Bronze Sculpture of 23rd Jain Tirthankara “Shri Parshvanath”

Archaeology of Bandiyagarh, Sirohi, Rajasthan, India

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Archaeology of Bandiyagarh, Sirohi, Rajasthan, India

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Abstract: Bandiyagarh fort is located in Sirohi district of Rajasthan state in India. This research paper is based on new findings in our previously discovered site Bandiyagarh. The discovered structures played an important role in rewriting the history of the Parmar dynasty because Bandiyagarh is approximately 10 km away from the ruins of the capital city site, Chandravati of the royal Parmar dynasty (910 to 1312 AD.). This area was part of the ancient Silk-route trade due to which Sirohi was rich in wealth, resulting in several plunder attacks by invaders and hostile kingdoms. The fort is built on top of a plateau flanked by a chain of mountains and protected by a stronghold fortification wall. Bandiyagarh fort was difficult to capture because, according to the analysis of the geographical obstructions, that fort was surrounded by steep ascents in hills, natural obstruction by water-streams, and the dense forest. Moreover, this forest is also associated with aggressive ethnic societies of Bhils and Garasias. This mysterious fortification is very large in area but has not yet been discovered because of its strategic location. So the reason behind building this fortified city or fortress is for the purpose of camouflage because a military strategy has been observed behind building this fort city in an isolated place. Inside the premises, we found water bodies, temples, structural complex, inscriptions, watch-tower and various unidentified structural remains. The cultural remains of the

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This paper presents an exploration of an abandoned fort near Soorapagla village in Sirohi district of Rajasthan, India. The plateau on top of dense forest is flanked by a very thick fortification wall. The fort site Bandiyagarh is not too far from Ancient deserted Chandravati City which was the prosperous capital of Parmar's kingdom. The cultural remain appears to be quite similar to the Parmar phase of Chandravati, as the epigraphic evidence would also indicate. The habitation of the discovered site was mainly the devotees of Hinduism and Jainism; this is evident from the ruins of many Hindu and Jain idols. Moreover, this forest is also associated with aggressive ethnic societies of Bhils and Garasias that currently live there without any modern facilities. Acropolis at Bandiyagarh due to the natural obstructions along with strong man-made fortification, considering it for hideout features, has made this site have the longest fortified wall in the world meant for any hideout fort.
discovered site show that they were believers of Hinduism and a sect of Jainism. Sirohi lies in a cradle-like area so it was easy to block the attacks of several hostile kingdoms; the analysis tells that the Parmar dynasty of Mt. Abu built many forts—few forts meant for war strategy and few for hideout strategy like Bandiyagarh.

Subjects: History; Archaeology; Classical Studies; Cultural Studies

Keywords: Bandiyagarh; defence structure; totem; ethnic society; hideout fort; Parmar dynasty

1. Introduction
The Bandiyagarh fort (24.4236689, 72.7948251) is located in the Sirohi district of Rajasthan state in India. The fort is built on top of a plateau flanked by a chain of Aravalli mountain range, and protected by a thick fortification wall. Bandiyagarh fort was difficult to capture because, like the analysis of the geographical obstructions shows, that the fort was surrounded by a steep ascent in hills, natural obstruction of water-streams and the dense forest.

The below map (Figure 1) is part of the "Survey of India" topography sheet. It shows contour-lines and elevation of the site area. The highest peak of the site is 865 m above the sea-level. Today, this abandoned area is under the vicious ethnic group of Bhils and Garasia; this is also one of the reasons that the site was not discovered earlier. Topography data shows that there were 2-m high thorny bushes present at the time of the survey. There is no path to reach the place due to its surrounding by several river streams (black lines in Figure 1) and steep ascent hills having steep falls of approximately 49-57 meters. All the above features help the site to become isolated from the modern world. This site still remains abandoned from technology and basic amenities. Currently, Bhils and Garasia groups are living in the forest with their hunting tools like the axe, bow-arrow and catapult. Both Bhils and Garasia groups are engaged in social activities like hunting, farming, animal husbandry and poultry; only a few of them are engaged in the economic occupation of labour in distant factories. Their families used to live in a hut made of mud, wood, stones and terracotta roof tiles. These ethnic-society worship ethnic-cults like Vir-Bavji and hero-stones. The word Vir Bavji is made up of two local words, "Vir" meaning brave warrior and Bavji standing for God. Besides the ethnic people, this land is also the home of numerous wildlife i.e., genus Panthera, sloth bear, monitor lizard, foxes, etc.

Figure 1. Topography sheet showing Bandiyagarh as a dense forest with 2-meter high grass. Data from Survey of India, 1950–60, updated 2005–06, print version 2011 Edition.
Bandiyagarh area consists of Calc-gneiss, Calcitic-Marble and Quartzite of Kumbhalgarh group and pink colour showing granite and Gneiss granite of Sendra-Ambaji. All belong to the Delhi Super-group from lower to middle Proterozoic Age (Acharya, 1998, p. Map). This explains the abundance of rocks used as raw materials to build massive long-stretched walls for defence. The construction techniques used at the site were stone blocks fitted and fixed inverse side positioned in an interlocking technique. No use of mortar was found in the construction technique. The acropolis (fort) is surrounded by a long stretch of stronghold fortified walls and enclosures.

The southern part of the fortification was discovered earlier by our team; previously we found ruins of an entrance comprising of bricks in the southern part and stones in the northern part, four temple ruins with sculptures of Shivalinga with Nandi & Ganesha of religion Hinduism, and Parsvanath of religion Jainism, one year-round waterfall connected through a small pond, two paused stronghold enclosures for seasonal rivulet, one stone inscription, one human-made water-tank, one buried step-well, several watch-towers, and ruins of some structural complex made of bricks (Talesara, Bahuguna, Thakar et al., 2020, p. 286). The size and fabric of the bricks are related to the Parmar Dynasty of the Medieval Period (Talesara, Bahuguna, Thakar et al., 2020, p. 286).

