

Thursday, 28 June 2012

A forgotten tale of Deeg

Deeg Palace.. a forgotten tale of an Indian king.

We often forget that the name of the commonly known 'Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary' is 'Keoladeo Bird Sanctuary', which comes from the Keoladeo temple (Lord Shiva) next to the watch-tower in the middle of the sanctuary. Such is the story of Deeg!

How to reach Deeg

Deeg is 153 kms from New Delhi & 98 kms from Agra) falls within the territorial limits of the holy Braj-Bhumi. Known as ancient Dirghapura in district Bharatpur of Rajasthan, Deeg became a stronghold of the Jat rulers during 18th -19th cent AD. Deeg is deeply connected with the rise of the Jat peasants under the leadership of Rajaram (AD 1686-88), Bhajja Singh (AD 1688-98) and Chudaman (AD 1695-1721). After the death of Chudaman, Badan Singh (AD 1722-56) consolidated his authority over several districts.

Badan Singh (1722 – 56 AD) after assuming the throne consolidated the headman ship of the tribe and was the founder of the Jat house at Bharatpur. The credit of commencing the urbanization of Deeg goes to him in entirety. It was he who selected this spot as the headquarters of his newly established Jat kingdom...something that our history books conveniently left out.

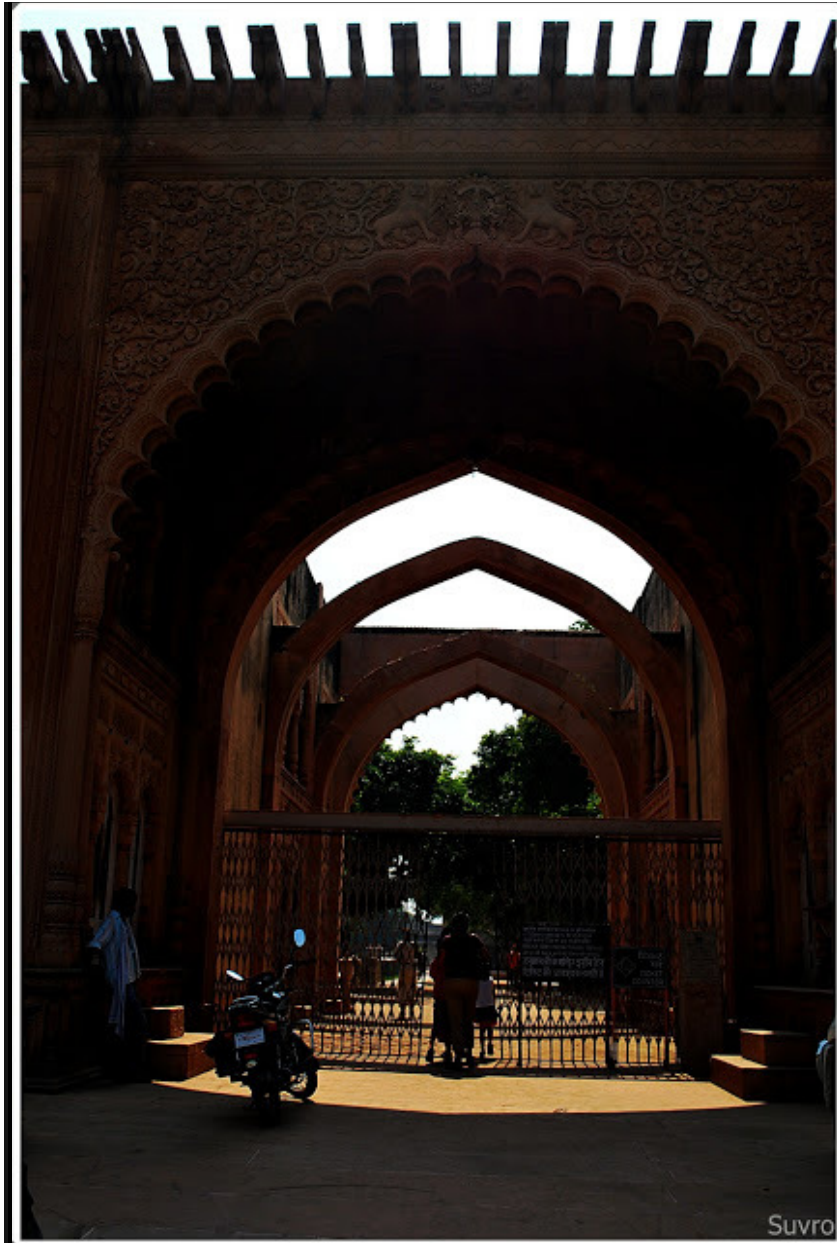
How many of us know that the Jat king, SurajMal attacked Delhi, defeated the Nawab of Delhi, Ghazi-ud-din (II) and carried smartly-cut out pieces of a complete marble palace from the Red Fort and had it reassembled to add on to the Suraj Bhawan here in Deeg!

