Conceptual Plan for Integrating Community-based Tourism along the Bangladesh-India Protocol Route for Inland Navigation

Third Draft Report

CUTS International
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Chapter 1: Background

1.1 SAWI Sundarbans Focus Area Program

Covering an area of almost 10,000 square kms across the coastal region of Bay of Bengal, the Sundarbans is a vast tract of forest and saltwater swamp in the lower part of the Ganges-Brahmaputra and Meghna river deltas.¹ The delta extending across Khulna, Satkhira and Bagerhat districts of Bangladesh and South 24 Parganas and North 24 Parganas districts of West Bengal in India is also the largest mangrove forest in the world supporting diverse habitats for various aquatic, terrestrial and amphibian species. The area is home to a wide range of fauna including 260 species of birds and some globally endangered species including the estuarine crocodile, the Ganges and Irrawaddy dolphins and the Indian Python. Moreover, it is the only mangrove habitat in the world for the Panthera Tigris (Royal Bengal tiger). In view of its geographical uniqueness, the region has been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984. Writing about the Sundarbans archipelago, eminent author Amitav Ghosh in his popular fiction ‘The Hungry Tide’ observes, “There are no borders here to divide fresh water from salt, river from sea. The tides reach as far as three hundred kilometres inland and every day thousands of acres of forest disappear underwater only to re-emerge hours later. When the tides create new land, overnight mangroves begin to gestate, and if the conditions are right they can spread so fast as to cover a new island within a few short years.”

The entire mangrove region of both India and Bangladesh is densely populated harbouring some of the most impoverished populations in the world. The Indian Sundarbans which comprises 40 percent of the total Sundarban region consists of about 102 islands of which almost 54 are populated by about 4 million people.² On the Bangladesh side, according to the 2011 Bangladesh Census, the Sundarban Impact Zone (SIZ) has a population of 7.8 million.³ A considerable section of this population works as agricultural labourers. Agriculture unfortunately is not high yielding due to pronounced salinity of soil and water. Other than agriculture, the major sources of livelihood include fishery, honey and wax collection. In this context, it is therefore believed that tourism can provide alternate livelihood opportunities to the local population and act as a tool for regional development. However, if tourism is not regulated it may inflict irreparable damage on the bio-diversity of the region. Thus there is a need for development of sustainable tourism in the Sundarbans area.

¹ https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/798
² http://livelihoods.net.in/e-course/sundarbans
³ http://landscape.geo.klte.hu/pdf/agd/2017/2017v11is1_1.pdf
The SAWI Sundarbans Focus Area Programme seeks to promote joint management of the Sundarbans by the governments of both Bangladesh and India for sustainable development of the region. The two specific goals of this endeavour are to: (i) enhance bilateral cooperation to support operation of the Sundarbans agreements between Bangladesh and India; (ii) enhance technical cooperation between Bangladesh and India to support joint water resources management in the Sundarbans.

Box 1: About the SAWI initiative

The World Bank’s **South Asia Water Initiative (SAWI)** is a five year programme that envisages increasing regional cooperation for a sustainable and inclusive management of the Himalayan river systems in South Asia. SAWI aims to facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue and policy deliberation; enhance knowledge and capacity on issues of regional, and in particular transboundary water resources management and climate adaptation; and promote cooperative action by way of policy reforms, institutional development, and investment in water resources management. The programme focuses on five key areas which include (i) Ganges Basin, (ii) Brahmaputra Basin, (iii) Indus Basin, (iv) Sundarbans Landscape, and (v) Regional Cooperation.
1.2 Potential of developing River Cruise Tourism between Bangladesh and India

The initiative to develop and promote community based river cruise tourism between Bangladesh and India, especially in and near the Sundarbans, has the potential not only to popularise some of the existing tourism routes and locations in this part of the world, but also to identify new destinations and routes for tourism that can help capture the ecological, cultural and historical uniqueness of the Sundarbans. Literally translated as the “beautiful forest”, Sundarbans has the potential to attract tourists from across the world. While there have been occasional interest among domestic and foreign tourists to explore this nonpareil land of mangroves, tigers, estuarine crocodiles and Olive Ridley turtles, a comprehensive plan based on detailed fact-finding on tourism prospects can facilitate promotion of global tourism for this terrain.

The lure of the exquisite flora and fauna of the mangrove forests apart; pilgrimage and heritage sites, local cultural events including fairs, festivals and many other traditional practices of the local communities of Sundarbans can hold popular attractions for tourists. Bonbibipujo, a traditional worship revered by both the Muslim and Hindu communities of the delta island to save themselves from the attack of tigers, is a unique example of harmony prevailing amongst the two major communities of the region.

Appropriate promotion of community-based river cruise tourism has substantial potential for generation of new and sustainable livelihoods for local inhabitants, a majority of whom belong to the poor and marginalised sections of the society. Dearth of employment opportunities results in widespread migration of the male population, to other parts of the state and nation, leaving the women to manage households, agriculture and other small-time economic engagements at the local level like fishing. Tourism with appropriate capacity enhancement can fill this lacuna and also help promote local cuisines, art and culture, with good economic returns. Additionally promotion of sustainable and responsible tourism in the Sundarban will not only showcase the uniqueness of the mangroves but also help preserve the delicate ecological balance of this biosphere through global attention, exposure and involvement. This will encourage governments on both sides of the border to frame policies appropriate to sustainable use and preservation of the Sundarban biospheres.

Given this backdrop, CUTS International with support from The World Bank has initiated the assignment titled Integrating Community-based Tourism along the Bangladesh-India Protocol Route for Inland Navigation.
1.3 Objectives of the Proposed Assignment

The specific objectives of this assignment are as follows:

Identify and study the possible and most feasible route (likely to be the already identified Kolkata – Haldia – Raimongal – Mongla – Kawkhali – Barisal – Hizla – Chandpur – Narayanganj route) of India Bangladesh waterways;

Identify locations of interest (in terms of ecological, cultural, historical, adventure, religious and nostalgic factors) for tourism along and near this identified route. This will include specification of all such places, seasons, activities, festivals, etc. that may interest tourists;

Identify and document existing and required infrastructure at such potential locations for tourism development, with emphasis on community-based tourism;

Look at policies and regulations that govern navigability along the route and understand what changes may be needed;

Identify opportunities and challenges for operating river cruises along the identified route. This will include issues like navigability (to be ascertained through available government data and interaction with local knowledge resources (particularly boatmen and sarengs), embarkation points and their existing infrastructure, links from river-side to places of interest nearby;

Briefly understand the impact of river cruise tourism on political-economy factors at the local level, including developing local livelihood opportunities linked to such tourism along the identified route;

Prepare a conceptual plan of the possible tourist circuits possible (with emphasis on night-stay among the communities) using a combination of several themes for each circuit;

Recommend additional studies that will be required either before any public investment, or after extending the proposal to the private sector for attracting investment.

1.4 Approach and Methodology

The project has been implemented through a combination of desk and field research with the aim of identifying locations of interest along and near the proposed Indo-Bangla protocol route, generating and/or strengthening available information about the identified locations, highlighting existing and required infrastructure for tourism promotion, gathering preliminary information and evidence on local socio-economic factors that may be impacted by such tourism. The desk research has been undertaken on the basis of available secondary literature pertaining to the existing

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4 People residing in West Bengal, India and Bangladesh share a common history because this region comprised the undivided province of Bengal prior to partition by British Colonialists in 1905, a segregation reinforced in 1947 when India and Pakistan were partitioned.
tourism routes, available information on existing infrastructure and the policies and regulations that govern tourism promotion in and around the Sundarbans. A list of such locations/festivals/cultural events preliminarily identified is attached as an annexure (Annex-1) to this report.

CUTS had taken on board Unnayan Shamannay from Bangladesh as a strategic partner so as to undertake this work in Bangladesh. The Unnayan Shamannay team has worked on this assignment with support and guidance from the CUTS team. Key Informant Interviews were conducted by CUTS and its Bangladesh partner to add to secondary and available information and evidence and also to inform the primary research. This primarily involved interviews with government officials, people’s representatives, experts and known champions of Sundarbans. The idea of this activity was to validate secondary information and also add new information on possibilities of potential cruise-tourism in the Sundarban region, including identification of new locations with potential for tourism.

A comprehensive field work has been undertaken to understand the feasibility and potential of developing community based river cruise tourism along the Indo-Bangla protocol route through Sundarbans. This involved multi-stakeholder perception analysis through structured questionnaire survey of stakeholders including government officials, entrepreneurs, people’s representatives, opinion leaders, subject experts, civil society organizations and media. Key informant interviews of relevant stakeholders also helped to understand the impact of tourism development on local livelihood generation.

While the primary objective of the study was to develop tourism, focused interviews with stakeholders were also undertaken to understand experts’ opinions and gather people’s perceptions about the impact of tourism on local biosphere, flora and fauna of the largest mangrove delta forest in the Bay of Bengal region.

1.5 Challenges faced during the study
CUTS and UnnayanShamannay teams faced certain challenges in undertaking this study given the difficult terrain and remoteness of a major part of the region. While the geographical issues could be addressed to a large extent, challenges related to political situations and climatic conditions were beyond the control of the team. The teams faced the following challenges that delayed the primary evidence gathering:

India and Bangladesh: Some of the locations, particularly those nearer to the estuary of the rivers on both sides of the border can only be accessed during winter months given the heavy tide situation beyond mid-March. This includes locations like Bonnie Camp and Kkalas Camp on the Indian side and Dublar Char, Pokkhir Char, etc. on the Bangladesh side. The other way to reach these places, is by hiring bigger vessels that can negotiate heavy tides, but even then the docking of the vessel
could be difficult. Permissions (for boats and tourist vehicles) to visit such places is usually not available beyond certain time periods since the establishments on both sides of the border advise against traveling to these locations during certain periods (mid-March to end-August or mid-September). This is mainly due to the unpredictable nature of the rivers and tides during nor’westers and monsoons. Given this, the survey team was not able to visit these locations and the information and evidence about these locations were based on inputs received from local tour and cruise operators.

India: Panchayat elections in West Bengal were declared on March 31, 2018. The elections were conducted on May 14 and the results were declared on May 17, 2018. Given the election code of conduct and the rather sensitive nature of this election, given the incidents of violence reported across the state in the build up to the elections, undertaking the field research was difficult. First because block and panchayat level officials did not have time to meet us till the elections were over; second, because other relevant local entities and respondents (local people’s representatives, opinion leaders, knowledgeable persons, etc.) were directly or indirectly engaged in the election process. This delayed the overall work in all the blocks of West Bengal by around 45-50 days.

In the next chapter we look at the history of human settlement and conservation in the Sundarbans area. It also briefly describes the places of attraction in both Indian and Bangladesh Sundarbans. Chapter three states all the possible routes by which cruise tourism can be conducted between Indian and Bangladeshi Sundarabans. The route wise tourism infrastructure is also mentioned in this chapter. The chapter also presents a rough sketch of trips that can be conducted within each of the routes along with places of attraction that can be covered. Chapter four talks about the possible impact of cruise tourism on livelihoods of people living in the Sundarbans area. Chapter five briefly mentions the possible challenges one might face while implementing a strategy for cruise tourism between India and Bangladesh Sundarabans. The final chapter makes some recommendations which may help to mitigate the challenges.
Chapter 2: Heritage, Nature and Tourist Attraction in the Sundarban landscape

The ancient history of Sundarbans is traceable by a number of different kinds of archaeological evidences including artifacts, scriptures and maps. However, studies mention that due to its ever changing landmass, complex physiography and dense population, it had been difficult to preserve old relics. Therefore very few scientific investigations have been carried out in the region. Below we briefly outline the history of human settlements in the region along with history of conservation and inland waterways. We also briefly describe the major places of attraction in the region along with their significance.

2.1 Brief History of Human Settlement in Sundarbans: A timeline

Early to Middle ages: Around 500 antiquities found from explorations carried on by the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of West Bengal, in Govardhanpur and its adjacent Uttar Surendraganj, located near the mouth of the Ganga in the interiors of the Sunderbans in South 24 Paraganas district makes it evident that this area was inhabited from early ages. The artefacts found direct to the following periods

Mauryan era - 4th to 2nd Century BC
Pala era – 750 to 1200 AD
Indo Turkish Islamic rule: 1204 to 1575 AD
Mughal rule: After 1575 AD

British Colonial Period: The recent human development dates back to 1757 when a treaty was signed between Mir Jafar and British East India Company and the lands of undivided 24 Parganas were ceded to the East India Company. The present settlements originate 1771 when the forest land was divided into plots to be leased out to prospective landlords

Recent times: After independence between 1951 and 1971, the area was flooded with huge influx of refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. The region also witnessed influx of tribal population from central India lured for clearing forest by upper caste Hindu lease holders. Migration of poor people from coastal districts of both India and Bangladesh also happened.

Due to this continuous influx of people from various parts of the world and India, Sudarbans witnessed a mix of culture. Additionally, since living in Sundarbans was

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5 http://wbplan.gov.in/HumanDev/DHDR/24%20pgsSouth/Chapter%2009.pdf
fraught with challenges including animal attacks and frequent cyclones, the culture and literature of the region was highly influenced by the struggle between human and nature. The unique folk religion of Sundarban which is followed by a number of dwellers including fishermen, honey gatherers, wood cutters, boat builders and cultivators does not necessarily identify itself as Hindu or Muslim but shows aspects of both the religions. Two deities followed by the dwellers of Sundarbans include

**Bono Bibi**: She is the deity of the forest and the protector of human beings and is revered by both Hindus and Muslims. This shared worship is a result of a shared dependence on the forest. The inhabitants of the Sundarbans consider Bonobibi as part their hard lives where religious differences are less important compared to the daily struggle of life.  

**Dakshin Rai**: He is termed as the lord of the tigers and is worshipped by all the dwellers of Sundarban. While in some mythologies he is described as the demon king of the forest, some other mythologies describe him as the son of Hindu Deity Lord Shiva. The entire area of Sundarbans is dotted with several small local temples dedicated to both Bonobibi and Dakshin Rai.

### 2.2 History of Conservation in Sundarbans: A timeline

**1878**: The Bengal Forest Department of the British Colonial Administration, applied the Indian Forest Act of 1865 to declare the Sundarbans a Reserve Forest.

**1974**: Parts of Bangladesh Sundarbans declared as Wildlife sanctuary

**1979**: Government of India established a National Mangrove Committee within the Ministry of Environment and Forests in 1979, with the mandate to manage, protect, and re-afforest the areas

**1985**: The Indian part of Sundarbans declared as National Park

1989: Government of India adopted the national Man and Biosphere Programme and declared the entire Sundarban as Biosphere reserve

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8 [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Priyanka_Ghosh/publication/281576871_Conservation_And_Conflicts_In_The_Sundarban_Biosphere_Reserve_India/links/58ca2c7392b54b5e6ca592/Conservation-And-Conflicts-In-The-Sundarban-Biosphere-Reserve-India.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Priyanka_Ghosh/publication/281576871_Conservation_And_Conflicts_In_The_Sundarban_Biosphere_Reserve_India/links/58ca2c7392b54b5e6ca592/Conservation-And-Conflicts-In-The-Sundarban-Biosphere-Reserve-India.pdf)

9 [https://www.innovations.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/1227364.pdf](https://www.innovations.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/1227364.pdf)
1989: A moratorium on felling of Sundari trees enacted in Bangaldesh

1989: The Forest Department in Bangladesh specifically, the Sundarbans Division brought under the newly created Ministry of Environment and Forests

1997: Declared World Heritage Site by UNESCO

2001: Sundarbans was included in the Global network of bio-sphere reserve

2.3 History of Inland Waterways:
The Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PITWT&T) between India and Bangladesh was first signed in 1972. The official route travels through the northern edge of the forest.

2.4 Places of Historical and Religious Importance:
Bagerhat (Bangladesh):

- **Shat-Gambuj-Mosque**

  Situated inside the UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Mosque City of Bagerhat, this architectural spectacle was built by Khan Jahan Ali in 15th Century. During this time a Muslim colony was founded in Bagerhat known as Khalifabad. Khan Jahan Ali built several mosques around Khalifabad making it the Mosque City. The name of this mosque comes from Shat gombuj or sixty pillars which support the structure.

  **Best time to visit:** Preferably winter that is November to February

- **Kodla Math**

  This math or temple is located at a distance of 10 kms from Bagerhat city, on the Eastern bank of river Bhairab. It was built in the 17th century. It gets its name from the name of the village where it is located. The math is very good example of terracotta craftsmanship in Bangladesh.

  **Best time to visit:** Preferably winter that is November to February

Current Level of Tourism Infrastructure: While Bagerhat city has the potential to attract sizeable number of tourists, the tourism infrastructure is not well developed. For instance, there are no proper accommodations in the vicinity of both the sites. Popular tourism websites such as Tripadvisor and Lonely Planet show the nearest hotels to be almost 30 to 40 kms from the Mosque city near Khulna.

Opportunities for development of infrastructure and facilities for community based tourism: Bagerhat has huge opportunity to be developed as a site for history based tourism; it also acts as a gateway to the Bangladesh Sundarbans. Given this, the
government should incentivize locals to invest in home stays and restaurants to attract more tourists.

