

Koch people demand constitutional recognition

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The people of the Koch community staged a rally at Sagardighi in Tangail's Ghatail yesterday to press home their 12-point demand, which includes their constitutional recognition.

Their other demands include a stop to eviction from their lands, formation of separate ministry and land commission for the indigenous people, formulation of laws to safeguard their rights, allocation of separate seats for them in parliament, and separate community clinic in areas where indigenous people live.

The programme was organised on Sagardighi Girls' High School premises.

Lawmaker Fakhrul Imam attended the rally as chief guest, with Romesh Chandra Koch, president of Bangladesh Koch Adivasi Songathan, in the chair.

Prof Mezbah Kamal, of DU's history department was present as the main speaker, while Rana Das Gupta, general secretary of Hindu, Buddhist, Christian Oikya Parishad, spoke as special guest.

Woman killed in Ctg road accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman was killed in a head-on collision between two auto-rickshaws in Chattogram's Hathazari upazila yesterday.

The identity of the deceased, aged around 65, could not be known immediately.

Quoting locals, Panchlaish Police Station Inspector (investigation) Sadekur Rahman said the accident occurred around 12:00pm.

Later, locals took the woman to Chattogram Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared her dead.

Police sent the body to the morgue for autopsy.

An unnatural death case was also filed, said the inspector.

PRAYER TIMING

APRIL 16

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-18	12-45	4-45	6-24	7-45
JAMAAT 4-28	1-15	5-00	6-34	8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	APRIL	SEHRI	IFTAR
14	16		6:24
15	17	4:12	6:24
16	18	4:11	6:25



Under the scorching summer heat, these coal miners were seen busy at work. Each of them earns Tk 400-800 for a day's hard work in a hazardous and contaminated environment. This is what it takes for them to earn a livelihood and run a family. This photo was taken recently in the port city's Majhir Ghat area.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Tragic demise of earthenware

Potters in Moulvibazar suffer from lack of resources, funds



MINTU DESHWARA

Nandiura, a village in Moulvibazar's Rajnagar upazila, was once famous for almost all its inhabitants being engaged in pottery. But tragically, at present the number has dropped to only three families. Their profession is dying out as they struggle to survive, owing to a lack of funds. Although business peaks during the festivals, it is not enough to sustain their craft.

Akmal Hosain Nipu, writer and resident of Moulvibazar, said there was a great demand for pottery in Sylhet region, even in the past decades. Different religious and cultural festivals required the purchase of clay pots and plates. Potters also garnered seasonal business centring different fairs, including Baruni Mela, Baishakhi Mela and Charak Mela.

In the month of Chaitra, potters spin their wheels and turned lumps of clay into a variety of utensils and show-pieces like earthen elephants, horses, various species of birds, coin banks, fruits and many other toys.

Madhab Paul, a resident of the village, said, "We used to get purchase orders in advance once

before any festivity or fairs. Colourful earthen items were delivered across the country. However, things have changed now. Aluminium and plastic products have replaced earthenware."

Veteran potter Harendra Paul said, "Now there is a problem of getting soil and wood, and we don't get business like before. For these reasons, many can't continue this profession. I don't know how long we can."

Others in the profession, including Harendra, said that to make these earthen crafts, potters have to acquire clay, which is a strenuous process in itself. The collection process goes on through the dry season.

First, the location is identified, and then soil is collected by cleaving 8 to 10-foot deep holes below the ground by hand. Earlier, potters didn't have to pay land owners, but now, land owners are hesitant to let them dig holes, even if they're offered Tk 20,000 to 25,000. Besides that, purchasing just an ounce of firewood costs Tk 150 now.

Potter Upendra Pal said, "Before, everything was free. Now the soil, the wood — everything costs money."

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Nana Halim, a 30-yr-old Khulna delicacy

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Around 3:00pm, South Central Road of Khulna city remains almost empty due to the scorching heat. However, an opposite scenario can be noticed on the footpath in front of Government Pioneer Women's College. With a canopy overhead, vendors have set up iftar stalls. Of these stalls, "Nana Special Halim" continues to gather a large crowd.

For the people of the city, Nana Halim is the go-to destination for iftar delicacy. What's more, it's only sold during Ramadan, making it all the more precious.

The owner — Hazrat Ali (78) — has been selling halim every Ramadan since 1993. Since everyone fondly calls him Nana, the halim achieved popularity under the brand of "Nana Halim".

Visiting the spot recently, this correspondent saw some customers had brought their own containers from home. But at the shop, the halim's served in earthen pots. Seven employees of the shop were filling the bowls and handing them over to the customers. Hazrat Ali kept the accounts and monitored the rush.

Farid Uddin, one of the helping hands of Hazrat Ali, said, "I've been Nana's helper for six years. Nana starts cooking the halim at 7:00am. By 1:30pm, he is finished, and sales begin at 2:00pm."

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“ We used to get purchase orders in advance once before any festivity or fairs... However, things have changed now. Aluminium and plastic products have replaced earthenware. MADHAB PAUL Resident



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"Lathi Khela" is a traditional martial-art form prominently practised in the subcontinent, particularly in rural areas. On Pahela Baishakh, when everything resonating with the essence of the land's culture is brought to the fore, Khulna University arranged a performative form of Lathi Khela at Hadi Chattar.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN