

Youth turns village library into cultural hub

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

In remote Tipar Bazar village under Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila, evenings that were once quiet and dark are now filled with poetry recitations, songs and lively discussions.

At the centre of this change is Sarpukur Jubo Forum Pathagar, which has grown from a modest library room into a vibrant centre of cultural and social activities.

The transformation has been led by Jamal Hossain, 23, a postgraduate student in Dhaka. He started the library with a few friends in 2014 with just 10 books in a tin-roofed room furnished with old chairs and tables.

Over the years, the collection has grown to more than 15,000 books.

In 2020, Jamal also launched an initiative to encourage reading by placing books in barbershops in his village.

"Our Barbershop Library initiative has now spread across the country. Readers' response has been overwhelming, and the demand for new books keeps growing," Jamal said.

For promoting reading habits and community engagement, Jamal received the National Youth Award last year. He has also received several national and local honours.

The library has also undergone renovation, carried out at a cost of Tk 30 lakh. It now runs in a concrete building equipped with bookshelves, computers, laptops, lighting and space for cultural programmes.

Shaheen Hussain, director of Robin

Printing and Package Limited in Dhaka, contributed nearly 90 percent of the renovation cost after learning about the initiative through a report published in The Daily Star. The local administration also provided support.

The library now hosts regular cultural programmes, including poetry recitations, debates, music sessions and reading circles. Young people also receive training in music, art and computer skills.

College student Niramoy Kumar Roy said the library has become an important part of students' lives.

"We have access to different books and newspapers here. We also practise music, art and computers, and organise debates ourselves. It's helping us grow intellectually," he said.

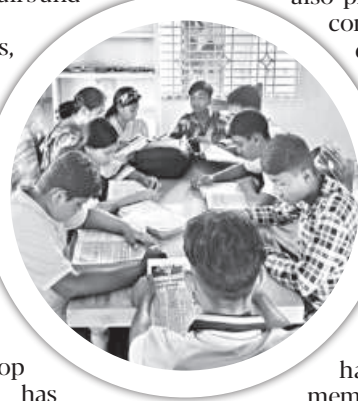
Schoolgoer Asha Akter and retired college teacher Sunil Kumar Sutradhar echoed the same sentiment.

The library now has several hundred members and attracts visitors from different walks of life, including students, farmers and homemakers.

Farmer Abdul Kader said he often reads books on agriculture at the library to learn modern farming techniques.

Jamal said his goal remains simple: to spread reading habits in rural communities and transform Tipar Bazar and nearby villages into "reading villages" with bookshelves in every home.

"Books free us from darkness," Jamal said. "I want every boy and girl in this village to read for at least some time every day."



A city corporation worker conducts fogging in Khulna city to curb dengue and other mosquito-borne diseases amid rising mosquito infestation during the rainy season. The photo was taken in the Bastuhara area yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

HEALTH COMPLEX IN JASHORE New hospital building stuck in approval delay

MOHSIN MILON, Benapole

A newly-built Tk 38 crore facility at Chowgachha Upazila Health Complex in Jashore remains largely unused for lack of approval, even as patients continue to crowd the corridors of the existing 50-bed hospital.

Although a six-storey building expanded the health complex from 50 to 100 beds in 2023, the authorities have yet to receive official approval to operate it fully.

Around 1,000 to 1,250 patients receive treatment at the outpatient department every day. Many of them come from neighbouring upazilas, including Moheshpur, Jhikargachha, Kotchandpur, Kaliganj, Sharsha, and Jashore Sadar.

Hospital authorities said staff shortages, inadequate infrastructure and lack of rest facilities for them are affecting healthcare services.

Only 24 of the 32 sanctioned doctor posts are currently filled. Several key posts, including ENT specialist, dermatologist, orthopaedic surgeon, assistant surgeon and pathologist, have remained vacant for years. There is no ultrasonologist, while many health assistant posts also remain vacant.

Of the 221 sanctioned posts for officials and employees, only 134 are filled. The post of resident medical officer is vacant, while only one midwife is working against eight approved posts. All four medical technologist (pharmacist) posts are also vacant.

As a result, many patients leave without proper treatment, while others are referred to Jashore General Hospital. The understaffed pathology department also forces many patients to rely on private diagnostic centres for tests.

Mozammel Haque from Singhuli village said he had been waiting for over two hours for his blood test report.

"I cannot afford to get the test done at a private clinic," he said.

Dr Suraiya Parvin, an emergency medical officer, said she handles



gynaecology and obstetrics cases while also performing ultrasonography.

Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer Dr Md Ahsanul Mizan Rumi said the facility had repeatedly sought approval from the relevant authorities but received no response.

"Without administrative approval, there is no allocation for furniture, staff or budget," he said.

Jashore Civil Surgeon Masud Khan said they recently wrote to the ministry about the shortages and were seeking approval to begin operations.

GAZIPUR HOMICIDE Throats of four slit, fifth strangled Says autopsy report

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Autopsies have been completed on the five victims, including a mother and her three children, who were killed in Gazipur's Kapasia on Friday.

According to the preliminary autopsy report, four of the victims had their throats slit, while one child was strangled to death.

Around 5:00pm yesterday, Mazharul Haque of the forensic department at Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Medical College Hospital told The Daily Star that Sharmin Khanam, her brother Rasul Molla, and her two daughters Mim and Maria died after their throats were slit. Another daughter, Faria, was killed by strangulation.

He added that samples, including stomach contents and other evidence, were sent to the CID lab to determine whether the victims had been given sedatives or any other substances before they were killed.

Further details will be known after the lab report is received, he said.

Police said the killings took place on Friday night at the family's home. Investigators initially suspect the murders were the result of a family dispute.

Kapasia Police Station OC Shahinur Alam said a case has been filed in connection with the incident. The accused, Sharmin's husband Forkan Mia, of Gopalganj Sadar upazila, went into hiding.

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EC to add madrasa, advanced degrees to NID database

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) is set to introduce major changes to the education section of the National Identity (NID) registration form, allowing citizens to specify madrasa qualifications as well as advanced academic degrees.

Officials at the EC's NID wing said registrants currently can only select broad education levels such as secondary, higher secondary, bachelor's or master's. Under the proposed changes, madrasa qualifications including Dakhil, Alim, Fazil, Kamil and Dawrae Hadith will be recognised separately.

Advanced academic and professional qualifications such as BSc (Engineering), MBBS, MS/MD, MPhil and PhD will also be included in the database.

Md Saiful Islam, director (Operations) of the NID wing, said the move is aimed at reflecting citizens' educational and professional identities more accurately.

"A person spends years earning a degree, yet our database did not reflect it specifically. Now we plan to add higher education degrees in line with professional identity," he said.

He said the initiative, now at a preliminary stage, would be formalised through legal and regulatory processes.

"The degrees will not be part of the name. The information will be stored as additional data under the profession section and would not appear on the physical NID card," he added.

Explaining the rationale behind the proposal, Saiful Islam said a government doctor is currently listed simply as a government employee in the database, which does not indicate their medical profession.

"If MBBS or FCPS is mentioned under education, their professional identity becomes clear," he said.

Similarly, madrasa graduates would also be able to specify their exact qualifications in the NID registration form, he added.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
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বাড়ি ভাড়া গ্রহণের বিজ্ঞপ্তি

জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ডের নকসুট কাস্টমস এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট কমিশনারেট, কক্সবাজার এর আওতাধীন কক্সবাজার দক্ষিণ বিভাগ এবং উক্ত বিভাগের অধীনস্থ দুইটি সার্কেলে যথাক্রমে: ইদানী সার্কেল, সৈকত-৩ সার্কেল এর অফিস হিসেবে ব্যবহারের জন্য কক্সবাজার লাবনী পয়েন্ট হতে হিমছড়ি ভিউ পয়েন্ট পর্যন্ত এবং উলফিন মোড় হতে কক্সবাজার কেন্দ্রীয় বাস টার্মিনাল পর্যন্ত রাস্তার ডান পাশ এলাকার মধ্যে ১২,০০০ বর্গফুট (কম/বেশি) আয়তন বিশিষ্ট বেসরকারি বাড়ি/ভবন ভাড়া আবশ্যিক।

উক্ত বাড়ি/ভবনে নিম্নে বর্ণিত সুবিধাসমূহ থাকা আবশ্যিক:

- কর্মকর্তা-কর্মচারী এবং সকল সেবা গ্রহীতার জন্য পর্যাপ্ত লিফট এবং সিঁড়ির সু-ব্যবস্থা থাকতে হবে;
- ন্যূনতম ২০ ফিট প্রশস্ত সড়কের পাশে অবস্থিত হতে হবে;
- বৈদ্যুতিক সাব-স্টেশন ও জেনারেটরের ব্যবস্থা থাকতে হবে যাতে দাৈরিক কার্যক্রমে বিঘ্ন না ঘটে;
- বিদ্যুৎ, পানি, টেলিফোন ইত্যাদির সুব্যবস্থা থাকতে হবে;
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