

Star WOLIDAY

DHAKA SUNDAY JANUARY 1, 2006

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Taj Caselina, 2nd Floor, 25 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka 1212
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MALAYSIA



Dhadhar Char

Prelude of a dream

WHILE our boat was moving near the sandy gentle slope of the riverbank, several boatmen called us to hire their country boats, transformed into steel plated boats powered by irrigation pumping engines. We boarded an open boat, amid much noise and billows of smoke.

We edged our way through the crowded boats and began our voyage down to the Dhadhar char on the dead, calm and clean water, taking photographs of the changing panorama and birds. As the cool gentle breeze was blowing, we, sitting on the open boat, forgot about the comfort of a shade.

Mr Kamal, our guide, told us that the boat has arrived at Dhadhar char, a shoal in the Shitalakhya.

The northern tip of the Dhadhar char is located to the south of Raniganj, from where we have started our journey. On the edge of the water near the huge sandbank an interesting scene drew our attention. We saw some brick-red huge birds half-submerged in the waters. As we get closer,

we identified them as Brahminy Kite, a kind of fish and offal-eating raptor, popularly known as 'Shankha Chil'.

Dhadhar char, an island of one and a half kilometres in length and half a kilometre in width, is well elevated from the water level and covered with lush green vegetation of different species of plants.

On the water we found some bamboo posts, erected by the local fishermen for their casting nets. In their absence, birds took them as lucrative points for fishing. Kingfishers, ablaze with iridescent colour, were seen on the bamboo posts and we logged three species of different colour, shape and sizes.

The tiny jewel-like common kingfishers were seen perching on the twigs along the water edge while the big white-breasted kingfishers stood on the bamboo posts. I wondered why these birds sit on posts as they are not reputed fish-eaters, rather they prefer insects, small lizards and worms as their staple diet. But it was interesting to see

that the lesser pied kingfishers, an exclusive fishing bird, were hovering on air and diving into the water for catching small fish. Along the bank of the Dhadhar char, we found little egrets, common snipes, paddy birds and some wagtails.

With little difficulty, we toiled up on the Dhadhar char and were fascinated by its tranquility and beauty. Trees of different sizes and shapes, winter crops adorned the landscape. Birds like hoopoe, baya weaver, sparrow, wagtail, doves, myna, crow pheasant and swifts were flashing either from the ground or from the branches of trees. A sense of solitude was prevailing all along the island.

On our way back we saw some little comrponents on the deserted bamboo posts and retrained us from photographing them while they were drying their wings against the tree line.

Photo & story: KHASRU CHOUDHURY

CATEGORY
ADVENTURETRIP

Category: Family
Location: Kapsasia, 85 km north-east of Dhaka city
Road condition: Fair
Trip cost for six persons
Microbus (seven seater A/C) a day Tk 1700
Fuel and others Tk 1500
Food @ Tk 200 per person Tk 1400
Drivers allowance Tk 200
Boat rent Tk 1,000 for five hours.

THINGS TO CARRY

Pair of Binoculars Camera and film Casual dress/warm clothing in winter months
Sunsreen lotion Light soled sho Sunglass
sun hat Swimming gear

BAY OF BENGAL

