



A classroom at Abhaynagar Upazila Autism and Intellectual Disability School in Jashore's Nawapara.

PHOTO: STAR

# Special needs school fills education gap

Locals establish Abhaynagar Autism, Intellectual Disability School in Jashore's Nawapara

MOHSIN MILON with ANDREW EAGLE

Even in the best of circumstances, to have a child on the autism spectrum or a child with an intellectual or physical disability is a challenge for parents. When it comes to schooling, suitable options can be limited, especially outside the big cities. The recently established Abhaynagar Upazila Autism and Intellectual Disability School in Jashore's Nawapara is one institution that aims to fill the gap. Founded by community locals, the school currently caters to 101 students with special education needs.

"My seven-year-old daughter has a physical disability," says Manjuara Begum, the mother of one of the school's students, Monju Khatun. "She was admitted to a government primary school but she was ignored by her classmates. They wouldn't interact with her. My daughter used to cry a lot when she had to go to that school. After we enrolled her in this new school her circumstances improved dramatically. She started to learn new things rather quickly."

Rehena Begum's seven-year-old son Yehin Hossain, who also has a physical disability, is another of the school's students. "Since being admitted to this school he has learnt to read and write in a short time," says the mother.

Among the school's students, around half are on the autism spectrum, with a further forty percent divided between children with physical disabilities and those with intellectual disabilities. A few students have speech difficulties or vision impairment.

"There are many children in this area with special needs in terms of education," observes the school's executive committee president, Mosharraf Hossain. "Such children are often victimised in general society. If we can work towards providing them with a good education, we can help them as much as possible to lead independent lives as adults, as valuable community members."

The school is especially thankful to

Monjuara Begum, who currently works as an assistant-teacher there. "In 2014," says the school's headmaster Abdur Rahim, "Monjuara was working with thirty physically-challenged children of her own initiative. She started to raise the money for a building, with the idea of establishing a more formal institution."

The school has four classrooms in a tin shed building, with enrolment numbers on the rise. "Some of the students travel up to eight kilometres to reach us," the headmaster says. "It's hard for them because many are from struggling families; they can barely afford to spend as much as Tk 60 per day on transport. Besides that, the school lacks materials. But we are trying."

Rahim notes that while the school's ten teachers and six other employees are all rather dedicated, and although the teachers are proficient in their subjects, none of them have the benefit of specialist training on how to teach children with disabilities. "Our teachers really need such train-

ing," he says, "I have sought government help in this regard."

The school is taught in four classes. For children with more significant physical or intellectual challenges, a 'mother and child' stream is available, where mothers attend alongside their children for added support. There are two pre-primary classes that introduce the children to first class government school textbooks, and a class focussed on vocational training to prepare students for later employment and self-sufficiency.

Students are also engaged with dancing, singing, poetry recitation and physical exercise classes, in much the same way as one might expect at any school.

"This school has been established by locals off their own bat," says the upazila's social service officer Roknuzzaman. "I have been liaising with them on a regular basis, and I am trying to help the school to access government support."

DHAKA-SYLHET DISTANCE

## New road to shorten 35km

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

The construction work of much-awaited Advocate Mostafa Ali road connecting Balbhadra Bridge via Habiganj-Lakhai was inaugurated recently.

Lawmaker from Habiganj-3 constituency (Sadar and Lakhai upazila) Advocate Mohammad Abu Zahir inaugurated the 18-metre-wide road construction on April 13.

After completion of the construction, it will reduce 35 kilometres distance for Dhaka-Sylhet passengers alongside saving at least one hour time, said Zahir, also president of Habiganj district Awami League.

Bamoi Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Enamul Haque Mamun said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the newly constructed Balbhadra Bridge on the Balbhadra river on October 8, 2015.

He said local people are still deprived of the benefits of the bridge due to the narrow and dilapidated condition of the approach road.

Small vehicles like cars, motorbikes and bicycles use the road as it is too narrow for the heavy vehicles to ply, the UP chairman said.

Habiganj Roads and Highways Department Executive Engineer Mohammad Jahirul Islam said the road construction project at a cost of Tk 146 crore is scheduled to be completed by 2020.

During this period, they will also re-construct four bridges, he said.

Although a complexity rose over the construction of Balbhadra Bridge, it was later resolved following the intervention of the prime minister, lawmaker MP Zahir said.

RESHUFFLE IN PABNA UNIVERSITY

## Administrative work disrupted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Administrative activities at Pabna University of Science and Technology (PUST) are being badly disrupted due to the teachers' division centring the recent major reshuffle of the university administration.

On Friday, newly appointed Assistant Proctor Uttam Kumar filed a general diary (GD) with Sadar Police Station against former Proctor Awal Kabir Joy and senior teacher Abdul Alim after a group of 15 to 20 men threatened his wife Tilottoma Chowdhury on Thursday night.

According to the GD, Awal Kabir Joy and Abdul Alim threatened Uttam with dire consequences soon after Uttam joined the assistant proctor's post.

Meanwhile, Awal Kabir Joy and Abdul Alim filed two separate GDs with the police station against the newly appointed proctor and assistant proctor on Saturday night making same allegations.

