

Baldah on the verge of extinction

By Morshed Ali Khan and Parveen Ahmed

Many rare plants and trees are under threat of dying due to an acute shortage of water and negligence of the officials responsible in the city's Baldah Gardens — the only botanical gardens in the country with rare species of plants and trees.

For the huge number of rare species of trees, plants and shrubs in the age-old Baldah Gardens, a total of 10,000 gallons of water is required a day during the dry season but WASA can only supply 500 gallons, an official said.

"This water problem has been going on for few years now and many plants and trees are suffering from dehydration and rapidly becoming malnourished," said an official of the Forest Department which has been entrusted with looking after the historical gardens since 1962.

The Baldah Gardens was set up in 1909 by the Zaminder of Baldah, Babu Narayan Roy Chowdhury — an avid naturalist and philanthropist. It has a total of 700 species of 339 genera, belonging to 87 families

from 50 different countries of the world.

It was learnt that in view with the water crisis, Dhaka WASA was given two decimal of land from the gardens own premises to set up a pump house in 1983.

The 1983 accord with WASA was that it would supply 10,000 gallons of water a day to the Baldah Gardens in addition to supply water in the neighbourhood, said the botanist-cum-senior research officer of the gardens.

"But due to increasing demand for water in the area WASA had to cut down its supply to the gardens," said the official, adding that the natural pond inside the gardens also got dry during the dry season.

Despite having a workforce of 19 full-time gardeners (most of whom have their accommodations inside the gardens premises), a foreign trained botanist-cum-senior research officer, a deputy ranger and two security personnel, the gardens bear all marks of carelessness and negligence.

Many rare plants were seen by these correspondents, covered with dry weeds and dead leaves while the whole premises of the gardens were a dirty look. Small plants — mainly range of orchids were seen left dying. Hundreds of recently drafted plants in plastic bags were kept amid rubbish. Spider webs on top of the drafts tell the story of carelessness.

The locals complained that some unsocial activities were random within the garden where Tk 6 is charged for entry from each person.

"We have lodged complaints to the authority to clampdown on these activities but these days it seems to be increasing," complained Amir, a resident of Narinda.

The botanist of the gardens claimed that the collection of Cactai in the gardens was one of the best in the country although the greenhouse lacked modern facilities.

"The effect of water shortage can easily be detected as many plants no more give flowers as regularly as before," she said.



Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Mohammad Hanif addressing a huge rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. — Star photo



Watering the plants (left) inside the greenhouse, and a partial view of the dehydrated cactai in the Baldah Gardens. — Star photo

Nari Samaj asks Pak govt to apologise for misdeeds in '71

By Staff Correspondent

The Sammito Nari Samaj organised a discussion meeting and cultural function at Bakul Tala of the Art Institute on the occasion of the silver jubilee of the Independence Day on Tuesday, says a press release.

Meghna Guhu Thakurta, Saed Kamal, Minu Huq, Sultana Raka and Shami Kaiser took part in the discussion while Anaada Dhani cultural group rendered patriotic songs.

The speakers demanded a formal apology for the Pakistan government for their misdeeds during 1971 as, according to them, the women of that country had expressed solidarity with the women of Bangladesh.

They said the losses which Bangladesh suffered during that period could not be compensated in any way. "We want that the Pakistan government seek an apology," they said.

They expressed their determination to continue their struggle till the trial of those responsible for the killing of their relatives.

The cultural function was conducted by Fragma Laboni.

BCS, trade, employees assocs urge PM to step down

Different government and non-government professional organisations yesterday urged the Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, to quit and form a caretaker government without further delay so that the nation can get rid of political turmoil, reports BSS.

Bangladesh Civil Service (Information) Association at a meeting of its executive committee expressed deep concern at the overall situation of the country.

The association expressed its solidarity with the Sachib Committee's programme and urged President Abdur Rahman Biswas to immediately form caretaker government, a press release of the association said.

Bangladesh Civil Service (Forest) Association at an emergency meeting held expressed its deep concern at the lack in security, stagnation in economy and deterioration of the law and order due to the prevailing situation in the country.

The association leaders Md. Golam Habib, president of the association, and Md. Nuruzzaman, general secretary of the association, urged President Abdur Rahman Biswas to help implement the decision to form caretaker government to rid the nation of the gradual economic downturn.

Bangla Sramik Federation at a meeting in the city yesterday urged Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to immediately resign and pave the way for holding the next elections under a caretaker government.

