

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Lutki or Datranga.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Birds and Flowers

For me, one of the joys of living in Bangladesh is enjoying her birds and flowers. For many, they are symbols of nature's bounty but I enjoy them simply for their beauty.

Our country is full of birds, many of them exotic and rare in other parts of the world. A few years ago, a visiting British friend remarked how easy it is to see a kingfisher here: apparently this colourful bird is an exceptional sight in his home country.

Another example is the masked finfoot (*goilo hansi*), a duck you can spot in Sundarban. It is so rare that it is a check-off item for dedicated birders from all over the world.

If you don't have time or inclination to visit Sundarban to find pretty birds, they are surprisingly plentiful in Dhaka's concrete jungle. Any place with trees is home to birds.

It might be that *koroi* tree behind your flat or the *krishnachura* tree on the roadside which reveals a world of birds after a little patient observation. Sparrows, *fingey*, *shalik*, bulbuli and *doel* are very common. Of these, I enjoy the *shalik*'s facial expressions and the *fingey*'s pursuit of insects and flies. One can also observe *sutchora*, *ishtikutum*, *kaththokra*, *tia*, *ghughu* and *kokil*, as well as smaller birds such as *fotikjal* and *boshonto-bouri*.

I have found that one of the best spots for bird-watching in Dhaka is the Botanical Garden in Mirpur whose trees, shrubs, and lakes are home to countless birds. The nice thing is that these birds are accustomed to people who stroll in the Garden, so I find them to be less shy than normal.

The other green spots such as

Ramna, the lakes in Gulshan/Banani/Baridhara and Dhanmandi, and Chandrima Udyan host many birds. Old Dhaka's Baldah Garden is home to numerous bats.

If you like seasonal birds here for the winter, haors and lakes provide refuge for them. Close to Dhaka, Jahangirnagar University's elaborate set of lakes hosts a large number of winter birds as well as beautiful water lily.

The thing birds have in common with flowers is that they add colour to our lives.

Our flowers are mainly seasonal. Many native trees bloom in spring and summer. Perhaps this happens because nature wants the seeds ready in time for the rains to help the next generation of trees.

So I have to wait for summer for my favourite flowers: *krishnachura*, *shimul*, *mandar*, *jarul* and *sonalu*. However, winter's yellow mustard flowers blanketing the countryside are a joy to behold. And our wildflowers grow year round, sometimes in the most unexpected places. There are hundreds of varieties, yet how many of us can name more than a few?

Two favourite wildflowers from my childhood are *lutki* (also called *datranga*) and *kash*. *Lutki* has a colour combination of purple and yellow. *Kash* – immortalised in Satyajit Ray's *Pather Pachali* – is a tall grass whose flower blooms in white and shades of beige.

Dear reader, I wish you a new year filled with colourful flowers and delightful birds.

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NEXT POLLS
Dialogue must
for two parties
Says US envoy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador to Dhaka Dan W Mozena yesterday observed that the two main political parties must engage in constructive dialogues to reach an agreement for holding free and credible election.

Mozena told the 2nd Bangladesh CME (Continue Medical Education) Conference organised by Bangladesh Medical Association of North America (BMANA) in the capital's Brac Centre Inn.

The US ambassador said Bangladesh made tremendous progress in the health sector, surpassing many countries in this regard.

Addressing the conference, Health Minister AFM Ruhal Haque suggested Bangladeshi doctors living in the USA to communicate with the authorities concerned in Bangladesh before making any suggestion regarding the improvement of the country's health sector.

BMANA President Maksud Chowdhury chaired the conference.

7 Rohingyas arrested at airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of Armed Police Battalion detained seven Rohingyas with fake passports at the Shahjalal International Airport in the capital yesterday.

Atiqur Rahman, senior assistant superintendent of Armed Police Battalion, said on information, they challenged the people in transit and terminal areas of the airport.

The seven young Rohingyas were trying to go abroad illegally, he added.

Quoting the detainees, Atiqur Rahman said they were trying to get on a plane of Kuwait Airways.

They made the attempt of overseas travel with the help of brokers, he said.



A human chain organised in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday in remembrance of the road tragedy in which journalist Nikhil Bhadra lost his leg on December 28 last year. Story on Page 3

PHOTO: STAR

PARDONING WAR CRIMES ACCUSED Turkish president's request condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Social and cultural organisations yesterday strongly condemned Turkish President Abdullah Gul's recent letter to President Zillur Rahman calling for "clemency" to the accused under trial in the International Crimes Tribunal for the "sake of peace in the society".

The organisations demanded quick completion of the trial of crimes against humanity committed during the 1971 Liberation War.

