

# TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Morning exercise in Victoria Park, Dhaka.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

## Runners

Last summer a bout of chikungunia stopped my running. The best I could manage on a good day was a short walk in the park. Many a runner passed me by during these walks. I have always known that different people run differently, but for the first time I started observing their running style.

And I realized there are so many ways to run!

The runner I admire most – or, let's face it, feel most jealous of – is the seasoned runner. This person's body parts move easily to the beat of an unseen inner drum, delicate and cadenced. Stepping softly to protect their knees and feet from the impact, they make running look effortless. The way they move their wrists or bob their head from side to side – it is as if a ripple passes over their body. This graceful runner seems not to run but to dance.

Then there are the vigorous, powerful runners. They remind me of soldiers exercising, forceful strides lunging forward, posture erect, muscles bulging, and no sign of fatigue. They look heroic, almost like they are going to charge into the battlefield. I have never aspired to be one of them; for me, running is very much an introspective act, not a martial one.

Once in a while, a voice inside my head says "That person should not be running" because even though this runner has come to the park dressed for a serious workout they are not physically fit for it. They warm up and stretch before confidently starting to run. But when they run into trouble, they have an almost surprised look on their face while panting for breath, as

if to say, "I used to be an athlete, so why is this so hard for me?" Many of them carry on relentlessly, varying their pace with their energy level; others drop to walking to catch their breath before valiantly resuming their run. But who is going to tell them that running while unfit is a recipe for trouble or even disaster?

Sometimes I am taken aback, like the pair I saw one evening. One was walking briskly while the other ran in slow motion. Keeping pace with each other they remained engrossed in conversation. As far as I could tell they moved in tandem for the duration of their outing, seemingly violating the laws of physics.

Masochist runners run to torture themselves. You can see that every limb of their body is protesting and their face is contorted, verging on pain. Yet they carry on, one painful step after another. Why, I wonder, would you do it if you are not enjoying it?

Sometimes I see runners who get carried away. They start walking vigorously and then break into a spontaneous run. From their clothes and shoes you can tell running was not their plan, but they could not contain themselves at the fresh air or feeling of freedom. Their running style and posture is atrocious but who cares, they are enjoying the moment!

As for me, who knows? I have enjoyed running for almost four decades, but how does that reflect in my running style? I guess that's for others to judge. Would I like to know how you would categorize my style? Err – probably not!

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## RAPE ATTEMPT ON SCHOOLTEACHER BCL leader still at large

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jhalakathi*

A Chhatra League leader of Monpura upazila in Bhola is still absconding after allegedly attempting to rape a primary school teacher inside her school on March 31.

Meanwhile, unknown callers have been threatening her to withdraw the case over the rape attempt.

Now the teacher is not only traumatised due to the attempted rape, but also distressed by the threats on the phone ever since she filed a case against the accused on April 2.

The incident took place inside the teachers' room at the school where she commutes from her house in the upazila headquarters 25 kilometres away.

On March 31, she arrived earlier than other teachers and was waiting alone in the teachers' room around 9:00am for classes to start.

Enam Howlader, vice president of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Monpura upazila unit, who had been staying in a room inside the school compound by force, appeared in the room and asked for some high-energy biscuits that are given to students for free.

She said when she asked him to leave the room as only the headteacher could give biscuits to anyone, Enam started looking around for the biscuits in the room. At one stage he locked the door of the room from inside and physically forced her on the floor in an attempt to rape her.

Her scream for help was of no use as no one was around. Vehemently tussling with her attacker, at one point she managed to get out of the room and found her students

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## When school isn't safe Harassed by head teacher, fifth grader stops attending classes

BULBUL AHMED with HASAN MEER

A school is not just a place where one can learn, school also serves a number of purposes from building confidence to teaching children the importance of teamwork and working with others.

Most importantly, a school is a nurturing and a safe place. And, teachers are the torch-bearers who ensure that safe environment for children.

But what happens when that safety is breached, especially by those who are entrusted to safeguard it?

It has been more than a month, a fifth grader of a primary school in Natore has stopped attending her classes after allegedly being sexually harassed by the head teacher on February 27.

She alleged that the head teacher, Narayan Chandra Karmakar, touched her inappropriately with an excuse of beating her for making a mistake while solving a mathematical problem.

