

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Ballion's crane at Muhuri Dam.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Muhuri Dam

The Muhuri river originates in India's Tripura before flowing into Bangladesh, where it passes through Feni on its way to the Bay of Bengal. At Sonagazi in Feni, a dam has been built to seasonally hold the river's water for local agricultural irrigation. The dam closes in early winter creating a large lake, and the sluice gate is opened before monsoon to release its water. During winter and spring, this lake, in addition to holding agricultural water, is used for fish cultivation, thus attracting many types of birds.

Muhuri Dam is therefore a destination for bird enthusiasts. It has long been on my list of places to visit but I made the trip only recently. Arriving there, I noticed that the lake's frontage is setup for tourists with snack stalls and hawkers. Nearby is a boat mooring site from where one can hire boats for cruising the lake. Tourists go out on these boats for an hour-long pleasure cruise on the lake.

For birders, it is probably best to rent a boat for half- or full-day. Since it was already 1pm - due to reasons explained later - I opted for a half-day boat.

As soon as I entered the lake I realized it is special. Off to one end, a large flock of black-headed gulls were sitting on the water. They took off in a hurry when the boat approached.

There was considerable fishing activity, as evidenced from the poles and nets which cordoned off areas from boats. Water hyacinth covered large chunks of the water's surface. Birds were everywhere.

A speciality of the lake is the (white) whiskered tern. Hundreds of them flew around, sometimes hovering over the water while scanning for fish, then

diving swiftly to catch a meal. Sometimes they perched on top of the poles for a better vantage point while catching the winter sun's rays.

Groups of cotton pygmy goose rested among the water plants. These geese, at twelve inches perhaps the smallest anywhere, were once plentiful in Bangladesh; nowadays they are less so. Several other ducks were in evidence too, including tufted ducks and pintails.

Due to our late arrival we missed most of early morning's birds of prey, but we still saw a few marsh harriers. These birds glide low while searching for prey. Sitting on top of a fishpole was a majestic osprey, famous for catching fish. A large eagle, probably a greater spotted eagle, perched on a far away tree.

Perhaps the day's highlight was the Ballion's crane, a small, shy waterbird of the rail family that lives among the aqueous plants. Sporting an intricate, rust coloured pattern on the back, these cranes were plentiful at the lake, running around and eating vegetation. Having never seen them before, I was thrilled.

I would love to return to Muhuri. But here is the problem. Starting at 5 am from Dhaka it took me eight hours to cover the distance of 160 km. That's because the Dhaka-Chittagong highway had essentially become a parking lot. The drive home was another seven hours.

So, there you have it: a beautiful lake with a rich diversity of birds. But if you go, take lots of patience and water and food for the road, staying overnight in Feni and birding the next morning might be more effective.

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Abul Mansur Ahmad was a defender of people's rights

Speakers tell discussion marking the litterateur, politician and journalist's 39th death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abul Mansur Ahmad was one of the most prominent figures who upheld the rights of the Bengali Muslims in the then undivided India, said speakers yesterday at a discussion on the occasion of the litterateur, politician and journalist's 39th death anniversary.

Terming him a great proponent of cultural and linguistic rights, they said Abul Mansur Ahmad fought for the rights of common people.

A contemporary and a friend of Kazi Nazrul Islam, Abul Mansur Ahmad wrote and spoke for the recognition of the spoken language of ordinary people as part of the literature of the contemporary period, they added.

The discussion, titled "Abul Mansur Ahmader Khojey: Buddhadeb Basur Sathe Tarker Sutra Dhore" (In search of Abul Mansur Ahmad: In regards to debates with Buddhadeb Basu), was presided over by Prof Emeritus Anisuzzaman.

Abul Mansur Ahmad Smriti Parishad and Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation, in association with Reading Club Trust, organised the discussion in Muzaffar Ahmed Chowdhury Auditorium of social

science faculty building at Dhaka University.

It was held in the Muzaffar Ahmed Chowdhury Auditorium of social science faculty building at Dhaka University.

In his keynote paper, DU Associate Professor of Bangla Mohammad Azam focused on a debate between famous Bengali litterateur Buddhadeb Basu and Abul Mansur Ahmad in 1942.

This debate brought out in stark contrast the differences of opinion between writers belonging to the two communities.

Prof Azam brought out the distinctive feature of Abul Mansur Ahmad's works, saying that his cultural identity formed the fundamental basis of all his works.

Abul Mansur Ahmad believed that in order to flourish, a nation must have a literature based on the spoken language of the ordinary people.

Any ivory tower approach to literature and culture can produce an advanced elite class, but it will not lead to the emancipation of the masses.

Associate Professor Azam strongly advocated for the culture of dialogue in the arena of intellectual advancement.

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NEPAL PLANE CRASH Funeral of last 3 victims held



Nazrul Islam, Alifuzzaman, Pias Roy

STAR REPORT

The funeral of last three Bangladeshi victims of the US-Bangla aircraft crash was held yesterday.

Earlier, on Thursday, the bodies of the three remaining victims arrived in Dhaka.

The victims are Nazrul Islam, 62, of Rajshahi; Alifuzzaman Alif, 30, of Khulna and Pias Roy, 23, of Barisal.

