

Of delicious guava, delighted farmers

Two upazilas of Ctg see bumper output

ARUN BIKASH DEY,
Chittagong

Guava farmers of Chandanaish and Patiya upazilas under the district are happy due to its bumper production in the area famous for producing delicious varieties of the popular rainy season fruit this year.

Wholesale traders from different areas now come to Raoshan Hat, Bagicha Hat, Badamtoli and Dohazari of Chandanaish upazila and Kamol Munshir Hat and Kharana bus stand of Patiya upazila where the growers come with baskets full of guava daily.

Guavas are cultivated in around one thousand acres of hilly land in the two upazilas in the southern part of Chittagong district and the fruit worth around Tk six crore is sold on an average every season, said sources of Patiya and Chandanaish upazila agriculture offices.

Besides, there are a large number of guava orchards in the plain lands of the two upazilas, local farmers said.

Farmers also cultivate mango, jackfruit, litchi, lemon and other fruits in the area.

Guava of Kanchan Nagar village in Kanchanabad union of Chandanaish upazila has earned special reputation

for its taste and size.

"This variety of delicious guava grows in this area by virtue of the soil and environment. If you sow the seeds of this variety in another area, you won't get the same delicious guava," Dr M Abdul Gafur, professor of botany in Chittagong University, said.

Badi Alam, who has cultivated guava in eight acres of land, said, "Ten people work at my orchards for daily wage ranging from Tk 250 to Tk 330. A pair of baskets containing about 500 guavas was sold at Tk 1,500 early this season. The price fell to Tk 500 in the middle of the season. Now the price is Tk 800 to Tk 1,000."

"If a farmer works hard and takes proper care of the orchards, he can make profit of up to Tk 1.5 lakh per acre by selling guava in a season. But in absence of any storage facility in the area we are often deprived of fair prices as the perishable item has to be sold quickly," he said.

"We cultivate guava as family tradition for generations. Many hill areas, once filled with dense thorny bushes, were cleaned and prepared for cultivation of fruits including guava," he added.

Thousands of people work in the guava orchards

spreading from Mujaffarabad to Dohazari in Chandanaish upazila during the season from the middle of Bangla month of Ashar to early Ashwin, said farmer Jamal Mia.

He alleged that officials of local agriculture office hardly come to these orchards or extend any logistic support for guava cultivation.

Asked about the matter, Abu Kausar Md Sarwar, agriculture extension officer of Chandanaish upazila, said the deputy assistant agriculture officers regularly make field level visits at their blocks and the upazila agriculture office always provides suggestions to the farmers when they come there.

He suggested arranging storage facilities in the area and operating more trains from Dohazari station to Chittagong to facilitate better transport of guava to different parts of the country.

Contacted, Chandanaish Upazila Nirbahi Officer Khaled Mehedi Hasan said they have a plan to establish a cold storage and build a centre beside ChittagongCox's Bazar highway to popularise the tasty varieties of guava among people from different areas of the country.



PHOTO: STAR

Rawshanhat in Chandanaish upazila under Chittagong district sees abundant supply of guava as nearby Kanchan Nagar area, famous for delicious varieties of the popular rainy season fruit, sees bumper yield this year.

Stalker and cohorts beat up seven of victim's family

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Rangpur

A stalker and his accomplices on Tuesday beat up seven members of a family at Ganganarayan village in Pirgachha upazila as they refused to withdraw a case filed against him in June this year.

Locals said Rabiul Islam, 22, son of Baker Uddin of the village, used to stalk Shahinur Begum, a second year student of Itakumari Shibchandra Roy College in the upazila, on her way to and from the collage for long.

As she informed her family members of the matter, they filed a case with Pirgachha Police Station on June 7. Rabiul and his family asked Shahinur's father Fazar Haque, complainant of the case, several times to withdraw the case, but he refused to do so.

On Tuesday, when Shahinur along with her brother Lutfar Rahman, a teacher of the college, was going to the institution from their home at Ganganarayan village at around 9:00am, Rabiul and his accomplice swooped on them.

