

Documentation of Ganga from Gaumukh to Gangasagar | Mirzapur District

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Report Submitted by Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Division
Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)



Documentation of Ganga from Gaumukh to Gangasagar

Mirzapur District

Intangible Cultural Heritage

July-November 2019

Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage

National Mission for Clean Ganga
(Reg. Society)
Ministry of Jal Shakti
Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation
Government of India




INTACH Indian
National Trust
for Art and
Cultural Heritage

Contents

Introduction	1
Journey from the Ancient to Modern	8
Revolt of 1857 and Mirzapur	11
Trade through Ganga	13
Mirzapur, Meerjapur and Girijapur	23
Chunar Fort: History, Mysteries and Chronology	27
Traditional Crafts:	33
Weaving, Brassware, Chunar Pottery, Lac and Shellac Industry	
Performing Traditions— <i>Kajri</i>	61
Traditional Wrestling	71
Mural and Rock Paintings	72
Foodways	75
Lala Lajpat Rai Library	78
Sacred Complexes	81
Ghats of Mirzapur	109
Fairs and Festivals	115
Literature, Languages and Communities	126
Lorikayan—Folklore of Vindhyanchal	138
Hindi Tithi Calendar—Mirzapur	140
Acknowledgements	152
Annexure	
a) District Map of Mirzapur	5
b) Map of Ganga and Ghaggar, by Tieffenthaler, Year 1784	6
c) Media Coverage of Field Documentation Work	141

**Cover Image: Persian Motif of Rose and flowers, once trademark of Carpets of Mirzapur*

**Back Cover: Awadhi style Mural Painting at Naar Ghat, on the verge of extinction*

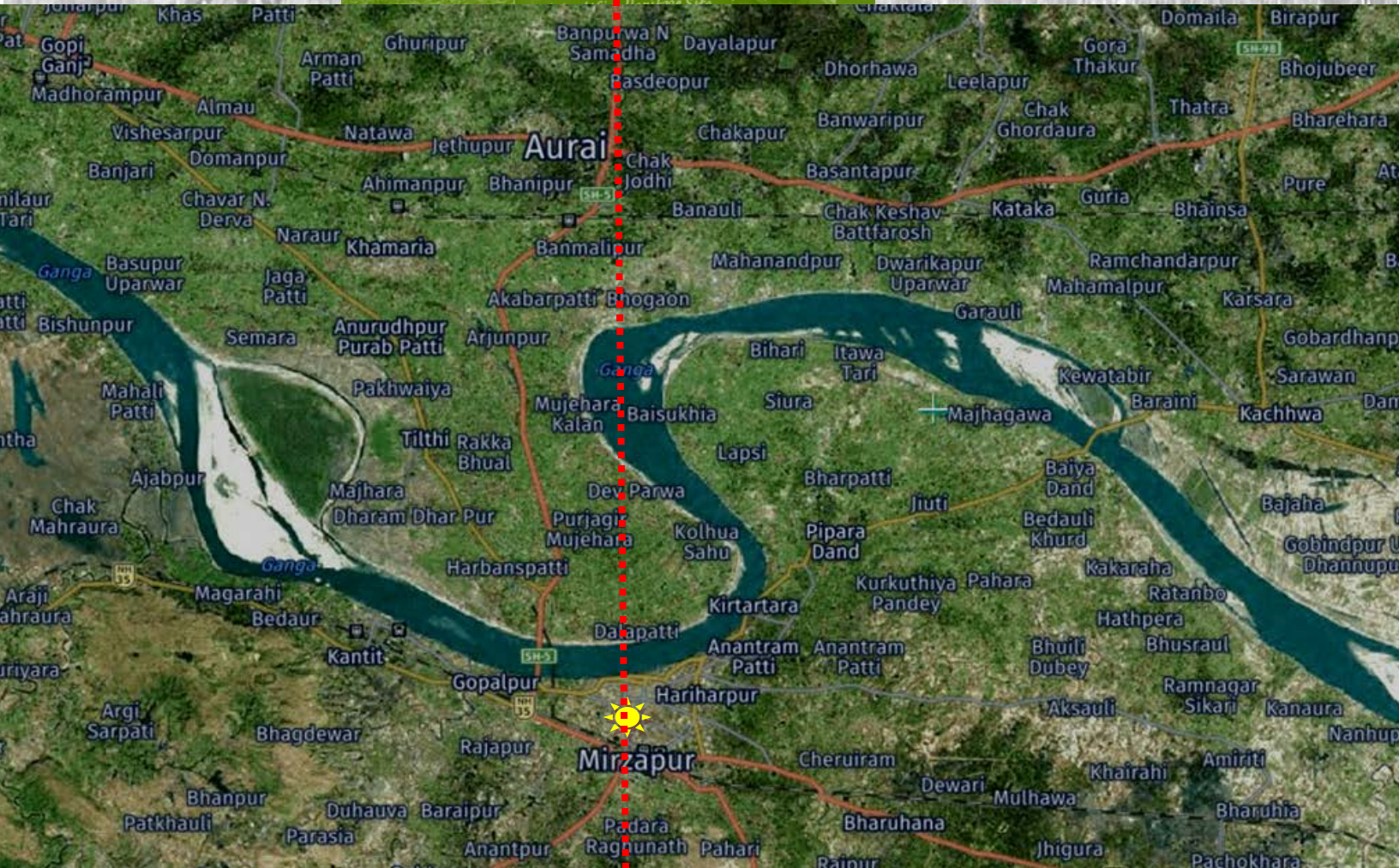
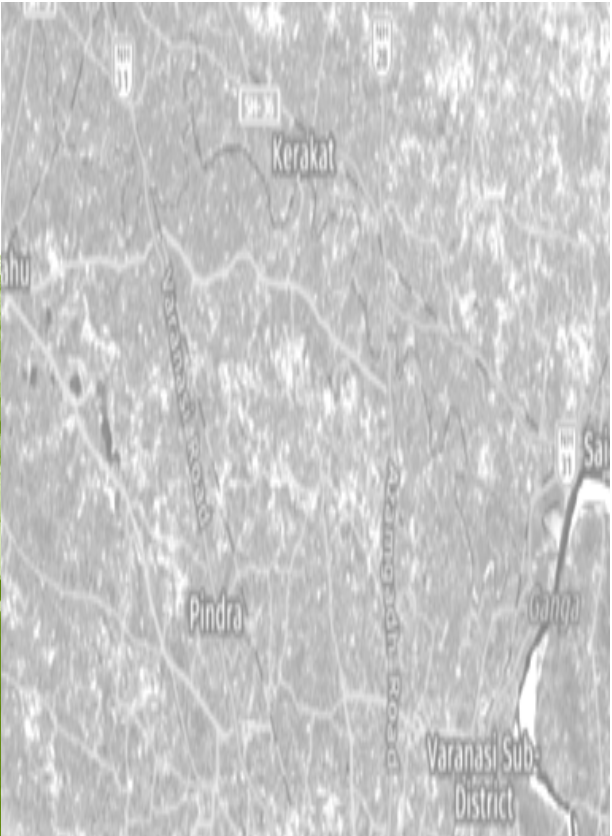
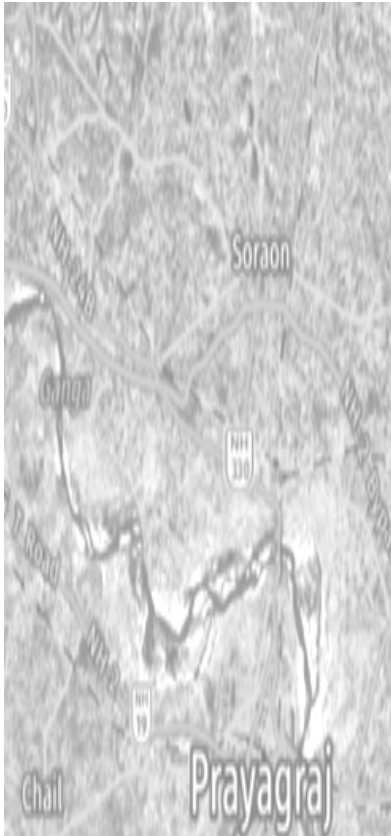




Figure 1 Idol of Ma Vindhyaasisni

Introduction



Figure 2 A view of the Ganga with fields in the foreground in Mirzapur district, as seen from Shastri Setu



Figure 3 Burrier Ghat

Blessed with natural beauty and a rich cultural history, the area of Mirzapur or Vindhyanchal is a lesser known gem adjoining the famous regions of Varanasi and Prayagraj. The sacred Vindhyanchal range with its waterfalls, rock shelters, cave art and sacred groves and complexes runs through the district. Mirzapur district has a rich living tradition of artisanship, with artisans engaged in crafts like Carpet Weaving, Brassware, Shellac Work, Wooden Furniture, and Chunar Pottery, which has facilitated Mirzapur in carving a niche for itself globally.

In keeping with the idyllic setting of the place, the days here close with the mellifluous notes of Kajari, prayers in the temples and Azaan in the mosques. Such has been the captivating charm of this region that when India's first Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru visited the Vindhyanchal-

Sonebhadra region he referred to it as *'the Switzerland of India'* for its sheer natural beauty and flora and fauna.

The earliest evidence of habitation in the area dates back to the Prehistoric era. A locally available, popular religious text, the ‘Vindhya Mahatamya’, describes the religious significance of the place thus:

महालक्ष्मी पूर्वभागे, महाकाली च दक्षिणे

महा सरस्वती प्रत्येक कोणे यंत्रस्थ संस्थिता

In the East resides Goddess Lakhmi, while in the South Mahakali

In the West Goddess Saraswati

Mirzapur was once the largest district in Uttar Pradesh before it was split in two—Mirzapur and Sonbhadra. As per the 2011 Census, the broad details of the district are as follows:

- Area – 4,521 Sq Km
- Population –2,496,970
- No. of Tehsils – 4
- No. of Blocks – 12
- Nagar Palika/Panchayats – 4
- No. of Gram Panchayats – 806
- No. of Police Stations – 16
- No. of Villages – 2079

Mirzapur city (District Headquarters) is roughly 650 km from both Delhi and Kolkata, around 87 km from Prayagraj (Allahabad) and 67 km from Varanasi. In 2011, it had a population of 2,496,970, of which male and female populations were 1,312,302 and 1,184,668 respectively (Census 2011). The city is surrounded by hills and is an important Hindu pilgrimage centre as the holy shrines of Vindhyachal (Vindhyavasini Devi), Ashtbhuja Devi and Kali khoh are located nearby. As is the Ashram of Saint Devrahwā Baba revered by the people of the region.

The location of Mirzapur is considered significant in Hindu mythology and finds a mention in the Vedas. It is the place where India’s holiest River Ganga meets the Vindhyan Range. Vindhyanchal, a Shakti Peeth, is a centre of pilgrimage in Mirzapur District, Uttar Pradesh.¹ Mirzapur City was a part of Banaras state in the year 1775 when the Wazir of Avadh rendered the sovereignty of the place to the East India Company but the ruler of Banaras retained the right to administer it till 1794. On October 27 the then Kashi Naresh Mahip Narain Singh transferred control over the city to the then Governor General.

¹ <https://mirzapur.nic.in/about-district/>

In 1861, the district of Mirzapur came into existence when it was divided from Allahabad. In terms of area, it was the largest district of the United Provinces. Further, in April 1989, the district was again divided and the southern part was named Sonebhadra.² Till June 14, 1997, Mirzapur was part of the Varanasi Division. On that date the Government of Uttar Pradesh created a new Division – Vindhyanchal, which included Sant Ravidas Nagar, Sonebhadra and Mirzapur having its headquarters at Mirzapur city.

Mirzapur's importance as a centre of trade and handicrafts, however, goes back centuries. About three centuries back, Mirzapur began developing as a center of trade and commerce of Northern India. As the means of transportation through rail and road were not available then, the agriculture and forest yields of the entire Vindhyan region and Kaimoor plateau lying in the southern part of the then Mirzapur and Central Province were transported down to the market of Mirzapur for further transportation to the port city of Calcutta through river cargo. The advent of woolen carpet weaving skill and non-ferrous metal utensil manufacturing added to the glory of the city as a trade centre. During the period 1760-1770, Joseph Tieffenthaler³ identifies Mirzapur as a Market, a place of trade situated on the banks of the river Ganga. Even after construction of rail and road links the city continued to be identified as a major trade centre of India.

Figure 4 Pt. Nehru addressing a crowd at Sonebhadra

Before its establishment, the area was a dense forest and used by various princely states like Varanasi (Benaras), Sakteshgarh, Vijaygarh, Nainagarh (Chunar), Naugarh, Kantit and Rewa for hunting. British East India Company established the modern city of Mirzapur to fulfill the needs of a trading center between Central and Western India. By this time, Rewa was a well-established state of Central India and was directly connected to Mirzapur by the Great Deccan Road. Over time, Mirzapur became a famous trading center of Central India and started trading in cotton and silk on a large scale. The East India Company named this place Mirzapur.

The earlier city of Mirzapur was probably founded in the seventeenth century and by 1800, it had become the largest trading centre in Northern India. Before the advent of the British, a central figure in the area's fascinating history was an affluent cotton trader Mahant Purushottam Das Giri. He was one of the richest and most powerful traders who operated out of Mirzapur during the last decades of the eighteenth century. He wielded so much power and political influence in the city that he literally chose the British bureaucrats that would serve as District Magistrates and

² Meerjapur, 2005-06

³ A Jesuit missionary and one of the earliest European geographers to write about India

hold other important offices in the city. It is widely believed that the Ojhla Bridge was constructed on Purushottam Giri's initiative using a day's earnings. When the railway to Allahabad (northwest) was opened in 1864, Mirzapur began to decline, but it retained an important place in local trade. The city, located at a road junction and a major rail line, still remains a centre of industry, including cotton milling, sandstone dressing, brass-ware production, and carpet manufacture.



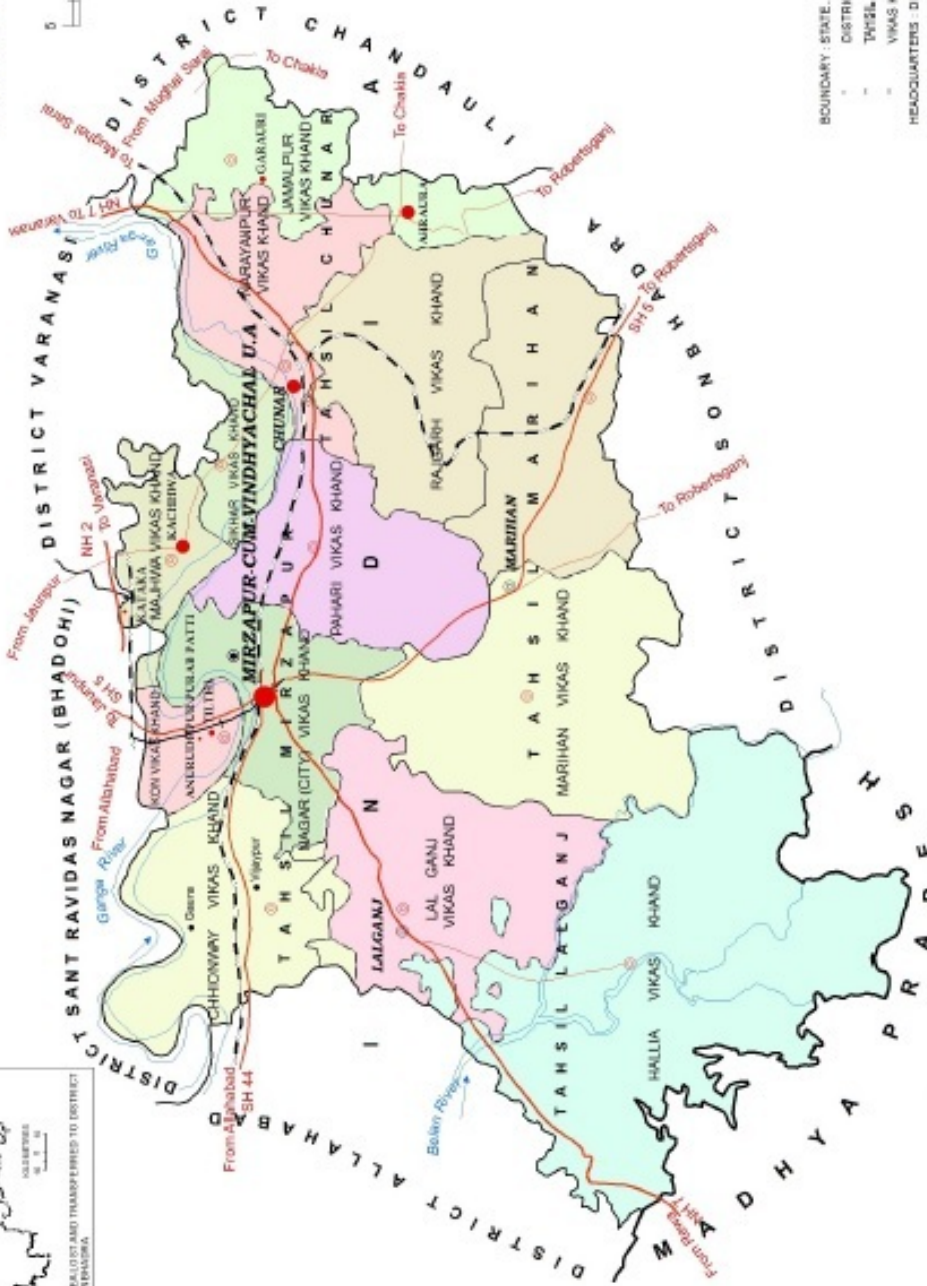
According to a number of records, the city of Mirzapur was established by the British East India Company in 1735, though civilization in the area dates back to 5000 BCE. The city was established by the officers of the British East India Company led by Lord Wellesley. As per some evidence, the British construction was initiated at Burrier (Bariya) Ghat. Lord Wellesley reconstructed the Burrier Ghat as a main entrance to Mirzapur from the Ganga. Some of the places in Mirzapur still carry the name of Lord Wellesley such as Wellesleyganj (the first market in Mirzapur) and Mukeri Bazar. The Municipal Corporation building is a precious example of British era construction.

Figure 5 Lord Wellesley after whom the first market of Mirzapur was named as Wellesleyganj



Figure 6 A happy co-existence: an Ayurvedic medicine store at Wellesely Ganj, Mirzapur

UTTAR PRADESH DISTRICT MIRZAPUR



- BOUNDARY - STATE
- DISTRICT
- TALUK
- VILLAGE
- HEADQUARTERS - DISTRICT TAHSIL VIKAS KHAND
- VILLAGES HAVING 10,000 & ABOVE POPULATION WITH NAME
- URBAN AREA WITH POPULATION SIZE - I, II, V & VI
- NATIONAL HIGHWAY
- STATE HIGHWAY
- IMPORTANT METALLED ROAD
- RAILWAY LINE - BROAD GAUGE
- RAILWAY LINE - METRE GAUGE
- RIVER AND STREAM

Area (Sq. Km.)	4,402.00
Population	24,99,870
Number of Tahsils	04
Number of Villages	12
Number of Towns	10
Number of Villages	1,281

Note - District Tahsil headquarters is also the Tahsil Vikas Khand headquarters.

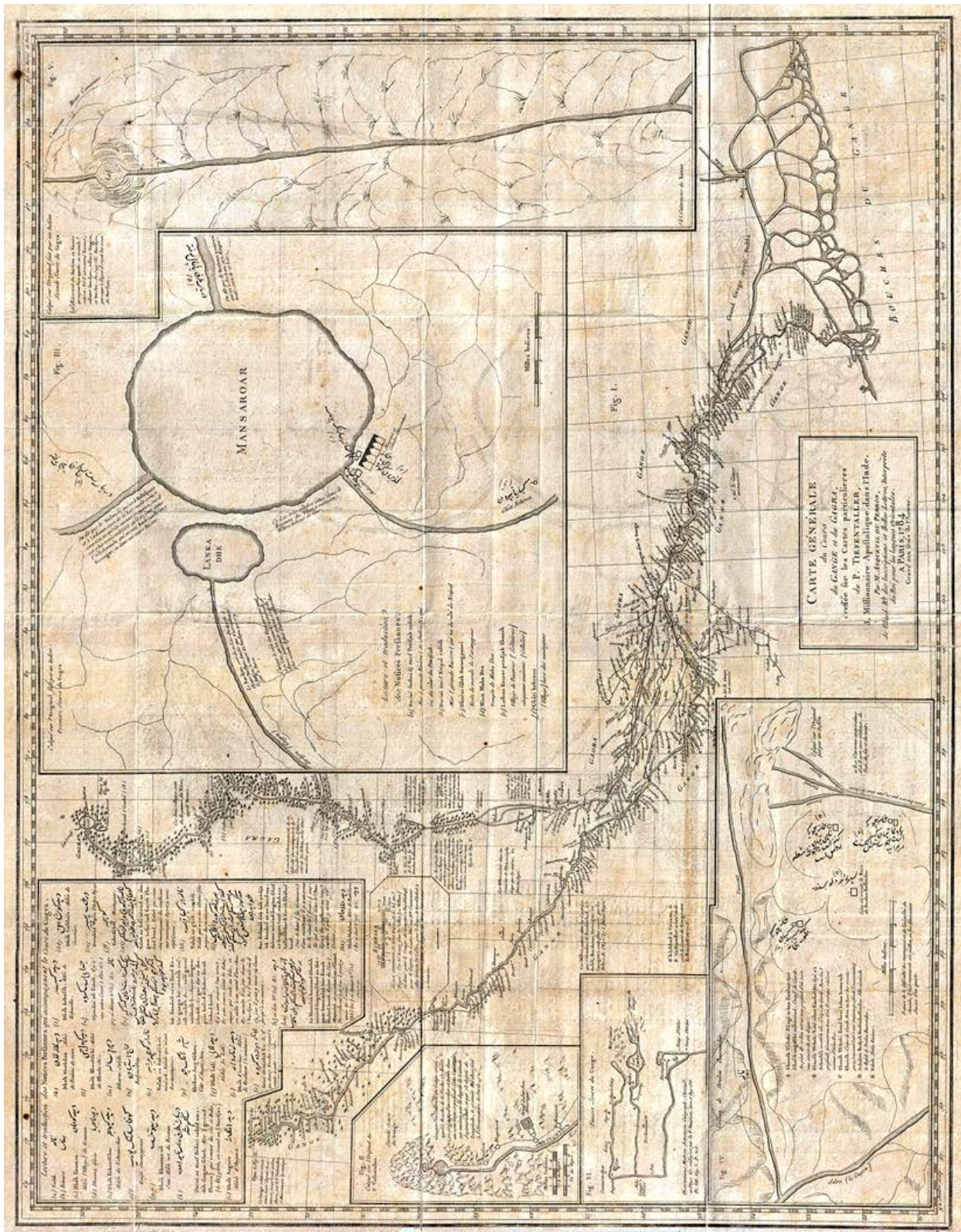


Figure 7 Map of Ganga and Ghaggar, Tiefenthaler, Year 1784 Source: Wikimedia Commons

82° 30

LONGITUDE

DISCOVERED BY
S.P.A.C.E.
UNDER
KHOJ



आप भारत की प्रधान मन्त्री देवा 82.5 पूर्वी देशान्तर पर स्थित हैं। जो भारत के समय को मनाया जाता है। भारतीय मानक समय समस्त भारत में उपयोग में लाया जाने वाला समय है। जो यू.टी.सी. में 5:30 घंटे आगे पर कार्य करता है। इस विशेष देशान्तर की सटीक भौगोलिक स्थिति के स्मरणार्थ स्तं. पी. ए. सी. ई. (साईज माइल्स सहजेशन एलेक्ट्रिकल ऑफ कम्युनिकेटर्स एंड एज्युकेटर्स) द्वारा स्थापित किया गया है।
अध्यक्ष सचिव
सी. बी. देवमाल सचिव कान्हा
27 जनवरी, 2007

NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC
HERITAGE SITE

A Scientific Heritage Site
Discovered By S.P.A.C.E. under
SCIENCE POPULARISATION ASSOCIATION
COMMUNICATORS AND EDUCATORS
www.Space-India.org

Indian Standard Time is calculated on the basis of 82.5 °E longitude which is just west of the town of Mirzapur, near Allahabad in the state of Uttar Pradesh. The longitude difference between Mirzapur and the United kingdom’s Royal Observatory at Greenwich translates to an exact time difference of 5 hours and 30 minutes. Local time is calculated from a clock tower at the Allahabad Observatory (25.15° N 82.5° E) though the official time-keeping devices are entrusted to the National Physical Laboratory, located in New Delhi

After independence in 1947, the Indian government established IST as the official time for the whole country, although Kolkata and Mumbai retained their own local time for a few more years. The Central observatory was moved from Chennai to a location near Mirzapur so that it would be as close to UTC +5:30 as possible.