Meanwhile, asked to comment on the letter, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, at the Trust Bank 12th National Senior and Junior Taekwondo Championship in the capital's National Sports Council Gymnasium, invited journalists to her ministry tomorrow, reports UNB.

Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee President Justice Muhammad Ghulam Rabbani, President-in-Charge Shahriar Kabir and General Secretary Kazi Mukul issued a joint statement.

They said the Turkish president's request interfered with Bangladesh's internal affairs, went against diplomatic norms, was a blow to Bangladesh's inde-

pendence and sovereignty, and was similar to siding with those who committed genocides in 1971.

The Turkish president should remember that Turkey committed the world's first genocide in the last century by killing 15 lakh Armenians from 1919 to 1921. No trial was held and Turkey is still killing Kurds without any trial, they said.

Another statement was issued by Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigoshthi President Kamal Lohani and General Secretary Prabir Sardar, stating that the request was a shameless expression of a conspiracy to foil the war crimes trial.

Workers' Party of Bangladesh President Rashed Khan Menon, at a party meeting in the capital's Shaheed Asad Auditorium, said BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's ongoing movement's main target was to save the war criminals.

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote leaders, at a rally organised in Jatiya Press Club to congratulate Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the UN acceptance of her peace model, said Bangladeshis would try Khaleda once for assisting the war criminals.

NEWS IN brief

10 get Bangla Academy fellowship

Bss, Dhaka

Bangla Academy yesterday awarded honorary fellowships to 10 eminent persons for their role in different fields.

The fellowships were awarded in the second session of the 35th annual general meeting of Bangla Academy held on its premises.

The awardees are Home Minister Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, singers Runa Laila and Sabina Yasmin, Justice Tofazzal Islam, artist Muztaba Bashir, physician Pran Gopal Datta, Mohiuddin Ahmed, Ramkanai Das, M Saiduzzan and Dr Atiur Rahman.

Bangla Academy Chairman and Director General Shamsuzzaman Khan handed over cita-

Walk for drug free society held in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A five-kilometre walk was organised in the capital yesterday morning in support of Apon, a rehabilitation centre for drug addicts, run by Brother Ronald, a former teacher of St. Gregory's High School.

Gregorians of 1967 organised the first annual run/walk 2012, from Mohakhali Old DOHS to Manik

BSF picks up two Bangladeshis

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) picked up two Bangladeshi cattle traders from Indian territory near Nagarjita border in Thakurgaon on Thursday while the two were returning home.

They are Ayub Ali, 36, of Kherbari village, and Kashem Bhuiyan, 40, of Baliadangi upazila.

Bangladesh Border Guard (BGB) sources said a company commander level flag meeting was held between BSF and BGB on Thursday where BSF informed BGB that the two detainees were handed

Elephants kill worker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Wild elephants trampled a worker to death at the foot of some hills in Banigram village in Banshkhali upazila yesterday.

The victim is Md Shahjahan Mollah, 28, son of Joynal Mollah, of East Mehendi village in Rajoir upazila of Madaripur.

At about 1:00am, a herd of about eight to ten elephants from the hills was roaming around the field behind an under construction building where Shahjahan was working. When he closed to the herd, the animals chased him and trampled him, police said.

DHAKA TODAY

Discussion

Policy Research Centre bd will organise a discussion on "Food Security Challenges: Impact of Climate Change"; Venue: its premises; Time: 3:00pm.

Seminar

Centre for Sustainable Development will hold a seminar on "Peaceful Transition of Power: Options for Bangladesh"; Venue: Cirdap Auditorium; Time: 2:30pm.

Founding anniversary

Department of Applied Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, Dhaka University will celebrate its 40th founding anniversary; Venue: Teacher-

Seminar

ActionAid will organise a seminar "The present condition of Bangladesh's jute sector and the state's jute industry and what needs to be done"; Venue: Cirdap Auditorium; Time: 9:30am.

Seminar

Padakhep Bangladesh will hold a

WEATHER TODAY

Cold wave may continue

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Thick fog may occur over the river basins and moderate to thick fog elsewhere over the country during midnight till noon, Met Office said.

Mild to moderate cold wave is sweeping over Khulna, Barisal and Rangpur divisions and the regions of Mymensingh, Madaripur, Comilla and Srimongal and it may continue.

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

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:21pm and rises tomorrow at 6:40am.

Country's highest temperature 24.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 07.8 degrees at Jessore.

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	15.7	10.7	95	89
Chittagong	20.2	12.0	100	73
Rajshahi	21.7	11.2	96	81
Rangpur	22.6	09.3	99	78
Khulna	16.5	09.5	100	95
Barisal	16.8	08.8	100	97