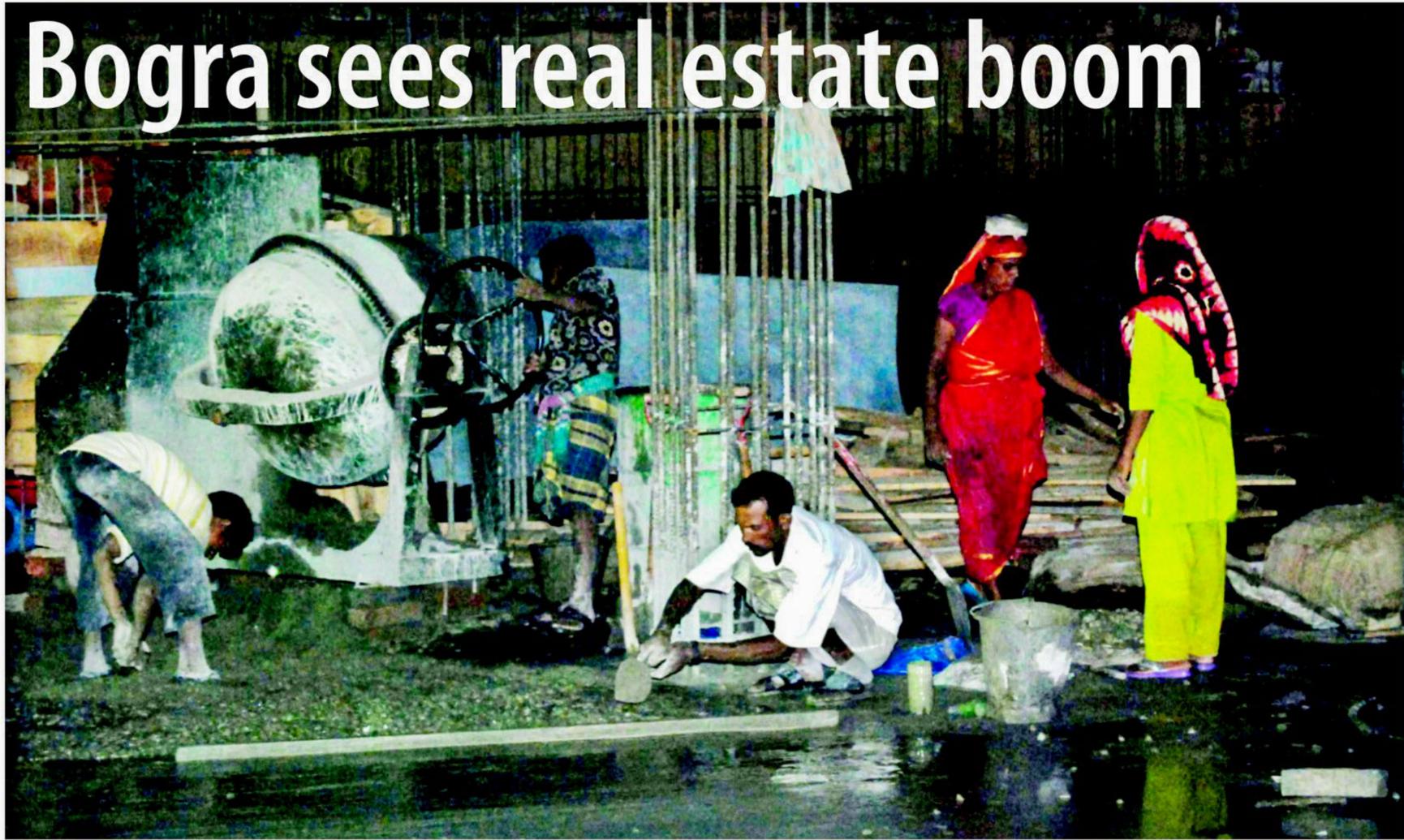




Districts in Focus

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Bogra sees real estate boom



HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU

The number of construction workers in Bogra is increasing by the day as real estate has seen a fast expansion in recent times.

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

THOUSANDS of jobs have been created in Bogra in the building construction sector in a span of only seven years since real estate business flourished

locally. Alongside, other businesses related to real estate development such as brickfields have also mushroomed in the district during the period.

Brick production in the district has seen a rise as years passed since 2003 to meet the rising demand for the product, said Abul Kalam Azad, Bogra district president of Brick Manufacturing Owners' Association.

According to the association, 163 brickfields now produce around 81 crore bricks annually on an average. "At least 30 brickfields were established in the district in the last seven and a half years to supply bricks to the private sector development projects," said Azad.

