

Poor govt response affects orange cultivation

Moulvibazar farmers resent lack of infrastructure: DAE proposal for 5-yr extension of project awaits ministry approval

RAJAT KANTI GOSWAMI, Moulvibazar

A dry spell followed by floods badly hit orange production in Moulvibazar district this year, reducing the yield by around 20 per cent over that of the last year, according to estimates by growers and officials.

The average annual production is two lakh eighty thousand tonnes in favourable weather, according to District Horticulture Development Officer Anwar Hossain. The average production per acre is 3.5 tonnes.

This year, the production was less as flowers withered in a large scale due to uneven rainfall during the fruiting season, he said. It would be around two lakh tonnes.

Farmers depend on nature as there is no irrigation facility in gardens.

There is bright prospect for increasing the yield and expanding its cultivation in Moulvibazar but the potential can not be utilised due to lack of government's proper attention, it was gathered from agriculture officials and farmers.

The government's lukewarm response to growers' demands for development of irrigation and infrastructure facilities has frustrated farmers, many of them said talking to this correspondent during a recent visit to the orange growing areas in Kulaura and Baralekha.

The government's Orange and Pineapple Development Project (OPDP) taken up in 2002 concludes in June next year.

Responding to growers' demands, the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) has submitted a proposal to the ministry for a five-year extension of the project. It now awaits the ministry approval, officials concerned said.

The growers said the short three-day training under the project benefits them. They are trained on how to raise a garden, use of fertiliser and pesticide and production of saplings.

But the project lacks plan to develop infrastructure and irrigation facilities, which are vital to increase production. There is nothing in the project to develop the

communication system, the main hurdle in marketing. Growers have to manually carry their products to distant markets from the gardens in the hills, the growers said.

So far, 510 growers out of 1200 in the district have been trained. More 300 will be trained in the coming months, officials said.

The project followed publication of a story in The Daily Star on November 12, 2002 on the sorry plight Moulvibazar orange growers and lack of government attention.

Moreover there is hassle by law enforcers, many of the growers alleged. Bordering Goalbari and Fultala unions in Kulaura upazila and Shahbajpur and Nijbadurpur unions in Baralekha upazila are orange growing areas.

There are around 1000 gardens in the areas, covering about 90 hectares of land involving over 5000 people. The number of trees vary from 200 to 500 in the gardens and each tree yields 500 to 1200 oranges. According to DAE estimate, there are about 70,000 orange trees in the district.

Law enforcers often harass the local growers on their way to markets with orange plucked from their gardens, branding them as smugglers, many of them alleged.

Now is the peak season of orange harvest. The main wholesale markets are in Juri and Kulaura.

The growers ventilated their grievances at a recent gathering held on the Lathichara Community Primary School at Kulaura, when over 100 of them from Kulaura and Juri upazilas were given identity cards by the administration to avoid hassle by law enforcers. With these, about 500 growers so far got identity cards. Some farmers got cards last year.

The gathering was presided over by Kulaura Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Md Nurul Absar. Moulvibazar Deputy Commissioner Md Younusur Rahman was the chief guest while DAE Deputy Director Md Abdul Hamid Mullah was the special guest. District Horticulture Development Officer Anwar Hossain also spoke on the occasion.

The DC assured the growers that their problems in growing and marketing of orange would be resolved soon.

He urged the people of the two upazilas to bring more lands under orange cultivation, assuring them of all possible DAE support in training and technology.

Some orange producers also spoke at the gathering.

They said lack of irrigation and transportation facilities are the main problems. These can be resolved only by the government.

They expressed their disappointment that the project concludes in next June and demanded its extension.

Anwar Hossain said in two years, the project increased the total lands under cultivation to 90 hectares from 69 hectares.

He said the number of trees in gardens is less than optimum as farmers plant saplings in a scattered way due to lack of knowledge. Six hundred trees per hectare is the optimum figure, he said.

After the training, each farmer was given 10 orange saplings and Tk 360.

The OPDP also covers Panchagarh and Chittagong.

AK-47 recovered in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

An AK-47 assault rifle was recovered from a tribal youth by army at a remote bazaar in Durrhahar under Baghaichhari upazila on Wednesday, according to police.

