

KHULNA TEXTILE MILLS

Abandoned
for 31 years

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

The once-thriving Khulna Textile Mills Limited, now a neglected relic of the past, has remained abandoned for nearly 31 years. Established in 1931 as the Acharya Prafulla Chandra Cotton Mill, the mill sits on 25.63 acres of land in the heart of Khulna city. It was renamed in 1960 and nationalised in 1972, following Bangladesh's independence.

In 1993, the government laid off 1,600 workers and employees, shutting down operations with promises to resume, but the mill has remained closed ever since.

Over the years, various initiatives by the Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation failed to reopen the mill, leaving the vast industrial site unused and derelict.

The mill's land, now overrun with trees and dotted with just a few remaining buildings, stands as a reminder of its once-prosperous past.

When visiting the site, this correspondent observed an eerie calm, with three old buildings and a broken boundary wall the only remnants of the mill's operations. A police outpost and a small tin-shed housing security guards are the sole signs of human activity.

While the government continues to protect the land, residents and local authorities have raised concerns over its prolonged abandonment.

Sheikh Ashrafuzzaman, president of the Greater Khulna Development Movement Coordinating Committee, said, "This valuable land has been lying unused for more than three decades, with the government spending money just to protect it. The authorities lack sincerity and commitment to bring any positive change."

Various plans have been proposed for the site, none of which have materialised.

In 1999, the Awami League government initiated a project to develop a textile village, dividing 18.02 acres into 36 industrial plots. The remaining land was allocated for roads, mosques, schools, and other services.

However, the project missed its 2002 deadline and was never completed. In 2017 and 2018, BTMC invited tenders for the plots but received no serious bids, effectively halting the plan to establish the textile village.

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Once a thriving business, the Khulna Textile Mills Limited building is now simply a neglected relic of the past. It has remained abandoned for nearly 31 years. The landscape is now overrun with trees and dotted with just a few remaining buildings.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN



Chinese naval fleet begins goodwill visit to Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A Chinese naval fleet Qi Jiguang and Jing Gangshan arrived at Chattogram Port yesterday on a goodwill visit.

During the fleet's four-day goodwill visit, a series of events will take place – including bilateral meetings, ship open days, and deck reception – to enhance China and Bangladesh Navy's cooperation and mutual trust, says a Chinese embassy statement.

"This visit marks the first occasion in four years since a Chinese naval fleet visited Bangladesh, and it is the first foreign naval fleet to visit since the establishment of the interim government," the release said.

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen welcomed the Chinese training fleet at the port.

Yao Wen and commanders of the Chinese naval fleet called on Rear Admiral Masud Iqbal, commander of the Chattogram Naval Area; Rear Admiral Md Moinul Hassan, Commander of the Bangladesh Navy Fleet, and Rear Admiral S M Moniruzzaman, Chairman of the port authority.

Low morale,
lack of vehicles

Ctg police yet to resume full operations

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

Following the fall of the Awami League government and the subsequent attacks on police stations across the country on August 5, Chattogram police personnel have been grappling with low morale, severely disrupting their daily operations.

Although officers have returned to duty over the past month, the full resumption of police activities has been delayed, exacerbated by a significant shortage of vehicles.

This has created concerns over public safety, with patrols and emergency responses hindered.

During a visit to various parts of Chattogram city, this correspondent observed that key policing areas remain largely inactive, leaving residents vulnerable to rising criminal activities, including theft, robbery, and even murder. Police response to such crimes has been sluggish, largely due to the ongoing operational challenges.

Several field-level officers shared that they are still in search of a morale boost, citing fears of further attacks and a lack of logistical support, including vehicles for patrolling. This has made it difficult for officers to respond promptly to calls made

through the national emergency hotline, 999.

Night patrols, in particular, have been reduced due to concerns over potential attacks on police.

The Chattogram Metropolitan Police has acknowledged the current difficulties.

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Officials said efforts are being made to fully restore services, though it will take time. "We are coordinating vehicles from other units to support the affected stations," an officer said.

In the aftermath of the August 5 attacks, the Kotwali, EPZ, Patenga, and Pahartali police stations were completely destroyed, while eight others were vandalised.

Several weapons, ammunition, and case evidence were either looted or destroyed, along with personal and official vehicles.

CMP data indicates that 28 police vehicles, including an armoured personnel carrier, were set ablaze, while approximately 30 more were damaged.

Noble Chakma, additional deputy commissioner of CMP's South Division, said two vehicles have been allocated to each of the Kotwali, EPZ, and Patenga police stations to assist with patrols and emergency responses. However, officers remain stretched thin.

