

# TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Bride and groom returning home after wedding, Tanguar Haor.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

## Call of the Haor

A haor is a large depression in the land which submerges underwater during monsoon and dries in winter. The Haor Basin, which falls in Sylhet division, comprises about 4500 square kilometers. Geologists suspect the depression was created at the same time as the rise of the Madhupur Tract, and it has sunk 1.5 meters as recently as the last two centuries. Numerous haors (and smaller beels) dot this Basin, where the water depth during monsoon can reach thirty feet.

That is the science. But the real charm of haors is how they make you feel and what they do to your soul. Two of our greatest poets, Hasan Raja and Abdul Karim, hailed from Sunamganj, the land of haors. Their songs resonate with the range of feelings – from infinite longing to haunting loneliness to existential acceptance – that haors evoke in us.

With advent of winter, I itch to return to the haors. The roads are rough as they are underwater half the year. Most haors are remote, because the ones close to town have been built up. To get to Tanguar Haor is a long day's boat ride from Sunamganj. Hail, Hakaluki and Khoroti Haors are accessed by dirt roads that jar your bones.

But as villages recede, the scenery rewards you. Small groups of fishermen, nets dangling from bamboo poles slung over the shoulder, walk home with their nightly catch. A shepherd boy struggles to keep his herd of water buffaloes from dipping into the roadside beel. A burkha-clad grandmother marches home with her grandson carrying sundry items from the nearest village market.

In the austere landscape, trees stand

like lonely sentinels. Most are hijol, koros or borun – underwater survivors. Occasionally you see kodom and planted hardwoods, even a bori, on raised plots, but never jackfruit which cannot stand water. You can smell the water everywhere. The breeze is cool and light on your skin. Land, water and sky meet somewhere over the horizon.

At the edge of a large water body, perhaps Baikka Beel in Hail Haor, or Haor Khal in Hakaluki Haor, you find a boatman to take you close to the birds, many of which have come from afar to spend winter here. Dozens of duck varieties in the open water look for fish, roots, insects or grains to eat. Jacanas, moorhens or swamphens play among the lotus, water hyacinth or water lilies. Suddenly they stop and go on alert. You find the reason high overhead, where a bird of prey – perhaps a kestrel or a harrier – is circling, looking for a kill.

Come monsoon the haors sport a new look. They become inland seas through which boats pass, but fishermen and farmers are now gone.

People living in the haors have a tough life. In monsoon, with their land submerged, they must find work elsewhere. During winter they fish, raise poultry or grow crops. In Tanguar, where there are no paved roads, I saw a wedding in a small hut. Bride, groom and guests arrived riding motorcycles over fields and meadows. After the wedding, the bride and groom mounted a motorcycle and rode off, a suitcase carrying the belongings she needed for her new life.

Haors are our wild, wild West. And a whole lot more.

www.facebook.com/tangents.ikabir

## BAR ON TAKING DU ADMISSION TEST TWICE

# Protesters attacked by 'BCL activists'

VC says some coaching centres financing demonstrations

DU CORRESPONDENT

Some 100 students staging protests against the Dhaka University (DU) authorities' recent decision to discontinue from 2015-16 session the opportunity to sit for the admission test twice stated to have been assaulted yesterday allegedly by a group of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists.

Meanwhile, Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said he had learnt from law enforcers that "some coaching centres", in the interest of their business, were financing the protesters.

Seven protesters were claimed to have been injured after being "kicked and

punched" while holding a rally at the base of Shontrash Birodhi Raju Sharok Bhaskorjo around 11:30am. The demonstrators accused police standing nearby of offering no protection.

The rally, however, continued till 4:30pm.

Omar Sharif, DU BCL general secretary, stated to have no knowledge of the pro-Awami League student organisation's involvement in the attack.

Similarly, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner (Ramna zone) Shibli Noman claimed around 9:00pm yesterday that he had no knowledge of the incident.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Case docs damaged in court fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Files of around 200 to 300 cases both civil and criminal were damaged after a fire broke out in a Panchagarh court early yesterday.

Of the files, 15 to 20 ones were burnt and the rest were damaged in the water sprayed to extinguish the fire, court sources said. Advocate Aminul Islam, public prosecutor of the court of Joint District Judge Mamun-or-Rashid, said the damaged files were not preserved elsewhere.

A three-member investigation committee headed by Senior Judicial Magistrate Krisna Kanta Roy was formed, said District and Session Judge MA Nur.

Fire fighters rushed to the spot on information from Azhar Ali, night guard of Chief Judicial Magistrate Court who first noticed the fire.

Abdul Malek, station officer at Panchagarh Fire Service and Civil Defence, said the fire might have originated from a mosquito coil or a burning cigarette.

The last person to have left the premises, the court's Bench Assistant Afiz Uddin, said he put out a mosquito coil when he left the office around 10:00pm on Thursday.



Guests including artists, actors and sportspeople hold the copies of "Bangladesh 2024", a mock issue of how-the-Prothom-Alo-may-look-like-in-2024, at the daily's 16th founding anniversary celebration programme on the Bangla Academy premises in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

16TH FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY

## Prothom Alo celebrates with readers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of readers yesterday swarmed the Bangla Academy premises in the capital and took part in the fanfare of the 16th founding anniversary celebrations of the Prothom Alo, the country's largest circulating Bangla daily.

The daylong readers' fair, "Utshabe Sholo Ana, Sholo Periye Shimana Chhariye", was inaugurated at 10:00am with the participation of prominent artists, singers, and sportspeople including Bappa Mazumder,

Chanchal Chowdhury, Joya Ahsan, Tisha, Mim, Kona, Elita, Konal, Nasir Hossain, and Taskin Ahmed.

