



3 KASHFUL SPOTS to visit this autumn

JAWWAD SAMI NEOGI

It is simple to understand why so many people fall in love with the autumn season here in Bangladesh. The blossoms, blue sky, and the cotton-like clouds look nothing less than a watercolour painting. One of the most beautiful elements of this season is the Kans Grass or kashful as we call it in Bengali.

During this season, many people seek to visit places where kashful blooms to enjoy a wonderful time in nature, often with their families. Photography enthusiasts also flock to these places and find themselves capturing scenic frames. The layers of kashful create an ideal background while capturing the beauty of autumn.

With that in mind, here are 3 kashful locations, in and around Dhaka, that are recommendable for anyone looking to experience the magic of the season.



PHOTO: JAWWAD SAMI NEOGI

DIABARI

The area has become a popular destination for its stunning natural beauty. In autumn, the beauty of Diabari intensifies, with a huge area covered in kashful, offering a vibrant and peaceful atmosphere.

Metro rail has made it much easier to visit Diabari. After hopping off the station, you can take a short ride using local vehicles for just Tk 30-50 to reach the kashful location.

Diabari is not limited to kashful spots only. There is nagordola, balloon shooting, kayaking, horse riding – you name it. There is also an open-space food court nearby.

AFTABNAGAR

Aftabnagar is basically a residential area in Rampura. The kashful spots, often referred to as the “last stop” or the “kashful place” by locals, are a Tk 50-60 rickshaw fare away from the Aftabnagar entrance.

The last part of Aftabnagar has empty fields where the kashful grows. Families gather around the spots when it's afternoon. Teenagers also play football in these empty spaces.

SARIGHAT

Although Sarighat is not inside Dhaka, it is located very close to Dhaka – just on the other side of the Buriganga. Sarighat, Keraniganj is an excellent spot for a day tour. It attracts a large number of visitors, especially on weekends, enjoying lush greenery, kashful fields, and boat-riding. There are a number of eateries in and around the area.

You may take a car or even a CNG-run auto-rickshaw from Dhaka. Or, take a bus to Hasnabad and then a CNG ride to the destination, costing you less than Tk 250.

So, be it an escape to Sarighat or outings to Diabari or Aftabnagar, make the most of this season by surrounding yourself with the immense beauty that is kashful.

Night guard stabbed to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A night guard has been stabbed to death in Dhaka's Mohammadpur, allegedly for stopping a known drug addict from stealing construction materials.

The deceased, Rabiul Islam, 35, was on duty on Road 3 of Dhaka Udyan around 11:30pm on Thursday when he was attacked, said Inspector Md Faruk, in charge of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) police outpost.

Hearing his screams, his colleagues, and locals rushed to his aid. They initially took him, with stab wounds in his chest, to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital.

He was later shifted to DMCH, where he died of his injuries around 12:45am on Friday, said Inspector Faruk.

Rabiul had been working as a night guard in the area for the last three to four years, said Abdul Hannan, a supervisor of Dhaka Udyan.

Motorcyclist run over, killed by truck

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was killed after a truck hit his motorcycle and ran him over on Dhaka's Elephant Road on Thursday night.

The deceased, Fuad Hossain, 32, from Lalmohan upazila of Bhola district, was a driver for Al Noor Eye Hospital in Mohammadpur.

After finishing work on Thursday evening, he was riding his motorcycle home when a truck hit him from behind in front of Multiplan Centre market on Elephant Road.

Fuad was thrown off the bike and subsequently run over by the same truck. Bystanders rescued him and took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition around midnight, said Inspector Md Faruk, in charge of the DMCH Police Camp.

Doctors pronounced him dead while receiving treatment the same night, said Faruk.

Russian strikes kill four in Ukraine's Odesa region

AFP, Kyiv

Russian strikes overnight on the southern Ukrainian region of Odesa killed four people, including a teenage girl, and wounded 10 more, the regional governor said yesterday.

Russia has targeted Ukraine's coastal Odesa region throughout the war, hitting cargo ships and grain silos in what Kyiv says is an attempt to destroy its export capacity.

“The enemy attacked the Odesa region with ballistic missiles. Four people were killed, including a teenager,” the regional governor Oleg Kiper wrote on social media.

