

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Rhine II. PHOTO: ANDREAS GURSKY

The Value of a Photograph

Not too long ago, a piece by the German photographer Andreas Gursky, called *Rhine II*, sold for \$4.3 million to an art collector. This was the highest (disclosed) price anyone ever paid for a photograph, and the news startled me into thinking about the value of photographs.

Our most valuable photographs are usually those of near and dear ones. During the nineteen-eighties, when I began working in California, a wildfire blew out of control and started burning people's homes. My colleague with a house in danger had an hour to evacuate his family and important belongings in one car. Luckily the house did not burn. When he returned to work next week, looking exhausted and battered, I asked him what items they had taken in the car. He said the first items they saved were family photographs, which, unlike other things, were irreplaceable.

For those in the news business, photographs have an altogether different kind of value. A photograph of an important event may inform and educate us. Thus it is valuable for many. The news value diminishes quickly, but still, some news photographs have become iconic in our collective psyche. One such photograph is that of the naked girl in Vietnam running away from a napalm bomb blast. It helped intensify protests against the Vietnam War.

There must be numerous other ways a photograph is valuable, since photographers get paid for countless types of photographs. For example, in the commercial world, a photograph communicates a message about a business to clients and stakeholders through an advertisement, catalogue or annual report. Documentary

photographers try to create a document of, say, a certain group of people or a place. This work often takes on historical or political value. In each of these cases, the photograph has a practical usefulness.

For photographers who make their photographs as art, the game is different. They mostly work without paying attention to the practical value of their photograph and are more interested in expressing their unique vision or making a statement through photography. The lucky ones have their work accepted by the art establishment. It takes years – sometimes decades – of hard work and drudgery to gain acceptance as an art photographer with the associated financial benefits, and not everyone succeeds.

Ansel Adams, who spent over six decades photographing the American West, was a key figure in the world of high-priced photographs. He started selling photos for less than \$10 and built his reputation slowly. In 1981, a print of his famous photograph “Moonrise, Hernandez” sold for \$71,000 and caused a stir. After he died, all his autographed photos went up in price.

Today, for a photograph to fetch stratospheric prices like Gursky's, many factors must align, including the photographer's fame and background, an effective “limited edition” to control supply, making it into a one-of-a-kind object, and, perhaps most significantly, support of the art establishment.

But, after all is said and done, for me the value of a photograph lies in the joy the viewer experiences when looking at it.

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CHT PEACE ACCORD

Incomplete execution will increase unrest

Says Santu Larma

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) yesterday said the unrest in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) would worsen if the CHT Peace Accord was not completely implemented.

PCJSS Chairman Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma said no marked progress in implementing the accord can be seen though it was an electoral pledge of the present Awami League-led government.

He was reading out a statement at a press conference PCJSS organised in the capital's Hotel Sundarban marking the accord's 15th anniversary.

Jyotirindra demanded proper implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council Act, 1998 and completion of the guidelines under which the CHT Regional Council would coordinate activities of the three hill districts -- Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban. Though the government is reaching the

end of its tenure, CHT Regional Council is yet to be functional while the dominance of Bangladesh Army and colonial-style communal repression continues unabated, he said.

The hill districts are undergoing ethnic cleansing as indigenous people's houses are torched, households looted and land grabbed while indigenous women are abducted, raped and murdered, added Jyotirindra, also known as Santu Larma.

He also demanded elections to CHT Regional Council and the three Hill District Councils after guidelines for the preparation of the voter list and election guidelines of the three districts' chairmen and members were ready.

The contradictory provisions of CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission Act 2001, as pointed out by a July 30 inter-ministerial meeting, should also be immediately amended while a timeframe should be present for the army's withdrawal, he headed.



Some of the 40 spotted flapshell, Assam roofed and soft-shell turtles seized by forest officials from a person at No-3 Fisheries Ghat in Narayanganj yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Man held with 40 turtles, 200 shells in Narayanganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Forest officials yesterday held a person for illegal trading of wildlife and recovered 40 live turtles and 200 turtle shells from him in Narayanganj.

The turtles belong to three different species--spotted flapshell turtles, Assam roofed turtles and soft-shell turtles.

Md Farid, 40, was detained with the endangered animals at No-3 Fisheries Ghat. He was sued and handed over to police.

Forester Saleque Ahmed Mollah led a team of wildlife management and nature conservation division and made Farid's

detention. “On information, we ran the drive and held Farid with two drums full of live turtles, dried shells and meat,” he said.

The wildlife act prohibits poaching, capturing, trapping and trading of wildlife. The law's violators face a minimum of one year's imprisonment or a fine of Tk 50,000.

Meanwhile, the crime control unit officials of the forest division recovered eight red-breasted parakeets, five jungle mynays, six spotted doves and five striped palm squirrels from the capital's Kaptan Bazar yesterday.

UPDF slams PCJSS, govt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

The government and PCJSS are playing games over the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord's implementation to cheat and deprive indigenous people, said Prosit Khisha, president of United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), yesterday.

Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) and the government are trying to achieve their own gains as 15 years went by with no visible progress in the accord's implementation, he stated in a press release.

