

# TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Shatkora.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

## Citrus Story

**A** shatkora is a citrus fruit growing in the Sylhet region and used in cooking. It imparts a rich distinctive flavour and is particularly suited to meat dishes. It also lends itself well to achar. I wanted to photograph the shatkora growing in a tree.

My search took me to Jaintiapur in northern Sylhet, home of the Citrus Research Station. Part of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute, the Station was established in 1961 on 119 acres of hilly land. It is devoted to horticultural research. I met Borhannuddin Bhuyan, Scientific Officer of the Station. Bhuyan and I discussed citrus.

Many types of citrus fruits grow in Sylhet: not just shatkora but oranges, malta and different types of lemon including adalebu, katalebu, jaralebu, ashkonilebu, shorbotilebu etc. Growing up in Sylhet, I encountered them often and was always curious about their diversity. So I asked Bhuyan about the variety of citrus fruit growing in Sylhet.

"There are seventy-eight species of citrus growing in the Sylhet region," he said.

I expressed surprise that the number was so high.

"Sylhet has so many citrus varieties because it falls in the centre of origin of citrus fruits," Bhuyan explained. Citrus fruits originated and grew wild in their natural home before being domesticated and disseminated globally. This home is thought to be in northern India and China and Bhuyan said that includes Sylhet.

He mentioned that the Station had records of interviews with older planters of citrus fruits in the area. Not too long ago, citrus plants grew wild in the

jungles here and some planters had started their orchards with plants acquired directly from the jungles. This wild growth can only happen in a fruit's area of origin.

What other activities is the Station engaged in today?

Its researchers collect citrus specimens every year from the field; it currently has thirty-two species of citrus. It also helps propagate citrus throughout Bangladesh.

For example, when local (Sylheti) jaralebu plants were stricken by Canker disease, the European Union refused to import the fruit. However, the Station was able to raise disease-free versions of the plant in Narsingdi and the fruit grown there is exported to Europe today. Due to environmental differences the fruits grown in Narsingdi are subtly different from those grown in Sylhet: they are juicier but less flavourful.

The Station also serves as a nursery, selling seedlings to orchards far and wide. What is the most popular seedling they have? Bhuyan thought a bit and said it was malta, because it is relatively easy to grow and profitable.

I thanked Bhuyan and went for a stroll through the Station's gardens. There were many kinds of citrus trees, including pomelos, various oranges and malta and of course shatkoras. But that was not all. Other fruit trees abounded, including mangoes, jackfruits, guavas, lychees and lotkons.

Seedling sales start in July. You can buy several types of citrus (including shatkora of course) as well as other plants including thoikor, a startlingly sour fruit popular in Sylhet.

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## Teacher sent to jail for remarks on Bangabandhu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A private university teacher in Khulna has been sent to jail following a student's allegation that the teacher made derogatory comments about Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the president and the prime minister four months ago.

Other students and the teachers of Northern University's Khulna branch claimed that the allegation brought against Razib Hasnet Shakil, senior lecturer of law department, is completely false and baseless.

The university authorities said Mohammad Nayeem recently alleged at a press conference that

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## Abducted college girl rescued in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A college girl was rescued in the capital's Uttara yesterday morning, hours after criminals abducted her.

Uttara East police said they found her on a street in sector-4 around 5:00am, said.

According to Uttara police, the incident occurred when the girl along with her mother and fiancé was returning home around 11:15pm.

The security guard of a nearby building, Liakat Ali Liton, was gunned down as he tried to resist the miscreants while they were abducting the 18-year-old girl in front of her mother. Liton hailed from Rangpur.

The criminals also hacked the girl's fiancé.

Police detained four people at Kafrul for interrogation. The main culprits are absconding and they are trying to arrest them, added police.

Victim's mother filed a case.

She yesterday told The Daily Star that the criminals wanted to snatch her daughter's ornaments and dumped her after snatching the valuables.

## CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS

# Indigenous people's rights under threats

CHT Commission Co-chair Sultana Kamal tells the press; blockade in Rangamati called off after the commission declared 'cancellation' of visit

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

The human rights of indigenous communities in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) are under threat, said the International Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission (CHTC) Co-chair Sultana Kamal.

She made the comment while briefing journalists at the auditorium of Khagrachhari Parjatan Motel yesterday.

Implementation of different government projects is dealing a blow to the indigenous people in the region, she said.

Regarding the issue of establishing a BGB battalion in Babuchhara



Sultana Kamal

of Khagrachhari, she said local administration should have acquired the land taking into consideration the rights of local indigenous people, who were evicted from their homesteads, and had been passing a

miserable life.

She urged the government to take effective measures to preserve the fundamental rights of the indigenous people.

Criticising the movements of Bangalee organizations against the commission, she said the commission had been working for establishing the rights of deprived

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## BANGLADESH EMBASSY IN BEIRUT

# Govt to call back envoy, counsellor

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to call back both the ambassador and counsellor from the newly opened Bangladesh embassy in Beirut, as the two officials lack professional relationship between them, hampering the normal activities of the mission.

Diplomatic sources said Ambassador AFM Gousal Azam Sarker and Counsellor and Head of Chancery ATM Monemul Haque had lodged various complaints against each other with foreign ministry.

Following the allegations, the ministry sent the Bangladesh ambassador in Cairo to Beirut in April to investigate the allegations, and the two officials are being brought back on the basis of the inquiry report.

Though both the officials will be called back, the ministry has decided to give fresh foreign posting to Monemul Haque after his return from Lebanon, as allegations made against him are baseless, officials said.

However, the ambassador will be attached to the ministry.

Officials said about 100,000 expatriate Bangladeshis in Lebanon are being deprived

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PHOTO: STAR

Young people of Rakhine community bathe and frolic in the sea in Cox's Bazar on the last day of their monsoon festival yesterday. The indigenous people, inset, going to the sea beach to join the festival. Every year the monsoon festival of Rakhines begins on the first Friday of May and ends on the first Friday of July.

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