

A story of ability and determination

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

"I don't think I am a disabled person. I think those who call me disabled are the ones with disability," said Harun-ur-Rashid.

Hailing from Shitakundo, Chittagong, Rashid suffered from polio during his early childhood and partially lost his mobility. "I never realised that one day I would become what I am today. A little help and patience can take someone long way forward," he said.

Today at the age of 24, Harun is a successful dairy farmer with special training in poultry farming. Father of a bright young boy, his physical impairment did not impair his strong spirit.

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"I want to be someone -- just like you when I grow up," she said.

Nasima Akter from Kamarkanda, Sirajganj, another spirited young woman in her twenties, helps her brother in their family handloom despite having visual impairment.

"One day I want to buy handlooms and start a factory of my own," said Nasima.

Centre for Disability in Development (CDD) is organising a 12-day photography exhibition at Shilpangon gallery showcasing the incredible abilities of persons with disability.

The show features 50 photographs of 14 persons with

disabilities from all around the country highlighting their achievements.

The exhibition also marks the 127th birth anniversary of Helen Adams Keller, the renowned deaf-blind American author and disability activist.

The photographs display lively interaction of the 14 persons with their surroundings. It depicts that people with disabilities can also attain extraordinary goals when given proper care, assistance and opportunity.

The persons featured in the exhibition, including Harun, Akhi, Nasima and their family members, were present during the opening ceremony on 27 June. They were given special

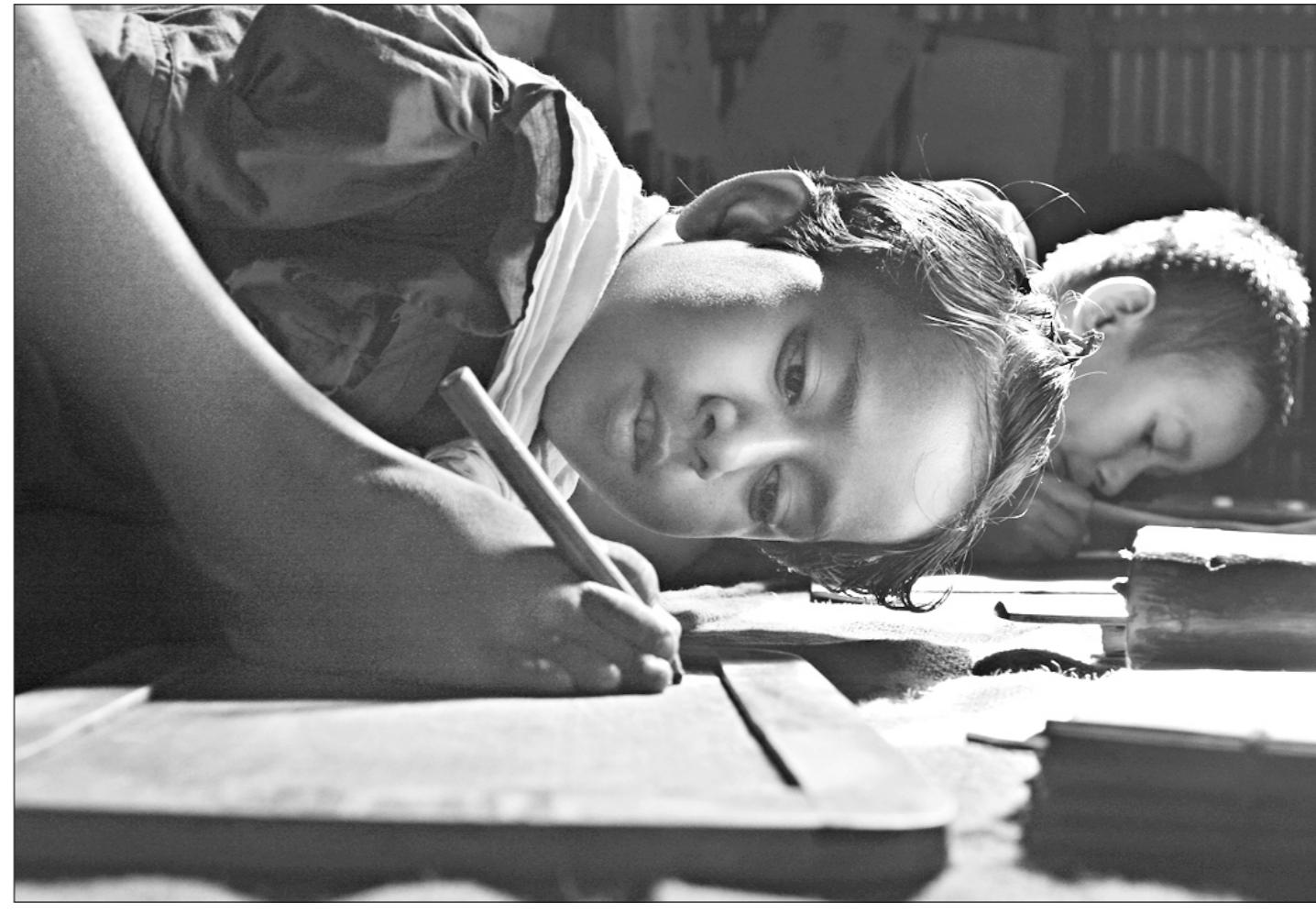
awards for their achievements.

