

TRAVEL

# From clay hills to tranquil rivers: Discovering Birishiri

Mymensingh is Bangladesh's best-kept travel secret, and Birishiri is the jewel in its crown. It offers scenic views that are raw and almost untouched—and even for seasoned travellers, it is not just about ticking boxes.

It's about seeing something closely and experiencing it deeply. You will most likely remember every spot long after returning home



**China Matir Pahar, Birishiri Lake**

The place is famous for its Cheena Matir Pahar or "China Clay Hills," named after the deposits of coloured clay found in the area. This hill stands in gentle contrast to the surrounding greenery, creating a beautiful landscape. Although small in height, it is striking in appearance. Many travellers choose to climb the hills for panoramic views of the surrounding areas. During certain times of the year, especially after rain, the clay pits take on shades of blue and green, giving the place an almost surreal quality.

If the hills are the heart of Durgapur, the Someshwari River is its soul. The waters are clean; the riverbanks are sandy. A boat ride along the Someshwari, especially in the rainy season, is nothing short of therapeutic. During winter, the river thins, revealing walkable stretches—perfect for a moment in solitude. The change in scenery from one season to the next makes each visit feel new.

However, it is not just scenic views that make travelling to Birishiri appealing. The warmth of the people is

something to look forward to too. They are famed for their resilience, and for their role in the death-defying Tonk Movement; a historical chapter that still echoes through the region. The armed struggle, a parallel but different movement from the Tebhaga Movement, was waged by the Hajong community at the end of the British colonial period. Today, the Tonk Memorial in Durgapur stands in honour of those who gave their lives for justice and land rights.

Essentials —

The journey to Birishiri may not be the smoothest; there are no airport



**Kamalabagan**

drop-offs or fancy tour buses waiting for you. Instead, there are dusty roads, unpredictable public transport, and a definite lack of luxury. But for those willing to trade comfort for experience, the rewards are well worth it.

Travel to Durgapur, Netrokona by bus or car. From there, local electric rickshaws and boats are your best bet to explore



**Tonko Memorial**

the surrounding area. Know that there are very few options for an overnight stay in Netrokona, but Birishiri is doable as a day trip from Mymensingh, or even from Dhaka if you are adventurous enough and start early.

The seasons paint the landscape in a different palette every few months. So, no matter when you visit, there is something on offer. If you want to experience the beauty of the Someshwari River in its full glory, monsoon is the time you should visit. Otherwise, winter offers more comfortable travel conditions—dry weather, walkable trails, and cooler temperatures—and is highly recommended.

**LS DESK**

**Photo: Shahrear Kabir Heemel**



**Someswari River**