

Have a different day at Sitesh Deb sanctuary

A CORRESPONDENT,
Moulvibazar

Banyaprani Seba Foundation, a sanctuary set up by famous wildlife conservator Sitesh Ranjan Deb at Rupashpur of Sreemangol upazila in Moulvibazar district, now hosts a number of creatures including those of rare and exotic species. Upon entrance to the wildlife sanctuary, one will be easily attracted to a herd of hog deer. As one enters his hands inside the cage to cuddle the graceful creatures, they will come near, even lick the visitor's hands with their tongues.

Straight ahead there are geckos. They will try to 'chase' the visitor from inside the cage and throw sputum. Chirping, loitering and fluttering, beautiful birds of different species will amuse the visitors. "You will hear some of the birds, especially mynahs, utter Bangla words," said Sitesh, founder of the sanctuary. There are doves, jungle fowls, greater hornbills, water hens, pigeons, white breasted water hens and a host of other birds. There are 'fruit eating' golden tortoises that can climb trees.

Another attraction of this sanctuary is flying squirrels. These innocent looking creatures can fly 300 to 400 feet, using their skin that spread like wings. A rare species white tiger offers an amusing sight to the visitors. Two bears, kept in the cage next to the white tiger's, often accompany Sitesh or his sons to take a stroll outside. The ferocious jungle animals now behave like domesticated ones and sometimes play with dogs. A pair of pythons are kept in a corner of the zoo. The female one laid 38 eggs in the sanctuary about six

years ago and 40 more eggs in June last year. The young pythons hatched out of the eggs were released to Lauachhara forest. There are also Himalayan palm civets, long tailed hanumans, porcupines, cobras, and a number of other creatures at the sanctuary. Set up around 22 years ago, it remains open for the public from 8:00am to evening every day. Sitesh Ranjan Deb, 66, was once a famous hunter. But he became a changed man in 1991 after surviving an attack by a wild bear and finally set up the sanctuary.



Some of the attractions of the wildlife sanctuary set up by Sitesh Ranjan Deb at Rasulpur in Sreemongal upazila of Moulvibazar district.

'Unfair' distribution of VGD wheat protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Women beneficiaries under vulnerable group development (VGD) programme in Sadar union of Kishoreganj upazila under the district have demanded legal action against the union parishad (UP) chairman for his alleged irregularities in distributing wheat of World Food Programme (WFP) under the programme. To press their demand, the VGD beneficiaries staged a demonstration in front of the upazila nirbahi officer's (UNO) office yesterday. On behalf of the aggrieved people, Lovely Begum, 55, (holding VGD card No 106) and Ambia Begum, 45, (VGD card No 100) alleged that at the direction of the UP chairman, most of the beneficiaries were given around 21 kg of wheat each instead of stipulated 30 kg on Tuesday when all 435 VGD beneficiaries of the union were supposed to get food grain at the UP office premises. The receivers protested the irregularities on the spot but they were silenced by the chairman's men, they said, adding that they went to the UNO office the same day to submit a written petition to stop the chairman's irregularities and realise the misappropriated wheat. The UNO heard their complaint but his office did not receive the written complaint, they said. All the UP members of the same union also lodged a written complaint to the UNO on Tuesday noon, alleging that UP Chairman Asadur Rahman Babul started

distributing wheat that day without calling any meeting of the union VGD committee or passing any resolution. They also alleged that the chairman violated rules and kept the UP members in the dark regarding the matter to misappropriate the VGD wheat. Following the complaints, the UNO went to the spot the same day and ordered stopping wheat distribution among the rest of the beneficiaries as he found 'mysterious' presence of some wheat traders at the UP office premises. The beneficiaries and the UP members complained to the UNO that being aware of their complaint and the official's possible visit to the spot, the UP chairman hurriedly removed the misappropriated wheat from the godown with the help of some wheat traders and musclemen in broad daylight. Contacted, UP chairman Asadur Rahman Babul claimed that VGD wheat distribution was fair. "The UNO visited the spot and compared the amount of remaining wheat with the number of rest of the beneficiaries. He found the amount to be proportionate and there was no excess wheat," he said. In presence of the UNO's representative, remaining 82 bags (50 kg each bag) of wheat was distributed among the rest 138 beneficiaries at the UP office premises yesterday. Asked about the VGD beneficiaries' demand for investigation into the allegation and legal action against the chairman, the UNO said, "I will see the matter."



Beneficiaries of vulnerable group development programme in Sadar union of Kishoreganj upazila under Nilphamari district demonstrate in front of the upazila nirbahi officer's office yesterday demanding legal action against the union parishad chairman for his alleged irregularities in distribution of wheat meant for the programme.

