

Design Resource

## Bidar Fort - Karnataka

An Ancient Bahmani Monument

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Srikanth B.

NID Campus, Bengaluru



Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/bidar-fort-karnataka>

1. Introduction
2. Takht Mahal
3. Rangeen Mahal
4. Solah Khamba Mosque
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## Introduction

Bidar is a city in the Indian State of Karnataka, named after Bamboo, locally called “Bidiru”. The origin of its name traces back to an old bamboo jungle that lasted in the area. This city at the edge of Deccan Plateau is from the northeastern part of the state, hence called the peak of Karnataka. Bidar city is regarded for its ancient forts and handicraft products. The city, the district, and the fort are all tagged with the name Bidar.

The Bidar Fort built in 1426-32 AD by Bahmani King Sultan Ahmad Shah, is considered the most difficult trek in the country. The fort is surrounded by a rare to find triple moat, introduced by Turkish Mercenaries. Other notable structures include its seven well-protected gateways, two main gates to the palace complex, and several elegant monuments within it. The Sharza Darwaza and the Gumbad Darwaza, are the massive complex gates that open to the southern side, enhanced with domes, arches and paintings. The passage area between these gateways possesses the capacity to accommodate three thousand soldiers on duty to shield the fort. Mandu Darwaza is another brilliantly designed gate that opens to a well-defended underground tunnel, protected by 37 bastions, huge cannons, and large weapon magazines. Other architecturally diverse and outstanding monuments within the fort are Takht Mahal, Turkish Mahal, Rangeen Mahal, Gagan Mahal, Shahi Matbakh (Royal Kitchen), Diwani-i-Am (Public Audience Hall), Solah Khamba Mosque and the Naubat Khana.

### Gagan Mahal:

The Gagan Mahal, meaning heavenly palace was built in the 14-15th century AD. Though its construction was initiated during the Bahmani rule, the following Baridi Shah rulers made certain alterations and additions to the building plan. Their modifications were mainly targeted towards the northern side of the palace and the apartments on the upper southern wing, leaving the rest as it is from the Bahmani dynasty. Architecturally, the rooms on the ground floor were allotted to the staff and guards while upstairs for royal ladies. Here the Sultan was found to reside in the inner court of the main building.

### Turkish Mahal:

Built-in 1432, the Turkish Mahal is an epitome of Indo Islamic craftsmanship. It is believed that the palace was exclusively built for Turkish wives of the Sultan. The Mahal houses a special room with granite and floral decorations solely built for royal guests and other important members of the sultanate. The building provides a wonderful view of the Bidar fort from its terrace. But now, it is badly affected with time, hence has collapsed hugely.

### Diwan-i-Am and Diwan-i-Khas:

Diwani-I-Am was a magnificent court built for public discussions. It carries intricate frameworks and detailing giving it the name of Jali Mahal. While Diwan-I-Khas is a fort that stands tall near the Solah Khamba Mosque. It is regarded for its high-walled magnificent audience hall.

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### The Madrasa:

The Madrasa known as Islamic school was built by Khwaja Mahmud Gawan, a Persian scholar and Prime Minister to the court of Mohamad Shah. The structure completed in Persian Architectural Style is a work of architects and engineers invited all the way from Persia and other Middle-Eastern countries. The Madrasa is a three-storied building with towering minarets. The minarets are part of the quadrangle plan, where the first and second floors are projected around balconies without bracket support. Here the fascia is adorned with colored Chevron tile with parapets done in a cusped pattern, which is a unique style of Persian art. The bulbous domes are, however, in the Timurid style. In 1696, the Madrasa was damaged by lightning as it housed cavalry barracks and powder magazines intensifying the damage. Even now, in the ruined state, the Madrasa is an impressive construction.



Bidar fort entrance gateway.



Front elevation of the Bidar fort gateway.



The side angle photo of the Bidar fort.



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Fort Gate.



Bidar fort inside view.



The architecture inside the Bidar fort.



Front gate door.

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Fort front gate door.



The road inside the fort.



The architecture at the top end.



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The ancient windows of the fort.



The fort constructed in the Muslim architecture style.



Fort windows.



The top position of the watching tower.



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The steps of the watching tower.



The Paintings on interiors of fort tower.



Bidar Fort elevations.



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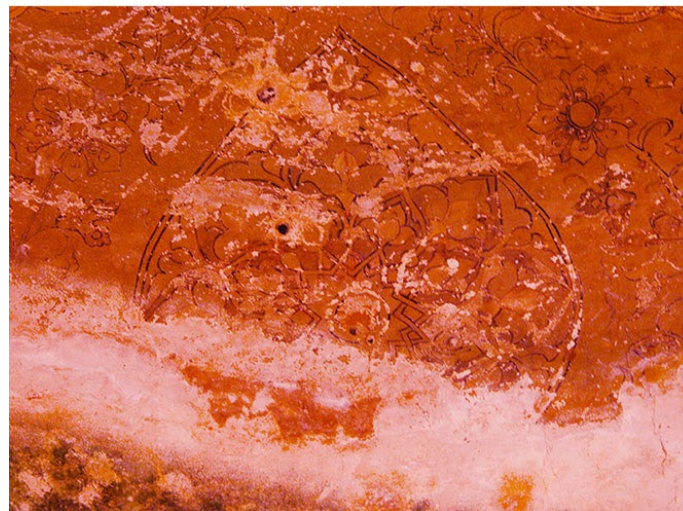
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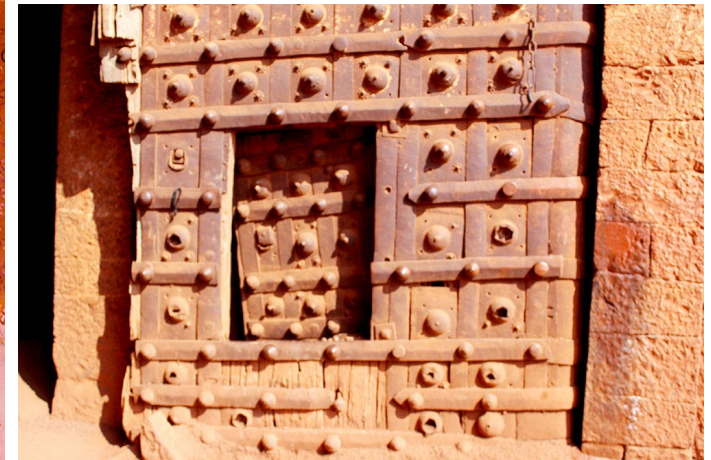
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The Paintings on interiors of fort tower.



The tower of the fort gate.



The Fort gate door and small emergency exit door.

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Different types of cannons at Bidar fort.



The walls of the fort area's elevation.



The trenches on the side of the fort.



The stones used for the construction of the fort.

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The pillar figure on the side of the fort.



Stone structures installed inside the fort.



Flower motifs carved on stone, installed inside the fort.

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The Statue of Nandi.



The Yali face motif carved in stone.



The motif Statue was installed in the fort.



Stone sculptures.

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## Takht Mahal

Takht Mahal is a royal residence built in 1432 by Bahmani Kings. The architecture of the palace is an amalgamation of Persian and Islamic style, decorated with granite, wood, and mosaic. This structure located to the western side of the Bidar Fort is now only left with arches as remains. Though the Mahal mainly opens to the north there are several small doorways to the other sides of the monument. Its interiors adorned with both Islamic art and Hindu Calligraphy makes it one of a kind among other palaces. The Mahal shelters an extravagant durbar hall for ceremonies and a hot water swimming pool carved with granite.



