

DHAKA SUNDAY AUGUST 13, 2006



PART-1

Cloud gazers

NOT the wide concrete Ghat, but the fruit bats hanging upside down from the banyan tree reminded us that we visited this place in Kapasia before. Sitalakhya flows so peacefully in front of us, full to the brim in monsoon.

We took little time to rent an engine boat and set out for our destination with an enigmatic name -- 'Dhadhar Char' (Island of puzzle). Nobody can say how the island got its name, or for how long it has been there. The name itself was too enchanting to defy a visit and when someone said it is one of the most beautiful place on

earth, we could not disbelieve him and took up this trip.

The boat bobbed dangerously for some time as it cut the river across and then steadied. We were cruising close to the bank; the monsoon breeze blew over the Helancha trees, creating a pleasant ripple of the green leaves. This part of the Sitalakhya is quiet, hardly any boats crossed us. The pleasant diffused sunlight gave a dreamy edge to everything. Egrets were slowly winging their way across the river, a kingfisher sat motionless on a Helancha tree. A lonely boatmen hung on to his sail. We

cruised on.

About 45 minutes later, a sharp edge of the riverbank, like the slice of a pizza, came into view. Beyond it stands a thick line of tall trees, so tall that they look overwhelmingly green against the cloudy sky. The boatman first slowed the engine and then turned it off. A strange stillness dropped over us as we moved silently through the water. Finally, with a mild jolt the boat docked to the shore.

A signpost welcomes us to Dhadhar Char from a woodlot. A tranquil place sleeping deep into the shades of the trees. We get off

the boat and drop our backpack on the ground. But where were the tents that we were promised that would house us at night? Wasn't it supposed to be a camping trip?

With a shy smile, Khosru said there was a mix-up and the tents could not be arranged. What the heck does it matter when you have such a heavenly place! We set out to explore this small island. It is basically used as cattle grazing ground by the villagers across the river. A 'Bathan' as is called in Bangla. No human habitation. Only the cows -- red, white and deep brown -- wandering aim-

lessly, chewing the cud in the shades. The fun about this island is that you can cross to the other side in 15 minutes and have a different view of the Sitalakhya. The tall trees are a testimony to the long formation of the island.

It was about 3pm now and we longed for a dip.

.....
Story: INAM AHMED
Photos: INAM AHMED,
NURUZZAMAN NOOR,
SHAMIM ASHRAF



CATEGORY ADVENTURETRIP

Category: Family
Location: Kapasia, 85 km north-east of Dhaka city
Road condition: Fair.
Time to destination: About 2 hours by car to reach Raniganj Ghat.
Travel cost for six persons:
A/C microbus Tk 1,600/-
Food and others Tk 1,000/-
Boat rent Tk 1,000/-

THINGSTOCARRY

T-Shirts Sun hat sunscreen lotion binoculars Camera Torch
drinking Water food

