

## BANESHWAR FAIR: AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE (8-10 February, 2017)

Baneshwar Fair is a popular tribal festival held in the Baneshwar Temple of Dungarpur. This festival, held on the full moon day of February or Magh Shukla Purnima, attracts a large number of tourists. On this pious occasion, Bhils travel all the way from Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh to take a dip at the confluence of the rivers, Mahi and Som. In addition to this fair, the Vagad Festival is also one of the popular celebrations of Dungarpur. This festival showcases dance forms and music from the region. Holi, the popular Hindu festival, is celebrated here with tribal dances.

This year the cultural programmes from 8 February to 10 February at the 'Baneshwar Fair' will be organized by the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan along with the District Administration, Dungarpur.

On 8 February evening, the 'Baneshwar Fair' will begin with folk performances by the folk artists of Rajasthan at 7pm. The evening will be wrapped up with a spiritual 'Bhajan Recital' at 10pm. On 9 February and 10 February, folk performances, have been organised by West Zone Cultural Centre of Udaipur. These events will take place from 7 pm to 10pm.

Other major attractions at the fair will include 'Tribal Sports' and 'Religious processions'. Merchants will also be selling their wares at the 'Tribal Bazar' for those looking to take a souvenir back home. The festival will also host highly energetic 'Gair Dance' performances by men wearing colorful red ghagras. Deepdaan and other attractions will also be a part of the festival.

### About Dungarpur

Dungarpur is as exotic as the green marble found here and shipped globally and lies snug in the foothills of the Aravalli range. Harsh and wild in the northeast and teeming with life in the fertile plains of the southwest, it is irrigated by two rivers, Mahi And Som.

Dungarpur's rise to tourist fame is thanks to the exceptional architecture of its palaces and royal residences. These stone structures are adorned with 'jharokhas' (windows) and built in a style that was born during the times of Maharawal Shiv Singh (1730-1785 AD). Dungarpur's goldsmiths and silversmiths are skilled artisans Famous for Their lacquer-painted toys and picture frames.

Dungarpur was founded in 1258 AD by Rawal Veer Singh, the eldest son of Karan Singh, the ruler of Mewar, after he drove out the local Bhil chieftain named Dungariya. Later rulers of Dungarpur added to the town's architectural heritage.

### Places To See In Dungarpur

#### **Udai Bilas Palace**

The Udai Bilas Palace has been named after Maharawal Udai Singh II. Its striking design follows classic Rajput architectural style and boasts of detailed designs in its balconies, arches and windows. A beautiful wing built of the local bluish grey stone called Pareva overlooks the lake. The palace is segregated into Raniwas, Udai Bilas and Krishna Prakash, also known as EkThambiyaMahal. The EkThambiyaMahal is a veritable marvel of Rajput

architecture featuring intricate sculptured pillars and panels, ornate balconies, balustrades, bracketed windows, arches and frieze of marble carvings. Today, Udai Bilas Palace functions as a heritage hotel.

### **Juna Mahal**

Juna Mahal (Old Palace) is a 13th century, seven-storeyed edifice. It is built on a high platform constructed from Pareva stone and its rugged exterior gives it a resemblance of a citadel. It has been elaborately planned with fortified walls, watchtowers, narrow doorways and corridors to delay the enemy for as long as possible. What lies inside is a complete contrast to the exterior. Visitors will be spellbound by the beautiful murals, miniature paintings and delicate glass and mirror work that adorn the interiors.

### **Gaib Sagar Lake**

The lake is famous for the shrine of Shrinathji that rests on its banks. The shrine complex contains numerous exquisitely carved temples and one core temple, the Vijay Rajrajeshwar Temple. This temple of Lord Shiva displays the skilled craftsmanship of the famed sculptors or 'shilpkars' of Dungarpur.

