



AKM MOHSIN

Botanical Garden and Eco-park at Sitakunda.

Eco-park needs fund to conserve rare species of plants, wildlife

ABDULLAH -AL MAHMUD

Eco-park and Botanical Garden at Sitakunda are yet to be developed properly for maintaining biodiversity and conservation of wide variety of plants and wildlife due to fund constraints.

Developed on a vast 1996 acres of hilly and forest land overlooking the Bay of Bengal, the project was launched in 2001. The project, 996-acre eco-park and the 1000-acre botanical garden, helped enrich its natural beauty and develop entertainment facilities.

Under the project, a good number of gardens of rare species of medicinal plants, nursery, two rose gardens and an orchid house were developed there in less than three years with investment of Tk. 3 crore, sources said.

The park could not draw visitors yet from distant places of the country to the expected level, sources said. Besides,

lack of security measures poses a

threat to the visitors and discourage them indirectly, sources added. It lacks in facilities and structural development, visitors said. A small number of sheds, poor sitting arrangements and non-availability of refreshment items caused a great inconvenience to them, they said. A group of visitors from the city said there should have more sheds, having sufficient sitting arrangements and snacks shops. After travelling 23 miles from the city or other distant places, the visitors might need some refreshment and nice sitting arrangements, they said.

They said due to lack of security measures, visitors some times fell victim to mugging at remote and desolate corners of the garden and park.

Project director Zahid Hossain Bhuiyan told The Daily Star that the authorities were thinking of further development of the Eco-park and Botanical Garden with creation of lakes, picnic spots and corners. It was also planning for installing

amusing instruments like hanging-bridge and aerial rope way to lessen trouble of travelling. Different remote corners of the park and garden, he said.

But these are not possible now as tenure of the project will expire this year, Bhuiyan said.

He said a large portion of the project budget had to be spent for construction of gardeners' barracks, rangers' quarters and water-supply while around 50 per cent would go for payment of salaries of the project staffs and officials.

In view of this, a new project profile involving Tk. 6 crore for further development of the Eco-park and Botanical Garden was submitted early this year, Bhuiyan said.

He said it was not possible to ensure security of such a huge area with the small number of security guards. Some incidents of mugging take place at a lonely place between the park and the Chandranath hill, he said.

We always ask the visitors to let us know before passing the lonely places so that we can take care of their safety, he said.

Since its inception the Eco-park and Botanical Garden project succeeded in drawing attention of the visitors through preserving rare species of plants and animals.

Among the rare species of plants grown in the gardens are Tamal plants, Joitun, Naglingam, Peduk and medicinal trees of Chalmugur. A plenty of Dumur, Kaufal and date trees also grow.

Natural habitats developed there conserve wild animals and the Eco-park has become a rendezvous for a large number of monkeys, red deer, Hanumans and rabbits.

Two springs namely "Shahasra Dhara" (flowing throughout the year) and "Supta Dhara" (sleeping spring) of the Eco-park are also attracting the tourists.

Several "picnic spots" were also created inside the park.

Too busy to work at office

Most BFRI staff are engrossed in their private business

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN RIAD

Most of the Bangladesh Forest Research Institute (BFRI) employees including scientists are busy with their private business.

The BFRI was established at Sholashahar in the port city on 28 hectares of land in 1955. It has a total of 22 research centres all over the country. Of 628 staff, 478 are class three and class four employees.

Most of the class three and class four employees have nursery business and shops.

They go to their office for the time being only to put signature on the attendance book. After putting signature they leave the office and do personal business, sources said.

Most of them have opened nursery at the staff quarters and around the BFRI area. It posed a threat to the BFRI over selling the saplings to the consumers.

Middlemen prevent consumers from buying saplings from BFRI and advise them to purchase those from the nurseries owned by the employees. As a result, the BFRI suffered a huge loss.

Besides, a section of class three

and four employees has opened shops inside the BFRI compound. They are very irregular at their offices as they are busy with their private business.

However, the technical section is also not exception. Most of them reportedly are doing part time job at different business farms, sources said.

Despite being a losing concern since its establishment, the BFRI is going to deposit Tk. 20 lakh to government fund as revenue for the first time. It will provide the fund in the current fiscal year from their internal resources.

The fund will be collected

promoting its sales department and extending the activities of wood experiment department.

