

# TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Coppersmith barbet at the Botanical Garden.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

## At the Botanical Garden

At the National Botanical Garden in Mirpur, you buy a ten-taka ticket from the booth and, handing it to the guard at the entrance, make your way through a rusty but solid turnstile.

Inside, you enter a different world. At 208 acres, the Garden is larger than the Botanical Gardens at Singapore and Melbourne, two others which I have visited. Its 908 plant species are divided into 57 sections including a bamboo garden and areas dedicated to palms, orchids and cactuses as well as two rose gardens. The Garden, on the banks of the Turag river, was established in 1961.

My first trip here last year surprised and delighted me from the start. Among many trees was a medium-sized banyan which stood within a hundred yards of the entrance. As I passed under it, I heard birds chattering above. The ripe red banyan fruits had attracted a flock of coppersmith barbets (*choto boshonto-bouri*), astonishingly beautiful small birds with a green body, a large red blob on the forehead and a black and yellow mask around the eyes. I started photographing one and he stopped eating and looked downwards. Fixing his stare at me, he tilted his head this way and that several times before deciding I was harmless and resuming his meal.

Heading to my right, inside a grove of (mostly acacia) trees I saw several Asian cuckoo (*bou-katha-kou*). I grew up with this bird's song, but had never seen it up-close. One caught my attention. He was scanning the

horizon with his sharp eyes, and a minute later he swooped from his perch to catch his favourite food from the ground: a green caterpillar.

Near a wall separating the Garden from the zoo next door were some *rongon* trees. Several small birds - little spiderhunters (*mochatuni*) - were busily drinking the nectar of the *rongon* flowers, sometimes turning upside down to get to the flowers.

The birds thinned, however, as I entered an area called "International Grove." Rows of towering casuarinas, interspersed with *nageshwar* trees, lined both sides of the road. The grove, created in 1973, also contains oaks, magnolias, camphor, rambutan and various exotic palms.

On a recent trip, I found the bamboo grove to be an island of serenity. There were few birds here, but a nearby grove of teak trees was alive with birdcalls. With some patience, I saw woodpeckers, doves, warblers, orioles and starlings.

As I walked along the road, a sweet fragrance wafted through the air just as the second of the park's two rose gardens came into view. There are 200 varieties of roses here sporting many colours. Some are multi-coloured; some are hybrids developed here. Tipped off by Md. Ruhul Amin, helpful Director of the Garden, I found an unusual rosebush full of green roses in full bloom.

If you are interested in nature or birds, the Botanical Garden is worth a visit. The treasures of this large park, however, are impossible to cover in a single day and you may find yourself returning soon.

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## Ctg port termed most efficient in South Asia

Says WTO chief Pascal Lamy

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Director General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Pascal Lamy yesterday said Chittagong port was considered the most efficient container port in South Asia.

"This port has held many names throughout ages but with only one real purpose--to connect this country to the outside world through trade and to serve as a conduit for other countries to connect with each other," he said.

"The efficiency of the port has improved over the years and many consider it to be the most efficient container port in the South Asian region," he told a discussion organised by Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry at a hotel in Chittagong city.

Lamy said during his visit to Bangladesh last year, he was overwhelmed when a lot of people insisted that he must visit the port--the heart of the economy of Bangladesh, handling more than 90 per cent of the export-import trade.

Former adviser to a caretaker government Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman said Chittagong itself was an emerging trade zone and was the gateway of regional connectivity. He emphasised developing Chittagong as a regional economic hub of Southeast Asia.

The WTO chief said he was convinced that Bangladesh saw trade as a path to growth and development. His visit to Chittagong today (yesterday) and talk to representatives of the government, including the commerce minister, asserted it, he added.

He said despite some challenges, Bangladesh had made tremendous strides in the economic and social fields over the last few years, including achieving several Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

"As the most densely populated coun-

try in the world, you have a large comparative advantage in the provision of labour and services, but this also means a tremendous responsibility to ensure that this population has access to food, shelter and education," he said. "Developing the agricultural sector is a necessity for food security," he added.

