

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Running in Lalbagh Kella.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

The Running Life

I came into running by chance. There was a “sports” requirement for graduation at the university in the USA where I studied. You had to take two semesters of physical education as part of the undergraduate program. I took a skiing class my first semester. Then I forgot all about the requirement. Before my last semester I was reminded that I would not graduate unless I completed another physical education course.

Looking at the offerings, I chose Running. It seemed lightweight. We showed up at the cavernous gym and ran for forty minutes, three times a week, under the guidance of an instructor. Everyone in the class had signed up for the same reason. It was an easy way to meet the sports requirement, what we used to call a “gut” course.

But when semester’s end came along, something strange happened. I could not quit running. That was forty years ago. Since then, running has been a part of my life. Sure, there have been breaks: pains in the knee, back, and feet, a torn meniscus, a year or two spent swimming or bicycling instead. But running in the morning has been a blessing for me.

What is it about running that attracts me, as it does so many others? It breathes life into my day by motivating and energizing me. For several hours after running I enjoy a “high” created by endorphins. While running, my mind can roam freely and new ideas often kick in. Starting each run is hard for me; I feel there is such a long way to go. Therefore, finishing the run gives me a sense of

accomplishment. It all adds up to a good start for the day.

Running also has health benefits, helping control blood pressure, blood sugar, weight and cholesterol. There is also the convenience factor: you don’t need a partner or a gym. You just step outside and run!

Outdoor running allows me to tune in to the seasons, the weather, and flora and fauna. Last month, for example, fragrant *bokul* flowers from neighbourhood trees had carpeted parts of the road. This month, the *chhatims* are awash in off-white flowers, but, alas, no fragrance there. In monsoon, the air is heavy with moisture and I sweat profusely, longing for winter. However, while winter running is easier, it is much harder to get out of bed early.

Every time, I run the same distance at a speed that pushes me but not to exhaustion. Many runners challenge themselves to try to run faster and longer, and it works well for them. I am content just to run.

Doubtless, there are other physical activities which are better for you. The acknowledged best exercise is brisk walking. Swimming and bicycling are also excellent. And running is hard on your knees and feet; you are exposed to more injuries. But there is something very special about running that I find addictive.

If you want to make running a part of your life, consult a doctor first and start gently, building up over time.

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Covid-19 negative certificate mandatory to enter Bangladesh

CAAB says the decision comes into effect from today

RASHIDUL HASAN

Presenting a negative Covid-19 certificate is mandatory for any incoming passengers to Bangladesh starting from today. No airlines will issue boarding passes to passengers without the negative report.

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) yesterday issued a circular in this regard with effect from December 5 to combat the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

Although CAAB earlier on several occasions asked passengers arriving from abroad to carry Covid-19 certificate, there was some reluctance by them, sources in CAAB said.

Those who didn’t have the certificate, were sent for institutional quarantine for 14 days at Ashkona Hajj Camp or Diabari in the capital.

Recently the number of incoming passengers without a negative test report has increased.

In November alone, over 4,000 passengers arrived without Covid-19 negative certificates. Therefore, the government made it mandatory to have such certificates.

According to the CAAB circular, anybody interested in entering Bangladesh will need a Covid-19 negative certificate issued within 72 hours prior to the flight. This certificate has been made mandatory under the new guidelines of CAAB.

Almost every day, passengers of different airlines are entering the country without Covid-19 negative certificate, sources at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport said. Amid this situation, the health department fears the deterioration of Covid-19 situation in the country.

According to the new CAAB guidelines, PCR tests have been made mandatory for members of diplomatic and UN missions.

Migrant workers have been asked to bring antigen or other acceptable coronavirus negative reports from the respective countries where PCR tests are not available. For children under 10, this guideline has been relaxed.

Asked, officials of Turkish and Saudi Arabian Airlines said they have informed all their station offices about the new instructions from

CAAB. “Boarding cards will not be issued from December 5 without a corona-negative certificate,” an official of Turkish Airlines said.

Assistant director of the health department Shahriar Sajjad, working at the Dhaka airport, said incoming passengers that show no symptoms at the airport will have to quarantine at home for 14 days.

“If passengers are found showing symptoms of Covid-19 during health screening at the airport, they will be sent to the hospital or for isolation (institutional quarantine),” he said.

Passengers coming from Bahrain, China, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, the Maldives, Oman, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Turkey, the UAE and the UK must have a Covid-19 negative certificate, said the CAAB circular.