**Sagar (India):**

- **Ganga Sangar and Kapil Munir Ashram**

The region is named after the mythological King Sagar who meditated to bring Ganga down from the heaven to Earth. According to mythology, Kapil Muni, a reincarnation of Vishnu turned King Sagar’s sons to ashes on being falsely accused of stealing their sacrificial horse. Later at the king’s pleading and having compassion for the young princes, he agreed to their resurrection provided King Sagar would persuade Ganga to descend on Earth. The festival of Ganga Sagar Mela is celebrated on Makar Sankranti which is also believed to be the date when Ganga descended on the Earth to commemorate this event. Worshippers also visit Kapil Muni’s Ashram although the original Ashram is believed to have been buried in water due to the 1897 Bengal Earthquake.

**Best time to visit:** The Ganga Sagar Mela is sponsored by the West Bengal Government and is organized every January (14th to 16th).

**Current level of tourism infrastructure:** It is already a popular tourist spot due to its cultural and religious significance. Ganga Sagar Mela is the second largest congregation in India after the Maha Kumbh. This area is well connected with Nakhana by water. The condition of jetty at Sagar is good. However, compared to its popularity the tourism infrastructure needs much improvement. While there is one tourist bungalow and one youth hostel available in the vicinity they may not be sufficient to cater to the increasing tourist population. Additionally, local eateries are very basic and may not suit tourism purpose.

**Opportunities for development of infrastructure and facilities for community based tourism:** The local people around the temple are already involved in tourism. However, with more hotels and restaurants more jobs can be created for local populace.

**Mathurapur II, Raidighi (India):**

- **Jatar Deul**

Located in the village PurbaJata- this monument is preserved as Archeological Monument by the ASI. According to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the Monument was constructed in 975 BC by one Jayanta Chandra with a very special architecture. Presently it has been treated as Shiva Temple by the local community.
Best time to visit: This spot can be visited throughout the year. To get the local flavor, one can visit the spot during Charak Mela which happens on Chaitra Sankranti for 8 days which falls in the month of April.

Current Level of Tourism Infrastructure: While it has immense tourism potential, this monument has not gained sufficient popularity due to lack of knowledge. Also due to its location, this monument is better reachable by road and may not be suitable for cruise tourism. There are no accommodations in the vicinity while some basic budget accommodations are available in Raidighi.

Opportunities for development of infrastructure and facilities for community based tourism: There is huge opportunity for developing weekend tourism in this area. Local people should be encouraged to invest in home stays and eateries to attract more tourists.

Gosaba (India)
- Netidhopani

The village has been mentioned in Bengali Folklore (Manasamangal) and has been associated with the goddess Manasa (the goddess of snakes). There is a watchtower on this village which offers glimpses of ruins of a 400 year old Shiva temple.

Best time to visit: Since it is located close to Bay of Bengal, this spot is best visited during winter season (November to February). Boat operators avoid taking tourists to this spot between April and August due to frequent nor’westers and monsoon rains.

Current Level of Tourism Infrastructure: The spot is popular tourist destination. While there are no accommodations or eateries in the adjoining village, tourists generally prefer going back to Pakhiralay which is at a distance of 3 hours by boat after visiting this spot.

Opportunities for development of infrastructure and facilities for community based tourism: There is not much opportunity.

2.5 Places of Natural Beauty and Wildlife:

Bagerhat (Bangladesh)
- Koromjol Eco-tourism centre:

This centre under the Chadpai Range is on the eastside of Bangladesh Sundarban. There is a Deer and Crocodile breeding centre in this Centre.
• **Katka:**

It is the eastern sanctuary under Sharankhola Forest Range. There is a **watch tower**. It is almost 152 km away from Khulna in south direction. Wild lives spotted include Tiger, Spotted deer, Wild Boar, saline water crocodile.

• **Kachikhali:**

Near Sarankhola Range and 14 km east of Katka sea beach. Tourists can see tiger, deer, crocodile, monitor lizard, and many other mammals.

• **Jamtala sea beach:**

Jamtola is almost 3 km distance from Katka on the east side of Sundarban. There is a watch tower in the beach.

• **Dublar char, Dimer char, Pakhhir char, Tear char, Selar Char, Tinkona Island:**

These small islands (sand bars) are found at the confluence of Sundarban rivers with the Bay of Bengal. The beaches on these islands are popular with the tourists. Also, bird watching is a popular activity in these islands. Dublar char is gradually being developed into a sea food processing centre.

**Best time to visit:** November to March

**Current Level of Tourism Infrastructure:** The tourism in Bangladesh Sundarban unlike India, is much more river based. Therefore in most cases, stay and food have to be arranged on the cruise or boat. Of all the spots mentioned here, only Kachikhali offers a forest rest house.

Opportunities for development of infrastructure and facilities for community based tourism: There is a need to develop better accommodations in Mongla.

**Satkhira (Bangladesh)**

• **Kolagachia Eco-tourism centre:**

This centre is in the westside of Bangladesh Sundarban near the Burigoalini range. It provides the tourists an opportunity to go inside the forest. Goran and Khoilsha trees are abundant in this region. Among wild animals, deer is common here.

• **Dobeki:**

This spot is famous for forest activities such as nature walks, guided village and honey collection tours. Accessible by boats.

• **Mandarbaria:**
This spot cannot be located in Google. It is difficult to reach from Khulna or Mongla. One can reach from Dublar char or Nilkamal. Wildlife found includes Dolphin, King Crab, Horse shoe crab etc.

- **Kalir Char and Putni Island:**

  Theses are small flat islands (sand bars). These areas are popular among tourists for their beaches and for bird watching. Both the spots are located in the estuary of Malancha river.

  **Best time to visit:** November to March

**Current Level of Tourism Infrastructure:** The tourism in Bangladesh Sundarban unlike India, is much more river based. Therefore in most cases, stay and food have to be arranged on the cruise or boat. There are some accommodations available in Burigoalini which are largely maintained by NGOs.

**Opportunities for development of infrastructure and facilities for community based tourism:** Burigoalini has significant capability to develop village based eco-tourism.

Khulna (Bangladesh)

- **Harbaria Eco-Tourism Centre:**

  It is an eco-park with a jetty which provides glimpses of the Bangladesh Sundarbans. Can be accessed only by boat.

- **Hiron Point:**

  Located within the Nilkomol range this place is very popular for spotting animals including tigers, deer, monkeys and crocodile. It is also popular with bird watchers.

  **Best time to visit:** November to March

**Current Level of Tourism Infrastructure:** The tourism in Bangladesh Sundarban unlike India, is much more river based. Therefore in most cases, stay and food have to be arranged on the cruise or boat. There is a forest rest house in Hiron Point which can be availed with prior permission.

**Opportunities for development of infrastructure and facilities for community based tourism:** Not there

Sagar (India)

- **Jambudweep:**
Located 8 kms South West of Bakkhali and Frazerganj, this tiny hamlet offers serene beaches and fresh water reservoirs. This spot is being developed by West Bengal Fisheries Department as an eco-tourism spot.

**Best time to visit:** November to March is the best time. One can also visit during fishing season to witness the fishermen in action.

**Current Level of Tourism Infrastructure:** The spot is well connected. Tourists can opt for a boat ride from Bakkhali to reach this spot. However, there has been no development in terms of tourism infrastructure including accommodations, eateries and even roads.

**Opportunities for development of infrastructure and facilities for community based tourism:** The Island remains largely uninhabited except during fishing season that is from October to February. Since it is largely untouched, there is significant scope for developing eco-tourism especially during the fishing season.

**Namkhana (India)**

- **Bakkhali and Frazerganj**

One of the many deltaic islands spread across Bay of Bengal, these places are popular for their pristine beaches.

**Best time to visit:** November to March

**Current Level of Tourism Infrastructure:** These spots are already popular with weekend tourists from Kolkata. Therefore, there are accommodations and eateries in both the spots. The jetties that serve Bakkhali and Frazerganj are well developed and are well connected to the beach.

**Opportunities for development of infrastructure and facilities for community based tourism:** Identification of spots at Namkhana for development of village based tourism can be undertaken. Additionally capacity building of locals to build more homestays and restaurants can be done by the government.

**Patharpratima (India)**

- **Bhagabatpur Crocodile Project:**

This spot hosts India’s only crocodile project. There are estuarine species of crocodile and Batagur Baska species of Tortoise. Besides, this place has immense natural beauty.

**Best time to visit:** November to March

- **Lothian Island:**
It is a wildlife sanctuary which includes estuarine crocodiles, olive ridley sea turtles, spotted deer, jungle cats and rhesus macaques. Tourists are not allowed to embark on this island but they can take a trip around the island in a boat.

**Best time to visit:** November to March

- **Kalas Forest camp:**

  Lying in the estuary of river Matla, this island is a breeding ground for olive ridley turtles during the winter season. It is also popular among bird watchers. While previously it was allowed to embark on the camp, off late there have been some restrictions on this.

  **Best time to visit:** Can be visited only during winter (November to March)

**Current Level of Tourism Infrastructure:** Patharpratima does not have good accommodation or eateries. Other than that the block is well connected by both roadways and waterways. The Ramganga jetty which is used by bigger ships and cruises is also well developed. It needs to be mentioned here that Kalas Camp trip is usually not done from Patharpratima.

**Opportunities for development of infrastructure and facilities for community based tourism:** Local communities can be encouraged and capacitated to take up home stays and open eateries such that this spot can attract more tourists.

**Kultali (India)**

- **Kaikhali and Kantamari:**

  It is located on the banks of river Matla. The spot is ideal for weekend tourism and is well connected to Kolkata by road.

  **Best time to visit:** Anytime, preferably winter

- **Piyali Closure Site:**

  This spot has been developed as a location for family gatherings and picnics. It is located very near to Kolkata as is best reached by road. There is not much scope for cruise tourism but it can be ideal for day-outs.

  **Best time to visit:** Anytime, preferably winter

- **Bonnie Forest Camp:**

  It is an island located quite close to Bay of Bengal. There is a watchtower at 50 feet height which is the highest in Sudarbans.

  **Best time to visit:** Can be visited only during winter (November to March)
Current Level of Tourism Infrastructure: Kaikhali has only one government holiday home which is maintained by Nimpith Ashram and can be booked only from the Ashram located at Joynagar. Other than that there are no accommodation facilities in Kultali. It needs to be mentioned here that Bonnie Camp although belong to Kultali block is generally visited by tourists from Pakhiralay or Jharkhali. Also, as per boat associations, the strip of the river connecting Jharkhali to Kaikhali has piracy issues.

Opportunities for development of infrastructure and facilities for community based tourism: Local people can be encouraged and capacitated to build home stays and eateries around Kaikhali to attract more weekend tourists from Kolkata.

Basanti (India)

- **Jharkhali Tiger Rescue Centre:**

  This is the first tiger rescue centre of India. It was established in 2012. Currently there is one tiger which is being treated.

  **Best time to visit:** Anytime

- **Nafarganj island:**

  This island has remained largely untouched by tourists.

  **Current Level of Tourism Infrastructure:** Jharkhali is already well established as a tourist spot. Other than Jharkhali however, no other spot is developed for tourism in Basanti.

  **Opportunities for development of infrastructure and facilities for community based tourism:** There is scope for village based tourism. Additionally Basanti can be advertised as a gateway to Sundarban. Nafarganj island can be developed for weekend tourism purpose by engaging communities in developing home stays and eateries. There is also a mangrove interpretation centre.

Gosaba (India)

- **Sajnekhali:**

  It is one of the most popular spots in Indian Sundarbans. This location has a watchtower, a mangrove interpretation centre, a Bono Bibi temple as well as a crocodile park. It is located very near to Pakhiralay and is easily accessible from Godkhali (Canning). The watchtower has the capacity to host 20 people at a time

- **Sudhanyakhali Watchtower:**
This watchtower located near Sajnekhali is becoming popular for tiger spotting. The watchtower has the capacity to host 25 people at a time

- **Dobanki:**

The spot has a watchtower which can be approached by a canopy walk located at a height of 20ft from the ground. There is a sweet water pond nearby which makes it easy to spot animals.

- **Netidhophani:**

Apart from a watchtower which can accommodate 20 persons at a time, this place also has a 400 years old Shiva temple which is associated with the old Bengal legend of Behula Lakhhindar. There is also a sweet water pond in this location making it easier to spot animals.

**Best time to visit:** November to March

**Current Level of Tourism Infrastructure:** Most developed tourist circuit in Indian Sundarbans. The tourist spots are all located close to Pakhiralay which has the maximum number of accommodations in the entire Indian Sundarbans. Moreover, Sajnekhali offers accommodations in a government guest house.

Opportunities for development of infrastructure and facilities for community based tourism: Already developed in terms of tourism. More village based options can be explored.

**Hingalganj (India)**

- **Jhingekhali Watchtower:**

Located at the easternmost side of the Indian Sundarbans near the border with Bangladesh, this watchtower complex houses sweet water ponds and observation lines for animal watchers and a Bonobibi temple. The watchtower has the capacity to host 20 people at a time.

- **Burirdabri Watchtower:**

This watchtower again located in the easternmost side of India Sundarbans on the river Raimongol. The view point is called Raimongol view point and it gives tourists glimpses of Bangladesh Sundarbans. This watchtower is also famous for a mud walk and a mangrove cage trail. The watchtower has the capacity to host 10 people at a time.

**Best time to visit:** November to March

**Current Level of Tourism Infrastructure:** Well connected however tourism infrastructure is not developed which is why these two watchtowers fail to attract sufficient number of tourists compared to sajnekhali.
Opportunities for development of infrastructure and facilities for community based tourism: Village based eco-tourism and home stays should be developed in Hemnagar which is at close proximity to both the watchtowers.

2.6 Festivals of Cultural Significance in Sundarbans:
Bono bibi Puja and Mela: While the population of Sundarban in both India and Bangladesh hosts a number of folk and mythology based pujas and melas, the most significant among them is the Bono bibi Utsav. This is because this particular festival resonates with the locals of Sundarbans on both sides of the border. Bono bibi is the guarding deity of the forest and is believed to protect human beings from animal attacks. The deity is revered by all the inhabitants of Sundarban who are largely dependent on forests for their daily bread. They believe that praying to goddess Bono bibi would protect them from tiger and crocodile attacks and snake bites. The most significant aspect of the deity is that she is revered by both Hindus and Muslims in Sundarban signifying that religious divisions are less significant compared to the struggles of life in Sundarbans.

The worship of the goddess is celebrated during the month of March through out several locations in both India and Bangladesh Sundarbans. The puja is associated with fairs which witness large congregation of local populace.

Tourists both local and international can get a real taste of the folk culture of Sundarbans if they visit this festival. Hence tourism plans can be made around the time of this festival. The government can also take initiatives to popularize this festival as an important aspect of Sundarban tours.
Chapter 3: Potential Tourist Circuits

This chapter outlines all the possible routes for cruise tourism between Indian and Bangladeshi Sundarbans including those that currently exist and potential ones. Under each of the routes possible trip plans along with places of attraction and availability of infrastructure are mentioned. The chapter talks about the trade Protocol route first. This is an already existing route by which trade is conducted between South Bengal and Bangladesh. It also talks about other alternative routes present. The routes discussed below include.

- **Route A (Kolkata-Dhaka):** The Protocol Route: Kolkata – Namkhana – Hemnagar – Angtihara – Mongla - Dhaka
- **Route B (Khulna-Kolkata):** Existing Alternative Route (Bangladesh): Dhaka – Khulna – Burigoalini -Angtihara - Kolkata
- **Route C (Godkhali-Dhaka):** Existing Alternative Route 1 (India): Kolkata – Canning – Godkhali -Hemnagar – Angtihara – Mongla - Dhaka
- **Route E (Hasnabad-Dhaka):** Suggested Alternative Route (India): Kolkata – Hasnabad – Hemnagar - Angtihara – Mongla - Dhaka

10 For more reference one can also refer to Anexure 1 which is a detailed table on the tourism circuits of Sundarban
3.1 Route A (Kolkata-Dhaka; Dhaka-Kolkata): The entire protocol route

1.6 Route 1: Entire Protocol Route
Route in the India side

Figure 1: Schematic diagram of the route in the Indian side
Located near Kolkata, these spots are ideal gateway for beach lovers.

1. Bakkhali
2. Frazerganj
3. Ben Fish island
4. Henry’s island
5. Mousuni island
6. Jambudweep

Sagar Mela: The second largest congregation after Kumbh Mela.

1. Sagar beach
2. Kapil munir ashram

Gateway to Sundarbans and the only crocodile project in West Bengal.

1. Dhanchi forest camp
2. Buraburir tot
3. G-plot
4. Haliday Island
5. Lothian island

Sundarbans

Located near Kolkata, these spots are ideal gateway for beach lovers.

Glimpses of Bangladesh Sundarbans

Most popular tourist circuit in Indian Sundarbans

1. Kalash camp
2. Bonnie camp
3. Netidhopani
4. Dobanki
5. Sudhanyakhali
6. Sajnekhali
7. Jharkali tiger rescue centre

Bhagabatpur crocodile project
Figure 2: Schematic Diagram of the Route in Bangladesh side

Hemnagar, India

Angthihara ghat (immigration point in Bangladesh)

Satkhira range
1. Dobeki
2. Kalir Char
3. Putney Island
4. Patkosta

Khulna Range
1. Koromjol warch tower
2. Nilkomol Sanctuary centre
3. Hiron Point

Bagerhat
1. Harbaria Eco Park Jetty
2. Tinkona Island
3. Kachikhal forest office
4. Katka
5. Selar Char
6. Dimer Char
7. Dublar Char

Bagerhat: UNESCO World Heritage Site
1. Shat Gombuj Mosque
2. Kodla Math

A taste of village life: Country-side tours, guided honey collection tours, Guided forest tours

Government run Crocodile breeding centre, animal spotting

Ideal place for tiger spotting

Dhaka

Narayanganj

Car

Cruise

Cruise

Cruise

Cruise
A cruise ship may take 5 to 6 days to cross over to Bangladesh following the protocol route. The total number of days that may be required to complete the cross-country trip is around 2 weeks or 12 to 14 days. A tentative day to day itinerary is given below along with two schematic diagrams that show all the possible sites in the Indian Sundarbans and Bangladesh Sundarbans that can be covered in this cruise. It needs to be mentioned here that while the schematic diagram shows route starting from Kolkata, the route may also start from Dhaka and reach Kolkata.

