

Places of Interest

Kolkata

The Dakshineswar Kali Temple :

It is a Hindu temple located in Dakshineswar on the eastern bank of the Hooghly River. The temple was built by Rani Rashmoni, a philanthropist and a devotee of Kali in 1855. Built in the traditional 'Navaratra' or nine spires style of Bengal architecture, the three-storeyed south-facing temple has nine spires distributed in upper two storeys, and stands on a high platform with a flight of stairs, over all it measures 46 feet (14 m) square and rises over 100 feet (30 m) high. The *garbha griha* (sanctum sanctorum) houses an idol of goddess Kali idol, known as *Bhavataraini*, standing on the chest of a lying Shiva, and the two idols are placed on a thousand-petaled lotus made of silver. The temple is famous for its association with Ramakrishna a mystic of 19th Century Bengal.



The Kali Temple

Victoria Memorial :

This grand white marble building with its tree-lined walks, splendid parks, lakes and super statues including that of Queen Victoria is an awesome reminder of the Raj, and is a treasure trove of Raj Relics including a piano that was played by Queen Victoria when she was a young girl.



Day View of the Victoria Memorial

Built in Italian Renaissance cum Saracenic (also called Mohammedan or Moorish) style, Victoria Memorial was planned by Lord Curzon to commemorate the visit of Prince of Charles. It was inaugurated by the Prince of Wales in 1921. It is one of the most visited monuments in the country.



Night View of the Victoria Memorial

Belur Math :

Belur Math or Belur Mutt is the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, founded by Swami Vivekananda, a chief disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa. It is located on the west bank of Hooghly River, Belur, West Bengal, India and is one of the significant institutions in Calcutta. The temple is notable for its architecture that fuses Hindu, Christian and Islamic motifs as a symbol of unity of all religions.



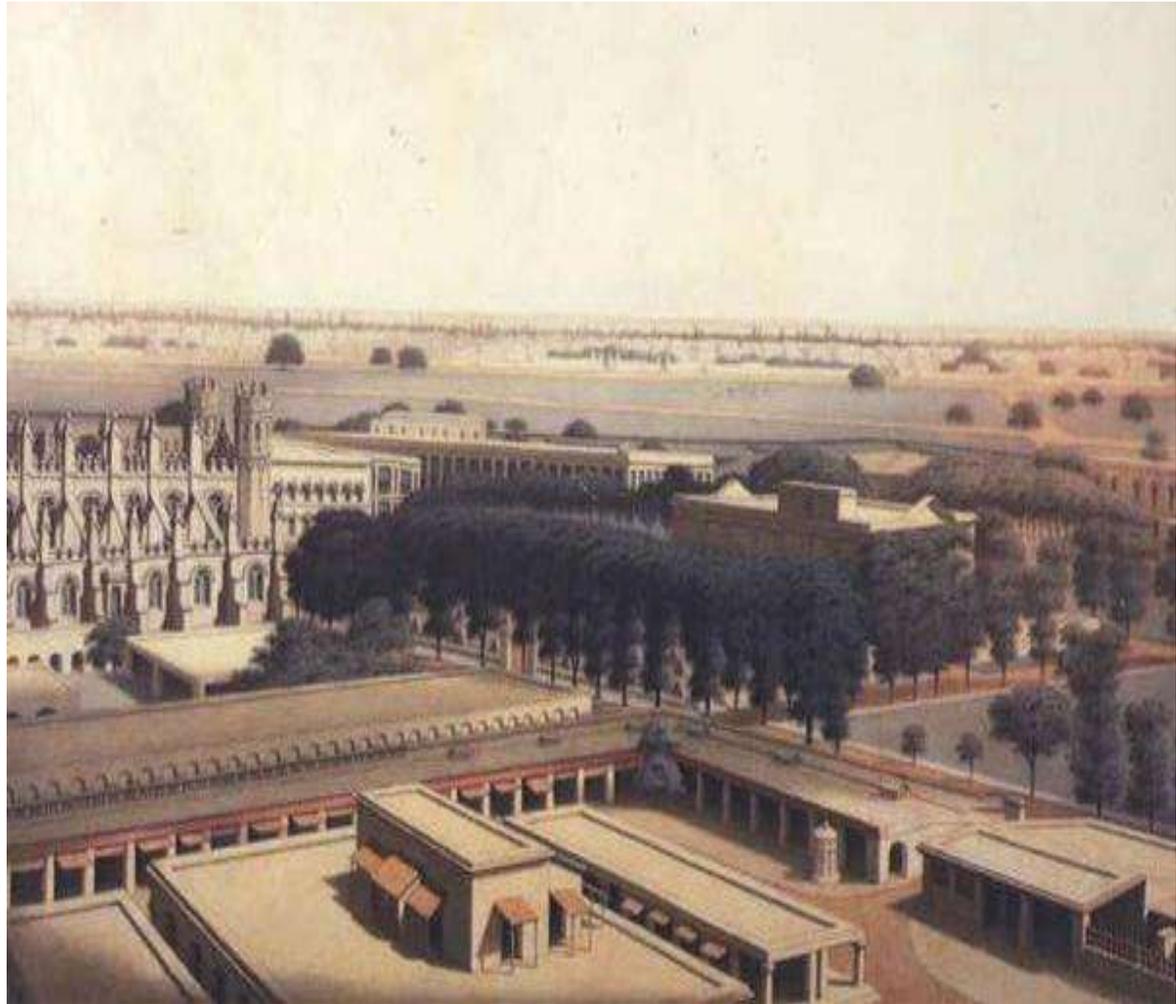
The National Library :

