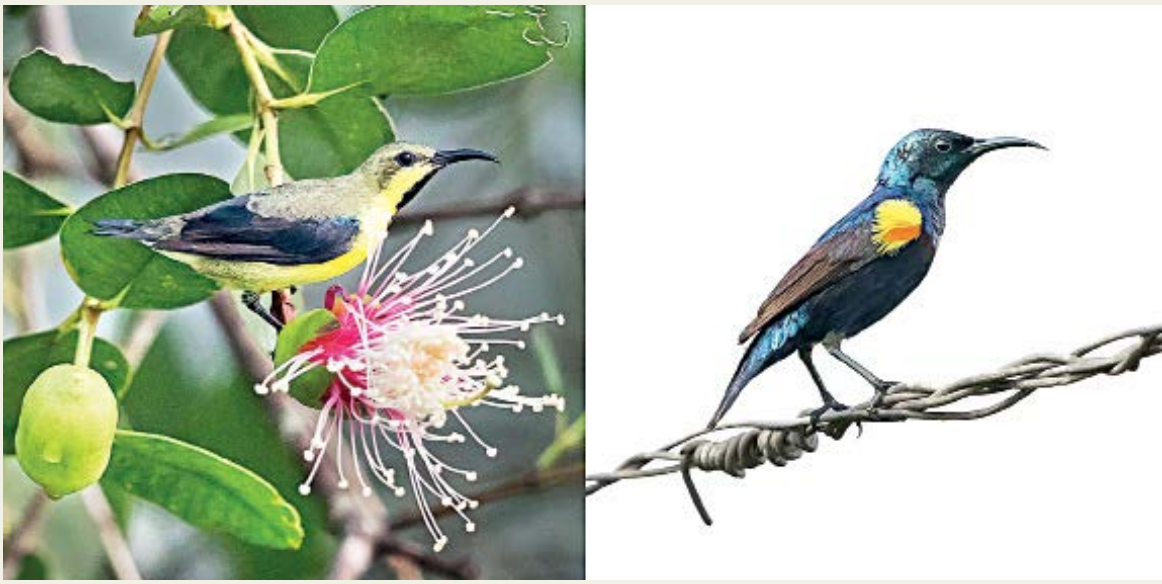


## TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

### Good-looking Birds



Purple Sunbird (male) – eclipse plumage on left and breeding plumage on right.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

We all have our notion of “good-looking” when it comes to people. This idea extends to other creatures. In case of birds there are three levels of looking good. First, some bird species are simply prettier than others. Second, several birds of the same species can have varying attractiveness. Finally, an individual bird’s looks can change from month to month.

Still, when we see a bird we focus on identifying the species and perhaps observing its behaviour. When I put on my photographer’s hat, however, I must think of the final result: the bird’s photograph. So I pay attention to the bird’s looks. A photogenic bird increases the likelihood of a better photograph.

From species to species, colour is the most appealing feature of birds. There are countless variations of avian colours and associated patterns.

Some of the world’s spectacularly colourful birds are in Central and South America. Birds such as Resplendent Quetzal, Cock O’the Rock and Sunbittern are justifiably famous for their exquisite plumage. They draw a large number of admiring bird photographers.

With their glittering bodies, hummingbirds of the Americas are also attractive. Photographers go through great lengths – setting up

multiple flashes around feeders, for example – in order to photograph the plumage of these birds in flattering light.

In Australia, colourful parrots and finches are exciting. Papua New Guinea has birds of paradise. These attractive birds that are not seen outside Australasia.

In Bangladesh colourful species occur in forests and include minivets, sunbirds, leafbirds, flycatchers, green magpies, parrots and trogons. All but one of our kingfishers are startlingly colourful. We are also blessed with many woodpeckers including flamebacks, easily spotted in the city.

Besides colour, appendages make birds attractive: the large, colourful beaks of toucans, the casques over the beaks of hornbills; the improbable crown of the Cock o’the Rock, the elaborate tail feathers of birds of paradise, and the long streamers of Tropicbirds for example.

In some species males are more colourful than females. These include most ducks, sunbirds and some forest birds. Males and females of yet other species are equally attractive, but in different colours. For example, Scarlet Minivet males are brilliant red while females are bright yellow.

Birds of prey have their own attraction stemming from the power and stealth they radiate. Their eyes, beaks, talons as well as

powerful wing-beats add to this charisma of power. Some raptors also have beautiful patterns, for example the white dots seen on a red Greater Spotted Eagle.

