

M I S T I M E S

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# PALESTINE DONATIONS CAMPAIGN

It is evident that the circumstances in Palestine are disheartening, filling the entire world with pain and misery. Seeing the state of people living in cramped and unsanitary conditions is utterly heartbreaking. Thus, in solidarity with Palestine, our school initiated a donation campaign in partnership with the Emirates Red Crescent to raise awareness and provide assistance for those affected. With much of the school participating, offering support, and donating food, medical aid, or clothing, donations demonstrated solidarity with those impacted by hardship, calling for their well-being and empowerment. As conflicts of this nature defy all models of life, donations play a crucial role in alleviating the consequences of such turmoil.

It is paramount to recognize the efforts of the student council, which led to an effectively organized campaign that received enormous support, whether it was from students or the school's faculty members; in the end, everyone from all backgrounds united in support of justice. This event has shown that with teamwork, all is possible, and it has shown that when people come together for an agreed-upon purpose, they can achieve anything. The donations have encouraged us to continue providing whatever paltry support we can offer to those trialled. We thank everyone from parents, students, school staff, and organizers for their incredible efforts and support, for believing in our mission, and for allowing us to host such a campaign.

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# The Tale of the Birdman



In a world with many interests, we've grown accustomed to the usual pleasures of sports, music, art, and video games. However, there's a world out there where people watch, capture, nurture, and exchange Parakeets—little birds just a tiny bit smaller than parrots. MIST hosted an exclusive interview with hobbyist Samir Salah, a student in Grade 12, BSA.

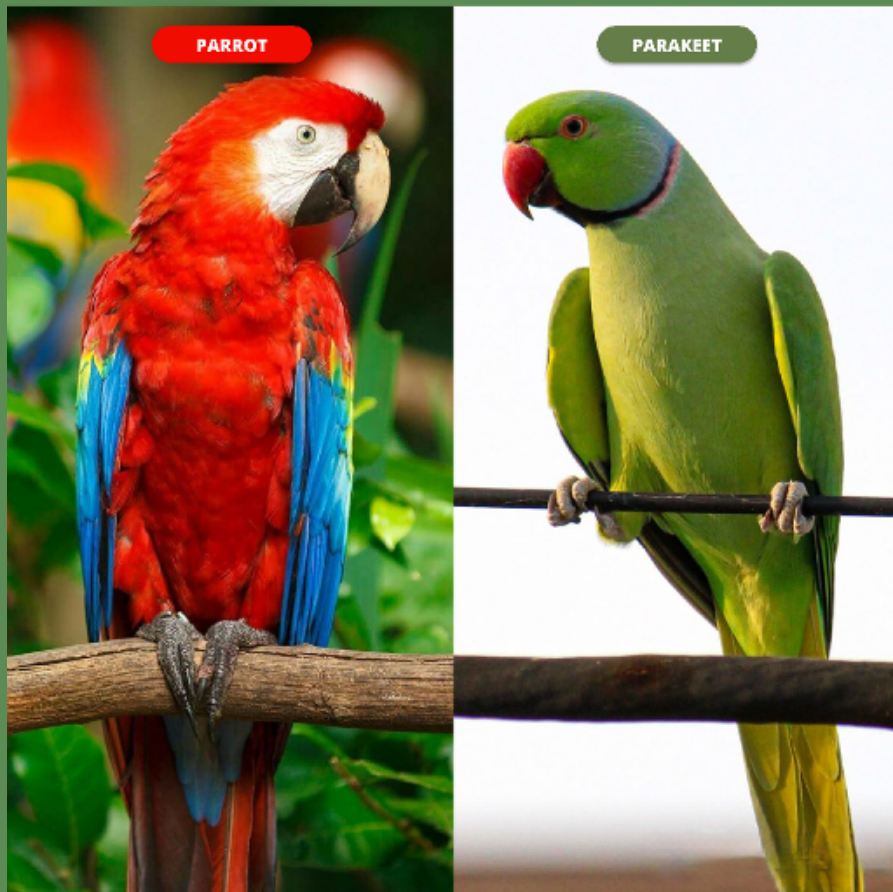
We hit the ground running with the first question, "Why Parakeets, exactly?" questioning Samir's interest in such a hobby. It turns out that these birds are deeply rooted in his family's history, "My grandma captures them, takes care of them, and then sells them off to markets for profit, especially during winter," he expressed. Obviously, you, like myself, are probably confused about how Samir can capture these birds in the first place. "I set up a food-and-water-filled cage in my backyard and watch over it. Along with food and water, a female parakeet would be inside to attract a male. The entire time, I'd be watching from a distance, and when the moment calls, I pull a string to close the cage on the male safely," he explained.

