

Rakib Update 8/9/2009

I spoke with Rakib several times in the past month. He is doing well. I got a little nervous when I called Rakib on a Saturday and I did not get an answer. When I was able to contact him several hours later he informed me that he was at the mosque for prayer when I tried to call earlier. Rakib had some great news he wanted to share with us. He informed me that the grades for the final exam he took for his higher secondary education (Sharonkola College) were posted. This would be something similar to a 2 year community college in the US. He took the exam before traveling to Dhaka to attend medical college coaching class. Rakib informed me that he earned a grade of 5.0, the highest grade obtainable. He said that about 6 lac students (600,000) take the exam, and only about 10,000 students earn a 5.0. Rakib is very proud of his accomplishment and asked me to share this news with the scouts in the US.

Rakib said that he got an email from Ryan M. Ryan informed him that he was the Troop webmaster. He was very pleased to get email from a scout in the US, He told me that Ryan gave him a link to the Troop website. He visited the site and was pleased that he was able to view our activities. He would like to learn more about our culture, our scouts and scouting in the US. He also viewed the Rakib page on the site. Due to my lack of knowledge of Rakib's culture and religion, I was not really sure we should post my updates on the website for the world to see. I was afraid I might have written something that was inaccurate and would offend or insult him or his people. Rakib said he read it and everything is accurate and he is pleased with it. I told him we would change anything he was not comfortable with on past or future postings. He was also very pleased that he could view the photos of him and his family on the Rakib webpage.

On the last update I informed you that Rakib had under estimated how much money he needed for his medical college entrance exam coaching class expenses. Before I went on the Venture Trek to Canada I sent Rakib some additional money from the Troop to help him with expenses that he did not previously allow for. In the past I have sent the money to his Father in Rayenda. This time I sent the money to Rakib in Dhaka. He had some trouble obtaining the money. The banks are the Western Union agents and they would not give Rabi the money because he had no official identification. He is not old enough for a drivers license, he does not have a national ID card (you need to be 18 to get one), and he does not have a passport (he could get one but it is costly and he does not need one to visit surrounding countries). He spoke with his father back in his village of Rayenda. His fathers banker at Brac Bank branch in Rayenda knew that the Boy Scouts in the US were supporting Rakib's education and how we were sending him money through Western Union. He said he would release the money to Rakib if he appeared in person at the bank in Rayenda. Rakib's family also wanted to see him to celebrate the 5.0 he received on his final exam. Rakib traveled about 12 hours on the overnight bus and arrived the next morning. His family met him and he went to the bank. The banker released the Western Union money to him as promised. The banker gave Rakib a Brac Bank customer ID card in hopes that he could use it to claim Western Union money in Dhaka. Rakib spent the rest of the day with his family and friends. That night he took the night bus back to Dhaka. Rakib did not want to miss any of his coaching class. Rakib went to a Brac bank branch in Dhaka and showed them the ID card the banker in Rayenda gave him. The bank manager said he would accept the card as identification for future Western Union money claims.

I also learned that 31 December is Rakib's birthday. He will be 17 years old on his next birthday. You may want to make a note of it if you would like to send him a card or letter.

Rakib's coaching class will continue until 13 October. The medical college admit (entrance) exam will take place on 16 October 2009. As stated in the last update, the exam date was postponed and will

allow for an additional month of coaching class. Rakib will need about 25,000 taka (\$370.00 US) to pay for his expenses for the additional month. I spoke with the troop treasure and it looks like we have that much in the Rakib fund. I will discuss this expense with the PLC and the Scoutmaster before sending the money. Rakib reminded me that if he is accepted to medical college he will need 10 luc taka (1,000,000). One luc equals 100,000 taka, this is about \$14,800 US dollars.

Rakib told me that he has been in coaching class for 1 month and 13 days. His teacher told him he is doing well and is a merit student. Rakib stated that he is #132 out of 7,000 students. I believe you need to be in the top 20% of the class to be a merit student. I can access Rakib's test results through the coaching school website and what he told me appears to be accurate. Rakib said he will email us a copy of his certificate of completion when he finishes medical college coaching class.

We talked a little about the internet. Rakib told me that using *high speed* internet access at the café, it can take several minutes to open an email and up to 20 minutes to download a photo. This brought back memories of my time spent in Bangladesh. The internet was painfully slow in Rayenda when I used it. It could take 5 minutes just to log on. We did not have a high speed connection though. Rakib told me that the last time he was on the internet he got several emails stating that he had won 1 million dollars US. He said it was from a US company and asked me if this could be true. I informed Rakib that I was sure that it was a scam. I told him that the internet is just like a city. There are good people and bad people on the internet, and that there were many people on the internet that try to steal your money by trying to offer you something too good to be true. Rakib gave me his email password and asked me to read the emails and determine if they are authentic. I told Rakib he should not give his password to anyone. He said he trusted me with it. I was honored by that statement. I logged on to his email and found at least 20 emails offering free lottery winnings. I deleted them and marked them as spam.

Rakib stated that he was trying to collect (borrow) a digital camera so he could email us some photos. He has not been able to do so yet. He said that a camera would be useful to him for his school study and to communicate with us. This is just a dream for now. A good quality camera costs 30,000 to 40,000 taka in Bangladesh (\$520 US) there is no money in his budget for one.

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