In ancient times, Rajasthan was known as Rajputana meaning an area which is established or ruled by a Prince/Raja-Putra standing for the son of kings (Dalal & Phadke, 2002, p. 138). Rajasthan (land of Kings) is the largest state of India which could be divided into nine cultural regions—Ajmer-Merwara, Hadauoti, Dhandhar, Godhwar, Shekhowati, Mewar, Marwar, Vagad, and Mewat—has rich heritage related to archaeological antiquities, history of kings, and art & architecture of temples & forts (Talesara, Bahuguna, Thakar et al., 2020, p. 280). Sirohi district lies in between Godh (palanquin or cradle-like structure) mid of the high mountain range of Aravalli, that is why this area is called Godhwara. Sirohi is bounded in the north by Marwar, on the east by Mewar; on the south by Palanpur, Edar and Danta, and on the west by the desert area of Marwar (Adam, 1899, p. 1). The study area is much intersected and broken up by hills and rocky ranges, which completely cover certain tracts. Its main feature is the almost isolated mountain of Abu lying off the Aravalli, near the southern edge, about 20 miles in length at the base and separated by a narrow pass from a connecting range of lower hills, which runs north-east, up to within a short distance of the cantonment of Erinpura, on the northern border of the State, thus dividing the territory into two not very unequal portions (Adam, 1899, p. 13). The entire area is drained by the river Western Banas and its tributaries. Western Banas, originating in the hills of Sirohi near Saímer, flows roughly north-north-east to south-south-west, and enters North Gujarat which finally disappears close to the Little Rann.

Sirohi district has a rich cultural heritage and history related to the royal Rajput clans of Gurjar-Partihar, Parmar, Guhil and Deora-Chauhan. The name “Sirohi” was given by Deora-Chauhan Dynasty in 1405 AD Before “Sirohi”, this place was identified by Arbuda Mandal/Desh (presently known as “Mount Abu”) or by the city of Chandravati. The recent discovery shows that the human habitation here began in the middle of the Palaeolithic Age and flourished from the Mesolithic Age to the present (Thakar et al., 2019, pp. 123, 124). Previous records shows that the dynasties such as the Maurya, the Kshatrapatap, and the Gupta are the past rulers of this Mount Abu Kingdom (Vijay Kumar, 1990, pp. 1,2). But epigraphic evidence from the Sirohi district suggests that the settlement of King Rajila of the Chapa dynasty (inscription 625 AD) of Vasantgarh, declared the area under the control of Bhnimal province of Gujara-Prathvara dynasty. Samoli inscription (646 AD) of King Siladitya shows that he gained control over the region in the same century. Later on, Abu kingdom area came under the rule of Parmar of Chandravati (till 1312 AD) who remained in conflict with the contemporary Chalukyas of Gujarat (1025–1041 AD) many times in-between years of Parmar rule. Deora Chauhan king, Lumbha defeated Parmar of Abu in 1312 AD. After defeating Parmar, Deora Chauhan established his colonies in half of Abu kingdom. The name “Sirohi” to this kingdom was given by Rao Sobhaji (6th descent of Deora Chauhan Dynasty) in 1405 AD. Deora Chauhan king, Lakha was contemporary to Guhil king, Maharana Kumbha (Kumbhkaran) (1433–1468) who was ruling the other half of Sirohi, i.e. Vasantgarh and developed Achalgarh fort area, where King
Khumbharkan took refuge (Dhoundiyal, 1967, p. 61). But in the fifteen century, Deora Chauhan King Lakha with the help of King Qutubudin of Gujarat attacked King Kumbharkan and captured the whole area under their control (Dhoundiyal, 1967, p. 61). Today, Deora Chauhan Dynasty has lost their kingship but still have custodianship over Sirohi’s princely properties. Due to the trade and being part of the Silk-route, the prosperity of this area is glorifying as compared to the other cities of contemporary time (Talesara, Priyank; Bahuguna, Aniruddh; 2020b, pp. 302, 304). The prosperity and the rich economic activity led to the development of a keen interest in this area by different contemporary dynasties. Due to this conflict of interest, sometimes this area was divided and ruled by two or more dynasties at the same time. The continuous warfare conditions in Rajasthan during the medieval period led to the development of strong defence structures by the ruling dynasties.

1.1. Fort tradition
The practice of building forts and fortification played a significant role in human history, especially for shelter and protection. In terms of archaeology, the defence structure is defined as a protective or fortified construction or enclosure around any settlement with or without mortar. Whereas fort structure is defined as a fortified building built according to strategic war craft, meant for the protection of elite classes, and to guard the capital city of the kingdom. In the Indian tradition, fortress is termed as Pura, Durga, Garh and Kila. The term Durga originated from the word Durgam meaning “a place difficult to capture”. The ancient Mauryan literary source “Arthashastra” described numerous types of Durga (forts) such as Jaldurga (water-fort), Parvat-Durga/Giri Durga (hill-fort), Van-Durga (forest fort) and Maru-Durga (desert fort) (Kautilya, 1915, pp. 66, 67). The traditional Rajasthani fort structures have Kiliabandi (fortification) meaning high walls, and fortified enclosures surrounding it from all sides.

1.2. Fort sites of Sirohi District
The location strategy of Mt. Abu or Arbuda Mandal played an important role in establishing the kingdom of the Parmar dynasty because most of the forts were developed during the period of Parmar rule. These forts always had watchtowers in each corner & direction, massive sized fortified Dwars/Pol (gateways) for entrance, and stronghold walls without or with mortar. This valley is already known for its many forts. Some of the famously reported forts are mentioned below:

1.3. Achalgarh (24.618590, 72.765851)
It is an ancient citadel fort situated in an isolated area on top of Mt. Abu established during the time of Parmar. It was formerly the throne of the Parmar dynasty for several centuries (Shrivastava, 1953, p. VI). Then Maharana Kumbha of the Guhil dynasty captured it, and later it was ruled by Deora-Chauhan.

1.4. Vasantgarh (24.717972, 73.032700)
Vasantgarh is believed to be the abode of the sage Vasistha; today it only has ruins of the fort. The inscriptions found from this site belong to the 6th to late 10th century AD (Talesara, Bahuguna, Thakar et al., 2020, p. 282). The epigraphic sources show that the area was also known as Vatakara or Vatapura (Bhandarkar, 1906, p. 52). The word “Vatapura” given by the Parmar clan explains fort (Pura) in Vata (banyan) tree forest built by them (Bhandarkar, 1906, p. 53). This shows that Vasantgarh was an example of Van-Durga and the Parmar dynasty was familiar with that tradition. Whereas “Vatakara” connected with the word “Akara” means an important centre of mines and smelting. (Bhandarkar, 1906, p. 52). The earlier excavation at the site of Vasantgarh unearthed 240 Jainism bronze idols, which justify the importance of industry & commerce. (Mishra & Ray, 2017, p. 159). During 1452 AD, the fortified city was under Maharana Kumbha but later on was ruled by the Deora-Chauhan King, Rao Lakha through the help of King Qutubudin of Gujarat (Vijay Kumar, 1990, p. 2).

