

Bangladesh





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Mob: +88 01757-570461

E-mail: bdculture02@gmail.com

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PUBLISHED BY

KARUNANGSHU BARUA

NYPHEA PUBLICATION

SHAJAN TOWER-1 (1ST FLOOR)

4 SEGUN BAGICHA

DHAKA 1000, BANGLADESH

PHONE: +88 02 9581527

EMAIL: INFO@NYPHEAPUBLICATION.COM

WEB: WWW.NYPHEAPUBLICATION.COM

**ACKNOWLEDGE WITH APPRECIATION THE SUPPORT AND CONTRIBUTION OF
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, BANGLADESH**

FIRST PUBLISHED

JULY 2016

EDITORS

ANISUZZAMAN

SYED MANZOORUL ISLAM

ZIAUL KARIM

CREATIVE EDITOR

SABYASACHI HAZRA

MASCOT BAGHA CREATED BY

MEHEDI HAQUE

COVER PHOTO

K M ASAD

COORDINATORS

AMITABH DEWRY

SHIMUL KIBRIA

TEXT

SHEIKH MOHAMMAD SALEH RABBI

SYED FAIZ AHMED

TAWHIDUR RASHID

ARAFAT AHMED

SYNTHIA ARSHAD

RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

KHADIZA FALGUNI

KAMRUL MITHON

GAYATREE ARUN

MASHFIQUE HABIB

GRAPHICS

KAZI SUJAN

BABLU HASAN

PHOTOGRAPHERS

A M AHAD, ARIF ABDULLAH, ARMAN HOSSAIN BAPPY, DARSHAN CHAKMA, DIN M SHIBLY, GAYATREE ARUN, JASHIM SALAM, K M ASAD, KAMRUL HASAN MITHON, M ABDULLAH ABU DIYAN, M MONIRUL H KHAN, M R HASAN, MOMO MUSTAFA, MUNIR UZ ZAMAN, OITIJHYA ONNESWAN, PROBAL RASHID, RIDWAN ADID RUPON, SAIFUL ISLAM KALLOL, SALMAN SAEED, SHAHNAZ PARVIN, SHAIFUL SHIPON, SHIMUL KIBRIA, SHINGKHANU MARMA, SUMAN PAUL, SUVRA KANTI DAS, SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN, TUTUL NESAR, ZIA ISLAM.

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About this Venture

The story of Bangladesh is colourful and multi-layered. The narrative of its economic miracle is drawing attention of development economists all over the world. Bangladesh is one of the few countries to achieve the millennium development goals faster than expected. Bangladesh's culture is among the world's oldest, its civilization began about 3000 years ago. One of the lasting achievements of civilization flourished in Bangladesh is its architecture. Different types of architectural expressions transformed by the forces of history, cultural life and religious beliefs are unique to Bangladesh. Since prehistory, Bangladesh has a rich tradition of music and dance. The music forms prevalent in Bangladesh include various folk, classical, and popular songs not only manifest the cultural heritage but also spiritually alleviating. The Bangladeshi cuisine is known for its subtle flavors with an emphasis on fish, vegetables, lentils, and rice. Fresh sweet water fish is one of its distinctive features. The book *Bangladesh* is a celebration of history and heritage, art and culture, food and festivals of the country and a collage of its beauty and splendor within the covers of a single volume.



Beauty & Splendor

Bangladesh still remains relatively unfamiliar to the West. A country of the size of Iowa in the US, situated in the northeastern corner of the Indian sub-continent and bordered by India and Myanmar, with a population of 160 million, Bangladesh is a rich reservoir of culture and an ever-evolving museum of human heritage.

Photo. Gayatree Arun



মনে স্তোত্রিকি স্তোত্র চণ্ড
 মাতা বাদে বসতি : বাণ্ডে
 প্রসিমে স্তোত্র জান দেবি হৈয়া
 যাহি কি প্রণাম : ॥ স্তোত্র
 জগন্মানে জান স্তোত্র মনে
 স্তোত্র বাই পাণ্ডিত : স্তোত্র
 দিত : ॥ বাই পাণ্ডিত স্তোত্র

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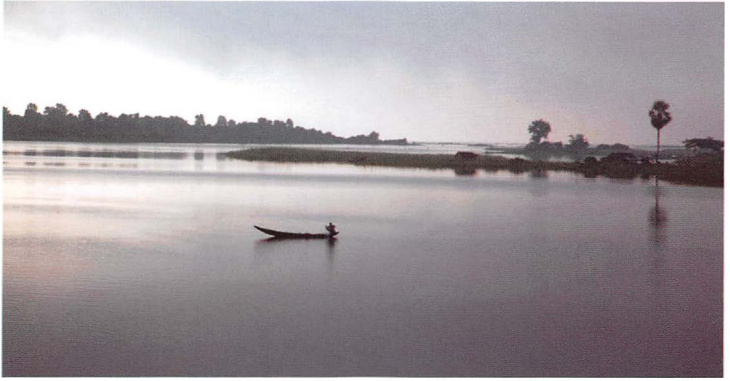
The story of Bangladesh is multi-layered. On the one hand, there is a narrative of an economic miracle: the country that suffered famines in 1943 and 1974 and military coups in 1975, 1982 and 2007 that had dealt painful blows to the democratic process, has improved extraordinarily in every measure of human development. On the other hand, it is a country rich in history, full of monuments and living traditions, a distinctive literary heritage, and a landscape where farmers keep plowing the land while chatting on their cell phones; in short, a country full contradictions because it is negotiating a path between the old and the new.

With a growing middle class, Bangladesh has already attained lower-middle income status with of over 1,080 dollars GNI per capita, thanks mainly to the consistent annual growth of over six percent GDP since the 1990s. The drivers of much of the growth are a 26 billion dollars ready-made garments industry (second only to China's!) and a continuous inflow of remittance from migrant workers abroad (topping more than 15 billion dollars in 2014-15). Bangladesh is also one of the few countries that has achieved its millennium development targets faster than projected. The country's success in achieving moderately high growth with respectable stability is only comparable to China's in the Asia-Pacific region. In his recent book *An Uncertain Glory*, one of the leading economists of our times, Amartya Sen, puts Bangladesh ahead of India on some crucial development indicators. He says, 'On a range of development indicators such as life expectancy, child immunization and child mortality, Bangladesh has pulled ahead of India despite being poorer.'

Bangladesh is a land where Rabindranath Tagore, the first Asian to be awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913, found his inspiration for a number of his significant works. Tagore spent a fairly long period of his life, from 1891-1901 to be precise, in rural East Bengal (now Bangladesh) as zamindar or landlord of his family's agricultural estates. We know from his letters to his niece Indira (published in Bengali in 1912 as *Chhinnapatra* and in English in 1921 as *Glimpses of Bengal*) that the turning point in his relationships with others outside his family and friends came out of his close association with the trials and tribulations of the poor peasantry of East Bengal.

His work as a zamindar or landlord took him to different places of the region. He would go from one village to another, from Shelidah to Patisar. Traveling on his famous house boat *Padma* through rivers large and small, Tagore would see the lives of the people of rural Bengal fully and take in their joys as well as miseries. Out of this experience, he created some of his best-loved verses and fiction.

Bangladesh is a land where between 5th and 12th century AD, Buddhism emerged as a dominant religion of the masses. Buddha's teachings and those of his followers exercised a profound influence



Land of river . Photo. Gayatree Arun

on the social, cultural, and intellectual lives of the people. The humane teachings of the Buddha swept away social discrimination and generated a new spirit of equality, fraternity, and humanism.

The Buddhist period in Bengal witnessed a remarkable development in architectural and sculptural styles. The centers of Buddhist learning with their viharas, shrines and stupas were centers for secular knowledge in both arts and sciences. The architectural style evolved here had a profound influence on monuments in South-East Asian region. The monumental Angkor Wat of Cambodia and Borobudur temple of Indonesia were modeled after the vihara complex of ancient Bengal. In fact, to some historians, Bangladesh is the birthplace of a new Buddhist theological development known as 'Vajrayana.'

Geographically, Bangladesh, one of the smallest countries in South Asia, is a plain land. The south-eastern (and some stretches of the north-east) and the northeastern parts of the country are full of hills and mountains, and rivers running through them like veins flowing through a human body. This part of the country is home of indigenous ethnic communities. Each group, with its unique traditions and cultures contributes to the diversity of the country. Located on the delta of the mighty Ganges, Bangladesh is blessed with water that flows throughout the year from the Himalayas till the Bay of Bengal. The water feeds the rivers that are the lifeblood of the country's economy and rural livelihoods are based on these rivers. Needless to say, the numerous rivers accentuate the beauty of the country's landscape manifolds. The southern part of the country is bejeweled with a 120km natural sandy sea beach in Cox's Bazar, the sea beach in the east and the biggest mangrove forest of the world, the Sundarbans, in the west. The panoramic sea beach of Kuakata, popular for its breathtaking beauty of sunrise and sunset is located in the southern part of the country. The northern part, being mostly plain lands, is the site of pre-historic and historic settlements and





monuments such as Mahasthangarh (the oldest urban archeological site in Bangladesh), Puthia Palace and palaces of rulers who have reigned here. Along such citadels and ruins runs the mighty river Padma, silent witness to their checkered histories. Dhaka, the capital, located in the middle of the country, is filled with historical sites and monuments, testaments to the city's rich inheritance. Ahsan Manjil, the Lalbagh Fort and Panam City tell stories of the rich civilization that flourished in this part of the world.

For sure, there is never a dull moment in Bangladesh whether you travel by bus, train or rickshaw. There is beauty and harmony amidst chaos and frenzied traffic.

A sanctuary of art and culture, Bangladesh is also the home of diverse ethnic communities who have their own distinct lifestyles, literature, and music. Living in different regions of Chittagong Hill Tracts, Sylhet, Rajshahi, and Mymensingh, the total population of indigenous people of Bangladesh is estimated at two million. Although very different from each other, the underlying spirit of these people remains the same. The songs and ballads they sing may sound different, but the core sentiments are the same. Our musical instruments, e.g. *banshi*, *dotara*, *dhol* etc. are made of the raw materials that we get in abundance in the country. Jatra, Palagaan, Bhatiali and Bhawaiya are some of the music genres that are unique to the land.

Every occasion has its own music and artifacts. Marriage ceremonies are thus celebrated differently in different villages and localities through songs sung in distinct dialects. The essential spirit of celebration, however, remains the same.

This book is a celebration of the colors of Bangladesh and of its lively traditions. For example, when it comes to clothing, we think about colors and natural patterns. Bangladeshis like to wear colorful clothes that rightly contribute to varied moods and occasions. Sari, kurta, salwar-kamiz, lungi are common daywear, whereas, people of urban areas wear western outfits. The clothes are richly patterned and embroidered. Some of our ethnic people still weave their own cloths. The hand-woven tapestries of the people are visual treats and coveted collectibles. Dhaka and its Muslims are still mentioned with awe when people talk about the finest fabrics. Khadi and cotton are two most popular fabrics to the people. No matter, what people wear, there is always color in abundance; Bangladeshis never miss a single occasion to show good cheer and display vibrancy!

One of the lasting achievements of civilization that flourished in Bangladesh is its architecture. Evolved through centuries, Bangladesh architecture is the result of distinctive socio-economic and geographical conditions. Different types of Bangladesh architectural expressions transformed by the forces of its history, cultural life and religious beliefs are considered unique to Bangladesh.

In ancient Bangladesh, architectural monuments of religious nature constitute the dominant style and can be traced back to the Pala Empire, an early Indian empire of Bengali Buddhist dynasty ruling from Bengal from the 8th to the 12th centuries. The Palas created a unique form of Bengali architecture. The structures of Vikramashila Vihar, Odantpuri Vihar, and Jagaddal Vihar were masterpieces of the Palas.

The medieval period of Bengal history began with the coming of Muslims towards the end of twelfth century. Muslim architecture in Bengal reached its summit during the reign of Subedar Shaista Khan, who initiated construction of modern townships and public works in Dhaka.

A new style of architecture developed as a result of the colonization of India in the medieval and modern eras. This style of architecture came to be called as Indo-Saracenic. Indo-Saracenic architecture combined the features of Hindu, Islamic and western elements. Colonial architecture exhibited itself through institutional, civic and utilitarian buildings such as post offices, railway stations, rest houses and government buildings. Among the more prominent works are Ahsan Manzil in Dhaka and Tajhat Palace in Rangpur city.

The modern phase of Bangladesh architecture began in the late 1960s when the state emerged as the major client to attract architects from the West and of what was then West Pakistan. However, this was also the period of burgeoning Bengali nationalism and Bengali architects soaked in the spirit of the time in their works. Architect Muzharul Islam, who is considered the father of Bengali modernism, crafted his own Bengali architectural idiom. The Dhaka Art College designed by Islam is his magnum opus. When the Pakistan government decided to build a capital complex at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in Dhaka and asked architect Islam to design the National Assembly Building, he associated his teacher master architect Louis Kahn, with the project. The rest, as they say, is history.

One of the great things about Bangladeshi culture is its fascinating cuisine which has been wooing people from all over the world from time immemorial. Food equals entertainment in this country. The staple food is of course rice. Other dishes are often prepared with hand-picked spices that we grow in abundance. The spices give the food unique color, smell and taste. Although rural people mostly depend on rice, daal and vegetables, the urban population are ready to taste anything! Dhaka, for sure, is filled with restaurants of international standards. The whole city is packed with restaurants that cater to every palate and taste: Japanese, Indian, Thai, Chinese, Korean... you name it!

No matter how tiny the country is in terms of area, it is never too small to accommodate the world.



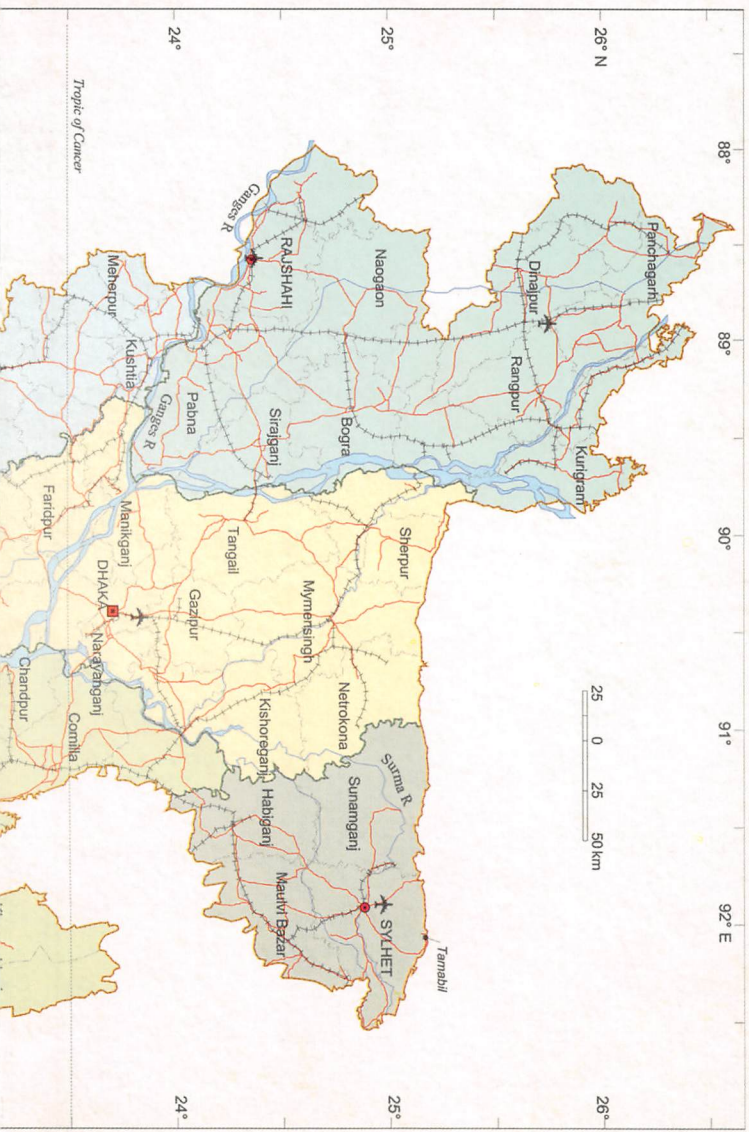
WORLD MAP

GREENLAND
(Kalaallit Nunaat)
(Denmark)

World Map
Miller Projection
1000 2000 3000 miles

Scale at Equator
©Academia Maps, GeoAtlas®
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BANGLADESH MAP





23°

22°

60°E

30° N

CHINA

NEPAL

PAKISTAN

BHUTAN

BANGLADESH

23½°

MYANMAR

Bay of Bengal

20°

10°

Andaman and Nicobar Islands

SRI LANKA

90°

91°

92°

20°

21°

22°

23°



On hungry tides. Photo: Mohammad Moniruzzaman





Tangua Haor, Sunamganj. Photo: Syed Zakir Hossain



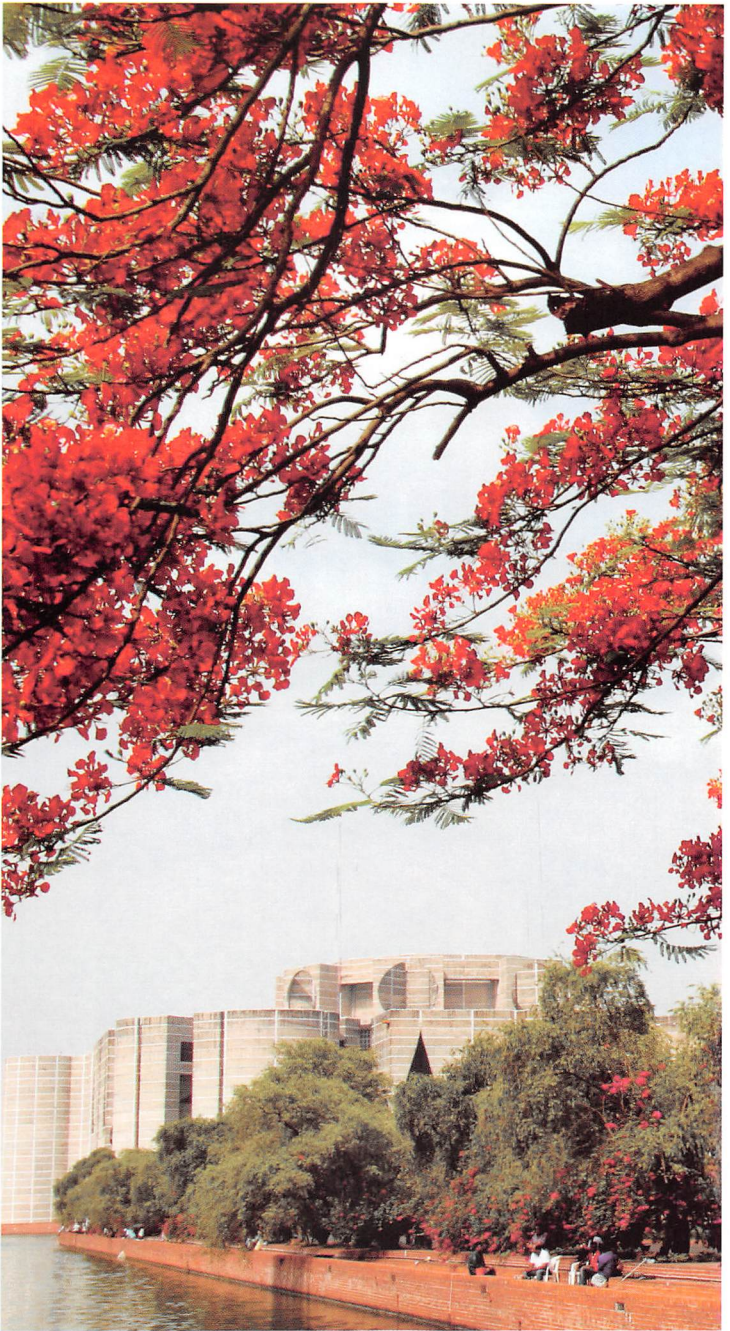
Traditional Boat Race. Photo. Suman Paul







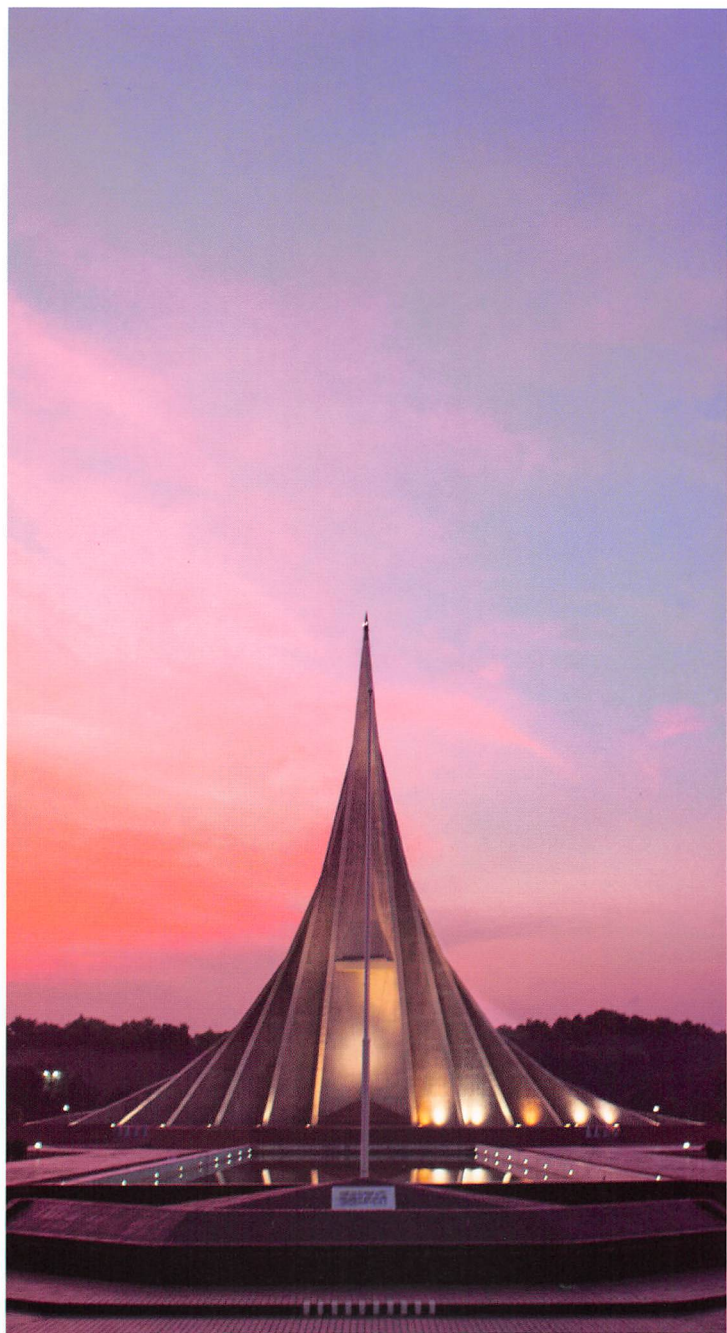
Shapla (Water lily, *Nymphaea Nouchali*), National flower. Photo. K M Asad



Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban (National Parliament House), Dhaka. Photo. K M Asad



Shaheed Minar, Dhaka. Photo: Syed Zakir Hossain

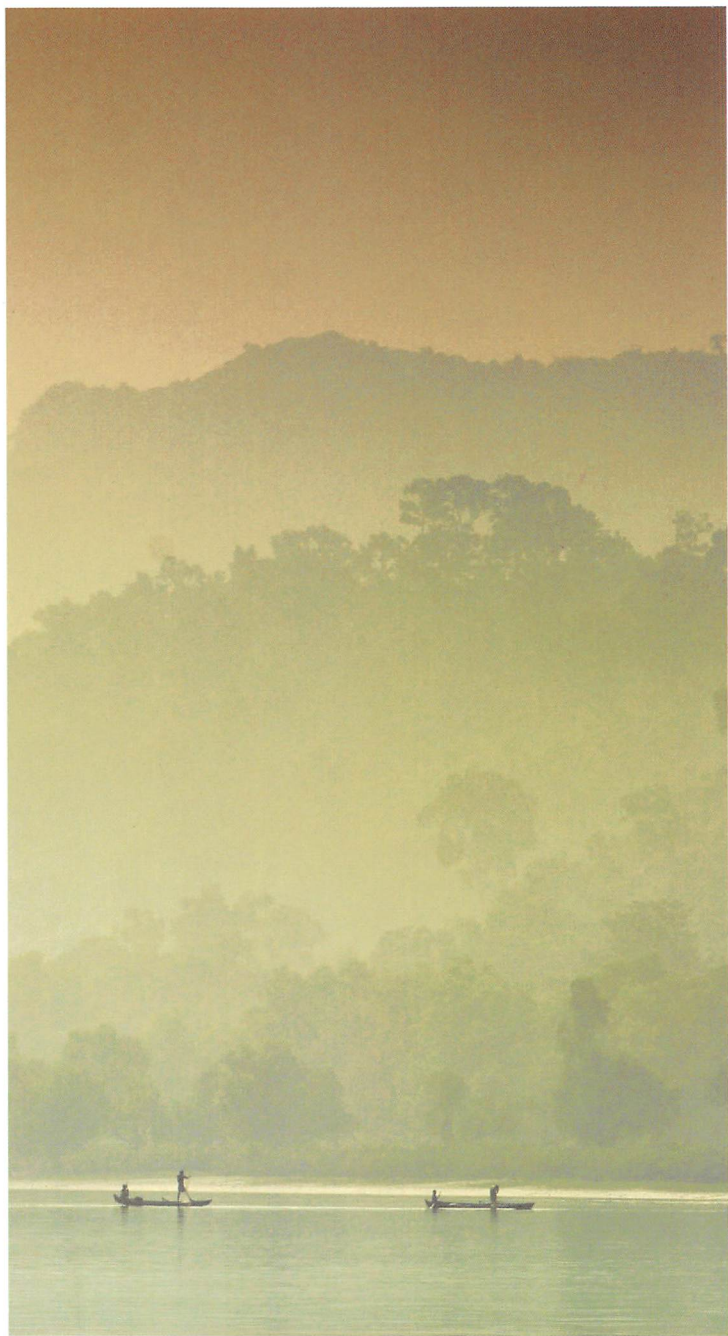


Jatiya Smriti Shoudha (National Memorial), Savar, Dhaka. Photo. K M Asad

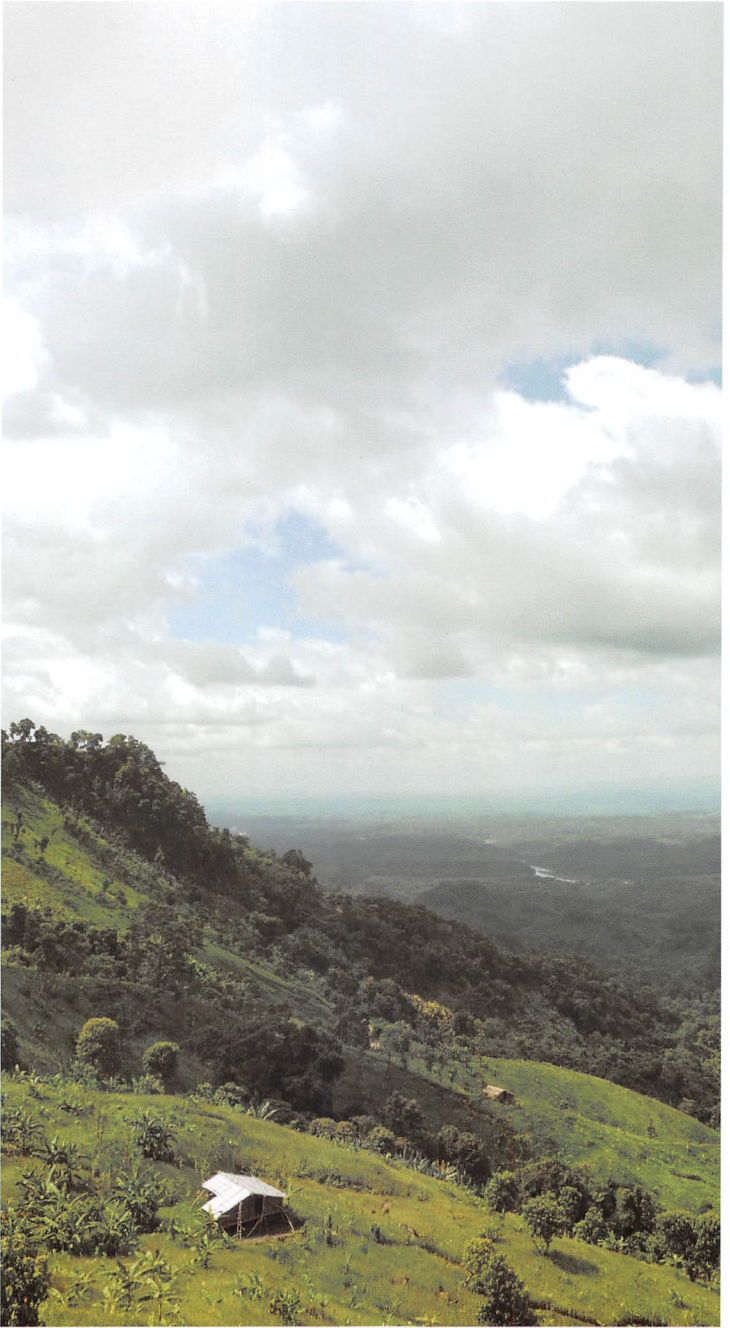


Busy metropolitan. Photo: Darsihan Chalerna





The meditating mountains at Naf, Cox's Bazar. Photo. Din M Shibly

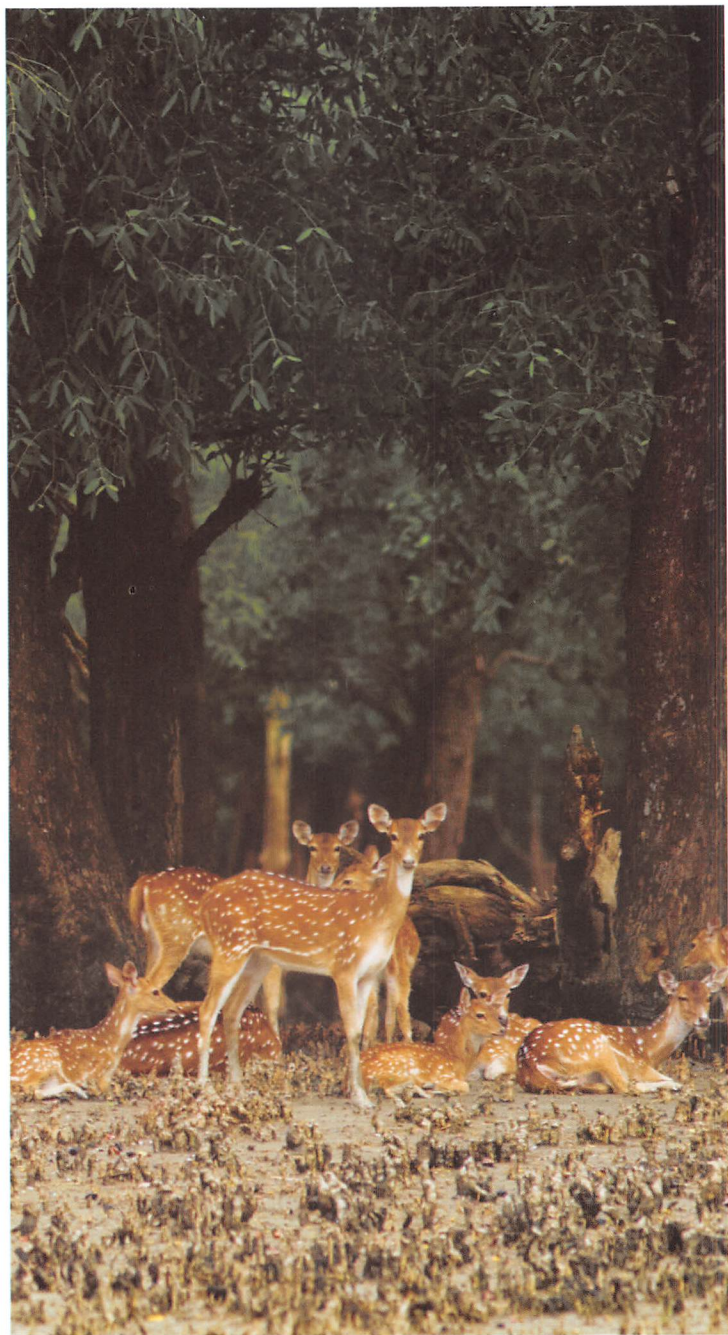


The Hill Tracts, Bandarban. Photo. Afzal Nazim

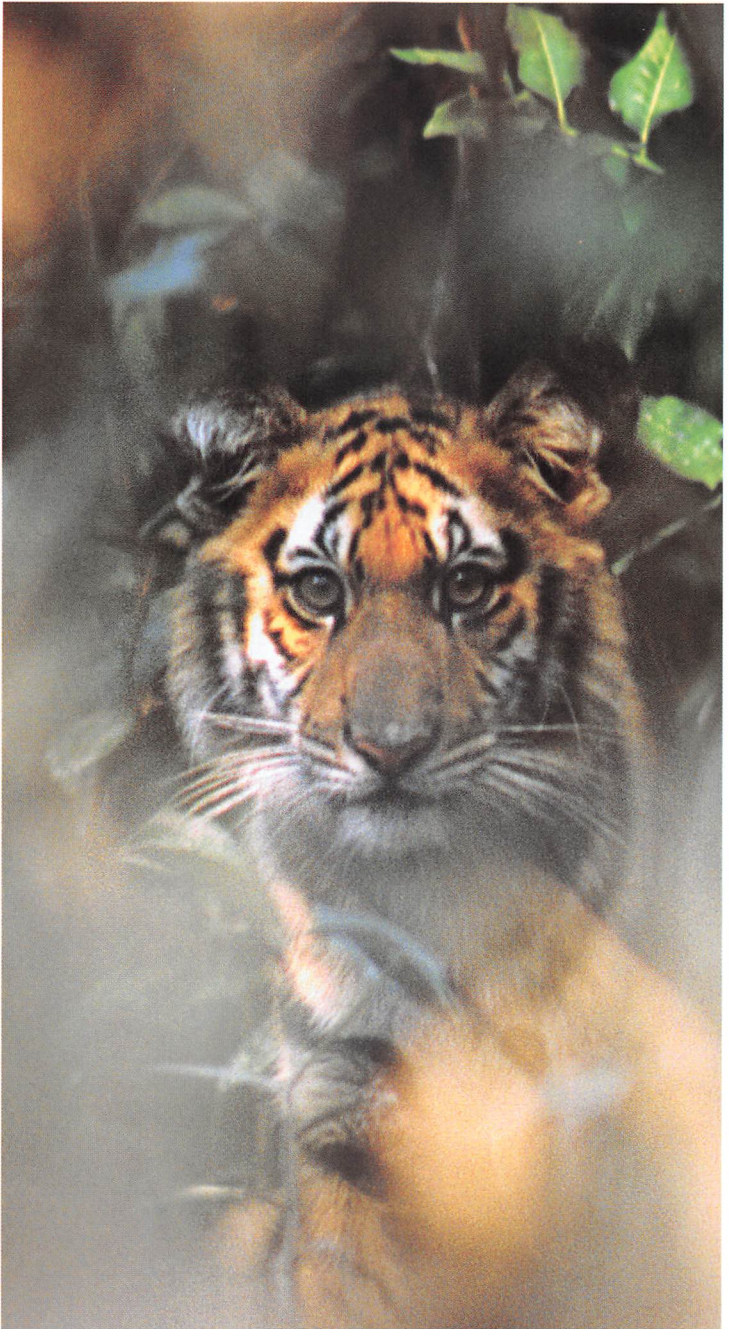


Towering palm trees at Kuakata beach. Photo: Anand K. S.

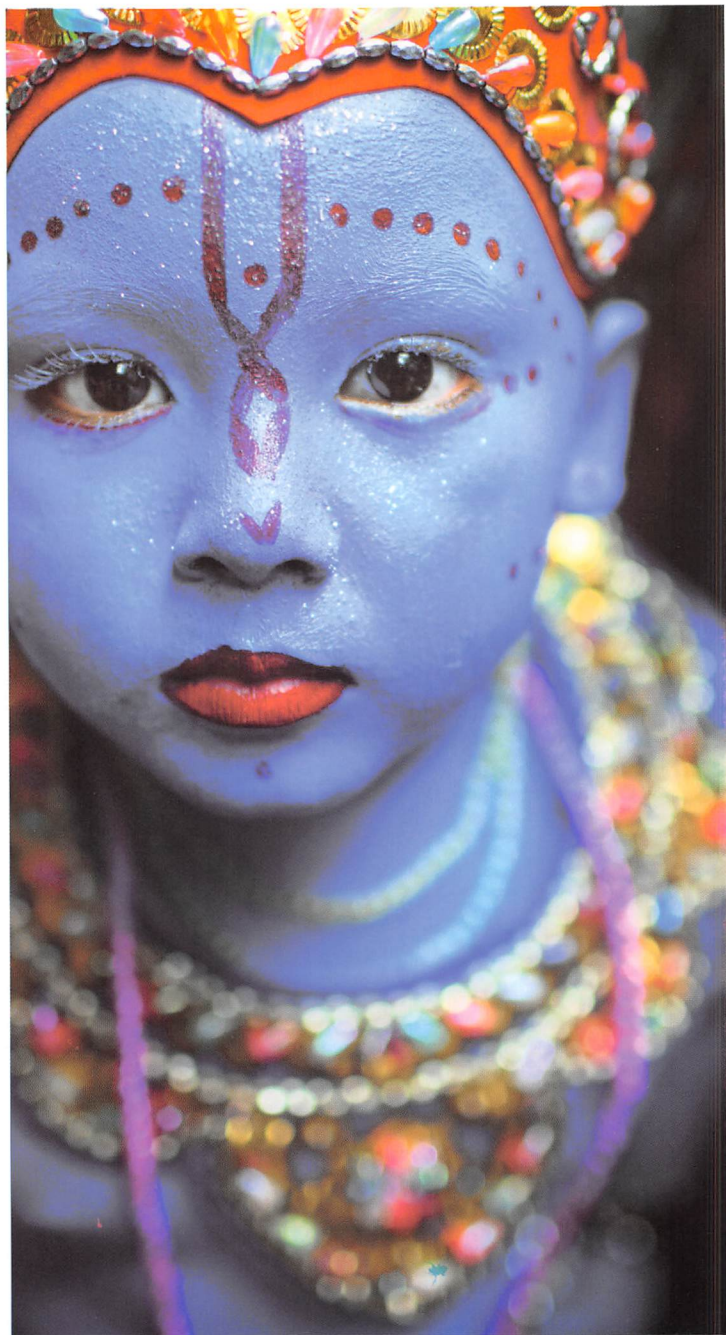




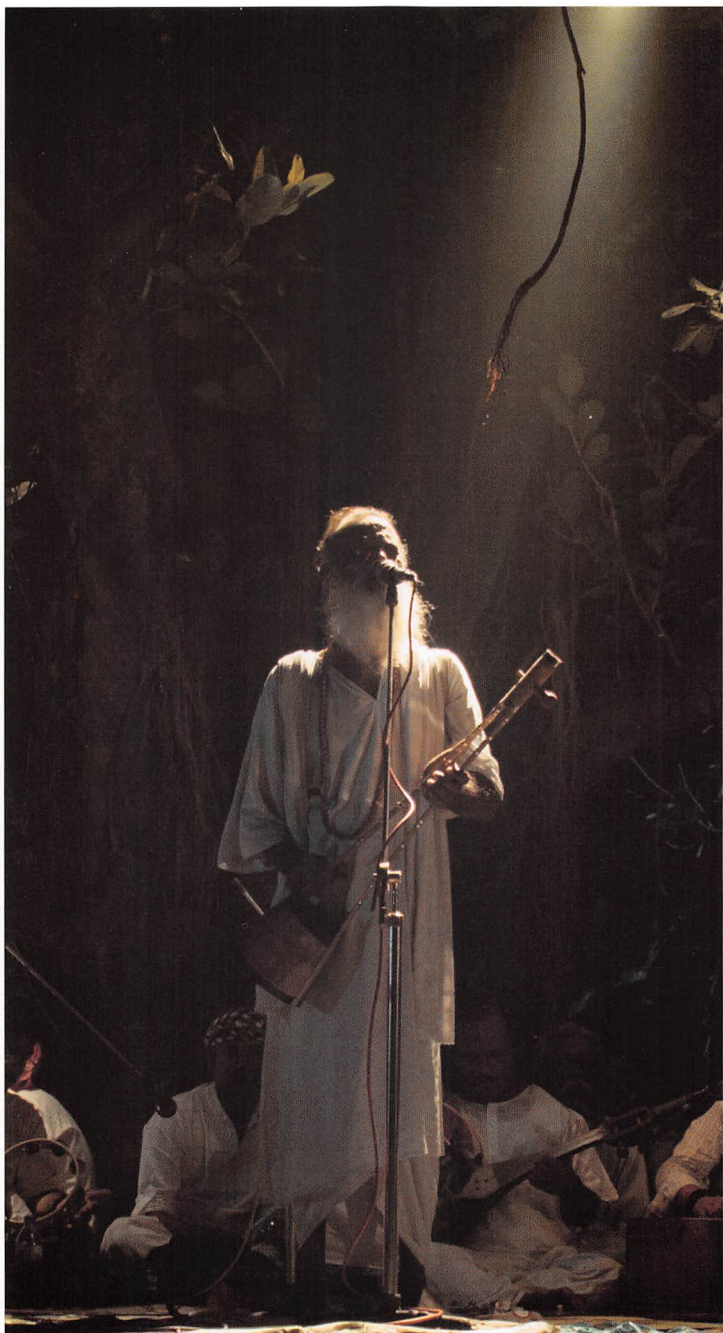
Chital (*Axis axis*) in Sundarban. Photo: Syed Zakir Hossain



The King (*Panthera tigris*), Sundarban. Photo. M Monirul H Khan



Janmashtami, Dhaka. Photo. Probal Rashid



Musical trance, Kushtia. Photo. K M Asad



City lights, Hatirjheel, Dhaka. Photo. K M Asad





Tea garden, Sreemangal. Photo: Probal Rashid



Remains of Panam, Sonargaon, Narayanganj. Photo. Afzal Nazim



Blissful beach, Kuakata Photo: K M Asad

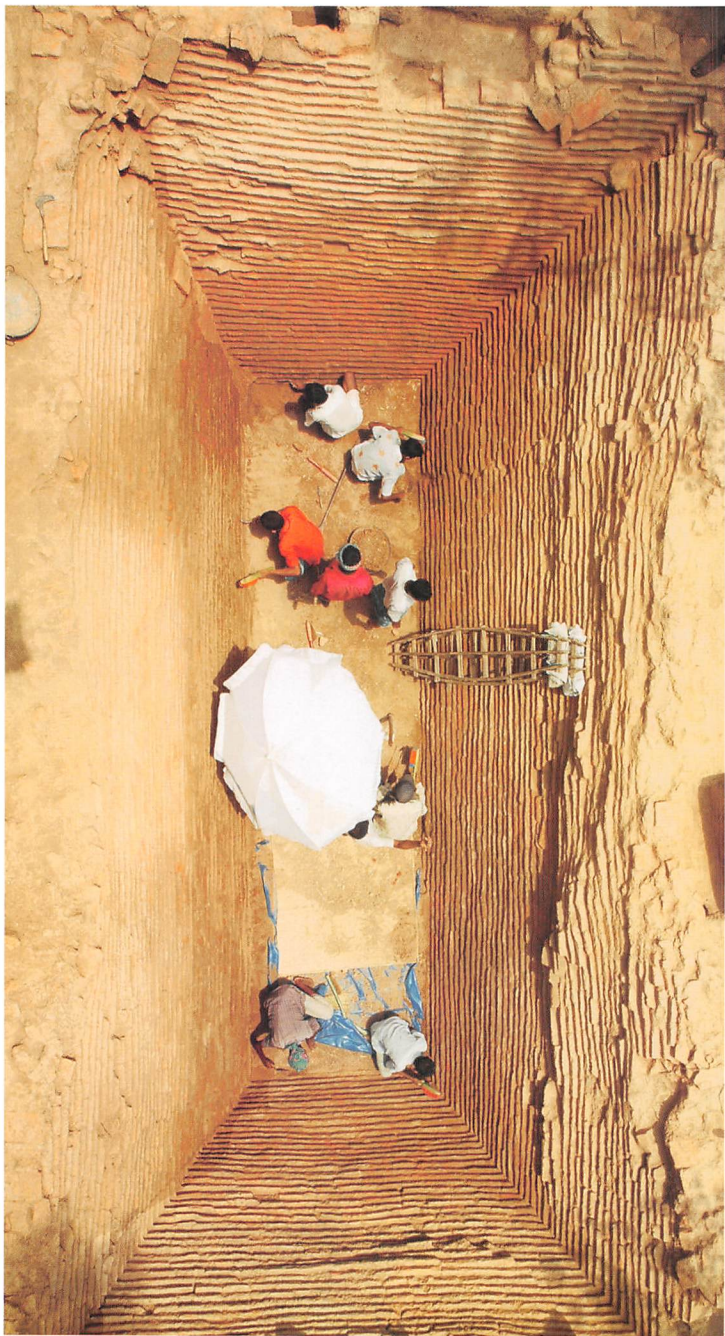




A Slice of History

The history of Bangladesh is replete with stories of different empires settling down in these deltaic plains. There are stories of legendary fights of braveheart rebels who kept the land free from tyrants and oppressors of all descriptions. There are also stories of welcoming diversity. The rebel in us ensured the birth of Bangladesh, but the long line of exchanges between the locals and the foreign rulers contribute to our tolerant nature and cultural diversity.





Signs of ancestors, Wari-Bateshwar. Photo. Oitijhya Onneswan



Coin from Shams al-din Ilyas Shah, (1242-1257). Photo. Archive



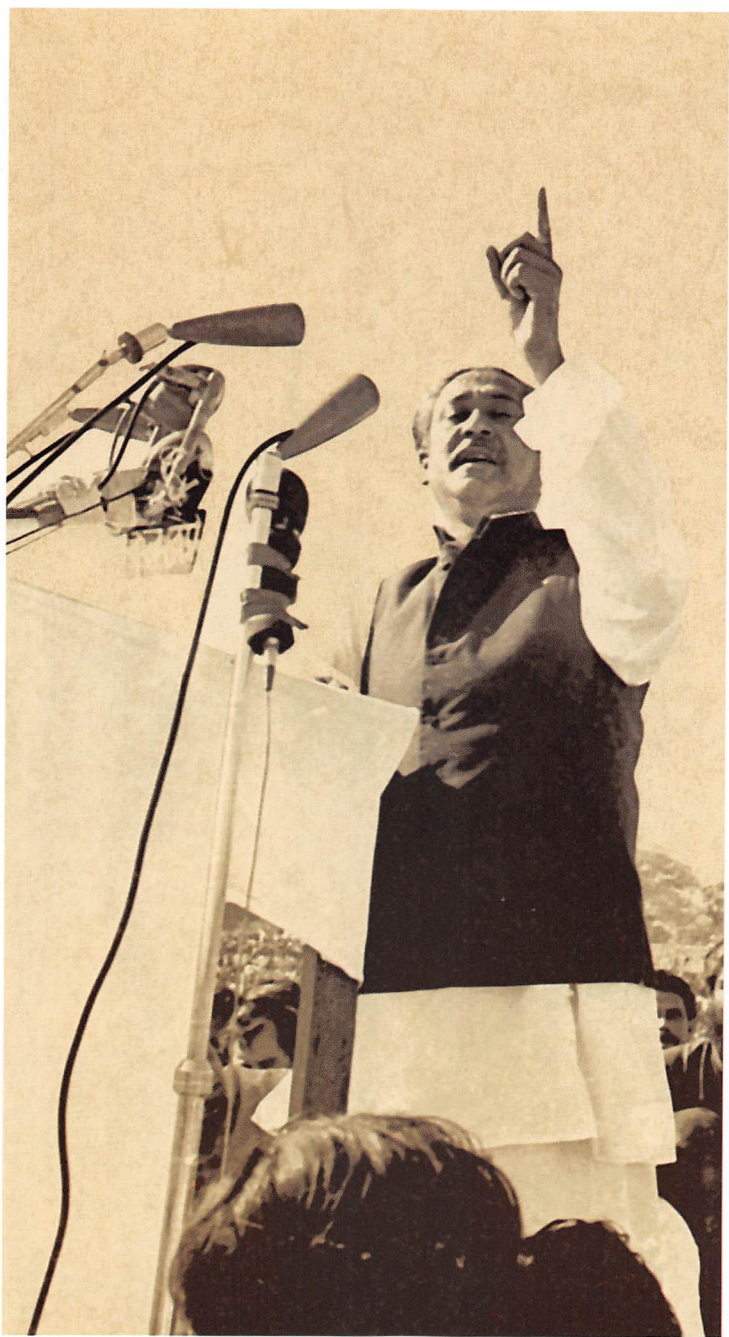
The last of the sovereigns, Nawab Siraj Ud Dawla (1733-1757). Photo. Archive



Colonial leisure. Photo. Fritz Kapp



Language Movement. Photo. Professor Rafiqul Islam



The Leader, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (1920-1975). Photo. Rashid Talukder



Jubilant Freedom Fighters. Photo: Rashid Talukder



Bangladesh is not a name which sprang up suddenly; it evolved over centuries, drawing strength from each encounter with the outsiders, while being enriched by its ability to prosper. The country achieved its independence through a glorious struggle, the war of independence, a phenomenon that defines our essential identity as a fearless and free-spirited people. Bangladesh is the most recent name for an area of the eastern portion of the Indian subcontinent more generally known as Bengal; a region, which, although related to its neighboring states in various ways, has been a distinct entity in Indian history for some three thousand years. From Banga to Bangladesh, the history of this fertile deltaic plain goes back to the non-Aryan ethnic groups belonging to the Austric or Austro-Asiatic race who settled in this region nearly 10,000 years ago. They were followed by two other ethnic groups whose languages were Dravidian and Tibeto-Burman. Excavations in Wari- Bateshwar in Narsingdi district testify to the oldest ruins of these powerful civilizations. Vedic, Epic and Puranic literatures as well as Greek, Latin and Chinese texts express the greatness of the land in antiquity. 'Gangaridai' was one such realm, which matched the military strength of Hellenic force led by Alexander the Great. Other ancient empires noted for their endeavors were Subga and Kausana, relics of which were found in Mahasthangarh in Bogra.

The region which is now known as Bangladesh had been successively ruled by the Maurya Empire, the Gupta Empire, and the empire of Sasanka, the Pala Empire, the Sena Kingdom, Delhi Sultanate, Mughal Empire and pax Britannica. In the 8th century, the Pala dynasty emerged from Bengal. The founder of the Palas, Gopala was the first king elected by his subjects to rule them. Especially this empire, which lasted for more than four hundred years and reached its zenith in eighth and ninth centuries under the leadership of Dharmapala and Devapala, is cited as an example of Bengali's political genius in empire-building and a testimony to an ancient civilization.

However, the 'Bengal' which was a political reality during the Muslim rule was unknown in the ancient times. The political



Battle of Palashi. Photo. Collection

landscape of the zone prior to the Muslim rule was dotted with a multitude of small states. The nucleus of many small states might have been provided by the various clans that originally inhabited the region.

Before the Muslims invaded Bengal, there had been numerous attempts by king Sasanka and the Pala rulers to capture the whole terrain. Their failure deprived the region from becoming a 'Great Bengal'.

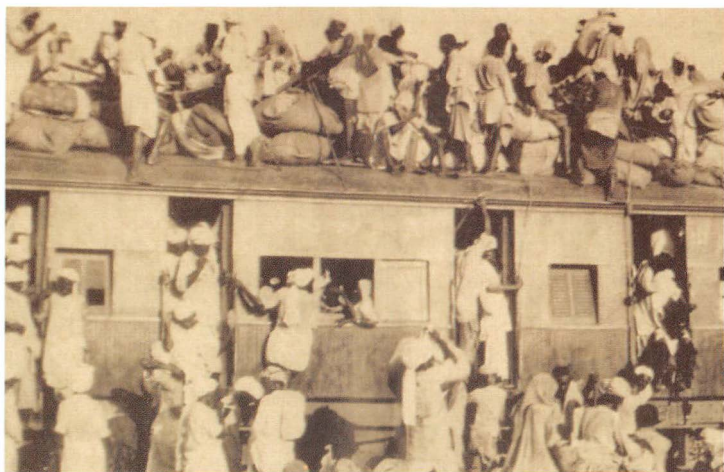
In the 14th century, Sultan Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah (1352–1358) was the first to unite these small units under the rubric of 'Bangala'. He himself assumed the title *Shah-i-Banglah*. Political unity of Bengal largely survived ever since. It was further strengthened by the Mughal rulers who incorporated the province of Bengal into the Delhi-based Empire. Political unity also promoted linguistic homogeneity. The Muslim rulers in Bengal, for practical purposes, patronized Bengali language and literature.

The British inherited a politically united and culturally homogeneous Bengal after the fateful defeat of the last independent ruler Nawab Siraj-Ud-Dowla in 1757. A drastic change took place with the establishment of British rule. Bengal became the political centre of India and due to the introduction of education through English, the hub for cultural activism.

Bengali nationalism has always been based upon cultural identity, with unity founded upon language. The entire region of Bengal has a strong cultural unity and this has been reinforced by hundreds of years of common political history of bonding and tolerance. A core feature of this identity formation is diversity and tolerance. Hindu mythology and culture have been a part of Bengal's heritage and Sanskrit has its impact on Bangla just like Latin on European languages. Yet Buddhism arose in this very land and was welcomed by the people as they always embrace the non-violent and humanistic approach of any faith. That characteristic of the people of this fertile land was most distinct when they embraced Islam often in the form of Sufism that portrays God as a loving and merciful religion as a way of achieving social cohesion and racial harmony.

Throughout history, when the Bengal region had been known as either one Great Bengal or many little Bengals. However, in 1947 when the British left the country divided, Bengal was divided too.

The people of Bengal neither demanded the partition of their homeland nor were ready for it. Partition of Bengal was imposed through table politics, not through a referendum; Pakistan was also forced upon the inhabitants of the area without a plebiscite opinion. The national aspirations of the Bengalis, therefore, remained unfulfilled, and politically they were found to be quite in a quandary. However, in spite of the widespread frustrations caused by the loss of West Bengal, the people of East Bengal and their leadership had showed strong inclination to make Pakistan a success. However, their efforts failed to evoke an equal spirit of cooperation from the other wing, West Pakistan. From the very beginning, the partnership was deemed incompatible. In forming the new State of Pakistan structurally and institutionally democratic principles were undermined. The Pakistani top leadership preferred to rule by decree. They decided that Urdu was going to be the state language. This decree faced resistance from the masses of East Bengal, which led to what is now known as the language movement. The movement was the earliest instance of resistance to rule by decree. Nearly



The largest migration in history of civilization, 1947. Photo. Archive

55% of Pakistan's population was living in East Bengal whose language was Bangla. They demanded Bangla to be one of the state languages. The government, which was run by the West Pakistanis and their collaborators in the east complicated the issue by proposing Arabic script and unfamiliar Perso-Arabic elements into Bangla. The language, which has been surviving for thousands of years, was not ready to make such drastic changes. The students were united and the civil society of East Pakistan started protesting. On 21st February, 1952 police fired upon the protesters demonstrating their right for the right of the mother language. People were inspired by the sacrifice of the language martyrs. The monument constructed for these martyrs came to be known as Shaheed Minar. It has become a symbol of pride for a nation determined to uphold its political and cultural heritage.

Pakistan was under the rule of a military junta which considered the Bengalees inferior and intractable. Economically, East Pakistan was contributing more to the exchequer, particularly in terms of foreign exchange, but the majority share was ploughed into West Pakistan's economy, with very little left for the eastern wing. Continued inequalities in the body politic had created disbelief among the two wings of Pakistan. In the 1960s there was a mass upheaval against the discriminations

and brutalities of the rulers from West Pakistan. To minimise the tension and bring stability to the region, a formula was advanced by the East Pakistan leadership. The Awami League headed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman proposed a six-point formula demanding autonomy for East Pakistan. The West Pakistan leadership, propped by the ambitious army and bureaucracy, busy securing the power, refused to accept the proposition. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested on false grounds and was confined in jail. However, his voice was soon transformed into the voice of the nation. Released from jail through a popular uprising in 1969 Sheikh Mujib grew in a stature as the leader of the nation. In general elections of 1970, Awami League sought a mandate from the people for the six-point-autonomy and the



Homecoming, 1971. Photo: Rashid Talukder



Birth of a Nation. Photo Kishor Parekh

nation endorsed it without any reservation. Awami League won a landslide victory in the polls; but the West Pakistanis declined to hand over power to Sheikh Mujib and allow autonomy. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman then addressed the nation on March 7, 1971 at the Ramna Race Course in Dhaka where he gave a clarion call for all out resistance.

On the night of 25 March, 1971, the Pakistani military junta launched a violent crackdown on unarmed civilians with an aim of systematic elimination of intelligentsia, religious minorities, students and armed personnel. No sooner had the genocide begun, than the armed struggle to liberate Bangladesh from the clutches of the military junta ensued, which eventually culminated in the independence of Bangladesh and birth of a new nation state on December 16, 1971.

Parables of Bangladeshi Art



Contemporary art is an exciting mix of ideas, images, styles, techniques and mediums. There have been significant shifts within the discourses of art and within the art market. Bangladeshi art is also changing and is marked by a dizzying variety of artistic expressions and languages. It embraces both the local and the international in its pursuit to be faithful to our time.

First Plantation, SM Sultan





Rabindranath Tagore.



The pioneer of modern Bengal art, Abanindranath Tagore (1871-1951). Photo. Archive



Dui Mukh, Zainul Abedin



W. W. 9/15/95



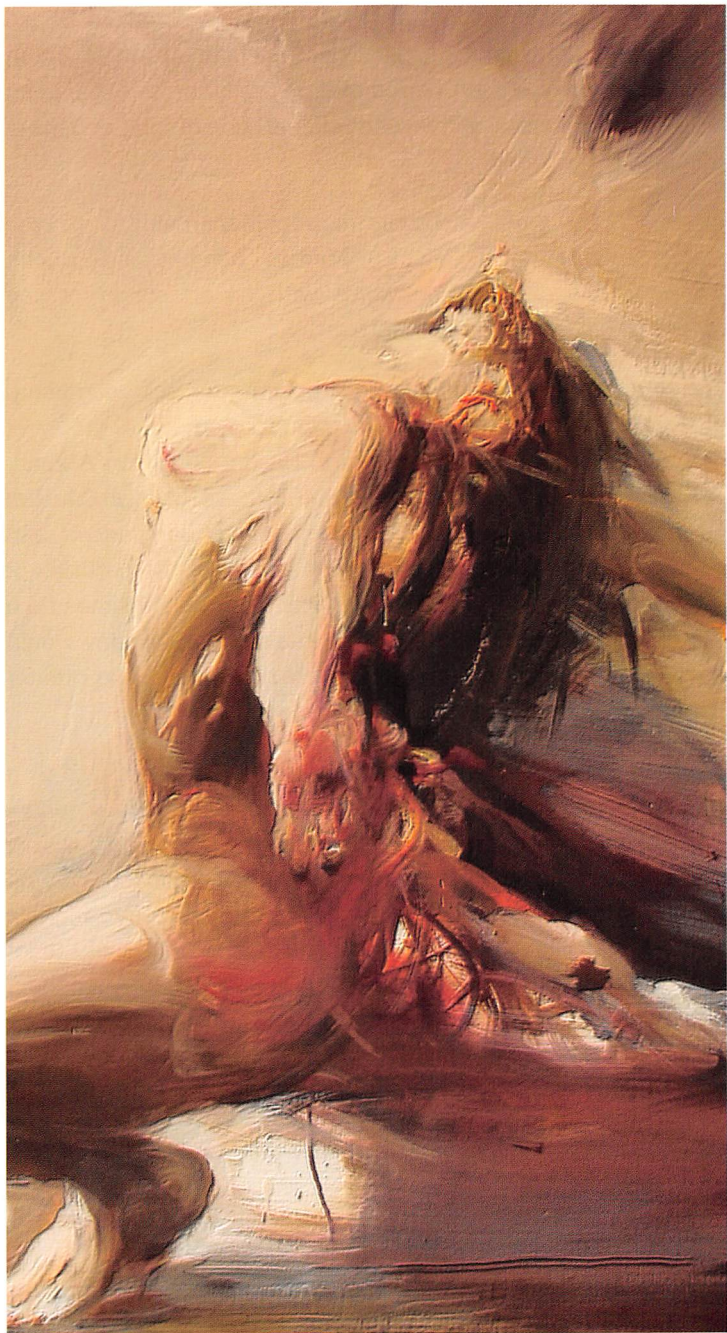
Novera Ahmed.



Quamrul Hassan.



Safiuddin Ahmed.



Shahabuddin Ahmed.

The movement of modern art in Bangladesh began in Dhaka with the establishment of the Government Institute of Art in 1948, and within a short period of time the Institute became an epi-center of cultural revival and regeneration of the Bengalis of this part of the world.

In the 1940s, unlike other metropolitan centers of the subcontinent such as Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and Lahore, Dhaka was a cultural backwater with no art school or any recognizable tradition of modern art.

The Institute was established largely under the leadership of Zainul Abedin, who was ably supported by a group of committed artists including Qamrul Hasan, Safiuddin Ahmed, Anwarul Huq, and Khaja Shafiqur. All these Bengali Muslim artists who scripted the art movement in Bangladesh had been trained in Calcutta Art College and after the partition of the subcontinent in 1947, thought that Bengali Muslims had a better future in Muslim dominated Pakistan where they would be able to contribute more and where there would be greater opportunities for them. And they all moved to Dhaka.

The first major challenge was to set up an art institute in a cultural milieu that had no art galleries or an art loving public. The task at hand was a Herculean one. After many hassles, Zainul and his friends managed to set up an art school. But who would study there? The society was not ready for anything like that, and middle and lower middle class parents refused to let their children to be enrolled in an art school because for them art education was not job-oriented. Zainul and his colleagues on a mission to collect students for the Institute went from door to door to convince parents as well as prospective students. The pioneers of the art movement were lucky as the first batch of students proved to have enough creative fire power to further their cause.

The first principal of art institute and spearhead of the art movement of Bangladesh, Zainul Abedin came into prominence in 1943 with his extraordinary powerful sketches on the Bengal famine of that time. With minimum of details and bold brush



Terracotta of Bengal. Photo. Afzal Nazim

strokes, Zainul depicted the unrelieved sufferings of the people on the Calcutta streets. The famine series earned him all-India fame. In search of a Bengali identity, he drew his inspiration from traditional motifs of Bengal found in dolls, *alpanas* and folk art.

The artists who drew their inspiration in the tradition of Bengal soon became an integral part of intelligentsia of Dhaka. Their canvas voiced concerns against all social injustices and atrocities committed by the Pakistani regime. When the ruling elites in Pakistan started an assault on Bengali language and culture by imposing Urdu as the official language for the country, the whole nation erupted to resist the attack on their Bengali identity. The struggle for the assertion of ethnic-linguistic identity became instantly known as the Language Movement.

Artists joined the agitation by drawing posters, designing banners, drafting inspirational drawings and painting *alpanas* (stylized geometric and floral designs or folk motifs) on the streets. The involvement of the artists in the Language Movement was not only a reflection of the social function of art, but also an artistic urge for creating a sense of belonging with new symbols, colors and images, which have become an integral part of Bengali national psyche.

Qamrul Hasan, who exuded youthful exuberance in everything that he did, was always at the forefront of every movement

against the repressive regimes of Pakistan. His caricature of the Pakistani general drawn during the war of liberation in 1971 urging the people to stand up against the atrocities of the 'beasts' became an iconic image of resentment against injustice.

Shafiuddin Ahmed, as student of Calcutta Art School, excelled in woodcut and etching. His depiction of the landscape and tribal life of Dumkiin woodcut had a powerful sense of disquiet. In late 1950s, he went to England and received further training in etching which eventually became his most preferred medium to release his artistic energy. He later turned to geometric abstraction where he portrayed forms and symbols of eyes, fishing nets and boats in swirling harmony.

Shafiuddin's younger contemporary, SM Sultan's paintings were about the energy and vitality of our people, especially the peasants. The men and women in his canvas are strongly built, muscular and optimistic. Everyday farming activities such as ploughing, planting, threshing, and fishing took center-stage of his work. His belief was that the indomitable spirit of the peasants will prevail against the forces of oppression.

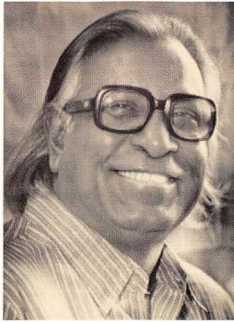
The crop of artists of the Fifties, who focused their energies to expand the horizon of art outlined by their predecessors and founding fathers of art movement in Bangladesh, included Rashid Chowdhury, Kazi Abdul Baset, Abdur Razzaque, Mohammad Kibria, Aminul Islam, Murtaja Baseer, Devdas Chakrabarty, Syed Jahangir, Hamidur Rahman and Qayyum Chowdhury.

Rashid Chowdhury is best known for his simple decorative tapestry works. His training in tapestry in France inspired him to look for inspiration in decorative designs.

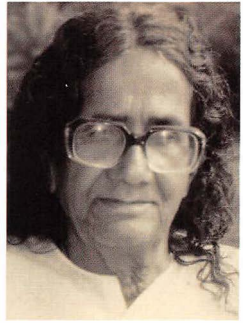
The painters of the Fifties took to abstraction to express their social realities. This was mainly due to the reaction to the conservative class who dominated the power blocks and disapproved of any figurative representation as it was contrary to religious strictures and considered anti-Islamic. The artists resorted to the language of metaphors and symbols.



Zainul Abedin (1914-1976)



Quamrul Hassan (1921-1988)



SM Sultan (1923-1994)

Not everyone, however, practiced non-representative, metaphorical or the symbolic art. Novera Ahmed irked the establishment by making figurative sculptures drawing inspiration from traditional dolls and folk forms. Her works were denounced as iconography and branded as 'Hindu culture.'

The stalwarts of the 50s also included Samarjit Roy and Abu Taher who found abstraction and semi-abstraction suitable for expressing their personal symbolism and imagery while embedding social messages in their visual language. In the process, they gave a very personal interpretation of their time and reality.

Qayyum Chowdhury was attracted to bright hues of traditional folk motifs and gave them his personal idiom to enliven his canvas. The aspiration and struggle of War of Independence also found strong emotive expression in his works.

In the late 60s' there was a group of prolific artists who are best known for their unique individual styles and vocabulary- Hasem Khan, Rafiqun Nabi, Monirul Islam, Mahmudul Haque, Abul Barq Alvi and Hamiduzzaman Khan.

Hasem Khan elevated book illustration to the status of art and gave publication industry the missing artistic touch. Rafiqun Nabi shot into fame with his cartoon character Tokai, a street urchin, whose scathing remarks on social inequality and perceptive commentary on the society with a dose of humor made the imaginary character into an iconic figure.

The newly-independent Bangladesh in 1971 provided new vitality and vigor to the country's art scene. As artists of a new and independent country, they invested their energy to look for purpose and meaning of their artistic endeavor. They channeled their energy to the rediscovery of the local and the indigenous traditions. Artists of the 70s include Kalidas Karmakar, Shahid Kabir, Abdus Shakoor Shah, Kazi Ghyas, Monsur-Ul Karim, Chandra Shekhar Dey, Alakesh Ghosh, and Shahabuddin.

Persistent in his experimentation, Kalidas Karmakar is prolific and voluminous. He deals with a variety of mediums with ease and dexterity. Whether he works in etching, oil and acrylic painting or mixed media, his artistic signature is unmistakably imprinted.

Kazi Ghyas is a master water-colorist and employs intricate patterns and designs on his canvas. He is also adept in oil and acrylic. A nature lover, he believes that nature is the ultimate destination for peace.

Shahabuddin is intense and emotional in releasing raw energy on his canvas. In sweeping and forceful brushstrokes, he portrays the heroism of freedom fighters of the Independence War. His artistic figures symbolize the energy and vitality of all freedom loving people.

The 80s witnessed a more intensified approach to both traditional and indigenous raw materials. Only this time there has been a *mélange* of the post-modern renegotiation of the tradition and popular culture. The dominant voices of the decade are Nazlee Laila Mansur, Farida Zaman, Ranjit Das, Mohammad Eunus, Nisar Hossain, Shishir Bhattacharjee, Dilara Begum Jolly, Wakilur Rahman, Saidul Haque Juise, Rokeya Sultana, Dhali Al-Mamun and Lala Rukh Selim.

In the 90s, the scene experienced drastic changes. The art practices of the period combined high points in Western art and culture and reinvestigated the local tradition to create meaningful images of our time. The art produced by the generation of the 1990s in Bangladesh has offered many

different routes to familiar questions about interpretation and intention and invited its audience into newer and multilayered relationships. Leading artists of the generation include GS Kabir, Shekh Afzal, Ashok Karmakar, Iftikhar Uddin Ahmed, Ahmed Nazir, Mahbubur Rahman, Rafi Haque, Mohammad Fokhrul Islam, Md. Anisuzzaman, Mohammad Iqbal, Dilara Begum Jolly, Fareha Zeba, Niloofar Chaman, Atia Islam Anne, Kanak Chanpa Chakma, Laila Sharmeen and Tayeba Begum Lipi.

