



Tetulia Jame Mosque



Jhurijhara mound



Prabajpur Shahi Mosque

The treasures of Buran Island



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ELIZA BINTE ELAHI

Buran Island! Have you heard of this land? Sounds unfamiliar?

The ancient name of Satkhira region is Buran Dwip.

This is the second time I have visited Satkhira, and after knowing about its rich history, it seemed different.

Before sharing my recent visit there, I am tempted to talk a little about the rich past of the Satkhira district.

According to the Ramayana Mahabharata, human settlement in this region started three and a half thousand years ago. Alexander the Great invaded India in 327 BC. During his invasion, an independent state called Gangaridi was mentioned in the mouth of the Ganges. The present Satkhira district was under this state. After Alexander, in the Maurya and Gupta periods, the island of Buran was known as Kharimandal.

King Chandravarman occupied this region in the 4th century, shortly before the advent of the Gupta Empire. The Pala and Burmese kings ruled this region from the eighth to the eleventh century before the Sen Kings. The Muslim rule began here with the conquest of Bengal by Ikhtiyar Uddin Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khilji. Then came the rule of the Mughals and Bara Bhuiyans.

During British rule, in 1852, this area got the status of subdivision. Then in 1984 Satkhira was upgraded into a district.

All these rulers, with their distinct tastes and culture, have enriched the district. There are many old installations in the seven upazilas



Shyamsundar Temple

Fortunately, I had the opportunity to visit all seven. Hammamkhanas of Satkhira are located in Shyamnagar upazilla -- one at Jahazghata and the other at Ishwaripur. Shyamnagar is 75 km away from Satkhira district headquarters.

DAMRAIL NAVARATNA TEMPLE

The ruin of the temple is situated in Kaliganj Upazila's Mostafapur, a village on the Bangladesh-India border. To reach this site, you have to take a bus or hire a car to Kaliganj, 35 kilometres away from Satkhira town. However, you have to walk the last 2 kilometres as there is no road near the temple. Seen from a distance, amidst prawn ghers and salt beds, it looks like an isolated installation in the middle of nowhere. According to historians, the temple was built in 1582 AD. The ruin of the temple still stands, but

threatening this site.

KOTHA BARI THAN

A small part of a broken wall, which is believed to be a part of a fort built by the Dewan of Mughal emperor Jahangir, at Kothabari in Kalaroa upazilla exists today.

SHYAMSUNDAR TEMPLE

Shyamsundar temple is situated at Sonabaria village in Kalaroa upazilla. The three-storied temple is a marvel of sixteenth-century architecture. The date of its construction is known from the brick inscription on the temple. However, historians believe that before the construction of the temple, there was a Buddhist monastery here. Despite the site being under the supervision of the Department of Archeology, almost all of the terracotta work on the temple is lost.

1666 AD) and it was renovated in the 18th century.

TETULIA JAME MOSQUE

Close to the Bhanga Mosque stands the Khan Bahadur Salamatullah mosque -- a Bangladesh heritage site -- on one side of the Khulna-Paigachha Road. The 'Tetulia Jame Mosque' has survived in a much better condition as a result of renovations by the Bangladesh Department of Archeology. According to the inscriptions found on the mosque, it was built in 1260 BS by Zamindar Salamtullah Khan in imitation of the Sindure Patti mosque in Calcutta. The number of minarets of this six-domed beautiful mosque is 20.

PRABAJPUR SHAHI MOSQUE

This historical mosque was believed to be built in 1693 AD during the region



A hammamkhana in Shyamnagar

All these rulers, with their distinct tastes and culture, have enriched the district. There are many old installations in the seven upazilas of Satkhira. However, very few have survived. According to the list of the Department of Archeology, there are 14 archaeological sites in Satkhira.

of Satkhira. However, very few have survived.

According to the list of the Department of Archeology, there are 14 archaeological sites in Satkhira. Here are a few historical sites that might tempt you to visit the district.

JHURIJHARA MOUND

The Jhurijhara mound of Satkhira district is a Buddhist temple which is about one and a half thousand years old. There are many legends about the mound in Agailjhara village of Tala upazilla. In 2016, after 3 months of excavation, the archaeological department uncovered the remains of a Buddhist temple made of bricks and unearthed fragments of pottery, beads, glass beads, ornate bricks, terracotta toys of the mediaeval period as well as artefacts from British and Pakistani period.

HAMMAMKHANAS

Hammamkhanas are restrooms, that elites of the Mughal era used for bathing and recreational activities. The idea of the hammam was adopted by Muslims from the Romans. Different parts of a hammam were used for different purposes -- bathing, drinking beverages, resting, defecating, praying etc. Satkhira has two of the 7 existing Mughal Hammams in Bangladesh.



Damrail Navaratna Temple



Tetulia Shahi Mosque (Vanga Mosque)

without proper restoration work and maintenance, only time will tell how long it will survive.

TWIN SHIVA TEMPLES

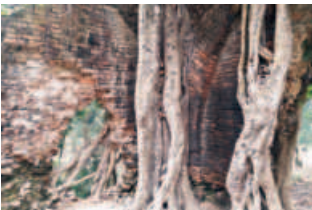
The twin Shiva temples built by Fakir Chand Ghosh are about 6 km from Satkhira district town. The walls of temples are decorated with flowers, leaves, gods and goddesses. Fakir Chand Ghosh was the jatidar, a wealthy person subordinate to a zamindar, of Prannath Roy, the zamindar of Satkhira. Settlements and ongoing construction works are

TETULIA SHAHI MOSQUE (VANGA MOSQUE)

This old dilapidated mosque was said to have been excavated in Tetulia village in Tala upazilla some decades ago. This mosque has been in use since its discovery but is in desperate need of refurbishment and renovation for preservation. The villagers have coined the Bengali expression "Tetulia Bhanga Moshjid" (Tetulia broken mosque) to identify this mosque. Some believe that this mosque dates back to the reign of Mughal Emperor Shahjahan (1592-

of emperor Aurangzeb in the village of Probajpur in Kaligonj upazilla. Nabab Nurullah Khan is said to be the founder of this mosque. However, some researchers believe that the mosque might be even older.

With proper planning, Satkhira can be a great holiday destination. Apart from these historical sites, the district has many natural attractions for tourists. Kalagachia Ecotourism Park near the Sundarbans, Mandarbari Beach, Mozaffer Garden and Resort are a few of the destinations a tourist can visit while in Satkhira.



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PHOTOS:
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