

Foy's Lake not safe for tourists?

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN RIAD

Crime has increased at the picturesque Foy's Lake area in the recent time, scaring off the visitors from the scenic site.

At least four incidents of mugging occurred and a woman was allegedly abducted at the spot in past ten days causing grave concern among the tourists that dismayed them. Besides, the place has turned into a safe haven for the drug addicts and those who tease women.

With the tourism ministry as well as government working hard to upgrade the scenic hilly belt to an international standard of tourism spot to attract tourists from home and abroad, local people are in apathy about the site due to poor security system.

The government leased the Foy's Lake to Concord Group for 50 years from April 1, 2004. Two companies of Concord Group -- Concord Entertainment Company Limited and Concord Engineering and Construction Limited have been tasked to

Crime has increased at the picturesque area and authorities and police are indifferent to the increased incidents of mugging

develop the spot with increasing amusement facilities to the visitors, sources said. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on April 19 laid the foundation stone of the project of Tk 103 crore.

Despite the government's effort to turn the site into an international standard of tourist spot aiming at earning huge revenue, the number of visitors is reportedly decreasing day by day due to lack of security measures.

Only 30 security personnel, including 20 ansars and 10 plain-clothes watchmen work in three shifts to ensure safety of visitors at the 337 acres of vast hilly belt.

"Yes, the number of visitors went down recently, Md Anwar Sadat Siddiquee," assistant general manager (administration and operation) of Concord Entertainment Company Limited said.

He, however, declined to give any statistics about the number of visitors in the recent months saying that off-season might

have been the reason behind it. At least four incidents of mugging took place there in last ten days.

Amirul Islam, an official of Chowdhury Group of Industries of Dhaka, was robbed at the hilltop of the Foy's Lake and received severe stab injuries in his back on July 12. Amirul said that he informed the incident to the General Manager of Concord Entertainment Limited immediately but he did not take any initiative to arrest the muggers.

"Six muggers snatched my money and some transcripts. They stabbed me in my back when I tried to resist them. I suspect involvement of the on duty security guards of Foy's Lake because they did not come in aid of me and standing few yards away from the spot," he added.

Besides, Susana, an English tourist, was robbed of her digital camera and Tk 3000 at the same place on July 11. However, the Concord authority recovered the camera worth about US \$

3000 and detained a female mugger -- Rumi Akhter on Friday and handed over her to the police.

A garments worker was also robbed the same day and a student lost his all belongings a day before, sources said.

A housewife was abducted by some armed criminals recently and released later on. However, many incidents of mugging remained unreported.

Anwar Sadat said, the development activities have just begun and all the facilities, including the security measures, will be provided gradually to make the place a real tourist spot. He said he sought police assistance but they do not visit the spot even once a week.

SM Shibli Noman, Officer in Charge (OC) of Khulshi thana, denied the allegation saying that a four-member patrol police discharge their duty at the entry point of the Foy's Lake from 9:00am to 11:00pm daily.

Scenic Lama to join tourist hot spots

SHAHIDUL ISLAM, back from Lama

Scenic Lama in Bandarban hill district will soon take a sure place in the list of Parjatan Corporation or that of country's private tour operators.

The new tourist spot, Mirinza Parjatan Complex, is nearing completion and it may be declared open to the visitors by August. The Bandarban district administration is supervising the construction work.

The proposed tourist spot is being built on top of the Mirinza Hill, which is according to the Bandarban administration nearly 1,500 feet from the sea level.

Mirinza is a quiet place located near Lama upazila headquarters and 120 kilometres from Chittagong and 16 kilometres from the Chittagong-Cox's Bazar Road at Fanshiakhali point.

None of the administration or local people, mostly Bangalce settlers, could say the origin of 'Mirinza', but one layman told

that the word 'Mirinza' is derived from Murong dialect and the sight was once predominantly a Murong, one of the tribes in Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The tourist spot is being constructed on 500 acres of land. It will be a very beautiful place for the visitors or tourists, especially those who craves for a relief from the metropolitan monotony.

"The place will have an observation tower at the peak of the hill for a clear view of the beauty of surrounding hills and the Bay of Bengal. The tower will be equipped with binocular and other facilities to cater the need of the visitors," State Minister for Forests and Environment Jafrul Islam Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

The most attractive sight of the under-construction tourist spot will be a vessel-shaped playground. "It will be built inside the stomach of a gigantic hill keeping its outside natural look unscratched and giving it an

extra-ordinary shape almost identical to a big ship," he said.

