Walking through the village track we reached a big banyan tree. Its sprawling branches were covering the surrounding place like a canopy. There was a small idol clad in a red sari at the bottom of the tree. The tree is a centre of village fairs and worship of the idol. There was a *poush* mela just the previous day. We regretted missing the fair just for one day. It could be our one in a million chance to attend a real village fair.

We took another break at a tea stall and then descended on the vast tracts of farmland. We filed in along the aisle of the field making a beeline for the main road. The field was like a collection of vivid colour patches. There were patches of yellow mustard flowers, different types of purple flowers waiting to be turned into vegetables, tomatoes, pumpkins, corianders and little *kalijira* plants.

After walking for half an hour we took the main road. Crossing a bridge under which Dhaleshwari River flowed. We took some pictures of ducks swimming in the shrinking river below. If I had not known that it was a river I would have not believed because it was looking like a dead canal. Someone said that trucks ply on the riverbed at night.



A pristine pond on the way.

At last, we reached the village Kharakandi beside the river Kaliganga, our destination. We freshened up and had our lunch at a house and took some rest in a big yard. Then at 3 in the afternoon we started for Kaliganga River. A man was making 'chhana' in a big square pan by the river.

When we reached the riverside the water was sparkling from the afternoon sun while big engine boats were plying gently upon the luminous water. The water was so clear the bottom of the river could be seen.

We trooped in the boat and perched on one side with other villagers to reach the other side of the river. There were some newlywed brides who were watching us with curious eyes like the Pankouris perched on the polls in the midst of the river.

Getting down from the boat we started walking along the riverbank. After walking one and a half kilometres we reached a nice place where there was a riot of yellow mustard flower on a highland.

We took a break there and munched on the remaining *muri-murki* wrapped in the *gamchha*. After some group photos,we boarded the boat to see the sunset from the other side. Everybody enjoyed the quickly fading rays of the sunset. But I could hardly fathom its beauty as my mother was shouting in my cell phone to come home in ten minutes when I was standing by a riverside in Keraniganj.

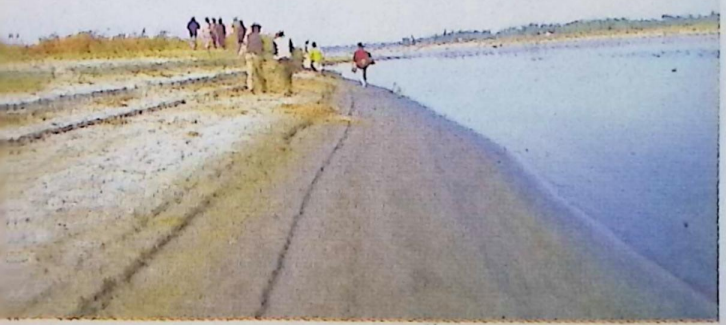
We started for home after the sun had set and took two helicopters which took us to Noyabazar where we first landed from a boat. The helicopters seemed to me as real choppers as it took only 25 minutes to get there; by foot it would have taken a whole day. We wrapped our heads with our scarves as instructed by our team leader.

It was six in the evening and the lights coming from the construction site of the third Buriganga bridge was lighting up the place. The workers were oblivious of the dark and were working like bees in a beehive.

There were several boats lined up on the bank waiting for passengers. We took two boats and reached Basila in two minutes. From there we reserved a human hauler to get to Dhanmondi, ending an eventful day of our lives.

It was a long walk but I had enjoyed it so much that I could hardly feel any weariness. It was a stroll I will treasure for the rest of my life. It had let me see so many things in a day that I would not have experienced in a year. It was more than a simple walk. It was a stroll through the winding lanes of life.

The writer is a reporter of Star City.
*Photo Credit: **Durdana Ghias***



Walking by the Kaliganga.