

Rangpur Zoo loses its charm

From Mozammel Haque

RANGPUR, Apr 29: Rangpur Zoo is lacking basic amenities for the visitors who rush from far flung areas.

Poor number of animals, faulty decoration, inadequate staffs are creating problems in the zoo. Insecurity of the zoo due to lack of proper fencing is another problem. The existing fence has been broken down at many points through which unauthorised persons illegally enter inside the zoo at day and night. They are allegedly taking away fruits and other valuables of the zoo.

In 1991, Rangpur Zoo was established at the local orchard farm, covering an area of 22.27 acres. A sum of Taka 2 crore was spent for this. At the initial stage, it started functioning with a poor number of animals.

Eighty-eight species of 19 animals were brought here. Among the animals, Royal Bengal Tiger, lion, leopard, deer, monkey, bear, gharial, peacock, water buck, mayna, porcupine, bison are worth mentioning. The peacock, tapir and gharial are living alone without partner.

The pair of Royal Bengal Tiger is the most resourceful animal at the zoo. It gave birth to 18 cubs. Of them four died. The rest cubs were shifted to

Dhaka Zoo. Two cubs of the Royal Bengal Tiger were sent to Kuwait as gift by the Bangladesh Government as a gesture of friendship.

The spotted deer gave birth to four cubs and bebin two cubs. A python laid 20 eggs from which four snakes were born while the others died.

The cages of lion and tiger are most congested and these always remain unclean. As a result bad smell is polluting the atmosphere of the area. The monkey and the peacock cages are also in pitiable condition.

Treatment facilities for the zoo animals is completely insufficient. Ailing animals are allegedly left at the mercy of the Almighty.

Every day 200 to 300 people are visiting the zoo. But due to non-availability of new animals, the zoo is gradually losing its charm.

The zoo has a children's park, lake, canteen and fruit garden. The zoo earns around Taka 14 lakh by auctioning the gate, children's park, canteen, lake, fruit garden and parking spaces for vehicles. Still it is a losing concern. Large amount of money is being spent for maintenance of the zoo which is much more than its earnings.

There are allegations that

the animals are not properly fed. Misappropriation of fund for animals of the zoo is a common phenomenon.

Proper maintenance work is not done at the zoo regularly. Poor sanction for this purpose is hampering the zoo's renovation work for months together.

A scheme for remodelling and for setting up of 16 new cages with modern facilities costing Taka four crore and seventy three lakh was undertaken in 1998. But it is yet to be executed for reasons best known to the authorities concerned.

High officials of the Livestock Department including the secretary of the ministry concerned visited the zoo earlier and assured development of the zoo, but in vain.

During visit, the Daily Star correspondent found a large number of unauthorised visitors loitering inside the zoo. All of them entered through the broken part of the zoo without procuring any ticket.

Unauthorised entrants have become a threat to the zoo as they are allegedly damaging valuable goods. The zoo authorities have demanded immediate protection of the zoo by constructing the fence and posting police guard to save its property.



A large number of visitors, mainly young people, visit Rangpur Zoo frequently.

— Star photo

Nor'wester claims 3 lives in Mymensingh, Gopalganj

By Staff Correspondent

Three persons were killed in nor'wester which lashed Mymensingh and Gopalganj recently.

Our Mymensingh Correspondent says: At least two persons were killed, over 25 injured as nor'wester lashed recently different areas of Mymensingh district.

At least one person was killed and 10 were injured as nor'wester hit different unions of Gouripur thana on April 19 and 20.

The victim was identified as Kajal, 10, son of Wakhil of village Damgan. Ten people were injured in house collapse at village Yusukabad and Shalihar in Gouripur union, local people said.

According to local administration, the storm caused widespread damage. Many houses were collapsed and many trees uprooted. Boro paddy was also damaged. The storm also damaged educational institutions.

In the storm Kalikhola Kali Mondir, and Shivpur Madrasa were damaged totally. The shed of a class room of Gouripur Government College was blown down during the storm.

Hundreds of valuable trees were uprooted and a vast tract of Boro lands were also damaged. Hundreds of poor people are now living under the open sky as their dwelling houses were razed to the ground. Electric and telephone poles were damaged causing disruption of power supply and tele-link was snapped.

