



THE RE are uncountable sightseeing spots in Singapore. About seven million tourists visit Singapore every year. The most famous of these places are Sentosa Island, Zoo, Jurong Bird Park, Botanical Garden, Crocodile Park, fish aquarium etc. Of course it's not possible to write about all of them but I'll try my best to highlight some of the most adventurous and exciting events and experiences. The city itself can be compared to a garden, where everything's so green and fresh. The cleanliness that everyone maintains has a sparkling effect on the nature. All the people here recognize the existence of strict laws and do not dare to litter the streets. In their effort to reach the highest extent of a clean and neat society, citizens and tourists are not allowed to eat chewing gum! They are also very health-conscious and smoking is strictly prohibited everywhere. You'll be surprised to know that they are so concerned about the welfare of the environment, they will fine you with a considerable sum for breaking the bough of a tree!

Anyway, I've visited only three of the sightseeing places and have enjoyed them thoroughly. To begin with, my visit to Sentosa was just great! Firstly, the very name "Sentosa" indicates tranquility and prosperity. The place is full of natural beauty and you can breathe in fresh air or take quiet peaceful nature walk or just simply amuse yourself by taking the mono-rail ride and see the different beautiful sights of the island. It didn't take us very long to reach the island by cable car from where we got a good view of ships anchoring in the harbour down below. We caught a match-box dimension of the whole city and saw the different factories with tall chimneys. Since we were on a tour guide, our time was limited, and as soon as we reached "Sentosa" our guide told us to head towards the Museum right away. The Museum had

Sightseeing in Singapore

by Sayeema T Hasan



A bird's eye view of Singapore's colonial centre.

been built in honour of the pioneers of Singapore. It was a wax museum where we saw the wax statues of famous and great leaders, soldiers and pioneers. It also held a vivid picture of the changes Singapore had gone through the ages.

The Magical Fountain is another one of the main attractions of the place. You must be wondering why in world its name has something to do with music. Well, have you in your wildest guess, imagined that the wa-

bundle of amusements and adventures and my visit to Sentosa came to an end in absolute satisfaction in the sense of fun. Out of three places I've visited, the Zoo can be ranked as my "top favourite". The Singapore Zoo is the exciting home of creatures great and small and where they are given dwelling places very similar to their natural habitats. From the beginning to the end, both my mind and heart were in constant action. Lions roam free

in their hilly, natural environment; there are South-East Asian snakes and friendly otters; a huge colony of Orang Utans; the brave clever and lovely little zoo resident - the Mousedeer; Polar Bears which have suited themselves quite well with the tropical climate and many other different creatures. And oh, I loved her - she's someone very special unbelievably cute, heart-breaking, adorable, the most darling innocent face and she's Anita! You must be

wondering who this "Close-to-my-heart" ultra-special person is? Well, she is no one else other than the gorgeous nine-year-old Orang Utan I had breakfast with at the Zoo! Surprised, folks? Well, she is so friendly and lively that you can't help but love her with all your heart. She loves to eat fruits and was having a variety of them for breakfast. And the way she walks - just like a toddler! Then there was the Polar Bear Show where they talked about the habits of these Arctic creatures and demonstrated their ways of catching preys and eating food.

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As full of wonders and surprises it has throughout Singapore, it is together a city where they have the strictest of laws, rapid development in trade and business and where the people are a friendly and decent bunch.

Travel Briefs

New PRM of Sonargaon: Anita A Karim has been appointed Public Relations Manager of Sonargaon Pan Pacific Hotel with effect from July 1. She has been with the hotel since December 1992. Before her present assignment she was the executive secretary. -*Monitor*

Larry Hillblom dies: A plane crash on May 21 near the Mariana Islands in the Western Pacific left Larry Hillblom, the H in DHL dead. Hillblom, one of the founders of DHL World express was travelling with another passenger to Spain when the accident occurred. The pilot was also killed. Hillblom started the first international air express company in 1969 with no capital. -*BD Shipping Times*

Travel quota raised: Travel quota has been raised this financial year to US\$3000 per annum in view of rising cost of living worldwide. For SAARC countries and Myanmar the quota has been raised to US\$1000 per annum. The importers and producers have been made entitled to a business travel quota at the rate of one per cent of the import LC's settled in the case of the producers, subject to maximum of US\$5000 per annum. -*Monitor*

Hotel Agrabad offers special facilities: Hotel Agrabad has announced 50% discount on her room tariff for the Bangladesh as well as foreign golfers staying at Hotel Agrabad. The condition is that reservations have to be made at least one week in advance as a must. No extra charge has to be paid for children under the age of 12 staying in parents' room. -*Tourism International*

THAI to start daily flight: Thai Airways International has decided to increase frequency between Bangkok and Dhaka and will operate daily flight from October. This was announced by Anon Juangbhanich, the outgoing General Manager of the airline at a Top Agent Award Ceremony at Hotel Sheraton.

He also announced the decision of the airline to equip their leading travel agents in Bangladesh with their computerised reservation system by the end of the current year. -*Monitor*

First woman Captain of Boeing 747: Yvonne Kershaw, a 42-year old mother and Virgin Atlantic Airways pilot, has become the first British female Captain of a Boeing 747-400 - the world's largest passenger aircraft. Captain Kershaw joined Virgin Atlantic in 1990 as a First Officer on Boeing 747-100 and 200 series aircraft, popularly known as jumbo jets. She was promoted to Captain in 1993. -*Monitor*

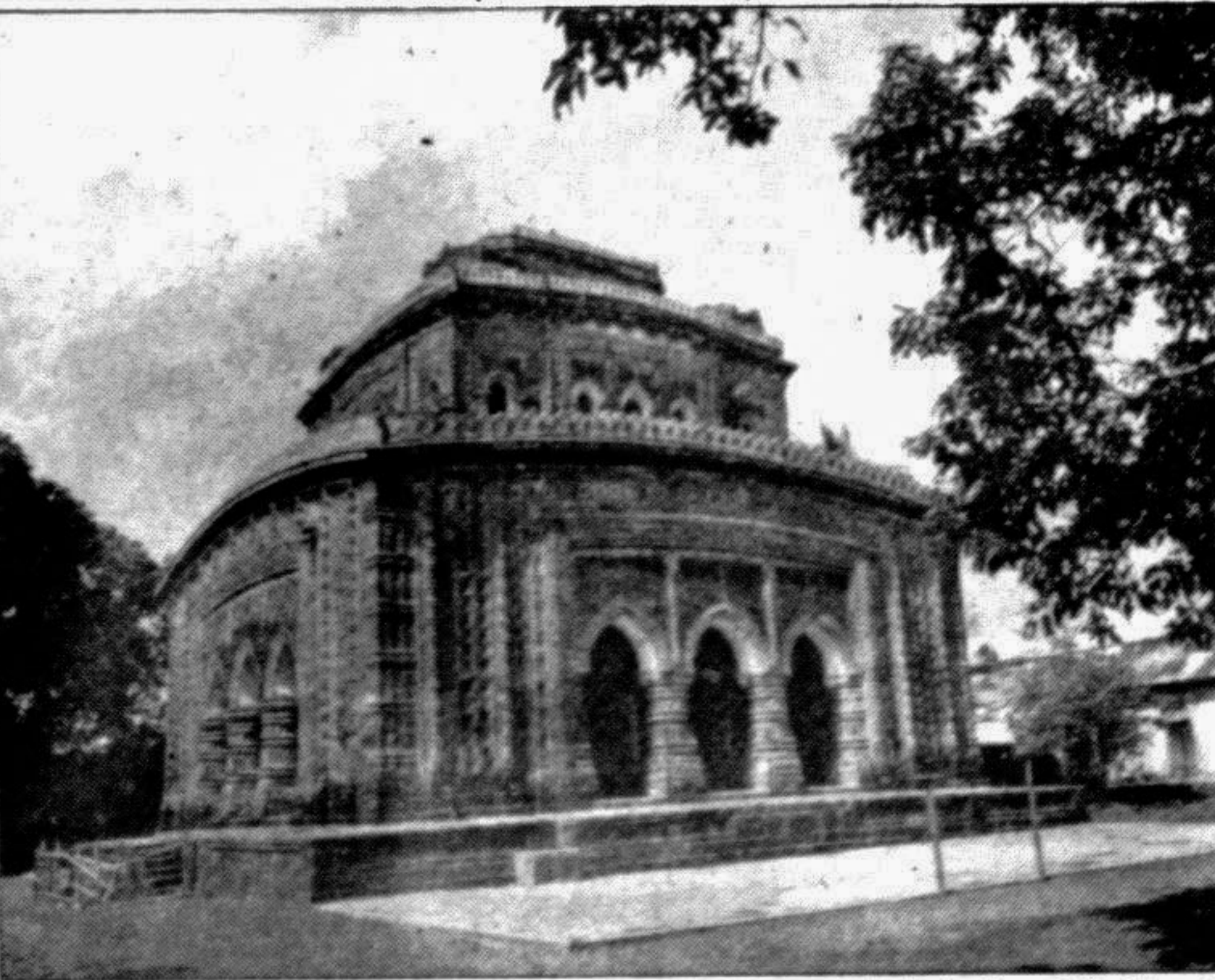
Come Visit Lalan's Homeland

Dinajpur and Kantanagar Temple
by Naseem Huq

THE Kantanagar Temple near Dinajpur town is one of the most elaborately decorated temples of the medieval times. Built in the year 1752 by Maharaja Prap Nath of Dinajpur, the temple is 50 feet square, three storied huge piece of architecture resting on slightly curved plinth of sandstone blocks. These blocks are said to have been taken from the ruins of the ancient city of Bangarh near Gangarampur now in west Bengal (India). The temple consists of four heavily ornamental towers on two-storied and a central one on the third storey. Unfortunately, at the end of the 19 century these magnificent towers collapsed due to an earthquake. The remains of the temple however, still stand out proudly to expose one of the finest handiwork of Bengali artisans. Every inch of the temple's surface is beautifully adorned with exquisite terracotta plaques and filigree work.

Kushtia, Shilaidaha and Lalan Shah
The district of Kushtia is located about 277 km. from Dhaka. It is bounded on the north-east and east by the district of Pabna and Faridpur, on the north by the district of Rajshahi, on the south by the district of Jessore, and on the west by the district of Nadia (India). Only 8 km. away from Kushtia town is the village Shilaidaha across the River Goral. This small village is enriched with the rich memories of the great Poet Rabindranath Tagore. To the north of Shilaidaha is the River Padma and on its opposite side lies the district of Pabna. The river Goral is on its eastern side. Before Rabindranath Tagore took over the estate at Shilaidaha, he used to visit Kushtia with his brother, Jyotindranath Tagore. The Kuthi Bari of Tagore is situated on the northern side of Shilaidaha on 91 acres of land. This historic building is three storied and consists of seventeen rooms. On the third floor was the poet's study. His writing table was beside a large window overlooking the river Padma. The works of Tagore show that the two rivers, Padma and Goral had cast a tremendous influence on the poet and had inspired his literary creations. The two boat names Chanchala and Chapala, which Tagore used during his days can still be seen at the Kuthi Bari in Shilaidaha.

Lalan Shah
Lalan Shah, the great lyricist, lived and died in Seuria, a village about 3.2 km from Kushtia town. Though there is no actual record of Lalan's birth, some say that he was born to a Hindu family in the village Sharara, in Kumarkhali upazilla in Kushtia district; while others say that he comes from a Muslim family from the village Kulbara Harishpur in Harina Kundu in Jheneidah upazilla. Lalan's place of meditation was at Seuria. It has been said that the great poet Rabindranath Tagore was inspired by Lalan's songs. The poet was a great admirer of Lalan Shah, so much so that he (the poet) collected about 300 poems of the Lalan which are now kept in Rabindra Sadan in Vishaharati in India. The tomb of Lalan Shah a Seuria is a place of pilgrimage for all his followers, especially the "Bauls" who come to pay their homage to their spiritual leader who died in 1880. Lalan lived for 116 years.



The Kantanagar Temple at Dinajpur - Bangladesh / Ahmed & Ahmed

Ambon Island could be another paradise lost

by Han Jei

Many locals worry that if this wave of tourism is left unchecked, their home would become another Bali

TO many people, Ambon Island is the closest they will ever get to paradise. Located in the Moluccan Province of eastern Indonesia, it is a place where one could bask under the tropical sun on a white and clean sandy beach. The warm crystal-clear waters reveal a bed of colourful corals. The journey to Ambon can be quite long depending on where one starts but the place is worth a visit. Visitors from Japan, Europe and other western countries are discovering Ambon as the place for "off the track" exploration. They come not in search of exotic spices, unlike travellers before them, but to enjoy the pleasures of snorkeling and diving (Ambon and its neighbouring islands are listed in the international diving magazines as popular spots for underwater sports enthusiasts) and to taste the delicious and cheap seafood cuisine. They visit Ambon to rest their weary bodies in the serene and unspoilt Moluccan beaches. Ambon Island has two peninsulas, inhabited by about half a million people with about 60 per cent of them residing in Ambon, a small but bustling town which is a mixture of the new and old. Here traditional old houses stand as graceful reminders of times past amid modern banks, hotels and shops lots. Javanese and Pacific island cultures are mixed with Islam and Christian influences making the island a true melting pot of different traditions. A unique feature of Ambon town is the three-wheeled, human-powered becak or tricycles. A becak driver averages a daily income of only 2,000 rupiahs (US\$1). A short ride within the town would cost only Rp 500 (US\$0.25) per passenger. This old Moluccan capital was once famed for its spices

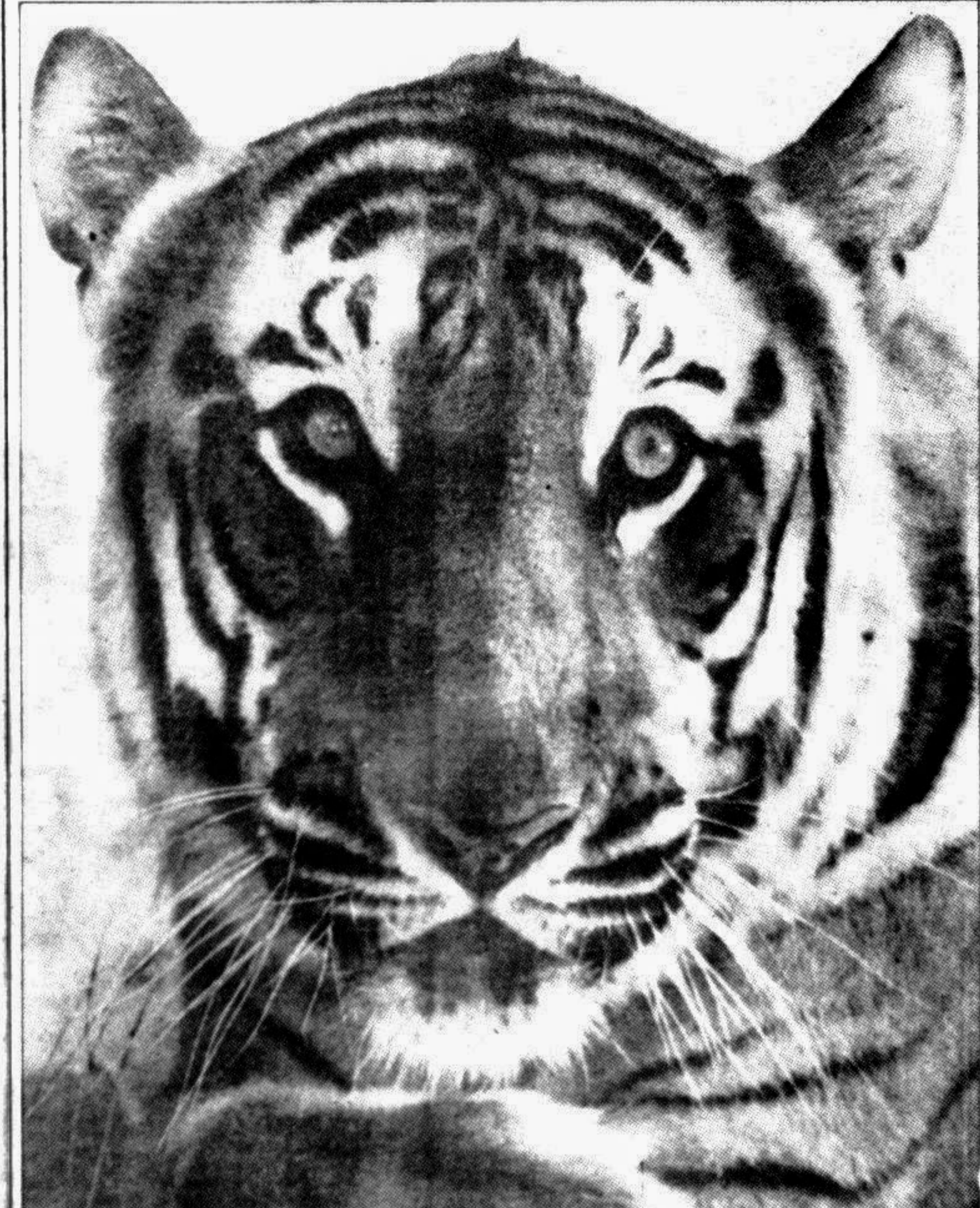
How Many Tigers are there in our Sundarbans?

by Khasru Choudhury

RECENTLY the honourable forest minister declared in the national assembly that in our limit The Sundarbans sustains four hundred and sixty tigers. The statement sounds highly optimistic as in a habitat where no development program has been made to nurse the tigers, yet they are maintaining amazing growth rate: one tiger per nine square kilometre!

The area of Bangladesh Sundarbans is about 5770 sq km of which 1700 sq km is waterbody. The tigers the largest of all carnivorous animals, a highly territory sensitive, secretive and solitary animal, it needs at least 70 deer or 50 wild boar annually just to satisfy the appetite of a single tiger. At least three hundred and fifty deer are needed to fulfill the appetite of all the tigers in the Sundarbans, annually. Three fifty or more deer in an area of nine square kilometre is not uncommon in southern sea-facing meadows of Sundarbans. But this rate prevails only up to ten kilometre from the sea, the remaining jungle up to is highly dense with associate mangrove and basic mangrove in the northern limit. Amount of open glade is very little and the deer have to depend mostly on grass which grow by the side of the river or khals or kewra saplings and leaves from the lower branches of kewra tree. So if you are not highly optimistic you can safely give up the idea that nine sq km of average Sundarbans sustains 350 deer, specially considering the western part of area where deer population is very thin. I am fortunate enough to traverse almost all the areas of Sundarbans in the last twenty one years. Started with hunting and trailing tigers I have had the privilege to see the inner areas of Sundarbans swamp.

To Be Continued



-Depthnews Asia