

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

Golden Bowerbird



Golden Bowerbird and its bowers, Queensland.

PHOTO BY:
IHTISHAM KABIR

Queensland - one of Australia's six states - covers the northeastern portion of the island continent. For almost three hundred miles along the state's northeast coast stretches a rainforest called Queensland Wet Tropics. The forest is a UNESCO World Heritage Site because of its rich biodiversity. For example, the Wet Tropics takes up only 0.2% of Australia's land but is home to 40% of her bird species.

The Golden Bowerbird, one of the 828 bird species of Australia, can only be found in this area. It is sought after by birders because it is a local endemic - Wet Tropics is the only place in Australia, and the world, where it can be found. The bird's name comes from the "bower" - a shelter or large nest made of twigs and branches - that it builds on the ground.

Looking for the Golden Bowerbird in the vast forest can be difficult, but - as we shall see - if one knows the location of its bower, it becomes easier.

Thus it was that early one morning our intrepid group, organized by Trekabout Photography, left our base in

Yungaburra, high in the Atherton Tablelands, and headed towards Tully Gorge National Park. Near the Park, we turned off into a dirt road. We were now in Warrigal, a privately owned hundred-acre property in the rainforest.

Presently we stopped, and accompanied by Jonathan, owner of Warrigal, we walked into the forest. The wide variety of plant life here included many ancient species; the larger flora was dominated by oak, laurel, ash and pine trees. The understory was clear like other rainforests (lack of sunlight prevents growth under tall trees) but unexpectedly dry.

After walking about thirty yards, we came to a small clearing on the ground. Jonathan had guided us to the bowers. We saw two conical structures made of twigs - perhaps three or four feet high - on the ground up ahead.

We waited silently. Soon there was movement on a tree behind the bowers. On its narrow trunk, about fifteen feet from the ground, was a small jumble of twigs - an "annex" to the bowers. Sitting there was a bird the size of a shrike. Its belly, tail and crest were a bright golden yellow; its

head and wings were with streaks were brown. It was the male Golden Bowerbird, shining bright in the dark, green forest.

For the next hour, we observed the bird. It flew from tree to tree, always sitting on conspicuous perches while singing to attract a mate.

At one point, the bird, which eats mostly fruit, plucked a berry from a tree. This it deposited into a cavity in the trunk of a nearby tree. Then it perched again and called out. Minutes later, a female Golden Bowerbird, olive-grey in colour, flew in and perched near the cavity. Then, in front of our astonished eyes, it retrieved the berry from the cavity and ate it. However, I could not tell if the friendship proceeded further.

One reason we had waited so long was to observe the male work on decorating its bower. It is known to do this to attract females, but this morning it did not cooperate. We moved on, but the memory of the Golden Bowerbird has stayed in my mind.

facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow ihtishamkabir on Instagram.

Scamming the dirt poor

MOHAMMAD SUMAN and ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

People of low-income group, who saved their hard-earned money with an NGO in Chattogram city for promised high returns, have become victims of alleged fraud as the organisation suddenly closed shop and its officials disappeared.

Some of the victims are house helps, rickshaw-pullers, janitors and beggars.

Seven years ago, Aleya Begum, who survived on begging in the port city's GEC intersection area, came to know about Organisation of Social Service and Elimination of Poverty (OSSEP) from locals.

The mother of two had been living in Jhautola area after her husband left her. When she heard about OSSEP, she thought it could change her lot.

Since 2011, OSSEP had been promising people high interest on their savings. Mainly from marginal-income group, like Aleya, deposited portions of their daily, weekly or monthly income with OSSEP as they would get a good return, in cases double their savings, after a period.

OSSEP, which allegedly operated in 39 wards of the city, closed its office in



2016 without returning money of the poor people.

Aleya had deposited Tk 95,000 under three policies. Two of those were supposed to have matured in 2016.

"Thinking about the future of my children, I had saved that money enduring a lot of difficulties," said Aleya, adding, "I had skipped meals to save up and make deposits daily, weekly and monthly."

"I was supposed to receive Tk 2 lakh in total at the end of a five-year deal in

2016," she said. "All my dreams have been shattered... they have ruined me."

Aleya is not alone. Many claimed that about 30,000 people had money with OSSEP. They said the amount added up to around Tk 50 crore.

The Daily Star spoke to over 30 of them and they had signed deeds and receipt books. Some of the deeds promised double the return in four years for fixed deposits.

Deceived and devastated, the depositors besieged the home of one Jahanara Begum Lucky, a field officer of the organisation, in Khulshi area. They handed her over to police on November 2 this year. They said Lucky collected the money from them.

One of the depositors, Ramesh Chandra Das, filed a case with Khulshi Police Station, accusing eight officials of OSSEP, including Lucky and Fatema Begum, 40, wife of the owner of OSSEP, Jasim Uddin.

