

Historical and Old Forts In Maharashtra



Murud Janjira

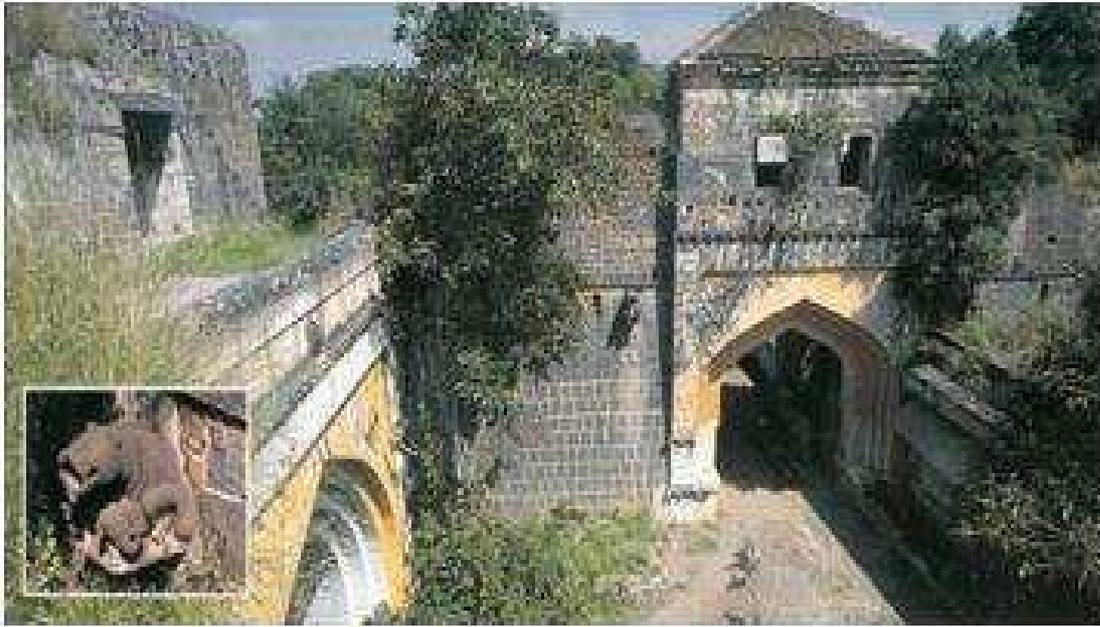
Murud-Janjira is the local name for a fort situated at the coastal village of Murud, in the Raigad district of Maharashtra, India. It is famous for being the only fort along India's western coast that remained undefeated despite Maratha, Dutch and English East India Company attacks. The word Janjira is not native to India, and may have originated after the Arabic word *Jazeera*, which means an island. Murud was once known in Marathi as *Habsan* ("of Habshi" or Abyssinian). Some of the people also split the name as "Jal Jeera" meaning fort in the water



Lohagad Fort

Lohagad (literally "Iron fort" in Marathi) is one of the many hill forts of Chatrapati Shivaji. It is situated 52 km from Pune in western India. Lohagad is at an elevation of 3,450 feet (1,052 m). It divides the basins of the Indrayani and Pavna and is situated on a side range of the Sahyadris. The Visapur fort is located on its eastern side. The four large gates of Lohagad are still in good condition and reasonably intact. Historical records show that in the later Peshwa period, Nana Phadnavis (1742-1800 AD) built several structures in the fort such as a big tank and a step-well (bawali).

On the west side, there is a long and narrow wall-like fortified spur called Vinchukata (Marathi for Scorpion's tail; see *picture*) because of its shape. Lohagad has a long history with several dynasties occupying it at different periods of time: Satavahanas, Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, Yadavas, Bahamanis, Nizam shahis, Mughals and Marathas. Shivaji captured it in 1648 CE, but he was forced to surrender it to the Mughals in 1665 CE by the Treaty of Purandar. Shivaji recaptured the fort in 1670 CE and used it for keeping his treasury.



Ahmenagar Fort The fort was built by Malik Shah Ahmed (after whom the city of [Ahmednagar](#) is named) in 1427 CE. He was the first sultan of the [Nizam Shahi](#) dynasty and he built the fort to defend the city against invaders from neighbouring [Idar](#). Initially it was made of mud but major fortification began in 1559 under Hussain Nizam Shah. It took four years and was finally finished in 1562. In 1596, [Chand Bibi](#) the queen regent successfully repulsed the [Mughal](#) invasion but when [Akbar](#) attacked again in 1600 the fort went to the Mughals.

[Aurangzeb](#) died at Ahmednagar fort at the age of 88 on February 20, 1707. After Aurangzeb's death the fort passed to the Marathas and later the [Scindias](#). During the period of instability in the Maratha Empire following the death of [Madhavrao II](#), [Daulat Scindia](#) had the fort and its surrounding region ceded to him. In 1797, he imprisoned [Nana Phadanvis](#) the Peshwa diplomat at Ahmednagar fort.

