

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Summer's Best Gift

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Mad Dogs and Bicyclists

On this hartal day, I have decided to take advantage of slow traffic to wander around Dhaka by bicycle. I am hoping for clouds, but when I step outside at 10am, the sun is blazing hot.

However, I am soon rewarded for my efforts. Summer's flowers are in full bloom in the city. Normally I don't have enough time to appreciate them. But today, as I bicycle to the Chandrima Udyan/Crescent Lake area, they face me in all their glory: *krishnachura*, *minjir*, *sonalu*, *jarul* and copper pod.

The house I grew up in Sylhet had a large *krishnachura* tree in the backyard. So I have a deep-rooted partiality towards this flower, which I find to be the most beautiful anywhere. The trees along Crescent Lake are awash in red. Some branches reach out over the lake, the flowers shimmering over water, competing for attention.

Just inside the park I see a *minjir* tree, which also blooms this time. The flower appears along the branches in profuse bunches. The central petal of each flower curves around like a hook, and its mix of white and yellow gives it a sweet, innocent appearance. If *krishnachura* reminds me of a soaring Beethoven symphony, *minjir* is a sublime Mozart concerto.

Also in the park is a *sonalu* tree, which, in comparison, yields a sparse flower. By that I mean the yellow flower does not grow in large bunches or fill up its entire space. The trick is to look at it from right underneath, for then it becomes a chandelier of many layers, each yellow bud replacing a light. Seen

thus, it is like a precisely beautiful Bach composition.

Jarul trees were also in the park. Its beauty comes in eye-catching bursts of purple like a Dvorak dance, full of crescendos.

To photograph a *jarul* flower, I position myself carefully so there is no visual distraction in the background. I point my camera up at the flower. Just as I am about to press the shutter, something moves high up in the tree right behind. What, a monkey? Behind the *jarul* is a gigantic mango tree, with a few mangoes left. A young man has climbed to the topmost branches to shake out the remaining green mangoes. I worry if the branch will support his wait, but he shakes it merrily until his cohorts on the ground have gathered all they want.

Now I look around the park and see some people scattered. Three different cricket games are in full swing in the shade. A few couples sit on the grass, enjoying a picnic despite the heat.

Back on the road, I see several bicyclists riding. One stops by to chat. He is going to his office riding his new mountain bike. Turns out a new dealer has opened shop in Dhaka, selling high-end bicycles. This is good news: the number of serious bicyclists in Dhaka is increasing.

On this day, some of us were even competing with mad dogs and Englishmen for our place in the noonday sun!

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Three die as boats sink

METRO DESK

Three people, including a college student, died and another student went missing as boats capsized in Narayanganj and Kishoreganj yesterday.

Our staff correspondent reports: A college student died and his friend went missing as a boat capsized in the Buriganga river at Pagla of Narayanganj at 5:00pm yesterday.

The body of Sajib Poddar Das, 25, a fourth year honours student of Habibullah Bahar University College of the capital was recovered around 7:00pm.

Mohammad Sajib, 26, a staff of a company went missing. Mainuddin, station officer of Sadarghat Fire Station told The Daily Star that ten friends living at Pagla were enjoying a fun trip by the boat. The cause of the accident could not be known immediately.

Our correspondent from Kishoreganj adds: Two people drowned as an engine-boat capsized in the Nagchinni River in Karimganj upazila yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Jobeda Khatun, 45, wife of Abdus Sobhan and Abdul Kuddus, 44, hailing from different villages in the same upazila.

Police and local sources said the boat with 12 passengers on board sank in the Nagchinni River near Chamtaghat area around 8:30am due to strong current and gusty wind.

All the passengers but Jobeda and Kuddus managed to swim ashore.

Schoolboy killed in house fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kurigram

A 10-year-old schoolboy was burnt alive as a fire broke out in his house at Namachar village of Chilmari upazila Thursday night.

The fire was originated from a kerosene lamp and soon spread to three adjacent houses, also gutting Tk 12 lakh worth of stored crops and domestic animals.

The deceased, Leeju, 10, the son of local trader Abdul Zail, was a class-IV student at Namarchar Reg. Primary School.

