

Triumph of freedom

Two years of enclave exchange celebrated

STAR COUNTRY DESK

The people of former enclaves in different areas of Panchagarh, Lalmonirhat and Kurigram yesterday observed the second anniversary of India-Bangladesh enclave exchange deal implementation that gave them access to different government facilities along with the promise for a better life.

Residents of the former enclaves in Panchagarh chalked out various programmes marking the second anniversary of the historic exchange of the adversely possessed lands yesterday, reports our Thakurgaon correspondent.

At midnight on July 31 in 2015, fifty-one Bangladeshi enclaves inside Indian territory and 111 Indian enclaves in Panchagarh, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat and Nilphamari districts inside Bangladesh were attached to their respective countries.

With this, about 40,000 people living in the 111 Indian enclaves got identity as Bangladesh nationals.

Thirty-six of the former Indian enclaves belong to Panchagarh.

People of former enclaves, public representatives and government officials took part in different programmes, including placing of floral wreaths at the Shaheed Minar of Mofizur Rahman College premises at former Garati enclave in Panchagarh Sadar upazila at 12:01 am. Later they lighted moshal and candles.

The programme followed a discussion where the speakers thanked the government for initiating different development works to provide basic civic amenities to improve life of the former enclave people.

The works include arranging electricity, setting up of schools and colleges, police camps and

community clinics, and road development.

Our Lalmonirhat correspondent reports: Different programmes, including milad mahfil, procession, cultural sports and cultural function were arranged as nine thousand people in 59 former enclaves of three upazilas under the district observed the second anniversary of enclave exchange deal yesterday.

Different development programmes are being implemented with government allocated fund of Tk 65 crore at these former enclaves.

Fifty-four kilometres of carpeted roads, a 150-metre-long bridge, three mosques, a temple, two community centres, a crematorium, a graveyard, 20 culverts and 2011 drains will be constructed under the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), at a cost of Tk 50 crore.

Twenty percent of the total work has already been completed, 40 percent work is going on and rest 40 percent work will start soon, said Md Masuduzzaman, seniorsub-national engineer of LGED in Lalmonirhat.

Asked about the former enclave people's demand for solving the land settlement issues, Lalmonirhat Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shaiful Islam said they will get land documents according to the settlement measurement very soon.

Our Kurigram Correspondent adds: People of Dashiarchara, a former Indian enclave inside Bangladesh, under Phulbari upazila of the district yesterday chalked out elaborate programmes.

At 12:01 am, at Dehpiat of Kamalpur village under Dashiarchara, they burnt 68 candles as a symbol of freedom from their troubled life for 68 years in the adversely possessed lands.

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Locals light candles at the Shaheed Minar on the premises of Mofizur Rahman College at Garati in Panchagarh Sadar upazila at 12:01 am yesterday, marking second anniversary of the former Indian enclave's attachment to Bangladesh, following exchange of such adversely possessed lands with the neighbouring country.

PHOTO: STAR

Donga only means

Around half a hundred kids have to use boat to go to their school

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Around 50 students of a primary school in Baufal upazila are suffering as they have to use country boats to go to their school.

They are facing this problem as the dyke beside Alutala canal collapsed and the lone bridge has broken down. Due to lack of better communication, the number of students has dropped from 500 a year ago to 150 now.

Headmaster of Dakkhin Dewpasha Government Primary School Abdullah Al Mamun said about half a kilometre of the road becomes too muddy to use in the rainy season and a portion of the dyke along Alutala canal collapsed recently.

Sleepers of the lone steel bridge over the canal have broken down due to lack of repair for long, so students have to use a boat (locally called donga), made from a palm-leaf tree, to attend school, he added.

Attendance of students decreases in the rainy season due to these problems, the headmaster said, adding that some students get admission to a nearby madrasa as they cannot go to school in the rainy season.

The road and the bridge should be repaired soon, he suggested.

Riad, a Class IV student, said they have to use a dingy to come to school as the dyke has collapsed and the bridge has broken down.

Suraiya, of the same class, said they go to school at the risk in the rainy season as the road and bridge has become unfit for use.

School Managing Committee Chairman Md Habibur Rahman said, "We badly need a road, a bridge and a new school building as the present 4-room building was declared unfit several years ago."

Upazila Primary Education Officer Md Rezul Haque said, "We informed the higher authorities about the matter and requested them to erect a new school building."

Baufal Upazila Chairman Engineer Mojuibur Rahman said, "I have heard about the matter and I will try to solve the problem after discussing it in the upazila coordination meeting as soon as possible."

Gold smuggling through Benapole on rise

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Gold smuggling to India through Benapole check post has increased as the smugglers are using the country's largest land port as a safe route for their illegal activities.

The customs intelligence officials seized seven kilogram of gold and arrested six people in this connection at the check post during the last nine days. Benapole Customs Intelligence Department Deputy Director (DD) Md Sadik Hossain said. It has long been one of the routes for smuggling gold to India, he added.

Over 100 people of Sadipur village in the area once called 'Sonapur village' were allegedly involved in the illegal trade in eighties. Later, the smugglers took Daulatpur border as a new route for their operation, changing the Sadipur route. Smuggling through this route was an open secret until 2000.

Then they took the Puthaki border when Indian cattle in exchange for

Bangladeshi gold started coming into Bangladesh. Gold smuggling through this route continued for about 15 years.

Smugglers travelling with passports started taking gold to India secretly. Of which, small amounts of smuggled gold were seized, but the big haul remained out of reach.

