



Shiblinga temple, left, front entrance of Naodanga Zamindar Bari, right, barely standing.



PHOTO: STAR

End of a Zamindar Bari

A historical structure in Kurigram in delicate state

ABDUL WAHID, Kurigram

Naodanga Zamindar Bari, a historical palace at Naodanga union under Phulbari upazila of Kurigram district, is going to be decomposed and destroyed due to lack of proper care.

An historical structure, Naodanga Zamindar Bari, although situated 25 kilometers away from off Kurigram town attracts many visitors everyday.

The grand structures Zamindar house stands on 9.45 acres of land. Of them, there are 3.85 acres of the land under control of the union 'land revenue office', while the rest 5.60 acres of land have been grabbed by illegal occupations.

The Zamindar contains many compounds, including: bed-rooms, queen's room, queen's bath-room, drawing room, guest house, kitchen, personal courtroom, soldiers' house, torture cell, horse-shade, pond with bathing-place, Durga Mondir (temple) and Shiblinga Mondir.

The next generations of Zamindar (landlord) Promod Ranjon Bakshi, left Bangladesh for Kolkata in

India after feudal system was abolished the country. As a result, most important parts of the Zamindar Bari has been lost to some unscrupulous locals.

Now, there are only a few structures in fragile condition is left, including: about 100 meter building, the main gate to enter the comound, queen's room (partially damaged), a staircase for climbing top of the building, Durga Mondir, Shiblinga Mondir and two ponds.

The Shiblinga temple, covered with various parasites, is now in deplorable condition where several cracks have appeared. There is a big black Shiblinga (statue of worship) of about 12 mound weight in the temple. Locals of Hindu communities still worship the Shiblinga there.

Local Hindu communities gather there for Geeta recitation after repairing the Durga Mondir, which is situated in the indoor area of the lord-house.

Naodanga High School and College has been set up in front side of the Zamindar Bari. The school

authority is farming fish in the ponds, taking lease.

It is learnt that landlord (Zamindar) Sri Promad Ranjan Bakshi built the palace in a time of non-divided Bharat-Barsha (sub-continent). He had three sons, one daughter and one wife. His daughter Pitu was married Mirpur Zamindar of Rangpur.

His first son Bireswar Prashad Bakshi was a judge of Calcutta court under West Bengal province in India while the third son Bipuleswar Proshad Bakshi was an engineer.

The lord Promad Ranjan Bakshi gave the charge of lordship to his second son Bissheswar Proshad Bakshi as he (Bissheswar) could not completed the entrance school certificate (SSC equivalent).

Zamindar Bissheswar Proshad Bakshi established a primary school (now Naodanga Government Primary school) during his

reign and started a mela (festival) to observe Lord Sri Krisna's birth day, which is still observed every year.

After the abolition of Jamindar system (feudal system), they left Bangladesh for good and settled in Kolkata. Later, Promod Ranjon Bakshi died in a hospital in Calcutta.

But the Zamindar Bissheswar Proshad Bakshi and along his family came after the independence of Bangladesh to attend a religious festival.

Chairman of Naodanga union parishad Md. Mushabber Ali said, "Hundreds people come to visit the Naodanga Zamindar Bari and watch the sign of Zamindars' grandeur reign. We could get visitors here for years if the concerned department take care to safeguard the remaining parts of the Naodanga Zamindar Bari.

What's Your Insight?

Send your contributions to star.insight@gmail.com
Articles/stories/profiles should be between 700 and 1,300 words in length and should be accompanied by at least two photographs.

Asha hall emits no hope

ZIA NAZMUL ISLAM

'Asha' means hope – the owner of Asha isn't that hopeful anymore. Asha is one of the three cinema halls at Shyamganj in Netrokona, a place where the train Junction makes if an important place. People from surrounding villages and Upazillas go there for shopping and entertainment. It has three cinema halls. All three are in deplorable condition. Cinema hall owners are worried - they are not sure how long they can stay in business. The other two cinema halls are: Torongo and Holy. The conditions of the cinema halls are not suitable for women and children. Even men, who have a TV set at home wouldn't step into the halls.

During Eid, two halls were screening movies that were already released months before. Asha is one them. Cinema hall owner Bahar Uddin Dudu Mia failed to grab hold of any of the Eid releases. Because of Eid, he got away with an older movie and was making good profit. Otherwise, the business is not good.

It was also the first time that his hall was using digital screening system. To say the least, the screening in digital format didn't bring much difference - a cheap projector with a cheaper sound mixer didn't not make much difference. Dudu Mia is happier than before though. Digital means cheaper way of screening. Before he had to spend much more, just to keep the projector running; that means more electricity consumption and a whole lot of carbon. He says that he bought the land and built the hall in 1983. He used to make good profit before. Now, easy access to Indian TV channels and movies that are produced are hard to sell other than special days. He is planning to build a market tearing down the hall. Dudu Mia ignored the question, what movie was screened before, although, outside the old posters were still there. They were of the sort that most people would be ashamed to go and watch.

Government has ruled that any cinema torn down to make market must also contain a cinema hall. But this rule is ignored by most. It is hard to blame a businessman like Badu Mia. He preferred good movies that brings him money. "People like good stories in a movie, most movies now are of bad taste in terms of stories and way of presentation", he said. It is obvious that Asha cinema hall will not be standing for long. Very soon we may find a market full of shops selling pirated DVDs and cheap electronics.

Related authorities must take actions so people don't get deprived of entertainment businessmen like Dudu Mia don't have to build markets.



