

Imran shines in flower, fruits

SHYKH SERAJ

Twenty five year old Imran Hossain is an exuberant young man. The cheerful youth, whom I met in September this year, from Samair village in Savar's Birulia has an inspiring spur in his eyes. After finishing his studies, Imran did not run after any job rather he joined his family farm. He has been cultivating roses on 7 bighas of land (2.3 acres). Standing in his rose field, I asked Imran, "After finishing your studies, why didn't you focus on job and how did you join the flower cultivation?" Imran's answer was, "For self-reliance." If you join a job, you have to work under other people.

"It is possible to bring any farming initiative to a sustainable level if it works according to the plan," added Imran. I understand Imran is calculating his working life meticulously. Many young people today are learning to think in that way and it is a matter of hope, shaped with perfect calculation.

Savar, on the outskirts of the capital, has changed a lot. Now, it's also known for rose cultivation. Flowers mean prosperity as it has changed fortunes of many in the region. Almost all the villages under three unions--Shyampur, Bongaon, Birulia--have turned into 'flower villages'. Rose cultivation is going on everywhere, from farmland to the farmer's backyard. Remember, the revolution of floriculture in the area started around two decades ago. At first, a couple of visionary farmers started flower farming. Then one by one, everyone joined this profitable cultivation. Like Godkhali in Jashore, which is often called the flower capital, a revolution has taken place in Savar. Roses are cultivated in hectares of land

here. The story of socio-economic development of many in the region has dramatically changed with colour of flowers. Flowers are now cultivated on a total of about 400 hectares land in Savar. Of the land, only rose alone being cultivated on nearly 350 hectares. Farmers' dreams, initiatives and passion are involved in this expansion of flower cultivation. Thousands of farmers in the three unions are now completely focusing on flower cultivation, especially rose.

I was talking about Imran, who



Shykh Seraj talks to young entrepreneur Imran Hossain at the latter's rose orchard in Samair area under Birulia union in Dhaka's Savar.

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

(USD 163.42) from selling each maund at Tk 700 (USD 8.17) a year. So who is going to cultivate paddy?"

Imran's words reminds me the talk with some farmers and young entrepreneurs in Singair, Manikganj, a few days back. They are changing their destiny by cultivating papaya in paddy fields, while some people do not cultivate paddy at all. They buy rice. Without getting the fair price of their produce year after year, many people are now shifting from paddy cultivation. If this continues, a large

is right next to his flower field. Good yield of malth has supported him a lot during the coronavirus pandemic days. I was really amazed to see Imran's malta orchard which worked as a backup during the bad days.

Imran said he planted 150 malta plants, spending Tk 40,000 (USD 467), about three years ago. In the first year, he got Tk 70,000 and (USD 817) and earns a profit of Tk 30,000 (USD 350). Farmers in Bangladesh are no longer depend on just one crop. Now, they are mastering modern farming

didn't thought twice to be self-reliant. After finishing studies, he started cultivating flowers according to his family tradition. He said flower cultivation has been going on in the area for about 25 to 30 years, he has taken the initiative only seven years back. In the meantime, he succeeded in cultivating Miranda variety of rose on 2.3 acres land. If flowers are calculated from the commercial agriculture point of view, the profit from flowers on one bigha (0.3 acres) of land is two to three times more than that of the paddy cultivation. In particular, this benefit has been confirmed by producing rose on a huge scale, Imran said.

Imran narrates, "A rose plant gives flower for at least 20 years. It is possible to pick 500 to 600 flowers daily from 0.3 acre land. If I can pluck, for example, 500 roses a day that would give me at least Tk 2 (USD 0.012) for each and I can easily earn Tk 1,000 (USD 11.67) every day. So, Tk 30,000 (USD 350.19) per month from one bigha land is guaranteed. On the other hand, from the same amount of land a farmer yields 800kg (20 maunds) paddy, which gives him Tk 14,000

number of farmers may move away from paddy cultivation, which is also a matter of concern.

