

# Guru Nanak Patshah's Halimi Raj (1469-1716<sub>AD</sub>)

*"Nanak Raj Chalaia Sach kot Sataani Neev De"*

(Guru Nanak patshah established the rule and forts on the Truth Foundation)

Guru Granth sahib, Ang: 966

Nanakshahi Coin (R)



Deg-o-Tag-o-Fateh-o-Nusrat-i-Bedirang Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh



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## Guru Nanak Patshah's Halimi Raj: Redefined

In the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, Guru Nanak *patshah* initiated a spiritual revolution centred on the Truth and oneness of God, and along with it he addressed human suffering primarily stemming from flawed political systems. Furthermore, Guru Nanak *patshah* implemented the notion of *Halimi Raj*- Benevolent Rule and commenced the construction of forts at Lohgarh and other Sikhs forts and places. This mission persisted for over two centuries (1469-1716 <sub>AD</sub>), spanning from Guru Nanak *patshah* to General Banda Singh Bahadar. Sikhs and Sufis guided by 35 saints whom hymns mentioned in the Guru Granth *sahib*, endeavoured to establish Sikh fortifications and worked towards the realization of *Halimi Raj* - Begampura the concept given by Bhagat Ravi Das *patshah*. Among these, the narrative of Lohgarh, stands as a paramount chapter, unparalleled in human history. Nestled amidst the rugged landscape of the Shivalik hills, early known as Manak Parbat, Lohgarh fortifications transcend mere physical construction, symbolizing resistance against tyranny and servitude, resilience, and the indomitable spirit of the *Khalsa Raj*. A new concept of *Piri-Miri* (saint-soldier) emerged with Guru Nanak *patshah*, emphasizing that every Sikh, before becoming a soldier, should embody the qualities of a saint. According to the historical account given in *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* by Ardastani, Guru Har Rai *sahib* lived in the Lohgarh region of Thapalpur for a period of 13 years (1645-1658 <sub>AD</sub>) along with his family and a cavalry of 2200 soldiers. Guru Tegh Bahadar *patshah* visited the Lohgarh zone many times (1656, 1664, 1665, & 1670 <sub>AD</sub>) and contributed significantly to constructing the Lohgarh fort. The in-laws of Guru Tegh Bahadar relocated from Kartarpur to Lakhnaur, Ambala, which is situated within the Lohgarh zone. Guru Gobind Singh stayed at Paonta (1685-1688 <sub>AD</sub>) near Lohgarh. All the Sikh Guru *sahibans* had visited Lohgarh. The book on Lohgarh aims to connect the dots and present a comprehensive narrative of Sikh history.

### Lohgarh Sikh State Capital

In January 1710 <sub>AD</sub>, General Banda Singh Bahadar proclaimed Lohgarh as the capital of the Sikh State, who's construction was started by Guru Nanak *patshah*. Lohgarh fort was situated in the Sirmaur quasi-independent Hill state which provides valuable insight into its strategic positioning during the Mughal era. The

Map illustrating Lohgarh Khalsa Rajdhani, Paonta, Nahar, and Sadhaura with their Historical Interrelations



proximity of Lohgarh to key locations such as Paonta (15 km northeast), Nahan (20 km northwest), Sadhaura (20 km southwest), and Khizrabad *pargana* (15 km southeast) underscores its strategic position among neighbouring towns and regions. The Lohgarh fortifications spanned thousands of acres on a cluster of hill known as Dabar. Rather than being a single fort, Lohgarh comprised a cluster of forts spread across various hillocks, all interconnected.

The 52 advanced forts of Lohgarh highlight the extensive and strategic nature of Sikh fortifications. The Lohgarh zone, a network of forts spread at short distances across several districts in present-day Haryana, Punjab, and Himachal Pradesh, covered approximately 3,000 square miles. This zone included areas in the present-day districts of Karnal, Kurukshetra, Yamunanagar, Ambala, Kaithal, Panchkula, Chandigarh, Patiala, and Sirmaur. It emerged as the focal point of Sikh resistance and fortifications during the conflicts with the Mughal forces between 1710 and 1716 AD.

