

Rakib Update  
February 3, 2009

I spoke with Rakib this morning (night in Bangladesh). He updated me on his family, school, and scouting.

Rakib informed me that a house had been built for his Grandmother and Aunt and Uncle who live just outside of the Sunderbans National Wildlife Conservation area. The Sunderbans is the home of the Bengal Tiger. During the time I was in Rayenda Bangladesh, Rakib informed the organization I was volunteering with (Hands on Disaster Response) that his Grandfather was killed during Cyclone Sidr. His Grandmother, Aunt and Uncle survived, but lost their house and all of their possessions. After I left Bangladesh HODR made the 4 Hour river trip to the area where Rakib's Grandmother lives to research their needs. When they returned they shared their conclusion that there was a need to help there with other NGO's (Non Government Organizations) who were working in the Rayenda area. One of them built a house for Rakib's relatives in the Sunderbans. I'm not sure which one built the house; it may have been OXFAM a British NGO. Rakib expressed his gratitude for the help that his relatives received.

Rakib went on to inform me about his progress with his studies. He told me that the grades had just been published for last year. He obtained a 5.0 GPA. He was very proud and was confident that he would earn another 5.0 this year. He attends a local college and spends many hours with tutors when ever he can. Education and Scouting are the only things in Rakib's life at this time. Both are very important to him. Rakib restated his desire to become a doctor so he could help other people. We talked in some depth about his need for financial help with the cost of medical college. His Father is still struggling to rebuild his rice shop which was destroyed in the cyclone, His only means of earning a living.

We went on to talk about scouting activities. Rakib gave me some insight as to how scouting works in his area. His scout unit is sponsored by his community college and most of the scouters (leaders) are teachers at the college. Keep in mind that a community college in Bangladesh is far from what a community college is in the US. Our community college facilities would be Ivy League in Bangladesh.

I informed Rakib of our winter weather that we are experiencing. Rakib lives in a tropical area but he knows about cold weather and snow. I told him about the winter camping that Troop 1776 has been doing.

Rakib told me about the scout activities he has been participating in. In November his scout group traveled to Kulhna. Kulhna is a fairly large town about 4 hours north of Rayenda. Bangladesh Scouts has a camp there. Rakib and his fellow scouts participated in leadership training and hiking. While hiking they witnessed much cyclone damage and washed out roads. They helped people cross washed out roads and streams where they could. They saw much property damage. They wished they could do more to help but they are poor scouts and did not have money to help the people of this area. Rakib also told me that there was a family in his village whose father had died recently. His scout group, though poor people themselves, raised 1000 Taka and gave it to the family. 1000 Taka is about \$15 US. To give a concept of the value of the Taka, 4 Taka will buy one banana; 40 taka will buy one 2 liter bottle of water, or a package of biscuits. The average worker in Rayenda earns 300 to 400 TK a day.

From Dec 29 – Jan. 7<sup>th</sup> 2009 Rakib attended the South East Asia, International Jamboree. I personally sent Rakib \$100 US so he could attend the jamboree. Rakib informed me that Scouts Bangladesh chartered 2 buses and sent 120 scouts from his area to the Jamboree. The trip took 22 hours with no overnight stop. These buses typically hold 45 passengers. With 60 scouts per bus this indicates that these buses were packed. Rakib is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage of Rover Scouts. This stage is service stage. During his time at the jamboree he served a rover scout trainer. This would be similar to Junior Assistant Scoutmaster in the US. He instructed younger scouts, age 10 to 13, in scout skills and the values of Scouting. Rakib received a certificate. He was not sure, but I believe this advances him to the next stage of Rover Scouts. Completes his requirement for the Rover Instructor Badge. There are only 5 Badges required to earn the Bangladesh Presidents Rover Scout Award, but these are very hard to earn and usually require participation in national and International jamborees to earn them.

Bangladesh emerged as a newly independent nation in 1971 after a historic war with Pakistan for its liberation. The East Pakistan Boy Scout Association was reconstituted in 1972 as “Bangladesh Boy Scout Samity Vide”, President Order no. 111/72. It received the recognition of the World Organization of the Scout Movement as a member in 1974. Bangladesh Scouts is the 105th Member of WOSM. The nomenclature of “Bangladesh Boy Scout Samity Vide” has been amended to “Bangladesh Scouts” in 1978. This organization serves both Boy and Girl Scouts.

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