The long view of the Takht Mahal.



Front elevation of the Takht Mahal.



Islamic architectural structure.



A long view of the Takht Mahal, built in the 14th century.



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Islamic architecture on the Takht Mahal interiors.



The wall of the Mahal.



The door with a stone frame.



The panel has a description on the history of Takht Mahal.

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## Rangeen Mahal

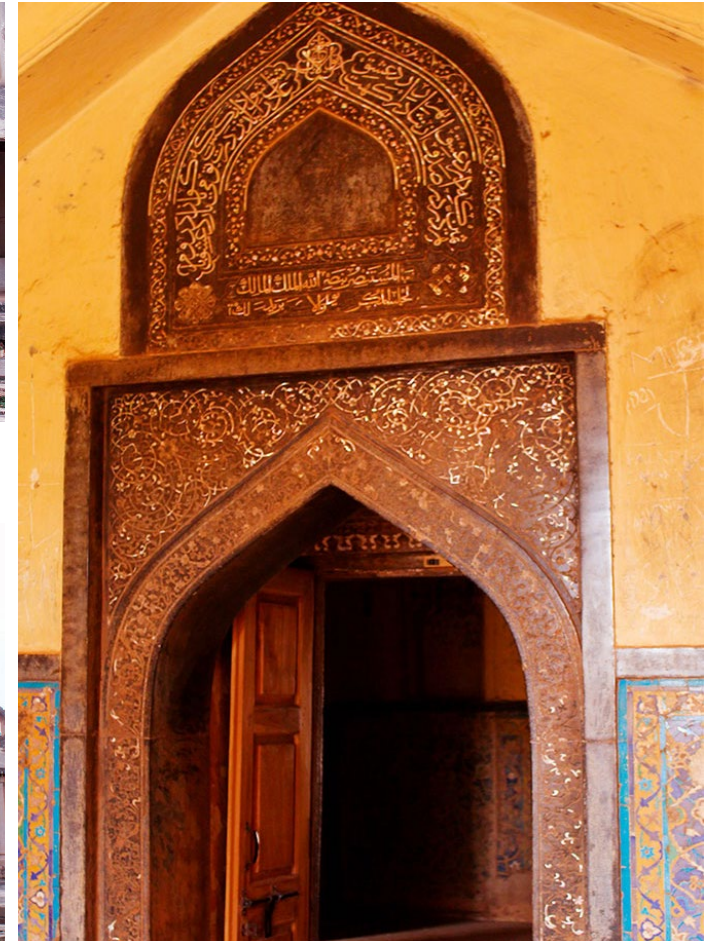
Rangeen Mahal, the best-preserved monument in Bidar Fort is an architectural wonder. It is also named as Queen Palace as the Queen and her women staff were the main residents of the Palace. Like Gagan Mahal, Rangeen Mahal was also rebuilt during the Barid Shahi period. This masterpiece from the mid-16th Century stands out for its wall decorations with finest pearls and colored tiles arranged in jet-black stone. Floral Paintings, Calligraphy Texts, Stone carvings, and Stucco art are other highlights of the structure.



Front view of the Rangeen Mahal.



The Rangeen Mahal.



The door was decorated with the Inlay work of Islamic architecture.



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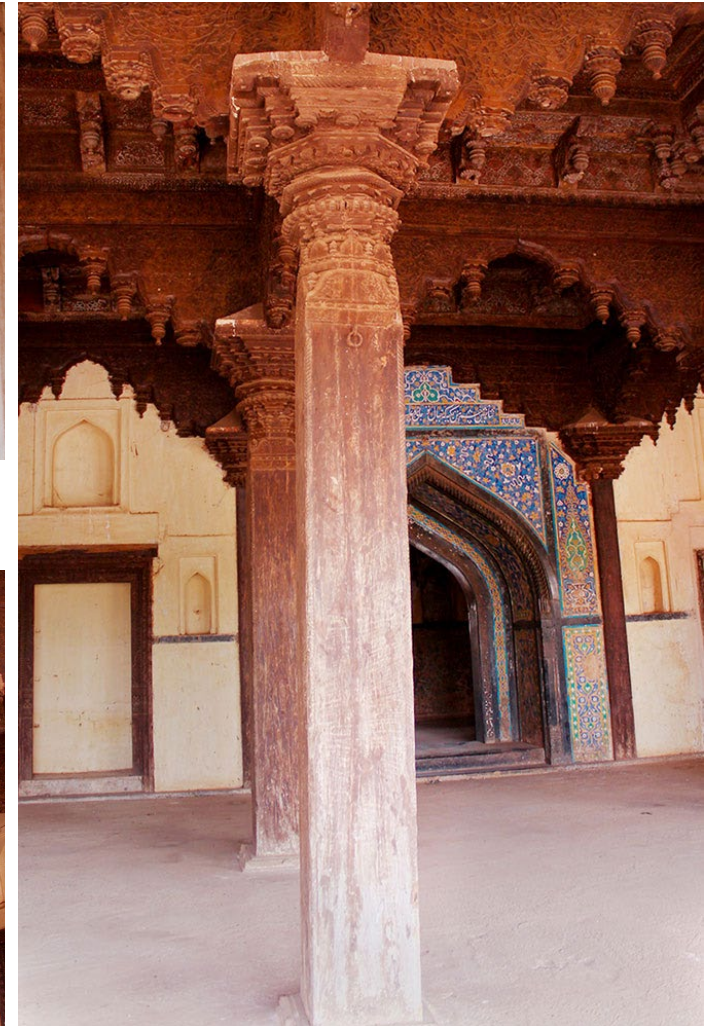
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Mural work located on the arch-shaped door.



Inside view of the Rangeen Mahal.



The wooden design roof supported on the wooden pillars.

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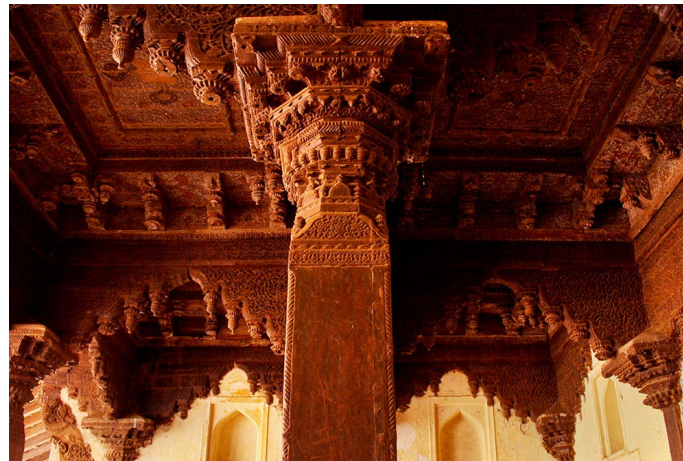
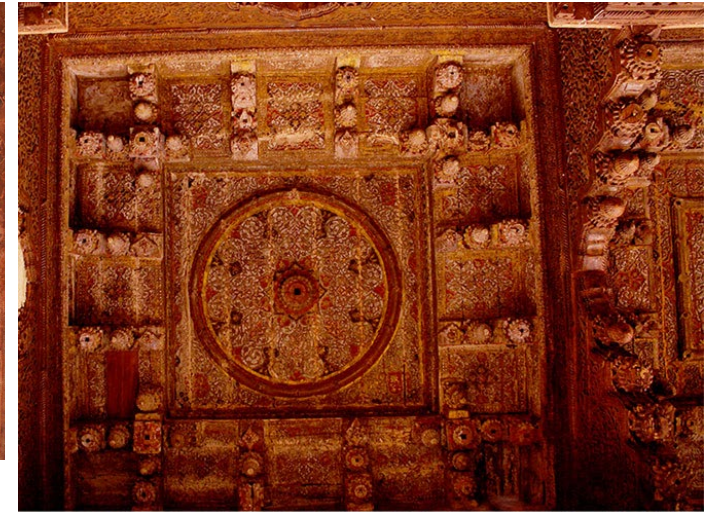
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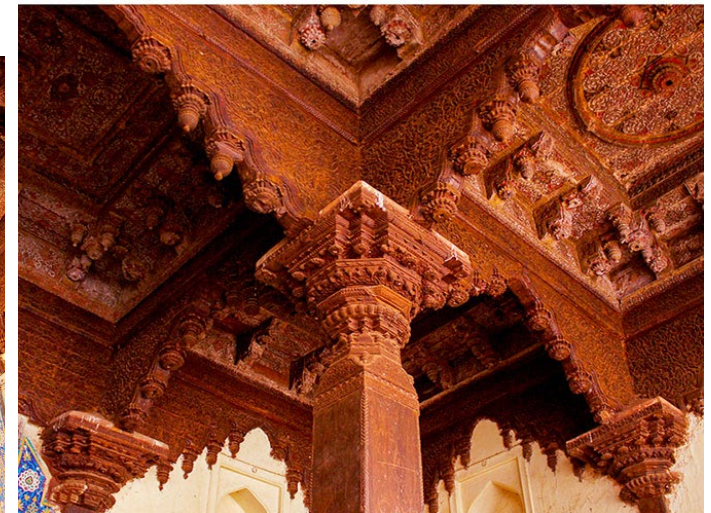
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Blue color designs painted on the Mahal walls.



