

BENGAL SULTANATE- MONUMENTS FROM THE BYGONE ERA

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FADE IN:

EXT. SONA MASJID - DAY

The pathway leading to the entrance of Sona Masjid in Pandua with the five archways in view.

MAIN TITLE: BENGAL SULTANATE

Monuments from the bygone era

EXT. QADAM RASUL MOSQUE - DAY

The gateway to Qadam Raul mosque in Gaur is seen.

INT. SONA MASJID - DAY

The designs on the window panes of Sona masjid is seen.

EXT. ADINA MOSQUE - DAY

The stone work on the doors of Adina mosque and the courtyard of the mosque with scattered tombs.

Map of Malda district in West Bengal.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The Bengal Sultanate was founded by Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah who established the Ilyas Shahi Dynasty. Before we look at monuments from that era that still stand today, let's first learn a little bit of history about the Bengal Sultanate. Lakhnauti, Sonargaon and Satgaon were the three regions of Bengal under the Delhi Sultanate and Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah was the governor of Satgaon region. He revolted and unified the three provinces of Bengal and formed the Bengal Sultanate.

Map showing the reign of Bengal sultanate.

Maps showing Gaur and Pandua regions of the Bengal Sultanate in present day context.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The areas that Bengal Sultanate reigned in, today are part of Bangladesh, India, Myanmar and Nepal. The sultanate had four capitals, two of which Pandua and Gaur are now part of Malda district in the Indian state of West Bengal.

TITLE: A brief timeline of Bengal Sultanate

EXT. ADINA MOSQUE - DAY

The main entrance, inner dome and pillars of Adina mosque.

Sub-Title: **Ilyas Shahi Dynasty (1342-1414 AD)**

Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah 1342-1358 AD

Sikandar Shah 1358-1390 AD

Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah 130-1411 AD

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Ilyas Shahi dynasty's rule was from 1342 to 1414 AD and its first Sultan was the founder Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah. His son Sikander Shah is known for constructing the largest mosque in the Indian subcontinent at that time, the Adina mosque.

EXT. EKLAKHI MAUSOLEUM - DAY

The main entrance of Eklakhi mausoleum with the garden in the front can be seen.

Sub-Title: **House of Raja Ganesh (1414-1435 AD)**

Raja Ganesha 1414-1415 AD

Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah 1415-1416 AD

Raja Ganesha 1416-1418 AD

Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah 1418-1433 AD

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Raja Ganesha founded the House of Raja Ganesha after overthrowing the Ilyas Shahi dynasty and he ruled briefly. His son Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah became the first native Bengali muslim ruler or sultan of the Bengal Sultanate.

EXT. SALAMI DARWAZA - DAY

View of Salami darwaza from its backyard.

Sub-Title: **Restored Ilyas Shahi Dynasty (1435-1487 AD)**

Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah I 1435-1459 AD

Barbak Shah 1459-1474 AD

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The Ilyas Shahi Dynasty was restored again in 1435 AD. Its most notable sultan was the second ruler Barbak Shah who built the Salami Darwaza that still stands today.

EXT. FEROS MINAR - DAY

View of Feroz minar from a distance and the stone work on the walls of the minar.

Sub-Title: **Habshi Rule (1487-1494 AD)**

Shahzada Barbak 1487 AD

Saifuddin Diruz Shah 1487-1489 AD

NARRATOR (V.O.)

This was followed by the brief Habshi rule from 1487 to 1494 AD. The sultans were from the Abyssinian mercenary corps.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Saifuddin Firoz Shah, the second ruler, built a watchtower and named it Feroz Minar after himself to commemorate his victories in the battlefield.

EXT. BORO SONA MASJID - DAY

A gateway and Boro Sona masjid with its archways and domes can be seen.

Sub-Title: **Hussain Shahi Dynasty (1494-1538 AD)**

Alauddin Hussain Shah 1494-1518 AD

Nasiruddin Nasrat Shah 1518-1538 AD

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
 And finally the Hussain Shahi dynasty that ruled from 1494 to 1538 AD. Alauddin Hussain Shah and Nasiruddin Nasrat Shah are two of its prominent sultans. A gateway, a mosque and a mausoleum built by them stand to this day in Gaur.

INT. BORO SONA MASJID - DAY

The hallway of Boro Sona masjid.

EXT. QADAM RASUL MOSQUE - DAY

The gateway of Qadam Rasul mosque is seen.

