

raajas

Mahajan – Lunkaransar -  
Bikaner – Damdama Sahib –  
Sangrur - Patiala

# Tour Details & Map

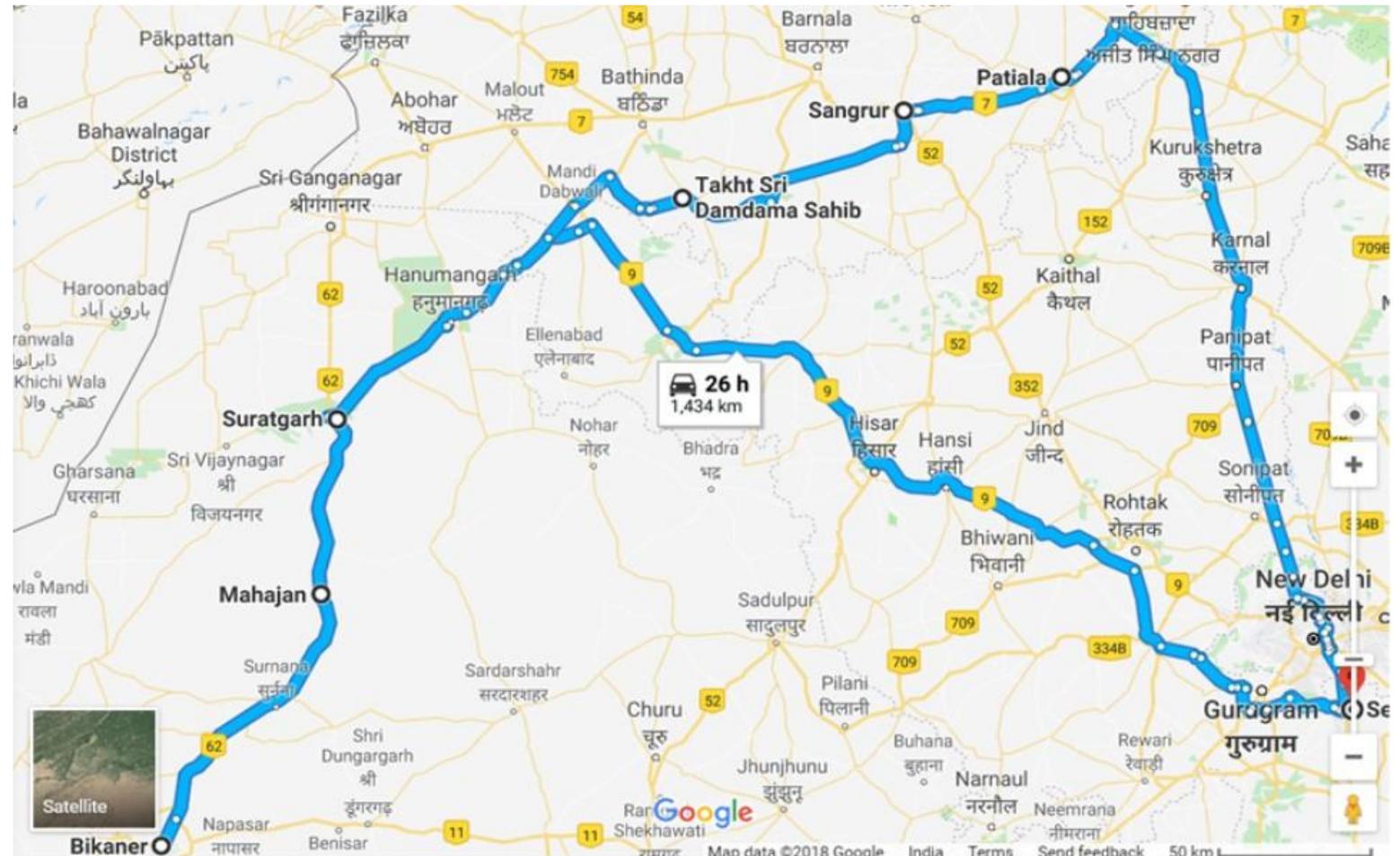
8 – 10 days  
August 2018



Mahajan – Bikaner – Damdama  
Sahib – Sangrur - Patiala

- Sector 14, Faridabad, Haryana
- Suratgarh, Rajasthan
- Mahajan, Rajasthan 334604
- Bikaner, Rajasthan
- Suratgarh, Rajasthan
- Takht Sri Damdama Sahib, Talwandi Sa
- Sangrur, Punjab 148001
- Patiala, Punjab
- Sector 14, Faridabad, Haryana

