

CHAPTER—XIX

PLACES OF INTEREST

The towns of Ballabgarh, Faridabad old and Faridabad township described here as separate entities, were included in the Faridabad complex on January 15, 1972. This complex was constituted to promote the planned development of area, particularly on the industrial side. The complex which had been put under the charge of the Chief Administrator comprises the area earlier covered by the municipalities of Ballabgarh, Faridabad old and Faridabad township and 17 villages.

As per Census of 1991, the population of the complex is 6,13,828 (males 3,40,341 and females—2,73,487).

BALLABGARH

Location.—Ballabgarh is the headquarters of the sub-division and tahsil of the same name in the district. It has an altitude of 200 metres and lies on the Delhi-Mathura National highway in 28° 20' 22" North latitude and 77° 19' 37" East longitude. The town is about 48 kilometres away from Gurgaon and 34.5 kilometres from Delhi to the South. It is also a railway station on the Delhi-Mathura double-track broad gauge line of the Central Railway.

Historical background.—As per legend, the town was founded by Ballab Singh, the son of a poverty-stricken cultivator. His mother as usual carried a few pieces of dry bread and onions as a mid-day repast for her husband who was tilling a tiny patch. She put down the child whom she had also carried in her lap in shade of a tree and took the food to her husband where he was working. When she returned, she found a black serpent hovering with its hood raised over the baby. As the men around rushed to kill the snake, a passing *sadhu* pleaded with them to desist, and prophesied the child would one day be a king. His words came true; Ballahab struck a great fortune when two mules laden with gold *mohars* strayed into the farms. This was the beginning of his rise. He and his successors ruled over 200 surrounding villages as fiefs of the Mughals for seven generations.

The name Ballabgarh is a corruption of Balramagrah, 'the fort of Balram, a Jat Chief who held the surrounding country under Surajmal

of erstwhile Bharatpur state of Rajasthan and built the fort and palace¹. In 1775, the estate was transferred by the Delhi emperor to Ajit Singh whose son Bahadur Singh was recognised in 1803 as Chief. According to another version, the fort was built by Raja of Bharatpur who took a fancy to the site when visiting a nearby village. The township outside the fort precinct was laid out by Raja Bahadur Singh of Ballabgarh². It still bears the trace of his careful planning, quadrangular market places, wells at crossroads and a large garden which he named Dilkhusha. A *Chhatri* and a pakka tank were constructed by the widow of Anrudh Singh, Raja of Ballabgarh till 1818 in the memory of her deceased husband. The last of this dynasty was king Nahar Singh who was the hero of the great Uprising of 1857 had to lose each and every thing; as the British forfeited his all properties. However, a monument, a Nahar Singh Stadium and Nahar Singh Memorial park have been raised by the municipality to mark the centenary of the event.

The rapid industrial development along Faridabad has reached Ballabgarh. All along the national highway new factories have come up. An alloy steel plant (Globe Steels), Goodyear Tyres, Escorts', Rajdoot Scooters and Motor Cycles, Pearl Cycles, Auto-Motors are among the important industries set-up in the neighbourhood of the town.

The places of public utility include police station, a post-telegraph, office, telephone exchange, Aggarwal College, artificial insemination centre a veterinary hospital and schools.

FARIDABAD (OLD)

Location.—The town having an altitude of 204 meters, is situated at about 25 kilometers from Delhi in 28° 25' 16" North latitude, and 77° 18' 28" East longitude. It has a railway station to the west of the town across Delhi-Mathura national highway on the Delhi-Mathura double track (broad gauge) of central railway.

Historical background.—It is said to have been founded in A.D. 1607 by Shaikh Farid, treasurer of Jahangir, with the object of protecting the highway which passed through the town. Shaikh Farid built a fort, a tank and a mosque.³

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1. After the death of Balu on November 29, 1753, the Name of Ballabgarh was changed as Nizamgarh.
 2. Punjab Provincial Series Volume-I, 1908, p. 290. (Imperial Gazetteer)
 3. The fort and mosque are in ruins but the tank was renovated at some later date.

