



# Moanoghar News Bulletin

(April - June 2021)

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*Mr. Aong Sui Prue Chowdhury, Honourable Chairman,  
Rangamati Hill District Council at Moanoghar*

## **The rampage of Covid-19 Continues in Bangladesh (and Moanoghar)**

The devastation of Covid-19 continues unabated in Bangladesh, including in the region of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The country is currently under the third wave with most of the diagnosed cases belonging to the Delta variants. The country is currently under lockdown and the government has upped the measures by ordering a further “stringent lockdown” from 1 July, initially for 1 week but which is expected to be extended further by more weeks. Everyone is ordered to stay confined at home, no vehicle is allowed on the street except those of the emergency services.

For the last few weeks, the country has been reporting higher number of cases every day, the highest so far, 8,850 positive cases and 142 deaths. The public health experts are now raising red alert to this catastrophic wave. Indeed, several districts currently report 30 percent or more positive cases and all the three districts of the CHT region: Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachari, are on this list.

The ongoing wave that started at the end of February '21 (with some remission in May) will further affect the life and livelihood of the people in the CHT region who are already in an extremely fragile condition from the earlier waves. For Moanoghar, this is again a very critical situation making it difficult to ensure the education of the children. Now, more than 300 children are staying in the hostels and more children are asking to return.

**In this situation, providing education and ensuring the accommodation of the children is a huge challenge to Moanoghar amidst the pandemic. We appeal to all for support, for the education of the children and their well-being at Moanoghar. PLEASE HELP US.**

### Moanoghar School in Covid-19 Pandemic Situation

Since March 17, 2020, all educational institutions in Bangladesh have been closed by order of the government for public health safety. As the country goes through continued lockdown from the eruption of the Delta variants in the recent months, it looks strongly likely that the schools will remain closed for the rest of 2021. If this is the case, then the children will be without schooling/classes for two consecutive years in Bangladesh.

At the peak of the initial wave of the virus, last year, Moanoghar School started online classes when most of the children were at home with their parents/relatives. The recorded classes were subsequently uploaded on Moanoghar website ([www.moanoghar.org](http://www.moanoghar.org)) and Moanoghar Facebook page (Moanoghar), so that the children can download the courses and study later.

Obviously, in the context of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the socio-economic background of the children's families, the initiative has some serious limitations. Most of the villages where the most of the Moanoghar children live, have no mobile network, let alone internet. Even where mobile internet is available (varying in quality), most children do not have the means to afford smartphones. Moanoghar reached out to the children despite the remote locations and in areas where internet is available, we grouped the children with those who have a smartphone and paid the internet access. In areas where, no mobile network is available, Moanoghar found a local tutor to provide lessons to the children and paid a portion of the tutor's salary. All of this had its own limitations. But this was surely the best Moanoghar could do in this desperate situation.

When the first wave of cases started to subside, the children returned to the hostels from September 2020 and Moanoghar provided intensive remedial classes to make up for the time lost.

***This year, as the pandemic has caused the schools to continue being closed, Moanoghar has started again the online classes.*** At the same time, it has arranged necessary facilities so that the children currently staying in hostels can attend the online classes with social distancing measures. It has also, at the same time, reached out to all the other children, by helping them with tutors or attending the online classes from villages, as it did last year.

This is a very critical time for Moanoghar. ***The staff have voluntarily agreed to a 50 percent pay cut during the period (since April 2020) and the savings are spent on children's education.***

*Orientation of the School Teachers for holding online classes (April 2021)*



### **Further initiatives for the education of the Moanoghar Children**

Moanoghar held meetings with the guardians/parents over 4 consecutive days from 23 to 26 April to plan for the education of the students in the context of the ongoing pandemic. In addition, Moanoghar teachers and other relevant staff also separately travelled in March - April to the remote villages in all the 3 Hill Districts to meet with the parents/guardians and organize tutors for their children.

At Moanoghar School, the teachers have made a 50-day intensive curriculum for the students, to prepare them for the 2<sup>nd</sup> terminal examination, tentatively scheduled for the end of August or early September. The curriculum is prepared in anticipation of the children being able to return to the hostels and attend online classes with social distancing.



*Children attending online classes from the hostels*

### **Database of Blood Groups of Moanoghar Children**

Moanoghar, with the support of Rangamati based voluntary association 'Unmesh' has started to set up a database of the blood groups of all the children: residential and non-residential. The initiative started from April, although it is currently suspended due to the prevailing spike of Covid-19 cases. However, it will resume once the situation improves and continue every year to include all new children.



### **Moanoghar Horticultural Project Activities**

The plantation areas of cashew nut have been further expanded this year. In addition, Moanoghar is setting up a nursery for saplings of various indigenous species. A key objective of the nursery is to grow bamboo plantations by reaching out to the Moanoghar parents and guardians' network with Moanoghar providing them the training and saplings of various local bamboo species. The planting is expected to start from next year. The initiative will respond to a twin goal: plantation of bamboo and other fruit trees will provide the parents/guardians and other fellow community participants a means for increased income while supporting the reforestation which has been rendered fragile due to the widespread deforestation of the CHT.

*Cashew nut saplings, planted last year (May 2020)*



### **Activities of Moanoghar Vocational Trade School**

Following the inauguration of the school building (reported in the last issue), the results of the school with the Bangladesh Technical Educational Education Board have been published. All the students from the Technical School have passed: 12 in dressmaking and sewing and 22 in Computer Office Applications. The new admission is currently suspended due to the Covid 19 situation.

### Fund Raising for Moanoghar HELP Activities

At the proposal of a generous individual from Australia, Moanoghar and its former students (the Moanogharians) carried out a fund-raising campaign for Higher Education Loan Program (HELP). The person contributed an equal amount raised by the Monogharians. In total, 1.5 million taka was thus raised. The collected fund will be kept in fixed deposit in a scheduled Bank in Bangladesh and the interests will be used for HELP.

In addition, Moanoghar also received a number of endowments from generous individuals to set up scholarships under HELP. This includes:

1. Moanoghar Pingala & Bimalashwa Dewan Memorial Scholarship, set up by Mr. Otin Dewan and Mr. Manish Dewan
2. Girindra Bijoy Dewan and Madhuri Dewan Memorial Scholarship, set up by Hemal Dewan and his family
3. Dr. Bhagadatta Khisha Memorial Scholrship, set up by his spouse Mrs. Sabita Dewan and son, Dr. Parash Khisha
4. Kumar Nandit Roy Memorial Scholarship, set up by his spouse Mrs. Jharna Roy and children, Vaskar Roy and Lumbini Roy.
5. In addition, Moanoghar also received an exceptional donation to replenish the AB Memorial Scholarship, from his son Mr. Roky Chakma.

Moanoghar expresses its deepest gratitude to all the donors and well-wishers for HELP.

*Hand-over of cheque for Moanoghar Pingala-Bimalashaw Memorial Scholarship*



**You also can help us by SPONSORING a child or with a one-time donation. Please contact us at; MOANOUGHAR, Rangapani, Rangamati, Bangladesh, Tel: 880-351-62796, Email: [moanoghar@gmail.com](mailto:moanoghar@gmail.com) URL:[www.moanoghar.org](http://www.moanoghar.org), Facebook group: Moanoghar**