Source:
<http://www.nplindia.in/clockcode/html/index.php>

Journey from the Ancient to Modern



Figure 8 Pen and ink colour painting of The Fort, Chunar by Salt, Henry (1780-1827), Source: British Library

The history of Mirzapur from ancient times has been eventful and interesting. In early days, this area was known as the land of 'Karushas'. The first historical record of the Karushas is a minor rock edict of Emperor Ashoka in a rock shelter on what is now known as Chandan Sahid's hill. Emperor Ashoka had established a stone quarry workshop at Chunar. The district contains more remnants of a tribal population than any other in Uttar Pradesh. It is said that 'Bhars' had large settlements along with Cheros, Seoris, Kols and Kherwars.

According to Dr. K. M. Singh, the present day Mirzapur was known as Kantitpuri during ancient times. He indicates the presence of three Naga houses that ruled from three locations namely - Kantit (Kantipura), Vidhisha (Padmavati)



Figure 9 Gandhi ji visited Mirzapur and Chunar during September 1921 (Photo by Hulton Archive Getty Images)

and Mathura. According to him, these three houses of Bharasiva dynasty ousted the Kushana rulers and established Hindu cultural traditions.

During the Buddhist era in India around 600 BCE most of Northern India was subdivided into 16 Republics, described as *Solahsa Mahajanapadas*. These Republics were also known as Ganarajyas. During this period, Mirzapur fell under the Mahajanapada of Vatsa, with its capital at Kaushambi. Professor Dr. K.P. Jayaswal attributes this Kantipuri to present day Kantit in Mirzapur. He is of the opinion that the region of Kanti (Kantitpuri during Pre-Kushana period) was ruled by the Nagas who asserted their political significance by performing the Dashasvamedha Yagna. He bases his opinion on the numismatic evidence that was published in



Figure 10 Dr. KM Singh, Ancient History Dept. KBS College, Mirzapur

– “Indian Museum Catalogue” (Vol. 1 on pg 205-06. According to Jayaswal the coins unearthed have the names of the rulers of the Naga clan of the Bharasiva Dynasty that ruled the regions Padmavati (Gwalior), Mirzapur

and Mathura. The opinion of Jayaswal

is contradicted by A.S. Altekar who says that there is no clear evidence to suggest that the Nagas were actually ruling in the Kantit area of Mirzapur and to say that these rulers belonged to the Bharasiva dynasty of Kantitpuri.

Mirzapur is proud of its history and contribution to the freedom struggle. The Morcha Ghar in Mirzapur played a crucial role in the Revolt of 1857. It also became symbolic of British repression. Here next to Morcha Ghar is a huge tree where hundreds of freedom fighters were said to have been executed by the British. In 1921, the Civil Disobedience Movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi found widespread resonance in Mirzapur. The movement found popular support among all sections of the society; from students to veterans alike. Barrister Yusuf Imam, Dr. Upendra Banerji, Ajit Nath Bhattacharya, Hanuman Prasad Pandey, Chandrika Prasad Vidhyarthi, Maulvi Hameed and several other local prominent figures were arrested by the then government. Later, in 1930 during the Salt March and Satyagraha, the resistance was led by J. N. Wilson in Mirzapur.

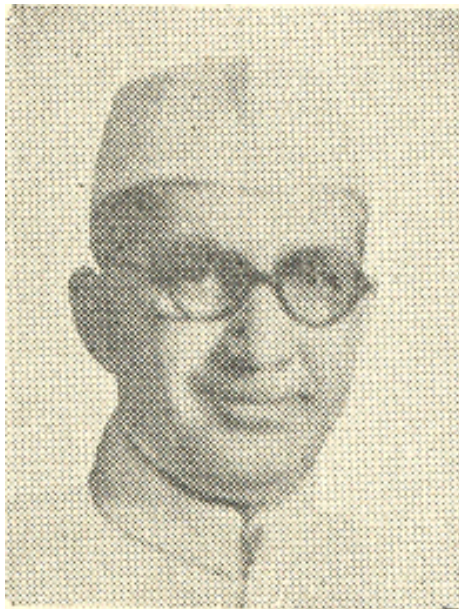


Figure 11 John N. Wilson, Freedom Fighter

When Gandhi ji broke the Salt Law imposed by the colonial regime, his defiance of the British resonated across the Mirzapur and Bhadhoi areas. In the premises of Ghanta Ghar, a large gathering of around ten thousand people led by freedom fighters John N. Wilson, Mahadev Prasad Seth 'Matwala', Sankata Prasad and Prof. Vishram Singh broke the Salt law.⁴



Figure 12 A rare photograph of freedom fighter Chandrashekar Azaad at Lala Lajpat Rai Library, Naar Ghat, Mirzapur

⁴ Vindhya Vaibhav, Publication, year: 2000

Revolt of 1857 and Mirzapur

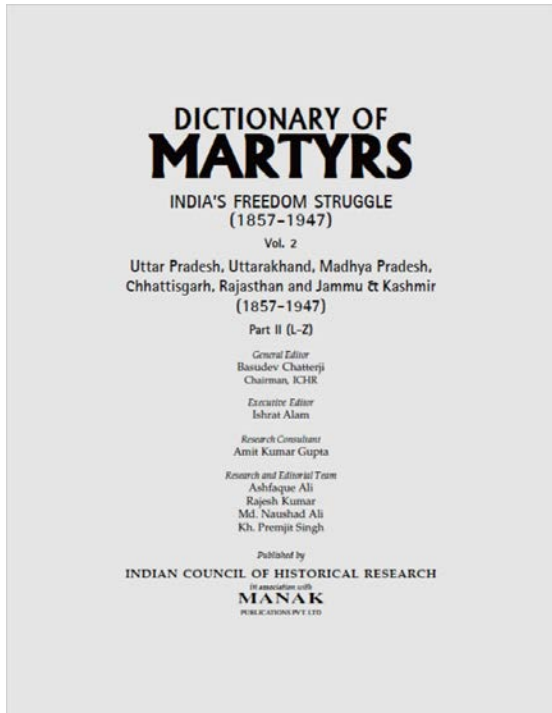


Figure 13 Morcha Ghar – a witness to the Revolt of 1857

The history of the Revolt of 1857 in Mirzapur is short but engaging. The call for freedom from foreign rule was already reverberating across various parts of India. Mirzapur couldn't keep itself isolated from the intense fire which engulfed Northern India. During 1857, George Tucker was the Administrator and Treasurer. The news of rebellion by the sepoys in Delhi and Meerut spread to Varanasi and Jaunpur in succession. On 16th May 1857, George Tucker came to know about the revolt and deployed soldiers of 37th Sikh Regiment from Ferozepur to guard the government treasure containing an amount of two lakh rupees; but the troops could not hold against an uncontrolled and charged mob. An amount of sixty thousand rupees was transferred to nearby areas of Allahabad and the rest of it via Ganga on steamers amid tight security⁵. Under the leadership of Adwant Singh the Rajput community on the other side of Ganga rebelled and disrupted the traffic on G.T. Road. Adwant Singh was captured by the British government and publically executed. On 4th July 1857, General Moorie ordered arrest of scores of protesters and held them in an indigo factory.

⁵ Vindhyanchal Mandal Samgra, Dr. Arjun Das Kesari

On 11th August 1857, a 5000-strong group of Indian rebel soldiers arrived in Mirzapur. To suppress the rebels, a united brigade of British troops marched to Mirzapur. Major fighting occurred at Company Ghat (or Burrier Ghat) and Morcha Ghar. The rebel soldiers couldn't hold their positions for very long and were defeated. They were captured and executed at a spot marked by a huge tree near Morcha Ghar. Although the battle resulted in victory for the East India Company troops, the exemplary courage and patriotism shown by the rebels will be etched forever in the annals of Indian history.⁶



Mohun Singh: Resident of Gwalee, Mirzapoor [Mirzapur], the North-Western Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh); he joined hands with the rebels of his area during the Uprising of 1857, and fought the British forces on several occasions; caught by the British during an engagement, he was sentenced to death and hanged in 1861. [Mutiny Records, NWP, Fatehpur Mutiny Basta (Ur. /Per. Srs.), UPRAA]

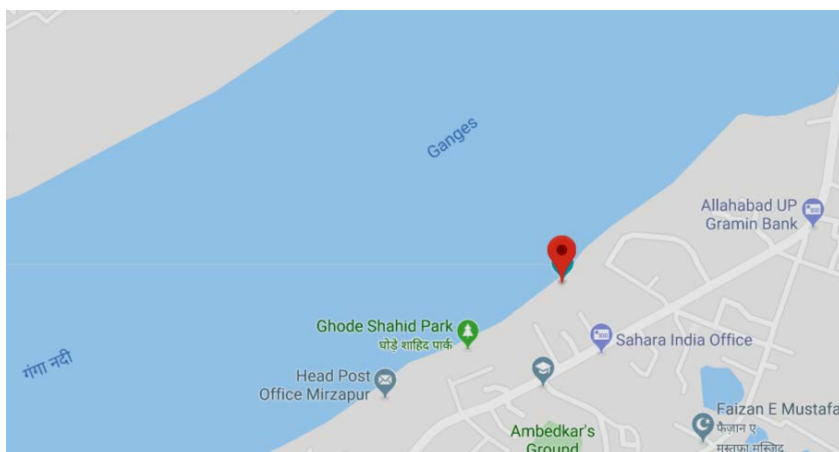


Figure 14 Screenshot of Morcha Ghar which is closed to river Ganga

⁶ Annals of the Indian Rebellion, Compiled by N.A. Chick

Trade through Ganga

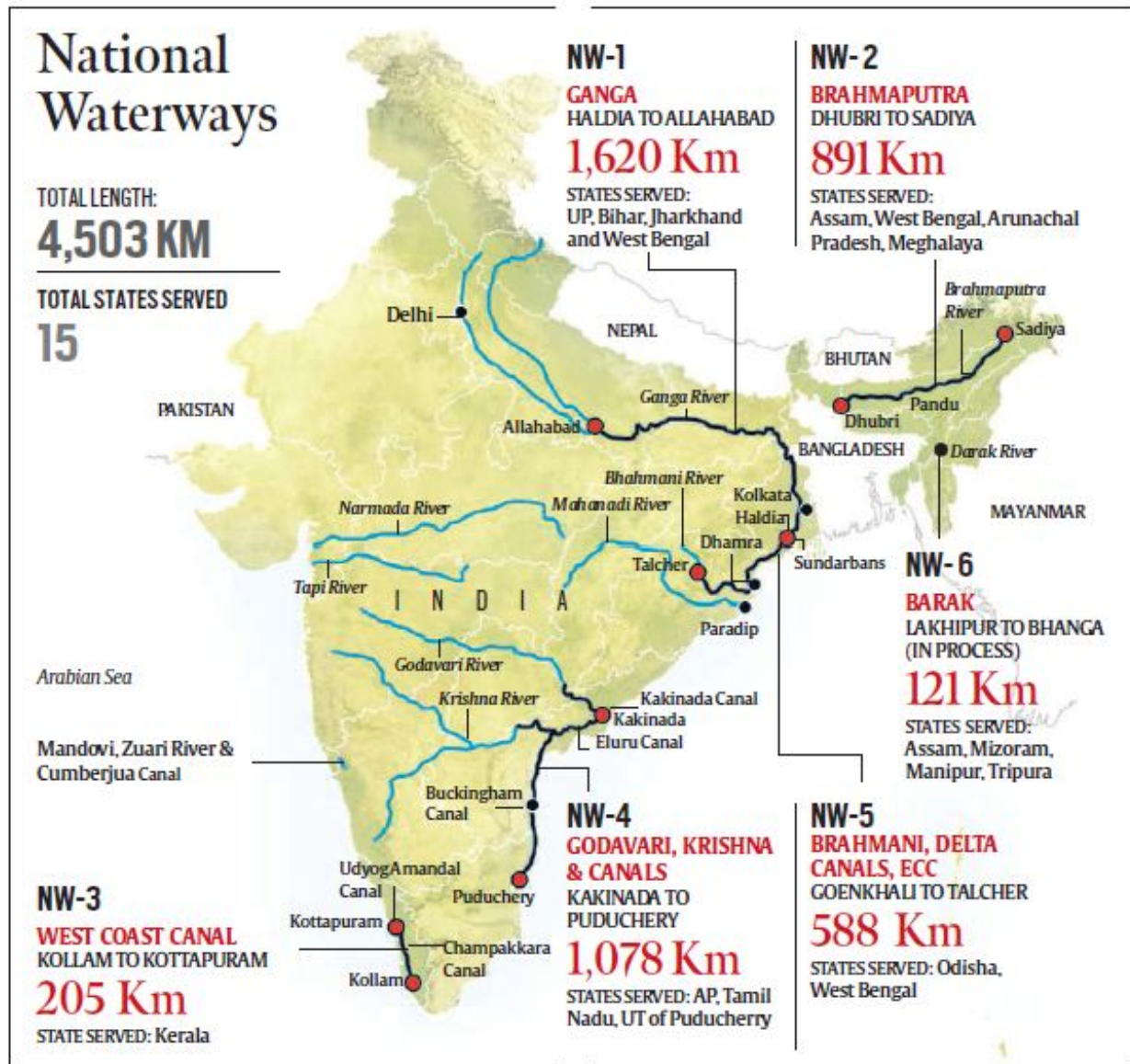


Figure 15 Map showing National Waterways of India, Source: <https://sandrp.in/>

The Ganges is practicable for boats of one thousand Maunds (11,000Kgs) burthen or even more during the rains, but the railway has caused the abandonment of most of the boat traffic, which is now almost entirely confined to the conveyance of stone and wood. There are a large number of wharves (a structure built on the shore of or projecting into a harbor, stream etc. so that vessels may be moored alongside to load or unload or lie at rest) on the river.

These exist at Bindhyachal, Kantit, and Ojhla...

Mirzapur District Gazetteer, 1911, pg 82



Figure 16 Boatmen repairing their boat near Naar Ghat

During the Mughal period, two major river systems namely the Ganga River System and the Indus River System were mainly used for commercial purposes. The Ganga, along with the Jamuna or Yamuna and their tributary rivers formed the largest navigation system in Mughal India between the capital Agra and Bengal. According to Sujana Rai, source of Yamuna was not known but it was said to be in China and it flowed through the Himalayan country of Bashahar. Historian Irfan Habib inferred from it that Sujana Rai took Pabar-Tons to represent the Yamuna and not the stream which originates at Yamunotri as no important change has been found in its course since the sixteenth-seventeenth century. From Agra it ran through Etawah, Chaparghata, etc. and joined the Ganga at Allahabad. The source of Ganga was also not known. Both, Abul Fazl in the sixteenth century and Sujana Rai in the late seventeenth century, were of the same opinion about the source of the Ganga.

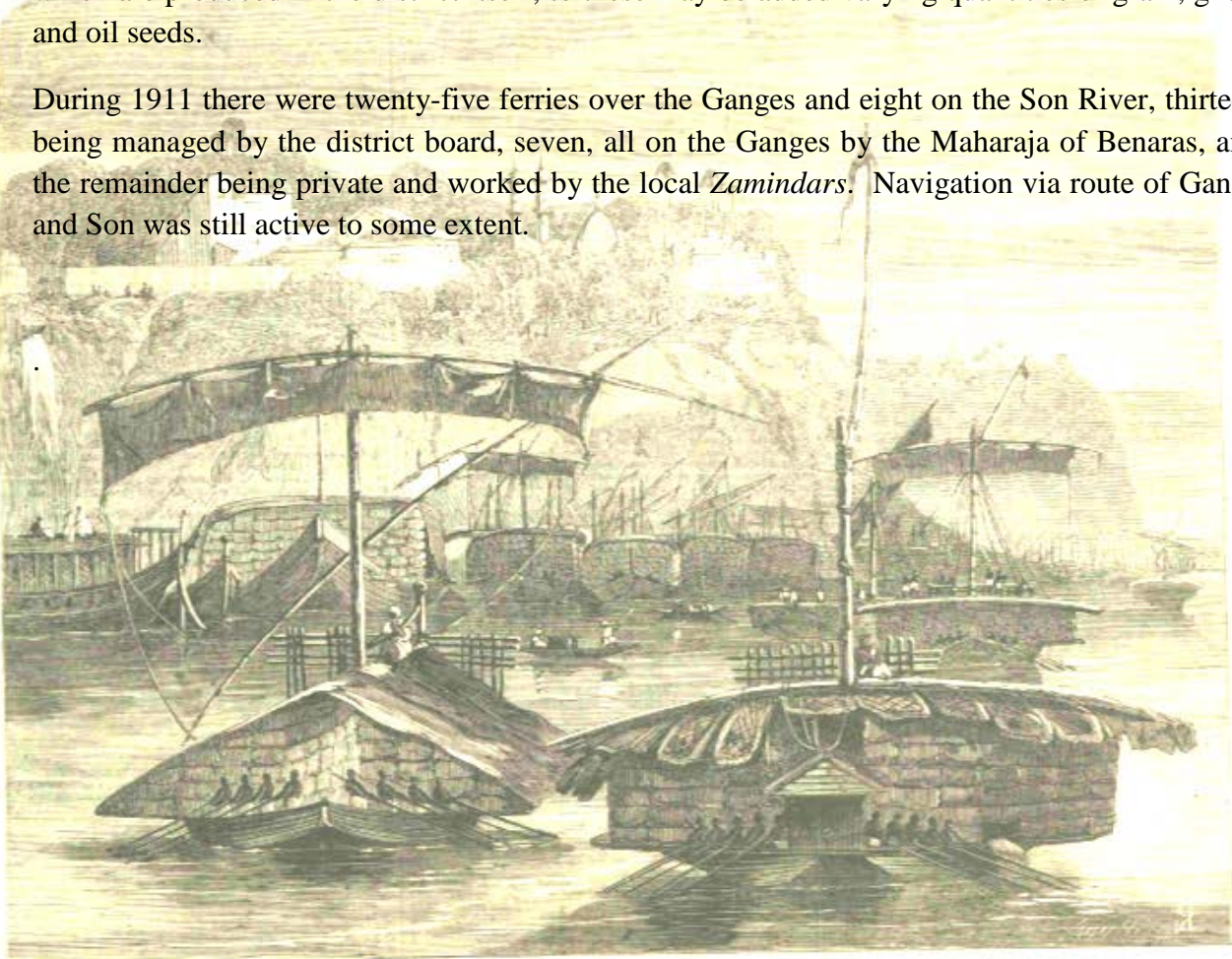
Mirzapur's position as an active trading point was further strengthened during the colonial regime and to protect the goods of merchant class the British government established the Ganga Insurance Company in the year 1791.⁷ The importance of Mirzapur as an entrepot of inland trade is now a thing of the past. The zenith of its prosperity was reached by about 1840, when, from its

⁷ Vindhya Vaibhav, Publication, Year: 2000; pg -35

position at the head of the steam navigation of the Ganges, the city attracted a very large share of the cotton trade from the south of Vindhya. In 1847 the annual value of the transit trade in this article alone was stated at nearly a million and a quarter sterling, and the traders of Mirzapur had their agents scattered all over Bundelkhand, then the main cotton-producing portion of the province. The boats that in those days plied over the *Jumna* (Yamuna) returned to Rajpur, Kalpi, Agra and other marts in Upper India, freighted with sugar, rice and cloth in exchange for the cotton and gram which they had bought down.

The development of the railway system has entirely revolutionized the carrying trade of the country. The steam traffic on the river has entirely ceased, and that by native boats is, with the single exception of stone, confined almost exclusively to local, as distinguished from through, traffic. The cheapness of freight, as compared with the railway is more than counterbalanced by the long duration of the voyage, the uncertainty of the date of its completion, and the risk which the difficulties of navigation in the upper portion of the river involve. The chief exports from Mirzapur during 1900-20s were stone, iron vessels, shellac, brass-utensils and carpets, all articles which are produced in the district itself; to these may be added varying quantities of grain, ghee, and oil seeds.

During 1911 there were twenty-five ferries over the Ganges and eight on the Son River, thirteen being managed by the district board, seven, all on the Ganges by the Maharaja of Benaras, and the remainder being private and worked by the local *Zamindars*. Navigation via route of Ganga and Son was still active to some extent.



CHIEF FROM INDIA. A FERRY BOAT DEPARTING FOR BANGALORE—PASSING BY THE MIRZAPUR GATE IN THE DISTRICT OF BUNDELKHAND.

SCHEDULE
OF TOLLS TO BE
DEMANDIED
ON EACH PUBLIC
FERRY IN THE
NORTHWESTERN
PROVINCES

WIKIPE
ONRO...
B...
P...
1...
F...
C...
D...
C...
B...
C...
S...
C...
S...
C...

**Schedule of Tolls to be
Demanded
On each public
Ferry in the
North Western Provinces**

The previous page image of the stone pillar shows this schedule engraved on it



Figure 17 Cotton Fleet descending the Ganges – Casting off from Mirzapore early in the Morning. Source: The London Illustrated, 1862, British Library

The development of the middle class in Northern India followed a different pattern from that in the port towns of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras which were the scenes of the earliest commercial activity of the Europeans in this country. For a long time after the British conquest, the areas now comprising, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi could not participate in or share the developing foreign trade of the country. But a rich commercial class existed in these areas before the British came and cities like Mirzapur, Agra, Lucknow and Delhi were not only flourishing commercial centres but were also seats of political power and influence. A rich and influential middle-class comprising traders and merchants (who engaged in inland trade), bankers, administrators, courtiers and educationists flourished in these cities.

The monopolisation of inland trade by the servants of the East India Company after the Battle of Plassey and later the annexation of Agra by the British in 1803, dealt a heavy blow to the fortunes of the commercial classes in Northern India. Bombay and Calcutta became the new

centres of trade and commerce and the inland commercial centres along the banks of the Ganga and the Jamuna lost their former importance⁸.



Figure 18 Goods being unloaded from the boats at Naar Ghat, Year 1986 Source: INTACH Report, 1986

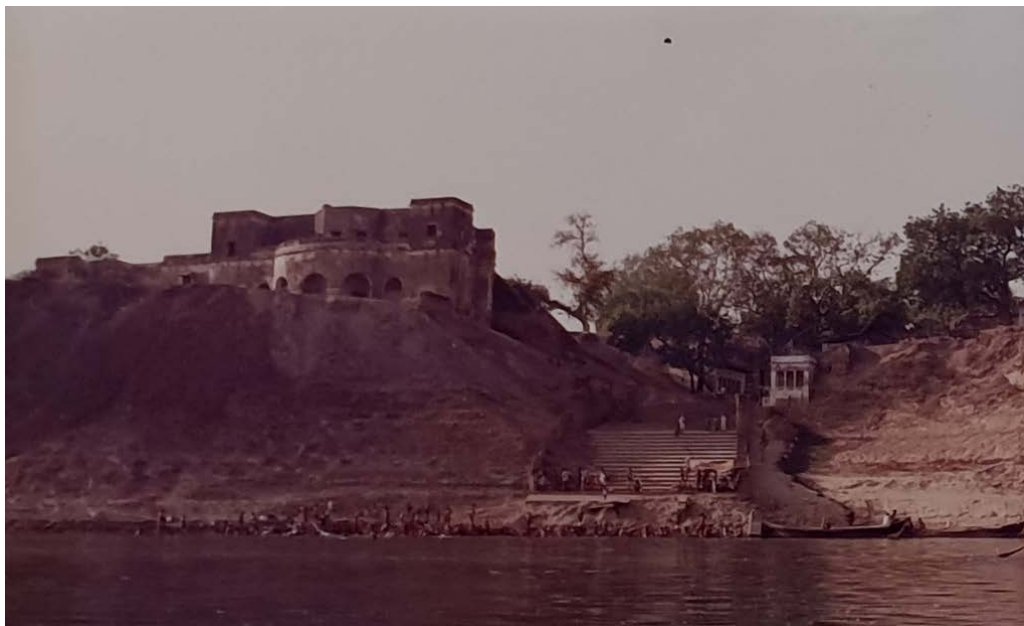


Figure 19 Sundar Ghat of Mirzapur is another Ghat beside Naar Ghat which is approachable via Ganga

⁸ History of freedom movement in india, Vol.2, by Tara Chand

FERRIES, 1908.

