

ENVIRONMENT

Jaflong, one of the most beautiful natural spaces in Bangladesh, is becoming inhospitable for tourists due to a lack of adequate facilities.

Once upon a time, Jaflong, a popular hill station in Sylhet's Gowainghat Upazila, was called the Lung of Sylhet. Hills covered with rainforests and cascades, crystal clear waters of the scenic Dauki River and picturesque hillside Khasi villages have made it one of the most beautiful natural tourist spots in Bangladesh.

Dauki River is one of the cleanest and most scenic rivers in the country. The water is so clean and transparent that anybody can see the riverbed and catch fish frolicking in the river with bear hands. Its mineral rich water comes from the waterfalls in the mountains of Meghalaya. In many places the depth of the river is less than five feet, and it's cool and clean water of soothing 18 to 20 degree Celsius makes it one of the best places for swimming and bathing.

However, another significant property of this river has seriously endangered its natural beauty. While flowing from the

mountains across the border, the river brings millions of tons of boulders with its torrential current. As a result, hundreds of stone quarries have grown like mushrooms all along the river banks.

The quarry workers used to extract stone with illegal dredger machines and crush them with heavy stone crushers called 'Boma Machines' which are also illegal. Usage of these illegal machines



in industrial scale has damaged the natural environment and ecosystem of the river. Once, the riverbed was covered with pebbles of different colours, now there is not a single pebble in the sand covered riverbed.

Deafening sounds from these machines used to erode the riverbanks. Open stockpiles of fuel to operate these machines such as coal and diesel have also polluted the river. After much

stone quarries for their livelihood. Now they have to extract and crush stone manually. Although usage of illegal machines is currently stopped, unplanned extraction and crushing of boulders are still harming the natural environment of this serene place.

Despite being a popular tourist attraction, the government has not taken any step to provide any kind of tourist facility. Huge craters and numerous pot holes on the sixty kilometres road from Sylhet to Jaflong have made it almost unusable. During every rainy season, flash floods from the hills turn the river into a torrential stream. Every year, several tourists go missing and drown while swimming in the river. However, there are no life guards or rescue services there.

Abdul Hakim Chowdhury, chairman of Gowainghat Upazila says, "We have applied to the government several times to declare Jaflong as a tourist spot. Tens of thousands of visitors come here every year but there is no hotel or restaurant of good quality here. Ensuring safeguard of the tourists is also a big challenge for us."

"If the government declares it as a tourist spot, tourist police will be deployed here to ensure safety for the visitors. More effort will also be made to protect the natural beauty and ecosystem of the Dauki River," he adds

Jaflong is one of the most beautiful places in Bangladesh where thousands of tourists go to refresh themselves by coming close to the serenity of nature. If government takes steps to run eco-tourism here, then a lot of revenue can be earned from the local and international visitors while the place's beautiful natural environment will also be protected.

criticism in the mass media and protests from environmental activists, usage of these machines has been stopped finally from March, 2015.

Abdul Gafur, a quarry worker says, "When the media starts to report against the quarries, they stop using the dredger and boma machines for a while. After some days, they start to use them again. However, this year, during the raid, the police damaged many of those machines and still none of the quarries are using them anymore."

However, thousands of people in Gowainghat upazila are dependent on

THE ENDANGERED SHANGRI-LA

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



AN APPLE A DAY

You have an itchy tingling sensation. You see a hint of redness around your lips. Get ready to welcome a cluster of fluid filled pockets on your lips in the next 24 hours!

Cold sores, also called fever blisters, are tiny, fluid-filled lesions that occur on and around your lips and usually heal within two weeks. These blisters, caused by certain strains of the herpes simplex virus (HSV), are often grouped together in patches and it ends in the form of a crust once the blister blasts.

Like its name, cold sores and fever blisters tend to develop when an individual has a cold or fever. But it can also be triggered by stress, over exposure to sun, hormonal changes, and trauma to the skin, emotional distress, intestinal illness and menstruation. These blisters can recur in the same spot or in different locations with a frequency ranging from weekly to yearly. They can irritate you all your life, as the virus remains dormant in the body for lifelong. A sore or blister will typically take a few days to break. Symptoms can vary, depending on whether this is your first outbreak or a recurrence. If you experience it for the first-time in your life, you might experience fever, sore throat, headache, muscle aches or swollen lymph nodes. Children under five years old may have cold sores inside their mouths and the lesions are commonly mistaken for canker sores. For people who do develop signs and symptoms, a cold sore usually passes through several stages, which include:

1. Tingling and itching. A stage when you feel an itching, burning or tingling sensation around your lips for a day or two before the blisters erupt.
2. Blisters. Small fluid-filled blisters typically break out along the border where the outside edge of the lips meets the skin of the face, although the blisters can also occur around the nose or on the cheeks.
3. Oozing and crusting. The small blisters may merge and then burst; leaving shallow open sores that will ooze fluid and then crust over. In most cases cold sores generally clear up without treatment and do not require seeing a doctor. However it is wise to see a doctor if you have frequent recurrences of cold sores or you have a weakened immune system and also the sores don't within two weeks. Several types of prescription antiviral drugs may speed the healing process. Applying ice or washcloths soaked in cold water

BOTHERSOME BLISTERS

FAYEKA ZABEEN SIDDIQUA



PHOTO COURTESY: WIKIPEDIA

to the blisters may help ease symptoms. Lip balms containing 1 percent lemon extract seem to shorten healing time and prevent recurrence. Foods rich in lysine include vegetables, beans, fish, and chicken can also help to heal the sore.

Most importantly, have patience. Don't poke it. Don't touch it. Cold sores usually go away without treatment within 7 to 10 days. You might have antiviral tablets or cream to ease your symptoms and speed up the healing time.

Source: Mayo clinic

Keep in Mind

- Sharing utensils, razors and towels, as well as kissing, may spread HSV-1.
- While cold sores are most contagious when they are oozing fluid, the virus can be transmitted to others even during times when you have no blisters.
- Unlike a canker, a fever blister appears on the upper surface of the lips whereas a canker sore appears on the movable parts of the mouth such as the tongue or the inside linings of the lips and cheeks
- A fever blister, unlike a canker sore, is very contagious.
- In most cases, fever blisters don't require a doctor's visit, though there are exceptions.
- It is advisable for a cold sore sufferer to avoid unnecessary exposure to the sun and wind, and not to worsen a sore by touching or poking it.
- Fever blisters are contagious, so it is highly recommended not to share lip gloss, drinks or food with others while you are having an outbreak.

Great Love Moves You.

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Thicker condoms with extra lubrication

Thin Feel
Ultra fine condoms for more feelings

Pleasure Me
Dotted & ribbed condoms for more excitement

Strawberry
Strawberry flavored condoms

Love
Condoms with lubrication for great comfort

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