



NEWSLETTER



FRIENDS OF STREET CHILDREN BANGLADESH

COMING UP

Sleep Out at the Ferry Terminal - Our Christmas Fundraising Appeal

On Saturday night 6th December our Chairperson, Mike Sherriff, and the Executive Director of LEEDO, Forhad Hossain will spend the night sleeping out at the ferry terminal in Dhaka. They will be joined by committee members and staff from LEEDO. The aim is to raise £1,500 to support the work of LEEDO in 2026 and to highlight the circumstances of children surviving at the ferry terminal including the work they do collecting plastic bottles. Please support this fundraising event by donating at: <https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/fundraising/sleep-out>

We also plan to make a short video about the sleep out and will show this on Sunday afternoon 14th December at 2pm, along with the film Green Foot Soldiers and a discussion about the position of children at the ferry terminal. This is the link to join the programme: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86778949023?pwd=R7cz4lbWjPQjorrJwbsH8RVkFoCTIM.1>

Meeting ID: 867 7894 9023

Passcode: 036722

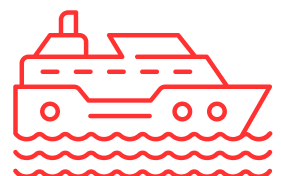
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Photo (above): The ferry terminal in Dhaka



Photo (above): A child collects plastic bottles on the banks of the ferry terminal.



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Our Facebook page will also have some live coverage at the beginning and end of the sleep out- at around lunch time and then again just before midnight (UK time) on Saturday 6th December. You can view this at: <https://www.facebook.com/friendsofscbd>

The ferry terminal in Dhaka is the place where many children first arrive in the city. Most of the children travel by launch from southern Bangladeshi districts such as Barisal and Chandpur and from the river islands including Bhola and Monpura. In Dhaka many children sleep at the ferry terminal. They earn money by collecting plastic bottles for recycling, selling items such as pens, tea or bottled water to passengers and carry bags for passengers. For example, Rafi is a fifteen-year-old boy. He sleeps under one of the bridges at the terminal,

where he arrived by launch from Chandpur three months ago. He earns 30 takas (about 19 pence) for every one kilogram of plastic bottles that he collects for recycling. Mina is a ten-year-old girl who also came from Chandpur by launch. She arrived three days ago and sleeps at the ferry port where she sells pens for 10 takas a piece to passengers, but she is finding that she can only sell a few pens each day.

At the ferry port LEEDO has an open-air school located on one of the bridges to the ferries. It operates on four days a week. As well as education including games and songs the children also receive a nutritious meal and health advice. Nearby there is a transitional shelter where children can go to stay before being rehabilitated with their family or being found long-term care, including at the LEEDO Peace Home.



LEEDO'S YOUNG JOURNALIST CHANGEMAKERS IN ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION WITH LEADING BANGLADESH NEWSPAPER

Twelve young people who have been supported by LEEDO's projects held a round table discussion with Bangladeshi government and non-government officers at the headquarters of the leading Bangladeshi English language newspaper "Daily Star" on Sunday 9th November. The discussion ranged from legal protection and political exploitation to the right to shelter and education. A summary was then published by the newspaper.

During the discussion one young man asked whether there was any legal remedy if a street child was harassed by a police official. He was advised by Dr Hasan Reza, associate professor at Indiana University's School of Social Work, who joined virtually that:



"There is no specific provision. But we found in our survey that street children are mostly abused by low-ranking officials, and if they can reach a higher-ranked one, he or she can intervene"



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One of the young women asked why laws and regulations protecting children's rights were not being properly implemented in Bangladesh.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of the Non-Government organisation Manusher Jonno Foundation, said it was due to a lack of accountability among stakeholders, disinterest among government officials, and ambiguities in existing laws.

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There is no process to hold accountable those who fail to perform their duties

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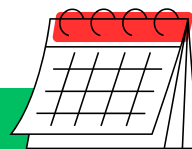
she said, adding that no child should sleep on the streets as it is a violation of human rights.



Photo (above): LEEDO at the Daily Star offices for the roundtable.



OUR PLANS FOR 2026



Next year Friends of Street Children Bangladesh faces a difficult challenge to raise funds that will sustain essential aspects of LEEDO's work, such as the shelter at the railway station. In the next issue we will report on plans developed with our new trustees. At their last meeting the trustees agreed to plan the following during the first few months of 2026. More details will be provided in due course.

