

CLOSURE OF CRUCIAL GOVT PROJECT

Over 1,000 mushroom farmers in Jashore quit farming

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Over 1,000 mushroom growers in Jashore have left farming after a government project facilitating mushroom farming was shut down, leaving many of them workless.

The farmers are leaving the highly nutritious mushroom cultivation and moving to other professions due to financial loss.

It could be learned that mushroom cultivation was introduced in the district in 2001.

It was later expanded in the region through a project titled “Strengthening Mushroom Development” which was initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture in 2009. Since then, more than 1,500 men and women joined mushroom cultivation. They earned a hefty amount by cultivating mushrooms in their houses under the patronage and guideline from the project. However, the project was abruptly shut down in June 2014. After the closure of the project, most of the farmers have been backing out from mushroom cultivation.

According to Jashore Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), Jashore was once famous for mushroom cultivation. Educated but unemployed people from different areas of the district including Chanchra and Muroli areas became involved in the promising sector.

Touhidur Rahman, a mushroom grower, once got great success by cultivating mushrooms in Chanchra Dal Mill area. His mushroom farm thrived with the help and support from the project but after the project was shut he had to switch his profession.

Now he makes a living by running a small business in Jhenidah. He said it is very difficult to cultivate mushrooms without government patronage.

“We have been waiting for six to seven years for the project to start



A view of a mushroom farm in Jashore.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

again. But so far, there is no update regarding the resumption of the project,” he said.

Ayub Ali, a mushroom farmer in the Murli area of the Jashore town, said although some entrepreneurs continue to stick to the cultivation after the closure of the project, they are also being forced to quit farming due to the current seed crisis.

Earlier, mushroom entrepreneurs were given regular training from Jashore Horticulture Centre.

However, the training has also remained suspended since the project closed, Ayub said, adding that mushroom seeds were officially distributed among the entrepreneurs.

“As we do not have seeds at

present, we cannot cultivate mushrooms even if we want,” he further said.

Rita Roy of Birampur area in Jashore changed her fate through mushroom cultivation since her school days. Following her footprint, a mushroom village was formed in that area. At present, there is no mushroom cultivation in the area.

Rita Roy said that just even two years ago, mushroom cultivation was popular in Jashore.

Hundreds of unemployed people were involved in this profession. She used to earn Tk 5,000 to Tk 10,000 per month but now most of the mushroom farms have become ceased to exist.

According to the DAE, to meet the need of the people of the

region, a mushroom laboratory was established at the Horticulture Center where seven thousand packets of seeds were produced every month. The seeds were distributed among the trained entrepreneurs. The laboratory is also now closed due to the closure of the project.

Bhibhas Chandra Saha, deputy director of the Horticulture Centre, said, that initiatives have been taken to revive the project.

A specific proposal has been prepared in this regard at the initiative of the Bangladesh Department of Agricultural Extension.

Dipankar Das, training officer of Jashore DAE, said, “We expect to resume the project within the next four to five months.”

Thousands face wrath of Kumar river

Locals blame illegal sand lifting from the river for collapse of a long stretch of a vital road into the river in Faridpur Sadar upazila

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

About 15 thousand people of 10 villages have been facing boundless sufferings since the end of August when almost half of the width of a vital road collapsed into the Kumar river in Sadar upazila.

Indiscriminate lifting of sand from the river, over the last two and a half years, has caused the collapse of nearly 52 metres of the road in Shobharampur village during incessant rain on August 28, alleged villagers.

The half kilometre-long road is used by about two thousand people of 10 villages every day, they also said.

During a recent visit to the area, this correspondent came across many who were taking extreme risk while using the damaged road to transport patients and essential commodities on rickshaw-vans.

Kamal Sheikh, a battery-run auto-

rickshaw driver from Gandia area, said, “It’s been really difficult since a large section of the road collapsed into the river. Now I have to walk an additional six kilometres to get home from the garage.”

Amol Kumar Malo, a senior citizen from Shobharampur village, said, “Illegal sand-lifting has to be blamed for the erosion of the Kumar river. The river is now on a rampage in the area, as a huge amount of sand was lifted from it last year.”