The National Library is the apex body of the library system of India. Serving as a public library, this is a permanent repository of all documents published in India. Under the Delivery of Books and Newspapers (Public Library) Act, 1954, the National Library is entitled to receive one copy of each publication published in the country. It is also a repository of the United Nations publications as well as official documents of selected foreign countries. The Library also holds a considerable number of electronic documents which are received through the above mentioned act through purchase, while some are generated by scanning of old brittle documents in the Library itself. The Library also has a collection of rare documents. The National Library has elaborate arrangements for physical conservation of books for posterity.

Fort William :

This colossal fort was built out of fear by the British East India Company. The British felt vulnerable after their defeat at the hands of Siraj-Ud-Daula in the year 1756. The Old Fort was repaired and used as a customs house from 1766 onwards. The New Fort is still in use as the headquarters of the Eastern Command of the Indian Army. The Army guards it heavily, and civilian entry is restricted.

The Fort is built of brick and mortar in the shape of an irregular octagon with an area 5 km². Five of its sides face landward and three towards the Hooghly River. The design is that of a star fort, suited to defence against cannon, but from before the advent of explosive shells. It is surrounded by a dry moat 9 m deep and 15 m broad, which can be flooded but is designed as an area in which to use enfilade (or "flanking") fire against any attackers reaching the walls. There are six gates: Chouringhee, Plassey Calcutta, Water Gate St Georges and the Treasury Gate.





St. John's Church:

This Church was built by the grave of Job Charnock. It was constructed during 1884-1887. Also known as the 'stone church' was constructed following the Greek architectural pattern at a cost of Rs. 2 lakhs. The floor of the church was made with stones obtained from Ganda. Stones were also obtained from Chunar. The stone tower is 174 ft. high. Job Charnock was buried here. His sculpture was made by his son-in-law Sir Charles Ayar around 1695. The sculpture is a unique specimen of art. There is a dome with a pitcher appended to it. There are sculptures of British Admiral Watson who subjugated Calcutta in 1757, Lord Brabourne, Lady Canning and several distinguished persons.

St. Paul's Cathedral :

The building was initiated by Bishop Daniel Wilson in 1839 and was completed in 1847,^[2] in Gothic Revival style with stained glass windows and two frescoes in Florentine Renaissance style. A military engineer, Major William Nairn Forbes, designed the cathedral with the assistance of C.K. Robinson, modelling the tower and spire upon the Norwich Cathedral. The tower was rebuilt along the lines of Bell Harry Tower in Canterbury Cathedral following the 1934 Calcutta earthquake. The Bishop's House across the street is also architecturally notable. St. Paul's was consecrated in 1874.



Eden Gardens :

Named after Lord Auckland's sister, the Eden Gardens and established in 1864, Eden Gardens currently holds 90,000 people following renovations for the Cricket World Cup 2011.

