

Acid thrower gets life in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A Pabna court on Monday sentenced a man to life imprisonment for throwing acid on a woman at Muladuli village in Ishwardi upazila in 2009.

Judge Sharnim Akter of Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court pronounced the verdict in the crowded courtroom in presence of the convict.

Convict Md Aytal Haque, 38, son of Aynal Haque of Muladuli village, was sent to jail from the court.

Aytal threw acid on Nasima Akter, 30, daughter of Azim Uddin of the same village on November 21 in 2009 for her refusal to accept a proposal of love affair, according to the case statement.

The victim's mother Jaheda Begum filed a case with Ishwardi Police Station accusing Aytal. Police submitted a charge sheet accusing Aytal on January 21 in 2010 after investigation, said Additional Public Prosecutor Abdul Jahed Rana.

Arms, ammo recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) recovered pistols, magazines and bullets in Shibganj upazila early yesterday.

Lt Col Mohammad Rashed Ali, commander of BGB 59 Battalion in Chapainawabganj, said BGB raided the house of one Abdul Mannan of Namochawpara village.

Sensing the BGB presence, Mannan, 65, and his son Sadikul Islam fled the house.

No obstacle too great

Polio survivor without use of legs drags himself to school, goes on to found school for people with disabilities

ABDUL WAHED with ANDREW EAGLE

When Asaduzzaman, now 27, from North Nagraipur village in Bhangamor union of Kurigram's Nageshwari upazila, was eager to attend school as a child, his father wouldn't let him. The family could see no point in educating a child afflicted with polio at the age of two, who had lost the use of his legs. Few could have guessed that the determined lad would not only complete his education but go on to found a school for children with disabilities.

"My parents didn't treat me like my brothers," says Asad, the sixth son of an economically struggling family. "They used to wonder what I could contribute."

There came a day in 1994 when a young Asad decided to prove his family wrong. He reached school of his own accord for the first time, dragging himself along the roadside.

His struggle didn't end there. "The Class I students at Bhangamor Government Primary School couldn't accept me as their classmate," he recalls. "I took lessons on the floor in the corridor outside. It was two months before I was allowed inside the classroom."

Asad knows the barriers of prejudice. He knows how to overcome them.

He passed class five on a talent-pool scholarship. He completed his Secondary School Certificate from Kharibari High School and graduated with a college-level diploma in computer science. For most of these years, working as a tutor Asad covered his own expenses.

In 2006 Asad established the Disabled Welfare Association in Bhogdanga union in Kurigram Sadar upazila where he currently

serves as director. "I motivated friends to undertake a union-wide survey of people living with disabilities. There were around six hundred," he says. "We collected money to found a school for students with disabilities. At first we bought five decimals as its grounds."

Asaduzzaman Special School for the Disabled opened its doors in 2009, relying on four volunteer teachers. It had eighty students, all with disabilities. "A local lawmaker then helped with a relief donation," says Asad. "We bought five decimals of adjoining land. Later, a local, Sadeque Ali, gave another ten decimals. We extended the school building."

Asad's school now has 196 students, fifty of whom have no disability. Ten teachers work there. "The teachers recently donated a van to help students with transport," says Asad. "They've appointed three van-cyclists."

No disability can exclude a child from enrolment: cerebral palsy, delayed-growth, visual impairment, mental and intellec-

No disability can exclude a child from enrolment: mental and intellectual disabilities, multi-disabilities, speech and hearing impairment: Asad's school caters to all.



Asaduzzaman, founder of Protibandhi Bishesh Shiksha Bidyalaya, a primary school meant for the children with physical and/or mental challenges in Bhogdanga union of Kurigram Sadar upazila, now remains preoccupied with the plan to rebuild the school damaged by flood in last August.

tual disabilities, multi-disabilities, speech and hearing impairment, Down syndrome or dwarfism: Asad's school caters to all.

"My son has gradually improved since he was admitted," says Shahida Begum, 36, mother to autistic Shahin Alom, 17. "He likes school. Earlier he couldn't understand anything clearly. Now he understands, though he cannot speak."

Ferdousi Begum is similarly pleased with the progress of her daughter Farjan Akhtar, 11, who has cerebral palsy. "I tried to enrol her in a government primary but failed," she says. "After five years at this school she is progressing. She couldn't visually identify

various common items but now, at least sometimes, she can."

"We try our best," says current headmaster Badol Hossain, "but we aren't properly trained. Five of our teachers have completed short-term disability education training. We're also trying to have the school registered with the social welfare ministry. It's important because for the first time, nine students are registered for the Primary School Certificate exams."

Unfortunately, since last August the school has had to contend with a new problem. Floods washed away most of the school's land. "Only two rooms including the teacher's common

room and some furniture were saved," says Asad. "We haven't been able to recommence classes yet but we are trying to build a new tin building."

It's not a situation that favours the Primary School Certificate candidates, with exams in late November. But as with every other obstacle Asad has faced, it's likely that in the longer term, the school shall find a way to overcome.

"I know too well the hardship people with disabilities face," says Asad. "I want that they can live full and normal lives with equal rights and opportunities." Asad's school is helping them do just that.

3 to die for killing kid in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A Mymensingh court yesterday sentenced three people to death for killing a child in Tarakanda upazila in 2011.

