

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Bisnakandi.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Bisnakandi

I first heard about Bisnakandi last year on my way to Pantomai, a border village in north Gowainghat Upazila. Md. Foyzul Islam, the local Union Parishad Chairman, was with me. I remarked what a beautiful place Gowainghat was, nestled between the Meghalaya hills and the plains of Sylhet. Foyzul suggested if I wanted to visit beautiful spots in the area I should consider Bisnakandi.

Thus it was that one rainy morning that I set out towards Bisnakandi from Sylhet. The road took me through Amborkhana towards the airport. A right turn before the airport led us towards a large bridge over the river Gowain. We crossed the stone-crushing centre of Dhupagol where small mountains of rocks – all different sizes and colours – lined the road. The road itself was full of gigantic potholes, though whether it was worse than my trip here last year was unclear.

At Shalutikor Bazar we made a sharp right and headed towards Hadar Par, the launching point for Bisnakandi. After more jarring potholes, the road became narrow but reasonably well-maintained. The rains had inundated farmland on both sides. On the left, beyond the inundated fields, the clouds collided with the towering Khasi Hills. At one place – Damari – plants grew out of the water and twisted and turned into themselves, creating unexpected reflections in the water.

After parking in Hadar Par, we walked through the market to Eidgah Ghat on the Piyain river where, even in this early hour, a dozen engine boats waited for tourists.

Our rental boat followed the Piyain for perhaps three kilometres to a Y junction on the river. The Piyain

continued on the right; we took the wide canal on the left. Normally this is the site of furious stone-collection activity, but the high water levels dampened this. The tops of submerged pyramids of stone punctuated the water's surface. A few diehard workers kept searching for pebbles to fill their boats with.

The hills in India loomed unexpectedly through the clouds like distant sentinels. As we got closer, I saw that the two closest hills here were separated by a canyon. Bangladesh ended where the hills started, but the view was breathtaking. Our boat came to a stop at a small island of stone, right at the border.

On a sunnier day it would have been a great place to frolic in the shallow water and play among the rocks. But today the sky was grey, water levels high and the current forceful. Hence there were few visitors.

Bisnakandi is actually a village of three thousand near this vista point. Inhabitants are mostly migrant labourers working in the stone business. These stones keep construction going in Bangladesh.

After spending about an hour at this vista point photographing the clouds playing hide-and-seek with the mountain peaks and the crystal clear water running over the stones, I decided to head back.

So that was Bisnakandi. Perhaps I was expecting more. But then I had spent many a summer day as a child playing among the rocks and water in Jaflong. With today's Jaflong groaning under the weight of the stone crushers, perhaps Bisnakandi is now what Jaflong was yesterday.

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Obama keen to boost ties with Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US President Barack Obama has shown interest to work together with Bangladesh to strengthen bilateral relations and for achieving common goals.

He said this to new Ambassador of Bangladesh to the USA, Mohammad Ziauddin, when the latter presented his credentials to Obama on Thursday.

The US president welcomed the envoy in the Oval Office of the White House and received his credentials in the morning, says a press release of the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington DC.

During the ceremony, Ambassador Ziauddin said the USA had been to Bangladesh a time-tested, trusted and reliable partner in its development and progress.

He also mentioned how grateful Bangladesh is to President Obama for its inclusion in all four of his Global Initiatives—feed the future, climate change, health, and engagement with the Muslim world.

Ambassador Ziauddin said the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina deeply appreciated the support of the US and other friends of Bangladesh in its fight against terrorism and all forms of extremism in the country.

In response, President Obama said the two countries would continue to work together and that the ambassador would get all support during his tenure in the US.

The ambassador conveyed to President Obama the greetings of President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and also their invitation for him to visit Bangladesh as soon as he finds it convenient.

RESORTING TO UNFAIR MEANS
JnU BCL leader,
14 admission
aspirants held
DU CORRESPONDENT

The Jagannath University (JnU) authorities yesterday detained a top Bangladesh Chhatra League leader of the university and at least 14 aspirants for aiding and using cellphones to get the answers to the questions through SMS during the Kha unit admission test.

JnU BCL unit Vice President Mehedi Hasan was handed over to Kotwali police for abetting the others in this regard.

A case was filed against six people including Mehedi with the police station.

Jnu Vice Chancellor Prof Mizanur Rahman said they had detained the aspirants

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New Bangladeshi Ambassador to the USA Mohammad Ziauddin with US President Barack Obama at the White House in the USA, where the envoy presented his credentials to the president on Thursday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Ghost scares school kids off the class!

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

It sounds like the perfect plot for a mystery novel. Six students fall unconscious within a short time one day triggering rumours of a ghost taking up residence in a tree next to the school building.

Children stop coming to classes prompting the villagers of Hazipur in modern-day Patuakhali to decide on calling in the witch doctor to chase the evil spirit away and set things right.

