

Move to promote ecotourism at Parki Beach

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR

Initiative is on to develop facilities at the uncared for Parki Beach under Anwara upazila here to promote ecotourism as well as to combat risks of climate change by creating an ecotourism centre-cum-field office.

Ministry of Environment and Forests is implementing a project worth over Tk 1.91 crore in this regard in cooperation with the Department of Environment, Chittagong divisional office.

The project, financed by the climate change trust fund of the ministry, is expected to be completed by March, 2012, said the sources.

Parki Beach, a potential tourist spot on around 17 kilometres to the south off the Chittagong city, remained untouched so far.

The beach 15-kilometre in length and 300 to 350 feet in width -- has 20-kilometre coastal exotic green belt of 'Jhau' forest of the Forest Department to save the area from natural calamities.

The beach with the scenic beauty attracts the tourists to enjoy the river Karnaphuli, large-sized anchored vessels in the Outer Anchorage of Chittagong Maritime Port, fishing in the bay, sunset, crabs of different species and local and migratory birds moving en masse from the beach.

At present there is no facility for the visitors at the beach that could help expand tourism. The beach is insecure while lack of care posed a threat to biodiversity of the area.

The Jhau trees of the coastal green belt are being illegally felled by a section of dishonest people while rise of sea level is also destroying the trees as the mud from bottom of the field are being washed away during high-tides, locals said.

A memorandum of understanding will be signed with the stakeholders after selection of the project site to make the project a success, said the



Parki Beach under Anwara upazila in Chittagong.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Project Director (PD) Mustafizur Rahman Akhand, also acting director of DoE, Chittagong.

When completed, ecotourism centre will help promote tourism apart from protecting the environment of the beach from degradation, he said.

The multipurpose ecotourism centre would have arrangement for multimedia presentation to let the tourists know about the affects of climate change, said Mustafizur, adding that seminar and discussion would also be held at the centre.

Sources said the ecotourism centre-cum-field office will be developed on 6,000 square-feet of land at a cost of Tk 1.2 crore while 500 dust bins of two categories and 100 rickshaw vans will also be procured at a cost of Tk 4 lakh to keep the beach clean.

While visiting the site recently, it was found that there were some visitors there without facility for food or entertainment of minimum standards.

Nurul Anwar, 36, a local, said after planting the Jhau forest back in 1993

the beach remained unused despite having huge potentials for tourism.

Some facilities and security for the visitors at the beach can boost the tourism here as the road communications with the beach from Chittagong city is good.

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Swadhinata Park opens

The theme park popularly known as Mini Bangladesh reopened with the changed of Swadhinata Park under Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) on Eid day.

The theme park was inaugurated on August 29 in 2006 while it was opened to public as "Zia Smriti Complex" on September 7 the same year.

The park was closed when extended tenure of the contract Concord Entertainment signed with the Ministry for Liberation War Affairs expired on January 4 this year

CCC won the tender floated in April as the highest bidder offering annual revenue of Tk 1.65 crore to run the theme park for five years.

CCC Mayor Md Manjur Alam inaugurated the Swadhinata Park while CCC Panel Mayor-1 Mohammad Hossain, ward councillors Mahbul Alam, Md Gias Uddin, Nurul Haque, Mohammad Azam and Bijoy Kumar Chowdhury and local elites were present among others.

On the opening day, visitors had access to the park free of cost.

13 prisoners freed on Eid

Thirteen prisoners got released from Chittagong jail in the port city on Friday.

Chittagong jail authorities set them free following a release order of the president on the occasion of the Eid-ul-Fitr.

The released prisoners were Omar Ali, 60, Md Abu Bakkar, 38, Md Ayub Ali, 25, Kajol Sarder, 40, Mantu Mia, 45, Abdul Wadud, 60, Md Abdus Shukkur, 26, Nurul Amin, 30, Saiful Islam, 22, Md Sirajul Islam, 45, Md Badsha Mia, 27, Nasima Akter alias Rawshan Ara, 25, and Achhia Khatun, 50.

Call to rehabilitate the challenged

Speakers at a function in the port city on Wednesday called for turning the persons with disability into human resources through training and rehabilitating them to contribute to the society.

They made this call at a function organised by Concern Services for Disabled (CSD) to distribute Eid clothes among the persons with disability and trainees of the organisation at its Fatehabad office.

