

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Jadukata river.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Jadukata

At 7:30 am one day last week I found myself in Sunamganj town waiting for Biplob, who was going to be the guide on my trip to Jadukata. His familiarity with the area came from his work with several NGOs there. My earlier conversations with him had revealed the motorcycle as the best way to reach Jadukata. I had picked my camera gear carefully to minimize weight, placed it all in my backpack, and tied my tripod with a bungee cord. Within a few minutes of his arrival, I had balanced myself and backpack on the motorcycle's passenger seat.

I first heard about Jadukata from my relative working at BanglaLink. Shumon told me it is a beautiful spot in Sunamganj district where BanglaLink commercials were made. Since it was hard to reach, I needed a guide. After making some calls, my friend Zahin Bhai connected me with Biplob.

Why the motorcycle? That's because there is neither bridge nor ferry across the Surma river in Sunamganj. The river runs along the edge of this town, home of famed songwriter Hason Raja. You can come to Sunamganj by car from Sylhet, which is to the east. However, if you want to proceed west of the town, you have two choices: cross the river by ferry and ride on a motorcycle on the other side, or travel by boat down the river. The latter was how I reached Tanguar Haor last year; however, today I opted for motorcycle to save time.

When we drove to the river Ghat, the early morning commute was in full swing. Several boats plied the river carrying workers into town. Our *Kheya* boat was large enough to carry half a dozen motorcycles. Crossing to the other side, I was expecting unpaved potholed roads; instead I was

pleasantly surprised to find well-paved roads, to the credit of LGRD engineering.

For most of our ride, the road ran parallel to the Khasi Hills in India, offering us a spectacular panorama of blue mountains set against green fields where rice, watermelons, wheat and other crops were growing. Houses and buildings became sparser as we travelled westward with occasional groups of schoolchildren walking along the roadside. It felt strange to the roads and landscape without cars. Motorcycles, however, were common as the primary public transport.

After travelling about thirty-two kilometers we reached a wide sandy tract. Here the Jadukata river entered Bangladesh from India. Its shallow waters shimmered with a turquoise hue reminding me of the Shomeshwari river in Birisiri. Unlike Birisiri however, there was a hill - called Barikka Tilla - across the river, offering us panoramic views of the river.

Numerous small boats were parked mid-river. The boatmen searched the riverbed for stones and coal which flowed in from the mountains. Their stockpile is stored nearby until monsoon when the river swells and trawlers can navigate here to carry it out.

We drove westward to Teker Ghat, close to Tanguar Haor. A liberation war memorial graced this outpost and children splashed at a pristine lake bordering the mountains. This was our last stop before we retraced our ride and returned to Sunamganj.

Jadukata turned out to be every bit as beautiful as I had hoped and I returned home with splendid memories.

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Power from human waste planned

BSS, Dhaka

After producing biogas from animal wastes and recently electricity, Bangladesh has now embarked on a plan to generate power through effective management of human waste, making a significant milestone in sanitation in South Asia.

Development partners came up with financial support for the venture to supplement the government effort in managing human waste and reuse it for producing biogas and electricity.

A pilot project with the financial support of Tk 31 crore from the Bill & Melinda Gates and Foundation (BMGF) and UK Department for International Development was floated in Khulna City Corporation (KCC) last week.

The SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, a pioneer in promoting biogas plants in the world, will implement the four-year (2014-17) project under the leadership of the KCC.

Talking to the news agency, Rajeev Munankami, senior technical adviser (renewable energy) of the SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, said the project was designed for effective manufacturing of human waste and reuse of it for generating biogas for cooking and producing electricity and organic fertiliser.

Munankami said, "But we are not claiming at this moment because we don't have adequate data. So initially we will do analysis of sludge characteristic."

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ABDUCTION OF EXPAT WORKERS IN UAE

Ringleader, aide arrested in Iran

BELAL HOSSAIN BIPOB

Iranian police last month arrested two Bangladeshis who were allegedly involved in abducting a fellow countryman from the UAE for ransom and taking him to Iran.

The arrestees are Nanu Mia, a ringleader of a trafficking gang, and his associate Taj Uddin.

"Iranian police raided a flat rented by the criminals in Bandar Abbas on March 27 and arrested the duo following information from Bangladesh embassy officials in Tehran," said Shah Alam, additional DIG of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday.

Iranian police also rescued the abducted Bangladeshis Shafiul Alam, who hails from Khulna, during the raid in the Iranian port city.

Shafiul used to work as a plumber at a company in the UAE before being taken to Bandar Abbas by Nanu on December 28 last year.

Bangladesh consulate in Dubai last month foiled a move of the trafficking gang who wanted to abduct 25 Bangladeshis with

promises of lucrative jobs in Iran, Turkey, Greece and Italy, he said.

"At least 80 Bangladeshis, who became victims of such abductions by their countrymen, had been rescued by Iranian police between February and March," he added.

Meanwhile, the CID arrested five local agents of Nanu from Bangladesh between January and March.

They are Abdul Kadir of Mymensingh, Jasim Uddin of Noakhali, Morsheda Begum of Moulvibazar, Shahanaz of Nilphaman and Rahmatullah alias Faruk of Sylhet.

