



Chanu at his malta orchard in Bhaluka upazila under Mymensingh district.

PHOTO: STAR

Malta cultivation sees success in Bhaluka of Mymensingh

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Aftab Uddin Chanu of Bhaluka upazila under the district has set an example of successful commercial cultivation of malta, a popular citrus fruit.

"Earlier I worked as supervisor at a malta orchard owned by Monmohan Sarker of Kalmakanda upazila in Netrakona district. After gaining experience from there for four years, I started malta cultivation at Panchgaon village in Bhaluka upazila in 2012," said Chanu, 55.

"In 2013 I planted 300

malta saplings of different sizes on 135 decimals of land. Last year I made a profit of Tk one lakh. This year I have already sold 50 maunds of malta at Tk 4000 per maund, said Chanu.

The sale is at its fag end now, he said.

Chanu also sells malta saplings for Tk 500 to Tk 1000, according to sizes.

"There are some 2000 saplings ready for sale at his orchard, said a smiling Chanu.

The fruit variety developed by Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute is very juicy and tasty, said stakeholders.

It passes flowering stage between March and April and it needs around nine months to mature, they said.

"Buyers from different areas of Mymensingh and outside come to my garden to buy malta. Once I was engaged in traditional cultivation but it did not bring good profit. Now I am running my family well with the earning from malta farming," said Chanu.

The cultivation of malta could be more profitable for farmers, especially for small and marginal ones, as it does not require fertile land

and cultivation cost is comparatively less, said Md Mafiz Uddin, sub-assistant agriculture officer (Katlamari Block) of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Bhaluka.

The land not suitable for traditional farming could be used for malta cultivation and the high and forest land in Bhaluka is very suitable for it, said Altabur Rahman, deputy director of DAE, Mymensingh.

Malta is in great demand in the local markets and farmers can earn well by cultivating it, he said.



Road expansion work goes on, keeping electric poles over three feet inside, making futile the initiative to ease traffic congestion on Shaheed Dr Zikrul Huque Road in Saidpur municipality under Nilphamari district.

PHOTO: STAR

ELECTRIC POLES KEPT INSIDE

Road expansion project fails to serve purpose

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

The ongoing road widening project in busy Saidpur municipality under the district may prove futile to ease traffic jam as the electric poles of Power Development Board (PDB) have been kept in their previous positions, three feet inside on both sides of the now expanded thoroughfares.

Local municipality and PDB authorities have blame each other for the situation.

Saidpur municipality authority started implementing the 'roads widening and rehabilitation project' in March this year under Municipal Governance Support Programme financed by World Bank, sources said.

Under this project to be completed by March 2016, Tk 3.32 crore was allocated for expansion of two busy roads Shaheed Dr Zikrul Huque Road and Sher-e-Bangla Road, they said.

As per the project, existing 18 feet roads are to be widened to 24 feet, expanding three feet on each side, to relieve traffic jam in the busy municipality area.

Visiting the project site on Wednesday, it was found that the work of Shaheed Dr Zikrul Huque Road is on but at least 24 electric poles, kept in their previous positions, now stand three feet inside the road on both sides, making six feet expanded portion of the road virtually unusable for vehicles.

Similar situation prevails

on the already expanded Sher-e-Bangla Road where at least 20 electric poles are standing as before.

"The road expansion brings no benefit as we cannot use the expanded three feet portion on both the sides due to existence of poles," said Md Hafiz, a microbus driver.

There should be planned road expansion in the busy town where thousands of traders from nearby districts come for business purposes, said Zikrul Islam, former commander of Saidpur upazila unit of Mukti Joddha Sangsad.

The town also accommodates Saidpur Railway Workshop employing thousands of workers.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah, executive engineer of local

PDB office, said the municipality authorities started road expansion work without giving them sufficient time to shift the electric poles.

On the other hand, Shahidul Islam, executive engineer of Saidpur municipality, said, "Before starting work, we sent letter to PDB to shift the poles. We waited for months but they showed utter indifference to the matter. If we waited further, the foreign funded project would have been cancelled."

Saidpur municipality Mayor Amzad Hossain Sarker said he has sent letter to power, energy and mineral resources ministry, requesting immediate step to solve the problem for greater interest of people.

SPECIAL DRIVES

20 Jamaat men among 50 arrested in 2 districts

STAR COUNTRY DESK

At least 50 people, including 20 Jamaat-Shibir men, were held during special drives by law enforcers in Sunamganj and Sathkira districts yesterday and the day before.

Police arrested eight activists of Jamaat-e-Islami in Gobindaganj area of Sunamganj on Wednesday, reports our Moulvibazar correspondent.

The arrestees include Rezaul Karim, ameer of Chhatak upazila unit of Jamaat, and its general secretary Akbar Ali.

