



Newsletter

Spring 2025

Two more years of funding for the project agreed

At their meeting in January the Friends of Khasdobir trustees agreed to commit funds to the project in Bangladesh for two more years. The amount committed is less than in previous years as our fundraising and donations (apart from legacies) continue to gradually decrease. Our reserves are also gradually reducing as we use these to support the work in Bangladesh.

Over the next two years our main aim is to continue to work with our partner in Bangladesh, Sylhet Jubo Academy (SJA), to support the local community to raise funds to sustain the work of the project. With SJA we have also started discussions with the tea garden authorities to seek some support from them for the pre-primary centres located on the tea estates.

The next phase of the project will include a commitment to fund 10 pre-primary centres and their teachers. Most of the cost of maintaining the shelters will become the responsibility of the local management committees. We will also be encouraging use of the centres at times when the classes are not meeting, for example the training now organized by the local community at the Hilwachara centre.

We will continue to provide training in embroidery and block batik, with an emphasis on recruiting new students from the parents and older siblings of children attending the pre-primary schools on the tea estates. Learning skills such as these provides an alternative to working on the tea gardens, especially for the daughters of tea labourers.

Sewing training at our main office centre will end. The outreach team will be supporting students who completed the course in the last two years to establish a group or groups who can use the sewing machines to generate an income. Computer training will continue, with an emphasis on supporting students to earn money from freelancing, by introducing a laptop loan scheme for students who need a laptop to get started.

We will be continuing some support for those widows who have not yet been able to claim funds from the various government initiatives that have been initiated in Bangladesh. Our outreach team will continue to support widows, to help them get access to subsidized and cheap medicine and treatment that are available in Sylhet, but often not widely publicised.



Meeting of a Centre Management Committee



Sewing training at Hilwachara Centre

Our Annual meeting of supporters:

**Saturday 5th July 2025 10am by
zoom**

Please join our annual meeting on Saturday morning 5th July. This is your opportunity to find out about our work over the past year and to take part in discussion about the future. It will provide an opportunity to meet staff who work on the project and the children and young people who benefit from your support.

This is the link to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83808915412?pwd=s7Z80ssUoGcXu4JihWwrRfPljzIJ8V.1>

Meeting ID: 838 0891 5412

Passcode: 896786

Thank you Spice Lounge Restaurant



Spice Lounge Restaurant Donates £250 To Friends Of Khasdobir

Article by Ripon

Spice Lounge Restaurant was proud and honoured on 11th March to be a sponsor of a fantastic fundraising event for FRIENDS OF KHASDOBIR. In total, we donated £250 to help support this wonderful local charity. Everyone who dined, thoroughly enjoyed this great night for a great cause.

We were delighted that the local paper publicized our recent Loughborough fundraising meal.

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 Registered charity number 1185262

Riyad gets a second chance

Riyad is a sixteen year old boy whose family live on one of the tea gardens near Sylhet. His father is a rickshaw puller and his mother works on the tea garden. Riyad had always been a good student but in the final year before his exams his attendance at school became erratic. His mother requested help from the school but the situation did not improve and Riyad failed his pre-exam test. The teachers then took the decision that Riyad should leave the school.

Riyad's parents informed our outreach workers about their concerns. Riyad was keen to continue his studies and said if he had the opportunity he would attend school regularly. Our outreach team then went with the family to visit the school and eventually the Head Teacher agreed that he could be readmitted.

Riyad did well in the most recent test. He has started attending coaching classes and hopes that this will help him to be successful in his forthcoming national examinations.



Yard meetings raise awareness

Every month the outreach team at the project organise yard meetings with the community- on the tea estates and in the slums on the outskirts of Sylhet.

These meetings are an extension of the door to door visits organised by the team. People living in a small area gather together in the yard of one of the residents. Then members of the outreach team lead discussions on issues of importance to people from the area. Usually there are about twenty four people present, mainly women. Some, but not all, are the parents and guardians of children attending the pre-primary schools.