River	Ferry	Pargana	Tahsil	Management.	Income
					Rs.
Ganges.	Mahadeva ..	Bhadohi .	Korh ...	Leased by the Maharaja of Benares.	15
	Paisani ...	Do ...	Do .	Do.	55
	Bhurra ...	Do ...	Do ..	Private	...
	Ohhachhua ..	Do. ...	Do. ...	Leased by the Maharaja of Benares	2
	Do. ..	Do. .	Do ...	Private	...
	Dig ..	Do.	Do .	Leased by the Maharaja of Benares.	No income.
	Narajpur and Bari pur.	Do. .	Do ...	Private	...
	Berwan, Puharpur.	Do. ..	Do	Do.	...
	Nagardah ...	Do. .	Do ...	Do	...
	Birahimpur ..	Do. ...	Do. ..	Leased by the Maharaja of Benares.	415
	Gulauri ...	Do ...	Do. ...	Do. ...	205
	Rampur Amlaur,	Do. ...	Do. ...	Do.
	Dewan Kaulapur	Do. ...	Do ...	Private	...
	Hindhachal ...	T Chhayanve,	Mirza pur	District Board,	6,000
	Narghat ...	T. Chaurasi,	Do. ...	Do	9,500
	Sundarghat ...	Do ...	Do. ...	Do	250
	Company ghat	Do ...	Do. ...	Do.	2,390
	Newaria ..	Do. ...	Do. ...	Do	2,650
	Bhatauli ..	Do. ...	Do. ...	Do.	580
	Kathuehi ..	Do. ...	Do. ...	Do.	1,530
	Sindhaura ...	Haveli ...	Chunar ...	Do. ...	1,225
	Turubalganj ...	Do ...	Do. .	Do	1,580
	Chunar City	Do ...	Do ...	Do.	...
Balwa ghat	Do. ...	Do .	Do.	150	
Juganadi ..	Do ..	Do ...	Private	...	
Sultanpur .	Bhush ...	Do. ...	District Board,	1,600	
Chhota Mirzapur.					
Son.	Silpi and Kota Newari.	Agori ...	Robertsganj..	Private	..
	Agori ...	Do. ...	Do. .	Do	...
	Patwadh Chohan.	Do. ...	Do. ...	District Board,	860
	Chopan ...	Do. ...	Do. ..	Private	...
	Kanch ...	Do ...	Do. ...	Do.	...
	Kota Kajrahat,	Do. ...	Do. ...	District Board,	...
	Hardi ...	Do. ...	Do. ...	Private	...
Argarh .	Bijaigarh ...	Do. ...	Do	...	
Bihand.	Obra ...	Agori ..	Do. .	Do.	...
	Sindhuria ...	Do. ...	Do. ...	Do.	...

Figure 20 List of ferries operational on Ganga during 1909, Source: Mirzapur—A Gazetteer, 1911

Ojhala Ka Pul



Figure 21 Ojhala Ka Pul

Mahant Purushottam Das was an affluent cotton trader based in Mirzapur. He was one of the richest and most powerful traders who operated out of Mirzapur during the last decades of the eighteenth century. Purushottam Giri wielded so much power and political influence in the city that he was said to literally choose the British bureaucrats that would serve as District Magistrates and hold other important offices in the city. It is widely believed that the Ojhla Bridge was made by Purushottam Giri with a day's earnings. The bridge represents a microcosm of British architecture and heritage. It is supported by four towers on both sides which evenly distributes the weight of the structure. The dungeons and other rooms that are a part of the tower were not for any practical purposes. The bridge is an architectural marvel. Its arches are also structurally important as they support the weight of the upper part of the bridge.



Figure 22 Inscription mentioning Ojhala Ka Pul

Pakki Sarai



Figure 24 Pakki Sarai

There is a beautiful old structure of a Sarai or rest house, with intricate stone-work, situated in the heart of the city. Built of sandstone, it is an excellent example of Gothic architecture. It was built in year 1851 on the orders of a rich local merchant, Pandit Sheetala Prasad Upadhyaya, the grandfather of renowned Hindi writer, Pandit Badri Narayan Chaudhary 'Premghan'.



Figure 23 Baoli at Pakki Sarai with Gothic architectural style

Mirzapur, Meerjapur and Girijapur



Figure 25 The famous Ghanta Ghar of Mirzapur now houses the Municipal Corporation

Before 1st April 1989, Mirzapur or Meerjapur was the largest district of India but on this day it was divided into two and the new district of Sonbhadra came into existence. On the nomenclature of the city then many residents of Meerjapur say:

‘Meer’ means Sea

‘Ja’ means to emerge

‘Meer ja’ means ‘one who emerges from the sea’ whom we call ‘Lakshmi’, the Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity

And ‘Pur’ means ‘Nagar’ or City

Thus it is the City of Goddess Lakshmi.⁹



Figure 26 Reference of Girijapur at Budhenath Mandir (Left), Mirzapur as written at Railway station

According to a report published by the Kashi Nagari Pracharni Sabha, the ancient name of Mirzapur was 'Girijapur' which was changed to 'Meerjapur'. It is believed that Mirzapur was established by the merchant class who migrated from nearby states and settled here; notable among them were famous scholars Chaudhari Badri Narayan Updadhya 'Premghan' and Sitaram Dwivedi 'Samanvayi' and it was the latter who validated the name 'Meerjapur' with the above mentioned break-up and references.¹⁰

The East India Company named this place "Mirzapore". The word Mirzapur is derived from 'Mirza' which in turn is derived from the Persian term 'Amīrzāde which literally means "child of the 'Amīr" or "child of the ruler". In Persia 'Amīrzād in turn consists of the Arabic title 'Amīr meaning "commander", and the Persian suffix -zād, meaning "birth" or "lineage". Due to vowel harmony in Turkic languages, the alternative pronunciation Morza (plural morzalar; derived from the Persian word) is also used. The word entered English in 1595, from the French émir. The meaning of Mirzapore is the "place of King". The name changed to Mirzapur after India's independence.

गिरिजापुर बासी जनहीं करात सदैव सनाथ

वृद्धेश्वर उपनाम पुनि श्री शिव बूढेनाथ ॥

Inscription engraved at Budhenath referring 'Girijapur'

⁹ Meerjapur, Deepak Kapoor, Page 10

¹⁰ Vindhaynchal Mandal Samgra, Dr. Arjun Das Kesari, Page 10

माधुर्य लहरी

(निम्बार्कमत का काव्य-ग्रन्थ)



रचयिता—
श्रीकृष्णदास जी

Krishnadas belonged to Nimbark Sampraday Vaishnav¹¹ who wrote *Madhurya Lahari* in the year 1753 which is poetry revering Radha-Krishna. In his creation Krishnadas mentions his native region from and writes of *Girijapatnam* which is near the Vindhyachal range. But as it is unclear if *Girijapattan* or *Girijapur* was a small village or a big district like the present one it is difficult to be sure if he is referring to the same Mirzapur.

विंध्य निकट तट सुरधनी गिरिजा पत्तन ग्राम

हरिभक्तं के आश्रे कृष्णदास विश्राम ॥

Krishnadas, Madhurya Lahari,

There are several misconceptions about Mirzapur...at temple of Budhenath near Naar ghat earlier named as Narayana ghat, there is an inscription found which states this city as 'Girjapur' the city of lakshmi, much later Sitaram Dwivedi 'Samanyvi' comment made it confusing because he called it as 'Meerzapur' but the report given by civic body assembly certifies its name as 'Girijapur'.

*Dr. Arjun Das Kesari
Anthropologist and Writer*

¹¹ The Nimbarka Sampradaya, also known as the Hamsa Sampradāya, Kumāra Sampradāya, Catuḥ Sana Sampradāya and Sanakādi Sampradāya, is one of the four Vaiṣṇava Sampradāyas. It was founded by Nimbarka, and teaches the Vaishnava theology of Dvaitadvaita or "dualistic non-dualism".

Interestingly, during documentation, Dr. Yoganand Giri (Trustee, Budhenath Mandir) provides an interesting observation by referring to Mirzapur as Kanchan Nagar or Kantitpuri in the mythological story of Satyanarayan Katha mentioned in Skanda Purana and the mention of Kanchan Nagar which was also



Figure 29 Dr. Yoganand Giri, Trustee, Budhenath Temple

known as Kantitpuri during that time. According to him, the name of this region was Kanchan Nagar.¹² This claim is supported by Dr. K. M Singh (Professor of Ancient History, KBS College, Mirzapur) who further refers to Dr. K.P. Jayaswal and his study on the numismatic evidence found from this region and attributed to the Naga rulers, who had a capital at *Kantipuri* for a short period of time. Dr. K.P. Jayaswal attributes this Kantipuri to present day Kantit in Mirzapur with which some other scholars disagree. However, Mirzapur is the name which is used currently.



Figure 28 Satyanarayan Katha



Figure 27 Naga Dynasty Coins

¹² Rekha or Avantya Khand, Skandapurana

Chunar Fort: History, Mysteries and Chronology



Figure 30 Chunar Fort entrance

The fort is about 35 km from Mirzapur on the road to Ram Nagar. It finds detailed mention in the fictional work of Devkinandan Khatri's famous novel—*Chandrakanta*. The fort is believed to have been built by King Vikramaditya for his brother Bhartrihari. A Samadhi of Bhartrihari is located in the premises of the fort. During Mauryan and Ashokan reign this fort was a hub of several activities. It was at this fort that the slabs used for Dhamma of Ashoka were built.

The state of Benares lost its independence in 1194 AD after the ruler of Kanauj was defeated by the Islamic armies. It was then ruled by the Delhi Sultanate, Sharqi kings of Jaunpur and eventually by the Mughals. Later, in the 18th century, the state's reigns fell in the hands of the Nawab of Awadh before passing on to the East India Company.



Figure 31 Warren Hastings' Bungalow at Chunar Fort

A popular saying in Varanasi, dating back to 1781 AD when the then Governor General Warren Hastings fled Varanasi with 450 troops and sought shelter in the Chunar Fort is as follows:

घोड़े पर हौदा, हाथी पर जीन

चुपके से भागा वारेन हेस्टिंग.

A popular local saying in Uttar Pradesh

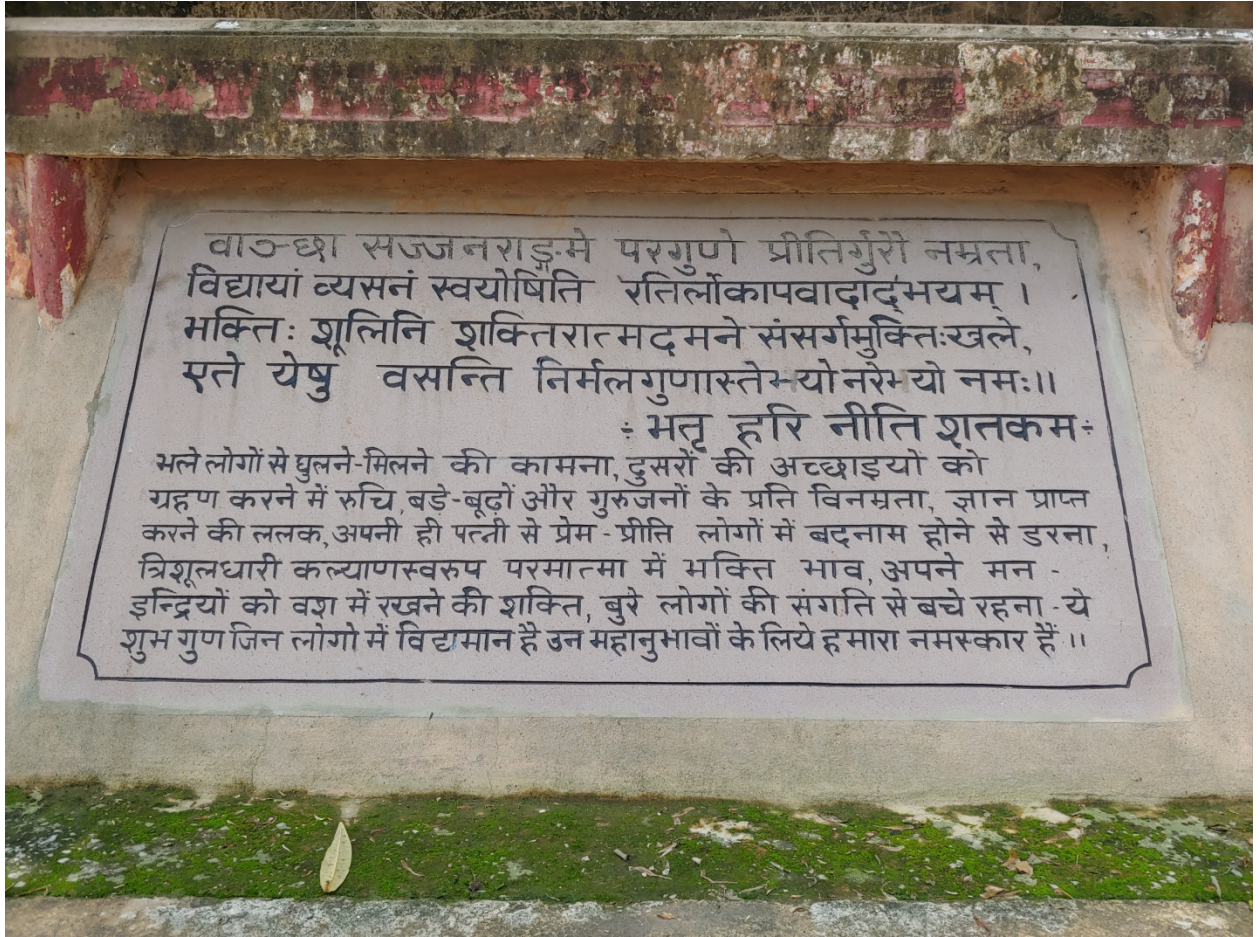


Figure 32 Quote from Bhartrihari's Neetishatakam at the entrance of Chunar Fort

The recorded history of Mirzapur starts with Chunar Fort which had become a strategic point by the sixteenth century. This Mughal stronghold was seized by Shershah Suri around 1530AD after defeating Humayun. Following, this Chunar had many changes of rulers which included Mughals again, the Nawab of Oudh, Minor Oudh Chieftains, the Raja of Benaras and finally the British by 1781 AD. The development of Mirzapur around this time, the changing concepts of defence, increasing trading activity must have arrested the further development of Chunar province.



Figure 33 Rani ka Jharokha, Chunar Fort



Figure 34 View of Ganga from Chunar Fort



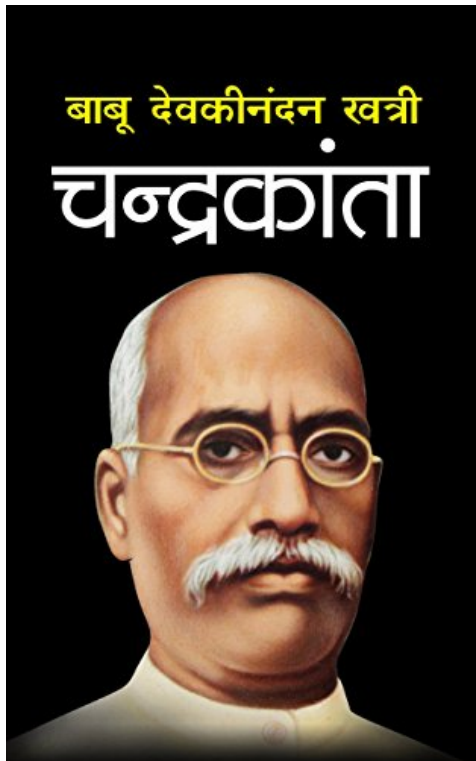
Figure 35 Sun Dial installed by Warren Hastings at Chunar Fort

The Chunar Fort also houses an accurate Sun Dial. The watch is positioned such a way that it tells the exact time over the stoney dials of the famous watch. After Hastings left the place in 1791, his bungalow was used for the Rest and Recreation of European forces. A huge iron water tank, which was used as a Geyser, is a living testimony to this.

Water used to be drawn into the iron tank from the river and a fire below it warms it for bathing purposes in the winters.¹³



¹³ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/lucknow/Archaeology-Dept-gets-back-Warren-Hastings-bungalow/articleshow/877902.cms>



Within the premises of the Chunar Fort is a memorial for Bhartrihari, the brother of King Vikramaditya of Ujjain.

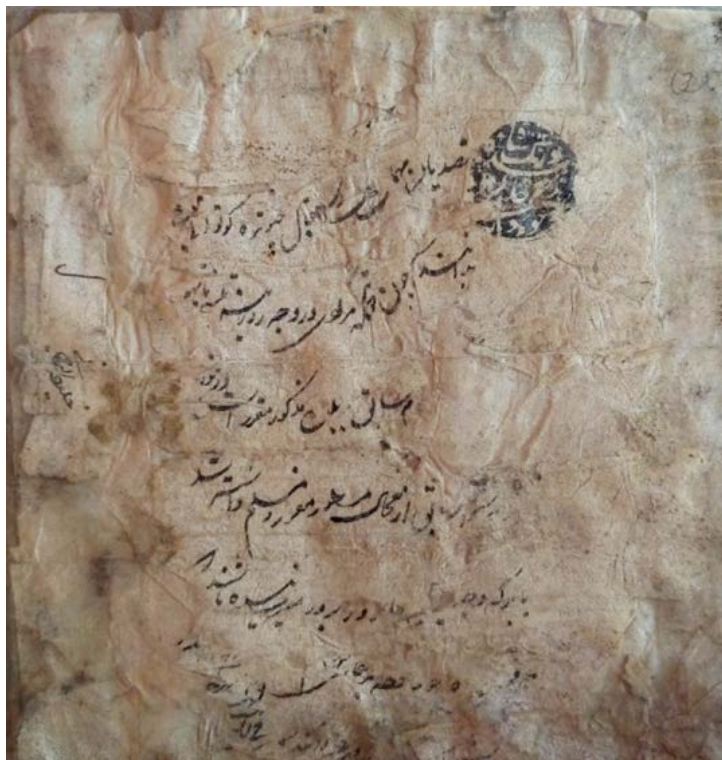


Figure 36 Priest at Bhartri Hari memorial showing an old manuscript claiming official Farman of Aurangzeb given to his ancestors (above right) Enlarge view of the Farman (above)



Figure 37 A Tablet with chronological order of rulers erected at Chunar Fort

THIS TABLE IS ERECTED IN MEMORY OF THE FOLLOWING RULERS OF INDIA, WHOSE NAMES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE FORT AT CHUNAR:-	
VIKRAMADITYA OF UJJAIN	56 B.C.
PRITHVI RAJ RAI PITHORA	(1141-1191 A.D.)
SHAHAB-UD-DIN MUHAMMAD GHORI	1194 A.D.
SWAMI RAJA	1333 A.D.
MUHAMMAD SHAH OF JAUNPORE	1445 A.D.
SIKANDAR II. (LODD)	1512 A.D.
BABAR	1529 A.D.
SHER SHAH SUR	1530 A.D.
HUMAYUN	1536 A.D.
SHER SHAH SUR	1538 A.D.
ISLAM SHAH	(1545-1552 A.D.)
AKBAR	1575 A.D.
MIRZA MUQIM (SURNAMED MANSUR ALI KHAN, SAFDAR JANG) NAWAB OF OUDH	1750 A.D.
THE BRITISH	1765 A.D.
SHUJA-UD-DAULAH, NAWAB OF OUDH	1765 A.D.
THE BRITISH	1772 A.D.
WARREN HASTINGS	1781 A.D.
ERECTED ON THE 28 th APRIL 1924 BY W.B. COTTON, Esq., I.C.S. COLLECTOR and MAGISTRATE MIRZAPUR	

Traditional Crafts

Weaving



Figure 38 A weaver making a hand-knotted carpet on loom

The main occupation and business activity in Mirzapur concerns carpet making. Most of the carpets made in the area are sold internationally as India has a limited market for carpets. It is believed that Akbar introduced carpet making in India. This also finds mention in Abul Fazal's *Ain-ae-Akbari*. Carpet making first developed in Kashmir, followed by Agra and then spread to Jaipur under the patronage of Akbar.

The story of carpet making in the Mirzapur belt is very interesting. The ruler of Bihar Sharif had requested Akbar to send royal weavers to Bihar, which was approved and a group of weavers were sent via Shershah Suri road. Near Gopiganj, the weavers were attacked by robbers and many of them were killed. Those who survived fled to Madho Singh and Ghosiya villages nearby to take refuge and thus started the story of carpet weaving in Mirzapur. Initially, they faced difficulties, especially as they couldn't procure wool and had to use Jute instead. Later with financial assistance provided by the Maharaja of Benaras, the industry flourished. During the regime of the East India Company, the carpets of Mirzapur received international recognition

and in this pursuit Edgar Hill established E. Hills company at Mirzapur in 1896 followed by Telly and Oakley, Bowden and Taylor or Obeetee¹⁴ (in 1936)¹⁵



Figure 39 Queen Elizabeth II inspecting a rug made in Obeetee, Mirzapur Source: Obeetee website

¹⁴ <http://www.obeeetee.com/history.aspx?tab=heritage>

¹⁵ Vindhya Mandal ke Kaleen Udyog, Layan Aporvachandra Bhattacharya

Types of Carpet

Mirzapur is again witnessing a surge in overseas demand, especially to the U.S. The main raw



Figure 40 Vikas Jain, Owner, Vikram Carpets

material wool is procured from Bikaner (Rajasthan) and New Zealand. According to Vikas Jain, Vikram Carpets, several types of carpets as per demand are produced. Some of the carpet types made in Mirzapur are:

Tufted woollen carpets: Made by both hand and machine; these rugs can be produced relatively

easily and inexpensively and generally have more variations in colour and patterns. Considered the best-looking carpets in the market these contribute significantly to export volumes.

Pure silk carpets: Made completely of silk in most carpet belts; manufacturing and weaving silk carpets is a family business where the secrets and techniques are transferred from one generation to the next.

Synthetic carpets: These carpets are made using synthetic fibres and have superior strength as compared to natural fibre carpets. These have a wide application in military, industrial and horticultural use.

GABBE¹⁶ woollen carpet: These carpets are made using indigenous and unique tradition of various tribal patterns, which are antique and elegant in design. These carpets are costliest in the market comparison to all other available in India. It is believed that they are generally made of 25% cotton and 75% wool but actual composition is unknown.

Handmade woollen durries: These types of carpet are made up of the finest wool and are made exquisite. These carpets are woven only by specific communities and are custom made according to the required design and quality of the clients.

Wool chain stitch rugs: These rugs are made by loosely twisting the yarn of cotton or linen. These rugs are famous and exhibited at many museums and exhibitions around the world. Rotating from the centre these rugs create solid and textured patterns.

¹⁶ Gabbe – one of the kinds of carpets which are made by such Iranian nationalities as loores and qhashqhaee. The main and most important instrument for gabbe manufacturing is woollen or metal machine tools of different size which are put horizontally on the ground.

Hand-knotted woollen carpets: Well-liked for their elegant style and unique craftsmanship, these carpets are admired globally. There are many carpet manufacturers who offer customized carpets for clients.

“Earlier there was demand for only Woollen Carpets which now has declined or replaced I would say by several other options; Jute Carpets, Tufted carpets...we have even created carpets on Jacquard Looms mostly used for saree in India.”

