

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

The Allure of Anonymity

Vivian Maier was born in New York in 1926. She moved to Chicago in 1956 where she spent almost four decades working as a nanny, taking care of children of several wealthy families. An intensely private person, she never married and had few friends. When she grew old in poverty, the children she had cared for in her youth bought an apartment for her to live in. She died in virtual anonymity in 2009.

She also left behind several hundred thousand black and white photographs that she took for herself and, apparently, never showed to anyone. She took these photographs on her off days when she roamed the streets with her camera.

In 2007, John Maloof, a real estate agent in Chicago, was researching the history of his neighbourhood when he bought a box of negatives from a local auction sale. The auction house had acquired these from a storage locker company, which had sold them when the owner had been unable to pay the fees for renting the storage.

Maloof scanned the negatives hoping to find documentary information on his neighbourhood, but instead found himself looking at photographs with artistic merit. Searching for similar negatives, he collected over 100,000, many from people who had bought them from the auction house. He eventually figured out that it was the work of Vivian Maier. She had died just a few days before this identification.

Posting the photographs on the Internet, Maloof found himself flooded with interest from viewers worldwide.

Vivian Maier's story now took on a life of its own with Maloof becoming its spokesperson. Exhibitions took place in several



A self-portrait of Vivian Maier

countries, a book called "Vivian Maier Street Photographer" was published, and a movie titled "Finding Vivian Maier" was made.

I have followed the Maier story since it surfaced and recently got a copy of the book. Most of her subjects are working people who appear heroic in some photographs (e.g., a labourer during a cigarette break) and vulnerably human in others (e.g., a dozing newspaper vendor.) The children in her photographs wear decidedly adult expressions. More than their artistic value, the photographs paint a social picture of a crucial time of transition in America.

But for me, her wit shines through in her many self-portraits.

Looking at the photographs raised many questions in my mind. I found myself constantly

thinking of her life story as I turned the pages. Is her popularity due more to her sad story than its artistic merit? Why had she kept her work to herself? Was she seduced by the allure of anonymity? Or was she a poor salesperson?

Another question made me uncomfortable. Maier never gave permission for the widespread dissemination of her work. If she really intended for her work to be private, are we violating her will?

Closer to home, aren't there others like her right here in Bangladesh? I recall a photographer from my childhood - a friend of my father - who created elegant, memorable portraits. I hope to write about him in the future.

www.facebook.com/tangents.ikabir

PADMA BRIDGE WB LOAN FIASCO
Suranjit wants national unity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Suranjit Sengupta, minister without portfolio, yesterday hoped that Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina would call for national unity for "upholding the country's dignity" following cancellation of the World Bank's funding for the Padma bridge project.

"We hope that she [PM] will call for national unity and hold dialogue with other patriotic political parties," the Awami League leader said at a discussion yesterday.

He hoped that the PM would make the call during her speech on the concluding day of the current parliamentary session, which is scheduled to end on Monday.

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote (BSJ) organised the discussion protesting "Falsehood against the prime minister and her family members and national international conspiracy against the construction of Padma bridge" at Public Library in the capital's Shahbagh.

Suranjit said the more the country works for solving its basic problems; the more national and international conspiracies are being revealed.

"The World Bank's decision about the Padma bridge is also a part of the conspiracy," he said, adding that, "National unity is the single weapon to fight against these conspiracies."

State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam also addressed the programme, which was chaired by BSJ's acting general secretary Arun Sarkar Rana.

On June 30, the World Bank cancelled its \$1.2 billion credit for the Padma bridge project, saying that it has proof of corruption conspiracy involving Bangladeshi officials, executives of a Canadian firm and other individuals.

Abducted trader rescued, one held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eleven hours after he was abducted, police rescued a trader and arrested an alleged abductor from the capital's Uttara early yesterday.

According to police, trader Obaidul Haque, 42, was kidnapped around 4:00pm Thursday. He runs a photo studio in sector-6 in Uttara.

Quoting victim's brother Sadeque Hossain, Sub-Inspector (SI) of Uttara Police Station Shahinur Rahman said two unidentified persons came to the studio on Thursday and requested Obaidul to go with them to take photos at one of their relative's birthday party.

On the way, the criminals beat up Obaidul and tied him, he said.

The kidnappers contacted Sadeque over phone and demanded Tk 8 lakh ransom. They told him to come to Rajuk Uttara Model College at 3:00am with the money.

Sadeque informed police about the incident and they arrested one Md Abir and rescued the victim when the abductors showed up at the spot to collect the money.

RU celebrates founding anniversary today

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University (RU) will celebrate its 59th founding anniversary on the campus today with much enthusiasm.

On the occasion, the authorities have chalked out various programmes to celebrate the day today instead of yesterday, as it was a holiday because of Shab-e-Barat.

Rajshahi University was established on July 6 in 1953.

The programmes will begin at 10:00am by releasing balloons and pigeons and hoisting the national and the university flag at the senate building, administrative building, vice chancellor's residence, central library, and students' dormitories.

A colourful procession, participated by teachers, students, university staff, would be brought out on the campus.

After the procession, teachers, students, and different political and cultural organisations of the university will place wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar and RU mass grave.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses the 'Headmen' of Rangamati Ethnic Minority Institute auditorium in Rangamati town using video conference from Gono Bhaban yesterday. (Story on Page 20)

PHOTO: PID

Family receives body of 'Dakat' Sahid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The bodies of top listed criminal Shahidul Islam, also known as "Dakat Sahid", and his accomplice, Kalam, alias Kalu, were received by family members from Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue yesterday.

