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Jhenidah village turns jujube heartland



AZIBOR RAHMAN with ANDREW EAGLE

Thought to have been domesticated in South Asia by 9,000 BCE, jujube has been enjoyed across the region for a very long time. Today, it would be hard to find a place in Bangladesh more closely associated with the fruit than the village of Bhatpara in Mandabaria union of Jhenidah's Moheshpur upazila.

In Bhatpara, of the 3,000 bighas of farmland, 2,400 are dedicated to jujube orchards, primarily of the BAU kul variety. Jujube farming supports 800 of the 900 local families and brings a substantial Tk 30 lakhs per day into the village during the harvest season. It's an agro-industry that's brought solvency to many a villager.

Perhaps ironically for a fruit with an ancient heritage, Bhatpara's jujube success story isn't all that old. The crop was first introduced to the village in 2011 by local farmer Dr Taj Uddin, who planted it on 2.5 bighas that year. The crop did well and over the following years he increased his orchard's size; moreover, inspired by his success other locals started to grow jujube too.

It was the start of a radical improvement in the village economy. Now that jujube is a proven winner, villagers without land of their own often lease it to grow the fruit.

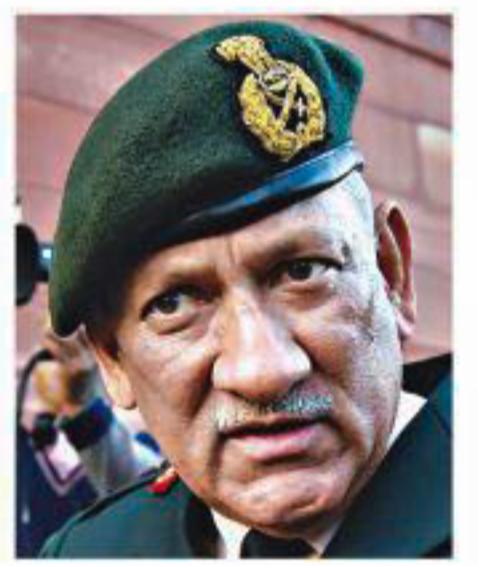
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'Robber' killed in 'gunfight' with Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

'PROXY WAR' REMARK Indian army chief faces criticism

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi



General Bipin Rawat

An alleged robber was killed in a "gunfight" with Rab in Boro Kumira area in Chittagong's Sitakunda upazila early yesterday. The identity of the deceased, aged about 40, could not be known immediately, said Rab-7 sources.

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