

# TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Tiny Jackfruits Starting Life.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

## The Dry Season

**C**RUNCH. Crunch. Crunch. Each step I take loudly announces the dry season. I recognise several dead leaves covering the ground: jackfruit, mahogany, acacia, *koroi*, *shegun* and *bohera*. But many more are unknown. Some leaves die on the branch and fall; others drop while yellow. Leaves of the native *bolos* - a beautiful but useless tree - turn bright red before dropping.

Occasionally a tall blade of grass peeks through the blanket of leaves. Here and there, a tiny yellow wildflower bravely introduces itself to the world.

Up in the trees, new leaves quickly replace fallen ones. *Amloki* and mahogany are two of the prettiest ones.

New *amloki* leaves are bluish green in the middle, gradually turning into a bright, almost fluorescent green at the periphery. From a distance, this change appears as an unearthly glow until the leaves attain a uniform colour and blossoms appear.

Mahogany leaves, tiny and translucent, appear in amber ripples. In a few days they turn a pale, shiny green. When I look up from below, their pattern shimmers as if a wave were passing through them.

The *bohera* trees sport small, bright yellow leaves which turn orange in a few days. A younger *amra* tree takes its time growing new leaves. Its shoots appear at a leisurely pace with leaves to follow.

Meanwhile, nature prepares for the coming monsoon's reproduction frenzy. Blossoms of mango, lychees, *jaam*, *golapjaam* and guava appear. But the real fruity miracle, to me, is jackfruit. It grows from tiny "muji", barely two

inches long, into the giant fruit sometimes weighing over 10 kg in three short months. These fruits all ripen in the summer. Thus, their seeds can germinate and start life during the rains.

The warmth following winter brings out all manners of creatures. Swarms of dragonflies and termites share the airspace over a field in a mad aerial dance. A *finney* (drongo) perches on a nearby kodom branch, its head jerking left to right as it scans the field. It dives suddenly, returning to its seat seconds later. Only this time it is not alone: a hapless dragonfly dangles from its beak. Two quick bites, and the dragonfly finds its place in the planet's relentless food chain.

Various reptiles, such as *ela* and *kaklas* lizards, come out of hibernation. Hungry after winter, they run around looking for food. Luckily, bloodthirsty leeches are still hiding. Those will come alive with rain.

Lonely warbles of winter's doves are replaced by a veritable orchestra of birdsong. Some, like *harichacha* (treepie), sound rough and dissonant. The *ishtikutum* (oriole), however, sings a beautiful welcoming tune. I am not surprised to learn the village folklore about this bird: if you see it, expect relatives or friends to visit.

Villagers make plans for the coming planting season: what seedlings to plant where. They shore up their walls, bridges, dams, roads and rooftops while it is still dry.

Through it all, we wait, patient yet anxious, for rain.

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## 56 injured in UP poll violence

METRO DESK

At least 56 people suffered injuries in the violence over Union Parishad elections in different upazilas of Bagerhat and Patuakhali yesterday and Thursday night.

Our Bagerhat correspondent reports: Some 21 people including a chairman candidate were wounded in clashes in three upazilas of Bagerhat yesterday and Thursday night.

Muzibor Rahman, 42, a member candidate from Besargati village in sadar upazila, was stabbed by his rivals following altercation over tearing a poster around 11:00am.

Muzibor was rushed to Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) in a critical condition.

In Fakirhat upazila 11 people including three women sustained wounds as the supporters of a chairman candidate and a defeated candidate clashed at Rajpat village.

Four of the injured were taken to KMCH and three others to Fakirhat Upazila Health Complex.

On Thursday night supporters of two rival chairman candidates clashed at Protappur village in Kachua upazila, leaving Humayun Kabir, a chairman contestant, seriously hurt.

Police later baton-charged and dispersed the clashing rivals.

Our Patuakhali correspondent adds: At least 35 people were injured in clashes over union parishad elections in Dashmina and Galachipa upazilas of Patuakhali Thursday night.

In Dashmina upazila a gang of winner chairman in Baharampur union attacked on the supporters of the defeated candidate at Baharampur village, injuring three people. The injured were given treatment at local clinics.

In another incident a gang of defeated member candidate Ruhul Amin beat up three supporters of winner candidate Solaiman. The injured were admitted to Dashmina Upazila Health Complex.

In Galachipa upazila three people including a woman sustained injuries as rivals attacked them Thursday night. Two of the injured were taken to Patuakhali General Hospital in critical condition.

## RU MUSIC & DRAMA DEPT Teachers go on work abstention from today

RU CORRESPONDENT

Teachers of music and drama department of Rajshahi University (RU) will go on work abstention from today (Saturday) demanding removal of the department chairman.

Fifteen out of 19 teachers in all from the department at a press conference yesterday vowed to continue work abstention till removal of the chairman, Prof Moly Bhoumick.

The teachers alleged Prof Moly Bhoumick has been arbitrarily taking important decision discounting academic and planning committee since taking office on November 10, 2009.

Prof Bhoumick also fixed the date of Masters final examination of the 2009 batch without considering the concerns of other members of the exam committee, they said.

Other allegations against Prof Bhoumick include threatening and attempting to exploit his colleagues and misbehaviour.

"We met the university Vice Chancellor Prof Abdus Sobhan Thursday night, but failed to get any assurance from him," they said.

Meanwhile, around 100 students of the department at a press conference also demanded immediate removal of Prof Bhoumick.

Denying the allegations Prof Bhoumick said RU authorities made him chairman in 2009 from management department, as mismanagement crippled music and drama department.

He also said that after taking charge as chairman, he changed the department and brought congenial atmosphere in study and research.

"Some notorious teachers could not accept his positive works in the department. They are trying to destroy my goodwill and also the image of the department."

## Housewife beaten to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A housewife was allegedly beaten to death by her husband for dowry at Bhatshala village in Debhata upazila on Thursday.

The victim was identified as Achhia Khatun Champa, 20, daughter of Abdul Gani Sardar of Chowbaria village in sadar upazila.

Police said they arrested Champa's mother-in-law Ramesa Khatun but the husband Md Rais Uddin, son of Saidul Islam Sardar, is absconding.

Rais used to torture Champa at times for dowry. When she died, Rais poured liquid insecticide into Champa's mouth and told neighbours it was suicide, police said.

Police said they sent the body, bearing several marks of injury, to Satkhira morgue for autopsy.

Abdul filed a case with Kaliganj Police Station accusing Rais and four others.

## Schoolgirl drowns while taking holy bath

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A schoolgirl of the district town drowned in the river Monu after she went to the river to take holy bath yesterday morning.

The body of Monisha Ghose, 15, daughter of Advocate Amullya Kumar Ghose of Shantibag area, still could not be traced till filing of this report at 10:30pm last night.

Monisha went to Chadnighat bridge area in the river with a neighboring woman to have bath on the occasion of Modhu Krishna Troyudoshi, a religious holy day of Hindus, around 8:30am yesterday.

Monisha is a student of class IX of Moulvibazar Ali Amzad Government Girls' High School.



### Human chain

Gonotanic Islami Oikya Jote will hold a human chain; Venue: Muktagong; Time: 4:00pm.

### Rally

Jaityo Rickshaw-van Sromik League will organise a rally; Venue: 23, Bangabandhu Avenue; Time: 11:00am.

### Festival

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy will hold a magic festival; Venue: academy auditorium; Time: 6:00pm.

### Human chain

National Domestic Woman Workers Union will organise a human chain; Venue: Muktagong; Time: 11:00am.

### Discussion

Nagorik Uddyog will hold a discussion; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 3:00pm.

### Launching

Shahitya Prakash will organise a book launching ceremony; Venue: Bangal Cafe; Time: 5:00pm.

### Meeting

Bangladesh Sammilito Peshajibi Parishad will hold a meeting; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:30am.

### Seminar

The Red Times BD.Com will organise a seminar; Venue: Bangladesh Press Institute; Time: 10:00am.

### Inaugural

Institution of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh will hold a course launching ceremony; Venue: IDEB building; Time: 6:00pm.

### Workshop

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust will organise a workshop; Venue: Cirdap auditorium; Time: 9:30am.

### Human chain

Federation of the Global NGO and Civil Society will hold a human chain; Venue: in front of National Museum; Time: 11:00am.

### Workshop

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University will hold a workshop; Venue: university premises; Time: 10:30am.

## NEWS IN brief

### PM to open Cox's Bazar Air Force Base tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will visit Cox's Bazar tomorrow to inaugurate the Cox's Bazar Air Force Base and lay the foundation stone of a medical college.

