

CHITTAGONG UNIVERSITY A safe haven for flora and fauna

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN

There are dense forest touching the hillocks . From far away it looks like a canvas painted by a famous artist. In the early morning or in the falling afternoon, if any one sees a herd of deer, there is nothing to be surprised as it is a common scenario of Chittagong University (CU).

Because of geographical locations, there are huge assemblages of biodiversity on the CU campus, 22 kilometres off the port city. It is full of greens and a sanctuary for the wild animals.

Covered with creepers, shrubs, and big

trees, there are also around 30 to 32 small hillocks on the campus. There are more trees from various classes and families as well as animals from various species in the hillocks.

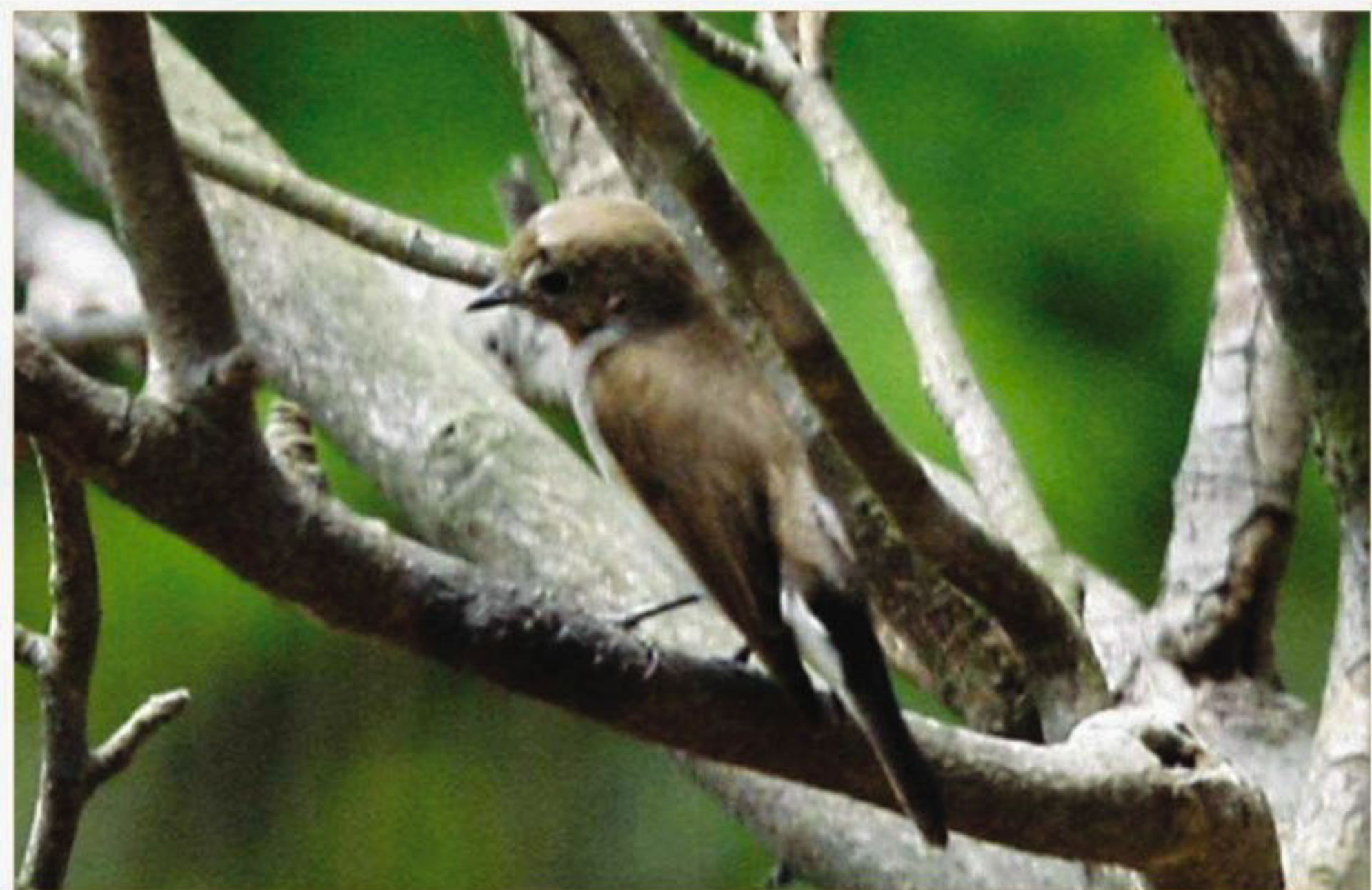
In the bush of trees, maya deer, monkey, wild hog, porcupine, rabbit, squirrel and birds of various species roam without any fear. Besides, there are some rare species of snakes and frogs.