Sheikh Mohammad Nasir Uddin, officer-in-charge of Khulshi Police Station, said, "Lucky told police that she deposited all the collected money to the office, but the organisation shut its office after its owner died in 2016."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



People of low-income group, who lost their hard-earned money due to an alleged fraud by an NGO, form a human chain in port city's Jhautola area yesterday. Above, one of the victims holds a receipt book and deposit slip.

Steady supply brings vegetable prices down in port city

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

Kitchen markets in the port city are witnessing a fall in the prices of seasonal vegetables in comparison with last week.

Vegetables traders said with winter approaching, the supply of vegetables has been on the rise and that is contributing to this fall in prices. If the flow of supply remains this way, the prices are likely to go down further in the days to come, they hoped.

Mohammad Yasin, president of Karnaphuli Kitchen Market, told The Daily

Star that a steady supply of vegetables from southern Chattogram and elsewhere in the country has helped bring the prices down.

City residents, especially families on low incomes, are delighted to be able to find the prices within reach of their pockets.

Rickshaw puller Mohammad Shahjahan, while shopping vegetables at Chawkbazar Kitchen Market, said, "It's only the winter season when people with low income like us can buy vegetables without having to worry about a budget."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

5 injured in gas cylinder blast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Five people were injured as gas cylinder of a CNG-run auto-rickshaw exploded in Bahaddardhat Ek Kilometre area in port city yesterday.

The injured are Md Farid, 40, driver of the auto-rickshaw, and passengers Naznin Akter, 25; her son Mikat, 2; Amena Begum, 40; and Rokeya Begum, 25. All the passengers hail from Raozan.

They came to a community centre in the area to attend a wedding, said Assistant Sub-inspector Alauddin Talukder of Chittagong Medical College Hospital police camp. When the auto-rickshaw reached the place around 1:00pm, its gas cylinder exploded.

Locals rushed the injured to CMCH. They were admitted to Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit of the hospital, he said.

Diplomats pay tribute at Mainamati War Cemetery

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Ten diplomats from commonwealth and other countries yesterday paid tribute to hundreds of soldiers, who died in World War II, buried at Mainamati War Cemetery in Cumilla.

The team, led by British high commissioner in Bangladesh, included representatives from the US, Canada, Australia, European Union, Japan, India, France

and the Netherlands.

On their arrival around 11:00am, tight security measures were taken at the cemetery in Cumilla Cantonment area. On behalf of Bangladesh, GOC of the cantonment paid tribute. A total of 738 soldiers who died during World War II had been buried at the cemetery.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission has been looking after the war cemetery since the World War.



Diplomats at the Mainamati War Cemetery in Cumilla.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Shaheed Noor

FROM PAGE 3
anti-autocracy movement. In the face of the movement, the autocratic ruler HM Ershad had to step down on December 6, 1990.

Different socio-cultural and professional organisations, as well as Awami League, have chalked out elaborate programmes to observe the day in a befitting manner.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages on the eve of the day.

President Abdul Hamid, in his message, said November 10 is an important day in the history of movement for democracy in the country.

In her message, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the country's democracy was restored through the sacrifice of the lives of many. She prayed for eternal peace of the departed souls of all martyrs, including Noor Hossain, and conveyed deep sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Dhaka Lit Fest

8-10 NOVEMBER 2018
Bangla Academy

WELCOME TO DAILY STAR BOOKS STALL AT BANGLA ACADEMY

25% Discount

"YOU CANNOT OPEN A BOOK WITHOUT LEARNING SOMETHING"
—CONFUCIUS

Announce fresh schedule for polls

Demand left-leaning parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Left-leaning political parties yesterday demanded that the Election Commission (EC) announce a new schedule for the 11th national polls and cancel the declared one.

The parties, in separate press releases, said EC's role has become questionable after announcing the "one-sided schedule, which is just a trap for holding a one-sided election".

On Thursday, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) KM Nurul Huda announced to hold the polls on December 23.

Although issues like formation of a neutral polls-time government and reconstruction of EC remain unresolved, the CEC came up with the schedule, claiming that there is a congenial atmosphere for polls across the country, said the parties.

Communist Party of Bangladesh President Mujahidul Islam Selim said, "We requested the EC not to announce the schedule until dialogue [between the ruling quarter and the oppositions] ends. But it announced the schedule as per the government's plan..."

He was speaking at a meeting with the party activists at its office in Dhaka.

Meanwhile, Left Democratic Alliance (LDA), a coalition of eight left-leaning political parties, announced to hold a protest rally today in front of Jatiya Press Club at 11:00am.

Besides, Socialist Party of Bangladesh, a component of LDA, said announcement of the polls schedule before finding a solution to the ongoing crisis is contrary to public demand.

Where others see
Brick and Building,

We see your
DREAM HOME
and a life well lived.

■ On Time Handover
■ Quality Construction

LAND WANTED

শেলটেক **SHELTECH** Since 1988
01713091723, 01713091721