



Visitors from neighbouring districts enjoy the beauty of tulip flowers in Sharieljoth village under Panchagarh's Tentulia upazila where eight farmers have cultivated the high-value flowers under a pilot scheme.

PHOTO: MD QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT

Tulip cultivation to boost regional economy, tourism

MD QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT,
Thakurgaon

A remote village in Panchagarh's Tentulia upazila is now abuzz with visitors from various parts of Bangladesh after eight farmers harvested high-value tulip flowers under a pilot scheme.

The successful cultivation of the flower, considered a popular ornamental plant across the world, shows the prospect of boosting tourism and the regional economy.

While speaking to The Daily Star at Sharieljoth village, visitors expressed their joy after taking a look at the captivating beauty of the blooming crop.

"When I was a student of high school, I first saw the tulip gardens on silver screens," said Chondona Ghosh, an entrepreneur, who came with a group of friends from Thakurgaon to visit the spot.

Habib Md Ahsanur Rahman Pappu, a businessman, said: "It is amazing that tulip is now being grown in Tentulia."

He recalled that he spent a day in a tulip garden in India in 2012.

Eight marginal farmers cultivated the flowers under a pilot project initiated by the Eco Social Development Organisation (ESDO), a non-governmental organisation, with financial backing from state-run Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

The farmers collectively contributed about 40 decimals of land in three



separate spots, where around 40,000 bulbs were planted on January 1. The flowers started blooming after 21 days, said Aynul Haque, the project coordinator of the ESDO.

Six varieties of tulips in twelve colours were planted this season, including Antarctica (white), Dutch Sunrise (yellow), Purple Prince (purple), Milkshake (light pink), Barcelona (dark pink), Addram (orange), Replay (orange), Denmark (orange), and Strong Gold (yellow).

Four female farmers – Morsheda Begum, Hosne Ara, Monowara Begum, and Khadija Begum – jointly cultivated 20,000 tulips on 20 decimals of land.

They said the cultivation has been successful so far as the flowers have bloomed.

A huge number of visitors are flocking to the village every day to have a look at the flowers. Many of them are buying each plant at Tk 100.

Md Jahangir Alam, upazila agriculture officer of Tentulia, said Bangladesh's weather is generally not suitable for tulip cultivation, but Tentulia's temperature during the winter season stays at around 20 degrees Celsius throughout the day, so the crop has been successful.

At least 1,000 bulbs can be cultivated on a decimal of land. If a farmer sells

a plant at a profit of Tk 10, they will be able to post a profit of Tk 10,000 using a small piece of land, he said.

Alam said acidic, sandy-loamy soil with a pH of between six and seven is ideal for growing tulips, which require a daytime temperature below 20 degrees Celsius and a night temperature of five to 12 degrees Celsius during the growth period.

Panchagarh's weather is suitable thanks to its prolonged winter, he added.

The bulbs were brought from the Netherlands at a cost of Tk 61.80 apiece.

The plants are being sold in the flower markets in various districts, including Rangpur and Dhaka, according to Aynul Haque.

Md Shahid Uz Zaman, executive director of the ESDO, says in recent years, a good number of visitors from different parts of the country have come to Tentulia to catch a glimpse of Kanchenjunga, the world's third-highest mountain peak.

"If the tulip cultivation goes ahead as planned, it would be an additional attraction to tourists and promote the northern region's tourism sector, which will play a vital role in improving the lives of the locals."

As winter lasts for about four months of the year in Tentulia, the temperature is almost perfect for tulip cultivation, he said.

The ESDO is helping growers supply their produce to various flower markets and plans to help them cultivate other flowers during the rest of the time of the year so that they can survive economically.

Lessons learned to reshape the future

MAMUN RASHID

I took over as head of treasury and a country senior team member in the then ANZ Grindlays Bank in early 1988 and since then worked as a senior executive in three global banks at home and abroad.

I had the great privilege and honour to have been the Bangladesh chief executive officer of a very prominent global bank for several years. In fact, I was the youngest CEO of a commercial bank during that time. Even at the present, I am the country managing partner for another highly reputed global firm's Bangladesh entity.

Now when people are attributing so many credits to good schools, academic background, how we were groomed up and what we learnt from the various organisational legacies for their fortunes, I look back and ask myself, what is it that enabled me to attain such positions? What qualities, strengths, capabilities, and skills are required to be able to succeed and rise in banking and professional life?

COMMITMENT

No matter what position you may hold at a company and no matter how high or low that position may be, commitment to your post is essential. One must make their job role as their highest professional duty and take full ownership and charge of it.

It is our responsibility to constantly try to enrich ourselves with knowledge and experience while also providing true and real value to the overall organisation. There simply isn't any alternative to hard work and dedication. We must be committed to our own success as well as the success of our institution.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The notion that the entrepreneurial vision can only be attained by starting and developing one's own business enterprise is outdated. In my experience, each employee within a business organisation can individually have an entrepreneurial vision from very early on. Hence, I believe it is important to develop skills with an overall entrepreneurship mindset right from the start. For example, from a banking perspective, even a junior level manager could consider their role as their own sub-business while subsequently growing and enhancing their skill sets.

Simply mechanically completing one's designated tasks is not really going to yield much success but rather having an overall vision of the company from early on and then working based on that at an individual level has been one of the keys to my own positive career progression.

As a banker, I always enjoyed working with local entrepreneurs and made it my firm conviction that by helping them succeed, I would also be contributing to my own success. The primary reason I moved up the corporate ladder was because those entrepreneurs who I helped and nurtured also grew and succeeded themselves. So, the way of thinking must be that we can all grow together.

BUILDING THE MARKET

I recall that sometimes I would be assigned to a sector for which there was no real presence or

READ MORE ON B2

PriceRunner sues Google for 2.1b euros

REUTERS, Stockholm

Swedish price comparison firm PriceRunner said on Monday it is suing Alphabet-owned Google for about 2.1 billion euros (\$2.40 billion), the latest firm to take legal action alleging the search giant manipulated search results.

Google in November lost an appeal against a 2.42-billion-euro fine it received in 2017 which found using its own price comparison shopping service gave the company an unfair advantage over smaller European rivals.

"They are still abusing the market to a very high extent and haven't changed basically anything," PriceRunner CEO Mikael Lindahl told Reuters in an interview.

PriceRunner, which is in the process of being bought by fintech Klarna, said a lawsuit it filed in Sweden aims to make Google pay compensation for the profit it has lost in the UK since 2008, as well as in Sweden and Denmark since 2013.

Google did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Lindahl said PriceRunner is prepared to fight for many years, has secured tens of millions of euros in external financing, and has steps in place in the event it does not win.

The European Commission's 2017 fine was the result of a seven-year investigation triggered by scores of complaints that Google distorted internet search results to favour its shopping service, harming both rivals and consumers.



A sign is posted in front of a building on the Google campus in Mountain View, California on January 31.

PHOTO: AFP

S Korea fines Mercedes \$16.9m over emission

REUTERS, Seoul

South Korea's antitrust regulator said on Monday it decided to fine German carmaker Mercedes-Benz and its Korean unit 20.2 billion won (\$16.9 million) for false advertising tied to gas emissions of its diesel passenger vehicles.

The Korea Fair Trade Commission (KFTC) said Mercedes had tampered with pollution mitigation devices by installing illegal software in its vehicles, making them perform at lower levels in ordinary driving conditions than during certification tests. A total of 15 Mercedes models had such software.

"It is meaningful to impose sanctions against the country's No.1 imported car sales operator for obstructing consumers' rational purchase choices with false and deceptive advertisements about its emission reduction," the KFTC said in a statement.