

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Ashok Flower in Baldha Garden.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

SPRING IN Baldha Garden

I went to see Baldha Garden in spring. Dhaka's miniature botanical garden in Wari, containing over 800 species of plants, is an oasis of serenity. It took Narendra Narayan Roy Chaudhury, a wealthy Dhaka landowner, over three decades (1909-1943) to build it. In 1962, descendants of Mr. Chaudhury transferred the garden to the government. Now the Forest Department takes care of it.

One half of the garden is open to the public. Here, a network of walkways crisscrosses the trees, bushes and nurseries. A large pond, called Shankhanidhi, dominates the ground.

Walking in, I was greeted by a profusion of delicate red flowers of Raj Ashok (*Amberstia Nobilis*). Directly across, a giant Muchkunda Chapa (*Pterospermum Acerifolium*) tree was in bloom, the unusual flowers shaped like miniature bananas drooping at its foot. Ashok (*Sarica Indica*) trees also sported their yellow-orange flowers.

Along the banks of Shankhanidhi were large Keya plants and a *Tabebuia* with brilliant orange leaves reaching for the sky. I walked under Joy House, the raised cottage where Rabindranath Tagore wrote facing the pond. The Garden has several *Magnolia* trees, which Tagore named "Udoy Poddo" in Bengali.

Turning at the far corner of Shankhanidhi I saw tiny star-shaped yellow-orange flowers on the ground. These are blossoms of wild nuts (*Jongli Badam*) and the big nuts were dangling like tennis balls from the tree overhead.

At another corner I found a *Kontok* (*Caperis Zeylamis*) bush, about seven feet tall, bursting with white flowers with alternating yellow and purple

centres.

There were some disappointments. I was hoping to see *Kanchon* (*Bohunia Variegata*) in bloom, but that tree appeared dead. On an archway, the *Golden Shower* (*Begunia Vermesta*) bloom was over, a few remaining flowers withering in the branches. When in bloom this archway is a sight to behold with the sun behind it.

Hundreds of bats hung from the tall branches of *Eucalyptus*, *Buddha Narikel*, *Champa* and *Tamarind* trees. Every so often, a bat spread its wings and flew slowly from one tree to another, perhaps searching for a comfortable spot to dangle from and soak in the sun.

The flower fragrances mixed with organic smells and permeated the entire garden. Depending on wind direction, the odour alternated between sweet and fetid, perhaps originating from the bats. Leaves were covered with the dust of dry season.

I chatted with two boys from *Jagannath University*. They had heard of the blooming Ashok trees and came to take pictures on a free morning. Many couples found private spots to romance, especially around the pond. Two housewives brought their toddlers and enjoyed the breeze on the benches at the top of the pond.

Signs everywhere asked visitors to behave themselves and "Not Embarrass Others" presumably to encourage discretion from the courting couples. But all visitors to the garden friends, lovers, parents, children, students - enjoyed this fine spring morning among Mr. Chaudhury's trees. Baldha Garden is definitely worth a visit. Come prepared with patience and tolerance.

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Hasina blames Khaleda for price hike of essentials

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia will have to answer why prices of essentials went beyond the reach of the common people during the BNP-Jamaat rule.

"When we took office in 1996, price of rice was Tk 25 and we had reduced the price to Tk 10 per kg. When we took office this time, we found price of rice at Tk 45. The opposition leader will have to answer for this price hike," she said.

Hasina said these while speaking at a discussion at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, arranged by Bangladesh Awami League marking the 91st birth anniversary of Bangabandhu and the National Children's Day.

The prime minister said her government has been able to reduce the price of rice and other essentials. "This time, initially we've reduced the price of rice to Tk 18, but later the price has to be increased only to ensure fair price to the farmers."

About the latest hike in rice price, she said coarse rice is now being sold in the market at Tk 32-34 per kg while the government is providing rice to lower and middle income people at Tk 24 through open market sale (OMS).

"So, it is not correct that the government could not reduce the price of rice."

Hasina said the government would not let people to suffer from price hike of essentials. "At all cost, we'll ensure easy life for the people."

She said Bangladesh is still suffering from poverty and illiteracy, as anti-liberation forces had ruled the country for many years. "War criminals, military dictators, bribe and interest mongers have destroyed the spirit of the 1971 liberation war."

ATTACK ON BANGLADESHIS Bahrain assures to stand by migrants

PORIMOL PALMA

The Bahrain government has assured Bangladesh and other major manpower exporting countries of protecting their migrant citizens in the Gulf country.

The assurance came when Bangladesh Ambassador to Bahrain Ali Akbar, along with the envoys of Pakistan, India, Philippines and Thailand, called on Bahraini Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa on Thursday in the wake of a political turmoil and attacks on South Asians.

One Pakistani and one Bangladeshi were killed while over two dozen injured in two incidents on Sunday and Tuesday when protesters demanding political reforms attacked them.

