

# Tourists ignore fear of abduction

**NURUL ALAM**  
Stream of visitors including foreign tourists continued to flock to Chittagong Hill Tracts regularly to enjoy the scenic beauty ignoring the fear of abduction, sources said.  
Hardly any day passes without arrival of hundreds of visitors in the three hill districts.  
The local administration tightened security in three hill districts -- Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachhari -- from the very beginning of winter season to ensure safety of the visitors against the backdrop of a rise in incidents of abduction there.  
The movement of visitors was, however, restricted, discouraging them to avoid the most vulnerable remote areas.  
A senior official of CHT administration seeking anonymity said, "We have taken precautionary measures before the visitors started to stream into scenic hills.  
"But we are very much worried about foreign tourists and we don't allow them to visit the vulnerable interior areas in the deep forest," he added.  
"We went to see the beauty of hills and lake though we saw the reports of abduction in the newspapers. We

moved only in the lake and town area. We did not dare to enter the interior area fearing trouble," Lipi Chowdhury, a housewife, said. She visited Rangamati along with her family members and relatives last week.  
"We were, however, not afraid of visiting the hills and lake as there were security patrol teams," Lipi said, adding that "We saw many visitors there moving freely as none of them seemed scared."  
Over 200 people including tribals and Bengali settlers were abducted in the three hill districts since signing of the peace agreement between the government and the Parbattia Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) on December 2 in 1997 that ended a two-decade long bush war, police and other sources said.  
Most of the abducted persons were released either after paying ransoms or in the face of raids by law enforcers.  
Some major incidents of abduction created panic and the people feel shaky to move freely in the rugged hills, sources said.  
PCJSS Vice-President Rupayan Dewan said, "People are a bit cautious in their movement due to abduction spree, but they are not so frightened."  
"Normal life in CHT is yet to be

affected seriously despite frequent incidents of abduction," Rupayan said.  
In the latest incident ten tribal villagers believed to be the supporters of United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) were abducted from an interior area in Rangamati on January 8, police said.  
They were kidnapped from Shapnara village under Naniarchhari upazila for sheltering the activists of UPDF.  
UPDF blamed the PCJSS activists for kidnapping its supporters.  
PCJSS denied the charge. Police and other sources said most of the incidents occurred as a sequel to rivalry between PCJSS and anti-peace agreement group UPDF.  
PCJSS activists allegedly kidnapped 20 UPDF supporters from Gargajachhara village at Khagrachhari headquarters on December 23 last year. The village is known as the stronghold of UPDF.  
The UPDF activists launched attack on villagers under Longadu upazila of Rangamati hill district on December 29 and abducted eight supporters of PCJSS.  
The victims in both the incidents, however, were released later, police said.



Visitors crowd on the hanging bridge over Kaptai Lake at Rangamati.



Artistes of Bulbul Lalitakala Academy perform a dance number at a cultural function organised by the Lions Club of Chittagong Karnaphuly at the Engineers' Institute auditorium on Thursday.

# Cry, my beloved Chittagong Port

**MOHT UL ALAM**  
Anyone born and brought up in Chittagong can't but have a dream about Chittagong Port, so adorably called *Porte Grande* by the Portuguese.  
Before that when the spice trade became the dominant feature in the functions of the Arab merchants, the Chittagong Port was looked upon as providing a most vantage point both for docking and repairing, and for recruiting crew on a cheap bargain.  
"Sareng" was the word used for local sailors who worked in the big merchant ships that commanded the trade from Borneo in the east to the Mediterranean in the west, touching Chittagong as the mid-point outpost.

Amitabh Ghose's internationally famed novel, "The Glass Palace," contains a section describing the stirring activities of the Chittagong Port in the British period.  
Moulavi Nasihuddin, writer of "Mofizon," and father of Mahub Ul Alam, worked as a sareng for sometime. He sailed up to Iraq. In the meantime, Mahub joined the First World War and was posted in Iraq, they had a chance meeting at Basra, the father not knowing that his son had joined the war, and the son not knowing either that his father's ship was just anchoring around.  
Many ancient families of Chittagong (like the Dobash family at Patharghata) just became phenomenally rich by having trade linkages with the Chittagong Port, which was developed as a modern port in

the fag end of the nineteenth century.  
The spiritual legend of the Port is also long, though rather unconvincing. It is said that Saint Badar Shah and his nephew Pir Mohsin Awlia came to Chittagong riding on stone on the sea. The strength of the myth lies in the fact that Chittagong had attracted religious missionaries from the early Middle Ages, and so the place traditionally has remained a strong haunt of lucre and piety. In Chittagong, God has stipulated it in such a way that the more religion you have the more money you command.  
However, this history apart, Chittagong Port has come to stand as almost a failed port now.  
A lead report recently pub-

lished in a vernacular Bengali daily (*The Ittefaq*, January 17) discloses very unnerving facts that seem to choke the development of this mother port of the country. The facts relate to the inefficiency of the Chittagong Port Authority management, but the thrust of the blame, however, has been put, and I think rightly so, on the workers' associations (35 of them, just imagine) whose activities more often than not paralyse the Port and keep it inoperative for most of the financial year.  
Of the 30 odd associations, only 7 are duly registered, and through an election the winning party works as CBA, which is the main bargaining agency.  
For Bangladesh being an over-populated country and unpardonably illiterate at that,

workers associations have become a safe harbour for those labourers who are lazy, unfit and quarrelsome, or who are firebrand but good for nothing, and those leaders who believe in nothing but self-aggrandisement.  
We are a teeming population suffering from a sickening poverty, but cite me one example of a workers association whose activities have helped redress the poverty of the poor labourers.  
The very existence of thirty-odd associations in the Port is a flagrant example of what kind of exploitation of the national properties is going on at the Port.  
Let Chittagong Port be not a feeding centre for unwarranted people.

