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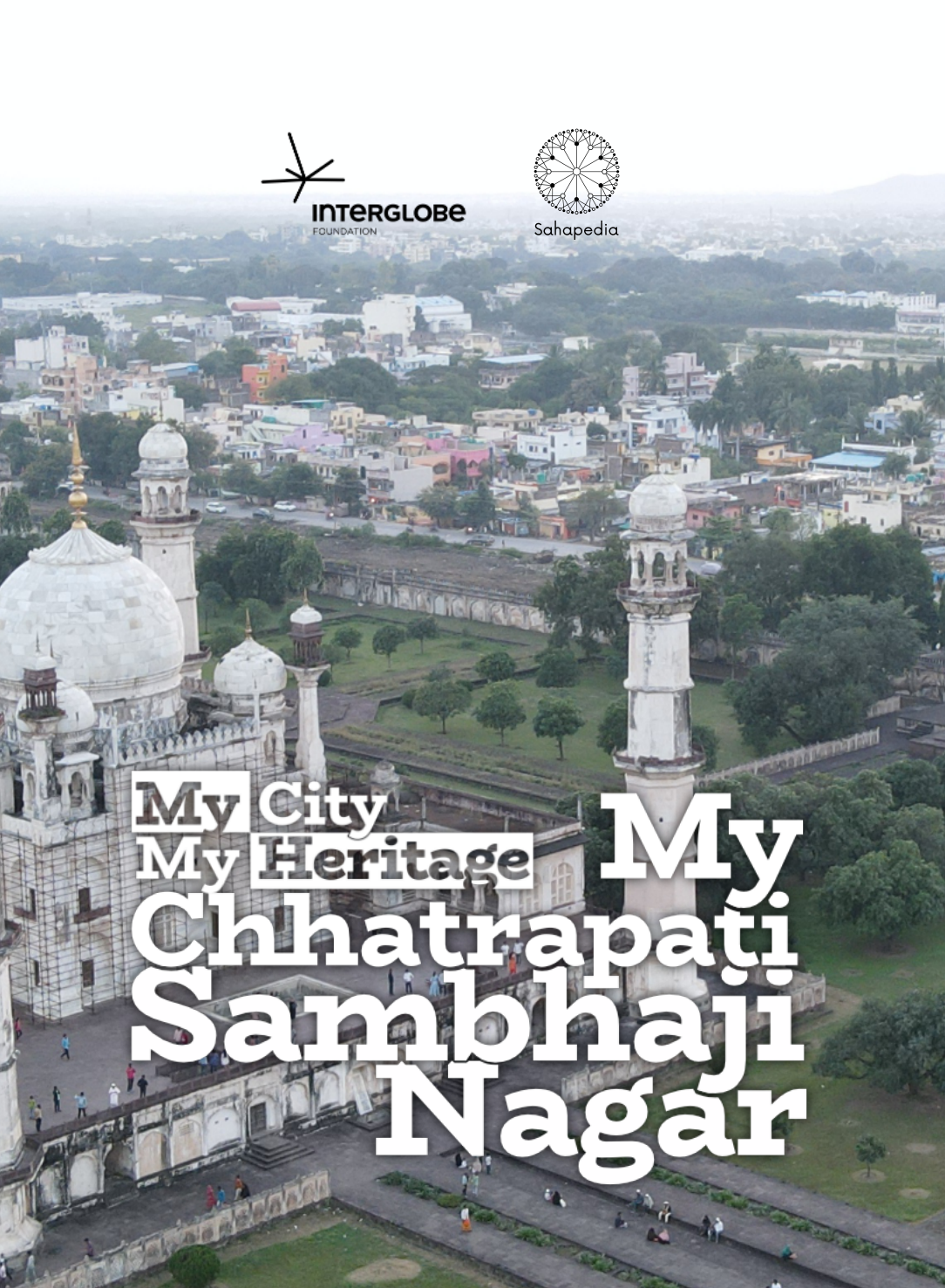

My City My Heritage

# My Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar

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My City
My Heritage

# My Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar

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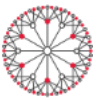


Sahapedia

# Foreword

It is with great pleasure that we present to you this compendium of booklets showcasing some of the lesser known and overlooked treasures of select cities in our country. Over the past decade, the InterGlobe Foundation (IGF) has been steadfast in its commitment to preserving and restoring India's cultural and built heritage. Initiatives such as the restoration of Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan Tomb in New Delhi and the Qutub Shahi Tombs in Hyderabad have not only rejuvenated these historic sites but have also empowered local craftspeople and communities.

Launched in 2019 in collaboration with Sahapedia, the 'My City My Heritage' project aims to document and celebrate the cultural fabric of Indian cities. With the vision to promote the intangible culture and vibrant heritage of our country, with the support of Sahapedia, the project was launched in 2019 documenting the cultural heritage of India cities. Each city has its own unique story to tell—stories rooted in its monuments, crafts, festivals, and the lived experiences of its people. By documenting these stories, this project not only preserves our cultural fabric but also inspires pride and awareness in local communities and visitors alike. In this new and expanded phase, 'My City My Heritage' continues its journey, extending its scope to include more cities across the country.

As custodians of a shared heritage, we at IGF believe that initiatives like this are crucial for exploring a deeper connection between the communities and the spaces they inhabit. We also hope that in each of the project cities, a group of concerned citizens, institutions and government will come together to carry forward this beautiful curation of their city's history. We hope these booklets will entice you to discover these cities and their treasures and share them with others. We welcome more organizations, individuals and researchers to build on the repository created here.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the team at Sahapedia and my colleagues at the InterGlobe group of companies, as well as the researchers, photographers, and local communities who have contributed to this endeavor.

Rohini Bhatia

**Chairperson,**
**InterGlobe Foundation**

# Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this collection of city booklets created under the 'My City My Heritage' initiative, a collaboration between Sahapedia and the InterGlobe Foundation (IGF). These booklets celebrate the rich and layered cultural heritage of Indian cities, bringing to light their stories, unique traditions, and enduring legacies.

At Sahapedia, our journey since 2011 has been defined by a vision—to document and share India's vast and diverse cultural knowledge. Over the past 14 years, Sahapedia has established itself as an open, digital resource dedicated to exploring the histories, arts, and traditions that define our shared heritage. The Sanskrit term '*Saha*,' (together with), embodies the spirit of collaboration that fuels our efforts in documenting local contexts and pluralistic traditions, and creating meaningful engagement with India's cultural legacy.

'My City My Heritage,' launched in 2019, has become an extension of this vision. With the generous support of IGF, this project underscores the role of cities as living repositories of history and culture. Beyond research and documentation resulting into City Booklets, the project engages communities, scholars, and enthusiasts in celebrating their cities' unique identities. Initiatives like heritage walks and *Anubhutis*—Sahapedia's initiative for children with disabilities and marginalized groups—have redefined heritage engagement.

Each booklet reflects research, thoughtful curation, and a commitment to accessible heritage. This endeavor owes its success to the unwavering support of IGF and the contributions of researchers, photographers, local communities, and Sahapedia's team.

It is my hope that these booklets will not only serve as resources for exploration and education but also foster a sense of responsibility for our cultural legacy. I invite you to dive into the stories within and to share in the joy of our collective heritage.

With warm regards,

Sudha Gopalakrishnan

**Executive Director,**
**Sahapedia**

# My City My Heritage
# My Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar

Initiated by Sahapedia in partnership with the InterGlobe Foundation, the 'My City My Heritage' project is focused on rediscovering the culture and heritage potential of Indian cities. The project entails exploration, documentation and dissemination of varied heritage and cultural aspects of urban locations in India, including through the publication of these booklets. As a part of the project, a number of heritage walks, museum tours, *Anubhuti*s and engaging educational activities for school students and general audiences were organised. The initial phase of the project, spanning 2019–2022, covered Ahmedabad, Indore, Prayagraj, Goa, Shillong, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Nashik. Building on this foundation, the current phase, started in 2024, extends to include Srinagar, Lucknow, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (formerly Aurangabad), and Kozhikode, continuing the exploration of India's diverse cultural heritage.

# More about the project

The ‘My City My Heritage’ project caters to a wide user group, including but not limited to children with disabilities and from financially and socially marginalised backgrounds, culture enthusiasts, scholars, heritage professionals and tourists. The project aims at creating opportunities, building interest and capacity of young local scholars through collaborative research, documentation and mapping. An equally important and compelling goal is to create fresh avenues for residents, local administration and local businesses to re-engage with their cities’ living cultural heritage and renew old as well as create new relationships of participation, community and ownership within these places. This booklet is a small step in that direction. More detailed versions of all pieces covered in this editorial and more information **about each city can be found on our website.** Scan the QR code to visit our portal and get access to our entire encyclopaedia.


**Phase 1**
Ahmedabad, Goa, Indore, Prayagraj, Shillong

**Phase 2**
Chandigarh, Nashik, Hyderabad, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata

**Phase 3**
Srinagar, Lucknow, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, Kozhikode (more to come)

# Contents



# Essays

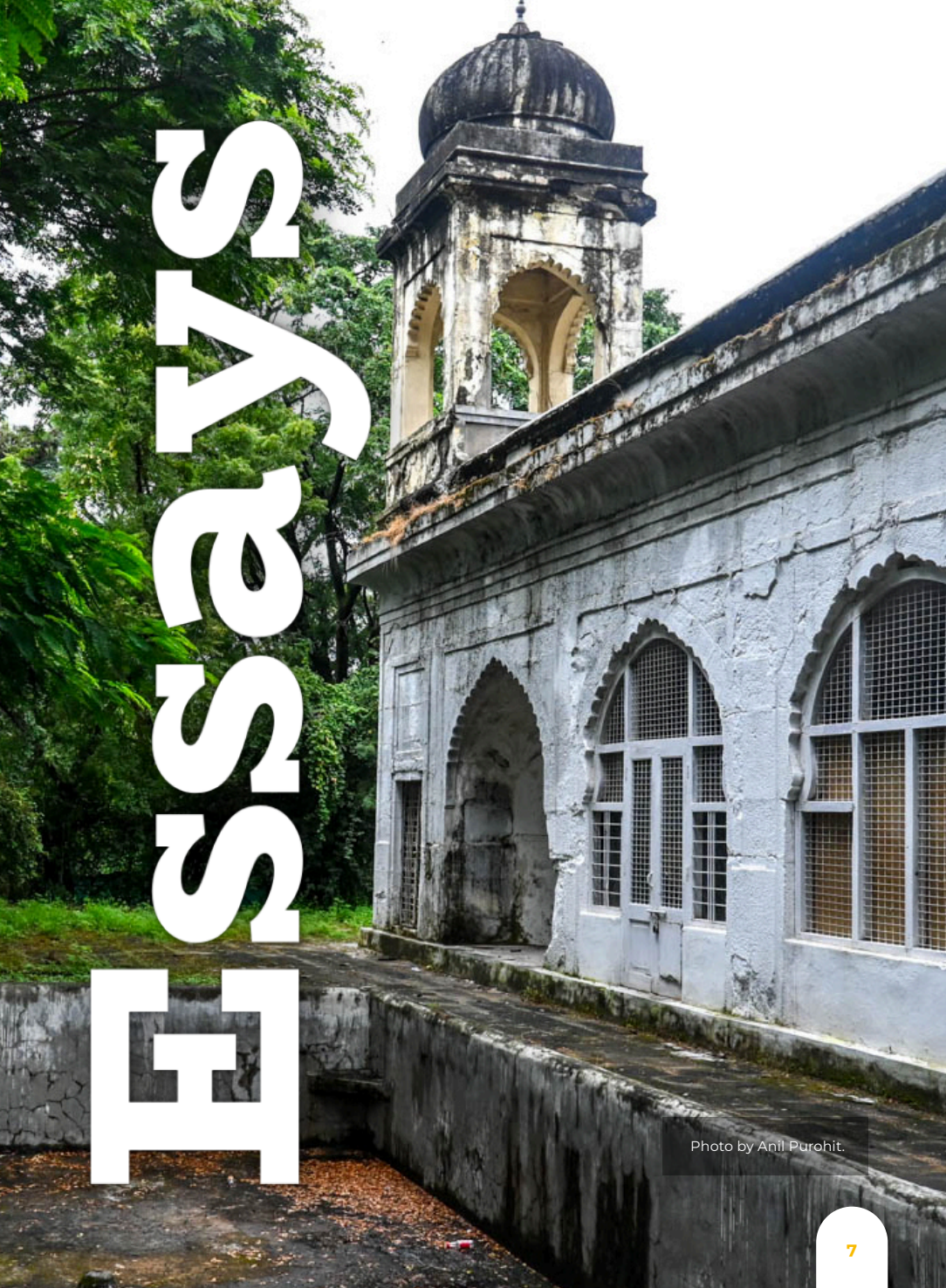


Photo by Anil Purohit.

# Introductory Note

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar was founded as Khadki in 1610 by Malik Ambar, the Peshwa of the Nizam Shahi state. He transformed the city with ingenious water systems and built iconic structures such as the Naukhanda Palace and the Bhadkal Darwaza. Under Mughal rule, the city became the empire's headquarters in the Deccan and was renamed Aurangabad after Aurangzeb. This period saw significant expansion, including the construction of fortifications, mosques and the renowned Bibi ka Maqbara. The subsequent Asaf Jahi rule, which lasted over 200 years, further enriched the city, particularly in cultural and artistic spheres. In modern times, the city has reinvented itself as an industrial and educational hub.

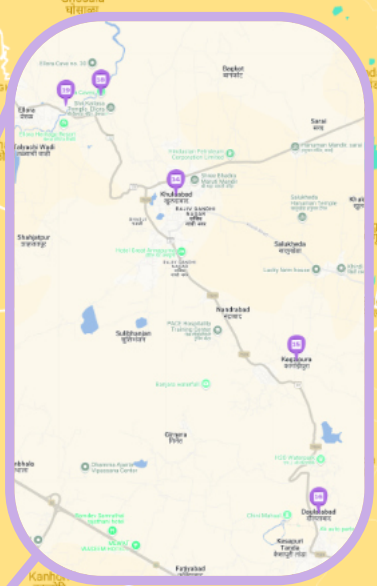
The history of the city, thus unfolding in distinct chapters, reveals a layered cultural heritage, often overshadowed by its proximity to the World Heritage Sites of Ajanta and Ellora. This booklet offers a concise yet comprehensive introduction to this multifaceted city, presenting both lesser-known narratives and celebrated landmarks.

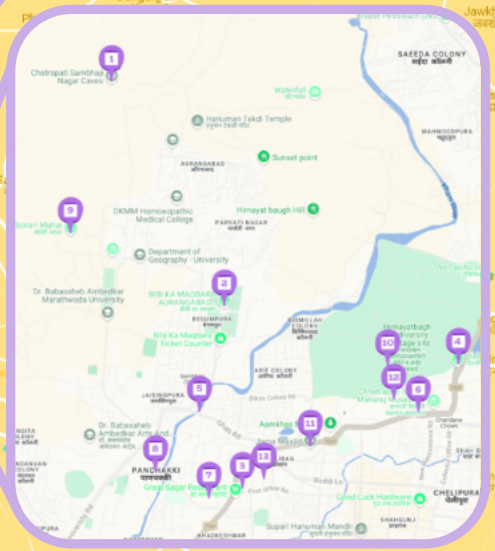
The first article, *The Centre of Empire*, explores the successive dynasties that shaped the city. *Looking for Ambar's Khadki* delves into the remarkable story of its founder, while *Panchakki and the Water Management System* highlights the architectural ingenuity that allowed the city to thrive in its rocky, arid terrain.

A broader perspective on the city's built heritage is provided in *Architecture in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar*, followed by three focused essays on key landmarks: *The Sculptures of the Aurangabad Caves*, *Bibi ka Maqbara* and *The City of Gates*.

The city's rich craft traditions come to life in *The Legacy of Himroo Weaving* and *Kagzipura: History in a Piece of Paper*, while its culinary heritage is explored in *A Culinary Journey*. Finally, *Legacy of Educational Institutions* examines the city's role as a centre of learning, from ancient institutions to modern ones.

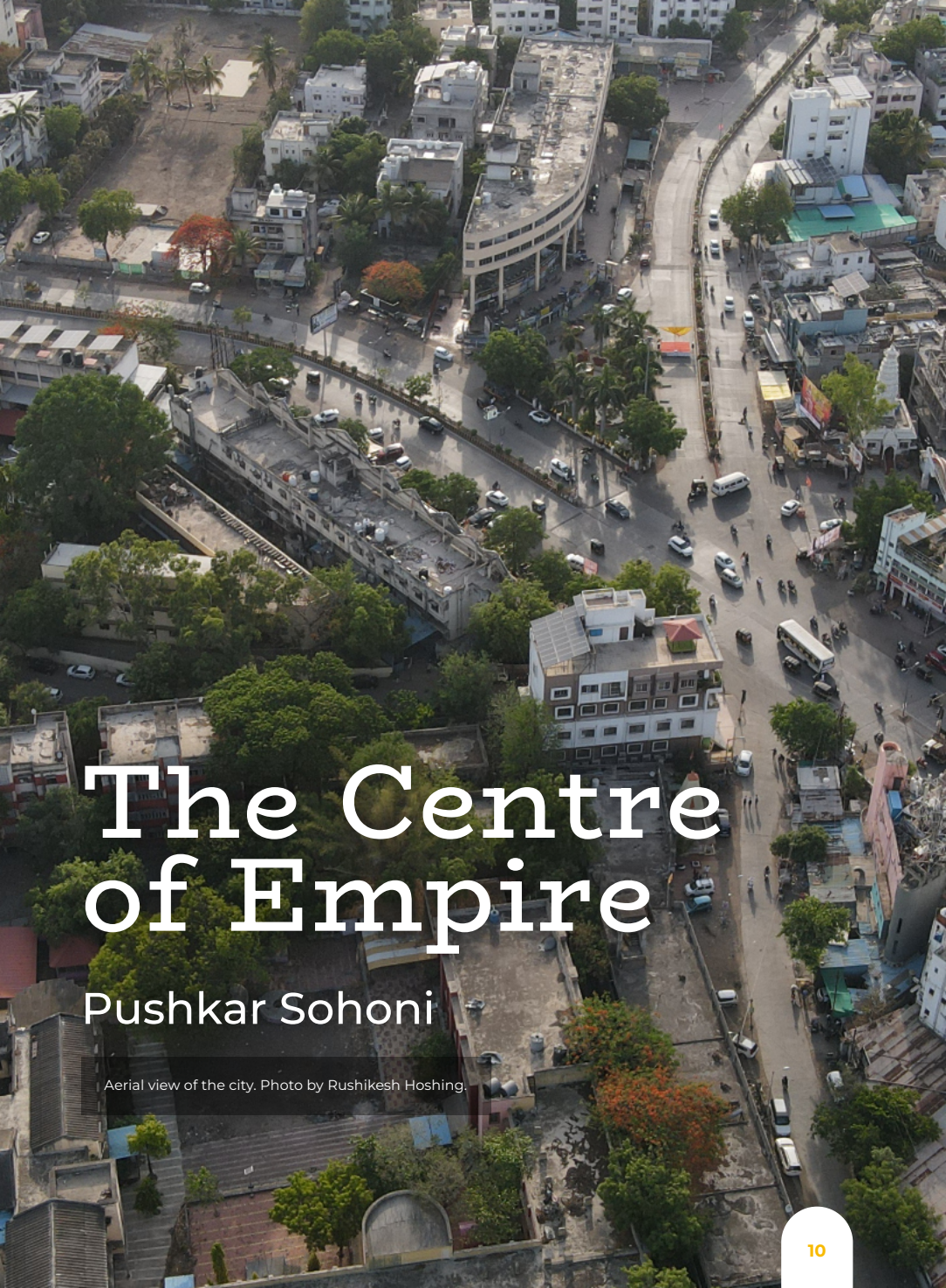
1. Aurangabad Caves
2. Bibi Ka Maqbara
3. Bhadkal Darwaza
4. Delhi Darwaza
5. Makai Darwaza
6. Rangeen Darwaza
7. Naukhanda Palace
8. Panchakki
9. Soneri Mahal
10. Fortification Wall Remains
11. Himayat Bagh
12. Jami Mosque
13. Shahi Mosque
14. Chitakhana
15. Khuldabad
16. Kagzipura
17. Daulatabad
18. Ajanta Caves
19. Ellora Caves
20. Grishneshwar





# The Centre of Empire

Pushkar Sohoni



Aerial view of the city. Photo by Rushikesh Hoshing.