EXT. CHAMKAN MOSQUE - DAY

The backyard of Chamkan mosque with fallen pillars.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
 The defeat of the Bengal Sultanate under Sultan Nasiruddin Nasrat Shah by Mughal emperor Babur at the Battle of Ghagra in 1529 AD led the path to the ultimate fall of the Bengal sultanate in 1576 AD in the hands of the Mughals.

TITLE: Remaining monuments of Bengal Sultanate in Pandua and Gaur

|                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Adina Mosque      | Boro Sona Masjid   |
| Eklakhi Mausoleum | Qadam Rasul Mosque |
| Chamkan Mosque    | Sona Masjid        |
| Salami Darwaza    | Lukochuri Gateway  |
| Feroz Minar       | Fath Khan's Tomb   |
| Gumti Darwaza     |                    |

TITLE: Adina Mosque, Pandua

Sub-Title: Adina mosque was built in 1369 AD By Sikandar Shah, the second sultan of Ilyas Shahi Dynasty.

EXT. ADINA MOSQUE - DAY

The entrance of Adina mosque with the garden in front.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It is one of the grandest structures of the Bengal Sultanate that we can find today. The tomb of Sultan Sikandar Shah lies inside its premises. The mosque is made up of bricks with a stone base which is typical of the architecture from that time in Bengal.

INT. ADINA MOSQUE - DAY

The tomb of Sikandar Shah, the inner structure of one of the domes and the royal gallery with its pillars can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The mosques from the Bengal Sultanate served as royal courts and had an in-built throne known as Badshah-e-Takht for the Sultan. This is the royal gallery used by the Sultan. It is well preserved even centuries later. This royal gallery in Adina mosque is one of the largest in the Indian subcontinent.

EXT. ADINA MOSQUE - DAY

The central Mihrab of the mosque in the backyard can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

This mosque is huge. It is rectangular in shape and has a large courtyard and pillared hallways. The central Mihrab of the mosque is still there. The semicircular niche that appears in the wall of a mosque indicating the qibla, that is the direction of Kaaba in Mecca is called a Mihrab.

EXT. ADINA MOSQUE - DAY

Wide view of the mosque from the backyard where few remaining domes and scattered tombs can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

There used to be several domes earlier but only a few remain now. Adina mosque is the most impressive structure from the Ilyas Shahi dynasty that we can find today.

TITLE: Eklakhi Mausoleum, Pandua

Sub-Title: Eklakhi mausoleum was built in 1425 AD by Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah, the second sultan from House of Raja Ganesha.

EXT. EKLAKHI MAUSOLEUM - DAY

The Eklakhi mausoleum with its sloping roof and the garden in the front can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

According to tales, one lakh rupees was used to build the mausoleum and hence the name Eklakhi which means one lakh. It is one of the earliest examples that incorporated the bengali architecture. The mausoleum gives the appearance of traditional thatched bengali hut with sloping roof but instead it is made with bricks.

## INT. EKLAKHI MAUSOLEUM - DAY

The inner structure of the dome of the Eklakhi mausoleum and the three tombs kept inside its premises can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Legend has it that the three tombs inside the mausoleum are that of Sultan Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah, his wife Asmantara and their son Shamsuddin Ahmad Shah.

## EXT. EKLAKHI MAUSOLEUM - DAY

Intricate terracotta work on the walls of the mausoleum can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The mausoleum is square shaped with a single dome. The thick walls have several ornamentations made of terracotta, that is a type of clay. It stands at 25 feet high and is a perfect example of the combination of Bengali and Islamic architecture.

TITLE: Chamkan Mosque, Gaur

Sub-Title: Chamkan mosque was built in 1450 AD.

## EXT. CHAMKAN MOSQUE - DAY

The front and side views of the mosque with fallen pillars in the backyard.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It is called Chamkan or Chika mosque but probably it was a mausoleum and not a mosque. It is quite similar to the Eklakhi mausoleum architecturally. Chamkan mosque also has a single dome and the structure is square in shape. Also, there is no Mihrab in it.

## EXT. CHAMKAN MOSQUE - DAY

The information board of Chamkan mosque put up by Archaeological Survey of India, the terracotta work on its walls and a fallen engraved pillar can be seen.



NARRATOR (V.O.)

Chika means bat in bengali and the mosque used to be infested with bats earlier, hence the name Chika or Chamkan mosque. All of its exterior walls have beautiful terracotta ornamentations. There are few richly engraved pillars that are lying around in the courtyard of the mosque.

INT. CHAMKAN MOSQUE - DAY

The empty interior of Chamkan mosque that can be entered with a small grilled gate.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It is said that during the reign of Sultan Hussain Shah from 1493 to 1519 AD, Chamkan mosque was used as a prison.

