

CHAPTER - BIDAR

.1 Aim:

Exploring ‘Bidar’ "The City of Whispering Monuments and Crown Town"

.2 Information :

Crown of Karnataka

Bidar is a city in the north-eastern part of Karnataka state in India. It is the headquarters of Bidar District which borders Maharashtra and Telangana. The city is well known for its many sites of architectural, historical, and religious importance.

Being located at the farthest of around 700 km (430 mi) from the state capital Bangalore, it has been neglected by the state government for a long time. However, owing to its rich heritage, the city has a prominent place on the Archaeological Map of India. Picturesquely perched on the Deccan plateau, the Bidar fort is more than 500 years old and still standing strong. According to the book "Bidar Heritage" published by the state Department of Archaeology, Museums, and Heritage, of the 61 monuments listed by the department, about 30 are tombs located in and around Bidar city., explaining its nickname, "City of Whispering Monuments".

Bidar is home to the second-biggest Indian Air Force training center in the country. The IAF Station Bidar is used for advanced jet training of prospective fighter pilots on BAe Hawk aircraft. Bidar city is known for its Bidri handicraft products, and its rich history. Bidar is also considered one of the holiest places for Sikh pilgrimage. Unlike other places in the region, Bidar is the coldest and wettest place in north Karnataka.

Geographically, it is surrounded by Kalaburagi district on the southern side, Telangana State on the eastern side and Maharashtra State on the western and the northern side. Bidar is Karnataka's northernmost district and is often referred to as 'Crown' of Karnataka.

.3 Location of Bidar in Karnataka :

Coordinates (Bidar): 17.9°N 77.5°E[1]



.4 History :

The recorded history of the city goes back to the third century B.C. when it was a part of the Mauryan Empire.

After Mauryas, Satavahanas, Kadambas, and Chalukyas of Badami reigned over Bidar territory. The Delhi Sultanate invaded the area first by Allauddin Khilji, and later, Muhammed-bin-Tughluq took control of the entire Deccan. In the middle of the 14th century, the Sultan of Delhi's officers rebelled and this resulted in the establishment of Bahmanid Dynasty

The history of the present fort at Bidar is attributed to the sultan Ala-ud-Din Bahman Shah, the first sultan of the Bahmani dynasty to 1427 when he shifted his capital from Gulbarga to Bidar since it had better climatic conditions and was also a fertile and fruit-bearing land. The earliest recorded history of its existence as a small and robust fort is also traced to prince Ulugh Khan in 1322, whereafter it came under the reign of the Tughlaq dynasty.

With the establishment of the Bahmanid dynasty (1347), Bidar was occupied by Sultan Ala-ud-Din Bahman Shah Bahmani. Bidar remained under the Barid Shahi dynasty until its conquest by the Bijapur Sultanate in 1619. He wrested the Bidar Fort from the Adil Shahis after a 21-day war in 1656. With this, Bidar became a part of the Mughal dynasty for the second time. Bidar was made a subah (imperial top-level province) in 1656, which Telangana Subah was merged into the next year.

In 1724, Bidar became a part of the Asaf Jahi Kingdom of the Nizams. Third son of Asaf Jah I (Nizam I) Mir Sa'id Muhammad Khan, Salabat Jang ruled from Bidar fort from 1751 to 1762, till his brother Mir Nizam Ali Khan Asaf Jah III imprisoned him in this fort, and was killed in Bidar fort on 16 September 1763. It was connected to Hyderabad by rail in the early 20th century. After India's independence, in 1956 all Kannada-speaking areas were merged to form the Mysore State and Bidar became part of the new Mysore (now Karnataka) state.

The ancient Karez System in the city has been recently discovered. The Karez (Qanat) is an underground network of aqueducts for water supply. The Bidar Karez, built in the 15th century, is more than 3 km (1.9 mi) long with 21 air vents. Underground canals, built to connect underground water streams, were meant to provide drinking water to civilian settlements and the garrison inside the Bidar fort. This was necessary for a city where the soil was rocky and drilling wells was difficult.

