

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Horials landing on the banyan tree.

PHOTO:
IHTISHAM KABIR

The Banyan Tree

It was one of those trees that one sees and still does not see, hiding in plain sight. I had walked near it many times and often glanced at it when scanning the landscape, but never actually looked at it. Perhaps its size was the reason. It was small for a banyan, barely two stories tall, standing behind a shack at the corner of a village crossroad near a cluster of tea shops. On one side were small patches for growing vegetables, followed by a bamboo grove. On the other side, a rapid descent into a rectangular plot where the earth had been dug out neatly. Underneath the banyan grew smaller trees, weeds and tall grass. Tucked away at a neglected corner of the road to nowhere in particular, the banyan never gave me reason for a second look.

I would have continued ignoring it were it not for a village boy. One day, when I was searching for birds in the village, he appeared at my side. "What are you doing?" he asked.

"Looking for birds," I replied.

"Did you check out that *bot* tree? It gets many birds."

"That one?" I pointed. He nodded.

I looked at the tree carefully now, top to bottom, side to side. Nothing was moving in the thick round crown of deep green.

"But it is empty," I said.

"You just have to visit it at the right time of the day, and look carefully."

"What is the right time then?"

"Oh, I don't know... mornings, but afternoons also, and some days at noon..." he said unhelpfully, "but, you can see lots of pigeons in that tree - green pigeons."

After that conversation I was more attentive to the banyan. One

afternoon, I was in the neighbourhood, looking for a coucal - a dark-red bird that looks like a cross between a chicken and a crow - that had ran into a roadside bush. Unexpectedly, I heard the loud flutter of wings and looked up to see a flock of green pigeons descending on the banyan.

I was thrilled. I had been trying to photograph these yellow-footed green pigeons (*horials*) for a long time. Here they were, playing in the tree, swaying and jumping from branch to branch, gobbling up the banyan fruit. Their meal lasted for a few minutes and they took off, all together, in search of the next fruit tree.

Spending more time at the banyan since that day, I discovered that its fruits attract coppersmith barbets, doves, bulbuls and many other birds in addition to the *horials*.

One afternoon, while waiting for the *horials*, I saw something move in the bushes underneath the tree. It was a brown shrike, here for the winter from colder places, hunting for insects. And while I was watching it, a cuckooshrike landed on a plant right in front of me. It hopped around looking for its own insects. Then a drongo appeared - it was probably hunting in the fields - and buzzed the cuckooshrike repeatedly, trying to drive it away. But the cuckooshrike persisted, jumping from branch to leaf to grass, and kept hunting.

And so life played out its ever mysterious moves in and around the banyan. If there is a banyan near you, this winter might be a good time for a closer look.

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98 Hindu people murdered this yr

Claims Jatiyo Hindu Mohajote

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 98 Hindus were allegedly killed and 357 others attacked physically from January 1 to December 29 this year, Bangladesh Jatiyo Hindu Mohajote (BJHM) said yesterday.

BJHM Executive President Sukriti Mondal cited the figure from a report prepared based on newspapers' information and their community's sources, at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

At least 26 Hindu women were raped, while 22 Hindus are still missing across the country, he alleged.

Besides, 141 temples were vandalised and torched while 165 Hindu houses were attacked during this period, he added.

"We have found 15,054 incidents of killings, rapes, attacks, tortures on Hindus this year. This figure may be higher. But we don't know about it. We only can make the government aware by publishing this report," said Sukriti.

"Now, we want the government to find out the culprits and try them. We don't want to see any repetition of these in 2017," he said.

In the report, Sukriti also claimed that 1,109 Hindus got death threats from different quarters while murder attempts were made on 18 others.

Besides, 711 Hindus were forced to leave the country, he

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BNP to stage countrywide demos Jan 5 except Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leader Rizvi Ahmed yesterday said BNP must hold its scheduled programmes of black-flag procession and wearing black badges on January 5 in all the cities except Dhaka protesting the January 5, 2014 national election.

He also said BNP will stage its rally scheduled for January 7 at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan to observe January 5 as "democracy killing day".

Rizvi was addressing a press conference at BNP's Nayapaltan headquarters after Awami League Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif at a meeting earlier in the day said people will not allow BNP to take to the streets on January 5.



Rasel Mridha, 11, in the exam hall

He writes with left leg
Passes primary terminal exam

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Like most people, he was not blessed with two hands and two legs. All he has as limb is a five-inch long left leg. But the power of his will triumphed over his disability.

Rasel Mridha, 11, has passed the ebtedayee (primary terminal) exam with GPA 3.17. He wrote with his leg.

The boy's father, Abdur Rahman, is a farmer of village Sholakura in Natore's Singra upazila.

Expressing happiness over Rasel's achievement, his mother Lovely Begum said, "I am proud of Rasel... I want to get him educated." Rasel eats and

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Defying prohibition, cars are parked in front of Bashundhara City Shopping Complex in the capital, yesterday. Street parking is a major contributor to the perennial traffic chaos in Dhaka city, but little effort from authorities has been seen to solve the problem.