PHOTO: ZIA NAZMUL ISLAM

Asha cinema hall at Shyamganj in Netrokona, inset, owner of Asha, Baharuddin Dudu Mia.



PHOTO: STAR

Sahidullah Miah, at age 135 still going strong with a 5 kg hammer at his blacksmith shop.

Century-old blacksmith

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Sahidullah Miah, a 135 year old man still works as a blacksmith. He resides at the village Bamoner Basa of Kamlabari Union at Aditmari Upazila in Lalmonirhat. with his 5 kg hammer hitting iron everyday at his shop. His tireless work is an encouragement to others of all ages.

He is known as the 'Dada' (grandfather) in the village. Everyone, from children to the elderly, always address him as Dada. Locals and family members have informed that Sahidullah Miah always goes to his shop after Fazar prayer and stays till midnight keeping himself busy producing iron made accessories.

His two wives Saher Banu and Khodeza Begum passed away 50 years ago. He has 8 children and 13 grandchildren. His three younger brothers and sister also passed away. Now, he is with his third wife Zohra Begum, with whom he has five children. All of his children are married and now he lives with his youngest son, Zohurul Haque.

Sahidullah Miah is originally from Shingrabari village of Kazipur Upazila in Sirajganj district. He settled in Lalmonirhat about 60 years ago.

"I never purchased a single piece of land in my long profession life and now I live on a six decimal land which is owned by my third wife Zohra Begum." He added that he never took tobacco in his life, resulting him never to face any disease other than fever. He prays five times everyday.

His youngest son Zohurul Haque said, "I tell my father not to work, but he doesn't listen". He says he wants to work until his last breath. He feels that his father is more energetic than him. "Me and my father we work together and earn about Tk. 400 to 500 per day. My father never demands for anything, he always encourages us to be honest," he said.

An aged villager Abdur Rahman Munsir, aged 98 said, Sahidullah Miah is older by many years than him but the blacksmith is still strong and works but he is unfit for doing any work. "I address the blacksmith as uncle as my late father was one of his friends," he said.

Local UP member Afsar Ali said, since July 2007, the aged blacksmith gets old-age allowance. Beside that Sahidullah Miah never comes to him for any other help.

"Many of my near and dear ones are dead, some of them comes in my dream and they call upon me to accompany them. I may leave this world soon," Sahidullah Miah said. He hopes to work as a blacksmith till his last days.



PHOTO: STAR

Farmer Fazlu Mia bunches up early variety of radish after collecting those from his field at a char of the Gumti River at Balikhara village in Burichong upazila of Comilla.

HUGE CULTIVATION IN COMILLA

Early variety of radish brings fortune

YASMIN REEMA, Comilla

Vast lands at Balikhara on the bank of the Gumti River in Burichong upazila under the district is now covered with greenery as cultivation of early variety radish is gaining popularity in the area.

October – November is the usual time for radish cultivation in the country and the vegetable grows abundantly in many upazilas of Comilla.

However, early variety of radish, planted in July, has gained popularity during the last two years in Burichong, Chandina, Barura and Adarsha Sadar upazilas, said agriculture officials.

"Early variety radish has

been cultivated on 150 hectares of land in Comilla this year. The growers and sellers are happy to earn good profit from the off season item," said Md Tofazzal Hossain, assistant officer of district agriculture office.

Radish becomes ready for plucking within 35 to 45 days.

Farmers Jalil Mia and Kabir Hossain said they cultivated early variety radish as it earns more.

They said they can do better if they get good seeds and easy term loan from the government.

"We sell radish for Tk 10-12 per kg to the wholesaler and they sell it for Tk 16-18 per kg to traders who sell the item at local

market for Tk 22-24 per kg. Finally the consumers buy the vegetable for Tk 30-32 per kg," said Mofizuddin, a farmer.

Wadud Sarkar, who buys radish from the field and sells to the wholesalers, said, "Now early variety of radish is grown in Comilla as well as other districts. These radishes look nice and taste good. Radish from Nimsar Bazar is sold in Dhaka, Chittagong and other districts."

Md Zahidul Haque, a agriculturist of Chaudhagram upazila agriculture office, said, "The agriculture office will provide necessary support if more farmers are interested in cultivation of early variety radish."

JESSORE-BENAPOLE HIGHWAY

Days of 75 old rain trees are numbered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

The district council authorities have recommended felling down 75 old rain trees on both sides of Jessore-Benapole highway as they are 'too weak and may fall down even in a minor storm'.

Following an order from Communications Minister Obaidul Quader on August 16, a team comprising officials of district council, district administration and Roads and Highways Department (RHD) conducted a survey and identified 75 large trees that

pose risk for commuters and pedestrians.

"The district council will take steps to fell the risky trees after getting approval from the ministry concerned," said Ziaul Haider, executive engineer of Jessore RHD.

Ashraf Hossain Monju, surveyor of Jessore district council, said there are about 2500 large rain trees on the both sides of 38 kilometre long Jessore-Benapole highway.

According to hearsay, Kali Prosad Roy Chowdhury, a zamindar of Jessore, planted the trees in 1842.



PHOTO: STAR

At least 75 of these century-old rain trees on Jessore-Benapole highway will be felled soon as they have been identified as "too weak and risky". The photo was taken from Jhikorgachha point of the road.



Kalim Khan

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

KALIM KHAN

There is a special Angel in heaven that is part of us. It is not where we wanted him but where God wanted him to be. He was here, but for just a moment... like a shooting star. And though he is in heaven he isn't very far. He touched the hearts of many like only an Angel can do.

So, today let us all remember him in our prayers.

- All family members