Sundari
Sundarbans

Office of the District Magistrate & Collector, South 24 Parganas

Very stifling yet extremely seductive.
Increasingly painful but immensely passionate.
Torrid and tempting.

This in essence, is the

Sundarbans.

A place where tigers swim in water and fish walk
on land. Everyday!

The Sundarbans

A UNESCO World Heritage site.

A part of the world's largest delta, formed by the mighty Ganga, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers.

The largest single block of tidal, halophytic mangrove forests in the world with more than 80 species of mangroves.

The only coastal habitat of tigers in the world; a population of over 200 tigers who have skilfully adapted to this inhospitable ecosystem.

The Sundarbans is a cluster of low-lying islands in the Bay of Bengal, spread across India and Bangladesh, famous for its unique mangrove forests. This active delta region is among the largest in the world, measuring about 40,000 sq. km. The Sundarbans forest is about 10,000 sq. km across India and Bangladesh, of which 40% lies in India.

4.3% of global mangroves in the Sundarbans (India & Bangladesh).

Sundarbans is a tourist's paradise. For the many options neatly nestled in this Gangetic delta. There is something for tourists from all walks of life, for all interests and for all ages.

1,105

Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary
(₹ lakh)
(Source: Indian Express)

850

Corbett Tiger Reserve
(₹ lakh)
(Source: Times of India)

315

Sundarbans
(₹ lakh)
(Source: Eco-Tourism: Sundarban Perspective by NEWS)

But, the revenue earned from this archipelago is still a far cry from what the returns could be.

Because, the Sundarbans scarcely finds a place in the itinerary of the well-heeled tourists.

That is the burning
question is

Why?

For multiple
reasons.

Governance issues: Abject poverty of the locals forces them to adopt undisciplined measures to improve their livelihood. This has considerably hampered the long-term prospects of tourism in the area.

Natural calamities: Devastating cyclones at periodic intervals in the Bay of Bengal has eroded most of the development work done in earlier years. It has severely impacted the people residing there. They have lost their houses, their belongings and their means of livelihood.

Lack of foresight: Residents of the Sundarbans are largely uneducated. Hence, they do not realise the uniqueness of the resource at hand and the vastness of the opportunities ahead. And since they remain squarely focused on overcoming the fallout of natural disasters, their ability to envision opportunities is limited – it has also dampened their entrepreneurial spirit.

Critical gaps: There exists critical gaps in the Sundarbans Tourist Circuit namely roads and jetties and other essential services such as electricity, healthcare, security among others which are extremely essential for generating tourist footfall.

The Government has, over the years, introduced multiple schemes and utilised considerable resources to uplift the Sundarbans and its people. But in doing so, tourism-focused development has taken a backseat.

Who suffers?

The Sundarbans

Because it is overlooked, it remains neglected.

Nature enthusiasts and travellers.

This opportunity haven gets destroyed.

The 4.5 million people who inhabit this haven.

Responsible tourism could single-handedly uplift their lives sustainably.

The Government

It is losing out on multiple counts.

Kolkata

Today if Sundarbans disappears, tomorrow Kolkata definitely will.

Tourism definitely needs to be bolstered.

A survey conducted as part of the analytic work for a World Bank report on the Sundarbans showed that there is demand from high-end international and domestic travelers for nature- and ecotourism-based activities in the Sundarbans.

In a sample of surveyed travelers from more than 20 countries, English-speaking foreign tourists constituted the largest percentage (43.8%) of total visitors. In addition, roughly 18% of the surveyed visitors were from India, which suggests that the domestic market can provide a solid base for initiating sustainable ecotourism development.

The need of the hour... Today!

Sundarbans, one of the largest mangrove forests, enchants numerous visitors including geologists, travel enthusiasts, ornithologists, photographers and nature lovers. They are captivated by the enthralling beauty of its flora, fauna and natural landscape. But the arduous journey, significantly wanting infrastructure, utilities and services pushes this destination way down in their must-visit priority list.

Sundarbans alone has the potential to catapult West Bengal onto the global tourist map.

But for that, the State Government urgently needs to create the infrastructure, facilities and resources, and develop the service quotient. This in turn will go a long way in improving the livelihood of the residents in Sundarbans and saving Sundarbans itself.

We need to move now.

The Government needs to take the first step towards improving the prospects of Sundarbans as a preferred tourist destination. It will open the floodgates for investments into this destination from all quarters because an initiation by the Government adds an important stamp of credibility. It showcases strong intent for holistic sustainable development.

We need to **integrate resources.**
We need to **step ahead and sustain progress steadily.**
We need to define
Sundarbans Tourism.

Tourism is about selling the right story.

Over the decades, we have only marketed

Tiger Tourism when talking

about the Sundarbans.

We have pitted the Sundarbans to any other tiger reserve, when the Sundarbans offers much more to the tourist... which unfortunately has gone unnoticed.

We should now reallign our story to

Sundarbans Tourism.

By addressing and highlighting the

natural, social and historic uniqueness of each destination.

So what is Sundarban Tourism?

The Sundarbans has a civilization that dates back more than two thousand years. Hence, it is a storehouse of everything that attracts tourists.

There are the **mangroves** which today are the most sought after forests to control climate change.

There is **floral** and **fauna diversity** that is second to none.

There are ancient and revered **religious sites** that attract believers of all ages and faiths.

There is loads of **history** buried in the muddy waters.

There is rich **culture** and **cuisine** that is spoken of only through books and dramas.

There are **unique skills** which are only found in this zone.

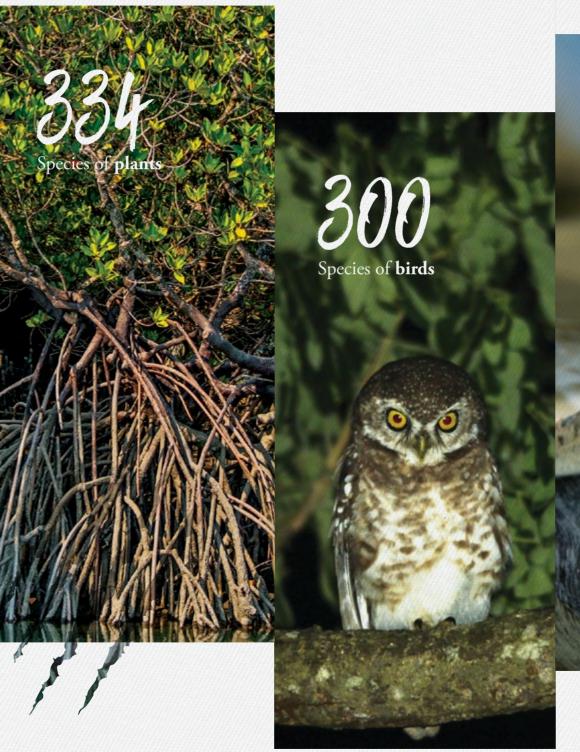## And tiger sighting... that can be a bonus.

Sundarban's richness of floral and faunal diversity knows no bounds.

Flora

84 species of mangroves have been recorded in the Indian Sundarban, of which Rhizophora, Sonneratia, Ceriops, Avicennia, Bruguiera are very common. Heritiera Fomes, locally called Sundari is the signature species. Nypa Fruticans or Golpata is a typical fresh water loving mangrove, whereas Phoenix Paludosa, locally called 'hental' provide perfect camouflage for tigers. Aegiceras SP gives the best quality of honey.

Fauna

Aquatic mammals include Gangetic river dolphins, Irrawaddy dolphins, Batagurbaska, Olive ridley turtles etc. Among other dominant species estuarine crocodiles, otters, wild boars, monkeys, spotted deers, monitor lizards are noteworthy. There are various cat species like fishing cats, leopard cats, jungle cats etc but Panthera Tigris i.e. tiger is the most charismatic of them all.

334 Species of **plants**

300 Species of **birds**

120 Species of **fish**

35 Species of **reptiles**
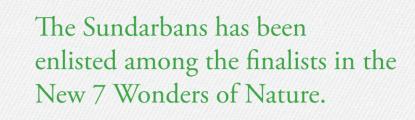
42 Species of **mammals**

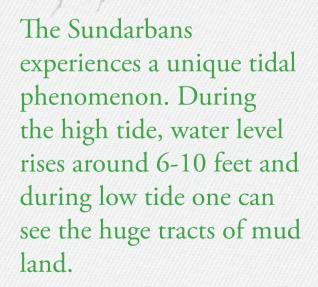# Sundarbans is home to rare and globally-threatened wildlife species.

15 mammalian species, 8 species of birds, 17 species of reptiles, are included in Schedule I and II (rare & endangered) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act,1972. 14 species have been listed in Appendix I of CITES, that has trade threats. Some of them are the Estuarine crocodiles, Gangetic dolphins and Olive ridley turtles.

8

Out of the 11 species of kingfishers found in India, are in the Sundarbans.

The Sundarbans has been enlisted among the finalists in the New 7 Wonders of Nature.

The Sundarbans experiences a unique tidal phenomenon. During the high tide, water level rises around 6-10 feet and during low tide one can see the huge tracts of mud land.

History unearthed in bits and pieces

Today not many people are aware of the fact that besides offering rich experience in regards to wildlife and mangrove forests, the region also has vestiges of various human settlements spaced in its specific islands.

Many archaeological sources, temple remains, metal and terracotta figures, historical documents and scriptures bear testimony to the fact.
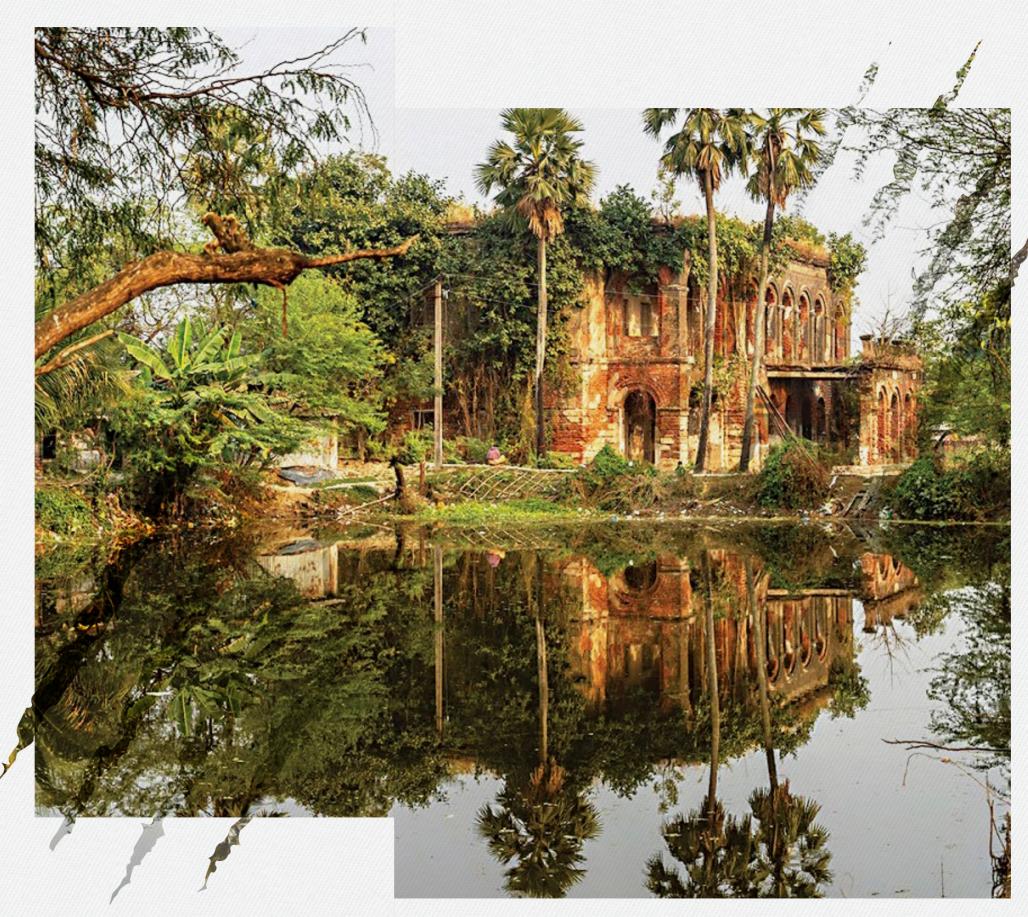
Residing in the Sundarbans is the traditional knowledge of brick making (open furnace, 1:2:4 ratio non-polluting), boat making using mango leaves and pottery (4 kiln have been found in Patharpratima which have a 1,000-year legacy).

Additionally, literature is available about how mango leaves can reduce soil salinity. This, if studied, developed and deployed scientifically can become a game changing phenomena for agriculture in coastal areas across the world.

Also in the Sundarbans, some Harrappan era artifacts, Buddhist idols and scriptures and remains of Chinese settlement have been found.

Materials of archaeological importance are also in private possession of some residents which can be displayed in a museum/interpretation center.

Other places of historical and archaeological importance include Marichjhapi, Netidhopani, Hamilton's house, significance of Rabindranath Tagore, Morarji Desai, Pannalal Dasgupta, Tushar and Bina Kanjilal at Gosaba.

Today's Kolkata was yesterday's Sundarbans.

Over the centuries, the forest has moved out but left its signature on the heart of Kolkata and the common Kolkatans for generations to come.

GARIA/GARIAHAT
Guriya is the name of a mangrove tree

KEORATALA
Keora is the name of a mangrove tree

ENTALLY
Hentel is the name of a mangrove tree

KOLSHI BAGAN
Khalsi is the name of a mangrove tree – the first flowering mangrove.

SEALDAH
A water body

CREEK ROW
A water body

KADAPARA
A marsh land

Canning

Canning holds considerable significance in British & Indian history as it is reminiscent us of the biggest commercial debacles of British India – the Port Canning disaster. The weather-beaten Canning House mutedly narrates tales of how and by whom the word 'cyclone' was coined and ironically, how a cyclone led to the ultimate port disaster. An important positive of this was the railway line. The Sealdah-Canning Line was the first of 4 lines that today form the Sealdah South Section. Also, the Strand Road, part of Kolkata's commercial hub, would not have happened had it not been for the Canning Port.

Hamilton's House

Sir Daniel Hamilton, a resident of Scotland, came to the Indian subcontinent back in the year 1880 and worked in Calcutta and lived in Gosaba. A few years later he bought 9,000 acres of land in Gosaba and remained deeply involved and motivated to enhance the living conditions of the poverty hit people of the British-ruled India. He introduced the co-operative system in the Gosaba place. The house was specially constructed for the legendary Rabindranath Tagore. Built on stilts the structure of the house has till the present time proven to be a skillfully designed piece for restraining the force of various cyclones and storms.

Marichjhapi

Marichjhapi massacre (also known as the Marichjhapi incident) refers to the forcible eviction of hundreds of Bengali Hindu Dalit refugees who occupied legally protected reserve forest land on Marichjhapi island in the Sundarbans, West Bengal, in 1979.

Netidhopani

Netidhopani is related to the love story of Behula and Lakhindar. Myth has it that Behula while accompanying her husband Lakhindar (who died of snake-bite on their wedding night) on his last journey on the boat, passed through a river bank - what is now called Netidhopani.

