

TANGENTS
BY IHTISHAM KABIR



PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Why you need squirrel traps

A Pastoral Life?

Many people dream about leaving the city for a pastoral life in the country. But what is it like in reality? Is it for you? The following list shows how priorities change when you opt for the farming life.

- 1. The Cow:** This gentle animal plays a critical role in any farming setting and soon you will see it in a different light. Thoughts such as "ah, there is the best source for fertilizers..." or "yes, that pair can look sturdy enough to plough my entire rice field" will enter your head when you see cows.
- 2. The Neighbour:** Competition with the neighbour enters a new dimension in your new pastoral life. Claiming "my Mercedes is faster than yours" becomes meaningless. Instead, you look forward to the day when you can claim "my jackfruits are bigger than yours."
- 3. The Slime:** You learn to appreciate slimy things such as deep mud, slimy green water and decomposed cow-dung. Mud is needed for rice, and the slimy green in water is fish food, but rotten cow dung is best - for everything you grow.
- 4. The Family Shopping Expedition:** You surprise your wife by taking her shopping to Aarong. You forget to mention that you were planning to check out hybrid mango saplings at the nursery across the street while she checks out the shoes. Uh-oh, doesn't Aarong sell those shoes she likes?
- 5. The Foreign Trip:** Whenever you are in a foreign country, you start looking for unusual and beautiful trees. When you find one, you scour the

- ground for its seed so that you, too, can have this tree.
- 6. The Interview Candidate:** Do you have a favourite question you ask a job candidate, such as "What do you want to achieve in the next three years?" It might need adjustment. Try asking this to test competence: "How do you make a cow turn right when ploughing a rice field? And left?"
 - 7. The Macho Braggings:** Do you like to brag about fast cars? Pretty women? Rare wines? Gambling windfalls in Las Vegas? It is time to switch. Your friends will be awestruck when you brag about all those near-lethal creatures that have bitten you. For maximum impact, be ready to show the scars left by the bites.
 - 8. The Books:** Remember the Picasso art book or the thriller about Jason Bourne? Those books become a hazy dream. Instead, your heart leaps at titles such as "How to Grow Strawberries in a Hot Climate" and "Composting for Maximum Benefit."
 - 9. The Gadgets:** Leave the ipod and ipad in the city. Look forward to examining the features of your new favourites: squirreltrap, ifishingpole, iricthreshrer, and icow.
 - 10. The Role Model:** Another writer, Thoreau, lived off the land for two years in the horrid climate of Massachusetts. Surely you can do better in a warmer climate. No? After several failed crops and unexpected disasters, you re-evaluate Thoreau. How did he pull it off? Either he had a lot of help or he faked it.
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Judiciary beset with 21 lakh pending cases: CJ

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Md Muzammel Hossain yesterday described the massive backlog of over 21 lakh pending cases at different courts across the country as the single largest hurdle in achieving the goals of the judiciary.

Enhancing access to justice for the poor, women and children, and dispensation of quality justice without delay are the stated goals of Bangladesh judiciary, he said.

According to the chief justice, about 2,132,046 cases were found pending on January 1, 2012, in all courts and tribunals, including the Supreme Court of Bangladesh.

The chief justice was speaking on "Potential of ICT in Case Management and Court Administration" at the inauguration of a two-day judicial workshop, jointly organised by the Supreme Court and UNDP at the SC auditorium.

Justice Hossain said he hoped that the ICT would make the justice delivery system more affordable, accessible, cost effective, transparent and accountable.

Similar objectives have been achieved in other parts of the world by the use of ICT, but in Bangladesh the ICT benefits could not be fully explored and utilised in the judiciary due to limited budget allocation, lack of IT infrastructure and skilled manpower, he said.

He, however said, "It does not mean that we are not using ICT in our case manage-

ment and court administration processes". "In fact we have built up a unique home grown limited ICT network of our own and utilising the same in the Supreme Court of Bangladesh and some courts in Dhaka."

"By and large, the existing network provides us automation of case list preparation, digital transcription of orders and judgment and, of late, their publication on the internet", he said.

The chief justice said the in-house IT team of the Supreme Court had also created a website with links relating to information on the SC and subordinate judiciary.

The link on SC has the judgments and profile of the chief justice and other judges of SC, he said. "Two domain names i.e. supremecourt.gov.bd and bdcourts.gov.bd have also been registered".

