

Dilapidated Railway Museum reopens

ARUN BIKASH DEY

Bangladesh Railway Museum in Chittagong reopened on August 1 only for two hours for the public after fourteen months of its closure since May 2010.

The railway authorities closed the museum without any notice, causing suffering to the visitors.

Now the museum remains open to the visitors from 3:00pm to 5:00pm. Earlier, it remained open from 3:00pm to 6:00pm in summer while 3:00pm to 5:00pm in winter.

Bungalow of Bangladesh Railway east zone was made museum on December 15, 2003 under the initiative of the then director general Rezaul Karim, railway sources said.

The museum has been limping since its inception with three temporary staff. The dilapidated condition of the museum shows that none is here to take care of it for long.

The museum building has become risky for lack of renovation as the door and windows are decaying for negligence of the authorities.

Shaptarshi Barua, a visitor, said the museum could be an attractive tourist spot if it is properly maintained and exposed to the people at large.

She said there is no initiative by the high-ups to project Chittagong as a good tourist destination.

Sub-assistant engineer Golam Mostafa, in-charge of the museum, said they kept the museum closed on security reasons for about 14 months and have reopened following a verbal order of Divisional Railway Manager in Chittagong. The divisional manager assured them of taking measures for proper security and development, he added.



Bangladesh Railway Museum in city's Ambagan area.

PHOTO:
ANURUP KANTI DAS

Mostafa said the local hoodlums chose the area for anti-social activities as the museum is situated in a desolate place. The criminals assault the museum staff if they

protest their anti-social activities. Three staff work here in three shifts, he said.

He said they have informed the higher authorities of the insufficient

number of staff and recommended for increasing security measures.

Yusuf Ali Mridha, general manager of Bangladesh Railway east zone, said he asked the officer

concerned to submit a report about the matter.

Tarun Kanti Bala, divisional railway engineer in Chittagong, said they have requested the authorities

concerned to construct a boundary wall, set up a check post at the entrance, renovate the museum building and fix fee for the visitors to run the museum properly.

Officer-in-Charge of Khulshi Police Station Abu Jafar Mohammad Omar Faruk said the railway has its own security men for providing security to its structures. He said the question of shortage of manpower is simply a lame excuse.

Bangladesh Railway Museum is situated in the Ambagan area under Khulshi Police Station on a hillock opposite to the Railway Workshop. The area of the museum is 4,394 square feet.

The museum has a rich collection of relics of railway equipment. The monograms of Eastern Bengal Railway and Bengal Railway of the British regime are in the museum. The BR monograms of 1972 and 1985 are also there.

It exhibits different equipments used in railway traffic department. Samples of guard belt, guard cap, fog signal, side lamp, gate lamp, telescope, lever spring point, steel sleeper, fish plate have also been displayed in the museum used by traffic department.

Samples of control fan panel, label base, control key, signal reverser, ark lever, point timing relay, control selector, control phone, key box, point indicator lamp, signal arm, point machine, analog telephone of the BR used by it's signal department are also displayed.

Samples of transmitter, alarm chain communication, carriage fan, table lamp, guard control switch, reading lamp and dynamo, alarm bell, engine governor, speedometre, horn, headlight are also displayed which are used by it's communication department.

theweekthatwas

Call to erect Mirsarai tragedy monument

Speakers at a meeting in the port city on Sunday urged the authorities concerned to erect a memorial in memory of tragic accident of Mirsarai.

Sandipana Sanskritik Forum organised the meeting at its office at Dosta Building under Kotwali Police Station.

The speakers urged the government not to issue driving license to the illiterate and unskilled persons.

Founder Director of Sandipana D K Das Mamun, lyricist and music composer Abdul Gafur Hali, folk versifier Nurul Huda, educationists Babul Das, Jafar Iqbal, Prof Shib Prasad and Prof Sanchayan Barua also spoke at the meeting.

Jadugopal Boishnab presided over the meeting.

Seminar on underprivileged held

A seminar on development of underprivileged people was held in the port city on Sunday.

People's Welfare Foundation organised the programme at Maniruzzaman Islamabadi Memorial Hall.

Former lawmaker M Kafil Uddin addressed the event as the chief guest with Foundation Chairman Wahid Murad in the chair.

HM Mujibul Haque Shukkur, Advocate Abu Naser Talukdar, Foundation Secretary AK Azad, Md Khorshedul Alam, M Idrich and Imran Ahmed also spoke at the programme.

Call to resist Indian supremacy

City BNP President Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury on Sunday called upon the people to resist Indian cultural domination and supremacy.