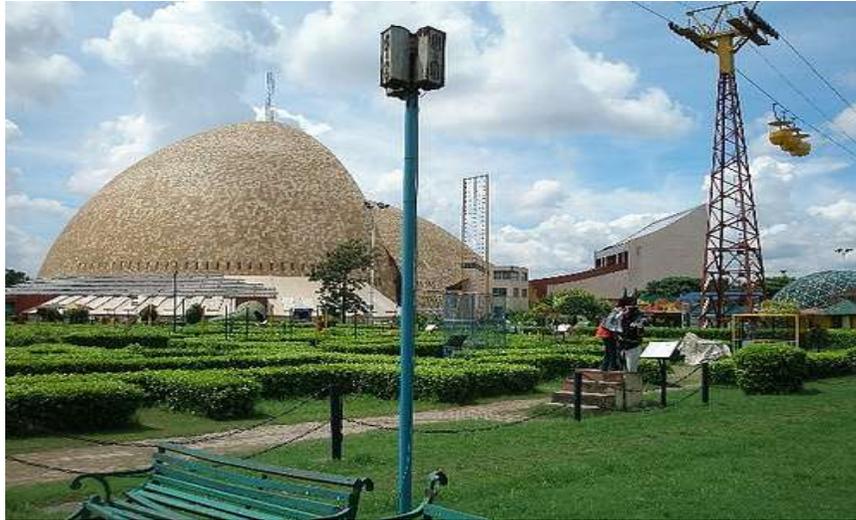
It is the largest cricket stadium in India and second-largest in the world by seating capacity. It is acknowledged to be the most iconic cricket stadium in the country and one of the most iconic stadiums in the world. Eden Gardens has hosted 35 Test matches in India.



Salt Lake Stadium:

The stadium is the second largest non-auto racing stadium in the world and the largest in the Indian sub-continent. It is currently used for football matches and athletics. The stadium was built in 1984 and holds 120,000 people in a three-tier configuration and covers an area of 76.40 acres (309,200 m²).

It is situated approximately 10 km to the east of the Kolkata downtown and is elliptical in shape. The roof is made of metal tubes and aluminum sheets and concrete. There are two electronic score boards and control rooms. The lighting is uniformly distributed to facilitate nocturnal sports. There are special arrangements for TV broadcasting.



Science City :

Located at the crossing of Eastern Metropolitan Bypass and J B S Haldane avenue, Kolkata, is the largest science centre in the Indian subcontinent under National Council of Science Museums (NCSM), Ministry of Culture, Government of India. It is considered by some people as the most distinguished landmark in post-independence Kolkata. Saroj Ghose, the first director general of NCSM is credited with having conceptualized this centre and was inaugurated by the prime minister, Mr. Inder Kumar Gujral 1997. The centre is open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on every day of the year except Holi.

Indian Museum :

Founded by Dr Nathaniel Wallich a Danish botanist at Serampore, Kolkata in 1814, is the largest museum in India and has rare collections of antiques, armour and ornaments, fossils, skeletons, mummies, and Mughal paintings.

It has six sections comprising thirty five galleries of cultural and scientific artifacts namely Art, Archaeology, Anthropology, Geology, Zoology and Economic Botany. It is an autonomous organization under Ministry of Culture, Government of India and is being included as an Institute of national importance in the seventh schedule of the Constitution of India.



Kalighat Kali Temple :

Kalighat is regarded as one of the 52 Shakti Peethams of India, where the various parts of Sati's body are said to have fallen, in the course of Shiva's Rudra Tandava. Kalighat represents the site where the toes of the right foot of Shakti or Sati fell.

Legend has it that a devotee discovered a illuminant ray of light coming from the Bhagirathi river bed, and upon investigating its source came upon a piece of stone carved in the form of a human toe. He also found a Svayambhu Lingam of Nakuleshwar Bhairav nearby, and started worshipping Kaali in the midst of a thick jungle.

Kalighat is also associated with the worship offered to Kaali by a Dasanami Monk by name Chowranga Giri, and the Chowringee area of Calcutta is said to have been named after him.



Vidyasagar Setu :

Also known as the **Second Hooghly Bridge**, is a bridge over the Hooghly River in West Bengal. It links the city of Howrah to its twin city of Kolkata. The bridge is a toll bridge for all vehicles. At a total length of 822.96 m, it is the longest cable-stayed bridge in India. It was built at a cost of Rs 388 crores and commissioned on 10 October, 1992. Its construction was a joint venture of the Public Sector Undertakings and private firms, under the control of the Hooghly River Bridge Commissioners.

It was the second bridge to be built across the Hooghly River, after the Howrah Bridge to its south was built in 1943. The bridge is named after the 19th century Bengali educationist reformer Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar.

