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THAILAND



Spring by the river Teesta

TIME has always been a factor during making a bicycle trip as we all have work and classes to attend to. The recent events in the country were not encouraging enough for outdoor trips. Despite that the joy of riding could not resist us! The seven-member team of adventure community -- Kewkradong.com -- set off for Nilphamari to ride along the famous river Teesta.

Riding bicycles in Dhaka is not always pleasant, actually it's kind of difficult because of maniac motor vehicle drivers. That's why it's hard to find riding mates here. We, a small group of youth known as Kewkradong.com, try locate places where we can paddle along. Despite the hassles of transferring cycles from Dhaka to

another region, it's full of fun to ride in rural or suburban areas in Bangladesh!

Nilphamari is only 6 hours' drive from Dhaka. We had to prop our bikes on bus roof at Gabtoli terminal. And that's a real trouble because our "Chinese" bikes are too rickety to travel on bus top. They need some mandatory fixing before and after every ride.

It was dawn when we started off from the Nilphamari District Circuit House but like many previous occasions we found that one bike has a flat tire.

We put the suburb behind and followed a paved road by a canal fed from the Teesta barrage to irrigate the farmland. This road also acts as a dam and so no heavy vehicles are allowed to ply it. We felt relieved and started riding in a flock.

Light spring breeze from the south flowed over the canals and green fields. We sung and rode, we parked by the canal to dip our feet in the gentle cold water. No rush. Then we started leisurely paddle away again. Trees planted along the dam cast shades on us. It was so refreshing that we stopped counting the milestones to our destination.

This place is named "Jaldhaka" which means a place covered by water. It is said that long ago this whole area was flooded by Teesta due to a devastating earthquake. Teesta was a much wider river then but now it has lost its vigor. We rarely found any tea stalls in this thinly populated area. The shops beside the road were empty except for a few curious faces eyeing us as we passed by. We could see the Teesta barrage in the distance. We found a picnic spot



just beside the rest house of the Water Development Board, where we decided to pitch our tents for the night.

The northern part of Teesta is really vast, appearing like an ocean of white sand. A few canals cut through the sand. We imagined how vast Teesta might have been looking in rainy season when the shoals go under water.

Night in the tent is another fun. We used the grassy field of the rest house as our camping ground.

The next morning we started very early en route to Saidpur. It was a fairly good road but after a couple of hours of riding we had to follow through a muddy road. It was even smoother than the paved one.

We had to cross a very small part of the national

high way after riding Kishorgong Taragong and using the by pass to access Saidpur town. So in a way almost whole riding - the path was just safe to following the path again. We caught the bus in the same night to reach Dhaka by the next morning!!

Story & photos: MUNTASIR MAMUN IMRAN

From more info : www.kewkradong.com