Rickshaw puller Sheikh Jalil said, “It’s really scary to cross the area as the river has eroded away most part of the road already.”

Contacted, Partha Protim Saha, executive engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board in Faridpur, said, “I visited the spot. The way the road has been damaged, there’s no scope for its repair.”

The cause of the problem lies in unplanned lifting of sand from the river by criminals, he also said.



A man with the help of others pull a rickshaw-van, loaded with goods, on a road that was eroded away by the Kumar river in Faridpur Sadar upazila's Shobharampur village. As a means to caution road users, locals put up pieces of red cloths on bamboo poles along the edge of what is left of the road.

PHOTO: SUZIT KUMAR DAS

Tito calls for political solution

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war, the massing of forces [near the border] greatly enhances the danger of conflict through miscalculation.”

The newspaper pointed out that the source of the trouble was the continuing military repression in East Pakistan, and the UN must come to grips with this “central problem” to prevent escalation of the crisis to war.

“As the first step,” The New York Times suggested, “the UN Security Council might empower the Secretary General to send a factfinding mission to East Pakistan and to the refugee camps in India to check conflicting Pakistani and Indian claims about what had been happening in the Bengali region of Pakistan.”

TITO SUPPORTS INDIA ON BANGLADESH CRISIS

President Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia ended his four-day state visit to India today after endorsing almost fully India’s position on the Bangladesh crisis.

A joint communiqué from Marshal Tito and Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared their support for “national liberation movements and the struggle against colonial domination”. It called for urgent steps to bring about a political solution to the Bangladesh problem.

Both countries said any political solution should be “in accordance

with the wishes, inalienable rights and lawful interests of the people of East Bengal”.

President Tito said a human approach to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would be “in the interest of a peaceful political solution and in the interest of peace and stability in the sub-continent.”

US EVALUATION OF UKTI BAHINI ACTIVITIES

The US Consul General in Dhaka Herbert D Spivack, in a telegram sent to the US State Department today, made the following evaluation of the guerrilla activities inside Bangladesh: “Over past three months East Pakistan insurgency has increased in intensity and widened its geographic scope of operations. Concentrating in the rural areas, with only token activity in cities (exception has been systemic and repeated disruption of power supply to Chittagong), Mukti Bahini (MB) have stepped up their disruption of roads, bridges, railroad lines in most parts of the country. In some districts, notably Dacca, Comilla, Noakhali, Faridpur, Bakarganj, MB seems to be able to move about almost at will and appears even to have set up parallel administration at some points. Evidence on hand suggests that insurgents are better armed than formerly, (automatic weapons, mortars, heavier explosives) and increasingly able

undertake sophisticated operations (mining of ships, effective sabotage of bridges, etc.). In central and southern districts mentioned, MB has demonstrated aggressiveness and skill in ambush operations against razakars (voluntary home guards) and army, occasionally inflicting significant casualties. Areas other than those cited above, MB activities [are] largely confined [to] destruction of bridges, culverts, railway lines, apparently avoiding contact with govt forces.”

ON THE WAR FRONT

Mukti Bahini today engaged Pakistani troops numbering about 40 in Khetkibari area of Rangpur district and inflicted 11 casualties on them. One of the freedom fighters was killed during this action.

On the same day, Mukti Bahini raided Pakistani troops’ position in Mukundapur of Comilla district and exchanged fire with them. In this action, an enemy soldier was killed. In another ambush near Chaudhagram in Comilla, Mukti Bahini guerrillas killed four Pakistani troops.

Mukti Bahini today clashed with the occupation troops in Nazirpur of Netrakona, killing two enemy soldiers and four razakars.

Mukti Bahini today raided a Pakistani position in Sylhet district, killing four enemy soldiers.

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Victims

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According to media reports, the DoE has imposed fines of Tk 385 crore on polluters in the last 10 years.

POLLUTION FROM TANNERY ESTATE

Yesterday, the parliamentary body again discussed the closure of the tannery estate in Savar.

Earlier on August 23, the committee had recommended shutting the Savar Tannery Industrial Estate as it does not have adequate facilities to treat all liquid waste generated by the tanners there.

Following the committee’s recommendation, the DoE issued a show cause notice to Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) asking it to explain why the tannery estate would not be shut.

