

Mushroom cultivation to fight poverty

Matiranga plans massive cultivation of mushroom

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD

Matiranga, a remote upazila of hilly Khagrachhari district, has planned massive cultivation of mushrooms to fight poverty with a slogan titled 'Safety through Development'.

Sixty families of Matiranga, 90km off the port city, have started cultivating mushroom after receiving training in this regard at the local army zone headquarters.

Having training on mushroom cultivation, they have harvested several batches of products to get financial support, at least to some extent, during the last two months.

Initially the families from six small localities of Charpara, Muslimpara, Babupara, Chowdhurypara, Moiectri Nagar and Mandirpara received the training under Pragati Mushroom Training Project organised and financed by the local zone headquarters of Bangladesh Army.

They received certificates from the local army zone commander at a colourful function at Matiranga Degree College on December 15.

Zharna Tripura of Babupara said the training will help them cultivate mushroom. It will also help them for consumption and marketing.

Aneu Chowdhury Nayan, a ward commissioner and headman, said the tribal people will be able to differentiate the non-



poisonous mushrooms from the poisonous ones while collecting them from wild state following the training.

She said but such naturally grown mushrooms are not always available when the collection is insufficient.

Aneu said after the training we now cultivate mushrooms to consume and sell a portion.

While visiting the area on Saturday this correspondent saw the locals are growing mushrooms in every house in six paras (areas) after the training.

Abul Bashar Miajee, a senior lecturer of Matiranga Degree College, looked very happy while he was showing the "Mada" (coils of rotting straws)

with different stage of growing mushrooms his wife Jobeda Khanam raised in rows on shelves at a corner of a small makeshift structure.

Bashar said he eats mushrooms as it helps him check diabetes.

He said he also has got a good harvest to sell in the last two months and before har-



(Left) Udy Kiron Tripura takes care of mushrooms at his house at Moiectripara. (Top) Headman and Ward Commissioner Aneu Chowdhury receives certificate from local army zone commander at a ceremony at Matiranga in Khagrachhari.

vesting the next batch he has received requests from many in advance to supply them mushrooms.

Udy Kiron Tripura of Moiectri Nagar was all in smile while he was showing the wonderful growth of the mushrooms he is cultivating at a corner of his house.

Udy said he is having three

harvests from a single batch in 45 days and the production cost is also very nominal.

Inspired with the success he is now planning to raise more Madas and cultivate mushrooms in wider scale for marketing.

Dr Mohammad Habibur Rahman, a college teacher, said with a suitable climate

Matiranga has a huge prospect of mushroom.

Meanwhile, encouraged by the success of the trained mushroom growers, the people from remote areas of Matiranga are expressing their interest to receive the training at the Matiranga Army Headquarters and cultivate mushrooms.

Matiranga Army Zone Commander said they have a plan to train as many as 500 families and provide them with seeds to cultivate mushrooms.

At the same time they are helping the mushroom growers form a cooperatives society to collect seeds and marketing their products in the city for a better price, he said.

the week that was



Ispahani School and College Principal Hasina Zakaria speaks at a discussion on the school premises on Sunday, marking the Victory Day.

Call to protect child rights

Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Hossain Jamil at a gathering of children in Patiya upazila on Saturday called upon all to be more responsible and sympathetic to the rights of children.

Jamil said this while he was speaking as the chief guest at the assembly.

He said "We all should be more careful to protect the rights of children with a view to building a better Bangladesh in future".

Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts (BITA) in Chittagong, organised the gathering at its Cultural and Development Centre (CDC) in Patiya.

With BITA Executive Director Shishir Dutta in the chair, Patiya Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shahidul Alam and child representative Moyena Akhter also spoke at the assembly.

A total of 200 children from different districts of Greater Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) attended the gathering.

Trial of war criminals demanded

Teachers, students and guardians at a discussion on Victory Day at Ispahani Public School and College (IPSC) in the port city demanded immediate trial of the war criminals to give the independence of Bangladesh a befitting meaning.

IPSC Principal Prof Hasina Zakaria chaired the discussion. Teachers Parimal Chandra Saha, Roksona Begum, Ali Asgar, Sheikh Abdul Hakim, Abu Taher, Ahmed Shahin Alrazi and Zobaira Akhter, and guardian Shahidul

Islam, bureau chief of The Daily Star, spoke at the discussion. The speakers at the discussion urged the people to project the history of 1971 and emergence of Bangladesh correctly before the young generation.

They also called for resisting anti-liberation forces like Razakar and Al Badr, creating mass awareness in all section of the society.

Lamia Dilshad, a class-two student recited a poem titled 'Freedom Fighter (Muktijuddha)'.

Smuggled Indian clothes seized

Police seized huge Indian clothes worth over Tk 20 lakh smuggled from India and detained a truck from in front of a market in the Station Road area in the port city early Sunday.

The criminals involved in the smuggling of these clothes might have tried to evade tax, police said.

The seized garments include 1,750 metre satin clothe worth Tk 4,07,500, 325 metre crepe clothe worth Tk 17,875, 2,000 metre georgette clothe worth Tk 80,000, six hundred pieces of saree worth Tk 6 lakh and 850 three-piece worth Tk 4,02,500.

