

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

Grey-headed Fish Eagle

In 2013, when I had just started paying attention to birds, I photographed a large bird perched atop a leafless tree in Baikka Beel, Moulvi Bazar. Sitting still, it only moved its head as it scanned for fish in the adjacent beel. When I showed my photograph later to other birders, they identified it as a Grey-headed Fish Eagle.

Since then, however, it has eluded me over many return visits to the spot. I was told it can be found in Feni's Muhuri reservoir, but when I went there it was absent. A fairly common bird of Bangladesh, this eagle was missing wherever I looked.

But my luck turned last month. One afternoon I was in the Haor, not expecting much because September is possibly the worst month for birding in Bangladesh. Sitting on the grass at the edge of water was an unexpectedly large bird. I momentarily thought it was a Pallas's Fish Eagle, but its head and body colours were all wrong.

I approached it cautiously, keeping my distance so as not to frighten it away. After some time, it took flight and perched on a branch right above the water.

The afternoon was hot but not too muggy. Once it perched, I could clearly see the white legs of the bird, confirming that it was a Grey-headed Fish Eagle. It scanned the water underneath with its sharp eyes. Because of the heat it kept its mouth open. (Since birds do not have sweat glands, on hot days they expel body heat through an open mouth.)

Although I had my camera aimed, it dived so suddenly and quickly that I missed the first few milliseconds. Nonetheless, I caught it on camera stretching its claws forward as it hit the water



Grey-headed Fish Eagle with fish.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

and grabbed a Tilapia with its right claw. In less than a second, it had taken off, while placing the fish in both claws.

It disappeared quickly, presumably to an unobtrusive place to eat peacefully.

Grey-headed Fish Eagles are found all over South East Asia. They can grow 75 cm in length and weigh up to 2.7 kg. Females are larger than males. Like other large raptors they use sticks to build their nests and usually lay two eggs per year per couple. In Bangladesh they are found in every district, and are known locally as *Kura Eegol*.

I found this eagle a second time some days later. It was perched on top of another tree and kept looking for fish. It

had no luck in the hour I spent watching it. The morning was cold with patches of gusty rain. This probably kept fish in deeper waters. I saw it preening its feathers and, for a remarkable second or two, it retracted its neck, brought down its head and looked at me. For an instant it looked like a Harpy Eagle. Then it took off, flying far, perhaps to a spot where it expected better luck with fish.

So there you have it. Sometimes in birding, you look and look and cannot find your bird, and then suddenly it shows up when you are least expecting it!

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Bangladesh committed to promote peace

Says UN Resident Coordinator Mia Seppo

UNB, Dhaka

The United Nations (UN) has appreciated Bangladesh's role in promoting peace and development both globally and nationally, terming the country a committed actor.

At present more than 6,500 Bangladeshis serve in peace operations across the world with their diverse roles, according to the UN.

Some of them provide protection while others ensure basic service delivery and facilitate aid access for millions of people affected by violence and conflict.

"Bangladesh has proven itself to be a committed actor in promoting peace and development both globally and nationally," said UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC) in Dhaka Mia Seppo recently.

She said peacekeeping is changing and Bangladesh needs to be able to change its offer to peacekeeping to remain relevant.

For example, Seppo said, the number of women peacekeepers, whom Bangladesh has so ably deployed, should continue to increase.

Bangladesh may also wish to avail itself of support from the UN, as needed, in screening those to be deployed, especially to senior positions, in accordance with UN policies and also as a follow-up to recent human

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-MIA SEPPU

rights recommendations, said the UNRC.

She said Bangladesh's contributions to peacekeeping is among the highest in the world, with the country being in the top four troop contributing countries for the last ten years running.

The UN resident coordinator, in her interaction with diplomatic correspondents, said Bangladesh is an important supporter of the UN secretary general's reform agenda of peacekeeping including on zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Bangladesh has supported the
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Road accidents kill 5, injure 4

STAR REPORT

At least five people were killed and four injured in road accidents in two districts during the last two days, our correspondents and news agencies report.

In Bogura, two people were killed and one was injured after a truck hit their motorbike in Boalia area on Bogura-Naogaon highway in Adamdighi upazila yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Rabbi Bulbul, 30, from the district, and Johurul Islam, 28, from Pabna.

Police said the accident took place in the afternoon, leaving Rabbi and Johurul dead on the spot.

Police seized the truck and sent the bodies to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical

College Hospital for autopsy, Officer-in-Charge Jalal Uddin of Adamdighi Police Station confirmed.

In Gazipur, three people were killed and three injured after a truck overturned in Gargaria Masterbari area on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Sreepur upazila on Thursday night.

The deceased were identified as Saiful Islam, 25, from Sherpur's Nakla upazila; Jahangir Hossain, 25, also from Nakla; and Badsha Mia, 19, from Mymensingh's Gouripur upazila.

Identities of the injured could not be known yet.

Manjur Hossain, officer-in-charge of Mawna Highway Police Station, quoting
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Naogaon couple die from snake bites

Father met same fate a month ago

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A couple died at a hospital in Rajshahi yesterday, hours after they were bitten by a snake.

Nurul Islam (35) died at 7:30am and his wife Mousumi Begum (27) an hour later, said Saiful Ferdous, deputy director of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH).

They were bitten by a common krait, said the director, adding that its venom is considered one of the most toxic with an ability to cause death in less than five hours.

"When we found the patients, the envenoming effects took hold over them," Saiful Ferdous told The Daily Star.

"They suffered a severe paralysis causing breathing failure. Our anti-venom injections didn't work," he added.

A month ago, Nurul's father Sirajuddin died from a snake bite too, said Nurul's uncle Abdur Rahim.

