



## CAMELLIA OPEN SKY SCHOOL

### Expanding tea cultivation

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT

'Camellia Khola Akash School' (Camellia Open Sky School), an innovative initiative of the Bangladesh Tea Board (BTB), is eyeing to create expert tea farmers, develop the skills of small-scale tea farmers and flourish tea cultivation in five northern districts including Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat and Dinajpur.

The school is a practical training programme beside most tea gardens, in open fields, for the marginalised tea farmers of different places.

With an aim to provide training facilities on tea cultivation process at the doorsteps of small growers, the Bangladesh Tea Board (BTB) is conducting training at different villages of these districts considering prospect of tea cultivation in northern region.

Through the school the growers can easily know the process of tea cultivation both in theory and practice, such as---selection of tea variety, setting up tea nursery, techniques of planting tea saplings, irrigation, drainage, applying fertiliser, pest management, pruning and plucking of tea leaves.

Dr Shamim Al Mamun, project director of 'Development of Small Holding Tea Cultivation in Northern Bangladesh', said that earlier BTB imparted training to small-scale growers at their Panchagarh office.

To expedite the training facilities, BTB started training on tea cultivation at different villages in the districts through 'Camellia Khola Akash School' from October 25 last year with the directive of BTB's Chairman Maj Gen Johirul Islam.

The name of the school is inspired by

two factors, firstly, the scientific name of tea - *Camellia sinensis* and the training being conducted under open sky, Dr Shamim Al Mamun said.

'At least 32 workshops have been conducted at different unions in five Northern districts from October 25 to till today. On an average 60 growers took training in each class', he added.

The training is being conducted in union-level in each week. Following the surge of Covid-19 infection, the training is imparted using virtual platform.

About 1,510 registered and 5,800 unregistered growers will be provided training within the current year.

Golam Mostafa, 48, of Mujabarni village in Thakurgaon sadar upazila said, 'Earlier we the people of northern region had no knowledge on tea cultivation. The Camellia Khola Akash School is playing an important role for us as we are being able to gather knowledge on the whole process of tea cultivation thanks to the school', Mostafa added.

He has cultivated tea on 12-acre of land gradually taking lesson from tea board officials and now he can nurture the tea field himself.

Matiar Rahman, 55, a large-scale tea grower of Sonapatila village of Atwary upazila of Panchagarh said he started cultivating tea on 5-acre in 2001 which now stands at 60 acres, said the tea growers of their locality can take care tea field properly after taking lesson from the school.

Previously, they could not understand what steps should be taken in case of pest attacks on the tea plants, now they easily manage pest attack and nourish the plants properly resulting in a good yield.

About 50,000 acres of land is suitable for tea cultivation in five northern districts -- Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Lalmonirhat, Dinajpur and Nilphamari -- of which, 10,170 acres have been brought under cultivation by this season.

Tea plantation has expanded to 8,642 acres of land in Panchagarh, 1,293 acres in Thakurgaon, 112.96 acres in Lalmonirhat, 71.09 acres in Nilphamari, and 61.50 acres in Dinajpur.

Cultivation grew by 15 per cent per annum on average in the last five years in the northern part of Bangladesh.

Apart from 26 large gardens, there are 7,310 small-scale farmers who produce tea on their own.

Large gardens and small growers in the five districts have a target to produce 12 million kilogrammes of tea, worth Tk 180 crore, in the current season by processing 60 million kgs of raw tea leaves.

In 2020, tea was cultivated on 8,060 acres of land in the districts, and the target was to produce 9.5 million kg of tea.

Despite the coronavirus pandemic, the target was exceeded as 18 factories produced 10.3 million kg of tea by processing 50.12 million kg of raw leaves last year. The northern region accounted for about 12 per cent of national tea production in 2020.

'As the land in the northern districts is more fertile than that of Chattogram and Sylhet, growers can pluck leaves after a year of planting the saplings,' said Mohammad Shamim Al Mamun, senior scientific officer of the regional office of the BTB in Panchagarh.

As many as 30 school children from Rakhine community in Kalapara upazila received bicycles from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Md Mohibbur Rahman, member of parliament in Patuakhali-4 constituency, handed over the bicycles at Kalapara Upazila Parishad auditorium.

He also gave educational materials to 80 Rakhine students and announced scholarships for 100 others on behalf of the PM.

