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Light after ages in darkness

Remote village in Ctg gets attention following a tragedy; life transformed in a year

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

It was by way of a tragedy that an impoverished village came to the attention of the upazila administration and the life of the villagers took a turn for the better.

The remote Monai Tripura Para in the hills of Forhadabad union in Chattogram's Hathazari upazila had no roads, schools, healthcare facilities or access to electricity. Their woes and plight knew no bound.

Children used to collect wood from the forest and help out the elders in paddy farming on the hills. The word "education" was alien to them and they had never seen the inside of a classroom.

When the sun set on the horizon, the villagers would huddle around a woodfire.

Last year, four children of the village died and 20 more were hospitalised due to an undiagnosed illness.

Immediately after this tragedy, the local administration took measures to improve sanitation and introduce solar electricity in the area. Former environment minister Anisul Islam Mahmud, now a lawmaker in Hathazari, helped secure the necessary budget for the project.

The entire project cost was Tk 9.60 lakh, according to Ruhul Amin, the upazila nirbarhi officer of Hathazari.

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Gleeful children after receiving gifts from Santa Claus on Christmas day yesterday at a hotel in the capital. The biggest festival of the Christians was celebrated across the world.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



On this day in 1971

DECEMBER 26 Sheikh Mujib taken to Rawalpindi as Bhutto is trying to construct a confederation between Bangladesh and Pakistan, reports Hindustan Standard from its London bureau. Bhutto also invites US and Chinese representatives for the meeting. 22 other countries are ready to recognise Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign state.

Shamsuddin Mollah, secretary of Faridpur Awami League, in a statement, demands justice against the Razakars and their atrocities. He demands of a special tribunal for it. It was

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Intruders from India will be sent back after verification

Says foreign minister

UNB, Sylhet

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said those who had entered Bangladesh from India in recent weeks would be sent back if they were not Bangladeshis.

"If any Bangladeshi is found to be living in India illegally, they'll be taken back through legal process and after scrutiny. India was also informed of this," he was speaking at a city bus service launching ceremony in Sylhet.

The Nagar Express bus service was introduced to resolve the public transport crisis in the divisional headquarters.

The minister added that the Indian government said they would not push in anyone.

Momen thanked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for approving a Tk 1,228-crore

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BOGURA YOUTH CHOIR

Battling hard to regain its former glory

MOSTAFA SHABUI, Bogura

Those growing up watching Bangladesh Television between the 70s and 90s will fondly remember one programme for daring to be different.

The song and dance troupe performed folk and mass songs in local dialect, coupled with choreography and satire. Known as the Bogura Youth Choir (BYC), their primary objective was to enrich local culture as well as create social awareness on weighty issues such as the Liberation War, freedom, poverty, and gender equality, among others.

Appearing on BTV once every three months, the BYC was so popular that people in the northern districts closed their shops well in advance to watch the hour-long programme.

It was also hugely popular among audiences in the capital at a time when BTV was the only television station in the country. The choir's burgeoning popularity meant that BTV started including it in special programmes on various national days and festivals such as Eid, Victory Day,

and Independence Day.

BYC's last BTV programme was in 2011. Today, it is barely in the limelight with limited patrons, funding, and artists. The now-diminished choir's 44th anniversary went almost unnoticed on October 4 at its once famous Nawab Bari road home in Bogura town, where it had its humble origins.



"I was disappointed when BTV and other TV channels stopped running this programme," Dr Enamul Haque, an eminent musicologist, told The Daily Star recently.

An Ekushey Padak winner in 2014 and Independence Day Award winner in 2017, Dr Enamul, who presented many BYC programmes on BTV, said: "The Bogura Youth Choir was a unique show on BTV and enlightened people through entertainment. I would say the group played an important role in our society in the past. It is still relevant today, and will continue to be for future generations."

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ANTI-CAA PROTESTS

Modi slams destruction of property

NDTV ONLINE

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday condemned the destruction of public property during violent agitations against the Citizenship Amendment Act over the last few weeks, asking protesters to introspect if their actions have been "good or not".

"I want to ask people who resorted to violence in Uttar Pradesh to sit at home and ask themselves whether what they did is good or not. They destroyed buses and public property that belongs to the future generation," he said at the foundation stone-laying ceremony of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Medical University in Lucknow.

The PM asked the protesters to keep in mind that everybody in the country is entitled to a

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New species of monkey found in the Amazon



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists researching a group of fluffy grey monkeys in the Amazon rainforest have determined the animals belong to a new species.

The primates, named *Plecturocebus parecis*, were first discovered by biologists more than 100 years ago but have only recently been recognised as a distinct group.

The species lives on the Parecis plateau in Rondonia, Brazil, and has survived deforestation because the plateau's steep sides make it difficult to access.

Biologists originally thought the monkeys were

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DEADLY GAZA ATTACK

Israeli army admits error

AFP, Jerusalem

The Israeli army said Tuesday that a strike in Gaza that killed nine members of the same family had been due to a faulty assessment of the risk to civilians.

The November 14 air strike targeted the home of Rasmi Abu Malhou, described by Israel as a commander in Islamic Jihad, the militant Palestinian movement against which Israel had launched a three-day campaign.

He and eight members of his family were killed by the attack, including five children.

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PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 26

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-25 12-45 3-45 5-24 7-00
JAMAAT 6-00 1-15 4-00 5-27 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

'Addict' son kills elderly parents

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

An elderly couple was hacked to death by their addict son for refusing to pay him money to buy drugs in Chaugachha upazila of Jashore yesterday, said locals.

The victims are Mahiruddin, 60, and his wife Ayna Begum, 50.

Rifat Khan, officer-in-charge of Chaugachha Police Station, said locals detained accused Milon, 28, and handed him over to police.

Milon was taken into police custody and shown arrested after a case was filed in connection with the murder, the OC added.

Local union parishad member Babul Hossain said Milon had an altercation with his parents over money for purchasing drugs.

At one point, he started hacking his parents with a machete. Hearing the parents scream, locals rushed to the spot but Milon managed to flee the scene by then, he added.

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This lorry veered off the road and crashed into the fountain basin at the Customs intersection in Chattogram city yesterday morning. The vehicle was going too fast around the roundabout, witnesses said.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

BURKINA FASO ATTACKS

Jihadists kill 35 civilians

Seven soldiers, 80 militants also killed in several hours-long fight

AFP, Ouagadougou

Jihadists in Burkina Faso killed 35 civilians, almost all of them women, when they simultaneously attacked a town in the north and its military base in one of the deadliest assaults in nearly five years of jihadist violence in the West African country.

Seven soldiers and 80 jihadists also died in the double attack Tuesday in Arbinda in Soum province which lasted "several hours" and was of a "rare intensity", the army said.

Burkina Faso, bordering Mali and Niger, has seen regular jihadist attacks which have left hundreds dead since the start of 2015 when militant violence began to spread across the Sahel region.

"A large group of terrorists simultaneously attacked the military base and the civilian population in Arbinda," the army chief of staff said in a statement.

"This barbaric attack resulted in the deaths of 35 civilian victims, most of them women," President Roch Marc Christian Kabore added on Twitter, praising the "bravery and commitment" of the defence and security forces.

Communications minister and government spokesman Remis Dandjinou later said 31 of the civilian victims were women, adding around 20 soldiers and six civilians were wounded.

The president has declared 48 hours of national mourning. The morning raid was carried out by dozens of jihadists on motorbikes and lasted several hours before armed

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