

Hazrat Ali, a hero of the soil

SHYKH SERAJ

It was the first week of March 2020, and the coronavirus wasn't detected in Bangladesh at that time. The first Covid-19 infected patient was confirmed on March 8, 2020. After a few days, someone called me saying, 'My name is Hazrat, I would like to talk to you for a minute.' I still remember his voice. The sharp and confident voice with a local dialect represented the voice of the soil. I talked with him for an hour or so. I listened to his story with much contemplation and the story of the young man named Hazrat Ali Akand, amazed me. He was crying when he was sharing his journey to agricultural success. Hazrat started from zero and came to farm 832 varieties of fruits on 775 bighas (256.19 acres) of land and was requesting me to visit his farm in Sherpur.

Dear readers, today, I will tell you the incredible story of Hazrat, a hero of the soil.

I told Hazrat, after the Covid-19 situation gets better, I will visit his place. I finally met Hazrat in August, this year. The story of Hazrat's life is like a story of a film. He was born in a poor family at Kuturakanda village in Sherpur. He spent most of his childhood either starving or half fed. He worked at other's farms and used to get one meal a day. 'I couldn't continue my school after second grade as my father didn't have any the ability to meet my educational expenses', said Hazrat. His uncle told him to go to the capital and he thought Dhaka would be



Hazrat Ali Akand talks with Shykh Seraj at his fruit orchard in Sherpur Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

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.



his final destination if he had to survive. He took a shirt and pant from his father and moved to Dhaka. The new war of survival started for Hazrat. Job in a grocery store in Jatrabari didn't go well for him. After seven months, he lost his job. He tried to work at a garments factory. That didn't go well for him as well. He used to sleep wherever he could. To survive, he started to sell fruits as a street vendor. He rented a shop to sell fruit. Another relative lent him Tk 20,000 (USD 233.39) to buy fruits for his shop. 'I will never be able to repay her debt', said Hazrat about his relative. He dreamed of turning around in the city with a new hope. He managed the shop, cooked his food. There was no money to rent a place to stay. His business started expanding while he built another grocery store. Then he started a wholesale business of grocery products. He now has a large storehouse for grocery products. Moreover, he has 25 trucks to send the grocery goods across the country. 'I watched many of your programmes on YouTube and

ran to the place, where there was a sign of hope', said Hazrat. 'I have built different orchards of fruits by watching your inspiring videos on social media,' added Hazrat. I was listening to Hazrat very attentively at his home in Sherpur. He was crying as well as smiling while narrating his story. I was also getting equally reminiscent of his stories.

Hazrat then took me to his 12 orchards, one after the other, built on about 775 bighas of land in four unions of Sherpur. First I went to his malta orchard in Rouha union, an overwhelming one, indeed. In the middle of the orchard, he was cultivating grapes and passion fruits, as well. Hazrat's farm in the four unions include 137 bighas (45.28 acres) in Jangaldi, 168 bighas (55.53 acres) in Raghunathpur, 153 bighas (50.57 acres) in Badshala and 317 bighas (104.79) in Rouha union. These are almost all the mixed-fruit orchards. He also has nursery and fish farm. He has an organic fertilizer business, poultry and dairy,

and livestock farms. High-value fruits are abundant including malta, papaya, orange, lemon, guava at his orchards. Hazrat has a plan to build a family farm in the future as he saw in one of my programmes on underwood family farm in the USA. Hazrat says, he has 283 varieties of fruits at his orchards. He also pays close attention to the preservation of mother plants and fruit tree saplings. Hazrat says he has 19,000 malta trees in his orchard. On average, 80 kg malta from each tree will allow him to achieve the annual trade of about Tk 14 crore (USD 16,334,906) from the orchard. Sitting in his orchard, located at Rouha village in Sherpur Sadar upazila, I was getting surprised after listening to the incredible tales of Hazrat's success.

The larger the scope, the greater his dream. Every initiative is taken in a planned method. There are emotions. But there are also goose bumping commercial agricultural success around the country. With the expansion of the orchard, Hazrat has been making

various fruit tree saplings. He also has a well-arranged business plan for rooftop farming. He understands very well that the rooftop farming initiative is spreading. He has primarily started his rooftop initiative in the orchard. Hazrat is a very extraordinary young man. But his understanding is very clear. He did not rush to compose his success but worked silently and efficiently. Success is in his hands now. He remains the same man, the same ordinary farmer who became a hero of the soil. Many people have been inspired by Hazrat to move into the farming profession and they have earned success and moving onward with new agricultural ventures. Hazrat is a successful person to the elders of his family, too. He is now in everyone's place of pride.