At least one person was killed and five were injured when a nor'wester hit different places of Phulpur thana on April 20. The victim was identified as Subojan, 50.

The storm caused a severe damage. It uprooted hundreds of trees, collapsed houses and damaged crops in vast areas.

Md Shamsul Hoque, MP of Phulpur thana visited the storm-hit area on April 21. He assured people to send relief.

Heavy rain with nor'wester on April 17 caused a substantial damage to Boro crop on a vast tract of land in the Sadar thana. It also caused damage to vegetable fields.

Heavy rain with hailstorm might hamper the production of Boro paddy. The farmers feared that a bright prospect of Boro harvest would not be achieved following incessant rainfall with his storm.

Hundreds of kutcha houses were razed to the ground, trees uprooted as of crops in vast areas were damaged when a nor'wester hit different areas of Nandail thana on April 19.

Decision shelved for reasons unknown

NATORE, Apr 29: A decision to introduce a new approach in sugarcane farming in the northern districts to boost its output has been shelved for reasons unknown, reports UNB.

Official sources said the decision to introduce transplantation method in sugarcane cultivation was taken in 1997-98.

They said the country's sugarcane output could be doubled by replacing its traditional method of cultivation with the new approach.

A BSFC officials said the new approach has proved best in Joypurhat, Thakurgaon, Panchagarh and Rangpur zones.

They said farmers of the regions harvested over 1000 maunds of sugarcane from per hectare of land applying the new approach against 400

maunds with the old method.

The country's sugarcane yield was excellent until 1992-93. Since then, it started to decline due to climatic change and pest menace. The increasing trend of crushing sugarcane for producing molasses had also contributed to steady fall in sugar production in the country.

Due to short supply of sugarcane this season, sugar mills of the region ceased crushing sugarcane in mid February; well before the schedule time.

Most of the sugar mills could not achieve their output targets this year.

BSFC official said proper management of the sugar mills and adoption of transplantation method in sugarcane farming can boost the country's sugarcane and sugar outputs remarkably.

relief was very insufficient according to their needs.

As the nor'wester caused a wide-spread damage in different areas, the authorities concerned should take immediate steps to help the victims, urged the storm-hit people.

Our Gopalganj Correspondent reports: A nor'wester accompanied with torrential rain and thunderbolt lashed in five thanas of Gopalganj district on April 15 evening.

One person died by lightning and 10 others injured, five of them injured seriously. They were admitted to Gopalganj Sadar Hospital.

Houses, trees mosques, including educational institution and standing crops were damaged by the storm.

Witnesses and hospital sources said the admitted persons were Motiar Rahman, 52, Sabar, 28, Molini, 25, Debendra Nath Biswas, 40, and Mohibur Rahman, 32.

The dead victim were identified as Subash Chandra Mondal, 62, of village Bhatra under Gopalganj sadar thana.

The nor'wester with a velocity of 130 kilometres per hour, started at 4.30 pm and ends at 5.10 pm.

Telephone and electric communications were snapped. Power supply remained suspended for two days plunging the town and its suburbs into darkness.

According to TNO office and different union sources, 2000 kutcha houses were totally damaged, 3,500 kutcha houses were partially damaged, standing crops on 8,200 hectares of land damaged and huge trees were uprooted.

Anirban School in Gopalganj town was partially damaged, Bashbaria College and Girls' School in Tungipara thana were also damaged by the storm.

Tale of a freedom fighter

From KM Rezaul Hoque

GAIBANDHA, Apr 29: Once a triumphant freedom fighter MN Nabi Lahu is now a defeated soldier. Now the man, who once fought battles to bring happiness for the poor, himself is gripped by abject poverty. The man is blind now. He really struggles hard to maintain his family.

A former student leader MN Nabi Lahu fought for the cause of national independence under Sector 11. On March 23, 1971 Lahu hoisted national flag of Bangladesh at Gaibandha Municipality Park, much to the excitement of local people, especially youths.

During the War of Liberation, Lahu's men were called as 'Lahu Company' who fought Pakistani occupation forces

and their local collaborators, members of Razakar, Al Badar and Al Shams forces.