Among the numerous followers of Surajmal, there was a Ballu Jat of Faridabad, 25 kilometers south of Delhi. He seized a large number of villages in the close proximity of the capital. Safdar Jang Wazir sent an expedition against him on June 3, 1750. He was captured at Shamaspur near Delhi. He was brought with his wrists tied together to Khizarbad, 8 kilometers from Delhi where the wazir along with the Maratha Vakil lay encamped—Safdar Jang handed him over to the Vakil and himself returned to his *haveli*.

Ballu's submission was only a temporary phase. He won over the Maratha Vakil and through him Safdar Jang. In the winter of 1750, he threw up a mud fort, 8 kilometers south of Faridabad, and called it after his own name Ballugarh, also known as Ballabgarh. He set himself as a collector in this area, and was confirmed in the position by Safdar Jang. Slowly and gradually, Ballu extended his depredations farther. In 1752, he ravaged Sikandrabad, 50 kilometers south of Delhi. He dug floors of the houses and fleeced the people of whatever they possessed. Seizing the local tradesmen, he hung them up and flogged them to extort money.

It was in November, 1753, that the Delhi Government took notice of the lawless activities of Ballu. An expedition consisting of 500 Badakhis under Aqibat Mahmud and 2,000 Marathas under Gangadhar Tatya reinforced by 7,000 soldiers and 30 light guns, was despatched against him by Imad-ul-Mulk, a rival and opponent of Safdar Jang. They besieged Ballabgarh, Ballu sued for peace. He waited upon Aqibat Mahmud, accompanied by his son, Diwan, nine military lieutenants and 250 troopers. The interview was held on November 29, 1753. It was a stormy meeting as Ballu used hot words in the course of discussion. Ballu and his companions were instantly cut, while his soldiers fled away. Ballu's head was displayed on the road near Faridabad.

It came to be the headquarters of a *paragana* which was held in Jagir by the Ballabgarh ruler. Now a days the boundary of Ballabgarh is very adjorcent to that of Faridabad old.

The places of public utility include post-office, schools, E.S.I. dispensary and a touring talkie.

FARIDABAD TOWNSHIP

Location .—Situated on the Delhi-Mathura National Highway at a distance of about 29 kilometers from Delhi, the new industrial township, Faridabad, has an altitude of 204 meters. It has a railway station on the Delhi-Mathura double track broad gauge line of the central railway which is at a distance of about 4 kilometers from Faridabad railway station.

The site for the township was selected by the Government of India for rehabilitating the displaced persons migrating from the North-Western Frontier Province and Dera Ghazikhan district (now in Pakistan), consequent upon the Partition of India in 1947. The control of this township was vested in Faridabad Development Board, which functioned under the authority of the Government of India through the Ministry of Rehabilitation. But in 1957, the control of this township was handed over to the then Punjab Government.

It is divided into 5 residential units known as Neighbour-hoods. These are located around a central Green separate from the Industrial area, The township being essentially an industrial area, a railway siding was laid down right through its entire length so as to be of service to all the industrial units established here. Because of its vicinity to Delhi and the numerous incentives given by the Government, the industries developed at such a rapid speed that Faridabad now occupies a significant place on the industrial map not only of the state but also of the country. Its industrial output is exported to other countries.

The industries employ various types of artisans and labourers. This is the reason that migration of the people from other areas to Faridabad is maximum. A employment exchange was opened by the Government of India for the benefit of both employers and employees. A branch of the National Productivity Council functions here. Just outside the township, opposite the approach road to Bata Shoe Co. and on the western side of the Delhi-Mathura National Highway, there is a 3-star modern hotel (Holiday Inn) which caters to the board and lodging needs of the industrialists and other visitors. Wayside catering facilities are provided at the state-run Magpie Tourist restaurant situated on the Delhi-Agra road close to the Canal Rest House.

Having kept in view the development of the area, Faridabad Complex was constituted on January 15, 1972 under the charge of a Chief Administrator. The complex comprises the areas earlier covered by the three municipal committees of Faridabad old, Faridabad and Ballabgarh besides 17 villages.

