



Shopkeepers all over the country are selling an array of spices on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, when people will prepare various dishes with the meat of their sacrificial animals. The picture was taken from Boro Bazar in Khulna city on Monday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Eid vacation raises concern for mango farmers

Lack of transportation, lower demand to take a toll on prices

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN, KONGKON KARMAKER and S DILIP ROY

The ongoing holiday centring Eid-ul-Azha has raised concerns among mango farmers that prices for the fruit may decline further in coming days despite the high production cost.

This is because there is a lack of transportation and low demand from consumers amid the religious festival for Muslims in the country, they said.

And although mango farmers are reaping for the overall increase in production, they are not making good profit due to oversupply.

Besides, they are having to harvest mango before they are naturally ripe because of unfriendly weather conditions.

In this situation, farmers and analysts fear that the ongoing Eid vacation may disrupt the supply chain as the lack of storage facilities means that the fruit may go to waste amid lower demand.

"The ongoing harvesting process has been disrupted due to the Eid rush as we cannot even send mango through courier services as they are not taking orders for now," said Abdus Salam Sarker, who cultivated the fruit on more than 14 acres of land in Rangpur.

He also said that demand could fall as people have little time to enjoy mangoes while passing busy times on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha.

Although trucks and covered vans will be available for shipping perishable products, courier services and home deliveries will remain suspended during the vacation, according to the authorities

concerned. "Our transportation services will remain closed for three days from Wednesday," said Hafizur Rahman Pulok, vice chairman of the Sundarban Courier Service.

However, he added that they would conduct regular activities, such as ensuring existing deliveries and taking

including shortage of transportation and manpower," he said.

But the situation will be normal a couple of days after the festival, he added.

Ismail Khan Shamim, a farmer from Chapainawabganj, said he used to sell mango for about Tk 50-55 per kilogramme (kg) with an additional charge of Tk 25 for purchases made through online platforms

Haribhanga mangoes are available in markets across Rangpur from the third week of June each year.

But this time, due to the severe heatwave, the mango came to the market 10 days ahead of schedule on June 10, according to farmers.

Mehdi Hasan, a mango grower in the Padaganj area of Rangpur, said overall yields were better this year.

"Still, I had to start harvesting mango earlier than usual because of adverse weather. Depending on the size of the mango, I sell them for Tk 25 to Tk 50 per kg," he added.

Dr Md Sorof Uddin, a renowned mango researcher of the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute, said mango production has increased this year in terms of acreage.

"Now is the peak season for the Fazli, Amrapali and Haribhanga mango varieties," he added.

Uddin also said that due to the vacation, farmers will not be able to do marketing and so, prices will fall in the next eight to nine days.

"If mango consumption or export processing does not increase in line with production, then farmers won't get proper prices," Uddin added.

A total of 24.68 lakh tonnes of mango were produced in fiscal 2021-22 while production has been estimated to be more than 25 lakh tonnes this year, according to the Department of Agricultural Extension.

There are more than 2,000 Haribhanga mango orchards across the five districts of Rangpur, with each being about two to 15 acres in size.



new bookings, during this time.

Echoing the same, Md Sohag Ali, manager of SA Paribahan Courier Service in Dinajpur, said their parcel service will remain open during the Eid holiday, but without any home delivery.

"The smooth service will be disrupted during the holidays for various reasons,

that are delivered using courier services.

And even though the cost of such services increased, he would still turn a profit by selling online.

"But due to the suspension of these services, I might have to sell it in local markets for just Tk 30-35 per kg," he added.

Mutual fund investment tips for beginners

M SHAHRIAR AZAD BHUIYAN

Mutual funds have emerged as a popular and beneficial option for individuals seeking to grow their personal wealth. With their unique blend of diversification, professional management, and accessibility, mutual funds offer a compelling avenue for beginners to enter the exciting world of investing. Here are some tips to get you started: **Understand mutual funds:** In Bangladesh, there are basically two types of mutual funds available in the market: open-end mutual funds and closed-end mutual funds.

Open-end mutual funds allow investors to buy and sell units at any time, and they continuously issue and redeem shares based on investor demand. On the other hand, closed-end mutual funds have a fixed number of units and are traded on the secondary market of stock exchanges.

Research the fund: Research the fund's performance history, investment strategy, management team and fees. This information can be found in the fund's prospectus, which is available on the fund company's website or through your broker's research team.

Diversify your portfolio: It is important to diversify your mutual fund portfolio by investing in funds with different investment objectives and asset classes. This can help reduce risk and increase returns. This diversification helps minimise risk and potentially increase returns by spreading investments across various holdings.

