

TANGENTS
BY IHTISHAM KABIR

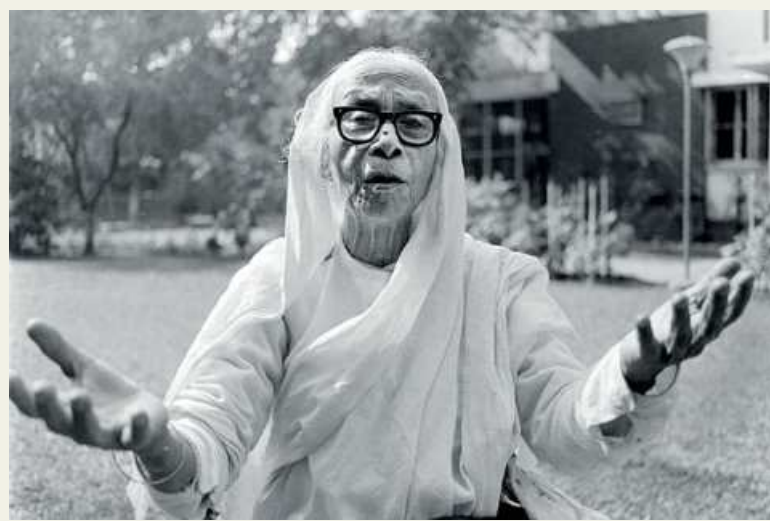
Old Photographs

I was thrilled when my cousin recently shared a photograph where my father poses with all his eight siblings. They were in their fifties and sixties when it was taken. A festive air permeates the photograph. They are basking in the winter sun, delighted to be with each other. Front-row center belongs to the eldest aunt and uncle; younger ones stand behind. While everyone else looks at the camera my eldest uncle is turned halfway towards his sister. Knowing them, an animated conversation had been interrupted by the photographer.

Six of these nine siblings have since departed. Four decades later I wonder: did they know that this 1/500 of a second, snatched from the jaws of time by a mechanical device, would be a precious witness to their entire big, close-knit, affectionate family for their descendants to look at with pride but also with sadness?

In 1984 I photographed Dadu, my paternal grandmother (Mrs. Zobeda Khatun), then towards the end of her life. In the photographs I can sense that she was posing for posterity, that she felt she would be remembered by these photographs. She looks serious and inspiring – as if she wants her lifetime of pioneering political struggle for Muslim women to be passed on through the photographs, like the baton in a relay race. Is that how we always pose – thinking “how will I be remembered”?

Through the old photograph we see ourselves growing up, becoming older and perhaps wiser. But does it also portend things to come? The astute look in the eye of a young cousin foreshadows her superlative accomplishments as a surgeon. Another cousin's astute expression during an office



Mrs. Zobeda Khatun, my grandmother, Dhaka, 1984.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

phone call predicts his success in business. And at the start of her political career, an aunt's demeanour parallels Dadu, her politician mother.

And so this is what an old photograph does: it runs away with our imagination. But in our cold hard reality old photographs pose an organizational challenge.

The album was the traditional way of organizing photographs. When you processed film at the lab they returned the photographs in a handy album which you could flip through. Bigger albums were stored with care. I remember when my parents and siblings would pull one out and gather around it, commenting on a pretty sari, a full head of hair, or the inevitable “(S)he looked so much thinner (or heavier) back then!”

Few maintain photo albums today. The organization and sharing of old photographs is all digital. Turning an old photograph into digital has become easy using

the phone camera. But a year or two later the scanned photograph is nowhere to be found unless it was organized properly.

Probably the easiest way to organize the photographs you scan with your phone is to upload them into a private album in Facebook, or a private account in Instagram or even Twitter. That way, you can access them easily even after upgrading your phone or laptop.

If you are more hands-on, you can use a content management system such as Lightroom to manage the photos on your computer or phone. This way the photographs are under your complete control. But every time you upgrade your computer or phone, there will be some hassle. Once organized, backing up in an external drive or the cloud will protect against catastrophes.

facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow “ihtishamkabir” on Instagram.

TIB raises concern over insufficient health allocation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has expressed concern for not having sufficient allocation in the next budget for critical sectors, including health, to combat the Covid-19 pandemic.

Similarly, it also raised concern over the lack of a clear roadmap to ensure transparency and prevention of corruption in the overall budget implementation.

The anti-graft body urged the government to ensure transparency and prevent corruption in implementation of the budget.

It, however, applauded the government's decision of not keeping any scope to whiten black money in the budget.

It seems like the government has gone through some sort of enlightenment as it has refrained from renewing the scope for whitening of black money, which was introduced amid severe criticism earlier, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said in a statement on Thursday.

He said they want to believe that the authorities will respect the prime minister's stance of “zero tolerance against corruption” and will not allow

this unethical benefit to continue in the end even if they face any legal scrutiny or pressure from any vested quarter.

