

# ***Heritage of Islamic Legacy: Noor Mahal and Faiz Mahal***

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Based on the historical and descriptive research about the palaces of Pakistan, this paper aims at highlighting the cultural and architectural value of the Noor Mahal in Bahawalpur State and Faiz Mahal in Khairpur State. Geographically, both States are located at the outer edge of Rajasthan, among 23 non-Muslim States in the North-West of British India. Both States possess the status of Princely States in the British Empire. Significantly, both were Muslim and neighbouring States. During 1872-79, Nawab Sadiq-IV constructed the Noor Mahal, and the Mir of Khairpur Constructed Faiz Mahal between 1894 and 1904 AD. Both palaces are precious heritage of Pakistan. Nawab Sir Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi-V (1903-1966) was the last Ameer of the Bahawalpur State, and Mir George Ali Murad Khan*

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*Talpur was also the last Mir of Khairpur State (1933-2023). Both States have a glorious history, with their popular Nawabs and Mirs and have multiple resemblances. The major icon of the Bahawalpur and Khairpur States is the marvelous architecture, and both palaces have been incorporated into Pakistan's heritage. These palaces added to the beauty of the city and fascinate the tourists.*



Fig. 1. Front view and elevation of Noor Mahal of Bahawalpur

### **A Quick Look on the Key Features of Both States**

<b>Bahawalpur State 1727-1955, 228 Years</b>	<b>Khairpur State 1775-1955, 180 Years</b>
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Rulers-His Highness. Nawabs,  
Amir, Khan, Abbasi

Rulers-His Highness. Talpur /  
Amirs / Khan / Mir

Founder: Muhammad Sadiq-I

Founder: Mir Fateh Ali Khan

Dynasty: Abbasi

Dynasty: Talpur

Area: 45811 square  
kilometers—17726 sq mi.

Area: 15730 square  
kilometers—6070 sq mi.

Title: H.H. Rukn ud-Daula,

Title: H.H. Alijah Sarkar-e-

Mukhlis ud-Daula, Hafiz-ul-Mulk,  
Nawab Muhammad Abbas, 'Ali  
Khan Abbasi Bahadur, Nusrat  
Jung, Amir of Bahawalpur

Status: Islamic Sovereign State

Geography: Desert and  
Agricultural

Major Crops: Cotton, Mangoes,  
Wheat, Dates

Water Sources: Irrigation  
System (Head Punjnad)

Salute Status: 17 Guns

Water Source: Sutlej River and  
Indus River

Historical Fort: Derawar

Wildlife Sanctuary–Lal Suhanra  
Park

Sufi Poet: Khawaja Ghulam  
Farid (Saraiki)

State Emblem: Pelican

**List of Abbasi Dynasty  
Rulers–Total 12**

S.N.	Name of the Ruler	Reign (AD)
1.	Muhammad Sadiq I	1723–1746
2.	Bahawal I	1746–1750

Mo'allaa Mir George Ali  
Muhammad Murad Khan  
Talpur, Wali-e-Mumlikat-e-  
Khudadad-e-Khairpur

Status: Islamic Sovereign State

Geography: Desert and  
Agricultural

Major Crops: Cotton, Dates,  
Mangoes, Wheat

Water Sources: Irrigation  
System Head Sukkur

Salute Status: 17 Guns

Water Source: Indus River

Historical Fort: Kot Deji

Wildlife Sanctuary–Mehrano  
Park

Sufi Poet: Shah Abdul Latif  
(Sindhi)

State Emblem: Deer

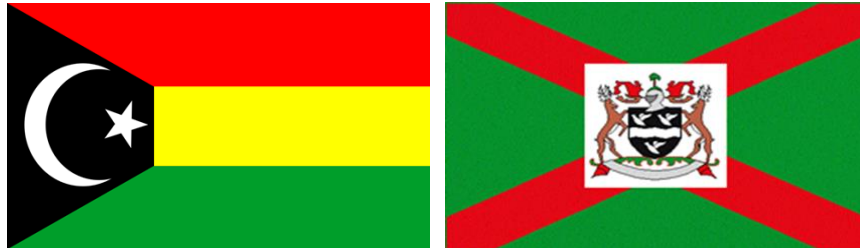
**List of Talpur Dynasty  
Rulers–Total 8 Mir**

S.N.	Name of the Ruler	Reign (AD)
1	Mir Sohrab Khan Talpur	1783–1830
2	Mir Rustam Ali Khan Talpur	1830–1842

3.	Mubarak II	1750– 1772	3	Mir Ali Murad Khan Talpur	1842– 1894
4.	Bahawal II	1772– 1809	4	Mir Faiz M. Khan Talpur	1894– 1909
5.	Sadiq II	1809– 1826	5	Mir Imam Bakhsh Khan Talpur	1909– 1921
6.	Bahawal III	1826– 1852	6	Mir Ali Nawaz Khan Talpur	1921– 1935
7.	Sadiq III	1852– 1853	7	Mir Faiz M. Khan Talpur II	1935– 1947
8.	Fateh Muhammad Khan	1853– 1858	8	Mir George Ali Murad Khan Talpur	1947– 1955
9.	Bahawal Khan IV	1858– 1866			
10.	Sadiq IV	1866– 1899			
11.	Bahawal V	1899– 1907			
12.	Sadiq V	1907 – 1955			

The state of Bahawalpur was abolished on October 14, 1955      The state of Khairpur was abolished on October 14, 1955

### Flag of the Ex-State Bahawalpur—Flag of the Ex-State Khairpur



### Introduction of Bahawalpur State 1727-1947

Pakistan possesses multiple and unique palaces (Mahal) across the country, including the Sheesh Mahal, Moti Mahal and Rang Mahal in Lahore, Mohotta Palace in Karachi, Umar Hayat Palace in Chinot, White Palace in Swat, Faiz Palace in Khairpur and Sadiq Garh Palace, Nishat Palace, Farrukh Palace, Noor Palace, Durbar Palace, Gulzar Palace, Dubai Palace in Bahawalpur.

The last seven places belong to Bahawalpur, which is the Ex-State of Bahawalpur. That's why Bahawalpur City is known as the 'City of Palaces.' This paper is an attempt to present a cultural and classical comparison of Noor Mahal vs. Faiz Mahal. These palaces are the jewels of the national heritage of Pakistan.



The Bahawalpur State emerged from 1727 to 1947 in the Northwestern of British India. The State faced political challenges, such as the Mughal Era, the Nadir Shah Invasion, the Ranjeet Singh Era, the Rajasthan Revelry and British Colonial Rule. Finally, on the eve of the partition of India and Pakistan 1947, the State of Bahawalpur joined

Pakistan as per the 3<sup>rd</sup> June Plan of British India. In Colonial Rule, there were a total of 565 Princely States in United India.<sup>1</sup> Including Bahawalpur and Khairpur, 14 States joined Pakistan. Currently, Bahawalpur is part of Pakistan and plays a pivotal role in the socioeconomic, defense, agricultural, and cultural heritage of Pakistan. The province of Punjab is known as the 'Land of Five Rivers', and these five rivers merge at Head Panjnad (Bahawalpur). The State of Bahawalpur holds an area of more than 45,000 square kilometers.<sup>2</sup> But most of the area is uneven, barren, and deserted. This area is known as Rajasthan Pennsville. The South side of the State touches the Indian Rajasthan Belt. The Eastern side connects with the Punjab province and Northern side Multan Division and Western side extends to the Sindh province along with the River Indus. The Bahawalpur State was founded by Nawab Sadiq in 1727 AD in Mughal Era and it merged with Pakistan on October 03, 1947. The State of Bahawalpur continues 220 years in the British India, and ruled by 12 Nawabs. It has a glorious history.<sup>3</sup>



