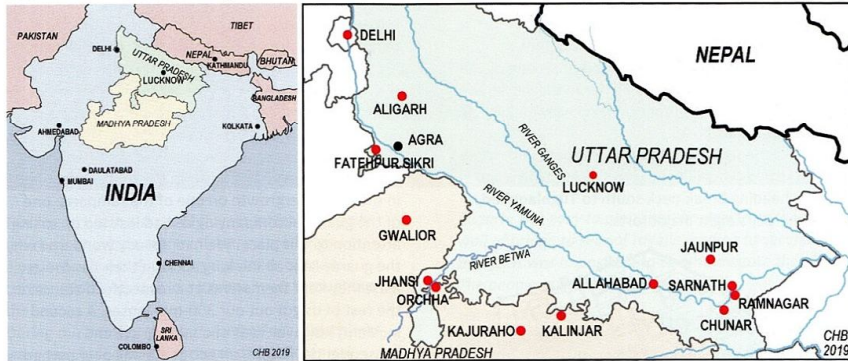


**A FORTRESS STUDY TOUR to INDIA –
MADHYA PRADESH and UTTAR PRADESH - PART 1**
By Hans-Rudolf Neumann

This year's fortress study tour to India in February 2019 went into the heart of the country and touched areas on both sides of the Ganges river.

despite the presence of large sections, in a miserable condition in the cityscape. One of these exceptions is the **Kashmir Gate** in northeast Delhi, which can be



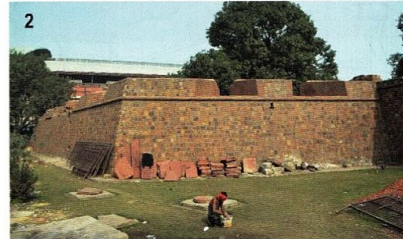
In contrast to the previous tours to India, this time - except for the first day in Delhi - no additional support was sought. We wanted to explore the country and selected fortifications as normal tourists and tune the visits to the pace of the group. The following report is only a description of our experience, not a detailed description of individual locations. This is already portrayed in the 44pp excursion folder on which this tour was based. Additional information that could only be obtained locally is included in this report. (The excursion folder can still be requested as a pdf.)

Day 1: Sunday, 03.02.2019

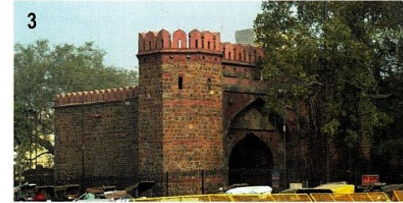
In **Delhi** we were supported by archaeologist Apurva Sinha MA who led us first to various parts of the former city fortifications, which had been modernised by the British and which are today, with exceptions,



reached by subway and which is in good condition (Fig. 1). Part of the adjoining rampart with an integrated bastion is still in existence and is currently undergoing a thorough renovation (Fig. 2).

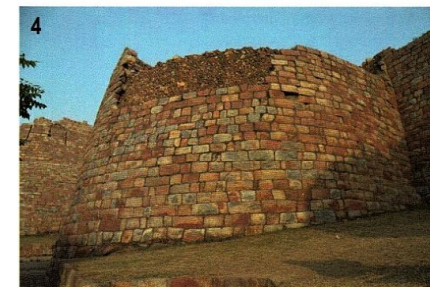
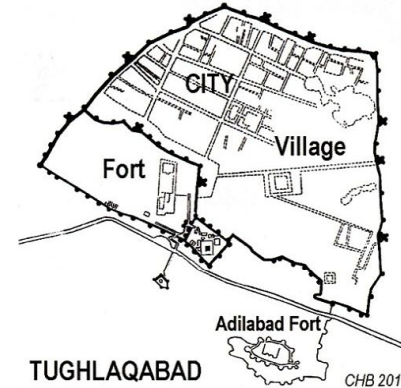


A commemorative plaque in the 1876 passage commemorated the British storming of this gate on September 14, 1857 ('after sunrise') and at the same site named the officers, NCOs, and men in Lord Napier's army who died when reconquering the city, which was held by about 30-40,000 insurgent sepoys. Also accessible by metro was the Martello Tower, integrated into a long section of the city walls. Starting from the **Delhi Gate** (Fig. 3) we reached the tower on foot from the front via a spacious park. Wall, ditch and tower were fenced though in one place you could crawl under but the broken arch in the access bridge did not allow access to the tower.



Unfortunately, the entire park is completely overgrown and neglected and requires urgent structural and horticultural care. As Delhi is one of the most polluted and air-poisoned cities in the world, the establishment and maintenance of such green lungs is of particular importance.

From here, the next 53 minutes were spent with three tuk-tuks, three-wheeled auto-rickshaws ('Bollywood swing') - heading break-neck south to **Tughlaqabad**, one of the city's eight major forts.

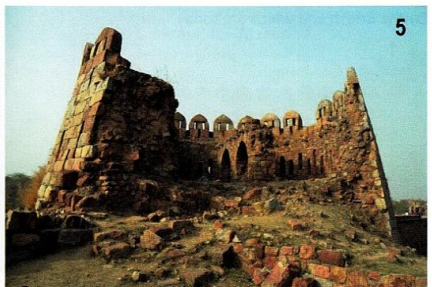


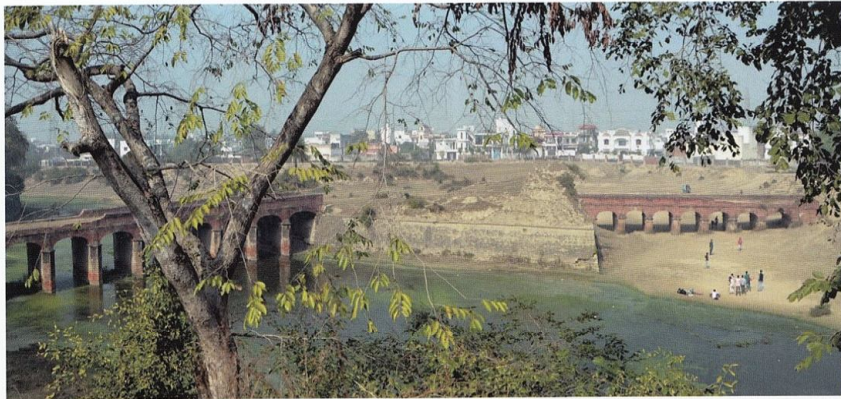
The fort was founded by Feroz Shah Tughlaq from 1321 to 1327 and was inhabited only a short time before his son Muhammad bin Tughluq in 1327 established the capital of his empire c100km south at Daulatabad on the Dekkan Plateau - a venture which he had to undo 17 years later after the Mongol invasion of northern India. The fortifications of the city and citadel stretch over an area of eight square kilometres; the fortress walls reach 15m in height and of the original 52 gates of the citadel 13 are still visible but are in a poor structural state. The bastions are particularly impressive (Fig. 4), especially where there are collapsed backs with visible internal construction. (Fig. 5) The view of the entire area was however much affected by the hazy and smog-burdened weather.

