

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



A view of the exhibition which runs until 29 April. PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

One Hundred Birds

Surprisingly our national bird, the oriental magpie-robin, is missing from the birds on display at the photographic exhibition *Pakir Desh Bangladesh* (Bangladesh, a Land of Birds) at the National Museum in Shahbagh. The eminent birder Enam Ul Haque explains the absence: "We want to cover the entire gamut of our 700 bird species in a cycle of eight annual exhibitions without repeating birds and the magpie-robin was already shown in a previous exhibition." This year's exhibition, the third of the eight-exhibition cycle, is organised by the Bangladesh Bird Club. It has photographs of one hundred different bird species of Bangladesh taken by fifty-one members of the club.

The club was founded in 1996 by Enam Ul Haque. The current President of the 150-member club is Professor Obaidul Haque. It focuses on studying and understanding our birds and raising public awareness about them while providing a friendly forum for enthusiasts. Thanks to its annual bird census, started in 2000, we can track the population of our migratory birds. Since 2010, trained members of the club have ringed birds to better understand their global movement. The bird club also organises bird fairs in places such as the National Botanical Garden and Jahangirnagar University. It makes a special effort to reach out to youngsters. By taking its bird fairs to various schools, often in remote regions, it teaches school children about our birds and nature. In 2015, the club started a research-grant programme for university students interested in studying birds.

The exhibition, being held at the Nalini Kanta Vattashali Gallery in the Museum, is an absolute delight. We come face-to-face with a wide variety of birds. The species, presented in various poses and action, are presented according to family. The photographers have often gone through extraordinary lengths to locate the birds they have photographed.

Thus, we have Asian woolly-necked storks photographed in out-of-the-way *chars* of Chapai Nawabganj, a portrait of a magnificent pair of hornbills from Shachori National Forest and a black eagle, previously unseen in Bangladesh and first recorded here three years ago, photographed in Bandarban. Portraits of smaller birds are also captivating, including a dark-sided flycatcher, a Siberian rubythroat and a resplendent ruby-cheeked sunbird, perhaps the prettiest bird in the show.

Rarities include photographs of oystercatchers (common in some other places but rare in Bangladesh) and the endangered black-bellied tern.

The photographs of the exhibition - which was inaugurated by the Honourable Energy Advisor to the Prime Minister Dr. Toufiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, Bir Bikram - are augmented by other items from the Museum's collection pertaining to birds. Terracotta plaques from between 9th and 12th centuries, recovered from Paharpur, depict a peafowl and a swan eating lotus petiole. Ten paintings of various birds by the great Kamrul Hasan vibrate with colour and life. At the entrance is an elaborate tableau of 22 species of stuffed birds shown in their natural habitat. A selection of beautiful books on birds can also be seen.

The exhibition runs until 29th April, 2017 at the National Museum at Shahbagh, Dhaka. Hours are 10:30am to 5:30pm, except on Friday when it is open 3pm to 8pm. The Museum is closed on Thursdays.

The Museum authorities deserve our appreciation for putting on this exhibition. For members of the bird club this is yet another important milestone achieved through many hours of dedicated work.

This wonderful and educational show is well worth a visit. If you go, please consider taking children of your family so they can learn about our treasures.

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Poland offers coal, mineral resources extraction technology

UNB, Dhaka

Poland has offered Bangladesh their state-of-the-art technology for extraction of mineral resources, including coal, in Bangladesh.

The offer was conveyed to State Minister for Foreign Affairs M Shahriar Alam while he was holding bilateral talks with Joanna Wroncka -- Poland's deputy minister for development cooperation, Africa, Middle-East, Asia and Pacific, economic diplomacy and human rights -- at the foreign ministry of Poland in Warsaw on Thursday.

According to a foreign ministry press release issued yesterday, Joanna said the balance of trade between the two countries is heavily in favour of Bangladesh and Poland would like to reduce trade imbalance by offering transfer of their state-of-the-art technology for extracting coal and other mineral resources in Bangladesh.

Shahriar termed Bangladesh a rising geostrategic economic and logistics hub where many European countries are showing keen interest to invest and to do business.

Pointing out the demographic dividend, competitive and skilled labour force and congenial business environment, he said Bangladesh could be a lucrative destination for Polish businesses in many priority areas such as shipbuilding, pharmaceuticals, leather, footwear and agro-processing.

The Bangladesh state minister expressed gratitude for the significant contributions and support of Poland during the country's War of Liberation in 1971 and put the emphasis on enhanced bilateral cooperation between the two time-tested friendly countries.

