

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Fun at the Kella.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Mughal Fort to People's Park

IS this the most beautiful spot in Dhaka?

The Mughal fort known as Lalbagh Kella is a delightful mix of past and present. Crossing its threshold, I feel I am stepping into history. People from far and wide come to enjoy its beautiful gardens set in spacious grounds.

Dating from the seventeenth century, the Kella is a sprawling but unfinished complex on nineteen acres. It contains three buildings: a mosque, the tomb of Pori Bibi, and an Audience Hall/Royal Bath. There is a large gate, barracks, a large pond for storing water and a watchtower for guarding over the river.

The fort's story is grandiose but sad. Prince Azam Khan, son of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, started the project in 1678 as governor of Bengal. His governorship lasted only fifteen months, and he left the fort unfinished. Shaista Khan, Azam's successor, resumed work on the fort. But his favourite daughter Pori Bibi died (c. 1684) before the fort was completed. Heartbroken, Shaista Khan abandoned the project.

Looking at the fort complex, I guess that the gates, walls, and mosque had received priority during construction, since they look reasonably complete. The Audience Hall, a small museum now, was intended to be Shaista Khan's residence, but I doubt its size would suffice for the governor of Bengal. Perhaps more work was needed.

Glimpses of Moghul genius and workmanship are everywhere. A plumbing system supplied the entire fort with running water. Fountains abound. The main gate, towering three stories high, is still imposing. Remains of a Moghul garden over the barracks

retain its charm. A small but perfectly proportioned mosque attracts hundreds of worshippers to this day.

But the highlight of the fort is Pori Bibi's tomb. Exquisite and symmetrical, it has eight identical rooms around a central room containing a cenotaph. The interior is decorated with stones imported from all over India.

On this busy afternoon, however, Shaista Khan's sorrow appears far from the crowd's thoughts. Throngs of visitors have lined up to buy the ten-taka entrance tickets. Once inside, their excitement knows no bounds. The Kella offers something for every taste: picnics, strolling, romancing, wall-climbing, and numerous games.

Finding themselves in beautiful surroundings, everyone wants photographs. People try new poses while standing, sitting or even lying on the grass. Some grab flowers or stand spread-eagled against the fort's wall. Inside a large opening on the fort's wall, a young man is rap-dancing while his friends click away.

For families the Kella is a true gift. Giggling babies roll non-stop in the grass while brave toddlers taste their first mountain climbing on the mounds of earth behind the barracks. A grandmother in head-to-toe burkha arrives with her grandson who looks bored. Producing a balloon from her purse, she inflates it without removing her veil. Now she has the boy's attention: he grabs it, jumps into an empty fountain and, holding the balloon up high, runs gleefully in endless circles.

Past and present thus come together at the Kella.

.....
ihtishamkabir@yahoo.com

Resolve problems of Old Dhaka

Demand environmentalists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmental activists, development workers, cultural activists and social workers at a rally yesterday demanded effective initiatives to resolve the yearlong environmental and citizens' crises facing the city's Old Dhaka area.

The demands came from an "environment mass rally" organised by Save Environment Movement at Balurghat of Amligola in the city's Lalbagh area.

Discussants said environmental degradation in Old Dhaka has reached a severe stage and grievance developed among the area's residents due to years of negligence by the authorities concerned.

Their demands, among others, include permanent solution of water logging; protection of playgrounds, ponds, parks and all archeological structures; and freeing Lalbagh Fort from illegal grabbing.

They also demanded developing good communication infrastructures; eviction of illegal structures in Buriganga; and withdrawal of combustible chemical warehouses from the area.

Lawmaker Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin; Save Environment Movement Chairman Abu Naser Khan; Prof Anu Muhammad; Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haque Inu; and Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon were also present.

Dhaka, Moscow happy over cooperation

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, who is now on an official visit to Russia, spent a busy day yesterday as she met chief executives of State Atomic Energy Corporation 'Rosatom', the largest oil and gas exploration company 'Gazprom' and members of Bangladesh community in Moscow.

During the meeting with Chairman of the Board of Directors of Gazprom Miller Alexey Borisovich, both sides expressed satisfaction at the recent level of cooperation between the two countries. A draft MoU, cleared by Bangladesh side, is now under consideration by the Russian side.

Moni requested the Gazprom chief to finalise the draft MOU at the shortest possible time, and urged to offer training assistance for Bangladeshi experts.



