



Newsletter

Autumn 2023

FRIENDS OF KHASDOBIR, BANGLADESH, Registered Charity No: 1185262

Our newest centre is being run by our longest serving teacher

Christmas Puppet Show

**Saturday 9th December
9.30am – 10.30am by zoom**

Following the success of our previous Christmas puppet shows we will be holding another show from our new school serving the Khasdobir area on Saturday 9th December. The story this year will be about the Little Red Hen.

We are inviting our supporters, their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren to join the project by zoom to watch the puppet show

To book your places email khasdobir@btinternet.com before Thursday 7th December and we will send you the link to join.



The event is free, but please make a Christmas donation at: <https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/donation/friends-of-khasdobir>

or send a cheque made payable to Friends of Khasdobir to our treasurer Phil Watson, April Cottage, 12 Church Street, Rothley, Leicestershire. LE7 7PD.

Please join us and support the project this Christmas.

In July we opened our 12th pre-primary centre. It is situated on the tea gardens at the back of the new Sylhet cricket stadium. It is an isolated community of families who work on the tea estates. The area is not currently served by our centres. The construction of centres has been possible due to the generous legacies left in the wills of former supporters.

The weekend before the centre opened a group of our teachers spent a day painting murals on the centre walls. There are pictures of fruits, fish, a bumble bee, and a frog. English and Bangla letters have been painted on the walls along with the flag and significant monuments of Bangladesh.

The teacher in charge at the new centre will be Salma, who has lived in this community since she was three years old. She originally came to Sylhet from Barisal (a small city in the south of Bangladesh) with her mother who came to work on the tea gardens. Salma first became involved with the project through her husband who was one of the first teachers on the tea gardens. He taught many of the young people who are now teachers and staff at the project. Salma's husband now works as a manager at a nearby fish farm. They have two daughters, one is waiting for a university place and one studies at the nearby High School

Salma started to teach at one of our schools under the sky serving the slum areas of Sylhet city in 2005. When the management of the project transferred to Sylhet Jubo Academy Salma continued as a teacher in charge at our Badambagicha school. She is very pleased that there will now be a pre-primary school in the part of the tea garden where she grew up as most people living here are very poor, working as day labourers. The school will enable the children to study and get a better life.

Since starting to work with the Khasdobir Project Salma has noticed many changes. The shelters mean that the schools can operate when it is raining. Play is now included in the daily routine of the schools and the resources available for teaching are much better than before.



Chairman
Treasurer
Patrons:
Web Site

Mike Sherriff
Phil Watson, April Cottage, 12, Church Street, Rothley, Leicestershire, LE7 7PD
The Rt. Hon the Baroness Morgan of Cotes; Rt. Hon Sir Kevin Barron
www.khasdobir.org.uk

From The School Comments Box-

Each of our schools has a comment box where parents and guardians can write about their opinions regarding the school. This is the comment from one guardian:

“ Greetings. Thank you to the Teacher and Assistant Teacher. My little sister's name is Nushahiba. She is a pupil at Bokul pre-primary school. She has been studying at the school for 6 months. At first she did not want to come to school She used to cry and sat very quietly in school. But the teachers were very kind to her and helped her to get to know the other children and play with them. Now she comes to school every day and learns a lot. She is friendly with other children and her speaking and writing has developed. When she goes home she plays games and sings songs. Many thanks to the school and the teachers”



Teacher at our school reading feedback from a guardian.

The Sylhet Trek

This year our annual virtual trek was organised with the students from our computer class. It was held on September 3rd with 20 people taking part. It aimed to introduce our supporters to some of the main sites of interest in Sylhet.

The journey started with a visit to Badambagica, an area on the outskirts of Sylhet City, where we have been running schools since the project started. In Badambagica we visited the market where fish and vegetables are sold. We saw the Ilashkhandi mosque, which is a landmark in the area.

We then moved on to the Rainbow Guest House where trustees from the UK visiting the project usually stay. We saw the bedrooms and dining room and enjoyed the view from the roof top.

This was followed a visit to Keane Bridge, built in 1936 and named after the British Governor of Assam. It is called the gateway to Sylhet City and spans the Surma River, which runs through Sylhet. Next to the bridge we saw the Ali Amjad clock, the oldest clock tower in Bangladesh founded by Nawab Ali Ahmad Khan in 1872 and named after his son.

