



Cane artisan couple Chandana Mala and Subhash Chandra Das at work in the yard of their house at Das Para in Lauta village of Harirampur upazila in Manikganj.

PHOTO: ZAHANGIR SHAH

Cane artisans: Grim future lies ahead

The environment-friendly utensils they make out of natural cane are losing out to those made of plastic or other materials

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

People's need and taste change in time. Their changing taste and need have gradually led them to replace popular household items made of cane with those made of different materials including plastic and aluminium.

The dwindling demand for cane utensils has resulted in financial hardship for cane artisans, a small Hindu community known as Monidas, living mostly in Harirampur, Ghor, Singair and Sadar upazilas of Manikganj.

Palla, Ser, Dhama, Katha and Turi are some of the items that the artisans have been hand-crafting for generations. Before the time of contemporary measuring scales, people in rural areas traditionally used Palla and Ser to measure rice or pulses. They used the other items, such as Dhama, Katha or Turi as containers or serving bowls for various food items.

During a visit to Das Para in Lauta village of Harirampur's Chala union, members of the Monidas community were seen making cane utensils.

Subhash Chandra Das, 52, said back in its

heyday, 25 families in the Das Para used to make cane goods. But now, only three families are involved in the craft as cane items are losing out to those made out of plastic and aluminium.

Palla and Ser were popular for measuring, while Dhama, Katha and Turi were used as containers for rice, wheat, maize, chira (flattened rice), muri (crispy puffed rice) or khoi (puffed rice), explained the elderly cane craftsman.

He said except for a few occasional orders received from rural fairs in Munshiganj, Nawabganj and Manikganj, he did not have any mentionable large order for cane utensils in recent time and the last time he received such an order was about 12 years ago, from an organisation in Dhaka.

Another elderly cane craftsman, Jagadish Moni Das, 61, said now he can barely provide for his family with the meagre earnings from the sale of cane utensils.

Frustrated by the grim prospect, a younger member of the community, Palash Das, 32, said, "This work is worthless. There's no respect for it in the society. But this is the only trade I've learned throughout my life."

Since he cannot find anything else in the country to make a living, he would have to leave the country, Palash added.

Contacted, Abdur Rashid Mollah, extension officer of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) in Manikganj, said there are about one hundred cane artisans living in different parts of the district. They also use bamboo to make different utensils as well as other goods.

BSCIC is working on to find ways to promote the goods made by the cane artisans in Manikganj, he also said.

Bimal Roy, regional coordinator of research organisation Bangladesh Resources Centre for Indigenous Knowledge, said only two hundred and fifty families are now involved in the trade of making cane utensils in Manikganj, whereas only a few decades ago, the figure was nearly three thousand.

Rise in the prices of raw materials, loss of sense of dignity and financial insecurity are some of the reasons, among many others, that are compelling the artisans to switch to other trades, he observed.

447 acres BR land, 1,500 rail quarters occupied

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

About 447 acres of Bangladesh Railway (BR) land and around 1,500 rail quarters in Saidpur municipality have remained under illegal occupation for years.

The occupiers are so powerful that the authorities concerned are yet to remove illegal structures from railway land, said locals, adding that two eviction drives were suspended in face of obstruction by the occupants on February 8 and 15. Any fresh date for eviction drive is yet to be announced.

Established in 1870, Saidpur railway workshop is one of the largest and best equipped workshops in the country. A vast tract of land surrounding Saidpur town is inhabited mostly by Urdu speaking people.

Of 799 acres of BR land, 447 acres and 1,500 out of 2,488 rail quarters in the municipality have remained under illegal occupation, said Md Ahasanuddin, assistant executive engineer of West Zone of Bangladesh Railway at Saidpur.

During a recent visit to the BR land, this correspondent found high-rise buildings, residential hotels, factories, business centers and houses on both sides of busy Shahid Zikrul Haque and Shahid Shamsul Haque roads in the area. Those have been rented out for different national and multinational companies, banks, insurances and traders.

"A strong syndicate comprising some rail workers' union leaders and a few corrupt rail officials blessed by a section of political leaders have been involved in building the illegal structures on BR land," said Abdul Huque, a social activist.

