

Gypsies' digital life

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

A group of 70 to 80 gypsies, including women and children, with all their belongings got down from a dilapidated bus at Sutipara village in Sadar upazila on February 19 and erected 25 makeshift houses on an open field beside Nilphamari Saidpur road within couple of hours.

Local people are not surprised to see them as the gypsies, known as the floating Bede community, who change their location frequently.

They come here every year and stay for three to four weeks and practise their ancestral mystic treatment in rural areas.

What surprised them is when they saw that two-third of the shabby tents were lighted with electricity generated from solar panels though they are still deprived of their basic needs, villager Azizul Hakim, 45, and many others said.

"Wave of digitalisation has also touched the under-privileged community people, upgrading their living standard," said Mohammad Waliullah, a teacher of Nagor Darwani High School.

Visiting the site on February 20, this correspondent found that as many as seventeen solar panels were kept in sunlight for recharging.

Wave of digitalisation has touched the under-privileged Bede community, upgrading their living standard.

"We used to light earthen lamps using kerosene earlier but now most of us use solar panels to generate electricity as it is not expensive and easy to carry," said group leader Rabiu Islam, 50, whom the community people address as Sardar.

"Many of us have cell phones as we can recharge it now," the leader said, adding that even one of their fellows Kahirul, 45, has a laptop, which is used to entertain all.

Bede man Paran Sheik, 60, said they earn their livelihood by entertaining people showing snake dances, selling amulets, treating diseases by reciting mystic and esoteric words.

Plain hearted rural people are their main clients, Paran added.

Senura Khatun, 45, a female member of the group, said she and her husband travel to different places for earning.

She said as their daughters Ravina, 12, and Baishakhi, 7, stay at home and do household works like cooking and washing clothes they cannot go to school.

Sadar Upazila Social Welfare Officer Abdul Mannan said Bede community people deserve support from the government but it is not possible because they do not live in any area permanently.



A number of solar panels are kept exposed to the sunlight for recharging in front of the makeshift houses of Bede community people at Sutipara village in Nilphamari Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: EAM ASADUZZAMAN

Soil lifting from agri land protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Farmers of three villages in Ghior upazila yesterday protested the soil extraction from agricultural land and demanded a halt to plying of soil-laden trucks on cropland.

They demanded this at a human chain programme at Manikganj Press Club premises and submitted a memorandum to the deputy commissioner in Manikganj.

The speakers said Awlad Hossain of Bashtia village sold soil of his 150 decimals of land to trader Ifty Arif, also an accused in different criminal cases.

As Awlad's land is about one kilometre from the road, many trucks, engaged in transporting the extracted soil, have been driven through croplands, causing damage to them, they alleged.

Man's cruelty lands wife in hospital

The brutality followed protesting his extramarital affair

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A housewife is fighting for her life at Barisal Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital as her husband set fire to her after pouring petrol early Saturday.

The victim is Rubina Begum, 30, daughter of Afzal Mir of Modhupura village in Dashmina upazila of Patuakhali, and wife of Sohan Dafadar of Khalishkhali village under the same upazila.

"Rubina and her husband Sohan came to our house on Friday. At midnight, they had a heated exchange over Sohan's extramarital affairs. At one stage Sohan set fire to Rubina's body after throwing petrol and fled," said Rubina's father Afzal Mir.

"Early in the morning we took her to Galachipa Upazila Health Complex. As her condition was serious, we brought her to Barisal Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital following suggestion of on-duty doctor Md Al Amin, medical officer of the health complex.

"Sohan is involved in an extramarital affair and he often physically and mentally tortured my daughter as she protested," he said.

Chunnu Hawlader, local union parishad member, confirmed the matter.

"A case was filed here on Saturday in this regard and we are trying our best to arrest the culprit," said Raton Krishna Roy, officer-in-charge of Dashmina Police Station.

Rapist of blind girl gets life

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

A court yesterday sentenced a man to life term rigorous imprisonment for raping a blind girl in Rehiachar-Tikrampur area of the district town on August 3 in 2015.

Judge of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-2, also Additional District and Sessions Judge Ziaur Rahman, pronounced the verdict in presence of the convict -- Kamrul Islam alias Kaima, 43, son of Mohammad Mojahar of Rehiachar-Tikrampur in Chapainawabganj municipality area.

The court also fined him Tk one lakh, in default, to suffer more three years' imprisonment.

According to the prosecution, Kamrul Islam broke the rod of a window and entered the room where the blind girl was sleeping and raped her on August 3 in 2015. As she started screaming, Kamrul hurriedly fled, leaving his lungi, T-shirt and sandals.

The victim's cousin Abdur Razzak filed a case against Kamrul Islam under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act with Sadar Model Police Station and police arrested the accused.

Investigation Officer of the case Sub Inspector Ataur Rahman of Sadar Model Police Station pressed charge against him on December 28 the same year.

After examining the records and witnesses and other relevant documents, the judge found the accused guilty and pronounced the verdict.

3 people murdered

Malaysia expatriate, night guard among the victims, two detained

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Three people were killed in Kushtia, Dinajpur and Bogra yesterday, report our correspondents.

Police recovered the beheaded body of a Malaysia expatriate from a field at Dourgoria village in Kumarkhali upazila of Kushtia yesterday, two days after he went missing.

The deceased was Imran Hossain, 25, son of Tokkel Hossain of the village. He returned home from Malaysia in January this year.

Additional Superintendent of Police Nuraneen Ferdous said Imran went out of home on a motorbike on Friday morning to attend a wedding ceremony at adjacent Balaidanga village. Since then he remained missing.

Informed by locals, police recovered the body from the spot yesterday afternoon. But his motorbike was missing.

