

POLITICS & POLICIES

Country to formulate BanglaGAP policy to boost agri goods' export

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The country is going to formulate 'the Bangla Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Policy' aiming to enter the foreign mainstream export market with a view to boosting shipment of agricultural produce.

GAP is a globally accepted accreditation criterion which certifies safe and healthy farm food and non-food produce of a country.

It is applied through sustainable agricultural methods, such as integrated pest management, integrated fertiliser management and conservation of agriculture.

Under 'the Bangla GAP Policy', an accreditation board will also be formed for branding Bangladeshi agro-products globally, officials said.

Assistant General Manager (Supply and Value Chain, Marketing) of the country's Horticulture Export Development Foundation (Hortex Foundation) Mitul K Saha told the FE that the Bangla GAP would be formulated by keeping harmony with the global standard.

In this connection, a concept by Hortex Foundation was sent to the agriculture ministry in July 2010 for approval.

A four-member national committee for GAP, headed by Member-Director of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) Khaliqzaman Akanda, was formed in May this year to formulate the policy, Mitul said.

Member of the national committee and also Assistant General Manager of Hortex Foundation (GAP, Traceability, Process and Packaging) Md Rafiqul Islam told the FE that the draft of the Agricultural Policy 2011 had also addressed the GAP.

Mr Islam said Bangladesh export fruits and vegetables mainly to the ethnic markets of EU and Middle-Eastern countries.

The country now exports nearly 50,000 tonnes of vegetables and fruits (excluding potato) to the importing nations.

This can be increased manifold by appropriating GAP, he said.

"A local accreditation in the light of GAP can enable us to enter the mainstream market of the importing nations," he said adding, "in that case, our export will increase."