The fire claimed the life of Leeju and gutted everything before fire fighters reached the spot from nearest Ulipur upazila.

NEWS IN brief

3-day IT quiz, workshop begins at DU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A three-day quiz competition and workshop on information technology begins at 17 residential halls of Dhaka University today, aiming to aware students on the latest breakthroughs in science and technology.

Dhaka University Information Technology Society (Duits) is organising the programme while Samsung is the sponsor.

The quizzes will be held today and tomorrow and the top 20 winners will be awarded by State Minister for Science and Technology Yeafesh Osman.

Dhaka University Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Harun-or-Rashid will inaugurate the workshop at Teacher-Student Centre on May 7.

Addressing a press conference at Dhaka University Journalists' Association yesterday, Duits President Abdullah Al Imran said some 10,000 students will greatly benefit from the programme.

Body found at temple

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The body of an elderly man was recovered from a temple at Mohanpur village in Birganj upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased is Jogen Chandra Das, 65, a resident of Siliguri in Paschimbanga of India.

Birganj police, quoting relatives, said Jogen settled in India from Birganj about 20 years ago. He came to Mohanpur in the upazila to visit his relatives.

On Thursday evening, he attended a marriage ceremony of one of his relatives at the same village. Since then he had been missing.

The villagers found him hanging from the ceiling of a temple in the area yesterday morning. Later, police recovered the body.

Girl injured for protesting stalking of sister

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

An elder sister of a college girl was injured by a stalker as she protested stalking her sister at Aponpara in the town on Thursday noon.

The stalker was Pavel Islam alias Royel, 24, son of Emdadul Haque, a resident of the area.

Police said Pavel teased the girl on the road in the same area while she, along with her elder sister, was going to market. The girl's sister protested against the stalker. At one stage, he attacked her sister with his belt and iron rod, leaving her injured in head, hands and legs.

The injured was undergoing treatment at Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital.

A case, accusing the stalker, was lodged with Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station on Thursday night, said police.

Documentary on Ashraf Siddiqui

METRO DESK

A documentary film on poet, folklorist and novelist Dr Ashraf Siddiqui titled "Jibon-Sangskritir Jalchhobi" will be premiered at the seminar room of Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban of Dhaka University at 3:00pm today.

An audio album "Taleb Master O Anyanyo Kobita" containing his selected poems has been published, said a press release.

An informative website, www.ashrafsiddiqui.com, comprising the details about his life and works, has also been launched.



Kendrio Khelaghor Ashor, a children's organisation, brings out a celebratory procession on the occasion of its national conference in the capital yesterday. The photo was taken from in front of Jatiya Press Club. PHOTO: STAR

Basic rights of female prisoners demanded

UNB, Dhaka

Speakers at a roundtable demanded ensuring basic human rights of female prisoners in jails.

Addressing the function, Home Minister Shahara Khatun assured of taking into consideration the recommendations made by the speakers.

She said the government is taking steps to ensure necessary facilities for female prisoners.

"The number of women behind the bars is increasing fast...this is unexpected. But the government is trying to ensure due facilities for them," said Shahara said while addressing a roundtable as the chief guest.

BLAST and Penal Reform International (PRI) organised the roundtable on women in prisons at Chhayanaut Bhaban on Wednesday with Supreme Court Justice Mohammad Iman Ali was in the chair.

Nikhil Roy, PRI programme development director, focused on Bangkok Rules in ensuring proper healthcare for female inmates in jails.

Founder of Karmajibi Nari Shirin Akhter narrated her horrific experience in jail she suffered for political reason at the age of 21.

Inspector General of Prisons M Ashraf Islam Khan, Information Commissioner Dr Sadeka Halim and BLAST Director Barrister Sara Hossain also spoke at the programme.

Later, the home minister unveiled the covers of two books-"Of Women 'Inside': Prison Voices from India" and "In Conflict and Custody: Therapeutic Counseling for Women" written by PRI honorary president Dr Rani Dhaban Shankardas, at the function.

