



A litchi-laden tree at an orchard at Jahapur village in Madhukhali upazila of Faridpur. The photo was taken a few days ago.

PHOTO: STAR

# Litchi growers all smiles

*Bumper litchi yield in Faridpur this year*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Bumper yield of litchi this season has brought smiles to the farmers in Madhukhali and Boalmari upazilas of the district.

Several litchi growers at Jahapur village in Madhukhali upazila said they are very happy with this year's production of the juicy summer fruit and that farming of this seasonal fruit has changed their lot.

"Litchi farming was started around 300 years ago by a landlord in our area. He made an orchard here with litchi plant brought from Madras in India. I started cultivating litchi on my land 50 years ago. Now I have 17 bighas of land under litchi cultivation, which is the largest litchi orchard in our district," said Abdul Sattar Sheikh, 70, at Jahapur village.

"I earned Tk 5 lakh from litchi last year. This year, I have leased my orchard for Tk 11 lakh for three years," he added.

"Litchi cultivation has gained popularity in our area as it is very profitable with less investment. This is encouraging farmers to cultivate litchi rather than paddy or jute. The wage of a labourer was Tk 200 daily 10 years ago, which is now Tk 600 per day," said

litchi grower Sultan Ahmad.

"There is no house in our area that does not have a litchi tree," he added.

On a recent visit to Madhukhali and Boalmari upazilas, this correspondent found that farmers in Jahapur, Doptordia, Tangrakandi, Monohordia, Char-Monohordia, Kharakandi, and Mirjapur villages in Madhukhali upazila and Chandpur and Chotorbazarkandi village in Boalmari upazila are now busy collecting litchi from orchards. China-3, Bombay Mozzaffer, Bedana and hybrid local varieties of litchi are being cultivated in the district.

"A bundle of 1,000 litchis is being sold at Tk 2,800 to Tk 3,600 this year in the local market," said Kashem Mollik, a trader at Jahapur village.

District Department of Agriculture Extension Deputy Director Kartik Chandra Chakrabarty said, "Litchi is being cultivated commercially in Madhukhali and Boalmari upazilas, but we don't have any statistics on how much land has been brought under litchi cultivation this year. It was about 1,195 hectares of land in 2016-2017 fiscal year, on which around 186 tonnes of different varieties of litchi were produced."

# Mother's little helper

*The child helps ease life of Rana Plaza survivor*

KONGKON KARMARKER with ANDREW EAGLE

In the face of disaster, time doesn't stop. Survivors have to carry on somehow, struggling to rebuild shattered lives. When her workplace, Rana Plaza in Savar, collapsed on 24 April 2013, Rebeka Khatun lost both her legs. She was found under the rubble after four days by the army. Five years on and Rebeka has done her best to adapt. In the process she's found support from a most surprising quarter: her three-and-a-half-year-old daughter Sidratul Montaha.

"It was totally uncertain that I could even become a mother," says Rebeka, at her modest home in Barai Chairmanpara in Dinajpur's Phulbari upazila. "My daughter is such a blessing."

"Rebeka faces difficulty even to move around," explains husband Mostafiz, who works as a farm labourer. "I do what I can to help her but I can't give much time since

I have to earn an income. These last eight months or so, our daughter has contributed a lot. Despite her young age there are many things she can do."

To visit the home is to find Sidratul cutting cucumbers with a traditional boti. She stops to acknowledge the visitor, turning on a light and a fan before resuming her work.

"My daughter feeds the chickens," Rebeka says. "She opens and closes doors for visitors and sometimes she even does risky chores like cutting vegetables. I use my hands to get about the house so they aren't in good condition."

Rebeka, who still finds it painful to move around, faced surgery ten times after the building collapse. It took almost two years before she was well enough to return to her family home.

"As a mother I can't even nurse her in my lap," a teary Rebeka continues, "but she does so much to look after me. God

gave me a daughter who is capable, a daughter who likes to help."

On that fateful morning in 2013 Rebeka and her mother Chan Babu left home together to reach the factory where they worked. "We'd seen the cracks in the building the day before," she remembers. "Many garment workers were refusing to enter the building but the factory owners forced them. At around 8:45am the building was shaking a lot. Then, suddenly, it collapsed."

After her rescue, Rebeka was sent to the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation. One of her legs was amputated from her upper thigh, the other from above the knee. It was a year before she learnt that her mother had died that day.

The Rana Plaza collapse was the largest industrial disaster in the country's history. Around 1,134 people were killed; a further 2,500 people were injured.



Three and a half year-old Sidratul Montaha on the lap of her mother Rebeka Khatun who lost her legs when her workplace, Rana Plaza in Savar, collapsed on April 24 in 2013. Right, the kid, a solace during the struggling life of her mother, often helps her in household chores.

PHOTO: STAR



## Highways

FROM PAGE 14 ministry had taken to make homebound people's Eid journey hassle-free.

About the steps, it said four meetings had already been held at Kaliakoir, Bhulta, Feni and Gazaria with the people concerned and necessary directives to make people's Eid journey hassle-free had also been given.

"Activities are on as per the directives. Such a report before Eid can create panic among people," the division said.

It mentioned that temporary congestion was created on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway due to the construction work of a railway overpass at Fatehpur in Feni.

The problem had been solved as quick measures were taken. Two lanes had already been opened and two other lanes would be opened before the upcoming Eid, it said.

Apart from the introduction of modern toll systems at the toll plazas near Meghna and Gumti bridges, toll collection had also been expedited. Therefore, vehicular movement returned to normalcy on the highway.

