

# TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

## The lure of the Lemurs

I went to Madagascar with friends to see and photograph birds that can't be found elsewhere. While the birds were fantastic, lemurs almost stole the show.

Lemurs, which are primates, are the most celebrated biological treasure of the island. Thought to have evolved earlier than monkeys and apes, their ancestral species probably arrived on this island from mainland Africa millions of years ago by "rafts" of vegetation. From that beginning they evolved and radiated throughout Madagascar. The hundred-odd species of lemurs comprise 15 percent of all the primate species of the world.

Lemurs range in size from the large indri (twenty pounds) to tiny mouse lemurs (about one ounce), the smallest primates in the world. Most lemurs are social animals, calling and singing loudly. They are friendly to humans: their soft fur, bright round eyes and gentle hands without claws, make them cuddly animals. But, like any wild animal, they will fight back if cornered. Lemurs roam freely in the forests of Madagascar, but they do have a natural enemy: the carnivorous cat fossa about the size of a large dog, which hunts and eats them.

Many lemurs have gone extinct. Identified from fossils, we know some of them weighed over 400 lbs. Most likely, human activity contributed to the decimation of these lemurs. (Incidentally, the largest bird ever, the elephant bird, also inhabited Madagascar. It weighed over 1000 pounds and became extinct after human colonisation of the island.)

I saw my first ever wild lemurs in the Perinet region of Madagascar, about four hours driving from the capital Antananarivo. While hiking through Andasibe National Forest, our group spotted a pair

of indris. They dangled from the branches of a tree, chewing on leaves. Sensing our presence, one of them paused to look at us with a frank stare. Then, tilting its head to access the leaves more easily, it resumed its chewing.

In another nearby forest, Mantidia National Forest, we saw a group of black and white ruffed lemurs. These are approximately the same size as indris, but they are augmented by a long, fluffy, black tail.

On another occasion, our group ran into a sportive lemur, this time down south in the arid spiny forest. It was small, brown and clung to the

bare branch of a small tree. As we stopped on the trail for photos, it first ignored, then warily observed us. Finally, in a flash, it jumped across the trail into the branch of another tree and instantly disappeared. Based on modern genetics, there has recently been a spate of new species named in this family of lemurs.

The aye-aye is a particularly fascinating lemur. A nocturnal animal, it has some unusual physical features, such as teeth that never stop growing, large ears like a rabbit's and a tail

suitable for a fox. But its claim to fame is its middle finger, which is very long and very thin. It has evolved to ease out grubs from under tree bark.

Finally, I want to mention Lemur Island, a special place near the Vakona Lodge in Perinet. There, many types of lemurs interact with people, eating from their hands, and jumping on their shoulders and heads. These lemurs have been habituated and are thus not risky at all. It is a good place to feel the cuddliness of a lemur and come close to one.

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Indri.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

# Celebrating victory the bikers' way

AMIR HASAN SHAHRIAR, Ctg

The relatively empty roads in Chittagong city's CRB area had been a blessing for the bikers practicing the stunt riding routine they would perform today, as a part of the city's celebrations of Victory Day.

From young men standing upright on the handlebars with arms wide open at considerable speeds, to lengthy wheelies, to 360 burnouts -- Chittagonians, who happened to be in the area in the last few days, have seen the bikers going absolute bonkers on wheels.

"To us, it is a liberating experience," said Mohammad Twasin, one of instructors of the city's motorcycle stunt club called Extreme Rollerz of Chittagong.

Twelve riders will lead a procession of bikers around 3:00pm from

To watch the video, scan this QR code with your smartphone



TO USE QR CODE ON YOUR SMARTPHONE, INSTALL FREE QR READER SOFTWARE LIKE "I-NIGMA BARCODE SCANNER" FROM GOOGLE PLAYSTORE OR APPLE STORE. TURN ON THE SOFTWARE AND HOLD THE PHONE CAMERA OVER THE QR CODE TO GET THE VIDEO LINK.

Chittagong Shilpakala Academy and go to CRB area, more than 3km away through the city. The twelve youths would then perform the biking stunts there.

"We would like to celebrate Victory Day through a demonstration of what

to us are liberating acts. We want to share our taste of freedom with others," said Twasin.

