

PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

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A high-end monthly magazine

Hippie hangouts in India

Roads to Zaskar Valley

Haunted destinations of India

Barefoot in Bali

7 insanely scenic train journeys

Explore
Ahmedabad
India's first
UNESCO World Heritage City





PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

September 2017

Gadi bula rahi he...

"Railway stations in India stand like fiercely independent states within cities and towns, insulated from the local flavour, as if they are territories of a common colonial master sitting in Delhi, which they are anyway. Such is their sameness that if you remove the yellow slab that identifies the station and all the other signboards, you will have very little idea where you are. All you will know is that you are in a country where tea is available round the clock and whose inhabitants have two primary occupations - travelling and waiting," writes author-journalist Bishwanath Ghosh, in his book, *Chai, Chai: Travels in Places Where You Stop But Never Get Off*.

While railway stations appear like twins that are dressed alike, the journey by train invariably offers an unparalleled feel about the diverse world that we stay in, often with drastic difference in language, people, culture, food and what not at a distance of every 100 km. The vibrancy of trains has also been the perfect setting for drama, intrigue, mystery, romance and even a murder for Indian cinema for years. From Pakeezah's popular dialogue "Aapke paon dekhe, bahut hasheen hai. Inhe zameen par mat utariyega, maile ho jayenge," by the veteran actor Raj Kumar admiring actress Mina Kumari's feet in a train to the climax scene of the 1995-flick *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge* with the legendary words "Jaa Simran Jaa, Jee le apni zindagi!", the trains or railway stations have been part of many hit films.

In this issue, we present '7 Insanely Scenic Train Journeys in India' that will take you to the splendid landscapes of the country. Pick a destination of your choice and get on the train to experience the most exhilarating journey with great views en route. If choosing the right destination for you is a concern, read our 'Hippie Hangouts in India' for a laidback vacation or go through the '10 Haunted Destinations of India' to grab your Ghostbuster's gear for some supernatural experiences. If adventure is on your mind, jump to the 'Roads to Zaskar Valley' - India's remote valley to cut the cord with the routine and indulge in the spellbinding nature, vibrant culture, sacred monasteries and generous people.

Read on!



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Have some suggestions for us?

Go ahead and send us your ideas, valuable opinions or topics you would like to see more coverage on.

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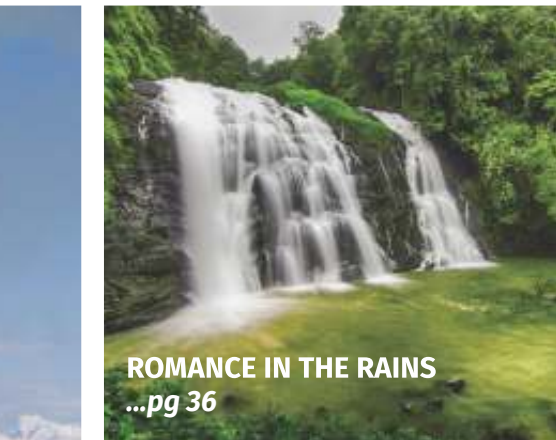
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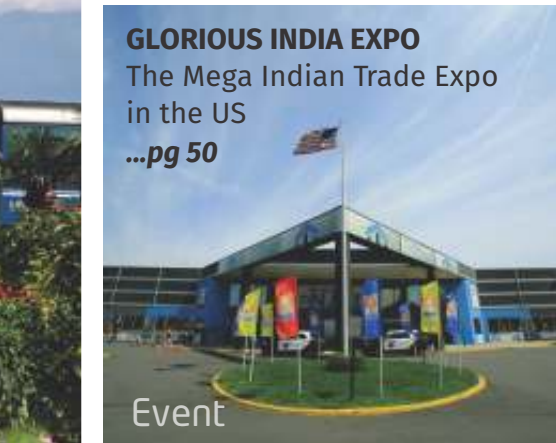
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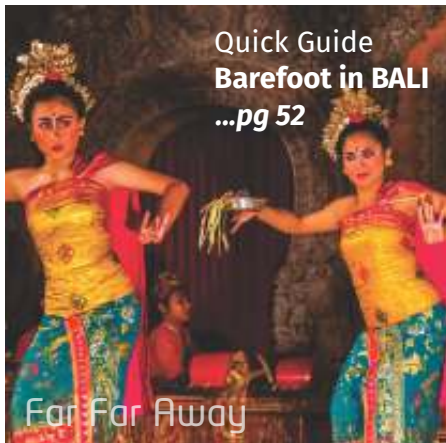


