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JALPAIGURI

B. Ray

of the West Bengal Civil Service

Deputy Superintendent of Census Operations, West Bengal

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GAZETTEER

ALIPUR DUAR—The headquarters station of the subdivision of the same name. It is situated on the north bank of the Kaljani river, in 26° 29' N. and 89° 32' E. Its population in 1961 was 28,927. Alipur Duar is named after the late Colonel Hedyat Ali Khan, who did good service in the Bhutan war and was the first Extra-Assistant Commissioner to be stationed there. It is the centre of a large and increasing trade, and an important railway colony. It is a station on the Assam Railway, and is connected by a good road with Jalpaiguri; another road runs north to Buxa. Alipur Duar is not a healthy place; it is situated on low-lying ground where rice used to be cultivated before the annexation of the Western Duars. There are several old beds of the Kaljani river in the neighbourhood and one of these, now a stagnant *jheel*, runs right through the civil station. During the rains, water lies about freely, and though much is being done to keep the roads and drains free from jungle, the inhabitants suffer from diseases due to this. The rains are heavy and last from May to September. In these months when rain is not falling the heat during the day and often during the night is most oppressive; at such times there seems a want of sufficient air to breathe, and the steamy atmosphere renders it difficult to summon enough energy to do any work.

THE ALIPUR DUARS SUBDIVISION—The eastern subdivision of the Jalpaiguri district, lying between 26° 24' and 26° 51' N. and 89° 3' and 89° 53' E. and extending over 1,078.5 square miles. Its population was 563,669 in 1961.

It is still sparsely peopled, the density to the square mile being only 523, but it includes large areas of reserved forest and tea, and the waste land available for settlement is being steadily taken up and brought under cultivation. The subdivision forms part of the Western Duars and has increased in numbers and prosperity since it came under Bengal Province. The rise of the tea industry has led to the introduction of a large foreign population and many immigrants from Cooch Behar and the district of Rangpur have made their homes in it. The subdivision contains the former military cantonment of Buxa and 357 villages, at one of which, Alipur Duar, its headquarters are situated. The chief markets are at Alipur Duar, Buxa, Falakata, and Madari Hat; there are also large private markets on some of the tea gardens.

AMBARI FALAKATA—Formerly called the Bengal Duars, a small Government estate, or *tahsil*, lying to the west of the Tista, and bounded on all sides by the Baikunthpur *pargana*. It was annexed from Bhutan in 1865 at the same time as the Western Duars and takes its name from a mango grove which stands on one of its *jots*. The Karatoya

runs through the centre of the *tahsil*. The land on both sides of the river is high and sandy, but grows crops of mustard and *aus* rice; the soil is generally inferior to that east of the Tista, and there is a tendency for the people to move into the Western Duars. The area of Ambari Falakata is 9,837 acres or 15½ square miles, of which 9,370 acres were settled by D.H.E. Sunder in 1889-95. There is an airstrip here.

BAGRAKOT—The terminus of the western branch of the previous Bengal-Duars Railway. It is situated near the foot of the hills close to the Darjeeling border, and is always much cooler than Dam-Dim, 6½ miles distant.

BARNES JUNCTION—A station on the old Bengal-Duars Railway. It is connected by a branch line, about a mile in length, with Barnes Ghat on the left bank of the Tista opposite Jalpaiguri, with which it is connected by a ferry under the control of the railway company. Barnes Ghat used to be the terminus of the Bengal-Duars Railway and passengers and goods were ferried across the river and joined the Eastern Bengal State Railway at Jalpaiguri. The construction of the southern branch of the railway in 1898-1900 to Lalmanir Hat on the Dhubri extension of the Eastern Bengal State Railway gave through communication and avoided the troublesome crossing of the Tista river. There is a bazar at Barnes Junction.

