

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



A quartet of hilsa. PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

The Fish Habit

Most Bengalis – yours truly included – love fish. We love the variety of flavours and textures that fish offers. Perhaps it is geography: in this small land there are over 260 species of freshwater fish which live and breed in 24000 kilometres of waterways (we have 700 rivers and tributaries) as well as numerous ponds, haors, beels and fishponds.

For many of us the love of fish extends to catching them. I caught my first fish when I was nine. It was a tilapia from a pond in the home of a relative in Naya Sharak, Sylhet. A member of the household staff set up a rudimentary fishing outfit for me – line, hook, sinker and dough for bait – and early the next morning we arrived at the pond. I recall with startling clarity the excitement of the first tug on the fishing line, of the anticipation of catching a wild thing. From that moment the day only got better.

Tilapias were easy and fun to catch but to me they do not taste as well as the smaller koi, pabda or puti. I have always been partial to eating smaller fish. Perhaps it is conditioned response. When I visited my Nanabari as a child, for example, my grandmother used cooked up a delicious curry of bashpata fish, with chunks of potatoes and tomatoes in a fragrant gravy. Not only did it have a delicate taste, but there was no worry about bones. You could either scrape its flesh off the backbone with your teeth or crunch and eat it whole.

Another childhood delicacy – and

still my favourite fish anywhere – is the tiger-striped rani fish, about 2-3 inches long. It has a rich flavour and, fried crispy on the outside, simply melts in your mouth. In my travels, the closest I have found to rani were fresh anchovies I had in Spain, again fried crispy, though anchovies in Turkey were not as good.

And yes, I like my fish fried, even pabda. I can already see aficionados shaking their head.

Different regions of Bangladesh allow me to try out different fish. I tried faishha the first time on a launch in Sundarban and it has since become one of my favourite fish. In Nijhum Dwip, I tried several fish caught by the local fishermen at the mouth of the Meghna. Among these, chheua was delicious. About 4-5 inches long, it is easily recognised by its abnormally large belly.

No discussion of Bengali fish would be complete without hilsa, the king. One of our great writers went so far as to declare that since there is no mention of hilsa in descriptions of heaven, he is not interested in going there. My mother, who was a natural-born cook, had at least two dozen ways of cooking hilsa, each more delicious than the others.

The most fascinating fish I ever saw was the mudskipper. An inhabitant of Sundarban mangroves, this bug-eyed amphibious fish can spend a long time out of water on mud while avoiding predators and looking for food.

So, what's your favourite fish?

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4,190 flats for govt employees to be built in capital

UNB, Dhaka

The government has taken a number of projects to construct 4,190 flats in the capital for mitigating the residential crisis of public servants.

The Public Works Department of the Housing and Public Works Ministry is constructing the flats.

According to an official document, a project has been launched at Azimpur Government Colony to construct six 20-storey buildings, where there will be 52 flats of 1,000 square feet (sqft) in two buildings and 304 flats of 800 sqft in four buildings.

At Motijheel Government Colony, there will be 532 flats of 600 sqft in four 20-storey buildings.

There will be 1,064 flats at Mirpur section-6 in ten 20-storey buildings. Of the 10 buildings, five will have 1,500-sqft 532 flats while the rest 1,250-sqft 532 flats.

Another project has been taken to build 608 flats at Paikpara, Mirpur. There will be eight 20-storey buildings, consisting 1250-sqft flats in three buildings and 1,000-sqft in the remaining five. Also, there will be 456 flats in Malibagh area in four 20-storey buildings.

For the employees of the Public Works Department, a project has been taken to construct four 13-storey buildings at Mirpur section-6.

For senior secretaries, secretaries, grade-1 employees, there will be three 20-storey buildings at Eskatan, where there will be 114 flats. Every building will have 38 flats of 3,000 square feet, 3,470 square feet and 3,455 square feet each.

At Aliganj in Narayanganj, the government has taken an initiative to construct eight 15-storey buildings having 672 flats.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

'Robber' killed in 'gunfight' with cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A suspected robber was killed in a "gunfight" with police at Dattopara in Lakshmipur Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The deceased was Russell, 30, son of Abdul Karim of Noakhali. Police recovered an LG, a local pistol, seven rounds of bullets and two sharp weapons from the spot.

Russell along with his associate Babul was arrested with a gun at an abandoned house at Kabirajbari of North Joypur village, said Chandraganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mokhtar Hossain.

Based on his information, the police took him to Dattopara in Binodpur to recover more firearms. Sensing the law enforcers' presence, Russell's associates opened fire on them, prompting the police to retaliate that triggered the "gunfight", the OC claimed.

Then Russell was wounded and was rushed to Lakshmipur Sadar Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

DU STUDENT'S DEATH

Hospital director held, granted bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The director of the capital's Central Hospital secured bail yesterday, a day after he was arrested in a case filed for the death of a female student of Dhaka University due to "negligence in treatment" at the hospital.

Afia Jahin Chaity, MA Kashem, director of the hospital, was arrested on Thursday night, hours after the DU authorities filed the case with Dhanmondi Police Station against him and eight other doctors and officials of the hospital, said Nazrul Islam, a sub-inspector of the police station.

Metropolitan Magistrate Abdullah al Masud gave the order when Kashem was produced before the court when he sought bail.

The other accused are Dr ABM Abdullah, Kashem Yusuf, Dr Mortuza, Lt Col ASM Matlubur Rahman, Dr Masuma Parvin, Dr Jahanara Begum Mona, Dr Maksud Parvin and Dr Tapan Kumar Bairagi.

Asked, Abdul Latif, officer-in-charge of Dhanmondi Police Station, said police are trying to arrest the other accused.

