

School is functioning teachers are starving

By Sayed Javed Eqbal

It was indeed a great pleasure to visit North Bengal after a lapse of few years. I visited Rangpur and Kuri-gram in July last for about a week in the company of my father who visited these two districts on professional assignment. The scenic beauty of Rangpur and Kuri-gram enchanted me. I visited important historical places in both the districts.

While my father was attending a reception at Rangpur Press Club on July 2 last, I got an opportunity to visit Rangpur-Tamir-e-Millat School for stranded Pakistanis situated at Muslimpara, Alamnagar of Rangpur town.

This school is rare of its kind as it is for the children of the marooned stranded Pakistanis languishing in the camp at Rangpur. Tamir-e-Millat School was established in 1984 and is run in three shifts having 800 students on its rolls. There are 11 teachers. With free teaching upto Class V in Bangla medium, Urdu is a compulsory subject.

I was taken to a modest room where the tension ridden boss of the school (Head Master) M. Mahmud Khan received me.

Mohmud Khan a tall and loveable personality exchanged views with me for about an hour. He did not

conceal facts. I was shocked to learn from him that the teachers of the school only 11 in number are going without salary since April last. Mahmud Khan was very much upset and lamented at the fate of the young boys and girls.

It was learnt that International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIRO) a Saudi based NGO stopped donation of Taka five thousand per month from April this year for reasons best known to the Director General for Asia of IIRO based in Dhaka Rahmatullah Nazir Khan.

Mahmud Khan, a Head Master with a difference and very much affectionate towards his pupils expressed his annoyance and without mincing words was bitterly critical about the indifference being shown by other NGOs in regard to his school. He with a proud smile said, 'Students of this school are now in colleges and Universities and their number is almost 200 now.'

The specialities of the school are: in every winter season, a chador is given to every male and female student, during Edi-ul-Azha Qurbani meat is provided to all students and Urdu books are procured from own sources.

In reply to a question Mahmud Khan complained,



"every year Bangladesh government used to give us free books but since beginning of this year we were not issued books on a wrong plea that the school is not registered. Hence free supply of books were stopped. All approach ended in failure."

When asked about the present situation, Mahmud Khan replied, "School is functioning, teachers are starving."

The school building having nine rooms, has now become congested.

It is really amazing that some foreign NGOs despite fully aware of what is the present fate of the stranded Pakistanis are abstaining from furnishing financial assistance to this school run by the Head Master M. Mahmud Khan, a devoted and sincere man with a team of dedicated teachers.

Even the Pakistan High Commissioner based in Dhaka is unconcerned with the fate of the future generation of Stranded Pakistanis. This is Islamic fraternity and solidarity—Pakistan style.

98