BHUTAN DUARS—The tract of country lying along the foot of the Himalayas which was ceded by the Bhutias after the Bhutan war. It was divided into two portions; the Western Duars, which now forms part of the Jalpaiguri district, and the Eastern Duars, which is included in the district of Goalpara. The Bhutan Duars comprises a strip of country about 180 miles in length with a breadth of from 20 to 30 miles.

BUXA—Formerly a military cantonment and later a political prisoner's detention camp and now the Tibetan refugee Lama Ashrama. Situated on a small gravel plateau 1,800 feet above sea level, in a valley in the lower range of the Bhutan Hills, in 26° 46' N. and 89° 35' E. It commands one of the principal passes into Bhutan and is two miles from Santrabari, at the foot of the hills and six miles from the frontier. A good road, maintained by the Central Works and Buildings Department, leads to it from the Buxa Road station on the Assam Railway; for three miles this road runs through the reserved forest to Santrabari whence a hill road, with gradients too steep for carts, winds in and out to the cantonment. Before the railway was constructed troops had to march from Cooch Behar, 32 miles away, and the road was then kept

in excellent repair. The cantonment, which was established during the Bhutan war in 1864, consisted of a rough fort with 3 pickets called the right, left, and Magdala, on spurs at a higher elevation. Water is obtained from two perennial streams, one of which issues from the base of the plateau. The average annual rainfall is 209 inches. Though it is not situated at a high elevation, the climate of Buxa is salubrious and there is little illness. During the rains the place swarms with leeches, and it is impossible to move off the roads without getting covered with them. Buxa lies on one of the trade routes from Bhutan, whence ivory, wax, wool, musk, rhinoceros horns, cotton cloth, *end*! silk cloth, blankets, honey and brick, tea were imported and bought by local merchants, who paid for them in cash or barter rice, tobacco, English cloth, betelnut, etc., for these commodities. Large quantities of indigenous wool from Bhutan, Tibet and Central Asia entered India by this route for export to Europe.

CHALSA—A station on the eastern extension of the old Bengal-Duars Railway. A metalled road leads from it to Matrali Hat, one of the largest markets in the teagarden area.

CHOTA SINCHULA—A peak of the Sinchula range situated about 7 miles north of Buxa cantonment in 26° 47' N. and 89° 34' E. It is the highest point in the Jalpaiguri district and has an elevation of 5,695 feet above sea level. This peak separates Indian from Bhutan territory.

DAM-DIM—A station on the Bengal-Duars Railway and the terminus of the original line. It is surrounded by tea gardens and a weekly market is held which is largely attended by labourers. The Dam-Dim police station was formerly notoriously unhealthy and the men stationed there suffered severely from malarious fever; it was removed to Mal in 1908.

DHUPGURI—A village on the Jalpaiguri-Alipur road about half way between Mainaguri and Falakata. It is the centre of a fertile tract of rice growing country and is connected by good roads with Gairkata on the north and Naothoa on the north-west, at both of which places there are large markets through which supplies reach the tea gardens. The market at Dhupguri is of considerable importance and much jute is brought to it for sale. There is a police station here, but the men suffer much from fever and the place is one of the unhealthy stations in the Western Duars.

DOMOHANI—A station on the Bengal-Duars Railway about nine miles north of Barnes Junction. The railway workshops are situated here and there is a large market. A good road connects Domohani with Mainaguri, three miles to the north-east, and there is a ferry across the river Tista to Paharpur on the Jalpaiguri-Dam-Dim road.