It said special plans were made for areas, including Rupshi in Narayanganj and the entrance and exit points of Dhaka city, to make commute comfortable on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway.

About its future action plan, the division cited the decision of a coordination meeting and said mobile courts would carry out special drives to keep Dhaka-Mymensingh highway free of illegal parking, make-shift markets and to prevent passengers being picked up from and dropped off at undesignated zones.

Four lane roads from Chandra to Alenga on the Dhaka-Tangail highway would be kept open on the basis of necessity, it added.



PHOTO: STAR

The waterlogged western side of Khagrachhari Sadar Upazila Mini Fish Hatchery Project in Swanirvar area of Khagrachhari town. The photo was taken a few days ago.

KHAGRACHHARI TOWN

# Hatchery causes waterlogging

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Development work of a hatchery under a government project has caused waterlogging in Swanirvar area of the hill district town.

Dwellings of four families and two and a half hectares of cropland remain under water due to this project.

Khagrachhari Sadar Upazila Mini Fish Hatchery under Chittagong Hill Tracts Fisheries Development and Extension Project (third phase), acquired 6.18 acres of land in the town and started development work in 2016 that would end in June this year.

A few buildings and ponds have been constructed along with a boundary wall on the land.

Waterlogging has been created in the surrounding areas following implementation of this project.

The project area is surrounded by a road that goes to Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) Khagrachhari sector office and a garage of the paramilitary force on the north, Khagrachhari-Panchhari road and Khagrachhari Hill District Council office

on the south, two and a half hectares of cropland and some houses and shops on the west, and cropland on the east.

The project is being implemented in such a way that there is no way to pass rainwater in the western side, causing waterlogging in the area.

Alo Bikash Chakma, a sawmill owner and a victim of waterlogging, said rainwater in the area cannot flow out, which is causing waterlogging on two and a half hectares of cropland. In addition, four homesteads have also been submerged and the situation will be even worse when the monsoon comes, he said.

Khagrachhari Municipality Commissioner Atish Dewan said the project authorities should have ensured that there would be no waterlogging in the areas around the project site. Now, Dewan Bazar in Swanirvar area may become flooded during the monsoon.

Deputy Project Director Bilal Hossain said construction work of the project will end in June this year. The municipality, the affected people and the authorities concerned will have to find a solution.

# The joy of colours

FROM PAGE 14

Atanu narrates. "In 1997, I established a poultry farm, which due to the menace of bird flu didn't last a year. Before I became sick I had a computer business. We also provided internet service."

Motor neuron diseases are rare. They cause the nerves in the spine and brain to progressively lose function, which affects the muscles. There is no cure.

"I couldn't continue the computer business after I fell ill," Atanu recalls. "In 2010, we spent a lot of money on treatment in India but a complete recovery wasn't possible. Still I can't use my hands and legs freely. I need support to walk. And the medical expenses left our family all but destitute."

"It was a dark time," he reflects. "All our hopes were dashed. I wasn't sure I'd survive, and even if I did, I wouldn't be able to work like before. It was then that my wife Sheuly suggested we could establish a textile business. As she knew something about that subject, she thought she'd be able to help."

The couple, who have a son currently studying in class nine, started

the new enterprise on a small scale in 2011. But it was three years later, thanks to artist Badal Chakraborty, that they found their niche.

"Badal is my uncle," says Atanu. "He is a graduate of the Fine Arts Institute at Dhaka University and he suggested that we could specialise in natural dyes. I was impressed by his idea."

The artist trained the couple in how to make fabric dyes from vegetables, medicinal plants and seasonal fruits. They found that naturally-dyed fabric was popular in the market for being environmentally-friendly and chemical-free. The endeavour was a first-of-its-kind in Netrakona.

"We use around 40 items to make the natural colours," Atanu explains, "anything from gooseberries to mulberries, the bark of khayer and boron trees, tea, neem and betel leaves, bottle gourd, tamarind, star fruit and pomegranate, even straw. Each colour is processed separately and takes between 24 and 120 hours to prepare."

"We mainly produce shirts, Panjabis, fotuas and women's three-piece suits using the natural dyes," Sheuly says. They also make accesso-

ries in appliqué, embroidery and block print, including saris, scarves, nakshi kantha bedspreads and cushion covers.

The business, which currently benefits from a Tk 50,000 loan from the government's youth development department, has done yet more than save the family from financial ruin. The couple have thus far trained 50 women from across Netrakona in dyeing techniques, to work with them.

"It's not only Badal who we must thank," Atanu says. "I have two very supportive friends, Iqbal Miah and Abdus Salam, who really helped us through the worst times."

"We still have cash flow difficulties and I can't run the business year-round," Atanu notes. "If we had greater access to capital on easy terms, we could do even better."

Motor neurone disease is nobody's ally. Atanu's health is likely to continue to deteriorate. But with the family having found its financial feet with natural dyes, there's some reason for optimism. Atanu's family, at the least, is now in a position to weather every storm and not get lost at sea.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Office of the Principal Scientific Officer  
Central Diseases Investigation Laboratory  
48, Kazi Alauddin Road, Dhaka

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## e-Tender Notice CDIL/GR-3/Lot-1/2017

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following Goods.

Sl No.	Tender ID	Package & Lot No.	Procurement Nature, Title	Closing Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
01.	200712	Package No : GR-3, Lot-1	Goods : Procurement of Surgical Appliances & Equipments for GR-03-, Lot-01 under the Office of PSO, CDIL, LRI, 48, Kazi Alauddin Road, Dhaka-1000	11/06/2018 14:00 PM	11/06/2018 14:00 PM

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online any registered banks.

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