

# We lost them

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it. My trip mate then walked through the meadow, his shadow moving with him on the green ground in the golden sunlight.  
The zeal to look for wild animals didn't provoke me much as we sat on the ground, watching the crimson sun vanishing into the tall grasses. The elephant safari didn't excite us much the next morning. However, the deciduous forest looked quite different when we mounted an elephant as it allowed us to look straight into the eyes of the birds flitting around the trees and down on the ground dwellers like the red jungle fowls. When we were by the riverbank, we walked through the short grassland dotted with shallow waterbodies and large Sal trees standing stubbornly, spreading enormous branches towards the top.  
The low evening light glowed on the tender wave as we got on a 20-foot long and narrow wooden boat to sail across the Narayani River. The floating water hyacinths made soothing sounds as we cruised our way through them. Water birds flew about on both of our sides. Within a few minutes our boatman whispered and we spotted a dark-grey prehistoric creature just a few metres away from out boat! It was a marsh crocodile (not the one that we see in the Sundarbans: estuarine crocodile) displaying its sharp teeth.  
The marsh crocodile was widely distributed throughout Bangladesh in freshwater wetlands and rivers. The species existed until the end of 1950s and became extinct due to the destruction of our wetlands and rivers, and hunting by professional crocodile hunters. It is unfortunate that Nepal, one of our neighbouring countries, has been successful in protecting this superb species whereas we lost them more than 50 years ago with many others also on the brink of extinction.  
The writer is a Bangladesh-based Conservation Biologist, currently studying at the University of Cambridge, UK.

# Development

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Reiterating his commitment to end waterlogging permanently and build a clean city, Nasir alleged that Manju, also his main rival, took a canal excavation project only in the eleventh hour of his tenure although in the last city election he pledged to solve the waterlogging problem.  
Promising to build the city as per the residents' wish, Nasir said, "If I fail to meet your expectations, I will never come to you for votes in any election in the future."

# Truck attacked

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Police said the iron rod-laden truck was going to Panchbibi upazila from Dhaka. When the truck reached Bhararpur village on Panchbibi-Shiratti road around 4:00am, some 10 to 12 criminals first halted the vehicle and then threw four to five petrol bombs at it.  
The driver and helper somehow managed to come out of the truck. But Shahidul, who was travelling with them, got trapped inside it.  
On information, firefighters of Panchbibi fire station doused the fire and rescued Shahidul.  
The 34-year-old was admitted to Joypurhat Modern Hospital. Later, he was shifted to Bogra Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital.  
Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal, officer-in-charge of Panchbibi Police Station, suspected that the activists of the BNP-led 20-party alliance carried out the attack.

# Two madrasa

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themselves.  
Oyasiqur, 27, son of Tipu Sultan of Ramganj in Laxmipur and a staff of a travel agency in Motijheel, was hacked to death by three clever-wielding youths in the capital's Tejgaon industrial area on March 30.  
Zikurullah and Ariful were caught by locals while they were fleeing the spot of the brutal murder. They later confessed to the killing during primary interrogation.  
The motive behind the murder appears to be "ideological differences," police said.  
A staunch critic of religious fundamentalism, Oyasiqur was active mostly on Facebook though he used to write in Bangla blogosphere.

# HC extends

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On April 5, another bench of Justice Md Moinul Hassan Chowdhury and Justice JBM Islam sent the petitions to the chief justice for a decision as Khaleda's counsels did not co-operate with this bench.  
On Monday, the chief justice forwarded the petition to the HC bench of Justice Md Nuruzzaman and Justice Jafar Ahmed.