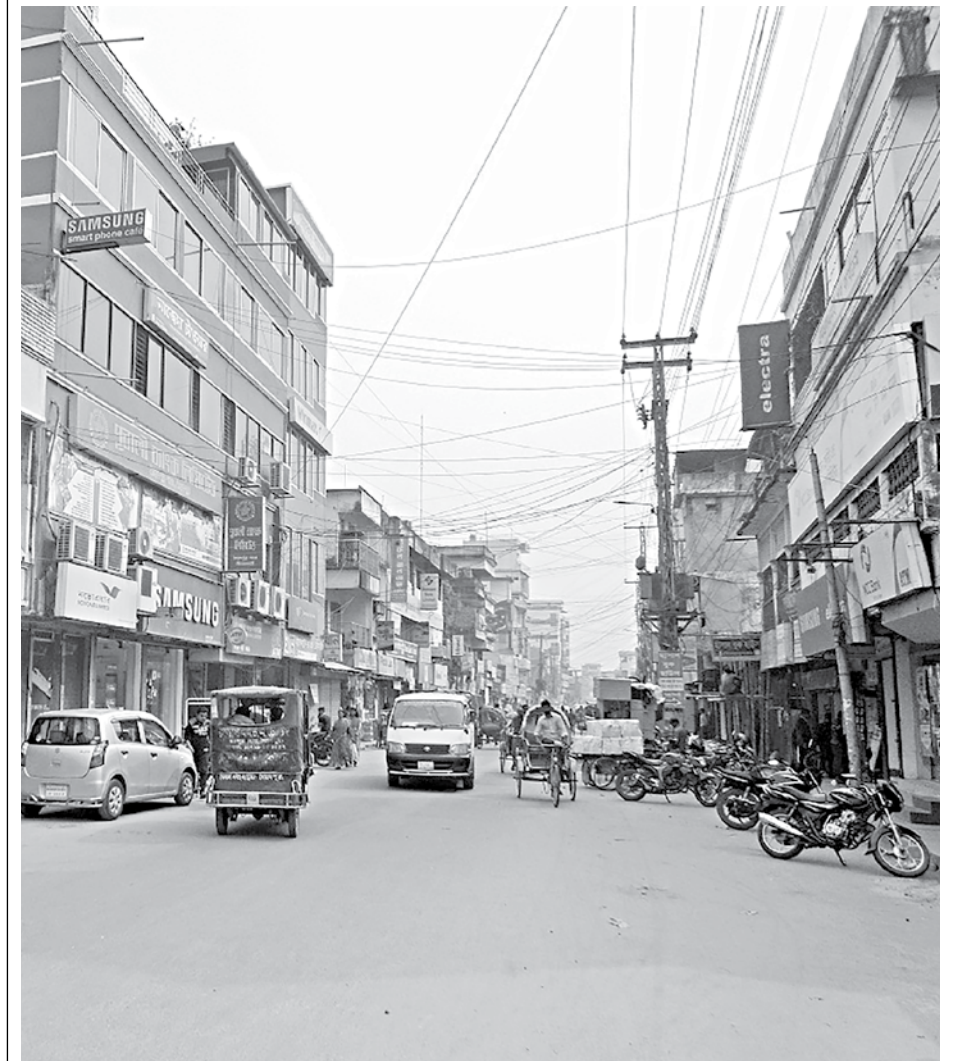
"Over the last few years, some eviction drives have been conducted, but the drives were simply eyewash as few makeshift roadside structures of poor people were demolished only in the drives," said Abdul Huque.

During the 15 February's drive, when the eviction team, led by Divisional Estate Officer in West Zone (WZ) of BR Md Nuruzzaman, went to Halder para area where occupants constructed buildings to use it as residence and business centre, the occupiers and their men encircled the team.

Without demolition of any illegal structure, the team left the area and came to local railway market and faced obstruction by the occupants. The occupiers then sprayed pepper powder on the team.

Two organisations named Odhikar and Bastohara mainly run by local political leaders are very active here in protecting rights of people living on the occupied BR land.

General Manager of BR in WZ Mihir Kanti Guha said "We have suspended eviction drives in Saidpur as per directives of higher authorities. Soon we will announce a new date for eviction drive."



The illegal structures built on Bangladesh Railway land in Saidpur municipality of Nilphamari.

PHOTO: STAR

Silicosis kills one more worker

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Another silicosis-affected stone-crushing labourer in Patgram upazila died on the way to Patgram Upazila Health Complex yesterday.

The deceased, Aminur Rahman, 42, who had been bedridden for the last two months, was son of Kachua Sheikh of Namazitari village under Burimari union.

Aminur was a member of silicosis affected stone-crushing labourers' compensation movement in Burimari Land Port area.

2 of a family die of unknown disease

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Two women of a family died of an unknown disease in the last three days in Baliadangi upazila, while three others of the family have been suffering from the same disease.

The deceased are Mina Begum, 35, wife of Hafizul Islam of Sangaon village, and Hafizul's elder brother's wife Pashina Begum, 40.

