



DISTRICT DIGITAL CULTURAL REPOSITORY

NORTH 24 PARGANAS

AN ARCHIVE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE OF BENGAL



Directorate of Culture

Department of Information and Cultural Affairs

Government of West Bengal

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North 24 PARGANAS

Spiritual Past, Modern-day Milieu

Being close to a bustling metropolis. It has all the elements of modern-day city life, but a temple here and a riverbank there still point to its glorious spiritual and religious past – in Shaiva, Vaishanava and Shakto traditions.

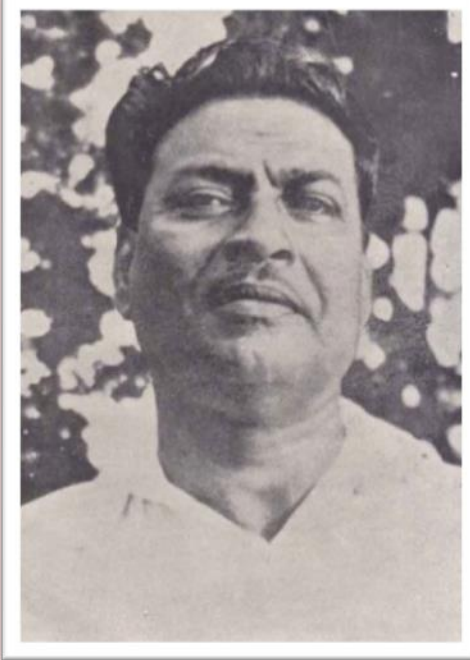
A) PEOPLE AND EMINENT PERSONALITIES

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (26 or 27 June 1838– 8 April 1894)



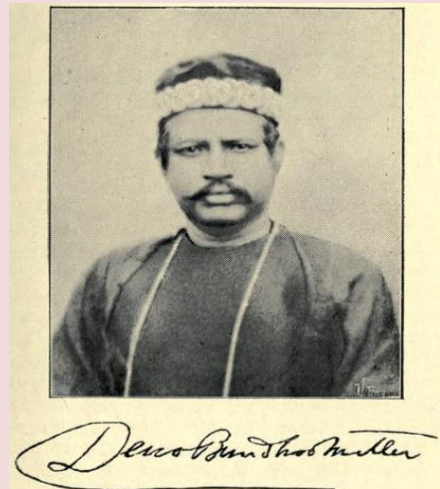
He was a Bengali novelist, poet and journalist. He was the author of the 1882 novel Anandamath, which is one of the landmarks of modern Bengali and Indian literature. He also wrote 13 other novels and many serious, serio-comic, satirical, scientific and critical treatises in Bengali. The national song of Republic of India, VandeMataram, appears in Anand Math

Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay (12 September 1894 – 1 November 1950)





He was a Bengali writer. His best known works are the autobiographical novel, *PatherPanchali* (*The Song of the Road*), *ChanderPahar*, and *Aranyak*. Eventually, Bibhutibhusan Bandyopadhyay returned from Bhagalpur estate to his native place and started working as a teacher in the GopalnagarHaripada Institution, which he continued alongside his literary work, until his death. *PatherPanchali* brought Bandyopadhyay to prominence in Bengali literature, and the novel and its sequel *Aparajito*, were subsequently translated into numerous languages.

Dinabandhu Mitra (1830-1 November 1873)



He was a Bengali writer and dramatist. He is notable for his play *Nil Darpan* (1860). His play *Nil Darpan* was about the plight of indigo farmers. Indigo revolt (1858) in Bengali was the revolt of the indigo farmers against the indigo planters. It was one year after the Sepoy Revolt, Bengal saw one more important revolt in its history. The play was published from Dhaka and soon after its publication it ignited a major argument in the newspapers. His first hand experience of the indigo cultivators, while on the job as the postmaster in rural Orissa and Bengal, were reflected in the drama. Michael Madhusudan Dutt translated the play into English immediately after it was published and Reverend James Long published it.

Sadhak Ramprasad Sen (1718 or 1723 – 1775)	
	<p>He was a <u>HinduShakta</u> poet and saint of eighteenth century <u>Bengal</u>. His <u>bhakti</u> poems, known as <u>Ramprasadi</u>, are still popular—they are usually addressed to the Hindu goddess <u>Kali</u> and written in <u>Bengali</u>. Stories of Ramprasad's life typically include legends and myths mixed with biographical details.</p>
SamareshBasu (11 December 1924 – 12 March 1988)	
	<p>He was a Bengali writer and was awarded the 1980 <u>Sahitya Akademi Award</u> for his novel, <i>Shamba</i>. He was also widely known in his nick name “Kalkut”.</p>

B) EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

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Kalpataru Utsab



Kalpataru Utsab is celebrated at Dakshineswar (along with Cossipore Uddyanbati at Kolkata district) on 1st January every year to commemorate Shri Ramakrishna Dev incarnation as an Avatar or incarnation of God on earth.

Banipur Art & Crafts Fair

Banipur Lok Utsav is a fair over fifty years held under Habra municipality in North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. This cultural fair has acquired several awards and honours by Information and Cultural Department, Govt. of West Bengal.

There are six stages or manchas namely Mul Mancha, Dakshin Mancha, Jatra Mancha, Janata Hall, Swasthya Mancha and Mela ground where different scheduled programmes are presented daily.



. These programmes include theatre (jatra), puppet dance(putulnach), chhou dance of Purulia district, Raybenshe dance of Murshidabad district, dramas etc.

Panihati Chida Utsav



Sri Chaitanya halted at Panihati Mohotsavtala Ghat twice, once in A.D. 1515 on his way to Puri and another time when going to Vrindaban from Puri via Gaud. He came here in the month of Kartik and stayed in the house of Raghav Pandit, his disciple. The image of Madan Mohan worshiped by Sri Chaitanya in the house of Raghav, as also the Samadhi of Raghav under a canopy of Madhabi creepers can still be seen in the Raghav Bhawan or Pat Bari. Since long (500 years past), Panihati is famous for a great festival called Chida Utsab/ DandaMahotsab. This festival is related to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Sri NityanandaMahaprabhu,

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having an immense religious value for the Vaisnavas. The festival is organised in the Month of Jaistha on Shukla Trayodoshi Tithi or June Month every year. This festival is held at the riverbank of the Ganges at Mahotsobtala Ghat (known as Panihati Ferry Ghat), and remembers a particular day when Nityananda Mahaprabhu had partaken chida and dadhi offered by devotee Raghunath Das Goswami . This festival is now celebrated widely in various states of India and many countries abroad at ISKCON Temples with the participation of devotees.

Matua Maha Mela

Thakurnagar is named after Pramath Ranjan Thakur, the great-grandson of the founder of the Matua Movement and Community, Harichand Thakur. Due to the Thakurs' significance to the Matua devotees, the village is considered as the "Mecca of the Matuas." On the Madhu Krishna Trayodashi Tithi, the lakhs of pilgrims of this sect (equipped with their respective flags and 'Dangkas') from the entire world take a holy dip at 'Kamana Sagar' which is fondly called as 'Baruni Snan'. Today, Thakurnagar is widely known for the nearby Thakur Bari.



Shiva Puja (Gajan)



Probably the most popular divinity of the district is Lord Shiva. A number of Shiva temples is found throughout the district. At Khardah there is twenty-six Shiva temples of At-Chala (eight roofed) style. Here, a big fair is organized on the occasion of Nil puja in the Bengali calendar month of Chaitra (mid-March to mid-April). In many places of the district, Gajan festival (a special ritual to commemorate Lord Shiva) is also celebrated with great grandeur. Jaleswar Shiva of Gaighata Police Station lies submerged in a tank called Shiva Puskarini (pond) and only raised and placed in a temple for performing Gajan.

C) Cultural Traditions and Art Forms

ASHTAK



‘Ashtak’ is a unique folk-form of the district of North 24 Parganas. It originated at the Bagdah Block of Bongaon Sub Division. This exclusive form of the region presents a musical soiree, which portrays the eventful childhood of the Lord Krishna. The mythological characters depict the various sagas of Little Krishna, which enthrall the attending audience.

JHUMUR DANCE

Jhumur dance is mostly performed in open places (now-a-days in cultural gatherings also). The male members wear long traditional dresses and keep the rhythm with few traditional instruments: generally, a drum, hung on shoulder; a flute and a pair of "Taal" (two metallic discs). The girls mostly perform the

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dancing part, holding each other's waist and moving hands and legs forward and backward synchronously.



KIRTAN



The age-old music form, since the time immemorial, has been sweeping throughout every corner of erstwhile as well as the modern-day Bengal. It embraced its optimum height during the period of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The district of North 24 Parganas had been the fortunate enough to witness the footsteps of his enlightened followers. Kirtan, depicting the different shades of Bhagwan Ram-Lakshman-Sita & Shri Radha-Krishna, cast a matchless spell at every occasion. North 24 Parganas district bears a rich legacy of this particular genre.

KABIGAN



It's a traditional folk-poetry form of Bengal since the ancient era. It's a friendly yet fierce musical battle between the two groups led by the two eminent & lead-vocalists of exceptional quality. Primarily, it was sponsored by the rich class & the zaminders during the renaissance period. But eventually, it gradually spreaded into the general masses & become the centre stage of wide attraction at the villages, hamlets, fairs, festivals, ceremonies, events & elsewhere.



MANASABHASAN

The exceptional Goddess Manasa had been revered, feared, worshipped & obeyed since the time immemorial. The extremely popular goddess has an irresistible charisma amid the toiling & the humble populace. The village women gather at afternoon in their vicinity, after completing their household chores, to collectively praise the superpower & prowess of the almighty Ma Manasa, which has also been termed as ‘Rayaan Gaan’, in the Bengali month of Shravan.

This particular folk-form, which has also been termed as ‘Manasa Mangal’, depicts the epic-styled sagas of the goddess which revolve around the tales of Chand Sadagar, Menaka, Behula, Lakhinder & others. The performing artists portray the heart-rendering events in front of the enthralled crowd.

BHATTYALI

This particular folk-form has been intensely associated with age-old heritage of riverine Bengal. The vast region is entangled & encompassed by the countless

rivers, lakes, streams & water bodies. The livelihood of the riverside inhabitants has greatly been influenced & shaped by the bio-diversity & eco-system of the flow. The boatmen endlessly afloat over the rivers, making their lives entirely dependent on moods of seas & the rivers. In passionate attempt to bear the daily challenges & ordeals, they composed their tunes at their hearts & utter the emotional lyrics with all sincerity & devotion. The music of water has purely been woven on the high and lower tides of the rivers and the streams. The district of North 24 Parganas has a rich treasure of Bhatiyali tunes and as well as its' creators.



TARJAGAN

Tarja is a form of folk poetry contest from Bengal with a long tradition. Historically it used to be performed in the village gathering around a chandimandap or altar for village god, mela and other social events, in streets, and marketplace religious festivals. The themes of the contest are usually taken from Ramayana, Mahabharata or Puranas.

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D) HISTORICAL, ANTHROPOLOGICAL & HERITAGE SITES

CHANDRAKETUGARH



Chandraketugarh is located in the district of North 24 Parganas, only 38 km. north-east of Kolkata. The history of Chandraketugarh dates back to almost the 3rd Century B.C. during the pre-Mauryan era. Historians identify this site with the DICO, North 24 Parganas

ancient Gangaridai mentioned by the Greek traveller, Megasthenes, in his work 'Indika'.

DAKSHINESWAR



Dakshineswar Kali Temple is a Hindu temple located in Dakshineswar near Kolkata. Situated on the eastern bank of the Hooghly River, the presiding deity of the temple is Bhavatarini. The temple was built by Rani Rashmoni, a philanthropist and a devotee of Kali in 1855. The temple is famous for its association with Ramakrishna, a mystic of 19th Century Bengal.

ADYAPITH TEMPLE



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Close to Dakshineswar temple is Adyapith, a pilgrim centre, the temple of Adya Ma. SreeAnnada Thakur being advised in a dream had built this temple of 'Adya Ma' in order to teach man the dictums of love and idealism. The construction was started in 1340 BS and the temple was inaugurated on Makar Sankranti (last day of Bengali calendar month Poush) in 1375 BS. The idol of Adya Ma is made of 8 metals.

CHAKLA DHAM

Chakla near Berachapa(Station Guma/ Bira is a well-known religious tourist place, considered as the birthplace of popular 18th century spiritual master Baba Lokenath Bramhachari.



ANNAPURNA MANDIR



The temple, similar to Dakshineswar Temple, is situated at Titagrah on the river bank, and was opened to devotees on the 12th of April, 1875 (30th Chaitra 1281)

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by Sri SriRamkrishnaParamahansa. The majestic Temple stands on the Rani Rashmoni ghat near Barrakpore.