As they cried for help, family members rushed to spot. The gang physically assaulted Shahinur, her father Fazlur Karim, 60, brothers Lutfar Rahman, 36, Nur Mohammad, 30, and Shafiqul Islam, 22, Lutfar's wife Nazma Begum, 32, and Nur Mohammad's wife Rezia Khatun, 25.

Of them, Lutfar Rahman, Shafiqul Islam and Nur Mohammad were admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital while the rest to the upazila health complex.

Rawshan Mostafa, officer-in-charge of Pirgachha Police Station said the gang fled the village soon after the incident. "The drive is on to nab the culprits," the OC added.

Meanwhile, a schoolgirl abducted from Ghonirampur village under Taraganj upazila of Rangpur on August 27, was rescued from the same village on Monday night.

Police also arrested the abductor, Moslemin, 22, son of Fazlar Rahman of the village.

Moslemin and his six accomplices picked up the girl, a class VI student of Ghonirampur Barogola High School, while she was returning home from the school at around 4:00pm.

Victim's father filed an abduction case against seven people, including Moslemin, with Taraganj Police Station the same day.

Moslemin kept the girl confined at different villages and brought her to his house at Ghonirampur village on Monday night.

Acting on a tip-off, police led by Officer-in-Charge Krishna Kumar Sarkar of Taraganj Police Station raided the house the same night and rescued the girl. They also arrested Moslemin from there.

Moslemin was on Tuesday produced in a court that sent him to Rangpur Central Jail. The girl was sent to Rangpur Medical College Hospital for medical test.

Contacted, OC Krishna Kumar Sarkar said they are raiding different areas to arrest six other accused.

DEATH OF A DOLPHIN



PHOTO: STAR

This huge dolphin, netted by fishermen from Nabaganga River in Magura yesterday noon, died shortly afterwards. This species of the graceful mammal usually comes to the rivers from deep sea areas in search of food, said Abu Bakar Siddiquee, assistant conservator of forest department in Magura.

PABNA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Students continue class boycott, talks today

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Pabna

Pabna University of Science and Technology reopened yesterday after a month-long closure following student unrest, but the agitating students continued class boycott, demanding withdrawal of 'false' case and expulsion order against their fellows.

On July 17, the aggrieved students started class boycott to press home their eight-point demand.

The demands include introduction of 'short semester system' for promotion, amendment to present GPA (Grade Point Average) system, cancellation of results published according to the running GPA system, eight years' registration validity instead of present six years, recruitment of experienced teaching

ers, early construction of university campus and end to 'ill-treatment' by the teachers.

The situation took a violent turn on August 1 as the students clashed with police.

Later, the law enforcers arrested five students following a case filed by the university authorities, said the agitators a protest programme.

The authorities then expelled the arrestees that turned the situation more violent. Finally, the university was closed on August 4.

"We will go for a tougher programme if our demands are not met immediately," said Mehedi Hasan, a leader of the agitating students.

Terming the demands logical, proctor Md Kamruzzaman said the authorities would sit with

the students today to resolve the ongoing crisis.

"The classes are expected to be held within Sunday", said the proctor.

PATUAKHALI

Away in Patuakhali, the admission tests at Patuakhali Science and Technology University for first year honours course of 2012-13 sessions will begin on December 1.

The decision was taken recently at an academic council meeting, said university sources.

Meanwhile, distribution of admission forms of seven departments under different faculties will be started from tomorrow, reports our correspondent.

Further details regarding the admission test will be available on the university website www.pstu.ac.bd.

BCL men sued for brutal attack on headmaster

Teachers observe work abstention, give 24-hour deadline to arrest culprits

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Seriously injured allegedly by Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists, Mohammad Afsar Ali, headmaster of Bindubansini Government Girls' High School in Tangail town, was admitted to Dhaka Dental College Hospital on Tuesday night.

Moriam Begum, mother of the victim, yesterday filed a case with Tangail Model Police Station accusing Tangail district BCL vice president Mostafizur Rahman Sohel, and 6/7 others in this regard, said Fazlul Kabir, officer-in-charge (investigation) of the police station.

"The criminals entered the school at around 6:00pm on Tuesday and created pressure on Afsar Ali for admitting three students to the school. As the headmaster refused to do so, the intruders started to bludgeon him. Hearing his scream, several staff of the school came forward and the criminals left the place," said Nazrul Islam, officer in charge of Tangail Model PS, referring to the injured headmaster's statement.

"With serious injuries in his leg and jaw, and several teeth broken, the headmaster was brought here on Tuesday evening. He was referred to Dhaka Dental College Hospital the same night," said Mohammad Shahidullah, consultant of Tangail General Hospital.

Protesting the barbaric attack, teachers of the school and other institutions in the area

brought out a procession in the town shortly after the incident.

In the morning yesterday, the aggrieved teachers wore black badges and observed work abstention, and submitted memorandum to the deputy commissioner with a silent procession under the banner of Sammilito Shikhhak Sangram Parishad.

Earlier in the morning, high officials of Tangail district and police administrations went to the school, held meeting with the teachers and assured them of taking tough action against the culprits. The teachers gave a 24-hour ultimatum to the administration officials to arrest the attackers and warned of tougher agitation in case of failure to do so.

The agitating teachers alleged that police could not arrest the attackers so far as they (attackers) are men of ruling Awami League backed BCL.

However, Tangail Deputy Commissioner M Bazul Karim Chowdhury, also president of the school managing committee, said, "A three-member committee comprising the additional deputy commissioner (Education), additional superintendent of police and district education officer was formed to investigate the incident. We will take tough action against the attackers, without considering their political affiliation."

Tangail Superintendent of Police AKM Hafiz Akter said the police are raiding different places to arrest the attackers.



PHOTO: STAR

Teachers under the banner of Shikhhak Sangram Parishad bring out a procession in Tangail town yesterday demanding arrest and punishment of the criminals who seriously injured Mohammad Afsar Ali, headmaster of Bindubansini Government Girls' High School, on Tuesday evening.

Mismanagement grips Thakurgaon govt poultry farm

UNB, Thakurgaon

Mismanagement and corruption have gripped Thakurgaon government poultry farm, putting its existence at stake.

Apart from irregular rearing of poultry birds, the farm's food warehouse, residence of the manager and residential quarters of its employees are now in bad shape for lack of maintenance.

An employee of the farm said they bring one-day-old chicks from Rangpur and other government hatcheries after every three to six months and sell them to private poultry farmers at Tk 50 per piece after one and a half months.

Set up in the fiscal 1982-83 on 3.17 acres of land in front of Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital, the poultry farm had been running well until a few years back. "But mismanagement, corruption and negligence of its officials and employees have gripped the farm, jeopardising its existence," said an official requesting anonymity.

He said once poultry birds used to be reared in the farm throughout the year, now both rearing and selling of chicks have become irregular.

The farm sold 1,480 chicks in March this year while 3,500 and 2,000 in September and November in 2011. In the fiscal 2009-10, the farm sold 12,285 chicks.

Currently, the farm is rearing some 2,000 chicks

which will be ready for sale within a few days.

According to the source, the farm usually buys chicks from Rangpur Hatchery, but the hatchery stopped chick production in September last year following the outbreak of bird flu.

Later, the farm started buying chicks from Jamalganj Farm of Joypurhat district. But Jamalganj Farm could not supply chicks according to the demand of different farms.

While visiting the farm, the UNB correspondent found chicks in only one of three sheds. Although there is a hatchery shed meant for hatching eggs, no hatching machine has been installed there since the inception of the farm.

More worrying is that the only vehicle meant for carrying chicks has remained out of order for long.

Raihan Ali, acting manager of the farm, said the yearly demand of chicks in Thakurgaon and adjacent area is about 70,000. Once the farm had a target of rearing 25,000 chicks a year, but now the target has been brought down to 10,000 due to bird flu and non-availability of chicks.

Besides, the yearly budgetary allocation for the farm is Tk 800,000, which is said to be too inadequate to operate it. Raihan said if the government enhances the budget for the farm and ensures the regular supply of one-day-old chicks it will be possible to meet the demand of the district.