In 1803 during the [Second Anglo-Maratha War](#), [Arthur Wellesley](#) defeated the Maratha forces and the East India Company came into possession of the fort. It was used by the British Raj as a prison and this was where [Jawaharlal Nehru](#), [Abul Kalam Azad](#), [Sardar Patel](#) and other members of [Indian National Congress](#) were jailed for almost three years after they passed the [Quit India Resolution](#). Jawaharlal Nehru wrote his popular book –the [Discovery of India](#)– while he was imprisoned at Ahmednagar fort. Currently the fort is under the administration of the Armoured Corps of the Indian Army



Pratapgad Fort The [Maratha](#) king [Shivaji](#) commissioned [Moropant Trimbak Pingle](#), his prime minister, to undertake the construction of this fort in order to defend the banks of the [Nira](#) and the [Koyna](#) rivers, and to defend the Par pass. It was completed in [1656](#)

The [Battle of Pratapgarh](#) between Shivaji and [Afzal Khan](#) was fought below the ramparts of this fort on November 10, 1659. This was the first major test of the fledgling kingdom's army, and set the stage of the establishment of the [Maratha empire](#).

Pratapgad continued to be involved in regional politics. [Sakharam Bapu](#), a well-known minister of Pune, was confined by his rival [Nana Phadnis](#) in Pratapgad in 1778. He was later moved from fort to fort until he finally died at [Raigad](#). In 1796, Nana Phadnis, while escaping from the intrigues of [Daulatrao Shinde](#) and his minister Baloba, assembled a strong garrison in Pratapgad before heading to [Mahad](#).

In 1818, as part of the [Third Anglo-Maratha War](#), Pratapgad surrendered by private negotiation. This was a great loss to the Maratha forces, as Pratapgad was an important stronghold, had a large garrison, and could annoy much of the country round Wai.

A 17-foot high equestrian bronze statue of [Shivaji](#) was unveiled by Javaharlal Nehru, then Prime Minister of India, on the 30th November 1957.



Sindhudurga Fort Sindhudurg fort was built by the great Maratha warrior King Shivaji in 1664. Shivaji selected the strategic rocky island location, then known as 'Kurte' for the fort ,himself - to counter foreign forces, and to keep the nearby Siddis of Murud-Janjira in check. Over 4000 mounds of iron were used in the casting and foundation stones were firmly laid down . The construction was started on November 25, 1664. Built over a period of thirty years, the sea fort is spread over 48 acres (190,000 m²) with a two-mile (3 km) long rampart, and walls that are 30 feet (9.1 m) high and 12 feet (3.7 m) thick. The massive walls were designed to serve as a deterrent to approaching enemies and to the waves and tides of the Arabian Sea. The main entrance is concealed in such a way that no one can pinpoint it from outside.

At a time when Samudra Gaman (travelling by sea) was banned by scriptures, this construction on an island represents the revolutionary mindset of its builder.



Karnala Fort

Its exact date of formation is not known but likely it predates 1400 CE as under the Devagiri Yadavs(1248–1318) and under the Tughlaqrulers(1318–1347), Karnala was the capital of the north Konkan districts of their respective empires.^[2] It later fell under the command of the Gujarat Sultanate but in 1540 was taken over by Nizam Shah of Ahmednagar. The Gujarat sultans then requested the help of the Dom Francisco de Menezes the commanding officer of the Portuguese at Bassien(modern day Vasai) to win it back. He ordered 500 of his soldiers to Karnala fort and they were able to capture it. The fort was left in charge of the Gujarat Sultanate but with Portuguese garrisons.

The loss of Karnala enraged the Nizam Shah and he took back the fort and the surrounding countryside by sending 5,000 of his men. The Gujarat sultans fled to Vasai in panic and gave up any claims of the fort to the Portuguese. In the subsequent battle between the Nizam Shah and the Portuguese, the latter were victorious in repulsing further attacks of the

Nizam Shahi army and the fort remained with the Portuguese. However the Portuguese viceroy determined that the forts of Sangli and Karnala were of little value to them and decided to give them to the Nizam Shah for an annual payment of Rs. 17,500(or 5,000 gold pardoas) to further their friendship.

Shivaji conquered it from the Portuguese in 1670 by building breastworks as he advanced. After his death in 1680 it was taken over by Aurangzeb. After this the Mughals occupied it for some time after which it in 1740 with the rise of the Peshwas of Pune it went to them. It remained under the command of *killedar* (garrison commander) Anantrao^[5] until a colonel Prother won the fort and established the rule of the British East India Company there in 1818.