

**DISTRICT DIGITAL
CULTURAL REPOSITORY**

An Archive of Cultural Heritage of Bengal

PURBA MEDINIPUR

Directorate of Culture,
Department of Information and
Cultural Affairs,
Government of West Bengal

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| People and Eminent Personalities | 3 |
| Events and Festivals | 7 |
| Cultural Traditions and Art Forms | 12 |
| Historical, Anthropological and Heritage Sites | 14 |

Purba Medinipur

Of Colours of Patachitra and Puppetry

A) EMINENT PERSONALITIES

Dr. Pulin Behari Sarkar, Scientist

Dr. Pulin Behari Sarkar, a very well-known scientist of India, was born on 22nd November, 1894 at Jhamapukur, Calcutta. His mother Sarojini Sarkar came to her father's house at Parbatipur, Tamluk of Purba Midnapur district with her son immediately after his birth. Sarojini wanted her son to be as an educationist. Accordingly, Sarojini got her admitted in famous Hamilton High School of Tamluk which was located near their residence. He passed his entrance examination with distinction, having secured District Scholarship, in 1909.

From the childhood he was inspired by Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy's life and contribution towards betterment of scientific research. Pulin Behari also got himself admitted in the Presidency Collage of Calcutta to study Chemistry. He completed his ISC in 1911 and BSc in 1913 from the Presidency Collage. Later he completed his M.Sc in Chemistry in 1915 from the University of Calcutta and joined post-graduate department of Chemistry as an Assistant Lecturer in 1916.

At that time University of Calcutta founded Science College for higher research in science. Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy Joined as Palit professor in the department of Chemistry and Dr. Pulin Behari Sarkar joined as lecturer there. Again in 1925 he got the chance for analytical research in Chemistry in the laboratory of world famous professor Urbain of Paris by getting '*Ghosh Travelling Fellowship*' for research work at the University of Sorbonne in Paris. Prof. Urbain was extremely delighted about his student's work and marked his work as a path opener in the world of Analytical Chemistry. Dr. Pulin Behari Sarkar had won the degree of 'State Doctorate of France' (Dr. es. Sc.) – a great honour in the world of knowledge and Science.

Prof. Pulin Behari Sarkar came back to his country in 1928 and for the first time he contributed in 'Analytical In-organic Chemistry' in India. He successfully spread over this method among his research students. The University of Calcutta honoured him with 'Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy Gold Medal' for his brilliant contribution in Analytical research in Chemistry. In 1931 for first time in India Dr. Sarkar extracted 'Radium' from basic mineral. He discovered '*Kalambites*' in India from Gaya in Bihar. His love for analytical Chemistry was unparallel and he dedicated his entire life for betterment of scientific analysis. Prof Sarkar emphasised that while analytical chemistry is

science, chemical analysis is the technique. Accordingly, he held that qualitative analysis which gave us the scientific basis of the Chemistry of ions and molecules in solution as well as of substances in the solid state. In course of this analysis of minerals he developed techniques for the detection of several elements in them. He also analysed food samples for quantitative determination of metallic constituents of various food substances.

Dr Sarkar was the president in the branch of Chemistry of Indian Science Congress in 1938. In 1946 he became '*Ghosh Professor*' of pure Chemistry and retired from his profession as departmental head of Chemistry in 1960. But he continued his research work with his students. Dr. Pulin Behari Sarkar, a student of Presidency College and a great son of Purba Medinipur died on 14th July 1971.

ii) Prof. Dr. Amalesh Tripathi, Historian

Dr. Amalesh Tripathi of this district of Purba Medinipur become world famous as a noted Economic and Socio-cultural Historian. He was born on 18th February, 1921 at village Debhog under the then Tamluk Sub-division (now Haldia) of Midnapore District in a Zamindar family. His father was Shyamacharan Tripathi and mother was Himangini Tripathi. Amalesh Tripathi had completed his early education upto class VI staying in his village residence. Then he was admitted (1932-33) in class VII in Tamluk Hamilton High School. He passed the Entrance Examination March 1936 as a student of Hamilton High School and stood 1st in this Examination. After that he took his I.A. and B.A.(Hons.) degree from the Presidency College. As a student of Presidency College he got the Bankim Award for scoring highest marks in Bengali in the I.A examination. Then he took his M.A degree in History from the University of Calcutta securing Frist position in 1942. By getting the Research Scholarship he got the chance to teach the students in M.A classes.

