

It was about 5 a.m. when the frenetic chirping of birds woke me. It was a rather noisy morning in the bamboo huts that we stayed in because sounds tend to enter from every direction, even the floors. One surely has to experience the morning sunrise to get an authentic feel of Bandarban. After the night's storm, almost all the leaves and the barks were covered in dew. As the sun began to rise, the dewdrops slowly disappeared and the onslaught of the mosquitoes began. I quickly ran to my hut to put on my morning dose of Odomos.

There is a full day excursion to Ruma Bazar from Milonchori. The trip is about five hours long, three hours drive and then two hours on boat. One can hire jeeps, micros, or a certain four-wheeler called *chander gari*, meaning the Vehicle to the Moon. The scenes are picture perfect. From there, one can even take a boat ride back to the main town of Bandarban but that is possible only during the rainy seasons, when there is enough water in the river. From Ruma onwards you are on foot and there is only wilderness. This place has the last market, the last rest house and the last signs of civilisation. On foot, Keokradong takes two days of trekking, but one has to stay over night at one of the local huts. Another spot of spectacular beauty is the Baga Lake in Ruma. It is a natural lake 2200 feet above sea level. There

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Khawl Khup Bawm, our guide, lives in Farukh Para along with a hundred other families.

are some rest houses there along with some nice picnic spots. Speedboats are also available for boating on this majestic lake.

Our group on the other hand, decided on an excursion to Chimbuk Mountain, presumably the highest point in Bangladesh. This is an hour's drive from Milonchori, 32 kilometres up and down the weaving mountain range. Throughout the ride, one can witness the rich fauna and flora in Bandarban. The Chimbuk mountain is 3000 feet above sea level, densely covered by forests and on a clear day, one can get a glimpse of the Bay of Bengal. Some



Mombao is a resident of Changgye Para from the Marma tribe.



Agni Shikha entertains the guests' with a dazzling fire performance.