

# Floating since 1974, roofless since 2012

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Young learners of an ill-fated public school in the district's Mehendiganj upazila have no roof over their heads for the past four years.

Established in 1943 on 72 decimals of land in Gaguria village under Sreepur union, Gaguria Government Primary School has been moving from one place to another since 1974 when its original building was washed away by the River Tetulia.

The school now temporarily sits on an unused, dilapidated kachari house -- an extended part of a house used for meetings or office work -- owned by Hashem Sardar in Sreepur.

The school has 122 students -- boys and girls -- and four teachers.

After the destruction of the original building in 1974, the school had to be moved to its first temporary address and it was there till 2000, when the school land was swallowed by the Tetulia for a second time.

The institution was then again moved, this time on an embankment, said Amir Hossain Gazi, a member of Sreepur union.

Misfortune of the students continued as disaster struck again in 2012. This time the Tetulia embankment was breached and the school had to be relocated, for the third time, to its present location, which is about five kilometres from where it was first set up on the other side of the river.

The current state is so appalling that it cannot accommodate all the students, said Imran Mahabub, assistant headteacher of the school.

A suitable location for the temporary accommodation of the school has been selected, but the authorities are yet to finalise a plan for constructing the school building, Imran added.

In the meantime, classes are being held out in the open for the last four years. When it rains, classes are cancelled for the day.

"We don't have any classroom and that's why we go home when it starts raining," said Shohag, a first grader in the school.

Despite repeated requests, the authorities have done nothing to construct a new building for the school, alleged Zakir Hossain, a local.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



Students of Gaguria Government Primary School in Mehendiganj upazila of Barisal attend a class under open sky. This is how the school has been running over the last four years.

PHOTO: ARIFUR RAHMAN

## Clinton accepts nomination

FROM PAGE 1

opponent, slamming him as a fear-monger with no policy credibility.

A PRESIDENT FOR ALL

In an hour-long address, she laid out an optimistic plan to improve the US economy, stressing that "my primary mission as president will be to create more opportunity and more good jobs with rising wages."

Her efforts will focus particularly on places "that for too long have been left out and left behind, from our inner cities to our small towns, Indian Country to Coal Country," she said.

And in a bold admission for a candidate seeking to build on Obama's policies, she said the economy "is not yet working the way it should."

After a bruising primary campaign against Bernie Sanders, and as she savaged Trump, Clinton extended an olive branch of sorts to her sceptics and critics.

"I will carry all of your voices and stories with me to the White House," she said.

"I will be a president for Democrats, Republicans, and independents," she added. "For the struggling, the striving and the successful. For those who vote for me and those who don't. For all Americans."

WE ARE NOT AFRAID!

The four-day convention has been a parade of party heavyweights -- including President Barack Obama who stirringly hailed Clinton as his political heir -- and tweeted after her Thursday speech that "she's tested. She's ready. She never quits."

Clinton spoke of the strains that have been placed on US society during

the toxic year-long campaign featuring heated rhetoric from Trump and other candidates.

"We are clear-eyed about what our country is up against. But we are not afraid," Clinton said. "We will rise to the challenge, just as we always have."

Clinton also rejected much of the Trump rhetoric that has been a constant on the trail, while mocking him as a thin-skinned candidate who "loses his cool" at the slightest provocation.

"Imagine him in the Oval Office facing a real crisis," she said. "A man you can bait with a tweet is not a man we can trust with nuclear weapons."

There are now just 101 days until the election, and the pair will face off in their first presidential debate in late September.

PERSONAL MOMENT

Clinton faces a major trust deficit among a US public that has known her for the past quarter century. Rocked by a series of scandals, she is now about as unpopular with voters as her Republican rival.

Her remarks signalled a plan to focus attention on down-and-out communities that have felt ignored by the slow and erratic recovery from the Great Recession.