**Day 1:** The cruise starts at Chandannagore or Millenium Ghat in Kolkata and travels till Namkhana via river Hooghly. The cruise can be anchored at Namkhana jetty for the night. It is to be noted here that since the sailing of the cruise significantly depends on the tidal wave timings which vary every day, it may not be possible to arrange for sightseeing at Namkhana on the same day.

**Day 2:** Tourists can be taken for sightseeing at Namkhana to spots such as Bakkhali, Frazerganj, Ben Fish island, Mousuni island, Henry’s island and Jambudweep. For this purpose local boats can be hired. Once completed, the tourists would come back to the cruise at Namkhana jetty for the night.

**Day 3:** Early morning, cruise starts for Sagar jetty. From there e-rickshaws or autos can be hired to take the tourists to Kapil muni’s ashram and Ganga sagar beach. Local sightseeing in Sagar can be done in two hours following which the tourists can come back to the cruise. Afterwards, the cruise moves to Ramganga jetty. From Ramganga jetty local boats can be hired to take the tourists to Patharpratima. From Patharpratima, local e-rickshwas can be hired to take the tourists to Bhagabatpur Crocodile Project. Local boats can also be hired to visit Lothian Island, Haliday Island and Buraburir tot. The cruise anchors at Ramganga jetty for the night.

**Day 4:** On the fourth day, the cruise moves towards Bonnie Island. It can be anchored there for the night. Local boats can be hired to travel to Kalash island, Netidhopani, Dobanki, Sudhanyakhali and Sajnekhali.

**Day 5:** The cruise moves towards Hemnagar. Hemnagar is a Land Customs Station (LCS) at the Bangladesh border and is also used for immigration checks. From Hemnagar, local houseboats hired to visit Jhingekhali watchtower, Burirdabri watchtower and Kumirmari watchtower. The cruise can be anchored at Hemnagar for the night.

**Day 6:** The cruise completes immigration formalities at Hemnagar, and crosses over to Bangladesh

**Day 7:** The cruise enters Bangladesh via Hemnagar in India and stops at Angtihara where it can complete immigration formalities before moving inland.

**Day 8:** From Angtihara, local houseboats can be availed to take a tour of Satkhira range including spots such as Dobeki, Kalir char, Putney island and Patkosta forest. It is a day
long trip after which tourists come back to the cruise for night halt. The cruise moves towards Mongla port overnight.

**Day 9:** From Mongla port local houseboats are availed to take the tourists to spots such as Koromjol Watctower and Horin Point. One the way back, tourists can be given a boat tour of chars including Tear Char, Dimer Char, Dublar Char, etc. The tourists come back to the cruise for night halt.

**Day 10:** Local houseboats can be hired to take the tourists to the Katka and Kachikhali forests. It is a day-long tour after which tourists can come back to the cruise to retire for the night.

**Day 11:** Local houseboats can be hired to take the tourists to the Kachikhali Wildlife Sanctuary for a day-long trip after which the tourists can come back to the cruise for the night. The cruise moves towards Khulna overnight.

**Day 12:** From Khulna transfers can be arranged towards Jessore. Flights can be arranged from Jessore to Dhaka.

**Day 13:** Sightseeing and shopping tour in Dhaka. Overnight flights are available from Dhaka.

1.7
3.1.1 Tourism circuits along the route (Bangladesh)

Bagerhat circuit
**Major places of attraction**

**Shaat Gombuj Mosque:** A 15th century mosque named as a UNESCO World Heritage site. It is reachable by road from Mongla Port.

**Kodla Math:** Located 10 kms north of Bagerhat, this is an old Hindu temple built in 17th Century. It can be reached from Mongla by road.

**Harbaria Eco Park jetty:** It is an eco-park with a jetty which provides glimpses of the Bangladesh Sundarbans. Can be accessed only by boat.

**Katka- Kachikhali forest:** This area in the heart of Sundarbans is famous for tiger spotting. It can be reached from Mongla port by water.

**Tinkona island:** These small islands (sand bars) are found at the confluence of Sundarban rivers with the Bay of Bengal. The beaches on these islands are popular with the tourists. Also bird watching is a popular activity in these islands. Dublar char is gradually being developed into a sea food processing centre.
Khulna circuit

Major places of attraction:

Koromjol Watch Tower: There is a government run crocodile breeding centre at Koromjol. There are no accommodations available.

Nilkomol Sanctuary Centre: This area is popular for tiger spotting.

Hiron Point: Located within the Nilkomol range this place is very popular for spotting animals including tigers, deer, monkeys and crocodile. It is also popular with bird watchers. Accommodation is available at the Forest Rest House.
Satkhira circuit
Major places of attraction

Dobeki: This spot is famous for forest activities such as nature walks, guided village and honey collection tours. Accessible by boats. No accommodations available in the spot.

Patkoshta forest camp: This spot is also famous for nature walks and guided tours into the forest. No accommodations available at the spot which is accessible by boats.

Kalogachhia forest office: This spot is famous for eco-tourism and guided jungle tours.

Putney Island and Kalir Char: Theses are small flat islands (sand bars). These areas are popular among tourists for their beaches and for bird watching. No accommodations are available in these spots.

Dolphin Sanctuary: three canals, one around 12 km from Ghagmari check-post of Chandpai Range to Karamjal check-post through Dhangmari canal and Pashur River, second, 15 km from Jongra check-post to Andharmari check-post through Mrigamari check-post and third, five km from Dudhkhali check-post to Supati canal through Bemara canal have been declared as safe havens for Dolphins by the Bangladesh government. These canals can be developed into potential tourist spots.
Accommodations and Restaurants:
The nature of Sundarbans tourism in Bangladesh is different from India as it completely river based. Accommodations and food arrangements are therefore done on the boat. There are some guest houses at Satkhira maintained by NGOs such as BEDS. There are also one government guest house in Burigoalini just outside Bangladesh Sundarbans.

Hospitals in the area:
Available at Jessore, Khulna, Mongla and Dhaka

Permits required:
Permits are required for entering almost all the spots inside Sundarban Tiger Reserve. These are issues by Divisional Forest Office in Khulna. The forest tours need to be compulsorily accompanied by armed guards, provided by the forest office. 11

11https://www.thedailystar.net/country/sundarbans-tourism-disarray-1503697
3.1.2 Tourism Circuits along the Route (India)

Namkhana and Sagar circuit

Major places of attraction:

Gangasagar and Kapil Muni Ashram: About 100 kms south of Kolkata and located at the confluence of river Ganga and Bay of Bengal, this island has religious significance. The Kapil Muni Ashram is located on this island. Additionally every year during Makar Sankranti (14 or 15th January), pilgrims gather to take holy deep in sea and then visit the temple. This gathering is popularly known as Ganga Sagar Mela which is the second largest congregation after Kumbh mela.
**Bakkhali and Frazerganj:** One of the many deltaic islands spread across Bay of Bengal, these places are popular for their pristine beaches. Accommodations are available in both spots.

*Frazerganj: Not a soul in sight*
**Henry's Island:** Located near to Bakkhali this island has a tower which gives tourists a view of the island and the sea. The place is also home to millions of red crabs that are visible on the beach. Government Accommodation is available here.

**Mousuni Island:** A small island near Namkhana, this spot has recently become popular among bird lovers. Apart from its natural beauty, this spot offers accommodations in beachside tents which add to the attraction.

**Jambudwip:** This is an uninhabited island located at a very small distance from Bakkhali. This is being slowly developed as a tourist attraction. However, as of now there are no accommodation facilities.
Patharpratima circuit

Major Places of attraction:

**Bhagabatpur Crocodile Project**: Located in Patharpratima adjacent to Lothian Island, this spot is India’s only crocodile project. There are estuarine species of crocodile and Batagur Baska species of Tortoise. Besides, this place has immense natural beauty. While this place is gradually gaining importance as a tourist destination, there are no accommodations at this place.
Lothian Island: It is a wildlife sanctuary which includes estuarine crocodiles, olive ridley sea turtles, spotted deer, jungle cats and rhesus macaques. Tourists are not generally allowed to embark on this island how they can take a trip around the island in a boat.

Buraburir Tat: This place is gradually getting popular among tourist due to its pristine beach.

Sajnekhali circuit
Major places of attraction:

**Sajnekhali Tiger Reserve**: The most popular spot in Indian Sundarbans. This location has a watchtower, a mangrove interpretation centre, a Bono Bibi temple as well as a crocodile park. It is located very near to Pakhiralay which has the maximum number of accommodations in the Indian Sundarbans and is easily accessible from Godkhali (Canning). The watchtower has the capacity to host 20 people at a time.

**Sudhanyakhali Watchtower**: This watchtower located near Sajnekhali is becoming popular for tiger spotting. The watchtower has the capacity to host 25 people at a time.

**Dobanki**: The spot has a watchtower which can be approached by a canopy walk located at a height of 20ft.
from the ground. There is a sweet water pond nearby which makes it easy to spot animals.

**Netidhopani:** Apart from a watchtower which can accommodate 20 persons at a time, this place also has a 400 years old Shiva temple which is associated with the old Bengal legend of Behula Lakhhindar. There is also a sweet water pond in this location making it easier to spot animals.

**Kalas Camp:** Lying in the estuary of river Matla, this island is a breeding ground for olive ridley turtles during the winter season. It is also popular among bird watchers. While previously it was allowed to embark on the camp, off late there have been some restrictions on this.

**Bonnie Camp:** It is a watchtower situated in an island quite close to Bay of Bengal. The watchtower at 50 feet height is the highest in Sundarbans. While there is a tourist rest house in Bonnie Camp, it is not supported by electricity.

**Hemnagar Circuit**
Major places of attraction:

**Jhingekhali Watchtower:** Located at the easternmost side of the Indian Sundarbans near the border with Bangladesh, this watchtower complex houses sweet water ponds and observation lines for animal watchers and a Bonobibi temple. The watchtower has the capacity to host 20 people at a time.

**Burirdabri Watchtower:** This watchtower again located in the easternmost side of India Sundarbans on the river Raimongol. The viewpoint is called Raimongol viewpoint and it gives tourists glimpses of Bangladesh Sundarbans. This watchtower is also famous for a mud walk and a mangrove cage trail. The watchtower has the capacity to host 10 people at a time.

**Taki Ghat:** Lying on the banks of river Ichamati, this old town gives glimpses of Bangladesh to tourists from its numerous ghats. One can also opt for boat rides along the river. During Dusserah (Bijoya Dashami), one can witness numerous immersions (Visarjans) in the river Ichamati from both India and Bangladesh. The site is spectacular and attracts a sizeable number of tourists from all over India and even abroad. Recently this has been covered by international channels including The National Geographic.
Places of accommodations along the route:

Patharpratima-Namkhana-Sagar circuit:

Diamond Harbour: Both private and government accommodations are available
Sagar: One government tourist bungalow and one youth hostel available
Bakkhali: Private guest houses available
Frazerganj: Government tourist bungalows are available
Mousuni Island: There are tents on the beach which can accommodate upto 20 persons

Dakshin Shibganj, Pathrapratima: Private budget accommodations near Bhagabatpur

Sajnekhali Circuit:

Pakhiralay: Several Accommodations are available at Pakhiralay

Sajnekhali: Only one forest guest house which can be availed with prior permission.

Bonnie Camp: There is a tourist rest house for night stay. However, it is not supported by electricity and can be availed with prior permission.

Restaurants along the route:

Restaurants are available at Diamond Harbour, Kakdwip and Pakhiralay
Hospitals along the route:

Government hospitals and health care centres available at Diamond Harbour, Sagar, Kakdwip, Namkhana, Patharpratima, Gosaba and Hemnagar
Permits required:

Table 1: List of Offices providing Permits for Spots in Indian Sundarbans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the office</th>
<th>Spots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Office of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, West Bengal Forest Department, located in Aranya Bhawan, Salt Lake, Kolkata</strong></td>
<td>All spots (North and South 24 parganas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Directorate of Forest office at Canning I</strong></td>
<td>Sajnekhali, Sudhanyakhali, Netidhopani, Dobanki, Bonnie and Kalash camp, Dhanchi forest camp, Bhagabatpur crocodile project, Jhingekhali, Burirdabri, Harikhali, Buraburir Tot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sajnekhali forest office</strong></td>
<td>Sajnekhali, Sudhanyakhali, Netidhopani, Dobanki, Bonnie camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jharkhali forest office</strong></td>
<td>Only South 24 parganas including Sajnekhali, Sudhanyakhali, Netidhopani, Dobanki, Bonnie camp and Kalash camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bagna beat office</strong></td>
<td>All North 24 parganas including Jhingekhali, Burirdabri, Harikhali</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4: Route wise and trip wise maps for the Bangladesh Sundarbans

This chapter looks into the popular routes in Bangladesh Sundarbans and number of trips that can be conducted within those routes.

4.1 Route A: Existing protocol route (Bangladesh Side)
Figure 3: Schematic Diagram of the Route

Hemnagar, India

Angthara ghat (immigration point in Bangladesh)

Satkhira range
5. Dobeki
6. Kalir Char
7. Putney Island
8. Patkosta

A taste of village life:
Country-side tours, guided honey collection tours, Guided forest tours

Satkhira range

Khulna Range
4. Koromjol watch tower
5. Nilkomol Sanctuary centre
6. Hiron Point

Government run Crocodile breeding centre, animal spotting

Ideal place for tiger spotting

Bagerhat
9. Harbaria Eco Park Jetty
10. Tinkona Island
11. Kachikhal forest office
12. Katka
13. Salar Char
14. Dimer Char
15. Dublar Char

Bagerhat: UNESCO World Heritage Site
3. Shat Gombuj Mosque
4. Kodla Math

Cruise

Narayanganj

Dhaka

Car

Bisleri

The Bagerhat UNESCO World Heritage Site

3. Shat Gombuj Mosque
4. Kodla Math

Cruise

Cruise

Cruise
Hospitals, restaurants and accommodations along the route

Accommodations and restaurants: Accommodations have to be arranged on the cruise. The houseboats can also provide accommodation facilities depending on the number of tourists. The quality of service needs to be checked too before making accommodation arrangements on board. Food arrangements also have to be made on board.

Hospitals in the area: Available at Jessore, Khulna, Mongla and Dhaka

Permits required
Permits are required for entering almost all the spots inside Sundarban Tiger Reserve. These are issued by Divisional Forest Office in Khulna. The forest tours need to be compulsorily accompanied by armed guards, provided by the forest office.

Infrastructure in Bangladesh side
Infrastructure remains a significant issue on the Bangladesh side of Sundarbans. While some private companies provide houseboats which are of good quality, most of the local boats available in the area are very big and can accommodate almost 60 to 100 people including locals and tourists. These boats often do not follow any regulation or standard. The government does not have any regulation pertaining to the services provided by the local boats leading to harassment of tourists. In many cases they also do not carry proper permits for taking tourists inside the tiger reserve. These boats also do not have sufficient safety measures which may be a priority for international tourists. Additionally the facilities inside the boat are not clean and hygienic.

With very few government accommodations in select areas such as Katka and Hiron Point, night stays have to be arranged inside the boats or cruise. It is also advisable to have on-boat food and water arrangements.
At many places there are no permanent ghats for embarkation. Intermittent supply of electricity and mobile connectivity is an issue at many of the spots. Due to lack of tourism based infrastructure, this part of the Sundarbans has already witnessed decrease in the number of national and international tourists over the past few year
4.1.1 Trip-wise maps on this route

- Dhaka-Mongla-Bagerhat Trip: 3 nights/4 days
Day 1: From Dhaka one can fly to Khulna from where the tourists can embark onto the cruise. Before starting the cruise, trips can be arranged to the Shat Gombuj Mosque and Kodla Moth by road. The tourists come back to the cruise for night halt. The cruise moves towards Mongla at night.

Day 2: Local houseboats are hired to take the tourists to the Bagerhat World Heritage site including spots such as Dublar Char, Tiar Char, Salar Char, etc. Thereafter the tourists come back to the cruise for the night.

Day 3: Local houseboats can be hired to take the tourists to the Katka forest office which is the gateway to the Sundarban National Park. It is a day-long tour after which tourists can come back to the cruise to retire for the night.

Day 4: Local houseboats can be hired to take the tourists to the Kachikhali Wildlife Sanctuary for a day-long trip after which the tourists can come back to the cruise for the night.

Day 5: From Mongla port the cruise moves towards Khulna.

Day 6: Overnight Volvo buses or early morning flights to Dhaka

Major places of attraction:
Shaat Gombuj Mosque: A 15th century mosque named as a UNESCO World Heritage site. It is reachable by road from Mongla Port.

Kodla Math: Located 10 kms north of Bagerhat, this is an old Hindu temple built in 17th Century. It can be reached from Mongla by road.

Harbaria Eco Park jetty: It is an eco-park with a jetty which provides glimpses of the Bangladesh Sundarbans. Can be accessed only by boat.

