

Chittagong International Biodiversity Conference - CIBC 2007

Meeting Summary of CIBC 2007

What a most pleasant and fruitful time we had last week in Bangladesh! Though the weather initially affected the arrival times of some delegates to Chittagong, everything ran very smoothly, thanks to superb organisation by Badrul Bhuiya and his team of helpers.

The first two days of meetings took place at the premises of the BCSIR (Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research) and aimed to reflect the themes implicit in the International Day of Biodiversity (22 May) and Linnaeus Tercentenary (23 May).

Day 1 We were all honoured, on the first day, to have a presentation by world-famous Bangladeshi cosmologist Professor Jamal Nazrul Islam, who, though a mathematical physicist by training (Cambridge), showed how the evolution of biodiversity is underscored by the commonality of cellular biochemistry and genes across all kingdoms of life and that this reality need not threaten a religious world view. In this, Professor Islam skilfully and non-overtly addressed the issue of creationism. Other presentations covered biodiversity informatics in Bangladesh and Taiwan, the Barcode of Life, southern hemisphere marine biodiversity, and birds and fungi of Bangladesh.

Day 2 featured presentations on Linnaeus, the Census of Marine Life, the Indian Ocean Biogeographic Information System (IndOBIS), ethnobotany, conservation of herbaria and plant databases, and biodiversity of Bangladeshi Cyanobacteria and arbuscular mycorrhizae, Nepalese *Begonia*, and Taiwanese insects. That evening, bathed in tropical breezes, we had a meeting of *Species 2000 AO* on a balcony of the Chittagong University Guest House. The history, aims, and aspirations of AO were outlined to the group, which

included several visitors/invitees. Election of officers followed, with the chair rotating to Vishwas Chavan for 2007-09. Vice-Chairs are Badrul Bhuiya and one of two nominees from the SE Asian region who will be approached to see which of them may be willing to take on this role and to act as host for the next AO meeting in 2009.

Day 3 featured the joint meeting of AO and SACNET to formulate the SABIS/SACoL proposal as already described by Vishwas, followed by a press conference.

Day 4 comprised a trip to the fisheries laboratories and coast at Cox's Bazar, preceded by a visit to the nearby Safari Park and dipterocarp forest. Overlapping with and succeeding this trip were workshops for Bangladeshi students on bird identification, insect taxonomy and collection management, and herbarium techniques and plant taxonomy.

Personal highlights : a superb feast of Bangladeshi cuisine at Badrul's house, prepared by Mrs Bhuiya; a visit to Professor Islam's house; and finding bryozoans on small beach-cast rocks at Cox's Bazar.

This discovery now guarantees a paper on Bangladeshi bryozoans in the new *Journal of Taxonomy and Biodiversity Research*/ produced by the Biodiversity Research Group of Bangladesh. Badrul is the editor-in-chief of this stunning-looking production.

Our thanks to all in Chittagong, especially Badrul, for their outstanding organisation and hospitality.

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