



# Hill Forts of Rajasthan

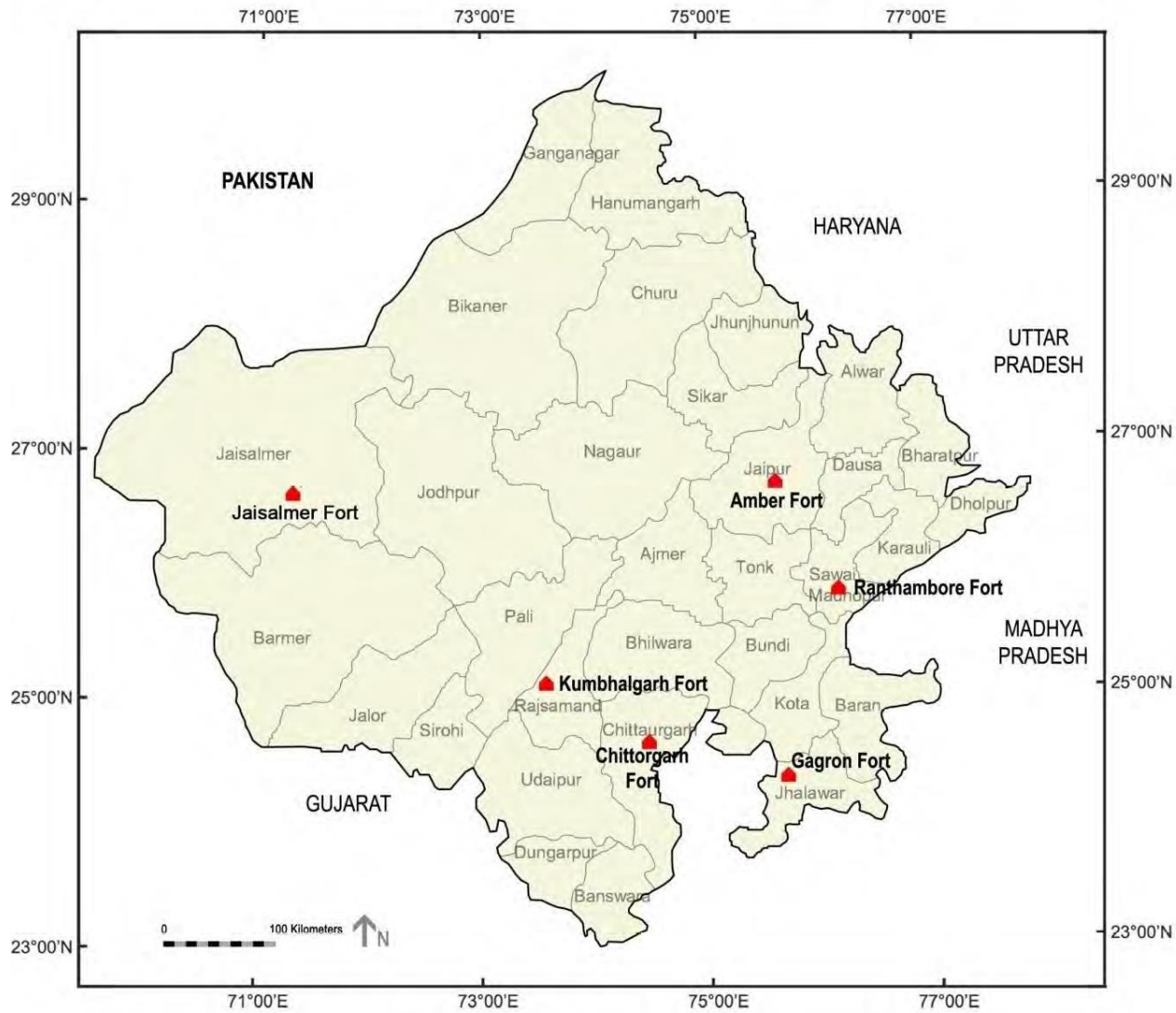
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## LOCATION OF THE HILL FORTS

# Location and Brief Description

- ▶ Hill Forts of Rajasthan includes six majestic forts in Chittorgarh, Kumbhalgarh, Sawai Madhopur, Jhalawar, Jaipur and Jaisalmer.
- ▶ They reflect the elaborate, fortified seats of power of Rajput princely states that flourished between the 8th and 18th centuries and their relative political independence.
- ▶ The extensive fortifications up to 20 kilometres in circumference optimized various kinds of hill terrain, specifically the river at Gagron, the dense forests at Ranthambore, and the desert at Jaisalmer, and exhibit an important phase in the development of an architectural typology based on established “traditional Indian principles”.
- ▶ Within the defensive walls of the forts, the architecture of palaces and other buildings reflects their role as centres of courtly culture, and places of patronage for learning arts and music.