On his confession, army recovered the rifle and several magazines from a nearby jungle. The magazines were filled with live bullets.

The arrested person is Rangadon Chakma, 35, a former member of defunct Shantibahini. Local sources told this correspondent.

The gunrunner was being interrogated by a special team of army from Longdu Zone till filing of the report on Thursday afternoon.

Victory Memorial built after 33 years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A Victory Memorial, built at Gaibandha Public Library ground by the Zila Parishad at a cost of Tk 10 lakh was inaugurated on Thursday.

Students and people had set ablaze a Pakistani flag and hoisted the Bangladesh flag at the spot on March 23, 1971.

Six Bangladeshis abducted by BSF

UNB, Kurigram

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) abducted six people from Chhat Tila enclave under Bhurungamari upazila on Monday.

According to a delayed report reaching from the enclave, three BSF men entered a house in the morning and tried to sexually assault a housewife.

As she cried for help, neighbours rushed to the spot and caught hold of the BSF men. Hearing the news, BSF troops from nearby Jhaukathi camp entered the enclave and beat up the residents.

They opened fire, rescued their fellow soldiers and abducted six enclave men named Joyal, Joyul, Joyul, Joyul, Joyul and Joyul.

BSF men besieged the enclave restricting its residents from going out even for procuring daily essentials from the market.

A flag meeting with BSF was held on Daskinai border at 3:00pm on Tuesday. In the meeting, the BSF agreed to withdraw the siege and set free abducted Bangladeshis soon.

Protest at cost of life

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

A 16-year-old girl committed suicide moments before her marriage.

The tragic incident took place at Baisha village in Keshabpur upazila Monday night after the bride party reached her house.

Police and victim's family said Mohammad Ali, father of 16-year-old Aklima Khatun, arranged his daughter's marriage with Abdu Salam of Panjia village in the same upazila.

Her guardians arranged the marriage against her will.

A bride party of about 20 people came to the bride's house on time.

Aklima entered a room and shut the door from inside on the plea of dressing for the marriage.

As she did not come out after a long time, her parents and relatives knocked the door. But there was no response.

They then forcibly opened the door and found Aklima's lifeless body hanging from the ceiling. A heart-rending scene was created. A pall of gloom descended in the village.

As police came, Aklima's relatives told them the whole story. Police allowed the body to be buried without autopsy.

But it could not be known whether Aklima had any affair with anyone.

B'baria industrialist, 200 AL men join BNP

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Sayed AK Ekramuzzaman, owner of RAK Ceramic Industry, along 200 Awami League workers joined BNP at a rally attended by State Minister for Land Abdu Sattar Buiyan, held at Nasiragar upazila Parishad ground on Wednesday.

Ekramuzzaman was president of the local unit Bangabandhu Parishad. He had contested in the last parliamentary election as an independent candidate.

Speaking on the occasion, the state minister said a party is trying to create disorder and anarchy in the country while the BNP government is implementing various development programmes to change the fate of the people. People will resist them.

With Nasiragar BNP President Md Iqbal Chowdhury in the chair, the state minister was also addressed by, among others, Brahmanbaria District BNP Secretary Syed Emranur Reza, former BNP lawmaker Syed Murshed Kamal, BNP Vice-president and Brahmanbaria Pourashava Chairman Md Hafizur Bari, central JCD (Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal) leader Sheikh Md Shamim.

Razakars' names on victory memorial

HOSSAIN SERAI, Magura

It is a matter of great regret that two infamous Razakars, collaborators of Pakistan Occupation Army, were engraved on a newly built victory memorial here.

The two Razakars are Khater Ali and Aminuddin. Both of them were killed in crossfire while a gunbattle was going on between freedom fighters and Pakistani soldiers at village Kamanna in Jhenidah on November 26, 1971.

Their names were engraved on the memorial along with names of 45 martyred freedom fighters who

laid down their lives in Kamanna battle, according to Bimol Kumar Biswas, a valiant freedom fighter.

Bimol disclosed that notorious Khater Ali and Aminuddin had guided Pakistan Army to the houses of Madhab Chandra and Shamela Begum where 42 freedom fighters took shelter. Pakistan Army attacked them when they were in deep sleep. Twenty-eight brave sons of Magura were killed and 14 freedom fighters saved their lives, he added.

