

Down with genetic disorder, Khan siblings keen to meet 'lookalike' Big B

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THEY were born with Progeria, a rare genetic disorder that speeds up ageing, and have been fighting against all odds everyday. But nowadays, brothers Ikramul Khan (24) and Ali Hossain (11) — whose physique and facial features defy their ages — are excited. They cannot wait for the release of Amitabh Bachchan's next film, Paa, where the actor is shown to be suffering from the rare genetic disorder:

"I want to see the film as soon it hits the theatres. People are telling me that Amitabh looks like us in the movie. The superstar wants to meet us. But I don't know my destiny. It is all about luck."



(Top) Ikramul with Ali and sister Rehana (centre), who passed away earlier, in a picture from the family's album; a poster of Paa in which Amitabh Bachchan portrays a 13 year-old-boy suffering from Progeria

says Ikramul, whose physical condition is almost similar to an 80-year-old. "Suddenly, people are saying that I have become a hero. I want to see what the film is all about," he adds.

Kolkata has been the home

of the brothers, who live with their two sisters and parents, since 2002. Originally residents of Chhapra in Bihar, Progeria has made their life span small as experts claim that those born with the disorder live for about 13 years and in some



cases till late teens and early 20s. Since they came to know that the legendary actor looks like them in the film, the brothers are praying for getting an opportunity to meet the superstar before it is too late. After being socially ostracised for

giving births to "abnormal" children, Ikramul and Hossain's parents — Bisul Khan (42) and Razia Bibi (42) — were on the verge of committing suicide. They came to Kolkata where an NGO, SB Devi Charity Home, helped them to cope up with their problems and explained them about the genetic disorder. "When they came to Kolkata, we explained them that five of their seven children were suffering from Progeria," says Sekhar Chattopadhyay, general secretary, SB Devi Charity Home.

"The couple's three children — Guddi who had aged to 80 plus when she was just 16, second daughter Rehana who was 90 plus when she was 24 years old and Rubina Khatoun as

she aged to 70 plus when she was only 13 years old — have already passed away. Two with the same disorder — Ikramul and Hossain — still live," Chattopadhyay adds. But the condition of the two brothers is deteriorating with each passing year.

Earlier this year, the NGO was told from Mumbai that Bachchan was planning to do a film for the awareness of this fatal genetic disorder. A few days ago, the superstar had sent good wishes message to the organisation for their work with the Khan family. Though Bachchan has communicated that he would not be able to come to Kolkata to meet Ali and Ikramul, there are plans that the family would go to Mumbai to meet the star.