

Kashmiri Apple Kul farming sees success in Faridpur

SHYKH SERAJ

Dear readers, in early February, I went to the orchard of a young farm entrepreneur Mofizur Rahman at Haat Gobindapur village in Faridpur Sadar upazila. Mofizur cultivated and harvested a new variety of larger jujube, known as Kashmiri Apple Kul, which has an attractive appearance and is tastier than the other jujubes available in the country. I went to the farm to witness the tremendous work this young man has done. With its reddish complexion over light yellow or green skin, Kashmiri Apple Kul is larger in shape and tastes better than other available varieties like Baukul and Thai kul. Mofizur is the first farmer to cultivate Kashmiri apple kul in Faridpur district.

Mofizur is a wonderful man and very much vibrant in his thoughts and appearance like his fruits, I would say. He went to the Middle East and worked there as a cleaner for couple of years, earning a very low salary. He always thought he should return home and start something with a refreshing thought since he comes from a farmer family. After returning home he got involved with farming, inspired by the videos of Hridoye Mati O Manush on YouTube. Now he has a fruit orchard on 22 bighas (8.81 acres) land, mostly leased, where he cultivates dragon fruit, guava, Chinese orange, Kashmiri kul, mangoes and many more. Within just 10 months, this man has done something so remarkable that my eyes couldn't believe. People in Haat Gobindapur and its surrounding villages regularly come to visit Mofizur's orchard. Not only that, they are also becoming successful following his footsteps.

There are so many fruit trees planted alongside



PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATTO MANUSH

Shykh Seraj, right, with Mofizur Rahman at his Kashmiri Apple Kul orchard at Haat Gobindapur village in Faridpur Sadar upazila.

Shykh Seraj is Bangladesh's pioneer development journalist. He received country's two highest civilian honours, Swadhinata Puroshkar and Ekushey Padak, respectively. He is a BIDS, Ashoka and Bangla Academy Fellow. He also received highest award for agricultural journalism from the United Nations, FAO A.H. Boerma Award, Gusi Peace Prize (Philippines) and many other prestigious accolades at home and abroad. At Channel i, he's the Founder Director and Head of News. He's also Director and Host of Channel i's popular agro-documentary, Hridoye Mati O Manush.



the roads and when I asked him why, he said, 'To grow more, I need love of people and the grace of the Almighty as well. I have done really well so far'.

As I walked into his farm, I felt so good. With the smell of fresh fruits in the air and the sound of birds mingled around, it was so beautiful. There were so many fruits, each having separate plots, inside the orchard. There was so much to discuss with Mofizur. Mofizur's success reminds me of the word 'courage' that only young hearts can bear and move onward. They are the people who actually take the risk and make the success happen in commercial farming.

You would probably recall farmer Sirajul from Jashore who managed to grow a plenty of Kashmiri Apple Kul. His Kashmiri apple kul orchard was the first-ever in Bangladesh. The episode was broadcasted on Hridoye Mati O Manush on Channel i in February last year. In just one year, look at the remarkable success of Mofizur. The production and quality of the fruit is truly

unbelievable.

'I'm harvesting 50 kgs from a single tree,' Mofizur said. This year, wholesale price of one kg Kashmiri Apple Kul is around Tk 70 (USD 0.825), while its retail price is Tk 120 (USD 1.41), straight from the orchard.

'I watched the Sirajul's episode on Channel i and went to meet him,' he said.

'Your programme was my sole inspiration to make this orchard, specially cultivating the Kashmiri Apple Kul,' added Mofizur.

Mofizur is selling five to seven maunds (280 kg) of Kashmiri apple kul daily at Tk 70 (USD 0.825) per kg. So, you can guess his daily earning only from Kashmiri apple kul is Tk 19,600 (USD 231.07). Mofizur has 1,800 Kashmiri Apple Kul trees in his orchard and he expects to get 50 kgs of fruit from each tree. So it might well be 93,000 kgs in total. If he can sell that much fruit Tk 70 per kg, he'll get more than Tk 65,00,000 (USD 76,702.06). A

few days back, I went there again when Mofizur informed me that he might finally get a total of Tk 73,00,000 (USD 86,148.99).

Mofizur's thoughts are very progressive. He believes, by working at farmland one can employ others rather than looking for job in this highly competitive market. With hard work and by working on his own, a farmer can become successful. He eagerly wants the young generation to get involved in the farming sector.

Dear readers, young entrepreneurs like Mofizur, shows us the hope of life with their new and exceptional ideas. It is also a great learning over the years that educated youth are gradually getting involved in farming sector with passion, heart and logic. Of course, they are brave to take any challenges. Farmers like Mofizur are great example in this development process. Like always, I do hope that farmers from other regions will also get encouraged seeing Mofizur's success and help the country prosper.

Teacher cuts hair of 5 boys

UNB, Faridpur

A teacher cut the hair of five Class IV students at Iqra Cadet Madrasa in Gharua union of Faridpur's Bhanga upazila.

Mizanur Rahman, a teacher of the madrasa, had asked the students to cut their hair short, said several students.

As some students did not cut it as short as the teacher would have liked, he picked out five such boys and had a go with the scissors on their hair.

The students ended up with messy haircuts.

A group of parents on Tuesday morning went to the madrasa and demanded punishment of the accused teacher.

The authorities have scheduled next Friday for arbitration in this connection.

Mid Shajahan, principal of the madrasa, said Mizanur asked the students to get 'crew cut' like members of the army but many students didn't comply.

Later, the teacher cut their hair as samples of that hairstyle, the principal added.

AL activist killed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

An Awami League (AL) activist was stabbed to death by his rivals allegedly over previous enmity in Jashore's Sharsha upazila on Tuesday night.

The deceased, Anisur Rahman, 42 son of Moslem Ali of Keralkhali village in the upazila, was an activist of Keralkhali union unit of A, police said.

Officer in Charge of Sharsha Police Station Ataur Rahman said Nasir Uddin, a Malaysia Expatriate, swooped on Anisur and stabbed him indiscriminately with a knife when the latter was sitting inside a tea-stall around 8:30pm.

Locals rescued injured Ataur and took him to Navaron Upazila Health Complex, where the doctors declared him dead.

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