- We plan to hold a zoom **“Where Are They Now”** event including children who visited England in 2019 to take part in the Street Child Cricket World Cup in 2019.
- We hope to **launch a song** on YouTube to raise funds.
- We plan to work with LEEDO to launch a **LEEDO Street Children's Sport Fund** enabling supporters in both the UK and Bangladesh to make donations dedicated to using the power of sport to transform the lives of street connected children. The fund would pay for equipment and facilities, training and participation in international competitions.
- We are planning a **fundraising meal** at the end of March or in April. It is likely to be held on a Sunday. and will include the auction of items including bed covers, gamchas, and table pieces that were crafted in Sylhet, Bangladesh.

Please remember to support our work by donating at <https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/donation/friends-of-street-children-bangladesh>

NEW TRUSTEES



Following the request for new trustees in our last newsletter and our advertisement for trustees using social media and networks such as Young Trustee Movement and Reach we are pleased to announce that four people have come forward who are interested in joining us as trustees. This includes three people recruited through the Young Trustees Movement. As a result of this successful recruitment campaign, we will be changing our constitution to increase the maximum number of trustees we can appoint. We hope to introduce our new trustees in the next issue of the newsletter and provide information about the roles and responsibilities that each trustee will be taking on. Thanks to everyone who came forward to become a trustee and to those who helped to promote the role.

EXTENSION AT LEEDO PEACE HOME

Those who have visited LEEDO Peace Home will probably remember a single storey building with the children sleeping on mattresses on the floor. With support from Give One Back in Germany the centre has recently been transformed into a multi-storey building. It now includes dormitory accommodation that is much better than the previous sleeping arrangements. The children now sleep on bunk beds. There is also a new “Healing Space” used by the LEEDO counsellor. It has facilities for craft work and games. The children’s artwork is

displayed on the walls. There is a training/meeting room, a guest room and a roof garden that is currently being completed.

The inauguration of the extension was attended by German Ambassador to Bangladesh.



Photos (above): Interior of the LEEDO Peace Home.

LEEDO OPENS A NEW SCHOOL AT THE RAILWAY STATION NEAR THE AIRPORT

LEEDO has recently opened a new school at the airport railway station. This is funded by Purnova (Switzerland). Purnova have worked with LEEDO to introduce some innovative new educational games into the curriculum of the schools including a game to build trust and leadership skills. During a visit to the school, I observed the children participating enthusiastically in this game, despite the heavy rain.

When it rains the school is held under a plastic cover. It is located on the building site for a new road and there was quite a lot of noise from this during my visit, apart from when the workers stopped to listen to the children singing.

The school is located near to the places where many of the children sleep. Opu, who is in charge at this school has helped the children to organise sleeping arrangements using concrete pipes that will presumably later be used in the construction. I met one boy who is disabled, and originally from Sylhet who sleeps in a concrete pipe with other children. He gets money by begging. Other children help passengers with carrying bags and collect plastic bottles. At the end of each class the children are provided with food (chicken, dhal and rice) from a local street stall. This is very popular with everyone attending.



Photos (above): (top) Purnovo game taking place at the station and (below) disabled boy sleeps in concrete pipe at airport station.

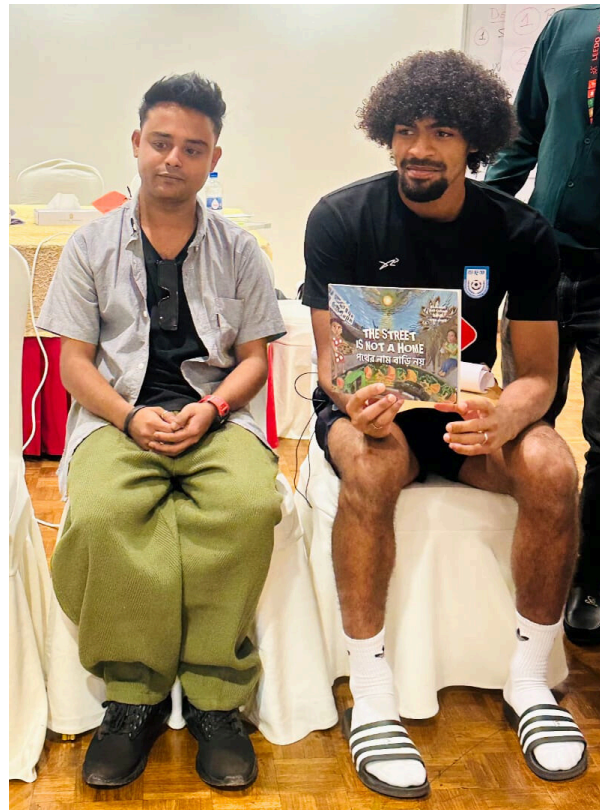


INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALLER HAMZA CHOUDHURY BECOMES A PATRON OF FRIENDS OF STREET CHILDREN BANGLADESH

Hamza a professional footballer who was born in Loughborough in 1997 and now plays for Leicester City and internationally for Bangladesh has agreed to become an ambassador for LEEDO and a patron of Friends of Street Children Bangladesh.