Vikas Jain

Vikram Carpets

Mirzapur

*Due to the new techniques, the old way of weaving has started to decrease, it has lost its essence, and there is a change in the overall atmosphere of villages and districts. Earlier, the size of typical hand-knotted rugs used to be 12x60, 14x70 or 16x80 with **around 300 knot/sq inch**. But now they are made in not more than **100 knot/sq inch** because new generation started distancing itself from the older system.*



*Pervej Khan, Carpet Exporter,
Neman Carpets, Mirzapur*

Journey of Carpets in India

Historically, it is difficult to say exactly when the industry of carpet weaving was established in Mirzapur. Carpets were made in Jaunpur and Allahabad during the time of Akbar, and it is

“His majesty has caused carpets to be made of wonderful varieties and charming textures; he has appointed experienced workmen, who have produced many master-pieces. The carpets of Iran and Turan are no more thought of, although merchants still import from Goshkan, Khuzistan, Kirman and Sabzwar. All kinds of carpet weavers have settled here, and drive a flourishing trade. In the imperial workshops, single carpets are made 20 gaj, 7 tassujes (inches) long, and 6 gaj, 11 ½ tassujes broad, at a cost of 1810 rupees, which those who are skilled in the business have valued at 2715 rupees.

Takhyahnamads, or woolen coverlets, are brought from Kabul and Persia, but are also made in this country.

It would take up too much time to describe the Jajams (small carpets or mats meant for seating), Shatrinjis, Baluchis, and the fine mats which look as if woven with silk.”

Abul Fazal in *Ain-ae-Akbari*

possible that weavers from these places migrated to Mirzapur. Abul Fazal, the courtier of Akbar writes about carpet and weavers and the incident of how the first carpet was laid at Agra fort by Akbar.

Pervej Khan, Carpet exporter, Neman Carpets also stresses on this fact.

“According to my knowledge and belief, in the year 1580 AD, Akbar laid the first carpet in his palace in Agra and this trend started in Khamaria district. During that period, people were trained in weaving due to unemployment but eventually they developed interest amongst themselves which led to an increase in their livelihood. As far as I know, carpet work came to Mirzapur from Persia during the Mughal period (1500-1600 AD) which brought along Iranian techniques like Persian knot. When the Mughals came to India, they brought some Persian artisans along with them because they needed carpets for their palaces. Way back then, the names of carpet designs were given according to the Iranian cities; it incorporated everything including their culture, structure and lifestyle. The names were; Mahal design, Nain design, Shahrub design, Sultanabad design, Oshaak, Mamluk, Agra, Lahore, Kazaak, Kirmaan design and more. These names are still being used which made carpet industry of Bhadohi, Mirzapur, famous across the globe.”



Figure 41 Earth Colours or less saturated colours as above are in huge demand

The carpet industry in Mirzapur has gone through a number of changes over time. According to



Figure 42 Mhd. Azaad a carpet weaver explaining the techniques of carpet weaving

Pervej Khan,—“There have been many changes in the past and now. Earlier a particular design or color would go on for years in the market and for the buyers. But trend the change; s be it in fashion or culture. I have observed that in last 10-15 years, carpets have been modernized through different textures, colors and designs, with an amalgamation of modern and contemporary art.

Along with hand-knotted carpets, Tibet-knot also came from Tibet and was done by the people of Nepal and locals from Mirzapur.”

Carpet making was not a vast business earlier and was more to clusters. Pervej Khan adds— *“I remember, there was a time when Mirzapur was famous for Durry - (flat woven rug), even a small grocery shop would have these durries. Every shopkeeper would buy durries from small vendors who would come to Mirzapur on their bicycles, they would again sell it to others and make money out of it, there was a kind of Mandi, and there used to be exporters in every street of Bhadohi.”*



Figure 43 Carpets labeled and packed for delivery



Figure 44 Hand Knotting is a very time consuming process (Above), Perisan style with floral motifs, a trademark of Mirzapur (Below)

Jail Carpets



Figure 45 Carpet with Tiger motif, Agra Jail

The world-renowned Mughal jail carpets, possibly the most expensive carpets in the world at present, originated under the reign of Emperor Akbar, who was a great patron of the arts and culture. When it was brought to his notice that the prisoners created a ruckus in the jails, he decided to reform them. Between 1520-30AD he brought some of the finest weavers of carpets from the most well-known carpet workshops of Persia to teach the prisoners the art of weaving carpets.

These prisoners took immense pride in their work and they eventually outshone their masters. These carpets were made for the palaces in India and some were also sent abroad in the form of gifts. Since there was no shortage of money, labour or time constraint, it could take a few hundred weavers up to 15 years to

make a single carpet.

They used the finest wools, velvets, silks and sometimes even 'Pashmina' (Cashmere), one of the most exotic fibres used for weaving shawls, for making these carpets. The dyes were all natural dyes/vegetable dyes extracted from plants, rocks, minerals, insects, etc.

These designs were rare and quite different from the traditional Persian, Turkish and Central



Figure 46 Jute mats with highly intricate designs are in demand across the country and abroad

Asian carpets and many of these designs were based on original Indian patterns prior to the Mughal influence. The jails most renowned for carpets were the jails of Agra, Lahore, Amritsar, Jaipur, Gwalior and Bikaner.¹⁷



Figure 47 The wool or yarn are processed under the technique of 'Multi-Dyeing' process

“His majesty (Akbar) has given such encouragement to this manufacture that carpets of Persia are thought no more...”

Abul Fazal,

The Abdar Khanah, Ain-ae-Akbari, Pg 55

¹⁷ Syed Mohammed Hasan <https://ranasafvi.com/jail-carpets-in-mughal-india/>



Figure 48 Weaver straightning the reels of wool before it is handed over to weavesr working on loom



Figure 49 A perisan motif style carpets denoting earth or neutral colour which is much in demand in Europe



Figure 50 Showrooms like these showcases umpteen carpet design samples for prospective buyers



Figure 51 A carpet weaver with hand tufting gun working on a design



Figure 52 After Quality check the carpets and rugs are rolled before delivery

Brassware



Figure 53 Billets of raw brass. Sheets are prepared from these discs for further shaping

The brassware tradition has been prevalent in Mirzapur for approximately the last 500 years and currently involves around 50,000 workers. There has been little development in entrepreneurship in this handicraft industry and traditional ways and processes still dominate.



The carpet industry is currently being provided help through government under the ODOP (One District One Product)¹⁸ program. There exists a growing view in the area that brassware industry is more in need of government assistance under the ODOP scheme.

¹⁸ UP government's One District, One Product scheme seeks to promote traditional industries synonymous with their respective districts



Figure 54 A semi finished brassware utensil

In the process of manufacturing of brass utensils there is separation of labour with each category specializing in a particular process. The process of brassware making is complex and time consuming. It involves various stages such as Moulding, Para Casting, Darza Casting, Sheet work, Beating, Pressing, Spinning Lathe, Soldering and scraping, Engraving and Polishing.



Two materials, copper and zinc are mixed in a ratio of 60:40 to make brass metal which is an alloy. Brassware is locally in demand mostly during the marriage season the area, which is about 4-5 months in a year. For the poorer classes of people, brassware has holding value similar to silver and gold jewellery in the case of the better off.



Figure 55 Even for shaping and creating a brass ladle it requires countless hours of labour and health compromise



Figure 56 Rupesh Kumar Verma, brassware utensils manufacturer, Malviya Nagar, Mirzapur



Figure 57 Semi processed brass sheets being carried for post processing



Figure 58 Brass utensils on the second last stage of processing

“The challenge we face in this business is that the government has increased taxes under GST slab by 18% on raw materials and by 12% on finished goods, so the weaker sections find it difficult to use these products. I request the government to decrease the taxes immediately to at least 5%.”

~ Rupesh Kumar Verma,

Representative, Udyog Vyapar Mandal, Mirzapur

Brassware industry has been facing tough competition from other centres located in the neighbouring district of Allahabad and the adjacent state of Bihar. On an average, there is work only for six months and the workers during the lean period migrate to other places searching for alternate employment opportunities. In this industry there are multiple informal units and there is a need to integrate them. Following is a brief summary of the problems faced by the Brassware Industry in Mirzapur District.

Brassware industry is labour intensive in nature and the labour force comprises hired workers and family workers who are paid wages on weight basis. However, most of the artisans are illiterate. Their socio-economic condition is unsatisfactory.

The manufacturing techniques adopted by the industry are old and time consuming. Regular and adequate supplies of raw material continue to be a critical problem for the industry.

Health and medical facilities available to the artisans also appear to be minimal. The incidence of T.B. and Asthma is high among them. The current recession has been adversely impacting brassware industry which can be tackled by adopting the right strategies. Both the industry and the government need to urgently address these issues. The government could consider providing financial, educational and medical facilities to artisans. It could also arrange awareness workshops and seminars for the artisans. Goods and Service Tax and demonetization have also impacted the brassware industry.



Chunar Pottery

As mentioned in Mirzapur District Gazetteer - 2015 pg.69 “At the census of 1901 there were



Figure 60 Chunar Clay utensils

4,861 persons enumerated in the district as sellers of pottery ware”. The traditional red clay pottery in Chunar was done by about 400 families who were associated with the pottery business. Today, due to a lack of adequate support, the number of artisans has dwindled from 400 to about 10 to 15 families that are still involved in this occupation.

Earlier, there were modelers who would make moulds, potters would make ceramics and there were operators, Bhati, to bake. Ceramics in Chunar are made using several raw materials brought from different regions, such as soil from Katni in MP, Felspar from Jharkhand, Gola-patthar from Haridwar, Plaster of Paris from Bikaner, Rajasthan and the chemicals are made from other materials. Only labour and

water are sourced locally.

This industry has been impacted adversely due to a smaller number of train routes through the area and electricity shortage. The artisans have not received any recognition through award and the number of artisans has decreased.

The process of pottery making has been described in detail in the Mirzapur District Gazetteer-2015 pg.70 “They are made from two special clays called *viakti* and *khasi*, and when unglazed are of a dark-brown colour, this tinge being produced by mixing up a powdered red stone with the clay paste. Both vitreous and metallic glazes are applied, but red metallic glaze is peculiar to the potters of Chunar and *Fyzabad*. The basis of this is yellow glaze which is made up as follows: Lead and zinc in the proportion of one to eight are put in an earthen pot, which is set over a clay hearth and plastered round with mud. They are melted together for two days, and the white scum containing the oxide of the two metals combined, which is called *phut*, is continually skimmed off with a large, flat ladle called *karakul* or *karolta*: one eighth part of borax and one eighth part of powdered red stone are then added and the compound is again melted for about seven hours. .

At the end of this time the molten *mass* is poured slowly into a wooden trough full of water and coagulates at the bottom of the trough in separate pieces, which are at once taken out and ground to powder in a common stone hand-mill. This powder is mixed with very thin wheat flour paste; and, in order to produce metallic glaze, quicksilver is added to it. The ornamentation and shape of the Chunar ware is purely English and generally classic in character. It consists mainly of raised leaf and flower patterns made in moulds, the manufacture of which has been hereditary among certain families of Sahara for many generations. A basket pattern is also made by the same Kahars in moulds which they buy from cane-weaving Shanks. The art of glazing was only



Figure 62 Avdhesh Kumar Verma, Chunar Pottery Seller

introduced about 35 years ago by one Bache, Kolar, who had learnt it at Bombay but it is not applied as a rule to delicate ornamentation. A small export trade is done in Chunar pottery.”

Of the families that used to work in ceramics, currently only 5-6 families are still engaged in the profession, unlike earlier, when at least 200 families were engaged in pottery making. The other families have shifted to making sculptures or moved to some other occupation. Such a situation calls for the government's immediate attention, otherwise the famous Chunar pottery industry will completely shut down.

The advent of machines has also impacted the traditional hand-made tradition, in which there was less uniformity in the products. The ones made with machines are all uniform and well-shaped. The customers are more interested in the cheaper products, which are machine made. The application of GST has also impacted workers as they are not educated enough to understand GST and other taxes. This is an ongoing cause concern.

Demand in terms of designs varies from customer to customer; sometimes they give their own designs according to their choices. The potters make products keeping in mind whether it would be useful or not. These products are not essential items for consumers as they have substitutes.



Figure 63 Tea pots like above has been in huge demand at Chunar



“Since the Mughal’s reign, several items are being made here, such as pickle jar, teapots; cup-saucer etc. It is mostly in demand in Uttar Pradesh and two neighbouring states Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. The customers who live far away find it difficult to travel so far due to lack of train routes.”

Avdhesh Kumar Verma

Chunar Pottery Retailer, Chunar

Lac and Shellac Industry

When an Indian recalls Lac or Shellac, the mind immediately travels back to the epic Mahabharata in which Duryodhana had clandestinely got a palace of lac called *Lakshagrah* built to kill the Pandavas. The spot where the mythical palace was said to have been built is near Jangiganj which is known as *Lakshagrah* or *Lakshagrih*. Even today



Figure 64 *Lakshagraha* or Palace made of lac as depicted in epic of Mahabharata

devotees offer their prayers at this spot. Earlier the production of lac items was entirely based on

demand. In some ways, its usage was similar to hard plastic and was used to create jewellery, toys and for painting. Its



commercial use started when the East India Company arrived in India and lac saw a surge in demand, especially during World War I and II as it was used in ships and explosives. The raw material for shellac industry used to be transported through camel, ox, and horses and through boats¹⁹.



By the beginning of the twentieth century, Mirzapur became well-known for its shellac industry. Lac from all parts of the country started to converge on to this town. During 1901-03, the first factory was set up by Mirzapur merchants. The Mirzapur factory owners also had their godowns at Jhalda (Puralia district, West Bengal) , Bundu (near Ranchi, Jharkhand) and Balarampur (Uttar Pradesh). They stored lac for two to three months, dried it and then dispatched it by bullock-carts to Purulia from where it was sent by rail to Mirzapur. But later they established their own manufacturing unit in this centre. With their gradual migration to West Bengal and Bihar, the industry in Mirzapur slowly declined. In the year 2010 around 13900 people were involved in Lac industry in Uttar Pradesh.²⁰

¹⁹ *Vindhyanchal Mandal ka Laah udyog*, by Gulaab Chandra Tiwari

²⁰ Bioved Research Institute of Agriculture & Technology, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh

Performing Tradition

Kajri



Figure 65 Vidya Sagar premi and his group performing Kajri at Pakka Ghat, Mirzapur

Folksongs as a tradition are orally transmitted by the older generation to the younger generation of the community. These songs are passed on within families/community as inherited tradition and are sung mostly during festivals and/or rituals. Mirzapur is known mainly for its Kajri. Birha and Laavani are also important folk song traditions here.

Laavani tradition of singing was performed at the Pukka Ghat, Ghantaghar and the Sankirtan Bhawan of Mirzapur. This form of singing is closely associated with literature and is sung accompanied by an instrument called Chang. Some of the well-known singers of Laavani were Hadiya Baba, Banarasidas Hazari, Harisahay Giri and Devi Singh.²¹ Birha singing was specific to the Ahir castes, who were traditionally cattle herders. The Birha songs of today are sung mostly in villages and can be in the form of Bhakri Gyaan, Vairagya Geet, Vikasgeet, Rashtriya

²¹ Vindhyaachal Mandal Samagr by Dr. Arjundas Kesari, Lokruchi Prakashan, Sonebhadra, 2009; pg. 29

Geet and Shringaar Geet. The instruments used to perform Birha include Harmonium, Kartaal, Dhol, Jhanjh etc.²²

Propogated further by Jahangir, Kajri is a legacy of Mirzapur. It is said that Kajri was redefined by Munni Lal Sharma, Bairagi Chaibiram, Akkhat and Sri Pandit Sridas who were folksingers. Interestingly, Goddess Vindhyavasini is also known as identified as Kajra Devi. Kajri is sung primarily during the months of Shravan and Bhaado. Dhunmuniya Kajri is sung during the month of Vasant.

*Hasi ke sawariya se
Hasi ke sawariya se, kahli re gujariya
Chatwa lagaile re balma *2
Barsa gai saavana ki badariya
Chatwa lagaile re balma
Barsa gai saavana ki badariya
Chatwa lagaile re balma
Chatwa (lagaile balamwa*4)
Barsa gai saavana ki badariya
Chatwa lagaile re balma*2*

It is believed, that the word *Kajri* is derived from the Hindi word *kajra*, which means *kajal* (kohl or black). References to the 'Kajli festival' being celebrated in the month of August (in the month of Bhadon) are found in archival texts like the District Gazetteers of Mirzapur. The Gazetteers of 1911 also mention that a large number of people ranging from 2000-18000 attended these fairs that were celebrated in various localities such as Mahantji ka Shivala, Tarkapur, Bazar Madho Singh in Bhadohi and so on.²³

Instead of Gharanas of Indian classical music, this folk tradition has multiple Akhadas. Shivdas Akhada, Imaman Akhada, Jahangir Akhada, Bhairo Akhada, Baffat Akhada, Muurat Thela Akhada and Akkhad Akhada are some of the well known Akhadas of Kajri in Mirzapur.²⁴

It is also believed that the origin of *Kajri* comes from the story of a woman called Kajli whose husband was in a distant land. Upon the arrival of Monsoon their separation became unbearable and she started to cry at the feet of the *Kajmal* Goddess or *Kajli-Mata*. Separation is the main theme of the origin of the popular *Kajri* songs. There are two forms of *Kajri* singing in UP—one,

²² Vindhyachal Mandal Samagr by Dr. Arjundas Kesari, Lokruchi Prakashan, Sonebhadra, 2009; pg. 30

²³ Mizrapur Gazetteer, Volume XXVII, Compiled and edited by D.L. Drake Brockman, I.C.S, Printed by W.C. Abel, Government Press, Allahabad, 1911; Pg. xxxix

²⁴ Vindhyachal Mandal Samagr by Dr. Arjundas Kesari, Lokruchi Prakashan, Sonebhadra, 2009; pg. 29

which is performed on stage for an audience and the other which is primarily for enjoyment and celebration at home and is sung by women during monsoon evenings, while dancing in a semi-circle (this is known as the *Dhunmuniya Kajri*).

It is pertinent to note that the Kajari Songs have mainly two opposing themes—some songs revel in the happiness of the union of lovers, while there are many songs that talk of separation and the distance between the lovers. The other variants of the Kajari songs include historic references, and references to the social, economic, religious, spiritual and cultural heritage of India. Poets like Surdas have also composed poetry and songs on the lines of Kajri songs.



Figure 66 Ajita Shrivastava (famous Kajri Singer) along with budding singer Shipra Jaiswal performing Kajri

The festival of Kajri Teej is celebrated in Central India in states such as Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. In Central India, Kajari Teej is also associated with Jhulas or swings. Women are seen swinging on jhulas during this festival. Even Lord Krishna is depicted swinging on a jhula which is sometimes accompanied by Kajri songs. Some Kajris are also composed on the theme of Lord Krishna. The Teej, however, is said to be based upon the mythological story of Shiva Purana and the union of Goddess Paravati with Lord Shiva after a long separation.

Various themes are presented in the songs. The following is from the history of the Muslim community:

*Nabi ke navaase noor-e-nazar
Jahan tji nana ki kabar
Nabi ke navaase noor-e-nazar
Jahan tji nana ki kabar
Sar jhuka kaha hukum do jaata hun main gaane karbala *3
Nabi ke nanhe-nanhe sain, saath mein Hassan aur Hussain
Toh kaaba zameen lage aur kaba gagan lage jab jaaye karbala*2*

The Kajari songs performed by the women of the village are numerous. One of them is called Janani Kajri. The following is an example of the same, depicting a story where the husband of a woman is in a relationship with another woman. She sings:

*Piya sautin ke *2
Piya sautin ke bade tu toh jaan di hai *2
Uke sab samaan di hai na,
Piya sautin ke bade tu toh jaan di hai
Uke sab samaan di hai na.
De de chaar jau chana, tohe karab mana
Jaan li hai jana, kaashi jee mein daan di hai, uke sab samaan di hai na*

There is another genre of Janani Kajri called Chaular. An example of this is presented in the following song, where there is an illiterate woman from a village who is married to an educated man. On the very first day she tells her husband:

*Hum toh goi (village) ke gujariya *2
Tu balamwa shahri *2
Hamka khai chana-matar, johari-bajari*2
Tu toh khai puri-meethai, saiyaan mewa-misri
Hum toh goi (village) ke gujariya
Tu balamwa shahri*

One more variety of Kajri (sung by women) goes thus:

*Unche-unche kunwara, (neeche ba jagatiya) *2
Padela, jheer-jheer ghuniya
guiyaan kaise bharu na,
guiyaan kaise badu chot ba rasariya
padela jheer-jheer ghuniya
guiyaan kaise badu chot ba rasariya
padela jheer-jheer ghuniya*

The Kajris sung by the males in the community are also of various types such as; Dasang, Nayika, Sarasaa, Sheeshapalath etc.

There is a folk song on river Ganga that is known by the name 'Kanhawa'. Below are a few lines from this song:

*Nahiya ka doriya, nahiya ka doriya dekha, sudhar sapanva, ganga maiyaa ho
Ganga maiya ho, sun li na arajiya humaar *2
Nahiya ka doriya dekha, sudhar sapanva, ganga maiyaa ho
Ganga maiya ho, sun li na arajiya humaar *2*

There is another form of Kajri that is sung by males called Chauvan;

*Kapi jee jaate, pooch badhaye *2
Ram hai jaata vasan lapete
Kapi jee jaate, pooch badhaye
Ram hai jaata vasan lapete*

The Jhumar Kajri is another well known variety. For example, in the story of Mahabharata, Abhimanyu wants to go into the battlefield and Bhim wants to stop him. He sings:

*Beta kaho na aisi vaani *2
Kyun ki umar teri nadaani
gyaani jee kahe ki jhulo abhi saavan ka jhulna *2
Kahna maan, abhi tu jhul jaa kar jhulna
Beta kaho na aisi vaani
Kyun ki umar teri nadaani
gyaani jee kahe ki jhulo abhi saavan ka jhulna*

According to Ranade (1997), this genre of folk song is mostly sung by women of Uttar Pradesh throughout the night on the third day of the second half of the Bhadrapad (month of August). This is mostly accompanied by their local folk dance. Youngsters can be seen holding hands, swaying and standing face to face while singing and celebrating the festival of Kajri. This folk song tradition was slowly turned into a form of folk dance tradition as well. It is believed that earlier women danced to the tunes of Kajri in areas like Kajarwa Pokhra, and Oojhal Pul or Trimuhani. It is said that the 'raees' of Mirzapur also enjoyed the Kajri songs and dance of prostitutes in the Trimuhani area of Mirzapur.²⁵

Famous Kajri folk singer Ajita Srivastava was interviewed by the team. She explained how Kajri is sung in the four months of the monsoon, namely, Aasaad, Saavan, Bhado and Dvaara. The

²⁵ Vindhychal Mandal Samagr by Dr. Arjundas Kesari, Lokruchi Prakashan, Sonebhadra, 2009; pg. 28

litterateurs included Kajri in their writings and some Hindi writers wrote about Kajri celebrations. Although there are many popular opinions about its genesis, it is still believed that Kajri emerged primarily from Mirzapur. The common opinion is that one of the names of goddess Vindhyavasini is Kajjala Devi and in her memory the songs sung by the devotees at the time of worship went on to be called Kajri. She mentioned that Kajri singing was initially dominated by women but gradually men entered this domain and now, they assert more rights over this genre.

