

CMCs Support Tourist Influx During Eid Holiday

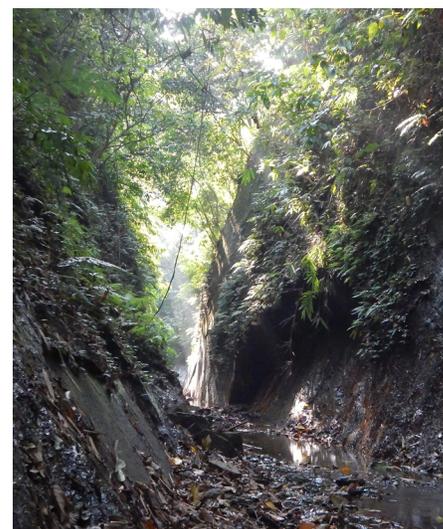
Being a tropical country, the major tourist season in Bangladesh has typically been in the dry winter period which includes Christmas, New Year and other government holidays. But even the rainy season in Bangladesh is now having a marked tourist influx especially when it coincides with Eid as it did in 2017. With the aim of providing improved services to the tourists during the Eid holiday

season, Hazarikhil and Baraiyadhala Co-Management Committees (CMC) were well prepared with a number of services and facilities for tourists. These two CMC's attracted over 2500 tourists during the 26-30 June Eid holiday as a result of their improved tourist friendly infrastructure, service excellence and welcoming attitude. This included approximately 60 tourist nights spent at Hazarikhil Wildlife Sanctuary during these five days.

the CMCs. As a part of the expansion of ecotourism activities in Hazarikhil and Baraiyadhala CMCs a number of ecotourism promotion events were organized in collaboration with local youth, school and university students, government officials and journalists. CREL is also supporting the CMC's to link them with established tour operators and providing training to eco-tour guides.



This was made possible after the USAID CREL Project supported Hazarikhil and Baraiyadhala CMC's to develop tourist facilities including picnic sheds, resting shelters, trail improvements and informational sign boards. The CMC's were also provided with an eco-tourist boat, an electric three-wheel "Tom Tom" for local road transportation and tents which enabled them to provide a wide range of high quality services to the tourists. Profits from the services will be used to ensure long-term sustainability of



Co-management Committee Sustainability Plan Revised by Ministry

The CREL Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting was held on June 13, 2017 where the major agenda was to share the Co-management Committee (CMC) Sustainability Plan (also referred to as the Investment Plan), which is one of the key tools envisioned to ensure the long-term sustainability of co-management organizations that were created for the conservation of natural resources and biodiversity in Bangladesh. The purpose of the sustainability plan is to articulate a road map that ensures that CMCs are financially viable and technically competent to ensure the long term participation of communities in the management of the protected areas with minimal external assistance. The CMC Sustainability Plan process began a year ago at the PSC meeting held on June 22, 2016 where the Honorable Secretary of Ministry of Environment and Forests advised the CREL

Project to draft a CMC Sustainability Plan to be reviewed and revised after a sharing workshop with MoEF. The process of developing the CMC Sustainability Plan included a review and consolidation of the 21 individual CMC long term plans which had been earlier prepared by CMC stakeholders (DFO, ACF, Range Officers, Beat Officers, President of CMCs and others) at each CMC which was facilitated by CREL staff. The outcome of the sustainability plan is an articulation of both the financial and human resource commitment needed to ensure a viable co-management partnership. In the latest PSC meeting it was decided to include the respective business plans of the individual CMC's to show the return on investments. After the inclusion of the latest meeting's feedback, the revised plan will proceed to the MoEF through the Chief Conservator of Forests for a final review and approval process.

Dragon Fruit Market is Expanding in Cox's Bazar



Farmers of Cox's Bazar region are now harvesting dragon fruit which were planted almost 2 years ago with the support of CREL. A total of 105 farmers cultivated dragon fruit in their fields. Over 50% of the farmers are already harvesting fruit from their fields this season and the plants are expected to continue producing fruit until late October. Approximately 500 farmers purchased plant cuttings from the initial 105 dragon fruit farmers for planting, and hopefully, many will be selling fruit by next year. Dragon fruit are still relatively expensive in Bangladesh, with farmers selling them for 400-500 Taka per kg in the nearest markets, top hotels and resorts of Cox's Bazar. In the Teknaf site, 43 farmers produced 167 kg of dragon fruit and sold them for 82,000 Taka. The total income earned by dragon fruit farmers this year will be calculated at the end of the season, in November.



Dhopachari Co-Management Council & Committee Reformed

Successful handover of power, a fundamental democratic practice, is one key criteria used to measure the sustainability of Co-Management Organizations. As part of this handover process, elections for new Co-Management Committee and Council members takes place every two years. Such democratic elections recently took place to establish the new Dhopachari Co-Management Council and Committee.

Mr. Alhazz Nazrul Islam Chowdhury, Member of Parliament for Chittagong 14 and Advisor to the Co-Management Council attended the meeting as Chief Guest with Mr. Alhazz Abdul Jabbar Chowdhury, Upzilla Chairman and Mr. Rafiqul Islam Chowdhury, DFO South Division also attending the meeting as special guests. Mr. Lutfur Rahman, UNO, Chandanish and the current elected President of the Co-Management of Council presided over the meeting as Chair.

Mr. Md. Morshedul Alam was elected as the President of Dhopachari Co-management committee and Mr. Abdul Jobber and Mr. Kamal Uddin were elected as Vice president and Treasurer, respectively. Mr. Kazi Alauddin became the Member Secretary by the virtue of his post in the Forest Department as per CMC practice.



CREL Participated Environment Fair 2017 in Chittagong

On the occasion of World Environment Day 2017 the Department of Environment, Chittagong organized a two day long environment fair on May 27-28 with the theme: "Connecting People to Nature". The venue was the Bangladesh Women Association Girls High School, Dampara, Chittagong. Staff from USAID's Climate Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) Project also participated in the fair. Consistent with this year's slogan of "I'm with Nature" CREL showcased a variety of environmentally friendly agriculture technologies and CREL livelihoods beneficiaries sold vegetables and fruit produced using these technologies.

Different environment based posters, leaflets, brochures and models from the CREL Project were also displayed in the fair. On June 5, a crest was given to CREL from the Department of Environment, Chittagong during a workshop on Environment Day 2017 at the Theater Institute, Chittagong as a memento for actively participating in the environment fair