Criminals might have killed Imran and taken away his motorbike, said the police official.

Police detained Imran's friend Monjil Ali for interrogation, he said.

Meanwhile, criminals looted around 100 bags of rice from a husking mill after killing a night guard in Birganj upazila of Dinajpur early yesterday.

Victim Nazrul Islam Nazu, 55, of Bhabki village in the upazila, was a night guard of Ma Husking Mill at Chawlia village.

Md Rabiu Islam is the proprietor of the mill, said Akkas Ali, officer-in-charge of Birganj Police Station.

Police detained another night guard of the mill Anwarul Islam, 45, of Bhabki village, for interrogation.

In Bogra, a farmer was hacked to death at Birgram village in Shahjahanpur upazila.

The deceased was Md Farhad Hossain, 25, of the village. He went out of his house on Saturday after receiving a phone call and did not return since then.



China farming gets popular

Char farmers earn good profit at low production cost

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

China farming is growing in popularity among farmers in char areas of the Teesta, Brahmaputra, Dharla and Dudhkumar rivers in Lalmonirhat and Kurigram.

The farmers in chars (land emerged from rivers) earn good profit at low production cost in cultivating the crop.

China's scientific name is panicum milieum with many common names including proso millet. It is a very nutritious grain crop and there is a high demand for it for producing poultry feed, cattle fodder and bakery items.

Sandy loam soil is perfect for farming china. China seed is sown from mid-November to mid-January and reaped before the rainy season.

Between 15 and 17 maunds (one maund equals 40 kg) of china can be produced on one bigha of land at a cost of Tk 4,000 to Tk 5,000. Each

maund is sold at Tk 1,000 to Tk 1,200 at the local markets.

Nabiul Islam, 65, of Teesta river char Nohali in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said he has been farming china for the last 15 years and getting expected price for the last five years.

"We had to use china as rice seven to eight years, but now we do not use it for family purpose as it has high demand in the market," he added.

Salamat Ali, 58, of Dharla river char Khatamari, said they were not much interested in farming the crop some years ago for lack of market facility, but now they are keen for its high demand. He said they now profit from china farming with little production cost.

Azizul Islam, 45, of Brahmaputra river Tadiar char in Chilmari upazila, said china is locally used for preparing sweets like nadu, payes and moa. "Many businessmen offer payment in advance for china," he said, add-

ing that the crop is almost free from diseases.

"We the char people like to take china as a food item as it is nutritious," said Nazrul Islam, 55, of the char. "We irrigate the field twice and use fertilizer two times, but we never use pesticide in a china field," he added.

Trader Mofazzal Hossain, 48, at a Astomir char market in the upazila, said they purchase china from the char farmers and sell it to poultry feed mills and bakeries. "A few years ago, we purchased this item for Tk 350 to Tk 400 a maund, which is now up to Tk 1,200," he added.

District Department of Agriculture Extension Deputy Director Bidhubhushon Roy told this correspondent that china was not a familiar crop to the mainland farmers. The crop has bumper yield in sandy loam soil, but only sandy soil is not enough, so all char farmers are not interested in farming this item, he added.

RIPON'S DEATH IN CUSTODY

'Punish culprits'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Hundreds of people formed a human chain in front of Laxmipur School and College in Sadar upazila yesterday demanding arrest and punishment of the people responsible for the killing of college student Ripon Chandra Das in custody.

On May 29 in 2016, Ripon, son of Babul Chandra Das of Hatia village in Sundarganj upazila, and a student of Laxmipur School and College, fled home with a girl of the same village and the girl's father Suresh Chandra Das filed an abduction case against Ripon and others with Sundarganj Police Station, speakers said at the rally.

On June 1, 2016 Sub-inspector Raju Ahmed, constables Shahanur Alam, Mostafizur Rahman and Nargis Begum picked up Ripon in a microbus and started for Sundarganj. On the way at Palashbari, Suresh Chandra Das and IUP member Momtazuddin along with cops beat up Ripon, causing his death but police tried to pass off the matter as accident, they said.

Babul Chandra Das filed a murder case with a court, accusing six people including Suresh, Momtazuddin and four cops.

Cycling against drugs, road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

With an aim to create awareness among people, a five-day bicycle tour titled 'Swadhinata Cycle Bhraman' began in Panchagarh town yesterday with the slogan 'Sarak Durghatana Rodh Kori, Madak Mukta Samaj Gori.'

Nejrat Deputy Collector (NDC) Suman Jihadi inaugurated the event as the chief guest, followed by a discussion at Panchagarh Technical and Business Management College premises.

Panchagarh Cycling Riders (PCR) organised the event with the financial assistance of Tentulia Upazila Chairman Rezaul Karim Shaheen.

An eleven-member bicyclist team of PCR is taking part in the programme to raise awareness among people about prevention of road accident and freeing the society from abuse of drugs.

During the five-day tour, the bicyclist team will go to different educational institutions and the crowded places in five upazilas and distribute leaflets inscribing many points to encourage people to build a society free from drug abuse and check road accidents.

Most of the road accidents occur due to lack of awareness among the drivers and victims, speakers said, adding that road accidents are increasing alarmingly in recent times.

Abuse of drug is destroying many families silently and its bad impact is also reflected in the society, they said during the discussion.

The speakers also urged the government to take steps in this regard to save the young generation from the curse of drug abuse for building a healthy nation.



A five-day-long tour 'Swadhinata Cycle Bhraman' began from Technical and Business Management College premises in Panchagarh town yesterday with a slogan 'Sarak Durghatana Rodh Kori, Madak Mukta Samaj Gori.'

PHOTO: STAR