"I have talked with both the factions and they assured me of withdrawing their complaints against each other," PUST Vice-Chancellor Dr Rostom Ali said.

"Reshuffle is a regular process in the administration" the VC said, adding that the process will continue in the future as well because no one can hold any post for long.

### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department  
Office of the Executive Engineer

Barisal

উন্নয়নের গণতন্ত্র  
শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র

Memo No- 46.02.0600.000.07.068.17-1825

Dated: 19.04.2018

### e-Tender Notice-280-282/2017-18

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of

e-Tender No.	Package No.	Name of work	Last receiving date & time
280/2017-18	FDR/Bar/URW002	Rehabilitation of Mahilara-Chaygram-Amboula-Paisarhat Road from Ch. 2600m-4429m under Agailjhara Upazila District Barisal Road ID-506022006 [e-ID: 189732]	09-05-2018 Time: 12:00 noon
281/2017-18	FDR/Bar/URW003	Rehabilitation of Mahilara-Chaygram-Amboula-Paisarhat Road from Ch. 10304m-12336m under Agailjhara Upazila District Barisal Road ID-506022006 [e-ID: 189733]	09-05-2018 Time: 12:00 noon
282/2017-18	FDR/Bar/URW004	Rehabilitation of Nimtola RHD-Dhamura GC via Ratnapur UP Road from Ch. 00m-2000m under Agailjhara Upazila District Barisal Road ID-506022010 [e-ID: 189734]	09-05-2018 Time: 12:00 noon

National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to 17.00 on previous day of receiving tender.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

M Mizanur Rahman  
Executive Engineer  
LGED, Barisal

GD-1106

### Hartal observed in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Parbatya Bangalee Chhatra Parishad (BPCP) here yesterday observed dawn to dusk hartal peacefully, demanding rescue of three missing Bangladeshis.

On April 16, wood merchant Md Salauddin, 28, Mahram Ali, 27, and truck driver Bahar Mia, 27, went missing when they went to Mohalchhari upazila.

The leaders of BPCP believe that the trio have been kidnapped.

All kinds of vehicles stayed off the roads due to the hartal. But educational institutions, office courts and banks remained opened.

Khagrachhari Additional Superintendent of Police SM Salauddin said there was no unpleasant incident took place during the strike.

### Lightning kills six

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Six people were killed in lightning strike in Kishoreganj and Habiganj on Sunday, report our Mymensingh and Moulvibazar correspondents.

Police and family sources said a thunderbolt struck the trio during a severe nor'wester. They died on the spot.

The deceased, Rupchand Akhter, 60, Md Abdur Rashid, 35, and Towhid Mia hail from Kishoreganj. Meanwhile, lightning killed three people in Habiganj.

Two farmers died as they were struck by lightning in Lakhai upazila.

The deceased were Nurul Miah, 45, and Apan Miah, 35, of the area.

In Baniachang upazila, Moin Uddin, 12, son of Ful Mia was killed by lightning.



Farmers harvesting Boro paddy in Senir Beel area of Khaliyajury upazila of Netrakona. The area sees bumper yield of the crop this season.

PHOTO: STAR

## Netrakona haor farmers see bumper Boro production

Special prayers for crop's safety as harvesting begins

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Farmers of haor areas in Netrakona are all smiles as they are hopeful of getting bumper production of Boro paddy, which will help them make up for the losses they suffered during the devastating flood last year.

Last year's flash flood destroyed almost all of the Boro crops in Khaliyajury and Mohanganj upazilas.

With board smiles on their faces, farmers of the upazilas started harvesting their crop 15 to 20 days ago, hoping for bumper production this year, said Khaliyajury Sadar union Sub-Assistant Agriculture Officer Aminul Islam Khan.

"We advised the farmers to cultivate BRRI-28 as the variety ripens quickly," said Upazila Agriculture Officer Md Shafiqul Islam.

Harvesting will be completed within another 15 days to 20 days and

the farmers will get a bumper production if there are no natural calamities, he added.

Ajit Das of Baniapara village in Khaliyajury, who cultivated Boro on nine acres of land, said production is higher than in previous years. It will help make up for last year's huge loss, he added.

Kobindra Sarker of Ballabhpur village said he also hopes for a bumper production from his 15 acres of land.

Krishnapur Union Parishad Chairman Nazim Uddin Sarker said local people could not enjoy their religious and traditional celebrations, including Pahela Baishakh, after last year's flood.

Special prayers are being organised at different places seeking God's blessings for the safety of their produce, the chairman added.

"It was a painful scene in the haor

areas last year, and I never saw such a crisis in the area," said 85-year-old Solaiman Mia of Kalyanpur village.

"We had to pass our days in great hardship, but now we hope for a good harvest and enjoyment with our families this year," said Abu Hanif of the village.

Officials of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) and district administration visited the haor areas recently.

District DAE Deputy Director Bilash Chandra Pal said 81,328 hectares of land were brought under Boro cultivation with a production target of 71,700 tonnes of paddy this year, but the cultivation target exceeded that and they are hoping for a bumper production.

He also said around 70,000 farmers of haor areas, mainly in Khaliyajury and Mohanganj, were supported with seeds, fertilizers and cash.