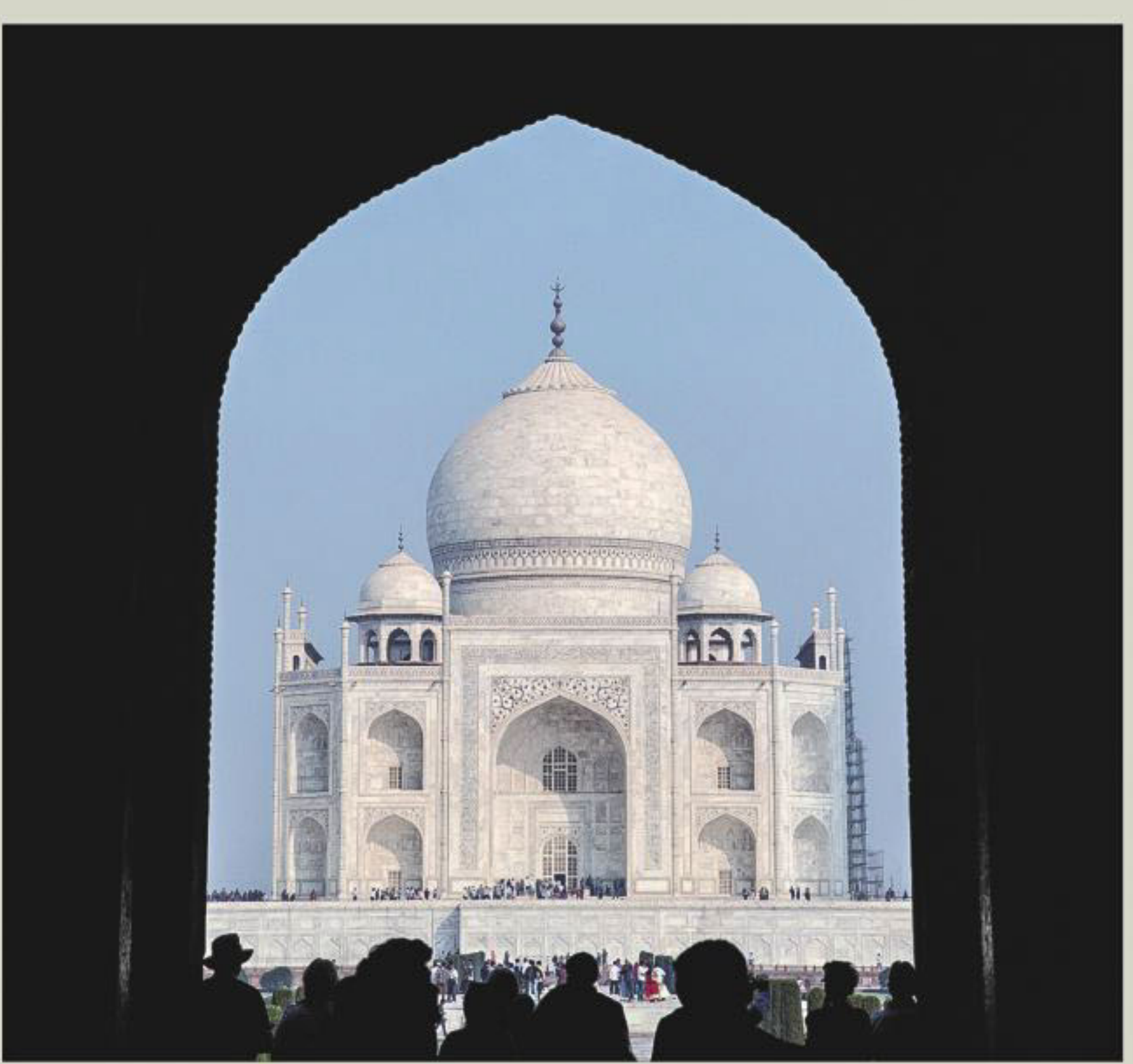


TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



My first view of Taj Mahal. PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

First Sight

As we go through life, we sometimes see things that move us so much that we never, ever forget that first sight.