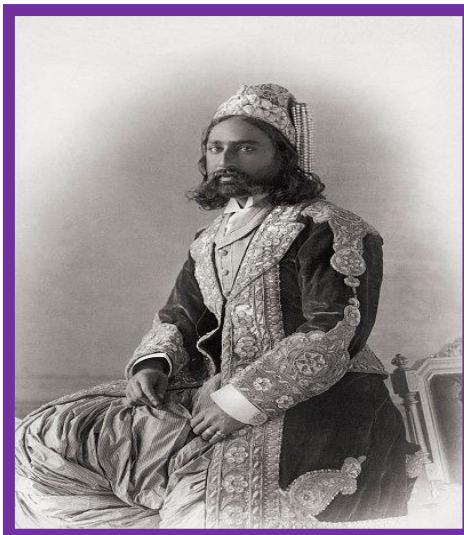
All princely states are shown in the map below, who joined Pakistan in 1947. The States of Bahawalpur and Khairpur are also highlighted on the map with their exact location.

- 1 Qamar Zaman Abbasi, *Bahawalpur Ka Sadiq Dosat* (Lahore, 1992), 37.
- 2 Qamar Zaman Abbasi, *Quaid-e-Azam or Riasat Bahawalpur* (Lahore, 1992), 52.
- 3 Nazeer Ali Shah, *Sadiqnamah: The History of Balahwalpur State* (Lahore: Maktaba-e-Jadeed 1959), 18.



### Introduction of Noor Mahal Palace 1872-79

The Noor Mahal was built for the residence of Nawab Muhammad Sadiq IV. It had an iconic status in the Abbasi Era. The building was constructed as the residence of Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi IV (1861-99), but later used as a Royal State Guest House.<sup>4</sup> The plan for a new building was adopted



in 1869, and an appeal was made to the masses for a marvelous design for the state. Finally, in 1871, Mr. Muhammad Hussain (Superintendent of Public Works Office) presented a rough model of the palace, which had flaws and technical lapses. Finally, a British architecture

4 Mushtaq Ahmad: Nawab Sadiq-V. Services for Bahawalpur State and Pakistan, Ph.D. Dissertation IUB.

engineer, Mr. Hamersley Heenan, finalized the drawing of Noor Mahal with his expertise.<sup>5</sup> The then governor of the Punjab also approved the project. Mr. Heenan was appointed as executive engineer, and Mr. Clarke was hired as sub-engineer on the project. On August 10, 1872, the foundation stone of the palace was laid by Nawab Sadiq IV to enhance the massive strength of the structure. A 20-foot deep foundation was dug, and a few coins of the state were also buried for the good omen. It was a local tradition that people followed religiously. Construction work was carried out, and various kinds of construction materials were imported from different parts of the world. Likewise, wood brought from India, while marble and glass from England, and other precious articles from France and Italy.<sup>6</sup> From the front side of the Palace, a special oval-shaped grassy lawn was developed, and orchid trees were planted side by side under the supervision of Mr. Doran. The Noor Mahal Project was completed in 1879, and the Finance Office of the Bahawalpur State spent 1.2 million rupees.<sup>7</sup> Although Bahawalpur State reflected Muslim Eternity, Nawab Bahawal Khan felt the deficiency of the masque. On April 11, 1902, Nawab Bahawal Khan-V laid the foundation stone of the mosque, adjacent to Noor Mahal and completed it in 1903 with an amount of Rs.20,000/- The palace contributed to the enrichment and appreciation of architectural legacy.

### **Features and Specification of the Noor Mahal**

The Noor Mahal is renowned for its name, 'Noor'. Many believe that this name was defiantly associated with a lady and a love story. In fact, all speculation is bogus; Noor Mahal is known for its fresh, direct light of the sun and spaciousness. The palace and adjacent area have a massive lawn with orchids. The accumulated area is more

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5 Sheikh Anwaar, *Tareekh-e-Bahawalpur* (Jallandhar: 1937), 141.

6 Tariq Naeem, *Socio-Religious Traditions in Bahawalpur State 1727-1947* (Ph.D. Dissertation, IUB).

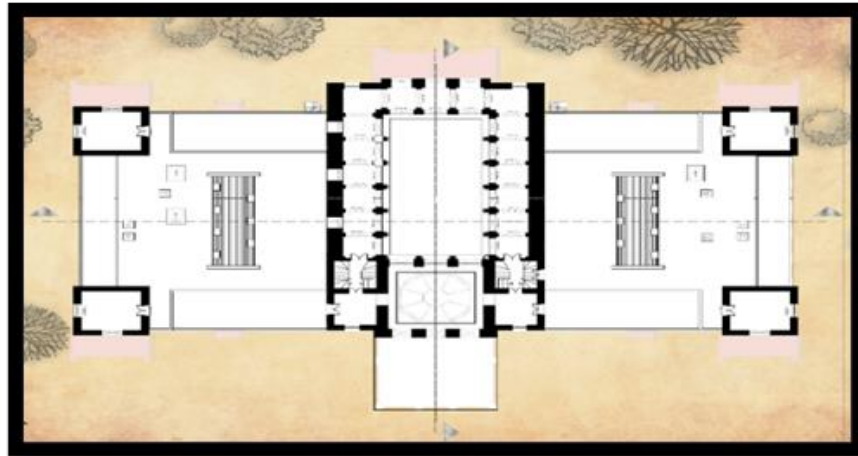
7 Muhammad Tahir, *Bahawalpur Riasat Ka Nazam-e-Mumlikat* (Multan: Ph.D. Dissertation IUB, 2011).



than 90 Acres, but the total cover area of the palace is 44600 square feet.<sup>8</sup> The length of the palace is around 200 feet, and the width is around 100 feet. It is erectile in rectangle consisting of three-storey almost up to 50 feet in height. It has 32 rooms, including the Cornish hall, main lobby, main entrance, porch, side galleries, a special golden bed, bathrooms, verandas, and a special basement with 14 rooms.<sup>9</sup>

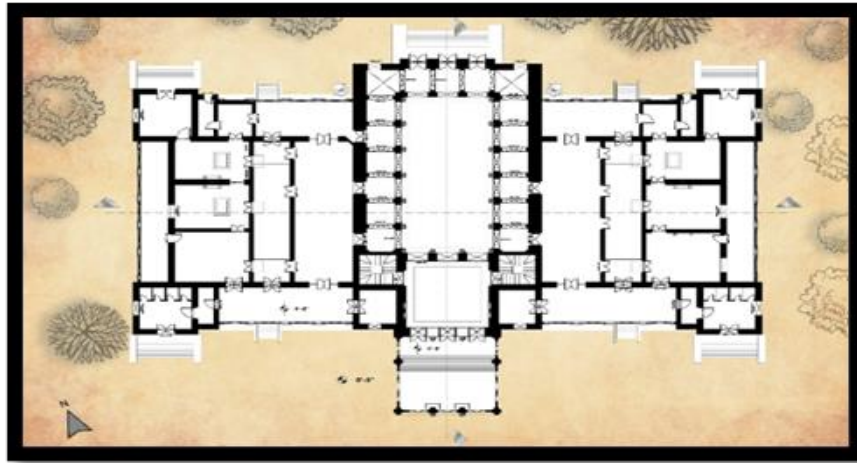


Front Elevation of Noor Mahal Original Site Plan  
SOURCE: Raees Faheem Associates (@raeesfaheem.associates)



