

Taro stolon a boon for Joypurhat farmers

KONGKON KARMAKER

Taro stolon, which is “Kochur Loti” in Bangla, has turned into a boon for farmers of Panchbibi upazila of Joypurhat as its consumption has slowly grown locally and internationally over the years.

Demand for this popular vegetable has also been met for it being a cost-effective crop for growers. The cash crop is now a brand crop of Joypurhat.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) of Joypurhat, the vegetable produced in different villages of Panchbibi upazila in the district is being exported to 25 countries.

The DAE officials said the soil and weather of Joypurhat were very much favourable for cultivating “Bari Lotiraj-1”, a variety developed by Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute (Bari).

It is high yielding, cost-effective, and can be produced nearly round the year, said the farmers.

The DAE officials said 1,250 hectares of land were utilised in Panchbibi upazila this year, with the production target set at around 70,000 metric tonnes, of which some 40 per cent were expected to be exported.

Farmers Lutfar Rahman, Amir Ali, Habibur Rahman, and Sanwar Hossain of Patabuka village in Panchbibi upazila, started cultivating Bari Lotiraj-1 on a trial basis in 1991.

It turned out to be pretty profitable, which prompted them to continue cultivating the crop.

More farmers in the upazila started getting interested in cultivating the vegetable for its high demand.

Monwar Hossain, a farmer of Keshabpur village in Panchbibi upazila of Joypurhat, said he has been producing the vegetable on a big ha of land for the last 20 years.

“I never suffered losses,” he said, adding that it was the safest crop to cultivate in terms of an assured return.

He said he invested Tk 30,000



Panchbibi upazila of Joypurhat expects around 70,000 metric tonnes of taro stolon or “Kochur Loti” to be produced this year, of which some 40 per cent were expected to be exported to countries, including the US, Australia, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia and Singapore. The photo was taken at the area’s local wholesale market Bottoli Bazar last month.

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DISTRICTS IN FOCUS

and made sales of Tk 1.1 lakh so far. “It is easily possible to earn Tk 5,000 per week by selling the vegetable,” he said.

Sweet Ahmed, another farmer of Aymarassulpur village of Panchbibi upazila, said the vegetable had turned into a boon for farmers of the upazila, changing the fortunes of many.

“Once the plants start providing yields, there is no significant costs to be borne by farmers,” he said.

During a recent visit to different villages in the upazila, including Bagjana, Dharanji, Shimultoli,

Dargapara, Aymarassulpur, Balighata, Koria and Belpukur, the correspondent found the vegetable being cultivated in large areas. Farmers were seen busy in their cropland from morning till afternoon.

Early morning every day, the farmers harvested the vegetable and brought it to wholesale market Bottoli Bazar for sale. The market remains open till noon every day.

Each kilogramme sells for Tk 25 to Tk 35, depending on quality.

Talking to The Daily Star, farmers said they had suffered

massive losses for the disruption to transportation due to the Covid-19 induced lockdowns since the infection hit the country in March last year.

But nowadays the situation has improved a lot, said farmers.

Md Chanchal, a wholesale trader, said buyers from other districts, mostly from Dhaka, Chattagram and Sylhet, and Barishal, come to the wholesale market.

The vegetable is exported to different countries, including the US, Australia, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia and Singapore.

SM Meftahul Bari, deputy director of the DAE Joypurhat office, said the vegetable was already being exported to 25 countries while his office had proposed setting up a plant for processing the vegetable for export.

How diaspora can support Bangladesh’s development



FARUQUE HASSAN

An estimated 13 million Bangladeshis are living abroad, temporarily and permanently, in as many as 162 countries. With the number, Bangladeshis are the sixth-largest group of migrants in the world.

They migrated for a varied number of reasons – jobs, education, improved standard of living etc. Whatever might be the reasons for their departure, they still feel connected to their roots- their country of origin, their motherland Bangladesh.

They may be a thousand miles away from Bangladesh, but their homeland occupies a special place in their hearts. With this deep attachment and connection comes interest and passion for the development of their homeland.