He said a two-storey building had been destroyed in the attack and that the victims included a 43-year-old woman, a 22-year-old man and a 16-year-old girl.

“Another woman died in hospital from her injuries,” Kiper said, adding that 10 people had been wounded.

Video from the scene of the attack distributed by first responders showed emergency workers retrieving bodies from the rubble of the destroyed building by lamplight.

Russian forces have stepped up attacks on southern Ukraine recently, including strikes that have damaged civilian vessels at ports in the Odesa region.

Ukraine was one of the largest exporters of grain in the world before Russia's invasion in February 2022 but repeated attacks on its port and storage facilities have severely curbed its output.

6 police units

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An insider said officers now lack confidence and morale because they are concerned about getting sudden transfer orders.

“I cannot focus on my work properly because I do not know when I will be transferred. If there is a new chief, and I am told that I will not be transferred anytime soon, I will get a morale boost,” said a CID officer.

The Industrial Police has been without a chief since August 22 when Mahabubor Rahman was forced to go on retirement; the Tourist Police has been without a boss since September 2 when Mir Rezaul Alam was asked to retire; and the Highway Police has been without a chief since October 9 when Shahabuddin Khan was forced to retire.

Special Branch chief Shah Alam went on retirement on October 3.

That was also the day he was promoted to additional inspector general. He and five other officers of the 12th BCS batch got the promotions because they were “deprived” during the Awami League's tenure.

Sources at the Police Headquarters said the five officers – Matiuur Rahman Sheikh, Alamgir Alam, Delwar Hossain, Sarder Tamiz Uddin Ahmed and Abdullah Al Mahmud – may be posted as the chiefs of those units next week.

Poor, middle class in a tight corner

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Mushliq Mia, a rickshaw puller from Paschim Tejgunipara, expressed worries about the soaring vegetable prices.

“Meat and fish have already become too expensive for us. If the vegetables also become unaffordable, what will we eat? How can I support my family?” he told The Daily Star at the Karwan Bazar kitchen market.

Echoing these worries, Jashim Uddin, a private job holder, said his daughter loves tomato curries, but he cannot buy tomatoes for Tk 260 per kg.

“Just three weeks ago, I bought tomatoes for Tk 160 per kg, and last week, they were over Tk 200.”

He alleged that the new government is indifferent to the price hike of vegetables.

“We haven't seen any effective measures from the government, apart from some drives in the kitchen markets. Prices of essentials will not come down unless the government dismantles the traders' syndicates,” Jashim Uddin said at Karwan Bazar.

Traders blamed incessant rain over the last few days and flash floods in some vegetable growing districts for the price hike.

Round aubergine was being sold for Tk 180-200 per kg, a rise from Tk 160-180 just a week ago and Tk 100-140 from a month earlier.

Long beans were selling for Tk 120-160 a kg, up from Tk 80-100 last week and Tk 60-80 a month ago.

Bitter gourd was priced at Tk 100-

120 per kg, compared to Tk 80-100 the previous week and Tk 70-80 a month back.

Green papaya costs Tk 50-60 per kg, up from Tk 35-40 a week ago and Tk 25-30 a month earlier.

Prices of leafy greens have also increased, with each bundle weighing 250-300 grams sold for at least Tk 30 yesterday, up from Tk 10-20 a month ago.

Green chillies was priced at Tk 360-440 per kg yesterday, up from Tk 320-400 a week ago and Tk 240-320 a month earlier.

Abu Jalor, a vegetable wholesaler at Karwan Bazar, claimed that incessant rain and flash floods damaged vegetable crops at different parts of the country, contributing to the price hikes.

The prices of broiler and Sonali chickens have also gone up, with broiler chicken selling for Tk 200-220 per kg yesterday, up from Tk 180-200 last week and Tk 170-180 a month ago.

Sonali chicken is now priced at Tk 280-300 per kg, an increase from Tk 260-280 a week ago and Tk 240-250 a month back.

However, egg prices have remained unchanged this week compared to last week. Eggs were being sold for Tk 160-180 per dozen, up from Tk 150-160 a month ago.

Hilsa fish has long been out of reach for the ordinary people. Hilsa was being sold for Tk 2,100 per kg (each piece weighing 1 kg), a rise from Tk 1,700 last week and Tk 1,600 a month back.