## History and Political Significance

The district of Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (formerly known as Aurangabad), after which the city is named, boasts a long and illustrious history. From the second century BCE, the Satavahanas, one of the Deccan's first major dynasties, established their capital at Paithan (then called Pratishthan), located 50 kilometres to the south of the city of Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar. In the thirteenth century, the Yadavas ruled from Devagiri, located 15 kilometres to the northwest of the city. Devagiri, later renamed Daulatabad, briefly served as the capital of the Delhi Sultanate in the fourteenth century, before becoming a provincial capital under the Bahmani Sultanate and a second capital for the Nizam Shahs. Malik Ambar ruled from Daulatabad as the regent of the Nizam Shahs in the early seventeenth century, before founding the new city of Khadki on the banks of the Kham River around 1610. He equipped the city with a robust water-supply system, without which the settlement would have been unviable. The region's significance continued under Mughal rule, with Aurangzeb Alamgir spending significant periods of time in the city, first as a prince and provincial governor, and later as an emperor. Therefore, it served as an imperial city, though not officially a capital of the Mughals.

After Aurangzeb's death, the Asaf Jahs (better known as the Nizams of Hyderabad) declared independence from the Mughal empire in this city. From 1724 to 1743, the city served as their capital before they relocated to

Aurangzeb, ca. 1890. Picture Credits: Victoria and Albert Museum.

Hyderabad. Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar remained an important regional city under the state of Hyderabad until 1948, when it became part of the Indian Union. Over the course of the twentieth century, the city evolved as an educational and industrial hub.

> The Aurangabad Mills, set up in 1897 by the then Nizam of Hyderabad, brought about the industrialisation of the city.

Two key educational institutions were established in the city in the latter half of the twentieth century—Milind Mahavidyalaya in 1950, established on 54 acres gifted by Mir Osman Ali Khan, the ruler of Hyderabad, to Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar (now existing as three separate colleges); and Marathwada

University in 1958, renamed Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University in 1994.

Today, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar is the fifth largest urban settlement in the state of Maharashtra, known for its educational institutions, industries and a significant tourist economy. But few people know of the cultural and literary importance of the city, particularly under the Asaf Jahs. The city dates back two millennia, as evidenced by the Aurangabad Caves dating to the reign of the Satavahanas, affirming its importance on a major ancient trade route.

> While the modern city as we know it today was founded early in the seventeenth century, it saw a century of growth, followed by a period of economic decline, and a resurgence from the twentieth century onwards.

Serving as the *de facto* capital of at least three monarchies, the city remains important in public imagination even today.

Changes in political regimes and names are a part of the storied history of Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar. Originally founded as a city called Khadki by Malik Ambar, its name was changed on at least four occasions. In a short-lived attempt, Malik Ambar's son Fateh Khan also called it Fatehnagar. Initially referred to as Khujistah Buniyad by the Mughals, it was renamed Aurangabad after Emperor Aurnagzeb Alamgir, a name that continued to thrive until recently. In 2023, the city was officially renamed as Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar.

## Cultural and Religious Heritage

The Ghrishneshwar temple. Picture Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Situated in the Godavari basin, the city is a repository of the region's historical and cultural heritage. The nascent city under Malik Ambar was endowed with several monumental buildings and institutions, including the Jami Masjid. Under the Mughals, the Naukhanda Palace precinct of Malik Ambar, with Bhadkal Darwaza nearby, became part of the walled city, and several new suburbs, such as Begumpura, were set up.


Bibi Ka Maqbara. Photo by Rushikesh Hoshing.

Aurangabad Mills. Photo by Rushikesh Hoshing.

Interestingly, despite the presence of a British cantonment on the western side of the city, which was established in 1816, the city largely maintained its indigenous character, with minimal vestiges of colonial culture remaining in the present day.

As the city flourished over time, it became a haven for artists, nobility and men of letters.

> The city's influential poet Wali Dakkhani Aurangabadi visited Delhi in 1700 and laid the groundwork for literary Urdu, as he presented poetry in a precursor of that language.

Aurangabad was to remain important for Urdu poetry through the twentieth century, producing notable poets such as Sikandar Ali Wajh, Qazi Salim, Javed Nasir and Bashar Nawaz. The linguist and scholar Maulana Abdul Haq, known as Baba-i-Urdu, also lived in this region from 1912, when he was appointed as chief inspector in the Department of Education, and later the principal of Osmania College. Till 1936, his residence was the office of the Anjuman-i-Taraqqi-i-Urdu, of which he was the secretary. The *Urdu Dictionary of Technical Terms* was also compiled here. The city has also produced a number of important literary personalities, such as N.D. Mahanor (who wrote in Marathi) and Malti Joshi (who wrote in both Hindi and Marathi). Among notable classical musicians was Nath Neralkar, who spent his entire life here.

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar has long been associated with various holy men and sacred sites, contributing to its spiritual significance. One of the

earliest holy men in this region was Chakradhar Swami, who founded the Mahanubhava sect, which predates the founding of the city. While the nearby Khuldabad (earlier known as Rauza) has been an important settlement for Sufi saints and their disciples, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar also has several important shrines. The city is dotted with *dargah*s dedicated to Sufi saints of various orders, but dominantly the Chishti lineage. A unique religious complex popularly known as Panchakki, stands out as a microcosm of the city's cultural syncretism. This *khanqah* (resting house for saints, travellers and pilgrims) of Baba Palangposh and his disciple Baba Musafir, who arrived from Bukhara in Central Asia, exemplifies the cosmopolitan connections of the seventeenth century. The complex is situated on the banks of the Kham River, just outside Mahmud Darwaza, one of the many gateways of the walled city. The city walls were constructed in 1682 under the Emperor Aurangzeb, and while the walls do not survive in their entirety today, it has gone on to earn the city the moniker 'City of Gates'. The region is associated with many Hindu traditions as well, with several Marathi saint-poets belonging to the city and as a home to several pilgrimage sites, such as Paithan and the Ghrishneshwar temple at Verul, located in its vicinity. The Vaishnava Saint Eknath was in the employment of the Nizam Shahs at Daulatabad, as was his guru Janardan Swami. The temple of Khandoba in the Satara ward in the southern part of the city is architecturally notable.

## Modern Growth

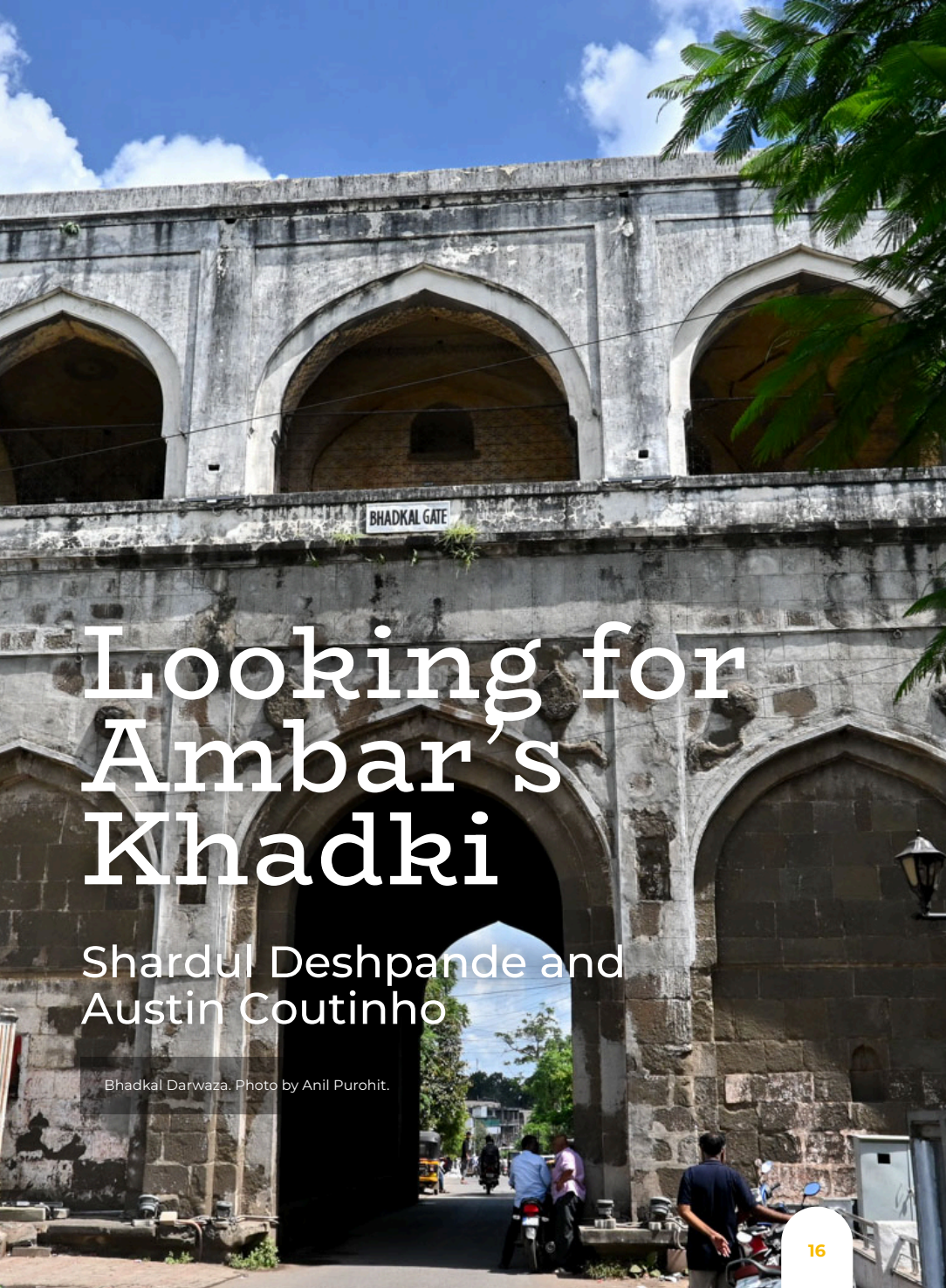
In continuity with the Mughals, through the rule of the Asaf Jahs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the city maintained its status as the administrative centre of Marathwada, though economically, it was in decline. From the late nineteenth century onwards, the Nizam of Hyderabad pushed for industrialisation, given its geographical location in the country's cotton belt. Cotton and silk mills were set up, boosting the production of the local textile called *himroo*, a weave blending cotton and silk. However, the region's rapid industrial development began when it was absorbed into the Maharashtra state of India. Government agencies like the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation and the City Industrial and Development Corporation set up industrial parks at Chikalthana, Shendra and Waluj.

> Today Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar is a significant industrial hub, hosting several multinational companies, including major sectors such as automobile manufacturing, agriculture, biotech, breweries and pharmaceuticals, among others.

In 2019, the establishment of a new integrated industrial city covering an area of 10,000 acres, called Aurangabad Industrial City, was proposed. The city continues to flourish in its new incarnation as a significant urban agglomeration.

# Looking for Ambar's Khadki

Shardul Deshpande and Austin Coutinho




Bhadkal Darwaza. Photo by Anil Purohit.

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar found itself most prominently in the news in 2023 for its name change from Aurangabad. In the debates that ensued either arguing for or against the change, two historical figures emerged supreme—Aurangzeb and Sambhaji, after whom the city's previous (Aurangabad) and current (Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar) names derive. Who often gets lost in this discussion of Maratha (Sambhaji) vs Mughal (Aurangzeb) and either dynasty's claim on the city's history, is another figure, Malik Ambar, an African who settled in the Deccan and established the original settlement beside the Kham River, where the city stands today.

## Life and Career of Malik Ambar

> "For one person to advance clear from slave to *peshwa* as Ambar did, however, was exceptional. But then, he was an exceptional person.'
>
> — *Richard Eaton (2005)*

Born as Chapu, in the Kembata region of Southern Ethiopia, Malik Ambar would forge an illustrious career as a military general and as a kingmaker in faraway Deccan (in southern India). Though his early life remains largely unknown, his journey began as a slave. Richard Eaton notes that Ambar found himself in Baghdad having been sold to a merchant who 'recognising Chapu's superior intellectual qualities, raised and educated the youth, converted him to Islam, and gave him the name "Ambar".' While on a trip to the Deccan with his master, Ambar was purchased by the *peshwa* (prime minister) of the Nizam Shahs in 1571 CE, himself a slave from Ethiopia. The Deccan at the time was governed by

Portrait of Malik Ambar, by Hashim, ca. 1622-1623. Picture Credits: Victoria and Albert Museum.

four sultanates: the Nizam Shahs of Ahmadnagar, the Qutub Shahs of Golconda, the Adil Shahs of Bijapur and the Imad Shahs of Berar.

When his master, the *peshwa*, died four years later, his widow granted freedom to Ambar. He then became a military freelancer, initially serving the Adil Shahs in Bijapur, where he commanded a small contingent and earned the title 'Malik', meaning 'king'. In 1595, citing insufficient support, Ambar left Bijapur's service with his 150 troops and returned to Ahmadnagar.

By 1600, the Mughals under Akbar had grown to include much of northern India, Gujarat and Bengal, and now sought control of the Deccan. Though they captured Ahmadnagar Fort, their authority remained restricted to the vicinity of the fort itself. In the hinterland, former soldiers of the dynasty, Malik Ambar being one of them, retained control and constantly challenged Mughal sovereignty in the region. This period of instability in the state proved especially fruitful for the ambitious Ambar who wanted the Mughals out of Deccan. To help his cause, Ambar installed a pliant nephew of the previous Nizam Shah ruler, further securing his position through the marriage of his daughter to the new ruler. Consequently, Ambar declared himself the *peshwa* and fought in the Nizam's name against the Mughals. At the time, Ambar's military strength grew to an impressive 7,000.

The local Marathi-speaking population formed an important part of Ambar's operations. Ambar also employed guerrilla warfare tactics to harass the much larger Mughal armies, a strategy later perfected by Shivaji. Interestingly, Shivaji's grandfather, Maloji, served as one of Ambar's chiefs, while his father, Shahaji, would carry on the cause of the Nizam Shahi dynasty after Ambar's death in 1626.

Tomb of Malik Ambar, Khuldabad. Picture Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Interior of the mosque in the Naukhanda Palace Complex. Built during Malik Ambar's time. Photo by Anil Purohit.

During his lifetime, Ambar successfully kept the Mughals at bay in the Deccan, and was succeeded by his son as the *peshwa* of Ahmadnagar.

## The Founding of Khadki

> "A map of the Neher's (water channels) various tributaries and blueways looks uncannily like a modern Metro Rail plan: it consists of twelve lines with numerous "stations" and "interchanges" designed to reach as much of the city as possible."
>
> *— Jonathan Gill Harris (2018)*

Malik Ambar's growing influence as Ahmadnagar's *peshwa* and de-facto ruler culminated in 1610 when he founded a new city. This was not only the year he took back Ahmadnagar Fort from the Mughals but also the period wherein he defeated his rival within the Ahmadnagar nobility, Raju Deccani, securing his position as Ahmadnagar's undisputed leader.

While smaller settlements such as Ellora, Rauza (present-day Khuldabad) and Daulatabad Fort always existed, the region's arid climate and water scarcity had prevented the establishment of a major capital. Even these earlier settlements had invested heavily in water provisioning systems sufficient for their scale.

The name given to the new city, Khadki, meaning 'rocky' in Marathi, itself attests to the nature of the land—a rocky landscape surrounded by mountains.

Chitakhana. Built during Malik Ambar's time. Photo by Anil Purohit.

For Ambar, the main challenge in building a new city was provisioning it with adequate water. His solution emerged from a curious mix of factors. According to Jonathan Gil Harris, his childhood in a similarly water-scarce mountainous region in Ethiopia (Kembata), his youth in the man-made oasis of Baghdad with its sophisticated Abbasid-era aqueducts, combined with his knowledge of the Deccan gained over the years, gave him the vision to execute such a momentous task. Just as the Ahmadnagar state relied on maritime trade networks with Persia, Central Asia and East Africa for labour, Ambar leveraged these connections to obtain hydrological knowledge. Using this knowledge of Baghdadi aqueducts, he built a canal system that drew water from numerous streams and lakes in the surrounding countryside through channels called *nahar*s. The channels had a combination of elevated and underground sections. The most famous channel from Ambar's period is the still semi-functional Nahar-e-Ambari, which brings water from Harsul Lake and ends at a reservoir located in the compound of Maulana Azad College Guest House.

