



Moslem Uddin tends lemon plants at his orchard at Dakkhinpara village in Sakhipur upazila of Tangail district

Lemon farming has changed the life of a Tangail farmer

SHYKH SERAJ

To make a living he did almost everything -- worked as a housekeeper at people's homes; was a shepherd for a long time, and sold different products on the roads as a 'feriwal' (hawker). This man has turned everything around. Finally, he has gained success with hard work, sincerity, honesty and struggle. His stories teach people to move onward.

This man, a successful farmer, Moslem Uddin, now owns six acres of lemon orchard. He took lease of a barren land three years back. You would be amazed to learn that this year he has earned Tk 10 lakh from this orchard. Now, Moslem Uddin is the most successful lemon farmer of Sakhipur's Dakkhinpara in Tangail district.

"I was trying hard to come out of poverty. I had to win over it," said Moslem.

It was really interesting to learn how he actually came out of poverty, a curse to humanity.

"I wanted to be an entrepreneur. I used to watch the TV programmes on farming, specially your ones. You inspired me to become who I am now," said a beaming Moslem.

I also felt great that my programmes had an impact on this simple yet incredible farmer who changed his fate

on his own. Moslem gradually started building his dreams with clear insight and vision. And, that's why he stands somewhere where nobody else does.

When Moslem took the lease of the barren land, many had teased him. He didn't care about the critics. He gave his full efforts and labour to the orchard for years, and now there are thousands of lemons, indicating a good earning at the end of the harvest. The most encouraging part is that he could do it on barren land.

There is a watch tower to monitor the lemon trees from the top. In leisure time, Moslem gets on top of it to see his dreams spread all over the six acres of dreamland. He does almost everything in the orchard himself.

He has around 6,000 lemon trees in the orchard. Each tree gives him 1,000 lemons on an average, in a year; which means, he gets six million lemons from this orchard.

"I have earned a profit of Tk 10 lakh this year, and next season, if everything goes well, I can make it Tk 30 lakh," Moslem said confidently.

"And in a decade, I hope to earn Tk 3 crore," he added.

The key to the bountiful production in the orchard is the proper use of organic fertiliser. Most interesting and innovative part is the irrigation system Moslem is using in his orchard. All the water pipes are rightly placed around the orchard at the root of the trees with individual switches for each and every tree in the orchard. This is what I had seen in the Gulf country, Qatar, at Al Sulaiten Farm.

Most of the lemon varieties in the orchard are seedless, which are sold around the country. However, Moslem eagerly looks forward to exporting the lemons. That's why he has built another orchard for 'Colombo' variety, which has high demand in the export market.

Shafiqul Islam, one of the fifteen day-labourers at Moslem's orchard, is pretty happy working here.

"Moslem bhai is my icon. One day, I want to be a successful lemon farmer like him. I want to have an orchard of my own," said Shafiqul. It clearly means Moslem is now

an inspirational man throughout the region.

"I love to spend my time here, to see what my son has done so successfully," said Joynuddin, the proud father of Moslem.

"We're extremely happy that Moslem has not only brought success for himself but also that he's been inspiring many others," said Fayzul Islam, upazila agriculture officer of Sakhipur.

Dear readers, now lemon has become a cash crop for Bangladesh. It has great export prospect. Once Sylhet was regarded as the most significant region for lemon farming. However, it is now spread all over Narsingdi, Mymensingh and in many other regions of the country. Moslem Uddin is truly a pioneer. Lemon has changed his fate and gave him a much better livelihood. From a hawker he's now a successful agricultural entrepreneur. I believe his success will be followed across Bangladesh. And, I'll be meeting so many successful lemon farmers in the coming days because Moslem has showed them the dream to become realistically successful.



Shykh Seraj is a Media and Agriculture Development Activist. He is an Ashoka Fellow and recipient of Ekushey Padak, FAO A.H. Boerma Award and many other prestigious accolades. At Channel i, he is Director and Head of News. He is also Director and Host of the popular agro-documentary, "Hridoye Mati O Manush".

Woman found murdered in Jamalpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Police recovered the body of an unidentified woman with slit throat from a crop field at Pochabahela village under Kulia union in Melandah upazila of the district yesterday morning.

