NOOR MAHAL PALACE

**INTRODUCTION:**

The **Noor Mahal** ([Urdu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urdu_language): نور محل) is a [Pakistan Army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan_Army)-owned palace in [Bahawalpur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahawalpur), [Punjab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punjab,_Pakistan), [Pakistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan). It was built in 1872 like an Italian [chateau](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chateau) on neoclassical lines, at a time when modernism had set in. It belonged to the Nawabs of [Bahawalpur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahawalpur_(princely_state)) [princely state](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princely_state), during [British Raj](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Raj). The land of Bahawalpur was part of the Hakra Civilization which is one of the oldest in the world, sharing the era of the Egyptian and Mesopotamian Civilizations. These civilizations were well connected via sea and land routes. The Hakra Civilization was mother civilization of “Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa”; read one of the many informative paintings, maps, unique glimpses from the past and historical photographs that were neatly framed and put on display for the viewers and tourists visiting the majestic Noor Mahal. If you visit the Noor Mahal, you may come across a number of maps of Bahawalpur region from different eras, and this information is available under one such map that broadly shows the entire Indian sub-continent of that time.

Located in Bahawalpur, this palace is immensely beautiful with high, colourful and tastefully decorated ceilings with massive chandeliers, aesthetically marbled, tiled floors and spacious halls. It’s a majestic work of architecture that would attract any history loving traveller to it. The building’s facade is well complemented by its equally stunning interior.

**Geography:**

Mr. Heennan, an Englishman who was the state engineer, designed the building. The foundation of Noor Palace was laid in 1872. A map and coins of the state were buried in its foundation as a good omen. Most of the palace's materials and furniture were imported from England and Italy. The construction of the palace was completed in 1875 at a cost of Rs. 1.2 million. Considering the amount of silver in the Indian Rupee Coin at 11.66 Grams in 1862, this amount in 2016 would come to about 8.1 million US dollars. Noor Palace covers an area of 44,600 square feet (4,140 m2). It has 32 rooms including 14 in the basement, 6 verandas and 5 domes. subcontinental style. The Corinthian touch is visible in the columns, [balustrade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balustrade), [pediments](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pediment) and

**History:**

There are various stories regarding its construction. According to the sources Nawad Sir Sadiq Abbasi built the Palace for himself.

Noor Mehal is one of the hidden gems of Bahawalpur, due to the lack of publicity. The palace is open to public. It is currently in the possession of the Pakistan Army and is used as a state guest house for holding state durbars and meetings with foreign delegations.

The Cornithian and Islamic-styled architecture spreads over 4140 sq. meters, and was designed by the state engineer, an Englishman namely Heennan, in 1872, and was completed in 1875, with many additions in the subsequent years. For instance, Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan-V added a mosque in 1906 with an expenditure of Rs.20,000. For good omen, the state coins and document with construction date were put into the foundation at the time of construction. The cost of the building was Rs.1.2 million and most of the items were imported from England and Italy. While a few stories are tagged with Noor Mahal, it is claimed that the palace was built by Nawab Sadiq Khan-IV (also called Shahjahan of Bahawalpur due to his love for architecture and buildings) for his wife Noor. However, she stayed in Noor Mahal for a night only and never came back. It was because when the next morning she woke up and looked out from the balcony of her bedroom, she could see Basti Malook Shah, a nearby graveyard, so she moved to Darbar Palace. Similarly, it is also claimed that no iron and cement were used in the construction of Noor Mahal; instead, the glorious building is entirely made up of mud which was obtained by mixing rice with pulses Many maps, showcasing the evolution of Bahawalpur state over a period of time and how its territories expanded under the rule of different nawabs, are also placed for those who seek the historical background of the area. The Bahawalpur region has a rich history of being invaded by different dynasties. Chronologically, the area was a prized possession for Alexander in around 320 B.C., followed by the Persians, Buddhist Empire, Rai Dynasty, Chachs, Arabs, Ghaznavids, the Sumras, Ghaurian Sultans, the Mughals, the Nahar’s, the Arghuns, Rai Dynasty of Jaisalmer, Nadir Shah and finally it came under the Abbasi family of Bahawalpur in 1727 A.D. Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi-I, who was enthroned as the head of Abbasi family in 1723, thus, laid the foundation of the state of Bahawalpur. He died during a battle in 1746.

The walls of Noor Mahal are glorified with the portraits of the many nawabs that ably ruled the Bahawalpur state, with their significant achievements and other life information under their portraits. There is, however, one nawab who cannot be left out from any discussion relevant to the state. Nawab Sir Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi-V, who was one of the loyal friends of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and who extended all out support during the creation of Pakistan. Born in 1907, he succeeded his father at the age of three years only. However, he was enthroned in 1924, at Noor Mahal. He re-organized the Bahawalpur State army and was bestowed with many medals by the British, in acknowledgement of his contributions in World War II. He was the first ruler to accede to Pakistan after independence on October 05, 1947.