



# Moanoghar News Bulletin

(May - June 2020)

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*Cashew Nut Plantation on Moanoghar land*

## **Covid-19 Ravages Bangladesh (and Chittagong Hill Tracts)**

The global Covid 19 pandemic continues to ravage Bangladesh. Bangladesh now counts, as per the most recent official information, more than 180,000 infections. However, given the relatively limited number of tests so far carried out with a rickety public health system in the country, most believe that the actual number could be much higher. Regardless, Bangladesh is currently among the 20 most Covid 19 affected countries in the world, even with the official number.

The pandemic has also reached to the Chittagong Hill Tracts. By the last count, the region has about 1300 Covid 19 patients: by and large, evenly spread out among the 3 hill districts of Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban. Although, this is a relatively small number, the impact of the livelihood of the people has been simply DEVASTATING.

Since early June, the government has started to withdraw the general countrywide lockdown situation. However, a return to normalcy still seems to be far away. Transports and communications network remain severely disrupted constraining market access by the people to sell their agricultural produces. This is most acute across the CHT region with its poor communication and transports infrastructure which even in the pre-Covid 19 days was barely functional. The mobility of the people remains severely restricted.

Moanoghar School is closed from 17 March'20 following the government's order for closure of all educational institutions. The majority of the children are also with their families. At present, no one can predict when the schools will open although there is anticipation that it could be in mid-August or September. Regardless, Moanoghar authority has taken steps in the meanwhile so that the children, at least a significant number of them, can access to their lessons with their class teachers and continue with their studies amidst the Covid 19 school closure.

### Revised Lessons Plan during Covid 19 by Moanoghar School

Moanoghar management has undertaken steps to provide lessons to the children despite the closure of the school and majority of the children staying with their families. The measures started from May and further revised and expanded in June. These are:

- All the children from class 5 to Class 10 will be provided online classes. Given that the children are from remote and poor families, they were advised to group together with several students in locations where there are mobile networks and have internet access. As per the phone call survey done by the house tutors, about 18.85% of the total students called, were accessing the online classes being conducted by the school; while in places where there is no internet, 51.31% students were trying to study with the private tutors engaged by the community. The routine for online classes was already shared with the children and their parents/guardians.
- Those who cannot attend live online classes, can access to the teacher's lectures, which have been uploaded on the Moanoghar Youtube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzaLKPqRtH4LIAoVNWqelkQ/featured>). We use social media (Moanoghar Facebook Group) and the school website ([www.mors.edu.bd](http://www.mors.edu.bd)) to pass message to the guardians and children of online classes and suggestions for studies.
- The teachers were provided with support to purchase the logics and IT equipment to provide the online classes.
- Several 'hotline numbers' have been set up so that the children and their parents/guardians can directly talk to the teachers and Moanoghar management.
- The overall school management is divided in 3 sections: primary (Class 1-5), Junior (Class 6 -8) and High (Class 9-10), with a designated Coordinator for each section. The Section Coordinator will be responsible to maintain contacts with the children and also class teachers.
- A SMS group with all the parents and guardians has been set up to maintain regular communications.
- Currently, Moanoghar School management is finalizing an "accelerated learning programme" for the children in anticipation of the school's reopening in mid-August – September. The programme is designed to prepare the children to attend the annual examination in November – December.

### SSC Results of Moanoghar School

The results of Chittagong Academic Board published the results of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) on last 31 May'20. In total 287 students attended the SSC examinations, out of which 219 passed and the remaining 68 failed. This amounts to a pass rate of 79 percent, slightly better than last year which was 78 percent. The results are along the average of the recent years' SSC results.

However, Moanoghar aims at a higher target and it has set up initiatives recently in this regard. As per this plan, Moanoghar School targets at least 90-95 percent pass rate in SSC examinations within the next 4-5 years.

On a similar note, the Moanoghar affiliated **Tara Bunia High School** in Tarabunia, Dighinala has achieved excellent SSC results with 100 percent pass. 19 students attended the SSC examination from the school and all of them have passed. The school is currently trying to obtain registration from the Chittagong Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, as a full-fledged high school.

At present, Moanoghar School is registering the class 8 students for Junior School Certificate (JSC) examinations and the class 5 students for Primary School Certificate (PSC) examinations. Despite Covid 19 induced closure of the school and the children being away with their parents/family, Moanoghar have been able to ensure registration of all the children for the related examinations.



### Endowment for Dr. Bhagadatta Khisa Memorial Scholarship under HELP

An endowment in memory of late Dr. Bhagatta Khisha was set up in June'20 under the Moanoghar Higher Education Loan Programme (HELP) by his wife Ms. Sabita Khisha. A special scholarship, to be called "Dr. Bhagadatta Khisha Memorial Scholarship", for tertiary level studies will be provided to a meritorious student from the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The fund for the endowment is created from the life-long savings of Ms. Sabita Khisha.



*Dr. Bhagadatta Khisa*

Late Dr. Bhagadatta Khisa was a renowned personality in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Born in 1933 in Sabekhyang village of the present-day Naniarchar upazila, he was the first MBBS medical doctor from the CHT region. He was a popular writer: he wrote poems, songs and drama including the translation of Molière's "Le Medecin Malgré Lui" in Chakma language. His study on the Shamanic customs of the Chakmas and other communities remain a reference in the field. He had been long associated with Moanoghar and since its foundation, a strong support of Moanoghar activities. He died from incurable cancer in 2002.

### Miscellaneous News

- Moanoghar has resumed activities of the bakery and sale of the various bakery products. The current operations are based on online orders and home-delivery to the clients
- Moanoghar has also undertaken the following initiatives:
  - Cashew nut plantations along with the associated crops such as *Shajna* (Moringa Oleifera) and *Kanaidinga* (Oroxylum Indicum). For the short term crops, the seeds of different vegetables such as long beans, pigeon peas, rosella and spinach were sown; while for the mid-terms crops, the saplings of banana and papaya were planted on the orchard.
  - Fishery in the 2 ponds: The two fish ponds were prepared for fish cultivation in June. Fingerlings will be released in July. The fish from the ponds will help fulfill the need of protein of the Moanoghar children.
- Moanoghar held a video-conference with the HELP donors in Rangamati to mobilize their support for the programme. Similar meetings are planned all through July 2020 with the groups in Dhaka, Chittagong and others districts in the CHTs.
- Moanoghar has been in extensive contacts with the parents and guardians of the children across the region. It has held, so far, a number of small group meetings with the parents over audio/video in Rangamati where this was possible. Similar meetings are planned all through July 2020.
- Moanoghar has been able to make contacts with most of the children and their parents/guardians: both residential and non-residential. However, there are still about 250 (out of the total of 1100) who could not be contacted as they live in locations where there is no mobile network. Moanoghar has sent messages through our ex-student networks and other parents/guardians to contact us.
- Moanoghar is planning for a reunion of the former students in January/February 2021 with the expectation that the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic will subside by the period.

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