NSU Earth Club goes to Bandarban

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THE great orange orb of heaven suddenly disappeared into the mist. The eyes of the onlookers took a long awaited blink - a sigh of satisfaction, an unassailable attempt of preserving a truly breath-taking sight in mind. Such simple words cannot explain the experience of witnessing a sunset at the Tiger Hill in Bandarban. The sun of the seventh day of January had set, as the earth club members experienced an eventful first day at Bandarban.

On the night of January 6, thirty-seven earth club members, alumni and faculty members gathered in front of North South University, to begin what would be Earth Club's first weeklong eco-trip in a year. The bus finally arrived and the journey began.

After a night of singing and dancing in the bus, the group got down for breakfast at Bandarban Town. The weary eyed, sparingly slept bunch then boarded three jeeps, which carried them to the Milonchori Resort. Situated in a small mountain, the resort itself is a site worth watching. The cottages are designed like the houses of the indigenous people of the hill-tracks. Some of them are named after birds of Bangladesh such as Munia, Moina etc. Trees, birds, snakes and frogs accompanied the residents of this naturally enriched resort. The small bamboo bridges, wooden steps and spiraling log stair cases make it more of a tourist spot than just a rest house.

After rest and lunch, the group again boarded the jeeps, which carried them through spiraling, narrow, mountain roads to the Buddha Dhatu Jadi. It is an attractive temple located 300 feet above sea level, on a hill at Balaghata, 2 km from Bandarban town. Its golden color, eye-catching architecture is a feast for the eyes of the visitors. On the ground floor the temple contains many statuettes depicting scenes of Buddhist scripture. At the top of the temple are more statues depicting Buddha and other religious figures, and an obelisk and a massive bell. Next stop for the group was Meghla Safari Park. It was another trip through the road resembling a stream through a mountain. It is situated near the Chittagong-Bandarban Highway. A magnificent lake, cottages, rest houses, a zoo, watchtowers and restaurants make it an example of how man and nature can truly bond. All manmade beauties lie on one bank of the lake, and a hanging wooden bridge connects it to natural forests, hills and wildlife on the other bank. On our way back to the Milonchori Resort, we stopped at Tiger Hill, to witness the sunset. The scenic view of Bandarban town and its adjoining area from the hill top rest house is simply amazing.

On January 8, the group visited Lama, a quiet and remote area in the Bandarban district. After a long journey between mountains, over steams and through clouds the travelers arrived at the gate of the Quantum Meditation Resort. This resort was established in Lama, to create a space for spiritual pursuit amidst natural surroundings. After a short rest and speech from our resort guide, the tour began. As we passed through the many sections of the resort we couldn't help but appreciate the beauty and magnificence of the breath taking scenes.



According to the guide taking a dip in the two natural springs *Abe Shefa* (The Spring of Healing) and *Abe Kudrat* (The Spring of Glory) rejuvenates the mind and body in seconds. The use of a special kind of clay found under the springs has successfully eradicated stubborn rashes and skin blemishes. *Chiching Phak*, or 'Open Sesame', a narrow dark waterway between two sharp ridges, almost merging into each other, surprisingly opens up to a large enclosure. *Jable Shams* or the Hill of the Sun the highest point in the resort is the site of a very special meditation, the *Surjomukhi*, or 'Facing the Sun' meditation- where one unexpectedly feels the touch of a cool breeze under the scorching heat of the sun.