Clinton and running mate Tim Kaine will seek to carry her momentum straight onto the campaign trail, taking a three-day bus tour into Rust Belt communities in swing states Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Helping Clinton with her task of appearing as the steady hand at the tiller were retired US military generals, Republicans furious over the rise of Trump, and in one of the night's most poignant moments, a Muslim father

with "undivided loyalty" to America and whose son was killed in a suicide bombing in Iraq.

"Donald Trump, you are asking Americans to trust you with their future. Let me ask you -- have you even read the United States Constitution?" Khizr Khan said, brandishing a copy to loud cheers.

"You have sacrificed nothing, and no one!"

Clinton also sought to portray Trump as deeply ignorant on foreign policy, mocking him for saying he knew more about the Islamic State group than US generals.

"No, Donald, you don't," she sneered.

PITCH TO MIDDLE AMERICA

While Clinton must play to the party's base -- and seek to soothe bruised Sanders supporters -- a key mission was to appeal to crossover voters and independents wary of Trump.

In a moment designed to appeal to more conservative Americans, Clinton forcefully said: "I'm not here to take away your guns."

And she expressed strong support for the US military, offering a shout out to Republican vice presidential nominee Mike Pence, whose son serves in the US Marines, and to Senator John McCain, a former prisoner of war who Trump said was not a hero.

But she spent considerable energy berating her November election rival, saying no Americans should trust a candidate who pledges that "I alone can fix it," as Trump said last week in Cleveland.

"Here's the sad truth. There is no other Donald Trump. This is it."

## 2 killed

FROM PAGE 16

Sensing the presence of law enforcers, the criminals opened fire on them, forcing the elite force to retaliate, he said. After a gunfight for around 30 minutes, the criminals retreated, leaving Johurul, who was bullet-hit, behind, he added.

The victim was taken to Pabna Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead, the Rab commander said, adding that two of his men received minor injuries.

Johurul is accused in nine cases in Pabna and Sirajganj, said Rab, who recovered a revolver, three bullets and three sharp weapons from the spot.

In Jessore, an alleged drug peddler was killed in a "gunfight" between two groups of criminals and police at a date orchard in Taraf Nauapara early yesterday.

On information, a police team went to the spot around 1:00am and fired bullets to disperse the criminals, reports UNB.

Later, police detained bullet-hit Abu Taleb around 2:00am and rushed him to Jessore Medical College Hospital, said Ilias Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station.

Doctors there declared him dead.

One pipe gun and two bullets were recovered from the scene, claimed Rakibuzzaman, sub-inspector of Kotwali Police Station.

Taleb who had long been involved in drug peddling in the area was wanted in several cases, said police.

## MINORITIES FROM BD, PAKISTAN

# India to give them better access to higher studies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The Indian government has decided to include the persecuted religious minority community members from Bangladesh and Pakistan based in India in a Self-Financing Scheme for admission in medical and engineering courses.

The decision is expected to further improve the condition of the persecuted minorities of the countries based in India.

While the scheme for admission to MBBS and BDS courses will be open to these minority migrants from academic year 2016-17, it will also cover Bachelor of Engineering, Bachelor of Pharmacy, Diploma in Engineering and Diploma in Pharmacy from academic year 2017-18, a statement by the Ministry of External Affairs Ministry said.

The decision has been taken to "facilitate greater access to educational institutions in India" of the persecuted minority migrants, the statement said.

Admission to eligible candidates from the persecuted minorities from Bangladesh and Pakistan based in India will be given against seats to be granted by the Health and Family Welfare Ministry to the External Affairs Ministry.

The applicants will not be required to appear in any Central Entrance Examination or any other examination and they will be selected on the basis of academic merit.

Ever since the Narendra Modi government came to power in May 2014, several concessions have been offered to persecuted Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Christians and Parsis of the neighbouring countries.

The concessions include issuing long-term visas, allowing such people to buy residential properties, procuring PAN cards relating to filing of income tax returns, multi-purpose Aadhaar identity card, driving licence, opening of bank accounts, lowering of visa fees, among other things.

