

Excursion to natural attractions of South-Eastern Assam

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Last September, I visited three major wildlife attractions of Assam i.e. the Hollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary, Joypur Reserve Forest, and the Dibru- Saikhowa National Park and Biosphere Reserve. The tour was arranged for the students (including me) of Master of Tourism and Travel Management (MTTM) by the Department of Business Administration, Tezpur University. This blog has been divided into three chapters which are posted differently as per the visits to the attractions mentioned above.

Chapter 1. HOLLONGAPAR GIBBON WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, 16-9-2016



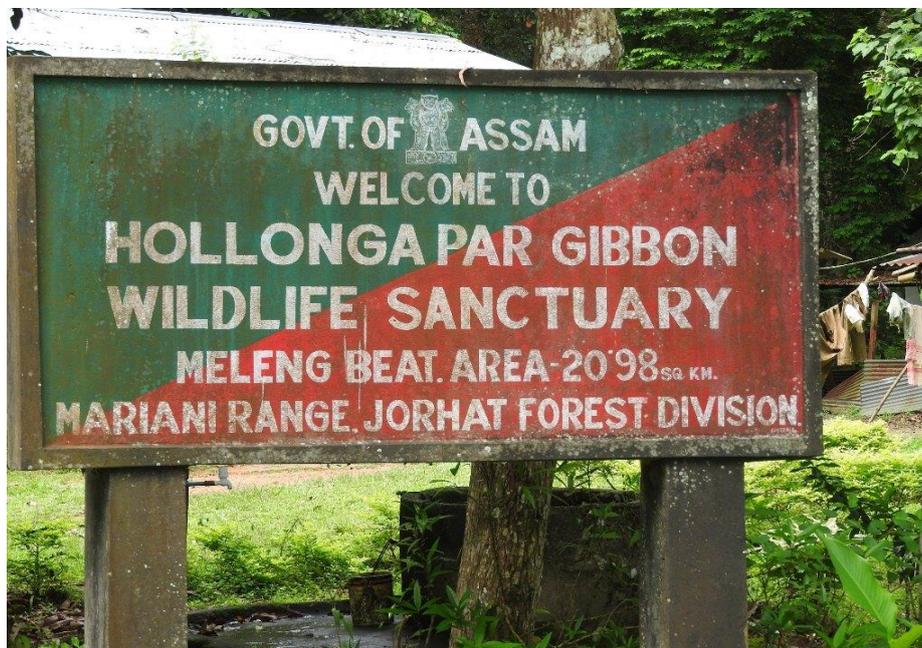
Our journey began on a misty September morning in a 17 seater bus with some unexpected sudden downpours on the way followed by greetings from Elephants and One Horned Rhinos near the roadside Kanchanjuri View Point, Kaziranga National Park.



Our first en-route attraction of the day was the Deoparbat, Numaligarh. Located beside NH 219 on the banks of river Dhansiri, Deopahar a 10th-century sculpture houses remnants of ancient temples having an explicit display of tribal art and architecture.



It has many sculptures depicting floral, plants and animal patterns such as the Asiatic Elephants and the Royal Bengal Tigers. The attraction is located 113Kms. away from Tezpur.



At high noon after traveling for almost 70Kms from Deoparbat, we reached Hollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary. The sanctuary is spread over 20.98 Sq. Kms. of land and is named after Hoolock Gibbon (the only Ape found in India) found here.

The sanctuary is situated amidst Tea Estates and human settlements with Bhogdoi river flowing on its western border and is very near to Mariani town in the Jorhat district.



After doing all the entry formalities, we entered the forest accompanied by two armed guards on foot.



A scurry of Malayan Giant Squirrels welcomed us as we trekked inside the jungle.



It was getting hot and humid inside the semi- evergreen forest and evergreen patches but everyone was excited after spotting different species of orchids, wood spiders, birds, and primates.



Hollongapar Gibbon WLS is home to 7 primate species namely the Hoolock Gibbon, Assamese Macaque, Pig- Tailed Macaque, Capped Langur, nocturnal Slow Loris, Stump-Tailed Macaque and the Rhesus Macaque. Know more at www.assamforest.in



It was during our return trek that we saw a family of Western Hoolock Gibbons and the curious male even followed us for some hundreds of meter which is unusual.



The primate species sightings tally rose to 4 out of 7 with this including the Pig- Tailed Macaques, Stump Tailed Macaques and the Capped Langurs apart from the Hoolocks.



However, the serene environment is not free of anthropogenic activities. The forest track is usually used by the villagers residing on the edge of the forest to commute and there is an active railway track that has fragmented the Southern part of the jungle into two.



After saying goodbye to the forest officials with a promise to visit again we continued our journey on the historic Dudhor Ali (Lazy man's road).

The 212 Km long Dudhor Ali road is said to be built under the leadership of Ahom king Gadadhar Singha. The road is so called because the king deployed dhods (lazy people) to construct the road. The road connects Mariani with Joypur, Dibrugarh on the east and

crosses major tributaries of river Brahmaputra on the way such as the Janzi, Dikhow, Teok, Disang rivers.



We reached Namrup, Assam, our final destination for the day singing and dancing late in the evening after traveling for more than 133 Km.



In Namrup, we checked in at the 60 years old Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation Ltd. guest house for the night. Though the rooms of the guest house were not in good shape but the homely service and food delighted all.

To be Continued...