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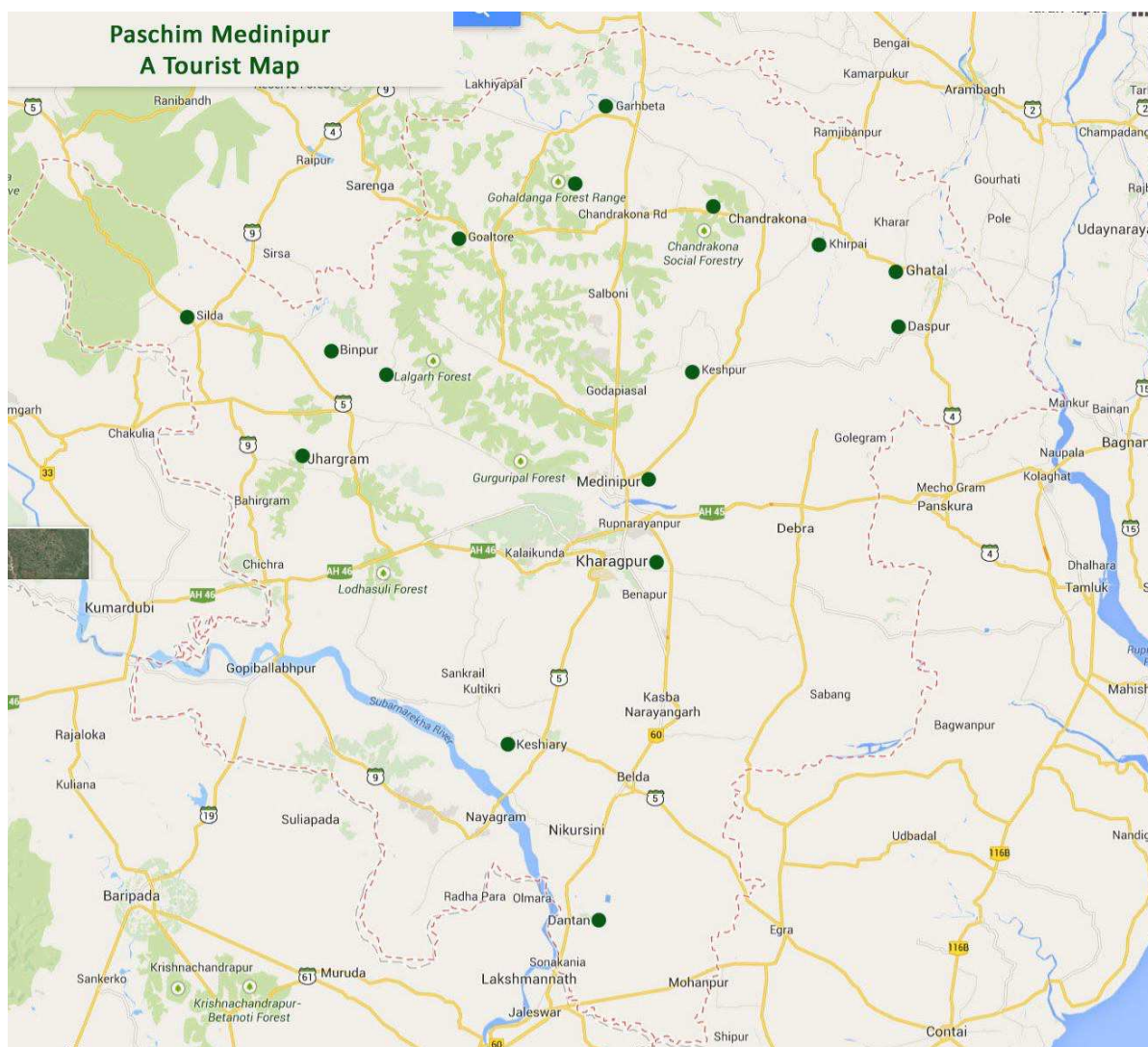
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Developing Tourism in Paschim Medinipur

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Why Tourism in Paschim Medinipur?

