

Mangoes start arriving in Rajshahi markets

Prices high due to low production



Farmers arrive at Baneswar market in Rajshahi with the earliest harvest of Guti mangoes.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Mangoes started arriving in markets of Rajshahi yesterday. Prices are high due to low production this season, farmers and agriculturists said.

With official commencing of harvest yesterday, a small number of farmers brought Guti variety of mangoes to local markets. They said these mangoes are an early variety and it will take more than a week to witness a full-blown supply of mangoes in the markets.

Mangoes were being sold at Tk 1200-1800 per maund, nearly double of last year's prices.

Farmers claimed a fall in production this season by more than

50 percent compared to that of last year. Agriculturists, however, said, the decline would not be over 10 percent.

"Unexpected rainfall damaged most mango buds in February," Md Shamsul Haque, deputy director of Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), said.

Other than the untimely rainfall, mango trees did not witness calamities this season.

"Mangoes dropping during storms and hailstorms are considered normal. Every tree has its own capacity of bearing fruits," he said.

He said the DAE would count a 12-tonne production per hectare of land this season; it was 12.5 tonnes last year. The district has mango trees

on 17,500 hectares of land, he added.

The district administration at a meeting on May 12 had set seven stages of harvest, beginning from May 15.

Since 2015, the district administration has been setting mango harvest dates in order to prevent harvesting of unripe mangoes and marketing of chemically ripened ones.

Harvest of Guti variety was scheduled to begin on May 15 while Gopalbhog mangoes on May 20; Ranipasand, Laukhna or Laxmanbhog on May 25; Khirsapat or Himsagar on May 28; Langra on June 6; Amrapali, Fazli and Surma Fazli on June 16; and Ashwina on July 1.

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BCC to repair major roads before Eid

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Barishal City Corporation (BCC) has started road repair work ahead of Eid.

According to the engineering section of BCC, some 14 major roads stretching around 19km in the city will be repaired in two weeks under the project, that started a week ago.

The city corporation is using modern machinery to renovate the roads and lanes damaged by rains, BCC Mayor Serniabat Sadik Abdullah told The Daily Star.

But the city dwellers reacted to this differently. The city streets were repaired just two years ago. "The roads get damaged in a short period of time as low quality materials were used," said, Ismail Hossain from the city's Amanatganj area.

Nazrul Islam, an auto-rickshaw driver, said numerous potholes developed on many roads, causing traffic inconvenience and accidents.

Commuters' suffering is a common phenomenon during the monsoon in the city. Waterlogging and potholes pose a serious threat to the city's almost 6 lakh dwellers.

The mayor further said, "I am hopeful, the works would be completed before Eid-ul-Fitr."

The project will cost Tk 20 crore, BCC sources said.

COMPENSATION FOR RUSSEL

HC orders Green Line to pay by May 22

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday ordered Green Line Paribahan to pay the remaining Tk 45 lakh (of total Tk 50 lakh) compensation to Russel Sarker who lost his leg after the company's bus ran him over in April last year.

Russel, 26, who was a driver, lost his left leg from below the knee after he was knocked down by a Green Line bus near Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover in the capital on April 28 last year.

An altercation broke out between Russel and the bus driver over rear-ending his car. As Russel chased the bus, the bus driver ran him over.

Yesterday, the HC ordered the company to pay the remaining compensation within May 22 and warned of consequences if they do not comply with the order.

However, the bench said, if not in full, the company can pay any sum of money to Russel by this time.

"Green Line Paribahan's business has

not stopped. We know what should be done if this court's order is not followed through," the HC bench of FRM Nazmul Ahsan and KM Kamrul Kader said during hearing of a writ petition.

Notably, Green Line has already paid Tk 5 lakh to Russel.

The bench issued the order when Green Line sought more time for paying the full sum.

The company's lawyer Advocate Md Ozi Ullah told the court that the owner of Green Line Paribahan is unwell and he needs more time to comply with the HC order.

Adjourning yesterday's hearing, the bench set May 22 for passing further order.