Nanu Mia, who hails from Sylhet, had been living in Iran along with his family for the last 30 years and handling his gang to kidnap Bangladeshi migrants and realise ransom from their families.

He came under the watch of the CID when Shafiul's younger brother Rabiul Islam filed a case with the capital's Bhashantek Police Station on January 11 regarding the abduction incident.

According to the case statement, Shafiul's SEE PAGE 5 COL 5



Following the rain yesterday morning and the night before, Jannatbagh Road of the capital's Mohammadpur gets waterlogged. This makes people wonder how this road and many other streets of Dhaka would cope with downpours during the upcoming rainy season. The photo was taken around noon yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

WAR CRIMES CONVICTS Review plea acceptability hangs in the balance

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The Supreme Court decision on whether the review petition of a war crimes convict was acceptable is still unknown, since its full judgment on petitions filed by Abdul Quader Mollah has not been released yet.

Quader Mollah, who was executed on December 12 last year, had filed two petitions with the SC on December 10 and 11 seeking review on his death penalty and life imprisonment handed down for war crimes.

On December 12, a five-member bench of the Appellate Division of the SC headed by Chief Justice Md Muzammel Hossain dismissed the review petitions hearing arguments from the defence and the prosecution.

The apex court, however, in the brief verdict did not disclose its decision on whether the review petitions were maintainable. Therefore, it is not clear if war crimes convicts can move such petitions before the SC against its verdict.

Additional Attorney General and Coordinator of the prosecution MK Rahman told The Daily Star that it could be known after the release of the full verdict on Quader Mollah's review petition.

SC sources said the judges of the bench concerned were writing the judgment.

Shishir Monir, a lawyer for Jamaat-e-Islami leader Quader Mollah, said they needed to know the SC decision on whether war crimes convicts had the right to move review petitions.

Appeals filed by some other convicts in war crimes cases are pending with the Appellate Division. After its delivery of a verdict in an appeal, the question whether a review petition is maintainable would come, he said.

Neither MK Rahman nor Shishir Monir could say when the SC's full judgment on Quader Mollah's review petitions would be released.

During the hearing of Quader Mollah's review petitions, his lawyer Abdur Razzak told the court that his client had the right to move the petitions to the apex court as per the constitution.

He also argued that the SC had inherent powers to review its verdict.

Attorney General Mahubey Alam opposed it saying that the petitions were not

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Six killed in road accidents

CITY DESK

Six people were killed and 11 others injured in separate road accidents in Sylhet, Rangpur, Moulvibazar and Sylhet districts yesterday and Thursday.

Our Sylhet correspondent reports, three persons were killed and 11 others injured when a bus of Shyamoli Paribahan collided head-on with a human hauler carrying them on Dhaka-Sylhet highway at Paraichak yesterday afternoon, said police.

Two of the dead were Rakib Ali, 75, of Manikpur village, and Zahur Ali, 50, of Moglabazar thana. However, the identity of the other deceased, aged around 20, could not be known immediately.

Our Rangpur correspondent reports, a youth was killed when a reckless Dinajpur-bound bus of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation rammed his bicycle on Rangpur-Dhaka highway in Shaleyasha Bazar area of Gangachara upazila in Rangpur yesterday morning, confirmed police.

The deceased was Shahidul Islam, 30, son of late Shamser Ali of Kharuabada village of the upazila.

Protesting the accident, agitated locals blockaded the highway for an hour from around 10:00am demanding exemplary punishment for the bus driver. They freed the road after officials of locals administration assured them of arresting the driver immediately.

Our Moulvibazar correspondent adds, two pedestrians were killed when a Dhaka-bound truck knocked them

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Bangladesh Cycling Club brings out a procession on bicycles on Dhaka University campus yesterday marking World Autism Awareness Day, which is observed on April 2.

PHOTO: STAR

Univ teacher found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

A private university teacher was found dead in the river Balu in Rugganj upazila of Narayanganj yesterday, three days after he had gone missing.

Rugganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Asaduzzaman said unidentified criminals might have strangled Rajib Ahsan, 37, and dumped the body into the river.

Rajib, a converted Muslim and son of Krishnapada Das of Raozan upazila in Chittagong, was a part-time lecturer of the Asian University of Bangladesh in Uttara of the capital.

On information from locals, Rugganj police recovered the floating body from the river in the evening.

Quoting the victim's wife Asma Ahmed, Asaduzzaman said Rajib left his

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Defender of migrant workers' rights Irene passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noted Malaysian human rights activist Dr Irene Fernandez, who died of a cardiac arrest on March 31, was laid to rest on Thursday.

Known as champion of the oppressed, Irene, 67, came to the aid of thousands of migrant workers,

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Woman kills child, herself

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A mentally challenged woman stabbed her two-year-old daughter to death and left her son injured before killing herself by hanging in her Purahata village home in Iswarganj upazila of Mymensingh Thursday night, said police.

The deceased were Shaila Akhtar, 2, and Hasna Begum Swapna, 35, wife of Marfat Ali, a garment worker.

Shaila died instantly and her seven-year-old brother Minal Miah was injured as their mother stabbed them with a knife in the back, chest and neck around 11:45pm, said police.

Later, Hasna hanged herself with a rope from the ceiling, police added.

Hasna's brother Anwar Hossain told The Daily Star that his sister had been suffering from mental disorder

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