.5 Popular places :

.5.1 Bidar fort

Bidar Fort is considered one of the most formidable forts of the country. The main citadel complex housed the royal places. Mahals and Mosque. Adjoining to this on the southern side, the city was built for the people. Both the citadel complex and city had separate forts for protection the plan of the Bidar city fortification is pentagonal. There are five gateways for entry into the city fort. It is main citadel complex fort which is stronger. It is built on the brink of the plateau. Engineers and architecture of various countries were employed on its design and construction. A Museum is present there having old armor, old sculptures. including many of the ancient stones .



.5.2 Solah Sutoon Ki Masjid

Solah Sutoon Ki Masjid was built by Qubil Sultan between 1423 and 1424. The mosque derives its name from the 16 pillars that are lined in the front of the structure. Popularly known as the Zanana Masjid, this mosque is about 90 metres long and 24 metres wide. Behind the southern wall of this mosque, there is a large well. Characterised by columns, arches and domes, this mosque is one of the largest in India.



.5.3 Rangeen Mahal

Rangeen Mahal, situated in the fort, near Gumbad Darwaza, is unique because of its decoration with coloured tiles and other art work. Wood carving done there is not only precious but also unique.

The walls of Mahal are adorned with mother-of-pearl of the finest quality in laid in jet-black stone. Floral patterns and calligraphic text are also depicted here. Stone carving, stucco art are other attractions of this monument. It was rebuilt during Barid Shahi period. The design of this monument represents a blend of both Hindu and Muslim architecture. There are rooms in the basement of the Rangin Mahal .



.5.4 Takht Mahal

The Royal Palace, was built by Ahemd shah. It was the royal residence. The place was fully decorated with coloured titles and stone carvings part of which can be seen even today. It had two side royal pavilions with lofty arches and a spacious hall at the back of which was the sultan's room. The building had stately dimensions and exquisite surface decoration. The coronations of several Bahamanis and Barid Shahi sultans were held there. From the royal pavilion which is situated behind throne palace one can view the valley and low land below.



.5.5 Gurudwara Nanak Jhira

Gurudwara Nanak Jhira Saheb is known to be one of Holiest Place For Sikh Devotees in India and is believed that first sikh Guru Shri Guru Nanak Dev ji visited the place during famine in this region. Papa Nashini Mandir Dargah Hazrat Shah Shamsuddin Quadri (Multani Basha) Dargah Hazrat Syed Abul Faiz Mailar Mallana Mandir Narasimha Jharna Mandir Changleri Veerabhadra Mandir .



.5.6 Basavakalyan

Located about 80km from Bidar, Basavakalyan was once the capital of the Kalyana Chalukyas and the centre of a great social and religious upheaval in the 12th century. Basavakalyan in Bidar district is famed for its cultural heritage and is known as the Karmabhoomi of Basaveshwara, the revered 12th century religious reformer. During his time, it became a seat of learning, and an abode of spiritual wisdom. Basavakalyan is renowned for the saints who made the city their home: Basaveshwara, Allama Prabhu, Akka-Mahadevi, Channabasavanna and Siddarama. You can also see some monuments like the Chaluckyan Fort, few caves, and other places of historic and religious importance here.



.6 Art :



Karnataka tableau depicting Bidriware Handicraft from Bidar passes through the Rajpath during the Republic Day Parade 2011 in Delhi.

Bidri wares :

Bidriware, one of the rarest and most intricate art forms is now unique to the city. This native art form has obtained Geographical Indications (GI) registry. The various art forms created by artists from Bidar city centuries ago are now major attractions in museums such as Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the National Museum in New Delhi, and Indian Museum in Kolkata.

The Karnataka tableau at the 2011 Republic Day Parade at Rajpath in New Delhi featured Bidriware and Bidri artisans from Bidar. Rehaman Patel did extensive research in Bidri Art from Gulbarga University. His book in Kannada version (2012) and English version (2017) was also published on Bidri Art .

How to reach :

By train:

Bidar railway station has a Tourist Information Centre, computerized reservation counter, waiting room, light refreshment stall and tea stall. Bidar has connectivity with Bangalore, Hyderabad, Sainagar Shirdi, Parbhani Jn, Aurangabad, Latur, Nanded, Manmad, Mumbai, Visakhapatnam, Machlipatnam, Vijayawada, Renigunta and Kalaburagi.

By Road :

Frequent KSRTC buses to Kalaburagi (Gulbarga), Hyderabad, Latur, Udgir, Nanded, Solapur, etc. Also volvo services to Bengaluru, Hubli, Belgavi, Davangere, Mumbai, Mangalore and Pune, etc.

