



**Mangoes in good quantities arrive at Puraton Bazar in Chapainawabganj town as harvesting of a few species started on Wednesday, as per the decision of the authorities who have set harvesting dates for different varieties of mangoes considering their ripening nature.**

PHOTO: STAR

# Mangoes start arriving in C'nawabganj markets

*Ban on harvest goes as the fruit matures*

RABIUL HASAN DOLLAR, Chapainawabganj

Markets in the district for high quality tasty varieties of mangoes now see abundance of the popular summer fruit, especially gopalbhog and few varieties of guti, as harvest started on Wednesday.

Earlier on May 10, the district administration in a meeting with the officials of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) and Regional Horticulture Research Station, Chapainawabganj Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bholahat Mango

Foundation, Kansat Mango Depots Association and mango traders imposed ban on the harvest of mangoes before May 25.

The decision was taken to prevent artificial ripening of the fruit before its full maturity.

On Wednesday afternoon, Jahidul Islam, deputy commissioner of Chapainawabganj inaugurated the mango harvest at an orchard of Professor Para in town.

Visiting the mango market at Puraton Bazar in the town yesterday, this correspondent saw abundant supply of the mango but

there was much less than usual customers.

In absence of sufficient publicity, many customers did not know about the start of harvesting and so, their presence is thin, said traders.

Jahangir Alam of Baliadanga village of Sadar upazila came to Masjidpara market in the town with eight maunds of gopalbhog mango, but he could not sell it due to lack of buyers.

Gopalbhog mangoes are selling at Tk 1600 to 2000 per maund at Puraton Bazar mango market.

The harvest started on Wednesday and separate dates have been fixed for

different varieties of mangoes in view of their ripening nature, said Sajdar Rahman, deputy director of DAE, Chapainawabganj.

DAE officials said there are 19 lakh mango trees on 24,470 hectares of land in the district and at least 2.50 lakh tonnes mangoes are expected from there this season.

The area of the mango orchards and number of trees has increased, DAE sources said, adding that 2.50 lakh tonnes of mango was produced from 18.50 lakh trees on 24,260 hectares of land in the district last year.

## UP chairman sent to jail in murder case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

A court here yesterday sent a newly elected union parishad chairman to jail, rejecting his bail prayer in a murder case.

Judge Mohammad Kamrul Hasan of Pirojpur Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court passed the order when Ashish Kumar Boral, chairman of Jalabari Union Parishad in Nesarabad upazila, surrendered before the court at noon.

Ashish is the main accused in the case for killing Jasimuddin Palash, 35, son of Amir Hossain of Durgakathi village in the upazila. He was a supporter of Ashish's rival candidate.

On April 16, Ashish along with his men beat Palash dead at a tea stall at Purbo Jalabari village around 11:00am.

Palash's younger brother Shimul filed a murder case with Nesarabad Police Station the following day, accusing 23 named and several unnamed people.

## 43 accused in arson cases held in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

At least 43 charge-sheeted accused in different arson cases were arrested early yesterday in Rangpur Sadar and Mithapukur upazilas of the district, police said.

The arrestees were later sent to jail by a court, said Saifur Rahman, senior assistant superintendent of police in Rangpur. The arson attacks took place in the district at different times from late 2013 to January 2015.

## LALMONIRHAT

# High yield, fair price make maize farmers happy

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Lalmonirhat farmers are happy as they are getting ample production of maize and its fair prices in the local markets this year.

They are becoming more interested in maize farming due to less production cost and high profit.

Shamsul Islam, 55, a farmer at Islampur village under Patgram upazila, said he cultivated maize on 16 bighas of land this year, and has already harvested the crop from 12 bighas.

"I got 320 maunds of maize from 12 bighas, and have sold 100 maunds at Tk 410 per maund in the field," Shamsul said, adding that he is expecting to get 120 to

130 maunds more from the rest four bighas.

Mafiz Uddin, 62, another farmer of the village, said it needs Tk 3,000 to Tk 4,000 to cultivate maize on one bigha and they can earn a profit of Tk 10,000 to Tk 12,000 by selling maize of the land. "Labour and maintenance costs of cultivating maize are low," he added.

Farmer Soleman Miah, 48, of Fakirpara village at Hatibandha upazila, said maize is a profitable crop for them this time as they are not earning expected profit from paddy farming. A farmer can produce 24 to 32 maunds of maize on one bigha of land, he

added. The Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources said maize was cultivated on 26,000 hectares of land in five upazilas of the district this year though the target was only 18,000 hectares.

Safayet Hossain, deputy director of DAE in Lalmonirhat, said farmers are happy as they are getting bumper production of maize due to favourable weather condition, good seeds and timely supply of fertiliser, diesel and other agricultural inputs. They are also earning expected profit in the local markets, he added.



PHOTO: STAR

**Huge quantities of maize are brought to Sarkarer Haat in Patgram upazila under Lalmonirhat district that sees good yield of the crop this season.**

# Bagging technology saves fruits from pests, improves quality

SHYKH SERAJ

Phuterjhiri village is located in Bandarban's Lama. Rubber, litchi, mango and many other fruits are cultivated in there. The hills are so high that it is quite difficult to see what is growing there. So, I went to see the place from very close.

The extent of cultivation of high value crops on the hills is very impressive. I found a mango orchard set on 30 acres of land two hundred feet high. Three thousand mango trees are full of mangoes, including a mropali, mollika, mohanonda, sindhu, subarnarekha, lengra and many more varieties.

