

The business of flowers

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"The shops and fields here supply flowers all across the country. Most shops have a prevalent contract to a shop or market in Dhaka or another city and we supply according to that.

We load up the vehicles with flowers by 1 or 2 at noon.

They arrive at Dhaka by midnight and then the wholesale market over there kicks off," he said, discussing the usual timetables.

Presently, he maintains about 75 acres of flower garden and like many

Godkhali farmers, growing exotic flowers in the near future is an appealing idea to Md Ali

Hossain.

"The ground here is amazing; the soil is like gold. Anything we sow, it blooms like magic," he added with pride. "This season, there has been an experimental cultivation of tulip in a field. The seeds were from Netherlands and dare I say the production was fantastic so this

looks like a promising prospect."

STORY FROM THE OTHER SIDE

In summer, the average flower will last for two days at most. It's easier in winter as flowers can survive for up to five to seven days depending on their variety. "If we cannot sell all the flowers within two to three days, then we have no choice but to throw away the remaining ones as trash. There's no other way around it" said Md Dulal, owner of New Aparajita Pushpaloi, a flower shop at the Shahbagh market. Having been in this business since 1996, he's seen quite a lot but the pandemic was quite an unexpected blow. "The business was really good and blooming before the lockdown. Since the pandemic, it's been really difficult and even though everything is reopened now, the demand for flowers is not what it used to be," he added.

Md Rasel from Agargaon flower

"The emergence of artificial flowers also dealt a blow to the flower business. Even the farmers back at Godkhali had suffered a drop in business because of artificial flowers."

market, a comparatively young face in the business shared a similar story, saying, "From December to March, our business blooms since it's a seasonal business but this year, not so much. COVID has really smothered it but I think it's the panic of COVID rather than COVID itself that did the most damage."

"The emergence of artificial flowers also dealt a blow to the flower business," stated Nur Mohammad, President of Sher E Bangla Ful Chashi O Baboshayi Somobai Samiti. Even the farmers back at Godkhali had suffered a drop in business because of artificial flowers. "And the farmers barely get any assistance in their cultivation of flowers. It's a blooming business, but there just isn't enough support that we hope for," he added.

A DIFFERENT STORY
'Pushpo Nir – One Stop Floral Decor & Design' is a high-end flower shop in

Gulshan that shares the flower business but their story is a bit different. For a more upscale location, they have a higher demand in exotic flowers compared to native ones.

Flowers are imported mostly from China and Kenya.

"Roses and Lilies are in high demand but roses are the most popular," said Mehedi Hasan, IT Executive of Pushpo Nir.

"Compared to a few years back, the overall demand of flowers has vastly increased. On the special days, we observe a higher demand of flowers but yes, from December to March, the business increases by 70 to 100 percent," he added.

While the average flower business has suffered because of artificial flowers, this high-end shop didn't suffer on those grounds. "We think that natural flowers and artificial flowers have different customers so those who are interested in natural flowers will not go for artificial ones."

Shakespeare said in one of his plays – "That which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet." I am no literary critic, but one thing I know for certain is that even he was captivated by the beauty of flowers. The rest of us remain enamoured just so.

By Ashif Ahmed Rudro
Photo: Adnan Rahman
Model: Niki
Flower Jewellery: Eskay By Samiul Karim
Make-up: Sumon Rahat
Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Studio: Utturn Production

