

Easy bikes the main tormentor of roads

Teenage three-wheel drivers the root cause of traffic gridlock in Narail

PONUEL S BOSE, Narail

Battery-run three-wheelers, locally called easy bikes are now the main cause of recurring traffic jam and accidents in three upazila's of the district.

Due to the increased number of easy bikes traffic congestion have taken an appalling turn in most busy roads. The volume of accidents have risen as three thousand people engaged in driving battery run three-wheelers in the district without any valid driving license said Md. Jahangir Alom, Inspector, BRTA Narail.

Abul Biswas of Voakhali village under Narail municipality alleged that haphazard parking of easy bikes in the busy point of the road have narrowed down the space available for vehicles to ply the roads, resulting in traffic gridlock.

Kamal Mia of Rupgonj Bazar said that about 98% three-wheel drivers are illiterate and they have no knowledge of traffic rules.

Akkas Rahman of Lohagara Bazaar area under Lohagara upazila said that the easy bikes operated without any headlight and this made them vulnerable to accidents after dusk.

The easy bike drivers run their vehicles without headlight to save power and improve their mileage, the traffic police are aware of the situation but



PHOTO: STAR
Battery-run three wheelers, locally called easy bikes, are now the main cause of frequent jam and accidents in three upazilla of the district. Inset, Teenage easy bike drivers ply the road without possessing valid drivers licenses.

chooses to turn a blind eye, reported a concerned civilian.

Mishan Khan a student of Narail Victoria College said he was injured at Rupgonj muchipole Moar when an easy bike hit his motorbike

from the backside.

While talking with Masum Mojamddar, President of Battery-run Auto-rickshaws Owner's and Labour's Association confirmed that they possessed more than three

thousand battery-run auto-rickshaws in the district. And also added that the drivers were unskilled with many not having jobs previously and few being rickshaw and van puller prior to this.

A dream of one man changes fortune for the entire locality

Kartik Pramanik: the visionary who transformed a dust bowl into a scenic heaven

SHYKH SERAJ

The farmers and rural areas are abound with the stories of success and development that was once envisaged and featured by Channel I's 'Hridoye Mati O Manush' programme and today, they seem to have come to reality. One of these petite stories has turned into a revolution, of which Kartik Pramanik is the main character.

Dear readers, I hope you remember a winter morning at Tarapur village in Monakosha union under Chapainawabganj's Shivpur upazila nine years back in 2004 where a rugged nature had turned into a tranquil locality with greenery. Much of its credit goes to Kartik Pramanik, an ordinary man. A barber by profession, his inner statements still ring into the ears.

I was quite amazed speaking with this legendary man who made the entire region green by planting trees.

"If humans don't pray for me, the animals and birds will. God will love me if they do. That's the objective of my life", says Kartik. "Please plant trees. If you plant at least 10 trees and only two of them survive, nurture those two", that is still the motto of Kartik.

Kartik Pramanik was awarded with the Krishi Padak back in 2007. Back then, he urged for a road to be constructed. His dream was all about better infrastructure that would make life easy for all.

On Kartik's earnest request, the government constructed his dream road,

through which the image of Monakosha union under Chapainawabganj's Shivpur upazila changed for good. We went to the locality four years after the construction. I have heard a lot about this infrastructure, how it has been helping numerous farmers to transport and market their agricultural produce. Now we can see concrete buildings, instead of only clay huts. The development in people's livelihoods is pretty apparent.

Greenery on both side of the road is Kartik's sole contribution but this minor gift has changed the image of the entire neighborhood.

A conversation with one of the locals: Has this road been useful for transporting your agricultural goods? Certainly it has. Could you elaborate? People don't have to wait anymore. It's easier to move around now.

The entire region was like the desert, full of sand. Now it has transformed into a greener landscape because of the hardship by Kartik and his great environmental entrepreneurship program.

However I came to learn the tragic reality from the locals. The dream road looks terrible at some points now. The locals reported that the lack of discipline and supervision brought a dreadful condition within such a short period of time.