# One month's time

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meeting held at the Probashi Kalayan Bhaban on providing Bangladeshi expatriates with MRPs.  
Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Khandker Mosharraf Hossain was furious at the meeting over the negligence and failures of IRIS in enrolling the expatriates, sources said.  
Department of Immigration and Passport (DIP) Director General NM Zeaul Alam told the meeting that IRIS was enrolling on an average 1,258 migrant workers a day in Saudi Arabia even though it promised on March 19 that it would enrol 9,000 every day.  
In the UAE, it was enrolling 125 to 150 people a day and in Malaysia 89 people against a promise of 5,000 a day in each country.  
Minister Mosharraf in the meeting even asked State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan how such a "dreadful" company had been selected to do the massive job.  
The state minister, who is supposed to monitor and ensure the MRP issuance job, did not respond, sources said.  
The IRIS was not represented by any of its senior officials at the meeting. Two representatives of the IRIS at the meeting failed to explain the company's persistent failures.  
Mosharraf rebuked the IRIS representatives for not being fully prepared for the meeting.  
IRIS Sales Manager Bahjat Aman only kept on saying "Inshallah" (with the help of Allah) things would improve soon.  
At one point, when an IRIS representative was giving excuses, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali called them liars, meeting sources said.  
The foreign minister said when the main contractor in Malaysia, Bangladeshi company Dataedge-iPeople consortium, was enrolling a huge number of people when it had the job, then why IRIS, being a Malaysian company, had failed miserably taking over the operations from Dataedge?  
"IRIS is simply an incapable company to do the job," the foreign minister added.  
Bangladesh ambassadors to Saudi Arabia and the UAE Golam Moshfi and

# No guarantee

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On April 2, after a week of gruelling 11th-hour negotiations, Tehran and the six powers agreed on a framework to be finalised by the end of June to rein in Iran's nuclear programme in exchange for lifting international sanctions.  
In his first comments on that deal, Khamenei said "everything is in the detail; it may be that the other side, which is unfair, wants to limit our country in the details."  
Playing down expectations of a final deal after the interim accord -- which sparked celebrations in the streets of Iran -- Khamenei said he had not taken any position until now as "there is nothing to take a stance on."  
"Officials say that nothing has been done yet and there is nothing binding. I am neither for nor against," he said, dampening the optimism that followed the marathon negotiations in the Swiss city of Lausanne.  
Khamenei's eagerly awaited first assessment follows positive comments from several Iranian officials as well as allies Syria and Russia.  
Under the outline agreed with Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States -- Iran must significantly reduce its number of centrifuges in exchange for a suspension of sanctions.  
The centrifuges are used to enrich uranium, which can produce fuel for nuclear power plants or the fissile core of a nuclear bomb at greater levels of purity.  
The outline was a major breakthrough in a 12-year international crisis over Iran's nuclear programme and raised hopes among ordinary Iranians of a lifting of sanctions which have stifled the economy.  
"I have always supported and still

# Junior diplomat not given

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Mahbub Shahid Shisir too was supposed to formally enter the foreign service yesterday, but his service remains unconfirmed as he was caught red-handed stealing a mobile phone from an electronic shop in The Hague during his diplomatic training in February.  
He serves as an assistant secretary on probation.  
Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali distributed certificates among the 11 junior officials at the Foreign Service Academy yesterday evening, inducting them into the foreign service after their various trainings at home and abroad.  
Shisir, who joined the foreign service through the competitive BCS exams in June 2012 along with nine other Bangladeshi foreign service officials, went to The Hague to participate in a training course for young diplomats at the Netherlands Institute for International Relations, Clingendael under a Dutch government scholarship.  
Immediately after the incident, the

Muhammad Imran were present at the meeting while Shahidul Islam, high commissioner in Malaysia, joined in via video conference.  
They expressed frustrations over IRIS and its incompetence.  
Secretaries of Local Government Division Abdul Malek and Civil Aviation and Tourism Ministry Khoshed Alam Chowdhury said the home ministry and the DIP should be held accountable for their failures to monitor the MRP job.  
None came up with an explanation as to why IRIS was given the scope to continue even after repeated failures over the last one year, jeopardising the future of several lakh migrant workers.  
The immediate-past DG of DIP Abdul Mabud, project director of MRP project Brig Gen Masud Rezwan, the state minister for home, and the former additional secretary of the home ministry Shafiqul Islam seemed reluctant to take action against IRIS, said officials in the foreign and expatriate welfare ministries.  
Mosharraf yesterday said the prime minister had to form the advisory committee to look into the matter because of the failure of the home ministry.  
He advised the state minister and the DG of DIP to form a Monitoring Cell by yesterday and come up with a clear work programme by Monday.  
The cell would monitor IRIS's activities in the three countries daily and report to Mosharraf weekly.  
The next advisory committee meeting on the progress of IRIS and the missions would be held on April 16.  
In response to the requests from the ambassadors, Mosharraf directed the MRP project director to provide the missions with additional equipment to increase the missions' enrolment capabilities.  
According to mission officials, around 21 lakh expatriates in Saudi Arabia, around four lakh in the UAE, and around five lakh in Malaysia would need MRPs within November 24, the deadline set by International Civil Aviation Organisation to end the use of old passports.  
Mosharraf said the government might consider hiring new outsourcing companies for the job.

