

# Sree-Rampur turns into guava village

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah

Out of 300 farmers, 125 in Sree-Rampur village under Kotchandpur upazila are currently engaged in guava production. The village is slowly becoming known as 'guava village', locals said.

According to Kotchandpur Agriculture office sources, around 1,000 bighas of land has been brought under guava cultivation this season. This is a clear sign that guava as a crop is proving more rewarding for farmers than the traditional crops. Profitable guava farming started in 2009.

Gradually, seeing the growth of this product, the youth farmers of this village started to grow guava too. Some guava growers mentioned that if they cultivated paddy in one bigha, they would harvest 20 mound paddy which will give them a return of about Tk 5,000 after all costs. On the other hand, after all expenses, the guava grown on the same space of land will give them a return of about Tk 75,000. Most of the farmers cultivate Thai 3, 5 and 6 varieties

in the village. They prepare the land with fertilizer from Baishaikh (mid-April), and after 45 days, they plant the seedlings. Later, after three months they start harvesting.

Shukumar Sarkar of Sree-Rampur village, a guava farmer said that he went to Kuriana village under Swarupkati upazila of Pirojpur district for a trip. There, he saw this kind of farming and was drawn to its potential. Before he returned he made up his mind to grow guava at his plot. Accordingly, he collected this seed variety from a retired agriculture officer Abdul Habib from Natore district. He cultivated one bigha at first in 2009 but he could not get good profit at the time because some villagers stole and ate his fruits! But, in 2013-14 he cultivated guava on 7 bighas at a cost of Tk 370,000 and he sold the produce for Tk 650,000. Similarly, he cultivated guava on 11 bighas of land this season at a cost of Tk 660,000 and expects to sell the output at close to three times the costs.

Another farmer, Kazi Moinuddin said that he cultivated guava on 4 bighas of land in 2013-14 and sold it at Tk 8 lac. This year he has cultivated the same fruit on 8 bighas of land and expects that he will sell his output at Tk 16 lac. About 100 to 110 plants can be planted in one bigha land and each plant give fruit worth Tk 2,000 thousand. He added that there are two farming seasons for Thai guavas. Of them one is from June to August and the other is from May to October. During the first season the farmers can sell guava per kg between Tk 30 and 60 and in the second season they can sell at Tk 70 to 135.

Kotchandpur upazila agriculture officer Sheikh Sazzad Hossain said that he is always ready to serve the farmers whenever they need. He added that he visits the guava plots often on his motor bike to talk to the farmers. The farmers of guava village are happy, they are growing and selling a high-value crop which is uplifting their standard of living.



Farmers of Sree-Rampur village inspecting fully-grown guavas protected by a polythene wrap.

PHOTO: STAR

# Price fall worries mango growers in Thakurgaon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Despite bumper production of mango in the district, farmers and traders are apprehending huge losses as the fruit is selling at throw-away prices in the markets in comparison to previous years.

Depending on the variety, each kg of mango is now selling at Tk 15-Tk 40, while it was sold at Tk 30-Tk 70 during the last several years.

Market sources said one kg of Surjapuri, a special variety of Thakurgaon which is not available in other parts of the country, is being sold at Tk 15-Tk 30 depending on size and quality, while each kg of Langra, Misri Bhog, Gopalbhog, Himsagor and others is being sold at Tk 25-Tk 40. The prices were

higher in the last several years.

Sources at the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) said there are 1,514 mango orchards in Thakurgaon district, covering 6,546 hectares of land.

DAE officials expect production of at least 1.47 lakh tones of mango in the current season.

As the soil and climatic conditions of the district are favourable for mango cultivation, farmers are increasing cultivation every year with a hope of earning more profit.

During a visit to mango markets on Saturday and Sunday, this correspondent saw the mango growers and traders frustrated as the prices of the summer fruit are low and the number of buyers too few.

Jalal Uddin, 48, a mango

grower of Badambari village in Baliadangi upazila of the district, told this correspondent at Kalibai bazar on Sunday that he brought two maunds of medium size mango (Surjapuri variety) to sell at the bazar. He sold one maund at Tk 20 per kg, and was waiting for customers to sell the rest. "I sold one kg of mango of the same size and quality for Tk 40-Tk 50 last year," he said.

Zaherul Islam, 35, a mango grower of Jogdal village of Baliadangi upazila, said he has brought one maund of Langra mangos, but is yet to sell all of them. He is selling it at Tk 30 per kg, while it was Tk 50-Tk 70 per kg last year.

Dulal, 55, a mango trader of Thakurgaon Road wholesale mango market, said farmers and mango traders are incurring huge losses

due to low price and shortage of buyers.

Replying to a query, Dulal said, like every year, he bought several mango orchards for Tk 6 lakh. He harvested the fruit from three orchards and got only Tk 1.3 lakh. He will hardly get Tk 3 lakh from the other four orchards. Dulal added that he made a profit of Tk 3 lakh last year from the same orchards though the production was lower than this year's.

Arshed Ali, deputy director of DAE, told this correspondent that bumper mango production has been achieved this season because the area did not face adverse weather during budding period, so the period passed well. After budding period, the fruit also got enough rain and proper climatic condition.



Vendors sitting with mangoes for sale at Kalibari Bazar in Thakurgaon town pass worrying time as the prices are too low amid bumper production and lack of buyers.