1.5. Chandravati (24.438293, 72.741804)
The site of Chandravati is located near a small town Abu-Road; in Parmar time it was an important trading centre. Earlier, at Chandravati nine strong building of the forts was discovered (Cambell,
Presence of semi-precious stones of carnelian at Chandravati is evident of important trade (Mehta et al., 1978, p. 5). Important evidence of trade link from Afghanistan is confirmed by the presence of semi-precious stone, “Lapis Lazuli” (Pilai, 2015). Chandravati’s trade network with silk-road is responsible for its importance & economic development (Talesara, Priyank; Bahuguna, Aniruddh; 2020b, p. 302). Even historical account of Jinaprabhasuri (1389 AD.) described Chandravati as full of wealth, and the text Tirthmala’s Megha (1443 AD) compared its prosperity and richness with the golden Lanka of Ravan (Jain, 1972, p. 345). The city of Chandravati witnessed several local and foreign attacks in between 7th century AD to 14th century AD Some of the famous foreign invasions are mentioned below:

- In 1024 Mahmud Ghazni plundered the wealth of Chandravati.
- In 1178 AD The Battle of Kasindra. Kasindra was an outer part of Chandravati, attacked by Muhammad Gauri for the treasure of Kasindra.
- In 1197 AD Chandravati was plundered by Qutub-Ud-Din of Gujarat and Delhi.
- In 1304 AD Invaded by Alauddin Khilji, who looted the city of Chandravati.

Bandiyagarh site is contemporary to Parmar kingdom of Abu since we have previously found pieces of evidence like, identical bricks size, two contemporary inscriptions (one rock inscription near the ancient ruins of a temple and another inscription inscribed on the backside of the bronze sculpture of Parsvanath (which we have now deciphered in detail), belonging to the 12th century, and another important detail being that this site is only a few kilometers away from Parmar’s capital Chandravati which helps to speculate that Bandiyagarh fort in ancient time was one of the important fort buildings of Paramara of Abu.

This research paper is based on the new findings at Bandiyagarh site of the Sirohi district of Rajasthan. Here we discovered long fortified structures and settlements that are important but are a missing part of history because it is contemporary to Parmar Dynasty ruling period and it lies only a few kilometers away from ancient Parmar’s capital site, Chandravati. Whereas Achalgargh was another important fort site meant for the privileged abode of King of Abu (Chandravati). The king of Abu had also built the large fort and fortified-wall around Vasantgarh, which had played a significant role in the copper smelting industry (Talesara, Bahuguna, Thakar et al., 2020, p. 282) Figure 2.
2. Methodology

This research is an archaeological field survey to discover the unknown fort site, Bandiyagarh. The study involves documentation of the recent finding at this site. In this research, various types of archaeological approaches related to geo-archaeological approaches like the study of landscape, plain table approach, pedestrian approach, GIS & GPS applications, digital photography, documentation & recording of discoveries have been applied. This also includes an analytical study of the architectural engineering of the structure, and epigraphic study to decipher inscriptions found at the site. Scaling, measurement and geometrical techniques were used to analyze the quantitative research approach.

The qualitative style of the methodology applied to this research studies ample data collection of primary and secondary resources dealing with the subject matter, especially related to the history of the area, forts and defence structures. Case study of the site includes collecting historical and geographical data such as different types of maps (cartographic study), online public archives and libraries; helps in the analytical discussion of the collected data. Some additional information concerning the subject matter was retrieved from books and articles by various authors. These sources help us understand history and problems related to this area. Data from government agencies such as the Geological Survey of India, Archaeological Survey of India and Survey of India also helped in this research. Current information from these departments helps us understand the importance of the subject, and to identify the missing study link of that area. Findings from all of these sources along with our physical findings of the site were examined to provide an accurate analysis of the research. Moreover, the bardic-stories from the resident ethnic groups also played a crucial role in understanding the anthropology and security of the area. Anthropological study shows the material culture & socio-ethnic-culture identified at the site.

3. Findings

The ancient site at Bandiyagarh is located near Sooropagla village. Our team found that the fortress city Bandiyagarh was designed on the top plateau of mountains (Talesara, Bahuguna, Thakar et al., 2020, p. 281). Here we also noticed some sacred places for the donation of the totem (cavalry), known as Vir-Bajji, of the current ethnic group. The fortress is located at the top and most of the area is covered with a forest of wild thorny bushes, Palasa trees and tall grass; we also found one natural limestone gravity spring at the outer side of the fortification which is evident from the tons of water charge inside the cavities of the hills. Moreover, from the highest point of the site, a person can easily view the entire Abu valley, Abu Road (Kharadi) and ancient sites like Chandravati, Achalgarh, Guru Shikhar (highest peak of Rajasthan) and Kuisagara Lake Figure 3.

3.1. Documentation of the discoveries

List of the neo-findings, documentation, and recording of defence & fortress structure including artefacts:

We observed that the stronghold fortified rampart, huge stone slabs and dressed stone blocks were used to build strong and tall rampart wall in northern weak ascent area to safeguard the only breach that happened in the geography of the fort. On the contrary, this part was also not easy to access but they take care well of that strategic drawback. While walking over the Orthostate of the northern rampart, we found several engrave marking on flat stone slabs. Figure 4(a) is engraving of footprint embedded with the ethnic shoe structure shape with some inscriptions in Devnagari script, not clear but probably the name of the engraver, another marking of the shoe but this shoe style is different from the previous one but is still of the Indian ethnic style. Figure 4(b) shows incise markings of someone’s hand. Figure 4(c) is an indigenous weapon axe (Parashu or Farsa). Figure 4(d) is the creative engraving scene of a warrior with a weapon, seated on a fish like a boat, and a snake is running towards the warrior. There is a possibility that defenders of the rampart made these engravings from their imagination over the rock floor while guarding. Apart from these, there are plenty of other engravings but most of them are weathered.
The artisan of the fort built a very long and extended fortified wall for the fort. We tried to measure the fortification with Google Earth Pro. We found that the surviving fortification is more than 7.2 km with an average width of 3 m excluding enclosures; see map in Figure 3, the white line here represents the exterior fortification.