Two special occurrences marked the visit: two fat, long pythons lolled not far from the empty step-well in the dry undergrowth on one of the ramparts; one of the guards accompanying us had insisted on calling attention to this place. We had already wondered why the guards kept all the long sticks in their hands - at least they kept themselves at a respectful distance: the rest of us got out our 300-mm lenses. A second incident, however, was of a more grave and consequential nature: an accidental fall over barbed wire barely an inch above the ground and overgrown with grass meant a painful hip and thigh injury for one participant over the next fourteen days especially limiting mobility when climbing stairs, towers and into rickshaws. Which proved once again that despite the greatest caution, accidents will happen, even in tourist fortifications. It is fair, however, to say that tourism development in India is sometimes different from Europe! Anyone who knows India knows what they are talking about.

Day 2: Monday, 04/02/2019

The official part of the excursion started with a visit to the fort in Aligarh, off the Yamuna Express Highway between Delhi and Agra. The link leading from the freeway to Aligarh reflects the current road construction situation in India.





The country is in a state of flux, to which especially the reconstruction of the infrastructure bears eloquent witness. Rides through miles of road construction sites would accompany us throughout the tour.

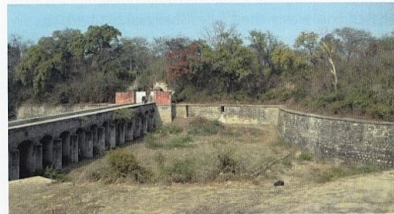
During our nearly two-hour visit to **Fort Aligarh**, we were welcomed by the director of the Botanical Garden, Dr Mohamed Farhan Fazli and his deputy, Dr Mohamed Khalid Hasan, and other employees welcomed and accompanied us.

The construction of the fort dates from 1524/25. The extent to which European influences were the source of inspiration at that time is unknown, at least for the years 1753 to 1759 internals such as eg. a powder magazine reported by French engineer officers. What is certain, however, is that the fort in its present appearance is the work of the Frenchman De Boigne et Perron. The complex, with its bastions, moats and two-bridge access is significant and could well develop into a unique selling proposition for the

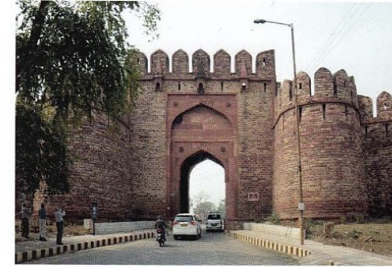


Aligarh: Group photo in front of the French magazine of the fort

Aligarh: Not easy to photograph; view from the fort's wall of bridge to rear of ravelin leading to second bridge. It was impossible to circumnavigate the glacis. The people in the dry ditch give a scale.



Aligarh: View from an advanced work of the main entrance of the fort



Fatehpur Sikri: Agra Gate, fortified access to the palace complex

city in the context of its current use.

We were able to point this out to our companions in our conversations, and Dr Fazli, himself an architect, appeared very grateful for the technical and moral support of his foreign colleagues. Despite dense scrub, we did not tire of taking ourselves into the most remote corners of the fort.

Lunch was taken in a restaurant in the city; the evening arrival in Agra was only an overnight stay, as the Red Fort was visited extensively in 2013.

Day 3: Tuesday, 05.02.2019

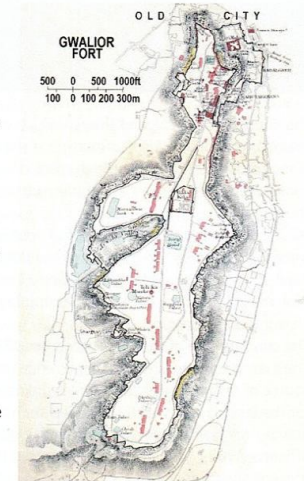
On today's trip to Gwalior, we visited the fortified **Fatehpur Sikri** palace, located 45km from Agra and listed as a World Heritage Site. The 2½ hour tour was mainly guided, through the extensive palaces from whose height one had a good view of the surrounding fortifications, towers and gates.

Due to time constraints and because of the tourist crowds we decided against a closer inspection of the mosque. For a more intensive visit you would have to plan at least 1½ days. But despite the hazy weather, it was possible to get a good impression of what was a short-lived facility, abandoned in 1585 under the Grand Moghul of Akbar due to water shortage just 15 years after its construction.

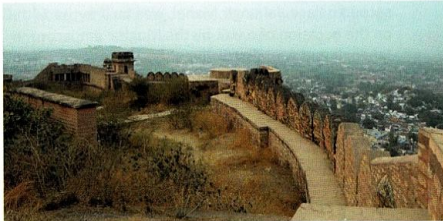


Gwalior: One of the outer bastions

The afternoon was followed at 16:00hrs by a visit to the fortress of **Gwalior**, popularly known as the 'Gibraltar of India', and the setting for a long-standing bone of contention between the Marathas and the British.



Gwalior: View of the Maan Mandir Palace. In the background on the left the access to the northern part of the fortress



Gwalior: North Bastion with gun platform

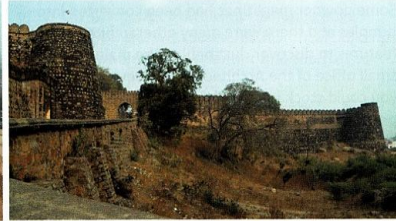
The bus's late arrival at the fort was caused by a bus in front which lost its oil on the steep driveway to the fortress, so the passengers had to walk part of the way, fearful that the bus would slide down the slope. Finally arriving in the fort, the lighting conditions were already difficult, so everyone went their own way in the northern part of the fortress. Those who did not manage to arrive at the entrance gate before 17.00hrs, the time for the sightseeing of the Maan Mandir Palace, 16th century, were unlucky as no one was admitted afterwards, but some still managed to gain access, pointing to our long journey, but the remaining time, now only one hour, was far too short for a thorough look at the fortress walls and grounds in the northern part. Gwalior Fort is undergoing a major restoration, so we saw *en passant* a number of interesting construction sites. On the return trip, a powder magazine from the British period was discovered at the Jain Temple.



