

# TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

## The Last Meeting

**L**ate one afternoon last September I arrived at the two-story building on top of a hill in Khadim Nagar, Sylhet for what was to be my last meeting with Zahin Bhui. He met me upstairs outside his office, looking the same as always: diminutive, with a short, well-trimmed beard and thick spectacles, appearing more like boy than a man.

And yet, I reminded myself, his accomplishments were far from diminutive. He founded the NGO Friends in Village Development Bangladesh in 1981. Among other things, FIVDB specializes in education, focusing on functional literacy for adults. The learning material they researched and developed has been used by over 300 organizations in Bangladesh and abroad and reached 2.4 million learners. FIVDB started 394 schools and handed them back to the communities. For its innovation, FIVDB has received many national and international awards.

In addition to education, FIVDB also focuses on livelihood and food security for rural population by enabling small-scale entrepreneurship. Notably, it is a pioneer in duck farming in Bangladesh.

After greeting me, Zahin Bhui puttered about his office, offering me tea and biscuits. It was a social call and we discussed a wide range of topics. On his computer, he showed me his collection of old photographs of Sylhet, including many eminent people, and asked me for a photograph of my grandfather.

I had been concerned about his eyes – he had complications after eye surgery – and was relieved that he was feeling better.

A little while later, he searched his desk and pulled out a beautiful, small book of translated Persian poetry that a friend had given him. He leafed through its pages like a little boy showing off a proud possession.

As usual, our conversation veered towards birds, in which he



Zahin Bhui at FIVDB, Sylhet.

PHOTO BY: IHTISHAM KABIR

took a keen interest. He wanted to see some ground-dwelling birds such as pheasants, quails and francolins. I offered to take him birdwatching. We brainstormed, concluded the tea gardens in cooler months would be a good option, and decided to enlist the help of one or two garden owners who often know the location of such birds in their property. Alas, that trip was not to be.

I had met Zahin Bhui first in the house of our common friend Colonel Salam (Bir Protik) about five years ago. Our families were friends much longer. His father and my grandfather were close, and he knew both my parents well.

Since then I was drawn to Zahin Bhui for many reasons. He took a keen interest in nature, particularly birds, and actively supported and encouraged my work in documenting our natural splendour through photo books. He was a voracious reader of books and listener of music and was the only person I knew who

was equally conversant in Western Classical and Indian Classical music.

But beyond this, there was something special about him that attracted me and many others to him. While very much a modern person, to us he represented a different era in Sylhet. It was a vastly different time than ours, gentler and slower, less prone to loud ostentation, when everyone knew each other. His humanism, modest but firm attitude, and above all the ability to love unconditionally touched the hearts of many.

With immense and unfathomable sadness I learned about the passing of Zahin Ahmed on the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> October in Dhaka. He devoted his entire life to improving the condition of his people and his country. I pray that he rests in peace.

facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow ihtishamkabir on Instagram.

## 3 cops injured in gunfight to arrest one in Sandwip

### Arms and ammo recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police arrested an alleged criminal in possession with several firearms and ammunition in Chattogram's Sandwip yesterday afternoon, following a gunfight that injured three law enforcers.

The injured are: Officer-in-Charge Md Shahjahan of Sandwip Police Station, Inspector Suhrawardi and Sub-inspector Helal Khan.

The police officials sustained injuries from stray bullets and were given primary treatment at Sandwip Upazila Health Complex, said Additional Superintendent of Police Shampa Rani Saha of district police.

The arrestee is Md Jahid Sarwar Shimul, 32. Police recovered a double barrel gun, two one barrel gun, two light guns, 19 cartridges and two rounds of bullets from his

house where he was holding up.

Shampa Rani told The Daily Star the gunfight took place at the residence of the arrestee, when a team of police went to his house to arrest him acting on a tip-off at around 1:30pm.

"Sensing presence of police, the criminal and his gang members opened fire targeting police officials, leaving three policemen injured," said Shampa, adding that police also fired 23 rounds in retaliation.

Shampa said after an hour-long gun battle, police arrested Shimul from the residence while his cohorts managed to escape.

Shimul is a listed criminal of the upazila, and is accused in two cases filed with the police station, the additional SP said.

A case was lodged in this connection.