Facts that this palace was built outside the fort walls, which is unlike most other palaces; that in an arid state like Rajasthan, they created a water-palace! For me, my visit to Deeg was like retrieving those lost pages of the history. I still wonder why this 'real-story' of the brave Jat rulers has been under-wraps! So here we go to Deeg ..

Welcome to Deeg Palace through Singh Pole.



The strong citadel with towering walls and bastions was erected slightly later in 1730 AD by Surajmal, the worthy son of Badan Singh. At about the same period, the enormous tank called Rup-Sagar was built by Rup Singh, Badan Singh's brother.



You enter by the 'Singh-Pol', the main entrance to the palace complex. It is named after two lions sculpted in front of the archway.





The beautiful garden retreat adorning this city is the most outstanding of the artistic accomplishments of Surajmal and serves to this day as a glorious memorial to the celebrated hero of the Jat tribe. Surajmal (AD 1756-63), the son and successor of Badan Singh was the greatest ruler and during his rule the power of clan reached its zenith. After the death of Surajmal, his son Jawahar Singh (1764 – 68 AD) completed certain palaces including the Suraj Bhawan and gave finishing touch to the gardens and fountains. The architecture of Deeg is mainly represented by mansions called the Bhawans. The Gopal Bhawan, Suraj Bhawan, Kishan Bhawan, Nand Bhawan, Keshav Bhawan, Hardev Bhawan form the complete palace. Strikingly, the palace have balanced outlines, fine proportions, commodious halls, attractive arcades, alluring greenery, charming tanks and canals with fountains. The layout of the Deeg Palace gardens is based on formality of the Mughal CharBagh or four-fold garden patterns and flanked by two reservoirs, viz., Rup-Sagar and Gopal-Sagar.

Suraj Bhawan

Built by Raja SurajMal, this is the most extensive building in marble inside the palace complex. This is a single storey flat-roofed building with a verandah & 5 arched openings. Originally built of buff-colored sandstone to which white marble was encased after he defeated Ghazi-ud-din in Delhi. The dados of the central apartment are bordered with excellent pietra dura work.



Seesh Mahal



Gopal Bhawan

The largest & most admirable of all, the Gopal Bhawan reflects in the surrounding sheet of water & imparts a unique charm to its ambience. A central hall is flanked by wings of two low-storied annexes called Sawan & Bhadon Bhawans, on either side. Each of these pavilions is a two-storied structure of which only the upper one is visible from front and has a fascinating palanquin-shaped roof crowned by a row of elegant spikes.

Kishan Bhawan

The Kishan Bhawan, at the southern fringe has a well-decorated and extensively paneled façade broken by five large central archways and a huge feeding tank for the fountains on its terrace. This massive tank is still active twice a year to run the 900 fountains that line the gardens. They spew colored water with a technology that needs to be seen to be believed.



One floor of this structure is under the water to beat the extreme heat of Rajasthan

Hardev Bhawan

Front-faced with a vast garden in the CharBagh pattern, this double-storied mansion underwent alterations during SurajMal's time. The ground floor has a projecting central hall faced with arches springing from a row of double pillars. Behind it is an arcaded colonnade running along three sides. Crowned by a chhatri on the rear, a narrow gallery screened with obliquely-cut jaalis, runs at the back of the upper floor.

The architecture is trabeate but arcuate systems have also been made in some places. The arcades are decorative as each arch is formed by joining cantilevers projecting from the pillars. The general features are of arches resting on ornate pillars, huge halls with flat roof terraces, balconies and pavilions with Bengal roofs, double eaves and spacious internal arrangements.

A quick run-through on the Bhawans within the Palace...