Gwalior: The upper magazine of batteries 11 and 12 located between the two Sas-Bahu temples and the outer fortress wall

In spite of falling darkness, one also had the best view of the mighty eastern fortress walls from this spot. Too bad - one would have liked to hear more of the freedom hero of the Indian rebellion, Rani Lakshmbai, who died here in 1858 in the fight against the British.

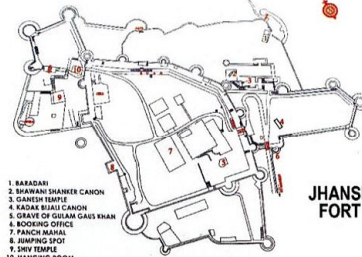
The night was spent in the hotel Taj Usha Kiran, a palace built by the Marathen-Maharaja Jayaji Rao Scindia in 1880 but a hotel boy was needed to give instructions for the electrical switchgear in our room.



Jhansi: access area. About 30 meters below, the complex is surrounded by a second fortress area

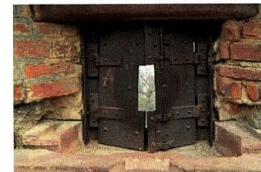
Day 4: Wednesday, 06.02.2019

After three hours of slalom through more miles of road construction, **Jhansi** was reached in the late morning, 100km southeast of Gwalior. At the entrance to the city, we were first hit by modern highway robbers who stopped the bus with their motorcycles and demanded customs and bank charges for the intrusion of a foreign vehicle into their territory. After watching for a quarter of an hour, we got out and began photographing and filming the group. In no time the whole gang was gone. Finally, we reached the fort in the centre of the city, once the seat of the reign of Princess Rani Lakshmbai.



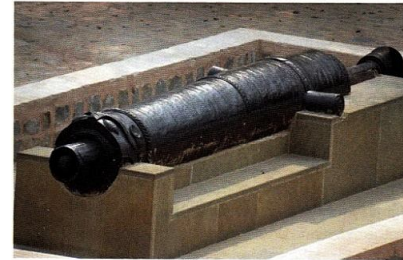
Site plan of the fortress. One can see the fortress beginning in the west and moving NE, surrounding the well-fortified core

The hilltop works turned out to be a complex fortress block, where it would have been possible to spend an entire day including the grounds. There was time enough to circle the fortress on its outer ramparts, discovering in the parapet wall a number of iron shutters, still fully functional, built by the British.



Jhansi: Fully movable, iron double-winged British embrasure-shutter Phoenix type

Some powder magazines had been converted into temples and there were many other architectural features to discover. Just behind the main gate was a small office of the Architectural Survey of India where you could stock up on good literature for a ridiculous price, including guides to locations from our previous tours, where these were already out of print. Amazing how many Indian tourists visited this facility during a weekday and inspected the Kadak Bijli cannon



Jhansi: Cannon Kadak Bijli from the Gangaghar Rao period (1st half 19th C)

The 17km drive to **Orchha** (pop.12k) took just 45 minutes. Our hotel resort was idyllically situated along the banks of the Betwa river, which was at low tide at that time. Orchha is not only famous for its **Raja Mahal palace fortress** (1531-1539), but also for the numerous 16th and 17th century temples and memorial buildings, including the Chaturbhuj Temple.



Orchha: View over the Betwa Bridge to the fortified palace

After a hearty lunch, the next 3½hrs were devoted to visiting the palace fortress, reached via a stone arched bridge over the Betwa, and then visiting the old city with the Chaturbhuj Temple. The Prince's Palace was characterized by numerous reception rooms, arranged around a large courtyard. The walls and ceilings had well-preserved paintings of war and hunting scenes. Part of the palace, the Sheesh Mahal (Mirror Hall), is now used as a hotel and was well frequented by Southeast Asian tour groups. The

second palace, Jahangir Mahal, was built in the 17th C on the occasion of a visit by the Mughal emperor Jahangir and was also distinguished by its rich, symbolic architectural ornamentation. Our visit was accompanied by a fertility procession of mostly young women. A drummer at the head of the procession loudly brought the necessary attention and curiosity of the public. Later, the procession encountered us again as it descended from the Chaturbhuj Temple. The Old Town tour remained as a pleasant memory. From the Betwa Bridge, you came directly into a pedestrian zone that led to the market square. Unfortunately, we were not allowed to visit India's famous and unique Hindu Ram Raja Temple, which had just closed. But compensation was offered by the Chaturbhuj Temple behind the Ram Raja Temple in a higher position. The fantastic view to the palace opposite and the old town as well as the inner rooms compensated for the arduous stair climbing. A group of young architecture students from Punjab were here practising freehand drawing.

Day 5: Thursday, 07.02.2019

This morning's 4½hr adventurous trip to **Khajuraho** was no different from yesterday's journey and travelled almost exclusively on bare ground through huge motorway construction sites. The almost four-hour afternoon visits focused not on fortifications but on the Hindu and Jain temples of the World Heritage List of Khajuraho temples. Khajuraho was the religious and cultural capital of the Chandella Empire from the 9th to the 16th century. Politically and militarily, the Chandellas ruled, among other places, from the fortress Kalinjar, which we would visit the next day. The temple complex with erotic scenes (*below*) dates from the 10th to the 12th Century and is divided into a western area with Hindu temples and an eastern



area with Jain temples. The fact that the small town of Khajuraho attracts tourists from all over the world resulted in a huge hotel infrastructure and the installation of a recently completed airport, which we passed the next morning

as we continued our journey. By the way, during the entire trip our hotel was the only place to get postcards and stamps.

