

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



A special fruit from a special tree.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

A Special Tree

WHERE would we be without the bounties of the amazing jackfruit tree?

My long and happy association with *Artocarpus Heterophyllus* began when I was five. In the yard of our Sylhet home, next to my parents' bedroom, was a large jackfruit tree. One day, my father swung a rope around a branch and fitted it with a wooden seat. This became my first swing and led to endless hours of entertainment.

Since then I have admired the jackfruit tree, which originates in India - showing up in archaeological digs from 5000-6000 years ago - but now grows in all tropical countries.

The tree grows fast, in some cases reaching fruit-bearing maturity in four years. The branches grow laterally from the trunk before reaching skyward. Its dark-grained wood is exceptionally strong and is useful for making doors, windows and furniture.

Some jackfruit trees live for over a hundred years, but from what I have seen, its average lifespan is closer to fifty.

My appreciation of this tree deepened during the 1971 Liberation War, when my family took refuge with relatives in a remote village for several months. We were grateful just to be alive, but any food beyond the basics - rice, dal and potatoes - was scarce. Summer, however, brought abundance in the form of the jackfruit. I spent many happy afternoons with friends indulging in its messy delight.

The fruit grows from a tiny pod, called *muji*, to the large brown spiky fruit weighing several kilograms in three

short months. At first the *muji* is sheathed in a shiny green cover which it sheds as the spikes develop. Not all *mujis* make it to maturity; most drop while still small. Many villagers can predict the survivors by inspection. A big tree can produce a hundred or more ripe jackfruits in a season.

All parts of the fruit are useful, starting with its sweet and flavourful bulbs. Afficionados argue endlessly over the merits of mushy versus crunchy varieties. Unripe fruits are cooked into curries. The seeds, with a sweet, nutty taste, are boiled or grilled, then cooked. Cows eat the portions of the fruit that humans cannot.

The jackfruit tree gives us many aesthetic pleasures. The dark green canopy of a fully grown tree provides a home for birds, squirrels and other wildlife. Its bark often sports colourful patterns. It has beautiful leaves.

These leaves, articulated by bold veins, are thick, heavy and roughly oval. Old leaves turn a bright reddish orange before dropping. New leaves take their place year-round, bright green at first before turning darker. Cows will go to great lengths to eat jackfruit leaves, so young trees must be protected.

I read somewhere that creepers, particularly black pepper vines, can be grown on the jackfruit trunk. But seriously, why would you let a creeper deprive this friend from its nourishment? I say feed it well, protect it, and nurture it, and it will return the favour many times over.

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NEWS IN *brief*

PM condoles death of Steve Jobs

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed profound shock at the death of Steve Jobs, former chief executive and co-founder of US technology giant Apple.

Hasina recalled contribution of Steve in building up the modern world. She prayed for the salvation of his departed soul.

Jobs introduced the colourful iMac computer, the iPod, the iPhone and the iPad to the world. Jobs announced he was suffering from pancreatic cancer in 2004. He died on Thursday.

Woman dies after falling from train

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A woman died after she slipped off a moving train at Akkelpur Railway Station in Joypurhat yesterday, according to railway police.

The dead is Kalpana Begum, 40, wife of Md Abdul Barek of Phulbari town.

Stationmaster Md Abdul Barik said the accident occurred around 9:30am as the Rajshahi bound Barendra Express started leaving the station.

Kalpana was trying to embark the train but slipped into the ground. She succumbed her injuries in Akkelpur Health Complex. Kalpana was bound for Rajshahi from Phulbari.

2 stabbed to death in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Two youths were stabbed to death by unknown criminals in separate incidents in Jessore town on Thursday night.

The deceased are Shukur Ali, 25, son of Khokon Mia of Ashram area, and Masud Sheikh, 27, son of Abdus Sattar of Purba Barandipara.

Some unidentified men beat up and stabbed Shukur in front of Jessore Zilla School around 12:00am.

Locals rushed him to Jessore Sadar Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

In the other incident, some unidentified criminals stabbed Masud to death beside a grave yard at Purba Barandipara at about 1:30am.