### **Government Archaeological Museum**

This museum was established with the objective of displaying sculptures collected by the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Rajasthan, mainly from the Vagad region. The Dungarpur Royal family helped set up the museum by gifting land and its own personal collection of charming sculptures and historically important inscriptions. The collection housed here includes statues of various deities, stone inscriptions, coins and paintings dating back to the 6th century.

### **Badal Mahal**

The Badal Mahal, built using Pareva stone, is another splendid palace of Dungarpur. Located on the banks of GaibSagar Lake, it is renowned for its elaborate design and a fusion of the architectural styles of the Rajputs and the Mughals. The monument comprises two stages, three domes and a veranda. Each dome sports a carved half ripe lotus while the largest dome sports three.

### **Baneshwar Temple**

The Baneshwar temple, containing the most revered Shiva Linga of the region, is situated on a delta formed at the confluence of Som and Mahi rivers. The Linga is believed to be Swayambhu or self-created. It stands five feet high and is spilt broken at the top in five parts. Just near the Baneshwar temple is the Vishu temple constructed in 1793 A.D. by Jankunwari, daughter - in law of Mavji, a highly revered saint and believed to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The temple is said to be constructed at the place where Mavji spent his time praying to God. Two disciples of Mavji called Aje and Vaje built the Laxmi Narayan temple. Though these are other Gods and Goddesses, People identify them as Mavji, his wife, his son, his daughter-in law and disciple Jiwandas. Besides these temple, there is also a temple of Lord Brahma.

### **BHUVANESHWAR**

Located barely 9 kilometres from Dungarpur is Bhuvaneshwar, famous for a Shiva temple which is perched on a mountain top. The temple is built around a naturally formed Shivaling. Tourists can also visit an ancient monastery located atop the mountain.

### **Surpur Temple**

This ancient shrine is located on the banks of the Gangdi River about 3 kilometres from Dungarpur. The area around the temple also houses other attractions such as Bhulbhulaiya, Madhavrai Temple, Hathiyon Ki Agad and several inscriptions.

### **Vijay Raj Rajeshwer Temple**

The Vijay Rajrajeshwer Temple is located along the banks of the GaibSagar Lake. The temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva and his consort, Goddess Parvati, displays the fine architecture of its times. The construction of the temple was ordered by Maharawal Vijay Singh and was completed in 1923, during the reign of MaharawalLakshman Singh.

### **Shrinathji Temple**

MaharawalPunraj built this temple in the year 1623. The idols of Shri Radhikaji and GoverdhanNathji are the main attractions. The complex also houses several shrines dedicated to Shri BankeBihariji and Shri Ramchandraji.

### **Goodh Mandap**

GoodhMandap is a three-storied hall meant for the common use of three temples located in its vicinity. Supported by 64 legs and 12 pillars, this hall is a marvel to behold.

### **Nagfanji**

Nagfanji is renowned for its Jain shrines and not only does it attract devotees from Dungarpur but also tourists who travel from far to see the temple. The temple houses statues of Devi Padmawati, NagfanjiParshwanatha and Dharnendra. TheNagfanjiShivalaya, which is located close to this temple, is also a tourist attraction.

### **Galiakot**

At a distance of 58 kilometres from Dungarpur, located on the banks of River Mahi, is a hamlet called Galiakot. The place is known for Syed Fakhruddin's shrine. He was a renowned saint who was buried in the hamlet after his death. The shrine is made from white marble and has his teachings engraved on its walls. The inner portion of the dome is decorated by beautiful foliage while teachings of the Quran are engraved in golden letters on the tomb.

### **Deo Somnath**

On the banks of Som river, there is an old and beautiful Shiva temple called DeoSomnath built in the 12th century. Built of white stone, the temple has imposing turrets. One can see the sky from within the temple. Though there is a perfect adaptation of parts in the masonry, yet it gives the impression that individual stones are crumbling. The temple has 3 exits, one each in the east, the north and the south. The entrance gates are two storied. The GarbhaGarah has a high dome. In front of it is the Sabha Mandap - built on 8 majestic pillars. There are Twenty Torans of which four still exist. Others were destroyed by the flood waters of the Som. The idol of the deity is in a chamber, eight steps below and the entrance is from the Sabha Mandap. There are several inscriptions by pilgrims and the oldest belongs to 1493 A.D. Several warriors were cremated near the temple and memorials have been raised in their honour.

