

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

Pantomai

To reach the village of Pantomai, start out from Sylhet towards Tamabil. Just before reaching the Shari river and Shari Ghat, turn left on the Gowainghat road. After several kilometres, at the Y intersection near the Gowainghat Upazila complex, bear right and keep going. The road, around ten kilometres, takes you through some beautiful scenery. Eventually you reach a small bridge called Aharkandi Bridge; crossing this, turn right and travel about two kilometres to reach Pantomai.

If you start from Sylhet town, the trip takes about two hours.

Pantomai is a Khasi word, its meaning of "a new village" or "a new char" coming from geological changes created by the river Piyain on which it lies. Across the river is India. The Piyain is narrow and flows down from the Khasi Hills across the Sylhet plains and into the Gowain river which then joins the Surma.

The entrance to Pantomai, lined with trees on both sides, sets the stage for the serene beauty to come. Dotting the road are individual homes; many have plots in front with a dense growth of trees. Vines of *paan* (betel leaf) climb along the trunks of these trees.

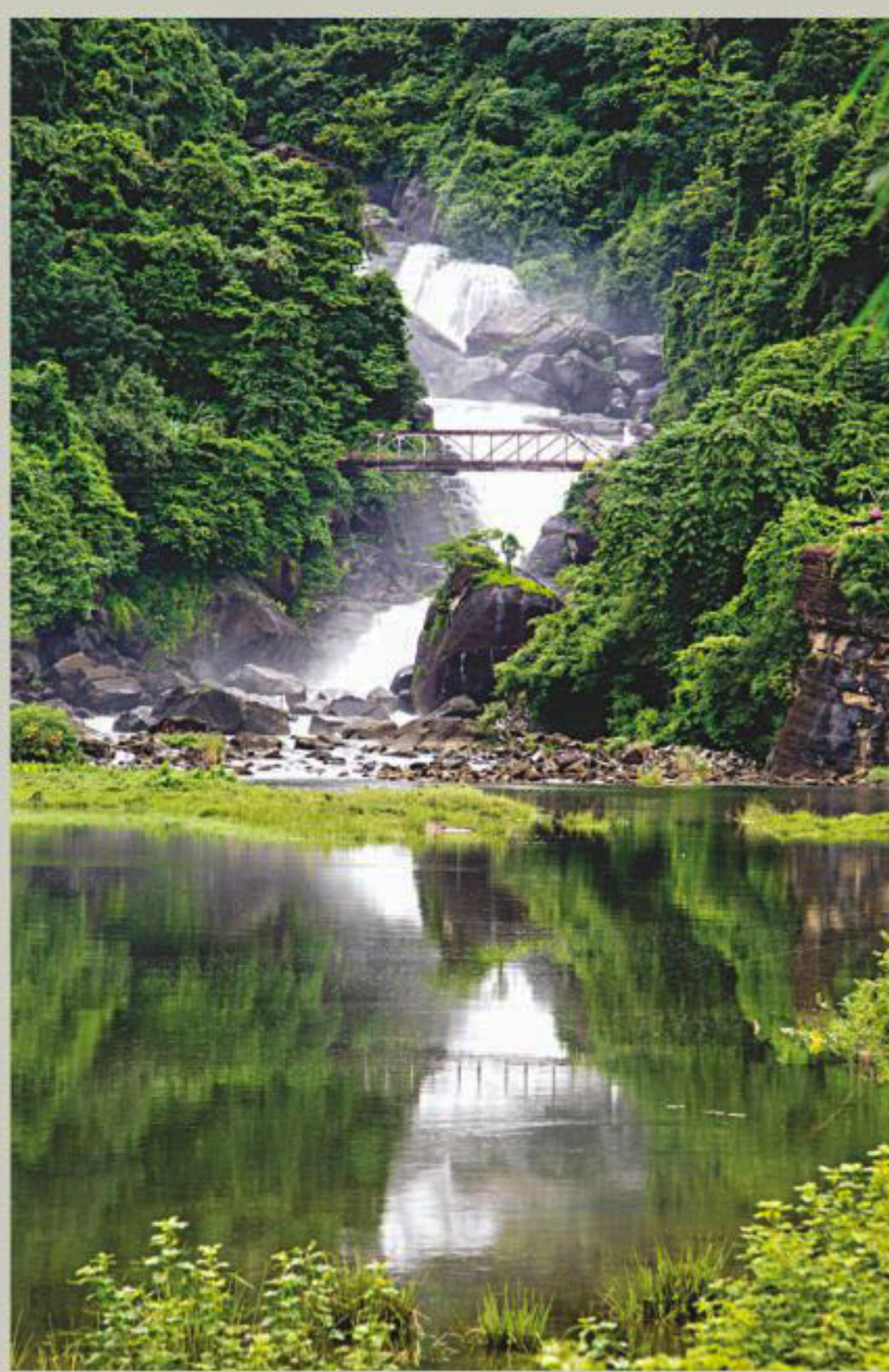
Rice and vegetables are grown on the farmland further inland and along the edge of the river.

