

Raj Punnah begins Dec 21

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Raj Punnah, the biggest colourful traditional festival of the Bohmong Circle, will begin here on December 21. 17th Bohmong Circle Chief Engineer U Chaw Prue announced the programme at a press conference in the town yesterday.

On the opening day, Bohmong Raja will collect taxes from the headmen of 109 mouzas and around 1261 karbaris under the Bohmong circle.

People belonging to Bohmong Circle also bring different kinds of traditional gifts for the king during the festival.

A traditional fair will be held at the historic Rajar Math in the town during the three-day Raj Punnah.

Tourists from home and abroad will gather in Bandarban to celebrate the programme.

Royal family sources said the Bohmong dynasty has been celebrating the Raj Punnah festival in Bandarban since 1875 to collect jhum taxes.

Cancel HSTU admission test

Demand some guardians

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Brining charge of serious anomalies in the admission test of Hajee Danesh Science and Technology University (HSTU), parents of unsuccessful admission seekers have demanded that the university authorities cancel the controversial examinations held between November 5 and 8.

They also urged the authorities to hold fresh examination immediately.

The demand was made at a press conference at Dinajpur Press Club in the town yesterday.

College teacher Md Hasanuzzaman at the conference alleged that the university authorities did not use randomisation system in seat planning, which was a serious violation. Other universities in the country are following the randomisation system.

They also warned of going for tough agitation if the admission test is not cancelled.



Akbar Hossain's fish farm comprising 36 ponds on 20 hectares of land in Chanpainawabganj's Bulonpur.

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

Fish farming revolution in Barind

SHYKH SERAJ

One of country's most arid regions was the Barendra (Barind). Even during the month of November, due to water scarcity, all the farmlands used to remain dry, the tube wells seemed not to be working. People often feared this inhospitable environment of the Barind would turn the locals into climate refugees. You all know how climatic changes have impacted on the nature and features of different regions across Bangladesh. Some places, where rain is rare, have become greener while some areas are losing their crops due to extreme flooding.

At the same time, some other places are enlivened with abundant crops, thanks to added fertility in soil. Perhaps, the nature has changed for the positive in the Barind region and now appears before us with a very new look and promise.

Dear readers, a couple of weeks back I went to the Barind region to film for Hridoye Mati O Manush. I was astonished to see the change and also the prospects the region offers now. The entire region has turned green. Most of the barren lands are now under cultivation. Years back, due to the nature of land and other geographical features, it was tough to produce crops in Chapainawabganj. People suffered from want of drinking water. As there was scarcity of water throughout the year, people never imagined of going for fish farms. Now, you would see a variety of crops

being cultivated there and fish farming is going on in full swing. Here in Chanpainawabganj, a large fish farm started its journey two years back. It involved a huge investment and certainly the most modern fish farm, I would say. On 20 hectares of land, in 36 ponds, the fish farm reminded me of Bagerhat, Satkhira, Trishal, Bhaluka and Fulpur – the most recognized fish farming regions of our country. It's a wonderful water landscape I found in the huge fish farm. As far as your eyes go, you'll see ponds after ponds, adjacent to one another.

It was early dawn when I reached the fish farm in Chanpainawabganj. The sun didn't come out then. The farm-labourers were busy in giving food to the fishes in the ponds. This endeavour has a far-reaching goal and mission. The mission is to invest and bring back the profits while ensuring quality fish for the consumers. This is probably the best example of fish farm extension that I observed during my work span of more than three decades. In the past, farmers used to experiment at small scale initiatives, but now the days have changed. Beside the change in mainstream farming, big entrepreneurs have joined in the commercial fish farming.

I hope you also remember the campaign of Hakim Ali, I produced for Bangladesh Television. I created the character of Hakim Ali as a symbol of an ideal fish farmer. Fish farming ideas was then slowly taking place among the farmers. When I used to ask the farmers

Shykh Seraj is a Media and Agriculture Development Activist. He is an Ashoka Fellow and recipient of Ekushey Padak, FAO A.H. Boerma Award and many other prestigious accolades. At Channel i, he is Director and Head of News. He is also Director and Host of the popular agro-documentary, "Hridoye Mati O Manush".



why they didn't farm fish in their household pond, they used to give me a weird stare, saying, "We've heard that paddy and jute can be cultivated, but how come fish?" It clearly means, a couple of decades back not many farmers had the idea of fish farming. Since then I have been trying hard to create small entrepreneurs through BTV's Mati O Manush. Many entrepreneurs have come up with very unique initiatives and became successful with fish farming in ponds. The 20-hectare land in Chanpainawabganj reminded me of the revolutionary efforts on television. It seems I have been waiting for all these decades to witness the success.