DUARS, WESTERN—The tract of country, lying along the foot of the Himalayas between the Tista and Sankos rivers. It includes some outlying spurs in the north-east of the district, on one of which the former Buxa cantonment is situated, and has an area of about 1,968 square miles. It is bounded on the north by the Darjeeling district and Bhutan, on the east by the Sankos river, on the south by Cooch Behar and *pargana* Baikantapur, and on the west by the Tista river. This tract, with the Eastern Duars, which now forms part of the Goalpara district, was annexed to Bengal in 1865 at the time of the Bhutan war. The Western Duars slopes from north-west to south-east, and is intersected by numerous rivers and streams, which drain the Himalayas. In the north, a series of well wooded plateau, rising to between twelve and fifteen hundred feet, form the connecting link between the hills and the plains. Their soil, a reddish loamy clay, in places of great depth, their climate, and the rainfall which reaches 180 inches in the year, are all well adapted to the growth of the tea plant, and the gardens extend throughout their entire area except where the land is occupied by the reserved forests, the area of which is 509 square miles. At the foot of these plateau used to stretch a belt of grass jungle, which gradually gave way to the ordinary cultivation of the plains, but as far east as the Torsa river nearly all the grass has been cleared away and the land brought under the plough. East of Alipur Duar the country is thinly peopled and there is still a good deal of waste land available for settlement. The closest tillage is to the west between the Tista and Torsa rivers, where rich fields of rice, jute, tobacco and mustard stretch up to the Cooch Behar boundary. Owing to the development of the tea industry, the population, which was very small when the Western Duars was first acquired, is rapidly increasing; large numbers of immigrants, mainly from Chota Nagpur and the Santhal Parganas, have come into the district to work in the tea-gardens and many of them have settled down in it. For administrative purposes the Western Duars is divided into four *tahsils*, viz., Mainaguri, Alipur, Falakata, and Bhalka. The principal Government markets are Mainaguri, Ramsbai Hat, Matiali Hat, and Amguri in the Mainaguri *tahsil*; Falakata, Gairkata, and Madari Hat in the Falakata *tahsil* and Alipur Duar in the Alipur *tahsil*. Many of the tea gardens have *hats* of their own and there are several private markets, the most important of which are Baradighi, Naothoa, Dhupguri and Silitorsa.

FALAKATA—A village, the headquarters of a police station, situated on the east bank of the Mujnai river close to the boundary of Cooch Behar in 26°31' N. and 89°13' E. It is also the headquarters of the *tahsil* of the same name which comprises the tract of country between the Jaldhaka and Torsa rivers. Falakata was formerly the headquarters of what is now the Alipur Duar subdivision. It has an important market at which some of the best jute, tobacco and mustard grown in the Western

Duars are sold and is connected by a good, well bridged road with Madari Hat, the eastern terminus of the Bengal-Duars Railway. It is 32 miles from Jalpaiguri and 22 miles from Alipur Duar, the main road between which places passes through it. The Mujoai river is navigable up to Falakata by boats of 50 maunds burden throughout the greater part of the year. An annual fair, lasting about a month, is held in February on the occasion of the Sripanchami festival. Bhutias used to visit the fair in large numbers but few of them do so now.

GAIRKATA - A village on the Angrabasha river, a tributary of the Duduya; it has a large Government market and is the centre of a series of roads, maintained by the Works & Buildings Department, which connect it with the rice growing country on the south, and the tea gardens on the north. There is a large tea gardens here.

JALDAPARA WILD LIFE SANCTUARY*

There are eight wild life sanctuaries in existence, at present, in the State of West Bengal, of which the Jaldapara Wild Life Sanctuary, with its splendid collection of wild life, occupies the pride of place. The sanctuary is situated within the limits of Alipurduar civil sub-division of Jalpaiguri district in the northern part of Bengal. The sanctuary constituted a part of the Buxa Forest Division at the time of its creation. The total area of the sanctuary is 10,474.40 hectares (25863 acres = 40.44 sq. m.). This area is distributed over 9 Blocks namely—Hasimara, Jaldapara, Malangi, Barodabri, Mendabari, Bania, Chilapata, Torsa and Salkumar. This sanctuary, though created primarily to preserve the famous Indian one horned rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), which inhabited the savannah forests of North Bengal, is delightfully rich in various other forms of wild life.