The places of public utility include telephone exchange, post-office, commercial banks, schools, an E.S.I. hospital, Sewa Samiti dispensary, a veterinary hospital and an artificial insemination centre.

HODAL

Location and population .—Hodal, a small town on the Delhi-Mathura National Highway, has an altitude of 190 meters and lies at a dis-

tance of about 87 kilometers from Delhi and 27 kilometers to the south-east of Gurgaon in 28° 53' 15" North latitude and 77° 21' 52" East longitude. It is also a railway station on Delhi-Mathura double track (broad gauge) of the central railway. This place is having the headquarters of sub-tahsil of the same name.

The population of the town as per the Census of 1991 was 25,635. It is class III town.

Historical background .—Legend runs that odes, a gypsy clan, shifted here from western India and they formed a military force of Brahmans, the priests of Pando Ban, to whom this was given as jagir. Fearing that odes might not overpower them, the Jats were invited by Brahmans. The Jats held the sway over the area where they were confirmed by the later Mughals.

The oldest part of the town is on the hill formed by the debris of a still older habitation. Surajmal, Jat Raja of former Bharatpur state, was connected by matrimonial relations with the Jats of Hodal. During his time many grand buildings were erected, a five old *sarais*, a *boali* and a masonry tank, but all these are now in ruins, The shrine of Radha Krishna, situated at about a kilometer from the town and a tank are held in high esteem by the Hindus.

Places of Public utility .—The places of public utility include a post and telegraph office, telephone exchange, veterinary hospital, few schools, commercial banks and a *Braj Mandal College* (now Government College).

PALWAL

Location .—The headquarters of the sub-division and tahsil of the same name and having an altitude of 195 metres, Palwal is situated on the Delhi-Mathura National Highway about 61 kilometres from Delhi. It lies in 28° 08' 26" North-latitude and 77° 19' 33" East longitude. It is also a railway station on the Delhi-Mathura (double track) broad gauge line of central railway.

Population .—The population of the town was 47,328 as per the Census of 1981; it increased to 59,168 as per Census of 1991.

Historical background .—The origin of the town is lost in legend and it is identified with the "Apelava" of the Mahabharata, a part of the Pandava kingdom of Indraprastha.¹ Tradition associates with the same period the high mound of Aharwan, a village, a few kilometres to the south-west of

1. Gurgaon District Gazetteer, 1910, p. 248.

the town, According to tradition, the town is said to have decayed for long and then been restored by Vikramaditya. The oldest part covers a high mound formed by the accumulated debris of many centuries.

The *Imperial Gazetteer of India (Provincial Series) Punjab*, 1908, Volume-I contains an account of the building built during the Mughal period. The details are as under :

“The mosque at Palwal is supported by pillars, which bear traces of Hindu idols defaced in the time of Altmash in 1221. An elegant domed tomb of red sandstone, just outside the town on the Mathura road, is said to have been built by a fakir, who levied an impost for this purpose of one slab on every cart-load of stone which passed from Agra to Delhi for building the fort of Salimgarh”.

At the downfall of the Mughal empire, alongwith surrounding territory, the place was given to General De Boigne as a jagir and after the conquest of Lord Lake to Murtaza Khan of Delhi for few years, after which it was annexed by the British.

The places of interest are : Panchayatî temple (situated on the south of Palwal town, it is associated with the Pandavas in popular belief), an old fort which was constructed during the Mughal period, now in ruins, Jama Masjid, which appears to date back to A.D. 1210; Idgah of Shihab-Ud-Din built about A.D. 1211, presently in ruins and occupied by Jawahar *Gaushala* and Tomb of Roshan Chirag which dates back to A.D. 1661, and was constructed by Saint Roshan Chirag, who levied a tax of one slab of stone from every cart-load that passed from Bharatpur to Delhi for building Shah Jahan's palace and with these, the tomb was constructed.

The places of public utility include a police station, post and telegraph office, a telephone exchange, a few commercial banks, hospitals and regional artificial insemination centre.

