

= Vizianagaram fort =

Vizianagaram fort is an early 18th century fort in the city of Vizianagaram in northeastern Andhra Pradesh , South India . It was built by Vijaya Rama Raju , the Raja of Vizianagaram in 1713 . The formal ceremony , while laying the foundation for the fort , was very auspicious as it represented five signs of victory . The square @-@ shaped fort has two main gates , of which the main entry gate (the " Nagar khana ") has elaborate architectural features . There are many temples and palaces within the fort and a victory tower .

= = Location = =

The fort is situated in Vizianagaram (Telugu language meaning : " the city of victory ") about 18 kilometres (11 mi) away from the Bay of Bengal . It is 40 kilometres (25 mi) to the northwest of Visakhapatnam .

= = History = =

The Vizianagaram fort was built in 1713 at a location where five vijayas (Telugu language meaning : " signs of victory ") were supposed to be present . It is named after its founder Vijaya Rama Raju , also known as Ananda Raju I (1671 ? 1717) , the Raja of Vizianagaram. The site for the fort was suggested to the Rajas by a Muslim saint , Mahabub Valli , who was doing penance in that forest . The auspicious date chosen for the foundation laying ceremony corresponded , according to the Hindu calendar , to the year known as Vijaya on the tenth day of the Vijaya Dasami when the Dassara Festival is generally held in the country . It was also a Tuesday , which means Jayavaram (" victory day ") in Telugu .

= = Features = =

The fort , built of stone , is in the shape of a square of side 240 metres (790 ft) , and rises to a height of 10 metres (33 ft) . The width of the wall at the top varies from 8 to 16 metres (26 to 52 ft) . The four corners of the fort have fortifications in the form of bastions made of stones with a slope on its inner face covered with earth fill and strengthened with stone slabs . There are two gates of entry into the fort . The fort entry from the east is the main gate called the " Nagar khana " , which has elegant architectural designs . Prior to the construction of the Nagar khana , a victory arch stood at the entrance . The west @-@ facing gate is smaller but with similar architectural features as the main gate . A moat surrounded the fort .

Apart from the two main gates , there are several temples and monuments located within the fort . Two important temples are the Hanuman temple , and the Lakshmi temple known as the ? Kota Shakto ? , which is the guardian deity of the fort . Rajas offered prayers at Lakshmi temple before proceeding on any war campaign . Important monuments are palaces such as the Moti Mahal , Oudh Khana , Alakananda Palace , Korukonda Palace , and , just outside , the victory tower called the " Ghanta Stambham " (Clock Tower) . Two other important historical monuments outside the fort , but within the city limits , are the Moddukovillu temple and the Perla Home .

= = = Gates = = =

The two main gates of the fort are architecturally elegant , built in Rajasthani style of architecture . The east main gate is called the " Nagar khana " as it has a drum tower at the top which was used to beat drums to inform the people of royal orders and arrival of royal guests .

The west gate is the rear entrance to the Vizianagaram fort . This gateway is also built in Rajasthani style with a pavilion on top . The gate provides access to the royal tombs , and is a traditional gateway to take out dead bodies for cremation . In place of a moat , which existed in the past , there is now a well turned park extending to the west gate .

= = = Moti Mahal = = =

The Moti Mahal is the royal court or the Durbar hall which was built by Vijayarama Raju @-@ III in 1869 . At the entry to this hall there are two marble statues . This is a monument that represent the past glory , donated to the Maharajah Alak Narayan Society of Arts and Science (MANSAS Trust) by its founder Dr. P.V.G. Raju , the Raja Saheb of Vizianagaram , is now functioning as a college for women on its first floor . It also houses a museum which has artifacts of the past kings who ruled from the fort .

= = = Oudh Khana = = =

The Oudh Khana is the opulent royal palace of the Rajas of Vizianagaram . A unique part of this palace is an exclusive bath room of the Rajas , which is an octagonal stone structure that adjoins the Phool Bagh Palace . The structure is 50 feet (15 m) in height built with stones and has a spiral stairway which leads to the water tank at the top that is fed by pumping water from a nearby well .

= = = Alakananda Palace = = =

The Alaknanda Palace was built as a royal guest house . It was constructed in a plush style for the royal guests . It is set within a well laid out garden with walkways . Within the grounds of this palace an air strip has been built in recent years for use of the royalty . This palace , however , now houses the 5th Battalion of the Andhra Pradesh Armed Reserve Police .

= = = Korukonda Palace = = =

Nearer to the Alakananda Palace is the Korukonda Palace . The land around this palace , about 1 @, @ 000 acres (400 ha) large , is used as a playground and also has well @-@ tended gardens . Educational institutions have been established in this land and there a school to train youth who wish to join the defense forces .

= = = Ganta Stambham = = =

Ganta Stambham is the Clock Tower patterned on the lines of the Big Ben in London . The rajas of Vizianagaram , who used to frequent London during the British Raj , built it . It is located just outside the limits of the fort within the heart of the city . The octagonal tower , built of sandstone in 1885 , reaches a height of 68 feet (21 m) . It was painted white at the top in the past but is now painted cream and red .

= = = Other structures = = =

Outside the limits of the fort there is an ancient temple dedicated to goddess Pydithalli Ammavaru which is held in great reverence by the people of the town . It is believed that this deity is the reincarnated form of a daughter of the royal family . The image of the Goddess worshipped in this temple was found on Vijayadashami day in 1752 . This day is marked by an annual celebration on 21st and 22nd October as a " jatra " or " religious fair " . The temple has a Shiva linga in two colours , which is said to exemplify the union of Shiva and Parvati .

Perla Home , also known as the " Perla Vari " , constructed in 1895 , is said to be one of the most well @-@ maintained monuments in the city . The first building to get electricity connection in the region , it had a bedroom fitted with bedsteads made of silver . A library , which was part of this building , is still functional . The elegant European furniture and the chandeliers of past glory are on display with other artifacts .