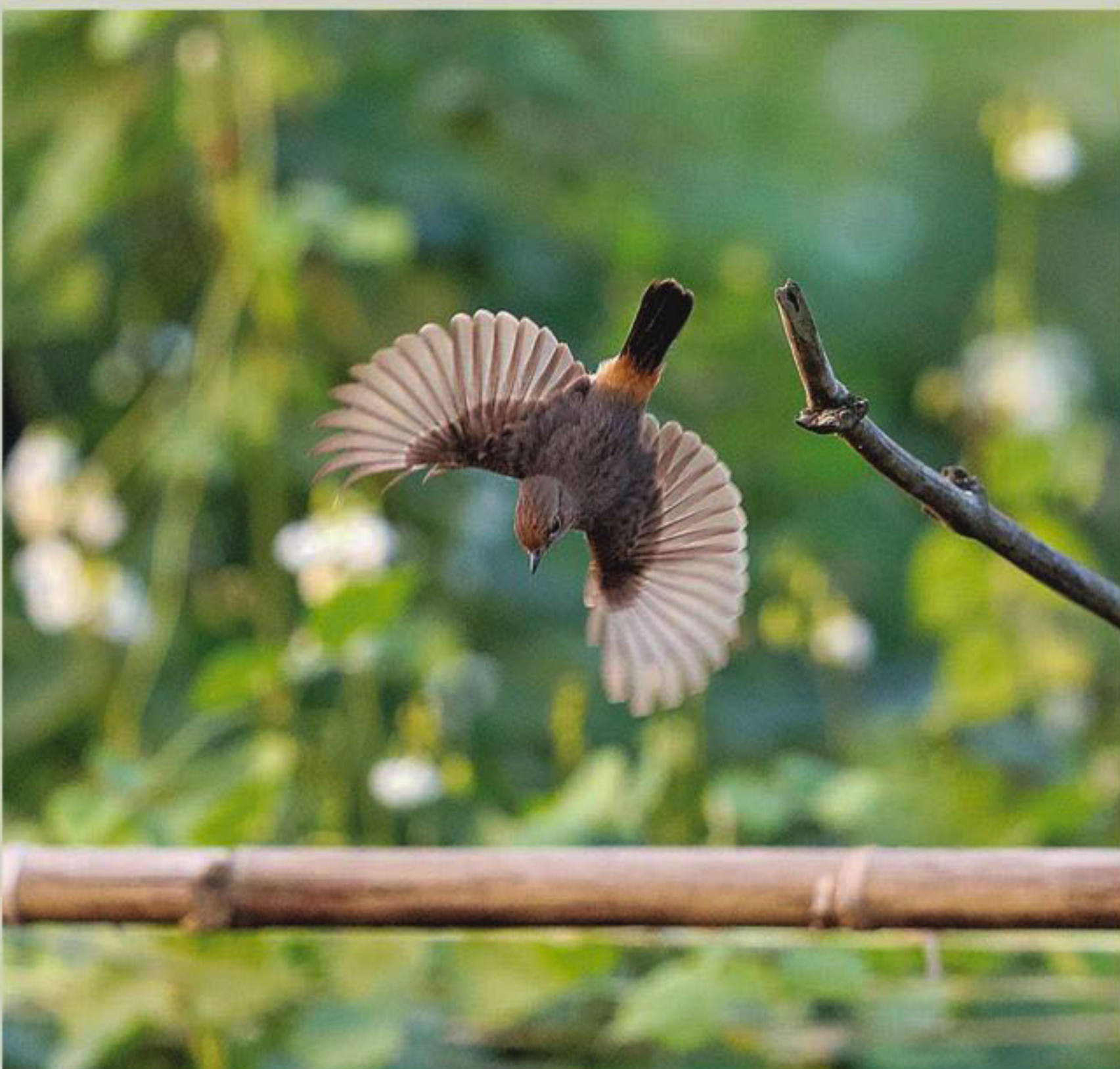


TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Flycatcher diving for insect.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Scales of Time

The other day I was watching a flycatcher catch insects. From its perch atop a bamboo pole, it repeatedly dove down to the grass with an agile aerial manoeuvre. In flight, its wings took on many fleeting shapes which my eyes could not catch. After scampering rapidly on the ground, it returned to its perch, but it had eaten the prey on its way up. My eyes saw it fly down and return to the perch, but could barely discern what went on in between.

