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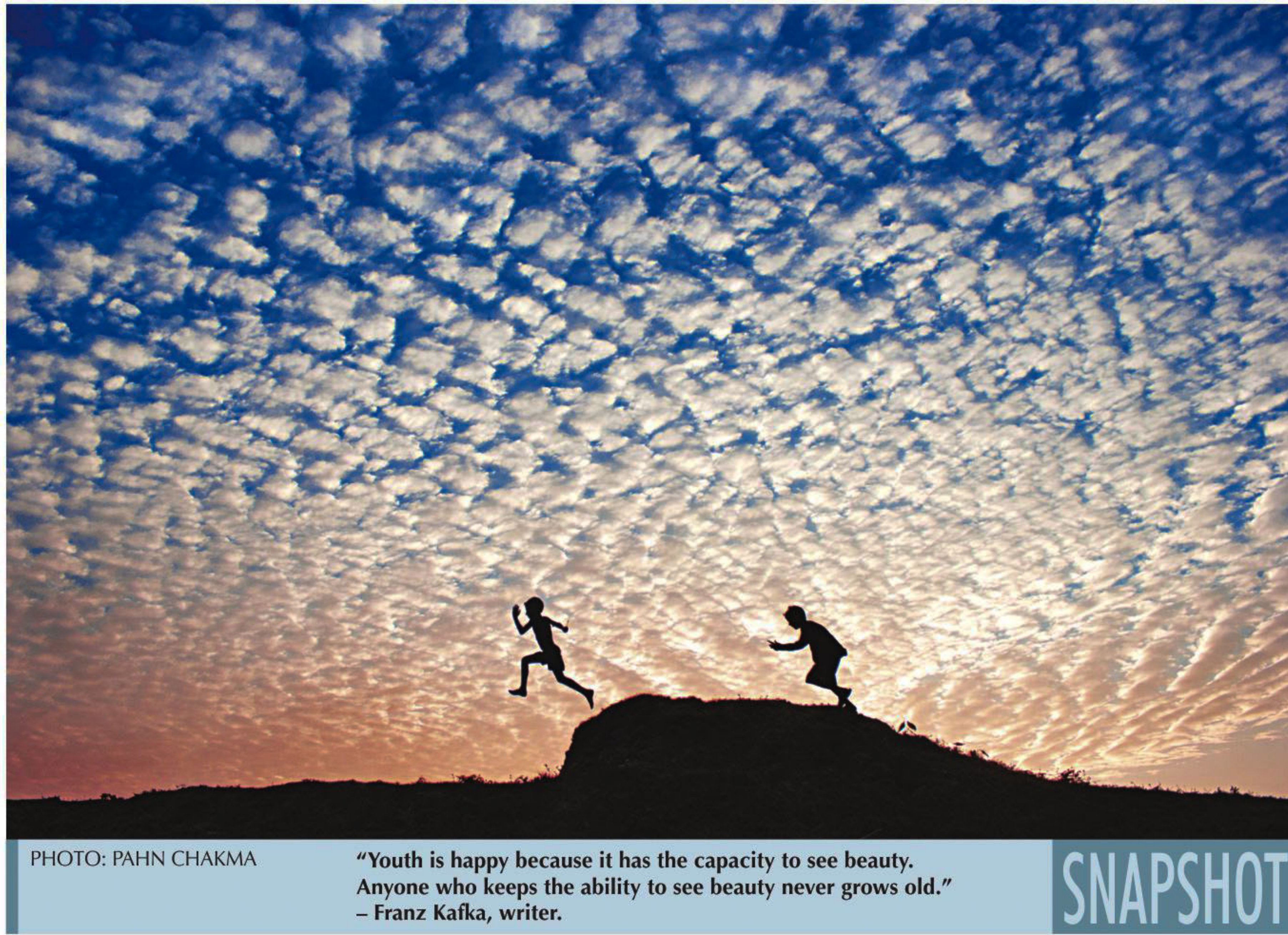


PHOTO: PAHN CHAKMA

**“Youth is happy because it has the capacity to see beauty. Anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old.”**  
– Franz Kafka, writer.

**SNAPSHOT**

**| OPINION |**

27th January, 1945. Victorious Soviet troops entered into a deserted and destroyed the Polish town Auschwitz. While advancing through town, they discovered a horrific incident which was deemed unbelievable by the rest of the world. It was the site of the Auschwitz concentration camp, a large industrial complex designed to kill Jews, gypsies, homosexuals and prisoners of war captured from all over German occupied Europe. The prison complex consisted of thousands of dungeons. There were work camps, where prisoners were worked to death. There were medical research facilities where prisoners were treated as guinea pigs for fatal experiments. There were gas chambers where thousands of inmates, who were too weak to work, were killed by showering poisonous gas on them. Then, before cremating the corpses in a massive crematoria, hair and teeth were systematically removed for the industrial production of fabrics, cushions and upholsters.