The deceased, aged about 30, was wearing printed salwar-kameez.

Locals found the body, which was stuffed in a sack, in a crop field belonging to one Hanif Uddin of the village and informed the police.

Later, the body was sent to Jamalpur General Hospital morgue for autopsy, said Nasimul Islam, officer-in-charge (OC) of Melandah Police Station.

Contacted, the OC said they are trying to unearth clue to the murder and arrest the culprits involved.

Fire at packaging factory

UNB, Savar

Machines and goods of a packaging factory were gutted in a fire in Boratnagar area under Dhamrai municipality yesterday.



A portion of Hulerhat-Shreerumkathi road at Udoykathi point under Pirojpur Sadar upazila subsided on Monday, causing great sufferings to the travellers as it has snapped communication between Pirojpur town and rest of the upazila.

Thousands suffer as road subsides in Pirojpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Thousands of people, who use the Hulerhat-Shreerumkathi road, are suffering as a part of the road at Udoykathi point under Pirojpur Sadar upazila subsided yesterday. The road is maintained by the Roads and Highways Department (RHD).

Locals said they found part of the road missing at Udoykathi, snapping road communication. Thousands of people use the road to come to Pirojpur district headquarters from Nazirpur and Nesarabad upazilas of the district. People of several villages of Kawlakhal union

use the road to come to Hulerhat and Pirojpur town.

Hundreds of vehicles, including motorbikes, battery-run three-wheelers and rickshaws ply the road.

"I was going to Kawlakhal ferry terminal from Pirojpur in the morning, but I found the road subsided," said Aminul Haque, a driver of a battery-run three-wheeler, adding that he crossed the spot with great difficulty. "I will not be able to drive my vehicle until it is repaired," he added.

"I use the Hulerhat-Shreerumkathi road to go to Nesarabad upazila everyday. But I will not be able to use

the road now," said Mizanur Rahman, a motorbike rider.

"From now I will have to use Pirojpur-Shreerumkathi road to reach Nesarabad," Mizan says, adding that he will have to travel a longer distance than before.

Advocate Nasiruddin Khan, chairman of Kawlakhal Union Parishad in the upazila, could not be contacted as he was on his way to Dhaka.

"We have come to know about subsidence of the road. We will send our men to repair it tomorrow (Wednesday)," said Atikul Islam, sub assistant engineer of RHD in Pirojpur.

Paddy price fall upsets Jhenidah farmers

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenida

The prices of paddy have fallen sharply in absence of buyers in the local markets, much to the frustration of the growers in the district.

Now they are worried about recovery of their production cost, let alone profit.

Sources in the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) of Jhenidah said the target was for planting aman on 97,288 hectares of land in six upazilas, but the achievement was 9,6901. The target for production was 2,64,981 tonnes of paddy but 3,29,119 tonnes were produced this season, sources added.

Of the cultivated land, 21,725 hectares are in Sadar, 24,801 in Shailakupa, 9,405 in Harinakundo, 17,780 in Moheshpur, 5,860 in Kotchandpur and 17,330 in Kaliganj upazilas.

Farmers told this correspondent that they were not interested to cultivate paddy in the next season because the price has disappointed them. They said that cultivation costs Tk 8,000 per bigha (33 decimals). It needs fertiliser, insecticide, weeding, harvesting, and labour cost. They get 15/16 maunds of paddy per bigha. Now they are selling paddy at Tk 500-Tk 550 per maund, which has made them lose heart in paddy

cultivation. Most of the farmers buy fertiliser and insecticide on credit. After harvesting, they sell paddy in the market and pay the due amount, the farmers added.

Sonai Mondol of Enayetpur village under Kaliganj upazila, said he cultivated four bighas of land at a cost of Tk 32,000. He got 58 maunds of paddy that he sold at Tk 540 per maund, which comes to Tk 31,320. He does not know how he will repay the loan and maintain his family.

Farmer Alok Kumar of Beleghat village under Shailakupa upazila, said he cultivated boro on two bighas of land taking Tk

16,300 loan from an NGO. He got 31 maunds, which he sold for Tk 17,050. He was not able to get profit on his investment. "I have decided to cultivate vegetables and tobacco next year," Alok said.

