

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Namaqua Dove, Madagascar.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Doves and Pigeons

My most memorable encounter with a dove took place in Kalenga forest in Habiganj. After a long unproductive day I was about to exit the forest. Ahead on the trail was a small bridge. From nowhere a green Emerald Dove descended on the bridge and pattered around, perhaps ten feet from me. Here was a gorgeous bird, normally elusive, so close to my camera. In a minute or two it turned a dismal day into a joyful one.

Doves and pigeons of over 300 different species are spread around the globe. They belong to the bird family Columbidae. They are usually stocky, walk with a characteristic gait while rocking their head, and build flimsy nests from twigs. Eating fruits, seeds and plants, flocks often descend on trees such as banyan when they bear fruit.

Humans have a long history with this bird family. Along with religious significance, the white dove is also the international symbol of peace. Doves and pigeons are generally well-loved. Many species, such as Rock Pigeons, have adapted well to humans – almost too well when they nest in your home and become pests – but others such as Emerald Doves are shy and remain in the forest.

I grew up in Sylhet where Rock Pigeons (called *Jalali Kobutor* locally) were everywhere. Legend says they descended from a pair brought that arrived with the holy saint Hazrat Shahjalal. They nested in the eaves of the numerous bungalows in town and were never harmed in deference to the holy man. The Spotted Dove (*Tila Ghughu*) was also found in homes with trees, its sweet song reverberating through the air.

Bangladesh has 14 species of doves and pigeons from common to rare. I have seen perhaps ten of these, the Orange-breasted Green Pigeon being the most beautiful. Some species such as Mountain Imperial Pigeon are very hard to find. Several green pigeons – Thick-Billed, Wedge-tailed, Yellow-footed, Orange-breasted Green Pigeons – look quite similar. One has to look at the feet, the tail, the breast or the beak to distinguish between these *Horials*.

Outside Bangladesh, I saw a dizzying variety of doves and pigeons in Australia. They could be colourful (Fruit Dove), elegant (Imperial Pigeon), cute (Crested Pigeon), intriguing (Top-knot Pigeon), mundane (Peaceful Dove) or familiar (Emerald Dove.) Some came quite close, but the Fruit Doves were high up on trees and uncooperative.

In Madagascar I found the Namaqua Dove with spectacular wings. I watched it feed on grass seeds in a semi-arid patch. It was smaller and friendlier than other doves I have encountered. The island also had the only blue pigeon I have seen.

The Passenger Pigeon of North America is the most thoroughly documented extinct bird in the world. During the 1800s there were millions if not billions of them. A flock was so large it could darken the sky. Farmers hated them because they decimated fields they landed on. Indiscriminate killing led to their extinction. The last Passenger Pigeon, Martha, died in the Cincinnati Zoo in 1914. Its body has been preserved and can be seen in the Smithsonian.

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

SHOT BY POLICE, INCAPACITATED FOR LIFE

RMG worker Kanchon's struggle to stay alive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Kanchon Mia, a worker of Creative Collection Limited, an RMG factory owned by the conglomerate Ha-Meem Group, is fighting for his life at bed number five, ward-219 of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

While protesting for Eid holidays, Kanchon was shot with pellet guns at point blank range by police and became badly wounded.

The surgeons at DMCH removed as many as 101 pellets from his intestines, and a large part of his intestines and lower abdomen had to be removed surgically to save his life.

For the rest of his life, Kanchon will not be able to do any strenuous work, and since the first surgery, he passes urine and stool only through an external bag attached to his punctured abdomen.

The seven-member family, in which Kanchon was the only breadwinner, is fighting hard to gather enough money for Kanchon's treatment.

Kanchon's wife Fatema Begum said, "Since the first surgery, we've already spent more than Tk 3 lakh for his treatment, and we've sold our last belongings to collect this money. Every day, we have to change his stool bag, which costs Tk 1,000."

"Besides, he needs expensive medicines and nutritious food to recover. How can we buy him those when we don't have enough money to eat a square meal? My husband has become so thin that he looks like a skeleton," said a weeping Fatema.



The surgeons at DMCH removed as many as 101 pellets from his lower abdomen.

PHOTO COURTESY: TASLIMA AKHTER



Kanchon Mia is fighting for his life at DMCH.

PHOTO: STAR

On May 10 this year, workers of Creative Collection Limited were protesting at Tongi's Millgate area to extend their Eid holidays.

Police allegedly started firing pellets at the protesters without any provocation. Twelve workers of the factory, including Kanchon, were

injured by pellets.

According to Kanchon, he was shot twice. The second shot was fired from point-blank range and pierced his lower abdomen.

Kanchon recounted this horrific incident, "After getting hit by pellets for the first time, I fell on



Demanding due wages for jute mill workers, reopening of jute and sugar mills, and bringing out properly designed battery-rickshaws, Sramik Krishak Chhatra Janata Oikya Parishad organised a rally at Khulna city's Khalishpur area yesterday. Hundreds of workers of jute mills that are currently closed and rickshaw pullers in Khulna participated in the rally.

PHOTO: STAR

Four arrested over killing of univ student

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested four people on Thursday over the killing of a 24-year-old university student.

