

Melkhum Trail : Walking between hills, water and silence

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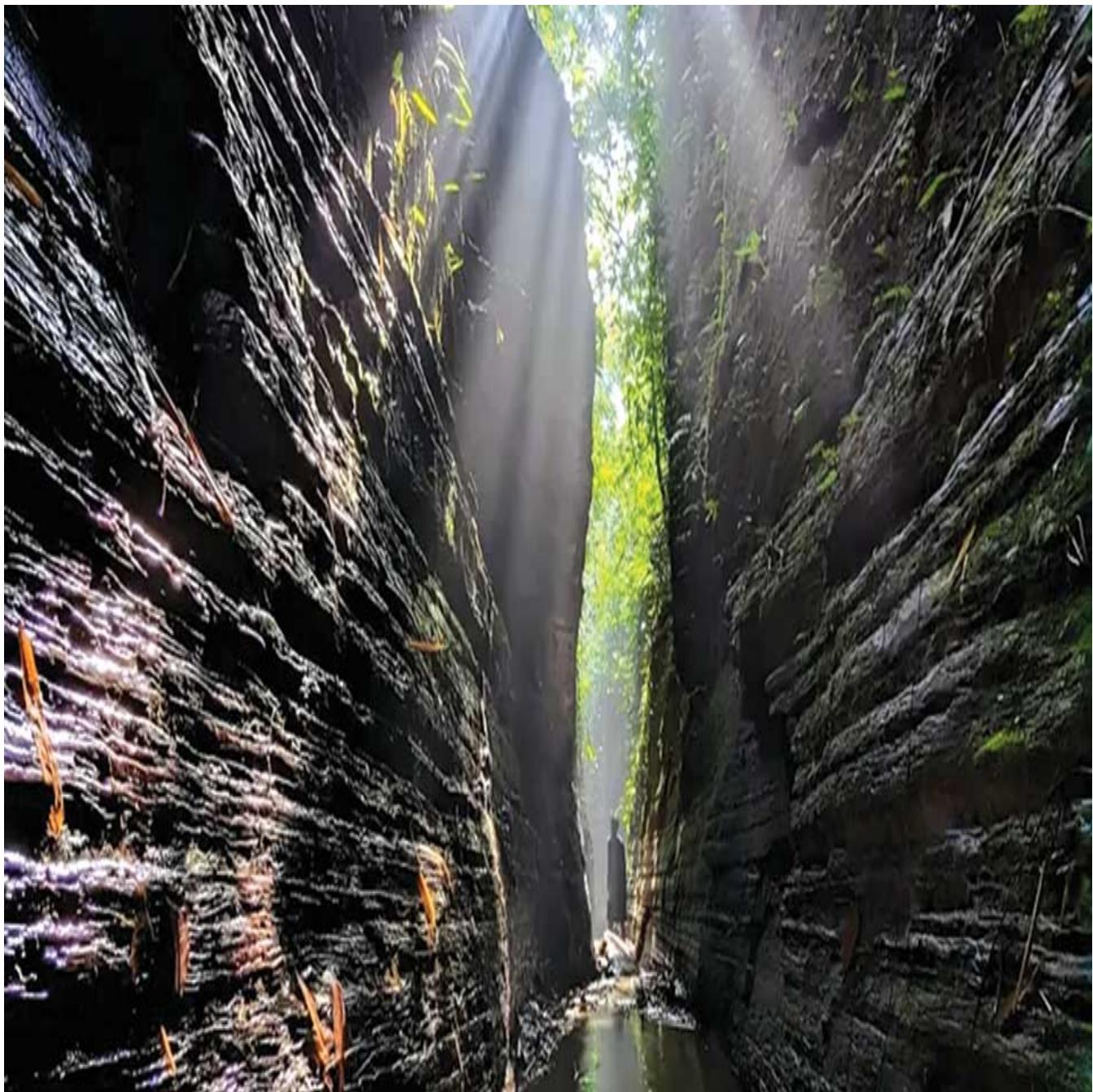
Bangladesh is a country filled with natural beauty. In every corner of this land, countless scenes of natural beauty and diversity are hidden. There are many unknown places that remain out of sight from the common paths of people. However, true travel lovers never overlook such natural beauty and mysterious locations. One such unique, mysterious, and beautiful place is the Melkhum Trail. Melkhum Trail is a mountain pass located in Jorarganj Union of Mirsharai Upazila in Chattogram District.