Three large sacred places of Vir-Bavji and Hero-stone were found in different directions, showing point no. 1, 2, 3 in Figure 3, Ref. Table 1. Vir means brave warrior and Bavji means God, together they mean Warrior God of an ethnic cult. This is an ancient tradition that is currently active here, where people donate a terracotta artefact “warrior seated on the horse”, to the totem site for their wishes, this place has thousands of warrior artefacts, see Figure 5, pretend like the God of these ethnic group lives in Bandiyagarh forest. The structures of the horses are larger compared to the warriors; horses have a round open mouth and both ears are in straight standing posture. This intangible heritage of ethnic culture challenges the contemporary relation to this fort, but the worshipping of the warrior shows the possibility of a link between them. This tradition is apart from the religions Hinduism & Jainism previously identified by the epigraphic evidence. Both Hinduism

Figure 3. Satellite elevation Map of the fortification showing the location of findings and boundary wall of the fort. Map created using GIS Google Earth Pro and DTP technology.

Figure 4. (a) Foot with Inscription, (b) Hand Impression, (c) Axe, (d) Warrior on fish like a boat with snake, (e) Fortification of Blocks of Dressed Stone.
and Jainism, very common religious communities of Sirohi District, are absent at Bandiyagarh in the current time.

Interlocking technique was discovered in the stones fitted and fixed in different positions without mortar. This technique was developed in ancient India, which they have used in gateway no. 2 and no. 3 (see Figure 4 refs. Table 1). We also noticed fallen ruins of massive stone-slabs that were used to construct fortification by block and block technique like a Harappan bond without mortar. A stairway with eight steps is adjoining the inner side of the rampart near the gateway no. 3 (See Figure 3, and point no. 12 in Table 1). Our previously discovered gateway no. 1 is made of bricks so there is no interlocking technique (Talesara, Bahuguna, Thakar et al., 2020, p. 287).

Discoveries of the water bodies—there are a total of four water-bodies out of which two of them are man-made embankment of reservoir, third was a step-well which was buried by local tribes, and the fourth one was natural water-fall. We observed that previously discovered water-tank no 1 (see Figure 6(a)), and the newly discovered water-tank no 2 (refs. Table 1 and Figures 4 and 6(b))

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### Table 1. Archaeological findings from the above map

| S. No. | Archaeological material found | Geo-coordinates          |
|--------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1.     | Horse Totem of Vir-Bavji 1   | 24.438398, 72.802372     |
| 2.     | Horse Totem of Vir-Bavji 2   | 24.425669, 72.801838     |
| 3.     | Horse Totem of Vir-Bavji 3   | 24.437222, 72.794724     |
| 4.     | Active water gravity Spring  | 24.438889, 72.797775     |
| 5.     | Man-Made Water-Tank no. 2    | 24.430469, 72.800241     |
| 6.     | All engravings on Stones     | 24.433537, 72.801184     |
| 7.     | Gateway (Entrance) no. 2     | 24.432086, 72.799851     |
| 8.     | Gateway (Entrance) no. 3     | 24.436108, 72.805391     |
| 9.     | Covered Horizontal Pit        | 24.437015, 72.805148     |
| 10.    | Rock Cuttings                | 24.431556, 72.800276     |
| 11.    | Fortress (Acropolis)         | 24.429812, 72.799671     |
| 12.    | Stairways no. 2              | 24.436072, 72.805415     |

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Figure 5. Sacred place of Vir-Bavji.
are both reservoirs whose embankment masonry made of dressed stones, especially water-tank no 2 which was bonded beautifully by chiselled dressed stones slabs.

There are tons of rocks used as raw material in the construction of fortification; it is very difficult to lift blocks of stones from the plains. So out of curiosity, we tried to find the cut marks present inside the premises of the fortification, and successfully identified some prominent chiselling and cut marks on an incomplete hewn block. After observing the marks, we hypothesized that it requires a hard metal tool to cut these types of hard stones. It shows that they used locally available stone for fortification, embankment and temple formation. See point no. 10 from Figures 3 and 7 refs. Table 1.

We also found a horizontal deep hole or pit on the north-eastern upper ridge corner of the fortification, assumed to be a possible secret passage used for escaping. Point no. 9 from Figure 3 and Table 1.

Important discovery observed near our previously discovered temple ruins revealed devastation of bricks at the large structural complex with chambers-like planning, looking like a fortress or acropolis. This is the only settlement complex made of bricks inside the premises of the fortification. See point no. 11 from Figures 3 and 8 refs. Table 1, the area of this castle is 958 M².

Leads for finding bricks from the acropolis, when looking for bricks-manufacturing inside the fortification premises, we found tons of unused bricks in the lower southern part; bricks are fabricated and lying untouched after the firing process in two large sections. Upon noticing the bricks-manufacturing, based on the foundation of bricks and red & black locus, it is noted that the raw material of bricks i.e., mud, is prominently available locally.

Figure 6. (a) Embankment of Water Tank no. 1 and (b) Embankment of water tank no. 2.

Figure 7. Cut Marks on the rock peeping out from the surface over the hill.
3.2. Dated inscriptions

Two dated antiquities were found, both inscribed with Devnagri script in the Sanskrit language. One massive limestone inscription is weathered and letters are difficult to identify, so we used ochre brick powder to decipher the grapheme (see Figure 9 (ii)). Another inscription found on the backside of the previously discovered idol of Jainism Tri-thankar Lord Parsvanath made of bronze has patina (see Figure 9 (i)).

(i) Bronze sculpture of Jainism (3-inch height x 2-inch length) of 23th Tirthankara Parsvanath, donative inscription inscribed with the title of “Shri Parsvanath” this time we successfully deciphered written 1211 Vikram Samvat (1211 VS—57 difference years = 1154 AD) sculpture also inscribed with the twelfth-century Devanagiri style symbol of “□”. The sculpture of Tirthankara Parsvanath can also be identified on these Lanchana (characteristic features) generally idol Tirthankara Parsvanath is crowned with seven hooded serpents, Srivastra (holy gem on his chest) and surrounded by guardians couple male Yaksha-Dharanendra in

Figure 9. (i) Backside of Bronze Idol of Parshvanath, (II) Lime Stone Inscription.
the right side and female Yakshni-Padmavati on the left side (Talesara, Bahuguna, Thakar et al., 2020, p. 291).

