

A REPORT ON



**Digital
District
Repository** - Malda



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EMINENT PERSONALITIES OF MALDA DISTRICT

1. **Krishna Jiban Sanyal :-** The infamous Carlyle Circular prohibited the slogan of Vande Mataram in schools of Bengal. But Krishna Jiban Sanyal, then a student of Malda Zilla School, disobeyed it. He was expelled. Later his guardian sent him to Bihar, where he was admitted in the Giridih High School. Giridih, Krishnajiban came into close connection with Barindra Kumar Ghosh and decided to join the 'Maniktala Secret Society'. He was an accused in the Alipore bomb case. After two years of imprisonment, he was released from the jail because of his young age. It becomes clear after the Alipur episode that a section of students from Malda was intensely influenced by the revolutionary activities.

2. **Benoy Kumar Sarkar:-** Benoy Kumar Sarkar (sometimes Binoy Kumar Sarkar) (1887–1949) was an Indian social scientist, professor, and nationalist. He founded several institutes in Calcutta, including the Bengali Institute of Sociology, Bengali Asia Academy, Bengali Dante Society, and Bengali Institute of American Culture. Binoy Kumar Sarkar was born in Malda Town, in Bengal Presidency. He started his early education in Malda Zilla School. Sarkar entered the University of Calcutta at the age of 13 after standing first at the entrance examination from Malda Zilla School. He graduated in 1905, at 18, with dual degrees in English and history. The wave of swadeshi movement gained momentum in Malda owing to the efforts undertaken by Benoy Kumar Sarkar, who was a Professor of National College. An enthusiastic follower of Satish Mukherjee of Dawn Society, Benoy Sarkar joined the swadeshi movement and actively participated in the National Education Movement also. He not only set up a number of national schools at Malda, but wrote a variety of books for the learners on national education (1906-14). Benoy Kumar Sarkar took a leading role in establishing Malda Jatiya Shiksha Samiti in June, 1907.

3. **Abdul Gani Saheb:-** An intellectual who was very much keen to spread modern education among the Muslim community in Malda district was Abdul Gani Saheb. His most remarkable work for the spread of modern education among the Muslims of Malda district is the establishment of Maldaha Sebasharam Siksha Samiti in February 1913. He wrote some valuable books for increasing awareness among the Muslims about education. In 1915, he published a Bengali Arabic Grammar book in Bengali. He also published a weekly national newspaper viz., 'Maldah Akhbar' from Malda, the first such initiative in the district by a Muslim intellectual.

4. **Radhesh Chandra Seth:-** Radhesh Chandra Seth was the a reformer who spread awareness about education among the people of Malda. Seth went to various villages and told the villagers about the importance of education. While studying in the Rajshahi College, he had attended the third session of the Indian National Congress held in Madras as delegate from Malda. In Madras, he came into touch with the nationalists coming from the different corners of the country. Returning in Maldah he decided to publish a newspaper to make the people aware of the newly emerging nationalist consciousness. The first monthly periodical published from Malda was Kusum, edited by Radhesh Chandra Seth. In 1896, he started two weekly newspapers – Gourbart and Gourdut.

5. **Jitu Santal:** He was the leader of the Santal revolt of 1932 in Maldah. He preached that the Santals had cleaned the jungle and made the land arable. As such, the land belongs to them. Thus to the Santal adivasis of Maldah, land became the most explosive source of discontent. In December 1932, a large number of Santals marched to Pandua and occupied the ruins of the Adina mosque, declaring that it was a Siva shrine which was transformed.

At the same time Jitu, who now called himself 'Senapati Gandhi', declared the end of the British Raj and proclaimed his own government: 'The English has gone. Our Raj, Our Desh is established', he said. The Santals attacked houses of zamindars and money-lenders as also a police outpost at Habibpur. The district administration sent a large group of armed police force to Pandua to put down the revolt of Santals of Barind. The then District Magistrate ordered the Santals to leave the Adina mosque, but they refused to obey. A pitched battle followed between Jitu's men and armed police force which opened fire after the Santals refused to come out. Six Santals, including Jitu himself, were shot dead, while a police was killed by a poisoned arrow and some others were wounded.

6. Shibram Chakraborty (1903–1980) He was a popular Bengali writer who is best known for his humorous stories. His short stories and novels are renowned for their unique use of pun, alliteration, play of words and ironic humour. He was a prolific author who also wrote poems, plays, non-fiction and novels for mature audiences in his long career. Chakraborty was born into the well-known Chanchal Rajbari (royal house of Chanchal) family, although his ancestral home was in Malda. However the ancestral seat of the Chakraborty family was at Choa in Murshidabad District.