The club, formed about four years ago by a handful of motorcycle enthusiast friends, now has 42 members, who are mostly university students.

But most parents disapprove of their sons' passion for biking, said Rizvi Hasan Sakib, a founding member of the club.

"People judge us too quickly thinking we are just reckless. But we go through elaborate precautionary measures and wear safety gears before pulling an act," Sakib said after performing his acts called handlebar Christ and cliffhanger in CRB area.

"No members can even touch a bike without wearing safety gears," Sakib, also a student of economics, said.



Blocking a length along this busy street, traders leave the empty boxes used for delivering fish in front of the Karwan Bazar wholesale fish market. Though the fish get delivered in the morning, the boxes remain there for almost the entire day until those are picked up for re-delivery. This continuous and careless practice not only impedes traffic flow, but also can cause an accident. The photo was taken near BGMEA building around 5:00pm recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

### ROAD ACCIDENTS

## Seven lives lost in two districts

CITY DESK

Seven people were killed and another was injured in road accidents in two districts yesterday.

Our Sylhet correspondent reports, four youths died as a car they were travelling in plunged into a roadside ditch in Tajpur area of Chhatak upazila in Sunamganj.

The accident happened as the driver lost his control over the vehicle, said police.

The victims -- Tofayel Ahmed, 27, from Bishwanath upazila; Shah Jahan, 30, from Osmaninagar upazila; Raju Ahmed, 35, and Tayef, 25, from Sylhet Sadar upazila -- were returning to their Sylhet residences after attending a wedding ceremony in Chhatak, said relatives.

Our Comilla correspondent adds, two persons were killed and another was injured as their motorbike was hit by a bus on Dhaka-Chittagong highway near Chiora bus stand.

One of the deceased is Ezazul Haq from Ullapara upazila in Sirajganj. The identities of the other deceased and the injured could not be known immediately. The injured was taken to Comilla Medical College Hospital.

Meanwhile, an unidentified person in a covered van died as the vehicle hit a bus from behind in Comilla Sadar upazila.

## US decision on Jerusalem a threat to int'l peace

Bangladesh envoy tells UN meeting

UNB, Dhaka

The United States' recent announcement of recognising Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and transferring the US embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv might trigger grave consequences and threats to international peace.

Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN Ambassador Masud Bin Momen said this mentioning that the announcement might also trigger hostility and violent extremism in the already volatile Middle East as well as other regions.

He made the remarks while addressing a meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable

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## Victory Day today

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independence],” Bangabandhu declared in a thunderous voice at a mammoth rally at the Racecourse Maidan (now Suhrawardy Udyan) that day.

Different political parties, socio-cultural organisations and educational institutions have taken up various programmes to mark the day.

Meanwhile, President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia have issued separate messages on the occasion.

President Abdul Hamid in his

message said the historic March 7 speech of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has been included in the international memory of the world register as World Documentary Heritage by Unesco. This recognition has made the whole nation proud once again.

Besides, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said such recognition is the source of inspiration and a great pride for Bangalee nation.

As part of the day's programmes, a colourful parade will be held at the National Parade Square at Sher-

Bangla Nagar in the morning.

Freedom fighters, members of the armed forces and law enforcement agencies will take part in the parade.

President Abdul Hamid will take salute and inspect the parade as the chief guest while Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will also be present there.

The president and prime minister will place wreaths at National Memorial in Savar in the morning to pay their tributes to the martyred freedom fighters.

They will be followed by the freedom fighters and their family members, foreign diplomats, leaders of Awami League and different political and social organisations and people from all walks of life.

The national flag will be hoisted atop all government and private buildings while the government and semi-government buildings and other public places will be illuminated and roads and islands will be decorated with flags and festoons in all cities of the country on the occasion.



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

A GOOD UTILISATION OF SPACE! The median on this road in the capital's Jatrabari turns into a parking for handcarts at night. Some of the pullers also lock the wheels with chains as a precaution. They park the handcarts overnight before going about their businesses in the morning. The photo was taken in Mir Hajirbagh area recently.



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On this Month of Victory,  
We remember those whose visions of victory continue to shine throughout the ages.