

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Jaguar, the Pantanal, Brazil.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

A Second Look

Before the pandemic I travelled to many countries in search of birds and wildlife. During the dark days of the pandemic I found myself longing for those places. Now, there are many wonderful places that I have not seen. Why, then, do I want to return to places I have already visited? Some are simply worth it. Second time around I know better what to expect. I can catch photographic opportunities I missed before. And I can cover spots I was unable to see the first time.

I knew about the diversity of birds and wildlife that Brazil offers before I went there. But I was unprepared for what I found. I explored two types of habitats there: the world's largest wetland in the Pantanal, and the Amazon rainforest. Birdlife in the Pantanal was memorable. There were colourful macaws and toucans, the gorgeous Sunbittern and myriads of other birds. The wildlife was rich: anteaters, capybaras, tapirs, porcupines, alligators, and the highlight, jaguars. In Amazonia, I was able to see over the tall canopy of the rainforest by climbing research towers in the jungle. Colourful birds such as dacnis, trogons and tanagers played there.

What I saw was just a fraction of the species found in Brazil. I could not cover all the hotspots. For example, the Atlantic forest has a different group of birds. A trail called Trilha dos Tucanos leads one to colourful toucans. Macaws flying over the huge sandstone crater called Buraco das Araras can be photographed from a viewing station. And a return to the jaguars of Pantanal would be delightful.

So it seems to me that Brazil deserves a second look. Madagascar has an enormous

number of fauna and flora species that are not seen elsewhere. There are five or six hotspots of birds and wildlife spread over the world's fourth largest island. Due to the long distances involved, I was able to cover only two of them during my 2017 trip. Next time I would like to visit the other spots and see birds I missed. In the steamy rainforests of north-eastern Madagascar lives a bird with a huge arched blue bill: the Helmet Vanga. Another pretty bird called Schlegel's Asity is found in the western part. In the west-central are the iconic baobab trees of the Avenue of the Baobabs. I want to cover these places on a return trip.

Another reason for revisiting Madagascar is the delicious and inexpensive French food sold everywhere.

Since 1986 I have visited Iceland thrice. Yet I long to see it again. In summer the country hosts thousands of Arctic Terns that nest there before flying off towards Antarctica with their chicks in winter. These birds are vigorous and acrobatic, a delight to watch. Also, the numerous waterfowl in Lake Myvatn in the north-eastern part of the country can be approached closely as they feed and play in the lake's water. The entire country has spectacular landscape, and on cliff faces one often finds colonies of sea birds. The next time I want to see the Gyr Falcon, Iceland's national bird and the largest falcon anywhere. A Puffin up close would also be nice.

So, while there are many places left to see, I would love to have a second look at these countries.

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'We are failing in vaccine diplomacy'

Alleges GM Quader
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman and deputy leader of the opposition in parliament GM Quader yesterday alleged that due to imprudent decision of the government, possibility of getting Covid-19 vaccines for country's crores of people has become uncertain.

In a statement, he said although the government is giving hope about getting the vaccine, there's no visible success in this regard. "Bangladesh is failing in vaccine diplomacy in international arena," he added. "The foreign minister said yesterday [Thursday] that many countries have agreed to give us vaccine, but no one could say when they will be able to give us those," he said.

"Under this circumstance, people have lost faith in the government's assurance," he said. "It's not clear whether 15 lakh people who have already taken the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine, will be able to get the second shot," he added.

Quader Mirza files GD against two nephews, lawmaker

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Basurhat municipality mayor Abdul Quader Mirza on Thursday filed a general diary (GD) against 96 persons including his two nephews and a Noakhali lawmaker.

In the GD, Mirza, who is also younger brother of Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader, alleged that those people were hatching conspiracy to kill or abduct or attack him. They were also conspiring to remove him from the mayoral post, he alleged.

Contacted, Abul Kalam Azad, inspector (investigation) of Companiganj Police Station, said he was looking into the allegation. Mirza came to limelight after making comments

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Along with commuters, sellers at the capital's Karwan Bazar kitchen market are finding it hard to deal with the frequent rainy days. Rainwater filled the area again yesterday, forcing buyers to traverse the muddy mess to get their produce. And due to poor drainage, it remained like this for the remainder of the day.

Bangladesh's progress should not be lost

Says ILO country chief on fight against child labour; headway stalls for first time in 20yrs, finds UN global report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unicef Bangladesh yesterday raised concern over the growing number of children in the country being pushed into child labour, as schools are closed since March last year and poverty levels are rising amid the pandemic.

