

On track to be tobacco farm free

Campaign to create awareness about health hazards in Jhenidah

AZIBOR RAHMAN with ANDREW EAGLE

Jhenidah farmers are quitting the tobacco trade en-masse. Thanks to the efforts of NGOs and social organisations in staging rallies, seminars and awareness campaigns, the hazards associated with growing tobacco are increasingly well-known. As a result, the area of land dedicated to the crop is declining across the district. Yet, due to incentives from tobacco companies and favourable crop prices some farmers persist.

"My son forbids me to grow tobacco," says farmer Badsha Mia from Hiradanga village in Jhenidah sadar upazila. "He says tobacco is poisonous and harmful for health." Badsha Mia's son Sazan Hossain is a Higher School Certificate student of KC College in Jhenidah.

"But I grow tobacco anyway," the farmer continues, "because of the good prices. I want to give it up as many neighbours have done. We know it is harmful. There has been a lot of anti-tobacco publicity in the market."

Kawsar Ali is another Hiradanga farmer who

still grows tobacco. "The tobacco company helps me in farming it," he says. "I've been growing tobacco for three years and this year I cultivated 3 bighas of land with tobacco at a cost of Tk 1.5 lakhs. The company gave fertiliser and ensures a good sales price." He will sell his tobacco for around Tk 150 per kilogram this year, expecting a total profit of Tk 1.2 lakhs.

Farmer Shamsur Ali of Enayetpur village in Kaliganj upazila on the other hand has personal experience to turn him away from tobacco. "I used to smoke a hookah pipe and for some years I have suffered coughing and respiratory disease. I had two cardiac arrests that required long periods of treatment. Never again in my life will I smoke or grow tobacco."

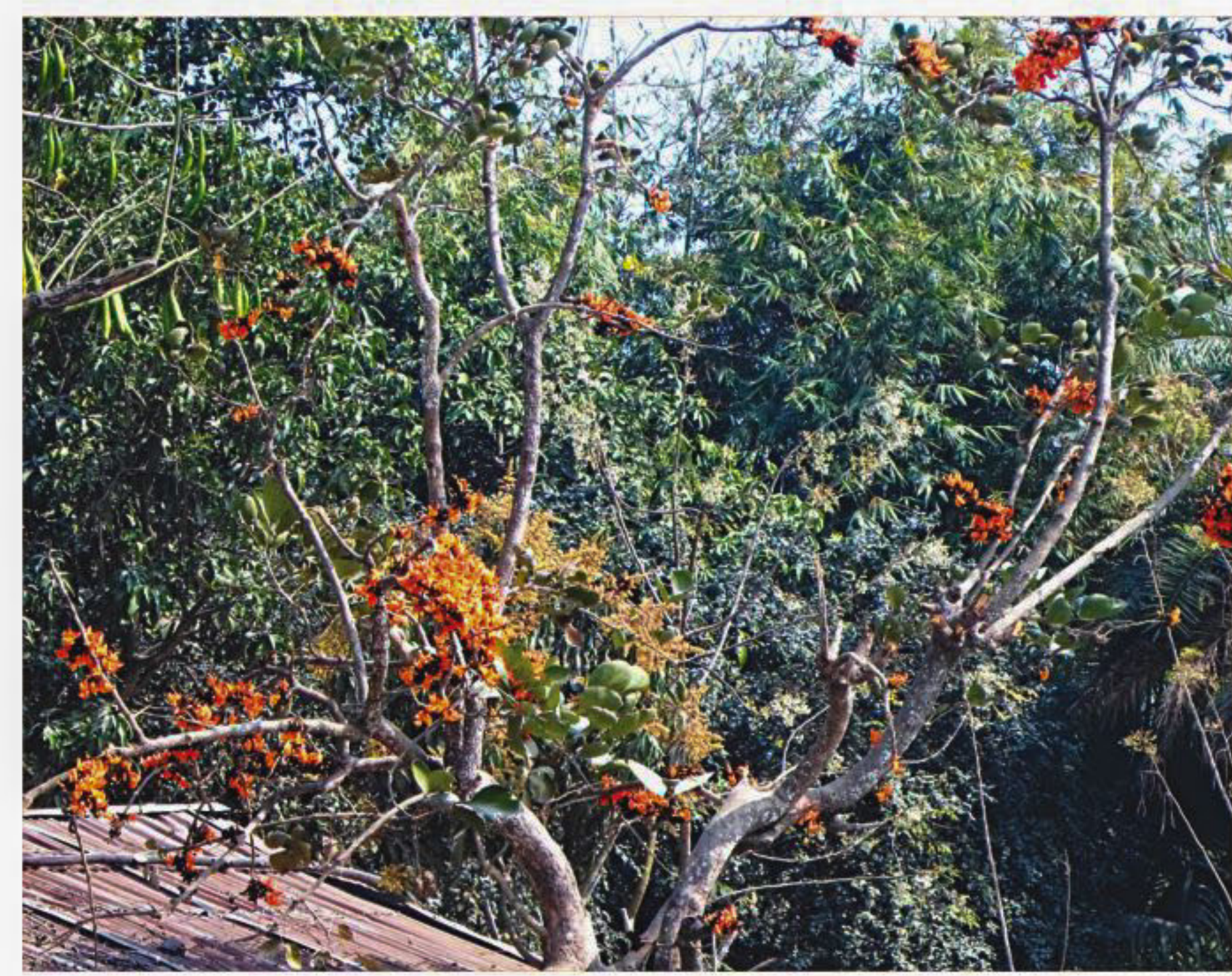
According to Jhenidah's agriculture extension department, 925 hectares in the district was planted with tobacco in the 2014-15 year, down from 1370 hectares a year earlier. The decline continued into 2015-16 with 795 hectares planted, while in the 2016-17 year only 660 hectares is being dedicated to tobacco. For the last two years Kotchandpur upazila,

