

T A N G E N T S

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

Morning in Australia

Up before dawn, I take a quick cold shower to rouse me for a full day of bird photography and gather my binoculars, hat, boots and camera. Leaving the hotel my Australian birder friends and I drive north, leaving behind Katherine, a small town in the Northern Territories of Australia. After about fifteen minutes we stop and walk down a dirt road to a stream called Edith Creek.

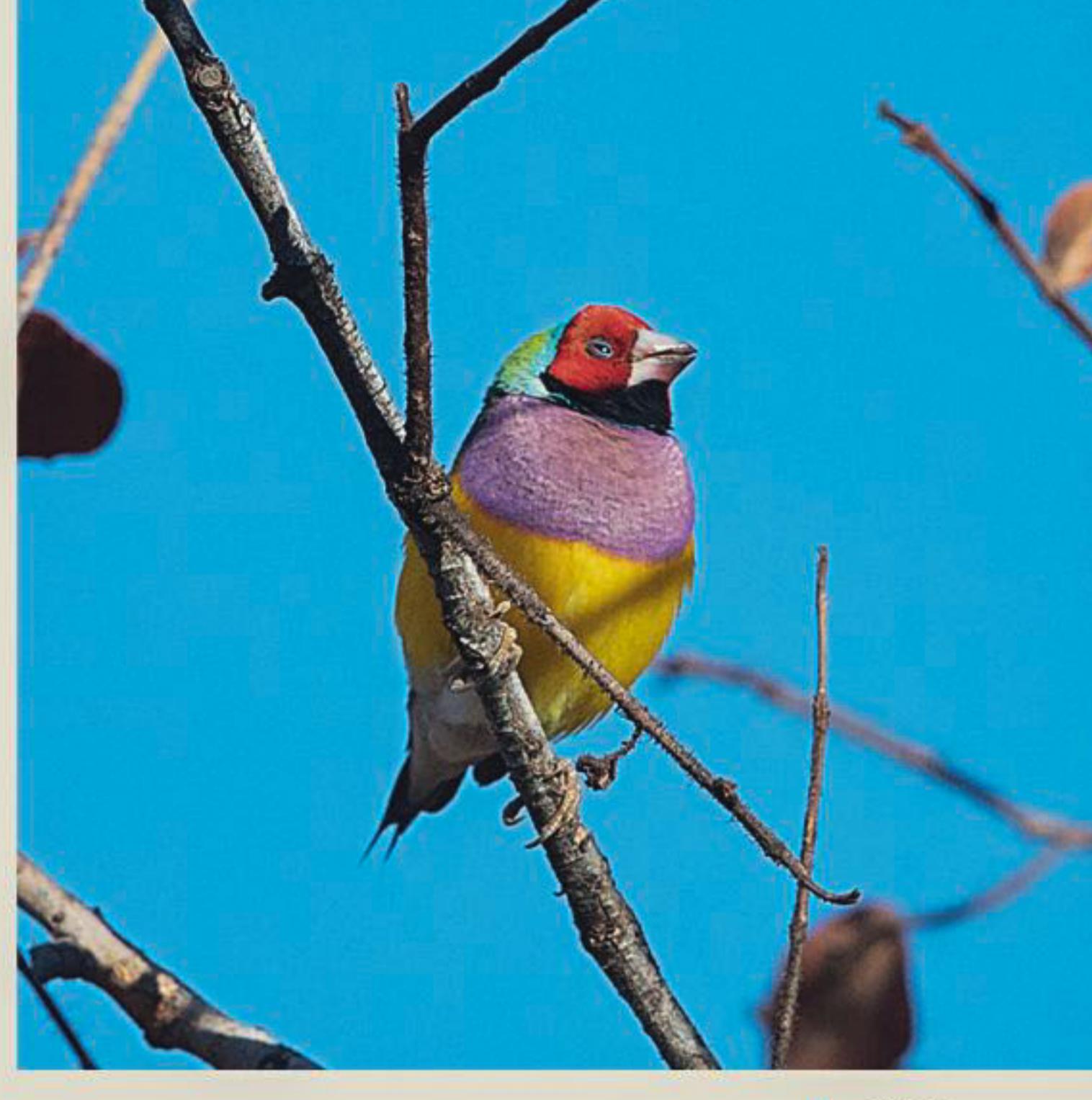
We were here the previous evening and saw several types of finches and parrots, scattered over the Pandanus bushes growing by the stream. We think they will return at daybreak for the water. After all, this is the dry season.

