

TRAVELOGUE

THE FINER CHINA

TEXT AND PHOTOS: NAZIBA BASHER



Nanjing Port



The Zheng He Treasure Ship Heritage park.



Statuette of Zheng He, the explorer.

albeit chilly, air filling my lungs, organised architecture, and a background view of mountains and blue waters to die for everything welcomed me humbly.

This gorgeous city is located in the center of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, 347 kilometers from the mouth of the river. It is the capital city of Jiangsu Province, with jurisdiction over 11 districts. It is a very famous historical and cultural city, whose construction began nearly 2,500 years ago. The city was the country's capital under various dynasties for more than 450 years.

Nanjing is a gateway city of the Yangtze River Economic Belt. As one of China's first cities to open up to the outside world, Nanjing's service trade and foreign investment still continue to grow, both ranking first in Jiangsu Province. Nanjing city plays a vital role in China's One Belt, One Road Initiative set forward by President Xi Jinping, mainly because the number of financial institutions and the value of their assets gives Nanjing a leading position in second tier cities around the country. Their urban forest ecosystem includes water sources, mountains, the city, and forests, making

Nanjing not only comfortable to visit, but also almost perfect to live in.

The port of Nanjing is one of China's 25 major coastal hub ports and a first-class national port to international regions and nations. It is devoted to the development of container, bulk, cargo, petroleum oil and liquid chemical business on the port in addition to the extended operation of shipping logistics, port machinery manufacturing and engineering construction.

Nanjing is the ultimate cultural, industrial and innovation hub. Large-scale enterprises such as the Sanpower group, in the information and modern services industry, are thriving there, bringing utmost improvement to sectors such as financial investments, commerce and trade circulation, information services, healthcare, and real estate development. The Suning Commerce Group Ltd is also an industrial giant, which has built a network of brick-and-mortar stores across 600 cities at home and abroad and e-commerce platform in its 25 years of development.

Their history and culture is very evident in the very surroundings. The Zheng He

regions. In August 2003, with approval from the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, the archeological team of Nanjing Museum began excavation of six sites of shipyard ruins, after which more than 2000 relics were unearthed, including two giant rudderstocks. In 2006, the State Council approved that the site be listed a state-level historical relic protection site.

With culture and business intermingling harmoniously, Nanjing also kept up to par their education. The Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunication is among the first academic members of the International Telecommunication Union, and its chemical sciences, material sciences and engineering departments rank among the top 1 percent internationally. Nanjing also has well instituted compulsory primary education system; a high percent of school-age children is enrolled in schools. The secondary schools including high schools achieves significant graduate rate.

Nanjing is also widely known as China's 'greenest city' – and for good reason. It is endowed with rich natural resources, and also possesses abundant water resources, both from the Yangtze River and groundwater. In addition, it has several natural hot springs such as Tangshan Hot Spring in Jiangning and Tangquan Hot Spring in Pukou. Surrounded by the Yangtze River and mountains, Nanjing also enjoys beautiful natural scenery. Natural lakes such as Xuanwu and Mochou Lake are located in the centre of the city and are easily accessible to the public, while hills like Purple Mountain are covered with evergreens and oaks.

With such beauty, serenity, and the potential to be a global leading city, Nanjing leaves no reason for one forget it when speaking of China. It's the perfect hub for industrialists, nature-lovers, and culture-geeks – all at once! ■

Treasure Ship Heritage park is ode to China's famous explorer Zheng He, whose voyages began in 1405. Over the span of 28 years, Zheng He and his fleet of 27,800 crewmen made 7 voyages to the West, to nearly 40 countries and