Wooden roof carved in the style of Islamic architecture.



Wooden work on the roof of the Rangeen Mahal.

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Closer view of the Inlay work at the Rangeen Mahal.



The wooden frame of the Mahal door.



Islamic writing on the wooden inlay of the door arch.



Beautiful designs carved on the wooden pillar.

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Mural art on the roof of the Rangeen Mahal.



The Rangeen Mahal roofs.



Beautiful mural work on the door arch.

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## Solah Khamba Mosque

Solah Khamba Mosque is one of the largest mosques in India, till date. The mosque is called so for its 16 pillars in the front. This dimensionally vast structure is impressive for its majestic domes and clerestory windows with perforated geometrical screens. Marking the second phase of the wonderful Deccan style, the monument was designed in 1423-24 by Qubli Sultan. Later in AD 1655, Aurangzeb as the Viceroy of the Deccan at Delhi occupied Bidar and named the mosque after his father Shah Jahan suddenly. This was undertaken officially as an announcement of his rule in the newly developed territory. In the inscription, dated AD 1423-24, it is mentioned that the founder of the mosque was Qubli Sultani. The roof is crowned by a majestic dome of fine shape, raised on a high clerestory with windows of.



The Solah Khamba Mosque.

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Circular Pillars of the Solah Khamba Mosque.



Islamic architectural window.



The Inside View of the Solah Khamba Mosque.

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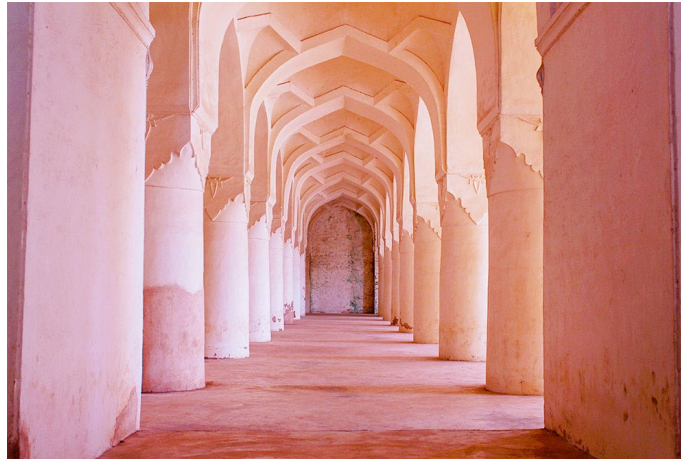
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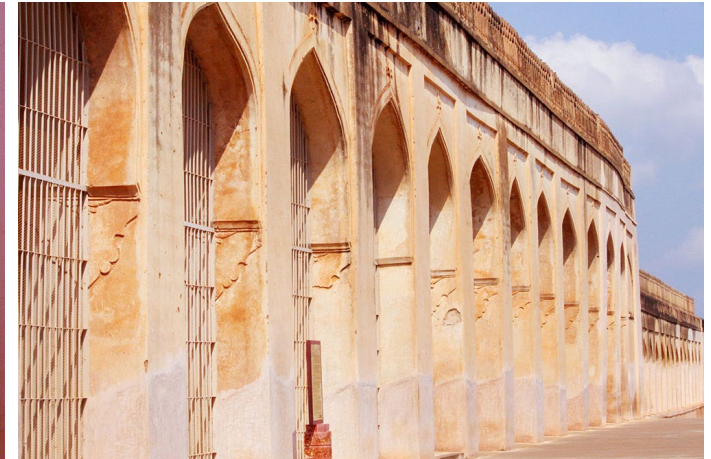
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The roof of the Solah Khamba Mosque.



Solah Khamba Mosque front doors built in Islamic architecture.



The Praying place of the Solah Khamba Mosque.



The dome of the Solah Khamba Mosque.



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The praying space was built according to Islamic architecture.



Islamic architecture.



Backside view of the Mosque.



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## Bidar Fort Museum

With the invention of Gunpowder in China at around the 9th century CE, the approach to fighting across the world shifted drastically, changing all the existing notions. The invention was then followed by new ways to use projectile weapons initially, later ending with the development of cannons, used extensively from the 13th Century CE. Sultan Muhammad Shah of the Bahmani dynasty was found to use gun powder during the siege of Belgaum in 1473 CE. King Babur, the pioneer of the Mughal dynasty in India, also encouraged improved artilleries, which led to his overthrow of Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi of Delhi. The forts in Karnataka, Bidar, Mudgal, and Bijapur are known for their large varieties of cannons dating back to 16-17th century CE, indicating their inevitable role in protection, capable of firing huge iron balls with the use of a large amount of gunpowder. They also exhibit types of ancient battle guns, with the capacity to hurl iron balls to a considerable distance. Small muzzle cannons raised on wooden trolleys and furnace wielded cannons, largely underlines the excellence of Indian metal casters and Blacksmiths, even during a period devoid of mechanization. The iron balls found from the site bear a diameter less than the bore size of the cannon from which it is fired. Here the iron balls possess varied diameters while cannons exhibit both differing lengths as well as diameters. These cannonballs measure, on an average 18cm in height and 55cm in circumference.



The Museum at the Bidar fort.

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The sculpture of Karthikeya.



The sculpture of Goddess Shakti.



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The sculpture of Lord Ganesha.



Sculpture of Hero stone.



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Lion and elephant sculpture.



Elephant sculpture.



Yali sculptor.

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The 'Kadwad' is the middle Palaeolithic tool of the Bidar district.



The stone 'Citta' is the middle Palaeolithic tool of the Bidar district.



The stone 'Srimandal' is the middle Palaeolithic tool of the Bidar district.



The stone 'Jampad' is the middle Palaeolithic tool of the Bidar district.