I recall the first time I saw the Grand Canyon. My wife and I had been driving for several hours, slowly climbing a never-ending mountain through the boring desert landscape of Arizona dotted with rocks, cactus and the occasional Joshua tree. By the time we entered Grand Canyon National Park it was late afternoon. Some tourist shops, motels and a tourist parking lot – these were all I could see. Alighting from the car we walked perhaps a hundred feet when, most unexpectedly, the canyon appeared in front of us in golden light. One moment it was hidden behind the buildings and trees; the next moment, it was spread out in all its glory. Its sheer size in depth and breadth, and its colours took our breath away. I have seen it several times since, but that first view stays with me.

Last week I had a similar experience when we visited the Taj Mahal for the first time. Years ago, an architect friend had told me that the Taj was much smaller than he had imagined it and I was fully prepared to be underwhelmed. But the very first sight of it through the opening in the gate made me catch my breath. The white marble shimmered in the crisp winter sunlight and the entire structure appeared to float in the distance. When our ever-helpful guide rattled on about historical facts, I hushed him so I could stare at the monument.

Some years ago, my father and I drove up to Shillong, which lies about 6000 feet above sea level. After crossing the Tamabil border in Sylhet, we hired a car which took us up the

road meandering through the Khasi Hills. About halfway, we stopped the car at a clearing and got out to stretch our legs. I looked back the way we had come and took a sharp breath. There was Bangladesh laid out like a green carpet below – a flat land, with rivers like ribbons, and the hills of Sylhet like small bumps on the carpet, a sight never to be forgotten.

Of course, landscapes and monuments are not the only first sightings that touch and move people. Often, it is also other people, for example, romantic interests or a child right after birth.

Take my friend Hassan for instance. He had just finished his studies in the US and was visiting his family in Bangladesh. On the trip's last afternoon, he went shopping to Aarong with friends. There he made eye contact with a young woman and instantly fell in love with her. He managed an introduction, spoke briefly with her and, the very same evening, convinced his family to send a formal marriage proposal to her home. They have been happily married for several decades with two grown-up children.

What are some sights I aspire to see in the future? Birds and wild animals are a big attraction. It would be wonderful to see a tiger or lion in the wild, and that most beautiful of birds, the resplendent quetzal of Central America.

But a memorable first sight takes more than an exciting subject. Many factors – both inside and outside you – conspire together, and when it happens, it feels like a lucky day indeed.

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Free of cost therapy brings smile to hundreds

ALAM PALASH, Chandpur

Jannat loves to smile and move her head happily while listening to folk music.

But the seven-year-old has problem communicating properly and also difficulty in walking, since she is suffering from cerebral palsy.

So her mother Farhana Akter, a housewife, hailing from Poura area of Chandpur, took her to the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) in Savar regularly for therapy.

"But the ride was hectic and took almost four hours each way. My daughter used to get tired and bothered..." she said. "We also had to pay for each physiotherapy."

Then she heard about the Disability Development Foundation in her area and took her there recently. She got Jannat registered and she is being given therapy there ever since.

"I don't have to go to the capital anymore, and it saves so much time. Also the therapy here is free of cost," Farhana told this correspondent Wednesday, while Jannat was busy playing with a ball at the foundation's service and help centre.

The foundation has been providing free therapy to the people with disabilities for the last four years, and so far has helped 2,800 people in Chandpur, said Sumon Chandra Nandi, its disability affairs officer.



A mobile van offering free physiotherapy and counseling. PHOTO: ALAM PALASH

The centre started its operation under the social welfare ministry on the first floor of a building in 2012, where a consultant, two physicians and two physiotherapists are working five days a week from 9:00am to 5:00pm, he said.

Besides, the organisation has also distributed wheel chairs, white canes and hearing aids to the poor patients.

The foundation also launched a mobile rehabilitation van for persons with disabilities along with another centre in Faridganj, said the physicians. The van stays at a

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Journo attacked in Gazipur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A local journalist was injured in an attack by three youths in Satkhamair Bazar of Sreepur upazila in Gazipur yesterday morning.

