

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

THRUSH

Thrushes are a family of small to medium-sized songbirds. They spend most of their time on the ground inside forests, picking insects, worms and vegetable matter. There are 172 species of Thrushes spread all over the world, although the most variety is found in Asia and Africa. They vary from five to twelve inches in length and have a characteristic thin bill.

The first Thrush I saw was the Orange-headed Thrush in the National Botanical Garden in Mirpur. I was there on a cloudy monsoon day and not expecting much when I saw a flash of colour under a grove of trees. The bird was rapidly walking in the shade, foraging for food. I was struck by its bright orange head. It moved in and out of bushes with nimble, rapid steps. I carefully stalked it for a picture. This became a difficult task as it was dark underneath the tall trees but I managed a reasonable photo. When it flew, it did so weakly, staying low and landing quickly back on the ground.

The following year, during monsoon, I saw Orange-headed Thrushes – mother and chick – on the walking trail near the lake in Baridhara. The mother loitered mostly on the ground and the chick tentatively followed it. One morning I saw it dig out an earthworm and tenderly feed the chick. I saw them on several other days, mostly on the ground or on low branches, before they disappeared.

It would be some years before I would see a different Thrush. On a trip to Bhutan, I left our hotel in Paro to walk along the banks of the Paro River. On an overhanging wire was perched a bird. I was



Blue Whistling Thrush, Satchori National Park.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

struck by its rich, dark-blue coat with silver dots and streaks contrasting with a yellow beak. It turned out to be a Blue Whistling Thrush, common in Bhutan.

Since then I have spotted this blue bird in Bangladesh several times. Late one afternoon in Satchori National Park I saw it sitting on an overhead branch. But it was just about sunset and my photograph came out dark. Months later, at a nearby water body, I saw it again. It came cautiously down to the water. Then it looked around (I was hidden) to ensure its safety. Finally it dipped

in for a quick bath, splashing the water rapidly with its wings. When it was done, it flew to a low-hanging branch and then disappeared quickly into the forest undergrowth.

Bangladesh has eight species of Thrush. Except for the Orange-headed and Blue Whistling Thrush, the others are rare winter visitors found in the forests of Sylhet and Chittagong. Incidentally, at twelve inches, the Blue Whistling Thrush is the largest Thrush in the world.

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Sacrifices made for an oath

Doctor cancels maternity leave to treat Covid-19 patients

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CTC

A doctor of Chattogram Maa-O-Shishu Hospital has cancelled her maternity leave to join the hospital's Covid-19 unit and treat patients who have contracted the disease.

Dr Mahmud Sultana Afroza re-joined work about six weeks before her leave was scheduled to end, leaving her 4-month-old son in the care of her family members at home.

Talking to The Daily Star, Dr Afroza said, "In the last few months, I've seen helpless people being deprived of treatment every day. So, I thought about cancelling my leave."

"After discussing with my family, we all agreed that I should return to work. I couldn't forget my professional oath and responsibilities in this pandemic," she said.

Afroza's husband Mahmudul Rahman Shawon fully supported his wife's decision, saying she has a duty to serve, and so, her family will take care of the baby while she is away.

Rezaul Karim Azad, treasurer of the hospital management committee, told this newspaper, "Dr Afroza, knowing full well about the risks treating Covid-19 patients pose, decided to serve them. We approved her cancellation, and she joined during the Thursday night shift."

The Covid-19 unit was launched at the hospital on June 8.

Khandker Mosharraf, Kamal Lohani test Covid-19 positive

Rana Dasgupta, wife flown to capital; Sahara Khatun sent to ICU with various complications

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former minister and incumbent lawmaker Khandker Mosharraf Hossain and eminent cultural personality Kamal Lohani are the latest high-profile individuals to test Covid-19 positive.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad General Secretary Rana Dasgupta and his wife, both of whom were found Covid-19 positive on Wednesday, were shifted to Dhaka from Chattogram yesterday for better treatment.

Also, former home minister Sahara Khatun, who has been undergoing treatment with fever, allergies and old-age complications, was shifted to ICU after her condition deteriorated.

Talking to this newspaper, Khandker Mosharraf Hossain, former Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives minister, said he was doing fine and sought blessings from countrymen.

"I got my test result yesterday [Thursday] and it was positive. I am staying at my residence in Dhaka and receiving treatment from home," said Mosharraf, also chief of the parliamentary standing committee on LGRD ministry.

Elected from Faridpur-3, Mosharraf is the father-in-law of Saima Wazed Putul, daughter of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The Awami League advisory council member served as a cabinet member of Sheikh Hasina governments for last two consecutive terms since 2009.

Kamal Lohani's daughter Urmi Lohani said her father was admitted to Health and Hope Hospital on Wednesday for kidney and lungs-related complications, and was on life support at the intensive care unit (ICU) of the hospital.

"We found out in the morning that he is Covid-19 positive," Urmi said, adding they wanted to admit him at Combined Military Hospital but authorities there said no seat was available for Covid-19 patients.

