

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

Fixing Shadows



My lead photograph in Fixing Shadows.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

In 1996 I was working as a software engineer in Silicon Valley. Engineering was a wonderful profession, but photography was more fun and so captured my free time. Those days, the World Wide Web was in its infancy. Photographs were part of the Web from its beginning and photographers were starting to use it to reach a large audience.

One day a Web-based photo gallery caught my attention. Run by David Sapir, a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Virginia, it featured portfolios of famous and unknown photographers with one thing in common: outstanding black and white images. Work was included from the great California photographer Jack Welpott, American documentary photographer Marion Post Wolcott and, surprisingly, Lewis Carroll, who had photographed when not writing about Alice. The gallery was named after a term used in the 19th century for photography: Fixing Shadows.

I had practiced photography seriously after being smitten in 1980. Soon I was processing and printing black and white photographs. I started spending my annual vacations to Bangladesh on the streets of Dhaka photographing people. In California I spent weekends teaching black and white photographic printing at University of California Berkeley's Extension Photography Program.

One day, while looking at Fixing Shadows, an idea hit me. I sent an email to David asking if I could include my photographs of Bangladesh in the gallery. He asked to see some.

The next weekend I scanned several photographs from Bangladesh that I had taken during the '80s and '90s and sent them to David. A series of email exchanges with him followed. At the end of that I had articulated how I came about making those photographs, what they meant, their context and my background.

And so one day my group of photographs, "Discovering the Children of Bangladesh", along with a statement and captions, joined others in Fixing Gallery.

The gallery was popular and I started receiving a steady stream of comments from

viewers. Then my Bangladesh photographs showed up on a Web list called "bwtop10" that someone compiled every month. It listed the best black and white photography on the Web that month. My portfolio went "viral" and I received numerous comments and mails indicating it had touched people. I added a second portfolio and more bombardment followed.

That experience left its mark on me. I learned that to connect with my audience I must present my work with sincerity and humility. Providing the context is important.

Much water has passed under the bridge. Nowadays there are millions of web galleries and an effort like "bwtop10", attempting

to capture the best the Web has to offer, would make no sense.

But the Fixing Shadows gallery (including my portfolio) is still alive, although the fixingshadows domain name has been taken by a Chinese company offering to fix facial blemishes! You can visit www.people.virginia.edu/~ds8s to view it.

Why bring it up now? I had almost forgotten this episode, but recently a friend mentioned the gallery and connected it with me. He had seen it while a graduate student in Europe in the late 1990s. It was nice to know this effort was remembered after so many years!

[facebook.com/ikabirphotographs](https://www.facebook.com/ikabirphotographs) or follow "ihtishamkabir" on Instagram

7 yaba traders surrender in mosque

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Seven yaba traders yesterday surrendered to police inside a mosque in front of worshippers during Juma prayers in port city's Bakalia area, responding to Chattogram Metropolitan Police's (CMP) call to surrender.

Khatibs of 38 mosques located in Bakalia area had circulated the call to surrender directed towards drug peddlers and their family members on May 10 from their respective mosques, urging them to shun the path of destruction.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Bakalia Police Station Nezam Uddin told The Daily Star, "The seven yaba traders gave themselves up at Madani Masjid area of Bajroghona in front of 2,000 worshippers, before sermon of Juma prayers."

"Bakalia police has launched a crackdown against drug peddlers since May 2. Police arrested 84 drug peddlers and filed 64 cases in the ongoing crackdown," said the OC, adding that the surrender is the outcome of the drive.

The drug traders who surrendered are: Md Abu Bakkar, 45; Md Abdul Mabud, 38; Md Shahjahan, 45; Md Shamshu, 40; Md Eskandar Mirza, 56; Md Wasir Rahman, 45; and Md Ishaq, 50.

OC Nezam said they stand accused in several cases filed with Bakalia Police Station.

Celebrating Int'l Day of Light

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Light is a kind of energy that travels in waves -- a vibrating pattern of electricity and magnetism. If eyes could see electricity and magnetism, then each ray would be seen as a wave of electricity vibrating in one direction.

This is how eminent educationist Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal began his speech on this specific form of energy.

Over 200 young minds eagerly listened to him speak yesterday at the conference hall of Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS) in Dhaka. Marking "International Day of Light", Society for the Popularization of Science (SPS), Bangladesh organised the event.

Prof Iqbal spoke about the source of light, its characteristics and visible and invisible roles. He also urged students to explore the joy and thrill of studying science and to refrain from spending excessive time on social media.