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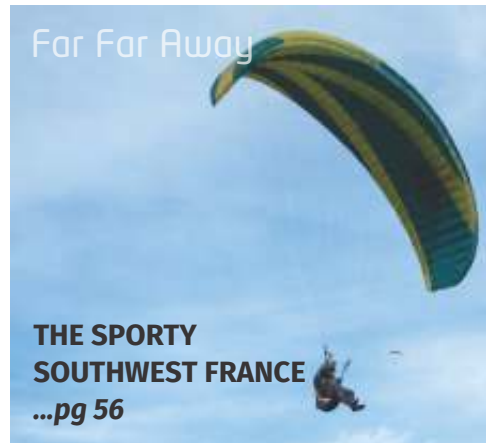
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Far Far Away


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Incredible India

ROADS TO
ZANSKAR VALLEY

In the middle of nowhere





Zaskar Valley is one of the most secluded parts of India. Located in the heart of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, it is like a Shangri-La. Though, Chadar Trek across the frozen Zaskar River is popular among tourists during the winter months, the place has many other attractions too.

More than the destination itself, a road trip from Kargil to Zaskar Valley is spellbinding. The roads to Zaskar Valley are very challenging. However, the sights of huge green fields, high mountains, beautiful monasteries and lovely people on the way are totally worth it.

The Drang-Drung Glacier - the second largest glacier in India



1

The road from Kargil goes down south passing by the beautiful Suru Valley. On the way, there are some mosques in the backdrop of scenic landscapes, peek-a-boo moments with the Nun Kun peaks and magnificent views of the Parkachik glacier.

After approx. 127km of journey, the roads will lead you to Rangdum - a small but scenic village. Little ahead is the 200-year old Rangdum Monastery. The serenity of this place is indescribable. It's worth spending some time here. The panoramic views from the monastery is breathtaking.

25 km ahead of Rangdum is the Penzi La, located at a height of 14,436 ft. above sea level. The pass is rightly called the 'Gateway to Zaskar'. This is the only way that connects the people of Zaskar

to the outside world. As you move ahead, the culture changes significantly. The Buddhist chortems are present all around the valley.

Further beyond is the surreal Drang-Drung glacier, the second largest in India after Siachen. It looks like a super-highway to heaven.

Go further down to the plains of Zaskar valley. The rough roads will test your driving skills. In fact, in some stretches, there are no roads at all. The seasoned drivers use their experience and guesswork to find out the right trail to go on.

After passing through some scenic landscapes, Padum is a stopover. It is the administrative center of Zaskar and the only town. Explore the vast landscapes and monasteries of this region.

1. Bardhan Gompa is a 17th-century Buddhist monastery located on a rock outgrowth beside the Lungnak River

2. A nun during Karsha Gustor Festival

3. A monk wearing traditional headgear during the Karsha Festival

4. A religious mask dance at the Karsha festival



*5. A monk blows his conch
as a part of the ritual*

*6. Playful young monks
practise somersaulting.
After all, they are just kids*





6



5

CLIMATE

Zaskar is a semi-arid desert in high altitudes. During the summer months, day temperature varies from 20 to 35 degrees. At night, the temperature drops significantly. It is extremely cold in winters and temperature drops to about minus 25 degrees. All the roads are closed during the winters and Zaskar is totally cutoff from the mainland.