Keeping its promise to provide succour to minority refugees from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Indian government on July 18 introduced a bill in Parliament to amend the Citizenship Act so that Hindus, Sikhs and other minorities of the three countries could be granted Indian citizenship even if they do not provide required documents.

The bill was tabled in the Lok Sabha on the same day by Home Minister Rajnath Singh who said many people

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## In time, with less cost

FROM PAGE 1

monitoring have helped us deliver the project successfully," Emdadul Haque, project director, told The Daily Star at his project office in the capital's Agargaon recently.

"In every phase -- from tendering to selection of centres and procurement -- we tried to be efficient, but not compromising with the quality," said the happy PD.

The project officials bargained with the vendors and were able to motivate them that this is a benevolent project taken to equip high school and college-going students with modern computer and technical skills.

For example, Microsoft's Bangladesh office gave us their products at a much subsidised rate, said ASM Shafiqul Alam Talukder, assistant project director.

Under this project, every digital lab has got 17 laptops of globally reputed

brands like HP, Dell and Lenovo along with six months' free wifi (internet) connection. Every centre has also got a printer, a scanner, a multimedia projector, 17 headphones and a router in addition to table and chair both for trainees and trainers. Every centre has been given Tk 30,000 for renovation work of lab rooms.

Of the 2,001 computer labs, 544 labs are in 17 districts of Dhaka Division, 387 in 11 districts of Chittagong Division, 228 in 10 districts of Khulna Division, 295 in eight districts of Rajshahi Division, 218 in eight districts of Rangpur Division, 183 in six districts of Barisal Division and 146 in four districts of Sylhet Division.

According to project officials, some 10 lakh students, mostly rural and semi-urban, will be able to get ICT education from these labs.

Another interesting component of the project is 65 language training

centres, which have been set up in 64 districts. Students and jobseekers will get the opportunity to learn nine foreign languages -- Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Russian and Spanish.

Over 1,000 people, mostly teachers, are being trained to become master trainers on these languages.

Project officials worked hard in implementing the project on time and within budget, yet they are not complacent, as, they said, the success of the project would depend on proper monitoring by the people concerned at the local level.

According to Talukder, the local ICT department and district and upazila administrations have to monitor whether these centres are being run effectively.

"We have started the project, but we want the education ministry to take over the management and monitor the centres," he added.

## Tackle spread of militancy

FROM PAGE 1

the DCs were to create public awareness against militancy and engage people from all walks of life to fight terrorism.

The directives came in the wake of two militant attacks at Holy Artisan Bakery in the capital's Gulshan and near Sholakia Eid congregation in Kishoreganj early this month.

At the conference, the DCs demanded more power to punish offenders, and the authority to swear affidavits, similar to that of judicial magistrates.

The DCs insisted on amending the Mobile Court Act 2009 to empower them to punish an alleged wrongdoer even if he doesn't confess to the offence.

In this regard, photographs and audio-video clips should be allowed as pieces of evidence, they said.

The DCs also demanded that the maximum punishment of an offender be increased to four years' imprisonment from two years for offences that fall under the Mobile Court Act 2009.

But no decision was made regarding the demands.

The DCs also requested the government to take steps to fill the vacant posts as they are facing problems due to manpower shortage.

They sought more cooperation from people's representatives to fight militancy and terrorism.

At the conference, the DCs were asked to increase surveillance at all educational institutions in their districts to prevent students from getting involved in militancy and inform the monitoring cell under the law ministry if public prosecutors don't properly assist court in trying militants.

They were asked to address border issues, implement the decision to ban three-wheelers on 22 highways and evict all illegal structures on roads and highways.

The DCs were also instructed to make sure that their family members stay with them at their official residences.

The DCs had prepared 336 proposals

of which 288 were placed at the conference.

"The decision on the proposals will be made after scrutinising them," Cabinet Secretary Shafiqul Alam said at a press conference at the cabinet division.

Talking to reporters after addressing the concluding ceremony of the conference, Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu said, "As employees of the republic, it is the constitutional duty of the DCs to play due role in curbing militancy and establishing good governance."