The contemporary art scene in Bangladesh is characterized by its tremendous creative surge, diversity and vitality. New media art opened fresh directions and vista to the contemporary generation. There is a constant injection of interesting and refreshing works in Bangladesh art scene testifying to the capacity of our contemporary artists to evolve with time and rediscover themselves.

The Colorful Palette of Literature



The history of Bangladesh literature extends back many centuries with the oldest sample of Bengali literature *Charyapada* dating back a thousand years. The literary landscape of the country is marked by its tremendous creative surge, variety and vitality. The stirring and profound impact of language movement of 1952 and the liberation war of 1971 shaped Bangladeshi literature at its core in form and expression.

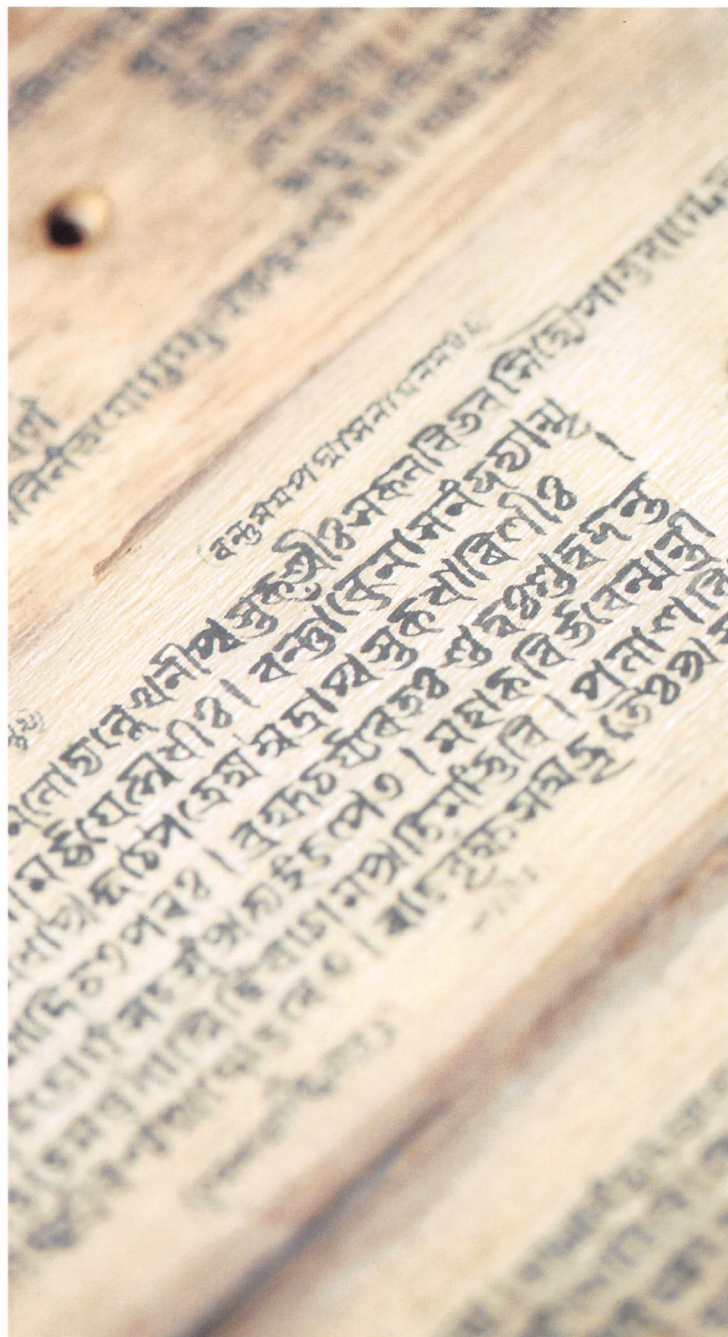
Photo: Gayatrie Arun



मोहिनाय नमः
शिवाय नमः
गुरुभ्यो नमः
विदुषो नमः
विदुषो नमः



मोहिनाय नमः
शिवाय नमः
गुरुभ्यो नमः
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Ancient Script. Photo. Gayatree Arun

বোধপূকাশ° শব্দশাস্ত্র°
ফিরিঙ্গিনামুপকারার্থ°
শ্রিয়তে হালেদগ্গেজী

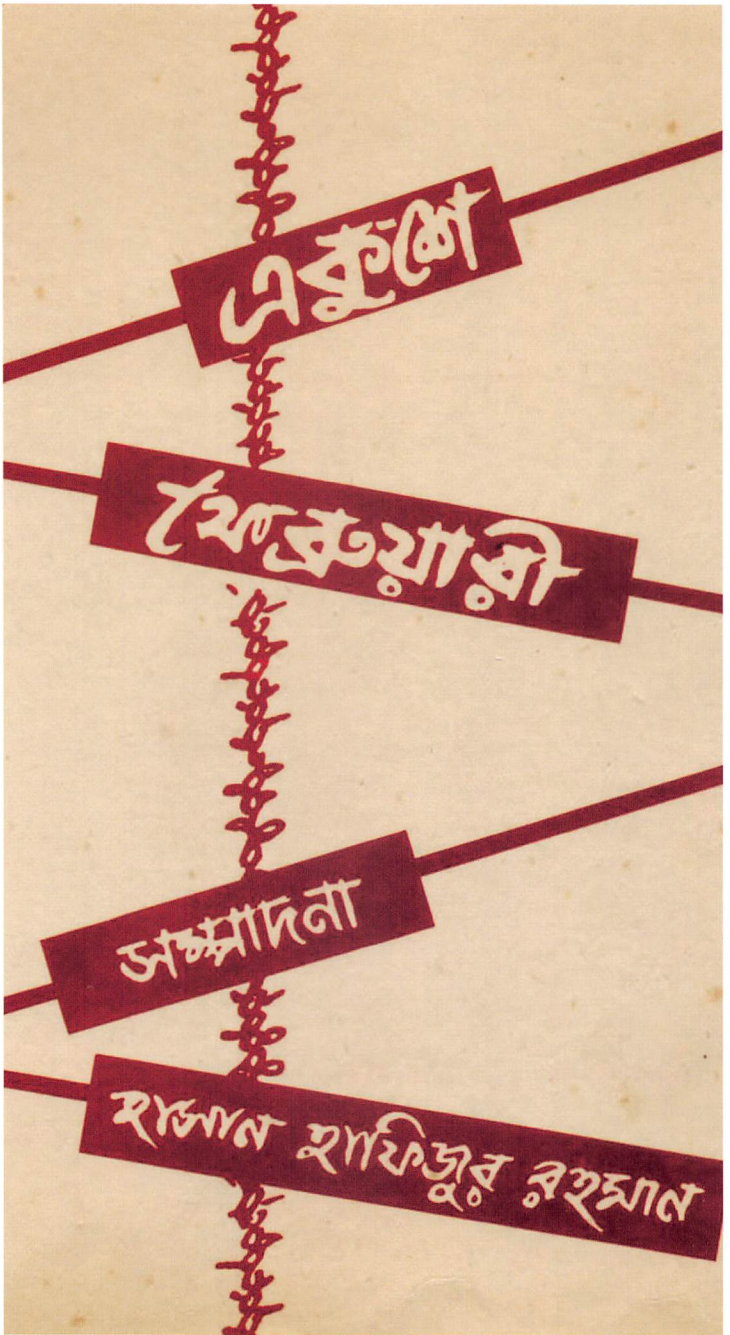
A
GRAMMAR
OF THE
BENGAL LANGUAGE

BY
NATHANIEL BRASSEY HALHED.

ইন্দ্রাদয়োপি যস্যান্ত° নয়যুঃ শব্দবারিধেঃ!
পুঙ্খিয়ান্তস্য কুৎসস্য ক্ষমোবজু° নরঃ কথ°!!

PRINTED
AT
HOOGLY IN BENGAL

M DCC LXXVIII.



Commemorative issue of 'Ekushe February' Magazine, 1953. Photo. Archive



Procession during Language Movement, 4 February 1952. Photo. Professor Rafiqul Islam



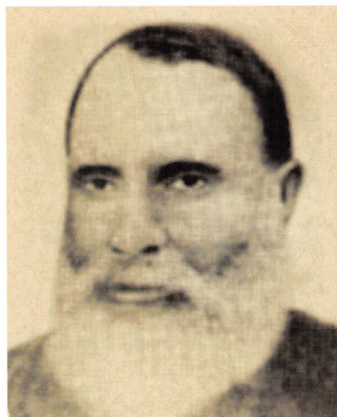
Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891)



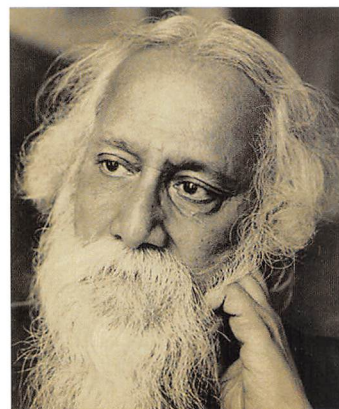
Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-1873)



Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (1838-1894)



Mir Mosharraf Hossain (1847-1912)



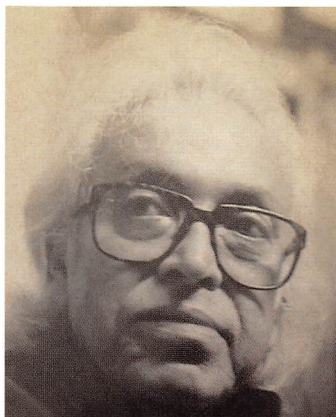
Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)



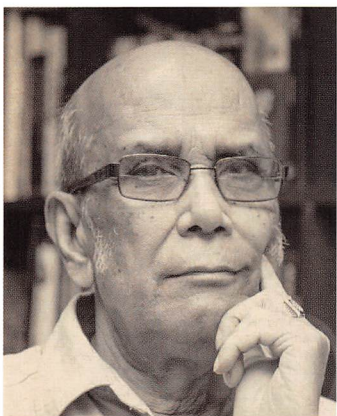
Roquiah Sakhawat Hossain (1880-1932)



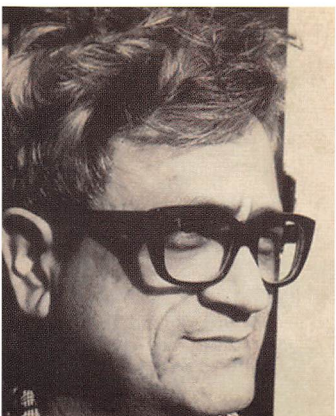
Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899-1976)



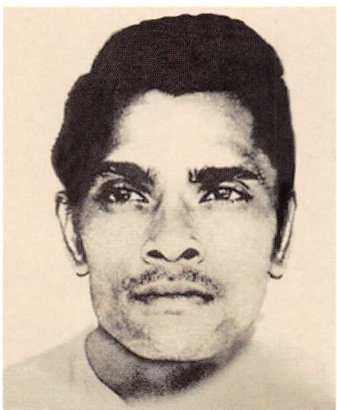
Shamsur Rahman (1929-2006)



Syed Shamsul Haque (1935-2016)



Akhteruzzaman Elias (1943-1997)



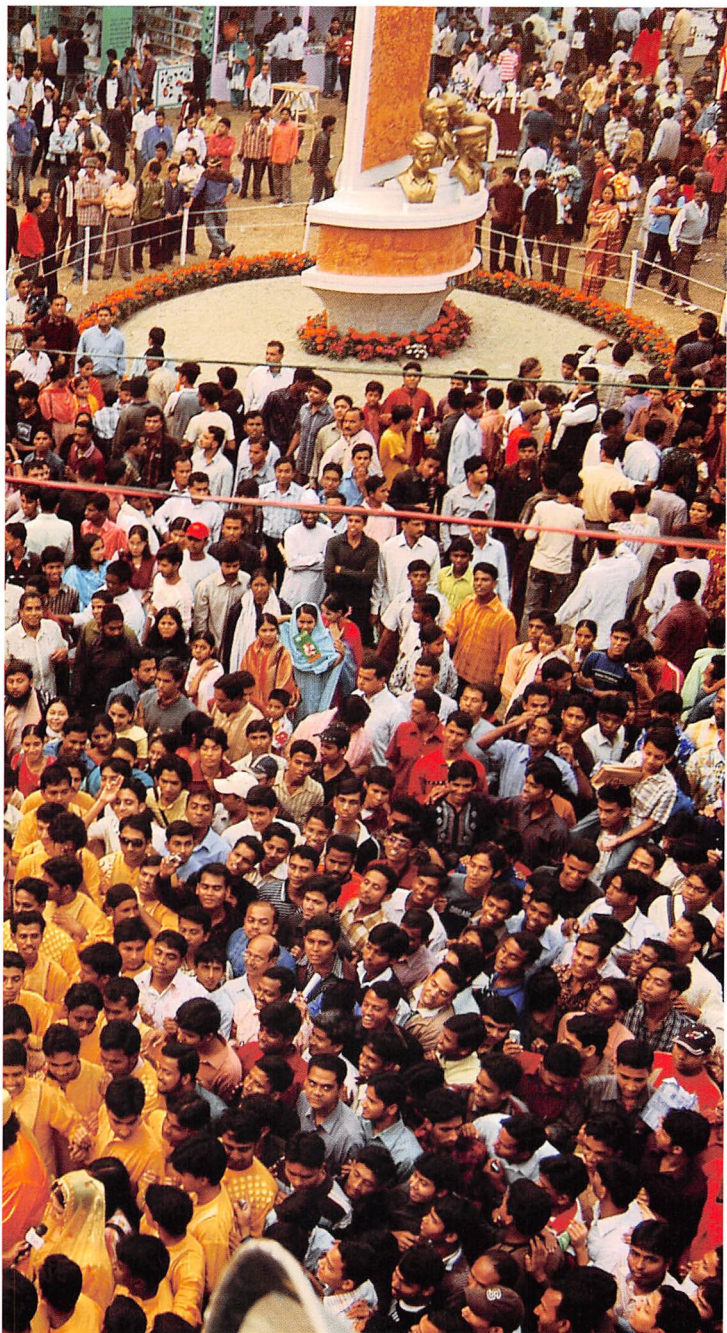
Abul Hasan (1947-1975)



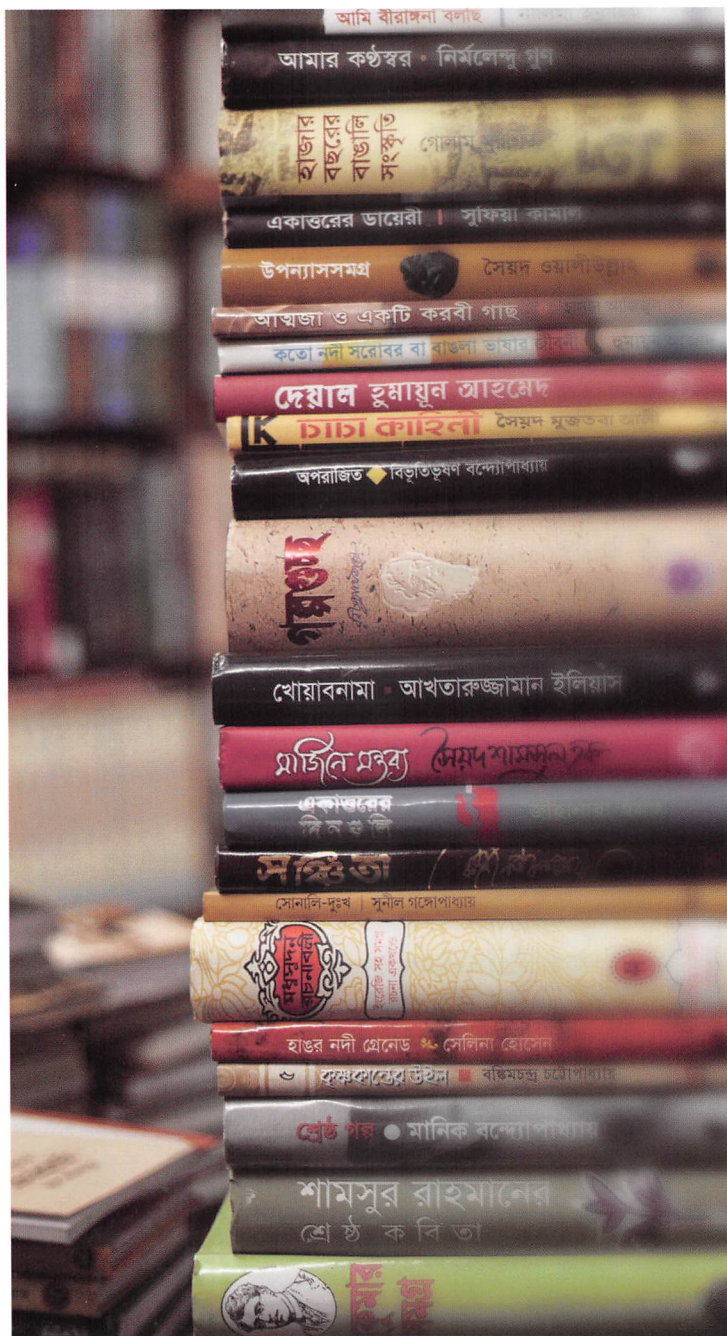
Selim Al Deen (1949-2008)



Bardhaman House, Bangla Academy, Dhaka. Photo. Kamrul Hasan Mithon



Month long Boi Mela (Book Festival) at Bangla Academy. Photo. Syed Zakir Hossain



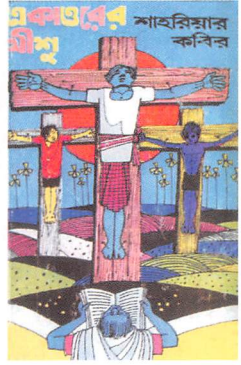
At a book shop in Dhaka. Photo. Gayatree Arun



Zainul Abedin



Quamrul Hassan



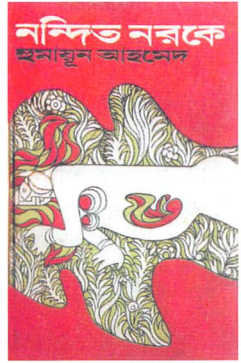
Rafiqun Nabi



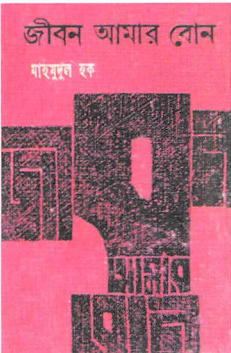
Hashem Khan



Murtoza Bashir



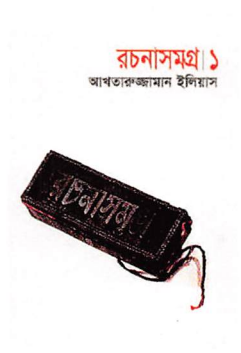
Qayyum Chowdhury



Kazi Hasan Habib



Pranesh Mandal

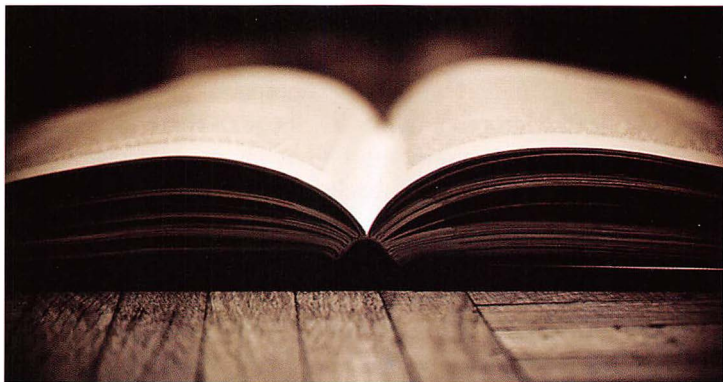


Dhrubo Esh

Covers by virtuosos, words by wordsmiths. Photo. Archive

The history of the literature of Bangladesh unfolds in three phases: the first phase stretches from 1947 to 1957; the second from 1958 to 1970 and the third from 1971 onward. The first phase extended from pre-partition days to the time when the military took over state power in Pakistan (Bangladesh or East Bengal, as it was known then, was a province in that state). The literary works from the first phase particularly focus on the partition of the subcontinent in 1947 and the tragedy and trauma it released; the uncertain life of the refugees who crossed the border both ways, economic distress and communal disturbances, the Pakistani regime's hostile attitude to East Bengal and its language and culture. The literary works produced from 1958 to 1970 specially bring into focus the harsh realities of rural life and the complexities in Hindu-Muslim relations. Furthermore, many literary contributions of the phase unfold the real picture of the government's injustices and oppressions. The third phase consists of pre-liberation and post-liberation literary and cultural activities. The literary works of the phase explore different aspects of social, political and economic life of the people.

Most of the novels of the first phase were written in the backdrop of rural Bangladesh. The remarkable works of the phase include *Lalsalu* (Tree Without Roots, 1948) by Syed Waliullah (1922-1971), *Char-Bhanga Char* (Broken Sandbanks, 1951) by Kazi Afsaruddin (1921-1975), *Kashbaner Kanya* (Daughter of Kashban, 1954) and *Alamnagarer Upakatha* (The Minor Story of Alamnagar, 1954) by Shamsuddin Abul Kalam (1926-1997), *Chandradvipar Upakhyay* (The Story of Chandradip, 1952) by Abdul Gaffar Choudhury (b 1934), and *Surya-Dighal Badi* (The Sundrenched House, 1955) by Abu Ishaque. Some writers preferred the life of the middle class and its crisis as their prime theme. Abul Fazal's *Jiban Pather Yatri* (The Traveller on the Road of Life, 1948) and *Ranga Prabhat* (The Crimson Dawn, 1957) successfully portray the existential struggle of the middle class. During the post-partition days, most of the Muslim writers were mainly interested in writing novels, but a few wrote short stories as well. The authors who were interested in short stories after 1947 include Abul Fazal, Abu Rushd, Syed Waliullah, Abul Mansur Ahmed, Shamsuddin Abul Kalam and Shawkat Osman (1917-1998). The new genre of short story grew around the Muslim middle class that gained strength following partition. Thus the short stories of Bangladesh reflected the prevailing



In search of light. Photo Collected

social reality and brought into focus the onslaught of urban life eroding the peace of rural life.

The first phase of Bangladeshi literature saw the evolution of modernist poetry. Since the pre-partition days the poets of East Bengal had been attempting to create poetry of their own coming out of the shadows of the dominant Kolkata based poets. After partition, the poets of East Bengal felt that they had to shape both a tradition of modern poetry here and give it a local colour. They included Ahsan Habib (1918-1983), Abul Hussain (1922-2014) and a few others. Some poets however, felt encouraged to write romantic poems on the themes of early Islamic history as well as on Pakistani nationalism. Those who belonged to this trend included Farrukh Ahmad (1918-1974) and Syed Ali Ahsan (1922-2002). However, most of our poets wrote poetry on secular and humanistic themes. Among these poets were Ashraf Siddiqui, with *Bishkanya* (The Poison Daughter, 1955), *Sat Bhai Champa* (Seven Brothers and Champa, 1955) and *Uttar Akasher Tara* (The Star of the Northern Sky, 1958), Mazharul Islam with *Matir Fasal* (The Crops of the Earth, 1955), Matiul Islam with *Saptakanya* (1957) and Begum Sufia Kamal with *Mon O Jiban* (The Mind and Life, 1957). This humanistic trend was also reflected in *Natun Kavita* (An Anthology of New Poems, 1950), jointly edited by Ashraf Siddiqui and Abdur Rashid Khan. Among poets who contributed to this edition were Shamsur Rahman, Hasan Hafizur Rahman, Alauddin Al-Azad and Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir.

Unlike other branches of literature in this phase, drama did not flourish to any significant extent. Religious and social taboos

about plays as well as various limitations in staging them thwarted the development of drama. Most plays of the time were based on historical stories, completely detached from the realities of contemporary life. Of these, Akbaruddin's *Nadir Shah* (1953) is worth mentioning. Poet Jasimuddin used some elements from folklore to write *Padmapar* (The Shores of the Padma), *Madhumala* and *Beder Meye* (The Gypsy Daughter). Outside these two trends, Nurul Momen wrote *Nemesis* (1948) depicting a superb picture of the contemporary life. In terms of theme and structure, *Nemesis* is regarded as the first successful play of Bangladesh.

During the pre-liberation war phase Munier Chowdhury (1925-1971) almost single-handedly raised the status of Bangla plays to an international level. He wrote his famous symbolic drama, *Kabar* (The Grave, 1953) during his imprisonment. The play brilliantly portrays the language movement of 1952. In fact, *Kabar* proved to be a turning point in Bangla drama. Later he wrote two more plays entitled *Manush* (The Humans) and *Nashta Chhele* (The Spoiled Kid). Through these three plays, the writer spoke of eschewing communalism and of embracing greater humanism.

Fiction in the second phase of Bangladeshi literature, as in the first phase, was written mainly on rural life. The harsh realities and everyday crises of rural life in Bangladesh were the themes of *Hazar Bachhar Dhare* (For A Thousand Years, 1964) by Zahir Raihan (1933-1972). Satyen Sen (1907-1981) unveiled the complexities of Hindu-Muslim relations in rural life in his novel *Padachinha* (Footprint, 1968). Shahidullah Kaiser (1925-1971) in his *Sareng Bau* (The Captain's Wife, 1962) drew a realistic picture of how the onslaught and complexities of urban life were destroying the peace of the rural life of south Bengal. Alauddin Al-Azad's *Karnafuli* portrays class struggle on the banks of the river Karnafuli. Ahmad Safa's *Surya Tumi Sathi* (The Sun You are the Companion, 1968) shows the endless existential struggle of rural people. However, Syed Waliullah's *Chander Amabasya* (Dark Moon, 1964), though ostensibly about rural life, was actually about social life under the military regime. There is no doubt that with *Chander Amabasya* Waliullah introduced the readers a different narrative style. He meticulously applied the stream of consciousness technique to his novels. In this phase many wrote modern individualistic

novels on the models of the European novels about middle class and individualism. These novels indicate a lack of trust in existing values, and a want of confidence in the force of love and a strong distaste for life. In fact, this way Bangladeshi literature embraced modernism. Consequently, the writers preferred loneliness and detachment of urban individuals -- two vital features of modernism, as the major themes of their novels. Of this genre, *Battalar Upanyas* (Novel of the Wayside, 1959) and *Anukalpa* (The Alternative, 1959) by Razia Khan (1936-2011) deserve special mention. Syed Shamsul Huq (1935-2016) was also adept in writing such novels. To show the inner psychological conflicts of modern men he wrote some of his most accomplished novels including *Deyaler Desh* (The Land of Walls, 1959), *Ek Mahilar Chhabi* (The Portrait of a Woman, 1959), *Anupam Din* (Exceptional Day, 1962) and *Simana Chhadiye* (Beyond the Border, 1964). One of the masters of modern fiction, Hasan Azizul Haque (1939) wrote some of his most memorable stories at this time. His *Samudrer Swapna: Shiter Aranya* (The Dream of the Sea: The Forests of Winter, 1964) and *Atmaja O Ekti Korobi Gaach* (Daughter and an Oleander Tree, 1967) deal with deprivations and psychological complexities in the lives of the ordinary people.

In the 1950s and 60s some poets took Islam as the primary inspiration for writing poetry. Farrukh Ahmad's *Hatem Ta'yi* (1966), Raushan Yazdani's *Khatamun Nabi-in* (1960), Sufi Zulfiqar Haider's *Fer Banao Mussalman* (Turn Muslims Once Again, 1959) bear testimony to it. During the 1965 Indo-Pak war, patriotism, national pride and communal hostility formed the themes of their poetry. But after the war, this trend was replaced with humanistic thoughts that transcended communal feelings. Simple romantic love, nature and man became the main ingredients of poetry. This trend manifested itself most prominently in Syed Ali Ahsan's *Uchcharan* (Utterance, 1968), Shamsur Rahman's *Bidhvasta Nilima* (Collapsing Blue, 1967), Muhammad Moniruzzaman's *Bipanna Bishad* (Vulnerable Sadness, 1968), Hasan Hafizur Rahman's *Antim Sharer Mata* (Like the Last Tune, 1968), Al Mahmud's *Kaler Kalas* (The Pitcher of Time, 1966), Shahid Qadri's *Uttaradhikar* (Inheritance, 1968), Fazal Shahabuddin's *Arakhhita Asundar* (Unprotected Beauty, 1969), Syed Shamsul Huq's *Biratihin Utsav* (Endless Celebration), and Abdul Mannan Syed's *Janmandha Kavitaguchchha* (Poems Blind from Brith, 1966).

Bangla poetry of the time gradually moved towards a concern for the masses. Even without being votaries of any particular political or social ideology, poets attempted to voice the collective feelings and sentiments of the masses of East Bengal. Syed Shamsul Huq's *Baishakhe Rachita Pamktimala* (Poems Composed in Baishakh, 1969), Shamsur Rahman's *Nij Basbhume* (In One's Own Homeland, 1970), Al Mahmud's *Sonali Kabin* (The Golden Marriage Deed) and Nirmalendu Goon's *Premamshur Rakta Chai* (I Want Premangshu's Blood, 1970) bear testimony to such thoughts. The basic themes of these poems were the misery of the common people, craving for national independence, oppression and repression of the Bangalis as a race and the people's protests against all these.

The efforts at writing Bangla plays in the first phase on the basis of contemporary period and society continued with much enthusiasm in the second phase. Drama during this phase was varied and tried to portray social realities. In this regard, Munier Chowdhury's *Dandakaranya* (1966) and *Raktakta Prantar* (The Bloody Field, 1959) can be considered as substantial literary works.

The liberation war of 1971 and the independence of Bangladesh mark the third phase of the literature of this region. The fiction of this phase records the saga of the liberation war, the hellish face of the war, the dream of a free and egalitarian Bangladesh and thereafter the realization of independence. Syed Shamsul Huq's novels of this phase depict the complex and multifaceted conflicts of human psychology. His novel *Duratyā* (Distance, 1981) very faithfully portrays, through the autobiographical account of Zainal, the intricate socio-political realities of post-1975 Bangladesh. His two other novels, *Mahashunye Paran Master* (Paran Master in Deep Space, 1982) and *Ayna Bibir Pala* (Ayna Bibi's Opera, 1982), also depict the changes and erosion in rural life.

The struggle of the people for survival in the coastal region has been truly reflected in Selina Husain's *Jalochchhvas* (The Tidal Wave, 1972) and *Pokamakarer Gharbasati* (Insects' Houses, 1986). Two other books of the type are Abu Bakr Siddique's *Jal Rakhsas* (Water Monsters, 1985) and *Kharadaha* (1987). A more optimistic view of rural life is found in Haripada Dutta's *Ishane Agnidaha* (Fire in the North Western Corner, 1986) and *Andhakupe Janmotsav* (Birth Celebrations in a Blind Well, 1987).

A large section of the patriotic middle class who took part in the liberation war got frustrated at the country's economic, social and political conditions. The post-1971 novels drew pictures of the post-independence instability and despondency. Humayun Ahmed's *Nandita Narake* (In Blissful Hell, 1972) and *Shankhanil Karagar* (The Blue Prison, 1973) depict the static state of the life of the middle class and their frustrations and loneliness. The picture of the alienated hedonist is found in Syed Shamsul Huq's *Khelaram Khele Ya* (Go On Playing, Playboy, 1973). Rashid Karim's *Prem Ekti Lal Golap* (Love is a Red Rose, 1978), *Boroi Nishanga* (So Lonely) and *Sadharan Loker Kahini* (Stories of Ordinary People, 1981) depict the multifarious problems in the life of the middle class. Rizia Rahman's *Rakter Aksar* (Letters of Blood, 1978), on the other hand, paints the dark picture of an urban slum of sex workers. Her *Ekti Fuler Janya* (Just For a Flower, 1986) presents a freedom fighter's face wearing the scars of defeat. Some other similar books are Shawkat Ali's *Apekhsa* (Waiting, 1985), Bashir Al-Helal's *Kalo Ilish* (The Black Ilish, 1979), Hasnat Abdul Hai's *Amar Atataya* (My Daughter, 1980), and Selina Husain's *Magnachaitanye Shish* (Whistle in the Deep Subconscious, 1979). Razia Khan's novel *Hey Mahajiban* (O Great Life, 1983) narrates the biography of a liberated woman. However, in the post-independence era, Mahmudul Haque contributed a lot to Bangladeshi literature. Though his first novel *Anur Pathshala* (Anu's School) was published in 1967 he drew the attention to the critics and readers after he published *Jibon Amar Bone* (Life is My Sister) and *Kalo Baraf* (The Black Snow). Apart from his novels he wrote only one volume of short stories entitled *Protidin Ekti Rumal* (A Handkerchief Everyday). Shawkat Osman's *Artanad* , (The Scream 1985) and Selina Husain's *Yapita Jiban* (Lived Life, 1981) are portrayals of the fundamental sentiments of the language movement as well as of the post-partition refugee problem and the cultural conflict. During this time some writers wrote novels being inspired by the anthropological, historical, and cultural heritage of the land. In this regard, Shawkat Ali's *Pradose Prakritajan* (The Commoners in the Twilight, 1984), based on history and heritage, is considered a unique addition to fiction. Furthermore, Rizia Rahman's *Bong Theke Bangla* (From Bong to Bengal, 1978), *Ekal Chirakal* (Now and Ever, 1984) and Selina Husain's *Nil Mayurer Yauban* (The Youth of the Blue Peacock, 1983) encompass the

long span of anthropological, geographical, social and cultural life of the Bengalis.

Poetry in the post-independence days could be described as poetry of the liberation war, for it was inspired by the war, its sentiments and experiences. Those who started writing poetry prior to liberation and continued to be active in the post-independence days include Abdul Mannan Syed, Abdullah Abu Sayeed, Rafiq Azad, Muhammad Rafiq, Jinat Ara Rafiq, Altaf Husain and Asad Choudhury. Alongside, the younger poets like Nirmalendu Goon, Mahadev Saha, Humayun Azad, Daud Haider and Humayun Kabir contributed a lot to enrich Bangladeshi poetry. Their poems clearly depict more faithfully the feelings of the masses than the pleasures and sorrows of individuals. By the same token Shamsur Rahman's 'Octopus' (1983) and 'Montage' (1985) depict the sufferings of the individuals due to internal as well as external compulsions.

In the free environment of the independent country, poetry, compared to other branches, became the most important segment of literature. But soon the poets, like the common people, became frustrated and afflicted with despair when they found that their hopes raised by independence were far from being realised. Their sentiments found expression in such poems as Daud Haider's "Janmai amar ajanma pap" (Being born has been my original sin), Rafiq Azad's "Bhat de haramzada ta na hale manchitra khabo" (Give me food O bastard or else I will eat up the map) and Rudra Muhammad Shahidullah's "Batase Lasher Gandha" (The Smell of Corpses in the Air)

The short stories of this phase exhibited a major change of attitude with the downtrodden segment of the society finding a place as subjects alongside the people of upper strata. Many writers created a world of fiction by using this phenomenon of social polarisation. The books of short stories of this trend include Rahat Khan's *Anishchit Lokalay* (1972), *Antahin Yatra* (1975), Abdus Shakur's *Crisis* (1976) and *Saras Galpa* (1982), Rashid Haider's *Antare Bhinnya Purush* and *Megheder Gharbari*, Hasnat Abdul Hai's *Jakhon Basanta*, Bashir Al-Helal's *Bipareet Manush*, Mahbub Talukdar's *Arup Tomar Vani*, Abul Hasnat's *Parakiya*, Humayun Ahmed's *Nishikabyo* and *Sheet O Anyanya Galpa*, Shahidul Zahir's *Dalu Nadir Howa O Anaynya* and Syed Manzoorul Islam's *Prem O Prarthonar Galpo* (Stories of Love and Prayer, 2005) and *Sukh-Dukher Galpo*.

Akhtaruzzaman Elias's novels and collections of short stories were also published after independence. Some of his remarkable works include *Chile Kothar Sepai* (The Soldier in the Attic, 1987), *Khoabnama* (Tale of Dreams, 1996), *Anya Ghare Anya Svar* (Another Tune in Another Room, 1976), *Khoyari* (The Hangover, 1982), *Dudhbhate Utpat* (Disturbances in Mealtime, 1985) etc. He depicted the life of old Dhaka graphically in his stories. His novels focus on the post-independence ambivalence of middle class people. The socio-political condition portrayed in the novels by Hasan Azizul Huq, Shawkat Ali and Akhtaruzzaman Elias unveils two major themes-the oppressed rural life and the decaying sense of values.

After 1971 the playwrights changed their traditional way of writing plays. In a word, innovative ideas, political awareness, skill in form and use of refined language revitalized drama. Those who made the drama movement forceful included Syed Shamsul Huq, Abdullah Al-Mamun, Mamunur Rashid and Selim Al-Din. All of them were connected with drama performances. Syed Shamsul Huq's poetic play *Payer Awaz Pawa Jay* (The Sound of Footsteps, 1976) based on the liberation war is a valuable addition to Bangla drama literature. His *Nuruldiner Sara Jiban* (The Entire Life of Nuruldin, 1982) and *Ekhane Ekhon* (ere and Now) are important works in terms of dramatic form.

The above discussion indicates that three particular phases have shaped the entire landscape of Bangladesh's literature. Bangladesh's literature started its journey from the pre-partition period and it has come to the present stage crossing many ups and downs. No doubt, post independent Bangladesh has conceived its own particular individual arrangement of litterateurs and writings. Besides, the contemporary litterateurs of Bangladesh have relentlessly been working to enrich different genres of literature. They have also been trying to take Bangladeshi literature to an international level through their contributions.

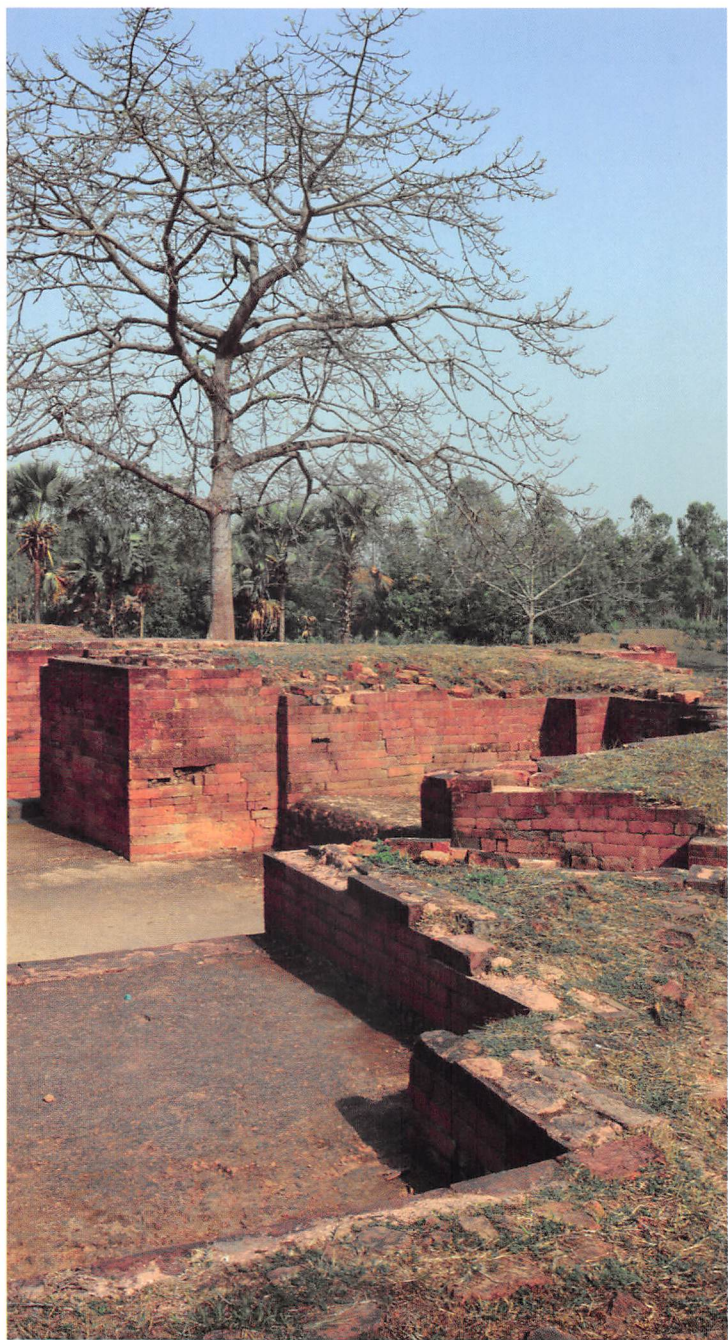
Standing Tall



The low-lying flat lands of Bangladesh are crisscrossed by numerous rivers and channels. The alluvial soils carried by the river work wonderfully for agriculture as well as for the purpose of making bricks and tiles.

Photo: Syed Zakir Hossain





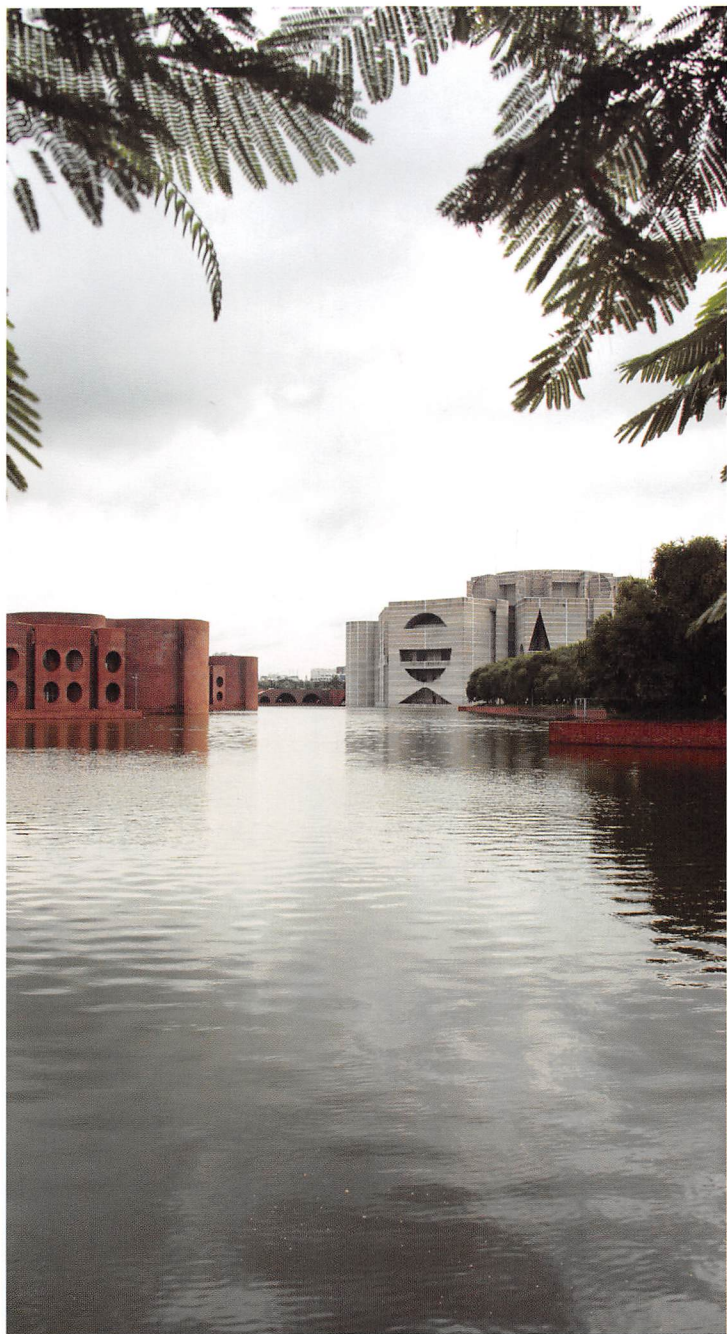
Buddhist ruins, Jagaddal Vihara, Naogaon. Photo. Maung Maung Gyi



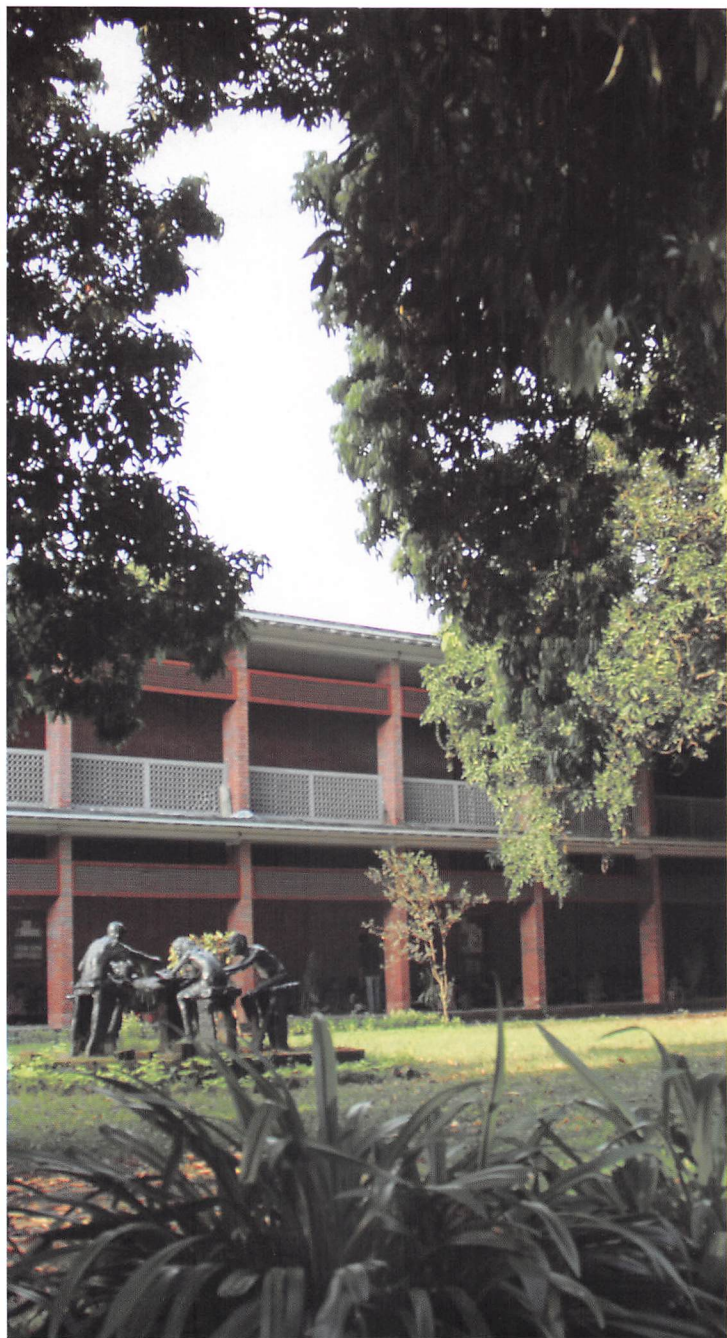
Mausoleum of Pari Bibi, Lalbagh fort, Dhaka. Photo. Kamrul Hasan Mithon



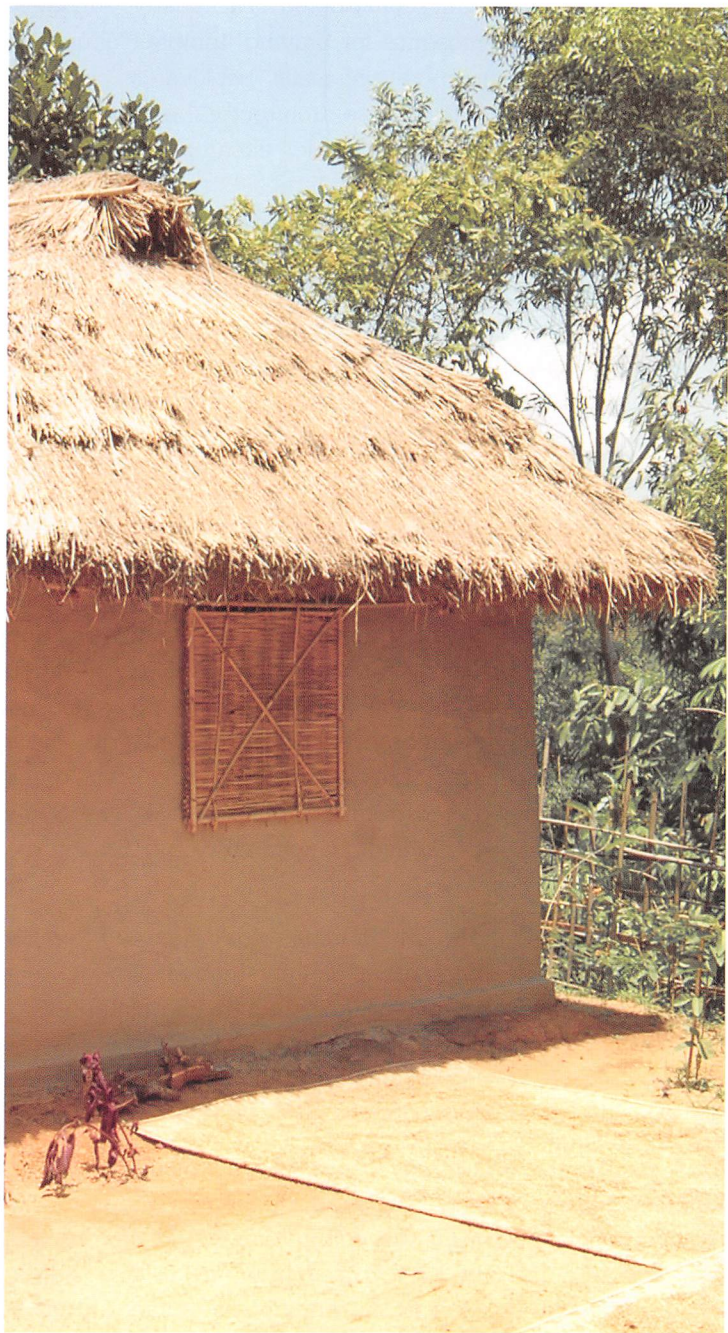
Mughal influenced British architecture; Curzon Hall, University of Dhaka. Photo: Kamrul Hasan Mithon



Artificial lake surrounding Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, Dhaka. Photo. Kamrul Hasan Mithon



Fine Arts Institute, University of Dhaka. Photo. Kamrul Hasan Mithon



A typical village hut of Bangladesh. Photo. Syed Zakir Hossain

Architectural structures are constructed for a myriad of purposes: for dwelling houses; mosques for praying, temples, churches; monuments for commemoration; malls, boulevards, parks for moving around. Behind all these architectural endeavours lie human desire to mark a territory which ensures the best use of space and resources. In building all these structures, humans seek ideas, aspirations, permission, recognition and credits from the community, society or environment. The hot, humid delta of Bengal is endowed with thousands of such structures, which are perfectly in harmony with nature and stand the taste of time. All these structures from the past to the present have hundreds of stories about the heritage, culture and lifestyle of all the people who dwelled or still dwelling or are still dwelling in them.

The climate is marked by heavy rainfall during four months of monsoon from June to September, with cold weather for four months from November to February and hot humid conditions in between. Since ancient times, the predominant building materials have been clay, timber, bamboo and grass, which grow in abundance on this soil. On the one hand, if we look at the rural structures, we find they were constructed with easily available cheap local materials that were subjected to quick deterioration and required frequent maintenance. The forms were comparatively simple and changed very little through the centuries.

Building activities in the urban areas were different in quality from the rural ones. In the urban context, many buildings were built with permanent materials, and the building material was predominantly brick. Buildings made for religious purpose were considered to be the most important buildings for society and were mostly constructed in brick.

This part of the world was conquered by men of different religious faith and caste. To establish their authorities, the conquerors imported their own culture to this land; architecture is a case in point. The legacy of architecture in this country is quite diverse. Looking at the ruins of the ancient cities of Bengal, we can easily understand this fact.



Column with terracotta engravings. Photo Gayatrien Arun

Mahasthangarh in Bogra is remnant of the earliest civilization in Bengal. It was the capital of Mauryan city of Pundranagar, which dates back to 3rd century BC. The citadel is rectangular in plan, with high and wide ramparts in all of its wings. The civilisation grew due to its proximity to the river Karatoya, which has now shrunk to a narrow stream, was once a mighty river flowing by its eastern side.

The Pala empire, on the other hand, was a Buddhist dynasty in control of Bangladesh from the 8th until the 12th. The Palas created a distinctive form of Buddhist art known as the "Pala School of Sculptural Art." The gigantic structures of Vikramshila Vihar, Odantpuri Vihar, and Jagaddal Vihar were master pieces of the Palas.

Relics of many temples could be found throughout the country from yester years. These temples, originated mainly in India, transformed into unique architectural establishments being imbued with local designs and materials. Based on roof-forms, they can be grouped into three basic types: a) Sikhara, b) Chala, and c) Ratna.

The oldest surviving temple is a Sikhara-form in Barakar in Burdwan district (West-Bengal, India) of the 8th century AD. A later example is the Kodla Math near Bagerhat.

The Chala-form, clearly derived from the rural huts of Bengal, has been more popular temple form, as is evident from the illustrations in ancient manuscripts and plaques and existing structure. There are variations of this form; for example, Dhakeswari Temple in Dhaka (early 17th century AD) and Jor-Bangla in Pabna. It is interesting to note that during the 16th and the 17th centuries, this roof form was used quite indiscriminately in Hindu temples as well as in Muslim mosques.

The Ratna-type is an elaboration of the previous types. The form consists of a central spire surrounded by minor pinnacles. The most impressive example of this type is Kantaji Mandir of Dinajpur (1692–1723 AD).

Later, all these modified forms and styles were seen in the temples of Puthia Rajbari (17th to 19th centuries). Chota Annik (18th century), Bara Annik (18th century), Shiva temple (19th century), Govinda temple (19th century) and Dolmancha (19th century) had been built in terracotta in a variety of styles combining the typical Jor-bangla architecture with other influences.

The advent of Muslim rule at the beginning of the 13th century marked a sharp break with the past. Predominant architectural establishments of this time, of course, were mosques, tombs and serais – for which the basic form, a large domed chamber with corner minarets, was imported. Nevertheless, local characteristics were added to this form: the curved cornice taken from the bent bamboo eaves of the village hut and terracotta decoration indigenous to a land without stone. Many decorative motifs were borrowed from the previous Hindu tradition, also as certain larger features – the stumpy, many-faceted pillars, or the Hindu image niche adapted for the mihrab. But structurally there was a significant shift from the old Hindu corbelling system to the Middle Eastern vaults, domes and keystone arches. With the subordination of Bengal to Mughal authority from the beginning of the 17th century, Muslim architecture



Supreme Court Building. Photo: Syed Zaki Hossain

imported the imperial Delhi style, abandoning terracotta and curved cornice. The indigenous tradition, however, was carried on by the temples.

Architecturally, the important aspect of the Sultanate period is the synthesis of regional forms, techniques and traditions with ideas and concepts brought from foreign lands. Although new building types, such as mosque and mausoleum, were introduced, they eventually found expression through regional forms and features. Some of these features, drawn from the same roots, were used interchangeably in mosques and temples. Defining features of this period was manifest in architectural form, structural system, richness of surface decoration, use of traditional brick and terracotta, occasional stone carving and glazed tiles work, use of curvilinear cornice and the Bengali roof. Traces of these features can be found in the structures in Gaur and Pandua, Sat Gambuz mosque in Bagerhat (1459 AD), Sura Mosque in Dinajpur (1493 AD), Chota Sona Mosque in Gaur (1493 AD), Bagha Masjid in Rajshahi (1523 AD) and Atiya Masjid in Tangail (1609 AD).

In 1576, most regions of Bengal came under the control of the Mughal Empire. At the time, Dhaka emerged as a Mughal military base. The development of townships and housing had resulted in a significant growth in population.

Subahdar Islam Khan proclaimed the town as the capital of Bengal Subah in 1608. Many mosques, forts and universities were built during this time. Bara Katra was built between 1644 and 1646 CE as the official residence of Mughal prince Shah Shuja, the second son of Emperor Shah Jahan.

Mughal architecture in present-day Bangladesh reached its peak during the reign of Subahdar Shaista Khan, who initiated massive urban and economic expansion through the construction of modern townships and public works in Dhaka. As a patron of arts, he commissioned construction of many majestic monuments across the province, including mosques, mausoleums and palaces, which represented the finesse of Persian and Mughal architectures. Khan greatly expanded Lalbagh Fort (also Fort Aurangabad), Chowk Bazaar Mosque, Saat Masjid and Choto Katra. He also supervised the construction of the mausoleum for his daughter Bibi Pari.

The English conquered Bengal in 1757 and later on the entire subcontinent. Like other rulers, they also wanted to impose their own style of architecture. The imported style had to be changed due to local climate. Local architectural elements, such as, overhanging eaves, wooden lattice and the verandas were incorporated in the British buildings to form hybrid style.

Some of the local elites were completely overwhelmed by the European economy and culture as they accepted the British architectural style in its entirety. The palace complex of the Nawab of Murshidabad (1820s), the Murshidabad Imambara, Ahsan Manjil in Dhaka are examples of the many residences of the Zamindars and elites of entire Bengal. Thus, both Englishmen of India and the local elites contributed to the making of a mixed style – a pastiche of diverse and discordant elements. This trend is still visible among the present day aristocratic class.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a new hybrid Mughal and European style emerged, particularly under the influence of Lord Curzon. Notable buildings of this hybrid style are Northbrooke Hall, Curzon Hall (the Town Hall), Fazlul Huq Hall, Shahidullah Hall, Dhaka Medical College (the Secretariat) and Salimullah Hall.



Lalbag Fort. Photo: Kanirui Hasan Mithon

After the emergence of Pakistan in 1947, two British architects, Edward Hicks and Ronald McConnel, were hired by the Department of Communication, Buildings and Irrigation, Government of East Pakistan. To help in the design of public buildings, they initially designed some public buildings such as Hotel Shahbag (presently BSMMU), New Market, Azimpur Housing Estate, Rajarbagh Police Barrack, Holy Family Hospital, Viqarunnisa Noon Girls' School and the nine-storied Secretariat Building.

At the same time, many foreign architects also came to Dhaka to design new buildings and complexes. Among them, Robert Bouigny and Dainel Dunham designed the Kamlapur Railway Station in 1961-63 which is an innovative architectural expression. Spiro, the Italian architect, prepared the Master Plan of Rajshahi University (1961-63). The chief architect, Daniel C. Dunham designed the dormitories and the hospital of the same institution; he also prepared the master plan of Agriculture University (1962-65) and its residential buildings. Comilla BARD, College of Home Economics, IER and TSC of the University of Dhaka were designed by Constantine Doxiades. In 1966, Paul Rudolph was commissioned to prepare the master plan and the design of some buildings of the Agriculture University in Mymensing. He designed the academic blocks, staff quarters

and the students' residential hostels, while Richard Neutra designed the library building.

Muzharul Islam, the leading figure of Bangladeshi architecture started his professional venture 1953. A renowned architect, Kazi K. Ashraf rightly describes Islam's work in these words: "sprawling, low building volumes, the use of exposed fired-brick which always has such a magical resonance with the 'green of Bengal', the natural garden setting on an urban site, all went to the atmosphere of a campus that was ideal for the contemplation and learning of the arts, and, more importantly, indicated a spatial environment evoking the architectural poetics of the land."

Muzharul Islam is also responsible for involving the American trio Kahn, Rudolph and Tigerman, as he felt that the vacuous contemporary situation was ideal for visual and provocative paradigms in sync with Bengal's landscape. The iconic Government Office Complex of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar and the National Parliament building have become examples of finest architectural works not only in the country but also in the world.

The legacy continued after the independence of 1971. The architects of Bangladesh are getting recognition around the world; they are creating designs that espouse modernity, eco-friendliness and a fusion of east and west. The architecture department of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) has played a pioneering role in popularizing the new Bangladeshi architecture. Faculty members such as Samsul Wares played a pivotal role in mentoring and guiding the students. Bashirul Haque, Mubasshar Hussain, Saiful Haque, Kazi Khaleed Ashraf, Jalal Ahmed, Raziul Ahsan, Saif ul Haque, Tanya Karim, Nahas Ahmed Khalil, Uttam Kumar Saha, Rafiq Azam, Kashef Chowdhury and Marina Tabassum are renowned architects of the country.

Nevertheless, present-day Dhaka or other cities of the country are true embodiments of concrete jungles. The modernization of architecture, the mindset of the dwellers and users of the country are responsible for a chaotic urbanization in which the city is busy to make room for everyone who can or are willing to pay for it. As highways, flyovers and roads are burgeoning on

the canvas of rapid urbanization, so are the high-rise residential complexes. The skyline of Dhaka is changing at a pace faster than ever. Availability of building materials and clients' demand to emulate architectural excellences from abroad have instigated architects to go the extra mile. The city's building structures are mired with mediocrity with some praise-worthy exceptions that pay proper attention to environment. Reduce, reuse and recycle, is the mantra that many architects are trying to implement in their works. From the straw-made huts to the sky-kissing penthouses, from terracotta-adorned temples to tiles-fitted mosques; from beautifully designed courtyards of kings to multi-storeyed high-rises – the journey of Bangladesh's architectural endeavours tells a riveting tale that can fascinate any ardent listener.



For Hungry Travelers

Once in Bangladesh, every traveler should challenge the foodie in them by trying local delicacies – be it home cooked courses or quickly served street foods. It is sure to take their tastebuds on a roller coaster ride, thanks to spices enriched with magnificent aroma and flavor we use in our cuisine. With teary eyes and watering mouths, they are sure to fall for any platter full of pleasant surprises. Rice, herbs, vegetables and varieties of fish – all these will take you on a wonderful gastronomical journey. With mouth-watering desserts, like every full course food experience in Bangladesh are an affair to remember.

Photo: Gayatri Arun







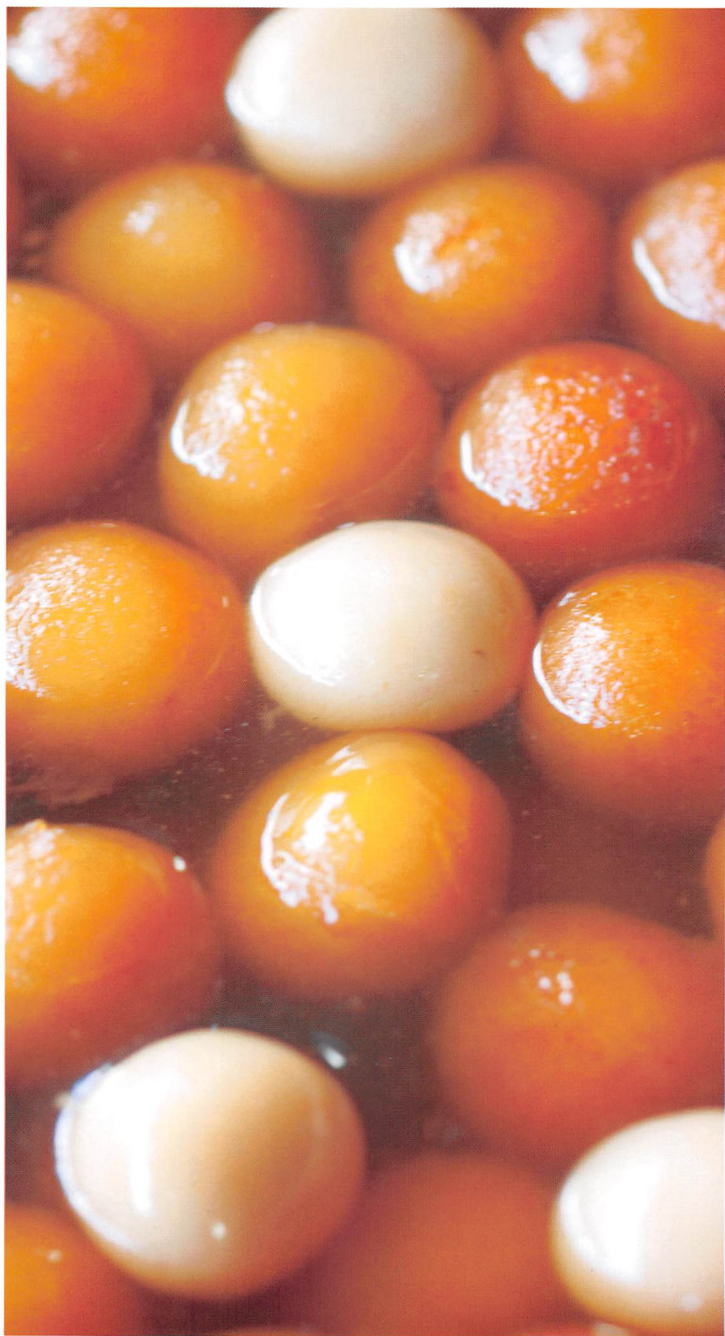


Abundance of vegetables. Photo. Gayatree Arun



Bengali platter. Photo. Tunil Nesar





Sweetest part of Bengal. Photo. Gayatree Arun



Pitha, Bengal's dessert. Photo: Kamrul Hasan Mithon

For hundreds of years, food for the people of the greater region called Bengal has worked as a means of finding solace. 'Reaching someone's heart through his stomach'-- the popular adage is absolutely true for these people, who love to entertain their guests with the best to offer, even if it means leaving nothing behind for themselves. The womenfolk, who engage themselves in cooking as many courses as possible depending on the financial condition, put their heart in it. The cooking processes are time consuming and to some extent may seem complicated to outsiders who are habituated to packed or canned pre-processed food. Making pastes of onion, garlic or ginger on a traditional grinding stone called 'Shil-nora', each one separately or sometimes even together (a tradition found in Faridpur region, the paste is called furanibata) is a tedious job but adds so much of distinct flavours in cooking. Nonetheless, what's much more amusing is the aroma that spreads from the kitchen is sure to make your mouth water. In *Charyapada*, the ancient book of Buddhist mystic songs, there are mentions of the staggering arrangements for cooking special dishes on special days; there are even rhymes, which used to be memorized by the cook to keep track of time while something was boiling or cooking. For those ancient people too, food was something that should give one's taste buds a joyous roller coaster ride. In fine, all the love, attention and probably the Midas touch of the experienced hands of the womenfolk enable the foods attain gold standard.

The deltaic region of Bangladesh is enriched with alluvial soil, and henceforth, rice, which is grown in abundance, is the staple food. Nearly 130 varieties of rice are grown here. Approximately every breed of rice has a unique use of its own. One breed of rice is used to make lavish *Biriyani* while another breed is puffed to make *Muri*. However, the most popular rice among Bangladeshis is the plain white rice or *Sada Bhaat* as we like to call it. A plate of freshly boiled steamy-hot rice along with



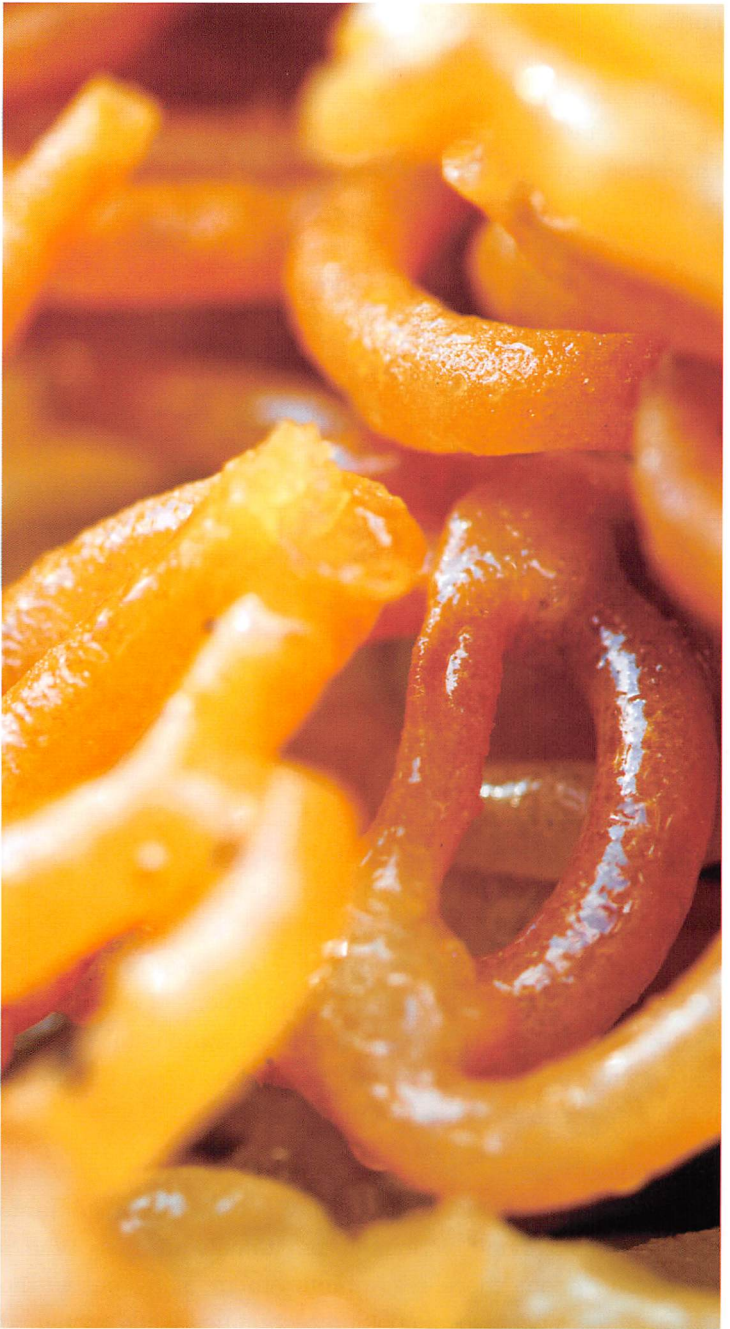
Sorshe Ilish (Hilsha with mustard). Photo: Claytree Arun

spicy and sumptuous supplementary dishes is one kind of a necessity for any Bangladeshi during lunch and dinner. The lethargic feeling that grows as the aftermath of a day of work tiresome is washed away when one returns home to find the sweltering steam of rice mingling with the aroma coming from a bowl containing chilly fish curry made out of seasonal spices. To glorify moments such as this, the term 'Maachhe-Bhaate Bangali' was coined. However, only fish and rice cannot define the food habit of Bangladeshis. Food here is not about heavily seasoned greasy curries either. It is not about a vast array of sugar loaded dairy-based desserts or allegedly overcooked vegetables. These perceptions about Bangladeshi cuisines that seem to prevail among the transient travellers are mostly based on their experiences in busy local eateries, where the true taste and essence of this deltaic cuisine is significantly compromised to accommodate higher profit margins. In addition, mainly established to cater for fleeting businessmen and office executives on the go, many restaurants usually do a terrible job of combining all the recipes from across the country under their roofs. Dining out was never the part of middle class Bangladeshi culture until very recently, which too is mostly for them to experience non-Bangladeshi cuisines for a change. Therefore, till today the best samples of Bangladeshi culinary delights are served in Bangladeshi homes, and are shared together by all members of the family.

