

# TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Is Lemon the Defining Smell of Kolkata?

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

## The Nose Knows

A recent incident reminded me that smell, more than any other sense, triggers our most primordial memories.

What happened? While visiting Kolkata after several decades, I unwittingly entered a large indoor butcher area in New Market and found myself immersed in a strange unpleasant odour. My mind was instantly awash in a childhood memory.

As a child, I was visiting Kolkata with my parents many decades ago. We stayed in the house of a friend of the family. One memory of that trip remains vivid, that of breakfast.

Every morning at breakfast I was overpowered by an odour from the hosts' kitchen. Its source remained mysterious. More like petrol or gas than organic, it did not affect others. But I gagged every morning, worrying my parents and embarrassing our hosts.

Visiting Kolkata after decades, it took an instant in this butcher area for those breakfast memories to return.

This time around I also discovered the happy smell of Kolkata's Nebu Pani (lemonade) that our hotel served on arrival. It is made from a subtly flavoured lemon, similar to Kagji Lebu. The lemony flavour lingered after the last drop. I found myself salivating whenever I saw those lemons at street corners.

In my memory, places often attach themselves to smells. For example, I cannot picture the Pacific in northern California without thinking of salt air mixed with kelp and seaweed on the beaches the odours from my first visit.

Flavours of Bangkok's street foods, especially fresh fruits and barbecued

meats, remain, for me, a magnetic attraction of that city. Memories of a visit to Iceland are coated in a sulphurous odour because of a geothermal pool that I swam in.

As a child growing up in Sylhet, I enjoyed collecting Bokul flowers with my grandmother. To this day, Bokul's fragrance reminds me of my hometown.

Our survival instincts often attach smells to imminent danger. I, too, experienced this fear one afternoon when I aimlessly wandered into old Dhaka's Tanti Bazar with my camera. I noticed the streets emptying as I approached Shankhari Bazar. An unknown chemical smell, reminiscent of gunpowder or potash, put me on guard. Then I saw it—purple, green and yellow colours on everything, including people! I had inadvertently walked into Holi celebrations. My camera survived the revelry, but after a few ambushes my face turned a deep purple.

Dhaka's odours change through the year. The aroma of fried foods of Ramzan afternoons changes into the fragrance of attar on Eid day. Around Eid ul Azha everything smells of cows. In dry season, streets are reasonably odour-free, but the rivers - Buriganga, Balu and Turag - emanate an awful stench. The roles switch during monsoon. The river pollution is washed clean, but the city starts smelling, sometimes compounded by flooding and overflowing sewage.

For all that, Dhaka to me lacks a defining smell. Perhaps there are so many of them that my nose is confused!

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## Woman prisoner with HIV dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A female prisoner with HIV/AIDS from Narayanganj jail died at the city's Infectious Disease Hospital (IDH), Mohakhali in the city on Thursday.

Sultana, 45, of Kadamrashulpur of Narayanganj, was admitted to IDH on March 17. She was serving lifetime jail term in the jail for last eight years, said sources.

They said she was taken for physical test after AIDS symptoms were noticed in her body and later she was admitted to IDH through Dhaka Central Jail. She was earlier detected with HIV positive in the jail.

Sultana was a sex worker of Baniashanta brothel under Dakop upazila of Khulna. Her body was sent yesterday to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy. Later, the body was handed over to Anjuman-e-Mafidul Islam as nobody claimed it.

## Govt hailed for Independence Award to Jyotipal

BSS, Dhaka

The Buddhist Community has expressed gratitude to the government and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for honouring Sangharaj Jyotipal Mahathero, former president of Bangladesh Buddha Khristi Prachar Sangha (BBKPS).

Jyotipal received the award in recognition of his outstanding contribution to Liberation War in 1971, said a press release.

DP Barua, former general secretary of BBKPS and chief editor of BSS, said the most venerable Jyotipal visited Sri Lanka, Thailand and Japan in 1971, met eminent Buddhist leaders and top politicians and mobilised support for Bangladesh's independence.

DP Barua, also the incumbent president of Asian Buddhist for Conference for Peace (ABCP), said Jyotipal, 10th Sangharaj in Bangladesh, enjoys highest religious status among Buddhists locally and internationally. He said Jyotipal also founded ABCP and acted as its founding president in 1975.

## Remain alert against conspiracy

President, prime minister urge all on Independence Day today

BSS, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in separate messages marking Independence Day, called upon the countrymen to work in unison for the country's development and remain alert against conspiracies by anti-democratic and anti-

development forces.

In the message, Zillur expressed his confidence that all irrespective of party affiliation would play a responsible role in fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of the common people.

In a separate message, Hasina said the defeated anti-liberation and identified reactionary forces are out to undo

the development process of the country as the government has taken steps to start the trial of war criminals.

"In this situation, I urge countrymen to foil all ill-designed plots against the country and the people. The independence earned through the huge blood-bath and sacrifice is our people's greatest achievement," she said.

ছিলনা অস্ব, কিন্তু ছিল  
অবিচল আস্থা

চার দশক আগে এই আমরাই অসীম আস্থায় বলীয়ান হয়ে  
ছিনিয়ে এনেছিলাম স্বাধীনতা। সেই আস্থায় অবিচল  
থেকে আজও আমরা গড়ে চলেছি স্বনির্ভর বাংলাদেশ।

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## Death anniversary

METRO DESK



Today is the 5th death anniversary of Khondoker Abdus Sami, a former joint secretary, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at Uttara Mosque, Road No-21, Sector No-4 after Asr prayers today.

Sami was a former student of Rajshahi Cadet College, obtained MSS in Economics from Dhaka University and MA in Development Economics from Williams College of Massachusetts in USA.

## Mozaffar Hossain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the first death anniversary of Mozaffar Hossain Khan, former chief engineer of Public Works Department and son of late Khan Bahadur Awlad Hossain Khan, former provincial council member, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at Mozaffar's residence at House No-9, Road No-83, Gulshan-2 after Asr prayers today.

**DHAKA TODAY**

**Reception**  
Dhaka Club Limited will arrange a reception. Venue: Dhaka Club, Time: 7:00pm.

**Cultural programme**  
Kachikachar Mela will organise a cultural programme. Venue: 37/A, Segun Bagicha, Time: 11:00am.

**Seminar**  
Engineers Institution, Bangladesh will organise a seminar. Venue: Seminar hall, IEB, Time: 6:30pm.

**Discussion**  
Bangla Academy will hold a discussion.

**WEATHER TODAY**

**Change in temperature likely**

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna, Barisal, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the region of Comilla in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said.

Day temperature may rise slightly over the country.

**The sun sets in the capital today at 6:12pm and rises tomorrow at 5:56am.**

Country's highest temperature 35.6 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 18.9 degrees at Sylhet.

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	32.1	23.0	60	50
Chittagong	29.5	23.2	76	77
Rajshahi	35.6	20.5	59	48
Rangpur	32.5	21.5	64	50
Khulna	32.4	21.8	64	65
Barisal	32.7	22.4	74	69

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