- ▶ As well as housing for the court and military guard, most had extensive urban settlements within their walls, some of which have persisted to the present day. And some also had mercantile centres as the forts were centres of production and of distribution and trade that formed the basis of their wealth. Most of the forts had temples or sacred buildings.
- ▶ Collectively the forts contain extensive water harvesting structures, many of which are still in use.

# Chittorgarh Fort





- ▶ **Location** - Chittorgarh Fort, on its isolate rocky plateau, rising 500 feet above the plain, developed between the 8th and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- ▶ **Architecture** - The ascent to the fort passes through seven gateways, partly flanked by hexagonal or octagonal towers, and all protected by enclosing defensive walls. The gates are known as the Paidal Pol, Bhairon Pol, Hanuman Pol, Ganesh Pol, Jorla Pol, Laxman Pol, and Ram Pol, the final and main gate.
- ▶ **Water management** - The forts has 85 historic water structures of which 20 are still functioning, including three water tanks dating from the 7th century.
- ▶ **Temples** - the majority of temple structures represent the Hindu faith, the hill fort also contains Jain temples.
- ▶ Home to a contemporary municipal ward of approximately 3,000 inhabitants

# Why a heritage site?

- ▶ As a former capital of the Sisodia clan and the target of three famous historical sieges, Chittorgarh is strongly associated with Rajput history and folk lore.
- ▶ The architectural remains of early date (ranging from the 8th to the 16th centuries) mark it as an exceptional fort in its scale and monumentality comparable to very few other Indian forts.





# Kumbhalgarh fort





- ▶ **Location** - Located in the district of Rajsamand, at an altitude of 1,100m above sea level, Kumbhalgarh Fort controlled the key border crossing between the Mewar and the Marwar territories.
- ▶ **Construction** - The initial walls were constructed in the 13th century AD. Their current planning reflect the ideas of the Rana Kumbha (1433-1468), the ruler of Mewar state, who, with his artisan Mandan, established guidelines for Rajput fortifications. ***The walls of Kumghalgarh extend to 20km in length, making them the longest in India and the third longest in the world.***
- ▶ **Temples** - Among the religious structures are Hindu and Jain temples of different periods, ranging from the earlier, such as the Mataji Temple from the 13th century, to later examples such as the temples of the Golera, a group of Hindu and Jain temples constructed up until the 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- ▶ **Water management** -The fort had an ingenious water system and several reservoirs and tanks survive such as the Badva Bund, a 15th century dam, and the Langan Baori, a 15th century step-well.

# Why a heritage site?

- ▶ Its distinctive contribution arises from it having been constructed in a single process and (apart from the palace of Fateh Singh, added later) retains its architectural coherence. Its design is attributed to an architect known by name - Mandan - who was also an author and theorist at the court of Rana Kumbha in Chittor (another fort in the series).
- ▶ This combination of factors is highly exceptional.
- ▶ Also declared a Monuments of National Importance of India under the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Declaration of National Importance) Act of 1951



