

TANGENTS
BY IHTISHAM KABIR

Dismal Days

I often write about rare or interesting birds (or wildlife) I have encountered. If you read my column you might think I find them on every trip or outing.

However, that is not how it happens. Finding interesting birds almost always depends on luck; animals require even more luck. What's worse, even if one gets lucky, one may not be prepared and miss a good photograph because birds and wild animals move fast.

And so my lucky days are mixed with dismal days – more often than I care to count.

The incident with the Harpy Eagle stands out.

A Harpy – seen in South and Central America – is probably the most spectacular eagle in the world. Before going to Brazil in 2018, I had applied to their government for visiting a wilderness park in Amazonia that had, among other things, a Harpy Eagle nest. I received a permit good for one day only.

On the appointed day my guide and I entered the forest and, after hiking a mile, came across an area cordoned off with tape. Posted signs warned visitors to remain silent and forbade them from getting too close to the nest. Staying behind the tape, we quickly found the massive tall tree, where, at a Y junction of branches, behind layers of leaves and stray vegetation, we could see a circular jumble of dead twigs and branches that was the eagle's nest. It was hard to get a clear line of sight for my camera to focus, but eventually I found a keyhole opening through the leaves.

We stood there waiting for some action. Presently we saw the tail feathers of two Harpy chicks as they moved. This was exciting! I took a few (poor) pictures and waited for better visibility.



Harpy Eagle, far away.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

My guide, at one point, thought he saw another bird behind us and went looking for it, a few feet behind. I remained glued to my spot, craning my neck, camera locked on the nest.

Presently there was more movement at the nest. Guessing from bits and pieces I could see, a larger bird had landed there. I couldn't see the head, only some feathers. It was probably the mother.

After a few minutes, I sensed her wings were becoming taut. She was getting ready to fly!

I wanted to alert my guide but he was now twenty feet behind me. I turned my head to wave at him. That was the instant my Harpy flew. I will never know if it presented a photographable view

as it took flight.

Thus I missed my chance of seeing a Harpy Eagle close. How is that for a dismal day?

So these days, I never bother to warn my companions if something interesting shows up and the companions are not paying attention. I just start shooting. The sound of my camera alerts them.

A few days later I did see a Harpy Eagle from a tower inside the Amazon forest. The bird was quite far away. Still, it was an unbelievable thrill.

I would love to return to Brazil to try my luck again with the Harpy Eagle.

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Man run over by car after bus pushed him off motorbike

STAR REPORT

A motorcyclist was killed in a road accident on Dhaka-Khulna highway at Nurpur area under Bhanga upazila in Faridpur yesterday, reports our Faridpur correspondent.

Deceased Mahamudul Hasan (30) hailed from Khalishpur upazila in Khulna.

The accident occurred when a bus hit Mahamudul's motorcycle from behind, making him fall on the road.

He died after a private car ran over him as he lay on the ground, killing him on the spot, said Ataur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Bhanga Highway Police Station, quoting locals.

Later, police seized the bus and private car but both vehicles' drivers fled the scene, OC Ataur added.

Meanwhile, a pedestrian was killed after a recklessly driven bus ran over him at Muradpur area in Chattogram yesterday morning, reports our staff correspondent from port city.

The deceased was identified as Mokammel Haque Chowdhury (50), hailing from Satkania upazila in Chattogram, said police.

Mokammel was standing in Mohammadpur area of Muradpur when a passenger bus of S Alam Bus Services ran over him around 8am, injuring him critically.

Locals rushed him to Chattogram Medical College Hospital where on-duty doctors declared him dead, Nayek Abdul Hamid of CMCH police camp told The Daily Star.

Police are trying to identify the bus, he said.

SYLHET AGRI UNIV

Staff recruitment tests postponed amid protests

UNB, Sylhet

Authorities at Sylhet Agricultural University halted recruitment tests scheduled for yesterday and today, amidst protests by students and staff.

Staffers went on strike on Thursday noon demanding more facilities.

Meanwhile, students joined them, saying that the date of the recruitment tests coincided with Bangabandhu's Homecoming Day yesterday.