Paddy trader Shaheen Mia of Kaliganj upazila town said the government should fix the rate. Due to lack of fixed rate the traders are purchasing paddy at their own rate.

Shah Akramul Haque, deputy director of Jhenidah DAE, said "We were able to achieve huge production of aman this year, but the price of paddy has come down. I do not know the reason for this."



As in other areas of the district, paddy farmers coming to Tetultala Bazar in Jhenidah Sadar upazila to sell their produce often get disappointed due to low price of the crop amid lack of customers.

2 die as train hits rickshaw van in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Two people were killed and two others injured as a running train hit a battery-run rickshaw-van in Gopalpur upazila of the district yesterday.

The deceased are rickshaw-van puller Anwar Hossain, 40, and passenger Hasi Begum, 30, of Belua village.

The accident took place at noon when a Bangabandhu Bridge Railway Station-bound train from Chittagong hit the rickshaw-van at unmanned Bholarpara level crossing under Hemnagar union in the upazila.

Sensing danger, Hasi threw her two-year-old son Habib who sustained minor injuries, said Jahirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Gopalpur Police Station, quoting locals.

Another passenger of the rickshaw-van, Riya Moni, 13, a Class VI student of a local madrasa, was seriously injured in the accident.

Of the injured, Riya was admitted to Tangail Medical College Hospital while Habib given first aid at the upazila health complex, said the OC.

Miscreants set fire to temple

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Unidentified miscreants set fire to a Kali temple at Mohishjora village under Kokdohora union in Kalihati upazila of the district on Monday night.

The criminals poured kerosene on a pile of firewood kept in the temple and set fire to it at around 9:00pm, said Purno Chandra Dey, a member of the temple committee.

Locals immediately extinguished the fire before the flames could damage the temple, he added.

Being informed, a police team visited the spot and started investigation, said police.

GAIBANDHA MUNICIPALITY 6 mayor aspirants vow to improve civic amenities

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Six candidates for the post of mayor of Gaibandha Municipality have promised to improve civic amenities if elected. The candidates also pledged to make the municipality free from corruption.

They mayoral candidates were responding to queries from voters on Gaibandha Shaheed Minar premises in a face to face with people programme organised yesterday by Sacheton Nagorik Committee, Gaibandha, and patronised by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIIB).

They pledged to accept

The candidates who attended the programme are Shah Masud Jahangir Kabir Milon of Awami League (AL), Shahiduzzaman Shaheed of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), and independent candidates incumbent mayor Shamsul Alam, AKM Ferdous Alam, Mirza Hasan and Sarder Roknuzzaman. Anwarul Sarwar, another independent candidate did not attend the programme.

All the candidates committed to fulfil the demands of the townspeople for safe drinking water and proper drainage system.

They pledged to accept

people's verdict in the ensuing municipality polls and work together with the people for an upgraded municipality.

They also vowed to eradicate early marriage and stalking, ensure child education, and reduce dropout in primary education.

The candidates also vowed to make Ghagot lake in Gaibandha town a recreation spot with enough lighting and sitting arrangement.

The programme was presided over by Gobinda Lal Das, President of Gaibandha unit of Sacheton Nagorik Committee, Gaibandha.



Six mayoral candidates of Gaibandha municipality pledge to promote civic amenities, if elected, at a face to face programme with voters organised by Sacheton Nagorik Committee on the premises of local Shaheed Minar yesterday.

Woman rescued 30 days into abduction in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Law enforcers rescued a newlywed woman from Duphancia municipality area in the district on Monday, a month after her abduction.

Police said the 19-year-old victim of Dhunat upazila got married four months ago.

On November 22, she was abducted from her father's house at Chuniapara in Dhunat.

Later, the victim's father filed an abduction case with Dhunat Police Station, accusing six local youths.

Of the accused, Enamul Haque, 24, son of Moktar Hossain of the Goshabari

area in the upazila, used to tease the bride.

On secret information, a police team raided the municipality area early Monday and rescued the victim.

Police are raiding different areas to arrest the culprits, said Mizanur Rahman, officer-in-charge of the police station.