Indeed, there is a limit to the speed at which our eyes and brains distinguish and comprehend events. From childhood we operate on a scale of time commensurate with human anatomical abilities. We learn to value, manage and utilize the time allotted to us. We learn the all-important lesson: there is nothing more valuable in our life than the time we are given on this planet. Time for us has a horizon on the scale of the human life expectancy, around 6-9 decades. Further, we tailor our repetitive activities around the period our planet takes to make a complete rotation on its axis. Finally, gravity – the time it takes for things to fall – helps us fine-tune our scale of time.

But this scale of time can be very different for other forms of life.

For example, the small fly called midge lives only a day or two as an adult. Butterflies have an average life span of two weeks. On the other hand, some of the bristlecone pine trees of North America have been alive for over 5000 years.

Because we have so many daily tasks

and hectic schedules, we often forget about these different scales of time. However, when we step out of our daily routines, such as hiking outdoors in nature, we can appreciate the scales of time.

In *The Wild Places*, a book about spending time in nature, the author Robert MacFarlane mentions this sense of time when he is hiking in a remote valley in Scotland: "... [the valley] kept many different kinds of time, and not all of them were slow...the sudden drop of a raven, the veer of water around a rock, the darts of the damselflies...but it was the great chronologies of [the valley's] making which had worked upon my mind most powerfully."

The scale of geological time is difficult for us to comprehend. It was during Darwin's era that scientists discovered how incredibly long it had taken for our planet to mature in a geological sense. This revelation had a profound impact on Darwin's thoughts.

One reason photography fascinates me is because it allows me to peek outside the human scale of time. Perhaps the most famous example is Eadward Muybridge's photographic study, around 1872, of horses in motion. Up until then, painters had depicted galloping horses with two feet on the ground, but Muybridge's photographs proved what the eye could not see – that all four hooves of a galloping horse are lifted from the ground during some point of its motion.

facebook.com/tangents.ikabir

Gazipur city mayor gets freed from jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Suspended mayor of Gazipur City Corporation (GCC) MA Mannan was freed on bail from Kashipur jail yesterday afternoon.

Subrata Kumar Bala, senior jail super of Kashipur Central Jail-1, said Mannan was released around 1:00pm after his bail order reached the jail.

Mannan had been in the jail since April 16 last year.

Hundreds of BNP leaders and activists thronged the jail gate, and received the suspended mayor with flowers.

Advocate Shahiduzzaman, president of Gazipur District Bar, said Mannan would be admitted to a private hospital in Dhaka. Mannan, also an adviser

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'BCL men' beat journo at Rokeya university

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Bangladesh Chhatra League men allegedly beat up a journalist at Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur on Thursday afternoon.

Sajib Hossain, 22, a BRUR correspondent of jagobdnews.org and a public administration student of the university, took treatment at a local hospital after he was hit with tree branches, he said.

The BCL activists also threatened him with dire consequences if the incident is published, he added.

Witnesses said the attack was carried out after Sajib reached the campus when the BCL men of the university unit were with admission seekers.

Police detained Maruf Bhuiyan, assistant general secretary of the unit; Al-Amin, organising secretary; and Partha Pramanik, an activist, on the spot, said Ershad Ali, in-charge of BRUR police outpost.

They were, however, released as no case was filed immediately.

BRUR Journalists Association submitted a written complaint to the proctor yesterday, said its President Tapan Kumar Roy.

Vice Chancellor Prof AKM Nurun Nabi asked Proctor Mir Tamanna Siddiqua, who got the complaint, to investigate the incident.

Denying the allegations, Partha said they just had an altercation with Sajib over a trifling matter. The other three were not available for comments.

The unit President Mostafa Mahmud Hasan could not be contacted as he did not respond to phone calls.