Katka- Kachikhali forest: This area in the heart of Sundarbans is famous for tiger spotting. It can be reached from Mongla port by water.
Dublar char, Tear Char and Selar Char, Tinkona island: These small islands (sand bars) are found at the confluence of Sundarban rivers with the Bay of Bengal. The beaches on these islands are popular with the tourists. Also bird watching is a popular activity in these islands. Dublar char is gradually being developed into a sea food processing centre.

➢ Dhaka-Mongla-Bagerhat-Khulna Trip from Dhaka: 5 nights/ 6 days trips
Day 1: From Dhaka one can fly to Khulna from where the tourists can embark onto the cruise. Before starting the cruise, trips can be arranged to the Shat Gombuj Mosque and Kodla Moth by road. The tourists come back to the cruise for night halt. The cruise moves towards Mongla at night.

Day 2: Local houseboats are hired to take the tourists to the Bagerhat World Heritage site including spots such as Dublar Char, Tiar Char, Selar Char, etc. Thereafter the tourists come back to the cruise for the night.

Day 3: Local houseboats can be hired to take the tourists to the Katka and Kachikhali forests. It is a day-long tour after which tourists can come back to the cruise to retire for the night. The cruise comes back to Mongla overnight.

Day 4: From Mongla port local houseboats are availed to take the tourists to spots such as Koromjol Watchtower and Hiron Point. The tourists return back to the cruise for night halt. The cruise moves towards Dobeki overnight.

Day 5: From Dobeki local houseboats are availed to take the tourists to spots such as Kalir Char and Patkoshta. The tourists come back to the cruise for night halt. The cruise moves towards Khulna

Day 6: Tourists can either opt for overnight Volvo AC buses or flights to reach Dhaka from khulna

Major places of attraction:
Shaat Gombuj Mosque: A 15th century mosque named as a UNESCO World Heritage site. It is reachable by road from Mongla Port.
Kodla Math: Located 10 kms north of Bagerhat, this is an old Hindu temple built in 17th Century. It can be reached from Mongla by road.

Harbaria Eco Park jetty: It is an eco-park with a jetty which provides glimpses of the Bangladesh Sundarbans. Can be accessed only by boat.

Katka-Kachikhali forest: This area in the heart of Sundarbans is famous for tiger spotting. It can be reached from Mongla port by water.

Dublar char, Tear Char and Selar Char, Tinkona island: These small islands (sand bars) are found at the confluence of Sundarban rivers with the Bay of Bengal. The beaches on these islands are popular with the tourists. Also bird watching is a popular activity in these islands. Dublar char is gradually being developed into a sea food processing centre.

Koromjol Watch Tower: There is a government run crocodile breeding centre at Koromjol.

Nilkomol Sanctuary Centre: This area is popular for tiger spotting.

Hiron Point: Located within the Nilkomol range this place is very popular for spotting animals including tigers, deer, monkeys, and crocodile. It is also popular with bird watchers.

Dobeki: This spot is famous for forest activities such as nature walks, guided village and honey collection tours. Accessible by boats.

Patkoshta forst camp: This spot is also famous for nature walks and guided tours into the forest.

Kalogachhia forest office: This spot is famous for eco-tourism and guided jungle tours.

Putney island and Kalir Char: Theses are small flat islands (sand bars). These areas are popular among tourists for their beaches and for bird watching.
4.2 Route B: Existing Alternative Route: Khulna-Burigoalini-Kolkata

1.13
A taste of village life: Country-side tours, guided honey collection tours

Ideal place for tiger spotting

Government run Crocodile breeding centre, animal spotting

Bagerhat: UNESCO World Heritage Site

5. Shat Gombuj Mosque
6. Kodla Math

The Bagerhat UNESCO World Heritage Site
Accommodations, restaurants and hospitals on the way

Accommodations and restaurants: Accommodations have to be arranged on the cruise. Food arrangements also have to be made on board. For tourists staying over at Khulna for one night, various good private accommodations are available. Government guest house is available at Burigoalini. While there are some eateries in Khulna, in most cases, food arrangements have to be made on board the cruise.

Hospitals in the area: Available at Khulna, Burigoalini, Mongla and Dhaka
Permits required

Permits are required for entering almost all the spots inside Sundarban Tiger Reserve. These are issues by Divisional Forest Office in Khulna. The forest tours need to be compulsorily accompanied by armed guards, provided by the forest office.
4.2.1 Trip-wise maps for the route

- **Khulna-Burigoalini-Dobeki Trip: 3 nights/4 days**

1.14

**Day 1:** Take an early morning flight to Khulna from Dhaka. Tourists may also opt for overnight Volvo AC buses which take approximately 7 hours to reach Khulna. Embark on the cruise from Khulna and travel up to Burigoalini. Village tours can be arranged in Burigoalini. Night halt is arranged on the cruise. Cruise moves towards Dobeki at night.

**Day 2:** Guided honey collection and forest tour in Dobeki throughout the day. The cruise may also take a round of Kalir char. Night halt is arranged on the cruise.

**Day 3:** Early morning cruise starts moving towards Khulna. Tourists may opt for overnight Volvo AC buses to reach Dhaka. Or else they may be accommodated in hotels available in Khulna.
Day 4: Early morning flights to Dhaka from Khulna

Major places of attraction:

**Dobeki:** This spot is famous for forest activities such as nature walks, guided village and honey collection tours. Accessible by boats.

**Putney Island and Kalir Char:** These are small flat islands (sand bars). These areas are popular among tourists for their beaches and for bird watching.

**Burigoalini:** This village acts as one of the gateways to Bangladesh Sundarban. It is ideal for getting a taste of Sundarban way of life.

- **Khulna-Burigoalini-Dobeki-Katka-Kachikhali trip: 4 nights/5 days**

Day 1: Take an early morning flight to Khulna from Dhaka. Tourists may also opt for overnight Volvo AC buses which take approximately 7 hours to reach Khulna. Embark on the cruise from Khulna and travel up to Burogoalini. Village tours can be arranged in Burigoalini. Night halt is arranged on the cruise. Cruise moves towards Dobeki at night.

Day 2: Guided honey collection and forest tour in Dobeki throughout the day. The cruise may also take a round of Kalir char. Night halt is arranged on the cruise. The cruise moves towards Hiron point.

Day 3: Full day activity at Hiron point. Local boats can be availed to take the tourists to nearby islands including Tear Char, Dublar Char and Selar Char. Night halt in the cruise. The cruise moves towards Katka-Kachikhali at night.
Day 4: Full day activities at Katka-Kachikhali forest. After this tourists again come back to the cruise for night halt. Cruise starts moving towards Khulna via Mongla.

Day 5: Reach Khulna by afternoon. Tourists may opt for either Volvo-buses or flights to return to Dhaka.

Major places of attraction:

Dobeki: This spot is famous for forest activities such as nature walks, guided village and honey collection tours. Accessible by boats.

Putney Island and Kalir Char: These are small flat islands (sand bars). These areas are popular among tourists for their beaches and for bird watching.

Burigoalini: This village acts as one of the gateways to Bangladesh Sundarban. It is ideal for getting a taste of Sundarban way of life.

Hiron Point: Located within the Nilkomol range this place is very popular for spotting animals including tigers, deer, monkeys and crocodile. It is also popular with bird watchers.

Katka-Kachikhali forest: This area in the heart of Sundarbans is famous for tiger spotting. It can be reached from Mongla port by water.

Dublar char, Tear Char and Selar Char, Tinkona island: These small islands (sand bars) are found at the confluence of Sundarban rivers with the Bay of Bengal. The beaches on these islands are popular with the tourists. Also bird watching is a popular activity in these islands. Dublar char is gradually being developed into a sea food processing centre.
Chapter 5: Route wise and trip wise maps for the India Sundarbans

This chapter looks into the popular routes in Indian Sundarbans and number of trips that can be conducted within those routes.

5.1 Route A: The protocol route (Indian side)
Figure 5: Schematic diagram of the route
Located near Kolkata, these spots are ideal gateway for beach lovers. Located near Kolkata, these spots are ideal gateway for beach lovers.

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Accommodations, restaurants and hospitals along the route

**Accommodations:** Available at Diamond Harbour, Ganga Sagar, Bakkhali, Frazerganj, Dakhshin Shibganj (Pathrpratima), Mousuni Island, Pakhiralay, Sajnekhali and Bonnie Camp

**Accommodations in Namkhana, Sagar and Patharpratima**

**Accommodations in Sajnekhali circuit**

**Restaurants:** Available at Diamond Harbour, Kakdwip and Pakhiralay
Restaurants on the way

Hospitals: Government hospitals and health centres are available at Diamond Habor, Kadwip, Sagar, Namkhana, Patharpratima and Gosaba

Hospitals on the way
5.1.1 Trip-wise maps for the route

- **Kolkata-Sagar-Pathpratima trip: 3 nights/4 days**
Day 1: The cruise starts at Chandannagore or Millenium Ghat in Kolkata and travels till Namkhana via river Hooghly. The cruise can be anchored at Namkhana jetty for the night. It is to be noted here that since the sailing of the cruise significantly depends on the tidal wave timings which vary every day, it may not be possible to arrange for sightseeing at Namkhana on the same day.

Day 2: Tourists can be taken for sightseeing at Namkhana to spots such as Bakkhal, Frazerganj, Ben Fish island, Mousuni island, Henry’s island and Jambudweep. For this purpose local boats can be hired. Once completed, the tourists would come back to the cruise at Namkhana jetty for the night. The cruise moves towards Ramganga jetty in Patharpratima at night.

Day 3: From Ramganga jetty local boats can be hired to take the tourists to Patharpratima. From Patharpratima, local e-rickshwas can be hired to take the tourists to Bhagabatpur Crocodile Project. Local boats can also be hired to visit Lothian Island, Haliday Island and Buraburir tot. The cruise comes to Sagar jetty at night.

Day 4: Early morning, from Sagar jetty e-rickshaws or autos can be hired to take the tourists to Kapil muni’s ashram and Ganga sagar beach. Local sightseeing in Sagar can be done in two hours following which the tourists can come back to the cruise. After this the cruise starts back for Kolkata. Reach Kolkata by night.
**Major places of attraction:**

**Gangasagar and Kapil Muni Ashram:** About 100 kms south of Kolkata and located at the confluence of river Ganga and Bay of Bengal, this island has religious significance. The Kapil Muni Ashram is located on this island. Additionally every year during Makar Sankranti (14 or 15th January), pilgrims gather to take holy dip in sea and then visit the temple. This gathering is popularly known as Ganga Sagar Mela which is the second largest congregation after Kumbh mela.

**Bakkhali and Frazerganj:** One of the many deltaic islands spread across Bay of Bengal, these places are popular for their pristine beaches. Accommodations are available in both spots.

**Henry’s Island:** Located near to Bakkhali this island has a tower which gives tourists a view of the island and the sea. The place is also home to millions of red crabs that are visible on the beach. Government Accommodation is available here.

**Mousuni Island:** A small island near Namkhana, this spot has recently become popular among bird lovers. Apart from its natural beauty, this spot offers accommodations in beachside tents which add to the attraction.

**Jambudwip:** This is an uninhabited island located at a very small distance from Bakkhali. This is being slowly developed as a tourist attraction. However, as of now there are no accommodation facilities.

**Bhagabatpur Crocodile Project:** Located in Patharpratima adjacent to Lothian Island, this spot is India’s only crocodile project. There are estuarine species of crocodile and Batagur Baska species of Tortoise. Besides, this place has immense natural beauty. While this place is gradually gaining importance as a tourist destination, there are no accommodations at this place.

**Lothian Island:** It is a wildlife sanctuary which includes estuarine crocodiles, olive ridley sea turtles, spotted deer, jungle cats and rhesus macaques. Tourists are not allowed to embark on this island how they can take a trip around the island in a boat.

**Buraburir Tat:** This place is gradually getting popular among tourist due to its pristine beach.
- **Kolkata-Sagar-Patharpratima-Pakhiralay trip: 4 nights/ 5 days trip on this route**
Day 1: The cruise starts at Chandannagore or Millenium Ghat in Kolkata and travels till Namkhana via river Hooghly. The cruise can be anchored at Namkhana jetty for the night. It is to be noted here that since the sailing of the cruise significantly depends on the tidal wave timings which vary every day, it may not be possible to arrange for sightseeing at Namkhana on the same day.

Day 2: Tourists can be taken for sightseeing at Namkhana to spots such as Bakkhali, Fazerganj, Ben Fish island, Mousuni island, Henry’s island and Jambudweep. For this purpose local boats can be hired. Once completed, the tourists would come back to the cruise at Namkhana jetty for the night. The cruise moves towards Ramganga jetty in Patharpratima at night.

Day 3: From Ramganga jetty local boats can be hired to take the tourists to Patharpratima. From Patharpratima, local e-rickshaws can be hired to take the tourists to Bhagabatpur Crocodile Project. Local boats can also be hired to visit Lothian Island, Haliday Island and Buraburir tot. The cruise moves back to Namkhana jetty at night.

Day 4: From Pakhiralay local boats can be hired to travel to Kalash Island, Bonnie Island Netidhopani, Dobanki, Sudhanyakhali and Sajnekhali. The trip starts at early morning. The tourists come back to the cruise for the night. The cruise moves back towards Sagar at night.

Day 5: Early morning, from Sagar jetty e-rickshaws or autos can be hired to take the tourists to Kapil muni’s ashram and Ganga sagar beach. Local sightseeing in Sagar can
be done in two hours following which the tourists can come back to the cruise. After this, the cruise starts back for Kolkata. Reach Kolkata by night.

**Major places of attraction:**

**Gangasagar and Kapil Muni Ashram:** About 100 kms south of Kolkata and located at the confluence of river Ganga and Bay of Bengal, this island has religious significance. The Kapil Muni Ashram is located on this island. Additionally, every year during Makar Sankranti (14 or 15th January), pilgrims gather to take holy deep in sea and then visit the temple. This gathering is popularly known as Ganga Sagar Mela which is the second largest congregation after Kumbh mela.

**Bakkhali and Frazerganj:** One of the many deltaic islands spread across Bay of Bengal, these places are popular for their pristine beaches. Accommodations are available in both the spots.

**Henry’s Island:** Located near to Bakkhali, this island has a tower which gives tourists a view of the island and the sea. The place is also home to millions of red crabs that are visible on the beach. Government Accommodation is available here.

**Mousuni Island:** A small island near Namkhana, this spot has recently become popular among bird lovers. Apart from its natural beauty, this spot offers accommodations in beachside tents which add to the attraction.

**Jambudwip:** This is an uninhabited island located at a very small distance from Bakkhali. This is being slowly developed as a tourist attraction. However, as of now, there are no accommodation facilities.

**Bhagabatpur Crocodile Project:** Located in Patharpratima adjacent to Lothian Island, this spot is India’s only crocodile project. There are estuarine species of crocodile and Batagur Baska species of Tortoise. Besides, this place has immense natural beauty. While this place is gradually gaining importance as a tourist destination, there are no accommodations at this place.

**Lothian Island:** It is a wildlife sanctuary which includes estuarine crocodiles, olive ridley sea turtles, spotted deer, jungle cats, and rhesus macaques. Tourists are not allowed to embark on this island but they can take a trip around the island in a boat.

**Buraburir Tat:** This place is gradually getting popular among tourists due to its pristine beach.

**Sajnekhali Tiger Reserve:** The most popular spot in Indian Sundarbans. This location has a watchtower, a mangrove interpretation centre, a Bono Bibi temple as well as a crocodile park. It is located very near to Pakhiralay which has the maximum number of accommodations in the Indian Sundarbans and is easily accessible from Godkhali (Canning). The watchtower has the capacity to host 20 people at a time.
**Sudhanyakhali Watchtower:** This watchtower located near Sajnekhali is becoming popular for tiger spotting. The watchtower has the capacity to host 25 people at a time.

**Dobanki:** The spot has a watchtower which can be approached by a canopy walk located at a height of 20ft from the ground. There is a sweet water pond nearby which makes it easy to spot animals.

**Netidhopani:** Apart from a watchtower which can accommodate 20 persons at a time, this place also has a 400 years old Shiva temple which is associated with the old Bengal legend of Behula Lakhhindar. There is also a sweet water pond in this location making it easier to spot animals.

**Kalas Camp:** Lying in the estuary of river Matla, this island is a breeding ground for olive ridley turtles during the winter season. It is also popular among bird watchers. While previously it was allowed to embark on the camp, off late there have been some restrictions on this.

**Bonnie Camp:** It is a watchtower situated in an island quite close to Bay of Bengal. The watchtower at 50 feet height is the highest in Sudarbans. While there is a tourist rest house in Bonnie Camp, it is not supported by electricity.
5.2 Route C: Existing alternative route 1: Godkhali-Hemnagar-Bangladesh

**India-Bangladesh:** Kolkata - Canning - Godkhali - Pakhiralay - Hemnagar (Immigration India) - Angtihara (immigration Bangladesh) – Chalna – Khulna – Mongla

**Indian Sundarban:** Godkhali – Pakhiralay (For Sajnekhali circuit) - Patharpratima (For Partharpratima circuit)

Godkhali jetty

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Local boat
Local transport
Cruise
Figure 6: Schematic diagram of the route

1. Dhanchi forest camp
2. Buraburir tot
3. Haliday island
4. Lothian island
5. Bhagabatpur Crocodile Project

Glimpses of Bangladesh Sundarbans

Most popular tourist circuit in Indian Sundarbans

Gateway to Sundarbans and the only crocodile project in West Bengal
Accommodations, restaurants and hospitals on the route

Accommodations in Sajnekhali circuit

Accommodations in Patharpratima circuit
Restaurants on the way

Hospitals on the way

Permits required

Permits have to be obtained for individuals, for cameras as well as for boats to visit spots including Sajnekhali, Sudhanyakhali, Do Banki, Netidhopani,
Buroburir tot, Kalash camp, Dhanchi forest camp, Jhingekhali watchtower, BurirDabri watch tower and Lothian Island (refer to table 1). Further, it is mandatory to be accompanied by a guide, recommended by Sundarban Tiger Reserve for visiting these aforementioned spots. The tourists need to carry government photo ID proofs to obtain permits. The table below lists the relevant authorities who grant permission for visiting spots in the core area. Foreigners have to obtain a special permit from the Joint Secretary, Forest Department, Writers building, Kolkata.

