



Travel & Tourism

Father of Tourism - I

by Ahsan Latif and Ferdous Hossain

GMME Karim. A personality who has more than 20 years experience in both field and secretariat status in Govt as Director and Deputy Chief of tourism from 1958-1980, and connected with policy planning, Financial and Tourism matters, Travel Trades, Tour Operators, and in wildlife conservation and policy and programming projects. He has massive expertise knowledge and experiences in preparation of feasibility reports, development of master plans and planning in tourism and travel trade schemes. In addition, he has the management experience of field organizations, of more than 20 years, related to Secretariat Tourism, Hotel/Motel travel trade systems and wildlife, nature, conservation and environmental matters. Along with these he is also a consultancy expertise having the experience in Environmental and Wildlife Conservation interest relating to Eco/Safari tourism development schemes and preparation of feasibility reports and in project implementation.

He has connections with both national and international organizations as listed below:

Member — "Wildlife Advisory Board" Ministry of Environment and Forest, Govt of Bangladesh since 1973, National Advisory Council — Dhaka Zoo, since 1976 (continuing), and "National Tourism Consultative Council" (Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation — Bangladesh), since 1980.

Founder and life member and Secretary General — "Wildlife and Nature Conservation Society of Bangladesh," 1973-78 and 1982-1994 (continuing)

"Hony Consultant" — World Wildlife Fund for Nature, Switzerland.

Species Survival Commission (SSC) member, Asia Region — The World Conservation Union (IUCN), and of

Specialist Cat and Marine Turtle Group — 1991-96.

Life Member — The World Pheasant Association HQ UK.

Member of South and South East Asia Network for Environmental Education (India).

President — "National FPRUM in Conservation of Tigers", Bangladesh.

As a natural wildlife lover he had, in childhood, hobby in rearing wild animals as pets, like Leopards, Tigers, Bears, Deer, Water-fowls, in his Dhaka city house. He was the pioneer selector of the present day site of the Zoo and the Botanical Garden at Mirpur. In 1966-68 he organized and conducted as the Country Team Leader, the two famous "World Wildlife Expeditions East and West Pakistan".

In 1968/69 he completed the World's 3rd "Short Course in Administration of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves", sponsored by the Universities of Michigan and Utah, USA. Along with the same course he had field training which took him to about 20 famous Wildlife and National Parks including the Florida Everglades in USA and the famous Wildlife Parks in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania in East Africa, extending over a period of nine months.