### **Lohgarh's First Battle: Unveiled**

In November 1710 AD, the Lohgarh fort, serving as the capital of the Sikh State, garnered significance when emperor Bahadar Shah arrived with an army comprising nearly 200,000 imperial forces alongside his princes and numerous *mansabdars*. For the next five months, the Sikhs under General Banda Singh Bahadar and Mughals engaged in heavy battles. During this period, the Sikh forces reduced the Mughal army to half, and the Mughals achieved no major successes. On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1711 AD, the emperor decided to withdraw all his forces from the Lohgarh zone and redirect them to Lahore to counter any potential attack by Banda Singh Bahadar in that region.

### **Lohgarh Faces Second Assault**

After the death of emperor Bahadar Shah due to insanity caused by Sikh war, Jahandar Shah became the next Mughal emperor in April 1712 AD. On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1712 AD, Mohammad Amir Khan was tasked with persuading the Sikhs in Lohgarh to submit to Mughal authority. By May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1712 AD, General Banda Singh Bahadar had taken up residence in the Lohgarh fort and the Sikhs had established police posts in *suba* Lahore and Delhi. Despite this, Mohammad Amir Khan lacked the resolve to launch another attack on Lohgarh. The Mughal forces did initiate attacks in May 1712 AD, continuing for almost four months, but they achieved no significant success. Thousands of Mughal soldiers were killed by the Sikh forces, and by October 1712 AD, the Mughal forces retreated from the Lohgarh zone.

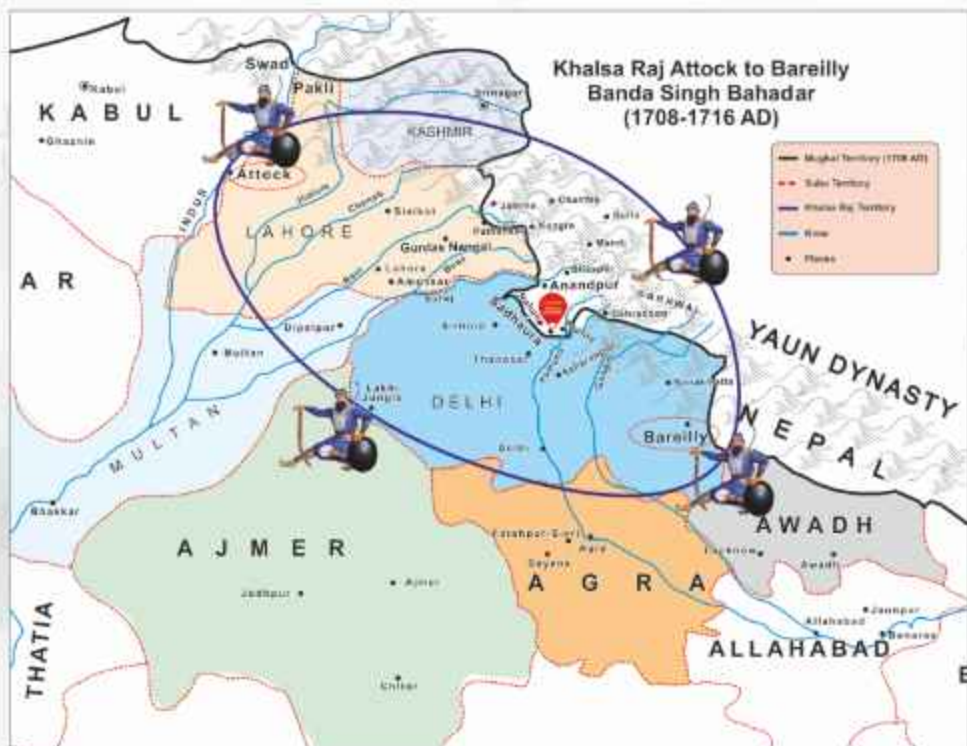
### **Lohgarh Endures its Third Battle**