TITLE: Salami Darwaza, Gaur

Sub-Title: Salami Darwaza was built by Barbak Shah, the second sultan of the restored Ilyas Shahi Dynasty.

EXT. SALAMI DARWAZA - DAY

View of Salami Darwaza from its backyard and the main entrance.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Salami Darwaza or Gate of Salutations is named so because salutes used to be fired from its sides. This arched gateway led to the capital city of Gaur and served as its main entrance from the northern side.

EXT. BANK OF A POND - DAY

The pond beside the Salami Darwaza and its main entrance. A walk-through the hallway of Salami Darwaza and reaching its backyard where vegetation can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Now on one side of the Salami Darwaza there is a pond and on the other side it is surrounded by vegetation and mango orchard.

EXT. SALAMI DARWAZA - DAY

Terracotta work on the walls of Salami Darwaza.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The base and the side panels of the archways are made of stones and there are two other layers of stone on the frontal facade that can be seen. The other part of the structure is made entirely of bricks and has window shaped arched panels. This also has terracotta ornamentations all over its walls.

TITLE: Feroz Minar, Gaur

Sub-Title: The construction of Feroz Minar started in 1486 AD and was completed in 1489 AD. It was built by Saifuddin Firuz Shah, the second sultan of Habshi rule.

EXT. FERROZ MINAR - DAY

The close-up view of Feroz Minar from outside and the information board by Archaeological Survey of India can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Feroz Minar is a five storeyed tower made of bricks and stones. The first three floors have twelve sides and the other two are circular in shape.

EXT. FERROZ MINAR - DAY

The stone work on the outer walls of the minar and the entrance to the staircase through a closed grilled gate is seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It stands on a stone pedestal and there are engravings on the stone structure encircling the minar. Even the entrance to the staircase is made of stones. The spiral staircase that was once open to the visitors has 73 steps. Feroz Minar is 25 metres high.

EXT. FEROZ MINAR - DAY

Feroz Minar standing tall from a distance.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

There are some engravings on the remaining part of the brick structure but it is not heavily ornamented.

TITLE: Gumti Darwaza, Gaur

Sub-Title: Gumti Darwaza was built in 1512 AD by Alauddin Hussain Shah, the first sultan of Hussain Shahi Dynasty.

EXT. GUMTI DARWAZA - DAY

The entrance of Gumti Darwaza as seen through some vegetation and the close-up view of the enamelled bricks on its walls.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The single domed square structure served as a gateway to the city of Gaur. It stands on a stone base. The highlight of Gumti Darwaza are the faded enamelled bricks that are still visible.

EXT. GUMTI DARWAZA - DAY

The information board by Archaeological Survey of India can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

There are intricate brickworks on both sides of the entrance and the top layer of the structure is heavily decorated.

Title: Boro Sona Masjid, Gaur

Sub-Title: Boro Sona Masjid or Baroduari, it was built in 1526 AD by Nasiruddin Nasrat Shah, the second sultan of the Hussain Shahi dynasty.

EXT. BORO SONA MASJID - DAY

The eleven domes of the mosque can be seen from its main entrance.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Boro Sona masjid or the great golden mosque was named so because the eleven domes on this massive rectangular mosque were initially gilded.

INT. BORO SONA MASJID - DAY

A walk-through the hallway of the mosque and the inner brick structure of the domes in view.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It is also called Baroduari or the 12 gated mosque even though there are only eleven archways in the main corridor. It is the biggest structure in Gaur. The mosque is mostly made of stones but the inner layer of the domes are made of bricks and there are brickworks on the archways that lead to the courtyard.

EXT. BORO SONA MASJID - DAY

The courtyard of the mosque that now remains in ruin.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

There are no heavy works on the walls of Boro Sona masjid. The courtyard now remains in ruin where perhaps once pillars used to stand.

TITLE: Qadam Rasul Mosque, Gaur

Sub-Title: Qadam Rasul Mosque was built in 1531 AD by Nasiruddin Nasrat Shah, the second sultan of Hussain Shahi dynasty.

EXT. QADAM RASUL MOSQUE - DAY

The view of the mosque from its garden. The hallway and the pillars of the mosque can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Qadam Rasul mosque was most likely not built as a mosque but to contain the footprint of Prophet Mohammad set in stone that was brought by a saint from Arabia. This is how it got its name Qadam Rasul that is footprint of the messenger.

