

# TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Babui at nest. PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

## The Babui's House

When I was growing up the story of the *babui* – or *baya weaver* – was popular in school textbooks. Usually there was an essay describing the bird's amazing ability to weave nests. On the side was a drawing of the elongated nest, hanging from a tree. I saw many such nests as a child, hanging mostly from *taal* palms, but scarcely gave them a second glance.

As an adult I take much more interest in birds than I did as a child. *Babuis* are not as plentiful as they once were, but I see them occasionally in the countryside, moving in flocks. It is easy to confuse them with the house sparrow, but they are generally lighter in colour and smaller. Their nests, however, proved elusive.

I finally found *babui* nests in Moulvi Bazar's Hail Haor. It was a hot summer afternoon. The recent rains had rendered the unpaved road unfit for car, so I was walking. Well inside the haor, I heard the cacophony of a group of birds and tracked them to a row of nine tall *shupari* trees. About a hundred nests were hanging from the fronds of the trees.

It was an astonishing sight: hundreds of *babui* birds frantically working on the nests which were gently blowing in the warm summer breeze against a deep blue sky.

I watched the birds at work. If you have ever played with *shupari* leaves, you know they are hard to tear laterally but can be easily stripped into thin threads along their length. That's exactly what the nest-building *babui* did. It tore each palm leaf into thin

long threads, one thread at a time, using its bill as the scissor. Then, holding the thread in its bill, it flew very fast to its nest. Using its bill as a needle, it wove the thread in and out, adding another layer to the nest.

The birds moved quickly, making it difficult to follow their action. But once I had grown accustomed to the pattern, I discovered something that magnified my respect for their ability. Every time a bird had woven in a thread, it tested the result of its work. How? If it had worked on the outside wall, it pressed and nudged with its bill and body to make sure the nest was strong. If it had worked inside, it went in and flexed its wings against the wall to make sure it did not break.

There were two types of nests. One is with a closed bottom, like a ball, which the mother uses for laying eggs and incubating. The other has an open bottom and a bar running across it. Its purpose seemed more for perching and relaxing.

The nests are built by male birds, identified by the bright yellow crown on their head. While making the nests, they usually display for the females. A female then chooses a nest, and completes it by adding soft finishing. It mates with the owner of the nest. Then it lays the eggs and incubates them.

There are many species of weaver birds around the world. Bangladesh has three species of them. It was a revelation to watch our *babuis* at work. They are gifted engineers.

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## Infant found in dustbin recovering at DMCH

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The condition of a newborn, rescued from a dustbin near the capital's Badda Post Office on July 10, is improving at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

"The baby's condition will be much better by this week. Then, we will be able to handover the infant to the social services welfare department," DMCH Deputy Director Khawaja Abdul Gafur told The Daily Star on Thursday.

Hearing screams, locals found the infant, wrapped in polythene, inside the dustbin and informed police. Cops, with the help of a local woman, rescued the newborn and took him to DMCH.

The infant, who was two-three days old and weighed around 2.8kg, had some infections of jaundice, said Abdul Gafur.

The baby was breastfed at the hospital but the results were not good, he said, adding, "Now, we're giving him saline."

Police said they are yet to identify the parents.

## WASA ROAD IN SHYAMPUR Riders forced to deal with potholes

HELEMUL ALAM

Mohammad Nadim has been riding motorbikes ever since he was young. He is an experienced and careful rider and he takes a lot of pride in that.

But, couple of weeks ago, while going to work, Nadim, a resident of the capital's Shyampur, could not control his bike as it hit a pothole veiled under the murky stagnant water on the Wasa road of the area.

Though he was lucky enough to not to suffer any fractures, he still received injuries to his hands and legs and had to stay home for around a week due to the accident.

"It's not just me, vehicles falling into potholes on the road has become a regular phenomenon as the road is in a severe condition for the last three months," said Nadim, also a rice trader.

"The income of my shop has also reduced around 65 percent due to the derelict condition," said Nadim.

Though the road, stretching from Jurain Rail Gate to Boroitola, was repaired around two years back by spending Tk 1.70 crore, in reality the contractor might have not spend

more than Tk 40 lakh, he alleged.

Mohammad Noyangazi, a shopkeeper of the road, said the city corporation did not repair the road properly for which it got damaged again within a short time.

