

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Some of my purported nephews and nieces over the years.

Have You Been Uncle'd?

NOT that many years ago, when I turned forty while living in California, I celebrated by learning how to fly a plane and how to scuba dive. The key fact about flying a plane is that the number of take-offs must equal the number of landings. This lesson helped me fly a Cessna 172 and survive. But scuba diving proved more daunting as I nearly drowned an instructor before earning my certification with another one named John.

John's twenty-something (and pretty, I might add) girlfriend helped him teach the lessons. I caught her looking at me and smiling a few times. Being a happily married father of two, I smiled back but (of course) maintained a safe distance. On the last day, as we walked back from the ocean after the final dive, she came up to me. "You know, I kind of like you..." Uh-oh, I thought, where was this headed? I could only smile and nod, but she kept on talking, "...because

you remind me of my favourite Uncle." Ouch, I had just been Uncle'd.

After my return to Bangladesh, Uncleing reared its ugly head again, often with a vengeance. Not only youngsters, but sometimes adult strangers called me Uncle to attract my attention when I went out taking pictures.

For example, in February I was photographing at the Boi Mela, hovering on the Bangla Academy road. Suddenly, from thirty feet away across the street, came a clear, distinct shout, "UN-N-KEL! UN-N-KEL!" His next (loud) words were "AREN'T YOU GOING TO TAKE MY PICTURE?" so there was no mistaking his target. Let's see now. You are yelling at the top of your voice, calling me Uncle as three hundred people watch, and you expect me to come over and take your picture? I really don't think so.

How can one retaliate being Uncle'd? I find the best retort is to Mamu the perpetrator, as in "MAMU! How are you? What do you

do these days?" The same person who had called me Uncle a second ago is suddenly uncomfortable facing their mother's possible long-lost brother. Quickly changing the topic to math sometimes works well. "Mamu, what class are you studying in? Tell me, how much is 12 times 7?" If the kid is older, throw in a twist: "If it takes 12 men 5 days to dig a plot of land, how many days will it take 8 men?" Often, these questions elicit an "Oh, I forgot I have some work to do now," followed by a rapid exit from the scene.

Despite my valiant efforts, the Uncle phase seems to me a lost cause. Perhaps the best I can hope for is to delay the Nana phase as long as possible. That comes with its own challenges, but the associated rewards grandchildren, real or purported must be a joy.

In the meantime if you want me to take your picture on the street, calling me Bhaiya will work like magic.

BDR holds 21 trespassers

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) arrested 21 people including women and children on charges of entering Bangladesh illegally through Sadipur and Putkhali villages under Benapole Police Station yesterday evening.

They are Nazma Begum, 27, Sefa Khatun, 13, Farida Begum, 17, Aleya Akhter, 18, Sima Das, 30, Laxmi Rani, 36, Nazir Hossain, 18, Shaymi Das, 35, Siddik Ali, 50, Azizul Sheikh, 15, Abdul karim, 19, Rajendra Nath, 46, Ranjan Kumar, 22, Rubel Ahmed, 17, Amit Sarker, 16, Rabbi Hossain, 6, Nafiz Hossain, 4, Monodas, 7, Masuda Yesmin, 3, Nazmul Sheikh, 6 and Sikdar Haq, 5.

All of them hailed from different villages of Bagerhat, Narayanganj and Narail districts.

BDR camp-in-charge Harun-ur-Rashid said acting on a tip off, they conducted a drive at Sadipur and Putkhali villages and held them.

A case was filed with Benapole Police Station.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK



Today is the 3rd death anniversary of Prof MA Hadi, former vice-chancellor of Bangladesh Medical University and president of Bangladesh Medical Association, says a press release.

Quazi Golam Dastgir



The second death anniversary of former ambassador major general Quazi Golam Dastgir, KAAO, psc will be observed tomorrow (Sunday) after Asr prayers at House 36 (New), Road 11 (New), Dhanmandi R/A in the city, said a press release.



The Liberation War Museum authorities accord a reception to 30 heroes of the War of Liberation on the museum premises yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

DAILY STAR-BANK ASIA-DRISHTY SCIENCE FESTIVAL Involve rural students in development: Minister

A CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Primary and Mass Education Minister Afsarul Ameen here yesterday said organisations like Drishty must work along with the government to encompass the students of the rural community, whose development have long been neglected.

Bangladesh will lag behind if we fail to assure equal development in our country, he added.

He was speaking as chief guest on the second day of the inauguration programme of The Daily Star-Bank Asia-Drishty science festival at Ispahani Public School and College.

The minister also urged the media and business community to work with social and government bodies to ensure participation of the deprived rural community.

Executive Vice President of Bank Asia Mohammed Roshangir, in his speech as special guest, pledged to work with Drishty in the future as a part of the bank's social responsibilities.

Another special guest, Bureau Chief Raesul Haq Bahar of The Daily Star, Chittagong, reminiscing the six-year's association with

Drishty said, "We would continue to work with them."

He also voiced his disappointment over the backwardness and social stigma that still prevails in our society even after forty years of our independence.

"We should work to instil scientific knowledge in our children so that our future society can be based on reason," he said.

Lecturer of Genetic Science at Chittagong University and

the organisation's Secretary Adnan Mannan said they are arranging this sort of festivals so that passion for science can be triggered when texts sometimes fall short to do so.

Drishty President Masud Bakul chaired the programme.

The minister inaugurated the program, releasing balloons in the sky and visiting science exhibition stalls with innovations of the participants, following a brief discussion.



A rally from the South Plaza of the National Parliament was brought out on Thursday on the occasion of World Sight Day 2010. Foreign Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister Gowhor Rizvy inaugurated the rally. Dr Deen Mohammad Nurool Huq, Dr Wahidul Islam, Biptopi Das Chowdhury, Zahida Ispahani and M Nurun Nabi, among others, took part in the rally.

সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠ ভোটে বাংলাদেশ আইটিইউ-এর কাউন্সিল সদস্য নির্বাচিত হওয়ায়

আন্তরিক অভিনন্দন



মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রীর ডিজিটাল বাংলাদেশ স্বপ্ন বাস্তবায়নে এ এক অনন্য সাফল্য।

মাননীয় ডাক ও টেলিযোগাযোগ মন্ত্রী, মন্ত্রণালয় ও সংসদীয় কমিটি, পররাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়, বিটিআরসি ও বাংলাদেশ মিশন সহ সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের আন্তরিক সহযোগিতা, সক্রিয় ভূমিকা ও অক্লান্ত পরিশ্রম আমাদের এ সাফল্য বয়ে এনেছে।

সবাইকে আমরা আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ ও প্রাণঢালা অভিনন্দন জানাচ্ছি।