## the week that was

### Samsung Computer Fair ends

The eight Samsung Computer Fair ended here on Friday with a call for facing the challenges of the new world with the knowledge of computer and Information Technology (IT).  
Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury in his speech as chief guest at the closing ceremony at Banani Complex said, "It is the time to use IT for development of the country". He emphasised on expanding IT vicinity for making the youth force more aware of software and e-commerce.  
Ali Ashfaq, Secretary General, Bangladesh Computer Council, Azizur Rahman, Samsung representative in Bangladesh and Managing Director of Index IT Limited, and Mostaq Ahmed, Managing Director, Khan Jahan Ali Computer Limited, attended the function. Javed Hossain of the Organizers DJ&J presided.  
Thirty-three computer firms, 10 from the capital, participated in 50 stalls of the fair.

Prof. Dr. Shanti Ranjan Das, Prof. Dr. Nuruddin Mahmud and Prof. Dr. Quazi Ahmad Nabil also addressed the seminar where Prof. Dr. Md. Shaikatul Meher made the address of welcome.

### Capt. Habib gets fellowship

Nautical Institute, London, awarded fellowship to Captain Habibur Rahman, Chief Nautical Surveyor of the Department of Shipping, for his contribution to the shipping sector.  
He obtained his Master Mariner Certificate of Competency from United Kingdom in 1985 and MSC from World Maritime University, Sweden in 1993. He joined Mercantile Marine Department as a nautical surveyor and assumed the charge of Chief Nautical Surveyor in April 2003.  
Capt. Habib, also the Chief Examiner of the Master & Mates, is also a contributor of the Star Chittagong page of The Daily Star.

### Best use of marine resources stressed

Speakers at a seminar on marine fisheries called for the best use of marine resources.  
They said marine fisheries alone could bring the country an annual export income of Tk 10,000 crore if properly explored and marketed.  
The seminar titled, "Management of Marine Fisheries, Bangladesh Perspective" was organised by Bureau of Business Research at the Commerce Faculty gallery of Chittagong University (CU) on Thursday.  
Chittagong University Vice-Chancellor Professor AJM Nuruddin Chowdhury was present as chief guest at the seminar with Professor Amal Bhusan Nag in the chair.  
Nuruddin in his speech called upon marine scientists for proper exploration and utilisation of sea resources for poverty alleviation.

### be centre of Islam

Jamiatul Falah would be the best centre of Islam of the century. To this end different projects have been taken and many of them are near completion. Food Minister Abdullah Al Noman, also the president of executive committee of Jamiatul Falah Mosque Complex, said this at a brief discussion on development of the huge mosque at Dampara in the port city on Friday.  
Noman said Tk 8.10 crore project for enhancing facilities of the mosque including construction of the second and third floors was almost completed.  
Besides, another project of Tk 10 crore for upgrading Jamiatul Falah as the best Islamic centre of the century has already been submitted and awaiting approval of the government.  
The mosque executive committee vice-president and former Chittagong city mayor Mahmudul Islam Chowdhury, DC, Chittagong Shafiqul Islam, former VC of Islami University Professor Dr. Enam-ul-Haq, Jatija Party president member Jahangir Alam, Asiatic Electric Company Managing Director Alhaj Abdus Salam, BAWA School and College governing body member Khorsheer Rahman and Jamiatul Falah Mosque Khatib Alhaj Moulana Muhammad Jalaluddin Al-Kaderi were present.

### Teachers' token hunger strike

National Teachers Employees Front, Chittagong district unit, observed a token hunger strike on the Chittagong Press Club premises to press home its eight-point demand including salary enhancement and two Eid bonus annually here on Saturday.  
At a rally during the hunger strike, the front leaders said those who suggested 25 per cent to 50 per cent Eid bonus for the teachers were not friends of the prime minister and the state. Bangladesh College Shikhhak Samity (Bakshis), Chittagong district unit president Principal Mesbah Ul Alam presided over the rally. Professor Fauzul

Kabir, Abdul Mannan, Professor Farid Ahmed, Professor Quazi Shamsur Rahman, Professor Dipok Dasgupta and Professor Abu Taher Chowdhury also spoke.