In the villages, breakfast on a regular day would be either *Panta Bhaat* (rice soaked in water overnight) served with green pepper, onion etc. or *Folar* (a combination of flat rice, jaggery, sweet curd, fruits and other form of dairy sweets). On special occasions, a vast variety of rice cakes (*pitha*) is served which can be both sweet and savoury. *Luchi* (finely rolled deep fried fluffy bread) with *Shuji'r Halwa* (Semolina Kesari) are widely popular in both rural and urban areas. The dairy shops would also have piping hot *Shingara* (deep fried pastry wraps stuffed with vegetables and nuts). In the cities, *Panta Bhaat* is replaced by wheat roti which is enjoyed with daal, stir fried vegetables (*Bhaaji*), eggs or curries. *Paratha*, *Bhaji* and Egg are also a classic combo in restaurants across the country. On the heavier side of the breakfast, there is Ox Brain Bhuna, Ox Liver Bhuna, Lotpoti (spicy curry of chicken liver, heart, gizzards, head and neck), and Chicken Soup (local chicken pieces cooked with yogurt, milk and green chili).

Each region in Bangladesh has their unique ways of honouring their fresh local produce as the abundance of each ingredient varies largely with respect to season and geography. Food preparation does not only vary across regions; they also vary in the same region depending on occasions, festivals or the time of the day. Nevertheless, the unique feature of Bangladeshi cuisine lies in the custom in which the food is enjoyed; which once mastered, can unearth all the hidden flavours of the fresh ingredients for the lucky diner. The rules might not be as ceremonial as that of Japanese Way of Tea, but the art of using fingers to mix rice with vegetables, protein dishes and broths is no simpler than that of using chopsticks. Apart from mastering the art of using fingers to enjoy meals, a seasoned Bangladeshi diner would also know from where to start and where to end just by looking at the dishes displayed before him.

Traditionally, the meal starts either with deep fried small fish like *Chapila*, *Puti* etc., pan-fried pointed gourd, bitter gourd, teasel gourd, okra, pumpkin etc., leafy vegetables like spinach, radish leaves, bottle gourd vines, red amaranth or from one of the



Jilipi, the perfect dessert. Photo. Collected

hundred varieties of *Bhorta* (seasoned and mashed vegetables, seeds, or fish). Once blended with rice using fingers, each of the combination teases your taste buds making up for a great appetizer/starter. Now on a dinner table in a Bangladeshi household, expect to have more than one main course, which is either a fish or a meat curry. The main courses are usually followed by a finishing course like *daal* made from a variety of pulses or a *Khatai/Ombol/Chatni* (an acidic variety of broth made with a combination of tangy fruits) to neutralize the heat from the flavor some courses.

No write up on Bengali food is complete without a mention of craving of Bangladeshi people for sweets. Dessert, which is a must after all meals on special occasions are always dairy based. Popularly known as *mishti*, sweetmeats of Bengal are better than anywhere else in the world. What sets them apart is the process of making them; unlike many other places, we make sweetmeats with *Chhana*, the unripened curd cheese from cow's milk. The moist and crumbly form of cheese is a special ingredients that is still used to make the famous *Roshogolla*, a bite of which will flood your tongue with sugary syrup that in the beginning may seem a bit too much for your taste; but soon you will be surprised that you will automatically take the second, third and fourth bite to finish it all. Different cities of the country have signature sweetmeats of their own and all of them are immensely loved by all. Chomchom, Kachagolla, Laddu, Shondesh, Balish Mishty, Komolabhog, Lencha are some of the very unique sweetmeats from different regions of Bangladesh. Taking sweetmeats is a gesture of showing felicitation here; festivals and celebrations are never complete without them, be it a village or the most modern urban set up.

As Bangladeshis are always welcoming to anything new and worthy, the whole Dhaka city is now dotted with restaurants and eateries serving various international cuisines. What's interesting about these restaurants are in many cases, the restaurants blend in local cooking techniques while preparing a Thai or Lebanese or Mexican dish and the final product

is interesting enough to provoke thoughts in the mind of gourmands. The emerging culture of fast food, fusion food and cuisine-based food is opening new windows for both the locals and travellers to enjoy a completely new range of items both savoury and intriguing and worth the try.

Happy Go Lucky



The riot of colors and deafening noise at any festival of Bangladesh are sure to shock those who have never been exposed to such ways of celebrations. Both seasonal and religious festivals come with colorful clothes, plenty of delicious foods and singing songs or blowing vuvuzela while walking in a long procession. Once in the stream, you are sure to forget all the drudgery of daily life. The fanfare will surely uplift your mood, and the contagious spirit of celebration will make you feel like one of the native Bangladeshis. Even simple surprises will fill your heart with plenty of joys.

Photo. K M Asad



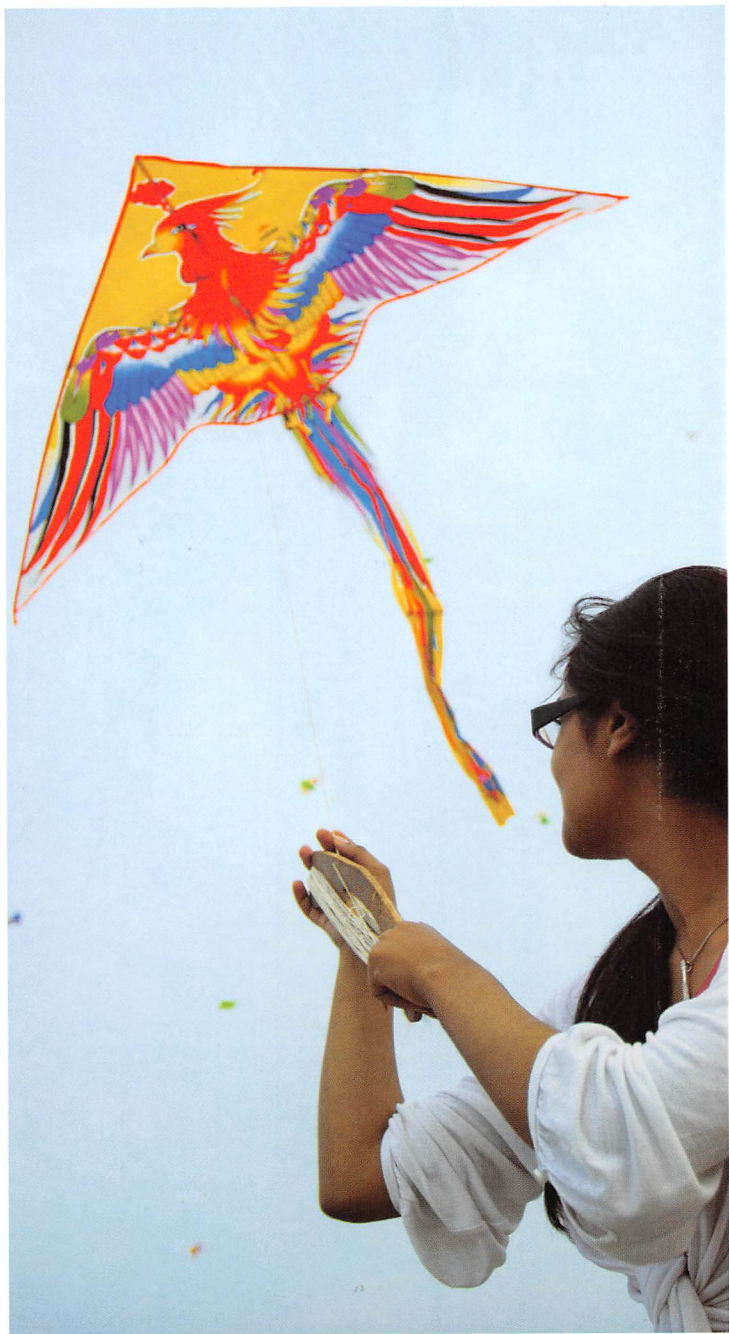


Bengali New Year, our own festival. Photo. K.M Asad





Tribal dance from the hill tracts. Photo. Suman Paul



Kite Fest, Cox's Bazar. Photo. K M Asad



Bizu, the festival of year ending. Photo: Jashim Salam

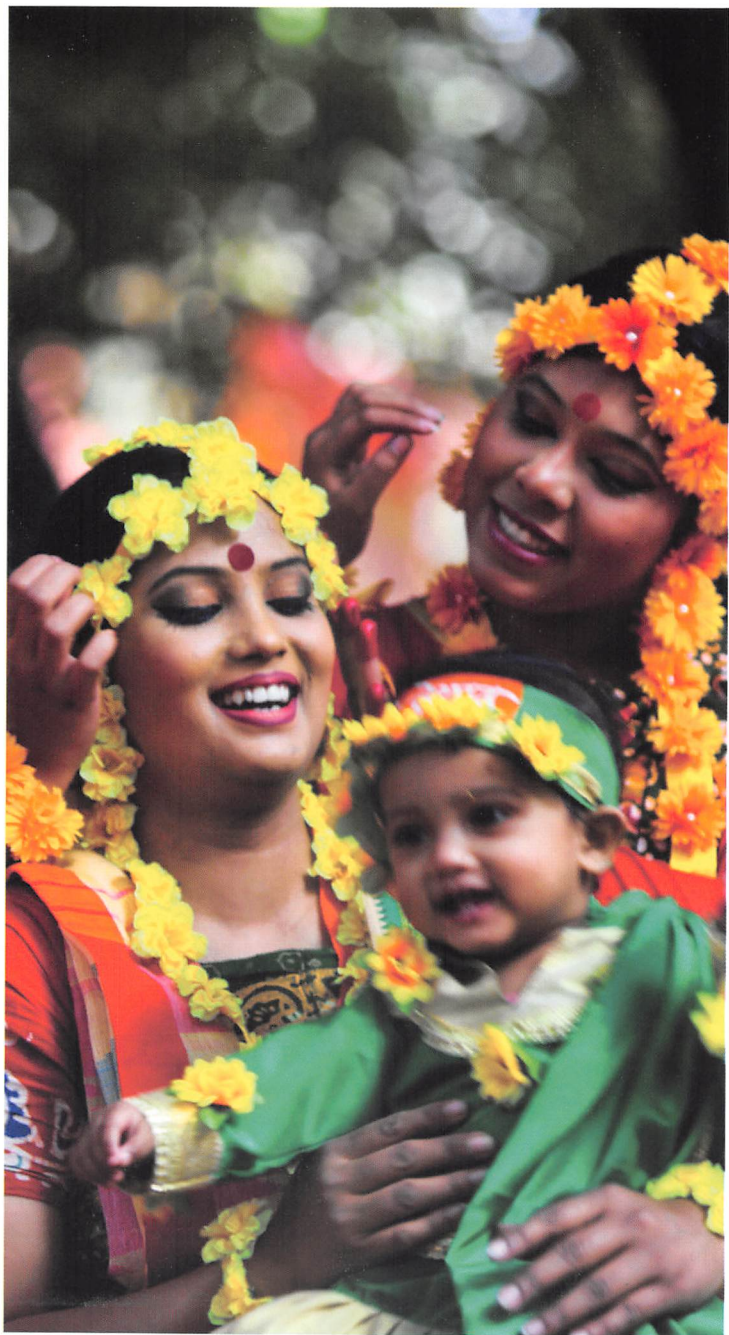




Magic lanterns to wish peace. Photo. Shingkhana Marna



Eid prayers, Dhaka. Photo K M Asad



Bashanta Utshab, welcoming Spring, Dhaka. Photo: Ridwan Adid Rupon



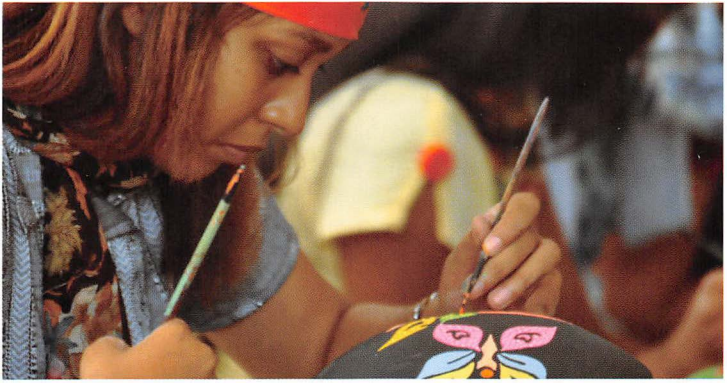
A roller coaster of local fair. Photo. Arman Hossain Bappy

Bangladesh is a land blessed with spectacular gift of nature. Beauty and diversity of nature are abundant here. Evidently people of this land are as lively and joyous as nature itself. They enjoy every moment of their lives; festivals in this part of the world are not only an integral part but also a core feature of their lives. They say, there are 13 festive seasons in 12 months, which means they have more festivals than the number of days. The statement is a proof of the omnipresent nature of festivals in the daily life of Bangladeshi people.

Agrarian functions are predominant in this land. Most of the rituals as well as the festivals are related to agriculture of which some follow the lunar calendar. Here in Bangladesh, we have such colourful festivals that never fail to entertain us. Some of the traditions and customs date back to prehistoric days, while others are relatively recent. All these depend on occasions like harvesting or sowing seeds. The extent and nature of festivity change according to the social and economic structures. Some of these festivals however become eternal because of their universal nature. They have become the symbol of a particular community, and on occasions of the whole nation. Quite a few of them have religious roots; nonetheless imbued with the core philosophy of the land, they have become universal and secular.

Based on seasonal timing, there are three brief festivals celebrated all around the country: *Nabanno* (the festival of the new harvest), *Basanta Baran* (spring festival), and *Pohela Boishakh* (the Bengali New Year).

Pohela Boishakh is the biggest among all festivals in Bangladesh. The day is marked by masked parades, musical soiree, dance performances, and street fair. Celebration begins with the very first rays of the sun kissing the morning sky. Traditionally, business houses start this day with a new ledger, clearing out the old. This very tradition is called *halkhata* (new account book), where businessmen invite customers to close off all the previous accounts and start with a fresh book for New Year. Village



Preparing for Nabobarsho, Fine Arts Institute. Photo. Collected

fair is common in every village, where people enjoy fairs and festivals. Singers perform traditional songs welcoming the New Year. Vendors sell conventional food and artisans sell traditional handicrafts. Traditional *Jatra* plays are also staged in these fairs. Like other festivals of the region, the day also involves visiting relatives, friends and neighbors. People prepare special dishes for their guests.

Over the years, rural festivities have evolved and become huge events in the cities, especially in the capital city, Dhaka. In Dhaka, the festivals begin with people gathering under the big banyan tree of Ramna Park at Shahbagh area and embracing the new year with the Tagore song “Esho Hey Boishakh”.

People from all spheres of life wear traditional Bengali dresses. Women wear traditional saris with their hair bedecked in flowers. Likewise, men prefer to wear traditional panjabis. The central attraction of the day-long festivities is a vivid procession organized by the students and teachers of the Institute of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka.

Pohela Boishakh celebrations epitomize a day of cultural unity without distinction between class, race and religious affiliations. Of the major holidays celebrated in Bangladesh and West Bengal, only Pohela Boishakh comes without any preexisting expectations. Unlike Eid-ul-Fitr and Durga Puja, where dressing

up in lavish clothes has become a norm, or Christmas where exchanging gifts has become an essential part of the holiday, Pohela Boishakh is about celebrating the essential Bengali roots. Eventually, anyone can take part in the festivities without the load of having to reveal one's class, religion, or finances.

Nabanno (New Crop) is a Bengali harvesting festival usually celebrated with food, dance and music. It is a festival of food; many local preparations of Bengali cuisine are cooked and offered. *Pitha*, which is local cake, is a very important part of this festival; different types of pithas are made with new rice, coconut, milk and molasses. *Pitha* is an icon of rural culture in Bangladesh. *Nabanno* festival is also observed with village fair that portrays the stunning life of Bengal villages.

Poush Sankranti or *Poush Parbon* is another big festival. It is another harvest festival for the ninth month of Bengali calendar *Poush*. The *Poush Sankranti* is also ornamented by a colourful celebration called *Shakrain*. This is a big festivity among the local Hindu people where sons-in-law are invited to their inlaws' houses and entertained with special food and gifts. In town as well as villages, kite festival has become a famous part and parcel of the *Shakrain* festival. It is actually an annual celebration of spring, observed with the flying and fighting of kites. It is widely celebrated in and around Dhaka, specially in the old Dhaka. At night, magic lanterns and fire breathing acts light up the festival.

There are many religious festivals celebrated in Bangladesh, such as, Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid-ul-Azha, Eid-e-Miladunnabi, Muharram (Ashura) for Muslims and Durga Puja, Kali (Shyama) Puja, Saraswati Puja, Janmastami, Holi (Doljatra) for Hindus. Buddha Purnima is the biggest festival for Bengali Buddhists, and Christmas is celebrated by the Christians. People from several ethnic communities also have their respective festivals. But like the lifestyle and philosophy of this land these festivals are enjoyed by all people and take a secular mood despite their religion specific evaluation.



Lights of festival. Photo: Stimul Kibrits

Eid-ul-Fitr marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan, during which Muslims fast from dawn to dusk. It is celebrated on the 1st Shawwal month of Arabic calendar. It is a day of joy, celebrated with new clothes and sweetmeats made at home. The day is expected to eradicate the difference between the poor and the rich. People offer prayers at Eidgahs. Alms are given to the poor and needy people and children receive Eid gifts. Another Eid, called Eid-ul-Adha is locally called 'Kurbanir Eid'. This commemorates the sacrifice Prophet Abraham (locally known as Hazrat Ibrahim) made for the satisfaction of Allah. Eid prayers are followed by the sacrificing of a cow, goat or ram by each capable Muslim family symbolizing Hazrat Ibrahim's offerings and faith in Allah.

Ashura is a sad event, commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (the grandson of the holy Prophet Muhammed), along with his followers at Karbala. It is a ten-day observance of intense mourning by the Shiah sect, a segment of the Muslim community. *Tazias* made of paper and bamboo (symbolizing the tomb at Karbala), a horse, representing Imam Hussain's

horse Duldul, and other symbolic elements are included in the procession. People from every community join this 'Tazia procession' that is brought out on the tenth of Muharram, the first month of Islamic lunar calendar.

Durga Puja (worship of goddess Durga) is part of the Bengali Hindu tradition. Hindus around the world worship several gods, but the worship of Durga has become an integral part of Bengali culture. Durga Puja festival marks the victory of goddess Durga over Mahishashura (buffalo demon), by extension, of good over evil.

Kali Puja, also known as Shyama Puja, is a festival dedicated to the goddess Kali, celebrated on the new moon day of the Bengali month of Kartik.

Saraswati Puja held on the fifth day of Magh (in early February) marking the start of spring and the Holi season. On this day Hindus worship Saraswati Devi, the goddess of knowledge, music, art and culture. For students and knowledge seekers, this is a special occasion. Autumn is the time to offer special worship to Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, who according to the legends, visits all her devotees and bestows gifts and blessings upon each of them. To welcome the goddess, the devotees clean their houses, decorate them with finery and lights and prepare sweet treats and delicacies and offer them to the "mother of wealth". The devotees believe that the happier she is with the visit, the more she blesses the family with health and wealth.

Roth Jatra is a part of the month long Roth festival held in the Bengali month of Asharh. 'Roth' is a chariot temple, dedicated to the Hindu God Jagannath located in Dhamrai, Bangladesh. The Roth Jatra in Dhamrai is one of the most important events for the Hindu community of Bangladesh and is participated by thousands of people gathered from all over the country. On 'Janmashtami' (the birthday of God Krishna), a procession starts from the National Temple of Bangladesh (Dhakeshwari Temple) and proceeds through the streets of old Dhaka.

The birth anniversary of Jesus Christ (25th of December) is celebrated by the Christians in Bangladesh. On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, singing of carols (religious songs), exchange of gifts and feasting with good foods are the norms. Churches, homes and hotels are decorated during this festival.

Buddhists of Bangladesh celebrate the anniversary of the birth, enlightenment and 'Nirvana' (death) of Gautama Buddha. Buddha Purnima (April-May) is marked by chanting of verses from dawn to late at night, and ceremonial offerings at Buddhist shrines.

Different ethnic groups of Bangladesh celebrate Sangrai, Baisabi, Biju and other festivals throughout the year. Just like their colourful lifestyles, these festivals are adorned with color and flavor.

Most of the festivals, be they religious or not, are enjoyed by all in the land where nature and people live in great harmony. To feel the vibes of this land, one has to take part in its festivals.



Arty & Hearty

The riverine nature of Bangladesh is reflected in its various crafts, i.e – pottery, furniture, clothing, etc. They represent both the rustic, toiled and fervent passion of its makers – and the spirit of perseverance and ever-smiling essence of every common person. Local arts may have a rather humble and simple start, but in course of time, they have evolved into something very sophisticated. Our crafts depict the vast array of indigenous knowledge that the craftsmen possess– something that can be banked on and envisioned as the next breakthrough export goods.

Photo. Gayatree Arun





Lakshmi Shora



Lakshmi Shora



Lakshmi Shora



Brass-made toy elephant



Lakshmi Shora



Paper mask



Paper mask



Paper-made
pitcher flower



Pat-chitra



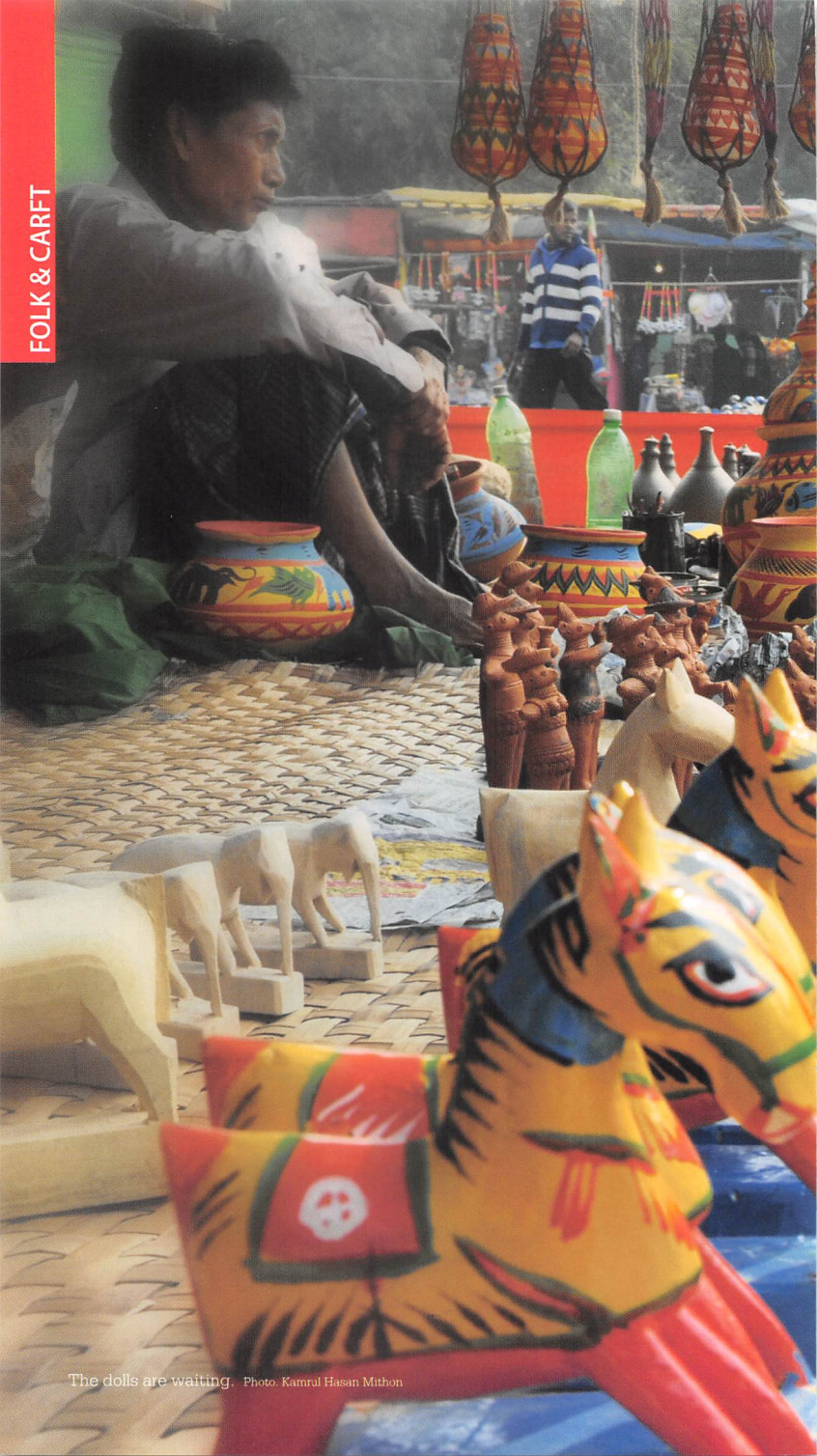
Hand-held fan



Jute-made dolls



Wheeled wooden horse



The dolls are waiting. Photo: Kamrul Hasan Mithon





Clay dolls, a Bengal heritage. Photo. Kamrul Hasan Mithon



Art on wheels, Rickshaw. Photo: Kamrul Hasan Mithon





Folk tradition in Bangladesh is rooted in the past and its wide-ranging variety demonstrates the aesthetic qualities and ingenuity of artisans in antiquity. Since the early times crafts were made as utility objects, for decorative purposes or for religious and ceremonial rituals. Most folk designs were either representations from everyday life or were totems and symbols. Chaityana's religious revival of Vaishnavism encouraged terracotta reliefs and painted book covers that drew upon the traditions of folk scroll paintings. On the other hand, Alivardi Khan's court was famous for promoting trendy metal ware. Every region of Bengal has its own tradition of folk creations. Dhaka was noted for excellent silver and gold filigree works, Dinajpur for its silver jewelry; Kurigram for carved ivory combs and Sylhet for wooden fans.

Reflecting the inherent skill and hereditary traditions, the artists resorted to the production of various objects and artifacts of both aesthetic taste and utilitarian nature. Production was hereditary within occupational caste, each one specializing in the use of different raw materials. Thus, the *Joloha tantis* spun yarn and wove cloth, *kumars* worked with clay; *kamars* with metal; *sutradhars* were skilled on wood work.

The craft works included manuscript paintings related to religious scriptures and the themes, scroll paintings, book cover paintings, wooden decorative seats, paintings on background or halo, painting on winnowing fan, portraits on pitchers, fancy pith, earthen cover paintings, painted masks, decorative family trees, kites, body paintings, house furnishings, alpana etc. These products are mainly made of earthen particles, the wood, bamboo, cane, cloth and handmade paper.

In case of paper-based folk crafts, there are some unique approaches to use these handmade pulps into a fine piece of craft. Puthi, which means hand-written books, for instance, are invariably painted with numerous themes related to religious myths, legends and stories as well as romantic and traditional legends. The manuscripts paintings commenced in Bengal in the eleventh century during the Pala period. *Bodhicharjyabrata*, *Panchabaksha*, *Manasamangal*, etc. are the most elaborated examples of this craft.

Another interesting and popular form of folk art is Pata Chitra or scroll paintings, which still survive in Bangladesh. Jarano Pata or folded clothes richly adorned with pictures painted by cheap and ordinary colours are known as *Patuas*. The word *pata* is derived from *patta*, a Sanskrit word for cloth, cotton coarse type that is gummed so that the vegetables colours struck to the cloth.

Buddhist mendicants used patas to preach their religion. In painted scrolls, the artist outlines a narrative based on the mythological or folk stories like *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Manasha*, *Behula-Lakshindar*, *Krishna-Lila*, *Gazi-Kalu* or some mundane, secular or romantic stories, legends etc. Undoubtedly, the *patas* are semantics of daily life of ordinary people.

These ancient manuscripts were written either on palm leaves or homemade papers, which were bound with threads in such a way as to lift the pages one by one, attached to two wooden painted covers. Many of the palm leaf manuscripts of the Pala age were thus bound by painted wooden covers like *Vishnu Purana*, dated 1499 A.D. which is now an exhibit in the British Museum.

Baskets called *Lakshmi's Jhapi* or basket of Lakshmi, *Phulkari* or patterned motives, *Kushti Chitra* (family tree or genealogical table), *Dasavatara Tas* (cards showing ten incarnations), *Ghuri Chitra* (pictorial kites), *Anga Chitra* (body decoration with sandal paste, mehendi or henna) are exquisite folk objects made from various easily available materials.

Nothing gives more pleasure to children than painted kites that are flown on celebrations like *Chaitra Sankranti*, the last day of the Bengali year. The kites are adorned with different floral, geometrical or figural motifs. Thin paper prints are used to imprint the colorful kites. Kites assume different names, according to the patterns and shapes, such as a patanga or an insect, chokder or eye design, maladar or garland design etc.

The tradition of pottery in the subcontinent can be traced back to the Indus Valley Civilization, that is, five thousand years back. Pottery has been one of the most indispensable objects since the

dawn of civilization. Deep-seated religious beliefs like mother goddess, social values and economic standards are added with the features. Various religious and domestic objects are made from clay. The most popular type of pottery in Bangladesh is the globular, narrow-necked variety with thick circular rim. It is usually a water container, which is often decorated with raised geometrical, floral figure motifs. Generally, painted jars having ornate designs are used in various festivities. Besides, pitchers, different types of utilitarian clay objects, such as, bowls, jars, cooking-pots, vessels, plates, dishes, jugs, lamps, incense-burners, flower vase etc. are to be found in this region.

Age-old customs of terracotta plaques and brick carvings in Bangladesh are found at Mahasthan, Paharpur and Mainamati as well as in the medieval mosques prior to the advent of the Mughals. The abundance of alluvial soil in the deltaic region of Bangladesh led to the finest flair for artistic designs and decorative ingenuity. Artists executed their works with utmost delicacy and finesse. Besides mother goddess figurines and household utensils, the terracotta ornamentation of the decidedly Muslim character is based on floral, geometrical and a non-figural motifs as found in the mosque of Bagha. In the later 18th and 19th centuries, temples of Bengals, such as those of Vishnupur in Bankura and Kantanagar in Dinajpur, a panoramic vista of paneled terracotta plaques depict the stories of *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Krishna-Lila* etc.

Making of dolls with divergent materials has been a very industrious and painstaking vocation since the beginning of civilization, as attested by the findings of Mohenjodaro and Harappa. Besides using clay, dolls have been made of cloth, straw, metal, wood, pith, bamboo, cane, bone, ivory, stone etc. Some of the most attractive dolls for the children are birds, beasts, brides, women with pitchers on their head or at the waist, mother fondling her baby, horses etc. done in Terracotta. Some strange types of dolls are found in parts of Mymensing, Sonargaon and elsewhere in which highly chiseled nude or clothed female figures are presented by adept potters with primitive notions like stumps as hands, beak-like nose, hole-like eyes, incised decorations, appliqué type of ornamentation.

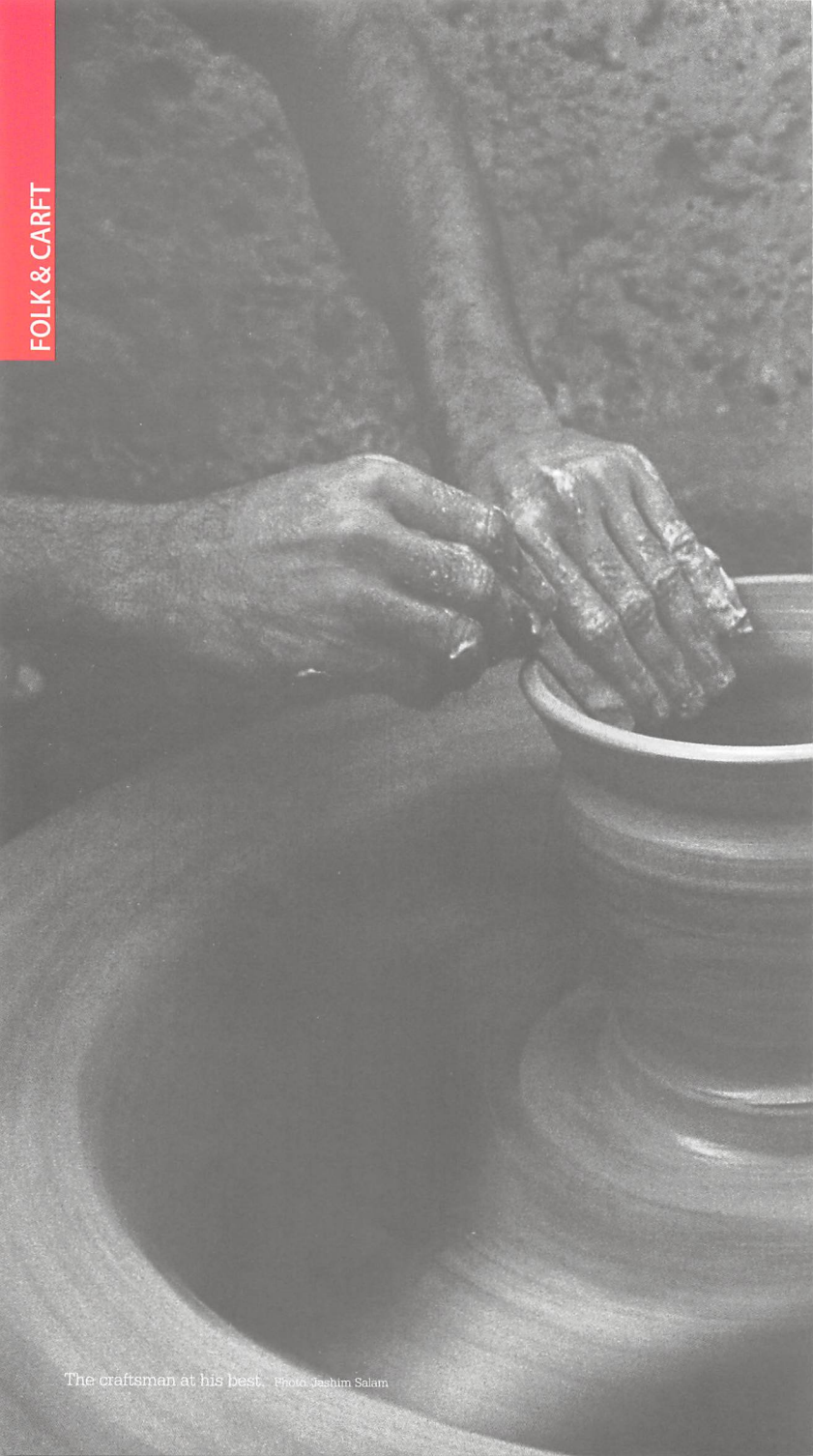
Besides Terracotta dolls, the most popular dolls found in Sonargaon area are made of wood, such as wheeled horse and elephant.

Potters are quite skilled in making a special type of earthen pots or pitchers adorned with images of goddesses, particularly *Lakshmi* or folk goddesses. These ritual pots are revered by the Hindu community as they are kept and preserved in the household, and sometime worship as a substitute for an image. Such human-shaped pots are of particular interest to womenfolk and quite popular in the rural areas. The most remarkable pots of this nature are known as *Mangal Ghat*, *Nag Ghat*, *Manasa Ghat*, *Shitla Ghat*, *Lakshmi Ghat*. Such ritual pots are made with female figures mounted on the top with expressive eyes, eyebrows, curvy lips, *tilak* (caste mark), hair ornamented in the face and stylized hands.

Pots fulfill divergent utility functions mainly for storage purposes such as jars, bowls, pitchers as well as utensils like saucers and bowls. In the colorful fairs that take place in the different parts of Bangladesh, large quantity of earthenwares attract the common people. One of the most fascinating earthen pots is known as *Sakher Hari* or fancy pots in which delicious sweetmeats are taken to the houses of relatives. It is shaped like an ordinary cooking pot with elongated top, tastefully embellished with typical motifs.

Saras are generally known as painted earthen pot-covers. They are always round in shape, shallow on the inner side and convex on the other. Meant to cover earthen vessels, these utensils display the skills of the folk painters in swift brush strokes with cheap colour or lacquer. Sometimes the surface is divided into several panels or the entire circular space is used up by the painters for depicting popular ritual motifs, such as Lakshmi-sara. Of all the ritual pot-covers the Lakshmi-sara reigns supreme due to its religious attachment and decorative scheme. These *saras* are not just fancy household objects for the drawing room, but are used at times of different pujas.

The most popular form of entertainment in rural area is *Jatra-Palagan* or folk drama. Continuous dance and music throughout





the night by a specialized group of village bards, actors and actresses are performed. They perform mostly folk and romantic dramas in which they use masks with music and dance. Sometimes, they wear such masks with deep religious ethos as to impress upon the audience a sense of goodness and moral codes. This is most common among Hindus, as their religious festivals are integrally connected with such outdoor performing arts. In the Hindu community, Kali dance, Shiva dance, Pala and Jatra are the most attractive and religiously motivated forms of performing arts, in which the actors wear typical and colorful masks, showing figural models of deities and demons. Indigenous people have masks with symbolic significance as they are considered totems. The most highly acclaimed type of mask dance is *Chau-nritta* or Chau-dance, which originated in the Purulia village of Birbhum district of West Bengal. The masks are made of a combination of clay, cloth, wood or gourd. The most common colours used in such masks are black, red, blue and yellow. The making of a mask is quite simple, done by the skilful artist with the help of a mould.

Alpana is a kind of floor ornamentation, done with pounded rice on joyful events. It is integrally connected with Hindu rituals as a typical form of drawings, painted on the floor with a paste of ground rice flour. In folk culture and in folk traditions, alpana assumes a distinctive place, used on the verandah, courtyard and house floors on social ceremonies like marriage, birth of a child, changing of seasons, worship-rituals. Alpana is traced back to the medieval period, much before the advent of Sri Chaitanya; and it is integrally connected with folk motifs and mystical religious beliefs and superstitions. as many as 121 kinds of alpana are found, all of which are more or less abstract form of folk art.

In alpana design, the central motif is the sought-after item placed at the centre of any decorative diagram, done by the womenfolk. This central motif may be sun, moon, mother-goddess, fish, betel leaf, mirror, comb, goose, earth, doll, vermilion, throne, etc.

One of the most beautiful and indigenous handmade products is the *Nakshi Kantha* or Embroidered Quilts. The term *kantha* a Sanskrit word is symbolic object of the folk art and culture, exhibiting social and religious values, executed with utmost artistry and skilled by illiterate womenfolk, living in villages, having no knowledge of the outside world. No crafts is more dear to women's heart than the *Nakshi Kantha*, which is generally made of old, worn out and discarded pieces of cloth, painstakingly stitched together in threads of different hues. While *Kanthas* produce by the Hindu womenfolk demonstrate figural motifs, the Muslim women resort to abstract floral and geometrical designs.

Judging from their divergent utilities, *Kanthas* have been divided into a number of items, namely, *lep*, meaning cotton-padded quilt; *sujni* or coverlets, children *kanthas*; *chaddar* or bedspread; *asan* or spreads for the bride and bridegroom; *dastarkhan* or rectangular spread or mat used at dinner time; etc. *Kanthas* of Jessore, Rajshahi, Faridpur, Kushtia, Mymensingh and Rangpur are of great excellence.

Nakshi Pankha, commonly used by the village folk as hand fan, it is a product that reflects the aesthetic sensibility of the womenfolk as various floral, geometrical and figural motifs are sewn through. Embroidered hand fans are made of various materials, such as cloth, bamboo, palm leaf, straw and mat, leather, ribbon, thread, cane. Various names have been attributed to such fans, having multifarious motifs, such as 'love', 'forget me not' in Bangla, 'Tara phul' or star motif, Sankhalata of conch shell patterns, elephant, flower and bird motifs. One of the most decorative pieces with symbolic motifs is the fan with a tree of life in middle surrounded by parrots and elephants, bordered by colour fringes.

Nakshi cakes prepared with various indigenous ingredients with beautifully designed moulds are considered as unailing village delicacies. These moulds are made of baked clay, wood, stone and metal. The predominant motifs are fish, fruit, leaf, birds and beasts, and sometimes Hindu deities. Both Hindus and Muslims are quite fond of designed cakes, for example,

during the Muharram and Lakshmi Puja sweets of different shapes of mosques and temples are prepared. Sometimes various dedicatory words with moral values are stamped on cakes.

One of the most interesting vocations of womenfolk is to make woven hanging pouches of different shapes and designs. Threads of fine jute fibers are twisted, interwoven into various patterns to make jute items for utilitarian purposes. These are called according to their shapes, such as, *Machh kata* (fish cutter), *Koutar Khopi* (pigeon holes), *Jali Bari* (perforated pincher), *Jilapi* (a kind of sweetmeat), *Elo Keshi* (flowing hair) etc. Sometimes intricate geometrical patterns and figures of Radha and Krishna are also woven in such jute goods. These decorative household pouches are used for keeping foodstuff or earthen jars, or storing quilts and the other domestic objects of daily use.

The baskets woven by village people in a variety of ways are made of split bamboos, cane, straw, reed and palm. They are often painted with gaudy colours. Bamboo being an indispensable material for housing in rural areas, the village artisans resort to *do-chala* and *char-chala* huts, as attested even by Abul Fazl, the vizier of great Mughal Emperor Akbar. Besides, bamboo is used for making exquisitely designed bowls, winnowing fan, measuring pot, strainer-fishing traps, musical instruments like flute, stool, top cover of boat and go-cart, headgear of farmers etc. Similarly, cane is used for making a large variety of furniture, domestic utensils, toys and other playthings. Nevertheless, pith has a special significance for the Hindu community as it is used to make a crown for the bride, necklace, and other objects of some religious bias. Those who make different objects of pith are called Malakar or ornament maker, and they are adept in doing so for generations. Even ordinary dolls and puppets are made of pith.

One of the most popular folk items used by the common village folks is mat or madur made of special kind of grass. A fine variety of cool-mat known as Sitalpati is mainly obtainable from Sylhet district. The excellent patterns woven by strips of coloured

mat sometimes take the form of Jainamaz or prayer mat. Chal chitra or Halo Design is often used in bamboo frames behind the deities of Hindu pantheon.

Brass is chased and beaten to form a variety of shapes of ordinary households, like bowls, plates, pitchers, pots, lamps, braziers etc. These objects can be divided into those having religious beliefs and rituals, and ordinary household objects. Many rural villages have at least one betel leaf case made by brass, adorning perforation and geometric design. Copper and brass are used to make Hindu deities, like Naga or serpent goddess, Radha-Krishna, lamps, long axes for sacrificial purposes. The Bangla Academy Folklore Museum and Bangladesh Folk Arts and Crafts Foundation, Sonargaon have preserved a lot of the finest brass, coppers and bell metal wears. Metal objects are used in Kagmari of Tangail, Islampur of Jamalpur, Nawabganj of Rajshahi and Dhamrai of Dhaka.

Though wooden objects are vulnerable to decay, they provide one of the most pleasing media of curved ornamentation in either three dimensional forms or in just panelling. Carpenters usually take long and painstaking hours to produce a great variety of wooden objects, which are often left uncoloured or decorated with lacquer. The most attractive pieces are palanquin, various types of boats, chest, partition, cot stool, miniature temple, chariot, panels, carved with mythological scenes, household utensils etc.

Folk jewelry is a fascinating subject of study whose origin is buried in antiquity. Folk ornaments are various types and are made from a wide assortment of materials, such as beads, lacquer, copper conch shells, glass, bronze, ivory etc. The ornaments reflect social and religious aspects of the common village people. Generally, women wear their ornaments at eight places of their body, and the ornaments are accordingly ascribed. For the head and forehead, Tiara; Haripin Crown, Tikli are placed at the parting of their hair; for the nose, Nolak, Nath, Nakchabi, which are worn in the nose hole or hang in the middle of the nose; for the ear, ear rings Makri, Kanpasa, pendant Jhumka; for the neck, Hanshuli (necklace), Maduli or

talisman, Panch or Sat Narihar meaning five or seven tiered necklace; for the arm bands, Ananta; for the hand, bangles, bracelets, Ruli; for the waist band, Chandrahar, Mekla; for the feet, Nupur or jingle bells, Mal or band, Kharu beck or carved and designed band etc. These ornaments are chased or embossed or filigree work. Besides metallic ornaments, beads have been used from ancient times as necklace. The most attractive piece of beaded ornament is Sat Narirhar or seven-tiered necklace, sewed together with threads to form the most colourful design.

Notable musical instruments are *Ektara* (single stringed), *Dotara*, *Khamak*, *Dhak*, *Flute*, *Sarinda*. Hindus use conch-shell, *Kartal*, *Khamak*, *Khanjani*, *Dhak*, *Mandira*, *Khol* whereas the Muslims used *dhol*, a kind of elongated wooden round object covered with hides on two ends, during Muharram. Sometimes musical instruments are delicately carved with designs and often mounted with peacocks or other animal figures.

Processed hides and skins have always been a good medium of handicrafts; the credit goes to our skilled artisans who produce different objects like handbags, purses, caps, etc. Dhaka was a great centre of artistic leather products. Another very important medium for handicrafts is seashells of all kinds. Cox's Bazar has been the traditional centre of conch and oyster shell ornaments and decorative pieces of infinite variety. Jute is used for a wide range of artistic products such as sika, handbags, moneybags, door and window curtains, partitions, cradle, dolls etc.

Zainul Abedin and Quamrul Hassan played a pioneering role in preserving and promoting folk art of Bangladesh. Zainul Abedin patronized indigenous pottery and Nakshi Kantha while Quamrul Hassan established the Design Center to protect and promote folk artisanal practices. The institute of fine arts has pioneered to endorse folk art through special exhibitions in the sixties. The emergence of the local cottage industry was a vital part in chalking out the future of Bengali folk art. Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation nurtured these cottage industries and conducted workshops for artisans from different parts of the country. Bangladesh Rural Development

Bureau, The Handloom Board, National Association of Small and Cottage Industries of Bangladesh, and Export Promotion Bureau also provided patronage to this sector.

After the independence, many women who survived the evils of war, were given trainings on handwork and craft production to generate income by Women's Rehabilitation Board. Established in 1974, Karika was an initiative to organize the handicraft artisans and associations. Non-government organizations like BRAC, MCC, OXFAM, CARITAS and others joined this process. The artisans practiced fair trade mostly under the umbrella of EKOTA, a fair trade organization. Kumudini handicrafts, a subsidiary of Kumudini Welfare Trust started their venture through jute handicrafts and later on become one of the biggest crowd-pullers for major local crafts. Aarong, a BRAC initiative, has been the most important catalyst in creating a global market for Bangladeshi handicraft. National Crafts Council of Bangladesh is working with every stakeholder and representing Bangladesh in World Crafts Council since its inception.

Transmission of skills and artistries from generation to generation has been an important feature of Bangladeshi folk culture. BSCIC, Shilu Abed Foundation, Karika, and National Craft Council are awarding the master artisans for their works, which encourages them to continue their inherited legacy and enlightens them about current markets trends and consumer demands. Professional designers like Bibi Russell and others are joining the artisans to reach out to international buyers. Bangladesh is thus creating a place of its own in the highly competitive world of craft products with the help of its innovative designers and hardworking artisans.

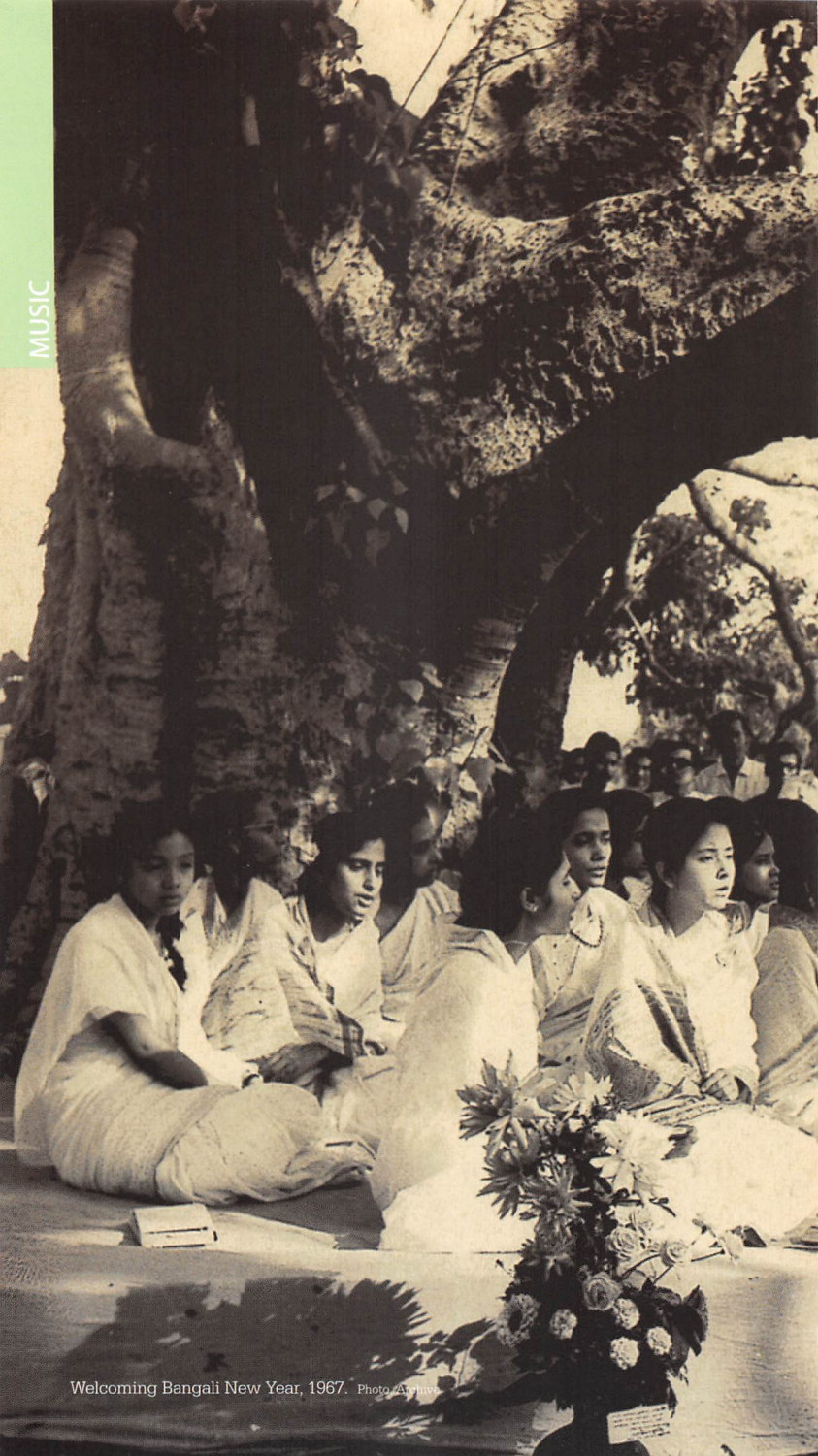


Soliloquy of Souls

The wandering bauls of Bengal have serenaded us with their melancholic ballads and their intoxicating folk songs for centuries. They personify our bucolic existence. Over the last century, our music—just like our culture—has assimilated a myriad of genres and styles of music from the west: rock, metal, punk, techno, soul or R&B. The musical scene has kept up with the rest of the world in assimilating and fusing what is local with what is new. But one thing has always been common: the true calling of our souls has always resonated with our songs.

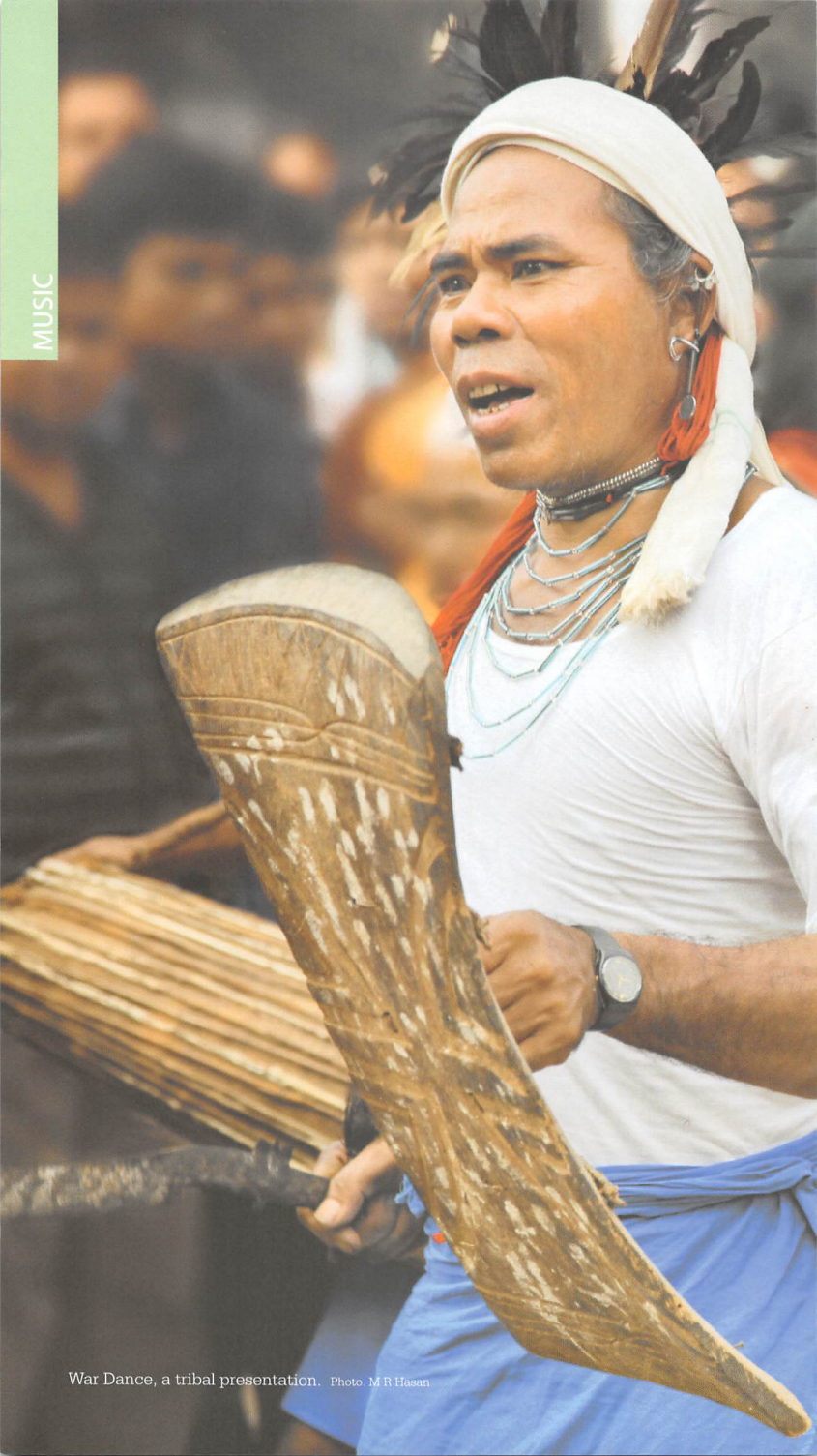
Photo Tutul Nesar





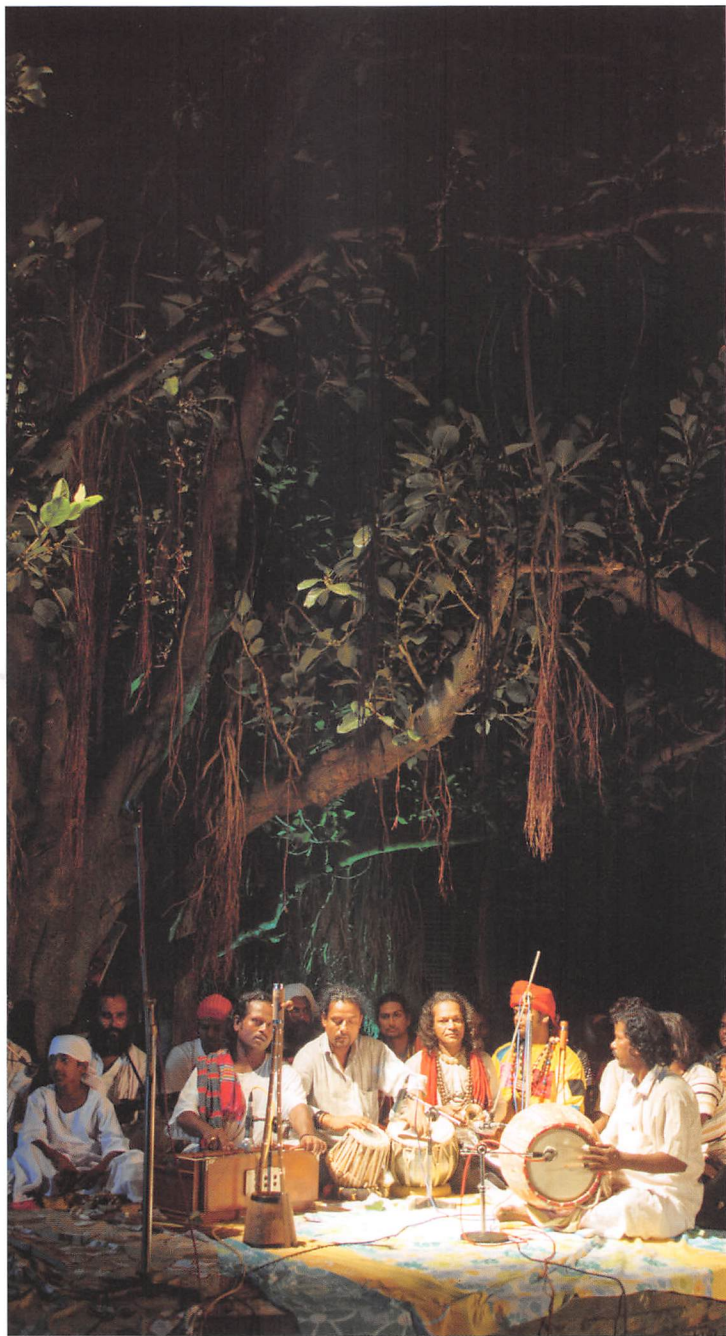
Welcoming Bangali New Year, 1967. Photo: Anshu





War Dance, a tribal presentation. Photo. M R Hasan





The mystic hymns. Photo. K M asad



Baishnab chants. Photo. Ridwan Adid Rupou

Rooting for good music has been in the blood for the people of this country from time immemorial. Good music, heart-touching melodies, tunes that unfurl the secrets of creation and the world have attracted millions throughout history.

Along with songs, Bengal has also contributed in creating musical instruments which have developed through time. The four basic instrument types are string, percussion, wind and reed. The first three categories can be applied to numerous musical innovations and these have been used in this music-struck land for a long time. These instruments are special because of their simplicity and use of local materials. Flutes are therefore found in many forms. Of string instruments, Sitar, Ektara, Sarinda are our contributions. Among the percussion types, the making of Tabla; Dhol; Mridanga; Madal has a long tradition.

The collection of mystic Buddhist songs of *Charan Geeti* or the *Charyapada* sung with different ragas are the earliest examples of notable compositions. Later, the music of this region evolved with the advancement of Bengali literature over the centuries in medieval Bengal, where classics like Sri Krishna Kirtana Kabya, Vaishnava Padavali, Mangal Kabya, Maimansingha Gitika became popular. They are still considered the most significant sources of Bengali music, especially of the folk stream, which have always maintained a strong presence in this region. Bengali music reached its great height through the historic union between the high lyricism of Vaishnavaites poetry and the musical excellence of Hindustani tradition. In Sri Krishna Kirtana Kabya, Baru Chandidas has shown pure Vaishnavaites musical form which still can be traced in our Mangal gan or the song of the bliss. Mandira and Khol are prominent instruments to perform this genre.

In the late 18th century, songs based on classical ragas became popular among the elites and comparatively educated groups of people in Bengal. Bengali Tappa, a kind of raga was popularized by Ramnidhi Gupta; those were known as Nidhubabu's Tappa and continued to be admired till the middle of the 19th century. He influenced two reigning musical trends - Shaktapada and Padavali. However, the musical cultures in the 18th century were laid in the organized version of Padavali Kirtan. Narottam



Dancing terracotta. Photo. Afzal Nazim

Thakur was one of the pioneers in this genre. Bharatchandra Raygunakar was the true representative of the transition from mediaeval to modern age. As part of the court of King Krishna Chandra Ray of Navadip, he was well-versed in traditional music. An ardent fan of Jayadeva, his works were frequently considered as erotic. His contemporary, Kaviranjan Ramprasad Sen was creating music to the genre of Shaktapada. He invented Prasadi Sur blending *baul* and classical melody. Bengal's modern popular songs are still in debt to him. During the Company Rule, Kolkata became the centre of Indian culture and intellectuals. The music related religious themes and folk elements were highly popular. Musical instruments of this period came under the western influence. Among them harmonium, violins got accepted in our musical soirees.

Baul songs date back to the 18th century and deal with a simple humanist philosophy that provides very liberal interpretations of life, love, religion and nature. Baul singers are pacifists by nature and believe in every sort of communal harmony. They can easily be sorted out by their simple outfit and unconventional lifestyle. The greater parts of the songs within this genre were composed by Lalan Shah is one of the major exponents of Baul mysticism. Baul philosophy was influenced by his way of life, and this genre is mostly performed by hermits. Rabindranath Tagore and other were heavily influenced by baul music. Baul singers, even today, avoid western instruments and use traditional ones like ektara, dotara, dhol, mandira, khamak etc.

Local lifestyles have ushered in the birth of different genres of music in different parts of the country. The Bhandari genre is mainly performed in the south of the country and is a form of devotional music; while in the north, in Rajshahi and Rangpur regions, Gombhira, Bhawaiya and Gajirgeet are more popular. Bhawaiya is the genre of cart-drivers. Gombhira on the other hand is always performed by two artists, representing a wise old man and his prankish grandson. This genre is a vehicle to discuss social issues with the audience. The songs of the boatmen are known as Bhatiali and Shaari. Dotara, Sarinda and flutes are played along with all these folk genres giving them an enthralling aural nature.

Real modern era of Bengali music started in the early years of the 20th century with the emergence of Panchakabi (five poets) who composed a large number of songs: Rabindranath Tagore, Dwijendralal Ray, Rajanikanta Sen, Atul Prasad Sen and Kazi Nazrul Islam. They combined the traditional and classical streams of Bengali music as well as added new pages in the history of Bengali music by dint of the innovative styles of their own. Almost every poet in this era composed songs and lyrics.

Rabindranath Tagore's songs, mostly known as Tagore Songs or Rabindra Sangeet, became widely popular and began to be considered as one of the most successful and sophisticated genres of Bengali music of all time. Rabindra Sangeet started something unprecedented and truly modern with thoughtful but uncomplicated lyrics, emotive as well as very inspirational tunes. Since those early years of the 20th century, for so many decades, Tagore's songs have been playing very diverse and significant roles at both personal and national levels of Bengali lifestyle. It is popularly believed that the Noble Laureate poet composed something that suits all possible types of moods of the Bengalis. Kalim Sharafi, Rezwana Choudhury Bannya, Papiya Sarwar, Sadi Mohammad, Mita Haque and Aditi Mohsin, among others, have touched listeners with their soulful rendering of Tagore songs. Fusion of oriental musical instruments with western ones was a key feature of Rabindrik composition: a presence of clarinet, piano, chellos are part of Tagore songs.

Dwijendralal Ray emerged as a skilled composer of patriotic and love songs. Most of his celebrated songs were written for plays.

Rajani Kanta started writing songs echoing Bengali nationalistic spirit of that time. His devotional songs also became very popular. Atul Prasad Sen's combining of classical and Kirtan styles created magic and the new blend won thousands of hearts instantly.

Kazi Nazrul Islam, national poet of Bangladesh, who was born in 1899, besides igniting hearts with his rebel verses, popularize the spirit of communal harmony in this part of the world. He imported and adeptly applied the Ghazal tradition from Urdu and Persian into Bengali musical arena. Nazrul's Islamic songs became incredibly popular and made the conservative Muslims feel comparatively comfortable with Bengali music. He also came out as one of the finest composers of Shyama Sangeet. The real versatility of Bengali music can be found in Nazrul Sangeet. Kamal Dashgupta, Firoza Begum, Sudhin Das, Fatema Tuz Zohra, Shabnam Mushtari, Ferdous Ara, Shaheen Samad and Khairul Anam Shakil, among others, are prominent exponents of this genre in present-day Bangladesh. Rich tradition of Indian classical music is a must for Nazrul songs. Tanpura, Sitar, Sarod and multi-types of percussion instruments are vital in every Nazrul Sangeet performance.

Radio played an amazing role in popularizing Bengali music as the sole medium of entertainment during the early years. In 1939, all India Radio opened its Dhaka Centre. Before that, almost all types of Bengali songs used to be released and broadcasted from Kolkata. Abdul Alim, the immensely popular folk singer joined Dhaka Radio as a staff artiste. He recorded around 300 songs for Gramophone Company and his songs, mainly folk, reached all types of people in the villages and in urban areas. Another great singer of that time was Abbas Uddin Ahmed who worked with poets like Nazrul, Jasimuddin, Golam Mostafa and gradually turned out to be a legendary folk singer. Abbas Uddin Ahmed and Abdul Alim's songs, composed mainly in the *bhawaia* tradition, are extremely popular to this day and are sung on almost every celebratory occasion. From the 1950s, Neena Hamid and Ferdausi Rahman contributed to this renaissance of Bengali folk songs with their melodious voices. Harmonium, Ektrara, Dotara, Khanjani, Juri are the main instruments to be mellowed with them.

People's theatre movement dominated Bengal's cultural ideology in the 40's. Songs were looked upon as an effective medium of organizing the working people to aware them about their rights. The songs were composed on themes of social change, forming of progressive society, free from exploitation. Binay Ray, Jyotirindra Maitra, Hemanga Biswas and Salil Chowdhury were the principle lyricists and composers. They were the creative descendants of Rabindranath Tagore, Mukund Das, and Kazi Nazrul Islam and successfully followed the footsteps to create mass movement.

With the release of the first Bengali feature film from Dhaka, *Mukh O Mukhosh* (1956), the music of this country entered a totally new epoch of widespread popularity. Singers like Abdul Alim, Neena Hamid, Ferdausi Rahman began to sing for movies/films and radio simultaneously. Bangla Adhunik Gaan (Bengali Modern Songs) started flourishing in the hands of some maestros, lyricists and composers including Mohammad Moniruzzaman, Abu Hena Musatfa Kamal, Abdul Latif, Abdul Ahad, Samar Das, Khan Aatur Rahman, Satya Saha and Khandaker Nurul Alam. Their soulful creations kept enchanting listeners of the 80s and 90s.

By the next decade, playback singing became the most prominent music genre in Dhaka. This decade saw a great number of accomplished playback singers' rise to prominence, such as Mahmudunnabi, Khondaker Faruk Ahmed, Abdul Jabbar, Bashir Ahmed, Khurshid Alam, Nilufar Yasmin, Shahnaz Rahmatullah, Anjuman Ara Begum and Sabina Yasmin.

The Liberation War of 1971 left a permanent impression on the life of every single cultural activist. Many lyricists, composers and singers of this country joined the freedom fighters with their patriotic songs and lyrics. Songs of *Shwadhin Bangla Betar Kendra* (Free Bengal Radio Station) helped the freedom fighters gain and regain the spirit of fighting against an oppressive occupation force, the Pakistan Army. Lyricist like Gobinda Haldar, composers like Altaf Mahmud, Ajit Roy, Sujeyo Sham, singers like Apel Mahmud, Abdul Jabbar, Mala Khan, Jahanagir Hayat Khan, Rupa Khan and several other artistes were very active during those days. Their efforts turned out very successfully through a number of songs. This music-loving



The golden age of radio; Prativa Bose is learning from Kazi Nazrul Islam. Photo: Archive

nation still seeks inspiration among a number of patriotic songs that were composed during the days of that bloody war.

