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FLUTE

plays export music

Comilla village sending flutes to 25 countries

MASUK HRIDOY, ENAMUL HUQ and ANDREW EAGLE

The sound of flutes tuning and playing is nothing new to Sreemoddi village in Comilla's Homna upazila. Over a century ago two expert flute craftsmen, Kokil Das Bairagi and Deen Bandhu, reached the village from India to ply their trade. Locals say they made up to a hundred flutes while there and sold them door to door. What is more certain, the two flute makers, who were also accomplished flautists, planted the seeds of a village industry that has endured and flourished. Today, Sreemoddi flutes are exported to as many as 25 countries.

"Our flute making tradition follows the footsteps of Kokil and Deen," says elderly flute maker, Rui Das. At least 40 families in the village have been making flutes for more than 120 years, he says. Elderly men and women, school children in their spare time, all are involved in crafting flutes. The village women specialise in piercing the flute holes, along with washing, drying and colouring the instruments.

"After independence the flute market was good," Rui Das recalls, "In the Bangla

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Rina Biswas and other villagers crafting flutes in Comilla's Sreemoddi. Over a hundred years ago, two flautists from India arrived in the village and taught the people there how to make the instrument. Today, flutes crafted in Sreemoddi are exported to as many as 25 countries. The photos were taken recently.



PHOTO: MASUK HRIDOY

Abandoned at morgue

Relatives refuse to bury teen saying they can't afford the cost

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and ANJAN CHAKRABORTY

Relatives abandoned the body of a garment worker, who committed suicide, at the Dhaka Medical College morgue yesterday saying they could not afford her burial cost.

Shahnaz, 18, lost her father around 10 years ago and mother around five years ago. She and her 12-year-old sister used to live with a distant grandfather in Uttar Manik Nagar in the capital.

She had an altercation with her boyfriend late Friday night and her body was recovered from the house around 1:45am yesterday. She had apparently hung herself from the ceiling fan, said Officer-in-Charge Enamul Huq of Mugda Police Station.

The OC told The Daily Star that after the autopsy he had

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Syria fighting eases as safe zones plan begins

AFP, Beirut

Fighting eased in Syria yesterday after a deal signed by government backers Russia and Iran and rebel supporter Turkey to create four "de-escalation zones" began to take effect.

The multi-phase plan, signed on Thursday in the Kazakh capital Astana, is one of the more ambitious efforts to bring an end to Syria's six-year conflict.

It provides for a ceasefire, rapid deliveries of humanitarian aid and the return of refugees after the creation of "de-escalation zones" across stretches of eight Syrian provinces.

Those zones would see a halt to hostilities, including air strikes, and proposes the deployment of "third-party" monitoring forces.

It began coming into effect at midnight (2100 GMT Friday), according to Russia, but cosponsors have until June 4 to finalise the

zones' borders.

The four main battlegrounds covered are the northwestern province of Idlib, parts of central Syria, the south, and the opposition enclave of Eastern Ghouta near Damascus.

Some of those areas had already seen a drop in violence by Saturday.

The skies were quiet over Idlib province, AFP's correspondent there said yesterday afternoon, but residents were anxious that the evening would bring renewed bombardment.

Syrian government warplanes could be heard from Eastern Ghouta around midday on Saturday, according to an AFP correspondent in the rebel-held town of Douma.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said there were skirmishes and shelling in several rebel-held areas in the central province of Hama and in Eastern Ghouta.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

People who read books are nicer

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Want to become a better person? Then you might want to consider picking up a book because according to a new study, reading regularly could make you kinder and more empathetic.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Rights activists denied access to Lama

STAR REPORT

A team of rights activists, journalists and a politician was barred from entering Bandarban's Lama upazila yesterday.

The 14-member team wanted to see for themselves the "eviction of many indigenous people from their ancestral land". However, they were stopped by some members of security forces near Yancha Check Post, said members of the team.

Three businesses have been evicting indigenous people to grab land in Lama. The team wanted to visit the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



A starving Tripura family inside their home in Hadukpara of Rangamati's Sajek union last week. Around 2,500 families in the union, who did not have enough jhum crops this year, are facing a severe food crisis. They need help to survive. PHOTO: ANVIL CHAKMA

FOOD CRISIS IN SAJEK

Supplies yet to reach many families

ANVIL CHAKMA, back from Sajek

Many people of the remote Sajek union in Rangamati are yet to receive food grains from the authorities.

Out of around 2,500 families in the union facing an acute food crisis, some 1,900 families have received aid until yesterday, according to the union parishad chairman.

However, people of some hard-to-reach areas in the union, particularly New Lonkor Para, Alonkor Para, Moano Adam, Talchhara, Dari Para, Midpoint, Haduk Para, Tarabunne, Milan Pur, Olod Hoda, Gobo Chari and Dojor areas did not get any rice.

Sajek Union Parishad Chairman Nelson Chakma said the local public representatives distributed 10kg of rice each among 410 families on April 22. Besides, Rangamati district administration officials distributed five tonnes of rice among 500 families on

May 1. In the last few days, around 1,000 more families were given rice.

"We hope to distribute rice among all the people facing the crisis. But we need more allocation," he said.

Baghaihat Army Zone Commander Lt Col Ismail Hossain Khan said they distributed five tonnes of rice among 500 families of Betling, Zupui, Gondhachhara, Arun Para, Tangnang, Konglak and Vaibonchara areas.

Talking to The Daily Star, Nayan Tripura, 30, of New Lonkor village, said, "We haven't got any rice yet."

Suro Bala Tripura of Moano Adam and Batte Chakma of Talchhara areas echoed Nayan.

Surendro Tripura, 70, of Betling Para said he received 10kg of rice. "But that is not enough for 3-4 more months. We need more food."

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

BOAT MIGRANTS TO EUROPE

Majority now Bangladeshis

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

As the refugee crisis enters its fourth year, the demographics of the men, women and children arriving on Europe's shores are undergoing an unprecedented shift.

Syrians have so far made up the largest group of migrants attempting treacherous journeys across the Mediterranean Sea, followed by Afghans, Iraqis, Eritreans and sub-Saharan Africans.

But as smugglers in Libya continue to expand their ruthless human trade, their counterparts in Asia are seeing an opportunity.

In the first three months of last year just one Bangladeshi arrived in Italy, but the number for 2017

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

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GULSHAN CAFE ATTACK

Police 'need more time to complete probe'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police need more time to complete the investigation into last year's July 1 café attack in the capital as some militants involved in the terror attack still remain off the hook, investigators said.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

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PRAYER TIMING
MAY 7

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
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JAMAAT 4-50 1-15 5-00 6-35 8-30

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