

## **Striding ahead**

Born in Hatabo village of Narsingdi, Anima is the daughter of Nasir Ali and Sahera Banu. Anima has been a very expressive child from her early childhood days; her gestures spoke volumes. As she was growing up, her parents realised that she had hearing and speech impairment. Since her parents did not have an inkling, the discovery came as a shock, leaving them at a loss about what to do.

Nasir and Sahera's concern grew when Anima turned six. Given that it is a school-going age, they wondered whether it will be feasible to enrol her in a school. They soon came to know about a hospital named Sahik where services are available for children like Anima.

The Sahik authority gave Anima's parents hope regarding her hearing and speech recovery. The authority assured them that a three-year speech and hearing therapy was just what Anima needed. It was great news for her parents. They hoped for a new beginning for Anima. With the help of assistive devices like hearing aid, Anima was able to hear and slowly began to speak. However, the three years' delivery came to an end with the discontinuation of the aids.

BRAC's children with special needs (CSN) programme came to know of Anima; she was 10 years old at the time. The unit enrolled Anima in Hatabo BRAC School of Narsingdi district. The well-planned environment of the school catered to Anima's needs.

Anima now studies in class 4. Everybody knows her as a good student. She has also developed an interest in dancing. Recently, Anima had a dance performance on a cultural programme that showcases talented children with disability, telecast on BTV and ATN Bangla. . She also demonstrated extraordinary skills during sports competitions at the divisional and national levels. Anima can now confidently participate in various activities just like any other child.

Anima dreams to become a teacher and a dancer. The kindness and support she received from her teachers have clearly directed her towards a more positive future. The pride of her parents, Anima is moving forward, slowly but confidently.