Bangladesh has always been blessed with melodious singers whose magical renditions enthralled the audience for years. Two such artists are Sabina Yasmin and Runa Laila. What makes them stand out is the skyrocketing popularity starting from the 60s for next four decades. Both of them did perfect justice to their popularity by ensuring praiseworthy high standard through playback and modern genre of music. The versatility of these singers allowed many modern composers experiment with instruments courageously. Instruments of indigenous communities also got attention in this period.

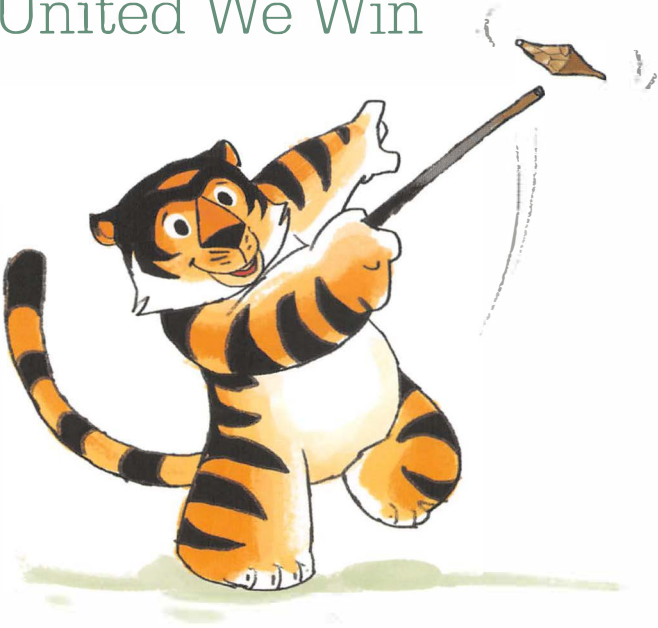
After the rocky phase of the War of Independence, the music lovers of the nation were looking for some new muses. A new wave in music emerged as Azam Khan, Ferdaus Wahid, Pilu Momtaz, Firoz Shai initiated Pop music in Bangladesh. In this decade, some singers and music composers, endowed with extraordinary gifts, joined the mainstream music industry. The playback singers continued to entertain with renewed charm as both lyrics and compositions enjoyed a breath of fresh air. Subir Nandi and Abida Sultana both were well accepted by the audience. Among the composers, Alauddin Ali, Azad Rahman, Anwar Parvez and Sheikh Sadi Khan created a great number of classy as well as popular songs.

The legacy continued and young generations were in love with western style of music; emergence of a number of musical bands namely, Souls, Miles, Renaissance, Feelings, Feedback, Different Touch, Winning, Obscure, Warfaze etc. was the best thing that happened in the 90s. In the next decade, LRB, Nagar Baul, Aurthohin and Dolchhut, among others, joined this triumphant journey of band music. Artists like Ayub Bacchu, Nokib Khan, Hamin Ahmed, Shafin Ahmed, Maksud, Partha Barua, James, Shonjib Chowdhury became youths' icons instantly as this decade sowed the seed of the culture of concerts. A burgeoning number of young listeners found their urban nirvana in songs that perfectly reflected the restlessness and uncertainty of the time. The 90s is also the decade that witnessed Bangladesh entering into the realm of democracy. Putting an end to decade-long tyranny of the dictator sprouted new hopes for coming

days of prosperity in the minds of the people and those bands offered exactly what the listeners were looking forward to. Their songs depicted hopes of a new nation, beating heart of a lover or vibration of the thriving culture seeking newness in every sphere of life. The expansion of middle-class and their quest for finding solace in the songs of new era added momentum to the bandwagon of 90's music. Soon there was an emergence of an alternative industry of music, the Audio Industry, that provided numerous hit albums, both solo and band. In the 2000s, two other streams went through a visible boom: rock and heavy metal bands on one hand and different fusion bands on the other. These genres have had an enormous impact on the young generation. A wide variety of instruments from around the world are played with band songs with a prevalent use of guitars.

Today the country has entered into the realm of digital music where singers are releasing their songs online and in social media and with the help of many FM radio stations, a multitude of genre of songs are flooding our auditory pathways every day. However, our age-old love for folk songs never ran out of fashion. Time and again, we have gone back to those eternal melodies produced by the Bauls and fakirs and tried to find our roots. Still renditions of the legendary Baul singers like Shah Abdul Karim makes us understand the deeper meaning of life, love and everything else we see around. Songs of Tagore, Nazrul, Lalon, Hason Raza are omnipresent and alive. In spite of the unavoidable global influences, today's musicians are producing a good number of songs that reflect the long-standing glory of Bangladeshi music. Some of the present-day bands and solo artistes are creating a completely new genre, which is already a vital addendum to the existing rich culture. The music of Bangladesh oscillates between its past and present, yet never loses sight of a different future. It sustains the core philosophy of a land which symbolizes a true blend of harmony, creativity and resilience.

United We Win



Bangladeshis love the games they play. They love the sports they watch. We are more than a nation of cricket crazy or football fanatics. There is always something we are rooting for. When we are not staying up all night shouting for a team on the other side of the world, we are screaming our lungs out supporting our local clubs. *Hadudu, kabadi*, boat races – you name it. From simple village sports to posh urban games, local, regional or international competitions, Bangladeshis unconditional support for their favourite team is amazing.

Photo K M Asad



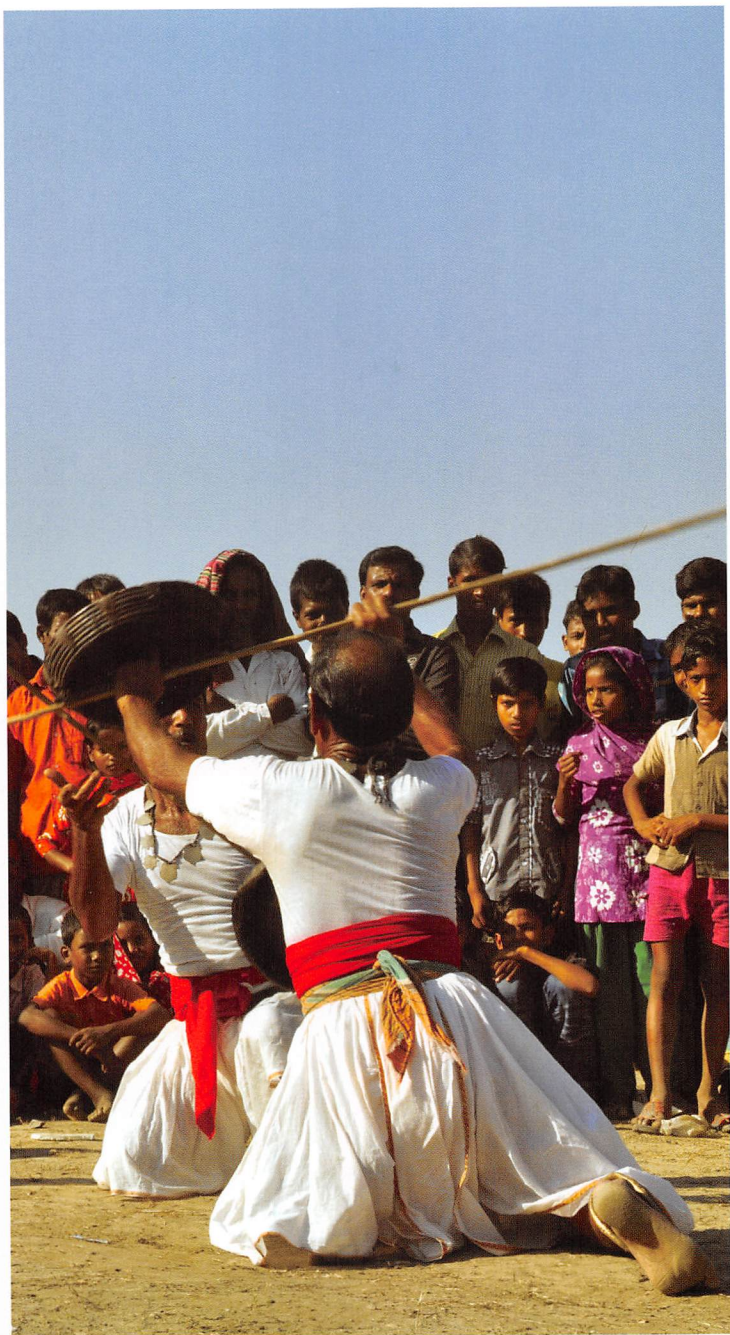


Kabadi, National Sport. Photo: Amir Abdullah





The pacing race. Photo. K M Asad

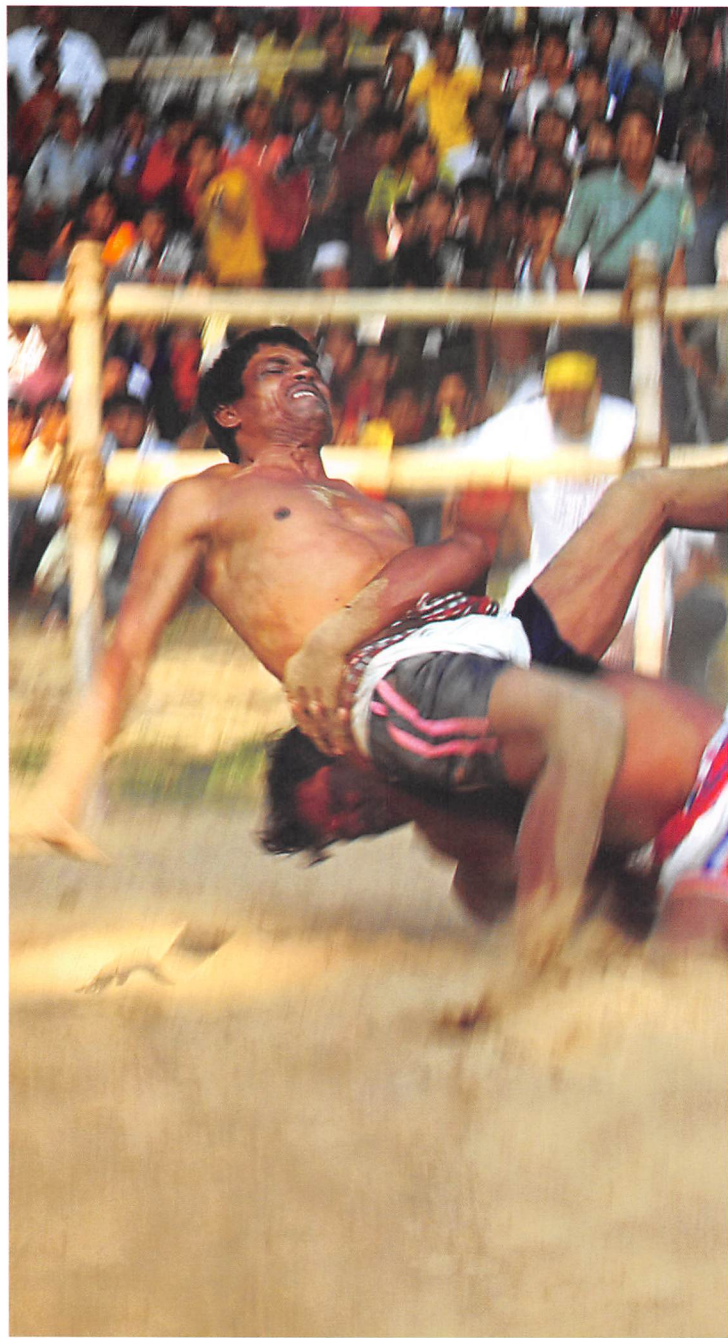


From war to sports. Photo. Kamrul Hasan Mithon

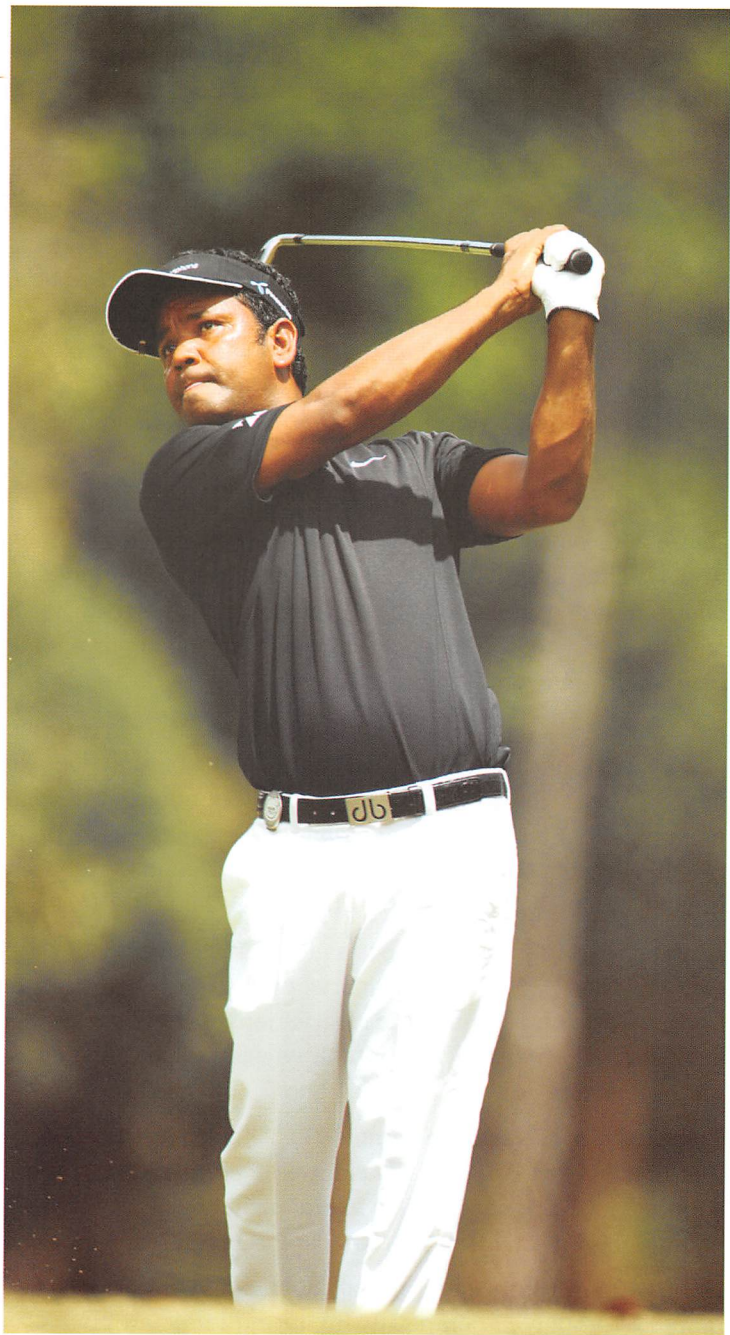


Jubilant Tigers of the cricket crazy nation. Photo: Collected





Wrestling, Bengali style. Photo: Jashim Salam



Siddiqur Rahman, Golfer. Photo. Collection

Sports have been an integral part of the long and rich history of Bangladesh. Sports are not merely entertainment but they have been building and sustaining the profound philosophy. Historically sports in this part of the world are non-expensive, they avoid pricey tools and are in tune with local nature and lifestyle.

Traditional sports are divided into two large categories – as physical and mental. Physical sports include *Kabadi*, *Hadudu*, *Dariabandha*, *Gollachhut*, *Kanamachhi*, *Bouchi*, *Golap Tagar Khela*, *Guli Khela*, *Rajar Kotal* etc. which are played as part of daily life. They are not restricted to male players even though they often require physical power and skill. *Kanamachhi*, *Gollachhut* and *Bouchi* are more popular with girls as they play them in the backyard every afternoon.

These games need no or very little instrument or a huge arena to play. They are diverse in nature, carry the philosophy and charm of an agrarian society and depend on the team work and unity most of the time, and however, the good players are given high esteem at the community.

Kabadi is a very popular game in Bangladesh, especially in the villages and, for this, it is also called the 'game of rural Bengal'. In some areas, *Kabadi* is also known as *ha-du-du*. But despite its popularity *ha-du-du* had no definite rules and it used to be played with different rules in different areas. *Hadudu* was given the name *Kabadi* and the status of National Game in 1972.

Another part of physical sports are festive ones, only the experts take part in those sports while the whole village becomes spectator. This is the local variant of wrestling known as 'kusti'; in which the heftily built wrestlers fight each other for pride and prize.

The festivals of *kusti* are termed 'Bali Khela' in Chittagong. The present-day *Bali Khela* was introduced in 1909 by Abdul Jabbar Saodagar. His aim was to organize the country's youth against the British rule and to prepare them for resistance.

Nouka Baich (Boat Race) is an ancient and traditional folk game, often played competitively during fairs and pujas. As the young men ply their oars, musicians beat drums and play



The bullfight. Photo: K M Asad

other percussion instruments to encourage the punters. The boats used in races do not have masts or sails. The agility and strength of the punters and the helmsman are the deciding factors in the game. Boat race is not only very popular but also a matter of prestige among villagers to claim supremacy as it is usually a competition between villages.

Bull Fight is another such issue where prestige and power is involved, although strong bulls are the active participants, but the proprietor of the bulls take all the pride or shame of winning or losing. Sometimes it involves the pride of village as well; cock fight is another sport which has similar attributes.

There are different kinds of mental sports in the rural areas of the country, ludu (a dice-based game), chess, pasha, satchara, sholo guti etc. Especially the women and old people pass their leisure with these board games.

Urban Bangladesh has different types of games, as they do not have the same lifestyle and attitude as the villagers.

With the advent of technology, western sports have found their niche in Bangladesh. Our traditional sports often struggle against overseas ones in terms of popularity. During the colonial period, football and cricket along with other sports were introduced. In course of time they have become a part of the daily life. Football creates such a passion in this part of the world that many

often term Bengali as football crazy nation. Recently cricket is superseding football in terms of popularity. Global success of Bangladesh in international cricket has made it a national pride.

Cricket was introduced to us during British ruling era, grew slowly in its infancy after independence, soon gained momentum and became the number one sport in the country. Now we are one of the esteemed members of test playing nations. The national cricket team is also known as the Tigers. They are named after the Royal Bengal Tiger, country's national animal. Many Bangladeshis are passionate about this sport. There are several domestic leagues under direct operation of Bangladesh Cricket Control Board. Sakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Mashrafe Mortaza, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mustafizur Rahman, Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Habibul Bashar, Mohammad Ashraful, Aminul Islam, Mohammad Rafique are some of our notable cricketers.

Like cricket, football had its roots tied to colonial period in the subcontinent. It flourished in the fifties; its fan-base was created through clubs like Victoria and Wanderers. Football was later followed hugely in the sixties and the seventies and reached the pinnacle of popularity in late eighties and nineties. Held at regular intervals, leagues and tournaments were like festivals. From the team selection to the rest of the major football leagues, football season was the most awaited and celebrated season for the football lovers. Football clubs like Abahani Krirachakra, Mohamedan Sporting Club, Brothers Union, Wari and other clubs were formed and continued to entertain people over the years. Football geniuses like Kazi Mohammad Salahuddin, Mohammad Aslam, Kaysar Hamid, Monem Munna, Alfaz and others are still remembered for their skillful presence on the field. The enthusiasm around football revives every four years during the world cup finals.

In response to the country's interest in sporting activities, a large number of sporting clubs have been formed. Apart from the above mentioned prominent clubs, there are the Dhaka Wanderers, the Arambag, the Ajax, the Brothers Union, the Azad, the Dilkusha, the GMCC, the Muktijoddha Sangsad, the Suryatarun, the Kalabagan, the Usha and recently formed Sheikh Rasel Krirachakra and Sheikh Kamal sporting clubs.



Home of cricket. Photo Collected

These clubs regularly host national and sometimes even international tournaments, so many of their facilities are kept in the best possible condition.

Chess is a global game, but the villages of Bangladesh have a long tradition of chess. In the modern format, Bangladesh has earned grand success; Niaz Morshed became the first grandmaster from Asia, followed by Zia ur Rahaman and Reefat Bin Sattar. There are many more promising players who can follow their footsteps. Rani Hamid is a very famous female player in the chess circuit.

We have gained considerable success in shooting snatching occasional gold medals from in international competitions. Abdus Satter Nini won gold medal in Commonwealth Games way back in the nineties, while some other talented shooters kept up the good work. Recently Abdullahel Baki won Silver Medal at Glasgow Commonwealth Games just points behind the Olympic Gold Medalist Avinav Bindra.

Golfer Siddiqur Rahman is becoming a very important player in the golf circuit by winning a few prestigious tournaments and tours. There are some other young prodigies who seem keen to retain the success in this sport.

Team game like Hockey, Basketball, Kho Kho etc. are also becoming popular, while some are doing well at individual games like Archery, Pool, Bridge at international arena.

National Sports Council (NSC) is the highest body of the sports arena in Bangladesh. Being an autonomous body under the Ministry of Youths and Sports, it plays an effective role for the development of sports and games throughout the country. NSC-registered national federations or associations are: Bangladesh Football Federation, Bangladesh Volleyball Federation, Bangladesh Hockey Federation, Bangladesh Weightlifting Federation, Bangladesh Amateur Boxing Federation, Bangladesh Karate Federation, Bangladesh Badminton Federation, Bangladesh Wrestling Federation, Bangladesh Bodybuilding Federation, Bangladesh Squash Racket Federation, Bangladesh Chess Federation, Bangladesh Women Sports Association, Bangladesh Cycling Federation, Bangladesh Handball Federation, Bangladesh Basketball Federation, Bangladesh Billiard and Snooker Federation, Bangladesh Deaf Sports Association, Bangladesh Roller Skating Federation, Bangladesh Amateur Athletics Federation, Bangladesh Taekwon-Do Federation, Bangladesh Gymnastics Federation, Bangladesh Kho-Kho Federation, Bangladesh Judo Federation, Bangladesh Carom Federation, Bangladesh Tennis Federation, Bangladesh Golf Federation, Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation, Bangladesh Shooting Federation, Association of Sports Medicine, Bangladesh Rowing Federation, Bangladesh Kabadi Federation, Bangladesh Swimming Federation, Bangladesh Archery Federation and Bangladesh Cricket Board. Local sports associations registered by NSC have been trying hard to fulfill their mandates. The associations are based mainly at the divisional level, with district-based general bodies as well as women sports associations. A large number of clubs take part in various sports competitions organized by local associations. These clubs are the major source of grooming players with required team building spirit and paving their ways to participate in district and divisional level competitions. Moreover, some clubs, approved by national federations, also take part in special events regularly.

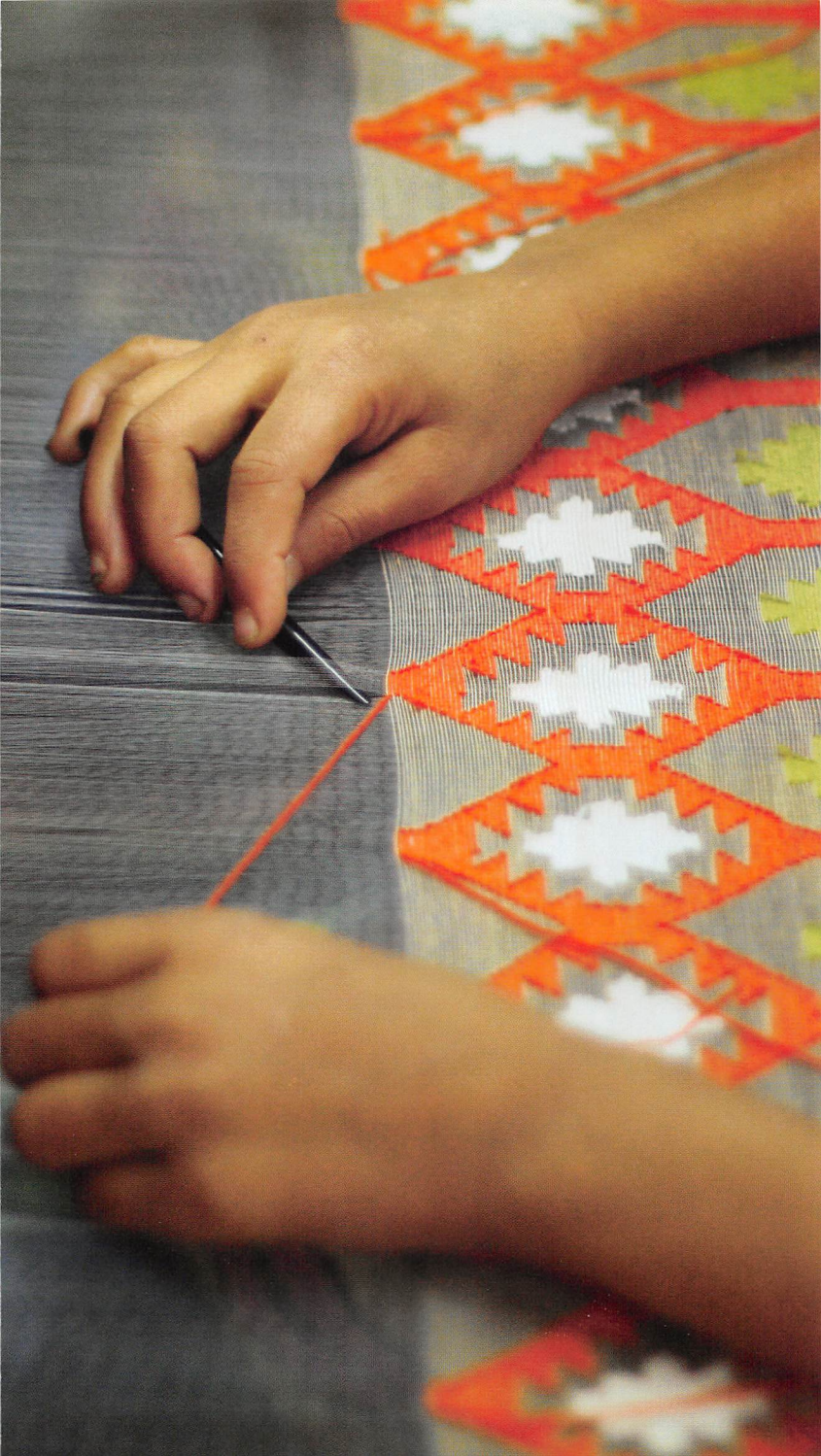
There are plans and scopes for formal sports education as well. Bangladesh Krira Shiksha Pratisthan (BKSP) is an institute for instructing games and sports with a curriculum combined and synthesized with general education. It is situated in Savar. Recently many other private schools and training centers for various sports are being opened.

The sports enthusiasts people of Bangladesh always embrace anything that is full of life and allow them to prove their exuberant nature. This why sports, be it in the form of locally emerged simple games or practising international level games, has always deemed to them something worth rooting for.

Of Colors & Patterns



Bangladeshis love to wear colorful attires. Vibrant shades, dynamic patterns and beautiful motif inspired by nature are evident in wearables of the citizens of this country. Kudos to the rich heritage of weaving and handloom industry where artisans come up with wonderful products that have lured both natives and expatriates from time immemorial. Bangladeshi made world-class Muslins, Jamdanis or Khadis have always opened new pages in the history of clothing of this subcontinent. Inspired by the magnificent finesse and design of all those exquisite clothing materials, today's designers are setting up boutiques, brands, fashion empires to fulfill the need of the masses.



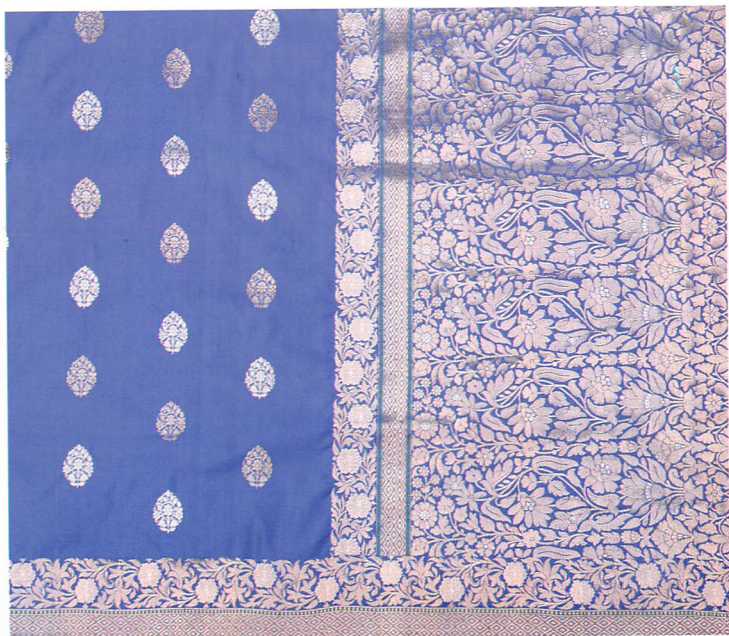


Jamdani



Tangail Silk

Diversity of Sarees. Photo. Farhan Faisal



Mirpur Katan



Manipuri Tant





Commuting through the busy streets of Dhaka you are sure to enjoy a riot of color – the usual clothes people wear here are vibrant and busy with patterns and designs. If you want to draw a simile with, the busy streets of Dhaka are the perfect match for the fashion statement random people here are ready to make with their dresses. Besides mostly being traditional, the moody characters inside those patterns are playful and uplifting. In course of time, the trends have changed from wearing simple clothes to today's designer outfits. Yet the country can still boast its rich heritage of its weaving industry.

From ancient times, Bengal was famous for its finest cotton. In the history of textiles, there is no name more famous than that of Dhaka muslin. Through the centuries Dhaka came to be known as the home of exotic muslins. Our weave was so fine that the Egyptian Pharaohs used them for wrapping mummies. The diverse weaving capacity of Bengalis can be seen in their preference of varied looms. Even the tribal people weave their own cloths and each tribe has its own distinctive dress which relates with their rites and rituals. Independent Bangladesh saw the rise of RMG revolution in world, and we are still making the most out of our weavers gene.

Just like all other countries, Bangladeshi culture always had a huge role to play in defining the trend of clothing among the people. Basking in the glory of the past, weavers, designers, tailors have always come up with clothing solutions that in a perfect emblem of both glory and dynamism. Our past in fabric and clothing was so glorious, that even today whenever we want to set a niche, we love to take a page from our splendid yester years and come up with a design that suits today's demand and look.

Bangladesh has always been a melting pot of cultures. For over 500 years, people from different regions and different culture and custom traveled to this part of land, stayed here and influenced our clothing outline with their outfits; gifted their dress styling, motifs and patterns. Traders, warriors, kings, dacoits, beggars – everyone from far away and nearby countries have come here in search of luck. All these invasions paved ways for styles and

materials to enter into the local market frequently in the past. The region is ethnically diverse, with a Bengali-speaking majority in the broad river valleys and lowlands, and with hill tribes, especially in the east, that have connections with the people of Myanmar. Thanks to satellite channels, Indian culture and trends have begun to influence our clothing trends. The good news is Bangladeshi culture never disappointed any of them and adopts almost all those themes with unique sense and sensibility in cloth design. This makes us say that we are proud to carry global dress patterns with our very own local essence with élan.

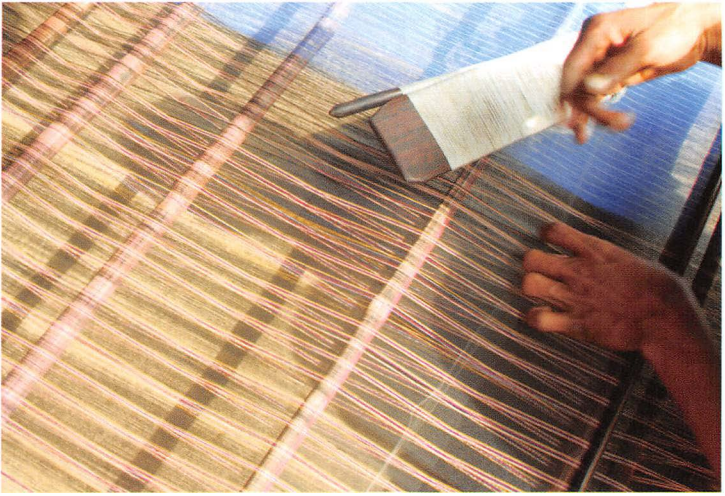
Nowadays, almost all urban men of Bangladesh wear shirts and pants and women wear salwar kameez. All of them are knit and sewing based outfits. Though our basic clothing style revolves around wearing unstitched 'one piece' of cloth. Bangladeshi women's usual outfit 'sari', men's day to day wear material is Burmese originated 'lungi' and 'vest' or traditional Hindus 'dhuti' are derived from the concept of that one piece of cloth. Another popular and important thing is 'gamchha'- a kind of towel also used as a part of clothing.

Women's fashion starts with sari. The saga of this six-yards-long clothe is one riveting tale. Saris are made of finely embroidered quilted patchwork cloth produced by the village men and women. Young Bengali women typically wear draped cotton saris over blouses in the typical Bengali style of fold upon fold. Practicing Hindus follow the same style, though previously they used to drape the end of sari over the head to form a veil. Muslim women wear sari at home in the same manner, but often cover it with a 'burqa' to go outside the house. The younger generation has taken to wearing the salwar (loose trousers), churidar with kamiz or kurti (long blouse). Our ethnic women wear sarongs (type of skirt) and breast cloths with intricate patterns, woven on back strap looms. Muslim peasant men wear colorful lungis with short vest. Hindu men wear dhuti with vest, and a shoulder cloth. Urban Muslim men wear loose pajamas with a tunic known as a Punjabi. For formal occasions, the men wear fitting, long coats, 'sherwani', with tight pajamas, influenced by Mughal and Persian clothing style. Hindus wear cotton or silk dhutis with Punjabi and a shawl.

The most appreciated part in our clothing is our very own fabric manufacturing culture. What makes Bangladeshi fashion unique are the weavers and their handlooms in the country. Started from small cottage industry, the fabric manufacturing trade had a boom after the 'swadeshi' movement of 1905. Back in 1930s, Ghandhi excited the regional people for wearing clothes from the homeland made an expression of nationalism and an appreciation for tradition. He advocated 'Khadi' a hand spun cotton that later became popular in Bengal, continued wearing it, which added new momentum in the popularity of the fabric. But the history of our 'Khadi' and other fabric is rooted back in our glorious earlier period. This part of Bengal was well-known from early times for its delicate 'Dacca muslin'. It had demand throughout the world. It is one of the reasons why the travelers and traders kept coming to our land in past. Even its myth of fineness was mentioned in ancient Roman history. Stories like the Roman senate apologizing for emptying their treasury to pay for this fine muslin or Caesar's beloved wife once appearing naked in public, though she told that she wore seven layers of the 'Muslin'-remind us of the fascinating heritage of Muslin. Gone are the days; but we have very little to repent about. The blend of traditional weavers and contemporary designers' inputs has brought together distinctive local materials, allowing far more experimentation with hand weaving.

First traditional handloom seen in this region was about 500 years old in this region. Handloom is a simple wood-iron made weaving device mainly operated by hand, relying solely on human metabolic energy. This cottage-based industry can be found all over the country. In a wooden vertical-shaft looms, the heddles are fixed in place in the shaft. The warp threads pass alternately through a heddle and through a space between the heddles so that raising the shaft raises half the threads and lowering the shaft lowers the same threads. The threads passing through the spaces between the heddles remain in place.

Urban people were quick to welcome those handloom products; credit goes to their suitable and comfortable nature to fit for our hot humid weather. Later with local patronization and the help of the Government of Bangladesh, our handloom industry formed



Ethnic fabrics Photo: K M Asad

and very soon got a decent infrastructure. 'Nipun', the pioneer boutique in Bangladesh paved the way for more to come and follow the trend of designing for mass. 'Kumudini', the famous welfare trust promoted underprivileged women into looms and still a market maestro in producing fashionable fabric. 'Aarong', a venture of globally renowned development organization BRAC played a vital role there. Aarong is considered to be the pioneer in promoting our handloom industry.

The vast majority of Bangladeshi handlooms is engaged in weaving cotton and blended fabrics although handloom cloth of silk earned a good reputation. Famous areas for silk weaving are Rajshahi, Tangail and Nobabgonj. Rajshahi producing mainly silk saris. Tangail produces Tangail Muslin and Narayangonj produces the famous Jamdani. Mirpur is famous for providing special 'Jari' work called brocade and 'cut work'. Besides producing varieties of silk, cotton, jamdani and other fabrics, various researches on developing the industry are being conducted. One of our biggest successes in this sector was discovering 'Endi'- a blend of cotton and silk. It is our gift to the contemporary textile theory, an innovative addition to the industry itself. This way our native elements gift the designers' inspirations to work that can define Bangladesh in fashion world. Also, we have our local weaving and motif pattern.

The people of Bangladesh have a rich fictional legacy; motifs in our dresses often remind us about that. Famous Gazi pot, Monsha pot, etc. inspired designers to develop various motifs portraying fictional characters. Various tribal dress styles also helped to create clothing like 'Monipuri' shawl and saris. Block prints, hand woven materials and dyes made of local ingredients are some other known features that make our clothing industry unique.

Our colors also have a significant part to play in our fabric. We have varieties of own dyeing technology; vegetable or natural dyeing is one of them, which itself has created a different category for fabrics. Locally produced silk and endi cotton saris in purely natural dyes are popular. For other uses, especially for festivals, choice in colors varies a bit. Nevertheless, we are more or less habituated with vibrant colors and contrasts.

The 1980's witnessed the beginning of an era, which put Bangladesh under different spotlight. Local entrepreneurs dared to venture in to Ready-made-garments industries. Soon many others caught upon the trend and there was no looking back.



Backstrap loom Photo K M Asad

With almost no experience in industrial textile and apparel making, Bangladesh becoming the second biggest apparel manufacturer in the world is a surprise for both the west and the east. The country started with producing t-shirts, socks, small apparel items; from there, we are now producing formal shirts, designer wears. As we move up the value chain, we portray the picture of a more efficient and skilled Bangladesh that is all set to rock the world of fashion by exporting not just street wears but high-class products. This too reflects the sign of our rich history as dressmakers.

From early 1990s, with the demand to look chic and exclusive, loads of new and promising boutiques started to crowd not only in Dhaka, but also all over the country. While clothing from the 'outside' was heavily popular, many boutique houses started to claim clothes and accessories representing works of local designers and fashion houses began to fuse influences from abroad and within, creating new lines of work that are meant to be contemporary. Inspiration from abroad is blended with our cultural intervention: the calligraphy, folk art, street art or rickshaw painting. Designers mixed, cut, and contrasted, experimented with different materials and styles in an attempt to make it look contemporary and individualized. With this practice, clothing in Bangladesh has become an attempt for not only trying to hold onto its own creative roots while branching out to a broader horizon, but also finding a way to pay homage to our glorious clothing and fabric industry.

The People-Pleasers



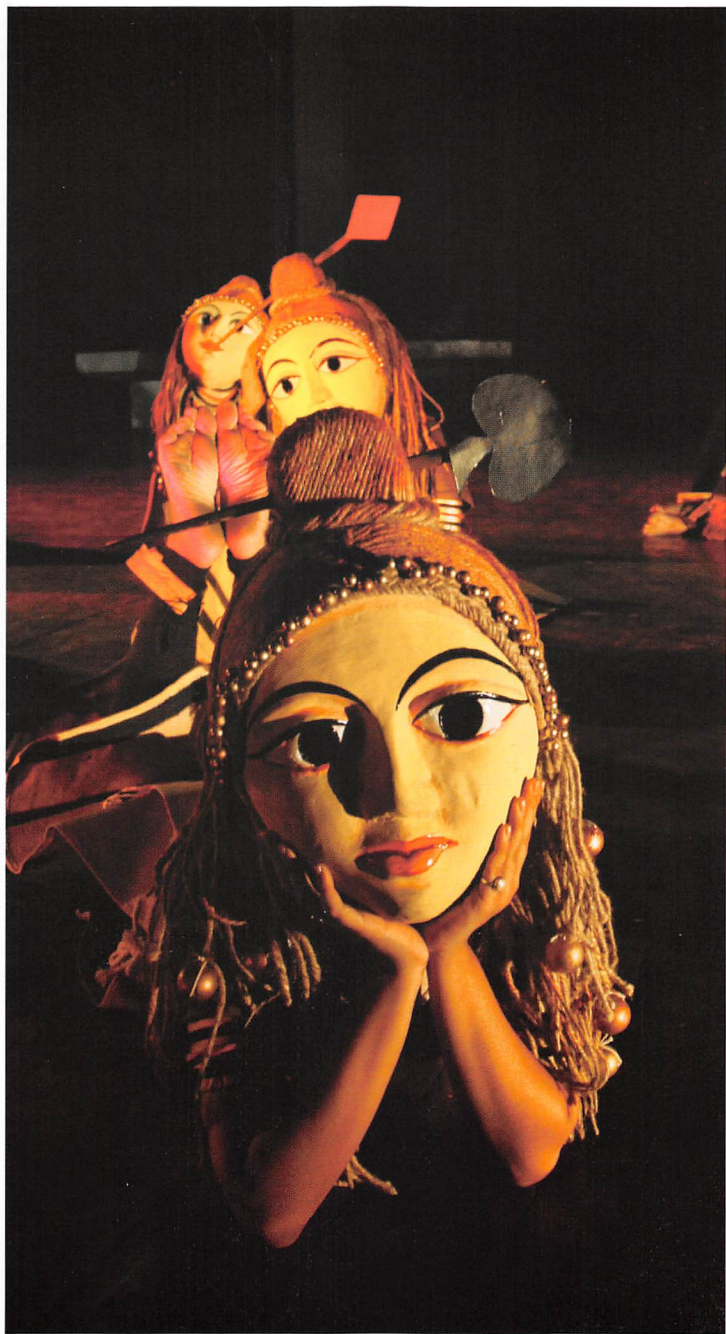
People of this peace-loving nation have always been admirers of simplicity in everything. Entertainment too is an arena where they are easy to floor. Performing artists here pour their hearts in whatever they render and audiences too welcome that in a gleeful manner. What started from a humble rural setting in course of time has now entered into the complex urban cosmopolitan culture. Nonetheless, our artists have always successfully stolen the show with their immaculate performance. Moreover, in time of need, these rebels with causes revolutionized the way we think and helped us embark on the path of a new beginning, be it for fighting for the motherland or making society better with one act at a time.

Photo: Ridwan Adid Rupoji





Dance on strings. Photo. K M Asad



The performing thespians. Photo. K M Asad



Jatra, Bengal's own open theatre Photo. Arman Hossain Bappy





Dance with bamboo. Photo. Shaful Shipon





Monipuri dance. Photo: Syed Zakur Hossain



Being a melting pot of races can be both good and bad for a country. For Bangladesh, having that one particular attribute proved to be a blessing in most of the cases. The people who have moved effortlessly for centuries through a plural world with stark divisions of rituals – enjoy happily the sunny side of diversity involving mass people's artistic endeavors and performances. It was the Pala rule which flourished Buddhism here and played an important role in shaping Bengali culture. That is why cultural and religious legacies of Buddhism are still vibrant in the popular imagery. The *Charyas* composed during the Buddhist period are the first available text to prove that the people of Bangladesh considered songs, dance, drama, storytelling, poetry, and other art forms as media of expressions. Cultural performances were carried out in every seasonal festival in Bangladesh. Besides, Hinduism, Vaishnavism and Islam have played pivotal roles in shaping our cultural practices as well as provided a room for our rituals. Instead of promoting dogma and fundamentalism, some of those rituals in course of time have transformed into sheer performing folk art. This was possible because of the jovial nature of the people of this country, who in many cases, take life vivaciously.

A short narrative like this one is inadequate to describe the various aspects of dances that the history of this land witnessed over centuries. We can start with folk dances, which are performed in groups and where singing plays an essential part. Folk dances in Bangladesh are mainly of three kinds: religious, social and cultural. Religious dances outnumber other forms. Dances relating to Kirtan, Penance, Baul Rites, Gambhira, Jari and Fakir Rites are associated with different religious beliefs and rituals. Dhali and Lathi dances are related to the martial arts, while Chhokra, Ghatu, and Khemta dances provide entertainment. While some dances are influenced by Islamic beliefs and stories, others are inspired by Hindu myths and legends. Folk dances are passed down from one generation to another, and, although the artistes have a great deal of liberty in performing, the basic form remains the same as a matter of tradition.

Different forms of dances emerge under the special regional influence from time to time. Alcap is a form of folk drama, which



The dancing bells/Nupur. Photo, Collector

is very popular in the greater Rajshahi region. Performed under the open sky or under a canopy, the audience surrounds the Alcap performers. Gamvira, which is essentially humorous and satirical in nature, focusing on various incongruities of our rural society, is popular in north Bengal. The performance includes songs; dance and humorous dialogues on social issues between a grandfather and his grandson have become more popular. In addition, there is Bichar Gan, also known as kovi gaan, a genre of folk song on religious and spiritual themes sung by two contesting groups. At the outset, the contesting singers select a topic, which they develop through questions, answers and counter questions. These songs are usually based on Islamic stories and doctrines. Bichar Gan is also known as Baul song in greater Dhaka and eastern Sylhet, Fakirali Gan in Tangail and Mymensing, Dhuya Gan in Jessore, Shabda Gan in Khulna, Bhav Gan in Kushtia, and Kavigan in Chittagong. Now-a-days Bichar Gan is also widely sung in different parts of Manikganj and Faridpur.

The art of dancing has flourished in the Bengal in many ways. The Dombis described in the *Charyapada* were adept in dancing and singing. The collection of mystical poetry also mentions about various musical instruments of ancient Bengal,

such as ektara, heruk, vina, domru, damruli, banshi, madal, pat etc. The folk traditions in acting, food, dances and dramas of that era have been depicted on the clay-plates discovered in Paharpur and Mainamati. The proofs of continuity of the history of dances, dance-skills, excellence of theme, mode of presentation in Bengal are found in various legends, deeds of gods and goddesses in narration and presentation of songs in the gatherings of the Dervishes.

In the medieval period, the ritual-based *Chhau-Nritya* used to be presented by the devotees of Shiva, the Hindu God. The artistes used to wear the masks of monkey, bear, cow, etc. while presenting dances. The style of its song belonged to the Jhumur category. Jhumur is the main tune of the festivals of small ethnic communities of this country, namely the Santal, Oraon and Soirai, Baha and Jitia festival of the Mahalis. Dhali Nritya, a mode of war dance performed by men, especially popular among ethnic communities. This dance originated in the medieval period and imitated the martial techniques of the armed warrior groups practiced by the Hadi, Bagdi, and Dome communities. The dance simulates attacks and counter-attacks as in battle. Raybanshey dance is also a war-like dance. It was practiced heavily during the last days of British regime.

Humorous and descriptive, the influence of Dhamail and Jhumur dances is visible in Baru Chandidas's *Srikrishna kirtana*. Dances were introduced at many junctures while staging the *Srikrishna kirtana*. *Padmavati Kabya*, written by Alaol, was an important work of poetry during this period. The contains descriptions of Dakshinatya dance and Chachri dance accompanied by different musical instruments. Gazir Gan was particularly popular in this period of history. Basically, it's a performance to thank the protector Dervish or to seek something from him. Although, the man himself was a Muslim but his followers included people from all religious identities.

The great poet Rabindranath Tagore played a major role in reviving Indian classical dance and creating a positive attitude towards it. He invited exponents of the different classical dance forms to Santiniketan and by merging various forms, developed a new genre of Indian classical dance which came to be known



Look. Photo Collected

as Rabindranritya or Tagore dance. Subsequently, Uday Shankar also helped to revive Indian dance, but in a form closer to ballet than Rabindranritya which incorporates both dance and drama.

Under the leadership of Gurusaday Datta (1882-1941) and Hemanga Biswas (1922-87), the Bratachari Society and Bratachari Lokanritya Samity took initiatives for presenting the traditional Bengali dances called Jari, Jhumur, Sari, Kathi, Raybanshey, Dhali, etc. The Bengali folk dances took a structured shape by their initiative.

Bulbul Chowdhury, considered one of the legends of Muslim Bengali dancers, initially had made a name for himself as a classical dancer in Kolkata. Later, he settled in Dhaka. By merging classical dance forms with themes drawn from the Muslim past, he was able to gradually popularize dancing in the Muslim society of East Bengal. An institution of fine arts established in Dhaka on 17 May, 1955 commemorating Bulbul Chowdhury and his role in popularizing dance among conservative Bengali Muslims. It is also known as BAFA (Bulbul Academy for Fine Arts). BAFA produced singers, musicians and dancers. One of the pivotal contributions of the academy was to liberalize attitudes towards music and dance.

In this connection, Chhayanaut's name must be mentioned here. More than a mere cultural organization, it has devoted to the practice and preservation of the cultural heritages of the country, especially the cultures of music and dance. Set up in 1961, Chhayanaut has been contributing not only to the

cultivation and development of music but also has become a hub of cultural activities of the country. Virtually, Chhayanaut unofficially operates as the apex body in the realms of music and dance. The main programmes of Chhayanaut around the year include Nababorsho or Bangla New Year under the Banyan tree of Ramna, various National Days, Rabindra-Nazrul festivals including their birth and death anniversaries, seasonal programmes, (e.g. welcoming Monsoon, Autumn, The Spring), on folklore, folk music festival, drama festival, classical music festival, dance ceremony and monthly selected speeches by experts.

Gawhar Jamil and Rabishankar Chatterjee established Shilpakala Bhaban at Rankin Street in Dhaka. Institutional practice of dancing was initiated through this institute. In 1950s, Laila Samad and Rokeya Kabir started to practice dance as a performing art.

Among the accomplished dancers of the 1970s and onward, the names of Dalia Nilufar, Dalia Salauddin, Golam Mostafa Khan, Manzur Chowdhury, Sharmin Hossain, Lubna Mariam, Zeenat Barkatullah, Laila Hasan and Hasan Imam are notable.

Among the classical dances practiced in Bangladesh, Bharat-Natyam, Monipuri, Kathak, Orissi and Kathakoli are the most popular. Tamanna Rahman, Shamim Ara Nipa, Shibly Mohammad, Munmun Ahmed, Sharmili Bandopadhyaya are the key figures in classical dancing. They have already played a remarkable role in systematic practice of dancing in Bangladesh. In recent times, Sadia Islam Mou and Warda Rihab have played bright roles in the staging of dance-shows.

Around 25 thousand students are involved with the practice of dance in over 225 dance schools all over the country. Organizations like Nrityadhara, Nrityanchal have organized a number of dance festivals throughout the year.

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy was established in 1974. The Academy patronizes cultural performances in its all district branches. Established in 1977, Bangladesh Shishu Academy is imparting the children of the country in music, dance, drama and fine arts. Bangladesh Television started its broadcasting

since 1964. TV-drama is considered to be one of the most popular forms of entertainment in Bangladesh. It has produced and broadcasted plethora of programmes which played an important part throughout the country to popularize Bengali culture. Among the most popular artistes are Lily Chowdhury, Mohammad Zakaria, Momtazuddin Ahmed, Abul Khair, Abdullah al Mamun, Ramendu Majumder, Golam Mustafa, Masud Ali Khan, Zahirul Haq, Ariful Haq, Syed Ahsan Ali (Sydney), Abul Hayat, Ali Zaker, Asaduzzaman Noor, Ferdousi Majumder, Jamaluddin Hossain, Sara Zaker, Pijus Bandyopadhyay, Afzal Hossain, Khaled Khan, Laki Inam, Amol Bose, Raisul Islam Asad, Humayun Faridi, Tarique Anam Khan, Jahiruddin Piar, Subarna Mostafa, and Shampa Reza. Most of the aforementioned artists have been reigning in the hearts of millions of people for many years, thanks to their stellar performances in many memorable television dramas. The most popular form of television entertainment, these dramas mostly depicted the day to day stories of happiness and sorrow of the people of the land. All of these actors are directly or indirectly also associated with theatre activities, which is also very popular as a medium of entertainment. The true ancestor of Bangladeshi theatre is the indigenous theatre or folk theatre that has been performed for centuries in this region. The happiness and sorrows, aspirations, dreams, love and hate of the common villagers are reflected in the folk plays that are performed by the villagers themselves.

One must know about Jatra, the Bengal's own theatre form, which had been working as the biggest crowd-puller in the rural and sub-urban set up. While the old Jatra Palas, tracing back to 1548 used to deal with mythological, fantastical and historical figures, nevertheless, modernization has brought about an array of social themes more suited to the educated and enlightened people from the present day society. During the 19th century, the local elites patronized Hindu mythical jatra-ballets. Three different genres were popular naming Ram Jatra (based on The Ramayana), Krishna Jatra (based on miracles of Sri Krishna) and Kali Jatra (based on the worship of Mother Nature).

In Jatra, the greatest change took place after the First World War, which saw Jatras being strongly influenced by patriotic

and nationalistic themes. Mukunda Das and his troupe, the Swadeshi Jatra Party, performed jatras about colonial exploitation, patriotism and anti-colonial struggle, oppression of feudal and caste systems etc. In the 40s, when the struggle for independence from colonial rule was nearing its climax, the socio-political content of jatra superseded the religious-mythical theme. Nevertheless, sentimental love and religious myths have continued to inspire the many Jatras that exist even today. It was only in the late 1940's that female roles were introduced to what had always been an all-male cast. Fascinatingly, Jatras encompass a variety of skills, such as, music, singing and acting. Loud thunderous music, dramatic props, harsh lighting and the ever expected stylized delivery with over exaggerated tones, gestures and orations are what make this performing art look so glamorous and boisterous in nature. All of this is typically set on a simple outdoor stage with the musicians and chorus standing off stage. Spectators attending folk theatre performances in Bangladesh enjoy an up-close-and-personal experience as they surround the stage on all sides. Surendra Nath Natto, Patit Pabon Natto, Amolendu Biswas, Tapan Kumar, Prince Delwar, Anwar Hossain, Tarun Kumar, Prince Lokman were the prolific artists of this form of art. Till 1995, even cine-stars were regular part of jatra casts. Minerva Theatre Company, Natto Company, Sonarbangla Natty Samproday, Purbasha Theatre was famous jatra parties. Today Bangladesh's Jatra continues to play its role, expressing the local Bangladeshi culture and as well as captivating the imaginations of spectators and audiences.

The theatre scene in Bangladesh, especially in Dhaka saw the emergence of liberal streams centered in this city and was linked to Dhaka University. Munier Chowdhury, Nurul Momen, Shawkat Osman, Askar Ibne Shaikh, Jasimuddin were important among the playwrights. Dhaka University students played a pioneering role in the production of the dramas written by these playwrights.

The Language Movement of 1952 gave the much-needed impetus which added great momentum in all sorts of performing arts practice. It had a profound effect on the theatre activists. The upheaval that started in 1952 continued to shake East

Pakistan afterwards and drama became the medium of protest, either subtly or boldly, against West Pakistan's suppressive rule. A year after the language movement, on 21 February 1953, *Kabar*, a play by Munier Chowdhury who was then imprisoned in Dhaka Central Jail, was staged inside the jail with the help of other prisoners. The milestone stage performance still works as a lighthouse for all cultural activism in time of need. Under such political scenario, the Drama Circle was established in 1956. A number of passionate young theatre activists were associated with this group which introduced modern set design and produced western classics as well as local plays. Bazlul Karim was the heart of this group who wrote, translated and directed for the group. During 1960s, Bangla theatre saw the proliferation of social and historical plays along with some experimental work by Syed Waliullah and Sayeed Ahmad.

In post-liberation Bangladesh, theatre gained unprecedented momentum. The sense of newly gained freedom inspired the dramatists to utilize this medium in every possible way. They began to experiment with new ideas and techniques, but their main objective was to bring about a social change. Theatre became a regular affair, although not professional. There have been several experiments in forms in the post-liberation theatre of Bangladesh. Contemporary playwrights have searched for the lifeblood of our theatre in the rich past of indigenous theatre and have tried to emulate the style of ancient dramaturgy. They have also tried their hands in folk drama and successfully added new dimensions to that genre.

The non-professional theatre groups that were formed after liberation included Theatre, Dhaka Theatre, Aranyak Natyadal, Nagarik Natya Sampraday, Natyachakra, Dhaka Padatik and many others. As there was no well-equipped proscenium stage, the plays were staged mostly in Mahila Samity Auditorium that did not have the modern technical facilities for drama productions. The new playwrights who enriched the contemporary stage by providing original texts included Mamtazuddin Ahmed, Mamunur Rashid, Selim Al Deen, Syed Shamsul Huq, Alauddin-AI-Azad, Sayeed Ahmad, Zia Haider, S M Solaiman, Masum Reza and others.

Selim Al Deen is one of the most accomplished playwrights who spearheaded the theatre movement in Bangladesh. With aplomb, he wrote plays in the narrative tradition and popularizes the format. He has experimented with home-grown drama forms and has incorporated in his plays with numerous folk materials such as songs, dance, choral singers, etc. He frequently collaborated with director Nasiruddin Yusuf and produced some great narrative plays, which are an asset of Bangladeshi theatre. This creative duo successfully incorporated the form of amphitheatre through their numerous productions. *Prachya*, *Banopangshul*, *Kittonkhola*, *Hat-hodai* and *Nimajjan* are some finest works of this duo.

As in the pre-liberation period, translation and adaptation of foreign plays continued in the post-independence Bangladesh. Along with an ever-growing consciousness about our own native tradition, a renewed interest in western theatre could be seen in the post-liberation theatre arena in Bangladesh. Plays of Moliere, Samuel Beckett, Bertolt Brecht, Heinrik Ibsen, G.B. Shaw, Arthur Miller, Albert Camus, and Shakespeare have been translated and performed on stage successfully, which have enriched our theatre. Especially the plays of Shakespeare, Moliere, Ibsen and Brecht have been most popular. Among the translators of these plays mention may be made of Munier Chowdhury, Kabir Chowdhury, Syed Shamsul Haq, Ali Zaker, Sayeed Ahmad, Mohammad Zakaria and Asaduzzaman Noor. Abdullah Al Mamun, Mustafa Manoar, Kamaluddin Nilu, Mamunur Rashid, Nasiruddin Yusuf, Syed Jamil Ahmed, Tarique Anam Khan, Aatur Rahman, S M Solaiman, Masum Reza, Ishrat Nishat, Azad Abul Kalam are the creative minds who directed dramas that relate the people and continued to dazzle the people.

In Bangladesh, street drama has been mainly influenced by folk song, folk dance and Jatras that were staged in open places to celebrate religious and other festivals. After the inception of group theatre, drama groups have come forward to practice street drama along with stage drama. Generally, the main objective of these plays has been to arouse the people against oppression and to make them conscious of religious superstition and fundamentalism.

Besides, a few other significant forms of minor performing arts, puppetry, magic show and mimicry are popular among audience. The tradition of puppetry in Bangladesh dates back at least a thousand years. Three types of puppets are common in Bangladesh: wire puppets, stick puppets and tressed puppets, all made of shola and lightwood. They are adorned with clothes and ornaments. Brahmanbaria was famous for its puppets and puppet shows in the past. Mustafa Monwar, a famous painter, has played a significant role in the development and modernization of puppetry in Bangladesh. In performing magic, Jewel Aich is our pride. This outstanding magician made a wave in international audience with his exceptional presentation and showmanship. Pantomime has been made popular in Bangladesh after the liberation of the country and Partha Pratim Majumder is undoubtedly the forerunner of mime in Bangladesh with his grand international recognition. Zillur Rahman John has also played an important role.

Bangladeshi performing art has always been bedazzled by iconic female artists. They have shown bright colours in their performances. Jotsna Biswas in Jatra, Ferdousi Majumder in Theatre, Rawshan Jamil in dance, and Naila Azad Nupur in drama have created landmarks by their works. These artists added new chapters in the history of each individual performing arts in shouldering the responsibility with their male counterparts from time to time. In the face of daunting odds, just for the love of the art have helped them promote the art and keep the audience enchanted. The audiences too have immensely showered love on their favourite actors, both male and female and kept their memories alive in the deepest corner of their hearts. With the blessings from such legends, the new breed of artists will surely take Bangladesh to a new height of accomplishment.



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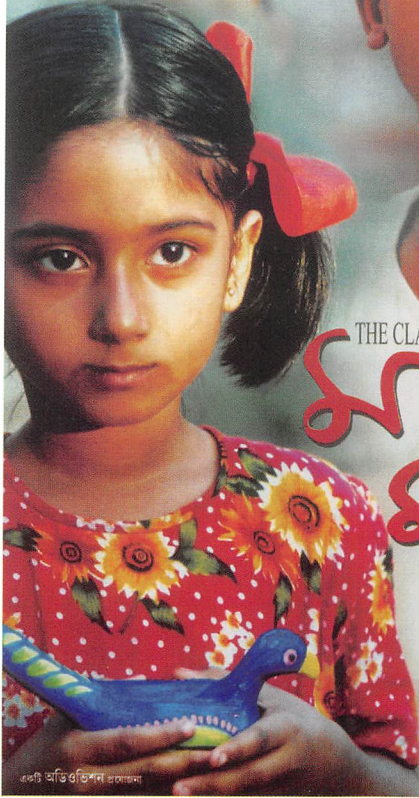
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মাটির ময়না

তারেক মাসুদ
পরিচালিত

Directed by Tareque Masud

Produced by Catherine Masud

অভিনয়ে নুরুল ইসলাম বাবুল রাসেল ফরাজী
জয়ন্ত চট্টোপাধ্যায় রোকেয়া খাটী চিন্নিহাণ সুধীর পালসানে
সম্পাদনা ক্যাথরিন মাসুদ শব্বহাণ ইন্দ্রজিৎ নিয়োগী
প্রযোজনা ক্যাথরিন মাসুদ চিত্রনাট্য তারেক ও ক্যাথরিন মাসুদ
পরিচালনা তারেক মাসুদ

একটি অডিওভিশন প্রযোজনা

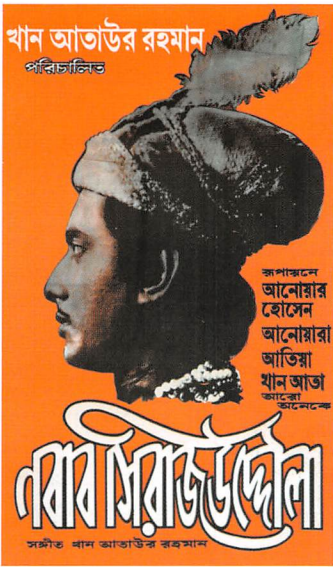




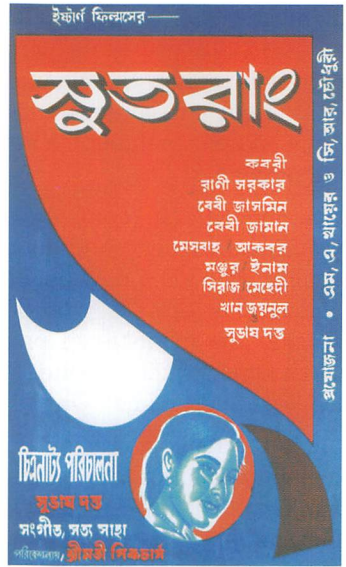
Razzak-Kabori, a legendary duo of Bengali cinema. Photo. Archive



Still from a contemporary film, "Keyamot Theke Keyamot," 1993. Photo. Archive



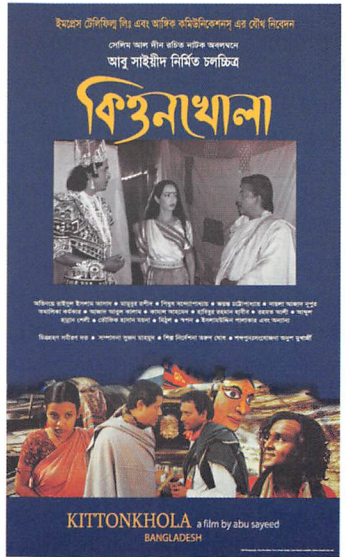
Nawab Sirajuddaula, 1967



Sutarang, 1964



Padma Nadir Majhi, 1993



Kittonkhola, 2000

To most western observers Bangladesh is a back-water with no cinema industry to write home about. The reality though is quite different. In fact, the commercial film industry in Bangladesh churns out an average of 100 films per year and reach out to huge audiences through a network of over 600 cinema theatres nationwide.

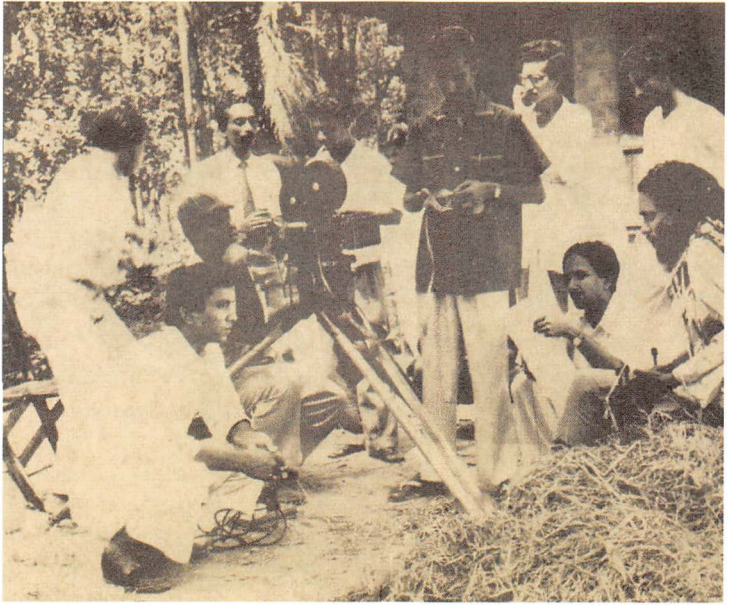
The mainstream commercial films are mostly trashy, poor imitations of song-and-dance formula Bollywood films. But against all odds a new generation of independent film-makers emerged in the 80s who created an alternative film culture outside the mainstream production and distribution system. Their films, for their shorter length and artistic overtones, were labeled "Short Films".

Since the earliest days of the Short Film movement, the new generation filmmakers found their audience in students and the intelligentsia, who had long since abandoned the cinema halls, but had retained their passionate devotion to better cinema.

Cinemas all over the world have developed gradually and so did our film industry. Just like the other countries during the late 1800s, our film exhibition culture started with 'bioscope'. Hiralal Sen from Manikganj arranged a number of bioscope shows across the country. Later, he directed and produced the first film of undivided Bengal. After Hiralal Sen's initiative, there was no looking back. That little step opened the vast doorway of Bengali cinema and paved the way for noted filmmakers like Ritwik Ghatak, Satyajit Roy, Zahir Raihan and others.

There were quite a few attempts to produce films in Dhaka from 1931 to 1956. Director Ambuj Gupta presented the first documentary *Sukumari* and first full length film *The Last Kiss*. Rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam became the first Muslim filmmaker with his film *Dhrubo*. Among other movies of this time, *Mukh-O-Mukhosh* (The Face and the Mask) released in 1956 is said to be the first feature film from the undivided Bengal. This film was the result of the Bengali language movement of 1952, which took martyrdom of several lives. From *Mukh-O-Mukhosh* to until now, our films are always recognized for depicting our local cultural elements, identities and sentiments along with impacts of social movements and contemporary activities.

By 1947, near about hundred cinema theatres were established in this region. Within ten years of the partition, the startup procedure for setting up the film industry began. The Film Development Corporation (FDC) was established by the



Shooting of "Je Nodi Morupothay", 1961. Photo Archive

legislation of East Bengal Provincial Assembly in 1958. It opened a new vista for the film industry of Bangladesh. The first film child that was born from FDC's womb was *Asiya* (*The Life of a Village Girl*) under the directorship of Fateh Lohani. *Asiya* centered on rural life and received high acclamation from home and abroad. Jahir Raihan's *Jaga Hua Savera* (*The Day Shall Dawn*), the second film produced at FDC in 1959 bagged an international award and received positive critical response.

Films produced in the sixties were mainly dominated by general themes such as artistic inquisition, language movement, folklore and history. Veteran Director Zahir Raihan directed the first-ever full-length coloured film produced in entire Pakistan. He later made the first cinemascope as well (*Bahana*). Ehtesham's *Rajdhanir Buke* (*In the Heart of Capital City*) was a tremendous musical hit of 1960. Zahir Raihan's 1961 cinema *Kakhono Aseni* (*Never Came*) was an inquest of artistic merit. In 1962 Salahuddin's *Surjasnan* (*The Sunbath*), Ehtesham's *Chanda* marked two different aspects. *Surjasnan* was an offbeat film with social conscience, while *Chanda* was an Urdu language movie that hit the commercial circuit of whole Pakistan.

Local folklore stories have inspired filmmakers which resulted into movies like *Roopban* and *Behula* in sixties. Reputed to

be the highest grossing Bangladeshi film of all time *Beder Meye Josna* was also from the same genre. Directed by Motiur Rahman Panu, this cult movie starring Anju Ghosh and Iliyas Kanchan was released in 1989, and had a remake in 1991. The fable-type storytelling in the rural setting, Jatra (a popular folk theatre) styled dialogue delivery and heartfelt songs are very common in Bangladeshi cinemas. Nawab Sirajuddoula was one of them. Later, in 2008, filmmaker Giasuddin Selim attempted similar fashion in *Monpura*, the same can be said for Humayun Ahmed's *Ghetuputro Kamala* (*Kamala, the Pleasure Boy*) in 2012.