By Air:

Bidar Airport also known as Bidar Air Force Station, is a military airbase and domestic airport in Chidri, Bidar, Karnataka, India. Bidar has been home to one of the oldest military air bases in south India.

Bidar has its own airport with flight connection to Bengaluru. Hyderabad airport (149 kms away) is the next closest airport with excellent flight connectivity from all parts of India and abroad.

History[edit]

Main article: History of Bidar

The recorded History of the city goes back to the third century B.C. when it was a part of the [Mauryan Empire](#). After the Mauryas, [Satavahanas](#), [Kadambas](#) and [Chalukyas](#) of Badami and later the [Rashtrakutas](#) reigned over Bidar territory. The Chalukyas of Kalyana and [Kalachuris of Kalyanis](#) also regained the area. For a short period after Kalyani Chalukyas the area of Bidar was under the [Seunas of Devagiri](#) and [Kakatiyas of Warangal](#).

The Delhi Sultanate invaded the area first by [Allauddin Khilji](#), and later, [Muhammed-bin-Tughluq](#) took control of entire [Deccan](#) including Bidar. In the middle of the 14th century, the Sultan of Delhi's officers that were stationed in Deccan rebelled and this resulted in the establishment of [Bahmanid Dynasty](#) in 1347 A.D. at Gulbarga/Hasanabad (present [Kalaburagi](#)). There was frequent warfare between the Bahmanids and the [Vijaynagar Kingdom](#).^[14]

The history of the present fort at Bidar is attributed to the sultan [Ala-ud-Din Bahman Shah](#), the first sultan of the Bahmani dynasty to 1427, when he shifted his capital from Gulbarga to Bidar since it had better climatic conditions and was also a fertile and fruit-bearing land. The earliest recorded history of its existence as a small and strong fort is also traced to prince Ulugh Khan in 1322, whereafter it came under the reign of the [Tughlaq dynasty](#).^[15]

With the establishment of the Bahmanid dynasty (1347), Bidar was occupied by Sultan Ala-ud-Din Bahman Shah Bahmani. During the rule of Ahmad Shah I (1422–1486), Bidar was made the capital city of [Bahmani Kingdom](#).^{[16][17]} The old fort was rebuilt and [madrasas](#), [mosques](#), palaces, and gardens were raised. [Mahmud Gawan](#), who became the prime minister in 1466, was a notable figure in the history of Bidar. Bidar remained under the [Barid Shahi dynasty](#) until conquest by the [Bijapur Sultanate](#) in 1619. [Aurangzeb](#) came to Bidar after his father, [Padshah](#) (emperor) [Shah Jahan](#), appointed him the Prince of Deccan. He wrested the Bidar Fort from the Adil Shahis after a 21-day war in 1656. With this, Bidar became a part of the Mughal dynasty for the second time.^{[18][19]} Bidar was made a [subah](#) (imperial top-level province) in 1656, which [Telangana Subah](#) was merged into the next year.^[20]

In 1724, Bidar became a part of the Asaf Jahi Kingdom of the Nizams. Third son of Asaf jah 1 (Nizam 1) Mir Sa'id Muhammad Khan, Salabat Jang ruled from Bidar fort from 1751 to 1762, till his brother Mir Nizam Ali Khan Asaf Jah III imprisoned him in this fort, and was killed in Bidar fort on 16 September 1763. *Mohammedabad* old name of Bidar is also on his name. It was connected to Hyderabad by rail in the early 20th century.^[21] After India's independence, in 1956 all Kannada speaking areas were merged to form the Mysore State and Bidar became part of the new Mysore (now Karnataka) state.^{[19][22][23]}

Ancient Karez System in the city have been recently discovered. The Karez (Qanat) is an underground network of aqueducts for water supply. The Bidar Karez, built in the 15th century, is more than 3 km (1.9 mi) long with 21 air vents.^[24] Underground canals, built to connect underground water streams, were meant to provide drinking water to civilian settlements and the garrison inside the Bidar fort. This was necessary in a city where the soil was rocky and drilling wells was difficult.^[25]

Geography[edit]

