

TOURISM IN PURULIA

Places of interest & Archeological Attractions in Purulia :

Places of interest :

Thousands visit Purulia every year to witness the charm of the natural forests of Ayodhya , Matha and Kuilapal, falls and tribal habitations of Ajodhya and Bagmundih, dams like Panchet, Murguma and Futiari. Heritage building like Panchakot Raj Place, trekking range of Matha proud with Pakhi Pahar, and Joychandi Pahar, picnic spots like Duarsini, Doladanga, Jamuna, traditional folk dance and culture like Chhou Dance and Jhumur Song and so on. The tourists who visit Purulia occasionally visit neighboring places of the adjoining districts and the Jharkhand State. And the inimitable traditional folk dance and cultural expressions like the flamboyant Chhou Dance and Jhumur Song are worth mentioning.

Archeological Attractions in Purulia :

GARH PANCHAKOT : It's a famous historical place located within Neturia Block, and is 60 kms away from Purulia town. It has the ruins of some forts built by the kings of Panchakot in 1600 A.D. At present the temples with terracotta art inside the fort are lying in broken condition.

BIRINCHINATH-: Near Mandandi, in Neturia police station, on the southern lower slopes of the Panchet hill, it is the site of an old temple which has now disappeared. A sunken linga is approached by steps into a pit with a modern superstructure. Many stone fragments with architectural mouldings and incisions are lying about; some have been reused for making the steps up the hill. Fragments of amalaka and finial suggest the former existence of a rekha-deul here. There is a modern mandapa on old columns. A Nandi bull near another ancient linga and the pedestal of an old image. Apart from Birinchinath, modern painted clay-images of Radha-Krishna and Sarabhujā Jagaddhatri are worshipped in the modern structures

GANPUR:- A village at Santuri P.S. It has on its outskirts an abandoned temple which exemplifies the type of atchala temple, especially built in the 17th century in Bankura district (e.g., at Simlapal, Sabrakon, Tejpal). The upper tower hardly projects over the lower roof, and the lines of the roof flow into each other, giving the look of a charchala temple. The base measures 23 feet square, with a pillared porch at the front, and a single chamber-15 feet 6 inches by 7 feet 2 inches; the ceilings of the chamber is a pointed vault. The temple is made of Barakar sandstone, and originally had brick enclosure wall. A brick rasmancha was possibly there nearby. The brick temple is in good condition, but the image (that of Raghunath) is said to have been removed to Cholbalpur in Kulti P.S. of Bardhaman district.

CHELIAMA:- A big village on Ahalyabai Road in Raghunathpur II block, is nearly 46 Km. from Purulia Town and the head quarters of that block. The village contains the temple most richly decorated with terracottas in Purulia district and one of the few surviving from the 17th century in West Bengal. The temple of Radha-Vinod, dated sakabda 1619 has a contemporary terracotta plaque in Bengali. In the panels above the archways are depicted Krishnalila scenes. There is also scene like Rama comforting with Ravana in two huge war chariots with monkeys and demons joining in the fray. A series of smaller panels rising on the left and right and continuing across the top includes the avatars of Vishnu, the other deities as well as devotees. Along the base on the left ran the usual Krihnalila frieze, and on the right (much less common) a Ramayan frieze. Beneath them is another frieze of professional and hunting scene. The base and the column panels of the façade are already badly worn but the panels above the archways are in excellent condition.

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TELKUPI--: A village at Raghunathpur P.S., and about 8 kms. north-east of Cheliama, it was earlier visited by Beglar who described this place as 'containing, perhaps, the finest and largest number of temples within a small space that is to be found in the Chutia Nagpur Circle in Bengal'. He listed over twenty temples and referred to several others and to 'numerous mounds, both of brick and stone, but more of brick'. Bloch visited the place in 1902, when the number of the well-preserved temples had diminished considerably, as he found ten, more or less complete temples. Out those only two stand today and one more is visible half-submerged in the Damodar reservoir at the Panchet Dam.

The site was on the south bank of the Damodar –the crossing of the former trade route between Bihar and Orissa –subject to erosion from floods and has now been permanently submerged after the construction of the Panchet Dam.