The land of Medinipur possesses unique cultural heritage, ethnic richness, eco-diversity and a number of glorious phases of history. All these make the land ideal for creating tourism circuits. Tourism in Paschim Medinipur can directly and indirectly help in utilizing the human, natural and historical resources for

1. Conservation of heritage sites in scientific manner.
2. Promoting awareness about local history and heritage and thereby helping conservation.
3. Developing local infrastructure
4. Creating job opportunities and developing local economy.
5. Promoting advanced researches on the history and heritage of the areas.

What Kind of Tourism Paschim Medinipur Can Offer...

Sl.	Type	Area/s	Target Groups
1	<i>Cultural Tourism</i>	i. Ghatal: Birsingh	Students
2	<i>Wild Life and Adventure Tourism</i>	i. Jungle Mahal: Various sites at Belpahari, Silda, Jhargram, Jambani, Nayagram	Young people, Students, photographers, wild-life lovers
		ii. Garbeta: Gangani	
3	<i>Eco-tourism</i>	i. Jungle Mahal: Various sites at Belpahari, Silda, Jhargram, Jambani, Nayagram	Family members, Young people, Students, photographers
		ii. Gopiballabpur: Forest Bungalows at Hatibari, Jhilli dam,	
		iii. Mindapore town: Gopigarh-Gurguripal, the bank of Kansai, Pathra	
		iv. Garbeta: Gangani	
		v. Dantan: Sarasanka lake	
4	<i>Religious Tourism</i>	i. Daspur: Temples	Family members, young people, old people, students, photographers, pilgrims
		ii. Chandrakona: Temples	
		iii. Garbeta: Sarbamangala Mandir, Bagri's Krishnarai Jiu Temple, Kameshwar Temple and Radhaballav Temple, Raghunathji Temple, Raghunath Bari, Uriyasaier Temple	
		iv. Midnapore: Temples of Karnagarh, Pathra, Well of the Peer and Akgambuj Masjid (for Muslim pilgrims)	
		v. Kharagpur: Temple of Khargeshwar, ancient Jain temple at Jisar, Manasatala at Jakpur	
		vi. Jhargram: Kanakdurga Temple	
		vii. Keshiary: Temples of Sarbamangala, Gaganeshwar,	

		Kurumbera Fort,	
		viii. Nayagram: Tapoban, Sahasralinga Temple, the Than of Kalua Snarh (for tribal and semi-tribal people) etc	
		ix. Gopiballabpur: Temples famous for its association with Chaitanya-Vaishnavism, Rameswarnath Temple,	
		x. Dantan: Buddhist Monastery of Moghalmari, Shyamaleshwar temple, Chandaneswar Temple and others.	
		xi. Ghatal: Temples	
5	<i>Archaeological Tourism</i>	i. Neolithic and Chalcolithic sites in Jungle Mahal	Researchers, historians, archaeologists
		ii. Midnapore: Gopegarh, Pathra, Karnagrah	
		iii. Garhbeta: Gangani and other places (particularly for Jain artefacts)	
		iv. Keshiary: Kurumbera Fort	
		v. Nayagram: Chandrarekha Fort, Khelargarh Fort	
		vi. Dantan: Moghalmari and other sites	
6	<i>Craft Tourism</i>	vii. Pingla: Patachitra of Naya	Folk researchers, art collectors, business persons dealing in handicrafts, enthusiasts, general public
		viii. Ghatal: Handicrafts	
		ix. Sabang: Madur-craft	
		x. Dantan: Iron Craft	

What is the Present State of Affairs?

Tourism in West Bengal has always remained a neglected affair. Again, their conception of Kolkata-is-all did not allow them to look much beyond the state capital. Bengalis cling to certain colonial structures like the Victoria Memorial Hall and the Howrah Bridge as symbols of high culture. Ideologically the Left rulers ignored true Bengali heritage lying about everywhere in West Bengal and even suppressed researches and discussion of heritage sites, particularly the religious structure—be it a temple or a mosque. Only the act of producing silly self-destructive literature was promoted. As a result of their extreme myopia, tourism in Paschim Medinipur did not develop systematically and the heritage sites now demand urgent attention.

The fact is that developing tourism in the district will take time—much more time than one or two years.