"Families are struggling to cope and using every available means to survive. We need to prioritise the needs of children and address the wider social issues that enable these harmful practices to continue," said Tomoo Hozumi, Unicef representative in Bangladesh, in a press release about a global report on child labour.

Globally, the number of children involved in labour has risen by 8.4 million in the last four years, with millions more at risk due to Covid-19 impacts, says the new report by Unicef and International Labour Organization

(ILO).

The report "Child Labour: Global Estimates 2020, Trends and the Road Forward", was released yesterday, ahead of World Day Against Child Labour on June 12.

Progress to end child labour has stalled for the first time in 20 years, reversing the previous downward trend that saw child labour fall by 94 million between 2000 and 2016, said the joint release issued yesterday marking the report's launch.

Bangladesh has made significant progress on child labour in recent decades, as data from Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) indicates a 50 percent reduction in child labour from 2003 to 2013. In 2003, 3.2 million children were estimated to be engaged in child labour, while in 2013, this figure had reduced to 1.7 million children.

However, it is alarming to note that in 2013, 1.2 million children were trapped in the worst forms of child labour, which involve hazardous working conditions, it says, adding planning was underway for ILO and BBS to produce an updated survey report on child labour by early 2022.

"Bangladesh must keep the fight against child labour at the top of the agenda, so that progress made in recent years is not lost," said Tuomo Poutiainen, ILO country director in Bangladesh. The global report points to a significant rise in the number of children aged 5 to 11 years in child labour around the world, who now account for just over half of the total global figure.

"The new estimates are a wake-up call. We cannot stand by while a new generation of children is put at risk," said ILO Director General Guy Ryder.

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ASI fatally run over by microbus

730 litres of homemade liquor seized from vehicle

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

An assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) was killed and a constable injured after a microbus carrying liquor rammed into them in the port city's Chandgaon area when they were on-duty early yesterday.

The deceased is ASI Kazi Md Salauddin from Laxmipur, and the injured is Constable Masud.

Police seized the microbus which was found abandoned with 730 litres of homemade liquor. No one has been arrested in this connection yet.

Inspector (investigation) Rajesh Barua of Chandgaon Police Station said, "ASI Salauddin was on night duty with a team of police in Mowlovipukur Par and C&B areas."

"He had information that a microbus was coming from the hill tracts carrying homemade liquor and was heading towards the port city. So he installed a check-post in Meherazkhan Ghata area around 4am."

"When Salauddin signaled the black microbus to stop, it slowed down. As he stood in front of the vehicle and asked the driver to step out, the microbus rammed him and the constable, and fled the scene," he said quoting the constable.

Salauddin was declared dead at CMCH" said Rajesh.

Drive is going on to arrest the culprit, he added.

Double blow for coastal fishers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Fishing families in Barishal division are passing hard times. The devastation caused by cyclone Yaas -- that too in the off-season for fishing -- is pushing them to the brink.

This can be particularly seen in Patharghata Sadar Union of Barguna's Patharghata upazila. Most of the 20,000 people of this union are engaged in hilsa fishing, which remains halted since the 65-day ban from May 20.

"After the cyclone hit, our union and those surrounding ours were submerged under three to five feet of water," said Alamgir Majhi, a resident of the union's Padma village. "Until the water cleared, we couldn't eat any cooked food for two to three days."

"I managed to get 70kg of the district

administration's relief rice. This will hopefully last for two months," he added. "But those who haven't got the relief are in even greater misery. Due to the ban, they can't even go to the river and fish their way out."

Pakhi Begum, Alamgir's wife, said they could not get their boat down to the river for fear of the coastguard.

"We can't live just with the help we're given. We can't go down to the river as well. We don't even have the money to repair our homes," she said.

According to Barishal Divisional Fisheries Department, not only Barguna, but the lower areas of Bhola and Patuakhali have been flooded too, leaving the fisher families helpless.

Alauddin Mia of Bhola's Char Fasson upazila said at least a hundred families

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Top, A displaced family from Bhola's Char Fasson upazila is living in a makeshift arrangement after their homestead got flooded following Cyclone Yaas. In Barguna's Patharghata, out of work anglers are spending time repairing nets.

PHOTO: COLLECTED, TITU DAS

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of togetherness.

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