Hamza is hugely popular in Bangladesh and visited LEEDO Peace Home earlier this year. On his most recent trip to Bangladesh, he met members of the LEEDO girls' football team at the hotel where he was staying and took part in a meeting with Forhad, Executive Director of LEEDO and our chairperson Mike. He was presented with the book produced by Friends of Street Children Bangladesh "The Street is Not a Home" and said he was excited about reading the stories in it to his own children.

Hamza has committed to supporting the work of LEEDO in both Bangladesh and the UK. We are hoping that in 2026 it may be possible for Forhad to visit the UK, and that at that the same time it will be possible to organise an event including Hamza.



Photos (above): (top) Hamza Choudhury with our co-produced book 'The Street is Not a Home', and (below) with aspiring young female sports women.



SEWING TRAINEES FROM THE RAILWAY STATION

LEEDO now provides training for older children who have been staying at the station in Dhaka. There is training in mobile phone repair and in sewing. This year the sewing training is supported by a grant from the Eleanor Rathbone Charitable Trust, following an application from Friends of Street Children Bangladesh.

The training now takes place in a separate building that is close to the shelter that is supported by Friends of Street Children Bangladesh. There are ten boys learning electrics and mobile phone repair. Five girls are learning sewing. The girls stay at the shelter, and the boys can sleep at the training centre. In addition to training the young people receive lunch whilst they are at the centre.

Faria (pictured) is 13 years old. She has been making a tablecloth. She is originally from Chandpur. She has been in Dhaka for one year. She has no relatives in Dhaka. She originally lived with her aunty in a slum but then stayed at the station. She enjoys training and says the teacher is good.

Shuma (pictured overleaf) is 14/15 years old. She is uncertain about her age. She is making a baby frock. She has been in Dhaka for two years. She is from Bhairab where her mother lives with a new husband who used to beat her. She has three half siblings who are still in Bhairab with her mother.

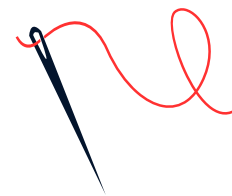
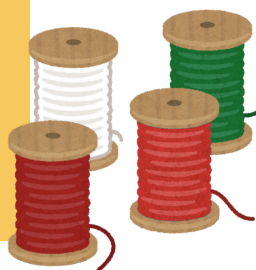


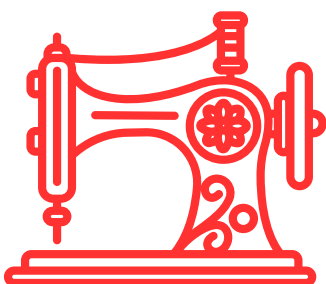
Photo (above): sewing by Faria Aktar Hashi.



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Photo (above): Shuma on the sewing machine.



Shuma came to Dhaka by train and met the LEEDO team at the station. In Dhaka she has stayed at various shelters. She has travelled by train to many different stations including Benapole, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar. She has been doing the sewing training for one year and has learnt simple embroidery, making a frock, and how to use a sewing machine.

