

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Lutki PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Rainy Day Flowers

The other day I was in the Botanical Garden in Mirpur. I wandered looking for birds to photograph the lotuses, but the rainy season had put a damper on their activities. As I walked under some tall casuarinas trees thinking what a fruitless day it had been, a man approached me.

He was hesitant. "Excuse me, may I say something?" he said. I nodded. "It would be a shame if you did not photograph the lotuses. They love the rain and are blooming all over the lotus pond."

The lotus pond was out of the way, so I made a detour to see it. Indeed, there were dozens of lotuses with large pink petals bloom on the pond. As I took photographs, the sky darkened and a wind blew twisting the petals into unexpected patterns. It was a memorable scene; I mentally thanked the stranger.

Most of the colourful and showy flowers of our country arrive during spring and early summer. I imagine the timing has to do with the seeds being ready for the rainy season. By the time monsoon arrives, summer's florid spectacle has all but disappeared. Occasionally, late blooming *sonalu* and *krishnachura* endure through the torrents, but they are the exception not the rule.

We think of the rainy season in terms of green. However, it brings its own bounty of flowers, including the lotus as well as some favourite flowers of my childhood.

One such flower is the lowly *lutki*. A small and fairly useless shrub, *lutki* grows in small numbers year-round on edges of paddy fields and unused land. But during the rains they grow tall and spread and the flowers blossom in

profusion. Their combination of purple petals and bright yellow stamens is stunning. To spend a few minutes in a field of *lutki* surrounded by colour is a magical experience.

Lutki is sometimes called "Blue Tongue" because the fruit of the plant contains a bluish-purple dye. After eating the edible fruit one's tongue turns a deep blue.

Many aquatic plants which persevere patiently through the year find new life with the rains. I see *shapla* or water lilies in many places. They come in several colours including purple, pink and white (our national flower.) Some confuse *shapla* with lotus – however, the latter usually has wider and larger petals with a central pod.

A smaller aquatic flower, called *chandmala*, or water snowflake, also blooms in the rain and often sprinkles the surface of ponds and lakes like snowflakes.

The much-maligned *kochuripana* (water hyacinth) flourishes at this time. It is a South American native that was introduced here (and elsewhere) for ornamental reasons. It is known to grow quickly, harbour mosquitoes and clog waterways. Compared to my childhood, I don't see much water hyacinth today. I have noticed farmers using the plant for compost and much which may explain their reduction.

Many other flowers – including *madhobilata*, *rongon* and cherry flower – also love the rains. The ever popular hibiscus blooms year-round, but does particularly well this season.

So when you are out enjoying the green beauty of this season, check out the flowers, too.

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JAMALPUR, KURIGRAM Floods worsen as rivers swell above danger level

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Among the country's 73 river stations being monitored by Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre, water levels in 46 marked a rise, 24 recorded a fall while one registered steady, reports BSS.

The water level in the Brahmaputra-Jamuna river may remain steady while that of the Ganges-Padma and Meghna rivers may rise during the next 48 hours.

Heavy monsoon rain and rush of water from upstream since Tuesday has caused the rivers to swell and overflow their banks, causing flooding in Jamalpur, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat and Dinajpur districts.

Our Jamalpur correspondent reports: The Jamuna river was flowing 18cm above the danger level at Bahadurabad Ghat point of Jamalpur district till yesterday evening, stated the local Water Development Board (WDB).

Recent floods had affected 25 unions of Islampur, Dewanganj, Bakshiganj, Melandah and Maderganj upazilas of Jamalpur, leaving about 30,000 people marooned.

There was an acute shortage of pure drinking water and food, stated WDB and the local administration sources.

Our Kurigram correspondent reports: The Dharla river was flowing two cm above the

danger level at Dharla Bridge in Sadar upazila of Kurigram district yesterday morning, stated the local WDB.

However, the Teesta, Dudhkumar and Brahmaputra rivers were flowing 21cm, 156cm and 25cm below the danger level respectively, it added.

The four rivers recently flooded around 200 chars of 35 unions under Kurigram's Sadar, Phulbari, Nageswari, Rajarhat, Ulipur and Chilmari upazilas, leaving over one lakh people marooned and causing a shortage of drinking water, fuel and fodder.

Our Lalmonirhat correspondent reports: The Teesta and Dharla rivers were flowing one cm and two cm below the danger level at Dowani point of the Teesta Barrage at Hatibandha upazila and at Kalakhawa Ghat point in Lalmonirhat sadar upazila respectively yesterday.

Five upazilas of Lalmonirhat district were still inundated by flood water while relief provided by the government was still inadequate.

Our Dinajpur correspondent reports: The water level of the Punarbhaba, Atrai and Ichhamoti rivers in Dinajpur district started decreasing while flood waters have been receding in 90 villages of seven upazilas in the last 24 hours.

NEWS IN brief

2 'Hizb-ut Tahrir' men detained

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police detained two suspected activists of the banned Islamist outfit Hizb-ut Tahrir in the capital yesterday.

Raihan Sharif, 22, was picked up from the south gate of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, when the police noticed him distributing leaflets authored by the group, said Sergeant Moshir Rahman.

The leaflets, which contained inflammatory material about the government, were being given to the people coming out of the mosque after Juma prayers.

Meanwhile, Anisur Rahman, 26, was caught before Gulshan Azad Mosque at the same time when people coming out of the mosque, said Gulshan police.

