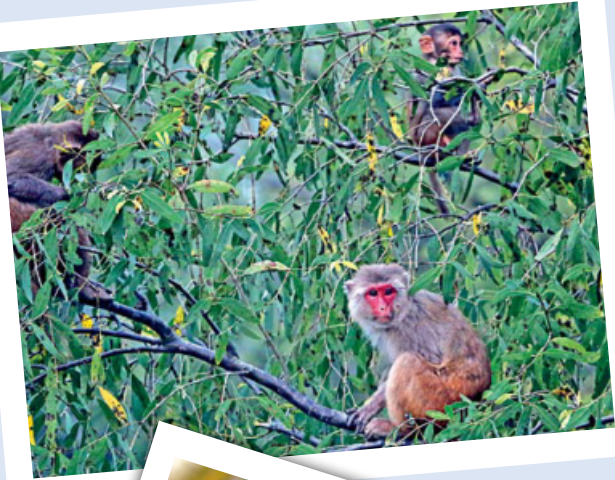




THE SOUND OF SILENCE IN SUNDARBANS



There is nothing quite like the heady concoction of sights and sounds that is the Sundarbans. It is a land of tidal waves, wide and narrow creeks, and myriad natural wonders -- each an assault on the senses. It is home to at least fifty species of reptiles, 339 species of birds -- of them many critically endangered, and nearly 41 species of mammals including the Bengal Tiger. Once you enter its great labyrinth, everything else is forgotten as silence engulfs you. Soon you find music in that silence -- the call of birds, distant and near, is constant company. Butterflies, wasps, flies and dragonflies buzz around you. Some 13 globally threatened and near-threatened bird species live in the Sundarbans and if you are a keen birdwatcher, you may just get to see them.

Photo: ANISUR RAHMAN