Acting on a tip-off, police seized the truck loaded with smuggled clothes at Nupur Market in presence of customs officials.

A case has been filed with the Doubtmooring Police Station.

Computer training for members of Ansar-VDP

The prize giving ceremony of a 42-day

basic computer training course for Ansar men were held at the Ansar-VDP Training Centre in the Foy's Lake area in the port city on Sunday.

Ansar and VDP Chittagong and Hill Range Commander Sheikh Abdul Mannan was present as the chief guest in the ceremony with Chittagong Range Deputy Director Laxman Chandra Talukdar in the chair.

Mannan in his speech underscored the need for the importance of the computer training.

Later, the guests handed over prizes among the 20 participants of the battalion Ansar.

'End repression of sex workers'

Speakers at a rally in the port city on

Monday demanded an end to all kinds of repression on the sex workers.

The speakers said the sex workers don't come to this profession by choice and most of them fall into the trap of pimps.

They were addressing a rally prior to a human chain organised by Rehabilitation Centre for Prostitutes and Rootless Children (PARC) and Jana Udyog to mark the 'End of International Sex Workers Repression Day' in front of Chittagong Press Club.

Around 50 sex workers, representatives from government and non-government organisations, journalists and cultural activists took part in the human chain.

The PARC Chief Executive Nazrul Islam Manna, Jana Udyog Coordinator Sharif Chowhan, local daily Suprobut Bangladesh Chief Reporter M Nasirul

Haq, Jamal Khan Ward Commissioner MA Naser, Woman Commissioner Rekha Alam Chowdhury, Chittagong Metropolitan Union of Journalists (CMUJ) President Shamsul Haq Haidari, Prof Idris Ali and Rezaul Karim Tareq spoke at the rally.

Sex workers Munni, Parvin and Laily also spoke.

Later, a colourful procession was brought out that paraded main thoroughfares of the city and ended at Cheragi Pahar intersection.

Training of information officers ends

A two-day training workshop of infor-

mation officers ended at the auditorium of Regional Public Administration Training Centre (RPTC) in the port city on Saturday.

Chittagong District Information Office organised the workshop under an UNFPA-financed project styled "Advocacy on Reproductive Health and Gender Issues Through Department of Mass Communication (3rd phase)."

A total of 28 information officers from Chittagong, Sylhet and Dhaka Division participated in the workshop.

Director of Mass Communication Department Surath Kumar Sarker gave away certificates to the participants as the chief guest. UNFPA Programme Officer Maruf Hossain also spoke at the function chaired by Deputy Director of District Information Office Mohammad Kamruzzaman Bhuiyan.



Students of Little Jewels School perform at a dance programme organised by the school on the occasion of Victory Day on Thursday.

Brisk business of porno CDs, mags in port city

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR

A section of dishonest roadside shop owners are doing brisk business of porno CDs and magazines at different spots in the port city, posing a threat of serious social degradation.

At least 20 makeshift shops on the pavements of the city streets in the New Market area are displaying such compact discs (CD) and books and selling everyday.

The CDs and magazines draw attention of the pedestrians, particularly the school and college students.

Sellers of such porno materials are also active at Station Road, Reazuddin Bazar, Sholoshahar Gate No. 2, Agrabad Commercial Area, Chawk Bazar, Bohadurhat, Rail Station and different bus stands, sources said.

Business of such CDs and books of vulgar pictures thrives on ahead of any festival or special occasions.

While visiting the New Market area the correspondent found that the porno CDs and magazines were on open display along with CDs of music videos, film and books of different types.

Abu Noman, a seller of the CDs in the New Market area, said they have porno CDs of different countries like Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Thailand, Egypt, Iran, China, Japan and the United States.

The local and Indian CDs have a higher demand and sell at a price ranging from Tk 50 to Tk 200 while CDs of other countries sell at Tk 30 to 50, he said.

Local and Indian porno books and magazines sell at Tk 10 to Tk 100, he said.

School and college goers and youths are the main buyers of these books and CDs having obscene picture and sex stimulating names, said Joynal, also a seller and an adolescent.

"Wholesalers always provide us with new flicks of high demand," said Joynal while refusing to disclose the identity of such wholesalers.

A shopkeeper alongside the makeshift shops on condition of anonymity told The Daily Star that students and youths throng the porno CD shops since the morning while the law enforcers seem indifferent to the menace.

He said due to sale of such CDs and books in the open markets, the youths and adolescents are going astray that needs to be dealt with strictly.

Abu Bakar Siddique, assistant commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Kotwali Zone, said they have conducted several drives and seized more than 2,000 porno CDs in the New Market area on Friday but could not arrest anyone in this connection.

A case has been filed in this regard. A section of dishonest hawkers return to the footpaths with such CDs and magazines immediately after the police raid, Bakar said, adding that the trade could be stopped if the wholesalers were traced out. He said the police are thinking of launching a hunt for the evil elements of the society soon.