

Artefacts gathering dust

Nilphamari authorities yet to shift them to new museum building

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Artefacts collected under social initiative in Nilphamari are now preserved in an old damp building of the district. Currently, they are running the risk of getting ruined due to a lack of proper maintenance.

The district administration demarcated the building as a museum mainly to preserve old government documents, said locals.

Residents of the district, led by one Mozibar Rahman, started collecting scattered archaeological evidence from nooks and corners of the area in 1984 in order to bring the heritage and culture of Nilphamari to light.

At first they kept them in a room of a public library building in the district town for display, even though the building wasn't suitable for it.

At one stage, space constraint became an issue. After this, the artefacts were shifted to the old building which was once used as the then sub-divisional officer's (SDO) office.

At present, it's known as the district administration museum, with a sign hung at the top.

The cultural affairs ministry, at the initiative of the then minister Asaduzzaman Noor in 2017, started constructing a full-fledged museum in the district near the tourist spot Nil Sagar in the Sadar upazila.

Although the construction work is complete, the museum is still inoperative for years, and this delay may ruin the valuable artefacts, said historians.

Historian and vice president of Rangpur Gobeshona Parishad (Rangpur Research Association) Abdul Hafiz and other dignitaries demanded that the museum be operational immediately.

Visiting the district administration museum on Monday, this correspondent found that the valuable artefacts like a British era 15kg iron lock, a centuries-old boat made by excavating the stem of a Shal tree, materials prepared from ivory, a hundred years old table, wooden structures of notable figures, and touchstone (a stone used to identify precious metals) were in display.

As the building is damp, sunlight cannot enter it and the place lacks other necessary conditions for a museum. Many of the artefacts were covered in dust and looked damaged.

Ratan Kumar Roy, one of the two master roll attendants having no academic knowledge of maintaining a museum, said they keep the museum open for visitors. Though during the time this correspondent was there, he did not see anyone visiting the place.

Custodian of Rangpur museum Md Habibur Rahman, said, "For preserving the archaeological evidence in a scientific way, chemical treatment is crucial. The room should have sufficient sunlight, be completely dust free and well insulated, moisture controlled and so on as per requirement."

However, the district administration museum was certainly missing all of the above criteria.

Contacted, Dr Nahid Sultana, regional director of the archaeological department in Bogura, said, "The new museum is ready for inauguration but we're having a manpower shortage. Our director general will visit the museum within a month and take necessary steps."

Deputy Commissioner of Nilphamari, Pankaj Ghosh, who visited the new building a couple of days ago said, "I'll discuss with the authority so that the museum starts functioning soon."



Due to damp conditions and lack of sunlight, most of the artefacts kept at the district administration building in Nilphamari are getting damaged. Even though the building is called "District Administration Museum", the reality is far from it. Meanwhile, the new museum building, where the artefacts are supposed to be shifted for better preservation lies unused for manpower shortage, inset.

PHOTO: STAR

Here, a woman rows the boat

Akhlima providing for family by rowing boat for two decades in Patuakhali

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Akhlima Begum's day starts at the break of dawn. Upon completing her household chores, she readsies her small boat, which ferries passengers to and from Patuakhali's Doani village of Galachipa upazila and Meermadan village of Dasmina upazila throughout the day.

This has been her only source of income for the last two decades.

By ferrying passengers, she provided for her three girls, married them off to respectable families and established a good rapport in her village over time.

However, Akhlisma is over fifty years old now. Her body does not function like it used to twenty years ago.

A few years ago, my youngest daughter's husband abandoned her and their child. Now I take care of them as well. So my savings will not sustain us for long if I retire now without any alternative plan.

AKHLISMA



For the last 20 years, Akhlisma has been ferrying passengers of all backgrounds -- students, day labourers, patients and elderly -- from Doani village to the east bank of the Sutabaria river. She charges Tk five from each passenger per trip and earns Tk 200-300 per day.

PHOTO: STAR

Even then, she has no alternative but to continue the tiring job all day even with her ageing body, as she's sceptical that her savings cannot sustain her for long if she retires.

Currently, she is contemplating opening a grocery store or starting a poultry farm to move forward from her life on a boat.

Akhlima's life turned upside down when her husband Phul

Khan, the only earning member of their family, passed away 21 years ago, leaving three little girls and Akhlisma behind.

She started working as a house help to provide for her girls. She even worked as a day labourer.

A year passed away like this.

Sutabaria river flows without any hindrance by her home in Doani

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Tea garden at cost of trees, animals and hills

Forest department covering up crimes, allege locals, environmentalists



This place was covered with century-old trees only a few weeks ago. But a tea estate has completely cleared the area by setting it ablaze. Now hills are being razed and tea saplings are being planted on the leveled surface.

PHOTO: STAR

MINTU DESHWARA, Moubibazar

A tea estate in Habiganj has completely cleared their leased land by setting it ablaze and cutting down the trees, much to the dismay of environmentalists and wildlife activists.

Hundreds of workers are now

working round the clock to plant tea saplings in the cleared area near the Hatimara church.

Besides, the hills of the area are now being razed to make them suitable for tree plantation.

Contacted, Moin Uddin, manager of Hatimara Tea Garden, said, "We are cutting hills on our

leased area to make it plain. There are no wild animals here."

Khalilur Rahman, a forest department official, said, "The hills that the garden authorities are cutting are on their land. So we have nothing to say."

Hatimara Tea Garden took

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Duck laying 'black' eggs causes stir in Galachipa

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A domesticated duck in Patuakhali's Galachipa upazila has been laying one black egg every day for the past five days, creating much excitement among locals.

The upazila livestock officer said the phenomenon is not unnatural, but that has not stopped locals from flocking to the upazila's Charbiswas union to see the "black eggs".

Locals said the duck belongs to Laiju Akter Bonya who has been rearing ducks for a long time.

As the news spread, hundreds have been going to her house every day to see the black egg.

Laiju Akter said the duck has laid five eggs so far and all of them are black. She said they gave the bird regular food and have no clue why the eggs were of a different colour compared to the rest.

Laiju's husband Mohammad Sardar said, out of curiosity, he broke

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Four held while smuggling slow loris and owl in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Four persons were arrested yesterday while smuggling two slow loris and an owl at Lohagara upazila of Chattogram.

Two motorcycles used for smuggling were also seized, said police.

The smugglers were trying to smuggle the animals after capturing them from Bandarban, said Ruhul Amin, sub-inspector of Lohagara Police Station. The animals were found when the police stopped the smugglers in front of the Lohagara Bar Aulia College, said the SI.

The rescued animals were handed over to the forest department and a case has been registered against the four, added the SI.



Mahmud Hossain, ranger of the Chhunati wildlife range, said they will release the rescued to the forest after completing our official process.

In recent times, Chattogram has become a transit route for wildlife trafficking by poachers and smugglers due to the indifference and lack of proper monitoring of the authorities concerned.

The organised crime came to light once again after Chattogram police thwarted several consignments of endangered wild animals while being smuggled from remote hilly areas of Bandarban and Khagrachhari via Chattogram.

Investigators and the forest department said several syndicates comprising international rackets have been involved in the smuggling.

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Memo no-1019

Date : 26/01/2023

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