

**Fundraising Meal In Sylhet**

Mike Sherriff reports

In February of this year Khasdobir Youth Action Group held its first fundraising event in Sylhet. The event coincided with 4 members of Friends of Khasdobir visiting Sylhet in a personal capacity. Those attending from the UK included Kathleen Jackson, the former chairperson of the UK Friends, who initiated local fundraising meals in Loughborough. Mike Sherriff, the current chair of Friends of Khasdobir, and Kazi Mashud were also present at the event. Kazi and Mike encouraged people they knew in Sylhet to attend. Members of the Khasdobir Youth Action Group Committee and staff of the project also sold tickets. In total 48 people attended and £77 was raised for the work of Friends of Khasdobir.

The Rainbow Guest House, where most visitors to the project in Sylhet stay, provided their conference room for the function at no cost. Ticket prices were



*The representative of Muslim Charity (2<sup>nd</sup> left) with (l to r) Mike Sherriff, Kazi Mashud, Kathleen and Derrick Jackson.*

based on half the cost paying for food and half being a donation to Khasdobir Youth Action Group. During the event guests were also invited to make regular monthly contributions to KYAG and several pledged to do so.

The programme included songs and dances from children, young people and one of the teachers of Khasdobir Youth Action Group. There were also some songs from Friends of Khasdobir and one guest. A speech about the importance of local giving in Bangladesh

from the country representative of the UK charity called Muslim Charity also raised awareness and inspired people to pledge to give on a regular basis.

The funds raised from this meal will pay for much needed materials for the Schools Under the Sky, as the project has been struggling to afford these following the changes in the exchange rate. Several of the guests who attended also expressed an interest in becoming more involved with KYAG, for example by joining the committee.

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# The Cost of Secondary Education

Mike Sherriff outlines KYAG's support for High School Students.

Khasdobir Youth Action Group started by providing open air schools under the sky for young children on the tea estates near Sylhet and for the children of labourers living in poverty on the outskirts of the town. Very quickly the project was successful in helping many children gain admission to primary schools. However, once primary school ended many of the children we had supported could not afford the fees to continue with their secondary schooling.

In Bangladesh, although primary school is free, there are many costs associated with attending secondary school. These include the

admission fee, monthly fees, examination fee and the costs of books and uniforms. These are simply too high for many of the families KYAG supports. KYAG therefore started to support students who needed help with tuition fees. An early morning free coaching class was also introduced, as most children from better off families in Bangladesh pay for private tuition to help them achieve success in their exams.

Currently 74 young people are receiving support with secondary school fees. To ensure a fairer system application forms for support were made available to students through the coaching

class and the open-air schools under the sky. The priority for support is based on occupation of parents and attendance at schools under the sky and coaching class. Some young people who have not attended schools under the sky receive support, especially if they have recently moved to the area. A higher contribution from KYAG is made to students of tea estate labourers (who earn less than 85p per day) and others whose parents were on low incomes. The contribution from KYAG is less for children of rickshaw pullers and other labourers, with children whose fathers are earning more receiving a lower level of support.

## Some of the students helped

**Muni** received support from KYAG last year. She is 19 years old and studying in class 10. Her father is a carpenter and her mother is a housewife. She has 4 brothers and sisters and she is the eldest. Her ambition is to be a teacher. Muni has to pay an annual admission fee of £50, a monthly fee of £6, exam fees of £12 (total of £134 per year) plus the cost of uniform and books. KYAG has supported her with a bursary of £27 in the last 6 months.



**Milon** is 18 years old. His father is a daily labourer and his mother does house work. He has one brother and two sisters, all are younger than him and all are studying and receiving some support from KYAG. Milon's ambition is to be an engineer. He started school by attending one of our schools under the sky at Badambagicha. The fees that Milon has to pay include an admission fee, monthly fees and exam fees. These total over £109 per year. In the last 6 months KYAG supported him with a bursary of £29.