support the Iranian negotiating team," Khamenei said.  
"I welcome any agreement that protects the interests and greatness of the nation, but having no agreement is more honourable than an agreement in which the interests and greatness of the nation is damaged."  
He said that retaining a civil nuclear industry in any agreement was vital for Iran's future development.  
"The nuclear industry is a necessity, for energy production, for desalination, and in the fields of medicine, agriculture and other sectors," he said.  
'No sanctions, or no deal'  
In a potential obstacle to any final deal, Rohani said his country wanted sanctions lifted on the day of the implementation of any agreement.  
"We will not sign any agreements unless on the first day of the implementation of the deal all economic sanctions are totally lifted on the same day," he said.  
The pace at which the sanctions will be lifted is one of the issues that still has to be agreed.  
Western governments, which have imposed their own sanctions over and above those adopted by the United Nations, have been pushing for that to happen only gradually.  
"In return for Iran's future cooperation, we and our international partners will provide relief in phases from the sanctions that have impacted Iran's economy," US Secretary of State John Kerry said last week.  
Rohani, who was speaking on Iran's National Nuclear Technology Day, reiterated that his government remained determined to develop its civil nuclear programme.

# Youth shot dead

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doctors declared him dead, said Mohammad Alamgir, officer-in-charge of Maheshkhali Police Station.  
Later, police seized three trawlers from Hamiardiachar and detained five persons for their alleged involvement with the incident.  
The arrestees are Md Rashed, 25, Nurul Islam, 15, Md Yousuf, 55, Sonamia, 48 and Delwar Hossain, 15.  
No case was filed till 12:30am.

# 1.6 lakh Yaba tablets seized 11 detained

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

In separate drives, Border Guard Bangladesh seized over 1.61 lakh Yaba tablets and detained 11 people, including three Myanmarese citizens, in Teknaf upazila early yesterday.  
The pills worth around Tk 4.87 crore.  
BGB sources said acting on a tip-off, a patrol team, led by BGB-42 Battalion Commander Abu Jar Al Jahid, raided the bank of Naf river in the upazila around 5:00am.  
The three Myanmarese nationals were detained along with over 1.25 lakh Yaba tablets there.  
They are Omar Faruk, 30, son of Abdur Rashid, Mohammad Jamir, 40, son of Sheikh Ahmed and Mohammad Rafique, 21, son of Abdur Rashid Ahmed. They hail from Mongdu area in Akiab of Myanmar.  
Around an hour earlier, another BGB team, led by Maj Abu Russel Siddique, deputy commander of the same battalion, raided the house of alleged Yaba trader Enamul Haque at Nasirpara area.  
Over 30,000 tablets, a locally-made pistol were seized and six people, including Enamul, were held from the spot.  
The other detainees were identified as Mohammad Ilias, Rezaul Karim, Nurul Alam, Farid Alam and Mohammad Emran.  
Around 1:00am, BGB members raided Shilbonia Para in Teknaf municipality acting on a tip-off and detained two persons along with 5,077 Yaba tablets.  
They are Nurul Amin, 38, son of Ahmed Ali, and Md Hossain, 32, son of Nur Mohammad of the area.  
Three separate cases were filed against the detainees and they were being handed over to police, said Abu Jar Al Jahid.  
On April 7, BGB seized some 2.30 lakh yaba tablets, worth around Tk 7 crore, in an abandoned condition from the same upazila.

# Artificial clouds

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everyone is convinced.  
The process of cloud seeding was first proposed in the 1940s at the General Electric labs in Schenectady, New York.  
Two decades later, the Central Arizona Project (CAP) and the Salt River Project invested in research to make it a reality.  
"It hasn't been taken off the table as a potential tool as we work our way through drought now and in the future," Nancy Selover, Arizona's state climatologist, told Becky Brisley at Cronkite News.  
Since 2007, CAP has put about \$1 million toward research happening in other states to increase the supply of water in the Colorado River system.  
The system works on the premise that rainfall takes place when super-cooled droplets of water form ice crystals.  
As a result they become too heavy to remain suspended in the air, and fall, often melting on their way down to form rain.  
Water in the air, even in dry areas, can be transformed into ice crystals by seeding the atmosphere with chemicals such as silver iodide or dry ice.  
They create rain by inducing nucleation -- a process in which water in the air condenses around the particles and crystallises to form ice.  
But some scientists are concerned about silver building up in river basins, as well as legal uncertainties over who should get the additional water.