She sung a few couplets of Kajri:

*Maiya kab debu darshanva ab toh chadhle savanwa na *2
Chadhle savanwa, chadhle savanwa, chadhle savanwa aa ho maiyaa
Kab tak tu drashan na maiyaa, ab toh chadhle savanwa*

She went on to narrate how the akhadas of Kajri used to compete with each other. Stages were set up and even the women of the villages used to participate in these battles. Even today, there are women who sing kajri battles such as Rani Singh and Saroj Sargam from Sonbhadra. Urmila Srivastava is another well known Kajri singer who earned fame and travelled abroad by singing and promoting this specific folk song tradition. Bade Beher ki Kajri, Dhundaar Kajri (where there are several tunes in one kajri), Shayari Kajri, Mardaani Kajri (sung by men), Janani Kajri (sung by women), and Chaular Kajri (which is primarily sung by men) are some forms of Kajris that she talked about. She went on to give an example of Chaular Kajri:

*Goriya kahe, balam humra ke unchi atariya chaahi na *2
Unchi atariya chaahi na piya
Unchi atariya, unchi atariya chaahi na
Goriya kahe, balam humra ke unchi atariya chaahi na
Chahatehi saandh kheti-badiya chaahi
Har-har he naam ariya chahi
Arey saavanna ho bhaiya, saavan na ho, saavan na re bhaiya, saavan na ho
Saavan jhule badre ke jhulah
Kadam kinariya chaahi na
Goriya kahe, balam humra ke unchi atariya chaahi na*

The following is an example of Dhunmuniya kajri, where the woman expresses her pain through her song:

*Railiya se utare, jaha jiya se gaile ki piya bina na, haanji piya bina na
Mori suniba se dariya ke piya bina na*2*

*Saasi baili hatiya, arey nanad dei ke thatiyaaan*2*
Akeli ghar maa na
Arey akeli ghar maa na
*Roi, roi, roi, rotIya akeli ghar man *2*

She shared another form of Kajri that is sung on the occasion of the Teej festival:

Teej kajri ke dina nagichan ba rangayede piya laal chunri
Laalahe lahanga, laalahe choli,
Laalahe lehenga O' laalahe lehenga
Mora laalahe pe jiya re lubhanba, rangayede piya laal chunri
Teej kajri ke dina nagichan ba, rangayede piya laal chunri

To enhance the beauty of these songs, the creators add a word set, which is called *lathka*. Although this *lathka* has no meaning, it is used to beautify the song. There are various *lathkas* that are used in the songs. For example: *rama-rama, sanwar-goriya, arey-sanwariya, jheer-jheer ghuniya*. An example of a *lathka* would be the following where 'Jheer Jheer Ghuniya' is used like the *lathka*:

*Radhe sang jhule nandalal ho padela jheer-jheer ghuniya*2*
*Kekra bheej gela dhani re chunariya*2*
Kekra ra bheejla re rumaal, padela jheer-jheer ghuniya
Radhe sang jhule nandalal ho padela jheer-jheer ghuniya

Women play a pivotal role in safeguarding and transmitting this folk culture and have kept this tradition of folk music alive, she added. This folk music mostly emerges from the villages where even today, the community gets together to celebrate fairs and festivals. This intangible knowledge through singing, dancing and other rituals is passed on to the younger generation during the celebration of these fairs.

Badri Narayan Chaudhary, also known as Premghan, was a well-known merchant from Mirzapur who also became famous for his poetry and literature. Below is one of his songs that are sung in the form of kajri:

*Arey rama meri mirzapur ki kajri lage pyaari re hari*2*
Arey mandir trikona ka mela, laage ajab rangeela rama
Arey laage ajab rangeela rama
Arey rama jungle mein bhi mangal ki taiyaari hai ghari
Arey rama meri mirzapur ki kajri lage pyaari re hari

A poet from Sridas Akhada in Mirzapur describes the fun-loving environment and the jolly mood of the residents of this district through this famous Kajri:

*Humre Mirzapur mein al masti ki chal ba, bada bemisaal ba na*3*
*Chane bahaute he mauj udave, Safa pahin roj lagawe*2*
Gaave rasik kajariya
Gaave rasik kajariya, silbatta ke balma,
Bada bemisaal ba na
Humre mirzapur mein al masti ki chal ba, bada

The INTACH team also visited the Saraswati Sangeet Kala Kendra near Pakki Sarai in Mirzapur that has been active in promoting classical music and dance in Mirzapur in recent years. The institute is affiliated to the Prayag Sangeet Samiti and also organises exams for students of Music till the undergraduate level. Shri Bhagwati Prasad Keshari, who heads the institution, also shared his concerns about the folk music of Mirzapur and its importance among the people of the district.

The institution has drafted a request letter for the Honorable Minister of Education, Secondary Education Minister, Secondary Education Council Board Allahabad regarding practical examination in High School Uttar Pradesh Board for Music. Their plea to the Education Ministry is to initiate practical based examinations so that folk and classical music gets attention and



many forgotten traditions within the category of music can be revived or preserved while transferring this knowledge to the youth of the district. Such endeavors are required to cultivate interest in the youth as well as highlighting and giving importance

to a subject that requires as much mastery as any other subject taught in schools and colleges.



Figure 67 Bhagwati Prasad, Saraswati Kala Kendra, Mirzapur



Figure 68 Village women performing Chaular, Khajuri village, Mirzapur

सेवा में,

माननीय शिक्षा मंत्री जी
माध्यमिक शिक्षा मंत्री जी
माध्यमिक शिक्षा परिषद बोर्ड इलाहाबाद उ०प्र०

विषय : यू०पी० बोर्ड हाईस्कूल की प्रयोगात्मक परीक्षा आरम्भ करने के सम्बन्ध में।

महोदय,

विनयवत आपका ध्यान आकर्षित करना चाहता हूँ कि यू०पी० बोर्ड हाईस्कूल में प्रयोगात्मक परीक्षा विगत वर्षों से बंद कर दिया गया है। संगीत विषय बिना प्रयोगात्मक के कोई मायने नहीं रखता। जब किसी छात्र को गायन-वादन का सही ढंग से ज्ञान न होगा तो वह भविष्य में शिक्षक बनकर कैसे किसी को ज्ञान या शिक्षा दे पायेगा।

प्रायः देखा जाता है कि प्रदेश के समस्त विद्यालयों में विभिन्न अवसरों पर सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रमों का आयोजन किया जाता है। बिना प्रयोगात्मक के कोई भी कार्यक्रम सुव्यवस्थित ढंग से नहीं हो सकता है। यदि प्रयोगात्मक परीक्षा पुनः नहीं आरम्भ की जायेगी तो संगीत का अस्तित्व खतरे में पड़ जायेगा। संगीत मनोरंजन के अलावा आम आदमी के रोजगार का माध्यम भी है। जहाँकि भारतीय संगीत विश्व पटल पर अपना परचम फहरा रहा है। भारतीय संगीत व भारतीय संस्कृति की अपनी एक विशेष पहचान है।

हमारे प्रधानमंत्री जी द्वारा कौशल विकास मिशन योजना चल रही है। उनका सपना है कि यदि आम आदमी के पास हुनर होगा तो वह सरकारी नौकरी पर ही निर्भर नहीं होगा बल्कि अपना खुद का व्यवसाय खड़ा करने में सक्षम हो सकता है। किसी भी विषय में बेसिक ज्ञान के बिना उच्च शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में सफलता प्राप्त करना सम्भव नहीं हो पाता। उसी तरह संगीत के क्षेत्र में भी बेसिक ज्ञान (लिखित व प्रयोगात्मकता) के अभाव में उच्च शिक्षा नहीं प्राप्त की जा सकती। संगीत में दस थाट होते हैं। एक थाट से 484 राग उत्पन्न होता है।

हाईस्कूल में—(1) विलावल (2) कल्याण (3) खमाज (4) काफी (5) भैरव (6) भैरवी (7) असावरी (8) भारवा (9) पूर्वी (10) तोड़ी ये दस थाट व राग है। इसका केवल लिखित ज्ञान ही पर्याप्त नहीं है। प्रयोगात्मक ज्ञान भी आवश्यक है तभी पूर्णतया ज्ञान प्राप्त होगी।

अतः माननीय मंत्री जी से अनुरोध है कि उपरोक्त तथ्यों पर दृष्टिगत रखते हुए हाईस्कूल में प्रयोगात्मक परीक्षा का शुभारम्भ करने का निर्देश जारी करने की की महती कृपा करें।

भवदीय

Mr. K. Keshari C/S
Bharthendu S. M. Vidyalaya
Mirzapur

Traditional Wrestling



Figure 69 Wrestlers in action during a wrestling competition in Mirzapur on the occasion of Govardhan Puja festival in Mirzapur. Source: Indian Express



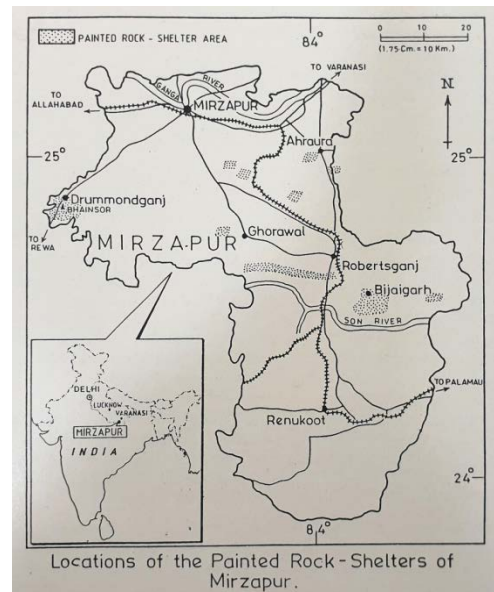
Traditional wrestling is an integral part of the culture of Mirzapur and is still prevalent in its original form. Here, on the occasion of Nag Panchami and Govardhan Puja, traditional wrestling matches are held. The *Dukhi Ram Akhada* near Ojhala ka Pul still follows the traditional form of wrestling. The other prominent

Akhadas of Mirzapur are Shripati Singh Akhada (Manai Village), Dukhi Ka Akhada at Pokhari, and Vishwanath Agrahari Akhada.

Mural and Rock Paintings of Mirzapur



Mirzapur was not only a trading city in earlier times but also a hub of art and creativity. The INTACH team in its interactions with Dr. K.M. Singh, Professor (Retd.) KBS College, Mirzapur, learnt about several lesser known aspects of intangible culture in the region.



Among them was the influence of Awadh Mural Paintings and Rajasthani Paintings; the sole extant samples on the verge of extinction are the mural paintings at Naar Ghat. According to Dr. Singh, there were three mural paintings in Mirzapur. One of them was at Mahant Parshuram Giri petrol pump, which unfortunately has vanished. The other two being a pair of paintings of peacocks at Dr. K.P. Jayaswal's haveli, near Gosain Tola which were indigenously made with *Bhusi, Mitti, Lime and Gond*. These paintings and art form depicted mythologies and is now on the verge of extinction, hence a concerted action from the authorities is required.

The total number of hitherto known painted rock-shelters is 240 which make district Mirzapur the second largest rock-art centre in India, after Madhya Pradesh.



Figure 70 A mural painting depicting mythological story, at Naar Ghat

The rock paintings depict various aspects of the life of the communities to which the painters belonged and provide a very useful source-material for the study of the associated communities and their cultures.

Figure 71 Figure 72 Cave Art of Mesolithic period at Panchmukhi Pahadi, Sonbhadra, depicting daily activities such as hunting, dance Image Credit: Deepak Kumar Kesharwan, Vindhya Shodh Samiti, Sonebhadra

Rock paintings in India are yet to be explored in depth as an area of study by archaeologists, art-historians and artists. These paintings were executed directly on the walls and ceilings of rock shelters, and are found in abundance in almost all hilly regions of the country. Numerous paintings containing evidence of art and culture and other aspects of life of prehistoric and ancient people adorn the rock shelters, many in inaccessible areas. One of the reasons for the prevailing controversy is their dating. It could be said that archaeologists and other scholars have neglected this subject from scrutiny because of the dating problem. We have, therefore, not been able to understand the significance of this rich heritage.²⁶



Figure 73 Row of Cows, Source: Bradshaw Foundation India Rock Art Archive

Foodways



Figure 74 Gujiya, Sonth ke Laddoo, and Balsuhahi is traditionally made in every household during festive season at Mirzapur

One of the most famous traditional sweets of Mirzapur is the *Badi Tikiya* which is found only in Mirzapur. Other popular local sweets are: *Makkhan Vada*, *Mewa ka Laddoo*, *Thekua*, *Gondh Laddoo*, *Balushahi* and *Bundi ka laddoo*. All these are made using pure *desi ghee*.

Makkhan Vada is usually prepared on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan and Diwali. The ingredients used maida, ghee, water and curd; process involves mixing all the ingredients together to make dough, which is then made into small balls and cooked over low flame, and after 2-3 days it is put in a sugar syrup or *Chaashni*. This sweet is known to have a shelf life of about a week.



Figure 75 *Makkhan Vada*, a local delicacy of Mirzapur

The other traditional sweet of Mirzapur is *Pethua* which is made with *Moong daal*, ghee, sugar, where the grinded *Moong daal* is fried with ghee on low flame, then it is rested for 2 days, after that it is beaten, sugar added and *Pethua* is ready.

Baati Chokha is made during the rainy season when people go out for picnics and family gatherings. Rice and lentils are cooked in clay pots and *Baati* is baked. People from other regions come here to eat *Baati Chokha*, especially during the rainy season.



Figure 76 Bathi Choka is another typical Mirzapuri delicacy

Lala Lajpat Rai Library, Naar Ghat



Figure 77 Lala Lajpat Rai Library at Naar Ghat, Mirzapur

Lala Lajpat Rai Memorial Library was established in the year 1928 near Naar Ghat in Mirzapur. The INTACH ICH team visited this oldest library in the region and interacted with the librarian Sh. Viresh Tripathi. This library was registered in the year 1936 under the Societies Registration Act and a Board of Trustees as the governing body was also formed. It houses books on varied subjects including Psychology, Environmental Education, Value Education, Population Education, and Education for Special Needs groups, Literature and Languages. The library plays a crucial role in terms of cultural dissemination and such institutions of learning along the Ganga need to be supported in a focused manner.

The library contains 25000 books in Hindi, 6200 books in English, 653 in Sanskrit, 209 in Urdu and 110 books in Bangla Language.

A Kavi Sammelan was organised in the year 1942 by the library, in which famous poets from across India had participated. The library has been visited by learned personalities, literary figures and renowned leaders such as poet Sohanlal Dwivedi, Maithli Saran Gupt, Pt. Ram Chandra Shukla, Smt. Sumitra Kumari Sinha, Shivani, Hari Vansh Rai Bachchan, Shiv Mangal

Singh Suman, Shyam Narain Pandey, Bedhab Ji, Sudhindra Ji, Devvrat Shastri, Purushottam Das Tandon, Govind Ballabh Pant, Pt. Rahul Sankritayan, Pt. Ganga Nath Jha, A.V. Dhruva, T. Raghvacharya, Ilachand Joshi, Keshav dev Malviya, Pt. Shyamdhar Mishra, Syed Ali Zaheer,

Banarasi Das, Chandra Bhan Gupta, AtmaRam Govindkher, Ganga Nath Jha, Dr. Bhagwan Das, Mahadeo Pd. Seth, Manmath Nath Gupta, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Atal Behari Bajpai, Dr. Ram Kumar Verma, Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna, Pandit Ram Kinkarji and Shankar Dayal Sharma among others.²⁷



Figure 78 Lala Lajpat Rai Library (Inside view)

²⁷ <http://mzplibrary.org/aboutus.html>

“Library plays a crucial role not only in preserving records/documents but disseminating it in the society...There are only two libraries in Mirzapur one is ours; the oldest and the other is a Government aided library at Mawariya School. We have Lala Lajpat Rai Trust Board which looks after the management of library and its need. We request Govt. of Uttar Pradesh to list us in their website and provide financial aid. We get an annual contribution of 200-300 books per year along with Almirahs and have 100 active members/readers but without financial support it’s difficult for us to function properly.”



Viresh Tripathi. Librarian,
Lala Lajpat Rai Library, Mirzapur

Sacred Complexes



Ganga view from Vindhyachal

The region of Vindhyachal consists of a number of natural heritage locations, which, over a period of time, have been accorded significance as sacred or seats of divinity. Many of these locations are currently marked by temples and associated with them are a number of myths and folklore.

Due to the U-shaped bend of the river Ganga here, the water flows westward in places before it again turns eastward in her journey to the sea. This location hence finds numerous mentions in the Vedic texts and is considered sacred. The Ganga is known as Devakulya here.

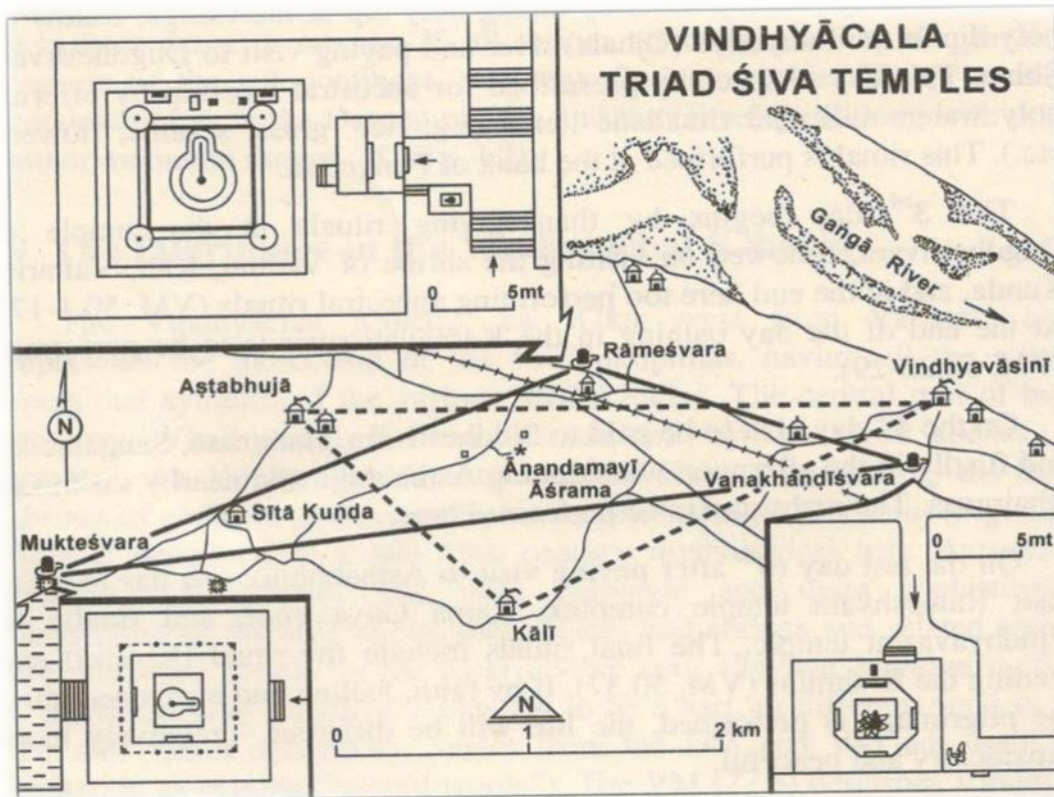


Figure 79 Balaji Temple at Gosain Tola, Mirzapur reflecting the Dravidian style of architecture



Man praying at Ganga Ghat, Vindhyachal

The hill ranges in this region form a natural triangle which is an ancient symbol of the divine feminine and is marked by temples to three female powers: Vindhyachal or Vindhyavasini, Ashtabhuj, and Kali Koh. In the Vindhya Mahatmya (“Glorification of Vindhya”) the holy sites, places and shrines and related rituals are described in detail. The Vindhya Mahatmya (27.3) describes Vindhyavasini Devi as the ultimate force of creation, known as Mahalakshmi, who together with Goddesses Saraswati and Kali controls cosmic movement.



Vindhyachal Traid / Trikona Parikrama Route Source: Rana. P.B Singh

The area's Trikona Yatra or Triangular Parikrama route has attracted pilgrims from different parts of the country since ages. The Trikona Yatra/journey is performed for 1, 3 and 9 days. Pilgrims decide their parikrama as per their wish and feasibility. The Trikona Yatra has special significance and the main centre of this yatra is the Bindu Vasini or Vindhyavasini Temple.

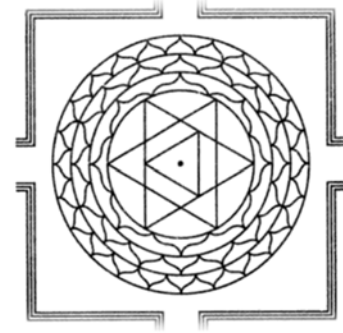
Sacred Journey and Circumabulation are equally important as cultural symbol as the territorial extension, and changes in people's attitudes and behaviours show the process of existence – maintenance – transformation and adaptation. This finally unites to make a whole – a unity – that is how sacredscapes become holy²⁸.

²⁸ Singh P.B Rana, Hindu Tradition of Pilgrimage; *Sacredscape & pilgrimage system: Some reflections*; May 2012, Pg -92

The Yatra/Circumbulation starts with a holy bath in river Ganga followed by a visit to the Vindhyavasini temple, then to Kshterapal Bhairav, Baal Roop Bandhua Hanuman, Kali Koh, Bhoothnath temple, Gerua Talab, Mukteshwar Mahadev/ Motiya Talab, Sita Kund, Asht Bhuja and Bhairo kund, Kankaal Kali in Akhori village, Puroshottam Rameshwaram in Shivpur Bazaar, MahaTarapeeth (one among the ten Mahavidyas), Sankhata Goddess, Chamunda Devi and then back to Vindhyavasini, the centre or core of this Trikoniey Yatra.



Dandi Swami Shri Mathura Das at Yog Maya Temple, Vindhyachal



As mentioned by Dandi Swami Mathura Das, “the famous concept recognised by the people of this region is trikon or trinity. It’s not a contemporary belief but an ancient tradition. During Navaratri, the devotees undertake the Trikon parikrama or circumambulation of these very hills. Guru Shankaracharya as well as Devi Lopamudra have characterized the Trikona as a physical instrument protected by 52 Bhairavas or Tantric deities and 64 Yoginis or female priests who are invisible to the naked eye. The Trikon just like any other triangle has three points. On the eastern side, there is Devi Mahalakshmi who is also known as Vindhyavasini in this avatar. On the south is Devi MahaKali and on the west is Mahasaraswati, locally known as Ashtabhuj (eight-armed one) avatar.

The Trikon aside from having three corners also has a bindu or dot in its centre. The Krishna Yoga Maya Mandir where we are currently sitting is the bindu in the center of this triangle. It is believed that each of Vindhyachal’s Shakti Peethas has special significance in the Trikon Parikrama as these three shrines – Vindhyavasini, Ashtbhuj and Kalikoh create a Trilogy. This trio of Shakti or divine feminine energies makes Vindhyanchal an important Shakti peetha.

Vindhyavasini Shrine



Goddess Vindhyavasini

gives both liberation (moksha) and material pleasures (bhoga) to her devotees. However, the *Devi Mahatmya* looks at Vindhyavasini as one of the many incarnations of a generic Great Goddess.

त्रिशूल मुण्ड धारिणी, धरा विघात हारिणी।
गृहे-गृहे निवासिनी, भजामि विन्ध्यवासिनी॥

According to *Vindhya Mahatmya*, the Great Goddess Vindhyavasini or Bindu Vasini (one who resides at the centre) manifests herself in three *mahadevis* who are differentiated by the quality of the three *gunas* of *sattva* (or goodness as Mahasaraswati), *tamas* (or darkness as Mahakali) and *rajas* (or activity as Mahalakshmi). These three incarnates then further transform themselves as Ashtabhuj, Kalikoh and Vindhyavasini respectively.

One of the most ancient Goddesses, Vindhyavasini was considered to be an independent deity and force for a long time before she came to be associated with Krishna's story. According to other mythologies, Vindhyavasini was the Great Goddess or the single Adisakti or primal energy of the universe. She has been referred to as 'Mahadevi' or the Great Goddess in many ancient hymns that are found in *Mahabharata*, where she is said to be residing in the Vindhyas. She also had a powerful association with nature, and was believed to "dwell in the mountains".