Table 1: List of offices providing permits for spots in Indian Sundarbans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the office</th>
<th>Spots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, West Bengal Forest Department, located in Aranya Bhawan, Salt Lake, Kolkata</td>
<td>All spots (North and South 24 parganas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directorate of Forest office at Canning I</td>
<td>Sajnekhali, Sudhanyakhal, Netidhopani, Dobanki, Bonnie and Kalash camp, Dhanchi forest camp, Bhagbatpur crocodile project, Jhingekhali, Burirdabri, Harikhali, Buraburir Tot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sajnekhali forest office</td>
<td>Sajnekhali, Sudhanyakhal, Netidhopani, Dobanki, Bonnie camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jharkhali forest office</td>
<td>Only South 24 parganas including Sajnekhali, Sudhanyakhal, Netidhopani, Dobanki, Bonnie camp and Kalash camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagna beat office</td>
<td>All North 24 parganas including Jhingekhali, Burirdabri, Harikhali</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the CUTS team

5.2.1 Trip-wise map along this route
- Godakhali-Pakhiralay Trip: 2 nights /3 days
Day 1: From Kolkata one can reach Godkhali by road. From Godkhali tourists can stay at the various accommodations available at Pakhiralay.

Day 2: From Pakhiralay, local boats are arranged to take the tourists to Dobanki, Netidhophani, Kalas and Bonnie camps. The tourists come back to Pakhiralay for night halt.

Day 3: Early morning tourists can be taken to Sajnekhali and Sudhanyakhali watchtowers. Once completed, the tourists can come back to Pakhiralay for lunch. After
lunch boats can be arranged to take the tourists to Godkhali from where tourists can move towards Kolkata by road

**Major places of attraction:**

**Sajnekhali Tiger Reserve:** The most popular spot in Indian Sundarbans. This location has a watchtower, a mangrove interpretation centre, a Bono Bibi temple as well as a crocodile park. It is located very near to Pakhiralay which has the maximum number of accommodations in the Indian Sundarbans and is easily accessible from Godkhali (Canning). The watchtower has the capacity to host 20 people at a time.

**Sudhanyakhali Watchtower:** This watchtower located near Sajnekhali is becoming popular for tiger spotting. The watchtower has the capacity to host 25 people at a time.

**Dobanki:** The spot has a watchtower which can be approached by a canopy walk located at a height of 20ft from the ground. There is a sweet water pond nearby which makes it easy to spot animals.

**Netidhopani:** Apart from a watchtower which can accommodate 20 persons at a time, this place also has a 400 years old Shiva temple which is associated with the old Bengal legend of Behula Lakhhindar. There is also a sweet water pond in this location making it easier to spot animals.

**Kalas Camp:** Lying in the estuary of river Matla, this island is a breeding ground for olive ridley turtles during the winter season. It is also popular among bird watchers. While previously it was allowed to embark on the camp, off late there have been some restrictions on this.

**Bonnie Camp:** It is a watchtower situated in an island quite close to Bay of Bengal. The watchtower at 50 feet height is the highest in Sudarbans. While there is a tourist rest house in Bonnie Camp, it is not supported by electricity.

- **Godkhali-Pakhiralay-Pathpratima trip: 3 nights / 4 days**

  - Kolkata → Godkhali → Pakhiralay → Pathpratima → Godkhali → Kolkata
Day 1: From Kolkata one can reach Godkhali by road. From Godkhali tourists can be taken to Pakhiralay by local boats. At Pakhiralay tourists can stay at the various accommodations available.
Day 2: From Pakhiralay, local boats are arranged to take the tourists to Dobanki, Netidhophani, Kalas and Bonnie camps. The tourists come back to Pakhiralay for night halt.

Day 3: From Pakhiralay, local boats are arranged to take the tourists to Patharpratima for a trip to the Bhagabatpur Crocodile Project. While travelling tourists can be shown around the Haliday Island, Lothian island and Buarbrir tat. The tourists come back to Pakhiralay for night halt.

Day 4: Early morning tourists can be taken to Sajnekhali and Sudhanyakhali watchtowers. Once completed, the tourists can come back to Pakhiralay for lunch. After lunch boats can be arranged to take the tourists to Godkhali from where tourists can move towards Kolkata by road

Major places of attraction:

Sajnekhali Tiger Reserve: The most popular spot in Indian Sundarbans. This location has a watchtower, a mangrove interpretation centre, a Bono Bibi temple as well as a crocodile park. It is located very near to Pakhiralay which has the maximum number of accommodations in the Indian Sundarbans and is easily accessible from Godkhali (Canning). The watchtower has the capacity to host 20 people at a time

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Bonnie Camp: It is a watchtower situated in an island quite close to Bay of Bengal. The watchtower at 50 feet height is the highest in Sudarbans. While there is a tourist rest house in Bonnie Camp, it is not supported by electricity.

Bhagabatpur Crocodile Project: Located in Patharpratima adjacent to Lothian Island, this spot is India’s only crocodile project. There are estuarine species of crocodile and Batagur Baska species of Tortoise. Besides, this place has immense natural beauty.
While this place is gradually gaining importance as a tourist destination, there are no accommodations at this place.

**Lothian Island and Haliday Island:** It is a wildlife sanctuary which includes estuarine crocodiles, olive ridley sea turtles, spotted deer, jungle cats and rhesus macaques. Tourists are not allowed to embark on this island how they can take a trip around the island in a boat.

**Buraburir Tat:** This place is gradually getting popular among tourist due to its pristine beach.

- **Godkhali-Pakhiralay-pathpratima-Hemnagar trip:** 4 nights /5 days
Day 1: From Kolkata one can reach Godkhali by road. From Godkhali tourists can be taken to Pakhiralay by local boats. At Pakhiralay tourists can stay at the various accommodations available.

Day 2: From Pakhiralay, local boats are arranged to take the tourists to Dobanki, Netidophani, Kalas and Bonnie camps. The tourists come back to Pakhiralay for night halt.

Day 3: From Pakhiralay, local boats are arranged to take the tourists to Patharpratima for a trip to the Bhagabatpur Crocodile Project. While travelling tourists can be shown around the Haliday Island, Lothian island and Buarbrir tat. The tourists come back to Pakhiralay for night halt.

Day 4: From Pakhiralay, local boats are arranged to take the tourists to Jhingekhali and Burridabri watchtower. The tourists come back to Pakhiralay for night halt.

Day 5: Early morning tourists can be taken to Sajnekhali and Sudhanyakhali watchtowers. Once completed, the tourists can come back to Pakhiralay for lunch. After lunch boats can be arranged to take the tourists to Godkhali from where tourists can move towards Kolkata by road.

Major places of attraction:
Sajnekhali Tiger Reserve: The most popular spot in Indian Sundarbans. This location has a watchtower, a mangrove interpretation centre, a Bono Bibi temple as well as a crocodile park. It is located very near to Pakhiralay which has the maximum number of
accommodations in the Indian Sundarbans and is easily accessible from Godkhali (Canning). The watchtower has the capacity to host 20 people at a time.

**Sudhanyakhali Watchtower:** This watchtower located near Sajnekhali is becoming popular for tiger spotting. The watchtower has the capacity to host 25 people at a time.

**Dobanki:** The spot has a watchtower which can be approached by a canopy walk located at a height of 20ft from the ground. There is a sweet water pond nearby which makes it easy to spot animals.

**Netidhopani:** Apart from a watchtower which can accommodate 20 persons at a time, this place also has a 400 years old Shiva temple which is associated with the old Bengal legend of Behula Lakkhindar. There is also a sweet water pond in this location making it easier to spot animals.

**Kalas Camp:** Lying in the estuary of river Matla, this island is a breeding ground for olive ridley turtles during the winter season. It is also popular among bird watchers. While previously it was allowed to embark on the camp, off late there have been some restrictions on this.

**Bonnie Camp:** It is a watchtower situated in an island quite close to Bay of Bengal. The watchtower at 50 feet height is the highest in Sundarbans. While there is a tourist rest house in Bonnie Camp, it is not supported by electricity.

**Bhagabatpur Crocodile Project:** Located in Patharpratima adjacent to Lothian Island, this spot is India’s only crocodile project. There are estuarine species of crocodile and Batagur Baska species of Tortoise. Besides, this place has immense natural beauty. While this place is gradually gaining importance as a tourist destination, there are no accommodations at this place.

**Lothian Island and Haliday Island:** It is a wildlife sanctuary which includes estuarine crocodiles, olive ridley sea turtles, spotted deer, jungle cats and rhesus macaques. Tourists are not allowed to embark on this island how they can take a trip around the island in a boat.

**Buraburir Tat:** This place is gradually getting popular among tourist due to its pristine beach.

**Jhingekhali Watchtower:** Located at the easternmost side of the Indian Sundarbans near the border with Bangladesh, this watchtower complex houses sweet water ponds and observation lines for animal watchers and a Bonobibi temple. The watchtower has the capacity to host 20 people at a time.

**Burirdabri Watchtower:** This watchtower again located in the easternmost side of India Sundarbans on the river Raimongol. The view point is called Raimongol view point and it gives tourists glimpses of Bangladesh Sundarbans. This watchtower is also
famous for a mud walk and a mangrove cage trail. The watchtower has the capacity to host 10 people at a time.
5.3 Route D: Existing Alternative route 2: Jharkhali-Hemnagar-Bangladesh Route
Figure 7: Schematic diagram of the route

Established in 2012, it is the first tiger rescue centre in India

Most popular tourist circuit in Indian Sundarbans

Glimpses of Bangladesh Sundarbans

Kolkata → Jharkhali (embarkation) → Pakhiralay → Hemnagar → Bangladesh

- Jharkhali Tiger rescue centre
- 22. Kalash camp
- 23. Bonnie camp
- 24. Netidhopani
- 25. Dobanki
- 26. Sudhanyakhali
- 27. Sajnekhali
- 8. Jhingekhari watchtower
- 9. Burirdabri watchtower
- 10. Kumirmari watchtower

Glimpses of Bangladesh

Sundarbans

Most popular tourist circuit in Indian Sundarbans

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Glimpses of Bangladesh

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Glimpses of Bangladesh

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Glimpses of Bangladesh

Sundarbans

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Glimpses of Bangladesh

Sundarbans

Most popular tourist circuit in Indian Sundarbans

Established in 2012, it is the first tiger rescue centre in India
Accommodations, restaurants and hospitals on the route

Accommodations on the route:
Jharkhali is gradually getting popular as weekend destination from Kolkata. Consequently a number of good private accommodations have sprung up in the place. There is also a government accommodation at Jharkhali. Tourists can be also accommodated at the various accommodations available at Pakhiralay for one night. There is a government rest house in Sajnekhali which can be also availed with prior permission.

Restaurants on the route:
Local shops are available at Jharkhali. All the accommodations have provision for food. During the boat rides arrangements have to be made on board.

Hospitals on the route
Permits required

Permits have to be obtained for individuals, for cameras as well as for boats to visit spots including Sajnekhali, Sudhanyakhali, Do Banki, Netidhopani, Buroburir tot, Kalash camp, Dhanchi forest camp, Jhingekhali watchtower, BurirDabri watch tower and Lothian Island (refer to table 1). Further, it is mandatory to be accompanied by a guide, recommended by Sundarban Tiger Reserve for visiting these aforementioned spots. The tourists need to carry government photo ID proofs to obtain permits. The table below lists the relevant authorities who grant permission for visiting spots in the core area. Foreigners have to obtain a special permit from the Joint Secretary, Forest Department, Writers building, Kolkata.

Table 1: List of offices providing permits for spots in Indian Sundarbans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the office</th>
<th>Spots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, West Bengal Forest Department, located in Aranya Bhawan, Salt Lake, Kolkata</td>
<td>All spots (North and South 24 parganas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directorate of Forest office at Canning I</td>
<td>Sajnekhali, Sudhanyakhali, Netidhopani, Dobanki, Bonnie and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalash camp, Dhanchi forest camp, Bhagabatpur crocodile project, Jhingekhali, Burirdabri, Harikhali, Buraburir Tot</td>
<td>Kalash camp, Dhanchi forest camp, Jhingekhali, Burirdabri, Harikhali, Buraburir Tot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sajnekhali forest office</td>
<td>Sajnekhali, Sudhanyakhali, Netidhopani, Dobanki, Bonnie camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jharkhal forest office</td>
<td>Only South 24 parganas including Sajnekhali, Sudhanyakhali, Netidhopani, Dobanki, Bonnie camp and Kalash camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagna beat office</td>
<td>All North 24 parganas including Jhingekhali, Burirdabri, Harikhali</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the CUTS team

5.3.1 Trip-wise maps for this route

- **Jharkhal-Pakhiralay Trip: 2 nights /3 days**

![Trip-wise maps for this route](image-url)
Day 1: Tourists can travel to Jharkhali from Kolkata by car. After reaching Jharkhali they can be given a tour of the Jharkhali Tiger Rescue centre. For the night they can be accommodated in the various private accommodations in Jharkhali.

Day 2: Local houseboats arranged to take the tourists to Kalas Camp, Bonnie Camp, Dobanki and Netidhopani. Tourists go to Pakhiralay for nigh halt.

Day 3: Local houseboats are arranged to take the tourists to Sajnekhali and Sudhanyakhali watchtowers early in the morning. Once completed tourists may be taken to Godkhali post lunch in local boats from where they can travel towards Kolkata by road.

Major places of attraction:
Sajnekhali Tiger Reserve: The most popular spot in Indian Sundarbans. This location has a watchtower, a mangrove interpretation centre, a Bono Bibi temple as well as a crocodile park. It is located very near to Pakhiralay which has the maximum number of
accommodations in the Indian Sundarbans and is easily accessible from Godkhali (Canning). The watchtower has the capacity to host 20 people at a time

**Sudhanyakhali Watchtower:** This watchtower located near Sajnekhali is becoming popular for tiger spotting. The watchtower has the capacity to host 25 people at a time

**Dobanki:** The spot has a watchtower which can be approached by a canopy walk located at a height of 20ft from the ground. There is a sweet water pond nearby which makes it easy to spot animals.

**Netidhopani:** Apart from a watchtower which can accommodate 20 persons at a time, this place also has a 400 years old Shiva temple which is associated with the old Bengal legend of Behula Lakhhindar. There is also a sweet water pond in this location making it easier to spot animals.

**Kalas Camp:** Lying in the estuary of river Matla, this island is a breeding ground for olive ridley turtles during the winter season. It is also popular among bird watchers. While previously it was allowed to embark on the camp, off late there have been some restrictions on this.

**Bonnie Camp:** It is a watchtower situated in an island quite close to Bay of Bengal. The watchtower at 50 feet height is the highest in Sudarbanas. While there is a tourist rest house in Bonnie Camp, it is not supported by electricity.

**Jharkhali Tiger Rescue Centre:** Established in 2012, it is first such centre in India

Jharkhali tiger rescue centre: A haven for the wildlife enthusiast
- **Jahrkhali-Pakhiralay-Hemnagar Trip: 3 nights / 4 days**
Day 1: Tourists can travel to Jharkhali from Kolkata by car. After reaching Jharkhali they can be given a tour of the Jharkhali Tiger Rescue centre. For the night they can be accommodated in the various private accommodations in Jharkhali.

Day 2: Local houseboats arranged to take the tourists to Kalas Camp, Bonnie Camp, Dobanki and Netidhopani. Tourists go to Pakhiralay for night halt.

Day 3: Local houseboats are arranged to take the tourists towards Hemnagar for a trip to Jhingekhali and Burirdabri watchtowers. Once completed tourists may be taken back to Pakhiralay.

Day 4: Local houseboats are arranged to take the tourists to Sajnekhali and Sudhanyakhal watchtowers early in the morning. Once completed tourists may be taken to Godkhali post lunch in local boats from where they can travel towards Kolkata by road.

**Major places of attraction:**

**Sajnekhali Tiger Reserve:** The most popular spot in Indian Sundarbans. This location has a watchtower, a mangrove interpretation centre, a Bono Bibi temple as well as a crocodile park. It is located very near to Pakhiralay which has the maximum number of accommodations in the Indian Sundarbans and is easily accessible from Godkhali (Canning). The watchtower has the capacity to host 20 people at a time.

**Sudhanyakhal Watchtower:** This watchtower located near Sajnekhali is becoming popular for tiger spotting. The watchtower has the capacity to host 25 people at a time.
**Dobanki:** The spot has a watchtower which can be approached by a canopy walk located at a height of 20ft from the ground. There is a sweet water pond nearby which makes it easy to spot animals.

**Netidhopani:** Apart from a watchtower which can accommodate 20 persons at a time, this place also has a 400 years old Shiva temple which is associated with the old Bengal legend of Behula Lakhhindar. There is also a sweet water pond in this location making it easier to spot animals.

**Kalas Camp:** Lying in the estuary of river Matla, this island is a breeding ground for olive ridley turtles during the winter season. It is also popular among bird watchers. While previously it was allowed to embark on the camp, off late there have been some restrictions on this.