In the early hours of September 13, Sirajuddin, a mason, was bitten while he was praying in his Ramcharanpur

village residence beside the river Atrai in Mohadevpur upazila of Naogaon, Rahim said.

"We tried to apply local methods to save him, but he died before dawn," he added.

Following the incident, police suggested locals to take snake bitten patients to hospital.

"I can't say which snake bit him as we couldn't see it," said Abdur Rahim.

But since his death, the family members took some precautions to catch snakes.

A month later yesterday, Nurul and Mousumi were bitten around 2:30am while they were asleep inside a mosquito net in the same room his father died.

This time, they managed a private vehicle for taking them to hospital, but the vehicle delayed to reach the village from Mohadevpur.

The patients were taken to the hospital, some 90km off the village, at 6:30am four hours after they were bitten.

Rahim said anti-venom was not
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Suspected JMB man arrested in Barishal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Rab yesterday arrested a suspected member of banned militant outfit Jama'at ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) in Muladi upazila of Barishal.

Md Salauddin Howlader, 40, was arrested from a residence in the area early in the morning, said Maj Sajjibul Islam Sajib, deputy commander of Rab-8.

Howlader, an electrician by profession, along with his associates used to propagate extremist views, said the deputy commander. He was also an imam at a local mosque, he added.

Rab also found out names of some of his associates, and is conducting drives to arrest them. Howlader will be handed over to Muladi Police Station after filing a case, he added.



WHY THIS DISCRIMINATION? Traffic police have put a wheel clamp on a motorbike for parking on the footpath. Right near the bike, cars parked on the very same footpath, are apparently above the rules. Some are even covered up, indicating they have been there for a while, inset. The photos were taken recently at the capital's Karwan Bazar.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Don't cheat people

President urges public representatives

UNB, Kishoreganj

President Abdul Hamid yesterday urged all to come forward to make the ongoing development works sustainable.

He made the call at a rally on the Muktijoddha Abdul Haque Government College premises in Kishoreganj. Nagorik Committee of Mithamoin upazila organised the meeting.

"The government has taken an extensive programme to develop the country. As part of that, many initiatives are being taken to save the hoar areas. People will get the benefits soon," he said.

"But it is a matter of regret that some people have started building houses next to the under-construction highway, connecting three upazilas of the district," the president added.

Hamid said such unplanned infrastructure in haor areas will hamper development works.

"It is your responsibility to save the development works as you will get benefit from them. In addition, you will have to take proper approval from the local administration before building any structures there [haor areas]," he said.

Urging people to follow existing environment laws, he warned that the administration will take strict action if anyone violates those.

Terming the haor areas one of the most lucrative tourist spots, Hamid stressed the need for providing visitors with proper facilities. If the areas are developed as tourist destinations, it will also create employment opportunities, he added.

"You will have to remain aware in this regard. If development is not sustainable, we cannot attract tourists," he added.

The president mentioned that there is also a rise in corruption with the increasing development trend.

He urged public representatives to play an active role in sustaining the ongoing development projects. "Do not cheat people and try to lead an honest life. Then our country will develop, even the haors will prosper," he said.

Earlier on his arrival at Mithamoin, his birthplace,
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Khaleda urgently needs better treatment

Says sister Selima

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's sister Selima Islam yesterday said the former prime minister's physical condition has deteriorated further and she needs better treatment urgently.

Talking to reporters after meeting her sister at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Selima said, "Her condition has worsened. She's unable to move or eat without help."

"Her hands and legs have gotten stiff. She urgently needs better treatment," she said.

When her attention was drawn to BSMMU physicians' assertion that the BNP chief is fine, she said doctors are not telling the truth.

Selima said Khaleda can go abroad for treatment if government allows, but they didn't get a response yet.

Six family members -- Selima, her younger brother Shamim Eskandar, his wife Kaniz Fatema, their two sons and a daughter-in-law -- went to meet Khaleda around 3:15pm.

They stayed there for nearly an hour.

Khulna tank-lorry workers call off strike

Fuel supply resumes after 50 hours

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Supply of fuel resumed after 50 hours as tank-lorry workers in Khulna called off their strike yesterday, after their association leaders met with Khulna's deputy commissioner and police superintendent.

Earlier on Wednesday, the workers went on strike from 8am, demanding withdrawal of a case filed against two fellow workers over a road accident.

Visiting the city's Khalishpur area, workers of three state-owned oil companies -- Padma, Meghna and Jamuna -- were seen supplying and filling oil after the strike ended.

Khulna Deputy Commissioner Md Helal Hossain called an emergency meeting with district administration, police and association leaders yesterday around 9am at Khulna Circuit House to discuss the strike.

Khulna Police Superintendent SM Safiullah, Deputy Commissioner of Khulna Metropolitan Police Mollah Jahangir Hossain, and Habibur Rahman of Fuel Oil Owners' Association were present, among others.

Sheikh Nur Islam, president of Khulna Division Tank-Lorry Workers' Union, told The Daily Star that the district administration promised workers that the issue would be resolved within the legal framework as soon as possible.

Later oil-tank lorry leaders announced withdrawal of the strike at a meeting at their office in Khalishpur Notunrasta area around 11am.

During the strike, fuel supply was suspended in all ten districts of Khulna division along with Gopalganj, Faridpur, Shariatpur, Madaripur and Rajbari.

Workers of Padma, Meghna and Jamuna expressed solidarity with tank-lorry workers and refused to load oil to vehicles.

Sheikh Nur said an accident took place on April 4 in Aronghata area of Khulna. No one was killed but police filed a case against two workers. Police also submitted charge sheet against them.



The snake that bit the couple was brought to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital yesterday after the family caught it in Naogaon.

PHOTO: COLLECTED