

Panoramic Rangamati awaits tourists

SHANTTIMOY CHAKMA

Rangamati offers a wide range of tourism potentials with its lush green hilly terrain, evergreen forests, cultural diversity, crystal clear water of the Kaptai Lake and zig-zag rivulets.

But potentials of the hill district headquarters largely remain untapped. Rangamati abounds with resources for tourism from which the government can earn huge revenue, local people said.

Some private initiatives, though not significant, have been made to help develop tourism in the hill district after signing of peace accord. And all these have given the tourists an escape from the humdrum of routine life for a break and to stay with nature's bounty and make their holidays a memorable one through cruise in the lake and sightseeing in Rangamati.

The most attractive places here are Hanging Bridge, Peda Ting-Ting, Suvalong natural waterfalls, Rajban Bihar, Chakma Royal Palace, Kaptai Lake, Indigenous Museum, Holiday Blast, Tuk Tuk Eco Village and DC Bungalow.

Hanging Bridge is the most favourite spot for the tourists and visitors. Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) built the bridge. Peda Ting-Ting, a restaurant, is located at the mouth of Suvalong Channel, about five km east of Rangamati town. It is about a 20-minute ride on an engine boat to reach the site. The restaurant provides varied dishes ranging from traditional cookery to indigenous people's delicacies.

Suvalong Natural Waterfalls is another exquisite place to visit. There are many big and small waterfalls near the Suvalong Bazar. One can easily go to the site by an engine boat or tourist boat, in one hour from the district headquarters. The 4,800-sq km artificial lake of crystal clear



Hanging bridge over Rangamati Lake, top, Rangamati Buddha Bihar, bottom left, and Rangamati Lake, right.

water, which was created after damming of Kaptai Hydroelectric Project in 1960, is a picturesque hinterland of large hill and forest. A cruise on the lake water can be a memorable experience.

Rajban Bihar is an internationally well-known Buddhist temple wherein venerable spiritualist and principal of the monk of

Rajban Vihara Shrimath Sadhana Nanda Mohasthabir (Ban Vante) lives. Situated on 100 acres of land in the hill town, it is also an attractive place for the tourists. Any visitor can directly visit Chakma Royal Palace and talk to the royal family members. Barrister Debashish Roy is the present king of the Chakma

community. Indigenous Museum offers many rare collections like attires, ornaments of indigenous people, depicting their socio-economic, cultural and historical traditions.

Holiday Blast is a private tourist spot. There are three cottages here -- Radhamon, Dhanpudi and Tanyabi replicat-

ing the lifestyle of the indigenous people. It conducts voyages across the Kaptai Lake and operates guided tours all over the district. They also arrange adventurous trips and hiking for tourists. Tuk Tuk Eco Village is also a private spot at Balukhali union under Sadar upazila and 20 km away from the district headquarter.

Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) has a motel with capacity of 62 people. It also has a bar and an amusement centre with modern facilities. Besides, many private hotels have also been sprung up here to make the visit of the tourists enjoyable. Of them, Hotel Sofia, Motel Jounge, Green Castle, Hotel Anika, Dream Land, Al-Mova, Golden Hill, Alif Boarding, Saikat Boarding, Arju Boarding, and Lake View are good for stay.

Goutam Dewan, former local government council chairman and owner of the Holiday Blast & Peda Ting-Ting, said there are huge potentials to build Rangamati an international-standard tourist spot, but unfortunately the successive governments have not taken any steps in this regard.

Developing more attractive spots, infrastructures and road communications are very important to attract the tourists, he said.

Goutam said ban on free movement of foreign tourists is hampering development of tourism in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and due to the ban the number of foreign tourists are declining.

BPC Manager Sunirmol Talukder said number of tourists and visitors has increased after signing of the CHT peace accord.

Saiful Islam, owner of Sofia Hotel, however, said unnecessary watch on the tourists and harassment to them by the law enforcement agencies and non-qualified guides are obstacles to expanding tourism in Rangamati.

Brisk business of illegal drug addict rehabilitation centre

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR

At least 25 medication and rehabilitation centres for the drug addicts are running in the port city without permission from the authorities concerned.

The centres lack logistic support for proper treatment of the patients. Besides, the centres have no specialist while the authorities concerned remain indifferent to the practice.

Most of the centres are situated mostly at the thinly populated areas like Halishahar and Chandgaon to avoid the law enforcing agencies, sources said.

