

Star HOLIDAY

DHAKA TUESDAY APRIL 22, 2008

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THAILAND



Sir Edmund Hillary Ride; 88+KM

PERHAPS everyone around us know the name of Mt Everest, the highest mountain on earth, the majestic symbol of courage for mankind. The 29th May, 1953 is perhaps the most significant day for mountaineering with the conquest of the Everest. Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay successfully scaled the summit of the crown

Edmund Hillary Ride, 88+Km.

It was a new route for us from Feni to Khagrachhari. When we left Dhaka it was 3am and the roads were empty. Diffused streetlights and mist washed over the roads. We had with us two four-wheelers to carry us the eight riders and their bicycles.

After breakfast we started our ride at 9am. It was still foggy. We followed the metal road to Chhagolnaiya, mostly calm as it is not a national highway. The start was a bit difficult as a lady rider, Salma, and Francois, an expatriate working with the International School Dhaka, drew a huge curious crowd. But after some time we managed to peddle our way through. We had planned to halt at Ramgor for the first night but unfortunately Salma's bike developed problems and our 'experts' Sagor and Tonmoy failed to fix it. Finding no other alternative we just hooked up the bike to our support car and Salma had to sacrifice her joyful ride.

of all mountains on earth. They proved that nothing is impossible, man can do anything and that success lies within courage!

On January 11, 2008, this great man passed away in New Zealand at the age of 88 and we named our riding trip as a tribute to this great man as Sir

The road was gently rising and then it became quite topsy-turvy. The slopes are stupendous; it felt like we were rolling like avalanche in the snow-covered gradients of the

Himalayas. Fast and furious! At a maximum speed of 49km according to our GPS. It was scenic and clean. We took snacks as our lunch on a pedestal of a nicely maintained pond of a local. The inmates helped us with drinking water.

It was getting late in the noon, the sun was going down. Salma who was scouting as an advanced party found a nice place to stay for the night. Datmara Rubber Garden, the supposedly largest rubber garden in Asia, was on our way. The bungalow of the rubber estate's general manager was surrounded by towering trees. He liked our venture and decided to give us a shelter inside the garden.

We started very early the next morning, even before the locals had woken up. We were in a hurry as we had to paddle 71Km more to reach Khagrachhari. It was an exhilarating ride across tea gardens. We coasted at ease on downhill slopes and then laboured up again.

We had to complete police formalities at Ramgor as we were entering Khagrachhari from Feni. After crossing 88km from our starting point we stopped under a banyan tree and rested.

Going was getting tough after our mid day meal. The uphill roads ahead were even steeper. Our Chinese so-called 8-gear mountain bikes were giving so many problems that we could hardly paddle the uphill trail. Talking was tough and tiresome because of the heavy load we carried.

The gradients of the road were getting higher and higher and daylight started to dim. Only 6km from here and we could reach the bottleneck of Khagrachhari with jaw dropping curves and slopes. But there was not the slightest chance of riding any more on this 6km terrain.

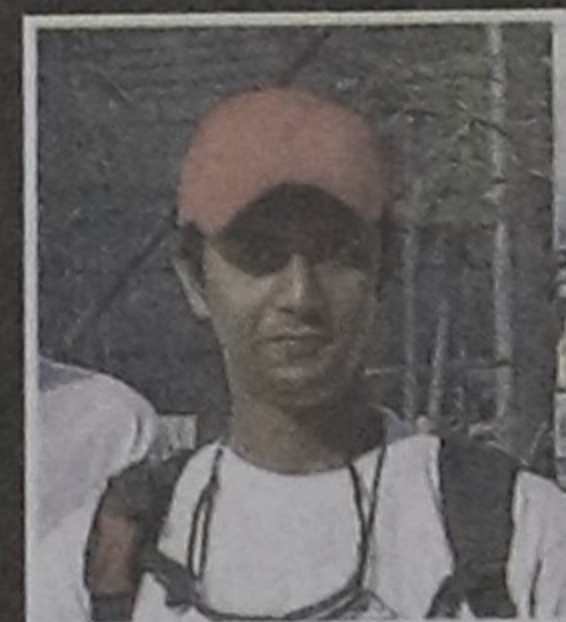
We stopped to take some food to boost our spirit to survive this last leg of the journey on this moon-lit road. Another small push, just another hundred meter, just another small push. We have to finish this "Hillary Slope" (as we named it), we have to reach the crest.

We made it at last, we made it to the darkness of the tranquil hill, and we had safely reached Alutilla at 8.15pm and lodged at Khagrachhari circuit house.

Story & Photo:
MUNTASIR MAMUN IMRAN



Round the globe on bicycles



A group of three cyclists are set to go on a world tour in May. The trio -- SM Muntasir Mamun, Mohammed Ashrafuz Zaman and Rifat Hasan -- have trekked through the off-beaten paths of Chittagong hill tracts, walked from Tetulia to Teknaif to make people aware about acid victims, sailed through the rivers from Dhaka to St. Martin's Island and bicycled around rural and urban Bangladesh to make people aware of HIV/AIDS. They have bicycled to the highest peak of Bangladesh -- Kewkradong -- where very few people dare to go even on foot. One of them even traveled 54 countries on a bicycle. They have scaled the mountain peaks of the mighty Himalayas.

This time around they are off to make another dream come true, a much bigger dream than they have ever dreamt. They are going on a round the globe journey on bicycles. They are going to visit as many countries as possible of the six continents. During the trip, they will devote their effort to make people aware of HIV/AIDS. They will start their journey from Latin America and will follow the trail up to Central and North America. They have planned to cross USA along the Atlantic coast which is almost 2600 miles. They will follow the path across Europe, Oceania pacific, Asia and the last of all the sub-Saharan Africa. Delta Outdoors, a tour organisation, is helping the adventurers to detail out the route plan.

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