

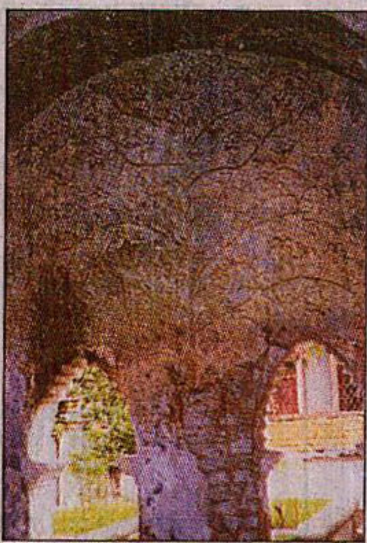


Moyez Manzil

An Epitome of Heritage

MOYEZ-MANZIL built by Choudhury Moyezuddin Bishuash - the renowned philanthropic zamindar of greater Faridpur (and Manikganj, Rangpur, Mymensingh, West Bengal, Darjeeling, Uttar Pradesh, Rawalpindi, even Arabia territories) in circa 1885, was renovated further by him in 1916. It stands still quite impressively, on 27 bighas of gardens, orchards and lawns, almost at the centre of Faridpur Town adjacent to the Curcuit House. It is still addressed as the "White House of Faridpur" not just its dazzling whiteness, but also its position at the apex of administrative power in Faridpur for over a century. This was home to Moyezuddin's sons: eminent anti-British revolutionist Lal Mia, and Mohon Mia and Tara MJ. This was also the venue for a large number of political, socio-economical and cultural conventions of historic significance and is perhaps the only location in East Bengal beside Dhaka, to be regularly visited by the most leaders of the Indian subcontinent.

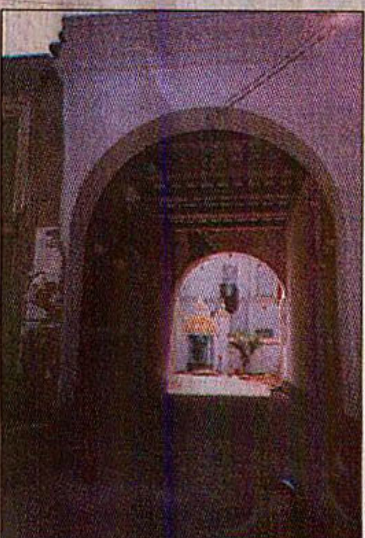
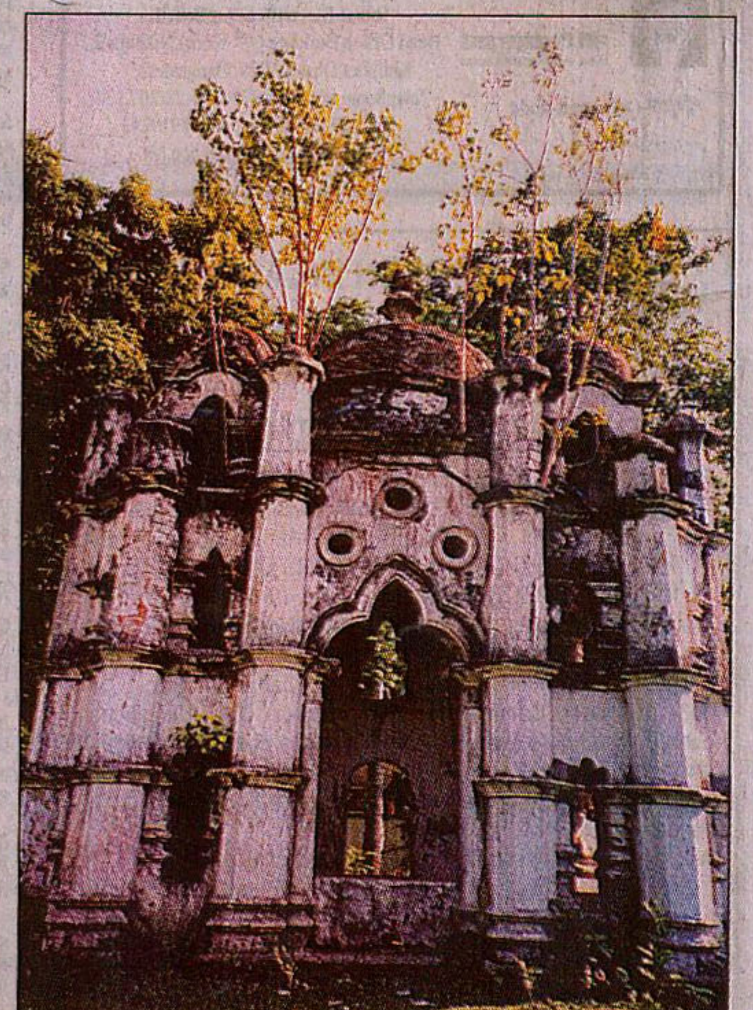
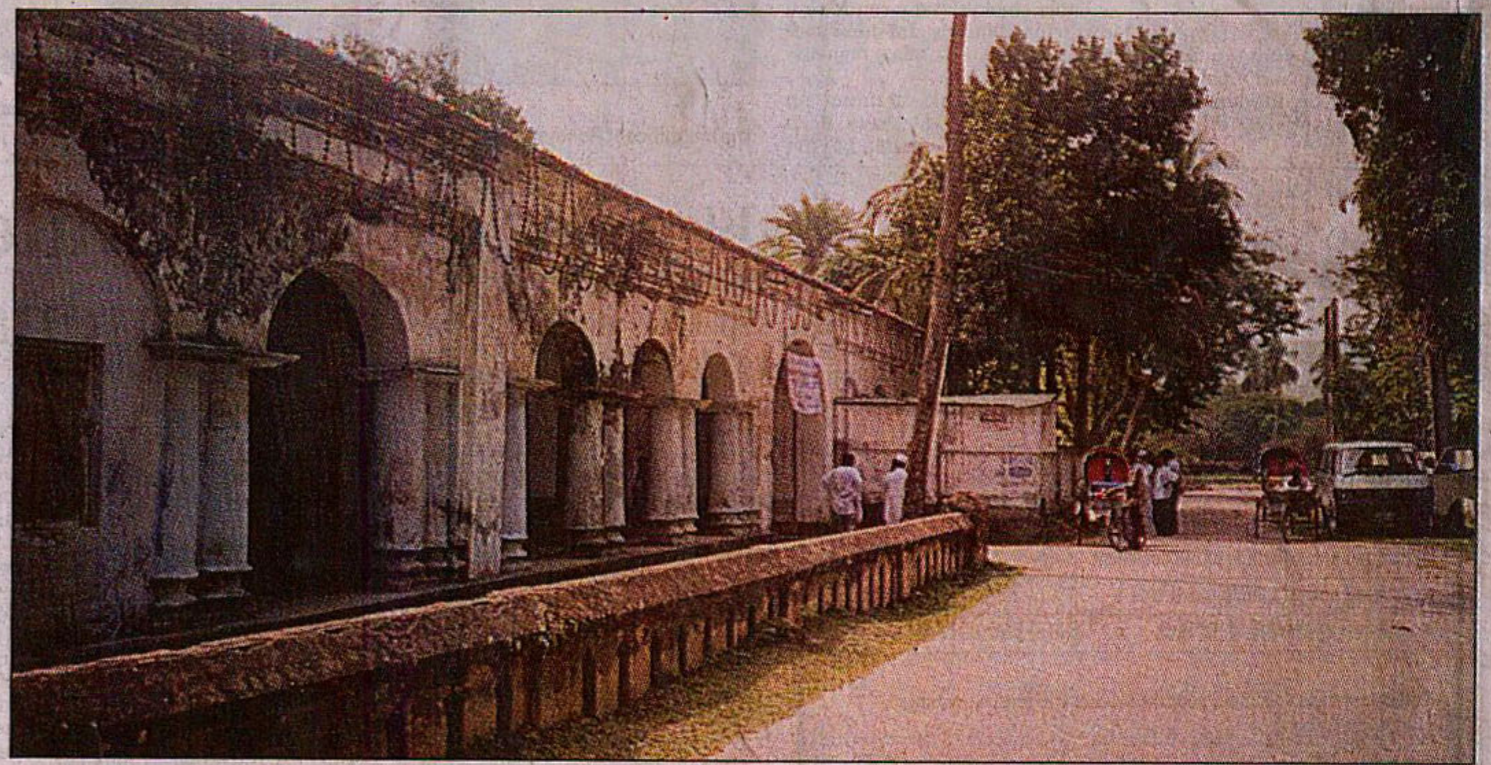
Ombika Charan Mojumder a founding member of the All India Congress Party as well as one of its earliest Presidents, held committee meetings at Moyez-Manzil across the late 1800s, happening to be Legal Advisor to Choudhury Moyezuddin, who had discreetly funded many of Congress's preliminary protest initiatives. Many meetings of the upper council of Faridpur were also held