The duo was killed in a gunfight with Rapid Action Battalion at Laxmibazar in Old Dhaka on the night of July 3, said Rab officials.

Shahidul's elder brother, Nurul Islam, said, "Rab members came to my Sreenagar residence in Munshiganj and brought me to the morgue at around 11:00pm on Thursday to identify the body."

Nurul took the body away and gave it a burial at Azimpur graveyard at around 5:00am yesterday. He said, initially, he had not wanted to claim the body fearing harassment.

He had last met Shahidul 14 years ago and Shahidul had no contact with his wife and children, who live in Kolkata, said Nurul.

Kalam's mother, Marium Begum, received the body at around 2:00am and left for her Madaripur residence, informed the morgue sources.

Nurul said Marium had informed him that Kalu went missing after law enforcers picked him up from Madaripur on June 20.

Fishermen to get ID cards for access to facilities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will issue identification cards to the marginal fishermen of disaster-prone coastal areas so that they can get access to government facilities, said Secretary of Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Uzzal Bikash Dutta yesterday.

Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecnc) approved a Tk 84.52 crore project in this regard on March 20, 2012.

"We have already begun processing the project", said Dutta in a press conference on National Fish Week-2012 organised at the Department of Fisheries.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to inaugurate the fish week, which starts today, to encourage fish farmers.

BURNT TO DEATH IN MALAYSIA
Five bodies arrive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The bodies of the five Bangladeshi workers, who were burnt to death in Malaysia last Tuesday, arrived at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka yesterday.

The deceased were later buried in their family graveyards following their namaz-e-janaza at Borikandi union of Nabinagar upazila in Brahmanbaria.

Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training Deputy Director Mukhtar Aziz told The Daily Star that coffins carrying the bodies arrived in the capital by a Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight around 4:30am and were handed over to the victims' families along with Tk 35,000 to each family for the burial.

The deceased were Hafez Mia alias Ruman, 28, and brothers Mohammad Basir Mia, 25, and Mohammad Faruk Mia, 22, of Borikandi village; Gulam Sarwar Babu, 30, of Dhorabhang village; and Abdullah Al-Farhad alias Sajib Mia, 28, of Noorjahanpur village in the upazila.

Our Brahmanbaria correspondent adds: The namaj-e-janaza of the five expatriates was jointly held at the playground of Borikandi Noorjahanpur Government Primary School.

State Minister for Liberation War Affairs AB Tajul Islam announced at the namaj-e-janaza that each of the victims' families will be given Tk 1 lakh from his ministry's fund and Tk 2 lakh from the prime minister's fund.

The workers died when a devastating fire gutted their house at Taman Puchong Perdana in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.

NEWS IN brief

Prof Azad gets UK fellowship

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

University College London has offered honorary fellowship to renowned physician A K Azad Khan, also president of Diabetic Association Bangladesh.

The university authorities presented the fellowship to him at a convocation programme in London on June 27, said a press release.

The fellowship is given to people from different countries for their contributions to fields including arts, literature, science, healthcare and industry entrepreneurship.

Prof Azad is the pioneer of the diabetic preven-

Ligherage Sramik Union calls work abstention from tomorrow

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Bangladesh Ligherage Sramik Union called work abstention for an indefinite period across the country from tomorrow to press home a 16-point demand, said a press release yesterday.

The demands include providing appointment letter and identity cards to the workers, restructuring of wage scale, canceling the renewal system of five year duration of certificates for masters and drivers, and increasing navigability of rivers.

Abu Taher, president of the union, said despite several requests concerned authorities including government, lighter vessel owners and labour directorate did not assured of fulfilling the demands.

Man dies after run over by train

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A man was crushed under the wheels of a train on Chuadanga-Goaland route in Kalidaspara rail crossing area of Alamdanga upazila in Chuadanga district on Thursday.

The deceased identified as Amirul Islam Binju, 20, son of Ainal Hossain of Kalidaspara in Alamdanga of the district, was a garment trader.

Locals said a Goaland-bound train ran over him while he was crossing the railway tracks, leaving him

Tripura happy with renewal of inland water protocol

UNB, Dhaka

Tripura has expressed satisfaction over the renewal of Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade with Bangladesh for the next two years.

Tripura Industries and Commerce Minister Jitendra Choudhury welcomed the move of the ministry of shipping for strengthening goods transportation to northeastern states through Bangladesh from central parts of India.

"Certainly, the protocol will beneficial for the region, especially Tripura, as rail and road connectivity to southern part of the northeast remains cut off most of the times," reported The Times of India quoting Choudhury.

India and Bangladesh signed a letter of exchange, agreeing to renew the protocol between the two countries from April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2014. The agreement, renewing the protocol, would be signed



Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also likely at places, Met Office said.

Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:50pm and rises tomorrow at 5:18am.

Country's highest temperature 33.7 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Dhaka and lowest 25.0 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	33.7	27.8	76	73
Chittagong	31.9	26.4	80	85
Rajshahi	32.2	26.0	79	95
Rangpur	28.0	25.2	97	90
Khulna	31.8	25.6	93	98
Barisal	32.0	27.8	80	92

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DHAKA TODAY
Meeting
Nagorik Oikya will hold its central committee meeting; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 2:00pm.
Roundtable
Patriots of Bangladesh will organise a roundtable; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:00am.
Token hunger strike
BNP and its associate organisations will stage a token hunger strike; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: