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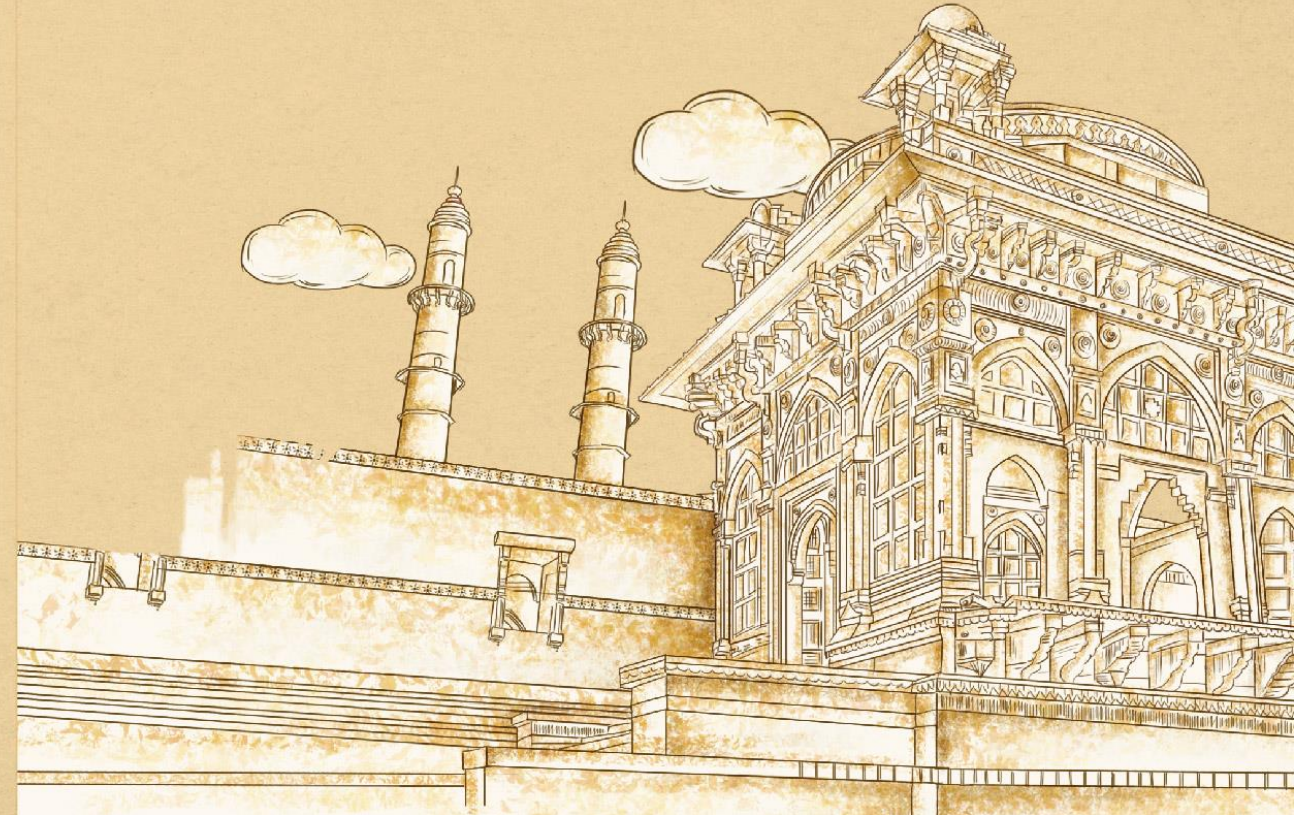
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an **ancient world**

CHAMPANER-PAVAGADH ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK





It was a forgotten city, abandoned and slowly falling to ruin from the mid-16th century onwards. Yet hundreds of years later, the world can't stop marvelling at the glories of Champaner-Pavagadh, the medieval capital of the Gujarat Sultans. Archaeological excavations have unveiled a once-vibrant city where different cultures blended seamlessly to create a rich heritage.

The glorious monuments, forts, mosques, tombs, arches, temples, stepwells and fortresses have elements of Jain, Hindu and Islamic architecture. The UNESCO World Heritage Site in Gujarat is the only complete and unchanged pre-Mughal Islamic city. Champaner was at its zenith for a brief period before it vanished in the mists of time. Yet, its ruins are an evocative reminder of an architecturally and culturally rich era.



A tale of defeat & abandonment

Battle for Pavagadh

Different dynasties controlled Champaner at different points in time. Its history dates back to the 8th century when it was ruled by the Chavda kings. Along with neighbouring Pavagadh, the city became an important trading route. The region came under the control of the Chauhan Rajputs in the 1300s with Pavagadh as the capital. It was during this period that a fortress was built on Pavagadh Hill.

The lost capital

Champaner-Pavagadh was constantly under attack, but it was finally defeated by the Gujarat Sultan, Mahmud Begada. He won the city after a 20-month siege in 1484 and constructed the new capital of Gujarat at Champaner. However, its glory days did not last long. Captured by the Mughal emperor Humayun in 1535, the capital was abandoned.

Rediscovering Champaner-Pavagadh

Well-planned city

Champaner-Pavagadh has gifted the world a rich historical, cultural and architectural legacy. Excavations reveal that the ancient city was a well-planned one. There were royal buildings, religious structures, open spaces, residential homes, cemeteries, granaries and a water management system.

Magnificent mosques

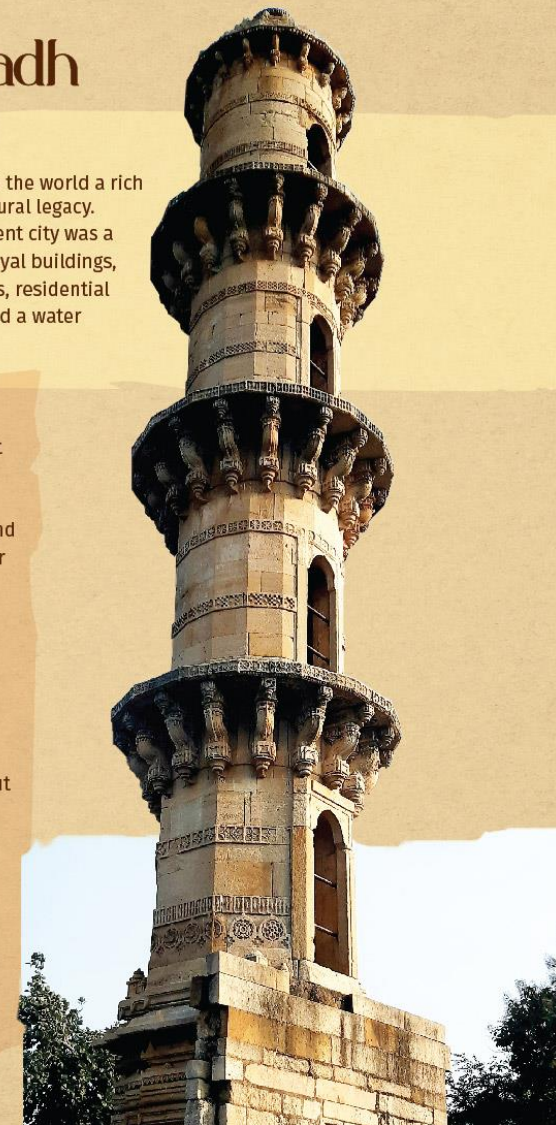
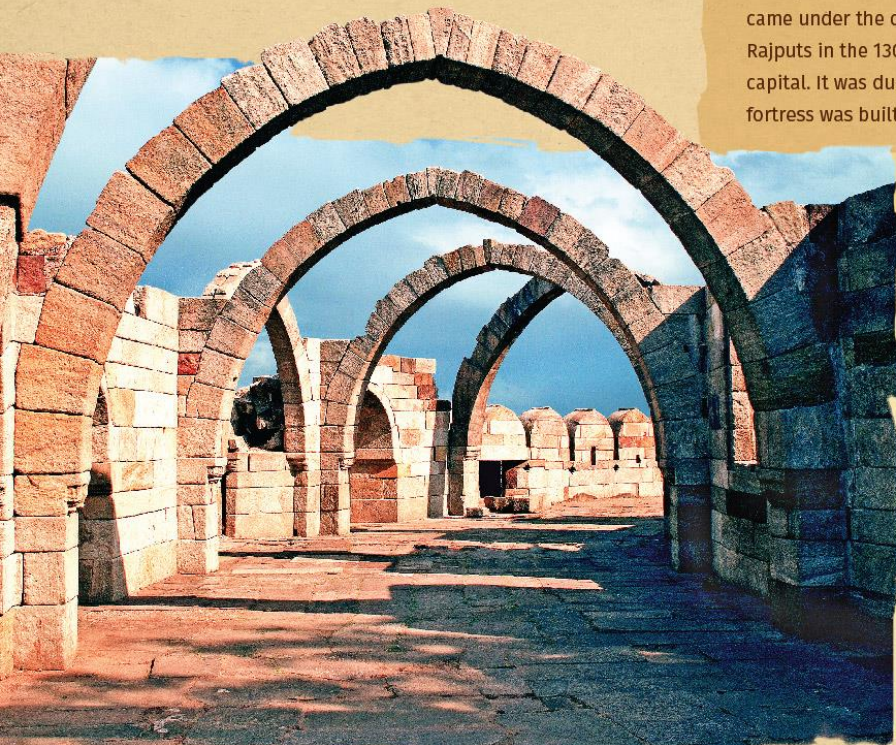
Champaner's most striking feature was its magnificent mosques, the biggest and most stunning being the Jama Masjid. The Jama Masjid and the palace, Hissar-i-Khas, were located in the centre of the city and could be reached through several arterial roads. Other important mosques included Saher Ki Masjid, Kevda Masjid, Nagina Masjid and Lila Gumbaj ki Masjid.

Ancient temples

An equally significant structure is the ancient Kalikamata Temple atop Pavagadh Hill, which is still visited by the devout from across the country. There are many Hindu and Jain temples scattered throughout the region.

Water management system

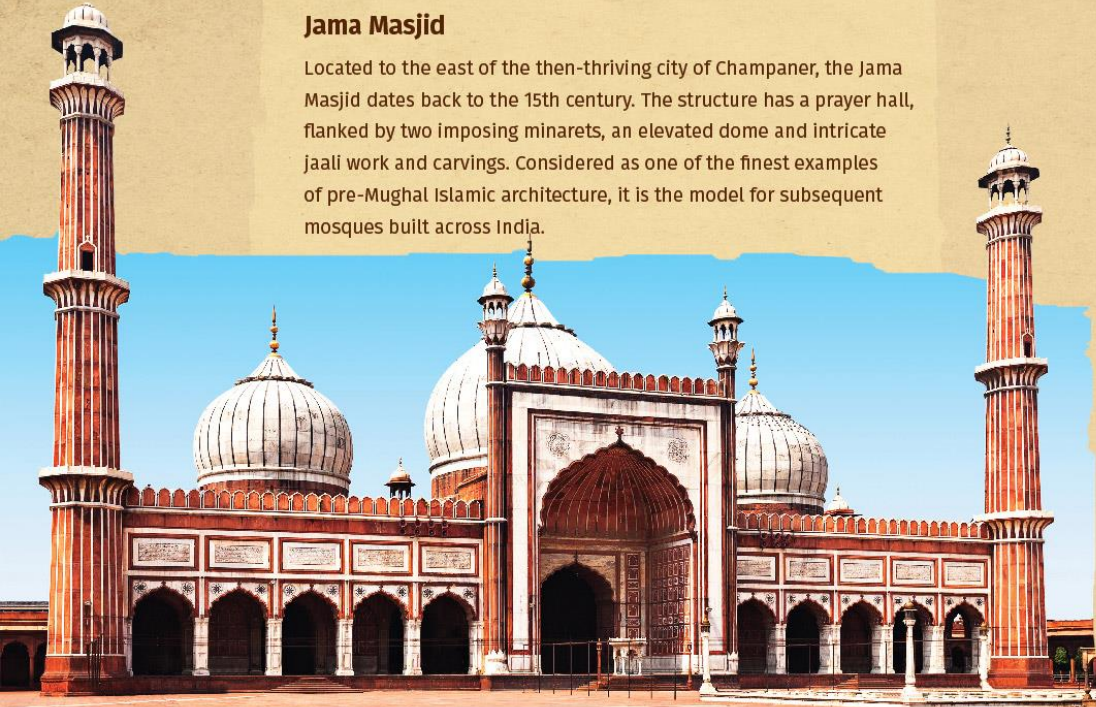
The archaeological excavations reveal several engineering marvels amongst the ruins, including a sophisticated water management system. Consisting of a network of stepwells and tanks, it ensured that there was no shortage of water in this arid land.



Incredible Monuments

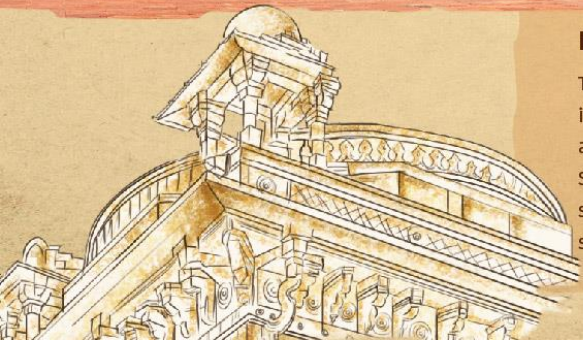
Jama Masjid

Located to the east of the then-thriving city of Champaner, the Jama Masjid dates back to the 15th century. The structure has a prayer hall, flanked by two imposing minarets, an elevated dome and intricate jaali work and carvings. Considered as one of the finest examples of pre-Mughal Islamic architecture, it is the model for subsequent mosques built across India.



Helical Stepwell

The water-retention system at Champaner-Pavagadh is testimony to the ingenuity of its engineers and architects. A remarkable example is the Helical Stepwell. This 16th-century well has a 1.2 metre-wide staircase that spirals down along the wall of the well shaft

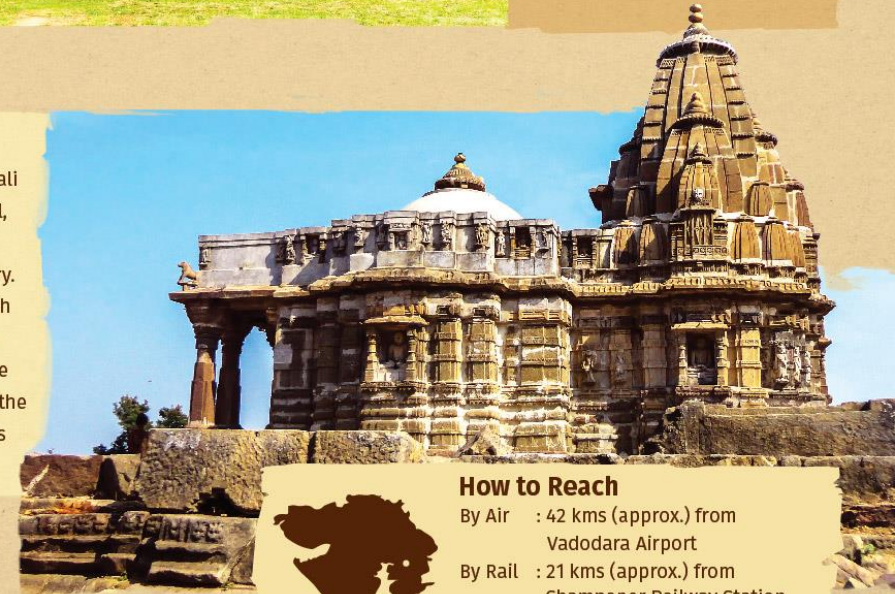


Kevada Masjid

A rectangular structure with double-storeyed prayer hall, the mosque has two minarets with beautifully carved floral and geometric designs. The square cenotaph has a fluted central dome and four corner domes

Kalikamata Temple

The temple dedicated to Mother Kali lies at the summit of Pavagadh Hill, 800 m above sea level. It was established in the 10th-11th century. The structure has fortifications with an open courtyard and two altars. There are idols of Mahakali and the yantras of Bahuchara too. Though the temple is tough to reach, devotees come here in large numbers.



How to Reach

- By Air : 42 kms (approx.) from Vadodara Airport
- By Rail : 21 kms (approx.) from Champaner Railway Station
- By Road : 49 kms (approx.) from Vadodara