Culture resident within nature

Sundarban's rich and unique culture and ethnicity is celebrated through numerous Bengali folk songs and dances, often centered around the folk heroes, gods and goddesses specific to the Sundarbans (like Bonbibi and Dakshini Rai) and to the Lower Gangetic Delta (like Manasa and Chand Sadagar).

Cultural zoning

Three broad zones exist from west to east, each defined by major rivers, and the north-south corridors of rail and road connectivity that reach Kolkata. The western Sundarbans, beyond the Matla river, seems to be more 'sanskritised' with people adopting higher caste rituals and practices, than the eastern part. Also, there is a north-south distinction. The areas situated in the south towards the forest, or the 'down' areas, are colloquially called 'abad'. The social practices here are different from the uplands in the north which are closer to and far more influenced by the mainland.

Bonbibi

Over time, Bonbibi, the "Lady of the Forest", has emerged as the symbol of the Sundarbans' own folk deity and is ingrained into the rituals and lives of people in the 'down' islands. She is revered as the protector of the forest and every living being in it. The mythology of Bonbibi started spreading in the 19th century. Since then, the Bonbibi cult gained popularity gradually replacing Dakkhini Rai in the eastern part of the Sundarbans. Bonbibi's idol has different looks in different places.

'Bonbibi-r Upakhyan' (the Story of Bonbibi) is a popular folk performance (Pala in Bengali), based on her mythology. Scripts are usually handwritten and the narrative is essentially centred around Jahurnama, a genre of folk literature developed by verbal transfers across generations.

Bonbibi-r Palagaan is considered to be the representative performance-ritual of the Sundarbans and also an emblem

of the syncretist nature of the region. Traditionally, Bonbibi-r Palagaan was simply recited or sung as a eulogy to the deity to invoke her blessings. It later evolved as an enactment form, where the various exploits of Bonbibi in Bhati-r Desh are acted out.

Bonbibi pala is a play popular in the Sundarban villages, which depicts the conflict between Bonbibi (deity of the forest), and Dakshin Roy (the evil king).

Culture within literature

The area provides the setting for several novels by Emilio Salgari, (e.g., The Mystery of the Black Jungle). Part of the plot of Salman Rushdie's Booker Prize winning novel, Midnight's Children is set in the Sundarbans. This forest is adopted as the setting of Kunal Basu's short story "The Japanese Wife" and the subsequent film adaptation. Most of the plot of an internationally acclaimed novelist, Amitav Ghosh's 2004 novel, 'The Hungry Tide', is set in the Sundarbans.

The Sundarbans has been the subject of a detailed and well-researched scholarly work on Bonbibi (a 'forest goddess' venerated by Hindus), as well as numerous non-fiction books, including "The Man-Eating Tigers of Sundarbans" by Sy Montegomery for a young audience, which was shortlisted for the Dorothy Canfield Fisher Children's Book Award.

In 'Up the Country', Emily Eden discusses her travels through the Sundarbans. Numerous documentary movies have been made about the Sundarbans, including the 2003 IMAX production Shining Bright about the Bengal tiger. The acclaimed BBC TV series 'Ganges' documents the lives of villagers, especially honey collectors, in the Sundarbans.

Gajan Utsav

Charak Gajan is considered to be the most idiosyncratic festival of Bengal. However, there are two different types of rituals known as Charak and Gajan. Over time people consider it as one festival - Charak Gajan which is celebrated on the last few days of the Bengali month of Chaitra. The word Gajan is derived from the word Garjan or the sound made by Sannyasis during a festival.
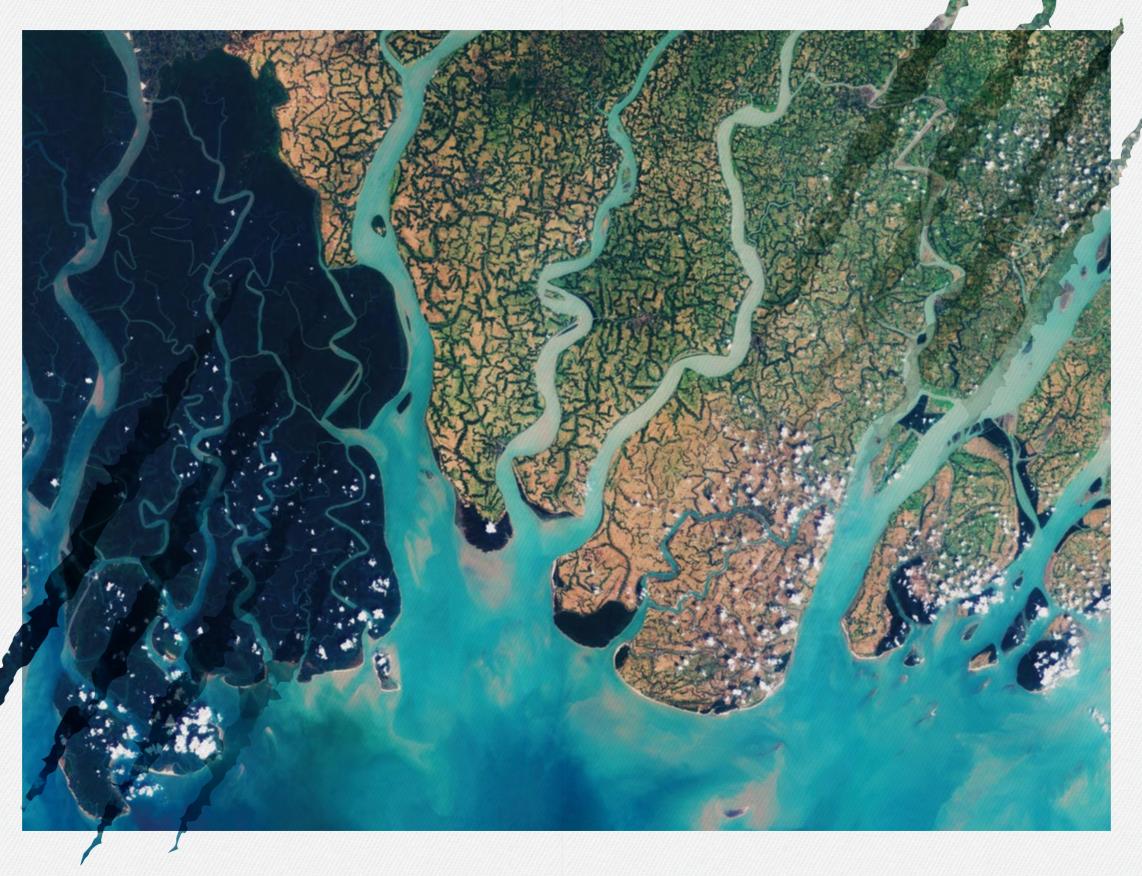

Handicrafts

The ancient settlement of Joynagar-Mojilpur stands at the gateway of the Adi Ganga in the Sundarbans. Most Bengalis know the twin towns for 'Joynagarer Moa', a seasonal sweet made of Nolen Gur (date-palm jaggery) and Kanakchur 'khoi' (popped rice, akin to popcorn). The other thing that this area is recognised for is its exquisitely crafted clay dolls. In many respects, the Mojilpur clay dolls, as they are called, differ from the fired-clay dolls made in other parts of Bengal. Sadly, not too many Mojilpur clay doll makers are found today. The number may soon be reduced to just one.

Will promoting tourism in Sundarbans adversely disturb its fragile ecology?

Uncontrolled tourism will significantly disbalance the ecological fragility of the zone.

For fragile ecosystems such as the Sundarbans, only limited, low-impact ecotourism, as opposed to mass tourism, is recommended. The spread of unregulated mass tourism will degrade the natural resources of the Sundarbans to a point at which it will no longer have any value for local people or visitors.

Moreover, economic development owing to tourism, would most likely attract more people into the region, and this would place even greater populations at risk from natural hazards and lead to increased stress on an already fragile ecosystem that would be unable to sustain itself in the face of increasing demands on its resources. Human vulnerability will increase multi-fold.

The call is for **'Responsible Tourism'** which implies regulated tourism that maintains a prudent balance between respecting the ecological fragility of the place and enhancing the livelihood of the present residents with a long-term goal of integrating the next generation into urban areas of West Bengal and India.

This approach would will reduce the population load on the Sundarbans ecosystem protecting its biodiversity and minimising human vulnerability to the harsh and challenging conditions of the Sundarbans.

An important contribution of the eco-tourism framework is Community-based tourism, which is not simply a tourism business that aims at maximising profits for investors. It is more concerned with the impact of tourism on the community and environmental resources. It emerges from a community development strategy, and uses tourism as a tool to strengthen the rural community that manage tourism resources with the participation of local people. It is a kind of nature tourism wherein the local community maintains full or major control over the management and the profits of the project.
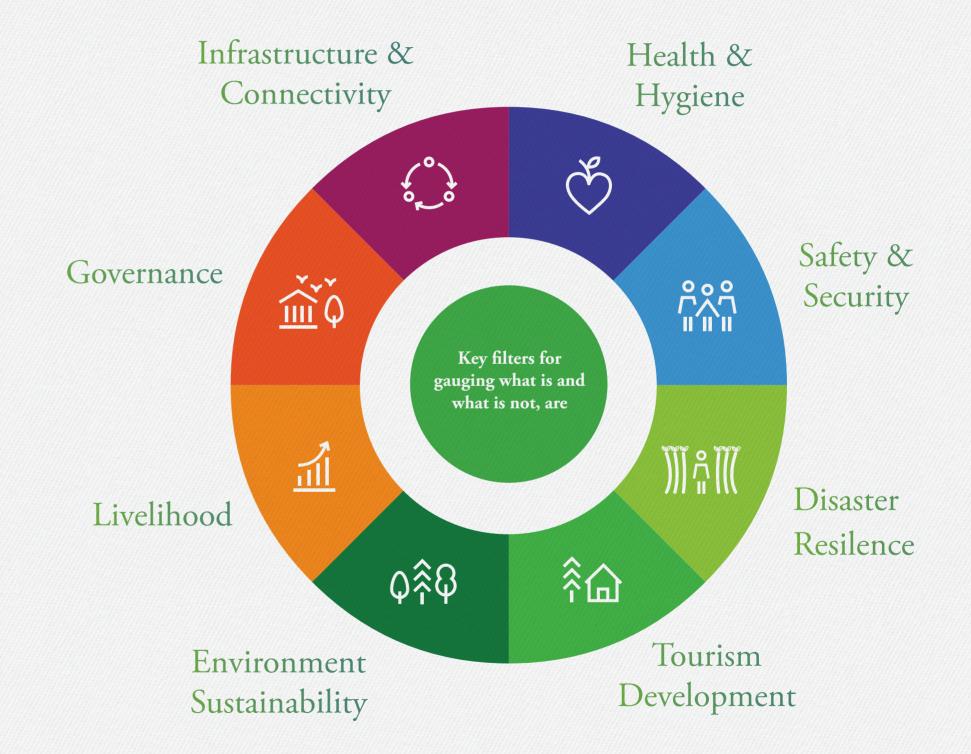
Identification framework

Even as the positioning of the Sundarbans as a tourist hub is a necessary mandate, the Government needs to lay the foundation of responsible tourism to maintain the fragility of the ecosystem in the Sundarbans.

In keeping with this reality, one needs to identify what's missing. This necessitates an incisive analysis that would identify the gaps between what is and what should be.

For a relevant road map that aptly suits the purpose and will stand the test of time, we will utilise some of the filters applied by the United Nation's World Tourism Organisation in their evaluation of the Best Tourism Village in the World. Their mission succinctly aligns with the requirement of Sundarbans.

The UNWTO Mission:

Advance the role of tourism in valuing and safeguarding rural villages along with their associated landscapes, knowledge systems, biological and cultural diversity, local values and activities.

Promote innovative and transformative approaches to the development of tourism in rural destinations that contribute to the three pillars of sustainability – economic, social and environmental – in line with the Sustainable Development (SDGs).

Infrastructure & Connectivity

Health & Hygiene

Governance

Safety & Security

Key filters for gauging what is and what is not, are

Livelihood

Disaster Resilence

Environment Sustainability

Tourism Development

Infrastructure & Connectivity

Infrastructure and connectivity play a pivotal role in the development of a successful tourist destination. Several governments have recognised the significance of infrastructure and connectivity in relation to the tourism industry and have coordinated their activities with the tourism industry by providing tourism friendly infrastructural facilities.

Roads

As such, roads emerge as a key parameter for shortlisting a tourist destination. They result in a bad beginning and an equally bad end to a tourist's experience.

The Sundarbans has 250 km of all-weather metaled road, and about 170 km of unpaved narrow roads. Its harsh and unpredictable climate coupled with frequent storms and cyclones continue to damage the road network connectivity. These need to be maintained for all-year-round smooth and seamless motorability.

Call to action

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (Roads)

Develop a plan for round-the-year upkeep of metaled roads.

PITSTOPS

*S*undarbans, for the well-heeled tourists, has been, and will always be road trips. While seamless motorability is the critical essence of a road trip, it requires rest zones for the essential breaks. To refresh and restart.

The suggestion is to create a rest zone that provides all essentials at one place, namely food/snacks and beverages, pharmacy, restrooms with toilets, ATM facilities and a refueling station with mechanics for minor repairs to the vehicle.

PITSTOPS TO BE DEVELOPED AT

- **AMTALA** (Bhasha)
- **SHIRAKOL**
- **DIAMOND HARBOUR** (Dolon)
- **DALANGHATA**
- **KULPI**
- **KAKDWIP**
- **NAMKHANA**
- **BIJOYGANJ BAZAAR**
- **JAYNAGAR**
- **RAIDIGHI**
- **BASANTI**
- **BOJERHAT**
- **MALANCHA**

- **BARUIPUR**
- **UTTAR BHAG**
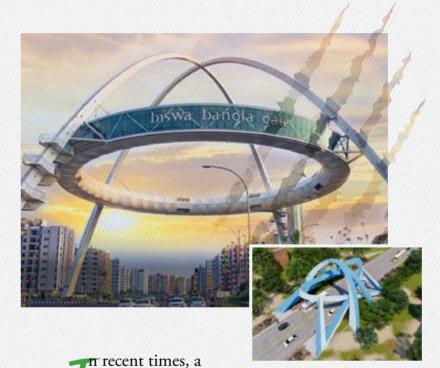- **CANNING**

Call to action

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (Roads)
Develop a plan to create rest zones at the above-mentioned locations.

TOURISM DEPARTMENT
Develop an awareness plan for improving utilization of PATHER SATHI infrastructure.

GATES

*I*n recent times, a new concept has emerged– that of creating pin code defining gateways at strategic locations on roads leading to the tourist site. These gateways serve as an interesting landmark for tourists, welcoming them to the destination.

The success of the gateway is already visible in Kolkata... the towering Biswa Bangla Gate provides a grand welcome to tourists entering Kolkata using the Rajarhat route.

GATES TO BE DEVELOPED AT

The road from **KOLKATA** to **BAKKHALI/SAGAR** via **KAKDWIP**.

The road to **GOSABA** via **CANNING**.

Call to action

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (Roads / Civil)
Identify the accurate location for these structures.

TOURISM DEPARTMENT
Leverage the PPP model to develop these gates.

Jetties

Since waterways are the primary mode of connectivity within the Sundarbans circuit, jetties need to be welcoming. Unfortunately, the current jetties are very substandard. As such, safe jetties need to be rebuilt which are more appealing, safe and can be used by tourists of all ages.

