

## TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Pied Bushchat (female) at Purbachol.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

## The Pied Bushchat

I first met her on Christmas Day a few years ago. In the late winter afternoon I was looking for birds in a large field in Purbachol. I found her perched on the very top of an *Akond* shrub. I couldn't recognize her from a distance and, intrigued, came closer. Her underpart was cream coloured and she was brown on the top. Her wings had brown stripes and three dots near each shoulder. She was hardly larger than a sparrow. I photographed her, came closer and photographed her again.

She didn't seem to mind me, and, standing on one foot, seemed preoccupied with other things. Occasionally she dived to the ground, then returned to perch.

When I came too close, she flew off reluctantly, retaking her perch when I had backed off. Once she landed near my foot and - craning her neck - scolded me until I moved away.

I returned the next afternoon, a cooler day, to look for her. She had moved to a new location about ten feet from the *Akond*, on the top of an old dry bamboo erected for the fence of a vegetable patch in the middle of the field. She was puffed up like a ball in the cold and it took me some time to recognize her.

It was the time of year when many birds are around but she held her perch and did not share her territory. Shrikes and bulbuls came by and tried to land but she ferociously buzzed them, forcing them to keep their distance. She made short forays into the vegetable patch or dived into the grass, often emerging with a small insect in her mouth which she swallowed by the time she had

resumed her perch.

That night, I sent a photo of the bird to my birding friend Shahadat who identified it as a female Pied Bushchat. Females of many birds are harder to identify because they appear drab and lack the distinctive colours of the males. The male Pied Bushchat, for example, is black with some white on top. I had seen it before and would have recognized it instantly.

Pied Bushchats are flycatchers and live on insects they catch from the ground. They are found over a wide area from the Middle East to Southeast Asia. About five inches long, they are smaller than their more common cousin, the Siberian Stonechat. They nest in cavities on the ground or along riverbanks and are usually seen in open fields and scrubland. In Bangladesh they are seasonal visitors and considered somewhat uncommon.

A fascinating fact about Pied Bushchats is that they differ in appearance and colour in different islands such as Sulawesi, Flores and New Guinea. About sixteen races (subspecies) of the bird are recognized today.

I returned several times to the same spot at the same time in January to photograph her. Then, one day, she was gone. Perhaps she had found a mate and they had built a nest to raise a family. Maybe she had left for another year. Who knows?

And the field where I found her? Today, it is the intersection of two roads.

facebook.com/tangents.ikabir

## 'The most alone of poets'

Jibanananda Das through the lens of a Japanese filmmaker

ANILIA KISHWAR TARANNUM

"I fell in love with how modern Jibanananda Das' work was, and how unusual the temperament behind it was. And it's not just his poetry, his life is just as interesting to me," said Japanese filmmaker Hiroshi Sunairi, who has been researching on Das for the past few months.

Currently a resident of New York, Sunairi has made 16 films in 22 years -- each with a unique theme and location. His last film, "Qué Tan Lejos/How Far Am I", was about Mexican poet José Rico's return to his hometown Ciudad Juárez, and visiting old friends, family members and landscapes of the border town that was ravaged by the drug war.

Poetry has long been an area of interest for Sunairi, and his next film will be based on the life and works of Jibanananda Das, a poet overwhelmingly loved and revered by Bengali poetry lovers and enthusiasts. Sunairi has already made multiple visits to Das' birthplace, Barishal, for research.

"My 2013 experimental short film 'Where it flows out into the plains' was sort of a travelogue on India. I wanted to use some poetry recitation in the film, and my Indian associate producer suggested Jibanananda Das," Sunairi said over a Skype interview recently.

That is when he started reading Das' translated works, and connected with them deeply. "I became fascinated with how he was ahead of his time. I feel he was kind

of arrogant about this -- he knew how good he was. He was sort of an outcast... not really included in the writers' circle of the time. There was loneliness in his life -- both as a person and a writer," Sunairi said.

"Das was very confident about his ability as a poet and writer. This confidence and loneliness made up such an interesting, almost hybrid kind of personality. He was

postmodern, in many ways," he added.

Das lived through some interesting times, especially partition in 1947. Sunairi picked up on this, and decided to make a biographical film. "At the same time, I read Jibanananda Das' short stories, and those were just like experimental cinema to me. The stories don't follow a specific

formula or chronology, yet some of the dialogues are so sharp and memorable," he said.