The university is situated on 1753.88 acres of land. Of these, 865-acres are plain and hilly rough area, a haven of flora and fauna. A combination of various kinds of trees, wildlife and insects have given the university a unique characteristic.



Chittagong University

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS



The number of birds is increasing on the campus gradually. Once upon a time there were around 80 species of birds that have now increased to around 150.

Thirty-five species of frogs are found in Bangladesh. Of them, 22 species of frogs are available on the CU campus. In only half a kilometre of Kata Pahar (hill), there are frogs of 15 species that are rare in the world. There are three kinds of tortoises on the campus, a zoologist said.

Institute of Forestry and Environmental Sciences of Chittagong University (IFESCU) launched an integrated initiative in 1982 to conserve the eco-system of the campus. The institute has so far brought around 550 acres of land under the afforestation programme and at least 5.50 lakh saplings of trees were planted.

IFESCU research revealed that there are 187 species of trees, 174 species of shrubs, 396 species of herbs, 78 species of climbers, 44

species of orchids, 47 species of mosses and 52 species of ferns on the campus.

There are a huge number of medicinal plants and timber trees including Dharamara (Stereospermum Personatum), Aamcundul (Swintonia Floribunda), Tun (Toona Ciliata), Arshul (Vitex Glabrata) Boilum (Anisoptera Scaphula), Pitaraj (Aphanamixis Polystachya), Agor (Aquilaria Agallocha), Hijol (Barringtonia Acutangula), Telshur (Hopea Odorata), Kanjal (Bischofia Javanica), Chapalish (Artocarpus Chama), Banshpata (Podocarpus Nerifolia) and Mohua (Madhuca Indica).

There are also 53 species of ornamental plants on the campus.

Moreover, there are 19 species of mammals, 20 species of reptiles, 12 species of amphibians, 150 species of birds, 130 species of fishes and 117 species of insects, recorded from various researches conducted by IFESCU.

The number of invertebrate species are more than the wildlife, the research said.

Hunting posed a threat to the diverse collection of animals of CU campus, said Prof Gazi Syed Mohammad Asmat.

For preserving the biodiversity of CU campus, authorities should declare the campus a reserved area, said Prof Gazi Asmat.

The species of birds are increasing rapidly on the campus, he said, adding that for preserving the birds the campus should be divided into four corners and students can play vital role in this regard.

In comparison with many protected areas of Bangladesh, CU campus is much more enriched with biodiversity, said Prof Mohammad Kamal Hossain of Institute of Forestry and Environmental Sciences.

He said the huge natural resource of the CU campus could play an important role to the expansion of education, research and tourism.

Dr Kamal said for the preservation of its biodiversity, the government should take initiatives.

SAVE BALUYAR DIGHI

PRANABESH CHAKRABORTY

It is difficult for anyone to find Baluyar Dighi in the port city as the encroachers grabbed all of its banks by constructing illegal structures.

Grocery shops, welding shops, godowns, unplanned semi-pucca houses and buildings have been built to fill Baluyar Dighi, once a large water body.

The encroachers also have put up bamboo and wood in the pond, filled up the eastern side and built up many illegal semi-pucca structures on the western side. Multi-storied buildings are also being constructed to grab the pond when the authorities concerned are indifferent to the problem.

Baluyar Dighi is located in the north side of the Khatunganj, commercial area of the port city, and on the southern side of the Chaktai canal.

Landlord Balu Poddar dug the dighi during the British era near Avoymitra Shwashan. Sixty-year-old Md Siddique Mia who live at a slum along with his family members near the pond, said water of the pond is being polluted and no one has any heed to protect the pond that they are bound to use for bathing and other daily activities as they have no alternative.

Locals said some influential people are grabbing the Baluyar Dighi as the authorities concerned are not taking action to save the pond.

They said Shafi Saodagor, Nur Mohammad Saodagor, Asgar Ali Saodagor, Maqbul Ali and some other influential men are now owners of the dighi.

