

# Paper pens that can also grow into plants!

A Jashore woman’s contribution in reducing plastic waste

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah

Have you ever wondered where the plastic-pen goes after you are done using them? After disappearing from our sight, the single-use plastic pens usually end up in landfills, eventually accumulating into a vast pile of plastic waste.

But what if you can use pens, without polluting the environment. Moreover, all these used pens can be germinated into trees.

Sounds too good to be true, right? That’s exactly what Nasima Akhtar, a mother of two, from Jashore’s Lonpara office area has been doing.

Rather than letting discarded plastic pens contribute to pollution, Nasima has discovered a way to give these writing instruments a new lease on life.



**Faced with limited alternatives, she came up with the innovative idea to create an eco-friendly ballpoint pen made of paper. In 2007, she started selling these pens, which she aptly named “Shuvo Eco-Friendly Pen” after her youngest child, Shuvo.**

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH VIDEO



First, Nasima collects an ink nip and an A-4 size paper. Cutting a long strip from the paper, she applies glue and rolls it tightly around the ink tube, creating a pen-like appearance. Buried at the bottom of each pen, is a vegetable, fruit or flower seeds. Once the pen serves its writing purpose, one can just bury it in a mud pot or under the soil and the seeds grow into plants.

## NASIMA’S JOURNEY

Despite facing poverty that forced her to drop out of school at an early age, Nasima’s talent and determination remained unscathed.

In 1992, she married a BGB personnel who retired in 2000, and then ventured into a fish enclosure business. But within six months, he incurred substantial losses, plunging the family into financial hardship.

With a son and a daughter to care for, Nasima found herself at a crossroads. Faced with limited alternatives, she came up with the innovative idea to create an eco-friendly ballpoint pen made of paper. In 2007, she started selling these pens, which she aptly named “Shuvo Eco-Friendly Pen” after her youngest child, Shuvo.

At first, Nasima hesitated to market her pen on a larger scale, fearing that customers might not show interest. However, with the support and encouragement from her children, she started mid-scale marketing of her eco-friendly products in 2017.

Today, she sells approximately 4,000 pieces of the pens in bulk to various institutions and organisations every week. Additionally, she sells over 2,000 pens through local Jashore stationery shops. She invests Tk 4/5 to make one pen, and sells them at Tk 7/8 on wholesale.

Habibur Rahman, her neighbour and a retired teacher, said, “My students use these pens and put it under soil after use. A flower or vegetables sprout from it later.”



Kabya Rahman, a student of Sammiloni Secondary School, said they are not only drawn to the smooth writing experience but also motivated to use more eco-friendly products.

Masud Ahmed Sanju, president of Environment and Biodiversity in Jhenidah, lauded Nasima’s innovation. He said the pen’s composition of natural fibers ensures it contains no harmful materials.

Nasima said she plans to expand the business to provide jobs to local women. She needs a paper cutter machine and a colour printer to ensure maximum supply.

“I can make 200-250 pens every day. These pens are non biodegradable and hence very environment friendly,” she said. “But I want to expand my business. If I can get support from the government, I will be able to do so and also support women in my area,” she told this correspondent.



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

The waste is being dumped over a 100-metre stretch of the Sonadanga-Mujgunni highway, starting from the Directorate of Health Engineering office entrance. The road, which was renovated just a couple of months ago spending Tk 50 crore, is less than 200 yards away from the Khulna Medical College Hospital.

## A foul-smelling nuisance

Roadside waste irks Khulna residents

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

The Sonadanga-Mujgunni highway has been transformed into a dumping ground, thanks to indiscriminate dumping of waste beside it by the Khulna City Corporation.

The highway, which was renovated just a couple of months ago spending Tk 50 crore, is less than 200 yards away from the Khulna Medical College Hospital.

According to locals, the road is one of the busiest in the area. Around 230 clinics, diagnostic centres, over 50 drug stores, and offices, including Indian visa centre, forest department office, and Khulna Nursing Institute, are located near the spot where garbage is being dumped.

The waste is being dumped over a 100-metre stretch, starting from the Directorate of Health Engineering office entrance.

Before the road was renovated, the KCC workers used to collect household waste from nearby areas and dump it in a brick-made dustbin, informed Mahafuzur Rahman, resident of the city’s ward-16.

“The dustbin had to be dismantled during the roadwork. So, the waste is being dumped beside the newly renovated road. Patients, their relatives, students, and locals who use this road have to walk past piles of rotting garbage,” he added.

Shahin Sheikh, a tea stall owner, said, “People choose to walk away from my shop due to the unbearable

stench coming from the garbage. The authorities don’t even clean the spot regularly.”