A federation press release said the federation leaders had welcomed the passage of the non-party caretaker bill in the Jatiya Sangsad and said if Begum Zia had any concern for the nation, she should immediately step down to rid the nation of the present crisis.

With president of the federation Mirza Muhammad Nurunnabi in the chair, the meeting was addressed, among

others, by M A Awal, Kazi Manzur Hussain, Mirza Ibrahim, Shahidullah Bhuiyan and Jamshed Chowdhury.

Sramik-Karmachari Mukti-Sangsad of Dhaka City Corporation expressed its solidarity with the movement called by Mayor of Dhaka Mohammad Hanif for resolving the present political crisis, a press release of the sangsad said yesterday.

Bangladesh Fourth Class Government Employees Association at a meeting of the representatives of Dhaka City, held yesterday expressed its solidarity with the present movement of Bangladesh Sachibayala Karmachari Sanjuktta Parishad.

With Golam Mostafa Talukder in the chair, the meeting was addressed, among others, by association leaders Muhammad Rezaul Mostafa, Muhammad Abdur Kader, Muhammad Sirajuddin, Ali Hanif Chhanu and Muhammad Abul Kalam, a press release of the association said.

Television-non-gazetted Karmachari Kalyan Samity at a meeting also expressed their deep concern at the overall political situation and urged President Abdur Rahman Biswas to take step for resolving the crisis by forming caretaker government.

Samity president Mir Ahmad Hossain and general secretary Md. Abdul Kavum in a press release said television is a national medium of the nation. Television should put up programmes impartially and objectively but experience shows that such programmes have not been put up due to absence of proper policies," the press release said.

Rotaract meet

The special general meeting, followed by an election meeting for 1996-97 of the Rotaract Club of Dhaka Buriganga will be held today at 10:30 am at RDS, Dhanmandi, say a press release.

Weather

Rain with gusty wind likely

Rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Dhaka, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at one or two places elsewhere over the country in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Met Office says day temperature may remain nearly unchanged across the country during the period.

Country's highest temperature 35 degree Celsius was recorded at Khulna and the lowest 17.8 degrees at Dinajpur.

The sun sets today at 6:14 pm and rises on Saturday at 5:55 am.

The maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	max	min	morning	evening
Dhaka	34.0	21.9	90	71
Chittagong	30.3	20.7	85	82
Rajshahi	33.4	19.5	73	55
Khulna	35.0	24.6	84	80
Barisal	33.0	24.0	80	80
Sylhet	33.0	20.5	79	83
Cox's Bazar	31.5	23.5	85	



BCS (tax) Assoc joins secys in movement

The Bangladesh Civil Service Taxation Association at an executive committee meeting yesterday expressed its solidarity with the move taken by the secretaries who met the President on March 27 to pave the way for resolving the present political crisis, says a press release.

The association also vented its frustration at the country's political disturbances.

For the last two months there has been hardly any activities in income tax fixation and revenue collection, the association observed.

The collection in revenue sector has fallen drastically because a sense of insecurity has gripped the mind of the employees and officials of various taxation departments across the country.

DU exams postponed

By DU Correspondent

The examinations of M.Sc/M Farm (Final) of 1995 and M.Sc-in-Nutrition of 1995 of the Dhaka University, scheduled to be held on April 2 have been postponed due to unavoidable reasons.

Fresh dates will be announced soon.

Young man killed in road accident

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Mar 28 - A young man was killed in a road accident on Sylhet-Tamabil road in the night following Saturday last. The victim Raja Miah, son of Abdul Manik of village Pirebazar of sadar thana was returning home after market from the nearby bazar when he was knocked down by a speeding truck bound for Tamabil from Sylhet near Pirebazar at about 9 pm. He was immediately rushed to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries the same night. A case has been registered with the police.

Lawyers' Forum meet today

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Nationalist Lawyers' Forum will hold a meeting today at 6 pm at the Sobag Community Centre, says a press release.

All members have been requested to attend.

Death anniversary of Principal Ibrahim today

The 18th death anniversary of eminent scholar and social reformer Principal Ibrahim Khan will be observed today, reports BSS.

Programmes have been chalked out the Dhaka and Tangail by a number of socio-cultural organisations to mark the occasion.

Bangladesh Lekhak Samity will hold a discussion at Kakali High School at 4.30pm today. Mahfil mahfil has also been arranged on the day after Asr prayers at the Dhanmondi residence of late Khan.

Death anniversary of Abu Taleb

The 26th death anniversary of shaheed journalist Khandaker Abu Taleb will be observed at his residence at Mirpur in the city today, reports BSS.

