

Newly developed haribhanga wins hearts of connoisseurs

MEHEDY HASAN, Rangpur

A recently developed variety of high quality mango, locally called haribhanga, has appeared as more appetizing than traditional popular varieties like langra, fazli and amropali in the markets in Rangpur.

Introduced about 12 years ago by Abdus Salam Sarkar, a retired government official, at Podaganj village under Mithapukur upazila of Rangpur district, haribhnaga now sees large-scale cultivation in Mithapukur, Badarganj, Pirganj and Sadar upazilas in Rangpur district as well as other areas of the northern region, the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources said.

Around 30 thousand people of Badarganj and Mithapukur upazilas are directly dependent on the cultivation and trading of the highly fleshy, fibreless and tasty variety mango.

Traders from Dhaka, Rajshahi, Barisal, Khulna and Sylhet are thronging the local markets to buy haribhanga from here.

This season this variety of mango is selling at wholesale market at Tk 1800-2000 per maund and about 20-30 truckloads of mangoes are being sent to different places of the country from here daily.

"Over 5,500 people are now cultivating the mango on 5,000 hectares of land comprising over 3,500 small, medium and big orchards as well as homesteads in the district. Last year around 20,000 tonnes of haribhanga mango worth about Tk 150 crore was produced in the district. This year the yield is likely to be much higher as the variety sees



PHOTO: STAR

Impressive as well as tasty, ripe haribhanga mangoes adorn a tree in Rangpur.

bumper production," said Khandaker Md Mesbahul Islam, horticulture specialist of the DAE.

Local farmers said only a decade ago large areas of land remained uncultivated year after year but now cultivation of haribhanga mango has added to the value of these lands.

Some people are buying land there to cultivate profitable harivanga.

Agriculture Minister Motia Chowdhury inaugurated an exhibition of haribhanga mango at Podaganj School and College ground on last June 23 for encouraging its cultivation in the region, said Md Feroz Ahmed, acting additional director of DAE.

In 2007 Abdus Salam Sarkar, 'developer' of haribhanga mango, made an orchard at Barogharia Sardarpara village of Khoragachh union under Badarganj upazila in

Rangpur district, and began commercial farming of the variety on eight acres of land.

In 2010 he got Tk 3 lakh by selling produces in his garden while he had to spend Tk 1 lakh for paying his staff and meeting other expenditures.

This year he sold mangoes from his gardens for Tk 13 lakh.

"I am buying lands to set up more gardens. Many farmers of the district come to me to take advices about haribhanga mango cultivation," he said.

Usually round-sized, a haribhnaga mango weighs 200gm to 400gm.

Harvest of haribhanga began in the second week of June and will continue till end of July.

Joynal Mian and Khogen Kunda of Podaganj village said they have gained solvency through farming haribhanga in recent years.

Masud Rana, owner of

Rana Nursery in Rangpur, said, "Many farmers are buying saplings of haribhanga for its commercial production in their orchards. One can get its yield within 2-3 years after plantation."

Several growers have urged arrangement of monitoring by the agriculture department, especially when germ and pest attack their orchards.

They have also demanded bank loans facilities so that they do not have to sell their produces for cheap prices to the middlemen early in the season.

Zinnat Mahamood Rusell, an organiser of haribhanga mango growers, demanded that authorities develop a national orchard for the variety of mango at Mithapukur, establish a research centre, set up cold storages, and take steps for exploring its market abroad.

Bogra medical college shut

A CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Bogra Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College was closed for an indefinite period yesterday following a clash between the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD).

The decision came at an emergency meeting of the academic council, said Principal Mahbul Karim.

The resident students have been asked to vacate the dormitories by 5:00pm, he added.

At least 10 people were injured in the clash on the campus in the afternoon.

The BCL activists locked in an altercation with the JCD men when they were holding a meeting at the college canteen.

Later, the BCL men attacked the JCD activists at the college dormitories, leaving at least 10 injured.

Three of them were taken to hospital in critical condition, said college sources.

Transport strike called off

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Chapainawabganj Truck and Motor Workers' Union withdrew their indefinite strike yesterday.