Kamal, a renowned journalist, was then shifted to Shikdar Medical College in Gulshan as his physical condition deteriorated.

In the afternoon, he was taken to Sheikh Russell Gastroenterology Institute and Hospital in Mohakhali, Urmi said.

Faruk Ahmed, director of the hospital, said Kamal was taken to ICU.

Kamal, aged around 86, had earlier been admitted to Health and Hope hospital in mid-May with kidney and lung problems.

He was taken back home after two weeks of treatment. "But we were compelled to take him to the hospital again as his condition deteriorated drastically," said his son Sagar Lohani.

Rana Dasgupta and his wife were admitted to Shikdar Medical College Hospital in Gulshan, said Taposh Kanti Baul, Rana's colleague at the international crimes tribunal (ICT).

Referring to doctors, Taposh said the couple was undergoing treatment at a cabin as they did not develop any major complications.

Both Rana Dasgupta, a senior prosecutor of ICT, and his wife gave samples for coronavirus test three days back.

Meanwhile, former home minister Sahara Khatun was shifted to ICU at United Hospital yesterday morning as her condition deteriorated.

"She was shifted to ICU around 10am, after her blood pressure and oxygen saturation level fell suddenly. She will be under doctor's observation for 72 hours," Anisur Rahaman, nephew of Sahara, told The Daily Star.

Sahara is an incumbent lawmaker and a presidium member of ruling AL.

Doctors have done Covid-19 tests four times since she was admitted at the hospital on June 3. The results all came back negative, said Anisur, who is also the assistant personal secretary of the lawmaker.

He said the AL leader yesterday expressed her gratitude to the prime minister for ensuring the best treatment available in the country, but she desired receiving treatment abroad.

Her family urged citizens of the country to pray for her recovery.

Waterlogging turns severe in Narayanganj

UNB, Narayanganj

Many parts of Narayanganj City Corporation and Sadar upazila have been inundated due to intermittent rain in the last few days, causing huge sufferings to the locals.

Residents of various areas, who are already struggling to fight against coronavirus outbreak, blamed mismanagement of drainage system, and unplanned city structure for the crisis.

Incessant rain from the early hours of Thursday inundated key roads of the city, forcing people to wade through knee deep water yesterday.

Abdur Rahim Dewan, a resident of Deobhog area of city said rainwater never entered the houses before but this year things are different.

Advocate Saidul Islam of Kashipur area said Mahmudpur, Vhigar, Delpara, Nayamati, Nurbag, Nandalalpur, Pilkuni, Kutubail, Gabtoli, Lalpur, Santapur, Isdair, College Road, Masdairbazar, Nagbari, Paikpara, Baburail, Narayanganj city, Hajiganj, Pathantoli, Godnail and many areas of DND were inundated on Thursday.

Narayanganj city planner Md Moinul Islam said they have fetched a master plan over water stagnation issue, and the problems will be resolved if the drainage system is brought under that master plan.

"The work of the master plan should have been started if the coronavirus pandemic didn't hit us," he said.

Executive Engineer of DND pump house, Anisur Rahman said DND pump house has four machines for water drainage, two of which are out of order. "For this reason, around 3,000 cusec water is being drained less in the DND area, and no allocation was made to fix the old machines," he said.

Along with that, locals dump excessive waste in canals and adjacent areas, which also blocked drainage system, he added.

Four Cumilla city wards in lockdown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Four wards of Cumilla City Corporation have been put in a 14-day lockdown to slow down coronavirus outbreak.

The District Administration issued a circular yesterday, to impose the order that effected from midnight.

The circular, signed by Deputy Commissioner Abul Fazal Mir, mentions that ward-3, 10, 12 and 13 will be under the lockdown purview. It also shows instructions on how to follow the order during the period.

The district disaster management committee took the decision on Tuesday in a meeting at Cumilla Deputy Commissioner's office, considering the intensity of Covid-19 infection, he added.

Any movement will be strictly restricted in the areas. All commercial buildings like shopping malls and markets will remain closed.

As the city has different commercial and business centres including Cumilla Export Processing Zone, the district administration made it mandatory to carry ID cards during the restriction. A factory employee can enter or exit only for single time in a day by showing ID cards.

In addition, banks and necessary commercial institutes can perform limited operations with prior permission from the authorities.

Teams of volunteers with public representatives and law enforcing agencies will be active during the lockdown period.

'The mugging was staged'

Three employees of a mobile phone shop who stole Tk 33 lakh held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The mugging took place in broad daylight. A mobile phone sales representative was robbed in Rajshahi city's New Market area on Thursday morning, while he was on his way to deposit Tk 33 lakh to a bank.

But something was not right about the story; at least that's what the law enforcers sensed.

And nine hours into the incident, through their investigation, police found out that the mugging was actually staged.

Three sales staff of Vivo Mobile Phone plotted the incident and stole the money, Boalia police of Rajshahi said in a press conference yesterday.

Police arrested them from different spots of the city and recovered Tk 32 lakh from their possession.