Lahu and his men took part in Kallibazar, Kanchipara Bridge, Badiakhali, Katlamari and Rasoolpur battles.

After the liberation of country, Lahu joined Jatiya Samjtantrik Dal (JSD). However, he did not continue.

He had been suffering from acute cataract disease during the period. And eventually he lost his eyesight.

Lahu, father of five children, is a resident in Godown Road area in Gaibandha town. The future is almost dark, said a depressed Lahu while talking to this correspondent recently.

He does not get any assistance from the government.

She collected enemy's information

BARISAL, Apr 29: One brave woman, Noorjahan Begum, 44, was found out here at village Batajor under Gournadi thana after 30 years of liberation of the country, reports BSS.

Noorjahan joined the Liberation War under Nur Hossain Nur Commander in 1971 with the spirit for liberating the motherland from the occupation Pak army.

Noorjahan was given the charge of collecting information of the occupation army from different places. She did it successfully, but she was caught red handed by the Pak army after injuring herself by gun shots when she was engaged in collecting information of the Pak army from Dhaka-Barisal highway. She was then taken first to Shikarpur camp and then shifted to Gournadi College camp of the army. She along with 13 other women was at that camp till December 19, 1971. All the 14 women had been tortured inhumanely in the camp.

Later, she sent to her father's

house after liberation, but she was not received by her family members. Her father Fakir was also killed by the Pak army in 1971. She then went to her brother's house at Khulna. She was not given shelter there also.

Noorjahan then went to Dhaka and engaged herself as a maid servant for livelihood. She was married to Kamruzzaman of Gopalganj district in 1976. Her husband died of illness without treatment in 1978. She is now living with her only son born in 1978. Afterwards, Noorjahan took training on milk-nurse with the help of a NGO 'World Vision'. Noorjahan being a milk-nurse is living now at a slum at east Kazipara of Mirpur in Dhaka. Sometimes she comes to the house of her father.

Sheikh Kutubuddin Ahmed, district commander, Barisal district unit of Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad, identified Noorjahan and awarded certificate to her as renowned brave woman.

Masterplan for uplift of Mujibnagar

From Atiur Rahman

JESSORE, Apr 29: The first government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was formed on April 17 in 1971 at Mujibnagar, with Tajuddin Ahmed as the Prime Minister, to lead the Liberation War and win victory by annihilating Pakistan occupation forces.

The big mango grove, 16-kilometre to the west of Meherpur, very close to the Indian border, is now Mujibnagar. Its original name was Boiddanathala.

Every year April 17 is observed in our country as Mu-

jibnagar Day in a befitting manner. Joint programmes of the local people and the district administration mark the day.

Despite glorious role played during the Liberation War, the fate of Mujibnagar remained unchanged. The place was most backward and undeveloped from the erstwhile East Pakistan days and cut off from the main land of the country due to lack of communications. Not to speak of subdivision or district, it had no link with local thana headquarters even.

Policy of the then govern-

ment to keep border areas undeveloped and the people as second class citizen depriving of basic rights and privileges was the reason of such state.

The total situation took a different turn now.

Mujibnagar drew the attention of the government for development.

The topography of Mujibnagar marked change on construction of the monument with 23 pillars over a large platform and a gate for entry, in a bid to uphold the spirit and values of the Liberation War.

The theme of the pillars indicate the period of 23 years of the erstwhile East Pakistan.

It was constructed during the reign of Ershad. The foundation of Darlapur Degree College near Mujibnagar was also laid at that time.

Now, the bus-stand at Mujibnagar which was shifted to Kederganj bazaar, three kilometres away from original place, was again brought back to the original place following improvement of the law and order situation in the area after a drive to curb terrorism was launched under the present government. The Zila Parishad Dak Bunglow at Mujibnagar looked busy. When contacted, the caretaker of the Dak Bunglow Rezaul Karim told that now visitor from across the country started coming and the so-called terrorists were gone.

He told that last year, the area looked abandoned and became virtually a den of armed terrorists.

But a source on condition of anonymity, contradicting this report told this correspondent that despite combing operation conducted by the administration, the armed cadres of Sabuj Bahini were still at large and pulling on smoothly. The source also said that they were moving openly all around. They changed their colours and remained undisturbed under the protection of new political leaders.