Hand pulled fan to air the large drawing room

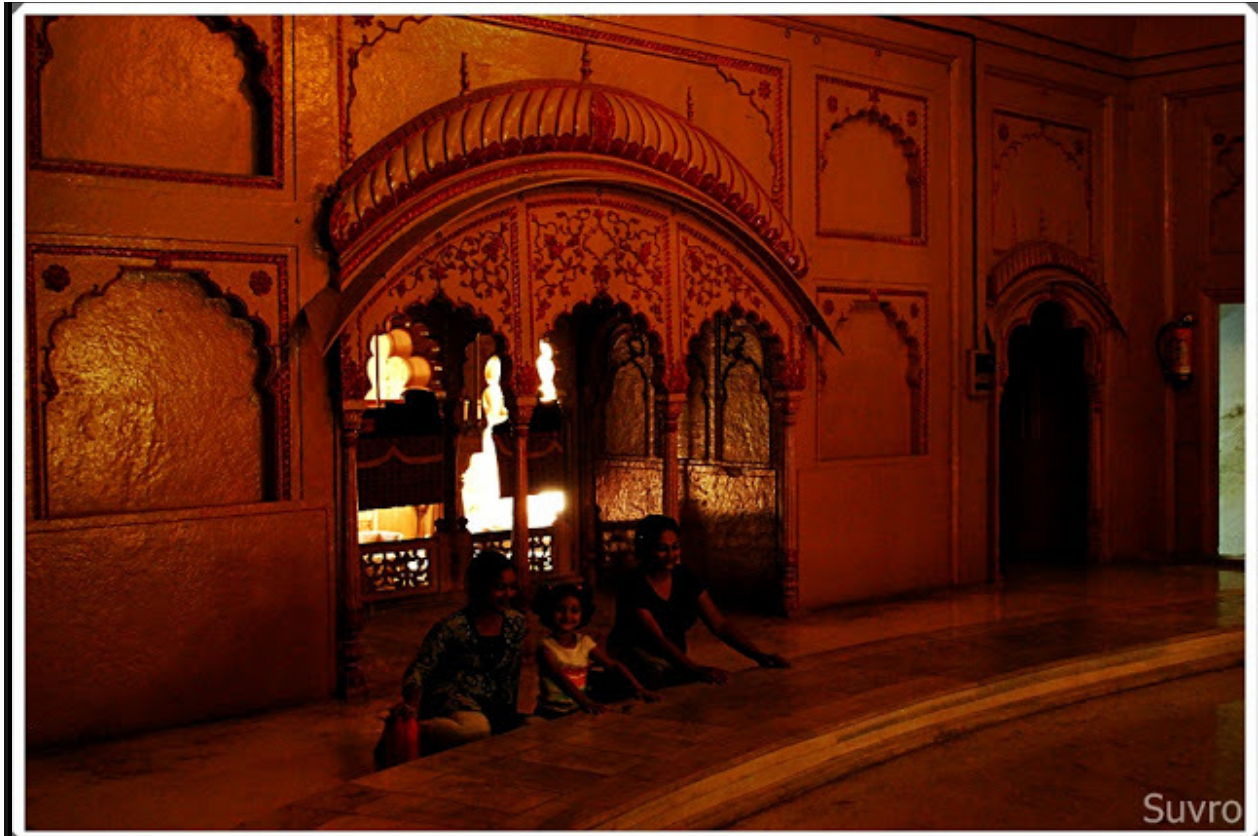


Some more fountains inside to make the air cooler



A mini bar beside the window, made of the leg of an elephant

And the royal residence had separate Indian and Western dining areas. I was completely taken in by the Indian one which was a marble 'horse-shoe' table with sit-downs on velvet cushions am sure. What a life!