## West Rajasthan & South Punjab



# Mahajan Field Firing Ranges (MFFR)



The Mahajan Field Firing Range (MFFR) is the army's oldest and biggest practice area in the desert close to the Pakistan border. The Indian Army has given a major face-lift to its biggest firing range in the desert of Jaisalmer, where real battlefield conditions are simulated to train soldiers in the entire spectrum of war-fighting. It was an administrative nightmare for the army to move troops in the area that lacked basic facilities. As part of the upgrade plans, permanent structures have been constructed to house soldiers and the basic facilities such as water & electricity.

The firing range has been developed into a model range based on army's experiences of all these years. The troops can practice shooting and validate concepts on ground. It incorporates the command, control, communication and intelligence concepts. After the expansion, the MFFR can now be used by 17 to 18 army units simultaneously as against only eight to nine units earlier.

A whole range of weapons from small arms to artillery guns and tanks are used in the training programmes, which are essential to validate war-fighting concepts. Apart from the Indian troops, exercises with friendly foreign armies are also held in these ranges.

Military conducts the Amphibious Trials at Rajpura, Piparan near Birdhwal on SH62 in Indira Canal. The trial location is 60 kms away from MFFR. Defence has a special training center located nearby. The vehicles / equipment's inducted in the Indian Army undergo Amphibious Trials at this place.

# Lunkaransar & Camel Research Farm



Lunkaransar is a town in the Bikaner district of Indian state of Rajasthan. Lunkaransar lake in Rajasthan is a playa lake formed due to deflation. Salt is called "Lun" in the local language. There once was a salt lake at this location. It is dry now. It is famous for peanut crop production, land and weather are suitable for oily crops. Lunkaransar is a small, closed, dry basin surrounded by dunes at the northeastern margin of the Thar Desert. The lake levels were very shallow and fluctuated often in the early Holocene and then rose abruptly around 6300 carbon-14 years before the present (14 C yr B.P.). The major Harrapan-Indus civilization began and flourished in this region 1000 years after desiccation of the lake during arid climate and was not synchronous with the lacustral phase.



Camel Research Farm, Bikaner is a farm engaged in the research of camels. It is located about 8 km from Bikaner city in the state of Rajasthan in India. This is a one-of-a-kind institute in India. The farm is a complex of camel stables, enclosures and buildings. One can enjoy camel rides or ice cream made of camels milk. The farm permits tourists at certain hours of the day. It is interesting to watch camel calves gamboling around and also quite spectacular when the camels return from a day out in the desert. It is also known as a Camel Breeding Farm and was established in 1984 by the central government.

# Deshnoke – Karni Mata temple



Deshnoke is a small town in the Bikaner district of Rajasthan, India, near the Pakistan border and about 30 km from Bikaner. Deshnoke is famous for its 600-year-old Karni Mata Temple, where the local rats are held sacred due to local legend. The goddess Karni Mata has been worshiped by the royal family as well as the general public of Bikaner and other parts of Rajasthan since long ago. Their original natives are depawat's of Deshnoke known as grandsons of Karni Mata.

Karni Mata also has followers from outside of the state. During Durga Navratri (Dussehra Festival), thousands of devotees visit the temple mainly from Rajasthan and also from Haryana and Madhya Pradesh. Biography of Karni Mata - According to tradition, Karni Mata was originally the wife of Kipoji Charan of the village of Sathika. However, she later expressed to her husband her unwillingness to engage in matrimonial relations. He initially humoured her, thinking that she would relent in time. Instead of doing so, Karni arranged for him to marry her own younger sister Gulab so that he might have a proper married life. She herself remained celibate all her life, with the concurrence and support of her husband.