A recent example would aptly mirror the fact. Bangladeshis living in Australia have applied to the parliament of the country to send 50 million vaccines to Bangladesh as a gift. They are leaving no stone unturned to help Bangladesh at a time when the country has been battling to cope with the surge in Covid-19 infections. They are making efforts out of their true love for Bangladesh, for their friends and families still living in Bangladesh and the fellow countryman. This type of assistance from the non-resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) is essential for prompt recovery from the pandemic of the century.

In another instance, the Bangladeshi community living abroad strongly protested when an English web series included a dialogue that unjustifiably undermined the “Made in Bangladesh” brand. This is also a testimony to their deep attachment, pride and love for Bangladesh.

Bangladeshi expatriates, particularly those who are living aboard on a temporary basis as migrant workers, have been playing a crucial role in the development of Bangladesh by sending their earned money back to their home country. Not

only this money is supporting hundreds of thousands of families in Bangladesh but also contributing to the country’s economic development.

The remittances they sent pushed Bangladesh’s foreign currency reserves past \$46 billion this year. Foreign reserve is important to pay import bills and maintain the balance of payment, and it’s one of the important factors of the country’s credit rating.

Despite the impacts of Covid-19, which adversely impacted remittance flows globally last year, Bangladesh received \$24.78 billion in the last fiscal year as remittance.

On the other hand, many Bangladeshis and their off-springs are permanently residing in different countries, and they have become an essential part of the host nations. Many NRBs have higher levels of education, special skills, technical expertise, and significantly higher incomes.

Many of them are well-established businesspeople having considerable investments in their countries of residence, while many hold influential positions in governments as politicians and members of parliaments.

Besides, a lot of Bangladeshis are renowned scientists, academicians and researchers. They proved their mettle and established themselves as successful in their respective fields.



OPINION

Even the second and third generation of NRBs are securing laudable positions in many countries across the globe.

For instance, we can pompously mention three Bangladeshi women living abroad who have made us feel proud, honoured and delighted in the recent weeks: Sadia Khanom, who invented a disinfectant spray that kills pathogens; Kishwar Chowdhury, a Bangladeshi contestant who secured third place in the MasterChef Australia competition; and Azmeri Haque Badhon, who stole the limelight at the Cannes Film Festival for her movie, “Rehana Maryam Noor”. All of these achievements were inspiring and proud moments for us.

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GLOBAL BUSINESS

Toyota to spend \$13.5b for battery tech by 2030

REUTERS, Tokyo

Toyota Motor Corp mentioned on Tuesday it expects to spend greater than \$13.5 billion by 2030 to develop batteries and its battery provide system – a bid to steer in the important thing automotive expertise over the following decade.

The world’s largest automaker by quantity, which pioneered hybrid gasoline-electric autos with the favored Prius, is now shifting quickly to ship its first all-electric line-up subsequent 12 months.

Thought of a pacesetter in creating batteries for electrical autos, Toyota mentioned it goals to slash the price of its batteries by 30 per cent or extra by engaged on the supplies used and the way in which the cells are structured.



Employees walk at the Toyota Motor Corp new plant in Apaseo El Grande in Mexico’s central state of Guanajuato, Mexico.

REUTERS/FILE

“Then, for the automobile, we goal to enhance energy consumption, which is an indicator of the quantity of electrical energy used per kilometer, by 30 per cent, beginning with the Toyota bZ4X,” Chief Know-how Officer Masahiko Maeda informed a briefing, referring to an upcoming compact SUV mannequin.

The corporate can be the entrance runner to mass produce solid-state batteries – a possible sport changer for automakers as a result of their extra vitality dense, cost quicker and are much less vulnerable to catching fireplace. If developed efficiently, they might substitute liquid lithium-ion batteries.

Whereas it was nonetheless battling the quick service life of those cells, Maeda mentioned there was no change in Toyota’s goal to start manufacturing solid-state batteries by the mid-2020s.