Bidar is located at 17.9°N 77.5°E,^[26] lies at a central position in Deccan, a plateau at an elevation of 2300 ft from the sea level. It has common boundaries with Maharashtra and Telangana which is, with the districts of Nizamabad and Medak in Telangana on the East and the districts of Latur, Nanded and Osmanabad in Maharashtra on the west. On the south lies the district Gulbarga of Karnataka.^[citation needed]

Geology[edit]



Laterite under the Top soil Layer

The upper [crust](#) of the [plateau](#) is of [laterite](#), a soft porous rock with limonitic surface. This crust varies in depth from 100 ft (30 m) to 500 ft (150 m) and rests on a bed of trap, which is of much harder texture and less pervious to water. The volume of water filtered during the [monsoons](#) through the laterite stratum is arrested by the trappean bed, and a nursery of [springs](#) is formed whose natural level of effluence is the line of contact of the two strata along the base of the [cliffs](#) of the plateau. The water in course of time frets out for itself an orifice and macerates and loosens portions of its rocky channel till a [rift](#) is produced. The rift gradually dilates into a [ravine](#), and the ravine expands into a [vale](#).

The [Karez System](#) is built along a [geological fracture](#). Such fractures are formed at the intersection of [laterite](#) and [basalt rocks](#) and form lineaments or [springs](#) that yield water.^[27]

See also: [Bidar district § Laterite](#)

Soil[edit]

Bidar soils are deep (>100 cm), well-drained gravelly red clayey soils developed on plateaus of laterites. They are *slightly* acid to neutral ([pH](#) 6.6) in reaction with low [cation exchange capacity](#). They are highly gravelly soils with gravel content (60 to 10%) that decrease with depth.^[28]

Climate[edit]

The winter season is from November to middle of February. Bidar is one of the coldest cities (by southern standards) in Karnataka as the minimum temperature during winter nights regularly hovers around 11-12 during December, which is the coldest month with mean daily maximum temperature of 27.3 C and mean daily minimum of 13.4 C. From the middle of the February, both day and night temperatures begin to rise rapidly. May is the hottest month with mean daily maximum temperature of 38.8 C and mean daily minimum of 25.9 C. With the withdrawal of southwest monsoon in the first week of October, there is slight increase in day temperature but night temperature decreases steadily. After October, both day and night temperatures decreases progressively. The highest maximum temperature recorded at Bidar was on 8-5-1931(43.3-degree C) and the lowest minimum was on 5-1-1901(2.9-degree C, the lowest temperature ever recorded in Karnataka).^[29]

Present day Bidar covers an expanse of 5448 square kilometres of land and lies between 17°35' and 18°25' North latitudes and 76°42' and 77°39' east longitudes.

Economy[edit]

Once a home to many cottage industries, such as cotton and oil-ginning mills,^[32] there are now few industries that draw on local raw materials or skills. Even the well known form of local artcrafts, [bidri ware](#), is in a state of decline. Increasing prices of materials, especially silver, and declining sales have meant that many of the hereditary artisans are no longer employed in the production of such ware.^[33] Bidar city has a large industrial area known as Kolhar industrial area.^[citation needed]

Tourism

Bidar is symbolically described as *City of Whispering Monuments*.^[34] The mountaintop city that served as the capital of medieval Deccan, has 98 monuments of which **four national monuments** are protected by the [Archaeological Survey of India](#) and 14 by the State Archaeology Department, Karnataka.

Bidar earned a place on the [World Monument Watchlist 2014](#).^[35] Of the 741 proposals received from 166 countries, 67 sites from 41 countries were finally selected which were announced by WMF president [Bonnie Burnham](#) in New York on 8 October 2013.^[36] Along with "the historic city of Bidar", two other sites in India to figure in the list were the house of [Sheikh Salim Chisti](#) in [Fatehpur Sikri](#) and Juna Mahal in [Rajasthan](#).

