

Toponymy of Districts of North Western Uttar Pradesh

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INTRODUCTION:

There are two myths associated with the origin of the name of modern city of Meerut. One is linked to the story of ancient epic Mahabharata and the other with the Ramayana.

1. According to Mahabharata, on the behest of Krishna, the famous architect Vishwakarma Mae made many palaces and a famous hall of audience (sabhagar) for Yudhishtir and his brothers in their new capital of Indraprastha. In lieu of the excellent services provided by Vishwakarma Mae, he was awarded land by the Pandavas on which he established a city which came to be called after his name Maerashtra. With time the name changed through continuous usage to Meerath and Meerut
2. The Valmiki Ramayan states that Mae was the father - in - law of the demon king Ravana. According to this myth the city of Meerut was established by Mae danav and from his name it was called Maerashtra which later got transformed to Meerath and Meerut. According to this myth Meerut in ancient times was also called Maedant Ka Khera. Khera in the local dialect is a mound; therefore the mound of Meerut, on which the old city is established, has its name derived from Maedant or Mae danav

It is interesting to note that both the epics talk of the same individual called Mae though in different relationships. An analysis of these two myths suggests that the Mahabharat precedes the Ramayan, though this is a big question of debate as according to the Indian religious traditions the Ramayan is said to predate the Mahabharat.

BAGHPAT:

In the Udyog Parv of the Epic Mahabharat it is said that this was one of the five villages that the Pandavas had asked for in the Mahabharata, four of these are given by name as Vraksthal, Varnavrat, Makandi and Asandi, the name of the fifth village is not mentioned.

Another possible explanation for the name of Baghpat is that the name is derived from the Sanskrit word vakpatuta which means witty people. Krishna had this experience when he interacted with the people of this region on his visit here and therefore named this place after this Sanskrit word.

BULANDSHAHAHAR:

There is a mound existing to the west of this city which appears to be of that period. Because of the town existing at an elevation, it was called Uchashahar and ucha in Persian language is buland giving it its present name of Bulandshahar.

SAHARANPUR:

The ancient name of the region of Saharanpur is Ushinar. It was also known as Kuru Jangal or Brahmarishi Desh during the reign of the Kurus. After the decline of the Kurus, the region of Saharanpur and surrounding area came under the reign of the Yaudhyas who had a large kingdom extending from the Indus up to the Ganges.

It is said that the Delhi Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq named this place Saharanpur after a saint called Shah Harun Chishti who resided here. During the reign of Akber the lands around Saharanpur were under

the control of Raja Saharanveer Singh who is said to have established this city. From then onwards it continued to be a district within the suba of Delhi (page).

MUZAFFARNAGAR:

During the reign of Shahjahan, a jagirdar of this region called Sayyed Muzaffar Khan established a town in the lands of Sujdu and Khera villages in 1633 AD. His son, Abdul Mansur Khan named this town after his father and from then on it came to be called Muzaffarnagar.

BIJNOR:

It is said that in ancient times a king named Ben or Ven ruled over this land. It is said that he did not extract taxes from his subjects but earned his livelihood by making fans of bijana, giving this region its name of Bijnor. It is also said that the name Bijnor is derived from its ancient name of Bijina Nagar or it is a derivative of Vijay Nagar. The district of Bijnor was established in 1817 with Nagina being its district headquarters. An officer by the name of

J. N. Halhad shifted the district headquarters to the town of Bijnor in 1824 which it has continued to be since then.

Ghaziabad

Ghaziabad was established in 1740 by Ghazi ud-din Khan Feroze Jung II, who was the elder son of Nizam-ul-mulk Asaf Jah. During the invasion of Delhi by Nadir Shah in 1739AD, Ghazi ud-din ran from Delhi and established Ghaziabad on the eastern bank of the Yamuna.

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