# Jaisalmer- Hill desert fort

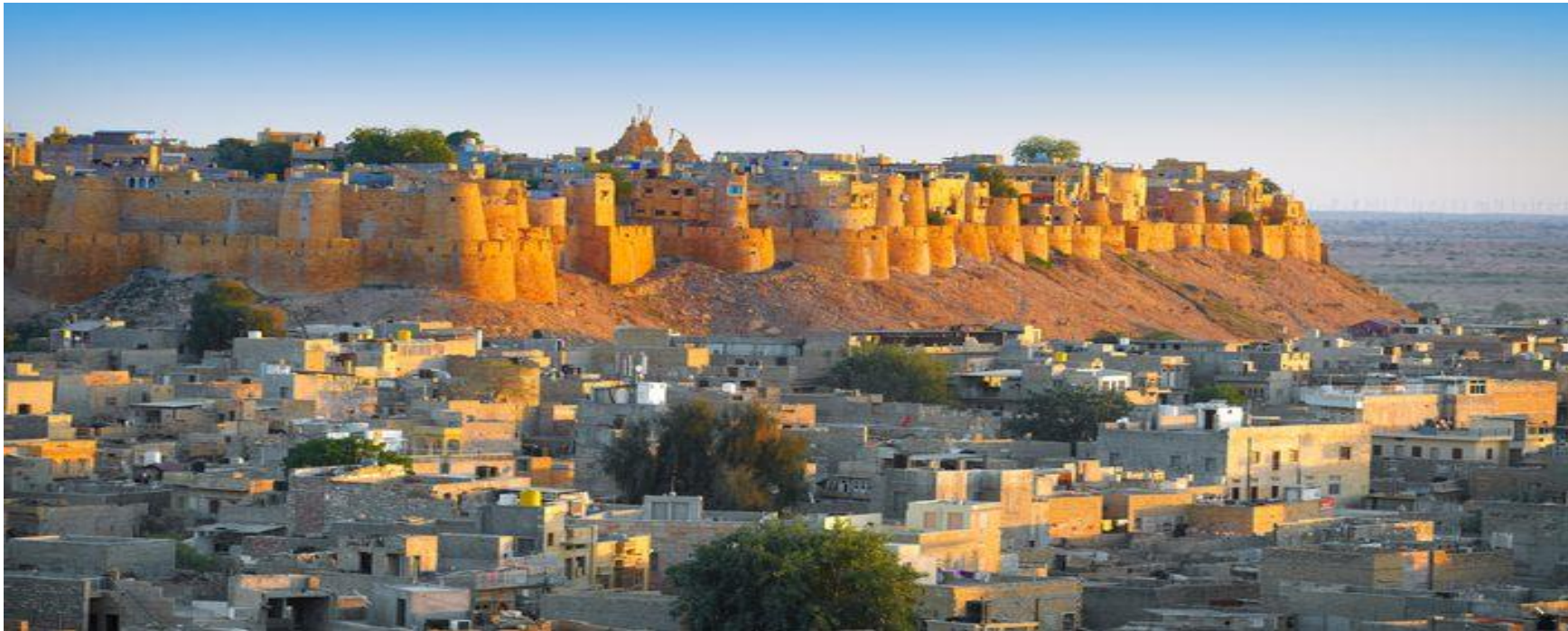


- ▶ **Construction-** Jaisalmer is an example a hill fort in desert terrain. It is also known as **sonar quila**. It was built in 1156 by rawal ruler Jaisal. The whole complex of fortifications palaces, temples and extensive urban dwellings reflects building between the 12th to the 18th centuries. For the better part of its 800-year history, the fort was the city of Jaisalmer. The extensive township contained within it from the outset, still **inhabited** today.
- ▶ **Architecture:** The fort is **1,500 ft long** and **750 ft wide** and is built on a hill that raises above a height of **uthe** surrounding countryside. The base of the fort has a **15 ft tall** wall forming the fort's outermost ring, within its triple ringed defence architecture. The fort also has four fortified entrances or gates from the townside, one of which was once guarded by cannon.
- ▶ **Temples:** There are group of Jain and hindu temples within the fort, which makes it an important and an unique example of a sacred and secular urban fort. Inside Jaisalmer Fort, there are 8 Jain temples and 3 hindu vaishnva temples.
- ▶ **Water management:** Seven wells within the Fort provided water to its inhabitants. However, the water from these wells was often brackish and saline and therefore could not be used for drinking purposes



# Why a heritage site?

- Jaisalmer is an example a hill fort in desert terrain. The extensive township contained within it from the outset, still inhabited today, and the group of Jain temples, make it an important (and in some respects even unique) example of a sacred and secular (urban) fort.