8 Bahawalpur State 1904, *Gazette* (Lahore: Sang-e-Mail, 1986), 142.

9 M. Ali Derwash, *Tareekh-e-Riasat Bahawalpur* (Bahawalpur, 1987), 49.



Top Elevation of Noor Mahal Original Site Plan.  
SOURCE: Raees Faheem Associates (@raeesfaheem.associates)



Original photo of construction of Noor Mahal gifted by  
Prince Qamar Zaman Abbasi  
SOURCE: [www.noormahalmuseum.com](http://www.noormahalmuseum.com)



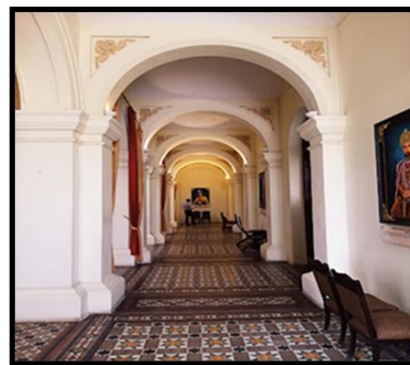
Grand Hall of the Noor Mahal  
SOURCE: [www.noormahalmuseum.com](http://www.noormahalmuseum.com)



Grand Hall of the Noor Mahal with elegant titles of the British era  
SOURCE: [www.noormahalmuseum.com](http://www.noormahalmuseum.com)

Inside Noor Mahal, multiple designs were used for various places. In Cornish Hall, this design was used across the grand hall and as well as in galleries. However, other Italian-style designs are also used in Bed and Bathrooms.<sup>10</sup>

Details of the design have been given in the photos.



Galleries of Noor Mahal Right and Left Side

SOURCE: [www.noormahalmuseum.com](http://www.noormahalmuseum.com)

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<sup>10</sup> [www.noormahalmuseum.com](http://www.noormahalmuseum.com)

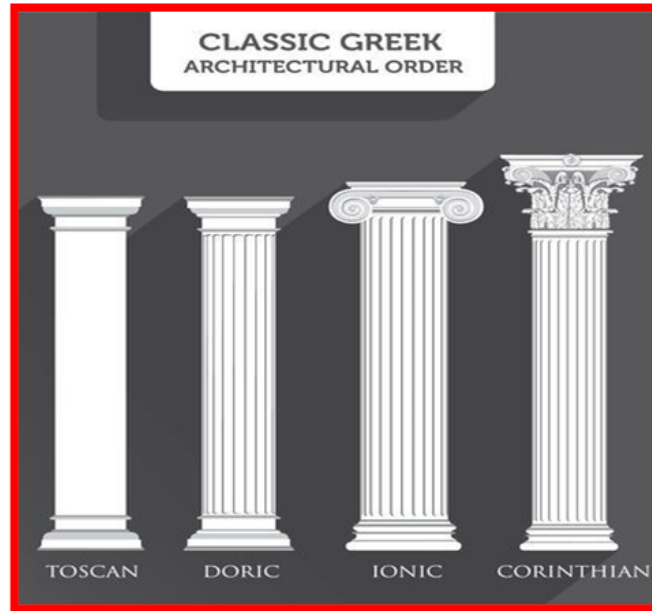


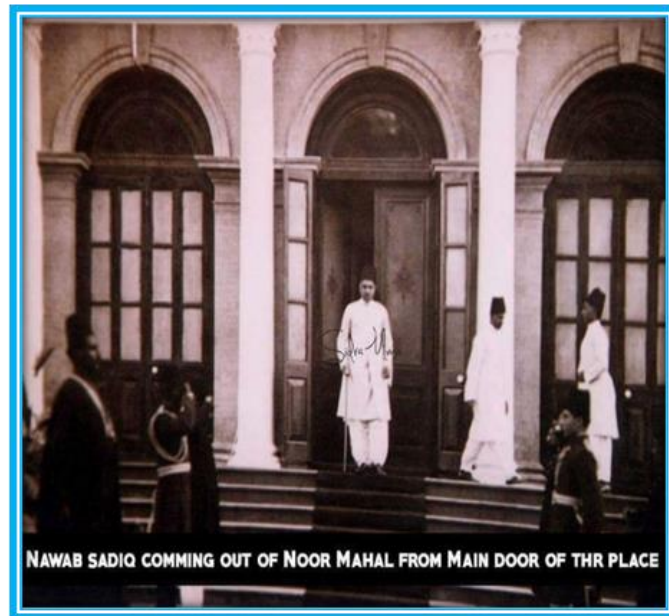


Different Pattern of Mosaic Tiles in Noor Mahal

SOURCE: [www.noormahalmuseum.com](http://www.noormahalmuseum.com)

Photo of column used in Noor Mahal in main entrance





A photo of the last ruler of the BWP State Nawab Sir Sadiq Muhammad Abbasi coming from the main entrance of the Noor Mahal



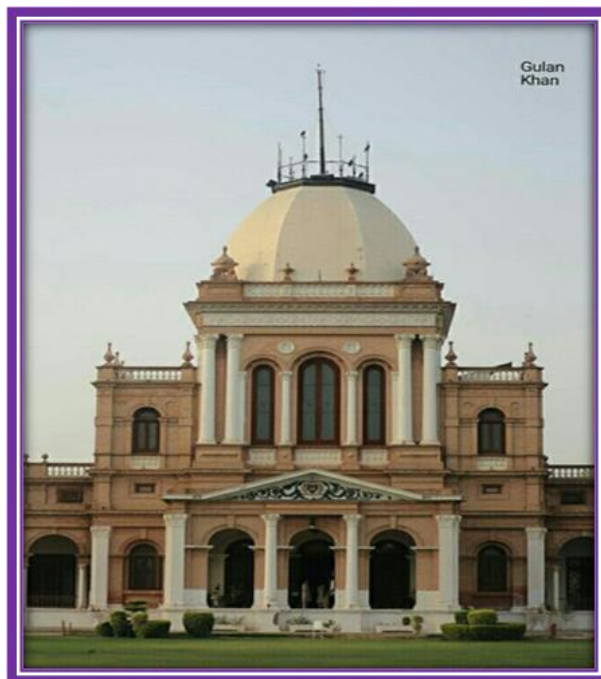
Current Photo of the main entrance of Noor Mahal after 145 years

## Complete restoration of Corinish Hall



The Corinthian, Doric, Toscan, and Ionic Columns were developed as classical orders of Ancient Greek and Roman Architecture. The Corinthian order follows the Ionic in almost all respects, except for the capitals of the columns. The Corinthian and Ionic columns were erected at the top and lower levels of the Noor Mahal. The Corinthian is commonly regarded as the most elegant of the three orders. The shaft is the most slender of the Greek orders. The Corinthian order is named after the Greek city of Corinth. The Corinthian column is iconic in the history of Antiquity and influential in architecture all across the world. The Corinthian column serves as a universal symbol of elegance and luxury.