Silting of the jetties is another perennial problem. It impedes boats, ferries and launches from reaching the jetty owing to the fear of being grounded. As such, desilting needs to be done at periodic intervals to sustain the usability of jetties.

JETTIES TO BE LOOKED INTO

GODKHALI JETTY
PAKHIRALAY JETTY
JHARKHALI JETTY GHAT
RAMGANGA JETTY GHAT
PATHARPRATIMA JETTY
LOT No. 8 JETTY
KACHUBERIA JETTY GHAT
FRASERGANJ JETTY
DIAMOND HARBOUR JETTY

Call to action

**IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT /
TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT /
SUNDARBAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT**

Rebuild the jetties to make them safe and flexible to use by all (incl. Sr. Citizens).

Create a shopping & snacking arcade, restrooms and toilets at all jetties.

Develop a proposal for resolving the silting issue on a sustainable basis.

Consider the concept of introducing floating jetties made of Fibre which are more effective and easier to maintain and have an aesthetic value too.

Disaster Resilience

This archipelago is faced with the threat of being eroded away year-after year. The most urgent need of the hour is to save the Sundarbans.

Significant adaptation is necessary under current circumstances, and will be even more important in future as climate change projections for the Sundarbans indicate that sea level rise will continue and the region is likely to experience cyclones and storm formations of greater intensity over the Bay of Bengal.

MANGROVE PLANTATION

Mangrove plantation is extremely critical for saving the Sundarbans from natural destruction.

Coastal protection: Owing to their extensive roots, mangroves ecosystems protect coastal communities by acting as bio shields especially during high sea waves, tsunamis, and cyclones. The mangroves' unique roots protect the water from entering human settled areas.

Climate change management: Mangroves are recognised for their role in combating climate change. Mangrove forests store three to four times more carbon than forests on land. For the world, mangroves are therefore able to sequester more than 24 mn. MT of carbon per year.

MANGROVE PLANTATIONS IN PROGRESS

NAMKHANA	MOUSUNI, BAKKHALI, FRASERGANJ, HENRY ISLAND, LOTHIAN ISLAND
BASANTI	JHARKHALI
KULTALI	MAIPITH, PIYALI
GOSABA	SATJELIA, GOSABA
PATHARPRATIMA	G-PLOT, GOBARDHANPUR, BHAGBATPUR, RAMGANGA
SAGAR	SAGAR ISLAND, SUMATI NAGAR
MATHURAPUR II	
CANNING I	BESIDE MATLA BEACH

Call to action

FOREST DEPARTMENT

Need comprehensive plan for developing mangrove plantations.

MGNREGA

Need to involve & incentivise local residents to undertake plantation drives & nurture trees.

5 **Cr** **Mangrove Plantation project in progress**

EMBANKMENTS

The continuously rising sea level threatens to erode the Sundarban islands. There is an urgent need to prevent this erosion.

While the mangrove green cover is the preferred solution against this threat, there is a need to create embankments to prevent the saline water from entering into land.

It is suggested to explore the two-layer submerged reef breakwater system (an environment friendly solution) which has been successfully deployed by the Department of Ocean Engineering at IIT Madras. Their solution showed results in only 8 months since deployment (erosion of the Vaan Island has reduced).

EMBANKMENTS TO BE STRENGTHENED AT

SAGAR

BAKKHALI

MOUSUNI ISLAND

G-PLOT

GOSABA

OTHER VULNERABLE AREAS

Call to action

IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT

Develop a plan to create embankments leveraging eco-friendly solutions.

GBDA / IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT / ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT / UDMA

Gangasagar sea beach protection work as suggested by IIT Madras to be taken up immediately.

CYCLONE SHELTERS

Sundarbans has been on the receiving end of Nature's lash out. As per a World Bank report (2014), nine of the 14 global tropical cyclones associated with the highest fatalities have occurred in the Bay of Bengal.

The most recent, Amphaan cyclone, broke the back of local residents of the Sundarbans. The loss of lives is, till today, only an estimated number.

As such, it is critical to have adequate and strong cyclone shelters across all tourist destinations to accommodate all local residents and tourists.

Currently, 115 multi-purpose cyclone shelters are functional at Sagar, Patharpratima, Kakdwip, Gosaba, Namkhana, Basanti, Kultali and Mathurapur II. But these are not sufficient for the 4.5 mn. people residing in these blocks. Many more such shelters need to be created.

It is also suggested to invest in high-speed boats and other safety equipment.

CYCLONE SHELTERS

COMMUNITY-LEVEL CYCLONE SHELTERS IN ALL BLOCKS

Call to action

DISASTER MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
Create new multipurpose cyclone shelters & invest in disaster management equipment.

POLICE DEPARTMENT / COAST GUARD / CIVIL DEFENCE
Create site-specific disaster response teams with adequate equipment and high-speed boats.

INDIAN METEROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT (Eastern Region)
Create a meteorological office for liaison with the Administration.

Signages

V isitor signage is a key part of destination marketing and management. A signage has many functions– it attracts visitors, provides direction and wayfinding and informs and educates them.

Unfortunately, the Sundarbans is lacking in signages, both on the way to tourist destinations and within

the Sundarbans zone.

The Sundarbans also presents a unique opportunity to create awareness signages within the Tourism Circuit – of the before and after condition of areas affected by cyclones (such as Aila, Amphan and Yaas).

SIGNAGES SUGGESTED	
KAMALGAZI to **CANNING**	Kamalgazi, Baruipur, Rajpur/ Sonarpur, Canning, Basanti, Godkhali
BASANTI HIGHWAY	Bhojerhat, Malancha
BEHALA to **BAKKHALI**	Behala Chowrasta, Joka, Amtala, Shrikhola, Falta, Diamond, Kulpi, Kakdwip, Namkhana, Bakkhali
KAKDWIP to **SAGAR**	Lot No. 8, Kachuberia, Sagar
KAKDWIP to **PATHARPRATIMA**	Patharpratima, G-Plot, Gobardhanpur
KULPI to **RAMGANGA**	Ramganga
KULPI to **RAIDIGHI**	Raidighi, Jatar Deul, Kultali

Call to action

TOURISM DEPARTMENT / PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (Roads / Civil)

Develop and implement a comprehensive signage plan comprising of signages visible in the day and at night on roads leading to tourist destination and signages within tourist destinations.

Signage maintenance to be mandatorily done all round the year.

Identify spots within the Tourism Circuit to set up awareness monuments/signages.

Mobile Connectivity

O wing to the digital tsunami prevailing across the globe, one cannot conceive of a moment when he/she is off the digital grid. Mobile connectivity has emerged critical for tourism.

As a result, tourist destinations that provide connectivity, are preferred over non-connected zones. As such, the Government must endeavour to

provide mobile and wi-fi connectivity at all tourist destinations. It is suggested to provide wi-fi connections at homestays clusters and other resorts for seamless connectivity. It would also facilitate digital payments.

CONNECTIVITY INFRASTRUCTURE TO BE INSTALLED

All destinations within the **SUNDARBANS TOURIST CIRCUIT**

Call to action

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY / BSNL

Undertake a detailed survey to identify locations to set up towers and other infrastructure at each destination.

Health & Hygiene

Health, hygiene and hospitality run in tandem with each other. Would a tourist want to visit a place that is lacking in health and hygiene? This question has become increasingly relevant in the post-Covid scenario where tourists prefer to visit destinations which have good hygiene and healthcare facilities.

Medical Infrastructure

This safety net for tourists has become more pertinent for the Sundarbans. Given the marshy and wet conditions of the Sundarbans, gastrointestinal disorders, respiratory problems, as well as water- and vector-borne diseases could impede a vacationer visiting this archipelago.

The reality is that the 'nearest' medical care center may be impossible for many tourists to access.

As such beefing up medical and healthcare services such as primary healthcare infrastructure, pharmacies and mobile ambulances is an immediate necessity. Also, it is necessary to create SOPs for medical practitioners.

TOURISM FRIENDLY MEDICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Tourism friendly health centers & sub centers need to be modernised **GOSABA • SAGAR • KULTALI**

Places where tourism friendly health centers need to be created **BAKKHALI • MOUSUNI • G-PLOT • JHARKHALI • PATHARPRATIMA**

Call to action

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE

Develop a comprehensive plan for creating the tourism relevant health infrastructure at various tourist destinations.

High Speed Boat and Water Ambulance to be made available.

Anti-venom kits to be made available across all blocks.

Fresh water availability

Clean potable water is the essence of life. And tourism. Ironically, the Sundarbans does not have adequate fresh water sources to meet its requirements.

Being largely dependent on agriculture, fresh water for the Sundarbans is critical. With tourism set to increase, the water position will only get more precarious. As such, adequate supply of fresh water on a sustained basis is a screaming necessity.

Moreover, with eco-tourism being the central theme for the Sundarbans, an environment-friendly way of creating sustained supply of fresh water is an immediate necessity.

Community Toilets

Toilets and restrooms are a constant source of traveler apprehension and must be included in the essential list of things-to-do in order to uplift a tourist destination. This holds true for the Sundarbans too because clean and functioning toilets are hard to find on this tourist circuit.

The Sundarbans and its neighbouring tourist destinations need to have clean toilets and restrooms. They need to be constructed and maintained.

Sewage Management

Tourism will generate increased volumes of sewage which will need to be treated to ensure that it can be reused and recycled to the greatest extent possible. With limited sewage management infrastructure operational in the Sundarbans circuit, it

is absolutely necessary to create contemporary sewage management infrastructure to manage the additional sewage load, reuse treated water for agriculture and not contaminate natural water bodies.

Cleanliness

Clean tourist destinations can attract the well-heeled vacationers. Hence, if the Sundarbans has to attract upmarket tourists, it needs to showcase itself as a clean destination. The beaches, homestays, roads... et al cannot have any garbage

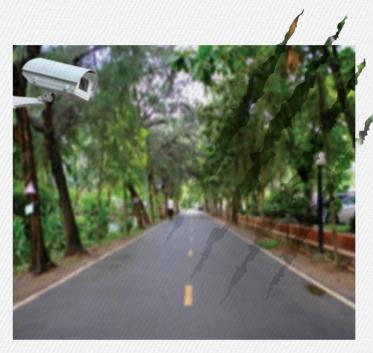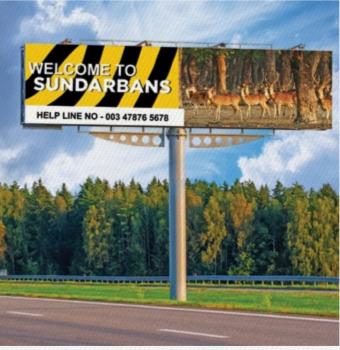or waste littered around. Because this then becomes the breeding ground for aliments.

Safety & Security

Safety and security are vital for the Peace of Mind of tourists. More than any other economic activity, the success or failure of a tourism destination depends on being able to provide a safe and secure environment.

Abject poverty in the Sundarbans zone could create fear of theft in the minds of tourists. Hence, it is imperative to tighten security measures across all destination with the objective of making the tourist feel safe.

SECURITY NET TO COVER

All destinations within the **SUNDARBANS TOURIST CIRCUIT**

Call to action

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Create a proposal for improving security systems. This blueprint could include the following:

- **Street lighting to be intensified on every road to ensure that it is adequately lit-up.**

- **A helpline number needs to be created along with call booths to ensure that tourists can report any incident to the police immediately.**

- **CCTV network has to be installed covering all roads and common areas/tourist hotspots.**

- **Integrated control rooms at district and block level for continuous monitoring.**
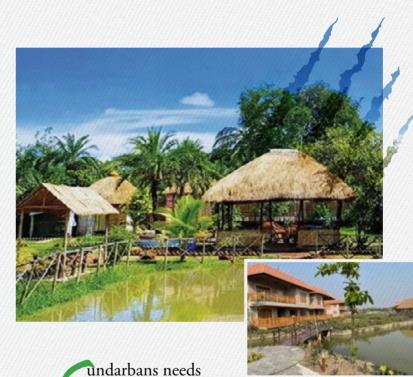
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (Roads)

Create and install signages to create awareness of the helpline facility.

Tourism Development

Sundarbans, just as it is, leaves people in awe owing to the Royal Bengal Tiger and stories surrounding this elusive predator. Moreover, novels on this archipelago, mystery tales and hair-raising stories of the tropical forest have generated significant tourist interest across the world. But, the Sundarbans has not attained its true place on the tourist itinerary. Because tourism as an industry space has not been developed. Tourism needs to be developed significantly to provide an entirely immersive experience to the tourists.

Accommodation

Sundarbans needs to cater to all kinds of tourists. Hence, the accommodation facilities need to fit every budget. For this there is need for affordable accommodation and high-end resorts.

- Homestays need to be increased which will allow the tourist to get a feel for rural lives.

- Eco-resorts need to be created comprising cottages (resembling village huts) with contemporary facilities

The idea of creating accommodation should be such that it integrates the tourist with the surrounding ecosystem.

ACCOMMODATION CREATION PLACES

HOMESTAYS
- ALL DESTINATIONS WITHIN THE SUNDARBANS TOURIST CIRCUIT

YOUTH HOSTEL
- BAKKHALI
- GOSABA

RESORTS
1. GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION
- G-PLOT

2. PPP MODEL RESORTS
- GANGASAGAR
- PATHARPRATIMA

Call to action

TOURISM DEPARTMENT
Improve facilities and aesthetics of existing hotels.

TOURISM DEPARTMENT/ FOREST DEPARTMENT
Develop homestays in select destinations such as Jharkhali, Mousuni Island.

TOURISM DEPARTMENT / FICCI & CII
Invite private players to create plush resorts.

FOREST DEPARTMENT
Draft a policy and plan for 'Night stay in boats' for tourists in a regulated manner.

Authentic Rural Cuisine

Sundarbans has the potential to emerge as a food connoisseur's paradise owing to the quality of its farm and forest products and the unique culinary skills of the village women.

It is suggested to pool in these skills for creating dining hubs which will offer a wide array of mouth-watering delicacies made of **fish, crab, mutton (Black Bengal goat & Garol sheep), organic vegetables and agri-products and sweets to tourists and foodies.**

There will be multiple beneficiaries from this concept

- The female segment of the Sundarbans diaspora who are experts in cooking.
- Local vendors and farmers would get a ready market for their produce.

The Government should provide farmers with high-yielding seeds which will assist them in increasing their output to cater to the increased demand.

COMMUNITY DINING PROSPECTS

LARGE DINING HUBS AT
- **CANNING**
- **DIAMOND**
- **BAKKHALI**
- **GANGA SAGAR**

SMALLER DINING HUBS AT
- **HOMESTAY CLUSTERS**
- **CAMPING CLUSTERS**

Call to action

SUNDARBANS AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT / TOURISM DEPARTMENT

Draw up a detailed proposal on setting up the dining experience leveraging the PPP model.

SUNDARINI / FISHERY DEPARTMENT / FOREST DEPARTMENT /AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

Draw out a proposal to create a robust supply chain for supply of the inputs.

Training

In the tourism industry, services are the ultimate competitive advantage leading to customer satisfaction and loyalty. This is significantly wanting in the Sundarbans, where majority of the population is uneducated and just about manage to make their ends meet.

