



PHOTO: STAR

Bousundari, a tasty yet less popular variety of mango, at an orchard of Housenagar in Shibganj upazila under Chapainawabganj district.

# The secret language of Chapai's mangoes

RABIUL HASAN DOLLAR with ANDREW EAGLE

The approach of the monsoon brings the mango season into full swing; and the mangoes arrive with their own vocabulary of familiar and rare words, especially in Chapainawabganj. Hear a Chapai farmer chatting about 'chhucha' and he might not be referring to the earth-digging animal, the mole. Chhucha is one of around 350 varieties of mangoes traditionally grown in the district's orchards.

Of many names have we commonly heard: gopalbhog, langra, fazli, khirsapat which also called himsagar. The leading varieties that have long monopolised markets are known to even a half-serious mango connoisseur. But there are others, with some mango varieties at risk of extinction.

"People call them chhucha for their long shape, like a mole," says Alfazuddin, an orchardist from Bhatola in Chhatrajitpur union of Shibganj upazila. He has one chhucha mango tree. "It ripens late in the season," he says. "The fruit is a greenish and tasty."

Boglaguti is renowned for its large size and smell, in taste similar to the khirsapat. Mishrikant, sofeda and golapba mangoes are famously sweet.

"Varieties like the mishrikant and sofeda have a beautiful scent," says orchardist Abdul Matin of Housenagar village.

Other exotic varieties available in Chapainawabganj include the paharibhog, misrikaya, khirpuri, darikabhog, jalibandha, boishakhi, kohitur, kazipasand kua pahari, dudhsar, arhiya and kumrajali. Some varieties are sweet while others are sour; each has its own shape, colour, taste and smell. All are mango varieties found only rarely in Dhaka or other parts of the country.

"I have at least fifty mango varieties in my orchard," says Noimul Bari of Chatra village in Shibganj upazila. "My father planted most of them about seventy years ago." Noimul has made efforts to collect rare mango varieties to add to the collection started by his father.

"More than 100 varieties are under threat of extinction," he says, "because commercial growers tend to rely on the few species with higher yields and greater demand in the market."

The senior scientific officer of Chapainawabganj regional horticulture research station, Dr Sorofuddin, says many varieties are at risk of extinction, while others are already extinct

due to orchardist preferences for just a few key varieties.

According to department of agriculture extension officials, 19 lakh mango trees occupy some 24, 470 hectares of land in the district, with this year's harvest expected to reach 2.5 lakh tonnes of mangoes. It's an increase from last year when 18.5 lakh mango trees were reported district-wide.

Mango production engages a large workforce in Chapainawabganj, from tending the orchards to harvesting and packing; each year's mango season is a hive of activity.

And if one decides to visit Chapainawabganj during the season, it's worth keeping an ear open for that special mango lingo.

If you hear a farmer talking about bou sundori, for example, which sounds a bit like a beautiful wife, he's probably not referring to an attractive life companion but a big-sized reddish mango.

And, just as in people it holds true that an attractive exterior might not accurately measure the beauty of a personality within, so it goes with this mango too. "People call it bou sundori for its beauty," says Shajahan Ali, an orchardist from Housenagar. "But its taste is not so good!"



PHOTO: STAR

Among many others on different river routes in Patuakhali district, this signal light set up on the Buragourango River at Amkhola in Galachipa upazila under Patuakhali district lies inoperative for long as its battery and solar panel were stolen.

## PATUAKHALI RIVER ROUTES

# Vessels ply amid risk as most signal lights inactive for years

Stealing of batteries, solar panels caused the problem

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Most of the signal lights on different river routes in the district have remained inoperative for long, posing problems for water transports plying the routes at night.

Batteries and solar panels of the setups were stolen in different times.

BIWTA (Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority) set up signal lights in different routes, especially at turnings of rivers in the district in 1990s to help smooth plying of water vehicles at night.

But thieves stole batteries, solar panels from these lights, leaving them inactive for years.

active signal set-up on the Buragourango River at Amkhola Bazar point.

"About 20 years ago BIWTA set up the signal light that was put on at night. But battery and solar panel from it were stolen several years ago," said Abdur Rashid Dhali, a local resident.

Md Bellal Hossain, a wood trader, said they carry wood to Swarupkathi in Pirojpur district from different areas in the district on cargo vessels but they face problems at night in absence of signal lights on the routes.

Often the loaded vessels get stuck on shoals in the rivers, he said.

Water transports like cargo vessels and double-decker launches regularly ply different routes connecting

Kalapara, Char Montaj, Galachipa, Panpatti, Alipur, Mohipur, Amkhola, Patua, Rangabali, Bauful, Kalaiya and Mirzaganj in Patuakhali, Amtali and Taltali in Barguna, and Bhola district.

Patuakhali river port office sources said most of the 59 signal lights, each set up at a cost of Tk 50 thousand, at different points in the district remained inactive for long as their batteries and solar panels were stolen.

Several days ago, Galachipa police arrested two people from Charkhali area under the upazila for their alleged involvement in the matter.

Md Rafiqul Islam, deputy director of BIWTA in Barisal, said, "We will take steps to re-set the inoperative signal lights."

## Sons hack father dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

An elderly man was hacked to death allegedly by his two sons while he was asleep in Parbatipur upazila of the district early yesterday, police said.

The deceased was identified as Mokhsed Ali, 60, of Gobindapur village in the.

On information, police recovered the body at around 3:00am and sent it to Dinajpur Medical College Hospital for autopsy. There were stab wounds in his neck, waist and back.

Rezaul Karim, sub-inspector of Parbatipur Police Station, told this correspondent over phone that Mokhsed was asleep in his room on Monday night. Hearing screams from the room at around 12:30am, Mokhsed's wife Asma Begum rushed to the room and found him lying in a pool of blood. Their sons, Abdul Maleque 27, and Imran Hossain 26, fled the scene.