PCJSS repeatedly threatened to launch a movement for the accord's implementation but indigenous people's demand for autonomy, land rights, constitutional recognition, and withdrawal of Bangladesh Army remained unachieved, said Prosit.

Accusing PCJSS cadres of killing some 231 UPDF men till date, he urged the government to bring into use CHT's traditional land laws and withdraw Bangalee settlers from the three hill districts.

Public-private efforts must for poverty cut

Discussion told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday underscored the need for coordination among government, non-government and business organisations to eradicate poverty from the country.

They were addressing the inaugural session of a daylong event including fair and discussions on poverty alleviation organised jointly by WaterAid and Shiree, a non-government organisation, at Bashundhara Convention Centre-2 in the capital.

Dr Mihir Kanti Majumder, secretary at Rural Development and Co-operatives Division, said the situation of those in extreme poverty would improve if they could reach healthcare and education.

If that is possible, extremely poor people would be able to earn their livelihoods on their own and contribute to the country's economy, he said.

In another discussion, speakers made some recommendations to address specific risks and vulnerabilities to gender and marginalised communities of the country.

Mentioning that women have special needs, Prof Ferdous Jahan of Dhaka University said these needs should be recognised.

She mentioned security as one of the special needs. Sahana Siddiqui, community facilitation coordinator of Solution Exchange of UNDP Bangladesh, suggested political participation of extremely poor women to empower them.

Besides the discussions, a daylong fair was held featuring NGO projects on poverty, the private sector's initiatives under corporate social responsibility and the beneficiaries of those projects.

The underprivileged people with disabilities who received vocational training from Shiree-ADD (Action for Disability and Development) set up a stall showcasing their skills in tailoring, fixing electronic gadgets and embroidery.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina consoles a relative of deceased Anjuman Ara Jamil, wife of Brig Gen (retd) Jamil Uddin Ahmad Bir Uttam who had been assassinated along with Bangabandhu and his family members on August 15, 1975, at Anjuman's Mohakhali Old DOHS residence in the capital yesterday. Anjuman passed away on Thursday due to old-age complications at the age of 74. PHOTO: PID

NEWS IN

brief

Two Jamaat leaders held

METRO DESK

Police arrested two Jamaat-e-Islami leaders in separate incidents in Lalmonirhat and Narail on Thursday and yesterday.

Chandropur union's Jamaat ameer Mawlana Anowar Hossain, 45, was arrested yesterday for his alleged involvement with anti-government activities, said our Lalmonirhat correspondent.

In Narail, the arrestee is Md Aiyub Hossain Khan, joint secretary of the district unit of Jamaat.

Police sources said Aiyub was arrested on charge of attacking law enforcers on November 5 during a Jamaat procession, said our district cor-

14 women trafficked to India return home after 5 years in jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Fourteen Bangladeshi women returned home yesterday after languishing for five years in an Indian jail.

Indian Border Security Force handed them over to authorities of Border Guard Bangladesh at Benapole check post.

The BGB sources said the women were trafficked to India through Jessore border in assurance of good jobs in Mumbai about five and a half years back.

But they were sentenced by an Indian court to five years imprisonment for crossing the border illegally. Earlier, police arrested them at Kolkata

Training for upazila parishad officials from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A three-day training for upazila parishad chairmen, vice-chairmen, and upazila nirbahi officers (UNOs) will start simultaneously at Dhaka, Comilla, and Bogra today.

The training will focus on legal and administrative structure of upazila parishads, preparing development plans and budgeting, and financial management and resource mobilisation.

Organised by the Upazila Governance Project, a total of 1934 upazila parishad chairmen and vice-chairmen and 485 UNOs will participate in the training in 42 batches, said a press release.

The training will continue till February next

Fire guts warehouse in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire gutted a catering equipment and furniture supplier's warehouse at Chawk Bazar in the capital yesterday.

Fire service sources said the fire, originated from an electric short circuit around 2:25pm, broke out in the warehouse on the second floor of a six-storey building on Water Wax road.

The fire fighters from Lalbagh station doused the blaze at around 2:50pm.

Chawk Bazar police said, during the fire, the panic stricken people got down from the building.



Symposium

Bangladesh JSPS Alumni Association will organise a symposium on climate change; Venue: Dr Anwar Hossain Auditorium, Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission, Agargaon; Time: 8:00am.

Human chain

Biswa Kobikatantho Parishad will form a human chain demanding speedy trial of war criminals; Venue: Before Jatiya

Press Club; Time: 10:00am.

Roundtable

Bangladesh Ganotantrik Sangskritik Jote will organise a roundtable on political violence and democracy; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:00am.

Hunger strike

Bangladesh Union Parishad Forum will stage a hunger strike to press home its



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country till 6:00pm today.

Light fog may occur over the river basins of the country during late night till morning, Met Office said.

Night and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:11pm today, and rises at 6:25am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 29.2 degrees Celsius was recorded today at Sitakunda and lowest 10.6 degrees at Chuadanga.

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

	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	27.2	16.0	62	70
Chittagong	26.8	15.0	86	73
Rajshahi	26.6	11.3	79	71
Rangpur	27.2	13.4	77	77
Khulna	27.4	13.6	76	72
Barisal	27.8	14.0	86	90