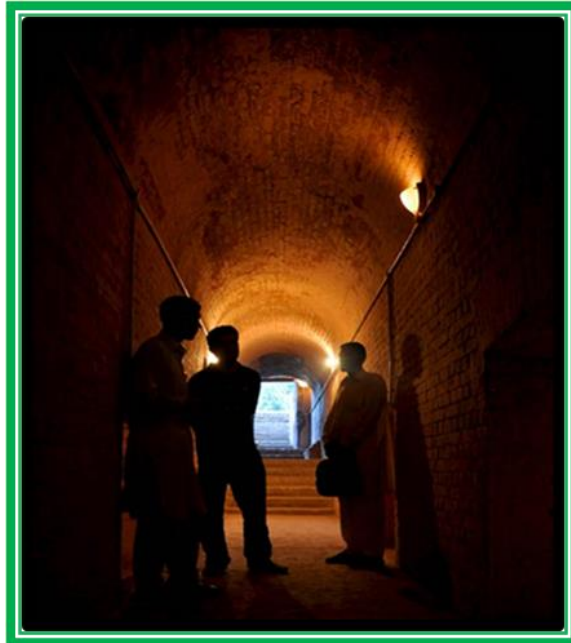
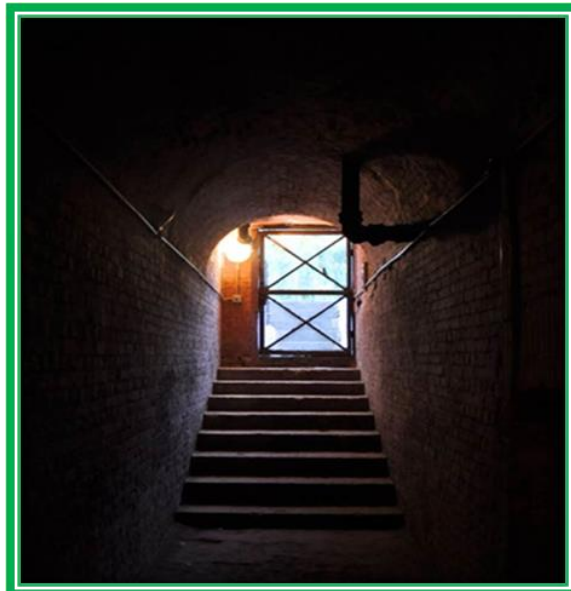




Side view of Noor Mahal Corinthian column  
middle section view

SOURCE: [www.noormahalmuseum.com](http://www.noormahalmuseum.com)





Basement view of Noor Mahal

SOURCE: Moazzam Khan Durrani, "Myth: Exploded by Archives Countered by the Curators: A Case Study of Noor Mahal Museum's Basement," *Journal of Xidian University* 17, no. 7 (2023): 1337

In the British Raj, Basements were used for underground floors as stores. A basement is completely or partly below the ground floor. Especially in residential buildings, it often is used as a utility space for buildings, where such items as the furnace, water heater, breaker panel or fuse box, car park, and air-conditioning system are located. Inside, there are multiple rooms for maids and cooking services. The basement is also a special feature in Noor Mahal because these kinds of basements were rare in such royal buildings.

### **Exterior of the Noor Mahal**

Noor Mahal has a splendid and elegant view. The combination of the palace looks light pink-red rusted bricks with combination of white color of pillars, which enhance its beauty. The palace has four corner octagon domes in Roman style and one major dome in the center. Single porch for vehicle about 15x27. It has a main entrance door made with wood and glass. At the top of the porch, a Roman arch has been designed and a State emblem and a set of pelicans are shown prominently. Moreover, stuffed pelicans were mounted at the main entrance of the palace. The front veranda is approximately 100 feet long. There are 16 pillars in white, which form the base of the front elevation of the palace. There are 12 small-sized pillars in a circle shape in Corinthian style.

### **Interior of the Palace**

The Noor Mahal has a wonderful interior with a combination of Italian and Indian architectural styles. Multiple pillars in grand lobby and grand hall are in Roman style inside the palace. A unique half-barrel-double heightened roof is decorated with artwork. The stage has been decorated in original shape with a Crown Chair. A sitting plan is also designed for Notables of the State in original shape. Old furniture and Antiques of the State have been placed, which enhance the beauty of the palace. Different types of mosaic tiles are also in their original condition.

### **Overall Beauty of the Palace**

Noor Mahal is a masterpiece of Italian, Indian and Islamic construction art. Roman style pillars, Indian red bricks, half Church style, and Islamic arches and domes present a glorious look. The oval-shaped front lawn further adding grace to the beauty. The middle front of the building resembles a Roman Church, which is both appealing and fascinating. A huge window provides fresh air and sunlight throughout the year.

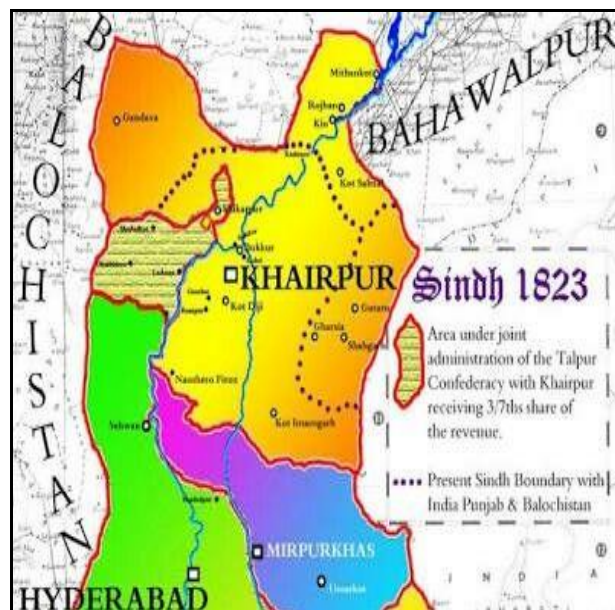
### **Basement as a Special Feature**

Noor Mahal has a special feature inside the basement. Basement was used for dual function; for the royal kitchen and provided fresh air to the upper story, just like an Air Conditioning System. The cooking staff lived here and made delicious dishes for the Royal family or guests. Presently, it has been restored to its original shape as it was at the start.

All in all, Noor Mahal, a symbol of grandeur, deteriorated and required repair. The royal family did not care properly due to their internal disputes. So, the building turned weaker and fragile. Finally, the Corp 31 Bahawalpur decided to save the building in its original shape, and they succeeded. Now Noor Mahal has become a regional tourist spot; housing State Cultural Museum, Bahawalpur Art and Nawab Gallery.

### **Introduction of Khairpur State 1783-1947 AD**

The Khairpur State emerged as Muslim Ethnic in 1783-1947 AD in North West of British India. It faced political and military challenges with the Kalhora Dynasty, Mughal Era, British Era, Nadir Shah Era and Rajasthan Revelry. Finally, in 1947, Khairpur joined Pakistan as per the 3<sup>rd</sup> June Plan of British India, and now being a part of Pakistan, it is playing a pivotal role in the amelioration of its development and programme.