HATHIN

Location .—It is located 16 kilometres south-west of Palwal on Palwal-Hathin road. It is headquarters of the tahsil of the same name.

Population .—The population of this town is 7,863 as per 1991 Census. It is class V town.

Historical background .—According to local tradition, the place was founded by a king in the heart of jungle. A number of elephants used to graze in this jungle. Later on, this place was known as Hastin (elephant) and its corrupt form became Hathin.

The tradition seems to be borne out by the discovery of a skeleton of an elephant during excavations at Autha, 15 kilometres south-west of Hathin. There are many mutilated art pieces near the site but the most important and interesting piece is the railing-pillar of Sunga period, which is fixed in the wall of a tank and is worshipped as *khera devta*. The site yielded Painted Grey ware, early and later historic pottery.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Many Painted Grey ware sites have been found in the district. The research scholar: Dharam Pal Singh Punia identified many such sites which are detailed below¹ :

Ahranva .—The village lies 7 kilometres south-west of Palwal. It yielded Painted Grey ware, early historic pottery and late medieval remains. The other finds recovered from the site include beads, balls, decorated dices and figurines of yaksha-vamankas of Kushan period, figurines of elephant belonging to Gupta period and a seal in terracotta, bangles of copper, faience and glass and copper coins of Hegamasa, Sodasa, Brahmamitra, Kota and later Kushans.

Sondh .—It lies 4 km south of Hodal on Nuh-Hodal road. According to local tradition, the village was founded during the Mahabharata period.

Apart from the Painted Grey ware, the place yielded a number of art pieces in stone, viz. image of Vishnu of Kushan period, a bust of female attendant and head of a figure of Gupta period, Vishnu with Ayudhapuruses and Vidhyadharayugala of early medieval period. A terracotta female figurine of Gupta period was also recovered.

Chhatnasa .—It lies 20 km south of Ballabgarh on Ballabgarh-Mahana road and situated on the right bank of the Yamuna. According to local tradition, the place is connected with Pandavas. It is also said that Sravan Kumar with his parents stayed here while he was coming from Mathura. The site yielded Painted Grey ware, early historic pottery and late medieval remains.

Tilpat or Tilprashtha .—It lies 5 km east of Faridabad on Faridabad-Tilpat road. It was one of the 5 *prashthas* (villages) which were demanded by the Pandavas and the denial of which by their cousin, Duryodhana, led to the Great Mahabharata war. The place yielded Painted Grey ware and early historic pottery.

Sihigram .—The village lies at a distance of about 37 km from Delhi

1. Archaeology of Mahendragarh and Gurgaon Districts, 1976 (MSS).

on Delhi-Mathura highway. It has been included in Faridabad Complex since January 15, 1972.

Here is a temple situated on mound, which according to popular belief, marks the birth place of Surdas, well-known poet of Bhakti Movement of medieval period.

Legend has it that blinded by wordly love, Bilvamangal took hectic efforts to reach the house of his beloved. It was night. Swimming across a river that was in spate, and by clambering up a python hanging down from the bough of a tree, he reached the chamber of his lady-love. Pointing out to him what an enormous risk he had taken to reach her. She said "Instead of being so frantic after me, had you directed this kind of madness towards God, how blessed would you have been". Disillusionment at once set in his mind. In an act of self-mortification, he blinded himself. The mortal Bilvamangal became the immortal Surdas.

Later he became the great devotee of Lord Krishna. Some sherds of Painted Grey Ware have been recovered on a mound nearby.¹

TOURIST RESORTS

The district has some resorts which attract the tourists from far and wide. The keen interest of the Haryana Government offering facilities and amenities for tourists has opened new vistas in the district for holiday-makers from Delhi and other neighbouring places. The tourist complexes at Suraj Kund, Badkhal at Faridabad and Dabchick (Hodal) make ideal picnic and holiday spots.

The State Government has provided oasis of comfort, relaxation and recreation by creating the above mentioned complexes. These complexes include restaurants and resorts. These also attract the foreign and domestic tourists who motor through the district enroute to the three major tourist centres of India, via Delhi, Agra and Jaipur, popularly known as the Golden Triangle of Indian tourism.

