

MAHASTHANGARH

Artefacts discovery sheds new light on past

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

Archaeologists have recently excavated different objects, including ornamental bricks, terracotta plaques, stone slabs, cells, terracotta balls, potshards, toy objects, brick tiles and iron artefacts, from Mahasthangarh in Bogra.

The excavators claim the discovery will help one know more about the Gupta dynasty (320-550 AD) and Pal (750-1174 AD) dynasty.

"We have found hundreds of bricks of different periods, including the Gupta and Pal dynasties during the excavation," said Md Badrul Alam, leader of the excavation team and director for Rajshahi region of the Department of Archaeology.

A five-member team of the department began the excavation in Mahasthangarh's western part, known as 'Tamro Duar' on January 19 this year.

Dr Md Shafiqul Alam, former director general of the department now working as a specialist with the team, said that a brick-built wall had been found that seemed to be

a symbol of the Maurya dynasty. "Earlier we found five occupations levels of pre-Maurya dynasty," he said, adding, "So far we have found 16 habitat levels in the city and adjacent areas."

Md Abdul Khaleque, former director of the department of archaeology, Rajshahi region, who is also working as a specialist with the team, said a structure was found during the excavation this week.

"The structure might have been used as a protection wall of the Tamro Duar (a gateway) during the Gupta dynasty.

"More excavations are needed for additional information about the wall and artefacts," said Abdul Khaleque.

"Since 1922, we have found various archaeological objects and structures of different dynasties, including the pre-Maurya dynasty, in several archaeological excavations," he added.

Afroza Khan Mita, assistant director of the archeology department, said that more excavations were needed to arrive at a conclusion about the discovery.



A part of Mahasthangarh in Bogra where archaeologists recently discovered artefacts from the Gupta (320-550 AD) and Pal (750-1174 AD) dynasties.

PHOTO: STAR

Another 'politically motivated' case scrapped

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The government has withdrawn a tax evasion case against Awami League lawmaker Habibur Rahman Mollah considering it "politically motivated and meant for harassment".

Judge (in-charge) Mohammad Mozammel Hossain of the Special Judge Court-5 passed the order on January 31 following the filing of a petition.

After receiving government recommendation, Special Public Prosecutor Kabir Hossain submitted the petition with the court on June 15 last year.

Deputy Tax Commissioner of National Board of Revenue (NBR) Golam Kabir sued the lawmaker on November 18 in 2007 for dodging income tax amounting to Tk 45.41 lakh.

Habibur Rahman Mollah, director of Habib Food & Allied Industries Ltd, had concealed information about income of Tk 1,92,71,060 in his tax returns and also provided false information about the expenditure of the company.

Govt to add rights issues in textbooks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is working to incorporate the issues of reproductive health, HIV, gender, and human rights in the national textbook curriculum, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said yesterday.

"We have already started updating the curriculum which was last modified 15 years ago. We are working to include these issues", he said.

The minister was speaking at the launch of a web-based curriculum titled "It's All One Curriculum Activities" in Bangla held at Brac Centre auditorium in the city. The Population Council, with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), organised the ceremony.

It's All One Curriculum is a two-volume book containing guidelines and activities on sexuality, gender, HIV, and human rights and culturally appropriate discussions on the issues. It also helps to promote academic growth, critical thinking, civic engagement, and core values of human rights.

The books are available in English, French, and Spanish. The Population Council with the help of the UNFPA translated the books into Bangla for youths of school and out of schools.

The book is now available at <http://www.popcouncil.org/ItsAllOneActivitiesbn>

The minister termed the book a new milestone and said it is indeed a massive task and would help the students learn the issues.

Education Secretary Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury presided the programme while Dr Ubaidur Rob, country director of Population Council; Ella de Voogd, first secretary of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands; Arthur Erken, country representative of the UNFPA; and Tarik-ul-Islam, secretary of Ministry of Women and Children Affairs; also spoke.

JANUARY 29 VIOLENCE 489 BNP-Jamaat men secure bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted anticipatory bail for a month to 489 BNP-Jamaat leaders and activists from different districts in nine separate cases filed on charges of vandalising public property and obstructing police from discharging duties.

The cases were filed after the country witnessed a number of incidents of violence on January 29 centring a mass procession programme by BNP-Jamaat led four-party alliance.

An HC bench of Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury and Justice FRM Nazmul Ahasan passed the order after hearing nine separate bail petitions submitted by the accused.

Among the accused leaders and workers, 138 from Borguna, 181 from Laksmipur, 16 from Nilphamari, 70 from Kurigram, 35 from Faridpur and 48 from Chandpur appeared before the court seeking bail yesterday.

Unfinished stalls mar Boi Mela's allure

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The festivity and momentum of Amar Ekushey Boi Mela was marred yesterday, a day after its inauguration, as some stalls remained empty or incompletely decorated, leaving many of the booklovers flocking to the city's Bangla Academy irked.

Around 25 stalls were found empty while decorators were seen giving last minute touches to some stalls in and outside the fair premises.

"Those receiving stall allocations were asked to complete decorations within February 1. But some of them could not follow the directions.

"We asked them to showcase the books in their stalls by tomorrow (today)," said Murshiduddin Anwar, a deputy director of Bangla Academy.

Expressing dissatisfaction over the matter, noted human rights activist Sultana Kamal, visiting the fair yesterday, commented, "This book fair is a cherishable event...we need to be much more caring in organising this event."

One visitor, a Dhaka University student, Protik Chakraborti, said, "This failure has hampered the fair's beauty."

However, the Bangla Academy authority

and the book sellers expressed satisfaction with the overall preparations taken so far and hoped that the month-long festival will satisfy and draw a large number of bookworms.

Yesterday, scores of people of all ages thronged the fair. The presence of a large number of children with their parents

was noticeable. The gathering started getting thick with the passage of time, especially after sunset, when it was almost overflowing.

"Compared to that of last year's, presence of people and sale is satisfactory on the second day," said Abdus Salam, a representative of Nazrul Institute's stall. "We sold books worth Tk 11 lakh last year. We hope to reach Tk 15 lakh this year," he added.

Other stall representatives said most visitors are now just browsing through the books and only a few are buying. They expect sales to rise soon.

A total of 42 new titles hit the fair yesterday covering a wide range of forms including poems, novels and autobiographies based on history, theatre, politics and science fiction.

Month-long Islami book fair begins

BSS, Dhaka

A month long 'Islami Book Fair' began on Wednesday at the premises of the national mosque Baitul Mukarram in the city aiming to develop Islamic book reading habits among the people.

Secretary of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Kazi Habibul Awal inaugurated the fair while Director General of Islamic Foundation Bangladesh Shamim Mohammad Afzal and other officials were present on the occasion.

The foundation has organised the fair on the occasion of Amar Ekushey February and Eid-e-Miladunnabi.

There are 53 bookstalls at the fair.

Various kinds of Islamic books, including the Bengali translations of the Holy Quran, the Hadith and Tafsir, are being sold at the Islamic Foundation stall.

The fair remains open for all from 10:00am to 8:00pm every day.

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