PHOTO: STAR

# Jockeys of Farabari Sheegari



PHOTO: STAR

Thousands of people including a large number of women and children from adjacent villages of Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts came to the horse race at Farabari Sheegari.

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

A traditional horse race was held at Farabari Sheegari village under Thakurgaon Sadar upazila last week on 11 June 2015.

Thousands of people including a large number of women and children from adjacent villages of Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts came to the horse race at the crop fields in Akcha union under sadar upazila in Thakurgaon.

The race started at around 3:00 pm at the crop field of the village where 25 jockeys with their horses from Thakurgaon, Panchagarh, Nilphamary and Rangpur districts took part. Of the jockeys, 12 were selected for the final round after a primary qualifying selection round. In the final competition Abdullah-Hil-Kafi of Domar of Nilphamary district secured the

first prize, Md. Aynal of Pachpir village of Boda upazila of Panchagarh came second and Md. Zahid Hossain of Domar of Nilphamary won the third prize.

The winner was awarded Tk.7,000 as prize money, the second prize winner was awarded Tk. 5,000 while third place was given Tk. 3,000. Upazila Chairman of Thakurgaon Sadar Upazila Parishad Toimur Rahman distributed the prizes among the winners as chief guest while Joint Secretary of district unit BNP Obaidullah Masud was present as the special guest of the event.

A delighted Kafi, who secured first prize, told this correspondent that he had been riding a horse from his very childhood. He takes part almost all the competitions which are organised in the northern districts and has won several prizes in the past as well.

A few youths including Bisu

Mohammad, a ward member of Akcha Union Parishad, Golim Uddin of Dakhin Bothina village, Kuddus of Munshirhat village and Biswanath of Farabari village organised the horse race. Bisu Mohammad told the Daily Star that they organised the competition in order to keep the village tradition alive. The organizers had been inspired by the competitions held in previous years in other adjacent villages of Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts. "We will try to organise the event every year," Bisu Mohammad said. The local people of the area helped to raise funds for the completion, adding that it was a matter of pride for the organizers that thousands of people attended the event with enthusiasm and had a great time.

## AL man hacked to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A Swetchhasebok League activist was hacked to death by unidentified criminals in Gulshanpara area of the district town on Monday night.

The victim is Torikul Islam, 22, son of Mozo Mondol of Beparipara in the town.

Biplob Kumar Nath, officer-in-charge (OC) of Sadar Police Station, said Torikul came under attack by an unknown gang in Gulshanpara area while he was returning home from town at around 9:30pm.

The gang hit Biplob with sharp weapons, leaving him critically injured.

Hearing screams, locals rushed to the spot and took the Jubo League activist to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

Rabiul Islam, president of district Swetchhasebok League, condemned the incident and demanded immediate arrest of the killers.

ARSON CASE

## 3 BNP men land in jail

UNB, Jhalakati

A court here on Monday sent three local leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Jubo Dal to jail, rejecting their bail prayers in a case filed for torching vehicles during blockade enforced by BNP-led 20-party alliance.

The accused are Enamul Haque Saju, senior joint convenor of the district unit of JCD, Anisur Rahman Panna, president of Sadar upazila unit of Jubo Dal, and Yeasin Arafat, organising secretary of Sadar upazila unit of Jubo Dal.

District and Sessions Judge SM Solaiman passed the order when the three surrendered to the court, said sources.



PHOTO: STAR

Mixture of sugar, flour and water is being boiled at a place of Saptana Road in Lalmonirhat town to sell the item at high prices, passing it off as molasses.

# Adulterated molasses sold in Lalmonirhat markets

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

It is difficult to get pure molasses in Lalmonirhat as unscrupulous traders are selling adulterated molasses, claiming it is genuine.

This correspondent visited different areas in the district and saw molasses being made with sugar and flour. The medicine hydroze is used to brighten the colour of the molasses. The price of one kg of molasses is between Tk 45 and Tk 55 in the local market, while one kg of sugar costs between Tk 38 Tk 40.

Yusuf Ali, 50, a molasses maker at Sapata Road area in Lalmonirhat town, said he never uses flour or hydroze for producing molasses. "I make molasses by using sugar, and sell it to the molasses traders at Tk 42 to

Tk 44 per kg," he said.

Hamidul Islam, 45, a molasses trader at Nayarhat, a local market in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said the traders are unaware about the adulteration of molasses as they purchase it from the producers believing it to be genuine. "I make a profit of Tk 2 to Tk 3 per kg in the local market, and I never cheat the consumers," he said.

Abdus Samad, 60, a molasses maker at Kulaghat village in the upazila, said sugarcane is not available now and there is high demand for molasses. "We make molasses by mixing sugar and molasses in equal parts and heating the mixture for about three hours," he said.

"We use sugar to produce molasses as its price is low. If

we make molasses from sugarcane, the price of one kg molasses would be Tk 65 to Tk 70," said molasses producer Nur Islam, 50, of Bhatibari village in Lalmonirhat Sadar.

Seeking anonymity, a molasses producer at Goshala Bazar in Lalmonirhat town said both sugar and flour are used to make molasses. Some molasses is sometimes mixed with the sugar and flour for better quality. "Sometime we use chemical medicine hydroze for brightening the colour of molasses," he said.

Consumer Rezaul Islam, 40, of Thana Para in the town, said use of molasses has decreased. "We are not getting pure molasses like we used to some years back," he said.