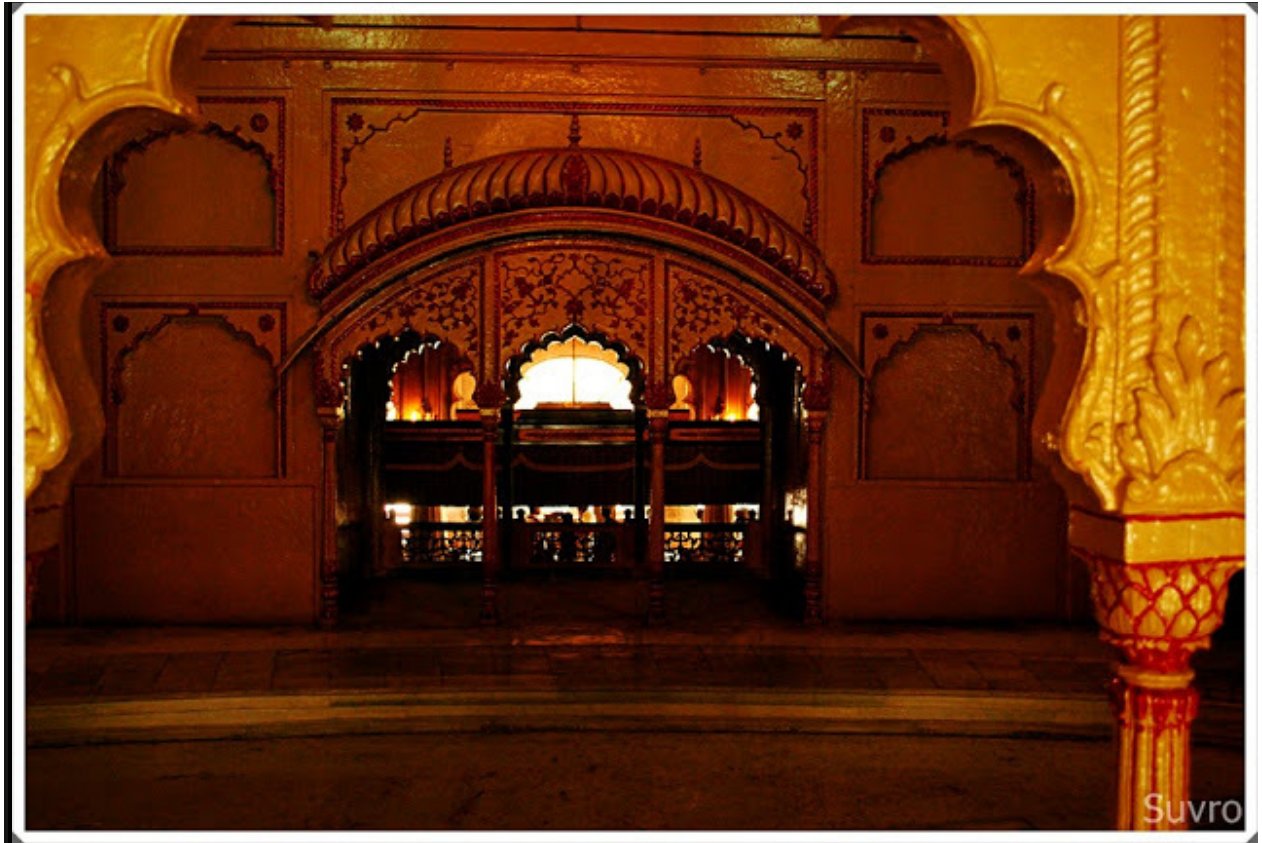


Indian style dining table, one of it's kind

Just below that is the English dining area



A glance around the palace



Overseeing the palace window is the big lake from second floor



And a look of Seesh Mahal



Indoor entertainment area - for card and chess playing



Peep into kings bedroom and the bed 'kingsize'



