

AEI

Bangladesh Air Express International Limited

PLEASE CONTACT:
Head Office Tel : 9565114, Logistics Office Tel : 9884851, Fax : (880-2) 9886531, E-mail : dac@aelogis.com
Chittagong Office Tel : (031) 721085, Fax : (880-31) 710106, Internet : fedcgp@spcnet.com.smp.
Air and Ocean-Forwarding • Customs Brokerage • Warehousing and Distribution • Express • NVOCC

Quality Worldwide Logistics



Rice Cooker



Dry Iron

Ideal gift for any occasion.

Instalment facility available only for purchases above Tk. 5,000

Transcom Electronics Limited

Official license of Philips Electronics N.V. for lighting products, radio and TV sets
Dhaka : 815307-10, 819625-9 Ctg. : 716353, 723578
Khulna : 720304, Bogra : 6215

Backed by Guarantee

Let's make things better.

PHILIPS

Guess which goose is coming as dinner

By Mir A Zaman

"Osh-shikar! Osh-shikar! Osh-shikar!" cries the man out loud every time a car rushes by along the New Elephant Road. The shikars, the Bengali synonym for games, in his hands are three migratory birds tied together.

He is not alone. There are four or five more like him.

Their marketing strategy is the same. Whenever they see a car coming in, they display the shikars and cry out, "Osh-shikar!" They are a regular feature in winter, that's when the migratory birds start coming in from Siberia and other arctic areas. Ironically, the birds, which fly thousands of miles away from home to the tropical land of ours in search of food, become delicious dishes themselves.

The tragic element in the whole story is, however, lost on the vendors. For them, the guest birds are nothing but product to be sold to whoever is ready to pay. Eco-systems, endangered species are terms they are not familiar with and don't care much about.

"People sell chicken and I sell these," said the middle-aged man, a familiar face at New Elephant Road in winter. "It's what I do for a living."

Although they sell the shikars, they are not the shikars, or hunters. They don't set the traps for the ducks, geese and other migratory birds that fly in winter. From November to January these birds take refuge in the ponds, beels and haors at different places across the country. The haor in Sylhet, Chalan Beel in Rajshahi, the forest in Madhupur and Srimangal attract the majority of the guest birds, and of course, the hunters, who set the snares to catch them.

The hunters sell the birds to



Guests for dinner: Elephant road vendors hawk migratory birds to curious onlookers — Star Photo: Zahedul I Khan

local traders. The migratory birds are then sent to the key cities of the country by road along with poultry of the regular kind. The trucks are off-loaded at the wholesale markets at Kawan Bazar and Mohammadpur. From there the birds go to street-side vendors.

"We don't catch them," said another vendor, as if he were making a confession. "We buy them from the markets and sell them here."

The migratory birds are expensive.

"I have got three Siberian ducks," said the man. "It will

cost you 1,800 taka."

The price they ask is often double the amount they eventually settle for. Often, it takes them the whole day to sell the few birds they have in their possession. Some just ask the price out of curiosity while some lose interest at the very beginning.

"Buying three ducks for 1,800 taka is not something I can afford," said the pedestrian, a junior executive at a private enterprise.

There are quite a few who simply hate the idea of having a migratory bird for lunch or

dinner. They are the ones who care about the eco-system.

"These people (the vendors) should be arrested and sent to prison for such a criminal act," said Salahuddin, a Dhaka University student. "They should be told what they are doing. I wonder why the government is not doing anything about it."

The Forest Ministry, on October 3, banned hunting of any wild creature, including birds. Under the Wild Life Preservation Act, 1974, a person in violation of the ban will be liable to a fine of five hundred taka. The ministry has recently car-

ried out a couple of raids on the pet shops at the Katabon market, recovered a few birds and sent them to Dhaka Zoo. Besides, it has also declared the haor in Sylhet a sanctuary for birds.

However, violation is rampant. Ornithologists feel the fine is not enough. The hunters, who earn a lot by selling the birds to the traders, don't mind paying the five hundred taka fine. The result is ominous — more guest birds are sold on the street sides everyday.

