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October-December 2022

SAC Celebrates the 38th SAARC Charter Day

The SAARC Agriculture Centre, Dhaka, Bangladesh celebrated the 38th SAARC Charter Day on 8th December 2022. Honourable Ambassador Masud Bin Momen, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended this event as Chief Guest. Dr. Nahid Rashid, Secretary Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock joined as Special Guest and Dr. Shaikh Mohammad Bokhtiar, Executive Chairman, Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council (BARC) chaired the program. Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain, Director SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) made a welcome speech. Dr. Himanshu Pathak, Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) and Director General of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, India was present as the key note speaker at BARC Auditorium. The celebration began with the hoisting of flags of SAARC Member States by the dignitaries of the High Commissions/ Embassies, senior officials of the BARC and NARS. It was followed by release of pigeon to spread the message of Peace, Support and Cooperation among SAARC Member States.

The technical session commenced with the welcome address by Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain, Director, SAC, Dhaka, Bangladesh. After welcoming the guests and dignitaries, he made a brief presentation on the year-round activities of the SAC in the field of crops, livestock, fisheries, horticulture, natural resources management and policy for the benefit of the SAARC Member



He also highlighted the recent achievements of the centre particularly on publication of books, policy briefs and SAARC Journal of Agriculture etc. He informed the house about the recent approval of multi-country project on Consortium for Scaling-up Climate Smart Agriculture in South Asia, supported by IFAD as well as on going multi-country project entitled Livelihood enhancement of the small farmers in SAARC region through small scale agro-business focusing on value chain development, supported by SAARC Development Fund.

Dr. Himanshu Pathak, Secretary, DARE and Director General, ICAR, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, India delivered the keynote address on Transforming Agrifood Systems in South Asia. He highlighted the impact of climate change on crop production systems, soil, water, biodiversity and pest infestation which all effects on poor farmers and they are the worst sufferer. To combat this crisis he mentioned that



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agriculture is the source and sufferer of climate change but can be a solution. As the current South Asian agriculture is concentrate on industrial driven agriculture, hence, keeping 5Ms (Market, Monsoon, management, Mechanization, Manpower) in mind, emphasis should be given on FARM building, Climate SMART agriculture, precision agriculture, safe and nutritious food, healthy diet, emerging technologies and integrated traditional and underutilised crops. He also mentioned that climate-smart technologies are available and also emerging, need reorientation and upscaling and integration with traditional systems, need international collaboration and institutional coordination for resources and implementation, a mission mode approach is needed to promote climate-smart technologies to make significant impacts. SAARC can play a big role, students, scientists and farmers need to be equipped with new skills and tools to make agriculture climate smart.

Dr. Nahid Rashid, Secretary, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh graced the occasion as Special Guest. She applauded the SAARC Agriculture Centre for its countless achievements in the field of regional capacity building, expert consultation meeting, policy guidelines and worthy publication on emerging challenges of South Asian agriculture and allied sectors. She emphasized that the fisheries and livestock sector has been playing an important role in the economy uplift efforts of Almost 80% of the country's protein requirements come from this sub-sector. This sector has much potential to develop as a commercial sector with employment and income generating opportunities both in the rural and urban areas. A large number of enterprises of cattle, poultry and dairy farms have grown in the private sector in recent years she added.



Ambassador Masud Bin Momen, the Foreign Secretary (Senior Secretary), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, grace the occasion as Chief Guest. The Chief Guest reiterated for stronger cooperation among SAARC Member States in the broader areas of agriculture to fulfil the aspirations of regional people; particularly the small and marginal farmers, who are toiling their efforts and sacrifices for producing foods from crops, livestock and fisheries. He complimented SAARC Agriculture Centre's endeavours for regional food and livelihood security.



Dr. Shaikh Mohammad Bokhtiar, the Executive Chairman of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council, delivered the Chairman's address during the technical session of the SAARC Charter Day celebration. He stated that the SAARC is a unique platform in the region which could facilitate to work collectively in the arena of agriculture and rural development. Applauding the Centre's efforts on IFAD supported multi-country project and SAARC Agriculture Ph D Scholarship, Dr. Bokhtiar urged to prepare Centre's vision 2030 aligning with UN declared SDGs. He opined that the Centre is striving hard to publish books, policy briefs, journal in order to maintain the status of SAC as the Agricultural Knowledge and Information Hub in South Asia.