7. Sachindranath Mishra: - Sachindranath Mishra. A student of Harisishchandrapur School organized the students there in support of the Non- Cooperation movement. Shibram Chakraborty, a noted literary figure afterwards, led the student of his school Chanchal Siddheswari Institution.

8. Lalbihari Mujumder :- One Ayurvedic physician Lalbihari Majumder came from Faridpur district of undivided Bengal to Malda district and relocated himself there in 1907. Eventually after a certain gap of time, the responsibility of publishing Gourdut Patrika came to him, by then he was well known as a doctor, patriot and intellectual writer of Malda district. As a result, the Gourdut Patrika started to be published from 1912 onwards. Lalbihari Majumder was born in a prominent Vaidya family at the village of Sendia of Faridpur district in East Bengal.

9. Rafik Mandal:- The main leader of the Wahabi movement in the district of Malda was Rafik Mandal, a poor peasant himself who along with others were displeased with the British policy of indigo plantation. Owing to his efforts Wahabi organizations were set up in various parts of Malda. The main places of Wahabi movement in Malda were Sibganj, Kansat, Nababganj, Kaliachak, Harishchandrapur, Ratua and old Maldah. He and his son Amir Mondol were accused by the British Government of recruiting fighters against the British in the North-Western Frontier. They were tried and while Rafik Mandal was freed, his son Amir was exiled to Andaman and later on was allowed to settle in Santhal Pargana (presently Pakur district) barring him from entering into his home-district Malda.

10. Baladevbananda Giri:- One of the most famous girls' school in Malda district was 'Chintamani Chamatkar Balika Vidyalaya'. The name of Gosain Baladevbananda Giri was associated with this school. His contribution towards spread of female education in the district was noteworthy. In the first half of the twentieth century, Baladevbananda Giri established a pathshala named "Mahakali Pathshala" in his house at Mukdampur. After that with the financial help from Maharaja Sarat Chandra Roy Chaudhury of Chanchal State, this pathshala was converted into a female school, known as the Mahakali Balika Vidyalaya.

11. Raja Sarat Chandra Roy Chowdury of Chanchal : Zamindar of Chanchal estate who donated his wealth and property for the development of people of Malda.

12. Pundit Bidhu Sekhar Shastri: Awarded epithet "Shashtri" from Kashi, he was close to Rabindranath Tagore and was a professor at Visva-Bharti for 30 years. He was honoured with the "Deshikottam" award.

13. **Adv. Md. Sayeed Mia (1901-1988)**, : He participated in the Gandhian Non-Cooperation Movement and Khilfat Movement in his student life. He was elected as the Member of the Legislative Assembly from North Malda Constituency before Independence in 1946, the only other from the South Malda Constituency being the Zamidar Moulvi Johur Ahmed Choudhury. He was elected in 1952 as the first post-Independence M.L.A from Ratua Constituency. He was also the M.L.C. and Parliamentary Secretary from 1952 to 1966. He was elected as M.L.A. from Malda Constituency in 1967. During his political career and being a long-time part of the Bengal and later on West Bengal Government, he pioneered the reformation and modernisation of the Madrasha Education System in West Bengal. He contributed a lot in the establishment of the West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education, upgrading of the High Madrasahs like Malda Model Madrasah and establishment of many other senior and high Madrasahs. The purchase of the land for and the construction of the building of the Malda Muslim Institute and its library in 1930s is another great work of Sayeed Miah, who was its long time Secretary.

14. **A B A Gani Khan Chowdhury**: A national leader from Malda, he is called the pioneer of modern Malda. Ghani Khan Choudhury was first elected as an MLA to the West Bengal state legislative assembly in 1957, winning the seat in 1962, 1967, 1971 and 1972. He served as a State Cabinet Minister in the Government of West Bengal from 1972 to 1977. First elected to the 7th Lok Sabha in 1980 from Malda, Choudhury would go on to represent the constituency for eight straight terms, winning again in 1984, 1989, 1991, 1996, 1998, 1999 and 2004. From 1982 to 1984, Choudhury served as the Minister of Railways in Indira Gandhi's and Rajiv Gandhi's governments. He took active part in introducing the Kolkata Metro Railway and Circular Railways in the city of Kolkata, and towards establishing the Malda Town railway station as one of the most important stations of the region.

15.