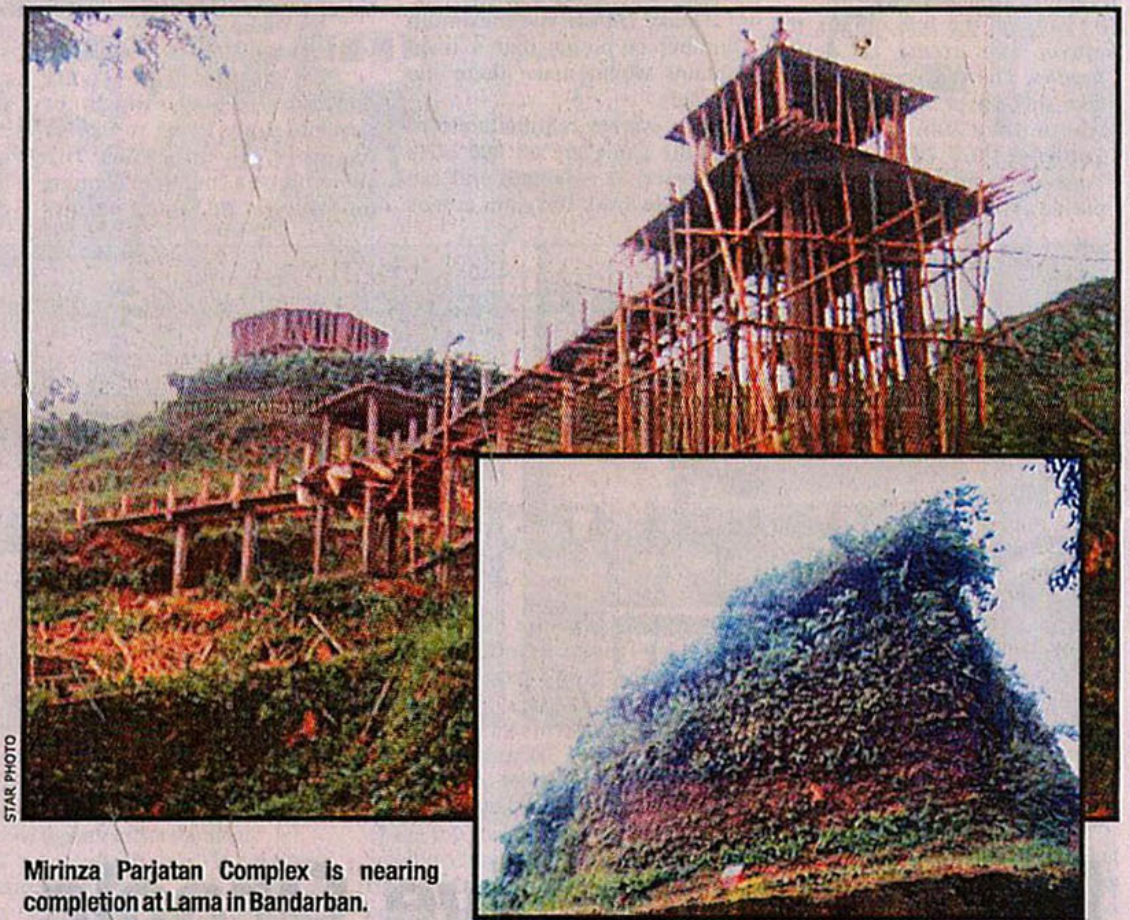
Jafrul Islam said, "At the first glance it will look like the replica of the historic Titanic Ship and that will surely be the prime specialty and attraction of this new tourist place."

A safari park and lake will add extra amusement to the visitors at Mirinza Parjatan Complex, he added.

Hafizur Rahman Bhuiyan, deputy commissioner (DC) of the district, said that the construction works of the tourist spot would be completed within one month. "Hopefully, it would open to the visitors by the end of August," he said.

The spot is being built with financial assistance of private sectors and donations and district administration is just supervising the construction works, Hafiz said.

The foundation stone of the spot was laid on September 17 last year.



Mirinza Parjatan Complex is nearing completion at Lama in Bandarban.

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US trade policy advisor meets CCCI president

Betsy E Stillman, US Special Trade Policy Advisor for South Asia Affairs of the Trade Representative Office, said that the adverse internal factors have to be removed as per the policy of our government to get duty-free access of Bangladesh goods to US markets.

She said this at a meeting with Chittagong Chamber President Amir Humayun Mahmud Chowdhury at the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) auditorium on Sunday.

