

Excessive rains bring worry for tea producers

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

Although production of tea is likely to fall short of the target this season, gardeners and traders may

feel encouraged by the continued rise of tea consumption, demand and sale in the market.

Heavy rainfall coupled with flooding in Moulvibazar, Sylhet and Habiganj, where 90 percent

of tea gardens are located, has caused some concern among the gardeners and traders. They, however, believe that increase in local consumption and the vibrant transactions at the international

weekly auctions here are still a good sign for Bangladeshi tea.

In addition to this positive scenario in the domestic market, what we need most now is to upgrade the quality and quantity

of tea to sustain in the competitive global market, they said. They also gave emphasis on the increase in the hectare-wise tea production by planting high-yielding saplings for better quality

and competitive edge in future. Although the negative impact of excessive rainfall will not take place right now, it is likely to be seen at the end of the season that ultimately will hamper the production target of the year, the traders said.

Both sunlight and rain are required for better production of tea and any fluctuation of either component may wreak havoc such as outbreak of disease and pest attack (red spider or mosquito bug) in the sector, they said.

Bangladesh is still lagging far behind in hectare-wise production of tea, compared to major tea producing and exporting countries like Sri Lanka, India and Kenya, said MA Taher, vice-chairman of Tea Traders Association of Bangladesh (TTAB).

He said the gardens on an average produce 1200 to 1250 kgs of tea per hectare, some a maximum of 2000 kgs and a few selective ones 2500 kgs and more. On the other hand, the tea production per hectare ranges

between 3000 to 3500 kgs or more in Sri Lanka, India and Kenya, he added.

Due to lack of a good management, Taher said, new plantation of high-yielding saplings replacing the old ones has not been taking place and in the absence of proper initiative, many hills in Sylhet, Chittagong and other regions that are suitable for tea cultivation remain unutilised.

Meanwhile, tea has continued to witness a good market as far as price, demand, selling and consumption are concerned this season (2007-2008). Fifteen weekly international tea auctions, out of 45, of the season were held until August 14 and market feedback was satisfactory. On an average, about 80 to 85 percent of tea on offer in the auctions were sold, sources said.

"Up to sale No. 15 this season, about 1.60 crore kgs of tea were sold with an average price of Tk 82.86 per kg," said Arif Rahman Shahin, senior executive of Purba Bangla Tea

Brokers Ltd.

"Around 1.31 crore kgs of tea were sold during the corresponding period of the season 2006-2007," he added.

According to the data available at Bangladesh Tea Association, tea production estimated up to July-end this year was about 2.33 crore kgs compared to 1.96 crore kgs during the same period last year.

Around 55 to 56 million kgs of tea are produced in 162 tea gardens (152 in production) in the country a year, sources said. Of this, local consumption is nearly 45 to 48 million kgs while the rest is exported.

The annual tea production in Bangladesh has unfortunately been static for many years -- between 55 and 56 million kgs -- barring the exception in 2005 when the figure rose to a record of 60 million kgs.



(Left) A tea garden at Hathazari in Chittagong. (Right) Professional tea tasters taste tea before a tea auction at Agrabad.

Ananya, new project of CDA, to tackle housing needs

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD

To cater for the need for housing, the Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) has started implementing a new project, Ananya Residential Area, in the city's Kultaon area at a cost of around Tk 300 crore.

Under the project being implemented with CDA's own fund, a total of 1550 residential plots will be developed on 174 acres of land beside the Oxygen Quaish Road.

A board meeting of the CDA on Monday approved the project and refixed the price of plots at Tk 6 lakh per katha and the deposit at Tk 4 lakh against each application.

Now the CDA will invite applications from interested persons through publishing advertise-

ment in newspapers, sources in the CDA said.

One of the main features of the project -- the first one taken after the introduction of CDA Plot Allotment Policy 2005 -- is that 20 percent of the plots will be earmarked for expatriates.

In previous housing projects, the CDA allocated some 8 percent of the plots for expatriates.

Ananya, the 9th housing project of the CDA, is the largest as far as the number of residential plots is concerned.

However, the CDA raised the price of each plot to Tk 6 lakh per katha following reassessment and review of the project. The price ranged between Tk 4 lakh and Tk 5 lakh in the Project Pro forma (PP) approved in February this year.

The review also led to the reduction in the number of residential plots from 1591 to 1550 as well as raising the price of plots in commercial and apartment blocks to Tk 10 lakh per katha as against Tk 8 lakh per katha proposed in the approved PP.

The price of plots for school and colleges remained unchanged at previously fixed Tk 9 lakh per katha.

