



The Tripura (left) and Marma (right) have their own distinctive way of dressing. Each indigenous community has its own dialect and culture.

people compare it with the beauty of Darjeeling, minus the cold. Chimbuk is home to the Morangs. This tribal group is still untainted by all the urbanisation around them. They take great care of their appearance. A curious ritual in this tribe is that the unmarried bachelors who are searching for a bride wear flowers behind their ears. This is a way of drawing out a possible bride. They also have a special flute called the Morang *bashee*. It looks like a bagpipe but instead the pipes come out of a *lau*.

On our way back, we stopped at the Shailapropat waterfall, about four kilometres from the resort. Adventurous groups have been known to trek to that site and it's about four hours walk, up and down the mountain road. There is a stream there and one can even go for a nice cooling dip. Close by is the Bawm village of Farukh Para which our guide was talking about. At the entrance of the Shailapropat, adivasis can be seen selling shawls, fruits and vegetables. One should try the *bon kola* (forest banana) which has quite a unique taste.

Some points need to be mentioned for first time visitors to Bandarban. It is useless to wear fancy clothes and shoes as one can expect to sweat and do a lot of walking,

So loose-fitting, comfortable clothes and sensible walking shoes should be worn. Take plenty of water, sugar and salts on you. It is recommended to also keep a torch, camera and spare clothes. It is pointless carrying your cell phone with you as you will only get network in one or two places. Therefore it is important that you make plans beforehand and inform your tour operators about it. Foreigners must remember to register in the police stations and army camps in Bandarban and Ruma.

Khokon runs The Guide Tours Ltd. with two of his brothers. "Hasan Monsoor, my younger brother, is the Managing Director and he manages the operations in the Sunderbans along with his wife and son," says Khokon. "My wife, my other brother Hasan Mahboob Bablu and I look after the operations here in Bandarban."

One thing must be said about the people who come to visit Bandarban is that at least half of them are repeat clients, continues Diyan. "I guess you only need to come and experience the wonder of this place once to become addicted to it. One has to return," he concludes. With me, the addiction had already started.

PHOTOS: IMRAN H. KHAN