A wooden air-cooler in the palace



Work area for the palace, don't miss the fountain within the room



The trophy is the swing of Noor-jahan, brought from the fort of Delhi

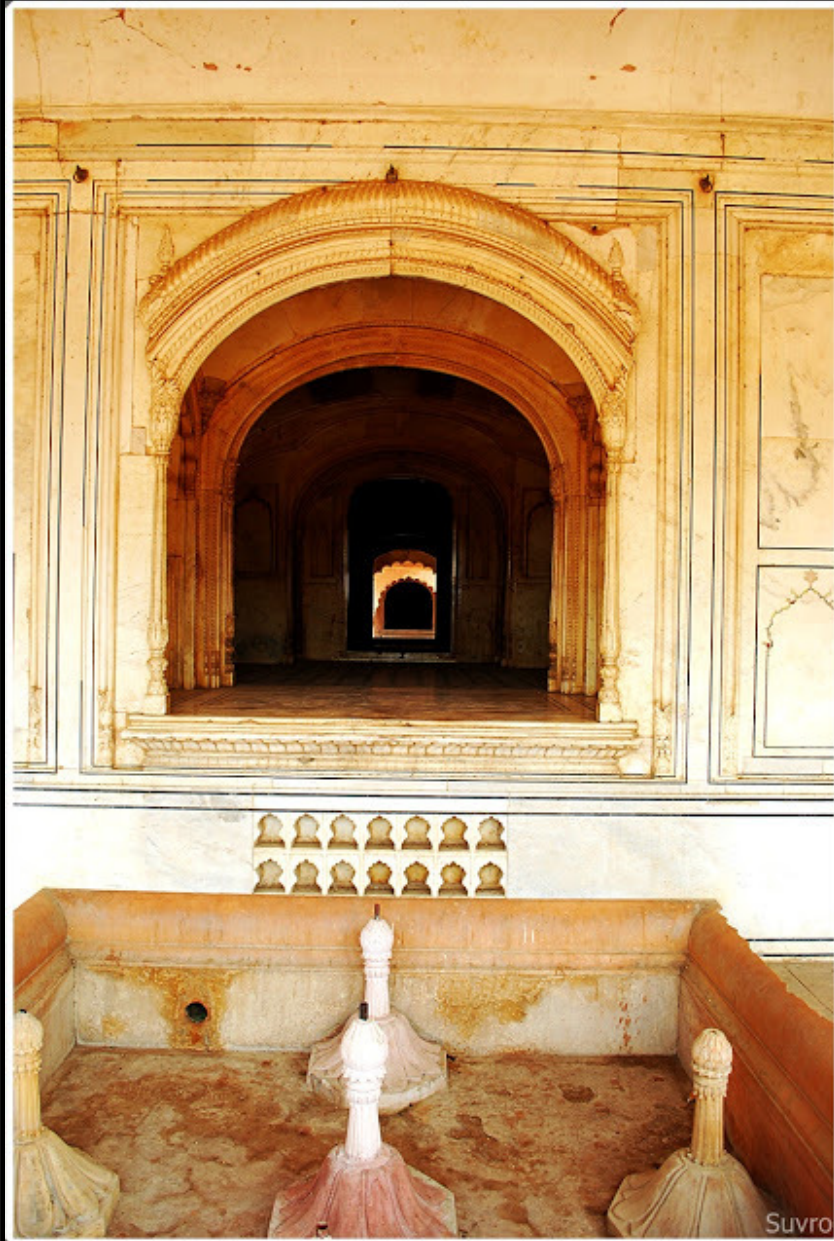


Trophy of the Victory ~ the 'Jhoola of NoorJahan' from Delhi fort. It was never featured in the pages of any history book.

Keshav Bhawan

Commonly known as *Baradari*, this is a square single-storied open pavilion. Keshav Bhawan is unique because of its elaborate architecture to reproduce the effects of monsoon.

There were massive metal balls in the double-walled ceiling which were agitated by piped running water to create the noise of thunder and the water was released through spouts above the arches to fall as rain in sheets around the open hall. A broad canal runs round the edge of the pavilion.



Nand Bhawan

The Nand Bhawan is a spacious oblong hall raised on a terrace and enclosed by grand arcade with 7 openings. The ceiling of the central portion of the hall is made of wood. This entire building was dismantled from the Moughel emperors and then each piece was assembled to make a guest house for women in the palace !!

There is a memory of the elephant, who broke the door of the castle of the delhi fort, but died. The leg of the elephant is still there to hold a wine bottle to keep his memory alive.



Suddenly a charecter appeared from history came in front of me to give the live feeling .. I was just lost ..



Just another view of Nand Bhavan



Conquers the war in Delhi, cuts the entire building into pieces and then assembles each piece within the palace compound as a 'Ladies guest house' as memento of the victory against the Mughals.



The Fort behind, with an underground tunnel to shit quickly ... when needed. Amazing.



A huge reservoir and water loading system for making all those hundreds of fountain work and most importantly they work still now. These fountains come out with colored water, that mechanism was made then and is also working condition still. Twice in a year they are operated for public view.



Cage of the 'pet Lions' of the braves



History elaborated inside



Im-possible ideas and excellence. Want to hear the thunderstorm? The roof used to have many solid balls and from the bottom water used to make them bounce to give the effect of thunderstorm and the feeling of enjoying rain.



Health is wealth .. always !!! Kings used to have indoor exercise and wrestling practice and then a swim to relax. Every bit gives the feel of a farsighted Indian intelligence other than the structural and architectural royal delicacy.



Granite Bajrangbali for blessing the kings

The strength comes to the Kings from 'Bajrangbali', which is a full size granite idol. Excellent sculpture of that old time !!



Now we are on our way out from the history

Back from the history, victorious moments... to reality.... to Delhi... back home with a huge memory of a lot of unknown things.



A last glance from out, for now .. to come back again..



There are so many things inside each part of the palace, which can only be experienced once one is really there ... but, ... I still wonder, why this glory is missing from our history books for some unknown reason ... !!

Perhaps another time to raise a question to ourselves .. why !!

Posted by Suvro Ghosh

<http://suvroghosh.blogspot.fr/2012/06/forgotten-tale-of-deeg.html?showComment=1364270475328>