

## T A N G E N T S

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Babu Mia captivates with his music.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

## Stradivarius of Nimtoli

THE first time I saw him was at the 2008 Chawk Eid Fair. A crowd of kids surrounded him, enchanted by his violin playing. A bag full of single-string bamboo violins rested on the ground. After he finished, his admirers lined up to buy the violins.

I ran into him again at the Muharram Fair in Azimpur this year. He told me his name: Babu Mia. He was, again, busy selling and invited me to visit his house. "Go to Nimtoli and ask anyone for the Violin Man (Behalawallah). They will show you where I live."

A few weeks later, finding myself in Nimtoli, I asked around. Sure enough, I was led to a six-story building. Babu Mia opened the door and led me to the third-floor flat he shared with his family.

Before I could say anything, he had an announcement. "After forty years, I have stopped making violins."

"Why?" I asked, taken aback.

"I am getting older. My six working sons insist that I don't work anymore. I stopped a month ago. My sons will provide for me," he replied.

Where did he learn to make those violins? From his father, Bacchu Mia. The violins are made from *Muli Baash*, a type of bamboo, and steel wire. Most months he easily sold a thousand violins all over Bangladesh.

I did a quick mental calculation. In his career, he had sold close to half a million violins!

"How much did you sell them for?"

"When I started they were two Paisa

each. Last year I sold them for ten Taka. But now the raw material costs twenty Taka, and people don't want to pay so much for a child's violin."

"What songs sell most violins?" I asked.

"That depends. In villages they prefer old movie songs like *Rupban*. Bashir Ahmed's song (*Jare Jabi Jodi Ja*) is also popular. City folks prefer more modern songs like Habib's."

He said it takes him 1-2 weeks to pick up a new song.

Babu Mia hails from Dhaka. His father owned a family home near Nimtoli, but lost it following some financial trouble. His older brother, Monu Mia, is also in the violin business. So are Monu Mia's sons.

But Babu Mia's sons have not entered the family business.

I asked him about his health. He got up and returned with a stack of medical reports. I squinted trying to decipher the doctor's writing, then gave up. Helpfully, Babu Mia said he was mostly fine except for a problem in his kidney.

At the second offer of tea, I took my leave. As I walked away, I was reminded of the Stradivari family of Italy. They made violins in the 1600-1700s which are now worth millions. Stradivarius violins have been the subject of much research and speculation. And here was our local violin-maker who had made and sold half a million units. So maybe he is not Stradivarius, but he has surely made his contribution to music.

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## Death anniversary

METRO DESK



Today is the 30th death anniversary of Makbul Hasan Moni, FCA, a sports organiser, says a press release.

## Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Profullo Kumar Hawladar, former president of Bangladesh Puja Ujjapon Parishad and Mohanagar Sabjonin Puja Committee, died yesterday. He was 79.

Dhaka, Delhi on good track  
Says Indian Vice President Ansari

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Wrapping up his Dhaka visit, Vice President Md Hamid Ansari yesterday said all parties in Bangladesh appeared to be committed to a bilateral relationship with India.

"I had a meeting this morning (yesterday) with Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia. I think on all sides, the commitment to a bilateral relationship is clearly there," Ansari said on his way to New Delhi.

In a reply to a question from journalists on the stand of BNP, he said the opposition too talks of having better relations with India.

Ansari said he had "good conversations" with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister Dipu Moni.

"I think the basic impression I go back with is that the commitment to developing certain bilateral relationship in all fields is vibrant on both sides."

Both India and Bangladesh were on "good track" in developing their bilateral relations, he said.

"A lot of things are happening in bilateral relationship. Visit of ministers (to Dhaka) have taken place. Things are on the track. The vehicle is not in the first gear, it has moved into second gear and beyond second gear."

"In some areas, it has gone into top gear and in some areas it is in second gear. But the vehicle is moving steady," Ansari said.

He said the talks revolved around core issues of communication and connectivity, water-sharing, and people crossing the international border without proper procedure and documentation. "We have no major political issues."

Public opinion in Bangladesh, according to Ansari, is evolving and more and more people are beginning to understand the benefits of cooperation and connectivity between the two countries.

He said public opinion automatically gets translated into government policy.

Ansari said the cost of disharmony among neighbouring countries is "very high" and "unproductive".

The Indian Vice President, who had gone to Dhaka to jointly launch yearlong celebrations to mark the 150th birth anniversary of poet Rabindranath Tagore, said neighbours have only two options -- either to live in harmony or disharmony.

"...as neighbours, there are only two ways. Either you live in peace, harmony, and cooperation or you live with disharmony. Everybody understands the cost of disharmony is very high and unproductive."

## NEWS IN brief

## One jailed for producing tainted poultry drug

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

A mobile court led by Executive Magistrate Abdullah Al Masud yesterday jailed one Manik Roy of Karampatri area for one year for illegally producing tainted poultry medicine.