Steps to be taken

In order to develop tourism there needs to be chalked out a long-term sustainable plan aiming at the future. The following steps may be taken:

- The district needs to be divided in **certain area-wise circles** keeping in view practical considerations of the demands and convenience of the tourists from inside and outside the district.
- After marking out the circles **basic infrastructure for transport, food and lodging** needs to be built or upgraded.
- At the same time, local **heritage sites and structures need to be conserved** locally with expert help from ASI or other agency.
- For preservation **local groups**, comprising members of local administration, elected people's representative and interest people, need to be created. The groups need to act following the guidelines fixed at the district or state level.
- After face-lifting of the sites, concerted efforts at **creating awareness** about the importance of heritage need to be taken up at the district level.
- At the same time, **publicity campaigns** can be taken up to **attract tourists** right from the Panchayet level to the State level.
- Some **new ideas and plans** need to be taken up in consultation with tourism experts from West Bengal and other states. For instance, the practice of 'Home-stay' with the slogan "Eso amar ghare" can be adopted in the case of eco-tourism.

Identifying the Tourism Circles and Circuits

It is clear from the Table 1 that Paschim Medinipur offers mixed bag of attractions and interests to visitors. Depending on this some tourism circles and circuits can be identified for further action:

Sl.	Circles	Tourist Attractions
1	<i>Daspur</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Gopinath Ekratna temple of the Singhas ❖ Radhagobinda Temple ❖ Brajaraj Kishore temple ❖ Nabaratna Rasmancha, Baliharpur ❖ Laxmi Janardan of the Pal Family ❖ Temple of Radhakantapur ❖ Pancharatna Temple of Banka Roy, Laoda, ❖ Bhootnath Temple
2	<i>Ghatal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Birsing - Birthplace of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar ❖ Visalaxmi temple at Barada ❖ Khipteswari temple at Ghatal ❖ Bhasapool, Alamgunj Mosque ❖ Kushpata Satsanga Ashram of Anukul Thakur

	❖ Eco park (picnic destination)
3	<p><i>Chandrakona</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ruins of many old temples ❖ Temple of Malleswar ❖ Navaratna temple of Mitrasenpur ❖ Raghunathgarh Rekha Deul ❖ Chandrakona Film City ❖ Chandrakona Forest
4	<p><i>Midnapore</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Chapaleswar and Mahamaya temples at Karnagarh (place of Chuar Revolt and setting for Bankim Chandra's novel) ❖ Temples of Pathra, ❖ Gopegarh Heritage Park ❖ Gurguripal Forest, ❖ Hindu & Muslim religious structures in the town ❖ bank of the river Kansai
5	<p><i>Garhbeta</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Sarbamangala mandir ❖ Gangani-danga ❖ Raikota Fort ❖ Bagri's Krishnarai Jiu Temple ❖ Kameshwar Temple and Radhaballav Temple ❖ Raghunathji Temple ❖ Raghunath Bari ❖ Uriyasaier Temple, ❖ Jhalda Fort ❖ Nayabasad
6	<p><i>Goaltore</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Gohaldanga Forest ❖ Temple of Sanaka,
7	<p><i>Lalgarh</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Forest life ❖ Radhamohan Jorh-Bangla Temple ❖ Dalan Temple ❖ Sarbamangala Temple
8	<p><i>Binpur</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Forest life ❖ Pre-Muslim Temple at Daintikuri
9	<p><i>Jhargram</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Jhargram Palace ❖ Deer Park ❖ Sabitri Temple ❖ Rabindra Park ❖ Chillkigarh Raj Palace ❖ Kanak Durga Temple ❖ Jungle Mahal ❖ Medical Plants Garden (Kalaboni) ❖ Dherua (for the banks of Kansai river) ❖ Sevayatan, known for its beauty of Kechenda Bandh (lake) & surrounding forests. ❖ Tribal Museum ❖ Alampur ❖ Kendua (to see migrating birds) ❖ Kakrajhore Forest

