



UNKNOWN STORY OF A MONUMENT PALACES OF DARBHANGA

INTRODUCTION

The city of Darbhanga is also known as the **cultural capital** of Bihar, popularly known as the "**Heart of Mithilanchal**", it is one of the oldest cities of the state. The history of this city has been traced back to the time of Mahabharata and Ramayana. The story of King Janak, the father of Goddess Sita finds mention in the epic Ramayana, Janak was the ruler of Mithila, today identified as modern day Darbhanga. The rulers of Darbhanga are said to have been patrons of Sanskrit learning and traditions.

The **unique nomenclature** of this city also has a number of stories to it, it is said to have been founded by Darbhangi Khan, whose identity is not established. It is also believed to be derived from *dwar* and *bang* meaning Gateway to Bengal. Some historians also believe that the name derives from the *dwar* - gateway and *bhanga* - broken, i.e. gate broken. The explanation for this is the fact that when the Tughlaq forces attacked the city, they broke open the gates of the fort with the use of elephants and canons. The latter seems to be a more plausible definition of the name of this city.

HISTORY

Darbhang

Dilkush Bagh and the Moti Mahal, of these the last two mostly survives in ruins. The Ram Bagh Palace located in the Ram Bagh fort is also a ruined structure.

Here we will seek to explore the three surviving palaces of Darbhanga Raj and know more about its history.



**Nargona Palace, presently
The Lalit Narayan Mithila
University**

This palace in its present condition was rebuilt after the 1934 earthquake which had greatly affected parts of northern Bihar and Nepal. This palace along with the others which was built by the rulers of Darbhanga was badly damaged due to this earthquake. One such palace which was completely damaged because of earthquake is the Moti Mahal palace, of which only one room remains as stated earlier.

This palace was renovated by then ruler, Maharaja Kameshwar Singh using the best technologies to build earthquake resistant buildings, this building is therefore one of the first buildings in India to employ earthquake resistant designs. It successfully endured the 1988 earthquake, which rocked this region.

In the year 1972, this palace was handed over to the Government of Bihar for establishing a university. It is a largely plain structure yet massive, the absence of decorations and ornamentations are largely due to its earthquake resistant designs.



**Lakshmivilas Palace presently
Kameshwar Singh Darbhanga
Sanskrit University**

Roper Lethbridge, a British academic and civil servant wrote about this palace after its renovation. *"The new palace at Darbhanga, with its immense stables, its botanical and zoological gardens, and its many beautiful surroundings, is well known in England by the sketches that have appeared in the London illustrated papers."*

This palace was built in the year 1882, by Maharaja Kameshwar Singh, this is also known as the Anand Bagh Palace, the main palace is said to have been built in around two acres and the surrounding area was over 32 acres that was once said to have beautifully designed gardens.

This building is now the administrative headquarters of the Kameshwar Singh Darbhanga Sanskrit University; it was donated by the ruler for setting up this educational institution. This building is now 135 years old and its present condition demands restoration work, this palace was also severely damaged in the 1934 earthquake, after which it was renovated by the then ruler.

The most beautiful and finely decorated room inside this palace (now university) is the Darbar Hall, which is known to have Venetian mosaic flooring, with exquisite chandeliers.





**Bela Palace presently Postal
Training College**

This palace was the residence of Raja Bishweshar Singh (also known as Raja Bahadur), he was the younger brother of Maharaja Kameshwar Singh, and it is one of the best preserved palaces built by the royal family of Darbhanga. The architecture of this palace is evidently inspired from modern European style of building architecture. This building was sold to the Government of India, by the royal family and from then on it serves as a Postal Training College for recruits of the Postal Services of India.

ACTIVITY

1. Name five princely states that existed in colonial India, also write in brief about one significant monument belonging to each of the princely state.