He stressed the need for announcing a budget, which is participatory, can ensure welfare of the people and can save lives.



“In the proposed budget for 2021-22 fiscal year, the allocation for the health sector has been increased to Tk 33,000 crore -- which is about 7 percent of the total budget -- but it is still much less than what is needed.”

“Again, due to persistent corruption and a lack of fair spending capacity, there is a strong risk that this allocation will not be spent properly, for which there is no clear roadmap in the budget, which is disappointing. However, there is no alternative to reorganising the health sector in recent years to curb the unimaginable and skyrocketing corruption.”

Although he applauded the government's investment in vaccination activities to prevent the transmission of Covid-19 in the country and the allocation of Tk 10,000 crore to fight the coronavirus, Iftekharuzzaman said, “This allocation is not enough to deal with coronavirus. In this case, the process of spending money should be done with transparency, and it should be ensured that corruption in the health sector should not take advantage of it in any way.”

Similarly, the government is expected to follow a transparent procurement process and prioritise the public interest in procuring vaccine for coronavirus, he added.

He also commented that tax exemption for 10 years -- to encourage private investors to establish hospitals outside the city -- is a timely decision. This will create opportunities to ensure quality healthcare in rural areas.

Expressing concern over the news of allocation of about 60 percent of the total proposed budget in the underdeveloped sector, Iftekharuzzaman said, “Considering the corona (Covid-19) reality, the government was expected to reduce

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DIGITAL SECURITY ACT

Eminent citizens demand release of Jhumon Das

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of 24 eminent citizens demanded the release of Jhumon Das Apon, who has been in jail for the last 80 days, after being accused in a Digital Security Act case filed over criticising Hefajat-e-Islam leader Mamunul Haque on Facebook.

They made the demand through a written statement yesterday. They said many of the accused in cases of vandalism and looting of traditional religious settlements got bail, but Jhumon did not.

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Terming the proposed budget “pro-rich”, two workers’ groups -- Bangladesh Textile Garments Sramik Federation and Bangladesh Motorjan Mechanic Sramik Federation -- demonstrated in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. Symbolising their impoverished state, they stood with empty cooking pots in hand, protesting the budget's overlooking of workers’ interests.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Battle for Green: UNDP and The Daily Star launch gamified platform marking World Environment Day



A joint initiative of
The Daily Star
UNDP

campaign.thedailystar.net/battleforgreen/

“Knowledge Meter”, which consists of several environmental questions. This segment is meant to enhance the participants' knowledge about different elements of the environment and build a deeper understanding of their surroundings. Whether the participants answer the questions correctly or not, they will get valuable information about the environment. After completing this step, the participants' sprouts will transform into “Saplings.”

Their next task will be to become a “Cleaning Master”, where they will be required to upload two pictures. One will be about an item that is dirty, and the next one will be a picture involving the participant cleaning that item. With this task, we aim to encourage participants to keep their surroundings clean and sanitised, and to take care of the environment. After completing this step, the participants' sapling will transform into “Seedlings”.

In the next part of the challenges, they will be required to perform small task with a time limit. This task will focus on environmental awareness and conservation. In this round, participants will be asked to turn off their room lights for two minutes to conserve energy and raise awareness regarding overused energy, which negatively impacts the environment. After completing this step, the participants' seedlings will transform into “Small Trees”.

Last but not the least, the final task for the participants will be to plant trees in their vicinity and upload pictures of each of their newly planted trees. This will encourage the participants to take a step to combat climate change and make our environment greener.

After completing this step, the partic-



ipants' small trees will transform into “Big Trees”.

After completing all the tasks, the participants of the games will be awarded digital certificates by The Daily Star and UNDP. You can also share the game, your tasks, and progress on social media and invite your friends to join as well, for which you will be rewarded with some extra points.

So what are you waiting for? Head over to <http://campaign.thedailystar.net/battleforgreen> and start taking on the challenges to “Reimagine, Recreate, Restore”.

As days go by, we are getting closer to environmental instability and rising temperatures causing climate change. In this fight against climate change, we need people of all ages, especially the youth, to safeguard and look after the environment we live in. What better way to introduce, enrich knowledge of, and commit to this important issue in today's technologically advanced age than by playing a simple game?

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and The Daily Star have jointly launched an initiative, called “Battle for Green”, where people of all ages can take up some small challenges, earn some incentives while going through them, and pledge

to the cause of protecting and safeguarding the environment.

Start your journey through being a “Seed” and heading into the first challenge, “Pledge of Heart”. Here, you are required to fill in a pledge box, where you will take a pledge that you will protect and safeguard the environment from your point of view and space. This round is meant to drive up the responsibility in each person to give back something to the planet on their terms. After completing this step, the participants' seeds will turn into “Sprouts”.

Next, the participants will have to prove their knowledge of the environment by competing in a quiz, called