But Bangladeshi workers who are cardholders of the Bureau of Manpower Export Development, and do not have adequate facilities for coronavirus testing, will have to show an alternative health certificate -- for example, antigen test or any other acceptable Covid-19 test report.

SM Ali’s 92nd birth anniversary today



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 92nd birth anniversary of Syed Mohammad Ali, founder editor-publisher of The Daily Star and a luminary in journalism of Bangladesh.

SM Ali made his way up from a cub reporter to one of the country’s most brilliant editors in a career spanning 44 years. He also led the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) as its chairman.

Educated in Kolkata, Dhaka and London, he

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It’s a race against time as people hurriedly cross the tracks at the level crossing near Mohakhali flyover. The approaching train was less than a minute away, signs to steer clear of the tracks were put out, and the crossing was just about to be closed when people rushed in front of the oncoming train to pass through. Is being on time worth risking one’s life?

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Most CCTV cameras out of order in Barishal city

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Almost all the CCTV cameras installed in Barishal city’s roads have gone out of order. This means the city streets now lie unsupervised and vulnerable, said residents, fearing a spike in crime.

Fund crisis, shortage of skilled human resources and mismanagement in the sector have led to the disorderly state, according to some BCC officials.

During multiple visits, this correspondent saw that CCTV cameras in most busy areas, intersections and points including Sadar Road, Launch Ghat, Nathullahbad Central Bus Stand, Chowmatha and Jaikhana Mor were not working.

Even the control rooms (eight in total) to operate those were left deserted. BCC executive engineer Omar Faruque said the situation has gotten worse mainly due to the shortage of funds needed to maintain those. “If we manage to get some funds, it will be possible to reactivate the CCTV cameras,” the official said.

According to BCC sources, during the previous mayor’s tenure, 261 CCTV cameras were installed through eight control rooms. This was done at a cost of Tk 2.59 crore for the financial year 2013-14. However, at least half of the cameras went out of order within two years.

The situation worsened in the last six months, which also increased security concerns.

Talking to this correspondent, BCC assistant engineer Ohid Murad said it started when 45 cameras were first damaged in 2017.

Currently, most of the cameras installed on important roads of the city are not working, the official said. On top of maintenance trouble, another prime factor is that miscreants steal parts of the installations regularly, he added.

Deputy Commissioner of Barishal Metropolitan Police Khan Abu Naser said, “A modern technology like CCTV surveillance plays an important role in controlling a city’s crimes. As these cameras are malfunctioning, it has become difficult to find the whereabouts of criminals.”

Similar sentiments were echoed by rights organisations. Shah Sajeda, convener of Conscious Citizens Committee, Barishal, said it’s imperative for the city corporation to reactivate the cameras, as this will help control crime in the city.

Asked, the BCC executive engineer said, “We are trying to come up with funds to reactivate the cameras soon.”



Installed to look after Barishal city streets, almost all CCTV cameras gather dust due to lack of maintenance by the authorities concerned. Even the police control rooms set up for their supervision lay locked and useless, inset. This photo was taken last week from Sadar Road.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

10-yr-old, student killed in Dhaka road crashes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A college student and a 10-year-old girl were killed, and five injured in road accidents in Dhaka yesterday.

In Jatrabari, Iftekhar Ifty (18), an HSC student of Rajarbagh Police Lines School and College, was killed and one of his friends injured as a truck hit their motorcycle around 10am, said Jatrabari Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mazharul Islam.

Ananta Barua, a student of Notre Dame College, was undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital with hand and leg injuries, the official told The Daily Star.

Police seized the truck but its driver managed to flee, added the OC.

Meanwhile, a bus rammied into an auto-rickshaw in the capital’s Motijheel, killing a 10-year-old girl and injuring four.

The deceased -- Nusaiba -- was from Keraniganj upazila in Dhaka, said police.

The injured -- deceased’s brother Jakir Hossain (23), his wife Sheuli Akter (19), his grandmother Raushan Ara (65), and auto-rickshaw driver Hafizur (40) -- were being treated at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Jakir’s cousin Kawsar Ahmed said the family members were going to their Keraniganj residence by the auto-rickshaw after visiting him at his house in the Khilgaon area.

The 10-year-old was declared dead at the hospital, said Motijheel police.

Condition of the auto-rickshaw driver is critical, said police quoting doctors.

Reform constitution for democracy to be effective: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday demanded reform in the constitution to establish effective democracy, and called for unity among social and political organisations to raise their voice against all kinds of repression.

