Pratapgad Fort

Year: 1656

Shivaji Maharaj

THE FORTRESS OF PRATAPGAD WAS completed in 1656 under the orders of the Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji. The construction of the hilltop stronghold turned out to be an inspired piece of strategy, as just three years later it played a pivotal role in the Battle of Pratapgad, a turning point for the fledgling Maratha.

In the 1650s, the young Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj ordered his peshwa, or prime minister, Moropant Trimbak Pingle, to oversee the construction of a strategic fort in the Western Indian state of Maharashtra. Built on a high spur and completed in 1656, the new two-level fort of Pratapgad (meaning “Valour Fort”) was ideally placed to defend the banks of the Nira and Koyna rivers and the strategic Par pass.

It was a judicious move by Shivaji, as just three years later the renowned Adilshahi general Afzal Khan was marching on Pratapgad, intent on destroying the Marathas. In the summer of 1659, Afzal Khan trampled through Maratha territory, destroying temples in an attempt to bait Shivaji, to draw him out of Pratapgad onto flat land more suitable for an engagement.

Lohagad Fort

Year: 1862

Guru Govind Singh

Lohagad Fort, literally meaning iron fort, is a historical citadel perched atop a hillock at an elevation of 3400 feet. Situated in the Sahyadri range of Lonavala, it separates the Indrayani basin from the Pawna basin. The elaborate history of this fort associates it with the great Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Shivaji. Many other Maratha and Vidarbha rulers used this citadel, making it an important part of Maharashtra's rich history.  
  
The fort can be reached from any of its four entrances, namely *Maha Darwaja*, *Ganesh Darwaja*, *Hanuman Darwaja* and *Narayan Darwaja*.  
  
Exquisite sculpting can be seen on the *Maha Darwaja* that speaks of the art and architecture prevalent in olden times. A step well and large tank constructed during the 18th century can also

be found here. Don't forget to catch glimpses of the famous Pawna Dam while you are at the Fort.

Panhala Fort

Year: 1209

Shilahara dynasty

Panhala is a city and a Hill station Municipal Council (3177 feet above sea level) 18 km northwest of Kolhapur, in Kolhapur district in the Indian state of Maharashtra. Panhala is the smallest city in Maharashtra and being a Municipal Council the city is developing rapidly. The city sprawls in the Panhala fort commands a panoramic view of the valley below. The main historical attraction here is the Panhala fort. There are many places of interest, each with its share of haunting anecdotes. The history of Panhala is closely linked with the history of the Maratha empire, and with its founder, chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Panhala is the only fort where chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj spent more than 500 days, other than his childhood homes. It was Maratha State capital until 1782 and in 1827 it became part of the British Empire.

Dolatabad Ford

Year: 1187

Yadava dynasty

This fort was built by the Yadava dynasty in 1187 and was known as Deogiri. When Muhammad Tughlak ascended the Delhi throne, he was so taken by the fortress that he decided to move his court and capital there, renaming it Daulatabad, "the City of Fortune". He ordered the entire population of Delhi to move out en masse to the new capital. Some of the prominent structures within the fort complex include the Mahakot which comprises four distinct lines of walls with 54 bastions that surround the fort for a length of nearly 5 kilometres. The walls are between 6 to 9 feet thick and 18 to 27 feet high with ammunition depots and granaries built along the interiors. Another interesting spot is the Hathi Haud a gigantic water tank admeasuring 38 x 38 x 6.6 meters with a capacity of about 10,000 cubic meters.A 5 kilometer strong wall, artificial scarping and a complicated series of defenses made Daulatabad Fort secure. The 30 meter high Chand Minar (Tower) built much later with 3 circular balconies played a defensive and religious role in the Fortress.

Sinhagad Fort

2000 years ago

Koli King

Sinhagad, literally means Lion’s Fort, is about 30 kilometres southwest of  Pune. It was previously called Kondana and was also important because of its strategic location, perched on an isolated cliff in the Bhuleswar range of the Sahyadri Mountains, 1,312 meters above sea level. The fort is ‘naturally’ protected due to its very steep slopes. Walls and bastions were constructed at only key places. A good motorable road leads right up to the top of the fort. Apart from the excellent views of the city and the Sahaydri Mountains, the fort is also a popular hangout because of the vendors who sell a local delicacy called ‘pithlabhakari’ and curds. On a clear day one gets to see the forts of Torna, Rajgad and Purandar from Sinhagad Fort.One of the most famous battles on Sinhgad was fought by Tanaji Malusare, a general of Chhatrapati Shivaji of the Maratha Empire in order to recapture the fort in March 1670A steep cliff leading to the fort was scaled in the dead of the night with the help of a tamed monitor lizard named "Yashwanti", colloquially known as a ghorpad. Thereafter, a fierce battle ensued between Tanaji and his men versus the Mughal army headed by Udaybhan Singh Rathod. Tanaji Malusare lost his life. There is an anecdote that upon hearing of Tanaji's death, Chhatrapati Shivaji expressed his remorse with the words, "Gad aala, pan Sinha gela" - "The Fort is captured, but the Lion is lost" and so the name Sinhagad.A bust of Tanaji Malusare was constructed on the Fort in memory of his fierce resistance of the Mughal forces in the battle.