The law is there and so are the law-enforcers. Still, the vendors have brisk business on the street side. Just a few hundred paces from the police box on the Myemensing Road, guest birds are sold. The police personnel on patrol conveniently ignore the wrong-doing. Many say the police and the vendors have an understanding deal. The law-enforcers get paid for their indifference.

Sensitising the general mass is regarded as a poignant means to stop the trade of guest birds. Unfortunately, people of the privileged class, who are supposed to take the lead in creating awareness among the masses, form the clientele of the street-side vendors.

"We sell these birds to rich people," said one vendor. "They don't mind paying five hundred taka for a goose."

Indiscriminate killing of guest birds goes on. The conscious sections of the society do their bits to stop the annihilation, but their efforts fail to make a major impact. A few days back, Kalidas Karmakar, a renowned artist of the country, rescued a few guest birds from a vendor at New Elephant Road and set them free. He may have saved a few, but others remain vulnerable to be snared, sold and served on the dinner table.

Why turtles turn turtle

By Shehab Ahmed

A giant marine green turtle was sold for Tk 6,000 at a bazaar last week in Faridganj, Chandpur.

It was one of the most endangered species in the world, seen in Bangladesh for the first time since 1996, wildlife experts said.

The 42-kg female turtle was caught in a fishing net in the Meghna estuary. This rare species is protected by the Wild Life Conservation Act, 1974.

Poachers hunting the green turtle and their eggs at their nesting grounds in the eastern coast of Bangladesh have reduced their number to such an extent that they were last seen in 1996.

The turtles are 'living fossils' that have changed little since they first appeared about 200 million years ago, experts said.

Portfolios of some ministers reallocated

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday reallocated the portfolios of one Minister, three State Ministers and a Deputy Minister, reports APB.

According to an official handout, Shipping Minister ASM Abdul Rab has been given the portfolio of Fisheries and Livestock.

State Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Satish Chandra Roy has been assigned the responsibility of Primary and Mass Education Division.

Prof Zinatunnesa Talukder, who was State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Division, will now look after the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.

State Minister for LGED and Cooperatives Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya has been made State Minister for Shipping.

Saber Hossain Chowdhury, who was earlier Deputy Minister for Shipping, has now been assigned to the Ministry of LGED and Cooperatives.

Earlier, on Wednesday the Prime Minister allocated Science and Technology Ministry to Lt Gen (Retd) Nooruddin Khan.

The air-breathing reptiles remarkably adapted to life in the sea. A streamlined shape, large flippers enable them to dive into great depths and travel long distance.

"But they are tied to the land and exposed to humans because the female turtles must lay eggs in sandy beach during breeding season between December and February," a biologist said.

A survey by Dr Ali Reza Khan and Anisuzzaman Khan in 1996 found that Bangladesh marine waters support five species — Green Turtle, Olive Ridley Turtle, Loggerhead Turtle, Hawksbill and Leatherback Turtle.

They conducted the survey on behalf of the forest department and suggested a comprehensive management plan for their survival.

Anisuzzaman Khan, an expert working with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), told The Daily Star that the green turtle is the largest sea turtle.

Sea turtles leave the sea to lay their eggs on land. The arduous process of nesting takes up to three hours. A turtle must drag her great weight ashore, dig a nest, deposit roughly 100 eggs, conceal the nest before returning to the sea.

During the breeding season, the female needs more food and ventures from deep sea to shallow waters and river estuary. He said the important turtle breeding grounds are in Saint Martin's island, beaches between Monkhali and Enani at Teknaf, Sonadia island, Kutubdia, Char Bahaiddin, Nijhum Dweep, East Dhala Char, Kuakata and part of the Sundarbans.

But ignorance about their status, both of the law enforcers and people, and poachers' greed have virtually brought them to the brink of extinction, he said.

Khan said that Nature Conservation Movement jointly with forest department organised people's participatory marine turtle conservation awareness and action programme in Teknaf peninsula. They also experimented with captive breeding of marine turtles.

CARINAM, a research organisation, collected eggs from the nest and protects the eggs until hatching in a safe place in Saint Martin's island and released the hatchling to the sea.

National Conservation

Strategy, the forest department and the ministry of environment and forests have conducted a survey and identified the marine turtles nesting area.

