

#JUST LAUNCHED

THE REIMAGINED PALACE ATELIER

Transformed under the vision of Princess Gauravi Kumari of Jaipur, the newly transformed *Palace Atelier* showcases products from leading brands in fashion, jewellery, literature and design, without losing its connection with the museum and the Royal Family of Jaipur.

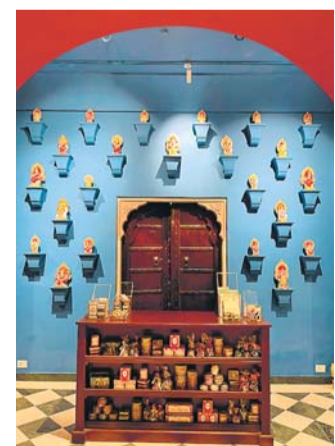


Princess Gauravi Kumari.

Tusharika Singh
Freelance writer and city blogger

In 2012, Princess Diya Kumari started the *Palace Atelier* store in Jaipur's City Palace, to showcase handcrafted products, linked to the artifacts displayed in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum. Ten years later, in 2022, the City Palace sets out to define a new direction for 'The Palace Atelier'. Over the past few months, Princess Gauravi Kumari and French Designer Claire Deroo have been working on an overhaul, that involves changing everything, from the premises to the purpose of the atelier. Apart from having a standalone space designed from scratch, it will have some of the most interesting brands across apparel, jewellery, literature and design, without losing its connection with the museum and the Royal Family of Jaipur.

With meticulous attention to detail, Princess Gauravi Kumari shares her vision for this 'reimagined space'. 'The *Palace Atelier* is a museum store, but also a 'concept store.' It will capture the originality and energy of India across design, fashion, jewellery art, and luxury making it, we hope, a retail hotspot at the City Palace, Jaipur. It is a world of beau-



tiful contradictions, where past meets future and craft meets modernity. A store where emerging designers will share shelf space with coveted labels.' Some of the brands housed at the Atelier include Anita Dongre, Kanika Goyal, Shanti Banaras, Bhavya Ramesh, Lovebirds and Rkivecty, to name a few. The *Palace Atelier* aims to embody the vibrancy and originality of India, through its diverse offerings in design, fashion, jewellery, art, and luxury. Serving as a dynamic hub, it provides a glimpse into the evolving landscape of 'India's creative and cultural scene.' Each section of the store has unique elements and therefore narrates different stories. The space is designed to create 'a world of new and old' from the space through its offering. For instance, the store will feature *vintage furniture*, from the palace mixed with the *new pieces*, exclusively designed for the store.

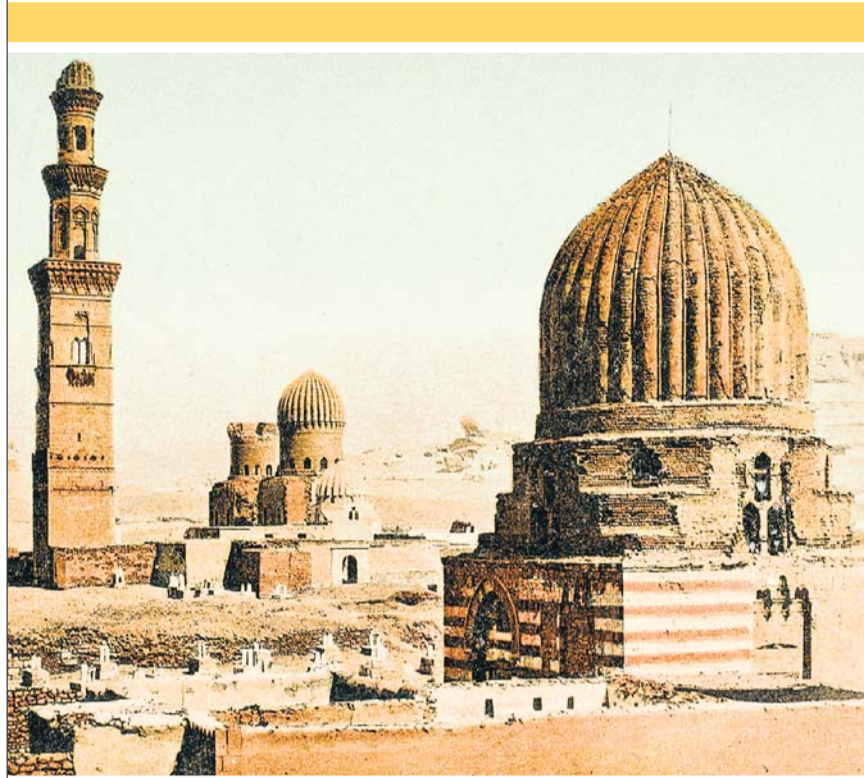
Strategically positioned within the first courtyard of the palace complex, *The Palace Atelier* beckons to both discerning travellers and locals alike. Its prime location ensures a seamless fusion of history and contemporary allure, drawing visitors from nearby attractions such as *Jantar Mantar* while offering breathtaking vistas of the regal *Mubarak Mahal*.

The newly opened store operates from 10:30 AM to 7 PM, welcoming visitors seven days a week, to explore its curated offerings.



Bloody History Played And Replayed

PART: 2



The tomb of the Mamluks, Cairo, Egypt.

It has been suggested that the *Mongols*, the invincible force of the time, were outclassed by the *Mamluks* on the battlefield. The *Mongols* were lightly armoured horse-archers, riding small steppe ponies and carrying little but 'home-made' weapons for close combat, whereas the heavily armoured *Mamluks*, on larger Arab-bred horses, could match them in their mounted archery and then, close and kill with the lance, club and sword. It has also been argued that the *Mongols* were lacking in organizational training whereas the *Mamluks* spent their lives in training. According to this view, the *Mongols* were most effective, only in terms of their mobility and their rate of fire. The *Mongols'* use of 'heavy' arrows, allied with the waves of galloping cohorts, each of which would fire four or five arrows into the enemy, would exhaust the opposition. Indeed, this together with outflanking manoeuvres, appears to have been the pattern of *Mongol attacks*. Each *Mongol* trooper had several fresh mounts 'ready' to ensure that the momentum of the attack was not lost.



Tripoli

Anjali Sharma
Senior journalist & wildlife enthusiast

his decisive battle, fought by the *Mamluks*, is well-recorded, and we do have some reliable bits to relate, today Louis took Damietta in the Nile delta, in June 1249, with an army of about 20,000 men. The Egyptian army withdrew further up the river. Louis started to march on Cairo in November, and should have gained an advantage from the death of the last Ayyubid sultan, As-Salih. Despite chaos in Cairo, during which the sultan's widow, Shaggar ad Durr took control, initially with Mamluk support, Louis and the Templars were roundly defeated by the *Mamluk Bahriya commander* Baybars at al-Mansourah (al-Mansur). Louis refused to fall back to Damietta and his troops starved, before a belated retreat, during which he was captured in March 1250. He was ransomed in return for Damietta and 400,000 livres. Louis left for Acre, where he attempted a long-distance negotiation with the *Mongols* (whom he may have believed to be the forces of the mythical Christian king Prester John) to assist him against the Muslims.

As-Salih had done much to promote the power of the *Mamluks* during his reign, perhaps too much, and the *Mamluks* eventually forced Shaggar ad Durr to marry their commander Aybeg Louis' crusade, therefore, proved as the catalyst for the *Mamluks*, to finally dispense with their Ayyubid overlords. The *Bahri Mamluk dynasty* was set up in 1250, with Aybeg as its first, though not uncontested, sultan.

However, Aybeg was later murdered in his bath on his wife's orders. More political murders followed including the beating to death of Shaggar ad Durr until Qutuz, the vice-regent, brought the factions

bloodily under his control.

In February 1258, the *Mongol* armies of Hulegu, grandson of Chinggis Khan and the brother of Kublai, later the Great Khan and Emperor of China, took Baghdad. The *Mongols* undertook a wholesale massacre. At least 250,000 were killed, but the intercession of Hulegu's wife spared the Nestorian Christians. *Mongol* troops kicked al-Musta'lim, the last *Abbasid caliph* and spiritual leader of Islam, to death after having rolled him in a carpet. The *Mongols* did not wish to spill royal blood directly. Aleppo fell almost as bloodily soon after, and it was widely reported, though, perhaps untrue, that the *Mongols* used 'cats with burning tails' sent running into the city, to end the siege by fire.

Damascus quickly capitulated, but one of those who escaped the *Mongols* was the *Mamluk general* Baybars (1223-77), who had been instrumental in the defeat of Louis in 1249. He fled back to Cairo. The *Mongols* completed their conquest of Syria by the near-annihilation of the *Assassin* sects and by over-running the kingdoms of Anatolia. Only Egypt, a few isolated cities in Syria and the Arabian Peninsula were left to Islam in its historic heartland. The *Mamluk sultanate*, in power, for less than a decade, had shown few signs of enduring. It was led by sultan Qutuz, who had seized power in November 1259, and was still consolidating his authority.