Choose suitable options: Mutual funds come in various types, catering to different investment goals, risk appetites, and time horizons. Investors can choose

from equity funds, fixed-income funds, balanced funds, growth fund and shariah fund. This variety allows investors to align their investment choices with their specific financial objectives and preferences.

By investing in mutual funds, individuals can access a broader range of investments than they could afford individually,

which further contributes to reducing the impact of any single investment's performance on their overall portfolio.

Mutual funds offer convenience and accessibility to individual investors. They typically have lower investment minimums, allowing individuals with smaller amounts of capital to participate.

Additionally, open-ended mutual funds provide ease of entry and exit, enabling investors to buy or sell fund shares at the fund's net asset value on any business day. Simultaneously, closed-ended mutual funds can be liquidated through the secondary market of the stock exchanges. This liquidity allows investors to access their investments relatively quickly.

Make the most of professional management: Mutual funds are managed by experienced fund managers who have expertise in analysing the local market and selecting suitable investments. This professional management can be particularly beneficial for individuals who may not have the time, knowledge, or resources to actively manage their own investments.

Avail tax benefits: Investing in mutual funds can provide tax benefits under certain conditions. For closed-ended mutual funds, a dividend income of up to Tk 50,000 is tax-free and for open-ended mutual funds, the limit is Tk 25,000 for a fiscal year.

Mutual funds have the potential to generate attractive returns over the long term. While past performance is not indicative of future results, investing in well-managed funds with a strong track record may provide opportunities for capital appreciation and income generation.

Mutual funds offer several advantages. However, they also have some drawbacks, such as fees and expenses, lack of control over individual investments, and market risks.

The author is the head of operations and compliance at UniCap Securities Limited.



West's economic de-risking a 'false proposition'

Chinese premier says

AFP, Tianjin

Chinese Premier Li Qiang slammed efforts in the West to "de-risk" their economies as a "false proposition" on Tuesday, hitting back against US and EU policy aimed at reducing their reliance on China.

The United States and the European Union have in recent months moved to "de-risk" from the world's second-largest economy.

"In the West, some people are hyping up what is called 'cutting reliance and de-risking'," Li told delegates at the opening of a World Economic Forum meeting in northern China.

"These two concepts... are a false proposition, because the development of economic globalisation is such that the world economy has become a common entity in which you and I are both intermingled," he said in a wide-ranging speech calling for deepening economic globalisation and cooperation.

"The economies of many countries are blended with each other, rely on each other, make accomplishments because of one another, and develop together," he added.

"This is actually a good thing, not a bad thing." This week's meeting of the World Economic Forum in the port city of Tianjin -- known colloquially as the "Summer Davos" -- is the first of its kind after a three-year hiatus caused by the Covid pandemic. It will last until Thursday.

Investors overly optimistic on speed, cost of taming inflation: IMF

REUTERS, Sintra

The world's top central banks may need longer to get inflation back down to target and a fresh bout of financial turbulence could make the process even more protracted, the International Monetary Fund's second-in-command said on Monday.

Central banks have raised interest rates at a brisk pace over the past year-and-a-half to fight off a historic surge in prices, but they have persistently underestimated inflationary pressures.

Describing what she called uncomfortable truths, Gita Gopinath argued that the financial community may be too optimistic about the cost and difficulty of taming inflation, which then raises the sort of stability risk central banks might not be equipped to handle.

"Inflation is taking too long to get back to target," Gopinath told the European Central Bank's annual get-together in Sintra, Portugal.

"While headline inflation has eased significantly, inflation in services has stayed high, and the date by when it is



Customers eat and drink outside a cafe in the Soho area of London on June 18. Recent data showed UK inflation slowed to a 13-month low in April, but remains elevated at 8.7 per cent amid soaring food prices.

PHOTO: AFP

expected to return to target could slip further." Such a delay would be costly, so central banks need to keep policy

tight, despite an obvious cost to growth, she said.

The problem is that investors

seem overly optimistic about the inflation path and do not see much of a hit to economic growth, an unlikely combination, especially if high rates persist for longer than currently predicted, Gopinath argued.

"It is useful to bear in mind that there is not much historical precedent for such an outcome," she said.

Once the reality hits, asset prices could reprice, potentially setting off the sort of financial turbulence seen around the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and the sale of Credit Suisse earlier this year, she warned.

While central banks have been adamant that they have the tools to manage both price and financial stability risks, the reality is that their powers are limited when financial stress threatens to morph into a systemic crisis, she added.

It is then up to governments to forestall a crisis but their fiscal capacity is quite limited now, so central banks may need to let inflation come down even more slowly to avoid their own policy triggering a crisis.