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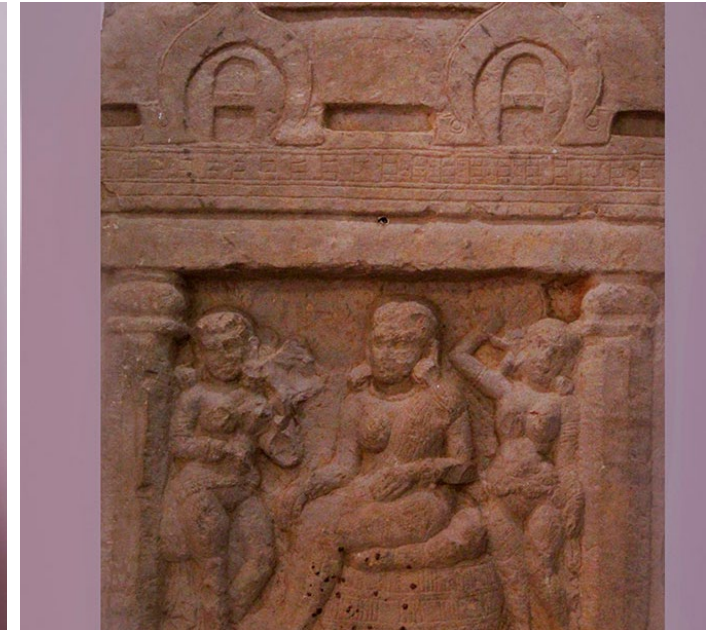
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Sculpture of Hero stone.



Sculpture of Hero stone.



The Gun types cannon.

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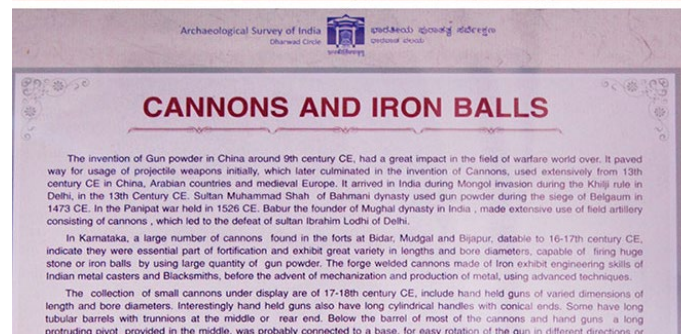
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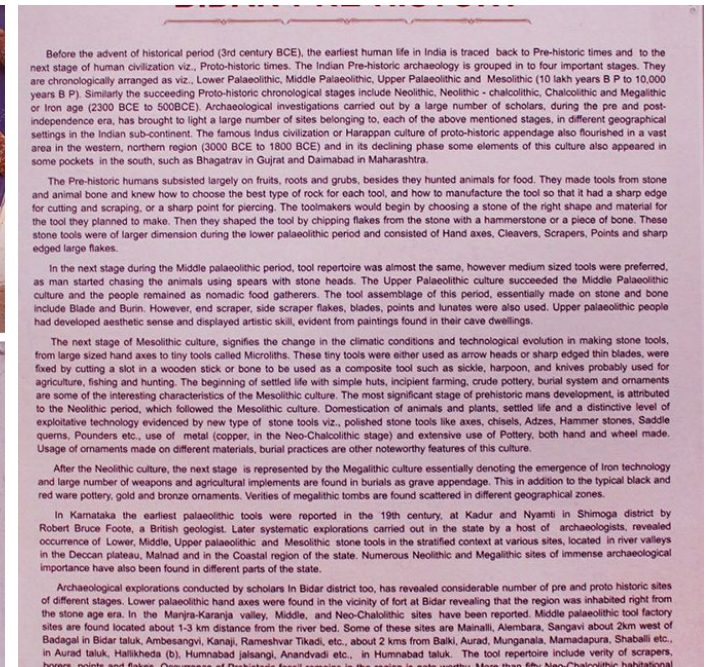
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Middle Palaeolithic tools of Bidar district.



Cannons and iron balls.



The panel has a description of the Bidar prehistory.

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## Bahmani Tombs

Ashtur village near Bidar is the place where the Bahmani tombs are situated, it is around 4 Km away from Bidar City.

### Ahmed Shah Wali Bahmani Tomb:

Ahmed Shah Bahamani was a religious ruler. Though worked under the order of Shah Nimat-Ullah, he was greatly devoted to Khwaja Bande Nawaz of Gulbarga. It is believed that this saint added the title “Wali” to his name Ahmed Shah. Ahmad Shah Wali, being the ninth Bahmani Sultan died in 1436 and his son Allauddin built this Majestic tomb for his father.

### Allauddin Ahmad Shah II (1436-1458):

Allauddin Ahmad Shah II was a Bahmani king, known for his civilized way of living. After his father’s death, Allauddin took to build a hospital, garden, and a palace along with a tomb in his memory. His rule encountered a number of rebellions, though most successfully handled, they had to eventually surrender to a crushing loss in Konkan. He died during this battle succumbing to grave wounds. It was during the time of Allauddin that Mahmud Gawan entered the service of Bahmani Sultanate. Allauddin Ahmad Shah’s tomb bears a lot of decorations and carvings on its exterior walls. Also, the wide arches are decorated with patterns of black stones.

### Humayun Shah (1458-1461):

Humayun Shah was the son of Allauddin Ahmad Shah. During his tenure, he came to be known as Zalim Shah, a nickname bestowed by the Kingdom for his cruel streaks. Owing to his deteriorating health, family members and nobles moved to remove him from the position. But by then he had named his eight-year-old son Nizam Shah as his successor. He made sure that the kingdom affairs were managed by Khwaja Mahmud Gawan, Khwaja Jahan Turk and the Queen mother, under the King’s advice. Zalim aka Humayun could only rule the kingdom for three years and died young at the age of twenty-one years due to an accidental fall. According to history, Humayun Shah’s tomb was struck by lightning and most of its dome and two walls were destroyed. The crushed tomb is a strange sight now.

### Nizam Shah (1461-1463):

Nizam Shah’s rule was eventful. As he started his rule as a kid, Queen Mother took the major responsibilities under her shoulder. She appointed Khwaja Mahmud Gawan as the prime Minister and Khwaja Jahan Turk as the controller of the state. Sensing the uncertainties at Bidar, the neighboring Kingdoms pressed forward to attack. Thus, Mahmud Khalji of Malwa captured Bidar city and arranged a barrier to the fort. Lately, at the request of Mahmud Gawan, the prime minister, Mahmud Shah of Gujarat came to help which forced Mahmud Khalji to retreat. Nizam Shah suddenly died in 1463 when preparations for his marriage were on. His tomb was built by Malika-i-Jahan, keeping it next to Humayun’s Tomb. The tomb curiously remained incomplete and is open with the dome missing.



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The strongly built walls suggest that they were designed to hold a big dome.

### Mohammed Shah III Lashkari (1463-1482):

Mohammed Shah III Lashkari came as the successor to the Nizam Shah reign. He was the brother of Nizam Shah and another nine years old. Even during his tenure, the Council of Regency had to handle the governing affairs. The prince grew into a learned king and his first takeover was the fort of Kherla in Malwa. With this, the kingdom stretched from Goa to Rajahmundry in Andhra Pradesh and Kanjeevaram in the south. By the time, Nobles realized that Mahmud Gawan had grown strong and popular, posing a threat to the King's stature. Hence they decided to immediately forge a letter with Mahmud's signature and made the drunken King pass orders to kill Mahmud Gawan. Later the king, realizing his mistake drank himself to death. Mohammed shah III was buried next to his brother Nizam Shah. Mysteriously, even his tomb was found incomplete.

