



Move to develop tourism

ABDULLAH-AL MAHMUD

Initiatives for flourishing of potential tourism with the participation of private entrepreneurs have ushered in a ray of hope among the tourists as well as nature-loving people in Chittagong.

The tourist spots that remained under-utilised for long are now attracting more visitors.

Earlier, the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) and private entrepreneurs have implemented some projects to develop the tourist spots.

After upgrading the century-old Foy's Lake, the BPC took initiative to utilise Parkie beach near the Karnaphuli estuary at Anwara upazila. To that end, BPC was going to introduce a cruiser between the

up and down streams of the Karnaphuli by this month.

The private entrepreneurs launched pleasure-crafts to take the tourists to different spots that remained beyond reach due to lack of transports or dilapidated condition of the muddy roads.

Private entrepreneurs have introduced some sea trucks in Teknaf-Saint Martin's route to cater the need of tourists while a SOLAS (safety of live at sea) SHIP of KEARI Limited - KEARI Sindbad, started plying in this route from February 11.

On the other hand, after handing over of some BPC-run motels to private sector in Cox's Bazar earn revenue several times higher than before.

The management of Laboni, the largest Motel in Cox's Bazar, was handed over to private sector on February, sources said.

Earlier, Upal and Probal were leased out for annual revenue of Tk 60 lakh while Motel Laboni alone would earn revenue of Tk 56 lakh annually.

These motels would earn a very little as required facilities could not be given to the tourists due to administrative complexities, a BPC official said.

With the better facilities, the motels now draw increased number of tourists though they charged a bit higher, he said.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Md. Nasiruddin at the inaugural function of the KEARI Sindbad said, the government took various steps to help the tourism industry flourish where any private initiative would be welcomed.

Routine work of BPC resulted in wastage of time for decades

when development of tourism through pragmatic steps could contribute significantly to poverty alleviation and economic growth, he said.

Mir Nasir said for further flourishing of tourism all the places with brighter prospect would be brought under his ministry while initiatives were on to introduce a coordinated policy for the industry.

In this regard, he said a secretary-level meeting was held last month and an inter-ministerial meeting among the ministries of land, forest and tourism was scheduled to be held this month.

He said upgrading of Foy's Lake as a lake-cum-amusement park of international standard under a master plan was under implementation.

The lake that had been earning

annual revenue of only Tk 4 lakh so far, he said, after BPC took over the charge it rose to Tk 24 lakh.

However, process was underway to hand over Foy's Lake to private sector for upgrading that might cost several crore taka, he said.

Besides, BPC-run Motel Saikat at the city's Station Road would be demolished within a month or two for upgrading it as a tourist hub at a cost of Tk 95 crore.

After implementation of the project in phases Motel Saikat with a 10-storey hotel building, shopping and office complexes and spacious car parking facilities would be of international standard, Project Manager Md Rafiqul Islam said.

The hotel building would be a six-storey one in the first phase, he said. Meanwhile, introduction of KEARI Sindbad is deemed as a remarkable addition to the tourism sector in greater Chittagong. The ship created a new dimension in the field of ship-building for the local shipyards.

Mir Nasir said any such ship built under the local shipyard strictly following IMO rules and regulations would also be allowed to operate in the upstream and downstream of the river Karnaphuli.

KEARI Limited Chairman Mir Kasem Ali said, KEARI Sindbad with its two 365 HP marine diesel engines could move at a maximum speed of 12 knots and able to operate 37 kms into the sea even in the maritime cautionary Signal No 7 to 8.

The 120-ft KEARI Sindbad with 25-ft width and 10-ft depth has a carrying capacity of 246 passengers excluding the crews, he said.

Mir Kasem assured of timely sailing of the vessel with passengers not exceeding the capacity.

KEARI Sindbad would leave Teknaf at 9.30am and 2.30pm to start return journeys at 11.00am and 5.00pm everyday.

The ticket prices would be Tk 300 for lower class and Tk 350 for upper class (each including the return journey).



STAR PHOTO

The lone lioness at Chittagong zoo gave birth to three cubs on February 16.

Red tape grips zoo

NURUL ALAM

Red tapism reportedly delayed procurement of two tigers and two hippopotamuses for the Chittagong Zoo adjacent to scenic Foy's Lake, sources said.

And, the aim for increasing the stock of animals for the zoo became uncertain due to bureaucratic tangles at the higher authorities.

Sources at the Chittagong Zoo said the Dhaka Zoo authorities took the initiative to send two tigers and two hippopotamuses for the Chittagong Zoo a year back.

But it needs a process through the ministry concerned which is yet to be started, sources added.

"We are making efforts to procure those animals as we want to develop this zoo to attract more visitors," said Shahjahan Chowdhury, a member of the committee

running the Chittagong Zoo.