(ii) Limestone inscription found (written area 8 inch height x 17 inch length) at the ruins near acropolis location; it was surely part of the temple structure because there we found large fragments of Indian-style temple. The Inscription consists of nine lines, the first line inscribed as “Om Namah Shivaya”, the hymn of Hindu God Shiva, the Sanskrit phrase “Om Namah” is the most auspicious hymn of Indic religion used to awake or praise, and to honour the god. The last line is deciphered as the date 1252 Vikram Samvat (1252 VS—57 difference years = 1195 AD). Inscription also mentioned “Liyav Rokar (cash grant) 715”. (Talesara, Bahuguna, Thakar et al., 2020, p. 286). Date 1195 AD shows the link with Parmar King Dharavarsha whose inscription we found a few kilometres away at the site Jhadoli (Talesara, Priyank; Bahuguna, Aniruddh, 2020a, p. 18). Bandiyagarh fort lies few kilometres away from Chandravati, so it surely remained part of the Parmar dynasty.

4. Settlement archaeology & anthropology
During the ancient time, Sirohi remained a vassal of followers of two major religions—Hinduism and Jainism, with additionally ethnic-groups of Bhils & Garasia. The Garasia have come from Mewar many centuries ago and as they still have their internal Gotra (lineage) of Paramara, Chauhan, Rathor, etc., upon the model of the regular clan, it may be speculated that they are the descendents of Rajput by Bhil women (Misra, 2007, p. 35). It is probable that the Deora Chauhan, when they defeated Paramaras about 600 years ago, were unwilling to dispose of the Garasia of their land, or were possibly unable to do so on account of their secure position among the vastness of the Aravalli mountains which the Garasia held (Misra, 2007, p. 35).

Ethnic-groups, Bhils and Garasia, have been using herbal medicinal plants, which are growing in their village or forest area. Both ethnic-groups have the knowledge of decoction of the plant after boiling it which is used as a gargle for the sore-gums. (Singh & Kumar, 2019, p. 69). But ethnomedicinal research conducted show that Garasia ethnic-group is using thirty-five types of plant species for medicinal purposes in their lifestyle (Singh & Kumar, 2019, p. 6).

4.1. Possessor societies are not presently living
In terms of Bandiyagarh findings, we previously found sculptures of Shivling, Ganesha (son of Shiva), damaged Nandi sculpture (mount of Shiva), Jainism idol of Parsvanath, and one unidentified idol because ethnic-group still worship it and decorate it with natural colour (Rang Bhag) or ethnic-ritual (Talesara, Bohuguna, Thakar et al., 2020, p. 284). From the above finding of Bandiyagarh, we could say that habitants were worshipper of Shivanism (the followers of Hindu God Shiva), Jainism (the followers of Mahavira and other Thithankaras), and one unidentified idol so it is difficult to make out which cult it belonged to (Talesara, Bahuguna, Thakar et al., 2020, p. 284).

4.2. Hinduism
Hinduism and Jainism, both religions belong to a tree of Indic religion. This tree, according to religious tradition, is termed as Sanatana Dharma (Pattanaik, 2018, p. Ch 18). The Sanskrit word, Sanatana means eternal and while scholars argue that Dharma means religion, in terms of Indic tradition, it is the way of living (Mehta, 2014, p. 116). The word Hindu was assigned by the Persians; basically Hindustan (ancient India) is a geographical area located on the bank of Sindhu river which in the Persian language is called Hindu (Rambachan, 1999, p. 16). Society or people of Hindustan are referred to as Hindu, even sometimes Jains are taken as a sect of Hinduism (Nesfield, 1885, p. 117). Today Sanathan Dharma or India seems to be the oldest living civilization in the world (Kuiper, 2010, p. 85). Darshanas (philosophy or vision) & Dharma of Hinduism are referred as Astika Darshanas (orthodox philosophy), whereas Dharma & Darshanas of Jainism belong to Nastika Darshanas (heterodox philosophy) (Flood & Flood, 1996, p. 247). The Indic religion Hindu mainly believe in Shruti (oral tradition) which is later composed in four divisions of texts—Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda & Atharveda—all these texts are called Vedas (Vyas, 1992, p. 15). According
Jainism/Jain Dharmā are worshipers of 24 Tirthankara (see Table 2) meaning that a divine man has a god-like personality who gained enlightenment through Kaivalya (supreme knowledge of the Universe’s reality) (Jyotindra & Fischer, 1978, p. 1). They do not deny the existence of God but do not believe that the universe was created by God. According to Jainism, the universe is not created by god or using the concept of Trīdevas. Jainism is referred as Nastik because they deny that God created the universe & oppose the authority of the Vedas, but they have the vision that the cosmic universe had a definite beginning in time as illogical and unthinkable, for that belief involves the further belief that a god, non-creative before creation, suddenly changed his mind and became creative (Prabhavananda, 2003, p. 156). The oldest significant teachings of Jainism are attributed to the 23rd Tirthankara, Parsvanatha who was the prince of a prosperous rich area of ancient Kashi, modern area of Varanasi in Uttar-Pradesh (Sharma, 2005, p. 154). Later on, he abandoned royal life and became an ascetic (Sharma, 2005, p. 154). The Tirthankara Vardhamanama (Mahavira) was the spiritual successor of Tirthankara Parsvanatha; he was the real founder of the title Jīna meaning conqueror of senses, which was later referred as “Jain”, followers of Jain religion (Sharma, 2005, p. 154). After 200 years of Mahavira Vardhaman’s death, a famine occurred in Magadhā (modern Bihar including Jharīkhand area) under King Chandragupta Maurya (322–298 BC). Due to this famine, Jainism got divided into branches or schools (sects)—Digambara and Svetambara (Jyotindra & Fischer, 1978, pp. 1, 2). In terms of art and iconography, the Svetambara idol is identified by basic features like a Tirthankara with earrings, necklaces, armlets, tiara and jewels. Whereas Digambara idol identified Tirthankara as naked and eyes cast down, but in Svetambara idol of Tirthankara he is shown with staring glassy eyes looking straight in front of them (Sharma & Sharma, 2004, p. 205). Ancient sites of Mount Abu kingdom such as Chandravati, Achalgarh and Vaasantgarh show various Jain sculpture representing basic features of Svetambara Jain School of Art. Even today, the Sirohi district is one of the most important pilgrimage centre for Svetambara Jainism.