Amalesh Tripathi went to Colombia for his M.A degree in 1951 with Fulbright scholarship. From Colombia he went to England in 1952 for his Ph.D on '*Trade and Finance in Bengal Presidency*' under Professor C.H.Philip. After returning to India he had joined in the Presidency College on 15th September, 1954 and ultimately became the Head of the Department of History. He also became Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Senate Member of this University. He was a member of University Grants Commission (1977-1980).

Prof. Tripathi had totally changed the syllabus and mode of teaching of History in the Department by collaborating the subject History with Economics, Literature, Social Affairs and Philosophy in a very meaningful way. He prepared the syllabus of degree course at the time of introduction. He was the instrumental to transfer the History Department from College Street Campus to Hazra Road Campus. For his brilliant academic career he was invited by

different intuitions and Universities of the world but he refused those offers to teach his students of his own country. By this great sacrifice of Prof. Tripathi, he was able to present many great scholars like Prof. Bhaskar Chattopadhyay, Ex Centenary Prof. of Calcutta University, Prof. Suranjan Das, Vice Chancellor of Calcutta (Ex) and Jadavpur University, Historians Prof. Brojodulal Chottopadhyay, Prof. Sumit Sarkar, Prof. Sabyasachi Bhattacharyya, Prof. Yasodhara Bagchi, Prof. Nabanita Deb Sen, Prof. Tapati Guhuthakurata and many more.

Apart from his brilliant performance in teaching his students, Prof. Tripathi was an excellent research scholar and a prolific writer. He has written many articles in academic journal newspapers and books. Five examples are below :

1. *Trade and Finance in Bengal Presidency.*
2. *Vidyasagar the Traditional Moderniser (1974).*
3. *'Itihas o Oitihask' (1986).*
4. *Swadhinata Sangrami Bharatiyo Jatiyo Congress (1990).*
5. *'Itihas Renaissance Ebong Banglar sanskriti' (1994).*

He became the Honorary Professor of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata. He founded '*Bangiya Itihas Parishad*' jointly with Prof. R.C. Majumder and Prof. N.K.Sinha, and received Rabindra Award in 1990 for his book '*Swadhinata Sangrame Bharater Jatiya Congress, 1895-1947*' and '*Acharya Jadunath Sarkar Puraskar*' for his outstanding research in History.

iii) Prof. Dr. Prabodh Kumar Bhowmik, Scientist and Social Reformer:

The famous Anthropologist and social reformer Professor Dr. Pradobh Kumar Bhowmick is well known for his developmental works for the causes of the tribal people in India. He was born in September, 1926 at the village of Amdabad under P.S. Nandakumar of Contai Sub Division in Midnapore district (now Purba Medinipur distict). He dedicated his whole life for the cause of the downtrodden people of India.

His research works are mainly developed on the affairs of the tribal people like Lodha, Sobar, Kakmara, Khadia, Ho, Santal, Chenchus, Oraoa and other marginalised communities. Dr. Bhowmik was admitted to Kalagachhia National School under P.S. Khejuri for his primary education. When he was a student of class IX, during Quit India Movement which was started in 1942, Prabodh Chandra Bhowmik joined picketing at Contai. He was arrested and got imprisonment. After he was released from the British jail, he took his admission in class IX again in the same school and passed the Probeshika Examination in 1945. He passed the ISC Examination from Bangabasi College, Calcutta and then passed B.Sc (Hons.) in Anthropology (1949) from the same college. Thereafter, he passed M.Sc (Anthropology) from Ballygunj Science College of Calcutta University in 1951. He started his lecturership in 1952 and he got Doctorate in Anthropology from the University of Calcutta in 1962. The name

of one of his famous works in this regard was *'The Lodhas of West Bengal'*. He joined as lecturer in the Dept. of Anthropology in the University of Calcutta and successively became the Dean of the Faculty of Sciences and member of Syndicate of this University for some years. He wrote many books and articles focusing on the life and lifestyle of various Indian tribes.