After the independence in 1971, we saw a free flow of Bangladeshi cinema. The following year film activities took a new turn. The 1971 liberation war created a buzz in our film industry. Promising and talented filmmakers, writers and others teamed up and came with liberation war based movie plots. A total of 29 cinemas were released in 1972 including Chasi Nazrul Islam's *Ora Egarojan* (*Those 11 Freedom Fighters*), Subash Dutta's *Arunodoyer Agnishakhi* (*Witness of the Sunrise*), and Momtaz Ali's *Raktakta Bangla* (*Bengal in Bloodshed*), cinemas based on our liberation war. These films still inspire the young film lovers.

The following years saw a variety in movie making. Kazi Zahir made the super hit social drama *Abujh Mon* (*Innocent Love*) in the early '70s. Zahirul Huq's social-action-drama *Rangbaz* was a hit in the box office. Three films based on Bangladesh liberation war, *Dhire Bohe Meghna* (*Quietly Flows the River Meghna*), Alamgir Kumkum's *Amar Janmobhumi* (*My Homeland*), and Khan Ataur Rahman's *Abar Tora Manush Ho* (*Humane Again*) still captures audience's heart. Ritwik Ghatak, the noted Bengali Indian director made *Titas Ekti Nadir Nam* (*Titas Is the Name of a River*) based on a famous novel, was a landmark of the year. Kabir Anwar's maiden venture, *Slogan* was another mentionable film.

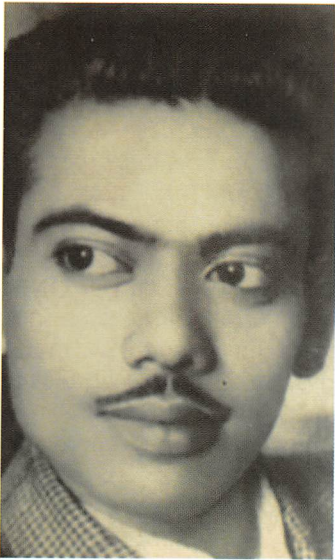
In 1974, due to severe flood and famine, the film industry faced difficulties. But in that year, 30 full-length feature films were released. Chashi Nazrul Islam's *Sangram* (*The Fight*), Mita's *Alor Michil* (*Procession of Light*), F. A. films unit's *Shanibarar Chiti* (*Saturday's Letter*), F. Kabir Chowdhury's *Anek Din Agey* (*Many Days Ago*) got international appreciation. This era also marked the rise of some noted actors of our cinema-Razzak, Shuchorita, Kabari, Shabana, Zafar Iqbal, Bobita and Alamgir.



Hiralal Sen (1866-1917)



Ehtesham (1927-2002)



Zahir Raihan (1935-1972)



Tareque Masud (1956-2011)

In the late 1970s, cinemas were mostly based on literature. Abdullah Al Mamun's *Sareng Bau* (*The Wife of the Shipman*) from a popular novel by Shahidullah Kaiser, Amjad Hussain's *Golapi Ekhon Traine* (*The Endless Trail*) from his own novel, Subhas Dutta's *Dumurer Phool* (*The Unseen Flower*) from a short story of Ashraf Siddiqui are some noted adaptations. These films were acclaimed globally and exhibited at International Film Festivals. The other remarkable movies of late 70s were Abdus Samad's *Surja Sangram* (*The Fight for Sun*), Alamgir Kabir's *Rupali Soikote* (*The Loner*), Kazi Hayat's *The Father*, Amjad Hossain's *Sundari* (*The Beautiful Woman*).

In 1980, another notable adaptation *Surja Dighal Bari* (*The Ominous House*) was released in the Figueira da Foz Film Festival in Portugal. This movie was adapted from a popular novel of Abu Ishaq based on hunger, war and partition of 1947.

The '80s were dominated by fantasy and action genre. Pune Film Institute trained director Syed Salahuddin Zaki surprised the audience with *Ghuddi* (*The Kite*), which focused on the contemporary issues, aspirations and frustrations of the urban youth. He assembled some known faces from television and stage drama. Later that year, another Pune returned director Badal Rahman created a colourful children venture *Emiler Goenda Bahini* (*Emil and His Team*). Besides these, Abdullah Al Mamun's *Sakhi Tumi Kar* (*To Whom You Belong Dear*) and Amjad Hussain's *Koshai* (*The Butcher*) were other action and fantasy loaded films of the year. Meanwhile there were other non-fantasy genre productions such as Shahidul Huq Khan's *Kalmilata*, Amjad Hossain's *Janmo Theke Jalchi* and Syed Hasan Imam's *Lal Sabujer Pala*. Film critic journalist turned director Alamgir Kabir came to the scenario with his movie *Mohana* (*The River Mouth*) in early '80s. Chashi Nazrul Islam revived the popular characters of Sarat Chandra's novel *Devdas*. It was one of the critically acclaimed movies of that time.

When we are talking about action movies, we have to mention two names – Sohel Rana and Rubel. They came along as a new breed of 'heroes' and took the action genre to a new level. Later, Jashim and Manna joined the list with their highly accepted social-action movies,

In 1984, Akhtaruzzaman, Rafiqul Bari, and Amjad Hussain presented excellent visual stories with in-depth messages. Amjad Hussain's *Bhat Dey* was a highly praised one. Later, *Dahan* (Affliction) by Shaikh Niamat Ali and *Agami* (*Future*)

by the then novice filmmaker Murshedul Islam was awarded at international film festivals. Based on two of Sarat Chandra's masterpieces *Ramer Sumati* (*The Kindness of Ram*) by Shahidul Amin and *Shuvada* (*Good Girl*) by Chashi Nazrul Islam were two acclaimed social movies of that period.

Late '80s saw the rise of a new generation moviemakers inspired by the wave of film movement. Murshedul Islam, Tareque Masud, Tanvir Mukammel, Mustafa Kamal and others came up with new visions and were led by legendary director Alamgir Kabir. They started the short film movement. Later, this movement turned into a wave of alternative cinema movement throughout the country. Many promising and successful film directors came along in the mainstream arena through this movement.

Bangladeshi cinema entered the vibrant age in the 1990s. Mostly taken over by commercial elements, the decade was ruled by fresh new acting talents; and by love-romance-song-drama oriented screenplays. Ehtesham's *Chadni* and Sohanur Rahman Sohan's *Keyamat Theke Keyamat* hit the circuit. Sohan's blockbuster hit movie introduced two new faces – Salman Shah and Moushumi. Salman's spirited performance and irresistible charm turned him into a heartthrob of the young moviegoers immediately. In a tragic incident, we have lost him forever, but Salman Shah had been, and still is considered as The Shining Star of Bangla Cinema. Sohan and Ehtesham set the filmmaking trend for the rest of the decade to follow.

The new thinkers of the new millennium later broke that trend. After 2000, Tareque Masud, Humayun Ahmed, Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, Giasuddin Selim gave the audience something fresh and offered some outstanding films to watch. Tareque Masud's *Matir Moyna* (*The Clay Bird*) has been a tremendous achiever in the international arena. The film was released in 2002. It was awarded the FIPRESCI Prize in section Directors' Fortnight outside competition at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival, and became Bangladesh's first film to compete for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

Alongside the mainstream movies, an alternative cinema-making is thriving. It has given rise to institutional criticism and academic interest. The Bangla cinema has evolved over the last decade in many different dimensions. It is all set to go big in near future.

A Model of Sustainable Growth



Once dismissed as a basket case, Bangladesh made into the lower middle-income country group per capita GNI threshold reaching USD 1044 on its 43rd birthday. This has been possible as Bangladesh is experiencing a steady economic growth over the last several decades.

Sheikh Hasina, providing visionary leadership as Prime Minister, as Bangladesh moves on sustainable development pathway.
Photo: Saiful Islam Kallol

মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী,

স্থান: নাওডো

তপ

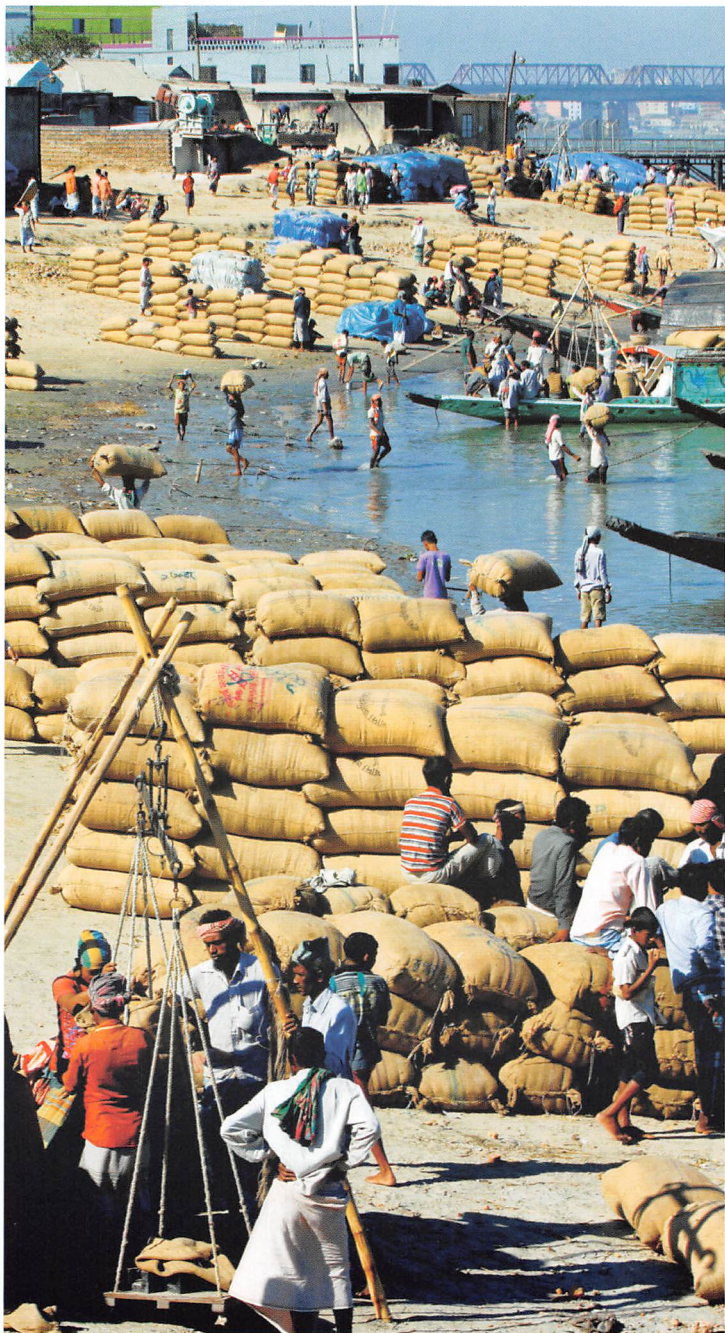








Golden fiber. Photo. Din M Shibly



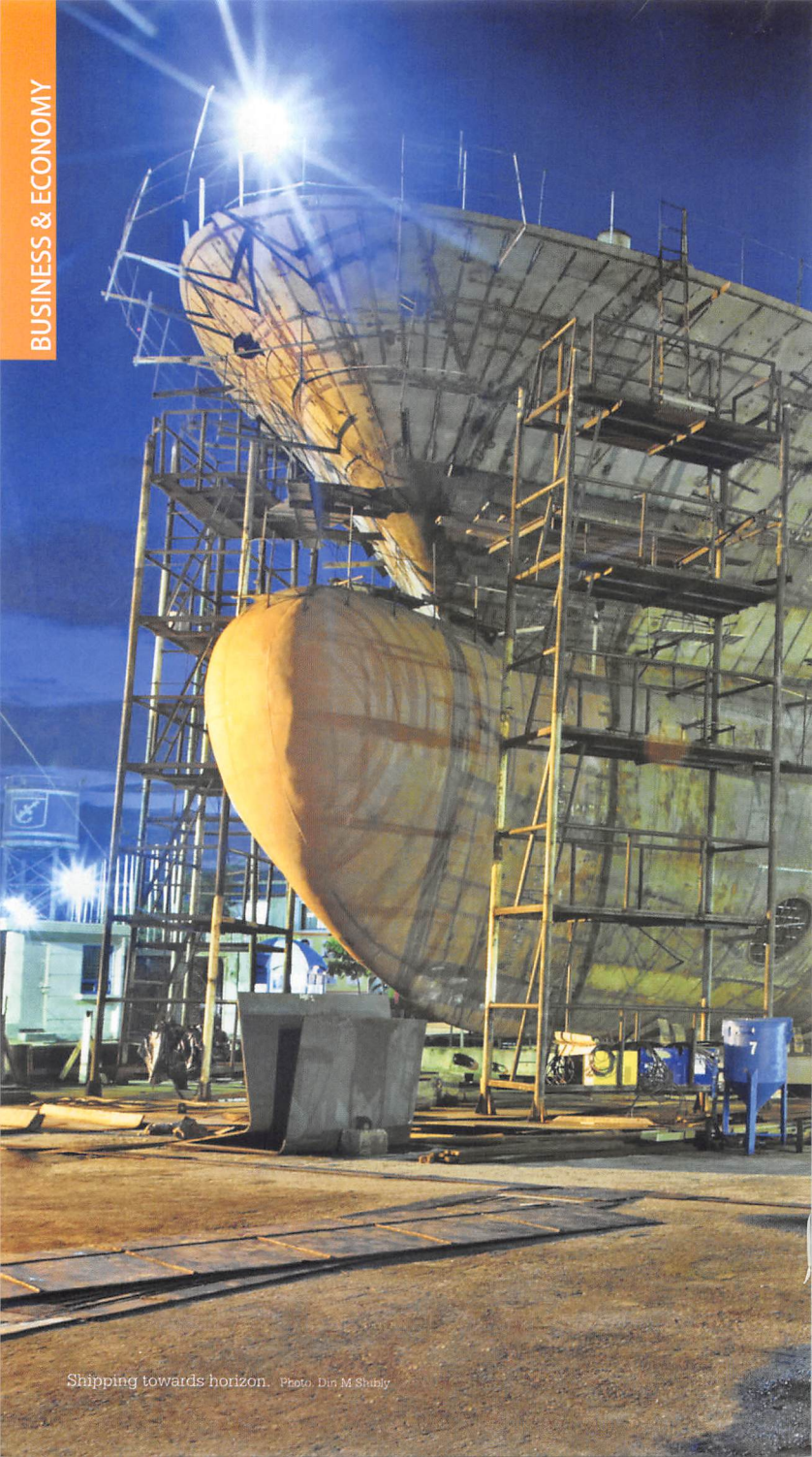
River port. Photo. K M Asad



Tea garden. Photo. Syed Zakir Hossain



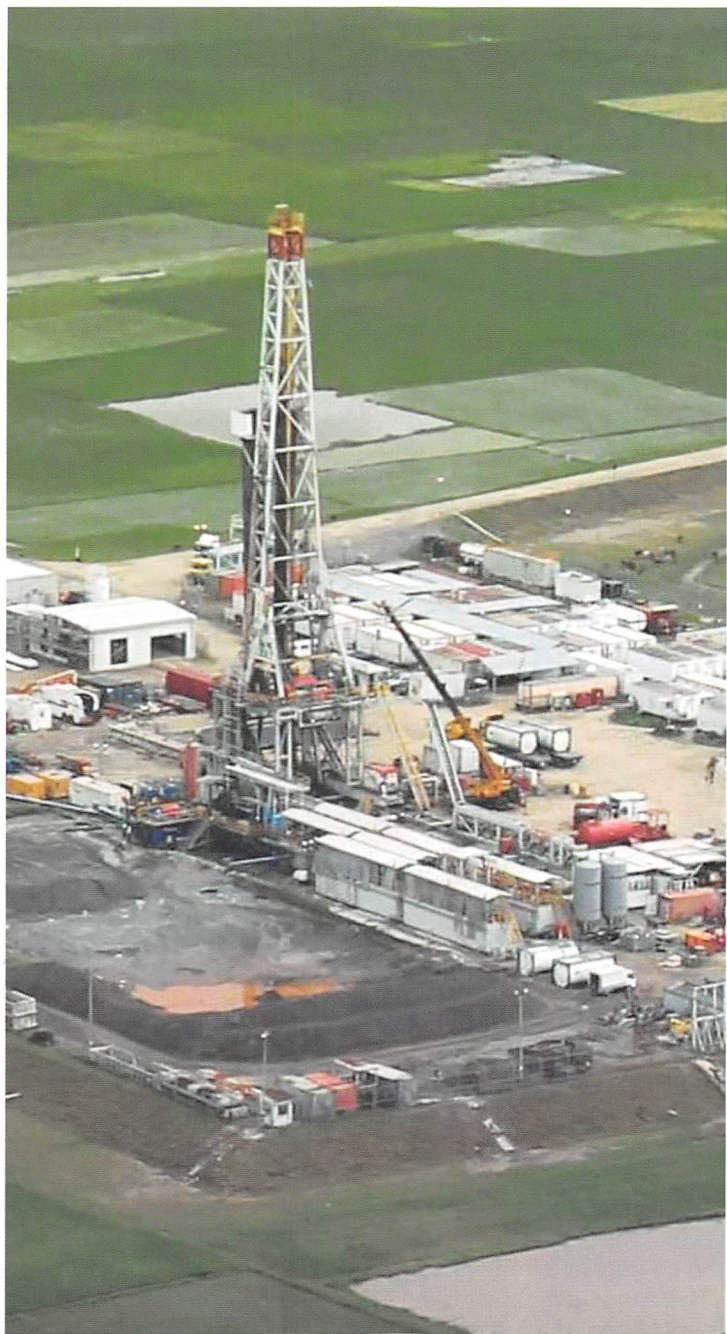
Mango auction, Rajshahi. Photo. K M Asad







The life savers. Photo: Probal Rashid



Glimpse of a gas field. Photo. Zia Islam

For economists around the world, Bangladesh has always been a puzzle, popularly termed “the Bangladesh paradox”. Economists have tried to understand how the country has been making progress in terms of growth and social reforms in spite of existing bottlenecks in infrastructure and governance. In real terms, Bangladesh’s economy has grown 5.8% per year since 1996 despite political instability, poor infrastructure, corruption, insufficient power supplies and slow implementation of economic reforms. Although more than half of GDP is generated through the service sector, 45% of Bangladeshis are employed in the agriculture sector with rice as the single-most-important product.

Bangladesh is an agricultural country, with some three-fifths of its population engaged in farming. Jute and tea are principal sources of foreign exchange. Major impediments to growth include frequent cyclones and floods, inefficient state-owned enterprises, inadequate port facilities, a rapidly growing labor force that cannot be absorbed by agriculture, delays in exploiting energy resources (natural gas), insufficient power supplies, and slow implementation of economic reforms. Economic reform is stalled in many instances by political infighting and corruption at all levels of government. For higher GDP growth, investments in both public and private sectors will need to be accelerated. The prevailing political and economic stability has greatly encouraged investment in the private sector. The trend of foreign direct investment is very encouraging. The government is committed to market economy and has been pursuing policies for supporting and encouraging private investment and eliminating unproductive expenditures in the public sector. A number of measures have been taken to strengthen the planning system and intensify reforms in the financial sector.

Bangladesh’s achievements in terms of improving basic conditions of people’s lives in last two decades are highly praiseworthy. Education and health are two sectors Bangladesh can be considered role models for many developing countries of the world. For the first decades of its independent history, Bangladesh’s economy grew by a trifling 2% a year. Since 1990, its GDP has been rising at a more respectable 5% a year, in real terms. That has helped reduce the percentage of people below the poverty line from 49% in 2000 to 32% in 2010. According to *The Economist*, four main factors explain this surprising success. Dismantling the population bomb with the help of Planned Parenthood is one big factor that helped Bangladesh. Family

Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB) has pioneered family planning movement in the country. It advocates family planning as a basic human right and motivates people towards the concept of small family. In giving women better health and more autonomy, family planning was one of a number of factors that improved their lot. As a result, women's status in Bangladesh has been changed greatly. Today they are playing important roles in all spheres of life. Secondly, Bangladesh managed to restrain the fall in rural household incomes that usually increases extreme poverty in developing countries. One-sixth of the population remains undernourished, which is an affliction; but it is an improvement on 20 years ago, when more than a third of the population was underweight or stunted. In spite of the existence of many problems and constraints to sustainable agricultural development in Bangladesh, a quiet agricultural revolution process has been taking place in the country. This process has evolved in response to emerging macro-economic policy and sector policy reforms. Besides, many of these villagers set out for abroad, as menial labors in search of a better future. Around 6 million Bangladeshis work abroad, mostly in the Middle East, and they remit a larger share of the national income than any other big country gets from migrants. Bangladesh received \$14.23 billion in remittance in 2013-14. These cash flow has been breathing new life in the economy of the country as well as making the family dream to live bigger and better.

Having stated that, there are other factors that helped tame the extreme poverty in Bangladesh. Microfinance gave another boost in the rural economy, thanks to Grameen Bank of Dr. Muhammad Yunus. The noble laureate's dream project has remarkable success in many parts of the country. However, what gave the ultimate momentum was added by BRAC, the biggest social enterprise in the world and other NGOs. The government of Bangladesh has been welcoming NGOs and paved the ways for their activities, which ultimately resulted in making striking progress on a range of social indicators over the last 15 years, an achievement widely credited to the country's pluralist service provision regime. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have significantly expanded their services during this period and have shown that it is possible to scale up innovative anti-poverty experiments into nationwide programs.

At the same time, the Human and Clothing (H&C) industries provide a major source of economic growth in Bangladesh's

rapidly developing economy. Exports of textiles and garments are the principal source of foreign exchange earnings. Agriculture for domestic consumption is Bangladesh's largest employment sector. By 2002 exports of textiles, clothing, and ready-made garments (RMG) accounted for 77% of Bangladesh's total merchandise exports. By 2013, about 4 million people, mostly women, worked in Bangladesh's \$19 billion-a-year industry, export-oriented ready-made garment (RMG) industry. Sixty percent of the export contracts of western brands are with European buyers and about forty percent with American buyers. Foreign investors own only 5% of textile factories, with most of the production being controlled by local investors. The country is now eyeing to move up the value chain in apparel manufacturing, which certainly is going to set RMG industry on a new journey. In need of manufacturing more sophisticated designer labels, the country is trying to skill up its labors, which will not only enhance their productivity but also help them earn more. In addition, due to some recent industrial accidents, the sector is trying to be more compliant environmentally and in case of workplace safety and the process has begun. The RMG sector has not only been boosting economy by earning foreign currency but also giving birth to a very dynamic backward linkage industry. All the people, especially women who have been engaged in the jobs are buying many locally made necessary commodities from the local markets-which in turn, create jobs and add money to the national exchequer. Latest studies done by McKinsey & Company shows that the retailers and buyers are still considering this country to be their prime destination because of massive factory set up and reasonable labor cost.

Good news is the country is trying to expand its export basket. New entrants that are leather and leather goods. Millions of foreign currency can be earned from this sector only. At the same time, a sector like Information Technology (IT) is opening new doors for economy, as outsourcing is a very popular trend among the youth. Highly technical industries as ship-building is also drawing much attention of European investors in last couple of years. This is certainly a turn around for a country, which has been making negative headlines with its ship-breaking industry that causes much peril to both people and environment it operates in. Pharmaceuticals and plastics are two other industries that can take Bangladesh to a newer height when it comes to quality export products at a much competitive price.

To sum up, the economy of Bangladesh is still attracting investors from different parts of the world and there are various national and international efforts to improve its economic prospects. Foreign direct investment has passed \$1 bn but this is below the potential, with a substantial gap of more than \$2 bn. A wave of FDI is expected to enter into the coming years with focus being more on the infrastructure sector.

Bangladesh plans to become a middle-income country by the year 2021. Experts from home and abroad have welcomed this visions, though at the same time they have expressed concerns over political unrest, which highly affected the economy of the country in the year 2013. The GDP growth slowed down to 5.6% in FY2014, owing to a decline in remittances (which have been equivalent to about 15% of private consumption spending) and as export growth tapers off in the coming months. Growth is expected to rebound to 7.05% in FY2016, aided by higher remittance and export growth, as well as by prospects for continued economic recovery in the US and the euro area.

If we look back, Bengal had always been a great choice for traders. The ancient city of Wari-Bateshwar on the bank of the river Brahmaputra, as archeological history suggests, was a great hub for Arab, Egyptian, Greek and Roman traders. As time passed, the country has been visited by traders and businessmen from around the world for various commodities like spices, silks and muslins. But if we look at today's world, with the economic center of gravity being shifted from west to east, Bangladesh is an important player for its position: it's located in the heart of Asia, bordered with India and close to China, it is sure to benefit from Asia's recent dynamic growth and the expanding middle class.

Having the 8th largest population in the world, 52% of them being in the age group of 25-35, Bangladesh's profile will surely drive growth and give a competitiveness for the country to become a regional hub of export. The country has always believed in the indomitable energy of its people and day is not far when its citizens will ultimately make the dream of a 'Shonar Bangla' (Golden Bengal) true by attaining sustainable prosperity.

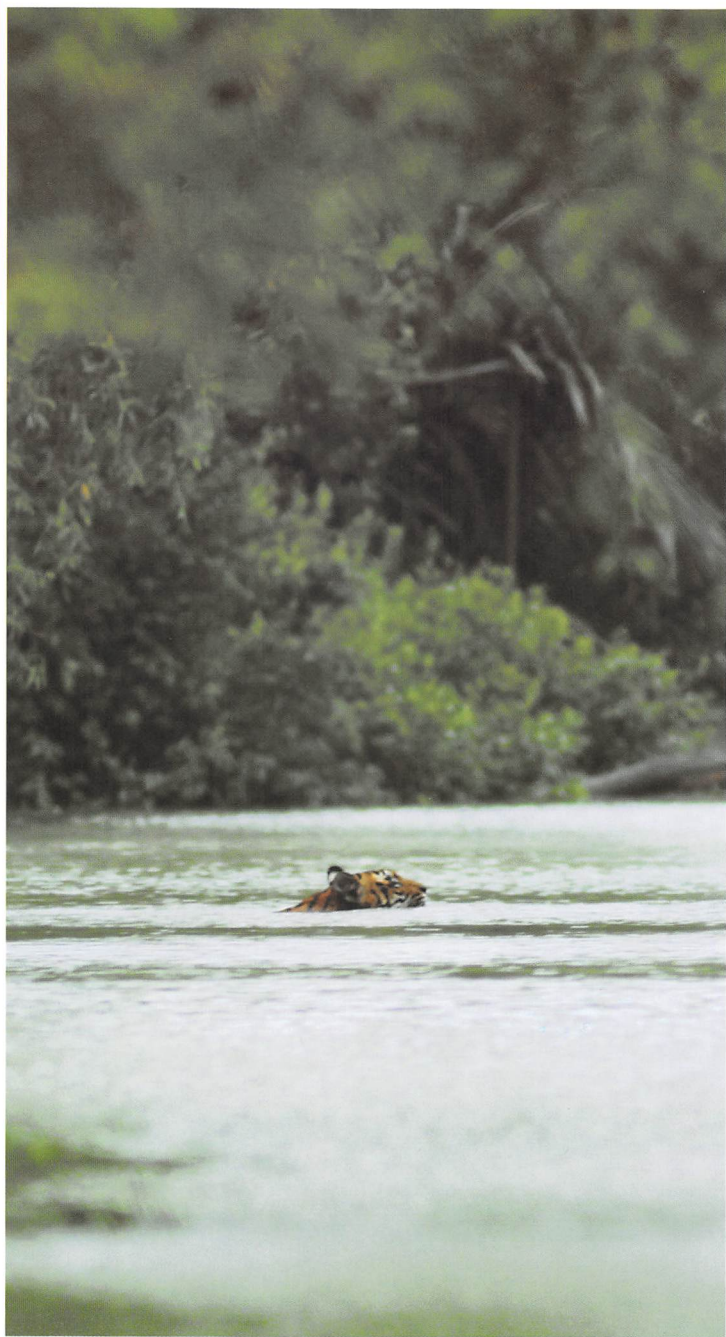


In the Lap of Nature

With more than 10% of the country being covered with forests, the flora and fauna we have are diverse and will never cease to surprise you. The country is bathed with numerous rivers and their tributaries, which carry abundant amount of silt. The result is fertile lands with wonderful condition promoting vegetation. More than 1600 species of vertebrate and 1000 species of invertebrate fauna are found here. Spending sometime in search of these beautiful species will open a window of opportunity to know how wonderfully these children of mother nature have been living with each other with perfect harmony.

Photo: M R Hossain

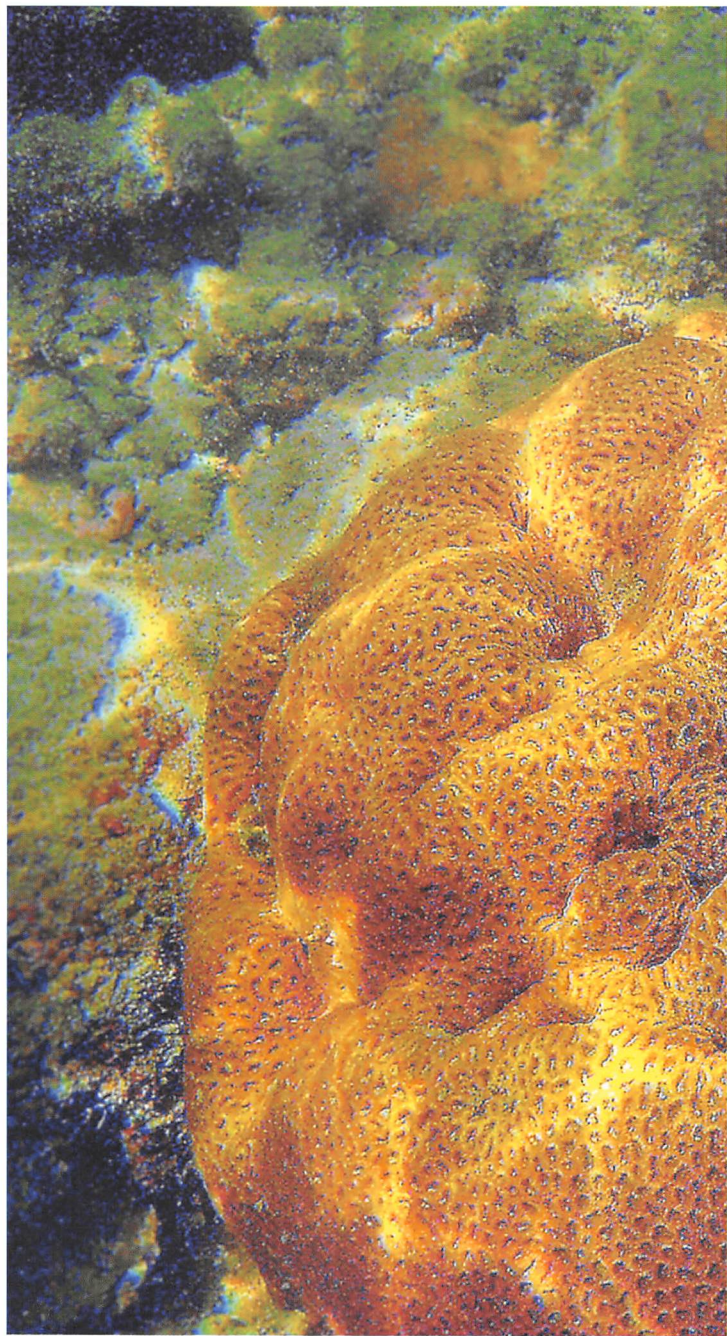




The king's bath. Photo. M. Monirul H Khan



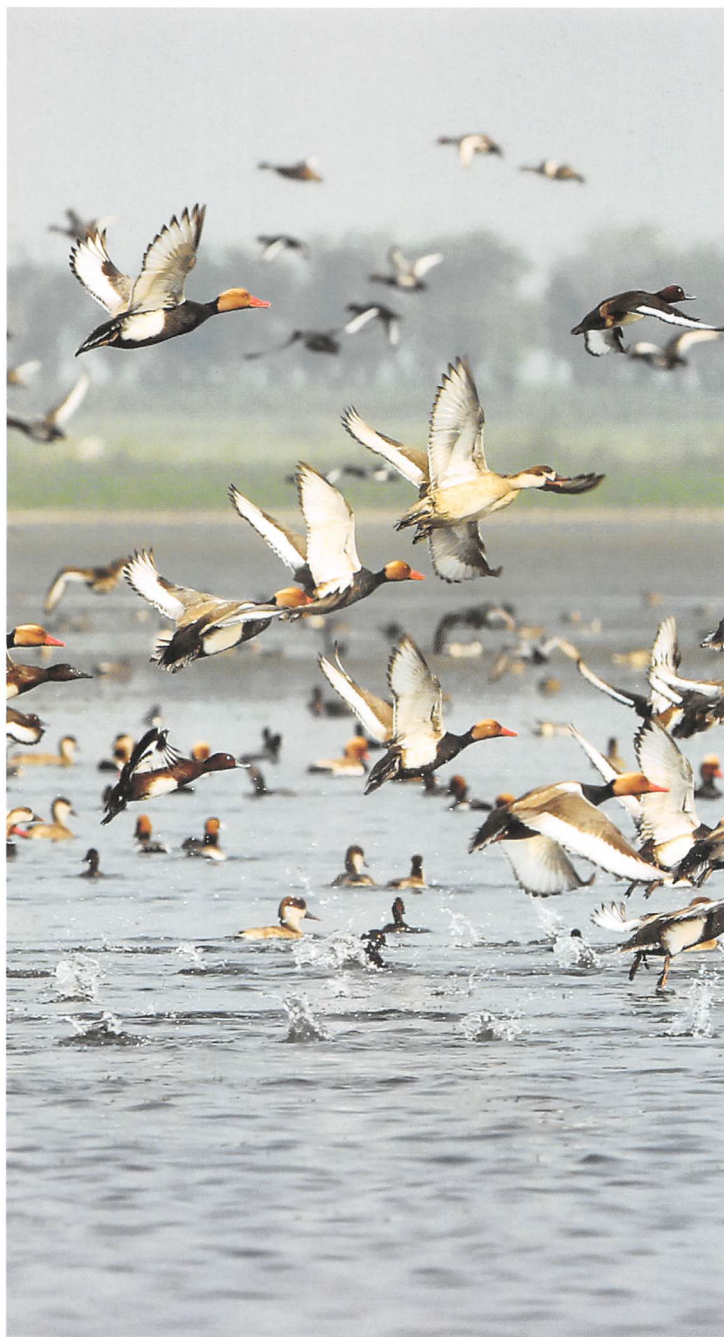
Magpie Robin (*Copsychus saularis*), National Bird of Bangladesh. Photo. M Monirul H Khan



Coral at the St. Martin's island, Cox's Bazar. Photo: Salman Saeed



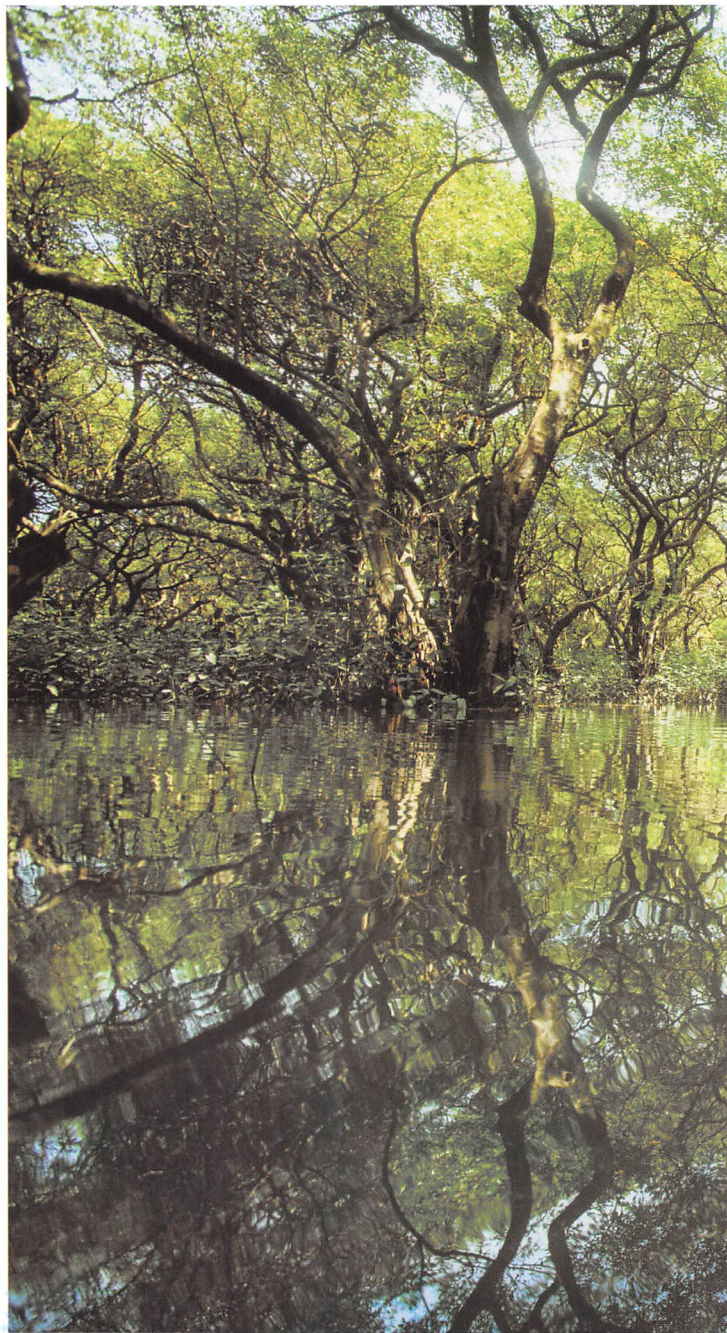
Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops aduncus*), Bay of Bengal. Photo: M Monirul H Khan



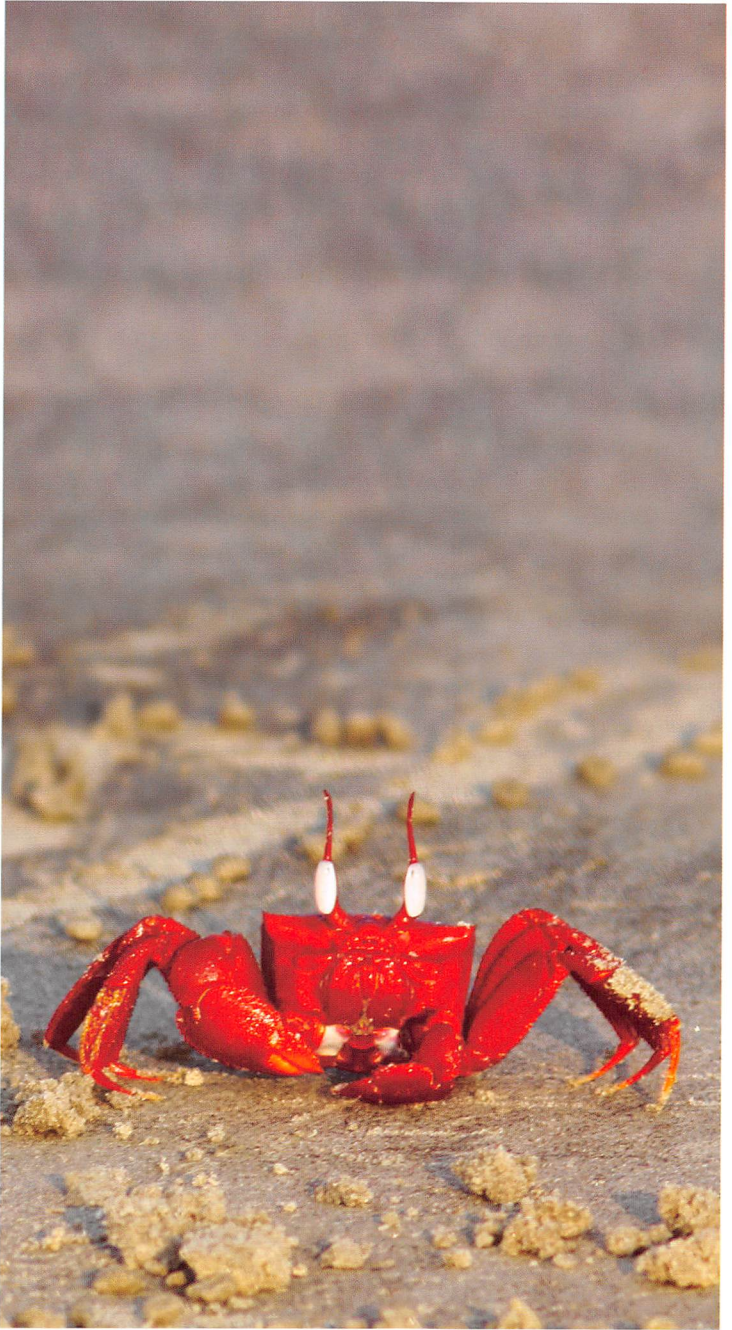
Migratory birds, Tangua Haor, Sunamganj. Photo: Syed Zakir Hossain



Life and river. Photo. M R Hasan



Ratargul, a fresh water swamp forest, Sylhet. Photo: K M Asad



Fiddler Crab (*Uca* sp.). Photo. M Monirul H Khan

Endowed with the blessing and abundance of nature, the terrain of Bangladesh is one of the liveliest territories on earth. Nature is so green that it mesmerizes the eyes and mind; natural features are so diverse that it surpasses the imagination. The largest delta in the world has an interesting geographical setting with mostly low-lying plains crisscrossed with hundreds of rivers, hill tracks in the east, and vast water bodies known as the 'Haors' in the north-east and in the south. In the south-west by the Bay of Bengal, stands the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest. The hilly coastal areas with some marine islands in the south-east provide another unique livestock feature. The diverse landscape beholds countless number of floras and faunas as well.

The riverine country is filled with many big and small rivers. The Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna river system with its some 400 tributaries and distributaries makes a massive network of water bodies throughout the country, which is only next to the Amazon river system in South America. The Padma (Ganges), Meghna and Jamuna (Brahmaputra) are the three major rivers of the country.

Forests of different genres and nature sprout forth all around in different parts of the country. The Sundarbans is the largest continuous mangrove forest eco-system in the world, which is also declared as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. This tidal swamp forest has 334 species of flora and 269 species of fauna vertebrate wildlife. The common floral species are Sundri, Gewa, Keora, Bain, Goran, Golpata, Keya (*Screw pine*), etc. The Sundarbans carries many important wildlife species such as world renowned Royal Bengal Tiger, Ganges River Dolphin, Rhesus Macaque, Monkey, Spotted Deer, Estuarine Crocodile, etc. Birds like kingfishers, crane, egrets, herons, wild ducks and, woodpeckers are some of many species of birds that have made their habitat here.

The central and northern districts of the country are bestowed with tropical moist deciduous forests. Highlands in the Gazipur and Mymensing districts have jungles known as the Bhawal Jungle. These jungles are also known as the 'Sal Bans' as they are full of Sal (*Shorea Robusta*) trees. These jungles have small animals like fox, weasels, hedgehogs, jackal, mongoose, squirrel, some small but pretty poisonous snakes, frogs, wild roosters raptors and some other birds.

The northern part of the country is mostly plain with few hills. Parts of Rajshahi and Rangpur Divisions, Mymensing and Gazipur Districts are consisted of highlands that include the Barinda Tract, Garo Hills and the Bhawal jungle. In summer this region is famous for growing sweet fruits, such as, mango, litchi, jackfruit, banana, and sobeda, coconut, pineapple, etc. Many of these fruits grow in every different parts of the country. But in Rajshahi, Dinajpur and Chapai Nawabganj districts are major producers of ripe mango and litchi during the summer.

Eastern parts of the country, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions have many hills and jungles of evergreen trees. The Khasia and Tripura hills in Sylhet division, Chittagong Hill Tracts and coastal hills in Chittagong division are also covered with jungles of some kind.

Tea and pineapples are grown mainly in hilly areas like Sylhet, Chittagong and the Chittagong Hill Tracts in the Chittagong. Sylhet is also famous for growing tea. In fact, tea gardens are one of the main attractions of this region. Tea gardens are abundant in all four districts in Sylhet division. For tea plantations, many rain trees are used as semi-permanent and permanent shades.

Rema-Kalenga and Satchari Wildlife Sanctuary in Habiganj district and the Lawachara National Park in Maulavibazar district are located in Sylhet Division. These dry and moist evergreen forests are the richest wildlifesanctuaries in terms of biodiversity. These are well-known for a variety of rare species of birds, such as hornbills, pheasants, mynas, bulbuls, owls, racket tailed drongo, parrots, hill mortem, red head kucakuci, sipahi Bulbul, Basantabauri, vultures, mathura, banamoraga (wild roosters), owl etc. A total of seven species of primates, five species of squirrels, and many species of snakes, lizards and frogs, three species of monkeys, kullu, lajjabati resus monkey and night monkeys, and five species kathbirali (squirrel) are found here. The most notable of all is the globally threatened ape Hoolock Gibbon. Among other significant wildlife found here are mukh pora hanuman, hanuman glasses, maya deer, mecho bagh (fishing cat), wild boar, weasel, hedgehog etc. Eighteen species of snakes can be found in the forest including cobra, paradise flycatcher, damrasa and laudaga. Lawachara National Park has the critically endangered western hoolock gibbons, a small population of only 62 individuals remain in the area.

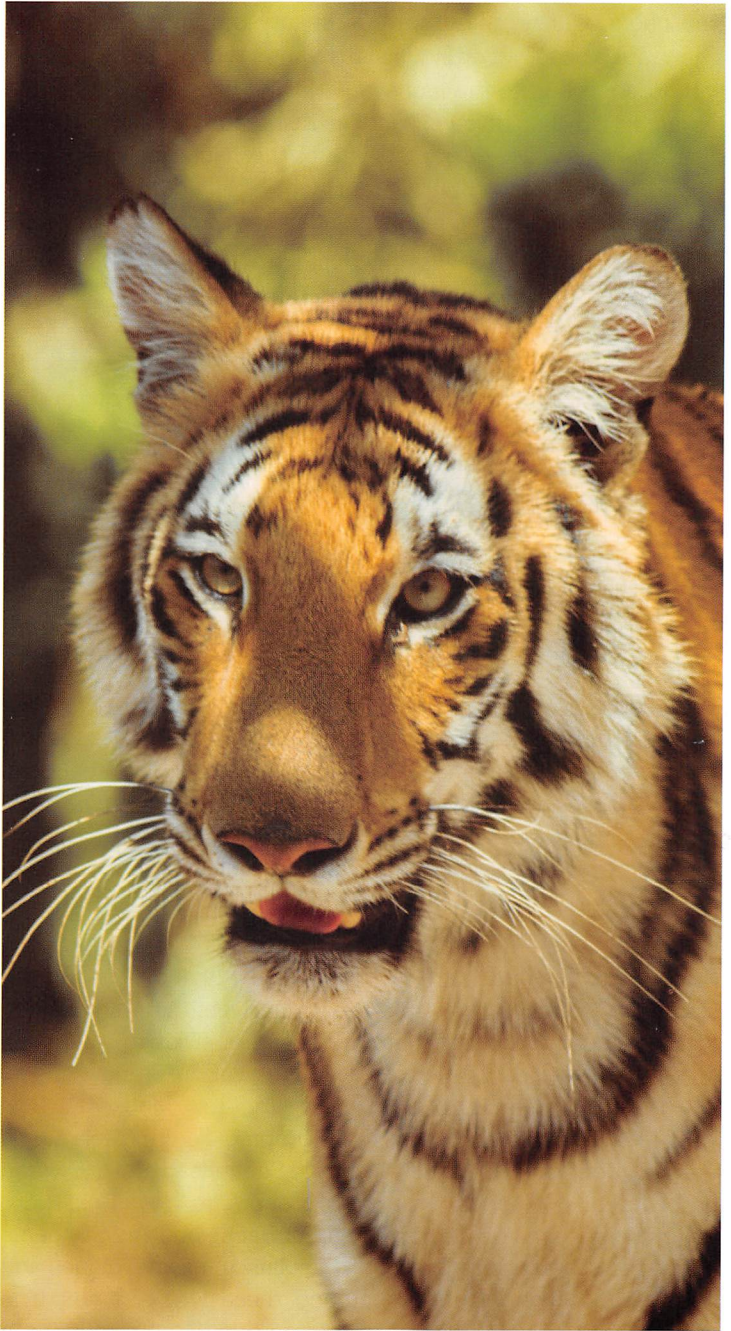
The only freshwater swamp forest in Bangladesh, Ratargul is also located in Sylhet district. It is one of the few fresh water swamp forests in the world. The forest goes under 20 to 30 feet water in monsoon, which remains about 10-feet deep rest of the year. Most of the water-tolerant trees grow here include, Koroch (*Pongamia pinnata*), Hijal, Borun and Murta. Rhesus Macaque, several species of snakes and frogs, and different kinds of waterbirds two types of snakes (watersnake and green pit viper), three types of frogs, many red faced macaques, different kinds of kingfishers are also found in this forest.

The country is fashionably beautified with different kinds of flowers of vibrant colours round the year. Among them are Krishnachura, Kanakchura, Jarul, Kadamba, Jasmine, Screw Pine, Oleander, Shiuli, Champak and Hibiscus. There are more than 100 species of orchids found in Bangladesh. Some are located in the Sal forests, Sylhet hill forests and also in the mangrove forests.

There is another tidal swamp forest in Nijhum Dweep in Noakhali district, which has become a huge breeding zone, as well as reserve of the spotted deer. It is the habitat for water fowl, migratory shore birds, and a large number of reptiles, mammals, and amphibians. Its aquatic areas harbour, the Ganges river dolphin.

A small island of the Bay of Bengal is St. Martin's Island, locally known as Narikel (Coconut) Jinjira, is full of coconut trees. Keya (Screw Pine) bushes are also in abundance in the island. Chhera Dweep, the southern tip of Bangladesh, is located in this island. Some coral reefs are seen in some parts of the island.

Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachari, situated in the south-eastern part of the land country are hilly areas. Boga Lake, situated in Bandarban is a popular place for the local adventurous tourists. Peaks of Keokradong, Tajgingdong and Sakha Hafong, wonderful waterfalls like Nafakhum, Rijhuk, Jadipai, Kubbung and, Remakri are also very beautiful. Khagrachari is full of smaller hills and waterfalls. Beautiful Sapchhari water fall emerges out into mysterious dark caves of Alutila hill. The evergreen jungles over the hills also grow bamboo and teak. Wild elephants are also found in these hilly forests. Rangamati is bestowed with a wonderful Kaptai lake and some wonderful natural landscapes.



Royal Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris*). Photo. M Abdullah Abu Diyan

The haors offer a unique natural beauty during the monsoon. These are basically crop lands in the winter that turn into massive water bodies during the monsoon. Most of haors are seen in the districts of Sylhet division, and in Kishoreganj and Netrokona districts. The water-tolerant plants of the haors include Hijalor Hual, Korijor Koroch, Bhui Dumur and, Nolkhagra. Other plant species available in Bangladesh wetlands include Mandar, Gab, Makna, Singara, Jaldumur (a kind of fig ficus), Chitki, Thankuni, Kalmi, Helencha, Hogla, Duckweed, Hyacinth, Lotus and Water Lilies.

These haors and other lakes around the country become the habitat of thousands of migrant birds in the winter. Ducks, geese, shorebirds, eagles, falcons, swallows and wagtails, grebes, storm petrels, tropic birds, boobies, cormorants, egrets, herons, storks, ibises, spoonbills, ducks, swans, hawks, eagles, falcons, hornbills, swallows, larks, pheasants, sandpipers, quails, swifts are some of the thousands of migrant birds found in winter. The only Pelican found in Bangladesh is Spot-billed Pelican, which is mostly found around the haors. Globally threatened Pallas's Fish Eagle have been found to nest in the haor areas.

The Oriental Magpie Robin, locally known as Doyel, is the National Bird of Bangladesh. Birds like crows, kites, ravens, sparrows, shaliks, mynas, robins, owls, cuckoos, parakeetsrots, pigeons, doves, woodpeckers, bulbuls, babui (weavers), warblers, thrushes and babblers are found all over the country throughout the year. Crows, kites and sparrows are found in abundance in the cities and towns. Almost all households of rural areas have domesticated hens and ducks.

Hundreds types of fish are found in the rivers and ponds in the country, which spread out into the major rivers during monsoon. Some of them are Ruhi (Rohu), Katla, Chital (Clown Knief fish), different types of catfish, known as Magur, Pabda, Shing, Pangas, Silver Carp, Grass Carp, Mohashol (Tor Tor, Mahseer), Boal (Wallago), Bele (Goby), Ritha, Koi (Climbing Perch), Mola (Mola Carplet), Tengra, Tilapia, Taki (Spotted Snakehead), Puti (Swamp Barb), Kechhki (Ganges River Sprat), Baim (Tire Track Eel), Reba, Kalibaus (Labeo), Foli (Bronzge Feather Back), and Aeer to name a few. Fresh water shrimps, snails, molluscs insects, algae and herbs are also grown in and around these watery lands. The national fish, Hilsa are found in Padma and Meghna Rivers in abundance during their breeding season in monsson.

With the Bay of Bengal stretched throughout south of Bangladesh, the coastal areas including the Sundarbans in Khulna division, Kuakata beach of Patuakhali district in Barisal division, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and St. Martin's island are huge reserves of salt water fishes like Bhetki (Barramundi), Surma (Mackerel), Churi, Lotia, Salmon, flying fish, and other seafoods like crabs, shrimps, octopus, squids, oysters, maroons, etc. Occasionally, some sharks, dolphins and whales are also found in these areas. Turtles and tortoises live in both fresh and salt waters. Different types of algae grow in St. Martin's and around the Sundarbans. Finfish, snails, shellfish, squids, cuttle and marine phytoplanktons grow in the Bay of Bengal and its coastal area.

Among hundreds of insects found around the country, house lizards, spiders, mosquitoes, flies, ants, beetles and grasshoppers are common insects around the cities and towns. Many different types of butterflies, and grasshoppers moths and dragonflies are also common in both city gardens and forests.

Lichens are used for dying silk and wool. The blue and purple dyes, litmus and archil are collected from species of lichens. Bryophytes grow on hills and in forests throughout the year.

Moreover, as many as 175 medicinal herbs are available in Bangladesh, which are used by the local people, especially the tribal people. People cultivate agricultural varieties like rice, jute, sugarcane, cotton, linseed, mustard, cucumber, bean, gourd, banana, mango, etc. About 10,000 varieties of rice were once available in this country, of which many still exist and are cultivated. Some wild species of rice are found in the Sundarbans, Madhupur and the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The diverse landscapes and the ecosystems incorporated with different geographical and climatic settings give Bangladesh its uniqueness tinged with heavenly beauty.

Top Tourist Destinations



- 1 CONTEMPORARY DHAKA
- 2 CLASSICAL DHAKA
- 3 BANDARBAN
- 4 COMILLA
- 5 COX'S BAZAR
- 6 DINAJPUR, RANGPUR
- 7 KHAGRACHHARI



15

Sylhet

4

Comilla

7

Khagrachhari

13

Rangamati

3

Bandarban

5

Cox's Bazar

8 KUAKATA, PATUAKHALI

9 KUSHTIA

10 MYMENSING

11 NAOGAON

12 RAJSHAHI

13 RANGAMATI

14 SUNDARBANS, KHULNA

15 SYLHET

Travels in Bangladesh

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YOUR PRIVATE SHANGRI-LA

Dhaka

Dhaka
Faridpur
Gazipur
Gopalganj
Kishoreganj
Madaripur
Manikganj
Munshiganj
Narayanganj
Narsingdi
Rajbari
Shariatpur
Tangail

Khulna

Bagerhat
Chuadanga
Jessore
Jhenaidah
Khulna
Kushtia
Magura
Meherpur
Narail
Satkhira

Barisal

Barisal
Barguna
Bhola
Jhalokati
Patuakhali
Pirojpur

Chittagong

Bandarban
Brahmanbaria
Chandpur
Chittagong
Comilla
Cox's Bazar
Feni
Khagrachhari
Lakshmipur
Noakhali
Rangamati

Rajshahi

Bogra
Chapainawabganj
Joypurhat
Naogaon
Natore
Pabna
Rajshahi
Sirajganj

Rangpur

Rangpur
Dinajpur
Kurigram
Gaibandha
Nilphamari
Panchagarh
Thakurgaon
Lalmonirhat

Sylhet

Habiganj
Moulvibazar
Sunamganj
Sylhet

Mymensing

Jamalpur
Mymensing
Netrokona
Sherpur

Bangladesh is divided into eight major administrative regions called divisions. Each division is named after the major city within its jurisdiction that serves as the administrative capital of that division.

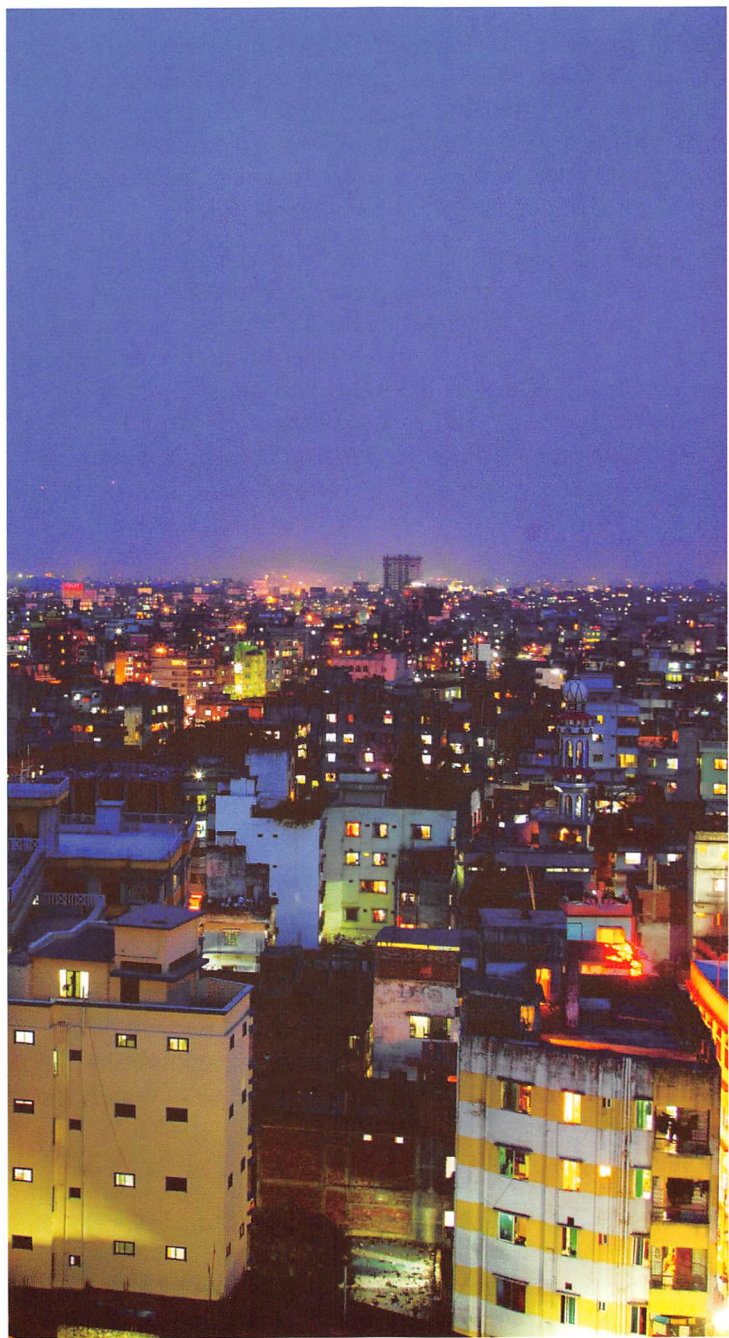
CONTEMPORARY DHAKA

An Ever-growing Urban Expanse

Meet the city where you can dream to 'have it all'

Dhaka is a beautiful chaos. Traveling inside Dhaka can be a commuter's nightmare but the bumpy ride can take you to places filled with spectacular surprises. For example, go to Hatir Jheel. Crossing the bedraggled streets of Mogbazar or Rampura as you embark on the vast area what awaits is an amazing view: beautiful blue sky all reflected on the water of the lake of Hatir Jheel. According to history, what once was used to be the bathing spot for elephants of Dhaka hundreds of years ago has now become one of nicest places to hang out for the people of Dhaka. Having an expanse of 302 acres of land, the magnificent spot looks ethereal at night when bridges connecting the roads are all lit up with beautiful white, green, blue and red lights. It reminds many millennials of a song that crooned: "My eyes had a feast seeing the Dhaka, the red-blue lights have soothed by soul." The beautiful lake surrounded by lane after lane of roads for commuting is fresh of breath air for the people who have to literally fight for a place inside a vehicle to reach their destinations. And for travelers, a ride around Hatir Jheel on a motor bike, the designated tour buses or car is worth your time.

The city, however, has a few other lakes, which too are famous for attracting visitors. Rabindra Sarovar, at Dhanmondi is becomes the nerve center of many cultural events on special occasions. On regular days too it exhibits a huge gathering of citizens living around the area. With a number of food stalls and restaurants situated around the Sarovar, the lakeside park attracts hundred of youth every day. Another beautiful park is Ramna Park at Shahbag. Dating back to 1610, in the Mughal period, the recreational park was an abode of hundreds of species of flowering and fruit bearing trees



Dhaka city. Photo. Suvra Kanti Das

and plants. The inside walkways are some of the best in the city for jogging in the morning. If someone likes to spend more time in the lap of nature, then two other parks, namely Botanical Garden in Mirpur and Boldha garden in Old Dhaka are the places to go. Dhaka Animal Zoo is situated at the neighbourhood of the Botanical Garden providing a unique chance to visit hundred of types of flora and fauna at the same time.

Dhaka is a shopper's heaven. One must visit New Market and Chandni Chawk for binge shopping. Especially women are in love with these markets as they sell anything and everything they want. Big shopping malls have become crowd-pleaser places. Malls like Bashundhora City and Jamuna Future Park so popular for housing branded shops from home and abroad. Both these shopping malls have huge food courts which are the main spots of public gathering. On a weekend or at the time of Iftar (breaking the fast) during the holy month of Ramadan, a visit to any of these places will make you believe that food indeed is a one of the most popular forms of entertainment for people of this country. These shopping malls have also promoted the concept of multiplexes in the city. Thanks to Star Cineplex and Blockbuster Cinemas of Bashundhora City and Jamuna Future Park respectively, you can enjoy the Hollywood flicks as soon as they are released internationally.

Does Dhaka have a night life? Not one if you mean to be going to a pub and have some drinks. But yes, certainly a very vibrant one if you mean just hanging around in rickshaws or private cars and lounging with your local pals. Dhaka literally is infested with restaurants offering so many varieties of local and international cuisine. Authenticity apart, the foods are nice, not too heavy on one's wallet and come with ample opportunity to just laze around for hours. This does play a significant role establishing a local foodie scene. Due to horrendous traffic condition, ordering online is the new in-thing and several service providers are leaving no stones unturned to ensure timely delivery. Nevertheless, it doesn't mean that all you do is eat as the sun sets on the skyline of Dhaka. The cultural scene of Dhaka is also pulsating with new offerings every now and then. National Museum auditorium and Shilpokola Academy organizes a number of theatre shows, cultural events which is open to all. Mostly ticketed these events are organized on weekends as well as on special days like Ekushey February (International

Mother Language day), Independence Day, Victory day, Pohela Boishakh (Bengali New Year). Other organizations like British Council, Alliance Française de Dhaka, Goethe Institut for Promoting German Culture Center and Education, EMK center, Russian Cultural Center, etc. are prominent among youth for their jubilant events on contemporary issues. Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts and Chhayanaut are places where cultural luminaries gather from time to time to celebrate special art and culture events.

Administratively divided into north and south, Dhaka is a city of possibilities. The city opens door to everyone. There is something to gain for anyone inside and around Dhaka. This is another reason why Dhaka's periphery is widening day by day. Uttara Model Town marking the major portion of North Dhaka is a beautiful part of the city with lots of modern apartments and lakes. Nowadays a number of restaurants and lounges are opened in and around Uttara making people living at that part to pamper themselves during leisure. It's interesting that only 75 km away from Uttara in the district of Norshingdi was excavated the ruins of an ancient city of 450 BCE. Known as Wari Bateshwar, the 2500 years old city is believed to be the rich, commercial city 'Sounagora' mentioned in Geographia, a famous book written by Greek geographer and mathematician Ptolemy.

The North Dhaka also lodges Banani and Gulshan areas, dubbed the most aristocrat parts of Dhaka. Both are areas having lots of embassies, diplomat houses, posh shopping malls and parks are one of the most expensive locations in the South East Asia. Banani 11, a strip famous for housing many wonderful cafes and boutique shops, is a hub for spending quality time for the elites.

With people from all different religion, caste and creed contemporary Dhaka has is wonderful box of assorted candies to be savored. Having said that, just have some patience and get your eyes ready for bursting colors and ears for maddening noise-you will go back with lots of incredible memories.

**DHAKA:****Area** 1463 Sq.km.**Population** 12044000**Weather** Winter welcomes the birds who travels thousands of miles to be just here, and the Rath Jatra in Dhamrai took place during this season.**Crops** Paddy**River** Bangsi, Turag, Tongi Khal, Buriganga, Dhaleshwari, Kaliganga, Gazi Khal, Banar, Balu, Shitalakshya, Lohajang, Fuldi, Bhubaneshwari, Kirtinasha or Sreepur (Shitalakshya), Ichamati, Malik Bader Khal, Gajahatar Khal, Ilshamari.**Greens** National Botanical Garden, Gazipur Bhawal National Park.**Wildlife** Bengal Monitor Lizard, Common Cobra, Jackal, Monkey, Wild cat etc.Important **phone** numbers**Police**

Emergency Helpline

Phone: 21777, 21666, +88028631941, +8801713373126

Extortion Helpline

Phone: +88029559933

Hospital

Labaid Specialized Hospital, Dhanmondi

Phone: +8801713333337, +880176666322

National Heart Foundation Hospital

Phone: +8801712146704

United Hospital Ltd.

Phone: +88028836444, +88028836000

CMH (Combined Military Hospital)

Phone: +88029870011

Square Hospitals Ltd.

Phone: +880281444660

Courier

S. A. Paribahan

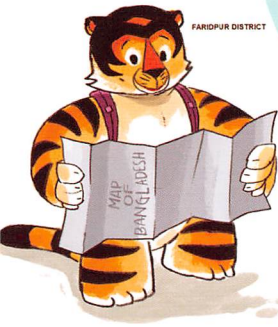
Phone: +8801755512638, +8801755512642

Sundarban Courier Service

Phone: +8801715200199, +8801713195570, +8801711057341



Contemporary Dhaka city map



Legend

- International Boundary
- District Boundary
- District HQ
- Upazila HQ
- National Highway
- Upazila Road
- Railway Network
- River Network





Places to see

- Sat Gambuj Mosque, Mohammadpur.
- Intellectual Martyrs' Monument, Rayer Bazaar
- National Assembly Building (Jatiyo Sangsad Bhaban), Sher-e-Bangla Nagar
- Chandrima Uddayan, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar
- Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Novotheater
- Dhaka Zoo, Mirpur
- National Botanical Gardens, Mirpur
- Dhamrai, Savar



Wari Bateshwar

Only 75 km away from the capital, lies the mystifying ruins of an ancient city of 450 B.C between the Wari and Bateshwar. The monochrome glass beads discovered in the site has traced it to be Sounagoura, a commercial city mentioned in Greek astronomer, mathematician Ptolemy's book, Geographia. This amazing site also holds remains of Copper Age, e.g. pit-dwellings.



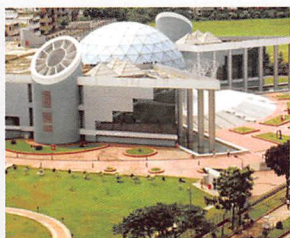
National Memorial, Savar

With seven towers rising to the height of 150 feet, this monument is a tribute to our martyrs of the Liberation War in 1971. The towers take on different views from each angle creating a mesmerizing architecture.



Hatirjhil Photo: K M Asad

- Jahangirnagar University, Savar
- National Martyrs' Memorial, Savar
- Baliati Zamindarbari, Manikganj
- Demorpara, Pubail
- Wari-Bateshwar, Narasingdi



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Novo Theatre

The dome-shaped planetarium reminds us of earth and its blue sky. With 150 projectors, the theatre offers a wonderful cosmic journey to be enjoyed. Other than the visit to the stars, the theatre also has a 5D ride simulator offering a thrilling experience with scientific attitude.



National Parliament House. Photo: Kamrul Hasan Mithon



Art & Craft

- Metal Crafts
- Jamdani Sari
- Jute Carpets
- Handicrafts
- Pink pearls



Mirpur Katan/Katan fabric

Prepared from homegrown silk filaments, Katan saris are must for our wedding ceremonies. With their posh, glossy look, Katan is a form of sari which has golden ethnic motifs on plain, one-colored interior. Benarasi Polli at Mirpur can provide you plenty of choices of elegant, gorgeous Katan Saris.