Firearms seized, 3 held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police arrested three young arms traders in Ishwardi upazila yesterday and seized two firearms and ammunition from their possession.

The arrestees are Ainul Haque Vola, Salim Sardar, and Rafikul Islam.

Acting on a tip off, police raided Ainul's residence at about 2:15am as Ainul and Salim were waiting for customers to sell new arms, said Ishwardi Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Akbar Hossain.

During the drive, police arrested the two and recovered two brand new foreign made pistols, four magazines and four rounds of bullets from their possession.

The arrestees confessed to illegal arms trading. Based on their information, police arrested Rafikul from his residence on the same charge, the OC said.

6 jailed for selling fake certificates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court sentenced two years of imprisonment to six people each for making fake certificates in the capital's Uttara on Thursday.

The convicts are Alamgir Malek, Saiful Islam, Al Amin, Ashraf, Liton, and Helal Ahmed.

They were sent to Dhaka Central Jail, said Executive Magistrate AHM Anwar Pasha, who led the mobile court, to The Daily Star.

Anwar Pasha said: "The convicts have been awarded jails when they were caught handed while they were making various fake certificates for selling them to the people."

Microbus snatched, driver killed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unknown criminals strangled the driver of a microbus and snatched the vehicle from him at the capital's Khilkhet early yesterday.

Police recovered the body of Ismail Hossain, 22, from the area's Lonjeni Para and suspected that the miscreants killed Ismail to snatch the microbus.

Md Mazharul Islam, sub-inspector, Khilkhet Police Station, said the victim's hands and legs were tied with ropes and his mouth gagged with scotch tape.

A belt was also found wrapped around his neck, he said.

The victim's elder brother, Enamul Haque, said Ismail used to drive the microbus of Lutfur Rahman of Uttara. The microbus was used to carry the staff of an Ashulia garment factory.

Enamul and the microbus owner said they talked with Ismail for the last time around 10:30pm Thursday. Later his cell phone was found switched off, they added.

Enamul filed a murder case in this connection. The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Schoolgirl found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Police recovered the body of a schoolgirl from behind a bush at Charpolash village in Pakundia upazila yesterday.

The deceased, Moina Akter, 13, a class-VII student at Charpolash High School, was the daughter of Md Shahabuddin of the village.

Police suspected she was strangled as the body bore injury marks on the neck, throat and mouth, while a scarf was found warped around her neck.

On information, police recovered the body around 10:00am and sent it to Kishoreganj adhunik sadar hospital morgue for autopsy.



Rangpur Bibhag Sangabadi Samity forms a human chain before Jatiya Press Club yesterday, demanding declaration of Rangpur as a city corporation ahead of this year's national budget. PHOTO: STAR

DHAKA TODAY

- Roundtable**
Management and Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) will organise a roundtable; Venue: Brac Centre Inn; Time: 10:30am.
- Human chain**
Paribesh Bachao Andolon will form a human chain; Venue: Faculty of Fine Arts, Dhaka University; Time: 11:00am.
- Lecture**
United Nations Association of Bangladesh will hold a lecture; Venue: Cirdap Auditorium; Time: 4:30pm.
- Discussion**
Bangladesh Fertilizer Association will hold a discussion; Venue: Officers' Club, Baily Road; Time: 12:30pm.
- Experimental programme**
Robi will organise an experimental programme; Venue: Hotel Westin; Time: 6:00pm.

WEATHER TODAY

Moderate heavy to heavy falls likely

UNB, Dhaka
Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Rangpur Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions in 24 hours till 6:00pm today. Moderate heavy to heavy falls are also likely at places over northern region of the country.

Day temperature may rise slightly and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:29pm and rises tomorrow at 5:21am.

Country's highest temperature 33.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 18.5 degrees at Syedpur.

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	30.2	20.5	83	57
Chittagong	31.0	24.8	75	71
Rajshahi	33.2	20.7	83	52
Rangpur	31.0	18.8	70	53
Khulna	32.5	20.4	100	81
Barisal	27.6	20.5	99	82
Sylhet	32.8	21.0	64	62
Cox's Bazar	32.2	24.5	67	70