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## '4,000-year' old settlement unearthed in Narsingdi

Archaeologists claim major discovery 6 years into excavation

BISHAWJIT DAS

Archaeologists have discovered artefacts at a village in Narsingdi that resembles traits of the Chalcolithic culture, which is around 4,000 years old, and believe the finds are the earliest signs of settlement in the region.

The Chalcolithic Age, also known as the Aeneolithic or Copper Age, is a phase in the development of human culture in which the use of early metal tools appeared alongside the use of stone tools.

The excavators led by Prof Sufi

Mostafizur Rahman, chairman of the Department of Archaeology at Jahangirnagar University,

traced a pit-dwelling, one of the primary means of living in which people lived in small ditches, at Wari-Bateswar under Belabo upazila, some 70km from the capital.

This is the first discovery of the Chalcolithic occurrence in the country, the earlier findings not dating back before the Mouryan Age in 400BC.

Artefacts of the pit-dwelling era in the Indian subcontinent have been found at places including Burzahom at Swat Valley in Pakistan, which is around 5,000 years old, and Inamgaon in South India, which dated back to around 1400BC-700BC.

The team of Rahman and his

students found a water reservoir, a hearth, a storage pit and some household accessories inside the pit-dwelling. They also unearthed an earlier dug-out road, leading to what seems to be a fortified town.

A pioneer in the field, Rahman had started excavating the area in 2000 and unearthed relics and artefacts, challenging the established notion that the region did not have any history of early urbanisation.

The team in March 2004 found a 20-metre stretch of a road, which later tested to be some 2,450 years old. Examining the location and landscape, they claimed it to be a fortified town

which is a significant symbol of urbanisation in the area.

This year's excavation, sponsored by GrameenPhone, dug out 180 metres stretch of the road, which is six metre wide and 21-35cm thick, with a by-lane, leading towards a citadel with protecting canals on its four sides.

Rahman said this proves that his earlier much-debated claim of a town buried under earth corresponds to a time much before the Christian era.

Although the finding of the road and a by-lane itself is a major discovery that indicates a planned town, the magnitude of pit-dwelling surpasses by its

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



Excavators, left, work to unearth a 180-metre strip of the ancient road at Wari-Bateswar village in Narsingdi; a pit-dwelling of the primitive settlement, right, that includes living space, a water reservoir and a hearth.

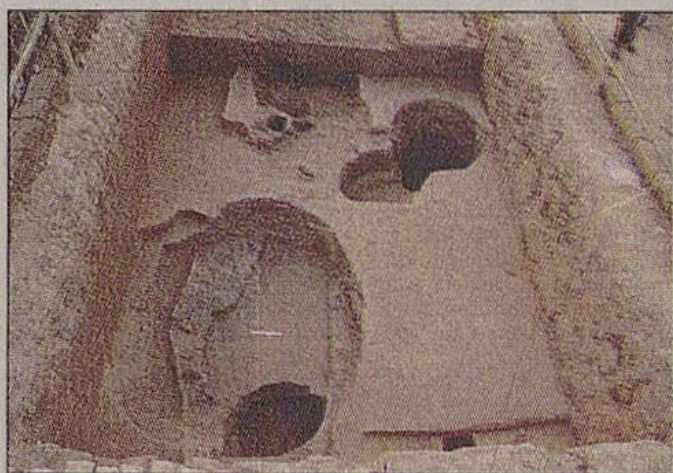


PHOTO: STAR

## Bangla Bhai's M'singh host captured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives last night arrested Chan Mian, who sheltered Bangla Bhai, at his in-laws' house in Bhaluk Chhatar village in Muktagachha upazila in Mymensingh.

Acting on a tip off, a team of Detective Branch (DB) of police raided the house around 9:00pm. The police also picked up his wife Rina Akter for quizzing.

Chan Mian was absconding since the arrest of Bangla Bhai at his Rampur village house in Muktagachha on March 6.

Bangla Bhai along with his bodyguard Masud came to his house three nights before the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## Law drafted to curb terrorist financing

To be placed in cabinet tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has drafted the anti-terrorist financing act aiming to clamp down on the militants' sources of funds, their financiers and bring them to justice.

"The draft of the law to trace the financiers of the militants would be placed before the cabinet on Monday [tomorrow]," Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed said while talking to ntv, a private TV channel, yesterday.

He said the militants could be tried at the existing speedy trial court or a new tribunal could be set up, if necessary, for trying them.

According to sources in the home ministry, the new law will

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



## Rahman claim shows how probes politicised

Accused in cinema blast cases ask for govt apology

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

The government's latest disclosure that JMB had carried out the Mymensingh cinema blasts three years back contradicts its earlier find, suggesting that the ruling coalition in fact used the law enforcement and intelligence agencies as a tool for political persecution.

The government on Thursday said detained militant kingpin Abdur Rahman has confessed to ordering the blasts in December 2002. The statement has called into question the role of the law enforcers as the government had earlier claimed that the opposition Awami League (AL) and some journalists

and intellectuals were behind the attacks.

Earlier Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) cadre Moinul Islam Ranga told a court last month that Salahuddin alias Salehin, the man in charge of the militant operations in Mymensingh-Sylhet region, had led the attacks.

Those who were arrested and abused on the allegation of orchestrating the cinema blasts have demanded the government seek apology, punish the persons responsible for wreaking vengeance on them and give them compensation for torture they underwent.

Some of the victims told The Daily Star yesterday that they will sue for defamation if the govern-

ment does not compensate them for the damage done to their image.

Immediately after the powerful blasts at Ajanta, Chhayabani, Purabi and Aloka cinemas on December 7, 2002 killing 21 people and injuring over 200, the government had arrested 14 AL leaders including Saber Hossain Chowdhury and Principal Motiur Rahman, writer-journalist Shahriar Kabir, Prof Muntassir Mamoon and journalist Enamul Hoque Chowdhury.

A few hours after the arrests on December 8, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia while visiting Aloka Cinema Hall said the authorities had arrested some people for

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