

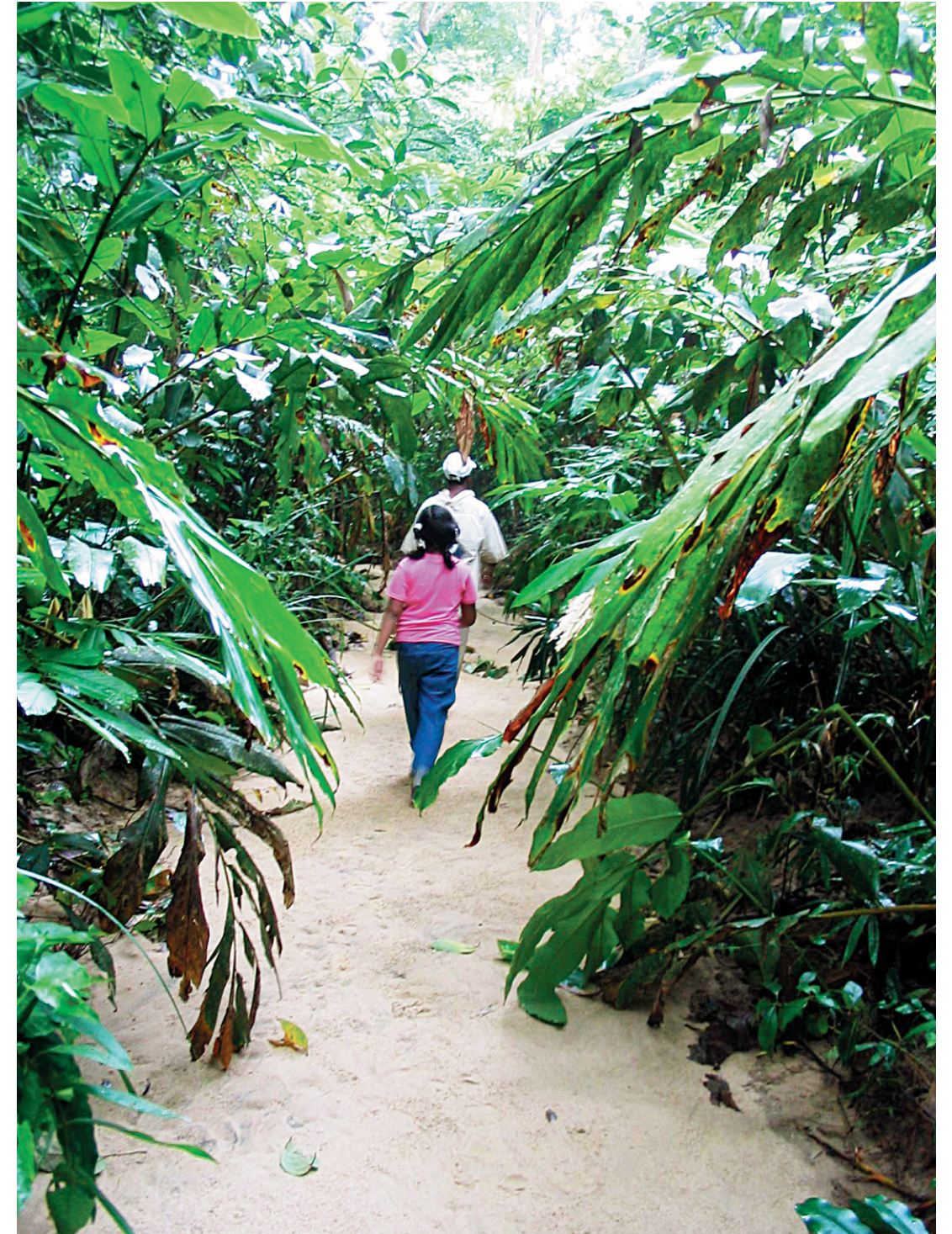
# Star Holiday

DHAKA SUNDAY AUGUST 8, 2004

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LOCATION > SATCHHARI, MOULVI BAZAR. CATEGORY > FAMILY / ADVENTURE

## The Deer Trail

**T**HE rainforest morning comes with sadness. Winds whirl above the tall trees in the overcast sky. We sit on the veranda of the bungalow and sip tea. It showered heavily last night. Now it drizzles.

