

TANGENTS  
BY IHTISHAM KABIR

Eurasian Wryneck

There are over two hundred species of woodpeckers in the world. The vast majority of these are grouped as “true woodpeckers” with similar features and behaviours. There are, however, two other groups in the woodpecker family: the strange-looking Wrynecks and the diminutive Piculets.

Wrynecks are similar to true woodpeckers in that they have a large head and long tongues to probe inside cavities. They also have the zygodactyl feet of true woodpeckers: first and fourth toe pointing backward and the second and third pointing forward. However, Wrynecks are smaller than true woodpeckers, about the size of a large sparrow, with shorter bills. Lacking the stiff tail feathers of true woodpeckers they cannot climb up or down tree trunks tapping for cavities. Thus they are found mostly on the ground or at lower branches where they look for ants, their main diet.

There are two species of Wrynecks in the world. The Eurasian Wryneck, or Jinx torquilla, can be found in Europe and Asia. In Bangladesh it is a migratory bird in autumn and winter found in villages and fields. The name “torquilla” comes from the Latin “torquere”, to twist, in recognition of the bird’s ability to turn and twist its head in all directions. Its Bangla name, *gharbetha*, translates to “pain in the neck.”

The second Wryneck, called The Red-throated Wryneck or Jinx ruficollis, is found in sub-Saharan Africa.

I saw my first Eurasian Wryneck in Purbachol five years ago on a late winter afternoon. I was walking northwards and had



Eurasian Wryneck, Purbachol.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

crossed two villages with nothing to show for it. On the way from the second to the third village there was a banana grove to my left. I saw something small inside the grove, hopping and skipping from place to place, staying low. It did not seem particularly shy so I was able to photograph it. Later, when I looked at the photographs, I was struck by the unusual patterns on its feathers. It looked like snakeskin.

Over the next few years, I saw several more Eurasian Wrynecks in Purbachol and the forests of Sylhet. They were almost always close to the ground, alone, and

more shy than the first one I saw. Most recently I saw one in mid-September in a grove of creekside *dhoncha* plants in Purbachol. It gave me a few seconds to photograph before flying off.

With a global population of fifteen million and a wide geographical range, the Eurasian Wryneck is not considered an endangered species. However, it is a bird worth seeking for its strange plumage and unusual head movements.

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Momen to attend Kuwait emir’s funeral

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen will fly for Kuwait tomorrow to attend the funeral of Kuwait’s Emir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who breathed his last on Tuesday.

“The foreign minister will leave at 11:30am as the prime minister is unable to join the ceremony,” a ministry official told this correspondent. He will return the next day.

Yesterday, Momen signed the mourning book at the Kuwait Embassy in Dhaka. Kuwaiti Ambassador to Bangladesh, Adel Mohammed AH Hayat, was present at that time.

MYANMAR TROOP MOBILISATION ON BORDER

Take initiatives for inter-regional diplomacy: BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing concern over mobilisation of Myanmar army in the border area, BNP yesterday asked the government to take initiative for inter-regional diplomacy.

“The government’s weak foreign policy is clear to Myanmar. Taking full advantage of this, Myanmar showed the courage of mobilising their military forces in Bangladesh-Myanmar international border,” said Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, secretary general of the party.

Addressing a press conference at party chairperson’s Gulshan office, the BNP leader condemned Myanmar’s move. “We are asking the government to take diplomatic steps to resist the Myanmar armies’ ill initiative,” he added.

Fakhru said when there is any military mobilisation in China-India border, the

government created a huge buzz but when Myanmar mobilised army in Bangladesh border, it kept mum.

“The government sent a letter to the [UN] security council. The government is yet to take any effective step to resolve the Rohingya crisis,” he said.

“We have failed in global, regional and bilateral stages to resolve the Rohingya crisis. The incumbent government’s subversive foreign policy made it tougher to resolve the crisis.”

The BNP leader said there is no alternative to creating a safe zone in Rakhine of Myanmar to send back Rohingyas to their motherland.

“It will be possible only when the government can bring the global, regional and bilateral diplomatic initiatives in a single frame,” he said.

Arrange for release of Kajol: CPJ urges PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), a non-governmental organisation that champions press freedom around the world, has asked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to arrange for the immediate and unconditional release of journalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol.

In a letter, signed by CPJ Executive Director Joel Simon, the organisation expressed concern that Kajol’s ailment makes him vulnerable to Covid-19 infection.

“The current danger to Kajol is significant. We call on you to instruct the home affairs minister to drop the charges against him immediately,” said CPJ.

“At a minimum, we ask that you instruct the minister of law, justice and parliamentary affairs to stop opposing bail, so that Kajol can be released and recover his health at home,” reads the letter.

