



Farmer Nazrul Islam attending his Tween plants in his orchard at Dadpur village in Jhenidah's Kaliganj upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Jhenidah farmer finds success in Tween cultivation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A farmer has found success in commercial cultivation of Tween fruit, commonly known as fig, in Kaliganj upazila of Jhenidah.

Nazrul Islam, 50, the son of Sher Ali Mandol of Dadpur village in the upazila, could not complete his education because of poverty.

He has no land of his own except the homestead. He cultivates land and maintains his family taking the lease of land of others.

Visiting Nazrul's Tween orchard recently, it was found that the trees had borne hundreds of fruits.

He said that he got inspired to cultivate Tween fruits by a relative in Jashore who owns a rooftop garden there. Nazrul collected 50

plants at Tk 20,000 and planted those on his plot on July 15 this year. After four and a half months, he could start harvesting the fruits.

At first, he was very anxious because the fruits were unfamiliar in the area and nobody knew their benefits, he added.

After the news of the cultivation of the fruits spread, local youths thronged on his plantation and expressed their desire to cultivate the fruits. In the meantime, he has sold about 10kg of fruits at Tk 500 per kg.

Nazrul said that the cultivation costs a little. It requires spraying insecticide twice a month.

Except Tween, Nazrul also grows dragon fruits, malta and guava in his orchards.

He has taken a lease of seven bighas of land at Tk 1,00,000 per year. He has cultivated Tween fruits on 16 decimals of land, dragon fruits on two and a half bighas, maltas on two bighas and guava on the rest of the land.

He said that he could not find success in cultivating traditional crops. However, the cultivation of foreign and local varieties of fruits has brought him success.

He has built a one-storey building at Tk eight lakh, which he earned by selling these fruits.

He said that he is planning to expand Tween cultivation in two more orchards in the next year.

A villager, Akmol Hossain, said, "We will collect plants from Nazrul Islam and start Tween cultivation.

It costs a little but it is more profitable."

Dr Md Ashrafuzzaman, associate professor at the Department of Nutrition and Food Technology of Jashore Science and Technology University, said that Tween fruits promote digestive health. They act as a natural laxative because of their high fibre content. It is rich in antioxidants which prevent ageing and reduce hair loss.

Kaliganj upazila Agriculture Officer Shikdar Md Mohimen Akhtar said that Tween farming is very profitable. The soil of Jhenidah is very conducive to it. The fruits have been cultivated on around five to six bighas of land in Kaliganj upazila this year.

Gorai devours vast arable land in Rajbari

The erosion intensifies with receding water level

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

With the receding water level in the Gorai river, erosion has taken a serious turn at five villages under Jangal union in Rajbari's Baliakandi upazila, devouring fresh areas including vast arable land in the last couple of days.

The fresh erosion is also threatening a portion of a flood protection embankment close to the affected villages.

Affected villagers said erosion by the Gorai river has continued devouring vast fresh areas at Potora, Olankarpur, Sonakador, Baorda and Somadhinagar villages under the union, stretching about two and half kilometres area.

Nearly 50 bighas of arable land with standing crops on it have already been washed away by the river in the last one week, locals said, adding that a flood protection embankment nearby the villages is also facing treat of being devoured due to the erosion.

Farmer Mokarram Hossain, 60, of Olankarpur village said, "I have cultivated onion, vegetable and onion seedbed on my two bighas of land, spending Tk 46,000 this year. But

the untimely erosion has devoured everything I had."

Murad Hossain Mollah, 33, another farmer from the village, said "I have cultivated onion on 50 decimals of land spending Tk 40,000, but my entire land went into the riverbed in the last couple of days."

Zahidur Rahim, 53, of Potora village, said less than a week time all their land went to the river womb and they had nothing to do.

Grower Motiar Rahman, 35, of the village said, "Our area is famous for onion cultivation and after losing our onion fields we are in huge trouble now.

Kollol Kumar Basu, newly elected chairman of Jungle Union Parishad, said he already visited the erosion-hit areas and informed the matter to the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) and Baliakandi upazila parishad chairman to take step to check the erosion.

Sub Divisional Engineer of Rajbari Water Development Board (WDB) MA Shamim said he has already informed his higher authority of the matter and hope they would take step in this regard soon.

Another win for transport

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of holding the latter licence, the driver could apply for a heavy-vehicle licence, which includes buses and trucks.

But as per the relaxed requirement, light-vehicle drivers can apply for medium-vehicle driving licence if they have professional licence and one-year experience. Holders of medium-vehicle driving licence can apply for heavy-vehicle driving licence if they have the same experience.

Moreover, those with professional driving licence for light vehicles and one-year experience can now drive medium vehicles till June 2022. Similarly, those with professional driving licence for medium vehicles can operate heavy vehicles till the date.

The new circular cited the shortage of drivers with licence for driving heavy and medium vehicles.

Relaxing the experience requirement for licences of heavy vehicles was one of the major demands of transport workers when they enforced strikes in November 2019, protesting the implementation of the Road

Transport Act-2018.

