

CU Botanical Garden a place for joy and education

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Botanical Garden at Chittagong University might duly be regarded as something conspicuous for a wide variety of plants, scenic beauty as well as for its contribution to enhancing the knowledge among the students on flora and fauna.

Enriched with more than 1,000 species of plants, the garden offers the students as well as the teachers a rare scope of carrying out practical and research works on the university campus.

The garden is spread over 100 acres of land adjoining the Pritilata Hall on the south of the university campus.

Prof Dr M Abdul Aziz Khan, founding head of the Botany department, took the initiative to turn a natural forest into the garden in 1976.

The aim was to help the students as well as the teachers of the university in their research work.

The garden under the supervision of the Botany department has different species of plants in 35 blocks.

The blocks are there for nurturing separately medicinal, shrub, woody, orchid, teak,

palash, mahogany, gymnosperm, lemon, jackfruit, palm, coconut, rose, seasonal flower, manjium and spices.

Besides, there are also some blocks for developing miscellaneous species of plants.

The garden has a separate orchid house enriched with some 80 types of orchids.

There is a conservatory house to conserve rare species of plants, the students collect during the excursion or field tours to the garden, said Mohammed Mujibur Rahman, horticulturist of the garden.

After being taken care of and nurtured in the conservatory house these plants are then replanted at the suitable blocks, said Mujibur who has been working at the garden for three decades since the beginning.

The medicinal plants include Sarpagandha, Harjoralata, Nisinda, Kalo Megh, Tulashi Pata, Aurjun, Bohera, Thankuni, Dhutara, Basak, Neem, Tamarind and Horitaki.

Apart from seasonal and different species of flowers like Ganda, Silvia, Dahlia, Cosmos, Star, Sunflower, the garden also has 12 types of roses.

The garden is also blessed with Dossera - a rare species of plant that attracts insects and kills

them with its secretion. The Dossera usually grows at the hillside fallow land of the garden during the winter, said Prof Dr M Atiqur Rahman, chairman of the Botany department.

Botany Department also takes care of the roadside plants and the garden of woody and endangered species of plants to the south of Science Faculty Building on the campus.

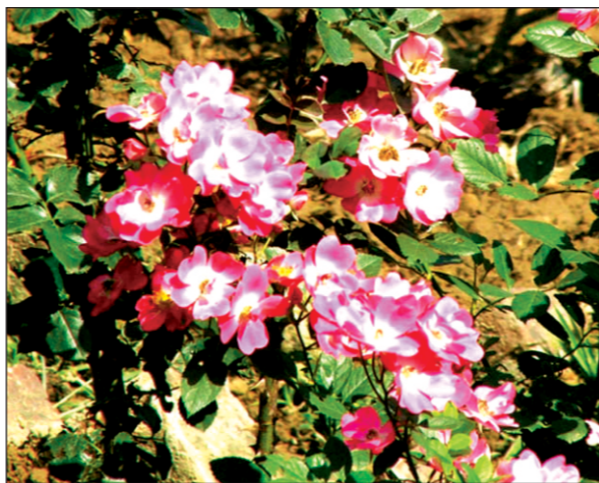
The garden earns around Tk one lakh from the sale of fruits and timbers for the university a year, Dr Atiqur said.

The local people damage the garden when they walk through the garden and take away the fences, sources said.

Illegal logging is also a threat to the garden, sources added. In this regard they said miscreants felled down around 350 valuable teak trees at the garden few years ago.

Cooperation from the authority concerned and more human resources are required for better care and further development of the garden, Dr Atiqur said.

"We also have plan for developing several other blocks of medicinal and potential plants in the garden," he said.



Different species of flowers in bloom at the Botanical Garden at Chittagong University, left, and a view of the garden, right.

Brickfields defy law in Khagrachhari

Extensive use of firewood exerts pressure on forests, threatens environment

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

Extensive use of firewood in the brickfield kilns is exerting pressure on forests as well as posing a threat to the environment in Khagrachhari.

Environmentalists said if the use of firewood continued unabated in the brickfields the vast natural forests of Khagrachhari will disappear in near future.

Around 1.5 crore mounds of firewood are used in 30 brickfields in the hill district a year violating rules, sources said.

Forests in Khagrachhari are shrinking as brickfield owners fell trees indiscriminately



Logs lie in heaps for use as firewood at a brickfield in Khagrachhari.

for firewood for their industries threatening the environment.

Almost all of the 30 brickfields use timber instead of coal taking full advantage of the indifference of the authorities concerned to the problems.

Of the 30 brickfields, five are in Khagrachhari Sadar, eight in Matiranga upazila, three in Mohalchhari upazila, three in Manikchhari upazila, four in Dighinala upazila, two in Panchhari upazila, one in Laxmichhari upazila and four in Rangour upazila, district administration sources said.

Of them, 17 brickfield owners have license while 12

others are operating illegally, said district magistrate Kamrul Hasan.

The Department of Environment (DOE), however, said only two brickfield owners have valid document and license.

At least six crore trees are axed in Khagrachhari during the winter season only, a recent survey reveals.