NAIHATI BANKIM SANGRAHASHALA



Bankim Sangrahashala is the library-museum of Rishi Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, the great novelist. It is located at Kanthalpara, Naihati in the North 24 Paraganas. Established in 1954, the museum occupies only a portion of the big ancestral house, located alongside. The heritage museum is a living testimony of the fact that the other gat personalities of pre-independent India like Rishi Aurobindo Ghosh, Chittaranjan Das, Dinabandhu Mitra, Keshab Chandra Sen, etc., used to come here for spending some quality time in this peaceful ambiance along with the great poet and author.

GANDHI GHAT



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A tomb in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi, a lush green garden dotted with 120 varieties of roses, exquisite plants and trees, a picturesque sunset and an exciting riverfront - the Gandhi Ghat package is good enough to entice one to break free from crowded Kolkata and set off for Barrackpore, around 30 km north from the heart of the city.

Built in 1948 (the year the father of the nation died), the monument on the banks of the river Hooghly and the sprawling garden, Jawahar Kunj ' maintained by the state forest department ' can offer a day's respite to city-dwellers. It was inaugurated by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru.

GANDHI MUSEUM BARRACKPORE

Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalayais a museum dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi at the initiative of Gandhi Memorial Trust. The variety of collections at the Museum at Barrackpore provide interesting and highly informative direct research materials regarding the Mahatma.



The museum looks for an alternative ideology, in place of those that are pursued still by Governments and countries, through various intellectual exercises like seminars, dialogues or other such programmes and research activities.

SADHAK RAMPRASAD SEN VITA



Halisahar is mostly known for being home to saint poet Sadhak Ramprasad Sen, "Ramprasad Vita" was the cottage of Ramprasad, who was a 'Sakta' sadhak and wrote more than 500 devotional songs, dedicated to mother goddess Maa Kali. The place of his meditation was the Panchamundasana at Panchabati, located at his sadhanpith adjacent to the Ramprasad Vita. Halisahar is also famous for being Rani Rasmani's birthplace.

CLIVE HOUSE (DUM DUM)

The house at Dum Dum was thought to have been acquired by Lord Clive either shortly before the battle of Plassey in 1757 as an operational base, or after his success during negotiations; Dum Dum House, 'an old property on a mound', is mentioned several times by contemporary historian Robert Orme (including a sketch diagram from 1756). After that, Clive took over the bungalow and combined the existing Indian architecture with European designs. This



is also a famous archaeological site. Recent excavations at this site have unearthed Chinese ceramic porcelain and Burmese ceramic pottery that dates back to the 15th and 16th centuries CE (Current Era). Further studies have revealed the possibility of this area once being used as a transit point for goods sent out or brought in from Chandraketugarh.

WARREN HASTING'S HOUSE, BARASAT



A stone tablet was found in the house from where we know that in this house the Governor General of India Warren Hastings lived for a certain amount of time. This was used to be his country house. After that, it was used as the S.D.O office. The building was in ruins until recently when Archaeological Survey of India(ASI) decided to renovate and conserve it.

OLD GOVERNOR HOUSE BARRACKPORE

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It was setup as a cantonment of the British East Indian army in 1775. When Marquis Wellesley took over the charge of the Commander-in-Chief in 1801, he decided to make improvements to the area of the cantonment. He built a single storied house for the future Governor Generals of India that is presently known as the Governor General's House in Barrackpore which was designed by Captain Thomas Anbury in 1813. Wellesley also landscaped the adjacent gardens in the English style and added an aviary, a menagerie and a theatre.

HOUSE OF RASTRAGURU SURENDRA NATH BANDOPADHYAY



The house of Surendranath Banerjee (Bandopadhyay) is situated at Monirampur in Barrackpore. Sir Surendranath Banerjee was one of the earliest Indian political leaders who went against the British Raj. Surendranath, known by the title of Rashtraguru (the teacher of the nation) was born in Calcutta (Kolkata). He founded the Indian National Association, one of the earliest Indian political organizations, which inspired the foundation of the Indian National Congress.

NANDA KISHORE TEMPLE, HALISAHAR



The Nandakishore temple built by local landlord Madangopal Roy in 1743, the temple has intricate terracotta panels. The panel above the arched entrance contains an elaborate battle scene from the Ramayan, with an image of Garuda at the centre. The panels on the walls depict several deities, including a multi-headed Shiva sitting on his bull Nandi.

HOUSE OF BIBHUTI BHUSHAN BANDOPADHYAY



This is the place where he spent most of his childhood and those memories were reflected in Pather Panchali..

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