In the *Vindhya Mahatmya*, there are around 2000 verses that describe the glory of the Goddess and her sacred residing place. It also explains how the Goddess

The temple is one of the most revered Shaktipeeths of India. Vindhyavasini Devi is also

popularly known as Kajala Devi and attracts most pilgrims during the month of April (Chaitra) and September -October (Sharad). This temple has a sanctum sanctorum comprising several other small shrines of other deities like Shiva, Radha-Krishna, Bhairon, Hanuman and Saraswati. The daily ritualistic practices include –

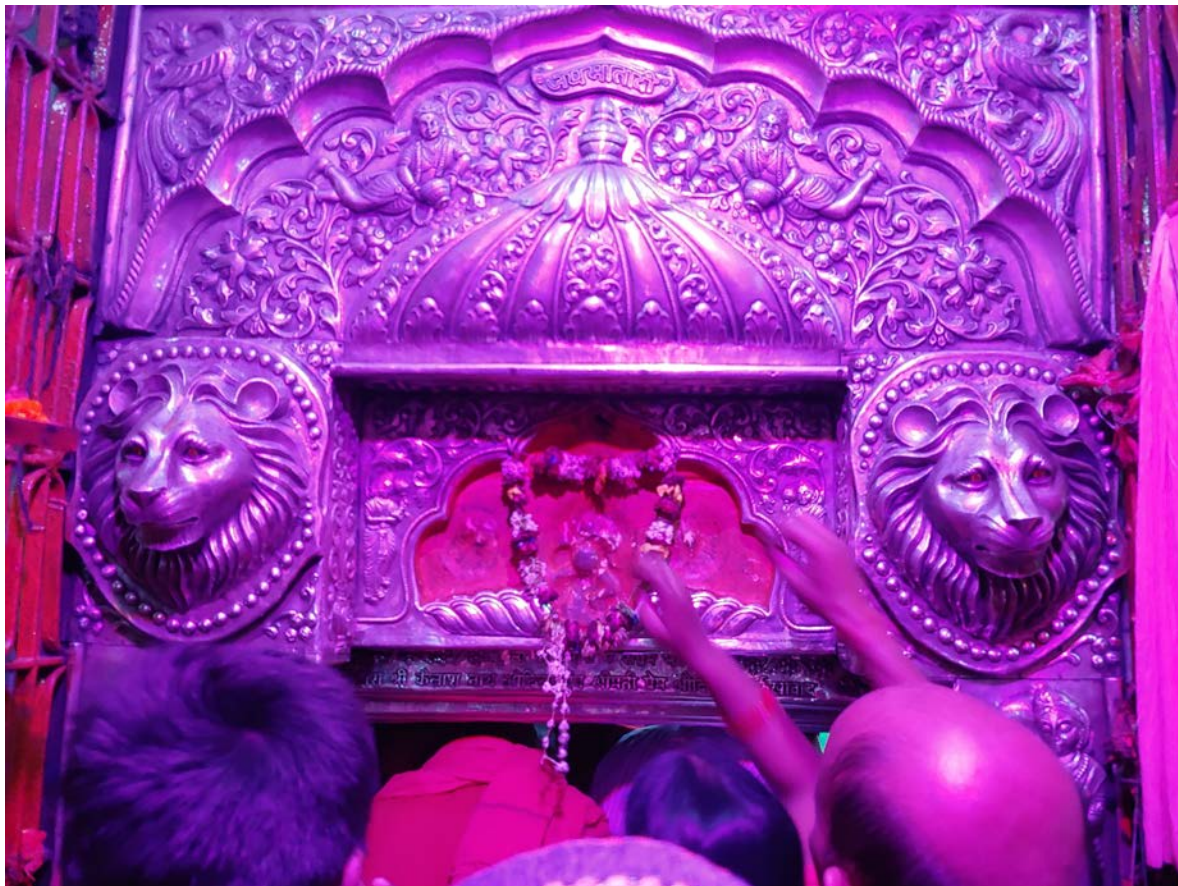


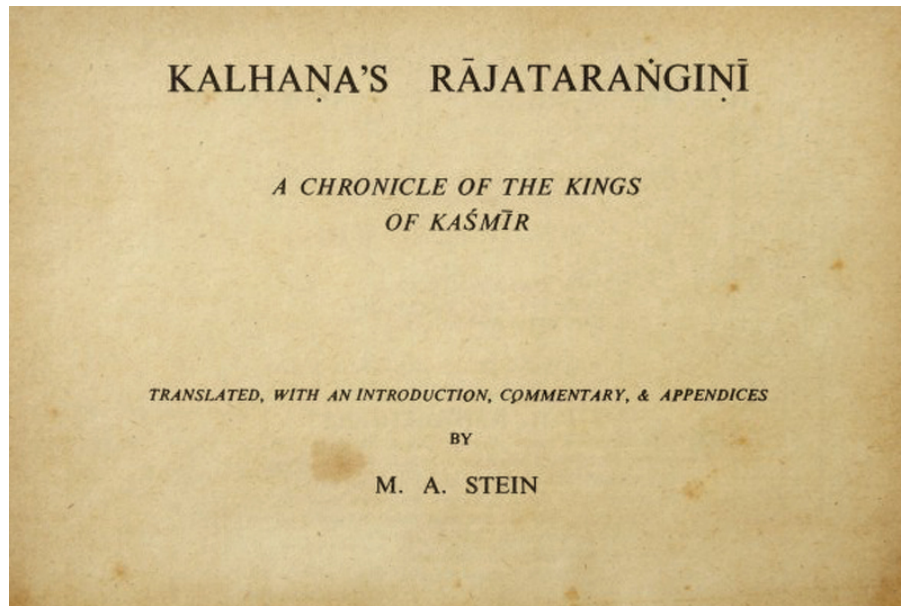
Figure 80 Priest at Vindhyavasini temple reciting the Durga Shapshati

Shringaar; and *Bhog* or food offering to the Goddess.

times a day;

People usually chant Shaptchandi Verses as an offering to the Goddess, especially during the two Navratris. Sacrificing animal has also been part of the daily ritual of the temple.





In Rajtarangini (a historical chronicle), the descriptions by historian Kallan (Kalhan) Bhat of Kashmir reinforce the belief of the people in the divine in the name of Brahmarvasini. He writes: Ganga, after leaving Gaumukh, reaches the Vindhyan region, after moving out of Vindhya Mountain and worshipping Goddess Vindhyavasini, it proceeds towards Gangasagar.

The glory and significance of Vindhyachal has also been described by Yahovarman, a king of Kannauj in the 8th Century. He wrote a historical poem in Prakrit script known as "Gaudhavadh Poetry". In the shlokas he writes about Vindhyachal that at the lion's doorway of the Goddess crores of metal bells swing.



Asht-Bhuja Temple



Goddess Asht -Bhuja

According to mythology, Ashtbhuja Saraswati was the Goddess born to Yashoda and Nanda as the divine girl-child who took her eight-armed form to announce to Krishna's evil uncle Kamsa that his slayer had been born. She then returned to the hills of the Vindhyas where she continues to reside. Ashtbhuja is one of the three feminine shaktis residing in Vindhyanchal and popularly known as Yogmaya.

As mentioned by Dandi Swami Mathura Das ji (Yogmaya Temple) -The ancient texts mention four Yugas/eras, if during any of those yugas/ era the social, cultural or economic deprivation of the country increases, if crime and dishonesty are on the rise and truth and the sanctity of the Ganga and the Gou are on a decline then the eternal soul of god descends upon earth in their desired avatar to set things back on course again through prayer. In the same manner when Shree Krishna's soul decided to reincarnate itself in the Brajmandal region in the form of a woman, that reincarnation of Shree Krishna is known as Shree Krishna Yoga Maya and is the goddess of the entire Vindhyagiri region since she resides here.

Kali Koh



Kali Koh temple is dedicated to Kali Ma and is in the form of a cave. Goddess Kali is believed to have been incarnated to kill the demon Rakta Beej (Demon) who had a boon that every droplet of his blood would give birth to another Raktabeej right away. This made killing the demon extremely difficult. It is believed that Ma Kali stretched her tongue across the ground, licked all the blood and swallowed all his duplicates.

Sita Kund

Sita Kund is located on the west side of the Ashtabhuj temple. It is believed that after construction of the kund, Sita ji established a Shivalay near the pond and this place came to be known as Sitieshwar. On the west side of Sita Kund, is the Ram Kund.



Figure 81 Sita Kund

Motia and Gerua Talab



Figure 82 Devotees sitting near Motia Talab

The two ponds of Motia and Gerua Talab fall on the route from Kali Koh and Ashtabhujia. The Shiva lingam of Mukteshwar Nath is established on the northern bank of Motia Sarovar. It is believed that devotees attain salvation by bathing in ponds, worshipping in the nearby temples after meditation. There is a belief that by bathing here after a dog bite, one can be healed immediately. Regarding the pond, it is written in the Puranas that any devotee who bathes in this lake and worships Mukteshwar Nath ji is freed from his sins.



Figure 83 Gerua Talab at Vindhyanchal



Figure 85 Motia Talab has rich flora and fauna



Figure 84 Mukteshwar Nath Temple, Vindhyanchal

Budhenath Mandir



The temple of Baba Budhenath situated on Satti Road in Rajapur area is very old and based on Bundeli architectural style. Notably, the temple has been patronized by the kings of Jammu and Kashmir and Nepal. Even today the Ashtadhatu-made bells provided by the kings adorn the temple. According to the temple priest Dr. Yogananda Giri, this place is considered the resting place of Goddess Parvati and Lord Shankar. It is believed that every day Lord Shankar comes here from Kashi Vishwanath.



Figure 86 King Birendra of Nepal

It is believed that Kashi was established by Vishwakarma's craftsmen in the *agra* or foremost *bhaag* (part) of Mahadev's trident on his orders. And on the insistence of Mata Parvati while going to Kashi from Mount Kailash, Bholenath asked Vishwakarma to build a place called Girijapur on the back of the Trishul. This place is considered to be Mirzapur. Mata Parvati rests in the Baba Budhenath temple located here. Lord Bholenath comes with Nandi every day to meet Maa Parvati and fulfills all the wishes of the devotees visiting the temple.

Raja Amar Singh, father of Maharaja Hari Singh, the last ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, provided a huge bell of Ashtadhatu on behalf of his ancestors, as did the

King of Nepal, King Birendra.

Even today both the historic bells adorn the temple. Along with Kashi Vishwanath temple, Baba Budehenath temple was also renovated by Queen Ahilyabai Holkar. The maintenance and service work of the temple has also been done by the kings of Rewa, Dumraon and Kashi princely states.



Figure 87 Idol of Baba Budhenath



Figure 88 Gandharvas (Celestial Gods) playing instruments adorn the entire complex of Budhenath temple



Figure 89 A massive brass bell donated by Nepal king Raja Birendra Singh to the Budhenath Temple



Figure 90 Pinnacle of a temple along with birds, Kaccheri Ghat

Kantit Sharif Dargah

Close to Vindhyachal is the village of Kantit²⁹ where the famous Dargah of Sufi Saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti's nephew Sufi Ismail Chisti is situated. According to Rajab (Hijri/Islamic Calendar) during 5th, 6th and 7th date of every month, the festival of Urs is celebrated here. Thousands of devotees from every sect and religion pay their obeisance and offer Shirni (Sweets), Tasbi (Rosary) and Chadarein (Cloth sheets).

The Dargah is situated on a sand mound and is a testimony to communal harmony. As an example of harmony, the first chadar is always mounted by the descendants of Jawahar Kasera, a resident of Makri khoh.

The Urs celebrated here starts with the reciting of holy Quran. It is relevant to state here that the first sheets are always offered by a specific community or sect and only then any other sheet can be offered, after this Shirni (sweets) is offered and the Urs starts.

The Urs of Kantit Sharif is governed by Islamic principles but the devotees who participate in it are not only Muslims, but from other religions as well, who participate with complete belief and faith.

The story behind the arrival of Khwaja Ismail Shah Chishti



Figure 92 Kantit Sharif Dargah resonate the harmony and unity among masses

²⁹ The term 'Kantit' comes in Srimad Bhagavad Purana written by Maharishi Ved Vyas, it has been the capital of Shiva kings, its mention can be found in the book *Dark Age of India* by the famous archaeologist and historian, Dr. Kashi Prasad Jayaswal and according to historical evidences, Kantit was the capital of the Nagavanshiya Vakataka dynasty during the 3rd century.

states that he accompanied Moinuddin Chisti when he came to India. Later he was given the luxury and khilafat of Mirzapur. There is a saying that when Ismail Chishti came to Mirzapur the then ruler forbade him to draw water from the river, in return Hazrat diverted the river stream and demolished the fort with his influence and power. Apart from this, many stories about Hazrat Ismail abound.



Figure 93 Devotee offering prayers at Kantit Sharif Dargah



Figure 94 Kantit Sharif Dargah (inside view)



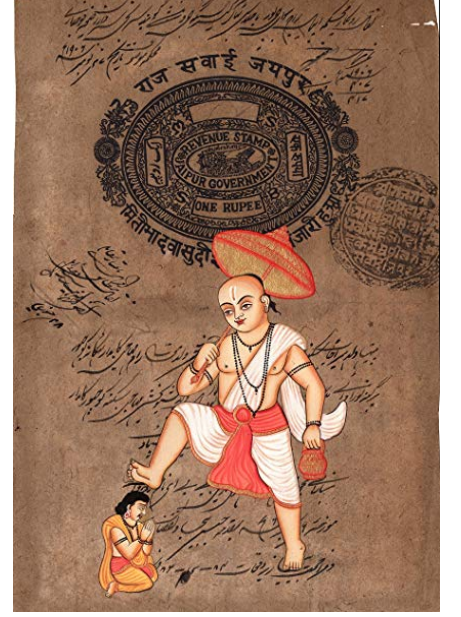
Figure 95 On Thursdays temporary shops like these are set up near Kantit Sharif Dargah



Figure 96 A woman looking for trinkets at a shop near Kantit Sharfi Dargah

Baman Mandir

The Baman temple is near Ojhala-Ganga river confluence and in close proximity to Ojhala ka Pul. According to Hindu mythology, the noble demon king Mahabali held a sacrifice and gift giving ceremony to consolidate his power, and Lord Vishnu appeared at this ceremony as a dwarf mendicant Brahmin called Vamana. When Vamana's turn came to receive a gift, Mahabali offered him whatever riches and material wealth he wanted, but Vamana refused everything and stated he would just like three paces of land. Mahabali found the dwarf's request amusing and granted it. Vamana then grew into a giant of cosmic proportions. In one step he covered the earth and in the next, the heavens, and for the third, Mahabali offered his head on which Vamana stepped, sending the demon king to the *Patala*³⁰ (netherworld).



येन बद्धो बलि राजा, दानवेन्द्रो महाबलः ।

तेन त्वां मनुबध्नामि, रक्षंमाचल माचल ॥

Or

O Mahabali king Bali I tie you this sacred thread which will protect you.



Figure 97 Baman Mandir premises (left), inside view of the temple (right)

³⁰ Prabhas Khand (Skanda Purana) Page 1040



Figure 98 St. Joseph Church, Wellesleyganj which now runs a school in the building



Figure 99 A Shiva Linga



Figure 100 A devotee performing sacred rituals during Sharad Purnima

Bhartrihari Memorial



Within the premises of Chunar Fort is the samadhi of Yogi Nath Bhartrihari, elder brother of King Vikramditya of Ujjain but he renounced his earlier he was the king of Ujjain. He renounced his coronation and became a disciple of Guru Goraknath and traveled widely across India and Nepal. His cave in Ujjain has a story whereby Bhartrihari was told by his guru to ask for alms from his wife. Only he be allowed to become a Shishya or student. Bhartrihari practiced 12 years of penance, got alms and then left for further journey. He traveled to Nepal, Alwar where his idols can be found and finally he came to Chunar. A quote from Bhartrihari's *Neeti Shatakam* can be seen at Figure 29.

Ghats of Mirzapur



Figure 101 A view of Ghats of Mirzapur as seen from the Shastri Setu

As per the list mentioned in the District publication; ‘Vindhya Mahotsav’ there were 27 Ghats in Mirzapur; majority of them have either been damaged or fallen into disuse. The names of them are: Fataha Ghat (built in 1857), Ghode Shaeed Ghat, Kacheri Ghat, Tarkeshwar Ghat (swept away), Bariya Ghat comprising separate Zanana and Mardana Ghats, Teleniya Ghat, Koniya Ghat, Sundar Ghat, Narayan Ghat, Badli Ghat (built in 1779), Baba Ghat, Gangaram Ghat, Trilochan Ghat, Heera Lal Ghat, Gau Ghat, Dau ji Ghat, Pakka Ghat (Built in 1885), Sankata Ghat, Naar Ghat (Pracheen Ghat), Rukhadd Ghat, Steamer Ghat, Chaube Ghat (Shamshan Ghat), Lalla Ghat, Bawan Ghat (near Ojhala-Ganga confluence).³¹

³¹ Vindhya Mahotsav, 1999, Page 18

Zanana or Pakka Ghat

Zanana Ghat remains the most active ghat of the town, being located in the central and the oldest part of the dense, active river front. This is one of the most elaborate ghats in Mirzapur. The steps leading down to the river are paved with buff coloured sandstone quarried at Chunar. Of the same material are built the two partitions running north-south from the river to the street. The central portion was used by women for bathing. The Ghat was built in the late eighteenth century by a local rich trader, Sri Bhagwandas Umar, for his wife's exclusive use.

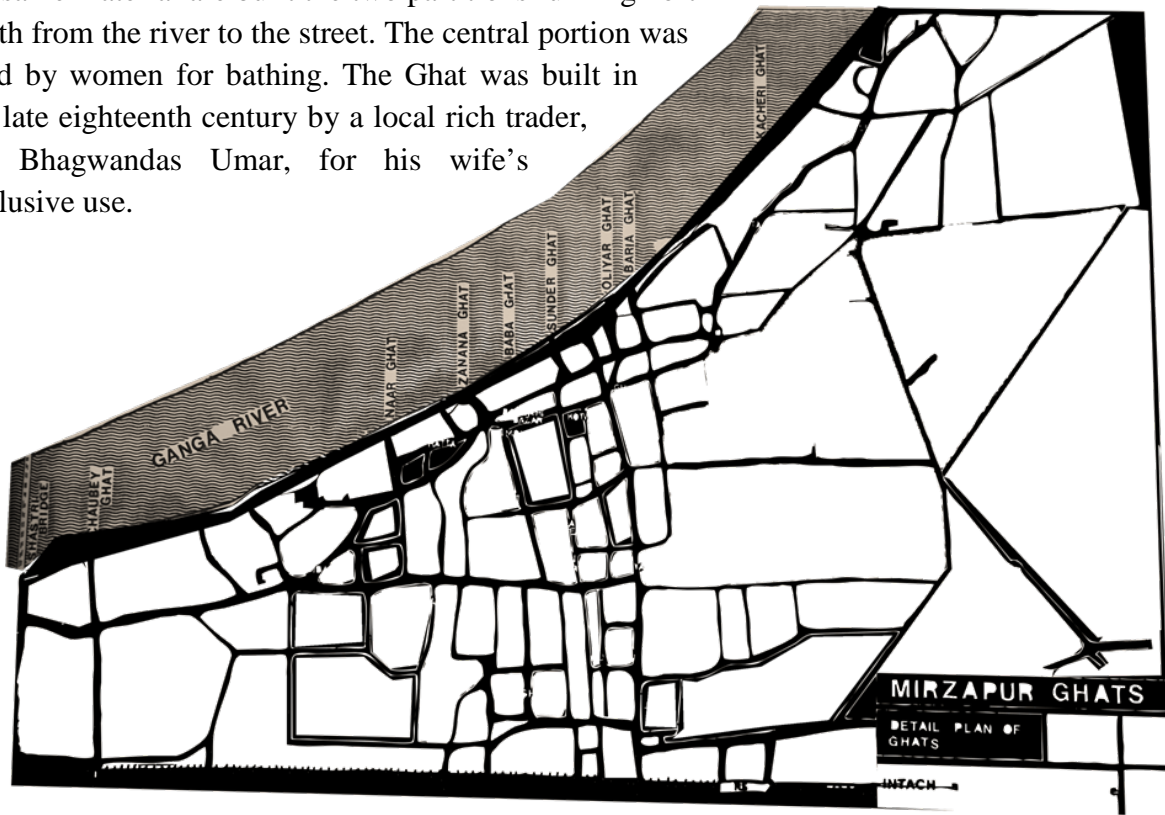




Figure 103 Zanana Ghat in 1986, Source: INTACH Report, 1986



Figure 102 Burrier Ghat



Figure 105 Zanana or Pakka Ghat in year 2019



Figure 104 A young priest gets ready for evening aarti at Pakka Ghat

Naar Ghat

At one time when Mirzapur was known as an important trading centre, Ganga Ghat had a major role to play. Goods were loaded onto large boats at this ghat and sent to Varanasi, Calcutta, Patna and other cities. Even today, inscriptions and prices written in English, Persian, and Hindi can be seen on old stone pillar here.



Figure 106 Naar Ghat is still one of the accessible Ghat both from the either side of the river



Figure 108 An old sanyasi taking an afternoon siesta at Burrier Ghat, Mirzapur



Figure 107 Sankata Ghat

Fairs and Festivals

Panchami ka Bharat Milaap



Figure 109 A view of Bharat Milaap at Chaube Tola, Mirzapur

According to Bholenath Pandey (President, Shree Ramleela Purani Dashmi Panchayati), the Bharat Milap Panchami of Purani Dashmi Ramlila Panchayati is a 650-years old performing tradition in Mirzapur. This Ramlila starts on the fourteenth day of the Kartik month (October-November), the same day when Bhagwan Shri Ram performed his father's *Pinda Daana* at Gaya and returned to Mirzapur. The specialty of this Ramlila is that it is staged daily and performed by the local performers with one episode a day. On the day of Vijay Dashami or the tenth day, after the 'battle' with Ravana, the effigies of Ravana and his main commanders are burnt. Finally after worshipping the Gods an elaborate enactment of Bharat Milaap (meeting of Rama with Bharat) at Purani Dashami at Chaubetola, the event concludes.





Figure 110 Bholenath Pandey, President, Ramleela Purani Dashmi Panchayati, Mirzapur



Figure 111 Visuals of Bharat Milap, Mirzapur



Figure 112 A devotee offering obeisance at Vindhyavasini temple

Navratri Mela

सृष्टि स्तिथि विनाशानां शक्तिभूते सनातनि।
गुणाश्रेय गुणमये नारायणि नमो स्तु ते ॥

Durga Navratri is the main festival of Vindhyachal region as Goddess Vindhyavasini is prayed to and honored by each family of Vindhyachal. It is believed that during this period the Devi's energy and divine power flows through all devotees. During Navratri, a large number of pilgrims also come from different part of the country to conduct special Puja/rituals like **Chandi Path**, **Durga Shaptshati** or other sacred ritual (**Anushthan**) at Vindhyachal. The Navratris occur twice in a year consisting of nine sacred days and nights dedicated to the Goddess's nine forms. One month is **Chaitra** (March–April) and the other is **Ashvin** (September–October). This basically divides the lunar year into two seasons. During this period devotees of Durga and other devout Hindus who seek empowerment from the goddess keep fast, eating only fruits and *Sattvik*

*Ahaar*³². It has been said that the Sattvik food diet helps in developing a positive frame of mind high energy and purity.

'Pearson (1996: 267) has lucidly described the main daily works of such devotees as: their vows (vrata) may consist of sleeping on the ground, not sleeping at all, or only sleeping for three hours a day. These acts are often combined with daily recitations of the Durgasaptashati. Devotees either recite the text themselves in their own homes if they are literate, or listen to its being recited at the temple.'

(Source: Hindu Tradition of Pilgrimage, Rana PB Singh, Page 143)



Figure 113 Shiv Linga and Nandi in the Vindhyavasini complex

During these nine days nine Goddesses are worshiped, one each day, as per their names described in the "Devi Kavacha" of the Chandipatha scripture also known as the Devi Bhagvatpurana or Devi Mahatmya ("Glory of the Goddess").

³²*Sattvik* diet is a diet based on foods in ayurvedic and yogic literature that contain the quality (*Guna*) *sattva*.

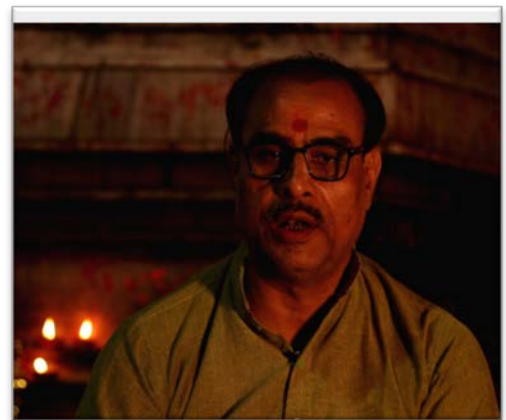
Sharad Poornima Festival

As per the belief system and stated by a priest from Vindhyavasini temple, Sharad *Poornima* has



a significance related to the churning of the ocean by *Devas* (Gods) and *Asuras* (Demons).

The fourteen elements were said to have been regurgitated from this churning of the ocean. One of these elements was the moon, which later took its place in the universe. It is also considered as a symbol of beauty due to its pacifying effect. The *Chandra Dwitiya (tithi)* has a special reverence and on the occasion of full moon during *Sharad Poornima*; its significance is further enhanced. Therefore, this full moon day known as *Sharad Poornima* is a festival rooted in deep faith and reverence.