Saber yesterday said the ministry was working to implement the parliamentary body’s recommendations.

“The BSCIC wants to say that they will take action in this regard occasionally. But we have told them that the tannery estate needs to be shut now as it is causing serious environment pollution,” he said.

Tigers keep hopes alive

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Jatinder struck a six and a four to Shakib just after the Powerplay and the momentum looked like it was slowly swinging in the hosts’ favour. The Bangladeshi players also deserve credit for holding their nerve despite Oman reaching 80 for two after eleven overs and requiring 74 off 54 balls with eight wickets in hand.

The crowd was cheering since the side was the hosts sensed a famous victory before Mustafizur took a brilliant catch running towards his left on the boundary line to dismiss skipper Zeshan Maqsood for 12 off the bowling of Mahedi Hasan.

Bangladesh slowly tightened their grip afterwards and Shakib got some getting revenge by removing Jatinder. The right-hander was caught at deep square leg while going for a sweep after scoring 40 off 33 balls, a knock that included four boundaries and a six.

It was then that the Bangladeshi supporters drowned out the small home crowd and Shakib put the final nail in the coffin by dismissing Ayaan Khan and Naseem Khushi off consecutive deliveries in the 17th over. The Tigers eventually restricted Oman to 127 for nine in 20 overs.

Earlier, Bangladesh did not make the best of starts after electing to bat. Liton Das failed to make the

most of a reprieve early on in the innings and was leg before on six by Bilal Khan.

The Bangladesh team management came up with a totally different strategy and shuffled the batting order. Mahedi Hasan came in at number three and failed and the Tigers could reach only 29 for 2 in the Powerplay.

It was then that Naim and Shakib came together and seized momentum for the Tigers, adding 80 off 53 balls for the third wicket. At that point, it looked that Bangladesh could go on to post somewhere near 170, but after Shakib was run out for a 29-ball 42, the hosts began to make inroads.

Nurul Hasan and Afif Hossain came in at number five and six respectively but were unable to make an impact before a tired Naim was dismissed for a 50-ball 64 which included four sixes and three fours.

Mushfiqur Rahim was surprisingly demoted to number eight for the first time since 2016 and he also failed to make an impact, departing for six.

Bangladesh will have to win their last group match against Papua New Guinea on Thursday but even that will not confirm a berth in the Super 12. They must also await the result of the other games between Scotland and Oman as net run rate will play a vital role.

Soybean oil gets

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hike of crude soybean and palm oil in the international market, say refiners.

As per the proposal of the Bangladesh Vegetable Oil Refiners and Vanaspati Manufacturers Association, the ministry increased the price of bottled soybean oil to Tk 160 per litre from Tk 153.

The price of loose soybean oil has been fixed at Tk 136 per litre.

The price of a five-litre can of soybean oil has been set at Tk 760 and the price of a bottle of palm oil (super) at Tk 118 per litre at the retail level, according to a statement from the association.

“The new prices of edible oil will come into effect in the local market from tomorrow [today],” said AHM Shafiquzzaman, additional secretary to the commerce ministry.

The refiners proposed Tk 168 per litre for edible oil at the retail level, but the ministry finally fixed the price at Tk 160 a litre.

The edible oil price was hiked in February this year. On September, the government increased the price in response to the refiners’ proposal.

Till October 9 this year, prices of crude soybean oil were 70 percent higher year-on-year to \$1,355 per tonne from \$785 a year ago, according to data compiled by Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission.

Palm oil price has also gone up.

Apart from high prices in the international market, refiners also blame the 15 percent Value-Added Tax on edible oil for the situation.

The commerce ministry last month sought duty reduction measures on import of edible oil from the National Board of Revenue so that its price comes down in the local market.

On Saturday, the country’s apex trade body -- Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry -- expressed disappointment for higher prices of basic commodities as a section of traders have been taking the advantage of the situation.

Fasting boosts

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“Instead, calorie restricted diets ensure that mice are fasted for much of the day – and that imposed fasting-period (when we eat) is critical for the benefits of calorie restriction to life and health.”

Lamming’s team put mice on different diets, with a control group getting unlimited access to regular food.

