



# SAARC AGRINEWS



Afghanistan



Bangladesh



Bhutan



India



Maldives



Nepal



Pakistan



Sri Lanka

## January–March 2023 Issue I

### Amor Ekesh Book Fair: SAARC Agriculture Centre Book Stall in Bangla Academy Premises

SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) involved in the 21<sup>st</sup> Book Fair 2023 (Omor Ekusha Boi Mela) at Bangla Academy Premises, Dhaka, Bangladesh on 01-28 February 2023. Around 200 books on different categories focusing on agriculture and allied discipline, published by the SAARC Agriculture Centre, were displayed at the fair. The main objective of participating in such fairs is to create awareness among the visitors about the SAC activities in South Asia. Around three thousand people visited the SAC stall and learned the presence of SAC in Bangladesh and activities of the SAC. Additionally, about 30 books were also sold during the fair. Dr. Shaikh Mohammad Bokhtiar, Executive Chairman, BARC, Ambassador Abdul Motalib Sarker, Director General (SAARC and BISMSTEC), MoFA and Mr. Md. Shamsul Haque, Former Additional Secretary, MoFA visited the SAC stall during the fair. Besides, the new publications of the SAC were unveiled during the fair.



On 22 February, 2023, the Ambassador Motalieb Sarker, DG, SAARC & BISMSTEC unveiled the cover of a book titled Cross-Learning for Addressing Emergent Challenges of Aquaculture and Fisheries in South Asia which was published in 2022. Releasing the SAC publication in front of the journalists and visitors at the national book fair, The Chief guest, Mr. Sarker said that it would help to increase visibility of regional cooperation among the visitors. Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain, Director, SAC and other SAC officials were present on the stage of book release event.

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Similarly, Dr. Shaikh Mohammad Bokhtiar, Chairman, BARC unveiled another book entitled Enhancing Sustainable Livelihoods and Nutritional Security in the Hilly Regions of SAARC Countries through Horticultural Approach on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February 2023. Unveiling the newly published book of the Centre, Dr. Bokhtiar highlighted the importance of horticulture for enhancing livelihoods of people in the hills of SAARC region and hoped that the book would serve as an excellent resource for hill agriculture in the region.



## Felicitation of the Newly Appointed Secretary, MoA

On behalf of the SAARC Agriculture Centre, Director, Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain extended heartfelt Congratulations to Mrs. Wahida Akter for being appointed as the Secretary for the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Government of Bangladesh. Congratulating Mrs. Akter, Dr. Baktear, hoped that under the able and dynamic stewardship of the newly appointed Secretary, SAC will achieve its goals to ensure sustainable food and nutritional security in the region.



## The First SAARC Agriculture PhD Fellow Received Degree

On 13 January, 2023, the first beneficiary of the SAARC Agriculture PhD Scholarship Programme Ms. Rafeza Begum Ranu of Bangladesh, received PhD Degree from Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU), Mymensingh. Subsequently, she handed over her PhD thesis to Dr. Md. Baktear Hossian, Director SAC. She also handed over the thesis to the honorable Executive Chairman of Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council (BARC), and the former director of SAC, Dr. Shaikh Md. Bokhtiar who introduced the SAARC Agriculture PhD Scholarship as a flagship program in 2017. Dr Baktear heartily congratulated Dr. Ranu for her excellent work under the scholastic guidance of Prof. Dr. M. Jahiruddin of Soil Science Department of BAU. Dr. Ranu has published papers in the peer reviewed high impact factor journals.



## Participation in Poultry Convention 2023

Director of SAC Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain and the Senior Technical Officer Dr. Md. Younus Ali, a poultry expert attended the First Bangladesh Poultry Convention-2023 at Sher E Bangla Agriculture University, Dhaka organized by the Poultry Professionals of Bangladesh, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January 2023. Director Dr. Hossain, chaired a very important session of the Convention Prospects on Trade of Poultry and its products in South Asia.



## SAC Participated to the Conference of BAEN

Director, SAC Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain and the Professionals, Dr. Nasreen Sultana, Senior Programme Specialist (Horticulture), Dr. Ganga Dutta Acharya, Senior Programme Specialist (PSPD) and Dr. Grinson Goerge, Senior Programme Specialist (Fisheries) along with the Senior Program Officer (NRM), Dr. Fatema Nasrin Jahan and Senior Technical Officer, Dr. Md. Younus Ali participated the International Conference on Food and Nutritional Security for achieving SDGs in SAARC Countries at the BRAC CDM Saver, Dhaka organized by Society for Bangladesh Agricultural Extension Network (BAEN) and Participatory Rural Development Initiatives Society (PRDIS) India on 02-04, February 2023.

