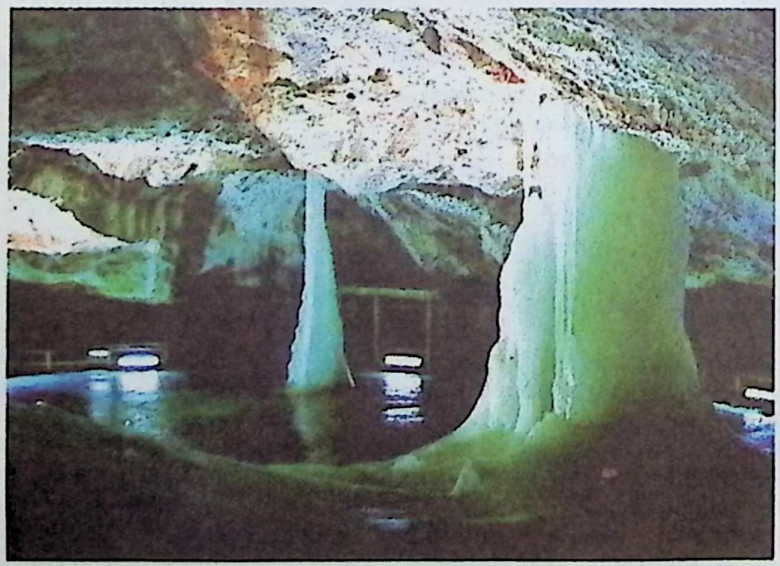


The river Danube. The country, together with its capital, has a great touristic potential.

Bratislava-A Small Big Town

RAFIZA HASHMI

When we were passing the bridge over the Danube, it was snowing and seemed to be the middle of the night even though my watch was showing only four thirty in the afternoon. In this Eastern European city called Bratislava, the capital of the Slovak Republic, the sun sets as early as 4 o'clock in the afternoon in December. This small but extremely rich in natural and cultural heritage country (total area 49,038 square kilometres), just fills the space between Poland and Hungary. It borders with the Czech Republic and Austria in the west. Slovak's shortest border is with Ukraine in the east. The Slovak territory has seven World Heritage sites: four of them cultural monuments, of which the most famous is the castle *Spissky Hrad*; and three natural parks, of which the Dobsinska glacial grotto is the real wonder of the underground world.



Dobsinska Ice Cave. UNESCO World Heritage Site

The town is bathed in the waters of two rivers: the Danube and the Morava. Part of a medieval trade road, mostly called "the Amber route" the city has managed to retain a mercantile culture. The greater Bratislava has an area of 367.5 square km with population 429,000. The city accounts for 26% of national GDP and its