

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Black-shouldered kite. PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Our Three Kites

About a year ago I was driving through Brahman baria when I noticed an unusual bird sitting on the roadside power line. It had the beak, talon and sharp looks of a raptor; for a second I thought it might be a falcon or a hawk. I got out of the car and took pictures of the elegant white and grey bird with red eyes. Seeing me, it flew a short distance and resumed its perch. I continued taking its picture until it flew away.

Back home, I pored over books to identify the bird and discovered it was a black-shouldered kite – *katua* or *dholo cheel*. The smallest and least common of the three types of kites living in Bangladesh, it hunts directly from open fields or forests, looking for mice and other small mammals, reptiles as well as smaller birds. Sometimes it hovers overhead, talons ready, while looking for prey.

Kites belong to the bird family Accipitridae – a family of predators that also includes eagles, hawks, vultures, harriers and ospreys. Generally, these predators kill their prey with their talons and carry it to a safe place for consumption. There are several dozen species of kites in the world. The name of the toy “kite” flown by children originates in the name of this bird.

The most common kite in Bangladesh is the Brahminy kite, *shonkho cheel*. Distinguished by a white head and dark chestnut-coloured wings, it was a constant feature of the Sylhet skies under which I grew up, usually circling high above. To this day it remains a common bird in Bangladesh.

Recently I watched a Brahminy kite hunting in the mud of a freshly drained pond, where a few diehard fish, frogs, and crabs remained. It flew overhead in slow, lazy circles with alert eyes – until it saw food. Then it dove downwards head-first at an astonishing speed. Just when I thought its head was crashing into the ground, it flipped over and grabbed its target from the ground with its talons. As it soared, the black stripes on its white chest stood out. More often than not, though, its prey had escaped before the strike, and the kite released a mass of mud and grass from its talons halfway up the flight.

Brahminy kites are scavengers as well as raptors. They can be seen near meat markets and garbage dumps, looking for food. When foraging over open water, they grab food – dead or alive - from the water's surface with their talon rather than diving into the water.

The third type of kite in Bangladesh is the black kite, *bhubon cheel*, which is actually dark brown. This is the largest of our three kites, and probably closest to humans because it forages and scavenges for leftover food and animal remains from slaughterhouses, fish markets, and garbage dumps. I have often seen black kites sitting on top of tall *koroi* trees; perhaps they provide the height necessary for it to survey for food.

Although kites are commonplace, they are extraordinary birds and skilful survivors.

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PROBABLE RISKY BUILDING FIGURE

Rajuk to depend on BGMEA, BKMEA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajuk will depend on BGMEA and BKMEA, two garment manufacturers' associations, to get the number of probable risky garment factory buildings under its 1,528 square kilometre area.

Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) Chairman Md Nurul Huda said they asked Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) for the figure.

“We will also take into consideration those buildings against which general people have complained,” he said.

Rajuk on Thursday formed a coordination committee to identify the risky buildings, built for residential or commercial purposes but being used as readymade garment factories, without assigning exactly who was going to do the job.

Rajuk must comply with a High Court order, which asked for a list of risky garment factory buildings and a report within two weeks following the Savar building collapse that claimed at least 525 workers' lives.

Rajuk member Sheikh Abdul Mannan, heading the committee, told The Daily Star that BGMEA and BKMEA had a list of 10 or 15 buildings and they were going to start examining those from tomorrow.

On how the unnumbered risky buildings will be identified, he said they hired Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) to conduct a survey.

However, Prof Sekendar Ali, director of Buet's Bureau of Research, Testing and Consultation, said they would only provide technical assistance to ascertain whether a building was risky or not.

“Buet cannot conduct surveys to determine the number of probable risky buildings. We will depend on Rajuk, BGMEA and BKMEA for it,” he said.



Supply water leaking from an underground Dhaka Wasa pipe and coming out through a pothole floods the road before Film Development Corporation in the capital, causing a waste of clean water and posing a threat to oncoming traffic. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Husband dispels Pakhi's fear

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Pakhi Begum almost gave up on her dream of educating her two daughters after she lost both of her legs in the Rana Plaza collapse. But it was for her husband, who she feared would never accept her in an amputated condition, that she sees the silver lining.

