



Public development centre in Shadupara, Right, cockfight at a rural fair focusing on biodiversity

PHOTO: MUKUL HOSSAIN

Sharing skills and ideas

Farmers have set up a Public Development Centre in Shadupara to share their knowledge about agriculture

SHYKH SERAJ

Farmers of Mymensingh's Shadupara have always been progressive in nature. I have observed them and found out that their minds are full of innovative ideas. Adding to that, they are also always inclined to uphold the ancient agricultural methods.

"We built this house because we, the farmers needed a place to gather and sit."

"You could sit under the tree or a farm house."

"No, it's a place entirely for farmers."

"What do you intend to do in here?"

"We will find solutions for many problems that we face."

Farmers are also keeping traditional tools like plough, cutters, axes, hoes, scythes, etc.

"So you are preserving these tools?"

"Yes we are, because these are going extinct"

I can tell you about Haripada Kapali, another farmer from Jhenaidah's Shadurhati union. Hope you've heard about Haridhan. He once found a rice plant while working in the field that was relatively longer in length than other breeds. He tried to figure out the reason, did a lot of research and finally pollinated a new breed of seed that eventually gave birth to a new breed of rice called 'Haridhan'. You must have heard about Kartik



Shykh Seraj is an Agriculture Development and Media Activist. He is an Ashoka Fellow and an FAO A.H. Boerma Awardee. At Channel i, he is Director and Head of News. He is also Director, Planner and Presenter of the popular Agro-Documentary "Hridoye Mati O Manush".

A traditional Bangladeshi house that belongs to the farmers of Shadupara- the house of enlightenment that I came to know. I was more impressed entering it. Only innovative and well-

structured agricultural minds can give birth to such a venture. The club entitled, 'Public Development Centre' has been adorned with ancient agricultural objects. I talked with the founders of the club.

These farmers of Shadupara have been putting their ideas together for biodiversity as well. A fair has been arranged specially focused on biodiversity. This place is not only eye-catching, but it also exhibits many objects that are essential for the farmers. For example, one of the stalls was only having organic pesticides. Anwarul Islam, a local man has put up a stall to introduce bananas of different varieties. A woman named Rokshana Akhter was seen busy with selling rural cosmetics at her 'Bodhu Grameen Proshadoni'. Azizul Haque, an elderly local man was displaying fishes of various local breeds. I was taken aback after arriving at Mahbub Alam's organic pesticide stall. There was a

cockfight at the end, an inevitable element of ancient Bengal ritual.

I found the diversity fair very much interesting and a very timely initiative which would definitely help protect our farming and would gather more and more farmers in one place. It would also lift up the spirit and heritage of the rural Bengal. It was a glorious day of experience for sure- first visiting the Public Development Centre and then the rural fair of farmers. It was such a fruitful day for me and I am sure you'll also be inspired to see farmers gathering in such effective manner.

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Malhubul Alam, one of the members of the excavation team and custodian of Paharpur Budhha Bihar Archaeological Museum said that some rare sculptures of Gautama Buddha were found, including some ancient brick, granite and black stone built structures and four cells of Buddhist monastery have been found in an excavation at Jagaddal Bihar recently. "They also found precious stones, ornamental stone pieces, ancient brick built staircases and broken earthen pots", he said. The structure was

built in the tenth or eleventh century during Pala dynasty. "The locals had their doubts about the authenticity of the Jagaddal Bihar. After digging out some rare artifacts and ancient structures, like the lotus inflorescence, we are now sure that this is the original Jagaddal Bihar", he said. The archaeologist further added, "It is a rare discovery for our country."

Archaeologists said, Department of Archaeology started an archaeological excavation one of the ancient cities in the country, Jagaddal, from December 1, 2012, aiming to find out the history of the archaeological site. The excavation continued till February this year.

Earlier, Archaeology Department excavated Jagaddal Bihar in 1996-1997 and 1997-1998 fiscal years. At that time, they found some rare ornamental artifacts from the archaeological site, they said.

Jagaddal Mahavihara was a Buddhist monastery founded by the later kings of the Pala dynasty, possibly Rampala (1077-1120), most likely at a site near the present village of Jagaddal in Dhamurhat Upazila in the north-west Bangladesh on the border of India, near Paharpur.

Little is known about Jagaddal compared with the other mahaviharas of the era. For many years, its

site could not be ascertained. AKM Zakaria inspected five likely locations, all called Jagaddal or Jagadal, in the Rajshahi-Malda region- namely Panchagarh, Haripur upazila in Thakurgaon, Bochaganj upazila in Dinajpur, Dhamoirhat upazila in Naogaon, Bamongola of Malda in India. Of these, significant ancient ruins were present only near Jagaddal in Naogaon district.

Excavations under UNESCO over the past decade have established the site as a Buddhist

monastery.

A large number of viharas (monasteries) were established in ancient Bengal and Magadha during the four centuries of Pala rule in north-eastern India (756-1174 AD).

Dharmapala (781-821) is said to have founded 50 viharas himself, including

Vikramshila, the premier university of the era.

Jagaddal was founded toward the end of the Pala dynasty, most likely by Ramapala (1077-1120). According to Tibetan sources, five great mahaviharas stood out, Vikramshila, Nalanda, Somapura, Odantapura and Jagaddal. The five monasteries formed a network under state supervision.

Jagaddal specialized in

Vajrayana Buddhism. A large number of texts that would later appear in the *Kanjur* and *Tenjur* were known to have been composed or copied at Jagaddal. It is likely that the earliest dated anthology of Sanskrit verse, the *Subhasitaratnakosa*, was compiled by Vidyakara at Jagaddal toward the end of the eleventh century or the beginning of the twelfth.

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In 1999, Jagaddal was

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the archaeological remains of a

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findings have included

terracotta plaques,

ornamental bricks, nails, a

gold ingot and three stone

images of deities.

Ancient artifacts found in Naogaon

RABIUL HASAN,
Chapainawabganj

Four Fourteen bronze-made Gautama Buddha sculptures and some other artifacts, including an ancient brick-built structure with a lotus-shaped inflorescence have been found recently during an excavation at Jagaddal Bihar archaeological site of Dhamurhat upazila, some sixty five kilometers away from Naogaon district town.

Though many Buddha Biars (Buddha monastery) have been discovered in the country, all of them were square or geometrical in shape, only this bihar is shaped like a lotus inflorescence, said archaeologists.

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Several artifacts found during excavation at Jagaddal Budhha Bihar archaeological site in Naogaon

TIDAL SURGE, RAIN IN SEVERAL COASTAL DISTRICTS

Hundreds of villages flooded

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Tidal surge under the impact of full moon inundated several hundred villages in 12 upazilas of Patuakhali and Pirojpur districts yesterday.

Our Patuakhali correspondent reported that high tide coupled with heavy rain flooded over 100 char villages in eight upazilas of the district.

According to Patuakhali Met Office, 103.8 mm rainfall was recorded in the district in the last 24 hours until 12 noon yesterday.

Aman seedbeds on 2000 hectares of land have gone under water in the affected villages, sources in the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) said.

Communications with Kuakata, the only tourist