To position the Sundarbans as a tourist priority, the Government needs to provide intensive training to residents. It needs to create training centers that will educate residents on Hotel Management and Customer Service. Some training should also be provided on spoken English and Hindi. This will help local residents service tourists better.

TRAINING CENTERS TO BE DESIGNATED AT

GOSABA

JHARKHALI

KAKDWIP

Call to action

SKILL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
- **Develop a proposal for enhancing the skill of all tourism-related stakeholders – direct and indirect. This could include training in urban pincodes for expertise and experience.**

  BOAT MAN, TAXI DRIVER, GUIDE, SAFETY TEAM
- **Create a blueprint for enhancing the basic education of children and teenagers – the new-generation tourism stakeholders.**

FOREST DEPARTMENT

Create a proposal for training local residents as forest guides, trek guides.

SUNDARBAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Monitoring the training calendar to ensure that all aspirants receive training.

Ensure that the training agenda facilitates in creating a level playing field.

Cultural Activities & Fairs

For tourists, especially from international destinations, cultural activities and fairs are important draws to visit a particular destination. Because it allows them to experience the culture of people, gain insights about their skills and expertise and their way of life.

Cultural activities need to be encouraged in the Sundarbans through tourism for it will promote the preservation of cultural heritage, revival of traditional art and crafts and cross-cultural exchange.

PROMOTION OF CULTURAL ACTIVITIES & FAIRS

Across the entire **SUNDARBANS TOURIST CIRCUIT**

Call to action

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION & CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Develop a calendar for cultural activities and fairs, promote the same through awareness campaigns globally, uplift the infrastructure and amenities at fairs etc.

Marketing Arcades

Sundarbans is an oasis of natural products and handicrafts. But this reality is known to only a select handful. This is owing to the lack of organised marketing. Hence, local residents are unable to showcase their products to the tourist community.

This needs to be corrected. A proper marketplace needs to be created with adequate infrastructure and utilities. The market place could be segregated into different zones namely milk and milk products, organic farm products, sea products, forest products and handicraft items. This will help local residents showcase their products.

SUGGESTED PLACES FOR LARGE MARKET CREATION

JHARKHALI
CANNING
BAKKHALI
KULPI

Call to action

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING DEPARTMENT / SUNDARINI / DISTRICT RURAL DEVELOPMENT CELL (DRDC)

Develop a detailed proposal for setting up market places (like a Dakhinapan of Kolkata) where agri products, forest products, milk products and handicrafts can be showcased.

Branding & Marketing

Awareness needs to be created across the globe of 'Community-based Tourism' leveraging the eco-tourism framework to wipe out legacy experiences of the Sundarbans.

Branding and awareness will need to be created primarily through social media platforms with periodic updates of the transformation towards eco-tourism. It is also suggested to take advertisement space on important tourist-related websites frequented by domestic and foreign tourists.

CREATING AWARENESS

SOCIAL MEDIA HANDLES
TOURISM-RELATED WEBSITES

TALKING POINTS:

- **SUNDARBAN TOURISM AS OPPOSED TO TIGER TOURISM**

- **TRANSFORMATION FROM TRADITIONAL TOURISM TO COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM**

Call to action

TOURISM DEPARTMENT / DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Create an across-the-board plan for branding and awareness of the Sundarbans as an eco-tourism hub.

Showcase plans and progress on a periodic basis.

Create stories around people and tourist experiences.

Environment management

Tourism is an important livelihood driver and economy accelerator. But the environment pays for tourism activities in many ways. According to UNEP, in a 'business-as-usual' scenario, tourism would generate through 2050 an increase of 154% in energy consumption, 131% in greenhouse gas emissions, 152% in water consumption and 251% in solid waste disposal. To reduce the load of tourism on the Earth, tourism needs to be environment-friendly.

Hence, in the Sundarbans, eco-tourism is the operative theme with the vision of 'Healthy Mangroves, Thriving Coastal Communities and Robust Value Chain' to build coastal resilience.

Plastic Free

Plastic sticks around in the environment for ages, threatening wildlife and spreading toxins. Plastic also contributes to global warming. Considering the fragile ecosystem of the Sundarbans, rampant use of plastic can create irreversible damage to this nature's nest. There is an urgent need to ban the use of plastic in the entire area.

PLASTIC FREE MISSION

Across the entire **SUNDARBANS TOURIST CIRCUIT**

Call to action

SUNDARBAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT / FOREST DEPARTMENT / TOURISM DEPARTMENT / LOCAL ADMINISTRATION/ DISTRICT RURAL DEVELOPMENT CELL (DRDC)

- **Draw up a plan for banning plastic utilisation in the entire circuit.**
- **Draw up a policy which bans the entry of plastic products into the Sundarbans Tourism Circuit.**
- **Sensitise residents, shop owners, hoteliers, homestays and others tourism stakeholders not to use plastic bags & plastic products.**
- **Create a plan for developing products with eco-friendly material.**
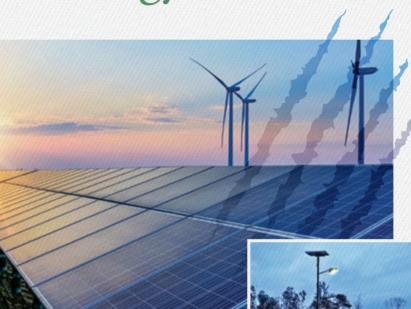- **Develop a plan for plastic up-cycling into marketable products.**

TIME LINE

Phase 1

- Create a list of banned products (plastic bags, thermocol, one-time use cutlery, plastic pouches, plastic bottles and PP bags).
- Create awareness among all tourism stakeholders including tourists on the non-use of plastic.
- Create a plastic collection team for collecting plastic from land and waterways and incentivise them based on volume.

Phase 2

- Create a team with members stationed at all locations for monitoring the plastic ban.
- Create a plastic waste segregation mechanism to stop illegal dumping of plastic waste.
- Create a timeline for banning plastic in the region across the supply chain.
- Create a penalty structure for defaulters which includes consumers (tourists) for using plastic products.

Renewable Energy

Sundarbans, a zone formed by more than 100 islands, makes conventional energy transmission extremely challenging. Further, the natural vagaries such as cyclones and storms further impede energy supply – if the transmission cables snap, it could lead to a catastrophe.

Hence, renewable power sources appear as the most feasible option for sustained power supply to the various tourist destinations within this deltaic region. As such, investment in solar power will need to be intensified at all tourist destinations.

RENEWABLE POWER

SAGAR
NAMKHANA
GOSABA
PATHARPRATIMA
BASANTI
MATHURAPUR II
KULTALI

Call to action

POWER DEPARTMENT / WBSEDCL / WBPDCL

Draw up a plan for increasing the renewable energy generation and supply.

E-mobility

DEVELOP E-MOBILITY

- All vehicles coming from **KOLKATA**

- All blocks in the **SUNDARBANS TOURIST CIRCUIT – LAND** and **WATERWAYS**

Call to action

TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT

- **Draw up a proposal for facilitating the transformation from conventional mobility to electric mobility – surface transport and water transport - in a phased manner.**

- **Create a subsidy plan for incentivising the transformation.**

- **Create charging infrastructure at select destination within the Sundarbans Tourism Circuit.**

- **Create a proposal for activity-based waterway travel which is also child friendly.**

Mobility to and within the Sundarbans using fossil fuel is very damaging to the environment. With tourism expected to increase, the damage would only intensify. It is suggested to convert the present mobility options (on road and in water) to electric-driven options. This would not only reduce air pollution, it would significantly minimise noise pollution. For this, one would also need to create charging stations at various locations.

Solid waste management solution

In the Sundarbans, unscientific practices of waste management has been one of the reasons for the decline in the number of foreign tourist in recent years. Hence, waste needs to be managed responsibly – both from an economic and an environment perspective.

It is suggested to develop scientific waste management solutions based on the internationally acclaimed 3R concept (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). The Government could consider deploying bio gas solutions for managing kitchen waste.

DEVELOP WASTE MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

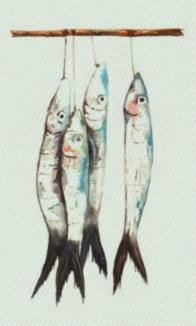All blocks in the **SUNDARBANS TOURIST CIRCUIT**

Call to action

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

Draw up a detailed solid waste management plan for every tourist destination.

SUNDARINI / PDDRDC

Develop a proposal for deploying biogas solutions in all villages.

Livelihood

Tourism revenue from the Sundarbans is not percolating to the local people. Majority of the revenue earned is pocketed by tour operators who are from outside the Sundarbans. This has only increased the deprivation among residents. As a result, their interest and stake in maintaining the pristine forest landscape is reducing.

To alter this position, the Sundarbans Tourism story is being pivoted on community-based tourism which involves and allows the local community to maintain major control over the management and the profits of the project.

It provides alternative economic opportunities, has the potential to create jobs and generate entrepreneurial opportunities for people from a variety of backgrounds, skills and experiences, including rural communities and especially women.

LIVELIHOOD DEVELOPMENT

All blocks in the **SUNDARBAN TOURIST CIRCUIT**

Call to action

TOURISM DEPARTMENT
- **Create a policy which states that no inputs are allowed from outside into the Sundarbans. Everything (natural capital and human capital) has to be sourced from within the Sundarbans circuit.**
- **Create awareness of the homestay funding policy at locations where homestays are to be developed.**
- **Create awareness of low-interest funding(up to 10 lacs) to entrepreneurs in the Sundarbans Tourist Circuit.**

SKILL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
- **Create comprehensive plans to train locals in enhancing existing skills**
- **Create a blueprint for sending locals to urban institutions for hotel & hospitality management skills.**
- **Create a proposal for identifying new skills required from an eco-tourism perspective and training local residents in these new skills.**
- **Update exsisting for training locals to become professional tourist guides.**

FOREST DEPARTMENT
Develop a plan to provide training to local youth to become tourist guides for boat rides, mud walks, forest treks and coastal treks.

SUNDARINI/AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT
Develop high-yielding seed varieties to help farmers increase their farm produce.

DRDC & SHG/SE
Prepare a plan to increase self-employment among women residing in the Sundarbans through the formation and strengthening of SHGs, providing funds and hand-holding.

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION
Create teams for maintaining cleanliness of tourist destinations on a sustained basis.

SUNDARINI – A LIVELIHOOD DRIVER
Need a comprehensive plan to increase the revenue generated under the 'SUNDARINI' brand.

- Increase women farmer participation in supplying to the co-operative.
- Widen the Sundarini franchisee network across West Bengal and the adjoining states.
- Increase the product basket under the 'SUNDARINI' brand.
- Strengthen the infrastructure and supply chain mechanism.
- Invest in digital brand-building campaigns.

Governance

As things stand today, tourism in the Sundarbans is largely unregulated and indisciplined. The tourism operators, largely residing in urban pincodes, are least concerned about their own responsibility in maintaining the natural sanctity of the area; thus lodges/hotels/resorts are springing up clearing mangroves, flouting Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) for laws and pollution guidelines.

In the long run, this uncontrolled tourism is not only detrimental to the Sundarban landscape but also the wellbeing of tourists. Short term economic benefits have resulted in significant degradation of protected areas.

Hence it is highly advisable that tourism growth is guided towards the path of 'Community owned Eco-tourism' in its true sense and be managed sustainably.
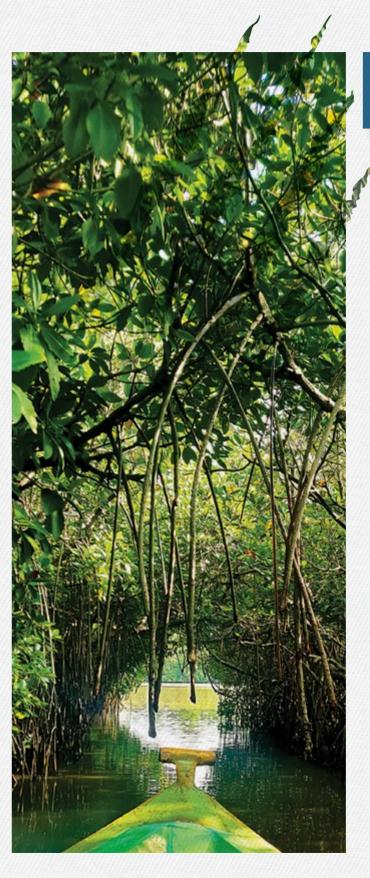
GOVERNANCE TO COVER

All blocks in the **SUNDARBAN TOURIST CIRCUIT**

Call to action

SUNDARBANS AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

- Sundarbans Affairs Department should be positioned as the Nodal Agency for all policies and affairs of the Sundarbans area.

- The Sundarbans Affairs Department will need to create a separate Regulatory/Governance wing headed by a senior bureaucrat with sub offices in each block.

- The Regulatory Wing, in consultation with relevant Line Departments, will develop a detailed responsible tourism framework and policies outlining the role and responsibilities of all stakeholders engaged in tourism.

- Institutionalise a mechanism to checks and balances for compliance with the policies failing which license renewal of the service provider would be stopped.

- Institutionalise a checking mechanism where nothing from outside can be brought into the Sundarbans Tourist Circuit by all stakeholders.

- Create a framework for assessing the performance of tour operators based on feedback from varied

tourism stakeholders (especially tourists) – utilise the same to for their certification.

- Creating annual competitions between homestay owners/resort owners and other stakeholder categories on the basis of environment sustainability parameters.

- Incentivise/reward tourists to provide geniune feedback.

- All departments and agencies working in the Sundarbans area to report to the Sundarbans Affairs Department, who will need to report higher authorities periodically.

- All policies formed relevant to the Sundarbans should be referred to the Sundarbans Affairs Department for their inputs before being implemented.

- Seek to transform the transactional framework to a digital platform for centralised control and monitoring. The data captured would also serve as a platform for outlining the strategic direction forward.

DIGITAL GOVERNANCE – AN IMMEDIATE NECESSITY

For sustaining tourism in the Sundarbans Tourist Circuit, it is essential to bring all stakeholders on a common platform digitally.

Suggestion

Create a Sundarbans website – the digital gateway to the Sundarbans. This all-encompassing platform will be developed to ensure that all service providers are registered here. It would also have multiple payment gateways which allows for financial transactions for all stakeholders.

About Sundarbans: This should include unique aspects of each destination based on possible tourism experiences. Tourist feedback could also be populated here for allowing prospective tourists to take a informed decision.

For tourists: Tourists would need to register here for entering the Sundarbans. They could utilise this

portal to identify the spots they wish to visit, fix their itinerary, book hotels/homestays and boat rides. There would also be a feedback and grievance mechanism.
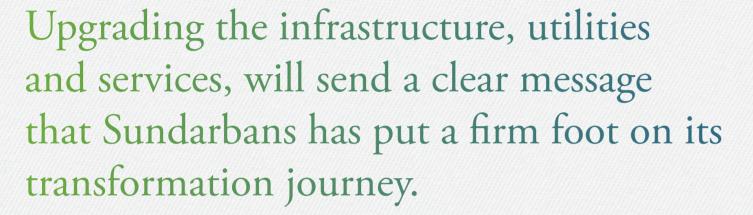
For service providers: They would need to register themselves on this portal. It would allow them to renew licenses and register grievances.