The court also destroyed adulterated medicine worth around Tk 5 lakh, which Manik stored near his

## 2 outlaws held with firearms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in separate drives arrested three cadres of outlawed Lal Pataka, a faction of Purbo Bangla Communist Party (PBCP-ML) and recovered three firearms on Thursday and Friday.

Acting on a tip-off a team of Rab-6 raided at Alokdia bazar of Sadar upazila in Chuadanga and arrested two cadres of Lal Pataka.

The arrestees are Joynal, 45, son of late Sahar Ali of Khejura and Abul Kasem, 35, son of Yunus Ali of Munshipur of Sadar upazila in Chuadanga.

Rab recovered two LGs and four bullets from them. On Thursday, a team from Mirpur Police Station raided the house of Lintu and arrested him with a LG and two bullets. He was a younger brother of Ashraful Kader Lalit, a Kushtia district commander of Lal Pataka who was killed in shootout with police.

## Two arrested with phensidyl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Detective branch of police, on information, arrested two drug peddlers with 570 bottles of phensidyl from Tebaria rail gate area yesterday.

The arrestees are Abdur Rahim, 25, son of Aminul Islam of Aliganj Badanpara village under Rajpara upazila in Rajshahi, and Tahabur Rahman, 27, son of Azer Ali of Nawdapara village under Charchhat

## JBFH to provide free treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital (JBFH) is going to provide free treatment facilities at Shahjadpur in Sirajganj to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Kobiguru Rabindranath Tagore on May 9.

The treatment facilities including blood pressure, blood sugar, high weight measure and BMI examine will be given from 9:00am to 2:00pm, says a press release.

Local lawmaker Choyan Islam will inaugurate the

## Three bodies authorised to deal with realtors

BSS, Dhaka

The government has empowered municipal bodies, cantonment boards, and national housing authority (NHA) to work as the line authorities for giving approval of real estate developers in respective areas.

According to a notification issued by the ministry of housing and public works, these bodies would be entrusted to register and serve other activities for streamlining real state developers and their projects in line with section 4 of the Real Estate Development and Management Act, 2010, official sources said yesterday.

However, Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk), Chittagong Development Authority (CDA), Rajshahi Unnayan Kartripakkha (RUA), and Khulna Unnayan Kartripakkha (KUA) will remain the concerned authorities for the capital Dhaka and three other major cities -- Chittagong, Rajshahi, and Khulna -- in this regard.

The NHA, would cover all areas across the country except some designated areas including Rajuk, CDA, RDA and KDA, city corporation areas in Dhaka, Sylhet and Barisal and all municipalities, Cox's Bazar district and Latachapli, Gangamoti, Kuarchar and Charchapali mouzas under Kalapara upazila in

## Glaxose WEATHER TODAY 100% GLUCOSE

## Slight fall in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Barisal divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi, Rangpur and Sylhet divisions in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may fall slightly over southern part and nearly unchanged elsewhere over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:30pm and rises tomorrow at 5:20am.

Country's highest temperature 35.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessor and lowest 22.2 degrees at Comilla.

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	33.3	24.4	82	61
Chittagong	31.0	23.0	78	74
Rajshahi	35.3	23.6	79	67
Rangpur	33.5	24.5	65	65
Khulna	33.2	26.0	77	73
Barisal	31.5	24.5	83	76
Sylhet	34.8	24.6	65	51

Instant energy, Instant recharge



Awami Motor Chalak League forms a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday demanding immediate execution of the verdict to hang the killers of former Awami League lawmaker Ahsanullah Master on the occasion of his 7th death anniversary today.

PHOTO: STAR

FOY'S LAKE CONCORD SCHOLARSHIP  
40 students awarded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Forty meritorious students of ten different schools were awarded Foy's Lake Concord Scholarship in a colourful programme.

Concord entertainment organised the award-giving programme at Foy's Lake Amusement World in the port city yesterday.

The schools are Nasirabad Govt High School, Govt Muslim High School, Chittagong Govt Girls' High School, Cantonment Public School, Chittagong Collegiate School, Bangladesh Women Association Girls' High School, Chittagong Govt High School, Aparnacharan City Corporation Girls' High School, Ispahani Public School and College and Saint Scholastica Girls' High School.

Managing Director of Concord Group SK Lala, Deputy Managing Director Shahriar Kamal, Vice-Chancellor of Chittagong University Prof Dr Md Allauddin, scientist Prof Dr Jamal Nazrul Islam and Editor of the Daily Azadi MA Malek were present at the programme.

Then she will have meetings with the EU head of delegation, head of state or head of government of Finland and Belgium and UN Secretary General Ban ki-moon.

On May 10, Hasina will deliver her speech in the morning session of the fourth UN Conference on LDCs at Lutfi Kirdar centre.

The same day, she will leave Istanbul for home and is expected to arrive in Dhaka in the morning of May 11.

Instant energy, Instant recharge