There are 828 posts at BFRI. Of the posts, 200 still are vacant, sources said.

The BFRI gets Tk. 5.5 crore budget from the government. Tk. 3.5 crore goes for the salary of 150 scientists and 478 class three and class four employees.

A lion's share goes to transport, service, supply, telephone, electricity, gas and other necessary sectors.

Only Tk. 9.5 lakh is allocated a year in research oriented sector.

The BFRI has so far invented 44 technologies to expand and protect forest resources.

BFRI Director Sheikh Sirajul Islam denied the allegation of private business by the staff during office hours. He said "they can do anything after office hour but not during office timing."

He urged the government to enhance budget for the research-oriented activities to make the BFRI a profitable concern.

"If we get few more money for research activities, we would be able to reach the doorstep of people with something better for our forest resource".



ZOBAEF HOSSAIN SIKDER

A plant propagation unit for producing high quality saplings at Bangladesh Forest Research Institute.

Inclement weather halts fishing in Bay

NURUL ALAM

Fishing in the deep sea and other potential places in the Bay under the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) remained suspended for the past one month due to rough weather and strong monsoon.

As a result, supply of sea fish to the city markets and other places of the country marked a sharp decline, market sources said.

Most of the trawlers and engine boats used for fishing in the Bay of Bengal were staying idle while few of them were sent for maintenance works, marine fisheries department sources said.

Full scale fishing in the deep sea and shallow water of the Bay of Bengal might

resume September after the seawater cooled.

"Some fishing trawlers go for harvest braving the rough sea. But it is very risky and therefore, we don't encourage them in this regard," a senior marine fisheries official said.

Many trawlers capsized in the Bay after being caught by stormy weather on many occasions as they had gone for fishing defying the cautionary signals and weather forecasts of Met office, he said.

Some of the crew met with tragic end of their lives, he added.

About 60 trawlers were engaged in deep sea fishing mostly to catch shrimps, fishing sector sources said.

In addition to these, thousands of registered and

unregistered engine boats were involved in fishing in the Bay of Bengal to catch pelagic fish, sources added.

There are four rich shrimp grounds in the country's EEZ.

These are called as swatch of no ground known as 'gold mine' located at opposite of Khulna, middle ground at the opposite of Patuakali, south patch situated west of Cox's Bazar and north patch at the west of Kutubdia, marine fisheries sources said.

Most of the shrimps harvested from those grounds are exported abroad to earn foreign currency.

On the other hand, a large quantities of white fish are released in the local markets to meet internal

demand.

Talking to The Daily Star the vice president of Chittagong based Trawler Owners' Association (TOA) Md. Salauddin said local markets would get normal supply of sea fish after resumption of fishing in the Bay in September.

The owners of some 14 trawlers on trial operation in the Bay, were lobbying with the government to press them into regular fishing system.

The government already gave permission to 40 more trawlers to operate in the high sea for fish harvest.

Meanwhile, price of local fish went up by 30 per cent to 50 per cent due to less supply of sea fish, market sources said.

the week that was

33 lakh suffer from venereal diseases

About 33 lakh people are suffering from venereal diseases in Bangladesh due to lack of proper care and treatment. Besides, 13,000 people have HIV positives in the country.

The speakers warned of an alarming situation in future if awareness about HIV could not be created to prevent it as Bangladesh is



Two snake charmers cum caretakers show the eight new-born pythons at Chittagong Zoo.

surrounded by very high HIV prevalent countries including Myanmar and India with porous borders.

These were revealed at a seminar on 'Rights of HIV positive' organised by Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB) held at Zila Parishad hall recently.

Divisional director of health Dr. Abdur Rashid attended the seminar as chief guest while Prof Dr. A.Q.M. Sirajul Islam of Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) and head of health, population and nutrition, USAID, Dr. Nizam Uddin Ahmed presented papers. Chaired by Joyanta Adhikari, executive director of CCDB, the function was also addressed by Dr. Selina Ferdous, coordination officer and Habiba Aktar.

The speakers stressed for taking sympathetic approach to the HIV patients to provide proper care and support to them. They also called upon the physicians to provide methodical counselling to the HIV patients and their family members.