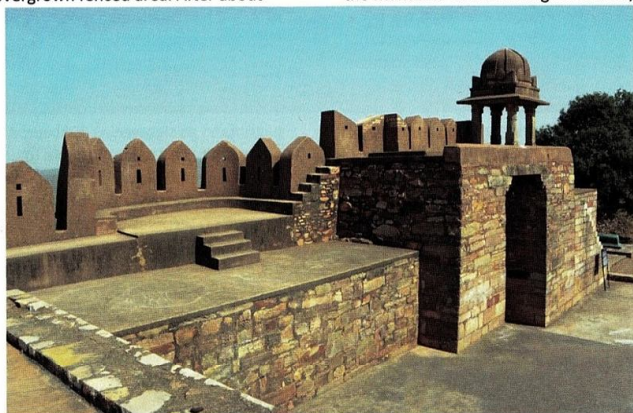
Day 6: Friday, 08.02.2019

Today we would finally reach the Ganges. But there was still a huge stretch of more than ten hours ahead of us that led us right through the Panna National Park Tiger Reserve with a 2½hr stay at **Kalinjar Fortress**. The trip was on a typical off-highway Indian country road, but was no better, if you know the state of Indian country roads in the province. Kalinjar itself is a city located at the foot of the fortress hill and 130km from Khajuraho. After passing through the city, we climbed up the fortress mountain in serpentine and reached two small buildings with a guard squad, which sold the tickets and then opened the entrance gate to a wildly overgrown fenced area. After about two kilometres

we reached the Rani Mahal, the royal palace, where the Chandellas resided, having their religious-cultural centre in Khajuraho. This was next to a huge water pool where steps led to the bottom and a small pond containing greenish shimmering water.

Our guide Agnishwar Gayen managed to persuade one of the guards of the otherwise closed palace to open it for us. However, this was only possible under a strict photography ban. The reason became clear to us as soon as we entered: neatly numbered spolia, which had been found on the fortress in the past, were stored in the colonnades around the inner courtyard. The figurative ornamentation reminded us immediately of the temple figures in Khajuraho, but these were much more sculpted and surpassed in their erotic power by far those figures at the temples in Khajuraho. Some of us tried in vain to reach the fortress walls from the royal palace; it was not until the return trip that we discovered a refurbished gate directly above the town of Kalinjar, which was located at the foot of the mountain, and took us on a long photo stop.

From here you had not only a wide view of the country, but also on the kilometre-long ramparts



Kalinjar: inside of the elaborately renovated fortified gate

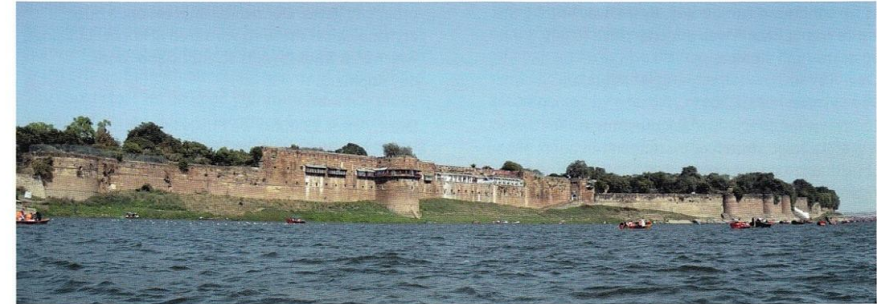
In 1583 the city was named by the Mughal Emperor

other city gates. Our overall impression: a huge archaeological site with scattered historical buildings, which as a whole awaits scientific and tourist development.

Shortly after 13.00hrs we finally left for the further journey to Allahabad, which we reached - interrupted only by a half-hour rest - after crossing the Yamuna bridge after 18.00hrs. It should not go unmentioned that the ride down from the hills to the Ganges plain gave us rich impressions and deep insights into the rural life of this extremely fertile region of India. Above all, the stone-clad ancient houses of the villages and individual farmsteads between the fields in the rich green mediated historical developments and social conditions in one. Our hotel Kanha Shyam was located on a side street of the Mahatma Gandhi-Marg boulevard, so we were

able to get some first impressions as we crossed the city.

Akbar I 'Allahabad' (City of God). In November 2018, the city took back its original Hindu name 'Prayag' (Sacrificial Site), but it will be some time before this name will prevail, especially since the name change with its anti-Muslim undertones has considerable potential for conflict. This is where the Ganges, India's largest river, and its main tributary, the Yamuna, unite. After a mythical Hindu concept, a third, invisible river is added - the Sarasvati; the city is therefore often called Triveni Sangam (Union of Three Streams). It's famous for its twelve-yearly Kumbh Mela: a great religious festival celebrated beneath the fortress in the area of the two confluent streams. During the last Kumbh Mela in 2013, more than 50 million pilgrims arrived in the city for 55 days. Every six years after the actual Kumbh Mela, the 'half kumbh mela' (Ardh Kumbh Mela) is also celebrated. And our arrival exactly coincided with this one.



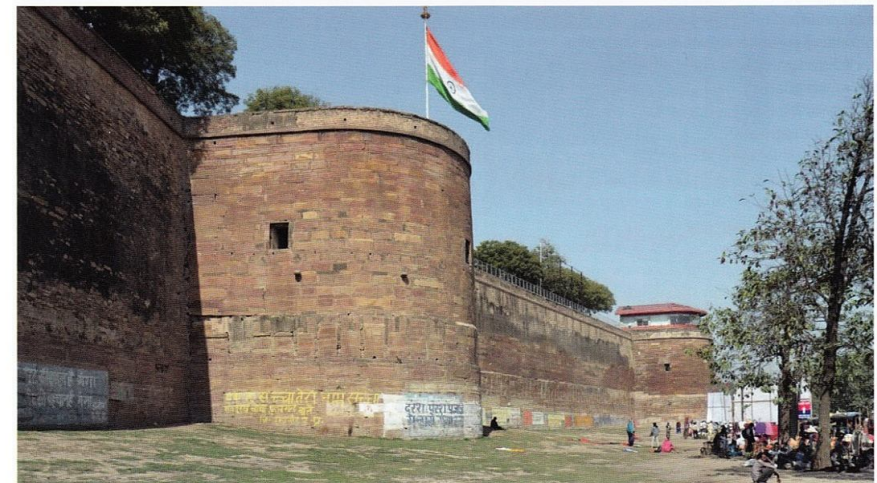
Front of the Fortress Allahabad facing the Ganges