As mentioned by Shri. Vishwabandhu Mishra, in Vedic lore *Amavasya* and *Poornima* are considered sisters; where *Amavasya* is *Shyama* (dark) and *Poornima* is *Ujjawalta* (light).

चन्द्रमामनसोजाताश्चिशोसूर्योअजायत।
श्रोतावायुश्चप्राणश्चमुखंदाग्निरजायत॥

(*Rigveda; Purus Sukta*)

Sharad Poornima as festival and its connection with Cosmology and Astrology

According to Vishwabandhu Mishra, Head Priest of Vindhyavasini Temple, astrology and cosmology are interrelated with the Sanatan festivities. He explains that Moon is considered as a symbol of calmness and serenity and therefore it said to reduce the ill effects of human antagonism. Those facing difficulties in life due to anger and anxiety are often advised by astrologers to wear Pearl which reflects the qualities of the Moon.

The Moon is believed to provide three main elements of peace, beauty and calmness. Moon is the most important among all the celestial bodies and Sharad Poornima is considered as a day of fulfilment when god *Dhanvantari*³³ gives out the nectar to the believers.

People stay awake during night and they keep *kheer* in the open sky and ask the moon to bestow them with good health, pure mind and beauty. This ancient tradition, which has been propounded by the sages, is still very popular.

The Ministry of Ayush³⁴, conducted a study with a camp in Chhattisgarh to study indigenous systems of medicine and traditional practices and their co-relation to cures for asthma and bronchitis.

On *Sharad Poornima*, any ritual, prayer and austere activity performed at the altar of the goddess is said to bring her blessings. It is also believed that the moon drips nectar on *Sharad Ritu* as it shines with the *sixteen kalas* which purify body and soul.

³³ Dhanvantari is the Hindu god of medicine and an avatar of Lord Mahavishnu. He mentioned in the Puranas as the god of Ayurveda.

³⁴ Practices at an Ayush health camp for asthma in Pendra, Chhattisgarh; Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative medicine, Source: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3255446



Figure 114 Raas Lila

Sharad Poornima has special significance as the day signifies that Raas Lila was initiated on this auspicious occasion by Lord Krishna in Vrindavan.

Kartik Snana & Rituals

During the month of Kartik, lighting lamps in the temples of Shiv, Chandi, Surya and other deities is considered auspicious. The God Vishnu is greeted with flowers. It is believed that doing special prayers during this month brings the fruit of Ashvamedha Yagnya. A person is supposed to take a bath on Poornima (full moon day) of the month of Kartik which has a special significance.

The *Pratipada* (first tithi of each Hindu calendar month) of *Kartik* Month³⁵ has a special meaning. On this day unmarried girls take *Ganga Snana* and fast every day during this month to please Lord Vishnu to get the boon of a good married life.

After morning bath, Radha-Krishna must be worshipped with Tulsi (basil), Peepal and Aanvla. Performing circumambulations of all the deities has been is considered important. Performing a Vishnu puja considered auspicious and donating lamps in the evening has special relevance.

Prayers are offered continuously for a month on a daily basis for *Kartik Poornima*.



Figure 115 Devotees praying Banana and Tulsi after Ganga Snana

Devotees praying Banana and Tulsi after Ganga Snana

³⁵ The significance of Kartik month is also mentioned in the Kalyan Khand of Skanda Purana.

Ojhala ka Mela

The Ojhala-ka-Pul is a distinctive and well-known architectural attraction within Mirzapur. It has been a popular location for holding of a traditional fair or Mela and Kajri festival on *Bhadrapada Shukla Dwadashi* (September-October). Near Ojhala is a lake named after Bali, in which rowing competitions are held and by the lakeside a Kajri singing competition or Kajali Dangal is organised. A fair on the day of Nag Panchami in the month of Saavan (July-August) is also held here.



Figure 116 Glimpse of local shop at Ojhala Fair

Kajri Mela

According to a belief Kajri song was written to please mother goddess Vindhyavasini by a Muslim poet. After listening to the song the Goddess granted the poet his wish and said whosoever would sing this song would get instant blessings from her. Since then, before the start of a Kajli Dangal in Mirzapur area, the poets have to write their first creation dedicated to mother Goddess Vindhyavasini.



Figure 117 Kajari Mahotsav at Mirzapur

Literature, Languages and Communities



Figure 118 Stamp of Dr. KP Jayaswal

The literary world of Mirzapur has been very rich and contributed immensely to the development of Hindi literature in the country. Mirzapur emerged on the country's literary scene in the first half of the 19th century. During the time of Bharatendu Harishchandra, known as the father of modern Hindi literature, a local patron of arts Badrinath Choudhary turned his *haveli* into a centre of Lavanai tradition originating in Janupur and the Kajali tradition of Mirzapur. As a result of such initiatives, the weekly *Matwala* was published (Kolkata, 1923) by Mahadev Prasad Seth, Shiv Poojan Sahai and Suryakant Tripathi Nirala with Nirala's poem 'Juhi ki Kali' on the front page of the weekly. Dr. Kashi Prasad Jayaswal (1881-1937), a local historian of Mirzapur, has written extensively on numismatics and archaeology (a commemorative stamp in his honour was issued by GOI- Figure 114



Figure 119 Research Literatures based on Vindhyanchal-Mirzapur region

above) as narrated by Dr. Arjun Das Kesari to the INTACH Team. Dr. Kesari himself has done extensive research on the rich tradition of the communities and ethnographical traits of the Sonbhadra and Mirzapur region. According to him, Mirzapur has also contributed significantly

to the rich literary tradition of Varanasi. The Hindi newspaper called *Aryan Memorandum* was published here for the first time and a city press Nagari Press was established here by the British to publish small booklets written in vernacular languages to propagate Christianity.

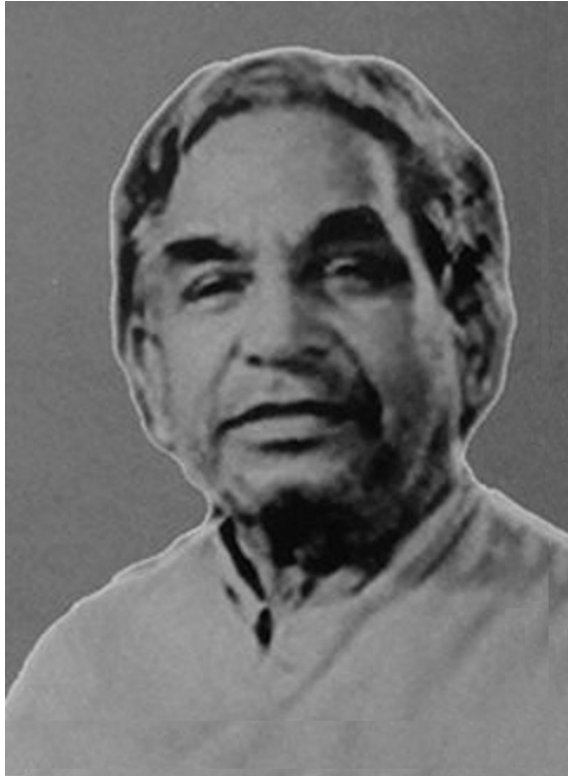
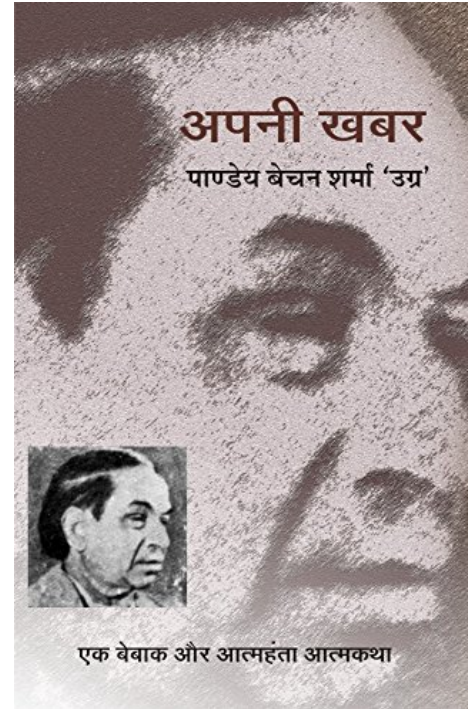


Figure 120 Pandey Bechain Sharma 'Ugr'

The men of letters belonging to Mirzapur made a marked contribution towards national awakening and the literature of Bharatendu era. The literary groups of Mirzapur such as Matwala-Mandal were influenced by the renaissance sweeping through Hindi literature during the Bharatendu era. A number of renowned journals of literature such as Nagari Neerad (weekly 1893) and Anand Kadambini (Monthly, 1881) both edited by

Premghan and, Matwala

(Weekly, 1923) by Mahadev Prasad Seth and Nirala were created during this period. Other writers of national fame who were associated with Mirzapur included: Badrinarain Chaudhari, Premchand, Ramchandra Shukla, Pandey Bechain Sharma Ugra, Bang Mahila, Bhagwan Das and the famous historian Kashi Prasad Jayaswal.



अमिय गरल शशिशेकर रविकर, रागविराग भरा प्याला

पीते हैं जो साधक उनका प्यारा है यह 'मतवाला' ॥

Matwala Magazine's opening lines which used to be at the beginning of every release.

मेरा पिता कौड !

जब सन्ध्याको रानी-
 भारती मलामले में चार
 निवला कर्मिल और दो
 पैसा मन्त्र मन्त्राण्ड लेकर
 आस्था की आधीको दहीन
 किया कर्मिल । जो लोग
 दो कपडा मलामले मलामी
 मेरे पलकेके, पला पैसा
 जन्म कर दो कले कर
 टोक मन्त्र पर किया रोक-
 टोक सीधे पहुँच जाईगा ।
 मन्त्रा-मन्त्राण्ड पक्षपाती
 होके चारण की० पी०की
 कलेक सन्ध्यादेर द्वारा
 कर्मिक दहिना सेनादी मुने
 अधिक प्साण्ड है, क्योंकि
 इसमें हम दोनोंका साम है



मतवाला

विद्यापनका दर ।

जो मन्त्राण्ड एक कर्म
 किये हुएमाना आयेगा मन
 प्रति दुष्क जनि मन्त्राण्ड
 आयेके दिग्गजाके पैसाके
 जायगी । जो कर्मिके कि
 एक दरका देवा, सीन
 मेके किये दुष्क और
 महीनेके किये विद्यापन
 जायगा । विद्यापन
 महीनेके मन्त्राण्ड मही कि
 जायगा । विद्यापनकी
 पाँच दर हालमें पैसाके
 की जायगी । विद्या
 देकर ही कर्मिके
 हूँ ही जायगी । जो
 पत्र बैठवाना हो तो
 मन्त्राण्ड कर्मिके ।

अमिष-गरल, शशिशेकर-रविकर, रागनविराग भरा प्याला पीते हैं जो साधक उनका प्यारा है यह 'मतवाला' ॥

(जति प्याला दो पैसा मन्त्र)

(कार्तिक मेलक दो कपडा पैसा)

वर्ष १] कलकत्ता, सम्पादन कृष्ण १, १९००, शुनिवार । [संख्या

सन्ध्या-सुन्दरी ।

“मिराला”

दिवसापमन्त्रका समय,
 वेचमय आसमानसे उतर रही है
 वह सन्ध्या-सुन्दरी खरी सी
 खीरे खीरे खीरे,
 मिमिराण्डलमें खंचलकका नहीं कहीं आभास,
 मधुर मधुर है रोनेो उसके अघर,—
 किन्तु उम्र मन्वीर—खड़ी है उनमें हास्यविलास ;
 हमका है तो केवल काम एक,
 मूधा हुआ उन मधुपरासे काले काले कालोमें
 इन्द्रपदावकी राजीका कह करता है अमिषेक ।
 आलस्यकी सी हवा
 किन्तु कोमलताकी वह काली—
 सभी नीरवकाके कंधे पर डाले खीरे
 लाद तो अम्बर-वधसे खाली ।
 नहीं कलके कलके हाथोमें खीरे खीरे,
 नहीं रोना खीरे, अम्बर-राज-आलाप,
 नारीमें भी मन्-मन् मन्-मन् मन्-मन् नदी,
 सिर्फ एक आन्वक मन्त्रसा “पुन-पुन-पुन”

स्वोमन्त्राण्डमें— जगलीकलमें—
 सोनी रान्त मन्वीर पर पस आकास कमिठिनी-
 सौन्दर्यगर्विता मरिजाके अतिविलसुल मन्त्राण्डमें—
 धीर धीर मन्वीर मिराल पर दिग्गजि-अटल-अच
 उन्मलकटकाण्ड-मन्त्र-चनगर्जक कलाधिरकलमें—
 चिदिमें—जलमें मन्में—अनिल-आनलमें—
 सिर्फ एक आन्वक मन्त्रसा “पुन-पुन-पुन”
 है मूत्र रहा मन् कहीं,—
 और क्या है ? कुछ नहीं ।
 मरिजाकी वह नहीं पहली खाली
 धके हुए जीवोंकी वह सन्नेह, प्याला एक पिलाकी,
 सुखानी उन्हें अंक पर कल्पने,
 दिग्गजी फिर विस्मृतिके किलने खीरे कल्पने !
 और जब मन्वीरालकी मिरालकलमें हो जायगी वह
 कथिका मन् जाला अम्बरमन्,
 मिरालपुर कमनीय कलामों
 आन निवला पहुँचा है एक विदाले ।



Figure 121 Salil Pandey, Writer-Blogger and son of Late Bhavdey Pandey, eminent scholar of Mirzapur

“The literary renaissance in context of Mirzapur dates backs to the 1960-65 and the credit goes to Dr Bhavdey Pandey. He is also credited with introducing several other writers and poets such as Acharya Shukla ji, Bang Mahila, Surykant Tripathi Nirala, Matwala, Prem Ghan ji and Pandey Vichan Shukla and so on.”

Salil Pandey,

Writer and Son of Late. Bhavdey Pandey



Figure 122 Badrinarayan Chaudhary 'Premghan'

“Premghan” (1855-1922) was born in Mirzapur, (UP) in a wealthy family. His background gave him the opportunity to study music and literature and he became a close associate of Bhartendu Harishchandra and like him, contributed significantly to the development of modern Hindi. He wrote prolifically, his writing including both poetry and prose. Much of his sangeet kavya prescribes ragas as well as the musical form he believed would be appropriate for its rendition. However, none of the compilations of his writings contain musical notations.

तेरे इश्क में हमने दिल को जलाया

तेरे इश्क में हमने दिल को जलाया

कसम सर की तेरे, मज़ा कुछ न आया

नज़र खार की शकल आते हैं सब गुल
इन आँखों में जब से तू आकर समाया

असर हो न क्यों दिल में दिल से जो चाहे
मसल सच है, जो उसको ढूँढ़ा वो पाया

चमन में है बरसात की आमदआमद-
अहा आसमाँ पर सियह अब्र छाया

मचाया है मोरों ने क्या शोरेमैहशर-
पपीहों ने क्या पुरगजब रट लगाया-

तुझे शैख जिसने बनाया है मोमिन
हमें भी है हिन्दू उसी ने बनाया

परीशाँ हो क्यों अब्रेबेखुद भला तुम-
कहो किस सितमगर से है दिल लगाया

- बद्रीनारायण उपाध्याय 'प्रेमघन'

जूही की कली

(सूर्यकांत त्रिपाठी 'निराला')

विजनवल्लरी पर-वन-

सोती थी सुहागभरी-मग्न-स्वप्न-स्नेह-

अमलजूही की कली-तरुणी-तनु-कोमल-,

दृग बन्द किये, शिथिलपत्रांक में।-

वासन्ती निशा थी;

विरहसंग छोड़-प्रिया-विधुर-

किसी दूर देश में था पवन

जिसे कहते हैं मलयानिल।

आई याद बिछुड़ने से मिलन की वह मधुर बात,

आई याद चाँदनी की धुली हुई आधी रात,

आई याद कान्ता की कम्पित कमनीय गात,

फिर क्या? पवन

उपवनकानन-गिरि-सरित गहन-सर-

कुञ्जपुंजों को पारकर-लता-

पहुँचा जहां उसने की केलि

कलीसाथ।-खिली-

सोती थी,

जाने कहो कैसे प्रियआगमन वह-?

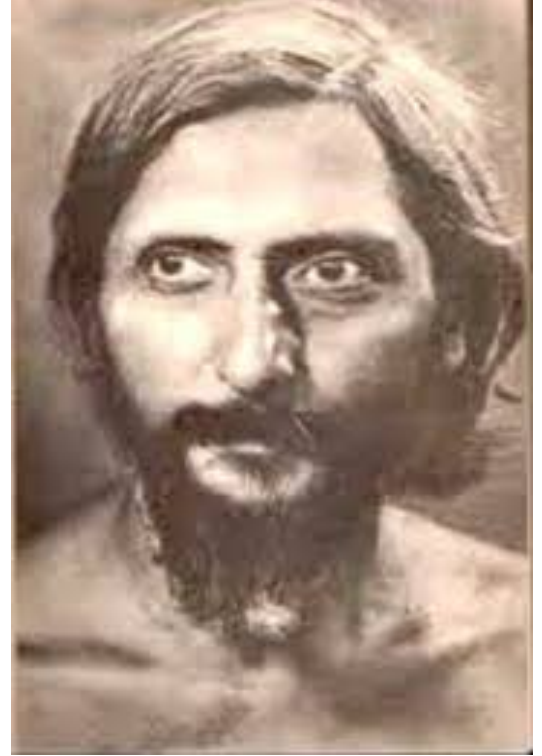


Figure 123 Surya Kant Tripathi 'Nirala'

Famous poem; Juhi Ki Kali of 'Nirala' was published on the front page of Matwala magazine after it was not accepted by Saraswati magazine in Allahabad (Prayagraj).

नायक ने चूमे कपोल,
बोल उठी वल्लरी की लड़ी जैसे हिंडोल।
इस पर भी जागी नहीं,
चूकक्षमा मांगी नहीं-,
निद्रालस बंकिम विशाल नेत्र मूंदे रही-
किम्वा मतवाली थी यौवन की मदिरा पिये
कौन कहे?
निर्दय उस नायक ने
निपट निठुराई की,
कि झोंकों की झड़ियों से
सुन्दर सुकुमार देह सारी झकझोर डाली,
मसल दिये गोरे कपोल गोल,
चौंक पड़ी युवति-
चकित चितवन निज चारों ओर पेर,
हेर प्यारे की सेज पास,
नम्रमुख हंसी, खिली
खेल रंग प्यारे संग।

रुख से परदा उठा दे ज़रा साक्रिया

बस अभी रंगमहफ़िल बदल जायेगा-ए-
है जो बेहोश वो होश में आयेगा
गिरनेवाला है जो वो संभल जायेगा

तुम तसल्ली ना दो सिर्फ़ बैठे रहो
वक़्त कुछ मेरे मरने का टल जायेगा
क्या ये कम है मसीहा के रहने ही से
मौत का भी इरादा बदल जायेगा

मेरा दामन तो जल ही चुका है मगर
आँच तुम पर भी आये गंवारा नहीं
मेरे आँसू ना पोंछो खुदा के लिये
वरना दामन तुम्हारा भी जल जायेगा

तीर की जाँ है दिल, दिल की जाँ तीर है
तीर को ना यूँ खींचो कहा मान लो
तीर खींचा तो दिल भी निकल आयेगा
दिल जो निकला तो दम भी निकल जायेगा

फूल कुछ इस तरह तोड़ ऐ बाग़बाँ
शाख़ हिलने ना पाये ना आवाज़ हो
वरना गुलशन पे रौनक ना फिर आयेगी
हर कली का दिल जो दहल जायेगा

मेरी फ़रियाद से वो तड़प जायेंगे



Figure 124 Anwar Mirzapuri, Urdu Poet and Shayar

मेरे दिल को मलाल इसका होगा मगर
क्या ये कम है वो बेनकाब आर्येंगे
मरनेवाले का अरमाँ निकल जायेगा

इसके हँसने में राने का अन्दाज़ है
खाक उड़ाने में फ़रियाद का राज़ है
इसको छेड़ो ना 'अनवर' खुदा के लिये
वरना बीमार का दम निकल जायेगा

- अनवर मिर्ज़ापुरी

“Such was the powerful presence of Anwar Mirzapuri that in whatever Mushaira (Poetic Symposium) he participated in, it was bound to achieve tremendous success, no matter what. Such was the aura of Anwar Mirzapuri.”

Dr. Dilshad Khan (MBBS)

Writer-Poet

Mirzapur



Languages and Communities

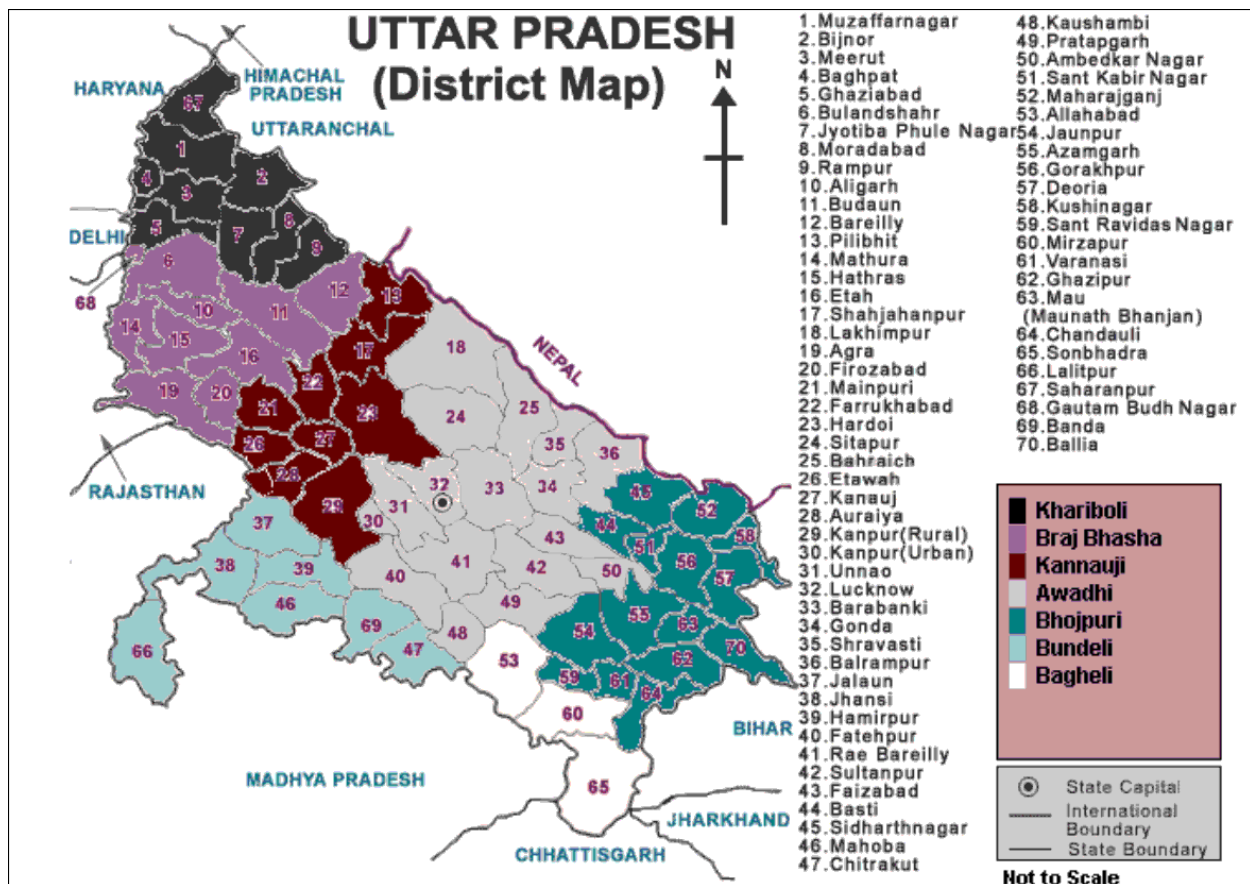


Figure 125 A map showing the distribution of various native languages across the different districts of Uttar Pradesh state, India³⁶.

