

# City of Lakes and Gardens

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Once colorful gardens and lakes dotted the landscape of Aurangabad. A city with cool rippling water bodies, dancing fountains, cascading water falls, lush green trees, fragrant flowers, where a perennial stream, the Kham river meanders and domes and minarets peep through the thick foliage. This picturesque site tucked in the basalt rocks scattered all around western India attracted the attention of the most fastidious travelers. Visitors Went into rapturous poetry when they passed through this medieval city. No wonder Mirza Sadiq Asfahani, a traveler passing from Akbarabad to Junnar to meet Shahajan visited the city of Aurangabad and was so impressed with its beauty and exquisite vista that he burst into poetry.

The gardens designed in the city presented a combination of architectural marvels. According to prof. Faruq there were 160 gardens that dotted the entire city. Some of the names of these gardens were jam Bagh(near Aamkhas Faseel, adjacent to the ghats,) SupariBagh (near Delhi Gate), NariyaliBagh (at khadkeshwar), Begum Bagh (Maqbara), AngooriBagh, BasantBagh (Labour Colony ), KhalaAmmikiBagh (Rauf Colony), RehmaniBagh (in Kiradpura), MathurdeskeBegh (Deodi Bazaar), Atol-e-kiBagh (Shahgunj), Aflatoon khan kiBagh (Fazilpura), LotaKaranjakiBagh, RaushanBagh (outside RoshanDarwaza). The list is endless. Some of the gardens still exist in a unkempt and shabby conditions while some of these names are still known locally.

## **Bibi ka Maqbara**

One of the most artistic and delighted gardens, is the Begum Bagh or rather Bibi ka Maqbara. The garden is designed on the Persian style garden layout called Charagh, in which the main building is put at the centre of a quadrilateral garden, divided by walkways or flowring water into four smaller parts. The four parts are again divided into eight parts symbolizing paradise that is mentioned in the Quran. The Mughals were very fond of perfumed. Flowers and fruits and their gardens once bloomed with Juhes, Chamelis, Hibiscus and other Indian flowers are well as fruits. Once Maqbara too bloomed with these flowers and thick foliage. Unfortunately it was replaced by the English lawns by Lord Curzon and John Marshall.



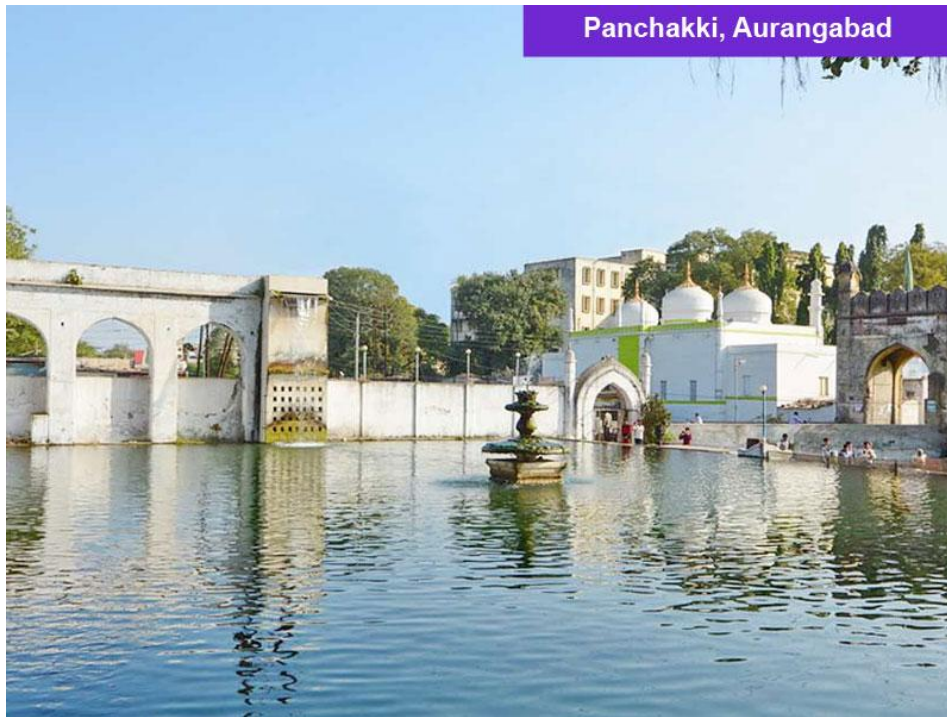
**BibikaMaqbara**

## **Panchakki**

Panchakki (pan for water and Chakki for mill in short a water mill) was one of the most charming monument more popular for its continuous sheets of water falling into a huge tank below.

This celebrated garden is neatly set, on the banks of river Kham. The ecstatic, tranquil water fall and flow of water in the tank and river serves as a solace to every tired soul. Several celebrated visitors in the 20<sup>th</sup> Cent. Went into euphoria while describing this garden. British president A.C. Lutyens (of Hyderabad state) during his visit in 1943 expressed his delight “Witnessing this gracious site, I am gratified with a sense of peace and pleasure”.

