in disaster management. Similarly, 91 percent of the surveyed UNOs faced challenges in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic.

The report says steps taken by the female UNOs to combat graft included complaining to the ministries concerned or the Anti-Corruption Commission about corrupt individuals, forming ethical committees, conducting anti-graft drives and punishing corrupt persons.

It says female UNOs faced challenges in carrying out their duties. The challenges came from a range of individuals, including upazila parishad chairmen, a section of local journalists, lawmakers, local politicians, law enforcement agencies, and government officials, including deputy commissioners.

All the female UNOs tried to address the challenges themselves. Besides, 80 percent of them sought support from district administrations, one-third from ministries concerned, 31.1 percent from lawmakers and 22.2 percent from law enforcement agencies, read the report.

Iftekharuzzaman said an analysis of the experiences of female UNOs reveals that political and social domains in the country's administration were not gender sensitive yet.

It is the duty of the state to create a conducive environment for establishing good governance and combating graft, he added.