EXT. QADAM RASUL MOSQUE - DAY

The terracotta works on the walls of the mosque and the arched verandah can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The single domed square structure is known for the beautiful brick ornamentations on its wall. There are several floral patterns visible as well.

EXT. QADAM RASUL MOSQUE - DAY

A nameless tomb and the ruins of the mosque can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The wide verandah with archways is in fairly good condition but the resthouse in front of Qadam Rasul mosque now remains in ruin.

TITLE: Sona Masjid, Pandua

Sub-Title: Sona Masjid or Qutub Shahi mosque was built in 1582 AD by one Makhdum Shaikh.

EXT. SONA MASJID - DAY

The main entrance of the mosque, designs on its window panes and a pathway between Sona masjid and Eklakhi mausoleum can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Qutub Shahi mosque or Sona masjid was built in the honour of Saint Nur Qutub-Ul-Alam by one of his followers Makhdum Shaikh. Built more than a century after Eklakhi mausoleum, now the two prominent structures in Pandua are connected by a narrow pathway.

INT. SONA MASJID - DAY

The stone work on the walls, the Mihrab and the pillars at the courtyard can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It is also called Sona masjid or the Golden mosque because earlier the walls used to be gilded. This structure has a lot of ornamented stone work on its walls. There are also heavily engraved stone pillars that are now lying in the inner sanctum.

TITLE: Lukochuri Gateway, Gaur

Sub-Title: Lukochuri Gateway was built in 1655 AD by Shah Shuja, the brother of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

EXT. LUKOCHURI GATEWAY - DAY

Lukochuri gateway, Qadam Rasul mosque and a garden connecting the two can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Lukochuri gateway was built as an eastern entrance to the city of Gaur. Its name probably came much later which means hide and seek in bengali. Gumti gate, a sultanate structure is close to Lukochuri gateway but this was most likely built for symbolic reasons and to represent the Mughal rule.

EXT. LUKOCHURI GATEWAY - DAY

The main entrance of Lukochuri gateway that stands on a road can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

This rectangular structure has guardrooms on its sides and a naqqar khana or a drummers' chamber built on top.

TITLE: Fath Khan's Tomb, Gaur

Sub-Title: Fath Khan's tomb was built between 1658-1707 AD.

EXT. FATH KHAN'S TOMB AND QADAM RASUL MOSQUE - DAY

The structures of Fath Khan's tomb and Qadam Rasul mosque standing side-by-side. The information board of Fath Khan's tomb by Archaeological Survey of India can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Fath Khan's tomb is the perfect example of the indigenous designs in structures of Bengal. The famed sloping roof of huts also known as bengal roof had first appeared in concrete form in the 15th century.

EXT. FATH KHAN'S TOMB - DAY

The tomb of Fath Khan and the courtyard of the monument can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Mughal emperor Aurangzeb suspected that Saint Niamatullah was advising his brother to conspire against him and hence sent Fath Khan to kill the saint. On reaching Gaur, it is said that Fath Khan died before he could complete the task and thus vindicated the saint's honour. Fath Khan's tomb and Qadam Rasul Mosque, these two structures are now next to each other.

EXT. ADINA MOSQUE - DAY

The royal gallery, fallen pillars in the courtyard and the stone work on the walls of Adina mosque can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

There are several things that are common in all the monuments that were built during the Bengal Sultanate. The use of stone at the base of the structures and the bottom part of the archways was done to increase the structural strength.

EXT. MONUMENTS - DAY

The single domed square structure of Chamkan mosque, the multi domed rectangular structure of Boro Sona masjid and the sloping roof and terracotta work on the walls of Eklakhi mausoleum can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Another unique feature of monuments from that time is that most of them are either square shaped and single domed or rectangular and multi domed. The sloping bengal roof and terracotta ornamentations show how indigenous designs were incorporated in the structures.

EXT. MONUMENTS - DAY

Arabic inscriptions and Mihrabs on the walls of Adina mosque and Sona masjid can be seen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Arabic inscriptions often included the name of the builder or verses from Quran. The mosques also have rectangular Mihrabs that have intricate designs.

EXT. MONUMENTS - DAY

Information boards by Archaeological Survey of India, the gateway leading to Boro Sona masjid and Lukochuri gateway can be seen.



NARRATOR (V.O.)

All these monuments are in Malda district of West Bengal and are maintained by the Kolkata circle of Archaeological Survey of India and can be visited for free of cost. These monuments today stand as Bengal Sultanate's strong architectural legacy.

FADE OUT.

END CREDIT

Music Credit

Sitarist Pandit Nikhil Banerjee

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