

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Gojaria's Immersive Greenery

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Gojaria

To bicycle to Gojaria, ride on Khilkhet road past Dumni and turn left for Tolna ghat. After crossing the Balu by boat, ride another three kilometres. You cannot miss the majestic Sal trees with their large green leaves.

The Sal, or Shorea Robusta, is a tree of legends. Its wood is strong; the Taj Mahal's foundation uses Sal pillars for stability. It gives us medicines and oils while playing an important role in indigenous folklore.

Gojaria is its local name. I found this grove accidentally several years ago when off-road bicycling with friends in rural Kaligonj. We had strayed off the main path and were following a small stream, looking for a way back. Finding a lone villager, I asked what lay ahead. "Gojaria is up ahead, blocking your way," he said. Gojaria? The word demanded exploration. Presently we reached a meadow: rising tall on three sides were the graceful trees, which I learned were Sal.

Since then, Gojaria's spell has

brought me here many times. When I stand inside the grove I am immersed in greenery punctuated by the beautiful trunks. There is no grass growing underneath - only small Sal seedlings, which die if transplanted. During winter, most Sal leaves fall. Villagers collect them for fuel (there is no gas in the area.)

Two years after my last visit I set out for Gojaria this hartal day. At Tolna, I find the Balu rain-swollen, but the same grizzled boatman is plying people across. He greets me like an old friend and ferries me and my bicycle across the river.

I have forgotten the trails and must ask for directions. After a brief drizzle, the sun heats up the land. Enveloped by the musky smell of the earth, I lose my way yet again. A friendly villager helps, but he eyes my bicycle dubiously: "It is muddy up ahead." I shrug. "I'll walk then."

The short stretch of red mud is deep and sticky. My bicycle gets stuck, then my shoes. I am exhausted when I catch sight of Gojaria. The misery disappears instantly.

I wander around the deserted groves, admiring the fine trees, taking pictures. Then it is time to go home.

Rather than retracing my path, I decide to complete a loop. Soon there is more mud. Two men are grazing their cows. Taking a break, I fall into conversation and learn that much of Gojaria is threatened by the Purbachal development project. The matter has reached the courts.

Their own homesteads were also acquired by the government, they say. "Land outside the project is ten or twenty times more expensive than what they paid us, so where are we supposed to move?" Their tale is familiar: the human cost of development. I wish them luck.

The hot afternoon sun soon makes me thirsty, but even small village shops are closed. Luckily I find a man selling young coconuts. The sweet water replenishes my strength and I bicycle home with renewed strength, glad that Gojaria survives for now.

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Case backlog bar to justice

Says chief justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Md Muzammel Hossain pointed out yesterday that huge backlog of pending cases and their long-delayed disposal are the main barriers to ensuring people's access to justice.

He, however, said the Supreme Court (SC) is working hard to solve the problems.

Justice Hossain made the remark at the inauguration session of a two-day workshop on "Case management: Towards a better justice system" at Brac-CDM in Savar, outskirts of the capital.

The SC and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) jointly organised the workshop attended by 21 judges from different district courts and some lawyers.

The chief justice said the separation of judiciary will not sustain if a separate judicial secretariat is not set up under the Supreme Court. The secretariat is vital to control and develop the judicial administration and case management system, he added.

He said bench officers and other court officials will be trained during the SC vacation with assistance of the UNDP for developing the justice delivery system.



Heavy falls likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Khulna, Barisal, Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Rangpur and Rajshahi divisions in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also likely at places over the country, said Met Office. Day temperature may rise 1-2 degree Celsius over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:46pm and rises tomorrow at 5:24am.

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	31.2	25.5	85	87
Chittagong	30.5	24.5	92	74
Rajshahi	31.0	26.2	85	76
Rangpur	29.0	26.4	87	83
Khulna	31.6	25.5	89	83
Barisal	30.5	25.5	93	78
Sylhet	31.2	25.8	80	96
Cox's Bazar	30.0	24.5	90	83

NEWS IN *brief*

TIB cartoon exhibition ends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two-day long photography and cartoon exhibition jointly organised by Transparency International, Bangladesh (TIB) and Sacheton Nagarik Committee (Committee for Conscious Citizen) ended at Savar on the outskirts of the city yesterday.

The exhibition displayed photographs from War of Liberation and anti-corruption cartoon was held at Savar College with assistance of Youth Engagement and Support, an anti-corruption youth group, says a press release.

33 shops gutted in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A fire gutted 33 shops at Narayan Hat of Fatikchhari upazila in the port city yesterday.

Fire brigade sources said the fire originated from an oven of a shop of the bazar around 2:50am and soon engulfed the adjacent shops.

On information, fire fighters from Ramgar upazila rushed to the spot and doused the flame with the help of locals around 6:20am.

The fire gutted grocery shops, tea stalls, crockery, fast food shops and shops of different goods, fire brigade, the sources said.

The cash and valuables worth Tk 10.5 lakh were gutted in the fire, the sources added.

UK APPG finds out women's role

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

UK All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Debt, Aid and Trade, a cross party group of MPs and Peers interested in international development issues, are in Bangladesh to investigate the role of women and girls in development.

"They have received written and oral evidence in the UK and are now in Bangladesh to investigate the matters further and discuss priorities for change," said a press release sent by Save the Children.

Four members of the group -- Lord Ahmed, Mary Macleod, Virendra Sharma and Debbie Abrahams -- are now in the country for the purpose.

The release says the group visited factories and met with owners and working children. The team also met local government representatives, who are leading the child protection committee. The team discussed issues relating to child protection and education with the civil society and local government bodies.

A salute to the glory of mystic Egypt



banglalink pays tribute to Egypt, where modern civilization dawned



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