

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

On Learning Photography

I took a long, roundabout route to learning photography. That's because I started with black and white film long before digital photography came into existence. Camera technology was much simpler then. You focused your lens by hand because autofocus had not been invented. You had to measure light using the camera's meter and set the exposure accordingly. And, most importantly, you captured your image on film. So every photograph you took cost real money.

But then, as now, there were two parts to learning photography. The first part was technical. One had to learn enough about photography technique so that, at the end of all that processing, one had a photograph that was not too dark, not too light and not too blurry. This is the part that has changed significantly over the decades I started on photography, because the technology has changed dramatically.

The second part of learning photography was the aesthetics. This part has not changed appreciably over the years. Aesthetics is how you compose your photograph. Broadly speaking, it means organizing the things you see in your viewfinder so the picture speaks to the viewer. In my opinion this part is far more important than the technical part. It is also harder to learn.

People often ask me for pointers on how to take good photographs. When we discuss their camera and how they are using it, I frequently discover that they are lost in the ridiculously intricate features offered by their camera. And if you are feeling confused or unsure about the tool, how can you use it to craft a beautiful, powerful work of art?

Looking back at my learning curve, I realize that I tried to streamline all the technical stuff into basic, simple steps. Make no mistake, there was plenty of technology to confuse the photographer and lighten



PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR.

his wallet even back then: filters, lenses, tripods, flashes... - there was no end to them. But I kept my setup simple - one camera and one lens - and concentrated my energy into learning composition and my money into buying film.

How would this change today for someone with a digital camera trying to improve their photography skills? I strongly believe one should keep the technology simple and manageable so one can concentrate on making pictures. The first step is to choose one camera and one lens and stick to that combination. With all the different modes and settings for the camera, try to find a combination that works for you and stick with it. Perhaps it is "Program" mode with

"Continuous" autofocus. The point is to set it there and forget about it while you take your pictures. (I spent a morning shooting with great National Geographic photographer Sam Abell. Before my eyes he made amazing photographs using only Program mode.)

With the bells and whistles out of the way, you can concentrate on composing the photograph. After choosing your subject, there are two things you must consciously watch before pressing the shutter. These should become second nature. The first is the light, which makes your picture. The second is the background, which can destroy your picture. Understanding light takes practice and feedback. Background is easier once you become aware of it. There are other things to watch for but you will eliminate a lot of frustration if you watch these two.

Depending on your favourite subjects, you will outgrow your fixed camera settings one day. When that day comes, you will know. Hopefully by then you will have learned to compose and light your photograph for best results.

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TALKS ON EC Reach consensus or face movement

Moudud warns govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP standing committee member Moudud Ahmed yesterday warned that the party will go for a tougher movement if the government fails to reach a consensus through the dialogues between the president and political parties on formation of new Election Commission.

He was addressing a programme at the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

He said BNP wants an acceptable search committee so that it can form a capable, competent and nonpartisan EC to hold the next general election.

Meanwhile, BNP's Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi Ahmed, at a press conference at the party's Nayapaltan central office, urged the government to hold such dialogues among the political parties.

IRIS Corp DMD held in Malaysia on graft charge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has arrested IRIS Corporation Berhad deputy managing director, Datuk Hamdan Mohd Hassan, for his alleged involvement in corruption in an e-passport project of the Republic of Guinea.

The Malaysian company, which has been running the machine readable passport (MRP) project in Bangladesh too, announced yesterday that Hamdan was arrested on Thursday for his alleged abuse of power and involvement in corrupt practices.

A Malaysian court remanded him for six days for carrying out probe against the allegations, said Malaysian newspaper The Star.

"Pending the finalisation of the investigations, IRIS wishes to announce that Hamdan's executive powers are suspended and his present duties and responsibilities as acting CEO of IRIS will be taken over by the current chief operating officer, Choong Choo Hock," IRIS mentioned in its announcement.

The Malaysian company drew criticism from home and abroad mainly because of its two senior officials, including Hamdan. The other official is IRIS international Sales Manager Bahjat Aman, who was fired for alleged corruption and irregularities in operating functions in different countries including Bangladesh.

Bangladesh government awarded the company a project for issuing MRP in 2010. The project ran smoothly at the initial stage but allegations of irregularities and mismanagement surfaced due to Hamdan and Aman.

Amid these allegations, the government in 2014

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Pirojpur UP chairman attacked

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

A union parishad (UP) chairman came under attack in Pirojpur yesterday.

Mirajul Islam Raju Mollah is the UP chairman of Shariktala-Dumrital union in Pirojpur Sadar Upazila.

Witnesses said a group of four miscreants attacked Raju with sticks in front of Balaka Club in the town around 6:30pm, leaving him injured.

Raju was taken to Pirojpur Sadar Hospital and later shifted to Khulna Medical College Hospital.

Pirojpur Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge (investigation) Hasnain Parves said Raju received injuries in the head.

The reason of the attack could not be known immediately.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Trees for the beautification of a footbridge near BAF Shaheen College at Mohakhali are dying due to a lack of care. The photo taken on Thursday shows only dry branches while the one taken on May 3, 2016, exhibits green leaves, inset.

Impunity a licence for crimes

Says visiting Canadian lawyer Sloan in his interview with The Daily Star

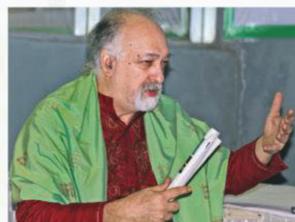
BELAL HOSSAIN BIPLOB

People of Bangladesh will decide how long the ongoing trial of the perpetrators of 1971 crimes will continue, observed visiting Canadian lawyer William Sloan.