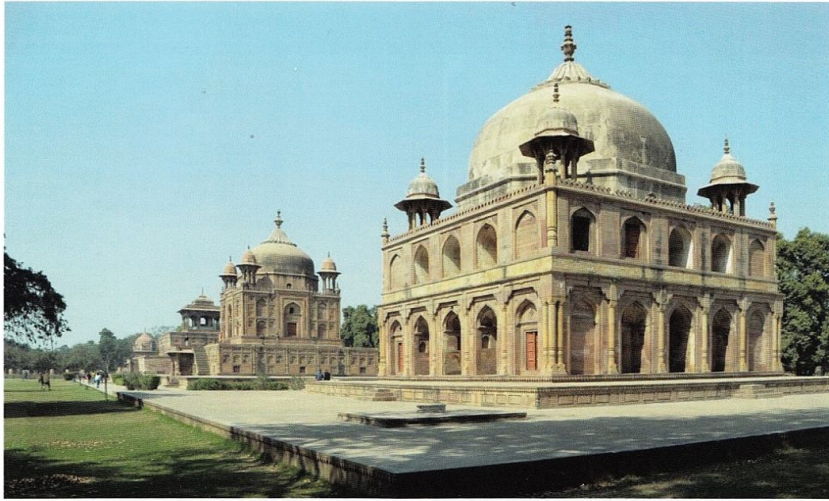
Day 7: Saturday, 09.02.2019

The highlight of the festival took place today: the washing of the aesthetes in the Ganges, which began at 04.00. Our local guide and student Ritesh Vishwas had politely asked us the previous evening if we wanted to attend this ceremony, which we equally politely refused. So, we tried initially at 08.45 to drive to the fort in our bus, but this worked for only a short distance on the Mahatma Gandhi Marg. The city was closed to all traffic. At the barrier we managed to organize three tuk-tuks, but both our guides and the drivers gave us little hope of reaching the fortress by motor. Overcoming the barriers turned into an adventure and eventually, within sight of the great Ganges Bridge, we had to leave our vehicles. Despite the great crowds we moved through, we were amazed at how well organized everything was. From the army to the border guards, the police up to uniformed assistants there were thousands of police officers on foot and horse to monitor and control the

various sectors of the beach between the fortress and the Ganges. After we had finally managed to reach the fort on foot, it became a little quieter, as the festivities concentrated on the banks of the Ganges, not to the Yamuna where we were heading. There were hundreds of boats on this shore, inviting pilgrims to go sightseeing. Of course, we took this opportunity and were thus able to enjoy the fortress from the water, completely closed for tourists and pilgrims on this day. The boats could only rowed, so the ride on the river took about 1¼ hrs. The river was full of boats, but our two oarsmen always managed to get us into the best positions for viewing and photography.

The front of Fortress Allahabad facing the Yamuna





Allahabad: mausoleums in the Khusru Bagh garden

The Allahabad Fort, unique in its architecture in India, was built in 1583-5 for Mughal Emperor Akbar I, and is the fourth and largest of the fortifications erected by Akbar, after the Red Forts of Agra, Lahore and Fatehpur Sikri. It is currently used by the Indian military and only a small part is open to the public but even this small part was not accessible today. Some of our group tried on their own, at least on the land side to reach several angular projecting walls in the manner of European bastions, but they failed in view of the crowds and more barriers. So we were left with the inspection of the two river sides, where large battlements bordered by high towers and the - today dilapidated - representative buildings of the fortress were. Our return to the hotel was very individual and took up to two and a half hours.

Day 8: Sunday, 10.02.2019

Not only because it was Sunday, but also because of the exhausting previous visit day, a 'tourist recovery programme' was announced. In the late morning we started for a large garden called **Khusru Bagh**. Built in the Persian style with two intersecting axes, the complex is interesting in that there are four mausoleums for members of the Mogul court from

the first half of the 17th C (Fig. 23). The imposing buildings also reflect the dramatic family history of the great-mogul Akbar I.

Following this visit, we drove to a dignified residential building in a park that is currently used as a national museum. This was Nehru's residence, Anand Bhawan,

once the headquarters of the Indian National Congress, where also his daughter Indira Gandhi lived and where India's independence was prepared with Mahatma Gandhi.



Anand Bhawan Museum: Former residence of the Nehru family

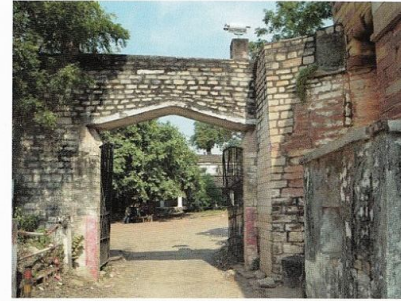
A visit to the Anglican Church of All Saints, a cathedral built in the Gothic style of the 13th C by the British between 1871 and

1887, within walking distance from our hotel, unfortunately could not be realized, as the building was closed this afternoon. This ended our visit to Allahabad, which did not give us the hoped for 100% fortress enjoyment but was nevertheless rich in impressions and could deepen our knowledge of Indian history and culture - not to mention an unforgettable participation in a worldwide unique Ardh Kumbh Mela event

Photographs by the Author

**A FORTRESS STUDY TOUR to INDIA –
MADHYA PRADESH and UTTAR PRADESH, PART 2**

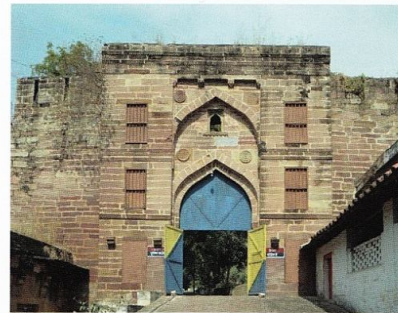
By Hans-Rudolf Neumann



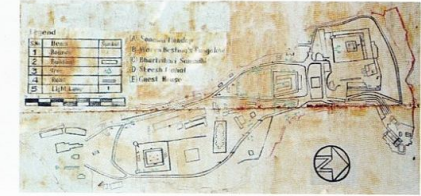
Chunar: Western entrance gate; on the right is the bricked-up original entrance

Day 9: Monday, 11.02.2019

After a hearty breakfast, the new week started with the drive to Chunar and Varanasi, the former Benares. We left our hotel Kanha Shyam in Allahabad at 08.10hrs and crossed parallel to the railway bridge - built 1911/1927



Chunar: Exterior and interior of eastern gate



Chunar: Schematic layout of the fort on a rusted sign

and one of the longest in India - the first time the Ganges had been bridged, a crossing repeated 115 mins later at Mirzapur on the right bank – another 15 mins. The weather was hazy; On both sides of the Ganges Bridge in Allahabad one could see the huge tented cities of the pilgrims. After Mirzapur we drove through further villages of Dhaurupur and Rajpur and finally reached **Chunar** at 11.10hrs. The fortress, located on a hill overlooking the river, was within ten minutes of the village.

