

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

The Art of Foraging

When U.S. Air Force pilot Scott O'Grady was shot down over Serbia in 1995, he survived several days in the mountainous wilderness before being rescued. I recall a television interview where he said he foraged - gathering food from wilderness - to feed himself. As an example, he said, he could eat black ants but not red ones which are toxic.

That is an extreme example, but foraging is an ancient human skill, used in conjunction with hunting by our ancestors. For example, early settlers in Iceland - where it is hard to grow food - often foraged for eggs in areas such as Lake Myvatn where wild ducks were plentiful. Foraging etiquette meant that not all eggs were taken from the nest and enough was left behind for re-generation (and perhaps the next person.) Foraging skills are particularly useful when one goes on extended exploration of unknown places. The renowned Scottish-American explorer and conservationist John Muir often spent months wandering by foot in the American West. He was instrumental in the creation of many national parks of the United States. Before a trip he gathered much dried bread and carried it with him. Drying reduced the bread's weight. When hungry he mixed it with water and ate it. But he used foraging to supplement his bread diet. (Once when he ran out of bread he lived mainly on sheep meat but detested the experience.)

When I was growing up in Sylhet I learned about - and ate from - some edible wild plants, including



Lutki flower and unripe fruit .

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

small flowering plants and a nut tree that grew in the wild. Recently I tried the dark juicy fruit of the wild *lutki* flower. The sweet fruit leaves one's tongue purple. Another tree, called *pishti*, has dual-use fruits. While green they are ammunition in the projectile toy *fojang*; ripe, they are edible. In the Bangladeshi countryside you can often see villagers foraging in the fields or near water. They are usually looking for edible roots and greens such as *kochu lata* and morning glory. From the water they get water chestnut and *makhna*, fruits of aqueous plants. Parts of our national flower, *shapla*, are also eminently edible. In the United States

there is a culture of foraging among outdoor enthusiasts and sometimes classes are offered in foraging. While I spent much time in the American outdoors the furthest I ventured in foraging was leaves of nasturtiums and dandelions. Both work well in salads. The former has a mild hot taste; the other is slightly bitter. The most important part of foraging is knowledge. One must be very very sure about the item one is about to eat. Even experienced woodsmen sometimes make mistakes. In his book *Into the Wild* Jon Krakauer tells the story of Christopher McCandless who went into the Alaskan wilderness and lived alone for four months. He hunted and foraged, but at one point may have mistakenly eaten the toxic seeds of a plant. His decomposed body was recovered later.

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Gonojagoron Mancha demonstrates in the capital's Shahbagh protesting the murder of blogger Niladri Chattopadhyay who was hacked to death in his residence in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Niladri killing seen as result of impunity

Condemnations pour in at home, abroad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Condemning the murder of a fourth blogger in the last six months in Bangladesh, New York-based secularist group Center for Inquiry (CFI) yesterday demanded that the Bangladeshi government and the wider international community overcome their ambivalence toward the acts of terror and act decisively to protect people's rights to free expression.

"What was already a human rights crisis has not spun entirely out of control, and it is now long overdue for the government of Bangladesh to take seriously its moral responsibility to protect the lives of its people," said Ronald A Lindsay, president and CEO of CFI, in a statement.

"The rights to free expression and dissent must be protected and cherished, and these killings must be stopped now," he said.

The same statement quotes CFI's main representative to the United Nations, Michael De Dora, as saying, "These acts of terror, largely motivated by an absolute intolerance for any kind of religious dissent should mobilize the world community to end what is an outright challenge to civilization."

Secularist blogger Niladri Chattopadhyay, who discussed atheism and religion on Facebook and helped found the Bangladesh Rationalist Society, was hacked to death in his apartment in Dhaka yesterday, by Islamist militant suspects posing as prospective tenants.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

HSC results tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The results of Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and equivalent examinations will be published tomorrow.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid will hand over a copy of the results to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office at 10:00am. He will announce the results at a press conference at his ministry at 1:00pm, said a handout.

The examinees will get results from their centres, education board websites and cellphones through SMS shortly after the conference. The results will also be available on <http://www.educationboardresults.gov.bd>



The railing of Nekrojbagh bridge in Keraniganj, outside the capital, left broken for quite a few days now but the authorities seem to be indifferent. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Form more tribunals to punish all war criminals

Roundtable of Sector Commanders Forum-Muktijuddha '71 urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable meeting yesterday demanded that the government increase the number of tribunals for quick prosecution of the war crimes suspects and not allow their burials in the country.

Two International Crimes Tribunals are currently running the trial proceedings of war crimes-related cases.

"Gen Ziaur Rahman released 1,100 war criminals, who had been detained during the regime of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. All those war criminals have to be tried and punished through establishing more war crimes tribunals," said former army chief Lt Gen (ret) Harun-Ar-Rashid.

He was speaking at the meeting on "Juddhaporadhider Bichar O Muktijuddher

Bangladesh (war criminals' trial and Bangladesh of the Liberation War)", organised by Sector Commanders Forum-Muktijuddho '71 at the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

Harun said the war crimes accused, who would be convicted and executed in the future, had to be dumped into the Bay of Bengal or in a jungle, since they did not have any right to be buried in the country.

"Those who were martyred in 1971 were not buried and no Janaza prayers were held for them, but the convicted war criminals have been buried and Janaza prayers were offered for them under the government protection. I protest it," he said.

Eminent journalist and cultural personality Kamal Lohani said the war criminals, who had killed people of the country, had

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

CTG VEGETABLE PRICES KEEP SHOOTING UP

Vegetable prices in Chittagong city have kept on soaring after rain-triggered flooding damaged gardens recently. The price rise ranges from Tk 20 to Tk 30 in the space of two weeks, particularly putting in trouble low-income people, reports Shahadat Hossain

VEGETABLES	PRESENT PRICE IN TK (PER KG) Reported yesterday	PAST PRICE IN TK (PER KG) Reported July 31	PAST PRICE IN TK (PER KG) Reported 3/4 days before July 31
CUCUMBER	70	50	40
POINTED GOURD	60	50	40
TOMATO	100	100	80
TEASEL GOURD	80	70	50
OKRA	80	60	50
GREEN PAPAYA	50	50	40
BRINJAL	80	60	50
SNAKE GOURD	80	60	50
CAULIFLOWER	180	160	-
RIDGE GOURD	80	60	50

PLAIN LAND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE Separate land commission, ministry sought

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights activists yesterday demanded a separate land commission and a separate ministry for the plain land indigenous people.

They were addressing a seminar on "Protection of land rights and human rights of both hill and plain land indigenous people: role of state" at Cirdap Auditorium.

The speakers called for an immediate end to rights violation, including killing, rape, grabbing of land, of indigenous people. Adivasi Commission was formed in India just after about 13 years of independence in 1960, while Bangladesh has already passed 43 years of independence, said Sanjeeb Drong, general secretary of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, who presented a keynote paper at the seminar.

He stressed the need for an indigenous community-friendly national policy.

Sanjeeb said indigenous people of plain land lose their lands for many different reasons like migration and setting up of eco parks.

Robaet Ferdous, associate professor of mass communication and journalism of Dhaka University, demanded legal recognition of indigenous people's traditional land rights.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

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