The common languages spoken in the Vindhyanhcal region are Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and Bengali. The



Figure 126 Deepak Kumar Kesharwani, Director, Vindhya Sanskriti Shodh Samiti, Sonbhadra

region of Vindhyanhcal (inclusive of Mirzapur and Sonbhadra) has several active dialects of which Bhojpuri dominates. According to Sh. Deepak Kumar the Dhulawal region is connected to Mirzapur's language. There at the end of every word they use 'va' which makes it aava, jaava, khaava, etc; 'ie' is also used at the end like aieli, gaieli etc in some areas. He has also written a book *The Tribal Folk culture, Literature and Art* that has been published by the Central Hindi Institute, Delhi.

³⁶ Source: Wikipedia, Sayed Mohammad Faiz Haider

In Sonbhadra district, idioms, folk proverbs, puzzles are very famous, for example there is one idiom ‘*Chaar din chadhe, adhai Kos*’ which means that you travelled a lot, climbed a lot, yet you have only covered a small distance.



“People in Mirzapur say aava, jaava, khaava, peeva, but we use ‘e’ in the end which makes it aieli, peeli, gaieli etc. Even though today, Sonbhadra has been separated from Mirzapur and has been established as an independent district, there is still uniformity in terms of language.”

Deepak Kumar Kesharwani,

Director, Vindhya Sanskriti Shodh Samiti

Sonebhadra

The district has a higher percentage of tribal population than any other in Uttar Pradesh. It is said that ‘Bhars’ had settlements along with Cheros, Seoris, Kols Kherwar and Baigas communities.³⁷ The Bhar, also known as Rajbhar, Bharat and Bharpatwa, is a community of more than 1.7 million people residing mainly in Uttar Pradesh.

The name Rajbhar, according to ethnologists Russel and Hiralal (Tribes and Castes of the Central provinces of India, 1916), signifies a landowning Bhar. They practice agriculture and grow crops on someone else’s fields and are paid for half of the crop that is harvested. In the forested areas some of them collect grass and wood for sale, and cultivate the insect that secretes a resin from which shellac is made³⁸. The Bhar speak Bhojpuri as their mother tongue, but they are also conversant with Hindi and use the standard Devanagari script to write both languages.

³⁷ District Census Handbook, 2011

³⁸ <https://peoplegroupsindia.com/profiles/bhar/>

The Baiga Tribe –is a primitive Dravidian tribe has shifted from Bihar to other parts of the country. The term “Bhumaior” lord of the soil is used sometimes for Baiga in Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh. They are also known for their magic practices. Baiga are also found in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand states.³⁹



Figure 127 Old couple from Kol Tribe, Source: Wikimedia Commons

³⁹ Tribes of Uttar Pradesh, Ramesh Kumar Rai

Lorikayan: Folklore of Vindhaynchal

Lorikayan is a very popular folklore in the Vindhaynchal region and is usually sung in Bhojpuri language. It is an oral tradition still prevalent among the tribal and non-tribal populace primarily



Figure 130 Lorik Stone, Markundi Hill, Sonebhadra



Figure 114 Dr. Arjun Das Kesari has documented Lorikayan

Lorik; the protagonist who was an Ahir by caste. The folklore also narrates the relation between Lorik and his love Manjari.

The Lorik stone is a symbol of love and bravery of Lorik and Manjari, the main characters of the local folklore 'Loriki'. According to the folk tale, Veer Lorik cut this stone, using his sword, in a single stroke, as proof of his true love. Several folk songs, sung by native folksingers, are based on Loriki. According to Dr. Ramkumar Verma, the time period of Lorik was around twelfth century A.D.

of Ahir community besides Gond, Dusadh, Teli, Kalavar, Kumahar, Mallah, Naai, Dhobi and Kherwar communities. It is sung with great love and great emotions. Many different versions of Lorikayan are available. Lorik's place of birth is disputed. Some say it was Gaura village in Mirzapur district while others insist that he was born in Hardi in Ballia district (both in Uttar Pradesh). However, officially, the UP government believes that Lorik was born in Ballia and the government is working on erecting his statue in the district. His father was Kua

Pehalwan and mother was Khulani. Kua Pehalwan enjoyed great respect not only in his community but also in the entire region.

On the basis of the Punarnava, a historical novel by Dr Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, Lorik is taken to be a contemporary of Samudragupta (AD 335–380) by Dr Bholu Shankar Vyas. Dr. However, Dr. Arjun Das Kesari insists that Lorik lived sometime in the tenth century.

In Bhojpuri, Lorikayan is sung as a love story of Lorik-Chanda. It is based on the heroic deeds and sacrifices of

‘Lor’ in Bhojpuri means ‘Tears’. In Bhojpuri folklores ‘Tears’ denote compassion. The narration of Lorikayan is full of emotions. There are three Parts; Prem-gatha (of Lorik), Sati-gatha (of Manjari) and Shaurya-Gatha (of Lorik).

One of the excerpts of Lorikayan reads like:

‘चिल्हांकन हाथी इनरावत, लेकर भागल किला भंडार’

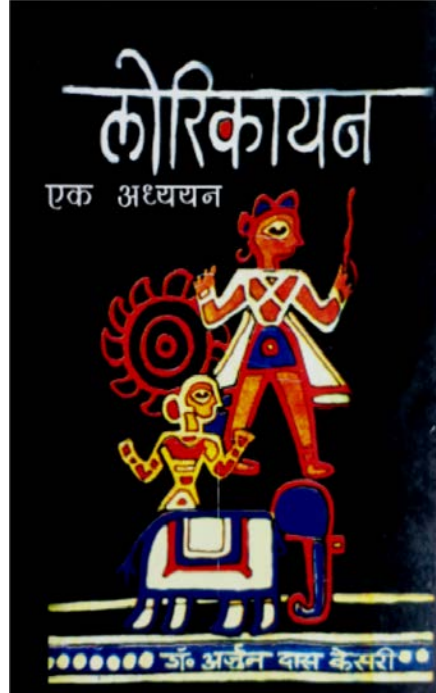
Or

The sheer agility of Lorik makes King seated on elephant nervous

The other excerpt of Manjari’s seated on palanquin during her wedding goes:

पलकी सारी पोछ देखा गइल, पंचरंग देलेन ओहार गिरवाय

पलकी चीटिकाय कर उत्तरवैले, डांडे निकले जगह नाही बाय⁴⁰



⁴⁰ Lorikayan – Ek Adhyayan, Page 137

गंगा से जुड़े इतिहास का तैयार किया जा रहा दस्तावेज

नमामि गंगे का बनाया लेखाजोखा

गङ्गामुक्तेश्वर। भारत सरकार की नमामि गंगे परियोजना के तहत भारतीय सांस्कृतिक निधि इंस्टैक के तत्वावधान में पूठ में दूसरे दिन रीति रिवाज परम्परा का लेखा जोखा तैयार किया। भारतीय सांस्कृतिक निधि के वरिष्ठ प्रतियोगिता एवं तृप्तासिंह ने दूसरे दिन

प्रयागराज : नमामि गंगे परियोजना के तहत भारतीय सांस्कृतिक निधि की प्रयागराज में गंगा के महत्व से जुड़े इतिहास का दस्तावेज तैयार किया जा रहा है। प्रयाग संगीत समिति के प्रतिनिधियों ने पारंपरिक रीति रिवाज परम्परा एवं अवधी लोकगीतों का लेखा जोखा तैयार किया। प्रयाग संगीत समिति के प्रतिष्ठानपुरी का लेखा जोखा तैयार किया जा रहा है। भारतीय सांस्कृतिक निधि वरिष्ठ

शोधार्थी हरीश बेंजवाल एवं तृप्ता सिंह केंद्र सरकार की नमामि गंगे परियोजना के तहत पिछले कई दिनों से प्रयागराज में गंगा से जुड़े इतिहास का दस्तावेज तैयार कर रहे हैं। परियोजना का उद्देश्य गंगा नदी के उद्गम स्थल गोमुख से लेकर गंगासागर तक गंगा के किनारे पांच किलोमीटर के दायरे में मौजूद मूर्त एवं अमूर्त धरोहर, परंपरा, रीतिरिवाज, तीज त्यौहार आदि का दस्तावेजीकरण उनके मौलिक रूप में करना है।

दैनिक भास्कर

08 मंगलवार 22 अक्टूबर 2019 वाराणसी

मिर्जापुर

मैंने अपने जीवन में एक भी दिन काम नहीं किया. ये सब मनोरंजन था।-थॉमस अल्वा एडिसन

सार सुर्खियां

गंगा के पांच किमी के दायरे में मौजूद धरोहरों का दस्तावेज बनाने में जुटा इंस्टैक

भास्कर वृद्ध

मिर्जापुर। भारत सरकार की महत्वपूर्ण परियोजना नमामि गंगे परियोजना के तहत गोमुख से लेकर गंगा सागर तक दिल्ली की भारतीय सांस्कृतिक निधि टीम के शोधार्थी गंगा नदी के पांच किमी के दायरे में मौजूद धरोहरों का दस्तावेजीकरण कर रहे हैं।

इसके लिए टीम के सदस्यों ने इन दिनों जिले में अपना डेरा डाल रखा है, जो गंगा नदी के उद्गम स्थल गोमुख से लेकर गंगा सागर तक गंगा के किनारे पांच किलोमीटर के दायरे में मौजूद मूर्त एवं अमूर्त धरोहर, परंपरा, रीति रिवाज, तीज त्यौहार आदि का दस्तावेजीकरण कर उनके मौलिक स्वरूप में करने की दिशा में तरो हुए हैं। दिल्ली से



पक्का घाट पर संस्था सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम से स्वरुप होती टीम

गंगासागर तक की यात्रा पर निकले हैं। दिल्ली से चली इस टीम में हरीश बेंजवाल एवं तृप्ता सिंह इंस्टैक के वरिष्ठ शोधार्थी हैं जो इन दिनों गंगा के दस्तावेजीकरण के लिए मिर्जापुर आए हुए हैं। इस दौरान टीम में शामिल लोगोंने मिर्जापुर नगर में स्थित प्राचीन



भ्रमण के दौरान प्रवृद्ध जनों से भेट करते हुए टीम के सदस्य

ऐतिहासिक इमारतों, पुरतकाल्य, भवनों, मंदिरों एवं धरोहरों अर्थात् नारायण मिश्रा, सुर्यासिंह कजली गायिका अर्जुना पंडा समाज, ज्ञानो, चूड़े बुजुर्गों से मिलकर उनके पौराणिक ऐतिहासिक महत्ता एवं काम ज्ञान

सरकार को प्रस्तुत करेंगे रिपोर्ट: बेंजवाल

भारतीय सांस्कृतिक निधि टीम के हरीश बेंजवाल ने बताया उनकी टीम भारत सरकार की महत्वपूर्ण परियोजना नमामि गंगे परियोजना के तहत मिर्जापुर एवं चुनार के भ्रमण पर है। परियोजना का उद्देश्य गंगा नदी के उद्गम स्थल गोमुख से लेकर गंगासागर तक गंगा के किनारे पांच किलोमीटर के दायरे में मौजूद मूर्त एवं अमूर्त धरोहरों तथा यहां की रीति रिवाज से लेकर तीज त्यौहार आदि का दस्तावेजीकरण करते हुए उनके मौलिक रूप में करना है। उन्होंने बताया कि भारतीय सांस्कृतिक निधि तथा इंस्टैक, दिल्ली की जिम्मेदारी भारत सरकार की सहायता, दस्तावेजीकरण एवं सुसज्ज प्रदान करना है।

मार्गदर्शन एवं सहयोग किया। इसी क्रम में इंस्टैक टीम ने चुनार का भी दौरा किया और यहां मौजूद चुनार के किले, भूतहरि समार्थि, चुनार पाटरी उद्योग के सांस्कृतिक एवं अमूर्त पक्ष को ज्ञान एवं उनका दस्तावेजीकरण किया। यह कार्य है। ताकि उनके दस्तावेज का रूप निरूपमा मोडवेल निदेशक अमूर्त विरासत विभाग, मनु पटनाम निदेशक प्राकृतिक धरोहर विभाग इंस्टैक दिल्ली के मार्गदर्शन में हो रहा है, जिससे जुड़े टीम के सभी साधार्थि विविध क्षेत्रों के लोगों से मिलकर विविध तथ्यों को एकत्र करते जा रहे हैं। ताकि उनके दस्तावेज का रूप निरूपमा मोडवेल निदेशक अमूर्त

Hindi Tithi Calendar - Mirzapur 2019-20

JANUARY

24th Jan – Sakat Chauth



Krishna Paksha Chaturthi is dedicated to Lord Ganesha and Krishna Paksha Chaturthi during the month of Magh is observed as Sakat Chauth. As Lord Ganpati is revered as a deity who removes hurdles and obstacles in life, women fast on this day for the well-being of their children. This Festival is celebrated in the Northern India Sakat Chauth is also known as Sankat Chauth, Til-Kuta Chauth, Vakra-Tundi Chaturthi and Maghi Chauth.

21st Jan – Paush Poornima



Paush Purnima is a significant day in Hindu calendar. In the lunar calendar, Magha month starts from the next day of Paush Purnima. As a custom people takes bath in river Ganga and perform rituals at Ghat like Deep Daan and prayers.

FEBRUARY

4th Feb – Mauni Amavasya



Mouni Amvasya is one of the most important Amavasyas for the Hindus. It is the Amavasya falling in the month of Pausha (Jan – Feb). The day of Mauni Amavasya is also said to be the birth day of Mauni Rishi and therefore the name Mauni Amavasya. Some people fast on this day and also visits to the temple. Most of the sages observe a vow of silence.

5th to 14th February – Gupt- Navratris (9 days of Shakti Upasana)



Due to the existence of the three divinities in Vindhyachal and being the main centre of Shakti Sadhana, sages and sadhaks have always been attracted to the area.

The Navratris are considered as the main days of Shakti *Sadhana / Upasana*. The Magha Gupta Navratri is considered most auspicious. The 9-day period that is dedicated to worshipping the nine different forms of Goddess Shakti from 'Pratipada' (1st day) to the 'Navami' (9th day) during the Shukla Paksha in the 'Magha' month as per the Hindu Tithi /calendar.

Magha Gupta Navratri is also known as 'Shishir Navratri' as it falls between the winter months of January-February. It is an important occurrence for Sadhaks, and any person desiring to resolve materialistic problems.

The word 'gupt' is a Hindi word meaning 'secret' and therefore Magha Gupta Navratri is known to less people unlike the other prominent Navratris observed during the Hindu month of 'Vasant' and 'Chaitra'. It is believed that puja done during the auspicious Magha Gupta Navratri shields an individual from any injuries or danger.

March

4th March -Mahashivratri



Lord Shiva is a Hindu deity and represents the aspect of the Supreme Being. The meaning of the Sanskrit word Shiva is 'pure and destroyer'.

According to Hindu mythology, Shiva is the destroyer among the Trimurti. He is the God of the Yogis and described as an omniscient Yogi, who lives an ascetic life on Mount Kailash.

Shivaratri is the festival to celebrate convergence of Shiva and Shakti. It occurs on the Chaturdashi Tithi of Magh Month.

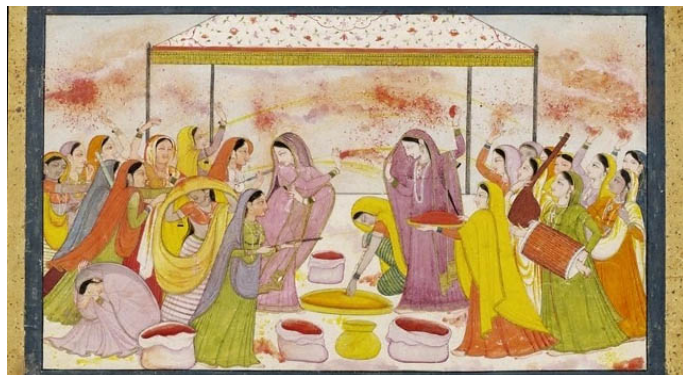
20th March –Holika Dahan



Holika (Sanskrit: होलिका) was a demoness in Hindu Vedic scriptures, who was burnt to death with the help of God Vishnu. She was the sister of King Hiranyakashipu and aunt of Prahlad.

The story of Holika Dahan (Holika's death) signifies the triumph of good over evil. It is believed that all sorts of fear can be conquered by doing Holika Puja on Holi. Holika Puja bestows power, prosperity and wealth.

21st March –Holi / Dhulendi



Holi is a festival celebrated by Hindus all over the world. Holi is considered as the second biggest festival on the Hindu calendar after Diwali. Holi is also known as the festival of Colors. The second day is known as Rangwali Holi - the day when people play with colored powder and colored water. Rangwali Holi which is main Holi day is also known as Dhulandi or Dhulendi.

APRIL

6th to 13th April – Chaitra Navratris



The Chaitra Navratris are the most common in Vindhyachal and Mirzapur. Most of the customs and rituals observed during Shardiya Navratri are also observed during Chaitra Navratri. People performs Hawan and chant of Durga Shaptshati at Vindhyachal and other shrines to invoke Devi's Shakti.

MAY

13th May – Sita Navmi



Sita Navami is celebrated as birth anniversary of **Goddess Sita**. This day is also known as **Sita Jayanti**. Married women keep fast on Sita Navami and pray to seek long lives for their husbands.

Sita Jayanti is celebrated on Navami Tithi during Shukla Paksha of Vaishakha month. It is believed that Goddess Sita was born on Tuesday in Pushya Nakshatra. Goddess Sita was married to Lord Rama who was also born on Navami Tithi during Shukla Paksha of Chaitra month. In Hindu calendar Sita Jayanti falls one month after Rama Navami.

JUNE

12th June -Ganga Dusshera



Ganga Dussehra falls on the Dashami Tithi of Jyeshtha Shukla Paksha during the month of May or June. Ganga Dussehra is also known as Gangavataran which means the descent of the Ganga. This festival is dedicated to Goddess Ganga and this day is commemorated as the day, when Ganga descended to the Earth to accomplish her mission to purge the cursed souls of Bhagiratha's ancestors. Before coming to Earth, the Goddess Ganga was believed to be residing in Kamandalu of Lord Brahma and with her consort Lord Vishnu brought the purity of heaven to Earth. On Ganga Dussehra devotees worship Goddess Ganga and bathe in the river. Taking bath in Ganga and offering charity or Dan-Punya on Ganga Dussehra is considered very auspicious. It is believed that holy dip in Ganga on this day can purge all sins.

16th June – Vat Savitri Amavasya Vrat



Vat Purnima falls in the Month of June (Jyetha) on Amavasya tithi where married women observe a vrat known as Vat Savitri. According to legend great Savitri tricked Lord Yama, the lord of death, and compelled him to return the life of her husband Satyawana. Hence married women observe Vat Savitri fast /vrat for the well-being and long life of their husband.

JULY

16th July – Guru Poornima



During the month of Ashadh, Full moon day is celebrated as **Guru Purnima** or **Vyasa Purnima**. Traditionally this day is dedicated to **Guru Puja** or Guru Worship. On this day disciples offer Puja or pay respect to their Gurus. A Guru refers to spiritual guide who enlighten disciples by his knowledge and teachings. This day is also commemorated as the birth anniversary of **Veda Vyas**. Veda Vyas was the author as well as a character in the Hindu epic **Mahabharata**. Prayag being a Hindu Pilgrimage centre, observes Guru Poornima as one of the main festivals.

AUGUST

3rd August - HariyaliTeej



Teej festivity is celebrated by women in a number of states, especially Uttar Pradesh. HariyaliTeej is celebrated by women during Sawan month. Hartalika Teej vrat is observed during Shukla Paksha Tritiya of Bhadrapada month. On this day, statues of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati are made with sand and worshipped for marital bliss and progeny.

HartalikaTeej is known by this name due to the legend associated with it. Hartalika word is combination of *Harat* and *Aalika* which means *abduction* and *female friend* respectively. According to the legend of HartalikaTeej, a friend of Goddess Parvati took her to the forest so that her father could not marry her against her wish.

5th August -Nag Panchami



Nag Panchami is a traditional worship of serpent Gods observed by Hindus throughout India. Nag Panchami is observed on Shukla Paksha Panchami during Shravana month. Nag Panchami falls in the month of July or August when women worship **Nag Devta** and offer milk to snakes. Women also pray for the wellbeing of their brothers and family.

15th August -Shrawan Poornima /Rakshabanadhan



Rakhi, which is also known as Raksha Bandhan, is a Hindu festival which is celebrated across India. Raksha Bandhan is recognized and celebrated among Hindus for its symbolic significance. Raksha Bandhan draws its significance from a sacred thread which is known as Rakhi. It is believed that the thread protects the one who wears it, especially during the auspicious time of Shravana Purnima.

24th August -Janamshtami



On Krishna Janmashtami devotees take Sankalpa to observe a day-long fast and to break it on the next day when both Rohini Nakshatra and Ashtami Tithi are over. Rituals performed during Janamashtmi:

- a day long fast
- worshipping Bal Krishna at midnight
- visiting Krishna temple
- cooking sweet dishes made of milk

SEPTEMBER

22nd September – Jivitputrika Vrat



Jivitputrika Vrat is a significant fasting day in which mothers observe Nirjala fasting throughout the day and night for the well-being of their children.

Jivitputrika Vrat is observed on Krishna Paksha Ashtami in the month of Ashwin as per the Hindu lunar calendar. This fasting is mainly observed in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh.

OCTOBER

29th September -Starting of Ashwin Navratris



Navratri is a Sanskrit word which literally means nine nights. During these nine nights and ten days, Goddess Durga is worshipped in 9 different forms, known as Navdurga. The tenth day is celebrated as Vijaydashami when idols of Goddess Durga are immersed in a water body. Navratri period is a splash of color, sound and fragrance to celebrate and perform Shakti-Puja.

8th October -Dussehra



Vijaydashami is celebrated as victory of Lord Rama over demon Ravana and also victory of Goddess Durga over the buffalo Demon Mahishasura.

Vijaydashami is also known as Dussehra and the Prayagraj Dussehra is famous across the country. Apart from Magh Mela, Dussehra is very famous in Prayag. The streets leading to the Alopi Devi and Lailta Devi temple witness huge crowd, eager to pay obeisance to these Goddesses.

21st October -Ahoi -Ashtami



27th October -Deepawali



Traditionally, on Ahoi Ashtami mothers keep fast from dawn to dusk for the wellbeing of their sons. Fast is broken during twilight after sighting stars in the sky.

As per folk stories, there lived a kind and devoted woman in a village situated near a dense forest. She had seven sons. One day in the month of Kartik, just a few days before Diwali she decided to repair and decorate her house for Diwali. To renovate her house, she went to the forest to fetch soil. While digging soil she accidentally killed a lion cub. She felt sad, guilty and responsible for what had happened to the innocent cub.

Within a year of this incident, all the seven sons of the woman disappeared and the villagers assumed that her sons might have been killed by wild animals. The woman was very depressed and narrated her misfortune to one of the old women of the village. She related how she had committed the sin of killing the cub mistakenly. The old woman advised that as atonement for her sin, she should offer prayers to Goddess Ahoi Bhagawati, an incarnation of Goddess Parvati by sketching the face of the cub as Goddess Ahoi was considered protector of offspring of all living beings.

Diwali is the most popular religious festival among Hindus. The festival spiritually signifies the victory of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, good over evil and hope over despair. At prayag, Diwali is celebrated for five days.

Being Amavasya, people also perform Shraadhha for their ancestors at Sangam. Traditionally, most Puja are performed after keeping a day long fast. Hence, the devotees observe a day long fast on the day of Lakshmi Puja. The fast is broken after Lakshmi Puja in the evening.

NOVEMBER

2nd November -Chhatt Puja



The Sun God, Surya, the God of energy and life-force, is worshipped during *Chhath Puja* to promote well-being, prosperity and progress.

Chhath Puja is also known as *Surya Shashti, Chhath, Chhathi, ChhathParv, Dala Puja* and *DalaChhath*.

9th November – Tulsi Vivah



Tulsi Vivah is the ceremonial marriage of the Tulsi plant (holy basil) to the Hindu God Vishnu or his Avatar Krishna.

12th November -Kartik Poornima



Kartik is the eighth lunar month in the Hindu calendar. The full moon day during the month of Kartik is known as Kartik Poornima. Depending on people and the region, the full moon day in Hindu calendar is also referred as Poornima. In Vaishnava tradition Kartik month is known as Damodara month. Damodara is one of the names of Lord Krishna.

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