This correspondent, during a recent visit to the spot, saw numerous locals walking past the trash heaps with their hands covering their noses. Various stray animals were seen feeding off the trash. Speeding vehicles, dragging the waste with their wheels, further added to the menace.

**The road is one of the busiest in the area. Around 230 clinics, diagnostic centres, over 50 drug stores, and offices, including Indian visa centre, forest department office, and Khulna Nursing Institute, are located near the spot where garbage is being dumped.**

“How can someone dump waste near the largest hospital in the division? Vehicles from the northern districts use this road. This also creates an obstruction for them,” said Shariful Islam Salim, secretary of Khulna Sammilita Sanskulture Jote.

Yasir Masum, a student at Children’s Voice School, said, “We find it very difficult to walk through this road. The situation worsens when it rains.”

Hassan Iftakhar Chalu, councillor of ward-16, informed of plans to

construct a Secondary Transfer Station (STS) in the area. “However, the garbage does make the environment unhealthy,” he added.

Rabiul Hasan, director of Khulna Medical College Hospital, patients from 10 districts of the division come to this hospital for treatment. “More than 1,500 patients are regularly admitted to the 500-bed hospital. At the same time, about 2,500 patients receive outdoor treatment here every day,” he added.

“However, patients and their relatives are facing problems due to this garbage being dumped in such a close proximity to the hospital. We are struggling to keep the hospital clean and free. Many patients are at risk of infection due to this. The authorities should stop this menace immediately,” he told this correspondent yesterday.

There is no STS within a km as the corporation did not find any land nearby to set up one, informed Anisur Rahman, KCC conservancy officer.

Earlier, the authorities tried to establish one in PTI More, Zilla School, Boyra, and Nirala Mor. However, the plan only remained in discussions as they did not find any land.

“We try to collect the trash from time to time and even bleach the spot. However, locals also throw garbage here, which worsens the problem. The problem will only be solved when we find land to build a STS in the area,” he added.

## Four killed, six hurt in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Four people were killed and six injured in road accidents in three districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Jamalpur, a youth was killed and another injured as a covered-van and an auto-rickshaw collided head-on on Bakshiganj-Raumari highway in Bakshiganj Bazar area.

Shamim Mia, son of Pukka Mia from East Chankanda area in Srivardi upazila, died on the spot, said police.

The injured -- Rakibul Hasan, 23, -- was admitted to Bakshiganj Upazila Health Complex.

The covered van was coming from Bakshiganj market area and the auto-rickshaw was going to Dhanua Kamalpur, said Bakshiganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Shohel Rana.

The body was recovered and handed over to the family without autopsy.

In another incident, a man was killed after a truck ran him over at Jamalpur Bakshiganj road in Islampur Bazar.

Akram Ali from Gotail village in Islampur upazila died instantly, said police.

The accident occurred around noon while he was crossing the road, said Islampur Police Station OC Mazedur Rahman.

In Narayanganj, a motorcyclist was killed and three persons were injured as the motorbike collided with a CNG-run auto-rickshaw in Bandar upazila.

The deceased was identified as Md Rimon, 26, while the injured are Rimon’s friends Arjid, 25, and Md Sayed, 27, and auto-rickshaw driver Tofazzal, 55.

The deceased’s family members said Rimon along with his two friends was going to Mograpara area in Sonargaon upazila from Bandar on a motorcycle.

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## PRAYER TIMING



JULY 22					
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
AZAN 4-15	12-45	5-00	6-55	8-17	
JAMAAT 4-50	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45	

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## Beijing for stronger people to people relations with Dhaka

UNB, Xinjiang

China has laid emphasis on stronger people to people relations between Dhaka and Beijing to help learn from each other and move forward together towards common development and prosperity.

To help understand each other better and foster deeper friendship between the two sides, the Chinese government has invited a ten-member media delegation which arrived in Xinjiang on Thursday evening.

“Journalists play a vital role to tell the truth to world,” an official there told UNB.

The media delegation members from Bangladesh visited Xinjiang Museum, Located

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## US delegation visit strengthened our ties: info minister

BSS, Kurigram

Information Minister and Awami League Joint General Secretary Hasan Mahmud yesterday said parliamentary election will be held as per the constitution of the country and the current government will perform duties of polls-time government.

“Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will discharge duties of the premier during the polls. There is no chance to go beyond the constitution,” he told journalists at Circuit House in Kurigram before addressing the extended meeting of district unit of AL as the chief guest.

In India, the UK, Australia, Japan, France and Germany and other democratic countries, existing government perform duties of polls-time government and in the US, existing president doesn’t resign before elections, he referred.

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