



# SAARC AGRINEWS



Afghanistan



Bangladesh



Bhutan



India



Maldives



Nepal



Pakistan



Sri Lanka

## January-March 2025

### Director SARSO Paid Visit to SAC

A meeting was held between SAC & SARSO at the SAARC Agriculture Centre on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025. The meeting aimed at discussion potential collaboration focusing on standard technical committee membership from Agriculture, Livestock and NRM sectors. The South Asian Regional Standards Organizations (SARSO) is contributing to the development of high quality, market relevant standards in the SAARC region. Director SAC, Dr. Md. Harunur Rashid along with Professionals, STO & SPO(NRM) attended the meeting. Later on Director SAC, presented a book on **Food Safety** in South Asia to Director, SARSO.



### PhD Review Meeting

SAARC Agriculture Centre organized an online PhD progress evaluation and results sharing meeting of PhD scholars under the SAARC Agriculture PhD Scholarship Program was held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025. The meeting started with a hearty greeting to all the fellows. Dr. Md. Younus Ali, Senior Program Specialist (Livestock), SAC delivered his warm wishes and heartfelt thanks to all participants. Dr. Md. Harunur Rashid, Director SAC delivered an inaugural speech. In his remarks, he focused on the importance of the SAARC PhD Scholarship.

## SAARC AgriNews

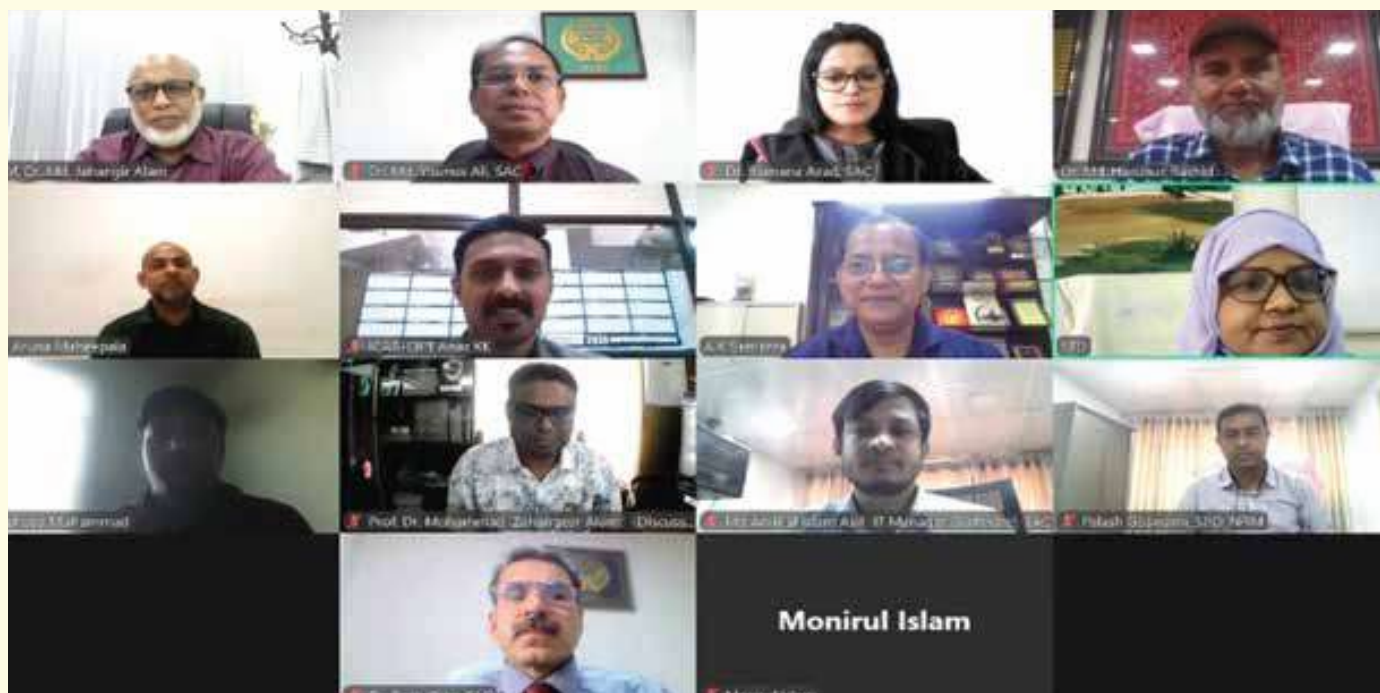
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### Editors

