

The land of Gita goes modern

The ancient Kurukshetra of Mahabharata fame has come a long way, making rapid strides on the road to modern living



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In the very first verse of Bhagwad-Gita, Kurukshetra is described as “dharamkshetra”, the ‘region of righteousness’. Kurukshetra is a place of great historical and religious importance, revered all over the country for its sacred association with the Vedas and Vedic culture. It was here that the battle of Mahabharata was fought and Lord Krishna preached his philosophy of ‘Karma’ as enshrined in Bhagwad-Gita, to Arjuna at Jyotisar.

It is the land where the sage Manu penned his ‘Manusmriti’ and where learned rishis compiled the Rig Veda and Sama Veda. Kurukshetra is named after King Kuru, who also performed the supreme sacrifice to bring prosperity to the land and his people. According to Hindu mythology, Kurukshetra is spread over a circuit of about 48 kos which includes a large number of holy places, temples and

sacred tanks connected with religious events/rituals, the Mahabharat war and Kurus, the ancestor of Kouravas and Pandavs. Kurukshetra is closely related to the Aryan civilisation.

The belief goes that the holy waters of all the sacred rivers flow/converge into Kurukshetra’s Sannehit Sarovar on Somavati Amavasya and solar eclipse. It is also believed that those who visit this area on Somavati Amavasya, take bath in the tanks, or die in Kurukshetra, go straight to the heaven. It is said that the God, after having performed divine yajnas, created the universe here.

Over centuries, some Sikh principalities lapsed to the British Empire. Ladwa lapsed in 1846; Kaithal in 1849; and Thanesar (only a part) in 1850. The British Government organised these lapsed territories into Thanesar district in 1849. The district was broken up in 1862 and the area was distributed into two districts, Karnal and Ambala. The parganas of Guhla, Pehowa,

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Kaithal, Indri and a part of Thanesar were included in Karnal District and the others were allotted to Ambala District. In 1866, Pehowa pargana was transferred from Karnal to Ambala district but was transferred back to Karnal district (14 villages in 1875 and remaining 89 in 1888) and included in Kaithal tehsil. The headquarters of Pipli tehsil were shifted to Thanesar in 1897.

Kurukshetra, the land of Bhagwat Geeta, was carved out of Karnal and made district with Thanesar and Kaithal tehsils on January 23, 1973. It was in November, 1989 that more new districts—Panipat, Rewari, Yamunanagar and Kaithal—were raised. This re-organisation of territories did affect Kurukshetra though in a small measure. The Radaur block of Kurukshetra district was included in Yamunanagar; Kaithal and Guhla tehsils (taken from Kurukshetra district) were included in Kaithal district. Then, Pehowa was made a sub-division. Since December 31, 1990, the district has two sub-divisions (Thanesar and Pehowa); two tehsils (Thanesar and Pehowa); and two sub-tehsils (Shahbad and Ladwa).

The countless number of initiatives taken by the Haryana Government and the district administration have transformed Kurukshetra from the ancient land of religious import to a zone of e-governance, facilitating hassle-free living and civic services in modern environment. “Information and citizen-centric services are available at the click of mouse”, M S Brar, Deputy Commissioner, Kurukshetra, told Haryana Review. Besides being the seat of higher learning, courtesy Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra has made rapid strides in many fields, including agriculture, horticulture and development of places of historical and religious import. ■