



the city that was

Dhaka Madrassah was established in 1873 with Tk. 10,000 moshin fund. The demand for English from Muslim students led the Madrassah to open Anglo-Persian department in 1875. A report of 1883 showed that 102 students were enrolled in Anglo-Persian department out of a total of 338. In 1880 the Madrassah building was constructed near today's Bahadur Shah park, now known as Kabi Nazrul Government College.

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Strong population, weak fund

MORSHEED ALI KHAN

coming year, he said.

In a bid to overcome the deficit the zoo authority has recently increased the entrance fee from Tk 5 to Tk 10. Officials said that the current fiscal's projected earning from the visitors is expected to be around Tk 2.75 crore. In addition, the zoo is also selling spotted deer each at Tk 24,000. The zoo official said last year they had earned Tk 12 lakh from sale of spotted deer.

With rapid breeding of hippos, tigers and lions the national zoo is facing an acute accommodation problem. The hippo moat was made for accommodating only a pair but within the last ten years the population has soared to ten, out of which there are six males and four females.

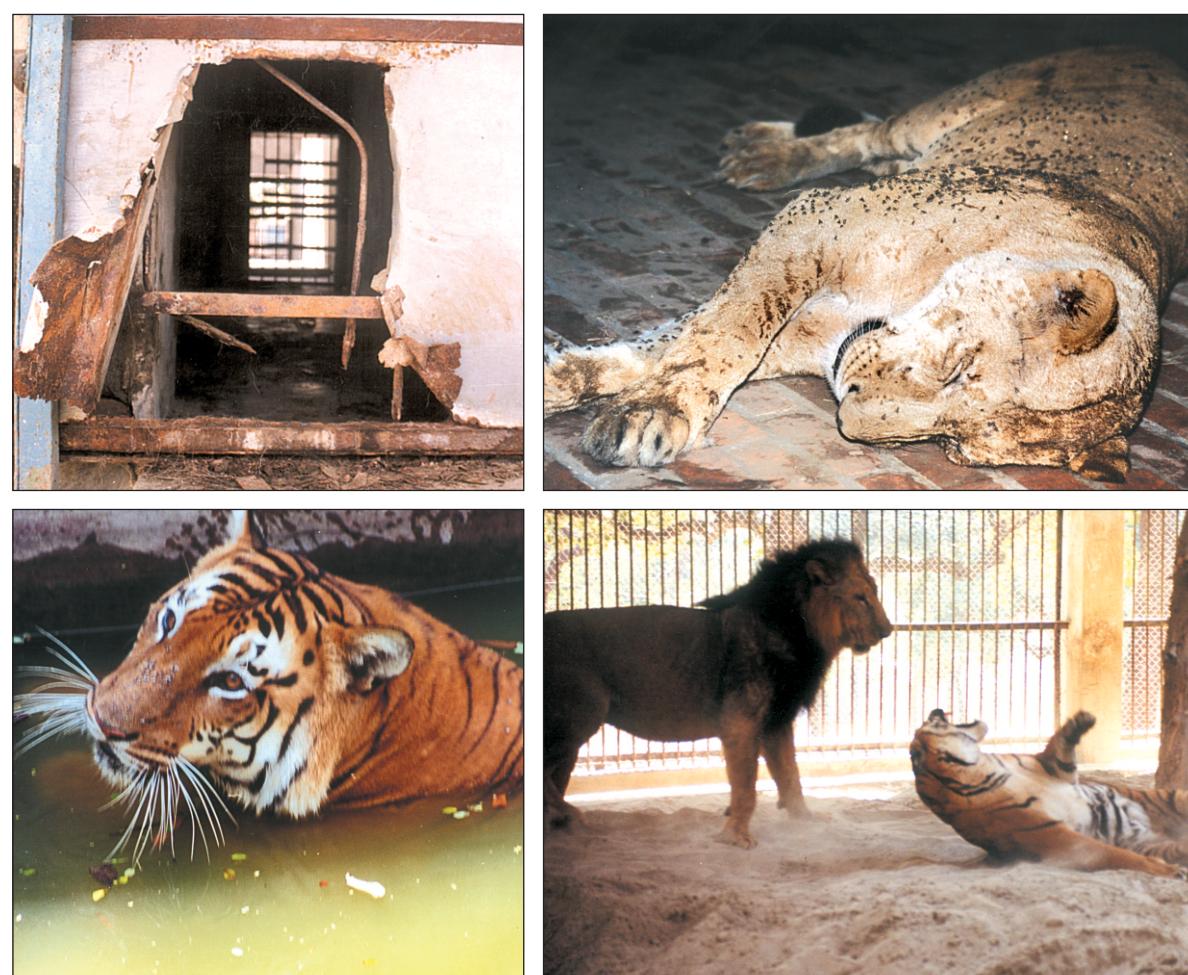
"Whenever a female goes into heat, fierce fights break out among the six bulls. I can tell you, the fights for domination may be spectacular but it leaves behind serious injuries," said a caretaker.

The zoo authority was also concerned about the interbreeding of animals, which they said result in births of animals with physical deformities.

"There is a big demand for exchange programs in the region. For instance, Kathmandu Zoo is asking for a pair of hippos in exchange for some of their surplus animals," continued the Curator of the National Zoo, Mohammad Mafizur Rahman, "we cannot participate simply because we do not have funds for the air freight of the animals."

With 19 lions and 15 Royal Bengal Tigers, the national zoo is in urgent need of launching exchange programs.

The zoo has a collection of 2,220 animals of 184 species.



File photos of eroded cage and zoo inmates.

city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.

"Dhaka has turned into a concrete slum under the very nose of Rajuk."