During hearing of the same writ petition, the HC bench on March 31 ordered Green Line to pay Tk 50 lakh to Russel by April 3 and asked the company to inform it by April 4 after compliance. The company handed Tk 5 lakh to Russel on April 10, writ petitioner's lawyer Advocate Khandker Shamsul Haque Reza told The Daily Star.

Journalists demand arrears, festival bonuses by May 30

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalists staged a demonstration in front of Jatiya Press Club yesterday, demanding that all media employees be paid their arrears and festival bonuses by May 30.

They also demanded implementation of the 9th Wage Board proposals and threatened to wage further movement if their demands are not met by that time.

Mollah Jalal, president of a faction of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), said they will announce fresh programmes from a demonstration at the

same place on May 30.

Yesterday's event was organised by a faction of BFUJ. Shaban Mahmud, secretary general of BFUJ, moderated it.

Journalists and media employees have been demanding a stop to unethical layoff, disbursement of regular salaries and enactment of "Media Employee Act, 2018" for a long time.

The demonstrators sought that the media workers, who were terminated recently, be given all their dues as per the current wage board.

Either lead us or let us lead: Oli to BNP

UNB, Dhaka

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) President Oli Ahmed yesterday said he is willing to take the responsibility for strengthening the 20-party alliance to free Khaleda Zia from jail and overcome the country's political crisis.

"There's no scope to sit idle as we must move ahead. We've taken an initiative (to strengthen the 20-party). I would like to request the BNP leaders that either you lead us or let us lead," he said.

Speaking at a discussion, Oli further said, "It's not possible for Khaleda Zia to give us directives from jail while Tarique Rahman can't play an active role in the field from London... I'm ready to take that responsibility at this critical time of the country."

LDP, one of the components the BNP-led 20-party, arranged the discussion on Khaleda Zia's release and a mid-term election at Jatiya Press Club.

"Either strengthen our hands or ask us to strengthen yours, and we are ready to do that," Oli said at the programme.

The LDP chief also said he is ready to "risk his life" to fight against the current "autocratic" regime.

He also said he has no reservation to accept the leadership of capable BNP leaders to launch a movement.

Oli strongly opposed BNP's decision of sending its elected MPs to parliament, saying the party has legitimised the current government through it.

FAKE FIREARM LICENCES IN RANGPUR

ACC okays charge sheet against 391

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has approved a charge sheet against 391 persons including a clerk at deputy commissioner's (DC) office in Rangpur in a case filed over issuing fake licences of firearms.

Amulya Chandra Roy, administrative officer of the DC office, filed the case accusing office assistant Shamsul Islam with Kotwali Police Station on May 18, 2017.

The case was later transferred to ACC.

Atikur Rahman, assistant director of ACC and enquiry officer of the case, found involvement of the individuals and implicated them in the case.

According to the case, Shamsul, who maintained register of firearm licences, took about Tk 20 lakh bribe from 390 persons and illegally issued the licences to them between 2011 and 2017.

The commission will soon submit the charge sheet to the court.

BEACH PHOTOGRAPHERS IN COX'S BAZAR

Capturing happiness in a frame

SHAHEEN MOLLAH, back from Cox's Bazar

With its sun-kissed stretches of sand, shimmering blue and jagged coastlines battered by white breakers -- Cox's Bazar sea beach never gets old.

Every trip to this longest natural sea beach -- strolling along the shoreline with loved ones -- lasts forever, and creates wonderful memories through moments captured in photographs.

These days, due to availability of affordable smartphones, capturing a sunny scene of sprawling sand and sea have become much easier as every one literally has a camera in their pocket.

Still, to capture a moment with precision, finding the right spot or choosing the most attractive or interesting aspects of the scene and most importantly to be part of that special instant, a little help always comes handy.

And to facilitate that experience, there are over a thousand photographers roaming around Cox's Bazar beaches, ready to take snaps.

One of them is Sagar Ahmed, a licensed photographer, who started his career as a studio assistant around 20 years ago.

"We have also adapted to technology," said the 36-year-old. "I take pictures of visitors with a DSLR camera and transfer them to their mobile phones right away." He said a photo costs around Tk 3-5.

