

# TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Passionfruit blossom.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

## BLOSSOM

It is spring and blossoms are blooming for many of our summer fruits. While the mango blossom has been immortalized in our national anthem, there are many others around us.

One of my favourite blossoms is that of the rose apple (*golapjam*). Hundreds of white stamens radiate outwards from its centre like an explosion. The beauty of this blossom makes up for the bland taste of the fruit.

Pretty blossoms come from unexpected fruits. Passionfruit, also known as tang fruit, is an easily grown, prolific creeper that does well in shady balconies. Its blossom has an intricate beauty. The fruit itself is flavourful and delightfully sour. You can find seedlings at the annual *brikkho mela*.

The red sour fruit called *chukka* or *hoilfa* has an elegant blossom: deep scarlet inside, delicate beige outside. They remind me of okra (*dharosh*) blossoms which are a pretty shade of yellow with purple at centre.

Cherry blossom is perhaps the most famous blossom in the world. Its delicate pink shade is seductive. In Japan – and other places – appearance of this blossom is cause for celebration since it signals the end of winter and the beginning of spring. Most of the ornamental cherry blossom trees (there are around 200 species in Japan) do not produce cherry fruit which is the product of a related tree.

The blossom of the jackfruit tree, however, is not a flower. Rather, it is a cylindrical object, called a *muji*, which is covered in a shiny green skin. In a few weeks, skin detaches revealing the tiny jackfruit. In two short months, the tiny *muji* becomes a massive fruit weighing several kilograms.

Many blossoms are edible, my favourite being *tok aamra* blossom. Its

delicate fragrance, sharp taste and grainy texture are best enjoyed in a sour *tok* (or *khatta* in Sylheti cuisine.) *Aamra* blossoms also lend themselves well to *achars*. Pumpkin blossoms are delicious sautéed or in an omelette. The banana blossom is boiled, mashed and fried into patties. The artichoke is actually the blossom of a certain variety of thistle, eaten before it blooms. It was a favourite of ancient Romans. The beauty of artichoke is that once you have a "colony" growing, plants automatically rejuvenate and expand every year.

Several members of the citrus family have distinctive looking blossoms. For example, the pink-white blossoms of some lemons cluster tightly into a ball before separating into individual flowers. Orange blossoms are, of course, famous for the honey they yield.

The betel nut's blossoms appear as triangular bunches of bright yellow strings that shimmer, high up, against the green leaves and trunks. But I am not so fond of some other nut blossoms, such as cashew, which are stringy and anemic. Another irritating blossom is that of *kalojaam*: not substantial, and inconveniently appearing in the most unreachable, highest branches of this large tree.

If you have orchards, blossoms give an indication of the size of the coming harvest. In some commercial orchards – such as mango – blossoms are often sprayed with pesticide to prevent bugs inside the fruit.

Blossoms are short-lived and attract insects with their high nectar content. Nevertheless, as a photographer I enjoy working with them because they often yield good pictures.

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### Check terror financing

BB Governor Atiur asks commercial banks  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Atiur Rahman yesterday asked the commercial banks to take the highest cautionary measures so that no one can use the banking channel for financing terrorism both at home and abroad.

"You (bankers) have to collect detailed information on customers and have to monitor their transactions very closely," he told the inaugural session of a conference of chief anti-money laundering compliance officials, known as CAMLCOs, of all banks, in Cox's Bazar town.

Atiur said the rise of different militant organisations had become a threat

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### Fatal play with fire

2 siblings burnt to death while playing with matchbox; another dies in Ctg slum fire  
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Two minor siblings faced a tragic end of their lives after a fire broke out in their house as they played with a matchbox at Ghola village in Chitalmari upazila of Bagerhat yesterday afternoon, said police.

The charred bodies of Habil Sheikh, 7, and three-and-half-year-old Chandni Sheikh, children of farmer Khokon Sheikh, were found following the fire which damaged the house totally.

During the incident, the children's parents were working in a shrimp enclosure near their house, Chitalmari Police Station Officer-in-Charge Dilip Kumar Sarkar told The Daily Star.

The wooden fence of the house caught fire after Habil rubbed a

match along the matchbox, he said.

Although their neighbors rushed to the spot and doused the blaze, they could not save Habil and his sister Chandni.

Our staff correspondent from Chittagong reports, an elderly died in a fire that broke out in his house at a slum in Arefinnagar area of Chittagong city yesterday.

Abul Ali, 60, of Barisal, was sleeping while the fire originated from the oven of his kitchen around 3:00am, fire service officials said.

Three other adjacent shanties were also damaged and two cows of Ali were burnt in the fire.

Fire fighters doused the blaze around 5:15am and estimated the loss caused by it at Tk 3 lakh.

