

Country's lone Ethnological Museum in a shambles

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PORT CITY CHRONICLES

If a museum is considered to be a window into the rich history of local culture, which plays a crucial role in preserving the past and documenting the present to inspire the future, the country's lone Ethnological Museum in the port city is failing its purpose.

With ancient and traditional ceremonial objects, ornaments, dresses, masks, musical instruments and other relics of glorious past, this museum is supposed to be a testimony to the country's diversity.

Despite having potential to become a popular tourist destination, this museum is gradually losing its charm and visitors for poor collections, and lack of proper maintenance.

Situated on Sabdar Ali Road at Agrabad, the museum, displaying lifestyles and heritage of various ethnic groups of Bangladesh and four other countries, was established on 1.30 acres of land in 1964. It opened to public in 1974.

Experts say it can become a tourist attraction if the authorities concerned enrich the collections and take steps to draw tourists. It could also earn huge revenues and become

a place of recreational learning for visitors, especially children, they added.

The museum consists four galleries and a hall room, portraying 26 ethnic minority communities of the country and 11 others from four other countries. Around 2,700



exhibits including tools, weapons, ornaments, idols of deities, paintings, photographs, dioramas, and sculptures are being displayed there.

The Bangladeshi ethnic communities include Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Chak, Tanchangya, Murong, Khumi, Garo, Bawm, Pankho, Lusai,

Khyang, Monipuri, Khasia, Oraon, Hajong, Mandai, Dalue, Hodi, Bona, Polia, Koch, Rajbangshi, Santal, Munda and Ho.

In addition, relics of five groups from Pakistan -- Pathan, Swati, Sindhi, Kafir and Punjabi -- are being displayed. The



Indian ethnic communities include Adi, Muria, Mizo and Futtowa. The remaining two come from Australia and Kyrgyzstan.

There are also dioramas depicting various events or a peek into people's lives -- Chakmas sitting on a "machang" (raised bamboo

platform) or Murongs celebrating arrival of a new season.

Despite having such a rich collection, the number of visitors continues to decline. The museum hardly sees 1,500 visitors a month while it was more than double a decade ago, according to museum officials.

"People are getting tired of seeing the same displays again and again," acting Curator Abu Bakar Siddique told this correspondent recently. "We need to add more attractions," added Siddique, also a research assistant at the museum.

Nurul Huda, a visitor at the museum, however, contradicted him. "The authorities have to publicise the museum first. Many don't even know there is an Ethnological Museum. They [authorities] should initiate rigorous campaigning in this regard by involving students and youths."

During a recent visit, this correspondent saw that most exhibits have become derelict while some were damaged.

Not just the collections, the infrastructure also needs maintenance. Roof plasters at



Couple found dead in Savar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, SAVAR

A couple was found hanging from the ceiling of their room in Burirbazar of Ashulia in Savar yesterday.

The deceased are Parvez Mia, 26, and his wife Shadiya Akter, 23.

Rejaul Haque, officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station, said Parvez used to work at a local garment factory. He, his mother and wife lived in two rented rooms of a house.

On Thursday, the couple had an altercation over a family issue, the OC said, quoting Parvez's mother.

Yesterday, Parvez's mother repeatedly knocked on their room's door but did not get a response. She then called neighbours who informed police.

Police rushed to the spot and entered the room by breaking open the door. They found both bodies hanging from the ceiling.

The bodies were sent to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital for autopsy.

For peace and prosperity

Buddhists observing 'Kathin Chibar Dan' in CHT

OUR CORRESPONDENT, RANGAMATI

Kathin Chibar Dan, the biggest religious festival of the Buddhist community in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), is being observed with due solemnity and fervour.

The month-long event began at Buddhist monasteries in the region on October 14, seeking peace, prosperity and happiness for all. It will conclude on November 13.

As part of the event, Kathin Chibar (robe) was donated to monks around 2pm yesterday at Sadhanpur Lumbini Ban Bihar in Rangamati Sadar upazila.

