

Orchid as a forex earner

There is a bright prospect for orchid farming as climate of Bangladesh is congenial to its cultivation

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Locally produced orchids are now being exported to foreign countries resulting in foreign exchange earning.

Orchid plants and sticks produced at a private farm named Dipta Orchids Limited in Phulbaria upazila are being exported abroad.

The orchid farm established on 11 acres of land in 2002 began its production in 2003. Dipta Orchids Ltd is situated at Dulma Enayetpur in Phulbaria, a remote place in Mymensingh. It has also become a source of employment for poor people. Now 26 people work at the farm.

After collection of 80,000 orchid saplings from Thailand, the farm started its activities. At present it produces thousands of orchid sticks every month. The farm has over three lakh orchid plants of 25 varieties which have great demand in local and foreign markets. A few of the varieties are Dendrobium Pink, Dendrobium Sonia, Dendrobium Sato, Dendrobium White, Red Bull, Miss Singapore, Dendrobium Earsa Kul and White Faiben.

Orchids produced at this farm are classified into three grades. The grades are Grade A, Grade B and Grade C. According to grade, prices of sticks are determined.

Amal Saha, a horticulturist of Dipta Orchid Ltd, told The Daily Star that orchid sticks produced here have great demand in local and foreign markets because of its quality. The demand is great but it can not be supplied because of its lesser production, Amal Saha told further.



PHOTO: STAR

Orchid plants in bloom at a private farm at Dulma Enayetpur in Phulbaria upazila of Mymensingh. Orchids are now being exported to Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Canada and Great Britain.

Initially, orchids are being supplied to Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Canada and London, disclosed Amal Saha. If the foreign demands can be fulfilled, orchids would be a source of good foreign exchange earning, he told.

At present the foreign requirement is over one lakh sticks. But the farm can supply 50 to 60 thousand

sticks each month, said Amal Saha. According to sources in Dipta Orchids Ltd, each stick is being sold at Tk 5 only. An orchid plant at its flowering stage is being sold between Tk 500 to 800, according to variety.

Dr AM Farooque, a professor of the Department of Horticulture of Bangladesh Agricultural University

(BAU) told The Daily Star, orchid cultivation can be extended easily as the climatic condition of the country is very congenial. The rainy season is very helpful to its growth, said Prof Farooque, adding like Thailand, Bangladesh also can earn good foreign exchange through its export.

'Gas pipeline thru' Lawachhara will be resisted'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Kamalganj Development Co-ordination Council (KDCC) on Thursday declared an action programme to resist installation of gas pipe lines through Lawachhara National Park (Reserve Forest) at Kamalganj upazila by the US gas exploration company Unocal.

The declaration was made at a meeting held at the office of Bhanugachh Businessmen Association. A series of programmes were chalked out in the meeting. The programmes included submission of a memorandum to the Upazila Nirbahi Officer, Kamalganj, constitute area based committees to motivate people, circulate leaflets, publicity and holding of public meetings at different places of Kamalganj upazila.

The meeting was presided over by its convener Syed Makhliur Rahman. It was attended by leaders of all political parties.

It is to be mentioned here that US company Unocal plans to install gas pipe lines to connect Magurchhara gas field with Kalapur field through Lawachhara Reserve Forest which has been declared a national park. According to environmentalists, if Unocal is permitted to install gas pipelines through the reserve forest it will adversely affect the environment.

'THREAT' TO PM Another case filed against Mansur of AL

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kusthia

A general dairy (GD) was filed against Awami League (AL) Organising Secretary Sultan Mohammad Mansur and four others on Thursday for their alleged threat on the life of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

Lawmaker and Organising Secretary of Kusthia district BNP Shorab Uddin filed the case with Kusthia Sadar Police Station.

It was complained that the Awami League leader, at a rally in Sylhet on Sunday, threatened the Prime Minister to face the fate of late President Ziaur Rahman if killers of former Finance Minister SAMS Kibria and four other are not punished properly.

Kusthia Sadar Police Station Officer-In-Charge (OC) Gias Uddin accepted the GD.

Injunction on 15 Moulvibazar Press Club members

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

The Additional District and Sessions Judge of Moulvibazar Md Hussain Helal has issued injunction to 15 members of Moulvibazar Press Club and two others.

The judge asked them not to use the name of the press club and not to perform any activity in name of the organisation.

The judge delivered the order when two third members of Moulvibazar Press Club went to court against illegal and unconstitutional election to the club.

Following expiry of the term of the previous executive committee of the press club, its two-third members called a requisition meeting and cancelled the time expired executive committee. They formed a seven-member ad-hoc committee to hold a fresh election, according to the constitution. The ad-hoc committee held an election and the new committee was duly elected with Bakshi Iqbal Ahmed and Rajat Kanti Goswami as the new President and General Secretary.

After the election, members of the time expired committee had published a 'fake' report in local newspapers that they formed a new committee of the club with Syed Md Atahar and SM Umed Ali as its President and General Secretary.

Intra-party feud in Netrakona AL hampers oust-govt agitation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

The intra-party feud in Netrakona district Awami League (AL) has been hampering the oust-government agitation programme as well as the party's organisational activities.