### Table 2. The List of 24 Jain Tirthankara with their Sacred Symbol

| S.No | Names of Tirthankara       | Sacred symbol  | S.No | Names of Tirthankara   | Sacred symbol |
|------|---------------------------|----------------|------|------------------------|---------------|
| 1    | Adinatha                  | Bull           | 13   | Vimalanatha            | Boar          |
| 2    | Ajitnatha                 | Elephant       | 14   | Anantanatha            | Eagle         |
| 3    | Sambhavanath              | Horse          | 15   | Dharmanatha            | Vajra         |
| 4    | Abinandanatha             | Monkey         | 16   | Shantinatha            | Antelope      |
| 5    | Sumantinatha              | Heron or red goose | 17   | Kunthunatha            | Goat          |
| 6    | Padmaprabha               | Padma          | 18   | Aranatha               | Nandyavarta or fish |
| 7    | Suparshvanatha            | Swastika       | 19   | Mallinatha             | Kalasha       |
| 8    | Chandraprabha             | Crescent moon  | 20   | Munisuvarta            | Tortoise      |
| 9    | Pushpadanta               | Crocodile      | 21   | Naminatha              | Blue lotus    |
| 10   | Shitalanatha              | Shrivatsa      |      | Neminathji             | Conch         |
| 11   | Shreyasanatha             | Rhino          | 23   | Parasvanatha           | Sesnaga (seven headed snake) |
| 12   | Vasupujjya                | Buffalo        | 24   | Mahavira               | Lion          |
4.4. Ethnic-groups presently living at the site

These two ethnic-groups (Bhils and Garasias) are very backward belonging to Hindu-society and hence, the block is considered as a most backward block in the Sirohi district. Both ethnic-groups, Bhils & Garasia (principally inhabitants) of the Bhakar or southernmost portion of the Aravalis in Sirohi district, and also settled in other districts of Rajasthan like Udaipur and Pali claimed that they are descendants of Rajput clans (Misra, 2007, p. 35).

(A) Bhils

**Life-style**

The notes of W. Crooke of Rajputana Gazetteer of the late nineteenth century observe that all ethnic-groups of Bhils walk heavily armed with their traditional-weapons like bows and arrows, and keep quiet in the winter and the rainy season but indulge in raiding others thereafter (Behra, 2020, p. 36).

The Bhils are prone to living in hamlets locally also known as Pals; each hut standing on a small knoll in the midst of that area of cultivated land (Dhoundiyal, 1967, p. 109). They stored their grains in large traditional Kotlas which is an indigenous grain-storage bin jar (Dhoundiyal, 1967, p. 109).

**Dress & Ornaments**

All genders of Bhils like to wear ornaments, especially males who wear ornaments in ears and hands (Mehta & Mehta, 2007, p. 20). Ornaments worn by males—ring-like jewellery in the ear called as “Long & Murkhi”, wristband called as “Kada” which also sometimes is worn on legs (Mehta & Mehta, 2007, p. 20). Females of Bhil society are very much fond of ornaments made up of silver and brass (Mehta & Mehta, 2007, p. 20). They wear a variety of jewellery from head to toe viz. Bor on head Rakdi, Long in the nose, Toti rings in ears (Mehta & Mehta, 2007, p. 20). They also wear a necklace called Hansli and a wrist-band called Bangile (Chudiya) (Mehta & Mehta, 2007, p. 20).

**Language & Dialects**

The principal language of the Sirohi district is Marwari which is a dialect of Rajasthan. The language of Bhil’s of Mount Abu is known as Bhili, which is an admixture of Marwari dialect and Gujarati language (Dhoundiyal, 1967, p. 97).

**Council & Panchas**

The Bhils have their council called Panchayat which has five council headmen or judges known as Patels (Mehta & Mehta, 2007, p. 9). The “Panchayat” literally means Pancha stand for five headman + Ayat standing for council or system (Swami, 2008, p. 1). This type of council is common in the rural areas of India (Swami, 2008, p. 1).

**Marriage Ceremony**

For marriage ceremony, Bhils sometimes followed monogamy but many cases of polygamy can also be seen in many families (Mehta, 2004, p. 189). Polygamy can be noticed in rich Bhils because the marriage ceremony includes bride Dapa (paid price) which could only be afforded by richer Bhils families (Mehta, 2004, p. 189). The ethnic group of Bhils followed exogamy practice: don’t marry a person who is of the same Gotra (clan) and shares the same clan name (Majhi, 2010, p. 49). For both male and female, a marriage ceremony is marked by them as adulthood and maturity (Majhi, 2010, pp. 49, 50). After the marriage, the bridegroom has to live in the home of the bride or his inlaws meaning the patrilocal system of Ghar-Jamai (Mann & Mann, 1989, p. 88).
They also allowed the following practice of levirate alliance (Mann & Mann, 1989, p. 88). Widow’s remarriage is common in Bhils known as Natha/Nate/Nata or Karewa (Dhoundiyal, 1967, p. 107). When the funeral ritual of the deceased husband is over, the widow is asked about her future—her desire of remarriage or she would wish to return to her parent’s house (Dhoundiyal, 1967, p. 107).

Divorce System

A woman of Bihl society seeks divorce due to lunacy, drunkenness, extravagance and adultery (Majhi, 2010, p. 48). The freedom of divorce is enjoyed equally by both husband & wife (Majhi, 2010, p. 48). Divorce symbolism represents by teasing breadth-wise the border of new clothes or Sari of the woman concerned (Majhi, 2010, p. 48). The woman who gets divorced, her new sari is banded or tied with cash given by the relatives or Panchas (Majhi, 2010, p. 48). After this procedure, she becomes free to marry another person of her own choice (Majhi, 2010, p. 48). In case the man leaves his wife, she may remarry and her second husband has to give a specified amount to her first husband (Majhi, 2010, p. 48). But if a woman seeks divorce, then she will have to pay back the bride price to her divorced husband (Majhi, 2010, p. 48). This act is called Jagdachukana (Paid for separation).

Occupation

Few Bhils still engage in the game of hunting and lumberjack but most of them have now adopted to agriculture (Mehta & Mehta, 2007, p. 21). Earlier, they followed shifting cultivation. But due to the strict forest policy of the government, they have settled at one place, left the practice of shifting cultivation, and started the settled farm practice (Mehta & Mehta, 2007, p. 21).

