



A few of the pigeons rest on perches inside Rashed Khan's pigeon farm in Khumuria area of Pirojpur town.

PHOTO:
HABIBUR RAHMAN

When passion makes way for profession

Success story of a man whose lifelong hobby is helping him support his family

HABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur

Many people rear pigeon as a hobby. But not too many of them ever come close to turning it into a source of income.

Rashed Khan, from Khumuria area in Pirojpur town, is an exception in this scenario, as he has succeeded in making a living from the hobby of rearing pigeon.

His passion for rearing pigeon in his younger years did not diminish when he grew up. Even during the many years he stayed in Dhaka for his business, Rashed, now 45, continued the hobby.

Taking advantage of his years of experience in rearing the birds, Rashed set up a pigeon farm at his home six years ago, after closing down his business in Dhaka.

Now he is a role model in the area for owning a successful pigeon farm that he set up on the rooftop of his house.

Rashed's passion for rearing pigeon in his younger years did not diminish when he grew up, even during the many years he stayed in Dhaka.

Now there are more than 400 giribaj pigeons of different varieties -- including Chuina, Markchi, Jiragala, Sabujgala, Lalgala, Benaras and Pankhi -- in Rashed's farm.

He said most of the pigeons at his farm are of higher price range. "A pair of pigeons at my farm sells between the price range of Tk 3,000 and Tk 30,000."

The income from his farm is sufficient

to support his family, he said, adding that primary customers of his farm rear pigeons as part of their leisure time as a hobby.

Locals are also delighted to witness Rashed's success with the pigeon farm and many of them are showing interest in rearing pigeon.

Touhidul Islam, a resident of the area, said Rashed's farm has become popular among locals. "Local youths are being inspired to rear pigeon to maintain their livelihoods."

Pirojpur municipality Councillor Shahidul Islam said rearing pigeons can play an important role in helping youths stay off drug addiction while at the same time earn their own pocket money.

"Youths at present are getting hooked on different drugs as they are hardly involved in constructive extracurricular activities," he also said.

Malta farming gaining popularity in Moulvibazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Malta is gaining popularity in Moulvibazar. Successful yield of malta brings substantial amount of money to the farmers.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), the delicious fruit is cultivated locally. Many in the district are now showing interest in cultivating organic malta for commercial purposes.

Farmer Al Amin of Munshibazar in Rajnagar upazila of Moulvibazar said he started cultivating malta in 2017 following the advice of the DAE.

"I hope I can sell malta for lakhs of taka in one season," he said.

Another farmer of Moulvibazar Sadar upazila Humayun Kabir said he is expecting to get four maunds of malta from his garden this year.

Al Amin said, "I started cultivating Malta on 60 decimals of land in Nandiura village of Rajnagar upazila. The DAE provided him with 180 malta saplings of Bari-1 variety. I spent Tk three lakh for the cultivation. I have taken several trainings on malta cultivation from the Department of Agricultural Extension."

"I also visited Malta gardens in different districts. This time I have also started selling fruits

from malta garden. In the first step, I sold two maunds of malta at Tk 150 per kg," he said.

Local buyers are buying 5-10 kg of malta from him, Al Amin said.

According to the Moulvibazar office of the Department of Agricultural Extension, this hilly district is suitable for malta cultivation. But local farmers are not familiar with this crop. Someone may have planted a couple of malta saplings in the yard as a hobby.

It added that no one had any idea of commercial farming. In this situation, the department of agriculture took initiative to cultivate malta in the district by bringing some saplings from Jaintapur Agricultural Research Institute in Sylhet.

Kazi Lutful Bari, deputy director of DAE in Moulvibazar, said they trained the unemployed youths and encouraged them to cultivate malta by providing free saplings.

The DD added that there are 275 malta gardens in Moulvibazar. Malta has been cultivated in almost all the upazilas of the district.

They are expecting to produce 480 tonnes of malta this year, he said.

Bari added that many are now interested in cultivating malta as it brings good profit to farmers.



A farmer at his malta orchard in Moulvibazar Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: STAR



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