By the mid-September, the hard impact of COVID-19, however, had just begun to subside. The previous year, I have seen extreme misery of flower growers across the country. Field after fields of flowers got ruined and florists had to count huge loss. This year, with the return to normal life, socio-economic activities have started blooming once again. Flower growers are also getting fair prices again. Imran said now the flower market has become quite strong. They are selling each rose starting from Tk 6 (USD 0.07). I asked Imran, "What was the extent of your loss? And how did you handle it?"

Confident Imran said, "Five years back, I saw one of your videos in which one Reboti Sikder of Pirojpur was cultivating malta. After seeing the video, I told my grandfather to give me some land where I want to cultivate malta. Hearing my proposal, my grandpa was confused. Then I showed him your video and he was surprised, but got the confidence. He gave me some land to cultivate malta." Imran's malta orchard

methods and transforming themselves by planting new fruit crops. The key to productive ventures is now in the hands of young entrepreneurs like Imran. They are setting examples of unimaginable success in the farming sector. Agriculture is growing rapidly with the advent of modern technology and planned investments.

Independent Bangladesh has travelled 50 years of its glorious journey and today is the last day of 2021. We look forward towards a new year and want to see more progress in farming sector. In 50 years, our socio-economic state has changed quite optimistically, where farming sector played a vital role. Over the years we have learned to be self-sufficient, leaving behind foreign aid. We have eliminated hunger. The dream of Sonar Bangla (The Golden Bengal) of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has become a reality with the true leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. And, we promise to build an innovative Bangladesh with the rise of fourth industrial revolution (4IR). Wishing everyone a joyous and healthy new year. Stay well and safe, dear readers.

DSA could be amended

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The minister was replying to queries from reporters at a function, titled "Meet the OCAB", organised by Overseas Correspondent Association Bangladesh, at Abdus Salam Hall of the Jatiya Press Club.

He said, "I have also spoken to the home minister and [we] arrived at a decision that if any journalist is prosecuted under the under, they will not be arrested immediately."

Besides, the government has already formed a cell to examine the merit of any case before it is registered under the DSA. "If the cell does not find the claims [in the complaint] to be satisfactory, the government does not proceed with the case," he said.

"As far as I know, no journalist has been arrested right after a [DSA] case was filed against them in the last six months," he said.

Asked if the government would issue any written directive in this regard, he said, "I have learnt that all police stations have been asked not to arrest any journalist immediately when a case is filed against them."

Speaking at another function organised by the Crime Reporters' Association of Bangladesh (CRAB) on Wednesday, the minister had acknowledged that the DSA was misused and abused.

The minister yesterday was also asked whether the government will disband the Rapid Action Battalion following sanctions imposed by the USA.

He replied, "No sanction was imposed on Rab. A sanction was issued on two persons. The ministries of foreign and home affairs are taking necessary steps in

this regard."

Asked whether the government will constitute any independent commission to probe extrajudicial killings, he repeated that there are no extrajudicial killings in Bangladesh. "The government enquires after each and every incident of offence. If any member of the law enforcement agencies is involved in any crime, appropriate action is taken against them. Everybody has the right to file a case against anybody for committing offences, and law enforcers are not exempted from this."

Anisul also spoke on the need to enact a law that would govern the formation of the Election Commission.

He said while there is need for a law, there is not enough time to do this before the formation of the next EC.

The law will be formulated after discussions with all political parties and other stakeholders, and following a parliamentary debate so that no loophole remains in it, he said. He added that whatever directives the president gives following the conclusion of his ongoing dialogue with political parties, will be accepted by the government.

He also said a bill would be placed in the upcoming winter session of parliament in order to drop a provision from the Evidence Act that allows questioning of the character of a rape victim in court.

OCAB Coordinator Qadir Kallol presided over the function where senior journalist Farid Hossain and OCAB Member Secretary Nazrul Islam Mithu also spoke.

6 members of trafficking

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mother sought their help to rescue her daughter from the gang's clutches.

The gang had earlier taken the victim to Darussalam to traffic her to India.