Nazrul, also a freedom fighter, was laid to eternal rest with state honour beside his wife at Gourhanga graveyard in Rajshahi.

His daughters -- Naznin Akhtar Kakon and Nargis Akhtar Konok -- received the body of their father at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. The body was then taken to his village home of Rohonpur in Chapainawabganj and after his namaz-e-janaza, the body was then taken back to Rajshahi city.

His coffin was covered with the flag of Bangladesh and a police team of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police gave him a guard of honour.

Later, the district administration, the city freedom fighters' command and other dignitaries placed floral wreaths on his coffin.

In 1971, he took training in Indian Siliguri and then

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Prof Emeritus Anisuzzaman speaks at a discussion titled "Abul Mansur Ahmader Khojey: Buddhadeb Basur Sathe Tarker Sutra Dhore" at Dhaka University yesterday. On his left are Emran Mahfuz, Morshed Shafiqul Hasan, Hayat Mahmud and Mohammad Azam. Abul Mansur Ahmad Smriti Parishad and Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation in association with Reading Club Trust organised the event marking Abul Mansur Ahmad's 39th death anniversary. Inset, A section of the audience.

PHOTO: STAR



DEVELOPING COUNTRY STATUS Govt's taking credit for it pointless

Says Moudud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Standing Committee Member Moudud Ahmed yesterday criticised the government as it was claiming credit for the country's graduation to the list of developing countries.

"It is pointless to take credit for meeting the criteria... There is no democracy in the country. So, the credit for graduation is useless," he said during a programme at Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka.

The programme was organised to press home BNP's demands for holding the upcoming general elections under a non-party and neutral government as well as immediate release of the party chief Khaleda Zia from jail.

If BNP was in power, Bangladesh would have been a developing country at least seven or eight years ago, Moudud said, adding, "The eligibility for graduation is not the sole credit of the government. Rather, it [the graduation] has been delayed due to the government's indulgence in

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Clarification of United Hospital Limited

United Hospital Limited has sent the following clarification after a mobile court of Rab fined it Tk 20 lakh on Wednesday.

Rab had raised an issue on a document of Poly Pharma, dated year 2014. The drug vendor supplied medicines to the hospital back then although such medicines were not found in the United Hospital pharmacy during the raid.

After 2014, the hospital authorities did not purchase any medicine from that vendor, as before that, the Director General of Drug Administration (DGDA) could not nominate any vendor to supply these

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Trees are friends, let them live

Say Uttara Sector 3 residents urging DNCC to abort tree felling on Rd 8

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Concerned citizens in the capital's Sector 3 at Uttara yesterday formed a human chain as Dhaka North City Corporation has been felling trees on Road 8 and targeted to fell about 200 more in the area.

WWC, a cycling group in Uttara, formed the human chain to save the trees -- some of them aged over three decades.

Participants including children carried several placards during the protest. Some of those read "Save the trees, they will save you" and "Hobona Obujh Bachabo Sabuj. Gaachh Amader Bondhu, Eder Bachtay Din (We will not be ignorant, we will save the greenery. Trees are our friends, let them live).

North South University Alumni Association, School of Business and Economics, Bashundhara Cyclists and residents of Uttara also participated at the human chain.

Uttara resident Latif Hasan said, "Several trees, older than three decades, on Road 8 in Sector 3 were cut down in the dark of night on March 19" and the logs were taken away early in the morning.

"A syndicate of corrupt and greedy individuals have targeted to chop down 200 more trees to make a hefty amount of money," he alleged.

Kazi Mushahidur Rahman, another resident of Uttara, said Uttara was once full of varieties of trees. But Sectors 4, 6 and 7 have already been turned into a concrete jungle due to indiscriminate tree felling in the name of development.

The DNCC last year backed down from their plan of cutting down around 100 trees on Road 4 in Sector 3 after the decision led to an outcry among the locals, said Mahfuz Kamal, another Uttara resident.

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বিশ্ব যক্ষ্মা দিবস ২০১৮

"নেতৃত্ব চাই যক্ষ্মা নির্মূলে
ইতিহাস গড়ি সবাই মিলে"

একনাগাড়ে দুই সপ্তাহের বেশি কাশি
যক্ষ্মার প্রধান লক্ষণ

তাই অবহেলা না করে কফ পরীক্ষা করান
নিয়মিত পূর্ণ মেয়াদের চিকিৎসায় যক্ষ্মা সম্পূর্ণ ভালো হয়

বিনামূল্যে যক্ষ্মা রোগ নির্ণয় ও চিকিৎসার জন্য যোগাযোগ করুন:

- সকল সরকারী মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল
- নির্দিষ্ট বেসরকারী মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল
- জেলা সদর হাসপাতাল
- সকল বন্ধব্যক্তি হাসপাতাল এবং বন্ধব্যক্তি ক্লিনিক
- উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য কমপ্লেক্স
- নির্দিষ্ট এনজিও ক্লিনিক
- নগর স্বাস্থ্যকেন্দ্র

জাতীয় যক্ষ্মা নিয়ন্ত্রণ কর্মসূচি, স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর, স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবারকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়, ব্র্যাক ও তার সহযোগী সংস্থা কর্তৃক প্রচারিত

আমরা এখন সুস্থ