The construction of these *nahar*s likely combined imported Persian/Arab aqueduct design and local engineering expertise working with foreigners. The locals had a long history of water management in dry land, evident in the water cisterns of Ellora, used to harvest rainwater. This aligned with Ambar's genius for tapping into local expertise, be it military or artisanal.

> The result was remarkable. Khadki flourished into a city with palaces, fountains and avenues, divided among 54 quarters, home to 200,000 people at its peak.

As Eaton notes, some of the quarters were even named after Ambar's prominent Maratha generals such as Malpura, Khelpura, Paraspura and Vithapura, reflecting the collaborative nature of his governance and the city's development.

Ambar's building of a vibrant multicultural city and integrating global influences into a water-scarce region should be instructive to us today. His story reminds us that the region's history transcends simple binary narratives.

Interior of Kali Masjid, City Chowk. Built during Malik Ambar's time. Photo by Anil Purohit.

# Panchakki and the Water Management System

Sanket Kulkarni

Mosque in the Panchakki Complex. Photo by Anil Purohit.

View of the pool in the Panchakki Complex. In the distance is Mahmud Darwaza and the domed Jamil Baig masjid. Photo by Anil Purohit.

Malik Ambar envisioned harnessing distant water sources through a sophisticated system of *nahars* and *bambas* (aqueducts) to nurture his growing city. Among the *nahars*, the Nahar-e-Ambari, named after Malik Ambar, remains a distinctive historical feature of the city, with remnants still visible throughout the old quarters of Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar. While the city once boasted several independent *nahars*—including Thatte Nahar, Panchakki Nahar and Palshi Nahar—only the Panchakki Nahar remains operational today.

The engineers behind these systems brilliantly exploited the natural topography, using the hills' gradual descent to channel water through large stone or clay pipes and into collection reservoirs. At strategic intervals, they erected elevated *bambas* that served multiple crucial functions: maintaining optimal water pressure, allowing sunlight and air to purify the flow, and enabling access for maintenance. From the street level, these underground waterways remain virtually invisible—a testament to their ingenious design. Though urban expansion has claimed many of the original *bambas*, the 10 magnificent structures of Thatte Nahar in Begampura still stand.

Malik Ambar initiated the construction of the *nahars* alongside the development of the Naukhanda Palace in 1604, largely completing this monumental project by 1610. The system channelled water from the Sawangi Hills to Roza Bagh through an underground channel before distributing it across the city via a network of earthen pipes. Elevated *bambas* were strategically placed along the route.

> The waterways were directed to key civic and royal locations—Naukhanda Palace, Gulshan Mahal, Town Hall, Shahgunj, Lotakaranja, Qila-e-Ark and various parts of the old market.

However, much of this intricate water supply system has been lost due to the passage of time, neglect and urban development. Today, only scattered *bambas*, occasional fountains and a few ancient tanks remain as silent witnesses to Ambar's visionary achievement.

## Panchakki: The Historic Water Mill

Panchakki, literally meaning 'water mill', is situated within the complex that also houses the *dargah* dedicated to Hazrat Baba Shah Musafir, a revered Sufi saint and spiritual guide to Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. The Panchakki complex once served as a *khanqah* or a sanctuary that provided refuge and sustenance to saints, pilgrims and soldiers alike.

Interior view of the Dargah of Baba Shah Musafir. Photo by Anil Purohit.

Built in 1744, the water mill was designed to grind grain for the local populace and soldiers of Aurangzeb's army. Water from a spring on the Jatwada Hills, flowing through the Harsul River, was raised using a siphon system into an earthen pipe before flowing an impressive 6 kilometres down to the mill. Originally, this system not only powered the grain mill but also supplied water to the complex's fountains and pools. Despite centuries of use, the water mill is still functional without human intervention. Though designated a protected monument under the state archaeology department today, the water mill is currently managed by the Waqf Board.

Other than the mill and *dargah*, the Panchakki complex also houses the tomb of Baba Shah Mahmood alongside a mosque, *madrasa*, court, traveller lodgings, women's quarters and several monuments. The main structures were built around 1695 by Turktaz Khan, a noble in the court of Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah, while Jamil Beg Khan, a disciple of Baba Shah Musafir, expanded the site two decades later, adding a large reservoir in front of the mosque and the fountains that are still part of the site. A large banyan tree near the tank provides shade to pilgrims and visitors, and the historic Kham River flows nearby.

Beyond its architectural and spiritual significance, the Panchakki complex houses the headquarters of the

Maharashtra Waqf Board and an eighteenth-century library containing rare manuscripts and books on history, law and philosophy. Following years of closure, the library has reopened its doors, offering researchers and students access to its treasured collection.

## Thatte nahar and Other Important nahars

Water rotates the blades of the water mill. Photo by Anil Purohit.

Constructed approximately 250 years ago during the Asaf Jahi period, Thatte Nahar's intricate water system originates in the hills of Ohar-Jatwada, flowing through areas near Himayat Bagh before reaching the Thatte Haud (an eighteenth-century reservoir or tank) in Begampura via a network of 10 *bamba*s. One branch of this *nahar* extended to a tank in front of Bibi ka Maqbara. The Thatte family initially maintained this vital infrastructure before transferring stewardship to the Archaeological Survey of India with the intent of ensuring proper preservation. Unfortunately, recent decades have seen diminished protection for this historical treasure.

Some of the other *nahar*s that played a crucial role in water management in this region include:

- Nahar-e-Palshi: Partially intact, with visible *bamba*s near Pisadevi and Pardeshwar Temple.
- Nahar-e-Garkheda: Once an important conduit but no longer in existence.
- Nahar-e-Satara: Fragments of its *bamba*s and earthen pipes can still be seen in the Satara district.
- Shah Ali Nahar: Remnants of its *bamba*s can be spotted near Shahnoor Miyan Dargah and along the Osmanpura police station road.

> Despite the gradual decline of many of these historic water systems, iconic sites like the Panchakki water mill continue to attract visitors from around the world.

Preserving these structures serves not merely to honour medieval ingenuity but also to inspire contemporary approaches to sustainable water management in an increasingly water-stressed world.

# Architecture in the City

Pushkar Sohoni

Fountain, Jami Masjid. Photo by Anil Purohit.

Façade of Cave 1, Aurangabad Caves. Photo by Anil Purohit.

From ancient rock-cut caves to modern edifices, the city reflects the visions of successive regimes, each leaving an indelible mark through monumental constructions that epitomise their respective eras.

## Medieval Architectural Marvels

The Aurangabad Caves, attributed to the Satavahanas and the Kalachuris, predate the city by fourteen centuries. Originally outside the city limits, rapid urbanisation has brought these caves within its boundaries. These Buddhist caves, contemporaneous to the well-known Ajanta Caves, were part of a network of caves on the trade routes of the period. Home to the usual monastic *chaitya*s and *vihara*s, the caves are also the site of many figural sculptures.

## Malik Ambar's Structures

> Malik Ambar built a monumental portal at the centre of the city, known as the Bhadkal Darwaza, a symbolic marker of the city.

It was most likely used for victory processions to the Naukhanda Palace (now occupied by the Women's College of Aurangabad and the Model High School) built in 1616. The imposing masonry portal is surmounted by a wooden chamber for musicians and drummers, with a triple-bayed facade employing Mughal-style columns and multi-foil arches. The pavilion inside the complex is where Asaf Jah I declared independence from the Mughals and had himself crowned as Nizam-ul-Mulk in 1724.

Another enigmatic structure credited to Malik Ambar is the Chitakhana (now part of the ensemble of buildings that houses the offices of the Municipal Corporation). Laid out on a large, irregular octagonal plan, it likely served as a palace. The double-storeyed structure has four entrances, one in the middle of each side. It features a central courtyard originally containing a large cistern fed by one of Malik Ambar's *nahars*. Later known as the Town Hall, the British added a Victorian trussed roof to the structure.

There are several Kali Masjids (or black mosques) distributed throughout the central part of Aurangabad, such as in the crowded urban quarters of City Chowk, Juna Bazaar and Shah Bazaar (near Shahganj). These typical neighbourhood mosques are attributed to Malik Ambar. The similarity in their designs suggests that they were all built by the same architectural guilds or workshops. Traditionally, the mosques consist of prayer halls three-bays wide, raised on a high plinth and of modest scale, with no decoration. The great Jami Masjid, built by Malik Ambar in 1612, is situated at the old city's northern edge. Its interior is five-bays deep with seven domes: three on each side and a taller central dome over the bay in front of the *mihrab*.

Jami Masjid. Photo by Anil Purohit.

## Expansion During the Mughal Rule

The next phase of construction in the city was commissioned under the Mughals, after they took over the city in 1633.

> One of the most important monuments of the Mughal era in Aurangabad is the Shahi or Royal Mosque.

Originally part of the royal palace complex on the ridge north of the old city, the mosque is not particularly large. It has three oversized domes above the prayer hall, resembling other Mughal royal mosques in Agra and Delhi. Small minarets flank the façade with tri-lobed arched openings. A Bengal roof-shaped cornice sits above the central arch. The central dome rises on a taller drum.

A path westward from the Shahi mosque, built by Aurangzeb in 1683, leads to Aurangzeb's citadel—Qila-e-Ark. The palace, now in a ruinous condition and dangerous to visit, once served as the principal seat of Mughal power in the Deccan, occupied by Aurangzeb himself or by his governor. The Government Arts College occupied the building for many years, later abandoning it due to its

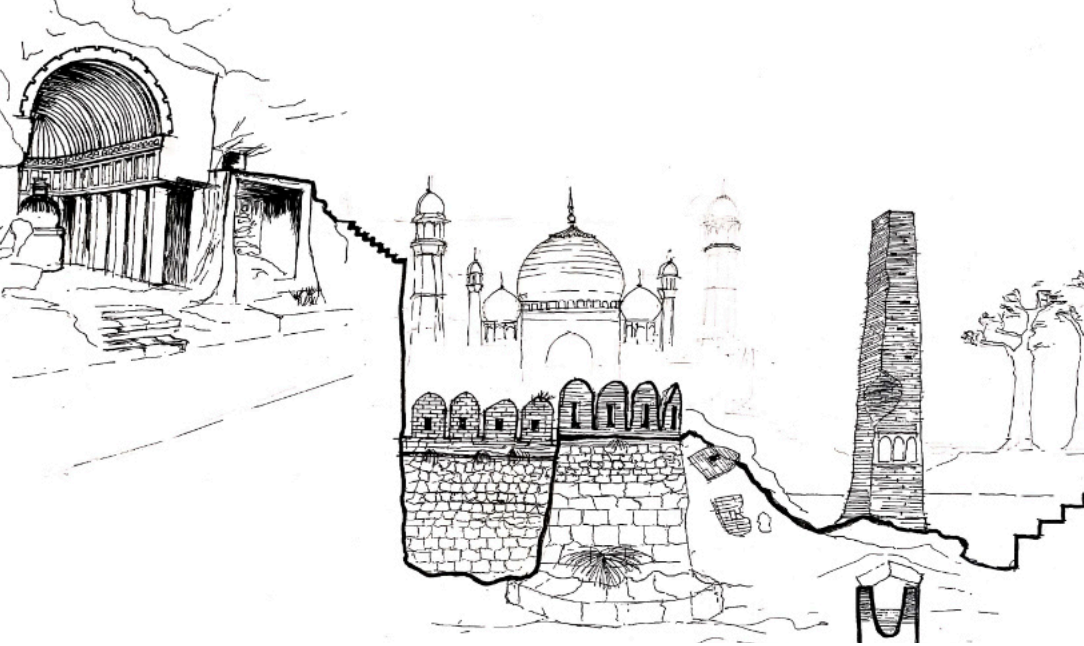
Shahi Mosque. Photo by Anil Purohit.

deteriorating structure over time. Northward, the palace looks over the large orchard plains called Himayat Bagh, originally an artificial lake that was filled in soon after its construction. The main palace complex was terraced, with gardens featuring fountains and cascades at different levels down the hillside to the south.

The city walls, constructed in 1682, are dotted with several gates, of which only a few stand till date. Except for the Bhadkal Darwaza, all the others are associated with Aurangzeb and built in the typical Mughal style.

The Pir Ismail tomb complex is situated in the Dr Rafique Zakaria College campus. It includes a caravanserai attached to a walled garden, with a central plinth supporting a pleasure pavilion, which was later converted into a tomb for Aurangzeb's tutor, Pir Ismail. The single-storey pavilion has five multilobed-arched openings on each side. The central three arches on each

Aerial view of Soneri Mahal. Photo by Rushikesh Hoshing.



A collage sketch of architectural remains of the city from different time periods. Sketch by Saurabh Jamkar.

side lead to an octagonal chamber housing Pir Ismail's cenotaph. The garden preserves traces of two intersecting watercourses with flanking walkways that converge on the central plinth. A small mosque stands on the western side.

The grounds of the Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University houses the Soneri Mahal (Golden Palace), built by Pahad Singh of Orchha, one of the many Rajput nobles who accompanied Aurangzeb to the Deccan. Now a museum, its name derives from the gilded paintings inside the palace (now partially restored). It sits at the edge of a large formal garden, against the backdrop of the hills behind it. Soneri Mahal's quadripartite garden is still discernible, a central water channel cascades down from the palace through the garden towards the grand entrance.

**The most celebrated monument of Aurangabad and the grandest Mughal monument in the Deccan is the Bibi ka Maqbara.**

Completed in 1661, the tomb stands in a vast rectangular garden, enclosed by high walls. The entrance to the garden is through a grand portal on the southern side, decorated with hand-painted tiles on the inside, offering a direct view of the monument. The Bibi ka Maqbara is the last in a distinguished lineage of Timurid-inspired imperial Mughal

mausoleums.

## Contributions by the Asaf Jahs

The next phase of construction was under the Asaf Jahs, who ruled over the city for a little over two hundred years (1724-1948), coinciding with colonial rule in the country. This period saw massive changes, including the industrialisation of Sambhajinagar.

> The Aurangabad Mills, behind the Central Bus Depot, exemplify the industrial architecture of this era.

The colonial period saw the construction of many civic buildings and offices. The British cantonment features a large nineteenth-century graveyard with numerous mausoleums. The Shah Ganj Mosque was erected in 1720 by Aaz-ud Daula Iraz Khan, the Mughal governor of the Deccan at the time. The Asaf Jah rulers later added a clock tower beside the large pool in front, which represents a curious amalgam of Indo-European style, typical of Asaf Jahi architecture.

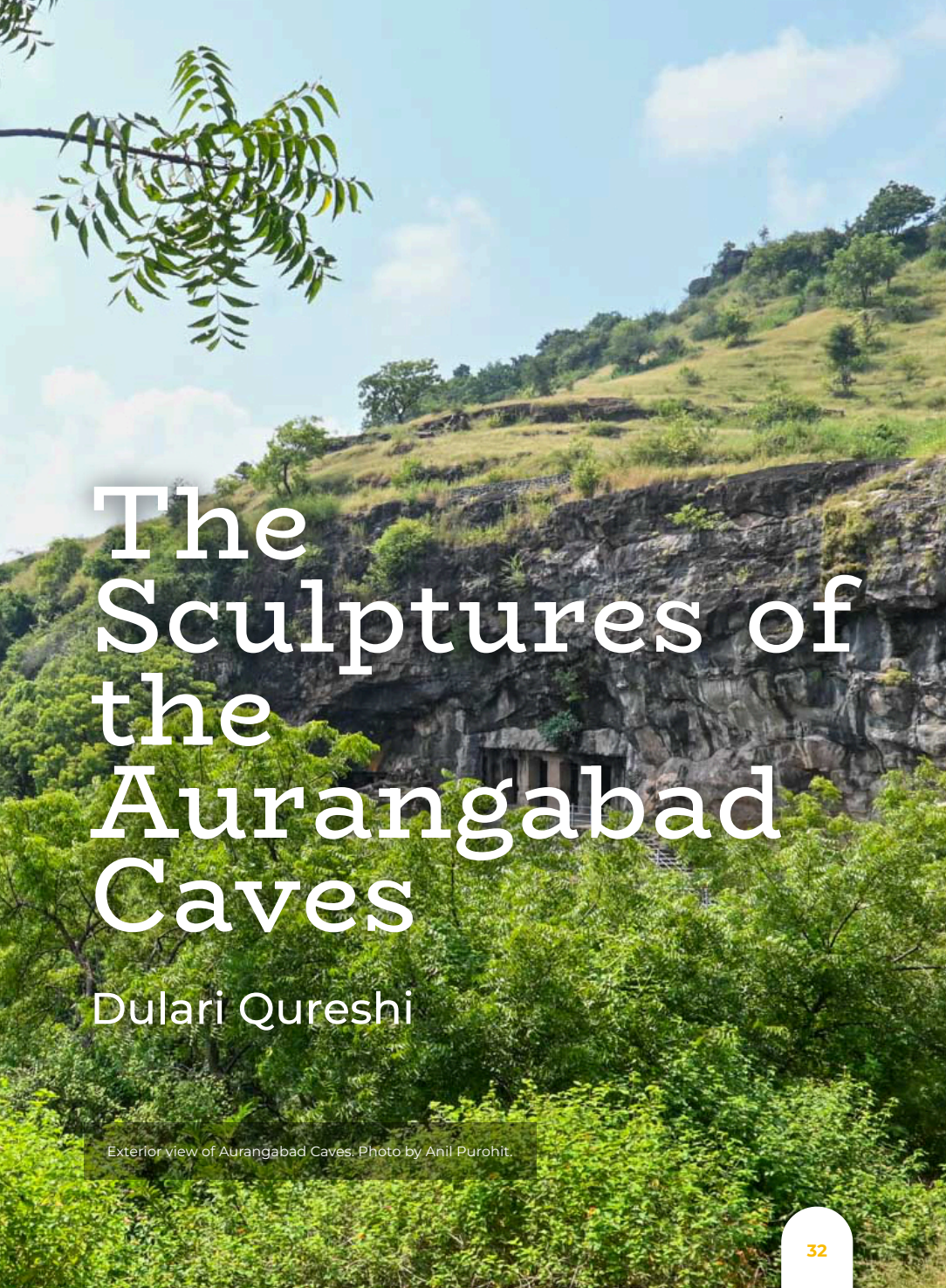
Clock tower. Photo by Anil Purohit.

The city has seen a massive spurt of growth from the latter half of the twentieth century, and continues to evolve. Some modern structures thoughtfully reference earlier monuments, such as the gateway to the university, which is a nod to Buddhist *chaitya* arches, bridging its illustrious past with its developing future. Though not iconic, buildings such as the High Court or some of the hotels in the city demonstrate an ongoing architectural interest. Sambhajinagar's architectural journey remains a testament to its enduring cultural significance and adaptability.