Dr. Raza Ullah Khan  
Senior Programme Specialist ( NRM)  
Mr. Palash Chandra Goswami  
Senior Program Officer (NRM)  
Md. Abul Bashar  
Senior Program Officer (Publication)  
Dr. Md. Harunur Rashid  
Director, SAC

Graphics  
Ms. Sanjida Akter

SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC)  
BARC Complex, Farmgate  
Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh  
Tel: 880-2-55027712  
Fax: 880-2-55027714  
Email: director@sac.org.bd  
Website: www.sac.org.bd



The technical session was chaired by Professor Dr. Md. Jahangir Alam Vice-Chancellor Bangladesh University, Dhaka and Dr. Ashis Kumar Samanta, Professor and Head, ICAR-NDRI, India. All three fellows Mr. Anas KK, Mr Aruna Maheepala of the SAARC PhD program presented their progress and research related activities. The above fellows are pursuing their PhD at ICAR-CIFT, India and PGIA, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. A farewell ceremony of Mr. Anas KK was held virtually. Newly awardee Mr. Rashid was advised to kindly update his proposal in the light of latest research trends. All scholars were told to complete their studies within three years of scholarship duration. Finally, Dr. Md. Harunur Rashid Director SAC concluded the meeting through vote of thanks.

## Participation of SAC in the Omor Ekusha Book Fair 2025

SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) Participated in the 21<sup>st</sup> Book Fair 2025 (Omor Ekusha Boi Mela) at Bangla Academy Premises, Dhaka, Bangladesh on 01<sup>st</sup> February -28<sup>th</sup> February 2025. Around 210 books of different categories focusing on agriculture and allied disciplines published by the SAARC Agriculture Centre were displayed at the fair. The main objective for participation in the fair was to create awareness among visitors about the SAC activities in South Asia. Around two thousand people visited the SAC stall, and they were made aware about the SAC activities. Some books were sold in the fair. Ambassador Abdul Motalib Sarker, Director General (SAARC and BISMSTEC), MoFA visited the SAC stall, and expressed his satisfaction on the SAC stall, on 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2025, as the Chief Guest unveiled the cover of a book title “Transformation for Sustainable and Nutrition Sensitive Agri-Food System in South Asia” published by the SAARC Agriculture Centre.



Mr. Sarker added that it would help to increase visibility of regional cooperation of SAC among the visitors. Dr. Md. Harunur Rashid, Director, SAC and other SAC officials were also present at the event.



Mr. Jamal Uddin Ahmed, Director (ARD & SDF), SAARC Secretariat, Nepal also visited the SAC stall and expressed his satisfaction about the SAC book stall. Later on he also interviewed to the Channel I Highlighted the role of SAC in food and nutrition security in South Asia. The Channel I broadcasted the news also.

The book related on Transformation of Agri Food System was written by the experts of SAARC Member States and it was edited by the Dr. Ganga Dutta Acharya, Senior Program Specialist (PSPD) and Dr. Md. Harunur Rashid, Director, SAC. This book will work as a guide book to the policy makers of SAARC Member States.

## **Dr. Md. Younus Ali Participated at the World Animal Nutrition Conference-2025**

Dr. Md. Younus Ali SPS (Livestock), SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) was honored to serve as the key note speaker on “Farm to Fork: Role of Nutritional Interventions in Poultry Production of Bangladesh” at the world Animal Nutrition Conference-2025 organized on 22-23 January 2025 by the department of Animal Nutrition, Nagpur Agricultural University under Maharashtra, India was held.



## **SAARC Regional Follow-up Training on “Developing Regional Agri-Business, Product Development and Marketing”**

The SAARC regional follow up training on **“Developing regional agri-business, product development and marketing” under the livelihood enhancement project of SAC** was held on 25<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2025 at ICIMOD headquarter, Kathmandu, Nepal. The training was organized by the SAARC Agriculture Centre, Dhaka in collaboration with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). The objectives of the training included: (i) To build the capacities of implementing agencies in agribusiness management, with a focus on value chain development. (ii) To enhance knowledge of relevant technologies and processes within the agro-processing sector.