“We’re nonetheless looking for the perfect supplies to make use of,” he mentioned.

Efforts to mass produce solid-state batteries have stumbled as they’re costly to manufacture and are vulnerable to crack after they broaden and contract throughout use. Toyota additionally plans to make use of solid-state batteries in hybrid electrical autos such because the Prius, it mentioned.

Indian growers gather outside Delhi to protest farm laws

REUTERS, New Delhi

Thousands of Indian farmers gathered in a large grain market outside New Delhi on Tuesday, protesting new agricultural laws they say threaten their livelihoods and actions by police during similar demonstrations last week.

“A large number of farmers are attending the meeting to ask the government to punish those responsible for using force against unarmed and elderly farmers,” said Balbir Singh Rajewal, a senior farmers’ leader.

The grain market where farmers were meeting on Tuesday is about 150km from New Delhi, in neighbouring Haryana state.

Farmers will also organise demonstrations at major government offices in Haryana to press their demands, Rajewal said.

“The use of excess, disproportionate force was not only brutal, but it was also a vengeful act,” he said.

Last month, about 10 farmers were injured after police resorted to baton



People arrive to attend a Maha Panchayat or grand village council meeting as part of a farmers’ protest against farm laws in Muzaffarnagar in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, India on September 5.

REUTERS

China’s economy gets welcome boost from strong Aug exports

REUTERS, Beijing

China’s exports unexpectedly grew at a faster pace in August thanks to solid global demand, helping take some of the pressure off the world’s second-biggest economy as it navigates its way through headwinds from several fronts.

The Asian giant had staged an impressive recovery from a coronavirus-battered slump.

But economic momentum has weakened recently due to the Delta variant-driven Covid-19 outbreaks, high raw material prices, slowing factory activity, tighter measures to tame hot property prices and a campaign to reduce carbon emissions.

Shipments from the world’s biggest exporter in August rose 25.6 per cent year-on-year, picking up speed from a 19.3 per cent gain in July, customs data showed today, pointing to some resilience in China’s industrial sector.

Analysts polled by Reuters had forecast growth of 17.1 per cent.

“While near-term headwinds

remain, supply constraints in China have eased and we think the global economic recovery will continue to underpin China’s exports later this year and in 2022,” said Louis Kuijs, head of Asia economics at Oxford Economics.

Exports from neighbouring countries also showed encouraging growth last month, with South Korean shipments accelerating on strong overseas demand.

The shipments breakdown showed a broad-based uptick across all goods types, said Sheana Yue, assistant economist at Capital Economics.

“In particular, the rebound in Chinese-made consumer goods such as electronics, furniture and recreational products possibly reflected retailers in advanced economies replenishing their inventories ahead of the Christmas shopping season,” said Yue.

Meanwhile, some of the port gridlock appears to have cleared in a boost to China’s shippers

last month. The eastern coastal ports have suffered congestion as a terminal at the country’s second biggest container port shut down for two weeks due to a Covid-19 case. That put further pressure on global supply chains already struggling with a shortage

of container vessels and high raw material prices.

The stretched global shipping capacity has left many boxes of finished goods piled up on Chinese factory floors, a factor set to bump up Chinese export numbers over coming months,



REUTERS/FILE

Containers are seen at the Yangshan Deep-Water Port in Shanghai, China.

said Meng Xianglong, founder of Heji Trade & Credit Research Centre based in the port city of Ningbo.

“I think it’s expected that China’s robust export growth will extend until the end of this year (around Christmas) or even into the beginning of the next year,” Meng said, adding that some factories are fully booked until the first quarter of 2022.

However, behind the robust headline figures, businesses are struggling on the ground.

Companies faced increasing pressure in August as factory activity expanded at a slower pace while the services sector slumped into contraction. A global semiconductor shortage has added to the strains on exporters.

The country appears to have largely contained the latest coronavirus outbreaks of the more infectious Delta variant, but it prompted measures including mass testing for millions of people as well as travel restrictions of varying degrees in August.