



People are seen tending to mango tree saplings at the Satvai Nursery in Kishamot Doshlia village under Sadullapur upazila of Gaibandha. The owners of this nursery are earning handsome amounts by marketing their plants at home and abroad through an online retail platform called satvai.com.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUI

E-commerce helps sapling business bloom

Two brothers in Gaibandha now exporting plants to Turkey

MOSTAFA SHABUI, Bogura

The locals of Kishamot Doshlia village under Gaibandha's Sadullapur upazila believe it is possible to earn a good amount of foreign currency by exporting different kinds of saplings to Turkey from the otherwise ordinary village.

And if the success of two bothers — Abdur Rahim and Saiful Islam Kollol — are anything to go by, then this dream could become a reality.

After setting up the Satvai Nursery in their village about four years ago, Rahim and Kollol have been exporting various saplings, of mostly fruit bearing trees, to Turkey through their online retail platform satvai.com.

Export orders from Turkey for a variety of saplings amounting to \$15,202 were shipped in the first consignment on December 31, 2021, while another consignment of equal value departed for the same destination on June 15 this year, as per data from the Bogura Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Both consignments comprised of about 466 litchi, 1,300 mango, 88 jackfruit, 45 java apple, 110 star anise, 206 phoenix palm, 102 Adenium, 40 rambutan, 50 sopheda, 49 wood-apple, 49 lotkon, 49 bilimbi, 102 Christmas, 53 simul and 100 bokul saplings.

The Nature Garden Flower Sale Centre in Alsancak, Turkey, imported these plants via Chittagong Port after ordering directly from satvai.com.

"Several other nurseries from Japan, Kenia and South Africa are now



contacting us to buy saplings," Kollol said.

Satvai.com is the first online nursery retail outlet to start exporting plants from the northern district, according to officials of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Gaibandha.

"I owned a grocery shop in Dhaka until it was demolished for a road extension project four years ago," Rahim said.

After remaining jobless for a few months, Rahim returned to Kishamot Doshlia village with his younger brother Kollol, who advised him to open a nursery on a small plot of land.

"After doing well in local markets,

we expanded the nursery to about 20 bighas and now, our monthly sales are near Tk 2.5 to Tk 3 lakh, he added.

Asked about how he came up with the idea to establish a nursery and then market saplings online, Kollol pointed out that he left his job with the Bangladesh Airforce in early 2016 as he was always more interested in botany.

"We then started the nursery business at the end of 2017 and as the domestic e-commerce sector is growing fast, I decided to develop a website to showcase our plants," he said.

"Now we are delivering nearly 100 varieties of saplings to homes in almost every district and about 60 per cent for our sales come from online orders,"

Kollol added.

Asked how they got foreign buyers, Kollol said the Turkish nursery found them through the webpage before contacting them directly using Bangladesh's yellow pages.

"They are now our regular customer."

Kollol went on to say that it is not easy to export saplings to a foreign country as they could get damaged or wither during the transportation process.

"First you need the proper documents, such as a trade licence, and then you grow the plants as per the orders placed after securing permission from local DAE officials," he said.

"For export quality saplings, you need to grow it in cocopeat. Later, you need certificates issued by the plant quarantine wing of the DAE, after which can export the plants within next 15 days, Kollol added.

Regarding the challenges they face in this business, Kollol said it is a bit difficult at first if you do not have enough experience.

"When we got feedback on the first consignment, it was found that 10 per cent of plants were damaged by improper temperature settings in the air-conditioned containers. I had damaged another 35 per cent of the plants when we shifted it to cocopeat from soil ground."

"However, I reduced the amount of damaged plants to 6 per cent when I sent the second consignment, which returned 35 per cent higher profits than the domestic market," he added.

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Facts and myths about innovation

ARIJIT CHAKRABORTI

The origins of many successful organisations that exist today can be traced back to the nineteenth century or even earlier. The business interests of such organisations typically span a wide range of sectors and industries, and all of them have been able to continue operations sustainably and successfully. They are standing tall today not because their century-old business models were robust, but because they have been continuously innovating and remodelling their businesses to stay relevant over time. That's why innovation is necessary not only for superior growth, but also to sustain the journey over a long duration.



At the same time, innovation has become a buzzword today. However, despite its popularity, the term isn't fully understood. This article tries to discuss a few facts and clear up some myths around innovation.

Innovation is not invention:

Quite often, we see people using these two words interchangeably and, more surprisingly, synonymously. Invention is about creating something that was either not available or believed to be impossible.

Innovation, on the other hand, is implementing a new idea by mobilising the required resources and things that are already invented or available.

For example, creating a photographic camera was a path-breaking invention that opened up a completely new world of scientific and business activities. But inserting a miniature version of such a camera inside a mobile phone is not an invention, but an innovation. This was an innovative idea that helped in mobilising multiple working elements, including a camera and a mobile phone, to create an unprecedented experience for users of mobile phones and cameras.

Innovation must fuel creative destruction, inside and outside. Successful organisations always go through such a cycle of internal creative destruction which helps them stay relevant over time

Innovation is not copying another innovation: This is another misconception among entrepreneurs and other stakeholders. Innovation does not mean borrowing an innovation from another part of the world. On the other hand, if an innovator adapts an innovation from somewhere else to solve a local problem, then this may qualify as innovation.

For example, ride-sharing apps had become popular in the USA's Silicon Valley more than a decade ago. The business model was relatively simple: to provide a better experience to riders and drivers alike in comparison to prevailing cab services.

Copying that business model and developing a new app would not qualify as another innovation. But when the innovators of emerging countries implemented a new idea of ride sharing involving two-wheelers, the business model was altered through an innovation.

Innovation is not only for start-ups: It's true that one of the most important criteria for distinguishing a start-up from a small business is its innovative capabilities. But innovation is not only for start-ups. In fact, large companies need

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Central banks must act quickly to fight inflation

Says Bank for International Settlements

AFP, Zurich

Central banks must not let inflation become entrenched, with the threat of stagflation looming over the global economy, the Bank for International Settlements warned Sunday in its annual economic report.

BIS, considered the central bank of central banks, said institutions will have to move swiftly to ensure a return to low and stable inflation, while limiting the impact on growth.

"The key for central banks is to act quickly and decisively before inflation becomes entrenched," said BIS general manager Agustin Carstens.

"If it does, the costs of bringing it back under control will be higher. The longer-term benefits of preserving stability for households and businesses outweigh any short-term costs."

BIS's flagship report said that in restoring low, stable inflation, central banks should seek to minimise the hit to economic activity, in turn safeguarding financial stability.

BIS said engineering a so-called soft landing had historically been difficult, and the starting conditions now were making the task all the more challenging.

"It would be more desirable if we could have a soft landing because that would mean that the tightening of monetary policy could be more subdued," Carstens told a press conference.

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People shop for food along a busy shopping street in the Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn in New York City. As the American economy continues to see a rise in inflation, the Federal Reserve recently announced that it is raising interest rates by 0.75 per cent, the largest such move since 1994.

PHOTO: AFP/FILE

India, EU resume free trade talks after 9yrs

AFP, New Delhi

India and the European Union resumed talks Monday on a free-trade deal after a nine-year gap, as Western countries seek to wean New Delhi off its close economic ties to Russia.

Dubbed the "tariff king" by ex US president Donald Trump, India has become more open to lowering trade barriers in recent years and is negotiating pacts with several other countries.

The Asian giant has refused to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine, even increasing oil purchases from its long-standing strategic ally and biggest supplier of arms.

The European Union is India's second-biggest trading partner after the United States but talks with the bloc broke down in 2013 over issues including tariff reductions and patent protection.

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