Sunairi is making two films: one, an experimental research documentary on Das, and another a fiction based on his short stories. During the months of June and July, Sunairi visited Kolkata and Barishal to get to know the poet.

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Hiroshi Sunairi at work by the Dhanshiri river.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

## DHAKA TODAY

## CONFERENCE

On dengue prevention

Organiser: United Nations Youth &amp; Students Association

Bangladesh

Venue: Center for Men and Masculinities Studies, Dhanmondi

Time: 5pm

## LITERARY EVENT

Remembering Bangabandhu

Organiser: Kendrio Khelaghar Ashor

Venue: RC Majumder Auditorium, University of Dhaka

Time: 5pm

## WORKSHOP

Introduction to Node.js

Venue: Tech Dojo, Airport Road

Time: 11am

## CONFERENCE

Empowerment of Youth &amp; Women to Achieve SDG

Organiser: Dhaka Language Club

Venue: The Westin Dhaka, Gulshan-2

Time: 10am

## PROGRAMMING CLASS

On Android Application

Development with Java SE

Organiser: Tech Trix

Venue: Muhammadia Super Market

Time: 10:30am

## A friend of the world

Diplomats remember Bangabandhu at discussion in UN Headquarters

BSS, Dhaka

Diplomats at a discussion in UN Headquarters recalled the contribution of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in realising rights of the deprived, terming Bangabandhu a "Friend of the World".

They said the struggle and sacrifice of Bangabandhu in realising the rights of deprived people is a glowing example for the international community.

Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations arranged the discussion at the UN Headquarters on Thursday, marking the 44th martyrdom anniversary of Bangabandhu and his family members, according to an official message received yesterday.

Former UN Under Secretary General and former Bangladesh Permanent Representative to the UN Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, Indian Permanent Representative to the UN Syed Akbaruddin, Serbian Permanent Representative Milan

Milanovic, Cuban Ambassador Ana Silvia Rodriguez Abascal, Palestine Permanent Representative Riyad H Mansour, Bangladesh Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Masud Bin Momen and president of the USA unit of Awami League Dr Siddiqui Rahman, among others, spoke at the discussion.

Anwarul Karim said Bangabandhu, as a global leader, had played an outstanding role in achieving UN membership of Bangladesh. He highlighted a newly-born nation to the world, Karim added.

Recalling India's long-standing relations with Bangladesh, Syed Akbaruddin said August 15 is India's Independence Day, but when people of India heard that Bangabandhu and most of his family members were killed on August 15 in 1975, their mirth turned to mourning instantly.

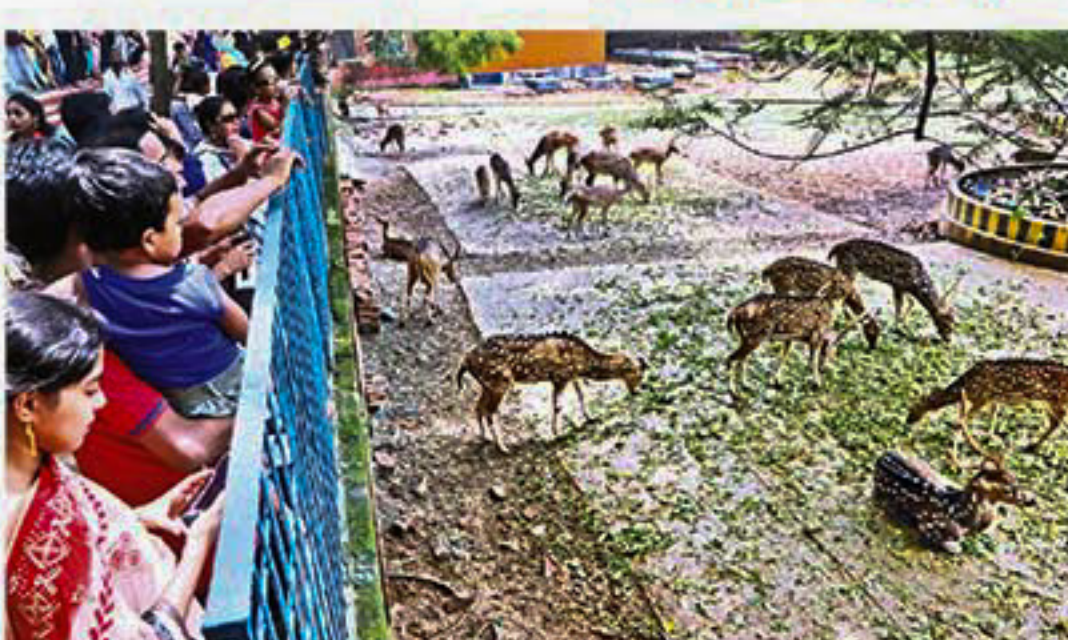
He said the principle and ideology of Bangabandhu are being reflected in