This morning we are supposed to go on a long trek into the forest. It is around 9:00am that the forest guard comes totting a 9-shooter on his shoulder.


We walk down to the Sri Mongal road and cross into the forest area. First comes the wide stream. It is now dry. Yesterday when we came here, rainwater was gushing downstream. This is the nature of the hilly streams, they gather water only when it rains.

Slowly and slowly we are sucked into the deep rainforest. It is absolutely silent now. Nothing moves. We walk on through fine drizzle following the wet streambed. On two sides, high



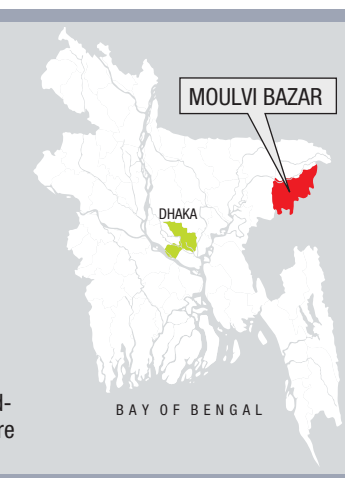
grounds pose as wall. The bright red roots of the cane trees have speared through the mud wall, looking like the pincers of giant crabs. Strange orange flowers are in bloom. No one knows their names and so we call them orange stars. They are our flowers now. Tall trees have spread a green canopy above us. The grey sky makes a surrealistic mosaic, like a mysterious painting.

We must have walked for about an hour when the forest guard stops us. We are at a bend on a wide clearing. Some movements on the trees catch our eyes. A group of orange langurs. We freeze. We have not brought binoculars, but that did not pose any problem. The trees are not so tall here and the langurs move freely. They look down at us and jump from one branch to another, often throwing down some wild jackfruits at us, or



**fact sheet**

Position from Dhaka: Northeast  
 Road distance: About 140-km  
 Journey time by car: 4 hours 30 minutes (appx.)  
 Road condition: Partly under construction  
 Best time to visit: Anytime depending what mood you want to capture



MOULVI BAZAR

DHAKA

BAY OF BENGAL

at least that is what we think. They must have got tired of the anthropoids.

We trek on. Soon the forest gets denser. We follow the dry bed of a

stream. Thick bushes block our way. Green branches lay a canopy overhead. A diffused light glows softly on us. As we follow the trail, we see the telltale signs of the

rainforest. Strange colourful flowers have bloomed under the thick bushes. Unknown big red fruits hang from rid like plants. Toads sit still in the shade.

Suddenly we see huge craters by the trail. The holes, some of them 100 feet deep, have eaten below the trail and we tiptoe across them, every moment expecting to crash down to the bottom. But we survive. And then we stop.

The forest guard spots it first -- hoof marks of a deer. They have emerged from a bush and gone down into a stream. Only then we believe what the foresters said last night -- that deer and bears still roam this rainforest, that only a few months ago a man had been attacked by a bear and so on, which we took as mere fables. We follow the hoof marks and step into the stream bed. It is a barking deer, Khosru said. Small in size as rear hoof marks follow the front ones closely. We try to imagine what this lonely deer had been doing here. It had stopped under a growth and eaten something. And of course, relieved itself. Then it went on for about a kilometer. And suddenly vanishes into woods again. Is he still waiting there in the bush? Watching us with his watchful eyes, ears pricked?

Let him do whatever he does. He has given us a good time. We leave him behind and walk on. It is all thick bushes and tall trees. Another two kilometres later, the forest ends. Suddenly. And appear into a tea garden with its emerald green lush.

photo & story INAM AHMED



### Budget

Microbus fare (7-seater) - Tk 3,000  
 Fuel- Tk 3,000  
 Food - Tk 2,000  
 Room rent Tk 1,200 (three rooms for one night)  
 Total Tk 8,200

### Travel tips

- Umbrellas or raincoats.....
- Trekking shoes
- Never wear shorts or half-sleeve shirts because of insect bites
- Mosquito spray.....
- Avoid mosquito bites between 4:40pm and 7:30pm
- Take a first aid kit that must contain paracetamals, anti-septic ointments, bandage