After the death of emperor Jahandar Shah, Farrukhsiyar became the next Mughal emperor in December 1713 AD. On February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1713 AD, Abdus Samad Khan was appointed as the *subedar* of Lahore with instructions from the emperor to capture Banda Singh Bahadar and Lohgarh fort. In April 1713 AD, Mohammad Amin Khan and Abdus Samad Khan took control near Lohgarh, prompting a fierce battle with General Banda Singh Bahadar. Seventy thousand Mughal soldiers gathered near Sadhaura in April 1713 AD. By June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1713 AD, Abdus Samad Khan, Zain-ud-Din Ahmed Khan, and General Inam Khan led a massive army to the Lohgarh zone. Despite their continuous assaults on Lohgarh, the Mughals encountered substantial setbacks, marked by heavy casualties and a lack of significant successes. By November 13<sup>th</sup>, 1713 AD, the Mughal army commenced an intense artillery bombardment on Lohgarh fort using guns and cannons, which persisted for months, targeting all the hills surrounding the fortress. After eight months of

attacking Lohgarh, the Mughals retreated due to heavy casualties and financial strain, with no major successes achieved. In 1714<sup>AD</sup> General Banda Singh Bahadar continued attacks on the *pargana* of *suba* (Mughal province) Lahore, Delhi, Multan, Kashmir, Agra and Ajmer.

### Sikh Onslaught: Attock to Bareilly

The *Akbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mu'alla* records that General Banda Singh Bahadar's campaign against the Mughals, from 1709 to 1716<sup>AD</sup>, spanned the region from the Attock-Jalandhar Doab (Jammu) to Nepal and Bareilly. Even today, the ruins of forts can be found across 600 kilometres from Attock to Garhwal in Shivalik hills. More than 400 Khalsa forts were established from Attock to Bareilly, since Guru Nanak *patshab* to General Banda Singh Bahadar for almost two centuries.



Guru Nanak *patshab* strategically chose Awadh, Punjab, and the Hills from Attock to Bareilly the land of eight rivers named Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, Sutlej, Yamuna and Ganga as the central locations for *Halimi Raj* and the capital at Lohgarh. Guru Nanak's mission was to make Lohgarh as capital of global humanity and the epicentre of the human race.

### Sadhaura - Second Kabha

Sadhaura is positioned at a distance of twenty kilometres from both Lohgarh *Khalsa Rajdhani* and Nahan. In the book Muhammad Shafi' Warid, *Mir'at-i-Waridat* (1738<sup>AD</sup>) notes that Shah Quamis's tomb in Sadhaura was called the second Kabha. Guru Nanak *patshab* established *Manji* (Sikh preaching centre) at Sadhaura, and Bhagat Sadhana assisted him in this mission. Shah Quamis Qadri and Shah Abdul Wahab Chishti, both descendants of Prophet Muhammad, moved to Sadhaura after Guru Nanak *patshab* to establish *Halimi Raj* at Lohgarh. These Sufi *Pirs* dedicated two hundred years to this mission. *Pir* Budhu Shah, a descendant of these Sufi *Pirs*, was a close associate of Guru Gobind Singh *patshab* and he met Guru *sabib* at Paonta many times.

## Thanesar : Gateway to Lohgarh

Thanesar is part of the Lohgarh zone, and is the only place in the world where all the Sikh Guru *sahibans* have visited. Repeated visits of all the Sikh Gurus *sahibans* to Thanesar were instrumental in establishing and developing the Lohgarh zone. Guru *sahibans* played a pivotal role in fostering the growth and prosperity of the Sikh congregation in this region from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The story commences with Guru Nanak *patshah*'s journey to Thanesar to establish the *Halimi Raj* at Lohgarh, followed by subsequent visits from other Sikh Guru *sahibans*, namely Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, and Guru Arjan. The narrative then delves into Guru Har Gobind's imprisonment and the role of Sai Miyan Mir in overseeing Thanesar during this period. The enduring spiritual significance of Thanesar is highlighted by the successive visits of Guru Har Rai, Guru Har Kishan, Guru Tegh Bahadar, and Guru Gobind Singh. Additionally, the relocation of Sikhism's headquarters to Dhamtan near Thanesar by Guru Tegh Bahadar and the presence of General Banda Singh Bahadar in the region further solidified Thanesar's reputation as a gateway to Lohgarh and a centre of Sikh spirituality and resistance.

