



The business of FLOWERS

#PERSPECTIVE

Flowers have been admired, sought after, and cherished throughout the history of humankind. There are a number of reasons for it, but the reason we usually seek flowers is the simplest of all. We seek flowers because they are beautiful. Native or exotic, we often get mesmerised by their beauty and forget that they come with a story of their own.

SHAHBAGH MARKET

If you have ever stepped out of a bus at Shahbagh or Shishupark or ever walked towards the Dhaka University Campus or Shaheed Minar, you have seen the Shahbagh flower market.

The shops are along the road and in a row. Big, small, even temporary ones. With the bright and conspicuous colours of chrysanthemum and marigold and the intricately outlined petals of roses and the bewitching fragrance of tuberose, this place is hard to miss without getting lost in the beauty of it all.

The Shahbagh market has two parts: one is a wholesale market and the other one is retail market. The wholesale market is located on the Shishupark side and the retail shops are everything that remains. The wholesale market starts rather early, at 4AM and it continues till 11AM. The rest of the market however, is open roughly 24 hours a day; so whenever you come here, you can get yourself a stick of tuberose or a bouquet according to your choice.

AGARGAON MARKET

The other wholesale market in Dhaka is at Agargaon. Originally, the market started at Khamarbari in 2009 where it had a good run for five years. Then it was moved to Agargaon and it's already been seven years since. The market is similar to the one in Shahbagh. This market also starts pretty early; in fact, earlier than the Shahbagh market. Starting to prepare at 2AM, this market kicks off by 3 in the morning and goes on till 10AM. After the wholesale business has been concluded, the retail shops will still remain open.

"There is a business of at least Tk 10 lakhs here every day, going as far as 20 lakhs," said Nur Mohammad, President of Sher E Bangla Ful Chashi O Baboshayi Somobai Samiti. It's a spectacular gathering of native and foreign flowers. Whether you are into orchids or lilies, or Chinese rose and gerbera, you will find them here. The million shades of colours and aroma will send you in frenzy if you step inside the market.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Where do all these flowers come from? Well, all sorts of places. From nearby places like Savar, Tangail and Narayanganj to far away locations like Jashore (Godkhali), Jhenaidah, Chuadanga; Even Natore, and Bogura – you will find flowers from all across

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the country in both of these markets. As soon as the flowers are ready to collect, they come straight to Dhaka, fresh from the fields. The native flowers are more popular than the exotic ones. One reason for this is that such flowers are costlier. Most of the exotic flowers come from India and China and even though they are low in demand amongst the mass people, they have their demand amongst a specific group of customers.

FLOWER CAPITAL

Godkhali in Jashore is called the flower capital of Bangladesh and rightfully so. While many places are known for their cultivation of different kinds of crops, flowers are cultivated in acres and

acres of fields in Godkhali. The wholesale flower market of Godkhali tends to the flower need of more than 50 districts in the country. In addition to that, flowers are also exported abroad. At least 15 different kinds of flowers are grown in the fields here, which include but are not limited to – rose, gerbera, gladiolus, tuberose, and marigold.

Md Ali Hossain, owner of 'Godkhali Krishi Nursery & Pushponir' has been in this business since 2006. "Before me, my father used to do the same business. You could say we are in this business since our birth," he said with a chuckle.

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