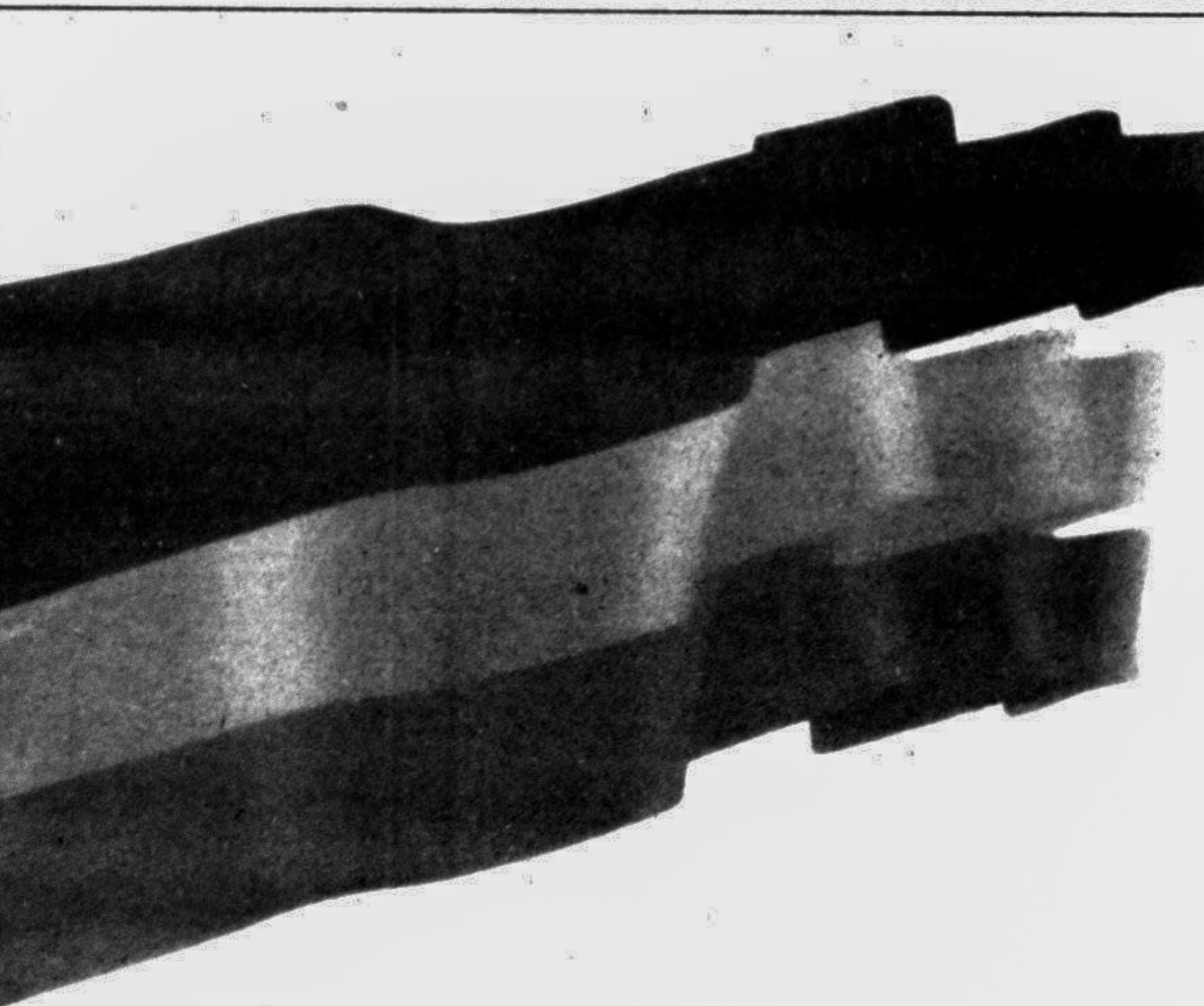
On the occasion a *milad mahfil* and special prayer will be held at the mosque adjacent to his house after Jumma prayers, family sources said.

Khandaker Abu Taleb, the then chief reporter of Daily Ittefaq, was killed by the collaborators of Pakistani forces at his residence on this day during the War of Liberation.

Passage of Caretaker Govt Bill hailed

KHULNA, Mar 28: Several thousand BNP activists today brought out a procession in the city to hail the passage of the non-party caretaker government bill and in support of the various programmes undertaken by the government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, reports BSS.

The procession came out under the aegis of district and Khulna city BNP from the party office situated at KD Ghose road and paraded through city streets.



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