

# Where Many Waters Meet

Somen Sengupta

WHEN YOU feel choked by the smoke and noise in overcrowded Kolkata, take a break and head off for Falta, the latest weekend destination of people in the city. A magical sunset, a peerless panorama and a 17th century fort make this humble place a magnet for those who need to relax in the lap of nature.

Falta is at a distance of about 55 km from the city centre and is accessible by bus or car. A dilapidated Dutch fort still stands here. This is the place where Governor Deck of the British East India Company took shelter after losing Fort William to Siraj, the last independent nawab of Bengal. The date was June 19, 1756. From here a messenger was sent to

Madras to inform Robert Clive about the "Calcutta catastrophe".

Though the fort is in bad shape, the ruins still have tunnels, stables, cannon points and warehouses for storing gunpowder. One cannon from that era is still preserved at the Falta police station compound.

Near the fort, there is the house of the Parui family. The family possesses a rare Vishnu statue of the Pala-Sena era made of black stone. This statue was salvaged from the womb of Hooghly.

The real attraction of Falta lies in its solitude and marvellous riverside beauty. The sunset is pure magic, when the sky turns an unforgettable shade. A pensive mood descends on the watcher as darkness slowly engulfs the surround-

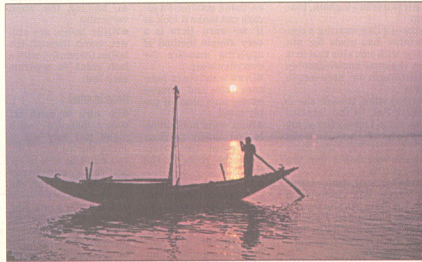


PHOTO: SOMEN SENGUPTA

The sky turns a rich purple with a tinge of gold as the sun sets at Falta

ing. To fully experience this magic, go to 'Falta point', the union of the Hooghly and Damodar rivers.

On the industrial map of West Bengal, too, Falta is becoming important. The proposed free trade zone has already attracted a bunch of big corporate houses to this small hamlet. Before industry overtakes serenity, enjoy the symphony of the rivers this weekend.

### Travel Information

Take any bus from Esplanade and reach there within two hours. Buses also ply from Babughat and Taratolla crossing. There are good hotels and seven restaurants at Falta. The best is Hotel Rajhans. This luxury hotel offers river-facing A/C rooms with excellent food and bar facilities. This hotel also offers gym and swimming pool. Hotels priced more moderately are also available. Room can be booked from Kolkata. However, spot booking is also possible.