The 38th SAARC Charter Day was attended by a galaxy of learned participants belonging to the higher officials from High Commission/ Embassy of SAARC Member States, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Agriculture, BIMSTEC, Department of Agricultural Extension, Department of Livestock, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council, Agricultural universities, in addition to the Director Generals of NARS Institutes namely Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute, Savar and Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute, Gazipur. The 38th SAARC Charter Day Celebration was concluded with the chanting of *Long live the spirit of SAARC*.



Director SAC and DG, ICAR, India visited BARI and BRRI

As a part of Bangladesh visit, after presenting keynote paper on Transforming Agrifood Systems in South Asia at BARC on SAARC Charter Day, 08 December, Dr. Himanshu Pathak, Secretary, DARE and Director General, ICAR, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, India visited Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute (BARI) and Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) Gazipur on 12 December 2022. He was accompanied by Dr. Shaikh Mohammad Bakhtiar, Executive Chairman, Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council and Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain, Director SAARC Agriculture Centre. They were received by Dr. Debashis Sarkar, DG, BARI, and Dr. Md. Shahjahan Kabir, DG, BRRI. Dr. Pathak exchanged views with the scientists of BARI and BRRI.



Director SAC visited Farmers fields of C-SUCSeS project in Sri Lanka

A two-member team led by the Director SAC visited the Department of Agriculture (DoA), Natural Resources Management Center (NRMC), Peradeniya, Sri Lanka from 21-27 December 2022. The visiting team attended meetings at the DoA and NRMC with the higher officials of the DoA and the project team of Sri Lanka. The team also visited participatory research fields and participated in the farmer consultation meeting at the Kandy and Anuradhapura Districts, Sri Lanka. The team met the partner in the morning session on 22nd December 2022 in the Director General office at the DoA, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka to present the details of the C-SUCSeS project and its management protocol. The meeting was attended by the Director General, Additional Director Generals of Research, and Development, Project Steering Committee (PSC) Members, National Focal Scientists, and Principal Researcher of Sri Lanka for the C-SUCSeS project. The SAC team also highlighted the importance and critical roles played by the DoA for the effective functioning of the project in Sri Lanka. Later, the PSC member of Sri Lanka and his team highlighted some of their achievements.



On 23 and 24 December, the team travelled to the Nelugaha, Walapane area under Kandy district and visited farmers field sites of the participatory research under C- SUCSeS project and NRMC Research Farm, Kundasale and Farmers' fields, Nugawela area.

On 25 December, they visited the Climate Smart Model Village in Manakkulama, Thirappane, Anuradhapura, and participated in the discussion of Participatory Research on CSA technologies under C-SUCSeS Project.



SAC team visited Milk Vita at Takerhat

The SAC team comprising of Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain, Director, SAC and Dr. Younus Ali, Senior Technical Officer (STO) visited Buffalo Farm of Bangladesh Milk Producer's Cooperative Union Ltd (Milk Vita) at Takerhat, Madaripur, on 17 December 2022 to review the performance of Murrah buffalo calves born through artificial insemination of pedigreed buffalo semen under the initiative on High Yielding Dairy Breed Development in SAARC Countries. All the calves born through artificial insemination are sound healthy and growing well with the dietary schedule adopted by the management of the farm. The average milk production found to be 4-5 litres/day/buffalo from first generation offspring (F1) of Murrah buffalo.



Meeting on Vision Document Development

On 8 November 2022 SAARC Agriculture Centre organized a consultation workshop on SAC Vision 2030 under the Chairmanship of Dr. Shaikh Mohammad Bokhtiar, Executive Chair, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) and honourable Governing Board (GB) Member of SAC and former director of SAC this morning. His Excellency Ambassador Mr. Abdul Motaleb Sarker, Director General, SAARC & BIMSTEC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) graced the meeting as Guest of Honour, Dr. Ganga Dutta Acharya, Senior Program Specialist, Priority Setting and Program Development (PSPD), SAC made the presentation and all former's directors and former and present officials of SAC actively participated and contributed on the draft SAC Vision 2030.



Director SAC Inaugurated a Safe Food Fair

On 06 December 2022, Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain, Director, SAARC Agriculture Center (SAC) inaugurated a Safe Food Fair as Chief Guest at Chader Hat Playground at Zohuri Moholla, Mohammadpur, Dhaka. The fair has jointly organized by the Consumer Association of Bangladesh (CAB) and Friends in Village Development in Bangladesh (FIVDB) under the financial support by Welthungerhilfe. Prof. Dr. Md Abdul Alim, Member Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA) joined the program as a Special Guest.



