

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Purple-rumped Sunbird, Dhaka.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Watching the Sunbirds

Like a high-wire acrobat the tiny bird tiptoes forward on the thin horizontal hibiscus branch, step by step. The branch swings up and down with the bird's weight but the grip of its claws remains firm. As it approaches the flower terminating the branch, its patience runs out. Abandoning the circus act, it jumps up, hovers for a split second in the air, propels itself forward and lands on the flower's base. Opening its beak, it extends its needle-like tubular tongue and inserts it into the flower's base.

It takes two or three seconds to extract the nectar. Then it lifts its head, searches, and moves on to the next flower.

After a few months, I am on the rooftop again watching sunbirds. A quarter of our eleventh floor roof is covered with grass around which grow hibiscus, *rongon* and other flowering plants. The sunbirds come to drink the nectar of the flowers.

Bangladesh has six species of sunbird. Two species show up on this rooftop: Purple Sunbird and Purple-rumped Sunbird. The former is more frequent and easier to approach. The latter is an uncommon arrival, taking flight whenever it sees my camera.

Sometimes the sunbird arrives as if thrown like a basketball from the floor below, a pendulous movement lobbing it in a high arc before it drops like a stone onto its target plant. At other times it arrives in-your-face like an approaching airplane, flying in straight from a neighbouring rooftop.

And then it flits from plant to plant, flower to flower, sipping nectar, before taking off just as abruptly.

Not all of the rooftop sunbirds are equally attractive. The most beautiful

is the male Purple-rumped Sunbird, with a blue head, red and purple neck, yellow breast, and a patch of purple on its tail. The male Purple Sunbird is photogenic only part of the year when iridescent purple-blue feathers cover its body. But as summer and monsoon roll around, it disappoints. That's because after mating in spring, when its purple plumage is enhanced by a bright orange circle on its shoulder, it assumes "eclipse plumage" in monsoon when olive and yellow feathers cover its body. The only reminder of its springtime glory is a small blue patch on its shoulder.

Females and juveniles of both these sunbird species are brown. They are friendlier than males and easier to photograph. The juveniles, unfamiliar with the cruel ways of the world, can be slow and sit still for seconds or even minutes at the same spot. But no matter how friendly, I soon run out of patience with them because drab colours do not make pretty pictures.

Sometimes several sunbirds arrive together. They call loudly – *chwee-chwee-chwee* – to each other as they frolic among the flowers and chase each other. Once I saw the eclipse male sit on a high hibiscus and sing its heart out for several minutes. When the desired female did not show, it moved to another plant and resumed its call.

These two species of sunbirds can be found in gardens and parks of the city. If you want to look for them remember they are small, quick, and drawn to flowers.

facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow "ihtishamkabar" on Instagram.

Dengue cases keep rising

211 more hospitalised in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More and more dengue patients are requiring hospitalisation as the number of cases continues to rise across the country.

At least 211 people with dengue fever have been admitted to hospitals in the country during 24 hours, till 8am yesterday. Of them, only 1 person is from outside Dhaka.

With them, a total of 5,645 patients have been diagnosed with dengue this year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of the total infected, 261 are from outside Dhaka.

Among the total infected, 2,987 were diagnosed during the current month, which indicates the fast-rising trend of the disease.

At least 2,286 people were hospitalised across the country in July and 272 in June. In May, 43 people were infected with dengue.

Though most of the patients who were hospitalised have so far been released, 952 are still undergoing treatment at hospitals across the country, the DGHS data shows.

As the capital's public hospitals are overwhelmed with Covid patients, those with dengue were finding it hard to get admission there.

The growing number of dengue cases since last month has been an additional pressure for the hospitals.

DGHS spokesperson Dr Md Nazmul Islam recently said the dengue situation could turn alarming again, but it would be possible to face the situation if necessary measures are taken immediately.

'Still waiting for our first dose'

10 lakh registered vaccine seekers in uncertainty as port city centres run out of Moderna jabs

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Without prior notice, the vaccine centres across the port city have suddenly stopped administering Moderna vaccines. This has left around 10 lakh registered vaccine aspirants in disarray.

Among the 11 vaccination centres in the city, the service was only being provided by Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH), that too in a limited scale. The centres said they had to stop as they ran out of Moderna doses.

However, the situation was different outside the city, at upazila level, where Sinopharm vaccines are being administered. Sources said people received vaccines at all 14 vaccination centres in the 15 upazilas of the district on Thursday.

However, both areas continued providing the second dose of Oxford-AstraZeneca jabs to people.

According to sources inside Chattogram civil surgeon's office, a total of 2,390,754 people got registered in the district till Wednesday. Of them, 1,050,020 were from the city while the rest 1,340,734 were from upazilas.

Of the registered, around 14 lakh have been vaccinated, either for their first dose or second dose, said sources.

Those who received a single



People demonstrate at the gate of Chattogram General Hospital on Thursday as the authorities stopped the vaccination programme due to shortage of Moderna jabs. Police force had to be deployed in the area to control the situation.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

dose of vaccine are assured of being administered the second dose immediately but it is yet to be known when would be the registered freshers would get their first dose.