Dhaka-Calcutta bus service soon, hopes Indian FM

NEW DELHI, Dec 24: The External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh said here today that arrangements were being made to introduce the bus service between Dhaka and Calcutta, and expressed hope that it would be done soon, reports BSS.

Replying to a question at his first press conference here today Singh said that the issue of barbed wire fencing in the border with Bangladesh could be resolved through discussion.

Singh's reply came when a correspondent asked him how India expected to improve its relations with Bangladesh when it had (India) started fencing the border with Bangladesh without consulting Bangladesh first.

PTI adds: West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu today urged the Vajpayee government at the centre for introducing bus and train services between West Bengal and Bangladesh to promote bilateral relations between the two neighbouring countries.

Speaking at a function marking the 125th birth anniversary of Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Huq, first premier of undivided Bengal, Basu said the issue of bus services remains in papers only even though "much has been talked about."

Basu said he would personally take up the matter, since nothing concrete had been done on India's side to pursue the issue.

"I have been told by Bangladesh traders and businessmen that Dhaka is ready with required number of buses and roads in that country are in good condition."

Basu also called for reducing huge trade gap between India and Bangladesh and suggested steps to promote bilateral business opportunities to bridge such a deficit.

High drama as Khaleque hops

From Page 1
brought a bouquet and a TV cameraman had come. As I started crying and wanted to know why I was taken there, PM (Sheikh Hasina) told me, "Don't create a scene..."

If I decide to join your party, I will do it in a group, not individually. I told the prime minister.

At one stage, it appeared to me I might get killed.

They started taking photographs, after placing the bouquet on my hands. The ceremony over, I requested the Mayor to drop me at home but he declined. Later, AL MP Kamal Ahmed Majumdar took me home in his car at around noon. I found my house under police guard. I then phoned madam (Khaleda Zia) to tell the story.

They did not torture me rather behaved well. But why did they harass and force me to do all these things?, he told a questioner.

Pak army picked me up and tortured me at Dhaka Cantonment during the 1971 Liberation War. I am one of the worst victims of the Pak repression in

rice in the morning."

PMO

Meanwhile, officials at PMO could not give details about his joining the AL.

Kazi Akhtar Uddin Ahmed, Deputy Press Secretary-II to the PM, told The Daily that at about 11 am, Khaleque came to the PMO and joined the AL. "We don't know any more."

Neither Ahmed nor Press Secretary Jawadul Karim was present during the occasion.

Khaleda Zia

Talking to a group of reporters at her Minto Road official residence after the iftar party, Khaleda Zia also alleged that the DGFI forced Khaleque to join the AL. "Using the DGFI for political purpose is unfortunate."

Bhuiya

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan accused the government of "torturing" DCC commissioners of his party.

"Most of the commissioners have gone into hiding in the city and some of them are also planning to leave the capital, following torture and threats on them for joining the AL. The

Mayor Hanif

Reached by telephone last night, Mayor Hanif told The Daily Star, "I was called from the PM office and reached there at about 11.30 pm. There, I found Kamal Majumdar and Khaleque gossiping. I also came to learn that Khaleque was waiting to join the AL. But I did not find any symptom suggesting he was forced to come there."

Asked about Khaleque's claim of coercion, he said, "It sounds childish."

Asked if the controversial joining of Khaleque was part of AL's plan to strengthen the party ahead of the mayoral election, Hanif said, "We'll encourage anybody to join our party."

The brief BTV shot on the occasion showed Khaleque standing with a bouquet carried by those surrounding him. It was not clear if Khaleque was presenting the bouquet to the PM. Water Resources Minister Abdul Razzak, Mayor Hanif, State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Kamal Ahmed Majumdar were among others seen.

Police close to finding clues to Sohel murder

By Staff Correspondent

Detectives have unearthed some sensational information about the killing of film actor Sohel Chowdhury in the city Saturday night.

After six days of interrogation, Detective Branch (DB) of Police yesterday gathered the information which, they said, would help resolve the mystery behind the killing.

They would now interrogate some influential people and nab some suspects. Two special DB teams are hunting for the suspects.