"People of Bangladesh have to decide how many people will be prosecuted - you can prosecute 10 or 100 people. Criminals of Second World War are still being prosecuted after many decades. The government can continue the trials here also," he told The Daily Star in an interview yesterday.

The eminent jurist and also a human rights activist came to Bangladesh to attend the silver jubilee and the seventh national conference of the Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee at the capital's Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB).

"If criminals escape from the country, people will not say forget about them. Rather they will seek justice.



William Sloan

Impunity is a licence for committing crime," Sloan added.

While talking about the trials of war criminals in Bangladesh, he said, "I didn't observe the trial procedure. What I followed is the general process. I have travelled so many countries...with the issue of human rights...it's not just about Bangladesh...it's about human rights."

Everywhere people want justice, the trials of the war criminals must be ensured, he advocated.

"Morally, I should not support

capital punishment but it doesn't mean the legal system is wrong," he said. Some form of punishment has to be implemented as well as justice in order to move forward, he added.

"If no measure is taken by some government...it will affect people's psyche," he mentioned. "It is so important to establish the rule of law for holding the society together."

Sloan was 18 during the 1971 Liberation War. He was a staunch supporter of the country's independence. "In 1971, I supported Bangladesh. I stood in front of the Canadian parliament with a placard." He said as a refugee lawyer he started working with Bangladeshi refugees in Canada from 1985. "I love Bangladesh. I love Bangladeshi people."

Asked about the emergence of right-wing political parties, Sloan said this is not something new but rather has been going on for decades.

Separate religion from politics to stop militancy

Indian journalist Geetesh Sharma tells The Daily Star

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Expressing concern over militancy and terrorism in South Asia including Bangladesh, a noted journalist, writer and cultural activists of India said religion has to be separated from politics to stop militancy and extremism.

"Religion should be confined to individual choice and separated from politics. Only then we would be able to create a society with equality, justice and secular values.

This is relevant not only for Bangladesh but also for other South Asian countries," said Geetesh Sharma.

The 85-year-old was attending the seventh national conference of the Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee. Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, he suggested encouraging open discussions on religions so that people can know the real message.

Geetesh said the struggle to create such a society is long and protracted. "It may not be easy to achieve but we should keep on endeavouring. It is not a utopian idea because around 30 countries have achieved this goal through their welfare system."

Expressing concern over the rise of conservative forces, he predicted the trend

will continue for the next few years as the countries have failed to give any alternative to their people.

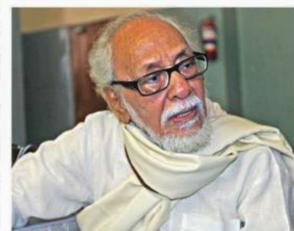
Geetesh, a humanist in conviction, said violent extremism and terrorism is on the rise due to lack of humanism, equality, justice and erosion of secular values.

Praising Bangladesh and its people, he said openness and hospitality of the country's people attracted him the most. "People of Bangladesh are religious but not extremists."

Geetesh also called for unity among Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bhutan and said the countries should unite against terrorism and militancy. "We have a common solution. We have to be united and fight terrorism and militancy, social injustice and discrimination together."

Geetesh said an open discussion among the believers and non-believers should also take place as it will help people to know the religions better.

"You are setting a limit by saying you cannot say or write more than that. You are not allowing people to speak their mind," he said. If this prevails, terrorism will continue to rise.



Geetesh Sharma.

Uber taxi fare to be increased from Monday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Uber is going to hike its fare from Monday, two months after the app-based taxi service was introduced in Dhaka.

Uber taxi users will be paying Tk 21 per km, instead of the current Tk 18 per km, and the time fare will be increased to Tk 3 per minute from Tk 2 per minute, which will result into a 20 to 22 percent increase in the final fare.

The minimum fare will remain Tk 50, which is also the amount to be paid for cancellations. The changes have been made to ensure that Uber continues to be a high-quality platform that seamlessly connects riders to affordable transportation and drivers to viable economic opportunities, Uber said in its website.

The world's largest on-demand mobility platform launched its service in Dhaka on November 22.

Though Uber does not own any cars and just acts like a middleman between customers and cab drivers, it has made the task of booking a cab easier.

Once a person signs up for Uber's free app, he/she can call a car by opening the app and giving information about their location.

'I cannot go home without the money'

Says Bangladeshi worker in S'pore about unpaid wages

STAR REPORT

The Labour Court in Singapore last month ordered a construction company boss to pay a Bangladeshi construction worker \$7,363 in unpaid wages.

But when the employer did not meet the payment deadline on January 12, the court's hands were tied. Instead, the worker was asked to go to the State Courts to take action to recover the sum, a step that would require him to fork out money he does not have, reported The Straits Times Singapore yesterday.

The case highlights a little-known limitation of the Labour Court, and the dilemma workers face when employers refuse to comply with its orders.

At the centre of the dispute is Islam Rafiqul, a 42-year-old construction worker, and his employer Md Shamsuzzaman, sole proprietor of Geosray Engineering and Services.

Islam, a work permit holder, started working for the company in February 2015, earning about \$700 a month in basic salary and \$1,000 a month with overtime.

He did not receive his full salary between October 2015 and June 2016. From July last year, the salary payment stopped completely. He complained to the Ministry of Manpower in Singapore last September and was given a special pass to remain in Singapore while his salary claim was being processed. The pass prohibits him from working.

"I have not sent money home for many months," said Islam, who is supporting his wife and two children. "I cannot go home without the money."

The ministry held meetings between Islam and his employer in September and October. The employer agreed to pay, but later went back on his word.

Shamsuzzaman, a Bangladeshi national, who is a Singapore permanent resident, said he could not pay Rafiqul because he owed more than \$100,000 to a main contractor.

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