one of Jhenidah's six upazilas, has been entirely free of tobacco cultivation.

Some of the remaining tobacco farmers in sadar upazila told The Daily Star they are attracted to the crop due to the profits on offer which are better than with other crops; besides, they are paid for an entire tobacco crop in a single instalment. For them, these benefits yet outweigh concerns about the hazards.

"We are continuing efforts to encourage farmers to resist tobacco," says Sayed Shafikul Islam, who works for a local anti-tobacco NGO. "We are still working towards increasing public awareness of its harmful effects through publicity, meetings and rallies. Tobacco farming should be gone from the district within one or two years."

"NGOs and other organisations are trying to rid Jhenidah of the menace of tobacco farming," says Jhenidah's agriculture extension department deputy director Shah Akramul Haq. "Due to publicity about its damaging consequences we have already seen significant reduction."



Palash flowers appear in a tree, heralding the advent of the spring. The photo was taken at Surail village in Nachole upazila of Chapainawabganj.

PHOTO: STAR



A late blight affected potato field at Madhobram village in Bhogdanga union under Kurigram Sadar upazila. Inset, farmers harvest the winter crop before its full maturity to minimise losses.

PHOTO: STAR

Late blight disease hits potato

Kurigram farmers start harvesting early to cut loss

ABDUL WAHED, Kurigram

Potato farmers in Kurigram Sadar upazila are harvesting potato before its maturity period to reduce their loss this year.

They may suffer loss as late blight disease has attacked their potato fields and the market price is not good.

Ariful Islam, 35, son of Golzar Hossain of Kaley village in Belgachha union under Kurigram Sadar upazila, said, "I have cultivated Cardinul, Estaric, Diamond, Shagita and Ledyrosa varieties on 90 acres of leased land in Char Madhobram village of Bhogdanga union. Initially, the plants grew well as I used fertiliser and anti-fungal medicines."

"The plants are around 65 days old now. One week ago, dense fog and cold

caused late blight that affected the plants, especially those of the Ledyrosa and Shagiata varieties. About 25 percent of potato fields have been attacked by disease," Arif added.

"I have already spent about Tk 85 thousand (including land lease cost), even though the market price is not good. I think I may suffer loss, so I am harvesting the Shagita variety and selling it at Tk 280 per maund," he said.

Abdul Alim, 34, said, "I have cultivated potato of Cardinul, Diamond and Estaric varieties on 21 acres of leased land in Fakir Mamud village of Buraburi union under Ulipur upazila. I cultivated Estaric variety on seven acres, of which about 25 percent was attacked by late blight. I may suffer loss if the disease is not checked as the

potatoes are 60 days old."

"The price of potatoes is decreasing every day. I am selling at Tk 200 per maund now and hope to reduce the loss," said Alim.

Kurigram Sadar Upazila Agriculture Officer Mohammad Kamruzzaman said, "We advise the potato farmers to spray anti-fungal medicines with power spray machines, so that the medicine can touch both sides of potato leaves. But the farmers use normal spray machine. As a result, medicine cannot touch the under parts of the potato leaves and cannot work properly."