"We hope that we will get those tigers and hippopotamuses after completion of due formalities in the ministry and then we will expect more visitors here," he said. "The zoo has reached the present stage due to the initiatives taken by some city elite," he added.

Magistrate Quamrul Hasan, in-charge of Chittagong Zoo, on behalf of local administration said "So far I know process is underway to provide two tigers and two hippopotamuses to Chittagong Zoo from Dhaka Zoo".

"We are keeping contact with the concerned bodies to expedite the process in this connection," Quamrul Hasan said. "I think we will get the same shortly," he added.

He said, "We are ready to develop infrastructural facilities inside the zoo to accommodate the hippopotamus with comfort". "We want to have more animals for the zoo to make it

attractive," he added.

Chittagong Zoo had two tigers, unfortunately one of them died from cancer.

However, it would be very difficult to maintain hippopotamus at Chittagong Zoo if the authorities fail to provide facilities for such animal. "Chittagong Zoo must raise facilities before procuring more animals like hippopotamus," a zoo source on condition of anonymity said.

Chittagong Zoo was set up in 1989 on a land of three acres owned by the government.

The number of visitors has increased during the winter season this year. On an average over 2,000 visitors turn up daily that help earn revenues of about Tk 10,000 (ten thousand), zoo sources said.

Moreover, Chittagong Zoo has an advantage of attracting visitors who arrive at Foy's Lake to enjoy the scenic beauty, sources said.



ZOBAER HOSSAIN SKIDER

A new bridge at Foy's lake to facilitate the movement of visitors.

Kalurghat and beyond

MOHIT UL ALAM

On January 22 I happened to be a passenger in a bus bound for Cox's Bazar.

As the bus crossed the Kalurghat Bridge, I saw that it met with a road that was anything but a road. The road from end to end for about five miles was full of potholes and ditches and craters. Some craters were so big that it reminded me of an airstrip heavily bombed. The bus could hardly move.

As I occupied a front seat just behind the driver, I couldn't repress my sense of humour and asked the driver as to when the road was so heavily bombed. The driver was a shy kind of person, but he understood my question and replied that the road had been in that condition for over a year or so. My anger mixed with a sense of helplessness arose at once and I cursed the people who were in charge of the road communications. Then and there I thought of writing a column on the condition of the road when I got back from Cox' Bazar. But I forgot about the matter even though two weeks had passed after my return.

Then suddenly one night, a couple of

days ago, as I sat with my family to watch a show on Channel I, I was really surprised to see Communications Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda on screen, not not delivering a speech or



Barrister Nazmul Huda

slicing a point in the Parliament, but rendering a song in his own voice. Though I am vaguely aware that many of our ministers and politicians have many other attractive parts rather than what they have chosen for life, but I never knew that the barrister sahib was such a great singer. The song, a great classical Tagore song at that: "Jakhon parbe na more payer chinha ei ghate" (When these steps will not be printed by my footmarks), was sung beautifully visualised by the minister's frequent change of dress and shifting of locations, while time and again the camera went inside the studio glimpsing at the minister actually recording the song locked with earphones and all that; and, he, in the studio was marvelously looking like Elton John singing his famous number, "Sacrifice." It was over all an A grade performance.

Now, what would you say about Nazmul Huda! The roads are breaking down everywhere, and he's singing on TV. This may be cruel, if we draw on the famous analogy with Nero who was fluting, while Rome was burning. But then it's a very close call, nonetheless.

The scenario has rather something to do with Stephen Greenblatt's post-

historical model. This great professor of literature, who was once in Berkeley and is now in Harvard, proposes that literature should be read as a link subject with the other phenomena in society. For example, he views that Columbus' telescope symbolises the dominance of the west over the colonies, which is again reflected in the literature of the Renaissance Europe.

We twist the theory, and then we can place Nazmul Huda. That is, Bangladesh must be a country where the ministers can enjoy their time well, even when the departments they are responsible for are suffering.

Readers, sensitive to people's individual talents, might argue that a minister is not supposed to be on vigil twenty-four hours. Yes, but when he's coming to the electronic media for attention, the poor citizens of the country, and the poorer travellers on that god-forsaken road mentioned earlier would like to know whether the minister has done his homework!

Honourable Minister Nazmul Huda is well known for his gift of the gab, then does it prove that 'more talk, less work' is true!



STAR PHOTO

Procession, playing of flute, dance and baul songs featured in spring festival held on Government Art College premises in the port city.

theweekthatwas

Child Cancer Day procession

A colourful procession was brought out in the city on Sunday to mark the World Child Cancer Day.

Children Leukaemia Assistance and Support Services (Class), a non-government organisation (NGO), organised the programme to help child cancer patients.