The province of Sindh is known as the Gateway of Islam, and since the Muslim Rule 712 AD, it has witnessed various Muslim rulers till 1843. The East India Company held the

Sindh Territory from 1843 to 1947. The ex-State Khairpur held an area of more than 17000 sq. km. However, two-third of the area is barren and deserted. This area is known as Rajasthan Pennsville. The South side of the State touches with Indian Rajasthan Belt.<sup>11</sup> The Eastern side connects with Punjab province and Bahawalpur State and North side Baluchistan Division and West Side extends to the Sindh Province along with River Indus. The River Indus is major water source for Sindh; it emerges from Tibetan Delta and merges with confluence Rivers at Head Panjnad (Bahawalpur) and further flow tills the Arabian Sea. The Khairpur State was founded by Mir Fateh Ali Khan Talpur after the Battle of Halani in 1783. The State expanded over the centuries. The 'Talpur' belong to a clan of Baluch tribes. Being the natives of Sindh and a well-off community, Talpurs earned a good repute in the Mughal era. Mir Shahdad Khan Talpur, a prominent bureaucrat in the Mughal era, founded the city Shahdad Pur in 1713 AD.<sup>12</sup> Talpurs emerged as a political force at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Thus, the chief of the Talpur tribe, Mir Behram Khan Talpur, was killed by Kalhora. This event led to rivalry, and it became mandatory to take revenge for the murder. Talpurs assembled their army, and finally, in the Battle of Halani 1783, Mir Fateh Ali Khan Talpur defeated the Mian Abdul Nabi of the Kalhora Dynasty and gained control over the entire Sindh region.<sup>13</sup> The Kalhora Dynasty ruled in Sindh 1701-1783 AD. The Talpurs Dynasty stretches in multiple directions. Mir Sohrab Ali ruled in Khairpur State 1783-30. Mir Sohrab Ali Khan holds at Khairpur, second at Old Hyderabad, Mir Tharo Khan Talpur at Mirpur Khas, and Mir Muhammad Khan Talpur at Tando Allah Yar Khan. From 1783 to 1843, Talpur flourished and became stable in Sindh. The East India Company (EIC)

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11 Mumtaz Hussain Pathan, *Talpurs in Sindh 1783-1843* (Karachi: Endowment Fund Trust, 2013), 7.

12 Uzma Soomro, "Art and Architecture of Talpur Tombs in Hyderabad," (M.Phil. Thesis, TIAC, QAU, Islamabad, 2013).

13 Naseem Amrohim, *Tarikh-e-Khairpur* (Khairpur: Murad Press, 1993), 27-29.

fixed deep eyes on the territory of Sindh for a long time. The EIC had various adventures in Sindh but failed.<sup>14</sup> Finally, the British General Napier Charles defeated Mir Sheer Ali Talpur (Sheer-e-Sindh) and conquered Sindh in the Battle of Miani on February 17, 1843 AD. Hyderabad, Tando Allah Yar and Mirpur Khas were occupied by the British forces. The Khairpur State made an alliance with East India Company and the British acceded as Princely State. Now the territory of Khairpur had reduced up to 17000km.<sup>15</sup> The ex-Khairpur State has two phases in history; the first phase from 1783-1843 AD and the second phase 1843-1947 AD.



On the eve of Independence in 1947, Khairpur State joined Pakistan, and on a special request of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, it merged with Pakistan on October 03, 1947. Khairpur enjoyed its Princely State status from

14 Humera Naz, *Kalhora Rule in Sindh 1701-1783* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2018), 76-79.

15 Hamid Ali Gadhi, Haseeb ur Rehman and Dr. M. Hanif Laghari, "Treasures of Talpur Ameer: In Context to Art and Architectural of Shish Mahal, Khairpur, Sindh," *Pakistan Journal of Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review* (PLHR), 7, no. 3 (2025): 175-186.

1947 to 1955.<sup>16</sup> Later on, both the Princely States i.e., Bahawalpur and Khairpur became part of West Pakistan in 1955. The State lasted for 172 years in British India. The State of Khairpur ruled by 8 Nawabs, and had a glorious history. Last Mir of Talpur dynasty Mir Gorge Ali Murad Khan Talpur (June 29, 1933-February 9, 2019) died at the age of 86.

### **Faiz Mahal—1798-1809: An Introduction**

In 1783, as Mir Sohrab achieved victory over the Kalhora Dynasty, he assumed political power in the region. It was a symbol of strength and esteem to hold the Royal Court; he conceived an idea for a new building. First, it was built by Mir Sohrab Khan Talpur in 1798 as the principal building serving as the Sovereign Court of Talpur Dynasty of Khairpur. Originally, it included the Royal chambers along with 16 waiting rooms for courtiers and guest rooms for royal guests, as well as the durbar and dining halls.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, there was a huge shed for the royal elephant and horses and orchards. The premier building was built in the Mir Sohrab Khan era, but over the decades, Mir's Mansion (Hevali) has gotten older and deteriorated. Moreover, massive rains and flood damaged the Mansion heavily, so it was considered necessary to build a new palace for the Khairpur State. Mr. Mir Faiz Khan Talpur, 4<sup>th</sup> ruler of the Talpur Dynasty (1894-1909) constructed the Faiz Mahal in 1894 AD. This palace had iconic status in Sindh and Talpur Dynasty. Initially, the building was constructed as the residence of Mir Faiz Khan Talpur, but later used as a State Guest House, Royal Guest, British High Official, Foreign Delegates and Royal Court.<sup>18</sup> The plan for the new residence of Mir of Khairpur Talpur started in 1894-98.

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16 Ashraf D. Ansari, *Sufi Saints and State Power: The Pirs of Sindh 1843-1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 86-91.

17 Saeed Ahmad and Dr. Abdul Fateh, Faiz Mahal, "Khairpur Mirs: A Study of Surface Decoration," *Grassroots* 8, no. 1 (Jan-Jun 2014).

18 Kamala Sabzwari, *The Perishing Haveli of Sindh* (Ferozsons Pvt. Ltd. 2019), 117.

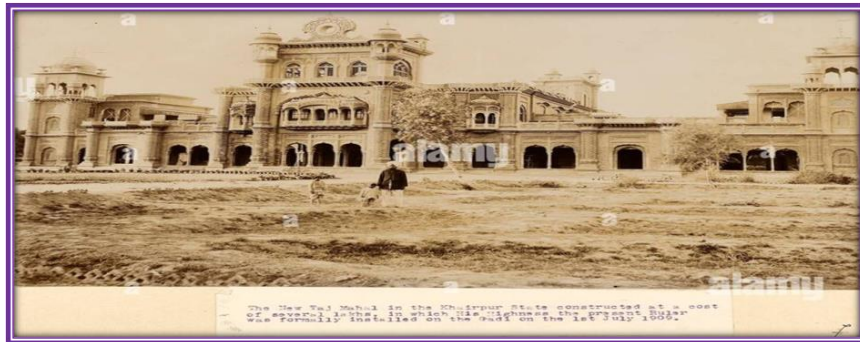


Photo of Faiz Mahal 1909, Heritage of Sindh

SOURCE: [www.Talpur.org.com.pk](http://www.Talpur.org.com.pk)

Mir Faiz Khan Talpur decided to build a new palace for the State, known as Faiz Palace. The local engineers and craftsmen finalised its drawing. The then prime minister of the State, Khan Bahadur Qadar Khan (1892-1903), started the work, but in 1895 he died. Later, Mr. Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan (1903-07) assumed the charge as State Minister, but the palace was supervised by Sardar Gulab Singh and accomplished the task in 1905.<sup>19</sup> Like the Nawab of Bahawalpur, Mir of Khairpur also had a refined taste of royal building. Many other historical buildings were constructed in their golden era, like Faiz Mahal, Sheesh Mahal, White Mahal, Dilshad Manzil, & others. On November 25, 1895, the foundation stone of the palace was laid by Mir of Khairpur, to enhance the massive strength of the structure; 20-feet deep foundation was dug. The construction work was carried out and various kinds of construction materials were imported from different parts of the world. Likewise, wood used from within India, marble and glass from England while other precious articles from abroad. From the front side of the palace, a special platform for 'Guard of Honour' and a square shaped lawn with trees planted side by side were developed. The Faiz Mahal Project was completed in 1898 AD in 13 years and 1 million

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19 Fahmida Qazi, *Preservation and Conservation of Faiz Mahal* (Karachi, 1994), 7-8.



