

Sonargaon : glimpse into Bangladesh's artistic past

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Dhaka : Sonargaon, a historic city nestled in the Narayanganj district of Bangladesh, offers a captivating glimpse into the country's rich heritage.

Once a bustling metropolis and the capital of ancient Bengal, Sonargaon's grandeur is still evident in its well-preserved architectural treasures and archaeological sites.

Sonargaon, meaning "Golden Village" in Bengali, has a history dating back centuries.

It flourished as a major trading centre, attracting merchants from far and wide. The city's strategic location on the banks of the Buriganga River made it a vital hub for commerce, particularly the trade of fine muslin fabrics for which Bengal was renowned.

During the Sultanate period, Sonargaon served as a secondary capital to

the main city of Dhaka.

Under the rule of Isa Khan, a powerful local ruler, it witnessed a period of great prosperity and cultural development. The city's architectural legacy reflects the influence of various dynasties, including the Sultans, Mughals and British.

Sonargaon boasts a collection of stunning architectural monuments that showcase the city's past glory.

Some of the most notable structures include Panam City. This ancient city within Sonargaon is a fascinating archaeological site. Its ruins offer a glimpse into the urban planning and architecture of the past. It is also known as Panam Nagar, a historical city. Once a bustling centre of trade and commerce, it offers a fascinating glimpse into the country's rich past.

Sonakanda River Fort is another attraction in the area. A fortified structure built during the Mughal period, the Sonakanda River Fort served as a strategic defense outpost. It is a prime example of Mughal military architecture and offers a glimpse into the region's rich history.

Panch Pir Mazar Shrine is also an attractive site. The Sufi shrine is a popular pilgrimage site and a testament to Sonargaon's religious heritage. It is a place of spiritual significance, attracting devotees from far and wide.

Ibrahim's and Abdul Hamid's Mosques are must-visits. These mosques, dating back to the Mughal era, are examples of Islamic architecture in Bangladesh. Ibrahim's and Abdul Hamid's Mosques are two historic mosques which stand as testaments to the region's rich Islamic heritage and architectural traditions.

Another attraction, Ananda Mohan Poddar House is a colonial-era mansion. This building showcases the architectural style of the British period.

Despite the passage of time, Sonargaon continues to be a vibrant community. The city's residents have preserved their traditional crafts and customs, ensuring that the cultural heritage of Sonargaon lives on. Visitors to Sonargaon can experience the local way of life, explore traditional markets and enjoy delicious regional cuisine.

In recent years, there has been a growing effort to preserve and promote Sonargaon's heritage. The government and various organisations have undertaken initiatives to restore and conserve the city's historical sites.

The travel time from the capital to Sonargaon, about 30 kilometres southeast of Dhaka, is approximately 1-1.5 hours, depending on traffic conditions and the mode of transportation.

The best time to visit Sonargaon is during the dry season (from October to March) when the weather is pleasant and the tourist attractions are easily accessible.

Be prepared for traffic congestion, especially during peak hours.

Consider hiring a local guide to learn more about the history and culture of Sonargaon.

Do not forget to visit the Panam city ruins, Sonargaon Folk Art Museum and the Ichamati River while being there.