## Lohgarh's Heritage In India

Lohgarh forts are located in various regions across the Indian subcontinent, such as Lohgarh Amritsar, Lohgarh Anandpur, Lohgarh Gurdaspur, Lohgarh Moga, Lohgarh Sirsa, Lohgarh Pinjore, Khalsa Rajdhani Lohgarh, Lohgarh Zirakpur, Lohgarh Ambala, Lohgarh Bharatpur (Rajasthan), Lohgarh Mumbai (Maharashtra), Lohgarh Aligarh (Uttar Pradesh), Lohgarh Siliguri (West Bengal), Lohgarh Jhunjhunu, Lohgarh Udaipur, Lohgarh Sirsa, Lohgarh Dina Kangar Moga, Lohgarh Gwalior, and others. There are over 50 forts in the Indian subcontinent, with the name Lohgarh. The construction of Lohgarh forts, spanning over two centuries, was a collaborative effort involving Guru Nanak *patshah*, all 35 saints of Guru Granth *sahib*, Sufis, Banjara Sikhs, and various other Sikh tribes such as Bhils, Noniyas, Bhoomias, Gonds, Jats/Jaats, Weavers, Leather dressers, Sikligars among others, across the Indian sub-continent. These forts hold historical significance and are connected to all the ten Guru Nanaks and General Banda Singh Bahadar, who were associated with the *Halimi Raj* mission.

## Misconception about Banda Singh Bahadar

General Banda Singh Bahadar was not a Bairagi ascetic but a Banjara Sikh. Banda Singh Bahadar forts at Koppal gives the testament that General Banda Singh Bahadar secret connections with Guru Gobind Singh before 1708 AD. Revenue records indicate that Banda Singh Bahadar's fort existed in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, disproving the fabricated stories connecting Madho Das, Laxman Das Bairagi, Gurbax Singh, and eventually Banda Singh Bahadar. Research has found that Banda Singh Bahadar was born into a Banjara Sikh family in Kunakheri Tanda, near Koppal in Karnataka, in a GurSikh family of Jangi (Jangha Ram Banjara) having connections since the era of Guru Nanak *patshah*.

The exhibition of warfare led by Banda Singh Bahadar stood out notably due to its extensive demands on individuals involved, necessitating rigorous military training and the experience of a seasoned army general and statesman. Furthermore, a comprehensive understanding of geography and strategic positioning of fortifications was imperative to effectively coordinate Sikh defences spread across vast distances amidst challenging terrains of the lower Himalayas and sub-mountainous regions in the Northern Indian plains.

## Abolishment of Feudal System

On May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1710<sub>AD</sub>, Banda Singh Bahadar abolished the feudal system at Lohgarh; this was done for the first time in the history of Mankind (much earlier than French Revolution). General Banda Singh Bahadar made history by transferring land ownership from the state to the farmers and tillers, marking the first instance of such a practice in human history. This move effectively eradicated the exploitative feudal system that had endured for centuries. Farmers were also exempted from paying blood-sucking land taxes to the state.

### Banda Singh Bahadar: Pioneer of Nanakshahi Coins

General Banda Singh Bahadar finally issued *Nanakshahi* coins in Persian script from the mint established at Lohgarh. He issued coins in the name of Guru Nanak *sahib* and Guru Gobind Singh *sahib* instead of issuing them in his own name and inscribed Lohgarh as *Khalsa Takht* on the coin.

#### Obverse

*Sikka Zad Bar Har Do Alam Fazl Sahebha Sahib Ast*

*Fath-i-Gur Gobind Singh Shab-i-Shaban Tegh -i-Nanak Wabib Ast*

By the grace of the True Lord, a coin representing both the spiritual and temporal realms has been minted. With the sword of Guru Nanak *patshah*, victories are achieved. Through the blessings of Guru Gobind Singh *patshah*, the Emperor of Emperors, triumphs are secured.

#### Reverse

*Zarb Khalsa Mubarak Bakht Ba-Aman Ud-Dabr Zinat At-Takht Mashwarat Shahr.*

At the *Khalsa Takht* (Lohgarh) was where the auspicious fortune was struck, and it became the refuge of the age, the ornament of the throne, and the city of the council.

