

# A tale of two schools

*Classes being held on open fields*

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Academic activities of two decades-old primary schools in Pabna and Kurigram districts are badly disturbed as classes are held on the open fields.

Students of Binnabari Government Primary School at Binnabari village of Chatmohar upazila under the district have to attend classes under the open sky due to lack of a permanent accommodation for over 10 years, reports our Pabna correspondent.

"After the Gumani River devoured the entire school area in 2002 it was shifted to a tin-shed room erected in a field of the village. The room is too shabby for use as a classroom and there are only 10 to 12 pairs of benches. And so, we have to hold classes on the ground under a tree for the last few years," said Rawshan Ara Khatun, headmaster of the school.

"Our classes are often disturbed as the villagers work in the field around us when the classes continue," said Mehedi Hassan, a student of Class V.

Contacted, Md Motiul Islam, Chatmohar upazila primary education officer said, "Local elite Md Kamruzzaman Khokon recently donated 10 decimals of lands for the school and we have already submitted a proposal to the ministry concerned for construction of a school building there."

Binnabari Government Primary School was established in 1933 and currently 157 students are reading at the school, the lone one at Binnabari village.

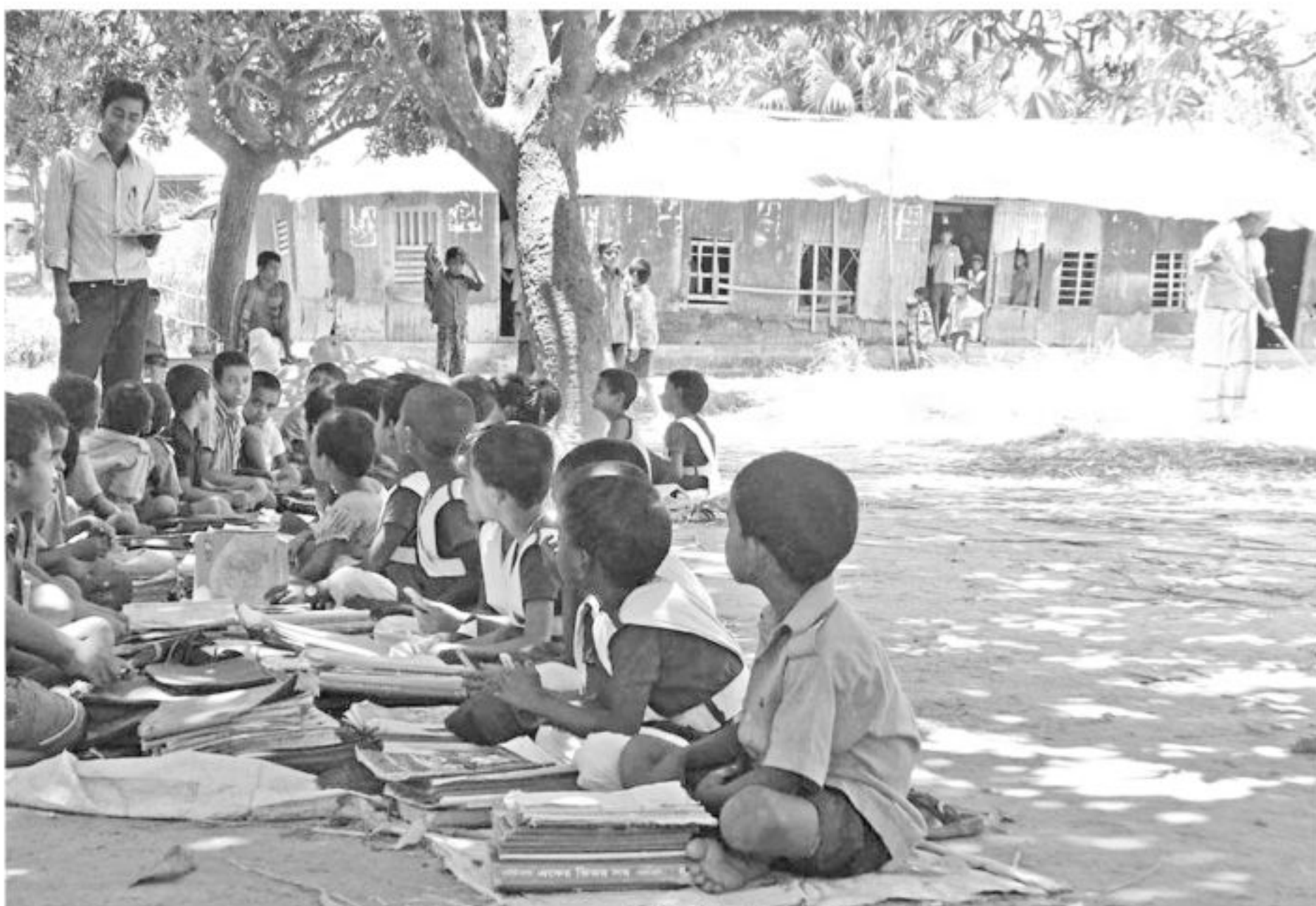
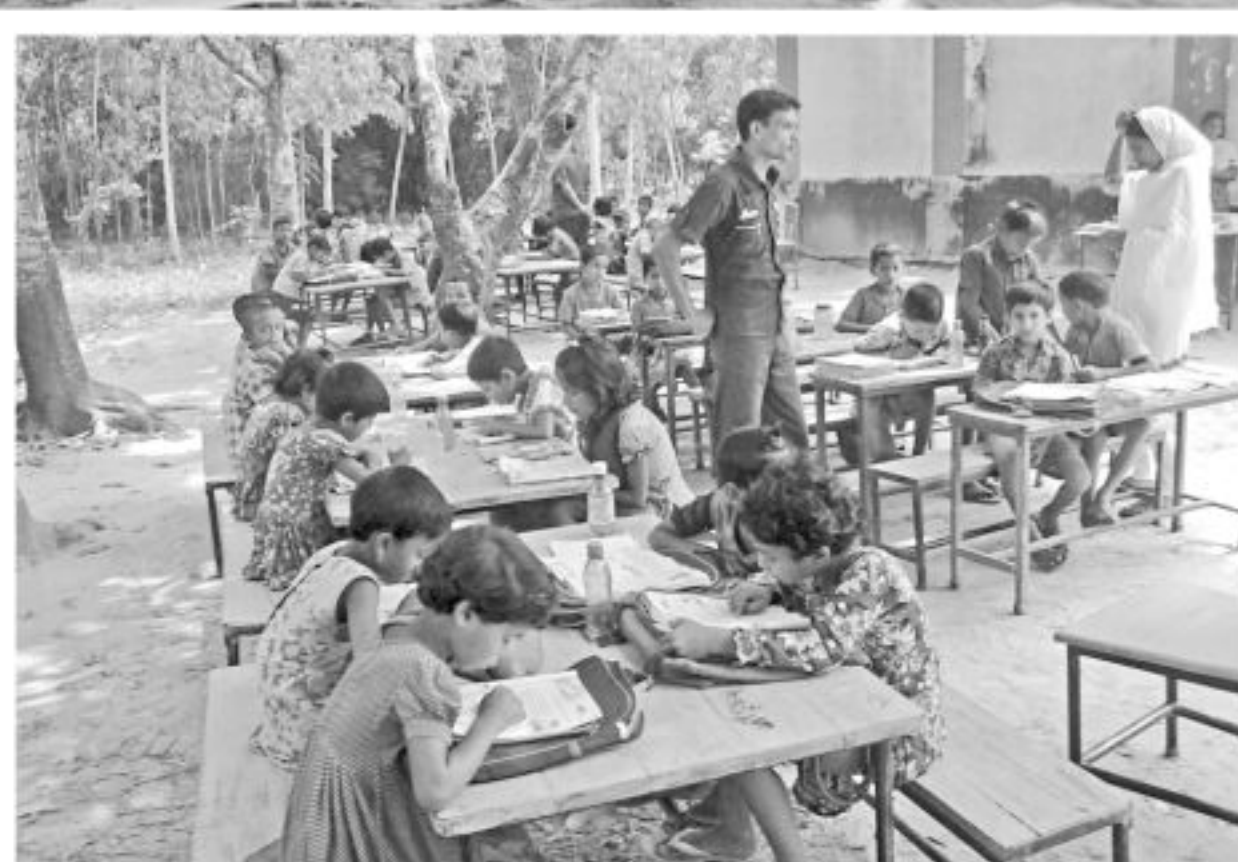