For product marketers: It would allow them to market their products to the world at large.

For the Nodal agency: This portal could provide a dashboard of the Nodal agency who could assess the performance of the tourism sector from a macro and micro perspective.

This digital platform will continue to evolve over a period of time in keeping with technology evolution and changes in the dynamics of the tourism sector.

Upgrading the infrastructure, utilities and services, will send a clear message that Sundarbans has put a firm foot on its transformation journey.

The next important step is creating facilities and experiences at various destinations within the Sundarbans circuit that draw deep-pocketed tourists from India and beyond.

This would require two approaches
1) Uplifting existing experiences and
2) Creating new ones.

Keeping this setting in the background, some interesting options are proposed that can cater to the diversifying need of tourists.

Farm Tourism

Farm-tourism will be an association between tourism and agriculture that serves as a key component of an ecologically and socially responsible tourism. It is essentially a natural farming based tourism development that can be another innovative alternative to the 'normal practice of tourism'; it can act on commercial basis for educational and recreation purpose – also envisages a supplementary income option for the farmers, showcase their unique farming ways offering healthy food to tourists.

Heritage tourism

Sundarban has a history that dates back to more than two thousand years and has gone through several natural calamities. Many archaeological sources, temple remains, metal and terracotta figures, historical documents, scriptures bear testimony to the fact. These can be woven into thematic stories and presented to the tourists, who come from various backgrounds to be witness to the history and culture of the Sundarbans.
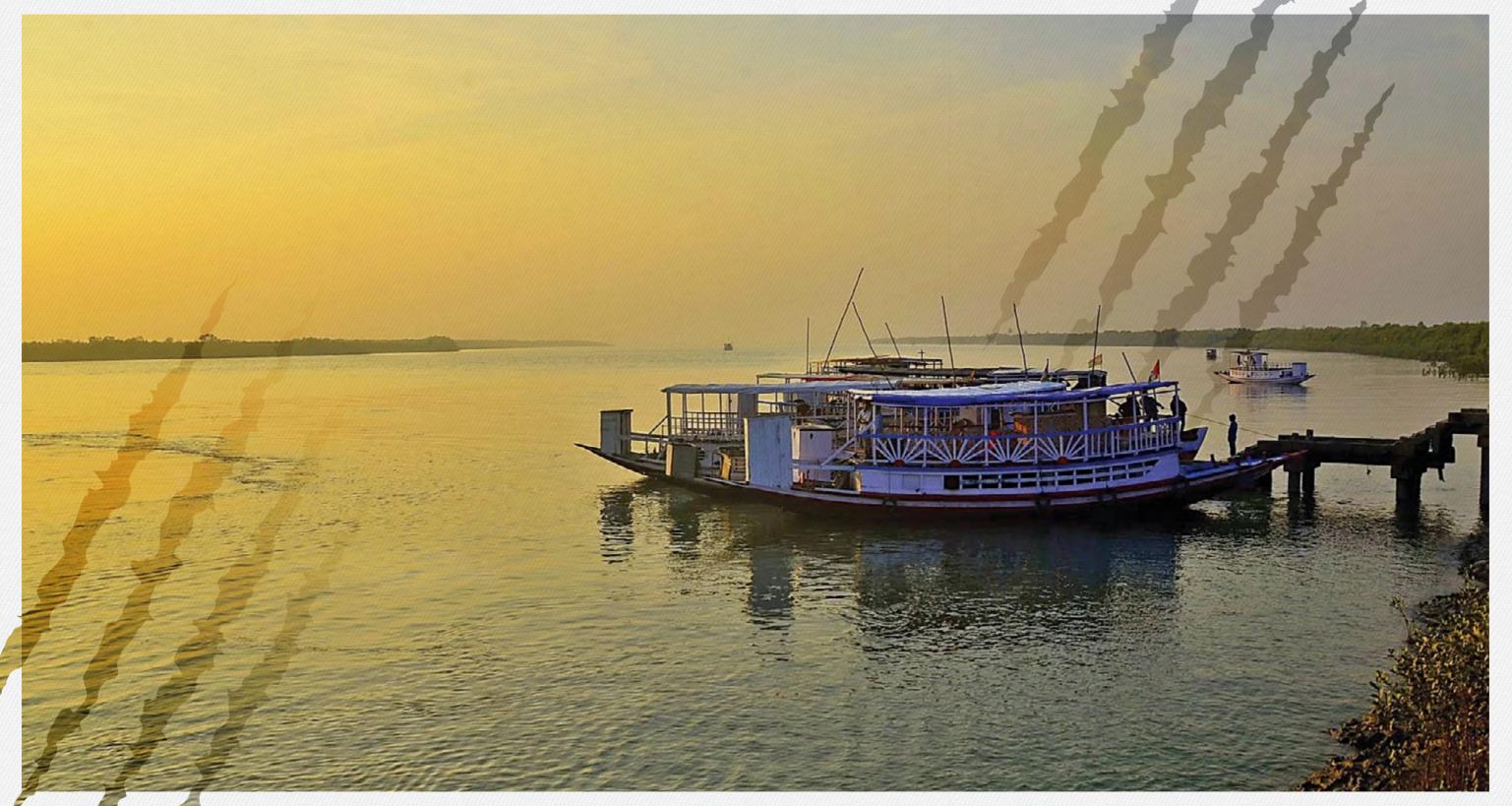
Adventure Tourism

Today's young and not-so-young tourists seek some adventure which allows them to undertake physically challenging outdoor activities that provide mental fulfilment and a thrilling experience. Leveraging existing resources, the following options are suggested:

1) **Coastal treks:** The 14 km stretch from Fraserganj to Haripur in Namkhana Block, and 8 km stretch from Buraburir tot & Gobardhanpur in G-plot of Patharpratima block can be wonderful destinations for a coastal trek and beach study.

2) **Mud walks:** There are dense mangrove patches outside the protected area along the village sides where mud walking in low tide can be an adventurous exercise. The tourists can also take part in measurement of trees, contribute to data for carbon sequestration of mangroves for the Sundarbans.
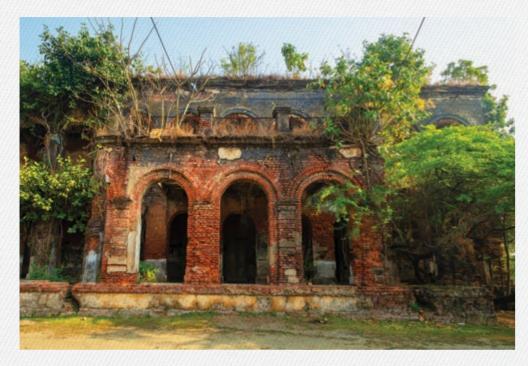
Destination-wise action plans & suggestions

Canning

Canning is the gateway to the Sundarbans. It is situated on the western banks of the Matla River. This town is named after Lord Canning, the former Governor General of India.

Restoration of the Lord Canning House

The Canning House, built by Lord Canning, the then Governor General of India, is situated on the banks of the Bidyadhari river in the Canning Sub-division of the South 24 Parganas district.

Recreation of Canning Port

This port was developed as a gateway to Kolkata, which has all but been lost in time. It was the biggest commercial debacles of British India. There is a need to recreate this port to relive those times.

Call to action

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION & CULTURAL AFFAIRS (WB HERITAGE COMMISSION) / WBSEDCL

Leverage the PPP model to draw up plans to reconstruct this heritage site and develop it into a tourist attraction.

TOURISM DEPARTMENT

Project funding.

Suggestion:

- It is suggested to build a museum portraying the history, archaeology, culture etc. of the region.

- The journey of human civilizations, could be interestingly presented through narrations, story-telling, various model structures, documentary evidences of archaeological figures and a light and sound show which will bring to life history in a unique form.

Development of Dabu

Dabu is nature lover's paradise, located on the banks of the Matla river, where tourists can soak in the beauty of the ecosystem and the rural environment.

Promoting Traditional Skills

Canning is recognised in the South 24 Parganas district for its traditional skills in pottery, salt making, wax and boat making.

Mangrove Interpretation Center (Canning 1 Block)

Create a center of learning where knowledge enthusiasts get an insight into mangroves, their uniqueness and their criticality.

Call to action

IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT & FOREST DEPARTMENT

Draw up a detailed plan for developing the location as a peace-lover's hub.

Call to action

SKILL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Draw up a detailed plan to enhancing the above-mentioned skills.

MGNREGA

Get local artisans to enroll for the program.

TOURISM DEPARTMENT

Funding of the program.

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING DEPARTMENT

Facilitate marketing of the products.

Call to action

FOREST DEPARTMENT / MGNREGA

Project design, development and execution.

Gosaba

Gosaba is a community development block in the v sub-division of the South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal that serves as an administrative division.

Gosaba was developed by Lord Hamilton who's estate remains. His bungalow has been transformed into a museum making it an excellent place for a throwback into the history of the area.

Gosaba is recognised as the gateway to the massive dense forest. It would take you to Sajnekhali and Sudhanyakhali, watch towers in the core area of the Sundarbans. This combination position Gosaba as a compelling get away.

Gosaba has its own hospitals, panchayats and schools – signifying that it is better placed than other tourist spots in the Sundarbans.

Restoration of Beacon Bungalow

The current condition of the bungalow does not inspire footfalls. It needs to be uplifted into a tourist friendly destination.

PROPOSED PLAN
(DPR with vetted estimate submitted)

PROPOSED MUSEUM BLOCK AND TOILET BLOCK
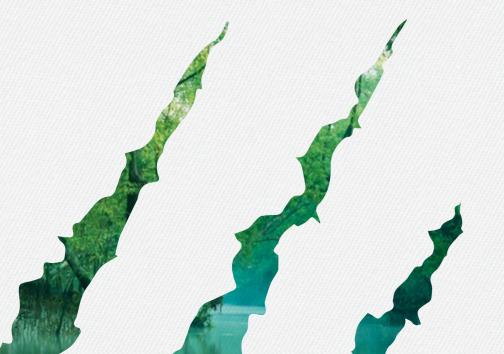
PROPOSED GUEST HOUSE BLOCK

PROPOSED TICKET COUNTER

Restoration of Hamilton Bungalow

The Hamilton Bungalow is much more than just any structure. It's an inflection point in the history of India. The museum needs to be refurbished and uplifted.

Call to action

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PWD, SOUTH 24 PARGANAS

Execution of the approved plan.

TOURISM DEPARTMENT/ SUNDARBANS AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Project funding.

PROPOSED PLAN
(DPR with vetted estimate submitted)

PROPOSED SEATING PLAZA

FEATURE WALLS WITH RESTORATION EXISITING STRUCTURE

PATHWAY AROUND POND

TRELLIS ZONE

DECK AND PROPOSED GHAT

Gosaba Lake

The Lake is very important as recently a water treatment plant has been installed and the lake water is being treated for supply in the Gosaba area. It is to be mentioned that since the river water is saline, fresh water supply is very important.

PROPOSED PLAN (DPR with vetted estimate submitted)

GOSABA LAKE- PART 1   GOSABA LAKE- PART 2

PHASE - 1
• Open air theatre
• Enhancing the bridge
• Jogging/Walking tracks
• Sitting Kiosks
• Embankments along the banks of the Lake

PHASE – 2
• Food Park
• Jogging/Walking tracks
• Sitting Kiosks
• Enhancing the bridge

• Landscaped zones
• Paddle boat facilities
• Embankments along the banks of the Lake

Call to action

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PWD, SOUTH 24 PARGANAS
Execution of the proposed plan.

TOURISM DEPARTMENT/ SUNDARBANS AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
Project funding.

Home Stay with fishing zone
Creating a dedicated area fishing/ crab catching zone (fee-based) to be developed into a dining hub for seafood restaurants/eateries.

Training
There is an immediate need to train local residents in managing tourists. The curriculum should also include spoken language training (English and Hindi).

Restoration of historical places
Delving back into history is gaining prominence with tourists, especially foreigners. There are a number of such tourist attractions such as Marichjhapi, Netidhopani temple (400-year-old), 100+ year school.

Call to action

TOURISM DEPARTMENT / FOREST DEPARTMENT
Continue to develop and fund new homestays.
Plan for 'Night stay in boats' for tourists in a regulated manner.

FISHERY DEPARTMENT
A detailed plan (includes site selection and execution) for creating a tourist fishing zone. Like the Benfish model.

Call to action

SKILL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Create and operationalize the training center.

FOREST DEPARTMENT
Provide training to locals on becoming guides.

Call to action

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES (HERITAGE COMMISSION)
Draw up a detailed plan for the restoration of places with historical and archaeological importance.

Jharkhali

Jharkhali Island, a hidden pearl surrounded by dense mangroves, is situated in the Canning sub-division, West Bengal. It directly connects to the Ganges delta which gives meandering waterways experiences.

The Sundarbans Wild Animals Park is a must visit place for the animal lovers. The jungle experience at multiple spots - Dobanki camp, Bonnie camp, Burirdabri camp and Netidhopani watch tower – keep the hopes of spotting the elusive Royal Bengal Tiger alive. The noises of the forest and its otherwise stillness will engulf your senses.

The water experience – to the watch tower or a day in the waterways is relaxing to say the least. The unique canopy walk in the Dobanki camp is about being at one with nature in the lap nature. Literally!

The Government is working on increasing the prominence of this historic destination of the Sundarban Tourist circuit.

An Eco-Tourism hub & Home Stays

The eco-tourism hub will integrate tourists with the rural backdrop while retaining contemporary luxuries. There will be a place for the Sundarbans special delicacies and for rural/tribal dance, plays and storytelling sessions.

A Mud Walk experience

The Government will need to train guides who will create trails for mud walks through the dense mangroves. This would provide an unforgetting experience for tourists.

Training & skill development

The Jharkhali eco-tourism hub which is not in use currently can be converted into a training & skill development center.

Mangrove experience center

The experience center will allow walks through the mangroves. It will have **dedicated areas for tourists to plant mangrove saplings**. It will also include homestays for researchers who seek deeper knowledge on these trees.

Zoological Garden

The Government has planned to set up the world's first mangrove zoological garden. The zoo will be home to a number of rare and globally threatened animals.

60

Homestays being set up by the Tourism and Forest Departments.

Call to action

TOURIST DEPARTMENT/ FOREST DEPARTMENT

Draw up a plan to develop the eco-tourist village.

This could be developed as a model village which can be extended to Maipith, G-Plot and Kumarmari over the coming years.

Call to action

MGNREGA

Enroll local youth to become guides.

FOREST DEPARTMENT

Identify mud tracks which are safe and exciting.

Train local youth for becoming guides.

Call to action

TECHNO INDIA GROUP

Develop a plan to convert the existing structure into a training center and operationalize it.

Call to action

MGNREGA / FOREST DEPARTMENT

Develop a detailed proposal for creating the experience center.