In a recent Wyoming Weather Modification pilot project, the technology resulted in an increase of seasonal snow water accumulations of 5 to 15 percent.  
But Selover, the state climatologist, told Cronkite News that the trickiest part of cloud seeding is measuring whether an area got more rainfall.

# Rizvi denied bail

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the bail petition of Rizvi in three other arson cases filed with Mohammadpur and Jatrabari police stations.  
The BNP leader was arrested in Baridhara on January 31 and was shown arrested in a dozen cases and remanded for 27 days.  
Meanwhile, another Dhaka court adjourned till May 28 the hearing of charge framing against BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and 45 others in a case filed for torching a bus before the Prime Minister's Office on April 29, 2012.

# 25 killed as bus rams

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a ditch, police said.  
Twenty-two passengers of the ill-fated bus of Sonartari Paribahan died on the spot and three at Faridpur Medical College Hospital.  
The deceased are Surjo Begum, 70, Akli Begum, 7, Asma, 27, Helal Karim, 28, Rezaul, 20, Shahin, 24, Kabir, 39, Mahmudul Hasan Mithu, 20, Sohag, 29, Abu Bakar, 22, Sumon, 28, and Ripon, 25, of Pataukhali; Mobarak, 32, Afzal Hossain, 40, Shahrja 28, and Bahadur, 27, of Barisal; Ratan Sajjad, 30, Rabeya Begum, 70, Tutul, 45, and Berek, 40, of Barguna; Shariful Sheikh, 27, of Gopalganj; Monirul, 35, of Jessore; Nazma, 30, of Gazipur; Mamunur Rashid, 32, of Dinajpur; and Jalil, 34, of Jhalakathi.  
The bodies of the victims were handed over to the victims' family members, said Alamgir Hossain, upazila nirbahi officer of Bhanga.  
Faridpur district administration gave Tk 10,000 to each of the families of the deceased.  
Talking to The Daily Star at the hospital, injured passenger Ansar, 45, said the bus was travelling at a high speed as its driver was apparently engaged in a race with the Barisal-bound bus of Shakura Paribahan since they crossed Daulatdia ghat.  
Another injured, Rubel, 26, said a truck was coming from the opposite direction when the bus was trying to overtake the Shakura Paribahan bus.  
Members of the fire service, Ansar and police reached the spot and rescued the injured with the help of locals.  
The injured were first sent to Bhanga Health Complex, just around half a kilometre from the spot. Five of the wounded were later moved to the medical college hospital.

# Tabith BNP's final choice

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as his father's nomination was rejected for minor procedural flaws. She also thinks Tabith is young, energetic and dynamic which will help him woo young voters.  
Over the last few days, a section of BNP leaders was trying to convince Khaleda to back Mahi B Chowdhury, son of ex-president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, in the DNCC mayoral race, considering his political background.  
But the Jamaat-e-Islami and several other components of the BNP-led 20-party alliance strongly opposed backing Mahi, as his party, Bikolpodhara Bangladesh, is not a part of the opposition combine, said the BNP leader, seeking anonymity.  
On April 7, Minto filed the appeal with the SC, challenging the HC order that summarily dismissed his writ petition on April 6.  
Dhaka Divisional Commissioner Zillar Rahman on April 4 dismissed Minto's petition against the returning officer's decision to cancel his nomination for procedural flaws.  
The following day, he filed the writ petition seeking HC directives for the Election Commission to accept his nomination and allow him to contest the DNCC polls slated for April 28.  
Minto lost his eligibility for contesting the polls by bringing in an unqualified voter to support his candidacy.  
According to the electoral law, a DNCC voter would have to propose his candidacy and another to second it.  
The person, Abdur Razzaque, who supported Minto's nomination, is a voter of Uttara Sector 12 under Harirampur union parishad, not within the DNCC area.  
Last night, Khaleda decided to back Tabith after holding a two-and-a-half hour meeting with leaders of "Adarsha Dhaka Andolan" (Ideal Dhaka

A five-member probe body, headed by Additional District Magistrate Abdur Rashid of Faridpur, was formed to probe the accident, said Sardar Sarafat Ali, deputy commissioner of the district.  
The magistrate said no incident of robbery was connected to the accident.  
Contacted, Shakhawat Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station in Barisal, said bus driver Zakir Hossain and his helper Montu were receiving treatment at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital under police watch.  
**Ukraine separatist leader warns of return to war**  
AFP, Donetsk  
Ukrainian pro-Russian separatist leader Alexander Zakharchenko accused the Kiev government of "totally ignoring" the terms of a peace deal and warned in an interview with AFP that fighting might resume.  
The warning came as international monitors overseeing a fragile February truce -- which is largely holding despite isolated clashes -- reported "an increase in the number of ceasefire violations in the Donetsk region" where Zakharchenko's forces are in control.  
OSCE monitors cited mortar explosions, tank and heavy artillery fire, and even 122mm Grad multiple rocket launchers supposed to be withdrawn from the frontline under the terms of a peace deal, including a ceasefire, agreed in the Belarussian capital Minsk to end a war that has claimed over 6,000 lives.

Movement), a pro-BNP citizens' platform, at her Gulshan residence in the capital.  
Coming out of the meeting around 10:00pm, Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, convener of the platform, communicated the BNP chief's decision to journalists.  
The platform emerged on Wednesday as a thinktank for providing guidance and assistance to BNP-backed candidates in city polls.  
Likewise, professionals loyal to the ruling Awami League formed a citizens' group, "Dhaka Nagorik Andolan" (Dhaka citizens' movement), the same day. The group, led by writer Syed Shamsul Haque, is working for AL-backed candidates.  
Around 10:20pm yesterday, Tabith along with his mother Nasrin Awal and several family members met the BNP chief at her Gulshan residence.  
Emerging from the 40-minute meeting, Tabith told reporters that he went there to express his gratitude to Khaleda for endorsing him in the DNCC polls.  
"If I get elected as mayor of Dhaka North City Corporation, my first objective would be to turn it into a city of international standard."  
The 36-year-old businessman said if elected, he would take steps to preserve the heritage of Dhaka city.  
A close aide to Tabith told this correspondent that the mayoral candidate would launch his polls campaign today.  
Earlier, Tabith had expressed unwillingness to contest the election in the wake of criticism that his father intentionally submitted a flawed nomination paper to pave the way for him to contest the city polls.  
The BNP chief on April 6 asked Tabith to get ready for the mayoral race if his father failed to qualify for the mayoral race.

# Nazrul's family for fresh

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accused in the murder case.  
"The five had threatened to kill him [Nazrul] just two weeks before the incident," she claimed.  
The charge sheet contained 35 names, including prime accused Nur Hossain and three sacked officials of Rapid Action Battalion.  
Nazrul's father-in-law Shahidul Islam alleged that the investigators submitted the charge sheet without interrogating the six who were accused by Selina of committing the crime.  
Family members of the other victims were present at the press conference.  
Contacted, IO Mamunur Rashid Mandal, also the officer-in-charge of Detective Branch of police in Narayanganj, claimed that the charge sheet was "clear and unbiased".  
He said no guilty person was spared and no innocent was implicated in the case.  
Nazrul, his three aides, senior lawyer Chandan Sarkar and two others were abducted in Narayanganj on April 27 last year around the same time.  
Six bodies were found in the Shitalakkhya on April 30 and the other the following day.

Soon after the incident, Nur Hossain fled to India. He is now behind bars in West Bengal for illegal entry.  
Sacked Rab officials Lt Col Tareque Sayeed Mohammad, Maj Arif Hossain and Lt Commander MM Rana allegedly executed the killing mission in exchange for money. They are now in jail.  
**160 more leave**  
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Bangladesh missions from Kuwait and Turkey to oversee the evacuation of the Bangladeshis.  
According to the foreign ministry, there are some 1,500 to 3,000 Bangladeshis in Yemen.  
The Middle Eastern country has been in turmoil for months since the rebels took over the capital, Sanaa, after bursting out of their northern stronghold, according to international media.  
Meanwhile, Indian high commission in Dhaka tweeted last night: "INS Sumitra, a true friend: has evacuated more than 180 BD nationals from Al Hudaydah tonight [Thursday]. Will reach Djibouti tomorrow morning."