A typical *wada* architecture of the region with carved hanging cornings at both ends of the balcony. Sketch by Saurabh Jamkar.

# The Sculptures of the Aurangabad Caves

Dulari Qureshi



Exterior view of Aurangabad Caves. Photo by Anil Purohit.

The Aurangabad caves, nestled in the Sihyachal ranges north of the city, rise above the plains to a height of 700 feet. Overlooking the Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University campus and situated 8 kilometres from the railway station, this 2000-year-old group of caves stands as testimony to the ancient history of the region. The caves are bereft of inscriptions, but, interestingly, a reference to the Aurangabad caves has been found in an inscription at Kanheri, a group of cave temples in Mumbai's Sanjay Gandhi National Park.

The *chaitya* at the Aurangabad caves, numbered as Cave 4, is the only early cave that was excavated during the later Satavahana period. Caves 1 and 3 belong to the later Mahayana period and were carved during the Vakataka period. Caves 2 and 5 are unique in that they completely separate the main shrine from the back wall and place it in the centre of the hall.

> The complex comprises three groups: the first (Caves 1–5) lies northwest of the city, the second (Caves 6–10, including a Hindu cave) northeast, and a third (Caves 11–12) unadorned group behind Caves 9 and 10.

## Cave 1

The pillars in Cave 1 showcase a variety of exquisitely carved *salabhanjika*s (tree goddesses) and *gana*s (assemblage or troops of demon attendants of Shiva and devis). *Gana*s, traditionally associated with Shiva and Ganesha, appear short and have paunches, and are seen

Tree goddesses as pillar brackets in Cave 1 veranda. Picture Credits: Sahapedia.

playing musical instruments. The *salabhanjika* figure is dressed in a *kashta*-type saree, a blouse ornate jewellery. A male attendant holds a flower vase, while a *gana* on the lower side seems to be supporting a mermaid above him. Above, the goddess holds a musical instrument known as *lyre*.

## Cave 3

In Cave 3, the main shrine has a partially damaged figure of the Buddha at its centre, seated on a double lotus in a teaching posture. Attendants stand at both sides, along with flying *apsara*s, dwarfs and crouching elephants. The most remarkable feature of the cave are the rounded devotee figures flanking the central Buddha figure. The life-like sculptures are huddled in a corner, worshipping the Buddha in silent adoration, their facial features

and hairstyles reminiscent of Greek figures.


Sketch of devotee figures in the main shrine of Cave 3. Picture Source: Sahapedia.

## Cave 6

In the main shrine of Cave 6, the entrance door is protected by two huge *dwarapalas*, above which are carved flying couples and dwarfs. A figure of Tara is carved on the right side of the male attendant (identified as Maitreya) on the left. A stupa and a Buddha figure seated in *padmasana* are carved on his crown. His right hand displays *vitarka mudra* (thumb and index finger touching, forming a circle).

## Cave 7

This completely intact cave is the most developed one among all the three groups. It has a veranda in the front supported by four pillars and two pilasters. On the back wall of the veranda, two huge sculptures are carved: Avalokitesvara on the left and Manjusri on the right. Avalokitesvara stands in the *samabhanga* (standing straight with equal balance on both feet) pose. His left hand is in *abhaya mudra* (gesture of reassurance and safety), and his right hand holds a lotus stalk. His *jatamukuta* (crown of

The *dwarapalas* flanking the main shrine door in Cave 6. Photo by Anil Purohit.

Dancing panel in main shrine of Cave 7. Picture Credits: Sahapedia.

matted hair) bears Buddha Amitabha's image, with flying dwarfs placed above. The panels surrounding Avalokitesvara depict the eight perils of travelling (*Mahabhaya*)—fire, robbery, slavery, drowning, attacks by lions, snakes, attacks by elephants and an ogress. Near each scene, Avalokitesvara is shown in a flying position, arriving just in time to rescue his devotees.

The shrine is carved in the centre of the main hall. On the right of the shrine, stands Tara in the *tribhanga* (triple-bend position) position, wearing heavy jewellery. Her intricate headdress features a rosette, lotus flowers, beaded strings, etc. The top part of her earlobe is adorned with earrings. Female attendants stand on both sides, also featuring elaborate hairstyles.

The Tara figure on the left side of the shrine, though missing both hands, displays voluptuousness and grace, standing in the *tribhanga* pose. The lotus stalk indicates the presence of a lotus flower in the right hand. Her hair is decorated with pearl strings, lotus

Ashtamahabhaya Avalokiteshvara flanking the main shrine door in Cave 7. Photo by Anil Purohit.

flowers, rosettes, leaves and a crescent motif.

Inside the main shrine, on the left, is the famous Dancing Panel. The central dancer is captured in a Bharatanatyam pose mid-performance, oblivious to everything around her and focussed completely on the movements of her feet, hands and eyes. The orchestra is composed of women playing musical instruments like *mridanga*, flute, cymbals and *damaru*.

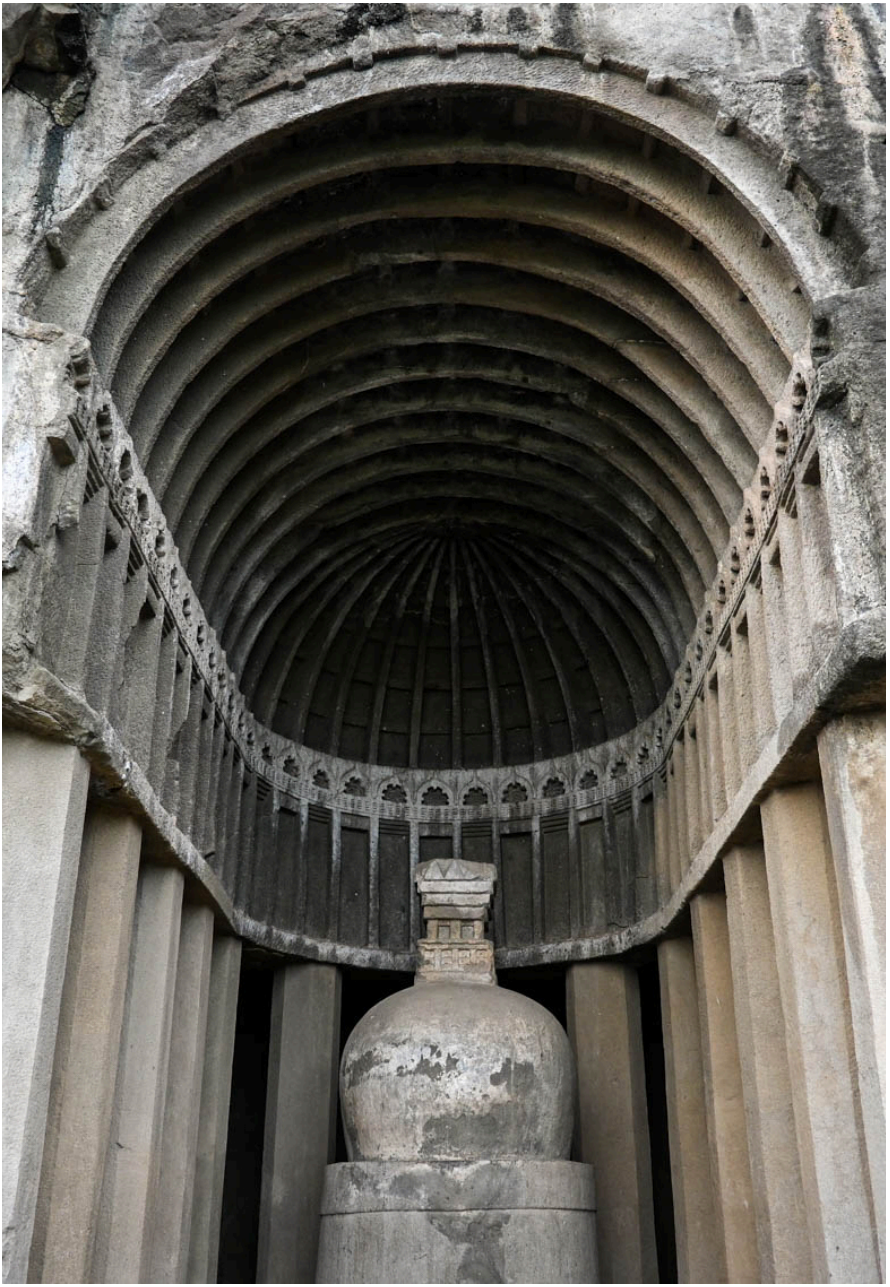
## Caves 9 and 10

At the entrance to the hall, to the left of the first shrine, is a sculpture showing the Mahaparinirvana scene, where the Buddha bids mother earth farewell and takes refuge in heaven. This is flanked by the standing four-armed figure of Sadaksari Avalokitesvara. He wears a *jatamukuta*, with a figure of the Buddha in the crown. He holds a rosary in the upper right hand and a lotus stalk in the left hand. His lower right hand is in the *varada mudra* (boon-granting gesture).

Avalokiteshvara figure (left) in Cave 9. Photo by Anil Purohit.

While the Aurangabad Caves may not match Ajanta or Ellora's scale, their sculptural artistry achieves comparable excellence.

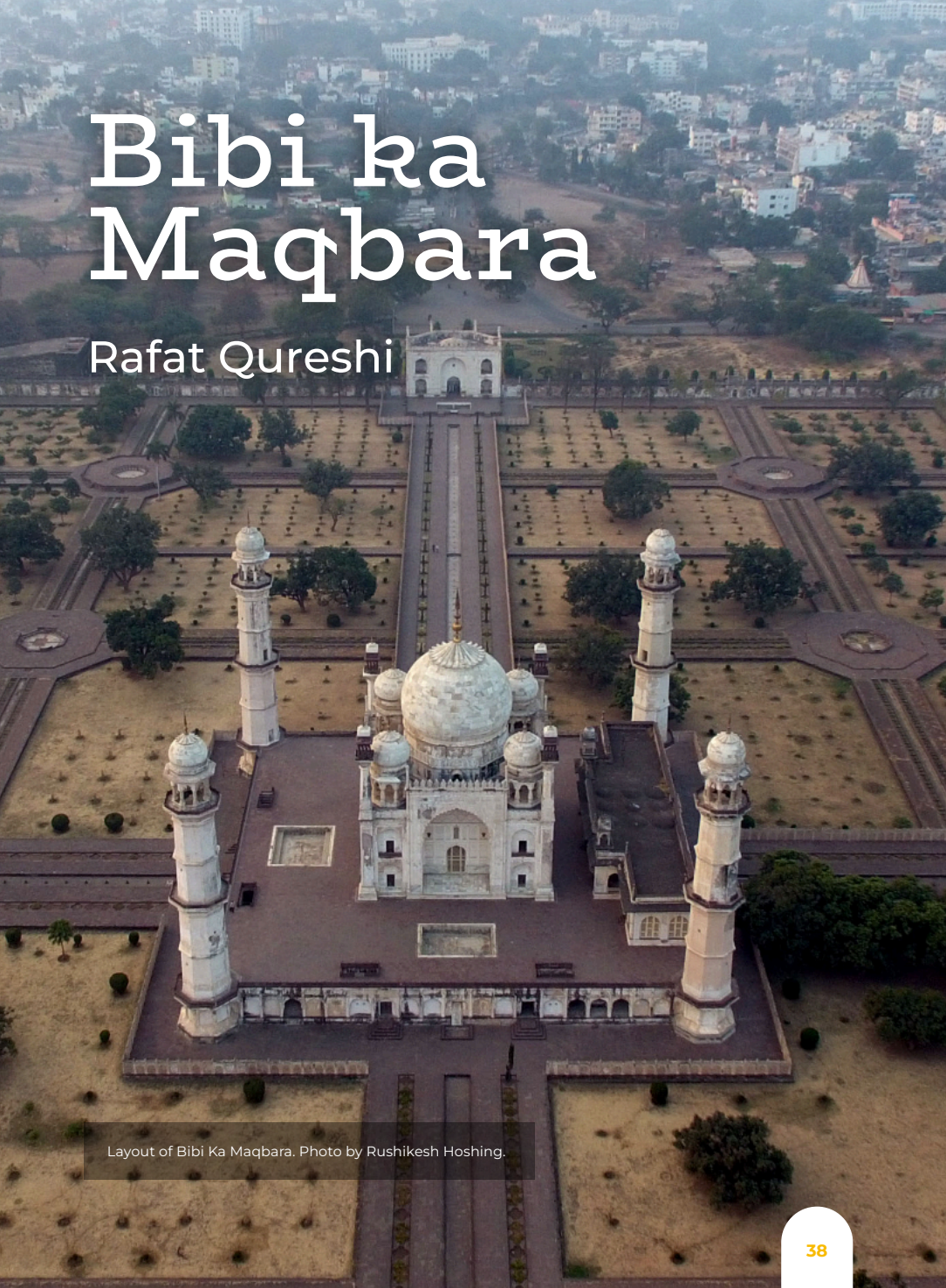
View of Cave 10. Photo by Anil Purohit.



The *chaitya* in Cave 4. Photo by Anil Purohit.

# Bibi ka Maqbara

Rafat Qureshi



Layout of Bibi Ka Maqbara. Photo by Rushikesh Hoshing.

The gardens. Photo by Anil Purohit.

Along the road connecting Daulatabad and Aurangabad stands an elegant and graceful Mughal memorial, draped in white, visible from afar. This structure, more popularly known as Bibi ka Maqbara, is the most conspicuous landmark of the city, underlining its historicity.

Bibi ka Maqbara was erected in memory of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb's wife Dilras Banu Begum, popularly known as Begum or Bibi. While the grandest of Mughal monuments and memorials are found in the dynasty's northern capitals of Agra and Delhi, Bibi ka Maqbara is an isolated Mughal monument in Maharashtra, owing to Aurangzeb's long-term governorship of Aurangabad.

Probably due to its unjustified comparison with the more celebrated Taj Mahal, Bibi ka Maqbara began to be referred to by some historians, travel writers and scholars as 'Deccan ka Taj', 'Mini Taj Mahal'. However, such comparisons only end up diminishing the distinctive beauty of this picturesque shrine.

## Questions over the ownership of the Maqbara

The monument's commissioning has been the subject of many a scholarly debate. While some credit Aurangzeb with its creation, others attribute it to the emperor's son Mohammed Azam Shah. The Archaeological Survey of India's information board displayed at the entrance to the site unequivocally credits Azam Shah. *The Aurangabad Gazetteer* (1997) and A.C. Campbell's *Glimpses of the Nizam's Dominion* (1898) also attributes its creation to Azam Shah, citing Aurangzeb's known aversion to building monuments, given there are very few structures belonging to his time.

However, with the support of historical data it is easier to arrive at

One of the four minarets at the mausoleum's corners. Photo by Anil Purohit.

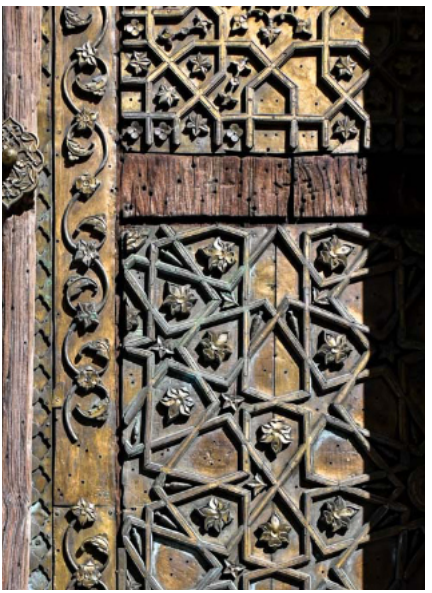
some sort of consensus. The construction of the Maqbara was initiated in 1653 as confirmed by the accounts of the foreign traveller Jean Baptiste Tavernier. As per most references, the Maqbara was completed between 1653 and 1660. The monument was also recorded by Monsieur de Thevenot, a French traveller, when he visited Aurangabad in 1667. Azam Shah's association with the structure likely stems from his extensive renovation work as governor of Deccan in 1680.

## The Architectural Marvel

Bibi ka Maqbara is undoubtedly modelled on the Taj Mahal, in its style, pattern and design, as it was conceived by Attaullah Rashidi, one of the three sons of Ustad Ahmed Lahori, the chief architect of the Taj Mahal, who had been given the title of Nadir-ul-Asar (a rare gem of the period) by Shah Jahan. Another person related to the construction of the tomb was Hanspat Rai, whose name is engraved behind the metal door at the site. He was an engineer with technical expertise and was responsible for overseeing the construction of the structure.

> Gardens were an integral part of the Mughal aesthetics, and the gardens of Bibi ka Maqbara, too, are laid out in the characteristic Mughal char *bagh* style.

The complex is divided into four parts, the main building occupying the central portion, with one building on



Detail of a door. Photo by Anil Purohit.

each side of the Maqbara, all equidistant from each other. On the east is the *jamait khana* or *aina khana* (so called due to the mirrors fixed on its doorway) and on the west a mosque. A *baradari* (a pavilion with 12 doors) occupies the north, while the main entrance, a two-storeyed building, lies to the south. The Maqbara occupies 15,000 square feet of fortified space enclosed by high walls, with a *chhatri* (pavillion) adorning each corner.

