

Mofiz Uddin: The Miracle Worker



Mofiz Uddin giving a motivational speech to young female footballers in Kalsindur village of Mymensingh. Eight members of the Bangladesh team that clinched the AFC U-14 Girls' Regional Championship title in style in Tajikistan capital Dushanbe on May 1 are from this village and its nearby regions. The girls learnt about football from this very man who has never been in the limelight.

PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL

Mofiz Uddin, a coach of a small primary school in remote Kalsindur village at the foot of the Garo hills is primarily responsible for the unprecedented success of Bangladesh's Under-14 Girls' Football Team. Eight members of the Bangladesh team that clinched the AFC Under-14 Girls' Regional Championship title in Dushanbe are from this village and its nearby regions. These girls were initially trained in the sport by this man who has never shown interest in being in the spotlight.

Mofiz was termed a 'mad man' by many in the areas when he first started training the wonder girls, who clinched the first international win for Bangladesh in football, at the insistence of school headmistress Minati Rani Shila. Mofiz loved to play football but he did not have any training in coaching the sport. However, he learned on the job. Convincing the parents of the girls was a challenge but the enthusiasm and eagerness of the girls to learn and excel in this sport won over everything else. Mofiz says that when he showed them

football games on YouTube, they were keen to learn more and more, and practise the moves in the field.

Nazma Akhter, a player of the U-14 team, adds that Mofiz had to sell his paddy crop to support their training and playing expenses. Her father Abul Kalam, a tea shop owner, also acknowledges that Mofiz's "football story" has had a positive impact on their lives as well as the infrastructure of their small village, as with the success of the girls, they now have electricity and the roads are getting better. Politicians and influential personalities visiting them have promised further development in the area.

The 44-year-old coach who barely earns enough to run his family of four is busy training the newest batch of players. He now trains around 50 girls every day, adding that the workload is nothing compared to realising the dream of the girls of Kalsindur winning the World Cup someday.

Source story: MIRZA SHAKIL

Jahir Raihan: The Planter

When one of his friends philosophised that man can only leave behind their deeds, it got Jahir Raihan thinking. He wanted to do something for his people, his community, and that's when he came up with the idea of tree plantation.

He planted some trees along a village road back in 1990, but soon became disheartened when people began to uproot them. He later resumed tree plantation albeit on a smaller scale. The change in people's attitudes delighted him, motivating him to turn his passion into compulsion in 2002. So far he has planted over 6,000 trees, including medicinal plants, in educational institutes and different government and non-government organisations in his home town of Jhenidah.

In 2010, he started a nursery on a small plot of land he owned. He then distributed saplings to his neighbours without charging a penny, spreading his love for nature to everyone around him. The nursery fetches him Tk. 40,000 a year from commercial sales. He has also built birdhouses, setting up clay pots, containing bird feed and water, on tree branches.

Raihan has also set up a mobile library on his bicycle. With a basket under the handle, he goes to the houses of students



in his village every other day, carrying books of fiction, history, etc. He loans a book for 15 days, after which he visits the kids with new books. He now has around 50 readers who borrow books from him regularly.

His deeds of kindness do not end here. Raihan also cares for students who cannot continue their education because of financial or familial reasons, paying their fees and buying stationery for them. He has thus

far supported seven students up to the higher secondary level. In October 2015, Raihan also took on the responsibility of Halima, a Class Nine student of Nagarbathan Secondary School.

Loved for his simplicity, commitment and kindness, Jahir Raihan is a testament that intention, perseverance and willingness are all you need to do good in the world.

Source story: WASIM BIN HABIB & TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

He runs a mobile library from his bicycle. "I'm not after name and fame. I love planting trees and I will do this as long as I live," said Raihan who is a painter by profession.

PHOTOS: AZIBOR RAHMAN/ RASHED SHUMON



Jahir Raihan plants mahogany saplings along the Nagarbathan-Dafolbaria road.