The WMF in its *current watch site* for "the historic city of Bidar" says "challenges to the site include a lack of integrated conservation and maintenance, environmental pollution, and the construction of new developments and roadways that encroach on the historic fabric. Current land use regulations also threaten the economic livelihood of many of the city's residents, and it is hoped that revised, context-specific planning policies would both protect Bidar's historic assets while also supporting the future of its local population. It is hoped that Watch-listing will spur documentation and analysis of the city's conditions, followed by policy development and applied conservation interventions that will reveal and maintain Bidar's rich heritage, as well as support a robust and sustainable tourist industry."^[37]

Mahmud Gawan Madrasa[edit]

Main article: [Mahmud Gawan Madrasa](#)

This grandiose [madrasa](#) was built by the prime-minister of the Bahmani empire, [Mahmud Gawan](#) in the late 15th century. Its only the most imposing building of the [Bahmani](#) period, but in its plan and in the general style of its architecture it is a unique monument of its kind in India. The Madrasa, a *multi-disciplinary university* he set up, which had a [library](#) of around 3,000 valuable manuscripts, was severely damaged when [gunpowder](#) stored inside the rooms went off during a 27-day siege of the city by [Mughal](#) king [Aurangazeb](#) in 1656. The [Mahmud Gawan Madrasa](#) is protected by the [Archaeological Survey of India](#).^[38]

Bidar Fort[edit]

Bidar Fort^[39] is considered one of the most formidable forts of the country. Bidar city was distinctly planned and built. The main citadel complex housed the royal places. Mahals and Mosque. Adjoining to this on the southern side, the city was built for the people. Both the citadel complex and city had separate forts for protection the plan of the Bidar city fortification is pentagonal. There are five gateways for entry into the city fort. It is main citadel complex fort which is stronger. It is built on the brink of the plateau. Engineers and architecture of various countries were employed on its design and construction. A Museum is preset there having old armor, old sculptures. including many of the ancient stones,^[40]

- **Rangeen Mahal**, situated in the fort, near Gumbad Darwaza, is unique because of its decoration with coloured tiles and other art work. Wood carving done there is not only precious but also unique. The walls of Mahal are adorned with mother-of-pearl of the finest quality in laid in jet-black stone. Floral patterns and calligraphic text are also depicted here. Stone carving, stucco art are other attractions of this monument. It was rebuilt during Barid Shahi period. The design of this monument represents a blend of both Hindu and Muslim architecture. There are rooms in the basement of the Rangin Mahal.^[41]
- **Tarkash Mahal** is said to have been built for Turkish wife of the sultan. From the remains of the decorative work found in the ornamentation of the walls, it can be said that the Mahal was built or extended by the Barid Shahi Sultans who had kept large harem with ladies from different nationalities. The rooms were decorated with stucco work.^[42]
- **Gagan Mahal** was originally built by the Bahamani kings and some alterations and additions were made by the Barid Shahi rulers. It has two courts. The outer court was used by the male staff and guards. The inner court also, there are rooms on either side of the covered passage for the accommodation of the guards. The main building of the palace was for the use of the sultan and his harem.^[43]
- **Takht Mahal**, The Royal Palace, was built by Ahemd shah. It was the royal residence. The place was fully decorated with coloured titles and stone carvings part

of which can be seen even today. It had two side royal pavilions with lofty arches and a spacious hall at the back of which was the sultan's room. The building had stately dimensions and exquisite surface decoration. The coronations of several Bahamanis and Barid Shahi sultans were held there. From the royal pavilion which is situated behind throne palace one can view the valley and low land below.

- **Solah Khamba Mosque** (Solah Sutoon Ki Masjid) was built by Qubil Sultani between 1423 and 1424. The mosque derives its name from the 16 pillars that are lined in the front of the structure. Popularly known as the Zanana Masjid, this mosque is about 90 metres long and 24 metres wide. Behind the southern wall of this mosque, there is a large well. Characterised by columns, arches and domes, this mosque is one of the largest in India.^[44]

Other monuments[edit]

- **Chaubara** is a tall tower, facing in four directions. This is an old cylindrical tower of 22 meters, height is situated in the centre of Bidar city. It was used as a watchtower, commanding a fine view of the entire plateau from the top. A winding staircase of eight steps leads to the top of the tower, a clock is being placed on top of the tower, can be viewed from all the four directions .^[45]
- **Jama Masjid**, a large mosque with no minarets, located near Chaubara.^[citation needed]
- **Bahmani Tombs** called as "Ashtur", located near "Chaukhandi of Hazrat Khalil Ullah" around a distance of 1 km^[citation needed]
- **Barid Shahi Tombs**^[46]
- **Chaukhandi of Hazrat Khalil Ullah**^{[47][citation needed]}

Religious places

Gurudwara Nanak Jhira Sahib[\[edit\]](#)

Main article: [Gurudwara Nanak Jhira Sahib](#)

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