Taking position on the northeast side of the creek, we wait for the birds as the eastern sky lightens. Several flocks of finches arrive from southwest but instead of landing near us they continue towards the wide rocky field behind, settling on the scattered trees. Occasionally a Hooded Parrot zips by overhead offering a tantalizing glimpse of its yellow, blue and black feathers. When a parrot and a few finches land by the creek but they are lit badly and too far from us.

Meanwhile the wind carries the cacophony of birds from the distant trees behind us.

I refuse to believe that after all this effort we will fail to photograph our target species: Gouldian Finches and Hooded Parrots. Clearly those trees behind us have something that is absent in our location: seeds or fruits perhaps, or insects. A plan enters my head. The trees are to our east, so a direct approach would place the birds against the light, destroying any chance of a good photograph. I suggest to my friends that we make a wide detour around the trees and approach them with the sun behind us. They agree.

It's a long walk, but when we finally have the right bearing



Gouldian Finch, Northern Territory, Australia.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

and approach the trees, we see dozens of Hooded Parrots, males, females and juveniles, socializing and cackling away. Periodically they descend to the ground looking for morsels of food before returning to their perch.

Meanwhile the sun has come out and is climbing rapidly over the sky. The soft but clear morning light drenches the idyllic setting.

While we are admiring the parrots, a cloud of finches appears from the direction of the creek and settles into a nearby tree. They include Gouldian Finches, as well as Long-tailed, Double-barred, and Masked Finches. They are tiny, smaller than our sparrows, and we need to come closer to get our photographs.

The birds give us some time – ten or fifteen minutes – before they all fly away to more distant trees.

We head back towards the creek with the sun behind us. On a raised bank, while I am trying to photograph a Double-barred Finch jumping around in a bush, a flock of finches lands unexpectedly at water's edge. We have a good vantage. They are all green, the colour of juvenile Gouldian Finches.

They dip their heads into the water in unison and then disappear. Parrots come next and drink. The last bird to drink is a red-headed Gouldian Finch, its brilliant colours reflecting on the water.

When they leave, the creek, its banks, and the trees in the plain are empty once again. It is hard to imagine that just a few minutes ago it was the site of one of my most memorable birding encounters.

facebook.com/tangents.ikabir or follow "ihtishamkabir" on Instagram.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Social attitude needs to change to empower women

Say speakers at CPD's Chattogram Sanglap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Speakers at a programme held yesterday emphasised providing proper environment, opportunities and facilities to ensure gender equality and empower women.

They were speaking at a programme titled "Chattogram Sanglap", organised by Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) at a local hotel in port city.

The theme was "Participation of civil institutions for democratic governance: Role of government in gender equality and women's empowerment".

Fahmida Khatun, executive director of CPD, suggested changing the social attitude toward women.

"In our society, when a woman works from dawn to midnight at home, she does not get proper recognition from her family or others," she said.

"Our society deems household work worthless as women do not earn from them. But we will have to change this attitude and recognise their service to the family and society," she added.

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'Negligence' of REB officials leads to electrocution

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Ctg

A woman died apparently from electrocution in Chattogram yesterday with the Rural Electrification Board (REB) officials disregarding villagers' complaint to fix an electricity line.

The incident happened as soon as the victim -- Lubna Das, 30, a mother two teenagers -- descended to a beel near her house at Daseri in Boalkhali upazila.

Her husband Kanu Das told The Daily Star that an 11,000 volt power line at the back of their homestead snapped amid squally wind on Thursday night. The wire has remained fallen on the marshy land, he added.

On information from the villagers, REB officials rushed to the spot, said the residents. The team, however, demanded Tk 2,000 to repair the line.

Kanu Das, a day labourer by profession, said, "As we were unable to give the money, they left the spot." At that time, they did not even bother to stop the power supply despite request, he alleged.

The snapped power line killed a goose, fishes of the beel, he said, adding that his wife rushed to the wetland when she found one of their goats dead there.

On his wife's death, he said, "It is killing, not an accident."

Rubel Das, a neighbour of the victim's family, alleged that local REB officials always demand money for anything relating to electricity line.

