

A museum of JOURNALISTIC HERITAGE

DIPANKAR ROY, *Khulna*

GKM Lutfar Rahim, regional manager of NGO Forum in Khulna, has a unique hobby – collecting newspapers.

With an aspiration to collect at least one copy of all newspapers published in Bangladesh, pre-independence Pakistan-era and erstwhile British colonial-era Bengal, Lutfar embarked on this hobby in 2010.

At present, he has a treasure trove of 1,050 published copies of different newspapers, both existing and defunct, published from 64 districts of the country, along with copies of others that are historical specimens.

With an ardent desire to ensure that future generations have tangible evidence of the vibrant press landscape that once existed in Bangladesh, Lutfar has established a newspaper museum with his collection at his residence in Jashore.

The museum inherently showcases the evolution of journalism across the country over the decades and offers a visual chronicle of events, issues, and cultural shifts.

"I used to collect antiques when I noticed that the number of newspapers available with hawkers is reducing daily. Many people now opt to browse the internet to check the news headlines instead of buying printed copies. Earlier, different offices would keep copies of several newspapers daily; nowadays the number has reduced to merely one or two," said Lutfar.

"Then it occurred to me that one day many newspapers that are now being published will disappear, as had happened in the past. It grew a desire in me to preserve at least one copy of each newspaper so that future generations could witness the array and diversity of newspapers published in our country," he said.

"Since 2010 I have been collecting newspapers. Being an NGO worker, I don't live an affluent life. However, it is not really about money; rather passion has so far driven me in this endeavour," Lutfar added.



"The names of local newspapers often mirror the names of rivers and districts, intertwined with the rich cultural tapestry of Bangladesh," he observed. "It is difficult to tell the exact number of newspapers published in Bangladesh till now, since many have become defunct a long time back, while those being published today may not even continue tomorrow due to various reasons," he added.

Lutfar's collection of newspapers vividly showcases the transition of the publishing industry from black-and-white prints to vibrant colours, coupled with changes in fonts and paper qualities, thereby painting a picture of the ever-evolving landscape of print media.

His collection even features copies of newspapers dating back to 1935.

"I collected a copy of Ananda Bazar from 1935. The copy has two dates printed – Kolkata 24 Jyaistha [Bangla month] and Mofswal [suburban/remote areas] 26 Jyaistha. Back then, it would take two days to send a newspaper from the city to remote areas due to poor communication, so two dates were

used," he said.

Lutfar also has a copy of Janabarta from 1978. It was a very famous local newspaper published from Khanjahan Ali Road in Khulna, each copy selling for 30 paisa. It went on to become defunct later on.

"A relative of Janabarta's editor Sayed Sohorab Ali once came to me and requested a photocopy of the issue in my collection as the family does not have any printed copies of the newspaper as memorabilia. Many others also come to me with similar requests," said Lutfar.

"Only 12 newspapers are being published from Khulna at present, but in my collection, I have copies of 40 newspapers published from the district alone," he added.

Also, some Bangladeshi newspapers are simultaneously being published in other countries for Bangladeshes residing abroad. Lutfar has three copies of Prothom Alo released in three countries, alongside several other newspapers.

While he initially contemplated collecting foreign newspapers as well, practical challenges and the vastness of languages posed limitations to that end. However, his well-wishers from abroad, who know about his hobby, often send him copies of newspapers

from different countries that have enriched his collection further.

Lutfar's Facebook posts, showcasing his collection, have garnered widespread encouragement, fostering a sense of community among fellow collectors.

Looking to the future, Lutfar envisions expanding his museum into a newspaper library, accessible for students and researchers. He also hopes to inspire more enthusiasts to delve into this unique form of cultural preservation.

"Lutfar has emerged as a custodian of the publishing heritage, ensuring that the stories once printed on newspapers are not lost to the sands of time. As far as I know, no individual or organisation in Bangladesh has such a rich private collection of newspapers," said Anwarul Kadir, educationist and also general secretary of Umesh Chandra Public Library.

"His efforts resonate with a profound sense of responsibility towards preserving the collective memory of a nation through the humble medium of newspapers. In a world where the present often eclipses the past, Lutfar's collection stands as a silent sentinel, guarding the legacy of Bangladesh's diverse journalistic landscape for generations to come," he added.

S ALAM SUGAR MILL FIRE Dolphin sanctuary in Karnaphuli under threat

SIFAYET ULLAH

A huge amount of polluted water has spilled into Karnaphuli and is spreading fast across the river, threatening the endangered dolphin sanctuary and hundreds of fish species.

The contaminated water spread from S Alam Refined Sugar Industries Limited, where a fire broke out on Monday. This would damage aquatic life, including endangered dolphins, said officials of the Department of Environment (DoE) and environmental science experts.

The Karnaphuli river is home to hundreds of dolphins and various species of fish.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has categorised the Ganges River Dolphin as an endangered species.