Hundreds of devotees from all walks of life brought the robes "woven through hard labour" to the monastery. They said every year they observe the event to preserve their tradition and customs.

Monks from different monasteries were present on the occasion. They urged all to leave the path of sin and confrontation, and follow the ideology of Buddha.

In the evening, Buddhists offered Pradeep Puja (lighting of candles) and flew fanush (paper lanterns). Such programmes will be held throughout the month.

Kathin Chibar Dan is an annual religious festival during which people donate different items to monks, including cloth woven in their own looms.

The ritual plays an important role in the Buddhist community -- to be a devoted follower of the religion -- through teaching them unity, solidarity and harmony.

Introduced by Bishakha -- a disciple of Buddha -- around 2,500 years ago, the festival is being celebrated around the world that feature making of cloth (saffron robes) in 24 hours and offering it to disciples of Buddha.

It marks the conclusion of a three-month seclusion of monks who meditate for self-education and atonement for mankind and is preceded by Probarona Purnima.

Admission test at Sust today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, SYLHET

Around 42 admission seekers will compete for each seat in the admission test of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust) for 2019-2020 academic session. The test will be held today.

A total of 70,543 students registered, and 1,703 seats have been allocated under two units of the test, authorities said.

The university has reserved 100 seats for descendants of freedom fighters, indigenous and disadvantaged communities, disabled people and tea workers, among other quotas.

VC Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed said, "All necessary steps have been completed to conduct a fair test."

Meanwhile, Sylhet Chamber of Commerce and Industry has arranged 20 buses for admission seekers to commute for free. Bikers Community of Sylhet and other organisations have also arranged free commuting services.

DEATH OF GIRL OUTSIDE POLICE STATION NHRC to publish probe report tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, RAJSHAHI

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is likely to publish its investigation report tomorrow on the death of Liza Rahman, who set herself on fire after stepping out of Shah Makhdum police station in Rajshahi last month.

The commission's Director Al-Mahmud Faizul Kabir, who is heading a five-member probe committee, revealed the information yesterday while talking to journalists at the rest house of forest department in Sopura area.

Kabir did not reveal their findings. He, however, said police findings have "some dissimilarities" with the facts.

He said he spoke to Liza's family members, her husband's family members, teachers and students of her college, police personnel, eyewitnesses and other relevant persons to prepare the report.

Liza, an 18-year-old HSC student of Rajshahi Women's Government College, set herself on fire on September 28. The incident occurred an hour after she went to the police station, seeking legal assistance to protect her marriage.

She lost the battle for life five days later, while undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital with 60 percent burns.

Liza's father Mohammad Alam filed a case accusing Liza's husband Shakhawat Hossain and her in-laws for her death. He also alleged that police forced him to file the case.

Earlier, a police investigation found "lack of responsible behaviour" by Officer-in-Charge of Shah Makhdum Police Station SM Masud Parvez. It, however, did not find "misbehaviour" with Liza by police, as claimed by her family members, Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) Commissioner Md Humayun Kabir had told The Daily Star. Salma Begum, an additional commissioner, headed the committee while Abdullah Al Mamun, deputy commissioner of Detective Branch, was a member. The committee submitted its report on October 3.

The police report observed that Liza was "mentally devastated" when she visited the police station, following pressures from her husband and in-laws for divorce. When she went to the police station, she did not receive the behaviour she had hoped for, added the report.



146th birth anniversary of Sher-e-Bangla

BSS, Dhaka

Today is the 146th birth anniversary of AK Fazlul Haque, popularly known as Sher-e-Bangla (Tiger of Bengal).

Different organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes to mark the day.

Barisal Division Association will place wreaths at the grave of the great leader in the capital in the morning. Later, a discussion will be held at his mausoleum.

Fazlul Haque was born in 1873 at Sauria village in erstwhile Bakerganj district of Barisal. He obtained his BL degree in 1897 from the University Law College.

