

**WEATHER TODAY**  
 Dhaka

Night temperature may rise slightly and day temperature may fall by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country, Met Office said.  
**The sun sets in the capital today at 5:34pm and rises tomorrow at 6:43am.**  
 Country's highest temperature 30.4

degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Feni and lowest 10.6 in Ishwardi, Dinajpur and Jessore.  
 The highest and lowest temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	28.5	14.2	69	59
Chittagong	24.7	18.5	93	72
Rajshahi	27.3	13.0	85	63
Rangpur	26.7	13.4	61	60
Khulna	26.8	13.8	78	80
Barisal	27.2	13.5	79	79
Sylhet	29.8	16.4	61	62
Cox's Bazar	27.5	19.5	95	78

# TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Grove of *Mittinga* bamboo in Habiganj. PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

## Bamboo

One day, while working on my photobook on the natural beauty of Sylhet, I walked into a grove of bamboo adjacent to the highway in Habiganj. Soon I found myself immersed in a forest of impossibly green and slender trees that grew this way and that, often intersecting at the top. The beauty of the trees left a lasting impression on me.

The group of plants known as bamboo belongs to the larger grass family. There are about 1500 species of bamboos worldwide of which Bangladesh boasts around two dozen. While the grass family has influenced human civilization like no other plant family giving us rice, sugarcane, wheat and corn, bamboos have made their own mark by being useful. In Bangladesh, for example, bamboos are used for house construction, scaffolding, shelving, ladders, mats, baskets, fencing, tool-handles, pipes, toys, fishing rods, fishing traps, handicrafts and, last but not least, for cooking *chunga pitha*.

It turns out that bamboo plants have some unusual properties. They flower rarely (at intervals of 65 to 120 years) but when they do, all bamboos of the same grove flower together. Further, bamboos grown from cloning also flower in synchronization with their parent grove.

Bamboos are also some of the fastest-growing plants on the planet. Certain bamboo species have been known to grow 35 inches in twenty-four hours, but more realistically many species of bamboo can grow 1-2 inches in that period. In the growing season, individual shoots emerge from the ground and grow to full size in a single season of three to four months. Bamboos do not live very

long – perhaps 5-8 years at most. They are usually ready for harvesting in three to five years. They grow best in warm weather, though some types of bamboo grow in Europe.

In Bangladesh several species of bamboo are prized for their strength and cultivated in villages. These include *jai* (*bambusa vulgaris*), *barua* (*bambusa balcooa*) and *mittinga* (*bambusa jaintiana*). Naturally occurring bamboos are dominated by the *muli* (*melocanna baccifera*) variety that grows all over Bangladesh.

One of the most interesting foods of the Sylhet region is *chunga pitha*, a smoked cake of sticky rice cooked inside the cavity of a bamboo over a fire. Traditionally *dolu* bamboo was used because it is thin, strong and there is a relatively long gap between its nodes. More recently, however, *kali* bamboo is used due to the unavailability of *dolu*. In fact restricted availability of this bamboo is one reason that prevents *chunga pitha* from becoming more widespread in Bangladesh.

Bamboo shoots are eaten in many places, including Bangladesh. However, because new shoots are tender, animals also love them. The diet of the giant panda of China, for example, is 99% bamboo. The popularity of shoots is a problem. Monkeys, for example, cause great damage to bamboo production in many parts of Sylhet by eating the shoots before they can mature.

Due to urbanization and cultivation other types of trees, bamboo production in Bangladesh appears to be waning. However, it is worth our effort to grow, nurture and spread this magnificent plant.

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# Pollution may drive fish away from Bay

Environmentalists tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Continuation of environmental contamination at the current rate may prompt fish to start shifting away from the Bay of Bengal, hampering protein supply and livelihoods, environmentalists told an international seminar in the capital's Cirdap auditorium yesterday.

"Pollution in Water Ways of Bangladesh, the Risk on Ecosystem and Human Health and other Beneficial Water Uses" was organised by the Chittagong University's Institute of Marine Sciences and Fisheries to reveal findings of a research.

The research identified Khejurtolighat, Halda and Sadarghat in Chittagong and Kamrangirchar and Boropole Bastuhara Colony in Dhaka as the five "most hazardous sites" or "pollution hot spots" where high concentrations of most of the carcinogenic and endocrine disrupting toxic metals were detected.