An individual bird can go from attractive to unattractive within a year. Some males look their most appealing during breeding season. For example, Red Munia becomes bright red early in its breeding season, gradually turning grey-brown as the season progresses. The Purple Sunbird sports a bright yellow-orange circle on its shoulder during breeding season. But after breeding it takes on a drab “eclipse” plumage. Some birds moult feathers when they can look distinctly disheveled.

My fondness for avian colour notwithstanding, I suspect that a majority of the world’s bird species are shades of brown, beige or grey, collectively known as “LBJ” or little brown jobs. Are they not worth photographing then? Of course they are! But the photographer must work harder for a more attractive photograph. For example, photographs of any bird in action can be dramatic. Catching the interaction of two or more birds can also yield an interesting picture.

For the author’s bird photos, updated daily, please follow “ihtishamkabir” on Instagram.

## GURUDWARA NANAKSHAHI

### Inclusion, the path to harmony

DIPAN NANDY

By 12:00pm yesterday, a crowd had slowly gathered at Gurudwara Nanakshahi’s doors. Far from being confined to adherents of Sikhism, the premises welcomed people from all religions, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, and Christians, in line with the Guru Nanakshahi’s message -- the door is open for all.

Located in Dhaka University area, the Gurudwara has a simple rule: anyone can wear a handkerchief and scarf with a ‘Khand’ symbol to take part in the community lunch at its ‘langarkhana’.

The langarkhana hosts a special lunch for all on Fridays. “Friday’s food list includes rice, pulses, vegetables and sweets. Attendees also get to have a serving of our delicious prasad, which is immensely satisfying,” Sushil Balmiky, president of the Gurudwara Management Committee, told the Daily Star.

He said the expenses for the lunch are funded by one Baba Sukka Singh of Sarhali in Punjab. On Fridays, the regular crowd at the Gurudwara swells up to five or even six hundred people, who join the day’s special

prayers and the lunch.

“This place is significant for the Sikhs of this country because our chief Guru, Nanakshahi, came here,” he said.

He also informed this correspondent that devotees come here not only from Bangladesh, but also from other parts of the world.

Although there is another Gurudwara in the city’s Banglabazar, this one is more popular as it’s always thronged by devotees and visitors. Outside of Dhaka, there are two more Gurudwaras in Chattogram and Mymensingh.

It is known from history that the main purpose of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was to help humanity recognise that all human beings should be one. Rather than drawing lines among religions, his message was one of harmony.

He came to Bengal from Punjab to spread this message of equality. In the early 16th century, during the reign of Mughal Emperor Jahangir, Nanakshahi resided in this part of the city for some time. A couple of centuries later, the construction of this Sikh Gurudwara was completed in 1830.

During the Liberation War, the fundamentalist Pakistani forces had their eyes on the temple and killed two of its staffers: Sharan Singh and Muhammad-ul-Malik.

At present, the Gurudwara has nine rooms. The main shrine is situated along its green lawn.

On Fridays, everyone at the premises adorn the “Khand” emblazoned, gerua-coloured handkerchiefs. Guru Nanak’s followers are called ‘Udasi’ and they do not wear turbans. On the other hand, the followers of Gobind Singh, the tenth guru of the Sikhs, are ‘Akali’, who do wear turbans.

Worship is performed here five times a day. The messages of the religion’s ten gurus are recited from the ‘Granth Sahib’, written in the original Punjabi language. The holy textbook written by hand is kept on the wooden altar at the middle of the worship room.

Apart from conducting regular “langar” and worship, the Gurudwara also stands beside victims during various natural calamities in the country. For an example, it stepped up during the outbreak of Covid-19 by providing food aid among those who needed it.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Despite there being another Gurudwara in the city, the Gurudwara Nanakshahi at Dhaka University area has proven to be more popular, as Guru Nanak himself came to this area in the early 16th century to spread the message of his religion. Inset, on Fridays, the premises hold a special lunch attended by hundreds.

## BARGUNA LAUNCH FIRE

### Nothing less than fair probe

#### Demands BLAST

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) has demanded a fair probe, punishment of persons responsible and compensation for victims of the deadly fire on Barguna-bound MV Abhijan-10 launch in Jhalakathi.

It is evident from such incidents that water transport owners, operators and supervising authorities have been violating relevant provisions of the Inland Shipping Ordinance, 1976, said BLAST in a statement yesterday.

Section 56 of the ordinance, which directs for taking protective measures against explosions or fire, has been breached in the case of MV Abhijan-10 launch.

