

#FYI

BIRD FEEDING 101

Feeding tips from Old Dhaka's bird expert



Birds are beautiful creatures, and whether you keep them as pets or enjoy watching them flock to your balcony for a quick snack, providing the right food is essential. However, how much do you really know about bird food?

In Dhaka's Sutrapur neighbourhood, Mohammad Musa has spent years perfecting the habit of feeding birds and advising others on how to cater to their unique needs. As the winter season approaches, Musa shares his expert knowledge on selecting bird food that is nutritious, seasonal, and suited to creatures of all ages — helping you ensure that your feathered visitors stay healthy and well-fed.

Musa begins by recommending seeds, which are versatile and suitable for various bird species, including pigeons, sparrows, and even mynas.

"Sunflower seeds, millet, and canary seeds are commonly found in local pet stores and markets," he says. "Sunflower seeds, high in fat, are ideal for the winter months or for birds that need extra energy. Millet is easy to digest, making it perfect for young or

smaller birds, like sparrows."

Musa's advice highlights the need to boost birds' caloric intake during colder months when they burn more energy staying warm. Staple grains like rice and wheat, commonly found in Bangladesh, are also recommended.

"Grains are beneficial for ground-feeding birds, such as crows and pigeons," Musa notes, adding that cooked rice is particularly nourishing and easy for birds to digest. "During winter, when natural food sources can be limited, these grains provide a reliable energy source."

Moreover, Musa emphasises maintaining hygiene while offering food. "Birds can contract diseases if their food is dusty or improperly cleaned," he warns. Musa advises that bird owners carefully sift and clean seeds, as dust and debris can lead to

respiratory and digestive issues in birds. This simple precaution goes a long way in safeguarding their health.

Feeding requirements vary as birds progress through life stages and Musa shares specific advice for younger birds.

"For young ones, avoid whole seeds as they may choke," he explains. Instead, Musa recommends offering bits of boiled rice and lentils, which are easy to digest and gentle on their developing systems.

For an extra layer of safety, he suggests blending or softening food before offering it to young birds, especially when transitioning to solid foods.

During the breeding season, birds require a nutrient-rich diet to support their health and that of their young.

"For breeding birds like parakeets, sparrows, and mynas, increase protein intake with foods like dried mealworms or with fresh fruits, particularly," Musa shares.

Birds also benefit from a calcium boost for healthy egg development, which crushed eggshells, easily mixed with seeds, can provide.

After the egg-laying phase, birds need balanced nutrition to support feather regeneration and recovery. Musa advises a mix of protein and fat, such as grains, seeds (especially sunflower seeds), and cooked rice, during this period.



Beyond food, creating a safe environment is vital for attracting and caring for birds. Offer fresh water for drinking and bathing, especially in the dry season.

Consider planting native trees and shrubs that provide natural shelter, food, and nesting materials for birds.

For quick advice on bird care, you can reach Mohammad Musa directly at +8801677627822.

By Ayman Anika
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Collected

