

Ray of hope for destitute children

M JAHIRUL ISLAM JEWEL, from Barisal

Born into a life of hardship, Rahat did not have a chance to go to school. At the age of nine, he now sells peanuts at Bangabandu Udyan in Barisal city to eke out a living.

He had always been interested to go to school -- a long-cherished dream of becoming educated like other children of his age. Meanwhile, the good news is that this dream has come to be true as he has recently started going to school.

A group of 22 students of Barisal University and Govt BM College came up with an initiative to establish a school, giving a ray of hope for underprivileged children like Rahat to get an education.

"I never had the opportunity to go to school; but now I attend the school twice a week," said a smiling Rahat, while recently talking to this correspondent at the school -- Shapno Puro Bidda Niketon -- in the city.

Marking the country's 48th Independence Day, the school started its operations with 48 underprivileged children of different slums in the city. Around 70 students are currently enrolled in the school.

The founders of the school formed a voluntary organisation named



Students take lessons circling around a teacher at Shapno Puro Bidda Niketon in Barisal city's Tirish Godown area. PHOTO: STAR

"Uchsash" in early 2017, with Barisal University student Proshonjit Kumar Saha at the helm. The school is being run under the organisation and the 22 founding members are conducting classes voluntarily from primary to fifth grade.

Situated in an open space in Tirish Godown area of the city, the school starts at 3:00pm and finishes at 5:00pm on every Friday and Saturday.

While talking to The Daily Star, Proshonjit said the organisation is working for the development of underprivileged children, particularly street children.

The teachers even counsel the guardians to send their kids to the school as most children are working at different professions for earning their livelihood, he said.

A teacher of the school, Mourie Binte Azad, said, "We offer them not

only education but also new dress and food on different occasions."

"Spending time with the children means a lot to me," said Israt Jahan, another teacher of the school.

Students are also passionate about the school.

First-grader Jonaki said, "We like the school very much. Teachers love us and we also love our teachers."

Rafiqul Islam, another student, wants the school authorities to increase the number of days instead of just two.

The school is also getting popular day by day as it provides good education, said Aysha Begum, the guardian of a student.

While explaining the features of the school, Proshonjit said, "We supply the education materials and toys among the students for free." "We are now trying to register the school for which we have to pay a certain amount."

Asked about their financial base, Proshonjit said they have been continuing their activities with support from friends and classmates.

He said, "As the rainy season is approaching, it will be a big challenge for us to continue the school activities in the absence of a school building. We can manage the situation if we get financial support."

Five arrested with yaba pills, heroin

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Five alleged drug peddlers were arrested with 18,200 yaba tablets and 500 grammes of heroin in Chittagong yesterday.

The arrestees are Masud Rana of Patuakhali; Abul Kalam and Joynal Abedin of Comilla; Salah Uddin of Khatunganj; and Rina Akhter, 24, of Comilla, said police.

On information, police intercepted a bus at Lohagara upazila and arrested its driver Masud and his helpers Kalam and Joynal with 14,000 yaba pills, said Inspector (Investigation) Abdul Jalil of Lohagara Police Station.

Salah was arrested in Asadganj area with 200 yaba pills, said police.

Meanwhile, police arrested Rina in Ice Factory Road area with 500 grammes of heroin and 4,000 yaba pills, said Nezam Uddin, officer-in-charge

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NEWS IN brief

9th wage board gazette likely next week: Inu

BSS, Dhaka

Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu said the much anticipated "dearness allowance" (DA) for journalists, as recommended by the Wage Board, is likely to be gazetted next week.

He made the announcement at a meeting at the Dhaka Reporters Unity auditorium yesterday.

The minister said all necessary formalities have been completed in this regard.

The meeting was also addressed by Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, the media adviser of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Dr Fazlul Huq passes away

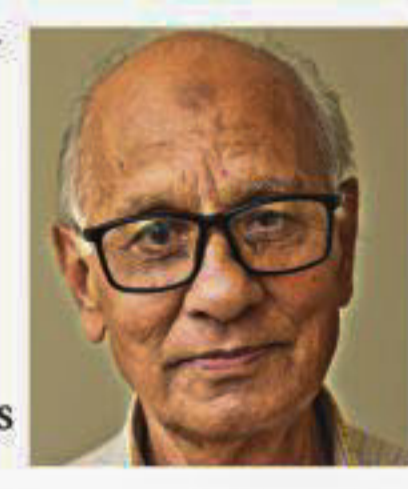
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr M Fazlul Huq, head of the chemistry and physics department in Gono Bishwabidyalay, died of heart attack in the capital's Bangladesh Medical College Hospital on Friday. He was 75.

He left behind his wife and two sons to mourn his death, says a press release.

Dr Huq obtained his PhD degree in organic chemistry in 1976 from Dijon University, France.

The private university held a condolence meeting on its campus yesterday. University Vice Chancellor (Acting) Prof Laila Parveen Banu presided over the meeting.



ARAFAT MURDER Key accused held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police yesterday arrested the prime accused in a case filed over the murder of a youth, Md Arafat, in Mohora area of Chittagong on Monday.

The arrestee is Md Arman, 20, a guard of a gymnasium in the area.

Police arrested him in Kalurghat area around 4:30am, said Bashir Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Chandgaon Police Station. "Police also recovered the knife used in the murder," he said.

On Monday, Arafat, 19, was stabbed to death allegedly by Arman and his accomplices over an altercation they had the night before.

Arafat, who worked at a welding shop, used to go to "Popular Gymnasium" for exercise, said the OC. On Sunday evening, he went there and found that the gates were locked. So he "rebuked" the guard, Arman.

"They also had an altercation," said the OC.

The next night when Arafat got out of the gym after a workout around 9:00pm, Arman and his accomplices stabbed him and fled the scene, he added. Arafat was declared dead at Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

His mother filed a murder case accusing Arman and some others. Earlier, police arrested two persons. Gleaning information from them, police arrested Arman, said the OC.



Slices of fruits on plates, creating colourful rows, laid down ahead of iftar. Every day during Ramadan, around 1,000 people from all walks of life gather at the High Court Mazar area in Dhaka to break their fast. The mazar committee organises this public iftar with donation from the well-off members of society. This photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

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