

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

Phayre's Langur

The monkey was high up on the jackfruit tree. It was all black except for circles of white around its eyes and mouth. It held something close to its breast, covering it with both arms. Moments later, the baby, a pale orange colour, peeked out from its mother's breast. It was startled to see me and my camera and turned back to its mother again. Several other monkeys in the group now huddled together on the branch. The father reached out several times to take the baby. Eventually the mother handed it over and the father held it close to its chest.

Bangladesh is home to ten species of primates; among them these monkeys, known as Phayre's Langur, are - quite literally - the most spectacular. The adults are black except for a white patch around the mouth and white rings around their eyes which look like spectacles. Hence their Bangla name *choshma bandor*.

Phayre's Langurs are found only in Southeast Asia, including Bangladesh, eastern India, Vietnam, Thailand, Laos and Myanmar. The IUCN considers it an endangered species because of its utter and total dependence on forests which are rapidly disappearing. In Bangladesh they can be found in the forests of Sylhet - for example, Satchori and Lawacherra - and in the hills of Chittagong.

Above my head, the troop was on the move. The baby was back with the mother who used one hand to hold it tight as she moved from branch to branch. From the jackfruit tree they transported themselves to a *koroi* tree where they joyfully chomped on young leaves. There was one alpha male, two females and two children (the orange one and an older child.) The male was fully



Phayre's Langur mother and infant.

PHOTO BY: IHTISHAM KABIR

engaged with the females in taking care of the young.

Then a bout of sibling rivalry broke out. To attract its mother's attention the older child tried to push away the infant. But the mother, altogether focused on her infant, paid it scant attention. The child then tried a different tack: it moved away and started leaping from branch to branch, as if showing off. When it returned, its mother continued ignoring it.

I spoke with Hasan Al Razi Chayan who studied Phayre's Langurs in the forest for two years (2016-17) for his Masters in Zoology from Jagannath University. Chayan said that a group includes one alpha male and multiple females (a harem). There is considerable affection among the adults. All the adults care for babies, for example.

Agreeing with my observations, Chayan said that he never saw them fight and found them to be peaceful.

I asked him about the striking orange colour I had seen. Chayan said that infants are born with this colour. During their first year, they gradually change to black.

How large were the groups? Chayan mentioned typical groups of 4-12, but recently a group of 41 headed by one alpha male was reported in China.

Back under the *koroi* tree, the langurs had their fill of leaves. In less than a minute they had jumped, leaped and swung several trees away, leaving behind an empty tree standing silently over my head.

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DU student found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Police recovered the body of a Dhaka University (DU) student from his village house in Galachipa upazila of Patuakhali district yesterday. His body was found hanging from a mango tree.

The deceased is Soumik Mitra Sabuj, 22, said Akhter Morshed, officer-in-charge (OC) of Galachipa Police Station.

The body was sent to Patuakhali General Hospital's morgue for an autopsy, the OC said.

"We are looking into the matter," he added.

The OC said an unnatural death case was filed in this connection.

Jhantu Devnath, Sabuj's brother-in-law, said Sabuj went to sleep after dinner. Early yesterday, Sabitri, Sabuj's sister, found his body hanging from the tree.

As Sabuj did not do well in his mid-term exams, he was upset, said Jhantu.

Sabuj was a good student. He stood second in the first-year exams, he added. "No one thought he would do badly in the second-year exams," he added.

Md Sazzad Hossain, local union parishad chairman, said Sabuj was a good student and they were proud of his success.

59pc DU students face bullying, abuse at dorms

Reveals CGS study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fifty-nine percent students of Dhaka University and 77 percent students of Rajshahi University are facing discrimination, bullying and verbal or physical abuse at their respective dormitories, according to a study published yesterday by the DU Centre for Genocide Studies (CGS).

The students, during interviews, also expressed dissatisfaction over existing teaching methods, facilities in libraries and residential halls, and security on campus, according to the study.

Dr Delwar Hossain, a professor at the university's International Relations department, presented the study titled "Tertiary Education in Bangladesh: What Do Students Think?" at the two-day "2nd assembly - Future of Higher Education" at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate building in DU. In collaboration with Bangladesh unit of German political foundation Friedrich-Stiftung (FES), CGS organised it.

Prof Delwar said they had interviewed 1,000 students from these two public universities and two private universities - Independent University Bangladesh (IUB) and Stamford University Bangladesh.

He said that 34 percent students of IUB and 47 percent of Stamford, who are living in hostels, are also facing discrimination.

"Unfortunately authorities of the universities are failing to allocate seats under their supervision and to ensure sufficient facilities for those students," he claimed, referring to the students' opinions.