## USE OF EVM EC attempting 'digital vote robbery': Saki

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

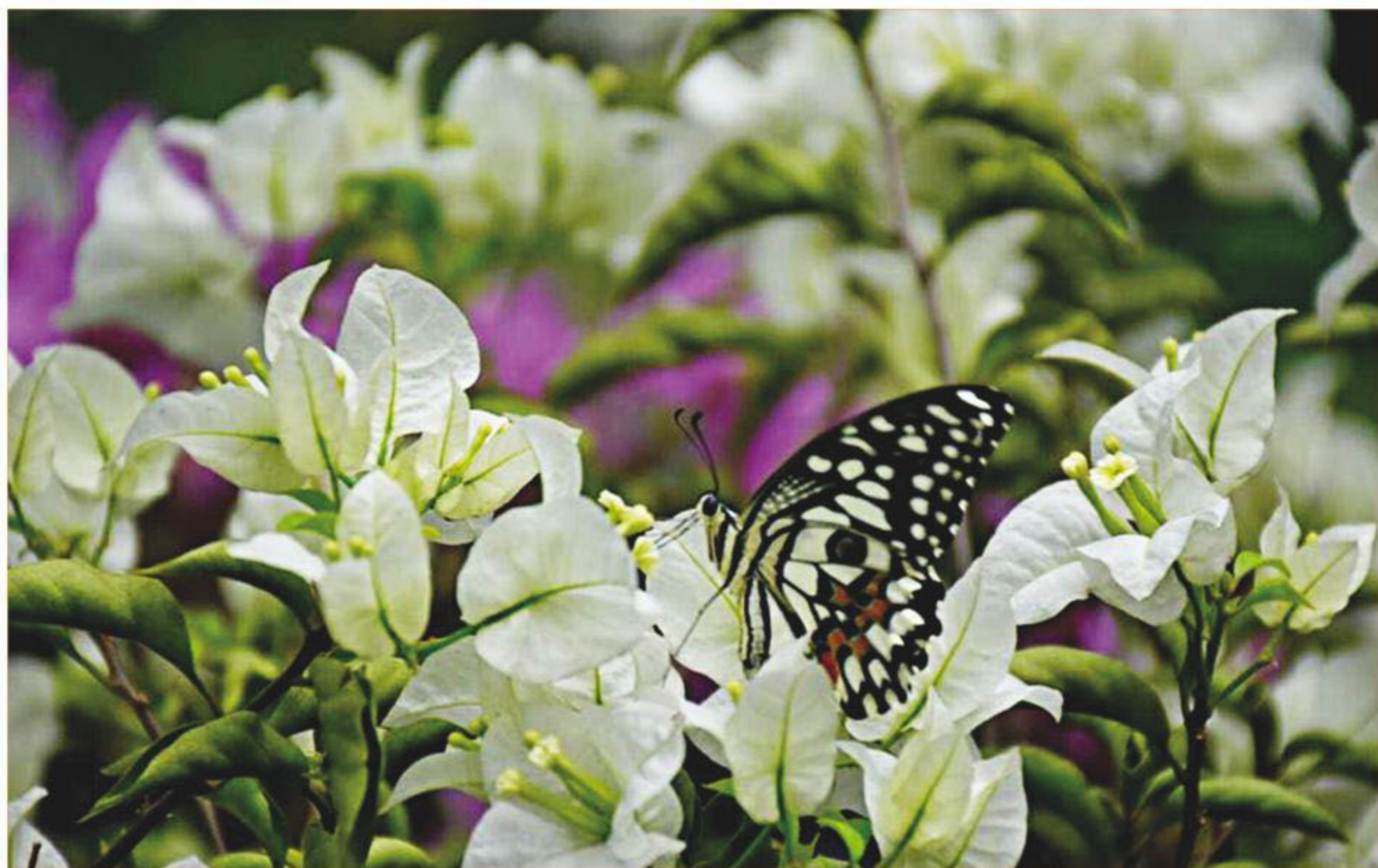
Ganasamhati Andolan's Chief Coordinator Zonayed Saki yesterday termed the urgency of the Election Commission (EC) to use electronic voting machines (EVM) in the upcoming national polls an attempt to "digital vote robbery".

Speaking at a rally in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital, he also urged the EC to cancel the decision, which could make the election questionable, according to a press release.

"The urgency of using EVM [in the polls], as per the prescription of the government alone, proves that how obedient the EC is to the government," Zonayed said.

The use of EVM became questionable in different countries, including India, and the attempt to use it here has already created an environment of mistrust, he said in the press release.

Zonayed Saki also urged the government to dissolve the existing parliament before declaring the election schedule, saying fair polls will be not be held under the present government.



A butterfly feeding on nectar. Below, visitors at JU botanical garden during the daylong Butterfly Fair yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## BURNING OF ANSWER SCRIPTS AT CU

## Investigators fail to make progress in five months

MD ABBAS, CU

Though more than five months have passed since hundreds of answer scripts of the computer science and engineering department of Chittagong University (CU) were mysteriously found burnt, the academic probe committee has failed to make any progress in their investigation.

Police, too, could not make any headway.

On May 16, 709 answer scripts of third, fifth and seventh semesters were found burnt on the roof of the computer science and engineering (CSE) faculty building.