Unless the court functionaries like the judges and the court staff show a personal initiative and involvement with bringing about a change in their professional culture by the use of technology, the efforts can hardly succeed at the touchstone of speed and quality, he said.

Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana, a judge of the Appellate Division, and Stefan Priesner, country director of UNDP, Bangladesh, also spoke at the function, which was attended by most of the judges of Appellate and High Court divisions of the SC.

SUNDAY'S HUNGER STRIKE VENUE BNP applies for Nayapaltan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The opposition BNP has applied to the authorities concerned for allowing the party to stage Sunday's mass hunger strike at its central office premises in the capital's Nayapaltan.

An application has been forwarded, as party leaders think they might not be allowed to hold the programme at Mahanagar Natya Mancha or Institution of Engineers Bangladesh, party's central office sources said.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will lead the Sunday's hunger strike to pile up pressure on the government to return party's missing leader Ilias Ali and release top opposition leaders.

Meanwhile, party standing committee member Moudud Ahmed yesterday said the government would not be able to thwart the ongoing movement putting so many leaders in jail.

Addressing a discussion organised by Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB), a pro-BNP body, he said the government was hatching a conspiracy to keep top BNP leaders away from participating in the next general election.

Brushing aside the prime minister's Thursday remark that she knew how to handle the opposition, Moudud said the BNP also knew how to compel the government to realise its demand.

A public opinion has been formed worldwide about a non-partisan, neutral government in Bangladesh, he said, adding that US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee also said of a participatory election.

"So there is no way to ignore our demand for the reinstatement of caretaker government system to oversee the next general election", he said.

Alternative job for tobacco workers stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers yesterday stressed the need for identifying alternative business and employment opportunities for the farmers and employees working in the tobacco industry.

They said this while addressing a survey report launching programme at Biam foundation in the capital.

Campaign for Clean Air conducted the smoking related survey on 1,200 people from April 16 to May 4 this year.

It won't be possible stop smoking by holding seminars and roundtable in air conditioned rooms that some non-government organisations are doing with the help of financial aid from donors, said Muhammad Abdul Mazid, former chairman of the National Board of Revenue.

Rather, anti-smoking awareness campaign must be held through local cultural programme and street play, he added.

Commerce Minister GM Quader also spoke at the programme.

Govt urged to collect rice from farmers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a citizens' rally yesterday demanded immediate implementation of the government's decision to directly collect rice from farmers.

Though there is bumper harvest of Boro rice this year, the farmers are not getting a fair price to sell their harvest, they said.

Nagorik Sanghati and Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods jointly organised the rally in front of the national museum in the capital.

On one bigha land (1 bigha = 33 decimals), 20 maunds of rice is produced. The production cost of per tonne Boro rice is Tk 750 while it's selling in the open market at Tk 450 to Tk 500, incurring the farmers a loss.

The government's rate of selling rice is Tk 720, which still leaves the farmers with a Tk 30 loss.

To end this situation, the government announced that it is going to collect rice directly from the farmers from May 3, though no action has been taken as yet.

Some businessmen and intermediaries have created a syndicate, taking advantage of the current situation, to control the rice market.

The mill owners are also hesitant to buy the rice, who will start purchasing once the government begins the rice collection.



Farmers at a human chain programme demanding immediate implementation of the decision to purchase rice directly from them by the government. Nagorik Sanghati and Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihood organised the event before the National Museum in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Formulate specific land use policy

Urge environmentalists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmentalists yesterday demanded formulation and implementation of a specific land use policy and more budgetary allocation for environment conservation to tackle the effects of pollution.

"A land use policy is required in every upazila and this could be initiated from an area, like Savar," said former Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) president Prof Muzaffer Ahmad at a press conference in the capital's Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Savar Nodi and Poribesh Unnayan Parishad (SNPUP) and

Bapa jointly organised the conference with Bapa President ASM Shahjahan in the chair, demanding a stop to environmental degradation of Savar and pollution of its rivers and water bodies.

Prof Muzaffer, currently Bapa adviser, said the immense potentialities of Savar were destroyed due to the absence of a land use policy, unplanned industrialisation and indiscriminate dumping of industrial waste.

Expressing concern over the non-implementation of the country's environment related laws, Shahjahan, a former adviser to a caretaker government, demanded

an environment-friendly budget to prevent pollution.

SNPUP General Secretary Sohrab Uddin Khan demanded the government to declare Bangshi and Dhaleshwari rivers as Ecologically Critical Areas (ECA) and demarcation of the offshore to prevent encroachment and pollution.