I speak with Md. Foyzul Islam, chairman of West Jafflong Union Parishad, who shows me around the village. While many villagers make a living from agriculture, *paan* and vegetable farming, others have migrated to the UK.

I ask Foyzul how large the village is. "There are 1100 voters here; the total population is closer to 2000." Some of the nicer houses attest to the remittance sent by *Londonis*. Foyzul's house is towards the end of the road. He leaves one room permanently open for villagers to stop by for a chat, relaxation, or use of the facilities.

Across the river on the Indian side is a waterfall called Borhill Falls, perhaps 500 feet tall. It descends the steep Khasi hills and crashes into the river. About a hundred yards from where the falls meets the river, on the Bangladeshi side, is a football field called the Borhill Field.

I ask the villagers about football. "We have an annual tournament coming up. This year the grand prize is a laptop computer. Sometimes we hire in players from national or international teams." International? "We expect one or two Nigerian



Borhill Falls seen from Pantomai. PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

players joining in this year." The village is pretty and peaceful and one can easily while away a few hours on the banks of the Piyain or cruising it on a small rowboat. The view approaching Pantomai can be spectacular. The rice crop, which has just been transplanted, is velvet green, caressing your gaze as your eyes travel further out until hitting the mountains in the background, clouds resting on top. Every once in a while there is a river or canal to cross. Parts of the road are lined with raintree and albizia (*raj koroi*) which were planted years ago by an NGO. We can add Pantomai to the list of scenic spots in northern Sylhet that also includes Lalakhal and Ratargul. They make this area a magnet for tourism. www.facebook.com/tangents.ikabir



Santrash Nirmul Toki Mancha forms a human chain on boats on the Shitalakkhya river in Narayanganj city yesterday demanding a proper investigation and quick trial in the murder of Tanvir Mohammad Toki. On March 8, police recovered the 17-year-old's body from the riverbank two days after he had gone missing. PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Army man found dead in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An army soldier, who was presumably fed sedatives in food by a mugging gang, was found dead under the Kuril flyover of the capital's Khilkhet Thursday.

Corporal Tajerul Islam, 36, was stationed in Comilla Cantonment. He recently came to Dhaka for some official work, said Benzir Ahmed, a sub-inspector of Dhaka Cantonment police.

His body was taken to Combined Military Hospital (CMH).

The police inquest report suggests that Tajerul was fed food laced with sedatives by a doping gang that sedates and robs people, Benzir said. The victim was robbed of his cell-phone, he added.

POOR WORKING CONDITIONS RMG workers tell of horrors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Garment workers at a meeting in the capital yesterday lamented poor working conditions and low wages that are, as of yet, crippling the industry.

Addressing the meeting organised by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad in Kobi Sufia Kamal Bhaban, Selimunnahar, a senior employee of a factory, deplored that Tk 4,000 of her Tk 4,300 wage goes into house rent that keeps increasing every year.

She lives with her mother and sister. Another worker, Nurunnahar, said she has been jobless since May 7 when the government shut down the factory after a building safety inspection.

"It was done suddenly and we neither got our outstanding wages nor any compensation," she said, adding that factory owners dismiss sick workers who go on leave.

In this context, her fellow, Rehana, said she got fired during a month's leave for an eye operation. "They gave me the leave, albeit after many requests. Now they will not even give my arrears. I worked there for two years," she said.

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Citi Asia Pacific CEO due today

CITY DESK

Citi Asia Pacific Chief Executive Officer Stephen Bird arrives in the capital today on a daylong official visit, says a press release.

Bird will attend the final ceremony of the Citi Microentrepreneurship Awards, currently in its 8th year; inaugurate Citi Bangladesh's new corporate office in the capital, and meet key clients, stakeholders, regulators and Citi employees.

NEWS IN brief

Youth found killed in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday recovered the body of a youth floating in the Buriganga river in the capital's Kamrangirchar.

Md Abdul Mannan, 22, a resident of Gopalganj, was found with his throat slit. Kamrangirchar police suspected that he was killed two or three days ago.

Locals spotted the body near the Koila Ghat beside the Beribadh.

2 die from electrocution in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

A boy and a youth died after being electrocuted in separate incidents in Mithapukur upazila of Rangpur on Thursday.

The dead were Maruf Hossain, 8, son of Mamun Mian of Chikli-Dhakkhinpara village, and Ershad Mian, 30, of Goyeshpara village.

Mithapukur police said Maruf died as he tried to plug in the television in his house. Ershad was electrocuted as soon as he got into the pond where a live electric wire of Rangpur Palli Bidyut-1 fell earlier, police added.

Youth found dead in Narail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narail

A youth was found killed with his throat slit in an orchard at Nokkhali in Lohagara upazila of Narail yesterday.

The deceased was Nasir Shaikh, 25, son of Tazed Shaikh.