"At least 20,000 mounds of firewood are required in each brickfield for every single production time while most of the brickfields usually go for producing bricks eight times a year," sources said quoting the survey.

They said a large portion of

the firewood collected from Khagrachhari is also used in Fatikchhari, Rangunia, Raozan upazilas and the town.

The brickfield owners cut down more than two crore trees in collaboration with a section of dishonest officials and employees of the Forest Department, sources said.

Besides, most of the brickfields are using only 25 to 30 feet high chimneys violating the rules of 120 feet, said environmentalists Pradip Chowdhury and Bitan Barua.

Pradip, also the programme supervisor of Centre for Sustainable

Development (CFSD), said the overall environment of Khagrachhari has been under threat due to gradual disappearance of 'worthy' forests.

"To stop the freestyle use of firewood and force the owners to use coal as fuel for their brickfields we are contemplating legal actions," said Abu Daud, president of Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (BELA) in Khagrachhari.

Magistrate Kamrul Hasan said they will form a mobile court to investigate the firewood and chimney issues.

theweekthatwas

Textbooks for poor students

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury on Thursday distributed textbooks free of cost among the poor and meritorious students of the port city.

About 400 students of 11 educational institutions of ward no 39, 40 and 41 received the books and calendars from the mayor at a ceremony organised by the Mostafa Hakim Welfare Foundation at a local community centre.

He also distributed a diary and a calendar to each teacher of the institutions. Foundation's Executive Director Monzurul Alam, also ward commissioner of Kattali, presided over the function.

US Embassy team visits CSE

A US Embassy delegation visited Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) on Wednesday to discuss about the preliminary work on "American Week"

to be held in Chittagong soon. The team members said they are eager to work with Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industries (CCCI) and CSE to hold week efficiently.

Information and Communication Specialist of the embassy Troy Beckman, Economics Officer Dayle Johns and Commercial Specialist Shafiqur Rahman were present at the meeting. CSE Acting Chief Executive Officer AB Siddique, General Manager and Head of System Abdul Mutaleb, Deputy Manager of Corporate Development AKM Shahroze Alam took part in the discussion.

Ctg-Kolkata new bus service launched

Silk Line Company launched a new bus service in the Chittagong-Kolkata route on Friday. Assistant High Commissioner of India Ashok Das formally inaugurated the service at the company's Dampara head office.

The first bus left Chittagong for Kolkata from Silk Line counter at

Garibullah Shah Mazar at Dampara. Silk Line Director Sirajuddin Mohammad Alamgir was present at the ceremony.

'Establish a democratic edn system'

Jatiya Mukti Council President and Writer Badruddin Omar on Friday called for launching a struggle against imperialism and the oppressive rulers to establish a democratic education system.

He was addressing a discussion titled "Education system of Bangladesh under control of foreign investors" organised by Bangladesh Lekhak Shibir, Chittagong.

Unit President Prof Nurul Islam Helali presided over the meeting at Muslim Institute Hall while Prof Hossain Kabir Chowdhury, Vice President Advocate Bhulan Bhoomik, central Joint Secretary of Pahari Chhatra Parishad Sunirmal Chakma and General Secretary of Chhatra Federation city unit Kazi Sumi also spoke.

Badruddin Omar said the rulers are

not only using the police and military forces to suppress the voices of the oppressed people but also trying to control their thoughts.

10 polytech students to be sent abroad

Ten meritorious students, who are studying technical education, will be sent abroad for higher education at the expense of the government.

Professor Dr Md Idris Ali, chairman of Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB), announced this while he was speaking as chief guest at a reception here on Saturday.

He said the government is also planning to send the teachers of non-government polytechnic institutes abroad for training.

Progressive Polytechnic Institute, a non-government technical training institution, organised the reception on its campus at Halihsahar in the port city for one of its student -- Md Abdul Hashim -- who secured second position in the national merit list of Diploma Engineering

Examination held under BTEB recently.

'Create scope for broadcasting community radio'

Columnist Kamal Lohani urged the government to create scope for broad-

casting community radio to send the messages of developments to the mass people.

He was addressing as chief guest a publication ceremony of a book titled "Community Radio Kibhabe Prothista Kora Jai" at the Premier University auditorium on Sunday.

Forum for Development, Journalism and Communication

Studies (FOCUS) organised the function with its president Prof Maniruzzaman in the chair.

FOCUS published the Bengali edition of the book "How To Do Community Radio" written by Lui Tang, founder of community radio in the Philippines, funded by Unesco. Subrata Chowdhury, Hosne Ara and Md. Sahidullah translated the book in Bengali.

Director of Bangladesh Betar, Chittagong centre Mostafizur Rahman, bureau chief of the daily Bhorer Kagoj Omar Kaiser, former chairman of Communication and Journalism department of Chittagong University Ali Asgar Chowdhury, Subrata Chowdhury and Shahidullah Lipon also spoke at the function.



Artistes of Proma, a recitation group, stage Sojan Badiyar Ghat, a drama by Pallikabi Jasim Uddin, at the Theatre Institute hall on Wednesday.