

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



A work in progress, forever.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Old Books

After years of procrastination, I recently hired a carpenter to make several bookshelves. Once they were made, I took out books that I had stored in cartons – some for a decade – and filled the shelves with them. It was an experience of unexpected joy and self-discovery.

As I was organizing the books and looking through them many thoughts crowded my head.

Books have always been a big part of my life. Going to the bookstore, browsing through books, smelling them, and eventually bringing some home – these have added comfort and excitement to my life. But books are also an open-ended quest. Who is to say what the ultimate goal is? Is it to enjoy a story? Expand my mind and skills? Insert myself into a world created by a storyteller?

Like others, I have gone through phases. My old books made that clear. There was the ideological phase of student days, reflected in works by Fanon, Said, and others. There was a literature phase: Joyce, Beckett, Steinbeck, Carver, Bowles. There was a phase of reading letters and essays, including those of Syed Mujtaba Ali, Steinbeck, Montaigne, White, Plutarch. For some years I enjoyed travel writing by Theroux, Bryson, O'Hanlon, Danziger and others. More recently, reflecting my interest in birds and wildlife, I have read about the natural world in books by Abbey, Leopold, Audobon, Muir.

Among my old books I found photography monographs, photography collections of a mix of photographer, and essays on photography. I collected these consistently over the last four decades. Some photography essays have come to be considered classics, for example, those by Berger, Sontag, and Barthes. Others which were instant hits upon publication now look dated.

These books are usually polemical, championing social or political issues of the time. Individual photographers – and their monographs – have come and gone at the whim of critics, curators and photographic kingmakers.

Some books also take me through phases in an author's life. For example, Paul Theroux, the renowned travel writer, whose early books such as *The Great Railway Bazaar* created excitement because they represented the world before globalization when it was hard to reach many places. Over the years the world became easier to travel in. Theroux kept on choosing difficult routes, but he also became increasingly cynical. Bill Bryson burst in with *A Walk in the Woods*, about a long hike on the Appalachian Trail. Then he went on to write about a wide variety of topics.

I always bought more than I could read. As a result I have dozens of unread books lying in my shelves. Why did I not read them? Some were hard going and I was hesitant to start – mostly Classics. Sometimes I bought so many books at once that I forgot about some. Some books are unread because they are bad. I keep wondering why they are still here in my bookshelf. Mysteriously, I found double copies of some authors I liked, such as Henning Mankell or Ray Carver.

As an added bonus, fast-moving thrillers or detective books, read in one night many years ago, are as good as new because I have forgotten the stories.

For the younger generation today, electronic books and social media are more exciting than paper books. But for me, nothing will ever replace good old-fashioned books made of paper.

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Eid celebrated amid pandemic

Bss, Dhaka

Eid-ul-Azha was celebrated across the country on Wednesday with due solemnity, religious fervour and maintaining health guidelines.

In the capital, people performed Eid prayers in phases. Five Eid congregations were held at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in the morning.

People were seen attending prayers wearing masks and leaving the venues without the customary Eid greetings such as embracing each other or shaking hands.

No Eid congregation was held at the National Eidgah on the High Court premises in Dhaka or at Kishoreganj's Sholakia Maidan.

No exchange of Eid greetings took place at Bangabhaban due to the pandemic.

Eid Jamaat was also held throughout the country, maintaining health guidelines. Special prayers were held seeking continued peace and development of the nation as well as for those infected and died from Covid-19.

In separate messages, President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina greeted the nation and prayed for continued peace, progress and prosperity of the country's people and the Muslim Ummah.

Marking the occasion, television channels and radio stations telecast special programmes.

Special food was served in hospitals, jails, centres for persons with disabilities, shelter homes, orphanages, and welfare centres.

Most of Dhaka cleaned up promptly after Eid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After Eid-ul-Azha, Dhaka city could be cleaned within three days through the efforts of the two city corporations and city dwellers.

However, animal waste was seen in some places on the third day of Eid yesterday.

Residents were encouraged to maintain proper disposal and clean their surroundings with bleach, which could be seen in many areas. Meanwhile, many also expressed satisfaction over the city corporations' prompt steps.

"After sacrificing our cattle, we cleaned the area and left the waste roadside, which were collected by the conservancy workers quickly," said Mohammad Jamil of Eskaton.

Earlier, the two mayors of the city had announced that they would ensure that garbage will be completely cleaned in three days.

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) has cleaned up 1,240.7 tonnes of animal and cattle market waste in the last three days till yesterday morning, while Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) cleaned up 15,733 tonnes during

this time, according to officials.

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh on Thursday said their garbage management workers have been working since the night of July 20.

DNCC Mayor Md Atiqul Islam, while visiting different areas on Thursday, said they have cleaned all animal waste on the first day of Eid.

WASTE REMOVED	CONSERVANCY WORKERS
DSCC 1,240.7 TONNES	9,990
DNCC 15,733 TONNES	11,500

Atiqul said around 11,500 conservancy workers were cleaning DNCC areas. Cleaning the city was possible due to cooperation of city dwellers, he added.

He said they have set up a control room at Gulshan Nagar Bhaban and were using it and their "Shobar Dhaka" app to clean the city.

He said they have distributed 6.5 lakh garbage bags, 50 tonnes of bleaching powder, and five-litre sized 1,500 containers of disinfectant to residents.

Meanwhile, around 9,990

conservancy workers were cleaning DSCC areas, said its officials, adding that they have distributed 30 tonnes of bleaching powder, 1.20 lakh garbage bags and 1,800-litre disinfectant to residents.

Although Dhaka's two city corporations cleaned up most of the areas, animal waste was seen at some places on the third day of Eid.