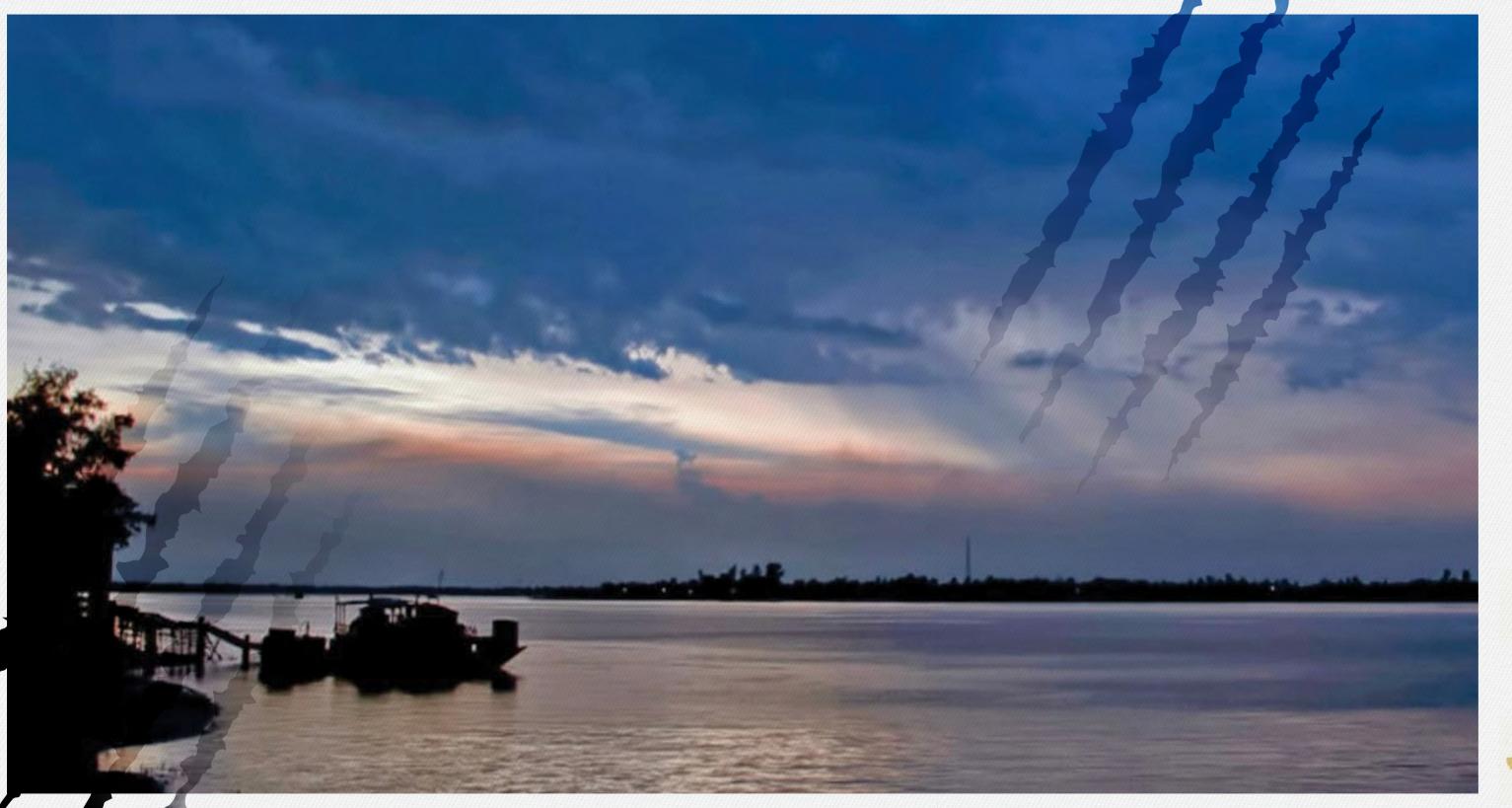**Call to action**

FOREST DEPARTMENT

Develop the Zoo Project in a phased manner as envisaged.

Raidighi

Located in the Mathurapur II block, Raidighi is truly an enchanting weekend destination, which offers a visual treat to nature lovers as it provides an opportunity to spot wildlife and birds. The place is also revered from a religious perspective owing to the number of temples and shrines. Built in the 11th Century, Jatar Deul, a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva is an important tourist spot.

Raidighi also boasts of some remarkable architecture that is reminiscent of the Maurya, Gupta, Pala and Sena periods – important phases in West Bengal's illustrious history. Moreover, the rural Bengali culture, its fairs, festivals and food make it an ideal location for a break from the monotony of regular lives.

Existing entrance of complex

To promote tourism and develop Raidighi as one of the entry points for the Sundarbans. The area around Raidighi's 'Dighi' is being developed into a tourist spot as the first phase of development.

The total area around the waterbody to be developed is of 9.8 Acre. The development of the waterbody is divided into two phases. This project will pave the pathway for future development of this region into a tourist spot.

PROPOSED PLAN (DPR with vetted estimate submitted)

Call to action

FOREST DEPARTMENT, MGNREGA, FISHERY DEPARTMENT, MPLAD & AGRI-IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT, SUNDARBAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Execute the proposed plan for transforming this destination.

Aerial view of the proposed site

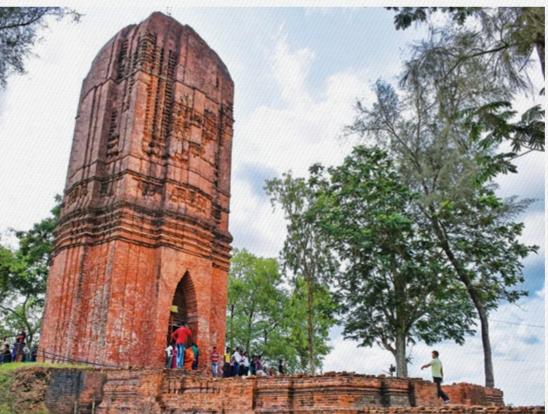*Zorbing*

The Oat

Musical Fountain

Boating

Fishing Deck

Jatar Deul

A religious hub complemented with fair, festivals and food, make Jatar Deul an ideal location for a short break.

Call to action

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION & CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Draw up a plan to increase tourist footfall to this destination.

Maipith

Maipith is a village and gram panchayat in the Kultali CD block of the Baruipur sub-division of the South 24 Parganas district in West Bengal, under the administration of the Kultali police station. The quaint and surreal surroundings introduces the tourist to village life. Meandering through multiple islands near Maipith is quite a breath-taking journey.

Maipith has the potential to be developed into an interesting tourist destination. This destination can be marketed to provide a 'Farm Tourism' experience comprising farming, bullock cart rides and fishing, among others.

Call to action

TOURISM DEPARTMENT/LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

Draw up a blueprint for the village experience – key focus to be on training local residents on engaging with tourists.

FISHERY DEPARTMENT

Create a proposal for developing a crab cultivation and catching zone.

SUNDARINI

Develop the honey co-operative and processing unit into an experience center for tourists.

IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT

Reconstruct the existing structure and refurnish with contemporary facilities.

Piyali

This little island is located at the confluence of the Matla and Piyali rivers. The lush green landscape coupled with the blue waters of the rivers is a balm to the aching mind. Boating on the Piyali river would rejuvenate your muscles and your eyesight as you spot exotic birds resting on tree branches.

This island could provide an interesting weekend getaway from the urban jungle for peace and tranquility. The Government would need to create a create the relevant infrastructure and facilities to position it as such.

Call to action

WBTDCL

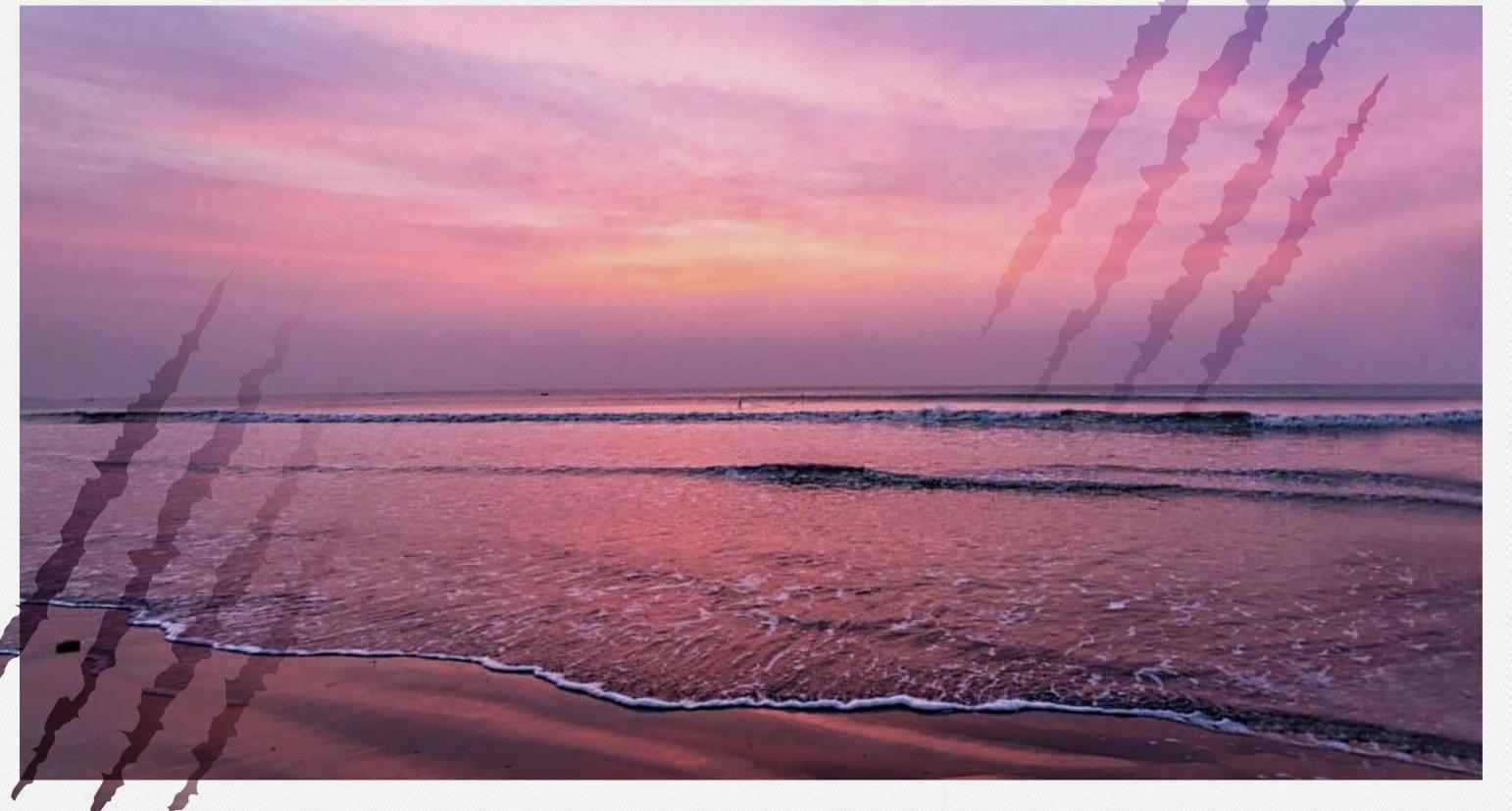Existing tourist lodge to be upgraded with contemporary facilities and a plush décor.

LAND AND LAND REFORM DEPARTMENT

Transfer land to the Tourism Department for development of this destination.

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Create a proposal to develop Piyali as a relaxation hub with activities such as boating and fishing.

Gobardhanpur

Gobardhanpur beach is under G-plot, Patharpratima block, West Bengal. This untouched beach about 130 kms. away from the hustle and bustle, stress and strain of urban life, promises to provide peace of mind in the isolation of nature. This virgin beach could be a peaceful weekend destination that allows a traveler tranquil serenity in the lap of nature.

PROPOSED PLAN (DPR with vetted estimate submitted)

- SPACE FOR ESSENTIAL INTEGRATED SERVICES
- LAND PARCEL FOR S.H.G AND CRAFTS VILLAGE (A&B)
- PRINCIPAL VEHICULAR ACCESS TO SITE
- LAND PARCEL FOR MID-LUXURY HOTEL ACCOMMODATION
- LAND PARCEL FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION
- LAND PARCEL FOR POLICE OUTPOST
- LAND PARCEL FOR AFFORDABLE HOTEL ACCOMMODATION
- LAND PARCEL FOR LUXURY HOTEL ACCOMMODATION
- LINE OF C.R.Z
- EXISTING CANAL
- PROPOSED ELEVATED PATHWAY

THE ELEVATED BOARDWALK

The 1.2 km long Elevated Boardwalk having an area of approximately 40,000 sq. ft. is a pedestrian pathway starting from the principal vehicular access and ending at the beach. Being elevated, it ensures that the flora and fauna of the site remains untouched by tourists. This Boardwalk will comprise of facilities such as Public Convenience zones, view points, relaxation pods and cafeterias.

The Elevated Boardwalk shall also divide the site into parcels, each of which in turn can be developed individually as per tourist requirements and demands at a later date.

Entrance & Public Convenience facility

Relaxation pods

Call to action

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PWD, DIAMOND HARBOUR

Execution of the proposed plan.

TOURISM DEPARTMENT

Project funding.

WBTDCL

Explore opportunities for innovative sporting activities such as E-biking & Cycling.

Call to action

FOREST DEPARTMENT

Draw up a detailed roadmap to uplift this crocodile project.

ZILA PARISHAD

Renovate the existing infrastructure with aesthetic appeal and contemporary facilities.

Bhagabatpur Crocodile Project

Being the only crocodile project in West Bengal, the Bhagabatpur Crocodile Project has emerged as an important tourist site. It is located on the bank of the Saptamukhi estuary.
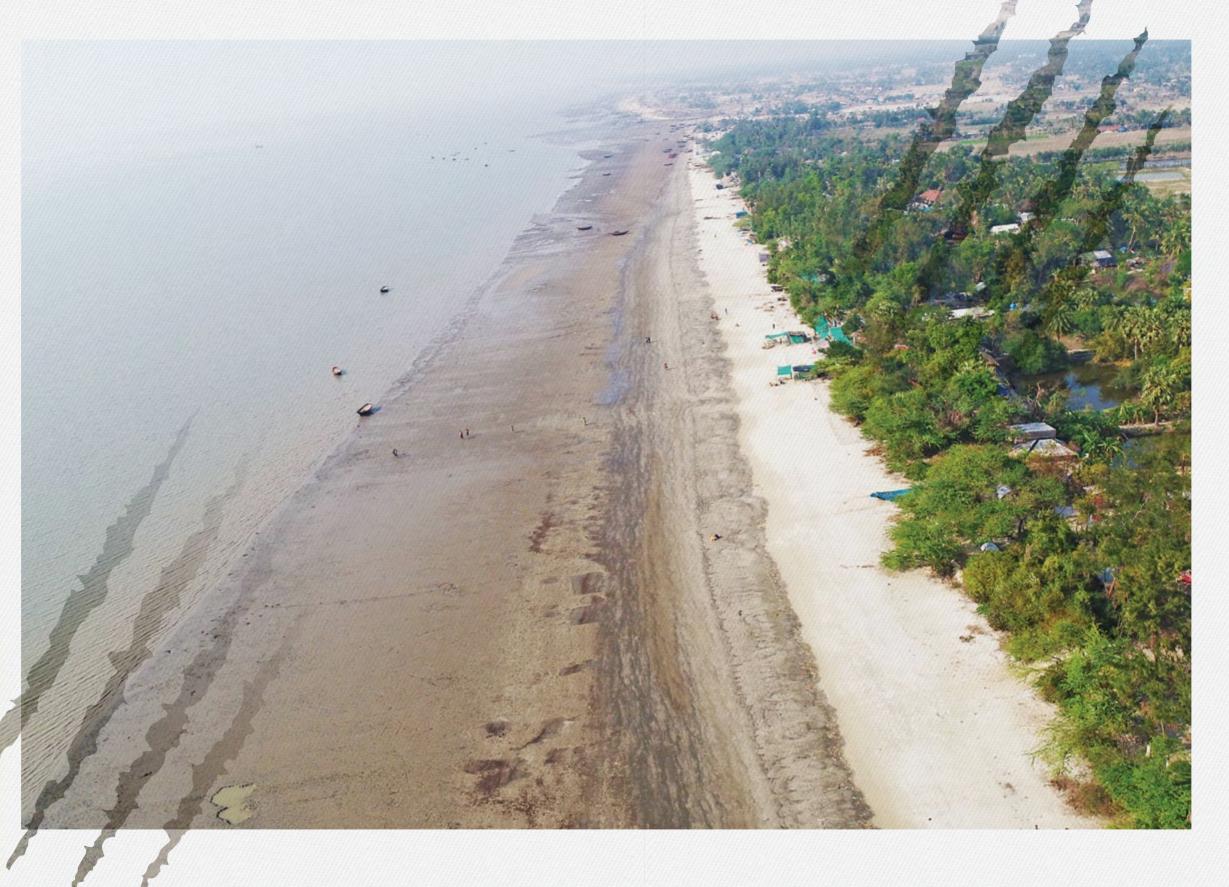
Mousuni
Island

Mousuni Island is a well-kept secret known only to select few. Mousuni is a small island near Namkhana, West Bengal, that is connected to the Sundarbans Delta. The island was built by the British to trade salt and dry fish, and now has golden sandy beaches, mesmerising orange sunsets, and a breathtaking view of the horizon.