**HISTORY TEACHES US NOTHING**

**MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN**

After the war was over, the allied forces defended their failure to launch raid on this concentration camp by stating that they thought the stories of concentration camps were Soviet propaganda. From 1940 to 1945, 1.1 million inmates of Auschwitz were killed. The handful of the survivors had to fight severe trauma and emotional disorders for the rest of their lives. Like Auschwitz, Nazi Germany established around 20,000 concentration camps between 1933 and 1945 and at least 11,000,000 people were killed by that evil regime. Among these camps, Auschwitz was the largest and this is why 27th January, the day when Auschwitz was liberated is commemorated every year as the International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The UN General Assembly Resolution 60/7 rejects holocaust denial as an event and condemns all forms of religious intolerance and violence against person or community based on ethnic origin or religious belief.

However, such large scale atrocities in recent history and UN's condemnation could not stop the nation states to indulge in more genocides, mass murders and brutal warfare. Within less than thirty years, the Pakistan army launched marauding raids on Bengalis and killed 3 million people in 1971 which is still considered the largest event of genocide after the Second World War. Despite protests



PHOTO: COURTESY

Young survivors at Auschwitz liberated by the Red Army in January 1945.



PHOTO: STAR FILE

Rohingya refugees fleeing from Myanmar.

from all over the world, the UN failed to take any initiative to stop the atrocities. On the other hand, USA and China, the two major powers of the allied forces during the Second World War, blatantly supported Pakistan army's raid against the unarmed Bengalis. In the end, Pakistani army officers who planned and committed the atrocities never faced any trial for their crimes against humanity.

The violence against the Rohingya community in Myanmar since 1974 is also another symbol of humanity's failure to take lessons from the holocaust. Some months ago, when the massacre on the Rohingya people escalated to an unprecedented scale, the world's major powers did almost nothing to stop the massacre. In fact, the former UN chief Kofi Annan refused to use the word "genocide" to describe the Rohingya crisis. However, the news published in the global media regarding the crisis was enough to prove that every aspect of the Rohingya crisis coincides with the definition of 'genocide' adopted by Article II of the International Criminal Court.

Even more ironical is the fact that the once major victim of the holocaust has been threatening the world with another form of ethnic cleansing. Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of the Jewish state of Israel firmly says, "What I am willing to give Palestinians is not exactly a state with full authority, rather a state minus."

Besides continuous conflicts, people are doomed to witness that the devastating ideology of radicalism and exclusion that led the world to the Second World War is triumphant again in every corner of the world. The United Kingdom's exit from the European Union to take back control over European politics, Trump's hard-line nationalistic policies, rise of extremism and restitution of dictatorship in the Middle East and North Africa have already signalled the end of the new world order. The new world order that promised free trade, globalisation, democracy and liberalism after the Second World War has died a premature death. And, it proves that we have failed to take any lesson from a tragic history. ■

**MAILBOX**

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**Sailing on Antiques**

Rocket steamers are not only a means of water transport but these century old vessels have become an indispensable part of the history of Bangladesh. Once upon a time, these double-decked vessels were a symbol of Bengal's aristocracy and wealth. High ranking colonial officials, rich zamindars and nawabs used to travel from Dhaka to Calcutta on these steam powered ships. It is very unfortunate that BIWTA undertook very little effort to preserve these vessels' aristocratic past. The article and photos published in Star Weekend on January 20, 2017 clearly revealed how these vessels have become a victim of their negligence and poor maintenance. However, BIWTA could earn a lot of revenue by arranging leisure cruises aboard these vintage paddle steamers.

Kamarul Islam  
Shadarghat, Dhaka

**Saving the Imperilled Migratory Birds**

Every winter, hunting migratory birds has become an occasion of celebration in many parts of Bangladesh. However, very few people are aware of the fact that killing even a house crow falls under criminal offence in Bangladesh. It is even more unfortunate that environmentalists in Bangladesh are not vocal enough about the importance of conservation of migratory birds. These birds play an important role in the fragile riverine ecosystem of Bangladesh. I appreciate the fact that in the Star Weekend's interview with ornithologist Enam Ul Haque, published on January 20, 2017, it has been mentioned that migratory birds are not "guest birds" at all, rather, these are the birds of Bangladesh.