### Mohammed Shah IV (1482-1518):

Mohammed shah IV again a boy of twelve years succeeded his father. Though he ruled for a long time compared to predecessors, by then Bahmani Sultanate had already been divided into independent kingdoms of Ahmednagar, Berar, and Bijapur, as an aftermath of several rebellious outbreaks. Hence Bahmanis was no longer a dynasty. Mohammed Shah IV built his own tomb along with several additions to the Bidar Fort. The tomb is unique with majestic arches on the walls. Mohammed Shah IV's nominal successors were his sons Ahmad Vira Shah III (1518-1521), Alauddin Shah III (1521-1522). Even their tombs can be found in the Bidar Fort complex, exalted with conical domes and arches.



Tomb of Allaudin Shah.



The arch above the tomb gate.



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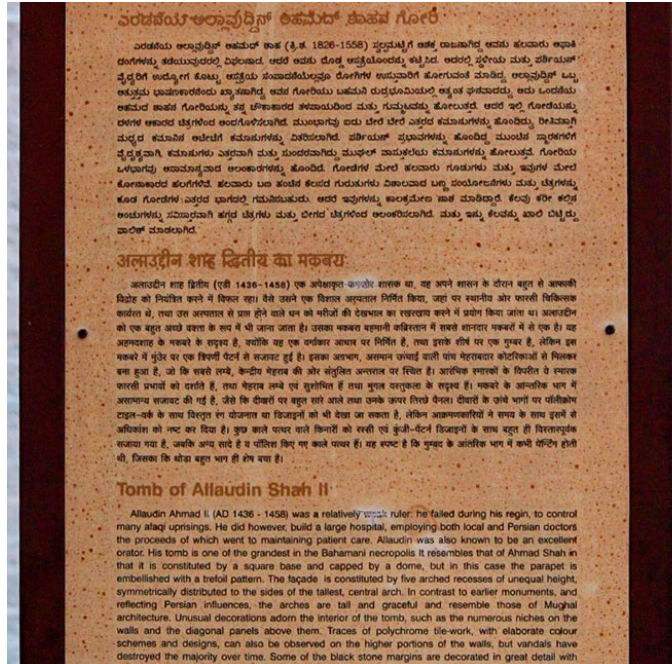
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The board telling the history of the Allaudin Shah tomb.



The tomb of King Bahmani Allaudin Shah's son.



The side view of the Bahmani tombs.



The nearest picture of the tomb tower.



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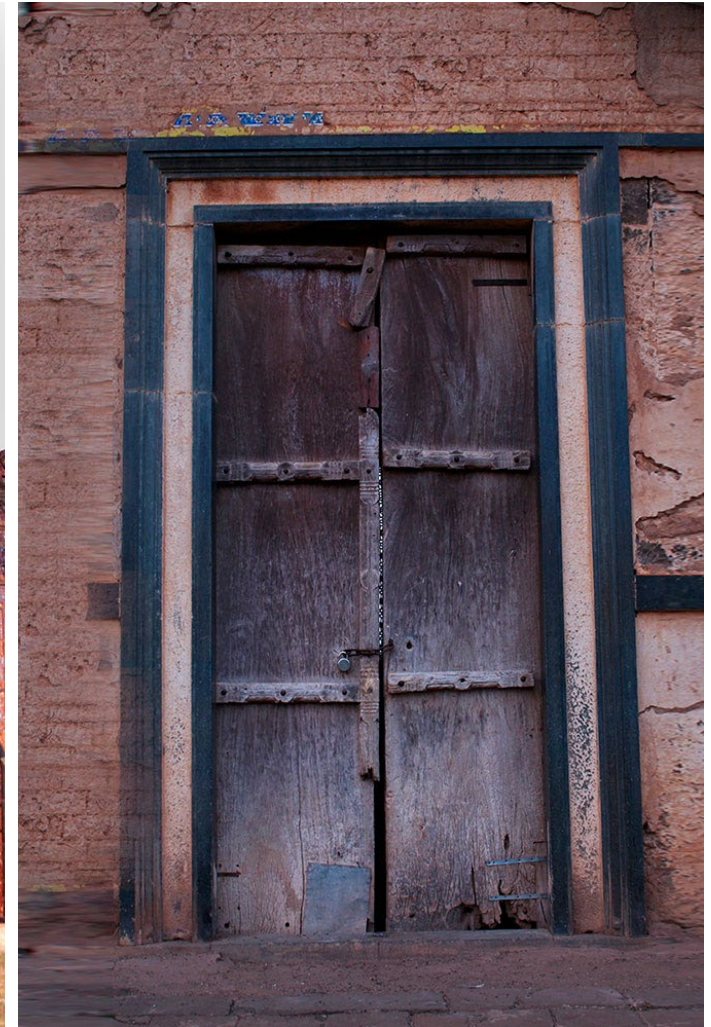
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The tomb of King Bahmani Allaudin Shah's son.



The door towards the tomb.



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The Bahmani tombs constructed by Muslim architecture.



The tomb of King Bahmani Allaudin Shah's wife.



Historical Monuments from the Bahmani empire.



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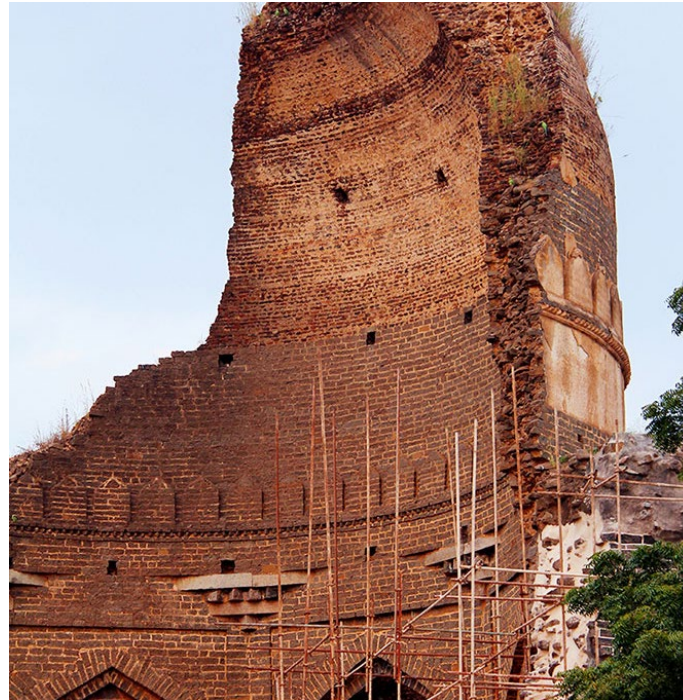
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Closer picture of the broken tomb tower.



Arch-shaped window design.



There are 12 tombs in total, this is one among them.