### **Boreshwar**

The temple BoreshwarMahadeo was built during the reign of MaharawalSamant Singh sometime in 1179 A.D. It is situated on the banks of the Som river.

## **Kshetrapal Temple**

Situated in Khadagada, historical background of the temple is 200 years past. the temple has its known popularity from the name of goddess Bhairav the manuscript of the temple. Besides the temple is surrounded by other small temples of goddess Ganapati, Lordshiva Goddess Laxmi and Lord Hanuman.

### How To Reach There

**Air:** At 120 kilometres, Udaipur is the nearest airport followed by Ahmedabad at 175 kilometres.

**Rail:** The railway station is 3 kilometres from the city. An important train connection is Himatnagar-Dungarpur-Udaipur.

**Road:** National Highway No. 8, which runs between Delhi and Mumbai and the State Highway (Sirohi - Ratlam Highway) passes through the district.

## **Places to visit near Dungarpur**

### Udaipur

Often referred to as the 'Venice of the East', the lake city of Udaipur is known as the centre for performing arts and crafts. The famous Lake Palace, located bang in the middle of Lake Pichola is easily one of the most beautiful sights of Udaipur. Udaipur is also home to Jaisamand Lake, the largest artificial lake in Asia. The beautiful City Palace and SajjanGarh (Monsoon Palace) add to the architectural beauty and grandeur of the city. The city is also known for its profusion of zinc and copper mines. The solar observatory in Udaipur is known as one of the best in Asia and has been modelled after the Solar Observatory at Big Bear Lake in Southern California. Udaipur is also renowned for its miniature paintings. The Shilpgram festival, held sometime around the New Year manages to pull in great crowds of people interested in arts and crafts.

Udaipur was founded in 1559 by MaharanaUdai Singh II as a new capital of the Mewar kingdom. It is located in the fertile, circular Girwa Valley to the southwest of Nagda, which was the first capital of Mewar. Until Udaipur was built, the capital of Mewar was Ahar, a flourishing trade town.

### Chittorgarh

Chittorgarh resonates with stories of Rajputana bravery, pride and passion. The bards of Rajasthan sing tales of courage and sacrifice recounting stories that are known to every child and adult in the city. Chittorgarh is named after its most imposing structure, the Chittorgarh Fort which stands atop a 180 metre high hill and is spread across 700 acres.

Chittorgarh Fort has had a tumultuous past. This bastion of the Rajputs has faced violent attacks thrice in its entire history. The first was in 1303 when the Sultan of Delhi, Ala-ud-din Khilji, who was enamoured by Queen Padmini, launched an attack to abduct her. More than two centuries later, in 1533, it was Bahadur Shah, the Sultan of Gujarat, who caused immense destruction. Four decades later, in 1568, Mughal Emperor Akbar attacked and seized the fort.

It was finally in 1616, under the rule of Mughal Emperor Jahangir that the fort was returned to the Rajputs.

### Kota

Kota is the third largest city in the state of Rajasthan and is one of the popular tourist destinations. Situated on the banks of the Chambal River, the city of Kota is famous for its distinctive style of paintings, palaces, museums, and places of worship. The city is known for gold jewellery, Doria sarees, silk sarees and the famous Kota stone.

The history of Kota dates back to the 12th century when Rao Deva conquered the territory and founded Hadoti. The independent Rajput state of Kota was carved out of Bundi in 1631. The kingdom of Kota had a turbulent history as it was raided by various Mughal rulers, Maharajas of Jaipur and even the Maratha warlords. The city of Kota is well known all over the world for its architectural splendour comprising beautiful palaces, temples and museums which exhibit the grandeur of the foregone era.

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