

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



My old boots.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Goodbye to an old friend

At some time or other all of us have felt fondness for inanimate objects. Perhaps they have empowered us or given us pleasure. Perhaps we rely on their loyalty and they never let us down. Perhaps we have good memories associated with them. Thus: a writer's pen, a musician's guitar, the favourite teacup which helps you start your day, or that old shirt you cannot get yourself to throw away.

Shoes - the walking kind, not the fashion-statement kind - fall into this category for me because I spend much time outdoors. They protect my feet from the elements, support my ankles, prevent blisters and steady my balance on uneven terrain. After many hours spent with them negotiating difficult ground, they become part of my outdoor experience. Somewhere along the way I become attached to them.

So it is with this pair of boots that I wore for seven years. I bought it in Florida on sale for around \$100. The brand is Timberland; it is (or rather, once was) covered with Gore-Tex, a waterproofing chemical. Its size 11 perfectly fits my slightly wide feet. The top is leather, the bottom is rubber, and the inside is lined with nylon. From the first day it fit comfortably and invited me to go on adventures.

Indeed, we had many adventures together.

Perhaps the greatest was tracking wild mountain gorillas in the mountains of Bwindi Impenetrable Forest in Uganda. Through a long and brutal climb on slippery slopes without tracks, these boots stayed rock solid on my feet. They kept my feet dry

on the wet ground and kept me from slipping, leading me to the gorilla family for an unforgettable experience.

At home, too, these boots served me well. Numerous times in the Haors of Sylhet, they let me concentrate on birds and forget my aching feet and muscles. They dealt with the sticky mud of Sundarban while I was honey-hunting without getting me stuck in the mud.

Not all experiences were good. These boots did not protect my feet well from leeches. In monsoon, I once opened them after a jungle trek to find my white socks red, the leech long gone after gorging itself on blood from my feet and leaving behind a puncture laced with anti-coagulants that bled and bled.

Sadly, during all this adventuring, the stitches holding the boots together gradually disintegrated. A cobbler repaired them. After a few more months of intense use he had to repair them again.

Then came my trip to Iceland where these boots took their worst beating. I spent several days climbing cliffs and hills of volcanic rock broken into sharp-edged gravel. The tough rubber bottom started to fray. Back in Dhaka, the cobbler worked on that, too. But the repair did not last and chunks of the sole kept breaking away.

Whenever I wear them now I am uneasy they will come apart at an awkward moment.

Thus the time has come to say goodbye to an old friend. And find a new pair of boots.

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10 shot among 100 hurt in clash over Indian TV serial

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulibazar

At least 100 people were injured, 10 of them sustained bullet wounds, during a clash between two groups following a dispute when watching an Indian TV serial in Dhal village of Sadar upazila in Habiganj on Thursday afternoon.

The bullet-hit persons were admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College and Hospital.

Fifteen of the other injured were taken to a health complex, 20 others to Habiganj Sadar Modern Hospital, and the remaining ones took first aid.

Habiganj Police Station Officer-in-

charge Yasinul Haque said on Wednesday night some villagers gathered at a restaurant to watch TV where two women argued with each other over performance of actresses in Kironmala serial, prompting the restaurant authorities to switch off the TV.

As the two continued their argument, their family members rushed to the spot and clashed, injuring 10 instantly.

To settle the matter, elite of the area called arbitration on Thursday but the two families had an altercation during the meeting that created two groups among the villagers, the OC said.

At one stage, both the groups equipped with firearms and sharp weapons clashed, injuring the 100 from both the sides, he added.



Activists of Bangladesh Chhatra Union at a human chain in the capital's Kakrail yesterday, demanding a probe into the death of Afsana Ferdous, inset, a student of SAIC Institute of Management and Technology in Mirpur, and arrest of the killers.

Consider psychological causes to curb militancy

Say experts at human chain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mentioning that merely giving priority to law enforcement agencies, legal system and political activities will not suffice to curb militancy, speakers yesterday underscored the need for finding out its psychological causes and solutions to purging the country of the curse of militancy and terrorism.