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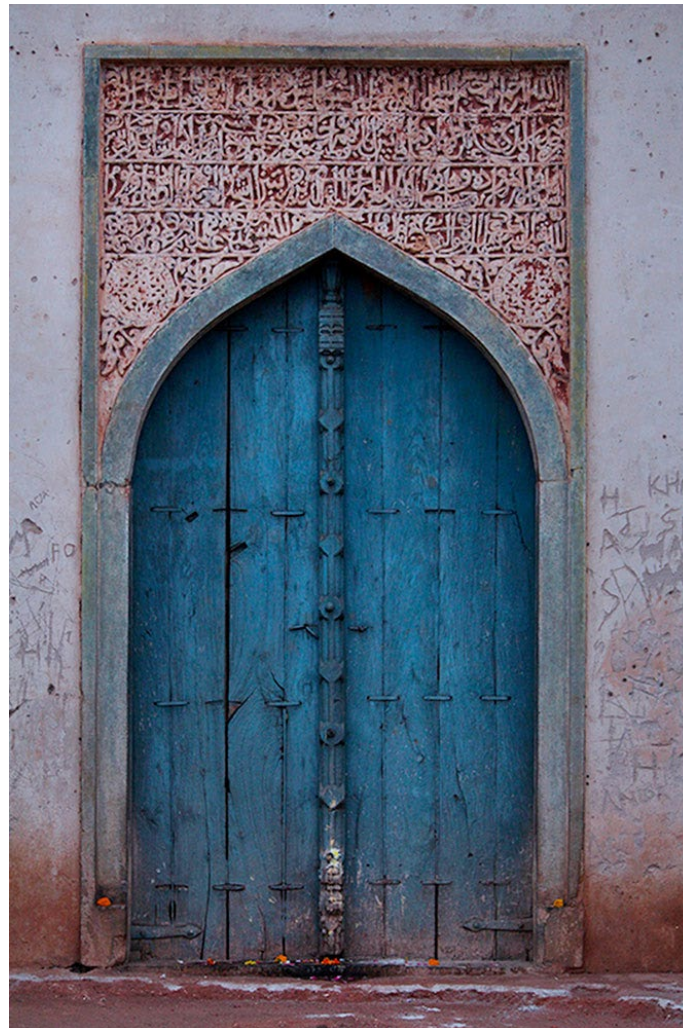
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The Muslim architecture door.



Muslim style relief work on the tombs.



The Gold color design motif painted on the wall.



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The Prayer space of the Sultan of the Bahmani Empire time.



The grave of King Allauddin Shah.



The grave of King Allauddin Shah's son.



A view of three tombs.

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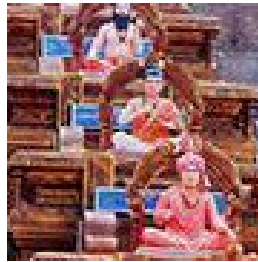
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## Other Main Attractions of Bidar



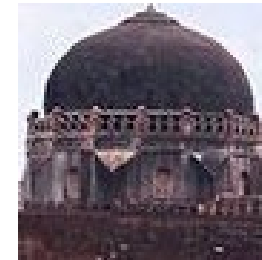
Basavakalyana Fort



Guru Nanak Jhira Sahib



Narasimha Jhira Cave Temple



Old Bidar Fort

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## Basavakalyana Fort

Basavakalyan, located in Bidar district is a place of social and historical importance. The city was proclaimed the new capital by the Kalyani Chalukya dynasty after they shifted from Manyakheta. Hence the place was anciently called Kalyan. Its historic importance dates back to the 10th century.



Entrance gate of the Basavakalyan.



The building is called the Basava Dharma Peetha or Basava Mahamane.



The way to the Basavakalyan.



Statue of Lord Basavanna which is 108 feet high.



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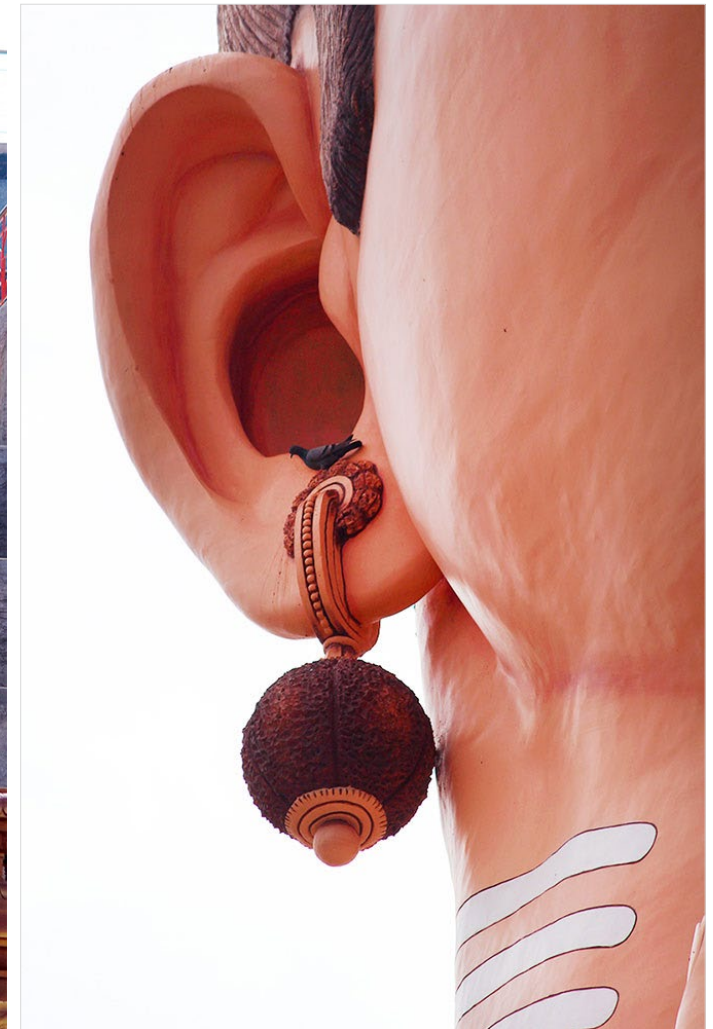
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The idols of eight Yogis were installed in front of the 108 feet height Basavanna statue.



The Rudraksha earrings.

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The closer picture of the Basavanna statue.



The statue of Poojya shri Maha Jagadguru Lingananda Mahaswamiji.



The statue of Guru Mallechwara.



The statue of Shanmukha Shivayogi.

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The statue of Ghanalinga Devaru.



The statue of Yadeyuru Siddhalingeshwara.



The statue of Manmatha Swami.



The entrance of the Basavakalyan.

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A temple shaped in the form of a cave.



Statue of Dasoha Murti Neelamma Tayi.



Shunya Peethadheeshwar Allama Prabhu.

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Statue of World Guru Basavanna.



Statue of Chinmayajnani Channabasavanna.



Cement sculptures.

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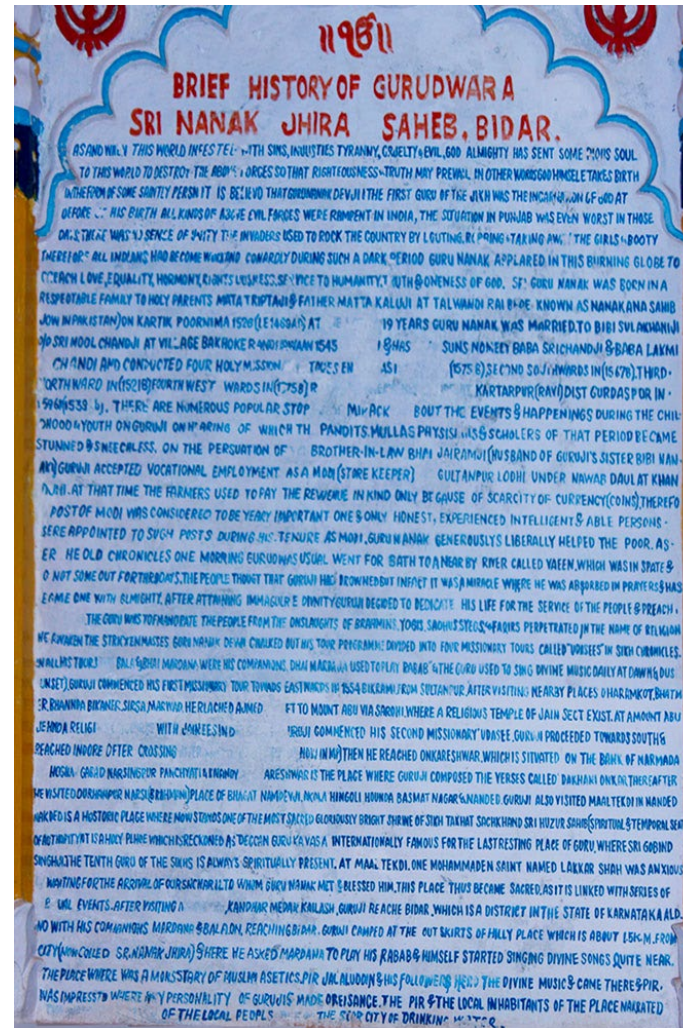
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## Guru Nanak Jhira Sahib

Guru Nanak Jhira Sahib is a Sikh historical shrine situated in Bidar, Karnataka. Gurdwara Nanak Jhira Sahib was built in the year 1948 and is dedicated to the first Sikh guru Guru Nanak.



