

# Bangladesh tries to save lone coral island

December 29 2009

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This file picture shows Bangladeshi fishermen pulling their nets on the shores of St Martin's Island, some 400 kilometres southwest of Dhaka. Bangladesh has ordered a building freeze on the island, its lone coral island, in a bid to save its wildlife and natural beauty from a boom in construction fuelled by tourism, its environment minister said Tuesday.

Bangladesh has ordered a building freeze on its lone coral island in a bid to save its wildlife and natural beauty from a boom in construction fuelled by tourism, its environment minister said Tuesday.

Hasan Mahmud told AFP his government had declared the eight square kilometre (three square mile) St Martin's Island an ecologically critical area and had banned new buildings there.

"We have also ordered an inventory of the existing infrastructure that threatens the island's ecology," he said, adding that any buildings that harm the environment would be demolished.

St Martin's Island, situated 400 kilometres (250 miles) south of the capital Dhaka, is Bangladesh's lone coral island and attracts tens of thousands of tourists during holiday periods.

The island is home to some rare [flora](#) and [fauna](#), including 182 wildlife species. In recent years, the island has witnessed a building boom due to a huge rush of tourists.

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