

# Shaheed Zia pioneered agricultural modernization : Dulu

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**Online Desk :** Disaster Management and Relief Minister Asadul Habib Dulu has said that Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman took landmark initiatives for the development and modernization of the country's agricultural sector. "The canal excavation program launched at the initiative of Shaheed Zia continues to play an important role in environmental protection, drainage of agricultural land, conservation of surface water and increased crop production," he said.

Asadul Habib Dulu said this while speaking as the chief guest at the Partner Congress 2026 organized by the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) at the Sadar Upazila Parishad auditorium in Lalmonirhat on Saturday, a press note issued by the Rangpur Regional PID Office said.

The event was organised under the "Program on Agricultural and Rural Transformation for Nutrition, Entrepreneurship and Resilience in Bangladesh (PARTNER)" and attended by local political leaders, farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Rashedul Haque Pradhan spoke as the special guest. Presided over by Lalmonirhat DAE Deputy Director Dr Md Saikhul Arifin, the program was also addressed by District Council Administrator AKM Mominul Haque and Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Mononita Das.

The minister said the present government has plans to commercialize agriculture and ensure fair prices for farmers, so that agriculture becomes more profitable and food production increases. Bangladesh is an agriculture-dependent country. Therefore, the agricultural sector must be given utmost importance to ensure the country's economic development and food security, he added.

The minister said the northern region is one of the country's most agriculturally productive regions, where a large amount of agricultural products are produced. "But farmers do not get fair prices many times. As a result, they lose interest in cultivating those crops," he said. On the other hand, due to inadequate prices for other crops, expectation of high profit and influence of various companies, many farmers are turning to tobacco cultivation.

He said, "Tobacco is a harmful crop, which poses a serious risk to public health. Farmers should be encouraged to produce alternative profitable crops and also ensure a market for their produce." Stressing the importance of using natural pesticides, the minister said that chemical pesticides are harmful to human health and agricultural land. To this end, a pilot program has been launched to promote biological pest control and expand organic farming practices as part of efforts to develop an environment-friendly agricultural system.

He said if agricultural products from this region can be exported abroad, farmers will get the right price for their products. Keeping this goal in mind, the government has a long-term master plan for the development of the agricultural sector. "Under this plan, storage facilities will be established in every union to preserve agricultural produce. In addition, agro-processing industries will be set up across the northern region to help ensure fair prices for farmers," he said.

Apart from this, the government has taken various practical steps for agricultural development. DAE Deputy Director Dr Md Saikhul Arifin said, "We have come a long way in the production of agricultural products. However, we are still lagging behind in the field of quality production." "In addition to increasing production for the commercialization of agriculture, efforts are continuing to improve the quality and market competitiveness of agricultural products," he said.