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## Education stipend changing lives of special students

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For Lima Akhter, life had changed for the worse when she lost a leg in a road accident four years ago. The incident almost forced her to stop going to school and quit studies.

Thankfully, the government's education stipend for students with disabilities was there to help her out. Lima now goes to school on a crutch.

She has resumed her studies with a renewed determination. The stipend is covering her educational expenses. And now Lima dreams of defeating her physical disability and achieving something worthwhile in life.

At present, she is a student of grade six at Kathalbari Bohumukhi Girls School in Kurigram sadar upazila. Its headmaster Md Nazmul Haq Mithu said Lima was concentrating on her studies and her hard work was paying off.

The Khalilganj School and College has an eighth grader with physical disabilities.

Rezwan Hossain cannot walk. 'It's really painful for him. He's been coming to school on a rickshaw after receiving the government stipend,' said Rita Dev, the principal.

'His interest in studies and determination gives me the impression that he'll overcome the hurdles and do something good in life,' she added.

The Department of Social Services in Kurigram said 1,470 students with physical and mental disabilities received stipend this year. An amount of Tk 500 was provided at primary level while Tk 600 at secondary level, Tk 700 at high school level and Tk 1,200 per month for tertiary education.

For this expenditure, Tk 1,27,35,600 was allocated in the current financial year.

Md Habibur Rahman, social services official at sadar upazila, said stipend for students with disabilities is a breakthrough programme of the government. 'Students with disabilities are now attending schools and colleges regularly thanks to the programme,' he said.

'They're achieving good results and are now dreaming of doing something for the country on completion of their studies,' he added.

Md Rokunul Islam, deputy director of the district social services office, said mentally and physically challenged students were being located from far-off areas in the district so they can receive the education stipend and prosper like the mainstream students.