None of the centres have even a single specialist doctor and they hardly care for providing required treatment they promise the client, said the victims' relatives preferring anonymity.

The centres not only charge high fees for treatment and rehabilitation but also extract money from the guardians in different ways, they said.

Attendants are never allowed to enter the centres where the patients stay in very congested rooms, they said.

When this correspondent in the guise of a guardian contacted such a centre -- Pratisrutu Drug Addicted Medication and Rehabilitation Centre -- at the Chandgaon Residential Area its director Raju Ahmed said they charge Tk 24,000 for a three-month course and Tk 5,000 to Tk 7,000 for a short course ranging from 15 to 21 days.

But, when contacted as correspondent of The Daily Star, Raju said they take Tk 15,000 for a three-month course and Tk 5,000 for a short course.

The course fees include food and accommodation, he said.

He said they do not have any permanent physician for the 16 patients undergoing treatment at the centre and call in one when a patient falls sick or develops any complication.

"We offer two types of course for treatment. The short course that continues for 15 to 21 days provides treatment for detoxification and the three-month course for rehabilitation," Razu said.

The detoxification course helps the patients

recover from the impacts and side effects drugs leave on them and get rid of addiction.

During the three-month course the patients are provided with narcotics anonymous meeting, counselling, occupational therapy, educational class of group therapy, family meeting, meditation and recreation, he said.

While visiting such a centre, four of its officials including one of the directors, were seen smoking inside the office.

When asked they said the patients are allowed to smoke at the centre at the initial stage of the treatment.

Tuhin, an executive of Tori, said they have 20 patients and they charge Tk 15,000 for the three-month course for each patient.

Meanwhile, the patients who received treatment from such centres said they had to stay in congested rooms and buy medicine on their own.

"In many centres the patients have to pay fees for the consultation of the specialist visiting them on special calls," said Rajib, not his real name, who underwent treatment in such a centre.

He said in many cases patients get addicted again as the centres do not follow proper method for treatments.

Deputy Director Mohammed Wahiduzzaman of Narcotic Control Department, Chittagong Metro Sub-Region said there is no specific law to check mushrooming of such centres and bring them under control or take legal action against them.

He said they asked the centres to submit documents and obtain permission from the department to continue activities.

"But, only five centres responded to the call and submitted documents, all of which are failing to fulfil the requirements of the permission," he added.

"We are thinking of seeking advice from Dhaka in this regard and will take step accordingly," he said.



A drug addict rehabilitation centre at the Chandgaon residential area, left, and a youth takes heroin in broad daylight at a corner of Chittagong Stadium shopping complex, right.

theweekthatwas

Nursing training begins

A two-month long nursing training and workshop began at the Chittagong Maa O Shishu Hospital on Wednesday with a view to developing the quality of the nursing service.

General Factory Manager of Unilever Bangladesh Limited Hasan Jafar Chowdhury inaugurated the training at the hospital auditorium as the chief guest.

Unilever Bangladesh Limited is financing the training.

Unilever General Manager (Technical Services) Rajib Barua, Course Coordinator Prof M Mariappan, hospital executive committee General Secretary Dr Anjumman Ara Islam and Treasurer SM Morshed Khan spoke at the inaugural ceremony with hospital Executive Committee President Prof ASM Fazlul Karim in the chair.

The speakers at the function said the training course and workshop will help increase the quality service and healthcare for the patients in the hospital.

Jafar Chowdhury in his speech said Unilever has been promoting several development works in different service sectors like education, health and women empowerment side by side its business activities.

He said several development programmes, including dental school programmes to create awareness among around 20 lakh students, healthcare service for the underprivileged children through Lifebuoy Friendship Hospital and IT scholarship for female students in the country.

A nursing specialist team of Tata Institute of Social Science of India is conducting the training course where 25 nurses are participating.

Attack on Dr Arsalan's office protested

Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad Chittagong unit staged a demonstration on Wednesday protesting the arson attack on the office of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Biochemistry

Chairman and Parishad Secretary General Prof Dr Iqbal Arsalan.

The Parishad took out a procession and held a protest rally on the Chittagong Medical College (CMC) campus with its convener Dr Sheikh Shafiqul Azam in the chair.

Speakers at the rally demanded immediate arrest of the culprits. They blamed the pro-BNP Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB) activists for the incident.