The owner of the orchard, Kazi Shahadat Hossain, is not only a skilled and knowledgeable farmer, but an eloquent speaker as well.

"When I started my rubber garden back in the '90s with government support, I thought of growing mangoes also," said Shahadat. "I have been in love with mangoes since my school life," added the smiling owner of the mango orchard.

Truly, his visionary idea has brought him where he is now today. This is just one of his orchards. He is growing many other fruits on around hundred acres of hilly land. He is a devoted farmer, very passionate about what he does.

This 75-year-old man visits his farms in this remote area two days a week. He has the eyes of an eagle. He guides his staff very effectively so that they can solve problems quickly, if there are any at all. He behaves like a friend with this staff. That is why those working in his orchard feel that they are also part of it; it's their orchard, too.

I learned a lot from this ingenious farmer. This old



PHOTO: STAR

**Kazi Shahadat Hossain at his mango orchard on a hill at Phuterjhiri in Lama upazila under Bandarban district.**



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man can spread the light of success among many others, I realised. In one of his mango orchards, he was talking with the orchard workers about bagging technology.

"Why didn't you bag these?" Shahadat asked one of his workers. "If you had bagged them, it could save them from insects," he added.

Shahadat is a believer in bagging technology. He covers his mangoes with paper bags, which protects the fruits from pests and bacteria. And, he is getting quality produce using this technology.

"This organic method is helping me unbelievably and it is scientific," says Shahadat. He has used 40 thousand bags, each costing Tk 5, this year. Apparently, the method seems expensive, but it has increased production of mangoes. Moreover, he can produce medicine-free mangoes.

"I learned about this technology from Hridoye Mati O Manush," said Shahadat.

Shahadat plans to send 30 tonnes of mangoes to the market this season, although he expected some more.

He has sold litchi worth

Tk 2 lakh and papaya worth Tk 15 lakh, and hopes to sell mangoes worth Tk 15 lakh this year. He believes that if bagging technology is used properly in the country, farmers can also export fruits next year.

Dear readers, a study says that among several good agricultural practices (GAP) throughout the world for the production of high quality fruit with less dependence on man-made chemicals, fruit bagging is one. It is a physical protection method which not only improves the visual quality of fruit by promoting skin

colouration and reducing blemishes, but can also change the micro-environment for fruit development, which can have several beneficial effects on internal fruit quality.

The technology can also reduce the incidence of disease, insect, pest and/or mechanical damage, sunburn of the skin, fruit cracking, agrochemical residues on the fruit, and damage caused by birds.

Due to its many useful effects, fruit bagging has become an essential part of peach, apple, pear and grape cultivation in Japan, Australia, China and the USA. Moreover, countries such as Mexico, Chile, and Argentina do not import apples unless they are bagged. Several studies have been conducted to identify the desirable effects of pre-harvest fruit bagging on skin colour development and quality.

Some factors need to be considered: differences in the type of bag used, the stage of fruit development when bagged, the duration of fruit exposure to natural light following bag removal, and/or fruit-and cultivar-specific responses. Nature's progressive young farmer Atique has already done extremely well commercially by using bagging technology on guavas.

Recently, I had been to China's Shuangdong province. In the city of Rushan, I found farmers using bagging technology on 50 per cent of their land.

The good news is that Bangladesh has exported fruits to four countries this year, including Germany. Last year we exported fruits to Walmart.

We need to improve our understanding of the beneficial effects of bagging of different fruits so that more growers could consider using this method on a commercial scale.

# Protect ethnic groups from land grabbers

*Demands human chain in Dinajpur's Phulbari*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Ethnic minority people formed a human chain in Nimtola area under Phulbari upazila town of the district yesterday to press their five-point demands including recovery of a decimal of grabbed land.

Jatiya Adivasi Parishad (JAP) organised the hour-long programme from 11:00am.

Their demands include recovery of a decimal of land of Proddhan Mardi and Montu Murmu at Pukhurimor, arrest of alleged land grabber Sohrab Ali, identification of the criminals who issued death threat to ethnic people, stopping of harassment by law enforcers in the name of arbitration at Phulbari Police Station, steps

by the government to protect their land from grabbers by forming a separate land commission.

The land grabbers cannot check their greed on just a decimal of land of ethnic groups, alleged Hopna Kisku, president of JAP of Phulbari unit, at the programme.

The ethnic minority people of the area constantly have been receiving death threat from the land grabbers whenever they come forward to recover the land.

In this regard, the participants at the human chain questioned the role of police as they are always supporting the grabbers and harassed the ethnic people in the name of arbitration at the police station.

They also urged the gov-

ernment to form a separate land commission for the ethnic people living in plain land areas of the country.

Bikash Mardi, general secretary of Phulbari upazila unit of JAP, its secretary Sagien Hasda and organisational secretary Shivalal Tudu, among others, spoke at the programme.

Later, they handed over a memorandum to Upazila Nirbahi Officer Ahtesham Reza who assured them of looking into the demands.

Contacted, accused Sohrab Ali said he purchased the piece of land from Montu Murmu.

Despite repeated calls, this correspondent could not reach Mokshed Ali, officer-in-charge of the police station, as he did not receive the call.



PHOTO: STAR

**Jatiya Adivasi Parishad forms a human chain at Nimtali in Phulbari upazila under Dinajpur district yesterday demanding effective steps to recover land of the ethnic people from illegal occupiers and an end to torture and repression on the minority people.**