

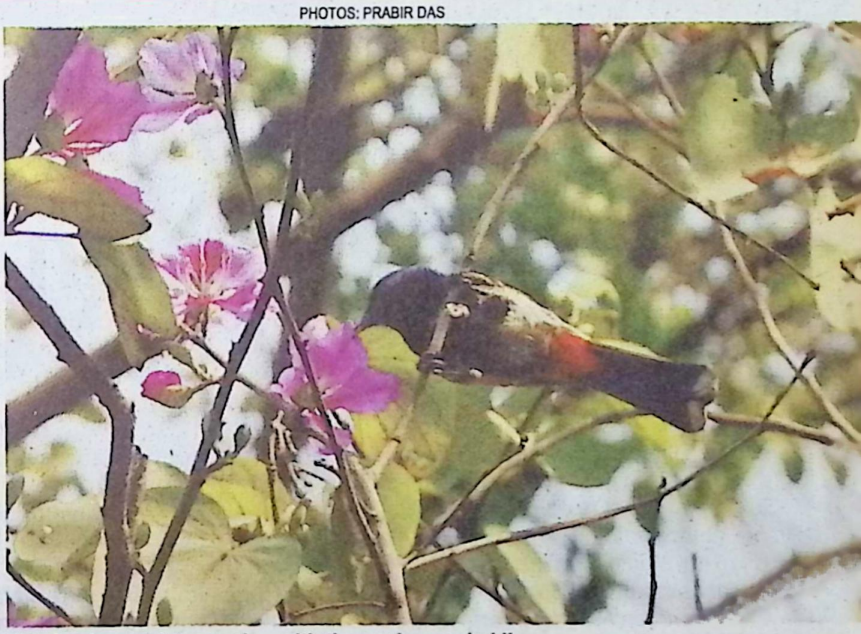
Hybrid marigold, dahlia, cosmos and sunflower survive throughout the spring.

PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS

The dry season continues in spring so the wetlands, water bodies and waterways dry up further. *Shing* (stinging catfish), *koi* (climbing perch), *magur* (African catfish), *shoil* (snakehead surreal) and other smaller fishes are easy to catch. Some wetlands and water bodies that dry up before the summer has come, becomes a festival and the children to scoop up the fish with bamboo baskets.

The Hindu community of the land is much known for celebrating thirteen festivals in twelve months. The festival that marks the arrival of spring is Doljatra - the spraying of coloured water similar to Holi in Northern India. For the Bengali Hindus Durga Puja is the greatest festival. Doljatra is not seen these days. Of course the non-Bengali Hindus in Old Dhaka celebrate Shiv-Pārbati Puja. Lord Shiva comes out with his braided locks piled on the head with an artificially made king cobra with bared fangs mounted on his shoulder carrying a triad with a little girl of a Pārbati at his side.

Many of the flowers of winter continue to blossom in spring. The beauty of the red rose in the brilliance of spring sunshine is one of the most fascinating spectacles on earth. Hybrid marigold, dahlia, cosmos and sunflower survive throughout the spring.



This land associates spring with the cuckoo or *kokil*.

This land associates spring with the cuckoo or *kokil*. It is generally a migrant bird that spends summer in many regions like Europe and South Asia. It winters in Africa. Large species of cuckoos lays eggs in the nests of other birds. The cooing is a mating call.

There was a time when there was pain in spring that in fact started from the middle of winter. It was the scourge of small pox. I remember a time in the mid-sixties - the little compound of our small house had a ramshackle tin shed where lived a village woman who served as domestic worker with her husband that laboured with the pulling cart. They had two children, a boy Pandit and a cherubic little girl Meghula.

In March Meghula was down with small pox. She struggled for her life. The lamp in the tin shed was flickering with the mother sitting at the head of her child trying to relieve the rigours of mortal battle of her child with a hand fan. Meghula struggled for more than a month with spring getting hotter. She survived - unlike her father, luckily the pox marks spared her face. One day she tottered up the steps to our veranda. I have never known a joy like this when I saw Meghula. For me the spring serenade rose to a crescendo as Mozart, Beethoven would have wanted. ■