For betterment of Lodha tribe he founded his dream organisation '*BIDISHA*' at Daharpur, P.O. Phulgedia, P.S. Narayangarh in undivided Midnapore (now in West Medinipur) in 1955. It nourished the path of development in tribal life.

iv) Madhusudhan Jana, Cultural & Social Reformer:

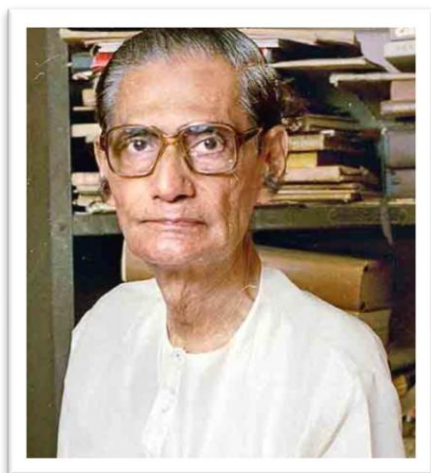
Madhusadhan Jana, the Editor of the weekly newspaper '*NIHAR*' published from Contai of Midnapore district (now in Purba Medinipur district) had played a great role in freedom struggle in India. He created '*Nihar Press*' in Purba Medinipur. Hundreds of books like '*Sarada Mangal*', '*Ekadasir Vrata-katha*', '*Dhruba Charitra*', '*Lakshmi Puran*', '*Raslila*', '*Madan Manjari*', '*Ram Navami Brata*' were published from his press.

Madhusudhan Jana was born at Birulia of Contai sub-division on 26th September, 1857. He completed his education from Lakshmi Primary School and Contai High School. Madhusadhan Jana shifted from his village Birulia to Contai town after getting a job of teaching in 1870 in Contai Middle English School.

Madhusadhan Jana founded Brahma Society and its Temple at Contai in 1870 with the support extended by the local people. The school was opened by Acharya Shibnath Sastri, the noted social reformer and writer. Madhusadhan Jana was its Honorary Secretary. For spreading education in Contai, he founded '*Kanthi Banga Vidyalaya*' in 1883 and subsequently renamed '*Contai Model School*' and became its founder head master till 1897. In 1907, he founded '*Kanthi (Contai) Chandramoni Balika Vidyalaya*' for women at Contai.

From the Nihar press the first magazine of '*KANTHI*' was published in 1896 before '*NIHAR*' weekly. Madhusudhan named this weekly '*NIHAR*' after his youngest step daughter Niharkana who became School Inspector of Midnapore. Madhusudhan and his wife Priyambada adopted two orphan girls Bibhubala and Niharkana after the death of their father, who was a family friend, '*Nihar*' weekly played a great role in social developments as well as freedom struggle of India.

Madhusudhan Jana died on 21st October, 1938.



Prof. Amales Tripathi



Dr Pulin Behari Sarkar

B) EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

1) Moynagarh Rash Mela:

This is an annual festival of Garh (fort) Moyna, killa Moynachoura. The name of the fair is associated with the legendary king Lausen (c.10th century A.C) of the story of Dharmamangala Kavya. Every year this Moynagarh Ras Mela starts with the Ras Utsav and 40 to 50 thousand people both from the Muslim and Hindu religion participate in this famous fair of Purba Medinipur.

2) Tamluk Baruni Mela :

Baruni mela of Tamluk is also known as *Poush Samkrantir Mela* as it commences in Tamluk on the last day of Bengali month of Poush every year. This fair is a very old one. People from locality and other parts of the district come to attend this fair not only for purchasing various necessary goods but also to take their *Punyasnan* (Holly Bath) in the river 'Rupnarayan' of ancient Tamralipta. Basically *Poush Barunir Mela* or '*Makar Sankranti*' fair is a festival of harvesting. Therefore, people offer their *Naibedyas* with all vegetables and fruits to the goddess Lakshmi.



