

Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Indian Botanic Garden

Date of Visit: 15th July 2025

Location: Shibpur, Howrah, Kolkata

Number of Students: 49 (Semester II, BOTM & MBOT)

Accompanying Faculty Members: Prof. Asim Panda, Prof. Debanjan Pandit, and Prof. Durbadal Barman

Introduction

A one-day academic excursion to the Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Indian Botanic Garden, located in Shibpur, Howrah, was organized on 15th July 2025 for the Semester II students of the BOTM and MBOT programs. The educational trip was supervised by Professors Asim Panda, Debanjan Pandit, and Durbadal Barman. The primary purpose of this visit was to enrich the students' understanding of plant biodiversity, taxonomy, and the importance of ex-situ conservation.

Objectives of the Excursion

The excursion was planned with the following core objectives:

1. **Exposure to Plant Diversity:** To provide students with direct exposure to the garden's extensive and well-curated collection of both exotic and indigenous plant species. These plants were labelled with their common and scientific names, along with their region of origin and natural habitat. This served as an excellent real-world example of ex-situ conservation.
2. **Understanding the Role of Herbaria:** To help students understand the importance of herbaria in plant taxonomy and other branches of botany through a visit to the Central National Herbarium (CNH), which is housed within the garden premises. CNH plays a critical role in plant identification, classification, and documentation.

Summary of Activities

Upon arrival, the students were given an orientation by the garden officials, who briefed them on the history and significance of the Botanic Garden, which dates back to 1787. The group was then taken on a guided tour through various sections of the garden.

Key highlights included:

- **The Great Banyan Tree:** Considered one of the largest trees in the world in terms of canopy coverage, this tree was a major attraction and a remarkable example of vegetative propagation and ecological resilience.
- **The Palm House, Orchid House, and Cactus Collection:** These sections showcased a wide variety of plants from different habitats, climates, and ecological zones, each labelled with taxonomic and ecological information.
- **Visit to the Central National Herbarium (CNH):** Students were introduced to the processes involved in plant specimen collection, preservation, mounting, and documentation. The herbarium staff demonstrated how preserved specimens aid in plant research and taxonomy.

Throughout the visit, students were encouraged to ask questions, take notes, and observe the morphological features of plants in their natural or near-natural settings.

Learning Outcomes

The excursion proved to be highly beneficial for all participants. The major outcomes included:

1. **Enhanced Knowledge:** Students gained in-depth insights into plant diversity, classification systems, and the significance of conserving plant species outside their natural habitats.
2. **Skill Development:** The visit encouraged analytical observation, scientific inquiry, and critical thinking. It allowed students to connect theoretical knowledge from the classroom with practical field exposure.
3. **Awareness and Inspiration:** Interactions with herbarium professionals and exposure to the living and preserved plant collections sparked greater interest among students in the field of plant taxonomy and conservation biology.

Conclusion

The educational visit to the Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Indian Botanic Garden and the Central National Herbarium was a successful and enriching experience for the students. It not only fulfilled the intended academic objectives but also served as a motivational foundation for aspiring botanists. The support and guidance provided by the faculty members greatly contributed to the success of the trip. Future excursions of this nature are strongly recommended to deepen students' engagement with plant sciences.



