

TRAVEL

Serenity of St. Martin's

Whenever one hears that I had spent eight straight days at St. Martin Island in the Bay of Bengal, most quizzically ask, "What did you do for so many days?"

"Nothing" I reply, always. "Absolutely nothing"

Well that was the purpose of the whole visit to the island anyway. To just relax, enjoy the breeze that moves a hammock twined between two coconut trees, sipping water from green coconuts, and going through the menu, ordering barbequed fresh sea food for dinner.

This would be my third visit to the island, but the first with my wife. She has learned to appreciate the lazy side of me that always takes her to scenic places, that brings out the photographer in her. But she does have some chaos and sounds in her bucket list. Always!

So, to strike a balance we had cut a deal.

The days were for relaxing and in the evening, we headed towards the jetty, which is north of where we were stationed, the southernmost tip of the island, just a minute's walk, when the tides subside, from the famed 'chchera dwip.'

On the evening of the second day, we ventured into the main bazaar of St Martin's, the hub of the remote island. This serves as a stark contrast to the serenity of the setting we got accustomed to in the last two days, but it certainly added spark to the St Martin's experience.

At the bazaar, we met chefs frying fish for you. Here, you will hear valiant sagas of how the island came into existence; how men enchanted genies, and how the unseen creatures were subdued into making the patch of land far away from mainland.

Returning to the resort in the evening is

an experience in itself. The whole place is lit with kerosene lamps creating an ambiance right out of a novel on buccaneers. Sitting on the chairs on the sandy courtyard, with no sounds other than that of waves crashing on



the rocky beach nearby, we relaxed, and like it had become a bad habit, sipped on coconut water.

The nights end early at the resort, dining provisions being over by 10 PM. This is when

you can truly experience the soul of the island; the sound of the waves, the starry night, and if you are the truly adventurous sort, forgo the comforts of the resort and camp right there on the beach, at one with nature's wonders.

St. Martin's is quite unique, in more ways than one. To many, this remains the only place in our country where you go to recharge and purify your tired soul. To others, it would seem that the charm may have faded with the passage of time. The only way to truly find out if the place resonates with you is to actually experience it yourself, because peace is what one makes out of a situation after all, and St. Martin offers that opportunity aplenty.

By Mannan Mashhur Zarif

Photo courtesy: Karnafuly Ship Builders Limited

It is no more required to go to Teknaf for going to St. Martin's

MV Karnafuly Express is traveling directly from Cox's Bazar

“ There are two main propulsion engines in this water vessel of about 55 meters in length and 11 meters wide. Energy of each of the engines of this famous American Cummins brand is about 600 BHP. This ship, which is equipped with 17 VIP cabins, can go at the speed of up to 12 nautical miles per hour. The vessel has about 500 seats of three categories. There are different modern amenities including conference room, dining space and sea view balcony in the vessel. Travel Charges: Chair Seats; 2000 to 3000 and Cabin: 5000 to 20,000 tk.”



Sikder Nazrul Islam

Though Bangladesh, the land of natural beauty, was lagging behind from the tourism industry, due to some breakthrough endeavor the possibilities of tourism have now started to open wing gradually. Renowned educator and entrepreneur engineer M.A. Rashid recently has added a new dimension to this industry. As in one hand he has established many top multiple educational institutions, in the same way in other hand he has established huge workplaces- Karnafuly Ship Builders Ltd. Where, he is constantly working with the talented persons of the ship industry to develop the design and construction sector. This virtuous engineer and entrepreneur have recently launched a new horizon in the tourism industry through the passage of luxury ships directly from Cox's Bazar to St. Martin's. Now for travelling from Cox's Bazar to St. Martin's, it will no more be required to cross inaccessible path of Teknaf. Under the initiative and management of Karnafuly Ship Builders Limited, tourists can now travel directly from the city of Cox's Bazar to St. Martin's in a luxury ship called MV Karnafuly Express by sea. This luxurious ship was officially

inaugurated on January 30 by the State Minister for Transport Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury. Prominent people of the area including the Secretary of the Ministry of Shipping, M.A. Samad, were present as special guests in the event. The event was organized at BIWTA Ghat on Cox's Bazar Airport Road of Cox's Bazar city. It was long days demand for travelling of tourist's ship directly from Cox's Bazar to St. Martin's by sea. Finally, by fulfilling this demand, tourists are getting the opportunity to travel to St. Martin's for the first time from the city of Cox's Bazar. The ship departs from Cox's Bazar at 7.00 A.M daily and departs from St. Martin's at 3.30 pm on the return route. This Legendary Vessel - MV Karnafuly Express is a new addition to the journey of people traveling comfortably. Engineer M.A. Rashid, Managing Director of Karnafuly Shipbuilders

Limited, said that MV Karnafuly Express has been developed as an ultramodern luxury ship in its own dockyard. The fully prepared vessel completed the trial from the Karnafuly River to the estuary of Patenga as part of the Sea trial before departing for service. There are two main propulsion engines in this water vessel of about 55 meters in length and 11 meters wide. Energy of each of the engines of this famous American Cummins brand is about 600 BHP. This ship, which is equipped with 17 VIP cabins, can go at the speed of up to 12 nautical miles per hour. The vessel has about 500 seats of three categories. There are modern amenities including conference room, dining space and view balcony in the vessel. It is important to note that mountain and sea draw the tourists always. As the seas get closer, nature embraces all. Therefore, the importance of the

largest sea beach of Cox's Bazar is most important in the world. Meanwhile, Cox's Bazar district is located 120 km away from the small and beautiful coral island- St. Martin's; which is Known as one of the most beautiful Coral Island in the world. As a result, the importance of Cox's Bazar and St. Martin's to tourists is always immense. But earlier, during traveling from Cox's Bazar to St. Martin's, tourists had to cross a long, rough and disgusting road. Recently, MV Karnafuly Express has transformed that boring journey into an aesthetic journey of blue sea. It is undoubtedly a rare opportunity and a sound of foot-step of possibility. For details, contact: Dhaka: 02-58317061, 01771575489 & 01832404149. Chittagong: 031-627866 & 01711749955. Cox's Bazar: 01870732590-97 & St Martin: 01870732598-99.

