



JOY OF LEARNING: Children immersed in reading their favourite items at Ahmed Ali Memorial Library in Pirojpur town.

# Pvt library stirs children's reading passion

HABIBUR RAHMAN WITH ANDREW EAGLE

Eight-year-old Abdullah Al Shabit is so deeply engrossed in the text before him that he's barely heard the question. "I'm reading Neel Hati," he says, eventually looking up. "The Blue Elephant" is a children's book by renowned author Humayun Ahmed.

As with many youths in Uttar-Porbo Masimpur village of Pirojpur municipality, Shabit's enthusiasm for reading stems in large measure from the establishment of the Ahmed Ali Memorial Library just 1.5 kilometres from the centre of Pirojpur town.

Novels, poems, non-fiction and magazines: every day from 4:00 pm children begin to arrive to search the shelves for something of interest. They can read at the library until 8:00 pm.

"I visit the library every afternoon to read stories," says ten-year-old Zaed. When asked why he does so,

he says it's simply for pleasure. "I like to read humorous stories," says class two student Shumiya, nearby.

The library is managed by M Shahidullah, 26, currently a master's degree student at a nearby college. "The library first opened in 2013," he explains, "with the help of local Ahmed Bin Reaz who nowadays resides in Portugal. The library is named after his late father."

With around 20 regular and 150 irregular readers of different ages, but for the most part between ages eight and twenty, the library of 200 books situated in a rented house isn't large. But the initiative of bringing access to the written word within easy reach of the public and especially local children is admirable. Developing healthy reading habits will surely help any child throughout the entirety of their lives.

Apart from the library's appreciative junior readers, many parents are also grateful. "The attitude of the guardians is very positive," says

Shahidullah. "They send their children regularly." The library stocks adult books too, and daily newspapers in Bangla and English to cater to the interests of parents.

Yet for any parent, a library's greatest attraction is always likely to be the witnessing of their son or daughter's growing enthusiasm for reading books.

"My son studies in class two," says one guardian, Ishak Ali Khan. "He is very attentive at reading books at home now too, thanks to the love for reading he found at this library."

"I'm really pleased to see my son enjoying the library," says another parent Abul Kalam Azad. "The library helps to build his character. Upon returning home of an evening he usually retells whatever story he read and we all enjoy that."

To further encourage its junior readers the library organises programmes on different occasions including drawing competitions and cultural events.

It has also enlisted the cooperation of local college students to work as volunteers to run a coaching centre which provides free tuition to children from struggling households. Library president, government school teacher Md Saiful Islam, meanwhile, donates his time to provide English classes at the coaching centre.

"Our plan is to include computer-based learning and internet in the library," explains Shahidullah. "But we also need more books and an instant power supply would help to keep things running when the electricity goes."

His hope is to find donations and new library patrons in Pirojpur in order to achieve these goals. In anticipation, two large, new shelves sit ready to house more books.

In the meantime, each afternoon the children return to find an old favourite or to discover something new: either way, they are soon enough absorbed, once again, in reading books.

# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN DINAJPUR

## 37 women murdered, 103 women and children raped, 47 attacked with acid

### Women leaders give 2015 statistics till mid October

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Crimes against women and children see rise due to negligence of the police and delay in trial process, leaders of Dinajpur unit of Bangladesh Mohila Parishad said at a press conference yesterday.

Marufa Begum, general secretary of Dinajpur district unit of the organisation, read out the keynote in presence of other women leaders including Kaniz Rahman, president of the organisation, at the conference held at Dinajpur Press Club.

As many as 103 women and children were raped and 37 women were murdered centring different disputes including those related to dowry in 13 upazilas of Dinajpur from January to October 15 this year, the

keynote read.

"Forty-seven acid throwing cases were filed in different upazilas of Dinajpur from January 1 to October 15 this year and most of the victims were women. Besides, 372 women were tortured for dowry, 64 children were tortured, and 20 cases were filed for trafficking women to other countries.

"A total of 603 cases under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act were filed in the district and police filed final report in 103 of the cases. "Recently a Class VIII girl of Parbatipur upazila was raped, but it was compromised, paying Tk 50,000 through so-called village arbitration. Despite agitation by locals, police is yet to file the charge sheet against the offenders for torturing

Rehana Begum in Chirirbandar upazila of Dinajpur," the keynote mentioned.

The speakers at the press conference expressed grave concern over repeated incidents of killing freethinkers and liberal minded persons including writers, researchers, publishers and journalists.

They urged ensuring punishment to the offenders through speedy trial process to check heinous crimes including those against women and children.

Bangladesh Mohila Parishad has taken up different programmes from November 1 to December 10, marking the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on November 25.



Leaders of Bangladesh Mohila Parishad at the press conference at Dinajpur Press Club yesterday.



A scene of the Rupchanda-The Daily Star Super Chef Competition 2016, held at Ambika Memorial Hall at Jhilatuli in Faridpur town on Monday. Four contestants in the district were selected as "Yes card winners" in the cooking round, making them eligible for taking part in the next stage of the biggest culinary competition in the country.

CASE FOR VIOLENCE

## Upazila chairman held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Detectives arrested the chairman of Sadullapur Upazila Parishad in a case for violence on the deputy commissioner's office premises in the district town on Monday.