Benoy Kumar Sarkar



Events & Festivals:

1. **RAMKELI MELA:** Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came to Ramkeli about five hundred years ago. In his memory, this fair is held on the day of Jaistha Sankranti for last five centuries. Many devotees from different parts of Bengal as well as India take part in this fair, which runs for several days.
2. **PANDUA BAISH HAZARI MELA:** The Holy mazar of the 13th century Sufi saint Alaul haq Pandvi and his son Noor Qutub ul Alam is situated at Pandua under old Malda Block. His Urs (demise anniversary) is commemorated every year on the 23rd, 24th and 25th Rajab in Pandua Sharif Dargah, known as Pandua Mela. It is maintained by the Baish Hazar Wakf Estate which was originally donated by Ballal Sen (the 13th century ruler of Bengal) to the Saint Sheikh Jalaluddin Tabriji in whose honour the King's minister Holayudh Misra wrote the Sanskrit book *Sheikh Subhodoya*.
3. **SADULLAPUR PIRANE PIR MELA:** Aaina-e-Hind Hazrat Sayekh Khaja Usman Akhi Sirajuddin Aoudhi was a 14th-century Bengali Sufi saint just before the time of the great Bengali Sultan Hussain Shah. His shrine is situated on the bank of Sagardighi at Sadullapur, Gaur. His Urs or death anniversary is commemorated annually on Eidul-Fitr (1st and 2nd Shawwaal). His shrine attracts hundreds of thousands of devotees every year.
4. **CHARU SETH MELA:** This fair, which is centuries old, is one of the traditional fairs of Malda. The fair is held in the ward number five of Old Malda Municipality near the river Mahananda. Once upon a time boat rides, Jatraagan were the main attractions of this fair. But now this fair is famous for wooden furniture. This mela is held in the month of October/November after Diwali.
5. **NAUKA BAICH OF NABABGUNJ:** Nawabganj boat race fair is about two centuries old. The fair was centered around the boat race on the river Mahananda. This fair is still held in Nawabganj at ward number one of old Malda municipality. However, boating is no more a part of the mela. People from both Hindu and Muslim communities take part in this fair.
6. **KANSABRATA MELA :** The fair is almost five hundred centuries old in the village of Dhawel in Gazol, Malda district. Demon Kansa's body is said to have fallen in this place. On the opening day of the fair, a huge fire pits were built in the hope of producing good crops. The flames of this fire can be seen from a few kilometers away. The fair, held in February/March lasts for about a month.
7. **KARTIK PUJAR MELA:** This fair is one of the traditional events in the town of Ingrejbazar. This fair is centuries old and starts on the occasion of Kartik Pujo. The fair lasted for about a month. It is famous for sale of wooden furniture, delicacies like "goja", "jhuribhaja", "puffed binni rice" and seeds of bhat flower
8. **RATH YATRA OF INGRAZBAZAR:** 150-year old Rathayatra fair is one of the focal points of attraction in Makdumpur area of Ingrejbazar town. This fair is held on the occasion of Rath Yatra in the Bengali month of Ashar.
9. **JAHURA MELA:** Zahura Mela is one of the ancient traditional fairs of Malda. Devotees claim that mother Zahura is very merciful to her followers. The fair is held every Tuesday and Saturday of Baishakh around the temple at Jahuratala in Ingrejbazar block.

10. **JUARI MELA:**The fair is held on the day of Mula Sasthi in the mango orchard surrounded by forest near the river Behula in Sarbari area of Old Malda. It is said that a person lost everything by gambling here a few hundred years ago. By the mercy of Sati Beulah he gets back all the property. This fair has been going on since that time. This fair is also called Leuri Fair as a special sweet called Leuri is available in this fair.
11. **DUSSERA MELA OF SADULLAPUR:** The Dussehra fair on the banks of the river Bhagirathi at Sadullapur in Ingrejbazar is about eight hundred years old.
12. **CHARAK MELA AT SAHAPUR:** Charak Mela is held every year in Chaitra Sankranti at Sahapur of Old Malda. The locals claim that this fair is hundreds of years old.
13. **GAMBHIRA, MUKHA FESTIVAL AND GAJAN FESTIVAL:** Gambhira and mukha dances are performed in different parts of Malda district on the Chaitra Sankranti. This festival has been going on for centuries. However, the festival is much popular in Old Malda and Ingrejbazar block.

The Gambhira is a folk entertainment peculiar to the district of Malda. Songs are composed every year dealing with local subjects and are sung to the accompaniment of dancing and instrumental music towards the end of the Bengali month of Chaitra every year in connection with the Gajan Festival.