Worship & Followers

Bhils of Mount Abu worship not only Vir-Bhavji and horse rider god Gogaji (who is known for protection from snake bites) but also believe in Hindu deities like Lord Shiva, Mataji (mother goddess) and Lord Hanuman (Dhoundiyal, 1967, pp. 99, 102).

Cremation activity

The ethnic-group of Bhils cremate the dead, and ashes were thrown into the river or stream, and if there is no river or stream in the nearby area, they just gather ashes into a heap (Misra, 2007, p. 35). The corpse or bones, however, is saved and thrown into a river at a later date (Misra, 2007, p. 35). The Bhil ethnic-group raise a cairn circle of stones on the spot of the cremation ground and place their stone tablet or memorial stone or hero stone (Misra, 2007, p. 35).

(b) Garasia

Life-style

Most of the ethnic-group of the Garasia villages are of dispersed nature. Their nucleated village pattern is exceptional (Mann & Mann, 1989, p. 75). The individual huts are widely scattered, some on the hillocks and others on the mountains adjacent to the cultivated land-fields (Mann & Mann, 1989, p. 75). They have hamlets which constitute a village area again of dispersed nature; locally these hamlets are called Phalas (Mann & Mann, 1989, p. 75).

According to Sir John Malcolm, “Garasia denotes chiefs who were driven from their possessions by invaders and established and maintained a claim
to a share of the revenue upon the ground of their power to disturb or prevent its collection” (Misra, 2007, p. 35)

**Dresses & Ornaments** The dressing style of Garasias is very attractive and colourful both in design and embroidery (Mehta & Mehta, 2007, p. 69). The male generally dresses up wearing a turban called Potiyu or Pagri, the colour of which depends on age and status. Other dresses include half-sleeves Kurtas, Jhulki and Dhoti (Mehta & Mehta, 2007, p. 69).

Whereas Garasia women dress up in the most colourful dress. Women generally wear dark colourful dress called Chatak (Mehta & Mehta, 2007, p. 69).

**Language & Dialects** The dialect spoken by Garasia is known as Girasia or Nyar-ki-Boli which contains an influx of words and pronunciation from Marwari language (Mann & Mann, 1989, p. 74).

**Council & Panchas** The ethnic-group Garasia like Bhils have their council under the Panchayat system (Dhoundiyal, 1967, p. 103). Their Panchayat council system, like the Bhils', also has five council headmen called Patels (Dhoundiyal, 1967, p. 103).

**Marriage Ceremony** Garasia follow both endogamy and exogamy (Mann & Mann, 1989, p. 85). They prefer both types of marriage, polygamy and monogamy which are too common in this society (Mann & Mann, 1989, p. 85). Garasia group also follow Dapa system of marriage like the Bhils (Dhoundiyal, 1967, p. 107). The marriage ceremony of Garasia is solemnized at noon in the presence of the priest class known as Bhopas (Dhoundiyal, 1967, p. 107).

The ethnic-society of Garasia rule of residence, after marriage, followed Ghar-Jamai or patrilocal system. The orthodox sections of the society frown at such ideas like the widow remarriage (Mann & Mann, 1989, p. 88).

**Divorce System** For divorce system, Garasias have two types of social structure—Logai Chhorna meaning divorcing a woman & Admira Chhorna meaning divorcing a man (Mann & Mann, 1989, p. 88).

**Occupation** Their economy is dependent on forest and forest produce (Mehta & Mehta, 2007, p. 71). They also have agricultural land and used to follow shift-farming but due to strict forest policy, have now started settled cultivation. The Garasia also have an economic occupation of animal husbandry, pisciculture & apiculture and rope making (Mehta & Mehta, 2007, p. 72).

**Worships & followers** The ethnic-group of Garasia worship ethnic-gods like Vir-Bhavji, Bhumaya (mother-goddess of lands & fields) & Ghoda-Dev (protector of Village) but also worship Hindu deities like lord Shiva, Ganesha (son of Shiva), Lord Indra (god of thunder), goddess Chamunda (appearance of mother-goddess Kali), Jogmaya (mother-goddess of illusion), Sitalamata (mother-goddess of small-pox), Sheshnag (auspicious cobra or serpent worship) and Lord Hanuman (Dhoundiyal, 1967, p. 103).

**Cremation activity** They announce death via drum known as Var, which is beaten three times for announcement of the funeral (Mehta & Mehta, 2007, p. 71). During this funeral procession, the nearest male relative will take fire and maize in
earthen pots. In case of death of small boys or with snake-bite, corpses are buried and not burnt (Mehta & Mehta, 2007, p. 71). The important or honourable man of this ethnic-group is not burnt but buried in the ground. On the eleventh day, they organise a feast for the nearest relatives and villagers (Mehta & Mehta, 2007, p. 71).

5. Observation and analysis
This discovery reveals new shreds of evidence regarding its great defence structure over the hill, natural and man-made water bodies inside the premises, number of temples, large ruins of structural complexes, multiple gateways and stairways, inscription, citadel, large numbers of stone blocks were used in the building of fortification with strong local stones i.e. granite, quartzite, limestone, greenschist and locally available material. We found a beautiful water-tank in the northern part of the fort near the acropolis; very fine dressed stone slabs were used to prepare the embankment of that water body. The location of this acropolis is not easily accessible. We could say that the craftsman and the architect have technically built a massive building and fortification-like enclosures, watchtower, defence structures, ramparts, fortress and walls. Moreover, those architects had high knowledge of engineering skills used to design defence structures, and they had well-studied the landscape of Bandiyagarh area because these structures are strategically placed on the ridge area which was surrounded by high steep mountain and also protected by river streams. There are remains of the guardrooms and several watch-towers attached to the outer fortification. In the case of two of the inner enclosures, we noticed a gap in the wall at a place from where a seasonal rivulet is passing by. It was made of semi-dressed stones, and these passed walls and embankment of the water tank show their efficiency in hydraulic engineering. In terms of archaeology, the defence structure is defined as protective or fortification construction or enclosure around any settlement. We have not found any ceramic evidence at the site but here we notice ample amount of Palasa tree (Buteamnosperma) which may have been used for making natural perishable utensils made of leaves in ancient India and also present. Because pottery is completely absent in this region, these Palasa leaves and their metallurgy expertise seem to be an alternative of that pottery.

