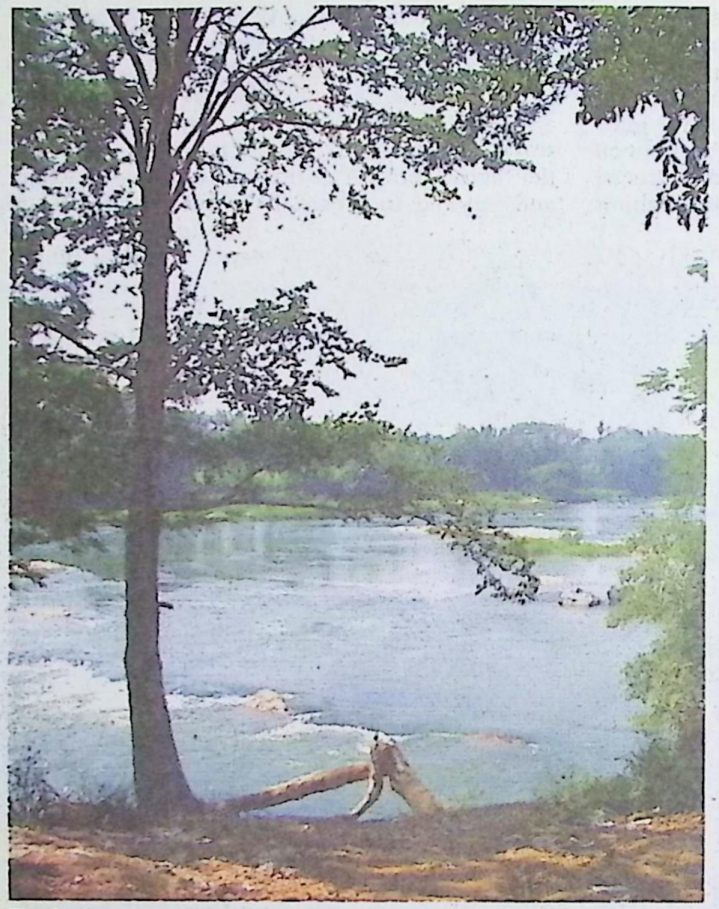


The Cauvery river in southern India.



Tipu Sultan's summer palace.

beautiful mosque by its side. The three tombs lay side by side-simple and dignified. Tipu's grave was shrouded by a large decorated cloth looking like a tiger skin, which reminded us that he was widely known as the Tiger of Mysore. Remembering the developments and innovations he had introduced in his state, we felt sad at his loss at the hands of the British. Tipu Sultan was the last great independent Indian ruler, an able administrator and innovator. Both Hindus and Muslims in the Indian sub-continent revere him till today for his brave stand against the British supremacy and expansionism in India.

Our visit to the pretty city of Mysore was brief. We saw the Maharaja's palace and other imposing public buildings and gardens. The Maharahja was reinstated in power by the British after Tipu's defeat, with Mysore then being treated as one of the native states. One interesting thing that cut down on the time available to us was a number of public processions with posters and banners slowing down the traffic and often blocking the roads in support of rival candidate for a bye-election to the state assembly. The amusing part was that it was not even the main election-it was only a show of support for candidates seeking nomination of one of the political parties. We also visited Sir Visvesvaraya Dam on the Cauvery River named after a great Indian engineer and administrator. It is located on the border of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Due to an on-going dispute between these two states on water sharing, we were not allowed to go on the Dam itself to get a fuller view of the irrigation works and the Cauvery River. We recalled that Kazi Nazrul Islam had produced a romantic song using South Indian tunes on the Cauvery River banks.

We were later invited to the spacious apartment of our friend in a modern high-rise building in a residential area of Bangalore. Being received in the family and dining at their home in a family atmosphere was a great gift of friendship. The South Indian hospitality was as warm and sincere as in a typical Bangladeshi home. It was impressive the way we were treated by the children and relations of our friend. The afternoon of our last day was spent going downtown for shopping. Prices were lower than in the Malls but the qualities were comparable. In fact, some of the name-brand shops were also present there. The street was congested with traffic and numerous shoppers. There were rows of clothing and other shops on both sides, sprinkled with coffee shops and restaurants, reminding us of Dhaka's Elephant Road.

We returned to Dhaka at the conclusion of what appeared to me to be a long-pending and justified pilgrimage to the land of Tipu. ■