



PHOTO: STAR

Visually challenged children along with coaches, teachers and govt. officials before an exhibition cricket match

Glimpses of light thru' cricket

Visually challenged students playing cricket in Lalmonirhat

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

They can't see anything, but nature has given them the ability to feel and enjoy everything. They don't see colours-cricket is all but the feel of bat and ball. Cricket brings colour to their lives.

The young cricket-playing talents are not only playing to spend time, they also are students. This gives them the feeling that they are able to participate in activities that was once unthinkable. Most visually challenged persons believe that they can contribute to the society job if they get proper support. Some blind students are building their identity as cricketer at the village Saptibari of Aditmari Upazila in Lalmonirhat, as they being trained.

Spectators were awed watching the excellent performance of visually challenged boys in a blind cricket match, held at the playground of Saptibari High School at Saptibari village of Aditmari Upazila in Lalmonirhat. Many of the spectators included; Government officials, journalists, teachers, students, NGO representatives and local people. They gathered in the school playground to watch

the blind cricket match.

Nine visual students from class two to intermediate of Integrated Education Programme for Blind at Saptibari Resource Centre played cricket among themselves after 10 days of training for one month in June, 2013. Two coaches included; the captain of Bangladesh Blind Cricket Team (BBCT) Hafizur Rahman Bulet and the trainer of BBCT Sanowar Ahmed. The programme 'Training Camp on Blind Cricket for Visually challenged Students' was organised by Government Integrated Education Programme GIEP, a partnership programme between Department of Social Services and Sightsavers.

One of the coaches, Hafizur Rahman Bulet

said that he feels very happy after watching excellent performance of the visually challenged students. He complemented, "Nine visually challenged students received training from us on how to play cricket. In short time, they achieved much and they expressed their experience through the match". He believes that these students will develop extraordinary skills in future if they are provided with regular training.



A visually challenged student of class two, Mostafa Kamal Manju said that he loves studying, but finds immense joy playing cricket—he dreams of becoming a cricketer. He said, "Now, I know how to play cricket. I can throw ball and bat. Ten days of training give me the skill of playing cricket. My skill will

develop if I get more training".

Another student of class twelve Ibrahim Miah said that it was his first time playing cricket. He feels playing cricket gives fresh mind.

"We are blind students, but we no less than others, we are equal like others in the society and we want to exercise our right in any form we can. Like any other aspiring student, we need only support and proper direction", said another blind cricketer Ramzan Ali of class four.

The Resource teacher of Integrated Education Programme for Blind at Saptibari Resource Center, Ershad Ali, said that he always takes care of all the ten visually challenged students in the centre. He understands the sufferings of the blinds as he is a blind as well. He hopes that the kind-hearted people in the society will extend their helping hands to the visually challenged students to continue playing cricket.

The Aditmari Upazila Nirbahi Officer Rezaul Alam Sarker said that he in awe watching the blind cricket match. They are very good at playing the game, and they also brilliant in their education. He also vowed to support the students.

Kid torn between schooling and duty to family

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Schooling as well as 'complex-free' friendship with students of his own age eludes nine-year-old Anisur Rahman as he sells peanuts all day long to feed his parents and two younger siblings living at Binnabari village, four kilometres off Jaldhaka upazila town under the district.

"My desire to read in a school remained unfulfilled as I have to earn to manage food for parents and siblings. The children of this school are friendly to me. But I can't think myself as their friend. There is big gap between them and me. They are students while I'm a simple peanut vendor," said Anisur in a choked voice, standing in front of Jaldhaka Model Government Primary School.

His father Hakimuddin, 50, a long time asthma patient, can hardly do any work and mother Hamida Begum, 38, is also physically too weak to do any gainful job.

With a wooden bowl containing peanuts, Anisur daily walks to Jaldhaka town where he moves around busy areas like the market, bus stand and petrol pump areas and upazila parishad premises to sell peanuts.

But he feels special attraction to the premises of Jaldhaka Model Government Primary School where he finds friendly boys and girls of his age.

Whenever he goes there, the school children gather around him. Some talk to him and give choc-



PHOTO: STAR

Anisur Rahman sells peanuts to school kids on the field of Jaldhaka Government Primary School in Nilphamari district. The nine-year-old boy feels special attraction to the school premises where he finds friendly boys and girls of his age.

olates, some buy peanuts. Sometimes Anisur gives a few peanuts free of cost to those who cannot afford to buy it.

"I like this place very much as I can see a lot of boys and girls of my age. It is nice to see children wearing school dress attend classes, play and loiter," Anisur said.

Anisur daily earns around Tk one hundred by selling 2-2.5 kg of peanut.

He returns home in the evening with two kg of coarse rice, one kg of potato, brinjal or other vegetables. They seldom eat meat or fish.

Asked why Anisur was not sent to school, his mother Hamida replied, "His earning is very essential for our survival. He has no time to go to school."

Ferdousi Begum, headmistress of the school, said, "It's really touching to see

nine-year-old Anisur sell peanuts to the school kids. Once I called the boy inside the school and told him to get admitted here but he expressed inability."

There is law against child labour but it will hardly work unless poverty, the root cause of the problem, is not eradicated, said Sohrab Hossain Tuhin, chairman of local Kanthali union parishad.

College boy murdered

Youth remanded for killing boy

STAR COUNTRY DESK

A college student was killed in Feni district while a youth was remanded in a case for killing a schoolboy in Bogra on Sunday.

A college boy was killed and another injured in an attack by rivals over previous enmity at Kazirbagh village in Sadar upazila of Feni on Sunday night, reports our correspondent.

The deceased was identified as Azharul Islam alias Sajib, son of Mintu Mia of the village and a student of Feni Chhagalnaiya Government College.