Most of the 30 brickfields are doing good business, he said. "Another three new brickfields will start production soon," said Azad. The brickfields created at least 10,000 fresh jobs in the last five years thanks to the real estate business, he added.

Md Alamgir Hossain Alam, president of Bogra District Building Construction Labourers Association, said more than 70,000 skilled and unskilled labourers, most of whom are the members of the two associations, are engaged in different real estate and private construction projects in Bogra.

"Only 5,000 members were registered with my organisation before the national election in 2003. The number now stands at 24,637," said Alam.

Hafizar Rahman, president of Bogra District House Building Labourers Union, said the number of enrolled skilled and unskilled construction workers in the union is over 8,000. "Over 3,000 women got registered as construction labourers in several real estate or housing projects such as Roop Katha Housing."

"I could hardly find only 25-30 labourers at Namazgarh labour market 12 years back. Now you'll see more than 500 people searching for works there," said Haroon-Ur-Rashid, 40, a construction worker.

The labour market just cropped up from nowhere in 1990 to meet the local day labourers' demand.

There are still hundreds of construction labourers who are yet to be registered with any labour association or union, said Alam of the construction labour association.

A local real estate company, Roop Katha Housing, engaged 70 labourers including women for its construction works, said Rajedur Rahman, Roop Katha's project director. He said their 10-storey building will be complete at a cost of Tk 12 crore.

"With the completion of the building's basement till now, 10 of the total 63 units of the project have already been booked," said Rahman. Most of the buyers are from Bogra town and its adjacent areas, including businessmen and government officials like engineers, doctors and

members of the judiciary.

Md Emdadul Hoq, agent of Shah Cement in Bogra, said he sold five lakh bags of cement last year. "I sold only two lakh bags in 2003, whereas it was 3.5 lakh in 2009. In between 2003 and 2008, the sales stood at 2.5 lakh bags annually. At least 450 shops in the district now sell cement of different brands."

Md Mostafizur Rahman, deputy manager of BSRM Steels, said business of quality steel rod has been flourishing in Bogra because of an increase in real estate and commercial building construction works.

"Now we sell more than 5,000 tonnes of quality MS rod monthly, up from 1,200-2,000 tonnes in 2008," said Rahman. Companies like AKS, GPH and KSRM Steels appointed their agents in Bogra, he added.

Md Abdul Hai, a carpenter, said he has set up furniture making machinery spending Tk 7 lakh two years ago in Tinmatha area on the outskirts of Bogra town to meet the increasing demand for furniture. "My main job is to make wooden decorated doors and kitchen fittings," said Hai. His income has increased by 50 percent by this time, he added.

Putu Talukder, proprietor of Bogra Sanitary Store, said: "I used to sell sanitary goods like basins worth of Tk 20,000 a day before the real estate boom here. Now my sales have just doubled."

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Realtors provide jobs for many

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

AN HSC examinee Zahidul Islam, 18, has been working as a painter assistant since 2009, in high-rise building projects in Bogra town. He started earning when his father became unable to give exam fees for his Dakhil exams due to a loss in his vegetable business.

The fast-flourishing real estate and commercial building construction projects in Bogra gave him the chance to continue his studies, said Islam.

A student of Bogra Azizul Haque Collage, Islam got a good result in his Dakhil exams under Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board in 2009. Now he is expecting a better result in HSC. "I will continue my studies with my own earnings."

He is grateful to his neighbour Putu Sarker who arranged a job for him at Tk 70 a day before the Dakhil exams. Now he gets Tk 100 a day, Islam said.

Housewife Bina Begum, 25, works in Roop Katha Housing Project at Tk 250 a day. "I had to start working a month ago as a day labourer to meet up the educational expenses of my kids," she added. Her husband Shapon Molla, 27,

The fast-flourishing real estate and commercial building construction projects in Bogra gave Zahidul Islam, a painter assistant, the chance to continue his studies

cannot run the family with his small income as a transport worker, she added.

Shabana Begum, 25, said her husband Md Aminul Islam is physically unfit to do any kind of work that forced her to be a day labourer in a housing project at Tk 250 per day three years ago. She spends most of her earnings for the treatment of her husband.

Md Delwar Hossain, a construction worker, earns Tk 4,000 a month. Earlier, he used to earn Tk 1,000 a month as an agriculture labourer at village Dhoroanjoy under Bogra sadar upazila.



Day labourers wait with their working materials at Namazgarh labour market in Bogra.

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