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MALAYSIA

TRIP HOLIDAY

DHAKA SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 10, 2006



Cris-cross road through the park.



Down the realm of rain forest

Many more times the train crosses the park jolting the wildlife fauna.



A good climber always on the move.

IT was just afternoon we got down from the 'Srimongal to Bhanugach' local bus at the 'Lewwa' bus station. The helper was shouting, "Ei lewwa namen, lewwa". Stephen was with his entire house on his back, the huge belongings seem to the same length and weight of him!

Lawachara National Park (LNP), the part of once West Bhanughach reserve Forests, recently declared as LNP receives the highest rainfall of the country during the rainy season since long. The same happened at that moment. The rain was looming for us and received with rainy and wetly welcome. It was the way of decorated 'Rakton' trees commenced from the bus station to rest house we walked for. We became soaked and much more to reach the rest house on the hilltop.

After having a wash, we decided to have a look around for a while as the sunlight was coming to fade in the jungle. One and half an hour's walk through a trail made us really rejuvenate except Stephen, who was still devoting his time to be a part of the wilderness, looking for the helps, snakes and lizards. For a while, we lost him from our six-member team.

When we came back to the premise of hilltop rest house, it was around 6:30pm. Mannan Mia, caretaker cum Tomi Mia's type cook of rest house came to us with his forwarding tummy piping through the haves of the shirt and steamy tea in the hand. It made us affluent with recharged energy and enthusiastic for enjoying the true wilderness of the wild.

Equipped with head torch on the forehead and snake catching stick like tong in the hand, we the team of herp's lover, started to move through the forest floor for searching out the herpetofauna. Near to 7:00pm we instigated to quest the still unexplored but richest biodiversity hotspots of the country.

The park covers an area of

1250ha with three ethnic communities in and around of it. Two Khasia communities, Magurchhara Punji in the western side and Lawachara Punji in the northeastern side of the park are living within the park while another Tripura community on the eastern boundary. These communities depend mostly on the forest lands and its produces for their livelihood. They are still continuing their traditional betel leaf cultivation practices in the forest land allocated by the forest department which is intimidating threats to the biodiversity of the park.

Lawachara National Park is such unique type of forest patch of the country still supporting the highest number of primate species together with its viable population. These are Hoolock Gibbon the only lesser ape in the country, the two Langur species out of three of the country namely Phayre's Langur and Capped Langur and Pig-tailed Macaque, Rhesus Macaque and the Slow Loris. A good population of Wild Boar could also be found in remote corners of the park and being nocturnal, becomes active at night and in the early morning.

If you go through any of the trails of the park in the first half of the day, you must have come across a loud call in cohort or one after another but with harmony and definitely you would be confused weather its by human or any animals. It is the most amazing animal of the park, the Hoolock Gibbon, Hoolock hoolock living with a good population among the Gibbon ranges of the country.

Among the Squirrel species, the most common are the Hoary-bellied Squirrel and Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel while Malayan Giant Squirrel is the least in the Park. The notable bird species found in the park are Oriental Pied Hornbill, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, Red-headed Trogon, white-rump Shama, Emerald Dove, Necklaced Laughingthrush, Yellow-footed Green Pigeon etc.

While walking through the trail, if you are fortunate, could be experienced with the bark of the Barking Deer which supposed to be wiped out from the place in the near future. Painted Bull Frog is the notable among the frog species of the park, could be found in the small ditches, pools of stagnant water in the rainy season. The snakes like Green Pit Viper, Common Vine snake, Ornate Flying snake, Rock python reticulated etc, with many more unknown and unrecorded are supposed to be here in the park.

The vivid spiders, ranges from the size of pinheaded to the gigantic one, set their webs on the way to the insect's movement in every corner of the forest for their daily foods! Their web placement and design could keep you at spell of thinking about untold and unforeseen creatures of this planet at least for a moment. Their web

butterflies.

"You have only 10 species (4 species of amphibians and 6 reptiles) of herpetofauna in this park!?" came to light when Stephen asked. It was on the way to rest house an information board has been set aside by Nishorgo containing the information on that. We had to convince him to say, "It is now your turn to be the update reference!"

"There is no entry fee!.....surprising" expressed Stephen Mahony, being staying here in Bangladesh to study the herpetofauna. The authority could keep a small amount of entry fees at least for the visitors and tourists and the earning could be used for the management of the park, he commented.

Although the rainy season is rough enough for the visitors and tourists due to heavy rains and some unexpected mos-



The brilliant spiders you can see everywhere in the forest.

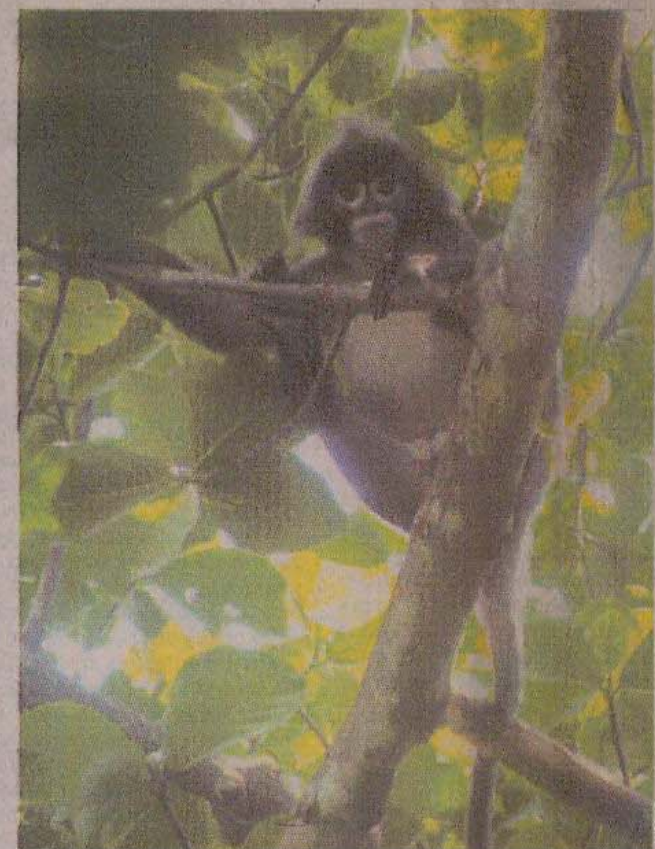


Inflorescence of *Curcuna hussainii*

building creativity could pave the way to reopen your mindset again! You would probably be amazed and more impressed with these beautiful creations. The forest has long been considered as heaven for entomologist, specially interested in

quito and leech's bites, you could oversee what the true wilderness is of the forest at this time. So, it's the pick time for you to have look!

Story & Photo: M ABDULAZIZ



The Chasmapara Hanuman (Leaf Monkey), marvelous and mesmerized animal of the park.



LAWACHARA

DHAKA

BAY OF BENGAL

Location:
Lawachara, Srimongal
North of Dhaka

CATEGORY ADVENTURE TRIP

Travel cost for six persons.
Microbus : 7 seater A/C @ Tk 1600 per day for two days Tk 3,200.
Accommodation: There are several ranges of hotels and rest houses around Srimongal. Tourist can hire them according to their budget. There are also some restaurants in Srimongal township where tourists can find food. Rest houses also provide food on payment.

THINGS TO CARRY

• A pair of light soled ankle boot • A pair of binocular • Sun screen lotion • Sun hat • Flash light • Insect repellent • Antiseptic cream • Casual forest green wearing apparel • Camera, film, batteries