**Bonnie Camp:** It is a watchtower situated in an island quite close to Bay of Bengal. The watchtower at 50 feet height is the highest in Sudarbans. While there is a tourist rest house in Bonnie Camp, it is not supported by electricity.

**Jharkhali Tiger Rescue Centre:** Established in 2012, it is first such centre in India

**Jhingekhali Watchtower:** Located at the easternmost side of the Indian Sundarbans near the border with Bangladesh, this watchtower complex houses sweet water ponds and observation lines for animal watchers and a Bonobibi temple. The watchtower has the capacity to host 20 people at a time.

**Burirdabri Watchtower:** This watchtower again located in the easternmost side of India Sundarbans on the river Raimongol. The view point is called Raimongol view point and it gives tourists glimpses of Bangladesh Sundarbans. This watchtower is also famous for a mud walk and a mangrove cage trail. The watchtower has the capacity to host 10 people at a time.

5.4 **Route E: Alternative route:** Kolkata-Hasnabad-Hemnagar-Bangladesh route
Figure 8: Schematic diagram of the route

Kolkata → Hasnabad/Taki → Hingalganj → Hemnagar → Bangladesh

1. Jhingekhali watchtower
2. Burirdabri watchtower

Pakhiralay

Patharpratima

Glimpses of Bangladesh Sundarbans

Most popular tourist circuit in Indian Sundarbans

1. Kalash camp
2. Bonnie camp
3. Netidhopani
4. Dobanki
5. Sudhanyakhali
6. Sajnekhal
7. Jharkhali tiger rescue centre

1. Bhagabatpur Crocodile Project

Gateway to Sundarbans and the only crocodile project in West Bengal

1. G-Plot
2. Buraburir tot
3. Haliday island
4. Lothian island
Accommodations, restaurants and hospitals on the route

Accommodations on the route

There are private accommodations in Taki since it is an already developed weekend gateway. Restaurants and eateries are also available in Taki.
Hospitals on the route

Permits required

Permits are required to travel to the two watchtowers including Jhingekhali and Burirdabri and these can be obtained from the Office of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, West Bengal Forest Department, located in Aranya Bhawan, Salt Lake, Kolkata, Directorate of Forest Office at Canning I and Bagna forest office. It is also mandatory to hire a government registered guide while travelling inside the forest.

Infrastructure

The condition of Basanti Highway, the most preferred road connecting Kolkata to Hasnabad is good. The road is dotted with several small eateries. At Malancha, which is half way along the route, the tourists can stop at PathaSathi which is a state government initiative and provides clean toilets, waiting rooms, night shelter and restaurant under one roof. During the survey, CUTS team visited the Malancha facility which is managed by the local women self-help groups and found it to be clean and well-maintained.
Hasnabad is a community development block in Basirhat Sub-division in North 24 Parganas. The block has 100 percent electricity, water supply and mobile connectivity although the power supply and mobile connectivity may be intermittent especially in the villages under this block. During the survey the CUTS team did not witness any law and order problem in the area. However, since Hasnabad is located on the India-Bangladesh border the possibility of occasional disturbances cannot be precluded.

The Hasnabad Vessel Ghat which can be used for embarkation is in good condition. Taki ghat which is located in close proximity can also be used as an alternative embarkation point. (Refer to fig 6 below).

Figure 6: Locations of Vessel Ghats at Hasnabad and Taki

Source: Compiled by CUTS team from Google My Maps

There are four to five private guest houses on the bank of river Icchamati in Taki. These facilities are well-maintained and can accommodate 20 to 30 guests each. There are no other accommodations on the way, hence accommodation arrangements have to be made on the boat. Similarly while local eateries are available at Hasnabad, Hingalganj and Hemnagar, it is advisable to make on-boat food
arrangements.

While the cruise can operate through river Icchamati, for entering the creeks of Sundarban, the tour operators need to involve local boat associations at Hasnabad, Hingalganj and Hemnagar. These associations can provide two, three or four cylinder boats that can travel through the narrow creeks of Sundarbans while the cruise can be stationed at Hemnagar. However, as already mentioned, safety arrangements in these boats may not be adequate.

The watchtowers are well maintained, however lack of amenities such as clean toilets needs to be noted. Accompaniment of Government registered local guides is mandatory for visiting the watchtowers and they can be availed at the Jhingekhali forest office. Since the area lies close to the international border, it is strictly guarded by both Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and its Bangladeshi counterpart.
5.4.1 Trip-wise maps on this route

- **Hasnabad-Hemnagar-Pakhirlay-Godkhali Trip: 3 nights 4 days**

  ![Trip-wise maps](image_url)

**Day 1:** The tourists reach Hasnabad from Kolkata airport in approximately two-and-a-half hours. A day-long sightseeing trip can be arranged at Hasnabad and Taki. Taki is a town in
Hasnabad block which is historically significant and attracts weekend tourists from Kolkata. Additionally the entire stretch of river Ichhamati between Hasnabad and Hingaganj witnesses a number of Durga idol immersions during Dusserah (Bijoya Dashami) from both India and Bangladesh. This event attracts a sizeable number of tourists from India as well as abroad and is being covered by international channels such as National Geographic.

Tourists can also be taken to Machhranga island (Kingfisher Island) on river Ichhamati for bird watching. This island can be reached within 30 minutes from Hasnabad in a mechanized boat. Spread across 129 acres, the island offers a magnificent view of the river and Bangladesh border. There are a number of picnic spots on the island maintained by the Hasnabad municipal committee.

The tourists can stay back at Taki for the night.

**Day 2:** Local boats can be arranged to take the tourists to Hemnagar to reach the Jhingekhali and Burirdabri watchtowers

**Day 3:** Local boats can be hired from Hemnagar to reach Netidhopani, Dobanki, Kalash and Bonnie islands. For the night tourists can be accommodated in the hotels in Pakhiralay opposite Sajnekhali.

**Day 4:** Local houseboats are arranged to take the tourists to Sajnekhali and Sudhanyakhali watchtowers early in the morning. Once completed tourists may be taken to Godkhali post lunch in local boats from where they can travel towards Kolkata by road

**Major places of attraction:**

**Sajnekhali Tiger Reserve:** The most popular spot in Indian Sundarbans. This location has a watchtower, a mangrove interpretation centre, a Bono Bibi temple as well as a crocodile park. It is located very near to Pakhiralay which has the maximum number of accommodations in the Indian Sundarbans and is easily accessible from Godkhali (Canning). The watchtower has the capacity to host 20 people at a time

**Sudhanyakhali Watchtower:** This watchtower located near Sajnekhali is becoming popular for tiger spotting. The watchtower has the capacity to host 25 people at a time

**Dobanki:** The spot has a watchtower which can be approached by a canopy walk located at a height of 20ft from the ground. There is a sweet water pond nearby which makes it easy to spot animals.

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**Netidhopani:** Apart from a watchtower which can accommodate 20 persons at a time, this place also has a 400 years old Shiva temple which is associated with the old Bengal legend of Behula Lakhhindar. There is also a sweet water pond in this location making it easier to spot animals.

**Kalas Camp:** Lying in the estuary of river Matla, this island is a breeding ground for olive ridley turtles during the winter season. It is also popular among bird watchers. While previously it was allowed to embark on the camp, off late there have been some restrictions on this.

**Bonnie Camp:** It is a watchtower situated in an island quite close to Bay of Bengal. The watchtower at 50 feet height is the highest in Sundarbans. While there is a tourist rest house in Bonnie Camp, it is not supported by electricity.

**Jharkhali Tiger Rescue Centre:** Established in 2012, it is first such centre in India

**Jhingekhali Watchtower:** Located at the easternmost side of the Indian Sundarbans near the border with Bangladesh, this watchtower complex houses sweet water ponds and observation lines for animal watchers and a Bonobibi temple. The watchtower has the capacity to host 20 people at a time.

**Burirdabri Watchtower:** This watchtower again located in the easternmost side of India Sundarbans on the river Raimongol. The view point is called Raimongol view point and it gives tourists glimpses of Bangladesh Sundarbans. This watchtower is also famous for a mud walk and a mangrove cage trail. The watchtower has the capacity to host 10 people at a time.

**Taki Ghat:** Lying on the banks of river Icchamati, this old town gives glimpses of Bangladesh to tourists from its numerous ghats. One can also opt for boatrides along the river. During Dusserah (Bijoya Dashami), one can witness numerous immersions (Visarjans) in the river Icchamati from both India and Bangladesh. The site is spectacular
and attracts a sizeable number of tourists from all over India and even abroad. Recently this has been covered by international channels including The National Geographic.
Chapter 6: Possible impact of cruise tourism on potential livelihood generation

While the majority of the population on both sides of the Sundarban is employed as agricultural labourers, agriculture in the area is not high yielding due to high level of salinity of the soil. Therefore, apart from agriculture, people have to depend on a range of forest based activities such as collection of forest produce; honey, wood, leaves and fruits for survival which increases man-animal conflict in the region and leads to human casualties. The other employment that is popular in the region is fishery which engages both men and women. However, in most cases people are involved in collecting prawn and fish seedlings from the rivers which is a high-risk engagement, but yields low returns.

Tourism being labour intensive has the potential to create immense livelihood opportunities for both men and women and improve the quality of their lives. Previous studies have shown that increasing tourism in the Sundarban improved the quality of employment and lives of the local populace. One study on the Indian part revealed that with the spread of tourism those employed in tourism activities spent 19% more on food items and 38% more on non-food items than those associated with other livelihoods.12

Additionally tourism may also reduce dependency on forest resources which can contribute towards conservation and lessen human-animal conflicts. Studies have shown that the income levels in blocks such as Gosaba increased after the increase in tourism in the region. Similar developments have been observed in Namkhana and Jharkhali over the years.

Despite such advantages tourism has not being able to create large scale livelihood opportunities in the region. This is due to lack of proper training and capacity building of the local populace. During the survey, CUTS team observed that in many of the existing hotels, staff lacks professional training; they need to be trained in terms of attitude, language, presentation, etc. to enable them to cater to international tourists. West Bengal Government is working on skill development of the local inhabitants to improve their livelihoods. To build trust between the Forest department and the local populace in the Indian Sundarban various eco-development activities are executed under the Joint Forest

12https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/4368/750_PUB_working_paper_26.pdf?sequence=1
Management Committees of Sundarban Biosphere Reserve. These activities may include establishment of self-help groups, piggery, goat rearing and poultry.

More such skill development programmes can be organized in tandem with the tourism sector. Additionally in areas on both sides which have the potential to attract significant number of tourists but lack tourism infrastructure, both governments must be more proactive and assist locals to develop viable and environment friendly accommodations. Furthermore, the local motorized boats which form the lifeline of Sundarban tourism needs to be re-designed keeping in mind international safety and hygiene standards. The boats must be registered and regulated by the state government. These boats often use contaminated oil which may impact the Sundarban ecology negatively. Therefore they need to be sensitized about waste management and fuel usage and disposal. In the table below we present a cruise tourism value-chain matrix which identifies the major stakeholders in this sector, their influence area and the key issues faced by them. We also make some recommendations such that their participation yields the desired result.

The cruise tourism value-chain matrix consists of the following players:

- Passengers
- Cruise operators
- Cruise crew
- Jetty or barge operators
- Local boat operators
- Homestays
- Local eateries
- Village tourism

There is considerable scope of local employment generation in many of the areas such as cruise crew, jetty operators, local boat operators, etc. There is also significant scope for generating women employment in domains such as homestays, local eateries and even village tourism etc. With increasing number of tourists demand for food and non-food items may increase in the local markets which would indirectly benefit their sellers. The table below (table 2) mentions the key entities of the cruise tourism value chain and also offers suggestions:
### Table 2: Cruise tourism value chain matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Role in cruise tourism</th>
<th>Entity scope/ scope of local women employment</th>
<th>Key issues</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Passengers</strong></td>
<td>They represent the demand for cruise tourism</td>
<td>Global or local</td>
<td>Understanding of the local culture and sentiments</td>
<td>A brief introduction on the culture, ecology and tradition of Sundarbans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding of the local language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Creating positive impact on the local community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cruise operators</strong></td>
<td>They provide cruise services to the interested passengers</td>
<td>Global or regional companies</td>
<td>Preservation of the wildlife and marine environment</td>
<td>Capacity building programmes for lessening the impact on marine and wildlife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Usage of fuel</td>
<td>Benchmarking their standards with international cruises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Waste management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive impact on the lives of the local community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cruise ship crew</strong></td>
<td>They provide services within the cruise</td>
<td>Mostly local or regional</td>
<td>Understanding of the local customs and traditions</td>
<td>Vocational training to improve their communication and handling of international tourists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding of the nature and preferences of tourists especially international tourists and communication with them</td>
<td>Awareness generation on the local customs and traditions of Sundarban in case the crew is not local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jetty ghat and barge operators</strong></td>
<td>Those operating ticket counters at jetties or providing other assistance to the passengers</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Understanding of the nature and preferences of tourists especially international tourists and communication with them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Local boat operators** | **Small motor boats taking tourists to the creeks of Sundarban** | **local** | **Understanding of the nature and preferences of tourists especially international tourists and communication with them**  
**Waste management**  
**Usage and disposal of fuel**  
**Safety issues in the boat**  
**Improvement of boat infrastructure to cater to international tourists** | **Trainings on improving communication skills**  
**Making them aware of the ecological vulnerability of the area and helping them to select proper waste management and fuel disposal systems**  
**Informing them about international safety and hygiene standards for boat based tourism**  
**Providing them with some kind of assistance to improve the infrastructure and safety measures in the boat** |
| **Homestays and community based accommodations** | **They provide accommodations to the tourists**  
**Local Women can participate** | **Understanding of the nature and preferences of tourists especially international tourists and communication with them**  
**Waste management**  
**Resources to build homestays**  
**Hygiene issues** | **Capacity building to understand and communicate with international tourists**  
**Providing assistance for developing homestays**  
**Capacity building programmes to make them better equipped in managing the homestays** |
| **Local eateries and restaurants** | **They provide food to the tourists**  
**Local Women can participate** | **Presenting the local delicacies suitable for international tourists** | **Capacity building programmes to make them better equipped** |
| Village tourism | Giving local tourists a guided tour of Sundarban villages, their cultures and traditions and even unique livelihoods such as bee-keeping, honey collection, etc. | Local. Women can participate | Understanding of the nature and preferences of tourists especially international tourists and communication with them. Safety issues especially in honey collection | Training programmes to communicate with international tourists | Quality of food and hygiene of the place. Communication with the tourists in managing the restaurants. Training programmes to communicate with international tourists |
Chapter 7: Difficulties in operating Cruise along this route

While cruise tourism through the Sundarbans is a novel idea that can generate significant returns there are certain issues that need to be addressed before implementing this plan. Some of these issues are listed below.

- Lack of least available depth along many stretches of the Sundarban rivers

The governments on both sides need to identify these stretches and take proper actions such as dredging and de-silting. Additionally to facilitate international cruise tourism IWAI/BITWA need to declare additional routes and disembarkation points based on anchoring facility and places of tourist attraction. During the survey CUTS team was informed that West Bengal government had started dredging on an alternative river route from Kolkata to Sundarban. The route started at Chitpur in Kolkata and was connected to Dhamakhali in Sandeshkhali via Adi-Ganga channel. However the work has been aborted due to administrative problems. It is understood that if the channel was made navigable, it could have acted as an alternative route for cruises travelling from Kolkata to the Indian Sundarbans.

- Lack of passenger protocol for operating cruise ships between India and Bangladesh

During the study CUTS team met representatives from Vivada Cruise, the only company which has conducted one tour from Kolkata to Bangladesh via Sundarban. They mentioned that the existing protocol route is for trade and therefore the rules are tailor-made for cargo ships and may not be appropriate for passenger ships. For example, under India Bangladesh trade protocol, a ship from India can only anchor at designated ports in Bangladesh which include Mongla and Narayanganj. However, for conducting tours, the cruise needs to anchor at different places in Bangladesh Sundarban. Similar rules are applicable for Bangladeshi cruises coming to India via the protocol route.

- Lack of Standard operating procedure (SOP) between India and Bangladesh for operating cruise ships in the Sundarban area

Currently there is no SOP for operating cruise ships/vessels in the Indo-Bangladesh Sundarbans. During CUTS team’s interview with Vivada cruise, it was specifically mentioned that such SOPs are required to understand how an Indian cruise should operate in Bangladesh, quantity and type of food and beverages that they need to carry, environmental and safety norms that the cruise has to approximate when in Bangladesh Sundarbans, etc. This is also required for Bangladesh cruises coming to the Indian Sundarbans.
Other issues

The immigration check point at Hemnagar mainly caters to cargo vehicles. There needs to be separate posts for immigration check of tourists. Also, piracy is a problem in these waters. Hence there is a need for protocol to facilitate safe passenger movement.

7.1 Environmental impact and its mitigation

During the survey it was observed that there is an apprehension among the forest department officials regarding cruise tourism in the Sundarbans. This is mainly due to the fact that the Sundarbans is an ecologically vulnerable area and they feel that cruise tourism may negatively impact the ecology. However studies have found that increasing dependence of locals on forest resources in Sundarban is one of the major causes of environmental degradation in the region. In this context tourism can play a very positive role in reducing the local population’s dependence on forest resources. Capacity building of locals to develop eco-tourism models including environmentally sustainable home-stays, restaurants and village tours which can be coupled with the river cruise can generate more sustainable livelihood opportunities in the area with minimal environmental damage.