Karni lived in her in-laws' village for about two years, reached near Deshnok, stopped further wandering and settled there. Her husband Depoji died in 1454.

In 1457 she went to Jodhpur at Rao Jodha's request, to lay the cornerstone of the fort at Jodhpur. In 1485, she laid the foundation stone of the fort of Bikaner at the request of Rao Bika. On 21 March of that year she was travelling back to Deshnok with her stepson Poonjar and a few other followers. They were near Gadiyala and Girirajsar of the Kolayat tehsil in Bikaner district where she asked the caravan to stop for water. She disappeared there, reportedly at the age of 151 years.

# Junagarh Fort, Bikaner



Junagarh Fort is a fort in the city of Bikaner, Rajasthan, India. The fort was originally called Chintamani and was renamed Junagarh or "Old Fort" in the early 20th century when the ruling family moved to Lalgarh Palace outside the fort limits. It is one of the few major forts in Rajasthan which is not built on a hilltop. The modern city of Bikaner has developed around the fort.

The fort complex was built under the supervision of Karan Chand, the Prime Minister of Raja Rai Singh, the sixth ruler of Bikaner, who ruled from 1571 to 1611 AD. Construction of the walls and associated moat commenced in 1589 and was completed in 1594. It was built outside the original fort of the city, about 1.5 kilometres (0.93 mi) from the city centre. Some remnants of the old fort are preserved near the Lakshmi Narayan temple.

Historical records reveal that despite the repeated attacks by enemies to capture the fort, it was not taken, except for a lone one-day occupation by Kamran Mirza. Kamran was the second son of the Mughal Emperor Babur who attacked Bikaner in 1534, which was then ruled by Rao Jait Singh.

The 5.28 hectares large fort precinct is studded with palaces, temples and pavilions. These buildings depict a composite culture, manifest in the mix of architectural styles. Before the present Junagarh Fort was built, an old stone fort existed in the city. This fort was built in 1478 by who established the city of Bikaner in 1472. Utsa vyas was the second son of Maharaja of the Rathor clan, the founder of Jodhpur city. He conquered the large arid lands to the northern region of Rajasthan to set up his domain. As the second son of Jodha he had no chance of inheriting his father's territory of Jodhpur or to the title of Maharaja. He, therefore, reconciled and decided to build his own kingdom at Bikaner at the place then called "Jungladesh". The Junagarh fort was built on a plain land, which has an average elevation of 760 feet (230 m). The formal foundation ceremony for the fort was held on 17 February 1589 and the fort was completed on 17 January 1594. Ganga Singh was the best-known king among the Rajasthan princes. A favourite of the British Raj, he earned the title of Knight Commander of the Star of India.

# Junagarh Fort, Bikaner



Gangs Singh's contribution to the building activity in Junagarh involved separate halls for public and private audience in the Ganga Mahal and a durbar hall for formal functions. The hall where he held his Golden Jubilee as a ruler of Bikaner is now a museum. He also got a new palace - north of Junagarh fort - designed and built by Swinton, the third of the new palaces built in Bikaner and named it Lalgarh Palace in the name of his father and shifted his residence from Junagarh fort to this palace in 1902. The royal family still lives in a special suite in the Lalgarh palace, which they have converted into a heritage hotel.

While the main entry gate was Karan Pol or Parole, facing east, the current gate of entry is called Suraj Pol (meaning the Sun gate), 'pol' also colloquially spelt prol, built in gold coloured or yellow sandstone, unlike the other gates and buildings built in red sandstone. Har Mandir temple was the royal chapel - private temple of the royal family. The royal family celebrated the Hindu festival of Dussera and Gangaur here, apart from celebrating other family functions such as birthdays and marriages. The fort has 6 Palaces (Karen Mahal, Pool Mahal, Anjp Mahal, Chandra Mahal, Gangs Mahal, Badal Mahal and 2 Bikaneri Haveli's. The museum within the fort called the Junagarh Fort Museum was established in 1961 by Maharaja Dr.Karni Singhji under the control of "Maharaja Rai Singhji Trust". The Museum exhibits Sanskrit and Persian manuscripts, miniature paintings, jewels, royal costumes, farmans (royal orders), portrait galleries, costumes, headgear and dresses of gods' idols, enamelware, silver, palanquins, howdahs and war drums. The museum also displays armoury that consists of one of the assorted collection of post medieval arms.

