

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

Birds of Brazil



Hyacinth Macaw, the Pantanal, Brazil.

PHOTO BY: IHTISHAM KABIR

Along the bank of the Paraguay river, on the top of several adjacent tall trees, they had their rookery and birds flew in and out with nesting material and food.

Birds seemed friendlier and more accessible in Brazil than they are in Bangladesh. Other than the obvious sparse population, another reason is that Brazilians are extremely serious about conservation. For example, Harpy Eagle nests are jealously guarded and Hyacinth Macaw's favourite trees are left alone. Hunting of all wildlife has been illegal since 1967. And jaguar and caiman (crocodiles) populations have rebounded in the Pantanal after locals decided - correctly - that they would draw tourists.

I could not help comparing Brazil's birds with the birds - approximately 800 species - here in Bangladesh. There is no doubt that Brazil offers a more

colourful and diverse menagerie of birds, most of them viewed easily. However, we have some strong points. We have more variety in ducks, especially during winter. We win hands down in kingfishers. None of Brazil's kingfishers is as beautiful as the kingfishers we find in Sundarban. Other birds that Brazilian birders may long for include our hornbills, pittas, sunbirds, bee-eaters and our crown jewel, the mysterious and rare Masked Finfoot of Sundarban.

From Alexander von Humboldt onwards, visitors and explorers have remarked on the beauty of South American birds when compared to those of other continents. From my short but productive visit to Brazil, I found myself in delightful agreement.

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A sea of mourners at Shaheed Minar

Fans say farewell to rock icon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It was a sea of people. Emotions ran high at Central Shaheed Minar premises yesterday, as fans and well-wishers of Ayub Bachchu turned out in large numbers to see their favorite rock musician for one last time.

The queue was getting longer since he was taken to Shaheed Minar at 10:30am in the morning. Fans were carrying flowers - some bouquet, while some a single rose.

While some of them had special memories involving Bachchu's songs, some shared personal moments with the star.

"Another Ayub Bachchu will not be born in this country. He is irreplaceable," said Farzan Alam, a private university student, who also went to Square Hospital on Thursday after news of the musician's demise broke out.

Sakib, a Dhaka University student, was waiting beside Shaheed Minar to get in line. "I grew up listening to his music. Who will carry out his legacy? The call of time is an archive on him and his works so that generations can be familiar with his contributions to Bangla rock music," Sakib said.

Tisha Jannath, a student of Dhaka Medical College, said, "He was a musician for all and his songs brought people together. I have many memories involving his songs."

Police and Rab were there to control the crowd. Director General (DG) of Rapid Action Battalion Benazir Ahmed placed a wreath on the artist's coffin to show his respect.

Admirers of the rock legend came from all sectors and backgrounds. Cultural and political personalities too turned up to bid farewell to this nationally beloved singer. Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor, Road

Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, eminent singer Fakir Alamgir and novelist Imdadul Haq Milon were among the mourners.

"The trend in Bangladeshi music that Azam Khan initiated was taken to a new height by Ayub Bachchu. This is an irreparable loss for Bangladeshi music," said Fakir Alamgir.

Members of popular bands Miles, Feedback, Warfaze, Artcell and Mechanix were also there to say goodbye to their legendary fellow musician.

"I was influenced by his style. I used to practise his songs such as 'Shei tumi' and 'Ghumonto shohore' while growing up. His demise marks a tremendous loss for music in the country," said George Lincoln D'Costa, frontman of Artcell.

Bachchu's body was kept at Shaheed Minar till 12:30pm and was later taken to National Eidgah where his namaz-e-janaza was held at 2:00pm.



Thousands of fans flocked to the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka to pay their last tributes and express their heart-felt gratitude to Ayub Bachchu yesterday. The musician passed away from a heart attack on Thursday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Enhance opportunity for research-based education

Dr Shishir Bhattacharya says in public lecture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The opportunity for research-based education has to be increased in the country's universities, said Dr Shishir Bhattacharya yesterday.

"The universities should be transformed into knowledge-gathering centres," said Dr Shishir, also director of Institute of Modern Language at Dhaka University.

If the students lack such an opportunity their development will be hampered, he said.

While delivering a solo public lecture on "History of University", the linguist emphasised turning the universities into "democratic institutions" to ensure their advancement.

Reading Club Trust and Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation arranged the

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Three Bangladeshi mountaineers set to conquer Yala Peak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of three young Bangladeshi mountaineers have set a mission to conquer Yala Peak, a 5,732 metre summit of the Himalayas, in Nepal.

The mountaineers -- Mohiuddin Mahi, leader of the group, Sadia Sharmin and Masud Parvej Sujon -- will start the expedition from October 23. The expedition is expected to end on November 3.

Rope4 Outdoor Education, a non-government organisation which arranged the mission, made the announcements at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka yesterday.

Marufa Haque, chairman of Rope4, said they organised the event as part of their "Mission Himalaya 2018" project in order to generate interest in mountaineering among youths in Bangladesh.

"A total of 60 people showed interested to participate in the expedition. Of them, we selected the three by holding several trainings and competitions. After seeing such interest, we now decided to continue the project every year," said Marufa.

About choosing Yala Peak, she said the summit is suitable for beginners and it will help them to learn a lot.

Congratulating the young mountaineers, Akhtaruz Zaman Khan Kabir, chairman of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, said Rope4's mission will help in the branding of the country and brighten its image.

The Daily Star is the youth engagement partner of the expedition.

Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, Peak69, Ghuddi, First Security Islami Bank Ltd and Peoples Radio 91.6 FM are other partners of the programme.