Basically a Sufi Centre the area was developed and decorated by the disciples of the famous Sufi Saint Babashah Musafir. It was blend of architectural edifices like the MKsjid, khankhaq and Dargahs embellished with gardens and water bodies with fountains and beautiful waterfall, as well as reservoirs and tank .



### **Panchakki**

### **HimayatBagh**

One of the important gardens of Aurangabad, once a part of Quil-e-Ark palace can be called as the oxygen hub of Aurangabad. Once designed in an area of 350 acres, surrounded by fortification walls with gates was adorned with abundant and luxuriant fruit trees, gardens, wells water bodies and aesthetic structures.

Mughal gardens are invariably protected by fortification wall as they were meant for private use and personal pleasure of the royal family. The other considerations were environmental concerns of protecting trees, animals and birds. The gardens once contained several fragrant flower beds set around the water bodies or separate marked areas. The garden had several fruit trees.

The architectural structures at HimayatBagh include Barra-dari, summer palace and Chandni Chabutra, which offer the garden grace and elegance.

Water bodies include oblong reservoirs on either side of the summer palace, shaker baudi (so named as the water of the well is sweet.) The building of the well was constructed of strong bricks and lime pipes. The source of the water was the Nehar of Malik Ambar. Presently Himayat Bagh is in a very ruinous condition as several trespassers are using it for their personal benefits.

## **Tanks and Lakes of Medieval Period:**

Interestingly the medieval period developed and built a few large and small tank. of the earliest thank of Auragabad belonged to the ancient period and was know as Rajtalaka / rajtadaka. Now probably the some huge lake is called Harsul / Arsul. Is was also known as talaab-e-kala (meaning an expansive and sizable lake). According to Wikimedia. Org. Harsul lake was built in the times of Nizam of Hyderabad.

Salim Ali lake: know earlier as khizar lake was the creation of the Malikambar. It was said that due to water scarcity in kharik, Malikambar dug a canal in Harsul lake that he brought water up till his wada (residence) in sahagunj know as Sabzmahal or green bungalow. Salim Ali lake was a part of the Nehar-e-Ambari Project. As par an article in Lokmat by Atulkulkarni the original lake measured 54 acres in size, but due to road it was reduced by 20 acres reducing the lake to only 34 acres.

Once this lake attracted 175 species of migratory birds several from Siberia. But to-day due to contaminated water with sewage and filth pouring in from neighbouring houses, the number of birds dropped to only 75 species.

## **Kawwal / Kamal Talaab**

Kamal Talaab once to pride of Aurangabad was constructed during the times of Aurangzeb. It is located towards to northwest to Aamkhasmaidan. Which has an enduring life. Even a decade back it was in good condition and was completely beautified with lotus flowers. But today though the lake still exists, it is covered with wild growth of hyacinth due to filthy water.

Basically the Mughals constructed several lakes and gardens in the city under their authority to escape from the impact of the indian heat. These gardens water bodies served to cool the environment.

## **JaswantTalaab / Lake**

Jaswant singh was the mansabdar of Aurangzeb who had been given a Jagir Nnear Baijipura. He built a palace and tank and the area came to be named as jaswantpura. It was a private tank hence finds little mention in contempory books. But the Jaswant lake has been referred to in bhimsen saxena's book, "tarik-e-dilkhusha" in context with an attack of Marathas on auragabad (February 1681). The reference was, "the Marathas entered baijipura and created chaos and confusion here. But as khan jahan bahadur arrived and set his camp on the bank of jaswant sigpura tank, the Marathas retreated without a fight.

There were smaller tanks like Raufhauz in Rohillagalli and haathi tank (collector's Office).

## **Haathi tank**

Haathi tank was a part of the Nizam'sbardari complex and in those days was so huge that it appeared like a lake. This haathi tank is mentioned in the times of India, during the visit of Mehaboob Ali pasha to Aurangabad as a child. There were several other tanks, pools that belonged to private families of Amir's, Umrao and other higher ranking officers.

## **Maintenance of Baghs and Talaabs**

Even in the medieval period gardens and water bodies were considered very important and had a separate department. It was known as the 'department of garden and tanks', under which each district had a superintendent and other specialized staff to supervise and conserve the royal gardens and tanks.

In Aurangabad there were four water tanks. Harsul, Khizar, Jaswant and Kawal/ Kamaltalaab. Harsul was talaab-e-Khurd (Meaning Small) which was under the Government supervision and was maintenance was on routine basis.

In Alamgir-Darbari Akhbar translated by Sethu Madhavraopagari, there were several letters by Aurangzeb giving instructions to his garden, staff for the upkeep of Talaab and Bbagh.

According to one Darbar newspaper report, Aurangzeb had ordered a news scribe Bholanath to given him regular report of the maintenance of gardens and talaab.

In case of repairs Aurangzeb wrote the would send khwajaYaqut to repair the talaab. In another instance on 10<sup>th</sup> Novembar , 1695 Fazil khan prepared maps of Aurangabad's Talaab and presented them before the badshah. Badshah instructed Bholanath that he will send khwajaYaqut to clean the talaabs of the city.

Reason why Aurangabad was once known as the city of gardens.