Ghulam Rahman, former president of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh, yesterday said traders attributing the price hike to rain and flash floods was merely an excuse.

“We need to verify whether flash floods have affected the vegetable-growing regions. If not, then it is just an excuse.”

He suggested increasing supply and fostering competition among the traders.

“If we can ensure competition among the traders, the prices of essentials will come down,” he said.

He urged the government to take necessary measures, including strict market monitoring, to keep the prices of essential affordable.

‘SYNDICATES DRIVING UP EGG PRICES’

Fisheries and Livestock Adviser Farida Akhtar yesterday urged the government to declare eggs as an essential food item, reports the UNB.

Speaking at an event marking World Egg Day 2024 at the capital's Krishibid Institution Bangladesh, she said eggs should be available for all citizens, regardless of their income or social background.

Blaming syndicates for driving up egg prices, the adviser said that the government is taking measures to address the issue.

“Market inspections are going on, and wholesale prices [of eggs] have already started to fall. Prices will be stable soon,” she added.

2 held over song calling for Islamic revolution

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incident hurt religious sentiments of the Hindus.

Durga Puja at the JM Sen Hall is organised by Bangladesh Puja Ujapan Parishad's Chattogram city unit.

In an overnight drive, CMP arrested Shahidul Karim, 42, a teacher of Tanzimul Ummah Madrasa, and Md Nur Islam, 34, a teacher of Darul Irfan Madrasa in the city.

Meanwhile, Sukanta Bikash Mahajan, finance secretary of the parishad's Chattogram city unit, filed a case with Kotwali Police Station yesterday evening against the six performers and a leader of the parishad for hurting religious sentiments, said Fazlul Kader Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of the station.

Besides Shahidul and Nurul, the performers were Abdullah Iqbal, 30, Rony, 28, Golam Mostafa, 27, and Mohammad Mamun, 36. Joint General Secretary Sajal Dutta of the parishad's Chattogram city unit, who reportedly permitted the performers to use the stage, is the other accused in the case.

At a press conference in the CMP headquarters yesterday, its Deputy Commissioner (crime and operations) Roish Uddin said they were interrogating the arrestees and trying to arrest the others.

He said some members of Chattogram Cultural Academy sang two songs at the cultural programme “at the request of” Sajal.

It was presumed that some words of one of the songs hurt religious

sentiments, and it went viral on the social media, he said.

He added that police identified the performers and arrested two.

The CMP official said they were quizzing the two and trying to find whether there was any ill intention behind singing the songs and whether they had any political affiliation.

Police were also looking for Sajal, who went into hiding right after the incident, he added.

Meanwhile, Chattogram city unit of Bangladesh Puja Ujapan Parishad expelled Sajal for allowing the six to perform the songs.

In a press statement yesterday, the organisation said it held Sajal solely responsible for the incident, which hurt religious sentiments of the Hindus.

Sukanta told The Daily Star that they have divided cultural events into two parts each day from Maha Saptami to Maha Nabami during the Durga Puja. One is held from 4:00pm to 8:00pm and the other afterwards.

“Thursday's incident happened during the day's first programme where students of different cultural academies usually perform, but the name of Chattogram Cultural Academy was not on the list,” he said.

Sukanta added that he came to know that Sajal, at the request of his business partner, allowed Chattogram Cultural Academy to perform without the knowledge of other committee members.

Another organiser, wishing anonymity, said the performers wanted to perform a patriotic song and Sajal might have permitted them

in good faith.

Within hours of the incident, Hindu devotees, mostly youths, from different puja mandaps of the port city rushed to the spot and demonstrated for several hours against the incident, pointing the finger at the organisers.

The situation at the puja mandap was calm yesterday, with Maha Ashtami rituals held in a befitting and usual manner.

The organisers, however, cancelled yesterday's first cultural event from 4:00pm to 8:00pm, as the listed cultural organisations expressed unwillingness to perform, said Sukanta.

In another development, Bangladesh Puja Ujapan Parishad condemned the “untoward” incident.

In a statement, it said the Hindu people were deeply saddened by the incident. It demanded that the culprits be brought to book after a judicial probe into the incident.

“The government has taken necessary steps so that Durga Puja is celebrated in a peaceful manner. But such incidents could foil the efforts and thus the government, the army, law enforcement agencies, and students should join hands in this regard. There is no alternative to doing so,” reads the statement.