Mousuni island is at the confluence of the river and the sea and was damaged by Amphaan and Yaas cyclones. The Government is planning to transform this island into a new-age tourism destination.

Call to action

GANGASAGAR BAKKHALI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Chalk out a detailed plan for the development of Mousuni Island into a tourist destination.

Suggestion:

- **An Eco-Tourism hub:** This zone could have high-end resorts on the beach which would include multiple facilities such as 1) handicraft hub 2) culinary hub 3) relaxation hub 4) experience hub (salt making, fishing, crab catching, boating) 5) village interaction zone.

- **Adventure tourism:** The zone will need to be equipped with camping facilities, fishing, barbeque and cooking facilities, among others.

GANGASAGAR BAKKHALI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY / TOURISM DEPARTMENT

Tourism Governance: Create a policy framework for controlling unregulated and undisciplined tourism. The policy should detail the do's and don'ts to be adopted by all stakeholders, directly and indirectly, linked with tourism.

Bakkhali

Well-connected with and proximate to Kolkata, this under-utilised beach provides unique experiences of the sea, dense mangroves and sea food delicacies.

Bakkhali is a village in the South 24 Parganas district that is under the jurisdiction of the Namkhana police station in the Namkhana CD block of the Kakdwip sub-division of the South 24 Parganas district.

PROPOSED PLAN (DPR with vetted estimate submitted)

Bakkhali Beach Front Development

The south facing crescent shaped beach of Bakkhali is one of the rare ones in the world that offer great views of both sunrise and sunset.

A beach walk is proposed for a distance of approximately 1 Km both ways from the central Biswa Bangla Fountain. The beach walk is designed to make the space interesting. It is provided with food stalls, souvenir shops on the beach side. On the seaside a wide promenade is provided to enjoy the view. Some seatings are provided for the visitors with shaded benches. Cycle tracks may be provided for enjoying the long viewing gallery.

The upliftment project will transform this tourist destination into an international getaway for well-heeled tourists.

Call to action

GANGASAGAR BAKKHALI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Implement the proposed Bakkhali Beach Front Development Project.

TOURISM DEPARTMENT / DEPARTMENT OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT & MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS
Project funding.

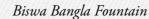**WBTDCL**
Prepare a plan for a sea cruise to the Lothian Island.

TOURISM DEPARTMENT
Create a zipline/ropeway attraction from Bakkhali to Lothian Island, while ensuring safety of tourists at Lothian Island.

The Crab-shaped restaurant with a Central Double Height Aquarium
- The seating area revolves around the aquarium providing customers a pleasant view both from inside and outside.
- The two levels of the restaurant provides eatery at both levels.
- The ground floor area is air conditioned with a glass façade to enhance the aesthetic value.

Biswa Bangla Fountain

Food court

Henry
Island

Henry Island is an island near Bakkhali in South 24 Parganas of West Bengal, India. This island is a virgin beach and home to millions of red crabs. The Government could look at transforming this beach into the Venice of the Sundarbans.

Call to action

FISHERY DEPARTMENT

Create a detailed plan for the development of Henry Island to transform this virgin beach into a tourist hotspot.

Suggestion:

Make this a unique aqua experience.

- **Cottages on stilts:** To be built in water which allows the tourist to feel that he is at one with the sea.

- **A floating market:** Market place in the waterbody which allows the tourist to tour the market in small boats.

- **A floating theatre:** The theatre is created on water. Tourists watch events and performance from the comfort of boats.

- **A beach aquarium:** This would be a one-of-its-kind facility which will introduce the tourists to the various sea life of the Sundarbans.

- **Duck rearing:** Tourists get to integrate with the island folk and get information of duck rearing.

- **Other activities:** Creating facilities for water sports, angling; a water cruise to Lothian Island.

Sagar
Island

Sagar Island is an island in the Ganges delta, lying on the continental shelf of the Bay of Bengal about 100 kms south of Kolkata. The confluence of the River Ganga (River Hooghly) and the Bay of Bengal is at Gangasagar.

Every year during Makar Sankranti (mid-January), lakhs of devotees from across the world congregate at Gangasagar for a sacred dip at the convergence of River Ganga and the Bay of Bengal. After the sacred dip, the pilgrims offer puja at the Kapil Muni Temple or Ashram.

PROPOSED PLANS TO BE SUBMITTED

Proposed Beach Walkway at Gangasagar – By GBDA

A 100-Bedded dormitory at Gangasagar – By GBDA & UDMA

Currently, Sagar Island is only associated with the Gangasagar Mela. As such tourist footfall is largely concentrated during this period of the year. But the Government is keen on developing this destination as a tourist destination for the entire year.

Call to action

GANGASAGAR BAKKHALI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (GBDA)/ DEPARTMENT OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT & MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS (UDMA)

Execute the proposed plans.

Tourism trail through Mangroves at Gangasagar - UDMA

SAVE SAGAR

Call to action

GBDA / IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT / ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT / UDMA

Gangasagar sea beach protection work as suggested by IIT Madras to be taken up immediately.

UDMA

Undertaking Mangrove plantation at vulnerable areas.

Decentralisation of Gangasagar

Sagar Island experiences tremendous tourist pressure during the Gangasagar season where millions come to this destination. Also, since tourism infrastructure, facilities and services are primarily concentrated in this area, tourism is restricted to this zone only. Hence, there is a need to decentralize the tourist pressure.

Call to action

GBDA AND THE SAGAR DEVELOPMENT BLOCK

Need to identify new spots for tourism and develop the same.

Suggestion:

Some of the suggested spots are
1. Bhoisagar near Mohisamani
2. Nath Sarovar
3. Lighthouse, Rudranagar
4. Bahirplot

Enroute Destinations

Interestingly, a trip to the Sundarbans will give you much more than you can ever imagine… as the attractions start well before you even reach the archipelago.

Some of these destination are standalone attractions while others are pass-through tourists spots en route.

This promises to attract multiple visits to this deltaic nature's nest.
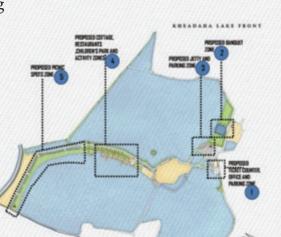
Let's take a look.

Keyadaha

The Pirtala Fish Production Bheri's in Keyadaha in very proximate to the Ruby Crossing on the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass and is an excellent get away place. With an overall area of more than 70 Acres of which 90% is a water body, it positions itself as a perfect place for a day long break to the people of Kolkata and around.

PROPOSED PLAN
(DPR with vetted estimate submitted)

The project will be developed in two phases and will include the following:

- Entrance Gate and Office Block
- Cottages with Deck
- Restaurant with Office and Reception Block
- Fishing Decks, Sitting areas and Kiosks
- Jetty and Paddle Boating
- Watch Towers
- New Ghat Area
- Picnic Spots
- Toilet Block

KEYADAHA LAKE FRONT

Call to action

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (SOUTH 24 PARGANAS)

Execute the proposed project for the beautification of the Keyadaha Water Front.

Diamond Harbour

Diamond Harbour is a town and a municipality of the South 24 Parganas district in West Bengal. The town was originally known as Hajipur, as it was situated on the banks of the Hajipur creek. The name Diamond Harbour was given by the British, who used it for both river and sea shipping.

PROPOSED PLAN
(DPR with vetted estimate submitted)

Based on the urban character, edge condition, width of the walkway, traffic movement, density and use pattern the entire stretch is divided into six segments and six nodes. The idea is to prioritize pedestrian movement. So effort is made to create a continuous walking stretch from the jetty to the end of the Kellar Math.

Call to action

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (DIAMOND HARBOUR)

Execute the proposed Diamond Harbour Riverside beautification project.

Netaji's Ancestral House

Located at Subhash Gram, this house is witness to the playful years of young Subhash Chandra Bose for he spent his puja vacations here. One can still feel his presence in the furniture and belongings that have been preserved in the house since then.

Baruipur Rajbari I

As meticulous protectors of its ancient heritage, the descendants of Raja Rajballav Roychowdhury have kept alive the traditional festivals which the Rajbari had witnessed for over three centuries.

Baruipur Rajbari II

This palatial building in Baruipur has hosted many distinguished names in the literary and business world of its time. This Rajbari originally belonged to Maharshi Debendranath Tagore.

Ghutiyari Sharif

Ghutiyari Sharif, near river Vidyadhari is the resting place Gaji Baba who is known to have brought rainfall to this region when it was struck with severe drought. He lost his life in the process.

Gopinath Jiu Temple Premises

This nine- domed Navaratna temple has a 'Ras Mancha', a 'Jhulan Mancha' and a 'Nat Mandir' where the floors were made of Italian marble. Unlike most architecture of current times, this temple does not have plaster; rather the bricks were polished in a manner to give it a pink coloured look.

Achipur Chinese Temple

Achipur, believed to be the first Chinese settlement in India, is named after its founder, trader Tong Achew. The 300 year old temple is dedicated to the Chinese deities, locally called 'Khude' and 'Khudi'. The traditional ways of Chinese fortune-telling are still practiced here.

Considerable work has been done in kick-starting the transformation of the Sundarbans circuit into a tourism hub. Key places have been identified. Plans and proposals have been drawn up.

The ready-proposals await a buy-in and a final sign-off.

REVAMPING OF THE BEACON BUNGALOW, GOSABA

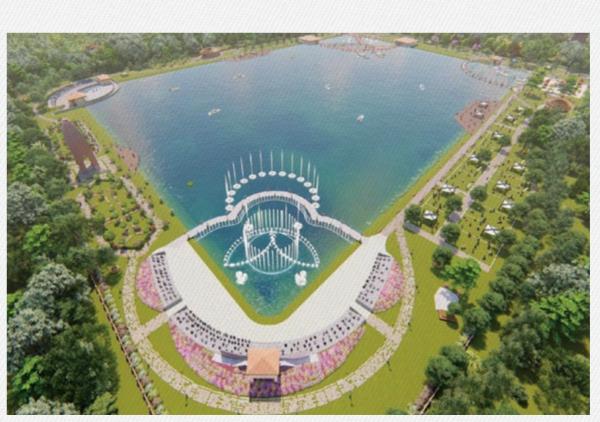**EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PWD (SOUTH 24 PARGANAS)**

REVAMPING OF THE HAMILTON BUNGALOW, GOSABA

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PWD (SOUTH 24 PARGANAS)

GOSABA LAKE

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PWD (SOUTH 24 PARGANAS)

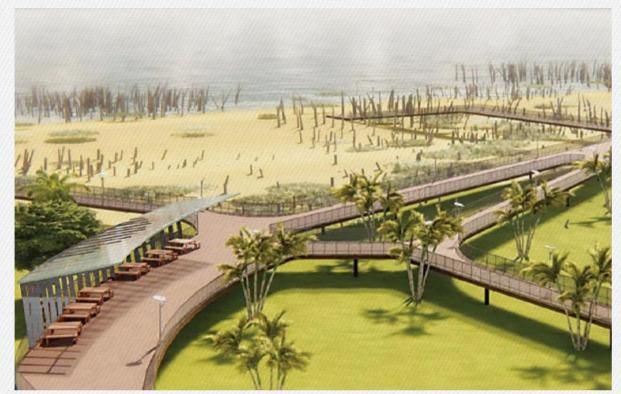
DEVELOPMENT OF THE DIGHI, RAIDIGHI

FOREST DEPARTMENT, MGNREGA, FISHERY DEPARTMENT, MPLAD & AGRI-IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT

ELEVATED BOARD WALK, GOBARDHANPUR

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PWD (SOUTH 24 PARGANAS)

BAKKHALI BEACH FRONT DEVELOPMENT, BAKKHALI

GANGASAGAR BAKKHALI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

PROPOSED BEACH WALKWAY AT GANGASAGAR, SAGAR ISLAND

GANGASAGAR BAKKHALI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

A 100-BEDDED DORMITORY AT GANGASAGAR

GANGASAGAR BAKKHALI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY & DEPARTMENT OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT & MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

BEAUTIFICATION OF THE KEYDAHA WATER FRONT

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PWD (SOUTH 24 PARGANAS)

DIAMOND HARBOUR RIVERFRONT REJUVENATION

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PWD (DIAMOND HARBOUR)

Department wise Responsibilities

SUNDARBANS AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Jetties: Rebuilding jetties, creating facilities and desilting of waterways / Introduce floating jetties made of Fibre which are more effective and easier to maintain. *(p32)*

Water availability: Create a policy which forbids resort and homestays to draw ground water for tourism purposes. *(p42)*

Authentic rural cuisine: Draw up a detailed proposal on setting up the dining experience leveraging the PPP model. *(p50)*

Training: Monitoring the training calendar and its effectiveness. *(p51)*

Plastic free mission: Draw up a plan for reducing plastic utilisation in the entire circuit in a phased manner; create a plan for developing products with eco-friendly material. *(p56)*

Governance: The Sundarbans Affairs Department will need to create as separate Regulatory/ Governance wing headed by a senior bureaucrat with sub offices in each block / The Regulatory Wing, in consultation with relevant Line Departments, will develop a detailed responsible tourism framework and policies outlining the role and responsibilities of all stakeholders engaged in tourism / Institutionalise a mechanism to check and balance for compliance with the policies failing which license renewal of the service provider would be stopped / Create a framework for assessing the performance of tour operators based on feedback from varied tourism stakeholders (especially tourists) – utilise the same to for their certification. *(p64)*