Governing Board Chair Visited SAC

On 29 December 2022, Honourable Governing Board Chair of SAARC Agriculture Centre Dr. Ram K Singh, Additional Director General (CC), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) visited SAARC Agriculture Center (SAC) to join the Selection Committee meeting for recruiting Senior Program Specialist (SPS) of Livestock, Natural Resources Management and Crops. Mr. Jamal Uddin Ahmed, Director Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) of SAARC Secretariat also joined as a member of the Selection committee.



Director, SAC Attended Asia Pacific Symposium on Agrifood

The director of SAARC Agriculture Center (SAC), Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain, attended in the Asia Pacific Symposium on Agrifood Systems Transformation Organized by FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) in the Millennium Hilton Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand from 5-7 October 2022. High-level delegations from Asia and the Pacific region attended the symposium. The objectives of this symposium was to unpack the economic, environmental and social elements and impacts of agri food systems transformation and explore how innovations, technologies and digitalization can contribute to accelerating the progress of leaving no one behind across the Asia-Pacific region.



Professionals Attended Celebration of World Soil Day

A team of professionals led by the Director SAARC Agriculture Center, Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain, a promising soil scientists of Bangladesh join the World Soil Day celebration at Krishbid Institution Bangladesh (KIB) on 05 December 2022. The program was organized by the Ministry of Agriculture Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh with the theme, **Soil: Where Food begins**. The keynote paper was presented by the renowned soil scientist and the Executive Chairman of BARC, Dr. Sheikh Muhammad Bakhtiar. Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, MP, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of people republic of Bangladesh Attended the program as the Chief Guest and Mr. Mostafizur Rahman, Secretary, Ministry of Land chaired the program.



SAC Participated to the Regional Panel Discussion of the SAPLING Project

The South Asian Policy Leadership for Improved Nutrition and Growth (SAPLING) project of BRAC organized a Regional Panel Discussion on 01 December 2022 at Pan pacific Sonargaon Hotel Dhaka in hybrid mode aiming to bring together national and regional sector leaders in dialogues about improving food systems and nutrition throughout South Asia in the thematic areas of Climate-Smart Food Systems, Post-Harvest Losses and Food Safety Standards.

A two-member team composed of the Director, SAC Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain and Senior Program Specialist Horticulture Dr. Nasreen Sultana Participated in the discussion. Dr. Baktear Hossain took part in the discussion of the thematic area of Food Safety Standards and Dr. Sultana shared her knowledge in the thematic area of Post-Harvest Losses.



Director SAC Chaired the CIRDAP Training Program

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) and Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) Cumilla jointly organized a regional training course on Integrated Rural Development, Governance, Trade, and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, from 4-25, November 2022. In the closing session on 28 November 2022, Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain, Director of SAC delivered the closing remark as the Chair of the session of the 1st CIRDAP-BARD Flagship Training program.



Director SAC's Curtesy visit with DG SAARC & BIMSTEC

On 2 November 2022, Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain Director SAC called on the office of the Director General (SAARC & BIMSTEC), His Excellency Ambassador Abdul Motaleb Sarker for a courtesy visit and handed over some recent publications and mementos of SAC to him. In this meeting Dr. Baktear discussed with Mr. Sarker about the future program and activities of the Centre where Mr. Sarker assured to continue his support to run the Centre.



Director SAC participated in the 32nd APC of RDA

On 22 October 2022, a two membered team of SAC comprised of Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain, Director and Dr. Younus Ali, Senior Technical Officer (STO) SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) joined the inaugural ceremony of 32nd Annual Planning Conference (APC) 2022-2023 of Rural Development Academy (RDA), Bogura. Dr. Hossain, Chaired a technical session with a research group. A group of talented professionals, renowned professors from different public universities, delegates from Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD), NGOs, experts and officials from RDA actively participated and contributed to the technical session. On the second day the rapporteur's note was presented. Participants were enlightened with the concluding remarks by Mr. Md. Abul Kalam Azad former Principal Secretary to Honorable Prime Minister and President of Bangladesh Scouts and Global Commissioner of Biodiversity.



SAC's Participation in Regional Dialogue on Pathways to Climate Resiliency

On 21 October 2022, Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain, the Director of SAARC Agriculture Center (SAC) virtually participated in the Regional Level Dialogue on pathways to climate resiliency organized by Asian Farmers Association (AFA) for COP 27 and delivered a talk for activities done by SAARC countries.