The name of the huge fish farm is Nawab Matsya Khamar, located at Amnura road in Chapainawabganj's

Bulonpur. The entrepreneur is Akbar Hossain. The first thing he said after I entered his farm, "I was really inspired to see your programmes on BTV and Channel i." He also went to different countries to bring in the latest fish farming developments to his farm. To reach the peak of success, he has invested his brain and money together. I could understand the fish farm of Akbar will turn into something colossal in the next few years. Akbar has also planted other vegetables, flowers, diversified crops. Last year, he sold bananas worth Tk 2 lakh. Akbar also has his own feed mill, just beside a pigeon farm.

This huge farm employs 20 permanent labourers and 30 temporary people. Akbar follows almost all the modern technologies fit for fish farming. To ensure sufficient oxygen in the ponds, he's using aerator. In the past, I have seen farmers used bamboos to hit the water of the ponds for this oxygen generation. He's not using any manual feeding system; rather, he's using auto-feeders.

"This is how I'm saving a lot of food and I can ensure the right amount of food for the fishes," says Akbar.

"However, there is crisis of fingerlings," adds Akbar, demanding government assistance in this regard immediately. Looking at the great prospect of Akbar's fish farm and others that I went to, it felt like, it's not a difficult matter for us to export fishes like Vietnam, Myanmar and we can easily

earn the foreign currency. During 1990-95, we used to import fishes from India and Vietnam. Now, we don't need that anymore. We have been successful in meeting the local demand. I can declare through this write up, that fish farmers like Akbar Hossain are very well ready to grab the international market. This was possible due to the government's effort and also innovative farmers like Akbar. That is why Bangladesh now stands in the fourth position in producing freshwater fish. Meanwhile, a business organization has started exporting fish fillet to Europe. That's the start for sure and I hope many more will come up with great ideas so that Bangladesh can stamp its identity across the globe.

Dear readers, with the efforts from fish farmers and entrepreneurs, government assistance, learning from globally acknowledged practices, following the media stories on the latest technologies, support from scientists and researchers, Bangladesh has turned into world's one of the most significant fish producing countries. For this united effort Bangladesh is a role model in fish production to UN's FAO. I personally believe, with great initiatives from Akbar Hossain and alike, there will be even better revolution that we don't know yet. New investors will join in with strong force of effective technology and strategy. Bangladesh will shine brighter in fish revolution in near future- I do believe strongly.



PHOTO: STAR

Physically challenged Alo Akhter at her makeshift shop in Lalmonirhat town, selling cakes and boiled eggs.

Against the odds

Girl with disability struggles to create good life for unborn child

S DILIP ROY with ANDREW EAGLE

An early marriage, a husband who left six months ago and about to give birth: it's not a pretty picture. But Alo Akhter, 19, from Dalpatti slum in Lalmonirhat town is doing her best to manage. From afternoon to night each day she works in a makeshift shop nearby, selling cakes and boiled eggs. It's a struggle not only because of her pregnancy or the inconvenient hours, but because, since she was herself a baby, Alo has suffered a disability in her legs.

"I can earn up to Tk 250 per day at the shop," she says. "I try to save half of that for delivery expenses

and to spend on the baby." The eldest of two sisters, with her twelve-year-old younger sister still at school, Alo is also a recipient of disability pension, and is helped by her widowed mother. She lives at her mother's home.

Alo studied to class seven at a school for children with disabilities in the town. She was married at seventeen. "Because I have a disability I am not allowed at my in-laws' house," she says. "I don't know if my husband will return, either. I will be a mother soon and I have to be ready to take on all responsibilities. But for now the priority is ensuring a safe birth."

"I wish my daughter wasn't

working in the shop during this critical period," says Alo's mother Nur Jahan Begum. "I work as a day labourer, and after I finish I usually try to help her at the shop. She can't move without assistance."

Beyond the family, Alo has some community support. "Her struggle and hard work inspires us," says Dalpatti Bazar local Aminul Islam, 46. "We try to support her by buying her cakes and eggs every day."

"As a girl with a disability, Alo will be given all kinds of facilities from the municipality," says local ward councillor Azizur Rahman Tuhin. "I also hope to help Alo reconcile with her husband."

Five robbers arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Police arrested five robbers from Sarail and Ashuganj upazilas in the last three days for their alleged involvement in killing two people during robberies.