Assessing the ecological and public health risks of metal contamination within

the waterway, the research said such abundance posed a risk to water use including for drinking, irrigation and agriculture and to aquatic species, human health and livelihoods. Titled "Pollution monitoring in rivers, estuaries and coastal areas of Bangladesh with artificial mussel (AM) technology", the research made use of artificial mussels for monitoring and assessing concentration levels of 11 metals including mercury, cadmium, copper and uranium.

The institute, in collaboration with scientists from RMIT University, Australia; City University of Hong Kong; and University of Hong Kong, conducted the research monitoring 21 sites in the Karnaphuli river estuary, Chittagong coast, Cox's Bazar and the Buriganga, Bahira, Pasur and Rupsa rivers between 2013 and 2014.

Secretaries Shelina Afroza of fisheries and livestock and Rear Admiral (retd) Khurshed Alam of the foreign affairs (maritime affairs division) ministries and Chittagong University Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Iftekhar Uddin Chowdhury were present.



Bengal Foundation Chairman Abul Khair Litu, right, and architect Kazi Khaleed Ashraf formally announce the founding of an institute for architecture, landscapes and settlements, to be directed by Ashraf at "Engage Dhaka 2015", organised by Bengal Foundation at the army museum in the capital's Bijoy Sarani.

# Anarchy, terrorism to be uprooted

IGP tells event to provide assistance to 3 Rangpur arson victims

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Accusing "anti-liberation forces" of creating terrorism and unrest in Rangpur's Mithapukur and Gaibandha's Palashbari and Gobindaganj, Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Haque yesterday said all forms of anarchy and terrorism would be "uprooted through necessary steps" to restore peace.

Those who kill innocent people and damage public property are not people's friends, he told a views-exchange meeting at Mithapukur Girls' High School after providing financial assistance to families of three victims of a recent arson attack.

The family of deceased Rahima Begum, 65, and her son Rahim Badshah, 45, of Darichar village under Kurigram's

# Mamata invites singer Suman for Dhaka tour

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has requested former lawmaker of her party Trinamool Congress (TMC) Kabir Suman to join her official team due to visit Bangladesh likely from February 19.

According to a report of the Anandabazar Patrika, though Suman did not confirm the report, her entourage features the name of Suman, who was sidelined in the party

# Spokesman of 'real' BNP asks Khaleda to quit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Claiming himself as spokesperson of the "real BNP", one Qamrul Hasan yesterday issued an ultimatum to Khaleda Zia to resign as BNP chairperson by February 2 and dissolve all the committees of the party. Addressing a press conference at the capital's Westin Hotel, he claimed that the BNP under the leadership of Khaleda and her elder son Tarique Rahman was illegal.

He threatened to meet Khaleda with 1,700 leaders on February 3 and "bring an end to its illegal leadership" if she does not resign in time.

Qamrul identified himself as a central committee member of Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal, and said neither the prime minister nor any intelligence agency was behind his move.

Three prominent BNP leaders would hold a press conference on February 6 and a rally in the capital on January 30, he said, adding that there were many BNP leaders with him but due to strategic reasons he could not disclose their names.

Qamrul went on saying



Muslims take up nearly every available space on Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway, including the tops of vehicles, at Tongi, Gazipur while offering Jumma prayers yesterday, the beginning of Biswa Ijtima's second phase.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

# Talks only way out

Says B Chy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bikalpadhara Bangladesh President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday urged the government to hold dialogue with the political parties and end the current deadlock before the "foreigners intervene".

"The current political crisis is deepening gradually. It's an ominous sign for democracy. I want to say there's only one way out—the government must talk to the opposition," he told reporters after visiting BNP chairperson's adviser Reaz Rahman at United Hospital.

He said, "I don't want to say in advance that you [Awami League] may have to sit for dialogue under foreign pressure, but it will be shameful for the country." The former president demanded immediate arrest of attackers of Reaz.

# Implement peace accord to end crisis: Nagorik Samaj

DU CORRESPONDENT

Criticising the government move to set up a hospital in Rangamati, Bangladesh Nagorik Samaj yesterday demanded that the state immediately effectuates the Chittagong Hill Tracts peace accord's unimplemented clauses, ensures quality primary, secondary and higher secondary education there and end the "political and economic crisis" being faced by indigenous people.