ROUTE

The best way is to fly to Srinagar or Leh and take the road to Kargil and then down to Zaskar. Starting from Srinagar is little easier for human body as it is at a much lower altitude than Leh.



7



8



9

HOW TO GO

The only way is to hire a taxi, a self-driven car can be a big challenge as there are hardly any roads on some places and needs lots of off-roading. Solo travelling can be difficult as there are very less public transport. There are fully packed shared taxis available, which leave Kargil at a specific time.



10



11



12

7. A typical house and a chortem in the Zanskar valley

8. A Ladakhi lady being honoured with a kata (sacred cloth) for her contribution to the society during a festival

9. A Ladakhi lady drinks Chhaang, a local beer made of barley, millet or rice during a festival in Rangdum

10. Landscape with Rangdum village in the background

11. An old lady at Sani monastery

12. A monk performing a mask dance at Stoday monastery during the annual gustor



WHEN TO GO

July is a good time to visit Zaskar Valley. The best will be if you can include a festival during your trip. The Ladakh festival calendar has a listing of all the festivals in the valley. During festivals, people from far away villages visit Zaskar. Some walk for about 3 days to reach here. The festivals have a mask dance called Chham, where the monks dance with the beats of drums and trumpets.

WHERE TO STAY

Though Padum has good accommodations, there are very limited places to stay in Rangdum. There are some basic homestays. The Nun Kun Camp, Rangdum is the only decent place to stay. It's located right below the Rangdum monastery. Kargil has a good range of hotels for lodging.



TIPS

Carry packed food and enough water with you for the journey as there are hardly any places to eat or drink on the way.



15

If photography tour is on your mind...

In Ladakh, there are immense opportunities for photographers – the landscapes, culture, monasteries and people.

Photography is allowed in most monasteries, some with a nominal fee. However, look out for signboards mentioning about photography. In some monasteries, it is not allowed. Remember, the purpose of a monastery is to pray at peace. Clicking too many pictures makes the place noisy.

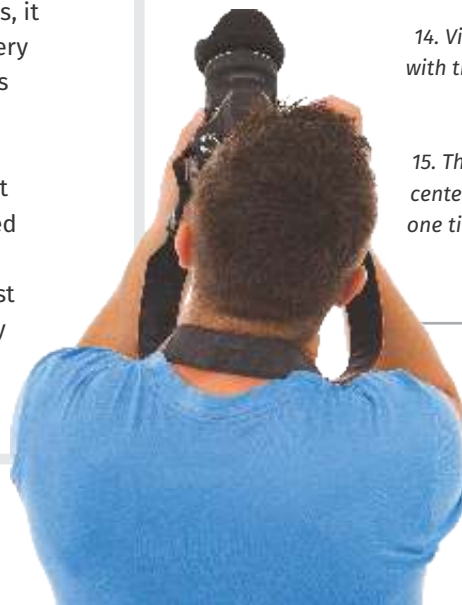
Do not use flash inside monasteries. It is very distracting and sometimes offending. Besides that, it can also damage the old and rare paintings displayed there.

Always ask before you shoot people. Though most people are very friendly, some may not like it or may charge a fee. 📷