The arrestees, Alamgir, Zakir, Saiful, Abu Taleb and Abdul Haque were sent to jail through a court yesterday.

Police said armed robbers killed Kamal Ahmed and took away 70 pieces of wooden doors on November 13.

On November 18, the gang robbed a fish-laden truck after killing Rafiqul Islam.

NSU STUDENT MURDER

Two to die, eight get life

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A court here yesterday sentenced two people to death and eight others to life term imprisonment in the case for killing North South University (NSU) student Touhidul Islam Lipu three years ago.

Additional District and Sessions Judge ABM Mahmudul Haq delivered the verdict.

The death sentence awardees are Rakibul Islam alias Bappi, 22, and Md Sumon Ali, 35, of Kushtia town. Sumon is absconding.

The convicts with life term – Zuhaime Khondokar Shuvo, Hridoy Hasan, Alif, Sajedul, Nayan, Sajib, Minhaj and Milon are in jail.

Lipu, the only son of Wahedul Islam, assistant general manager of Agrani Bank (now posted in Jessore), and a second-year student of NSU, was abducted when he went home at Kushtia on vacation.

On August 31 in 2014, Lipu was called out of home by his father's cousin Shuvo and Shuvo's friend Bappi, goes the prosecution.

They took Lipu to Pabna's Ishwardi, called Lipu's father and demanded Tk 10 lakh as ransom.

According to the charge sheet, the kidnappers decided to kill Lipu to evade the risk of trial if their identity is disclosed.

On 1 September, they took Lipu to the Padma riverbank, strangled him, slashed his abdomen and dumped the body into the river.

On September 13, Rapid Action Battalion arrested Shuvo and Bappi, and the two confessed to the brutal murder.

The case was handed to Kushtia's Detective Branch of police and the charge sheet was submitted before a magistrate's court on August 1 in 2015.

রোগতত্ত্ব, রোগ নিয়ন্ত্রণ ও গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট (আইইডিসিআর)
স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর
স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়

মোবাইল ফোনের মাধ্যমে মহিলাদের স্বাস্থ্য সম্পর্কিত তথ্য সংগ্রহ

আপনারা অবগত আছেন যে, বাংলাদেশ সরকারের স্বাস্থ্য মন্ত্রণালয়ের রোগতত্ত্ব, রোগ নিয়ন্ত্রণ ও গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট (IEDCR) ২০১২ সাল থেকে মোবাইল ফোনের মাধ্যমে রোগ সম্পর্কিত বিভিন্ন তথ্য সংগ্রহ করেছে। এ সকল তথ্য স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তরের বিভিন্ন জনস্বাস্থ্য উন্নয়নমূলক কার্যক্রমকে সমৃদ্ধ করেছে। দৈনন্দিন জীবনের মাধ্যমে (লটারির মত) সবকিছু মোবাইল ফোন সেবাদাতার নাম্বার সমূহে আইইডিসিআর- এর তথ্য সংগ্রাহকগণ আপনাদের সম্মতি সাপেক্ষে ফোনের মাধ্যমে আপনারা এবং পরিবারের সদস্যগণের স্বাস্থ্য এবং রোগ সংশ্লিষ্ট আচরণগত তথ্যাবলি সংগ্রহ করে থাকে। এ কার্যক্রমে ইতিমধ্যে অংশগ্রহণকারী সকলকে আইইডিসিআর ধন্যবাদ জানাচ্ছে।

IEDCR- এ পর্যায়ে, ১৫-৪৯ বছর বয়সী সকল মহিলাদের কাছ থেকে প্রজনন স্বাস্থ্য সম্পর্কিত বিষয়সমূহ সম্পর্কে তথ্যাদি সংগ্রহ করবে। এই কার্যক্রম চলাকালে আপনি আইইডিসিআর থেকে আপনার মোবাইলে একটি ফোন কল পেতে পারেন। এ বিষয়ে আপনার সার্বিক সহযোগিতা ও আন্তরিকতা একান্ত কাম্য। স্বাস্থ্য সংক্রান্ত আপনার মূল্যবান তথ্য এই রোগ নিরীক্ষা কার্যক্রমের জন্য বিশেষ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। গবেষণায় প্রাপ্ত তথ্য মহিলাদের স্বাস্থ্য উন্নয়নে ব্যবহৃত হবে। আইইডিসিআর- এর ওয়েব সাইটে (www.iedcr.gov.bd) কার্যক্রমের তথ্যাদি ইতিমধ্যে প্রকাশ করা হয়েছে।

GD - 2528