According to sources, the CDA had to review implementation cost and other aspects of the project since the increase in land price raised the budget prepared back in May 2005.

In the PP, an approximate cost of Tk 284.61 crore was estimated for the project, but as per reassessment the cost would now exceed Tk 300 crore due to increase in the land price and inflation, they said.

The reassessment committee had proposed refixing the rate of residential plots at Tk 5 lakh and deposit at Tk 5 lakh for each application, sources said.

As per the approved project, the CDA is to develop commercial and apartment blocks on about 1265 katha or 29 acres. Of them, commercial blocks will be developed on about 426 katha to sell plots at Tk 8 lakh per katha and apartment blocks on about 838 katha to sell plots at Tk 9 lakh per katha.

Under the project, the CDA plans to develop residential plots on about 5702 katha or 94 acres of land.

And about 50 acres of land has been kept aside for roads and utilities purposes, said the sources.

On the land preserved for

utilities, the CDA plans to develop shopping malls, community centres, kitchen markets, health centres, school and colleges, kindergartens, mosques, Eidgah and playgrounds.

Project Director Engineer Hasan Bin Sams said that as per re-assessment, the proposed budget would increase at least by Tk 16 crore due to the increase in land price and inflation.

The implementation cost would increase by Tk 13 crore only for acquisition of lands, he added.

"The reduction in the number of residential plots would help increase plots in apartment and commercial blocks as well as create an scope of making more room for roads and open spaces," he added.



Garbage litters the road at Firingee Bazar where the city's largest wholesale market for fruits is located. Hundreds of trucks carrying fruits from across the country arrive here every day. As there is no dustbin nearby, the sellers dump the garbage onto the road, causing suffering to pedestrians as well as pollution to the environment.

the week that was

Independent School debate

The final round of Inter-Class Debate Competition-2007 of Independent School and College was held on the school premises last week.

The Team 'C' emerged as champion by defeating the Team 'B'. The motion of the debate was 'City life is better than village life'. Team 'C' leader Abeer Akther Zam Zam was adjudged the best debater.

Independent University Bangladesh (IUB) faculty member Rashid Ahmed Chowdhury presided over the concluding

ceremony of the competition while school Principal Masugur Rahman and joint coordinator Ziaul Haque also spoke.

Adnan Mannan, a representative of Drishti, Chittagong, who was a judge of the competition, gave some informative tips to young debaters.

Archaeological museum inaugurated

An archaeological museum and a website was inaugurated at a ceremony at Chattogram Academy auditorium last week.

Speakers at the ceremony called on all to help preserve the heritages of the country, saying the task was not easy though.

Eminent Scientist Dr Jamal Nazrul Islam was present as the chief guest while Ashraf Khan presided over the ceremony. Mili Rahman, wife of liberation war hero Birshreshtha Matir Rahman, was present as the special guest.

Writer Runu Siddique, Prof Dr Abdul Kashem, Principal of St. Placid's High School Father Joseph Jibon Gomez and Prof Dr Jinobodhi also spoke.

Kafco donations for hospital

Karnaphuli Fertiliser Company (Kafco) has donated central oxygen system and a 150-KV electric generator to the Chittagong Ma Shishu O General Hospital.

Kafco Chief Executive Officer Mohammad Kaiser Jamal formally inaugurated the oxygen system and generator as the chief guest at a ceremony last week.

Speakers at the ceremony said the hospital depends on the donation from affluent persons and business firms and it provides medical care for distressed mothers and children.

They called on all to extend a helping hand to the hospital, which lacks modern equipment for advance treat-

ment.

The Kafco officials also assured the hospital of helping it in the future.

Kafco Chief Operation Officer Fazle Rabbi, Prof Dr M Nurun Nabi, Dr Anjuman Ara Islam, SM Morshed Hossain and Prof Dr NI Khan spoke at the ceremony chaired by hospital Executive Committee President Prof Dr Fazlul Karim.

Ctg Club medical team in Dhaka

A 12-member team under the supervision of Chittagong Club Limited went to Dhaka on Thursday to provide medical assistance for flood-affected people

suffering from diarrhoea and cholera.

Led by club member Dr Omar Faruk Yusuf, the team comprised 12 specialist doctors of Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

They are providing medical assistance at the temporary medical centre of Haji Camp at Uttara in the capital.

Earlier, the club members, officials and employees donated Tk 21 lakh to the government relief fund for the flood victims.

CCC training on healthcare

A two-day training programme under 2nd Urban Healthcare Project of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) was held last week.

CCC Chief Executive Officer Md Imtiaz Hossain Chowdhury inaugurated the training at a ceremony at Chittagong Press Club (CPC) conference room as the chief guest.