He made the call at a view exchange meeting at his own resident at Mehediabagh in the city.

Metropolitan Jasad Vice-President Md Ali Azam Chowdhury presided over the meeting where Bandar unit BNP President MA Aziz, Jasad central Press Secretary Jasimuddin Chowdhury, Jasad leaders Jahangir Alam Shohel, Nazrul Islam Tuhi and Jahurul Alam also spoke at the meeting.

Uttar Nandotsab celebrated

Uttar Nandotsab, a Hindu religious festival, was celebrated amid festivity at Central Mohora marking the birth anniversary of God Sri Krishna.

'Gita Prochar Sangha' arranged the programme.

Installation ceremony, worship of Sri Krishna, recitation from the holy Geeta and a discussion were held on the occasion.

Tarun Acharjee, Sujan Das, Chhoton Das, Sanjeeb Dewanjee and Litu Ghosh spoke at the discussion.

'Save villagers from Halda erosion'

Thirteen freedom fighters in a statement in the port city urged the authorities concerned to save their houses, schools, mosques and village from the erosion of the river Halda.

They said village Gunamordan played a vital role and its inhabitants fought against Pakistani occupation forces during the War of Liberation but the inhabitants of the village are losing their land, homes and habitats due to river erosion.

Signatories to the statement are Mohammad Abu Taher Chowdhury, Abu Mohammad Emran, Mohammad Abul Hasem, Mohammad Jahur Miyan, Dr Farid Ahmed, Md Habibur Rahman and Mahbubul Alam.

Nishpap: Ray of hope for the autistic



Autistic children render song in their music class while another group of students, inset, draw pictures in their class at Nishpap, a school for the children with autism, in Katalganj area in the port city.

PRANABESH CHAKRABORTY

Shubhanil from his childhood is different from other children. He could not adjust with members of his family, including his parents. He was not interested in playing or other activities that children do as usual, as he is an autistic child. But the nine-year-old boy now draws pictures and is able to make others understand his necessity.

He is learning his vocational and other lessons in Nishpap, a school run by the guardians of autistic children in the port city.

Ribu and Mahi, students of the school, have drawn many pictures depicting nature. They respond to others through occupational therapy and other process. And, they are learning those in the school, a non-traditional, non-profitable and welfare institute in Chittagong.

Nishpap launched its journey in July in 2010 with only four autistic children in the Panchalaish residential area. Later it was shifted to Katalganj residential area near Chawkbazar as number of students has

increased. It has now 22 students.

There are 17 teachers and four assistants who look after and train the children at the school. It has also 50 donors and over 200 life members.

With a view to training up the autistic children, to helping understand the characteristics of guardians and above all to making them self-reliant through vocational education, it continues its activities.

Autistic Children Development and Welfare Centre (ACDWC), Chittagong is one of the organisations which is running Nishpap for the autistic children. The school also trains the guardians how to behave with their autistic children.

Engineer Jhulan Kumar Das, secretary of ACDWC, said he was worried about his son when doctor confirmed that his son is suffering from autism. He took his son to Monobikash Kendra in Kolkata where doctors told him that there is no treatment for it. Only training the autistic children and understanding their behaviour are solution to those kind of cases, Jhulan added.

Doctors in Kolkata told him that two institutes in Chittagong are working on autistic children where he can admit his son.

He said he first tried his child to adapt with general school but failed as he was not able to receive the lessons.

Later, Taufiqueel Alam Bablu, SM Ali Akbar and Jhulan established Nishpap, a special school for the autistic children.

Now many kind hearted men have extended their helping hands to the organisation. It is an achievement of the institute, he added.

The programmes in the school include creating awareness among guardians through counselling, training for the guardians and teachers, preparing the suitable students for the mainstream schools and arrange seminars, conferences to aware the people of the country.

Jhulan said they need a piece of land and own building as many guardians now want to admit their children in the institution seeking government's help in this regard.

Dr Basana Muhuri of Chittagong Medical College (CMC) who is working on the issue and also a guardian of an autistic child, told The Daily Star that in Chittagong autistic children need many special educations like occupational therapy and sensory therapy.

Dr Basana said through these therapies and processes, the communication skills and socialisation of the autistic children are developed so that they can adapt with the society.

Many guardians have come forward to establish such institutions in the country but government's support is needed for transforming the institutions into bigger ones, Dr Basana, also adviser of Nishpap, said.

"In our country, one in every 110 persons is autistic. So every conscious person should come forward and stand united for making a brighter future of the autistic children", she said, adding that it is a matter of hope that present government is taking initiatives to reduce the problems of persons with autism.