

**WEATHER FORECAST**

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	KHULNA	BARISAL	RANGPUR	COX'S BAZAR
	H 32.6°C L 23.4	H 31.7°C L 24.6	H 33.9°C L 23.2	H 31.1°C L 22.4	H 33.0°C L 24.7	H 31.6°C L 24.0	H 31.6°C L 23.5	H 33.0°C L 24.0

Day and night temperatures may rise slightly over the country. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:31pm and rises tomorrow at 5:57am. Country's highest temperature 33.9 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Sylhet and lowest 21.6 in Sreemangal.

# TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

## THE WORLD OF INSECTS

Which group of living beings on this earth are the most successful at survival? If you answered "humans" or "large mammals" you might want to think again.

Insects are the most abundant and diverse group of organisms on earth. They have dominated the planet's life forms for over 400 million years, long before dinosaurs arrived and long after they disappeared.

Whenever we discuss insects, numbers dominate the conversation. It seems to me that they make up for their small size with sheer variety and volume. For example, for every human being on the planet, there are 200 million insects; for every one pound of human, 300 pounds of insect. About a million species of insects are known, but it is estimated this is a (small) fraction of the total number of insect species in the world. By the way, the million known insect species represent 80 percent of the known species variety of our world. Another mind-boggling statistic: on a given day there are 10 quintillion individual insects alive on our planet. That is 10 followed by 15 zeros.

There are a number of reasons why insects are so fearfully successful in survival. Unlike larger animals, the skeleton of insects is outside their body. This exoskeleton makes them strong and robust. Their small size gives them mobility. Smaller sizes also mean less food needed to survive, and the exoskeleton and a flexible body give insects great weight-bearing capacity. Many insects can fly to avoid predators and find food. Their flight consumes relatively less energy per pound than the flight of birds or airplanes. Insects can adapt to and thrive in many diverse and hostile environments.

Take ants, for example. Whenever I have watched them, I have been struck by their single-minded focus and disciplined march where they sometimes carry loads bigger than their body size. There are an estimated 22,000 species of ants in the world. They can live in virtually any environment except Antarctica and some islands such as Iceland. Edward O. Wilson, the world's foremost ant specialist, discovered that ants behave in a highly complex social manner - next only to humans.



Caterpillar eating cinnamon leaf.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR.

This focus can be seen in other insects. Once I watched a caterpillar eating leaves of a cinnamon tree. It went after the young, tender leaves at the end of a branch, devouring each one systematically, like a lawnmower going back and forth. Within a few minutes it had eaten several leaves!

We tend to view insects as pests. There are good reasons for this. Mosquitoes, for example, kill more people than all other animals combined: an estimated 600,000 people die every year from malaria. On the other hand, without insects we would be in trouble. For example, bees pollinate plants and without them we would not have hundreds of types of foods including most fruits and vegetables. Some insects remove waste and others

fertilize soil. In the garden many insects help by eating those insects which damage plants. This is one of the foundations of organic agriculture.

Bugs might not be our favourite living things, but as Wilson points out, if we wiped out all insects from this planet, the rest of life on earth - including humanity - would not survive more than a few months.

www.facebook.com/tangents.ikabir.

### ROAD MARCH TOWARDS SUNDARBANS REACHES MANIKGANJ

## 25 hurt in police action

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

At least 25 leaders and activists of Gonotantrik Bam Morcha, including its coordinator Saiful Haque, were injured when police charged baton on them during their road march at Manikganj.

The morcha started off towards the Sundarbans from Dhaka demanding a stop to the construction of the coal-based thermal power plant at Rampal which they say would damage the world's largest mangrove forest.

Leaders of the morcha said the protesters reached Manikganj around 2:30pm and gathered at Manikganj Shahid Swarani around 4:00pm. They faced the baton charge around 4:30pm when they brought out a procession from there.

Moshrefa Mishu, Gonotantrik Boplobi Party's general secretary, was treated at Manikganj Sadar Hospital. The other injured include Saiful, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal's Central Committee member

Shudhangsha Chakrabarty, and Bonni Shikha and Toma.

Manikganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Aminur Rahman said the morcha had no permission to hold a programme. Police asked them to stop the programme and intercepted it as they "violated rules", he said.

Gono Sanghati Andolon's Manikganj unit President Monjurul Islam Babu claimed that police attacked the

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Clockwise from top, a woman helping up Moshrefa Mishu, Gonotantrik Boplobi Party's general secretary, after she was knocked down by police when the law enforcers attacked their road march in Manikganj yesterday. Police charge batons, one even threatens with a gun, on the road march to the Sundarbans from the capital demanding a stop to the construction of Rampal Power Plant. Activists have a standoff with police after the law enforcers attacked the procession.

PHOTO: STAR



Sylhet police take the prime accused in the Rajon murder case, Kamrul Islam, who had fled to Saudi Arabia and was brought back home recently, to jail after a Sylhet court passed an order in this connection yesterday.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

## BNP terms PM's allegation against party chief 'baseless'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday termed "baseless", "fabricated" and "politics of vengeance" recent comments of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina accusing BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia of conspiring from abroad to kill foreigners to tarnish the country's image.

Addressing a press conference in the party's Nayapaltan central office, Spokesperson Asaduzzaman Ripon also urged Hasina to refrain from making such remarks in the country's greater interest.

"Everybody knows the BNP chairperson is staying in London for treatment, but the comments have proved how inhumane the government is," alleged Ripon, also BNP's foreign affairs secretary.

Hasina, also the ruling Awami League's president, made the comment at a public rally on the Kurigram Government College grounds on Thursday.

Ripon also said the AL was spreading vengeance among

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## Be compassionate towards farmers

### Urges Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury yesterday called all to be compassionate towards farmers who are at the centre-stage of Bangladesh's success in achieving food sufficiency.

"Let's not forget the sweat of the farmers. They do the most important part in food production," she said at a seminar while World Food Day was observed worldwide.

Stating that Bangladesh exported 30,000 tonnes of rice to Sri Lanka in the last fiscal year, Matia said the Awami League-led government has brought a surplus of food in Bangladesh since 2009 when there was food crisis.

The ministry organised the programme

in the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (Barc) auditorium in the capital with the theme "Agriculture in Eradicating Rural Poverty and Social Protection".

Addressing as chief guest, Matia said agriculture was still the driving force of Bangladesh's economy, and is ensuring food security, employing half the workforce, supplying raw materials and reducing rural poverty.

Therefore, agriculture is at the core of social protection, she said, adding, "When people are not hungry, they have employment, the society is stable and there is discipline. That is what agriculture is doing in the country and the government is doing everything to boost agriculture."

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# পাল্টা হাসি উল্টো চ্যালেঞ্জ!

নতুন জেনারেশন পৃথিবীকে কিভাবে দেখিয়ে দেয় তাদের জয়েন্টাস, কি তাদের এগিয়ে যাওয়ার খেলা, জানতে হলে দেখুন- Spelling Bee, Season 4! কারণ, Spelling Bee মানে কণ্ঠসমাজ না করা, Spelling Bee মানে পারফেকশান, Spelling Bee মানে **The School of Excellence!**

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**SANGUINE**  
(adj) Optimistic or positive, especially in an apparently bad or difficult situation.

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