



away from dhaka

close to nature

WINTER is the perfect time for pleasure trips. The word 'pleasure trip' brings to mind luxurious hotels, beaches and picnic spots with all the delectable food and lavish facilities handy. Rarely do we set foot for an adventurous expedition to the places unknown, trekking in the hills or a voyage in the bottomless sea to an almost deserted island. We Bangalees always tend to play safe.

In this week's issue, we are going on an expedition to unlock the mysteries of nature. If you are one of those people who have the knack for adventure and exploring the unknown, come along with us, let loose your wildest imagination. And also make the most out of your Eid-ul-Azha vacation this January.

TREKKING TRIP TO KEOKRADONG

The first place we are taking you is to Bandarban, to Mt. Keokradong, the highest mountain peak of Bangladesh. It is about 4,500 ft high from the sea level. On the way to the top you will get to see waterfalls, serene mountain



rivers, ripples of the Boga lake and many friendly Bawm and Tripura faces.

The trip starts with a bus ride to Bandarban. You can choose between The S Alam service from Fakirapool or the Dolphin from Kalabagan, and the fare is Tk 240. Taking the 11pm night coach, you reach the fresh air of the hilly district by 7 am. This is followed by a rickshaw ride to Hafezghona and then to Poukkhon chari by 'chader gaari'. This interesting vehicle will charge Tk50. You can also reserve a jeep for Tk 1300-1500. These are available near the bus stand.

From Poukkhon chari you will have to get to Ruma bazaar by trawler, and you reach there by nightfall. You can either avail one of the several boarding houses at the bazaar, or if you want a little more comfort, try and obtain permission from the authorities to stay at the Parbattya Ancholik Porishad rest house or the Thana rest house. Sleep tight,

for the morrow brings a challenging adventure.

The day starts with a hike to the Boga lake. Grab a local guide to take you on the 3-hour journey through Eden Hill and Jhiri Khaal to the entrance of the Boga lake. A handful of stores owned by the indigenous people there will yield simple food like rice, egg, and bananas, to appease the hunger that's bound to appear after the long hike.

After a little rest, hiking starts again. You will have to go through Boga khal this time. After Boga khal you start climbing the slopes full of damp rocks. There are steps hewn into the slopes by the locals, with bamboo handrails. An undulating path leads you to Boga para, where you stay the night.

Beside the lake there are two rest houses both made of bamboo on high platform. The tranquil night with sparkling stars on the sky and glowing fireflies in the bushes will mesmerise you. The Boga lake itself is a