During the survey, local boat operators insisted that they have repeatedly urged the forest department to open new spots in the Sundarbans to attract more tourists in the area. However the forest department has refused to do so due to its apprehension about environmental damage and negative impact on animals. In this context, one suggestion has been to open new spots inside the core area for which the forest department can charge a hefty sum. This would restrict mass tourism in those spots. Also the money collected from those spots can be utilized by the forest department for funding more conservation efforts in the region.

During the survey it was also observed that usage of contaminated fuel by local boats and their disposal in the water causes serious damage to the Sundarban environment. Solid waste management is also a critical issue since the boatmen and even the tourists have the tendency to dispose off solid wastes in the rivers of Sundarbans. Therefore capacity building should be done to make them better equipped in terms of fuel and waste management. In this context it is worth mentioning that some boat owners have themselves adopted innovative ways to utilize the used fuel. They are using the fuel to lubricate boat parts and machineries instead of draining it into the water. At the same time the cruise crew and management should also adopt international operation standards to minimize their adverse impact on Sundarban ecology.

It is to be noted here that the forest department of the Bangladesh government has proposed a ban on tourism in Sundarbans between June and August since it is monsoon
and also breeding time for the animals. There are no such restrictions on the Indian side. However, getting permission during monsoon may be difficult.

### 7.2 Recommendations and Conclusion

Inter-country cruise tourism through Sundarbans has huge potential in creating economic opportunities for both India and Bangladesh. This is more so because the local populations on both sides of Sundarbans are economically marginalized. However, until and unless the above mentioned issues are addressed, tourism may not yield desired results in the area. Below we list the most critical issues that were observed during the study and the recommendations for addressing them.

**Table 3: Issues and Recommendations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of tourism infrastructure in both India and Bangladesh</td>
<td>Capacity building and financial assistance to local people to develop more eco-friendly accommodations&lt;br&gt;Assistance to local boatmen to improve infrastructure and safety measures in local boats&lt;br&gt;Regulation of boat associations active in the Sundarbans area&lt;br&gt;Building more restrooms and waste disposal facilities on the way and near the spots&lt;br&gt;Building more ghats and jetties for embarkation&lt;br&gt;More floating police deployment to address the sporadic issues of piracy and theft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of tourism orientation of local population</td>
<td>Proper training and capacity building of local boatmen such that they can handle international tourists&lt;br&gt;Capacity building and vocational training of locals involved in hotels and restaurants to manage international tourists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties in cruise operation</td>
<td>Regular dredging of the river ways to keep them navigable&lt;br&gt;Establishment of new routes connecting the Sundarbans to Kolkata in India and Bangladesh in Dhaka&lt;br&gt;Need for passenger protocol for cruise tourism between India and Bangladesh&lt;br&gt;Need for an SOP for smooth operation of Indian cruises in Bangladesh and vice-versa&lt;br&gt;Need for separate immigration check points for tourists crossing over to Bangladesh in boats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental impact</td>
<td>Need for an environmental impact analysis before making the cruise operational&lt;br&gt;Capacity building of cruise crew and boatmen for proper disposal of waste and used fuel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both India and Bangladesh governments are well aware of these difficulties and have had close talks to mitigate these challenges. As the two countries signed the MoU on passenger and cruise services in both coastal and protocol routes in April, 2017, there have been discussions between them regarding formulation of a draft SOP for passenger and cruise services. However the progress in this aspect has been slow. While preparing the SOP may take some time the two countries can work on the following terms of engagement

a. Joint training for the guides of both the countries. This can be done by the forest departments of the two countries along with NGOs. It would help in exchanging knowledge and best practices
b. Cooperation in boat design by bringing in boat designers and manufacturers of both the countries
c. The Bhomra-Gojadanga land post can be improved to accommodate tourists who may be interested in moving through land ports

It is recommended that both the governments should work towards adopting a seamless traffic pact between the two countries in the lines of European Union (EU) to make cruise tourism successful in this region.

Additionally alongside cruise tourism, other types of tourism can be explored in the Sundarbans area. Due to the region’s proximity to cities in both India (Kolkata) and Bangladesh (Khulna and Jessore) it is ideal for weekend tourism. In fact during the survey CUTS team observed that Block Development Officers in many of the Indian Sundarban blocks are keen to develop weekend tourism in their areas. While this study has been constrained by time and has looked only into the prospects of cruise tourism in the Sundarbans, more detailed studies can be done to explore other types of tourism that can be developed in this area and their implications for the local population. A more detailed study can also offer greater insights into the lives of the local population and the ways in which tourism can bring positive changes in their lives.

Annexure 1:

1.15 Namkhana Sagar circuit: Cruise anchoring at Namkhana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the spot</th>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Nature of the spot</th>
<th>Permits required (issuing authority)</th>
<th>Nearest jetty</th>
<th>Means of commutation</th>
<th>Infrastructural amenities at the spot</th>
<th>Opportunities of the block</th>
<th>Issues and recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kapil Munir Ashram</td>
<td>Sagar</td>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sagar jetty or Namkhana jetty</td>
<td>From Sagar jetty, this spot can be availed by road (e-rickshaws and autos)</td>
<td>Hotel: One government tourist bungalow and one youth hostel available</td>
<td>Restaurants: Available</td>
<td>1. This tourism block is already popular due to ganga sagar mela. 2. While it is not proper Sundarban, Bakkhali, Fazerganj and Henry's island are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Services</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manasadwip</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>From Sagar jetty, this spot can be availed by road (e-rickshaws and autos)</td>
<td>Hotel: One government tourist bungalow and one youth hostel available</td>
<td>Restaurants: Available</td>
<td>Hospitals: At Sagar and Namkhana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrityunjainagar</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sagar jetty, this spot can be availed by road (e-rickshaws and autos)</td>
<td>Hotel: One government tourist bungalow and one youth hostel available</td>
<td>Restaurants: Available</td>
<td>Hospitals: At Sagar and Namkhana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jambudwip</td>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Can be accessed from Nakhana or Sagar jetty however tourists are</td>
<td>Hotels: Not available</td>
<td>Restaurants: Not available</td>
<td>Hospitals: Not available. Nearest already popular amongst weekenders and beach lovers</td>
<td>2. Identification of spots at Namkhana for development of village based tourism and capacity building of locals to build more homestays and restaurants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Infrastructural improvement of the local boats.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Need for more safety measures such as life jackets, first aid medicines, etc. in the boats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Training and capacity building of local boat operators to make their boats more safe and hygienic and tourist friendly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Island/Location</td>
<td>Most Near Jetty</td>
<td>Type of Beach</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>Local Transport Accessible</td>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
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<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mousuni Island</td>
<td>Namkhana</td>
<td>Natural/Sea beach</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The local ghat can be accessed from Namkhana or Sagar jetty.</td>
<td>From the local ghat e-rickshaws need to be availed to reach the beach</td>
<td>Not available. Nearest hospital at Namkhana</td>
<td>Available at Sagar hospital and boats are available easily.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakkhali</td>
<td>Namkhana</td>
<td>Natural/Sea beach</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Namkhana jetty</td>
<td>Local transports like e-rickshaws or autos can be availed from Namkhana jetty to reach this spot</td>
<td>Available at Namkhana</td>
<td>Available at Namkhana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry's Island</td>
<td>Namkhana</td>
<td>Natural/Sea beach</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Namkhana jetty</td>
<td>Local transports like e-rickshaws or autos can be availed from Namkhana jetty to reach this spot</td>
<td>Available at Namkhana</td>
<td>Available at Namkhana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frazerganj</td>
<td>Namkhana</td>
<td>Natural/Sea beach</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Namkhana jetty</td>
<td>Local transports like e-rickshaws or autos can be availed from Namkhana jetty to reach this spot</td>
<td>Available at Namkhana</td>
<td>Available at Namkhana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. This area can be marketed as the gateway to Sundarbans. Jambudwips and natural/seaside beaches can be developed to give tourists a feel of the jungles.
Sea beach jetty transports like e-rickshaws or autos can be availed from Namkhana jetty to reach this spot
Government tourist bungalows
Restaurants: Not available
Hospitals: Available at Namkhana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the spot</th>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Nature of the spot</th>
<th>Permits required (Issuing authority)</th>
<th>Nearest jetty</th>
<th>Means of commutation</th>
<th>Infrastructural amenities at the spot</th>
<th>Opportunities of the circuit</th>
<th>Issues and recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bhagabatpur crocodile project</td>
<td>Patharpratima</td>
<td>Wildlife</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Ramganga jetty</td>
<td>Local transport including autos and e-rickshaws can be availed from Ramganga jetty to reach this spot</td>
<td>Hotel: Nearest hotel available at Dakshin Shibganj in Patharpratima. Two private budget guest houses available there</td>
<td>1. While Patharpratima is the starting of Indian Sundarban s, this block is become gradually popular with tourists especially due to the Bhagabatpur</td>
<td>1. This tourist block doesnot have many good accommodatio n options. Since it has high potential for Sundarban based tourism, local people can be engaged to develop more accommodatio n and dining options in the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.16 Patharpratima circuit: Cruise anchoring at Ramganga

1. While Patharpratima is the starting of Indian Sundarban s, this block is become gradually popular with tourists especially due to the Bhagabatpur.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Park or Natural Reserve</th>
<th>Pathpratima</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Amenities</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buraburir Tot (Watchtower)</td>
<td>Pathpratima</td>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Local jetty for small boats</td>
<td>Hotels: Not available. Nearest options at Pathpratima and Super Specialty Hospital at Kakdwip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Local 3 or 6 cylinder boats from Ramganga jetty.</td>
<td>Nearest big hospital at Kakdwip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurants: Not available</td>
<td>Crocodile project. Buraburir tot is a beach destination which is now being developed for tourists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hospitals: Not available</td>
<td>The location has high tourism potential due to its uniqueness of having a beach inside the Sundarban area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nearest primary healthcare centre at Pathpratima and Super Specialty Hospital at Kakdwip</td>
<td>2. Infrastructural improvement of the local boats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hotels: Not available</td>
<td>3. Need for more safety measures such as life jackets, first aid medicines, etc. in the boats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurants: Not available</td>
<td>4. Training and capacity building of local boat operators to make their boats more safe and hygienic and tourist friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hotels: Not available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Park or Natural Reserve</th>
<th>Pathpratima</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Amenities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lothian Island</td>
<td>Pathpratima</td>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Tourists are not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hotels: Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-Plot</td>
<td>Patharpratima</td>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Local 3 or 6 cylinder boats from Ramganga jetty which can sail around the island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nearest options at Patharpratima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurants: Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hospitals: Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nearest primary healthcare centre at Patharpratima and Super Specialty Hospital at Kakdwip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hotels: Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nearest options at Patharpratima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurants: Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hospitals: Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nearest primary healthcare centre at Patharpratima</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.17 Sajnekhali circuit: Cruise anchoring at Pakhiralay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the spot</th>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Nature of the spot</th>
<th>Permits required</th>
<th>Nearest jetty</th>
<th>Means of commutation</th>
<th>Infrastructural amenities at the spot</th>
<th>Opportunities of the circuit</th>
<th>Issues and recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holiday Island</td>
<td>Patharpratima</td>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Tourists are not allowed to disembark</td>
<td>Local 3 or 6 cylinder boats from Ramganga jetty which can sail around the island</td>
<td>Hotels: Not available. Nearest options at Patharpratima</td>
<td>Restaurants: Not available</td>
<td>Hospitals: Not available. Nearest primary healthcare centre at Patharpratima and Super Specialty Hospital at Kakdwip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Block</td>
<td>Wildlife</td>
<td>Accommodations</td>
<td>Local Boat Requirements</td>
<td>Hotel Accommodations</td>
<td>Comments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
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<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sajnekhali</td>
<td>Gosaba</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Pakhiralay in Goshaba Block and Jharkhali Jetty in Basanti block</td>
<td>Local 2 or 3 cylinder boats required to commute to this spot</td>
<td>Hotel: Only one forest guest house which can be availed with prior permission. Accommodations are available at Pakhiralay which is at the opposite bank of the river.</td>
<td>1. This is the most popular tourism block in Indian Sundarbans 2. It is also popular amongst weekend tourists from Kolkata 3. There are a number of decent accommodations at Pakhiralay 4. Since the area already caters to sizeable number of tourists including foreigners, the local service providers are tourism oriented 5. The boat association is fairly large</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudhanyakhali</td>
<td>Gosaba</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Pakhiralay in Goshaba Block and Jharkhali Jetty in Basanti block</td>
<td>Local 2 or 3 cylinder boats Sajnekhali or Pakhiralay</td>
<td>Hotels: Not available Restaurants: Not available Hospitals: Not available. Nearest hospital at Goshaba</td>
<td>1. Improvement of the local boats. 2. Need for more safety measures such as life jackets, first aid medicines, etc. in the boats 3. Training and capacity building of local boat operators to make their boats more safe and hygienic and tourist friendly 4. Selection of areas which can be developed for local tourism and capacity building of the local people to increase their participation in tourism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dobanki</td>
<td>Gosaba</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Pakhiralay in Goshaba Block and Jharkhali Jetty in Basanti block</td>
<td>Local 3 or 6 cylinder boats can be hired from Sajnekhali or Pakhiralay</td>
<td>Hotels: Not available Restaurants: Not available</td>
<td>1. Improvement of the local boats. 2. Need for more safety measures such as life jackets, first aid medicines, etc. in the boats 3. Training and capacity building of local boat operators to make their boats more safe and hygienic and tourist friendly 4. Selection of areas which can be developed for local tourism and capacity building of the local people to increase their participation in tourism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Area Type</td>
<td>Facility</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netidhopani</td>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Pakhiralay in Goshaba Block and Jharkhali Jetty in Basanti block</td>
<td>Local 3 or 6 cylinder boats can be hired from Sajnekhali or Pakhiralay Jetty in Patharpratima, and boats are available easily. There is also transparency in terms of rates.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnie Camp</td>
<td>Wildlife</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Pakhiralay in Goshaba Block and Jharkhali Jetty in Basanti block Also can be accessed from Namkhana or Ramganga Jetty in Patharpratima,</td>
<td>Local six cylinder boats can be booked from the nearby jetties to reach this spot. Hotels: There is a government tourist bungalow. However, the permission to avail this facility depends on the forest department. Restaurants: Not available. Hospitals: Not available. Nearest hospital at Gosaba and Jharkhali.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalash Camp</td>
<td>Wildlife</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Pakhiralay in Local six Pakhiralay in Goshaba and Jharkhali Jetty in Basanti block Also can be accessed from Namkhana or Ramganga Jetty in Patharpratima,</td>
<td>Hotels: Not available. Nearest hospital at Gosaba and Jharkhali.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. There is a considerable scope of developing village based tourism in this area to experience the daily life in Sundarban. There is a nearby island called Bali.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jharkhali Tiger rescue centre</th>
<th>Basanti</th>
<th>Wildlife</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Jharkhali Jetty</th>
<th>Small boats need to be used to reach this spot</th>
<th>Hotels: Both private and government accommodations available</th>
<th>Restaurants: small local shops available which provide basic Bengali meal</th>
<th>Hospitals: Available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1.18  Hemnagar Circuit: Cruise anchoring at Hemnagar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the spot</th>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Nature of the spot</th>
<th>Permits required</th>
<th>Nearest jetty</th>
<th>Means of commutation</th>
<th>Infrastructural amenities at the</th>
<th>Opportunities of the circuit</th>
<th>Issues and recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