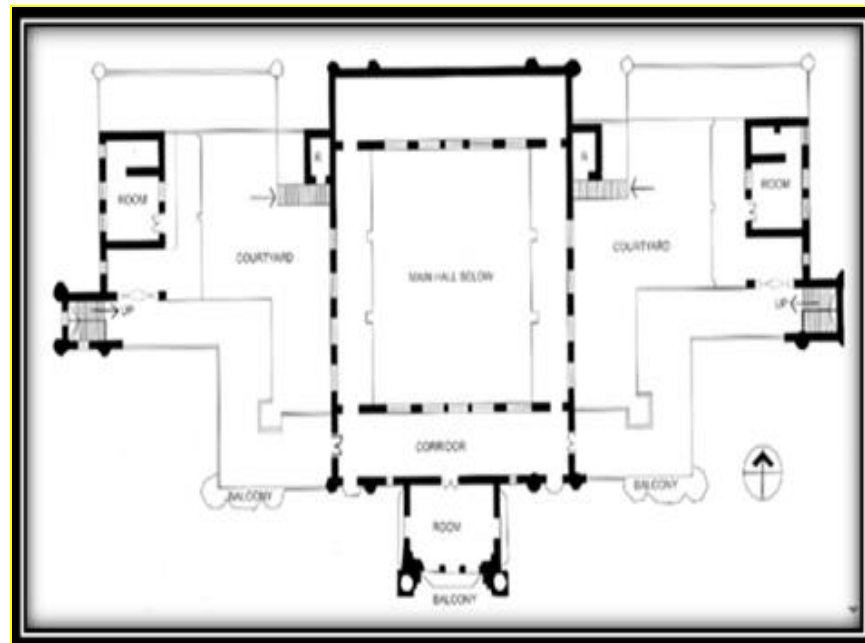
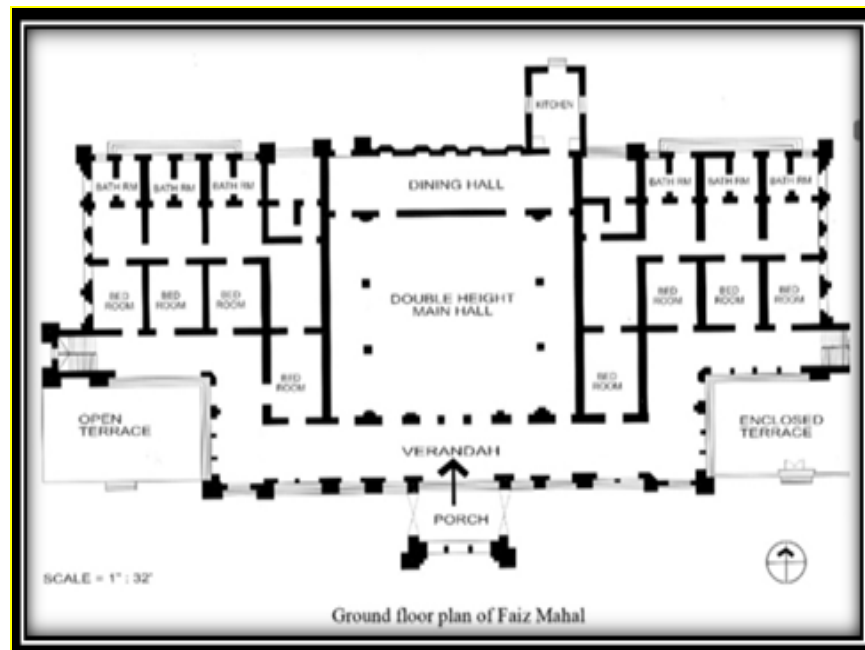
Rupees, which were paid by the Finance Office of the Khairpur State.<sup>20</sup>



Front Elevation of Faiz Mahal original site plan.  
SOURCE: Official Record of State Khairpur

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20 Mir Muhammad Bakhsh Talpur, *Tarikh-e-Miran-e-Sindh, Mir Pur Khas*, 2016, 38.



Faiz Mahal, Khairpur Mirs: A Study of Surface Decoration  
SOURCE: Saeed Ahmad & Dr. Abdul Fateh, 2014



Inside view of Faiz Mahal Grand Hall. Heritage of Sindh;  
SOURCE: [www.Talpur.org.com.pk](http://www.Talpur.org.com.pk)

### Features and Specification of the Faiz Mahal

The Faiz Mahal's accumulative area is more than 14 acres, but its total covered area is 37800 sq.ft. The length of the palace is around 210 feet and the width is around 180 feet. It consists of triple story; almost up to 57 feet in height. It has 32 rooms, including Cornish Hall, main lobby, main entrance, Porch, side galleries, special bed with bath rooms, verandas & and balconies on three sides and vast terraces.<sup>21</sup> There were three square lawns with green lawns developed on the front side of the palace. A special front wide citadel was constructed for 'Guard of Honour,' ceremonies, and an elephant and horse track for royal traffic.<sup>22</sup>

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21 Heritage of Sindh; [www.Talpur.org.com.pk](http://www.Talpur.org.com.pk)

22 Heritage of Sindh; [www.Talpur.org.com.pk](http://www.Talpur.org.com.pk)



The Interior of the Faiz Mahal with Gold Plated Master Theme  
SOURCE: [www.Talpur.org.com.pk](http://www.Talpur.org.com.pk)



Photo Gallery with original official documents of Khairpur State  
SOURCE: [www.Talpur.org.com.pk](http://www.Talpur.org.com.pk)

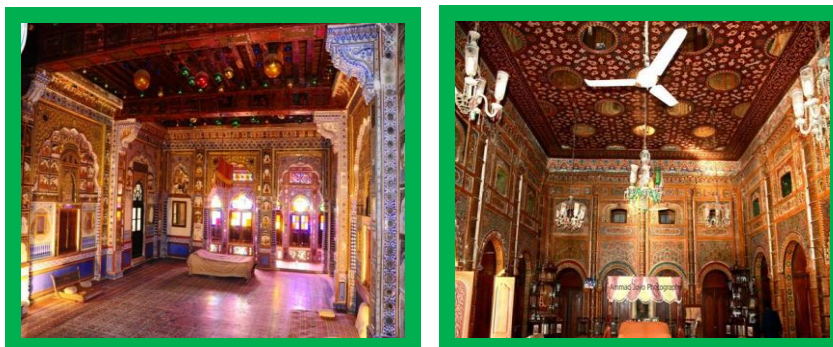


Photo Gallery of Khairpur State (Bed Rooms); Heritage of Sindh  
SOURCE: [www.Talpur.org.com.pk](http://www.Talpur.org.com.pk)

Inside the Faiz Mahal, the gold and red combination is the dominant theme. The entire decoration is in golden and red colors. In Cornish Hall, the chandelier, sofa, chair, tables, wardrobes, and tables, ancestor photo frames are in the same golden and red color. The Mirs of Khairpur were fond of gold, so they promoted their hobbies. The roof of the royal dining hall was made with golden artwork. Moreover, in the bed rooms, they used golden color extensively. Furthermore, daggers and swords were also made with gold.<sup>23</sup> In royal and official ceremonies, it was mandatory for the Mirs of Khairpur to wear the golden costume. Overall, the Golden/Yellow color is quite prominent in the State. A special kind of Date is produced in Khairpur, which is also in yellow/golden color. The economy of Khairpur depends on Date production, which has the biggest market in Asia.



