

# TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Sam inspects wing feathers of a Greater Coucal. PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

## Ringling by the River

Winter beckons and migratory birds have started arriving. When we see one, questions naturally come to mind: Where did it come from? Where will it return to? These questions are not restricted to migrant birds: we often want to know the movement of birds which reside here year-round.

Birders try to answer these questions by tagging wild birds.

The most popular method for tagging is called *ringing*: you catch a bird, place a thin, encoded metallic or plastic ring around its feet or wings, and set it free. It provides a way to track the movements and life history of the bird.

Ringling is a sophisticated technique that takes months to learn and years to master. The difficulty is compounded because very few places can manufacture the rings which must include identification numbers and location information. According to its founder Enam Ul Haque, the Bangladesh Bird Club started ringling birds in 2010. The club sent two members to the UK to train with the British Trust of Ornithology. Subsequently, experts from abroad have come here every year to train and conduct bird ringling camps.

The result: in nine years, seventeen young scientists have been trained and 10,000 birds have been ringling in Bangladesh.

Last Saturday I had the opportunity to observe bird ringling in Rajshahi. The team comprised of Matt Prior and Sam Layley from the British Trust for Ornithology working with Onu Tareq of the Bird Club and Zenin Azmiri of IUCN. They had been working since dawn in a mixed grove of trees and bushes by the Padma river. Nearby, a rope stretched out like a clothesline. Several white cotton bags, tied with

drawstrings, were hanging from the rope. They held the morning's catch of birds.

When my friend Niaz and I arrived the team was working with a Greater Coucal. The bird stayed remarkably calm as it was inspected, measured and weighed with infinite care; this data (and other information) was entered into a notebook. Then, rings were placed around its legs using a plier-like tool.

Finally the bird was released. This too requires finesse. "Usually I release it in such a gentle way that it does not even realize it is free - it just flies away spontaneously," Matt told me later.

We walked over to check the fine nets - set up like tennis nets - near the trees. Sure enough, a bird was caught in one of them. As Matt retrieved it, I scrutinized it but could not recognize it.

This, I later learned, was another benefit of ringling. Enam said that bird species that are not easily seen or photographed can be caught in mist nets. The first record (or sighting) in Bangladesh of ten different bird species were made after they were caught in nets for ringling. These included Sykes's Nighthawk, a bird of the middle-east and western India which was never seen this far to the east.

There are several other methods of tagging birds. These include tagging their wings or attaching radio transmitters, and placing distinctive flags - easily identified from a distance with binoculars - on their feet.

Soon it was time to move on. Impressed by their dedication and discipline, Niaz and I said good bye to the ringling team by the river and moved on to our next Rajshahi adventure.

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# In solidarity with #MeToo

## Female journalists hold human chain

JAMIL MAHMUD

Some 25 female journalists from different media outlets yesterday took to the streets, expressing solidarity with the women who recently shared their bitter experiences of sexual harassment and abuse on social media.

Holding a large banner that read "Solidarity with #MeToo", they formed a human chain in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club and demanded proper investigation into each of the complaints that has surfaced as well as exemplary punishment for the culprits.

Addressing the human chain, Nasimun Ara Haque Minu, president of Bangladesh Female Journalists' Association, said some women recently shared their experiences of sexual harassment on social media.

She demanded that all institutions and organisations implement the High Court guidelines to prevent sexual harassment of women at workplace and educational institutions.

She also urged the government to take effective measures to address sexual harassment, which has become a rampant national issue.

From the human chain, she announced that they will form another human chain on the issue on Sunday morning at the same place.

Momtaz Bilkis Banu, president of Bangladesh Women Journalists' Forum, lauded the courage of those who broke the taboo regarding talking openly about harrowing experiences of sexual harassment and abuse.

"Women do not feel safe anywhere anymore, because societal norms had silenced them over the years and encouraged perpetrators and predators," she said, stressing the need for generating awareness on sexual harassment among parents and guardians.