CREATION OF THE SANCTUARY—During the early third of the present century, a deep necessity was felt by the then foresters of Buxa reserves, to protect the grass-land fauna of the savannah forests of Chilapata and Malangi blocks, as the same was perilously heading towards extinction, with the extension of tea cultivation in these areas, and consequent shrinkage of the grass lands. In the early thirties, Mr. E. O. Shebbeare, the then Conservator of Forests, was greatly concerned about the fate of the famous Indian one horned rhinoceros, inhabiting this tract. The animal, as he described, being "condemned to carry a horn worth half its weight in gold" and consequently, "bound to be a target for poachers". Accordingly he initiated a determined effort, with the help of a special patrol party headed by Mr. T. V. Dent, Assistant Conservator of Forests, to lay the poachers' hands off this precious asset of this tract.

Ultimately, in 1932, the Bengal Rhinoceros Preservation Act came into force providing for complete protection to this solo-horn pachyderm. It was only in 1940, that, this favourite haunt of rhinoceros was declared a "Game Sanctuary", under the Bengal Government notification No. 10694-For., dated 18th Nov. 1940, amended later through notification Nos. 10549-For., dated 13th November, 1941 and 5238-For., dated 3rd April, 1943. Subsequently, the Jaldapara Game Sanctuary Range was created in the year 1954, with the headquarters at Jaldapara, comprising the whole of Jaldapara Game Sanctuary. The idea was to entrust the management of this tract to a separate set of personnel, to be busy with the welfare and maintenance of the sanctuary alone. The Sanctuary which constituted a part of the Buxa Forest Division at the time of its creation, came under the management of Cooh Behar Forest Division, with the creation of the latter in 1951. In the year 1959, the name of "Jaldapara Game Sanctuary" was officially altered to "Jaldapara Wild Life Sanctuary".

THE TRACT AND ITS VEGETATION—The tract is more or less flat, with a gentle slope from north to south, and is strewn with a number of perennial streams, which render the area suitable for permanent abode of various forms of wild life. The rivers Malangi and Torsa flank the East and the West of the sanctuary respectively. The average altitude is 76 metres (250 ft) above mean sea level.

Major part of the sanctuary area bears a riverain forest, which conforms to Champion's subtype 6/IS-2 and contains *Khair* (*Acaulatechu*), *Sissoo* (*Dalbergia sissoo*), *Simul* (*Salmalia malabarica*) interspersed in a sea of tall grasses. However, the savannahs of Chilapata and Malangi blocks come under champion's subtype 2S-7 (b) of Moist Tropical forests. The common grasses which occur in the tract are *Saccharum procerum*, *S. ravennae*, *S. spontaneum*, *Phragmites karka*, *Rotiboellia exaltata*, *Narenga porphyrocoma*, *Themeda arundinacea*, *T. villosa*, *T. quadrivalvis*, *T. strigosa*, *Neyraudia reynaudiana*, etc. Patches of dry mixed forests characterised by *Tatari* (*Dillenia pentagyna*), *Paral* (*Stereospermum chelonoides*), *Tanki* (*Bauhinia purpurea*), *Bahera* (*Terminalia belerica*), *Sidha* (*Lagerstroemia parviflora*), *Udal* (*Sterculia villosa*), *Gamar* (*Gmelina arborea*) etc. and wet mixed forests characterised by *Kalnjal* (*Bischofia javanica*), *Chalta* (*Dillenia indica*), *Gineri* (*Premna bengalensis*), *Chaltwan* (*Alstonia scholaris*), *Jam* (*Syzygium cumini*) *Kawla* (*Machilus spp.*), etc. occur on stabler banks. *Sal* (*Shorea robusta*) occurs sporadically near the western border. However, the Salkumar block, belonging to the sanctuary, bears *Sal* (*Shorea robusta*) along with its usual associates like *Sidha* (*Lagerstroemia parviflora*), *Bahera* (*Terminalia belerica*), *Udal* (*Sterculia villosa*), *Gamar* (*Gmelina arborea*), *Kawla* (*Machilus spp.*), *Gineri* (*Premna bengalensis*) etc.

