

The Daily Star

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Saturday, October 18, 2008 04:53 AM GMT+06:00

Metropolitan

Another bamboo-clay school building opens in Dinajpur

Kongkon Karmaker, Dinajpur



The new clay- and bamboo-made school building in Dinajpur (Photo:STAR)

Another clay-, straw- and bamboo-made two-storey eye-catching school building was inaugurated at Rudrapur in Dinajpur yesterday near the similar old building which won the 2007 triennial Aga Khan Award for Best Architecture.

The construction work of the building was completed with the help of eight students of Brac University and key architect of Aga Khan award-winning building Anna Heninger.

Biral Upazila Health Official Md Abu Bakkar inaugurated the building as chief guest.

Dipshikha, an NGO working at Rudrapur, initiated to build a clay and bamboo-made multi-storey building for the first time in Bangladesh using local materials which are available everywhere in the country.

According to the NGO officials, the building will be used for students of electrical department under Dipshikha Electrical Skill Improvement [DESI] project. For the reason, the building has been brought under complete electric wiring to provide the students with power.

The students of the project have installed the solar power system at the rooftop of the building. They also installed two power generators inside the building.

Prof Alfred Glaese, an electrical engineer and lecture of a Swiss university, told The Daily Star that the attractive building would be a global model as it used local resources, adding that it would be environment-friendly.

Speaking at the inaugural function as the special guest, Shanti Swchweiz Chairman Jakob Schaub thanked all who were involved in building the houses.

The building is weather-friendly as the moisture and heat inside it are controlled by clay, straw and bamboo. So, it is not required to use foreign resources, he added.

Dipshikha officials said the buildings have been made built to carry out their two educational programmes -- Modern Education and Training Institute (METI) and DESI -- of Dipshikha, an NGO working to help the underprivileged children and explore their creative potential.

The school building of METI was constructed in 2005 and took only four months to set up the building but it took 14 months to make DESI school with the help of local craftsmen and resources.

The building drew a lot of attention at home and abroad for its use of local cheap materials and converting those into an elegant structure. Villagers of remote areas of the district showed their interest in building such structures and three families of the villages built three houses with the same resources.

Anna Heringer, an Austrian national, and Eike Roswag from Germany, were the key architects behind the building. They engaged skilled local craftsmen and helped them refine the processes and taught them new techniques.

Heninger, now in Austria, told The Daily Star over phone that the building was made with local materials like clay, bamboo, straw and rope and it was built at a cost of Tk 17 lakh.

Prodip Tigga, head teacher of METI, received the award in September 2007 on behalf of Dipshikha in Malaysia with a prize money of \$500,000.