The convicts are Md Akbar Ali, 32, son of Md Intaz Ali; Akram Hossain, 30, son of Abdus Sobhan of Lautia village and Tanvir Hasan Anis, 32, son of Jamal Uddin of Baroipara village in the upazila, said Court Inspector Nawjesh Ali Miah.

Judge Miazi Shahidul Alam Chowdhury of First Additional Sessions Judge's Court delivered the verdict in presence of Akbar and Tanvir while Akram was tried in absentia, said Nawjesh.

The court also fined them Tk 50, 000 each, in default, to suffer six months more in jail, he added.

According to the prosecution, the convicts hacked Sujon alias Chetan Pandit, 15, to death suspecting him of stealing a mobile phone on August 30 evening in 2011. Later, the killers left the body on a road near a fish farm of Lautia village.

On information, police recovered the body of Sujon, son of Khokon Pandit of the village, and sent it to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

The victim's father lodged a case with Tarakanda Police Station the following day accusing the three and later police framed a charge sheet against them.

AK Fazlul Haque defended the accused while Sohrab Uddin Khan and Sanjib Sarker Sanju pleaded for the state.



Waste dumped beside the Lohalia river in Patuakhali district town causes severe pollution of the river.

PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN

Threat to biodiversity, fish

Patuakhali municipality wastes pollute Lohalia and Lawakathi rivers and grabbing of banks narrows 21 canals

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

The Lohalia and Lawakathi rivers in the district town are becoming polluted due to dumping of waste in the two rivers by the municipality, endangering biodiversity and many species of fish.

Lohalia river plays a vital role in removing waste from the town and also in communication with Dhaka and Payra port.

Locals said there were 21 canals connected to the Lohalia and Lawakathi rivers, but most of them have turned into drains due to grabbing of their banks.

Over 10 tonnes of garbage are dumped daily on Lohalia river bank in Puran bazar area and on Lawakathi river bank at Swanirvar road area as the municipality does

not have a dumping site. During high tide, the garbage mixes with the river water and pollutes it. Launches and trawlers also pollute the rivers with fuel.

Rahmat Ali Majhee of Lohalia area said they used to catch hilsa, koral, pangas in the rivers as they were abundant, but now the rivers are empty as the fish have left due to water pollution.

He maintained his family by fishing in the rivers about 25 to 30 years ago, but he had to change his occupation as there are no fish here, he said, adding that several thousand fishermen have changed their occupation.

Sobhan Gazi of the same area said both rivers are silting up as thousands of polythene bags also fall into the rivers and tidal water

floods both banks of the rivers during the rainy season.

Convener of local Coastal Environment Protection Committee S M Delwar Hossain Dilip said the town developed due to the Lohalia and Lawkathi rivers, but now people are polluting them by throwing all kinds of wastes, including household wastes.

Associate Professor of the environment science department of Patuakhali Science and Technology University Md Nurul Amin said pollutants like poisonous nitrogen and phosphorus increase due to the waste matter in the water.

Because of this, biodiversity is destroyed and fish leave the rivers as oxygen in the water decreases on

a large scale, he added.

The municipality should take immediate steps to reduce pollution by setting up a water treatment plant and also a waste management project to save the rivers, he suggested.

Assistant Professor of fisheries department of the same university Md Jahangir Alam said the Lohalia and Lawkathi rivers are under threat as their waters have become poisonous.

Conservancy Inspector of the municipality Muktipodo Nandi said all the waste water in the town of around one lakh people falls into the Lohalia and Lawkathi rivers as there is no water treatment plant. They have to dump waste on the river banks as there is no dumping site, he added.

Absent for years!

Three doctors stay away from their workplaces for years without any leave

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Three doctors under Nilphamari health department have been absent from their workplaces for years without any leave.

Civil Surgeon (CS) Ranajit Kumar Barman said they are yet to get any response from the trio in spite of sending letters to their respective home addresses several times.

Health directorate conducted probe against the doctors and found that the allegation was true, said the CS.

But they failed to contact them although they are still attached with their official workplaces, he said.

The physicians are Dr Imran Hasan, medical officer of Dimla Upazila Health Complex, Dr Mamunur Rashid, medical officer of Nautara union health sub-centre in the upazila and Dr Shawkat Ali Shafayat, medical officer of Domar Upazila Health Complex.

Imran joined Dimla Health Complex on August 7 in 2014. He has been absent from August 1 in 2015, said Dimla Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer (UHFO) Golam Sarwar.

Mamunur joined the health sub-centre on June 24 in 2012 and worked

The three doctors in Nilphamari even did not draw their monthly salary during their absence, says district health department official.

there for 40 days. He is absent till now.

It is very strange that a day after joining Domar Health Complex on July 1 in 2010 Shawkat remained absent till now without any notice, said UHFPO Sarwar.

The doctors even did not draw their monthly salary during their absence, said Ansarul Islam, accountant of district health department.

Quoting relatives, the UHFPO said the three doctors might have gone abroad without informing the directorate and maintaining departmental procedure.



Patuakhali police administration arranges an anti-drug procession yesterday, followed by a meeting at Sheikh Russel Children's Park in the district town, where 72 drug peddlers and addicts were given a floral reception marking their return to normal life. Story on Page 8.

PHOTO: STAR