"There has been sunshine for two days. The danger period has passed and the fields will be harvested soon," said Kamruzzaman.

Widows find livelihood in drying hard papers

MAMUN-UR-RASHID, Bogra

Eight widows in Bogra town have been earning their livelihood by drying hard papers (stiffened paper) for a long time.

They are Ayesha Bewa, 65, of Baghopara village, Shahinur Bewa, 56, and Monowara Bewa, 60, of Arulia village, Nurjahan, 50, of Choto Kumira, Parboti Rani, 45, and Beauty Bewa, 45, of Nishindhara area in Sadar upazila, Bilkis Banu, 60, and Josna Khatun, 61, of Bihar village under Shibganj upazila.

The widows said they started drying hard papers under paper trader Haji Awal Mia of Nishindhara area after losing their husbands. They are paid Tk 100 each per day.

The widows said they have none to care them after their husbands' deaths and have to fight for their existence as their sons do not care for them and their daughters are married.

Ayesha Bewa said she has been managing her life, thanks to the sincerity and sympathy of her employer.

Shadon Kumar, manager of the paper house, said they supply the hard papers to shops for making cartons and packets for packing different goods and food items, and for binding books.

Awal Hossain said he has been making hard paper for a long time. It is a really easy task and he employs the widows so they can earn their livelihood, adding that he tries his best to support



Drying of hard papers serves as the means of livelihood for these two widows, like a few others in the area. The photo was taken at a ground beside Shaheed Aktar Ali Moon Hall of Government Azizul Haque College in Bogra a couple of days ago.

PHOTO: STAR

3 MONTHS AFTER NASIRNAGAR MAYHEM Festival begins at temple

A CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Over three months after the Nasirnagar mayhem in the district, a six-day festival began at a temple in the upazila yesterday.

Local administration said they have taken adequate measures alongside the organisers to hold the festival peacefully.

General Secretary of Gour Temple Organising Committee Nirmal Chowdhury said they have set up idols of Radha and Krishna at the temple.

Locals said the Gour Temple was vandalised during the attack that took place on October 30 last year.

Locals said the Hindu community people were in fear after the incident, adding that they got back confidence and decided to arrange the festival at the Gour Temple after the government took an initiative to provide security.

Officer-in-Charge of Nasirnagar Police Station Md Abu Zafar said they have taken adequate security measures ahead of the festival.

Mother, baby return from Indian prison

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A woman and her minor child returned home from India on Monday night through Benapole check post after serving one year in an Indian prison.

OC Iqbal Hossain of Benapole Immigration Police said the two had entered India illegally one and a half years ago for jobs.

Indian police arrested them and later an Indian court sentenced them to one-year imprisonment.

Takes own life to end suffering

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A student of Kushtia Islamic University committed suicide at a mess in Kushtia town on Monday evening.

The deceased, Atiqur Rahman Atiq, 23, a Masters student, hailed from Bhrungamari upazila of Kurigram.

According to a note left by Atiq, the cause behind his suicide was 'unbearable pain in his abdomen for a long time.'

Atiq wrote, "I had a dream to be a magistrate. But my illness (abdominal pain) was getting more severe every day, and I did not want to push my family into poverty by spending for my treatment."

Man killed, 15 injured in Habiganj clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A man was killed and 15 people were injured in a clash on Monday between two groups of villagers over land dispute in Lakhai upazila of Habiganj.

The deceased is Md Sagor Mia, 25, son of Muktar Hossain of Bamoy village in the upazila.

According to eyewitnesses and police, an altercation broke out between supporters of Aziz Hossain and Tanvir Ahmed in the village over land dispute at around 10:00pm.

The two groups armed with sticks,

locked in a clash that spread over the entire village and adjacent areas.

Police struggled for one hour to bring the mob under control. They fired rubber bullets and teargas shells to break up the feuding parties.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Lakhai Police Station Muzammel Haque said Sagor, brother of Aziz, was killed on the spot while 15 people from both sides were injured.

Five of the injured were admitted to Lakhai Health Complex and three were taken to private clinics. Others were given first aid.

Two people were arrested yesterday in this regard. Riot police have been deployed on the spot, the OC said.

Mudslide kills one

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A brickfield worker was killed and another sustained critical injuries in a mudslide in Pirgachha upazila of Rangpur yesterday.

The deceased is Abdul Aziz, 48, of Kaunia upazila.

Quoting witnesses, police said the incident took place when a huge chunk of mud fell on two workers while they were cutting earth from the basement of a huge pile around 8:00am.