Hazrat has proved that money is not the last word in life. He has returned to the soil and crops not only for financial gain but also for life. I believe the power of humans will let us see innumerable examples like Hazrat Ali Akand.

Fire guts 100 shops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

At least 100 shops were gutted in a devastating fire at a warehouse in New Market area of the town.

On information, six firefighting units from Patuakhali, Kalapara, Barishal's Barekganj and Barguna's

Amtali rushed to the spot and doused the blaze after a two hours of frantic effort.

The traders said the extent of loss caused by the fire could go up to Tk one crore.

They said the fire broke out in the market's hardware lane and soon engulfed the adjacent shops.

Meanwhile, Ismail Hossain of Patuakhali Fire Station fell ill while controlling the fire and was admitted to Patuakhali Medical College Hospital.

3 of a family die from electrocution

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Three members of a family, including a couple, died from electrocution in Khalaijuri upazila of Netrakona.

The victims were identified as Ayub Ali, 50, his wife Abeda Akter, 40, and their daughter Pinky Akter, 25, police said.

The couple's another two-year-old daughter also sustained injuries during the incident.

Quoting local people, Officer in Charge (OC) of Khalaijuri Police Station Mujibur Rahman said Ayub came in contact with a live electric wire while he was watering walls of his under construction house using an electric water pump around 12:30pm.

Hearing Ayub's screams, Abeda and Pinky rushed to the spot to save him, but they also got electrocuted and they all died on the spot.



Farmers preparing organic pesticide with fruits plucked from mahogany trees found in the village. The photo was taken recently at Uttar Kalikapur village in Kishoreganj upazila of Nilphamari. PHOTO: EAM ASADUZZAMAN

Organic pesticides catching on

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Use of organic pesticides on crops is gaining popularity among farmers in Uttar Kalikapur village in Kishoreganj upazila, as their insecticidal ingredients are non-toxic to consumers as well as to honey bees and many other beneficial insects.

Besides, easy preparation methods and low-cost ingredients of organic pesticides help reduce cost of agricultural production, farmers in the village said.

Ever since they started applying organic pesticides, more and more health-conscious consumers are visiting the village to buy organic produce from them, the farmers also said.

While visiting Uttar Kalikapur recently, many of the villagers were seen busy preparing organic pesticide with fruits plucked from mahogany trees found in the village.

Most of them were peeling off outer shells of the fruits while a woman was mashing the inner flesh of the fruit in a traditional wooden hand mortar.

The homemade organic pesticide effectively kills various crop pests such as grasshopper, swarming caterpillar (leda poka), stem borer (mazra poka) and leaf roller (pata morano).

Farmer Ataur Rahman said initially, a paste would be made by mixing some water with about five kilograms of the mashed fruit.

The paste would be left in a bucket for five to seven days. Once it is fermented, some detergent powder and more water would be added to make it into a solution to be sprayed on crops, he added.

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Abdul Mannan, a farmer from the village.

He said he saw the result firsthand after using it in his aubergine field on one bigha land.

Powdered neem, papaya and tobacco leaves can also be used to prepare organic pesticides, said several other farmers.

Inufa Begum, a farmer from the village, said she got good results after she applied organic pesticide four times on her Aman rice field on 24 decimals of land.

This saved her Tk 1,000 that she would otherwise spend on harmful chemical pesticides, she also said.

Officials at the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Kishoreganj said they have been getting good response from farmers when they arrange training programmes on preparation of organic pesticides. They have been organising the training programmes to ensure production of safe food for all by reviving the age-old practice of using natural ingredients to kill pests, said Tushar Kanti Roy, an agriculture officer at the DAE.

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি, বাংলাদেশ
(বাংলাদেশের একমাত্র পাবলিক মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি)
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Department of Agricultural Extension
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E-GP Tender Notice

Tender ID	Brief Description of Goods and Related Service	Tender Publication	Last Selling	Tender Security Submission	Closing & Opening
616277	Supply of Fumigant Aluminium Phosphide 56% in tubes	05-Oct-2021 14:00	20-Oct-2021 16:00	21-Oct-2021 11:00	21-Oct-2021 12:00

The above mentioned tender is an online tender, where e tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline copies will be accepted. To Submit e-Tender register in the e-GP portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd). The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents of the mentioned package from the national e-GP portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank by up to particular date specified on the tender notice. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP portal and e-GP help desk.

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