Maharaja Rai Singhji Trust has been set up by the 'Royal family of Bikaner' with the basic objective to showcase the fort with professional inputs in various areas and to improve the experience for visitors. Another objective is to promote education and research scholarships, cultural activities, setting up of libraries and integration with other such trusts. Copyright © . Ajay Palkar , RAAJAS.COM

# Takht Damdama Sahib, Talwandi Sabo



The Takht Sri Darbar Sahib Damdama Sahib, one of the five Takhts or Seat of Temporal Authority of Sikhism, Takht Sri Damdama Sahib is in Bathinda in Punjab, India[1] and is the place where Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru, prepared the full version of the Sikh scriptures called Sri Guru Granth Sahib in 1705. The other four Takhts are the Akal Takht, Takht Sri Keshgarh Sahib, Takht Sri Patna Sahib and Takht Sri Huzur or hazur Sahib. The Takht is in the Talwandi Sabo, 28 km southeast of Bathinda. Literally, Damdama means breathing place. Guru Gobind Singh stayed here after the Sikhs fought several defensive battles.



Before leaving to visit Sikh Sangats in the Deccan, Guruji blessed Talwandi Sabo, as Guru Ki Kashi. Now known better as Damdama Sahib after the Gurdwara became one of the five temporal Takhts of the Sikh religion. This title was given because of the intense literary activities that Guru Gobind Singh engaged in during his stay here (the compilation of Sikh scriptures). It is said that one day Guru Gobind Singh flung a handful of reed pens over the heads of the congregation ('Sangat'), saying: "Here we will create a pool of literature. No one of my Sikhs should remain illiterate." The Damdama Wali Bir as the Guru Granth Sahib is sometimes called was completed here, being dictated by the Guru to one of his disciples Bhai Mani Singh. It was at this time when the hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, the ninth Guru and father of Guru Gobind Singh were added to the Bir.



This Takht was officially recognized as the fourth Takht of Sikhism on 18 November 1966. A report of the sub-committee containing 183 pages was received to declare Damdama Sahib or Guru Ki Kashi as the fifth Takht of the Sikhs. A general body meeting of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee at Amritsar approved the recommendations through resolution number 32 on 18 November 1966. It was declared as the fifth Sikh Takht by the government of India in April 1999 during tricentennial celebrations of the formation of the Khalsa.

# Sangrur



Sangrur is a city in the Indian state of Punjab, India. It is the headquarters of the Sangrur district. It is located at the intersection of the roads connecting Jalandhar with Rewari and Chandigarh with Bathinda, at a distance of 77 km from Ludhiana and 58 km from Patiala.

The earliest settlement at the site of Sangrur is believed to have begun around 2,300 B.C. Attracted by the fertile soil and availability of water, people from Sindh and Balochistan started moving and following the path of the Satluj or the Ghagger settled at Rohira. They started living in thatched huts on the virgin soil, before long they started building houses of sun-dried bricks. By about 2,000 B.C, a new set of people is believed to have settled at the site. Their pottery was more Surdy and their equipment superior. The houses were well laid out and were fairly spacious.

Sangrur is said to have been founded by one Sanghu, a Jatt, about four hundred years back. At one point in history, Sangrur was a part of Nabha state but during the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh it was forcefully taken from Nabha state and gifted to Jind State. The Maharaja of Jind made Sangrur winter capital of Jind state while its summer capital was Khunga Kothi, a place near Jind. It was part of PEPSU state after the partition of India and was made a district headquarters. It became part of Punjab state after the abolition of PEPSU state. District Sangrur lost a good chunk of its area to Haryana and the remaining district was further subdivided into two when its Barnala tehsil was granted a district status. Sangrur was considered to be the largest district of Punjab before Barnala became the separate district.