# Amber Palace





- ▶ **Construction:** The huge Amer Palace Fort is one of the top tourist attractions of Jaipur. It is located at a distance about 11 km from the main city. It sits atop the Cheel ka Teela (Hill of Eagles) of Aravalli range.
- ▶ Amer was the capital city of Rajput clan Kachwaha, which rose to the power during the middle ages. It was first occupied as their fortified citadel in eleventh century. The town of Amer and the Amber Fort were originally built by Raja Man Singh and additions were, later, made by Sawai Jai Singh.
- ▶ **Water management:** A technical intricacy of Amber Palace is the hydraulic system which uses pulleys to lift collected rain water from Maota Lake into the palace. In a three-stage process the water was first transported through clay pipes and stored, then lifted into upper tanks using pulleys and finally lifted with the help of a Persian wheel fitted with a number of earthenware buckets. The inhabitants therefore had the benefit of a continuous water supply, which during the colder months was heated in the hammam heating system. As the only water supply, the Maota Lake had a strategic function, which explains its inclusion within the fortification walls.

# Architecture

- ▶ The fort is divided into four main sections that are graced with their own courtyards.
- ▶ The main entry is through the Suraj Pol which leads to the first main courtyard. This was the place where armies would hold victory parades with their war bounty on their return from battles, which were also witnessed by the Royal family's womenfolk through the latticed windows. This gate was built exclusively and was provided with guards as it was the main entry into the palace. It faced east towards the rising sun, hence the name. Royal cavalcades and dignitaries entered the palace through this gate.



- The second courtyard, up the main stairway of the first level courtyard, houses the Diwan-i-Aam or the Public Audience Hall. Built with a double row of columns, the Diwan-i-Aam is a raised platform with 27 colonnades, each of which is mounted with an elephant-shaped capital, with galleries above it. As the name suggests, the Raja (King) held audience here to hear and receive petitions from the public.





- ▶ The third courtyard is where the private quarters of the Maharaja, his family and attendants were located. This courtyard is entered through the **Ganesh Pol or Ganesh Gate**, which is embellished with mosaics and sculptures. The courtyard has two buildings, one opposite to the other, separated by a garden laid in the fashion of the Mughal Gardens. The building to the left of the entrance gate is called the **Jai Mandir, also known as sheesh mahal**. It is exquisitely embellished with glass inlaid panels and multi-mirrored ceilings.
- ▶ The other building seen in the courtyard is opposite to the Jai Mandir and is known as the **Sukh Niwas or Sukh Mahal** (Hall of Pleasure). This hall is approached through a sandalwood door.



- ▶ The fourth courtyard is where the Zenana (Royal family women, including concubines or mistresses) lived. This courtyard has many living rooms where the queens resided.
- ▶ South of this courtyard lies the Palace of Man Singh I, which is the oldest part of the palace fort. This pavilion (which used to be curtained for privacy) was used as the meeting venue by the maharanis (queens of the royal family). All sides of this pavilion are connected to several small rooms with open balconies. The exit from this palace leads to the town of Amer, a heritage town with many temples, palatial houses and mosques.



# Why a heritage site?

- ▶ Amber. is the representation of a key phase (17th century) in the development of a common Rajput-Mughal court style, embodied in the buildings and gardens added to Amber by Mirza Raja Jai Singh I.
- ▶ It also has an unique water management system.





# Ranthambore Fort

- ▶ Ranthambore Fort lies within the Ranthambore National Park, near the city of Sawai Madhopur. It provides a panoramic view of the surrounding Ranthambore National Park and is now a popular tourist attraction.
- ▶ Broadly, the Ranthambore Fort, having an area of 4 square kms is virtually divided into 2 parts. The western part of the fort having many temples, Stambhas and other ancient monuments is generally full of visitors, whereas the eastern part of the fort is generally considered as wild area where you can easily spot a number of birds, langurs, the odd small cat, leopards and even the very rare and elusive fishing cat.
- ▶ It is a formidable fort having been a focal point of the historical developments of Rajasthan. It is widely believed that the construction of the Ranthambore Fort was started during the reign of the Chauhan rajput King Sapaldaksha in 944 AD and came into existence when Chauhans came here and made it their capital. But the actual fame of Ranthambore came when the most known ruler of this period Raja Hammir Dev was crowned in 1283 AD.