According to legend, the hill was already fortified in 57 BC by the Ujjain-King Maharaja Vikramaditya; it was first mentioned in history in the Mughal I dynasty when Humayun (1508-1556) tried unsuccessfully to capture it. In 1574 Akbar the Great (1542-1608) conquered the fort; during the India uprising of 1857/58, it served as a safe retreat for the British. The fort is openly accessible today, and houses a police station, but there was not much to see. Most buildings stand empty, including the palace; in another building is a small temple. The most noteworthy building is the open pavilion Sonwa Mandap with its 28 columns erected in the architectural Hindu style. Of the defences, two gates were identified; a round bastion next to the main entrance provided opportunities for the mounting of cannon that could shoot directly up the river from above (below).

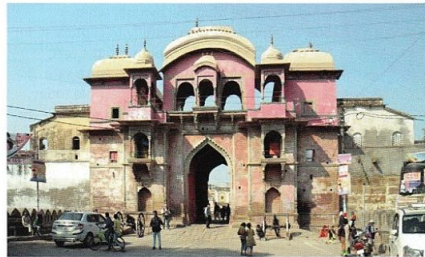


The entire area is neither renovated nor open to tourists, but there were toilets in the buildings used by the police. The visit took just seventy minutes; unfortunately, the fortress walls were not visible because of the impenetrable vegetation. Only on the onward journey did one see the mighty walls and half bastions, from the bottom of the hill.

Just past Mirzapur and below the fortress, so to speak, a new concrete bridge over the river led us straight to **Varanasi**, India's holy city of death and the holiest city for Hindus. But this was not the only reason to spend two nights there; that evening we took a boat after sunset for the ritual fire offering, a Hindu Ganga Aarti ceremony at the holy Dasaswamedh Ghat near the Kashi Vishwanath Temple. This nightly ritual is the highlight of every day dedicated to the gods, with lots of fire, music and songs to admire. Four to seven young pandits, dressed in saffron coloured robes, performed the approximately 1½hr ceremony, starting to blow on a large conch shell and then, to the rhythmic songs and the sound of cymbals, incense sticks and fire lamps were launched into the dark sky. Deeply impressed by the ritual singing and peals of bells and drumbeats, as well as by the flaming torch ritual, we left the ghat and, as on the way out, were driven at breakneckspeed in our motorized rickshaws through dense crowds, back to the hotel, arriving there around 20.30hrs.

Day 10: Tuesday, 12.02.2019

Today, starting from Varanasi, the **Ramnagar Fort** should be visited. Although the fortress is only a few miles SE of Varanasi on the right bank of the Ganges, it took us 1½hrs to reach it via a section of the Grand Trunk Road leading to Calcutta, which crosses the Ganges with six lanes. The traffic in the area of the bridge structure, which is still a-building, is indescribable, but we came across the river relatively smoothly and reached the fort at 10.15hrs.



Ramnagar: Multi-storey fortress gate as main entrance

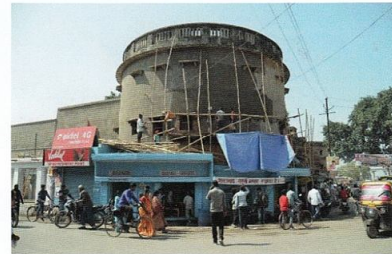
The fortress with its museum, built in 1750 in a typical Mughal style, is a place of history for the kings of Benares. Since the 18C, it has been the home of Kashi Naresh. The current king and resident of the fortress is Anant Narayan Singh, known as Varanasi's Maharajah, although this royal title was abolished in 1971. In this respect, only part of the complex could be visited; the southern area, which meant about half of the fort, was unfortunately not accessible. The flag on the fort is hoisted when the maharaja resides in his palace fort, but he wasn't at home. The palace, in the accessible part, has many carved balconies, open courtyards and pavilions. Two white towers are accessible via a staircase. The museum, known as Saraswati Bhawan, is located in the Durbar Hall (public hall) of the fort and includes, among other things, a collection of vintage American cars, mediaeval costumes, royal sedan chairs,



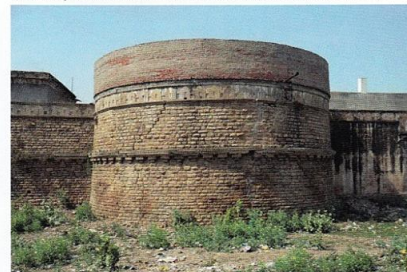
Ramnagar: A cannon on a wheeled carriage, one of many lining the courtyard

silver-carved elephant saddles and an impressive armoury with swords and old weapons from Africa, Burma and Japan. The exhibits are directly related to the family history of the Maharajah and were made at the time specifically for the Royal Palace of Varanasi.

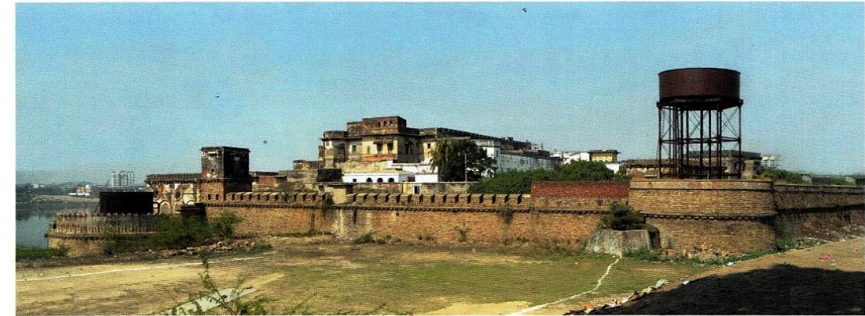
Of course, we were more interested in the defences. Due to the location directly on the banks of the Ganges, only the land side walls could be visited. A total of seven half-round, three-quarter and round bastions connected by curtain walls were identified, of which the NE round corner bastion was undergoing refurbishment.