Afia Jahin Chaity, 20, a first-year student of zoology department, was admitted to the hospital on Green Road on Wednesday after doctors of the hospital diagnosed her with "acute myeloblastic leukaemia", a type of blood cancer, according to the medical file of the deceased. But just before she died around 5:30pm yesterday, doctors confirmed that she actually had dengue fever, students claimed.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



With summer heat soaring and days getting more tiresome, a worker takes a nap on the pontoon of the capital's Sadarghat Launch Terminal yesterday. The photo was taken around one in the afternoon.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

'Tea Labourers Day' today

Tea workers to commemorate deaths of fellows at the hands of British colonial rulers in 1921 during a revolt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulribazar

Tea labourers in the country will observe "Tea Labourers Day" today.

The day, popularly known as "Mulluke Cholo" (let's go home), is held to commemorate the deaths of hundreds of tea garden workers at the hands of British colonial rulers in 1921 during a revolt.

According to tea labour leaders, at the beginning of tea cultivation in the region, tea labourers were brought from different areas of the subcontinent, such as Orissa, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh and had to work under inhumane conditions in the tea gardens.

On May 20, 1921, thousands of tea labourers left their work and gathered near Chittagong's Chandpur river port to go back to their homelands.

But the then British owners of the gardens, with the help of the then Assam law enforcing agency, resisted the labourers and, at one stage, fired at them, resulting in hundreds of deaths.

Satya Naidu, convener of Bangladesh Cha Sramik Federation, said various tea labour organisations will hold programmes to mark the day in remembrance of the killings with a demand for

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Agrani Bank recruitment test postponed over question leak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid allegations of question leaks, the second phase of the senior officer recruitment test of Agrani Bank was postponed yesterday.

"The test scheduled to start at 3:30pm was postponed due to unavoidable reasons," said Aftab Uddin Mahmud Chowdhury, assistant professor of Dhaka University's banking and insurance department, which was in charge of conducting the exam.

Allegations started surfacing on Thursday night with some candi-

dates reporting that they found printed questions and hand-written questions floating on social media. In some cases, only answers were given.

Around two lakh candidates have applied for 262 posts. Considering this huge number, the authorities concerned had decided to hold the test in two phases -- morning and afternoon.

The applicants of the morning phase also alleged the questions were leaked the night before. At least five candidates told this newspaper that most of the questions found on social

media, especially Facebook, matched with the original questions of the test that started at 10:00am.

"At first I did not believe when I saw some hand-written questions on Facebook last night [Thursday night]. Later one of my friends told me the questions were leaked," said Raju, a candidate from Dhaka University.

Wishing anonymity, another candidate said he saw some applicants trying to memorise answers for a set of questions they received on their mobile phones just before the exam.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



A group of people forms a human chain holding litchis, watermelon, mango, jackfruit, pineapple, orange and banana in their hands with syringes consisting red liquid inserted inside some of the seasonal fruits symbolising use of chemicals including formalin in the summer delicacies. The widespread applying of chemicals in fruits to keep those fresh for long poses a massive threat to the public health and nutrition. The human chain was organised by seven rights organisations in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club yesterday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



PM, people's help sought to save JU student

JU CORRESPONDENT

Shirin Akter Tithi, a third-year anthropology student of Jahangirnagar University (JU) under academic year 2013-14, has been suffering from Hemophagocytic Lymphohistocytosis (HLH), a life-threatening disease.

She is undergoing treatment at TATA Medical Centre in Kolkata, India.

Prof Mirza Taslima Sultana, chairperson of Anthropology department, said over Tk 75 lakh is needed for her treatment but her family cannot afford it.

Tithi's family requested all and appealed to the prime minister for financial assistance to save her life.

Financial help can be sent to account no-1271010070370, Dutch Bangla Bank Ltd (Syed Mohammad Jobaer), 0200009621118, Agrani Bank Ltd, JU Branch (Ismath Jahan Chanda), and bKash: 01749277501, 01984740885 and Rocket: 017492775017.

NEWS IN brief

Man 'kills himself' in cop custody

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A man accused in a women repression case allegedly committed suicide inside Jaintiapur Police Station of Sylhet yesterday, a day after his arrest.

The deceased, Nazrul Islam Babu, 28, was a resident of Prothomkhando Khorakhor village and an employee of Jaintiapur upazila administration.

His wife Nasrin Fatema had filed the case for domestic violence.

Sugyan Chakma, additional superintendent (media) of Sylhet District Police, said the detainee hanged himself from the ventilator using the border of a blanket.

The act was recorded in CCTV footage, he said, adding, police personnel on duty that night would be punished for negligence. The body was sent to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital for an autopsy.

Man dies in Faridpur mob beating

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

An angry mob beat a man to death and injured another on suspicion of stealing a battery-run auto-bike at Char Hossanpur village in Gagirtake union of Charvadrang upazila in Faridpur yesterday, said police.

The deceased was Halal Kha, 30, son of Moslam Kha. Babul Kha, owner of that auto-bike, said the vehicle was put on charge at a shop in Taladangi village when someone tried to steal that. Charvadrang police sent the body and the injured, Khokon, to the upazila health complex.

13 Shibir activists held with gunpowder, jihadi books

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj:

Police arrested 13 activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir with 800 grams of gunpowder and 122 jihadi books during two drives in Chandlai-Baganpara area of Chapainawabganj town early yesterday.

The arrestees are: Al amin, Kabir Hossain, Shafiqul Islam, Harun Or Rashid, Abdul Aziz, Helaluddin, Nure Alam, Jahangir Alam, Asadulla Nihat, Khademul Islam, Abdur Rakib, Abdul Muttakim, and Nazmul Hodas.

Police filed two cases.