CONSERVATION OF SUNDARBANS

Campaigners make global appeal to stop Rampal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports has appealed to global environmental organisations with a call for observing January 7 as a global day to protest Rampal coal-fired power plant project to save the world's largest mangrove forest Sundarbans.

In a statement, the committee said, "We believe the observance of a global day would strengthen our unity, uphold our common spirit, and take our struggle to a new level... We believe that the global solidarity would also open up the opportunity to create worldwide awareness for environment and ecology-friendly power generation and sustainable development..."

The Sundarbans, to preserve its outstanding universal value, now demands global public action for its

survival. The joint project of Bangladesh and India for the 1,320MW power plant has become a deadly threat for the survival of the forest, says the statement.

"Let us raise our voice together on January 7, 2017 in different parts of the world to save the Sundarbans and to make a step forward to save our Mother Earth from projects of mass destruction," the committee said in its appeal.

Earlier on November 26, 2016, it made the call for observing the global day from a grand rally at Dhaka's Central Shaheed Minar, which was joined by more than 15,000 people from different parts of the country.

As part of the protest, the national committee appealed to all the citizens in the world to stage demonstrations, form human chains, send written appeals to the missions of Bangladesh and India,

and organise cycle, boat processions. It also urged them for arranging theatre, songs, making cartoons, masks, and appealing to the United Nations to stop the project.

In a release sent to the press, the national committee also said at least 33 organisations from India sent letters of solidarity to them following their call.

In the letter, they said, "We, people's movements and other civil society organisations from India, extend our support and solidarity to the National Committee in their struggle against the Rampal power project and to protect the Sundarbans. Sundarbans is part of the culture and ethos of both Bangladesh and India, supporting the livelihood of millions and protecting them from natural calamities. Any damage to it either side of the borders will result in monumental disaster."

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A good number of visitors pour into Dhaka International Trade Fair in the city's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar on the first weekend of the month-long fair yesterday, which started on January 1.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Ruet sees record number of vacant spots

Authorities to sit Jan 10 to decide what to do

ANWAR ALL, Rajshahi

A record number of spots in undergraduate courses at the Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (Ruet) have remained vacant this academic session.

A total of 647 students have enrolled while 228 spots remained vacant till closing of the admission process for 2016-17 honours courses in 14 departments on December 29, said Prof Abdus Sobhan, president of the admission committee.

"...only a couple of seats remain vacant normally at every department," he told The Daily Star.

Vice-Chancellor (VC) Prof Rafiqul Alam Beg said there was no "fault" in the admission process, the same process of previous years.

"We selected the best students for admission but the chosen students preferred other universities," he said.

Around 13,000 students applied for admission and Ruet selected 8,000 to sit for

the admission test on October 26. It published the merit list on October 31 naming 2,498 students.

However, all the available spot in four departments -- electrical and electronic engineering, mechanical engineering, computer science and engineering, and electrical and computer engineering -- have been taken up.

The vacant spots are in the departments of newly opened glass and ceramics engineering, urban and regional planning, and material science engineering (90); architecture (26), chemical and food process engineering (24), electronics and telecommunication engineering (40) and four others (48).

The admission committee forwarded the matter to the academic committee, which would sit on January 10 to take a decision, said the VC. He said classes would begin on January 14.

DCC MARKET FIRE BNP blames ruling party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday blamed that the fire at Gulshan-1 DCC market was an "act of sabotage" and blamed the ruling party for its hands behind the fire.

"It was an act of sabotage and the ruling party's link was behind the fire," BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Rizvi Ahmed made the allegation at a press conference at the party's Nayapaltna central office in the capital.

The BNP leader urged all to be vigilant so that the businessmen were not evicted from the market.

"Business leaders have already rejected the government's probe committee."

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4 'Jamaat men' held with bombs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Police arrested four alleged Jamaat-e-Islami activists with eight crude bombs in South Buruj Bangan village under Sharsha upazila of Jessore yesterday.

The arrestees are Noor Hossain, 40, Abdus Salam, 47, Akkel Ali, 45, Tipu Sultan, 47. All hail from Pantapara village.