They placed the demands as the new law stipulated stricter punishment for operating heavy vehicles with light-vehicle licence, a very common phenomenon of the country's road transport sector.

The government in August 2018 relaxed the experience requirement for getting heavy and medium-sized vehicle driving licences. The government then extended the tenure on several occasions.

Prof Hadiuzzaman said the wholesale relaxation of requirement would increase the risk of road crashes, because a driver with medium-vehicle licence and only a year of experience can get a heavy-vehicle licence. But only a skilled and experienced drivers should get heavy-vehicle licences, he said.

He added that the involvement of heavy vehicles in road crashes rose to 44.5 percent in 2020 from 43 percent in 2019. The relaxation of requirement of getting heavy-vehicle licence is one of the reason behind the rise.

Rohingya

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was later killed because the kidnappers did not receive the ransom, he said.

"Three people were arrested in a raid on E-3 block of Rohingya Camp-14 in Ukha on Saturday morning," Shihab Kaiser told reporters. The arrestees had previously been charged with a variety of crimes.

During interrogation, they confessed to kidnapping Amin in January. The abductors demanded a ransom of Tk 80,000 from his relatives at the time.

As they did not receive the money, around 25 miscreants, led by Mohammad Shukkur, killed Amin and later buried him in an abandoned house.

"On information from the arrestees, a mutilated body was recovered from the house of one Yakub in the presence of officials concerned from the Rohingya camp administration," the APBN commander added.

Hasna Bashari, the victim's wife, arrived at the scene and identified her husband's body.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Ahmed Sanjur Morshed, officer-in-charge of Ukha Police Station, said a case has been filed in this regard and the body was sent to the Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy yesterday morning.

Treasure

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possible, a very special sequence of events had to take place in a short time," geologist Grzegorz Pienkowski said in a statement.

Several hundred dinosaur tracks, representing at least seven species, have been found and geologists say they are likely to find more.

They have also discovered bone fragments from animals and fish.

US Senate confirms new

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On July 9 this year, President Joe Biden named Peter Haas the new nominee for US ambassador to Bangladesh.

Haas is the acting assistant secretary and principal deputy assistant secretary at the US Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs.

He also worked as deputy assistant secretary for Trade Policy and Negotiations and served as head of the US Consulate General in Mumbai, India.

Haas has also served as the chargé d'affaires and deputy permanent representative at

the US mission to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and economic counsellor at the US Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Other diplomatic postings of Peter Haas include London, Rabat, Washington, Port-au-Prince and Berlin.

He holds a BA in International Studies and German from Illinois Wesleyan University. He attended the London School of Economics as a Marshall Scholar, where he earned MSc (Econ) degrees in both Politics of the World Economy and Comparative Government.

Gang of RMG thieves busted

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Hossain, 38; Hanif, 37; Nazrul Islam, 20; and Abul Kashem, 21.

Efforts are on to arrest the other suspects, including the lorry's driver, part of the organised gang, said Shahidur Rahman, additional deputy commissioner of DB's Khilgaon Zonal Team.

Like Manta's, export consignments of other garment manufacturers are increasingly getting intercepted en route to the Chattogram Port every day by organised gangs with the assistance of the lorry driver and helper.

In the first seven months of this year, there have been 22 instances of highway theft, according to the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association's records.

The actual tally of incidence of such theft would be higher as many exporters do not report them to the police for fear of losing buyers' confidence and possibly work orders, said industry insiders.

In 2019 there were nine incidents of theft, up from two in the previous year.

The gangs, comprising of unscrupulous buyers and clearing and forwarding agents, then smuggle the stolen items to Nepal, Bhutan and African countries.

The gangs steal 30-35 percent of the products from cartoons every day, re-seal the cartoons and then deliver them to the port as scheduled, Akter said at the press briefing.

Omicron cases

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government support - as Covid-19 hospital admissions in the city rose by nearly 30% this week, reports Reuters.

He said health worker absences had also increased. "This is a statement of how serious things are," he said.

Khan, from the opposition Labour Party, also declared a major incident in January, when rising Covid-19 cases threatened to overwhelm hospitals.

The health secretary, Sajid Javid, has made clear that tougher Covid restrictions could be imposed in England before Christmas.

Speaking on the BBC's Andrew Marr Show, Javid stressed that it was already clear that Omicron spread very quickly, adding that there were likely to be many more

cases than official data is showing.

The Omicron variant is estimated to account for more than 80% of new Covid-19 cases in London, officials said.

Germany's health authority announced late Saturday that Britain had been added to its list of Covid high-risk countries, which will mean tighter travel restrictions.

Johnson was due to chair an emergency committee meeting yesterday with the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which have their own powers over public health.

A report in The Times newspaper said officials were preparing draft rules which, if introduced, would ban indoor mixing in England -- except for work -- for two weeks after Christmas when pubs and restaurants would be limited to outdoor table service.

People will

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At a brief rally before the procession, BNP leaders and activists demanded their party Chairperson Khaleda's treatment abroad.