128
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Nearest Jetty</th>
<th>Nearest Big Jetty</th>
<th>Local Jetty</th>
<th>Local Boats</th>
<th>Hotel</th>
<th>Restaurants</th>
<th>Hospitals</th>
<th>Potential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jhingkhali Watchtower</td>
<td>Hingalganj</td>
<td>Wildlife</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Nearest Jetty at Hemnagar</td>
<td>Local Boats from Hemnagar</td>
<td>Hotel: Not available</td>
<td>Restaurants: Not available</td>
<td>Hospitals: Jogeshganj hospital at Hemnagar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burirdabri</td>
<td>Hingalganj</td>
<td>Wildlife</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Nearest Big Jetty at Hemnagar, Local Jetty for Small boats available</td>
<td>Local Boats from Hemnagar</td>
<td>Hotels: Not available</td>
<td>Restaurants: Not available</td>
<td>Hospitals: Jogeshganj hospital at Hemnagar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumirmari Watchtower</td>
<td>Gosaba</td>
<td>Wildlife</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Nearest Big Jetty at Hemnagar, Local Jetty for Small boats available</td>
<td>Local Boats from Hemnagar</td>
<td>Hotels: Not available</td>
<td>Restaurants: Not available</td>
<td>Hospitals: Jogeshganj hospital at Hemnagar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taki</td>
<td>Hasnabad</td>
<td>Historical and Cultural</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>At Taki ghat</td>
<td>Cruise can reach. One can take car from Kolkata too to reach this spot</td>
<td>Hotels: Available</td>
<td>Restaurants: Available</td>
<td>Hospitals: Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Durga Idol Immersion from both sides of the border at Icchamati. Both the spots attract sizeable number of tourists including foreigners. The events have been covered by international channels including National Geographic.</td>
<td>Hemnagar serves as an immigration point between India and Bangladesh. Hence cruises definitely stop here.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.19 **Bagerhat circuit: Cruise anchoring at Mongla port**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the spot</th>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Nature of the spot</th>
<th>Permits required</th>
<th>Nearest jetty</th>
<th>Means of commutation</th>
<th>Infrastructural amenities at the spot</th>
<th>Opportunities of the circuit</th>
<th>Issues and recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harbaria ecopark</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Local jetty for small boats and houseboats</td>
<td>Local boats have to availed from Mongla port</td>
<td>Hotel: Not available. One has to stay at Mongla</td>
<td>1. This is a UNESCO World Heritage site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurants: Not available</td>
<td>2. Several tidal flats including dimer char, tear char which are birdwatcher’s paradise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hospitals: At Mongla</td>
<td>3. Already popular among both local and international tourists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Dublar char is being developed for dry fish processing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kachikhali forest</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>Wildlife</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Local jetty for small boats and houseboats</td>
<td>Local boats have to availed from Mongla port</td>
<td>Hotels: Forest rest house available</td>
<td>1. While the area is a popular tourism circuit, not many accommodation s and eateries are available. Lot needs to be done to improve tourism infrastructure in this circuit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurants: Not available</td>
<td>2. The boats also need to be developed to support international tourists. Currently the local boats are very big in size and are used for local transportation which makes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinkona Island</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>May not be allowed to disembark</td>
<td>Tourists may take local boats from Mongla to avail this spot</td>
<td>Hotels: Not available. One can either stay t Mongla or on the houseboat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>Natural and Wildlife</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Local Jetty</td>
<td>Local Boats</td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>Hospitals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
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<td>-------------</td>
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<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katka Ghat</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Local jetty for small boats and houseboats.</td>
<td>Local boats have to availed from Mongla port.</td>
<td>Hotels: Not available. One can either stay at Mongla or on the houseboat.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimer char</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Local jetty for small boats and houseboats.</td>
<td>Tourists may take local boats from Mongla to avail this spot.</td>
<td>Hotels: Not available. One can either stay at Mongla or on the houseboat.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublar char</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Island underwater for 5 months in a year. Apart from those months, local houseboats or small boats can reach the jetty.</td>
<td>Tourists may take local boats from Mongla to avail this spot.</td>
<td>Hotels: Not available. One can either stay at Mongla or on the houseboat.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tear Char</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Local houseboats or small boats can reach the jetty.</td>
<td>Tourists may take local boats from Mongla to avail this spot.</td>
<td>Hotels: Not available. One can either stay at Mongla or on the houseboat.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remarks: Hygiene and safety an issue. Houseboats although are in better condition.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>Tourists to Reach</th>
<th>Hotels</th>
<th>Restaurants</th>
<th>Hospitals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salar char</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>Natural and Wildlife</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>local houseboats or small boats can reach the jetty</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>At Mongla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saat gombuj Mosque</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Best reached by road from Mongla</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>At Mongla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kodla Math</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Best reached by road from Mongla</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>At Mongla</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 1.20 Khulna Circuit: Cruise anchoring at Mongla

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the spot</th>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Nature of the spot</th>
<th>Permits required</th>
<th>Nearest jetty</th>
<th>Means of commutation</th>
<th>Infrastructural amenities at the spot</th>
<th>Opportunities of the circuit</th>
<th>Issues and recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Koromjol Watchtower   | Khulna    | Wildlife           | Yes              | Local jetty for small boats and houseboats | Local boats have to availed from Mongla port | Hotel: Not available. One has to stay at Mongla | 1. This circuit is also popular among local and international tourist  
2. Good view of wildlife. Tiger spotting also possible  
3. Hiron point is a fisherman’s island  
4. Crocodile breeding ground developed at Koromjol                                      | 1. Very poor tourism infrastructure  
2. Lot of work needs to be done in terms of building accommodation, eateries and improving the conditions of local boats |
| Hiron point           | Khulna    | Wildlife           | Yes              | Local jetty for small boats and houseboats | Local boats have to availed from Mongla port | Hotel: Forest rest house available  
Restaurants: Not available  
Hospitals: At Mongla | 1. This circuit is also popular among local and international tourist  
2. Good view of wildlife. Tiger spotting also possible  
3. Hiron point is a fisherman’s island  
4. Crocodile breeding ground developed at Koromjol                                      | 1. Very poor tourism infrastructure  
2. Lot of work needs to be done in terms of building accommodation, eateries and improving the conditions of local boats |
| Nilkomol Sanctuary Centre | Khulna   | Wildlife           | Yes              | Local jetty for small boats and houseboats | Local boats have to availed from Mongla port | Hotel: Not available  
Restaurants: Not available  
Hospitals: At Mongla | 1. This circuit is also popular among local and international tourist  
2. Good view of wildlife. Tiger spotting also possible  
3. Hiron point is a fisherman’s island  
4. Crocodile breeding ground developed at Koromjol                                      | 1. Very poor tourism infrastructure  
2. Lot of work needs to be done in terms of building accommodation, eateries and improving the conditions of local boats |

## 1.21 Satkhira Circuit: Cruise anchoring at Angthihara
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>the spot</th>
<th>Parishad</th>
<th>of the spot</th>
<th>required</th>
<th>jetty</th>
<th>commutation</th>
<th>amenities at the spot</th>
<th>of the circuit</th>
<th>recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dobeki</td>
<td>Satkhira</td>
<td>Wildlife and Natural</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Local jetty for small boats and houseboats</td>
<td>Local boats can be availed from Angthiara or Mongla port</td>
<td>Hotel: Not available.</td>
<td>Hotels: At Mongla</td>
<td>Already popular among local tourists for bird watching, guided fishery and honey collection tours, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putney Island</td>
<td>Satkhira</td>
<td>Wildlife and Natural</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Local jetty for small boats and houseboats</td>
<td>Local boats can be availed from Angthiara or Mongla port</td>
<td>Hotel: Not available.</td>
<td>Restaurants: Not available</td>
<td>Very poor tourism infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalir Char</td>
<td>Satkhira</td>
<td>Wildlife and Natural</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Local jetty for small boats and houseboats</td>
<td>Local boats can be availed from Angthiara or Mongla port</td>
<td>Hotel: Not available.</td>
<td>Restaurants: Not available</td>
<td>Lot of work needs to be done in terms of building accommodations, eateries and improving the conditions of local boats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patkosta</td>
<td>Satkhira</td>
<td>Wildlife and Natural</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Local jetty for small boats and houseboats</td>
<td>Local boats can be availed from Angthiara or Mongla port</td>
<td>Hotel: Not available.</td>
<td>Restaurants: Not available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals: Mongla</td>
<td>At and</td>
<td>Khulna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annexure 2:

Information regarding Sundarban tourist spots in India

Pilgrimage sites in Sundarbans (19 Blocks) and in Kolkata

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Blocks</th>
<th>Pilgrimage Sites</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sagar</td>
<td>Kapil Muni Temple at Gangasagar confluence point</td>
<td>State Fair, 3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mathurapur - II</td>
<td>AMBULINGA SHIB Mela at Chatratirtha, Kashinagar in Chaitra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ANDHAMUNI Mela at Chatratirtha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NANDA SNAN Mela at Kashinagar on Pous Sankranti</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CHARAK Mela at JATAR DEUL on Chaitra Sankranti</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Patahrpratima</td>
<td>GOBINDESWAR SHIB Mela at Gobindapur in RamgangaGP</td>
<td>15 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Joynagar - I</td>
<td>JAYCHANDI Mela near Jaynagar – Majilpur Rly Station</td>
<td>15 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Canning-II</td>
<td>BARA KHAN GAZI at GhutiaryShariff : Mela in Asharh, Special event on 17th Shravan, Pilgrimage arrival on every Thursday evening for prayer &amp; offerings all the year round</td>
<td>Mela in Asharh for 7 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Haroa</td>
<td>PIR GORACHAND mela in Falgun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Historical Heritage Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Blocks</th>
<th>Heritage Sites</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mathurapur- II</td>
<td>JATAR DEUL in village PurbaJata-preserved as Archeological Monument by the ASI. According to the ASI, the Monument was</td>
<td>Route direction: From Sealdaha South Rly to Mathurapur Rd. Station then Roydighi on</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
constructed in 975 BC by one JAYANTA CHANDRA with a very special architecture. Presently it has been treated as SHIB Temple by the local community and an idol of Lord SHIBA has been placed at its GARVAGRIHA. Melas and festivals are organized on the occasions of Lord Shiba specially CHRAK Mela on Chaitra Sankrant.

road and then from Roydighi to JATAR DEUL by road. It is about 100 km from Kolkata.
### Cultural Events: Mela, Haat, Folk Culture like Bono bibi Puja

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Blocks</th>
<th>Mouza</th>
<th>Cultural Events: Mela, Festivals, Puja etc.</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sagar</td>
<td>Gangasagar</td>
<td>Ganga SnanMela near Kapil Muni Temple at Gangasagar</td>
<td>State Fair, 3 days- 14th to 16th Jan, every year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Silpara</td>
<td>CharakMela</td>
<td></td>
<td>7 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mrityunjaynagar</td>
<td>ShibratriMela</td>
<td>4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Manasadhvip</td>
<td>ChoddaMadalSangkirtan</td>
<td>5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Do-Nag Mela (Snake Goddess)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 days in November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mandirtala</td>
<td>ShibratriMela</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 days in Falgun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Namkhana</td>
<td>Amarabati</td>
<td>Ganga Mela</td>
<td>Pous Sankranti - 3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lalpur</td>
<td>Rashjatra</td>
<td>Falgun - 1 day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Rash Mela</td>
<td>Kartik-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Minakhan</td>
<td>Bamanpukur</td>
<td>Pir Gorachand Mela</td>
<td>Baisakh-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sitalamela</td>
<td>Falgun-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Basanti Mela</td>
<td>Falgun-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. 1) In every Block: State sponsored YUBA Utsav celebration with cultural programme on 12th January every year

2) In every Block: State sponsored Sundarban Dibas celebration for environment awareness on 11th December every year.

3) In every Block: State sponsored Krishi-o-Prani Sampad Utsav in December / January every year

4) NGOs/ CBOs organize different rural fairs like environment awareness, agricultural – o matsyamela, livelihoods development fair, Health & Nutrition fair, Sundarban Development fair, Book fair, Baby Show, etc. in different blocks
5) Mythological festivals, pujas and celebrations viz Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Saraswati Puja, Lakshmi Puja, Biswakarma Puja, Mansa Puja, Ganga Puja, IED, Muharram, Christmas etc. are organized by different castes and religious groups and some of these continue to this day.

Established Natural Attractions
Sagar – Jambudwip
Namkhana – Frejerganj and Bakkhali
Namkhana & PatharPratima – Lothian, Printce Island, Watch Tower
PatharPratima – Bhagabatpur Crocodile Project
PatharPratima – Dhanchi Forest Camp
PatharPratima – Kalas Forest Camp
Kultali – Kaikhali & Kantamari
Kultali – Boni Forest Camp in Ajmalmari Forest Block
Kultali – Piyali Closure Site
Canning – I – Dabu Tourist Spot
Basanti – Jharkhali Tiger Rescue Centre & Herobhanga Forest
Basabti – Nafarganj Island
Gosaba – Pakhirala – Rangabela
Gosaba – Sajnekhali Mangrove Interpretation Centre & Watch Tower
Gosaba – Sudhanyakhali Camp & Watch Tower
Gosaba – Do – Banki Cat Walk & Watch Tower
Gosaba – NetiDhopani Forest Camp & Watch Tower
Gosaba – Haliday Island & Watch Tower
Hingalganj – Jhingakhali Watch Tower
Hingalganj – BurirDabri Watch Tower
Khatuajhuri – Forest Camp

Information regarding Sundarban tourist spots in Bangladesh
Established Natural Tourist Attractions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SI No.</th>
<th>Tourist spots</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Koromjol Eco-tourism Centre</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>This centre under the <strong>Chadpai Range</strong> is on the eastside of Bangladesh Sundarban. There is a Deer and Crocodile breeding centre in this Centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>TetulBariakhal</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>It is under the <strong>Chadpai forest station</strong> and Andharmanik. It is a natural sanctuary of wild animals, birds, reptiles and otters. It is almost a one-hour distance from Mongla Port.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Harbaria Eco-Tourism Centre</td>
<td>Harbarsia,Khulna</td>
<td>It is in the deep forest. There is a <strong>wooden watch tower</strong> in this area which enables a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI No.</td>
<td>Tourist spots</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kolagachia Eco-tourism Centre</td>
<td>Satkhira</td>
<td>This centre is in the westside of Bangladesh Sundarban near the Burigoalini range. It provides the tourists an opportunity to go inside the forest. Goran and Khoolsha trees are abundant in this region. Among wild animals, deer is common here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Katka</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>It is the eastern sanctuary under Sharankhola Forest Range. There is a watch tower. It is almost 152 km away from Khulna in south direction Wild life abundance: Tiger, Spotted deer Wild Boar, saline water crocodile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dobeki</td>
<td>Satkhira</td>
<td>Dobeki is of two hour distance from Mandarbaria, Satkhira. A watch tower provides facilities to the tourists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kachikhali</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>Near Sarankhola Range and 14 km east of Katka sea beach. Tourists can see tiger, deer, crocodile, monitor lizard and many other mammals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nilkomol or Hiron Point</td>
<td>Southside of Khulna</td>
<td>130 km from Khulna and 80 km from Mongla. Wildlife is in abundance: Raj Gokhra snake (King Cobra), otter, spotted deer and Tiger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mandarbaria</td>
<td>Southwest region of Sundarban, Satkhira Coastal Area</td>
<td>-Western sanctuary of Sundarban.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Difficult to reach from Khulna or Mongla. One can reach from Dublar char or Nilkamal. Wildlife is abundant: Dolphin, King Crab, Horse shoe crab etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The Sundarban Museum</td>
<td>Mongla town, Bagerhat</td>
<td>Subash Biswas established this museum. He started collecting specimens for this museum in 1986. -photographs and specimens of wild and aquatic animals, trees, algae, orchids and many other objects of interest. -articles on local and folk culture and tradition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sea Beaches, Chars and Islands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SI No.</th>
<th>Sea Beaches and Island</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jamtala Sea Beach</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>Jamtola is almost 3 km distance from Katka on the east side of Sundarban. There is a watch tower in the beach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kachikhali Sea beach</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>Kochikhali Sea Beach is half an hour walking distance on the south side of Kochikhali Jetty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kotka Sea Beach</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>It is under Sarankhola Range and almost 152 km from Khulna. One of the familiar tourist spots. There is a watch tower here. It is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mandar Baria Sea Beach</td>
<td>Satkhira</td>
<td>It is a local tourist spot almost 170 km away from Khulna and 100 km Satkhira south west.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dimer Char</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>Its shape has resemblance with egg shape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pokkhir Char</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>This char is near to the Dimer Char.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Tiar Char</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>This char is 2 hour distance from Kokil Muni Island by boat. Attraction: Deer, wild bird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Dublar Char</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>It is considered as a tourist spot under Chadpai range. It is 90 km away from Mongla port in the south direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kalir Char</td>
<td>Satkhira</td>
<td>It is in the estuary of Malancha river. It is 70 km away from Mongla port in the south west direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Shelar Char</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>This char is mainly a natural shelter centre for fisherman in the coastal region. It is 90 km away from Mongla port in the south direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Kopilmuni Island</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>This island is in the estuary of Pashur and Sibsha River. It is 75 km away from Mongla port in the south direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tinkona Island</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>This island is in the estuary of Pashur and Sibsha River. It is 70 km away from Mongla port in the south direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Putni Island</td>
<td>Satkhira</td>
<td>This island is in the estuary of Malancha River. It is 106 km away from Mongla port in the south direction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Pilgrimage sites and Historical Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SI No.</th>
<th>Tourist spot</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shat-Gambuj-Mosque</td>
<td>Bagerhat</td>
<td>Shat Gambuj Mosque was built by Khan Jahan Ali in between 1400 A.D to 1500 A.D. It is 5 km away from the Monglaport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ShekherBarirMondir</td>
<td>Khulna</td>
<td>Temple of Kali which is approximately two or three hundred years old. It is beside Shibsha river. It is almost 30km south direction from Khulna Noliyan Forest Range.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Relics of an ancient civilization</td>
<td>Khulna</td>
<td>There is a relics of an ancient civilization 1.5 km distance from Shekher Bari. Locally it is known as the civilization under the command of Raja Protapditto (1500 A.D.-1700 A.D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chedonkhali</td>
<td>Satkhira</td>
<td>Several relics are found in this area. It is near the Buricoalini forest range, Satkhira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Relics of salt industry</td>
<td>Khulna, Satkhira</td>
<td>The relics are found in several places on the bankside of Shibsa, Malancha, Pashur and Alki river in area between the Tinkona Island and Dublar Char.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Cultural Events:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SI No.</th>
<th>Cultural Events: Mela,Festival,Pujaetc</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Raash Purnima Mela</td>
<td>Dublar Char</td>
<td>3 days program in every year in Alarkole in DublarChar. It starts on Moonlit night of Bangla month Kartik (In middle of November month). Though it is mainly occasion of Hindu community but people of other religions also enjoy the activities of mela.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dashkin Rai Puja</td>
<td>Munshiganj, Mandarbaria, Dublar Char</td>
<td>Duration: PoushShonkranti to MaghShonkranti (30 days) (December-January)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>BanaDeviNaraiani Puja</td>
<td>Satkhira</td>
<td>Duration: 30 days of Magh month according to Bengali Calendar (Mid-January- Mid February)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bono bibi Puja</td>
<td>Satkhira, Khulna</td>
<td>Among the local people living near the Sundarban areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kalu Rai Puja (god of Crocodile)</td>
<td>Satkhira, Khulna, Bagerhat</td>
<td>Fishermen, Bouali and Mouali normally show their respect before going to work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>