A brief history of Gurudwara Sri Nanak Jhira Sahib.



View of Guru Nanak Jhira Sahib temple in Bidar.



The main gateway of Sri Nanak Jhira Sahib temple.

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The gateway of Amrit Kund, in Gurudwara.



The closest picture of the Shri Nanak Jhira Sahib temple Gopuram.



The closest picture of Shri Nanak Jhira Sahib temple main gateway.

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Sikh symbolic icons are displayed in the main Gateway.



'Khanda' symbol of Sikhism built in the garden of the Gurudwara Complex.



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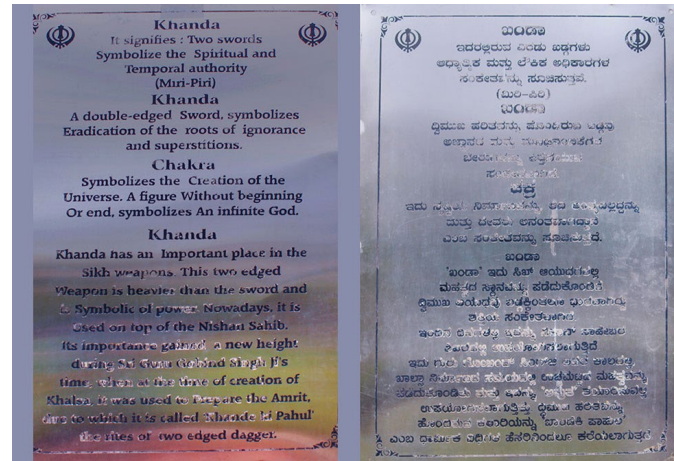
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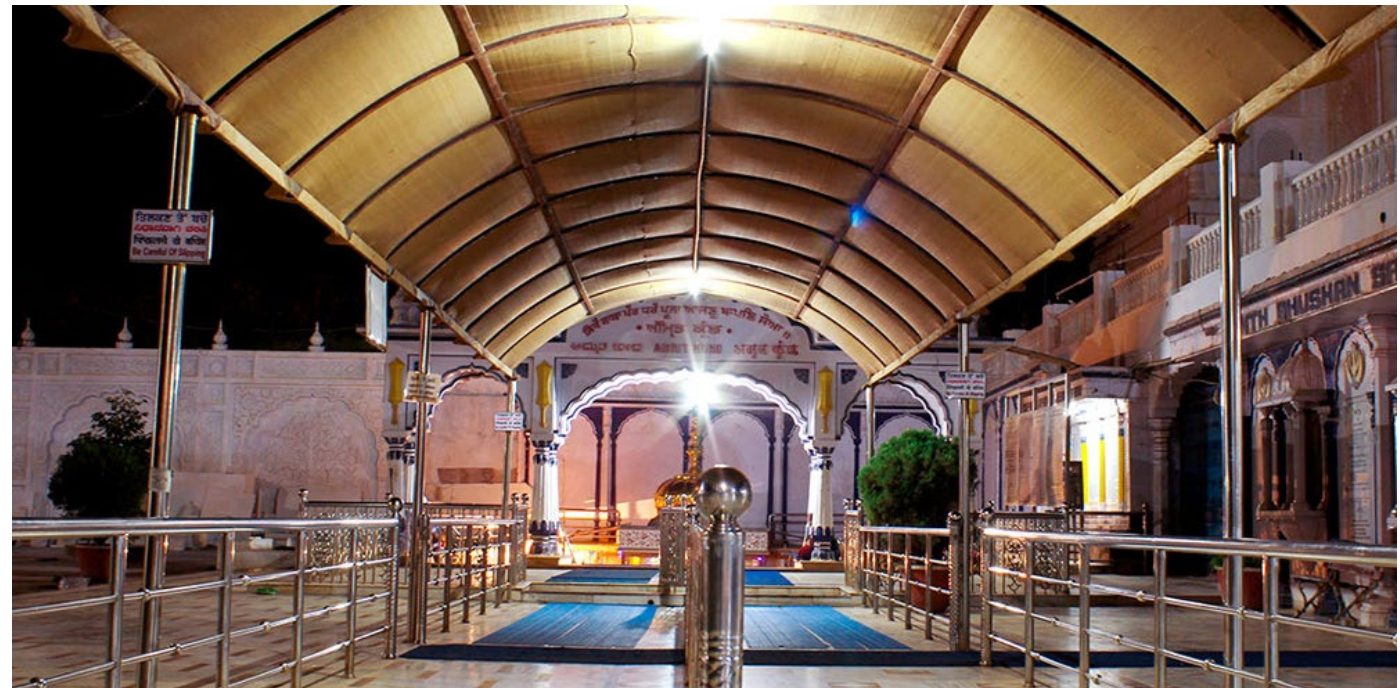
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Description board on the Khanda symbol.



The Inside View of the Main Gateway.



The way towards Amrit Kund.

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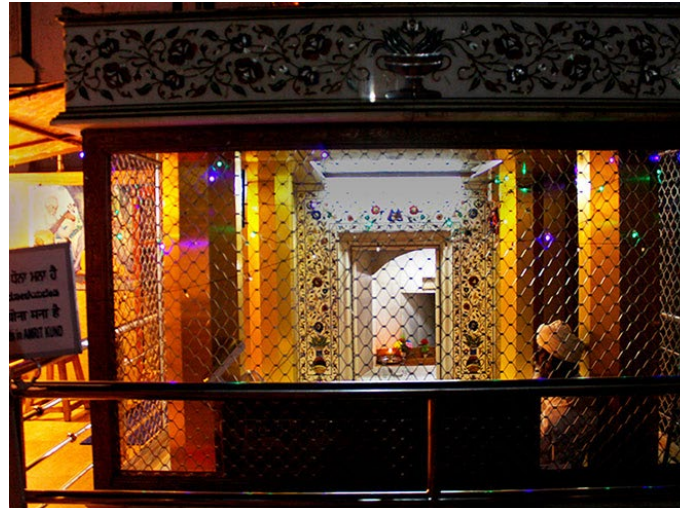
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Amrit Kund (holy water fountain) at Gurudwara.



The flow of Amrit water.



The footprint of Shri Nanak Jhira Sahib at the Gurudwara.



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Inside view of the Gurudwara.



The interiors of the Gurudwara.



Design motif work carved in Marble.



This is Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Yatri Niwas.

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## Bidar Fort - Karnataka

An Ancient Bahmani Monument

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Srikanth B.

