

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Pallas's fish eagle, Hail Haor.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Our Raptors

The term "raptor" became popular due to the movie *Jurassic Park*. It means a bird that hunts small animals or other birds. The word is derived from the Latin *rapere*, meaning to snatch. Raptors appeal to the primitive in us with their hunting.

The most important features of a raptor are its hunting tools. It needs to catch prey and tear its flesh. For this, it has sharp claws attached to strong legs and a hooked bill with a sharp cutting edge. Sharp eyesight is important so the raptor can see prey that is far away or camouflaged. What about flying speed? Surprisingly, although many raptors, such as peregrine falcons, fly very fast, other raptors such as harriers are slow fliers. So the flight speed varies with the needs of the raptor.

There are many species of raptors in the world. One large group (order) of them, called *Falconiformes*, which includes eagles, kites and falcons, has around 300 species. Another order, called *Strigiformes*, contains over 200 species of owls.

The raptors in Bangladesh include eagles and eagle-like birds, falcons, buzzards, kites, owls, harriers, shikras, besras, bazas, ospreys and the smaller shrikes.

About a dozen species of eagles can be seen in Bangladesh. While many of these are seasonal, the crested serpent eagle, the white-bellied sea eagle, and the grey-headed fish eagle live here year round. The first is usually found in wooded rural areas, the second near the coast and the third near water bodies. Another eagle, the Pallas's fish eagle, is awe-inspiring. It is a seasonal migrant that nests and breeds in Bangladesh. This large bird, with a wingspan of two metres, can be seen in Sylhet's *haors* during winter.

Our most common falcon is the

common kestrel, seen during winter. Many raptors are shy, but the kestrel can be friendly and is readily seen on top of the pylons in Purbachol. I have seen other falcons such as peregrine and red-headed falcons only fleetingly, also in Purbachol. If you are there, keep an eye on the sky and you may see an oriental honey-buzzard circling overhead, recognizable by the intricate patterns on its wings.

Kites are probably our commonest raptors. Indeed, if you look up on a clear day in most places in Bangladesh you are likely to see a brahmīnī or a black kite in flight. The latter's tail is V-shaped. Both these kites are more scavenger than raptor as they eat carrion and waste. Another kite, the black-winged kite, can be seen in rural areas. This full-time raptor is a magnificent bird, black and white, with bright red eyes. It can hover over fields while looking for prey.

Shrikes are smaller raptors. They are also known as butcher birds because of the way they impale the carcass of their prey on thorns or sharp branches like butchers. Our most common shrike is the long-tailed shrike, with an orange body, which is seen in fields and lightly wooded places year-round. Shrikes are conspicuous because they perch on top of poles and branches while scanning for prey. In winter, we also have the brown shrike, the grey-backed shrike and the (rare) Burmese shrike visiting us.

I have seen ospreys in Sundarban and in the haors. Recognized by the black band running across the side of their face, they sometimes fly while carrying a fish.

In my experience, our other raptors are harder to find and require a lucky (and patient) trip to the forest.

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Give preference to local engineers

Prof Jamilur Reza urges govt at Buet reception

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury yesterday urged the government to rely on Bangladeshi engineers instead of the ones from abroad.

"There is no shortage of talented engineers in Bangladesh, but the talents do not get due recognition," the eminent civil engineer told a programme arranged in his honour in the capital's Buet auditorium.

Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) Alumni Association accorded the reception to Prof Choudhury, a former adviser to a caretaker government and the current vice chancellor of the University of Asia Pacific, for being awarded with Ekushey Padak 2017 in science and technology.

Addressing the programme, Prof Choudhury said the government, in many cases, gives preference to foreign experts over the local ones even for small projects.

If the authorities find a shortage in skilled engineers in the country, there has to be a process to develop their skills by employing only the best experts from other countries, said Prof Choudhury.

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Cancel exam if question leak allegations arise

Demand speakers at DU conference

DU CORRESPONDENT

If allegations of a question leak arise, the exam of the related subject should be cancelled, speakers demanded at a conference yesterday, a day before the start of the HSC examinations.

Shikkha O Shishu Rakkha Andolon (Shishir), an education rights organisation, organised the programme titled "Upcoming HSC Exam 2017: How to Prevent Question Leak" at Sirajul Islam Lecture Hall at Dhaka University.

"If question papers are leaked in the upcoming HSC exam, the government must cancel the exam [of the subject]. A market has been created for leaked question papers, and the business has spread. It must be stopped," said MM Akash, an economics professor of DU.

The speakers also expressed deep concern about the routine question leaks in public exams, laxity of the invigilators at

exam halls, and dishonesty and irresponsibility in evaluation of answer scripts.

Academics, guardians, students, politicians, and journalists took part in the conference.

Fahmidul Haq, professor of mass communication and journalism at DU, said, "The practice of question leaks is spreading like a cancer. An incident of the question leak is no less dreadful than the horrible night of the Holy Artisan [terrorist attack]. A defamer of the prime minister or a minister is caught within two hours under the ICT [Information and Communication Technology] law, but a person involved in question leaks is not arrested."

Shafiq Islam, a mathematics teacher from Munshiganj, said, "Questions are leaked by the moderation committee of the education board, at the BG Press, at the office of upazila and district administration, and by the teachers of the institutions where

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Buet Alumni Association presents a citation to Dr Jamilur Reza Choudhury, a former professor of civil engineering of the university, congratulating him for winning the Ekushey Padak 2017, at the Buet auditorium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

English translation of Charyapada launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Charyapada, the earliest form of Bangla, can inspire people to lead a life in communal harmony and promote self-dignity, academics and litterateurs said yesterday.

