

## CU campus-a sanctuary for birds, rare plants



ZOBAR HOSSAIN SHIDER

Birds find the steep sides of hills on the Chittagong University campus as safe place to build nests, left, while different species of birds, right, perch on the trees.

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR

Chittagong University (CU) is now a sanctuary for a wide varieties of birds and rare plants, greatly enhancing the campus' attraction.

The university is situated on around 1258 acres of land with hills and forests comprising around 72 per cent of the total land.

The authorities also developed a forest enriched with flora and fauna on around 400 acres of land turning the campus a sanctuary for the birds.

Out of 788 species of birds of the country, 151 species are living on CU campus, say surveys conducted by the students and teachers of Zoology Department, adding that it is 20 per cent of the total birds.

Of them, 87 per cent of the birds stay permanently on the campus while the rests join in

different seasons.

According to the experts and researchers, the number of species of birds in Bangladesh is higher than those of the neighbouring countries compared to the basis of land area.

The statistics show 1,302 species of birds are living in India, 737 in Pakistan, 124 in the Maldives, 441 in Sri Lanka, 680 in Bhutan, 901 in Nepal and 500 species in Afghanistan, said Prof Ghazi SM Asmat of Zoology Department, also president of Bangladesh Wildlife Network.

Prof Asmat in his survey in 1985, the first one after establishment of the university in 1966, found 79 species of birds on the campus.

Later, two other teachers, Dr M Farid Ahsan and Nasima Khanam of the same department, conducted survey to discover 38 other species of birds on the campus.

Two other surveys, conducted by Umme Habiba and

Mohammed Kamruzzaman of the department, in 2003 and 2004, found presence of 34 more new species of birds.

The birds include different types of yellow-breasted singing birds (Shalik), Heron, Kite, Owl, Nightingale, Dove, Great Tit, Greater Coucal, Green bee eater, Barn swallow, White wagtail, Sadamata Nakuti, Suichora, Ababil and Khanjani.

Prof Asmat said, "The birds get a tranquil and friendly atmosphere in and around the campus where they also find a plenty of food as they to live there permanently."

"If the university authorities take steps to conserve the forest and save the wildlife from poachers it would surely be further enriched with wide varieties of wildlife in future," he added.

Apart from birds, more than 1,000 species of natural and

planted plants enriched the Botanical Garden of the university to offer the students as well as the teachers a rare scope for carrying out practical and research works inside the campus.

The garden spreads over some 100 acres of land adjoining Pritilata Hall on the south of the campus.

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

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

There are separate blocks for nurturing medicinal, shrub, woody, orchid, teak, palash, mahagani, gymnosperm, lemon, jackfruit, palm, coconut, rose, seasonal flower, manjuri and spices.

The medicinal plants of the garden include Sarpagandha,

Harjoralata, Nisinda, Kalo Megh, Tulashi Pata, Aurjun, Bohera, Thankuni, Dhutara, Basak, Neem, Tamarind and Horitaki.

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

The garden is also blessed with Drosera, a rare species of plant that attracts insects and kills them with its secretion.

The Drosera usually grows on the hillside fallow land of the garden in the winter, said Prof M Atiqur Rahman, chairman of Botany Department.

## Ctg-Dohazari rail line limps along

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

The trains of Chittagong-Dohazari branch line of Bangladesh Railway (BR) no more attract passengers in large number as most of the tracks and stations are lying in dilapidated condition.

Besides, the tracks have become risky for journey due to continued pilferage of slipper and the stations also do not attract any passenger to step in due to their poor and dirty interior.

The Chittagong-Dohazari branch line is one of the examples how once a feasible and profitable organisation turns into a losing concern within few years, thanks to the indifference to the authorities concerned.

Six pairs of train used to ply everyday between Chittagong and Dohazari even two decades ago while number of passengers was no less than 20,000. All the 12 stations on the 45-kilometre route have always been found full of life with huge passengers, including government and non-government employees, students and businessmen.

No matter whether it was day

or night, the stations Jhautala, Sholoshahar, Jan Ali Hat, Gomdandi, Bengura, Khan Mohan, Dhalghat, Patiya, Kharna, Kanchannagar, Hashimpur and Dohazari were seen crowded amid hustle and bustle.

People of vast southern Chittagong were greatly benefited with the introduction of this route by the then Assam Bengal Railway authorities in early fifties. Passengers of Boalkhali, Patiya, Dohazari, Chandanaish and Satkania upazilas as well as those from Bandarban hill district were largely dependent on this route when the other modes of transports were not available. The businessmen also had an advantage with the train services as they used the route to transport their goods to the city daily.

Now all these scenarios are a matter of history.

The degradation began in early eighties when the authorities of eastern zone here had closed down five of the six train services on the route showing loss, instead of taking proper initiatives to make the route sustainable and viable.

The people of southern

Chittagong said continued ignorance, indifference and lack of vision by the authorities made the route miserable.

"The only train that plies on the route only at night is of no benefit for passengers of southern Chittagong. Vagabonds, smugglers, anti-social elements and members of the red-light-zone always found in full control of the train now a days," said Abdul Mannan, a businessman, and Mohammad Jahangir, a student, from Patiya upazila.

Travelling without ticket had long been a common practice that ruined the route, sources said.

