



The majestic mansion of the Pailgaon Chowdhurys, in Jagannathpur upazila of Sunamganj, has been lying in ruins for decades without a custodian.

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Majestic Pailgaon zamindar house to be protected by govt

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

The government is taking steps to protect the centuries-old mansion of the Pailgaon Chowdhurys -- once a notable zamindar family in the region, in present day Jagannathpur upazila of Sunamganj.

On January 21, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs declared the aesthetic building, which has been in ruins for decades, a 'Protected Archaeological Site' under the 'Antiquities (Amendment) Ordinance, 1976'.

The ministry made the move acting on a proposal of the Department of Archaeology for protecting the decaying heritage site, situated in the village of Pailgaon. A gazette notification in this regard will be published soon.

Dr Md Ataur Rahman, regional director of the archaeology department, said, after successfully bringing the Laurer Garh of Sunamganj under protection of the department, the protection of the Pailgaon zamindar house will be another important achievement towards preserving archaeological heritage sites in the greater Sylhet region.

The Pailgaon zamindar mansion is located on the northern side of the Kalni river, on nearly 5.5 acres of land. Though there were several other structures including a temple

in the compound, the remains of the main building is still standing there.

According to "Shrihatter Itibritto (Uttarangsho)", authored in 1917 by veteran historian Achyut Charan Choudhury, and various other historians, the Chowdhury family has a long history in the region with the earliest known member of the family being Kanailal Dhar.

About 10 to 12 generations later, Umananda Dhar alias Binod Roy became the family's first member who was awarded the title 'Chowdhury' by then Mughal ruler Muhammad Shah.

In his line of succession, several generations later, four brothers -- Durlav Ram, Ramjiban, Hulash Ram and Jogjiban -- expanded the Chowdhury zamindari by leasing four estates in 1786 under the 'Dash Shala Bandobasto'.

Fame and fortune of the zamindari peaked under Jogjiban Chowdhury's grandson Brajanath Chowdhury, who was a lawyer and an honorary magistrate. He had two sons -- Rosomoy and Sukhamoy.

Sukhamoy Chowdhury was a first class magistrate for 40 years since 1886. Many awards and titles -- including the 'Queen Victoria Jubilee Award', in 1897, and the 'Roy Bahadur' title, in 1915 -- were conferred on him during his lifetime.

From 1916 till 1926, he was chairman of Sylhet municipality. In

1919, he established Brajanath High School in Pailgaon and in 1930, he established Rosomoy Memorial High School in Sylhet town.

Rosomoy's son Brajendra Narayan Chowdhury was the last zamindar of the family until 1950, when the 'State Acquisition and Tenancy Act, 1950 (East Bengal Act)' dissolved zamindari system.

During the anti-British movement in the subcontinent, Brajendra acted as a leader of the movement to end the British rule. He was president of the Indian Congress Party in Sylhet and between 1936 and 1940, he served as an elected member of the state and central legislative councils.

After the 'partition' in 1947, unlike other zamindars, Brajendra decided to stay in the then East Pakistan. After falling gravely ill, he left for Kolkata in 1962 to be with his family. He died in Kolkata in 1972.

On January 25 last year, Brajendra's grandchildren -- Dr Aparna Basu, Bhaswati Chakraborty, Mitali Chowdhury and Pratap Narayan Chowdhury -- who live in different cities in India, came to Pailgaon Brajanath High School to celebrate founding centenary of the school.

Following their visits to the school and their ancestral home, they urged the government to protect and restore the heritage building that has a history of around three centuries.

Is repatriation now up in the air?

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There is a chance, however, that the international pressure on Myanmar military government would mount. China, a close ally of Myanmar, also may come under more pressure as it has been supportive of Myanmar in the global arena, he said.

The Western countries, especially the US and European Union, already have sanctions on the army chief and some others for their involvement in the crackdown on the Rohingyas. They control large businesses in Myanmar, and if these businesses are sanctioned, the military government will be really hurt, Humayun told this correspondent yesterday.

Given that the Biden administration's priorities are democracy and human rights, the US is likely to put stronger pressure, he said.