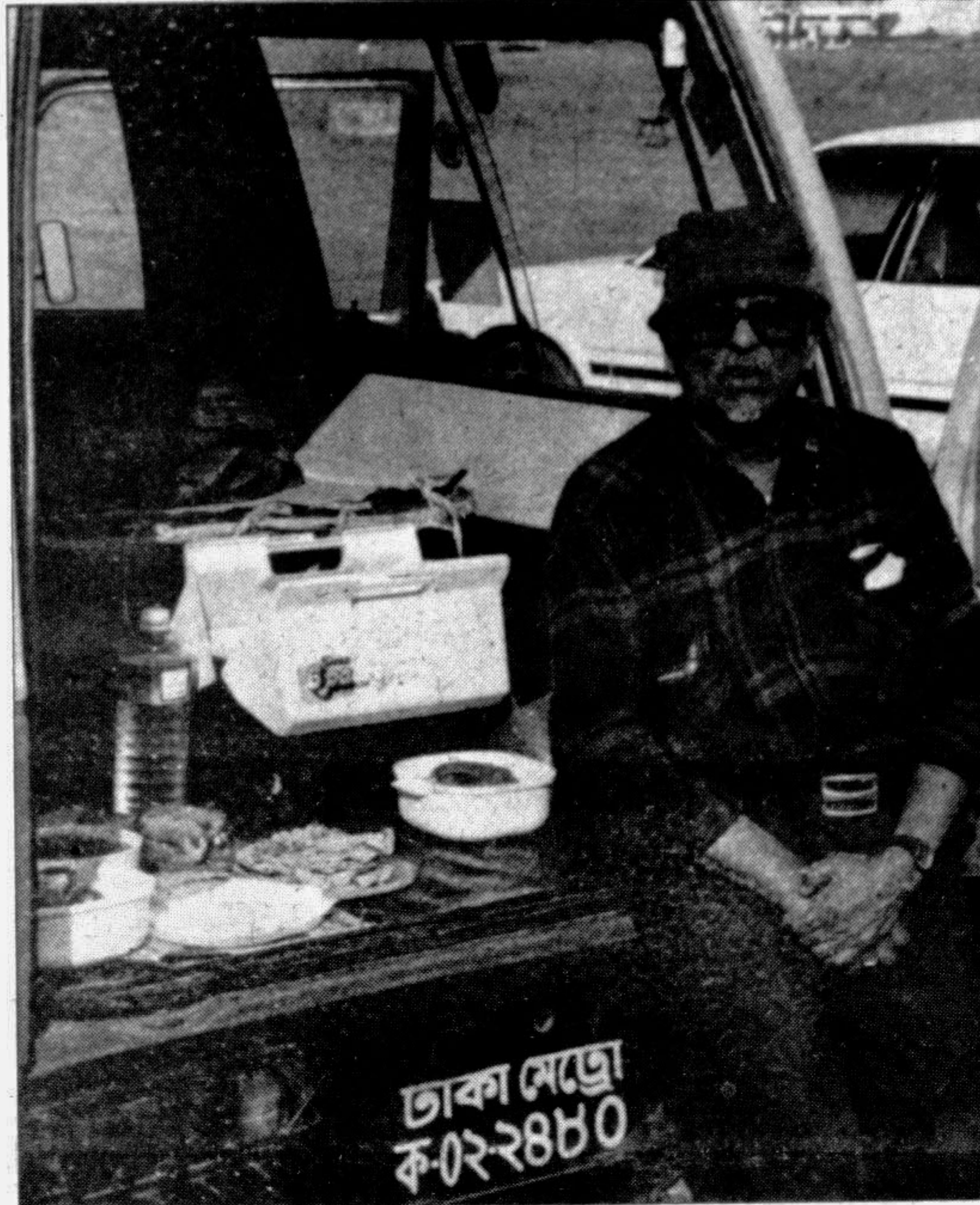
From 1968 to 1970 he represented the Department of Tourism and was a member of the then East Pakistan team in the "Wildlife Inquiring Committee" set up by the then Govt of Pakistan. He was sponsor-convenor and a permanent member of the "select committee for Draft Report on the Flora, fauna and establishment of wildlife sanctuaries and parks in the then East Pakistan".

After Liberation and against national backdrop of

millions under hunger, he untiringly carried on campaigns in-press and platforms for the preservation of wildlife and was successful as the founder

and life member of the first "Wildlife and Nature Conservation Society," with General M A G Osmany as its first president, from 1972-77. In

1974 he represented as the first Bangladeshi in the General Assembly meetings of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and of International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) in



Still touring the country at this age

Gland, Switzerland and was successful in obtaining a first ever allocation of \$35,000 under an international campaign fund "Save the Tiger" for the Sundarbans tiger sanctuary in Bangladesh.

He participated as a member of the national delegations of the then Pakistan in the Forestry Conference held in Ankara in 1969, and in the first National Conference on Forestry held in Dhaka in 1976, and in 1978 represented, along with Mr Oliver, in the international "Seminar on Asia Elephant" held in Bangladesh and Tamil Nadu states of India. He had also participated as a delegate in the First Symposium on Tiger in 1979 at New Delhi.

He had many contributory articles which were read and published in national and international newspapers and outdoor magazines on Wildlife, Environment, Parks and Tourism.

His hobby is Traveling, Cine and Still photography of wildlife, writing articles on wildlife, eco-tourism and environmental issues, tape recorded collections of wild calls of both mammals and birds in Bangladesh. At present, he is working on "Research Studies in Wildlife Management," waterfowls and quail breeding," with peoples participation techniques. He is also preparing papers relating to development of "Eco-Tourism" and "Recreational Schemes in Wildlife Parks" in the Sundarbans. As a retired Govt officer, he acts as a Hony consultant in the welfare of wildlife societies, Environmental and Participatory Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and is closely connected in influencing relevant top policy makers in the Ministries of Environment and Forest, Fishery and Livestock, Zoo and Tourism.

In our next issue, this great man, now aged 73, yet feeling fit by the grace Almighty, will describe how he brought tourism in our nation.