Noticing a heightened sale of smartphones amid the pandemic, they, driven by greed, decided to steal the money, said Nibaran Chandra Burman, officer-in-charge of Boalia Police Station, quoting statements of the involved.

After the mugging, the sales representative gave misleading information and his statement contradicted their initial inquiry into the incident, he said.

The arrestees are Zafar Iqbal (35), Rajshahi city manager of the store, and sales representatives -- Mehedi Hasan Faisal (25), who got mugged, and Taijul Islam (24).

They had helped too. Two outsiders -- Ariful Islam and Md Ohidul -- were involved with the crime. They are on the run, said police.

THE PLANNING

The store collected money from retailers and deposited it into a bank account of the distributor for bringing phones to Rajshahi for selling.

The sales increased manifolds since the restrictions were lifted in Rajshahi, said the OC, quoting the arrestees.

In the last couple of weeks, the store witnessed a sale of around Tk 1.5 crore. Noticing that, the three planned to stage a mugging.

Taijul and Faisal contacted Ariful, who was a former employee and had "experience in mugging", the OC said, quoting the arrestees.

While giving confessional statements, Taijul and Faisal denied involvement of Zafar. But police decided to investigate Zafar as his motorcycle was used in the mugging.

Around 11:45am on Thursday, when Faisal went out of the store to deposit the money at a bank, some 300 yards away, he was carrying the money bag.

He was accompanied by Sohel, an employee of the distributors, who was also carrying a separate bag with Tk 4 lakh. Sohel was unaware of the plan.

Taijul drove a motorbike, with Ariful as

a pillion, towards Faisal. Ariful took away Faisal's bag without any hindrance.

HOW COPS SOLVED THE CASE

Police had doubts regarding the statements of Faisal and Zafar after they saw video footage of the incident and found that the staffers showed a different spot of occurrence. Also, Faisal did not try to stop the muggers.

In police questioning, staffers named Taijul as an employee who became irregular, citing the Covid-19 situation.

Police contacted Taijul and asked him to come to Boalia Police Station.

When he did, they noticed his motorcycle matched the one used in the mugging.

They also found a photo in his phone where it showed that Faisal and Zafar were counting the money at the store before sending it to the bank.

Finally, Taijul confessed and showed where they hid the money.

Based on his confession, police raided Ohidul's residence in Kashiadanga area at 9pm that night and recovered the bag with Tk 32 lakh.

Taijul told police that he gave Tk 1 lakh to Ariful after the mugging and kept the bag with the rest of the money at Ohidul's place for distributing among themselves later.

The OC added, "We're looking for Ohidul and Ariful."

MA Mokaddem passes away

CITY DESK

MA Mokaddem, a renowned individual in the tobacco industry, passed away at a hospital in Maryland, USA, on Thursday, said a press release.

Born in Noakhali in 1939, Mokaddem became the first Bangladeshi branch manager (Chattogram) of British American Tobacco Bangladesh (BATB) in 1974. He was also its first Bangladeshi production director in 1981, before joining its board of directors.

He became general manager of BAT Papua New Guinea in 1992, and was stationed in Cambodia and Singapore. He later became director of Birdem General Hospital, and finally, joined Kazi Farms as chief operating officer.

He left behind his sons Asem and Amer Mokaddem, their wives, and grandchildren.

He will be interred today at Maryland National Memorial Cemetery, next to his wife Ismat Mokaddem.



THE COMPLETE COLLECTION ... A wide array of masks, from what appears to be medical-grade respirators to dust masks, surgical masks and even fabric masks, are hung to dry on a window. While fabric masks can safely be washed, some other reusable ones are not washable, and some are single-use only. With the coronavirus pandemic showing no sign of receding, many citizens are presumably trying to develop the habit of protecting themselves at all times. The photo was taken near Bakshibazar yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Italy's Teddy Group promises to 'stay beside Bangladesh'

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Italian fashion company Teddy Group has committed to stay beside Bangladesh during the pandemic, saying that Bangladesh is a trusted partner.

At a virtual meeting -- recently organised by Bangladesh embassy in Rome, Italy -- Teddy Group said they did not have any cancellation or holding order currently, and assured of continuing business with Bangladesh, if work environment continues.

The company said it would order for a major supply of clothes at the end of this month.

However, it said the amount might be slightly less than that of the same period of the previous year, due to lower global demand, said a statement of the embassy on Thursday.

They hope the situation will be normal within three or four months.

The embassy appreciated Teddy for its responsible business conduct and assured its readiness to extend any kind of support to the company.

Teddy Group is one of the top fashion companies in Italy, founded in 1961. They have over 600 stores in 40 countries.

Bangladesh is a top business hub for the company, from which it sources more than USD 200 million worth of apparel products per year. It set up an office in Bangladesh in 2004, where 80 people work.

Bangladesh Embassy in Rome has taken an initiative to hold meetings with the top 10 Italian importers of apparel products from Bangladesh, to make sure business operation during the pandemic continues and Bangladesh can strengthen long-term partnership with Italian businesses.