### Lohgarh as Mukhlisgarh: Concocted story

Historians have inaccurately suggested that Banda Singh Bahadar attacked and captured the Mukhlisgarh fort, renaming it as Lohgarh fort. Situated 35 kilometres from Lohgarh, on the opposite side of the Yamuna River, in the former *pargana* (Mughal administrative unit) of Faizabad, Mukhlisgarh is regarded as a captivating pleasure house. In an Atlas of the Mughal Empire authored by Irfan Habib, Sheet 8A Mukhlisgarh location is depicted along the banks of the Yamuna River in Uttar Pradesh. The construction of Mukhlisgarh is attributed to Ali Mardan Khan in 1640<sub>AD</sub>, an esteemed engineer and high-ranking *mansabdar* (Mughal nobility) under Shah Jahan, boasting extensive expertise in hydraulics.

***"Baygam puraa sahar ko naa-o. Dookh andohu nahee tihi thaa-o.  
Naantasvees khiraaj na maal."***

Baygumpura, 'the city without sorrow', is my town's name. There is no suffering or anxiety there. There are no troubles or taxes on commodities there.

Guru Granth *sahib* Ang : 345

***hun hukam ho-aa miharvaan daa. pai ko-ay na kisai ranjaandaa  
sabh sukhaalee vuthee-aa ih ho-aa halaymee raaj jee-o. ||13||***

Now, the Merciful Lord has issued His Command. Let no one chase after and attack anyone else. Let all abide in peace under this Benevolent Rule. ||13||

Guru Granth *sahib* Ang : 74

For additional information, explore the books on Guru Nanak Patshah's Halimi Raj-Lohgarh Sikh State Capital (Both Short & Long Volume in English) now available on Amazon India. The older edition of the book, in English, Punjabi, Hindi, Marathi, and Kannada, can be downloaded for free from [WWW.LOHGARH.COM](http://WWW.LOHGARH.COM).

## Architectural Blueprint of Sikh Forts

### Parapet's Backdrop: Guarding from Behind



### One Soldier, Three Muskets: Mastering Control

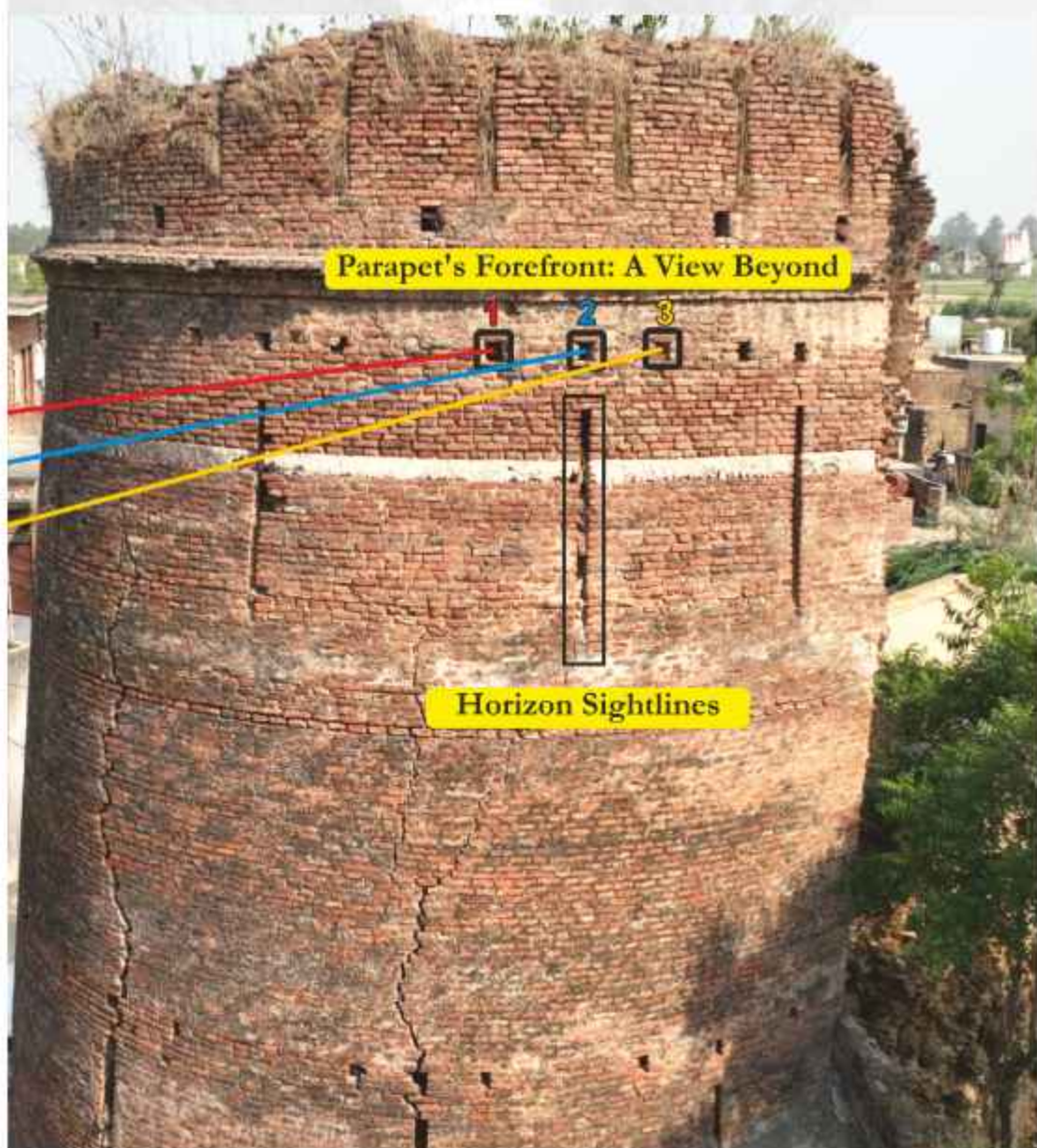
The architectural blueprint of the advanced Sikh forts of Lohgarh is meticulously crafted to integrate the strategic implementation of gunpowder technology. Each fort is distinguished by six to eight dome-shaped bastions towering at a commanding height of 35 feet. The circumference of these bastions commences at 30 metres at their base, gradually tapering to 20 metres at their zenith, a configuration akin to a conical funnel.