The naming of this place has a special mystery behind it. Mel is a type of vine that works as a fish anesthetic. Local people once used to spray the juice of the mel vine into the water of the Kum to catch fish. Shortly after the juice was spread, the fish in the Kum water, especially shrimp, would die and float to the surface. In this way, through repeated fishing, the name of the area eventually became Melkum or Melkhum.

From Sonapahar in Mirsharai Upazila, the road that stretches toward the east is actually the main trail. This is the trail that leads into Melkhum. On both sides of the entrance, steep hills rise about 100 to 200 feet high, standing face to face. Between the two hills lies a narrow and slippery path.

The path is so narrow that sunlight enters in different ways inside. When the sun's rays pass through the gaps between the hills, a breathtaking natural scene appears - a unique play of light and shadow can be seen.

It is mainly to enjoy this narrow pathway and the endless beauty of light and shade that people come to trek on this trail. Usually, trekking enthusiasts visit this trail. Especially for those who are just thinking about starting trekking, Melkhum is a very beautiful and suitable place for a one-day beginner trip and exploration.



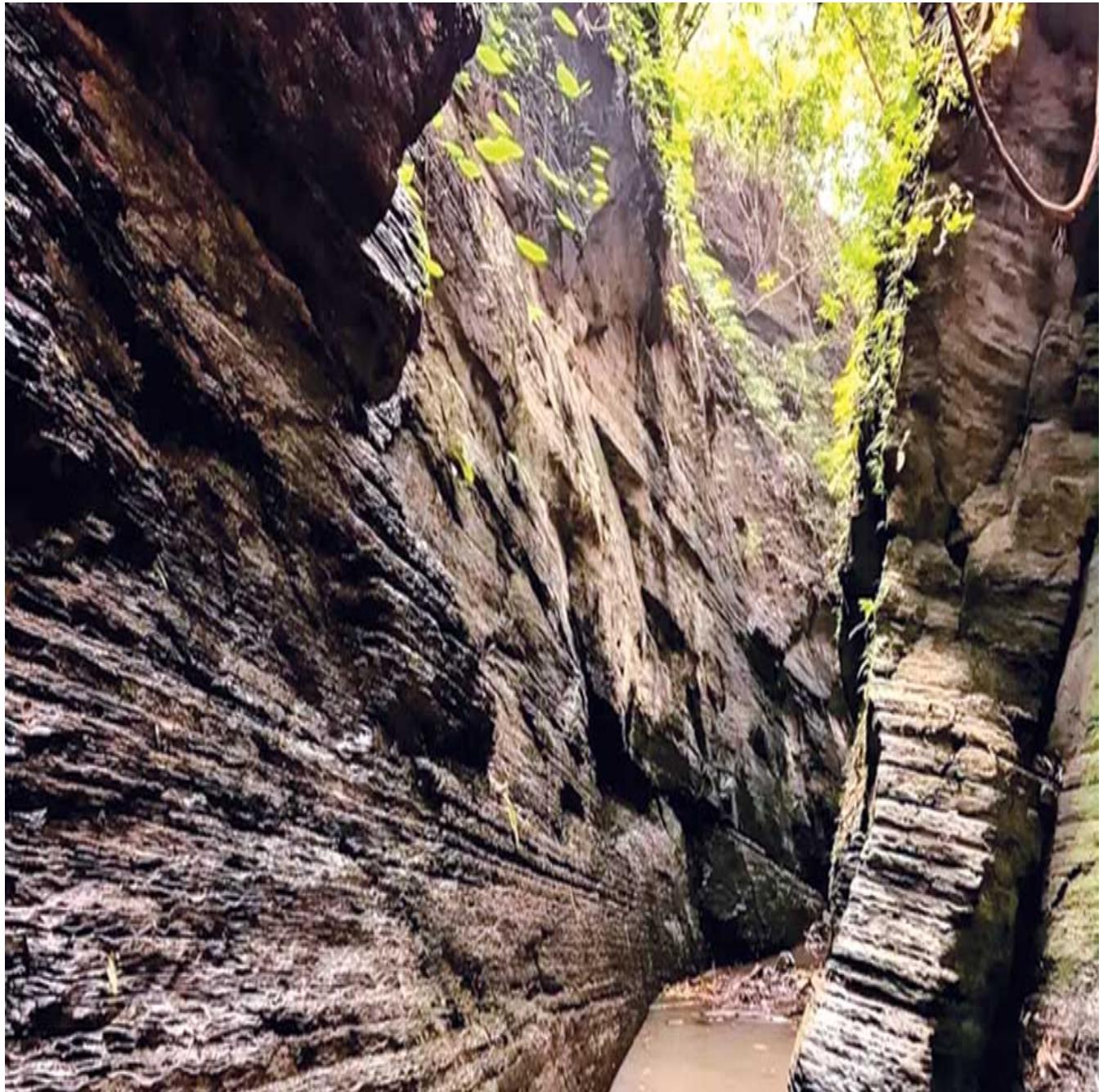
Along the way, there used to be earthen paths, though now they have almost disappeared. When your feet touch the soil, you can feel the natural scent of the earth. Walking along this path brings a different kind of peace. In the play of light and shadow, the water sometimes appears deep blue. All around, you can see various kinds of butterflies, which are very photogenic.

