

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Male common kestrel at Purbachol.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Common Kestrel

I started using the 300-foot road in Purbachol early to take shortcuts on my way to and from Sylhet. In its infancy it was a gravel road full of bumps and potholes but it still beat the merciless traffic jams of Kaliganj Road. After monsoon one year, the entire length of the road took on the profile of a wave, my car going up and down the wave's ripples like a boat bouncing up and down with ocean waves. It was during one of these trips that I saw a medium-sized reddish bird sitting on the median of the road. Having never seen it before, I stopped the car and came in closer for a photograph. It played with me for a bit and then flew away.

Later at home, I identified the photograph as a common kestrel. Belonging to the family Falconiidae, the common kestrel is our commonest falcon. It is about 36 centimeters in length, a bit larger than a house crow. The female is slightly larger than the male and has a reddish crown, contrasting with the male's grey crown. In flight, its fanned-out tail looks splendid with a black band and white tips cutting across it. Its wingtips are pointed. Like many other falcon species, a vertical black mark drops from its eyes down its face.

Since that day I have been able to observe kestrels numerous times in Purbachol during winter. They can be found perched at high places - on top of the pylons, or tall palms - scattered around the Purbachol fields. Usually they are patiently scanning for food, particularly insects such as

grasshoppers, locusts, beetles, crickets, termites, rodents, voles, frogs and lizards. Their eyesight is superior and sensitive to ultra-violet rays. This enables them to track urine trails of rodents.

Observing the kestrels with patience can yield clues to their behaviour. For example, when hunting, they often hover over one spot 10-20 meters from the ground while pinpointing their prey which they swoop down to catch with their sharp talons. I have also seen them stomping repeatedly on a prey to kill it before flying off with it.

Most birds of prey are shy, but common kestrels, when hunting, can come near humans. This also goes for when they guarding their territory. Normally they fly away quickly as I approach them, but when they are hunting, I had kestrels swing around in flight and return for a closer look at me. Perhaps they wanted to chase me away from their territory or perhaps they were sizing up a prospective lunch, who knows?

Common kestrels are uncommon, seasonal birds in Bangladesh, spending the winter months here and leaving for cooler climates as our weather warms in spring. They can be found all over Europe, Asia and Africa and the countries of South Asia. Next time you are in Purbachol or other open rural areas, keep an eye on tall perches - pylons, brick chimneys, tall denuded trees - and you might spot one.

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Woman hacked at home

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

A young woman was hacked inside her home in Chandpur on Thursday night. Some miscreants, wearing masks, carried out the attack, said family members, quoting the woman. Critically injured Razia Akhter, 20, daughter of Dulal Akhond of Paschim Chandpur village at Faridganj upazila, was admitted to Faridganj Health Complex yesterday. Later, she was shifted to Chandpur Government General Hospital. Razia's family was in Noakhali visiting her ailing sister, said Zakir Hossain, a local union parishad member. She was alone at the time of the incident. When the family came back home yesterday morning, they found a blood-drenched Razia lying on the bed. Monirul Azim, a doctor at Chandpur hospital, said, "She suffered multiple wounds. We referred her to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for better treatment." Shah Alam, officer-in-charge of Faridganj Police Station, said, "We've visited the house already. No complaints have been filed yet." According to her family members, Razia got married around two years ago. Earlier this month, she divorced her husband, and had been living with her parents ever since. She is now undergoing treatment at DMCH.

Social activist Kanai Lal dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

Kanai Lal Datta, who dedicated himself to arrange funerals of unclaimed bodies for around 48 years, passed away at his Thakurpara residence in Comilla city yesterday, aged 83. He left behind his wife and a daughter.

Kanai Lal, locally known as Kanu Datta, formed Hindu Satkar Sangha in 1969 to cremate unclaimed bodies and those from poor families. According to the official record of the Sangha, he organised the funerals of a total of 1,400 bodies.

In 1984, Aminur Rahman, deputy commissioner of Comilla, allotted an office to the Sangha in front of Comilla Ranirbazar Asram. Meanwhile, Kanai Lal served the general post office (GPO) in Comilla as a clerk between 1960 and 1991. After retirement, he expedited the social work.

At the time of his death, he lived with his wife in a cottage of Mahesh Charitable Trust in the city. During his life, various organisations honoured him for the welfare activity. In 2006, he received "Sada Moner Manus" award from Unilever. Kanai Lal was cremated last night.