# Patiala



Patiala is a city in southeastern Punjab, northwestern India. It is the fourth largest city in the state and is the administrative capital of Patiala district. Patiala is located around the Qila Mubarak (the Fortunate Castle). It was constructed by Sidhu Jat chieftain 'Baba Ala Singh', who founded the royal dynasty of the Patiala State in 1763.

In popular culture, the city remains famous for its traditional PatialaShahi turban (a type of headgear), paranda (a tasselled tag for braiding hair), patiala salwar (a type of female trousers), jutti (a type of footwear) and Patiala peg (a measure of liquor).

Patiala state was established in 1763 by Baba Ala Singh, a Jat Sikh chieftain, who laid the foundation of the Patiala fort known as Qila Mubarak, around 'which the present city of Patiala is built. After the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761 in which the Marathas were defeated by the Afghans, the writ of the Afghans prevailed throughout Punjab. It is at this stage that the rulers of Patiala began to acquire ensigns of royalty. The Patiala state saw more than forty years of ceaseless power struggle with the Afghan Durrani Empire, Maratha Empire and the Sikh Empire of Lahore. In 1808, the Raja of Patiala entered into a treaty with the British against Jat ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Lahore in 1808, thus becoming collaborator in the grand empire building process by the British in, the sub-continent of India. Patiala became a 17-guns salute state during the British Raj. The rulers of Patiala such as Karam Singh, Narinder Singh, Mahendra Singh, Rajinder Singh, Bhupinder Singh and Yadvindra Singh were treated with respect and dignity by the British.

The city of Patiala was designed and developed according to a plan akin to that of temple architecture, the first settlers of Patiala were the Hindus of Sirhind, who opened their business establishments outside the Darshani Gate.

The royal house is now headed by Captain Amarinder Singh who is also the current Chief Minister of Punjab. The royals are considered cultural and political icons in east Punjab.

Maharaja Karam Singh who ruled from 1813 to 1845 (the Sikh Kingdom of Patiala in Punjab) joined the British East India Company and helped the British during the First Anglo Sikh wars against the Sikh Empire of Maharajah Ranjit Singh of Punjab which was larger and extended from Tibet Kashmir, plains of Punjab to Peshawar near the Afghan borders.

# Patiala: Gurudwara's



**Dukh Niwaran Sahib:** According to local tradition, supported by an old handwritten document preserved in the Gurudwara, one Bhag Ram, a jhivar of Lehal, waited upon ninth guru of Sikhs Guru Tegh Bahadur during his sojourn at Saifabad (now Bahadurgarh), and made the request that he might be pleased to visit and bless his village so that its inhabitants could be rid of a serious and mysterious sickness which had been their bane for a long time. The Guru visited Lehal on Magh sudi 5, 1728 Bikram/24 January 1672 and stayed under a banyan tree by the side of a pond. The sickness in the village subsided. The site where Guru Tegh Bahadur had sat came to be known as Dukh Nivaran, literally meaning eradicator of suffering. Devotees have faith in the healing qualities of water in the sarovar attached to the shrine. It is still believed that any kind of illness can be cured by 'ishnaan' on 5 consecutive panchmi. It is in the vicinity of Patiala Bus Station.



**Moti Baag Sahib:** When Shri Guru Teg Bahadur started his journey towards Delhi, he came here via Kiratpur Sahib, Bharatgarh Sahib, Roap Makar, Kabulpur etc. Saint Saif Ali Khan was great follower of Guru Sahib, To fulfill his wish Guru Sahib came to his Place Saifabad (Bahadur Garh). Guru Sahib stayed here for 3 Months. Saif Ali Khan Served Guru Sahib with great Devotion. In daytime Guru Sahib used to meditate on the Place inside the Qila(Fort) and used to come here in the nighttime. From here Guru Sahib left towards Samana, Guru Sahib took rest for some time this place. From here Guru Sahib left towards Samana and stayed in the Haveli of Muhamad Bakhshish. From there onwards Guru Sahib left towards Cheeka Via Karhali, Balbera.

