

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

Golden Jackal

I had taken just a few steps into a large, soggy field in the Haor when from the corner of my eye I saw two doglike animals, thirty feet to my left, sprinting in the same direction as I was headed. Reaching a submerged area up ahead, they paused momentarily before turning right and running along water's edge. While one kept running across the field, the other ran towards me. By this time I had recognized them as Golden Jackals (*Khek Sheyal*, *Canis aureus*) and was taken aback at this bold move. I stopped on my tracks and started photographing it as it approached. But just before reaching me it turned right and disappeared into a patch of entangled weeds. I surmised that it probably had cubs in its den and felt threatened by my presence. The encounter took me back to my childhood.

In 1968 my parents built a house in a new development in the outskirts of Sylhet. When we moved in, Housing Estate was dotted with just a few houses. To the north were the hills of Lakkatura tea garden. Jungles and bamboo groves covered the east of our house.

Along with a kitchen garden and a tube well, our back yard also had a chicken coop. This was of great interest to the jackals that lived in the hills and jungles surrounding us. Around sunset every evening, they started howling in unison. The *kekha hua*, *kekha hua* sound rapidly reached a crescendo that lasted for several hours.

As the night progressed they prowled in the adjacent jungle, while the chickens, having figured out what was outside the coop, cackled mightily fearing for their lives. In the end, though, the jackals left empty-handed – most of the time. If a chicken or two had been accidentally left out, the jackals had a good dinner.



Golden Jackal, Molvi Bazar.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Fast-forwarding to the present, this animal, once a pest, has become increasingly rare in Bangladesh with habitat loss due to population pressure. Nonetheless I have seen it in many places, the most common being the Haor. I also saw it in several parts of Purbachol.

The Golden Jackal, a strikingly wolf-like canid, is a native of southern parts of Asia and Europe. It grows to 85 centimeters in length and can weigh up to 14 kilograms. A monogamous animal, it spends its entire life with one partner. It is fairly omnivorous in its dietary habits, makes its den underground, and is not considered endangered.

For me, its most remarkable feature is the way its mouth opens when running. It looks like a crooked, sly grin and is

probably responsible (along with the aforementioned chicken-stealing habits) for the less than respectable place it has in our folklore.

My strangest sighting of a Golden Jackal was in a distant *char* in Rajshahi. I had been watching a Peregrine Falcon as it flew overhead in circles, gradually moving away. Suddenly, in the distance, it swooped down to attack what appeared to be a dog, which ran for its life across the *char*. The falcon repeatedly buzzed the animal. As I came closer I realized it was a Golden Jackal. How strange for this bird to attack a nimble mammal almost twenty times its weight, and for the jackal not to fight back!

facebook.com/tangents.ikabir or follow 'ihtishamkabir' on Instagram.

CU student files complaint against BCL activists

CU CORRESPONDENT

A student of Chittagong University has lodged a complaint against some Bangladesh Chhatra League men for allegedly confining him and snatching away his valuables.

Morshed Alam Rifat, a third-year student of the management department, filed the written complaint with the proctor's office on Thursday morning.

In the complaint, he said some 10 to 15 BCL men, loyal to CU unit BCL president Rejaul Haque Rubel, picked him up in front of Shahjalal Hall and confined him in a room of Shah Amanat Hall on October 17 midnight.

"They demanded money from me. As I denied, they started beating me and snatched away my mobile phone, around Tk 2,500 and other valuables," he

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KUET ADMISSION TEST

Khulna hotel accommodates 765 candidates for free

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

A hotel in Khulna city has provided free accommodation to 765 candidates of Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (KUET) admission test.

The aspirants -- 685 males and 80 females -- checked in Hotel Tiger Garden International on Thursday noon and left yesterday afternoon after attending the entry test of KUET, hotel sources said.

Separate accommodation was arranged for them. Male candidates stayed in Banquet Hall while the female ones in the conference room, said hotel authorities. Many of their family members stayed with them, they added.

Alongside the accommodation facility, candidates received food and transport services from hotel authorities.

Sena Kalyan Sangstha, Bangladesh, the owning agency of Hotel Tiger Garden International, has been providing such services for the last five years, Maj Shahiduzzaman Shaheen (ret'd) told The Daily Star.

During the admission test, many candidates from different districts across the country spend nights at bus stands, train stations as they have nowhere to stay in the city.

Shahiduzzaman, project head of the hotel, said they took the initiative considering their problems. The candidates were provided transport to go to the examination hall from the hotel, he said.

Those who have no accommodation facility in Khulna send the hotel authorities messages, then they are included in the service, said Shahiduzzaman, adding that they are informed about it via Facebook.

"Those who are incapable to rent accommodation usually get this opportunity," he added.

Ayon Roy, one of the candidates from Rajshahi, told this newspaper that he stayed at Banquet Hall with others. "I applied for the service after I had noticed a Facebook post by the hotel authorities," he said. "The hotel authorities gave us food and transport to reach the exam centre on KUET campus, which is 19km away from the hotel," said Ayon Roy.

Sheikh Shamim Ahmed, manager of the hotel, said 400 candidates received the service last year.