PHOTO: STAR

'Robber' dies in mob beating

UNB, Laxmipur

A suspected robber was killed in a lynch-mob attack at Charbix in Raipur upazila early yesterday.

The dead is Ruhul Amin of Charbongsi village.

Quoting locals, police said some 7-8 robbers swooped on the house of one Sharif Hossain breaking open the door and looted its valuables.

They stabbed house owner Sharif indiscriminately, leaving him critically injured. Later, locals chased them and caught Ruhul while others managed to flee.

Later, the angry mob gave him a good thrashing,

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UNDER-CONSTRUCTION MOGHBAZAR-MOUCHAK FLYOVER
No safety measures at sites

UNB, Dhaka

The movement of pedestrians beneath under-construction Moghbazar-Mouchak flyover in the capital has become riskier as incidents of the fall of construction materials like rods and brick chips have become rampant due to a lack of safety measures.

Even, the construction workers have to work at construction sites risking their lives due to a lack of public safety measures like enclosures, scaffolding and fencing as those are allegedly ignored by the authorities concerned.

Besides, workers are not made to wear personal safety gears like helmet (hard hat), special boots and retroreflective vest, which are mandatory for a construction worker as per standard safety guidelines.

Rabbi Ahmed Emon, a construction worker of the Moghbazar-Mouchak

flyover, suffered multiple injuries when an iron rod fell on his head at the construction site near Eskaton on March 16 last. He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead. Emon was not wearing any safety gear when the accident took place.

Earlier on April 4 in 2015, construction workers Asaduzzaman, 18, his brother Majedul, 16, and several others, including Majur Hossain, were working at the flyover at Moghbazar crossing.

Suddenly, a bus of "Provati Banasree Paribahan" ploughed through them as its driver lost his control over the steering. Both the siblings died on the spot while Majur suffered severe injuries.

SM Piya Ahmed, a Cosmos Group staff, sustained injuries as construction materials fell on him from the under-construction flyover in front of Fortune

Shopping Mall at Mouchak crossing on December 22. With head injuries, Piya received treatment at nearby Dr Sirajul Islam Medical College Hospital.

Like Piya, many pedestrians are receiving injuries while passing through the construction sites of the flyover.

Visiting the site from Malibagh to Shantinagar, the news agency correspondents found that workers were working without wearing helmets, special boots and retroreflective vests. No public safety gears like enclosures or fencing were found there and they were working on the busy road risking their lives. The Local Government Engineering Department has been implementing the Moghbazar-Mouchak flyover. The project drew huge criticisms from experts for its implementation with half a dozen

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Road crashes kill seven

CITY DESK

Seven people were killed and four others injured in road accidents in the country yesterday and Thursday night.

Our Bogra correspondent reports, two youths were killed and another was injured when a truck hit their motorbike at Baghopara near Thengamara Mohila Shabuj Shanga (TMSS) on Bogra-Rangpur highway in Sadar upazila on Thursday night.

The dead were Shuruj Mia, 25, son of Abdul Kuddus, and Rakibul Islam, 22, of

Kocua village of Gaibandha district.

Injured Tanjid Ahmed was sent to TMSS Rafayetullah Community Medical College Hospital.

Our Dinajpur correspondent adds, a college girl was killed while her friend injured when a paddy loaded truck hit their bicycle in Dakchai Bazaar area at Bochaganj upazila of Dinajpur on Friday.

The deceased was Bobita Rani Shill, 18, daughter of Chhabhi Lal Shill village Ishania. Lima Rani Roy was sent to Bochaganj

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Ctg door-to-door waste collection begins tomorrow

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN, Ctg

To make Chittagong a "green and clean" city, the door-to-door garbage collection by Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) is going to begin tomorrow in seven wards, out of 41.

CCC Mayor AJM Nasir Uddin had inaugurated the first phase of the project to collect and remove garbage in seven wards through distributing bins among two housewives at the city's Barik Mia High School on August 1.

The CCC conservancy workers were, later, supposed to go door-to-door to collect waste in Pashchim Sholoshahar, Shulokbahar, Bagmonirum, Enayetbazar, Uttar Pathantuli, Al-karan and Gosaidanga areas after distributing the bins, CCC sources said.

But the authorities could not do so at that time due to various reasons, said Shaibal Das Suman, chairman of CCC Waste Management Standing Committee. Now, the garbage collection and removal will go on from 3:00pm to 10:00pm everyday, he said.

About two lakh bins were distributed in the households, shops and markets in the areas, Suman said. Magistrates will monitor the project and take legal actions if waste is dumped here and there, he said. The open dustbins of these wards will be removed gradually, he further said.

Moreover, about 99 percent of bin distribution has already been completed in 10 more wards, he said, adding that waste collection in those areas will begin on January 15.

"Our target is to bring all the 41 CCC wards under this initiative by March, 2017," Suman said. Co-operation from the city dwellers is required to make the initiative a success, he further said. Under this initiative, CCC conservancy workers will collect garbage from all households, shops and markets then dump those on the designated dumping grounds by trucks, said CCC Chief Conservancy Officer Shafiqul Mannan Siddique.

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*as per clinical study performed in Oct. 2015