Three padlocks were found broken, indicating that some "miscreants" might have entered the store room, situated inside the chairperson's room, to steal and destroy the answer scripts of nine courses, informed teachers after the incident.

Immediately, the university authorities formed a three-member probe committee, headed by Prof Mahabubur Rahman, dean of the Faculty of Biological Sciences, and directed them to submit the probe report

within five working days.

As the deadline passed on May 21, the probe committee sought two more weeks. Later, on June 4, they sought an indefinite period of time as they failed to make any breakthrough till then.

This correspondent recently contacted CU Assistant Proctor Litan Mitra, also the member secretary of the probe body, for latest updates of the investigation.

"We could not submit the report on time as it is a very complicated as well as crucial case. Such incidents never happened before in the university."

"Some people are on our suspect list. It would have been easier for us if we had latest technology or an expert in handling such cases," said the proctor.

The CCTV camera installed in front of the chairperson's room only had footage of a hand disabling it, he said, adding, "We will submit our report soon with recommendations for further investigation by law enforcers."

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## 4-day Iranian film show begins in Dhaka today

UNB, Dhaka

A 4-day Iranian film show will begin at the national music and dance auditorium of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy today.

Iranian Cultural Centre, Dhaka and the academy will jointly organise it. The inaugural session will be held at 3:30pm, Public Relations Officer of Iranian Cultural Centre Sayeed Islam told the news agency.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's media adviser Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury will be present as chief guest while Charge d' Affaires of Iranian Embassy in Dhaka Ebrahim Shafiei Rezvani Nejad and eminent actor and film director Syed Hasan Imam will be present

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## Of beauty and butterfly

JU CORRESPONDENT

Like every year, the premises of Zahir Raihan Auditorium in Jahangirnagar University (JU) took on a festive look yesterday as over a hundred butterflies and their photographs were put on display.

The fluttering of vividly coloured butterflies and a myriad of programmes kept both the young and old mesmerised at the daylong butterfly fair.

Butterflies of around 50 species were exhibited in front of the auditorium and at the university's Butterfly Park and botanical garden.

"They are so beautiful to look at," said an elated Malbika Nipun, a third-grader who was visiting the fair from the capital with her father.

The zoology department of JU in association with Prokriti o Jibon Foundation and International Union for Conservation of Nature organised the fair, which included a colourful rally, art and photography competitions, photo exhibition and documentary on butterflies.

The theme of the fair was "Urle akashe projapoti, prokriti pai natun



gati" (when butterflies fly, nature gets a new life).

Jiban Bikash Karjocrom, a voluntary organisation, was given this year's "Butterfly Award" for its contributions to research on butterfly and overall achievement in the field of zoology.

Fahmina Sarker Borsha, a student of zoology department,

received the "Young Butterfly Enthusiast" award.

JU VC Prof Farzana Islam inaugurated the fair. Pro-VC (Education) Prof Nurul Alam, Treasurer Prof Sheikh Md Monzurul Huq, Zoology department Chairperson Prof Monwar Hossain and Prokriti o Jibon Director Mukit Majumder Babu were present.



Christians observe All Souls Day to remember the deceased relatives at Patharghata Catholic Church in Chittagong city last evening. Inset, a girl lights up a candle on the church premises in memory of a loved one.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## Woman stabbed in Netrakona, 'stalker' handed over to cops

### She was set to get married tomorrow

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A woman was stabbed by her stalker in Netrakona on Thursday night as the 20-year-old repeatedly refused his marriage proposal, said police.

Beni Rani Sarker from Keshobpur village was set to get married to a man named Rentu Chandra Sarker tomorrow, said Kalmakanda Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mazharul Karim.

Hearing the news, Rajon Chandra Sarker, a day labourer living in neighbouring Singhpur village, along with two others, attempted to abduct her while she was home alone, said the OC.

When she tried to resist them, they attacked her with sharp weapons, said the officer. Immediately, neighbours rushed in, caught Rajon with a knife and handed him over to police. The other two, however, managed to flee.

With injuries to the abdomen and right hand, Beni was taken to Kalmakanda Upazila Health Complex from where she was transferred to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Later, she was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Beni's brother Bindu Chandra Sarker filed a case with the police station, accusing Rajon and two unidentified persons.

A Netrakona court sent Rajon to jail when he was produced before it.

## Covered van driver dies in accident on road

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A covered van driver died after a container had fallen on the vehicle from a lorry on Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Chattogram yesterday.

The lorry carrying the container fled the scene after police had chased it in Chhoto Kumira area of Sitakunda upazila, said police.

Nur Hossain Royal, 30, who was from Noakhali, died instantly, they said.

They are investigating how the container fell onto the van, said Abu Abdullah, in-charge of Kumira Highway Police Outpost.