Two persons arrested earlier and placed on police remand, however, denied involvement in the killing.

Police sources said a rival group had attacked Sohel with sophisticated arms and killed him in front of Club Tramps at Banani. Both sides were equipped with firearms and fought each other for some time.

DB interrogation, however, revealed that Sohel's group had started firing first.

Police could not confirm whether the murder was pre-

planned but said they had come to know that it was planned at least two months back.

One of the proprietors of Club Tramps yesterday denied that the club had any link with the killing.

"We have permission to operate dance floors but not to sell liquor. We never serve liquor to our customers. But foreigners and licence holders can always bring alcohol with them," Bunty Islam said over telephone.

Two other owners of the club are AR Chowdhury, Bottle and Shukumar Chowdhury.

Bunty, who has a warrant of arrest against him, denied any dispute with Sohel and said, "I used to treat him as my younger brother. On the day of his murder, I helped catch one of the 'killers' on the spot. Moreover, my manager gave police the clues for arrest of the killers."

Club Tramps started business in December 1996. Police closed it following the killing.

Denying some recent press reports, Bunty said his club never paid toll to police.

Gas blowout baffles firemen

By Staff Correspondent

Fire Brigade divers conducted a day-long operation yesterday to repair the damaged under-water gas pipeline in the Turag river below Mirpur bridge.

However, the operation went in vain due to lack of technical knowledge.

The divers have spotted the damaged section of the pipeline on the first day. Managing Director of Titas Gas and Transmission Company (TGTC) Sekander Hayat said.

They found that the 'safety concrete coating on the 50-pound pressure pipeline' was severely damaged when hit by a motorised vessel Tuesday morning, he added.

The 12-inch diameter pipeline is one of the main gas supply lines for the western part of the city including Mohammadpur and Mirpur areas.

"We have contacted the Naval Headquarters seeking their cooperation in repairing the damage as Fire Brigade does not have the technical know-how and equipment to do such a difficult job," Hayat told The Daily Star.

Fire Brigade divers will conduct another operation tomorrow (Friday) to give us a more precise damage report prior to Navy's operation as the line was under 10-12 feet of water," he said.

Earlier, TGTC had lodged a diary with Mirpur thana. Police are yet to arrest anyone or trace the motorised vessel responsible for the damage.

Meanwhile, the gas crisis in the city further deepened on the third day yesterday owing to the damage.

Gas was leaking from the pipe creating bubbles in the river. The TGTC has deployed security personnel at the site to avoid any accident.

Meanwhile, the newly constructed Hazaribagh-Amin-

bazar gas pipeline was commissioned on Wednesday ahead of schedule as an alternative to the damaged line to restore normal supply.

Intern docs call off strike

By Staff Correspondent

The two-day strike of intern doctors, called by a rival faction of the Young Doctors Movement (YDMC) ended yesterday.

The strike was called on Wednesday to protest an "unacceptable" settlement between the leaders of a faction of the YDMC and the health minister to raise the monthly remuneration of intern doctors to Tk 5000 from Tk 4000 and verbal assurance to consider five other demands.

Intern doctors of government medical college hospitals in the country had begun an indefinite strike on December 15 at the call of the YDMC to realise their six-point demand. The strike was called off by some leaders of the YDMC Tuesday midnight following the settlement, sparking off protest by another faction.

YDMC General Secretary Dr. Hayat Mahmud Russel, who leads the rival faction told The Daily Star yesterday, "We have suspended our agitation programme due to the Ramadan and considering the sufferings of patients. We will go for further movement after the Eid-ul-Fitr to press our six-point demand."

The strike was called off by Dr. Nurul Anwar, Co-chairman of YDMC, following the settlement.

The six-point demand of intern doctors include raising of their remuneration to Tk 8000.



University students protest sexual harassment by teachers.

— Star photo

Saying no to sex fiends

By DU Correspondent

The on-going movement by Dhaka University students against alleged sexual harassment by some teachers took a new turn yesterday as another group appeared in the scene under the banner of "Conscious Students" to "save the image of the university."