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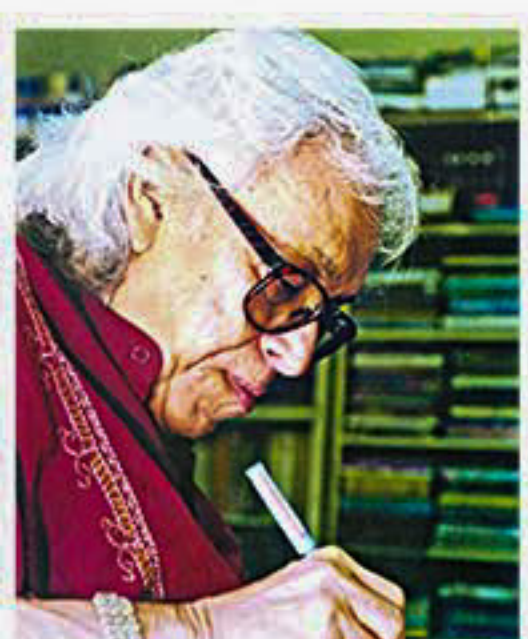
HAVING A BALL AT THE ZOO... yesterday, being a weekend, added an extra holiday to the Eid vacation and children along with their parents utilised it to the fullest by spending the day at Dhaka Zoo in Mirpur. Children were seen petting horses. Some leaned over the fence to see a herd of deer, while some little ones tried to draw the attention of a tiger.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



## Poet Shamsur Rahman's 13th death anniversary today

BSS, Dhaka



The 13th death anniversary of renowned poet Shamsur Rahman will be observed today.

Different socio-cultural organisations including Kabi Shamsur Rahman Smriti Parishad have drawn up various programmes to mark the day, said a press release.

Jatiya Kabita Parishad, Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote, Kabi Shamsur Rahman Smriti Parishad and the poet's family members will place wreaths at this grave in Banani in the morning. The death anniversary will also be observed at his ancestral village in Raipura of Narsingdi through various programmes.

Rahman was born in Old Dhaka on October 23 in 1929. His poems largely feature the Liberation War.

Barnomala Amar Dukhina Barnomala, Asader Shirt, Tomake Pawar Jonno Hey Swadhinata and Udbhat Uter Pithe Cholechhe Swadesh are some his works depicting various aspects of national transitions at different times.

The number of books published in his lifetime is 112.

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## BNP accuses govt of destroying leather industry

UNB, Dhaka

BNP yesterday alleged that the government has destroyed the leather industry, after that of jute, in a planned way to make the country dependent on others.

"We earn foreign currency through the leather industry as rawhide is collected after every Eid-ul-Azha, but the government has destroyed it in a planned way. They did so in the past, too," said BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir.

Speaking at a doa mahfil, he further said, "The government has made good progress in making Bangladesh a subservient country as part of its far-reaching plot. They [govt] are not only repressing people, but also playing the biggest role in turning the country into a dependent one."

BNP arranged the programme at its Nayapaltn central office, where party leaders and activists prayed for their incarcerated Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

Recalling their party chairperson's contributions to the socio-economic development of the country, Fakhru bemoaned that the government has kept her in jail deliberately to cripple the country

and its economy.

He alleged that the government has destroyed all the democratic institutions to hang onto power. "The judiciary has been harmed badly and it has completely lost its independence."

Branding the government "unelected and fascist", the BNP leader said it is now oppressing political and democratic activists by establishing its "control" over the judiciary.

Fakhru regretted that their party could not free their ailing chairperson through a strong movement yet.

He urged BNP leaders and activists to unite to have their chairperson released from jail through street agitations. "We have no alternative to intensifying the movement to free her."

Later, a munajat was offered, seeking the well-being of Khaleda.

BNP standing committee members Moudud Ahmed, Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Nazrul Islam Khan, Selima Rahman, vice chairmen Shamsuzzaman Dudu, AZM Jahid Hossain, Netai Roy Chowdhury, Shawkat Mahmud;

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