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/bidar-fort-karnataka/other-main-attractions-bidar/guru-nanak-jhira-sahib>



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## Narasimha Jhira Cave Temple

Narasimha Jhira Cave Temple worships the lion god Narasimha, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. It is also known as Narasimha Zarna Cave temple or Jharani Narasimha Temple. People throng to this temple because it is believed that the idol at the Narasimha Jhira Cave temple is self-manifested and is very powerful. This ancient temple excavated from a 300-meter tunnel under the Manichoola hill range, houses a fresh stream of water. Hence the devotees have to walk waist-deep in water for 300 m to have a glimpse of the idol.



Jhira Narasimha Temple street.



A building to the left of Jhira Narasimha cave was anciently built by a Mughal ruler.



The stairway going to the Jhira Narasimha Temple.



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The god Ganesha shrine is located to the right side of the cave entrance.



Picture of Narasimha Jhira Cave Temple entrance gate.



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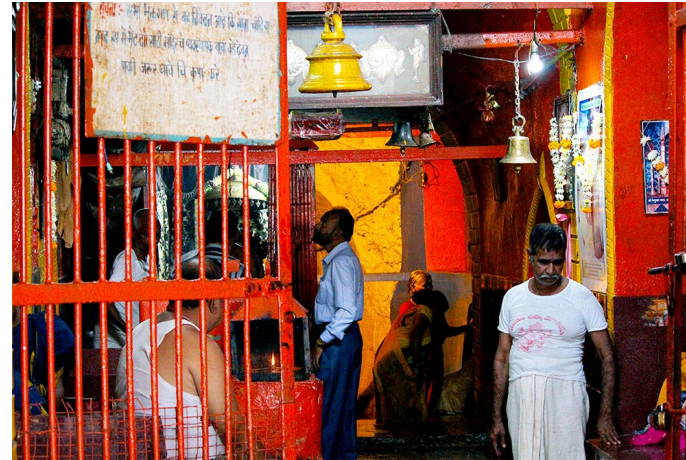
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The entrance door to the cave.



The way towards the Narasimha shrine.



The length of the temple measures about 300 meters.

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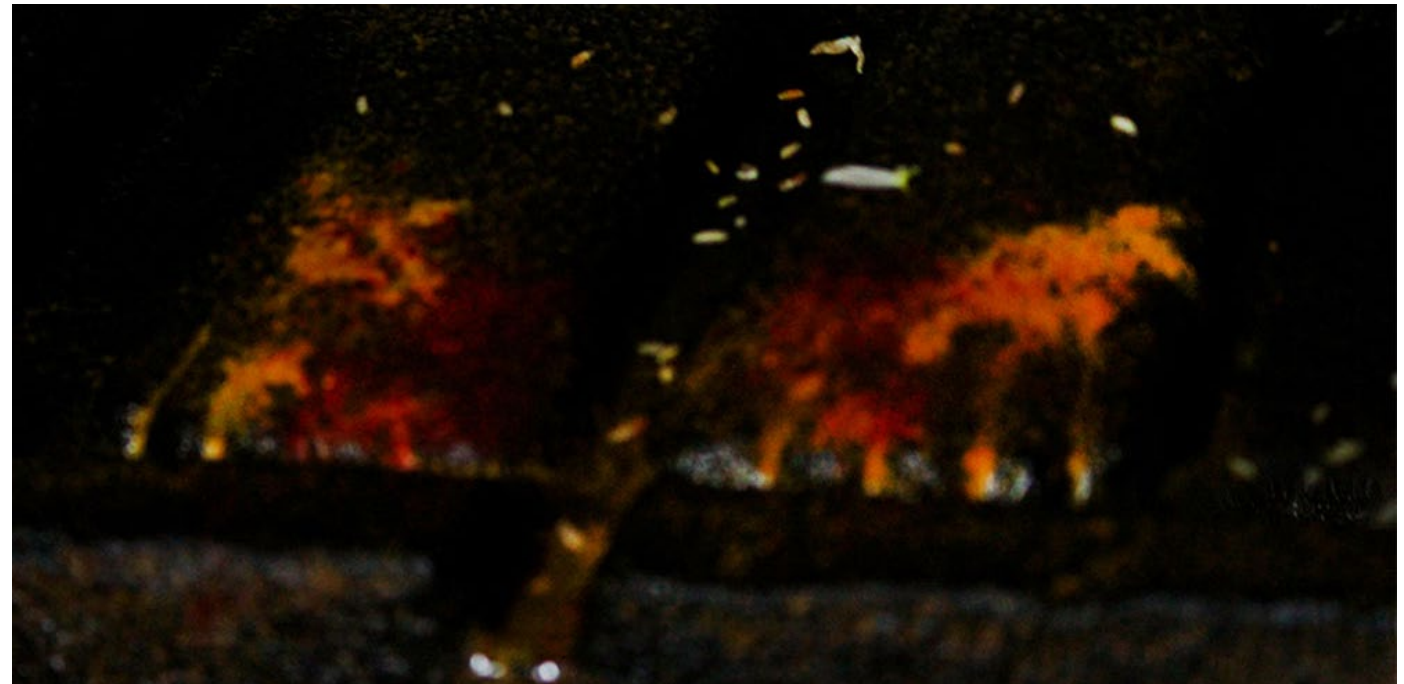
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5 feet of water going into the cave.



The devotees have to walk in chilling water to worship the idol.



The footprint in front of the Narasimha idol.

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The Nandi idol in front of the Shiva Linga.



The way towards the King Manikya Prabhu meditation place.



The king Manikya Prabhu meditation place.

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Face of the deity here is with two eyes wide open, tongue is out of mouth and bear

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## Old Bidar Fort

This fort is situated in the Bidar district of Karnataka. The fort, the city, and the district are all affixed with the same name. Sultan Alla-Ud Din Bahman of the Bahmanid Dynasty shifted his capital from Gulbarga to Bidar in 1427 and built this fort along with a number of Islamic monuments.



Entrance gate of the old Bidar fort.

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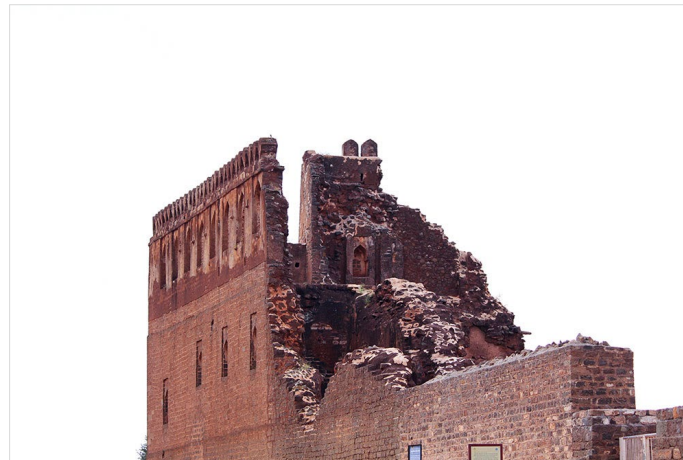
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A view of the fort.



Left end view of the structure.



The prehistoric walls of the old fort, built in the Bahmani period.



Fort buildings built according to the Muslim style of architecture.

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View from the interiors of the old fort.



Arch-shaped gates built in Muslim architecture.



The view of the broken walls of the old Bidar fort.



Dome-shaped building structure in the interiors of the fort.



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Inside view of the old fort.



The wall relief design in the interiors of the old fort.



Inside view of the dome.



The basement path of the fort.

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## Video



Solah Khamba and Tarkash Mahal



Rangeen Mahal



Narashimha



Guru Nanak

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Bidar Fort



New and Old Bidar Fort



Basavakalyana



Bahamani Tombs

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