“We remain very concerned about the indiscriminate use of the Digital Security Act against Kajol and other journalists in

Bangladesh, and have documented many misuses of this law against the press,” read the letter sent to the premier over email on October 1.

Kajol, a photojournalist and editor of the biweekly Pakkhal magazine, disappeared on March 10 only to reappear near the border with India in early May, blindfolded and apparently held against his will during that time.

His disappearance followed the filing of three cases against him in Dhaka under the Digital Security Act for alleged derogatory online postings.

After his reappearance, Kajol was immediately arrested on trespassing charges, granted bail, then subsequently rearrested and then held under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code, CPJ documented at the time.

He was transferred to a jail in Dhaka and has been repeatedly denied bail, most recently on September 14, according to news reports.

Man accused in 29 cases held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police on Thursday claimed to have arrested a man accused in 29 cases filed with different police stations of Chattogram.

Md Ismail Hossain Tempoo alias Tempoo Ismail (35), from city’s Chandgaon area, was arrested from Rowfabad area, said Additional Deputy Commissioner Ashikur Rahman of CMP.

Police seized a firearm, machete and 545 yaba pills from him, said Ashikur.

“Tempoo Ismail is a top-listed criminal of Chattogram; he is accused in 29 cases for extortion, mugging and robbery. He was arrested several times and was in jail but did not refrain from criminal activities,” the ADC added.

The fault in our fuchka

FAISAL BIN IQBAL, SHOUT

Fuchka would make it on even the shortest list of the most popular Bangladeshi street foods. The spicy-savoury delight can be found at major street corners of every city, and even in district towns and suburban areas.

Like all other restaurants and food businesses, fuchka stalls have had a rough few months due to the ongoing pandemic. The lack of customers, coupled with hygiene issues, has forced a lot of these stalls to close down. Those that remain are barely managing to survive.

“We opened the stall after four long months. Although there were no customers at first, they gradually started showing up over time,” said Md Hasibur Rahman, owner of “VIP Shaad Fuchka and Chotpoti”, located near Banani Bridge.

Unlike other places in Dhaka, neighbourhoods around Banani, Gulshan and Baridhara do not have many street food stalls. The few that do operate within these areas are therefore quite popular among fuchka-craving locals.

“I have been running this place for over 14 years now, in this same spot. Business has never been this bad,” Hasibur said. “Good thing is that customer flow has



A vendor prepares the spicy delight at his stall on Gulshan Avenue.

started again, most of whom work in nearby offices. We are also providing home deliveries through an online delivery service.”

Despite reopening though, customers are yet to get back to previous levels. Though their fuchka craving cannot be satisfied by any other item, many are still avoiding fuchka places out of hygienic concerns.

“A majority of my regular customers have just disappeared. I’m almost at the verge of shutting down my shop,” said Md Tofayal

Hossain, owner of “Mexi Ind Corner” in Gulshan’s Pink City Shopping Complex, a favourite among shoppers. “I opened this shop seven years ago. We have been serving thousands of customers every day.”

For fuchka stall owners, the times are truly dire. Previously, their income wasn’t limited just to storefront sales, they also earned a good amount by catering to private programmes.

However, these incomes have

dried up too. “We used to cater a lot of private and corporate events, but almost none take place anymore. Right now, my shop is struggling to survive, said Tofayal.

Even though the love for fuchka remains, it is uncertain when things will go back to normal for these popular food joints. A lot has changed over the past few months, and although people have started to go back to their normal routines, they are now more cautious of their everyday actions.

Fusion Cafe, another popular spot on Gulshan Avenue, is known among foodies as “Kumudini fuchka” due its location beside the popular handicrafts store. Its manager Md Saiful informed that they are operating on a smaller scale and have kept the indoor seating area closed.

People stop by for takeaways but the business is nothing like it was before, he said.

Given our love for this mouth-watering snack, there is no doubt people will start flocking to their nearest fuchka stalls the moment this ordeal reaches its end. Till then, perhaps many of us will feel it is in our best interest to wait a bit longer before we start munching down on some fuchka.

Punish the culprits, compensate victims

Survivors of Tazreen fire demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Victims of the 2012 tragic fire at Tazreen Fashions yesterday demanded exemplary punishment of those responsible for the gruesome fire and casualties.

Speakers at a sit-in programme in front of the Jatiya press Club also demanded rehabilitation and proper compensation, said a press release. Victims of the fire incident have been holding the sit-in programme for the last 14 days.

Injured worker Hasi Begum read out a written statement.

On November 24, 2012, fire broke out at Tazreen Fashions Limited, a garments factory in Ashulia, some 35km from Dhaka city.

When the workers attempted to leave the building, the management locked it from outside, she said, adding many jumped through the windows of the building to save their lives. Many workers broke their limbs and became physically disabled.