CCC Health Adviser Dr Nurjahan Buiyan, Chief Health Officer Dr Mohammad Ali and Assistant Health Officer Bhagyanandan Barua were present special guests.

Medical officers, officials and staffs working at different health care centres under the project took part in the training programme.

Tree plantation

Chittagong District Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ashraf Shamim emphasised the need to raise aware-

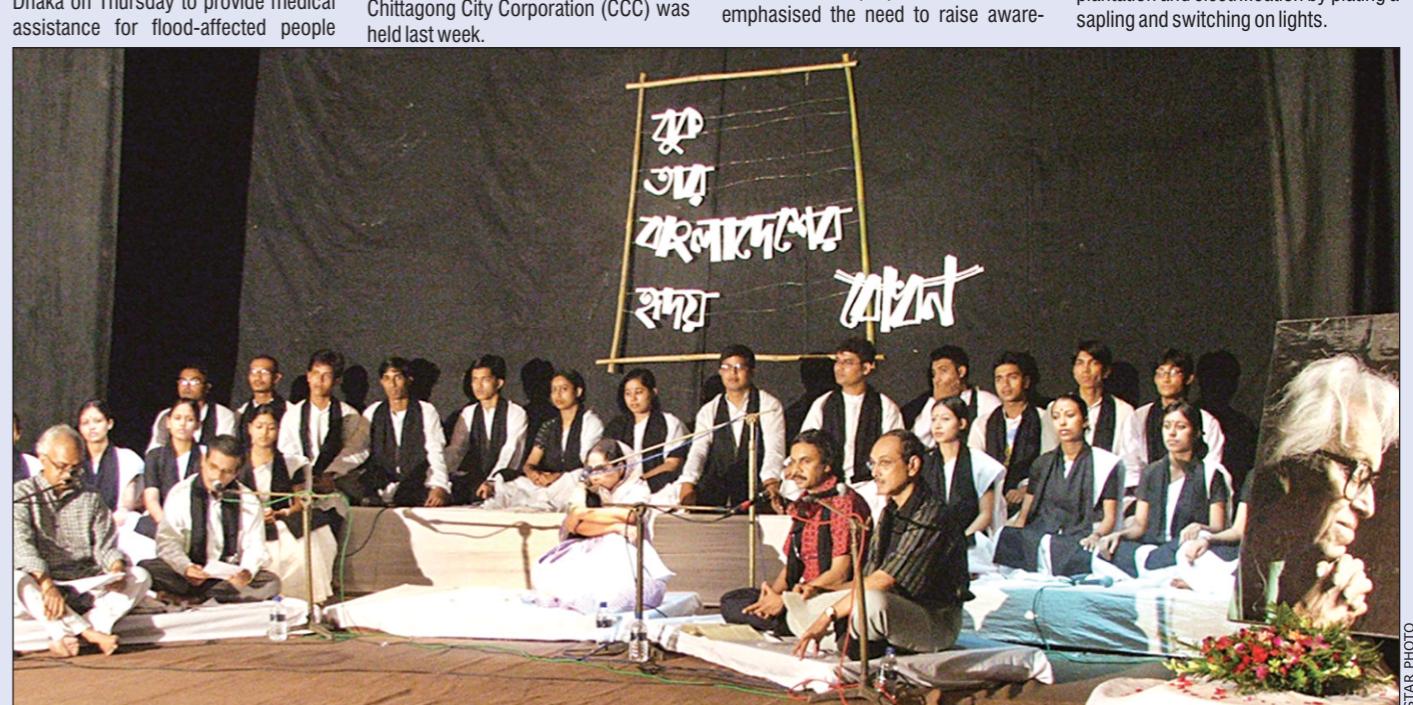
ness about tree plantation.

He said tree plantation at school level would inspire the next generation to build a green Bangladesh.

The deputy commissioner was speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of tree plantation and electrification at the Patiya Barolia Government Primary School last week.

The school management committee President Shahid Ul Alam presided over the ceremony while Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Md Shaidul Alam, Upazila Education Officer Nobir Uddin, Patiya Police Station Officer-in-Charge Nazrul Islam, Deputy Education Officer Sabina Nargis and Union Parishad Chairman SM Nasir Uddin also spoke.

Later, the DC inaugurated the tree plantation and electrification by plating a sapling and switching on lights.



Members of Bodhon, a recitation organisation, recite poems of poet Shamsur Rahman at a programme marking the first death anniversary of the poet at Shilpkala Academy Auditorium in the port city on August 17.



Children perform a dance number at DC Hill Park on August 16. Chattal Youth Choir organised the programme titled 'Barsha Mongal'.

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