# Why a Heritage site?

- ▶ Ranthambore is an established example of forest hill fort and in addition, the remains of the palace of Hammir are among the oldest surviving structures of an Indian palace.
- ▶ The Fort is elevated on a natural hummock around 210m (700ft) high and was once a stronghold in the glory days of the Chauhan dynasty. In its prime, the Fort governed and ruled important trade routes between north and central India, cementing its vital role in the governance of the area.
- ▶ It is an architectural marvel, the fort includes many attractions such as Toran Dwar, Battish Khambha, Mahadeo Chhatri and Sametonki Haveli within its premises. The presence of a mosque and temple within the fort precincts bears testimony to the secularity of the Rajput kings. The Lord Ganesha temple housed here is a major tourist attraction, and it also hosts a fair every year on the occasion of Bhadrapad Sudi Chaturthi over here. Siddhasenasuri, who lived in the 12th century has included this place in the list of holy Jain tirthas.





# Inside the Fort



Rani Havelli



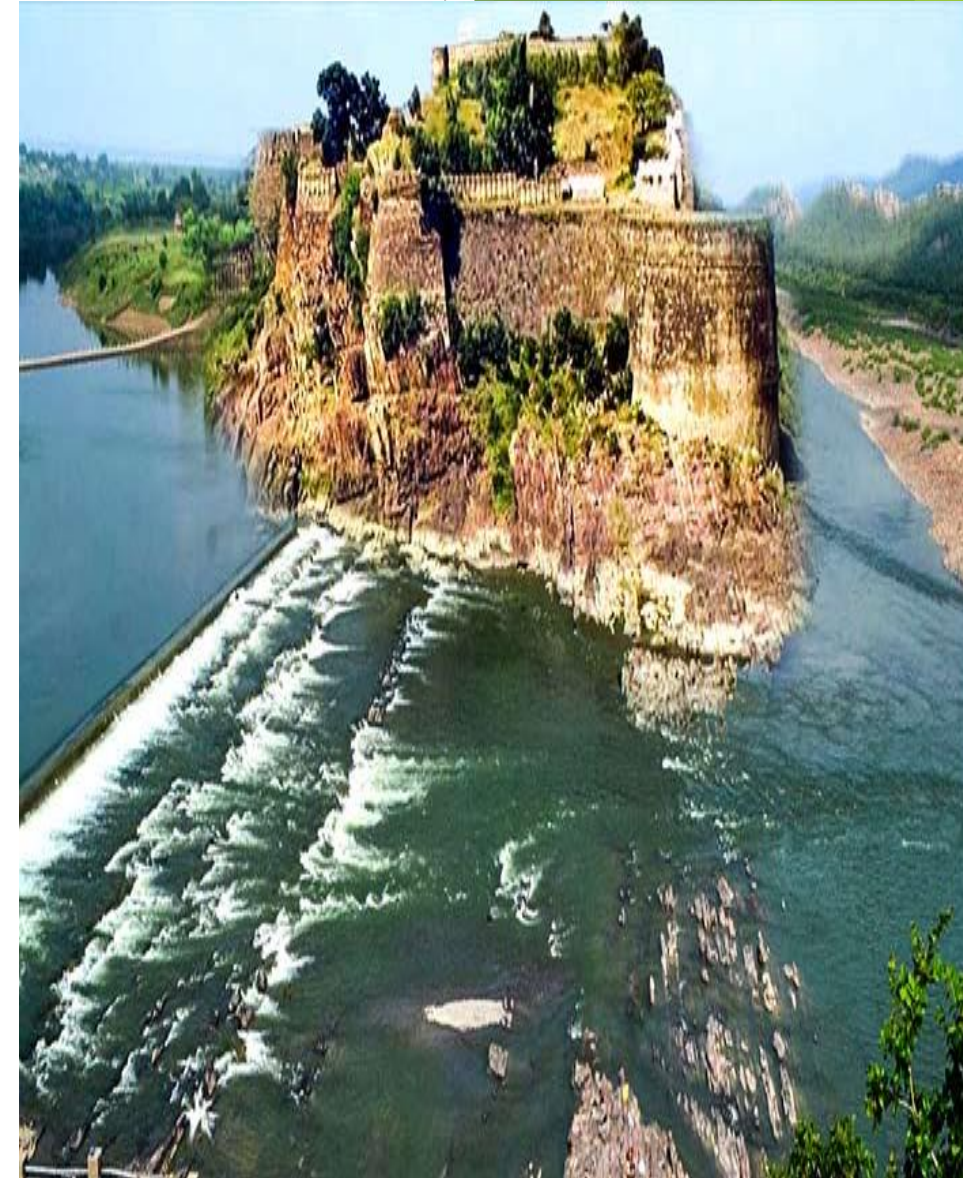
Jain Temple

The fort is also related to the historical legend of the royal women performing 'jauhar' (self-immolation) when the Muslim invader Alauddin Khilji laid siege on this fort in 1301 and defeated Hammirdeva. When faced with a certain defeat, the defending ruler Hammiradeva decided to fight to death with his soldiers, and his minister Jaja supervised the organization of a jauhar. The queens, daughters and other female relatives of Hammiradeva committed suicide in this jauhar.



# Gagron Fort

- ▶ Gagron Fort is a hill and water fort and is situated in Jhalawar district of Rajasthan, in the Hadoti region of India. The fort was built by Bijaldev Singh (a Rajput king) of Parmar Empire in the twelfth century.