10 hurt as JCD factions clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Rangpur

At least 10 activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) were injured in a clash between two factions of the student party over forming a committee of the council at Rangpur Charmichael College yesterday. Of the injured, Shahidul Islam Shohag, Abdur Rauf, Mahidul Islam, Arif and Milon, were admitted to Rangpur Medical College and Hospital while the rest given first aid. Police and college sources said the council of the college unit JCD, a student front of main opposition BNP, was scheduled to be held yesterday. The men of rival groups--one led by president candidate Shahidul Islam Shohag and other Proshad Roy, another president aspirant of the committee--locked in an altercation and attacked each other with lethal weapons on the campus, leaving 10 from both sides injured.

Six arrested on border

UNB, Benapole, Jessore

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) on Wednesday night arrested eight people, including women, foiling their attempt to enter India through Sadipur border illegally. The arrestee were identified as Okil Biswas, 60; Nirapod Biswas, 65, and his wife Maya Rani Biswas, 40, of Khada area of Magura district; Bimol Chandra Borai, 50, and his wife Itika Borai, 35, of Taluk village of Barisal district; Ashok Roy, 25, son of Sushil Roy of Rajapur village of Gopalganj district; Darjul Islam, 40, son of Maola Box; and Swapon Ali, 45, son of late Osman Goni of Putkhali village of Benapole. All of them were going to India without any passport.

Two commit 'suicide' in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Rangpur

A man and a schoolgirl allegedly committed suicide in the district on Wednesday. In Chetanapara village under Pirganj upazila, a man allegedly killed himself after failing to repay loan which he had borrowed from a local club and different non-government organisations. The deceased was identified as Zaidul Islam, 38, son of Sohrab Ali of the village. Police and local sources said Zaidul had taken a loan of around Tk two lakh from the club and the NGOs. He committed suicide by taking pesticide at his house on Wednesday morning as he could not repay loan by the deadline on Tuesday. Meanwhile, a schoolgirl allegedly committed suicide on Wednesday at Dudhiabari village of Pirganj upazila following a family feud.

She was identified as Ankhi Khatun, 16, daughter of Anwarul Islam of the same village and a SSC examinee from Tukuria High School of the upazila. Police and locals said, Ankhi was suffering from mental depression as her family members rejected her relation with a local youth. After a family feud over the issue in the morning, she committed suicide by hanging herself from the ceiling of her room. Hasan Shamim Iqbal, officer-in-charge of Pirganj police station said two separate unnatural death (UD) case were lodged with the incidents.



Security guards, dressed in traditional attire, escort Bomang King KS Pru Chowdhury to Darbar Hall in Rajbari compound in Bandarban prior to the opening of Raj Punnah festival yesterday.

Raj Punnah begins amid festivity in Bandarban

STAR NATIONAL DESK

The celebration of Raj Punnah, a traditional festival of the Bomang tribe, began in Bandarban yesterday. Sixteenth Bomang King K S Pru Chowdhury inaugurated the five-day festival, ascending a makeshift throne at Darbar Hall at around 10:00am. Marna children greeted the king, showering petals, according to our Rangamati correspondent. Raj Punnah is an annual revenue collection programme where the Bomang circle chief collects taxes from headmen and karbaris (businessmen). Thousands of indigenous people--Chakma, Marna, Tangchagya, Tripura, Pankhua, Lusai, Khiyang,

Bawm and Chak from Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachhari districts thronged the Rajbari compound yesterday to enjoy the traditional royal festival. Tourists and Bangalee settlers from the three hill district also gathered in the Rajbari compound on the first day of the festival. On the opening day of Raj Punnah festival, the headmen of 109 mouzas and over 1,000 karbaris expressed their allegiance to the king, who received annual jhum tax and traditional gifts from them. The headmen and karbaris brought a bottle of wine each, cocks, goats, pigs and wine as gift for the king. On the occasion, a five-day mela (fair) also started at the field in front of the

Bomang king's palace yesterday. Bomang people will put on display their traditional food items and stage colourful cultural programmes at the fair. Bomang King K S Pru Chowdhury will meet all headmen and Karbaris at his palace at 1:30pm today. Bir Bahadur Ushwe Sing, Chairman of CHT Development Board, was the chief guest at the inaugural function. Bandarban Hill District Council Chairman Kwe Shwe Hla, Deputy Commissioner of Bandarban K M Tarikul Islam, Superintendent of Police Kamrul Ahsan, Bandarban Brigade Commander Samsul Huda were present, reports a correspondent from Bandarban.

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Limited seats. First come, first serve.

Qulkhani

Mr. M. N Islam, Chairman, Flora Limited, passed away on 1st January, 2013 (Inna Lillahe Wa Inna Ilaihe Rajeun). May Allah rest his soul in peace. He left behind his beloved wife, two sons, two daughters and eight grand children.

His Qulkhani will be held today after the Asr prayer at Gulshan Central Mosque.

All his relatives, friends, acquainted well wishers are requested to attend this Dua Mahfil.

Family Members

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