The one that is half under water towards the other side of the lake is the No. 10 of Beglar's list—a late structure, probably of the time of Man Singh, with an ugly shikhara divided up by horizontal ridges and two mandapas with pyramidal roofs in these sections.

Beglar's No. 10 is one of his first group of thirteen, all of which must have been submerged. The two temples that are standing now on the very edge of the river seem to belong to Beglar's second group, although one of them contains a linga, whereas Beglar's second group contains only Vaishnava temples. Both these temples are almost similar

in design to the Banda temples. Between these two temples are the mounds of two more, with carved fragments indicating that they were of the same style as the two others. One has a lingam; the other has a fragment of a doorframe with five carved bends, including a series of figures in the niches.

BANDA:- A village also called Deulghera in Raghunathpur II P.S. about 1 km from Cheliama. It has a solitary temple in "rekha" style with broken amalaka still in place. The plan is tri-ratha, about 13' square with much simplified base moldings and plain squared pilasters on either side of a niche in each wall. The tower has bhumi-amalaka upto the corners; the central projection is decorated with interconnected chaityas and foliated scrolls and two vertical rows of separate projecting chaityas between this and the corners. The central projection on the south side has large interweaving leafy stem with lattice like designs below, suggestive of Middle Eastern Islamic influence. The door frame has curving of boys blowing horns by climbing up a wavy stem, a band of foliated scrolls and two bands of floral lozenges. The single cell measuring 6.6' square has a shelf projecting 3/1/3 ft. there is however no idol in the temple which faces north, with a water outlet (makara head) on the east. It is preceded by a mandapa which has largely collapsed, although eight pillars still stand supporting crossbeams.

DEULBHITA :- This is a small village under Para Panchayat Samity, and is 40 km away from Purulia town. The ruins of some temples along with many Shivalingas are still existing. The images of Hara-Parvati, Jain Tirthankar, Gayetri, Lokeshwar and Vishnu in different postures bear the architectural grace of the 10th century

PARA :- It is situated in the north-east of Purulia town and is about 30 kms from the district Headquarter. A village with a station of the thana of the same name, it has two pre-Muslim deuls to the east. One belongs to the type of the three-brick temples of Deulghat.

Its top has fallen down along with most of the stucco, but some carved brick work still remains. The lower walls have three niches each—one on each of the projections (as at Deulghat), surmounted by tall rekha shikharas in relief, with pilasters on either side of them. The tower has a big heart-shaped chaitya in the centre on each of the four faces. It has a trefoil niche below, and the usual moldings up the pagas. The entrance is the usual tall corbelled triangle. The lower portion of the exterior walls, measuring about 5 meters square, has been given a protective brick casing, now partly fallen away. To the east there is a stone temple of about the same size, though not so tall as the brick temple originally was. It has rich overall carving in soft sandstone, though weathered beyond recognition. Immediately to the south-west of the brick temple is a large mound, containing the carved stone fragments of another early temple, perhaps larger than the other two. Beglar mentions two pilasters with plain square moldings. At the opposite end of the village there is another temple of a later period. It is built of stone, with a plain square shrine, about 6 meters square, preceded by a slightly smaller porch. The temple of Radharaman is now in complete ruins, on which no terracotta panels remain; nor are any to be seen on any other temple. Beglar was told that the Radharaman temple was built by one Purushottam Das from Brindavan, during the viceroyalty of Man Singh, to whom the later stone temple was attributed. The tomb or Chhatri of Purushottam Das stands opposite the temple. Also in the village is a small mound with a ling, some pillars, and makara waterspouts.

Archeological Attractions in Purulia :