Baruni Mela

3) Chariot Festival of Mahishadal:

Chariot festival or Rathajatra festival of Mahishadal in Purba Medinipur District is very famous after Rathajatra Festivals of Jagannath Temple of Puri in Orissa. After the death of Anandalal Upadhyay, the last king of this Upadhyay family, his queen Rani Janaki took the administration of Mahishadal Raj Estate in 1770. In 1976 for the satisfaction of her people Rani Janaki inaugurated in Mahishadal Rathajatra festival and a great fair by preparing a wooden chariot of 40 feet height. In 1852, king Lachhman Prasad Garga of Mahishadal had prepared a new chariot. In 1912, at the time of king Satiprasad Garga Bahadur, two wooden horses were added in front of the chariot. Every year, this chariot festival commences in Bengali month of “*Ashadha*“. On the day of Rathajatra the chariot carries the idol of the family deity of Mahishadal Raj Madan Gopal Jiew, Lord Jagannath and Salagram. Lakhs of people attend the fair. Raja Debaprasad Garga Bahadur of Mahishadal Raj Estate has said that about 3 lakh people attended the fair in the year 1954.

4) Bhim Fair:

Bhim, the great hero of Mahabharata is symbol of courage and might. In many places of Purba Medinipur district, fairs are organized for worshipping of ‘Bhim’. Fairs are being held every year in ‘Bhim Ekadasi’ at Khodambari under Nandigram 2 block, Kulberia and Taragedia (Byabarta) under Tamluk block of Purba Medinipur. This Bhim Fair starts in the Bengali month of “Magha” every year. The main attraction of this fair is a 40 feet high idol of Bhim.



Bhim Fair

5) The fair of Lord Shiva:

The fair of Lord Siva (Shiva Mela) at Reyapada under P.S. Nandigram is the symbol of religious togetherness. On the occasion of Shiva Chaturdasi in the Bengali month of “Falgun”, this fair is held. It is famous for various artistic objects made of bamboo, clay and cane. This fair is the symbol of folk culture. It is also known as `Shiver Mela` of Reyapada Shiva Temple.

6) Basuli Mela – Fair of the Goddess Basuli :

The name of the fair is derived from the name of goddess Basuli. Every year on the last date of Bengali month “Poush” this fair starts in Dinabandhupur of Purba Medinipur district. Local people from the Hindu & Muslim religion participate in this fair.

7. Fair relating to Raghunathbari Rabanbadh :

A fair is being held at Raghunathbari under Panskura P.S. on the Navami Day of the Durga Puja festival, highlighting Ravan badh.

8. Bishalakshmi Debi:

The Mahisya community migrated to the Purba Medinipur district from the Sundarbans area of South 24 Parganas. They worship the Goddess Bishalakshmi Debi made of woods in Purba Medinipur district. The wood Goddess has no body but an oval face. The Goddess resembles Dakshin Rai. This Goddess has to be worshiped before cutting a tree or cleaning forest.

9. Charak Mela and Gajan:

The week-long festival of Gajan is celebrated during the last month of Chaitra of Bengali Calendar (mid-March to mid-April) and Charak Puja commemorates the final revelries at the last day of the month. In the equivalent Gregorian Calendar, the festival usually falls in the middle of the month of April. The manifestation of Lord Shiva as a hermit Sanyasi (maintaining a life of renunciation from all earthly attractions) is the centre point of the Gajan and as a part of the celebrations, people live the ascetic life for 15 days as bhakta. Another important character of this puja is the gender-neutrality. Both male and female devotees can equally participate in the occasion. Fairs are organised during this period at many places in the district.

10. Ganjam Mela:

Ganjam Mela is organised in Naipur during the occasion of Akshay Tritiya in the Bengali calendar month of Baisakh (mid-April to mid-May). In Nachinda (Contai P.S.), the mela continues for 21 days.

11. Haldia Utsav:

The Haldia Trade Fair is organised keeping in view of the infrastructural development of the port town of Haldia located at the mouth of river Haldi meeting with river Hugli (Hooghly). The Haldia Trade Fair 2010 has been a commendable event in respect of the district Purba Medinipur.

12. Karam Puja:

Karam Puja is celebrated by the Bhuiyas in Purba Medinipur district during the Bengali calendar month of Bhadra (mid-August to mid-September). This puja is celebrated on the 11th day of the month. The headman of the community leads the puja ceremony. As a part of the puja, a branch of Kadamba tree is brought and planted on the courtyard of the headman. Four posts are planted on four

corners and all posts are decorated with water lilies. Throughout the night dancing and singing continues by both men and women of the community in the courtyard of the headman. The women dance forward and backward according to the rhythms and beat of the madal (a kind of drum). The dance is known as patta dance.

