



Natore Rajbari was a prominent royal palace in Natore, Bangladesh. It was the residence and seat of the Rajshahi Raj family of zamindars. The famous queen Rani Bhabani lived here and after the death of her husband, expanded both the estate and the palace.

Natore Royal Palace is located in Natore District town. It is also known as Rani Bhabani Rajprasad. The cannon of the Royal Palace is placed in front of the palace. There are six ponds inside the palace area. The whole palace is surrounded by lake-shaped tanks from outside. The building which was built in the 17th century still attracts visitors. This palace was the residence of Queen Bhabani which is also known as Big Taraf Bhavan.



History:

Natore Rajbari (also known as Pagla Raja's Palace) was a prominent royal palace in Natore, Bangladesh. It was the residence and seat of the Rajshahi Raj family of zamindars. Famous queen Rani Bhabani lived here and after the death of her husband expanded both the estate and the palace.



This great woman was born in 1122 at the village "Adam Dighir Chhatiyana" of Bogra district. During the period of Rani Bhabani, the Rajshahi, Pabna, Bogra, Kushtia, Jessore, Rangpur, and Murshibad, Beerbhum, Malda of India was under her. That's why she was called the "Ordho Bongeswari"(half of the ruler of Bengal). Her palace is situated at the main town of Natore, and it's a lovely place for the tourist.

The Natore dynasty is regarded as one of the most powerful and unified empires of the 18th century in this region. In 1706, contrarily in 1710, Raja Ramjiban became the first king of the dynasty and he built his Rajbari at Natore on an area of 50.42 acres of land that is enclosed within two rings of moats as a part of the defensive system. He governed up to 1734 AD and died that very year.

After his death, his adopted son Raja Ramkanto became the king and got married to Rani Bhabani in 1730. When Ramkanto died, Nawab Alibordi Khan handed over the responsibility of the zamindari to Rani Bhabani who expanded the empire further.



Architecture:

The present palace of Natore is situated in the centre of the district on a total area of about 120 acres. This once-stunning structure was equipped with different elegant features in its architecture like the massive gateways, large tanks, orchards, courtyard, ponds, canals, and temples.

Different features like the geometric and floral panels in plasterwork on the façade, the clerestory windows originally fitted with colored glass

panes, the classical nude female sculptures, the series of Corinthian columns and semi-circular arches in the typical classical Roman style, the spiral iron staircases, and the black and white marble floor will surely take you back to that period.

The total area of the Rajbari is divided mainly into two parts- Baro Taraf and Chhoto Taraf. It also has buildings like the Rani Bhavan, Kachari Bhavan, Guest House, Madhu Rani Bhavan.

Boro Taraf, the main palace block, is now used as the Deputy Commissioner's office which faces a large open lawn to the south. The Natore Rajbari is one of those treasures of the past that demand care and preservation.

The main palace block (Boro Torof), now housing the newly created deputy commissioner's office, faces a large open lawn to the south. Two other single-storied blocks, placed on the west and the south, look over the lawn and are laid out in the form of an English "U" with the open side on the east. The main northern block, facing south, has a frontage of about 100'-0" with a prominently projecting porch in the middle and two slightly projecting bays at either end, all carrying triangular pediments above. The elegant central porch is supported on a series of Corinthian columns and semi-circular arches in the typical classical Roman style and the veranda in front of the apartments are also similarly relieved. The whole facade is tastefully decorated with geometric and floral panels in plasterwork. This block contains twelve spacious apartments, disposed on either side of the large reception hall (7.47m × 16.01m) which is located in the middle. The access to the reception hall (60'-0"x 30'-0") is gained through another large hall and is backed by a 10'-0" wide veranda on the north.

The lofty ceiling of the central hall, rises to a height of 30'-0" and is lit by eighteen clerestory windows, originally fitted with colored glass panes, whilst the roof of the other rooms are considerably lower in height. The entire floor of this block is laid in black and white imported marble. The back veranda is supported on twenty pairs of Corinthian columns, the capitals of which contain within its acanthus leaves, some classical nude female figures. The western block, placed at right angles to the main block, has about a 200'-0" frontage and faces the lawn on the east. It is also a single-storied building with an arched projecting bay in the middle. A strip of veranda, supported on a series of paired Doric columns, runs the entire length of the block. Entering through the arched central bay there is access into an open of longed court, occupied by typical 'nat-mandap'. Beyond and further to the west, is a Krishna temple. This family shrine has a 50'-0" wide frontage, backed by a 10'-0" wide veranda which carried on a series of double Corinthian columns.



This 'nat-mandap' has a humped tin roof supported on a series of iron pillars. Placed at right angles to this block is another north facing single-

storied building, which is about 150'-0" long and has central projecting porch. The porch entrance leads on to a long veranda running the entire length of the building behind which there are a series of apartments of varying sizes, somewhat similarly disposed as the former. A long veranda to the rear of this building overlooks a large tank. A series of Corinthian columns, which support veranda, projects as a semi-circle in the middle. The rear of this handsome block is tastefully decorated in plasterwork. The building at present is occupied by the office of the superintendent of police.

To the south-west rears of the second block a couple of very ruined single-storied residential buildings overlook a large tank from its northern bank. The smaller of these two structures presenting a 50'-0" frontage with a veranda, is relieved with a series of paired Doric columns while the larger adjacent block has a 100'-0" frontage with a veranda carried on a row of double Corinthian columns. Sadly both these ruins are now thickly covered with encroaching thickets and accumulating debris. However, the main palace block of the 'Chhota-Taraf', perched picturesquely on the western bank of this large tank and now occupied by the District Judge's Court, is an imposing structure. The 70'-0" long façade has a prominently projecting central triple-arched portico.

The central part of the building, occupied by the reception hall projects above the flanking wings and is crowned by a pyramidal roof with clerestory windows. The parapet of the porch is decorated in plasterwork with two short projecting bays at either end of the building, each decorated with two pairs of Corinthian columns, which are topped by triangular pediments. Entering this palace block through the porch one encounters a long 10'-0" wide veranda with a black and white marble floor. Behind the veranda there is a row of apartments which lead on to the vast reception hall, measuring 7.32 meter x 15.55meter.

The lofty ceiling of reception hall is another hall measuring 50'-0"x20'-0" with a projecting balcony at the far end which overlooks the encircling moat. Although there are fifteen apartments including the central hall.

The rear of the building also is tastefully relieved with Ionic capitals, floral motifs and bearded human heads in stucco. The two large halls of the palace, probably flagged in marble, are now devoid of their original floor, but the other apartments have white and black marble floors. Curiously the capitals most of the columns are of composite character with acanthus leaves intertwining Ionic roundels.