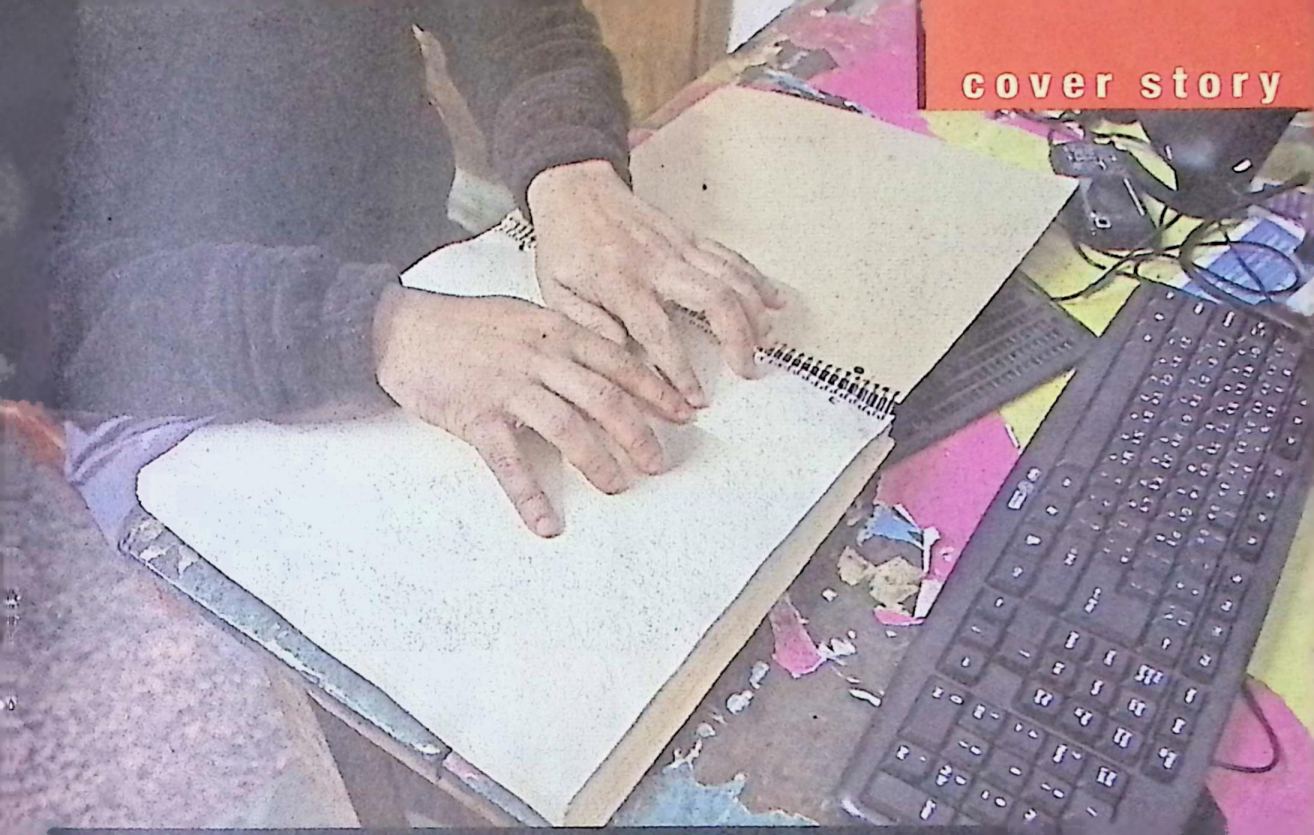


PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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Get Rid of the Blin

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With around 30,000 students and some of the best teachers in the country, Dhaka University is the largest and richest centre of higher education in Bangladesh. Beating hundreds and thousands of able competitors in the admission test, a handful of meritorious students get the entrance to the country's highest seat of learning. At the university a completely different environment full of new challenges awaits for some.

Mostly allotted in the Mohsin Hall and Surya Sen Hall, these few extraordinary students, the unbeaten soldiers of destiny, are passing their days in studies, cherishing the dreams for a future which is not very certain for them in this country.

They are the blind students of Dhaka University. With no light in their eyes, their life is not as normal as others. Each new day brings a challenge, a new struggle.

Life for the blind students of Dhaka University is an odyssey of overcoming one hurdle after another. Being a visually impaired student, continuing studies is not an easy task. Though some efforts have been made by some NGOs and personalities like Dr Diba Hossain, they are turning out to be enough to change the stigma associated with the blind students of the country.

There are only a few special schools for the visually impaired learners in a handful of districts. For most of the families in Bangladesh, these government-run schools are the only place to take their blind children. But with few resources, textbooks and almost no trained teachers, these schools can't afford to teach blind students after the primary level. Md Shamim, a student of Education and Research, while sharing his experience says, "We practiced only some Braille lessons in these schools. If some NGOs had not supported us with learning aids, these few surviving schools would have shut down long ago."

For those who have no school in their district, getting access to education is even harder. Meet Mahbub, a visually impaired student of Islamic studies department. He is from the remote haor area of Kishoreganj, where even regular school is a rare phenomenon; special school for the blind is a