As soon as Jahangir Alam, around 30, met her wife at Enam Medical College Hospital in Savar after three days of the disaster, he said he was happy to find her alive.

"It does not mean much that you don't have your legs anymore," Jahangir told Pakhi. "The best thing is you have survived. I am happy to see you alive when lots of people were either missing or dead. Without you I won't be able to look after my two daughters," he said.

Pakhi was very unsure if Jahangir would ever accept her. She said her husband was giving her new hopes and a new lease of life. "All I want is a job so that I can send my daughters to school and educate them," she said in tears.

Pakhi, 25, a machine operator, was working on the fifth floor of the nine-storey building when it collapsed on April 24, trapping her legs under concrete bars. Her legs had to be cut off from thigh for the sake of rescue.

Pakhi said, "I never thought I would be able to walk again." But she now looks forward to walking and working again with artificial legs.

Pakhi also met her two daughters after eight days of restless wait. Her elder daughter Yasmin, 8, said, "I am happy to see her alive." Her younger daughter is aged 5.

Pakhi said so far different people had donated Tk 3 lakh to her for treatment. She is now getting ready for a new life with a new challenge.



Pakhi on the hospital bed

SAVAR TRAGEDY VICTIMS

Children keep hopes alive

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and WASIM BIN HABIB

While everyone was losing hope and searching for words to comfort grieving relatives of the Savar building collapse victims, eight-year-old Rima Akter was still optimistic that her father was alive.

"Let us search for him at the hospital (Enam Medical College and Hospital) ma," she said, blocking her mother's path which leads to Savar Adhar Chandra High School where the bodies are being kept for identification.

The class II student of a Savar madrasa believes her father, Mohammad Raju, is either undergoing treatment or trapped inside the rubble.

Consoling and asking her mother, Khushi Begum, not to mourn for Raju, she said, "My father did not die...he will come back." But these words could not erase the shade of helplessness etched on her face.

Raju, 33, was a quality inspector working on the third floor of the nine-storey Rana Plaza. His family left no stone unturned in their search for him, strolling from one hospital to another, even for several times, and to the school playground since the building collapsed on April 24.

Yesterday Khushi was found sitting near the rubble. Beside her was Rima, holding a picture of Raju.

"My father used to give me some money or buy me some snacks before



Rima Akter sits by her mother Khushi Begum near the Savar building collapse site holding a picture of her missing father Raju.

PHOTO: STAR

leaving for office," she told The Daily Star.

"Even on Wednesday (the day of the collapse) he told me that he would return home with many snacks."

There were other children like Rima, coming with their family in search of their loved ones, still looking for their missing father or mother.

Three sisters -- Akhi Akter, 12, Urmi Akter, 11, and Eti Akter, 7 -- have been frantically searching for their mother, Shahnaz Begum, and maternal uncle, Abdul Malek.

On Thursday, they were seen waiting at the school. They rushed towards any vehicle carrying the dead. But hope turned to helplessness as the disfigured bodies were no longer identifiable.

"Their father died four months before Eti was born," said Eti's grandfather, Shaharuddin Bapary.

"Shahnaz came to her younger brother Malek in Savar when Eti was one-year-old to bring up the girls. Both Shahnaz and Malek struggled hard for a better life. Their fate started to change as the children were enrolled in schools.

"But everything has been shattered, the children became orphans," he said, adding that Eti, always cheerful, was the apple her mother's eye.

But now she hardly says anything. She just stares blankly like her two sisters towards an apparently bleak future.

More ethical journalism stressed

DU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called for more ethical and responsible journalism as it is tied to the public welfare.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said she always welcomed constructive criticism from the media and viewed that there should be polices to ensure freedom of speech.

The seminar on recent trends of journalism was organised by Dhaka University Mass Communication and Journalism Alumni Association at the TSC cafeteria.