Metal Crafts, Dhamrai

One of the dying arts of Bangladesh is still upholding the centuries old tradition of making Nataraja, the Dancing God or Durga, the Hindu Goddess with ten hands. Meeting the mythological characters in brass is meditative. The crafts also include aristocratic chess sets, bangles, and anklets. An hour at Dhamrai workshops would definitely take you to another era when creating complemented art.



Brass craft Photo: Kamrul Hasan Mithon



Cuisine

- Kabab
- Halim
- Fuchka



Leg Roast

Your heart is sure to melt at the first sight of the majestic gravy of the lamb roast. The aroma is scintillating and your mouth will water profusely. As you devour it with plain rice, polao or roti, the semi-sweetened, mellow mouthfuls of juicy meat will feel like the perfect food treat the foodie in you has been looking for.



Hilsa with steamed rice. Photo: Tutul Nesar

Pilgrimage

- Gulshan Central Mosque (Azad Mosque)
- Masjid-e-Gausul Azam Complex, Mohakhali
- Jagannath Chariot, Dhamrai
- International Buddhist Monastery, Gulshan
- Dhaka Ismaili Jamatkhana, Basundhara



Dhamrai Rath

The Rath Jatra at Dhamrai is one of most popular Hindu festivals in Bangladesh. It is almost 400 years old and connected to the ritual of Rathjatra. The annual festival centers on the belief that seeing Jagannath on the chariot would act as a penance of past sins; and a touch of the Rath itself is a transformational, holy one.

Hotel

- Lake Shore Hotels and Apartments, +88029859991, +880298441786-92, www.lakeshorehotel.com.bd
- Westin Dhaka, +88029891988
- Asia Pacific Hotel, +88028815461, www.asiapacifichotelbd.org
- Bengal Inn, +88029880236, www.bengalinn.com
- Hotel Lake Castle, +880258817080-85, www.hotellakecastle.com
- Hotel Sarina, +88029821111, www.sarinahotel.com
- Hotel Sweet Dream, +8801919777766, www.hotelsweetdream.com.bd
- Royal Park Residence, +880255033452-53, www.royalpark-bd.com
- Viator, +88029871434, www.viatorbd.com
- Aristocrat Inn, +88029892327, +88029881014, www.aristocratinnltd.com



Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel Photo: Collected

- BRAC Center Inn, +88029886681, +88029893227,
- Hotel Center Point, +8801780330099, www.hotelcenterpointbd.com
- The Civic Inn, 8817461, 01552463275, www.civiccinn.com
- Laurel Hotel, +88028814500, +880255033837-9, www.laurelhotelbd.com
- Pacific Inn, +88029657583-85, www.hotelpacifichdaka.net
- Quality Inn, +88029881886, www.qualityinn.com.bd
- Rosewood Residence, +88029890628-9, +88017113435351, www.rosewoos.com.bd
- Washington Hotel, +88028851467-72, www.washingtonbd.com
- Radisson Water Garden, +88029834555, www.radissonblu.com/watergarden
- Dhaka Regency, +88028913912, +88028900250, www.dhakaregency.com
- Le Méridien Dhaka, +88028900089



Restaurants

Local Menu

- Dhanshiri, +88028825050, +88029850684
- Fakhruddin, +88028834224

Global Menu

South asian

- Khazana, +88028826127
- Sajna, +880255041985
- Kasturi, +88028818548, +88029898869, +8801732172589
- View 211, +8801912000339
- Dhaba +8801726750979

Asian

- Arirang, +8801795594922
- Corner Thai, +88029853851, +8801841566222
- Le Saigon, +88029892122
- Samdado, +88029848499, +88029848400
- Sura, +88029843042, +88028836077
- Bamboo Shoot, +88028821497
- Cathay Restaurant, +88029857023-4, +8801767803333
- Du Mi Ok, +8801711591317, +8801720998805
- Koreana, +8801621212334
- Lemongrass, +8801717444532
- Thai House, +88029880358

Continental

- Casa Greek, +8801811487711
- Flambe, +88029853835, +8801819263289
- Spaghetti Jazz, +88029842062, +8801756422441
- X Lounge, +8801944129721
- Bella Italia, +8801676200056
- El Toro, +8801938599538
- KFC Banani, +8801731912844
- Cuppa Coffe Club, +8801703555557
- Café Mango, +8801716473260
- Red Shift Coffee Lounge, +88028833473



Pubs

- Ruchita Bar, Mohakhali
- Picaso Cigar Bar, Banani
- Uttara Club, Uttara
- La Diplomat, Gulshan 1
- Blue Moon, Banani
- Bagha, Gulshan 2



Shopping

- Aarong, Uttara & Gulshan
- Swadeshi, Gulshan
- Deshi Dosh, Gulshan
- DCC Market, Gulshan
- Banani Road 11
- Kumudini, Gulshan
- Folk International, Gulshan
- Aranya, Banani
- Deshal, Banani



Cultural centers

- Indira Gandhi Cultural Center and Library, Gulshan 1
- Alliance Française de Dhaka, Dhanmondi
- Goethe-Institute Bangladesh, Dhanmondi



Connectivity

Air

- Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport
- Biman Bangladesh, www.bimanair.com
- United Airways, +88028932338
- Novo Air, +8809666722224

Rail

- Dhaka Cantonment Railway Station
- Airport Railway Station

Road

- Abdullahpur
- Gabtoli
- Mohakhali

Port

- Amin Bazar



u know ?

Books to read

National Capital of Bangladesh, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1962-83 by Louis I.
Bangladesh: Six Decades 1947-2007
A golden Age by Tahmima Anam

Food to taste

Mama Halim, Fuchka

Performance to enjoy

Open Theatre at Jahangirnagar University

Songs to listen

"Poraner Bandhobre" by Kangalini Sufia
"Nantu Ghotok" by Mamta

CLASSICAL DHAKA

Old is gold

Witness of a 400-year old history, the city of Dhaka never ceases to make you wonder

All those winding lanes have some things in common: they all exude an intimacy that big cities normally do not foster. The bedraggled buildings, the overflowing drains, crisscrossing electric and internet wires that hang over the lanes like spider webs and threatening to collide with you especially when you are on a rickshaw: the spectacle is overwhelming. In some places, the crowd is unbelievably thick, yet a trip to old Dhaka is nothing but exciting! The reasons are aplenty. The carefree nature of the folks, the tiny stores showcasing crafts and jewelries of amazing craftsmanship, the signature cuisine of the famous local chefs, the deafening sound of mp3s from everywhere – old Dhaka is our inner courtyard where everyone has a happy time. Unlike any other city, the 400-year-old Pura Dhaka caters to all your five senses.

Begin with Chawkbazar, one of the largest wholesale markets of almost every product. Drop in at the shops that sell fabrics: your eyes would never forget the feast of colour they have to offer.

The old town heralds another monumental fort called Lalbager Killa or the Fort of Lalbag an excellent example of old Mughal architecture, which can be your second stop. Then there is Hoseni Dalan, a place of religious importance for the followers of Shia Islam. The white building with the small lake in front is also a retreat from bustling cityscape.

From there find your way to the river Buriganga. You will find yourself face to face with a majestic villa on the waterfront, which will stun you. Ahsan Manjil, also



Classical Dhaka. Photo, Syed Zakir Hossain

known as the Pink Palace, used to be the official residence of the Nawab family of Dhaka, has now been transformed into a national museum. A mixture of Mughal and gothic architecture, this is the most significant palace in Bangladesh and has been a witness to many historical events. A tour inside the palace would introduce you to the lavish lifestyle the Nawabs enjoyed.

From the architectural heaven, take a journey back to earth – or water, to be more precise; the river Buriganga is one of the most crowded rivers anywhere, which hosts a spectacular selection of country and ferryboats, motor launches, and other assorted watercrafts. There are steamers waiting for their night safari. Don't forget to take a boat trip and indulge the shutterbug in you: you are sure to shoot some amazing photos.

From Sadarghat, from where you have been experiencing the unending hullabaloo associated with a river port, make your way to Bahadur Shah Park, once known as Victoria Park. The place preserves the memory of people killed during the 1857 uprising against the British. From there, just take a few steps towards the east to the Armenian Church, one of the oldest in the region. The peace and tranquility inside the church is overpowering. You may also visit Jagannath University nearby or take a rickshaw ride to Ram Krishna Mission, a spiritual retreat for the Hindu community. Old Dhaka proudly hosts people and places of worship of every major religion.

As you move along the glorious old town, you will find many shops with tandoor, a kind of clay oven, inside them. Something must be cooking! You wonder. Naan, a special kind of bread and Bakorkhani, a signature biscuit made of flour, are like a part of the lives of old Dhakaites. The former is served with any spicy curry chicken, beef, or mutton. A very special offering is naan with khashir paya – leg of lamb gravy is a must for many people every day. The tender spherical breads taste yum any even if you try them with simple daal or vegetable curry. And the heavenly Bakorkhani – dip them into milk or tea and the cheap amuse-bouche are perfect as your morning or evening snacks.

Something about the royal main meals. Kachchi Biriyani, Murag Polao, Khashir Rejala with Bhuna Khichuri – there are many of

them. The juicy lamb loin or the fried fine scented rice are show stoppers in any big dinner!

A walk along Shakharpatti will intrigue your nostrils with smells of raisins and dhups. You can see small temples here and there with goddesses adorned with beautiful jewelry. Old town has many small artifacts made of conch shells, clay, wood or terracotta that you can buy. They are beautifully designed and are examples of age old traditions the artisans are nurturing in their families. Saankha, kind of white bangles are pricy but worth collecting because of the floral designs, they are embellished with. On the other hand, try collecting some fabrics from Chawkbazar or Chandni Chawk. There are big brands like Aarong and Jatra selling handmade crafts pieces in their eponymously famous shops.

Old Dhaka, as a matter of fact, can be stretched up to one of the best mint-towns of the independent Sultans of Bengal. During the 19th century, the city hosted cloth merchants. Many decaying buildings still bear testimony to their lifestyle. If you have a penchant for ruins – the lost cities, their relics and cultures – Sonargaon is one of the best locations for you. It lies seventeen miles Northeast to Dhaka. As you move along ancient buildings, now in shambles, you'll have the feeling of stepping back a hundred years into history. Take a walk through the narrow streets of Panam City, established in the late 19th century as a trading center of cotton fabrics during British rule. You can observe the architecture of the old structures and wonder about the technology used to build them. The terracotta motifs used on the buildings will give you an insight into the excellent artistic minds of the artisans of the time. The lost city still has some charms when it comes to artistic crafts and showpieces. The tiny clay or wooden toys are sure to enchant you. One can also buy jamdani, which is popular for the excellent motifs and geometric patterns textured onto them.



DHAKA

Area 1463 Sq.km.

Population 12044000

Weather Dhaka awaits with the moist, humid and the eccentric climate which are a joy in winter and can be a real hazard if you are stuck in the traffic.

Crops Paddy.

River Bangsi, Turag, Tongi Khal, Buriganga, Dhaleshwari, Kaliganga, Gazi Khal, Banar, Balu, Shitalakshya, Lohajang, Fuldi, Bhubaneshwari, Kirtinasha or Sreepur (Shitalakshya), Ichamati, Malik Bader Khal, Gajahatar Khal, Ilshamari.

Greens Baldha Garden.

Wildlife Bengal Monitor Lizard, Common Cobra, Jackal, Monkey, Wild cat, Street dogs etc.



Important **phone** numbers

Police

Emergency Helpline

Phone: +88021777, +88021666, +88029551188

Extortion Helpline

Phone: +88029514400, +8801713398311

Hospital

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU)

Phone: +88029661051

BIRDEM

Phone: +88028616644

Dhaka Medical College & Hospital

Phone: +8801911032927

Sir Salimullah Medical College & Mitford Hospital

Phone: +88027315076

Courier

S. A. Paribahan

Phone: +8801755512638, +8801755512642

Sundarban Courier Service

Phone: +8801755512601-5, +88029332052



Dhaka city map



Legend

- International Boundary
- District Boundary
- District HQ
- Upazila HQ
- National Highway
- Upazila Road
- Railway Network
- River Network



Places to see

- Panam Nagar, Sonargaon
- Mograpara, Sonargaon
- Awal Manzil, Sonargaon
- Galdi Mosque, Sonargaon
- Abdul Hamid's Mosque, Sonargaon
- Sadarbari, Sonargaon Folk Art Museum
- Ahsan Manzil, the residence of the Dhaka Nawabs
- Shankharia Bazar
- Star Mosque of Armanitola
- Bara Katra
- Chota Katra
- Lalbagh Fort, a 17th century mughal fort which is now a museum.
- Hussaini Dalan, house of the Shi'ia Imam
- Dharmarajika Buddhist Monastery, Basabo
- Baldha Gardens, Wari
- Rose Garden, Gopibagh
- Bangladesh National Museum, Shahbagh
- Shahid Minar, National Martyr's Memorial



Lalbagh Fort

This Mughal palace was founded by Subadar Azam Shah in 1678. However, when his successor Shaista Khan took over, his daughter Pari Bibi died there which stopped him from continuing the construction. Along with Pari Bibi's tomb, the fort has a two-storied structure named Dewan-i-Am with adjacent hammam, a water tank, a three-domed mosque and a museum. With high gates, brick-colored and bastions, the fort is truly breathtaking.



Ahsan Manjil

To pass a day in the Nababi style, this magnificent building has been turned into a museum for all. Built in 1859-1869, this palace housed the Nabab family. Now many rare exhibits, furniture, household articles, utensils etc are exhibited in its 23 galleries. The pink-domed Manjil with its staircase has a beautiful surrounding being on the bank on the Buriganga river.



- Curzon Hall, University of Dhaka
- Old High Court
- Liberation War Museum, Segunbagicha- Housed in a beautiful whitewashed colonial-era building, this small museum chronicles the 1971 War of Independence.
- Ramna Park, Ramna
- Sadarghat
- Bangabandhu Memorial Museum, Road 32, Dhanmondi
- Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection, Armanitola
- Suhrawardi Park, This was once a racecourse, where both the Bangladeshi Declaration of Independence and the surrender of Pakistani occupation forces took place in 1971.
- University of Dhaka
- Sitara Mosque, Armanitola
- Baitul Mukarram Mosque, Motijheel. Bangladesh's state mosque which was built during the 1960's.
- Jinjira Castle, Narayanganj
- Bahadur Shah Park, Sadarghat
- Ramna Kali Mandir, Ramna
- Bardhaman House, Bangla Academy

- St Thomas Church, Johnson Road.
- Chawk Bazaar
- Dhakeshwari Temple, National Temple of Bangladesh, built in the 12th century.
- Khan Md Mridha Mosque, Lalbagh
- Shahbaz Khan Mosque, Teen Netar Mazar in Shahabag, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Binat Bibi Mosque, Narinda, the oldest mosque of Dhaka.
- Kartalab Khan Mosque, Begum Bazar which was built by Nawab Diwan Murshid Quli Khan in 1701–04.
- Bangsal Road, the rickshaw art street.
- Philatelic Museum, Dhaka GPO
- National Art Gallery of Bangladesh, Shilpakala Academy, Segunbagicha, Dhaka
- Dhaka Shahid Matiur Rahman Memorial Museum, the Nabakumar Institution of Bakshi Bazar.
- Dhaka City Museum, Dhaka City Corporation Building - Nagar Bhaban.
- Ramakrishna Mission, Gopibagh which is a Hindu temple and complex that was first founded in 1916.
- Institute of Arts and Crafts (Charukola Institute), University of Dhaka
- Teen Netar Mazar, Shahbagh is the burial place of the three pre-liberation bengali political leaders, which are A. K. Fazlul Huq, Khawaja Nazimuddin and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy.



Panam City

Also known as 'lost city', this place in historic Sonargaon, Narayanganj, has beauty in its ruins. The city used to be the center of commercial importance for trading clothes. The city grew in late 19th century. However, during the India-Pakistan war in 1965, most of its Hindu businessmen had to flee, leaving all their posh and pomp. There are now 52 exotic buildings reminding us of lives of a different time.



Rose Garden Palace. Photo: Kamrul Hasan Mithon

Art & Craft

- Rickshaw Paint
- Sponge Wood Products
- Shankha



Rickshaw Painting

With the most vibrant strokes, rickshaw painters fill blank tin sheets to make the minds of commuters a little happier. Done with enamel painting, these are usually themed after movie pictures, animal imagery, flowers, proverbial words, natural scenes. While the rickshaws are bound to give you joyful rides, the paintings are there to amuse your aesthetic mind with the art of people.



Shankha, Shakhari Bazar

These ornate hand-crafted bangles from conch-shells have been a mark of sanctity by Hindu married women. The Shakhari community of 400 years old in Old Dhaka are still known for making these delicately designed bangles. The whiteness of the shells combined with their floral motifs seem to stand for purity itself.



Jamdani design. Photo: Fathan Faisal



Cuisine

- Bakarkhani
- Biryani
- Borhani
- Kabab



Bakarkhani

It is a type of crisp flat-bread made with layers of flour dough. Sometimes, it is flavored with panir, salt, sugar, sesame seeds and cinnamon. Usually, baked on tandoori ovens, these are mostly found in Old Dhaka where the Bakharkhani-walas greet you with oven-hot Bakarkhanis and a smile.



Haji's Biryani. Photo: Gayatree Arun



Pilgrimage

- Baitul Mukarram National Mosque
- Khan Md Mridha Mosque, Lalbagh
- Shahbaz Khan Mosque, Shahbagh
- Binat Bibi Mosque, Narinda
- Kartalab Khan Mosque or Begum Bazar Mosque
- Kakrail Mosque, Kakrail
- Dhaka University Central Mosque
- Archbishop's House, Kakrail
- St Thomas Church, Johnson Road
- Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection, Armanitola
- Holy Rosary church, Farmgate, Tejgaon
- Dhakeshwari Temple
- Ramna Kali Mandir
- Shiddheshwari Kali Mandir, Siddheshwari
- Ramakrishna Mission, Gopibagh
- Gurdwara Nanak Shahi, University of Dhaka
- Dharmarajika Buddhist Monastery
- National Bahá'í Center, Shantinagar



Dhakeshwari Temple

An ancient architecture often traced back to 12th century, this temple is the most prominent one of its category in Dhaka. The ten-armed deity found here is named Dhakeswari, often also referred to as Durga. The four-armed male deity is known as Vasudeva. It is a complex of several temples; the main temple has a natmondir, yajna mondir with yajna kunda.



Evening over Ahsan Manjil. Photo: Salman Saeed

H Hotel

- Hotel Zakariya International, +88029845003-4, www.hotelzakariabd.com
- Pan Pacific Sonargaon, +88029128008, www.panpacific.com
- Hotel Orchard Plaza, +88029331832, www.hotelorchadplaza.com
- Hotel Purbani Ltd., +88029552229, www.hotelpurbani.com
- Hotel Victory, +8801765777537, www.hotelvictorybd.net
- Hotel Ornate, +88029330219, +88029354434, www.hotelornate.net
- Hotel Razmoni Isha Kha, +88028322426-9, www.hotelrazmoni.com
- White House Hotel, +8802322973-6
- Hotel Midway International, +88028319315,
- Hotel Pacific, +88027169842-51, www.hotelpacificdhaka.com
- Imperial Hotel International, +88029559580
- Ambala Inn, +8801919524738, +8801841103333, www.ambalainn.com
- Ambrosia, +88029665760
- Hotel Al Razzaque International, +88029566412
- Hotel Intercontinental, Dhaka, currently under construction



Armenian church, Armanitola. Photo Collected



Restaurants

Local Menu

- Haji Briyani, Kazi alauddin Road, Nazira Bazar
- Nanna Biriyani, Abul Khairat Road
- Al- Razzaque, North-South Road, Bangshal
- Hotel Time Star, Thathari Bazar
- Star hotel & Kebab, Road 2, Dhanmondi
- Malancha Restaurent, New Elephant Road
- Cafe Jheel, Topkhana Road
- Santoor, House 2, Road 11, Dhanmondi
- Hotel Royal, Lalbagh
- Beauty Lacchi, Ray Saheb Bazar
- Nirob Hotel, Chankhar Pul
- Bengal Cafe Ltd., Road 16, Dhanmondi
- Beauty Sharbat, Johnson Road
- Chawk Bazzar Snack Stalls

Global Menu

South Asian

- Santoor, +88029128737
- Bar-B-Q Tonite, +8801728865446
- Voot, +8801978650751
- Dhaba, +8801726750979
- Khushboo Restaurant, +8801712781458
- Korai Gost, +88028625135
- Shad Tehari Ghar, +88029118695
- Star Bekary and Kabab Ghar, +8801745206473
- Star Hotel and Kebab, Dhanmondi +8801710771195

Continental

- Nando's, +88028128125
- Kozmo Lounge, +8801978656966
- Red Tomato, +8801923850917. +8804475981609
- Sausly's, +8801612131016
- Andersen's Ice Cream, +88028818553
- Mexi-Ind, +8801733740480

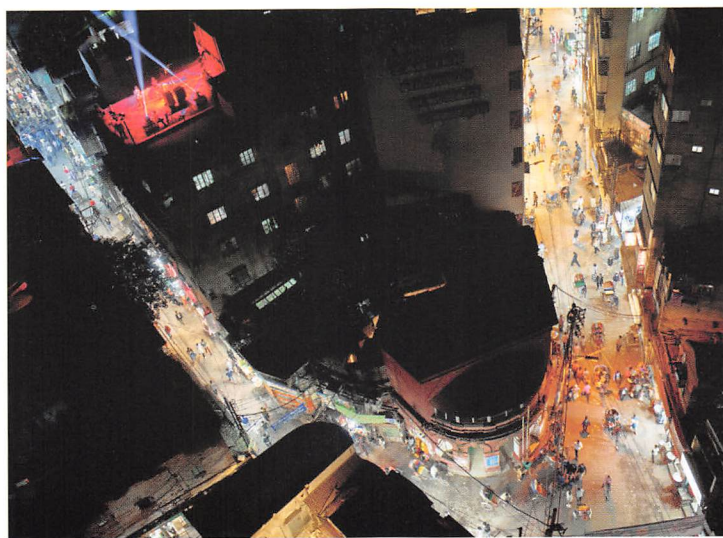


Pubs

- Sakura, Shahbagh
- Peacock, Shahbagh
- Chalet, Bangla Motor
- Golden Dragon, Eskaton
- Pipasha, Mogh Bazar
- Galaxy Hotel and Bar, New Market
- Piyashi Bar and Restaurant, Moghbazaar
- Dhaka Club, Ramna



Beauty Boarding. Photo. Collected



Old Dhaka. Photo. K M Asad



Shopping

- Chawk Bazar
- Aarong, Mogbazar
- Bashundhara City, Panthapath
- New Market, NeelKhet
- Probortona, Asad Gate
- Bangla Bazar
- Shankharia Bazar
- Neelkhet Book Market, Neelkhet
- Aziz Super Market, Shahbagh
- Stadium Market, Motijheel
- Banga Bazar, Gulistan
- Jatra, Road:27, Dhanmondi



A lane in Dhaka New Market Photo: Collected



Cultural centers

- EMK Cultural Center, Plot: 5, Road: 16 (old 27), Dhanmondi
- British Council, Fuller Road
- Alliance Francaise de Dhaka, Dhanmondi
- Goethe Institut of Dhaka, Dhanmondi
- Indira Gandhi Cultural Center, Dhanmondi
- The Russian Cultural Center, Dhanmondi
- International Mother Language Institute, Kakrail
- Shilpakala Academy, Shegunbagicha



A book shop in Dhaka. Photo. Collected



Museums

- Bangladesh National Museum, Shahbagh
- Liberation War Museum, Shegunbagicha
- Philatelic Museum, GPO
- M. R. Tarafder Memorial Museum, University of Dhaka
- Dhaka University Zoology Museum, University of Dhaka
- DUCSU Shangrahasalah, University of Dhaka
- Border Guards Bangladesh Museum, Peelkhana



Liberation War Museum

This museum at Segunbagicha, Dhaka has a unique collection of more than 10,000 artifacts and exhibits of our war memories. The museum records different phases of our liberation war from the time of British Raj to 1971. Artifacts displayed at the museum will take you to a journey down the memory lane and lead you through the bloody war that helped us earn independence.



Nagar Bhaban Museum. Photo. Collected



National Museum. Photo. Collected

Connectivity

Rail

- Kamalapur Railway Station

Road

- Syedabad
- Gulistan

Port

- Sadarghat
- Showarighat



Kamalapur Railway Station. Photo. Collected

u know ?

Books to read

Dhaka: From Mughal Outpost to Metropolis by Golam Rabbani
Glimpses of Old Dhaka: A Short Historical Narration of East Bengal and Assam by Syed Muhammed Taifoor
A History of Bangladesh by Willem van Schendel,
Freedom's Mother by Anisul Haque

Food to taste

Bakarkhani

Performance to enjoy

Kawali, Theatre

Songs to listen

"Alal o Dulal" by Ajam Khan

BANDARBAN

Picture Perfect

With the highest lake of Bangladesh, Chimbuk peak and Boga Lake, Bandarban is a land of calm and serenity

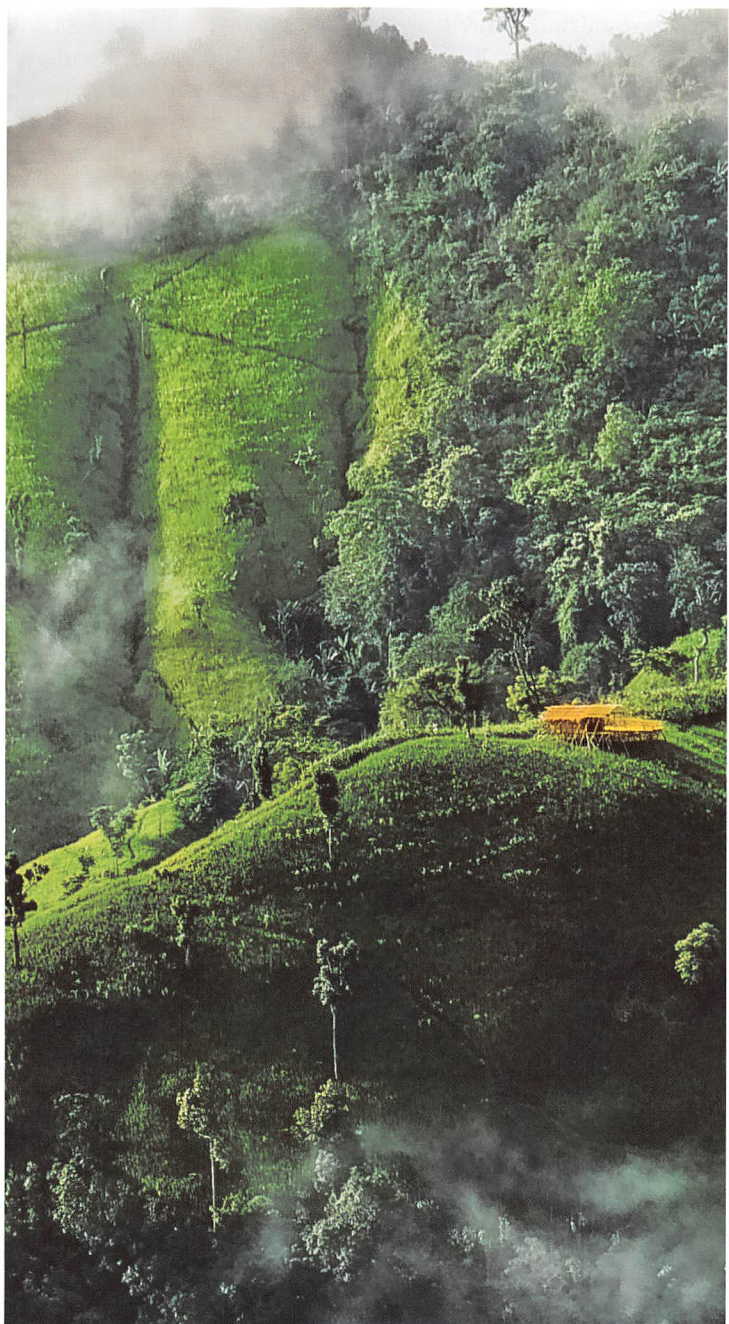
Bandarban is the remotest district of Bangladesh and features the three highest peaks – Tahjindong, Mowdok Mual and Keokradong. This hill town is the home of Marmas, the second largest ethnic community of Bangladesh.

You won't find any resort or bungalow to stay at night. May be you will have to leave yourself at the mercy of the locales who can let you stay over with them and spend a night amidst unfettered nature.

There will be houses made of bamboo and without a proper bed. Don't even think about having lights as electricity is still a distant possibility. There isn't any communication tower that can serve your mobile phone networks. Hence, you can imagine that the place lies 'at the end of the world.' But the place has its charms to woo you.

Take the waterfall, for example. It descends from a place called Remarki. You will have to be a seasoned trekker to reach the place. Don't hesitate if you have to get down from the boat and walk along the meager river dipping your ankles. It is indeed a rare opportunity for you to soak your legs in water enriched with minerals. As you reach the starting point, the sunrays kissing the sprinkling water of the fall will enchant you. On your way back, you can see hills standing like custodians of that virgin land. The cotton-like clouds moving through the hills create a breathtaking view.

In between the hills, you can see the sun dipping below as evening approaches. And then comes the hour of silence. As time goes on, calls of animals from nearby forests will thrill you. From Remakri, you can go to



Beautiful Bandarban. Photo: Afzal Nazim

another amazing place called Nafakhum, which is one of the most amazing water falls of the country. Absolutely wonderful and reaching it will give you a bumpy ride via river snaking across the big chunks of ancient rocks. But once you are there, your jaws will drop at the pristine view and the murmuring sound of the clear water flowing through the rocky edges.

One of the amazing places in Bangladesh is Boga lake, every trekker's dream destination. This is the highest hill-enclaved lake of Bangladesh situated around 1216 ft above sea level. The most striking fact about this lake is, it gets no contribution from any source nor it contributes to any. The villagers are hospitable and would arrange food and lodging for you at cheap costs. The army camp situated nearby ensures the security of the place. The lake never dries out; hence, you can try visit it any time. However, visiting it during monsoon will enchant you with a melodious experience.



Bandarban hill tracts. Photo: M F Hasan

The drizzling rain, the humid weather, the aching trekking-all might seem a big 'no'. However, once you stand in front of the lake, the mind-boggling green will take your breath away and fill you with enormous joy.

Thus, visiting Tindu and Boga offers you a mixed bag of pain, exultation, worries, adventure and achievement that every traveller wants to have at least once in life. As we have said, after going through all the troubles to reach there, once you step into the land of hills and rivers, you feel like being on cloud line.

To reach Boga lake, you will first have to reach Ruma/Ramu bazar, a village in Bandarban district. From Bandarban take a bus or jeep to reach the village and then you can walk, which will take six to seven hours to reach the lake above the hill. It's tiring but is sure to give you a once-in-a-life-time experience. Once you are there, you'll see your troubles melt – like, what else, but lemon drops.

On your way, get down at Thanchi bazar and collect some handicrafts and woven fabrics made by the local people. The ethnic communities who inhabit here, among them, are Marma, Murong, Tripura, Khumi, Boam, Chakma and Khyang. Having a local friend or guide would help you buy these products at a cheaper rate. You can collect some fresh vegetables and spices from the local markets too, specially the ginger, or paddy – which are organic and fresh and taste a bit different from anything your urban super stores offer. Last but not the least, in Thanchi, there lies an amorous resort which will free your soul at the vicinity of flying clouds. Yes, a stay at the Nilgiri resort, on one of the highest peaks of Bandarban would seem like an icing on the cake for a journey you have made so far.



Area 4479 Sq.km.

Population 388000

Weather The climate in Chittagong hill tracts are theatrical, to say the least. It is subtropical and steamy.

Crops Ginger, Turmeric.

River Feni, Sangu, Matamuhuri and many more.

Greens Garjan, Chapalish, Telsur, Tali, Kamdeb, Uriam, Jarul, Civit, Toon, Bandothola, Teak, Gamar, Mehogani, Chapalish, Koroi etc with bamboo, cane, climbers and fern.

Kaptai National Park, Baroiyadhala National Park, Sitakunda Botanical Garden and Eco-park (Chittagong)

Wildlife Elephant, Monkey, Wild Boar, Barking Deer, Samvar, King Cobra, Monitor Lizard, Bengal Monitor Lizard, and Indian Leopard.

Ethnic Communities Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Tancangya, Mro, Chuck, Khyang, Khumi, Pankhoya, Bom and Lusai.



Important **phone** numbers

Police

Bandarban Sadar Thana

Phone: +88036162233

Police Super: +88036162505, +88036163977

Hospital

Bandarban Sadar Hospital

Phone: +88036162544

Courier

Continental Courier

Phone: 0361-62414

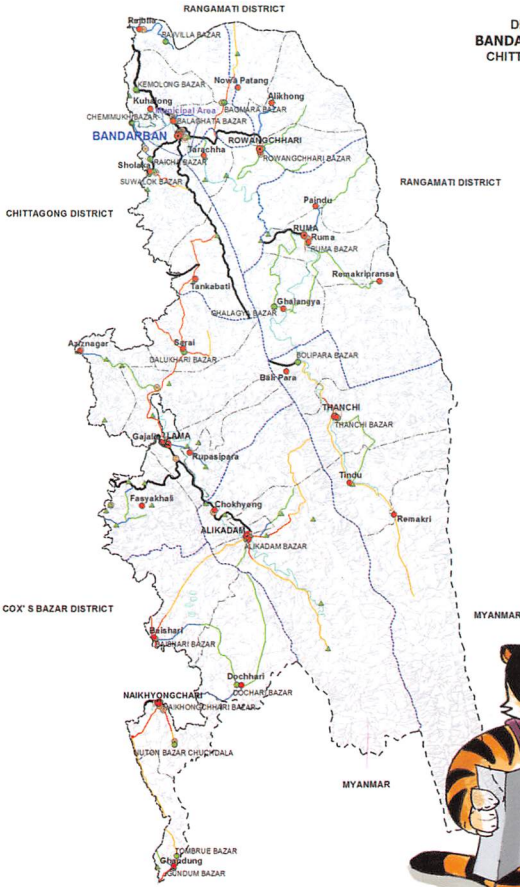
Sundarban Courier Service

Phone: +8801556524368











Bandarban city map

DISTRICT MAP BANDARBAN DISTRICT CHITTAGONG DIVISION



Legend

-  International Boundary
-  District Boundary
-  District HQ
-  Upazila HQ
-  National Highway
-  Upazila Road
-  Railway Network
-  River Network





Places to see

- Tahjindong
- Buddha Dhatu Jad
- Shoilo Propat Falls
- Meghla Tourist Complex
- Hanging Bridge at Keranihat,
- Raj Vihar and Ujanipara Vihar
- Chimbuk Hill Range
- Jadipai Falls
- Nilgiri
- Boga Lake



Boga lake, Ruma

The natural lake on a hilltop, at about 1500-2000ft high from the sea level, is breathtakingly beautiful. One can reach there by using "chander gari"- converted military jeeps for local use. A rest house is available at the Zilla Parishad. The locals also accommodate visitors. Myths suggest that the lake is formed after an earthquake caused by the wraths of a dragon many years ago.



Sangu River

Villages nearby the mighty river can only be reached by boat. The length of the river is 270 kilometres, 173 km is located within Bangladesh, of which 48.27 km is navigable from the estuary. The shallow river turns fierce with rapid currents during rainy season. The lush green hills on both side of the rivers will soothe your eyesight.



Trekking on... Photo: Darshan Chakma

- Supreme Bridge Buddhist Pagoda
- Golden Buddha Statue
- Hatibandha Trek
- Thanchi
- Keokaradang
- Songia Villages
- Ruma Bazar



Nilgiri

Nilgiri, literary meaning 'blue mountain' lives up to its name as this is the place where you can spend holidays at the embrace of clouds, close to the blue sky. The magnificent sojourn on the hill will overwhelm you with its splendid beauty. It is the highest hill resort having several cottages, a restaurant, a helipad—all well maintained by Bangladesh Army.



Reflecting on beauty. Photo. Darshan Chakma

Art & Craft

- Tribal Handloom
- Bamboo Baskets or Throng
- Flute
- Cane Hats
- Wooden Mask
- Tribal feminine dress named “Thaami”



Tribal Handicrafts

Bandarban is a home for more than 15 ethnic minorities. Of them, Chakma, Bomong, Marma, Mru, Bawm have heritage of making their own handicrafts, that contribute to the huge cottage industry. Visit the place to collect handloom cotton in plenty of colorful stripes; handmade ornaments and utensils made of local ingredients.



Bandarban handicrafts. Photo Gayatree Arun



Cuisine

- Bamboo Chicken
A special menu of chicken with Bamboo shoot
- Black Tricky Rice
- Bamboo Shoot with Fish
- Sticky Rice
- Nappi
- Thoja
Vegetable Preparation



Sticky Rice

The delicacy comes wonderfully wrapped in small banana leaf packages. Unwrap it to enchant your tastebuds. Try it with dried fish curry paste or vegetable soup. For the ones having sweet tooth, some mango cubes, shredded coconut and milk are sure to delight.



Egg Kebang. Photo. Gayatree Arun



Pilgrimage

- Raj Vihara
- Kyang or Buddhist Temples
- Buddha Dhatu Jadi or The Golden Temple



Hotel

- Parjatan Hotel, +8801720149801
- Plaza Bandarban, +8801977763342, www.plazabandarban.com
- Hotel Green Hill, +88036162574, +8801820425090
- Bilkis Hotel, +8801856699910
- Hillside Resort, +8801755598529
- Hotel Four Star, +88036162466, +8801553421089
- Hotel River View, +8801731112757
- Hotel Paharika, +88036162155
- Holiday Inn Resort, +88036162896
- Royal Hotel, +88036162926



Mystic Bandarban. Photo: Afzal Nazim



Restaurants

Local Menu

- Sangu Residential Hotel and Restaurant
- Khaoa Daoa, Bandarban Bazar
- Nima, Chowdhury Para Market
- Tohzah, Maddham Para
- Chanachaya Indigenous Bazar
- Indigenous Market
- Re Soung Soung
- Riggri Khyog

Global Menu

- Kyank Ching, Parjatan Motel, Meghla
- Parjatan Motel & Restaurent
- Rig-rig Khong, Maddham Para



Pubs

- Parjatan Motel Meghla
- Hotel Holiday Inn
- Ching and Aaraa at Tribal Villages
- Guide Tour Resort
- Coconut Juice and Tea with Thin milk and salt at any marketplace



Shopping

- Bandarban Bazar
- Master Shopping Complex
- Burmese Market
- Bonolota Textile
- Rangamati Textile
- The BSCIC Shop
- Shoilo Propat
- Farukpara
- Marmabazaar



Cultural centers

- Adibashi Culrural Academy
- Bandarban Shilpokola Academy
- Golden Temple



Museums

- Small Ethnic Group Museum
- Anthropological Museum
- Archeological Museum



Connectivity

Air

From Dhaka to Chittagong:

- Bangladesh Biman
- Regent Air,
- Novo Air

Rail

From Kamalapur Railway Station to Chittagong:

- Turna Nishitha
- Mahanagar Godhuli
- Subarna

Road

From Kolabagan, Gabtoli, Kollanpur and Kamlapur Bus stand, Dhaka:

- Dolphin
- Unique Service
- Shyamoli Paribahan
- S Alam
- Saudia Paribahan

From Chittagong to Bandarban by Bus:
Purbani Bus Srvce



Golden Temple. Photo: Memo Mustafa



u know ?

Books to read

The Chittagong Hill Tracts: Living in a Borderland by Willem Van Schendel, Wolfgang Mey, Aditya Kumar Dewān
Race and History by Claude Lévi-Strauss

Food to taste

Mondi (A kind of local noodles)
Chumat kurahura (Chicken steamed inside a bamboo shell)

Performance to enjoy

The water Sprinkling Festival, Baishavi/Sangrai
Raj Punnyah, the annual tax collection fest hosted by Bomang Chief
Boat Ride on Sangu

Songs to listen

Marma Songs

COMILLA

A Tribute to Ancient Glory

Home to ancient Buddhist center, Comilla was established by Buddhists kings in late 7th century

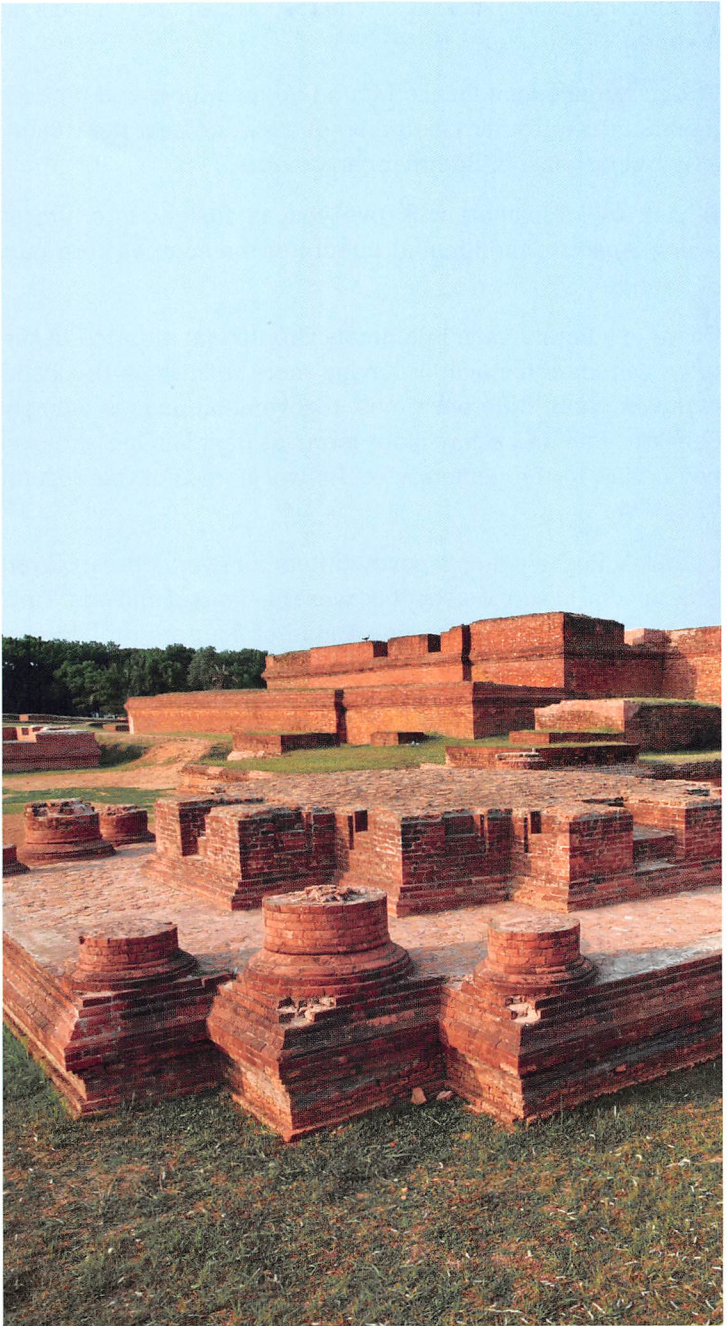
Mainamati, one of the greatest assemblages of ancient Buddhist remains in Bangladesh has stood the test of time and is waiting to be visited by those who have a thing for relics. The treasure-trove of yester years' archaeological artifacts is available at the site to see and know more about the lifestyle of the then people.

There is a significant link between Lalmai and Mainamati because of the rich past they both share. Lalmai is identical with Lalambi-vana of the Chandra epigraphs, while the northern part recalls the name of the legendary Chandra queen 'Maynamati,' mentioned in local ballads and folk songs. The innumerable monuments, mounds and excavated remains give one an idea about the glory and the magnitude of the past one can easily feel proud of.

The museum at Mainamati has a rich collection of inscribed copper plates, gold and silver coins, many terracotta and baked clay seals and sealing, and a large number of sculptural specimens in stone, bronze and terracotta found in situ or otherwise.

Interesting and intricate structural forms and decorative styles have been preserved at Kutila Mura, the highest mounds in the northeastern ridge. Charpatra Mura, situated in another site in the northern part of the ridge is one of the earliest known examples of Hindu temple architecture in Bangladesh.

Largest among the Mainamati monuments is Ananda Vihara. Located in the archaeologically rich Kotbari central area, it represents a huge religious-cum-



Shalban Vihara. Photo. Maung Maung Gyi

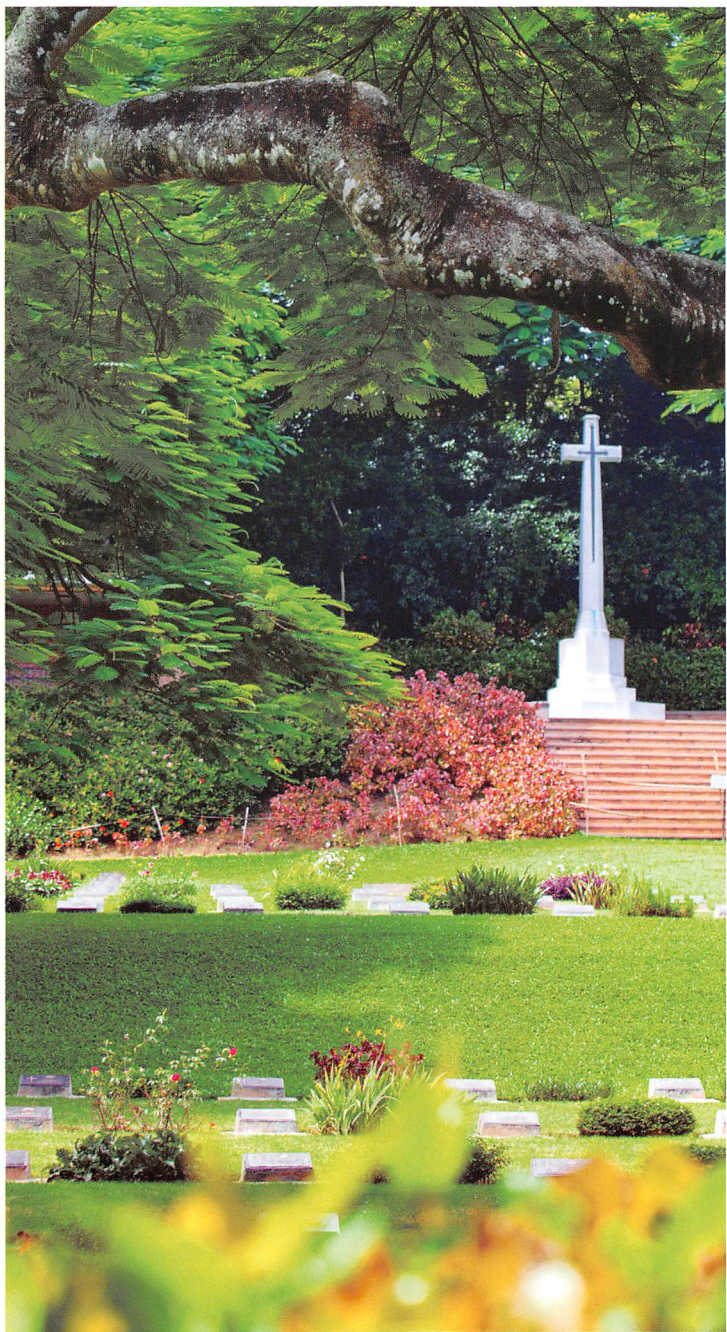
educational establishment of viharas, stupas and chapels all around.

Queen Mainamati's Palace Mound is the largest and highest mound in the northern extremity of the ridge near the village, situated just east of Brahmanbaria road.

A visit to Mainamati will give you an insight into almost every aspect of the life and culture of the southeastern part of Bengal.

There is a library called Rammala Gronthagar situated in the town, which is famous for having more than three thousand manuscripts of different times in several languages, namely Sanskrit, Pali and a few older forms of Bangla. One can also pay a visit to the cemetery of the war heroes of the Second World War.

Comilla's Roshmalai is a coveted item for every dessert lover. This special brand of sweet has won the heart of millions. Tiny, spongy balls made of the finest kind of flour are dipped into a bowl of condensed and sweetened milk, known as malai. The balls melt inside your mouth as soon as you gulp them. Along with the yummy taste of the malai, the squishy balls would charge your taste buds with a glucose rush. One can also collect khadi from Comilla, a form of handloom cotton. Its connection with Swadeshi movement of the colonial period still inspires many people to buy and cherish it.



Mainamati War Cemetery. Photo: Tutul Nesar



Area 3146 Sq.Km

Population 5387000

Weather The ruins of old monarchs await with much humid tropical weather and the landscape is bluish green

Crops

River Titas, Gumti, Dakatia, Sonai, Satnal, Buri, Khaliajhuri.

Wildlife Bengal Monitor Lizard, Common Cobra, Jackal, Monkey, Wild Cat etc.

Ethnic Communities Tipra



Important **phone** numbers

Police

Police Super

Phone: +8801713373678

Kotoali Model Thana, Comilla

Phone: +8801713373685

Hospital

Midland Hospital PVT. Ltd.

Phone: +8808176868, +8808168118, +8801713375904

Moon Hospital Pvt. Ltd.

Phone: +8808165114, +8801766556655

Meem Hospital

Phone: +8808167333

Comilla Maternity Clinic

Phone: +8801711186406

National Blood Bank and Transfusion Center

Phone: +8801715849633

Holy Care Medical Services Pvt.

Phone: +8801711071250

Courier

S. A. Paribahan

Phone: +8801755512748

Sundarban Courier Service

Phone: +8801727908827



Comilla city map

BRAHMANBARIA DISTRICT

DISTRICT MAP
DISTRICT COMILLA
DIVISION CHITTAGONG

NARAYANGANJ DISTRICT



CHANDPUR DISTRICT



Legend

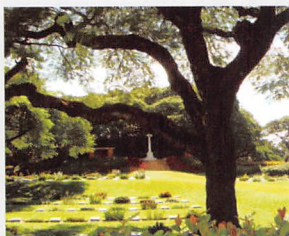
-  International Boundary
-  District Boundary
-  District HQ
-  Upazila HQ
-  National Highway
-  Upazila Road
-  Railway Network
-  River Network





Places to see

- Shalbon Vihar, Kotbari
- Maina Moti Ruins, Mainamoti
- Comilla Victoria College (Intersection), Kandir par
- Kotila Mura, Charputra Mura, Comilla Cantonment
- Ananda Vihar, Kotbari



War Cemetery

In this historic place, lies 736 Commonwealth soldiers who fought in Second World War in Myanmar. Most of them were British and Indians, while a few were Bangalees. A picturesque landscape enhances the beauty of the cemetery while making its silent ambience more palpable to the visitors.



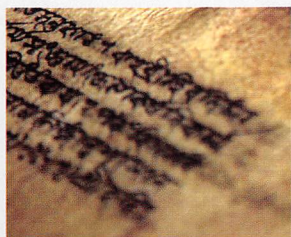
Lalmal Hill

The peaceful scene of elongated low hill range of about 17 km attracted many Buddhist priest to build their monasteries here. Covered with reddish-brown soil, the hill range is spectacularly solemn with the ancient remnants of Buddhist Culture. Many have claimed them to be of Pleistocene period.



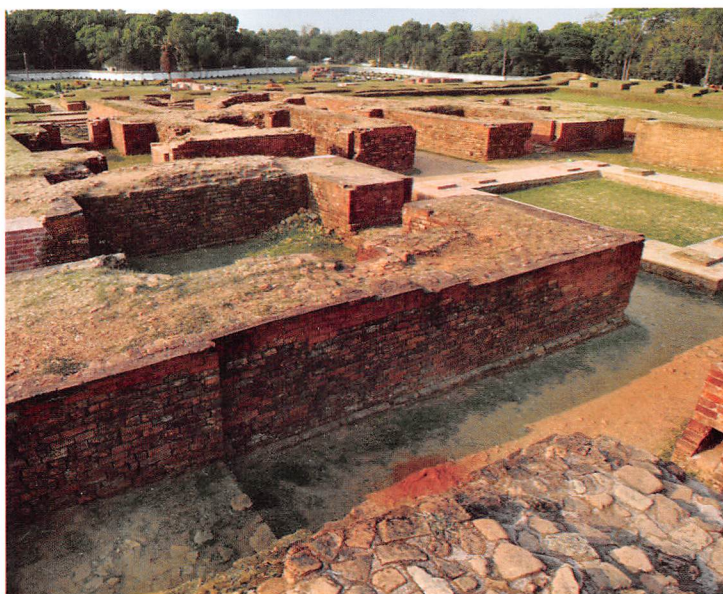
Shalban Vihara. Photo. Maung Maung Gyi

- Comilla Bard, Kotbari
- World War II Cemetery, Mainamoti
- Lalmai Hill, Lalmai
- Ram Mahla, Laksham Road



Ramamala Library

Enriched with thousands of historic manuscripts, the library is bound to take one with awe. Some Punthis are centuries old, while some are written on palm leaf; some on paper, though the difference is not that easy to identify. The large body of the library also stores 12000 rare printed books and 8000 handwritten ones.

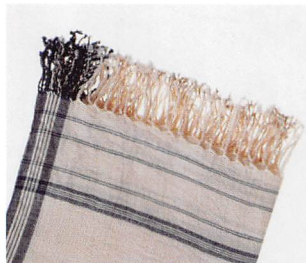


Shalban Vihara. Photo. Maung Maung Gyi



Art & Craft

- Khadi
- Bamboo and cane Made Handi Crafts
- Jute Bags
- Pottery
- Hukka by Coconut Shell



Khadi

Since the Mughal period, Comilla's cottage industry is renowned for Khadi. Gandhi once mentioned this rough textured cotton to be bonding people of all classes spiritually. In fact, the simplicity of Khadi's thick yarn gives it an elegance rarely found in other fabrics.



Pottery

The rich folk traditions of Comilla must have contributed to its artistic commitment in making the finest earthen wares of the country. As the potter's wheel moves, exquisite pots, vases, decorative toys are born. Bijoypur is a town known for its pottery industry, earning bread and butter of the local community.



Khadi fabrics. Photo Collected



Cuisine

- Rasmalai
- Jhuri Pitha with Beef



Rasmalai

Dipped in dense, fresh milk and sugar syrup, these sweetmeats are one of the most beloved desserts for Bangladeshis. The milky freshness of Matree Bhandar Rasmalai has made it the crème de la crème of all sweets of Comilla.



Beef with fenugreek seed and a type of pancake. Photo, Debashish Shome



Pilgrimage

- Adi namura Temple , Lalmai
- Jogonnath Temple, Jagannath Dighee
- Ram Mala Ashrom, Laksham road
- Shah Shuja Mosque
- Buddha Bihara at Mainamati



Hotel

- Postal Rest House, +8808163600, www.bard.gov.bd
- Hotel Noorjahan, +8801703872736
- Red Roof Inn, +8801730306092



Mainamati Museum

As the largest Buddhist residential education institute was excavated next to Salban Vihara, history opened a new window for archeologists on the artifacts from the civilization of 8th–12th century. The museum has terracotta plaques, bronze statues and caskets, coins, jewelry, utensils, pottery and votive stupas engraved with Buddhist inscriptions preserved here. Among the bronze statues, a large Buddha is noteworthy.



Rabichandra Manikya Town Hall. Photo. Collected



Restaurants

Local Menu

- Roshmalai of Matree Vandar, Monoharpur
- Ledikeny of Matree Vandar, Monoharpur
- Sponge Misty of Jolojog, Kandir par
- Misty of Porabari, Monoharpur
- Luchi of Pipasha Hotel, Kandir par
- Pera Sondesh by Matree, Monoharpur
- Khrirsha of Matlab, Chandpur
- Sondhur Hotel, Bishwa road

Global Menu

- Hotel Noorjahan, Paduar Bazaar
- Hotel Q Palace, Race Course
- Amania Rest House, Kandirpar
- Masum Rest House, Shachangacha
- Hotel Dreamland, Chatipotti
- Dhaka Rest House, Rail Gate



Pubs

- Comilla Club
- Ranir Kuti at Dharma Shagar Par
- Tari of Tipra Tribal



Shopping

- Eastern Eyakub Plaza
- Sattar Khan Complex
- Khandakar Haq Mansion
- Comilla tower Shopping complex
- Khadi bitan at Kandir par and Monoharpur
- Cantonment Market or Tipra Bazar at Mainamati



Cultural centers

- Dharma Shagar Par
- Town Hall
- Press Club
- Comilla Club
- Shilpokola Academy
- Comilla City Club



Museums

- Mainamati Museum, Mainamati



Connectivity

Rail

From Kamalapur and Airport Railway Station:

- Upakul Express
- Mohanagar Provati
- Mohanagar Godhuli
- Turna Express

Road

From Kamalapur Bus Dipot, Dhaka:

- BRTC Bus Service (AC)
- Upakul Service (AC)

From Sayedabad Bus stand, Dhaka

- Tisha Service
- Asia Line
- Prince Service
- Prime Service
- Cordova Service



Post-Gupta gold coin. Salban Vihara, Mainamati. Late 7th Century AD Photo Archive



Manuscript from Ramlala Library. Photo. Gayatree Arun



u know ?

Books to read

"Rural Development in East Pakistan", speeches by Akhtar Hameed Khan
Incomprable Sachin Dev Burman by HQ Chowdhury

Food to taste

Rasmalai
Paan, the betel Leaf from Motlob, Chandpur

Performance to enjoy

Tipra Rash Festival

Songs to listen

Sachin Dev Varman's "Takdum Takdum Bajai Bangladesher Dhol"

To visit

Nazrul Complex, Dharma Shagar
Memorial of Freedom war at Comilla Victoria College inter section
Juddho Joy at Alekhar Char Bishwa road
Dhormo Manikya Tripura raja
Pashchimgaon Nawab Bari
Jagannath Temple, East Bibirbazar Road

COX'S BAZAR

Seeking Bliss

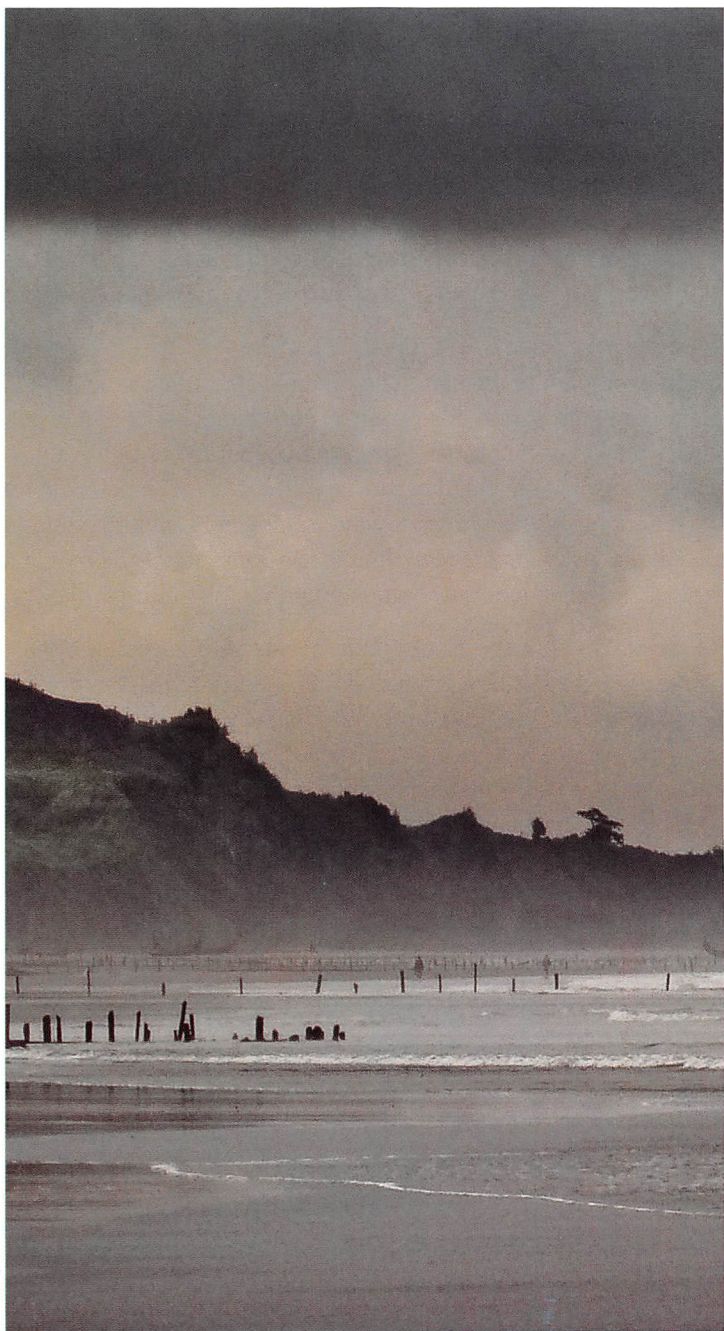
Bounty of sun-kissed surprises offered

Famous Persian Poet Jalal-ad din Muhammad Rumi said, 'what you seek is seeking you'. This quote is probably apt for a tourist destination like Cox's Bazar that can offer you the ultimate solace from the drudgery of city life. It is one of the most scenic places in Bangladesh, which has reached the peak of popularity very recently. Cox's Bazar has been acclaimed as one of the natural wonders of the world. The longest beach in the world, attracts local and foreign tourists in droves. Executive level hotels, lounges, clubs, cafes and beachside restaurants have mushroomed in every corner of the sandy town to facilitate the needs of the visitors and tourists.

You can get up early in the morning and take a stroll along the beach. The spectacular sunrise will leave you speechless. As the day advances, the sea changes her face and mood according to the operation

of high and low tide. If you want to bask in the sun, just lie down in the bench deck chairs or go to a beach café and grab a bite while listening to music. Don't forget to relish sea food salad, lobster, prawn cake, spinach nun with chicken drum stick, pasta with beef stew, pineapple, salmon tomato kebab, etc.

There are numerous speedboats waiting to give you a ride to the nearby islands. If you want to surf, surfboards are there too. Spend the afternoon hanging around with friends. For the evening, there are many activities to take part, such as parties in the cafés. Try to visit Cox's Bazar during full moon, as the sea looks mystically beautiful. In every winter, the beach arranges several kite festivals that bring thousands of kite fliers from the country to participate in the fanfare. All those kites, in



Inani Beach. Photo. Afzal Nazim

different sizes and shapes, turn the skyline into an amazing canvas.

The only coral island of Bangladesh, the St. Martin's Island is in the northeast part of the Bay of Bengal, about nine kilometers south of the tip of the Cox's Bazar-Teknaf peninsula, and forming the southern most part of Bangladesh. Situated about 8 km west of the northwest coast of Myanmar at the mouth of the Naf River, the island has a local name: Narikel jinjira (Coconut Island).

If you ever wish to be marooned on an island, this island stands out as the best option. Flaunting the ethereal beauty of a beach with thousands of seashells, the island is bathed with turquoise coloured water. A visit to the island can turn your ordinary weekend into a heavenly gateway to enjoyment that relaxes you and offers visual feasts of a lifetime. Basking under the sun will seem like a blessing; but there is much more waiting for you.

At night, go near the sleepy blue ocean. You can take a walk along the beach or laze around. If it is a starry night, the meteor shower is sure to enchant your visual pathway stemming thoughts of heaven on earth in you. The caravan of shooting stars would leave you speechless and you can spend hours just



St. Martin's Island. Photo: Afzal Nazim

gazing at them. One of the best parts of the trip to St. Martin's Island is of course experiencing the sunrise. The purple and crimson sky during sunrise is nothing but an emblem of magical beauty. Take a stroll along the *Chhera Dwip*. The rocky-and-wet walk, while the sea is on high tide would make you listen to the roar of the sea while your eyes feast on the glistening black corals. You can also take a ride by speedboat that would take you to different parts of the island. There is a nice resort on the cranial part of the island.

Last but not least: in Cox's Bazar you can soothe your spiritual self by visiting a number of temples belonging to the local Hindu and Buddhist communities. Maheshkhali, an Upazila of Cox's Bazar district is famous for the temple of the Hindu community atop hill. Thousands of worshippers visit the temple every year. Another must visit place is Ramu, situated 15 km away from the beach city, this Buddhist village is famous for wooden viharas and artistically designed archaeological monuments. You will see the statue of Buddha, in gold, bronze and metal, inlaid with precious stones.

If you have some more time, go to the Burmese market. You would see many things made and sold by indigenous people living there. From skincare products to home decor pieces – the market has everything. You should not miss the local hand woven clothes, which are eco-friendly, sophisticated and colorful. If you pay a visit to the fountains at Himchhari, you would find vendors selling sweet tamarinds. These are some must-buy items.



Area 2491 Sq.km.

Population 2290000

Weather The largest sea beach is waiting. The winter is the most extravagant time of year to count the waves.

River Naf.

Greens Garjan, Chapalish, Telsur, Tali, Kamdeb, Uriam, Jarul, Civit, Toon, Bandorhola, Teak, Gamar, Mehogani, Chapalish, Koroï etc. with Bamboo, Cane, Climbers and Fern

Medhakachhapia National Park. Himchari National Park

Wildlife Elephant, Monkey, Wild Boar, Barking Deer, Samvar, King Cobra Monitor Lizard, Bengal Monitor Lizard, and Indian Leopard.

Dulahazara Safari Park, Fashiakhali Wildlife Sanctuary

Ethnic Communities Rakhain, Chakma, Mog



Important **phone** numbers

Police

OC, Cox's Bazar Model Thana

Phone: +8801713373663

Hospital

Sea side Hospital Pvt. Ltd

Phone: +88034163606

Fuad Al Khatib Hospital

Phone: 0341-64674

Baitus Sharaf Hospital

Phone: 0341-63911

Courier

S. A. Paribahan

Phone: +88001755512716

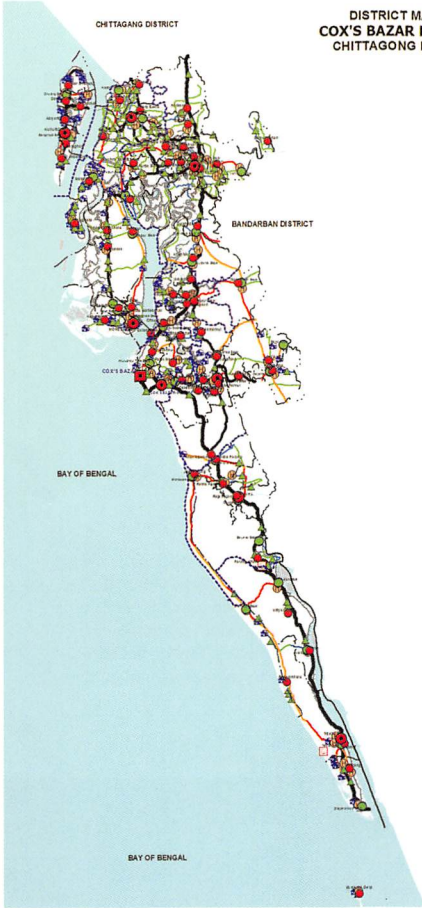
Sundarban Courier Service

Phone: +8801736383753



Cox's Bazar city map

DISTRICT MAP OF COX'S BAZAR DISTRICT CHITTAGONG DIVISION



Legend

- International Boundary
- District Boundary
- District HQ
- Upazila HQ
- National Highway
- Upazila Road
- Railway Network
- River Network



Places to see

- Cox's Bazar Sea
- Inani Sea Beach, Cox's Bazar
- Aggamedda Khyang, Buddhist Monastery of Cox's Bazar
- Rakhain Para, Khurushkul Union
- Himchori, Cox's Bazar



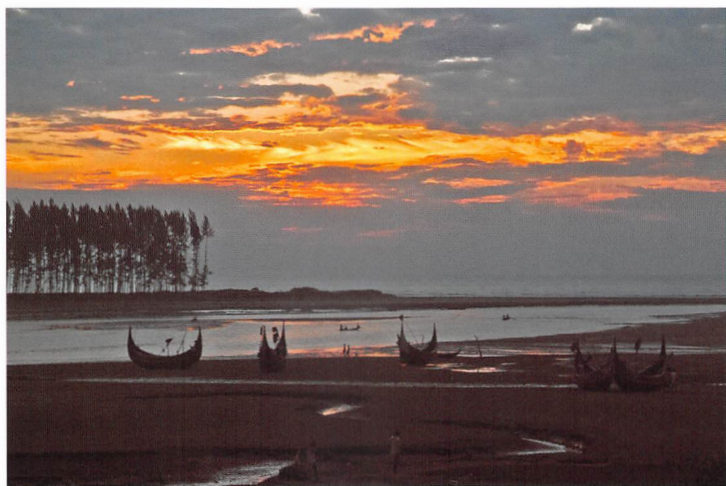
Inani sea beach

If sunsets are too mainstream, watch unusually shaped rocks and coral boulders in different sunlight. With green hills in the background, an 18 km long calm beach at Inanai is a wonderful place to refresh oneself.



Bangabandhu Safari Park

The first Safari Park in Bangladesh is a vast area enriched with trees like Garjan, Boilam, Telsur and Chapalish along with other herbs, shrubs and creepers. This evergreen forest is a safe home of many animals. This is a nice sport for those who like to spot animals secretly.