The arrestees are: leader of the gang Sekander Hossain of Dhaka, Asaduzzaman alias Akash of Jeshore, Noor Mohammad alias Alif of Narsingdi, Bulbuli Begum of Jashore, Rubi Akhter and Koli Akhter of Netrakona.

Rab rescued the victim and recovered some Aadhaar cards, the identification card issued by the Indian government, PAN (permanent account number) cards, mobile phones and fake travel documents.

Rab in a press release said the filing of a case by the victim was under process.

Primary interrogations revealed that Rubi and Koli were once trafficked to India and sold to a dance bar where they remained

confined for four years, Rab said in the press release.

They managed to flee back to Bangladesh, but again tried to go to India with the help of fugitive accused Sohag alias Sagar, who had asked them to lure a victim for the trafficking ring.

They then lured the victim who was rescued on Wednesday night.

Rab said apart from the arrestees, the gang has five to seven more accomplices in Bangladesh while several others including Dipak, Khoka alias Kangkai, Maria and Tamanna are in India.

The gang used to traffic victims through the Benapole border at night with fake documents.

Sekander, the leader of the gang, once worked as a make-up artist in Bangladesh Film Development Corporation.

Sohag had also worked as a make-up artist in the film industry earlier, but left the job and got involved in human trafficking, said the Rab release.

Schools may close

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Hasina again urged everyone to get inoculated against Covid-19 as the government is going to expand vaccination to the grassroots.

"We've already decided to continue vaccination through every community clinic and health centre so that rural people can get the jobs. No one should remain unvaccinated."

Many people are still reluctant to get inoculated, she noted. The government has already vaccinated the teachers of educational institutes and now jobs are being given to students, she said.

The PM said her government gives particular importance to nutrition and mental health awareness of the students.

She said one lakh teachers and officials have been given training on nutrition issues and two lakh teachers on mental health issues.

The north shivers

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place - Sitakunda - can have the maximum and minimum temperatures on the same day, a Met official over the phone said it can happen due to fluctuation in fog and rain.

In Dinajpur, the sky remained overcast all throughout the day and daily wage-earners struggled due to the sudden fall of mercury.

Sumon Miah, an easy-bike driver in the town, said, "It is very difficult to run vehicles in such cold weather. Besides, visibility is very poor due to dense fog. I could not earn money today."

Meanwhile, the numbers of patients infected with cold-related disease are also increasing.

In Lalmoirhat and Kurigram, locals have been suffering for three consecutive days due to severe cold. Villagers were seen burning straws for warmth.

"We don't even have enough money to buy food. How can we buy warm clothes?" said Arzina Bewa, 67, a resident of Jorgach village of Kurigram's Chilmari upazila.

Mohor Ali, 62, a day labourer of Kalmati village in Lalmoirhat Sadar Upazila, said, "It is much too cold to even step outside, so I could not go to work today [yesterday]."

The district administrations have begun distributing blankets among cold-affected people.

EU for arms embargo

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embargo," Borrell said in a statement. "The EU also stands ready to impose further sanctions against the military regime," he added.

His call for an international arms embargo echoed one Tuesday from the United States.

Western nations have long restricted weapons to Myanmar's military, which even during the pre-coup democratic transition faced allegations of crimes against humanity for a bloody campaign against the Rohingya minority.

The UN General Assembly voted in June to prevent arms shipments into Myanmar, but the measure was symbolic as it was not taken up by the more powerful Security Council.

China and Russia, which hold veto power on the Security Council -- as well as neighbouring India -- are the major arms providers to Myanmar.

Myanmar has been in chaos since a military coup in February, with more than 1,300 people killed in a crackdown by security forces, according to a local monitoring group.

Since the coup, the EU has imposed targeted sanctions on the Myanmar military, its leaders and entities.

The bloc also halted EU financial assistance to the government and froze assistance that could be seen as legitimising the military regime.

Borrell said "the targeting of civilians and humanitarian actors is unacceptable and a blatant violation of human rights and international law, including humanitarian law."

He called for "full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to" Myanmar's people while demanding full protection for humanitarian workers and medical personnel.

DU, Gulshan

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Shafiqul said.