The Dining Hall of the Faiz Mahal with Gold & Red Bricks Theme  
SOURCE: [www.Talpur.org.com.pk](http://www.Talpur.org.com.pk)

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23 Heritage of Sindh; [www.Talpur.org.com.pk](http://www.Talpur.org.com.pk)





The Photo of Talpur Dynasty mounted in Faiz Mahal with Golden Frame  
SOURCE: [www.Talpur.org.com.pk](http://www.Talpur.org.com.pk)



The Exterior of the Faiz Mahal with a Gold and Red Bricks Theme, Triple Storey; Heritage of Sindh

SOURCE: [www.Talpur.org.com.pk](http://www.Talpur.org.com.pk)

The exterior of Faiz Mahal is elegant and spacious. There is more compared to Noor Mahal. The combination of yellow and rust-red has been adopted. The elevation of the palace is attractive. It is a blend of Rajasthani, Indian, and Islamic traditions. The carving of the main pillar reflects the local product of the date tree. The local date palm tree inspired the zig-zag pattern. The yellow color was also inspired by nature. Red is prominent in Sindhi and Rajasthani culture. Inside the palace, Gold is a basic theme that has been adopted, so the exterior of the palace also has the same color. Outside the palace building, a medium-sized cannon has been mounted on both sides, which reflects the symbol of power and guardian of the State and was used in ex-Wars. On the front side on the cannon, the name of Mir Sohrab Ali Talpur is written on the cannon metal.<sup>24</sup> At the top of the palace, there are ten minar, like the Mosque minar

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24 Soomro, "Art and Architecture of Talpur Tombs in Hyderabad,".

and two mini-Domes. At the top of the middle section of the building, there is a crown, which typically reflects the Rajsthani culture. A crown is a traditional head adornment worn by monarchs as a symbol of their power and dignity.



Outside view of Faiz Mahal  
SOURCE: [www.Talpur.org.com.pk](http://www.Talpur.org.com.pk)

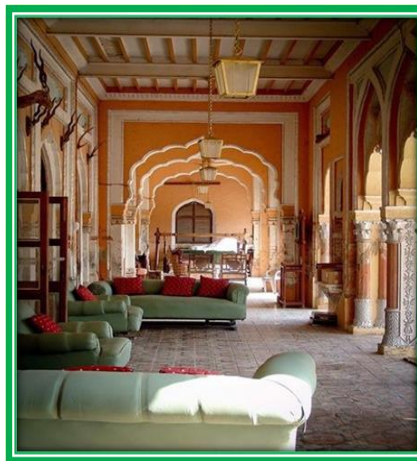




Outside view of Faiz Mahal  
SOURCE: [www.Talpur.org.com.pk](http://www.Talpur.org.com.pk)



A View of Faiz Mahal, Heritage of Sindh  
SOURCE: [www.Talpur.org.com.pk](http://www.Talpur.org.com.pk)



View of Faiz Mahal, Heritage of Sindh  
SOURCE: [www.Talpur.org.com.pk](http://www.Talpur.org.com.pk)

Veranda is an open-air roofed hallway attached to the outside of the building. The veranda is common in Europe, and the British in subcontinent. The Veranda of Faiz Mahal is elegant and spacious. There is more space compared to Noor Mahyal. Beautiful tiles have been fixed and stuffed heads of deer are mounted on the wall. The deer is the national emblem of the State of Khairpur; this icon is everywhere. The arches of the verandah and porch reflect

the Islamic Architecture.<sup>25</sup> The tiles of floor are almost similar to Noor Mahal and Faiz Mahal. The design of mosaic tiles is the same, but in Noor Mahal there is more variety in the design used. The balcony is the face of the home, and thus, it is important to decorate it smartly. Therefore, exquisite art work in Faiz Mahal is seen in balconies and jharoka.<sup>26</sup>

These balconies are side by side and front main at the top of the porch. These types of balconies are common in Rajasthan, and also seen in the Sikh era. The front-side balcony has a triple direction. The column/pillar of the palace is made with local art and craftsmanship. The Jharoka is a stone window that enhances the wall at the upper storey to view the outside. The Jharoka is a common feature in classical Indian architecture and prominent in Rajasthan. Supported on two or more brackets or corbelling, it has two pillars or pilasters, balustrade and a cupola or pyramidal roof, technically closed by Jaali but generally partly open for the residents to peep out to see passing processions. The Jharoka is more formal and ornamental than the English or French oriel window and one of the most distinctive characteristics of the façade in medieval Indian architecture until the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>27</sup>

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25 F. Sara Ansari, "The Royal of Talpur and the Heritage of Sindh;" [www.Talpur.org.com.pk](http://www.Talpur.org.com.pk)

26 *Sindh Studies*, The Pakistan Study Centre, University of Sindh Jamshoro.

27 *Sindh Studies*, The Pakistan Study Centre, University of Sindh Jamshoro.



Outside view of Faiz Mahal



A photo of last Ruler of Khairpur State Mir Murad Ali Talpur standing at main entrance of the Faiz Mahal in teen age. Different Angle and Pose of Exterior of The Majestic Faiz Mahal.

**Exterior of the Faiz Mahal Palace**

Noor Mahal has a splendid, elegant view. The combination of the palace looks light pink-red rusted bricks with a combination of yellow and red, which enhance its beauty. The palace has two corner domes in Islamic style and one major dome in the center. There is a huge single porch for vehicles. It has one main entrance door made of wood and glass. At the top of the porch, Islamic arches have been designed, and the State emblem, a set of deer is shown prominently. Moreover, a stuffed deer is mounted at the main entrance of the palace. The front verandas are about over 100 feet long. There are 16 pillars in yellow color, which are the base of the front elevation of the palace. There are 12 small-sized pillars seen in a circle shape.

**Interior of the Faiz Mahal**

The Faiz Mahal has a wonderful interior with a combination of Rajasthan and Indian architecture style. Multiple pillars in local style are erected in grand lobby and grand hall inside the palace. A unique double-heighted roof is decorated with artwork. A stage has been decorated in original shape with a crown chair. A sitting plan is also designed for notables of the State in the golden color scheme. Old furniture and antiques of the State have been placed, that further add to the beauty of the palace. Different types of mosaic tiles are also in their original condition.

**Overall Beauty of the Palace**

Faiz Mahal is a masterpiece of Rajasthan, Indian, and Islamic architecture. All three styles are encompassed in Faiz Mahal. Local style pillars, Indian red bricks, Islamic arches and domes present a glorious look. Three square-shaped front side lawns also increase its beauty. The middle front of the building resembles the Rajasthan model, which is appealing and fascinating. Huge and colorful windows provided fresh air and sunlight throughout the year.

All in all, the Faiz Mahal is the Jewel of the ex-State Khairpur. Mir Faiz Talpur decided to construct it in 1894-1905. In the following decades, Faiz Mahal became the iconic symbol of the State. With the passage of time, it required maintenance. The royal family did not care properly due to their internal disputes. So, the structure of the palace got weak over the centuries. The building needs massive repairs and proper maintenance like Noor Mahal. Recently, the Archeological Department of Sindh finally decided to save the building and now Faiz Mahal has become a regional tourist spot and Mir Talpurs Gallery with historic documents. Faiz Mahal is one of the amazing cultural heritages of the Talpur dynasty.