# Patiala: Kali Devi Mandir

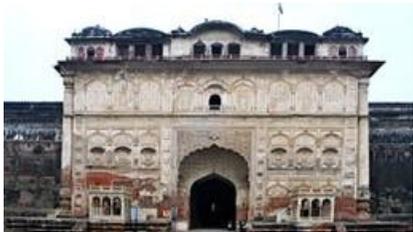


Shri Kali Devi Temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to Maa Kaali. The temple was built by the Sikh ruler of the Patiala State, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, who financed the building of the temple in his capital and oversaw its installation in 1936. Legend has it that the Maharajah built the temple to protect the city from flooding and performed annual sacrifice at the temple.. Bhupinder Singh ruled the princely state of Patiala from 1900 to 1938. He brought the 6-ft statue of Divine Mother Kali and Paawan Jyoti from Bengal to Patiala and offered the first Bali (sacrifice) of a water buffalo to the temple. Because of the temple's beautiful structure, it has been declared a national monument. This large complex attracts devotees, Hindu and Sikh, from distant places. A much older temple of Raj Rajeshwari is also situated in the centre of this complex. The temple is situated opposite the Baradari garden at Mall Road. Devotees offer mustard oil, daal (lentils), sweets, coconuts, bangles and chunnis, goats, hens and liquor to the Divine Mother here. As an average estimate, devotees offer more than 60,000 liquor bottles during Navratras alone, which goes into a 'Sharab Kund' built on the temple's premises.

# Patiala: Other Places



**Bahadurgarh Fort:** The fort was constructed by mughal Nawab Saif Khan in 1658 A.D where Guru Teg Bahadur visited him and later renovated by a Sikh ruler Maharaja Karam Singh in 1837. The construction of the entire fort was completed in eight years. A sum of ten lakh rupees was spent on its construction. The fort is enclosed within two rounded walls and a moat. The circumference of the fort is slightly over two kms. The name Bahadurgarh fort was given by Maharaja Karam Singh as a tribute to the Sikh Guru Teg Bahadur who stayed here for three months and nine days before leaving for Delhi where he was executed by Aurangzeb in 1675 CE.



**Quila Mubarak:** The complex stands on a 10-acre ground in the heart of the city and contains the main palace or Qila Androon, the guesthouse or Ran Baas and the Darbar Hall. Outside the Qila are the Darshani Gate, a Shiva temple, and bazaar shops which border the streets that run around the Qila and sell precious ornaments, colourful hand-woven fabrics, 'jootis' and bright 'Parandis'. It was the principal residence of the Patiala royals until the construction of Old Moti Bagh Palace.



**Sheesh Mahal:** A part of the Old Moti Bagh Palace built in the 19th century by the Maharajas is the famous Sheesh Mahal, literally meaning the Palace of Mirrors. The mahal contains a large number of frescoes, most of which were made under His Highness Maharaja Narinder Singh. A lake in front of the palace adds to the beauty. Lakshman Jhula, a bridge built across the lake, is a famous attraction. A museum housing the largest collection of medals from the world collected by His Highness Maharaja Bhupinder Singh is here.



**Baradari Gardens:** The garden with 12 gates, are in the north of old Patiala city, just outside Sheranwala Gate. The garden complex, set up during the reign of Maharaja Rajindera Singh, has extensive vegetation of rare trees, shrubs, and flowers dotted with impressive Colonial buildings and a marble statue of Maharaja Rajindera Singh. It was built as a royal residence with a cricket stadium, a skating rink and a small palace set in its heart named Rajindera Kothi. The gardens include a museum building with collections of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh.



**National Institute of Sports:** Founded in 1961, Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports (NIS) is Asia's largest sports institute in princely city of Patiala. The institute was renamed as Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports in January 1973.



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