“The Koches and their congeners worship the Gramya Devata (village godlings) at a curious ceremony called Gumbhira, when the young people of the village disguise themselves, personating the deities and dance.” In this district, however, the ceremony is universal amongst low caste Hindus: it is said that it is a form of the Ban Puja introduced by King Ban, whose capital was at Dinajpur. The king was a great worshipper of Shiva and used to review at this ceremony the acts done during the year which was passing. The ceremony consisted originally in the annual review of the acts of the year and penance for misdeeds. As now celebrated in this district, a shamiana or a hut open on three sides is put up and an image of Siva (Mahadeb) installed, before which there is dancing, singing, masquerading and general merriment. *

- West Bengal District Gazetteer, 1969, P- 209
District Handbook, Malda, Census- 1951, P-
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Cultural Traditions & Art Forms:

Folk Cultures Of Malda:

1. Gambhira:- Gambhira and Aalkaap: Kinds of folk-drama originated in the typical Maldaiya or Shershabadia language. As M.O. Carter, in his *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the District of Maldah* (1938), observes: "The Shersabadiyas have an intonation peculiar to themselves, the voice rising to a high pitch at the end of the sentence. This peculiarity is an unfailing source of satire at *Gambhira* and *Alkap* performance." (Page 46)

Gambhira flourished in Gour as a folk form, as the rural populace invoked Lord Shiva through music and dance. They then graduated to enacting their skits on stage, mainly involving two actors conversing about their daily problems, which they would convey to Shiva through music and dance, and ask for solutions. While the dance form is not as colourful as, say, the [Chhau of Purulia](#), it nonetheless has a strong element of storytelling attached to it, adapted through the ages to reflect current problems and preoccupations. It is important to realise that Gambhira is not just a form of song or dance, but a ritualistic drama like the Noh of Japan, for example, complete with its own typical masks.



2. **Alkap:** A folk dance popular in the districts of [Murshidabad](#), [Malda](#) and [Birbhum](#) in [West Bengal](#) and [Chapai Nawabganj](#), [Raajshahi](#) in [Bangladesh](#). It has also spread to the adjoining areas of [Jharkhand](#) and [Bihar](#) such as [Dumka](#) and [Purnia](#). Kaap means 'kavya' (verse) and Aal means 'part of the verse'. Another meaning of the word Aal is 'sharp'. The word Kaap is also one of the many meanings of 'sam' - a distorted form of gesture in the arena, or an image of a humorous comedian or social ugly subject. Alkap is an amalgamation of music, dance and theatrical presentation. An alkap group of ten to twelve performers is led by a *sarkar* (master) or *guru* (leader) and includes two or three young men called *chhokras*, one or two *gayens* or singers, *dohar*, choristers, and musicians. Alkap is presented in five parts: *Asar Vandana*, *Chhora*, *Kaap*, *Baithaki Gaan* and *Khemta Pala*. The programme is a reflection of rural society and puts the focus on the prevailing socio-economic condition of the rural masses.





3. **The Shershabadia Geet:** The Shershabdiya or Sher Shah Abadi or Badia or Bhatia, are a Bengali Muslim community found in the states of West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand. They are the descendents of Afghan soldiers who came during the Bengal invasion by Sher Shah and permanently settled in the state. Shershabadia women are experts in stitching Kyantha/Kheta (clothes) and singing Badia Geed (songs).

4. **Mushahar Geet:** Mushar is one of the bakcward castes of Malda. They sing inKhotta and Bengali mixed language. Mushahar Geet is performed in different social occasions, such as weddings etc.

Some other cultural traditions and, folk forms of the district are Santhali Geeti, Saari Gaan, Jaari Gaan and Jharni Gaan , Kabiyaali Gaan, Jal Manga Geet, Hal Baha Geet and Bhuiin/Bichan Garani Geet, Bishahari/Manasa Gaan, Holi Gaan, Saharai parab, Karma Dharma parab, Sarjum Baba, Joanna Kharia puja.Hurhuriya, Dangri, Gocharpan and Nabanna

HISTORICAL, ANTHROPOLOGICAL & HERITAGE SITES OF MALDA

1. Madanaboti:- The Madanabati village is located in the north of the place of Nalagola, north of Bamongola Police Station in the Barind region of Malda district. The greatest identity of Madnavati is that William Carey, one of the pioneers of Bengali prose literature and one of the leaders of the Srirampur Baptism Mission, spent the important period of his life in this place from June 1794 to the first few months of 1799. In order to spread education among local residents, he established a school here in 1794 AD. Madnavati is remembered as a witness to the multifaceted work of William Carey.

2. Ramkeli: - In the heart of Malda, lies the small village of Ramkeli, popularized on Bengal's tourist map as the land of Rup and Sanatan, the two famous disciples of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. In the summer of 1515AD, Prabhu was travelling to Vrindavan and for a short while he had stayed at Ramkeli. Two brothers, Rup and Sanatan Goswami who lived a life of opulence and luxury, were so inspired by Prabhu's spiritual lessons that they decided to denounce luxury and embrace Vaishnavism after listening to his speech. It was right at the footsteps of the Madan Mohan temple that still stands tall in Ramkeli, that Sri Chaitanya Dev had delivered his preaching. At the temple entrance, there is a pair of 600-year-old Kadamba and Tamal trees under which Prabhu meditated for hours during his stay. It is as famous as the Mahabodhi tree of Bodh Gaya. These two trees are said to have been present even during that era when Rup and Sanatan attained enlightenment through Krishna consciousness.