The student died after a mugger stabbed him at Tejgaon on Tuesday night. Police said Keshob Ray Papon, who studied at Sonargaon University, was attacked as he grabbed one of the five muggers soon after they snatched his cellphone.

Police said this on Thursday, hours after Jewel (18), Jahangir alias Muttu Jahangir (35) and Nuruzzaman alias Mamun (23).

Besides, Rab arrested another Md Tuhin at Tongi, Gazipur.

Mohammad Shahidullah, deputy commissioner of Tejgaon Division of Dhaka police, told a press briefing that they had identified five snatchers from CCTV footages.

Keshob, from Taraganj in Rangpur, used to work part-time at a courier service office to support his studies, said Keshob's younger brother Sumendra Chandra Ray.

Sumendra, a construction worker, told The Daily Star that his brother came under attack near Purnima Cinema around 9pm while he was returning to his Monipuripara residence by his bicycle after work.

No Durga Puja at Kalabagan field this year

DSCC cites development project as reason; Puja committee to protest if decision not altered



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) will not allow Dhanmondi Sarbojonin Puja Committee to organise Durga Puja festivities at the capital's Kalabagan playground this year.

Although the Hindu community received permission from the LGRD ministry, the supervisory body of DSCC, to construct a makeshift temple at the grounds, the city corporation authorities have stated otherwise, citing that a development project is going on there.

"We got permission from the ministry on October 3, after which we arranged equipment and other materials to set the puja mandap on the playground. But officials from DSCC did not allow us to enter," said Shyamal Shaha, organising secretary of Dhanmondi Sarbojonin Puja Committee.

"We are currently in a state of confusion regarding whether we will be able to hold

the puja there. We only have a few days remaining before the puja," he told The Daily Star.

DSCC spokesperson Md Abu Naser, in a press statement yesterday, said they withheld permission as they have been developing the playground and beautifying surrounding areas since 2018 and have a target to complete the work by December.

DSCC will set up a kids' zone with 29 rides, and will name the park Sheikh Shaheed Russel Shishu Park, he stated.

The statements and allegations of the puja committee are misleading, and clearly show ill-motive to tarnish the image of the city corporation, he argued.

The claim of the committee, that it received permission from the LGRD ministry, is misleading, as the permission was contingent upon the condition that the establishment will not be harmed in any way, he said.

Naser said they had given permission for

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President leaves for Germany

BSS, Dhaka

President M Abdul Hamid is scheduled to leave Dhaka today for a 12-day visit to Germany and the United Kingdom for health checkup and treatment.

"A VIP flight of Qatar Airways carrying the president will depart Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport early tomorrow [today]," president's press secretary Md Joynal Abedin told BSS yesterday.

Abdul Hamid is scheduled to undergo his health checkup at Charite University Hospital in Germany and Eye Hospital in London.

"The head of the state is expected to return home by an aircraft of Biman Bangladesh Airlines on October 22," the press secretary added.

DENGUE UPDATE



Death toll 73

4 died in Oct so far

23 in Sept, 34 in Aug, 12 in July

150 more hospitalised yesterday

Total infected 19,694

SOURCE: DGHS

BALASHPUR MADHYAPARA IN MYMENSINGH CITY

Waterlogged for four months a year!

MD AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

For around four months a year -- from June to September -- thousands of residents of Balashpur Madhyapara area in Mymensingh city have to sit through debilitating waterlogging.

"I have been living in this area for 35 years. The waterlogging is a yearly phenomenon here during monsoon," said grocery shop owner M o h a m m a d Sultan.

After every spell of heavy or moderate rainfall, the entire area gets flooded with ankle or knee-deep water for several days, said Sultan.

If the showers continue for a few days, then the courtyards of most houses go under water, said sand trader Abdus Samad.

Locals alleged the situation took a turn for the worse after the construction of the Balashpur Madhyapara road in 2013, which they say was done without proper planning.

They said the area's water used to go down a drain which was connected to the neighbouring Kewatkhali area's Railway Power House Colony's drain. From there, the water used to flow into the Brahmaputra river.

But with the passing of time, the drain got blocked for various reasons and has remained that way for many years.

"No one has taken an initiative to free up this important pathway for

rainwater," said Md Saidur Rahman, a BAU employee.

The area hosts 2,000 families, with the total population numbering around 10,000, locals told this correspondent.

The situation is so dire that residents have to travel to the main road on rafts made of banana leaves before they can get on rickshaws, said Golam Mustafa, an employee at Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU).

Abdul Jobber, president of local Aman Jame Mosque, said the flooding makes it difficult for devotees to attend prayers and students to attend classes on time.

Locals said before every national and local election, candidates visit and throw around pledges to solve the crisis, but none of them have followed up. They said they have informed incumbent ward commissioner Abbas Ali Mondol several times, but to no avail.

Contacted, Mondol did not hesitate to admit the chronic problem, but said a project is underway to mitigate it.

However, Md Anwar Hossain, chief executive officer of Mymensingh City Corporation, laid a part of the blame on the construction of unplanned houses in the city's new areas.

"Our engineering department has started a feasibility study on waterlogging in the city. Necessary steps will be taken after that," said the CEO.



PHOTO: COLLECTED