Hulegu sent envoys to Qutuz in Cairo, demanding his surrender. Qutuz killed the envoys and placed their heads on the gates of the city, considering treaty with the *Mongols* to be 'impossible' and that exile into the 'bloodthirsty desert' was equivalent to death. Qutuz mobilized and was joined by Baybars.

At this point, news arrived that the *Mongol* Great Khan Mongke had died, and Hulegu returned to Karakorum to support his branch of the family's claim on power. The remaining *Mongol* army in Syria was still formidable, numbering about 20,000 men under Hulegu's lieutenant, Kitbuqa. The *Mamluk* and *Mongol* armies encamped in Palestine in July 1260, and met at Ayn Jalut on 8 September.

#DYNASTIES



Mamluks, attacking at the Fall of Tripoli in 1289.

Initially, the *Mamluks* encountered a detached division of *Mongols* and drove them to the banks of the Orontes River. Kitbuqa was then drawn into a full engagement. Qutuz met the first onslaught with a small detachment of *Mamluks*. He feigned retreat and led the *Mongol* army into an ambush that was sprung from three sides. The battle lasted from dawn till midday. The *Mamluks* employed fire to trap *Mongols*, who were either trying to hide or flee the field. Kitbuqa was taken alive and summarily executed by Qutuz. According to the *Jami al-Tawarikh* (a 14th century Persian history), he swore his death would be revenged by Hulegu.



Bridge.

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medieval Middle East.' After the Ottomans had hanged the last *Mamluk sultan* in 1517, the loss of the *Mamluks* was universally lamented in Egypt, and many minor *Mamluk* functionaries remained to manage the Turks' new province.

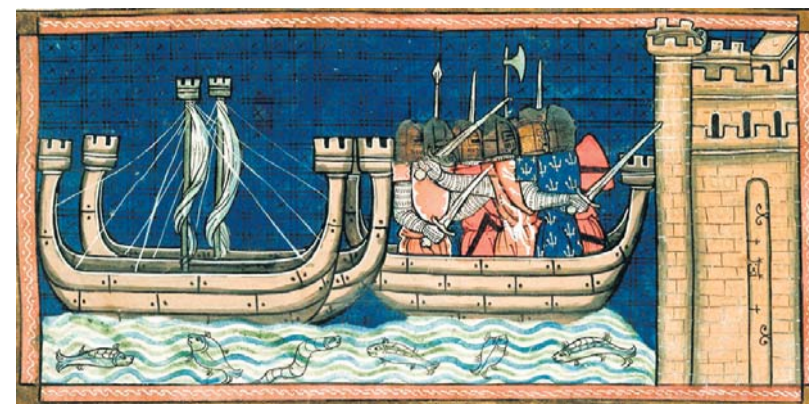
Baybars I was proved thorough and ruthless, and a gifted exponent of realpolitik. Even though, he was to follow his victory over the *Mongols*, with an assault on the remaining *Crusader* cities in Syria, he maintained friendly relations with *Norman* Sicily, and even though, he attempted to destroy what remained of *Assassin* power in Syria, he employed what was left of them to carry out political murders among both, his domestic rivals and enemy leaders. Indeed, the future king Edward I of England was fortunate to survive a 'Baybars' sponsored *Assassin* attempt' on his life, in Acre in 1271, during the Eighth Crusade.

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Mongols, the invincible force of the time, were outclassed by the *Mamluks* on the battlefield. The *Mongols* were lightly armoured horse-archers, riding small steppe ponies and carrying little but 'home-made' weapons for close combat, whereas the heavily armoured *Mamluks*, on larger Arab-bred horses, could match them in their mounted archery and then, close and kill with the lance, club and sword. It has also been argued that the *Mongols* were lacking in organizational training whereas the *Mamluks* spent their lives in training. According to this view, the *Mongols* were most effective, only in terms of their mobility and their rate of fire. The *Mongols'* use of 'heavy' arrows, allied with the waves of galloping cohorts, each of which would fire four or five arrows into the enemy, would exhaust the opposition. Indeed, this together with outflanking manoeuvres, appears to have been the pattern of

International Women's Day

Commemorating achievements in the ongoing struggle for gender equality, acknowledging progress while recognizing the road ahead, this day is, perhaps, especially important in parts of the world where women are still forced to deal with shocking inequality on a daily basis, and in need to raise awareness of the challenges and struggles faced by these women. Women's Day celebrates women's history, highlighting key events, milestones, and achievements, and aims to further promote and raise awareness of 'women's rights' and to achieve 'equal opportunity' status in all walks of life.



