



SILK FACES CHALLENGES

SILK is a protein fibre usually made by certain worms. Some forms of silk can be woven into fabric. Rajshahi silk, once a reputed commodity across the world, is today waging a battle for survival because of intense competition with international producers. Silk yarn producers face problems in producing and marketing since imported yarns are cheaper and make their way easily into the local market. Even so, experts continue to pin high hopes on Rajshahi silk. They think the industry needs support, proper utilisation of government facilities, training of manpower and use of modern technology and machinery in packaging and branding. Over 10,000 people are dependent for their livelihood directly or indirectly on the local silk sector. Of them some 1,000 people are engaged in producing silk yarns by using very old, pretty obsolete methods. In a period of 52 days, eggs turn into worms, eat mulberry leaves and grow, and form cocoons made of silk. Growers collect the silk and make reels. The fibre is sent to the mills to be woven into fabrics. Bangladesh produces only 50 tonnes of silk against a yearly demand of over 300 tonnes.

Photo: ANISUR RAHMAN