"We don't have enough vehicles, so our patrolling has decreased significantly. The central authorities have provided two vehicles each for the EPZ and Patenga stations," said Shakila Sultana, deputy commissioner of Bandar Zone. Despite these efforts, many officers remain psychologically affected by the attacks, with some saying that both their personal and professional lives have been impacted. "We are still recovering from the trauma," said one officer.

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CROWN THEFT AT
SATKHIRA TEMPLE
Case filed,
four held
Police declare
reward for info

A CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Satkhira district police have announced a reward for information leading to the capture of the thief who stole a crown of the goddess Kali at the Jeshoreshwari Temple in Shyamnagar, Satkhira.

The crown, a silver piece plated with gold, was gifted by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Bangladesh in March 2021.

The theft, which occurred between 2:47pm and 2:49pm on Thursday, was captured on CCTV footage, but the thief has yet to be identified.

Satkhira Superintendent of Police Monirul Islam sought public assistance through a post on the district police's official Facebook page, offering a special reward for any information that helps arrest the culprit.

Four suspects have already been arrested, according to Satkhira police, and operations are

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Mymensingh's
sweet offerings
for Durga Puja

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Pera, a traditional sweetmeat, is having a moment of its own during Durga Puja this year.

It is made from solidifying cow-milk, and can be crafted in several designs and patterns.

However, despite being a delicacy, the traditional Pera has been gasping for survival in recent years.

This sweet is mainly used as a "bhog" item for various puja festivals, said 80-year old Jagadish Roy, of Mymensingh's Aamlapara area.

Pera is now being sold at Tk 550 to Tk 600 per kilogramme. For special orders, prices can be as high as Tk 700 per kg, said Saurav Das, proprietor of Bikrampur Sweet Meat at the city's Boro Kalibari area.

There was a time when pera had great demand among people and it was sent to different European countries.

"There used to be orders from different zamindar palaces," said Pintu Sarker, proprietor of Adarsha Mistanno Bhandar in the Boro Kalibari area.

Like many other traditional sweet items, it is lagging behind due to lack of publicity. The present generation is not familiar with this sweet item, said 58-year-old Pintu.

Recollecting memories, Pintu, the third generation in a line of sweetmeat makers, said their grandfathers late Suresh Sarker and Brojendra Sarker, hailing from Cumilla, came to Mymensingh in their youth and learned to make Pera. It is now a century old business.

Rina Sarker, proprietor of Jol Khabar Mistanno Bhandar, said the item they prepare has a difference in colour and taste than other sweetmeats.

Facing different odds including a serious crisis of skilled technicians to make pera, they have been continuing this business to honour to their ancestral trade, said Rina.

Rina added that they enjoy reliable retail sales around the year, as a large number of devotees visit "Loknath Ashram and Boro Kalibari Temple" in the area.

The devotees usually buy pera in pieces, and such sale is not enough for the survival of this sweetmeat making, said Khitiranjan Sarker, a retired school teacher.

Dr Ranjan Kumar Majumder, a resident of the Boro Kalibari area, said the Mymensingh region was once famous for its variety of sweetmeats, including pera. But many traditional sweet items are now in a tight spot due to various reasons, and they are struggling to cope with the situation, added Dr Ranjan.



Once upon a time, this was a normal street where vehicles could move freely. Now, countless makeshift shops have narrowed it down to such an extent that only pedestrians or rickshaws can use it. The photo was taken in the capital's Karwan Bazar area yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

CHATTOGRAM WATERFALLS
Scenic wonders
or death traps?At least 12 tourists
died since 2020

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

Mahbub Hasan, a bank official, went to visit Khoiyachhara Waterfall in Chattogram on September 27 this year.

While bathing in the waterfall, he died after being hit by a stone that fell down the hill from the origin of the waterfall.

At least 12 tourists, including Mahbub, died from different types of accidents while visiting the waterfalls in Chattogram in last five years, according to sources at police, fire service and forest department.

Of them, six died this year alone till October 10, while two each in 2020, 2022, and 2023.

Drowning has so far been the cause of deaths in most cases, according to government data.

Chattogram is home to several waterfalls. Of those, the most popular ones among tourists include Khoiyachhara, Napittachhara, Rupasi, Sonaichhari and Kamaldah waterfalls, located in Mirsarai and Sitakunda upazilas.

During monsoon, the waterfalls take a scenic look with their flow, attracting hundreds of tourists every season.

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