Three other victims -- Hafizul's mother Hazera Khatun, 54, younger sister Tanjina Akhter, 14, and younger brother's wife Aleya Akhter, 30, is now under close observation at Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital.

Thakurgaon Civil Surgeon Mohammad Mahfuzar Rahman said a medical team already visited the victims' house.

Meanwhile, a four-member team of experts led by Dr Omar Quaium of Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) are on their way

to Thakurgaon to assess the situation, the civil surgeon said, adding that, they were advising villagers to use mask until the disease is identified.

Hospital sources said Hafizul's wife Mina died on Friday night while Pashina passed away on Sunday.

Dr Abul Kasem, medical officer at Baliadangi Upazila Health Complex, said Mina was brought to the hospital with vomiting complaint and she was also behaving abnormally.

After taking treatment, family members took her home on Friday, but she died the same night.

In February last year, five people of a family died and three others fell sick at Bhandardaha Morichapara area in the same upazila.

Later, a team of IEDCR collected samples and found one of the five victims were infected by Nipah virus.



Forest officials seized these logs worth Tk 75 lakh from different villages near Rangamati's Kaptai reserve forest area in the last two months. The photo was taken from Kaptai Range Office compound yesterday.

PHOTO: ANVILCHAKMA

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh			
College Education Development Project (CEDP)			
Govt. BL College			
Khulna			
Invitation for Tenders			
1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Education.	
2	Agency	University Grants Commission/National University.	
3	Procuring entity name	Principal, Govt. BL College, Khulna.	
4	Procuring entity code	N/A	
5	Procuring entity district	Khulna	
6	Invitation for	Procurement of Furniture for the Classrooms, Laboratories, Central and Seminar Libraries.	
7	Invitation Ref. No.	BLC/CEDP/86	
8	Date	25 February, 2020	
KEY INFORMATION			
9	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (National).	
FUNDING INFORMATION			
10	Budget and source of funds	Development Budget (Government & IDA Credit).	
11	Development partners	International Development Association (IDA), World Bank.	
PARTICULAR INFORMATION			
12	Project code	224017200	
13	Project name	College Education Development Project (CEDP).	
14	Tender package No.	G-4	
15	Tender package name	Procurement of Furniture for the Classrooms, Laboratories, Central and Seminar Libraries.	
16	Tender publication date	25/02/2020	
17	Tender last selling date	14/03/2020, 5:00pm.	
18	Tender closing date and time	15/03/2020, 2:00pm.	
19	Tender opening date and time	15/03/2020, 3:00pm.	
20	Name & address of the office	Govt. BL College, Khulna.	
	Selling tender document		
	Receiving tender document		
	Opening tender document		
21	Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (optional)	Will not be held.	
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER			
22	Eligibility of tenderer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The tenderer shall have a minimum of 3 years overall experience in the supply of goods and related services; years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT in the newspaper. The minimum specific experience as supplier in supply of similar goods of at least 2 contract(s) successfully completed within the last 2 years, each with a value of at least Tk 70 lac. The minimum supply and/or production capacity of goods is/are: High Bench: 800, Low Bench: 800, Teachers Table: 40, Teachers Armed Chair: 40, File Cabinet: 80, Office Almira: 80, Computer Table: 140, Computer Chair: 140, Multipurpose shelf: 70, Executive Table: 4, Revolving Chair: 10, Visitor Chair: 160, Side Rack: 10, Plastic Chair: 400 per year. The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the tenderer shall be Tk 75 lac. 	
23	Brief description of goods or works	Procurement of Furniture for the Classroom, Central and Seminar Libraries such as High Bench, Low Bench, Teachers Table, Teachers Armed Chair, File Cabinet, Office Almira, Computer Table, Computer Chair, Multipurpose Shelf, Executive Chair, Revolving Chair, Visitor Chair, Side Rack, Plastic Chair.	
24	Brief description of related services	Related service shall be in accordance with Section 4: Particular Conditions of Contract, Section 6: Schedule of Requirements and Section 7: Technical Specification of the tender document.	
25	Tender document price	BDT 1,500.00 (one thousand five hundred).	
26	Name of package	Location	Tender security amount (Tk)
	Procurement of Furniture for the Classroom, Central and Seminar Libraries	Govt. BL College, Khulna	2,00,000/-
27	Name of official inviting tender	Prof. KM Alamgir Hossain.	
28	Designation of official inviting tender	Principal	
29	Address of official inviting tender	Govt. BL College, Khulna.	
30	Contact details of official inviting tender	Tel: 041-762944	Fax: 041-2850370
31	E-mail: infoblcollege@gmail.com		
The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.			
 18.02.2020 Prof. KM Alamgir Hossain Principal Govt. BL College, Khulna			
GD-350			