Today, Kartik enjoys the view of overall development of this locality. But his dream doesn't stop here. They want to expand further. It's really uncer

tain whether if anyone's actually thinking about the development of this locality like Kartik Pramanik. It's certain that the Government and the Policymakers will someday notice Kartik's dreams and desires. Many people of different ages were around when I visited Kartik's village, including students from schools and colleges. I enquired many of them about Kartik Pramanik. What does Kartik Pramanik do? He plants trees, was the simple response.

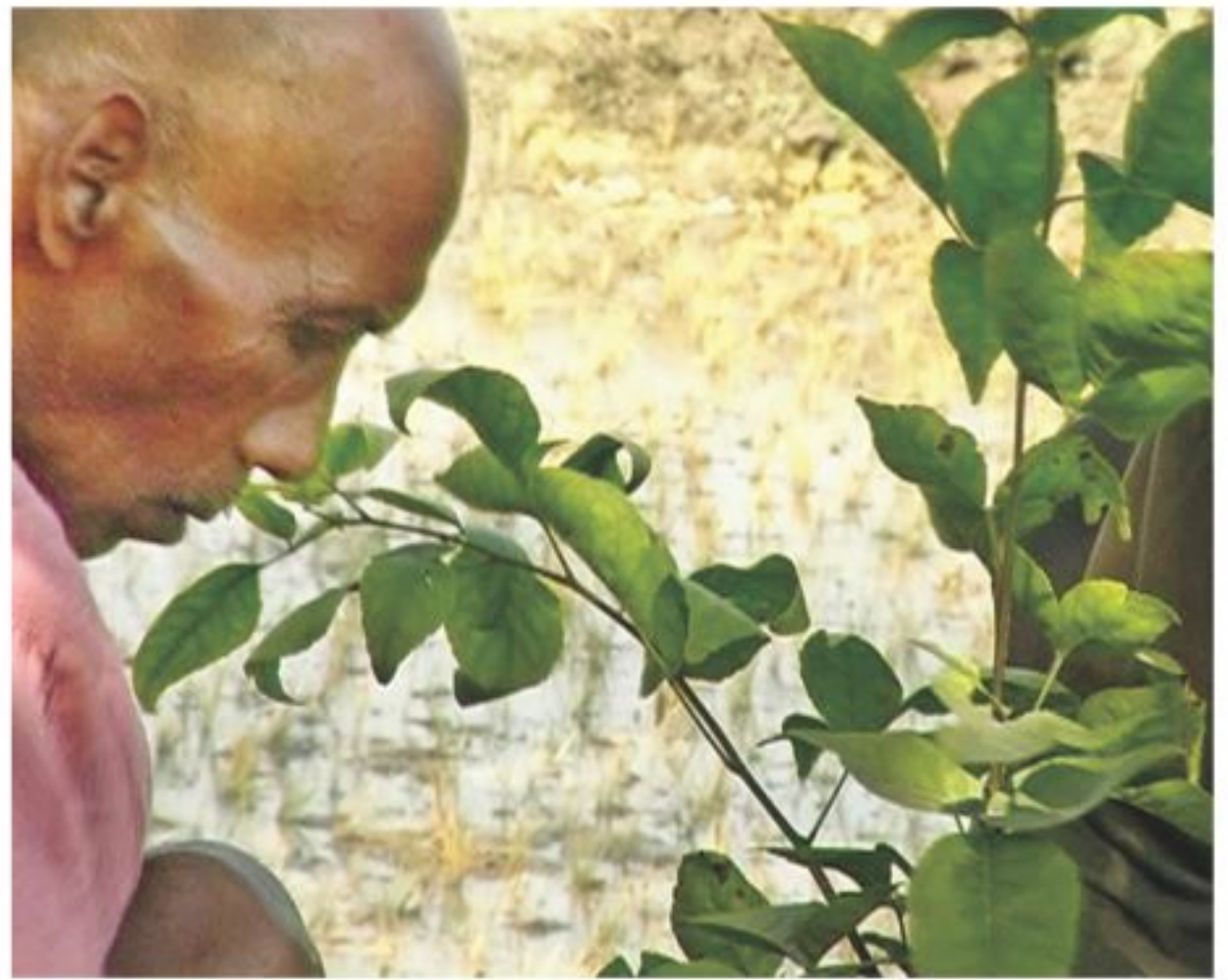
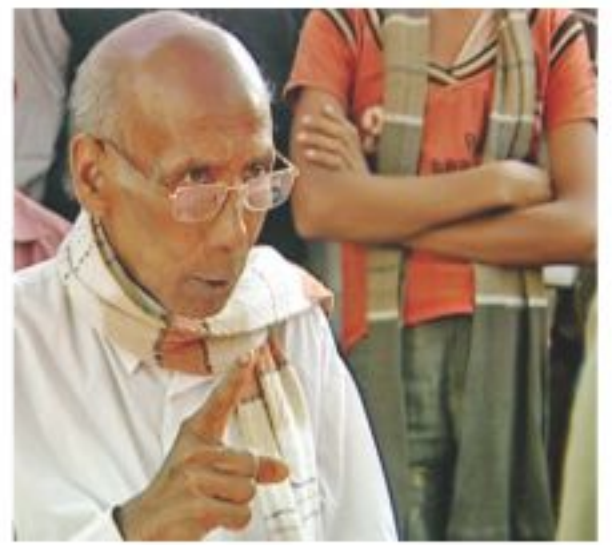