"Charyapada actually speaks of good conducts and good living," said Dr Sukomal Barua, professor of the Pali and Buddhist studies department of Dhaka University, at a book launching ceremony at Poet Sufia Kamal Auditorium of the National Museum.

"Mystic Poetry of Bangladesh", written by Hasna Jasimuddin Moudud, was launched at the ceremony organised by Bengal Foundation. Har-Anand Publications published the book from Delhi.

The book contains the translation of the Charya verses in English. Hasna, who herself translated the verses, said she visited Nepal, Bhutan, and Mongolia and Tibet to see the manuscripts.

Charyapada dates back to at least the 9th century. A manuscript of writings on palm-leaves containing the poems was discovered in the library of the royal court of Nepal in 1907 by Haraprasad Shastri.

Autor Hasna Moudud said Charyapada was best described as spiritual poetry using mystical language and imagery. Though these poems were metaphysical in nature, they depict the life of common people and beauty of riverine East Bengal, now Bangladesh.

The poems are part of the cultural and religious heritage of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet, she said, paying tributes to the great minds of Bangla including Poet Jasimuddin, Prof Abdur Razzaq and painter Zainul Abedin.

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Bullet-proof prison vans procured

UNB, Dhaka

Against the backdrop of several attempts to snatch prisoners, especially militant leaders or notorious criminals, during their transportation from one place to another, the police department has procured four high security prison vans from the UK.

The four fully air-conditioned and bullet-proof prison vans are expected to be added to the existing fleet of prisoners vans by this month, a top official at the Police Headquarters (PHQ) told UNB.

Of the vans, two will be given to Dhaka Metropolitan Police and one each to Dhaka District police and Gazipur district police.

Bangladesh police sent a proposal to the

Home Ministry to procure such bulletproof vehicles for carrying high profile prisoners following a prison van attack incident in Mymensingh on February 23, 2014.

Activists of the outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh snatched three of their leaders -- death-row convict militants Salehin and Rakibul with another top convicted JMB leader Jahidul Islam alias Bomaru Mizan -- from Trishal upazila when they were being transported in a prison van from Kashimpur jail to a Mymensingh court.

One of them was killed in crossfire during a gunfight with police while two others fled to India. A police constable was also killed when the JMB activists attacked the

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MAX FOUNDATION
JOB OPPORTUNITY
MAX FOUNDATION
(Bangladesh Country Office)
23/16, Khilji Road, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh

Max Foundation (MF), a Dutch INGO established in 2004, fights child mortality with an integrated approach, consisting of WASH, safe motherhood, reproductive health and stunted growth prevention. Max Foundation has been implementing child health programs in Bangladesh since 2005. Max Foundation aims at reducing child mortality in the most cost effective way.

The Max WASH approach consists of a number of integrated components that includes access to safe drinking water and improved hygienic sanitation, awareness raising, and hygiene. Along with its integral components for improving mother & child health, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender Max-WASH program emphasize on creating sustainable behavioral changes in the rural and urban communities and in the schools. Last September Max Foundation has completed its 4-year program called "Max Value for WASH" (Max-WASH II); reducing child mortality by providing approximately 890,000 people with the integrated Max-WASH approach in south coastal hard to reach areas (Patakhali and Barguna). Since Max Foundation has implemented this "Max WASH I" program successfully the Dutch Embassy in Bangladesh has recently decided to award and support the continuation of this program with another 4-year program called "Max WASH II" aiming to increase sanitation coverage to 441,000 people and safe water to 307,000 people and knowledge linked to better hygiene practices to 1.3 million people.

In addition to this extensive program, Max Foundation is implementing 4 other programs for stunting reduction, urban WASH improvement and WASH business in Madaripur, Kurigram municipality, Bogra and Sunamgonj districts. Max Foundation is currently implementing 10 projects with national reputed NGOs and is planning to expand in Khulna and Satkhira in Bangladesh.

To support our growth and ambitions, Max Foundation, Bangladesh Country Office, is inviting Bangladesh citizen to apply for the below-mentioned post of its "Max WASH II-Project". All the posts are contractual and only for the project duration of 04 (four) years as per approved FD-6.

Sl.	Name of Position	Number of Posts	Sl.	Name of Position	Number of Posts
1	Governance and Capacity Building Specialist	01	5	Admin and Accounts Officer (Max WASH II)	01
2	SRHR, Nutrition and Gender Specialist	01	6	Admin and Accounts Officer (Max Water Business)	01
3	MIS Specialist	01	7	Monitoring Officer	04
4	WASH and Health Behavior Change Specialist	02	8	Support Staff	02

Please visit Max Foundation website (www.maxfoundation.org) for details job description and required qualifications of the above-mentioned vacancies. Interested and desirable candidates are requested to submit their application in the prescribed template available at the website: www.maxfoundation.org/en/about-us/jobs/vacancies and must send to recruitmentmax@gmail.com on or before 10 April 2017. Only shortlisted candidates will be called for written test. No TA/DA will be paid to the recruited candidates for participation in the written test. Management of Max Foundation reserves all right regarding the shortlisting of candidates.

(Please mention the job position on the subject line. Example: "Application for the post of -----")

Max Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourages women and minority candidates to apply.

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