

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Foggy morning in a tea garden.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Change of Season

Winter is finally here bringing respite from our usual heat and humidity. Most people like the heat going away. Many despise the coughing, scratchy throat and wheezing that the dry weather brings. This seems to be over half the people I know, myself included. While most people don't miss the sweating of hotter days, as a runner I miss the profuse sweating that results from humidity. A sweat-drenched T-shirt at the end of a long run is a tangible accomplishment, one that I miss in winter.

Birders, however, count the days to winter, when the migratory birds arrive and many of the local birds also become more camera-friendly. Our wetlands are the best places to find these birds. The first to congregate are the *shoralis* (Lesser Whistling Ducks). These remain in Bangladesh all year but during the summer and monsoon they scatter looking for food. Come winter, they join into large flocks and descend on the wetlands, their loud whistling calls rudely breaking nature's silence. Perhaps the best part about their flight is the landing when they stick out their feet in what must be the most hilariously clumsy manoeuvre in the avian world.

Pintails are probably the next to arrive. They are easy to identify because their tail protrudes like a pin. These graceful birds look beautiful while swimming. Hunters, however, will tell you that their meat is delicious.

As winter progresses more exotic species arrive in the wetlands, for example, pochards, garganeys, shovellers, shelducks, ibises and spoonbills. Last year a rare flock of

glossy ibises arrived at Baikka Beel in Moulvibazar and stayed there most of the winter much to the delight of photographers and birders alike.

Morning fog which appears in winter plays an important role for photographers. For landscape photography it can be wonderful. Appreciation of its subtle nuances are not restricted to photographers, however. I wrote about morning fog a few years ago and heard from readers in many parts of the country. "You should feel the fog in Jamalpur - it touches your bones." Or "Nah, the most beautiful fog in Bangladesh is in Ishwardi, just like silver." And so on.

But while fog makes for pretty landscape photographs, it wreaks havoc on bird photography. Some years ago I went to Sundarban and set out early morning in a boat on a small canal looking for birds. I spotted a lesser adjutant - the largest bird in Bangladesh - sitting on a tree. But because of the thick fog I was unable to get a good photograph. A similar fate often frustrates me on winter birding trips to other places. Once I watched a grey-headed fish eagle in Jahanginagar University catch a fish from a lake and devour it while perched - all within photographable distance - but in my photographs you could see little through the fog.

Nonetheless, I am itching to get away to my favourite winter spots - the haors, perhaps to Sundarban and certainly to the outskirts of Dhaka (Savar, Keraniganj) with my camera for who knows what surprise this winter will bring?

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RU HALL CANTEENS

Poor hygiene scares off diners

MA SAYEED, RU

The dining halls and canteens of all 16 dormitories of Rajshahi University have been serving substandard food in an unhygienic environment allegedly due to indifference of the authorities.

More often than not, students have found dead cockroaches, flies, tails of lizards and stones in their food.

Some students alleged that in many cases, they fell sick after having stale food.

The situation has led to the canteens seeing a decline in the number of students eating there as more and more students opt to eat outside.

On November 5, the canteen of Shaheed Habibur Rahman Hall was closed for a night after resident stu-

dents demonstrated as two of their hall mates found cockroaches in their chicken curry.

During the month of Ramadan this year, two students found a cockroach and a tail of a lizard in their dinner at Shaheed Suhrawardy Hall.

On December 6, 2010, rat meat was served to two students at dinner at Sher-e-Bangla hall. After the incident was known, the hall canteen remained closed for more than six months.

The authorities admitted the incident occurred saying a rat was accidentally mixed with chicken cooked for dinner that night.

As authorities took no initiatives to improve the situation, most students began eating elsewhere.

Rajob Ali and Mohammad Ali, who

serve food at the canteen of Shaheed Suhrawardy Hall, said nowadays hardly 100 to 150 students can be seen at the dining halls, while just two years back the number was about 350 to 400. Each hall accommodates about 600 students.

Some resident students of Suhrawardy hall said although they have been living in the hall for over four years, they hardly eat at the dining hall as the environment is unhygienic.

Two of the students, Tonmoy Dey and Asaduzzaman Newton, claimed they have only eaten at the hall for some 20 days, and almost immediately they fell sick.

Some doctors at Rajshahi University Medical Centre said they have

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Bangladesh's Capt Moin to head IMSO

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Navy's Capt Moin Uddin Ahmed has been elected director general of the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO) in a contested election in London to head the inter-governmental body which oversees certain public safety and security services provided by mobile satellite communication systems.

Moin was in the lead by considerable margin in all four rounds of elections against contenders from France, Germany, Italy and

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An ongoing drive by mobile courts to encourage use of footbridges and pavements in the capital is apparently aimed at jailing and imposing fines only on ordinary citizens, as this photo shows of policemen yesterday, with no zebra crossing in sight, jaywalking right before oncoming traffic near the Farmgate police box, the same area where a court had fervently chased down people engaged in the act.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Youth shot by muggers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Masked muggers shot a youth and snatched his mobile in Rajshahi city yesterday afternoon when he tried to resist them from assaulting his wife.