Lamy said increasing production and productivity and ensuring that goods reached both the domestic and export markets should be the priorities. Using the development finance of aid for trade and foreign direct investment is one avenue to increase the efficiency of this sector, he added.

The WTO chief applauded Bangladesh's role in facilitating a greater integration of Least-Developed Country (LDCs) into multilateral trade system.

Lamy said as WTO members prepared for the ministerial meeting in Bali in December, he expected that Bangladesh would continue to play a pivotal role in ensuring that LDC issues were reflected in any input to and outcome from Bali.

Mentioning that the issue of trade facilitation could be considered in Bali, he said, "I expect that Bangladesh will consider the merits of a Trade Facilitation Agreement and will take a proactive approach in ensuring that the negotiations on trade facilitation are completed in a way that strengthens the rules, regulations and processes of 'doing trade' but which also seeks to develop a framework that provides the necessary technical assistance and capacity building to developing countries, especially LDCs."

Former vice chancellor of Chittagong University Alamgir Mohammad Sirajuddin and CCCCI President Morshed Murad Ibrahim, among others, spoke at the meeting.

## NEWS IN brief

### On hurt in cocktail blast at DU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A rickshaw puller was injured as cocktails exploded on Dhaka University campus around 9:00pm yesterday.

Mansur Ali, 40, was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with wounds in his right leg. Witnesses said five to six cocktails exploded.

### 'Nipah' kills child in Joypurhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Nipah virus claimed the life of a girl child in Joypurhat on Thursday, says Joypurhat Health Department officials.

Sumaiya Begum, 3, daughter of Shawkat Ali of Dasra Sarail village in Khetlal upazila, died at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College, Bogra around 1:30am, said family members.

Earlier on Monday, the girl was admitted to Joypurhat Modern Hospital with fever and headaches, symptoms of Nipah virus infection, the

### Gloria Jean's Coffees help FFs

METRO DESK

Gloria Jean's Coffees Bangladesh, an international gourmet coffee shop, has given facilities to four freedom fighters to help them set up a small business.

State Minister for Liberation War Affairs AB Tajul Islam handed over the items--photocopy machine, computer, printer, scanner, UPS, internet modem and mobile phone--to the freedom fighters at a ceremony on January 31.

### Students to win trip to S Africa

METRO DESK

CIMA Global Business Challenge 2013, an international business management competition for full time undergraduate business students, is under way.

Teams from 25 countries are taking part in the contest, says a press release. The champion team from Bangladesh will visit South Africa to compete with 24 other regions. Students can register for the competition at [www.cimaglobal.com/gbc2013](http://www.cimaglobal.com/gbc2013) until February 28. The country finale will take



Director General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Pascal Lamy addresses a roundtable at a hotel in Chittagong city yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

## JRC meet to assess Tipai impact

BSS, Dhaka

The Joint River Commission (JRC) of Dhaka and New Delhi yesterday began a two-day meeting related to a joint study on the proposed Tipaimukh Dam to assess its possible impacts on the two neighbouring countries.

"We are discussing the inception reports by the two consultants, outlining the approaches they took to study the water modelling and assess the impact of the mega project on the other side of our (north-eastern) borders," Sajjad Hossain, JRC member from Bangladesh side, told BSS at the end of the first day's meeting.

The second sub-group meeting with the Indian side led by NK Mathur would continue until today while the joint study was expected to be completed by 2014, he added.

Earlier in 2011, India formally announced its plan to build a hydroelectric dam and irrigation barrage on the Barak River that enters Bangladesh through its north-eastern frontier, sparking wide concerns in the lower riparian country.

Last year, the two countries agreed to conduct the joint study. The first meeting of the sub-group on Tipaimukh Hydroelectric Project under the JRC was held in New Delhi on August 27-28, 2012.