Fakhrul said the current government shattered all the hopes and aspirations and the spirit of the Liberation War to establish a one-party Baksal rule "usurping" the state power.

"Today's programme is for awaking people afresh and waging a new struggle for the restoration of democracy."

"Let's make a good start of a movement through this programme, to free our leader Begum Khaleda Zia and ensure her proper treatment ... through this movement, we'll be able to establish a truly democratic state by restoring democracy in the country and we'll be able to restore our human rights," he said.

Fakhrul renewed their party's demand for allowing Khaleda to go abroad for advanced treatment.

The BNP leader said it is unfortunate for the nation that a government has been there in power by force using the state machinery even after 50 years of the country's independence. "They [government] have destroyed everything we achieved -- our sovereignty, our freedom, our right to vote, our right to write, our right to speak."

The nation celebrated the 51st Victory Day on Thursday by paying deep homage to the martyrs of the Liberation War and taking an oath to build the country as a developed, prosperous and non-communal "Sonar Bangla".

This year's Victory Day has special significance as it coincided with the celebrations of the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the golden jubilee of the country's independence.

Bangladesh cannot, should

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officials, and observations on the island, that considerable resources have also been put into constructing the facilities on Bhasan Char," the Special Rapporteur said.

Because of the remote location of Bhasan Char, and the nascent humanitarian programming on the island, he said, "I would urge the government of Bangladesh to make sure services that can meet the projected needs of the increased population are firmly in place before relocating more refugees, including, especially greater freedom of movement."

He welcomed the commitments made in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the UN and urged they be put into practice."

The UN Special Rapporteur said he will do everything in his capacity to push for a stronger, more coordinated international response to this crisis, including the imposition of pressure on the Myanmar military and for concrete measures to hold the military junta fully accountable for this crisis.

"Bangladesh saved untold numbers of lives when it opened its arms and hearts to Rohingya people who survived these most unspeakable horrors inflicted on them by the Myanmar military. All who value human rights owe Bangladesh a debt of gratitude."

During his mission, the UN expert met refugees in Cox's Bazar refugee camps in Bangladesh as well as some of those relocated to Bhasan Char Island.

"For the Rohingya, we must ensure their safe, sustainable and voluntary return to their homeland in Myanmar, noted Andrews," he said.

"Nearly every Rohingya person I spoke

with on this mission, whether in the Kutapalong Camps or on Bhasan Char, wants to return home as soon as they can do so voluntarily, safely, sustainably, and with dignity," he said.

Andrews offered many initial observations and recommendations formed during his mission.

Andrews stressed that the areas that emerged during his mission as particularly important for the Rohingya community include security, educational opportunity, access to health care, the creation of sustainable livelihood opportunities, and, especially with respect to Bhasan Char, the importance of the principles of voluntariness and freedom of movement.

"I firmly believe—and am offering as my most important finding and recommendation—that successfully addressing each of these key areas is in the interest not only of the Rohingya community but of everyone who shares the goal of a successful and sustained repatriation of the Rohingya community back to where they most want to go, home."

The Special Rapporteur commended Bangladesh for its partnership in accountability measures and noted how critical it was that "the rights and dignity of the Rohingya people be respected, protected and promoted."

Education and livelihoods, including in particular programmes for women and girls, also provide a meaningful outlet for refugees to live dignified lives.

Andrews highlighted, "Education will provide Rohingya youth with opportunities that could deter them from negative coping mechanisms, reducing security vulnerabilities in the camps, and reducing security vulnerabilities for all."

2nd death anniversary of Fazle

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remote area of the Sylhet division 48 years ago is today providing services to more than 100 million people in 12 countries of Asia and Africa.

Brac now stands as a unique ecosystem interweaving microfinance, social enterprises, university, bank and multidimensional investments targeting the development of the poor and marginalised people, said a press statement.

For his outstanding contributions to empowering people living in poverty and inequality and assisting them in bringing lasting changes in their lives, Sir Fazle has been honoured with numerous national and international awards.

These include the Yidan Prize for Education Development in 2019, LEGO Prize in 2018, World Food Prize in 2015, Spanish Order of Civil Merit in 2014, Inaugural WISE Prize for Education in 2011, David Rockefeller Bridging Leadership Award in 2008, Inaugural Clinton Global

Citizen Award in 2007, UNDP Mahbubul Haq Award for Outstanding Contribution to Human Development in 2004, Olof Palme Prize in 2001 and Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership in 1980.

In 2010, Sir Fazle was appointed Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George by the British Crown in recognition of his services to reducing poverty in Bangladesh and internationally. In addition, he was honoured with a Dutch Knighthood in 2019.

Sir Fazle was a member of the Group of Eminent Persons appointed by the UN Secretary-General in 2010 to advise on support for the least-developed countries.

In 2014 and 2017, he was named one of Fortune Magazine's World's 50 Greatest Leaders.

The many honorary degrees received by him include those from Princeton University (2014), the University of Oxford (2009), Columbia University (2008) and Yale University (2007).