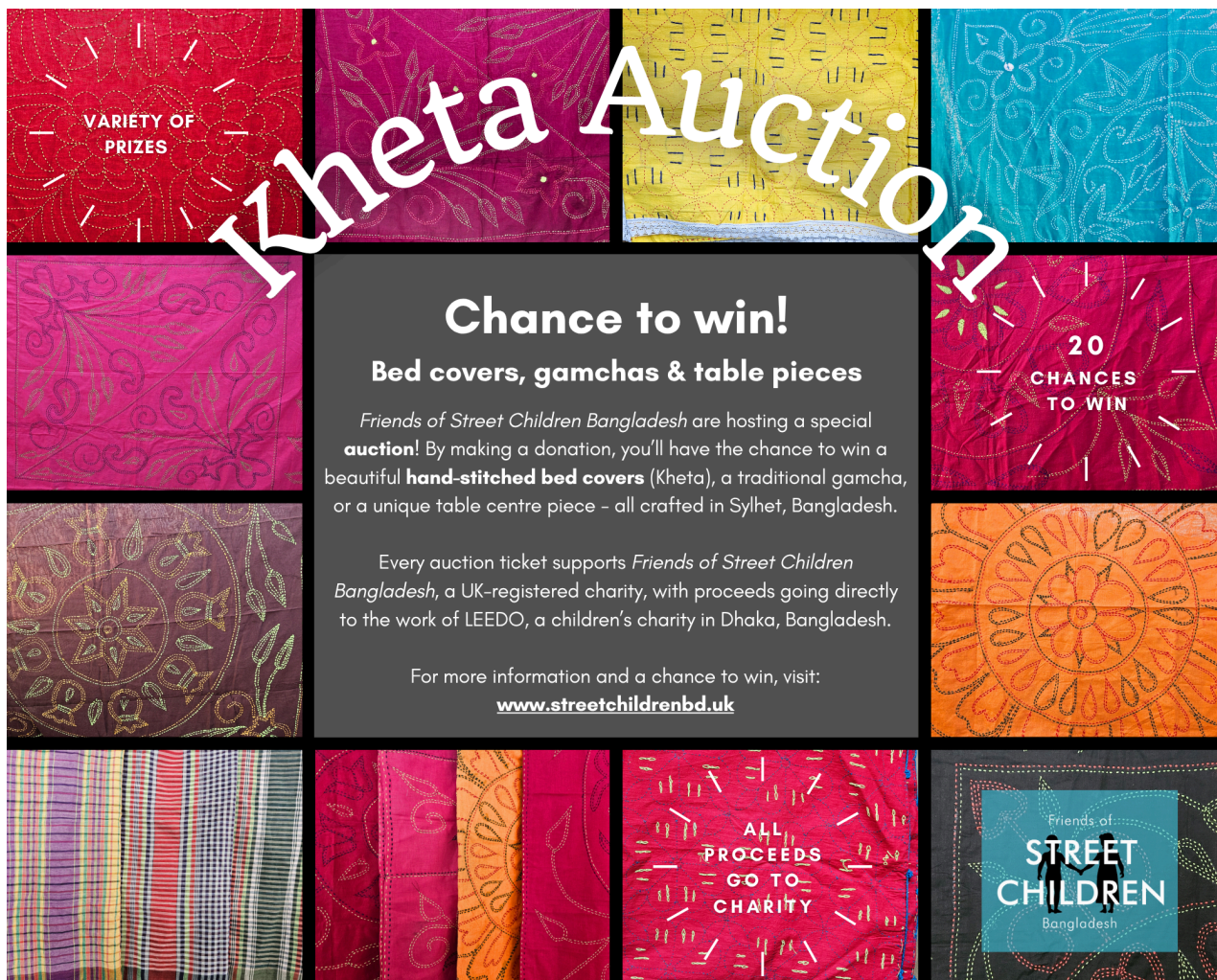
She wants to be a sewing trainer and work in a sewing shop. She is not interested in working in a garment factory because she wants to work independently. The instructor will help her find work.

Jana is 14 years old. She has been attending the training for two months. She has been in Dhaka for one year having come here from Chandpur. Her father was drug addicted and left her mother when she was little.

Jana did not previously go to school. She stays at the station. She enjoys the training and has learnt to sew clothes. She wants to work in a garment factory in future.

Hafija is 16 years old. She completed the course last year but still attends class. She stays at the shelter. She is originally from Barisal and has been in Dhaka for five years where she first stayed with her mother and father until they separated. Hafija injured her head and hands on a train and had to go to hospital. She came to the shelter from hospital. She could then no longer find her father at the station. Her father was addicted to drugs.

In future Hafija wants to have her own sewing shop. She does not want to work in a factory.



We have a selection of bed covers, gamchas and table pieces that we are auctioning. It will be possible to bid for these at our next in-person fundraising event, which will be announced in the New Year. It is also possible to bid online at:

<https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/auction/auction-of-bangladeshi-crafts>

By bidding in our auction, you will have the chance to win a beautiful hand-stitched bed-cover (Kheta), a traditional gamcha, or a unique table centre piece – all crafted in Sylhet, Bangladesh.



For more information, visit our website:
www.streetchildrenbd.uk

Friends of Street Children Bangladesh is a UK-registered charity: number 1171061