

travelogue

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Inside the Trikuta Temple

NEEHARIKA SATYAVADA

Named after a Khildar under the reign of Sikandar Jha during 1803 to 1823, Syed Karimuddin, Karimnagar is one district in Telangana, which has ancient places of historic importance to both Hindus and Buddhists alike. The most popular amongst these being Manthani.

A timeless village from an era gone by, Manthani is home to the ruins of the Gautameswara Temple. It had once flourished on the banks of the river Godavari as these of Vedic learning. Also referred to as 'Mantrapuri' or The Town of Hymns it gets its name from the Sanskrit word 'Mantra Kutam', meaning House of Mantras. It is also popularly



Putting back the temple in Manthani

believed that Manthani is home to a thousand Brahmin families, which is why it is also called the 'Sahasra Brahmana Gadapa' i.e. a Thousand Brahmin's Threshold. Little surprise then that though the temple in Manthani is in ruins today, the town remains to be culturally significant for the Hindus. Work is underway to put back the beautiful stone temple of Manthani to how it once stood. Meanwhile there is a new, fully functional temple on the premises.

Another place in Karimnagar, similar to Manthani is Nagunur, with its cluster of Kalyana and Kakatiya temple ruins right in the heart of the village. This tiny village was once the centre of the Kakatiya Empire. The most significant of these temples from the 12th century is the Trikuta Temple built by the Chalukyas of Kalyani. Though constructed in the same style as the Manthani temple, it is in much better shape today, with the three shrines dedicated to Lord Shiva showing evidence of continuing worship.

Less than a three-hour drive from Hyderabad, the district of Karimnagar in Telangana is peppered with numerous lesser-known forts and ancient ruins, making it the ideal day trip destination

Dating farther back than these temple ruins is the Buddhist site of Dhulikatta. Believed to be one of the 30 walled cities mentioned by Megasthenes in his book Indica, it has stupas and viharas that date back to the Satavahana Period. Historians say that the Archaeology authorities had discovered other relics here including residential houses, wells, beads, pieces of bangles, ivory combs, gold objects,

Roman coins and Satavahanas seals. Most of which have been shifted either to the Andhra Pradesh State Museum or the Karimnagar museum.

So, if you are someone you loves exploring forgotten ruins, a road trip to Karimnagar is surely something that you shouldn't miss out on.

FACT FILE

The distance from Hyderabad to Karimnagar is around 164 kilometers but if you take the NH44 via Medchal you will reach the town in less than two hours. 64 kilometers from here is Manthani. A further 100 kilometers from Manthani is Nagunur and along the way is Dhulikatta. While the onward journey works out to be longer, the distance back from Nagunur is only 200 kilometers.



The Shiva Temple at Nagunur

Lost in Time