"I had to face a loss of Tk 3,000 around 15 days back as one of my rickshaw-van was turned upside down along with my goods in front of my shop," he said.

"It has become a common scene. Everyday eight to 10 vehicles are getting damaged," he alleged.

Al Amin, a rickshaw-puller of the area, said one of the wheels of his rickshaw collapsed around 15 days back on the road. "I was lucky enough to avoid injuries but my livelihood was damaged. I had to spend Tk 350 to repair my rickshaw," he said.

Though for the most part of the one km road is good but the condition is worst at several points, he said.

Kazi Bourhan Uddin, executive engineer of zone-5 of Dhaka South City Corporation, said they will inspect the spots and take immediate steps to repair the damaged portions.



## A job well done!

SCC stops bird sale at fair after Star report

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

In a commendable move, Sylhet City Corporation yesterday dismantled stalls and evicted traders from the "Rath Mela", who were selling various local and migratory birds at the fair after The Daily Star published a report "Selling birds rampant at Sylhet fair" on Friday.

"After reading the news, I ordered the Mela authorities to not to give any stalls to the birds traders and evicted the vendors," Enamul Habib, chief executive officer of SCC, told this correspondent.

"We express solidarity with the initiative and will work together to augment the movement of protecting nature," he said.

Contacted, RFM Monirul Islam, divisional forest officer of the Sylhet Forest Division, said that they have put their entire effort for stopping these illegal

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Law enforcers intensify security at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque yesterday, after the Islamic Foundation urged countrywide mosques to follow common anti-terror sermon delivered there during Juma prayers, following the recent deadly terrorist attacks at Holy Artisan Bakery in Dhaka and near the Eid congregation at Sholakia, Kishoreganj.

## Rabiul remembered as son of Manikganj

At memorial meeting held by BLOOMS school which he founded for challenged children

ZAHANGIR SHAH, Manikganj

Speakers yesterday at a memorial meeting highlighted the life of Mohammad Rabiul Karim, a slain assistant commissioner of the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, who was not just a police official, but also a patriotic and dedicated social worker.

Rabiul sacrificed his life on July 1 when he was fighting to rescue hostages from the Holy Artisan Bakery in the capital's posh Gulshan.

He was buried beside his father at his

village graveyard in Katigram of Manikganj.

The specialised school "BLOOMS" held the meeting on its premises around 3:00pm in Manikganj Sadar upazila, which was attended by its students, their guardians, and teachers, Rabiul's fellows and well-wishers as well as villagers.

He founded the school for children with disabilities at the village in 2011 and used to bear all the expenses of the school where some 36 students are currently studying.

Mohammad Nuruzzaman, assistant



## 3 of a family die in bus, auto-rickshaw collision

STAR REPORT

Three persons of a family were killed on the spot and four others injured when a bus collided head-on with a CNG-run auto-rickshaw at Shabgram on the second bypass in Bogra town yesterday around 8:00pm, reports our Bogra correspondent.

The deceased were auto-rickshaw driver Ziaur ur Rahman, 32, his wife Reshma Begum, 22, and their son Atik, 8, of Madla in Bogra's Shajahanpur upazila.

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## KSA largest source of remittance

Bangladesh gets \$13.5b in 11 months

UNB, Dhaka

Saudi Arabia has been the largest source of remittance as non-resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) living there sent \$2.694 billion from the kingdom in 11 months (until May) of the FY 2015-16.

According to available statistics at Bangladesh Bank, Saudi Arabia is followed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as NRBs residing in the gulf country remitted \$2.450 billion during the same period.

Both the countries in the Middle-East constantly maintain their highest position in sending remittance by Bangladesh expatriates. As per the central bank data, Bangladesh received \$3.345 billion and \$2.823 billion respectively from Saudi Arabia and the UAE in the FY 2014-15.

Bangladesh received a total of \$7.729 billion from all eight countries in the Middle-East, including Saudi Arabia and UAE. The other six remittance sending countries in the region are Bahrain (\$447.91 million), Kuwait (\$929.35 million), Oman (\$814.50 million), Qatar (\$380.45 million), Libya (\$11.82 million) and Iran (\$0.16 million).

The data show Bangladesh received third highest

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7