



**Ratargul Swamp Forest** is a freshwater swamp forest located in Gowain River, Fatehpur Union, Gowainghat, Sylhet, Bangladesh. It is the only swamp forest located in Bangladesh and one of the few freshwater swamp forests in the world. The forest is naturally conserved under the Department of Forestry, Government of Bangladesh.

Its area is 3, 325.61 acres, including 504 acres declared as the animal sanctuary in 2015. It is known as the **Sundarbans of Sylhet**. This only swamp forest in Bangladesh is located 26 kilometres (16 mi) far from Sylhet. The forest's name comes from the word, "Rata" or "Pati" tree, used by the locals of Sylhet.

The evergreen forest<sup>[1]</sup> is situated by the river *Goain* and linked with the channel *Chengir Khal*. Most of the trees growing here are the *Millettia pinnata* (করচ গাছ *Koroch tree*). The forest is submerged under 20–30 feet water in the rainy season. For the rest of the year, the water level is about 10 feet deep.<sup>[2][3][4]</sup> Ratargul is known as "Sundarban of Sylhet."

Location:

Ratargul is about 26 kilometres from Sylhet. There is a 3,325 acres wetland in Sylhet range-2 under the forest department and in that wetland Ratargul swamp forest is about 504 acres. It is located in Gowainghat. After reaching Gowainghat, tourists reserve local engine boat namely "traller" to reach forest. There are two haors namely *shimul bil haor* and *neoa bil haor* in the south part of the forest.

If you want to visit this place then at 1st you have to come sylhet by bus, train, plane. then come to Amborkhana and hire your private car or CNG or taxi and they will help you to reach your desired destination.



Plant diversity:

Seventy-three species of plants could be found in the forest till now. 80 percent of the forest area is covered with an umbrella of the trees.<sup>[8]</sup>

Two-layer of plants can be seen in the swamp forest. The upper layer consists of trees, and the lower one consists of intense *Schumannianthus dichotomus*. The canopy of the plants spreads up to 15 meters of height.

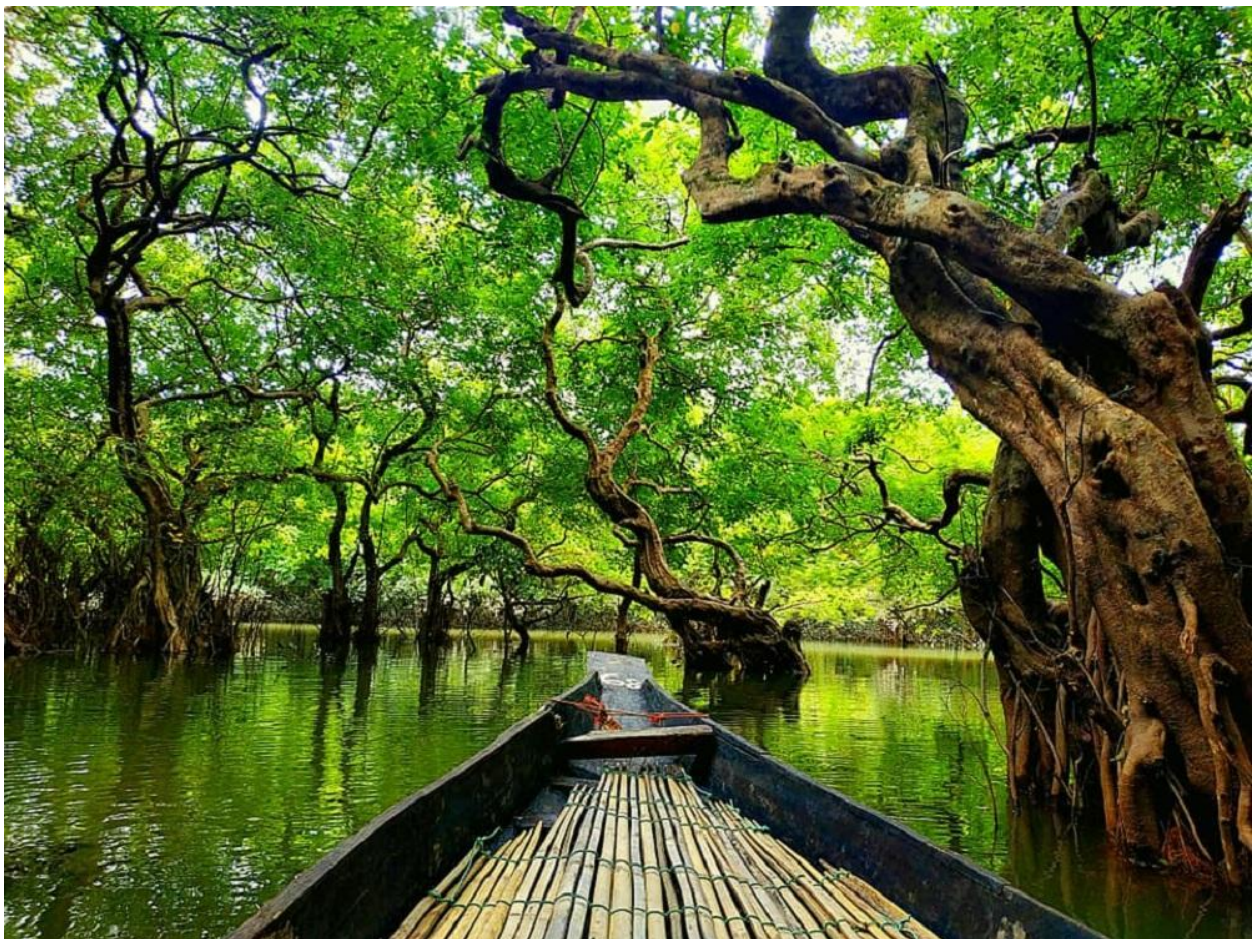
Though the forest is natural, the Forestry Department of Bangladesh has planted some watery plants like *Calamus tenuis*, *Neolamarckia cadamba*, *Barringtonia acutangula*, *Calamus tenuis*. Banyan Tree is very common in the forest. Besides that, *Barringtonia acutangula*, *Millettia*



*pinnata*, *Crateva religiosa* or *Hygrophila* (plant), *Alstonia scholaris* can also be seen.

#### Animal Diversity:

Snake and worm snake can widely be seen in this water-drowned forest. Mongoose can be seen in dry season. Monkey and Water Monitor also resides in the forest. Heron, Egret, Kingfisher, Parrot, Bulbul, Swan, Dove, Water fowl, Eagle and Kite Bird are some of the birds of the swamp forest. Cotton Pygmy Goose and other Migratory birds and Vulture visit the forest in winter. Name of some local fishes available in the forest are Batasio, Rita, Pabda, Rohu etc.



How to go:

Though Ratargul is situated in Guainghat Upazilla, it is not too far away from Sylhet city. Driving on the Airport Road , one reaches Dhupagul point on the Sylhet-Companigonj Highway, from where s/he should take the Dhupagul-Horipur Road and drive a short distance to Motorghat, from where visitors can enter the swamp forest on small boats. Rather than stopping at Motorghat, tourists can also move a little further ahead and reach Ramnagar Bazaar. A right turn from the Bazaar leads to the Ratargul village, where tourists can hire a boat to visit the forest. The simplicity and hospitability of the villagers are sure to fascinate an average tourist. On the way back, it is a good idea to travel through Horipur on the Sylhet-Jaflong Highway rather than going back to Dhupagul.

From Ratargul Village local boats may charge Taka 1000-1500 for a ride inside the forest.