Earlier at a meeting between the DCs and the high-ups of post and telecommunications ministry, it was decided that an individual would be allowed to get registered a maximum of five SIMs, instead of existing 20, against his national identity card.

GOVT DIRECTIVES

In the last four days, the DCs held meetings with the president, the prime minister, and all ministers and state ministers.

President Abdul Hamid asked the DCs to take all-out measures to root out terrorism and militancy.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina directed them to apply their full strength, talent and skills to tackle terrorism.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal directed the civil bureaucrats to cooperate with law enforcers to combat militancy and terrorism, and monitor the activities of anti-militancy committees in districts, thanas and unions.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid asked them to increase surveillance at all educational institutions in their districts to prevent students from getting involved in militancy.

He also told them to create awareness among teachers, students and guardians to resist militancy.

State Minister for Power Nasrul Hamid Bipu told them to ensure adequate security at all power plants, while Public Administration Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam directed them to enhance security for key government installations.

Health Minister Mohammed Nasim

asked them to take action against drug peddlers.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon instructed them to take proper security measures at airports, tourist spots, resorts, restaurants, and hotels where foreigners stay.

Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor asked them to arrange more cultural programmes to discourage the youths from choosing the wrong path.

Religious Affairs Minister Matiar Rahman told the DCs to help create a database of all mosques across the country, while Law Minister Anisul Huq asked them to inform the monitoring cell under the law ministry if public prosecutors don't properly assist court in trying militants.

## Great Wall

FROM PAGE 16

The crackdown will include spots checks, regular inspections and a hotline to allow members of the public to report damage, official news agency Xinhua reported.

The State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) first outlined the new regulations earlier this year but the issue has been in the headlines after a video of a man kicking and vandalising the wall went viral on Chinese social media last week.

Many China visitors associate the Great Wall with an extensively restored stretch of Ming era wall at Badaling near Beijing, but this is far from typical of most of the structure.

According to official statistics, around 30% of the Ming Dynasty section of the wall has already disappeared and less than 10% is considered well preserved.

"The Great Wall is a vast heritage site -- over 20,000 kilometres -- hence increasing the difficulty in preservation and restoration," Dong Yaohui, deputy director of the Great Wall of China Society, told CNN last year.

## Vegetable prices

FROM PAGE 1

depending on supply. Prices of green chilli have risen due to floods in the country's north," said wholesaler Mohammad Ashrafur Alam who was offering customers the vegetable at Tk 50 a kg.

According to data of Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), floodwater in 10 northern districts has inundated crops, including vegetables, paddy and jute, on more than 12,000 hectares of land.

A senior DAE official said vegetable plants would be affected the most.

"Plants would die if they remained submerged for a couple of days. This might affect vegetable production," he noted.

saler at Karwan Bazar, said prices of vegetables usually remained high in the rainy season compared to those in other seasons of the year due to flooding.

Mohammad Lokman, who runs a shop with his brother at a kitchen market in the city's Kazipara, said prices of eggplants went up by at least Tk 10-15 in the last one or two weeks. He sold the item at Tk 40-60 a kg yesterday. A week ago, he sold it for Tk 40-50 per kg.

However, prices of potatoes remained stable at Tk 25 a kg, Lokman added.

Prices of onion, sugar, garlic, salt and bottled soybean oil have soared, according to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh. Onion was selling at Tk

25-45 per kg yesterday, up from Tk 20-40 a month ago.

Alamgir Hossain, an importer at Bhomra Land Port, said import of onion slowed down as the Indian authorities allowed only 70 truckloads of onion into Bangladesh every day to ease pressure of shipment of other goods. This has caused onion prices to rise.

Prices of sugar, which started increasing during the month of Ramadan in June, edged up 12 percent to Tk 70-74 per kg yesterday from Tk 63-65 a month ago, influenced by higher international prices, according to traders.

On the other hand, prices of broiler chicken have slumped by 15 percent to Tk 140-150 a kg from a month ago.