Locals took the duo to Pirgachha Upazila Health Complex from where they were referred to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Aziz died on way to the hospital, said Sub-inspector Ershad Ali of Pirgachha Police Station.

Madrasa student found murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police recovered the body of a madrasa student from Bagan Madhyapara area in Trishal upazila of Mymensingh yesterday.

The victim was identified as Shariful Islam Sharif, 17, an Aleem student at Bagan Islamia Alia Madrasa in the upazila.

Quoting family sources, Officer-in-Charge of Trishal Police Station Md Moniruzzaman said Sharif, son of Md Shamsuddin of Bagan Madhyapara, went out of his house on Monday night and did not return home. Family members searched for him but could not find him, said police.

Locals found the throat-slit body of Sharif at a field near his house and informed the police.

Police went to the spot, recovered the body and sent it to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

No case was lodged and none was arrested as of filing of this report at 4:00pm yesterday.

Police are investigating the incident, but no motive behind the killing has been found yet, the OC said.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.
Bangladesh Marine Academy, Chittagong.
www.macademy.gov.bd

INVITATION FOR TENDER (OTM-05/2016-17)

01. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Shipping			
02. Agency	Bangladesh Marine Academy			
03. Procuring Entity Name	Commandant, Bangladesh Marine Academy			
04. Procuring Entity Code	-			
05. Procuring Entity District	Chittagong			
06. Invitation For	বেতার যোগাযোগের জন্য রিপিটার সেট ও ওয়াক-টক সেটসহ আনুষঙ্গিক মালামাল/ যন্ত্রপাতি ক্রয় / সরবরাহসহ সংযোজন সংক্রান্ত।			
07. Invitation Ref. No.	18.459.007.00.00.050.2014			
08. Date	06-02-2017			
09. Procurement Method	National Open Tendering Method (OTM)			
10. Budget & Source of Fund	GOB			
11. Development Partner (if applicable)	N/A			
12. Project/ Programme Code (if applicable)	N/A			
13. Project/ Programme Name (if applicable)	N/A			
14. Tender Package No.	Package No-OTM- 05/2016-17			
15. Tender Package Name	As mentioned above.			
16. Tender Publication Date	On or Before 08-02-2017			
17. Tender Last Selling Date	20-02-2017 (During office hour).			
18. Tender Closing date and time.	22-02-2017 on 12.00 noon.			
19. Tender Opening date and time	22-02-2017 on or After 12.30 pm.			
20. Name and Address of the office for Selling tender documents	1. Office of the Accounts Officer, Bangladesh Marine Academy.			
21. Name and Address of the office for Opening & receiving tender documents	Office of the Chairman, Tender Opening committee, Marine Academy, Ctg.			
22. Place/Date/Time of pre-tender Meeting	Conference Room, Bangladesh Marine Academy, Ctg / Date- 13-02-2017 Time- 10.30 am			
23. Eligibility of tendered	All eligible persons/ Contractors/ Firms. Who have fulfil the qualification criteria stipulated in the tender data sheet and other conditions of the tender documents with experience mentioned above.			
24. Brief Description of goods or works	Detail mentioned in the schedule.			
25. Brief Description of Related Services	Detail mentioned in the schedule.			
26. Tender Document Price	Lot-01-2000.00 (Two thousand), Non-refundable Bank draft (DD) in favour of the Commandant (Drawable Sonali bank Ltd. Marine Academy branch) Bangladesh Marine Academy, Chittagong-4206 is to be submitted.			
27. Lot	Identification of Lot	Location	Tender Security (Only Bank Draft, Re-fundable)	Completion Time in days/months
Lot-01	বেতার যোগাযোগের জন্য রিপিটার সেট ও ওয়াক-টক সেটসহ আনুষঙ্গিক মালামাল/ যন্ত্রপাতি ক্রয় / সরবরাহসহ সংযোজন সংক্রান্ত।	Marine Academy	25,000.00	30 Days
28. Name of official Inviting Tender	Dr. Sajid Hussain, Chartered Marine Engineer.			
29. Designation of official Inviting Tender	Commandant			
30. Address of official Inviting Tender	Bangladesh Marine Academy, Chittagong-4206			
31. Contact details of official Inviting Tender	Bangladesh Marine Academy, Chittagong, Ph-031-2514151-6, Fax- 031-2514160, e-mail-commandant@macademy.gov.bd			
32. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.				

GD-304

06/02/2017
Officer in-charge Store
Bangladesh Marine Academy
Chittagong-4206