

Rakib update July 16. 2009

I spoke with Rakib on Sunday July 12. He had just returned to his hostel from the internet café. He has to go to the internet café to access educational material that his teachers post online. The café is about a 30 minute walk from his hostel. The internet access costs Rakib 100 Taka per hour and he needs 7-8 hours per week to access the material his teachers post on line. The high speed internet is very slow. Rakib also has to pay the internet café for what he calls “collect notes”. This is to print material that is posted online. This costs Rakib about 500 taka per month if he collects just important notes. It would cost about 1,000 taka to collect all notes. Rakib usually walks to the café but he sometimes takes a rickshaw if he is very tired. The rickshaw costs 10 taka each way.

Rakib told me his friend has a computer, but he does not have a modem or an internet account. He told Rakib he would let him use his computer for ½ hour per day if Rakib could obtain a modem and internet account. In the past several people in the troop offered to give Rakib a computer. It would have been of little use to Rakib in his home town of Rayenda since he did not have electricity in his home. Now that Rakib is in Dhaka he has electric in his hostel and a computer would be very useful to him. If anyone is still interested in donating a computer please let me know. [erpaley@verizon.net](mailto:erpaley@verizon.net) cell 908-413-6149.

I asked Rakib how the food was at the hostel. It is included with his lodging. He responded “not good, but not bad either” he said it was middle class. Rakib informed me that the admit exam for medical college is being postponed due to a conflict with a religious festival. He went on to enlighten me about the festival.

Eid ul-Fitr is a Muslim holiday that marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting. Eid is an Arabic word meaning "festivity", while Fitr means "to break the fast" so it symbolizes the breaking of the fasting period. Eid ul-Fitr starts the day after Ramadan ends, and is verified by the sighting of the new moon. The date of the festival changes each year because it is based on the lunar calendar. The holiday also celebrates the harvest season. Muslims give money to the poor and wear their best clothes during the festival which lasts two to three days.

The late date of the festival will allow time for Rakib to attend one additional month of coaching class before taking the medical college admit exam. Rakib would like very much to attend the additional month of class. He did not anticipate this and does not have the money to pay for the class and lodging expense for the additional month. He asked if we could help him. The cost of the additional month is about 25,000 taka, (\$267 US).

Rakib also informed me that he under estimated the amount of money he needed for the two months of class he planned on attending. This is mainly because he did not anticipate the having to buy books and the need for transportation to class. Rakib estimates his expense for August to be about 29,000 taka (\$425 US). This includes 5,000

taka to open a bank account. He has been told that he cannot receive Western Union unless he has a bank account. Rakib has about 11,000 taka (\$161 US), left from what we sent him. So that means that he will need about 18,000 taka (\$263 US) to pay for the balance of his August expenses. I believe the Troop has at least that much in reserve and I will talk to the Troop Youth and Adult leadership about authorizing the additional expense and sending Rakib the money ASAP.

At the Scout Sunday service at the Neshanic reformed church \$858 was raised through a special offering. Thank you to all at the Church! I think it would be great if other scouts in the troop prepared a letter to print in their church bulletins. They could inform their congregations about what their Boy Scout is doing to help a Boy Scout in Bangladesh to fulfill his dream to become a doctor.

Rakib informed me that thanks to the mobile phone the Wildgen family bought for him he talks to his family in Rayenda once a week. His family is doing well but his Father still has not received any assistance from the government to rebuild his rice shop.

I am working on a spreadsheet to summarize Rakib's monthly expenses. It is based on information Rakib gave me. I will share it with all when it is finished. Some scouts have asked how much things cost in Bangladesh. This will give them a good idea.

Rakib ended the call with "Thank you and God be with you and all of your Scout's families".

On another note; this morning I went to my Doctor for my yearly Boy Scout Physical. I told him about my experience as a disaster response volunteer in Bangladesh. I told him how I had met a Boy Scout who wanted to become a doctor and how My Scout troop was helping him. I also showed him a few pictures from my experience there. He told me that for a long time he had thought about volunteering with Doctors with Borders on a response to a third world country. He said I had inspired him to look into it more seriously. He indicated that it would be nice to have me accompany him on a response. When I departed his office he said "Let's not forget about what we talked about". You never know what path life's trails will take you down.

I will be away on a Venture Scout Trek in Canada from July 18 – 29. Please be patient if I do not respond to your email during that time. I will respond when I return. Several of our leadership scouts have Rakib's email address. I encourage you to communicate with him while I am away. Please copy Mr. Metauro, Mr. Cincotta and Me on any correspondence.

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