

# Man, two sons get life

A CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur

A court here yesterday convicted a man and his two sons to life imprisonment for killing a snake charmer in Sadar upazila in 2003.

Convicts Kashem Baidya, 60, and his two sons Alamgir Baidya, 28, and Jakir Baidya, 25, were tried in absentia.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Nazmul Haque also acquitted six other accused of the case as the charges brought against them could not be proved.

Public Prosecutor Imran Latif said the convicts had an altercation with Dalim Baidya, a snake charmer of Charmuguria area, over a trifling matter on May 28 in 2003.

At one stage, they hit him on the head and fled the scene. Dalim died at Madaripur Sadar Hospital while undergoing treatment there.



Indigenous artistes perform at cultural functions at 1) Rangamati, 2) Bandarban and 3) Moulvibazar towns yesterday marking International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.



PHOTO: STAR

# VGD rice seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Local administration yesterday seized 183 sacks of government rice, allocated for Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programme, from a wholesaler's shop in Bandarban's Lama upazila.

Lama Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Khin Nu said being tipped-off by the locals they raided Rony Store in the municipality and seized the rice, adding that none was arrested in this connection.

Shop owner Rony Das said he bought the rice from Chokoria area on Tuesday noon and then had no idea whether the rice was illegally stocked by the owner of the rice shop.

# Give constitutional recognition

## Indigenous people urge govt on International Day of World's Indigenous Peoples

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Speakers at different rallies yesterday demanded that the government give constitutional recognition to the indigenous peoples as they are deprived of their fundamental rights in the country.

The meetings were held at the Town Club auditorium in Chapainawabganj, Khagrachhari and Rangamati marking the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

Speakers at a meeting in Chapainawabganj said miscreants attack the indigenous people, torture them and physically harass their girls.

They said the criminals threaten them in different areas on different occasions, but often

go unpunished.

They alleged that land grabbers have been grabbing their cultivable lands, residences, ponds, cremation sites and even temple lands.

They urged the government to form an independent land commission immediately for indigenous people of the plain land and ensure their security and other social rights.

Lawmaker Abdul Odud spoke as the chief guest and lawmaker Golam Mostofa as special guest with Hingu Murmu, convener of Adivasi Samannoya Committee, in the chair.

Adivasi Samaj Kalyan Parishad President Kornelius Murmu and Nachole Adibasi Academy President Jotin Hemrom also spoke at the rally.

Meanwhile, speakers at a rally in Khagrachhari urged the government to give constitutional recognition to the indigenous people.

The Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, Bangladesh Marma Students Council, Bangladesh Tripura Students Forum celebrated the day with a call for implementing the UN declaration on rights of indigenous people.

Jatindra Lal Tripura, chairman of Task Force on the Rehabilitation of Tribal Refugees returned from India, inaugurated the occasion.

President of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum Khagrachhari unit Chaitowai Marma, Namita Chakma, Protima Tripura and Chailau Marma spoke at the rally.

In Rangamati, lawmaker

Uchaton Talukder at a rally said the indigenous people are still deprived of their basic rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

The programme was held on the Rangamati municipality premises and organised by Bangladesh Adivasi Forum CHT chapter.

Speakers said day by day the indigenous people are deprived of many opportunities and passing their days amid insecurity.

In Bandarban, speakers at a rally said they are still deprived of their fundamental rights regarding land, culture, education and language.

They also demanded constitutional recognition as well as rights to education, health and land.

The indigenous leaders at a

rally in Thakurgaon urged the government to fulfil the nine-point demand, including constitutional rights and formation of a separate land commission for the indigenous people living on plan lands.

Socio-economic and political rights are yet to be established and many families were evicted from their ancestral land and homesteads as local influential people grabbed their land with the help of a section of corrupt officials, they said.

They also demanded withdrawal of false cases filed against the indigenous people.

Thakurgaon district Jatiya Adivasi Parishad and ESDO Premdip Project jointly organised the programme.

# Wife, boyfriend jailed for life for killing man

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

A court here yesterday sentenced a housewife and her boyfriend to life imprisonment for killing a man in November 2013.

The convicts are Salma Akter, wife of Akteruzzaman of Dakkhinkhar area, and Nurul Islam, son of Dudu Mia of Dhamti area in Debidwar upazila.

Additional Public Prosecutor (APP) Abul Bashar said Salma engaged in an extramarital affair with Nurul in absence of her husband Akter, an expatriate in Saudi Arabia.

On November 4 that year, Nurul and Salma killed Akter and told neighbours that he died of brain-haemorrhage.



People including school kids walk on a long bamboo bridge at Shantinagar in Tarakanda upazila of Mymensingh and a man collects water from a tube-well on the submerged yard of his house (inset) as the area remains under stagnant water around half of the year.

