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Districts in Focus



Left, Flowers are displayed in busy shops at the Khokon Park Flower Market in Bogra town. Right, Shop attendants make bouquets.

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU

Flower trade takes hold in Bogra

“Most traders are interested in collecting the local varieties because of their high demand. We make a 25 percent profit on normal market days. On special occasions such as Valentine’s Day, profits rise to about 50 percent”



Montu Mia

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

FLOWER trade has blossomed over the last 20 years in Bogra, lifting many families in the town and other areas out of poverty.

It was all possible for the activities at Khokon Park Flower Market in Bogra town. Yearly turnover of the market stands close to Tk 1.5 crore.

Montu Mia, 55, was the first to start the trade on the sidewalks near Khokon Park with an initial investment of only Tk 200. Now, 200 families are catering to the business directly or indirectly, finding a source of income.

Montu Mia says the peak season for the flower business is from September to March every year but special days such as December 16, February 21 and March 26 are important days for the business.

Most traders are interested in

collecting the local varieties because of their high demand, he says.

“We make a 25 percent profit on normal market days. On special occasions such as Valentine’s Day, profits rise to about 50 percent,” Montu Mia adds.

The pioneer of the flower trade in the area, Montu Mia used to earn Tk 100 a day on average selling local flowers. “Now I am earning Tk 3,000 a day on average selling both local and hybrid varieties,” he says. “Government patronisation is important to increase the business.”

Md Zaidul Haque, 50, started the business in the market about 20 years back, selling locally produced flowers, like red roses. “Now I am earning Tk 2,000 a day on an average selling local and hybrid flowers.”

His yearly turnover rose to Tk 7.2



municipality.

Haque, owner of Karotoa Fulghar in the market, says the 17 shops employ at least 60 people.

Haque employs three workers in his shop. Previously, it was a one-man-show for him as he managed everything by himself. But he later hired help to run the business smoothly.

Haque sells flowers to customers from near-by districts as well: Joypurhat and Gaibandha.

His main buyers are the government offices of different areas, who buy flowers for the programmes they host.

Milon Mia, 30, an employee, has been working there for the past eight years as a flower bucket maker. “I get a monthly salary of Tk 4,500 and maintain a family of four.”

Prior to joining the shop, he was jobless. To pass his days, he used to sit idle in a local market in Shibganj upazila in Bogra.

Farmers profit from bio-pesticide

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

THE government-run research organization, Rural Development Academy (RDA) in Bogra, has introduced an environment-friendly pesticide to reduce the use of toxic chemical pesticides in agriculture.

The bio pesticide enhanced by trichoderma, a genus of fungi present in all soils, also helps increase soil fertility.

AKM Zakaria, director of agriculture for RDA Bogra, said the bio-pesticide potent is an agent used extensively for soil-borne diseases. It has been used successfully against pathogenic fungi belonging to various genera, he added.

Application of the pesticide increases the number of deep roots, increasing the plant’s ability to resist draught, he added.

“The farmers can use the bio pesticide on paddy, wheat and vegetables to protect the major crops against soil-borne diseases,” said Zakaria. The product is also effective

in managing municipal solid and household waste, he added.

RDA introduced four forms of trichoderma products which are all user-friendly, according to Zakaria.

Cucumber farmer Md Rustom Ali, 45, of Garidaha village in Sherpur upazila in Bogra, harvested around 680 kilograms of cucumber on 10 decimals of land using only 2 kilograms of trichoderma bio-pesticide last year. Even two years back, he got 400 kilograms of cucumber by using various toxic chemicals and fertilisers worth Tk 600.

“I brought 10 kilograms of bio-pesticide two years for the first time in 2010 to apply on my cultivable land,” said Ali, a pesticide trader.

“I started selling the bio-pesticide two years back, considering the local farmers’ interests as well as the environment. Now I am earning handsome amounts selling the trichoderma bio pesticide in my area,” said Ali. He sold at least 500 kilograms of bio pesticide to farmers in the area in the last one year.

Another farmer, Md Mostak Ahmed, 25, said he made Tk 5,000

by cultivating ash-gourd on 10 decimals of land using the bio pesticide. He spent Tk 120 on the pesticide.

Last year, he spent Tk 600 to cultivate the same vegetable on the same piece of land. “Previously, I made only Tk 3,000 by selling my produce in the local market by using toxic pesticides and chemical fertilizers,” said Ahmed.

Md Badsha Mia, 50, a banana producer of Kalshimati village in the same upazila expects to sell his produce for double the amount this year compared to last year.

“I sold my produce for Tk 18,000 last year. But I expect more than Tk 36,000 this time for the same quantity.”

He cultivated bananas on 20 decimals of land using trichoderma bio-pesticide spending Tk 4,000 this time with advice from Ali. Last year, he used chemical fertilisers and toxic pesticides on his banana field.

Most farmers in the region use liquid and powder forms of the trichoderma bio-pesticide to cultivate paddy, potatoes, brinjals, chillies and other crops, said Ali.



A farmer uses environment-friendly pesticides to cultivate crops in Bogra.

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