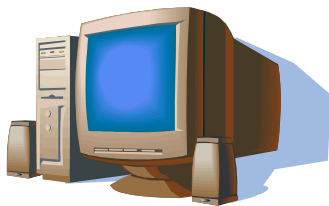
**Kali** is 17 years old. She is studying science and is about to take her exam. She has been attending her current school for 5 years and before that went to Khasdobir Primary School and Sumon Momen School under the Sky. Her father works at the mosque and her mother is a housewife. She is the youngest of 5 brothers and 3 sisters. Her two younger sisters are married. Four brothers paint the houses of other people and one is studying at the Madrassa. Kali wants to be a doctor. The admission fee, monthly fees and exam fees for Kali total £104. In the last 6 months KYAG has provided support of £50, including £30 towards school clothing.



## Visiting a tea estate



Trustees Moyra Blake (left) and Sue Simmons visit a family on a tea estate while on a private visit to KYAG. We look forward to an article about their trip next time.



Do visit our excellent new website, full of pictures of the project.

[www.khasdobir.org.uk](http://www.khasdobir.org.uk)

## Come and Eat for KYAG Monday May 22

Enjoy a meal at an excellent Bangladeshi restaurant a short walk from Hatfield Station. Details from John Burgess, 66 Park Meadows, Hatfield, AL9 5HB. Email: [johnburgess@ntlworld.com](mailto:johnburgess@ntlworld.com).

**Should you for any reason no longer wish to receive this Newsletter please let me know. My contact details are at the bottom of page 1. K P-B**

KYAG rely on help from supporters in the UK to pay the bursaries for secondary school students at Khasdobir.

- £84 will pay for an annual bursary for a secondary school student who is the child of a tea estate labourer and children from families with a very low income (where one parent might be earning as little as 85p per day)
- £70 will pay for an annual bursary for a secondary school student who is the child of parents in job such as a rickshaw puller
- £56 will pay for an annual bursary for students whose parents work in jobs such as drivers or in the local markets

**Our AGM  
Saturday July 1  
11.30 am**

**Rosebery St Peter  
Community Centre  
Loughborough  
LE11 5EQ**

This is your opportunity to learn more about the project you support from Trustees who have recently visited it as well as to meet Trustees and fellow-supporters. So do try to come if you possibly can. There is parking at the venue or we can arrange for someone to meet you at Loughborough station.

But do please let Kathleen Jackson (01509 557740 or email her on [derkat.46@ntlworld.com](mailto:derkat.46@ntlworld.com)) know so that we know numbers for the vegetarian curry lunch (for which a small charge will be made)

**Explore London  
On Foot  
Saturday  
September 2**

Yes, there'll be another walk exploring part of London on the first Saturday of September. This year we hope the walk will explore Chelsea.

Get yourself sponsored for Friends of Khasdobir and walk for free or pay just £6 and walk for fun. In either case you will receive a booklet full of fascinating information about the places you pass. Details from: Jeni Gosling, [j.gosling@btinternet.com](mailto:j.gosling@btinternet.com).

# I'd like to help...

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Forename(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Post code \_\_\_\_\_

**Please complete either Section A or B and if you are a UK taxpayer and have not already done so please sign the Gift Aid form in Section C, making each pound you contribute worth an additional 25p. Then send this page to:**

**Geoffrey Pool, 7 St John's Road, Stoneygate, Leicester LE2 2BL**

**A - by Cheque** (*payable to Friends of Khasdobir*). I enclose my contribution of £.....

## **B – by Banker's Order**

To: .....

(*Name of Bank*)

.....

.....

(*Address of bank*)

Please pay to:

**Friends of Khasdobir.** At Barclays Bank, Town Hall Square, Leicester, Branch. Sort Code: 20 49 17. Account no: 20587192

The sum of £..... on .....20.....

And thereafter the same amount on the same day each month until further notice.

.....(Signature)

.....(date)

.....(Account No.)

## **C – Gift Aid**

**I am a UK taxpayer and would like Friends of Khasdobir to reclaim the tax I have paid on any donations I make to them.**

Signed .....

Date .....

### **Notes:**

**This declaration is in force from the above date until it is cancelled. It need only be made once.**

**You must pay in tax (income tax and capital gains tax added together), at least the total of all donations that you make to charities each year. The donation that you make to the Friends of Khasdobir, Bangladesh is included in this total.**

**If your financial circumstances change, and you cease to pay income tax or capital gains tax at a level at least equal to the sum that you donate to all charities each year, then please let Friends of Khasdobir know by writing to the Treasurer.**