After crossing the Surma River by boat and returning over the bridge we visited the Shahjalal Mazar. This is Sylhet's most famous tourist spot. It is the shrine and burial place of the 14th century Sufi saint Shah Jalal, who brought Islam to South Asia. Along with many other visitors we admired the famous tank reservoir with large fish.

Finally, we went by rickshaw to the Shaheed Minar in Sylhet and visited the Sylhet book fair. The Shaheed Minar is the memorial to the student martyrs killed during protests to stop Urdu being imposed, instead of Bengali, as the language of the country.

Thanks to the computer class students for filming. It is not too late to support this fundraising event. You can donate online at:

<https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/donation/friends-of-khasdobir>



We are looking for a new Independent Examiner

As a small charitable incorporated organization our accounts have to be scrutinized every year by a financially competent person. We are very grateful to Robert Whowell and Partners who have provided this service to us for many years. However, they have now informed us that they do not have the capacity to continue. If you, or somebody you know, could consider taking this on please contact us at khasdobir@btmail.org.uk



When your legs are tired run with your heart

This is the slogan that is being used for a marathon fundraising event that Sylhet Jubo Academy are organizing to raise funds for the Khasdobir Project.

In our current 3 year funding agreement for the project we have included support for the development of fundraising in Bangladesh that will help to secure the long term future of the project.

The first event will be a half marathon run, along with a fun run. It is being held in November.

The running clubs in Sylhet and more widely in Bangladesh have been contacted and are enthusiastic about taking part. Staff from the project and students from the computer class have offered their time as volunteers. Sponsors and supporters for the event are being sought.

The marathon will be the first of three planned events to be held in the coming year.



Two young men join our embroidery class

In July 2022 we started to provide embroidery and block batik training in addition to sewing and computing. The first batch of students were all young women and they produced some fantastic embroidery on garments, bedspreads and cushion covers. We now have an online shop selling items made by the students: <https://peoplesfundraising.com/shop/sylhet-embroidery-and-craft-shop> They are ideal for Christmas gifts.

This year we were very pleased when two young men also joined the class. They did not previously know each other, coming from different parts of Sylhet.

Mirad Ahmed is 19 years old and lives in Chowkidhiki, an area that has been served by the project since it started. He is in the second year of college, having previously studied at Khasdobir School. His father has retired, and his mother is a housewife. He has 3 brothers and 2 sisters. One brother and one sister are still studying. Mirad likes embroidery and hopes to form a business selling embroidery after completing our course. At present he is learning the basics but hopes to move on to make cushion covers, bedsheets and embroidered garments. Mirad was full of praise for the embroidery teacher. He found everyone in the class very friendly and had no concern about joining a class where most students were women.

Musharaf is 22 years old and is studying economics at college. He has one sister who is studying. His father runs a small grocery shop, and his mother is a housewife. Musharaf joined the class because he saw women doing embroidery and thought "I can do that too". At present he is learning basic stitches and hopes to learn to make embroidered clothes, bedsheets and cushion covers. In future he would like to start an embroidery training centre. He is also interested in computing. Musharaf said that our teacher was very talented, and he especially liked the fact that she taught the students by assisting them directly and demonstrating stitches with her own hand. At first Musharaf was a bit shy with all the female students but now he is very friendly with all of them.



If you receive your newsletter by post and we do not currently have your email address it would be extremely helpful if you could provide it to us so that we can communicate with you occasionally about our various on-line events using email. It is still possible to receive a paper version of the newsletter. If you want to stop receiving a paper version of the newsletter and just receive an email copy, then please let us know. You can contact us at: khasdobir@btinternet.com

YES, I'd like to help...

1 Friends of Khasdobir, Bangladesh Registered Charity No. 1185262

2 Gift Aid Declaration

I am a U.K. taxpayer, and wish the charity to treat all donations that I make as Gift Aid donations from the date below, so that the tax I have paid on those sums can be recovered by them.

Name, including Mr, Mrs, Miss or Ms, and first name

.....

Full Address

.....

Postcode Date

Signed

E-mail Address (optional)

Notes:

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

I confirm that have paid or will pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax (added together) for the current and each following year; 6th April to 5th April, until further notice, that is at least equal to the amount of all the tax that the charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts each tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand that The Friends of Khasdobir charity will reclaim the tax on my donations to them.

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 and CASCs each year, then please let the charity know by writing to the Treasurer.