Bangladesh should fully engage with Myanmar for the repatriation.

There is also a possibility of China and Myanmar working together to start the repatriation to ease pressure from the international community, he said.

Dhaka University International Relations Professor Imtiaz Ahmed said the military always had tremendous influence on Myanmar's political system. Even Suu Kyi, who was in office, had little power of her own in the true sense.

He said the western governments, especially the US, European Union,

as well as Japan and India had been saying that Suu Kyi might go deep into the Chinese side if they put pressure on her government, which was moving towards democracy after decades of military ruling.

"Now, with the military taking control, these governments can no more say that. There is a chance that these governments would mount pressure on Myanmar for Rohingya repatriation," said Prof Imtiaz, also director at the Centre for Genocide Studies at DU.

However, if the western governments do not do that and continue to keep relations with the Myanmar military, one has to understand that things will not move, he said.

The foreign relations analyst said the repatriation agreement was signed with the Myanmar government and Myanmar must comply. One needs to remember that Rohingyas repatriation in the 1980s and 90s happened during the military regimes in Myanmar. So, the issue cannot and should not be affected.

Jahangimagar University International Relations Professor Shahab Enam Khan said from Myanmar's perspective, the international actors have so far been playing "ping-pong" since the Rohingya crisis began in 2017. Myanmar has been portrayed negatively. Now, with the military in power, this game is going to stop. He thinks this change in power

does not affect the repatriation process much because the Myanmar military was playing its role from behind the scene even during Suu Kyi's previous regime.

"Bangladesh needs to play a balanced diplomacy, with a focus on how to repatriate the Rohingyas," Shahab said.

Charles Santiago, a Malaysian MP and chairperson of the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Right, thinks differently.

He says Myanmar army chief led the "Rohingya genocide" in 2017, while there were conflicts in Chin and Kachin states where minorities were facing persecution.

"The military wants to finish their unfinished job," he said. He fears there might be more influx of the ethnic people to South and Southeast Asian countries, while human trafficking could go up under the military regime.

The international community needs to work sincerely to fix the issues.

All the experts said democracy in Myanmar was in deep crisis and that it would not affect the democracies in the region.

Joyeeta Bhattacharjee, senior fellow at the Delhi-based think tank -- Observer Research Foundation -- said the countries around the Bay of Bengal have democratic values.

"There are certainly difficulties in dealing with a military regime," she said.

Coup baffles analysts

FROM PAGE 1

But behind the scenes, the military has kept a relatively tight grip on Myanmar, thanks to a constitution which guarantees it a quarter of all seats in parliament and control of the country's most powerful ministries.

Which raises the question why did it seize power now - and more to the point, what happens next?

The military yesterday took power alleging widespread fraud in the election. It claimed to have uncovered more than 10 million instances of voter fraud. It had demanded that the United Elections Commission (UEC) of Myanmar which oversees elections, or the government, or outgoing parliamentarians prove at a special session before the new parliament convenes on February 1, that the elections were free and fair. The demand had been rejected.

Tensions grew after General Min Aung Hlaing -- the head of the military and arguably Myanmar's most powerful individual -- gave a speech warning that the country's constitution could be "revoked" if it is not respected.

Despite calls to respect democracy from West and UN, the military staged the coup.

The alliance between Suu Kyi and the Myanmar military was not a match made in heaven.

But the strong Rohingya policy defense by Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and de facto head of civilian government, brought her closer to military.

Their relationship were seen as always uneasy but workable with the ruling NDH anchoring on people's

popularity and the military on stability given that the country is still rife with ethnic insurgencies more than 60 years after its independence.

But in 2020, with raging Covid-19 pandemic, the uneasy relationship cracked as NLD MPs advocated for and tried to pass legislations to amend the 2008 Constitution, a change designed to reduce the Tatmadaw's (Myanmar military) role in Myanmar politics.

It was the military that drafted the 2008 Constitution, and put it to a questionable referendum in April that year. The NLD had boycotted the referendum, as well as the 2010 elections that were held under the Constitution.

