



**200 YEARS LATER**  
**RETRACING FRANCIS BUCHANAN'S JOURNEY OF 1800-01**  
**THROUGH PARTS OF SOUTHERN INDIA**

**Chapter II: Srirangapatna and its Vicinity**

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## Srirangapatna (Anglicized Seringapatam)



*Geographical Overview of Srirangapatna:*

Buchanan first visited Srirangapatna on May 19, 1800, where he met Krishnamacharya Purnaiah, the Diwan of Mysore. Purnaiah was a military strategist and administrator who served as the first Dewan of Mysore. He played a key role in restoring the rule of the Kingdom of Mysore to the Wadiyar dynasty. After Tipu Sultan's death, he continued to advise Lakshmi Devi, the queen regent, and the newly installed monarch, Krishnaraja Wodeyar III. Previously, he had served in the inner cabinet of Tipu Sultan and Hyder Ali.

Buchanan mentioned that the town of Srirangapatna was very poor. He noted that the streets were narrower and more disorganized than in any place he had seen since leaving Bengal.

Srirangapatna is situated at the western or upper end of an island surrounded by the River Cauvery, stretching about 4.8 km from west to east and about 1.6 km in breadth. The eastern end of the island is occupied by the suburb of Ganjam. Srirangapatna is the headquarters of a taluk, located between the Mysore-Bangalore highway and the railway line. The town derives its name from the presiding deity of the Sri Ranganatha Temple.

The original town was built during the Hoysala period and was later ruled by the Vijayanagar feudatory kings. It was eventually administered in the name of the Vijayanagara sovereigns by a viceroy known as Sri Ranga Raya. Tirumala Raya, the last viceroy, was a relative of the royal family. In 1610, when Raja Wodeyar of Mysore took possession of Srirangapatna, it became the capital of the Rajas of Mysore and continued to be the seat of government under Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan until its capture by the British in 1799.

## Wellesley Bridge



This bridge was constructed following Buchanan's visit in 1804. Built of stone, the bridge spans 512 feet and features square stone pillars and corbels. Its foundation is securely anchored in solid rock, with each row of stones topped by a long stone laid level over the others. Additional stones are placed longitudinally on top, forming a continuous structure along the length of the bridge. The road surface is covered with gravel and mud, while the sides are finished with lime plaster.

Until the construction of a new bridge downstream in 1967, this bridge served as the primary route for vehicular traffic between Bengaluru and the Mysuru region. The bridge, dedicated to Marquis Wellesley, the Governor-General of British India and brother of Arthur Wellesley, who participated in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War, remains a historical landmark.

## Ranganatha Swamy Temple:



This majestic temple was constructed in three stages: the innermost part was built during the Hoysala period, followed by additions in the Vijayanagar era, and later by the Mysore kings.



## Dungeons:



*Colonel Bailey's Dungeon*

There are two dungeons in Srirangapatna:

**a. Colonel Bailey's Dungeon**

This dungeon was used by Tipu Sultan to imprison British officers. It is located near Tipu's memorial. Colonel Bailey was the only British officer who died in this dungeon, unable to survive the harsh conditions, and it was later named after him. Another version suggests that Colonel Baillie, the commanding officer of the British forces at the Battle of Pollilur (1780), was imprisoned here after his troops were defeated in the First Mysore War.

**b. Thomas Inman's Dungeon**

Located in the north-eastern corner of the fort, this dungeon was discovered in 1885 by Thomas Inman, an engineer, and was named after him. It was used to imprison Dondia Wagh, a Maratha warrior, along with other Indian prisoners.