13. Pilgrimage to Damodar:

The Santal community of the district observe certain rituals to observe the death of their member. When a person from the community dies, the remains are taken to the river Damodar and immeresed into the river together with all articles used by the deceased and which were most dear to him.

14. Wooden Doll Mela:

Natungram is celebrating this village festival from Jan 15-17, 2016. A visitor at this festival can experience the simple lifestyle of the wooden doll makers and get acquainted with their craft and their making process. A chance to spend a few days of stay at an artist's house enjoying the splendour of the rural life in their picturesque village beside river Ganga is an added bonus. The festival is being organised by artists' society Swami Janaki Das Natungram Kasthakhodai Hastashilpi Samity.

C) CULTURAL TRADITIONS

i) Music & Dance: -

a) Patua Song (Poter Gan)- Enlisted folk form of Lok Prasar Prakalpa by Dept. of I&CA, Govt. of West Bengal : -

Pata shilpa - Pater Gan or Patua Song is the a powerful folk medium of mass communication in West Bengal. There are many villages of Purba Medinipur district which are hugely dominated by Patua population. The patuas of these areas sing song prepared by them from the stories of its related patachitras and while they present these to its audience they narrate the story.

Previously they prepared their songs of Patachitras from the stories of the epics the Ramayana & Mahabharata and from the Puranas of the Mediaval Literature, like Manasa Mangal, Dharma Mangal, Chandi Mangal. Presently in addition to these, they also include various social issues relating to current subjects based on contemporary happenings and incidents like adverse effects of dowry, need of education, need to protect trees and plants, effects of drug and alcohol, adverse effect of early marriages of the girls, eradication of illiteracy and on the different schemes along with flagship programmes of the state government like Kanyashree, Swasthasathi etc. Nankarchak-Habichak-Muradpur villages of Purba Medinipur have many eminent patuas.

This Folk Form of Purba Medinipur is very colourful indeed and it has tremendous capacity to easily draw attention of the audience and at the same time inform and educate them.

b) Kali Dance: -

This Folk dance are mainly prevalent in some places of Tamaluk and Haldia sub-division and mainly in Mahishadal area. At the time of Gajan festival of Chaitra Sankranti (last day of Chaitra month of Bengali year), it is held at end of the night of Chaitra Sankranti called 'Nilratri'. While performing this, a man decorate himself as kali and holds a stick in hand and other men hold lamps while others play different musical instruments like dhak, dhol and kansi.

ii) Visual Arts –

a) Puppet Show (Putul Nach) Enlisted folk form of Lok Prasar Prakalpa by Dept. of I&CA, Govt. of West Bengal :

Putul Naach (Puppetry) is a traditional art form of West Bengal and a very ancient form of theater. A putul (Doll) made of bamboo, wood etc is controlled using strings and sticks at different parts of the body. A puppetry band has one main singer followed by the instrument players like clarinet, flute, dhol and kansi. The dolls are of different types like dang (rod) putul and tar (string) putul. This 14th century old tradition is performed with the story of great epics or story of God and Goddess. It has an emphasis on operatic singing and performance of a folk play. The dancing and acting elements of the performance hinge on the traditions of the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas, with the epic themes being made totally assimilated in the life of Bengal. In fact, all imaginary or romantic allusions outside the Bengal life have never found a place in the puppetry here. Putul Nach is more drama than dance, in fact, a small edition of Jatra (folk play).

There are two villages in Purba Medinipur district

- (1) Padmatamli of Mugberia is famous for Putul Nach called Beniputul
- (2) Bhagbankhali village near Narghat famous for putul nach known as Danger Putul.

Previously puppets were prepared from mud. Presently the puppets are made of paper and wood (mainly Hingal wood) Like the patachitras, the necessary songs of the stories of Putul Nach were prepared from the stories of the Epics, the purans and the mangal kavya. Presently the theme of the Putul Nach programme is based on the different social problem and on different developmental schemes of West Bengal Government.

b) Donochampati khela:

It is a combination of traditional folk lore and sport. This sport is named as 'Dono Champat' khela at Nandigram in Purba Medinipur district.