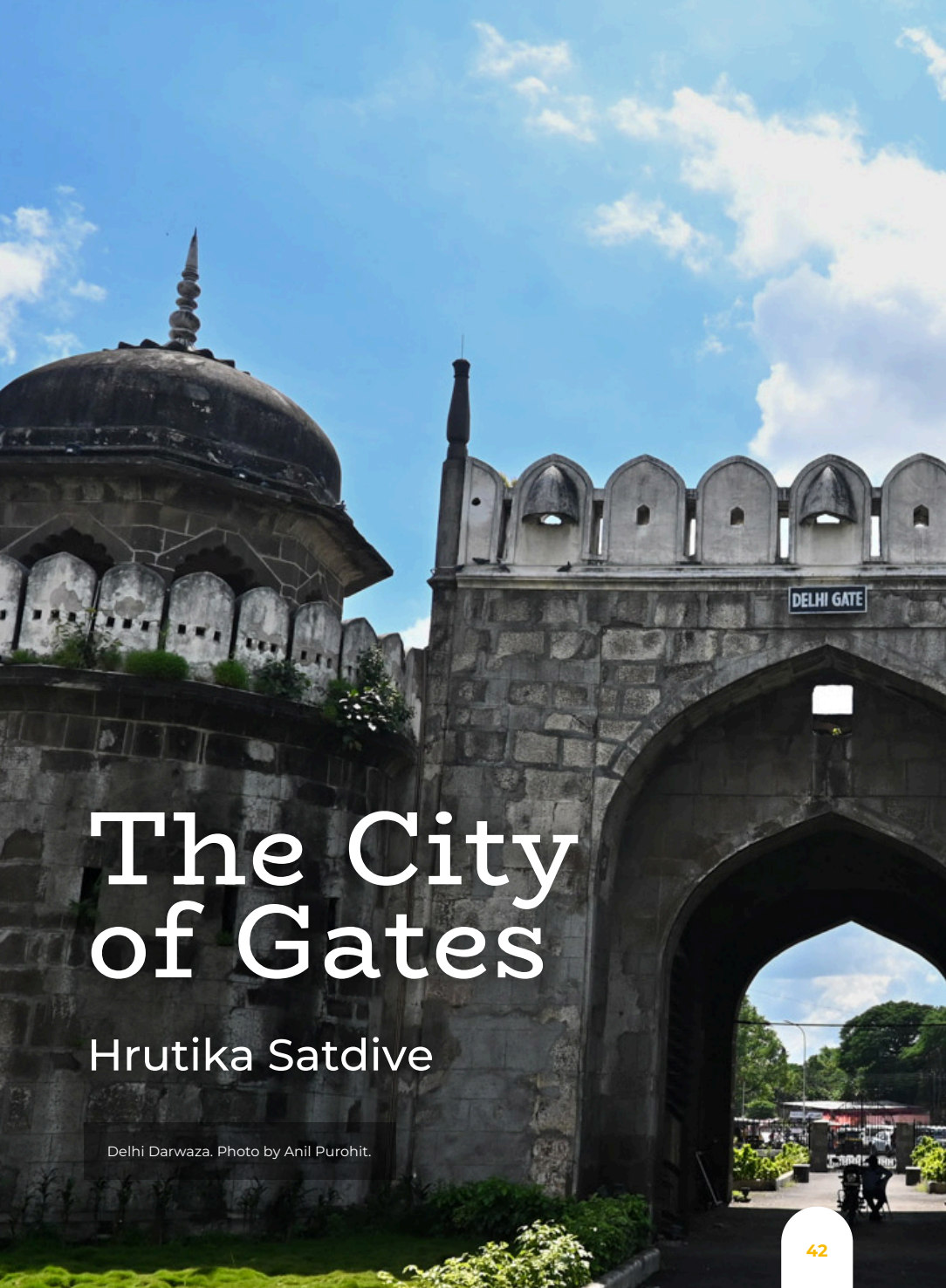
At the centre of the pathways on four sides are oblong reservoirs, which are 488 feet long, 96 feet wide and 3 feet deep, with a total of 61 fountains. The water comes through the slanting red stone or marble carved sheets connected to internal wells on all four sides of the central building.

The principal building, which houses the queen's tomb, is at an elevation of 19 feet. This majestic height contributes significantly to the Maqbara's beauty and exceptional grace.

The main platform is 72 feet x 72 feet, and the main mausoleum area 24 feet x 24 feet. The dome of this plinth, main *chabutra* and the octagonal minars on all four sides are made of marble. The minars are 72 feet high, accessible by 144 stairs, and feature three storeys. Each floor opens to a gallery with intricately carved red sandstone *jali* railings. The entire structure is crowned by a magnificent white dome with a brass pot finial and four smaller domes. The monument showcases various decorative techniques, such as stucco painting, relief ornamentation, stucco lustro and dado, besides glazed tiles and elaborate lattice work.

Bibi ka Maqbara stands as the sole significant monument erected by the Mughals in the Deccan, in the midst of a persistently dry climate, a balm to the eyes with its tall cypress trees and lush dark green lawns.

Marble carved sheets connected to internal wells. Photo by Anil Purohit.




# The City of Gates

Hrutika Satdive

Delhi Darwaza. Photo by Anil Purohit.

Kala Darwaza. Photo by Anil Purohit.

The stone gateways spread across the length and breadth of the city are beautiful remnants of the past, which evolved into navigational landmarks over the centuries. From an architectural perspective, these structures were strategically positioned within a planned city, serving both infrastructure and security needs. Though Aurangabad has been christened as the 'City of Gates', today only a handful of a total of 52 such majestic gateways remain, though no historical record attests to this number. Each of the extant gates showcase distinct architectural features, with its name reflecting its purpose or location.

Under Aurangzeb's rule, Aurangabad witnessed the construction of the fortification walls around what constitutes the old city of today, complemented by an extensive network of stone gateways.

> The four principal gateways to the city were the ones facing the cardinal directions, namely, the Delhi Darwaza facing the north, i.e., towards Delhi; the Paithan Darwaza facing the holy city of Paithan (or Pratishthan) towards the south; the Mecca or Makai Darwaza facing the west towards Mecca, and towards the east the Khaas Darwaza or Jalna Gate.

Additional strategically positioned gateways included the Kala, Mahmud, Kat-kat, Rangeen, Naubat, Barapulla, Roshan, Bhadkal, Bulund, Jaffar, Noor, Mir Adil, Khusro, Khooni and Naukhanda Darwazas, each striking in its own way.

Mecca or Makai Darwaza. Photo by Anil Purohit.

## Architectural Features and Construction

While construction techniques and use of materials reveal the period of a gateway's construction, its primary function as a defence post manifests in its stone and mortar construction and its imposing facade. The gateways, typically two-storeys high, feature prominent attributes such as the bastions flanking the gate's pointed, arched openings, crowned with battlement walls and reinforced with merlons and crenelations. This is exemplified in the Rangeen Darwaza, Paithan Darwaza, and Kala Darwaza, as well as the Delhi and Mecca Darwaza, which also showcase *chhatri*s topped on the bastions. Towering as they may seem, the gates vary in proportions. The Mahmud and Mir Adil Darwazas present notably slender profiles. The Mahmud Darwaza, located at the entrance of the Panchakki complex, with two miniscule Bangladar-roofed *chhatri*s on top, is interestingly constructed at an acute angle to the bridge on the Kham River, forming a unique junction (a departure from typical right-angled positioning of most gateways). Another gateway

Mecca or Makai Darwaza. Photo by Rushikesh Hoshing.

atop a bridge is the Barapulla Darwaza, which gets its name from the twelve-spanned bridge. These two gateways provide an understanding of Aurangabad's organic evolution with relation to the Kham River.

The Bhadkal Darwaza, built during Malik Ambar's reign in 1612 CE, commemorates the victory over the Mughal governor of Gujarat Abdullah Khan's attack on the Nizam Shahi kingdom. Originally named Bahar-kul Darwaza, it is probably the city's first gate, distinguished by its grey basalt stone and lime mortar construction. The two-storey structure is a perfect cuboid built on eight stone columns, its upper level once housing the *nagarkhana* (music gallery) that offered panoramic city views. The central vaulted dome and the facades adorned with lotus symbols (Malik Ambar's royal emblems) mark its architectural significance.

Near the Bhadkal Darwaza stands the Naukhanda Palace, also built by Malik Ambar that can be accessed through the smaller Chota Bhadkal Gate. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the Qila-e-Ark was constructed as the emperor's residence. This royal citadel was guarded by its four principal gateways—the Delhi Darwaza, Mecca Darwaza, Naubat Darwaza and the Rangeen Darwaza. The Rangeen Darwaza showcased robust bastions and canon platforms, and earned its name *rangeen* (colourful) from the vibrant firework displays during royal celebrations. The Naubat Darwaza, the southern entrance of the citadel, was the primary gate used for the arrivals of the royals. Also called the Qila-e-Ark Darwaza, this double-storey arched gateway derives its name from the naubat drums that

Rangeen Darwaza. Photo by Anil Purohit.


Paithan Darwaza. Photo by Anil Purohit.

announced royal arrivals.

## Conservation Efforts

> The gateways, once integral to Aurangabad's identity as a de facto capital, formed the framework upon which the present city developed. However, today merely 15 to 18 of these gateways are traceable.

Although these gateways are a part and parcel of quotidian life, their glory is diminishing with each passing day and insensitive intervention. The Jalna Darwaza, that once formed a cardinal point of entrance into the city, has succumbed to demolition, with many others faced with the same fate for their derelict state. Conservation of these structures, woven so tightly into the historic fabric of the city, demands immediate attention.

In 2019, the Aurangabad Smart City initiative launched a large-scale conservation project with an aim to boost the tourism potential of the city. The project proposed restoration of nine gateways—namely, Barapullah, Roshan, Kat-kat, Paithan, Naubat, Mahmood, Jaffar, Kala and the Khijri Darwazas—with the estimated project budget of INR 3.20 Crore. This project marks the beginning of broader efforts to safeguard not just the gateways but also other prominent monuments dotting the city.

Mahmud Darwaza. Photo by Anil Purohit.

# The Legacy of Himroo Weaving

Meenakshi Vashisth

*Himroo* textile with floral patterns. Photo by Anil Purohit.

Imran Qureshi at *Himroo* Factory. Photo by Anil Purohit.

*Himroo*, a textile tradition developed in the historic city of Aurangabad, embodies a legacy of exquisite craftsmanship and cultural significance. This centuries-old craft, known for its intricate patterns and luxurious texture, reflects the convergence of Persian and Indian artistic influences. It originated when Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq shifted his capital from Delhi to Devagiri (now Daulatabad) during the fourteenth century, bringing skilled weavers who introduced techniques of weaving luxurious fabrics to meet elite demand for blended silk clothing.

The name *himroo* is derived from the Persian word *hum-ruh*, meaning 'similar' or 'alike,' referring to its resemblance to the *kimkhab* fabric (brocades of silk woven in gold and silver threads, mostly patronised by royalty).

> Over time, these artisans adapted their craft to local materials and preferences, creating the *himroo* weave we know today—a unique texture, both durable and visually captivating.

It emerged as a cost-effective alternative to expensive brocades only accessible to few.

From the times of Muhammad bin Tughlaq and Deccan Sultanates to the Mughal Empire, particularly under Aurangzeb's rule, *himroo* gained prominence and found a thriving export market in West Asia. With the decline of the Mughal and Maratha Empires in the early eighteenth century, the craft flourished under the patronage of the Nizams of Hyderabad. However, with industrialisation, changing market demands during the British rule, and the shifting sociopolitical landscape during the Second World War and its impact on trade, the demand for such luxurious fabrics waned. By the 1940s, only 150 artisan families were practising the craft, a number that fell to just 30 after India's Independence.

## Weaving Technique and Characteristics

*Himroo* weaving involves interweaving silk and cotton threads on a pit-loom to create a soft, durable fabric with a satin-like finish. The process begins with *naqshbandi*, the preparation of a design directly on threads, now drawn on paper, to guide the handloom and create the patterns.

The craft employs a double-reed

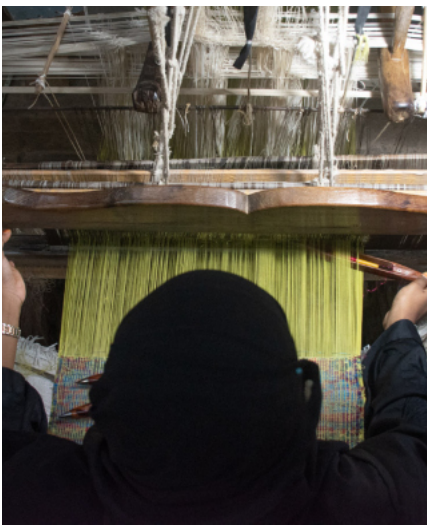
Bobbins of coloured threads. Photo by Anil Purohit.

handloom for weaving, with the reed—a comb-like tool—used to separate warp threads, guide the shuttle and position weft threads into place. Traditionally artisans worked on a pit-loom, also known as *pagar* loom (double-sided loom), where locally sourced cotton *bana* (weft or horizontal threads) and silk *tana* (warp or vertical threads) threads were interwoven to create elaborate designs. The weaver sits below in the pit working the loom, while the helper sits above to handle the *dori* (thread). The fabric is distinguished by its double-layered structure. The warp threads are woven in two layers, with the weft threads interlacing between them. This creates a unique, almost three-dimensional effect, adding depth and texture to the fabric. The fabric's characteristic sheen and texture emerge from the interlocking pattern created with overlapping silk and cotton threads.

The essential tools for *himroo* weaving include:

- Pirns – A small, tapered bobbin used to hold weft yarn.
- Fly Shuttle – A device carrying a pirn that passes through the warp threads to create patterns.
- Charkha – A spinning wheel that winds yarn onto pirns and bobbins.

The threads undergo careful dyeing, often using natural colours. Each motif requires specific warp and weft calculations. Depending on complexity, weaving a single metre of fabric may take up to a week, while completing an entire piece can require months. Traditional patterns include *jali* (latticework), *bel* (creepers) and *gul* (flowers)—motifs often in use for generations. Some designs echo the frescoes found in



Weaver sits at a pit loom for Himroo weaving process. Photo by Anil Purohit.

Medals awarded to Imran Qureshi's family over the decades. Photo by Anil Purohit.

Ajanta Caves, highlighting regional influences on the craft.

## A Family Legacy

Imran Qureshi, a 49-year-old master weaver with over four decades of experience, continues his family's weaving tradition in Nawabpura, the locality famous for *himroo* production. Taking pride in his family's centuries-old legacy, Qureshi shared, 'My ancestor Muhammad Yakub Sahib, with other weavers, shifted to the region when the capital was shifted during the fourteenth century.' His forefathers were renowned for creating intricate *jangla* (meandering floral patterns) and *butidar* (floral sprigs) *himroo* fabrics that adorned royal weddings and ceremonial robes. He recalls when the production team of Mughal-e-Azam visited his grandfather's workshop while crafting costumes for Dilip Kumar's role as Shehzada Salim.

For many of these weavers, the craft remained a closely guarded family tradition, passed down from fathers to sons.

Dignitaries visiting *Himroo* Factory. Photo by Anil Purohit.

Weavers setting up weft and warp threads on the loom. Photo by Anil Purohit.

> “My great-grandfather, Haji Gulam Ahmed, still had 150 looms in the early twentieth century. Despite the decline in demand by the 1980s, my father Ahmed Syed Qureshi had a *karkhana* (workshop) in Nawabpura with about 25 looms, which employed more than 50 artisans. I learned the art of weaving—a craft that demands patience, skill and a keen eye for detail—from my father on the traditional *tana-bana* (handloom) when I was only eight years old,” Qureshi explained.

He went on to comment on how the landscape of demand and patronage of the craft has evolved over time—from royal dignitaries like Maharani Gayatri Devi of Jaipur, who visited their *karkhana* in 1956, and India’s first president, Dr Rajendra Prasad, to a niche clientele primarily based outside India today.

Despite its historical significance and exquisite craftsmanship, the production of *himroo* faces numerous contemporary challenges. In the words of Qureshi, ‘The market is flooded with machine-made imitations that are cheaper but lack the soul of handwoven *himroo*. These imitations lack the finesse and authenticity of handwoven fabric but dominate the market due to their affordability.’ He continues, ‘The craft requires a painstakingly slow technique. The traditional loom we use allows us to weave elaborate patterns that demand precision and creativity. It has become increasingly

difficult to find skilled artisans willing to continue this labour-intensive work due to low financial returns. Many young people from our community are abandoning their roots, as they prefer jobs that offer better pay and financial stability.'

## Reviving Himroo

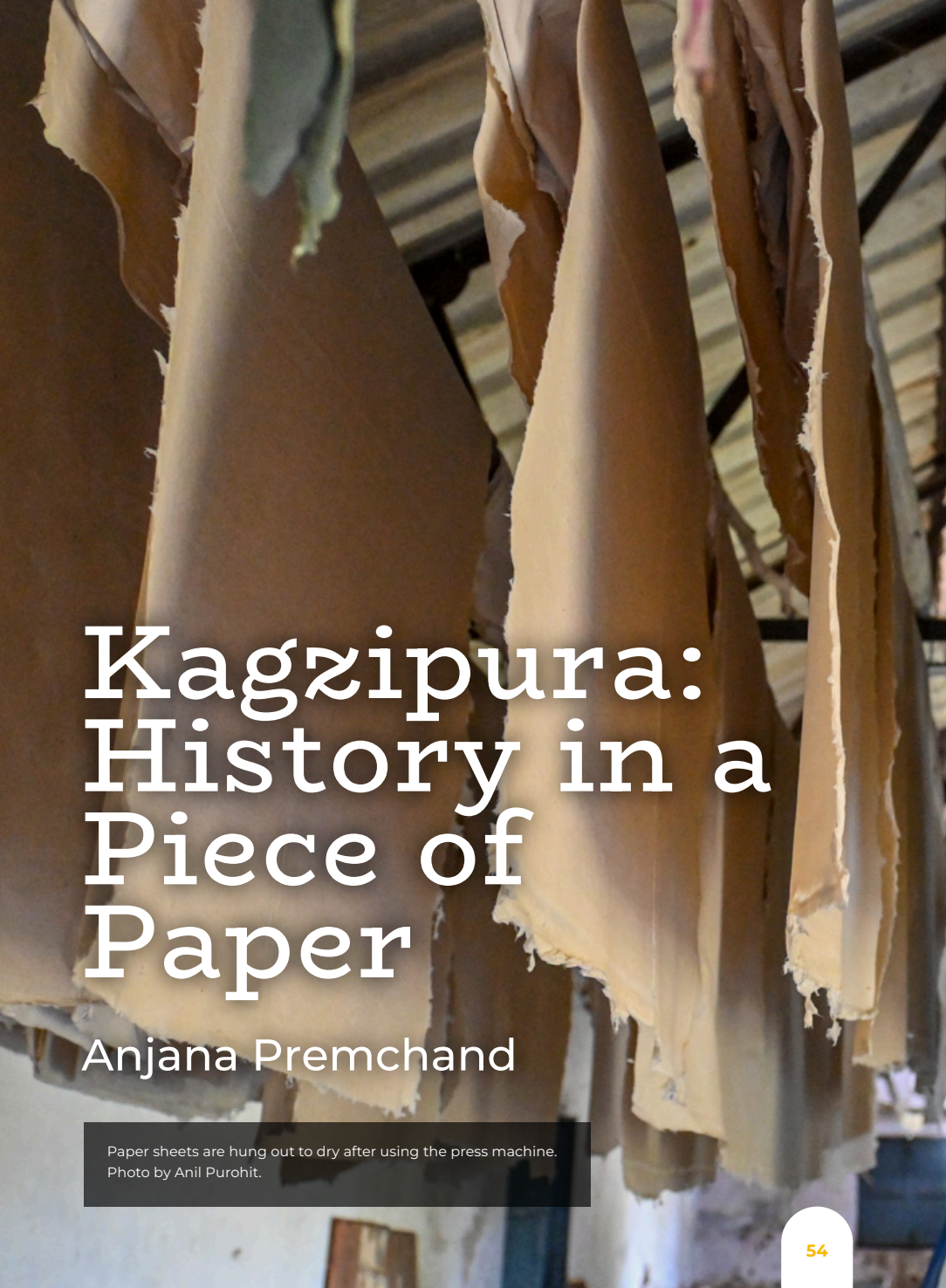
Given the challenges of the current times, various individual and non-profit initiatives, alongside government programmes, have aimed to revive the craft and ensure its survival. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, with only one loom remaining operational, a determined Imran Qureshi connected with Mohammad Yaseen, a 75-year-old skilled weaver, to train a group of 22 women from underprivileged backgrounds for eight months, hoping to inspire a new generation of weavers. This project, accomplished in collaboration with the INTACH

Dignitaries visiting *Himroo* Factory. Photo by Anil Purohit.