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ketki Falls ❖ Rohini: This is a historical village situated in the bank of Subarnarekha River. ❖ Birthplace of famous Vaishnav saint Rashikanandaji Maharaj. ❖ Gidhni Annukul Ashram ❖ Pukuria Bharat Sevashram Sangha
10	<i>Belpahari</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ghagra Water falls ❖ Gurrasini, Kakrajhor ❖ The Hills of Kanaisor ❖ The Spring at Ketki ❖ The Laljal Mountains, Orgnonda, Tarafeni
11	<i>Silda</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Some temples ❖ Forest ❖ some prehistoric archaeological sites
12	<i>Lodhasuli</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Forest
13	<i>Gopiballabpur</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Forest Bungalows at Hatibari ❖ Jhilli dam ❖ Rameswarnath Temple ❖ Temples famous for its association with Chaitanya-Vaishnavism
14	<i>Nayagram</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Chandrarekha Fort ❖ Khelargarh Fort ❖ Tapoban ❖ Sahasralinga Temple ❖ Than of Kalua Snarh (for tribal and semi-tribal people) etc
15	<i>Keshiary</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Kurumbera Fort and the Gaganeshwar Temple ❖ Sarbamangala Temple and others ❖ Ruins of Muslim structures
16	<i>Dantan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Buddhist Monastery of Moghalmari and the entire village ❖ Ruins at Uttarraibarh, Jatadhari Baba ❖ Shyamaleshwar temple ❖ Chandaneswar Temple ❖ Ruins of Fort ❖ Sarasanka lake ❖ Banks of Subarnareka

Considering the location and time needed for covering the areas in real-time tours, these 15 circles may be brought together under certain circuits:

Sl.	Circuits	Circles	Time (Day/s)
1	<i>Ghatal</i>	<i>Daspur</i>	One day (if a car is hired for the entire day)Two days (if some want to spend a night in a forest bungalow)
		<i>Ghatal</i>	
		<i>Chandrakona</i>	

2	<i>Midnapore</i>	<i>Midnapore</i>	Two days (spend a night in a forest bungalow)	Midnapore & Garhbeta (One day if a car is hired for the entire day)
		<i>Garhbeta</i>		
		<i>Goaltore</i>		
		<i>Lalgarh</i>		
3	<i>Jhargram</i>	<i>Binpur</i>	Two days (spend a night in a forest bungalow)	
		<i>Jhargram</i>		
		<i>Belpahari</i>		
		<i>Silda</i>		
		<i>Lodhasuli</i>		
4	<i>Nayagram</i>	<i>Gopiballabpur</i>	One day (if a car is hired for the entire day)Two days (spend a night in a forest bungalow)	
		<i>Nayagram</i>		
5	<i>Dantan</i>	<i>Keshiary</i>	One day (if a car is hired for the entire day)	
		<i>Dantan</i>		

Some of these circuits can be interlinked with other circuits of other districts for attracting more tourists.

Paschim Medinipur Circuits	Link with Circuits of Other districts
<i>Ghatal</i>	<i>Jayrambati, Kamrpukur, Hooghly</i>
<i>Midnapore</i>	<i>Bishnupur, Bankura</i>
<i>Dantan</i>	<i>Digha, Purba Medinipur</i>

Creating Awareness and Publicity

Sri Tarapada Santra did stupendous work of surveying the heritage sites of the district and the documentation is available. So there is not much need for field-work for identifying the heritage sites. In our time it is necessary for the people of the district to be aware of our heritage and history and learn to respect and conserve them. At the same time people from outside the district need to be attracted to the richness and beauty of the state. For this strategies for effective publicity need to taken up.

Few suggested steps for generating awareness:

- Booklets may be prepared on the tourist sites of Paschim Medinipur and may be distributed among teachers of primary, secondary and HS schools and colleges, administrative officers and staff right from Panchayet levels, staff of all govt. and non-govt offices, clubs and other organizations for a charge.
- Special awareness campaigns may be taken up at different administrative and educational levels.
- People need to be directly involved in tourism like drivers, guides, hotel owners, cooks be trained and sensitized on the matters relating to the development of tourism.

Few suggested steps for publicity:

- Important roadways may be marked and hoardings be put up with pictures and instructions to reach a nearby tourist place, thereby both informing about and inviting passerby to the local spot.
- A website dedicated only to tourism in Paschim Medinipur may be created for providing information and displaying photographs of the places.
- Booklets on tourist spots of the entire district may be made available for purchase to tourists from all the tourist spots.

Tarun Tapas Mukherjee is He is Assistant Professor in English, Bhattar College, Dantan, Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal. He is interested in British Literature, E-literature, digital technologies, documentary photography etc. He has promoted a number of OA projects in India and abroad. He is also interested in the ancient and medieval history of Bengal and its culture and heritage.