On information that some local Jamaat activists were gathering at the residence of Nur Hossain to plot subversive activities, police raided the house and arrested them, said Moniruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Sharsha Police Station.

A case was filed.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION

China to train 581 teachers in phases

First batch joins programme in Guangzhou

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

China will provide training to 581 teachers and officials of Bangladesh's technical education sector in phases under a partnership agreement signed last November.

As part of the agreement, a 10-day training of the first batch of teachers and officials began at Guangzhou in China yesterday, said a press release issued by the education ministry.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid inaugurated the training at Guangzhou Industry and Trade Technician College.

The main objective of the agreement is to improve the quality and relevance of technical education through encouraging innovation within institutes, and to enhance the technical and institutional capacity of the Technical-Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Bangladesh.

Under the agreement signed between Bangladesh's Skills and Training Enhancement Project (STEP) and China's Guangzhou Industry and Trade Technician College, 20 teachers and officials of different batches will be given either 10-day or 21-day training in phases, said the press release.

Inaugurating the training programme, the minister said the present government had put the highest priority on boosting technical education.

The enrolment rate of students in technical education had been increasing rapidly for the last few years, which now stands at around 14 percent, the minister said, adding that the government's target was to take the enrolment rate to 20 percent by 2020 and 30 percent by 2030.

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The Daily Star
18th 'O' & 'A' Level
Award Presentation Ceremony, 2015-2016

Announcement for 'O' & 'A' Level
Private Candidates and Schools

Private Candidates
Private candidates who fulfill the criteria described below are requested to register their names at *The Daily Star* for inclusion as awardees. The criteria to be fulfilled are as follows:

Criteria for 'O' Level
Minimum 6 (six) 'A' grades in two consecutive sittings within May/June 2015 to May/June 2016

Criteria for 'A' Level
Minimum 3 (three) 'A' grades within 1 academic year (May/June 2015 to May/June 2016)

Eligible candidates are requested to contact Mr. Sheikh Yasir Arafat at *The Daily Star* 64-65, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215, with their **original Results Certificates and a photocopy and 2 (two) passport-size photographs** in person on **29,30 or 31 January, 2017**, between **12:00 noon and 5:00 pm**.

Schools
Any school that has students meeting the above criteria but has not been contacted by *The Daily Star* (i.e. has not been informed of the first scheduled meeting through regular post, email or phone) is requested to contact Mr. Sheikh Yasir Arafat at *The Daily Star* (64-65, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215), on the aforementioned dates and times or email him at o.alevel.tds@gmail.com by 28th January, 2017, with:

- The name of the school, phone number of a responsible representative and a valid email address that is checked regularly.

The schools are also requested to promptly prepare a list of the candidates meeting the above criteria, the number of 'A' grades achieved by each candidate, and photocopies of results certificates for each candidate.

No registration will be allowed or accepted after 5:00 pm of 28th January, 2017.

NOTE: If you know of any private candidate(s) or school(s) that may be unaware of this, please communicate the above information to them so that we may include them in this ceremony as well.

China to train 581 teachers in phases
First batch joins programme in Guangzhou

IDP IELTS NEW TEST VENUE IN BANANI

IELTS - TEST FOR STUDY, WORK AND LIFE

IELTS results are accepted by more than 9,000 educational institutions, governments and professional associations globally within USA, UK, Hong Kong, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

Registration open for test dates: 21st Jan, 16th Feb & 25th Mar (AC + GT)

IDP IELTS Bangladesh opens new test locations in Banani:
Bangladesh International Institute of Higher Studies (BIIS)
Northern University Bangladesh (NUB)
7th floor, Prasad Trade Center 6 Kemal Ataturk Avenue Banani, Dhaka -1230

To Register online, please log on to www.idp.com/bangladesh

For more information, please contact IDP Education Bangladesh

IDP Education Bangladesh Pvt. Ltd.
Hamid Tower, 4th Floor, Level 5, Gulshan Circle 2, Dhaka - 1212.
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