Contacted, Nizam Uddin, deputy general manager of REB in Boalkhali, said they were not informed that the power line was torn down.

When asked why then a team of his office went to the spot and demanded money to repair the line, he said they launched a probe into the incident.

"If the allegation comes true, we will take actions against the involved officials," he said.

Neyamat Ullah, officer-in-charge of Boalkhali Police Station, said on information they recovered the body and sent it to Chattogram Medical College morgue for autopsy.

When asked about electrocution, he said it will be confirmed after post-mortem.



Though illegal, local species of herons being sold in broad daylight on Dhaka-Sylhet highway. The sellers say 500 to 1,000 birds are sold on at least 10 points of the road daily. The photo was taken at Pani Umda in Habiganj last week.

AL doesn't believe in politics of vengeance: Hasan Mahmud

AGENCIES

Asserting that Awami League does not believe in politics of vengeance, Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday called upon BNP to leave the "vengeful" path introduced by its founder Ziaur Rahman.

"The government also wants to see the BNP as a strong opposition, but the people have rejected the party because of its politics of vengeance," the minister said, reports UNB.

He rejected BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgi's allegations, made at a recent meeting, that the ruling party is working to eliminate existence of all opposition parties in the country and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia was sent to jail

Shafiqul takes charge as DMP commissioner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Md Shafiqul Islam, the newly-appointed commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), took charge yesterday as the successor of DMP Commissioner Md Asaduzzaman Miah.

Earlier on August 28, the public security division of the home ministry issued a gazette notification regarding Shafiqul's appointment as the 34th DMP commissioner.

Shafiqul, son of Shawkat Ali and Sufia Khatun from Naoda Bondo Beel village in Alamdanga upazila of Chittagong, was born on October 30, 1962 and is known for his "clean" image in the police force.

After completing his BSc (honours) from Bangladesh Agricultural University in 1986, he joined Bangladesh Civil Service (Police) as assistant superintendent of police in 1989.

Shafiqul served as the AIG in Khagrachhari,

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REFUSAL OF MARRIAGE

University student sent to jail on rape charge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A university student in Rajshahi was shown arrested and sent to jail on Thursday after being accused in a rape case as he refused to marry the girl he was having an affair with.

The incident took place three days after both were taken into police custody.

The first-year student of Rajshahi New Degree Government College under National University started a relationship with the HSC-passed girl of Rangpur on Facebook around six months back, said Rezaul Hossain, officer-in-charge of Paba police station.