In a late development, the central committee of the Bangladesh Puja Ujapan Parishad yesterday relieved its Chattogram city unit President Ashish Bhattacharya and General Secretary Hillol Dey from their posts for failing to perform their responsibilities properly.

A project destined to fall into ruin

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construction cost of each semi-brick building at Tk 1.71 lakh.

After this, in the fourth phase, four more houses were built with the construction cost of each home at Tk 2.90 lakh.

An NGO built another 10 tin-roofed houses with concrete basements on the char at an estimated construction cost of Tk 15-20 lakh in total following the government project.

In the last month, 10 homesteads under the Ashrayan project on the river island were lost in the river because of erosion.

The residents demolished another 39 houses and removed the bricks, roofs, and other materials.

Those living in the remaining 30 houses are now seeking to shift to safe places.

Jahanara Begum, 60, a beneficiary of the project, said she had never lived in a brick house before and got the semi-pucca home two years ago.

“But as the river bank is eroding sharply, this house is no longer useful. Now I don't want this kind of brick house any more. If possible, the government should build a tin-roofed house in another safer place,” she said.

Sajeda Begum, 40, said they were very happy to get the house two years ago. “We had cropland around the village. We started a happy life there. The river was about two kilometres away from the house. But in the last year, all the croplands have gone into the river. Now the houses given by the government are also going.”

Anecha Begum, 65, has been living in a house of the project for a year after the original resident abandoned it out of fear of river erosion.

“We have to leave this char again and take shelter in another char, as

the river erosion is taking a dangerous turn,” she said.

The residents alleged that the local administration implemented the project under pressure from Shawkat Ali, the former chairman of Chaluabari Union Parishad.

Shawkat went into hiding after the fall of the Awami League government while officials of the local administration were transferred.

When asked why government shelter project houses were built in a disaster-prone area like a char, Shahriar Rahman, acting upazila nirbahi officer of Sariakandi and assistant commissioner (land), also blamed Shawkat for choosing the char for the project.

Shawkat was a member of the project implementation committee.

“Besides, the residents of the char also demanded that project for them there,” said Shahriar.

Nazmul Haque, executive engineer of the Water Development Board in Bogura, told this correspondent that they always advise the district administration not to construct any paved or semi-paved infrastructure in the char areas.

“But still, these infrastructures were built on the char. However, we shall visit the area and try to find out what to do,” he added.

The residents said no measure to stop the erosion will be sustainable since the current directly hits the char.

When asked what efforts will be taken to rehabilitate the families affected by the erosion, acting UNO Shahriar said, “We have spoken to the higher authorities about these families. Now, we intend to rehabilitate these families as per their needs elsewhere according to the government allocation.”

Japanese anti-nuke group wins Nobel Peace Prize

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“The hibakusha help us to describe the indescribable, to think the unthinkable, and to somehow grasp the incomprehensible pain and suffering caused by nuclear weapons,” the committee said.

“I can't believe it's real,” Nihon Hidankyo co-chair Toshiyuki Mimaki told a press conference in Hiroshima, site of the August 6, 1945 atomic bombing during the closing stages of World War Two, as he held back tears and pinched his cheek.

Mimaki, a survivor himself, said the award would give a major boost to its efforts to demonstrate that the abolition of nuclear weapons was necessary and possible and faulted governments for waging wars even as their citizens yearned for peace.

“The win will be a great force to appeal to the world that the abolition of nuclear weapons and everlasting peace can be achieved,” he said. “Nuclear weapons should absolutely be abolished.”

In Japan, hibakusha, many of whom carried visible wounds from radiation burns or developed radiation-related diseases such as leukaemia, were often forcibly segregated from society and faced discrimination when seeking employment or marriage in the years following the war.

“They are a group of people delivering the message to the world, so as a Japanese I think this is truly wonderful,” Tokyo resident Yoshiko Watanabe told Reuters, as she wept openly in the street.

Without naming specific countries, Joergen Watne Frydnes, chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, warned that nuclear nations should not contemplate using atomic weapons.

“In a world ridden (with) conflicts, where nuclear weapons is definitely part of it, we wanted to highlight the importance of strengthening the nuclear taboo, the international norm, against the use of nuclear weapons,” Frydnes told Reuters.