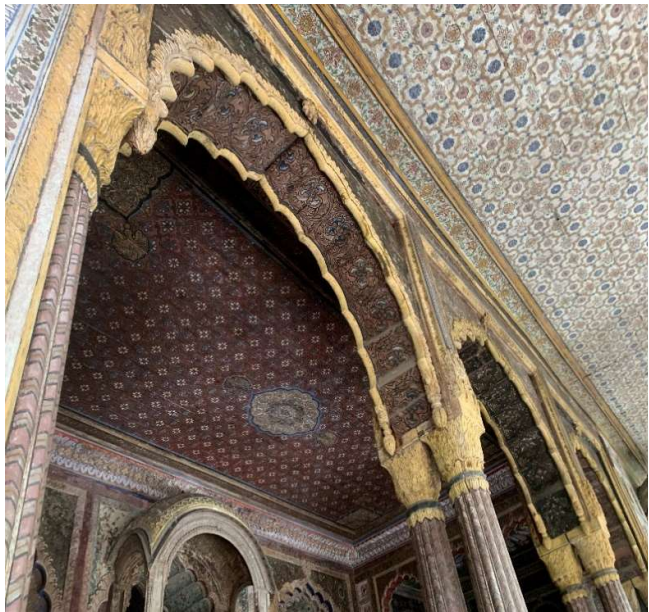
**Jumma Masjid**



It is a grand structure with two lofty minarets, noted for their majesty and grace. It was constructed by Tipu Sultan on top of the Anjaneya Temple (source: Mandya 1967 Gazetteer) after filling in the original ground floor.



## Darya Daulat Bagh







Clockwise from top left: 1. Wooden pillars with trefoil arches, adorned with intricate wall paintings; 2 & 3. The west wall featuring a large-scale battle scene depicting Colonel Bailey's defeat at the Battle of Pollilur; 4. The east wall illustrating scenes from the courts of various Rajas & Palegars.

On the south bank of the River Cauvery, Tipu Sultan built a large garden, which he called Darya Daulat Bagh, or the Garden of the Wealth of the Sea. In its centre, he constructed a summer palace in 1784, which served as his favourite retreat from business. The graceful proportions and the arabesque work in rich colours with which it is adorned render the palace highly attractive.

The building, which is a fine specimen of Saracenic architecture, stands on a square platform about five feet high. It features wooden pillars with trefoil arches. The first floor has a small hall with balconies, where Tipu Sultan used to receive envoys and guests. There are interesting paintings on the walls; the west wall displays a large-scale battle scene representing Colonel Bailey's defeat at the Battle of Pollilur. The east walls depict scenes from the courts of several Rajas and the Palegars. It is said that the paintings were defaced by Tipu Sultan prior to the siege of 1799, but they were later restored by Colonel Wellesley, who occupied the palace for some time.

Buchanan mentioned a false gilding of the flowers and other decorations, where the gilding resembles a grain of gold. However, it is not actual gold; the artisans use lead and other ingredients to create this effect. Buchanan described the process of making false gilded paper.

*"Daria adaulut baug was Tippoo's favourite retreat from business. It walls are covered with paintings which represents the manner in which two Mussulman princes, Hyder and Tippoo, appeared in public processions; the defeat of Colonel Bailie; and the costume of various casts or professions, that are common in Mysore. In these paintings the figures are much in the style of caricatures, although they retain a strong likeness of native countenance and manner."*



## Gumbaz



*The dome of the Gumbaz, adorned with striking tiger stripe patterns, reflecting Tipu Sultan's iconic emblem.*

At the eastern end of the island, towards the south, there is a mausoleum built by Tipu Sultan for his father, where his mother is also buried. The interior is painted in lacquer with the tiger stripes adopted by Tipu for his military uniforms.

### Shahar Ganjam or Ganjam:

Situated at the eastern end of the island of Srirangapatna, this suburb is part of Srirangapatna town. This town was established by Tipu Sultan, who is said to have transported twelve thousand families from Sira to provide it with an industrial population, as Sira had been a seat of the Mughal Empire.

