

But fear not if your adventurous streak does not extend to food-- mainland cuisine is also available, although it is quite a task to get the supplies to Munlai for its significant distance from the larger cities, Tamzid adds.

THE TASTE OF ADVENTURE

The best part of Munlai, as said before, is the plethora of options it offers to vacationers. No matter the number of days in the visit, or intention, there can never be a dull moment, unless that is exactly what you are looking for!

If it is a chilled out three days of doing nothing but perhaps read a book overlooking a valley, or some stargazing towards a clear midnight sky, Munlai Para is the place for you. But then again, if the sedentary lifestyle in our city and jobs have got you bogged down and feeling like an inanimate unmoving object, believe me when I say how awful that feels, Munlai offers a rich variety of activities to satisfy the need to soak up some nature and open wilderness.

The entire resort has been created to offer ample space for an authentic camping experience out in the hills of Bandarban overnight, but with provisions for essential facilities like washrooms and water supply.

Always dreamed of spending the night listening to the peaceful noises of nocturnal

nature? Make it happen here!

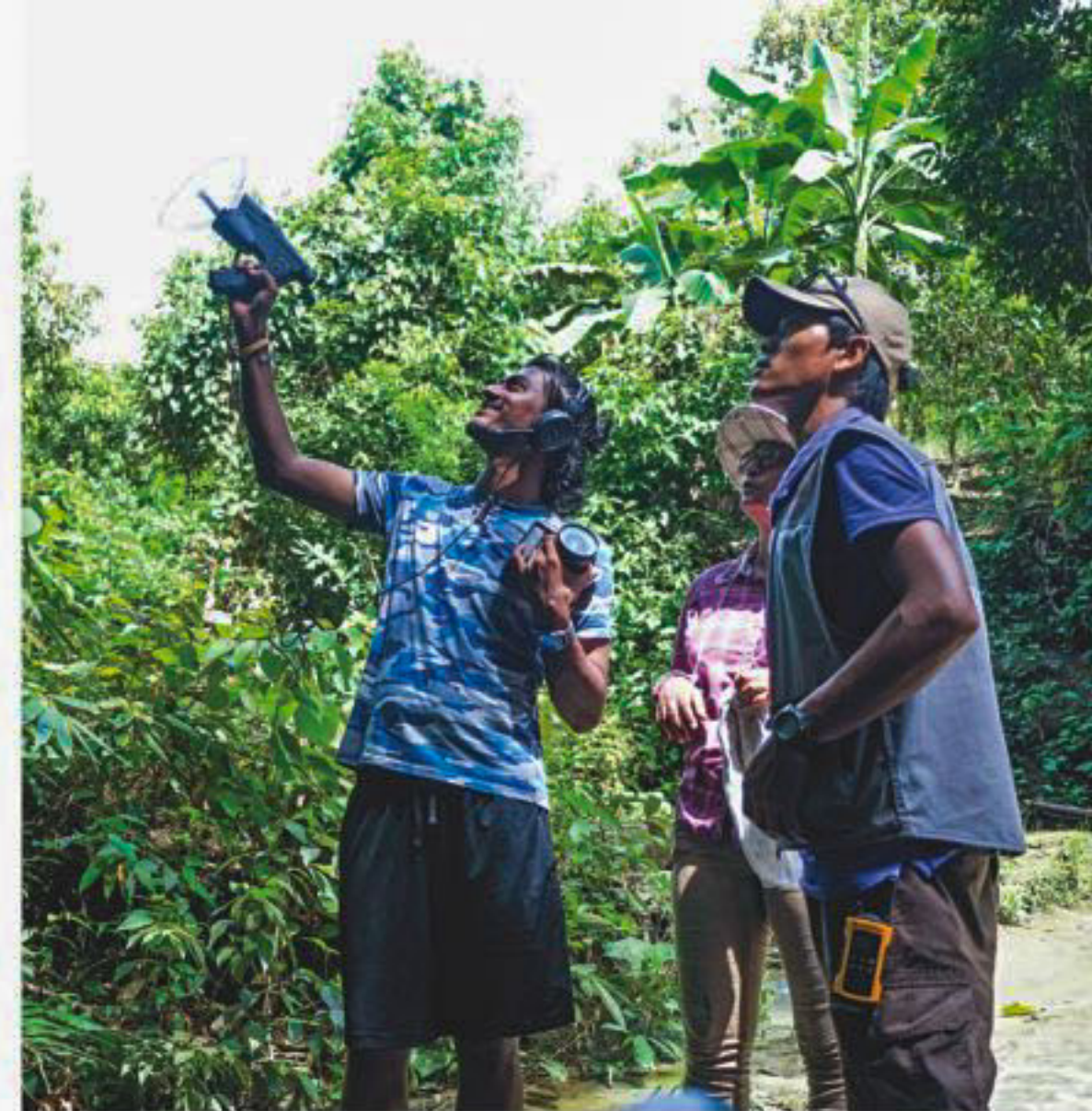
Love a boat ride over the pristine waters of a hilly stream? The Sangu, one of Bandarban's major and longest rivers, offers just that, as it flows by only five minutes' walk away from the Munlai Para. The rugged unspoiled beauty of the hills on both the banks, upstream from Bandarban, is the perfect way to feed the soul some breaths of quiet peace.

If a little more physical exertion is on your mind, opt for the kayaking, either on the Sangu - for the brave of heart-- or the nearby smaller streams for novices. What's more, the gorgeously picturesque Boga Lake is just a short 40-minute bike ride away!

Trained guides can take you along for hikes, as the Para has been eloped to have six ent trails with varying levels of difficulty. Tree top activities, zip lining -the largest in Bangladesh as of now, mountain biking options also await those with a thirst for adrenaline. And for those looking for a lower inten-

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sity vacation, learning to weave cloth, bird watching and star gazing will surely seal the deal!

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

The best element of Munlai Para tourism is that it practices responsible community travel. The team works hard to be mindful to preserve and conserve nature, as well as help make the lives of the Bawm better in all ways possible. "We planted 1,600 endangered local trees in this area so far," Tamzid says, adding that they

have also conducted a year-long research into the lives of the Bawm, their culture and lifestyle, rites and rituals, and are working to conserve many disappearing practices, perhaps a first in the country for this particular indigenous community. "The locals are being given training to improve their weaving patterns, and we also got a machine from China to help the farmers make better profits from their cashew harvest," Tamzid says. A school was also started for the local children, and a system was installed for organic and inorganic waste, with the organic one being used for making compost fertiliser.

The Munlai Para services are run on a system that allows all the Bawms to share benefits from each tourist, under the concept of community tourism. Can you think of a better way to have fun and contribute to the society than vacationing here?

By Sania Aiman
Photo courtesy: Munlai Community Tourism