"Many passengers had also gotten into a habit of taking this undue advantage by managing the railway staffs," they said.

They, however, said if proper initiatives are taken this route will again be a profit-making one and people of southern Chittagong be benefited immensely.

They said if the branch line can be extended up to Cox's Bazar it will attract tourists in great numbers and thereby contribute to expanding tourism in this part of the country.



ZOBAR HOSSAIN SHIDER

The rail tracks at Chittagong-Dohazari railway section are lying in dilapidated condition at Dohazari upazila with grass and mud replacing the gravels.

## the week that was



STAR PHOTO

Institute for Environment and Development (IED) takes out a procession in the port area marking the Begum Rokeya Day on Saturday.

### Begum Rokeya Day observed

Speakers at a discussion on Saturday said the womenfolk have no access to many sectors despite ability and competence.

"The working women in Bangladesh have shown aptitude and skill at their workplaces but they are not yet given opportunities in challenging fields," they said while speaking at a discussion organised by Samajtantrik Mahila Forum in observance of Begum Rokeya Day.

Forum leader Poppy Chakma chaired the meeting at its Dost Building office. Bangladesher Samjtantrik Dal (BSD) Chittagong District Coordinator Razekuzzaman Ratan and writer Ferdous Ara Alim spoke.

### Withdrawal of cases against lawyers demanded

Leaders of Sammilita Ainjibi Parishad at a rally on the court premises on Thursday demanded immediate withdrawal of sedition cases filed against eminent lawyers, including Dr Kamal Hossain, Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud.

They said Dr Kamal, Barrister Amir and Barrister Rakan are true patriots of the country. The cases were filed against them as part of a conspiracy, they added.

Bangabandhu Ainjibi Parishad President Mahub Uddin Ahmad, former president of Bar Association Anwarul Kabir, Jatiya Ainjibi Parishad Convenor Abu Mohammad Hashem and former general secretary of Bar Association Monotosh Barua spoke.

Chittagong District Bar Association General Secretary Ratan Kumar Roy presided over the rally.

The rally was followed by a procession.

### Free eye camp at Patiya

Lions Club of Chittagong Presidency and Chittagong Lions Eye Hospital jointly organised a free eye camp for the poor patients on Saturday.

Former lawmaker and Awami League leader Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury Babu inaugurated the camp as chief guest on AJ Chowdhury College Ground at Poschim Patiya.

A team of specialists from the Eye Hospital provided free prescription and medicine to 2,000 patients while around 360 patients with cataract problems were registered

for operation to be done at a convenient time later on.

Babu in his speech said a 100-bed full-fledged hospital will be established in the area if his party is voted to power in the next general elections.

M Shamsul Haque, Ahmad Hossain, Dr Naushad Khan, Shamim Mostafa and Syed Jamal Ahmed were present.

### AIDS Day observed

Speakers at a discussion urged the people to start a mass movement to create social awareness about HIV/AIDS.

They said though the disease is under control in Bangladesh it might break out in epidemic form in future as the country is in high risk of AIDS for its geographical position.

The discussion was organised marking the World AIDS Day by Ghasful, a non-government organisation, at Madarbari Sebak (Sweeper) Colony on Wednesday.

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Medical Officer Chittaranjan Chowdhury was the chief guest at the discussion with local club Udayan President Jagadish Das in the chair.

Ghasful Chief Executive Aftabur Rahman, Bahar Uddin, Ghasful Medical Officer Dr Arafar Hossain, Dr Sadia Islam, Anjuman Banu and

Jahirul Ahsan participated in the discussion.

The speakers said awareness is the main medicine to fight the deadly disease.

### Death anniversary

Dhrubatar Sangskritik Sangsad, Chittagong unit observed the 50th death anniversary of eminent litterateur Manik Bhandopadhyaya on Wednesday.

Marking the day, Sangsad organised a meeting titled "Manik Bhandopadhyaya: Life, Activity and Education" at its office at Dost Building with its organiser Dipak Chandra Pal in the chair.

The speakers said the education from the life of Manik will help the progressive cultural organisations strengthen anti-imperialist cultural movement to show the nation a roadmap of freedom against the oppression of imperialism.

Dr Ariful Islam, Vivekananda Biswas, Imran Hossain, Sukanta Biswas, Sheikh Farid and Mridul Kanti Dev also spoke.

### BELA workshop held

Bangladesh Environment Lawyers' Association (BELA) arranged a

follow-up workshop for its network members on Thursday.

BELA, Chittagong unit, organised the workshop under its project "Manusher Jonyo" with its Divisional Coordinator Advocate Anwarul Islam Chowdhury in the chair.

TRK Consultancy Service Chief Executive Rumina Kabir conducted the workshop.

Different aspects of environmental disaster, means and strategies to prevent the disaster were discussed at the workshop.

### Role of pvt educational instts lauded

Speakers at a discussion said private educational institutions are drawing attractions of people like other private sectors for their quality service.

They were speaking at the class ending ceremony of the Residential Model Cadet School and College on the college campus on Wednesday.

Principal of Chittagong Govt City College Prof Sams Ud Doha was the chief guest in the ceremony while former upazila chairman of Sitakunda Shafiqul Islam, banker Mostak Hossain, The Daily Purbakone Sub-Editor Kalyan Chakrabarti Babu and columnist Sirajul Hoq Chowdhury