In addition, there are lakes, hills, wildlife and a diverse range of plants and trees brought from all over Bangladesh. A safari park *Kantaran* is a 3-acre fenced off valley housing deer, rabbits, hedgehogs and various species of birds.

About ten stages or *manchas* are scattered all over the resort and are perfect places to sit and meditate. There is a 1300 sq. ft. *dhyanghar* or meditation hall where 200 people can meditate together. The gentle murmur of the spring flowing by the side of the *dhyanghar* creates the perfect harmonic background for meditation. There are many clay and wood sculptures scattered all over that blend with the surroundings. Brick stairways, pathways and bridges not only make traversing easier but also add architectural



beauty. At night, generators and solar panels illuminate this remote area where power lines are yet to be extended. The center also houses *Sishu Kanon*, a school and rehabilitation center for impoverished local children.

On our way back to the Milonchori Resort, we stopped for lunch and then started for a visit to the Sangu River. The clear blue water, the calming breeze and soft light of the setting sun, was a perfect end to the day.

After breakfast on January 9, the team left the resort to find the jeeps that were parked outside the resort. The journey began and some 40 minutes later we arrived at a small market place. Here a gate marked the entrance to a popular tourist spot, Shaila Propat (waterfall). Some hundred steps leading down to a rocky stream. The rocky bank of the stream is very slippery and a few of the merry gang dared to traverse it.

Then we went to Nilgiri Resort. Panoramic Nilgiri Resort is situated on the apex of a hill and is supervised and controlled by Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh Rifles. It is about 2500 feet above sea level. We were awestruck when we got a glance of the Cox's Bazar sea beach from Nilgiri. A lot of natural beauties including the waves of Cox's Bazar sea beach, breezy air, the colourful life of the Mru indigenous community on the horizon touching the hills, the lush greenery marked the Nirgili trip. After lunch the enthusiastic travelers were off again. It was then time for another sunset, from another hill Chimbuk.



Chimbuk is a unique hill with different kinds of tourist attractions. It is called the Darjeeling of Bengal. It is 2000 feet above sea level. The zigzag road and view of the Sangu river en route to Chimbuk is a thrilling experience. The top of this hill is plain like a plateau. Some of us stretched our hands and could easily touch the clouds.

Returning to the Milonchori Resort, the group prepared for a barbecue night. Singing dancing and a short drama show carried through the night. The next morning some early risers of the group decided to view the sunrise over the hills before the journey back home began. Thus a memorable and inspiring trip to the rooftop of Bangladesh ended, as the rays of hope from a new morning sun shimmered over the hilltops.

An Architect's Dhaka

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During my student years at BUET, and in years afterwards, we would almost everyday gather at a friend's house near the China Building in Azimpore. Among them there are now professors at home and abroad, generals and one adviser to the Caretaker Government. I would often slip out of the adda and walk around as this was a place on the invisible boundary between old and new Dhaka. This is something I got used to when I was nine, I would just slip out of school and roam around the meandering galis in Mymensingh. On one such loitering towards south I suddenly came across a long red wall on my left at a crossing; as I went round I discovered this mosque to me one of the most elegant and unusual structures; we hadn't have studied Indian or Bengal architecture yet, usually taken in the second year. Later I would frequently visit the place as I became acquainted with the owner of a biscuit factory adjacent to the mosque.

In 1913 the Archaeological Survey of India listed Khan Mirdha's Masjid; by then it had undergone alterations and appropriations that had to be demolished to restore it to its original form. The earliest photograph available on the mosque shows a ruined structure just before this early restoration attempt. Thereafter both the DOA and mosque committee have undertaken periodic repairs some of which ignored the architectural and historic importance of the building. To compensate for the damaged drains and arrest further deterioration the authority provided new outlets to drain rainwater out from the upper terrace; and improved water and sanitation services. The structure also experienced many encroachments that constricted the compound, which drew serious attention of the architects when it was included as a case study in an architectural conservation workshop in 1989 in Dhaka.