- ▶ The fort is constructed on the confluence of Ahu River and Kali Sindh River. The fort is surrounded by water on three sides which makes it unique and a moat on the forth side which completes its defence and hence earned the name Jaladurg meaning Water Fort. It has a remarkable construction as the fort does not have a foundation and the mountain on which it sits is itself the foundation of the fort.
- ▶ Naturally strategic location and common Rajput-Mughal architecture. Two wall protected Gagron Fort is designed in inner and outer enclosures manner where inner part includes Sheesh Mahal or Zenana Mahal and Mardana Mahal while courts and temples in outer part.





# Why a Heritage site?

- ▶ Gagrion is an exemplar of a river-protected fort. In addition its strategic location in a pass in the hills reflects its control of trade routes.
- ▶ The fort also boasts three courtyards as opposed to traditional forts that have only two and two gigantic main gates. One of these leads to the river and the other to the hills. It has witnessed 14 battles and 2 Jauhar of queens.
- ▶ There are both Hindu and muslim shrines in and around the fort. It has temples of Lord Shiva, Lord Ganesha and Goddess Durga inside the fort. There is also a Dargah of Sufi Saint Mitheshah right outside the fort where a fair is held every year during the islamic month of Muharram. Near the fort there is a monastery dedicated to Saint Pipa who is a contemporary of Saint Kabir.
- ▶ The Mukundara Mountain Range serves as a backdrop, while a neighboring valley to the fort is circumscribed by woodland that echoes with screeches of peacocks and also parrots.