*Ramnagar: Remediation and plaster work on the round outer bastion in the NE corner of the fort
On bamboo scaffolding workers were busy plastering the masonry. Walls and towers are in a tolerable condition.*

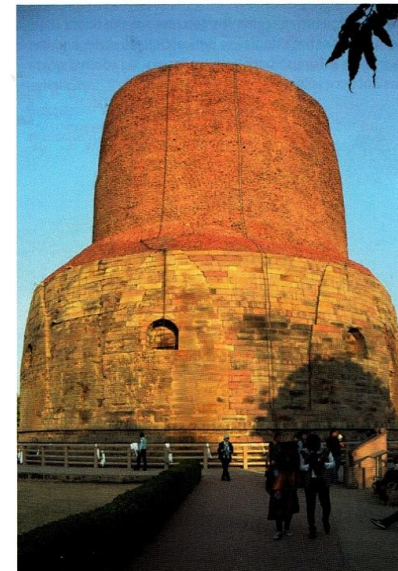


Ramnagar: A half bastion on the east landside ramparts



Ramnagar: View from the east of the south side of the fort. Left in the background is the Ganges River

Much of the fortress could only be viewed from the river. It is a shame that the northern parts of the building are not used. For a (not yet existing) river tourism industry there is plenty for a hotel business. Directly north of the fort a bridge crosses the river, but this leads directly into the old town area of Varanasi, which did not serve us at all, so we went back the way we came reaching our hotel for lunch after just under a 2hrs drive, shortly before 14.00hrs.



Sarnath: Dhamekh Stupa from the 3rd century BC in the Buddhist place of pilgrimage. It is said to mark the place where Buddha gave his first sermon

Varanasi is famous not only for its function as the spiritual capital of India and Hindu burial rituals.

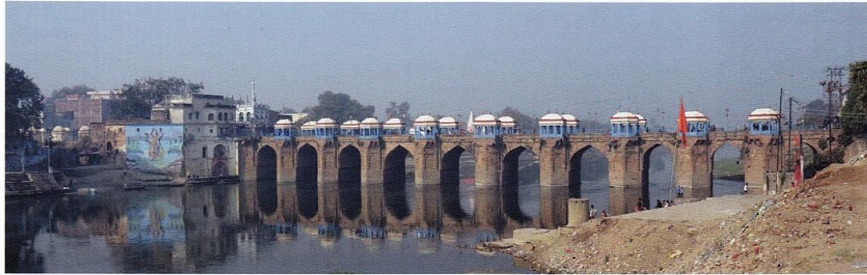
Ten kilometres north of the city is **Sarnath**, which we reached at 15:45hrs after about 25mins driving. In Sarnath, the Buddhist order was established. Excavations by the ASI since the early 19th century have established Sarnath as one of the most important pilgrimage sites for Buddhists from around the world. Remains of stupas, monasteries and one of the pillars of Ashoka testify to the importance of the place until its destruction in the 12C. Sarnath today has a gazelle park, several Buddhist temples, two ancient stupas, numerous monastery ruins, parts of an Ashoka column, the Archaeological Museum - one of the most visited museums in India - several modern temples and the Central Institute for Tibetan Studies.

The Gazelle Park of Sarnath is considered to be the place where Buddha, after his enlightenment under the bodhi tree of Bodhgaya, put into words for the first time the insights of his wanderings, ascetic practices and meditations, sharing them with his disciples Kaundinya, Vappa, Bhadrīya, Mahanaman and Asvajit. We saw many groups of visitors from SE Asia, even from the regions where Buddhism is the leading religion. Prayers and recitations took place at the large stupa - altogether a historical and sacred place at the same time.

Day 11: Wednesday, 13.02.2019

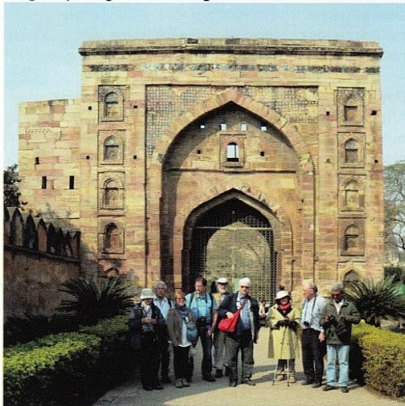
After approximately 1,100km of driving, the eastern part of our journey had been reached in Varanasi. Today, the return journey to Delhi began, which initially led via Jaunpur to Lucknow and from there by plane to the Indian capital. The approximately 300km route to Lucknow was estimated at seven hours driving; Jaunpur on the Gomti River, which is about 70km away from Varanasi, was reached in two hours.

Because of the good northern location of our hotel in Varanasi, we actually managed to leave the city at 07:40hrs and exit at 09:15hrs on the left carriage of the Sadbhawana Bridge in Jaunpur. Here we greeted our leader Kaushlesh Kumar Singh who arrived from Varanasi as the city of Jaunpur could not provide us with a local guide. From here we had an excellent view of the historic and fortified **Mughal Bridge Shahi Pul**, which we wanted to visit.



Jaunpur: The Mughal Bridge Shahi Pul seen from the left bank of the Gomti looking upstream
 The bridge, which is known by its various names and has a total of 15 arches, was built in 1568-72 by the Afghan architect Afzal Ali on the orders of Akbar during his reign. The bridge spans a third of its length with five arches on an approach area on the right bank and then leads with another ten arches over the Gomti River, a tributary of the Ganges. After the first third there are building complexes on both sides of the bridge e.g. a white mosque with a towering minaret. On a square platform opposite lies a large lion sculpture with an elephant under its front paws, brought from a Buddhist monastery. On either side of the bridge pillars there are small open pillared pavilions painted in blue, which give an unmistakable appearance with their red and white-striped roofs. Previously, the pavilions served as shops, now only seen on the approach. In terms of urban planning, the bridge, together with the two parts of the old town and the neighbouring fortress on a hill, form a highly interesting ensemble.

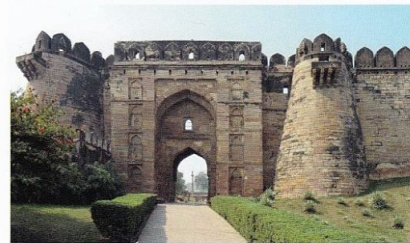
The 1½hr visit to the nearby fortress **Shahi Fort** from 10.00hrs surprised us immensely. The preliminary research on the Internet and Google Earth led us to expect only an entrance gate and the ill-defined overgrown surface of an irregular pentagon - but how great was our astonishment



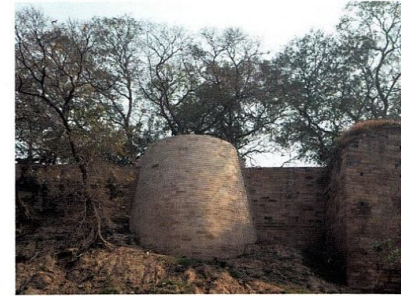
Jaunpur: First gate to the fortress

to find a well-restored fortress with park-like maintained interior, which was under the ASI. In the NE entrance area, we were greeted by a mighty archway, which we immediately used as a background for a group photo. But after passing through this gate, one could see the huge fortress wall of the eastern front with four round towers and the equally powerful entrance gate.