Md Shahid-Ul-Munir, president of BCS, and Munir Hasan, vice-president of SPS, also spoke.

Jubo Dal activist hacked to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Jubo Dal activist was hacked to death by miscreants in Sitakunda upazila of Chattogram early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Abul Kalam, 48 -- hailing from Muradpur Delipara under Sitakunda upazila in Chattogram, police said.

The incident took place when some nine to ten miscreants swooped on Kalam with sharp weapons at a shop in Delipara area, leaving him critically wounded, police said quoting locals.

He was rushed to Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH), where doctors declared him dead at 1am.

BNP's port city unit has urged the administration to arrest the killers of Kalam immediately.

Kalam was an activist of Muradpur union unit of Jubo Dal, said Md Idris, assistant office secretary of BNP's city unit.

Afjal Hossain, inspector (investigation) of Sitakunda Police Station, said the body was sent for autopsy.

Saving heritage structures of Sylhet

Bapa places six-point demand



Rights activists at the seminar yesterday.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Rights activists at a programme yesterday placed a six-point demand to protect heritage buildings in Sylhet.

Held at Kendrio Muslim Sahitya Sangshad in Dargah Gate area, the seminar on "Sylhet's Threatened Architectural Heritage and Abu Sina Hostel Building: Citizen's Concern" was organised by Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa).

Their demands are: stopping demolition of Abu Sina Hostel and taking initiative to protect the heritage building; creating a list of cultural and natural heritages of Sylhet and enlisting them in the department of archaeology list; establishing an archaeology office in Sylhet; creating Sylhet City Heritage Plan; forming a Heritage Cell at Sylhet City

Corporation to authorise works at heritage sites; and forming a citizens' committee.

The seminar was presided over by Bapa Vice President Advocate Sultana Kamal.

Bapa Joint Secretary Sharif Jamil; Jalalabad Samity President AK Abdul Mubin; Bangladesh Heritage Society President Sohel Ahmed Chowdhury; Bangladesh Architect Institute (Sylhet) President Syeda Zarina Hossain; Ganatantri Party President Barrister Aros Ali; and Jalalabad Association former president Tofael Sami were also present.

Kaushik Saha, an associate professor of architecture at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, delivered the keynote speech and Bapa (Sylhet) General Secretary Abdul Karim Kim gave the introductory speech.

Tea workers demand quota in SAU admission

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Members of the tea workers community and several rights organisations on Thursday demanded a special quota for children of tea workers in the admission process of Sylhet Agricultural University (SAU).

Tea Workers Students Welfare Trust, Cha Janagosthy Chhatra Jubo Kalyan Parishad, University Tea Students Sangsad and several other organisations jointly submitted a memorandum to Prof Matiar Rahman Howladar, the university's vice chancellor (VC), mentioning their demand of reserving seats for at least four tea workers' children.

Sojol Chotri, convener of Tea Workers Students Welfare Trust, said, "The tea workers community has become a major part of the country's social economy but they are always deprived of facilities, even of their basic humanitarian needs. Sylhet is identified for its tea gardens, but ironically

tea workers are mostly neglected regarding education."

So far, there are special quotas for tea workers' children at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, International University of Business Agriculture and Technology, and Asian University for Women.

SAU VC said, "A prosperous country cannot be built by leaving anyone deprived of their rights. We will discuss the demand at the meetings of the syndicate and academic councils and will try to reserve seats for at least two students."

During the submission of the memorandum, Caritas Sylhet region's education section chief Piyus Nanowar, Bangladesh Adivasi Forum's member Narayan Kurmi, SAU Assistant Professor Subrata Koiri, Cha Janagosthy Chhatra Jubo Kalyan Parishad Vice President Barun Singha Chotri, University Tea Sangsad Advisor Balaram Nairu and several others were present.

UP member jailed for digging pond in cropland

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A mobile court yesterday jailed a union parishad (UP) member for one year on the charge of digging a pond in his cropland at Laxmipur village in Natore Sadar upazila defying a High Court ban.

The court led by Executive Magistrate Tasmina Khatun also seized two batteries of an excavator from the spot.

The convict -- Abdul Baten Shikdar, 45 -- is a member of Laxmipur Kholabaria Union Parishad.

Later, the court seized four batteries of excavator



Rotten, stinky molasses being produced at a factory in Natore. A mobile court on Thursday fined three factories Tk 9 lakh in Gurudaspur upazila for adulteration of molasses. The local UNO and Rab destroyed around 1,980kg molasses and ingredients.



PHOTO: STAR

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