-- Abdul Abu Sayeed

Teacher, author and environmentalist

Commenting on the high-rise policy at a roundtable at Jatiya Press Club, on March 12.

Source: Prothom Alo

"Cabinet decision to hang photographs in offices shows bad taste of the rulers."

-- Dr. Kamal Hossain

President, Gano Forum

Tells an AmCham function, on March 9.

Source: Prothom Alo



"Khaleda Zia is like a banyan tree, falling of one or two leaves won't affect her."

-- Mufizul Haq Amin

MP and a leader of the ruling alliance

Tells a public rally in Rajshahi while criticising the activities of

Badruddoza Chowdhury, on March 10. Source: Prothom Alo

"Thousands of construction workers became unemployed due to rod price hike. On the other hand the remuneration of MPs and ministers have been increased. What kind of democracy is it?"

-- Abdul Awal Minto

President, FBCCI

Tells a grand rally of contractors' co-ordination body, on March 10.

Source: Prothom Alo

"There is no alternative stream but the Jatiya Party."

-- H.M. Ershad

Chairman, Jatiya Party

Tells newsmen at Zia International Airport, on March 11. Source: Borer Kago

"The outgoing Executive Engineer may have done some wrong while giving us facilities. Top LGED officials should look at it leniently."

-- Nazrul Haq Swapan

Former Comilla JCD Leader

Tells a function at LGED Bhaban, on March 8. Source: Prothom Alo

Empty nest syndrome creeps into city life



SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

It took a very long time for Ayesha Bahman (not her real name), a widow living in Dhanmondi, to come to terms with 'empty nest syndrome'. Ayesha is like any other aged parents who live separately from their children.

Empty nest syndrome refers to the grief that many parents feel when their children move out of home. According to psychologists, this condition is more common in women.

Living separately from parents but staying in the same city is no more an unimaginable task in today's world. "Actually it is better both for the parents and their adult children if they live separately. They can avoid all types of confrontation especially in the case of the son or daughter being married," said Akhtaruzzaman who is working in a private company.

Some adult children these days prefer to live alone when they are single because of the attraction of freedom. There are elderly parents too who do not want to stay with their adult children.

"I think the relationship between us will be perfect if my son and daughter-in-law live elsewhere," said Hasina Haider, whose son got married recently. "It is a far

better way to avoid squabbles," she added.

This change in attitude to traditional values leads elderly people to suffer from the empty nest syndrome.

In most of the cases elderly parents living alone in Bangladesh have their offspring staying abroad. It has increased over the years following people's inclination to settle abroad.

"Initially it was very tough for me to except it when all of them left," said Shameem Rahman, mother of two who are living in the USA and Canada since 1992. She said she and her husband had developed the habit of living away from children over the years.

"However, I still feel bad whenever I see the empty chairs at the dining table," she sighed. "We miss our grandchildren also," she added.

"Well, you cannot but miss your own blood," said Aminul Islam, who has all three of his children living abroad. "But there is no other way to avoid it. They are bound to leave as it is natural and you cannot blame them," he said.

Most of the parents, especially mothers said they had an innate preparedness to bear staying away from daughters no matter how heart-breaking it can be as it is the tradition for daughters in our

society to leave the parental abode after marriage. However, it takes more time to adjust in the case of sons living separately.

Insecurity haunts some of these elderly parents. Especially those who are quite old and have become more emotionally vulnerable.

"I am on the verge of leaving this world. Who will take me to doctor if I fall sick?" said Aziz Anwar who lives without his children in Gulshan.

In western countries parents plan in advance for the day when their nest will be empty. Often they opt to go to psychologists for counselling beforehand to cope with the stress and distress. However, it is not that common in Bangladesh as yet.

"We receive some people who comes to us as patients suffering depression and then we find the reason behind it the empty nest syndrome," said A. H. Mohammed Firoze, Director, National Mental Health Institute. "Only one in a hundred patients comes to us seeking help for coping with the syndrome," he added.

Firoze said mental stress that originates from such circumstances might cause psychosomatic problems like headache, high blood pressure, body-ache, or palpitation.

Who will bell the cat?

Forged tickets still being sold to patients at DMCH. All four probe bodies 'failed' to identify people aiding the racketeers

CITY CORRESPONDENT

patients' admission to the hospital in exchange for money from them.

"High officials have roles in the sale of forged tickets," a DMCH doctor told Star City, asking not to be named.

As part of anti-forgery measures, the DMCH issued tickets to the health workers of the inpatient and emergency departments with the signature of a deputy director and serial numbers on them and introduced watermark on August 1 last year.

A doctor informed DMCH Director Nazmul Huda about forgery on August 30 last year, after he found tickets without watermark.

The director seized 400 forged tickets and suspended three hospital officials, HM Nuruzzaman, Abdul Mannan and Mofazzal Hossain Khan, in an instant action.

The DMCH also formed a four-member committee headed by Professor

AF Siddique of the medicine department, which found 200 forged tickets in January.

Huda said the authorities are working hard to stop ticket forgery and give better service to patients.

Doctors said the suspended officials came back to work, as the committee could not prove the allegations against them.

Another DMCH doctor the authorities formed the four committees for eyewash in the wake of allegations against some officials.

"These committees came under pressure so that the authorities cannot take action against the guilty," said a doctor on condition of anonymity.

The DMCH says it earns Tk 4 lakh in revenue a year through selling tickets to inpatients and outpatients. An entry ticket costs a patient Tk 5 and an admission ticket Tk 10.

WHO IS TO BLAME?



These railings meant for footbridge in Mirpur 10 Gol Chakkar (circle) area are lying idle for over a year.

ANISUR RAHMAN