Gosaba (Restoration of Beacon Bungalow): Project funding. *(p76)*

Gosaba (Restoration of Hamilton Bungalow): Project funding. *(p78)*

Gosaba (Restoration & beautification of Gosaba lake): Project funding. *(p80)*

Raidighi (Dighi development & beautification): Execute the proposed plan. *(p88)*

TOURISM DEPARTMENT

Pitstops: Improve utilisation of PATHER SATHI infrastructure. *(p30)*

Gates: Leverage the PPP model to develop gates. *(p31)*

Jetties: Introduce floating jetties made of Fibre. *(p32)*

Signage: Develop and implement a comprehensive signage plan / Identify spots within the Tourism Circuit to set up awareness monuments/signages. *(p38)*

Accommodation: Improve facilities and aesthetics of existing hotels / Develop homestays in select destinations / Invite private players to create plush resorts. *(p49)*

Authentic rural cuisine: Draw up a detailed proposal on setting up the dining experience leveraging the PPP model. *(p50)*

Branding & Awareness: Create an across-the-board plan for branding and awareness of the Sundarbans as an eco-tourism hub. *(p54)*

Plastic free mission: Draw up a plan for reducing plastic utilisation in the entire circuit in a phased manner; create a plan for developing products with eco-friendly material. *(p56)*

Livelihood: Create a policy which states that no inputs are allowed from outside into the Sundarbans / Create awareness of the homestay and business funding policies / Draft a detailed plan to train locals to become professional tourist guides. *(p61)*

Restoration of Canning House: Project funding. *(p72)*

Canning (Promoting traditional skill): Funding the training program. *(p73)*

Gosaba (Restoration of Beacon Bungalow): Project funding. *(p76)*

Gosaba (Restoration of Hamilton Bungalow): Project funding. *(p78)*

Gosaba (Restoration & beautification of Gosaba lake): Project funding. *(p80)*

Gosaba (Home Stay & Fishing zone): Continue to develop and fund new homestays / Plan for 'Night stay in boats' for tourists. *(p81)*

Jharkhali (Eco-tourism hub): Draw up a plan to develop the eco-tourist village as a model village to be extended to other areas. *(p84)*

Maipith (Village experience): Draw a blueprint for the village experience. *(p91)*

Gobardhanpur (Elevated Boardwalk): Project funding. *(p97)*

Mousuni (Tourism Governance): Create a policy framework for controlling unregulated and undisciplined tourism. *(p99)*

Bakkhali (Beach Front Development Project): Project funding /Create a zipline/ropeway attraction from Bakkhali to Lothian Island. *(p102)*

FOREST DEPARTMENT

Mangrove Plantation: Comprehensive plan for developing mangrove plantations. *(p34)*

Accommodation: Develop homestays in select destinations such as Jharkhali, Mousuni island / Draft a policy and plan for 'Night stay in boats' for tourists in a regulated manner. *(p49)*

Authentic rural cuisine: Draw out a proposal for a robust supply chain for inputs to dining centers. *(p50)*

Training: Create a proposal for training local residents as forest guides and trek guides. *(p51)*

Plastic free mission: Draw up a plan for reducing plastic utilisation in the entire circuit in a phased manner; create a plan for developing products with eco-friendly material. *(p56)*

Livelihood: Develop a plan to provide training to local youth to become tourist guides for boat rides, mud walks, forest treks and coastal treks. *(p62)*

Canning (Development of Dabu): Draw up a detailed plan for developing the location. *(p73)*

Canning (Mangrove interpretation center): Project design, development and execution. *(p73)*

Gosaba (Home Stay & Fishing zone): Continue to develop and fund new homestays / Plan for 'Night stay in boats' for tourists. *(p81)*

Gosaba (Skill Development Center): Provide training to locals on becoming guides. *(p81)*

Jharkhali (Eco-tourism hub): Draw up a plan to develop the eco-tourist village. *(p84)*

Jharkhali (Mud-walk experience): Identify the mud tracks which are safe and exciting; train local youth for becoming guides. *(p84)*

Jharkhali (Mangrove experience center): Develop a detailed proposal for creating the experience center. *(p85)*

Jharkhali (Zoological garden): Develop the Zoo Project in a phased manner as envisaged. *(p85)*

Raidighi (Dighi development & beautification): Execute the proposed plan. *(p88)*

Bhagabatpur (Crocodile project): Detailed roadmap to uplift this crocodile project. *(p97)*

IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT

Jetties: Rebuilding jetties, creating facilities and desilting of waterways / Introduce floating jetties made of Fibre which are more effective and easier to maintain. *(p32)*

Embankments: Plan for creating eco-friendly embankments / Gangasagar sea beach protection work as suggested by IIT Madras to be taken up immediately. *(p35)*

Canning (Development of Dabu): Draw up a detailed plan for developing the location. *(p73)*

Raidighi (Dighi development & beautification): Execute the proposed plan. *(p88)*

Maipith (Infrastructure restoration): Reconstruct the existing structure and refurbish with contemporary facilities. *(p91)*

Sagar: Gangasagar sea beach protection work as suggested by IIT Madras to be taken up immediately. *(p109)*

FISHERY DEPARTMENT

Authentic rural cuisine: Draw out a proposal for a robust supply chain for inputs to dining centers. *(p50)*

Gosaba (Home Stay & Fishing zone): A detailed plan (includes site selection and execution) for creating a tourist fishing zone like the Benfish model. *(p81)*

Raidighi (Dighi development & beautification): Execute the proposed plan. *(p88)*

Maipith (Crab tourism): Create a proposal for developing a crab cultivation and catching zone. *(p91)*

Henry Island (Development): Create a detailed plan for the development of Henry Island to transform this virgin beach into a tourist hotspot. *(p105)*

AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

Authentic rural cuisine: Draw out a proposal for a robust supply chain for inputs to dining centers. *(p50)*

Livelihood: Develop high-yielding seed varieties to help farmers increase their farm produce. *(p62)*

Raidighi (Dighi development & beautification): Execute the proposed plan. *(p88)*

PDDRDC

Solid waste management: Develop a proposal for deploying biogas solutions in all villages. *(p59)*

SKILL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Training: Develop a proposal for enhancing the skill of all tourism-related stakeholders; create a blueprint for enhancing the basic education of children and teenagers. *(p51)*

Livelihood: Create comprehensive plans to train locals in enhancing existing skills / Create a blueprint for sending locals to urban institutions for hotel & hospitality management skills / Create a proposal for identifying new skills required from an eco-tourism perspective and training local residents in these new skills / Update exsisting for training locals to become professional tourist guides. *(p61)*

Canning (Promoting traditional skill): Draw up a detailed plan to enhancing traditional skills. *(p73)*

Gosaba (Skill Development Center): Create and operationalize the training center. *(p81)*

TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT

Jetties: Rebuilding jetties, creating facilities and desilting of waterways. *(p32)*

E-mobility: Draw up a proposal for facilitating the transformation from conventional mobility to electric mobility – surface transport and water transport - in a phased manner / Create a proposal for activity-based waterway travel which is also child friendly. *(p58)*

LAND & LAND REFORM DEPARTMENT

Piyali: Transfer land to the Tourism Department for development of this destination. *(p93)*

DISASTER MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

Cyclone shelters: Create new multi-purpose cyclone shelters; invest in appropriate equipment. *(p37)*

ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Embankments / Sagar: Gangasagar sea beach protection work as suggested by IIT Madras to be taken up immediately. *(p35 / 109)*

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Cultural affairs: Develop a calendar for cultural activities and fairs, promote the same through awareness campaigns. *(p52)*

Branding & Awareness: Create an across-the-board plan for branding and awareness of the Sundarbans as an eco-tourism hub. *(p54)*

Canning (Restoration of Canning House): Leverage the PPP model to draw up plans to reconstruct this heritage site and develop it into a tourist attraction. *(p72)*

Gosaba (Restoration of historical sites): Draw up a detailed plan for the restoration of places with historical and archaeological importance. *(p81)*

Jatar Deul: Draw up a plan for development of site to increase tourist footfall. *(p89)*

Piyali (Development): Create a proposal to develop Piyali as a relaxation hub with activities such as boating and fishing. *(p93)*

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY / BSNL

Mobile Connectivity: Identify locations to set up towers. *(p39)*

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE

Medical infrastructure: Develop a plan for creating Tourism friendly infrastructure / High Speed Boat and Water Ambulance to be made available / Anti-venom kits to be available across all blocks. *(p41)*

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING DEPARTMENT

Marketing arcade: Develop a detailed proposal for setting up market places. *(p53)*

Canning (Promoting traditional skill): Facilitate marketing of the products. *(p73)*

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Cyclone shelters: Create site specific disaster response teams / Create site specific disaster response teams with adequate equipment and high-speed boats. *(p37)*

Safety & Security: Create a proposal for improving the security systems. *(p47)*

DISTRICT RURAL DEVELOPMENT CELL (DRDC)

Marketing arcade: Develop a detailed proposal for setting up market places. *(p53)*

Plastic free mission: Draw up a plan for reducing plastic utilisation in the entire circuit in a phased manner; create a plan for developing products with eco-friendly material. *(p56)*

Livelihood: Prepare a plan to increase self-employment among women residing in the Sundarbans through the formation and strengthening of SHGs, providing funds and hand-holding. *(p62)*

MPLAD

Raidighi (Dighi development & beautification): Execute the proposed plan. *(p88)*

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PWD (SOUTH 24 PARGANAS)

Gosaba (Restoration of Beacon Bungalow): Execution of the proposed plan. *(p76)*

Gosaba (Restoration of Hamilton Bungalow): Execution of the proposed plan. *(p78)*

Gosaba (Restoration & beautification of Gosaba lake): Execution of the proposed plan. *(p80)*

Keyadaha (Keyadaha Water Front): Execute the proposed project. *(p115)*

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PWD (DIAMOND HARBOUR)

Gobardhanpur (Elevated Boardwalk): Execute the proposed plan. *(p97)*

Diamond Harbour (Riverside beautification): Execute the proposed project. *(p117)*

INDIAN METEROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT (Eastern Region)

Cyclone shelters: Create a meteorological office for liaison with Administration. *(p37)*

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (Roads)

Roads: Maintain all arterial roads. *(p29)*

Pitstops: Create pitstops on arterial roads. *(p30)*

Gates: Identify location on arterial roads. *(p31)*

Signage: Develop and implement a comprehensive signage plan / Identify spots within the Tourism Circuit to set up awareness monuments/signages. *(p38)*

Safety & security: Create signages for helpline facility awareness. *(p47)*

COAST GUARD

Cyclone shelters: Create site specific disaster response teams with adequate equipment and high-speed boats. *(p37)*

CIVIL DEFENCE

Cyclone shelters: Create site specific disaster response teams with adequate equipment and high-speed boats. *(p37)*

PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING

Water availability: Undertake a detailed water analysis; develop a road map to sustain supply of fresh water. *(p42)*

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (Civil)

Signage: Identify spots within the Tourism Circuit to set up awareness monuments/signages. *(p38)*

Community toilets: Develop a detailed proposal for a network of community toilets. *(p43)*

ZILA PARISHAD

Bhagabatpur: Renovate the existing infrastructure with aesthetic appeal and contemporary facilities. *(p97)*

Ramganga: Renovate the existing infrastructure with aesthetic appeal and contemporary facilities.

SHG/SE

Livelihood: Prepare a plan to increase self-employment among women residing in the Sundarbans through the formation and strengthening of SHGs, providing funds and hand-holding. *(p62)*

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

Sewage management: Develop a blueprint for Sewage Management. *(p44)*

Cleanliness: Need to create the sops, processes and teams for cleanliness. *(p45)*

Plastic free mission: Draw up a plan for reducing plastic utilisation in the entire circuit in a phased manner; create a plan for developing products with eco-friendly material. *(p56)*

Solid Waste Management: Draw up a detailed waste management plan for every tourist destination. *(p59)*

Livelihood: Create teams for maintaining cleanliness of tourist destinations on a sustained basis. *(p62)*

Maipith (Village experience): Draw a blueprint for the village experience. *(p91)*

POWER DEPARTMENT / WBPDCL

Renewable energy: Draw up a plan for increasing the renewable energy generation and supply. *(p57)*

WBTDCL

Piyali (Tourist lodge): Existing tourist lodge to be upgraded with contemporary facilities and a plush décor. *(p93)*

Gobardhanpur (Elevated Boardwalk): Explore opportunities for innovative sporting activities such as E-biking & Cycling. *(p97)*

Bakkhali (Beach Front Development Project): Prepare a plan for a sea cruise to the Lothian Island. *(p102)*

WBSEDCL

Renewable energy: Draw up a plan for increasing the renewable energy generation and supply. *(p57)*

Restoration of Canning House: Leverage the PPP model to draw up plans to reconstruct this heritage site and develop it into a tourist attraction. *(p72)*

FICCI / CII

Accommodation: Invite private players to create plush resorts. *(p49)*

MGNREGA

Mangrove Plantation: Involve locals in mangrove plantations. *(p34)*

Canning (Promoting traditional skill): Get local artisans to enroll for the training program. *(p73)*

Canning (Mangrove Interpretation Center): Project design, development and execution. *(p73)*

Jharkhali (Mud-walk experience): Enroll local youth to become guides. *(p84)*

Jharkhali (Mangrove experience center): Develop a detailed proposal for creating the experience center. *(p85)*

Raidighi (Dighi development & beautification): Execute the proposed plan. *(p88)*

GANGASAGAR & BAKKHALI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (GBDA)

Embankments: Gangasagar sea beach protection work as suggested by IIT Madras to be taken up immediately. *(p35)*

Mousuni Island (Development): Chalk out a detailed plan for the development of Mousuni Island into a tourist destination; create a policy framework for controlling unregulated and undisciplined tourism. *(p99)*

Bakkhali (Beach Front Development): Implement the proposed Bakkhali Beach Front Development Project. *(p102)*

Sagar (Proposed Beach walkway): Execute the proposed plan. *(p108)*

Sagar (A 100-bed dormitory): Execute the proposed plan. *(p108)*

Sagar (Decentralisation): Need to identify new spots for tourism and develop the same. *(p109)*

Sagar: Gangasagar sea beach protection work as suggested by IIT Madras to be taken up immediately. *(p109)*

SAGAR DEVELOPMENT BLOCK

Sagar: Need to identify new spots for tourism and develop the same. *(p109)*

DEPARTMENT OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT & MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS (UDMA)

Embankment / Sagar: Gangasagar sea beach protection work as suggested by IIT Madras to be taken up immediately. *(p35)*

Bakkhali (Beach Front Development Project): Project funding. *(p102)*

Sagar (A 100-bed dormitory): Execute the proposed plan. *(p108)*

Sagar: Undertaking Mangrove plantation at vulnerable areas. *(p108-109)*

SUNDARINI

Authentic rural cuisine: Draw out a proposal for a robust supply chain for inputs to dining centers. *(p50)*

Marketing arcade: Develop a detailed proposal for setting up market places. *(p53)*

Solid Waste management: Develop a proposal for deploying biogas solutions in all villages. *(p59)*

Livelihood: Develop high-yielding seed varieties to help farmers increase their far produce; need a comprehensive plan to increase the revenue generated under the 'SUNDARINI' brand. *(p62)*

Maipith (Honey center): Develop the honey co-operative and processing unit into an experience center for tourists. *(p91)*

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