Rashtrochinta organised the event -- “What Reforms are Needed for Bangladesh” -- at its office in the capital.

Didarul Bhuiyan, a member of the platform, said, “We want a country free of autocracy.” People who run the state should have accountability, he said, adding that currently, public representatives do not have accountability.

Rashtrochinta organiser Advocate Hasnat Kaium said the country needs effective reform to function better.

He suggested reforming laws that will compel lawmakers to disclose their wealth statement every six months.

Abul Hasan Rubel, acting executive coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolon, said the constitution has allowed supreme authority of lawmakers, which has shrunk the scope of making them accountable.

Noyeem Jahangir of Bhasani Onushari Parishad said there is no democratic practice inside political parties. “A reform is needed in the culture,” he said.

Abdur Rahman, member of Sramik Odhikar Parishad, alleged that the government uses law enforcement agencies to repress workers. “This practice needs to stop,” he said.

‘His life will inspire generations’

Haider Anwar Khan Juno remembered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

He dreamt of a disparity free society. His life will inspire generations to work towards the same ideology, said speakers at a memorial programme for noted cultural activist Haider Anwar Khan Juno yesterday.

The event was organised by Haider Anwar Khan Juno commemoration committee at Central Shaheed Minar.

Haider Anwar Khan Juno -- a noted freedom fighter, prominent communist leader, and writer -- was born on December 29, 1944 and died on October 29 this year. He was also the younger brother of CPB presidium member Haider Akbar Khan Rono.

“He was not just a friend of mine, but also friend of the people who struggled for democracy,” said a statement by Emeritus Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury. “He was a fighter.” Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury said, “His life will inspire new generations to bring change in the country.”

BSD leader Razequzzaman Ratan, Jatiya Gonofront co-ordinator Tipu Biswas, Gono Sangskritik Front vice president Kamal Uddin, CPB assistant general secretary Sajjad Jahir Chandan, Juno’s daughter Anaya Labani Putul spoke.

Beat policing gaining popularity in rural areas

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Anguished and fed-up by her husband’s frequent torture, Farida Begum lodged a complaint with the newly established beat police office at her union in Sathkira’s Debhata upazila in mid-October.

Police swung into action promptly, summoning her husband Jahangir Hossain of Jagonnathpur village to an arbitration attended by the beat police officer, local dignitaries and the local union parishad member concerned.

“Castigated for the misdeeds at the arbitration, Jahangir signed a bond promising he would no longer torture his wife,” Sub-inspector Nayon Chowdhury, the beat officer of no-4 Noapara union, told The Daily Star over mobile phone last week.

Since the arbitration, Jahangir has not attempted to torture his wife, said local UP member Mizanur Rahman, adding that police managed to settle 25 such problems in the union alone since the beat policing initiative started around three months ago.

He said, “Earlier, both complainant and accused had to go to the police station, which is a few kilometres away, to file a case for such complaints. It cost them money and time.”

SI Nayon said by involving local public representatives and locally respected persons, he tried to settle problems like family feuds, local clashes and even small land related disputes at the beat police office.

So, in many cases people do not need to go to the police station to file a case.

Beat policing is getting popular among a cross section of people in different districts as people are getting prompt service from police personnel in cases of criminal activities.

In police terminology, a beat is the territory and time a police officer patrols.

A union in districts, a ward in city corporation areas and three wards in municipalities are regarded as a beat patrolled by a sub-inspector assigned as the beat officer.

An assistant sub-inspector and two constables work under each beat in-charge.

They maintain a close connection with local people in respective areas and resolve problems, according to the SOP (standard operating procedure) of beat policing.

Police Headquarters (PHQ) expanded beat policing activities to union level following the directives of Inspector General of Police Benazir Ahmed.

Earlier, beat policing was present in Dhaka and some other metropolitan cities, police said.

According to PHQ, in August alone, 20,441 family problems were settled and 13,448 preventive measures were taken across the country through beat policing.

Now the total number of beats is 6,912.

Beat policing allows better utilisation of forces deployed at police stations and enhances capability to gather intelligence about crimes and law and order at local level, according to the officials at the Police Headquarters.

“One of our priorities is to take policing service to the doorstep of the people. The beat policing system will enable us to reach people more closely and easily,” said Soheli Rana, assistant inspector general (media and public relations) at PHQ.

“In August alone, 20,441 family problems were settled and 13,448 preventive measures were taken across the country through beat policing.”