

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Before dusk at Kalenga.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

On Trail, Off Trail

The pull of the forest is undeniable. It attracts us, beckons us to enter and explore the green and the dark, even lose our way. What pulls us? Is it a long-lost memory of a past when our ancestors lived much closer to nature, surviving as hunter-gatherers? Is it simply a yearning for change from cities of concrete and steel?

Not many forests are left standing in Bangladesh, but when I am in the forest – whether it is Kalenga, Lawacherra or Sundarban – I usually walk on trail. These trails have been made by others who came before me to make it easier for people to navigate through the forest. Sometimes I have to cross a bamboo bridge where a stream cuts across. The trail meanders through the trees and then, when I am least expecting it – voila! – a lush green meadow in the forest's bowel, with birds singing overhead.

In the morning sunlight hits the forest at an angle, the shafts of light illuminating the leaves, branches and trunks. As morning gives way to noon, the sun moves overhead but somehow the forest is darker as light is blocked by the canopy. In the afternoon, angled light once again enters from the side. At twilight, silhouettes of the rows of trees stand black against the darkening sky. And so the play of light and darkness repeats day after day.

The forest teems with life – from the smallest insects and flies, through spiders, reptiles and snakes, squirrels, monkeys and other mammals, and of course many birds. But not all are easily seen: man is the most feared creature here. A complex food chain supports the hierarchy of life. When flowers bloom or fruits appear on a

tree, insects gather there first, then birds and mammals to eat pollen, fruit, petals, nectar and insects, finally bigger birds and animals to eat the smaller ones.

It is one thing to walk on trail, but adventure awaits those who walk off trail. After all, most forest creatures do not follow trails meant for humans. The great scientist Edward O. Wilson, celebrated for his study of ants, collected thousands of ant species from tropical forests. He always walked perpendicular to the trail to find the most ant samples.

I too had to go off trail in Uganda in 2014, when we were tracking mountain gorillas at Bwindi Impenetrable Forest. After an hour of following trails in the wet, green mountainous terrain, our trackers found gorilla footsteps. Leaving the trail, they led us along slippery slopes, down hills of tall grass, slipping and sliding, trying to hold on to small branches or trunks when we could. Sure enough, we found the gorillas – the entire family sitting around some trees with edible leaves, munching away, quite far from the trail!

There are risks going off trail, of course. The path is not clear, and, particularly in hilly terrain, it is easy to become disoriented. Chances of stepping on a snake are higher, because others have not walked this way. Roots and fallen branches and trunks impede one's progress. One has to take each step very carefully. But surprises abound.

So what will it be on your next great adventure? On trail or off trail?

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Take all-out preparation to implement Paris agreement

Discussion told
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh should concentrate on capacity building and take all-out preparation to implement the Paris agreement, speakers told a discussion styled "COP 21 Presidency: Roadmap towards COP 22", held at the residence of French Ambassador to Bangladesh Sophie Aubert in the capital on Thursday.

Aubert said, "After the Paris agreement was signed in last December, the most important thing is to ratify the agreement and take it towards the implementation now."

"Till the next COP in Morocco in November this year, the French government will help the countries implement the Paris agreement," the ambassador added.

Dr Saleemul Haque said the most important topic for COP22 would be the "loss and damage," adding, "the government should implement a nationally determined commitment (NDC) to reduce carbon emission by five percent."

Joint Secretary to Ministry of Environment and Forests Dr Nurul Quadir said Bangladesh was taking preparation to ratify and implement the Paris agreement.

More people thronging fair in last days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With only three days left before the month-long fair closes, a huge crowd visited the Amar Ekushey Granthamela 2016 on Suhrwardy Udyan and Bangla Academy premises yesterday.

A total of 196 new books hit the fair yesterday, which raised the total number of books published in the last 26 days to 3,033.



Prothoma Prokashon was seen struggling dealing with the crowd. It has published 62 new books this fair, including Abul Mansur Ahmad Smarakgrantha, edited by Imran Mahfuz.

Abul Mansur Ahmad was a versatile person who demonstrated talents in literature, journalism and politics.

The book sheds lights on different aspects of his life, and contains an article by Professor Emeritus Dr Anisuzzaman, where he said Abul Mansur Ahmad dreamt of a modern and secular democracy.

"He never refrained from dreaming that dream even in bad times," he said.

Another professor emeritus, Serajul Islam Choudhury, said the main identity of Abul Mansur Ahmad was he was a writer, and it described him completely.

He said his life story mortified many politicians who considered politics a business.

Another book of Prothoma, "BNP: Somoy-Osomoy", was written by Mohiuddin Ahmed.

The writer narrates the birth of the political party, and how it has worked in the past decades.

BNP was created in the army barracks by an army officer who was at the centre of power, he wrote.

Such political parties usually sink into oblivion once thrown out of power, but BNP is an exception, read the book.

The party has not only survived but also made its place as an alternative power in the democratic system, it added.

The book reveals many unknown facts about BNP.

At Prothoma, child readers were most attracted by "Baganbari Rohoshho" by Anisul Hoque.