Private universities create ample facilities

With the installation of private universities, ample facilities were created in the country for taking higher education. Premier University (PU) Vice Chancellor Prof Dr. Anwarul Azim Arif said this while he was speaking as chief guest at an orientation programme organised by the Department of English of its newly



PHOTO: STAR

School students who won scholarships under 'Fair and Lovely Uttorone Nari' programme of Lever Brothers pose with the guests at a function at the Chittagong Club auditorium on Monday. Fair and Lovely sponsors 1500 NIIT Computer courses as scholarships across the country.

admitted students.

Prof Dr. Muhit Ul Alam, chairman of the department presided. The function was addressed by Prof. Badruddin, chairman of the department of law, Sultan Mahmud, project director of PU, Chittagong bureau chief of The Daily Star Nurul Alam, Principal of Sunshine Grammar School and College, Safia Rahman and Ruxmila Zaman and Sadat Zaman of the English department.

Prof. Anwarul Azim said, "the private universities can accommodate more students for studies who can not get admitted to state run universities due to serious rush for admission."

Professor Muhit Ul Alam said learning of English as an international language is nowadays essential to communicate with global network as well as for knowledge.

BATB to distribute 35 lakh saplings

To encourage the common people the British-American Tobacco Company, Bangladesh (BATB) distributed around 4 (four) crore saplings of various kind. About 900-km of rail and roadsides' embankments and other important places have been brought under its massive afforestation programme across the country in last two decades.

This was informed at a function on 'Inauguration of Afforestation-2003' at the Muslim Hall here on Saturday. State Minister for Environment and Forest, Jafrul Islam Chowdhury inaugurated the programme as chief guest, while acting divisional commissioner of Chittagong Quamrul Islam and conservator of forests Mosharraf Hossain were the special guests.

The function was further informed that BATB will distribute 35-lakh saplings free of cost this year to supplement the government's tree plantation programme. Of this, 13-lakh saplings will be distributed in Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and three districts of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) namely Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachhari.

BATB's deputy managing director Golam Mainuddin presided over the function, where president of the Biodiversity Research Group of Bangladesh Dr. Badrul Amin Bhuiyan, additional director of the Agricultural Extension Department of Chittagong Wasizuzzaman Akand and BATB's head of leaf Ezaz Ahmed Chowdhury also spoke.

Seminar on

boss-subordinate relations

Some of the bosses are found friendly and compassionate while many prone to take an upper-hand on subordinates. This usually hampers the smooth functioning of any firm or office.

The speakers told a seminar titled 'Relationship between boss subordinate' at the University of Science and Technology, Chittagong (USTC) auditorium on Sunday. Faculty of Business Administration organised the seminar. Pro-Vice-chancellor Prof Dr. Shahadat Hossain was the chief guest. Professor Mohammad Yunus presented the key-note paper.

The seminar was also addressed by USTC treasurer Dr. Kazi Rafiqul Haq, the Daily Bir Chittagong Moncha editor Syed Omar Faruk and Daily Purbokone news editor Nasiruddin Chowdhury with Associate Professor MS Nurul Absar in chair.

Artistes exchange views with minister

Bangladesh Television (BTV) and Betar artistes exchanged views with State Minister for Forest and Environment Jafrul Islam Chowdhury on different issues including their problems and Chittagong Centre of BTV on Saturday. They sought help from the minister in

World Sports Journalists Day

The Bangladesh Sports Writers Association, Chittagong chapter, in observance of the 'World Sports Journalists Day' organised a friendly football match and brought out a colourful procession on Wednesday.

The procession started from in front of the Chittagong Press Club and concluded at Dampara Police Line field after parading Kazir Dewri, Stadium area, Lalkhan Bazaar, Ispahani crossing and WASA crossing. Later, a friendly football match between former and present booters held. Present footballers outclassed their older colleagues by 3-1. Abul, Yousuf and Touhid scored for the winner while former national player Khasru netted the lone goal for his side.

A discussion on the day was also held with association president Prof Shayesta Khan in the chair. General secretary Abu Jafar Haider, joint secretary of Chattagram Mahanagari Krira Sangstha Shahabuddin Chowdhury, referee Bimal Kar, former national footballers Ashish Bhadra, FI Kamal, Khasru and general secretary of Chittagong Football Players' Association Parvez Mannan took part in the discussion.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Krira Lekhok Samity, Chittagong branch, brought out a colourful rally in the city on the World Sports Journalist Day on July 2.