At one stage, they confined Vice-Chancellor Matiar Rahman Howlader to his office.

He was freed shortly after midnight yesterday, after he assured protesters of meeting their demands.

Badrul Islam Shoeb, registrar of the university, told protesters that authorities postponed the written tests. Besides, demands raised by the university staff will be met gradually.

Later yesterday, the public relations office of the university issued a handout in this regard.

Engineer's body recovered from Dhaleshwari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Police recovered the body of Mehedi Hasan Jishan (35), an engineer, from the Dhaleshwari river in Munshiganj yesterday noon. This comes after he went missing four days ago after falling from a trawler in the Buriganga river at Baktabali area in Narayanganj.

Deceased Mehedi hailed from Boalia upazila in Rajshahi. He was an engineer at Bangla Cat Company.

Another engineer of the company, Likhon (32), who also went missing after the incident, is yet to be found.

Upon being informed by locals, police retrieved Mehedi's body from the river adjacent to Bhashanchar village around

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Opening ports to India, Bhutan, Nepal will benefit us: minister

UNB, Ctg

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi yesterday said Bangladesh will be benefitted economically if the country permits India, Bhutan, and Nepal to use its ports.

He made the remarks while handing over two Bangladesh-made ships to Indian High Commissioner Riva Ganguly Das at the yard of local shipbuilding company Western Marine Shipyard.

Two ships -- JSW Singhagar and Lohgarh -- made by Western Marine Shipyard were handed over to the Indian company -- Jindal Steel Works.

Minister Munshi called for developing an open mindset of cooperation and noted that Bangladesh was located at a geographically favourable spot.

According to the Chattogram Port sources, Jindal Steel Works gave the work order of making four ships to the Bangladeshi company in 2015.

Two ships were handed over to the Indian company in October 2017, while the remaining two were handed over yesterday.

Pangolin rescued in Kishoreganj

Caught in Sylhet, the mammal was being trafficked to Dhaka



The rescued pangolin.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

OUR CORRESPONDENT, M'singh

A pangolin was rescued from Bhairab upazila of Kishoreganj on Thursday afternoon.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of police from Bhairab Police Station raided Natal intersection area and rescued it from the possession of Babla Sarker and Ripon Mia, said Mohammad Shahin, officer-in-charge of the police station.

Babla and Ripon caught the animal from Lawachhara Reserve Forest in Moulvibazar and were planning to take it to the capital for selling, he added. During the drive, the police team, led by Sub-inspector Masudur Rahman, also arrested the duo, said the OC.

On information, Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Bhairab Lubna Farzana rushed to the spot and took the pangolin and the detainees to her office. Farzana, also an executive magistrate, conducted a mobile court there and fined the duo Tk 20,000.

The pangolin was handed over to the officials of Wildlife Crime Control Unit of Bangladesh Forest Department yesterday morning.

'BON RUI'
Although at first glance, a pangolin may look like a reptile, it is actually a mammal.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

DoE director of port city sustains burn injury

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Department of Environment (DoE) Director Azadur Rahman Mallick sustained burn injuries at his flat in Panchlaish area yesterday morning.

He sustained the burns following a fire eruption in the kitchen at his flat in Sugandha Residential Area at 9:30am.

The incident occurred as Azadur was lighting a burner in the kitchen to boil water. As soon as he lit the burner, fire erupted and burned him, Toufiqueul Islam Bhuiyan, deputy assistant director of Chattogram Fire Service and Civil Defence, told The Daily Star.

Family members doused the blaze before the fire service could reach the spot, he added.

Azadur Rahman was initially taken to a private hospital in Chattogram city.

From there, he was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for better treatment, said Sanjukta Das Gupta, assistant director of DoE in Chattogram.

Azadur sustained injuries on his face, head and hands, he added.

Polluters back in business

Errant brick kilns resume operations in Savar, Dhamrai

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH, Savar

Dozens of illegal brick kilns have resumed operations in Savar and Dhamrai on the outskirts of Dhaka, days after the Department of Environment (DoE) had fined the owners, due to the authorities' failure to fully destroy those, and lack of monitoring.