Imran Qureshi shows a *naqshbandi*. Photo by Anil Purohit.

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, was focused on including women, given they had been historically absent from the narrative of this craft. Ten out of the lot, have chosen to continue this work with Qureshi in his Nawabpura workshop, creating products such as stoles, shawls and upholstery that appeal to modern sensibilities while preserving traditional techniques, ensuring a renewed interest in the craft.

'The future of *Himroo* lies in awareness and support. When people understand its craftsmanship, they value it more,' says Qureshi.



# Kagzipura: History in a Piece of Paper

Anjana Premchand

Paper sheets are hung out to dry after using the press machine. Photo by Anil Purohit.

Paper mill reopened in 2017. Photo by Anil Purohit.

The production of paper, fuelled by its growing demand as a medium for record-keeping and communication, spread throughout northern India under the Delhi Sultanates from the thirteenth century onwards. As the craft of papermaking flourished, paper gradually replaced traditional materials such as birch bark, cloth, palm leaves and so on. Artisans known as *kagazi*s, a term derived from the Persian *kagaz* (paper), settled near capital cities and commercial centres, where they produced paper by hand using materials such as cloth rags, hemp and jute fibres.

## The Artisans of Kagzipura

The Kagzipura village located in Aurangabad—its name combining *kagazi* (those who made paper) and *pura* (settlement)—is home to a centuries-old artisan community whose ancestors arrived in the region in 1327 during Muhammad bin Tughlaq's ambitious relocation of his capital from Dilli to Devagiri.

> Among the many professionals who accompanied this large-scale migration were papermakers—artisans whose skills were in demand, as paper was not readily available in the region at the time.

However, the move was short-lived. In 1335, when Tughlaq returned to Delhi, many migrants, including from the community of *kagazi*s, chose to stay on. They eventually settled in a village about 4 kilometres from Daulatabad, naming it Kagzipura. Today, the village lies in the Khuldabad Tehsil of Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar district, approximately 21 kilometres from the city.

Papermaking continued through the centuries in Kagzipura, and by the

Mohammad Altaf pours the pulp into the frame of the vico vat machine which is operated by hand. Photo by Anil Purohit.

latter half of the twentieth century, nearly every house in the village functioned as a *karkhana* (workshop). Traditionally, the entirely manual process of papermaking utilised cotton, *san* (hemp fibres) and *jhaal* (tree bark), though the latter is no longer considered environmentally sustainable. *Kai* (moss) from lakes was also used, producing a paper of superior quality. Without electricity, raw materials were heated over a fire for two days before being beaten and scrubbed into a pulp.

A significant shift occurred in 1954 with the establishment of the Handmade Paper Manufacturing Society, which brought structure to the local industry and eased competition among village artisans.

Mohammad Altaf, a 52-year-old artisan from Kagzipura, comes from a family deeply rooted in the craft; his father, Mohammad Ibrahim, began working in the 1960s. Despite challenges, such as the 1972 water shortage and recurring droughts over the decades, papermaking persisted. Altaf recalls the village gaining wider attention, particularly in the 1980s, when film stars like Dilip Kumar and Saira Banu visited the area.

However, as the paper industry rapidly modernised, cheaper machine-made alternatives turned handmade paper into a luxury and a fading craft. 'This is a flawed business. The cost of making handmade paper is high, but the demand doesn't match. It is also more expensive than mass-produced paper—a handmade paper diary costs significantly more than regular diaries in the market. Financial struggles have always been a part of this trade,' says Altaf.

Artisans separate layers of pulp with cloth. Photo by Anil Purohit.

The declining demand and financial hardships ultimately led to the collapse of the village's paper industry in 2007. Artisans who had relied on the craft for generations were forced to seek alternative livelihoods, turning to wheat *bhatti*s (mills), dairy farming, transportation and other trades to sustain themselves.

## A Recent Revival

In 2017, Kagzipura's papermaking craft was revived through a joint initiative by the Cosmo Foundation (the CSR arm of Delhi-based Cosmo First Limited) and the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) through its local chapter.

> The project aimed to develop Kagzipura as a modern heritage village, not only by establishing and supporting a paper mill but also by improving infrastructure and education.

The on-ground implementation of these initiatives is overseen by Rajat Bathe, the CSR Coordinator, and Lakshmikant Mankar, the Cluster Coordinator.

The initiative also manages various aspects of the paper mill's operations, including artisan and labour payments, machinery maintenance, material procurement and product sales. The installation of a solar power system has cut electricity costs by INR 3,000 per month.

When production resumed, Altaf rejoined as an artisan alongside Gawas Khan, a veteran artisan who had worked alongside Altaf's father. Among the younger artisans is Sameer Sheikh, whose grandfather,

Interior of the paper mill, featuring pits used for processing raw materials and areas where paper is laid out to dry after pressing. Photo by Anil Purohit.

Gawas Khan stacks paper that was straightened and cut. Photo by Anil Purohit.

Azimudeen Sheikh, was once part of the industry. As a child, Sameer often accompanied his grandfather to the workshop, and when the mill reopened in 2017, he, too, became a part of it. Today, the mill employs around 10 people, including artisans and helpers.

However, few villagers are willing to take up papermaking as a profession, as wages remain lower compared to other industries. With Daulatabad Fort and the Ellora and Ajanta Caves nearby, some young people from the village are even training for careers in tourism. This could also open opportunities for visitors to engage with the village's paper mill. Currently, most paper products are sold through exhibitions and other limited avenues, but integrating tourism could help boost sales. Another key challenge is knowledge transfer—only a few artisans from the older generation experienced in traditional papermaking techniques remain.

## The Craft and Toil of Papermaking

> "My favorite type of paper is one where we embed flower petals or neem leaves between two layers of pulp and press them into a single sheet," says Sheikh.

Holding up a sheet to the sunlight, he points out the delicate dried petals, their shapes visible in a subtle contrast against the white paper.

Producing a sheet of paper, usually

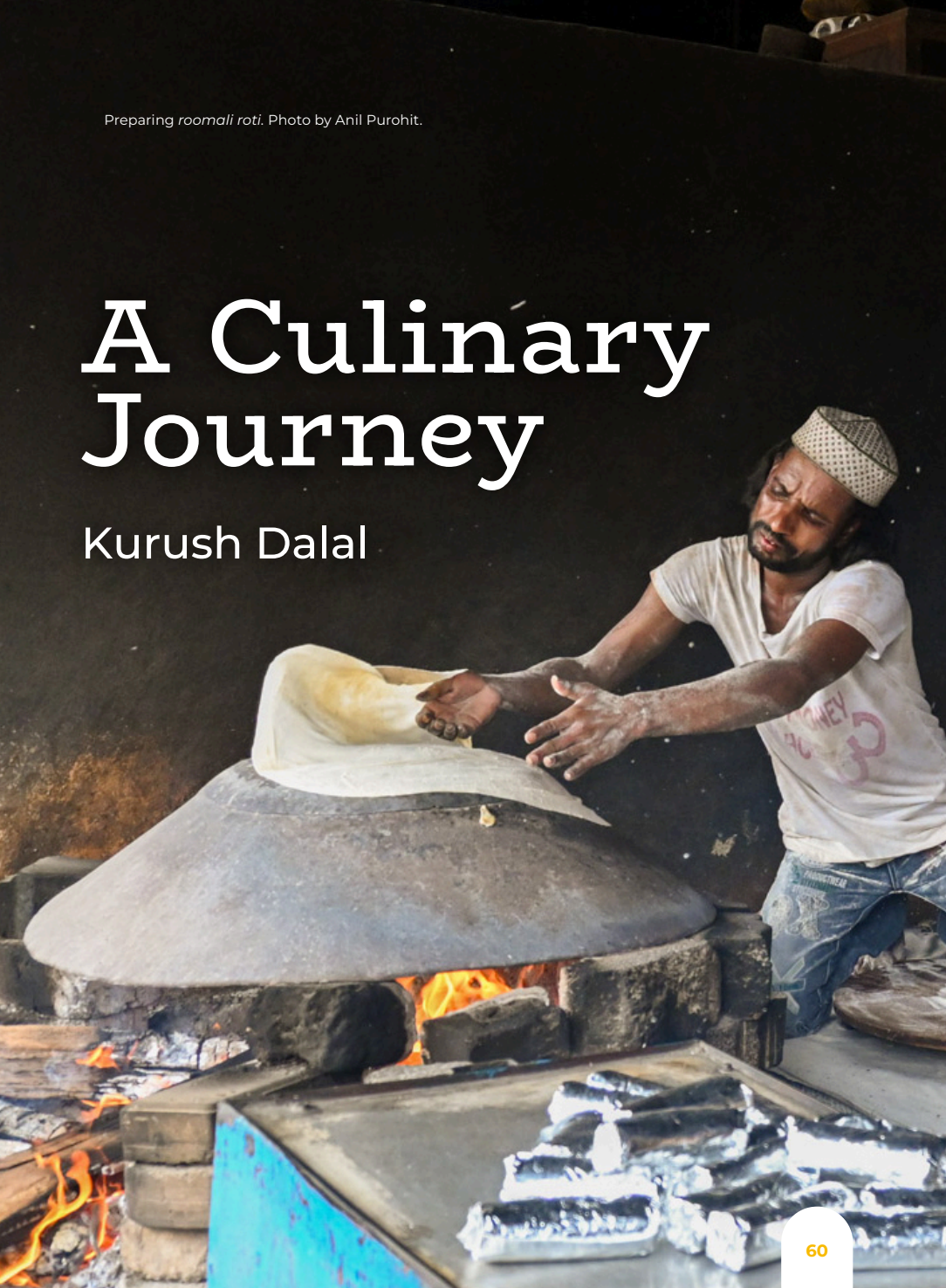
part of a batch of 60, takes approximately eight hours. The process begins with 30 kg of cotton thread, which is processed in a mixer machine for five to six hours. Water is periodically added to clean the cotton and create a pulp. Initially, only the cotton thread is churned, after which bleaching powder is introduced. The contaminated water is then drained, replaced with fresh water, and mixed again. To ensure the paper holds ink without smudging, *fitkari* (alum) and a binding chemical are added. Natural dyes such as henna and turmeric, or fabric colours, may also be mixed in to create tinted paper. Approximately 750 sheets of paper can be produced from 30 kg of cotton.

Once the pulp is ready, the artisans begin work on the Vico Vat machine, which is operated manually. Using intuition to gauge the right quantity, a layer of pulp is poured into a wooden frame with a mesh screen and carefully washed by hand to remove any lumps or impurities. The frame, suspended from the ceiling by nylon ropes, is then swung gently to drain excess water, leaving behind an even layer of pulp. The standard frame size is 34 x 24 inches, but with dividers in place, it can produce four sheets measuring 16 x 12 inches each.

After draining, the frame is removed from the machine and tilted to release additional water. A thin cloth is placed over the pulp layer to keep it intact. The frame is then flipped upside down onto a table, with the cloth at the bottom, and pressed down by hand—usually by two people working together. Once a stack of at least 60 pulp layers, each separated by cloth, is ready, it is taken to a press machine outside the mill, where it is compressed into paper sheets. The final sheets are cut evenly using a manually operated cutting machine. Most of the equipment used in the process is old, and since few technicians are familiar with these machines, the artisans often carry out repairs themselves.

> “The quality of this handmade paper is excellent—its lifespan exceeds 100 years. The oldest sheet we have here is around 50 years old,’ says Altaf proudly.”

Despite its durability, handmade paper remains a niche interest, with few willing to invest in it for daily use. Artisans like Sheikh may be the last generation in the village to practice this craft. For now, the revival project in Kagzipura has kept the tradition alive, and the artisans take pride in their work and continue despite the challenges. Their greatest reward is seeing the craft recognised and respected. It is only fair that the long tradition of papermaking in the region is recorded in the pages of history with the same care that goes into creating each sheet of handmade paper.



Preparing *roomali roti*. Photo by Anil Purohit.

# A Culinary Journey

## Kurush Dalal

*Bhel* served on paper at a street stall. Photo by Rushikesh Hoshing.

When it comes to Aurangabad, what often goes unmentioned is the city's amazing local cuisine. A city that has been at the crossroads of trade and business for at least the last 2,000 years, its people are hardy and so are its crops. The thousands of daily tourists who come to explore its rich built heritage often miss out on the gastronomic heritage of the city.

## Gosht Qaliya and Naan

This succession of dynasties has left an indelible mark on the city's culinary landscape, with each ruler contributing to the city's rich culinary traditions. Perhaps no other dish better exemplifies this than the *gosht qaliya* and *naan*. The *bhatiyaras* (caterers) and *khansamahs* (cooks) who prepare this dish claim their recipes have remained unchanged since Mughal times. Slow cooked and infused with spices and flavour, this is a sensuous yet robust dish. Many believe that this dish evolved thanks to Muhammad bin Tughlaq's decision to move his capital to the Deccan. This dish then became the sustaining meal for the people during this long, arduous journey.

The *qaliya* is cooked in a single pot, ensuring carefully controlled heat, and brings together the best of the north and the south in its seamless flavours by combining sesame seeds, poppy seeds, coconut and exotic spices like Marking Nuts. Cubes of meat are gently simmered, allowing them to absorb the complex spice mixture and the heat from the chillies. In many places the vessel in which the *qaliya* is made is enclosed in a brick chamber, essentially creating an 'underground' oven. The resultant slow-cooked meat is a true gastronomic delight. The *naan* can be a simple flatbread (made using flour, water and salt) or a more exotic variation made using milk, honey and

*Gosht qaliya* and *naan*. Photo by Rushikesh Hoshing.

*Seekh kebab* served with *pav*. Photo by Rushikesh Hoshing.

dried fruits. There is a *qaliya* and *naan* to suit all pockets and palates.

## Local Gems and Regional Influences

Aurangabad's *khau-galli* (food street) is dotted with hidden gems, with small shops serving up the most delectable *kebab*s and desserts. Aurangabad is also known for its hot *mawa jalebi*s, a sweet delicacy that can be enjoyed on its own or paired with thick cold *rabdi* for an indulgent treat. Other local specialties include *manda*, a paper-thin flatbread, and *kebab*s of all kinds.

Breakfasts are a hearty affair, often featuring brain and offal presentations. *Kheema* is another perennial favourite, typically garnished with boiled eggs—a ubiquitous ingredient in Aurangabadi cuisines. During monsoons and winters, locals turn to *paya* (trotter) soup, considered a hearty restorative meal or a tonic to start the day.

The Maharashtrian influence in Aurnagabad's cuisine is, of course, undeniable. Classic dishes such as *poha*, *missal*, *vada* and *sabudana* are all present and accounted for, with Marathwada's signature spicy kick. This fiery flavour is often offset with a *ghee*-laden sweet *sheera*. A lesser-known gem is the simple Maharashtrian *bhojanalaya* (eating house). These unassuming eateries serve a 'fixed' meal of a small selection of gravies and a dal with rice and hot millet flatbreads. Marathwada's traditional grains—*jowar*, *bajra* and *nachni* (or *ragi*)—are perfectly suited to the region's arid climate, requiring less water and fertilizer. These hardy grains not only sustain local farmers but also offer a healthy alternative to typical grain options. A local specialty worth noting

*Sabudana vada*. Photo by Anil Purohit.

is the *pathri*, a flatbread made from rice flour, often paired with spicy gravies.

Evenings in Aurangabad are incomplete without *tikkiya-pau*—the city's answer to all the hero snacks of the other Indian cities. Minced lamb is marinated with chillies and spices, pounded into submission and then rolled into small balls, which are then flattened on a hot *tava* and griddle fried to crisp perfection. The *tikkiya* is then stuffed into a *pau* (reminiscent of Mumbai's *laadi pau*) and served with a spicy *green thecha*-like chutney and chopped onions. Boiled eggs as a sidekick are always optional. For vegetarians there is the *poha-tarri-samosa*. A unique concoction of a potato-filled *samosa* smashed into a plate, covered in a spicy rice pulao and then drowned in an even spicier and mouthwatering *tarri* (thin gravy). Variants include substituting the samosa with a *batatawada* (mashed potato coated in batter and deep fried). The city also offers a diverse range of dining options for main meals, from modest eateries to upscale restaurants, all serving *thali*s with all the trimmings.

