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## Down Syndrome!

Tourist traffic to Sundarbans has declined 55 per cent post Aila – learn what the state government is doing

By Raja Chowdhury

Posted On Tuesday, December 29, 2009 at 05:44:54 PM



Destruction post Aila

The aftereffects of Aila continue to plague the West Bengal tourism industry. In fact, the global perspective regarding Sundarbans has changed a lot due to the lack of infrastructure and massive destruction.

Foreign as well as domestic tourists are not interested in the place any more despite efforts and grants from the central government and foreign funds. According to government records, tourist traffic has declined 55 per cent since Aila struck.

Sundarbans forest, scattered over 4,200 sq km, is considered to be the largest mangrove in the world. Apart from this, another 5,366 sq km has been inhabited for over a hundred years. The Sundarban Tiger Reserve is scattered over another 2,585 sq km.



Global warming is also affecting the area

According to the minister in charge of Sundarbans, Kanti Gangopadhyay, "Post Aila, Sundarbans has been attracting just a handful of tourists despite efforts of the state and NGOs to restore its former glory."

According to the government of West Bengal principal secretary (Sundarban Development), Raghvendra Singh, "Global warming is also affecting the area. We are trying to create awareness regarding the effect of global warming on forests. Several agencies and NGOs are helping us in this. A lot of work is being done to restore identity of

Sundarban."

According to the project head of Save The Sundarban project, Shiladitya Pujari, "The condition of the area is pitiable. There is starvation and lack of basic amenities. Since everything depends on tourism, the massive decline in it has led to many homeless people dying. The condition of the animals in the forest is also not good. We want everyone to participate in our project so that we can restore Sundarbans, one of the most important tourism destinations in the country."



Massive decline in tourism has led to death of many homeless people

duty. Tourism can be boosted and awareness can be created if people from all across the world join hands to promote this region, which is the pride of India."

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