

Bangladesh tree fair abuzz with nature lovers to see topiary plants

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A tree fair has been underway in Bangladesh capital Dhaka, with an array of topiary plants providing a picturesque sight for nature lovers.

The event, entitled "National Tree Fair", kicked off on June 5 at the site beside the Bangabandhu International Conference Center (BICC), also known as the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Center.

With the theme of living sustainably in harmony with nature, the month-long fair, the largest of its kind in Bangladesh, had a flying start this year with many visitors after a two-year COVID-19 hiatus, aiming to promote and encourage gardening and planting trees among the capital dwellers. It is a great treat for nature lovers as stall owners have been showcasing exquisite topiary plants of various kinds from abroad, China to be specific.

Deepak Kumar Nath, the proprietor of a local company, DC Nursery and Services, set up a stall and showcased plants he imported from China.

"The tree behind me is imported from China. We call it (locally) Faikas (Bonsai). It is actually topiary plant," he said, adding this topiary is made like an antique showpiece item.

Many of the visitors are seen roaming around the stalls selling and showcasing topiary, the art of training plants (typically evergreen shrubs and trees) into intricate or stylized decorative shapes and forms.

"I've heard for long about Chinese topiary plants. I'm glad to see today here an excellent Chinese topiary plant," said Abdur Rahim, one of the visitors.

He came with his family members in the tree fair, which is a great annual event of nature lovers in Bangladesh.

Ahsanul Karim, a senior advocate of the Bangladesh Supreme Court, comes to the fair every year. He said the fair has not been held for two years because of COVID-19, and orchids in particular are his favorite.

"I've 1,500 orchids in my own collection," he said, adding "in this kind of fair there are so many kinds of trees we see from native and foreign (countries)."

"Those who are tree lovers or those who are not tree lovers also fall in love with trees and flowers when they come to this kind of tree fair," he said.

"I think this tree fair is very important in our national life," he said.

Md Aminul Islam, an official from the Forest Department, said, "We could not hold the fair due to the epidemic in the last two years. We've organized the fair with great enthusiasm this year."

"As always we've organized the fair with 110 stalls, nine of which are from government departments," he said, adding although the city of Dhaka is now full of residential or office buildings, people are still interested in things like roof gardens.

According to the official, annual award is given under roof garden category by the prime minister of Bangladesh at the national level to encourage people in this respect.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the fair, calling upon all to plant tree saplings to create green afforestation to maintain a healthy and safe environment for future generations in the country.

A.F.M. Jamal Uddin, a professor of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University in Dhaka, said every tree fair starts with new trees, with the first one started with pinwheel flower from China, and new trees are now still coming from China.

"The big trees that you see in our roadside plantations are coming from China," he said, adding Chinese trees are easily adaptable to Bangladesh environment.

"And one of the interesting things is Chinese technology. We're trying to use Chinese technologies to take care of the trees," said the professor.

China has a big role to play in the development of Bangladesh horticultural sector, he added.