In Faridabad district, the Department of Tourism has developed the following resorts :—

Badkhal Lake —Nestling amidst rocks to the west of Faridabad old and north-west of Faridabad Township, Badkhal Lake is about 31 kilometres away from Delhi and 3.5 km away from Delhi-Agra national highway to the right near Faridabad. Conceived as an irrigation project in 1947, it was also to serve as a counter-measure for floods and soil

1. Indian Archaeology, 1969-70, p. 59.

erosion. Flood water was tamed by joining toes of the two hillocks and by constructing a bund, 644.5 metres long and 6 metres wide. Later in 1958, fish farming was also started. Thus a beautiful lake was created on one side of the *bund* while the rock remnants of Aravali Range on the other side presented a lovely back drop. After the Haryana State was formed in 1966, the Government decided to turn the artificial lake into a picnic-cum-holiday resort; accordingly a master plan was formulated in 1967.

The lake is named after the nearby Badkhal village. The name Badkhal is possibly derived from Persian word 'be *dakhal*' which is suggestive of a place free from any interference.

All tourist facilities are spread across the rocks and ridges surrounding the lake. Standing majestically amidst natural landscape, expansive lush green lawns, terrace gardens, mounds, flowering trees and shrubs that lend a beautiful treatment to the surroundings. It is Haryana's rendezvous par-excellence.

The tourist complex offers a choice of two restaurants; Mayur and Grey Falcon-both centrally air-conditioned and having bar facilities, each specializing in a different cuisine. The Grey Falcon is equipped with gva drophonic sound system, latest in sound technology.

A 13-suite motel here provides excellent well-furnished and air-conditioned accommodation. It has also a conference room for 25 persons with portable conference system. Exclusive accommodation is available in two tourist huts called Minivet. Each has two air-conditioned bedrooms, a living and dining room and balcony, a refrigerator and T.V. A well-equipped kitchen where tourist have culinary facilities, a garage and a room for a personal attendant are attached with each hut.

In 1981, an eight-room motel called 'Garud' was constructed. There is an exclusive swimming pool with a pool cafe; massage facilities and a choice of steam and sauna baths.

The complex has its own shopping arcade where a quick snack is provided on an easy budget. There are campers' huts for budget tourists. The lake is ideal for anglers and rowing enthusiasts. Rods, bait and lines are available at a nominal fee. Fishing permits are given on the spot and also rowing boats, pedal boats and *shikaras* for yachting.

The ridges of the Aravallis and the lake embankment serve as an impressive promenade where tourists flock. One can go hiking on the ridges and even trek from Badkhal lake to Surajkund through a 6-kilometre inner forest road. Children have a paradisaical surroundings near the play-

grounds specially made for them. The lake is equally popular with bird watchers for a variety of beautiful birds migrating from Siberia flock here.

A special bus service has been introduced by the Haryana Roadways between Delhi and Badkhal lake so that the common man may reach the place. For the rich persons, the tourist luxury cars are available.

Magpie Tourist Complex, Faridabad.—Located 30 kilometres from Delhi on the Delhi-Agra National highway, in the midst of the industrial nerve centre of Haryana, it is a conspicuous red building with extensive and well-maintained green lawns.

There is a beautiful motel which offers excellent stop-over facilities for tourists passing by and also for those desiring a night halt while on business to Faridabad Complex. It has four well-furnished and air-conditioned suites.

The Magpie restaurant serves a choice of Indian and Western cuisine. It is an obvious choice for a garden party or a social gathering.

Dabchick Tourist Complex, Hodal.—Dabchick Tourist Complex at Hodal is situated 92 kilometres away from Delhi and about half way to Agra, on Delhi-Agra National highway.

Started in December 1974, it now enjoys great popularity with both domestic and foreign tourists. Located on the main road, close to Hodal village, it has filled a vital gap in facilities offered to tourists on the golden triangle of Indian tourism.