*This is reproduced from an article on the subject appearing in the centenary volume of the West Bengal Forests (1964) by Shri P. K. Das., Assistant Conservator of Forests.

FAUNA OF THE SANCTUARY—Besides the famous Indian one horned rhinoceros, which marks the principal interest, the sanctuary abounds in various other forms of wild life such as gaur, elephant, tiger, leopard, sambhar, hog deer, barking deer, spotted deer, swamp deer, pig, sloth bear, various species of cat and a rich and varied population of reptiles, birds and fishes.

(I) Mammals :—

Common name	Scientific name	Number of individuals	Remarks
(1) Rhinoceros	<i>Rhinoceros unicornis</i>	72	
(2) Gaur (Indian Bison)	<i>Bos gaurus gaurus</i>	14+	Includes calves Artificially introduced Sometimes in herds of 10—20
(3) Goyal	<i>Bos spp.</i>	6	
(4) Elephant	<i>Elephas maximus</i>	2+	
(5) Sambhar	<i>Cervus unicolor niger</i>	20	
(6) Swamp deer	<i>Cervus duvauceli</i>	4	
(7) Spotted deer (Chittal)	<i>Axis axis</i>	11	
(8) Hog deer	<i>Axis procius</i>	141+	
(9) Barking deer (Kakar)	<i>Muntiacus muntjak</i>	188+	
(10) Wild pig	<i>Sus scrofa cristatus</i>	88+	
(11) Tiger	<i>Panthera tigris tigris</i>	2+	

+ indicates that presumably there are more number of individuals of the species.

Apart from those enumerated above there are plenty of other mammals like monkey (*Macaca spp.*), civet (*Viverra zibetha*), jungle cat (*Felis chaus*), leopard cat (*Felis bengalensis*), fishing cat (*Felis viverrina*), Jackal (*Canis aureus*), rabbit (*Lepus nigricollis ruficaudatus*), squirrel (*Petaurista spp.*) sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*) etc.

During the year 1963-64, 6 Gayals (4 female and 2 male) were purchased and released among the wild gaur herd of the sanctuary. It may be of interest to study the origin and exact status of this species. To quote from Mr. E. P. Gee's Wild Life of India :—

"The goyal is much the same as the "bison" or gaur in appearance, the chief difference being that the horns of the goyal are straight while those of the gaur are curved. They were at one time regarded as two distinct species *Bos frontalis* and *Bos gaurus*, but now-a-days only the gaur is regarded as wild species and the goyal is thought to be a domestic or domesticated animal. It would seem, then, that the goyal is either the domestic survival of an extinct wild species or else a cross between the wild gaur and the domestic cow—a hybrid which breeds true".

(II) BIRDS—During the enumeration, 91 peacocks (*Pavo cristatus*) and 115 jungle fowls (*Gallus gallus*) were noticed.

While, it is extremely difficult to ascertain the exact number of individuals of each species of animal in the sanctuary, a comprehensive enumeration of the fauna was conducted by the Forest Directorate in May, 1964 (21.5.64). This gives a rough idea of the animal population of the sanctuary. The figures of enumeration conducted in May, 1964 and subsequent observations stand as below :