3. Jagjivanpur:- Jagajjibanpur or Jagajivanpur is an archaeological site in Habibpur block of Malda district, located at a distance of 41 km east from English Bazar town. The most significant findings from this site include a copper-plate inscription of Pala emperor Mahendrapaladeva and the structural remains of a 9th-century Buddhist Vihara: Nandadirghika-Udranga Mahavihara.

4. Pandua:- Pandua was the first capital city of the Bengal Sultanate for 114 years between the mid-14th and mid-15th centuries. It continued to be a "Mint town" until the 16th-century. The capital later shifted to Gaur. Pandua was described by travelers as a cosmopolitan administrative, commercial and military base, with a population of natives, royalty, aristocrats and foreigners from across Eurasia. Pandua was a lost city until it was rediscovered by Francis Buchanan-Hamilton in 1808. A detailed study of the city was carried out by Sir Alexander Cunningham. An aerial survey was conducted in 1931 by the Archaeological Survey of India. The notable archaeological sites include the Adina Mosque, the largest mosque in the subcontinent; the Eklakhi Mausoleum; and the Qutb Shahi Mosque.

- i) **Adina Mosque:-** The Adina Mosque is a former mosque in Malda District, West Bengal, India. It was the largest such structure in the Indian subcontinent and was built in 1369 AD, during the Bengal Sultanate era, as a royal mosque by Sikandar Shah (c.1358-1390 AD), who is also buried inside. The vast architecture is associated with the hypostyle of the Umayyad Mosque, which was used during the introduction of Islam in new areas. The early Bengal Sultanate harbored imperial ambitions after having defeated the Delhi Sultanate twice in 1353 and 1359.

Adina Mosque, an ASI-listed monument, extends 507½ feet from north to south and 285½ feet from east to west. On the east side, through which the shrine is entered by an insignificant door, the cloisters are 38 feet wide and have 3 aisles. The total number of domes covering the cloisters was 306 in all. The upper chamber (Badshah-Ka-Takht) which is situated to the north of the Central hall, was apparently intended to provide separate accommodation for the King and his family during services. The prayer niches on this area in the west wall are embellished with beautiful ornamental Tughra inscriptions.

- ii) **Eklakhi Mausoleum:-** This brick built Mausoleum is shaped like a square roofed by a dome with a small turret at each corner. The inside plan of the structure is octagonal. The walls are exquisitely ornamented in the outer part by carved tiles and decorative motifs on bricks. Tradition runs that this construction cost one lakh rupees, which gave the structure its name. Amongst the three graves inside, one is regarded as tomb of Sultan Jalaluddin, son of Raja Kans/Ganesh.

5. **Gour:-** Gauda was the capital city of Bengal under several kingdoms. The Gauda region was also a province of several pan-Indian empires. During the 7th century, the Gauda Kingdom was founded by King Shashanka, whose capital, was however at Karnasubarna of Murshidabad. The Pala Empire, which ruled large parts of the northern Indian subcontinent, was founded in Gauda during the 8th century. Gauda became known as Lakhnauti during the Sena dynasty. Gauda gradually became synonymous with Bengal and Bengalis. It was conquered by the Delhi Sultanate in 1204. Gour has many architectural structures of historical importance and is sure to attract history and archaeology buffs. Many historical relics are located in Gour like Kotwali Darwaza, Sona Masjid, Lottan Masjid, Tanti Para Mosque, Lukachuri Gate, Qadam Rasul Mosque, Fath Khan's Tomb, Chika Masjid or Chamkan Mosque etc.

- i) **Bara Sona Masjid:** Built by Sultan Nasrat Shah in c.1526 AD, this is a massive rectangular brick Mosque but stone pillars in three aisles with a corridor. It has eleven arched openings and was roofed by 44 hemispheric domes. It has earned the name Bara Sona Masjid (Great Golden Mosque) as its domes were originally gilded with gold.
- ii) **Dakhil Darwaja:** This impressive gateway built of brick was probably built by Sultan Barbak Shah (c.1459-74 AD) and served as the main entrance on north into the citadel of Gaur. It was also called 'Salami Gate' as salutes were fired from its sides. The facade of the gateway measures 73' 4" in breadth and rises to a height of 60'. The gateway represents the height of excellence that the brick masons of Bengal were capable of achieving.
- iii) **Firoz Minar:** Alternately known as Firoza Minar or 'Blue Tower' this tower 25.60 m high with spiral staircase having 73 steps was probably constructed by Saifuddin Firoz an Abyssinian commander of the royal forces who became the Sultan by avenging the killing of Sultan Jalaluddin Fath Shah, the last ruler of the Iliyas Shahi dynasty.