Shumon Ahmed, a student at South Asian Institute of Photography Pathshala in Dhaka, has voluntarily contributed the photographs to CDD.

"People with disabilities are considered burdens in our society, even by their families. I wanted to portray a positive image of these people," said Ahmed.

"Their incorporation in this society will be easier if a positive image can be depicted to the society that they can also achieve," Ahmed added.

The exhibition is open to public from 12:00 noon to 8:00pm Sunday thru Friday and will conclude on July 7.



Akhi Moni, a physically challenged child is writing with her feet.

PHOTO COURTESY: SUMON AHMED, CENTRE FOR DISABILITY IN DEVELOPMENT.



STAR PHOTO
Authorities are constructing a permanent structure to make a kitchen market in front of the historical Eidgah on Satmasjid Road. The Public Works Department has earmarked the spot for a public park. The Department of Architecture has also finalised a design of the park. BDR has been running a fair price shop

Short circuit

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Although Desa claimed to have collected around Tk 250 crore of arrears in addition to its regular electricity bills during the first quarter of this year, Desa officials themselves admitted that their target to collect another Tk 650 crore by the year-end would be a daunting task.

According to sources in Desa, the undesirably high systems loss is due to the severe malpractices within PDB and Desa.

The efficiency of the system largely depends on the individuals who are integral parts of that system.

The sources said around Tk 2,000 crore was plundered in the past few years through widespread corruption, malpractices and illegal use of electricity.

The Desa officials claimed that systems loss occurs due to the operational or technical failures but in reality pilferage of electricity is the main reason.

"Like any other physical systems, electricity generation and distribution systems are not flawless and there must be system loss," said a Desa high official.

"In western countries the rate of the system loss is not more than 1 percent. But in our country, although almost similar technology has been adopted for electricity generation and transmission, the system loss is around 25 percent. The reason behind this is not just technical flaws in the system," he added.

Rajuk Chairman Haroon said: "I am not aware that Rajuk has received the penalty money from BGMEA. In fact the BC committee deals with it."

A Rajuk official said at an inter-ministerial meeting, presided over by LGRD Adviser Anwarul Iqbal on

Rajuk, BGMEA both guilty

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The preconditions included demolition of the portions of the building built in deviation from the proposed plan, paying plan approval fees at penalty rate (ten times more than regular) and construction of a bridge in between the building and Panthapath.

Rajuk, following a board meeting decision, issued a notice on the BGMEA on July 30, 2006 directing it to pay penalty and demolish some portions of the building for constructing it before obtaining approval of the proposed construction plan.

The Building Construction Committee (BC committee-4) of Rajuk slapped a penalty of Tk 12.5 lakh on BGMEA. BGMEA finally deposited Tk 12.5 lakh to Rajuk on May 12 this year and initiated construction of the bridge.

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R&HD to seek

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"The area is clearly a public land under the ministry of land, I cannot understand how these people could get Rajuk permission to build such a project on a public land," the project official said.

"If this planned high-rise building is constructed on the designated approach road it would be time consuming to demolish it, now is the time for the government to take over the area," said Nurunnabi, a resident of Katalash.

The R&HD officials are hopeful of a positive response from the KFAED. They said anyone would understand how vital it is for the bridge to have a wide approach road for smooth flow of traffic.

If the approach road is not built, a permanent traffic jam would grip the Mohammadpur area and many people would avoid using the bridge," said an R&HD engineer.

The Tk 49 crore third Buriganga bridge project is scheduled to be completed by 2010. Project engineers said that up to 30 percent of the work has been completed well ahead of schedule. But the work is currently passing through a hurdle due to complications arising from further land acquisition.

Once completed the bridge would connect a vast area in Keraniganj linking Mawa in the south and Savar road in the north. With the start of the construction work, prices of land in Keraniganj have rocketed. It is expected that a huge volume of traffic, including heavy goods vehicle, will use the vital link between Dhaka and the southern and northern parts of the country.

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Leaves Dhaka at 3-15 pm
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