Nibash Sarker, accounts executive of Prothoma, said most of their readers were buying "Baganbari Rohoshho", "BNP: Somoy-Osomoy", and "General o Narira" by Anisul Hoque.



Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Najmul Islam, 24, of Kukhpara in Nilphamari, is suffering from cancer, says a press release.

A tumor had developed in his shoulder and after its removal following an operation in 2003, a few more ones developed there. In 2005, they too were removed but they caused swelling in the left cheek, neck and shoulder.

Najmul underwent treatment at different hospitals in the country in the last few years. The doctors at Christian Medical College at Vellore in India, advised longtime treatment, which requires a huge amount of money.

But it is not possible for his rickshaw-puller father to afford the treatment there.

So the family requested the well-off of the society for financial help.

Aid can be sent to savings account no: 10979, Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd, Nilphamari Branch; contact number: 01750735174.

Three students hacked over cricket match

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Three students of a school were injured in a scuffle following a cricket match dispute at Jamshing in Savar early yesterday.

The injured are Md Sagor, Md Rakibullah and Md Al-Amin of Shukurjan Jinnat Ali High School in the area.

Md Zakaria Hossain, sub-inspector of Savar police, said Md Kamrul Hasan, another student of the same school, hacked the trio when they went to Kamrul's house to beat him up following a cricket match dispute, leaving them severely injured.

The injured were rushed to Enam Medical College Hospital, the SI added.

Md Benu Miah, guardian of one of the injured students, lodged a case, accusing Kamrul.



With the end of the month-long Amar Ekushey Granthamela approaching, more and more people are thronging the fair, and the crowd gets even bigger on the weekend yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



Imran H Sarker addresses a discussion on the attacks on free thinkers at Shahbagh intersection in the capital yesterday, organised by a faction of Gonojagoron Mancha, marking the first death anniversary of blogger Avijit Roy.

PHOTO: STAR

Avijit's killers at large for law enforcers' insincerity

Alleges Imran-led Gonojagoron Mancha

DU CORRESPONDENT

Insincerity is the reason the law enforcement agencies have failed to arrest the murderers of slain blogger Avijit Roy in the last one year, Imran H Sarker-led Gonojagoron Mancha said yesterday.

"Police have claimed several times that they identified the murderers of Avijit, but they could not arrest anyone. Their insincerity is the only reason for the failure," he told a discussion on the "attacks on free thinkers", at Shahbagh intersection in the capital.

He claimed that some people inside the government were patronising the killers and militants.

"If the government cannot arrest the killers of the free thinkers, but rather patron-



ises the militants in the country, it is not possible to build the country based on secular and Liberation War ideologies," Imran said.

Ajoy Roy, father of the blogger and a professor of Dhaka University, said, "Police have said they identified some people as Avijit's killers and tried to test their DNA samples as well as the evidence collected from the crime scene."

He hoped for the killers' arrest soon.

Later in the evening, the Mancha brought out a torch procession towards to TSC of DU and placed a floral wreath at the spot where Avijit was killed.

On February 26 last year, Avijit Roy was hacked to death near the Raju memorial and his wife Rafida Ahmed Bonya injured in an attack by machete-wielding men.



Ashutosh president, Didar GS of Law Reporters Forum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Daily Star senior reporter Ashutosh Sarkar was elected president and BSS senior reporter Didarul Alam general secretary of the Law Reporters Forum yesterday, for the term of 2016-17.

A three-member election commission led by Kazi Abdul Hannan held the election at LRF's Annual General Meeting at the Supreme Court Bar Association building in the capital.

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'Criminal' with 10 crude bombs arrested in Jessore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Detectives arrested an alleged criminal along with 10 crude bombs, one shooter gun and one round of bullet from Bagachra Bazar area in Sarsha Upazila of Jessore early yesterday.

Arrested Rafiqul Islam, 28, was son of Md Ainnuddin Boro of Khalsi village in the district's Jhikorgacha upazila. Md Habibur Rahman, in-charge of Bagachra police outpost, said, "The arrestee is involved in terrorist activities for a long time and indicted in some cases."

A case was lodged in this regard.

It's a conspiracy in UP

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threats while submitting nomination papers.

Addressing a briefing at its Nayapaltan headquarters, Rizvi said in the last municipality polls the law enforcers got strong directives to take action if the situation went out of control but this time it had decided not to give any strong directive to the law enforcers.

The meaning of all these is to ensure the victory of the ruling party chairman candidates, said Rizvi.

In the UP elections held before 2011, some 20 law enforcers, including police and Ansar, were deployed in each polling centre.

On Thursday, EC officials told The Daily Star that some 15 Ansar members were deployed in each station in previous elections, but the number had been reduced to 12 since 2012.

According to this, the number of law enforcers will be 17 for each general centre and 19 for vulnerable one.

Meanwhile, BNP chairperson's adviser Khandaker Mahbub Hossain at a discussion alleged that conducting the UP polls was a conspiracy because the government wanted to show the world the Awami Leaguer won a large number of chairman posts.

He warned that the consequences would not be good for the government if votes were rigged.

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