During the daylong visit, the prime minister will also lay the foundation stone of Cox's Bazar-Dohajari rail line.

Hasina is scheduled to reach Cox's Bazar at 10:35am by air, said an official of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

The foundation stone of the Cox's Bazar Medical College and the railway line will be laid at Jhilongjha, the area where the prime minister will also open the upgraded submarine cable connection of Cox's Bazar Landing Station.

The prime minister will also hold meetings with the district administration and the district's joint lawyers' coordination council.

Later, in the afternoon, she will address a public rally at Park Playground before returning to the capital.

### Teacher killed, 30 hurt in road crash

UNB, Manikganj

A madrasa principal was killed and 30 others were injured in a road accident at Shibpur in Ghior upazila yesterday.

Abdul Haque, 72, principal of Ghior Alia Madrasa, died instantly.

Injured passengers said a Daulatpur-bound bus of Village Line paribahan fell into a roadside ditch while giving side to a bus coming from opposite direction.

On information, local fire service personnel, police and locals rescued the injured and sent them to different hospitals.

### Truck crushes rickshaw-puller

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A rickshaw-puller was killed after a speedy truck hit his rickshaw from behind at the city's Darussalam yesterday morning.

The identity of the rickshaw-puller, aged around 40, could not be known immediately.

Sub-inspector Abu Bakar of Darussalam Police Station said, a truck hit the rickshaw in front of Shah Ali Mazar around 4:00am and sped away.

Locals rushed the injured to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the doctors declared him dead.

The body was sent to the hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Meanwhile, at least 11 people were injured when a speeding truck hit a passenger bus from behind in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the city around 7:00am.

Of the injured, Nurul Islam, 70, Monir Hossain, 25 and Hamim Ahmed, 24, were admitted to DMCH as their condition was critical.

They came from Bhola to attend the Tablig Jamaat at Kakrail Mosque, police said.

Police seized the truck but the driver managed to flee.

### 'Develop shipbuilding industry'

CU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday urged the government to expand the shipbuilding industry, as demand is growing for Bangladeshi ships in global market.

This industry will also create jobs for large number of people and expedite the country's economy, they said.

The view was made at the closing session of two-day long international seminar on "History and Heritage of Chittagong" in the port city yesterday.

History department of Chittagong University (CU) and Bangladesh History Association jointly organised the seminar at Regional Public Administration Training Centre.

## Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The 25th death anniversary of Justice Syed Muhammad Hussain will be observed today, says a press release.

Syed Muhammad was an eminent judge of the Supreme Court and he was removed under the Martial Law in 1984.

### Amin Laskar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 14th death anniversary of Amin Laskar, former president of Bangladesh Chemist and Druggist Association, says a release.

### Selima Jalal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 4th death anniversary of eminent social personality Selima Jalal (Lovelu), wife of late freedom fighter Sheikh Ahmed Jalal, says a press release.



Hindu devotees taking holy bath at Kattali Rani Rasmani Ghat on the occasion of Barunir Snan in Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Upazila chairmen threaten strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Upazila Parishad chairmen and vice-chairmen yesterday threatened to go on fast unto death from June 1 if their 10-point demand is not met by the time.

They announced the protest programme at a press conference organised by Bangladesh Chairmen-Vice-chairmen Okkiyo Parishad at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU).

So the demands should be fulfilled on urgent basis; otherwise there will be no alternative left but to launch tougher programme, they said.

The association president, Abdul

Majid Photo, read out a written statement, saying, "We showed enough tolerance to the government, but they (govt) never heeded our demands."

Although some policymakers assured us of talking about the issue in the parliament and with the prime minister, but no output has been noticed as yet, he said.

"Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury and other lawmakers promised us to resolve the crises through negotiation. If it fails, we will go for tough movement."

Although 26 months have already passed after holding the upazila elec-

tions, the government has yet to take any effective measure to strengthen the institutions, he said.

Their demands include establishing upazila parishad as an autonomous body, implementation of Upazila Parishad (Amendment) Act, 2009 and the president order to hand over responsibilities of 13 departments of 10 ministries to the upazila parishad, removal of barriers to exercising power by upazila chairmen as the chief executive and carrying responsibility by a vice-chairman in absence of chairman, and increasing their allowances.