He further emphasised opening of a resident Polish mission in Dhaka at the soonest for tapping the opportunities of deepening bilateral relations on economic, trade and investment, education, agriculture, knowledge and innovation.

After Shahriar raised the issue of difficulties of Bangladeshi students in attaining visas for

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Major quake to damage 70pc of Ctg buildings

Says CUST survey

UNB, Ctg

About 70 percent of high-rise buildings in Chittagong city will collapse if an earthquake of 7-8 magnitude on the Richter scale hits the city, says a new study of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (CUST).

The survey, conducted by Earthquake Research Centre of the university, predicted that the greater Chittagong region is at risk of a powerful earthquake of 7-8 magnitude due to its geological position.

Once a moderate to powerful tremor occurs in the Chittagong region, most of the city's buildings will collapse due to unplanned urbanisation, it said and warned that school buildings in particular are highly vulnerable to earthquakes.

The research found that the Chittagong region is located at an earthquake risky zone due to Eurasian and Indo-Australian plates, which are still active.

Another survey of a private firm, Development Design and Consultant (DCC), shows that a moderate to high magnitude earthquake may originate any time from the Sitakunda-Teknaf fault, one of the two most active seismic faults in Bangladesh, or Rangamati-Barkal fault or the Mirsarai-Teknaf fault line.

Former vice chancellor of CUST Prof Md Jahangir Alam said about 78 percent buildings of the port city were built violating the

Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC) and the designs of Chittagong Development Authority (CDA), which makes these buildings highly vulnerable to tremors.

On January 3, 2017, an earthquake of 5.5 on the Richter scale jolted Chittagong, creating panic among city dwellers.

Seismic experts said frequent light tremors give a signal that a powerful one is coming up, which is a matter of concern for all.

They said that Chittagong seaport Shah Amanat International Airport Sitakunda, Chittagong University, Khulshi, a residential area of the city, and Madunagat areas are located at an earthquake-prone zone due to four active fault lines beneath the surface.

Urban planner Prof M Ashraf Ali said Dhaka-Comilla-Chittagong-Sylhet-Cox's Bazar belts were highly vulnerable since the region was hit hard by earthquakes in the past.

He said a number of seismic fault lines, which might cause earthquakes anytime were located near Chittagong.

Citing the findings of a study of Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP), head of the Civil Engineering Department at Southern University Bangladesh Ashraf Ali said about 1.42 lakh buildings of Chittagong

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A policeman rides a bicycle while carrying his firearm with its belt swung over the seat near High Court area in the capital yesterday. Although the practice is not common in the city, police personnel in remote areas are sometimes seen carrying their arms this way. If a gun is mistakenly loaded and its safety catch switched off, carrying it in this manner can be fatal.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Woman under pressure to withdraw rape case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A man is apparently putting pressure on a woman, whom he allegedly raped, to withdraw the rape case in Manikganj.

The 25-year-old woman alleged that Shyamdas Rajbongshi, 30, who is a married person and also her neighbour, is threatening her with dire consequences.

The woman, who is a college student, said Shyamdas had filed a case against the witnesses of the rape case just to harass them.

She further alleged that Shyamdas' two accomplices recorded the rape incident on cellphones.

She filed a case on August 4 last year with a Manikganj court, accusing

Shyamdas of raping her and two unidentified persons of videoing the incident on July 14 the same year.

After investigation, Ghior police submitted a charge sheet on January 1 this year against Shyamdas and his brother-in-law Sujon Rajbongshi.

Police arrested Shyamdas on January 7. He was released on bail on March 27. The next date to hear the rape case is April 26.

Shyamdas filed a case on April 11 this year with another Manikganj court accusing all seven witnesses of the rape case of beating him on April 9 in Ghior area.

Shyamdas could not be contacted as this correspondent did not find him at his home and found his cellphones switched off several times.

Drama urges expats to remit thru formal channels

UNB, Dhaka

The Bangladesh Embassy in Athens has produced a short drama titled "Remittance" to create awareness among Bangladeshi expatriates for sending remittance through formal channels.

The actors and others involved in the drama have never been involved in acting or making drama, said the embassy officials.

"This is their first effort. This is also an example of wonderful collaboration between the Embassy and Bangladesh expatriate community. And this has

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A truck goes over a puddle on the rundown Airport Bypass Road built on an embankment alongside Chamaurakandi Haor under Sadar upazila of Sylhet. Flash floods caused by last month's incessant rain and onrush of water from upstream rivers destroyed almost all embankments and the roads built on those in Sylhet and three other neighbouring districts. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

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