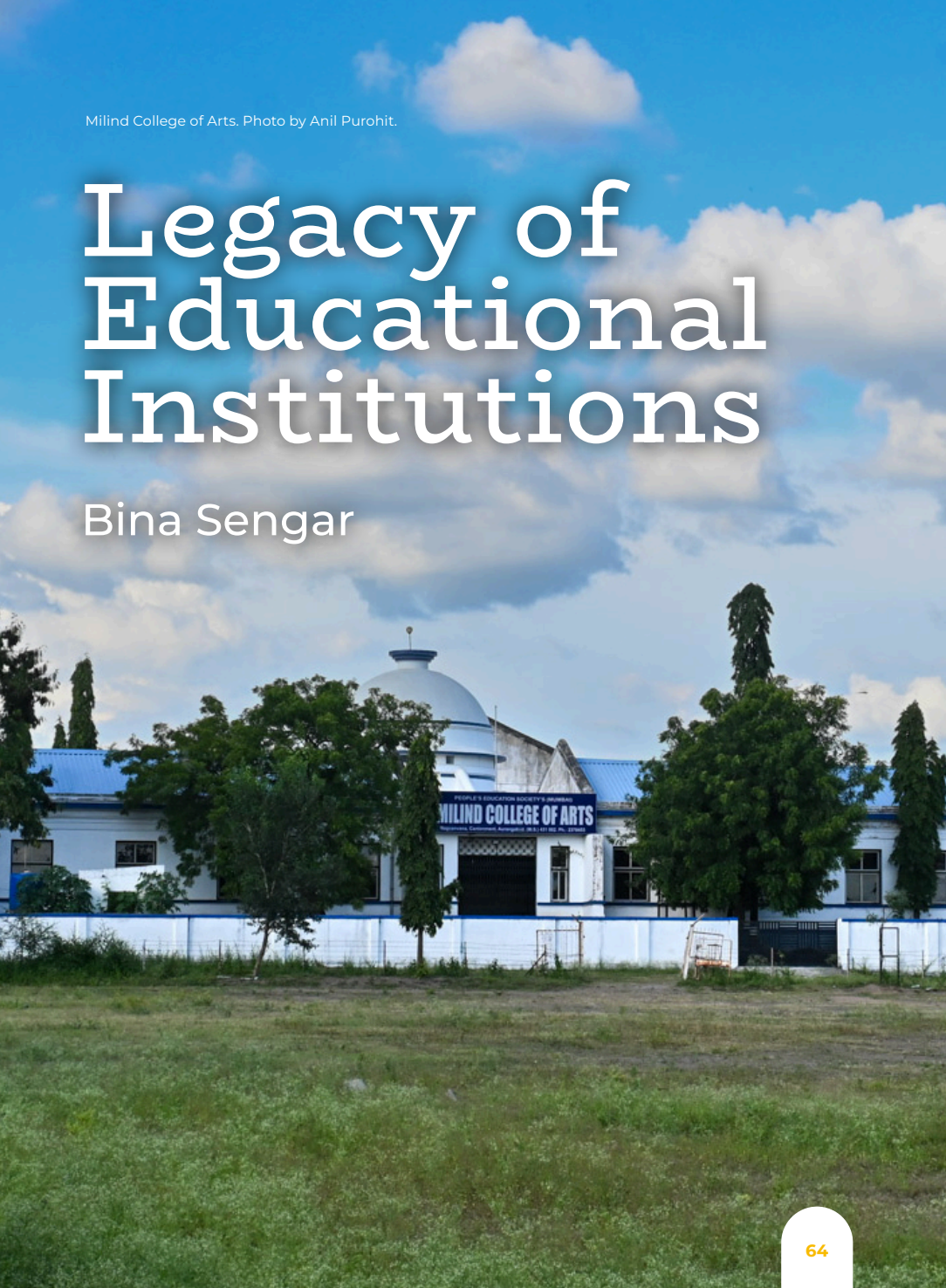
## Aurangabadi Mandi

But perhaps something that is least known to outsiders is the *Aurangabadi mandi*. This super slow-cooked meat dish arrived in Marathwada from across the Arabian Sea with the Yemeni soldiers in the service of the Islamic armies, especially those of the Nizams of Hyderabad. The meat is spiced and marinated and then slowly cooked while suspended in a sealed tubular

Meat cooked in a silo to prepare *Aurangabadi mandi*. Photo by Rushikesh Hoshing.

underground silo. The lifting out of the meat is a spectacle in itself. As it cooks the meat drippings are collected in a bowl at the base and served alongside the meat. When served, the meat is so tender it falls off the bone as it's shaken onto the plate! It is typically served with rice and/or *naan*. Surprisingly, the chefs in the city also developed a chicken version of *mandi*, which is equally delicious, though purists may raise eyebrows.

For those who appreciate the robust, earthy flavours of Marathwada and enjoy meat, bread and *kebab*s, the region is an unmissable gastronomic destination. The culinary landscape of Aurangabad is rich with cross-cultural influences and offers a unique blend of traditional techniques and innovative adaptations, making it a haven for food enthusiasts seeking authentic and diverse flavours.




Milind College of Arts. Photo by Anil Purohit.

# Legacy of Educational Institutions

Bina Sengar

Students of Rafiq Zakaria College for Women in the library. Photo by Anil Purohit.

The evolution of human civilisation is marked by a continuous process of knowledge making, and today's centres of learning are testimony to this historic continuity in knowledge expansion. Cities such as Varanasi, Cairo, Istanbul, Rome, Florence, Baghdad, Delhi, Peking, Tashkent, Tehran serve as examples of the preservation of intellectual heritage and educational development. Such a legacy has often proved necessary for a city's resilience in the face of historical challenges.

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar is one such city and district with an enduring heritage of knowledge systems. Educational institutions in the region have received patronage since ancient times and there is evidence of ancient learning centres in the city's vicinity. Buddhist cave sites in the city and surrounding areas, such as the Aurangabad Caves, Ajanta Caves, Ellora Caves, Pitalkhora Caves, and several lesser-known Buddhist sites, served as centres of learning since the second century CE. Multiple inscriptions at Ajanta highlight the generous donations received from patrons for the propagation of Buddhist knowledge. An inscription in Cave No. 2 details a donor's value and commitment:

> *"...[bhimasya ya] d atra punya tad bha[va]tu...(matapitrm u)disa [sa][t]vanam anuttarajnanva (ptaye)*
>
> of? Bhima. Let the merit therein be in honor [of his parents and for the attaining] of supreme knowledge by all living beings."

—Richard S. Cohen (2006)

These traditions, however, were not only confined to Buddhism.

Christ Church. Photo by Rushikesh Hoshing.

Over the centuries, the area witnessed the growth of a diverse range of religious and spiritual knowledge systems, each leaving a distinct mark.

While Buddhism flourished and diversified through its sects and schools, other traditions such as Bhagavatism, Shaivism and the Bhakti movement also gained prominence, and many centres of Bhakti and Sufi schools emerged in the region. Saint Dyaneshwar, a venerated Marathi scholar, poet and philosopher of the Hindu Varkari sect, was born in Pratishthan, on the banks of river Godavari, around thirty kilometres southeast of present-day Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar. Later, the Varkari sect flourished in the region, under Saint Eknath, who was also born in Pratishthan. The region was also a centre for the Mahanubhav sect of Hinduism, founded by Saint Chakradhar Swami.

Patana Devi, located about 100 kilometres northwest of Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, is renowned as the *ashram* and abode of the eminent scholar and saint, Bhaskaracharya. Known for his monumental work *Lilavati*, Bhaskaracharya was a polymath, excelling in diverse fields such as grammar, medicine, logic, mathematics, the Vedas, gemology and Vedanta philosophy. His contributions to mathematics, algebra, and trigonometry, as detailed in his masterpiece *Siddhanta-shiromani*, remain significant. He was an influential teacher and established a school in Patana, a legacy later carried forward by his disciples.

The region surrounding present-day Aurangabad was also home to significant Jain learning centres, notably the Jain Caves of Ellora or those discovered in Kachner village,


Entrance of Milind College of Arts. Photo by Anil Purohit.

Entrance to the Government Arts and Science College. Photo by Rushikesh Hoshing.

situated around 35 kilometres from the Aurangabad railway station. These learning centres flourished under the patronage of the various Jain sects.

With the advent of Islamic rule and scholarship, many learning centres or *khanqah*s of Islamic theocracy also emerged in the city. Among them, Khuldabad, its name meaning 'door towards heaven', remains a major centre. It is interesting to note that this small town has more than sixteen Sufi *silsila*s (lineages) of disciples originating from the Prophet Muhammad. This legacy can be traced to the time when Emperor Muhamad Bin Tughlaq shifted his capital from Delhi to Devagiri (renamed Daulatabad) near Khuldabad.

Khuldabad also has a modest shrine dedicated to Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, who chose to be buried beside his teacher Hazrat Zainuddin Shirazi. Aurangzeb's interest in Aurangabad also stemmed from its proximity to his personal tutor.

One of the city's historic centres of learning, the Panchakki *khanqah*, was founded in the 1730s when the city was in its most turbulent state of affairs due to clashes between the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Peshwas. Under the guidance of Shah Baba Pilangposh and Shah Baba Musafir, this institution supported its students through the operation of a flour mill that catered to the city residents and the military members stationed in the city. Historical records indicate the Panchakki *khanqah* housed more than 500 learners at a time.

## Modern Institutions

As Aurangabad expanded, it embraced new Western educational trends emerging across India. In the 1750s, consistent conflicts among Nizams, the Marathas and later the Peshwas prompted the Asaf Jahi dynasty to relocate its capital in the Deccan from Aurangabad to Hyderabad. However, they handed over the administration of the region to their British and French allies. By 1818, following British victory over the Maratha confederacy, they secured broader authority from the Nizam to establish a formal cantonment in Aurangabad. This allowed the British to promote anglicised educational systems in the region. The result was the establishment of convent schools in the city, such as the Christ Church School, established in 1875.

With changing values in the modern educational system, schools were


Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University. Photo by Rushikesh Hoshing.

founded both by the Nizam's government and by affluent communities. By the 1930s, responding to diverse community needs, schools offering instruction in Hindi, Gujarati and Marathi also emerged. The growing demand for convent education, supported by patronage from influential residents, also resulted in the establishment of several institutions—the Holy Cross English and Marathi schools (1958-60s), the Seventh Adventist School (1960s) and the Saint Francis Convent School (1967). These convent schools not only served British cantonment residents but also the children of the growing number of people migrating from neighbouring villages and the marginalised communities to work in the burgeoning cotton and silk mills owned by the Nizam of Hyderabad.

One of the first higher education institutions to be established by the Nizam was the Nizam College in 1887, now known as the Government Arts and Science College of Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, housed in the vicinity of Qila-e-Ark. However, its students either had to travel to Bombay University or Osmania University (in Hyderabad) to complete their university degrees. A significant challenge arose from Osmania University's Urdu-medium instruction, which proved difficult for students educated in English, Marathi or Gujarati.

The Saraswati Bhuvan Education Society (SBES) was established in 1923 by the nationalist lobby of the city, headed by Govindbhai Shroff. Under his leadership, SBES became one of the torch bearers for the inclusion of Hyderabad state and eventually Aurangabad division in the Republic of India in 1948–1949 under Hyderabad Liberation Movement/ Marathwada Mukti Sangram in 1949. Till today SBES has its own pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher secondary (junior college)

schools as well as higher education colleges catering to students from the city and neighbouring rural areas.

> In the early 1940s, as he began work on the inclusion of Hyderabad state in the Republic of India, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, recognising both the educational potential and inherent caste disparities in the Aurangabad region, founded the People's Education Society (PES) in 1945, which runs twelve colleges presently.

With his efforts, PES established the Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Milind Arts College and Dr Ambedkar Law College. All these institutions were built with the vision of bridging the gap between Eastern and Western educational values. By the 1950s, the educational institutions developed by PES became pillars of modernisation.

In 1958, the Government of India founded the Marathwada University, conceptualised under the leadership of the country's first prime minister Jawarharlal Nehru. The university is closely aligned and adjacent with PES and its various educational institutions. In 1994, Marathwada University was renamed Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University in honour of the personality who changed the city's educational landscape. The Maharashtra National Law University was established in the city in 2017.

Aurangabad's educational institutions reflect its rich academic heritage and serve as a tribute to the efforts of the visionary leaders and rulers that shaped its landscape. While its educational movements may have commonalities with other regions in India, specific interventions are unique to the city, making it an interesting study.


Humanities & Social Sciences Department, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University. Photo by Anil Purohit.

# CITY'S FIRSTS

**Notable moments in the city's modern history, related to its development.**

## Cotton Spinning and Weaving Mill (1889)

The first cotton spinning and weaving mill in the city, established in 1889, employed around 700 people at the time, and was followed by other mills

## Railway Line (1900)

The first railway line in Aurangabad was established in 1900 by the Nizam's Guaranteed State Railway (NGSR). It was part of the Manmad–Secunderabad line, which passed through Aurangabad and fuelled industrial development.

## Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University (1958)

The Marathwada University was founded in 1958, later renamed as Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University. It was one of the first universities in the Marathwada region.

## First Industrial Area (1960s)

The establishment of the Chikalthana Industrial Area dates back to the 1960s. At present, this industrial estate covers approximately 633.18 hectares and comprises 955 plots designated for industrial development.

## Municipal Corporation (1982)

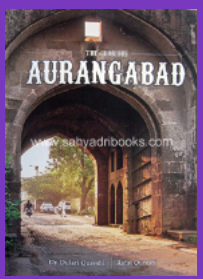
The Municipal Council of the city was formed in 1936, and was established as the Aurangabad Municipal Corporation in 1982, marking the city's first structured approach to governance.

# CITY READS

**Books that study the city's cultural heritage and the nearby sites of Ajanta and Ellora.**

## The Glorious Aurangabad (2022)

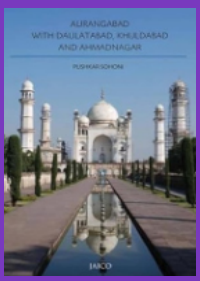
**DR DULARI QURESHI AND DR RAFAT QURESHI, PUBLISHED BY VIDYA BOOKS**




This book delves into Aurangabad's rich historical heritage, highlighting must-visit locations such as

ancient caves, medieval temples and Bibi-ka-Maqbara.

## Aurangabad with Daulatabad, Khuldabad, and Ahmadnagar (2015)

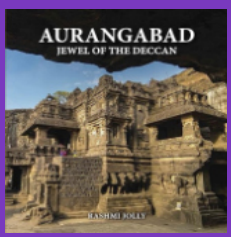



**PUSHKAR SOHONI, PUBLISHED BY JAICO**

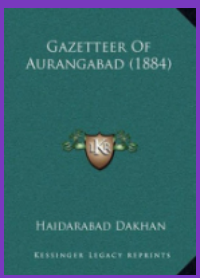
This guidebook explores the historical and architectural landmarks of Aurangabad and its neighboring regions, including Daulatabad, Khuldabad, and Ahmadnagar.

## Aurangabad: Jewel of the Deccan (2009)

**RASHMI JOLLY, PUBLISHED BY NIYOGI BOOKS**




This guidebook offers an overview of the region's architectural and cultural heritage, including its gates, Aurangabad Caves, and sites like the Ajanta and Ellora.

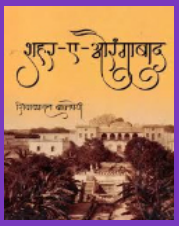



## Gazetteer of Aurangabad (1884)

**NIZAM'S GOVERNMENT**

Originally published in 1884, it provides detailed information on Aurangabad's geography, history, and culture during the late 19th century.

## Shahar E Aurangabad (2019)




**SHIVAKANT BAJPAYEE, PUBLISHED BY B.R. PUBLISHING CORPORATION**

Published in Hindi, the book explores Aurangabad and provides an introduction to the region.

# FESTIVAL FOOTPRINTS

**Festivals that celebrate the city's cultural heritage and rich traditions.**

## Ajanta Ellora International Film Festival (AIFF)


A premier annual event celebrating global and Indian cinema, AIFF hosted its 10th edition in January 2025, reaffirming its place among India's film festivals showcasing diverse narratives.

## Karnapura Fair

A cultural and religious fair held annually during the Navratri festival, it centers around the centuries-old Karnapura Devi Temple, dedicated to Goddess Durga (also known as Karna Devi).

## Khandoba Yatra, Satara

The Khandoba Yatra in Satara is an annual pilgrimage dedicated to Lord Khandoba. Devotees gather in large numbers, often carrying palkhis (palanquins) and performing traditional rituals and performances.


## NathShashti Festival of Sant Eknath Maharaj, Paithan

An annual religious festival held in the Hindi month of Phalgun (March-April) in Paithan village, it is organized to honor Saint Eknath, a revered Marathi saint and poet.

## Jar Jari Jar Bakhsh Urs, Khuldabad

The annual Khuldabad Urs draws numerous devotees from various regions each year in September. The event features a Sandal procession, along with other rituals.

# MUSEUMS & MEMORIES

**Institutions that house precious relics and remnants of the region's past. Please note that entry fees are applicable for all sites.**

## History Museum, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University

Established in 1973, the museum houses a diverse collection spanning from the Paleolithic and Early Historic periods to the Early Medieval, Mughal, and Colonial eras.

- Location: Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University
- Days: Tuesday - Sunday
- Timings: 11 am - 5 pm


## Regional Museum, Soneri Mahal

The Soneri Mahal houses a museum whose collection includes seventeenth-eighteenth century metal vessels, paintings on wood and glass, and Yadava-period sculptures, as well as an eighteenth-nineteenth century weapons gallery.

- Location: Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University
- Days: Tuesday - Sunday
- Timings: 11 am - 5 pm

## Shrimant Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Puranwastu Sangrahalaya

The museum showcases weapons and artifacts from the Maratha Empire, including war weapons and suits, coins and other artefacts.

- Location: Near Govt. Arts and Science college, Himayat Bagh
- Days: Monday - Sunday
- Timings: 10:30 am - 6 pm

## Marathwada Muktisangram Museum, Siddharth Garden

The museum celebrates the Marathwada liberation struggle, which saw the integration of the state of Hyderabad into India in 1948.

- Location: Siddharth Garden, Central Bus Stand Rd.
- Days: Monday - Sunday (Closed on Tuesday)
- Timings: 9 am - 7 pm

## APJ Abdul Kalam Astrospace Science Centre & Club

Established by the Mahatma Gandhi Mission (MGM) Trust, it aims to make the wonders of science accessible to all. Galleries include a solar observatory, an ISRO exhibit, and a mathematics lab, among others.

- Location: MGM Campus, N-6, CIDCO
- Days: Tuesday - Sunday

# Trails

# Three Capitals **One City**

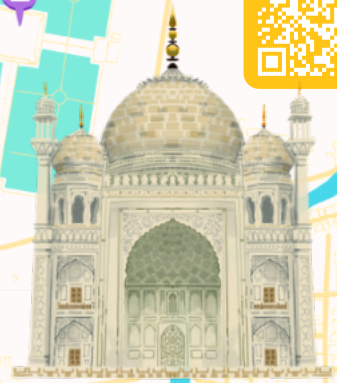
4.1 KM

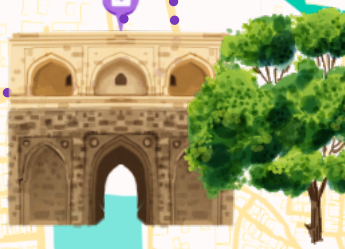
BIBI-KA-MAQBARA

Photos by Anil Purohit, Rushikesh Hoshing and Meenakshi Vashisth.