DEULGHAT- A place near Boram in Arsha PS. It has ruins of some 15 temples and small shrines near the Kansai River about 6 kms from Joypur which is about 25 km. away from Purulia town. Among them are 3 tall brick deuls with stucco decoration. The largest of which is to the south. All the trees have triangular corbelled entrances with towers built up by interior corbelling. The corbelled entrance of the southern temple is high and graceful with a delicate carve. All of them have rich curved brickwork with stucco application. They depict chaityas and miniature rekha motifs. The stucco application includes scrollwork with geese and foliage, dwarfs familiar from Pala-Sena art. The stucco is fine and would appear to date from the same period as that on the Bahulara and Satdeulia temples. The hunched supporting figures on the middle temple recall those on the 15th century temples of Barakar. But there is nothing else significant in common between these temples. Deulghat figures are much livelier and more rhythmical. All these temples have lost the tops of their towers, together with the amalakas and kalasas, but the western and southern ones still stand to a height of 50 feet or more, the Western one specially, on a base about 16 feet square, seems to have been slender and graceful, the southern one, 24 feet square, is about the same size as the Bahulara temple. As one of the rekha temples in Purulia district, the plans are basically tri-ratha (single central projection). Complicated by many decorative recesses or subsidiary rathas. At least the central and Western temples seem to have originally had stone door-frames on a slightly projecting porch or antarala (entrance passage) to judge by the curved stumps still in situ. Each temple has a carved stone water outlet on the northern side. The other temples at Deulghat which are mostly of stone have all fallen down. The largest stands at the head of a flight of steps leading up from the river – a low mound in Beglar's Day on which he found a slab inscribed in characters which may belong to the 9th or the 10th century. The establishment seems to have been Savite, for besides the lingas in situ, all the images relate to this cult. An image of Uma- Maheshvar has been removed to the State Archeological Gallery. The oldest temples may be the bricked-temples, to judge by superiority of the workmanship, they had the large tile-like bricks typical of the Pala period.

PAKBIRRA :- It is located within Pancha Block and 40 km. from Purulia town. Only three temples are standing, all of them have lost most of their frontal stones. The smallest of these faces east. The other two face north. These two temples, buried several feet up to the level of the wall niches, still have some of the lower façade stones, which give an idea of their appearance. They have the basic tri-ratha plan with simplified mouldings. The large amalaka fragments lying about, and the stone kalasas with lotus buds emerging, make us suppose that most of the temples here belonged to the usual nagara order. The principal temple, of which Beglar could only describe the foundations, was very large, containing the full complement of preliminary chambers and hall in front of the sanctum. That temple, facing west, perhaps enshrined the colossal figure of a naked Tirthankar over two meters high, with lotus symbol on its pedestal, which still stands, along with a number of other Jaina sculptures, in an improvised stone-shed over the site of the original temple. Near-by Beglar excavated five more Jaina sculptures 'of late age' from brick mounds. The sculptures at PAKBIRRA are of Jaina affinity. The aforesaid shed has more than eight standing tirthankaras, including three with the bull symbol (Rishabhanatha). Two with the lion (Mahavira) one with the horse (Samhambhanatha), one with the lotus (Padmaprabha), and one with the half-moon (Chandraprava), two images of Yaksha and Sasanadevi beneath a tree with a Jina in the branches, three votive stupas (two with standing and one with seated Jinas each side), two being of the usual rekhashikhara variety, but the other possibly intended to represent a Bhadra (Deul), a curious small image of a four-armed deity, apparently holding a goad and noose, seated on a dog, Ambika with child and attendant, standing on her lion, beneath a flowering tree, and numerous fragments. There seems little doubt that these were the images originally enshrined in the temples, or placed in the exterior niches and some of the fragments may indicate the exterior decoration. A short distance to the south east is another shed of roughly assembled stone blocks, which contains five standing tirthankaras, one within the bull symbol, two with the bull between two lions (one of them over 1.2 m high, one with the deer "Shantinatha"), and one of the Parsvanatha, broken off at the west with the entwined nag and nagini between two lions at base. Yet another image of Rishabhanatha stands on the ruinous mound of another large stone temple about forty six meters to the east, almost in the village. A small image of the Yaksha Kuvera has been removed to the museum of the archeological directorate of the Government of West Bengal.

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SUISSA :- It is situated within Bagmundih Block at a distance of about 50 kms from the district Headquarter . A number iconic images are seen here, probably obtained from the temples which once existed here or in the neighborhood. These are a 1. Large four armed Vishnu unusual tribhanga pose, along with Sri and Sarasvati, and devotees on the pedestal but no Garuda, 2. Ambika, broken into many pieces, 3. A Chaturmukha votive shrine of rekha-type, with seated tirthankara, 4. Several images of different sizes, of tirthankaras (including Parsvanatha) – some intact, some broken (with symbols like a pot, a lotus of a wheel, the sun, a lion etc.) 5. Another Ambika, 6. A linga, 7. Amalaka 2.5 ft across, 8. A decorated door-jamb, several curved stone fragments. These statues were worshipped under Hindu names when Begler saw them, but are now lying about neglected.