D) Historical, Anthropological & Heritage sites :

a) Tamluk Rajbari :

A proposal has been initiated for a heritage site with a museum in the old premises of the Rajbari by the Tamralipta Museum & Research Centre. Now it is preserved by the ASI as one of the Heritage sites in India. This building belongs to mediaeval period and approximately constructed during the beginning of eighteenth century possibly by Didar Ali Beg who took the administration of this Tamluk Zamindary for a short period at that time on behalf of the Masnad-i-Ali of Hijli.

b) Khejuri:

Before Calcutta Khejuri was the important centre of the East India Company for their commercial activities. In 1672 captain James of the East India Company first landed with his ship 'Rebeka' for clearance of goods at Khejuri as at that time the big ships could not reach to Calcutta directly. All the goods could reach Calcutta by small sloops and therefore, Khejuri had turned to a sea port in 1679. Raja Rammohan Roy once and prince Dwarkanath Thakur of Thakur family of Calcutta twice had to stay one day at Khejuri during their journey to foreign countries. For its sea-side location many foreigners in India used to come there for recoveries of their health. Job Charnak also stayed for permanent settlement of the East India Company at Khejuri-Hijli areas before his establishment of Calcutta.

For communication between the foreign sailors and the passengers of the ships, an old post office was opened at Khejuri in 1772. The post office of Khejuri was the first of its kind in India. Dr. Osagnesi, a Professor of Calcutta Medical College first introduced telegraph line between Khejuri and Kukrahati and later it was extended upto Calcutta in 1857.

c) Dariapur :

On the way from Khejuri to Contai via Masnad-i-Ali a village named Dariapur is located with a famous temple of Kapal Kundala. Sahitya Samrat Bankim Chandra Chattapadhyya visited this area and he stayed at Dak-Banglo of Dariapur of Contai Sub-Division. At that time this area was covered by jungle and this visit had inspired Bankim Chandra to write his famous novel '*Kopalkundala*'. To commemorate his staying, every year the local people organize one annual fair in his name, which is known as '*Bankim Smriti Mela*'.

d) Bahiri :

Another important heritage place in Contai Sub-Division of Purba Medinipur. This village has its ancient archaeological value. It is an important centre of Buddhism. Four Buddha Stupas named *Paltikri*, *Shaptikri*, *Dhantikri* and *Godhantikri* are located at Bahiri. The name of the village '*Bahiri*' derived from word 'Bauddha Bihar'.



e) Negua:

It is under Egra Sub-division. Once office of the Sub-Divisional Officer was located at Negua before shifting to Contai Town. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was the Deputy-Magistrate, S.D.O. of Negua at that time. He took the charge of S.D.O. Negua on 9th February, 1860.

f) Kajlagarh :

This important historic place is situated under Bhagabanpur block of Egra Sub-division. The great writer and poet Dwijendralal Roy came to

this place for the settlement of this area when Kajlagarh was under the administration of Burdwan Raj during 1890-1893.



ii) Temple, Mosque & Other religious places of historical importance:

a) Bargabhima Temple :

The temple of the Goddess Bargabhima is a very famous temple of Purba Medinipur. There are many legends about the origin of the Goddess Bargabhima. The king Tamraddhaj of Tamralipta of the epic Mahabharata had constructed this temple. There are references of Goddess Bargabhima in Bengali literatures like Dharmamangal kavyas of Manikram Ganguly and Ruparam Chakraborty and in the Chandimangal Kavya of Mukundaram Chakraborty. This evidence justifies the existence of this temple within thirteenth to fourteenth centuries in Tamluk of Purba Medinipur. Basically, this temple had been created on one of the Buddhist Stupas at the time of decay of Buddhist religion. Mainly people of Hindureligion had created this temple to worship their Goddess Bargabhima.



