

## Rakib Update & A Thank You! - June 20, 2010

Here is a summary of my conversations with Rakib over the past few weeks.

First, Rakib wants me to thank all who donated money to buy the re-chargeable battery operated lamp and fan, and also the calculator, watch and additional money for his monthly expenses. He said the fan makes the heat more tolerable and the light makes it much easier to study during power failures. Rakib is very busy studying and taking final exams at this time but, when he is done he wants to send a thank you letter to all who have helped him.

Each week we try to share a current event and learn a little more about each others country and culture. This week I told Rakib that there was a terrible oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico and it was causing great environmental damage. Rakib said he knew of the leak, he read about it in the English language newspaper he shares with his roommates. He said he was hopeful that it would be stopped soon.

Rakib informed me that there was an outbreak of violence among the young people in Dhaka City. It was brought on by a power failure. The power failure happened at the time that the World Cup Soccer game between Argentina and Nigeria was being played and televised. It caused a TV blackout of the game. Rakib said the people of Bangladesh are great soccer fans and Argentina is a favorite team. Brazil is also a local favorite. The people were quite upset when they could not watch the game. Much of the violence was targeted at the local power company's offices and facilities.

In another call Rakib informed me that one of the engineering universities had to be closed for a while due to a student protest. The students wanted time off from class and studying to watch the World Cup games. After some students were injured the school closed and ordered students out of their hostels until things calm down.

Rakib said the World Cup games have not affected classes at his medical college. He said "medical students know they must study harder and longer hours than any other profession, we have not had much time to watch the soccer games".

I did a little research and found that Bangladesh is ranked 157 in the World Cup and has never qualified for a playoff. I also learned that the Bangladesh government has asked all factories and stores to shut down between the hours of 5PM and 11 PM for the rest of the month. This is prime time for soccer game broadcasts. The government feels that if there is less of a demand for power it will decrease the chance of a power failure during the soccer game broadcasts.

Not many people in Bangladesh have televisions, electronics are very expensive there. Large crowds of people gather with friends, family and at business establishments that have them to watch games.

In our conversation on May 9<sup>th</sup> I informed Rakib that it was Mothers Day in the US, He told me that the holiday is also observed in Bangladesh and they honor their mothers on the day. We also talked a bit about Father's Day. He said it also was observed in Bangladesh. He said these are from western culture and are observed in the urban areas of his country but. In the rural areas many people do not know of them.

Rakib informed me about some of what he learned in the past few weeks. He said he had been studying the cardio vascular system. He learned that too much salt in a diet can cause damage to the system. He said it was ok to use a little salt when cooking food but, you should never put salt on your food after it is cooked. He said "Bob please don't put salt on your food".

He also learned about proper blood flow. He learned that the body needs at least 20 minutes a day of exercise to maintain a healthy cardio vascular system. He also said that you should not use a high pillow when you sleep. A low pillow will let blood flow properly to the brain at night. Reduced blood to the brain can cause a stroke.

Rakib also learned about the importance of checking the urine and stool. He said a doctor can tell that 50% of the body is working properly from these tests.

Rakib has been very busy studying and taking semester final exams in the subjects of anatomy, physiology, biochemistry and community medicine. Rakib's class has been taking an extra class this semester. Community medicine is not usually taught until later in the course but, his teachers feel it is very important and want to cover it earlier and spend more time on the subject.

Rakib said he placed 6<sup>th</sup> in his class on the written portion of his anatomy exam. He has completed most of the written exams in his subjects and will be taking the oral and practical exams over the next two weeks. The results of the final exam will be published July 15<sup>th</sup>.

Rakib said he will get three days off between semesters when his finals are complete, that's right, just three days off. He said he wants to travel back home to visit his family when his finals are complete. He said it will cost 900 to 1,000 taka (about \$14US) for round trip bus fare and for some food on the trip. He should have enough money to pay for the visit with the little bit of extra money we sent him last month.

Rakib asked what the scouts were doing. I informed him that they had gone on a canoe trip on a river in NJ and that the younger scouts were preparing for summer camp and the Venture Scouts were preparing for the Teton / Yellowstone Trek.

Rakib said he called the scout leader I knew in Dhaka and told him he thought he was ready to get involved with a scout group again. Mr. Masum, a scout leader/trainer said he will help Rakib find a good scout group near his college.

I have attached some photos of Rakib and some of the other medical students. Rakib wanted me to let you know that he bought the yellow shirt with the money I sent him for his birthday last December and he bought the red shirt with some of the extra money we sent him. The photos where Rakib is wearing the red shirt were taken on Bangladesh New Year in April. They dress in a festive manner on major holidays. Rakib said the students have become very close and load each other personal items at times. He wanted me to tell you the watch he was wearing in one of the photos was borrowed from another student.

On one of our calls Rakib closed with these words. "If you give someone money they may not be able to pay you back. If you give someone knowledge they can pay you back with knowledge". He ended with "May God bless the Scouts and their families".