### Wife again seeks PM's help

IGP refutes arrest allegation  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leader Salahuddin Ahmed's wife yesterday again sought the prime minister's intervention in tracing him while Inspector General of Police (IGP) AKM Shahidul Hoque reiterated that police had not arrested him.

"It has been 17 days...we did not get any support or information from law enforcers," said Hasina Ahmed during a visit by some pro-BNP lawyers led by Barrister Mahbul Uddin Khokon at her Gulshan residence.

She said she was yet to be granted an audience with the premier, to whom she submitted a memorandum on March 19 seeking the intervention.

Circumstances indicated that law enforcers had picked up Salahuddin, said Mahbul, adding that abductions had

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Instead of destroying the young hilsa, known as jatka, the Coast Guard which seized the undersized fish and arrested three youths in Chandpur town, distributes them among madrasas, orphanages and the destitute people, inset, yesterday. The catch, weighing 20 maunds or 750kg, was worth around Tk 2.4 lakh, said officials.

PHOTO: ALAM PALASH



### Gender equality foundation of dev

Speakers tell inauguration of 3-day int'l conference at DU  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but is a foundation for the creation of a forward-looking nation, speakers told an international seminar at Dhaka University yesterday, which assesses the role of a society free from sex-based discrimination in national development.

"To turn Bangladesh into a middle income, progressive and forward-looking country by the year 2021, we must achieve gender equality in all spheres of our national life," said Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, vice chancellor of DU.

"The only way you can empower women is to have more women at the top so that they can make strategic policies for themselves in order to curb gender inequity," he said.

But that will need more investment in education, especially in female education, the professor told the inaugural session of the three-day conference, which concludes Sunday.

The symposium draws more than 500 participants from India, Nepal, Pakistan, the Netherlands, UK and USA and is hosted by the women and gender studies department of DU, with support from the women and children affairs ministry, USAID, Unicef, Manusher Jonno Foundation, CARE Bangladesh, Gender and Water Programme Bangladesh, and NRB Global Bank.

Thomas Kress, programme office director, USAID Bangladesh, said Bangladeshi women had made enormous

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### A Mirpur road in shambles for 3yrs

HELEMUL ALAM

Roads in terrible condition in Dhaka city is not a new concept, however, the state of Road-17 in Mirpur-10 still shocks pedestrians and residents of the area alike. The road no longer resembles a road but rather a swamp with garbage floating on it.

The road is usually flooded with sewage making it very difficult for pedestrians and vehicles, be it motorised or not, to use it.

Road-17 links the main Mirpur-10 road with Paris Road.

Although Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) repaired Paris Road last month, it overlooked the link road.

"We have finished repairing Paris Road recently. We will begin repairing the link road soon, but if we fail to do it this fiscal year due to a shortage of fund, then it [repair work] will get priority next fiscal year," said Syed Qudrat Ullah, additional chief engineer of DNCC.

Sumon Ali, a class VII student of Ahsaniya Mission School situated on

Paris Road, suffers every day when commuting to and fro his home and school.

Sabbir Ali, owner of a roadside shop, said goods falling off rickshaws using the road is an everyday thing.

"Not only goods, passengers fall off rickshaws all the time," he said, adding that the road has been in this terrible state for over three years.

A resident, Mohammad Sazzad Hossain, said, "The situation worsens during the rainy season when people have to wade through ankle to knee-deep dirty water."

Supriya Akhtar and Kasmia, students of Mirpur Girls Ideal Laboratories Institute, said it is difficult for them to hire rickshaws as rickshaw-pullers do not want ply their vehicles on Road-17.

They said they have grown up seeing the road in this terrible condition.

"The city corporation has to construct a proper drainage system before it can begin repairing the road," said Mohammad Akbar, a resident of Paris Road.



Road-17 in Mirpur-10 of the capital has been in this terrible state for over three years. The road is usually, if not always, flooded with sewage causing misery to pedestrians and residents. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

### Youths vow to do good for society

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While disabled persons face neglect in society, 13 youths from Jagannath University have come forward to raise awareness among people on ensuring disability rights.

After participating in a four-day Active Citizen Youth Leadership Training from November 1 last year, they formed human chains and conducted signature campaigns and research and observed the International Day of People with Disability in the last four months.

Uday and 10 similar groups working on sectors including social enterprise, health and education yesterday participated in "Active Regional Achievers' Summit-2015", organised jointly by British Council and The Hunger Project in the capital's Institute of Diploma Engineers.

Wearing green T-shirts, over 100 youths aged mostly between 20 to 25 years came together for the day motivated with the thought of doing something for society.

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The pitch-black water has been the permanent feature of an overly polluted Shitalakhya River, a victim of indiscriminate dumping of industrial waste and sewage, near Kantchpur outside the capital. The water remains clarified only during the few months of monsoon. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN