

## Banning of Polythene bag inside Dhaka Zoo for the first time

Dr. Md. Shakif-Ul-Azam\*

After the completion of 10<sup>th</sup> Annual SAZARC conference in Nepal from 22-27 Nov 2010, Dhaka Zoo decided to offer engaging programs, exhibits and materials that educate our visitor about wildlife, help visitors feel more connected to animals, and motivate them to take action to preserve the natural world. Objectives of the programme are to educate visitors about 21<sup>st</sup> Century crises – like Climate change, emerging diseases, Zoo animal conservation, environmental issues, etc.



**Author and colleagues destroying poly bags, a demonstration to educate visitors about the need to act to preserve the natural world.**

Dhaka Zoo Research & Education Center organized a programme on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2010 entitled "Banning polybags inside the zoo will help keep our wild animals safe". From the programme we hope that, our visitors learned respect for our Zoo animals and for all wildlife. We want to deliver this message to our zoo visitors:

**When you're on zoo grounds, please help us keep our animals safe and our grounds beautiful. Do not allow visitors to throw food or other items into the animal exhibits, or try to touch the animals.**

The Central Zoo Authority, India guidelines clearly mention that plastic is prohibited from entering zoo premises in India. Plastic bags, empty, as well as with leftover snacks, which are dumped on the lawns or inside animal enclosures, may be swallowed by the animals. Polythene bags are non-biodegradable and cannot be digested. They can clog the digestive tract, and suffocate the animals to death (Animal Right Protection Forum, November, 2006).

The Central Zoo, Kathmandu, Nepal banned the use polythene bags in its premises stating that such bags had an adverse effect in the health of the animals in the zoo. The zoo administration announced not to

allow visitors to take polythene bags with from Friday, on the occasion of the World Environment Day (Nepal News, 05 June, 2009).



**Dhaka Zoo Curator Dr. A.B.M. Shahid Ullah, presides over the Rally which started from his office and went round the zoo.**

Dhaka Zoo shares the experience of above two success stories and inspired by the SAZARC conference took the first ever such steps of banning polybags inside the Zoo premises in order to protect the captive wild animals from the grave dangers of consuming the plastic bags.



**Rally announcing the importance of banning polybags and other plastics to stop danger to zoo animals.**

The programme to ban polybags at Dhaka zoo began at 10.00 to 10.45 am with a rally from Curator's office. The Rally went round through out the Zoo with banner and announced the importance of banning polybag and other plastic items inside zoo to stop

\*Research and Education Officer, Dhaka Zoo, Bangladesh. shakif78@gmail.com

danger to zoo animals. The rally was presided over by Dr. A. B. M. Shahid Ullah, Curator, Dhaka Zoo.

Zoo Officers, Staff and Intern students from Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) and Hajje Danesh Science and Technology University (HSTU) worked together collaboratively for the programme.

After the Rally, from 11.00 to 11.20 am there was a Zoo Premises Cleaning Programme near the Carnivore Section. Officers, Staff, Intern students & Zoo visitors gathered for a presentation on Why Polybag Need to be Banned at Zoo Premises. Afterwards, the zoo visitors participated in a cleaning programme. They collected Polybags and other detrius from the Zoo area and inspired people with environmental topics. The Curator spoke about the topics & discussed issues of banning polybag inside the zoo. Next, the Curator, Animal Nutrition Officer & Research and Education Officer conducted a programme near Carnivores Section of the Zoo.

The drama highlighting the importance of cleaning the zoo premises was performed near the enclosure of the Royal Bengal Tiger. It was performed by the Intern students from Bangladesh Agricultural University, and Hajje Danesh Science and Technology University. From 12.20 to 12.35 p.m. refreshments were served by the management at the Curator's Office for the Officers, Staff of Zoo & Intern students from BAU and HSTU.



The zoo conducted a drama to demonstrate the need to clean zoo premises and keep it clean



Visitors to the zoo enjoy the drama and learn about environmental cleanliness