### Tipu's Lalbagh (Laul baug)

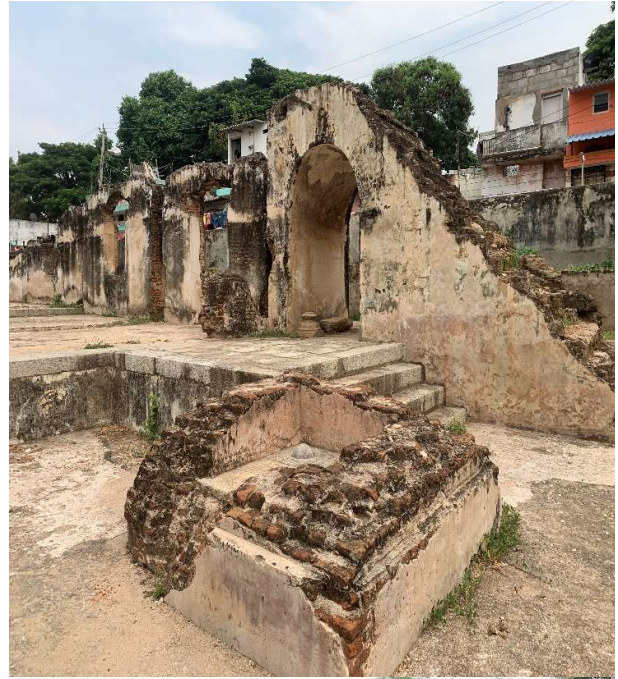
*The Palace at the laul baug, which occupies the lower end of the island, though built of mud, possesses a considerable degree of elegance, and is the handsomest native building that I have ever seen. Near to it stands the mausoleum of Hyder, where his son also reposes in state.*

*- Francis Buchanan, Chapter II*

Buchanan mentioned the Lalbagh near the Tipu and Hyder mausoleum, but now nothing remains. It appears that the British destroyed the building.



## Lal Mahal-Tipu sultan Palace



*Ruins of Tipu's Palace, also known as Lal Mahal: Once home to a grand Audience Hall (40'x20'), Zenana (women's quarters), and multiple rooms for grain storage, the palace was dismantled between 1807-1809 AD during Colonel Wellesley's rule.*





*Additional views of the Lal Mahal Palace ruins: Showcasing remnants of the once grand structure, including fragmented walls and foundations that hint at the palace's former splendour before its dismantling between 1807-1809 AD*

The ruins of Lal Mahal are situated about 150 meters northeast of the Ranganatha Swamy Temple. Buchanan mentioned this palace as a very large building with handsome apartments that served as warehouses for a variety of goods, as Tipu was also a merchant. This palace was dismantled between 1807 and 1809 AD during Colonel Wellesley's period.

### **Agriculture produce of Srirangapatna and its vicinity:**

Rice and ragi are the main staple foods for the people of Srirangapatna. Due to the proximity of the Cauvery River, paddy cultivation is one of the primary crops. Sugarcane farming, supported by the canal system from the River Cauvery, is often used in local jaggery production. Other common crops include coconut and banana, which thrive due to the irrigated system and favourable conditions.

In terms of vegetable produce, tomatoes, brinjal (eggplant), beans, lady's finger (okra), green chilies, and radishes are grown in the nearby vicinity, as documented by Buchanan. However, the only crops that seem to be missing in this region nowadays are navane (foxtail millet), saame (little millet, species: *Panicum sumatrense*), and kadle (chickpea, *Cicer arietinum*).



**Rice harvesting, preservation, and the method of preparing rice for use by soaking.**



*Mechanized paddy harvesting in action at a paddy field in Navooru, Belthangady—showcasing modern agricultural techniques. (Representative image)*

Buchanan documented the rice harvest process at Srirangapatna, which at the time was done using traditional methods relying on manpower. Workers used the *Kudugolu* (in Kannada) or *Cudugalu*, a hand sickle tool, to harvest the paddy. Afterward, the harvested paddy was carried to a flat area called a *Kana* in Kannada, where the surface was smeared with a mixture of clay, cow dung, and water to ensure it stayed clean and free of dirt. The paddy was then spread on the thrashing floor and trodden by bullocks to separate the grain. Once threshed, the paddy was piled into a heap called a *Rashi* (or *Rashy*), which was marked with clay and carefully covered with straw. A trench was dug around the heap to protect it from water. For twenty to thirty days, until the division of the crop between the government and the cultivator took place, the grain was left in the heap.





