

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

Mr. and Mrs. Gould



Left: Gouldian Finch....., Darwin, Australia. Right: Mrs. Gould's Sunbird, Satchori, Bangladesh.

PHOTOS: IHTISHAM KABIR

I became interested in the work of the Goulds after noticing that two of the prettiest birds I have seen bear that name. John Gould (1804-1881) was an English ornithologist and author. His wife Elizabeth Gould (1804-1841) was an artist. The aforementioned birds are Mrs. Gould's Sunbird and Gouldian Finch.

John Gould was trained as a taxidermist. He excelled in it and was sought after by contemporary ornithologists to preserve their avian specimens. Soon he was appointed Curator and Preserver at the museum of the Zoological Society of London where he was responsible for stuffing and mounting bird specimens sent from around the world to the Society.

One day John's co-worker introduced him to his sister Elizabeth. John and Elizabeth were married shortly. Soon Elizabeth started drawing and painting the birds that John preserved for his customers. John, an instinctive businessman, recognized her artistic talent and started selling her artwork to his taxidermy customers. In 1830 the Society received, from India, a shipment of birds of the Himalayas. While preserving them, John saw an opportunity to make a book. He would write

and Elizabeth would illustrate this book. Before starting the project, however, Elizabeth learned a new technology, lithography, which allowed her to make nicer pictures than the woodcuts she was doing. This book - their first - on the birds of the Himalayas included 80 hand-coloured lithographs of 100 bird species of the Himalayas, along with text written by John.

These books were not mass-produced like today. Instead, the author announced a limited number of copies and sold subscriptions to them in advance. In addition to Gould, the subscription method was employed by John James Audubon in the United States to support his work.

In recognition of Elizabeth's work, one of the birds of the Himalayas - a sunbird - was named after her.

In 1838, the Gould family travelled to Australia and started working on birds there. One result of this trip was the seven-volume *Birds of Australia*. They returned to England in 1840. Sadly, Elizabeth died shortly thereafter after giving birth to her eighth child.

In his prolific career, John Gould published eleven illustrated books on birds. In addition to his magnum opus on Australian birds, he produced seven volumes on the

birds of Asia and five volumes on the Birds of Europe. He also made books devoted to Trogons, Toucans and Partridges. He made a fortune from selling these books.

We may never fully know the extent of Elizabeth's contributions to these works. As was often the case with women in Victorian times, she has not one to claim credit. Eight books that John Gould published during her lifetime all bore only his name as the author, but when a collection of her letters was discovered in 1938, it became clear that her contributions to these books went substantially well beyond her illustrations.

After she died, John Gould named a pretty Australian bird after her: the Gouldian Finch. He never recovered emotionally from Elizabeth's death nor did he remarry. In his later years he developed a passion in Hummingbirds, contributing to a Hummingbird craze in Europe. When he died in 1881 John Gould had 5738 hummingbirds in his collection. Today the world remembers him and Elizabeth for their books and birds and animals named after them.

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'They'll lose councillorship if found involved'

DNCC mayor warns councillors on canal grabbing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Md Atiqul Islam yesterday said if they find allegation of canal grabbing against any councillor and if it is proven, he or she will lose their councillorship.

"If it is verified through probe that a councillor has grabbed a canal land then his/her councillorship will be cancelled. Even if we get evidence of their involvement with the grabbing, they will lose their councillorship," he said.

The DNCC mayor said this while inaugurating the Khidirkhal after its re-excavation at sluice gate point in Uttara sector-11.

The canal was blocked by a structure constructed illegally by an influential person. Atiqul said though the canal ran through both sides of the sluice gate, during a visit on March 16 he did not see any connectivity as an illegal structure was blocking it, he added.

"I have dismantled the structure by taking help from local lawmaker, councillors, Awami League leaders and locals," he said. Atiqul said he has already

directed his chief estate officer and local councillor to identify the width of the canal observing the last map.

If necessary, they will have to break the wall of the adjoining hospital and they have already got positive consent from its director, the mayor said.

Pointing towards Rajuk and other government agencies, the mayor said their mentality has to be changed. They should not only allot plots; but also keep space for dumping yards.