Outside Kolkata

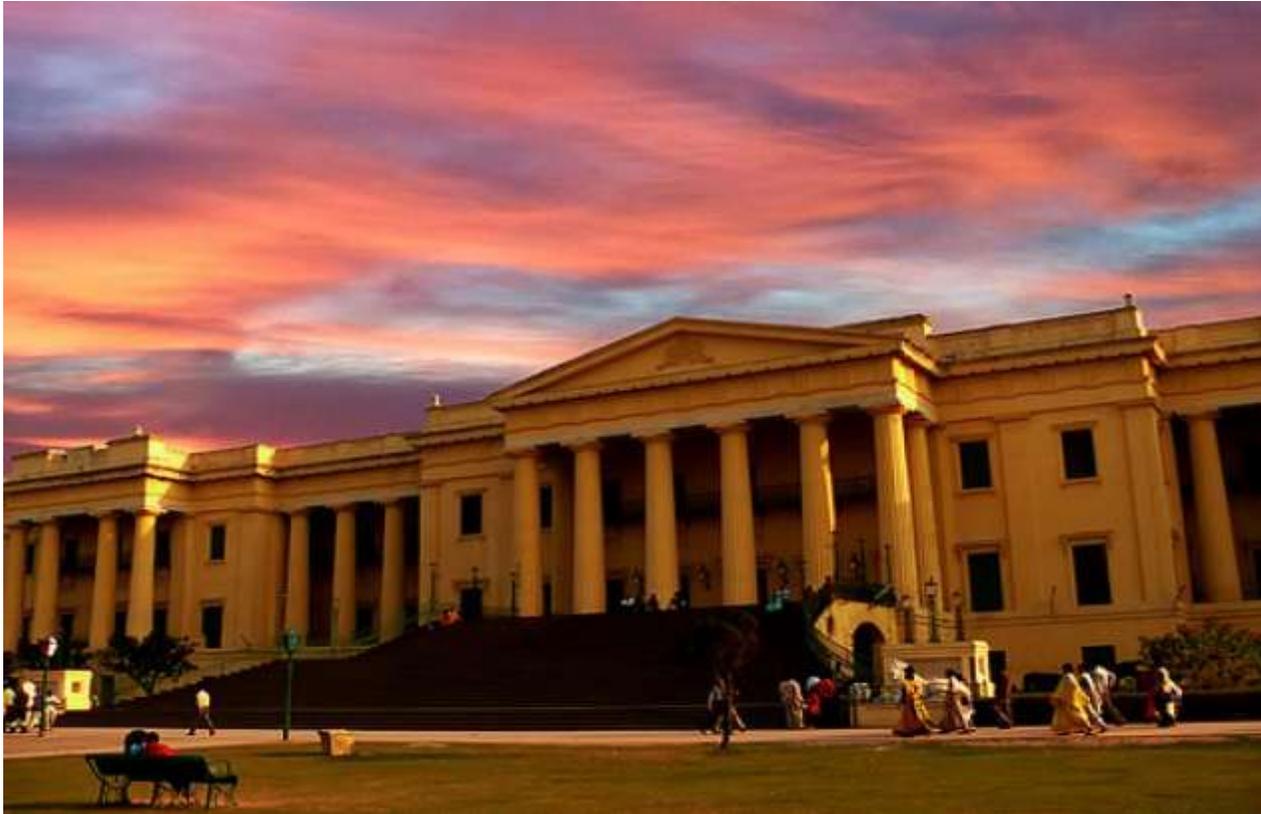
Murshidabad district comprises two distinct regions separated by the Bhagirathi River. To the west lies the Rarh, a high, undulating continuation of the Chhota Nagpur plateau. The eastern portion, the Bagri, is a fertile, low-lying alluvial tract, part of the Ganges Delta. The district became part of the ancient kingdom of Gaur in 1197 and passed on to the British East India Company in the 18th century. Murshidabad is famous for Murshidabad Silk.

Murshidabad was the last capital city of independent Bengal and was named after Nawab Murshid Quli Khan, the Dewan of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. It was made the capital of Bengal in 1717 but later the British shifted the capital to Kolkata in 1773. The historic Battle of Plassey (Palashi) fought in 1757 between Nawab Siraj-Ud-Daula and Lord Clive, of East India Company (which changed the destiny of India forever by giving the British ultimate supremacy in India) was fought in Plassey only 40 Km south of Murshidabad

Immambara :

Parallel to the north face of the Hazarduari Palace, stands the Nizamat Imambara, built in 1847 AD. by Nawab Nazim Mansoor Ali Khan Feradun Jah, son of Humayun Jah, at a cost of more than 6 lacs, after the Imambara built by Siraj-ud-Doula had been destroyed by fire. It took only eleven months to construct this Imambara. The Imambara, which is the largest in Bengal, is perhaps the largest in India.