Founding Director of the East Asia Study Center Prof Delwar said 37 percent students of DU, 29 percent of RU, 46 percent of IUB and 50 percent of Stamford

expressed frustrations with university life.

He said 75 percent students of DU, 68 percent of RU, 63 percent of IUB and 49 percent of Stamford had claimed that they feel bored in class. He urged university teachers to be more practical instead of using traditional methods during lectures, so that students can enjoy the learning experience.

Prof Delwar said that 39 percent of DU students are not going to library due to seating crisis while 11 percent are not going due to lack of required books.

"46 percent students of DU, 40 percent of RU, 30 percent of IUB and 8 percent of Stamford even expressed dissatisfaction over the existing admission system [mainly MCQ based]," he said.

Prof Delwar said 51 percent of DU students and 42 percent of RU students had expressed that the existing syllabus of their respective departments would not help them secure jobs. He also said that a good number of students are going to the library only to read some guide books on job preparation.

He urged the government to take proper initiatives to improve the existing education system which still remains "a legacy of the British colonial era".

"Our education system is divided into three mediums: Madrasa, English and Bangla, but the state should take initiatives to minimise the gap among them," he said.

A total of 17 research papers were presented on the first day. The inauguration ceremony was held in the morning. With CGS Director Dr Imtiaz Ahmed in the chair, the ceremony was also addressed, among others, by FES representative Tina Marie Blohm, CGS Conference Coordinator Farhana Razzak, and DU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Md Akhteruzzaman.



Noted author and associate editor of Prothom Alo, Anisul Hoque, at the opening of Ashraful Hasan's exhibition "Time in a Threshold" at Galleri Kaya yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Bangladesh is a role model in women's empowerment: Palak

BSS, Rajshahi

State Minister for Information and Communication Technology Zunaid Ahmed Palak, yesterday said Bangladesh has become a role model in women's empowerment.

He said many women are contributing towards building the nation and mentioned that the present government under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been working relentlessly to boost women's empowerment in the country.

The state minister was addressing a programme titled "Women Empowerment with Technological Support Project (She

Power)" at Rajshahi Government Women College auditorium, as the chief guest.

Solaiman Mondal, director of the project, was also present as the special guest, while Nilufar Ferdous, principal of the college, chaired the event.

The state minister said 43,000 multimedia classrooms were established across the country, making both teaching and learning processes easier.

Palak said the government has been working to introduce engineering technologies like Internet of Things (IOT) and with Technological Support Project (She

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World Communicators' Council starts journey in Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

World Communicators' Council, Bangladesh Chapter -- a platform for communication professionals -- started its journey in Dhaka yesterday.

A launch ceremony was held at Studio Theatre Hall of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud was present at the programme as chief guest while former Chief Information Commissioner Prof Dr Md Golam Rahman and Chairman Emeritus and Chief Mentor of Public Relations Council of India (PRCI) MB Jayaram, were present as special guests.

Chairman of governing council of PRCI

BN Kumar, Senior National Vice President of PRCI Prof BK Sahu; and Chairman of PRCI's Kolkata Chapter Biswajit Das, were also present.

As part of the programme, discussion on "Communication -- It's not Everyone's Job" and "Power of Advertising, It's Dangerous -- Handle with Care" will be held at BSA today.

The World Communicators' Council (WCC) aims to bring together all communication professionals on one global platform to network, share ideas and exchange experiences.

Organisers informed that WCC will encourage work on social projects to communicate for causes and work in tandem with its motto: "Communicating for a Better World".

Seminar on alternative childcare

CITY DESK

Speakers at a seminar said it is important to focus on quality of care provided in alternative settings as 130 million children around the world are at risk of losing parental care.

They were talking at a seminar organised by SOS Children's Village International with Institute of Social Welfare and Research, University of Dhaka at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban on March 28.

Kamrun Nahar, secretary of Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, was the chief guest at the event.

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DUCSU ELECTION
Prof Shabnam temporarily relieved of academic duties

DU CORRESPONDENT

The former provost of Kuwait Maitree Hall of Dhaka University (DU) Prof Shabnam Jahan has been temporarily relieved of her academic duties.

The decision came at a syndicate meeting on Thursday, chaired by Vice-Chancellor Prof Akhteruzzaman.

They also formed a five-member probe committee, headed by Supernumerary Professor Khondoker Bazlul Hoque, to further investigate into the matter.

Confirming the matter, a syndicate member told

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ERRATUM

In the report published yesterday under the headline "Raudha died by suicide: PIB" we mistakenly mentioned PBI (Police Bureau of Investigation) as "PIB". We regret the inadvertent error.

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