Communications within the *Mamluk state* were also well-organized. Harbours were improved and a four-day postal service established between Cairo and Damascus. Baybars opened up trade with the Spanish kingdom of *Aragon* and maintained friendly relations with the Italian maritime states. He also sent emissaries to the *Golden Horde*, the *Mongol Khanate of Russia*, with which Hulegu's *Ilkhanate* was involved in a protracted struggle. This helped to maintain the flow of slaves from the Black Sea region for the maintenance of the *Mamluk* system and also built up pressure on the *Ilkhanate*. Baybars also sent raiding parties into *Mongol* areas of Armenia, the southern *Taurus* Mountains and the *Seljuk Sultanate* of Rum. His priority, though, was to hold the *Mongols* at bay. Baybars destroyed the Christian lands of *Outremer*. In 1263, he captured Nazareth and destroyed the environs of Acre. In 1265, he captured Caesarea and Haifa. He then took the fortified town of Arsuf from the Knight Hospitallers and occupied the Christian town of Athlit. Safed was taken from the Knight Templars in 1266. He slaughtered the Christians, if they resisted, and had a particular enmity for the military orders. The Templars and Hospitallers received no quarter. Qalawun, his general and a later sultan, led an army into Armenia in 1266. Sis, the capital, fell in September 1266. With the fall of Armenia, the Crusader settlement of Antioch, first captured by Bohemond in 1098, was isolated. Baybars com-



menced his siege on 14 May 1268 and the city fell, four days later.

Acre was attacked again in 1267, but withstood the assault. Jaffa fell in March 1268, and Beaufort the following month. In 1271, Baybars took the White Castle and Krak des Chevaliers from the Templars and Hospitallers, after a month-long siege, and added to its already awesome fortifications. The Christians had shown that such powerful fortresses could break up insurgencies, make up for a paucity of forces and threaten communication lines, and the *Mamluks* followed the same policy.

Baybars may have feared an alliance between the *Mongols* and Christian powers. The *Mongols*, certainly, tried to achieve this and in 1271, Edward Plantagenet, during the Eighth Crusade, was able to convince them to send a sizeable force into Syria, to reduce the 'Mamluk pressure' on the remaining *Crusader* cities. But after the failure of the Crusade, the last cities soon fell. Tripoli was taken by the army of Sultan Qalawun, Baybar's successor, in 1289 and the *Crusader* settlement of Acre fell in 1291. This effectively made the *Syrian coast* an impossible beach-head for Christians. There would be no more *Crusader* attempts to regain the *Holy Land* or Syria.

How history catches up

The *Mamluk dynasty* was now secure, and it lasted until the 16th century. Power struggles prevented continuity at the centre, and even after the *Crassian Bahri Mamluk* seized power from the *Bahri Mamluks* in the mid-14th century, factionalism and insecurity continued unabated. The *Mamluks* managed successfully to re-establish their Syrian powerbases, following the brief but hugely destructive invasion in the early 1400s, but the dynasty had been left weakened by the Black Death, which had made repeated onslaughts through the Middle East, from the mid-13th century and it soon lost the valuable trade revenues of Syria after the Portuguese opened up Europe's ocean trade and the route to India, in the late 15th century. In the end, it took two, only two brief battles, for the Ottoman Sultan Selim I to decimate the last *Mamluk army* to take the field just outside Cairo, near the Pyramids, in 1517. The Ottoman army used firearms and artillery, but the *Mamluks* rose out to meet them with bow, lance and sword. History had caught up with them.

Selim I continued to employ a *Mamluk* as viceroy, however, and recruitment of *Crassians* as 'tax farmers' continued until the new age arrived, in Egypt, with Napoleon's army in 1798. Indeed, 'faction building and *Mamluk* infighting' were still characteristic of *Egyptian politics* in the

early 19th century. Although, warfare was the primary concern of these slave soldiers, their contribution to *Islamic art and architecture* was immense. Many of the sultans were remarkable builders, a fine example being *Qalawun's mausoleum* complex in Cairo, which includes a mosque, a religious school and hospital. The dynasty's achievements in the arts of the book, especially of the *Qur'an*, are also very fine. The importance of fighting and training meant that the 'art of the armourer' was highly prized. *Mamluk* armour was decorated and intricate, helmets, leggings, spurs and shields often carried inscriptions such as, 'Father of the poor and miserable, killer of the unbelievers and the polytheists, reviver of justice among all.'