Section 33 and 58 (A) of the ordinance have also been violated, the statement read.

## Hakaluki's deforestation dilemma

### Only 14 guards for 18,383 hectares of ecologically critical area

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Illegally cutting down various species of aquatic trees, especially in the Hijal-Karach area, has posed a serious threat to the ecosystem at Hakaluki Haor, one of the country’s largest natural water bodies.

Since the end of November, around 600 trees have been cut down in Barlekha upazila under Moulvibazar district. Just six months ago, approximately 20,000 trees of different species were felled in the same area, said DoE sources.

Even though this is a regular occurrence, authorities have hardly ever raised a finger, alleged environmentalists.

Moreover, only 14 guards have been recruited to protect the haor, according to DoE sources.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found that a huge number of trees were felled and uprooted across the haor’s reserved areas.

According to the sub-sections 1 and 4 of section 5 of the Bangladesh Environmental Protection Act, 1995 (amended 2010), the government has declared 18,383 hectares of Hakaluki



Large patches of the Hakaluki Haor have been leveled by rampant deforestation, posing serious threat to the area’s ecological balance. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Haor as Ecologically Critical Area (ECA) through a notification in April 1999.

The Department of Environment (DoE) undertakes forestation activities in Hakaluki Haor to preserve the biodiversity of the ECA area and make it suitable for the habitat of fish, aquatic animals and birds.

Tapan Chandra Dev Nath, an

officer of Halla Forest Camp, said, “About 600 trees have been cut down across five acres on the south side of Malam Beel in Barlekha upazila of Moulvibazar on November 30.”

He said boro paddy seedlings have been planted there after removing the trees and the land has been cultivated using tractors.

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## Vegetable price hike puts Ctg residents in backfoot

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Even with winter’s arrival, vegetable prices in Chattogram city’s kitchen markets are yet to decrease, bringing a blow to people from middle, lower-middle and low income groups, who were already suffering due to rising prices of edible oil and rice.

Vegetable traders said the reason for the hike was the damage incurred on many vegetable fields due to torrential rain in the first week of this month, coupled with increased transportation fare after the fuel price hike.

Supply of vegetables in kitchen markets has also decreased in the aftermath of the torrential rain, they said, adding that even in December, a time when there’s supposed to be an abundance of a variety of vegetables, the prices have shot up.

Visiting different kitchen markets in the city yesterday -- including Kazir Dewri Kitchen Market, Chawkbazar Kitchen Market, Kamaphuli Kitchen Market and Bahaddarhat Kitchen Market -- this correspondent found that prices per kilo of most vegetables were hovering between Tk 40 and Tk 60.

For instance, in Chawkbazar Kitchen

Market, bitter gourd was sold at Tk 60 per kg, while brinjal at Tk 50 per kg. In Bahaddarhat Kitchen Market, okra was selling at Tk 40, ridge gourd at Tk 40, and snake beans at Tk 50. In Kamaphuli Kitchen Market, snake gourd cost Tk 50 and stolon of taro (kachur loti) was priced at Tk 50.

Mohammad Ibrahim, a vegetable trader, said, “Keeping aside the damage caused to acres of vegetable yield, we also have to pay more for carrying vegetables due to increased transport fares, as a result of which vegetable prices are high.”

“I earn Tk 250 a day, but I’ve to buy 2 kg rice, around 2 kg vegetables and half a kilo of dal for my family’s daily meals, even after I cut off protein,” said Ali Abbas, a cobbler from Chawkbazar area. “I’ve to pay Tk 100 for rice and Tk 100-120 for vegetables. It’s difficult to buy anything else with the remaining amount.”

Trishna Acharjee, a school teacher who stays at Bahaddarhat area, said after her husband’s demise, she has been maintaining her family of four alone. “This price hike has brought a huge blow for me, as I’m already struggling to sustain my family after the price of rice increased,” she said.



At Mohakhali’s TNT playground, an anti-smoking exhibition where every article is made of used cigarette filters and packets is currently running. Organisers say this is their attempt to make people aware of the adverse effects of cigarette smoking on citizens’ health and the environment.

PHOTO: STAR

## Making anti-smoking art with cigarettes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A unique exhibition featuring artworks created with more than five crore used cigarette filters, that were found lying on the roads of various parts of the city, is ongoing at the TNT playground at the capital’s Mohakhali.

In addition to instalments, the exhibition area also hosts walls made out of discarded cigarette packets.

The exhibition, titled “Save Earth, Save Bangladesh: Season-2”, is organised by BD Clean to create awareness

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