

6,000 Harijans in Barisal city denied basic rights

A CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Deprived of basic rights to education, employment and housing, members of the Harijan community, widely termed as 'the untouchables', are living in appalling condition in Barisal city.

About 6,000 members of 1,000 families are residing at the densely populated commercial and residential areas of the city without any permanent housing, sanitation, sewerage, drinking water, electric supply and education facilities.

"We do not have any land for permanent residence," said Harijan leader Joyanta Kumar Das, secretary of the Barisal Harijan Oikya Parishad, adding that the places where they live now belong to Barisal City Corporation.

This neglected community basically keeps the divisional town clean. They work to keep the sewerage lines clear and the drains flowing. Many of the Harijans are involved in hide trading while others survive as cobblers and shoe shiners. Traditionally Harijans also brew their own liquor for consumption.

The rate of literacy among Harijans of the city was less than twenty percent, Laxman Lal, president of Harijan Oikya Parishad, said.

At least twenty people including four females of the community got higher education like two in post graduation, six in graduation and 12 in HSC and SSC levels, said Laxman Lal.

Meanwhile, District Higher Secondary Education Officer Ashok Purokayesto, said "There is no specific data about their education status."

There is only primary school for the Harijan community at Amir Kutir and admission of the Harijan children in other schools is often discouraged, added



PHOTO: STAR

This shanty, typical of the dwellings of some 6000 Harijans living in Barisal city, shows the appalling living condition of the neglected community.

Laxman Lal.

"We are the most neglected and unprivileged section in the society," said Shibu Dom, a leader of Barishal Zila Dom Samaj.

We also pointed out that many belonging to the community took part in the country's War of Liberation in 1971, but still we are treated as 'untouchables', said Uttam Vakta, a Harijans' leader of Bangladesh Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM).

Public representatives visit the colonies only on the occasion of general election, he added.

JhamaLal, a former leader of

Harijans, said only 240 members of Harijan out of 640 posts are temporarily employed in Barisal City Corporation on daily-wage basis.

"Harijan members are working in hospitals and clinics in the city without any permanent job security," she added.

"We protest appointment of non-Harijan persons as sweeper," said Jharna, adding that they demanded at least 80 percent quota for the appointment of underprivileged Harijan against the posts of sweeper in different government and non-government offices.

Anil Chandra, district

civil surgeon, said, "We do not have any specific data on Harijans and there is no separate programme for their health service."

Laxman Lal, president of Harijan Oikya Parishad, said we want same status, civic rights, permanent employment, permanent residence, sanitation, health services and education facilities like other citizens of the country.

Six Harijan Pallis (residential localities) in the divisional town are spread over Nazir Mahalla, Falpatty or Chamar Patty, Katpatty, Marok Khola or Dompatty, Kawnia Janoki Sen Road and Amir Kutir.

Transport worker beaten to death

UNB, Bogra

A transport worker was beaten to death at Brindabanpara in the town early Wednesday.

The deceased was identified as Ershad, 31, son of Belal, of the district town.

Police said a bicycle was stolen from Govt Azizul Haque College campus on Oct 18.

Suspecting his involvement in the stealing, some youths picked up Ershad from his house in Brindabanpara area at midnight on Tuesday, took him to Jolly Food Factory and beat him up.

On information, family members rescued Ershad from the factory and took him to Bogra

Mohammad Ali Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries at around 3:00am.

Victim's father Belal filed a murder case with Bogra Sadar Police Station accusing five people.

Police arrested the owner of the factory Ramzan Ali and his wife Jahanara Begum Wednesday morning. They were produced in a court that sent them to jail, rejecting their bail prayers.

Yaba tablets, beer seized in Teknaf, 3 held

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Police arrested three smugglers in Teknaf upazila of the district early Wednesday yesterday and seized 600 yaba tablets and 768 cans of beer from their possession.

The arrestees are Mohammad Yunus, 25, son of late Waziullah of Shahporirdwip area, Markin Mia, 42, son of Moulavi Ali Hossain of Nayapara area, and Sura Khatun, 18, a Myanmar citizen.

Police said they raided Shahporirdwip area at around 4:00am and arrested smuggler Yunus with 768 cans of beer. They later arrested gang leader Markin in the area.

The same team arrested Myanmar citizen Sura Khatun on Teknaf-Shamlapur Road at around 9:00am and seized 600 yaba tablets from her possession.

People's Jute Mills resumes production at month-end

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The state-owned People's Jute Mills in Khalishpur is expected to resume its commercial production in the last week of this month.

Meanwhile, about 848 casual workers have already been reinstated as the mill produced jute goods worth about Tk 50 lakh during test production in three shifts since October 5.

"Maintenance works of the mill, which started in June this year, are nearing completion. Besides, more than 2589 quintals of raw jute supplied

from Crescent Jute Mills is being used for production", said Emdadul Huq, the project director on Tuesday.

The mill authorities have already received an order for jute goods, particularly carpet baking cloths (CBC), from the USA, the director added.

A three-member vigilance team had been formed to monitor production during night shift.

Casual workers who worked before closure of the mill are being reinstated in their respective sections on the basis of daily payment varying from Tk 130 to Tk 165, said workers' leader Abdur

Rahman. Established on 70 acres of land, the mill went into production in 1954.

About 5,000 workers and employees lost jobs when it was shut down in 2007 due to severe financial crisis following loss of Tk 140 crore, mill sources said.

A private firm, Kazi Firms Ltd, took lease of the mill from the government in 2008.

But the firm withdrew from the business in July last year and handed over the mill to the government in December last year on the grounds of incurring huge financial losses.

PABNA JUBO LEAGUE LEADER MURDER

All 10 accused acquitted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A Pabna court on Tuesday acquitted all the 10 accused, including a UP chairman, in Jubo League leader Saiful Alam Sabu murder case.

Those acquitted in the case are Malanchi Union Parishad Chairman Ali Reza Khan Kakon, Advocate Saiful Alam Suja, Md Nazrul Islam,

Shahid, Khokon, Asad, Bachchu, Helal, Bakul and Amirul.

Additional District and Session Judge Md Monjur Kadir pronounced the verdict in the crowded courtroom at noon. He acquitted the accused, as murder charge brought against them could not be proved for lack of witnesses.

Saiful Alam Sabu, a mem-

ber of Jubo league central committee, was killed by unidentified assailants near his house at Shinga village in January 2008.

Saiful's brother Mahbul Alam filed a case with Pabna Police Station the same day without naming anyone as accused. After investigation, police submitted a charge sheet against the ten.



PHOTO: STAR

Journalists form a human chain in Natore town yesterday demanding arrest and punishment of the criminals who assaulted journalists when the latter were performing professional duty during the ruling party men's deadly attack that killed BNP leader Boraigram upazila chairman Sanaula Noor Babu at Bonpara Bazar in Natore on October 8.

Table with 2 columns: S.No. and Details. Contains information about various educational institutions and their details.

SNIPPETS section containing news items: Two outlaws held with arms, Three car lifters arrested, Housewife murdered, Timber worker electrocuted.

Advertisement for Dhaka Power Distribution Company Limited, including a notice about a human chain and a recruitment notice for a discipline in life.