This gaping hole on Beribadh Road, which is in a sorry state from Abu Bazar to Aminbazar, at Islambagh in the city poses a hindrance to commuters and a threat to vehicles. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

NEWS IN brief

PM arrives at Sirajganj today

UNB, Sirajganj

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will arrive here today to reopen Qaumi Jute Mills, inaugurate 150MW peaking power plant at Saidabad and expansion works on Saidabad-Enayetpur road.

The prime minister will also address a public meeting at Sirajganj University College ground.

RU proctor receives threat from Shibir

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University (RU) proctor on Thursday evening received a letter threatening him that the university campus will be paralysed in the summer vacation starting on April 17.

The letter said Islami Chhatra Shibir along with Jatiyatibadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) would take control of the campus by a sudden attack before or during the vacation.

It also asked RU authorities to vacate all dormitories and shut activities on the campus during the vacation to avoid any attack on the teachers and students.

RU Proctor Prof Chowdhury Muhammad Zakaria disclosed the matter to the journalists after filing a general diary (GD) with Motihar Police Station around 8.00pm.

7 cocktails recovered in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Police recovered seven cocktails from North Mourail of the town on Thursday night.

Police said they raided Kabir's home at North Mourail and recovered the cocktails, wrapped in scotch tape, from inside the boundary wall.

The cocktails were kept in a tub of water at Sadar Police Station where a general diary was lodged, said police.

SHIP SINKING

Probe body asked to find causes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The government has formed a three-member probe body on Thursday night to find out the causes of sinking of MV Hyang Ro Bong at the outer anchorage of Chittagong port late Wednesday.

Engineer AHM Sherajul Islam of Mercantile Marine Department heads the committee; and Captain Rahmat Ullah, deputy harbour master of the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) and a Lt Commander ranking officer from Bangladesh Coast Guard are its members.

The committee was asked to submit its report within seven days, Engineer Sherajul said adding that they have already started the investigation.

Meanwhile, the North Korean ship, which sank with 13,492 tonnes of rice imported from Pakistan for Bangladesh, was not rescued till yesterday evening.

Contacted, CPA Secretary Sayed Farhad Uddin Ahmed said it is the responsibility of owners to salvage their ship from the sea.

However, the movement of ships in the channel is not being hampered due to the sunken vessel, he added.

Shoumen Chakraborty, manager of the ship's local agent Fortune Shipping, told The Daily Star it would take time to start rescue operation because owners of the ship at first have to settle a salvage plan through a meeting with the CPA.

He hoped the meeting would be held today. MV Hyang Ro Bong sank after hitting MV Banga Lanka, which was anchored at C-Anchorage, while entering the outer anchorage of the port.

Over 100 hurt in B'baria clashes

UNB, Brahmanbaria

Over a hundred people were injured in separate clashes at Dewra-Shahbazpur village in Sharail upazila and in the district town yesterday.

Witnesses said a clash ensued between the supporters of Mintu group and Anu group of the village over previous enmity at about 5:00am, leaving at least one hundred people injured from both sides.

At least 10 houses were ransacked and looted during the four hours long clash.

In another incident, an altercation ensued between Suresh Rishi and Bijoy Rishi in the morning over a family feud in Bhadughar Rishipara area of the district town.

Later, their supporters equipped with sharp weapons and sticks attacked each other that left 10 people from both sides injured. The injured were rushed to Sadar Hospital.

Kidnapped engineer rescued, four held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Four alleged kidnappers were arrested from Birganj upazila of Dinajpur district while the kidnapped man was rescued from Kabirajer Haat in Thakurgaon on Thursday.

The arrested are Shah Alam of Motukpur village of Nilphamari; and Mizanur Rahman of Bhognagat village; Golap Mia of Shahadubi village; and Shafiq of Deuli village; all of Dinajpur district.

Officer-in-Charge of Sukumar Mohanto Domar Police Station said Sirajul Islam, assistant engineer of Mir Aktar Hossain Ltd, a construction company, was kidnapped from Boragari Bridge on Domar-Jaldhaka road on Wednesday morning. The company is currently constructing the road.

The kidnappers called Sirajul's wife to send Tk 1 lakh by Karotoa Courier Service at Birganj. Plainclothes police, on her information, caught the four from the courier office. On interrogation, the four informed police of Sirajul's location, he said. He added that a court granted a seven-day remand prayer.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

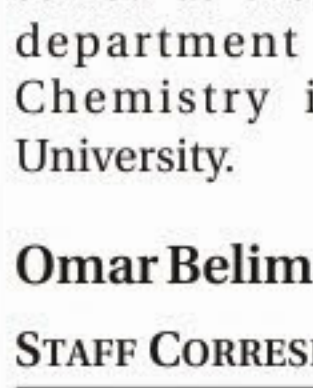


Today is the 15th death anniversary of Prof Fazlul H A l i m Chowdhury, former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, says a press release.

