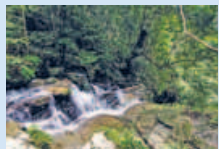


gigantic stream was falling from 290 feet above. I sat in front of that waterfall in amazement, oblivious for a while to the world. Then, seeing other team members showering, I couldn't resist myself.

But the quest was to climb to the top of the four-step waterfall. We had to climb a steep path to reach the upper steps, literally making our way through. It was so slippery and steep that we stopped short of reaching the top. It was getting too risky.

We spent as long as we could in the arms of this wild beauty. The sky was getting darker, and it was now time to return. We took the same route back. But to our surprise, this time it took us half the time to cross the trail. As soon as we crossed the jhiri trail, it started raining. Water was flowing down the hill, washing away the mud, making our trek easier and faster.

WILD SAINGPRA the majestic waterfall



HABIBA MITUN

It felt so peaceful!

It was too early even for the roosters to break the tranquility of Khemchong Para, an indigenous neighbourhood in Ali Kadam, Bandarban.

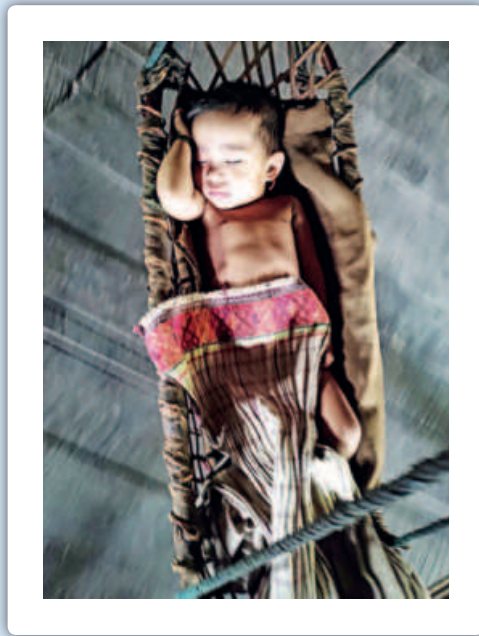
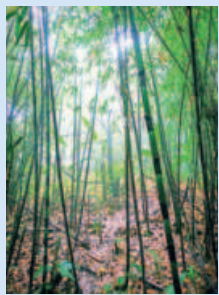
It was 5:30 in the morning. The silence was magical.

The cool breeze that was circulating in the room through the window slit made it harder for me to leave the warmth of the quilt. It rained a lot during the night.

But the next thought pushed me out of bed. I was going to meet the wild Saingpra, a majestic waterfall, that day.

As I opened the window of the cozy cottage, floating clouds greeted me with their misty, earthy embrace. The soft glow before the sunrise turned the rain-soaked lavish green mountains into a wonderland.

I had little time to get ready. Visiting Saingpra wasn't going to be easy. Day-long arduous trekking was awaiting us all.



surrounded by hills. The view was refreshing for our tired minds and soul.

The trail got tougher at this point. Landslides, caused by downpour, made the already muddy and slippery downhill trek riskier. Our progress slowed down considerably as we had to be extra cautious. One wrong step could have cost us dearly.

After a short walk down this muddy patch, we came to a dense bamboo bush. The path here was also slippery, but trekking was a little easier. After ascending for a while, we went down a jhiri poth (trail along a small stream). We took a short break here.

From there, the trail was different from others we trekked before. It was full of boulders, and each boulder was about 8-9 feet in height and slippery. And the trail was full of leeches. I felt like crying but there was no going back.

We helped each other to cross these huge boulders. It was just 10:30 am, but the trail was getting darker as sunlight barely pierced through the dense forest.

The trail was "dangerously beautiful" that day. The gorgeous landscape was a sight to remember and cherish for life.

After a while, another huge boulder stood in our way - larger than all those we left behind. We tried to climb it up but that wasn't an easy task. We looked around to find another way and noticed thick roots, which came as a lifesaver. One by one, we crossed this rock, scrambling, crawling.

After walking for another 30 minutes, it was time for a little rest. We ate dry food, before walking for another 10 minutes to reach the bottom of the Saingpra waterfall. It was around 11:30 AM.

I was not ready for what I saw. A

We reached Khemchong Para by afternoon.

The next 3 days, we trekked to seven more waterfalls including Kra Taung upper stream and downstream, Ladmerakh, Jaam Rung, Palong Khyang upper and downstream and Thang Koyain.

But the trek to the Saingpra waterfall remains the highlight of the tour.

Yes, we did it! It's been a year, but the memories are still alive.

HOW TO GO THERE?

Take a direct bus from Chattogram to Chakariya. Then, there are local buses from Chakariya to Ali Kadam. You can take a jeep (locally known as chander gari) too. After reaching Ali Kadam bazaar, you have to take a ride on local CNG to Aamtali ghat. Here you have to hire a boat and after a 2-2:30-hour journey, you will reach Dhusri bazaar. Here the trek starts. Until you reach Dhusri bazaar again, all you have to do is "WALK".

WHERE TO STAY?

This trek is relatively in a remote place in Bandarban. You have to rely on the cottages of local people. So plan your tour accordingly.

Another surprising issue is no one will cook for you there.

We carried food from Chattogram. However, the locals were friendly and I didn't feel unsafe for a moment during the whole tour.

COST

The trip starting from Chattogram can be managed in 5-7 thousand taka.



Habiba Mitun is a student of journalism at the University of Chittagong, and an avid traveller.

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It was the third day of our tour which started on August 16, 2021. We, 11 of us from different parts of the country, set out on our mission to cover the highest summits and waterfalls in the Ali Kadam area. Nine of my travel mates were total strangers to me. But when everyone shares the same goal, bonding happens automatically.

The first two days were hectic. We summited Kris Taung (approx. 2949 feet) and Rungrang Taung (approx. 2772 feet), the two highest peaks in the Chimbuk range. After six to seven hours of trekking each day, my legs were tired. But I was determined to meet Saingpra, the highest waterfall in the Ali Kadam, come what may.

It was drizzling again.

We waited for it to stop, but there was no sign. So, after a warm, hearty breakfast of noodles and coffee, we started trekking.

From the beginning, the trail was slippery. After trekking for 30-40 minutes on the hilly trail, we reached a beautiful green flat land