1. Bibi-ka-Maqbara
2. Makkai Darwaza
3. Lal Masjid
4. Chitakhana
5. Bhadkal Darwaza
6. Naukhanda Palace
7. Mahmud Darwaza
8. Panchakki

MAPS





**Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, formerly Aurangabad, has a rich history. Its beginning can be traced to after 1600, when Malik Ambar, the regent minister of the Nizami Shahi state, moved his capital to Daulatabad from Ahmednagar.**

Ambar was responsible for enlarging the fortified precinct of Daulatabad, and once the population and commerce of the town overgrew the fort, they founded the city of Khadki around 1610, on the site of a nearby village, and equipped it with water systems and urban conveniences. Khadki became the *de facto* capital of the Nizam Shahs under Malik Ambar, and he built the Naukhanda palace for himself in the city.

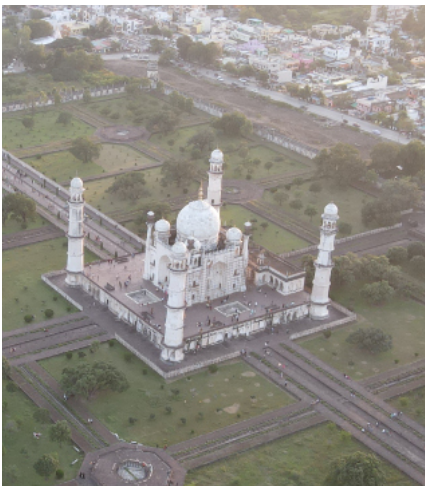
Khadki was later to become Aurangabad, the Deccan headquarters of the Mughals, taking its name from Prince Aurangzeb, viceroy of the Deccan at the time. Most of the city was settled under Mughal rule. Aurangzeb commissioned major building projects such as the Bibi-ka-Maqbara and the Himayat Bagh palace. His long tenure in the city, first as a regional governor, and for the last three decades of his life as emperor, left a lasting mark.

It was in Aurangabad that the Asaf Jahi kingdom (later based in Hyderabad) was founded in 1724, when the governor of the Deccan under the Mughals, declared independence in the Naukhanda palace. Rulers of this autonomous Asaf Jahi state seceded from the Mughal empire, and embellished Aurangabad and Khuldabad with numerous administrative and public institutions. Even after they moved their capital city to Hyderabad, Aurangabad continued to be the second-most important city in their kingdom.

This heritage trail traces the city's evolution through different periods, showcasing the legacies of its successive rulers.

## 1 Bibi-ka-Maqbara

The most celebrated monument of Aurangabad. The mausoleum was completed in 1661 and is credited to Azam Shah, Aurangzeb's son, who built it for Aurangzeb's first wife and chief queen Rabia' Durrani/Daurani.



Aurangzeb himself sponsored the project, as it began in 1657 when he was viceroy. It is an original design in the lineage of Mughal tombs, and is not a lesser copy of the Taj Mahal as is often claimed. Set in a large quadripartite garden, Mughal landscape design is also evident. The suburb of Begumpura where it is located is also named after the queen.

## 2 Makkai Darwaza

The Delhi, Makkai, Paithan and Roshan *Darwazas* face the four cardinal directions of north, west, south and east respectively. The city was walled by the Mughals, and at least a dozen major gates controlled the flow of goods and people.

## 3 Lal Masjid

The Lal Masjid, is a red-brick mosque believed to date back to the Mughal era. Its name comes from the red sandstone used in its construction. Located within the old city, the mosque features traditional Islamic architectural elements. It is raised on a high plinth, and has shops underneath, the rents from which pay for the upkeep of the mosque.

## 4 Chitakhana

The building now known as Chitakhana is now part of the ensemble of buildings that houses the offices of the Municipal Corporation. The building is ascribed to Malik Ambar, but we do not know

its original function. The large octagonal building has a central courtyard which was originally provided with a large cistern fed by one of the nahrs. The building was converted to a town hall with the addition of a trussed roof in the early twentieth century.

## 5 Bhadkal Darwaza

The city was not walled when it was built, and the Bhadkal Darwaza was not so much a gate as a ceremonial portal through which processions would pass. Built as a marker like the Charminar in Hyderabad, it has a space for musicians above. Malik Ambar's palace to the west of Bhadkal has a small gateway locally known as Chhota Bhadkal. The city was walled in the late seventeenth century under Aurangzeb, and the city gates were all constructed then.

## 6 Naukhanda Palace

The former residence of Malik Ambar, it is now occupied by the Women's College of Aurangabad and the Model High School. Nothing remains of the palace built by Ambar in 1616, since it was subject to substantial alterations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and accretions under the Mughals and Asaf Jahs. The seventeenth century gate and interior pavilion are worth visiting. The pavilion is where Nizam-ul-Mulk declared independence from the Mughals and had himself installed as the first Asaf Jah ruler in 1724.

## 7 Mahmud Darwaza

The Mahmud Darvaza stands right outside the entrance of the Panchakki complex, situated on a bridge on the Kham river. This gateway with two miniscule bangla-roofed *chhatri*s on top is interestingly constructed at an acute angle to the bridge forming a unique junction. One of the west-facing gates of the city, it overlooks the Kham river.

## 8 Panchakki

The Panchakki, or Water Mill, despite its name, was built as the *khanqah* (house of rest for travelers of a religious order) of Baba Palangposh and his disciple Baba Musafir, both Sufis of the Naqshbandi order. In the complex, there is a large pool, a large water-operated mill grindstone (which lends its name to the shrine), a garden, a mosque, and a tomb. Most of the construction was during the Mughal period and can be dated to the late seventeenth century.

## Please note:

- Certain places in the trail are at a distance from each other and cannot be covered on foot alone. Please plan your day and transportation accordingly.
- There are entry fees for Bibi-ka-Maqbara and Panchakki. Please abide by the rules and regulations at each site.

**Heritage Experience/Walk Leader:**

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# The Legacy of **Lonar Crater**

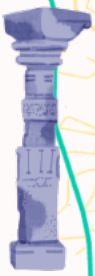
8.5 KM

GAIMUKH TEMPLE

Photos by Dr Swapna Joshi.

1. Gaimukh Temple and the Sacred Dhar (stream)
2. Papahareshwar Temple Ruins and Tank
3. From Kumareshwar to Yadneshwar Temple; en route to Lonar Lake
4. Wagh and Mor temples
5. The Kamalja Mata Temple
6. Ramgaya Temple
7. Motha Maruti Temple and the Ambar Lake
8. The Daityasudan Temple

MAPS



**The Lonar meteorite crater, located to the east of Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (formerly Aurangabad), is reachable within three hours by road from the city. Lonar is the youngest and smallest crater in India with well-preserved geography, unique geology, and distinct biodiversity.**

**This hypervelocity impact structure was formed in the Pleistocene geological epoch, approximately 30,000–50,000 thousand years ago.**

The crater's basaltic target rock provides rare geological insight into how meteorite impacts interact with volcanic bedrock. Additionally, the crater hosts a distinct ecosystem where saline-alkaline water bodies and freshwater streams coexist, fostering unique microbial life that thrives in such extreme conditions. This makes Lonar a significant site not just for geological and ecological studies, but also for understanding structures on other planetary bodies.

Lonar's geological significance is equally complemented by its cultural identity as an eminent religious centre. The crater and its environs have been revered by Hindu and Jain worshippers from medieval times, traces of which are extant in the forms of temples, tanks, and monasteries built in and around the vicinity of the crater. The piousness of the crater has made it a pilgrimage site and earned it the nomenclature of Virajkshetra and Vishnugaya, a place that cures ailments, fulfils people's wishes, and helps attain liberation.

This trail, covering almost half the circumference of Lonar Lake, follows the natural geography of the crater, made up of rugged rocky roads and water streams, interspersed with several monuments carved in stone that were built at different periods in history.

## 1 Gaimukh Temple and the Sacred Dhar (stream)

The trail begins at the Gaimukh

Temple, also known as the Dhar Tirth, from which the descent to the lake begins. A picturesque view of the entire crater is the most alluring feature of this location. The Dhar Tirth premises are a conglomerate of temples, *kunda*s (small square tanks), and *samadhi*s (memorials) built between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries CE. The central shrine is dedicated to Daityasudan, an incarnation of Vishnu. Below this temple is a *kunda* from which flows the perennial fresh water spring known as Ganga Bhogawati which is believed to have healing properties. An adjacent *kunda* has temples to Narsimha, Ganpati, Renuka, and Mahadev on its fringe that are stylistically datable to the thirteenth century CE. Built in stone, all these temples have distinct interiors and exteriors with depictions of forms of the deity Vishnu, stories from *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, animals, and floral motifs.

## 2 Papahareshwar Temple Ruins and Tank

The Papahareshwar Temple is located slightly lower and to the south, accessed by a small passage from the corner of Dhar Tirth. It is a mystic yet serene spot, away from the bustling crowd of the Gaimukh Temple. Though partially ruined and later renovated, only its *garbhagriha* (sanctum) remains, along with a large stepped tank beside it. In front of the temple stands a beautifully carved free-standing *manda*pa, with intricate designs on its pillars, ceiling, and plinth mouldings. This *mandapa* (pillared hall or pavilion) is one of the earliest structures in Lonar. Nearby, there is a striking life-size sculpture of a seated Jain tirthankar. One cannot miss the scattered ruins all around the temple premises which reveal that this location was home to a large structure at some point.

## 3 From Kumareshwar to Yadneshwar Temple; en route to Lonar Lake

Situated midway between the crater's rim and the saltwater lake, the Kumareshwar and Yadneshwar temples are easily accessible from Dhar Tirth. The Kumareshwar Temple, dedicated to Shiva, enshrines a Shivalinga and has been referenced in medieval texts written in the thirteenth century CE. Over time, incongruous additions and restorations have obscured its original layout, yet traces of a *barav* (stepwell), niches, pillars, motifs and sparse iconography hint at its past grandeur. Further down the path lies the Yadneshwar Temple, also known as Shukracharya's Vedashala, believed to have been a centre for ascetic practices and Vedic rituals. Nearby, the Bhasma Tekadi hillock, with its ash-coloured soil, is thought to be the sacred remains of countless *yagnas* performed here.

## 4 Wagh and Mor Temples

The Wagh and Mor Temples stand along the southeastern edge of the saltwater lake, their names inspired by the wildlife that inhabits the surrounding forest. These temples remain better preserved than the temples on the northern side of the lake; however, in recent years, rising water levels have led to damage, especially to the Mor Temple. Built as standalone structures, these temples rest on raised stone platforms adorned with simple moldings and scattered carvings. Their layouts are nearly identical, featuring a *garbhagriha*, an *antarala* (vestibule), and a

*gudhamandapa* (spacious hall) with three entrances. The temples are located along a scenic walkway. During high water levels, the lake comes close to the temples, adding to their mystique.

## 5 The Kamalja Mata temple

Situated along the southern side of the crater, the Kamalja Devi Temple stands opposite the Dhar Tirth Temple. The temple complex includes the main Devi

temple, the well-known Sasu-Sunechi Vihir, a *deepamala* (lamp pillar), and a small ruined shrine within its premises. There is an interesting story about the well near the temple. For the greater part of the year, the well remains submerged under the lake. However, when the lake water recedes, the exposed well is found to be filled with sweet water, unlike the salty water of the lake. Kamalja Devi is revered as the patron deity of Lonar. This temple also marks the last spot in the trail along Lonar Lake.

## 6 Ramgaya Temple

Overlooking the river the Ramgaya Temple is situated on the mid-landing toward the lake. Interestingly, it is located at a similar ground elevation to the Yadneshwar temple. The complex consists of the Ramgaya Temple, the Mahadev Temple, a small Hanuman shrine, and a *kunda* fed by a natural spring named after the temple. Recent debris clearance has restored the stream's flow. According to legend, Lord Rama visited this temple and bathed in its waters during his pilgrimage to Lonar,

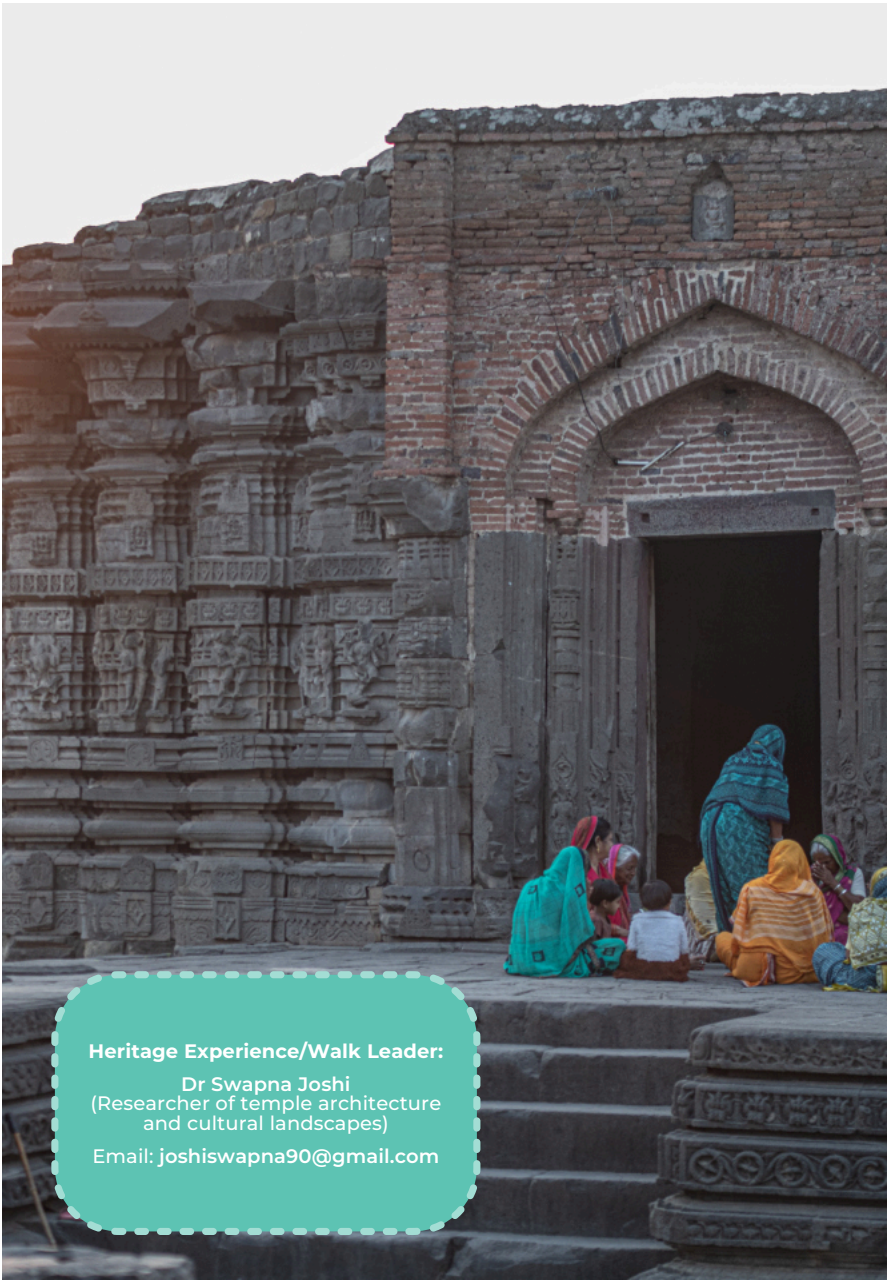
further elevating its religious significance. Today, the temple enshrines a standing two-armed figure of Rama. Ramgaya would be the last location to be visited in the Lonar lake environs.

## 7 Motha Maruti Temple and the Ambar Lake

The Motha Maruti Temple sits near Ambar Lake, slightly removed from the bustling village and surrounded by serene farmlands. According to a few studies, Ambar Lake was also formed during the creation of the Lonar crater owing to a small fragment of the meteorite that fell here. However, there is no consensus regarding this. The temple has a unique life-size image of Hanuman in a reclining posture, earning it the name Jhopalela Maruti—the Sleeping Hanuman Temple. The temple has long been in the care of the Kanitkar family. The story goes that in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, a man from the Kanitkar family travelled to Lonar after receiving a divine vision of Hanuman calling for rescue. Guided by his vision, he searched the barren lands near Ambar Lake and eventually discovered an abandoned Hanuman idol. A temple was then built at the site, and the Kanitkar family later settled in Lonar to safeguard and maintain it.

## 8 The Daityasudan Temple

In the village of Lonar, the Daityasudan temple complex is a site rich in history and architectural beauty. This complex includes the Daityasudan Temple, the Garud Temple (also sometimes called as Brahma Temple), the Samadhi Temple which is a memorial built for a seer named Sacchidashram Swami, and the remains of other structures. All of these are enclosed within ancient fortification walls. Built in the thirteenth century CE, and facing east, the temple has a unique design, with both the sanctum and the front hall featuring a star-shaped layout. The temple's outer walls are intricately decorated with carvings. A highlight of the temple is the ceiling of the vestibule, which features sculptural panels. One of these panels tells the creation myth of Lonar, showing Vishnu in his Daityasudan form defeating the demon Lavanasur—an image that gives the temple its name.



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# About Us

**InterGlobe Foundation**

InterGlobe Foundation (IGF) is the CSR arm of the InterGlobe Group of companies. The key focus areas of IGF include Heritage Conservation, Promotion of Livelihoods and Environment Conservation including Waste Management. The Heritage projects cover both the tangible and intangible aspects of heritage. The environment projects support development and protection of Natural Resources thereby increasing the green cover and ground water recharge. It also includes work on Waste Management. The livelihood projects support income enhancement of marginalized groups, especially women through environment friendly projects. By partnering with leading NGOs of the country, IGF has been able to impact more than 600,000 lives.

**Sahapedia**

Sahapedia is an open encyclopedic resource on the arts, cultures and histories of India offering digital content in multimedia formats such as articles, books, photo essays, videos, interviews, oral histories, maps and timelines, authored by scholars and curated by experts. Subject areas range from ideas and belief systems, rituals and practices, to visual and performing arts. The values that guide our work are accessibility, inclusiveness, collaboration and reliability. Sahapedia hosts multiple perspectives, is free to access, and is designed and developed with participation as the central principle. As a knowledge enterprise, Sahapedia is focused on India and South Asia.