# TARAKANDA IN MYMENSINGH

## Waterlogging half of the year!

MD AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Some 2,000 people of Shantinagar area in Tarakanda upazila headquarters under the district have to bear with serious waterlogging problem for years.

"Now stagnant water covers the area nearly half of the year. The residents including some 500 school and college going children have to use a bamboo bridge to come out of their homes to go to different destinations," said Manik Sarker, a businessman of the area.

The residents, especially the children, are often affected with various waterborne diseases due to the nuisance, he said.

The waterlogging has turned unbearable due to lack of proper drainage system and unplanned construction of buildings, said 90-year-old Monindra Chaklader.

"Even after a moderate rain, water enters our houses, stopping our cooking," said Jharna Sarker, a schoolteacher.

Housewives Toma Pal, Arobi Begum, Basona Singh and Jharna Das said they are in serious trouble with their children due to

the situation.

Many families have shifted to other places including Mymensingh town to save their children from waterborne and skin diseases, also considering their smooth schooling, said Taposh Chaklader, father of a son.

"Before every local and national election, the candidates talk about overall development of the area but they ignore us afterwards," said Benu Pal, a local.

"Like hundreds of residents of the area, we have to cross the bamboo bridge amid risk, especially in the rainy season," said Senjuti Pal, a Class IV student of the area.

Md Harun-or-Rashid, member of Tarakanda union parishad, said they informed the authorities concerned on several occasions to solve the waterlogging problem but no action was taken.

Motahar Hossain Talukder, chairman of Tarakanda upazila parishad, said, "A master plan has been taken recently to solve the perennial problem but no allocation has been made yet. The work will start if necessary budget is sanctioned."

PHOTO: STAR

# Import consignment worth Tk 2 cr seized for tax evasion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Customs intelligence yesterday seized an import consignment worth Tk 2 crore that had entered the Benapole Land Port without payment of due duty.

Director of Customs Intelligence and Investigation Department at Benapole Customs House Sadek Hossain said a team of customs intelligence conducted a drive in the port on information that a shipment of grease and transformer oil had entered the port without payment of due duty.

The officials identified the consignment and saw that 25,020 kg of grease had been brought instead of 50 kg as was stated in the document and 836 litres of furnace oil had been brought submitting document for 200 litres, dodging a total of Tk 70 lakh duties.

Meanwhile, customs intelligence officials started investigation to find out how the consignment entered the port without paying proper duties and who was involved in the incident.

Commissioner of Customs at Benapole Customs House Shawkat Hossain said legal action will be taken against the customs officials and C&F agent involved in the incident.

Customs intelligence asked the authorities concerned to cancel the license of C&F agent Gani and Sons, he added.

A case was filed under Customs Act in this connection.

# Brisk business in boats in Moulvibazar

MINTU DESHWARA with ANDREW EAGLE

When rain deluges the haor wetlands of Moulvibazar, boats become for many the only practical transport option. Unsurprisingly, while the monsoon lasts local boat builders are busy. They work morning until midnight, with orders aplenty and profits healthy. Peak business for boat builders usually lasts from around April to mid-October.

"At the moment there's lots of water in the haor," says one boat builder, Sajjad Ahmad, 35, from Rajnagar upazila's Nawangan village, which is within the area of Kawadighi Haor. "People can hardly leave their homes without boats at this time of the year. Boat building is a family tradition for me. I've been doing it for almost twenty years. Currently I have five orders on hand, which is good because during the dry season boat builders are unemployed."

Sajjad says it takes twelve days to construct a standard boat, built with the help of two assistants.

Such a boat might sell for around Tk 10,000. "To make an 18-foot long boat," he adds, "with the cost of wood and iron it will

need upwards of Tk 25,000."

Another boat builder, Lal Mia from the Gourisankar area of Kulaura upazila observes that the cost of a boat for the customer will depend on design and size. "People want quality boats," he says, "but quality wood for a boat will cost between Tk 10,000 and Tk 45,000, and quality wood is hard to find."

"It's only during the monsoon months that we have an income," says Monsur Helal, a boat builder based in Bhularkandi of Barlekha upazila, within the area of Hakaluki Haor. "But we have to run our families throughout the year. Even though business is good now, it's difficult to make enough savings to really make a difference to our living standard."

Meanwhile, Sobhan Hossain from Kadipur area in Kulaura upazila has just bought a boat.

"Water transport is the only means by which we can reach Kulaura town," he says. "I purchased a boat for Tk 15,000, which is more than it cost in previous years; but I think the quality of this one is good. I will use it to ferry passengers around the haor."



Workers busy making a boat at Noagaon village in Rajnagar upazila of Moulvibazar as such country boats serve as the main mode of transport in low-lying haor areas during the rainy season.

PHOTO: STAR