The monument was built in the district town by Zila Parishad at a cost of Tk 14.10 lakh. BNP law-

maker Kazi Salimul Haq Kamal formally opened it on the Victory Day.

When asked about the blunder, Magura Zila Parishad Assistant Engineer Sazzakur Rahman said, 'We have engraved the names according to a list supplied by the district administration'.

While talking to The Daily Star, Organising Secretary of district BNP Akter Hossain told, 'The list was prepared by the Liberation War Affairs Ministry and supplied by the district administration. So, we are not responsible for it'.

A laudable initiative by a school

Tree plantation included in curriculum

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Students and teachers of Brahmanbaria Ideal Academy have set a good example by planting tree saplings in different areas of the district free of cost.

So far, they have planted at least 250 saplings along Brahmanbaria Poursabha roads and in Bhadughar, Kazipara and Al-Hera Complex area of the town.

Every year after annual examina-

tion, students of the Academy submit saplings to their teachers as part of practical training in their Agriculture Education Subject.

After practical examination, they do not take back the saplings. They plant those in different areas.

Last year, the teachers and students planted the saplings on the Academy premises. This year they planted the saplings in different areas of the town.

When contacted, the headmaster

said, from now on, teachers and students of the academy will plant a good number of saplings in different areas of the town and the district every year free of cost.

From next year, they will take up such programmes after first and second terminal examinations also.

The programme not only encourages students in tree planting but also makes them environment conscious. This is part of their school curriculum, the headmaster said.



Teachers and students of Brahmanbaria Ideal Academy, snapped on Wednesday, planting saplings of timber trees along the Poursabha road in the town.

PHOTO: STAR



Two boys with orange plucked from their garden in Goalbari.

PHOTO: STAR

SNAPS

Dacoity in guise of Rab in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Armed robbers, in guise of members of Rab (Rapid Action Battalion), looted nine houses at a night in Chuadanga. Armed gangs divided into several groups, looted the houses of Selim Uddin, Ahrafat Alam, Alamgir Hossain, Abed Ali, Abdul Hannan, Moslem Ali, Selim Mollah and Khalek at Amtola Village in Sadar upazila. Introducing themselves as Rab members, they asked the house owners to open door for search operation. When they opened door, the criminals confined them at gunpoint and robbed belongings. Separate cases were filed with Sadar police station.

RU admission tests Dec 29-Jan 11

RU CORRESPONDENT

Tests for admission in first year honours courses in Rajshahi University (RU) for 2004-05 session will be held from December 29 to January 11 next year. Sixty-eight students will vie for each seat. About 2,37,455 forms were sold against 3,500 seats of 46 departments under Science, Arts, Social Science, Commerce, Life and Earth and Agricultural faculties. Test result will publish on February 7 and admission process will start on February 8. Classes will start from March 25.

Hijacked truck recovered

A CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur

A loaded truck from Dhaka, hijacked from Daulatdia ferry terminal Wednesday night, was recovered from Mostafapur in Madaripur on Thursday. Madaripur Sadar thana police said they also recovered the body of helper Rashid from a place along the Faridpur-Madaripur road. The truck (Dhaka Metro-TA02-0781) was carrying goods sent by Agrani Transport in Amin Bazar in Dhaka to Madaripur, police said. Police arrested four persons in this connection. They are the truck's former driver Akkas Ali, Helal, Syed Alamgir and Jafar. Police said Akkas Ali was earlier dismissed from his job.

Free from drug addiction

Satkhira dist administration, Ahsania Mission and local NGO RKH play a laudable role

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

It was a joyous occasion for all. It raised great hopes among several hundred parents, civil society members, students, professionals, government and NGO officials when eight youths appeared on the podium and said they are free of drug addiction and are prepared to lead normal life.

The eight drug addicts have been treated at the Community Based Detoxification Camp Cum Medical Centre in the town, opened by the district administration on December 1 with the help of two NGOs -- Dhaka Ahsania Mission and Rural Kind Hearted (RKH).

The function was arranged after the youths, the first batch of patients, were cured.

This was the fast move in the district to cure drug addicts.

The youths are Milon Ahmed, Omar Farook, Ruhul Amin, Abdu Sabur, Rafiqul Islam, Shahin Shahriar, Md. Ali and Shamim Sana.