6. **Pirana Pir Dargah :-** It is one of the most busy, famous, and beautiful Dargas in Malda. Usman Serajuddin, known affectionately by followers as Akhi Siraj, was a 14th-century Bengali Muslim scholar. He was a Sufi belonging to the Chishti Order and was a disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi. He spent long years with him in Delhi and earned the sobriquet of Āinā-e-Hind (Persian: Mirror of India). His shrine, the Pirana Pir Dargah, attracts hundreds of thousands of devotees every year. Siraj and his successor, Alaul Haq, are credited with the rise to prominence of the Chishti order in Bengal.

7. **Jogdola:-**The village of Jogdola can be reached by crossing Pakuyahat near Nalagala or Madanavati. According to almost every local and foreign historian, the Jogdola monastery, established by Raja Rampal,(1070-1120 AD) was one of the finest centers of Buddhist culture in Bengal at that time, whose chief acharya was Abhaykar Gupta.

8. **Baharal :-** Baharal, on the banks of the river Kalindi, about 33 km northwest of the town of Englishbazar, is famous in history as the place of arrest of the late Nawab Manusrul Mulk Sirajuddallah Shah Quli Khan Mirza Mohammad Jambahadur. After fleeing from the battlefield of Palashi, Nawab Sirajuddallah was captured by the people of traitor Mir Jafar in this Baharal of Maldah district. Baharal is famous for the shrine of the Sufi Saint Danshah, a contemporary of Sirajuddoulah.

9. **Kandaran:-** Kandaran, an extension of Gour, is next to Samsi railway station in Malda district. The huge mounds here are believed to have hidden various traces of history of the Pala-Magadha kings and the viceroys of the Delhi Sultanate. Samsi, originally Shamsi, the place name is the reminder of the Delhi Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish.

10. **Kaligram:-**Kaligram is an ancient town just a few kilometers away from Chanchal. This remote place was once known as a centre of Sanskrit practice. There used to be a lot of wise people living here who were experts in various subjects. Purushottam Goswami, well-known for extraordinary

erudition, lived here.

11. **Patalchandi**:- According to local belief, during the Sen period, stone idols of goddess rose from the ground at the four entrances of Gaur, the capital of Bengal. Their names are Patalchandi (as the idol of the goddess came out from the underworld), Jahurachandi, Madhaichandi and Duarbasini. The kings of Gaur at that time believed that these goddesses were protecting the area from all dangers. So on their initiative temples were built in four places.

12. **Guamalati** :-On the 34th road from English Bazar, a town in Malda district, one can see the ruins of a very tall and huge brick building near Gaur Malda railway station and the ruins of several adjoining houses. In fact, it is a famous Indigo factory built during the English period. Compared to the many Indigo factories that were built in Malda district, this blue factory is still in a very decent condition. Looking at this indigo factory, one can directly understand the method by which indigo was made here.

13. **Old Malda** :- Old Malda, the town which lies just east of the confluence of the Mahananda and Kalindi Rivers, is part of the English Bazar metropolitan city. The town rose to prominence as the river port of the old capital of Pandua. During the 18th century, it was the seat of prosperous cotton and silk industries. Old Maldah or previously known as Malda is another important historical town of the district that may have first risen to prosperity as a port town prior to the Hussain Shahi rule. The town of Old Malda is situated on the eastern bank of the Mahananda River at the confluence with the river Kalindri. It is about 13 miles to the north of the citadel of Gour and four miles from English Bazar. The word 'Mal' is in Arabic origin which means wealth and the word 'Daha' means Ponds or sea hinting at the meaning 'sea of wealth' for Maldah. The geographical advantage of the town helps to a great extent to its rise as a port town. Moreover, it was well connected with the whole of north-east India through its river communication and thus commanded over the economic activities of North-Eastern India. Old Malda had not only a great retail trade but also probably the large town of silk and cotton manufacturers from very early times. Abid Ali Khan refers in his book *Memoirs of Gour and Pandua* mentions that the town of Old Malda might have emerged to prosperity as a port- town of the capital city of Pandua. The letters of the English Agents at Patna in 1620 and 1621 A.D. mention “doupattas (Sheets) of Malda” and “a few Malda wares for patterns for Persia”. Up to 1770 when the factory was transferred to English Bazar, Old Malda was the East India Company's local centre of trade in cotton and Silk. The French and Dutch also had factories at Old Malda. But with the gradual improvement of the English Bazar town, the prosperity of the old Malda town of Malda gradually diminished.