However, it may be mentioned here that the figures of direct enumeration of only a few species of birds are likely to bring about a sense of under estimate regarding the avian population. There are many more number of individuals of the two species mentioned above, together with an abundance of various other species of birds such as Wood cock (*Scolopax rusticola*), Pie (*Dendrocygna spp.*), Tit (*Parus spp.*), Nuthatch (*Sitta spp.*), Babbler (*Turdoides spp.*), Slatyheaded Scimiter Babbler (*Pomatorhinus schisticeps*) Iora (*Aegithina spp.*), Chloropsis (*Chloropsis spp.*), Bulbul (*Pycnonotus spp.*), Redstart (*Phoenicurus spp.*), Flycatcher (*Muscicapa spp.*), Cuckoo-Shrike (*Carcinia spp.*), Minivet (*Pericrocotus spp.*), Drongo (*Dicrorus spp.*), Tailor bird (*Orthotomus spp.*), Wren Warbler (*Prinia spp.*), Oriole (*Oriolus spp.*), Grackle (*Gracula spp.*), Swallow (*Hirundo spp.*), Wagtail (*Motacilla spp.*), Barbet (*Megalaima spp.*), Parakeet (*Psittacula spp.*), Bee eater (*Merops spp.*) Pied Kingfisher (*Ceryle spp.*), Horn bill (*Tockus spp.*), Hoopoe (*Upupa spp.*), Nighthjar (*Caprimulgus spp.*), Owl (*Bubo spp.*), Vulture (*Gyps spp.*), Fishing Eagle (*Haliaeetus spp.*), Imperial Pigeon, Green pigeon (*Treron spp.*), Dove (*Streptopelia spp.*), Emerald dove (*Chalcophaps spp.*), Peafowl (*Pavo spp.*), Quail (*Coturnix spp.*), Black Partridge (*Franccolinus spp.*), Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax spp.*), Cotton Teal (*Nettapus spp.*), Common Teal (*Anas spp.*), Grebe (*Podiceps spp.*), etc.

(III) REPTILES—The sanctuary abounds in various kinds of snakes and big and small lizards.

TABLE 19—PLACES OF TOURISTS' INTERESTS

Name of Place	Name of Police Station and Jurisdiction List No.	Reasons of interest	Nearest Railway Station and Bus Route	Tourists' Facilities	No. of tourists visiting the place during	
					1960	1961
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ambari Barrage	Rajganj/17	Barrage on the river Karatowa with surrounding natural beauties	Ambari Falakata Rly. Station	A forest Rest House is situated close to the Ambari Falakata aerodrome	Not known	Not known
Shikarpur Hat Kalimandir	Rajganj/7	A Kali temple of the days of Bhabani Pathak is situated wherein the statue of goddess Kali along with Bhawani Pathak and one <i>sanik</i> is being maintained locally	Belakoba Rly. Station	A Inspection Bungalow is situated at Shikarpur Tea Garden	Do	Do
Maharajghat	Rajganj/1	A spot of natural beauties in the bed of river Tista surrounded by the forests	Belakoba Rly. Station	Do	Do	Do
Jalpeah Mandir	Mainaguri	The highest temple of Shib in North Bengal	Mainaguri Rly. Station and Jalpeah Bus stop	A Dak Bungalow is situated at Mainaguri	Do	Do
Garumara wild life Sanctuary	Mal	Rhinoceros	Lataguri Rly. Station	Rest House with no catering arrangements	.	.
Baradabri	Kalchini/46	Preservation of wild life and expansion thereof	Hasimara Rly. Station	(a) Well furnished tourist lodge with catering arrangements (b) Elephants for visiting the sanctuary in the morning and afternoon (c) Jeep for the use of tourists (d) Well furnished youth hostel for the students of schools and colleges	Not available	Not available
Mahakalguri	Kumargram	Mahakali shrine	Jainty Rly. Station	Nil	Not known	Not known
Totopara	Madarihat/13	Toto aboriginals are residing at Totopara. Tourists generally visit this place to know the interesting features of one of the extinguishing Toto aboriginals	Madarihat Rly. Station, Bagunbari Bus stop near about 19 miles will have to be covered on foot or Bullock cart to reach Totopara. No other conveyance is available	A Bungalow of Agricultural Department Tourists may halt at Totopara	Do	Do

* The place is not visited by tourist but by many local people and Government officials whose number would be annually 500.

Source : Deputy Commissioner, Jalpaiguri.