"It was not like this before. After taking a photo, we had to develop it at a studio, which was time consuming. Now, we can either transfer soft copies or deliver print ones instantly. Our number of clients has also increased," said Sagar.

In Cox's Bazar, photography has opened a window of opportunity for many.

Giasuddin, 13, a madrasa student at Ukhia, earns around Tk 15,000 a month taking pictures of visitors during peak season (December to February), which also helps him continue his studies. He said he mostly works at Inani and Patuarek points.

"I had to stop going to school due to my father's illness. My elder brother, who is a professional photographer, taught me how to take pictures. Now, I also support my



Photography has opened up a window of opportunity for hundreds of youths at the country's most popular tourist destination.

family," he said.

"I work alongside authorised photographers and at times, substitute for them," he said. "I can give a client studio print within 30 minutes or transfer pictures to their phones instantly," he pride.

According to the district administration, there are around 1,100 registered photographers working in the beach town -- at Kolatoli, Sugandha, Laboni, Inani, Patuarek and Moheshkhali points and Saint Martin's Island.

Besides, around 400 teenagers, who borrow cameras and uniforms from the registered ones, are also involved in this

profession.

Visitors are also quite upbeat about the experience.

Naznin Akhtar, who visited Cox's Bazar recently, said, "It's true that we can take photos with our phones but their [photographers'] framing and angles are much better. In some pictures, the photographer either went low to the ground or shot at eye level with the waves or placed the beach umbrella off centre."

Having an additional subject in the frame helped break the linear lines of sand and sea, and added an extra intrigue to the shot, said Naznin, an amateur photographer

herself. "It was our honeymoon and the pictures came out perfect," she smiled.

Contacted, Cox's Bazar Executive Magistrate Saiful Islam Joy said they have brought the sector under surveillance and guideline. "We have provided uniforms and registration cards to the photographers. The cards can be renewed yearly."

There are two types of photographers -- studio-based and those on the beach, he said.

About the unauthorised ones, Saiful said as they are using cards of the registered photographers, they are also under surveillance.

IOM DDG Post Bangladesh seeks support from int'l community

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has sought support from the international community for its candidate for the post of Deputy Director General (DDG) of International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque is contesting the election scheduled to be held on June 21 in Geneva, Switzerland for the post.

Ambassador of Bangladesh to Saudi Arabia Golam Moshi, during a recent iftar programme in Riyadh, talked about the candidature of Shahidul Haque for the post.

Bangladesh Embassy hosted the iftar at Hilton Hotel in Riyadh for ambassadors

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Sadeq Khan's 3rd death anniv today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today marks the third death anniversary of Language Movement veteran, freedom fighter and journalist Sadeq Khan.

Born on January 1, 1933, he passed away at the age of 83. He was an active worker of the then communist party, a writer, researcher, filmmaker and art critic. He was the contributing editor at Weekly Holiday and chairman of Gonoshasthaya Kendra Trust.

An Ekushey Padak laureate, Khan was the director and producer of a pioneering Bengali art film "Nodi O Nari".

On information, police arrested Jahirul from his house in Bakalia's Beribadh area, added the OC.

A case was lodged in this regard with Bakalia Police Station. He stands accused in two other cases filed with the station.

YABA PEDDLING DB informant imposter held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police yesterday arrested a drug peddler, who used to introduce himself as a police informant, in possession of 510 yaba pills from Bakalia area of Chattogram.

The arrestee is Md Jahirul Islam, 45, from Banskhali upazila of Chattogram.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Bakalia Police Station Nezam Uddin said Jahirul is a long-time yaba dealer and he used to trade yaba and other drugs in different areas of the city introducing himself as an informant of the Detective Branch of police.

On information, police arrested Jahirul from his house in Bakalia's Beribadh area, added the OC.

A case was lodged in this regard with Bakalia Police Station. He stands accused in two other cases filed with the station.



Sadharan Chhatra Odhikar Songrakhon Parishad yesterday formed a human in front of Narayanganj Press Club with a five-point demand that includes setting fair prices of agricultural products, and ensuring better facilities for farmers.

PHOTO: SANAD SAHA