14. **English Bazar**:- English Bazar, presently known as Malda, which is another important town of historical importance of the district is situated on the right bank of the Mahananda. The name of English Bazar is derived from its old name of Englezabad which was later changed to Angrezabad or Ingrezabad and finally English Bazar as well as Engrejazar. One theory is that the name points to its early foundation by the English traders of the East India Company; the other that it was a centre of the dying trade, and from that, the name evolved. The town of English Bazar is now commonly known as Malda and the real town is now known as Old Malda. The English East India Company selected the place near to the river Mahananda to build its administrative or trade centre. They transferred their headquarters from the Malda (Old Malda) to English Bazar Town. In the eighteenth and nineteenth Century the town was famous by the name Englezabad, Auragazabad or English Bazar. The East India Gazetteer which was published in 1828 refers to English Bazar as a considerable town, about four miles distance from Malda, the headquarters of the commercial resident of the Company.

15. Maa Johura Temple, Malda :- Maa Johura Temple is situated on the outskirts of Malda Town, West Bengal, India. It is surrounded by lush green fields on one side and Mango Orchards on the other side, and is very near to the Bangladesh border. The original temple is stated to have been built in c 1500 A.D. However, there is another view that the original temple was built by Raja Ballal Sen in 1159-1179 A.D, who was the third ruler of Sena Dynasty of the then Bengal. It is a renowned temple of Adishakti in Malda and the deity is represented by three faces of Goddess Kali. It is said that the three faces represent the three goddesses Maha Kali, Maha Laxmi and Maha Saraswati. The unique feature of this temple is that it opens only on Tuesdays and Saturdays when thousands of people come to offer their prayers, the rest of the days the temple remains closed.

16. The Kotwali Darwazah:

This is the central gate in the south wall of the City of Gour near Mahadipur. It had a magnificent archway which has now fallen in but before this happened Artist Henry Creighton made a good sketch of the gate. The gateway had a brick arch 30 feet high and 16 feet 9 inches long. It is said that the chief of police was stationed here. There are battlements East and west of the gateway and on each side apertures still exist from which to fire on an enemy.

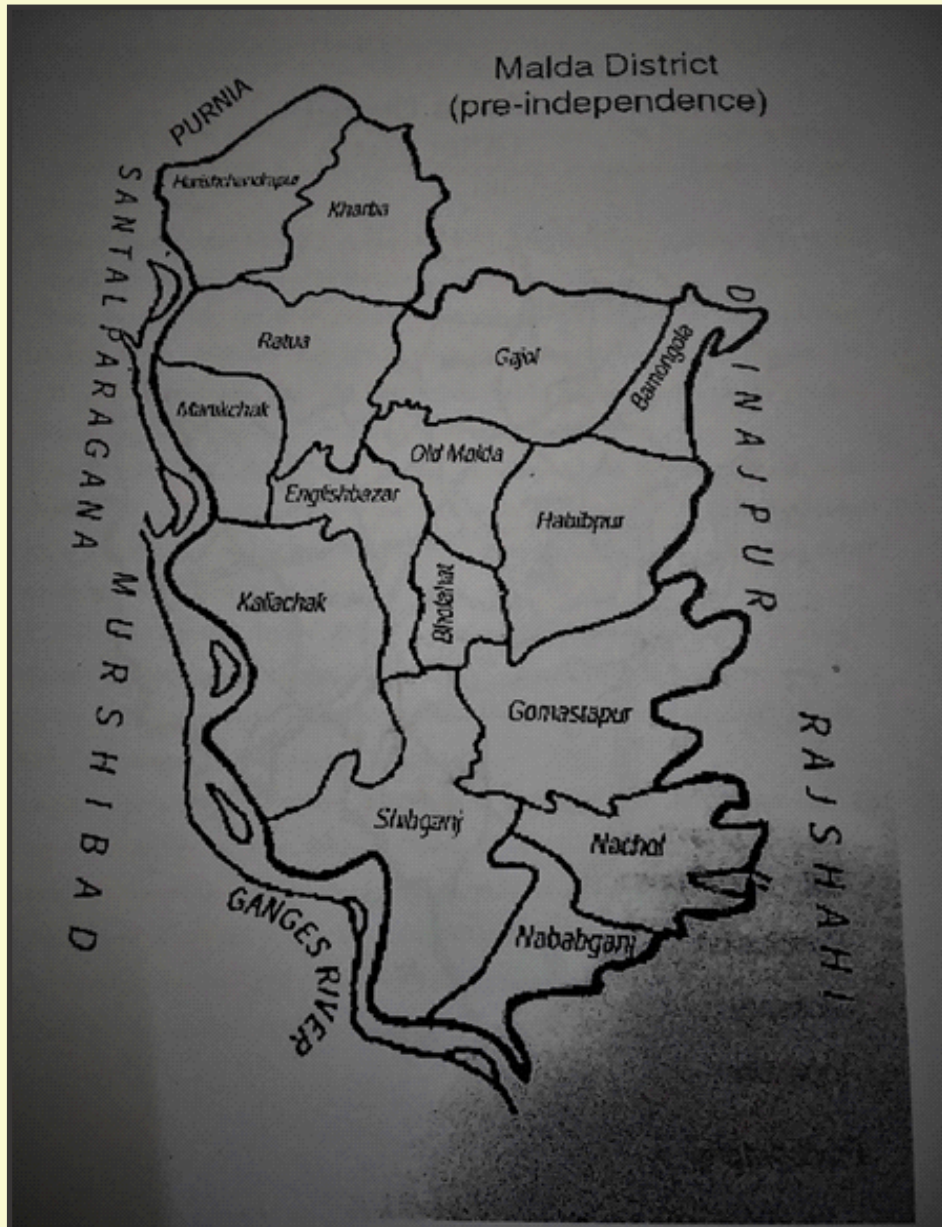
17. The Great Sagar Dighi:

The enormous tank lies about 6 miles Southwest of English Bazar on the north of the road. The actual water measures 1600 yards by 800 yards. The length is from north to south proving its Hindu origin. It had six masonry ghats or landing places, each 60 yards in breadth. This work is said to have been commenced in the reign of Lakhan Sen about the middle of the 12th century AD.

JAHAJBARI



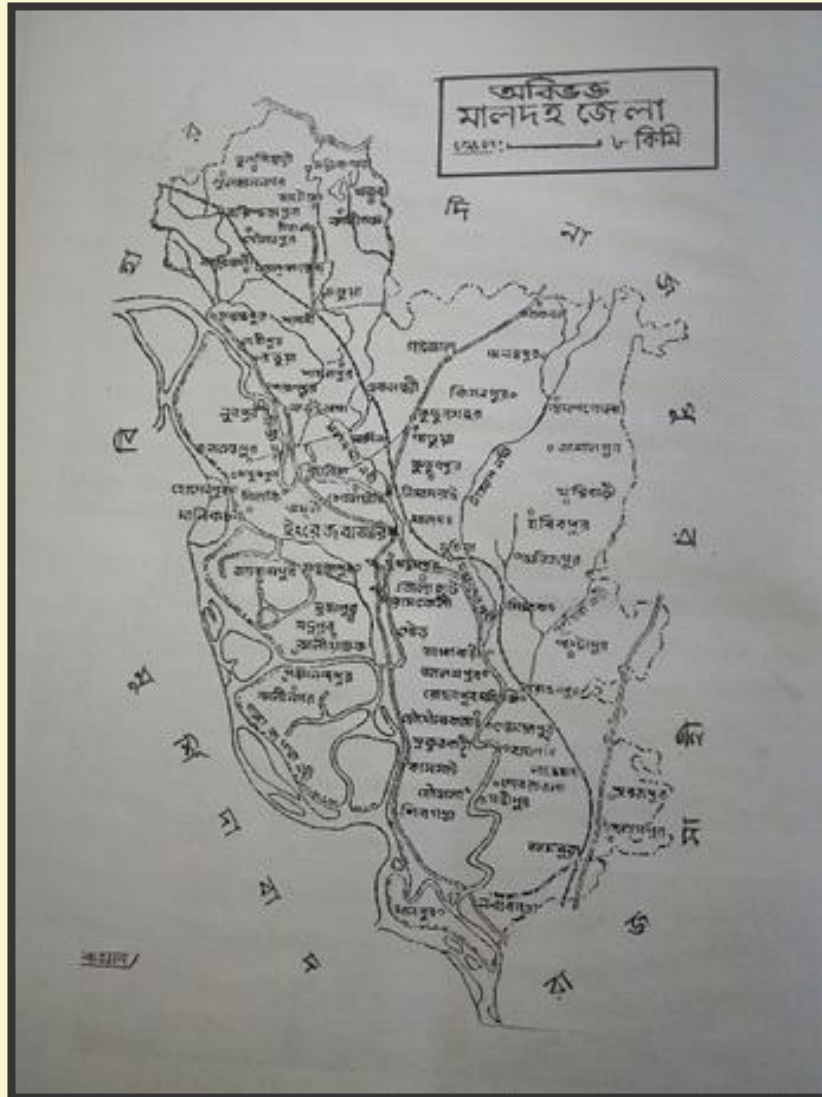
MALDA DISTRICT



MALDA ZELA



MALDA ZELA



The replica of copper plaque found at site



ADINA



GOUR





A compendious vocabulary, English and Persian, including all the Oriental simples in the materia medica, employed in modern practice: with tables subjoined of the successions of the Khaliffs. And of the kings of Persia and Hindostan / [Francis Gladwin]. The first publication from Malda

The second publication from Bengal came out from Malda District

Compiled by: Saswati Saha, DICO, Malda