Mahiuddin, a college student, said he used to swim and bathe with his childhood friends in the dighi. He said it still can be protected from pollution and the grabbers if authorities come forward.

Dr Alak Paul, chairman of Geography and Environmental Studies Department of Chittagong University (CU), said pollution of the water body would pose threat to the public health.

Pointing to its ecological importance, Dr Alak said the large pond contains the rainwater of the area, increasing the underground water level. If it disappears, waterlogging will hit the locals in the long run, he said, adding that the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) and Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) have a great role to play in saving the dighi.

Mentioning the importance of the dighi in protecting biodiversity and the environment, he said, "The authorities concerned often take steps without tangible result as the landlords and the grabbers continue to encroach on the water bodies."

CDA Deputy Town Planner Shahinul Islam Khan said action would be taken against the grabbers.

When asked, Mayor Mohammad Majur Alam said, "We want good environment but owners of the dighi have to take initiative to protect the water body first and if they want we are ready to help."



BALUYAR DIGHI

theweekthatwas



STAR PHOTO

Artists who are participating in the exhibition pose for photograph with former principal Hasi Chakraborty.

Physiotherapy centre opens

Sangsaptak, a non-government organisation (NGO), launched a physiotherapy and rehabilitation centre titled "Kalyani" at Anwara upazila for the underprivileged people in the southern part of Chittagong.

Sangsaptak President Rawshan Ara Chowdhury inaugurated the centre at upazila headquarters on Monday.

Rawshan Ara in her inaugural speech said the persons with disability are not different from others as they are also members of our family and society. She said if they get proper guidance and service they would become resources of the country.

Physiotherapist Dr Kamruzzaman, Medical

Officer of Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Dr Swadesh Barman and Chief Executive Officer of Sangsaptak Saurav Barua also spoke at the function.

Photo exhibition begins

A six-day photo exhibition began in the port city on Sunday organised by 'Panchadash', 15th batch of Chittagong Government Fine Arts College at Chittagong Shilpakala Academy.

Former principal of Chittagong Fine Arts College Hasi Chakraborty inaugurated the programme.

Fifty four works of 17 artistes are being displayed in the exhibition.

The exhibition will remain open till February 25.

5 get CCC Ekushey Padak

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) awarded five people with the Ekushey Padak-2011. The awardees are Prof Dr Abu Yusuf (posthumously) in education, Ataur Rahman Khan Kiaser (posthumously) in social service, Sekander Hossain Mian (posthumously) in Social development, Obaidul Huq in journalism and Mohammad Nasir (posthumously) in music.

Primary and Mass Education Minister Dr Afsarul Ameen distributed the awards at a function on February 21 as the chief guest.

Teachers to submit memo

Teachers' leaders on Saturday said Bangladesh Primary Teachers Association will submit a memorandum containing 13 recommendations to the prime minister.

The recommendations include implementation of education policy and individual salary scale for the teachers.

The leaders announced their demands at a meeting of the Chittagong divisional workers held on the Katalganj Government Primary School premises on February 18.

They said if the government fails to meet their demands by March 30 they will stage a grand demonstration and mass strike programmes.

Chief Adviser of the association Quazi Fazlul Hoque was the chief guest at the programme with city unit President Babu Shubal Chandra Achariya in the chair.

B M Asadullah, Hafez Ahmed, Zafar Ahmed, Shafiqul Hoque, Jobaer Alam, Abul Bashar and Harunur Rashid also spoke at the programme.

Contribution of Jatindra Mohon recalled

Indian High Commissioner Somnath Gosh on Monday said Jatindra Mohan Sen Gupta was a non-communal democrat who sacrificed his life for the independence of the Indian subcontinent.

Somnath was addressing as the chief guest at a memorial meeting of Desapriya Jatindra Mohan Sengupta on the occasion of his 125th birth anniversary organised by 'Jatindra Mohan Sen Gupta Janma Joyanti Udjapan Parishad' at J M Sen Hall in the port city.

He said Jatindra Mohan fought against British colonialism and participated in non-cooperation movement.

Women's rights leader Mushtari Safi, former additional secretary Depak Ranjan Sengupta, Joint Secretary of Industry Ministry Rita Sen spoke on the occasion with Prof Anupam Sen in the chair.