At places where there is water along the trail, if you stand quietly for a moment, you will notice small fish. Because of the clear water, the fish are easily visible, and sometimes they gently touch your feet before swimming away. The stream water is very cold. At times, you have to cross water that is chest-deep, and at other times knee-deep.

The further you go, the more it feels like you are moving toward a new

mystery. There are no signs of people around. Water flows beneath your feet, your back touches the rock walls of the hills, and above you there is only a narrow strip of sky. The hills on both sides lean inward so closely at the top that the vast sky appears in a uniquely beautiful way. As you continue, the water eventually becomes so deep that there is no option but to swim across.

Like the local people, many also believe that some supernatural entities can be seen here. Many explorers have claimed that during their trek, several members of their group heard strange sounds and felt as if someone - or something - was watching them. The beliefs and warnings of the local people are also noted. According to them, this area is inhabited by spirits or otherworldly beings.



Since the Melkhum mountain range is a remote area, tourists often lose their way once daylight fades. Visitors are advised not to go to this place without an experienced guide. Measures will be taken, with the support of the Forest Department and Upazila administration, to prevent any incident. Meanwhile, the Forest Department has already put up warning notices and signboards at various entrances of Melkhum. Since the area has been declared off-limits by the authorities, they will not be responsible for any loss or damage to life or property.

Route to Melkhum from Dhaka via Chattogram

To travel from Dhaka to Chattogram, you can take a bus from Dhaka (Saidabad Bus Terminal). There are both AC and non-AC buses available. The fare for a non-AC bus is around BDT 700 (fare may vary depending on time and transport service). AC buses are slightly more expensive. Buses are also available from other terminals in Dhaka. Alternatively, you can take a train from Dhaka to Chattogram, with fares varying depending on the seat type.

After reaching Chattogram city, travel towards Chattogram - Mirsharai. You need to get down at Mirsharai, where local buses or vans are available. You will get off near a place called Sonapahar Bazar. From Sonapahar Bazar, a short walk is required to reach Melkhum. Some areas are sparsely populated, so seeking help from locals can make the journey easier.

Accommodation

Since a one-day trip is possible, there are very limited options for staying overnight in Melkhum. Usually, no one stays there permanently. If you want to stay overnight, you can find many hotels, guesthouses, or rooms for rent in Sonapahar Bazar or Chattogram city.

For those who love mysterious trekking, natural beauty, and unique landscapes, Melkhum is an exquisite place to explore.