During a visit to Old Dhaka's Dholaikhal, Sutrapur, Distillery Road and North South Road areas, animal waste was seen piled up at some points. Garbage management workers and dump trucks were active to clean the solid waste.

The places were still in a bad condition, as cattle markets were set up on the roads, said locals. Bad smell emanating from the piles spread throughout the areas.

Even after fully cleaning the city, the reality is that residents dump waste again at open spaces that were just cleaned, said Mayor Taposh.

He requested city dwellers to collect garbage bags, fill them with waste and give them to the workers.



Locals busy cleaning up animal waste in Dhaka University area on the afternoon of Eid while conservancy workers put the collected waste in their vehicles to quickly clear out the roads in the area. Due to the combined effort, most of the city areas were cleaned up within three days.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

3-DAY EID VACATION

16 lives lost on roads

STAR REPORT

At least 16 people were killed and 51 injured in road accidents during the three-day Eid holidays across the country, according to reports from our correspondents and a news agency.

In Rangpur, four people were killed and more than 30 injured in a collision between two buses in Taraganj upazila during Eid day on Wednesday. The condition of five of the injured were critical.

Police said a Dinajpur-bound bus collided head-on with a Dhaka-bound bus on Dinajpur-Rangpur highway near Taraganj Upazila Parishad around 2:30pm, killing three passengers and one of the drivers instantly.

In Cumilla, Asma Akter (23) died and three sustained injuries as a bus rammed a CNG-run auto-rickshaw on Cumilla-Sylhet highway in Boropukuria Debidwer area on Tuesday.

In another accident, biker Sajdul Haque Saju (30) and his daughter Khadiza Akter Saba (5) were killed as a covered-van hit the motorbike on Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Lalbag area on Wednesday.

On Thursday, Abdullah (5), son of Monir Hossain, died after a car skidded off a road in Ischapura area. The same day, a bus fatally ran over Komola Begum (65) at Sahidnagar bus stand while she was crossing

Dhaka-Chattogram highway.

In Lalmonirhat, Mezbah Ali (48) from Kaliganj upazila was killed when his motorcycle hit a tree beside Lalmonirhat-Burimari highway at Kakina on Wednesday.

In another accident, at least 15 people were injured as two buses collided on the highway in Saptibari area on Thursday.

In Kurigram, motorcyclist Ashraf Islam (42) from Chilmari upazila died in a collision with another bike on Kurigram-Chilmari road at Thababat on Wednesday.

In Meherpur, three people were killed and two others injured in a head-on collision between two motorcycles at Mujibnagar on

Wednesday, reports UNB.

The deceased are Shakil Hossain (22), Shamim Hossain (22) and Mostaq Hossain (20).

In Patuakhali, a university student and a microbus driver were killed and another was injured as the vehicle carrying them plunged into a ditch beside Patuakhali-Kuakata highway at Sharifbari bus stand in Sadar upazila on Thursday, said police.

Emrul Kabir (20), the university student in Dhaka, and Mahbub Hawlader from the upazila were declared dead at Patuakhali General Hospital. The injured – Emrul's mother Laiju Begum (40) – was undergoing treatment at the Hospital.

6 killed in Bagerhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

At least six people were killed and one was injured after a truck hit a battery-run three-wheeler in Fakirhat upazila of Bagerhat yesterday morning.

The accident took place around 7:45am in Beltali area on Khulna-Mawa highway.

The Dhaka-bound truck hit the three-wheeler coming from the opposite side killing six of its passengers on the spot, said Abu Sayid Md Khairul Anam, officer-in-charge of Fakirhat Model Police Station.

Golam Sarwar, deputy assistant director of Bagerhat fire service, said police and fire service recovered and sent the bodies to Fakirhat Health Complex.

Police arrested Osman Gani (20), the pick-up van driver, the OC said, adding, he was driving without licence.

Five of the six passengers have been identified. They are Abdul Hai (55), Utpal Raha (42), Nayan Dutt (21), Nazrul Sheikh (55) and Gourmanda Dey (50). The injured, Nur Mohammad, was taken to Khulna Medical College Hospital as his condition was critical.

Bagerhat Superintendent of Police KM Ariful Haque and Fakirhat Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Sanjida Begum also visited the spot after the incident, the OC said.



PHOTO COURTESY: PROTHOM ALO

The mangled battery-run three-wheeler after the accident that killed at least six people and injured one in Bagerhat yesterday morning.

Working to resume vaccine export to Bangladesh: envoy

UNB, B'aria

India is working to resume the export of Covid vaccine jabs to Bangladesh as vaccine production in India is growing rapidly, said Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Vikram Kumar Doraiswami yesterday.

He said this at Akhaura International Checkpost on his way back to Bangladesh from India in the morning.

The envoy said India is working to resume the vaccine supply to Bangladesh and the increased production of vaccine is a positive sign.

"Hopefully, we'll be able to send vaccine jabs to Bangladesh if vaccine production increases further. But I cannot give any specific date in this regard," he told journalists.

He also said India will be happy if it can cooperate more with Bangladesh in their fight against Covid-19.



Vikram Kumar Doraiswami

123 more dengue cases reported in 72 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 123 people with dengue fever were admitted to hospitals in the country during 72 hours till 8am yesterday.

Among the patients 85 were hospitalised yesterday while 25 and 13 on Thursday and Wednesday respectively.

With them, a total of 1,470 patients have been diagnosed with dengue this year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of the total infected, only 44 are from outside Dhaka.



With the onset of another nationwide lockdown, the major thoroughfares of the capital wore a deserted look yet again. Traffic sergeants and police officers were seen stationed at Farmgate intersection yesterday monitoring the area, with almost no vehicles in sight. If the restrictions are properly enforced, the scenario will remain the same for the next two weeks.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS