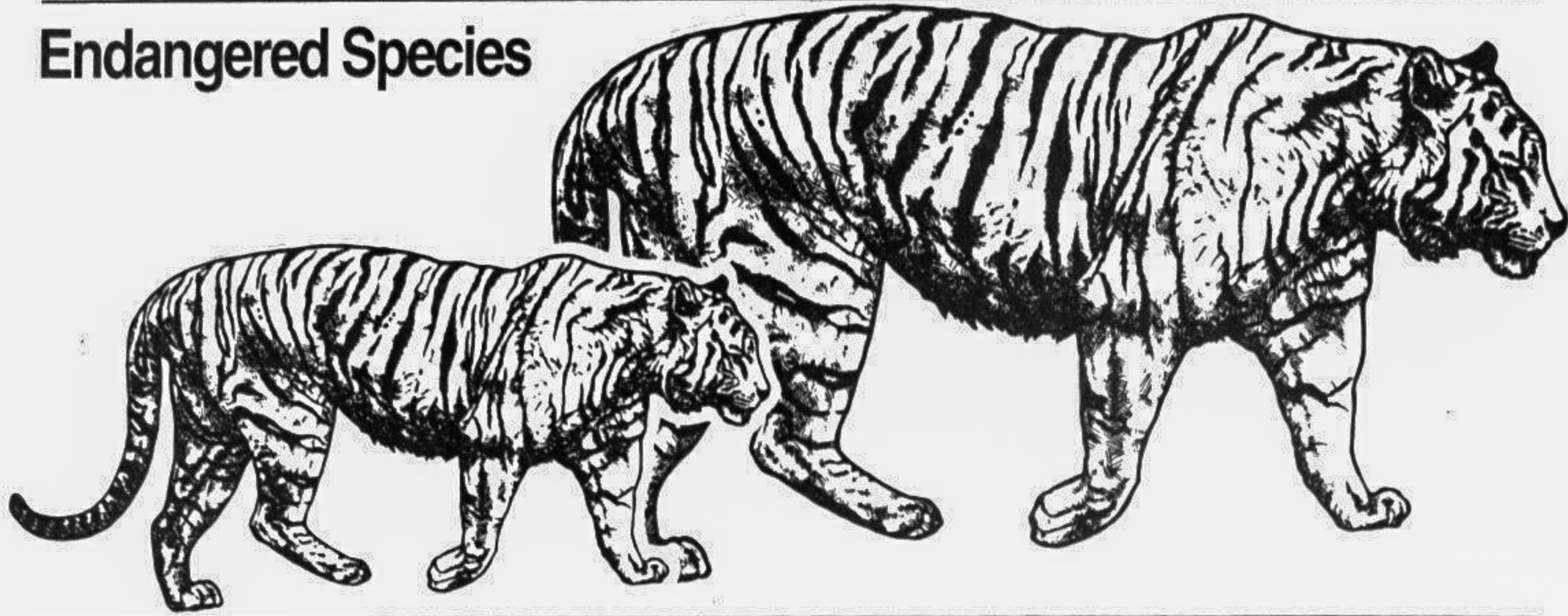


On the Year of the Tiger

by Sarwat Chowdhury

Tigers in the wild are in danger of becoming extinct unless effective measures are taken immediately. Of the known eight tiger subspecies, only five remain alive today. Conservationists believe that about 5000 to 7500 tigers now survive in the wild (mainly in national parks and protected areas) today whereas at the beginning of the century, the tiger population was about 100,000.

Endangered Species



Unlike us human beings, tigers do not recognize international borders. Therefore, saving this endangered species calls for more of an international collaboration.

A few days ago, a leading Japanese television network provoked outrage among its viewers and leading conservationists of the world with the broadcast of a cooking programme. The Fuji Television show, filmed in China, was part of a series entitled "World Super Deluxe Rare Cuisine," and showed its entertainers eating and enjoying tiger meat.

The three Japanese entertainers appeared to be dining on the tiger at a restaurant in Shanghai. Reportedly, they described their meal as delicious, and even after they had been told what they were eating; the entertainers showed no signs of regret.

Measures are taken immediately. Of the known eight tiger subspecies, only five remain alive today. Conservationists believe that about 5000 to 7500 tigers now survive in the wild (mainly in national parks and protected areas) today whereas at the beginning of the century, the tiger population was about 100,000.

which the tigers belong. As they occupy the top of the food chain, tigers play an important role in determining the population and diversity of other life forms in the ecosystem. In other words, since tigers require large areas of habitat, conserving of this species implies the conservation of vast wild areas that is the home of thousands of other species including mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish and insects.

Islanders Try to Turn the Tide against Coral Disaster

Many of Jamaica's beautiful coral reefs have been reduced to "wastelands of rubble" by man-made hazards, say marine scientists. Urgent conservation measures are now being introduced, reports Gemini News Service, as the destruction threatens not only marine life but the lucrative tourism trade.

Zadie Neufville writes from Kingston

JAMAICAN authorities are stepping up efforts to protect the Caribbean island's coral reefs amid warnings that 95 per cent of them are either dead or dying. An alarming decline in coral and related marine life in recent years is already threatening Jamaica's tourism trade, the country's main foreign exchange earner and second largest employer.

One south-east hotel complex has had to build its own artificial beach out of limestone chips because the original white sand—a cherished feature of the island that was formerly protected by the reefs—was washed away. Scientists at the Discovery Bay Marine Laboratory of the University of the West Indies say most of the reefs are falling victim to such hazards as pollution, excessive coastal development, overfishing and climate change linked to global warming.

Some have already been reduced to "wastelands of rubble", says a report from the laboratory. Such warnings have prompted the government and environmental organisations into drawing up an action plan aimed at protecting the island's remaining reefs and marine life.

recent reclamation of wetlands has led to severe damage to the nearby reef. Problems begin inland, with deforestation and agricultural run-off causing chemicals and soil to flow into the sea. Run-off increases algal growth, and because overfishing has reduced the number of fish feeding on the algae, the coral can become smothered and starved of oxygen.

Corals in crisis

- The world's 600,000 sq. km. of coral reefs are among the oldest and richest living communities of plants and animals. These marine equivalents of tropical rainforests are threatened by industrialisation
- Reefs are vital in protecting tropical shorelines from erosion
- Tourists can contribute to the destruction of reefs. Divers can kill coral simply by standing on it
- Deforestation releases sediments which smother reefs
- Some reefs provide the only local building material, leading to their demolition
- One-tenth of the world's coral reefs may have been destroyed; another one-third may be lost within the next two decades
- Reefs supply 12% of global marine fish catch

How to Influence People and Lose Friends

by A Husnain

FORGET about Dale Carnegie's *How to Influence People and Win Friends*, a best seller decades ago, when the young professionals memorized the gold mine of ideas and applied it indiscriminately, with many funny results; meaning that life is not a book in black and white, which can be opened and closed at will, or kept on the bookshelf (life), or carried in the pocket.

bi-polar vision: one eye is directed towards you, and the other scanning for more glamorous images or realities. Hence the story of success is not a linear progressive curve on 2-D paper (a sheet of paper has only two dimensions, and cannot cope with the instant sixth sense). By the way what is the definition of 'success'? The subjective definition is restrictive, and the objective one is abstract, and takes longer than one term to show any result. Success is a lifetime search for what is not.

Always point out that nobody thought of the idea before you. The rest are duffers. Never give credit to others. Ignore facts and data, and forget you ever made a mistake. Everything is done in public interest, for the janata—the poor, simple, honest folks who were waiting so long for your august presence in their midst. Even your children's education had been arranged abroad, with great personal sacrifices, to enable them to return to the country, and serve the poor masses and our rich country.

might change your character! Anyway, it is worth taking the risk. In this part of the world, one can afford to burn the fingers more than once, as *dalals* (agents) and money come cheap. Bank-loan defaulting is a good business. It keeps you in the limelight, protects your shady deals, and puts you in the category of upper-class untouchables. A cluster of defaulters is a time-bomb. The philosophy is the modern version of having the cake and eating it too.

GREEN POLITICS An Abduction Foretold

Threatened by the AVARD-NE's rising popularity among the people in Majuli, ULFA saw itself losing credibility rapidly. Tried and tested tactics failed to bring back their people to them. Was the abduction of Sanjoy Ghose the ULFA's last resort?

SOCIAL activist Sanjoy Ghose's abduction and his subsequent disappearance from Majuli, a riverine island in Assam, on July 4, 1997 raises questions about the interface between NGOs and militants, both critics of the establishment. Many believe he was murdered. To mark the first anniversary of his abduction, Ghose's friends held protest demonstrations in Guwahati and a rally in Majuli.

AVARD-NE and ULFA shared the same terrain and the same mass base. They both were critics of the establishment. Says Kaul: "Sanjoy said idealistic youths had two choices—pick up arms or become NGO activists." Explains Ghose's wife Shumita: "The methods are different, so there would definitely be a conflict."

leagues started a project to tackle soil erosion in Majuli, the locals voluntarily pooled in 30,000 human days of labour. By the time they could protect 1.7 km of Majuli's banks from erosion, AVARD-NE had earned one more enemy—the contractors who had been skimming the fat off such government projects. Says Kaul: "There is a rural development department-contractor-militant nexus."

they began systematically interrogating people closely associated with ULFA, and warning them to stay away." Ghose writes. The people who had been warned off were local activists, who ran *Duweep-Alok*. AVARD-NE called an emergency meeting and gave them a chance to "disengage (themselves) honourably." Instead, the people suggested a public meeting.

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