According to sources, around one lakh doses of AstraZeneca, 50,000 doses of Sinopharm, and 10,000 doses of Moderna were in stock in the district till Wednesday.

CMCH director Brig Gen SM Humayun Kabir said as the hospital had some stocks of

Moderna jabs remaining, they managed to continue first-dose activities at their centre Thursday.

Meanwhile, vaccine aspirants unaware of the authorities decision to stop vaccinations were seen gathering at different centres in the city Thursday.

At Chattogram General Hospital, several hundred vaccine aspirants were seen, some of whom even demonstrated after knowing vaccines weren't being administered.

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Since the lockdown, walls of the capital are gradually being covered with to-let posters, as droves of people, who have lost their income, have been moving across or even out of the city in search of more affordable accommodation. With educational institutes remaining closed, these two university students were seen putting up posters for shared accommodation, as those places are also becoming empty. This photo was taken from Malibagh area recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Cumilla councillor draws flak for giving jabs at her office



PHOTO: COLLECTED

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Despite not being authorised to do so, a Cumilla City Corporation councillor has administered Covid-19 vaccines to over a hundred people at her office on Thursday.

A photograph of Nadia Nasrin, a councillor from reserved ward 4, 5 and 6, administering Moderna vaccine to people at her office went viral on social media on Thursday and drew widespread criticism.

The councillor also came under severe criticism from city dwellers.

Contacted, Councillor Nasrin said she administered the Moderna vaccine to over a hundred people as the scheduled mass vaccination at Harun Primary School Centre was postponed.

She also claimed that she had received vaccination training and has a certificate in this regard. "No one lodged any complaint after being vaccinated by me," she said.

Meanwhile, a three-member probe committee has been formed by the civil surgeon's office to investigate the matter. The committee will submit a report today, said Mir Mubarak Hossain, civil surgeon of Cumilla.

"The councillor has no legal permission to administer vaccines to people. Also, she cannot take those vaccines to her office from the centre. The city corporation authorities have been informed about the matter," he added.

He also mentioned that the councillor was not part of the vaccination training programme in Cumilla.

Asked, the city corporation mayor Monirul Haque Sakku he will look into the matter.

The special mass vaccination programme started in Cumilla on August 9.

No one including cops above the law

Says home minister

UNB, Dhaka

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday said the police personnel who have connections with crimes will be punished as no one is above the law.

He said this during a food distribution programme organised by the north city unit of Awami League. "Those police personnel who got involved in crimes will be punished..."

There has been a lot of qualitative changes in the force over the last 10 years, he said. "This police force has played a very brave role in dealing with the pandemic."



Two students killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

Two students were killed in road accidents in two districts on Thursday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Dinajpur, a speeding truck fatally ran over a college student in Birganj upazila at night.

Sarwar Hossain (25) from Birganj's Jotraghu village was an honours fourth-year student of Dinajpur Government College, said police.

The accident occurred on Dinajpur-Panchagarh highway at Jodumor while Sarwar was going home on a motorcycle from the

upazila headquarters.

He succumbed to his injuries at Birganj Upazila Health Complex.

In Jhenidah, a schoolboy died after a truck crushed him in Hatgopalpur Bazar area in Sadar upazila in the morning, said police.

Likhon Hossain (9), son of Aslam Hossain from the upazila's Paikpara village, was a class four student of Paikpara Government Primary School.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy. They also seized the truck but the driver managed to flee.



For many, staying away from one's pets can be unbearable. Whenever this family takes a trip anywhere around the country, their pet birds accompany them during their travel, just to make sure the birds are cared for at all times. During this trip, a porter is helping them take the birds to their train at the capital's Kamalapur Railway Station on Wednesday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

NEWS IN brief

No security threat centring Aug 15: Rab director general

Bss, Dhaka

There is no security threat in the country centring August 15, National Mourning Day, said Rab Director General Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun yesterday.

"We have taken all out measures to maintain law and order and to deal with any kind of untoward situation," he said while distributing food among orphans at a programme.

Rab organised the event at Ranavola Jamia Islamia Orphanage and Madrasa at Uttara on the occasion of the martyrdom anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.



Some areas in Dhaka to see gas disruption today

UNB, Dhaka

Gas supply will remain suspended in different areas of the capital for 10 hours from 9am to 7pm today.

According to Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company, the areas include Boro Moghbazar, Taltala Gali, Jahabox Lane, Gabtala, Wahab Road, Nayatola, Chairman Gali, Modhubagh and their adjoining areas.

The consumers of the areas will either have no gas supply or experience low pressure in supply due to works on gas pipeline relocation, said Titas Gas.

Over 1.6 lakh under-trial prisoners released on bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 1,60,768 under-trial prisoners including 2,261 children were released from jails after they received bail from virtual courts across the country in 120 working days since May 11 last year to August 10 this year.

Supreme Court spokesperson Mohammad Saifur Rahman in a statement said yesterday bail petitions in connection with 3,15,568 criminal cases were disposed of through virtual hearings by the subordinate courts and tribunals during this period. A total of 9,622 accused were released from jails on bail since July 1 to August 10 this year.

Contacted, Saifur could not say how many accused including children are now in jail custody.

The regular activities of courts remained suspended for around eight months since March 25 last year due to the pandemic.