Prof Fazlul served as an adviser of science affairs of UNESCO in Delhi. He also served as the chairman of department of Applied Chemistry in Rajshahi University.

Omar Belim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the first death anniversary of M o h a m m a d Omar Belim, father

of former national cricketer Javed Omar Belim, says a press release.

Faisal Mahmud Shetu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the f o u r t h death anniversary of F l y i n g Cadet Faisal M a h m u d

Shetu, son of Shahjahan Hawlader, says a press release.

Road crashes kill 4

METRO DESK

Four people including a child were killed and five others injured in separate road accidents in Lalmonirhat, Chapainawabganj, Kishoreganj and Comilla yesterday.

Our correspondent from Lalmonirhat reports: A man was killed in road accident at Sindurmoti village of Lalmonirhat sadar upazila yesterday.

The victim was identified as Momen Miah, 45, son of Mollah Haque at Sindurmoti village of Lalmonirhat Sadar.

Police said the accident took place when a Rajarhat-bound truck from Barobari Bazaar hit Momen while he was returning home after praying Juma prayers, leaving him injured seriously.

He died on the way to Rangpur Medical College Hospital. The truck and its driver managed to flee away from the spot.

Our correspondent from Chapainawabganj adds: An elderly indigenous woman was killed and four others were injured in a road accident at Battola of Nejmampur of Nachole upazila in Chapainawabganj yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Shukur Moni, 70, wife of Raichand of Golmashna village under Niamotpur upazila in Naogaon.

Police said the accident occurred when a Chapainawabganj-bound bus from Nachole collided head-on with a speeding truck in Battola area under.

Of the injured, two were admitted to Chapainawabganj Sadar Hospital and two serious injured were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

A correspondent from Kishoreganj says: A child was killed in a tragic road accident as a bus hit and another bus crushed under its wheel while the child was crossing the Dhaka-Kishoreganj highway in Pakundia yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Tanjina Akter, 5, daughter of Fazar Ali of Bahadia village in Pakundia.

Agitating people caught the two busses and drivers of the busses were handed over to police.

UNB from Comilla adds: A covered van helper was killed and its driver injured when the van collided head-on with a truck on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Korpai in Burichang upazila yesterday.

The identity of the deceased could not be known immediately. Police said the accident occurred around 5:00am when the Dhaka-bound covered van from Chittagong collided head-on with the goods-laden truck coming from the opposite direction, leaving the van helper dead on the spot.

Obituary

METRO DESK



G o b i n d o Chowdhury, son of late B e n o d e B e h a r i Chowdhury of Bashpara

Chowdhury House of Sadarghat Road, Chittagong, passed away yesterday, says a press release.

Abdur Rauf Khan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Abdur Rauf Khan Mistu, president of the Beani Bazaar Press Club, passed away at a private hospital in the capital due to Cancer at the age of 55, says a press release.

He left behind his mother, wife and three sons.

Mistu worked for the weekly Jugabheri of Sylhet and the weekly Bangla Patrika.

In a message Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid condoled his death.

Abdul Matin Talukder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abdul Matin Talukder, a freedom fighter and acting convener of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD), passed away at a city hospital on Thursday, says a press release.

He will be buried at his family graveyard after namaz-e-janaza at Gabindaganj High School ground today.

Temperature may rise slightly

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore and Kushtia in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said.

Mild heat wave is sweeping over the regions of Rajshahi, Pabna, Jessore, Mongla and Patuakhali and it may spread over rest of Khulna division and the regions of Bogra and Tangail.

Day temperature may rise slightly over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:17pm and rises tomorrow at 5:43am.

Country's highest temperature 37.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Mongla and lowest 18.4 degrees at Srimongal.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	34.8	23.8	54	38
Chittagong	30.8	21.2	64	48
Rajshahi	36.5	22.0	89	78
Rangpur	33.1	19.8	74	56
Khulna	35.6	22.5	77	52
Barisal	34.5	22.6	83	69
Sylhet	33.8	21.6	58	52
Cox's Bazar	33.3	21.5	76	77

Instant energy. Instant recharge