Two other groups had calories restricted by 30 percent, one with access to low-calorie food all day and the other receiving a 30 percent smaller amount of regular food in a single feeding with a 21-hour fast.

The study shows that mice on a calorie restricted diet with 21 hours between meals lived about half a year longer than mice who ate as much as they wanted at any time of day.

Prabarana Purnima today

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month-long yellow-robes offering ceremony that begins the day after the Purnima.

According to the legend, Buddha once clipped some strands of his hair and said that if he were qualified to attain supreme wisdom and enlightenment, the strands would not fall down but go up instead – which they did in the long run.

To mark this event, Buddhists will release candle-lit air balloons made of coloured paper (fanush) and set them free to flow towards the sky in the evening, which is the chief attraction of the festival.

The festival will be celebrated in all monasteries, respective offices of the religious organisations and educational institutions through daylong programmes.

The celebrations will begin with the hoisting of the national and religious flags atop all monasteries at dawn and the chanting of the sacred verses from the Tripitaka.

Breaking of fasts of the monks, mass prayers, blood donation, Sangadana,

discussions, panchashila and pradip puja will highlight the programmes.

In the city, the main religious congregations will be held at Dharmarajika Bouddha Bihar, International Bouddha Temple, Kalachandpur Bouddha Bihar, Uttara Bouddha Bihar, Adibashi Bouddha Temple in Mirpur and Ashulia Maitthree Bhabona Kendra.

In Chittagong, the religious congregations will be held at different temples, including Nandankanan Buddhist Temple, Katalganj Nabapandit Vihar, Shakkymuni Mohasashan Bouddha Vihar at Agrabad, Purnachar International Buddhists Monastery at Devpahar and Sarbajanin Bouddha Vihar on Momin road.

A number of Buddhist periodicals will be brought out on the occasion.

Special prayers will be held in all monasteries seeking peace and prosperity of the nation and the world.

Members of the law enforcement agencies have already been deployed in and around all temples in the city and districts for the smooth celebration of the festival.

India delays Covid vaccine

FROM PAGE 12
On Monday, in the run-up to an October 26 meeting on Covaxin, India’s first domestically developed Covid-19 vaccine, the World Health Organization (WHO) said it could not “cut corners” in the approval decision.

One of the sources said it was “frustrating” that India had yet to confirm any supply to Covax, despite a promise last month by the health minister to meet the commitment to Covax and others during the quarter to December.

The sources, who have been briefed on the export talks, declined to be identified as they were not authorised to speak on the subject.

The Serum Institute of India (SII), the world’s biggest vaccine manufacturer, has contracts to supply hundreds of millions of doses of a licensed version of the AstraZeneca vaccine to Covax and countries such as Bangladesh.

Its output of the vaccine has more than tripled since April, to reach 220 million doses a month now.

India’s health ministry, SII and Covax co-leads, the WHO and GAVI, did not respond to requests for comment.

Delayed supplies to Covax could disrupt inoculation drives in many African nations that rely on it for vaccine supplies.

Indian government officials have said they are confident the WHO will soon approve an emergency-use listing for Covaxin, which makes up 11% of the 990 million vaccine doses given in India, with the rest mostly from AstraZeneca.

A few weeks ago, Adar Poonawalla, the chief executive of SII, told the Telegraph newspaper that his company would recommence exports to Covax in October.

Kushtia journo

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was filed, police raided the journalist’s home and arrested him around 11:00am yesterday, he added.

The journalist will be produced before a court soon, the police official further said.



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Tender Notice No. 06/2021
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of works details in table.

Memo No.	Name of work	Tender ID	Tender document last selling date and time
36.02.014.00.00.053.2021	Construction of Road & other works	616484	09-11-2021, 4.30pm
36.02.014.00.00.056.2021	Construction of pump driver quarter & pump house	616536	02-11-2021, 4.30pm
36.02.014.00.00.059.2021	Installation of Deep Tube-well	618027	02-11-2021, 4.30pm
36.02.014.00.00.058.2021	Installation of water supply line	618770	02-11-2021, 4.30pm
36.02.014.00.00.060.2021	Construction of RCC Drain and other works	618826	16-11-2021, 4.30pm

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 (<https://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 through any registered banks' branches up to as per above table. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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