Police said the deceased had a conflict with his sons due to his addiction to gambling. Relations between Mokhsed and his sons deteriorated recently as he sold 31 decimals of land at Tk 12 lakh and spent all the money in gambling, police said.

Asma Begum filed a murder case with Parbatipur Police Station, accusing Maleque and Imran.

## UP chairman sent to jail in vehicle torching case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A court here on Monday sent a newly elected union parishad chairman to jail, rejecting his bail prayer in a case for torching vehicles in Sadar upazila of the district during the national elections in 2014.

The accused is Anisur Rahman Badsha, chairman of Chehelgazi Union Parishad, and vice president of Sadar upazila unit of BNP.

Although Badsha won the UP polls held on May 28, he went into hiding during his election campaign as he was accused in the case.

Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Ahsanul Haque passed the order when Badsha appeared before his court, said ATM Khalequzzaman, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station.

Badsha was elected chairman of the UP for the third consecutive terms.

## Bullet-injured Sirajganj AL man dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

An activist of Awami League, who sustained bullet injuries in an attack allegedly by his rivals in Kamarkhand upazila of Sirajganj on Sunday night, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday morning.

The deceased, Mahbub Alam Milton, 40, son of late Mokhsed Ali of Boro Pakuria village in the upazila, was a member of the upazila unit of AL.

Quoting locals and witnesses, police said a gang opened fire on Milton near Nishibari Bridge while he was returning home riding a motorcycle on Sunday night.

Villagers rescued him and took him to Sirajganj General Hospital. He was referred to DMCH the same night.

He died at the hospital around 7:00am yesterday, said Officer-in-Charge Babul Sardar of Kamarkhand Police Station.

Milton's brother Mohammad Ali Jinnah filed a case, accusing five people, including Sanwar Hossain Sanu of the village, the OC said.

Sanu had a longstanding rivalry with Milton over establishing supremacy in the area, the OC added.

# Villagers build bamboo bridge on self-help basis

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

People of three char villages along the Teesta River basin have built a bamboo bridge on voluntary basis over a tributary at Tambulpur in Sundarganj upazila.

The bridge has reduced the suffering of the people as they can now carry agriculture products, communicate with the upazila headquarters, and attend office and educational institutions.

For the last two decades, the residents of Khorda, Latsala and Tarapur villages had to cross the tributary either by country boat or banana tree raft during the rainy season, facing the risk of capsizing in the strong current. It was also time consuming.

During the dry season, the people had to wade through knee or waist deep water of the tributary and

the farmers could not carry their agriculture produce for marketing. They had to travel seven kilometres more to reach their destinations.

Locals said people of both sides of the tributary decided three months ago to construct a 300-foot-long bamboo bridge over the tributary. Accordingly, they collected bamboo, wood and other necessary items and started construction of bridge voluntarily.

Some people contributed money and construction items while others gave their labour for the construction of the bridge. It took one month to erect the bridge.

"Earlier, people had to wait for a long time to get a ferry boat for crossing the tributary, but now the situation has changed," said Abul Kashem, a farmer of Khorda village in Sundarganj

upazila. "Carrying agriculture products to the markets was a problem, but now it has become much easier. The carrying cost and the time spent have also reduced due to the bridge," said Abdu Salam, a trader of the village.

"During the rainy season we normally did not send our children to schools as they had to cross the tributary by boat, which was very risky. The bridge will help the students to attend classes," said Amjad Hossain, a guardian.

"We asked the upazila administration many times to build a bridge over the tributary, but nobody responded to the demand. However, the people came forward spontaneously for construction of a bamboo bridge, and they finally succeeded," said Aminul Islam Lebu, chairman of Tarapur union.



PHOTO: STAR

Through self finance and voluntary service, locals built this 300-foot-long bamboo bridge over this tributary of the Teesta River at Tambulpur in Sundarganj upazila under Gaibandha district to ease their movement and transport of agricultural products. Earlier their repeated appeal to the upazila administration for building a bridge there brought no results.

## CHARGE-SHEETED IN ARSON CASE

# Mithapukur upazila chairman, 2 vice-chairmen removed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Chairman, vice chairman and female vice chairman of Mithapukur Upazila Parishad in Rangpur district have been removed from their posts as they are charge-sheeted accused in a case for torching a passenger bus which killed five people and injured many others in 2014.

He received a letter in this regard from the ministry concerned a few days ago, said Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Mohammad Salauddin on Monday.

The trio are upazila chairman Golam Rabbani, also ameer of the upazila unit of Jamaat, vice chairmen Abdul Based Marzan and Morsheda Begum.

Golam Rabbani and Abdul Based Marzan are now in Rangpur jail while Morsheda Begum went into hiding. Earlier on November 23 last year, they were sus-

pending from their posts. The three were elected chairman and vice chairman in the upazila parishad election held in 2014.

On January 13 in 2014, at least five people were burnt to death while many others were injured as criminals hurled petrol bombs on a passenger bus on Rangpur-Kurigram road at Fathepur village in Mithapukur upazila of the district. Later, a case was filed in this connection.

Police submitted charge sheet against the trio in the case on May 17 this year.

Police said the trio also played a key role to deteriorate law and order in the upazila soon after February 28, 2013 verdict on a case against Jamaat leader Delwar Hossain Sayeedi for crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War.

Jamaat-Shibir men of the upazila carried out atrocities in the area then.



PHOTO: STAR

Shoppers choose clothes at a store at Hawladar Market in Thakurgaon town yesterday, as sale sees gradual rise with Eid-ul-Fitr, the biggest religious festival of the Muslims, only two weeks away.