"When my daughter came back from school, she was crying," said her father of Natore Sadar upazila. "She kept on saying that she won't go back to school anymore. She is still in a shock..."

"At times, it becomes quite unbearable to see my little girl cry like that," said the father.

"A school is supposed to be a safe place for a child. How can I believe in that after an incident like this," he said, demanding justice for his daughter.

But seeking justice has not been an easy road for the father.

He said when he went to the school the same day to complain, many of the teachers told him that they were helpless and could not do anything against the head teacher as he was an "influential person".

Desperate, the father and daughter then contacted the district administration on March 4 and requested them to take actions against the head teacher.

Contacted, Shaheena Khatun, deputy commissioner of Natore, said, "After hearing about the allegation, I appointed UNO Jesmin Akter Banu of Natore Sadar to investigate into the matter."

She said the UNO, during her investigation, had found the allegation against the head teacher to be true. The UNO submitted the report on March 27.

When asked, the UNO said, "I went to the school and spoke with many of the students present in the class during the incident. All of them verified the act. Many of the teachers also complained about the head teacher."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Rokia Afzal Rahman, president of Bangladesh Federation of Women Entrepreneurs, speaks as chief guest at a seminar titled "Business Expansion by Women Entrepreneurs in SMEs: Way Forward" at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital yesterday. Nazneen Ahmed, senior research fellow, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, sitting on extreme right, presented the keynote paper under the same title. Also present at the programme were, from left, Md Rashedul Karim; Ismat Jerin Khan, member, Board of Directors, SME Foundation; Mirza Nurul Gani Shovon, president, National Association of Small and Cottage Industries of Bangladesh (NASCI); Safiqul Islam, managing director, SME Foundation, and Dr Zaid Bakht, chairman, Agrani Bank Ltd.

PHOTO: STAR

## Nor'wester likely today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is a possibility of further nor'wester and hailstorm at some places, including the capital today, Met office said yesterday.

Hafizur Rahman, a meteorologist of Bangladesh Meteorological Department, said the storm, thunder-shower and hailstorm is normal during this season. "Therefore, small or large seasonal storm which is locally known as nor'wester, thunderstorm and hailstorm may occur tomorrow [today]," Hafizur told The Daily Star.

However, there is no signal to hoist for the river and naval ports, he added.

Yesterday, highest 35mm rainfall was recorded in Noakhali, Met office said.

## Report any suspicious contacts to ACC

The anti-graft watchdog urges all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has requested the people to report to it if anyone, impersonating an ACC official, makes phone calls, sends electronic mails or communicates personally to discuss corruption allegations.

The commission has recently learnt that several syndicates, impersonating ACC officials, are demanding financial facilities from people via phone calls, e-mails or fake notices for withdrawing graft allegations against them.

An ACC officer alone cannot bring or withdraw any allegation against someone; it is a team-work and is done after intensive investigation, said the anti-graft watchdog in a cautionary press release on Thursday.

To avoid unwarranted incidents, the ACC directed its investigation and inquiry officers to establish communication with alleged persons and witnesses only through letters.

If anything seems suspicious, the public must contact ACC Director Mir Md Joydul Abedin Shibby at 01711644675 and 9352552, it added.

## Lawyer, the mastermind

Man, woman impersonating two accused confess they acted upon the lawyer's direction

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *B'baria*

Selim Mia and Hazera Begum, who impersonated two accused in two different cases, have recently given a description of how they acted upon the instruction of a defence lawyer.

Abdul Hannan, union parishad member of Akhaura Dakshin and general secretary of Akhaura Municipal Swachhasebak League, and one Shuva Begum of Razapur village are accused in two separate drug smuggling cases in which Selim and Hazera respectively acted as their proxies.

Advocate Dolonara Begum is the defence lawyer in both the cases.

In his confessional statement before a magistrate's court on Wednesday, Selim said, "Hannan Member took me

to advocate Dolonara's chamber. She taught me how to copy his signature."

"In front of her, I practiced it several times on a white paper to avoid any suspicion," said Selim. He also said he was offered an auto-rickshaw worth Tk 1.5 lakh.

Selim, impersonating Hannan, surrendered before the District and Sessions Judge's Court on March 11. The court sent him to jail in the drug smuggling case filed against the latter on December 13, 2014.

