



Passion fruits, locally known as 'tang phal,' cultivated by Mohsin Ali of Baniapara under Chilahati union in Debiganj upazila of Panchagarh

PHOTO: STAR

Panchagarh garden adorned with exotic passion fruits

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, back to Thakurgaon from Panchagarh

Passion fruit, a vine species fruit of South American origin, now sees successful cultivation at Baniapara village under Debiganj upazila in the district.

An excellent source of vitamins A and C, passion fruit has also been cultivated in hill areas of Chittagong for the last few years and Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute has evolved a local variety of BARI Passion Fruit-1 in 2003.

However, the exotic fruit has been cultivated successfully on a plain land, for the first time in the country in Panchagarh, agriculture experts said.

Md Mohosin Ali, a retired teacher of Baniapara village, brought two saplings of the foreign fruit from his relative's house in Debiganj upazila headquarters and planted at his house in 2008.

The creeping plants grew well without care and within months crept on adjacent betel-nut and *nim* (margosa) trees.

When the plants turned two years old, they flowered and shortly afterwards, green fruits resembling lemon appeared. The round to oval shaped fruits turned yellowish after three to four months.

During a recent visit to the house, this correspondent saw around a hundred green and yellowish fruits, each weighing about 150-200 gram, on the plants.

"In the first season 150/200 fruits appeared on the plants but we did not eat it, thinking it to be wild fruit. Later in the next season we enjoyed the fruits, making juice in the process suggested by the relative from whose house we collected the saplings," Mohosin Ali's son Md Shajahan,

lecturer of Abeda Hafiz School and College in Panchagarh, told this correspondent.

"Drinking the fruit juice, villagers are showing interest about it. Several people have collected saplings from us and planted it at their house premises. Visitors from different areas often come to see the fruit which is new to them," Shajahan Ali said.

The two plants have borne four to five hundred juicy fruits in this year. The plants bear fruits over the year but June-July is the main yielding season.

As the juice colour is yellowish like locally available 'Tang' juice, locals call the fruit 'Tangphal'.

An excellent source of vitamins A and C, passion fruit is eaten raw as well as used in preparing juice, desserts, mousse, cheese, cake, ice cream, etc.

The fruit is also blended with honey, yogurts and cocktails to add refreshing flavours.

"Scientific name of passion fruit is *Passiflora edulis var flavicarpa*, a vine species native to Brazil, Paraguay and northern Argentina in South America. The plant bears fruit almost all over the year but more abundantly during summer," said Deputy Director of Panchagarh Department of Agriculture Extension Md Alimuzzaman.

"It is possible to cultivate passion fruit in Panchagarh district like orange as the soil here is mixed with rock and sand like that in hill areas. Its cultivation is very easy and needs short space and relatively less labour," he added.

The creeping plants, which require support of trees or bamboo-made shelves, can yield fruits for several years, agriculture experts said.

Festivity in air as Boisabi begins today

TRIBENI CHAKMA

The three-day 'Boisabi Utsab', the biggest social festival of indigenous people of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) begins today with various programmes in three hill districts.

The ethnic communities in Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachhari districts celebrate the festival 'to leave behind the sorrows of last year and welcome the Bangla new year' with the hope for a brighter future.

The festival is widely called Boisabi though the ethnic people have regional names of it. The Tripuras, the Marmas and the Chakmas call it Boisuk, Sagnrain and Biju respectively while the first two or three letters of each form the word 'Boisabi' collectively.

The last two days of Bangla month Chaitra is called 'Ful Biju'

and 'Mul Biju' respectively and the first day of Baishakh is known as 'Gojya Pojya Din'.

The indigenous people of CHT float flowers on river or fountain water on 'Ful Biju' day. Today Biju Udjapan Committee and Tripura Kalyan Foundation will organise the 'floating flower' programmes from 6am at Banabihar Ghat of Kaptai Lake and Garjantali in Rangamati.

As a mark of respect to the elders, another programme including giving bath and new clothes to them will be held today at Garjantali at 8am in Rangamati. A cultural programme, performed by local Tripura artistes, will also take place at 5pm at Garjantali. In Khagrachhari, a colourful rally will be brought out in the town by Zila Parishad.

On April 13, during the main function of Mul Biju festival, the indige-

nous people will prepare 'pachan', a kind of mixed vegetable curry in every house to treat the guests. They will also make their own traditional *pitthas* (cakes), sweetmeats and liquor to celebrate the day.

On the occasion, Utsab Udjapan Committee in Bandarban has organised a three-day long programme at Bandarban town which will begin at 9am on April 13 with the performing of 'Shoyeng Daan' (delivering food) in the *Kheuya Kiong* (local temple). At 12 noon, a religious procession will parade the town with the statue of Lord Buddha and after that the statue will be taken to Shankho River to arrange bath of the statue.

On April 14, a cultural programme featuring Pani Barshan or showering each other with water will be organised by Marma Shilpi Gosthi at Puraton Razar Math at 4pm in the town.

At the function, young women and men sprinkled water on each other to symbolise cleansing of weariness of the past year.

A game named Tailakta Bangshee Utha (climbing oiled bamboo) will be performed on Saturday and Sunday. Besides, traditional sports like *tachhi khela* and *boli khela* (a form of wrestling) will be held at 3pm at the same place on April 15.

Pitha Utsab (preparing traditional cakes) will take place at night at Maddhampara and Ujanipara in the town for three days.

On the day of "Gojya Pojya Din" or the first day of Bangla New Year, the indigenous people go to Kiong (temple) to offer cakes and hear Dharma Deshana (religious preaching) and pray for the well being of their family. They also host their neighbours at their respective houses on the day.