The strike was called off following a 'fruitful meeting' between the leaders of the local union and Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Federation, Rajshahi division regional unit, at a hotel in Naogaon district on Monday.

On July 16, the leaders and workers of the union called the strike on Rajshahi-Chapainawabganj road after their general secretary Abdul Khalek was assaulted by Rajshahi Motor Sramik workers.



PHOTO: STAR

Authorities stopped plying heavy vehicles on Ghior Bridge over Dhaleswari River in Manikganj district on Friday as the bridge has turned risky due to loosening of soil near two of its pillars.

Ghior bridge over Dhaleswari River declared risky

Soil near its two pillars loosens

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Authorities on Friday suspended plying of heavy vehicles on Ghior Bridge over the Dhaleswari River as the bridge has turned risky due to loosening of soil near its two pillars.

Road communication between Manikganj district headquarters and Daulatpur upazila has been disrupted due to the situation.

The Ghior-Daulatpur road is also very important for the people of Chowhali upazila of Sirajganj and Nagarpur upazila of Tangail as they use it to go to the capital.

Local Government

Engineering Department (LGED) built the 180-metre-long and 3.66-metre-wide bridge on Ghior-Daulatpur road at Ghior with Tk 2 crore in 2007 and it was opened in June for vehicular movement, said sources of Ghior upazila office of LGED.

Visiting the bridge on Sunday, this correspondent saw that authorities set warning signboards and kept tree logs on both sides of the bridge to prevent movement of heavy vehicles. Village police have been deployed there too.

There are eight pillars in the bridge.

Locals alleged that a section of people have been

lifting sand from 60-70 yards off the bridge for long although soil lifting within 200 yards of the bridge is illegal.

"The bridge is now under threat as the soil from the bottom of its two pillars has been washed away by the river current. The LGED has taken initiative to save the bridge. The high officials already visited the bridge on Saturday," said Ghior Upazila LGED Engineer Md Yusuf Hossain.

"The soil has been sent to the research unit of LGED head office for test. We will take necessary steps after getting the soil test report," he said.

Lone road link under threat

Erosion by river devours half of Barunagaon-Bograpara road that links five villages with Thakurgaon district headquarters

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

Erosion by River Shenua threatens the lone road link between the district headquarters and five villages.

The river has already devoured almost half of the mud road, 2-3 km away from the district town.

Erosion took an alarming turn as the river swelled due to downpour in the last few days.

Amid serious risks, hundreds of villagers including school students of Barunagaon, Bograpara, Memberpara, Pabnapara and Shenuapara under Sadar upazila are using the nearly collapsed Barunagaon-Bograpara road as they have no alternative to reaching Thakurgaon town.

Despite repeated requests and proposals to build a road protection embankment, the authorities concerned are yet to take any effective step in this regard due to unknown reason.

Political leaders made pledges before every election to build the embankment but to no effect yet, said the villagers.

During a recent visit, this correspondent saw about 200 meters of the road from Shenua Bridge to Bograpara point



PHOTO: STAR

Thousands of people of five villages have to take risky journey on the partly eroded Barunagaon-Bograpara road to go to Thakurgaon town, thanks to the negligence of authorities concerned.

washed away at different places in the last few years. Power tillers, tractors with agricultural goods were also plying the risky road as they had no alternative way.

Rahima Khatun, 13, of Bograpara village in Sadar upazila, who attends school in Thakurgaon municipality area, told this correspondent that they use the road in monsoon amid risk and fear.

"Last year, our two friends--Kajol and Shakila-

-fell into the river with bicycle while they were returning home from school. They could not walk for many days after the accident", Rahima said.

Monirul Huda Helal, a farmer of Barunagaon village under Sadar upazila, said they cannot carry agricultural produces on vehicles as the condition of the road is very risky. We have to count more fare than real charge to our goods to the town as the drivers often refuse to go by

the road, he said.

Last year, locals saved the road from further collapse by putting sand bags and bamboo fence in the breached portions.

Contacted, executive engineer of Thakurgaon Water Development Board Noimur Rahman told this correspondent that they had sent a project proposal to repair the road protection embankment to the higher authorities.

The work will start soon after its approval, he said.

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