

Steps to conserve Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR

Department of Forest has taken initiatives to conserve the Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary, a reserved forest that is disappearing at an alarming rate.

The department launched a project titled 'Nishorgo Support Project' funded by USAID on December 20 at Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary with a three-day hiking of scouts to that end.

Enriched with a wide variety of different species of plants and animals, the Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary is on 7,800 hectares of land at Banskhal and Lohagara upazilas in Chittagong and Chakaria upazila in Cox's Bazar.

The forest was declared as a wildlife sanctuary in 1986 to conserve the vast stock of plants and endangered animals.

The project aims at improving the management of the country's protected areas through building up partnerships with the key local and national stakeholders that can assist in the efforts.

It was launched at Bhawal National Park on February 24 in

2004 with the slogan "Let us save nature for our future generation".

Nishorgo Support Project and Bangladesh Scouts jointly organised the hiking that started from Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary ended at Teknaf Game Reserve Forest with a view to creating awareness among the local people about conservation of the reserved forests.

Around 1200 species of plants, including 45 species of tall tree like Garjan (Dipterocarpus spp.), Raktan (Lophopetum spp.), Jam (Syzyium), Urinum (Mangifera spp.), Chapalish (Artocarpus spp.), Simul (Salmalia spp.) Koro (Albizia) and wide variety of herbs and shrubs enriched the forest.

There were 178 wildlife species, including six of amphibians, eight of reptiles, 137 of birds and 27 of mammals, in the forest.

But, a recent survey showed some species of bamboos, grasses and trees like Goda, Ban-Chalta, Chapalish, Bahera, Menda, Amlaki, Dumur, Gotgotta and Bajna as dominant in the forest while many of the species are already extinct or on

the verge of extinction, sources said.

Of the animals, two species of amphibians, two of reptiles, two of mammals and some eleven species of birds are mostly found in the forest now, they said.

Illegal felling of trees posed a serious threat to the forest, once natural habitats of the wildlife, while poaching endangered the wild animals, including elephants and birds there.

The forest has been degraded so much that the natural habitat in the sanctuary now has become very poor in quality for wildlife, said the sources.

Various species of trees, bamboos and grasses and wildlife, however, are still profuse in the protected area calling for a comprehensive move for conservation.

Elephants use the forest as their route for movement while different species of Cat, Buno-Shukar, Hanuman, Kant tukra, Choto Basanta Bowry, Banaspati, Kanakua, Ababil, Tila Ghugu, Finge, Buna Moyna, Bhat Shalik, Gu Shalik and some aquatic animals are available at

Chunati Sanctuary.

While visiting the sanctuary this correspondent found local people cleared off the forest to erect huts or to do cultivation.

The Nishorgo project will be implemented through community participation involving these people as local stakeholders, said Mehrin A Mahbub, Nishorgo Communication specialist.

"Besides, private business community, local and international nature conservation institutes such as International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Bangladesh Wild Life Trust and the nature fan individuals are also working as the partners of this project," Abdul Mutaleb, conservator of forest, Chittagong circle, told The Daily Star.

The project will offer alternative income generating opportunities for those live on forest resources and promote the resources and beauty of the natural forest through artificial regeneration of valuable species of both plants and animals, sources said.



Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary.

City passenger sheds under illegal occupation

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

Most of the city passenger sheds have long been under illegal occupation of vendors, vagabonds, tea stall, phone-fax shop owners and miscreants.

Finding no space available at the sheds, the helpless commuters wait for vehicles on open footpaths or roads, no matter whether it is scorching summer or incessant snowing.

The sheds at New Market, Agrabad, Choumuhani, Kazir Dewri, Laldighi, Station Road, Sholoshahar Gate No-2, Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) area, Wasa Intersection, Muradpur, Chittagong College Road and Chittagong Port areas are virtually occupied by hawkers and

Hawkers and a section of dishonest businessmen occupy a passenger shed near Chittagong Municipal Model School in the port city.



STAR PHOTO

small traders.

The Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) leased 38 sheds to eight firms for 25 years in 1989. They leased one-third's space of each shed for specific commercial use, like newspaper or magazine stall. But the lessees are violating the agreement in most of the cases.

Acting City Mayor M Monzur Alam said they will investigate the matter and take actions against the violators of the agreement.

Two audio-video and one phone-fax shops were doing brisk businesses by capturing two-third's space of the shed at Station Road. Commuters often face trouble to stand there for transports. Customers or relatives of the shopkeepers always occupy

the lone bench of the shed.

Private Ambulance Drivers' Association and phone-fax traders have occupied the two sheds at both ends of the road in front of the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) while typists and stamp sellers have captured the entire space of the shed in front of Janata Bank at Agrabad Commercial Area. The shed in front of the General Post Office (GPO) at New Market area is taken by two small vendors, one newspaper-plus-magazine seller and another is betel leaf seller.

Everyday more than 10,000 transports -- bus, tempo and human hauler -- ply to and from this route but there is hardly any space for passengers at the shed.

Another shed at the New

Market area near the foot-over bridge and Municipal Model High School evokes the worst kind of impression about a 'passenger shed' in true sense. One will fall in labyrinth to spot the shed. The mobile vendors, largely sellers of old garments, have taken so much freedom that they sprawl their hegemony even on the roads and footpaths, overshadowing the shed.

Thus, the sheds at Kazir Dewri, Laldighi and Wasa Intersection go to magazine sellers while Sholoshahar, Chittagong College, Muradpur and few other sheds are now (partly or entirely) belong to the tea stall and betel leaf owners.

"I travel quite often to and from my college and New Market area or Sholoshahar, and each

time I try in vain to wait under the shed to catch the bus," said Rizwanul Haq, an English teacher of Chittagong College.

Rashedul Amin, a banker who travels everyday to and from Agrabad Commercial Area, said "I have never found a good space due to the encroachment of Agrabad shed."

He said he usually takes autorickshaw to reach his bank or home at Chawk Bazar to avoid such hazard.

"We spent a lot of money to get possession here and we need to recover the loss anyhow," said Jahangir Alam, a vendor at the shed near Municipal School.

Moazzem, a typist at Agrabad shed, said they had to make police and goons happy on regular basis to run their business.

theweekthatwas

Hawkers' Samity AGM held

The 15th annual general meeting of Chittagong Sangbadpatra Hawkercs' Bahumukhi Samabaya Samity Ltd on Monday passed unanimously five proposals, including two audit reports for 2004-2005 and budget for 2005-2006.

The AGM was held at a local community centre with Samity President Hossain Ahmad in the chair. Md Anwar Ali Sikder, a veteran member of the organisation, was present as the chief guest.

Samity General Secretary Mokbul Hossain Sarker placed the audit reports, budget and the secretary's report at the AGM.

Founder President Manir Anmad, former President Nurul Alam, Vice President Md Soleman, former general secretary Arun Sen, founder member Md Oli Ahmad, Chattagram Sangbadpatra Hawkercs' Union President Md Abu Taher, Vice President Zainal Abedin, General Secretary Md Daudul Islam, Joint Secretary Ali Akbar Majumder and Samity Director Selim Reza also spoke.

Cantt English School inaugurated

Army Chief Lt General Moin U Ahmed called upon the students to serve the

country imbued with the spirit of patriotism after completion of education.

He was addressing as chief guest the inauguration of a new building of Cantonment English School on Wednesday at Chittagong Cantonment. General Officer Commanding (GOC) of 24-Infantry Division and Chittagong Area Commander Maj Gen Iqbal Karim Bhuiyan also spoke at the function.

The Army Chief emphasised the need for co-curricular activities like culture and sports alongside the academic education in order to develop merit of the young students.

Maj Gen Iqbal Karim said the school initially will be English medium from class one to class five as per international curriculum, and national curriculum will be followed from class six.

He said that the school will gradu-

ally be upgraded to Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) level.

Later, the army chief also inaugurated the newly built 'Cantonment School and College' at Khagrachhari.