Vice Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique said, "Quoting someone properly does not mean neutrality in reporting. Comments or views should be verified and then presented objectively. That is what neutrality is."

In the keynote paper, Prof Golam Rahman said the country's television channels hosted numerous talk shows but they ended inconclusively.

Prof Sheikh Abdus Salam said most of the newspapers played a role for garnering public opinion for the Shahbagh movement as in the Pakistan period.

A reunion of the department's current and former students was held later.

NEWS IN brief

JU syndicate meeting postponed

JU CORRESPONDENT

A Jahangirnagar University syndicate meeting has been postponed as some pro-Awami League teachers besieged and locked the registrar building where the meeting was scheduled to be held yesterday.

The teachers under the banner "The progressive teachers' society believes in the ideology of Banghabandhu and Liberation War" alleged that Vice Chancellor Prof Anwar Hossain called Prof Ameer Hossain, secretary of the teachers' body, a man with brain disorder.

Prof Anwar Hossain, however, denied the allegation.

Import-export thru' Benapole remains suspended since April 30

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Export and import between Bangladesh and India through Benapole land port have remained suspended since April 30 as Indian C&F agents traders went on an indefinite strike.

Sopon Shed, president of Indian Petrapole Port C&F Agents Staff Welfare Association, said they raised a six-point demand, including immediate solution to a glitch at internet in the customs house. He said the problem had been prevailing for 15 days last month.

Benapole customs Revenue Officer Quamrul Islam said no Indian truck entered Bangladesh since Tuesday.

World Press Freedom Day observed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Barisal Reporters Unity and Odhikar, a human rights organisation, yesterday brought out a procession in Barisal on the occasion of The World Press Freedom Day 2013.

The procession, with the theme "Safe to Speak: Securing Freedom of Expression in All Media", began at Ashwini Kumar Hall and ended at Barisal Reporters Unity.

Participants in the programme emphasised the safety of journalists and combating impunity for crimes against freedom of expression.

Muhammad Ali Jasim, president of Barisal Reporters Unity, among others, addressed the programme.



- Seminar**
Equitybd will organise a seminar, "Political economics of black money: Undeclared economics and collection of internal resources"; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:30am.
- Human chain**
Garments Sramik Rokkha Andolon will form a human chain demanding compensation for the victims of the Rana Plaza collapse and the highest punishment for the owners of the building and factories housed in it; Venue: before Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:01am.
- Discussion**
Free-Lance Journalist Association of Bangladesh will organise a discussion, "Context of press freedom in Bangladesh"; Venue: Liberation War Museum; Time: 4:30pm.
- Memorial meeting**
University Cultural Foundation will hold a meeting in memory of the Rana Plaza collapse victims; Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy; Time: 6:30pm.
- Lecture**
Asiatic Society of Bangladesh will organise the inaugural lecture of National Prof Dr Nurul Islam Memorial Trust; Venue: its auditorium; Time: 4:30pm.
- Anti-smoking rally**
Sarda Society will hold an anti-smoking rally; Venue: at the base of Aparajeya Bangla, Dhaka University; Time: 11:30am.
- Seminar**
Centre for Advanced Research in Social Sciences will organise a seminar, "The impact of microcredit program participation on income and consumption: Evidence from a household longitudinal survey in Bangladesh"; Venue: 401, Lecture Theatre, Dhaka University; Time: 10:00am.



Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

Mild to moderate heat wave that is sweeping over Rajshahi and Barisal divisions and the region of Dhaka, Tangail, Faridpur, Madaripur, Dinajpur, Syedpur, Khulna, Jessore and Kushtia may continue.

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

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:28pm and rises tomorrow at 5:22am.

Country's highest temperature 39.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 22.0 degrees at Sylhet.

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	37.1	28.2	65	63
Chittagong	31.8	27.8	85	76
Rajshahi	39.4	26.6	67	44
Rangpur	34.6	27.0	78	68
Khulna	37.5	27.5	51	62
Barisal	37.5	27.8	69	59
Sylhet	27.8	22.0	89	76
Cox's Bazar	34.0	28.5	74	76