A Visit to Patenga

by Saifa Rashid

ALMOST everybody is fascinated by the sea. It bears an exclusive enchantment, which is undeniable as its origins are obscure. Everybody plans to go to the seaside at least once, in their lives and those who have been once plan to go again. Although this may be difficult for some, for Chittagong dwellers a glimpse of the sea can be gained by an afternoon's ride to Patenga.

This side of the hill is covered with large rocks of varying sizes and shapes. Great care is needed when climbing down or up the rocks. A slip could end in a twisted ankle or worse.

But the climb down is worth it. To be down on the beach just beside the thousands of wavelets that are formed as the sea laps the beach is absolutely delightful. And to be able to paddle in the sea is a little less than heaven. As long as one does not go out too far there is no problem with the current. One can stroll by the sea edge or write one's name in the sand or can sit on the sand and contemplate the every changing aspect of the water. Greenish-blue foam flecked water stretches as far as the eye can see. Waves ceaselessly break against the shore and shatter into foam with such a rhythm that it seems to be the pulse of Nature.

At this point the sea can be heard and can be smelt but it cannot be seen. A small artificial hill blocks the view.

Patenga is the place where the Karnaphuli river opens into the sea. The sea beach of Patenga is situated about 10km away from the city of Chittagong. To go to Patenga one must pass the Chittagong Airport and also the Naval Academy. The Airport and planes can be seen from the road. The road passes through the fields and fields of water-melons. It seems as though all the water-melons of Bangladesh are grown here. Finally the road ends in a crowd of tin shacks that serve as shops. These shops sell a variety of items such as shells, shell products, mother of pearl ornaments, wooden boxes etc. There are even stalls that sell shells and engrave names on them by request. Of course, there are also little restaurants and food stalls which sell tea, cold drinks, snacks, chatpati and even rice.

At this point the sea can be heard and can be smelt but it cannot be seen. A small artificial hill blocks the view. This hill is constructed to prevent the area from flooding during high tides. After reaching the peak the sea and the beach can be seen clearly. To get to the beach one must descend down the slope.

Waves ceaselessly break against the shore and shatter into foam with such a rhythm that it seems to be the pulse of Nature.

There are always several ships anchored in the deep water. They unload their goods from this point. That is why sometimes at Patenga beach foreign cigarettes and electronic goods can be found for sale. When evening falls the Patenga beach is transformed from a divine sea-beach to a dreamland. The twinkling lights, the waves and sand all combine to make a bewitching environment.

But Patenga has its drawbacks. The roads are not in good repair and there is lack of respective shops or hotel facilities. The social environment is also declining drastically. But if properly developed Patenga could even rival Cox's Bazaar.

Sylhet: The Land of Shrines, Waterfalls and Tea Gardens

by Ms Naseem Huq

SYLHET, the sanctuary of millions of migratory birds in winter is said to be the Paradise of Bangladesh. Nestled in, the picturesque Surma Valley, Sylhet is between the Khasia and the Jaintia Hills on the north, and the Tripura Hill's on the south. The flatness of Sylhet is broken as you come into the land of multitude terraced tea-gardens. Here the rolling country-side will also take you to the orange groves and juicy pineapple plantations. The tropical forest of Sylhet is the home for many a wild life and also of the Monipuri Tribe. Whose maidens are famous for their dances. During festivals such as Resh Leela (full moon night in February) and Doljatra, beautiful, young girls dress colourfully and dance with the man of their choice. The Monipuris perform their famous dance, based on allegorical love themes of the ancient mythology. The aboriginal tribes, such as the Tippera, Khasi and Garo also take part in this age old rites.

Before the conquest by the Muslims, Sylhet was ruled by local chieftains. In 1303, the great Saint Hazrat Shah Jalal (RA) came to Sylhet from Delhi with a band of 360 disciples to preach Islam and defeated the then Raja (king) Gour Gobinda. From then on Sylhet became a district of Saint, shrines and daring but virile people. Even today, more than six hundred years after the death of the great saint, the Shrine of Hazrat Shah Jalal (RA) is visited by million of devotees of every caste, creed and culture who came to pay their tribute from far away places. The legend goes to say that the followers of Raja Gobinda, after being defeated, were transformed into catfishes by the Great Saint, and are still alive in the tank (pond) adjacent to the Shrine. Several belongings of the Saint Shah Jalal (RA), such as his sword, his Holy Quran, and his robes are still preserved in the Shrine.