Abducted youth rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police rescued a kidnapped young man from Kabirajhat area under Birganj upazila on Tuesday evening and arrested two people in this connection.

The arrestees are Md Bappi, 25, son of Aminul Islam of Islambagh and Shohel Rana, 25, son of Tasir Uddin of Ghoshpara under Sadar upazila.

Nurul Islam Shiddiqui, officer in-charge of Birganj police station, said a gang of 8/10 picked up Aatur Rahman Mizan, 25, son of Tota Mia of Jhalhalki under Birganj upazila, at gunpoint near his residence on Saturday.

Later, the gang took Mizan to Thakurgaon, confined him to a room and demanded Tk 10 lakh as ransom from his family.



PHOTO: STAR

Women busy making potteries at Palpara village in Baufal upazila of Patuakhali district as Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla New Year nears.

MARRIAGE AGAINST WILL

Young man set afire allegedly by father-in-law

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Set afire allegedly by his father-in-law at Sarkarpara village in Gorgram union under Nilphamari Sadar upazila, a young man is fighting for a life.

The father-in-law, Moksed Ali of Sarkarpara village, did the brutal act after spreading kerosene on the body of his son-in-law -- Sarwar Hossain, 20, son of Aminur Rahman of Majapara village in Gorgram union, as he could not accept Sarwar's marriage with her daughter against his (Moksed) will.

Critically injured Sarwar was admitted to a Nilphamari hospital on Monday night, shifted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital the next day and referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday as his condition deteriorated fast.

Police arrested Moksed Ali on Tuesday night and the victim's maternal uncle Nefaur Rahman filed a case with Sadar police station accusing Moksed and two of his brothers yesterday morning.

About two years ago, Sarwar, who had developed a relationship with Peari Begum, daughter of Moksed Ali, eloped with her and they got married.

Later, the couple took the job as garment workers in Dhaka. One year ago, Peari gave birth to a female child.

Meanwhile, Moksed Ali filed a case with Women and Children Repression

Prevention Court in Nilphamari against Sarwar, locals said.

A few days ago, Moksed assured his son-in-law of withdrawing the case and took Peari, Sarwar and their daughter to his Sarkarpara village home from Dhaka.

On Monday, Sarwar went to the court in Nilphamari to attend the case proceedings.

While returning from there in the evening, he met his father-in-law Moksed Ali at Bhabaniganj Bazar.

Moksed forbade him to go to his house and said he would not allow his daughter to go with him.

As Sarwar protested, Moksed and his men forcibly took Sarwar to his house and created pressure on him to divorce Peari but Sarwar declined. At one stage Moksed put kerosene on Sarwar's body and set him afire.

Hearing Sarwar's scream, locals rushed to the spot and sent him to the hospital.

"The victim gave statement to me accusing his father-in-law of setting him afire. Doctors in Rangpur said there is very little chance of his survival," investigating officer of the case, Sub Inspector Hafizul Islam said after visiting Sarwar at Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Talking to newsmen, Moksed Ali claimed that Sarwar set fire to his own body to make him (Moksed) fall in trouble.

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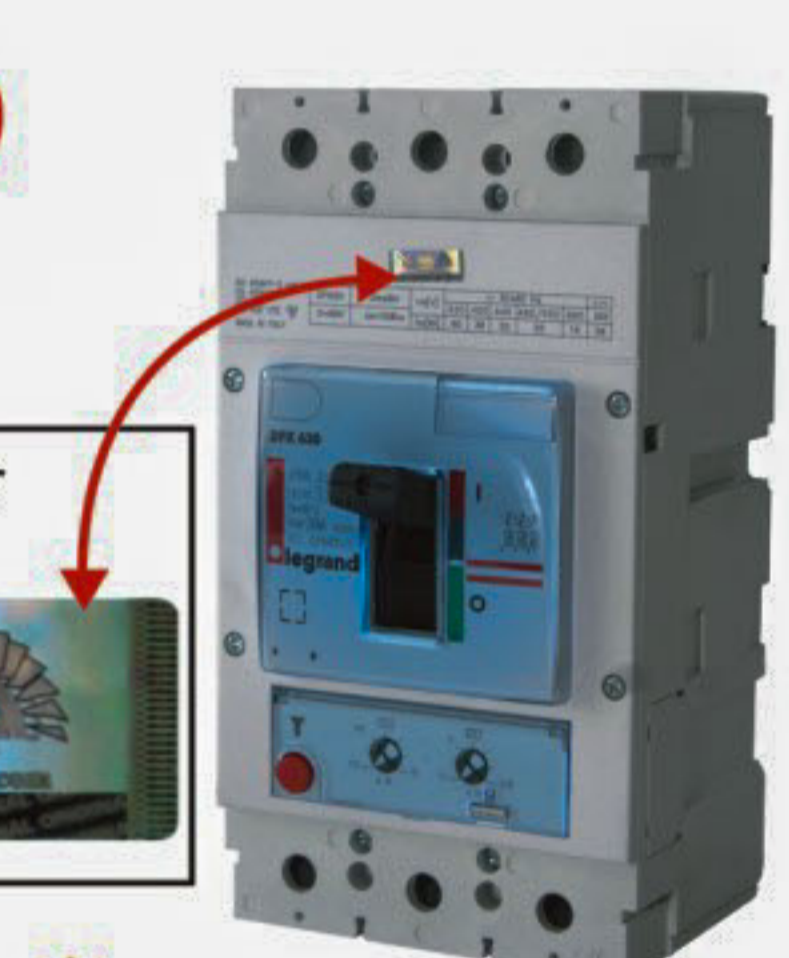
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আজই জাতীয় সঞ্চয়পত্রে বিনিয়োগ করুন।

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