A chorus sang the theme song of the anniversary at the direction of Bappa Mazumder. The theme of this year is "Kalker Prithibita Amader Habe" (the world of tomorrow is ours).

Later some other artists sang some patriotic songs including "Janmo Amar Dhonno Holo."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## NEWS IN brief

### Another held over Burdwan blast

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) yesterday arrested one more person in connection with Burdwan blast for allegedly indoctrinating youth for training by showing "jihadi" videos related to Gujarat and Assam riots.

Zia-ul-Haque, a resident of Naida in West Bengal, was held from Masjid Talha in Khagrachar of Burdwan district where he was hiding and was traced by NIA with the help of central security agencies.

According to NIA spokesperson, Haque, a resident of Kaaliachak Police Station of Naida, was a close associate of absconding accused persons Rezaul Karim and Yusuf Sheikh alias Moulana Yusuf.

### Quick execution of Kamaruzzaman's death penalty demanded

DU CORRESPONDENT

Activists of National Awami Party (NAP) yesterday urged the government to ensure immediate execution of the Supreme Court verdict that had sentenced Muhammad Kamaruzzaman to death and also to speed up the process to ban the politics of Jamaat-e-Islami.

The demand came from a human chain formed in the capital's Shahbagh where NAP's President Pankaj Bhattacharya said the government should take tough measures to confiscate the institutions which fund Jamaat.

Condemning Pakistan for taking a stand against the trial of war criminals, the speakers also urged the government to sever ties with Pakistan.

### Groom jailed for child marriage bid

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A mobile court sentenced a bridegroom to one-month imprisonment for attempting to marry a girl under 18 at Narayanpur village in Sadullapur upazila on Thursday night.

The convict is Hazarat Ali, 21, of the upazila. On information, the court assisted by police went to the house where the wedding ceremony was all set to proceed and also saved the girl.

### Jamaat-Shibir men torch 2 trucks

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamaat-backed Islami Chhatra Shibir allegedly torched two fruit-laden trucks at Kanasat in Shibganj upazila of Chapainawabganj during the hartal enforced by Jamaat on Thursday night.

Shibganj police said Jamaat-Shibir men intercepted the Dhaka-bound trucks on Chapainawabganj-Sonamasjid land port highway around 11:00pm. The activists fled when police reached the spot.

### Youth's body recovered in Bandarban

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Police recovered the body of a youth bearing several stab marks from Hargachha Jiri area in Lama upazila of Bandarban on Friday morning.

The deceased, Md Joynal Hossain, 28, son of Delwar Hossain of Fashiakhali union, was a timber trader.

The body was sent to Bandarban Sadar Hospital for an autopsy.

ATTACK ON IMTIAZ

## Four DU students identified

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University authorities yesterday identified the four students who assaulted, without provocation, photographer Imtiaz Alam Beg and his two nieces on the campus on Wednesday.

All of the miscreants are first year students and activists of Shahidullah Hall unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League, said hall sources.

The students are: Faruq of botany department, Masum of physics department, Zisan of statistics department and Johir of mathematics department, said DU acting proctor Prof Amzad Ali.

"We will take temporary action against them within a day or two, and will take permanent action against them based on the report of the probe body," he said.

A probe body, formed on Thursday, will submit a report in this regard within seven days.

On Wednesday, while Imtiaz and his nieces were chatting by the pond near Shahidullah Hall, they were approached by the four who asked them if they were students.

When they replied no, the four beat Imtiaz up and tore up the clothes of his nieces and verbally abused them.



From left, Prof Imtiaz Ahmed, Dr Binayek Sen, Prof Mizanur Rahman, and Syeda Rizwana Hasan at the publication ceremony of "Human Rights in Bangladesh", a book written by 12 eminent personalities, in RC Majumdar auditorium of Dhaka University yesterday. The book chronicles the past human rights issues, depicts the present situation, and shows what the future should be in the country.

PHOTO: STAR

## Pro-AL men attack BNP rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Local Bangladesh Chhatra League and Jubo League activists allegedly attacked a rally of the BNP in Shailokupa upazila of Jhenidah yesterday.

Rakibul Hasan Khan Dipu, president of the upazila unit of the BNP, said they held a rally on the grounds of a school in the upazila with permission from police.

"Suddenly out of nowhere, activists of BCL and Jubo League attacked our rally," he claimed, adding that the attackers must be punished.

However, Shikdar Mosharrif Hossain Sona, general secretary of the upazila unit of the ruling Awami League, said none of their activists were involved in any attack on BNP activists.

The incident left six persons injured, one of whom was admitted to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital.

## VISIT TO YOUTH INJURED IN 'COP SHOOTING'

# NHRC chief hits back at police for criticism

Counter comes at "Human Rights in Bangladesh" book launch

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lashing out at police for the recent "shooting" of a youth, National Human Rights Commission Chairman Prof Mizanur Rahman yesterday said the force had been arrogant to criticise his visit to the injured youth, allegedly a Hizb-ut-Tahrir activist, at Dhaka Medical College Hospital Thursday.

"One [police] cannot shoot a person point-blank in the leg or waist—no law of Bangladesh gives this right to any agency... It

is a violation of human rights, and those who have done this are offenders in the eyes of law and hence should be tried," he said.

Prof Mizanur made the comments to reporters after attending a book launch in RC Majumdar auditorium of Dhaka University.

The book, "Human Rights in Bangladesh", is written by 12 rights activists, academics and researchers including Prof Imtiaz Ahmed, who also edited the book, Hameeda Hossain, MM Akash, and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5