'Publish gazette of 40pc DA'

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) Secretary General Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul urged the government to publish immediately the gazette of the 40 per cent dearness allowance in accordance with the declaration of the Sixth Wage Board.

He made the call while exchanging views with the journalists on Thursday at Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) office at Chittagong Press Club.

Bulbul also demanded full implementation of the Fifth Wage Board and payment of the dearness allowances in all newspapers and news agencies in Chittagong.

The journalists at the meeting said the government's move to control media by enacting a law will rather hinder the press freedom and it will be used as a tool of harassment.

Former BFUJ vice president Obaidul Hoque, Vice President Arun Das Gupta, Joint Secretary General Asif Siraj, executive committee members Nur Mohammad Rafiq and Samir Barua, Chittagong Press Club General Secretary Kalim Sarwar, CUJ General Secretary Shahid Ul Alam, Joint Secretary Nazimuddin Shyamal and Daily Sangbad Bureau Chief Hasan Ferdous also spoke. CUJ President Mostak Ahmad presided.

Classical Song confce held

Ninth National Classical Song Conference-2006 was held on Friday at the Chittagong Theatre Institute auditorium.

Sadaranga Sangskritik Parishad organised the conference to mark the 500th birth anniversary of music maestro Mia Tan Sen.

Noted artistes from Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Narail and Joipurhat and the students of Sadaranga performed songs and played different musical instruments at the conference.

Parishad leader Animesh Chakrabarty presented the cultural function. Pandit Bijan Chowdhury, Jaial

Ahmad, Asit Dey, Jahar Mukherjee, Badal Pramanik, Swapan Kumar Sarker, Rubaiyat Ferdous Shaon, Surajit Sen, Milan Bhattacharya, Palash Dev and Ratan Das performed, among others.

Paying rich tribute to Tan Sen, Parishad General Secretary Sharmamoy Chakrabarty presented the annual report of the organisation.

JCD sweeps CMCSU election

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of ruling BNP, swept the Chittagong Medical College Students' Union (CMCSU) election for 2005-2006.

JCD's win was easier as

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of Awami League, continued boycott of election for the fourth consecutive time.

JCD bagged 19 out of 20 posts, including vice president and general secretary in the election held on Wednesday. Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS), the students' wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, was the nearest rival followed by Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU).

Both JCD and ICS candidates for literature secretary were declared winners on Saturday by the election commission as they got equal number of votes.

Abdul Matin and Imranur Rahman Sonet were elected new Vice President and General Secretary respectively.

A total of 885 voters out of 908, cast their votes in the election.

CCCI to work to attract FDI

The annual general meeting (AGM) of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) for the year 2004-2005 was held on Thursday with a vow to make more efforts for the overall development of the port city.

The AGM also decided to arrange tour for its members to several countries across the world to attract direct foreign investment (FDI) in Chittagong.

The chamber leaders in the AGM also envisaged some early plans and programmes for the benefit of business community in Chittagong. These include a meeting with President Iajuddin Ahmed, organising the 14th Chittagong International Trade Fair (CITF)-2006 from February 9 and groundbreaking ceremony of World Trade Centre (WTC) soon.

Chamber President Saifuzzaman Chowdhury chaired the AGM. Senior Vice President SM Nurul Hoque, Vice President MA Latif, directors Nazmul Haque Chowdhury, Abdul Gaffar Dobash, M Amirul Haque, Mahbub Ali, Syed Jamal Ahmed, Mohammed Mohsin and Ashik Bhuiyan also spoke.

The AGM made a fresh appeal to the government to formulate a regulatory commission with representatives from both public and private sectors to ensure the competence, transparency and accountability of Chittagong Port.



Turkish Ambassador in Bangladesh Ferit Ergin, second from left, receives a crest from Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) President Saifuzzaman Chowdhury Javed at the Chittagong chamber office on Saturday.



Chittagong Sangbadpatra Hawkercs' Bahumukhi Samabaya Samity General Secretary Makbul Hossain Sarker speaks at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the organisation at its office on