*An ancient method of storing food grains in underground (in dilapidated condition), photographed at Nidugal Fort, Pavagada—offering a glimpse into historical preservation techniques.*





Left to right: 1. Ancient grain storage in a wooden box, captured as a representation image from Gurupura, Jangama Mutt, Mangalore; 2. Traditional method of preserving paddy in a straw bag known as a 'Mudy,' represented in an image captured from Moodabidre.



Traditional Seed Storage in Waday

The grain is always preserved in its husk. The paddy is stored in *Kanaja*, a type of storage pit or room. When the paddy needs to be processed into rice, the *Kanaja* (or *Canajas*) is securely floored with planks to protect it from bandicoots and rats. The storehouse has no openings for air, except for a small one used for loading and unloading the grain.

Another method of storing or preserving paddy involves using small cylindrical containers made by potters, called *Waday* (or *Woday*). The mouth of the container is covered with an inverted pot, and the paddy is drawn out as needed from a small hole at the bottom. There is also another method of preserving paddy using a type of bag made from paddy straw, called a *Mudy*. The paddy can be kept for up to two years without alteration, but beyond that, it becomes unfit for consumption.

Nowadays, only a few farmers continue to harvest by employing manpower in the field, as this practice is declining due to the rise of mechanized farming and a shortage of labor. The use of harvester machines has become common, as these machines can single-handedly perform all operations: cutting the crop, feeding it into the threshing mechanism, threshing, cleaning, and discharging the grain into a bulk wagon or directly into bags.

## Method of preparing rice for use.



A woman beating paddy using wooden pestles, typically four feet long and three inches in diameter, with iron-shod ends. (Representative image from Tamil Nadu)

Buchanan documented that there are two methods of processing paddy into rice: one by boiling and the other by simply beating. Boiling, in turn, is done in two ways. The first method, used to prepare rice for the Rajas (kings), is called 'Aydu Nuchu Akki' (anglicized as 'Aydu Nugu Aky'), meaning 'five-piece rice.' This rice was reserved for the Rajas and other luxurious individuals. It was always prepared by royal families and never made for sale.

The other process of preparing rice by boiling is in a common manner, called *Cudapal Akki* ( *Cudapal Aky*), which is used by the Shudras or lower classes who can afford it. Both of the above methods are referred to as parboiled rice preparation.

The other process, without boiling, is used by Brahmins and is called *Hasi Akki* ( *Hashy Aky*). This method involves beating the paddy with wooden pestles, which are generally about four feet in length and three inches in diameter, with the ends shod in iron.

At present, the boiling process of converting paddy to rice is no longer followed in the Mysore region. Instead, after thoroughly drying the paddy grains, they are sent to rice mills, where machines remove the hull and bran from the grains to produce polished rice. Further milling by machines applies pressure to rub the grains together, which

removes the bran layers and reveals white or polished rice. The boiling process retains more nutrients compared to white rice.

In the coastal regions of Karnataka, such as Dakshina Kannada and Udupi, as well as in the Kerala region, the parboiled process is still used to produce palatable rice, known as *Kuchalakki* in Kannada and *Matta rice* in Malayalam.



*Ragi mudde served with Avarekalu (Hyacinth beans) curry, topped with ghee. Ragi, a staple food of the Old Mysore region, continues to be a dietary mainstay for all classes, alongside rice.*

*"Ragy is always ground into flour,as wanted by means of hand mill called Visacallu (Bisakallu) In this operation it loses nothing by measure;so that a candaca of ragy is reckoned contain as much nourishment as two candacas of paddy.The flour is dresses in various ways.The most common are, a kind of pudding called sangutty (Ragi mudde) and two kinds of cakes called Ruty(Rotti) and Doshy(Dosay),both of which are fried in oil."*

-Francis Buchanan, ChapterII





*Clockwise from top left: 1. Defensive fort near the north-eastern corner; 2. Fort near the Delhi Gate; 3. Water Gate Archway at the northern end, where Tipu Sultan's body was found in May 1799; 4. Obelisk in Srirangapatna, a memorial erected in 1907 during the reign of Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV, commemorating the English soldiers who died during the Siege of Srirangapatna in 1799*

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