An offshoot of this artifice was high-quality metalwork, such as candlesticks, lamps, ewers and basins, highly decorated with musicians and dancers, warriors and images of the hunt. Intricate decoration of *Mamluk glassware* can also be seen in mosque lamps, many carrying the *Qur'anic* inscription, 'The lamp enclosed in glass: the glass as it were a brilliant star.' A suitable testament to a dynasty that prevailed against the most powerful empire of the medieval age.

Concluded.
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#INSIGHT

Shiva Tattva

Maha Shivratri, This night brings a sense of deep serenity and benevolence



Maha Shivratri, the grand night of devotion and fasting for Lord Shiva devotees is here. One of the most important Hindu festivals, the festival is celebrated with great fervour and enthusiasm, across the country with slightly varying traditions.

On this day, devotees observe a day-long fast, meditate, visit Shiva temples, recite mantra and prayers, and perform rituals associated with Lord Shiva worship. The festival is the time to purify body, mind and soul and for fresh beginnings. Observing a day-long fast on Mahashivratri is of great spiritual significance, as it is equivalent to worshipping Shiva the entire year and can also help one attain 'salvation' and get rid of all sins.

Observing this 'vrat' can help one progress on path of 'inner peace and spirituality' and achieve all worldly goals, too.

Maha Shivratri is most important of all 'Masik Shivratis' that are observed every month. The festival falls on the fourteenth day of the dark (waning) half of the lunar month of Phalgun or Magha, a day before the new moon.

History of Maha Shivratri

There are many legends associated with the observance of the festival, that range from sacred union of Shiva and Parvati to the tale of Lord Shiva, consuming the Halahala poison, each adding depth to the significance of this auspicious observance.

As per one legend, Maha Shivratri is the night when Shiva performed the heavenly dance of creation, preservation and destruction. It is believed that Lord Shiva con-

sumed Halahala poison produced during 'Samudra Manthan' to save the world. Since, he held the poison in his neck, it turned blue and he came to be known as Neelkantha.

However, the most popular legend remains the one that describes 'Lord Shiva's union with Mata Parvati.' Legend has it that Goddess Parvati, in her various incarnations, performed intense penance to win affection of Lord Shiva.

Finally, impressed by her devotion and perseverance, Shiva agreed to marry Parvati and this divine union is celebrated as 'Maha Shivratri.'

Significance

The significance of the festival is greater than what is popularly known. Fasting during Maha Shivratri helps overcome ignorance and attain self-realisation. By reflecting on its true nature, the soul attains 'salvation' from the 'chakra of birth and death.' Observing this fast with sincerity can help absolve 'past sins and negative karma' and give one a new direction in life. Thus, Maha Shivratri is an opportunity to introspect and renew one's connection with the divine to evolve 'spiritually.'

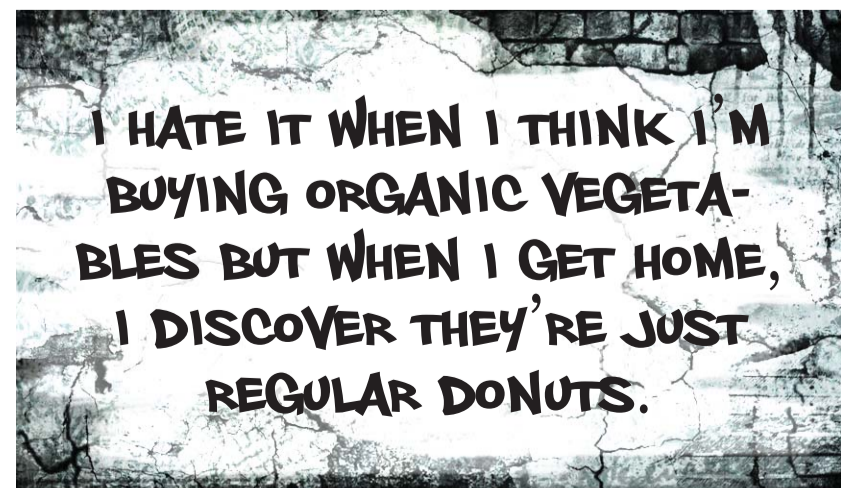
From Kashmir to Tamil Nadu, the festival is celebrated with unique traditions and great dedication by Hindus. From *malas*, *jagrats* to day-long fast, devotees pray and connect with Lord Shiva in their own way.

It is common for devotees to pray all night and participate in *jagrats* as it is believed that this can help overcome darkness and ignorance.

Maha Shivratri finds mention in ancient texts like *Skanda Purana*, *Linga Purana*, and *Padma Purana*.



THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman