A Scenic Encounter Beyond the City Bustle

Posted on

Serenity hours away from the city bustle, a quaint stream near a rubber estate between Meepe and Waga

Travel beyond the bustling roads and precincts of Colombo city and discover serenity, wilderness and natural beauty. Witness the bounty of the island’s rich soil.

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Colombo is Sri Lanka’s commercial hub, bustling with commerce, construction and nightlife. Yet, one must merely travel a few kilometres away from the city limits to discover the untouched landscapes of Colombo.

Heading along the Colombo – Batticoloa Highway, we turned onto the Meepe –

Ingiriya Road fringed by semi-urban landscape.

A road between a verdant paddy field beckoned us, compelled to discover its secrets, we made a left at the Pinthaliya Junction and headed down this path. In a matter of minutes we were surrounded by greenery. The evergreens only divided to make way for one or two rural homes with garden. There was barely a soul in sight. Thoughtfully leaning rubber trees in neat estates stood out from the untamed natural beauty. As the area had experienced rains, the tapped rubber tree bark was covered, seeming as if the trees were dressed with a mini-tutu.

The road curved on, and sloped on, the emerald and blue views a treat for our eyes. The climate was cool and the air was fresh, crisp and refreshing. As we rounded past a rubber estate, the land opened around us to reveal a quaint temple, the Sri Vijitharama Viharaya. There were no humans, only nature and the soft hustle of the wind. Shortly, we reached Sri Saranankara Road, which lead to Waga. As the vehicle sped along, we stopped momentarily to catch a glimpse of a thriving pineapple plantation in a home garden. Soon we were on the climb, curving along in ascent, thick, tall green trees tightly flanking our sides. The thin arms of bata bushes were outstretched onto the road. These malleable sticks are generally used to make the Attapattama or structure of the Vesak lanterns and kites.

Kumari Falls cascades enchantingly with a soft, musical lull

As the greenery cleared, onto our right was a picturesque view of the slopes of the Colombo District, unruly and thick with forestry. Once we had reached Waga, we were greeted by the fringes of the Indikada Forest Reserve, an area protected for its tropical lowland wet zone forestry.

As were progressed onwards, it was quite difficult to conceive that we had left the urban landscape a mere few hours ago. Travelling through Thummodara and Ilukovita, we passed tea fields, cotton trees holding snow-like fluff and even thick groves of coconut trees. It was a truly wondrous landscape. Our journey was soon leading us to the heart of Avissawella, home to the Seethawaka Wet Zone Botanic Gardens. Conserved within this land are endangered flora and pristinely maintained gardens, a mere glimpse of which we received while passing the entrance to the Gardens. It is no wonder then that the outskirts of the Wet Zone have been blessed with such a bounty from nature.

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Eager to explore more, we continued to journey along the green-fringed Thummodara – Puwakpitiya Road. Here we passed pepper cultivations, where most of the plants were heavy with pepper berries, dangling from the branches like green bead earrings. When we neared the periphery of the Colombo District, we were about to turn back, yet a board pointing to the Kumari Falls piqued our interest. Just a few more minutes, we thought, and headed onwards in search of it. The path to the falls was enchanting, shaded by bright, lime-green foliage that dazzled and through which sun rays trickled down magically.

Rubber trees with tutus – the tapped bark was covered for protection from the rain

Certainly, we were rewarded for choosing to stick on the route for longer; Kumari Falls was indeed a beauty, gleaming waters cascading over rocks like a silken bridal train. The soft lull of the water was music to our ear.

It was now time to head back to the rush of the city. Beyond the city limits of Colombo, our souls had felt the intense, verdant touch of nature.