PHOTO: STAR

**Students of Binnabari Government Primary School in Chatmohar upazila under Pabna district, above, and Gatiasham Government Primary School in Rajarhat upazila under Kurigram district attend classes under the open sky due to lack of usable classrooms.**

Our Kurigram Correspondent reports: Students of four classes of Gatiasham Government Primary School in Rajarhat upazila under the district take lessons on the school ground as its badly damaged four-room academic building was declared unfit for use on May 9.

Another recently constructed two-room building of the school is being used for office work and conducting a class.



School headmaster (acting) Mizanur Rahman said, "Classes and examinations are being conducted in the school ground as the district primary education office declaring the four-room academic building abandoned."

"As we take lessons in the open field, our classes are closed when black clouds appear in the sky," said Sharmeen Aktar, a student of Class V.

Swapon Kumar Roy,

assistant district primary education officer, said, "As per instructions from the government authorities, 49 buildings of different primary schools in the district including Gatiasham Government Primary School were declared unfit for use in last month. We have suggested the managing committees concerned to make alternative arrangement for classes."

The school was established in 1918.

## Robbers attack policemen

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

An assistant sub inspector (ASI) of Parbatipur Police Station was injured in an attack by robbers in the upazila early yesterday.

Police said a gang of robbers put up a barricade on Parbatipur-Bodarganj Road by felling roadside trees at Basupara point to commit robbery.

Hearing the news, ASI Md Abdul Aziz and constable Md Mofazzal went to the spot, riding a motorbike at around 1:30am.

The gang swooped on the cops and hit Aziz in the head with a rod.

As constable Mofazzal opened fire, the robbers fled the scene.

Locals took injured policeman to Parbatipur Upazila Health complex.

## Jubo Dal, Jubo League men clash in Comilla

A CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

A Jubo Dal man sustained stab injuries during a clash between the activists of Jubo League and Jubo Dal at Comilla Victoria Government College intersection in the city yesterday afternoon.

The injured, Rashed Ahmed, 19 was admitted to Comilla Medical College Hospital.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Mohiuddin Mahmood of Comilla Sadar Police Station said the clash was a sequel to an attack on a Jubo Dal man allegedly by Jubo League activists on the campus in the morning.

# Mindless sand lifting threatens bridge

*Cracks, ditches have developed on the adjacent canal bank, crop fields*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Indiscriminate sand lifting poses threat to Ashadaha Bridge over a canal in Salamara union of Gobindaganj upazila under the district.

An influential person of Ulipur Panchpara village in Salamara union has continued sand lifting with a power pump from the canal for the last seven months, locals said.

Consequently, cracks and

ditches have developed on the adjacent canal bank and crop fields, said Faridul Islam, a villager.

The illegal sand lifter, who supplies sand to different construction sites, has ignored repeated requests from locals to stop the callous act, locals said, adding that if the bridge collapses, communication of total union with the upazila headquarters will be snapped.

Local people appealed to the authorities concerned to

take steps to stop illegal sand lifting from near the bridge, but no initiative has been taken yet.

"We urged the UNO for taking action against the culprits involved in sand lifting," said Shameen Ahmed, chairman of Salamara union parishad.

"The upazila administration is informed of the matter and strict action will be taken against the culprits," said Ashrafuzzaman, UNO of Gobindaganj upazila.