The victim, Shahin Akand, local correspondent of the daily Kaler Kantho, took treatment from a local doctor.

Shahin said he was hit with a stick in the head and later in the back and neck while he was standing before his house.

As locals rushed in, they fled the scene, he said.

He recognised two of the three but could not identify the other who carried a cleaver in his hand, added Shahin, who could not say the reason behind the attack.

On a verbal complaint, police rushed to the houses of the alleged attackers but did not find them, said Sreepur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Asaduzzaman.

Local journalists demanded arrest of the attackers.



Hearing-and speech-impaired people under the banner of National Deaf Unity Council, in a procession, protest the deadly attacks on Rohingyas in Myanmar, by raising their hands in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

AL central team asks N'ganj leaders to work for Ivy

A CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Leaders of Awami League's (AL) central unit asked those of the party's Narayanganj district unit to work for the party-nominated mayoral candidate Selina Hayat Ivy burying all sorts of divisions and conflicts.

An AL team headed by AL organising secretary Mohibul Hasan Nawfel reached Narayanganj city and held a meeting with the unit leaders at the AL district office yesterday.

Ivy and ruling party lawmaker Shamim Osman were absent in the meeting.

The district leaders in the meeting blamed Ivy for not integrating them into electoral campaigns, said a leader preferring to be anonymous.

"Awami League is giving highest importance to the election. The country's people are looking forward to it. Leaders of each ward committed to working for the party's symbol --

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40 injured in Habiganj clash over fishing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Around 40 people were injured, four of them seriously, in a clash between two groups over catching fish from a beel in Rahamatpur village of Baniachang upazila in Habiganj yesterday.

The four – Shahid Miah, 40, who was hit with a spear in the chest; Mohibur Rahman, 25, in the left hand; and Kaium Miah, 30, in the left leg; and Jubel Miah, 15, who was beaten up – were admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

Nine others were admitted to Habiganj Sadar Modern Hospital and the remaining ones took first aid.

Locals said the two groups have been wrangling over the issue for a long time.

They attacked each other with sharp weapons following a meeting of one group which was fixing a date to catch fish, they added.

Amulya Kumar Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Baniachang Police Station, said additional police were deployed there to avoid further violence.

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CHT people's basic rights still a far cry

Speakers tell events marking 19th anniversary of peace accord

CITY DESK

People in Chittagong and in three districts that comprise the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) yesterday held different programmes, marking the 19th anniversary of CHT Peace Accord.

In Bandarban town, speakers at a rally demanded that the government fully implement the accord, reports our correspondent.

Fundamental rights of the CHT ethnic minorities have not been ensured yet, with the accord not being fully implemented, they said.

Ethnic minority leaders alleged that influential land grabbers in collusion with local administrations are continuously grabbing the minorities' ancestral land.

Meanwhile, Bandarban district unit leaders of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) alleged that law enforcement agencies harassed some of their community men while they were going to the town from Rowangchhari upazila to join the programme.

"We strongly condemned the harassment," said KS Mong Marma, member of the PCJSS central unit.

However, Sanjit Kumar Banik, superintendent of police in Bandarban, refuted the allegation, saying, "We did security checks only."

PCJSS also organised rallies and meetings in the district's different upazilas, attended by thousands of ethnic minority people.

In Rangamati, PCJSS held a discussion on the Rangamati Gymnasium premises in the town, adds a correspondent in the district.

Uchaton Talukdar, lawmaker from Rangamati, and Prokriti Ranjan Chakma, president of Bangladesh Adibasi Forum's CHT region, attended the discussion with Suborno Chakma, president of PCJSS Rangamati unit, in the chair.

When addressing the discussion, Uchaton Talukdar said, "The government claimed to have implemented 48 out of 72 clauses, which is not true. Only 26 clauses have so far been implemented."

Mentioning that the CHT people are living in fear and insecurity, he mentioned that they have ardently been awaiting the agreement's full implementation for 19 years.

Also, Rangamati Hill District Council brought out a

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