2 robbers shot dead

UNB, Laxmipur

Two alleged robbers were shot dead while another was injured by their rivals at Shyamganj village in Laxmipur Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The deceased could not be identified immediately. Locals caught the injured bandit, Mizan, along with a light gun when he was trying to flee the spot in a rickshaw. He was later handed over to police.

Police said hearing the sound of firing early in the morning local people came out of their houses and found the body of a robber lying on a road.

The villagers also found the body of another dacoit floating in a nearby pond. On information, police recovered the bodies.

All the bandits hailed from Ramganj upazila of the district, police said.



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HUQ

Garbage including polybags occupies a significant portion of the road causing suffering to its users at Madhya Badda in the city. The photo was taken yesterday.

Polybags bounce back despite ban

Creep into markets for lax monitoring

UNB, Dhaka

Polythene shopping bags that were banned a decade back have sneaked into the market over the years, posing a greater threat to the environment.

Environmentalists think the widespread use of polythene and plastic bags has turned out to be a grave concern as those are clogging the drainage system and choking the water bodies.

Paribesh Bachao Andolan Chairman Abu Naser Khan told the news agency that the use of polythene has become rampant not only in Bangladesh but also across the world, causing a serious harm to the environment and the biodiversity.

He said the government had imposed a ban on the use of manufacturing, selling and marketing of polythene bags over a decade ago, which was obviously a good initiative to protect the environment. But now, polythene is being used all over the country for lack of monitoring.

The environmentalist said the government should announce a "complete policy" and enact a "complete law" to check the use of all kinds of polythene products and plastic goods, considering their adverse effects.

Naser Khan suggested introducing green products to replace the polythene shopping bags.

"Yes, the use of polythene shopping bags has marked an alarming rise despite a ban on it and it should be stopped," said Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association official advocate Anwarul Islam Chowdhury.

He said the law-enforcement agencies and officials of the Department of Environment (DoE) are not playing their due role in stopping the use of this hazardous polythene bags.

Almost all products, including food items, are packed in polythene bags the bulk of which finds its way into drains and water

bodies. Used polythene bags are seen everywhere on the roads and in areas near canals as people are using those without restraint.

During the rainy season, the problem gets worse as polythene and plastic products block the drainage system, causing water logging.

Nurul Amin, a retired civil servant, says, "Had there been a nonstop campaign about the hazards of polythene bags and their adverse impacts on the environment, people themselves would have stopped using those."

The government in 2001 slapped an outright ban on all polythene bags after they were found to have been the main reason during the 1988 and 1998 floods that submerged two-thirds of the country.

Asked about the problem, State Minister for Environment and Forests Hasan Mahmud said, "Drives are on against poly-bag production. But the law-enforcement agencies will have to play a more proactive role in this regard."

He, however, said polythene bags are now mostly used in packing dry food items like Chanachur, biscuits and other items. "The government is sincere to stop the use of polythene bags," he said.

On September 6, Hasan Mahmud directed the Department of Environment (DoE) to strengthen its anti-poly-bag drive to help minimise the environmental degradation.

He made the directive when DoE Director General Monwar Islam met him at his ministry office on the day. But his directive seems to have fallen into the deaf ears.

According to official data, the previous BNP-Jamaat government had conducted anti-polythene drive for just 75 days during its 2002-2006 term and realised only Tk 10 lakh.

The present government has so far conducted anti-polythene drives for 221 days from January 2009 to July 2011 and realised Tk 70.40 lakh in fine and seized around 136,587 kg of polythene.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK



Today is the 4th death anniversary of Begum Jahanara Ali, wife of late

Principal Askar Ali, says a press release.

Relatives, friends and well wishers are requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Reazul Haque

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 3rd death anniversary of former Bangla Academy deputy director and researcher Dr Khondoker Reazul Haque.

On the occasion, Purnima Bashar, a cultural organisation, is organising a discussion on the life and works of Reazul Haque at 5:00pm tomorrow at Sanskriti Bikash Kendra in the city's Paribagh, said a press release.