This complex consists of residential accommodation in the form of huts, camping huts, a restaurant and a canteen. There are three one-room huts, built on stilts, each room opening out on to a balcony overlooking the landscape dotted with a variety of trees and flowers. 'Dream Castle' with six rooms was added to the complex in 1981.

A unique feature of this complex is that the restaurant here is built on stilts. Both Indian and continental food is served here. The architectural beauty of this complex has blended with surroundings to produce an effect of pure aesthetic joy to the tourists.

Suraj Kund Tourist Complex.—Close to Tughlakbad and almost in Delhi itself, it is set amidst picturesque surroundings about 20 kilometres south of Delhi. A water tank, resembling a Roman amphitheatre, Suraj Kund is believed to have been constructed by the Tomara king, Surajpal, whose existence is based on bardic tradition. The Tomaras originally settled in Aravalli hills south of Delhi, and are then believed to have

PLACES OF INTEREST

moved to the Suraj Kund area. Undoubtedly the most remarkable Hindu monuments, it dates back to the pre-Islamic period (10th century A.D.), of temples and sun worship much before the mosques and tombs of Delhi were built.

The shape of Suraj Kund resembles the rising sun, curving eastward. It consists of a semi-circular stepped stone embankment to impound rain water from the hills. Its bed is about 130 metres in diameter. Though in ruins, the original grandeur of this vast reservoir where royal hunting parties rested, can be very well imagined. The dancing peacocks on the bank of the *kund* and in the forest-like surroundings provide a fascinating sight. The area is dotted with rocks suitable for hiking. It is believed that a sun temple existed here. Some ruins are still in evidence. Almost touching it is a fresh water pool called peacock lake surrounded by hillocks.

In the nearby Anangpal village is a dam whose construction is ascribed to Anangpal. Here, quartzite stone is placed across the mouth of a narrow ravine to catch rain water. The neighbouring hills are dotted with the ruins of several fortifications, which lend credence to the belief that a town founded by Anangpal once existed here.

Haryana Tourism Department has provided a number of tourist facilities at this monumental holiday resort.

Commissioned in 1975, a modern and luxuriously furnished motel holds a star attraction for tourists. It has 13 air-conditioned rooms, fitted with four channel piped in music. The view of the pool and peacock lake from the bed rooms and the terrace affords a spectacular sight of the vast expanse of water.

The motel has a large sitting room with a library which specialises in books on Indian art, culture, folk-music, etc. A well furnished conference room with a seating capacity for 30 persons provides necessary conference facilities to the tourists. A sunbird restaurant offers catering service.

A small putting-green approach and a hole golf course is there for golf enthusiasts. Putters and the services of a golf-expert are provided at Suraj Kund.

Rowing in the quiet Peacock lake with slender eucalyptus trees lining its shores and the plants trailing their leaves in the still green water is a great delight. Angling facility is also available.

Lush green exclusive lawn for picnickers and camping tents are there for the tourists. Camping huts with bath room facilities for tourists are also available.

A new motel named 'Rajhans' was constructed to cater to the rush in tourist traffic at Delhi during ASIAD-82.

Some important details about monuments and places of worship, or tourist interest in the rural areas are as under :

Sr. Village No.	Monument places of worship	Age (Years)	Remarks
1.	Seokri <i>Minar</i>	330	—
2.	Chandaoli <i>Chhatri Bihara</i>	100	Fair held annually
3.	Sarai Khawaja An old Serai	530	—
4.	Rahimpur <i>Maqbra of Banjaras</i>	330	—
5.	Sultanpur A historical building of the time of Raja Rodd	630	—
6.	Bhulwana Minar of Sher Shah Suri's time	—	—
7.	Amarpur <i>Gol Maqbra</i>	180	—
8.	Sajwari <i>Maqbra of Peer Sheikh Ahmad</i>	old	—
9.	Kheri Sarai Ancient historical pillar	Very old	—
10.	Sunahad Temple Lal Dass	Old	—
11.	Badha Old temple	130	—
12.	Alapur Pillar stated to have been erected by Shah Jahan	—	—