The Constitution was the military's "roadmap to democracy", which it had been forced to adopt under increasing pressure from the West, and its own realisation that opening up Myanmar to the outside world was now no longer an option but a dire economic necessity. But the military made sure to safeguard in the Constitution its own role and supremacy in national affairs.

The results of the 2020 election were being seen by the NLD as a mandate for its plan of constitutional reform, through which it aimed to do away with the military's role in politics and governance. But this was never going to be easy, given the tight constitutional restrictions for amendments.

Political analysts say, even with the huge mandate NLD received in 2020 polls, changing the constitution would have been near impossible as the military controls 25 percent of seats. Changing the charter requires the support of 75 percent of the parliament.

Aye Min Thant, a former journalist and tech educator, suggested there may be another reason for yesterday's action: embarrassment on the part of the military.

"They weren't expecting to lose," she told the BBC from Yangon referring to dismal performance of military backed Union Solidarity and Development Party in the election.

The pandemic and international concerns over the Rohingya being disenfranchised in the November vote may have emboldened the military to act now, Aye Min Thant suggested.

All the same, it still took her by surprise.

Indeed, experts appear unsure of exactly why the military acted now, as there seems little to gain.

"It is worth remembering that the current system is tremendously beneficial for the army: it has complete command autonomy, sizeable international investment in its commercial interests and political cover from civilians for war crimes," Gerard McCarthy, a postdoctoral fellow at the National University of Singapore's Asia Research Institute, told the BBC.


"Seizing power for a year as it has announced will isolate non-Chinese international partners, harm the military's commercial interests and provoke escalating resistance from millions of people who placed Suu Kyi and the NLD in power for in another term of government."

Perhaps, he said, they hope to improve the USDP's standings in future elections, but the risks of such a move "are significant".



Truckers block the Rangpur-Kurigram road, keeping vehicles haphazardly, in Babu Kha area in Rangpur City for nearly three hours yesterday, demanding an end to alleged extortion and harassment by police.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



Pabna University of Science & Technology

Office of the Project Director, PUST, PABNA.


Memo No: PUST/PD/e-GP/OTM/41 Date : 02/02/2021

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Serial No	Tender ID	APP ID	Package No & Invitation Ref. Number	Name of Works	Tender Publication Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time	Method
01	540702	158695	PUST/PD/e-GP/OTM/41	Supply Installation and Commissioning of e-Library and ancillary goods & goods related works for the Pabna University of Science & Technology, Development Project , FY 2020-2021.	02 February, 2021 and 10.00	08 March, 2021 and 11.00	OTM

This is an online Tender where only e-Tender will be accepted. To Submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http:// www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks branches. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).



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Sl No.	Tender/ Proposal ID	Invitation Reference No.	Tender description	Publishing date and time	Tender closing date and time
1	540732	DMPI/Gov/e-GP/2020-21/147	Supply of Computer Accessories	02-Feb-2021 10:00:00	23-Feb-2021 12:00:00
2	541061	DMPI/Gov/e-GP/2020-21/148	Supply of Raw Materials and Spares	02-Feb-2021 10:00:00	23-Feb-2021 12:00:00
3	541066	DMPI/Gov/e-GP/2020-21/149	Supply of Equipments and other Material for IOT Lab	02-Feb-2021 10:00:00	23-Feb-2021 12:00:00
4	541067	DMPI/Gov/e-GP/2020-21/150	Supply of Office Equipments	02-Feb-2021 10:00:00	23-Feb-2021 12:00:00
5	541068	DMPI/Gov/e-GP/2020-21/151	Supply of Educational and Learning Aids	02-Feb-2021 10:00:00	23-Feb-2021 12:00:00
6	541069	DMPI/Gov/e-GP/2020-21/152	Supply of Furniture	02-Feb-2021 10:00:00	23-Feb-2021 12:00:00
7	541071	DMPI/Gov/e-GP/2020-21/153	Supply of Equipments and other Materials for Production Lab	02-Feb-2021 10:00:00	23-Feb-2021 12:00:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

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