HERITAGE

GROUND OF REBELLION

APURBA JAHANGIR
PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS

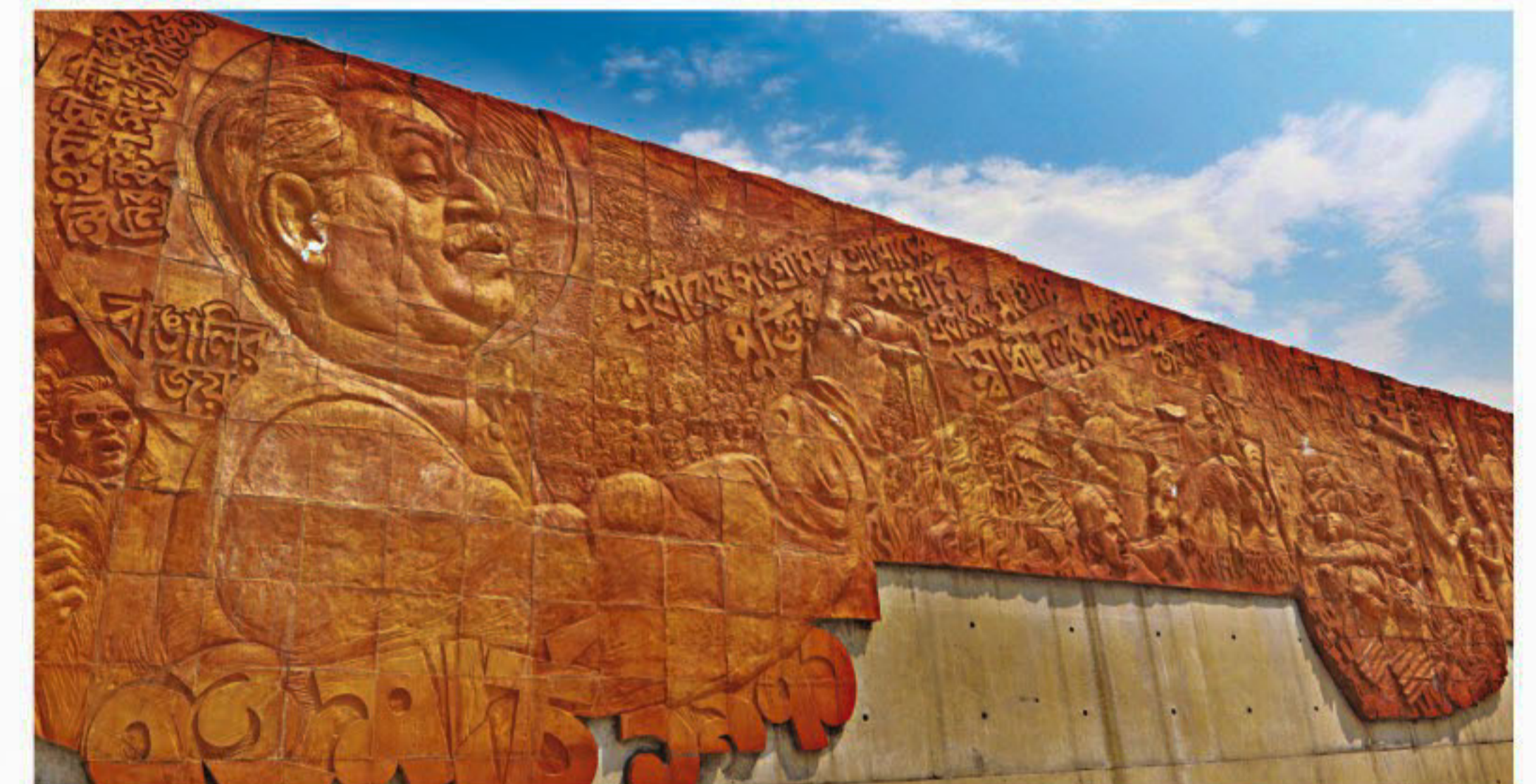
Formerly known as Ramna Race Course Maydan, Suhrawardy Uddan is known for hosting historical events of our country from a much earlier time. From being one of the most prominent legal horse racing course to being the resting place of three prominent countrymen; A.K. Fazlul Huq, Hossain Shaheed Suhrawardy and Khaza Nazimuddin. Mir Jumla the second, prominent Subhadar of Bangladesh also built the prominent Dhaka gate in this land, making it one of the prominent structures of Dhaka city.

The famous speech delivered by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, known as the Shaatei Marcher speech (Speech delivered on March 7) was delivered here. The event brought together patriots from all over, and experienced the voice of rebellion against the then Pakistan government. Bangabandhu delivered the famous speech to the people of then East Pakistan in which he unofficially declared



independence. The speech is considered as the pre act which led to the 1971 liberation war against West Pakistan.

After the National assembly got 'postponed' on March 3, a massive outcry across East Pakistan took place. Thousands protested the delay which they felt was the last nail in the coffin for a united Pakistan.



Cities such as Dhaka, Chittagong, Rangpur, Comilla, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Khulna were submerged in violence which saw the security forces killing dozens of unarmed protesters. As the atmosphere became more tense, Bengalis began hoisting the flag of a future independent Bangladesh. There were open calls from the masses for their leader Sheikh Mujib to declare independence from Pakistan.

The Awami League then called a massive public gathering at Dhaka's historic Race Course Maydan on March 7 to respond to the boiling tension across the province.

'Ebarer Sangram Amader Muktir Sangram, Ebarer Sangram Swadhinatar Sangram' (This time the struggle is for our freedom), is what the creators of the nation's independence eminently pronounced. A huge rally took place before the speech where people from all parts of Bangladesh joined and marched towards the Race Course ground. Bangabandhu spoke of increasing tensions between East Pakistan and the powerful political and military establishment of West Pakistan. The people were inspired to prepare for a potential war of independence unless the power restores to the election winners.

During the speech, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman also announced the civil non-compliance movement in the province, calling for "every house to turn into a fortress". Following his declaration, people across the country- from the capital Dhaka to remote villages- continued to raise slogans like: 'Sab Kothar Shesh Kotha, Bangladesher Swadhinata' and 'Bir Bangalee Austro Dhoro, Bangladesh Shadhin Korô'.

Famous historian Jacob F Field in his book "We Shall Fight on the Beaches: The Speeches That Inspired History" included Bangabandhu's speech as one of the best speeches ever given.

This historical place still dominates a lot of space inside the Dhaka University area. People are either taking a stroll or mingling with friends and family. Many of the Bengali festivals, programmes and events take place at the Suhrawardy Uddyan, including Bengali New Years, Chaitra Shankranti, etc. In fact, for the last two years, a part of the Ekushey Grantha Mela is being set up at the Suhrawardy grounds as well, adding another significant gathering. Suhrawardy Uddyan will always be the place where the revolution took place. Without that occurrence, the history might have been written differently. ■

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