Road Trip

Posted on
Kokkilai lagoon where birds and fishermen co-exsist

Mullaitivu is less than an hour away from Trincomalee. Take the route via Kokkilai along the Tennamavaradi road and experience the beauty of village life on this northeastern drive.

Words Udeshi Amarasinghe | **Photographs** Indika De Silva and Mahesh Bandara

It was a spontaneous decision to try and reach Mullaitivu on that day as we were in Trincomalee for a holiday. We headed on the A15, driving over the Saliyapparu and Irakkandi bridges, drinking in the beauty of the coastal area. The estuaries of the Kunchikumban Aru and the Yan Oya can also be seen along this way.

As these are fishing areas, the seashore as well as the lagoons are peppered with boats. While Kokkilai is a bird sanctuary that spans a large area, the land at the tip of the lagoon is home to fishing communities. A bridge does not connect the two points of the lagoon, therefore if you do take a boat across, travel time will be less as the drive along land takes awhile. You know that you are close to a bird sactuary because there are flocks of aquatic birds interspersed with the fishing boats, and with the slightest of movements they rise together into the sky.

The fishermen had already brought in their days catch and were sorting the goods. Kokkilai lagoon is best for prawns and crabs and there was a sizable quantity that was being organised into boxes so that it was ready for purchasing by the main buyers in the area, which would then be distributed to various locations in the country.

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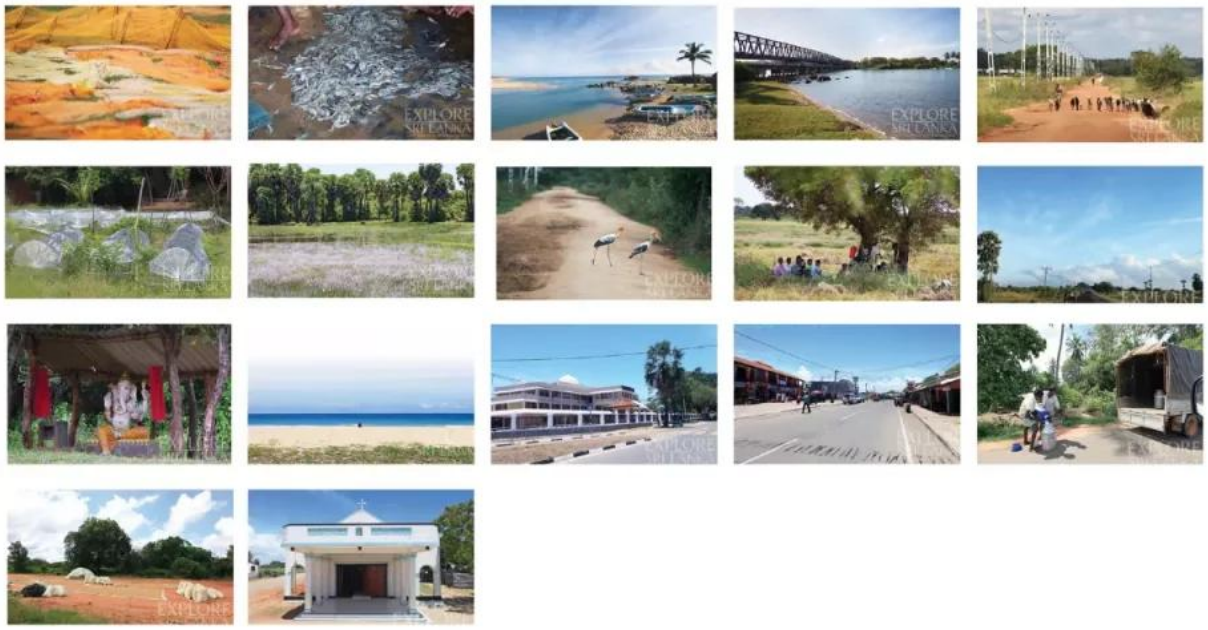
Proceeding farther we turned on to the Tennamavaradi road to continue our journey to Mullaitivu. The scenery was of green paddy fields and farming life. It was different to what we had just left behind. Herds of goats blocked our path, they took their time but they finally let us go. Paddy harvesting was in progress and as such

there were farmers working in the fields. The paddy stalks were laden with grain and the fields were green with a golden hue. A couple of painted storks crossed our path stopping us for a moment. At times you may wonder which way to turn, but just ask one of the friendly villagers who are always willing to help.

Onion nurseries along the way drew our attention and we also briefly stopped to watch the milkman collecting milk from the farmers. It was a simple yet pleasing life. As we progressed we soon reached a causeway and crossed over. A charming statue of Lord Ganesh exuded a peaceful aura. Along with palmyrah groves there were acres of coconut estates too. The roads stretched out into the distance and the drive was pleasant except for the few areas that were still gravel road.

Passing greenery we soon reached the beachside town of Mullaitivu. The views were unhindered and the roads let straight to the beach where the golden sand, aquamarine ocean and blue sky merged beautifully. As a new and upcoming town Mullaitivu has a feeling of revival. Blue and white churches and newly painted buildings glistened in the sun. The town was almost unrecognisable from a few years ago. The District Secretariat was impressive and centrally located. The roads of the town were well organised with each interlinking with the other.

After a refreshing lunch we headed back to Trincomalee reminiscing about a morning well spent.