Forming an anti-terror human chain in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club, they also demanded that every educational institute appoint a psychologist to understand psyche of its students.

Curbing militancy by only law enforcers or through legal system is not possible, but rather psychologists will have to play an important role in this connection alongside a concerted social movement, viewed Prof Dr Shamsuddin Ilias, general secretary of Bangladesh Psychological Association (BPA).

Teachers, students, officials and members of different educational institutions and organisations including BPA, Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Society (BCPS), Bangladesh Educational and Counselling Psychological Society (BECPS), Dhaka University Psychology Alumni Association (DUPAA), and Dhaka University's psychology and clinical psychology departments participated in the human chain.

Mentioning that psychologists should stand up against militancy, Chairman of Rajshahi Education Board Prof Abul Kalam Azad, who is also the president of Dhaka University Alumni Association, said like the psychologists, it is the responsibility of people of all professions to resist militancy.

BCPS General Secretary Md Jahir Uddin urged the guardians of students to take their children to psychiatrists if they observe any behavioural abnormality in their children.

Prof Tania Rahman suggested rehabilitating those who already became militants so that they can return to normalcy.

Among others, Chairman of the Department of Clinical Psychology of DU Kamaruzzaman Majumdar and BECPS President Shaheen Islam addressed the human chain.

Physically challenged girl 'raped by neighbour'

Locals hand over 57-yr-old 'rapist' to police

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A physically challenged teenage girl was allegedly raped by one of her elderly neighbours in his house in a village of Sadar upazila in Lalmonirhat yesterday.

Mogholhat Union Parishad member Asmot Ali said locals beat up the alleged rapist, Shukur Ali, 57, and handed him over to police after the 13-year-old screamed.

The girl, who cannot move her hands properly since birth, was taken to a hospital for forensic test, the family said.

The family alleged that Shukur, whom the girl called grandfather, lured her to his house promising her to give a guava before violating the teenager.

Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge (investigation) Prodip Kumar Roy said the family was preparing to file a case in the afternoon.

Four Noakhali girls die as boat capsizes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Four girls died when a boat capsized in the Chota Feni River at Musapur in Companiganj upazila of Noakhali on Wednesday.

The deceased were identified as Rabita, 13, daughter of Nurul Anowar, Bibi Fatema, 14, daughter of Abul Kalam, and Kamrun Nahar Fancy and Marjahan; all residents of Char Fakira village at Musapur in the same upazila.

The bodies of Fancy and Marjahan were rescued on Wednesday, and those of Rabita and Fatema yesterday.

The latter were students of Azgor Ali Dakhil Madrasah in the upazila.

Abdul Hai, superintendent of the madrasah, confirmed that Rabita was a student of class VI and Fatema was of VIII.

Nazrul Islam Shahin, chairman of Musapur Union Parishad, said, "Today [yesterday] morning, a rescue team of Fire Service and Civil Defence went to the spot where the boat capsized. After reaching there, they found the bodies of Rabita and Fatema adrift in the river and took them to the bank."

Later he informed the two victims' relatives of the incident, who confirmed their identities, added the chairman.

Azizul Hoque, an official of Companiganj Fire Service Station, said the bodies of the duo were rescued around 9:00am when a rescue team of the station was searching in the Chota Feni River with the help of a team of Chandpur and Maijdee Fire Service Unit.

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Missing boy found murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A 10-year-old boy, who went missing on Wednesday, was found dead in a bamboo cluster in Delgaon village under Khansama upazila of Dinajpur yesterday.

The deceased Md Asad, son of Surat Ali was a class-one student of Bhabki Government Primary School.

Family members said Asad went missing on Wednesday after he left home for school. Family members looked for him everywhere and made an announcement through a loudspeaker in the village on Thursday. The next morning, locals found his decomposed body in the bamboo cluster.

Officer-in-Charge of Khansama Police Station Abdul Motin said the boy was strangled and his face was burnt with acid.

The body was sent to Dinajpur Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

The Daily Star



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