Six workers hurt in gas explosion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Six workers of a spinning mill were injured in a gas explosion in Sreepur upazila of Gazipur yesterday.

Ibrahim Azad, 45, Delwar Hossain, 40, Masum Mia, 50, Babul Hossain, 35, Noman Mia, 32, and Sujon, 30, were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Mikail Rahman, manager (admin) of Israk Spinning Mill, said the explosion occurred around 12:00 noon while the workers were connecting gas pipe to a generator at Madkhola, leaving six of them injured.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina greets children during an iftar with orphans, wounded freedom fighters, Islamic scholars and people from all walks of life at Gono Bhaban in the capital yesterday. PHOTO: BSS

Eight Rohingyas held in Patiya

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police arrested eight Myanmar nationals in Patiya upazila of Chittagong yesterday.

The arrested are Syed Hossain, Nurul Islam, Jashim Uddin, Jahangir, Ziaur Rahman, Jobair, Md Yousuf and Mohammed Kashem.

Patiya Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mofiz Uddin said police held them for their suspicious movement at Haidgan intersection around 2:00am.

During interrogation, the eight revealed that they were Rohingyas and came to Bangladesh nearly six months ago, the OC added.

Girl hacked to death in Comilla

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

Unidentified criminals hacked a girl to death in Jakunipara Gomti river area of Comilla sadar upazila yesterday noon.

The deceased was Shabnoor Akhter, 10, daughter of expatriate Fatik Mia, of Jakunipara village.

Comilla Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mahiuddin Mahamood said the miscreants waylaid Shabnoor and hacked her in the area while she was returning home from a paddy field, killing her on the spot.

Police suspected that Shabnoor might have been murdered due to past enmity.

Fabrics looted from Gazipur RMG factory

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A huge amount of textile was looted from a readymade garment factory at Bhogra in Joydevpur upazila of Gazipur early yesterday, claimed its owner, who suspected that a guard employed by a private security company organised the crime.

Iftekar Hossain, owner of Interlink, said the looting took place when its six guards and a supervisor fell unconscious after sharing a bottle of soft drink offered by Saidur Rahman, 42, an employee of Rana Security

Company, around 11:00pm Thursday.

The guards of another shift found them lying unconscious around 6:00am, Iftekar said, adding that Saidur had remained missing since then.

Around 725 rolls of fabric worth around US \$1.6 lakh were found missing from the factory, said Interlink HR Manager Asadul Islam.

Saidur was recruited by Rana Security Company on July 5 and posted to Interlink two days later, said Amin Hossain, managing director of the security company.

A case was filed in this connection.



Influential locals carry out trade of brick and sand by illegally occupying this portion of the bank of the Buriganga river at Postogola in the capital. The photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

ASSAULTING CONSULATE STAFF Govt withdraws new first secretary in Jeddah

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A newly appointed first secretary (visa) to the Bangladesh Consulate at Jeddah in Saudi Arabia was withdrawn on charge of beating a foreign ministry official.

The Jeddah Consulate office received a notice from the foreign ministry in this regard on Wednesday.

Md Jamal Uddin, a deputy director of National Security Intelligence (NSI), who joined the Jeddah Consulate on May 4 this year, has been asked to refrain from performing official duties following the incident.

The foreign ministry has also formed a committee, which will go to Jeddah to investigate the matter, said a senior official of the ministry. On July 1, Jamal and foreign ministry assistant secretary Tanvir Kabir had argued over identifying themselves at Bangladesh Hajj Department in Jeddah.

Prothom Alo reported that Jamal wanted to identify himself as Kabir and during presenting their identification he hurled insults at Kabir and also beat him up.

8 killed in road accidents

CITY DESK

Eight people were killed and 29 others injured in road accidents in Brahmanbaria, Pabna, Comilla, Gaibandha, Narail and Bhola on Thursday and yesterday.

Our Brahmanbaria correspondent reports, two people were killed when a motorbike and a tractor collided on Comilla-Sylhet highway at Sultanpur in Sadar upazila yesterday afternoon.

They were Musharaf Hossain, 30, and Rasel, 28.

Our Pabna correspondent reports, one Mazem Uddin Baperi was killed and five others were injured as two human haulers collided on Dhaka-Pabna highway at Jalalpur Natunpara in Sadar upazila on Thursday evening.

Our Comilla correspondent reports, one Sunil Chatterji, 60, died as a bus hit him on Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Palki Cinema area in Chandina yesterday morning.

Meanwhile, Sukandu Das, 50, of

Shreekail in Muradnagar, was killed and seven others were injured as a bus and a car collided on Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Zinglatoli of Daudkandi upazila yesterday.

The injured was taken to Daudkandi Upazila Health Complex.

Our Gaibandha correspondent adds, an unidentified woman was killed and 17 others were injured as a bus hit a truck parked on Rangpur-Bogra highway in Jundaha area yesterday noon.

Our Narail correspondent reports, a boy died as a car hit him on Lohagara-Narail road at Duttopara in Sadar upazila on Thursday evening.

The deceased was Ayon Sardar, 7, son of Lablu Sardar of Duttopara.

Our Bhola correspondent adds, Abdul Jalil, 65, died after a battery-run auto-rickshaw hit him from behind while he was crossing the road near Bepari Bazar in Sadar upazila of Bhola on Thursday afternoon.

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