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**AREA HANDBOOK
for
BANGLADESH**

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where the rainfall, although still at least 100 inches annually, is somewhat less than in the evergreen areas. Teak is particularly prized for heavy construction and boat building. Cane grows generally throughout the Chittagong area, and rubber plantations have been developed.

In the Sundarbans the delta tidal forest covers about 2,300 square miles. Mangrove and *sundari* trees furnish timber, and the *gewa*, or *gengwa*, is important for softwood. Leaves and foliage of the *golpatta* tree provide thatching for dwellings, and the *goran* tree is extensively used for firewood and in tanning. Great quantities of naval stores are also levied from the Sundarban forests.

The *sal* tree, useful in construction, is the main wood of the Madhupur Tract. In the northeast of the country the Sylhet forest covers more than 300 square miles. Its chief tree is the *jarul*. On the margins of the forest in the low hills south and east of Sylhet are extensive tea plantations.

The country abounds in fish and wildlife. Great quantities of fish are caught in the coastal waters and at sea but much more in the inland waters, where at least 725,000 tons are taken annually (see ch. 12). Because of the climate and lack of refrigerated packing plants, fishing is mainly for local consumption, although some preservation and commercial marketing of sun-dried, salted fish is carried on. A preferred fish in the coastal waters is the pomfret, or *rupchanda*; inland, a favorite is the *hilsa*, an anadromous herring poetically extolled as "the silver harvest of the rivers."

Wildfowl, water and land birds, and wild game are abundant. There are numerous varieties of wild pigeon and pheasant and over 100 species of songbirds. In Sylhet the rhinoceros is found. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts there are elephants, tigers, leopards, wild oxen of the bison family, bears, and several varieties of deer, including the swan deer, the *muntjac*, or barking deer, and the large, dark-brown Indian deer called the sambar. The Chittagong rain forests contain reticulated pythons, king cobras, and other reptile varieties. Monkeys, gibbons, golden langurs, and the intelligent Blyth's macaque are found around Cox's Bazaar and in southeast Chittagong. Across the estuary the royal Bengal tiger roams the Sundarban forests, and the mangrove swamps are infested with crocodiles.

FUEL AND MINERAL RESOURCES

With the exception of natural gas, fuel and mineral resources are not extensive. Identification of known deposits has almost entirely taken place since 1947. Exploration and development projects were under way in 1974, but neither overall known reserves nor their degree of exploitation was yet sufficient to constitute a major factor of national wealth as compared to agriculture (see ch. 11; ch. 13). The three principal mineral-bearing regions are Sylhet-Comilla, for natural gas and peat; Sylhet-Mymensingh, for coal, lignite, limestone, and clay; and Rajshahi-Bogra, for coal and limestone. Since the mid-1960s findings near