As the matter came to light, Brahmanbaria Bar Association has found that Dolonara, a few days back, did the same in Shuva's case.

In her confessional statement before police on Sunday, Hazera said the defence lawyer asked her to memo-

rise the name of Shuva.

Sub-inspector of Brahmanbaria Sadar Model Police Station Sumon Chakrabarty, who interrogated Hazera, told The Daily Star that illiterate Hazera, who gave a thumbprint, was offered Tk 50,000 for the job.

Both Selim and Hazera were shown arrested for cheating.

The defence lawyer was also detained on March 30. She was later released on the pretext of being sick.

Meanwhile, Hannan, who is absconding, allegedly threatened Akhaura correspondent of Bangla daily Jugantor Mahiuddin Mishu numerous times since March 25 ever since the incident came to light. Mishu filed a general diary with Akhaura

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

## BRUR student Sadia suspended for 'militancy involvement'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

The Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur (BRUR) authorities suspended Sadia Afroz Nina for her alleged involvement with banned militant outfit organisation Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

Police arrested Sadia, a fourth-year student of the Department of Accounting and Information System, in Hatibandha upazila of Lalmonirhat, early Thursday.

The BRUR authorities took the decision at a meeting yesterday, said Tabiur Rahman, head of public relations, BRUR.



Violating rules, an open garbage truck of Dhaka North City Corporation carries waste in the daytime, instead of early morning, to Moghbazar, spreading bad odour on the capital's busy Bangla Motor road. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Road crashes claim 14 lives 9 killed in Brahmanbaria alone

CITY DESK

Fourteen people were killed and six others injured in road accidents across the country yesterday.

Our Brahmanbaria correspondent reports, nine people were killed in separate road accidents on Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Narsingdi.

In Raipura upazila, four masons died on the spot when a Dhaka-bound bus, Anonnaya, hit their motorcycle at Charabagh, said Bhairab highway police.

The dead, motorcyclist Yamin Mia, 24, of Shibpur upazila, Sohag Mia, 17, son of Sharif Mia, Dalim Mia, 17, son of Hafizuddin, and Ramjan Mia, 17, son of Asad Choukidar, hailed from Morjal area.

Vehicular movement was halted for half an hour in the area following the accident. Later, highway police recovered the bodies and sent them to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital morgue.

Meanwhile, three people, including a rickshaw puller, died when a Habiganj-bound bus named Agradut hit the vehicle and a passerby at Madhabdi.

Two of the dead were identified as Ratan Mia, 44, passenger of the rickshaw who hailed from Birampur, and Mokbul, the passerby who hailed from Mymensingh.

Meanwhile in Baghata, two persons were killed when their motorcycle was hit by a

bus in Sadar upazila.

Separate cases were filed with police stations concerned.

Our Chittagong correspondent adds, a four-month-old boy was killed and three others were injured when a CNG-run auto-rickshaw carrying them was hit by an oncoming truck at Dantmara in Bhujpur union.

The deceased is Sabrin Hossain, son of Abdul Mannan in Bhujpur village. The injured – mother and aunt of Sabrin and the auto-rickshaw driver – were admitted to Fatikchhari Upazila Health Complex.

Police confiscated the truck but its driver managed to flee.

Our Jhenidah correspondent adds, a passenger was killed and three others were injured when a power tiller collided head-on with a CNG-run auto-rickshaw carrying them in Mahamaya bus stand area of Sadar upazila.

The deceased is Anwara Begum, 50, of Kakiladah village in Kushtia. The injured were admitted to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital.

Our Dinajpur correspondent adds, a tenth grader, Priya Mandal, 16, of Sadhuria village, died in Birampur upazila yesterday

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

## Sydney to host Global Summit of Women 2018 from April 26-28

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Over 1,000 women from 60 countries, including heads of state and government, will participate in the Global Summit of Women, a prestigious international event dubbed "Davos for Women", in Sydney, Australia between April 26 and 28.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to leave Dhaka for Sydney on April 26 to attend the largest annual global meeting of women, which is described as a business summit focusing on women's advancement in the global economy.

The participants include heads of states and vice presidents, cabinet ministers and parliamentarians, corporate executives from multinational companies, and a diverse set of entrepreneurs from all parts of the globe.