Bargabhma Temple

b) Hijli Masnad-i-Ala :

This mosque of Hijli of Purba Medinipur district is a symbol of communal harmony in West Bengal. Although it is a Muslim mosque but large number of people from different parts of our country irrespective of their caste, creed and religion assemble here. This mosque was constructed in 1651 ACE by a pious man named Tajkhan Masnad-i-Ala, the then administrator of Hijli area. It is also an example of successful execution of Indian architecture. The salty weather of this district even could not destroy any part of this. The colour this mosque is black from the time of its formation by the decision of the Fort William authority. The place where this mosque is located in Purba Medinipur district is one of the best tourist spots of the district .

c) Manik Pirer Darga :

It is situated by side of the Tamruk Panskura road very near to Tamruk Maniktala More. The darga is also a great centre of communal harmony. Large no. of people come to pray here irrespective of cast, creed and religion in each Sunday of every month. Previously it was a simple mud house. Recently it is being constructed as pucca building with the financial assistance of the Government of West Bengal.



d) **Damodar Jew Temple:**

The Damodar Jew Temple is located at the Hogla village under Tamluk sub-division of Purba Medinipur district. It was established in 1205 Bengali Era. The village of Hogla has immense value in terms of heritage for being the birth place of Matangini Hazra - the great martyr in India's freedom struggle. She used to perform regular puja in this temple. The Damodar Jew temple is a mark of the great attractive architectural style of the temples of Bengal. The temple of Damodar Jew is also significant in terms of historical and religious reasons.

e) **Kishore Raj temple :**

The Kishore Raj temple is situated at Panchetgarh in Patashpur - II block under Egra sub-division of Purba Medinipur district. It was established by Jugal Kishore Das Mahapatra - one of the descendants of the zamindar Das Mahapatra family. It was constructed in the early eighteenth century.



The East facing temple was constructed in the Rekha deul style with a height of about 50 ft. The temple bears ornamentation at its peak. The Jagamohana (prayer hall) of the temple is built in Sikhar deul style. But the cornice of the temple is not constructed in the traditional way and not parallel as well. They are constructed like arches.

f) **Pancheswar Shiva Temple :**

The Pancheswar Shiva Temple and Narayan Jew temple is situated at Panchetgarh in Patashpur - II block under Egra sub-division of Purba Medinipur district. The region is named as Panchet after the Pancheswar Shiva. The name of Kishore Rai Shri Krishna is also attached with the garh along with Pancheswar Shiva. It is said that during the construction of the Panchetgarh Palace (Rajbari), a black basalt stone was found while digging of soil was on. Some portion of the stone broke apart due to the digging. Later, the stone was excavated and it was found that the stone was originally a Shiva Linga (deity of Lord Shiva). A temple was constructed for the Shiva Linga. The Shiva linga was situated in this area much before the construction of the palace, it is said. It is considered that the temple was constructed between 1897 and 1907.



g) Pancharatna temple of Shitala Devi

The Pancharatna temple of Shitala Devi is situated at Patashpur in Panchet under Egra sub-division of Purba Medinipur district. It was established by Chowdhury / Das Mahapatra - the zamindar family of the Patashpur pargana. The temple was established between the years 1900 and 1903. It was constructed at the entrance of the landlord house as per the wish of Tilottama Devi - the senior-most female member of the zamindar family. The temple was constructed with red color bricks and lime-surki in the Jorbangla / Ekbangla or Dochala temple style. The Pancharatna temple originally constructed in Ratna style with peak but it has a resemblance of the architectural patterns of the Jorbanglo style. The temple is considered to be of Pancharatna style as there are four peaks around the main Ektratna peak at the center. The entire temple is of a square shape.

iii) Museum, Forts & Palaces :

a) Tamluk Museum:

Earlier this museum was known as Tamralipta Museum & Research Centre, Tamluk. It was founded in the year 1973.

b) Moynagarh Fort :

Moynagarh was originally a Buddhist Monastery and Lausen (Lausena) was originally a Buddhist king. The Dharmathakur of Lausena was actually Buddha and from here, the cult of worshipping Dharma Thakur evolved. Later the fort of Moynagarh was acquired by the Bahubalindras of Balisita. They transferred their capital from Balisitagarh to Moynachoura or Moynagarh in 1561 - 1562 AD. The King of Moynagarh was very rich and favourite in the court of Nawab in Murshidabad. The King of Moynagarh maintained an army of 3000 men. The unique structure of the fort makes it unparalleled. The Garh or the fortress was surrounded by two moats namely Kalidaha and Makardaha. These moats were infested by crocodiles. One East facing brick built temple of Pancha Ratna style and another one brick built East facing Atchala temple are there. Both these temples are dedicated to Lord Krishna. The outer walls of the Atchala temple are highly decorated with terracotta arts depicting horse and elephant riders, large ships, dancing men and women etc. There are 6

arched doors with multi cusped on the Eastern and Southern walls of the temple. One circumambulatory path is around the sanctum.