The 43-kilometre area, estuary to Kalurghat Bridge, of the river is the wandering zone of the mammal, locally known as Utom.

A 2017 study recorded that 920 dolphins inhabited this river. Another study reports that the Karnaphuli is home to 70 species of fish.

"The polluted water would lead to breathing problems for dolphins, as toxicity leads to a lack of fresh dissolved oxygen in the water," said Mohammad Al Amin, a dolphin researcher and professor of Institute of Forestry and Environmental Sciences at Chittagong University.



While visiting the area, this correspondent observed that the contaminated water near the sugar mill had already turned black and was flowing into the river through four points.

Anis Majhi, a local fisherman, told The Daily Star, "Black water has spilled into different points of this river. The polluted water flows into the sea during low tide. But it will return to the river during high tide and cause much damage."

The DoE has yet to launch any operations to tackle the contaminated water since the incident of the fire took place.

Ferdous Anwar, deputy director of the DoE Chattogram district office, said, "This water has already been contaminated with various ingredients, including raw sugar. It will severely damage the food chain and force aquatic life to migrate."

He said the DoE does not immediately have a plan to tackle the contaminated water, like the existing National Contingency Plan used in case of any oil or chemical spill. "Now the emergency is to douse the fire. Besides, we will take steps as per the law regarding the matter," he added.

Contacted, Subrata Kumar Bhoumick, executive director of S Alam Group, said they tried trapping the polluted water but failed.



Hill vanishes due to legal loopholes

CDA permits construction of 3 buildings without environmental clearance

SIFAYET ULLAH, *Ctg*

A hill in Chattogram's Ashkar Dighir Par area is counting its last days, and will soon be completely leveled to make way for three multi-story buildings.

You might wonder how this happened. The developers will tell you that what they are doing is completely legal, and that the authorities concerned have given them the required approvals.

While originally designated as a slope of a hill on Revisional Survey (RS) conducted in the 1960s, a surprising amendment decades later on Bangladesh Survey (BS) in 1998 reclassified the land as a "home."

Exploiting this loophole, the Chattogram Development Authority approved landowners to construct the buildings. A huge portion of the hill has already been

razed. To raze the hill, the developers bypassed the Department of Environment (DoE) and went directly to CDA for approval, breaching protocols.

Destroying a hill without approval from the DoE is against Bangladesh Environment Preservation Act and can result in up to two years in prison or a fine of Tk 2 lakh, or both, for first-time offenders. Repeat offenders may face up to 10 years in prison or a fine of Tk 10 lakh, or both.

Besides, this also violates Building Construction Act, said CDA insiders seeking anonymity.

Meanwhile, the DoE is seemingly unbothered by the situation, although razing of the hill has been going on in broad daylight for the last three years.

Despite a former director of the DoE Chattogram fining the land

owners Tk 28 lakh in 2020 for hill leveling, the current director of this unit has not taken action against them.

OF ACTIONS AND INACTIONS Md Abu Esa Ansary, city planner of the CDA, approved the developers to use the land in May 2022.

Based on this permission, CDA later approved building plans in April last year.

Contacted, Tanjib Hassan, CDA authorised officer, said, "I didn't give the permission. I have been promoted to this role recently."

Meanwhile, CDA has sent a letter to the landowners when the incidence of hill razing received widespread criticisms.

In reply, Shojol Chowdhury, speaking on behalf of the landowners, said they were not demolishing a hill, though he mentioned they have not obtained

Five suffer burn injuries in septic tank explosion

UNB, *Dhaka*

Five people sustained burn injuries in a septic tank explosion in front of Agrabad Islami Bank Hospital in Chattogram on Thursday afternoon.

Of them, four seriously injured were admitted to Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH), said Nurul Alam Ashch, in-charge of the CMCH police outpost.

They are Fahad, 20, Zahir, 28, Masum, 30, and Nayan, 31.

The incident happened around 3:30pm when they were cleaning the septic tank, he added.

Falling tree branch kills motorcyclist

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Thakurgaon*

A motorcyclist was killed as a branch of a tree fell on him in Thakurgaon yesterday noon.

The incident happened on Ranishankoil-Nekmarad road at Kumarganj village in Ranishankoil upazila.

The deceased was identified as Ismail Haque, 35, of Bismampur village in Baliadangi upazila.

Quoting locals, Ranishankoil Police Station Officer-in-Charge Sohel Rana said two unidentified



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Date: 05-03-2024


e-Tender Notice (NOTM)

Notice No : 06(2023-24)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works are given below.

Tender ID	Name of Work With Package	Tender Method	Tender Last Selling (Date & Time)	Tender Closing (Date & Time)	Tender Opening (Date & Time)
958360	e-Tender/PEDP-4/RAN/KAP/2022-23/W2-05528 Construction of Additional Class Room of B.F.I.D.C Model Government Primary School Under PEDP-4. (2 nd Call).	NCT OTM	24-Mar-2024 16.00	25-Mar-2024 14.00	25-Mar-2024 13.30

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


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