### Ensure equal participation in dev

The speakers at a meeting here on Thursday called for ensuring equal participation of men and women ward commissioners in the development activities of the city corporations.  
They also emphasised on determining "power, function and status" for the commissioners and introducing an effective "metropolitan government".  
People's Empowerment Trust (PET) and ActionAid Bangladesh jointly organised the view exchange meeting titled, "Empowerment of Public Representatives for urban development: Role of Woman Ward Commissioner" at Chittagong Press Club auditorium.  
Nazmunnechha Mahtab, Chairman, Women Studies Department of Dhaka University, was the moderator. Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) woman ward commissioner Afroza Kalam presented the key-note paper.  
Women leader Noor Jahan Khan, elderly journalist Muhammad Idris, Chittagong Press Club President Abu Sufian, CCC female ward commissioner Hasina Jafar, Anjali Kunda, Nilufar Rahman, Shahhaj Malik, CCC male ward commissioner Advocate MA Naser and Professor Aslam Hossain also spoke.

### Dr Robiul awarded

Renowned eye specialist and founding Managing Trustee of Chittagong Eye Infirmary and Training Complex (CEITC) Professor Dr. Robiul Hossen got Asia Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology (APAO) award.  
APAO gold medal to awarded Professor Robiul as recognition of his outstanding contribution to the protection and cure of blindness at an international conference of the academy held in Bangkok recently, says a CEITC press

release.  
Twelve hundred eye specialists from different countries attended the conference.  
Professor Robiul in a fight against blindness in the last three decades reached the eye-care activities to the distressed and poor people in remote areas.  
He played active role in setting up eight regional eye hospitals in different areas of the country, apart from setting up CEITC of BNSB and Institute of Community Ophthalmology. He conducted one million successful eye operations till 2003.

### Regional seminar on geography ends

A two-day regional seminar titled, "Geography Education in Bangladesh: At Different Levels" ended here on Saturday.  
Bangladesh National Education Commission chairman and former Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University Professor M Moniruzzaman Miah was the chief guest at the inaugural function at the Premier University auditorium in the city.  
The seminar organised by Bangladesh National Geographical Association (BNGA) Professor Moniruzzaman underscored the need for geography education in school and college levels.

BNGA President Professor Zafar Reza Khan presided. Seminar organising committee secretary Dr. M Shahidul Islam and BNGA Secretary General Dr. Nurul Islam made the address of welcome and introductory speech.

### Training on audit

Bangladesh Audit Department organised an audit training programme at Chittagong District Council auditorium here on Friday.  
Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) Asif Ali addressed the seminar on audit training as the chief guest. Asif Ali in his speech underscored the need for such training saying that there was no alternative to programme for developing professional skill for audit works.

### Rly annual sports held

The 27th annual sports competition of Bangladesh Railway ended at Polo-ground field in the city on Thursday.

Lalmoinrat clinched the champions' title bagging 16 medals including eight golds while the team from Dhaka got 13 medals including six golds to become runners-up.  
Md Quamruzzaman of Dhaka and Ayrin Sultana Nurpur of Pakshi were the fastest man and woman of the tournament.  
Later, Director General of Bangladesh Railway AFM Mostafizur Rahman gave the prizes among the winners as the chief guest.

### Reunion at Ramkrishna Sebasram

The annual reunion of former students of Ramkrishna Sebasram Hall, Chittagong, was held at the Sebasram premises on Friday.  
Principal of Malda Ramkrishna Math and Mission in India, Swami Dityanandaji Maharaj inaugurated the reunion as chief guest.  
The ceremony started in the morning with recitation from the Vedic Hymn and lighting Mongal Candle. Sebasram General Secretary Swami Shaktinathanandaji Maharaj chaired the opening session and Professor Gurupada Palit gave addressed of welcome.  
In the evening, former students recalled

the nostalgic memories of the past.

### Inter-college, university debate

Chittagong University and Chittagong Public College became the champions in the university and college levels in Mutual Trust Bank-Jugantor Inter-college and university debate competition that ended here on Thursday. In the final rounds at Shishu Academy auditorium Chittagong University defeated Chittagong Medical College in the university level debate. Dr. Nitish Chandra Deb Nath, Principal of Chittagong Government Veterinary College, presided.  
In the college level, Chittagong Public School and College defeated Ishpani Public School. Professor Dr. Imam Ali of Sociology Department of Chittagong University presided.  
Later, Chittagong chamber president Amir Humayun Mahmud Chowdhury distributed the prizes among the winners as the chief guest.  
Drisy, Chittagong, a socio-cultural organisation, organised the debate.

### Mobile poultry training ends

A mobile training on poultry firming and distribution of cheques by Youth Development Department (YDD) held at Yeakub Ali Girls' School at Ydgah in the city on Saturday.  
Social worker Dalia Nazneen Nasir addressed the function held on this occasion as chief guest with YDD Deputy Director Abdul Halim in the chair.  
The speakers said, initiative of youth forces for self-employment would help expedite process of acquiring self-reliance.  
They also called upon the non-government voluntary organisations for more initiatives side by side with the government for the development of youth community.



Students of the Institute of Forestry of Chittagong University formed a human chain in front of Chittagong Press Club protesting appointment of candidates from other disciplines, rather than from forestry institute, in the forest department.