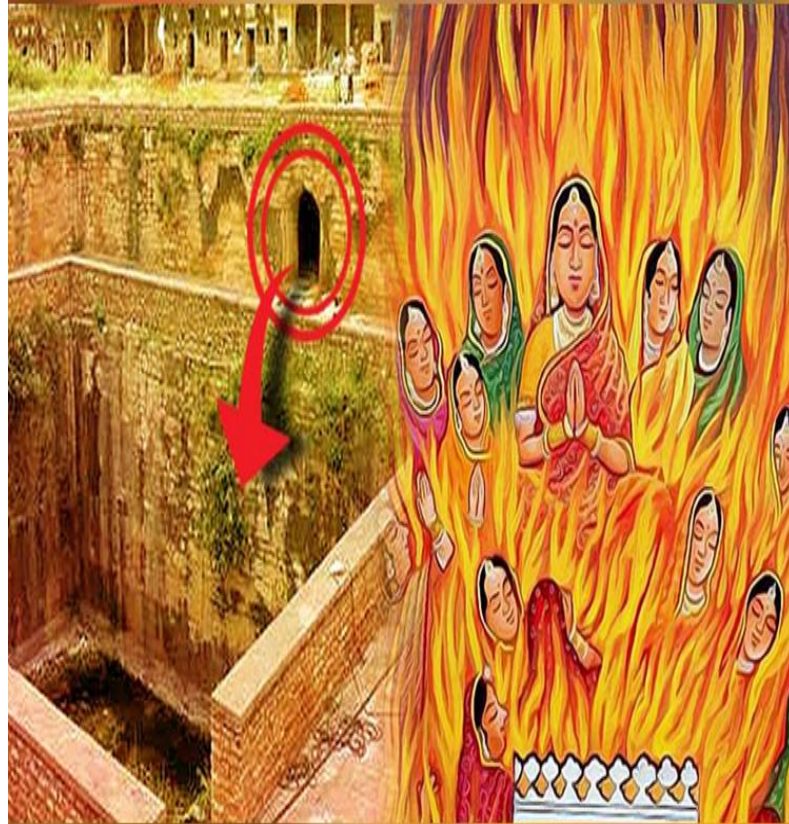
# Inside the Fort

- The following are some important sites of the fort:

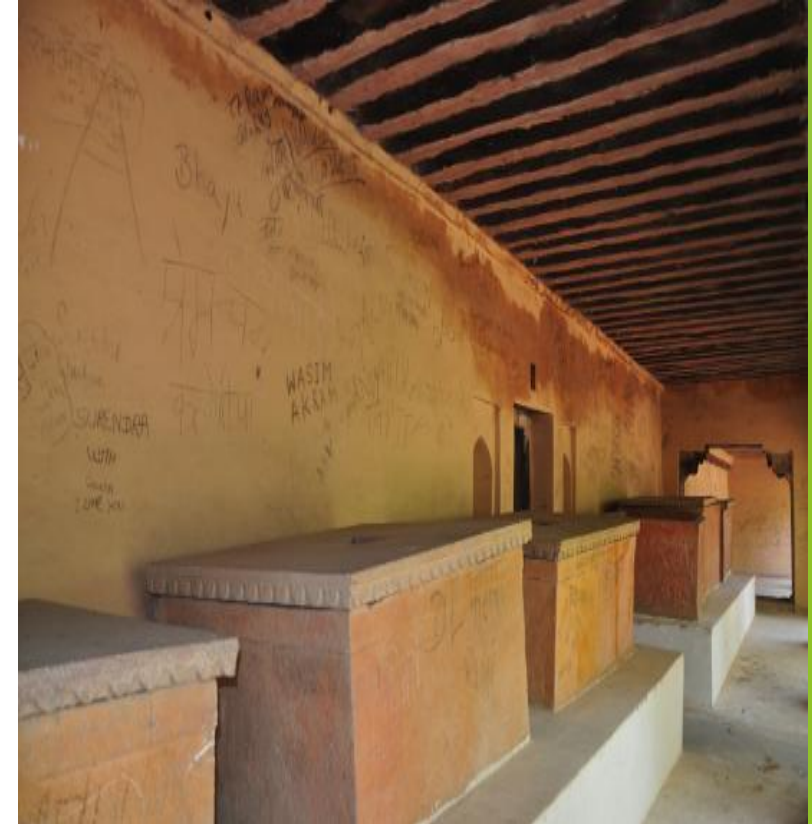
Ganesh Pol, Nakkarkhana, Bhairavi Pol, Selekhana, Dewan-i-Aam, Diwan-e-Khas, Janaana Mahal, Madhusudan Mandir, Rang Mahal



Ramburz



Jauhar Kund



Armoury



# Common criteria for Inclusion in UNESCO World Heritage sites

- ▶ **Criterion (ii):** The Hill Forts of Rajasthan exhibit an important interchange of Princely Rajput ideologies in fort planning, art and architecture from the early medieval to late medieval period within the varied physiographic and cultural zones of Rajasthan. Although Rajput architecture shared much common ground with other regional styles, such as Sultanate and Mughal architecture, it was eclectic, drawing inspiration from antecedents and neighbours, and had a degree of influence over later regional styles such as Maratha architecture.
- ▶ **Criterion (iii):** The series of six massive hill forts are architectural manifestations of Rajput valour, bravery, feudalism and cultural traditions documented in several historic texts and paintings of the medieval and late medieval period in India. Their elaborate fortifications, built to protect not only garrisons for defence but also palatial buildings, temples, and urban centres, and their distinctive Rajput architecture, are an exceptional testimony to the cultural traditions of the ruling Rajput clans and to their patronage of religion, arts and literature in the region of Rajasthan over several centuries.

**THANK YOU**