



The Historic City of Bidar

Karnataka, India

Located in the northeast corner of the Indian state of Karnataka, Bidar is a rapidly urbanizing city, and the administrative center of the Bidar district. The walls and bastions of the fortified city are surrounded by a triple moat, and the fort itself is enclosed by seven large gateways. Although its origins can be traced back to the Rashtrakuta Empire (753–983 A.D.), it became historically significant when Bahamani sultan Ahmad Shah relocated the capital of his kingdom to Bidar in 1422, and used the prevailing Persian style to construct the palace and design the urban morphology of Bidar. The “karez” water system, a complex system of aqueducts used for agricultural irrigation, can also be attributed to Persian influence.

Challenges to the site include a lack of integrated conservation and maintenance, environmental pollution, and the construction of new developments and roadways that encroach on the historic fabric. Current land use regulations also threaten the economic livelihood of many of the city’s residents, and it is hoped that revised, context-specific planning policies would both protect Bidar’s historic assets while also supporting the future of its local population. It is hoped that Watch-listing will spur documentation and analysis of the city’s conditions, followed by policy development and applied conservation interventions that will reveal and maintain Bidar’s rich heritage, as well as support a robust and sustainable tourist industry.