During his Dhaka visit in September 2011, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said his country would not take any steps regarding the Tipaimukh that could adversely affect Bangladesh.

Bangladesh earlier demanded a comprehensive joint study on the proposed mega project to assess its "negative and positive impacts" as experts feared that the cross-border structure in India would expose the downstream regions to severe environmental threats.

## PM visits Pabna, Sirajganj today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will visit Pabna and Sirajganj today, making it the premier's first visit to the districts since the present government assumed power.

During her visit, Hasina will inaugurate 15 development projects and also address a public meeting on the premises of Pabna Edward College. AL district unit has organised the meeting.

Earlier, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) confirmed her tour in an official letter signed by Md Jahangir Alam, assistant personal secretary at PMO.

According to the letter, Hasina will inaugurate a 150 megawatt power plant in Sirajganj and a bridge on Ullahpara-Belkuchi road in Sonatola area. She will then travel to Bera upazila where she will launch a 70 MW power plant and the newly built Bera municipality building.

In Pabna, the premier will inaugurate Pabna Medical College, Pabna Textile Engineering College, Pabna Open University building, Pabna Bonomali Institute, and newly built hostel and faculty building of Pabna University of Science and Technology.

She will also inaugurate construction work for Ishwardi-Dhalarchar rail line project and Vangura-Naogaon road and lay foundation stones for chief judicial magistrate's court building and regional passport office.

## Gang dopes 7 workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unknown criminals doped seven workers of an under construction building and stole some construction tools "worth Tk 3 lakh" in the capital's Gulshan-2 early yesterday.

Police said the victims were drugged by a man who pretended to be a lunch vendor. They were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Police said the workers bought lunch from the man on Thursday afternoon and fell asleep within around an hour after eating it.

"In the morning some of their coworkers who did not stay the night there found them unconscious," said Imam Hossain, an official of the developer company, which is constructing the building.

The victims are Anwar Hossain, 28, Shahdat Hossain, 24, Habib, 28, Jahangir Hossain, 28, Zahirul Islam, 25, Shariful Islam, 26, and Abdul Halim, 27.

## Jatiya Kabita Utsab starts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Themed "Trial of war criminals is the demand of poetry", a two-day 27th Jatiya Kabita Utsab (National Poetry Festival) 2013 began at Hakim Chattar, beside Dhaka University's Central Library, yesterday.

Several hundred Bangladeshi and Indian poets are taking part in the country's biggest poetry festival, being organised annually by Jatiya Kabita Parishad since 1987.

This year's festival was dedicated to late eminent poet and novelist Sunil Gangopadhyay and eminent journalist Foyez Ahmed.

The nation expects and demands the identification and trial of war criminals and removal of its stigma, said eminent poet Syed Shamsul Haque while inaugurating the festival.

Poet Robiul Hussain reiterated the demand for February 1 to be declared "Poetry Day".

The festival began with placing of wreaths at Central Shaheed Minar and graves of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin and artist Kamrul Hasan. The parishad President poet Habibullah Sirazi presided over the inaugural.



## Moderate fog likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light rain or thundershowers is likely at one or two places over Rangpur, Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna, Sylhet and Barisal divisions and the regions of Comilla and Noakhali in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary party cloudy sky elsewhere over the country.

Moderate fog may occur over the river basins and light to moderate fog elsewhere over the country during midnight till morning, Met Office said.

Night and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

**The sun sets in the capital today at 5:46pm and rises tomorrow at 6:38am.**

Country's highest temperature 28.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakunda and lowest 09.7 degrees at Srimangal.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	25.5	14.5	71	61
Chittagong	26.0	14.0	91	75
Rajshahi	23.7	13.4	86	79
Rangpur	24.0	13.3	67	70
Khulna	25.0	14.0	85	85
Barisal	25.2	12.4	84	80