BGC and customs intelligence officials in separate raids arrested 25 passport holding passengers along with 21 kg of gold bars in the last two years. However, no big smuggler was caught during that time.

Sadik said smugglers earn a profit of Tk 3,000 per tola of gold by selling it in India. Gold is being sold at Tk 48,000 a tola in Bangladesh while it is Tk 45,000 (Bangladeshi currency) in India, he added.

Sadik said an organised syndicate travelling in the guise of passengers has been engaged in gold smuggling for a long time. It has been difficult to identify them due to lack of specific information and modern technology,

he said.

Commanding Officer of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) 49 Battalion Lt Col Anifal Haque said some people with passports are carrying out smuggling now as different smuggling points at Benapole have been sealed.

BGB members now keep close watch on the movement of suspected people near the no man's land, he added.

Benapole Jewellers Association President Sadek Hossain said smuggling is taking place due to demand for gold in India. He called on the authorities concerned to be alert for checking the illegal business.

Benapole Customs Commissioner Shaukt Hossain said about 5,000 people go to India through Benapole check-post daily.

It is not possible to search all the passengers, but suspected passengers are kept under surveillance, he said. Customs intelligence officials have been able to recover gold recently due

Dr Bishnupada's contribution recalled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Highlighting life and work of Dr Bishnupada Pati, a former medical superintendent of Kumudini Hospital in Tangail, speakers at a memorial meeting yesterday recalled his contribution to the hospital and its patients.

Principal Protibha Musauddi, Kumudini Welfare Trust director, addressed the meeting as the chief guest.

Srimati Shaha, director of Kumudini Welfare Trust, Dr Md Abdul Halim, principal of Kumudini Women's Medical College and Dr MA Jalli, adviser (education) of the medical college, spoke among others.

Born in Tamuk of Medinipur district in Pashchimanga, Pati retired from the hospital in 2000 and started staying in London. He died on July 21.



A kid rows a donga made of palmyra tree through a flooded paddy field to go to school in Baufal upazila in Patuakhali. The photo was taken on Monday.

PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN

Ban on fishing in Kaptai Lake goes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

After a three-month window, Rangamati district administration allowed the local fishermen to continue fishing in the Kaptai Lake from yesterday.

Every year, the authorities impose a ban on fishing from May 1 to July 31 for safe breeding to increase fish production in the lake as mother fishes lay eggs during this time of the year.

In a letter issued last week, the district administration instructed Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation (BFDC) official in the district to allow the fishermen fishing in the lake, Md Muhaimmud Asaduzzaman, manager of Rangamati BFDC said.

Nearly 21,000 fishermen of two hill districts - Rangamati and Khagrachhari - earn their livelihood through fishing in the lake.

Learning for earning

Women receive training on computer on mobile bus

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

For rural women, it was once a long cherished dream to get training on computer literacy and internet browsing but now they can receive the training free of cost, thanks to the initiative of the government.

"I feel very happy that I can receive internet based training free of cost, which was beyond of my imagination once," said Ishrat Jahana, a student of Amtali Government College.

She hopes that she can earn very well after completion of the training.

Another student of the college Khadija Begum, who also received the same training, said she did not get such training on computer or internet before this though it was her long cherished dream.

digital training from a mobile van to become skilled manpower.

Under learning and earning project of ICT ministry, 23 women received the training in a batch.

Training will be provided to each batch for two hours. There are 69 women in three batches received training at Amtali Government College premises in Barguna.

A total of 276 women of different educational institutions including Barguna Government Women's College, Barguna Police Lines College, Sonakhalai Girl's High School and Kadomtala High School received training from the mobile van in the last four days.

Trainer Ashiqueur Rahman Dipu said the main object of the training is to make skilled manpower through computer training.

Project Director Mirza Ali Sharif said they are working to make digital Bangladesh by providing such training to rural women through mobile van across the country.

Medicine crisis hampers community clinic services

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Treatment at 145 community clinics in five upazilas of the district is badly hampered as supply of government medicines has remained stopped for about two months.

In addition to prescriptions, patients are provided 29 items of medicine like paracetamol, antacid, histamin and orsaline free of cost from the community clinics.

Each community clinic is supplied those medicines after four months, said Community Health Provider (CHP) Subas Chandra Roy.

But since early February, supply of government sponsored medicines to the 145 community clinics in the district has remained suspended, he said.

During a recent visit to Farbari Community Clinic in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila, this correspondent found that patients were not provided treatment service

properly due to shortage of medicine. They were returning home with empty hands as the clinic's stock was finished.

Anita Rani, 35, of Chutbohiya village of the upazila, said, "I came to the clinic as I had been suffering from fever for three days. The doctor gave me prescription, but no medicine."

CHP Subas Chandra said 50-70 patients come every day to get treatment at the clinic.

"We have not been able to provide medicine to patients for two months as the stock is finished. Now we are providing only prescription to the patients due to shortage of medicine," he said.

If the allocation of medicine was doubled, they can provide medicine to patients regularly, he said.

Civil Surgeon Dr Abu Mohammad Khairul Kabir said now medicine is provided to community clinics under the project of Revitalisation of Community Health Care Initiatives in Bangladesh (RCHPIB).

Within a short time, the community clinics will be given medicine, he said.



Rural women of Barguna receive computer literacy training from a mobile bus, thanks to the initiative of ICT ministry.

PHOTO: STAR