Parishad central Vice President Dr

Nurul Islam was the chief guest at the rally. Chittagong Unit General Secretary Dr Md Sharif, CMC Secretary Dr Nasiruddin Mahmud and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) CMC Convener Ripon Das also spoke.

Mayor criticises Chief Adviser

Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury at a rally

on Thursday blamed the Chief Adviser of the caretaker government and President Iajuddin Ahmed for keeping more than ten vital ministries under his stewardship.

Mohiuddin, also coordinator of 14-party combine, Chittagong, was addressing as the chief guest at a rally organised by Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) city unit at Lalighi Maidan with BCL Chittagong Unit President MR Azim in the chair.

The rally demanded immediate

withdrawal of Chief Election Commissioner, cancellation of appointments on political consideration and an end to harassment of the student leaders by the law enforcement agencies.

AL City General Secretary Kazi Inamul Hoque Danu, Treasurer Abdus Salam, Bangladesh Chhatra League President Kaiser Alam, and BCL General Secretary Md Salahuddin also spoke.

'30,000 children, women victims of trafficking'

Speakers at a discussion said around 30,000 children and women of the country are victims of human trafficking and forced to do inhuman jobs like camel jockey, begging, smuggling, robbery and other immoral activities.

Aparajeo Bangladesh, a non-government organisation, under its Patha Shishhu Karmasuchi, Chittagong organised the discussion at Shilpakala Academy on Saturday.

News Editor of Dainik Azadi Kazi Jarul Islam was the chief guest.

Children activists of Aparajeo Bangladesh in four groups also participated in the discussion on "The problem of human trafficking and its prevention."

Filling station fined

The mobile court led by

Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Magistrate Munir Chowdhury detected the fraudulence through faulty measuring units in a drive at M/S Nabarun Agencies at the city's Agrabad area.

The court found the filling station giving 175ml litres less in every 10 litres of petrol and 120 ML in every 10 litres of diesel.

Moreover, the filling station also set up a dispensing unit without approval of the Bangladesh Standard Testing Institute (BSTI).

Besides, the station was running business under a deal with Padma Oil Company, one of the three marketing companies of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), sources said.

Call to annul Microcredit Regulatory Law

Speakers at a discussion demanded annulment of the Microcredit Regulatory Authority Law-2006 saying its implementation might hamper the development of small investment and cooperatives activities.

They said the cooperative societies can play a vital role in the development of the country through small investments.

They were speaking at a discussion titled "Small Investment and Cooperative in Development" to mark the 35th National Cooperatives Day at Muslim Institute hall on Saturday.

Additional Divisional Commissioner (DC) Mohammad Golam Qudus was the chief guest at the meeting organised by Chittagong Regional Cooperatives Day Observation Committee.

Bangladesh Cooperative Housing Society Limited President Sams Ud Doha presided over the ceremony.

District Cooperative Officer Syed

Hafiz Mahmud, Cooperatives Department Deputy Registrar Narayan Chandra Sarkar, Deputy Controller Khondaker Sirajul Islam, Regional Director Abdus Sattar, president of Care Multipurpose Sawkat Azam Khaza, secretary of Prime Multipurpose Md Ullah and Ahmad Shafi Sikder of Al Armin Multi Purpose Limited addressed among others.

Earlier, different organisations brought out a colourful procession organised by the committee from the Muslim Institute premises that paraded different city streets.

Artists meet CTV GM

Leaders of different cultural organisations demanded incorporation of the Bangladesh Television, Chittagong Centre (CTV) to the revenue sector.

The leaders of the organisations placed the demand at a meeting with the newly appointed General Manager of CTV Faruq Bhuiyan at his office on Thursday.

They also demanded quality programmes, EFP unit for taking outdoor scene, audio facility, adequate light facility, broadcasting documentaries on different tourist spots of Chittagong and broadcasting neutral news.

Faruq assured them of taking immediate steps to implement their demands gradually.

Singer Mihir Kumar Nandi, dramatist Munir Helal, Pradip Dewanjee, Shahriar Khaled, General Secretary of Nazrul Sangeet Shilpi Sangstha Dwipen Chowdhury, Secretary of Giti Kabi Sangsad Liakat Hossain Khokan, news presenter Prof Golum Faruq, lyricists Syed Mahiuddin, Faruq Hasan and Dristy President Masud Bakul were present at the meeting.



Artists perform regional song of Chittagong at Theatre Institute on November 5.