New life was infused at Mujibnagar by the present government.

To ensure its uniform development and bring it to the level of township making available the benefits of modern age to the people, this government

created Mujibnagar Upazila very recently. Mujibnagar Upazila was set up with four unions including Darinpur, Monakhali, Mahajanpur and Bagoan unions detaching from Meherpur.

The Upzila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) joined on February 24, 2000. He was running the office housed in a room of the local Zila Parishad Dak Bunglow, with a skeleton staff.

During a visit of this correspondent along with the Director of Gramteen Udayan Sangstha, a non-government Organisation (NGO) Mahabubul Ashraf, to Mujibnagar on April 16, UNO Helal Uddin could not available found in his office till 11 am. It was learnt that he was busy with a meeting with the Deputy Commissioner (DC) in Meherpur. The UNO was attending his office daily from Meherpur where he was staying after his joining the office.

However, two chairmen of Daniapur Union and Bagoan Union Abdul Hai Gazi and Ziauddin were available at the UNO office. The union chairmen expressed their satisfaction for having the upzila at their doorstep after a long time.

They also said that Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Mujibnagar police station joined here on the same date. He was holding his office at Ratanpur, six kilometres from Mujibnagar under the Bagoan union, they said.

It was learnt from them that a tug of war over selection of site for upzila parishad building and thana building was going on between two groups.

One group was fighting to set up upzila parishad at Mujib-

nagar, while the other at Kederganj.

Similar was the case about the thana.

One group was active for its sanctioning at Ratanpur and the other at Rannagar, only two kilometres from Mujibnagar, it was learnt. All these proposals were sent to the higher authority for approval.

A source also informed that a total of 50 acres of land at Mujibnagar mangrove was acquired by the Deputy Commissioner of Meherpur and distributed the land to various departments for accommodation of their offices were in process.

It was learnt that a master plan was drawn up by the Public Works Department (PWD) for massive development of Mujibnagar. A telephone exchange would soon be built. All formalities in this connection were completed.

Local public representatives, social workers and opinion leaders, when contacted, were found unanimous on the issue of the proposed Immigration Check-Post. They demanded it at Mujibnagar. In support of their demand, they said that Mujibnagar is now connected with network of communication in the country. The place was also well-connected with India.

Importance of the place would go up and business activities would grow if the Immigration Check-Post was opened here. They also argued that if it was done, it would play a vital role in the national economy also.

They urged the government to consider their demand keeping in mind the historic importance of Mujibnagar.

News snaps

Move to create job opportunity

KHAGRACHHARI, Apr 29: The district council has undertaken a number of projects to create employment opportunity, reports UNB.

In the first stage Tk 13 lakh was allotted for the purpose, said an official. The projects include development of tribal handloom industry, setting up of handloom centre and fish cultivation in the hillside lands, ponds and canals. The council hoped that these projects would reduce unemployment problems to a great extent increasing family income.

Development projects undertaken

KHAGRACHHARI, Apr 29: Khagrachhari Municipalities has taken up four development projects to ensure supply of pure drinking water and sanitation facilities for the poor people, reports BSS.

The projects are — installation of fourteen Tara pumps and five ring wells, construction of two community latrines and four stand posts. According to municipalities officials sources, the work of the projects in progressing and will be completed soon.

Work progressing

TANGAIL Apr 29: Academic buildings of nine registered non-government primary schools are being constructed in Gopalpur Upazila at a total cost of Taka fifty six lakh seventy six thousand, reports BSS.

The work will be completed within three months' time under the supervision of Upazila Local Government Engineering Department, official sources said.

FP activities hampered

LAXMIPUR, Apr 29: Family Planning (FP) activities are seriously being hampered due to acute shortage of manpower, reports UNB.

Besides, the noble effort of the government to reach health-care services to the doorsteps of the people also suffered a setback in Sadar, Rangati, Raipur, and Rangaj upazilas due to manpower crisis. Deputy Director of District Family Planning office here said some 68 posts of field workers, including four Assistant Upazila Family Planning Officers, remained vacant since long creating a stalemate in the overall family planning activities. Being illiterate and religious-minded, people of the region are normally reluctant to accept family planning methods. Suspension of motivation work due to the shortage of manpower has compounded the problem.

