



## COMMUNITY / CULTURE

# For the love of falcons

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**GULF**  **TIMES**

**BIRD IN HAND:** Dr Zubair Medammal poses with a falcon. Medammal has been a recipient of Pravasi Award in India for outstanding research in foreign coun

**A native of Kozhikode, Dr Zubair Medammal has dedicated his life for the study of these elusive birds. He is the first non-Arab to be granted membership in Emirates Falconers Club**

Dr Zubair Medammal has several firsts to his credit. He is the first and only Indian to get a doctorate degree on the study of falcons. Also, he is one of the few non-Arab enthusiasts who recorded and made a sonogram of 15 different vocalisations of various species of falcons for the first time in the world. Medammal is the author of the book *Biology and Behaviour of Falcons*, which portrays his tedious five-year research

work on falcons. The book features all aspects of falcons with emphasis on breeding and healthcare of the peregrine/shaheen falcon. It is awaiting publication in Arabic. This book is an important study material and, according to the author, could be introduced in the syllabus of schools and colleges, especially in the Middle East.

Medammal is the first non-Arab to be granted membership in Emirates Falconers Club. After finishing his postgraduate course in Wildlife Biology at Farook College, Calicut (Kozhikode), India, he proceeded to the Gulf in 1995 in search of greener pastures. In spite of frantic search, he didn't succeed in getting a job. So Medammal took it as a challenge and decided to pursue research on falcons.

"But it was not an easy job as I had thought. Since falcons fly high and live at great heights, it is very difficult to watch their movements and observe their behaviour. I sacrificed my family life and all benefits as a lecturer in Kerala, to come to Gulf for research for a period of five years," he says.

"To observe the falcons, one has to travel in an airplane. Apart from Gulf countries, I had also visited Germany, China, Sri Lanka and Iran as part of my research, and spent weeks at Western Ghats (Silent Valley hills) in my home state of Kerala," he adds.

Medammal took a student visa for studies in the UAE. He had to sacrifice all his earnings of five years but eventually succeeded in obtaining a PFBT degree from Germany.

Equipped with knowledge of Arabic and familiarity with Arab culture as a result of his long years of stay in the Gulf, Medammal hopes to continue his research on falcons.

Medammal has been a recipient of Pravasi Award for outstanding research in foreign countries, presented by the government of Kerala, and the National Award JC

International (2006) for outstanding young personality. Recently he was assigned to investigate causes of bird hits at Kozhikode airport and found that in the specific case of an Air India aircraft the real cause for the mishap was 'palm civet', a nocturnal mammal. Subsequently, he was appointed by the Airport Authority of India (AAI) to study and suggest steps to avoid 'bird hits' in the Kozhikode International Airport. Medammal has suggested that trained falcons can fend off other birds. "I have submitted a major project proposal to the AAI to resolve this issue," he says. Medammal has been appointed as a Special Officer in the Department of Environmental Sciences, University of Calicut. He plans to make a documentary on falcons in English, Arabic and Malayalam. "For this purpose, I am here in Qatar for a few days," he says. For research inquiries, Medammal can be contacted on [drzubairm@gmail.com](mailto:drzubairm@gmail.com)

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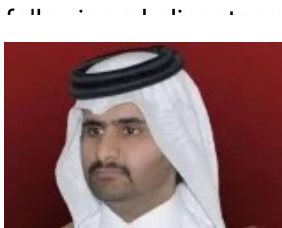
The Islamic Republic of Iran's Guardian Council spokesman Hadi Tahan Nazif has announced that according to the Constitution, the vice president will take over as interim president with the Supreme Leaders approval. Tahan Nazif in an interview on Monday said that with the Supreme Leaders approval, a council consisting of the



Parliament, the Islamic Consultative Assembly, and the Guardian Council to elect a new President. He said that there will be "no disruption to the operations of the Islamic Republic of Iran," an IRNA reported. According to Article 131 of the Constitution, in case of the death of the vice president, or other matters preventing him from performing his duties, or when the president does not have a

vice president, the Supreme Leader shall appoint another person in his place. Iran announced earlier on Monday the death of President Dr. Ebrahim Raisi, Minister of Foreign Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, and their accompanying delegation





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