PHOTO: STAR

This bridge over a canal in Salamara union of Gobindaganj upazila under Gaibandha district remains highly vulnerable as an unscrupulous trader in the area has continued illegal sand lifting with a power pump from just beside the structure for months.

# Madaripur sex workers fear eviction

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur

Around 500 sex workers (prostitutes) in Puranbazar area of Madaripur town have been spending days and nights in fear of being evicted and tortured as Islahe Qoum (religious organisation) has announced a plan to drive them off.

Many sex workers have started fleeing their homes and hubs – some of which they own and rent out to business – after Islahe Qoum president Alhaj Maulana Sharif Mujibul Haque announced their plan yesterday afternoon at a meeting held on the premises of the Puran Bazar Baro Masjid (mosque).

The sex workers said they had been apprehending attacks and forcible evictions from the red light area

and as such, in the meantime, they have also obtained a court order to the effect that no one will force them from their homes and sex business, said Mamata Rani Karmaker, a leader of the Madaripur sex workers.

She said a sex workers' organization, "Bandhabi Nari Sangha", has sent applications to the higher authorities including a minister, Madaripur district commissioner and police superintendent as well as the media requesting protection from likely attacks, arson, looting and vandalising of the red light blocks in Puranbazar.

"We have asked for protection of our lives and human rights," said Mamata, also the president of Bandhabi Nari Sangha.

She and others said a

vested group has been trying to grab the valuable land in the red light district by evicting the rightful owners – the sex workers.

Refuting the allegation, Moulana Sharif Mujibul Haque said they do not intend to evict the sex workers but want to relocate them legally and peacefully.

"For this, we have set up a committee with the additional district commissioner as its convener to discuss with the sex workers for their rehabilitation," said Haque, president of Madaripur Islahe Qoum Parishad and the peer of Shamadar Dargah Sharif.

Madaripur Police Superintendent Khandaker Faridul Islam said police will be deployed to prevent any attempt to evict the sex workers from Puranbazar area.

# Use of religion

FROM PAGE 1  
men have been urging people to vote for Mannan to "protect Islam".

At public gatherings, Hefajat leaders claim that the government killed hundreds of Muslims at their May 5 rally in the capital's Shapla Chattar, and call on people to give a reply against the "genocide" through ballots.

"They [the government] killed hundreds of Muslims who were sleeping and offering prayers at Shapla Chattar," said Nasiruddin, joint general secretary of Gazipur district Hefajat-e-Islam, while addressing a rally yesterday near Pagar Fakir Market in Tongi industrial area.

He claimed five Alems of Gazipur had been killed on the day and so if people of Gazipur made any wrong decision on the election day, they would betray those "martyrs".

"On the instructions of our Ameer Allama Shah Ahmad Shafi, we have to help MA Mannan win the election in revenge for the blood of our martyred brothers," said Nasiruddin.

He said mayoral candidate Ajmat Ullah Khan supported by the AL-led grand alliance was confusing

people by introducing some religious persons accompanying him as Hefajat men.

"But I categorically say no Hefajat man is with Ajmat. Those religious men are brokers of the Awami League."

Echoing Nasiruddin, BNP chairperson's adviser Ahmed Azam Khan said the government in the last four and a half years had been torturing Alem-Olama and patronizing atheists.

"If you want to protect Islam and democracy, you will have to vote for the 18-party alliance-backed candidate."

At the rally, where MA Mannan along with other BNP leaders was present, some people chanted "Hefajat-e-Islam Zindabad" and "Naraya-e-Takbir, Allah hu Akbar".

Earlier on Wednesday, Fazlur Rahman, general secretary of Hefazat-e-Islam, Gazipur district, at a rally said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had lost faith in Allah.

Her government carried out bloodshed by attacking Muslims on May 5 at Shapla Chattar and that was why her party-led candidates faced defeat in the four city corporation polls, Fazlur said.

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