Internally, Sikh forts were ingeniously equipped with three tiers of parapets, allowing defenders to operate multiple muskets simultaneously. Externally, these individual tiers seamlessly merged into a single elongated parapet line, meticulously engineered to offer both clear visibility of the surrounding terrain and robust protection against incoming threats.

The size of the parapet apertures within the bastions was meticulously calibrated to strike a delicate balance between defensive efficacy and structural integrity. Each aperture within the three tiers of parapets (each parapet's hole is 3 inches by 3 inches) was meticulously sized to seamlessly integrate into a unified external with 1 metre long line having width of 3 inches to keep an eye on enemy and internally this parapet's apertures measuring about 1 metre wide and 1.5 metres high. This size offered ample space for soldiers to maneuver within the bastions while engaging in defensive actions such as firing muskets or surveilling enemy movements. By providing sufficient room for tactical maneuvers, these apertures ensured that defenders could effectively utilize their firearms while remaining sheltered behind the fortress walls.

Moreover, the strategic placement of these parapet apertures along the fortress perimeter was meticulously orchestrated to optimize defensive coverage. The spacing between

## Architectural Blueprint of Sikh Forts



adjacent apertures was judiciously adjusted to minimize potential weak points in the defences while maximizing the overall defensive reach of the fortifications. This meticulous attention to detail in the design of the parapet apertures underscored the fortresses' formidable defensive capabilities, allowing Sikh defenders to repel enemy attacks with unparalleled efficiency and resilience. Interconnecting the bastions are imposing fortification walls, towering at an impressive height of approximately 25 feet. The placement of round bastions, strategically situated both within and outside the fortification walls, augments surveillance capabilities. These fortification walls, predominantly composed of *Nanakshahi* bricks, stones and lime mortar, are reinforced internally with mud mortar in specific sections to enhance stability. The outer surfaces of the bastions are meticulously coated with lime mortar, further fortifying their defences. Similar Architectural design had been followed in all the 400 *Khalsa Raj* forts from Attock to Barielly and size of the fort ranged from 2 acres to 5 acres.