"The government could consult the hill tracts regional council...the country's

eminent educationists could initiate a feasibility study. And the move could be postponed," columnist Abul Maksud told the samaj's rally in the capital's Shahbagh.

On January 10, a rally of Hill Students Council protesting the hospital's inauguration was attacked in Rangamati. Although the district administration imposed Section 144 and then a curfew, there were reports of indigenous youths and homes in Bangalee settler-dominated areas coming under attack.

# NEWS IN brief

## Sarwar new envoy to Maldives

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT



The government has decided to appoint Rear Admiral Kazi Sarwar Hossain as the new high commissioner of Bangladesh to the Maldives, said a Foreign Ministry press release yesterday.

Sarwar joined Bangladesh Navy in 1980 and had served as the director general of Coast Guard and in UN Peace Keeping Mission in Ivory Coast. He acquired an MBA from the University of Honolulu, USA.

## Govt should ban Jamaat: Imran

DU CORRESPONDENT

The government should immediately ban "the politics of Jammata-e-Islami and pro-Jamaat Islami Chhatra Shibir" to stop the culture of arson attacks and sabotages on rails, Imran H Sarker, leader of a faction of Gonojagoron Mancha, yesterday said.

At a rally in the capital's Shahbagh, Imran also criticised the government for delaying execution of convicted war criminal Jamaat leader Kamaruzzaman.

Later, activists led by Imran brought out a procession that marched to the burn unit of DMCH where Imran met several victims of recent arson attacks.

## Habiganj clash kills 1, injures 100

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A man was killed and at least 100 others were injured in a clash over land dispute at Mokrompur village in Baniarchang upazila of Habiganj on Thursday afternoon.

Abdul Hannan died at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

The clash ensued between the supporters of Jonab Ali and Siraj Miah, said police. The injured from both the groups were admitted to hospitals.

## Govt to establish autism academy

BSS, Dhaka

The government is going to establish an academy at Mohakhali to give proper education to autistic children.

The education ministry has set an outlay of the establishment of the autism academy project with Tk 74.10 crore, said sources.

"Although over 3 acres of land is required for establishing a full-fledged autism academy, we are going to set up the academy on two acres of land at Mohakhali," Education Secretary Md Nazrul Islam Khan told the news agency.

## Pitha Utsab begins on Monday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The eighth Jatiya Pitha Utsab (National Cake Festival) 1421 will begin on Monday at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy in Dhaka.

The nine-day long festival will be held every day from 3:00pm to 9:00pm till January 27 at Coffee House Angan of the academy at Segunbagicha of the capital.

Jatiya Pitha Utsab Uddjapan Parishad made the announcement at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday morning.

## RUVc urges withdrawal of blockade

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University Vice Chancellor Prof Muhammad Mizanuddin yesterday urged the BNP-led 20-party alliance to withdraw the countrywide blockade ahead of the university's 9th convocation scheduled for January 18.

The VC made the request at a press conference at the university's Senate Bhavan yesterday.

On a different note, Prof Mizanuddin said President Abdul Hamid would soon inaugurate a female dormitory, "Bangamata Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall".

## Jhalakathi jail prisoner escapes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

A man convicted of theft yesterday escaped from Jhalakathi Jail by scaling its boundary wall, as high as a one-and-a-half-storey building, informed the jailer, Md Shariful Islam.

Md Monir Hasan, 40, son of Md Joynuddin of Fulohar village in Nalcity, had served one year of a three-year sentence.

Three constables were suspended for negligence in their duties. A four-member probe committee was formed.

## Girl found dead in house in Dhamrai

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Police recovered the hanging body of a girl from her house at Gopinathpur in Dhamrai outside the capital on Thursday night.

Dhamrai police could not immediately ascertain whether Razia Khatun, 14, daughter of Rezaul Karim, committed suicide or was murdered. The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for an autopsy.



Solo exhibition of artist Kazi Rakib, titled "Chronology (1975-2015)", was inaugurated at Galleri Kaya in the capital yesterday. The exhibition will remain open from 11:00am to 7:30pm till January 30. PHOTO: COLLECTED