Responding to a query on worldwide festivities on the New Year's Eve and the restrictions in Bangladesh, he said, "Let us be educated like them first, then we will celebrate like them."

The DMP chief said there is no security threat centering the New Year's Eve.

Humans

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"There is a certain cost per ton to the surface of Mars where we can afford to establish a self-sustaining city, and above that we cannot afford to do it."

"Right now you couldn't fly to Mars for a trillion dollars; no amount of money could get you a ticket to Mars. So we need to get that above, you know, to get that [to] something that is actually possible at all."

Musk also predicted that Earth will get "too hot for life" in approximately 500 million years, but said that it was "wise for us to act quickly ... just in case".

SpaceX is reportedly facing financial trouble with regards to the Raptor engines that powers Starship.

"The Raptor production crisis is much worse than it seemed a few weeks ago," Musk wrote to SpaceX employees last month, in an email obtained by CNBC.

"We face genuine risk of bankruptcy if we cannot achieve a Starship flight rate of at least once every two weeks next year," Musk also said. SpaceX did not provide comment to either CNBC or The Independent when asked.

The billionaire believes that terraforming - blasting the planet with nuclear weapons at its poles to cause the ice caps to melt and induce accelerated warming - will be a key component to live on other planets.

Lead poisoning

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our environment. Dangerous, often illegal and unsafe lead-acid battery recycling spreads toxins in surrounding areas.

Lead is particularly harmful to children. Bangladesh is one of the most lead-impacted countries in the world. The best available evidence suggests that exposures to lead in the environment, in consumer products, and in food are taking a staggering toll on public health and economic development. Childhood lead exposure can have life-altering consequences.

A recent study indicated that one in three children worldwide, or about 600 million children, had a lead level of 5 micrograms or more per deciliter (µg / dL). The lead level in the blood of estimated 35.5 million (60%)

children in the country is more than 5 µg / dL, which has made Bangladesh the fourth worst country in the world in terms of the number of affected children. The impacts from lead exposure can significantly affect the overall health status, societal wellbeing, and future economic prosperity of the Bangladeshi population and therefore require increased attention. While there is no proven "safe" lead exposure level, especially in children, the severity of the problem increases with the increasing levels of exposure and consumption.

The longer lead exposure continues, the greater the likelihood of disease. The potential focus could be: 1) partnership between government and non-government stakeholders for facilitation and coordination of existing legislation, 2) rolling out the test for lead level in the blood, 3) enforcing transition of recycling of lead-acid batteries to formal industry, 4) establishing treatment facilities, 5)

fostering governmental system detection as well as enhancing educational interventions and cognitive behavioural therapy in the system, 6) identifying areas of contamination, where children are being put at risk for disability, and develop a plan to return them to as a safe place, 7) building awareness, prevention and control measures on minimising children's exposure, 8) legislation and enforcing environmental and air-quality regulations for smelting operations.

Considering children's health and wellbeing, eliminating lead poisoning could act as a central pillar to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The more we delay, the more we will have to pay.

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01.	Biman Bangladesh Airlines Limited (Biman) invites proposal/offer for taking ACMI lease of 01 (one) or 02 (two) 270-300 seat-capacity, wide-body aircraft from Airlines, Operators, Owners of Aircraft and/or Leasing Companies.
02.	The terms and conditions may be viewed in the RFP Schedule, published in Biman official website www.biman-airlines.com , under Tab Tender (to be redirected to http://biman.gov.bd/site/view/tenders/-).
03.	The Lease Term will be for 80 (eighty) days during Hajj season 2022 (tentatively from 01 June 2022 to 20 August 2022).
04.	Closing schedule of the RFP is 1000 hrs BST (0400 hrs UTC) on 24 January 2022.
05.	Proposals/Offerers are to be submitted to General Manager Corporate Planning, Biman Bangladesh Airlines Limited, Head Office, Balaka, Kurmitola, Dhaka-1229, Bangladesh through Courier Service or E-mail to dacpm187@bdbiman.com . No Proposal/Offer will be accepted after the closing schedule due to any reason, whatsoever.
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