The government had already declared four rivers surrounding Dhaka city -- Buriganga, Shitalakhyia, Turag and Balu -- as ECA.

Describing the gradual degradation of Savar's environment, SNPUP Vice President Rafiqul Islam Molla placed a 17-point demand to con-

serve the area's environment.

It includes implementation of Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act, 1995 (amendment 2010) and Detailed Area Plan and setting up of branch offices of Department of Environment (DoE) and Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakha in Savar and Dhamrai. They also demanded monitoring programmes, participated by DoE, local representatives and environmental organisations, to prevent environmental degradation.

Bapa General Secretary Dr Abdul Moin and Architect Iqbal Habib also spoke at the programme.

NEWS IN
brief

Assam language martyrs to be recalled in Dhaka today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The language movement heroes will commemorate the language martyrs of Assam through placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital at 8:00am today.

A discussion will also be held where language movement hero Abdul Matin will be the chief guest.

Assam Bangla Bhasha Shahid Dibosh Udjapan Committee observes the day every year in Bangladesh.

On May 19 in 1961, some 11 people sacrificed their lives at Shilchar in Assam, demanding declaration of

Govt to open portals for schools

BSS, Chapainauabganj

The government would open web portals for its offices, unions as well as primary and high schools to ensure best services in future.

National Project Director of A21 Programme Nazrul Islam Khan told the closing session of the daylong training programme for the entrepreneurs of the UIJSCs of the district yesterday.

He also assured that the services of mobile banking, soil test, one house one farm, online registration of birth, death, marriage and population would be launched in phases.

Jibon Bima Corporation and DC Office jointly organised the training programme at the DC's conference hall with Deputy Commissioner Dr Shah Alam was in the chair. Managing director of Jibon Bima Corporation Parikkhit Datta also spoke.

Maternity unit inaugurated

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Water Resources Minister Ramesh Chandra Sen inaugurated a 10-bed maternity unit at Kashipur Union Community Clinic in Ranishankoil upazila of the district yesterday.

The unit was set up under the project of Mother and Neonatal Health Care.

After the inauguration, a discussion was held there with upazila chairman Shahidul Islam in the chair. Lawmaker of Thakurgaon-2 constituency Md Dabirul Islam, Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Shahiduzzaman, Civil Surgeon Dr Afzal Hossain Torafdar, president of the district unit BMA Dr

No change in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Mild heat wave is sweeping over Khulna division and the regions of Barisal, Patuakhali and Rajshahi and it may continue, Met Office said.

Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. The highest maximum temperature is likely to be 37-38 degree Celsius and lowest minimum temperature may be 21-22 degree Celsius.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:36pm and rises tomorrow at 5:14am.

Country's highest temperature 38.6 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 19.5 degrees at Sylhet. 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	34.5	23.5	69	63
Chittagong	32.5	25.3	76	81
Rajshahi	37.2	25.0	59	63
Rangpur	31.0	22.6	89	72
Khulna	37.0	28.2	82	69
Barisal	36.0	25.0	76	70

Attack on journos worries IFJ

UNB, Dhaka

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has voiced concern over the increasing hazards facing journalists in Bangladesh as political strife intensifies.

The Brussels-based media rights watchdog raised the worries in a web article titled "Journalists Attacked, Injured in Bangladesh's Intensifying Political Conflict" yesterday.

"Injury to journalists, either in direct retribution for perceived negative reporting or as a consequence of disregard for their safety, is a clear violation of media rights", the IFJ said. "The press should be able to report freely on events in the public interest without fear for their personal safety".

The article mentioned the incidents of May 14 and May 16 in this regard.

"On May 14, the nephew of a leading politician and minister in the Bangladesh government assaulted a journalist in the locality of Pabna district, allegedly in retaliation for stories published on his involvement in possible corruption".

Abdullah Al Mamun, the local correspondent for the Bangla daily Kaler Kontho, was admitted to Pabna Medical College Hospital (PMCH) with serious injuries.

A case has been registered against all those believed responsible. "On May 16, police baton charged a protest organised by the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in the capital city of Dhaka, injuring several participants and at least five journalists", the article said. All of the injured journalists were either reporters or camera-persons for local news channels. "The IFJ joins the Bangladesh journalists' unions in demanding quick and effective action in both of these cases, to challenge the idea that journalists are fair game in the intensifying conflict between the ruling party and the opposition".