On secret information, a police team raided the area and arrested the eight while they were holding clandestine meeting there.

Asheq Suja Mamun, officer-in-charge of Chhatak Police Station, confirmed the incident.

In Sathkira, a team of joint forces in separate drives arrested 42 people, including 12 activists of Jamaat and its student wing Islami Chhakra Shibir, at different places of the district in last two days on various charges, reports UNB.

Enamul Haque, sub-inspector of Sathkira district police, said a team comprising police, Rapid Action Battalion and Border Guard Bangladesh conducted the drive in eight upazilas and arrested the 42 people.

45 turtles seized in Benapole

UNB, Benapole

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in a drive seized 45 turtles from Putkhali border area in Jessore district on Wednesday.

Subedar Krishnapada, camp commander of BGB-21 Battalion, said on secret information, the border guards raided the area at night and seized 45 turtles worth about Tk 6.75 lakh.

Later, the seized turtles were handed over to Khulna Animal Resources Department.

BNP man killed in clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A BNP man was killed and three others injured in a clash with his neighbours at Dhanikhola Bhatipara village in Trishal upazila of the district yesterday afternoon.

The victim, Enamul Haque alias Chand Mia, 45, was general secretary of BNP Dhanikhola unit and son of late Altab Ali Mondol of the village, police said.

The trouble began as workers of Palli Bidyut Samity started cutting the branches of some trees to give power connection to Chand Mia's house at around 2:00pm.

Chand's neighbour Fazlul Haque and his men immediately rushed to the spot and prevented the workers from cutting branches.

Both sides locked in an altercation over the issue. At one stage, they clashed with sticks and iron rods, injuring four people, including Chand Mia, said Moniruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Trishal Police Station.

Chand, who sustained severe head injuries, was rushed to Community Based Medical College, Bangladesh (CBMBCB) where he succumbed to his injuries around 4:30pm, the OC said.

The three injured -- Chand's elder brother Azizul Islam, 65, and nephews Motiur Rahman Parvez, 30 and Ariful Islam, 25 -- were treated at local clinics, police said.

Police detained one man for interrogation soon after the incident, the OC added.

LALMONIRHAT

Early potato brings high profit to farmers

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Growers of early variety potatoes in the district are happy to get good yield as well as high prices of the crop.

The early variety potato is selling between Tk 45 and Tk 50 per kg in local markets while it sold for Tk 60 to 70 per kg when it was harvested first a month ago.

"I have cultivated early variety potato on two bighas of land after harvesting the short duration aman paddy. I have already sold 1500 kg

of harvested potatoes at Tk 50 per kg in the local market in last two weeks," said Dharendra Nath Barman, 60, of Gilabari village in Aditmari upazila.

"I hope to sell more 400 kg in a week," he said, adding that he spent only Tk 20 thousand for the cultivation.

Farmers Hasmat Ali, 48, of Kalkina village of Kaliganj upazila said he has already earned Tk 80 thousand from selling the newly harvested potato.

Early variety potato was

cultivated on 120 hectares of land after harvesting short duration aman paddy at different villages in Lalmonirhat, said sources of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Lalmonirhat.

A total of 11,000 hectares of land have been brought under potato cultivation in five upazilas of Lalmonirhat district this year and sowing of potato seeds will continue till early February next year, said DAE sources.



PHOTO: STAR

A farmer and his workers sort newly harvested early variety potatoes at a field of Gilabari village in Aditmari upazila under Lalmonirhat district.

Muggers shoot two, take away Tk 1 lakh in Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Armed muggers shot two people and took away around Tk one lakh from a shop in Kolabari area under Companyganj upazila of Sylhet district on Wednesday night.

The victims, Abdul Malik, 26, owner of Shah Arfin Enterprise, and Liton Mia, 35, manager of the shop, were admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College.

Bayes Alam, officer-in-charge of Companyganj Police Station, said a gang of 5/6 masked men started firing at the shop when Malik and Liton were taking preparation to shut it around 8:00pm, leaving the two bullet-injured.

One of the witnesses Apurba Das said

the gang snatched the cash from the manager and escaped in a car.

Away in Bagerhat, masked robbers looted gold ornaments and cash from a house in Sarui area of the district town on Wednesday.

Quoting house owner Shariful Islam, police said a gang of robbers started knocking on the door when his son Mahfuza Akhter along with her minor son was present at the house around 7:30pm.

They threatened Mahfuza to open the door, otherwise their men peeping through the windows, would shoot her son dead, Shariful said.

As Mahfuza opened the door, the gang entered the house, confined the duo to a room at gunpoint and looted seven tolas of gold ornaments and Tk 40,000.



PHOTO: STAR

Thousands of Muslim devotees gather at Shoru village in Dhunat upazila under Bogra district to attend *ijtema*, a large religious congregation organised by Tabligi Jamaat, yesterday.

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