Sylhet, the Main attraction of all tourists visiting Bangladesh, is also known as the land of two leaves and a

bud". This goes to explain that when picking tea leaves, the pickers' stilted fingers only go for two leaves and a leaf-bud in between, on a single tiny branch. These are then collected and sent to the granary for processing into the tea for us to brew.

The two rivers, Surma and Kushiara seem like a huge silver ribbon wound round the Sylhet valley. Innumerable hill-streams from north and south, are said to be the source of these two rivers. The valley is also rich in haors, which are big natural depressions. During the year, these haors give two changing pictures, one in winter — when

who fly across the Himalayas, away from the severe. Liverian cold, take refuge in the haors.

Sylhet is rich in her potentialities and the 18th century Englishmen made their fortune in tea plantation. The tea capital of Bangladesh, Srimangal, connected to Sylhet by both rail and road of 80 km. in the actual tea centre of the area and has installed a Tea Research Institute there. All round are miles and miles of Tea gardens, spread like carpets over hills and plains. A tea plantation of Sylhet is a learn by itself. The tea granary of Bangladesh is

duces about 70 million pounds of tea every year, mostly for export.

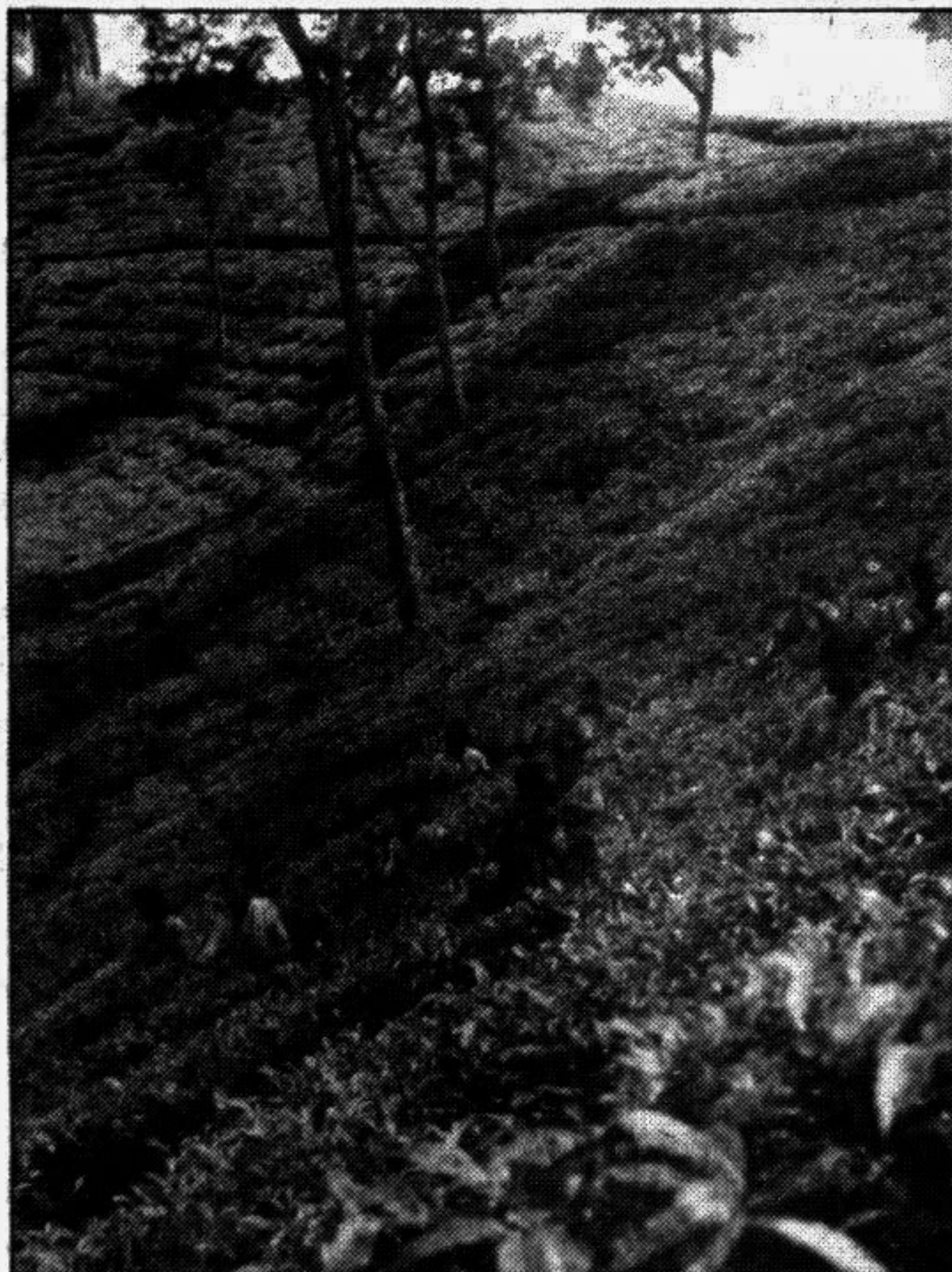
Apart from tea, Sylhet can also boast of her natural gas reserve, limestone deposit, cement, cane products and paper industries. Among the several places of historical interest in Sylhet town in the shrine of Hazrat Shah Shah Jalal (RA).