"Also, check CS, RS and city survey maps before allotting any plot... If you allot plots without verification, people will have to suffer for that. You have to visit the location first before allotment," the mayor said.

Pointing towards a road nearby, the mayor also said, "See how the road became narrow due to encroachment." He said they will continue their drives to free canals from grabbers with the help of public representatives and locals.

Among others, chief executive officer of DNCC Md Selim Reza, chief estate officer Md Mozammel Haque, ward-51 councillor Mohammad Sharifur Rahman, councillor (reserved seat) Jakia Sultana were present.

Zillur Rahman's anniversary of death today



CITY DESK

Today is the eighth death anniversary of former president Zillur Rahman, a veteran politician and Language Movement hero, an organiser of the Liberation War, and one of the close associates of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Zillur Rahman died of old-age complications at a Singapore hospital in 2013.

He started his political career as a volunteer of Awami League and was inducted as the

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MOUDUD LAID TO REST... Flanked by party leaders and activists, BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir pays tribute to Moudud Ahmed at Central Shaheed Minar in the capital yesterday. People from all walks of life paid their respects to the veteran politician and eminent lawyer who breathed his last on March 16 at a Singapore hospital. Barrister Moudud was buried last evening in his family graveyard at Manikpur village in Companiganj, Noakhali following his sixth namaz-e-janaza in the district. His funeral prayers were also held in Singapore, and High Court and Nayapaltn party office premises in Dhaka.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Youths stage climate march in Barishal



PHOTO: COLLECTED

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

In solidarity with the Global Climate Strike -- a movement against climate change -- youths representing different organisations held a climate strike march at Barishal yesterday.

At the march, participants called for the implementation of the Paris Agreement, including putting pressure on developing countries to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The procession started from Barishal Central Shaheed Minar at 10am and moved across different roads of the city, ending in front of Ashwini Kumar Hall.

The event was organised by the environmental organisation Youthnet for Climate Justice, Protiki Jubo Sangsad, and the Coastal Youth Action Hub. Throughout the march, youths shouted slogans expressing concerns for climate and environmental protection.

Chairperson of Protiki Jubo Sangsad Aminul Islam, programme manager Mayuri Akhter Tumpa, coordinator of Youthnet for Climate Justice Sohanur Rahman, president of Aranyak Kathak Biswas Joy and others spoke at the rally.

The speakers called on all countries to come forward to control global warming. They also urged the country's youth to be more vocal about this pressing issue.

3 killed in Sirajganj road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Three people were killed when a speeding truck hit a CNG-run three-wheeler on Nagarbari-Bogura highway at Shahzadpur upazila of Sirajganj early yesterday.

The deceased were Rashedul Islam (26) and Sakib Sheikh (17) from Dariapur Uttarpara and three-wheeler driver Ashik Ahmed (20) from Shahzadpur.

Hatikumrul Highway Police Station OC Shahjahan Ali said the accident took place around 3am. Police seized the truck but the driver managed to flee.

Our Dinajpur correspondent reports, a man was killed after being hit by a running train in Rangpur city yesterday morning.

The deceased is Md Wasim Ali (38), a resident of Rangpur Railway Slum at Patbari. Railway officials said the trucker was washing his vehicle near the rail track in Patbari area. He died on the spot when a Parbatipur junction-bound commuter train from Lalmonirhat hit him.

Boimela sees weekend crowd

Precautionary measures against coronavirus in place

MATHEWS CHIRAN

Although a little late, the Amar Ekushey book fair is taking place again after a year. The delay was obvious -- like everything else, the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted the Boimela too.

Bangla Academy sources said despite their initial dilemma, they eventually decided to host the fair following requests from publishers, who have been facing losses ever since the pandemic hit.

But the impact of Covid-19 was visible at the fair yesterday, on the second day.

At the entrance, law enforcers were seen reminding everyone to wear masks. Sanitisers are installed at the gates as precautionary measures, while temperature is also being checked at the gate. Announcers are shouting pandemic health guidelines in frequent intervals, while stalls bear "no mask, no service" signs.