Jatiya Oikyafront to meet civil society on Oct 24

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Oikyafront leaders will hold a view exchange meeting with civil society members and professionals on October 26.

The decision came in a meeting held yesterday at Dhanmondi but the venue and time is yet to be finalised, said meeting sources.

Earlier, the newly formed political alliance held a meeting with diplomats to brief them about its seven point demands and 11 point goals.

Following the meeting, Gono Forum's General Secretary Mostafa Mohsin Montu told journalists that they have finalised the coordination committee. However, he did not disclose the names.

Meeting sources said the coordination committee will be comprised of two members from each party and three from BNP. However, each of the parties proposed extra name as backups.

Seeking anonymity, a party insider said BNP leaders Barkatullah Bulu, Mohamud Shahjahan, Monirul Huq Chowdhury and Habibur Rahman Habib will be in the coordination committee.

Meanwhile, Gono Forum's AOM Shafiqullah, Zaglul Hayder Afrik and Mostak Ahmed will be in the committee, while Nagorik Oikya's Shahidullah Kayser, Mominul Islam and Zahedur Rahman and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal's Tania Rab, Abdul Malek Ratan and Shahiduddin Mahmud Swapan will be in the committee, he added.

2 US State Department officials arrive today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Two senior officials of the US Department of State are arriving in Dhaka today to discuss with government high-ups, political leaders and other stakeholders on a variety of issues, including the upcoming general election in Bangladesh and the ongoing Rohingya crisis.

Diplomatic sources in Dhaka and Washington yesterday told The Daily Star that the government is considering the visit important, as they will discuss a host of bilateral, regional and international issues.

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary (PDAS) of State of Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs Alice G Wells, and Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs Carl Risch have different agendas during their visit.

According to a media note of the US Department of State, Alice Wells will travel to Dhaka and Cox's Bazar on October 20-23. In Dhaka, she will meet senior officials from the government to discuss strengthening the US-Bangladesh partnership and collaboration on ensuring a prosperous, secure, and interconnected Indo-Pacific region.

On October 21, PDAS Wells will travel to Cox's Bazar to visit refugee camps sheltering nearly one million Rohingyas. There she will meet officials from UN organisations, NGOs, and local government.

Alice is likely to call on the prime minister, foreign minister and foreign secretary. She is likely to have meetings with political figures, business leaders and civil society representatives to discuss US' engagement with Bangladesh, especially the upcoming general election.

Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs Carl Risch will participate in a series of meetings with US diplomats and foreign government authorities. Risch will engage in bilateral discussions with Bangladeshi counterparts on consular issues.

Mainul Hosen should apologise publicly

Demand 15 eminent citizens

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fifteen eminent citizens of the country yesterday demanded that Barrister Mainul Hosen publicly apologise for hurling abuses at journalist Masuda Bhatti and calling her "characterless" on a television talk show last Tuesday night.

In a statement, they condemned the remarks of Mainul, former adviser to the previous caretaker government and publisher of English daily The New Nation, and said no one has the right to label anyone "characterless" in response to a justified journalistic question.

"We are aggrieved by his condemnable behaviour," reads the statement sent by eminent theatre personality Nasiruddin Yousuf.

The statement said a public apology from Mainul is necessary not just because he behaved deplorably with Masuda Bhatti but also for making sure that no one attacks someone personally in such a way in future.

Other signatories are: National Professor Anisuzzaman, litterateur Hasan Azizul Haque, educationist Anupam Sen, cultural personality Ramendu Majumdar, noted actress Ferdousi Majumdar, veteran thespian Mamunur Rashid, trustees of Liberation War Museum Aly Zaker, Sara Zaker and Tariq Ali, cultural personality Shimul Yousuf, poet Muhammad Samad, Hasan Arif, cultural personality Golam Kuddus and Ataur Aman.

BANGLADESH DELTA PLAN 2100 Green activists call for discussion among all stakeholders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Underscoring the need for a holistic strategy for the "Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100", green activists yesterday said a thorough discussion among all stakeholders is needed before implementation of the plan.

It is a wide-ranging and far-reaching plan, aimed apparently at formulating a holistic strategy for better utilisation of Bangladesh's land and water resources -- in light of the adverse effects of climate change, said Dr Abdul Matin, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa).

Bapa and Bangladesh Environment Network will jointly hold a two-day special conference titled "Delta Plan 2100 and Sustainable Development in Bangladesh" on January 4 and 5 next year to inform people and get their opinion on the strength and weakness of the plan.

Bapa yesterday held a press conference at Bangladesh Shishu Kalyan Parishad in Dhaka to reveal details of the proposed conference.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) last month approved the Bangladesh

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Hindu leaders greet President Abdul Hamid as he hosts a reception for Durga Puja at Bangabhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: BANGABHABAN

Resist anti-liberation forces

President urges all while hosting reception for Hindu community

BSS, Dhaka

President Abdul Hamid yesterday urged all irrespective of religion and caste to resist anti-liberation forces to continue the pace of development in the country.

"The anti-liberation forces have repeatedly tried to prevent the country's democratic progress and development... But the country is moving forward," he said while hosting a reception for Hindu community at Bangabhaban on Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Bengali Hindu community.

The president said, "To continue this trend of development, everyone irrespective of all religions and castes, should jointly defend all evil activities. This should be our promise in this Durga Puja."

Noting that humanity is an eternal message of religion, Hamid called upon all to abide by the rules of religion and simultaneously come forward for the welfare of humanity.

He said, "Durga Puja is not only a religious festival but also a social festival, which helps unite all. This festival is universal."

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