Hazarduari :

The Hazarduari Palace or the palace with a “thousand doors” is the chief attraction of Murshidabad. This three storey palace was built in 1837 by Duncan McLeod for the Nawab Najim Humaun Jah, descendent of Mir Zafar. It has a thousand doors (among which only 900 are real) and 114 rooms and 8 galleries, built in European architectural style. It is now a museum and has an exquisite collection of

armour including 2700 weapons and armour, swords used by Siran-Ud-Daula and his grandfather, Nawab Alivardi Khan, splendid painting, exhaustive portraits of the Nawabs, various works of art including beautiful works of ivory (Murshidabad school), of China (European) and many other valuables. The other attractions in this floor are Vintage Cars and Fittan Cars used by the Nawabs and their families.

Between the palace and the Imambara is a small mosque, ‘Madina’, with colourful tiled verandahs. The Mosque has an ornamented replica of Hazrat Muhammad’s tomb at Madina.



Katra Masjid :

The huge and impressive Katra Mosque was built in 1724 by Nawab Murshid Quli Khan on the same lines as that of the Great Mosque at Mecca. The gorgeous building has huge domes and high minarets. The tomb of Murshid Quli Khan is also in this mosque.

Wasef Manzil :

This palace was built by Sir Wasef Ali Mirza, Nawab of Murshidabad.

It lies near the south gate of Hazarduari palace. The staircases made of marble and beautiful statues of this Palace are worth visiting.



Shantiniketan :

Bengal's revered poet, writer, artist and nationalist Rabindranath Tagore spent a large part of the life at Shantiniketan. This peaceful town, famed for its Visvabharati University is 200 km northwest of Kolkata. The university was set up in 1901 by Tagore and has been a centre of much cultural and artistic activity.

Shantiniketan has three great festivals : Megh Mela (6-8 February), Vasantotsava in March (Spring) and the Paush Mela festival in December, featuring folk music, dance, singing and theatre. Frequently trains and a good road connect Kolkata to Shantiniketan.



Mayapur :

Located in Krishnanagar district on the banks of the Ganges river, at the point of its confluence with the Jalangi, near Navadvip, 130 km north of Kolkata (Calcutta), is the Head Quarters of ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) and is considered a holy place by a number of other traditions within Hinduism, but is of special significance to followers of Gaudiya Vaishnavism as the birthplace of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, regarded as a special incarnation of Krishna in the mood of Radha. It is visited by over a million pilgrims annually.



ISKCON Temple :

The temple evolved step by step since 1979 to the date; making started by Srila Radhapada das. **ISKCON**, known colloquially as the **Hare Krishna movement**, is a Gaudiya Vaishnava religious organization. It was founded in 1966 in New York City by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada. Its core beliefs are based on traditional Hindu scriptures such as the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

ISKCON was formed to spread the practice of bhakti yoga, in which aspirant devotees (*bhaktas*) dedicate their thoughts and actions towards

pleasing the Supreme Lord, Krishna. ISKCON today is a worldwide confederation of more than 400 centers, including 60 farm communities, some aiming for self-sufficiency, 50 schools and 90 restaurants. In recent decades the movement's most rapid expansions in terms of numbers of membership have been within Eastern Europe (especially since the collapse of the Soviet Union) and India.

Seven purposes of ISKCON

When Srila Prabhupada first incorporated ISKCON in 1966, he gave it seven purposes:

1. To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all people in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.
2. To propagate a consciousness of Krishna, as it is revealed in the Bhagavad-gita and the Srimad-Bhagavatam.
3. To bring the members of the Society together with each other and nearer to Krishna, the prime entity, thus to develop the idea within the members, and humanity at large, that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead (Krishna).
4. To teach and encourage the sankirtana movement, congregational chanting of the holy names of God as revealed in the teachings of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.
5. To erect for the members, and for society at large, a holy place of transcendental pastimes, dedicated to the personality of Krishna.
6. To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler and more natural way of life.
7. With a view towards achieving the aforementioned purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, magazines, books and other writings.



Samadhi of Swami Srila Prabhupada