On the second day, which was also a Friday, it was mostly young people flocking to the fair. They said this was a great opportunity for them since it has been a while they last got to visit a public event.

"We had no way to go anywhere

during the pandemic. This book fair gave us a destination. We're really glad to be here today," said Raisa Islam, who came to the fair from Santimagar with her university friends.

Asked if they are concerned about their health, she said, "We honestly are. We are wearing masks and brought sanitiser with us."

As usual, couples were there to roam out in the open and enjoy the festivity of the fair too.

Tarikul Islam, who came to the fair with his better half Nasreen Jahan, said, "We are just browsing today, but you never know, you always come across something interesting at the book fair."

This year the academy didn't allow Children's Hour, one of the major attractions at the fair, to take place keeping in mind the risk for children. However, children along with their parents -- wearing masks -- visited the fair and were seen browsing through books.

Meanwhile, Tanzila Ridi from Reza publication said, "We only sold a few books till the evening." To her wish, as the sun started to set in, the crowd also started increasing, this correspondent saw.

"Around 3pm in the afternoon, people were less in number. Now at 5pm, its brimming with people. I guess we need to go out now or else physical distance cannot be maintained," said Faruk Ahmed, leaving the fair with his wife Tarin Akter.

The fair wasn't hosted without hiccups. At the gates, sanitiser bottles ran out and volunteers were seen rushing to fill those up.

Abdullah Towhid, a volunteer at the gate near Bangla Academy, said, "The whole day, there was nearly no crowd but now they are here. Maintaining a big crowd is tough indeed. But we have enough sanitisers in stock, nothing to worry."

This year, 834 units have been allocated to 540 publishing houses and organisations to facilitate sale of books and other publications. The authorities have allotted 154 units on the Bangla Academy premises to 107 organisations and 680 units at the Suhrawardy Udyan to 433 organisations.

The area of this year's fair is 15 lakh square feet and there will be 33 pavilions in the fair including the academy's three pavilions.



In prior years, half of the weekends were reserved as Children's Hour. Though this was cancelled this year due to health concerns, the Boimela still saw a number of little ones yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Resolution introduced by US Congress

Commemorating 50yrs of Bangladesh's Independence

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US House of Representatives has introduced a resolution congratulating the people of Bangladesh on the 50th anniversary of the country's independence, hailing the courage of the valiant freedom fighters in the struggle for freedom and democracy.

It also lauded the contributions of Bangladesh for hosting Rohingya fleeing genocide in Myanmar.

The resolution titled "Commemorating the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence" was introduced in the US House of Representatives on March 16, 2021, according to a statement issued Thursday by the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington DC.

Democratic Congresswomen Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (New York) submitted the resolution in the first session of the 117th Congress. Three democratic representatives Rashida Tlaib (Michigan), Jimmy Gomez (California), and Chair of House Committee on Foreign Affairs Gregory W Meeks (New York) co-sponsored the resolution.

It has been referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

The House of Representatives in the resolution mentioned that on March 26, 1971, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared Bangladesh's independence from West Pakistan.

The Congress resolution cited Senator Edward Kennedy's speech on February 14, 1972, at the University of Dhaka, where he said, "The struggle of the people of Bangladesh... evokes the greatest memories of our past."

The resolution highlighted the history of Bangladesh's long struggle for self-determination culminating in the War of Independence in 1971.

CRIMINAL CASES

Witnesses to get court dates via SMS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Witnesses of criminal cases can now digitally know the dates of their appearance before the courts concerned.

The government on Thursday launched a programme to digitally inform the scheduled dates about their appearance before the courts through SMS along with current system of issuing summons.

The ministries of law, and post and telecommunication collectively inaugurated the event as a pilot programme for Cumilla and Narsingdi to ensure the presence of witnesses before courts on fixed dates to place their statements.

Speaking as chief guest at the inauguration in secretariat, Law Minister Anisul Huq said absence of witnesses or their irregular appearances before courts are one of the main causes for long delay in disposing of cases. This programme will reduce the time and cost of litigants and the state, he said.

Post and Telecommunication Minister Mustafa Zabbar was also present at the programme.