PHOTO: STAR

Kartik Pramanik planting more trees and encouraging others to follow his lead; Tarapur village in Monakosha union under Chapainawabganj's Shivpur upazila.



Shykh Seraj is an Agriculture Development and Media Activist. He is an Ashoka Fellow and an FAO A.H. Boerma Awardee. At Channel i, he is Director and Head of News. He is also Director, Planner and Presenter of the popular Agro-Documentary "Hridoye Mati O Manush".

Art of appearing at exams, knowing 'nothing' about art

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

Around 40 thousand students in Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts are going to attend this year's Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) and Junior Dakhil Certificate (JDC) examinations next month without getting formal lessons on 'art and craft', now a compulsory 50-mark subject for them.

The situation has arisen as 882 high schools and junior dakhil madrasas in the two districts are yet to get any teacher for the subject that has been made compulsory in the curriculum from the current session, thanks to the indifference of the authorities concerned.

According to District

Education Office sources, there are 654 high and junior high schools and 232 dakhil madrasas in ten upazilas of the two districts.

Of them, only four government schools, two each in Thakurgaon and Panchagarh, have art and craft teachers while 882 non-government high and junior high schools and madrasas in the two districts are without any teacher for the subject, Md Fazle Alam, district education officer of Thakurgaon.

Most of the JSC and JDC examinees of the two districts are still in confusion about the syllabus, question pattern and marks distribution of the now compulsory subject.

"This year 'art and craft'

subject has been made compulsory for Classes VI, VII and VIII but we are unable to appoint a teacher for it as the post is yet to be created. The teachers with some idea on the subject are taking classes on it," said Robiul Alam, headmaster of Boda Pilot Girls' High School in Panchagarh.

Shimu Akhter, a JDC examinee from Jamironnesa Dakhil Madrasa in Thakurgaon, said, "We are yet to get any clear conception about the new subject although the examination is very near."

Khademul Islam, an assistant teacher of art and craft in Thakurgaon Government Boys' High School, said, "As per the question pattern of the subject in JSC and JDC

examinations, 10 marks are for design (sketch), 15 for scenery drawing, 15 for multiple choice questions and 10 marks for two short questions."

Contacted, Rakibul Islam, assistant controller of examinations of Dinaipur Education Board, said over cell phone, "Classes of art and craft have been arranged with the help of biology teachers and the school authorities were asked to appoint part-time teachers to meet the requirement for the time being."