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A section of 40 school children, from Rakhine community in Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila, who received bicycles from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday. Md Mohibbur Rahman, member of parliament in Patuakhali-4 constituency, handed over the bicycles at Kalapara Upazila Parishad auditorium. He also gave educational materials to 80 Rakhine students and announced scholarships for 100 others on behalf of the PM.

PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN

<p>Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of the Superintending Engineer Roads and Highways Department Bridge Construction and Maintenance Circle Sarak Bhaban, Tejgaon, Dhaka- 1208 Phone: 02-8879337, E-mail: sebcmc.rhd@gmail.com, sebcmc@rhd.gov.bd</p>			
<p>Memo No. 35.01.0000.152.14.074.2021-229 Corrigendum Notice</p>			
<p>This is to notify for all concerned that the amendment of Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) notice vide Reference No. 35.01.0000.152.14.058.2021-226 Date: 16 June 2021 is as follows:</p>			
Subject	Previous Timeline	Revised Timeline	Remarks
EOI Closing Date and Time	20 July 2021, 02:00 PM BST	26 July 2021, 02:00 PM BST	All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

Further information and guidelines are available in the website of Roads and Highways Department & CPTU.

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## COPING WITH PANDEMIC

## Joypurhat cops provide free oxygen for the needy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

With Covid-19 infections surging in bordering districts in the country, Joypurhat police have launched an 'Oxygen Bank' to stand by Covid patients facing financial difficulties.

Once such patient starts showing acute respiratory problems, the Oxygen Bank will supply necessary oxygen in cylinders to the patient free of charge.

Masum Ahmed Bhuiyan, superintendent of police (SP) in Joypurhat, told The Daily Star that as the contraction of the disease has been on the rise in the district at an alarming rate, they decided to stand by the underprivileged in their desperate hours.

Driven by higher demands due to an increase in the number of Covid patients in the district, prices of oxygen-filled cylinders have been rising as well.

Since the underprivileged population will not be able to afford oxygen at steep prices, members of the police felt the need to come up with a solution.

In that light, they started an oxygen bank for them with 12 cylinders initially. They will increase number of cylinders based on demand, as necessary, the SP said.

But after they called the office of the Joypurhat SP over phone, the police delivered an oxygen cylinder to his home for free.

According to the civil surgeon's office in Joypurhat, at least 36 new cases were reported in the district on last Friday. The daily rate of contraction had remained between 22 and 24 percent.

The Oxygen Bank has been operating at the office of the SP in Joypurhat town.

Just by making a phone call, anyone can avail the service, which is open 24/7 and "our police personnel will deliver the oxygen cylinder to the patient's home."

"Since the launching of the Oxygen Bank over a week ago, we have been getting good responses from people," SP Masum said, adding that the members of police even responded to calls made in early Friday morning and delivered two oxygen cylinders to houses of two different patients in Joypurhat town.

A Covid patient in the town said that after he started having breathing difficulties over a week ago, his family members scoured the entire town but failed to arrange an oxygen cylinder for him at an affordable price.

But after they called the office of the Joypurhat SP over phone, the police delivered an oxygen cylinder to his home for free.

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Joypurhat Superintendent of Police Masum Ahmed Bhuiyan handing over a free oxygen cylinder during the launching of the 'Oxygen Bank' at the office of the SP in Joypurhat town.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Rakhine students get bicycles, other gifts from PM

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

As many as 30 school children from Rakhine community in Kalapara upazila received bicycles from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Md Mohibur Rahman, member of parliament in Patuakhali-4 constituency, handed over the bicycles to the students at the Kalapara Upazila Parishad auditorium yesterday.

As part of a project titled 'Development Assistance for Special Areas Under Implementation from the Prime Minister's Office', Kalapara Upazila Nirbahi Officer Abu Hasnat Mohammad Shahidul Haque presided over a ceremony to hand over the bicycles along with various educational materials and announcement

of scholarships among Rakhine students in Kalapara.

Upazila Chairman SM Rakibul Ahsan, Patuakhali-Barguna Buddhist Kristi Prochar Sangha President New Khan, Upazila Woman Vice Chairman Shahina Parveen Seema, Dhulasar Union Parishad Chairman Abdul Jalil Master and Kalapara Press Club President Humayun Kabir were present at the programme as special guests.

A total of 100 Rakhine students were awarded scholarships and 80 others were given educational materials under the project.

Machokhen Mau, a medical student from Rakhine community in the area, received a crest and cash award for being the first Rakhine to be able to get admission at a medical college in the country.

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