A total of 12,348 candidates sat for the KUET admission test yesterday to vie for 1,065 seats under 16 departments, said Monoj Kumar Majumder, public relation officer of the university.

The name plaque of Moghbazar-Mouchak flyover has become a destination for self-promotion. Be it for promoting movies, political agendas or campaigning for election to a school's governing body, the entire wall is covered with these eyesores. Even the name of the prime minister, who inaugurated the flyover, is almost illegible while garbage remains accumulated on the median. The photo was taken in the capital's Shantinagar intersection yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



'Affordable Autumn', an exhibition wishing to make art accessible to all, opened yesterday at Galleri Kaya in the capital's Uttara. A total of 93 works by prominent and promising artists are being displayed at the event.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

City to arrange housing for urban poor

Says Rajshahi Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman

BSS, Rajshahi

Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) is planning to arrange housing facilities for the city's poor and marginalised population.

The city corporation will take initiatives to build affordable houses by adopting a need-based coordinated plan to tackle the growing housing crisis.

RCC Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton revealed this while addressing a city-level consultation meeting titled "Advancing Inclusive and Resilient Development Targeted at the Urban Poor" at Rajshahi City Bhaban conference hall yesterday evening.

The meeting was told that Brac

and International Institute for Environment and Development are jointly conducting a study in the city on improving living conditions and livelihood of the poor and distressed population through freeing them from the vicious cycle of poverty.

Brac Climate Change Environment Programme Specialist Dr Mijanur Rahman presented a keynote paper, detailing the issue.

Mayor Liton said some 240 slum dwellers are now living in brick-built houses as they got community housing in the city. They had just moved to their new houses, which they constructed with support from Community Housing Development Fund.

Earlier, each of the beneficiaries

who had land but no house was given loan worth Tk 2 lakh for building their house.

Liton said proper housing for people living in urban poverty has become a prerequisite to achieve sustainable development goals (SDG-11), and ensure planned urbanisation and continued economic progress of the city.

He focused on stronger collaboration between the government and nongovernment organisations, and involving public representatives and other relevant stakeholders to promote plans for people living in urban poor areas.

He also suggested implementing community-led

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Bangabandhu Film City will be world class: info minister

BSS, Gazipur

Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday said the Bangabandhu Film City in Gazipur will be turned into a world-class establishment within the shortest possible time.

"... Within the shortest possible time, this [Bangabandhu Film City] will be turned into an international standard film city," he told reporters during his visit to the site.

Information Secretary Abdul Malek and Bangabandhu Film City Managing Director Md Abdul Karim, among others, accompanied the minister during the visit.

The preliminary works of Bangabandhu Film City construction on a 105-acre land is almost completed, Dr Hasan said.

He said Bangladesh and India are going to jointly make a film on Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, commemorating the golden jubilee of the country's independence. The minister said noted Indian director Shyam Benegal, helming the Bangladesh-India co-production, has already visited Bangabandhu Film City and wished to shoot some parts of the film there.

The decision to jointly produce a feature film on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with a documentary on Bangladesh's Liberation War is the outcome of an improved bilateral and diplomatic relations between the two neighbouring countries.

This initiative can further strengthen the bond through the exchange of audio-visual programmes and making Indo-Bangla films and documentaries.

The Bangabandhu Film City will not only be used for shooting purposes, but will also serve as a recreation centre -- having market restaurant, a lake, a garden and forests, among other attractions and amenities.

Considering global economy, Bangladesh going through 'best time'

Finance Minister Mustafa Kamal says

BSS, Dhaka

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal has said Bangladesh's economy is now in the best position in view of the present state of global economy.

"We are going through the best time of our economy. In view of the [current state of] global economy, we are in the best position -- moving forward under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina," he told journalists in Washington DC on Thursday.

The minister talked to journalists after holding a series of meetings with Executive Director of the World Bank for Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Bhutan, Aparna Subramani; India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman; and Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Mitsuhiro Furusawa on the side-line of the World Bank and IMF Annual Meeting, said a press release.

In the past two decades, Kamal said, the world witnessed economic disasters several times. During the great economic catastrophe in 1997, he said, several countries in Asia, including Indonesia and South Korea, were in difficult position.

During the 2008 catastrophe, the finance minister said many countries, including the United States, were in challenging position, but even then, Bangladesh's economy did not face any severity.

He mentioned that now another extreme situation is prevailing across the world and that is the so-called trade war.

"The impact of this ongoing trade war has led to a downward trend in global economy. China's growth has dropped from 14.4 percent to 7, but Bangladesh's economy is moving forward," he added.

Kamal said Bangladesh's impressive growth may seem like a myth, but it is the reality.

"The biggest contribution to this comes from the people of Bangladesh," he added.

The minister said the World Bank and IMF have lauded Bangladesh for its progress in all sectors and they presented Bangladesh positively before the world.

Finance Secretary Abdur Rouf Talukder, Secretary to the Economic Relations Division (ERD) Monowar Ahmed and Alternative Executive Director of the World Bank Mohammad Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan were present at the meetings.

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