Three Bangladeshis are still in the intensive care units of two hospitals in the capital Manama.

Bangladesh mission in Manama has advised its nationals to stay indoors and avoid visiting the areas where demonstrations are being staged. "The prime minister said his government is committed to ensuring safety of the migrants," Muhammad Ibrahim, first secretary at Bangladesh embassy, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Prince Khalifa appreciated the contribution of the migrants to the development of his country. He also arranged a special communication facility and said Bangladesh embassy could contact his office to address any problem. The Bangladesh envoy requested the premier to allow undocumented Bangladeshi workers to leave the country at will. The prime minister sounded positive, added Ibrahim.

The embassy official noted there were peaceful demonstrators in various parts of the capital after Juma prayers yesterday. A few shops open when curfew is relaxed and people venture out cautiously. Things appear to be improving here gradually, he added.

The Bangladeshi expatriates are observing the situation. They want to stay here, Ibrahim said adding, time has not come yet to ask our citizens to leave Bahrain.

According to the official, the Bangladesh embassy opened a control room for migrants to contact them during any emergency. A Bangladeshi community leader Fazlul Karim said everybody is expecting an improved political situation soon. President of Bangladesh Society in Manama, Karim said he has asked the expatriates not to join any demonstration.

Osman Ali's 40th death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The 40th death anniversary of language movement hero M Osman Ali will be observed today.

Osman was also the editor of Sabuj Bangla newspaper in British period and one of the founding members of Awami League, says a press release.

Abu Zafar Obaidullah

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The 10th death anniversary of Poet Abu Zafar Obaidullah will be

observed today.

To mark the day, discussions and milad mahfil will be held in Dhaka and at his village.

Obaidullah was born on February 8, 1934 and died on March 19, 2001. The poet was a prominent figure of the Language Movement and the proud recipient of the Ekushey Padak and Bangla Academy Award.

Siddique Ullah

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 13th death anniversary of Siddique Ullah Bhuiyan, father of

Prof. Din Mohammad Bhuiyan, editor of the daily *Ganajagoron* and the *Muslim Times*, says a press release.



Meeting

Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will hold a meeting. Venue: Dhaka Club, Time: 1:30pm.

Roundtable

Sushil Forum will arrange a roundtable. Venue: DRU, Time: 11:00am.

Workshop

Bangladesh Jatiya Mahila Ainjibi Samity will arrange a workshop. Venue: Brac Centre Inn, Time: 10:00am.

Human chain

Shikkhak Karmachari Oikya Jote will form a human chain. Venue: In front of National Press Club, Time: 11:00am.

Discussion

Bangladesh Kallyan Party will organise

NEWS IN brief

Jahan Moni reaches Oman today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Bangladesh-flagged ship MV Jahan Moni may reach the Salalah port in Oman this morning, said officials of the ship's operating company here yesterday.

Because of slow speed, the ship has been late for its destination, said the officials of Brave Royal Ship Management Limited.

Released on March 14 by Somali pirates, the ship was expected to reach the port on Thursday.

Capt Golum Mostafa, marine superintendent of the ship's operating company, said the ship was sailing at six to seven nautical miles per hour.

Newly-wed housewife kills herself

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A newly married housewife committed suicide by hanging herself from a ceiling fan at her husband's house at Moddho Paikpara in the city's Mirpur yesterday.

The victim, Rea Akhter, 17, daughter of Kazi Jahangir Hossain of Sabuj Bagh, married Jahidul Islam forty days ago.

Victim's father said Rea came to know about her husband's extramarital affair after 15 days of their marriage but she couldn't convince her husband to refrain from it.

Body found in city canal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The police recovered a decomposed body of a youth from a canal yesterday in the city's Sabujbagh four days after he went missing.

The dead, Md Sujon, 25, son of Abdul Mannan of Kadamtola, was a worker of a welding factory.

Sabujbagh police recovered the body from Manda Canal around 12:00 noon.

Mannan said Sujon left home on March 14 and since then he remained missing.

Khokon, the victim's brother, said Sujon heard that his wife had extramarital relations with someone in her father's area and this aroused an enmity between him and some youths. Khokon suspected that those youths might have killed him.



Change in temperature unlikely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Rangpur and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Tangail and Mymensingh in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:09pm and rises tomorrow at 6:03am.

Country's highest temperature 33.3 degree Celsius was recorded today at Rajshahi and lowest 18.0 degrees at Feni.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	31.5	22.6	68	47
Chittagong	27.7	20.4	70	68
Rajshahi	33.3	21.6	86	56
Rangpur	28.0	21.8	88	85
Khulna	32.0	21.6	79	55
Barisal	30.4	21.4	70	59
Sylhet	28.6	18.9	86	71

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at Madanganj, Narayanganj, completed before deadline, in record 8.5 months by Summit Narayanganj Power Limited- concern of Summit Power Limited (SPL)



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