During low tide. Photo: Afzal Nazim

- Maheshkhali island, only hilly island of Bangladesh
- Dulahazra Safari Park, Chokoria
- St. Martin's Coral Island, Teknaf
- Mathin er Koop, Teknaf
- Sonadia island
- Teknaf Game Reserve Forest



Saint Martin's Island

The only coral island of Bangladesh offers unforgettable memories with its beauty of nature and local people. The first of its settlers were Arabs who named it Zajira. In course of time, the name is changed. The island is now fondly called Narikel Jinjira denoting the land of coconuts.



Naf River. Photo Collected



Art & Craft

- Sea Shells Handicrafts
- Pearl accessories
- Traditional Burmese Dress
- Hand Woven Bed sheet
- Dry-Fish or Shutki



Oyster Shell Crafts

These artifacts are small in shape but easy to carry for friends at home. Favorite among women are shell made ornaments, gift items, kitchen utensils, etc.



Cox's Bazar handicrafts. Photo: Debashish Shome



Cuisine

- Loitta Fry (A Crunchy sea-fish Fry)
- Shutki Vuna (Dryfish Curry)
- Fish Fry
- Green Coconut Juice



Dried fish

Cooked as spicy curries with garlic, onions, fried red chili and other secret ingredients, dried fish is an addictive dish to be taken with gusto, thanks to its remarkably distinctive aroma. Brave anglers sail deep in the sea in pursuit of fishes; later to preserve those fishes, they dry them under the sun. In course of time, the age-old tradition of eating dried fish has become a mainstream delicacy.



Fried Snapper. Photo. Debashish Shome

Pilgrimage

- Ajgobi Mosque at North of BDR Camp
- Pagoda at Sadar, Ramu and Teknaf Hilltop
- Raamkote Teertha Dham
- Adinath Shiv Mandir, Maheshkhali
- AshtaVuja, Moheshkhali

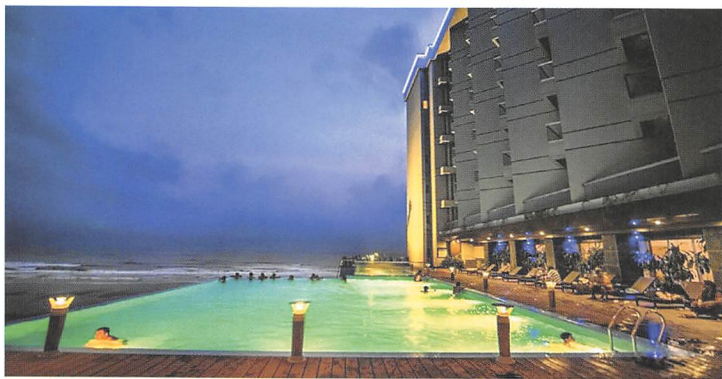
Hotel

- Coral Reef, +8801816246625
- Parjatan Motel Labonee Kalatoli, +88034164703, +8801716382032
- Hotel Kollol Bangladesh, +88034164748, +8801727613258
- Seagull Hotel Bangladesh, +88034162480-91
www.seagullhotelbd.com
- Royal Tulip, +8801844016001, www.royaltulipcoxzbazar.com
- Parjatan Motel Probal, +88034163211



Ramu Buddhist Temple

Inside the temple, meet several statues of the Gautama Buddha in different colors and shapes. While religious devotees pay their regular visits, it is also a place of interest for people looking for the combo of spiritual quietness and natural beauty.



Sayeman Beach Resort. Photo Collected



Restaurants

Local Menu

- Jhawban Restaurant
- Poushee Restaurant
- Al-Goni

Global Menu

- Mermaid Café, Marin drive road
- Handi, Beside hotel sea palace
- Nilima Café Restaurant
- Taranga
- Café 14
- Beach Café



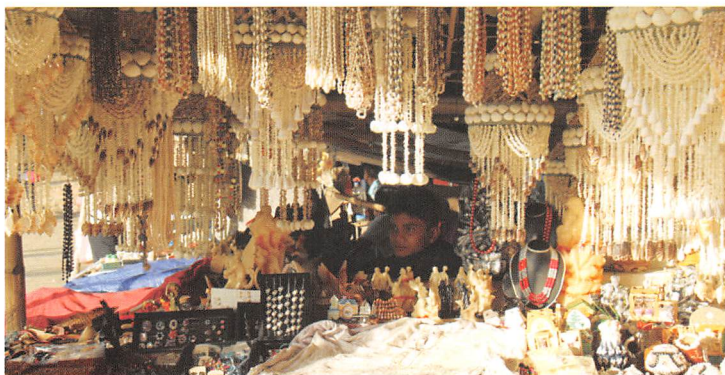
Pubs

- Seagull Hotel
- Hotel Sayeman
- Hotel Shaibal
- Renaissance Hotel



Shopping

- Islampur Bazar
- Kutub Bazaar
- Choufoldondi Bazar
- Time Bazar
- Notun Mohal Bazar
- Mia Bazar



Beach market. Photo: Kamrul Hasan Mithon



Cultural centers

- Cox's Bazar Shanskritik Kendra
- Laboni Point
- Kolatoli Point
- Inani Point
- Shaibal Point
- Sheikh Kamal Stadium



Connectivity

Air

From Dhaka Int. Airport to Shah Amanat International Airport, Chittagong:

- Bangladesh Biman
- GMG Airlines
- United Airways
- Novo Air
- Regent Airways

Rail

From Dhaka to Chittagong

- Karnofuli Express

Road

From Rajarbagh Bus Terminal and Kalabagan Bus Terminal

- Green Line
- Hanif Enterprise
- Shyamoli
- Shohag Paribahan
- Saudia-S Alam (Mercedes Benze)
- S Alam Paribahan
- St. Martin
- Bagdad Express



Eco-resort. Photo. Din M Shibly



u know ?

Books to read

Muslim Bengali literature by Muhammad Enamul Haq

Food to taste

Drink green coconut water

Performance to enjoy

Do Surfing

Email: surfingbangladesh@yahoo.com

To visit:

Hangor Foara at Kolatoli Mor (Shark fountain)

DINAJPUR, RANGPUR

From the Page of History

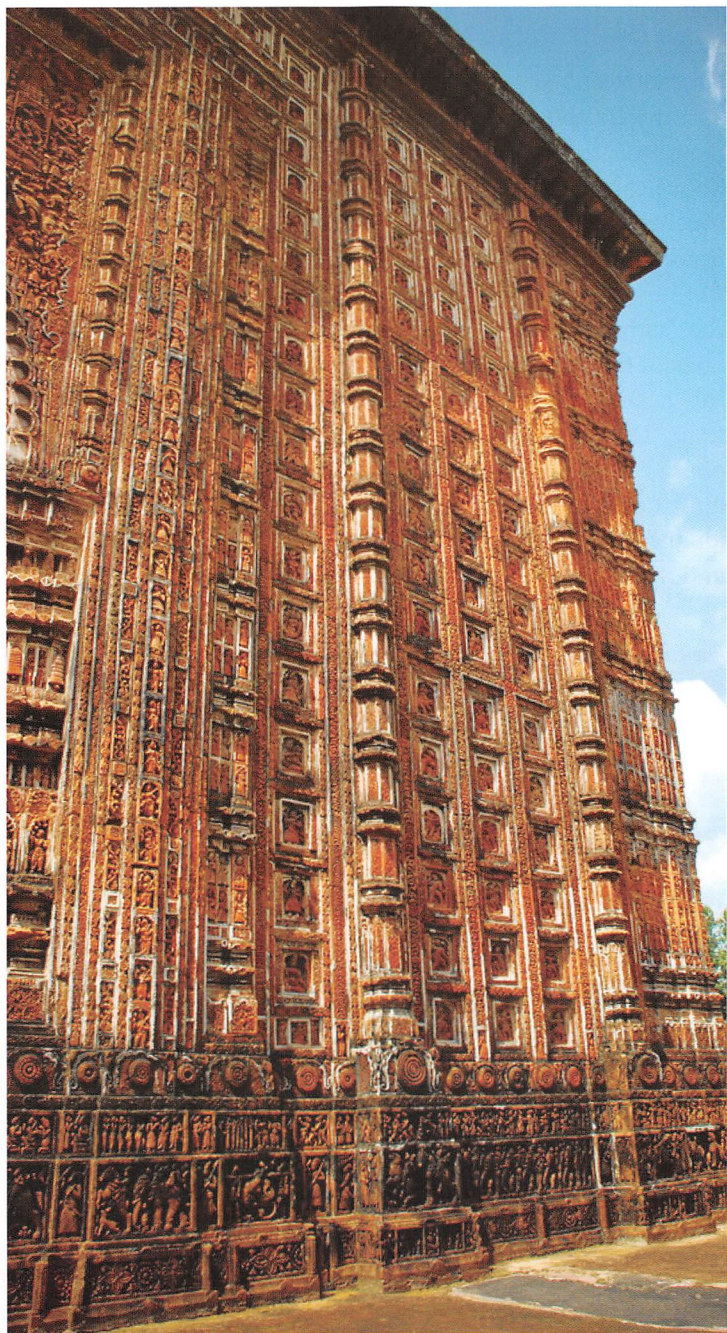
Boasting one of the greatest examples of terracotta architecture of this part of the world and producing famous katharibhog rice, these two districts are jewel of the northern region of Bangladesh

Looking at an outstanding monument with fabulous terracotta embellishment, you are sure to feel awe-struck. The temple, known as Kantaji's Mandir is one such place where one gets to meet a fascinating past. Where the intricately done panels have a life and vitality of their own and are deeply imbued with history. The vast array of subject matter includes stories from *The Mahabharata* and *The Ramayana*, the exploits of Lord Krishna, and a series of extremely intriguing contemporary social scenes depicting the favourite pastimes of the 'landed aristocracy.'

The temple is situated in Kantanagar, about 12 miles north of Dinajpur town, and about a mile west of Dinajpur-Tetulia highway across the Dhepa River. The temple is a perennial crowd puller.

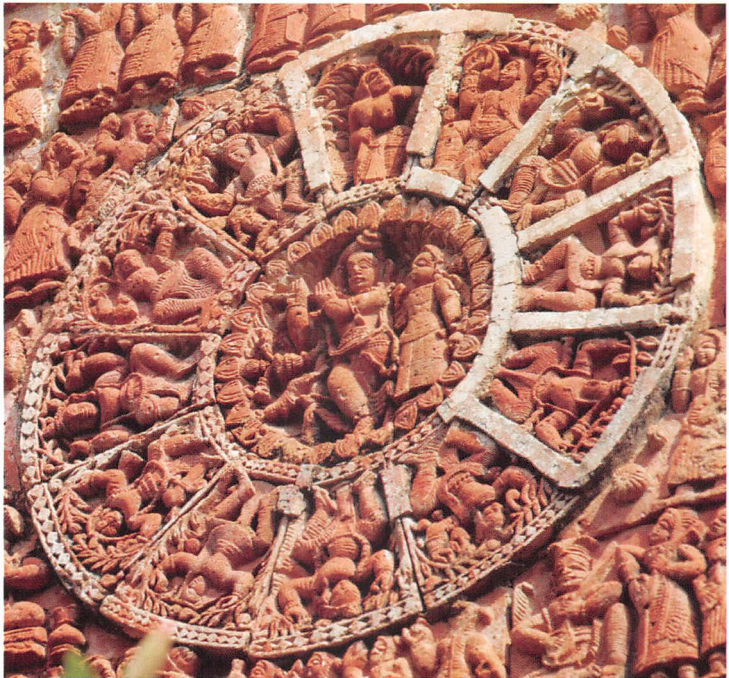
The design, the modelling and the beauty – everything is integrated in a strikingly skillful way. However, the artisans were not carried away while doing the designs. While choosing from a number of diverse motifs, they tried to maintain a balance in composition and representation.

So, what can one see visiting the temple? It's unbelievable that the artisans of that time left no stones unturned to depict the stories of Hindu purana onto the walls of the temple with sheer poignance.



Kantji Temple. Photo. Afzal Nazim

You will find mythological scenes depicting the nativity of Krishna; the demon King Kangsa; successive attempts to kill the infant Krishna; Krishna's killing of the Putana ogress and the Bakasura or crane-demon; the lifting of Govardhana mountain, the killing of Keshi; the quelling of the snake-demon Kaliya, and Krishna's pleasure ride on a long slim boat with revellers. The south face of the temple also presents stories from *The Ramayana* in a somewhat confused sequence. On the east face, you will find *Ramayana* stories crafted with the same mastery. The exile of Ramachandra, Sita, and Laksmana in the Panchabati forest; Laksmana's striking off the nose of Surpanakha; the abduction of Sita by Ravana from Dandakaranya; Jatayu's futile attempt to obstruct the chariot of Ravana; the captivity of Sita in Ashoka Forest; the fight between Bali and Sugriva with their monkey followers for the throne of Kiskindha; Ramachandra's sapta tala veda and Sugriva with his monkey followers and their palaver with



Terracotta designs on Kantji temple. Photo Collection

Ramachandra are represented in such a way that is sure to enthrall you.

In short, the terracotta embellishments on Kantaji's temple walls are highly sophisticated and rich in artistry.

Bangladesh is famous for having various kinds of rice. They differ according to the sizes of the grain. In that context, Dinajpur is the district of the country that produces the finest rice – Kataribhogh.

The fine grain and the lovely smell of the rice are food lovers delight. Another item that you can collect from this area is a clay bowl having done simple designs all over it. It is used to mash boiled potato or any other vegetable mixed with salt, chilli and mustard oil to prepare bhartas, these monochromic bowls are beautiful and sure to amaze the person you present them with.

The birthplace of Bengali feminism has more than meets the eye. Rangpur is the north most district of Bangladesh. This is where Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, the first Bangladeshi feminist, educationist and social activist was born in her village named Payraband. The virtuous lady dedicated her whole life to promote female education among the girls of her region, which was basically a utopia for the people of her time. Begum Rokeya University, besides, Rangpur Medical College and Carmichael University College, is one of the prominent education institutes in the district which also houses a number of different archaeologically important architectures.



Area 3444 Sq.km.

Population 2990000

Weather Dinajpur experiences a hot, wet and humid tropical climate which relishes a distinct monsoonal season and Maha Raas Leela of Kantanagar awaits in the winter.

Crops 128 different types of Paddy, Lychee.

River Pathraj, Talma, Punarbhaba, Tapa, Tangon, Dahuk, Jamuna, Atrai, Garveshwari, Jabuneshwari, Jaldhaka, Torsa, Kollani & more.

Greens Ramsagar National Park, Nababgonj National Park, Singra National Park, Birgonj National Park.

Wildlife Bengal Monitor Lizard, Common Cobra, Jackal, Monkey, Wild cat etc.

Ethnic Communities Santals.



Important **phone** numbers

Police

Police Super, Dinajpur

Phone: +8801713373955

OC, Kotwali Thana

Phone: +8801713373962

Hospital

Dinajpur Medical College Hospital

Phone: +8801712706793, +88053165006

Zia Heart Foundation Hospital & Research Center

Phone: +88053165735

Courier

S. A. Paribahan

Phone: +8801755512889, +8801755512881

Sundarban Courier Service

Phone: +8801715508470 Dinajpur, +88052163175 Rangpur



Rangpur city map

DISTRICT MAP OF DISTRICT RANGPUR DIVISION RAJSHAHI



Legend

- International Boundary
- District Boundary
- District HQ
- Upazila HQ
- National Highway
- Upazila Road
- Railway Network
- River Network



Places to see

- Kantaji Temple, Dinajpur
- Zamindar Bari, Dewanbari, Rangpur
- Bhinno Jagat, Rangpur



Tajhat Zamindar Palace

Built by Gopal Lal Ray (1887-1955), a Zamindar and a social worker; many contribute its artistry to his being a jeweler by profession. A Taj or a crown-shaped dome and an imposing staircase are its distinctive features. Ray introduced “Bou Mela” for women and a kite-flying festival for children in the palace to celebrate Pahela Baishakh. Now the building houses Rangpur museum.



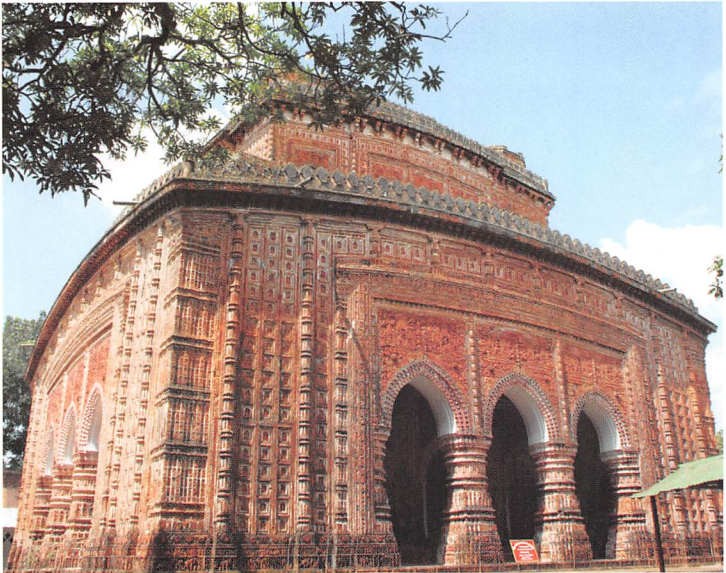
Terracotta on Kantaji Temple. Photo: Afzal Nazim

- Rangpur Zoo
- Shopnopuri Park, Kushdaha Union, Dinajpur
- Chiklir Bil, Rangpur
- Tajhat Palace, Rangpur
- Ram Shagar, Dinajpur



Begum Rokeya's House

In Pairaband, lies remnants of the old house of Begum Rokeya (1880-1932) where she was born. The eminent feminist and writer rendered her life to establish the rights of Muslim girls for education and enjoy equality in the society. A memorial exhibits her used stuffs. A library, a guest house and a research center are incorporated in it in her memory.



Kantji Temple. Photo Afzal Nazim



Art & Craft

- Shotoronji (Kind of Fabric Cover)
- Benaroshi, Gazghanta, Gangachara
- Pottery, Taraganja
- Khorom (Kind of Wooden Sandal)
- Shitol Pati



Sataranji

The largest of the Sataranji pollis in Bangladesh is situated in Rangpur. One can find there wall-mats, floor-mats of different colors and shapes. Rangpur's sataranjis are special for their fine-tuned look. It is a rare experience to watch the weavers working. Usually, two women share their works to make one handmade carpet within 3 to 4 days. The finished products are sold worldwide.



Nakshi Kantha

Rajshahi's version of our embroidered quilts include Lohori Kantha and Sujni Kantha. Lohori got its name from persian word 'lehr' meaning waves. Thick yarn is used for close pattern damping. For Sujni Kantha, floral and vine motifs are used.

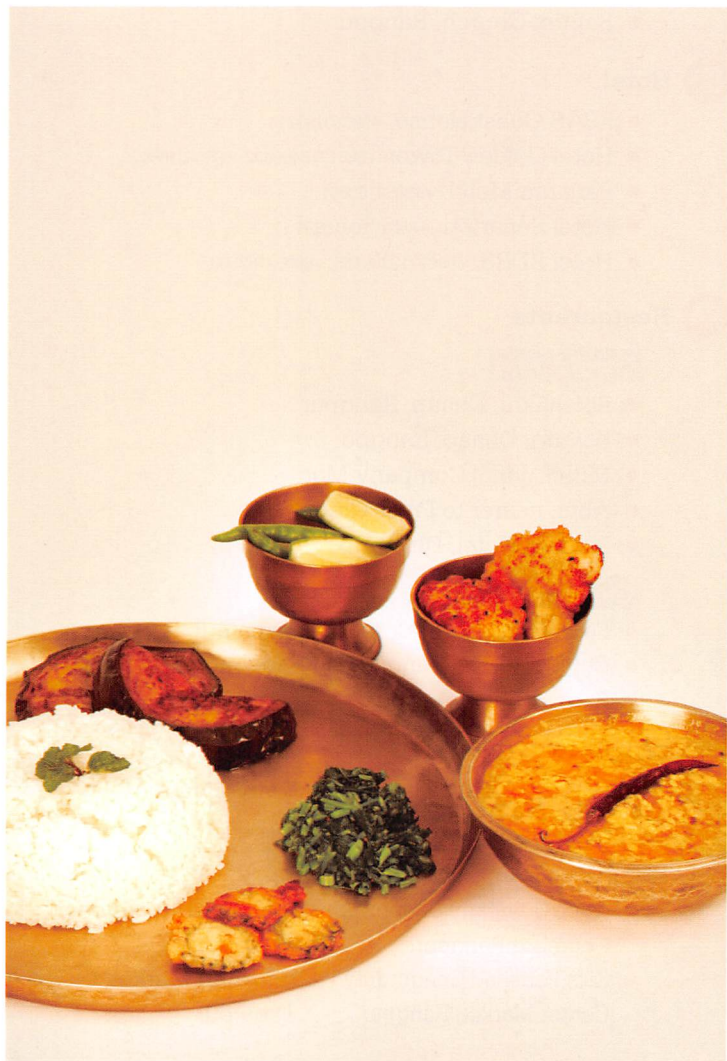


Sataranchi. Photo Gayatree Arun



Cuisine

- Siedol Bhorta (a dry fish preparation)
- Siedol Curry (a dry fish curry)
- Sholoka (a vegetable preparation)
- Shil-bilati Potato Bhorta
- Potato-Egg-Pulse Curry



Kataribhog rice, shona mung dal, and vegetable fries. Photo. Debashish Shome

Pilgrimage

- Keramotia Mosque, Rangpur
- Kalibari Temple, Rangpur
- Hatibandha Mazar, Peerganj, Rangpur
- Harano Mosque, Lalmonirhat
- Raja Rammohan Roy Temple, Rangpu
- Rai Saheb Bari Temple, Dinajpur
- Baptist Church, Rangpur

Hotel

- FPAB Guest House, +88053163214
- Hotel Golden Tower, +8801718409692, +88052165920,
- Parjatan Motel, +88052163681
- Hotel Sonartori, +8801716018995
- Hotel RDRS, +8801713200185, +88052162598

Restaurants

Local Menu

- Boishakhi, Dhaap, Rangpur
- Kosturi, Dhaap, Rangpur
- Mitali, Jahaj Company Mor
- Ahar, nearer to Press Club
- Rustam Hotel, Dinajpur

Global Menu

- Food Garden, Station Road, Dinajpur
- Coffee House, Bangladesh Bank mor, Rangpur
- Rangdhanu, Rangpur

Pubs

- Foreign Liquor Shop, Shapla Mor, Rangpur

Shopping

- Jahaj Company Shopping Complex, Rangpur
- Zilla Parishad Community Center Market, Rangpur
- Lalbagh Hat, Lalbagh, Rangpur
- Gulshan Market, Dinajpur



Cultural centers

- Rangpur Zilla School
- Rangpur Town Hall
- Dinajpur Town Hall
- Carmichael College, Rangpur



Museums

- Tazhat Zamindar Bari Museum, Rangpur
- Khaza Nazimuddin Muslim Hall and Public Library Museum, Dinajpur



Connectivity

Road

From Kollanpur Bus Counter, Dhaka:

- Hanif Enterprise
- Agomoni Express (AC)
- Shyamoli Enterprise
- Green Line (AC)

Rail

From Kamalapur Railway Station

- Rangpur Express



u know ?

Books to read

Peasant utopia: the communalization of class politics in East Bengal, 1920-1947 by Taj ul-Islam Hashmi

Sultana's Dream by Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain

Sultana's Dream by Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain

Food to taste

Lychee at Dinajpur

Performance to enjoy

Vawaiya Utsav

Dhemdhemi Kalir Mela

Nekmard Peer's Mela

Songs to listen

Album Sona Bondhure by Mustafa Zaman Abbasi

"O ki Garial Bhai" by Ferdousi Rahman

To visit

Magnificent Footballer Samad Memorial, Dinajpur

Begum Rokeya Memorial, Payraband, Rangpur

Shaswato Bangla, (Muktijuddha Museum), Rangpur

KHAGRACHHARI

An Abode of Fascinating Calm

Waterfalls, hills and cave together offer a pristine getaway from the humdrum of all the hustle and bustle of city life

An important town in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Khagrachhari has several local names like Chengmi Phalang Htaung or the Mong Circle. It is a town that homes the Mong Chief or Raja Saching Prue Chowdhury who is the head of the Arakanese descendants living in the circle. It is also the administrative headquarter of Khagrachhari district.

Chengi, Kasalong and Maini are three hilly rivers that wash the feet of the green valley of Khagrachhari. This is a trek-lovers' haven. Walking all the way up to the embraced by the clouds in an unmatched feeling. The faraway hills strike a marvellous pose: silhouettes of sleepy peaks will engulf you with sheer admiration. On the hills, you will find yourself amid thick forests and bamboo groves. It is better to take a guide along, as you might get lost in the trenches of those thick forests. A guided tour will also help you know the names of the various trees and animals you encounter on your way to the peaks.

Khagrachhari offers an amazing view of ethnic homes that are built on bamboo or wooden platforms to protect the families from ferocious animals. The bamboo built houses have small windows through which inhabitants survey you as you approach. You can see them on the veranda of their houses weaving or smoking locally prepared tobaccos.

Try visiting Alutila – a two-way cave that can offer you a stunning underground journey. Take a torch with you so that you don't get your ankles stuck in mud



Beautiful Khagrachhari. Photo. Afzal Nazim

or stumble on rocks. Once inside the fissure, try not to panic and savor the beauty of a dark cave! May be some hidden memories will resurface to connect you with a collective unconscious.

You can also get a shower at the Richang spring, which is a crowd pleaser. The crystal clear water of the spring is enriched with minerals. You can take a dive at the pond nearby for some water sports with friends.

Most of the people here live on Jhum cultivation. Hence, visiting Khagrachhari will give you a firsthand experience of slash and burn agriculture, which produces upland rice and vegetables.

Caution: you will have to take permission from the local army base camp for visiting remote areas.

You really need to have guts to try some local foods. Also try other options such as food cooked inside bamboo hollows or with tender bamboo shoots which, when grilled, give out an unusual smell but is savory in each bite. The soup here is also fantastic. The clear broth and floating boiled vegetables are sure to stimulate your palate.

You can collect amazing bamboo pipes the local people use to smoke, sticks or even weeds. You can also buy the fabrics that the local people weave with love and warmth of their heart. The rich color and fine texture of these fabrics prove their mastery, which will certainly delight you. And never forget to spend quiet times, may be you succeed in understanding what the hills say to each other.



Hill on hills. Photo. Afzal Nazim



Area 2749 Sq.km.

Population 614000

Weather

Crops Jumm Paddy.

River Feni, Maini, Chengi.

Greens Garjan, Chapalish, Telsur, Tali, Kamdeb, Uriam, Jarul, Civit, Toon, Banderhola, Teak, Gamar, Mehogani, Chapalish, Koroi etc. with bamboo, cane, Climbers and fern.

Kaptai National Park, Baroiyadhala National Park, Sitakunda Botanical Garden and Eco-park (Chittagong)

Wildlife Elephant, Monkey, Wild Boar, Barking Deer, Samvar, King Cobra Monitor Lizard, Bengal Monitor Lizard, and Indian Leopard.

Ethnic Communities Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Tancangya, Mro, Chuck, Khyang, Khumi, Pankhoya, Bom, and Lusai.



Important **phone** numbers

Police

Khagrachari Sadar Thana

Phone: +88037131944

Police Super, Khagrachari

Phone: +88037161655, +8801713373677

Hospital

Upazila Health Complex

Phone: +881730324772

Courier

S. A. Paribahan

Phone: +8801755512728

Sundarban Courier Service

Phone: +8801931094634, +880371683



Places to see

- Alutilla tourist spot at Alutilla Hilltop
- Rissang Falls, Nearer Alutilla tourist spot
- Alutilla Tunnel at Alutilla tourist spot
- Debota Pukur/ Gods Lake at Nunchhari, Sadar
- Hanging Bridge at Ramgahr Lake
- Rissang Falls
- Sajek Valley
- Mong Palace



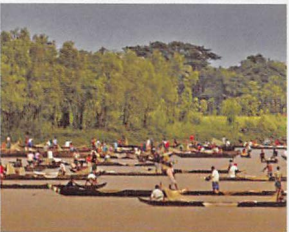
Alutilla Hill

Ever wished to have a meditative séance with nature? The mystifying natural cave of Alutilla with its rocky and dark texture is the perfect place. You need to be adventurous as water flowing through it makes the floor slippery. If you are not impressed enough with the approximately 150 meter long hill, visit Risang Fall, in the neighborhood, which too offers an amazing vista.



Sajek Valley

Sajek Valley is situated in Rangamati. However, you can only reach it from Khagrachari. It is a very remote, hilly place. Many tribes live here. Each Friday 'haats' are arranged by indigenous inhabitants. Mountain bikers find this valley intriguing. You can find fresh oranges here. Coffee is also cultivated in the area.



Halda River

Halda is the only tidal river in the world, which works as a natural breeding ground for carp type fishes. From many carp fishes like catla, labeo rohita, labeo calbasu, cirrhinus mrigala eggs are collected by local fishermen to breed fishes using local technology. Fishermen catching fishes in long boats with nets is an amazing scene.



Layered hills. Photo. Afzal Nazim



Art & Craft

- Traditional Tribal Dress Inon
- Traditional Habi Dress
- Goldplated Bulls Horn Ornaments
- Bamboo Handicrafts



Tribal Ornaments

The tribal ornaments, mostly made of silver are an essential element of livelihood. The women are fond of these collections which were once worn by the queens and relates to their mythical ancestors. The neck chains are designed and studded by colorful beads. The commoners use brass instead of silver in their ornaments.



Crafts and textile of Khagrachhari. Photo. Debashish Shome



Cuisine

- Chicken on Bamboo Shell
- Beef with Bamboo Shoot
- Sticky Rice



Bamboo Shoots

Many dishes are prepared with bamboo shoots, the inner soft core of bamboos. Locally known as "bash kurul", this ingredient when mixed with other vegetables, curries or meat, brings such a difference in your meal that you will never see treat bamboo in the same way as before.



Cooked snails. Photo. Gayatri Arun

Pilgrimage

- BGB Camp Mosque
- Zilla Parishad Mosque
- Gamari Dhala Forest Vihar, Gamari Dhala
- Parsi Buddha Vihar, Jidipara
- Shiva Temple, Thakur Chora, Golabari
- Bethelhem Church, Maischari
- Anandapara Church, Anandapara
- Datkupa Baptist Church, Keyang Ghat

Hotel

- Ecochari Inn Hotel, +8801680395557
- Hotel Gairing, +88037161041
- Hotel Shailo Shuborna, 01831-147310
- Alo Resort, Sajek, +8801863606906
- Runmoy Resort, +8801783969200

Restaurants

Local Menu

- Hotel Gairing, Sadar, Khagrachari
- Hotel Niribili
- Hotel Shoilo Subarna

Global Menu

- Café Chamak Hotel and Restaurant,



Sajek resort. Photo Collected



Pubs

- Parjatan Motel, Khagrachari
- Chuani (Tribal Liquor) at Tribal Village



Shopping

- Khagrachhari Bazar
- Vuahari Nutan Bazar, Vuachhari
- Mohalchhari Bazar, Mohalchhari
- Maischhari Bazar, Maischhari



Connectivity

Road

From Dhaka Fakirapul and Gabtoli Bus Terminal:

- BRTC
- Shyamoli Paribahan
- Eagle Paribahan
- Saudia Paribahan
- S. Alam Paribahan
- Shanti Paribahan



u know ?

Books to Read

The Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh: On the Difficult Road to Peace by Amena Mohsin

Indigenous people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh by M. Atiq-ur-Rahaman, Ema. E. Tahera

Performance to enjoy

Zoom Dance

Sangariza

Bottle Dance

Songs to listen

Chakma Music

To visit

BDR Memorial at Ramgahr Zilla Parishad

KUAKATA, PATUAKHALI

For Thirsty Travelers

Join the 'shagor konya' (daughter of the sea) to view the sunshine and sunset from the same sandy expanse.

Romancing with the daughter of the sea is as pleasurable as it sounds. In circa 1784, a brutal king illegally took possession of Arakan and started slaying the local Rakhains. The persecuted ethnic group fled from their homeland to an island called Rangabali. The island was a part of today's Galachipa Upazilla. The Rakhain settled down in Kuakata and Kolapara. The first problem they faced was the scarcity of drinking water. So, they dug some wells or kuas in search of fresh drinking water and hence the name 'Kuakata'. The Rakhains are still living in the place, practicing a colourful lifestyle. However, there are no wells to serve water, deep tubewells having replaced them. But the beach town is still serving the travellers who come here to quench their visual thirst. Named as the daughter of the sea, Kuakata is a well of endless scenic beauty. The beach town is situated 320 km from Dhaka and 70 km from Patuakhali district town. Kuakata beach is neither the longest of the world, nor does it shelter any coral reefs. But the beach is most sought after because of the tranquility it offers. This lightly populated area with moderate tourist penetration allows enough room on its sandy beaches for everyone, instead of being cramped by never-ending tourist cottages and hotels. The sea solitude and silver sand dunes perfectly describe this runaway spot for rejuvenation. However, the lack of hotels will also mean that availability of modern amenities is low, as most motels and hotels there will not be able to provide internet connection, sauna, indoor pools and other facilities. However, its remote location will provide you plenty of opportunities to romance with nature.



Kuakata Beach. Photo Afzal Nazim

Many people visiting Kuakata, like to visit the Buddhist temples located nearby places such as Keranipara, Misripara and Amkholapara. Kuakata is also a place of pilgrimage for Hindus and Buddhists. Devotees arrive here during the festivals of Rash Purnima and Maghi Purnima. A major ritual on these occasions is dipping in the holy waters of Kuakata. The Rakhains are prominent amongst the ethnic people living there. They have an exuberant lifestyle. Both their customs and costumes offer visual delight for the travellers.

As you walk along the stretch of the sea, you might be amazed to see many trolley wheels. Now these are used to pull boats onto dry land and to send them back to the sea for fishing. You will get many bikers around the town who will give you paid-rides on their pillions to see the beach. One of the many visual delights of Kuakata is the army of red crabs. When they come out through the tiny pores in the sandy beach and roam around, the sandy beach looks like a red carpet. They are smart enough



Kuakata Beach. Photo Atzal Nazim

to sense anyone coming near them and dip inside their nests. However, these crabs usually fall prey to local birds and people who know the techniques of catching them.

While visiting the mangrove forest at Fatra – a place nearby Kuakata – you will come across monkeys, jackals, and other wild animals. Also, go visit the acacia forest, a government initiative, from where watching the sunrise will enchant you. On the east of the acacia forest, you will find the thick spread of another forest Gangamati, which is also a sanctuary of wild birds. Without visiting these little pieces of green heaven, your visit to Kuakata will be incomplete. There are many different species of birds such as wild pigeons, sandpipers and collar kingfishers living in the jungle part of the beach town. Another bird lovers' haven, your camera shutter will never stop during your stay on the beach.

There are gardens of coconut trees on each side of the beach through which you can take a leisurely walk and enjoy some earthly flavour of a village life. These gardens used to be much larger, but with the shrinkage of the coastline due to erosion, the gardens have been reduced in size.

The town is famous for sea fish. Rich in ingredients that are essential for life, these fish are rich sources of protein. Try eating them cooked and served fresh. A rupchanda curry seems fascinating as the tender flesh of the fish lures your taste-buds while the spices tickle them with signature tastes. You can try some crabs and tiger prawns, or some Rakhain cuisine.

Don't forget to visit the 'Venice of East', just like the marvellous city of Italy, this riverine city pleases anybody. A city consists of rivers and endless natural beauty is the most favourite place for travellers. People can feel the divine adoration of the Kirtonkhola River and the other petite water bodies. Inhabitants of this land have adopted themselves just like nature; they are extremely jolly and friendly. Their sweetmeats are a must, if you want to taste the soothing Sandesh from Guthia, if you want to evade all the suffocation of modern life, if you want to get the feel of paradise, *Barisal* is the place to be.



Area 3221 Sq.km.

Population 1536000

Weather The coastal zone of Bangladesh which has diverse features, dynamic as well as complex natural environment.

Crops Fish, Paddy, betel Leaf.

River Bishkhali, Sandhiya, Agunmukha, Hemda, Torki or Turkey, Kirtankhola, Bhola, Pakashia, Chandana, Gournadi, Kalabadar, Madhumati, Dhansiri, Sugandha, Galachipa and many more.

Greens Mangrove, Costal forest, Kuakata National Park, Kuakata Eco-Park.

Wildlife Sonarchar Wildlife Sanctuary, Tengragiri Wildlife Sanctuary (Barguna).

Ethnic Communities Rakhain, Chakma, Mog.



Important **phone** numbers

Police

OC, Kotwali Thana

Phone: +8801713374318

Police Super Office, Patuakhali

Phone: +8801713374311

Hospital

Patuakhali Sadar Hospital

Phone: +88044162842, +8801722148706

Patuakhali General Hospital

Phone: +8801730324763

Marie Stopes Clinic

Phone: +8801716011848

Courier

S. A. Paribahan

Phone: +8801755512865









Sundarban Courier Service

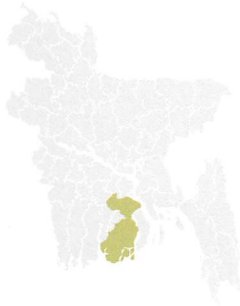
Phone: +8801711120055, +8801715605647

DISTRICT MAP OF
PATUAKHALI DISTRICT
BARISAL DIVISION



Legend

-  International Boundary
-  District Boundary
-  District HQ
-  Upazila HQ
-  National Highway
-  Upazila Road
-  Railway Network
-  River Network





Places to see

- Kuakata Beach
- Barisal River Port
- Durga Sagar, Barisal
- Kalibari of Mukunda Dash
- Fatrar Char, Kuakata
- Brajendra Mohon College, Barisal



Kuakata Beach

To fill your eyes with a full view of sunrise and sunset, this location is a nature lover's is an ideal place. Still having the setup of a simple anglers' village, the exotic beach is a place to enjoy romantic holidays or quiet vacations.



Expanse of the sea. Photo. Afzal Nazim

- Banari Para Floating Rice Market
- Ganga Mati, Kuakata
- Rakhain Villages, Kuakata
- Mashjidbari Mosque
- Alipur Port
- Misripara Buddhist Temple



Barisal River Port

This old river port is the heart of all trade of Barisal, a city previously known as the “Venice of East”. Withstanding the British architecture, this port is a nice place to say hello to the poetry of Jibanananda Das.



Barisal divisional port. Photo. K M Asad

Art & Craft

- Shawls and Cloths by Rakhains
- Ornaments Made of Oyster Shells, Kuakata
- Gamcha (a Local Cotton Towel) from Jhalakathi
- Bed Cover Made of Hogla
- Nokshi Katha
- Pottery
- Shakha
- Nakshi Pakha



Rakhain Textile

Hand-woven and colorful, Rakhain textile usually comes in stripes. Bed sheets, tribal wears, fatua are commonly made out of it. Aesthetics of Rakhains, who originally migrated to this land in the 18th century from the Arakan State, has become part of Bangladeshi culture.



Rakhain clothing. Photo Debashish Shome



Cuisine

- Guava from Shwarupkathi, Pirojpur
- Shandesh from Guthia
- Yogurt from Gauranadi
- Hilsha
- Crab



Guthia Sandesh

Guthia Sandesh is one wonderful form of Chhana, unripened curd cheese, a staple for sweet making in Bangladesh. The local amuse-bouche will please your tongue and give your blood a pleasant sugar rush.



Sorshe ilish (Hilsa in mustard gravy). Photo: Gayatrie Arun

Pilgrimage

- Oxford Church, Barisal
- Amanat Shah Mosque, Guthia
- Holi Bath, Durgasagar
- Mirzaganj Majar, Potuakhali
- Shreerampur Amor Mosque, Potuakhali
- Momin Mosque, Pirojpur

Hotel

- Parjatan Holiday Homes Kuakata, +8801732091599
- Kuakata Guest House, +8801719589752
- Hotel Neelanjana, +8801712927904
- Biswas Palace, +8801911672135, +8801712849373
- The Village, +8801711623901
- Hotel Banani Palace, +8801713674192



Oxford Church

The Oxford Mission Church was established in 1903 as a branch of the original one in England. Its red bricks in the backdrop of 13 ponds create a fascinating view. Forty archways supporting its roof give the church a unique structure.



Amanat Shah mosque, Guthia. Photo: K M Asad

Restaurants

Local Menu

- Shokal Shondha Restaurant, Barisal
- Bismillah Hotel, Barisal
- Rose Garden Restaurant, Barisal
- Hotel Rony, Kuakata
- Hotel Al-Hera

Global Menu

- Paradise Hotel Int., Barisal
- YMCA Hotel, Barisal
- Yan Thai Restaurant, Barisal
- Hotel Sea Palace

Pubs

- Barisal Club
(Have to be a member or invited by a guest)
- Parjatan Motel, Potuakhali

Shopping

- Barisal Bazar
- Rakhain Market, Kuakata
- Mistripara, Kuakata



Hilsa, our National Fish. Photo. Gayatree Arun



Cultural centers

- Public Square, Sohel Chattar
- Barisal Charukola Campus
- Muktijoddha Park at the bank of Kirtankhola River
- Amanatpur Park, Amanatpur
- Tirish Godown, Barisal Town



Museums

- Collectorate Bhaban Museum
- Sher-E-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Haque Museum, Chakhar



Connectivity

Road

From Gabtoli Bus Stand, Dhaka

- Sakura
- Eagle
- Hanif

Port

From Sadar Ghat, Dhaka (Evening at 8.00pm)

- Suravi
- Sundarban
- Kirtankhola
- Kalam Khan
- Parabat
- Green Line Express Service



Shabdaboli Theatre



Chakhar Sher-E-Bangla Memorial Museum



Guava orchard. Photo. K M Asad



Books to Read

My people uprooted: A Saga of the Hindus of Eastern Bengal by Tathagata Roy

A Poet Apart; A Literary Biography of the Bengali Jibanananda Das, (1899-1954) by Clinton B. Seely

Food to taste

Hilsa Curry, Nakshi Pitha and Coconut

Performance to enjoy

Boat Race at Kirtankhola

Rash Purnima at Kuakata

Maghi Purnima at Kuakata

Songs to listen

"Amar Bhaiyer Rokte Rangano", Altaf Mahmud

To visit

Birshrestha Mohiuddin Jahangir Memorial Museum and Library

KUSHTIA

A Land of Sufis and Mystics

The birthplace of one of the greatest sufis of Bengal, Lalon Shah, Kushtia is not only a place soaked in spirituality, but also blissed with scenic rivers.

Home of many poets and authors, Kushtia offers awe-inspiring experience to its travelers

There is something unique about Kushtia district. The mighty river Padma must have unfurled all its magic in the air of the township that people living here are bound to be intellectuals and trance-lover in nature. Rivers like Gorai, Mathabhanga, Kaliganga and Kumar are also there to crisscross the town and enrich it with their waves and silts. Historically the town attracted traders and businessmen from Mughal era to British reign. Home of magnificent poets and authors like Mir Mosharraf Hossain, Kangal Harinath and Fakir Lalon Shah, Kushtia is famous for a its masters of lyrics, poems and stories.

The beauty and myths of the river Padma are never ending. Now shrunk down due to dams and embankments, the mighty river may no longer seem dreadful but both shores of it offer a splendid panorama. Hardinge Bridge, a steel railway bridge situated over the river at Paksey still bears the testimony of the Viceroy to India from 1910 to 1916 Lord Hardinge's rule. The second largest railway bridge in Bangladesh, this majestic structure bore sour memories of Liberation War of 1971 when the allied forces damaged the bridge to spoil the Pakistani Army's retreat towards Jessore. Later, with the help of Japan government, the bridge was reconstructed. A journey over the bridge will give



Sculpture of Fakir Lalon Shah. Photo: Gayatree Arun

a magnificent view of both sides of the river and the villages.

Kushtia is also considered as a mystic nerve-center as it houses the shrine of Lalou, the famous mystic poet, saint, songwriter and social reformer. His soulful words put an end to all sorts of discriminations among caste and creed, and enhanced religious tolerance among common mass. The beautiful white colored shrine of iconic figure in the Bengali literature is a crowd-puller from across the country as well as India. The bauls from nooks and corners of the country throng to this place from 16th to 18th October to celebrate Lalou Fair amid much enthusiasm and festivity. The admirers of the famous baul try to fathom the depth of his philosophy during this period through various renditions and meditations. UNESCO has declared the Baul songs to be one of 43 masterpieces of oral and intangible world heritages of the world. For anyone into mysticism, this is the place to be where one can enjoy the ecstasy of eternal bliss of understanding his or her creator.

Shilaidaha Kuthibari of Rabindranath Tagore is an absolutely wonderful mansion that will enable you to see relics from the days while this great poet used to come to Bangladesh to look after their family Zamindari here and collect revenue from local peasants. Situated 20 kilometers away from the main town, this country house is situated on the bank of the river Padma. It was built by his father Dwarkanath Tagore in the Kumarkhali Upazila and had been used by the great poet to take a refuge from the drudgery of the daily lives and to delve into writing many world famous stories and verses over a decade from 1891 to 1901. He wrote a number of his masterpieces namely *Sonar Tori*, *Chaitali*, *Chitra*, *Katha O Kahini* during his stay here in intervals. The waves of the mighty river Padma and the gentle breeze must have done its own magic on the Nobel Laureate Poet and guided him towards a neverland, which had successfully been depicted in the bard's poems and stories. He himself expressed gratitude towards the aura of their place behind many of his creations. His *Chhinna Patrabali* shows readers how deeply he was engrossed into his sojourn at Shilaidaha. This is also the place where he started to translate *Gitanjali*, his collection of 157

poems that won him the Nobel Prize in Literature the next year. Now a museum that is looked after by the Archaeological Department of Bangladesh, this house is now called "Tagore Memorial Museum". Draped with a vast stretch of beautiful trees and plants, the plaza will take visitors as close to nature as possible and gives a better chance to feel the ambience of an amazing trance-inducing locale of the yesteryears. The great poet's bed, iron chest, lawn mower, wardrobe and houseboat are few of the invaluable artifacts one can see inside the museum. Spread over an area of 11 acres, the house is at the center and in the neighborhood is a picnic spot with car parking facility and guest houses for those who would like to stay over for a night.

Kushtia is also famous for its savory sweets. *Pera sandesh*, a special kind of gourmet sweetmeat is made here. An special type of curd from buffalo milk is also a famous dessert of this area.





Area 1608 Sq. km.

Population 1947000

Weather The sun feels warmer, and it rains with greater intensity in the monsoon. Lalan Festival awaits with much intense mystic atmosphere.

Crops Paddy, Mango Orchard

River Mathabhanga, Garai, Jalangi, Magarkhali & more

Greens Mango Orchard

Wildlife Nazirganj Wildlife (Dolphin) Sanctuary (Pabna), Shilanda-Nagdemra Wildlife (Dolphin) Sanctuary (Pabna), Nagarbari-Mohanganj Dolphin Sanctuary (Pabna)

Ethnic Communities Santal



Important **phone** numbers

Police

Police Super, Kushtia Sadar Model Thana

Phone: +8801713374214

OC, Kushtia Sadar Model Thana

Phone: +8801713374220

Hospital

Kushtia General Hospital

Phone: +8801819696256

Soho Hospital Ltd.

Phone: +8801714821360

Courier

S. A. Paribahan

Phone: +8801755512804

Sundarban Courier Service

Phone: +8801674045050











Kushtia city map

DISTRICT MAP OF KUSHTIA DISTRICT KHULNA DIVISION



Legend

-  International Boundary
-  District Boundary
-  District HQ
-  Upazila HQ
-  National Highway
-  Upazila Road
-  Railway Network
-  River Network



Places to see

- Shrine of Lalon Shah, Chheuria
- Kuthi Bari at Shilaidaha
- Tagor Lodge, Boro bazar
- Hardinge Bridge on Padma River
- Gopinath Jiu Temple, Kustia Sadar



Lalon Shai Mazar

Everyone asks, "What caste does Lalon belong to in this world?" Lalon answers, "What does caste look like?" Songs of such deep philosophy on caste issues, living, and spirituality earned Lalon epicomic love in the hearts of Bangalis. His institute Lalon Akhra, the shrine rests in Cheuriya, where devotees in circles keep singing Shaijee's songs with raw music of *Ektara* and *Dugdugi*.



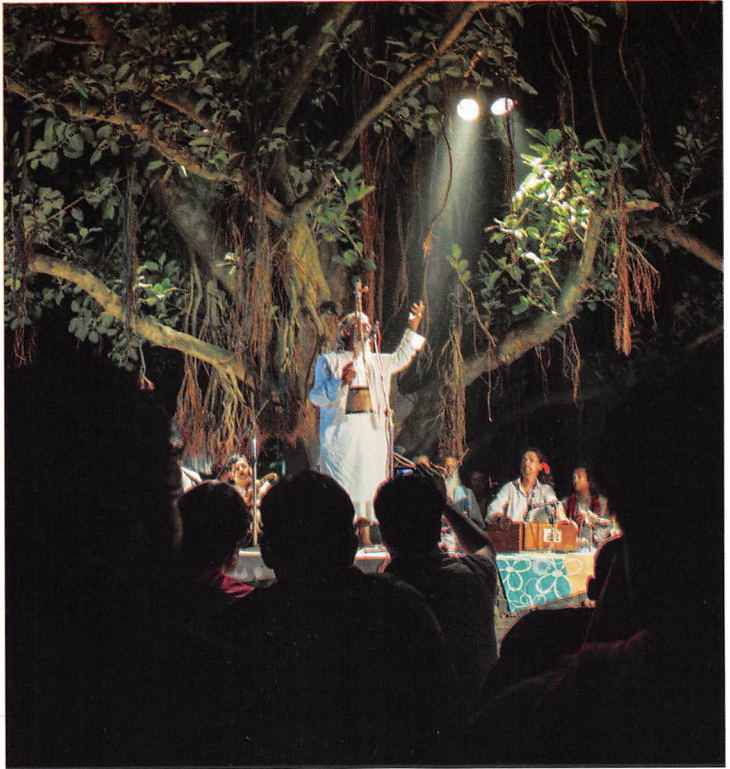
Shilaidaha Kuthibari

Rabindranath Tagore lived here for more than a decade in intervals. While managing his family estate, the poet also wrote many entries of *Gitanjali*, *Sonar Tari*, *Chitra* and short stories. Now the three-storied house serves as a museum in commemoration of Tagore with his bed, lawnmower, framed pictures and houseboat.



Hardinge Bridge over the mighty River Padma. Photo: Syed Zakir Hossain

- Mir Mosharraf Hossain's residence
- Shahi Mosque at Jhaudia
- Darshana, Chuadanga
- Mujib Nagar



A baul singing for the audience. Photo. K M Asad



Art & Craft

- Bedsheet from Kumarkhali
- Wooden Crafts at Lalon Shaai Mazar
- Ektara from Lalan Shaai Mazar



Gamchha from Kushtia

Anywhere in Bangladesh at the rail stations or the streets, you will find a few men carrying colorful, soft, cotton-made pieces on their shoulders. These are handloom 'gamchha' which is used as towels. In spectacular stripes of joyful colors, *gamchas* from Kishitia are the best in the world.



Padma River. Photo. Syed Zakir Hossain



Cuisine

- Fresh Boal Fish from Radha Nagar Bil
- Kulfi Malai (Local Rich-milk ice-cream)
- Tiler Khaja (Sesame candy)
- Yogurt from Kumarkhali
- Pera Shandesh



Carew and Co.

Not far from Kushtia, in Darshana, this company has been producing rum, whiskey, brandy, vinegar, sugar and bio fertilizer since 1938. While its distillery has gained fame for producing the finest liquor in the country, the sugar mill meets the popular demand with around 5075 metric ton sugar per year.



Sweet curd. Photo. Gayatree Arun



Pilgrimage

- Kalipuja Temple at Khoksha
- Sri Sri Jiur Temple, Kushtia Sadar
- Jhaudia Shahi Jame Mosque
- Kumarkhali Jame Mosque
- Thanapara Jame Mosque



Hotel

- Hotel Noor International, +880 1722-605459
- Azmiry Hotel, +881721507903
- Hotel Ratul, +8801763645145
- Hotel Pritom, +8801764503131
- Hotel River View, +8801711002701



Restaurants

Local Menu

- Shishir Bakery, Borobazar
- Nishuti, Lalon Saai Mazar
- Shilpi Hotel, Mojompur Gate
- Jahangir Hotel, Mojompur
- Shahi Hotel and Restaurant, T&T Road

Global Menue

- Punak food Park, Dadapur Sarak
- Hotel Riverview, Pach rastar mor
- Karamay Chinese restaurant
- Chinese Park Chinese Restaurant



Pubs

Goutam Chakis Liquor Shop (There is only one Licensed Bar in Kushtia)

- Hemps available during Lalon Festival



Shopping

- Lovely Tower, Borobazar
- Poura Bazar, Sadar
- Tamizuddin Market, Panch Rastar Mor
- Bangabandhu Market, Sadar



Cultural centers

- Parimal Theatre, NS Road
- Kustia Govt. College Campus
- Public Library Area
- Shilpakola Academy
- Bodhon Theatre
- Lalon Mausoleum



Museums

- Tagore Lodge, Borobazar
- Poura Museum, Kushtia Sadar



Connectivity

Road

From Kalyanpur and Gabtoli Bus Counter

- SB Super Deluxe
- Hanif Enterprise
- Sky line Express
- Shyamoli Paribahan



u know ?

Books to read

Bridges to Islam: A Christian Perspective on Folk Islam by Philip L. Parshall
Rabindranath Tagore by B. James
Songs of Lalon by Saymon Zakaria and Tony K. Stewart
Pronomohi Bongomata: Indigenous Cultural Forms of Bangladesh by Saymon Zakaria

Food to taste

Tiler Khaja (A sweet made of Sesame Seed)
 Yogurt made of ox's milk

Performance to enjoy

Rath Festival
 Dol Festival in March
 Lalon Mela in October

Songs to listen

"Khachar Vetur Ochin pakhi" by Farida Parvin
 "King-kor-tobbo-Bimurh" by Bangla

To visit

Lalon Shai Mazar
 Sculpture of Justice Radha Binod Pal, Mirpur

MYMENSING

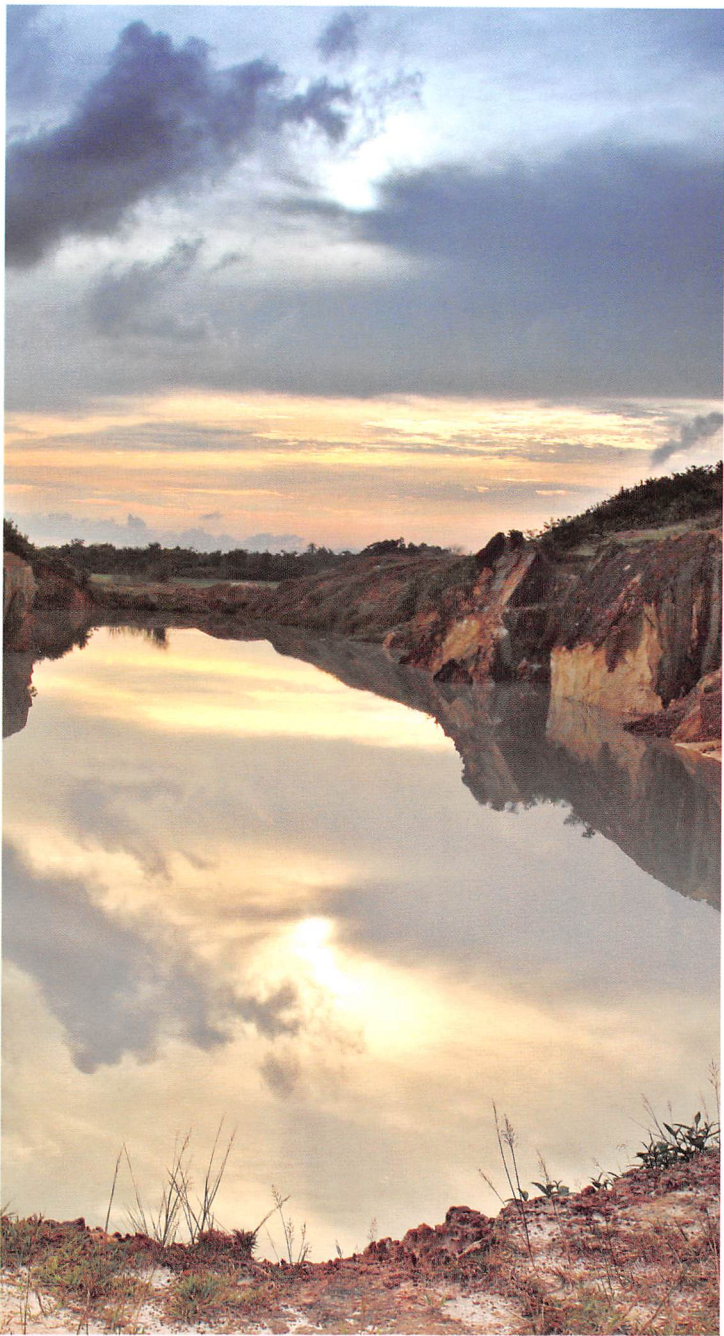
The Cultural Gamut

The town is nourished by great rivers,
The Jamuna and The Brahmaputra,
and bejeweled with Madhupur jungle

One of the major rivers of Asia, The Brahmaputra's tributaries have washed various parts of Bangladesh. Of them, the lower part is famously associated with the Mymensing district, a township famous for many educational institutes and its simple scenic natural beauty. The city is famous for *Nakshikantha*, a type of embroidered quilt that is popular around the world for its amazing artisanship and local ballads called *Mymensing Geetika*. Both have made which have made Bangladesh proud for their originality and authentic way of representing lives of rural Bangladesh.

Mymensing town has almost all the amenities of modern life. The town is known for its educational institutes like Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensing Medical College, Ananda Mohan College, etc. For visitors who are interested into landmark architectures, this is a melting pot of traditions from different religions. With the presence of mosques, temples and churches, the city is a prolific place to visit old buildings and its ruins. 'Lohar Kutir' or 'Alexander Castle' is an old Zamindar house built by Maharaja Surya Kanta Acharya. Another famous place called Shoshi Lodge built by Sashi Kanta Acharya Chaudhuri may remind you of Byzantine architecture, specially the positioning of the marble statue of Greek Goddess Venus in front of the palace looks magnificent during moonlit nights.

If you are an art enthusiast, then the Zainul Abedin Shangrahashala or the Art Museum of Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin is a must see. This is the place where the great painter resided during his early days. The museum is situated at the Shaheeb Quarter Park area of the town on the bank of the old Brahmaputra river. The visitors



Birishiri. Photo. Afzal Nazim

can have a look at 52 oil paintings by the artist, photographs of his life and work and various mementoes. The campus of the museum also houses an Art School and provisions of artists staying in the Art Cottage in a separate three-room building.

If you go further north, near the Meghalaya border of India, you will find yourself in the peaceful town of Netrokona. Beyond it, to satisfy the tranquility seeker in you, go and visit Birisiri. Located at Netrokona about 170 km north of Dhaka, the area is bestowed with ample natural beauty. You will find ethnic culture practised by the Hajongs, Garos, Achiks and Mandis. It would be a chance of your lifetime to spend some time with them and explore their amazing cultures. You will not get the amenities of modern life there but will feel one with the spirit of Birishiri. You will be miles away from the urban chaos and the vintage landscape will soothe your senses. The roads are bumpy, even the rickshaw ride seems a challenge. But when you stand in front of the river you are sure to forget the travel troubles. The clear water of



Shomeshwar river. Photo Afzal Nazim

Kangsha will beckon you to take a dive; its soothing touch will ease your body much faster than any specialized spa would do. If you see Kangsha during twilight, the crimson tides will make you nostalgic. On the other hand, you can spend hours looking at the hills dividing Bangladesh and India.

The ceramic hill of Durgapur is one of the main attractions of this area. The white sands of the hill look stunning on a sunny day. More like an ivory landmark, the ceramic mountain guards the turquoise coloured waters of the rivers.

You may also visit the Palace of the Susang King. Although in tatters, the site still heralds the relics from the glorious past. A visit to the Dasha Busha Temple and the temple near Kula Para of Ramakrishna and Loknath Baba will intrigue you. Stand amongst those broken walls and feel the essence of the spirituality that once animated the temples.

Do not forget to drop by at the ethnic museum. It will enrich your knowledge about the cultures and heritages of all those ethnic people. There is a monument erected in the memory of martyrs hanged during the Garo and Santal uprising against the British Raj. You can pay a visit there too.

There is a small church at Ranikhong, and a Catholic mission which allow guests who have taken prior permission to stay over. The mission is atop a hill, and staying there will allow you to feel the tranquility.

Mymensing is also famous for *Monda*, a sweet amuse-bouche made of milk and sugar, the origin of which dates back to 1824. First prepared by Ram Gopal Pal and offered to Maharaja Surya Kanta Acharya Choudhury, once famous Zaminder of Muktagachha, this savoury sweetmeat has become a legend for its unique texture, taste and tantalizing ability to cause a sugar rush in your body.



Area 4394 Sq.km.

Population 5313163

Weather The monsoon brings green landscape which is a sight itself and the summer is the best to make daytrips to everywhere anytime.

Crops Paddy, jute, wheat, potato, lentil, maize, mustard, ground nut, betel leaf, banana, pineapple, jackfruit, and winter vegetables.

River Old Brahmaputra, Narasundar, Shomeshwar, Kangsha, Gunai, Bangshai, Manas, Dhanu, Silai, Kharmeni.

Greens Madhupur National Park, Kadlgarh National Park.

Wildlife Bengal Monitor Lizard, Common Cobra, Jackel, Wild Cat etc.

Ethnic Communities Garo, Hasong, Coach.



Important **phone** numbers

Police

Police Super

Phone: +8801713373422

OC, Kotoali Thana

Phone: +8801713373429

Hospital

Mymensing Medical College Hospital

Phone: +880916-7001

Courier

S. A. Paribahan

Phone: +8801755512666

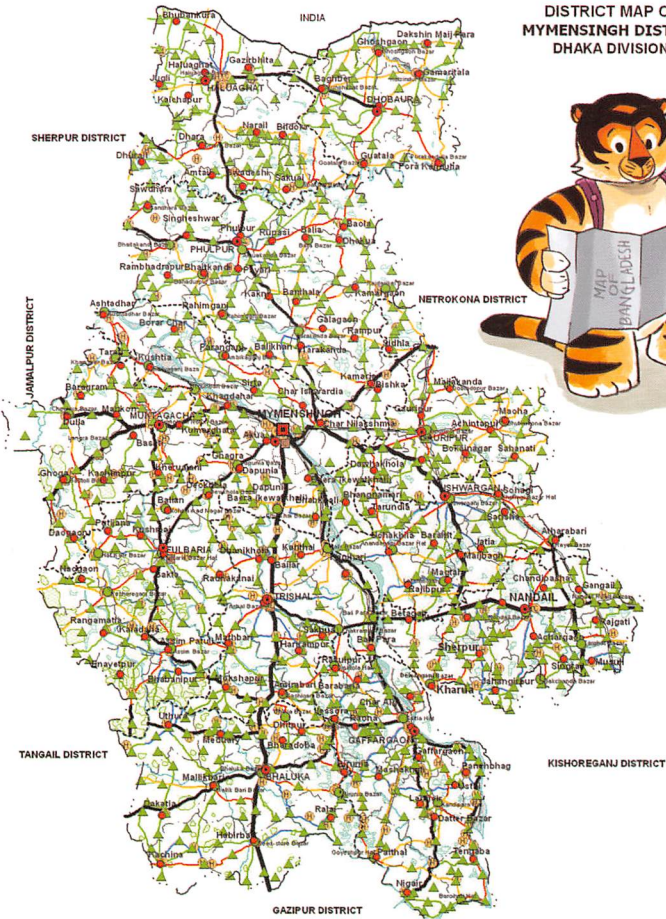
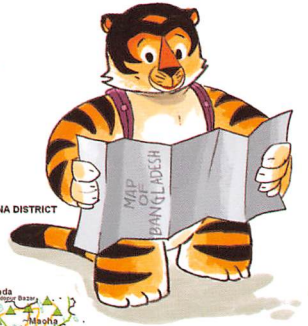
Sundarban Courier Service

Phone: +8801714388212, +8801916774708










Mymensing city map

DISTRICT MAP OF MYMENSINGH DISTRICT DHAKA DIVISION



Legend

-  International Boundary
-  District Boundary
-  District HQ
-  Upazila HQ
-  National Highway
-  Upazila Road
-  Railway Network
-  River Network



Places to see

- Shashi Lodge, Mymensing
- Botanical Gardens next to Agriculture and Fisheries College
- The Zainul Abedin Shongrohosala
- Mymensing Eco-park, Madhutilla
- Muktagacha Zamindar Palace, Muktagacha
- China Clay Hill, Shobaura



Shashi Lodge

Built by Babu Maharaja Surya Kanta Acharya in 1880, the lodge was reconstructed by his son Shashi Kanta after an earthquake. The 'musical staircase' was also renovated. Its other romantic features include the beautiful woodwork of the floors, the large hanging lights, 24 rooms with artistic pictures on glasses, and 'Venus' herself in the fountain.



Muktagacha Zamindar Palace

Bats fly in and out of the once wealthy Zamindars' houses in Muktagacha. However, the ruins still bear testimony of their regal lifestyle of owning herds of elephants. Muktagacha Zamindari sprawls over 20 hectors of land. It has many ponds, temples and palaces. The archaic architecture is enchanting and worth-seeing while hearing the legends from the locals.



Birishiri

With a river flowing through it, Birishiri awaits you at the foot of Garo Hills. An early morning trek along the bank will introduce you to innocence once again. "China matir pahar" or china clay hills are nearby to be explored. Chital fish of the Someshwar river is famous for its savory taste.

- Palace of Maharaja Shurjakant
- Alexander Castle, Mymensing
- Kalshar Dighee, Haluaghat
- China Clayhills, Birisiri



Sunset on Shomeshwar River. Photo. Afzal Nazim



Art & Craft

- Garo Textile
- Garo Bamboo Craft
- Jute Made Handicrafts



Garo Textile

Many people of this nomadic tribe live in Mymensing. Textiles made by them have gained much popularity. The fabric is made from handspun cotton wool and has many vibrant colors. Ornaments and accessories are also made by the people of this matriarchal tribe.



Kharu, Garo jewelry. Photo. Gayatree Arun



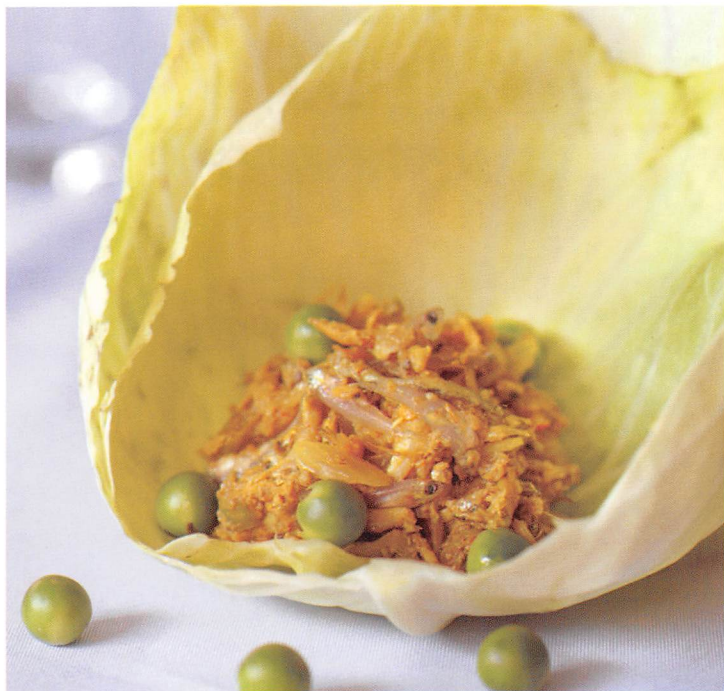
Cuisine

- Balish Misty (A pillow shaped sweet of Netrokona)
- Monda of Muktagachha
- Fried Bamboo shoot
- Chhanar Polau



Monda

Once in Mymensing, you will find a gate engraved upon it is a welcoming lion. This is Gopal Pal's *Monda* shop, which started its journey in 1824. Now after five generations, his relatives have kept the legacy of the sweetmeat alive. These delicacies come wrapped in thin papers keeping their soft core ready to be gulped by you.



Kachki bhuna, popular dried curry of small fishes. Photo: Gayatree Arun

Pilgrimage

- Ramkrishna Ashram, Ramkrishna Mission
- Paachbagh Jame Mosque
- Burapeer Mazar
- Baptist Mission
- Anglican Church

Hotel

- Hotel Amir International, +8801711167948
- Jamuna Resort, +8801713047623
- Alenga Resort Ltd., +8801713381042, +8801819410062
- Nirala Rest House, +8801771117916



Zainul Abedin Museum

Here you will find 53 paintings of Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin in original. Established in 1975 at his hometown, it has conceptualized the artist's own motto to preserve all artworks of Bangladesh. An art school of his dream has also been founded beside it. His works talk about traditional Bangladesh: *Famine, Boat-pulling, Father and Son Waiting for River Crossing* are some of them.