The fortress was built by Firoz Shah Tughlaq in 1350 AD over the ruins of the old fortress Kerar Kot. The fortress wall, partly with bastions, leads around an artificial mound. Outwardly the walls are of considerable height, but since the hill occupies only the eastern half, its height is not uniform from the level of the inner fortress. Later we saw that a destroyed bastion is being restored and rebuilt on the western corner. Inside the fortress are the Shahi mosque with three domes in typical Bengali style, and the Hammam, a Turkish bath with underground rooms, which was not accessible.



Jaunpur: Exterior and interior of main gate to the fortress



Jaunpur: A round and square bastion facing the Gomti River

We were able to complete a circuit of the fortress wall and view the entire city from an excellent position at different angles.

At the end of our stay we did not miss the chance to see one of the city's three famous mosques, walking to the nearby Atala Mosque, which was built in 1376 and is one of the earliest examples of Jaunpur style. It consists of a courtyard, on the west side of which are several buildings, of which the central one is covered by a dome, in front of which there is a gate pyramid or a Propylon of almost Egyptian type and contour.

In order to get to know Indian fortification (secular and sacred) architecture from the 14C Mughal period, Jaunpur is indeed an extraordinary city, which is fortunate not to be overrun by tourism. It is rightly called 'Jaunpur - a forgotten Mughal city'.

After the departure of our guide, the last part of our bus ride started at 12:20hrs along the well-developed highway with simultaneous consumption of packed lunches; a ¾hr rest had to be taken by our driver, and shortly before 19.00hrs we arrived at the Hotel Clarks Avadh in Lucknow for dinner and overnight.

Lucknow: inside the entrance to Bara Imambara; behind, right, two white towers of the Imam Bargah are visible

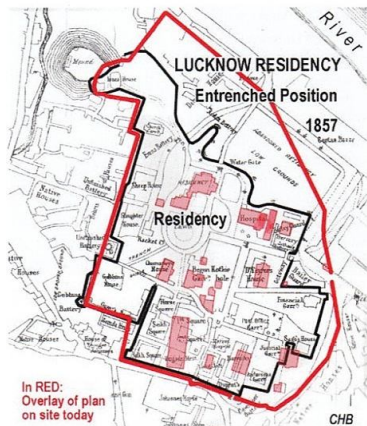


Day 12: Thursday, 14.02.2019

With the visit to **Lucknow**, capital city of the state of Uttar Pradesh (pop. 3m) this year's study trip to India would come to an end. The town on the Gomti River was built in 1528 on the orders of Babur (1483-1530), the founder of the Mughal Empire. From the middle of the 18C, when the Mughal Empire was declining, the Islamic centre of power slowly shifted from Delhi to the princely state and the province of Avadh with its capital Lucknow. As a magnet for poets and artists, the city was also an important place of Shiite culture and Islamic jurisprudence. The British removal from power of the last Nawab of Avadh Wajid Ali Shah (1822-1887) in 1856, is considered to be one of the causes of the Indian uprising of 1857 after British forces had captured the city in 1856. During the subsequent siege of Lucknow, the city was the scene of bitter fighting between British/Indian and insurgent Indian troops.

The four-hour morning visit began with a drive to the vast Bara Imambara ('Great House of the Imam') mosque, which impressed us with a huge vaulted hall, a three-dimensional labyrinth in the attic, and other buildings such as the artificially elaborated Shahi-Baoli water reservoir. Then we went to the Imam Bargah of the Chhota Imambara ('Little House of the Imam'), a completely white mosque complex with a wonderful Persian garden park, which serves as a centre of mourning for the split of Islam into Sunnis and Shiites. Founded in 1837-42, the third Nawab of Awadh, Muhammad Ali Shah, and his mother are buried here. Outside the two mosque complexes, the urban planning developments, which are also intended for mass events, were particularly important. The area around the bell tower with the picture gallery and the water basin is extremely impressive. The whole day it was striking that with the exception of a single coach we saw no foreign tourists.

After lunch at the hotel, a 2½ hr visit to the 'Residency' began - that complex in which about 1750 British and Indian combatants defended themselves against the Indian insurgents between the 1st of July and the 17th of November 1857. The residency was built as a group of



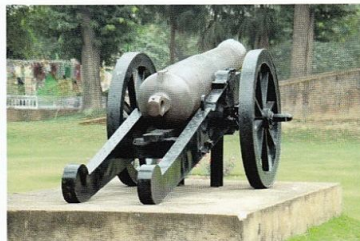
In RED:
Overlay of plan
on site today

Lucknow: Floor plan of the Residency

several buildings between 1780 and 1800 as the residence and administrative centre of the British Resident General, who was a representative at the Nawab's court (Fig. 40). The buildings are as ruinous as they were when they were abandoned, with traces of fire, cannon and bullet holes still visible today.

As a protected monument within a well-kept garden park, the residency is above all a local tourist attraction.

Lucknow: View over the grounds of the Residency with one of the buildings converted into a museum




Lucknow: One of the cannon in the Residency, used by the defenders during the siege

Day 13: Friday, 15.02.2019

We transferred in the late morning to Amausi Airport in Lucknow, from where the group flew back to Delhi at arriving after a fifty-minute, bumpy flight. Our farewell dinner was held in the restaurant of the neighbouring Pride Plaza Hotel; the check-in procedures for our home flights began with the return at 22.00hrs to the airport, from where after midnight we left for Munich, Amsterdam and London.

Once again, an extremely varied and educational tour had come to an end, and paths had been followed or driven far away from any tourist development. It was surprising what incredible tourist potential awaits discovery - and the fortifications with their palaces and mosques are at the top of the list. However, India is undergoing a huge process of transformation, and much of what we have seen and experienced presumably will be different in the future. (All photographs by the Author) 🍷



Fortress Study Group
CASEMATE
No. 117 January 2020 ISSN1367-5907

Editing and graphics: Charles Blackwood / Norman Clark