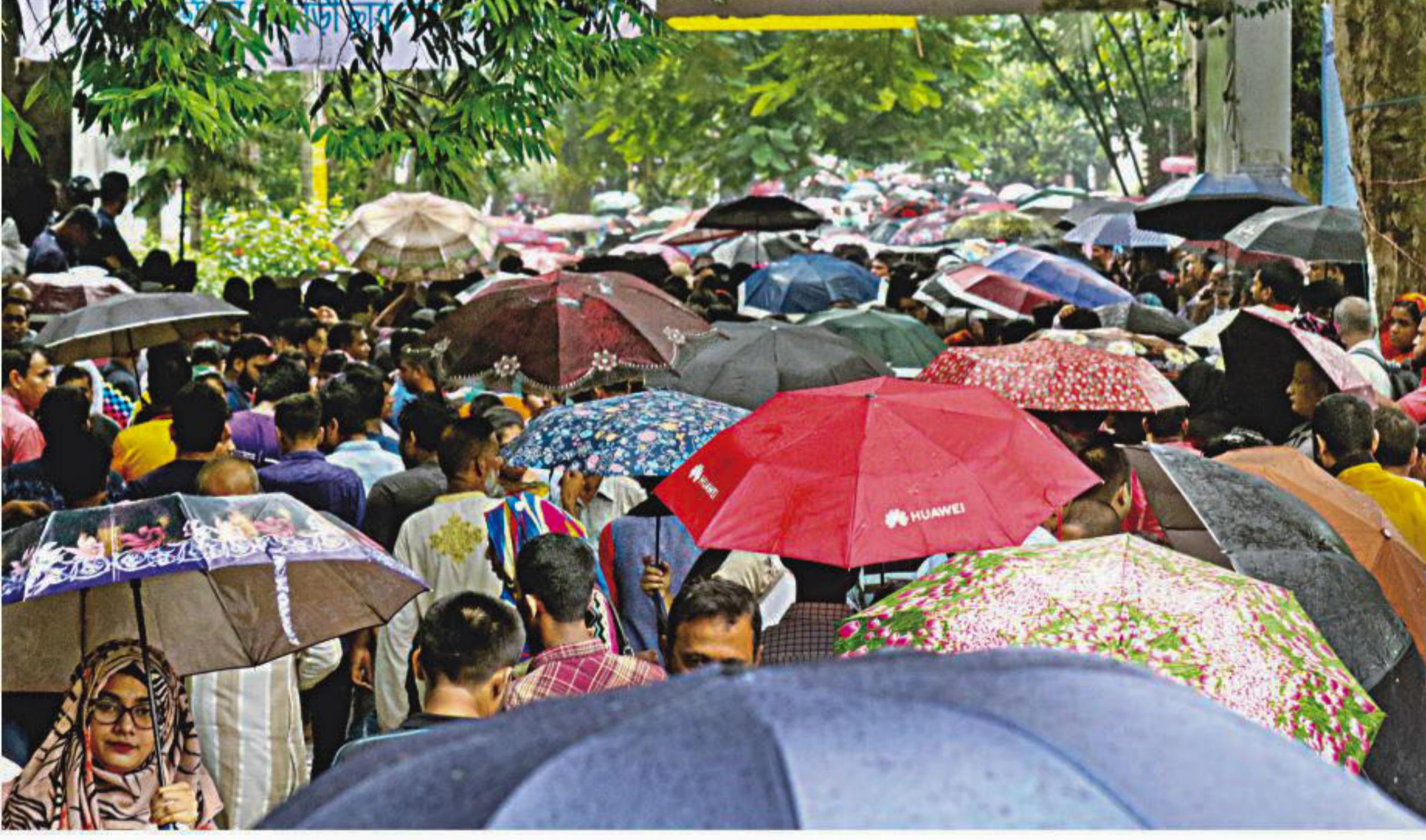
He said on Tuesday afternoon, the girl went to his home in Paba upazila and

denied to leave the house until they got married.

When the boy's father called police at night, law enforcers took both of them to Paba Police Station, said the OC. Police questioned and kept them in custody until Thursday morning. Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) then took both of them to Rangpur.

At Tajhat Police Station, the girl filed a rape case the same day. She alleged that the boy, with a promise to marry her, "raped" her in Rangpur on June 16, said Sub-inspector Anwar Hossain of the police station.

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Braving rain, aspirants wait outside an exam centre at Dhaka University yesterday morning for the admission test under "Ga" unit -- business studies faculty.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Six BCL men injured in factional clash at RU

RU CORRESPONDENT

At least six BCL activists were injured in a factional clash at Rajshahi University over a trivial matter yesterday.

Limon, Ikrar, Maruf, Jashim, Rashid and Sohel -- followers of former BCL central committee leader Shakibul Hasan Baki -- received primary treatment from the university's medical centre, campus sources said.

The clash ensued when RU BCL activist Kamrul, a supporter of RU BCL's incumbent general secretary Faisal Ahmed Runu, beat up Limon at the guestroom of Madar Bux Hall where the latter went to meet his

friends around 1:30pm.

Limon asked Kamrul, who is junior to him, either to sit "in a good manner or get out of the room", triggering an altercation, they said. At one stage, Kamrul and his friends beat Limon up.

Kamrul's followers then went to Kamrul's room and vandalised its windows.

Following the incident, RU BCL vice presidents Suranjit Prasad Britto, Arif Bin Jahir, organising secretary Chanchal Kumar Orko, and more than 200 activists -- including Saimun, Borno, Subroto and Kamrul -- gathered in front of the dormitory with iron rods, sticks, machetes and

other sharp weapons. They attacked other group members.

Contacted, injured Limon said Kamrul misbehaved and beat him up.

Kamrul could not be contacted for comments.

RU BCL general secretary Faisal Ahmed Runu said Kamrul and Limon first scuffled. The hall unit's BCL activists might have been beaten up as Baki's followers went to beat Kamrul and vandalised the windows.

RU Proctor Prof Lutfor Rahman said they took the situation under control and deployed more law enforcers to avoid any untoward incident.



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