Sharmin Rinvi, news editor of private televi-

sion channel BanglaVision, urged political parties not to give nomination to anyone with record of committing sexual harassment in the upcoming parliamentary election.

Expressing solidarity with the victims, Udisa Islam, chief reporter of online news outlet Bangla Tribune, said each institution should take effective measures against sexual harassment.

Movement against sexual harassment will continue, she said.

At the human chain, Syed Shukur Ali Shuvo, general secretary of Dhaka Reporters' Unity,

expressed solidarity with the movement on behalf of his organisation.

#MeToo has become a global movement against sexual harassment and assault. It spread virally in October 2017 as a hashtag used on social media in an attempt to demonstrate the widespread prevalence of sexual assault and harassment, especially in the workplace. In India, the movement began gaining prominence and gathered sharp momentum in October 2018 centring the film industry, news media, and even the political arena.



A group of women journalists gather in front of Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka yesterday to express their solidarity with the ongoing #MeToo movement in the country. PHOTO: STAR

## Bhasani's death anniversary today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Today is the 42nd death anniversary of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, a legendary politician and a dreamer of Bangladesh's independence.

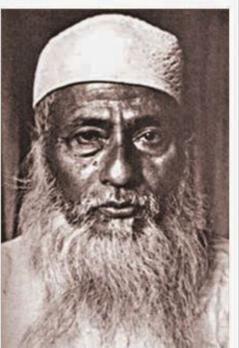
Marking the day, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University in Tangail, different political parties and social organisations have planned elaborate programmes.

Wreaths will be placed at the grave of the great leader at Tangail's Santosh in the morning.

Other programmes include doa and milad mahfils, food distribution, photography exhibition, spiritual songs, blood donation, painting competition, and discussion on the life and works of the leader.

Born in Dhangara village of Sirajganj in 1880, Bhasani fought against the oppression of Pakistani rulers. He played a significant role in the 1969 movement.

The brave and devoted leader worked relentlessly and spent almost his entire life for the oppressed masses, which earned him the title "Mazlum Jana Neta" or the leader of the



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## Don't nominate anyone who repressed minorities

### Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikya Parishad again urges political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikya Parishad yesterday once again urged political parties not to give nomination in the upcoming national election to anyone who had been involved in repression of minority communities.

"If any such candidate is nominated for the election, minority communities of that constituency will refrain from casting their votes," said Advocate Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of the Oikya Parishad.

He made the comment at a press conference organised by the Oikya Parishad at Jatiya Press Club.

Earlier, from a rally in September, leaders of the Oikya Parishad made similar calls to political parties of the country.

Reading out a written statement, Rana Dasgupta said with a few exceptions, all the elections held after 1990 were disastrous for the minority communities.

"Although it [the national elections] brings in festivities for some people, the election becomes a cause of anxiety for the minority community," he said.

Referring to experiences in past years, he said though the Election Commission assured the minority communities of providing security ahead of the polls, it had never kept the promise. "We hope this time there will be an exception," Rana Dasgupta added.

He also called upon political parties to make specific commitments in their manifestos to eradicate discrimination and establish equal rights and dignity of the minority.

The Oikya Parishad leaders in their speech urged all political parties to ensure empowerment of the minority and their representation in the parliament according to their demographic ratio in a constituency.

In order to gather information on repression of the minority during the election, the Oikya Parishad has opened a helpline -- 9612100300.

Among others, Nim Chandra Bhowmik, president member of the Parishad, spoke at the programme.

## Tax Fair turns festive with weekend crowd

Tax collection crosses Tk 1,000 crore mark at the venue

UNB, Dhaka

The Income Tax Fair wore a festive look yesterday as hundreds of taxpayers rushed to the venue to avail various tax-related services under one roof without any hassle on the first day of the weekly holiday.

Yesterday was the fourth day of the weeklong fair inaugurated by Finance Minister AMA Muhith on November 13.