Goods worth Tk 3 lakh looted

RANGPUR, Apr 29: Dacoits looted goods worth about Tk three lakh in a daring dacoity at a house at Kamal Kachina in the town on Tuesday night, reports UNB.

A gang of six robbers wearing musk entered into the house of Sheikh Shawkat Ali by breaking open the grilled window at 1 am. They looted gold and other valuable households at gunpoint and decamped with the booties at 3 am. A case was filed with Kotwali police, but no one was arrested.

30 hurt in road mishap

NARSINGDI, Apr 29: At least 30 people were injured in a head-on collision between two buses at Dukundi in Raipura thana here on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway on Friday, reports UNB.

Police said the accident took place at about 11:30 am when a Sylhet-bound bus from Dhaka rammed into a bus coming from Habiganj. The injured were rushed to Narsingdi Hospital and Bhoirab Thana Health Complex. However, drivers of the both the buses managed to flee the scene. Police seized the buses. A case was filed.



A children's painting competition was held at Kuddus Afia Kindergarten in Comilla town on the occasion of Independence Day. Bangladesh Gram Theatre, an organisation of rural theatre, and Shaheed Dhirendranath Dutta Memorial Committee in collaboration with Charupath, Comilla arranged the competition.

Three snatchers caught

GAZIPUR, Apr 29: Three snatchers were caught red-handed along with firearms form Jayartek village in Sadar thana on Wednesday, reports UNB.

The snatchers were identified as Monwar Hossain of Madinabazar village in Comilla district and Nuruzzaman and Amri Hossain of Bimal village in Gazipur district. Police said local people caught the muggers with two rifles and four bullets after they looted Tk 16,373 from an employee of ASA, a national NGO, and handed over them to the police. Later, police recovered Tk 5,115 from the muggers. Two separate cases were filed against them with the police under Arms and Public Safety Act.

Science, Technology Week ends

Tangail, Apr. 29: A three-day programme on the occasion of 23rd National Science and Technology Week concluded at Santosh Darbar Hall here recently, reports, BSS.

Al-haj Mohammad Abdul Mannan, MP, inaugurated the programme as the chief guest. It was attended by many local distinguished personalities including journalists, political leaders and public officials. Besides, a discussion was also held here on the day.

Training on land fertility ends

MANIKGANJ, Apr 29: The two-day training on Fertility of Land and Fertilizer Management concluded at Manikganj Sadar Upazila Parishad auditorium on April 25, reports BSS.

Agriculture Extension Department arranged the training. A total of 17 Block Supervisors, one PPI and one junior agriculture extension officer took part in the training. The trainees were imparted training on the necessity and procedure of collecting samples of earth to know fertility and utilisation of proper fertiliser.

Uplif' projects progressing

TANGAIL, Apr 29: Tangail Zila Parishad is implementing seven developmental projects at a cost of Taka 16.03 lakh in this fiscal year, reports BSS.

According to relevant sources, the projects included construction of a boundary wall of Shahid Mizanor Rahman High School, extension of second floor of Hemnagar Degree College, roof repairing of Mirzapur S K Pilot School, development of Basail Upazila Parishad Mosque, construction of Shakharia Ebtadaye Madrasa building, extension of Zila Parishad building and construction of Panch Tikri Union Parishad building work of the projects will be completed by June of the current year, an officials source said.

Discussion

NETRAKONA, Apr 29: A discussion meeting on 'Reforming of Present Electoral Process' was held here at Netrakona Press Club on April 25 under the auspices of Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA), Netrakona district unit, reports BSS.

President of district unit of FEMA Advocate Ruhul Amin presided over the meeting. Among others, President of Bangladesh Sangbadik Samity, Netrakona district unit, Haider Jabbar Chowdhury, Secretary of Netrakona Press Club Shyamolendu Pal, General Secretary of Bangladesh Sangbadik Samity, Netrakona, Mahabub Kibria Chowdhury Halim and General Secretary of FEMA, Netrakona, Pranesh Chandra Majumder took part in the discussion.



The historic monument at Mujibnagar with 23 pillars on a big platform.

— Star photo