A lot of the discussion is about family life and the development of children and teenagers. Subjects discussed include keeping children safe, why it is important not to hit children when they are misbehaving, the damage for children arising from family arguments amongst adults, and what to do to avoid accidents such as drowning, burning and road traffic accidents.

There is discussion about the risks associated with use of mobile phones and accessing the internet as these devices are now widely available in Bangladesh.

An important topic is why children under 18 should not get married. In the past children as young as 12 were married and it is often the case that most of the older women attending the meetings were married at an early age. However, they are usually very keen that their daughters should not marry at a young age and instead should pursue education that can lead to a better job. Today most of the young women, for example those living on the tea garden, strongly oppose early marriage. The legal minimum age for marriage in Bangladesh is 18 for women and 21 for men.

Finally the meetings are used as an opportunity to raise awareness about the pre-schools and training courses available from the project and to encourage people to take part.



We are looking for new trustees

We are a small charity that has been supporting the Khasdobir Project in Sylhet for over 40 years. We are always looking for people interested in joining our committee, which meets 3-4 times a year. The duties of a trustee are described here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved> If you, or somebody you know, would be interested in joining us then please email us at: khasdobir@btinternet.com

Meet Kalil

~ chair of one of the centre committees

Kalil is 50 years old. He was born near Dhaka and came to Sylhet in 1994 after an argument with his step-brother. His mother died when he was young and his father re-married.

Kalil married a woman from Sylhet. He works in the Tea Garden as a guard and in the city as a rickshaw puller. He has five daughters, three of whom are married. The eldest lives with her son near the pre-primary centre, which he attends. His fourth daughter is fourteen and is learning to sew at our training centre.

The family house has two rooms and a separate kitchen. Washing facilities are outside.

Kalil has been chairman of the Centre for over 12 months. The committee ensure the school is well maintained, and motivate the guardians to send their children to school. They also help with the organisation of special events.

Kalil is a member of the mosque and enjoys singing and poetry.

Below: Kalil with his Grandson



Freelancing success

Every year the project provides a one year course in computing to 40 students- meeting in four groups of 10. This is an ideal opportunity for young people to learn a skill that can help them to gain employment and/or undertake freelancing work independently. The course includes Microsoft word, excel and power point. It also includes photoshop and illustrator.

Ahad is 23 years old from Badambagicha. He lives with his mother who is a housewife. His father is dead and his brother and sisters are married and live separately. He is now earning money from platforms including Freepik, Getzy and Adobestock. On freelancing.com he has had 10-12 clients for logos, banners and business cards. He has provided designs to organisations in Bangladesh, India, USA, England, Scotland, Italy, Canada and UAE. Ahad uses the earnings from his work to support his family- especially his mother who is ill. He buys her medication. SJA lent him a lap top, which enabled him to work from home as he also has another daytime job.

Bushra is 21 years old. She lives with her mother who is a housewife and her father who is a bus driver. She has done some freelancing for her followers on tik tok who requested help with social media marketing. She made a short video to help a small business sell dresses. She set up a face book page for a small business selling cakes and earned 5,000 taka (about £31) from this.

Bushra does her work using a mobile phone. If she had a lap top she could do more work and in future SJA hope to lend her a lap top so that she can get started with freelancing on platforms such as freepic and FIVERR.

Jakariya is 20 years old. His father is a CNG engineer and his mother is a housewife. He got his first freelancing work with FIVERR when he was still doing our course. His job was to create business cards for Malaysian Airlines. He has worked with several platforms and has won two contests designing logos – one for a New Zealand Company (\$150) and one for a US Company (\$180). He is now earning 10,000 to 15,000 taka per month from freelancing and is helping other students to get started with freelancing.

Below Ahad, with one of his designs, and Bushra



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...

Friends of Khasdobir, Bangladesh Registered Charity No. 1185262

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.

Friends of Khasdobir; Bangladesh Treasurer, April Cottage, 12 Church Street, Rothley,
Leicestershire LE7 7PD