Muktagachha Palace. Photo: Ridwan Adid Rupon



Restaurants

Local Menu

- Hotel Khandaker, Ganginar Par
- Pak Muslim Hotel
- Uttara Hotel, Ganginar Par
- Sarinda, CK Ghose Road
- Rom III Restaurant, 25 Shyamachoron Roy Road

Global Menu

- Hotel Sarinda, CK Ghosh Road
- Hotel Dhansiri, CK Ghosh Road
- New Young King Chinese Restaurant
- Sarinda Park Café, River Road
- China Green Restaurant



Pubs

- Foreign Liquor Shop, Ganginar Par



Shopping

- Durgabari Road
- Chhoto Bazar, Amirbari, Trishal
- Maharaja Road
- Shibpur Chourasta Bazar, Nandail
- Mechua Bazar
- Boro Bazar



Brahmaputra River. Photo. Redwn Arlid Rupon



Cultural centers

- Amrabati Natya Mandir, Mymensing
- Mymensing Shilpokola Academy
- Muslim Institute Library
- Adivasi Cultural Institute, Haluaghat
- Gazni Abakash Kendra, Sherpur



Museums

- Tribal Cultural Academy, Birisiri
- Zainul Abedin Shongrohoshala
- Mymensing Museum



Connectivity

Rail

From Dhaka Kamalapur Railway Station:

- Train no. 55 up at 11.30pm
- Train no. 43 up at 10.45 am
- Train no. 707 at 10.10am
- Train no. 49 at 2.20am

Road

From Mohakhali Bus Terminal, Dhaka:

- Nirapad Travels
- Shoukhin Service
- Isha-kha Gatelock Service
- Kongsho Gatelock Service
- Mohua Gatelock service



Limestone hill. Photo: Kamrul Hasan Nijhu



u know ?

Books to read

The Ballads of Bengal edited by Dinesh Chandra Sen

Gouripur Junction by Humayun Ahmed

Banker to the Poor: Micro-Lending and the Battle Against World Poverty
by Muhammad Yunus

Food to taste

Monda, Modhupur, Tangail

Balish, Netrokona

Chom Chom, Porabari, Tangail

Performance to enjoy

Cock Fight

Songs to listen

Jalal Geeti

To visit

Orchid Garden, Fulbaria

Independence Monument, Mymensing

NAOGAON

An Ancient City on the Hills

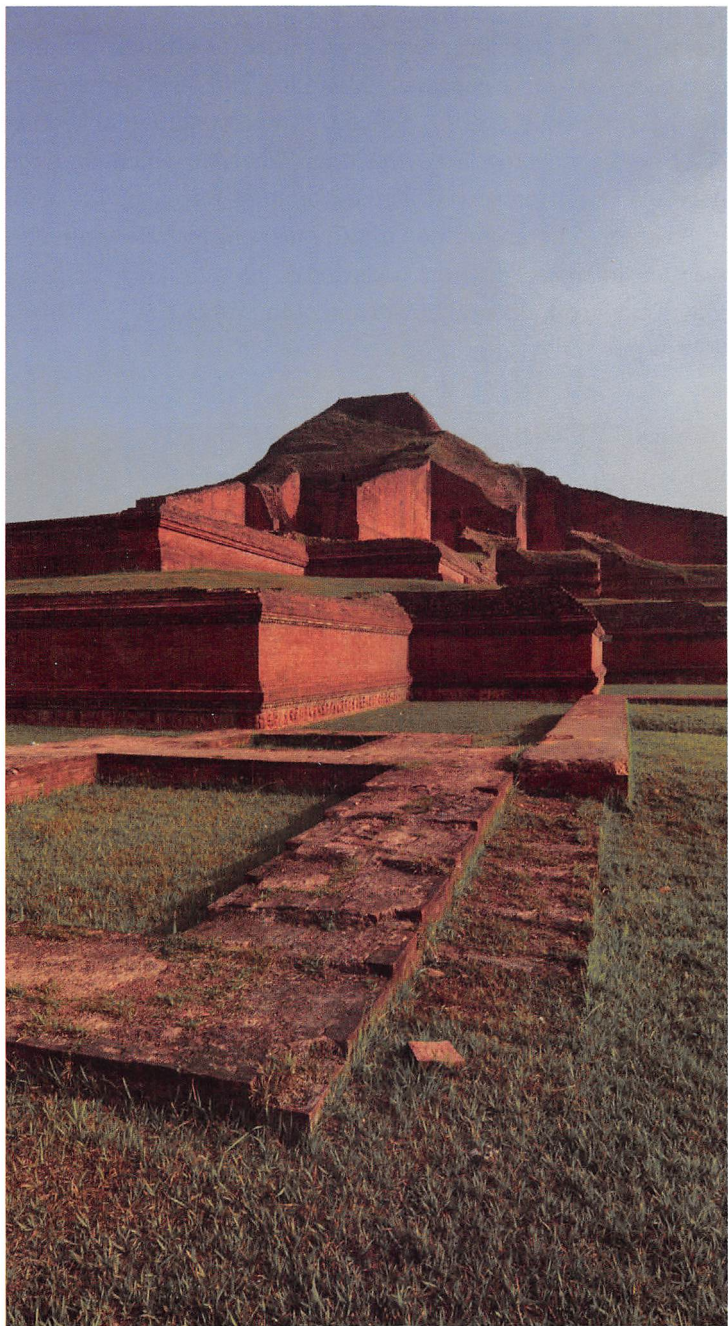
Paharpur's best kept secrets will surely lure relic hunters

The Indian subcontinent has always been a melting pot of rich cultures and traditions. A visit to Paharpur will make you realise the continuing impact of the cultural and historical legacies that have shaped the melting pot.

Paharpur is situated in Naogaon and is one of the best-known archaeological sites in the country. Paharpur is also called 'the Land of Monasteries' and this is so because it has one of the region's most known Buddhist monasteries: the Somapura Mahavihara. In fact, as a testimony to its significance, UNESCO declared it as a World Heritage Site in 1986.

Literally translated Paharpur means Land of Hills. And these hills offer you a great sight. The hills have an abundance of lush greenery and provide a breathtaking sight. Truly, to be so close to the hustling and bustling city of Bogra and yet get the feeling of having travelled back in time is an exhilarating thought to say the least.

The jewel in Paharpur's crown is the Somapura Mahavihara, translated loosely as 'Abode of the Great Moon.' This is the 7th century archaeological finding which covers approximately 27 acres (110,000 sq.m) of land. It had taken its name from a high mound, which looked like pahar or hillock. The entire establishment, occupying a quadrangular court, measures more than 900 feet in length and from 12 to 15 feet in height. With an elaborate gateway complex on the north, there are 45 cells on the north and 44 in each of the other three



Somapura Mahavihara. Photo. Maung Maung Gyi

sides with a total number of 177 rooms. The architecture of the pyramidal cruciform temple is similar to structures found in south-east Asia, especially Myanmar and Java. A museum has been recently built to house the representative collection of objects recovered from the area. The excavated findings have also been preserved at the Varendra Research Museum in Rajshahi. The antiquities of the museum include terracotta plaques, images of different gods and goddesses, potteries, coin inscriptions, ornamental bricks and other minor clay objects.



Terracotta. Photo. Afzal Nazim

Today, an air of enigma and mystery engulfs the majestic ruins of Somapura Mahavihara. One wonders how dedicated were the Buddhists were to build such a beautiful site in their efforts to spread their message of peace and truth! Was their mission fulfilled? What led to the fall of the Vihara? Who was responsible for the fall? Questions like these, and more, have baffled archaeologists and historians alike.

Paharpur is about 270 km away from Dhaka by road and usually it will take about six hours to reach Paharpur by bus/taxi/private car. If one starts from Dhaka, the route will be followed by Dhaka-Savar-Chandra-Tangail-Jamuna Bridge-Hatikamrul-Bogra-Joypurhat-Paharpur. The best way to tour/visit the site is to go to Bogra first, and visit Mahasthangarh, stay at the Parjatan Hotel at night, and then hire a taxi to go to Paharpur via Joypurhat, the next day. The Somapura Mahavihara is about 68 km away from Bogra via Joypurhat and it will take about two hours to reach the site by taxi. You will also find the locals increasingly helpful in taking you to the site.

Bogra is famous for sweets and desserts like many other districts of Bangladesh. Naogaon also boasts of some fine sweets. Try to get hold of some exquisite and delicate yoghurt named Chinipata Doi, which is a signature dessert item in/of the region. There is another food, which is like a staple to entertain guests. It's a vapour cake served with Boal fish curry with potato.



Area 3435 Sq.km.

Population 2600000

Weather The land is largely low-lying floodplain. The physical characteristics of the land, geographic location, the multiplicity of rivers and the monsoon climate plays a significant role in shaping the weather.

Crops Paddy, Tobacco, Mango.

River Atrai, Shiv, Choto Jamuna, Tulshi Ganga, Punarbhaba and more.

Greens Altadighi National Park.

Wildlife Bengal Monitor Lizard, Common Cobra, Jackel, Monkey, Wild Cat etc.

Ethnic Communities Santal.



Important **phone** numbers

Police

SP Naogaon Sadar Thana

Phone: +8801713373828

OC Naogaon Sadar Thana

Phone: +8801713373836

Hospital

Holy Family Hospital

Phone: +88074161333

Panchovai Clinic

Phone: +8801740912228

Islami Bank Hospital Naogaon Ltd.

Phone: +8801736952880

Grameen Hospital

Phone: +8801711411507

Courier

S. A. Paribahan

Phone: +8801755512828

Sundarban Courier Service

Phone: +8801916775377, +8801745177077



Places to see

- Somapura Mahavihara, Bodolgachi
- Jagaddala Vihara, Dhamrai
- Patishar Rabindra Kachari Bari
- Kushumba Mosque
- Natore Rajbari
- Alta Dighee National Park



Somapura Mahavihara

This archeological site is an ancient Buddhist monastery built in the 8th century. A traditional stupa is in the center and 177 cells surround it where the monks meditated. With many shrines and artistically detailed terracotta plaques telling the socio-political, martial, economic life of the Pala dynasty, one is sure to be taken in awe.

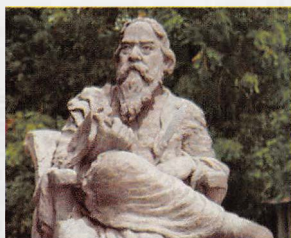


Jagaddala Mahavihara

Jagaddala Mahavihara is another remnant of Buddhist monastery with educational institute founded in 11th-12th century by later kings of Pala dynasty. It was world known for its contribution in knowledge, where many Bangali scholars participated. It is alluring to visit the place where Mahayana philosophy originated and secular Sanskrit poetry flourished.



- Bolihar Rajbari, Mahadevpur
- Dibor Dighee, Dhamur Haat
- Holud Vihar
- Dhibir Dighi
- Bhimer Pantı
- Santal Village



Patishar Kachari Bari

Rabindranath Tagore's memory resides in this official house of Jamindari. The architectural beauty of the time is entangled with stories of aesthetics.



Halud Vihara. Photo: Meung Maung Gyi



Art & Craft

- Crafts Made by Sola, Malupara, Baludanga
- Pottery, Palpara, Atraikhola
- Gamcha, Rainagar, Atrai
- Pati (Kind of Grass Covering Mat)
- Tal Pakha (A Colorful Local Handfan)



Shokher Hari

These colorful earthen pots are remarkable for their use in celebrations, as in weddings. In brilliant colors of bold sweeping lines, the potters paint birds, fish or floral motifs on them. White, yellow, red and blue mixed with the earthen color gives these Hari an eye-catching look.



Pakha. Photo: Kanitul Hasan Mithon



Cuisine

- Pera Shandesh
- Murki
- Ghagrai
- Kochu Ghanto (A Local curry)
- Gurer Khir
- Puli Pitha
- Mutha gorgora Pitha
- Begun Vorta



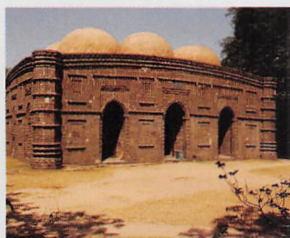
Boal fish curry with salty vapor cakes. Photo. Debashish Shome

P Pilgrimage

- Kusumba Mosque, Manda
- St. March Church, Chakrum pur
- Luthan Church, Dhamurai
- Kalitala Temple
- Pranab Mothh Shebashrom
- Dubolhati Mosque
- Hatkalupara Mosque, Atrai

H Hotel

- Archeological Rest House, +8801711058370
- Hotel Abakash, +88074162356
- Hotel Agomoni, +88074163351
- Hotel Raj, +88074162492
- Hotel Sharani, +88074161685



Kusumba Mosque

Kusumba mosque is a distinctively Bengal style architecture though it is built under Suri rulers. Grape and vine motifs can still be located in the mihrabs. Many claim its name "Kalapahar" (black pearl) is due to withstanding decay for this long time; inscriptions at the central entrance mentions the time of construction of the mosque to 966 AH (1558–59 AD).



Terracotta scriptures from Somapura Mahavihara. Photo. Maung Maung Gyi



Restaurants

Local Menu

- Khaoa-Daoa Hotel
- Soaliman Mishtanno Vandar
- Das Hotel and Mistanno Vandar
- Sabbir Hotel and Restaurant
- Bhai Bhai Hotel and Restaurant

Global Menu

- Dolphin Chinese Restaurant and Community Center
- Eden Thai and Chinese Restaurant
- Food Palace



Shopping

- Abadpukur Hat
- Ahsanganj Hat, Atrai
- Kirttipur Hat and Bazar
- Goalia
- Ganguria Hat, Porsha
- Chatiantoli, Mahadevpur
- Tetulia Hat
- Trimohani



Somapura Mahavihara. Photo. Maung Maung Gyi



Cultural centers

- Shahanabad City, Muktir Mor
- Coronation Hall Society, Muktir Mor
- Prova Shangshad Math
- Kobi Shah Alam Chow. Charupithh, Muktir Mor
- Crescent Park/City Park
- Shaheed Minar, Muktir Mor



Museums

- Paharpur Museum, Paharpur
- Ravindra Smrity Shangrahasala, Patisar, Atrai



Connectivity

Road

From Gabtoli, Kollanpur, Mohakhali Bus Stand, Dhaka to Bogra:

- Hanif Enterprise
- Shyamoli Paribahan
- SR Travels
- TR Travels

Rail

From Kamalapur Railway Station to Bogra

- Ekata Express
- Rangpur Express





Closer to Somapura Mahavihara. Photo: Maung Maung Gyi



u know ?

Books to read

Seeking Bauls of Bengal by Jeanne Openshaw

The Ecstasy of Enlightenment: Teaching of Natural Tantra by Thomas Cleary

Food to taste

Tea and Puri at Supari potty, Sadar

Performance to enjoy

Mahadevpur Baram Utsav

Boat Riding at Digli Bil and Jamuna River

Songs to listen

Saidurer Kiccha

Traditional Wedding song by Village Women

To visit

Shadhinota Stombha

Shadhinota Vashkorjo(Sculpture)

RAJSHAHI

A Land of Silk and Architectural Gems

Rajshahi is famous for its fine silk, luscious mango and liches and magnificent architectural landmarks; the silk city will unleash the cocoon-dweller in you

Rajshahi, a modern city with almost all amenities of a metropolitan city has always opened its gates for those who are amazed by its archaeologically important sites as well as various tasty foods. Also known as the Silk City, it is the main city of northern district of Bangladesh and a fertile land that nurtured a number of national leaders and important personalities who contributed hugely in building this nation. The clean streets and green surroundings of the city have always welcomed discriminating tourists. All you need is to loosen up and go with the wind to embrace surprises waiting in each corner of the city.

Puthiya Palace is one of the finest examples of old style architectural magnificence. It has a number of temples that used to be the center for worship by the local Hindu community. The palace is situated about 32 km to the east of the city and only 1 km from Rajshahi-Natore highway.

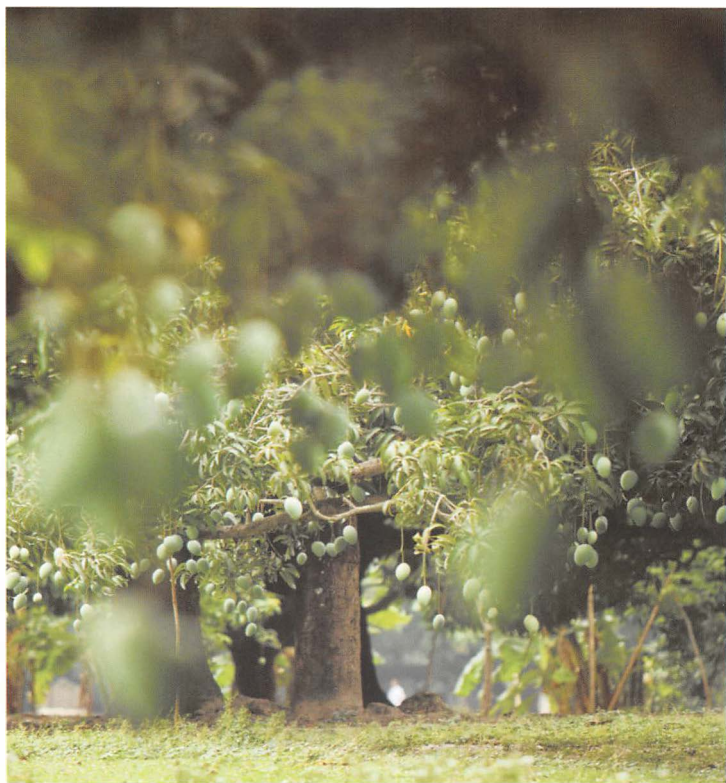
The whole six acres area is surrounded by high walls. Inside the walls are a number of temples with different names – Pancharatna Bara Gobindo Mandir, Choto Anhik Mandir, Choto Gobindo Mandir, and so on. The terracotta designs on the outside walls of these temples depict stories from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana as well as many abstract motifs common to Muslim architecture of that time. There are also panels showing the social life of the time. Some Muslim rulers



Puthia King's Palace. Photo. Gayatree Arun

initially ruled the land during the reign of Sultan Alauddin Shah, which later went under the possession of a Hindu zaminder who finally got the title Raja from Emperor Jahangir. Standing at the huge premises of the palace, one can easily feel the immense luxury that once characterized the palace life. Unlike ruins of many other houses of kings and landlords of Bangladesh, this one is in much better shape.

Uttara Gano Bhaban, also known as Dighapatia Zaminder palace, is also a must-see archeologically important architecture. This palace is the Presidential Palace in the northern region. As you roam around inside the humongous palace area, you will see the gargantuan gates, pillars and specially designed rooms for prince or princess - all standing tall reminding one of the days of the yore. This is one of the most beautiful and nicely preserved palaces in Bangladesh.



Mango orchard. Photo: K M Asad

Choto Sona Mosque in Chapai Nawabganj district is also famous for its intricate decorative designs on minarets and mehrab. The mosque mostly looking like a ruin of a once gorgeous prayer place, still bears the remnants of its perfect past and insinuates the visitors about the nuances of the Sultan regimes in the area.

Once the mighty river Padma now looks meager during dry season. The river, which used to have huge waves devouring miles after miles of land near the banks is dried up, and you can walk all the way to see the other side of it. But if you visit the river during the rainy season, spend some time by the side of the river which fills to the brim and you would be awed at the majestic sight of the river.

Pay a visit to Varendra Research Museum, which is a hundred-year-old museum-cum-research center. It has seven different galleries displaying different items like old Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian scripts, Hindu and Buddhist sculptures and some items representing the ethnic culture of Rajshahi. If you have time, you can go to Tahirpur and pay a visit to the temple of King Kangsa Narayan, where, as is commonly believed, the first Durga Puja, the biggest festival of Hindu community in this sub-continent, was observed.

The best buy from Rajshahi of course is silk. Chapai Nababgunj, a nearby district of Rajshahi, on the other hand, is famous for its delectable mangoes and liches. There are varieties of mangoes, such as, Fazli, Lengra, Mohon Bhogh and Heem Shagor, which differ from one another in size, shape and taste. Rajshahi is famous for its characteristic sweetmeats, not to be found anywhere else in the country. These special preparations include Roshkodom, Khaja, Raghobshahi and Kachagolla. Natore is famous for its special sweetmeat called Kachagolla.



Area 2425 Sq.Km.

Population 2595000

Weather Summer is best to try these flood prone areas which are extreme in both winter and monsoon.

Crops Mango, Litchi, Paddy

River Fakimi-Baranai, Shiba-Baranai, Mahananda, Pagla, Musa Khan, Ganges, Baranai, Hoja, Godari, Gumani & more.

Greens

Wildlife Bengal Monitor Lizard, Common Cobra, Jackal, Monkey, Wild cat etc.

Ethnic Communities Santal



Important **phone** numbers

Police

OC, Puthia, Rajshahi Sadar

Phone: +8801713373804

Police Super, Rajshahi: +8801713373792

Hospital

Rajshahi Medical College Hospital , Laxmipur,

Phone: +880721772150, +8801714029424

Popular Diagnostic Center, Laxmipur

Phone: +880721812117

Mohanagar Clinic , Laxmipur

Phone: +880721775346

Adhunik (Modern) Sadar Hospital, Nator

Phone: +88077166912, +8801730324811

Upazila Health Complex, Singra, Nator

Phone: +88077166719, +8801730324682

Courier

S. A. Paribahan









Phone: +8801755512808

Sundarban Courier Service

Phone: +8801718785536, +8801936603558



Legend

-  International Boundary
-  District Boundary
-  District HQ
-  Upazila HQ
-  National Highway
-  Upazila Road
-  Railway Network
-  River Network



Places to see

- Natore Rajbari, Nator
- Banks of the Padma
- Central Park and Zoo, located by the bank of river Padma
- Buildings of the British Raaj, Rajshahi Center
- Puthia Palace, Puthia, Rajshahi
- Chhoto Sona Masjid
- Bagha Mosque
- Khania Dighi Mosque



Uttara Ganabhaban

Seven generations of Dighapatia Royal family lived here from 17th century to mid-20th. The palace formally known as Dighapatia Rajbari is used for governments from the Pakistan period where many historic meetings took place. Now the palace is open for all exhibiting the regal private life of oil paintings, white porcelain, lion-headed thrones and aesthetic pond with sculptures.



Chalan Beel

A series of wetlands connected by channels of water in Atrai basin, becoming a single body in monsoon. The banks are adorned with kash, babla, nol, dhol kolmi, shimul. You can also spot 27 species of mammals and 34 species of reptiles. It is fun to meet the variety of beautiful frogs and snakes boating on the beel.



Puthia King's Palace. Photo: Gayatree Arun

- Rajshahi University
- Santal Para (Tribal Village)
- Uttara Ganabhaban, Nator
- Queen Vabani Royal Palace, Nator
- Chalan Bil, Singra, Nator



Choto Shona Masjid

Built during the 15th-16th century when Chapai Nababganj was named Gaur- the capital of Sultan Hossain Shah's reign, the 15 domes of the mosque were then gilded with gold. Choto Shona Masjid (Small Gold Mosque) is an archeological beauty designed distinctively in artistic rosettes giving it the title "Gem of Gaur".



Pancha Ratna Gobindo Mondir (Five dome temple of Lord Krishna). Photo. Gayatree Arun

Art & Craft

- Taat (A popular Fabric of Bangladesh, best found in Rajshahi)
- Bamboo and Cane Handicraft
- Pottery
- Wooden work
- Coconut Button



Rajshahi Silk

Its a delicate, shiny fabric original to Rajshahi. The fabric is made from the cocoons of silkworms. Three kinds of silk fabric are there- mulberry, endi and tassar. Silk punjabis and Saris are known for their elegant and gorgeous look.



Rajshahi Nakshi Kantha and artisan. Photo Zakir Hossain

Cuisine

- Rosh Kadam (a very special sweet of Rajshahi)
- Sweet Yogart from Bogra
- Mango From Chapainababganj
- Teel-er-misty (a sweet made of Sesame Seed)
- Kacha Golla of Natore (type of sweet)



Mango

Rajshahi is one of the largest mango growing districts of Bangladesh. From the traditional varieties of Langra, Fajli, Himsagor to the newer ones like Amrupali, Harivanga, every kinds of mangoes grow in plenty here. The juicy, sweet, soft flesh of ripen Langra mangoes are bound to take you to a transcendental plane; whereas the unripen ones of the same variety can leave your tastebuds with an unforgettable tang.



Gurer payesh; a dessert made with molasses. Photo. Debashish Shome



Pilgrimage

- Shrine of Hazrat Shah Makhdum (Rh.)
- Raypara Jame Mosque
- Golzarbag Zame Mosque
- Keshabpur Shiva Temple
- Temple of Ganga, Shekher Chak
- Govinda Temple, Puthia
- Shiva Temple, Puthia
- Fakirchand Vaishnab Ashram
- Shahjadpur Mosque, Nator



Hotel

- Hotel Poshur, +8801715984411
- Chez Razzak Suits, +880721-762 011, +8801711958708, +8801715772824
- Hotel City Inn, +8801711298501
- Hotel Royal International, +8801718679900
- Hotel Millennium, +88041733091-92



Bagha Mosque

Ornamented with terracotta, Bagha mosque is another Sultanate monument founded in 1523. Sultan Nusrat Shah, also ordered to dig a lake in front of the mosque for use of the devotees. The prayer hall is still used. Each year "Bagha Mela" is arranged during the Islamic ceremony of Eid-ul-fitr. You can join the 500 year old tradition of the vibrant fair here.



'Sabas Bangladesh', Rajshahi University Photo. Collection



Restaurants

Local Menu

- Naing Indian Restaurant, Moni Bazar, Rajshahi
- Rajshahi Mishtanno Vandar, Shaheb Bazaar
- Party Point, Shalbagan
- Hotel Galaxy, Lakshmipur
- Hotel Century, Lakshmipur
- Bismillah Hotel, Shaheb Bazar
- Skylink, Malopara, Ghorama

Global Menu

- Safa Wang Chinese Restaurant, Greater Road
- Aristocrat Coffee Shop & Restaurant, Shaheb Bazar Road
- Razia Chinese Restaurant, Shalbagan.
- Chili's Fast Food, Shaheb Bazar
- Hotel Nice International, Shaheb Bazar



Pubs

Rajshahi Club (you have to be a member or Invited by a guest)

- Could be found in Residential Hotels.



Shopping

- Shaheb bazar
- Ulla para Haat
- Kuthi bari Haat
- RDA Market
- Rani Bazaar
- New Market
- Madrasha Market
- Nanking Bazar
- Index plaza
- Uposhahor New Market
- RDA Market, Shaheb Bazaar



Cultural centers

- Rajshahi Boalia Club
- Natore Cultural Club
- Rajshahi University



Museums

- Varendra Research Museum
- Reshom Institute
- Dhaan (Paddy) Research Institute



Connectivity

Air

At Shah Makhdum Airport

- United Airways

Rail

From Komolapur Railway Station:

- Silk City Express
- Padma Express
- Dhumketu Express

Road

From Kollanpur Bus stand, Gabtoli Bus stand and Mohakhali Bus stand, Dhaka:

- Greenline Volvo
- Hanif Enterprise
- NP Elegance
- Modern Enterprise
- National Travels
- Shyamoli Paribahan



Barendra Museum

This museum has a remarkable collection from the Indus civilization, Hindu stone sculptures, scripts in Persian, Bangla and Arabic from Muslim period. Founded in 1919 by Barendra Investigation Society, the museum has a nice surrounding being on the bank of Padma river.



Lychee, a signature fruit from Rajshahi. Photo: Collectect



u know ?

Books to read

Islam in Bangladesh edited by U. A. B. Razia Akter Banu

Performance to enjoy

Padma Puran or the Song Offerings to Devi Mansha (Goddess of Snakes)
Gombhira

Songs to listen

Vawaiya of Abdul Alim
Bogra Youth Choir

To visit

Rajshahi University

RANGAMATI

The Land of Stark Beauty

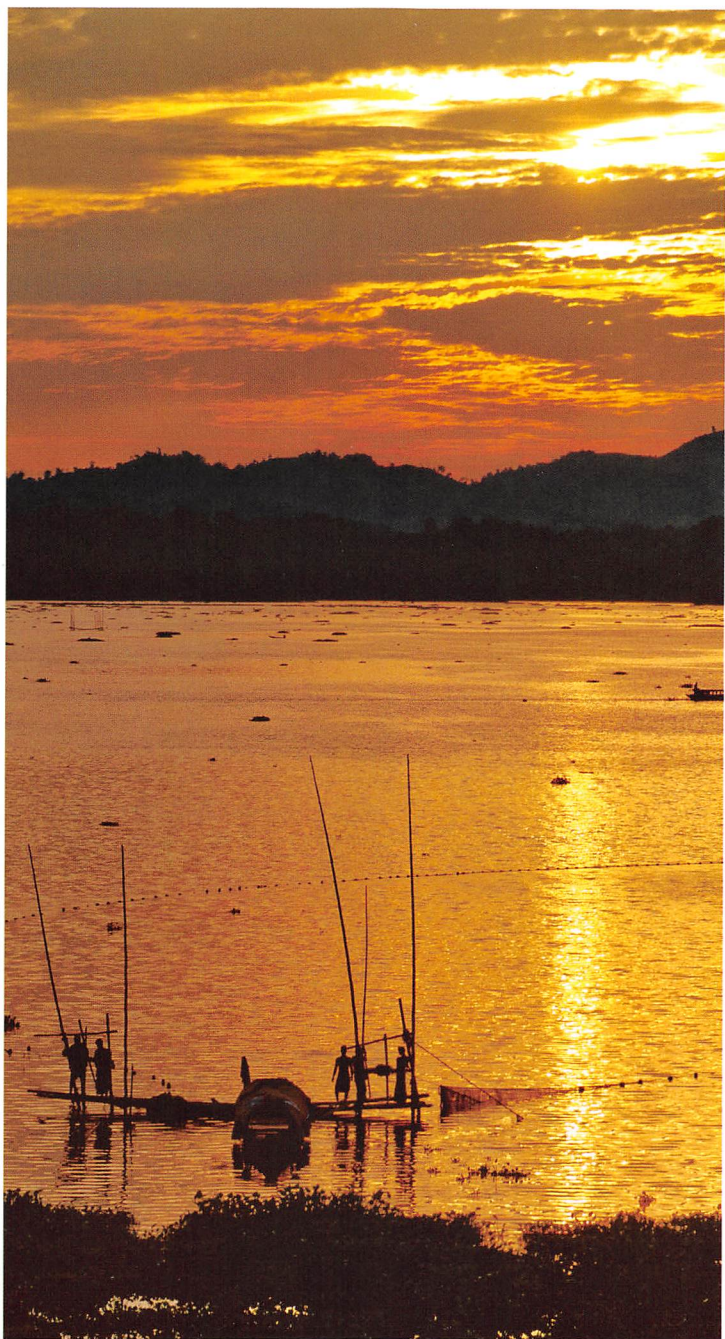
Hills and the lake of Rangamati have stories to tell

From Chittagong, a 77 km road winds amidst green fields and hills all the way to Rangamati, a unique depot of scenic splendours with flora and fauna of different types. The township is located on the western bank of the Kaptai lake. Rangamati is a favourite holiday destination because of its pictorial beauty, lake, colorful ethnic people (Chakmas, Marmas etc.), its tribal museum, hanging bridge, homespun textile products, ivory jewelry and of course the artisans who fashion them. For tourists, the attractions of Rangamati are numerous: ethnic life, fishing, speed boat cruising, hiking, bathing or merely enjoying pristine nature as it is.

There are three places and events which you must visit. One of them is the colorful Hanging Bridge. It is an iconic tourist spot where you can enjoy the lush natural beauty standing on the bridge that goes under water during rainy season.

Rangamati is the home of eight ethnic groups out of 11 in Chittagong – The Chakmas, Marmas, Tangchangyas, Tripuras, Khyangas, Khumis, Chaks and Mros. Make a weeklong plan to celebrate the New Year Festival, Sangrain Jal Utsab or traditional sports such as Ghila Khela, Nadengkhela and Tumorokhela.

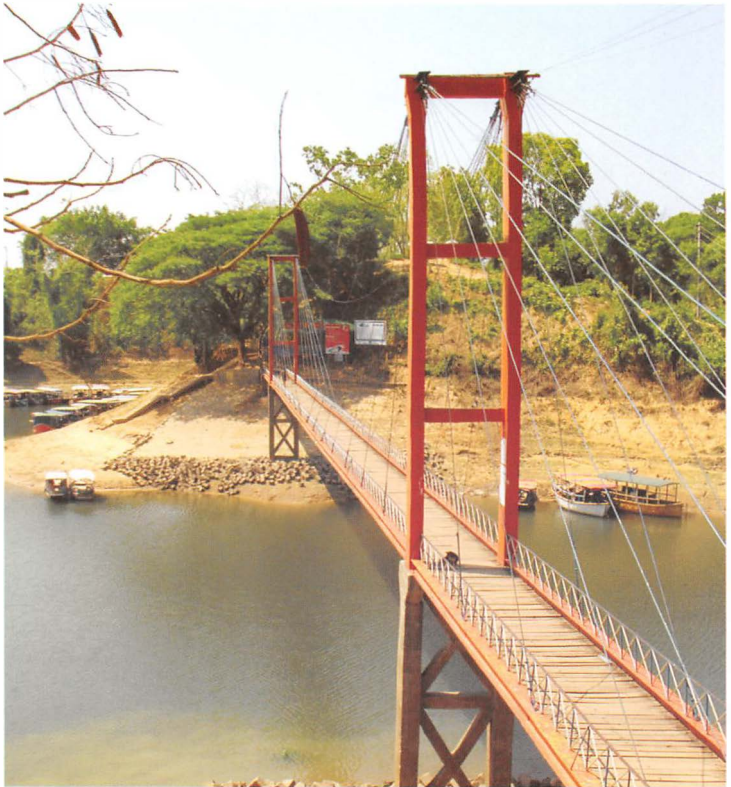
Kaptai Lake is another wonderful spot for the travelers for boating and cruising. Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation and private tour operators offer a number of cruises by mechanical boats. One can go to various scenic spots



Kaptai Lake. Photo. Afzal Nazim

in Shuvalong, Barkal, Longadu, Mainimukh and other areas by boat from Rangamati. The Shuvolong spring is one of the natural springs which has crystal clear water. Don't miss the chance to take a bath in the cool water of this spring.

The Tribal Cultural Museum in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region was established at Rangamati in 1978 and is run by the Tribal Cultural Institute. It preserves cultural artifacts of different ethnic groups depicting their socio-economic, cultural and historical tradition. These include typical dresses, ornaments, arms and ammunitions, coins, statues made of wood, bronze and other metals, musical instruments, ivory products, handicrafts, paintings etc. A visit to the place will give you an idea about the rich cultural heritage of the indigenous communities of the region.



Hanging bridge. Photo: Kamrul Hasan Mithun

A number of air-conditioned (AC) and non-AC buses ply to Rangamati everyday. The fare is also very reasonable, ranging from Tk 350 to Tk 500. You can call up the bus services and book a ticket. Usually the night journey is better. As it's a long way, you can have a sound sleep and wake up at the end of your journey the next morning. Which appears to be really thrilling even to one who has had the trip many times. The bus stops just at the door of Hotel Sufia, which is one of the oldest hotels you can hire a CNG autorickshaw and head for other hotels if you want.

Try Kabang, a famous chicken curry that is cooked in bamboos hollows. Chicken marinated with spices are put inside bamboos which are later charred. You can also try Pachon, usually cooked on the eve of the New Year celebration. This is usually prepared with different kinds of pulses mixed with potato and some vegetables. You may also take some sweet or sour pickles which might be challenging for your taste. Try some of the local sweets. After all, what is the point of visiting a new place if you don't get to taste its culinary magic?

There are plenty of things that you can collect from Rangamati and other nearby places. Clothings and fabrics made by the local people, for example, who have been weaving the beauty of their culture with the warmth of their heart on those fabrics for ages. Besides, you can collect some of the antique jewelry that the ethnic women wear during festivals. These fabrics and accessories are among the best that you may present your friends and dear ones.



Area 6116 Sq.km.

Population 596000

Weather Try hiking in winter, just sight-seeing in monsoon and indulge in tribal festivities during summer.

Crops Paddy, Betel Leaf, Pineapple, Melon, and Tobacco.

River Karnafuli, Kaptai, Chingiri, Harina and many more.

Greens Garjan, Chapalish, Telsur, Tali, Kamdeb, Uriam, Jarul, Civit, Toon, Bandorhola, Teak, Gamar, Mehogani, Chapalish, Koroi etc with Bamboo, Cane, Climbers and Fern.

Kaptai National Park, Baroiyadhala National Park, Sitakunda Botanical Garden and Eco-park (Chittagong)

Wildlife Elephant, Monkey, Wild Boar, Barking Deer, Samvar, King Cobra, Monitor Lizard, Bengal Monitor Lizard, and Indian Leopard.

Hajarikhil Wildlife Sanctuary, Dudpukuria-Dhopachari Wildlife Sanctuary, Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary, Pablakhali Wildlife Sanctuary- (Chittagong)

Ethnic Communities Chakma, Marna, Tripura, Tancangya, Mro, Chuck, Khyang, Khumi, Pankhoya, Bom, and Lusai.



Important **phone** numbers

Police

Local Police Station, Dhobolchori.

Phone: +88035162060, +8801713373675

Hospital

General Hospital

Phone: +88035162119, +8801554301766,

+8801556750100

Baghai Chari Upazila Health Complex

Phone: +8801556770339, +8801554360663

Courier

S. A. Paribahan

Phone: +8801755512720

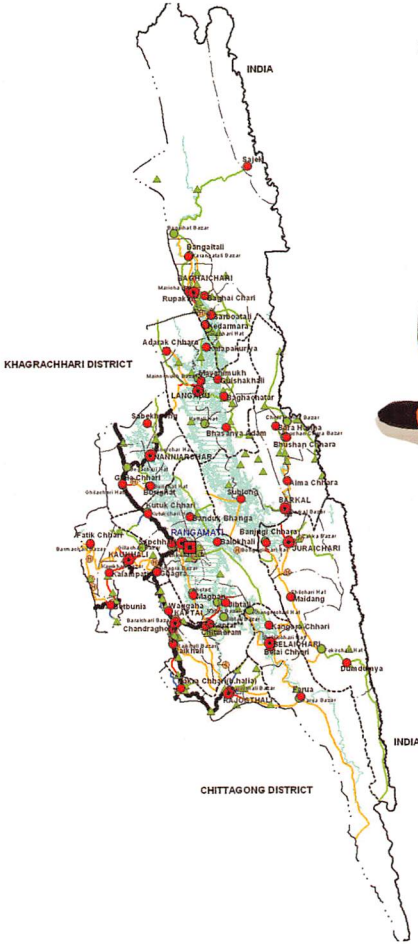
Sundarban Courier Service

Phone: +88035161362, +8801820310027











Rangamati city map

DISTRICT MAP OF DISTRICT RANGAMATI DIVISION CHITTAGONG



Legend

-  International Boundary
-  District Boundary
-  District HQ
-  Upazila HQ
-  National Highway
-  Upazila Road
-  Railway Network
-  River Network





Places to see

- Kaptai Lake, Rangamati
- Shuvolong Falls, Borokol
- Chakma King's Palace, Raj bari
- Chit Morom Buddha Vihar, Kaptai
- Hanging bridge, Porjoton Area



Kaptai Lake

Built mainly for electro-hydraulic power generation, this man-made freshwater lake is one of a kind. Boating on the lake is a unique experience. The 335 ft long iconic Hanging Bridge would tempt you for an exhilarating walk over the lake. What better places are there to take selfies?



Shuvolong Falls

Shuvolong is known for the several waterfalls it has, the highest being 300 ft. Accessed by speed boats or motor boats, the waterfalls offer a majestic view reviving you from the core. Many visit the small islands on their return in the boat journey.



Local vendors. Photo: Atzal Nazim

- Peda Ting Ting, Balukhali
- Chakma Village, Rangapani
- Pramon Hill
- Kaptai National Park



Chakma King's Palace

The remains of the century-old royal palace of the Chakma dynasty got resurfaced as the water level dropped low. The magical fairytale like setting of the palace with its beautiful architecture now is open to be visited on boats.



A small falls near Shuvolong Falls. Photo. Atzal Nazim



Art & Craft

- Bamboo Made Basket
- Tanchangya Dress
- Hand made Cloth 'Bain' by Tribal People



Rangamati Textiles

An exemplary craftsmanship make the thousands year old heritage of tribal backstrap weaving into a wide variety of exotic fabrics, from langkot to lukhu dresses, daily usable stuff; they are used by everyone to amaze all with the skill of their homegrown production.



Tribal ornaments. Photo: Gayatri Arun



Cuisine

- Khowla (a spicy preparation of Small and Big Fish)
- Rice and Curry cooked on Bamboo Shell
- Binni Pitha
- Sanni Pitha
- Chicken Varta



Chicken Salad

Ever tried the boneless juicy chicken salad as a starter? This salad of Rangamati is famous for using green chili, chopped onion and ginger. Lemons are added to give a push of citrus. This hill salad is best served with Dochoyani, the country liquor.



Chicken Kebang. Photo. Gayatree Arun

Pilgrimage

- Temples at Chit morom, Kaptai
- Rajban Vihar, Rangamati

Hotel

- Hotel Sufia, +88035162145, +8801553409149
- Hotel Golden Hill, +8801820304714
- Zilla Parishad Rest House, +88035163262
- Agri. Rest House, +88035162324
- Hotel Green Castle, +88035161200, 71214
- Motel Judge, +8801558480701
- Hotel Al-Moba, +8801610135480, +88035161959
- Hotel Mountain View, +8801553440324



Rangamati landscape, Photo: Kamrul Hasan Mithon



Restaurants

Local Menu

- Hotel Sufia
- Thai Mart
- Girishova Restaurant, Kathaltoli
- Sabarang , Rajbari road
- Hotel Sundarban and Biriyani House, Reserve Bazar
- Thugun, Rajbari road
- Kebang, Kutir Shilpa Area
- Peda Ting Ting Resort

Global Menu

- Frozen at Champaknagar
- Patjatan Motel



Pubs

- Local liquare 'Elachi'
- Sabarang, Rajbari road
- Thugun, Rajbari road



Shopping

- Textile Market
- Reserve Bazar



Kaptai Lake. Photo. Afzal Nazim



Cultural centers

- Rangamati Zilla Shilpakala Academy
- Tribal Peoples' Cultural Institute



Museums

- Tribal Cultural Institute Museum
- DC Bungalow Museum



Connectivity

Road

From Chittagong at Muradpur, Oxygen Mor:

- Paharica
- Shanti Paribahan
- By Car From Chittagong

Note: Foreigners are required to register while entering Rangamati



Kids of Ethnic groups. (Photo: K M Asad)



A lake with a view. Photo. Afzal Nazim



u know ?

Books to read

Strong Backs Magic Fingers by Manjulika Chakma and Niaz Zaman

Food to taste

Dochowani (Concentrated Rice Wine)

Performance to enjoy

Biju and Sangrai, Baisabi

Kathin Chibar Daan

Buddha Purnima

Boat Riding, Kaptai Lake

Songs to listen

"Aei sahara nakan Rangamaita" (Regional Folk Song)

"Lal Paharir Dese Jaa"

"Rangamati Pahare Dupur Belay Ahare"

"Rangamatir Ronge Chokhh Juralo"

To visit

Sculpture of The Father of Nation (The tallest sculpture of Bangladesh, 71 ft. high)

Munsi Abdur Rauf Memorial, Burighat

THE SUNDARBANS, KHULNA

Call of the Wild

In the realm of green, enjoy the dark beauty of a forest

The lure of one of the best naturally grown mangrove forests can be manifold. The diverse flora and fauna, which is part of an enigmatic ecosystem, will entice any visitor. Having an area of 10,000 sq kilometer, this forest's 60% is in Bangladesh. Lying on the vast delta of the Bay of Bengal, the forest owes much of its formation to the super confluence of the Padma, Bramhaputra and Meghna rivers, which are bathing the southern part of Bangladesh. The very name came from the abundance of Shundari trees. A forest of *golpata* and *thesh muul* (also known as breathing root), the Sundarbans is still considered a green maze to even the oldest dwellers, thanks to the intricate web of tidal waterways, mudflats and small islands of salt tolerant trees. Declared an UNESCO World Heritage Site, the ruins of a city built by the legendary Chand Sadagar from 200–300 AD was found at the Baghmara Forest Block. Hiron point, a site famous to travelers to watch sunrise and Mandarbaria are two heritage sites where you can see many wild animals.

One way to see the Sundarbans is to start your journey along the Kochi Khali on a boat. The local boatmen know every nook and corner of the forest. Once inside the forest, the chirping of birds will awaken the bird lover in you. You can take motor launch to go to Deemer Char – the Egg island. During low tide, you can see animals grazing or drinking water from the nearby swamps on



The Sundarbans, a mangrove heaven. Photo: Syed Zakir Hossain

this island. And if you visit it during high tide, all you will see is water and feel a melancholic isolation. From there you can go to Kotka, and another journey for an hour will take you to Badamtoli beach, which is simply breathtaking. If you are adventurous, go to Jamtoli tower, a four-storey high tower, and stay there for a couple of days. If you are lucky, you are sure to catch a sight of Mama – the local name for the Royal Bengal Tiger. Otherwise, climb the tower just to have a bird's eye view of the Sundarbans. From here, you may go to Dublar Char, through a U-shaped route. The site hosts famous Ras Mela, a ritualistic celebration of the love affair between Lord Krishna and his beloved Radha, which attracts more than 20,000 visitors every year. The fair showcases locally made handicrafts, souvenirs from the forest and various types of dried fish.



Footprints of the Royal Bengal Tiger. Photo K M Asad

On your way back to Khulna, you will come across Harbaria, an eco-park. This artificially made park is a house to reptiles and animals like alligators, tigers, and deer. Around the corner is Korom Jol, the canals of which are a breeding house of alligators. As you approach towards the Mongla port, get down from the launch and enjoy some authentic 'mudslinging.' This simple fun is sure to amuse the child in you. Then take a dip in the clear water of the adjacent river.

Since mangroves are placed between sea water and freshwater terrestrial system, they add to the rich diversity of the Sundarbans. Expect the following animals to be sighted during your visit: Fishing Cats, Macaques, Wild Boars, Common Grey Mongooses, Foxes, Jungle Cats, Flying Foxes, Pangolins, and spotted deer. The best as well as the most haunted experience can be achieved if you can manage to spend a night in your boat or around a forest reserve. The howling of night animals will give you goosebumps for sure. This certainly is not recommended for the faint-hearted ones.

Do not forget to collect some locally harvested honey from the *bawalis*, the local wood-cutters. They usually do the job of collecting honey from the forest. April is the usual month of collecting honey when *bawalis* make their voyage to the forest; they stay there on boats for three to four months. The honey thus collected is one of the best considering taste and quality.



Area 4394 Sq. km. (Khulna)

Population 2319000

Weather Climate of Khulna is relatively moist due to its closeness to sea. All aspects of the seasonal climate exists here.

Crops Prawn, Paddy, Coconut.

River Shibsa, Rupsa, Baleshwar, Pasur, Ichhamati, Payra, Hariabhanga and hundred rivers more in the Sundarbans.

Greens Sundri, Gewa, Baen, Passur, Keora etc. There are some other non-wood forest products like Golpata (*Nypa fruticans*), Honey are also available.

Wildlife 269 species of wild animals including Royal Bengal Tiger, Gangetic Dolphin, Monkey, and Indian Fishing cat.

The Sundarbans (East) Wildlife Sanctuary (Bagerhat), The Sundarbans (West) Wildlife Sanctuary (Satkhira), The Sundarbans (South) Wildlife Sanctuary (Khulna), Dudhmukhi Wildlife Sanctuary (Bagerhat), Chadpai Wildlife Sanctuary (Bagerhat), Dhangmani Wildlife Sanctuary (Bagerhat)

Ethnic Communities Oraons



Important **phone** numbers

Police

Police Super Office

Phone: +8801713374095

Sadar Thana

Phone: +8801713373285

Hospital

Khulna Sadar Hospital

Phone: +88041723433

Khulna Medical College Hospital

Phone: +88041761535

Courier

S. A. Paribahan

Phone: +8801755512784, +8801755512772

Sundarban Courier Service

Phone: +8801197229867











Sundarban map



KHULNA DISTRICT



Legend

-  International Boundary
-  District Boundary
-  District HQ
-  Upazila HQ
-  National Highway
-  Upazila Road
-  Railway Network
-  River Network



Places to see

- Sundarban
- Historic 60 Domes Mosque at Bagerhat
- Katka Beach
- Hiron Point
- Mongla Sea Port
- Michael Madushudhan Dutt's Residence, Shagordari, Jessore.
- Wonderland Shishu Park, Khalishpur region



Hiron point

Those who want to see rare wildlife creatures and water fowls, the trick is to wait here silently on a boat. As monkeys, deer, crocodiles come to quench their thirst in the nearby lakes, a primal connection with the whole circle of life can be felt at the graceful spot, often called Nilkamal.



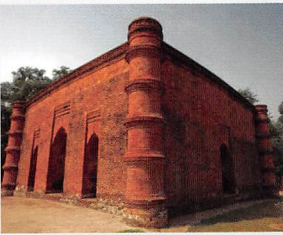
Katka Beach

Katka to Kachikhali (Tiger Point) is a breathtaking route for wildlife trekkers. The vast grassy meadows do not block the eye unless you are lucky enough to spot a Royal Bengal Tiger or a herd of deer passing by. It is 150 km from Khulna city.



Spotted deer. Photo: M Monirul H Khan

- Gollamari Memorial, on the way to Khulna University
- Khulna University, Located at Gollamari
- Rupsha Bridge at Lobon Chora area
- Nine dome mosque, Thakur Dighi, Bagerhat
- Sheikh Mujib Mausoleum, Gopalganj
- Ron Vijaypur Mosque, Bagerhat
- Kholda Math, Bagerhat
- Naldanga Hindu Temples, Jhinaidah
- Saint Paul's Catholic Church, Mongla



Mosque City of Bagerhat

Historic sanctuary reside in this city founded in the 15th century by the warrior saint Turkish general Ulugh Khan Jahan. It was known as Khalifatabad. In every road, the Sultanates seem to have left a mark to make it still reminded of as "mint town of Bengal Sultanate".



Canal of the Sundarbans. Photo. M Monirul H Khan



Art & Craft

- Talpakha
- Clay Doll
- Pottery
- Bamboo and Cane Baskets
- Wooden showpieces



Jute-made dolls. Photo. Kamrul Hasan Mithon



Cuisine

- Mutton with Chui Jhal
- Honey from the Sundarbans
- Tetul From the Sundarbans



King Prawn Malaikari

A delectable dish from our cuisine is King Prawn Malaikari. The juicy inner flesh of sweet, fresh prawns would immerse your taste buds with the coconut milk cooked delicacy. The mouth-watering dish is a staple in Khulna as prawns are found in plenty here.



Homemade rice noodle with duck meat. Photo. Debashish Shome



Pilgrimage

- Majar of Hazrat Khan Jahan Ali (R.), Bagerhat
- Arash Nagar Mosque, Dumuria
- Town Jame Mosque
- St Joseph's Church, Babu Khan Road
- Keshab Chandra Chotushpathi, South Central Road, Khulna
- Shaat Gombuj Mosque, Bagerhat
- Village Mosques, Around Shaat Gambooz Mosque, Bagerhat
- Dak-Bangla Mondir



Hotel

- Western Inn, +88041810899, +8801711431000
- Hotel Castle Salam Ltd., +88041730725, www.hotelcastlesalam.com
- Mozaffar Garden & Resort, Satkhira. +8801719769009
- Hotel Royel International, +8801718679900
- Hotel Tiger Garden, +8801712257030, www.hoteltigergarden.com
- Hotel Jalico, +88041811883
- Hotel Arcadia, +8801751219130



Sixty Dome mosque

With total 77 spectacular domes, this Sultanate monument in Bagerhat stands as a symbol of architectural finesse of Muslim period. As you step into this World Heritage site of 15th century, you would be amazed by its profound beauty still preserved in those tapered bricks of the Tughlaq styled mosque.



Restaurants

Local Menu

- Abbas's Restaurant, Zero Point
- Hotel Castle Salam, KDA Avenue
- Grill House, New Market

Global Menu

- Hotel Western Inn
- Goon Goon Coffee Shop, Hotel Castle Salam
- Hotel Royal International
- Hotel Tiger Garden



Pubs

- Parjatan Motel Pashur, Bagerhat
- Hotel Al-Prince & Bar, Mongla Port, Bagerhat
- Khulna Club



Ras Mela

Ras Mela is held on the night of the full moon in the Bangla months of Kartik and Agrahayan at Dublar Char in the Sundarbans. Songs and dance mark the occasion. The love story of Krishna and Radha are enacted through music and dance drama. The fair attracts both locals and tourists.



In quest of honey. Photo. Atzai Nazim



Shopping

- New Market
- Picture Palace
- KCC Market
- Boyra Bazar
- Sharan khola Bazar, Bagerhat



Cultural centers

- Khulna Stadium
- Hadis Park
- Rupsha Bridge
- Khalishpur Wonderland Shishu Park
- Zahanbaad Cantonment Zoo
- Prem Kanon



Museums

- Sundarban Information and Education Center, Khulna
- Divisional Museum, Khulna
- Sundarban's Museum, Mongla
- Bagerhat Museum



Bagerhat Museum



Khulna Divisional Museum



Connectivity

Air

From Dhaka Int. Airport to Jessore Airport

- Bangladesh Biman
- GMG Airlines
- Regent Airways
- United Airways

Rail

From Kamalapur Railway Station, Dhaka

- Chitra Express
- Sundarban Express

Road

From Sayedabad Bus Terminal and Gabtoli Bus Terminal

- Shohag Paribahan
- Eagle transport
- A K Travels
- Hanif transport
- Meghna Paribahan
- Bonoful Paribahan
- Dola Paribahan
- Parjatak Paribahan
- Falguni Paribahan

Port

- Rocket Steamer Launches, from Dhaka to Morelganj, Bagerhat

u know ?



Books to read

Man-eaters of Sundarbans by Tahawar Ali Khan
Sundarban: Rediscovering Sundarban The Mangrove Beauty of Bangladesh edited by Reza Khan,
The Hungry Tide: A Novel by Amitav Ghosh,
The Bangladesh Sundarbans by Enayetullah Khan

Food to taste

King Prawn Malaikari
Osman's tea at New Market, Khulna
Abbas's curry with chui jhal

Performance to enjoy

Lathikhela
Gazir Gaan
Kobi Gaan

Songs to listen

Ashtak Gaan (A special song at the end of Bengali month Chaitra),
Bijoy Sarker

To visit

Chuknagar, the largest genocide occurred here in 1971
Sultan Mela, Narail

SYLHET

Your Private Shangri-La

SYLHET

As Sylhet opens its bag of tricks, one is sure to get spellbound

Four thousands of devotees, Sylhet, the major city of northeastern Bangladesh, is the home of two of two universally respected saints: Hazrat Shah Jalal (R) and Hazrat Shah Poran (R). For travelers who would like to quench their thirst amid nature, this city is the perfect place to serve your wanderlust. The city of half a million people is surrounded by numerous tea gardens and tropical forests. These tea gardens are noted for their tranquility and endless natural beauty, while the forests house a great variety of flora and fauna.

From Sylhet you may travel south to Moulavi Bazar. Among the 153 tea gardens of Bangladesh, as many as 90 are situated here. So, one can easily imagine what a bounty of natural beauty this district has to offer. Besides, there are around fifty thousand ethnic people from Manipuri, Khasia and Tripura communities living here. As you visit areas of Kamalganj, Sreemangal and Kulaura, you will get to see the distinct lifestyle of these indigenous people. Try having a walk inside the sloppy tea gardens; spend some time under the trees planted to give shade to the tea plants. Men and women plucking tealeaves will welcome you with their friendly gesture.

Try to visit Baralekha upazilla of the district to see Madhabkunda, the largest waterfall in Bangladesh. The waterfall is about 200 ft (61m) high. The majestic view of the fall is impressive.

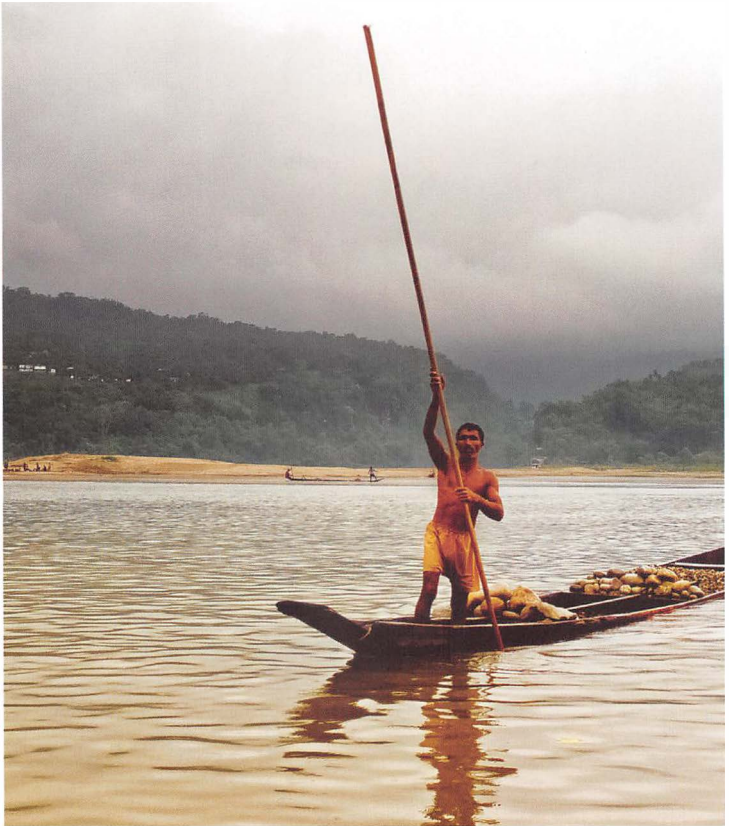
You can also go to Jaflong, which is approximately 60 km from Sylhet in Gowanighat Upazila. It is a natural tourist spot situated at the border between Bangladesh and the Indian state of Meghalaya, just



Lawachhara rain forest. Photo. Arman Hossain Bappy

below the Khasia Jayantia mountain range. Jaflong is famous for stone collections. As you hang around for a while, you will see how local people collect stones from under water. Deep inside the forest of Moulavi Bazar, at Razkandi reserve there is another water fall called Hum-hum. This fall's breath taking beauty made it one of the most visited places by the young crowd.

One must visit the beautiful Sari River. It is about 40 km from Sylhet town and takes about an hour to reach Sari Ghat. The beautiful blue water of Sari during winter will make you fall in love with it the moment you see. Gliding on the calm stream will leave you blissful. Thus, Sylhet, a busy hub of numerous expats and locals, is an amazing place to get enchanted by the warmth of nature.



Jaflong. Photo: Abdul Nazim

Tanguar Haor can also be on your bucket list of visit while in Sylhet. The amazing wetland in Sunamganj district is a back swamp, enriched with one of the most unique wetland ecosystems in Bangladesh hosting around a hundred and fifty different species of fish, more than hundreds of resident birds and around two hundred different types of flora. The haor is nestled by forty-six villages with a population of around forty thousand people, all of whom are dependent on it for their livelihood. Though a good portion of the eco-system has already been degraded due to undue deforestation and human habitat extension, every year the haor gets replenished with monsoon rain water and looks like a sea. As you look above, you see the changing face of the sky of rainy season—turning from white and sunny to pitch black in minutes. And in front of your eyes, all you see are infinite waves.

The latest craze about Sylhet is the Ratargul Swamp Forest, which is situated at the Guwani Ghat area. The only swamp forest in Bangladesh, this virgin locale was discovered recently and is now being conserved under the department of forestry. Rowing through the marshy land of the forest one can see lush green all around and exotic breeds of flora and fauna all around. A perfect place to seek for inner peace to rejuvenate your soul with renewed vigor.



Area 3452 Sq. km.

Population 479837

Weather The moist rain forest and wetlands are the unique offerings to every traveler. Monsoon is the best to rediscover this grand ecosystem.

Crops Tea, Rice, Potato, Bay leaves, Orange, Lemon, Bamboo, Rattan, Betel Leaf, Betel Nut.

River Surma, Piyain, Manu, Dhalai and many more

Greens Garjan, Chapalish, Telsur, Tali, Kamdeb, Uriam, Jarul, Civit, Toon, Bandorhola, Teak, Gamar, Mehogani, Chapalish, Koroi etc. with Bamboo, Cane, Climbers and Fern:

Khadimnagar National Park, Lawachara National Park, Madhabkunda Eco-Park, Borshijora Eco-Park (Moulavibazar), Satchari National Park (Hobigonj)

Wildlife Elephant, Monkey, Wild Boar, Barking Deer, Samvar, King Cobra, and Leopard.

Tilagar Eco-Park, Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary (Habiganj)

Ethnic Communities Manipuri, Patra, Khasia, Chakma, Tripura, and Santal.



Important **phone** numbers

Police

Kotwali Model Thana, Taltala

Phone: +8808217134 33

Police Control Room: +8801713374375

Police Super: +8801713374366, +880821716304

Hospital

Sylhet Sadar Hospital

Phone: +880821713506

M A G Osmani Medical College Hospital

Phone: +880821713506, +880821717055

Courier

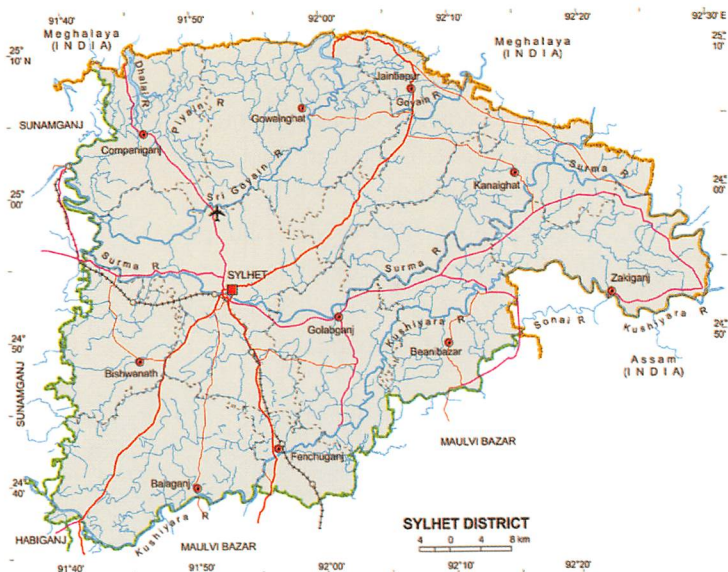
S. A. Paribahan Courier:

Phone: +8801755512836, +8801755512845

Sundarban Courier:

Phone: +8801759037152, +8801712823543

Sylhet city map



Legend

-  International Boundary
-  District Boundary
-  District HQ
-  Upazila HQ
-  National Highway
-  Upazila Road
-  Railway Network
-  River Network





Places to see

- Kean Bridge
- Tanguar Haor, Sunamganj
- Jaflong, Goainghat
- Madhabkunda Falls, Shreemangal
- Malni Cherra & Lakkatura Tea Garden
- LalaKhal, Jaintiapur
- Monipuri Royal Palace, Mirza Jangal
- Tamabil, Jaflong, Sylhet-Shilong Road
- Lawacherra National Park, Shreemangal
- Khasia Punji, Shreemangal



Tanguar Haor

The home of 140 species of fresh water fishes and the guest house for more than 200 types of migratory birds in winter, this wetland with its unique ecosystem is a must visit place at Sunamganj, Sylhet.



Jaflong

Jaflong is situated at the border between Bangladesh and the Indian state of Meghalaya. With subtropical mountains, rainforests and tea gardens, the spot is also renowned for stones. For food-lovers, the Khasia community has something unique and exciting of a cuisine to offer.



Tea garden. Photo: Atsal Nazim

- Humhum Falls, Shreemangal
- Madhabpur Lake, Shreemangal
- Parikunda Falls, Shreemangal
- Bichhanakandi, Goainghat
- Bharaura and Rajghat Lake, Shreemangal
- Ruins of Jaintiapur King's Palace
- Bholaganj Stone Excavation Sites
- Satchari National Park, Habiganj
- Ratargul Swamp Forest
- Hakaluki Haor



Madhabkunda Waterfall

You can hear the soft murmur of the 61m high waterfall even before you reach there. The bumpy ride through the zigzag roads will enchant the adventurer in you, while the scenic beauty of the fall will help you relax. Rubber and lemon plantations are also uniquely spotted in the area.



Ratargul swamp forest. Photo K M Asad



Art & Craft

- Manipuri Handicrafts
- Bamboo made Handicrafts
- Cane made Handicrafts



Manipuri Handicrafts

These crafts make exotic collectibles. Decorate your room with souvenirs like papier mache, decorative ivory, dolls, bamboo and cane works. For special ones, take home products like wood-carving, textile weaving, stone-carving, block printing and hand-embroidery.



Shital pati. Photo: Collected

Cuisine

- Beef with Satkora (*Citrus macroptera*)
- Pickles of Satkora
- Birun rice with Gur (date palm molasses)
- Special Starter made with by tea leaf



Tea

The most celebrated beverage of the world. For millennia it became a daily drink, and tea cultivation began at Bengal in 1824 when tea plants were discovered in the hills along the frontier between Burma and the Indian state of Assam. The British introduced tea culture into Bengal and the legacy goes on with finely lined rows of beautiful, large tea gardens covering Sylhet.



Beef curry with satkora. Photo: Debashish Shome

Pilgrimage

- Majar of Hazrat Shahjalal (R.)
- Majar of Hazrat Shah Poran (R)
- Shahi Eidgah
- Shonatola Old Jame Mosque, Sonatola Village
- Brahma Temple

Hotel

- Rose View Hotel, +8801972787878. www.roseviewhotel.com
- Zastat Holiday Resort, +8801712639555, +8801713300072
- Nazimgarh Resorts Ltd., +8801926667444. www.nazimgarh.com
- Hotel Abu Humza, +880821722216, +8801749924852
- Hotel Golden City, +0821726379. +0821726957
- Heritage Hotel & Restaurant, +8801713310179
- Grand Sultan Tea Resort & Golf, Srimangal
+880862673000-19. www.grandsultanresort.com
- Tea Resort, Srimangal. +8801712916001
- DuSai Resort & Spa. +8801617005515



Majar of Hazrat Shahjalal (R.)

The Sufi Muslim preacher Hazrat Shahjalal (R) had come to Bengal in the 13th century with his holy purpose of spreading Islam. Soon he fell in love with the land and the people with amiable nature. The number of his followers skyrocketed and the saint resided here till the last day of his life.



Dusai Resort & Spa, Sylhet. Photo Collected



Grand Sultan Tea Resort & Golf. Photo: Grand Sultan authority



Restaurants

Local Menu

- Shah Hotel and Restaurant, Railway Station Road, Srimangal
- Sath Rong Restaurant, Srimangal-Bhanugach Road
- Woondaal, East Zindabazar
- Panshi Restaurant, Located at Mirzajangal, Zindabazar
- New Green Restaurant, Taltala road
- Eatopia, East Zindabazar
- Alpine Restaurant
- Nabanna, Taltala road

Global Menu

- KutumBari, Railway Station Road, Srimangal
- Agra, Guho Road, Srimangal
- Pritiraj, East Zinda Bazar
- Sizzling Restaurant, Rose View Hotel
- Silver Palace, Noya Sorok
- Eatopia, Barutkhana, Zindabazar.
- Chiangmai Chinese Restaurant
- Paktoon, Rose View Hotel
- Pearl Orient, Rose View Hotel
- Four Season, Rose View Hotel
- Sizzling Restaurent, Rose View Hotel
- Exotica Restaurent, Hotel Supreme
- Dinette Restaurent, Hotel Fortune Garden



Pubs

- Sylhet Station Club, Shah Jalal Road (members only)
- Club Royale, Rose View Hotel
- Haria (A chilling liquor made by Tea garden workers)



Shopping

- Al Hamra
- M/S Ahmed Tea House, Railway Station Rd, Srimangal
- Aarong
- Monorom
- Kumarpara
- London Mansion
- Manipuri Bazar, Lamabazar (specialized for hand weave Monipuri Sari and Fabrics)



Cultural centers

- M Saifur Auditorium
- Sylhet Public Library



Museums

- Sylhet Monipuri Museum, Subidbazar
- Museum of Raja's, Zindabazar



Osmani Memorial Museum



Hasan Raja Museum



Madhabkunda Falls. Photo: Afzal Nazim



Connectivity

Air

From Dhaka International Airport to Osmani International Airport, Sylhet:

- Bangladesh Biman
- Novo Air
- US Bangla Airlines

Rail

From Kamalapur Railway Station, Dhaka

- Joyontika
- Parabat
- Upoban
- Kalni

Road

From Sayedabad Bus Terminal and Gabtoli Bus Terminal

- Shyamoli
- Hanif
- Green Line
- Mamun



Sylhet Rail Station. Photo: Collection



Jaflong. Photo: Abdul Hamid



u know ?

Books to read

Sylheti Nagori Lipi Vasha o Shahitto by Golam Quadir

Empire's Garden: Assam and the Making of India by Jayeeta Sharma

Food to taste

Chicken Reshmi at Etopia

Garden fresh liquor and Green tea

7 Layerd tea at Nilkantha Tea Cabin

Performance to enjoy

Monipuri Dance

Songs to listen

"Hobigonjer Jalali koitor" – A Famous song by Shera Shagoto

Shah Abdul Karim

Radha Raman

Hason Raja

Hemango Biswas

Notes