SAC Director, Dr. Hossain with Dr. Wais Kabir Co-Chaired the Technical Session II on Extension approaches and strategies to promote sustainable, Climate resilient, nutrition sensitive, profitable agriculture and allied sectors. Dr. Grinson George, SPS (Fisheries) presented a paper on 'Food and Nutrition Security for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in SAARC Countries: Revisiting Extension Approaches'



## Meeting with APAARI

On 15 February, 2023, Dr. Ravi Khetarpal, the Executive Secretary of the Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) and his team visited the SAC office and held a discussion with the SAC Director and Professionals on possibilities of future collaborative projects in the region.



## Meeting with the Director General, IRRI

On 19 February, Dr. Jean Balie, Director General of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) & Regional Director, South East Asia and Pacific, CGIAR and his team including Joanna Kane Potaka, Deputy Director General for Strategy Engagement and Impact, IRRI and Dr. Humnath Bhandari, Country Representative, IRRI Bangladesh visited SAC and held a meeting with the Director and Professionals regarding future collaborative projects in the region. At the end of the meeting, it was agreed to initiate a process of developing a concept note for a collaborative project.



## Meeting with the SACRP Director

On 15 March, 2023 Dr. Shiv Kumar Agrawal, Regional Coordinator, South Asia and China Regional Programme (SACRP) of the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), India accompanied with Dr. Md. Hossain, former Director, Pulse Research Centre, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) visited SAARC Agriculture Centre and discussed with SAC team about the common interest of collaboration. The Director expressed his keen interest to sign an MOU with the SAC for future collaboration. SAC team was instructed to draft and share a MoU between two organizations.



## Meeting with the World Bank Team in Dhaka

On 16 March, 2023 SAC team led by the Director Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain visited the World Bank office in Dhaka to discuss about potential areas of cooperation between two institutions. Ms. Gayatri Acharya, Sector Leader for the Sustainable Development Practice Group of the World Bank, led a team from the Bank's side for the discussion. Director Dr. Hossain made a presentation about SAC activities and invited for discussion on the areas of potential future collaboration. Ms. Gayatri expressed keen interest to invest in the Livestock program of SAC specially to control the Trans-boundary Animal Diseases (TADs) in the South Asian region.



## New Editor for SAARC Journal of Agriculture



Dr. Ganga Dutta Acharya, Senior Program Specialist (Priority Setting and Program Development), SAC, has been assigned as new Managing Editor for the SAARC Journal of Agriculture since March 2022.

Dr. Grinson George, SPS (Fisheries) was taking charge of the Journal. However, with the completion of his tenure at SAC at the end of February, the responsibility has been transferred to Dr. Acharya.

## Director SAC Participated in the workshop of FSAB

The Director, SAC Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain participated a workshop on Harmonization of the Food Safety Standard and Regulations held at intercontinental Hotel Dhaka organized by the Food safety Authority of Bangladesh (FSAB) on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2023. The honorable Cabinet Secretary Mr. Md. Mahbub Hossain, attended the program as Chief Guest. Mr. Md. Ismiel Hossain, Secretary, Ministry of Food, and Ms. Wahida Akter, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture were also present as the Special Guest. The programme was chaired by Mr. Md. Abdul Kayowm Sarkar, Chairman Bangladesh Food Safety Authority. Dr. Sanjay Dabe, former Global Chairman, Codex Alimentarius Commission and a reputed international food safety expert delivered the keynote speech in the programme.



## Director Bay of Bengal Programme, India visited SAC

On March 27, the Director, the Bay of Bengal Programme-Inter-Governmental Organization (BoBP-IGO, based in India), Dr Krishnan Pandian visited the SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC). The Director Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain and other professional staffs interacted with Dr. Krishnan regarding future collaboration between two organizations with respect to sustainable development and utilization of marine fisheries resources in the region with a focus on small-scale and artisanal fishers.



## Director attended to the Belgium Embassy programme

On 28 March 2023, the Director SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain along with Senior Technical Office (STO), Dr. Younus Ali and Senior Programme Office (NRM), Dr. Fatema Nasrin Jahan attended the business seminar organized by the Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium to Bangladesh in at Pan pacific Sonargaon Hotel, Dhaka on Innovative Business Opportunities from Belgium. His Excellency Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to Bangladesh with residence in New Delhi, Mr. Didier Vanderhasselt led the regional trade mission to Bangladesh to explore business opportunities in developing agribusiness facilities particularly in storage, transport, and processing fields.



## Dr. Grinson George, SPS (Fisheries) completes his tenure at SAC

Dr. Grinson George, SPS (Fisheries) completed his three years tenure at SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) by 26 of February 2023. Dr. George a Principal Scientist (Fisheries) of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research has returned to his position at ICAR- Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Kochi completing three-year deputation tenure at SAC. While working at SAC Dr. George proved himself a dynamic personality and involved actively in several regional and international activities not only to the fisheries but also in other sectors of agri-food systems. He also worked as a Managing Editor of the SAARC Journal of Agriculture for a year in 2022.

SAARC Agriculture Centre organized a farewell ceremony for Dr. George, on 26 February at SAC Conference room. Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain, Director and all the staffs of SAC bid an emotional farewell to Dr. George wishing him the best in all his future endeavors.



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