Representatives from different socio-cultural and volunteer organisations, and school students joined the procession, which started from in front of Chittagong Club and paraded main city thoroughfares.

Reopen Jalil Textile Mill

Leaders of Bangladesh Trade Union Centre (TUC), Chittagong District Unit demanded immediate reopening of Jalil Textile Mill.

TUC President Tapan Dutta and General Secretary Mohammad Mosiuddowla in a statement on Friday condemned the decision to close down the mill without prior discussion with the employees and workers.

They threatened greater agitation if their demand was not fulfilled immediately.

Classical Music Conference

The 7th Classical Music Conference under the auspices of Sadaranga Sangskritik Parishad was held at Chittagong Muslim Hall Institute on Thursday.

Renowned music expert Wahidul Haq inaugurated the conference. Noted scientist professor Dr Jamal Nazrul Islam presided.

Artists from different parts of the country rendered classical songs before a packed crowd. Chandana Devi Hajong presented

'Kheyal' while Shyamol Chandra Das 'Behala', Dulal Kanungo 'Guitar' and Khalid Latif rendered 'Kheyal.'

Later, two discussions on the state of classical music practices were held.

Lion's regional confce held

Speakers at the regional conference of Lion Club International, District 315 B-4, called upon all to extend their helping hands towards the poor and destitute people.

The conference was held on Friday with Meah Iftekhar Anwar in the chair. District governor Rafique Ahmed was present as chief guest while former Lion governor PR Sinha special guest.

Abdul Gaffar Dobash, Nader Khan, SM Ishaque, Baduzzaman Khan Nonny, Rupam Kishore Barua, MA

Malek and M Shamsul Haq also addressed the conference.

Workshop on bio-fertiliser

A workshop on the use of biological fertiliser, organised by Nawjowan Sangstha, was held at BADC Training Centre in Patiya on Wednesday. Sangstha's Chief Executive Mohammad Imam Hossain inaugurated the workshop.

Local farmers and nursery owners took part in the workshop to have a first-hand idea about the benefit of bio-fertiliser, its manufacturing process and uses.

Participants praised the initiative of the organisation and said that environment-friendly bio-fertiliser can improve the fertility of cultivable land.

Agriculturalists Faruk Ahmad, Mohammad Ansarul Islam,

Mohammad Abdul Alim and Mohammad Solaiman were moderators in the workshop.

Termination condemned

Leaders of Chittagong X-Ray Pathology and Health Clinic Workers' Union at a meeting strongly condemned the recent termination of two employees at Life Care and Chittagong Lab Limited and demanded their immediate reinstatement.

The protest meeting was held on Saturday at the Union Office in City's Jamal Khan area with Union President Bikas Basu in the chair.

General Secretary Mostafa Kamal Azad, Union leaders Ajit Dey, Shankar Saha, Sujit Kumar Nath, Sadequr Rahman and Mohammad Faruque addressed the meeting.

Pubali Bank branch managers'

conference

The first conference of branch managers of Pubali Bank Limited in Chittagong was held at the General Manager's Office at CDA Building on Friday with a call to render better services to the customers and work hard to enhance image of the bank.

GM of Greater Chittagong Region MA Zaber Meah presided. Managing Director Khondakar Ibrahim Khaled was present as chief guest while Deputy Managing Director (Adm) M Rafiqul Islam and Deputy Managing Director (Managing) Helal Ahmed Chowdhury were the special guests.

Khondakar Ibrahim urged all to work sincerely to achieve the targets set for the year 2004 in this region.

Chittagong North Region Chief of the bank Himangshu Shekhar Roy and South Region Chief Saroj

Kanti Khisa also addressed the conference and briefed the senior officials about the overall performance of their respective regions.

Winter clothes for street people

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, Chittagong City Unit distributed winter clothes and blankets to some 150 poor street people at a simple ceremony at the auditorium of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) on Saturday.

CCCI President Amir Humayun Mahmud Chowdhury distributed the blankets and clothes as chief guest.

CCCI Vice President Monzurul Amin Chowdhury, Vice Chairman of City Red Crescent Unit Golam Morshed and Unit Secretary SM Saiful Alam were present.

CU Officers' Samity installation

The installation ceremony of newly-elected office-bearers of Chittagong University Officers' Samity was held on Wednesday at its office.

Chief election commissioner and acting director of CU transport section Ahsanuddin Kabir Chowdhury chaired the function.

Newly-elected President Jafar Sadeq, General Secretary Shahjahan Rashid, former president Zaker Ahmad, new assistant general secretary Rashed Bin Amin Chowdhury and acting controller of examinations Mohammad Mofakkhairul Islam also spoke.

The leaders promised their whole-hearted cooperation to the activities of the university.