Other places of interest for the tourist in Sylhet are, the Shahi Eidgah which was built on a hill by the Mogal Emperor Aurangzeb in the 17th century. Though this looks like a grand fortress, it is actually meant, for Eid congregations which are the two biggest Muslim festivals. King Gour Gobinda, during his short reign in Sylhet had built a fort, the remain of which can still be seen to the north-west of the hill top Muranichand Government College.

A drive to Jaintiapur, 43, km. to the north of Sylhet town on the Sylhet-Shillong road will take one to the capital of an ancient kingdom. This kingdom which included the Khasi and the Jaintia Hills and the plains of Jaintia is long forgotten, but the runs are still there, scattered through out Jaintiapur to remind one of the by-gone days. The Jaintiapur's Rajbari (Palace) is 35 km. from Sylhet town.

Jaflong, an enchanting experience amidst tea gardens is only 5 km. away from Jaintiapur. If you want to sit on huge boulders and kick your feet into the beautiful spring waters, then Jaflong is the place for you. However if you are looking for fresh oranges then, you must go to Chhatak. Chhatak is famous for her orange orchard and is the seat of Assam Bengal Cement Factory. It is about 35 km. north west of Sylhet town and linked by rail, road and river. Tourist in large numbers are also attracted every year to the famous Madhabkunda Waterfalls which is about 3 km. from Dakshinbarg Railway Station.

Hotel and rest house accommodation at reasonably good prices are available at Sylhet town and Srimangal.



The lush green tea gardens of Sylhet —Parjatan

they become vast stretches of green land, and one in the rainy seasons — when they turn into a turbulent sea. At this time of the year, fishes can be found in plentiful. Millions of migratory birds

the proud owner of over 150 tea gardens and also of the three largest tea gardens in the world, both in area and production. The estimated area of tea gardens is about 1,06,819 acres, and it pro-

Around the World on a Tight Budget

by Fehmin Shoma Farashuddin

SUCCESSFUL advertising. You don't realize how powerful it is, until you fall prey to it yourself. Temptation presented itself to me in the form of super-glossy travel brochures full of pictures of happy tourists "eurailing" through Europe. It looked so simple — one ticket will take you everywhere, no hassles, no problems. Hop on and off in any country you wish, for as long as you like and save money by spending your nights on the train. After being reassured by fellow students that it was in fact possible to do it on a shoe-string budget, my good friend Raka and I finally gave in to temptation and decided to embark on a 2 week whirlwind tour of Europe, planning to go "everywhere".

Thanks to severe budgetary restraints, visa hassles and time restrictions, "everywhere" soon became narrowed down to France, Spain and Italy. Once the initial excitement had worn off, it was time for us to get down to the logistics of actually planning this trip. There were travel agents to contact, parents to wheedle for money, embassies to call up, shopping, packing. Finally we were ready — the tourist books had been read and highlighted, bags (over) packed and travellers cheques acquired. We were ready to make our way through Europe. The plan of action was to fly to Paris from London, then take Eurail from there through Spain and Italy and finally fly back to London from Rome.