With injuries to the ride side of the chest, Al Amin, 25, an electrician, of Jahajghat area, was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, said Ifte Khair Alam, assistant commissioner of police (Boalia Zone).

He is out of danger, said the police official quoting doctors.

Al Amin told reporters that two armed muggers waylaid him at Devisingpara of the city while he along with his wife was going to Nawdapara by a bicycle.

They also snatched Tk 500 in cash from him, he said. Efforts are going on to arrest the suspected muggers, said Alam.

AL men go berserk as leader hacked by rivals

15 houses vandalised in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A local Awami League leader was hacked by his rival group at Gopalpur village in Kaliganj upazila of Jhenidah on Thursday night, said police and locals.

In retaliation, the group led by the victim, Malek Mollah, vandalised at least 15 houses of their rivals loyal to Shariful Islam, also nephew of Malek, they said.

Malek, a member of Jamal union AL, is backed by AL lawmaker Anwarul Azim Anar from Jhenidah-4, while Shariful, president of Gopalpur ward-2 unit, is supported by former AL lawmaker Abdul

Mannan from the same constituency.

Witnesses said Malek was attacked while he along with some of his supporters was gossiping at a tea stall. The attackers also fired two gunshots and exploded six bombs and fled away, they said.

Afterwards, Malek's supporters damaged the houses of their rivals. Malek is undergoing treatment at Jessore Medical College Hospital.

Anwar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kaliganj Police Station, said there had been a long standing dispute between the two groups over establishing supremacy.

Although a drive is ongoing by the administration which is imposing fines against jaywalkers in the capital, there has been apparently no eviction drives against hawkers setting up shop for long on the stretches of footpaths from the Mohakhali kitchen market to the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh. The photos were taken recently.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



NAYAR'S DEATH Mother reiterates call for justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a Dhaka court having granted her appeal on Wednesday for exhuming and conducting a second autopsy, Razia Sultana, mother of Nayar Sultana, yesterday reiterated her demand for justice, seeking the prime minister's intervention.

On October 16, the body of Nayar who played Tunj, a young girl in a popular 80s drama serial "Ei Shob Din Ratri" on Bangladesh Television, was found hanging from a ceiling fan in her house at the capital's Gulshan.

Her husband Aly Amin was arrested that day centring a murder case Razia filed. He later got bail.

The first autopsy report, conducted by Assistant Prof Sohel Mahmud of Dhaka Medical College, terms it a suicide.

Aly Amin and his family members manipulated the autopsy report with bribes and abusing power, Razia alleged at a press conference in the capital's Crime Reporters' Association.

Magura AL leader injured in bomb attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

An Awami League leader was injured when unidentified insurgents hurled a bomb at him before his house at Mirpara in Magura district town on Thursday night.

Mir Abdur Razzak, 57, acting president of AL's municipality unit, with his bullet wound in the right leg was admitted to Magura Sadar Hospital, said police.

Adequate protein still a challenge

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same time, about 10.36 billion eggs will be required, against the estimated production of 7.70 billion. In the case of milk, the estimated demand and supply will stand at about 7.28 litres and 3.91 litres respectively.

Inadequate coverage of animal health and the low investment in the livestock research and poor management are also major concerns for the development of the livestock sector, which contributes 2.5 percent to the country's GDP.

Though livestock is an important sub-sector in the agriculture, its contribution to agricultural GDP is even lower than that of the fisheries, the

study says.

The contribution of animal farming has remained largely stagnant with a share of around 13 percent of agricultural GDP over the last two decades, whereas the share of fisheries considerably increased from 15 percent in the fiscal 1989-1990 to 23 percent in 2011-2012.

With a view to reducing the demand-supply gap, the study made recommendations of taking up appropriate policies to remove the barriers so that the sub-sector can grow to its full potential and meet the future demand of the country's growing population.

It emphasised increasing productivity of smallholder farmers, expanding

commercial production and ensuring better marketing facilities especially for smallholders.

It also recommended ensuring feed and fodder at affordable prices to the smallholders and poor farmers, providing training to cattle breeders, providing long-term credit at affordable rate to the smallholders and poor farmers, investing in research and development in the sub-sector, and improving the institutional capacities of related agencies.

The study says policy and institutional reforms of the Department of Livestock Services are needed to meet the new challenges set forth by globalisation, trade liberalisation and the World Trade Organization regulations.

Touchstone statue of Tk 7cr recovered

Two arrested

UNB, Natore

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members recovered a touchstone statue of a Hindu goddess worth Tk 7 crore and arrested two of a family in this connection at Sultanpur village in Natore Sadar upazila on Thursday night.

The arrestees are Shahjahan Miah and his son Mohasin. In a press briefing at Natore Press Club, Company Commander of Rab- 5 Maj Kamruzzaman Parvez yesterday said Shahjahan found the touchstone statue weighing 138 kg 10 months ago while digging a pond. And they tried to sell the statue instead of handing it over to the administration, he added.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of the elite force conducted a drive at Shahjahan's house and recovered the statue.