The six say they have been visited by the demon, or "Ramayan" as is its name, who wants the 25-year-old hog plum tree to be chopped down and each to sacrifice a goat and distribute the meat among the locals to appease it.

Doctors at Kalapara Upazila Health Complex who first treated the six on August 15, the day of the fainting outbreak, term it a case of "mass hysteria", that is manifesta-

tions of anxiety and hyperventilation.

News of one student becoming unconscious sparked off the outbreak, prompting others to feel malaise but for only a few hours. The phenomenon has nothing to do with the children's nutrition intake, they added, for they were healthy.

"They need counselling and guardians and teachers can play a vital role in this matter," stated Medical Officer Md Aminul Islam.

This seems all too apparent for Laboni Baidhya, the only Hindu of the group's five girls and single boy and the first to have gone unconscious.

She and the others, all of whom are classmates except for two who are two years junior to her and studying in class six, were treated for six days at Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital. But like the others she did not return to school.

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NEWSIN brief

DU Ka unit result published

DU CORRESPONDENT

Result of admission test for 'Ka' unit, under science group, at Dhaka University was published yesterday.

Results can be viewed on www.admission.eis.du.ac.bd and also by sending SMS, "DU Ka roll number", to 16321 from any mobile service operator. Results are also available at the registrar building on the campus.

A total of 16,840 passed the exams held for 1,640 seats and the first 10,000 in the merit list will have to fill up "choice forms" on the website and submit those between October 14 and 28.

Labourer dies falling from truck

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A labourer died after falling from a moving truck in AK Khan Gate area of Chittagong city yesterday.

Mojhu Mia, 40, son of Abdul Matin, of Belchhari village of Khagrachhari, was sleeping in the deck of the rod-laden truck when he fell down in Akbershah, said police.

He was declared dead at Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Photography contest from Oct 24

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Photographic Society and Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy have organised a national photography contest from October 24 to October 31.

The "13th BPS-IFIC Bank Photo Contest and Exhibition" will be held at the academy's art gallery with the theme "Alokito Bangladesh", said a press release yesterday.

Any Bangladeshi citizen can participate in the competition. Each contestant can submit a maximum of 20 photos. The last date of submission is September 26.

More information can found at www.bpsbd.org.

Certificates given to ACBA students

CITY DESK

The Institute of Business Administration at Dhaka University distributed certificates among its ACBA fourth batch students at DU Senate Bhaban yesterday.

Prof Nasreen Ahmad, pro-vice chancellor of DU, Prof Abdul Rob, former president of AMDISA, Prof Iqbal Ahmad, director of IBA, Dr Md Mohiuddin, coordinator of ACBA, also were present on the occasion, said a press release.



Opening ceremony

British Council will organise a new library. Venue: British Council, Fuller Road. Time: 6:00pm.

Seminar

Centre for East Asia (Foundation) will organise a seminar on "BCIM-EC and Maritime Silk Route Across the Bay". Venue: Lakeshore Hotel, Gulshan. Time: 9:30am.

Roundtable

Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and

Industry will organise a roundtable on "Factoring: A Better Alternative to Letter of Credit". Venue: DCCI Auditorium. Time: 11:00am.

Exhibition

A 12-day exhibition of artworks of Azmeer Hossain titled "Small is Beautiful" will start. Venue: Shipangan, Road-13, Dhanmondi. Time: 12:00noon-8:00pm.

Two killed in road crashes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was killed when a car plunged into a ditch in Demra of the capital yesterday.

The deceased, Nurul Islam, 35, of Wari, who was driving the vehicle, was a trader of motor parts in Jatrabari, said police.

Meanwhile, a motorcyclist was killed and his two other co-riders were injured when a covered van hit their vehicle from behind before the BRTA office in Mirpur last night.

The identity of the deceased could not be

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ROOM TO READ IN SIRAJGANJ Aid helps char girls pass SSC

RASHAD AHAMAD, Savar

She was unsure whether she would be able to continue studying after completing primary education for it was discouraged in her remote char village of Khaichala in Sirajganj district inhabited by an indigenous community called Odao.

Working in the crop fields even during exams, she had to force her tired self to stay awake at night to study. The pressure had caused her to fall sick while she was taking the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exams.

But the endurance paid off. Mili Rani Odao passed alongside 110 of the 116 persevering girls of different Sirajganj chars who had sat for the exam this year.

These girls were accorded a reception under the "Girls' Education Program" of non-government organisation Room

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Maybe flood has taken their homes away. Maybe it has put them in subhuman living conditions for quite a while. Maybe they have bewailed their fate because of all this. But a group of villagers, at Shakhipur in Tangail, do not forget to live the other side of life. Here the people young and old join hands for fishing in the runoff after floodwater has receded and are emptying a large puddle for hand gathering yesterday.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

MIRZA AZIZUL ISLAM

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