Chikondandi Union Parishad Chairman Muhammad Salim, Childcare Kindergarten Chairperson and CSD Member Reaz Mohammad and social workers Salim Uddin, Nazrul Bashar and Md Yusuf spoke at the meeting with CSD General Secretary Bishwajit Gupta in the chair.

Eid festival for persons with disability

An Eid festival was held for the persons with disabilities and the underprivileged at DC Hill Park on the Eid day (Saturday).

Chattal Youth Choir organised the festival where vermicelli, sweetmeat and foods were distributed among them.

A discussion was held in the first session of the festival where Industrialist MA Malek, organisation adviser Zafar Hossain Chowdhury, Saiful Karim Chowdhury and Swapan Mohazan spoke as guests with Salma Jahan Mili in the chair.

The participants exchanged Eid greetings with Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Sirajul Haq Chowdhury and Deputy Commissioner Foyez Ahmad in the second session.

Contribution of Yusuf Chy recalled

A discussion meeting commemorating Mohammad Yusuf Chowdhury, founding chairman of local daily the Dainik Purbokone, was held in the port city on Thursday.

Alor Michhil, a socio-cultural organisation, organised the meeting at its office in Golpaharer Mor area.

Speakers at the meeting recalled Yusuf Chowdhury's contribution rising above greed and selfishness. They called upon all to serve the people and society following Yusuf Chowdhury.

Local Ward Councillor Md Gias Uddin, Abul Faisal, Aminul Islam, Joinal Abedin and Md Jasim spoke at the meeting with Jasim Uddin Ahmad in the chair.

Govt land for non-existent madrasa in Khagrachhari?

JASIM MAJUMDER, KHAGRACHHARI

The district administration allocated 200 decimal lands of a cluster village for a non-existent madrasa under Sadar upazila here triggering resentment among the people.

Some 85 landless families living on the land since 1986 are now fearing eviction following the allocation.

Md Asgor Ali, 72, a settler, told The Daily Star that 85 Bangalee families were rehabilitated on the cluster village named "Shalbon Guchchhagram" in 1986 during insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). They have been living in the village on 200 decimals of land for the last 24 years.

He said one Osman Gani alias Kari Osman claims to have taken lease of the land in 2000 in the name of a so called Nurani Girl's Academy, posing a threat to their stay on the land.

He said they have formed a human chain in front of the Press Club on June 6 this year protesting allotment to the non-existent madrasa and its cancellation. But, the administration is yet to take any action in this regard, he added.

Md Sekandar Ali, 65, a resident of the cluster village, alleged that the then deputy commissioner AKM Zafrul Hossen was the man behind leasing out of the land to the madrasa in a bid to evict them from the village.

He said they have demanded cancellation of the land allotment in the name of a fake madrasa and new allotment for those who have been living there for over two decades.

Kari Osman, director of "Nurani Girl's Academy", admitted that there is no academy or madrasa. He, however, said he has a plan to set up a madrasa to teach girls Islamic education.

He said the administration allocated 200 decimals of land considering his 'noble intention' and it can also cancel the allotment if it thinks it is an act of fraudulence.

Osman said it is khas land and deputy commissioner has the authority to allot such land for any educational institution.

Mohammad Anwar Hossen, acting mayor of Khagrachhari Municipality, said he does not know who is Kari Osman and there was no existence of so-called Nurani Girl's Academy. He also become astonished to hear that the then deputy commissioner allotted 200 decimals of land for the fake madrasa.

"Where would these 85 families go and who would rehabilitate them?" he asked.

Former Khagrachhari Hill District Council chairman and local lawmaker Zatintra Lal Tripura said he has written a letter on January 31, 2000 to the secretary of establishment ministry to take action against the officials responsible, including the then DC and ADC.

Zatintra said he would inform the matter to authorities concerned to get the allotment to the so-called madrasa cancelled considering fate of these 85 families.

Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Anisul Hoque Bhuiyan said a case was filed by the villagers with district sessions and judge's court in 2005 against the allotment.

He said they would take necessary steps following the court order.



The people of a cluster village from a human chain in front of Khagrachhari Press Club demanding cancellation of 200 decimal land allotment for non-existent Nurani Girl's Academy.

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A child gazes at a deer at the Chittagong Zoo the day after Eid. People visited different entertainment spots in the port city, bringing joy to both the young and old into their everyday life.