



The Shat Gumbuj Mosque is near the northwestern outskirts of Dhaka in the Mohammadpur area. It is a fine example of the provincial Mughal style of architecture introduced in Bangladesh in the 17th century.

Architecture:

Bangladesh has three world heritage sites. The Shat Gumbuj Mosque in Bagerhat is one of them. It is a 15th century Islamic edifice situated in the suburbs of Bagerhat (a district in Khulna Division), on the edge of the Sundarbans, some 175 km south west of Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh.

It is an enormous Moghul architectural site covering area 160×108 square feet. The mosque is unique in that, it has sixty pillars, which support eighty one exquisitely curved domes that have worn away with the passage of time. The structure of the building also represents the 15th century Turki architectural view. It is anticipated that before 1459 a greatest devotee of Islam named Khan Jahan Ali established this mosque. He was also the founder of Bagerhat district.



History:

Built by Hazrat Khan Jahan (RA), this magnificent mosque is more than five centuries old and is located about one and a half kilometers west of his Dargah. The mosque occupies a special place in the medieval architectural style with its architectural techniques and the decoration of herbs on red burnt soil. Although it is known as the sixty-domed mosque, it actually has a total of 74 domes, including four domes on the four-cornered Burmanj, and a total of 71 domes, including six four-story domes similar to the middle row Bengali rice. It is noteworthy that the chauchala roof and dome of the prayer room are built on arches supported by sixty pillars of brick and stone. It is said that Hazrat Khan Jahan (R) brought all the stones for the construction of the Shatgumbuj Mosque by boat from Chittagong, far away from the Rajmahal in Orissa, India as his miraculous power. Tughlaq architecture has a special effect on the structure of the building. The wall around this huge mosque is 8 feet wide and has four minarets at its four corners. The cottage at the top of the south minaret is called Roshanai Cottage and has a staircase leading up to the minaret. The mosque is made of small bricks, 180 feet long, 108 feet wide, 22 feet high. There is a large arch in the middle of the front of the mosque and five small arches on either side. On the west side of the mosque there are a total of 28 doors, including one door next to the main arch. The Department of Archeology and Museums of the government has taken the responsibility of preserving this historic mosque and Mazar-e-Sharif of Khanjahan (RA) as antiquities. The mosque has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

In mid-15th century, a Muslim colony was founded in the inhospitable mangrove forest of the Sundarbans near the seacoast in the Bagerhat district by an obscure saint-General, named Ulugh Khan Jahan. He was the earliest torch bearer of Islam in the South who laid the nucleus of an affluent city during the reign of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah (1442-59), then known as 'Khalifabad' (present Bagerhat). Khan Jahan aborned his city with numerous mosques, tanks, roads and other public buildings, the spectacular ruins of which are focused around the most imposing and largest multidomed mosques in Bangladesh, known as the Shait-Gumbad Masjid (160'X108'). The stately fabric of the monument, serene and imposing, stands on the eastern bank of an unusually vast sweet-water tank, clustered around by the heavy foliage of a low-laying countryside, characteristic of a sea-coast landscape.



So in the year 1459 the great Azam Ulugh Khan Jahan established this mosque, which called Shat Gambuj Mosjid. In Bengali Shat means the number 60. Though it is called Shat Gambuj Mosjid, actually the numbers of Gamboj in the mosque are 81. The mosque roofed over with 77 squat domes, including 7 chauchala or four-sided pitched Bengali domes in the middle row.

The vast prayer hall, although provided with 11 arched doorways on east and 7 each on north and south for ventilation and light, presents a dark and somber appearance inside. It is divided into 7 longitudinal aisles and 11 deep bays by a forest of slender stone columns, from which springs rows of endless arches, supporting the domes. Six feet thick, slightly tapering walls and hollow and round, almost detached corner towers, resembling the bastions of fortress, each capped by small rounded cupolas, recall the Tughlaq architecture of Delhi. The general appearance of this noble monument with its stark simplicity but massive character reflects the strength and simplicity of the builder. This mosque is 160 ft long and 108 ft. in its width. This is one of the most beautiful archeological and historical Mosque in Bangladesh made by red burn mud. The archeological beauty of this Mosque enchants the tourist till now. Besides this Mosque an archeological museum is there where you can find that times archeological and historical materials.