6. Special clause
Bandiyagarh was protected from long-starched fortified wall known as Killabandi. The survived length of the outer fortification is more than 7.2 km, the width of the fort wall varies from 3 m to 5.50 m, and it has survived up to a height of 4 m at several locations. Erudite study of the fort area shows that the defence structure is virtually inaccessible because all the pathways leading to the top have been blocked by the fort wall using natural obstructions. Considering the contour of the hills and strategy of fortification, it may be stated that hostile enemy might have faced too many difficulties to enter the fort area. We would like to inform you that the Great Wall of China is the longest wall in the world but not meant for the fort, whereas Kumbalgarh fort (India) has the second-longest wall in the world but has the longest fortification wall in the world enclosing a fort. And the third-longest wall is from Rani-fort in Pakistan but none of the walls or fort walls is meant for the hideout fort. There is only one small area of acropolis of about 958 meter square found in the area of approximately 2 million meter square inside the fortification. So, if considered as a hideout fort, Bandiyagarh has the longest fort wall in the world for any hideout fort.

7. Discussion
This fort is an extensive example of all three major combinations of Jai Durg, Parvat Durg/Giri Durg and Van Durg. The site is located on a steep hill with a maximum height of 865 MSL and the landscape of this area is surrounded by large mountains, few water-bodies and river-streams. The fort, very likely, had a certain strategic link with Parmars’ capital city of Chandravati and Achorgarh fort. Due to the warfare conditions in the medieval period, contemporary thrones tried to build some hideout places in the difficult geography of Mount Abu (Talesara, Bahuguna, Thakar et al., 2020, p. 103). We did not find any pottery pieces inside the premises, strengthening the possibility that such a strong and massive fort might have been created for hide-out only and not to be used
in general. The study of the geographical area shows that Parmar’s mason had specialized knowledge of the design of fortress city, especially on the basis of location, of war-craft fort-like Achalgarh, hideout-fort like Bandiyagarh and also normal forts like in the trading city of Vasantgarh and Chandravati. We would like to propose a military hypothesis between Achalgarh, Bandiyagarh, and Chandravati. There is a possibility that they used to air-signal or raise an alarm through smoke or echo during an emergency to protect the castle of the king (Achalgarh) situated at the highest location of Rajasthan. We have done an erudite study of the contemporary structure found in the Sirohi area. The scientific model of the approved hypothesis is based on three models:

7.1. Model first hypothesis
- Bandiyagarh fort and Achalgarh fort built on top of the hill.
- Archaeological site Chandravati is located in plains, few kilometres away from Bandiyagarh.
- Achalgarh fort was also built by the Parmar dynasty, approximately 20 km air distance from Bandiyagarh.
- These all sites were well fortified.

7.2. Model second observation (Figure 10(a–c))
DSLR Camera shows the visibility between the Chandravati, Achalgarh and Bandiyagarh.

- View of Chandravati from Bandiyagarh. (A)
- View of Achalgarh fort from Bandiyagarh. (B)
- View of Bandiyagarh from Chandravati. (C)
- But there is no visibility between the capital city Chandravati and King’s Citadel Achalgarh.
- It is like a triangular shape strategy, and Bandiyagarh like an orthocentre plays a very curial role in passing signals during an emergency.

7.3. Model third pieces of evidence
- Bandiyagarh is located at a higher point over a hill from where a person could easily view the whole of Abu valley, the extension of the ancient city area of Kharodi now identified as Abu Road town, and ancient sites like Chandravati, Achalgarh, Guru Shikhar (highest peak) and Kuisagara Lake.
- Achalgarh is located at the highest point of the mountain of Arbuda (Abu) which leaves no doubt that Achalgarh area was the fortified acropolis for the king. The strategic location made it difficult for the hostile enemy to capture the fortified city of Achalgarh. Moreover, sound
echoes and fire-smoke alarm could be noticed from Chandravati to Bandiyagarh & Bandiyagarh to Achalgarh and vice-versa.

- These types of fire and smoke signals are very common in historical war-craft strategy.

8. Conclusion

Our team discovered the previously unknown fortified settlement in Sirohi district, the southern part of state Rajasthan in India. Today this abandoned fort site is home to ethnic-tribes called Bhils & Garasias. They are totally unaware of the fort tradition of Sirohi but the possibility of their belief in Vir-bayji pointing towards warriors explains their relation with wars. These people used to live in simple huts but they have great knowledge of making ancient weapons. This type of totem worship is very unique and not found in any other part of the state. This is different from Hero-stone worship that is also followed by the same tribes in different places.

We observed that the fort Bandiyagarh was well planned according to war strategies such as defended by stronghold fortification of the wall, protected by multiple gateways in different directions with several fortified watchtowers. The architect of the fort had used technological advancement to build the fort with Harapann bond & interlocking techniques; two artificial water reservoirs are evidence of rain-water harvesting and extensive cut marks observed on rocks show the use of metallic chisel tools to manufacture the infrastructure of stone material used for construction. Another important observation is that this fort is the combination of all three types- Parvat-Durga, Van-Durga, and Jal-Durga; which made this site impregnable for the hostile army; these above features show the most dynamic form of fort architectural engineering and planning to construct this stronghold fortification.

Sirohi lies in the Godhwar region so it is easy to speculate that it was surrounded by a number of hostile kingdoms in all directions. We could conclude that a number of constructed fort cities, like Chandravati fort to protect the capital city, Achalgarh fort to protect the abode of the king, Vasantgarh fort to protect copper mines of Vasantgarh, and Bandiyagarh fort meant for a hideout and to keep track of the view of the capital and the king’s abode to act fast in case of an attack. Even the kingdom had rich socio-economic trade, so it is important to establish a number of forts to defend the wealth of the city. These forts played a significant role in not only defending wealth but also protecting it from the invasion of a hostile kingdom. The analysis of city-planning of the Parmar dynasty shows the prominence of knowledge of various fort technologies. From the above strategic position hypothesis, the link between Chandravati, Bandiyagarh and Achalgarh for passing signals, which idea was definitely brilliant to protect and defend the King and its kingdom, can be proven. Nevertheless, this fort site Bandiyagarh was very crucial for the rulers to protect it from the neighbouring and foreign invaders. Ultimately, we can conclude that the acropolis at Bandiyagarh due to natural obstructions along with strong man-made fortification, and considering it from its hideout features, makes this site the longest fortified wall in the world meant for any hideout fort.

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