### **Comparison of Noor Mahal and Faiz Mahal**

Built at end of the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century: 1872-79	Built at end of the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century: 1895-1905
Total Area 44600 Sq. Feet.	Total Area 386400 Sq. Feet.
Red Bricks and Mosaic Tiles incorporated.	Red Bricks and Mosaic tiles incorporated
Tipple Story Building	Tipple Story Building
Spacious Lawn and Air Wind Passages	Spacious Lawn and Air Wind Passages
32+ Rooms, including Durbar Hall	36+ Rooms, including Durbar Hall
Architecture: Mr. Henantain	Architecture: Local Engineers
Arches + Columns + Corridors + three half barrel roof	Arches + Pillars + Corridors + Balconies, Jharoka
Total Cost: 1.2 Million Rupees	Total Cost: 1.00 Million Rupees
Special Basement for Ventilation ' rooms for staff and Kitchen	No Special Basement but Ventilation

Huge Front Columns in White Color and Huge Porch	Huge Front Column in Yellow Color and Huge Porch
Indo-Mughal-Islamic- Italian Architecture.	Indo-Mughal-Islamic and Rajasthan Architecture.
Four Corner mini-Domes and A Master Dom in Centre	Two front Corner mini-Domes and Single Master Dome
Front Elevation, Arches and Top Terrace	Front Elevation, Balconies, Arches and Top Terrace
Front Verandah with Islamic Arches	Front Verandah with Islamic Arches
Large Windows Front and Side by Side	Large Balcony and Jharoka Side by Side
Middle Section looks like Church	Middle Section looks like Mansion with an elegant Crown
Stuffed Pelicans mounted on surface	Stuffed Deer mounted on Walls
Durbar Hall is highly decorated	Durbar Hall is highly decorated
Noor Mahal is a masterpiece of Architectural Heritage	Faiz Mahal is a masterpiece of Architectural Heritage

### **Noor Mahal: Social, Economic, and Cultural Impact in Pakistan**

Noor Mahal, an architectural gem in Bahawalpur, holds significant social, economic, and cultural value. Built in 1872 during the rule of Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan IV, this majestic palace reflects a blend of Italian and Islamic architectural influences. It has a multidimensional impact in Pakistan:

#### **Social Impact**

- **Tourism and Heritage Awareness:** Noor Mahal attracts historical enthusiasts and visitors, fostering national pride and cultural awareness.



- **Community Engagement:** The palace serves as a venue for cultural events, promoting local arts and traditions.
- **Education and Research:** Historians and students study Noor Mahal for insights into Bahawalpur's royal legacy and architectural history.

### **Economic Impact**

- **Tourism Revenue:** The palace boosts local tourism, contributing to the economy through ticket sales, guides, and hospitality services.
- **Job Creation:** Many locals find employment in tourism-related activities, such as tour guides, vendors, and event management.
- **Real Estate and Business Growth:** Increased tourism enhances property values and supports local businesses such as hotels and restaurants.

### **Cultural Impact**

- **Symbol of a Golden Era of Nawab:** Noor Mahal preserves the rich cultural heritage of the Nawabs of Bahawalpur.
- **Architectural Significance:** The palace's fusion of European and Mughal styles makes it a unique cultural landmark.
- **Promotion of Arts and History:** Events, exhibitions, and documentaries about Noor Mahal keep historical narratives alive.

Noor Mahal is not just a historical site; it's a cultural treasure that strengthens Pakistan's identity, boosts tourism and contributes to the economy. Its preservation ensures that future generations appreciate Bahawalpur's royal past.



## **Faiz Mahal: Social, Economic and Cultural Impact in Pakistan**

Faiz Mahal, a historical palace in Khairpur, Sindh, was built in 1798 during the rule of the Talpur dynasty. It remains an important symbol of Sindh's royal heritage, showcasing the opulence and influence of the Talpur Mirs. Its impact on Pakistan can be analyzed through social, economic, and cultural aspects:

### **Social Impact**

- **Tourism and Heritage Awareness:** Faiz Mahal attracts visitors, researchers, and students, increasing awareness about Sindh's royal history.
- **Community Engagement:** The palace hosts traditional and official events, fostering a sense of pride and cultural belonging among locals.
- **Educational Value:** Scholars study Faiz Mahal to learn about Talpur governance and lifestyle, architecture and contributing to historical research.

### **Economic Impact**

- **Boost to Local Tourism:** The palace attracts tourists, benefiting local businesses like hotels, restaurants, and transport services.
- **Employment Opportunities:** Tour guides, artisans, and workers involved in preservation efforts gain job opportunities.
- **Growth of Handicrafts and Local Businesses:** Increased tourism helps Sindhi handicrafts, embroidery, and Ajrak textiles gain recognition and sales.

### **Cultural Impact**

- **Preservation of Sindhi Heritage:** Faiz Mahal stands as a symbol of Sindh's rich history, traditions, and architecture from the Talpur era.

- **Architectural Significance:** The palace's intricate wooden carvings, frescoes, and courtyards reflect Sindhi, Mughal, and Persian influences.
- **Promotion of Sindhi Music and Arts:** Cultural programs and Sindhi folk music events are occasionally held, keeping local traditions alive.

Faiz Mahal is more than just a historical structure; it plays a pivotal role in preserving Sindh's royal legacy, driving tourism and supporting the local economy. Ensuring its conservation will continue to benefit Pakistan's cultural and economic landscape.

### **Conclusion**

In the Medieval Era, Indo-Islamic architecture developed in the subcontinent by the Great Mughals, transforming the pattern of grand buildings into an Islamic design characterized by Geometrical patterns, Calligraphy, Kashi-Kari, Intricate Jaali, Frescoes, and carved designs. It was highly popular worldwide. By the start of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries, the colonialism and imperialism of the British Raj had a heavy influence on the culture of the subcontinent. Especially in the architectural design of the British colonial era, Baroque, Gothic, and Neoclassical were most popular in the region. Like the Mughals, the colonial era projects their power through the magnificent buildings. The Indo-Saracenic style was a fusion of British Raj and Indo-Islamic features, also developed in Lahore, including the Railway Station, Atchison College, F.C. College, Punjab High Court, General Post Office, Museum, and Governor House, The Islamia College in Peshawar, Clock Tower in Multan, Ferrier Hall in Peshawar, and Sind High Court in Karachi. The Noor Mahal of Bahawalpur State is characterized by Indo-Saracenic architecture, featuring sleek columns, pediments, balustrades, and a vaulted ceiling in the hallway with the architectural features of the subcontinent. Geometry, Calligraphy, and Kashi-Kari of Indo-Islamic Art, blended with Victorian and Neoclassical elements, influenced colonial architecture. The Faiz Mahal of Khairpur State is

characterized by Indo-Saracenic and Rajasthani architecture, featuring the use of heavy columns, pediments, balustrades, and vaulted ceilings in the hallway, which incorporate the architectural features common to the subcontinent. Geometry, Calligraphy, and Kashi-Kari of Indo-Islamic Art blend with Neoclassical components of Colonial Architecture. Having had a thorough study of both palaces, It is hard to conclude which is better than the other. Both palaces, Noor Mahal and Faiz Mahal, are Jewels of the Heritage of Pakistan as both possess charismatic characteristics. These monuments are a legacy of our national cultural heritage. We should protect and preserve our heritage for future generations.