The function was presided over by Satkhira Poursava Chairman Sheikh Ashrafur Haque while Satkhira Deputy Commissioner Md. Elias was present as chief guest.

Police Superintendent Abdur Rahim, Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Ashrafuzzaman and Principal Asit Kumar Majumdar were present as special guests.

It was also addressed by, among others, Union Parishad chairman Abdur Rahman and Habibur Rahman, RK Director Emdadul Haque and Abul Kalam Azad.

Two former drug addicts--Milon

Ahmed and Omar Faruk also spoke. The youths took oath at the ceremony that they will never take drug and will work to free others from drug addiction.

They also promised to create awareness among youths against drug addiction and smoking.

The DC called upon the people to build a movement against drug peddlers and to create awareness against drug use.

Alongside, treatment of drug addicts should continue to bring back them to normal life, he said.

Amid cheers the DC said he will try to turn the camp a permanent center for cure of drug addicts.

Other speakers lauded the role of the district administration, Dhaka Ahsania Mission and RK for setting up the camp.



The eight youths, now free of drug addiction, vow to free others from the curse and create awareness against drug use.

PHOTO: STAR



পাওয়ার গ্রিড কোম্পানী অব বাংলাদেশ লিঃ
POWER GRID COMPANY OF BANGLADESH LTD.

(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Red Crescent Concord Tower Tower, 17, Mohakhali C/A, 6th Floor, Dhaka-1212,

Memo No: 01/PGCB/Sec/2004/3487

December 15, 2004

INVITATION FOR BIDS

FOR THE

SUPPLY OF 230 KV, 132 KV & 33 KV SWITCHGEAR AND EQUIPMENT

Contact No. PGCB/GRID/04/01

- The Power Grid Company of Bangladesh Ltd. ("the Purchaser") invites sealed bids in single envelope from eligible bidders for supply of 230 kV, 132 kV & 33 kV Switchgear and Equipment as defined in the bidding document (hereinafter referred to as "the Works") to be financed from the purchaser's own fund. The Works include:
 - Lot-1 : Design, supply & delivery of 230 kV, 132 kV & 33 kV Circuit breakers.
 - Lot-2 : Design, supply & delivery of 230 kV, 132 kV & 33 kV Disconnector switches, CT, PT, Lighting arresters and 33 kV Power capacitors.
 The bidder may participate in any or both of the above lots.
- The materials and equipment to be supplied under this contract shall be procured from any country of the world except Israel.
- The Works both Lot-1 & Lot-2 under this contract shall be completed within 6(six) months from the date signing of the Contract.
- Bidders may obtain further information from and inspect the bidding documents at the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh Ltd. (PGCB), Red Crescent Concord Tower (13th Floor), 17, Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka-1212, Tel : 880-2-9888589 & 9888970, fax : 880-2-9888501.
- A complete set of bidding documents (containing Lot-1 & Lot-2) may be purchased by interested eligible bidders on submission of a written application to the Company Secretary, PGCB at the above address and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of USD 50.00 (United States Dollar fifty only) or Tk. 3,000.00 (Taka three thousand only) in the form of pay Order/Demand Draft in favour of the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh Ltd.
- All bids (Lot-1 & Lot-2 separately) must be accompanied by a Bid Security amounting to USD 6,000 (United States dollar six thousand only) or Tk. 3,60,000 (Taka three lakhs sixty thousand only) for Lot-1 and USD 15,000 (United States dollar fifteen thousand only) or Tk. 9,00,000 (Taka nine lakhs only) for Lot-2 must be delivered to the company Secretary, Power Grid Company of Bangladesh Ltd., Red Crescent Concord Tower (7th Floor), 17, Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka-1212, Tel : 880-2-9888589 & 9888970, fax : 880-2-9888501 at or before 11:00 am Bangladesh Standard Time on February 14, 2005. The bid proposals will be opened at 11:05 am BST on the same date in the presence of bidders' representatives who chose to attend.
- PGCB will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of bids including costs and expenses related to visits to the sites/sores of delivery of the goods.
- PGCB reserves the right to accept or to reject any or all bid(s) without assigning any reason thereof.

(Mohammed Salim)
Company Secretary