The father said Nasir went out to have a walk after dinner and did not return. In the morning, locals found the body near their house.

Trains halted in Natore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Rail communications came to a halt for around four and a half hours after Dhaka-bound "Drutajan Express" got stuck on the tracks at Yasinpur Railway Station in Natore Sadar upazila yesterday.

The incident occurred when a part of a wheel of the train broke around 1:30pm. A salvage train sent from Santahar Railway Junction reached the spot around 4:40pm and removed the coach around 6:00pm, said Ashok Kumar, the station master.

JU student sexually harassed

JU CORRESPONDENT

A female student of Jahangirnagar University's (JU) business faculty was sexually harassed by some seven Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists studying in the first year yesterday before the university's central entrance.

Shopkeepers who witnessed the incident said the activists passed lewd comments to which the female student protested, leading to an altercation. Faced by a barrage of verbal abuses, she then left.

The accused could not be reached for comment while JU unit BCL President Mahmudur Rahman said punitive measures should be taken for such a crime.

Proctor Muzibur Rahman said steps would be taken once two assistant proctors investigated the incident.

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Surf excel দাগ থেকে দারুণ গল্প

নিয়ামাবলী

সাদা কাগজের একটিতে পরিষ্কৃতভাবে লিখে পাঠান। যাদের উপরে প্রতিযোগিতার নাম, স্থানপূরণ নাম, ঠিকানা এবং প্রাপকের ঠিকানা লিখে পাঠান।

গল্পের সাথে ব্যক্তিগত মোবাইল নম্বর উল্লেখ করতে হবে।

গল্পের বিষয়বস্তু অবশ্যই মৌলিক ও সৃজনশীল হতে হবে এবং গল্প সর্বোচ্চ ১০০০ শব্দের মধ্যে হতে হবে।

যেকোনো প্রয়োজনে কর্তৃপক্ষ গল্পকারের সাথে যোগাযোগ করতে পারবেন।

নির্বাচিত বিজয়ী গল্পে ছিট তৈরি এবং নির্দেশনা প্রদানে নিম্নোক্ত পূর্ণ স্বাধীনতা থাকবে।

ইউনিভার্সিটির, অ্যাকাডেমি এবং এই প্রতিযোগিতার সাথে সংশ্লিষ্ট কোনো ব্যক্তি এই প্রতিযোগিতায় অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবে না।

সেরা গল্প নির্বাচনের দুই সপ্তাহ ও প্রতিযোগিতার নিয়ামাবলীর যেকোনো পরিবর্তন, পরিমার্জন, স্থগিত বা বাতিল করার সর্বস্বত্ব ইউনিভার্সিটির কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে।

যেকোনো প্রকার বিনামূল্যে সাহিত্যিকর্মের কপি গ্রহণযোগ্য নয় এবং এ সংক্রান্ত সকল দায়দায়িত্ব প্রতিযোগীকেই বহন করতে হবে।

গল্প পাঠানোর শেষ তারিখ ৩০ সেপ্টেম্বর ১৩ পর্যন্ত।

“জন্মের মানুষের জন্মে হঠাৎ একদিন হারিয়ে যায় মন্দি ও নিলা। মাকে খুঁজে পেতে ওরা জ্ঞান বের করে দারুণ এক বুদ্ধি। খাবারের দাগ দিয়ে মন্দি টি-শার্টে লেখে “মা” শব্দটি। তারপর টি-শার্টটি নিয়ে নিলা চড়ে বসে মন্দির কাঁধে, খুঁজে বের করে তাদের মমতাময়ী মাকে।”

দাগ থেকে তৈরি হয় এমনই দারুণ সব গল্প। তাই এবার লিখে পাঠান আপনার শিশুর দাগ থেকে দারুণ কিছু করার গল্প আর

নির্বাচিত সেরা ৩ গল্পকার সপরিবারে ঘুরে আসুন

বিজয়ী ল্যাক্স হংকং

সাথে গল্প নিয়ে থাকছে শর্টফিল্ম

আরো জিতে নিন অ্যাডভেঞ্চার ট্যাবলেট, ওয়াশিং মেশিন ও ১ বছরের জন্য সার্ফ এক্সেল ফ্রি।

এছাড়া নির্বাচিত গল্প নিয়ে বহুল প্রচারিত পত্রিকায় বিশেষ আয়োজন তো থাকছেই।

গল্প পোস্ট করুন জি.পি.ও বক্স ৪০৩৪ নম্বরে

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DHAKA TODAY

Rally Garments Sramik Sangram Parishad will stage a rally demanding Tk 8,000 as the minimum monthly wage for RMG workers; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:30am.

Seminar Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon will organise a seminar on mobile phone and its impact on environment; Venue: Dhaka Reporters Unity; Time: 10:30am.

Demonstration Bangladesh Chhatra Union will stage a demonstration protesting military aggression on Syria; Venue: Before Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:30am.