Two factions are active here. One faction is jointly led by ex-lawmaker and former president of Netrakona district Awami League Fazlur Rahaman Khan, three times elected chairman of Netrakona Pourasabha Matiur Rahaman Khan, Juba League leader Omar Faruk and President of Netrakona district Chhatra League Majibur Rahaman Hira.

Another faction is jointly led by ex-member of parliament (MP) Jalaluddin Talukder, President of Netrakona district Awami League Shamsuzzoha, General Secretary of Netrakona district Awami League Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru, Organising Secretary of Netrakona district Awami League Nur Khan Mithu.

Both the factions are running

their political activities and anti-government agitation programmes separately.

As a result workers and supporters of the party in the entire district are frustrated.

The conflict surfaced during the last general election when Shamsuzzoha group asked the party central leaders not to give party nomination to Fazlur Rahman. Because of resistance of Shamsuzzoha group, the central leaders gave nomination to Abdul Momin as a neutral political leader.

The conflict turned serious during the last biennial conference of Netrakona district Awami League held on January 27 last year. In the conference Fazlur Rahaman Khan was defeated by Shamsuzzoha.

From then on both the groups did not coordinate with each other in any major party activity which harmed the party interests much.

Both the groups organised meetings protesting the killing of party leader Kibria in Habiganj

separately.

When contacted with Shamsuzzoha and Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru, President and Secretary of Netrakona district Awami League, they told this correspondent a few leaders and activists of the party led by ex-MP Fazlur Rahman Khan always non-cooperate with them in all party programmes.

But Fazlur Rahman denied the allegation.

Party workers and supporters still wait for end to the conflicts through intervention of the central leaders.

Urs

The three-day annual Urs of Hazrat Khanbahadur Ahsanullah (R) will begin in Naita Sharif, Satkhira on February 8, says a press release.

A large number of devotees and followers of the Pir Kibla from home and abroad are expected to attend the Urs.

Prominent religious scholars will take part in discussions.



PHOTO: A K M MOHSIN

A break from a day's hard toil: Female and male labourers at a village in Louhajang, Munshiganj preparing to take their lunch after a pause from work. They work together as farm labourers to earn a living.

IRRI-boro crops on 1,000 acres of land under Teesta Project flooded

Embankment on Dinajpur main canal damaged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

IRRI-boro crops on about 1,000 acres of land have been flooded due to damage in embankment on Dinajpur main canal under Teesta Irrigation Project on Tuesday.

A portion of the embankment stretching about 200 feet has been damaged at Deviganj in Chirribandar upazila of Dinajpur district adjacent to Nilphamari Sadar upazila due to high pressure of water.

After the damage, the Teesta Irrigation Project authorities have

stopped supply of water through Dinajpur canal resulting in suspension of irrigation on about 12,000 acres of land in a few upazilas in Nilphamari including Khansama, Chirribandar and Parbatipur.

A source in the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) told The Daily Star, the Teesta Irrigation Project authorities let water to flow through Dinajpur canal on February 1. But at dead of night, the embankment was damaged at the aforesaid spot.

When contacted, the BWDB Executive Engineer of Saidpur,

Azharu Islam admitted the fact to this correspondent. He said the BWDB men are engaged in repairing the damaged embankment. He further said that it would take about a week to complete the repairing work.

A BWDB source told this correspondent, before supply of water towards Dinajpur canal, the embankment was renovated at a cost of about 2.5 lakh taka. But local people alleged that the renovation work was poor. They also alleged that the embankment had been damaged because of its construction with sand instead of earth.



PHOTO: STAR

Winter clothes being distributed among the cold affected people of Shiblaya in Manikganj by the officials of the Greenery and Livelihood Development Society, an NGO, on Thursday.

SNAPS

Changing people's lot thru' cooperatives

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Mohipur Samabay-o-Sarbannali Bidhayak Samity, a cooperative society has been doing a great job for a long time by changing people's lot. At present 30 educational institutions including a degree college, a senior madrasah, a high school, four primary schools, four hafezi madrasahs, 29 Muslim primary schools (Maktab), 27 mosques and four hermitage are being run by the samity. The association spends about Tk five lakh are spent each year through different social works. Initially the association set up a primary school and a Muslim primary school (Maktab) in 1940. Ruhul Amin Raja Mia, President of the association told this correspondent the Samity plays a major role in development of the area.

Mass movement to wipe out crimes stressed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Speakers at a workshop here on Tuesday stressed on building a strong mass movement to wipe out criminal activities from the society once and for all. The workshop titled Human Security was organised by the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA), a legal and human rights organisation, with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It was held at local Zilla Parishad auditorium. Speakers also called upon the all to work for creating mass awareness on human security. About 50 persons including journalists, lawyers, teachers, businessmen, NGO workers took part in the workshop which was presided over by Advocate Mousumi Jubaidée Mili. It was addressed, among others, by Manikganj Zilla Parishad Secretary Khondoker Rafiqul Islam, BNWLA Law Officer Advocate Rashida Hossain, its coordinator Advocate Farhana Jasmine and others.

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