The enthusiastic taxpayers started gathering on Officers' Club premises well before 9:00am where the fair is taking place.

Taxpayers were seen standing in a long queue from 8:30am in front of the fair entrance.

When asked, Abul Kalam Miah, a freedom fighter, said he feels comfortable to submit his tax return during the fair as there is a dedicated booth for freedom fighters. "I've been taking this opportunity for the last eight years and this is a very good gesture of the NBR [National Board of Revenue] for us," he said.

Yasmin Farida Bhuiyan said as the fair has a separate booth for female taxpayers and senior citizens, it is better for everyone to submit their income tax return there.

Syed Hasan Nasir, who lives in Mohammadpur area of the city, said he avails the opportunity to submit his tax return at the fair as he always finds solution to any problem under one roof.

Abu Delowar Hossain, who came from Agargaon, emphasised the need to bring back the fair to its own building at Agargaon.

The volunteers were seen proactive in maintaining the queue as some taxpayers were reluctant about maintaining discipline. "Everyone rushes to have his work done once entering the venue," a worried volunteer said.

Talking to this correspondent, some officials said they feel encouraged when they see the smile of content on the faces of taxpayers as they get their desired tax-related services done.

All divisional cities are also holding similar fairs for seven days while it will be held for four days in 56 districts, two days in 32 upazilas, and one day in 70 upazilas.

November 30 is the last day for submitting income tax returns for individual taxpayers.

For the last two years, the fair was held at NBR's own office in the city's Agargaon area.

To avoid traffic jam due to the ongoing construction of metro rail, the NBR has shifted the fair venue from Agargaon to the Officers' Club, according to NBR.

The new inclusion to the fair is the tax training through audio-visual means.

New taxpayers can collect e-TINs (electronic tax identification numbers) at the fair while other taxpayers also can collect e-TIN through re-registration.

## Traffic inspector found dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A traffic inspector was found hanging from a ceiling fan at a flat in Dhaka's Uttara area yesterday morning.

Azharul Islam, 44, was found in that state by his family members. He was declared dead at Uttara Adhunik Medical College Hospital, police said.

Abdur Razzak, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Uttara West Police Station, told The Daily Star, "This seems like a case of suicide."

Azharul was posted in Teknaf. He came to Dhaka on Tuesday for medical treatment, the OC said, quoting his family members.

His wife and three children used to live in the rented apartment in Uttara sector-9.

## The miracle of a mother's touch

'Kangaroo Mother Care' helping premature babies thrive

MATHEWS CHIRAN

When Shanta became pregnant for the second time, her family was elated.

Two years back, the 18-year-old mother gave birth to her first child and luckily, there wasn't any pregnancy or childbirth-related complications, despite her being underweight.

So, the couple from Narsingdi was looking forward to welcome the new addition to their family. Shanta was admitted to the same hospital where she gave birth to her first child.

But little did the young mother know the joy of motherhood would turn to worry as her second child, born in October, was born premature. The baby, born at seven months, weighed 1,085 grams and had breathing difficulties along with other health hazards.

The doctors at the hospital recommended that the couple take the child to Dhaka Shishu



Shanta with her newborn at Dhaka Shishu Hospital. PHOTO: COLLECTED

Hospital. The baby boy was admitted there early this month.

Thanks to the initiatives taken by the doc-

tors at the hospital, especially the Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) method they taught Shanta to practise to improve the child's health, he is getting better now.

KMC refers to the practise of providing continuous skin-to-skin contact between mother and baby, exclusive breastmilk feeding, and early discharge from hospital. Premature babies, usually born before 37 weeks and weighing under 2,000 grams, are treated with KMC.

"I was very worried when my child was born premature. I feared I was about to lose him due to his poor health," Shanta told this correspondent at the hospital on Wednesday.

She was holding the baby in her arms. In between conversing, the mother was also being attentive towards her child. She hummed him to sleep.

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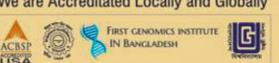


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