

TRAVELOGUE

BY SHAHANA HUDA



TETULIA

A view of the majestic Kanchenjunga

Perhaps you have been yearning to see the famed Kanchenjunga for long. But because of the international travel involved, and the various red tapes, it has not materialised yet. Did you know that you can easily see the sunbeams dancing off of the massive mountain's snow sheath from a peaceful corner of your own country? That is exactly what Kakon and her friends did. "Never in my dreams did I imagine we could see the amazing mountain from within our own country! We just went to Tetulia based on supposed hearsay. But we tasted success on the very first day. We woke up to the magnificent mountain shining in the distance, in clear view. We could not believe our eyes at first." Darjeeling, known as "himaloyer konna", or the daughter of the Himalayas, is right next to Tetulia, just across the border.

Hundreds of people from the world over visit Darjeeling from October through May every year to see the beauty that is Kanchenjunga. And yet many of us are not aware that its mesmerising beauty can be experienced from the northern most upazila of Bangladesh, Tetulia, during any clear day of Hemanta or Sheet seasons, that is from mid October to mid November. The weather is only slightly cold then, with only a few clouds wafting about in the blue sky, and there is not much fog either. You just need nature to favour you on the day to catch a glimpse of a proud member of the Himalayas. Of course, you need nature's favourable



gaze in Darjeeling itself too. A European tourist I know went to the top of Tiger Hill for 10 days straight and yet left without a glimpse of the mountain, all for the lack of Mother Nature's favour.

Tetulia is the most attractive upazila of Panchagarh. If you think the view of the Kanchenjunga is the only thing on offer, it is not. There is plenty more to

see. There are four rivers flowing through—the Korotoa, Gobra, Dahuk and Mahananda. They have different flows during different times of the year. Originating in the mountains, they also bring along large rocks. The water is crystal clear and sweet. It is a lot of fun to take a dip in the cold waters if you visit in the summer season. The water

flow is much lower in the winter, but then the vast 'Chars' emerge on them. And after a good rain in the monsoons, the serene waters peacefully flow through the tea estates to the flatter parts of the region.

Apart from the rolling hills in the Sylhet region, a lot of tea is now produced in the flatlands of Panchagarh now. Tea estates line both sides of the main road, melding into the horizon. It is a vast verdant carpet, wherein stand some tall trees, providing shade to the tea gardens. We had assumed that the name Tetulia must have been derived from Tetul, or tamarind, and that we found to be true. There used to be many tamarind trees in the region then. But we could not determine whether those trees were in fact haunted or not, as many in Bangla literature are said to be! It is also said that once an English trader lived on one of the hill tops here, beside a large tamarind tree. His father's name was "Tetu". So the name Tetulia came from the Tetu and "tetultola" for the tree. Even today it seems that the greenery is the most dominant factor in Tetulia. Apart from the tea gardens, there are also orchards of pineapples, jackfruit, watermelon, papaya, and oranges. Rows and rows of mango trees, wheat, rice and garlic can also be seen. Rows and rows of ancient trees. The whole place is somehow shaded, basking in its greenery.

Tetulia is one of the oldest police stations or "thana" of the country. It used