Earlier on Sunday, a court issued arrest warrant against the chairman, Saidur Rahman Munshi, also a leader of Jamaat-e-Islami, in a case over attempted murder of Sharier Khan Biplob, secretary of the upazila unit of Awami League, filed in 2013.

Judicial Magistrate Muniruzzaman Sikder granted him bail in the attempted murder case following a petition filed by Saidur's lawyer on Sunday afternoon.

Despite granted bail, Saidur was held at court inspector's room. Later, he was released around 8:00pm.

The following day, when the UZ chairman reached the main gate of DC office, the law enforcers arrested him in the violence case filed earlier, said Shamim Hasan Sarder, officer-in-charge of DB police.

## Hira, Biplob denied bail in Kunio killing case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

A Rangpur court on Monday denied the bail petition of two suspects in Japanese national Kunio Hoshi killing case.

Advocate Aftab Uddin and advocate Badrul Islam Bibbu submitted bail petition for their clients, Rashed-un-Nabi Khan Biplob and Humayun Kabir Hira, in the morning.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Shafiul Alam rejected the bail petition of Biplob and Hira and passed an order to send them to jail again after the hearing at around 1:30pm.

The court also fixed November 16 as the next date for hearing.

On October 19, Biplob was produced before the same court and denied bail.

Advocate Aftab Uddin, lawyer for Biplob, claimed that his client was not involved in the killing as police could not prove it.

He also added that his client's name was not mentioned in the case. The court, however, again denied bail to Biplob, Aftab added.

Law enforcers detained Humayun Kabir Hira and also picked up Rashed-un-

Nabi Khan Biplob from his house on October 3.

Later, both of them were shown arrested on October 5 and placed on a ten-day remand.

Police produced Hira before a senior judicial magistrate's court after his 25 days remand in three phases on October 28, and recorded his statement under Section 164.

The court sent him to jail.

Assistant Public Prosecutor Advocate Jahangir Hossain Tuhin, who pleaded for the state, said it was a sensational murder. The court sent the duo to jail after hearing.

## BEATING OF JSC EXAMINEE

# Stalkers yet to be arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The stalkers, who allegedly beat up a Junior School Certificate (JSC) examinee and chopped her uncle and a cousin in Iswarganj upazila here Sunday noon, are yet to be arrested.

The girl sat for her English First Paper examination yesterday, but local administration and police did not take security measures for her, it was alleged.

Quoting family and local sources, police said Rahima Khatun, 13, a JSC examinee from Postari High School, was returning home at Char Pubail village in Iswarganj on a motorbike with her uncle and cousin from Iswarganj upazila headquarters around 2:00pm.

On the way, Russel Miah, 22, son of Abdul Quddus, along with 20 accomplices of the same village, waylaid the motorbike near Char Pubail Community Clinic and gave a mar-

riage proposal to the girl.

As the girl rejected the proposal, Russel and his men pulled her and her uncle Nazrul Islam, 32, a fish farmer, from the motorbike and started beating them up with an iron rod.

At one stage, the miscreants hacked Nazrul Islam with sharp weapons. When Rahima's cousin Faruq Hossain, 25, came forward to save Nazrul, the gang hacked the boy also. The miscreants also snatched away the admit and registration cards from the girl.

Hearing their screams, locals rushed to the spot but the miscreants had left the place.

Russel and his accomplices used to tease the girl on her way to school for long, said police. Following the eve-teasing, an arbitration was held locally one month ago and Russel was slapped before the arbitrators, sources said.

The three victims were first taken to Iswarganj Upazila Health Complex

but later Nazrul and Faruq were shifted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) with head injuries.

Rahima was released after treatment at the local health complex.

Rahima's uncle Abdul Helim Liton filed a case accusing 20 people with Iswarganj Police Station on Monday, and 12, including Russel, were named in the case statement.

Contacted, Md Borhan Uddin, officer-in-charge of Iswarganj Police Station, said a case was lodged in the afternoon and police will take necessary steps to arrest the attackers.

Rajib Kumar Sarker, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Iswarganj, said they made arrangements so the girl could for the examination as her admit and registration cards had been snatched away.

The UNO said the victim's family did not seek security measures, and he had asked police to arrest the attackers as soon as possible.

## Correction

In the news item titled 'Medtronic to organise a Cardiovascular summit' in Dhaka published on page 12 in The Daily Star on November 1, it was mentioned that Medtronic will organise the summit.

Actually Medtronic partnering with D16 Pharmaceutical Company will conduct the summit to address the barriers and treatment of cardiovascular conditions in Bangladesh.

Besides, Dr Fazila Tun-Nesa Malik was mistakenly stated to be from NICVD. In fact, she is from National Heart Foundation Hospital.

PC Mondal, mistakenly stated to be from Apollo Hospital, Dhaka, is from Apollo Gleneagles Hospital Limited, Kolkata.

We regret the mistakes.



Police detained mahout Hridoy along with his elephant at Kalibazar in Thakurgaon town yesterday on charge of forcing shopkeepers to give money as per demand by intimidating them with the giant animal. The law enforcers later released them after making Hridoy sign a bond not to create such nuisance again.