At this point, you'd be hitting the nail on the head if you're wondering why he is luring male parakeets rather than female ones. The answer is: It's all for the Ca-Chings. Apparently, male parakeets have specific patterns on their bodies—on their necks, to be exact—that make them more expensive in the market, hence why Samir is hunting them specifically. "AED 180 for males and AED 70 for females, but you can haggle with it if you are good enough," he mentioned. Since I like to think similarly to Bill Gates, I suddenly began imagining the substantial profit increase Samir would have if he implemented an automated trapping system instead of waiting for the birds himself, so I asked him about it. "I want to live the moment, you know? I also feel more at ease knowing I can safely trap the bird myself; you never know how an automated lock would hurt the bird." I must admit...although it was simply leisure for Samir, money was what caused a stir for me.

As my conversation with Samir drew to a close, the primary insight I'd like to highlight is the value of broadening one's life experiences through diversifying one's hobbies and interests—always with an ethical compass guiding those choices, of course. Trust me, it will come in clutch.



Rose-ringed parakeet – *Psittacula krameri*



The image represents the physical differences between a parrot and a parakeet. Parakeets are noticeably smaller in size, but they are much more cooperative with humans than parrots. Generally, they are very similar but with some minor differences.

# INTERVIEW WITH MARIA KEVORK: RISING PING PONG STAR FROM ARMENIA

In the dynamic realm of competitive sports at the school level, there emerges a **shining passion for ping pong** that has not only captured the attention of her peers but has also propelled her to remarkable achievements. Meet **Maria Kevork**, a 16-year-old prodigy hailing from **Armenia** and currently navigating the challenges of Grade 11 GComm. Maria's journey in the world of ping pong is more than just a tale of skill and competition; it's a narrative enriched with childhood memories, family influences, and an unwavering commitment to enjoying the game. Having secured an impressive second place in the AUS sports tournament last year.

## Interview

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**Interviewer:** Maria, can you share what inspired you to start playing ping pong and how your passion and love for the sport grew?

**Maria:** Sure, the inspiration came from playing with my friends as a kid. It was always a part of my life, particularly in my Armenian school.

**Interviewer:** Maria, can you share what inspired you to start playing ping pong and how your passion and love for the sport grew?

**Maria:** Sure, the inspiration came from playing with my friends as a kid. It was always a part of my life, particularly in my Armenian school.



**Interviewer:** Indeed. Moving on to your training, are there specific techniques or routines you find particularly effective in honing your ping pong skills?

**Maria:** Mainly, I focus on forearm and leg workouts. It helps me stay agile and sharp on the table.

**Interviewer:** As someone who achieved second place in the AUS tournament, how do you handle pressure during high-stakes matches?

**Maria:** I try not to think of the game as something overly important in my life. If I lose, it won't affect me much, and after all, I'm there to have fun.

**Interviewer:** Wise perspective. Can you highlight any role models or influences who have had an impact on your ping pong journey?

**Maria:** Absolutely, my father has been my role model. He's a skilled player who has guided me through every aspect of ping pong.

**Interviewer:** Fantastic. What advice would you give to aspiring ping pong players, particularly those in your school who admire your accomplishments?

**Maria:** Just enjoy yourself! Don't stress yourself out, as it might lead to losing, and that's not what you want, right?

**Interviewer:** Definitely good advice. Finally, what are your future aims and ambitions within the realm of ping pong, both at the school level and beyond?

**Maria:** I'm hoping to secure first places because MIS should always be at the top. That's the goal – aiming high for the team!