Critically injured Bappi, a friend of Sajib, was admitted to Feni Sadar Hospital.

Police and locals said a group of youths allegedly, led by Zehadul Islam of the area, attacked the duo with sharp weapons at 8:30pm, leaving them critically injured following an altercation over a football match a few days ago.

Sajib died on way to the Chittagong Medical College and Hospital at 11:00pm.

Police arrested Zehadul in connection with the incident, said police superintendent Md Saiful Haque.

In Bogra, a young man was placed on a one-day remand in a case for killing a schoolboy in the district on Sunday, reports our correspondent.

The accused is Sanwar Hossain, 27, son of Ibrahim of Parapur village in Dupchanchia upazila.

On July 26, Md Arafat, son of Malaysia expatriate Dulal Talukdar of the area, was found murdered at Poradoha village.

The deceased was a class one student of Parapur Government Primary School, said Riaz Ahmed, officer in-charge of Dupchanchia police station.

Arafat's mother filed a murder case with the police station against some unidentified people.

Police then arrested Sanwar in connection with the case, said the OC.

Pabna, Sirajganj weavers have no time to waste

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, from Sirajganj

Weavers of Pabna and Sirajganj districts, the biggest handloom cloth producing zone in the country, are passing busy time ahead of the Eid-ul-Fitr.

Sellers of over 200 large wholesale shops at Shahjadpur Tant Kaporer Hat, the biggest wholesale market of handloom products in the country, are also busy as the traders from different parts of the country are thronging there to buy cloths.

The areas noted for weaving industry are in Shahjadpur, Ullapara, Chowhali (Enayetpur), Kazipur, Belkuchi and Sadar upazilas of Sirajganj district

and Bera, Santhia, Sujanager and Sadar upazilas of Pabna.

"Now 3.5 lakh looms are operating in 10 upazilas of the two districts with target to produce two crore pieces of handloom cloths. At least 70 percent of the country's demand for handloom cloths is met from the zone," said Md Haidar Ali, vice president of Bangladesh Handloom and Power Loom Owners Association, also president of Sirajganj district unit of the association.

Around 50 percent of the total production of the two districts is exported to India and the demand soars up ahead of the Eid, Haider added.

But marginal weavers of the two districts are suffer-

ing due to the fund crisis in the peak production season.

"I have three looms. I and my son are working in two looms while the other has remained abandoned. I do not engage worker due to fund crises," said Md Raihan Ali, a marginal weaver of Dorgachar in Shahjadpur upazila.

"I have targeted to produce 100 pieces of sarees in my two looms. But to start the work, I had to borrow money from a mohazan (money lender) on condition of giving him 60 pieces of sarees without making any profit," Raihan said.

Around 15 thousand marginal weavers of the two districts are facing similar problems.



PHOTO: STAR

With Eid approaching, a weaver busy producing handloom cloths at a weaving factory at Shahjadpur in Pabna district.

Abducted schoolboy rescued

A CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

The law enforcers rescued a schoolboy from a jungle at Nanosrivillage village in Karimganj upazila on Monday, a day after his abduction.

They also arrested one Manik, 28, and Humayun, 26, in connection with the abduction.

Victim Sumon Mia, 14, son of Nurul

Islam of Uttar Dampara village, was a class nine student at Mahtab Uddin High School.

A team jointly led by police and Rab arrested the duo at Joshodal in the upazila when they were receiving the ransom money from Sumon's elder brother Mokrrom Hossain.

Later, on information from the arrestees, the team raided the jungle and rescued the boy at night.

Potters in peril

RABIUL HASAN, Chapainawabganj

Meneka Rani Paul, 45, of Chunaripara village of Baroghoria union in Sadar Upazila of Chapainawabganj district is facing food hardship. Her five sons and two daughters are all involved in their traditional pottery business. In early days, they could earn good living by selling their products locally and to other districts. But their traditional pottery products have lost their markets.

Another potter, Saptomi Paul, 43, of Natun bazar has sold out her house recently due to poverty and now living in a khas land (empty govt. land) near the road side at the area. Her family has no other options. Currently, she earns only Tk. 90 to 100 a day, which is less than any other daily laborers.

Pottery, one of the most traditional industries in the country, is in the verge of extinction in Chapainawabganj for the lack of marketing facilities and price hike of raw materials. The situation is pushing the potters into hardship and compelling many to leave their ancestral profession.

The potters usually manufacture costing pot, plate and some age-old domestic utensils; latrine rims and ground well, which had been in use in the country for centuries. But introduction of plastic, steel and melamine, these traditional earthen potteries are gradually being unused.

Most of the families, especially in the rural areas hardly use potteries. Over 150 families live in Natun Bazar, Chunaripra, Bazar Para and Puraton Bazar of Baroghoria Union of Sadar Upazila in Chapainawabganj.

Great number of potters have left the traditional profession as their product are not being sold in the local markets because of wide demand of plastic, steel and melamine goods, said Godadhar Paul, a potter of Chunaripara village. The prices of raw materials like mud, fuel wood, and colour has gone up to a level that does not cover the production cost, he added. Godadhar also said, earlier, they used to take paddy from the farmers in exchange of their products. But now, most prefer purchasing the earthen pots in cash that incur higher transportation and their cost.

Describing the their hardship, another potter Khagen Chandra Paul of Natun bazar said a potter can hardly earn Tk. 80 to Tk.100 a day which is not enough to maintain a family. They are leaving this profession and trying to join other professions like; rickshaw and van puling, working as a day labourers for their survivals.

Potters urged to the government and non-government organizations to save their traditional pottery business thus saving the lives of hundreds of pottery businessmen in Chapainawabganj district.



PHOTO: STAR

A potter at work in Chapainawabganj