BAGHMUNDI :- A place in the thana of the same name. It is about 58 km away from Purulia town and well connected by road It has within the rajbari compound, an atchata temple of Radha Govinda, dated sakabda 1675 (A.D. 1733), which is badly overgrown with thicket and measures about 19 feet square. The facade is decorated with lotus medallions and other floral and geometrical designs in terracotta, but has no figures. The new Radha-Govinda temple is a flat-roofed modern structure, also tending to crumble. There is a small, octagonal rasmancha nearby with nine pinnacles, having terracotta figures on four out of the eight sides. These consist of enthroned Rama and Sita with entourage, Krishna in rasmandala with the gopis, episodes like the holding up of Giri Gobardhan, or the killing of Bakasur, and many secular figures and animals-all crudely modelled. There is also a plain pancharatna Siva temple. All these were built by the Rajas of Baghmundi.

Chorida : It is a small village. 3 km away from Bagmundih Block. This place is famous for traditional mask making which are generally used in 'Chhou Dance'. Nearly forty families of this village are engaged in this profession. The ancient king of Bagmundih used to patronize this 'Chhou Dance'. Padmashree Gambhir Sing Mura, the famous Chhou dancer is the inhabitant of this village

BUDHPUR:- A village at Manbazar P.S., it is about 11 kms. south of Pakbirra and 6 kms. North of Manbazar on the Hura Road, on the north bank of the Kasai River. There was a large temple of Buddheswara Siva here. The temple had attached mandapas earlier, but now fallen down. In Beglar's time, the main tower was replaced by brick-and-plaster work. In 1926 was in it was replaced by a rough stone tower having curved entrance. Four smaller shrines at the corners of the enclosure form a panchayatana arrangement. But now only one is partly standing, with simplified mouldings and squared pillasters typical of Telkupi. The position of the others being understood from their bases amidst the rubble. From the curved fragments of amalakas, chaityas, etc., it appears that all these temples were in the nagara style. The place is now full of tumbled down blocks of stone containing pillars, door-jamb and a makara water-spout. Apart from these five, Beglar also found no less than five other temples, all small, to the north-east of the enclosure. The original lingo too, seems to have disappeared, for a pillar has now taken its place and is worshipped in the main sanctum. Three sculptural remains found at the site were cult images; to judge by their heavy pedestals, one was a standing Vishnu, another a standing Ganesa and one was Ganesa seated in Lalitasana. Their style having Orissa similarities, like the sculptures at Deulghat, though less richly carved. Beglar dates them to the 12th or 13th centuries. Forest bungalow is available for accommodation of the tourists.

CHARRA:- A village, in Puruliya Muffasil thana, situated at north-east of Puruliya town. Until recently, there were two small stone built rekhadeuls in this village. The one which still stands has plain tri-ratha wall with only rudimentary mouldings at the base, but the tower is extensively carved with square bhumi amalakas, large chaityas on the central projection, and small chaityas on the sections. The ornamentation of the shikhara suggests an earlier stage than that of the Telkupi temples. Its amalaka is still in position. The other temple, which has fallen down, was entirely plain; it was pancharatha in plan, with no base mouldings. This temple faced south and the other one east. Both were empty, but it may be that they were originally Jaina temples as there are many loose Jaina sculptures strewn around the village. According to local tradition, some large tanks in the vicinity were sunk by Sarak-jains.

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ANAIJAMBAD :- It's a place which is 3 km. away from Purulia town. This place is famous for Jain temples. The relics of Parswanath and Chandraprova bearing the mark of Pala era are there in the temple. Besides above, Shivalingas and images of Kartika and Bishnu are also found here.

BALARAMPUR : It is a small town, situated on the banks of the River Kangsabati. It has ruins of ancient Jain temples as also of sculptures which used to be seen once. The principal ruin is considered to be of a temple of the Baijnath type, dating to some time after Raja Man Singh.

BHANGRA : This place is within Purulia-II Panchayat Samity. It is 11 km, away from Purulia town. The modern Jain temple, images of many Tirthankaras and Rishavanath have increased the historical importance of this place.