The big day dawned overcast and gloomy — nothing to get worried about, this was London after all. We got to Heathrow airport with nary a misadventure — the usually recalcitrant London tube system giving us no trouble at all. Even checking-in for the flight was no hassle and it seemed like almost the very next moment we were in Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris, negotiating our way through futuristic tunnels and

moving floors that looked like something out of a science fiction movie.

The hurdles at the immigration counter having been met, we proceeded to start searching for an inexpensive place to stay. This was peak tourist (read: STUDENT) season and all the well-located youth hostels were already full. But thanks to our trusty LET'S GO EUROPE (the travelling student's Bible), we managed to find a reasonably priced place to stay, very close to the Eiffel Tower. So we bought ourselves some "Paris Visite" cards (that allow you unlimited use of the bus and metro system during a fixed time period) and headed towards our hostel.

The weather was very uncooperative the entire two and a half days we spent in Paris and it set the foundation for the misadventures that were to follow. We ended up going to Versailles, sight of the world-famous palace the one day in the week when it was closed. The sympathetic guards nevertheless allowed us a peek at the magnificent gardens, so that we could at least say that we had "seen" part of the palace. We went to visit the famous church of Sacre Couer and it was only after we'd climbed the over 100 steps that we found out about the cable cars that had been built for the purpose of taking people to an from the church.

Thanks to my limited command in French (Parisians speak too fast for a novice like myself to comprehend), we walked through drizzling rain following what I thought were directions to the Musee D'Orsay (which has a superb collection of painting by the masters of Impressionism), only to discover that we had been given directions to the parking lot!! Then we wasted hours in a decrepit cemetery looking for Jim Morrison's (a rock and roll legend) grave, which eventually didn't live upto our expectations.

(To be Continued)

Travel Briefs

Best supervisor of April: Md. Muzaffar Hossain, Asstt. Foreman of Engineering Department of Hotel Sonargaon has been nominated the 'Best supervisor' for the month of April 1995. He joined the hotel on 1st January 1984 as Junior AC Mechanic. — Sonargaon Tattler

Liberisation of air transport, a priority: Air transport plays a pivotal role in moving the bulk of international travellers, yet liberation of air transport has been limited in the Uruguay Round. The GATS specifically excludes so-called "hand-rights," i.e. traffic rights in the broader sense of the term and the supply of services directly related to the exercise of traffic rights. — Holiday Aviator

DSR— senator banks on partnership: In the near future there will hardly be a shipping line which will offer services on its own. In an interview with ITJ, Michael Peters, member of management of DSR— senator lines, remarked that the trend of partnerships was continuing. In future it would be essential to find forms of cooperation beyond the existing simple slotcharter agreements.

DSR— senator line, which cooperates with 27 other partners as well as its large slotcharter partner Cho Yang, is preparing for a wide-ranging cooperation with Hanjin. Details are currently being worked out. — BD Shipping Times.

Singapore's regional airlines — SILKAIR: Tradewinds Pte Ltd was formed in 1975 as the tours and travel arm of Singapore Airlines. Its primary function then involved the development and wholesaling of holiday tours. On April 10, 1992, the carrier was renamed SILKAIR. The airline caters to both business and leisure passengers. In keeping with its route expansion plan, SILKAIR will add one or more aircraft annually to its fleet the next few years to serve new destinations. — Holiday Aviator

Emirates holidays' expansion: Emirates holidays, the leisure management division of UAE's international airlines, has expanded its product ranges from one to nine brochures, number of destinations featured from 24 to 37 and hotels listed from 274 to 600. These include the introduction of vacation programmes to Africa and the Indian ocean territories.

These development spring from Emirates holidays' singular philosophy of providing the best range of leisure products to meet the requirements of every traveller. — Emirates

Thai celebrates 35th anniversary: Thai Airways International Public Company limited, keeping to tradition, presented a commemorative gift to the 35th passenger. Mr. Ciaramicali Alberto of flight TG 322 received the gift from Thai Station Manager Mr. Z Karim at Zia International Airport. — Thai Airways

Japan-Europe airfreight-balance reversed: The volume of airfreight between Japan and Western Europe has been severely unbalanced for a long time, with far more being carried westbound than east bound. The reasons behind this are that many Japanese firms one having their goods produce in Europe and the high value of the Yen. — BD Shipping Times.