DEATH REFERENCE IN BDR CARNAGE CASE HC verdict tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court will deliver its verdict tomorrow on the death reference and appeals in the BDR carnage case. A three-member HC special bench headed by Justice Md Shaukat Hossain is set to start announcing the judgement at 10:30am. Other two judges are Justice Md Abu Zafor Siddique and Justice Nazrul Islam Talukder. It cannot be specifically said how much time will be needed to finish delivering the verdict, Deputy Attorney General KM Zahid Sarwar Kazal told The Daily Star. On April 13, the same bench had kept the reference and appeals as curia advisari vult, a Latin legal term meaning the verdict could be delivered anytime. If a lower court sentences any person to death in a case, its judgement is examined by the HC through hearing arguments for confirmation of the death sentence. The case documents and judgement reaches as death reference to the HC from the lower court in seven days after the latter delivers the verdict. Seventy-four people, including 57 army officials, were massacred during the BDR mutiny on February 25-26 in 2009 at the Pikhana headquarters of the paramilitary force, later renamed Border Guard Bangladesh. The death reference and the appeals were filed with the HC months after a Dhaka court announced the verdict on November 5, 2013. The trial court gave death sentences to 150 BDR soldiers and two civilians, and jailed 160 others for life for their roles and involvement in the carnage. It also handed down rigorous imprisonment to 256 people, mostly BDR soldiers. The court acquitted the remaining 277 accused, but the government later appealed against the acquittal of 69 of them. The HC started hearing the death reference and appeals of the convicts in January, 2015.

Man found dead in Dhaka house

Tenants missing for 4 days

Police recovered the decomposing body of an unidentified man from a house in the capital's Kafrul yesterday four days after the tenants had gone missing. The house owner, Jesmin Nahar, told The Daily Star that a man introducing himself as a canteen worker of a police barrack in Mirpur, rented the tin-shed house on November 13. His wife and their child were with him, she said. Jesmin said when she asked them to give her the photocopies of their national ID cards and fill in the tenant information forms, the man told her that he would do so on November 20. However, the landlady found the house's door locked from the outside that day. On Thursday night, she informed police as bad odour was coming from the room. Later, police broke open the door. Jesmin could not recognise the body, said Jashim Uddin Molla, an additional deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police. The whereabouts of the wife and child could not be known till last afternoon.



People place floral wreaths in front of Tazreen Fashions' factory gate in Savar's Ashulia yesterday, marking fifth anniversary of the deadly fire at the garment factory. Hundreds including the injured victims, relatives of the deceased and worker leaders gathered there in the morning. They demanded compensation and rehabilitation for the victims and punishment for those responsible. At least 113 workers were killed and 172 injured on November 24, 2012, in the fire.



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ডাক্তারবিহীন একটি সুস্থ, সুন্দর এবং সাবলীল সমাজ কি চিন্তা করা যায় ?

ডাক্তার হওয়ার স্বপ্ন অনেকেরই, কিন্তু অনেক সময় শুধু আর্থিক সংকটের কারণে আজন্ম লালিত স্বপ্ন ম্লান হয়ে যায়। সেই সব স্বপ্নবান, সম্ভাবনাময় মেধাবী শিক্ষার্থীদের লক্ষ্য অর্জনের সহযোগিতার জন্য ওরিয়ন ফার্মা ওয়েলফেয়ার ট্রাস্টের সমরোপযোগী উদ্যোগ "ওরিয়ন ফার্মা মেডিকেল স্কলারশীপ"।

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Commuters at Dinajpur Govt College intersection in Sadar upazila anxiously wait for transport during the ongoing bus strike yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

HSTU teachers, students sued over torching buses

Road link with Hili land port, Dinajpur cut off since Thursday following indefinite transport strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Teachers and students of Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University (HSTU) were sued in two separate cases on Thursday over setting fire to two buses.

Local bus owners' and transport workers' associations filed the cases alleging that the accused teachers instigated their students to torch two buses in Basherhat area in front of the HSTU campus on Wednesday. Leaders of transport workers claimed that ten transport workers

were injured when HSTU students attacked them during clashes that day.

In the first case, filed on Thursday night with Dinajpur Sadar Police Station by Nazrul Islam Shelu, general secretary of Road Transport Owners Group in Dinajpur, 12 identified and 40 unidentified individuals were made accused.

The accused HSTU teachers include Proctor Khalid Hossain, Assistant Proctor Sourav Paul Chowdhury and Student Adviser Shahadat Hossain Khan.

The second case was filed the same night with the same police station. Saifur Raj Chowdhury, vice president of

district Transport Workers Union, made the same people accused in the case.

Officer-in-charge of the police station, Redwanur Rahim, confirmed the filing of the cases.

Meanwhile, passengers departing and arriving through Hili land port are facing immense sufferings with road communications between Dinajpur and the rest of the country closed since Thursday morning.

Transport owners and workers associations in Dinajpur have been observing an indefinite transport

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