Between November 6 and December 30 last year, DoE mobile courts partially demolished and fined 30 brick kilns a total of Tk 2.24 crore in six phases, DoE sources said.

This correspondent was present during three such drives against 14 brick kilns in Dhamrai on November 29 and against five in Savar on December 16. The mobile courts fined and destroyed around 5-20 percent parts of those brick kilns. But, their chimneys were left untouched.

During a recent visit to those areas, The Daily Star found all the 30 brick kilns -- including TBC, MSB, Chand Mia, Karnaphuli and Masum Super Bricks kilns in Savar's Genda -- continuing operations.

Locals and an expert told The Daily Star that the brick kilns owners did so one or two days after the drives.

It happens because the actions taken by authorities are not adequate, they said.

Prof Jamal Uddin Runu of environmental science department at Jahangirnagar University said if the DoE wants to stop illegal brick kilns, they will have to tear those down fully.

Echoing him, Anowar Hossen from Genda said the brick kiln owners should be imprisoned as well.

Rahim Uddin from Dhamrai's Vararia said seven illegal brick kilns restarted operations in the area only a day after they had been fined Tk 5 lakh each on December 30. Only 1-2 percent of those were demolished, he said.

In six phases, the DoE fined one brick kiln Tk 20 lakh, nine of them Tk 12 each, 18 of them Tk 5 lakh each and two of them Tk 3 lakh each, according to DoE sources and media reports.



PHOTO: AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH

Even after being fined by the Department of Environment earlier, these illegal brick kilns have resumed operations. The photo was taken from Dakutia in Dhamrai recently.

WHAT OWNERS SAY

Shohidul Islam, manager of Abul Bashar Bricks in Vararia, said they paid Tk 5 lakh fine. "We restarted operations as the mobile court did not order us to stop it," he added.

Azahar Ali, owner of Airin Bricks in Dhamrai's Dautia area, said he was fined Tk 12 lakh. "I had all documents from DC office and DoE. I applied for their renewal, but to no avail," he said.

Many do not even have any document to run their businesses, he added.

Azahar said he resumed operations as he invested crores of taka and many labourers depend on his brick kiln.

Similar comments came from Hannan Mia, manager of TBC Brick in Savar's Namagenda;

Mozibor Rahman, manager of Karnaphuli Bricks in area; and Chand Mia, owner of Chand Mia Bricks.

Kamrul Hasan Shahin, owner of MSB Bricks and a Jubo League leader of Savar Municipality unit, refused to comment why he resumed operations.

CONTROVERSY OVER NUMBER

This correspondent visited the office of Dhamrai Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) to collect information about brick kilns -- such as how many are legal and how many illegal.

UNO Shamiul Haque said, "We have no information about the number. If needed, go to the DoE or DC offices."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Bagerhat bids adieu to Dr Mozammel

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Namaz-e-janaza of Dr Md Mozzamel Hossain, a freedom fighter and Awami League lawmaker, was held at Bagerhat Sheikh Helal Uddin Stadium yesterday.

Thousands of people attended the funeral after the Juma prayers to pay tribute to Dr Mozzamel, who was a five-time MP and Bagerhat district AL president.

Mozammel breathed his last around 12:30am yesterday at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University.

His first janaza was held at Jatiya Sangsad's South Plaza.

His body was then brought to the Bagerhat stadium. It was later taken to the railway station office of Bagerhat district Awami League. AL city and district units of Bagerhat and Khulna, and Bagerhat district Jubo League placed wreaths at the coffin there.

Leaders of the ruling party, Khulna



The freedom fighter being given state honours at Bagerhat Sheikh Helal Uddin Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

city mayor, state minister for labour, Bagerhat deputy commissioner, officials from police administration and many of his well wishers attended the namaz-e-janaza.

Later, the body was taken to the stadium where the district administration gave him a guard of honour.

Dr Mozzamel was buried at his village home in Bagerhat's Kachubuniya.

Meanwhile, President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and JS Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury expressed deep shock at the death and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

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