Nicole Sherin Rahim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 2nd death anniversary of Nicole Sherin Rahim, only daughter of late Abdul Rahim, retired joint secretary of Bangladesh, said a press release.

Special prayers were held at the family ancestral mosque at Dagnunbhuiyan upazila in Feni yesterday. Besides, destitute feeding was arranged in the village home.

Blessings are sought from the near and dear ones for the departed soul.



Child learners at Kendrio Kochi Kachar Mela perform song as they celebrate the 55th anniversary of the institution in its auditorium in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Drug peddlers kill 5 die in road crashes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Drug peddlers killed a person and injured another critically as they protested sale of liquor publicly during an immersion procession in Dinajpur town on Thursday evening.

The deceased is Hira Singh 24, son of Mohesh Chandra Singh of Gunjabari of Dinajpur Sadar, while the injured is Bishu Bakshi 27, son Babul Bakshi of Neemtola. With his four fingers chopped off, Bishu was admitted to Dinajpur Medical College and Hospital.

Quoting witnesses police said a group of drunken drug peddlers was dancing around Hira during the immersion procession of goddess Durga at Neemtola intersection. At one stage, they began stabbing Hira indiscriminately.

Later, the criminals chased Bishu with sharp weapons, caught him near his home and stabbed him.

Locals rushed them to the hospital where Hira succumbed to his injuries around 7:00pm.

Witnesses said Hira and Bishu were campaigning against drug selling and trying to convince devotees not to consume liquor during the procession. Ranjan Das, 30, a known drug-peddler in the area, led the criminals, they added.

A case was filed on Thursday night accusing eight persons, including Ranjan.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five people, including a minor boy, were killed in four road accidents in the city yesterday.

The deceased are Kamruzzaman Miraz, 30, Lipi Akter, 26, Mohammad Joy, 8, son of Akkel Ali of Kafur; Mohammad Azad, 35, a rickshaw-puller of Mirpur Section No-7; and Akash Mia, 18, a vegetable vendor of Pallabi.

Dhanmondi police said Miraz and his friend Lipi were on a motorcycle when a truck rammed them from behind at Russel Square in Dhanmondi around 9:30pm, leaving them dead on the spot. The truck driver was arrested, said police.

In another incident, a battery-run three-wheeler knocked down Joy while he was crossing the road in front of Mirpur Dental College at Section-14 of Mirpur around 5:30pm.

Locals caught the vehicle but its driver managed to escape.

Meanwhile, a CNG-run auto-rickshaw hit Azad's rickshaw and sped away, leaving him critically injured near Mirpur Police Station around 6:00am.

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

Akash was taking his vegetables to his shop at Section No-12 of Mirpur from Karwan bazar on an auto-rickshaw when a truck hit the vehicle around 5:00am, killing him on the spot. The injured driver was admitted to DMCH.

BCL leader Khokan's contribution recalled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of former and current leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) yesterday recalled the contributions of Abdul Wadud Khokan, also a former general secretary of Dhaka University (DU) unit of BCL who died of a stroke on October 2 at his Bagerhat residence.

They also recalled contribution of Khokan, also a former central vice president of BCL, in different movements.

BCL organised a commemorative discussion on the life Khokan at DU.

Obaidul Quader, Mahbul Alam Hanif, Ahmed Hossain, Bahauddin Nasim and Al Mahmud Swapon, were also present.



Light rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

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

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:50pm and rises tomorrow at 5:53am. Country's highest temperature 35.7 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chuadanga and lowest 24.2 degrees at Patuakhali and Cox's Bazar.

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	34.0	26.5	65	86
Chittagong	31.7	25.7	80	80
Rajshahi	34.5	25.5	79	92
Rangpur	34.4	26.3	74	86
Khulna	32.5	27.0	68	79
Barisal	33.5	24.9	97	83
Sylhet	35.3	26.2	84	76
Cox's Bazar	32.5	24.2	69	88