The new group captured the traditional meeting venue at the foot of the Aparajo Bangla on the campus where the other group under the banner of "Students - Protesting Sexual Harassment" was scheduled to hold a rally. This group had started a movement on December 12 following a complaint by a student of Public Administration that she was sexually harassed by a teacher of International Relations, Prof. Shahiduzzaman.

Seeing the meeting venue captured, they marched towards the administrative building in a procession to observe a scheduled sit-in strike there.

They started the "Conscious Students" group virtually ran towards the administrative building and captured the place in front of the gate of the Vice-chancellor's office.

The other group then gathered in front of the main entrance of the Registrar Building. They held a rally there and announced a programme to realise their six-point demand. The programme includes a procession wearing masks on December 26, burning of effigies of accused persons and a rally on the

campus on December 29.

The "Conscious Students" group also held a rally in front of the date of the VC's office where speakers said they were with the "Students - Protesting Sexual Harassment" but left them as "outsiders" were with them. There are students of Jahangirnagar University with them which is tarnishing the image of DU, they said.

They said the teacher concerned has already been suspended, and the authorities have assured action against him on the basis of an inquiry committee.

"We also want trail of the culprits. It is not necessary to create law and order situation on the campus. They (the other group) are creating a situation being provoked by some NGOs", one of the speakers.

The group under the banner of "Students - Protesting Sexual Harassment" later held a press conference at the Madhu's canteen and explained their six-point demand. The demands include a code of conduct against sexual harassment, setting up of a cell to receive complaints of sexual harassment, suspension of all teachers against whom there are allegations of sexual harassment, release of reports of all inquiry committees formed in the past, and inclusion of female students in the committee formed to probe sexual harassment. They alleged that Ruhul Amin a teacher of International Rela-

tions was accused of sexually harassing a child in the USA while he was there on a scholarship. They demanded that he should not be reinstated in service. The students also distributed leaflets carrying these demands.

They also accused the university authorities of publishing misleading information in the media to divert their movement.

A committee was formed to probe an allegation of sexual harassment against Aminur Rahman of the department Political Science four years ago. But the report was not published, they said. A female student filed a complaint against Emran Hossain of the same department to the VC through the Chairman of the department but the authorities did not take any action, the students alleged.

Case challenging results of JS polls in Dhaka-6 dismissed

The Election Tribunal of Dhaka Division has dismissed a case filed by BNP candidate Mirza Abbas challenging the results of the 1996 parliamentary election in Dhaka-6 constituency, reports UNB.

Awami League candidate Saber Hossain Chowdhury was elected MP from the constituency



He's ours. No I'm not: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina thinks she has landed S A Khaleque (left). But the AL-turned-BNP-turned-JP-turned-JP leader later claimed he was "got".

which I suffered physically and materially.

We liberated the country to live with freedom. But now, under the AL rule, my freedom of choice is at stake. Why should I not have the right to do politics as I like?

The official news agency BSS said: "S. A. Khaleque, a BNP leader of Mirpur, and Ismail Hossain Bantu, a ward commissioner of Dhaka City Corporation, joined Bangladesh Awami League expressing their total support to the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina."

"They formally joined the party after meeting Hasina, also the AL President, at her of-

worst victim of the government's political repression is S. A. Khaleque, who became MP for the four times, and a political personality of Mirpur.

"Losing popularity, the government has now started forcing the opposition politicians to join the ruling party," he said.

"They came down on him after he had made a joint convenor of the BNP city unit."

Quoting the PM claiming on Wednesday that her party would win in 175 seats if elections was held now, the BNP leader said, "If it is so, then why doesn't she announce elections right now?"

Khaleque's wife
Contacted by telephone, Khaleque's wife told this paper that her husband returned home at 12.30 pm yesterday and requested them not to ask anything. He also asked to call all of my children back home. "I think I won't remain alive anymore," she quoted her husband as saying.

ISPR
The Director Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Mohammad Hossain, told The Daily Star that he had no knowledge of the incident. "I contacted DGFI officials who termed Khaleque's claim baseless."

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Published by the Editor from City Publishing House Ltd., 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000 on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C.A., Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 866772-4, Commercial: 866771, Fax No: 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA. Internet edition address: http://www.dailystarnews.com and Email address: dstar@bangla.net