Betsy said that (general strike) is the main obstacle to the progress and underscored the need for coming out of this culture.

She called for an end to bureaucratic tangle at customs, port and other government offices to get duty-free facilities in US. Moreover, measures have to be taken against unjustified charges during export and import by freight forwarders and others concerned, she said.

Betsy, however, assured business leaders of making efforts to get duty-free facilities.

CCCI Vice-President Monzor Ul Amin Chowdhury and director Mahbob Ali were present at the meeting.

Build hanging bridge or tunnel, save Karnaphuli

Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury demanded of the government to build either a hanging bridge or a tunnel to save the river Karnaphuli as well as Chittagong port from silt.

He said construction of such a bridge

or tunnel on Build Operation and Transfer (BOT) basis was very much possible with the assistance of Japan International Cooperative Agency (JICA) if government approval was available.

Mohiuddin Chowdhury, also general secretary of Chittagong city Awami League, was addressing a rally at Jetty Gate no. 3 of Chittagong port here on Saturday.

All political parties, professionals, workers, cultural and social organisations organised the rally as a part of its fortnight long movement for the development of Chittagong.

National Awami Party Chittagong (north) district General Secretary Sree Shantosh Chowdhury presided.

Tree fair ends

Forty-day tree fair of the Chittagong City Corporation ended on the CJKS Gymnasium premises here on Sunday.

Addressing the concluding ceremony as the chief guest mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury called for a national consensus on afforestation and environment irrespective of party

affiliation to ensure a pollution-free and healthy environment for the future generation.

"Whatever differences in opinions we may have as politicians, yet we can reach a consensus at least on this issue for preserving the environment," he said.

He called for launching a social movement for tree plantation to save environment right now.

Scientist Professor Dr. Jamal Nazrul Islam and former Pro-VC of Chittagong University Professor Dr. Abu Yusuf Alam were special guests at the ceremony chaired by CDC Education Standing

Committee Vice-President and Ward Commissioner Md Yakub.

Dr Moyeen visits N-medicine centre

Minister for Science, Information and Communication Technology Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan visited the Nuclear Medicine and Ultra Sound Centre at Chittagong Medical College (CMC) on Sunday.

Dr Moyeen asked the authorities

concerned to improve service facilities and quality of the centre further.

He emphasised on the centre's more contacts with CMC, Chittagong University and other scientific and technical institutes and involving them in its routine and research activities.

Acting director of the centre, Dr. Tamiuddin Ahmed told Dr Moyeen that the centre is a modern project and it would provide better service.

Chittagong Medical College Hospital Director Brigadier General Taufiqul Alam and CMC Acting Principal Professor Margub Hossain were present.

Mostafa Tea Family Pack released

Mostafa Group of Industries organised a view exchange meeting with its distributors on the release of Mostafa Tea Family Pack in the market here on Thursday.

Mostafa Group Director Zahir Uddin said that the 52-year old group was marketing the family pack of its tea with the leaves from the garden it purchased in Fatikchhari two years back.

He said they aimed at presenting the

customers a tea having quality of international standard at a competitive lower price.

Corporate Finance Advisor Mohammad Salim Uddin, Manager (Blending and Production) Selim Khadem and Manager (Marketing) Quazi Motaher Uddin were present.

BDMA submits memo to PM

Bangladesh Diploma Medical Association, Chittagong district unit submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to change their designation as Deputy Assistant Community Medical Officer.

The memorandum was submitted to PM through the Deputy Commissioner, Chittagong.

BDMA, Chittagong district unit President Dr. Yunus Akter, General Secretary Dr. Abul Monzor Chowdhury, Dr. Chitta Ranjan Nath, Dr. Subhamoy Chowdhury and Dr. Shahena Parveen were present.

Exhibition on French technology

A 12-day exhibition titled "Technology in France Part II" began at Alliance Francaise auditorium here on Sunday.

The main features of the exhibition will include the instrumentation and the materials, which had been the factors for the technological development of France in the last 50 years.

The visitors at the exhibition will see the achievement of France in the field of chemical development and new appropriate system that protects environment and keeps live the business of fuel and raw materials, said a press release.



Teachers of non-government primary schools under the banner of Non-government Primary Teachers' Samity held a rally in front of the Chittagong Press Club on Sunday demanding nationalisation of their jobs.



Prothom Alo Resident Editor Abul Momen gives away trophy to the winners of the Pepsodent-Drishy Debate in the city on July 16.