The training was attended by the participants of five SAARC Member States, namely Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. This event highlights the significant progress and challenges in value chains of dairy, banana, moringa, FMCG products like biscuits, cookies, etc. Across Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka. Training in value addition and processing has empowered entrepreneurs and farmers, particularly in India and Bangladesh, where advanced processing systems and strong market linkages have boosted employment and income. However, Nepal and Sri Lanka lag in infrastructure with inadequate storage and logistics leading to post-harvest losses.

## Monitoring and Evaluation of Participatory Research Sites Established Under C-SUCSeS Project



A team consists of Dr. Harunur Rashid, Director SAC, Dr. Raza Ullah Khan, SPS (NRM), Mr. Palash Chandra SPO (NRM) and Mr. Shazan Islam, Account Officer carried out monitoring and evaluation (M&E) visit of the site established under participatory research framework in the project Consortium for upscaling Climate Smart Agriculture in South Asia (C-SUCSeS) in different locations of Pabna, Rajshahi and Rangpur districts of Bangladesh. The team evaluated different sowing methods and technologies and its impact on crop productivity, and general impression of the farmers about its adaptation and suitability in the area.



Participatory research sites at Pabna; Pirpur, Ataikula, Paban were visited with project collaborator Dr. Md. Samim Hossain Molla and Dr. Arif. Three sowing methods, conventional practice, land was ploughed and broadcasted), strip planting (zero/minimum tillage) and raised bed (2 rows/bed zero /minimum tillage) in the residues after harvest of Boro rice. In strip and raised bed methods, a 2-Wheel 16 hp tractor has been used for strip planting of mustard (BARI Sarisha-20 on 495 decimals area) involving seven farmers, and lentil (BARI Masur-8) on 176 decimals area and four farmers were involved. In another sites Dr. Shakawat accompanied to participatory research sites; Byjoynagar, Godagari established under C-SUCSeS in Rajshahi where lentil was sown conventionally and on raised bed and strips by 2-wheel tractor after boro rice harvest.

Participatory research sites of Nowda Para, Kalkuri, Pirgachha in Rangpur area was visited with collaborators Dr. Apurbo Kumar Chaki and Dr. Md Zannathul Firdous. Maize crops have been grown on raised beds in the standing crop residues of boro rice and significant differences were found. There was found a sizeable difference.



The M & E visit captured in-depth understanding of climate smart agriculture technologies; Minimum tillage / Zero tillage, Strip tillage, and Bed planting in the northwestern region of Bangladesh. The hands-on tools enabled participants to observe the tangible benefits of these technologies, including enhanced productivity and environmental sustainability. Moreover, the interactive sessions facilitated knowledge- sharing and strengthened collaboration among the C-SUCSeS project team, local farmers, and researchers. sharing and strengthened collaboration among the C-SUCSeS project team, local farmers, and researchers.

## **Dr. Rumana Azad Appointed as Project Program Officer for the C-SUCSeS Project of SAC**

Dr. Rumana Azad joined the SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC), Dhaka, Bangladesh, as a Project Program Officer for the Consortium for Scaling-Up Climate Smart Agriculture in South Asia (C-SUCSeS) Project in February 2025. Dr. Azad earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Botany from University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. She received her Ph.D. in Genetics and Plant Breeding from Department of Agricultural Biology, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka in 2017. Following her Ph.D. she worked as a Postdoctoral Fellow at National Institute of Biotechnology (NIB), Bangladesh. She also served as an Independent Biotechnologist at the Warsaw University of Life Sciences in Warsaw, Poland. With over seven years of experience in research and development projects,



Dr. Azad has developed expertise in project management, timely execution of project components, supervision, and partner coordination. Her expertise includes crop protection, food safety, natural resource management, and the advancement of biotechnological applications in agriculture. Dr. Azad has published fourteen research papers in national and international journals and has contributed to two book and book chapter. She is also an active reviewer for scientific publication.

## **Consultant to Synthesis Report, Consortium for Scaling up Climate Smart Agriculture in South Asia (C-SUCSeS) Project**

SAARC Agriculture Center hired Dr. Jairuddin, as consultant in C-SUCSeS project for writing Synthesis Report on SDF and IFAD funded project on 'Consortium for scaling up climate smart agriculture practices in South Asia'.



### **SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC)**

BARC Complex, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh

Phone: 880-2-58153152, Fax: 880-2-9124596

Email: [director@sac.org.bd](mailto:director@sac.org.bd), website: [www.sac.org.bd](http://www.sac.org.bd)