there. In 1924, Lal Mia hosted the annual convention of All Bengal Congress in Faridpur as Moyez-Manzil became the venue for many sessions, attended by illustrious personalities including Netaji Shubhash Chandra Bose, Sarojini Naidu, Chittaranjan Das and Mahatma Gandhi. Our national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam visited Moyez-Manzil on that occasion and became a frequent visitor to a resident guest in the 30s. The same year, Lal Mia hosted the All India Literary Conference at Moyez-Manzil, which brought some of India's greatest talents to its threshold, including Sharat Chandra Chatterjee. In 1928, Moyez-Manzil played host to the entire ministerial cabinet of undivided Bengal, including the Chief Minister. Shere Bangla Fazlul

Moyez-Manzil is a wonderful blend of Victorian architecture and indigenous Islamic styles, comprising of one double-storied and several single-storied buildings, aggregating over 20,000 square feet, making it the largest residence in town. The main buildings do not boast a plethora of relief-work on their walls, but there stands within the grounds two Mausoleums, one of Moyezuddin's and the other of his eldest grand-daughter, which are resplendent with floral carvings and intricate design work, decorative kiosks, domes, multi-frayed arches resting on ornate Corinthian columns and colorfully tiled floors. The main building, impressive in its simplicity, has 15 feet high ceilings, rows of large hall rooms, 400 feet of arched verandahs and connecting corridors. There are over 100 doorways crowned with arched metal designed ventilators, ornate iron railings and spiral stairs, and balustrade crested roofs rising to over 50 feet. There are over 40 rooms in the palace complex including a 100 feet long gatehouse with a colonnaded frontage and a very high arched gateway in the centre. The 200 person capacity mosque is elevated and supported by four tall minarets with three lofty arches in front. Apart from the buildings, which still symbolize ancient glory, there are two large ponds, spacious gardens, orchards and vast lawns used previously for polo, golf, and for the grazing of horses and elephants.

Indeed, Moyez-Manzil was one of the most important centres of political, religious and cultural activity of East Bengal and was more of an institution than just any home. It became a symbol of Anti-Colonial defiance, religious harmony and the emancipation of the underprivileged. It surely ranks as one of the most historically significant locations within our country, one which is in true sense an epitome of our heritage.



Architectural features:

Story & Photo: CHOWDHURY ABD-ALLAH QAUSEED