Haque was elected to the Bengal Legislative Council and appointed the education minister in 1924. In 1935, he was elected mayor of Calcutta. In 1943, he was elected prime minister of Bengal during the British rule.

Haque died in 1962 and was buried on the grounds near Shuhrawardi Udayan.

2 children among 3 killed in Bogura

7 killed, 7 injured in other road crashes

STAR REPORT

At least three people, including two children, were killed and six injured after a bus overturned in Rahabul Bazar area of Bogura's Shibganj upazila yesterday.

The victims are Shabnur, 22; her two-and-a-half-year-old daughter Manjila Akhter, and Mehdi Hasan, 6, said OC Md Abdul Kader Zilani of Gobindaganj Highway Police Station.

Quoting locals, he said the bus driver lost control and overturned the vehicle around midnight. All three died on the spot.

Police seized the bus but its driver fled, he said. Meanwhile, at least seven people were killed and seven injured in other accidents across the country, our correspondents report.

In Faridpur, three people were killed and two injured in two accidents in Komorpur and Ambikapur Bazar areas.

At Komorpur, two people were killed and two injured after a pick-up and truck collided, said police.

The deceased are Riaz Mondal, 19, and Jalal Sheikh, 50. Four passengers of the van were also injured. Locals rushed them to Faridpur Medical College Hospital where the two died while undergoing treatment.

At Ambikapur, a man was killed on the spot after an easy-bike ran him over around 8:30am, said police.

Identity of the deceased could not be ascertained yet. Police seized the van and easy-bike involved in both accidents but the drivers fled the scene, they added.

In Mymensingh, a man who was injured critically after his motorbike collided with another bike on Monday, succumbed to his injuries yesterday. The deceased is Md Motiur Rahman, 65, a retired primary school teacher and president of Awami League's Tarati union unit in Muktagachha upazila, said police.

In another accident, a man was killed after a bus hit him in Digarkanda Bypass area in Mymensingh yesterday.

The deceased could not be identified yet, said police.

In Sirajganj, a woman was killed and five were injured after a truck hit the three-wheeler carrying them in Viuagati Bridge area of Raiganj yesterday, said police. The deceased is Sheuli Khatun, 30. Two of the injured were taken to a local hospital, they added. The truck driver fled with the vehicle.

In Jashore, a man was killed after a tractor collided with his motorbike in Kashipur area of Monirampur upazila yesterday. The deceased is Rafiqul Islam, 38, said police quoting locals. Critically injured Rafiqul was rushed to Jashore General Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

The tractor driver fled with the vehicle. A case was lodged in this connection.

Man arrested with 20,000 yaba pills

STAR REPORT

Police on Thursday arrested the driver of a three-wheeler with 20,000 yaba pills worth Tk 60 lakh from Ghumdhum area in Naikhongchhari upazila of Bandarban.

The arrestee is Syed Karim, 26, from Cox's Bazar, said police.

Acting on a tip-off, police arrested Syed from the area around 7:30pm and seized the pills, said Md Anwar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Naikhongchhari Police Station.

A case under the narcotics act was filed against him.

COP HELD WITH YABA

Two people, including a police officer, were arrested with 370 yaba pills from Rangpur Sadar upazila on Thursday night.

They arrestees are Saddam Hossain, a constable at Rangpur Metropolitan Police, and his acquaintance Rafiqul Islam. Both hail from Nayapara village in Rangpur's Badarganj upazila.

Zakir Hossain, inspector (investigation) of Rangpur Sadar Police Station, said on information, a police team raided Palicharhat village in the upazila and arrested them with the pills.

Police also seized a motorbike from them. A case under the narcotics act was filed against them, said the inspector.



With his daughter holding an umbrella, a man paints the "Samadhi" (funerary monument) of a family member at Mohashashan in Barisal city yesterday. Hindus will observe the "Shashan Dipali" today. During the event, they offer special prayers for salvation of the departed souls of their near and dear ones. For more than a century, the community has been observing the programme at the cremation ground where a large number of people from home and abroad gather.

PHOTO: TITU DAS