



The taste and trade of INDIGENOUS GUAVAS

According to Patiya and Chandanaish upazila agriculture offices, guavas are cultivated on around 1,000 hectares of hilly land in this area, and farmers sell guavas worth around Tk 7 crore on average every year in the season.

ARUN BIKASH DEY

It was early in the morning on a Saturday. The Sun was peeping behind the cloud. The road at Raoshan Hat in Chandanaish upazila was wet due to overnight rain.

In the distance, people, in rows, carrying baskets, were seen coming down the narrow, winding, hilly path.

As soon as they opened their baskets, bright green, almost ripe, mouth-watering-looking guavas peeked out!

This is a common sight in Raoshan Hat if you visit it in the morning. These people, who carried the guavas in baskets from their orchards located up in the hills, do this almost every day to sell their goods to wholesale and retail traders.

Like the cultivators, traders also gather

here early in the morning from different areas of the country. This is how it has been going on for decades.

Chandanaish and Patiya, the two neighbouring upazilas in Chattogram, are famous in the country for producing delicious guavas.

According to Patiya and Chandanaish upazila agriculture offices, guavas are cultivated on around 1,000 hectares of hilly land in this area, and farmers sell guavas worth around Tk 7 crore on average every year in the season. Hundreds of orchards, most of them in the hilly areas of Chandanaish, also employ thousands of people.

Farmers also cultivate mangos, jackfruits, litchis, lemons, and other fruits apart from guavas in these orchards.

But the main attraction is the guava. Traders from across the district come here every day in the season to purchase this delicious fruit.

In the season of guava, wholesale and retail traders from different areas travel to several locations in the two upazilas, including Raoshan Hat, Bagicha Hat, Badam Tol, Kamol Munshir Hat, and Kharana Bus Stand, where cultivators gather with guava every day from early morning.

As these markets sit by the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway, traders find it easy to transport them to their respective destinations.

Guava cultivator Abdul Mabud said guava season is from the Bangla month of mid-

Ashar to early Ashwin (between July and September).

About 1,500 farmers have their own orchards of guava and other fruits in the Chandanaish hilly area, he said, adding that several thousand workers work in these orchards stretching from Mujaffarabad to Dohazari.

He added that the Hashimpur and Kanchanabad unions of this upazila are the main hubs of guava orchards.

According to farmers and locals, the guava of Kanchan Nagar, a village in Chandanaish upazila, is more special. Its taste has earned its reputation over time.

Abul Kashem, a retail trader who came from the Kotwali area in the port city, said the guava from this area is famous for its taste and size, so there is a high demand for it among customers.

Contacted, Azad Hossain, Chandanaish Upazila Agricultural Officer, said farmers in the upazila produced over 1,500 tons of guavas on 755 hectares of land.

"We have trained them and shared the knowledge of cultivation so that they can have a good production," he said.

Contacted, Dr Harun-ur-Rashid, professor of the Botany Department at Chittagong University, said the guava of Chandanaish and Patiya is an indigenous variety, adding that there are some ecological factors, including soil and water quality, as well as the environment, that have made the variety so special and different from others.



Shipbreaking goes on without environmental clearance

SIFAYET ULLAH

Defying law, shipbreakers in Chattogram are breaking scrap vessels without obtaining clearance from the Department of Environment (DoE), putting the environment at risk.

DoE has fined and warned seven shipbreakers in the last four months.

Ferdous Anwar, deputy director of the DoE Chattogram district office, told The Daily Star that "Despite repeated requests, shipbreakers are not bothering to get environmental clearance."

According to the DoE, two shipbreakers were fined Tk 1 lakh and five others were warned and told to get clearance as per the law before recycling ships.

To prevent environmental pollution, any vessels scheduled for dismantling must have clearance under Section 19 (1) of the Hazardous Wastes and Shipbreaking Waste Management Rules, 2011, as ships also contain a wide range of hazardous wastes.

As per the laws, the details of the recycling process of the scrap ships and the management of wastes, including asbestos, glassholes, lubricant wells, and various other harmful materials, have to



be mentioned in the application for that clearance.

"Upon receiving the application, we inspect the vessel and issue the clearance certificate with instructions to dispose of the toxic waste as per law," said Ferdous Anwar, deputy director of the DoE.

According to the Bangladesh Ship Breakers and Recyclers Association (BSBRA), there are 40 ship-breaking yards in Bangladesh, and around 20,000 people work in these yards.

Contacted, Abu Taher, president of the BSBRA, told The Daily Star "We have recently held a meeting about the issue and written to all yard owners directing them to obtain clearance from DoE before scrapping ships."

Experts said shipbreaking without environmental clearance is a threat to both the terrestrial and marine environment as well as human health.

Dr Prabal Barua, who has been researching the effects of pollution caused by shipbreaking in the last decade, told The Daily Star "Usually scrap ships are broken up in our country without proper disposal of hazardous waste."

Ship scrapping activities have already affected the physicochemical properties of seawater, intertidal sediments and soils, and the biodiversity of Bangladesh.

Scraping ships without environmental clearance will accelerate the destruction of the environment as scrap ships are filled with hazardous waste, he warned.

However, Ferdous Anwar, deputy director of the DoE, said they will take tougher actions if shipbreakers continue to show disregard to laws.

"We have warned shipbreakers that they would be prosecuted if they cut ships without environmental clearance."

Priungshu sings his way to Asia Book of Records

The 16-yr-old learned the national anthems of 120 countries in eight months

His dream of being in the Guinness World Records has yet to come true, but he has recently received recognition from the prestigious Asia Book of Records.

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

During the 2021 Covid lockdown, Priungshu Roy Chowdhury, a schoolboy from Chattogram, found a productive way to spend his time by learning to sing the national anthems of 120 countries in just eight months.

His dream of being in the Guinness World Records has yet to come true, but he has recently received recognition from the prestigious Asia Book of Records, which is based in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and Faridabad, India.

Priungshu, who passed his SSC exams from Chittagong Government High School this year, has been awarded the title of "Grand Master" by the Asia Book of Records for singing the national anthems of 10 countries, including Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and UAE, in 9 minutes and 11 seconds at the age of 16 years, as confirmed on June 20, 2023.

Asia Book of Records posted the entry on its website.

Priungshu, a fan of the

Australian cricket team after his home team Bangladesh, used to get excited when he heard the Australian national anthem being sung by its players before the start of an international cricket match and learned their national anthem.

He then got tempted to learn other national anthems on the popular video-sharing app YouTube. From childhood, he had a love for singing and listening to songs.

"At the beginning, I started learning different national anthems as a hobby. Later, I started learning as many anthems as I could after finding out about Canadian singer Capri Everitt, who made it to the Guinness World Records for singing most national anthems in their host countries in one year," Priungshu told The Daily Star.

After learning to sing 80 national anthems in just five months that year, he submitted an application to Guinness World Records. But his appeal was not accepted since Capri set the record

by singing 76 national anthems while visiting those particular countries, which was not possible for him.

But he was not disheartened; rather, he continued learning more anthems against his parents' wishes, who were worried about his school studies.

"I practised for 30 to 40 minutes daily and managed to learn 40 more anthems in the next three months before I paused for my studies," said Priungshu.

After finishing his SSC exams a few months ago, he resumed practising, and this time he applied to the Asia Book of Records.

His father, Palash Roy Chowdhury, a manager of Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Limited, said, "I was really impressed when I first heard my son singing anthems of different countries in their native language. He has made us very proud!"

Priungshu, who previously wanted to study biological sciences, now wants to pursue his studies in international relations.



PHOTOS: RAJIB RAIHAN