c) Mahishadal Raj Palace :

There was a king of Mahishadal (now under Purba Midnipur Dist.) named Kalyan Raychaudhuri. His capital was situated in Garh Gumai. At that time one businessman and Kanauji brahmin of the then Juktapradesh came to Jibankhali (now Geonkhali) for commercial purpose. His name was Janardan Upadhyay and he was the founder of the Raj family of present Mahishadal. Kalyan Roy Chowdhury had failed to pay his revenue to the nawab of Bengal. He rescued himself from the punishment from the hand of nawab in the financial support from Janardan Upadhyay who took the administration of the zamindari of the former. Janardan ruled over this area by constructing a palace in the Rangibasan area of Mahishadal (old palace). His subsequent successor Anandalal Upadhyay died without any son and his widow Janaki devi took over the administration of Mahishadal. She was a pious lady and constructed many temples all over her administrative area. But after her death the administration of Mahishadal had shifted to her daughter Manthara and son-in-law Chhakkan Prasad Garga but within few days he died and his son Ram Nath Garga took over the Reign of Mahishadal. They were the founder of the present Mahishadal Raj. After that the Gargas constructed a new beautiful palace a few yards away of Rangibasan Fort.



This newly built palace is the only existing raj palace of Purba Mednipur district at present. Many administrators has ruled from this palace. Last administrator (Zaminder) Dev Prasad Garga was very popular for his simplicity and administration for the development of culture and education. He died on 4th April 1986. Presently this newly constructed palace is being used as a museum run by the successor of the Garga family with support of the government of West Bengal.

d) Contai high School :

The Contai High School is situated in Contai Town of East Midnapore. It was founded in 1857 and is one of the oldest schools of the district. When Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was the Deputy Magistrate of the region, the school experienced considerable development. He made arrangements for land for the school. The school building, hostel and gymnasium were set up on the school. Birendranath Shasmal - the noted revolutionary leader, was a student of the Contai High School.

It is an East facing single storied school building, built in 1906. There is a porch in front of the building. There are ten rooms and one headmaster's room inside the building with all windows and doors made of glass and wood. The roof of the building is made of rafter and the corridor of the house is tinned roof.

e) Hamilton High School :

The Hamilton High School is situated at Tamluk in East Midnapore. It was the second oldest institution in the formerly undivided Medinipur district. It was founded in 1852 by Mr. Robert Charles Hamilton. He was a salt agent of a salt agency under East Indian Company. Saheed Kshudiram Bose, Jadugopal Mukhopadhyay, Ajoy Kumar Mukherjee - former Chief Minister of West Bengal, Sushil Kumar Dhara, Prof. Amalash Tripathi - 1st in the Matriculation Examination in 1936, Vattacharja Chandan - poet and writer, Bhaskar Maity - former goalkeeper of the Indian National Football team and Paresh Maiti - painter were the students of this school. Kshudiram Bose - the first martyr, who sacrificed his life in the freedom struggle against the British rule. He was a student of the school from 1900 to 1903.

It is a West facing brick built tipple storied school building. There are about 50 rooms in the building.

f) The Gourmohan Institution

The Gourmohan Institution is situated at Kalyanchak in Nandakumar of East Midnapore. The school was started as Kalyanchak Middle English School in 1895. Later in 1926, the school was shifted to its present location. During the Quit India Movement in 1942, the students of this school got actively involved in it. Asutosh Kulia, Pulimadhav Pramanik and Upendranath Jana - three students of the school, were martyred. Due to their active involvement in the movement, the British police made raids in the school and tortured the residential students. The headmaster went absconded and his house was raided. The doors and windows of the building were completely destroyed. The recognition of the school was about to be withdrawn which could only be stalled after the suspension of the then Headmaster by the managing committee of the school. The East facing three storied brick built school building was built in 1896. It is a roofed. There are also three mud built and tin-roofed hostel buildings with wooden doors and windows. In front of the hostels, there are porches.

Compiled by: Mahua Mallick, District Information and Cultural Officer, Purba Medinipur; May 2022