"The directorate of secondary and higher secondary education has already been informed of the situation and we hope the problem will be solved soon," he said.

BSF returns boy, arrests cattle trader

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) on Monday night returned a Bangladeshi schoolboy, who was picked up on Eid day from border in Nageswari upazila of Kurigram district.

The boy Habibur Rahman, 13, is son of Babu Mia of Kedar frontier in the upazila and a class seven student, reports our correspondent.

BGB sources said a patrol team of BSF from Addarpar BOP camp caught Habibur while he was crossing the border area to hand over Eid gifts to his relatives in India.

In Jhenidah, BSF arrested a Bangladeshi cattle trader on Kushumpur frontier in Moheshpur upazila on Monday night, reports our correspondent.

The arrestee is Sher Ali, 22, son of Wadul Sheikh of Shyamkur Kalyanipara village, said an official of Border Guard Bangladesh

PRABARANA PURNIMA CELEBRATED



PHOTO: STAR

Buddhist devotees pull a colourful chariot in Bandarban town, singing religious songs on Monday, the concluding day of the three-day celebration of Prabarana Purnima, one of the biggest religious festivals of the Buddhist Community of Bangladesh. They later immersed the chariot into the Sangu River.



PHOTO: STAR

A farmer shows a gourd plant affected with root rotting disease on his farmland at Mirerbari village in Rajarhat upazila of Kurigram district.

TWO KURIGRAM UPAZILAS

Root rotting disease deals a blow to gourd growers

ABDUL WAHED, Kurigram

Roots of gourd plants are rotting due to bacterial attack in Chhinay union under Rajarhat upazila and Kathalbari union under Kurigram Sadar upazila, much to the worry of vegetable growers.

"This season I have cultivated gourd on 55 decimals of land here, like previous years. Two weeks ago, the roots began to decompose when the plants started flowering and fruiting. The gourd leaves of plants in one bed started drying too," said Latifar Rahman, 50, a

farmer of Mirerbari village of Chhinay union.

"Spraying of medicine failed to prevent rotting of the plants although the soil is dry. The affected plants were shown to an agriculturalist of a renowned seed company and he advised me to spray medicine after soil test. But there is no arrangement for such test in the area," he said.

"In the second week of August, I sowed gourd seeds on 20 decimals of land. But the roots of 25 percent of the plants showed signs of rotting when they were flowering.

It happened due to bacterial disease. Later I was able to prevent rotting by spraying anti-virus medicine in the soil near the plant roots," said Idris Ali, 35, of Shainwashi village of Kathalbari union.

"Usually the root rotting disease due to bacterial attack is seen in the rainy season if water or wetness prevails for several days in the plant roots. In such cases we advise farmers to reach air and sunshine to the roots and spray proper medicine," said Majnur Rashid, upazila agriculture officer of Kurigram Sadar.

Sirajganj BNP enforces half-day-hartal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The half-day hartal enforced by Sirajganj district unit BNP protesting the arrest of its leaders and activists passed off almost peacefully in Sirajganj district yesterday.

Earlier, district BNP president Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku announced the hartal from the party office on Monday.

During the hartal hours, leaders and activists of BNP brought out procession at about 8.00am and JCD at 6.00am in the district town.

Pickets exploded cock-tails in Kutcha Bazar, Boro Bazar and S. S Fazlul Haque Road areas.

They threw brickbats at police after being chased by

them.

Pickets also vandalised two trucks at Shyamolipara bus stand in Ullahpara upazila and a CNG-run auto-rickshaw at Enayetpur in Chouhali upazila in the morning, reports UNB.

Police detained three pickets from different points of the district town.

No buses entered or left the district town during the half-day shutdown. But long-distance buses were seen plying on the highway as usual. Most of the shops and business establishments also remained closed.

Earlier, police arrested 24 BNP activists from different parts of the district town on Monday on charge of vandalism and attack on police on Sunday.