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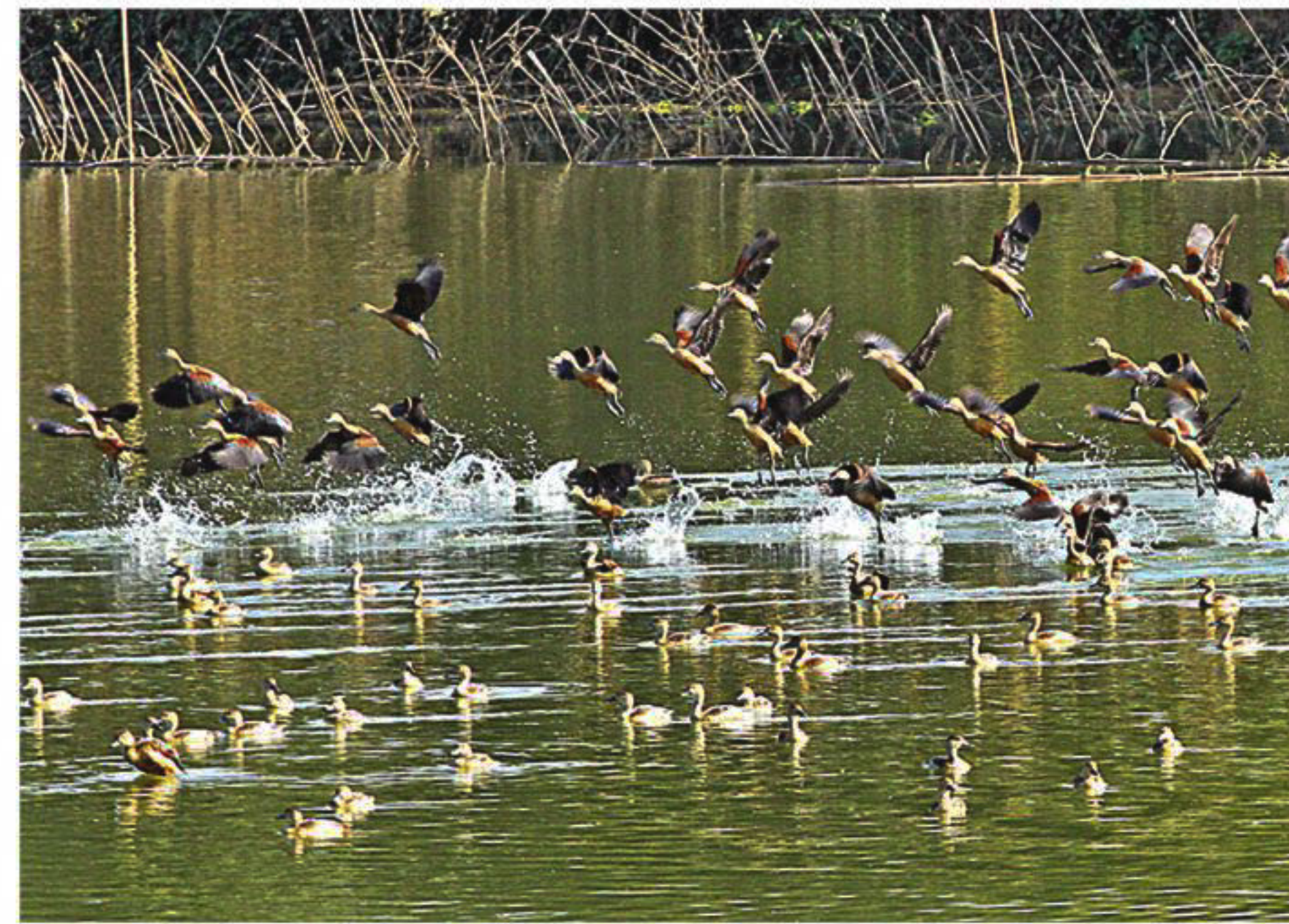


PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

**Learning in 10 minutes**

The article titled "Learning in 10 minutes" published in Star Weekend on January 13, 2017 intrigued me to think about the power of youth. Ayman Sadiq, while still studying in IBA, University of Dhaka, materialised his innovative idea of establishing online classroom of 10 minutes in length with hard work and integrity. Now, it is the only website in Bangladesh through which students can take tutorials, live classes, model tests etc. Within a very short time, the overwhelming success has made it a successful organisation. The idea behind this form of education has been acclaimed both home and abroad. I was really glad to know that recently, it has taken a step to reach out to all the 64 districts of Bangladesh, where it will organise trainings and workshops for the school teachers on ICT based teaching methods. The website of 10 Minute School also covers courses from different job arenas and opportunities for higher studies. I was so surprised to see the quality of classes and lessons when I visited the website of 10 Minute School. Actually, this kind of ICT based educational initiative is very necessary for our children. I would like to thank Star Weekend for stating the details about this innovative initiative.

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The opinions expressed in these letters do not necessarily represent the views of the Star Weekend.