“We become unable to do any work and therefore have been passing days in hardship,” said Hasi.

“Although various government and non-government organisations including

RMG buyers had pledged to extend help for affected workers after the incident, we did not get proper compensation,” she added, alleging BGMEA and other organisations of depriving the victims of treatment.

She threatened to hold tougher programmes like hunger strike if the government fails to ensure proper compensation.

President of Garments’ Sramik Oikya Forum Mosharefa Mishu, acting secretary of Garments Sramik Oikya Forum Shahidul Islam Sabuj, and secretary of Garment’s Sramik Trade Union Center Jolly Talukdar expressed their solidarity to the demands of the protesters.

Some 113 workers were killed in the fire and several hundred people injured in the incident. Two cases were filed with Ashulia Police Station against the factory owner and others. Police submitted charge sheets in both the cases against 13 people on September 2015.

After the incident, the retailers and brands working in association with the factory paid victims compensation under pressure from the International Labour Organization.

Masks bygone but threat omnipresent

Many residents of port city not following health guidelines due to authorities’ indifference

ARUN BIKASH DEX, Ctg

Fahim Hasan, a student of Chattogram College, uses face mask whenever he goes out. But every time he is outside, he sees a large number of people on roads and public transports ignoring health guidelines amid the pandemic.

“If anyone beside me doesn’t use mask, there’s no benefit if I do so,” Fahim told The Daily Star recently.

“It is frustrating that law enforcers do not take actions against those violating government health guidelines that everyone must wear mask outside to resist Covid-19,” he said.

According to health experts, fear of second wave of coronavirus transmission is looming as people are showing nonchalance in following health guidelines.

“In many cases, Covid-19 positive people are asymptomatic,” said Dr Abdur Rob, a senior consultant of medicine and head of Covid-19 isolation ward at Chattogram General Hospital. “So, it is important for everybody to use masks outside,” said Dr Rob.

Contacted, SM Nazer Hossain, central vice president of Consumers Association of Bangladesh, said the administration should carry out awareness programmes and enforce law so that none can defy health directives. “Otherwise, we will

have to bear the brunt of Covid-19 second wave,” he said.

Echoing him, Dr Mahfuzur Rahman, convener of Public Health Rights Protection Committee, Chattogram, said using face masks should be made mandatory. “The administration should take the matter seriously,” he said.

Asked, Yasmin Pervin Tibrizi, acting deputy commissioner of Chattogram, said they are conducting awareness programmes on a regular basis.

“We are campaigning in city and rural areas,” she said, adding, “We also distribute masks among those who cannot afford one. We are also enforcing law through mobile courts.”

Umar Faruk, an executive magistrate of Chattogram District Administration, said he conducted a mobile court at Kotwali Intersection in the city on September 28 and fined 50 people for not wearing masks.

“Most of them said they had masks but forgot to carry those. They said they would use those from then on,” he said. “During the drive, people appreciated us and requested to conduct such drives every day.”

Faisal Ahmed, upazila nirbahi officer of Patiya, said he would continue mobile court drives in the upazila to ensure that people wear face masks.



WHAT MASKS?... The shutdown may have been made flexible, but coronavirus is still going, affecting and claiming lives every day. Citizens all across Chattogram and other districts of the country have started to get comfortable with the situation, flouting social distancing guidelines, including the strict requirement of wearing masks in public. These photos were taken from port city’s Kazi’r Dewri area on Thursday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN



Man arrested over killing woman, son in port city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) have arrested the key suspect in a case filed over the murder of a woman and her son in Chandgaon of Chattogram city.

Md Faruk (33), a vegetable vendor, was held from the port city’s Pakkar Matha area on Thursday, said Lt Col Moshir Rahman Jewel, commanding officer (CO) of Rab-7.

On August 24, police recovered the bodies of one Gulnahr and her eight-year-old son Rifat from their house in Chadgaon’s Pathania Goda area.

Both had wounds inflicted by sharp weapon. During interrogation, Faruk said he plotted the double murder after watching a crime show on TV, the CO said.

“Faruk was a paying guest at Gulnahr’s house and he sold food items prepared by her on the streets. A rift developed between the two over money,” Lt Col Moshir said.

Faruk killed Gulnahr and murdered her son because he was a witness, the Rab official said quoting Faruk.

“Faruk threw his blood-stained clothes in a drain and left the city. He also switched off his phone. In interrogation, Faruk said he learned this from a TV serial,” Moshir added.

Faruk went to Khagrachhari and remained in hiding for a few days. He then moved to Dhaka before returning to the port city again, the Rab official added.

After the incident Gulnahr’s daughter filed a case with Chandgaon Police Station accusing Faruk.