13. A stretch of field as seen from the Stongday monastery high above

14. Views from Zangla Fort with the amazingly textured mountains

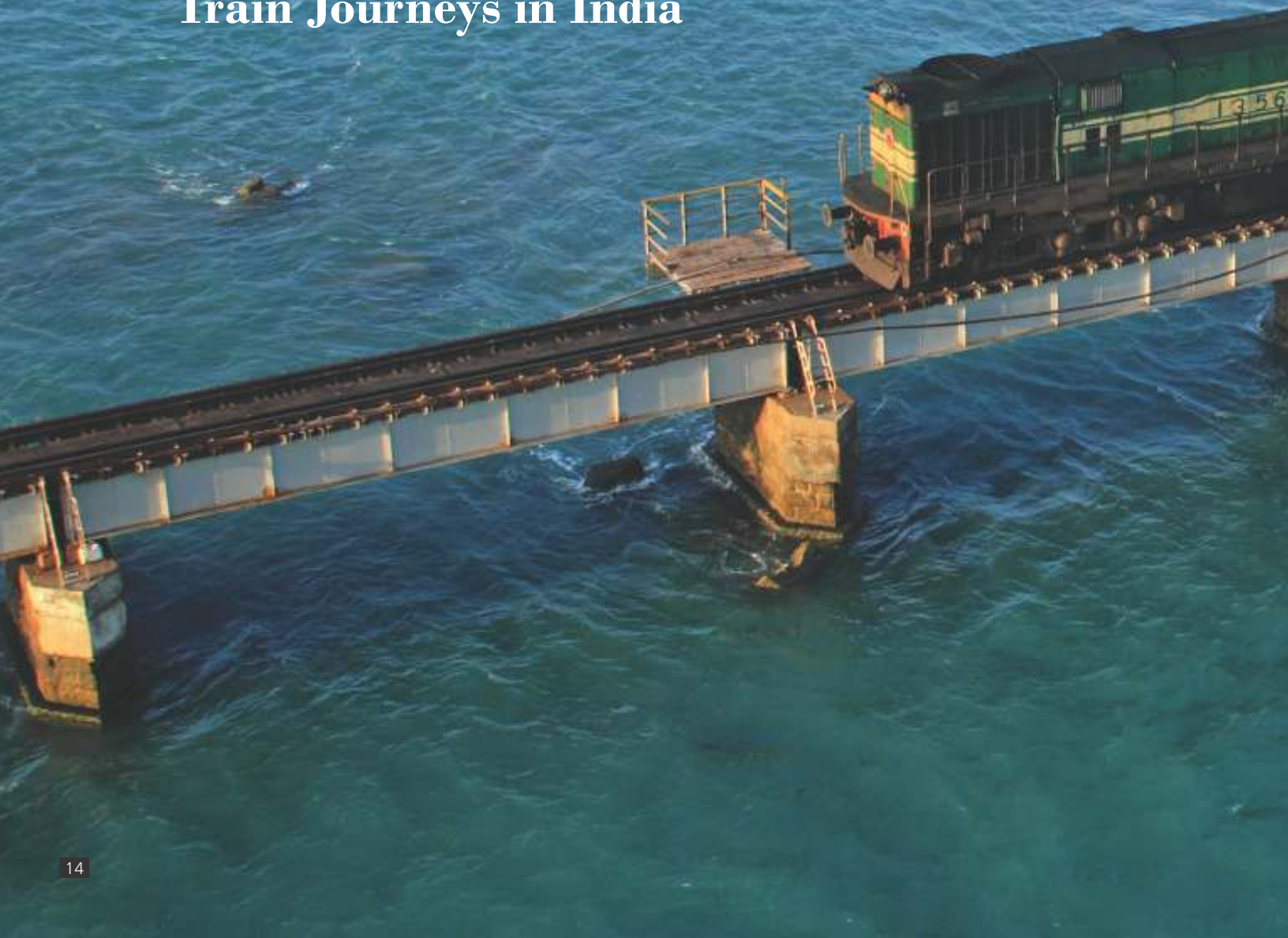
15. The Zangla fort was the center of administration at one time before it moved to Padum



Incredible India

THE RAILISH JOURNEY

7 Insanely Scenic
Train Journeys in India





“There isn’t a train I wouldn’t take,
No matter where it’s going

-Edna St. Vincent Millay

No journey in India is complete without the train journeys. Spread like a giant spider web, the Indian Railways covers approximately 65,000 km and carries 30 million passengers a day. Joining width and length of the country, the railways is touching the unique element of the nation – its diversity.

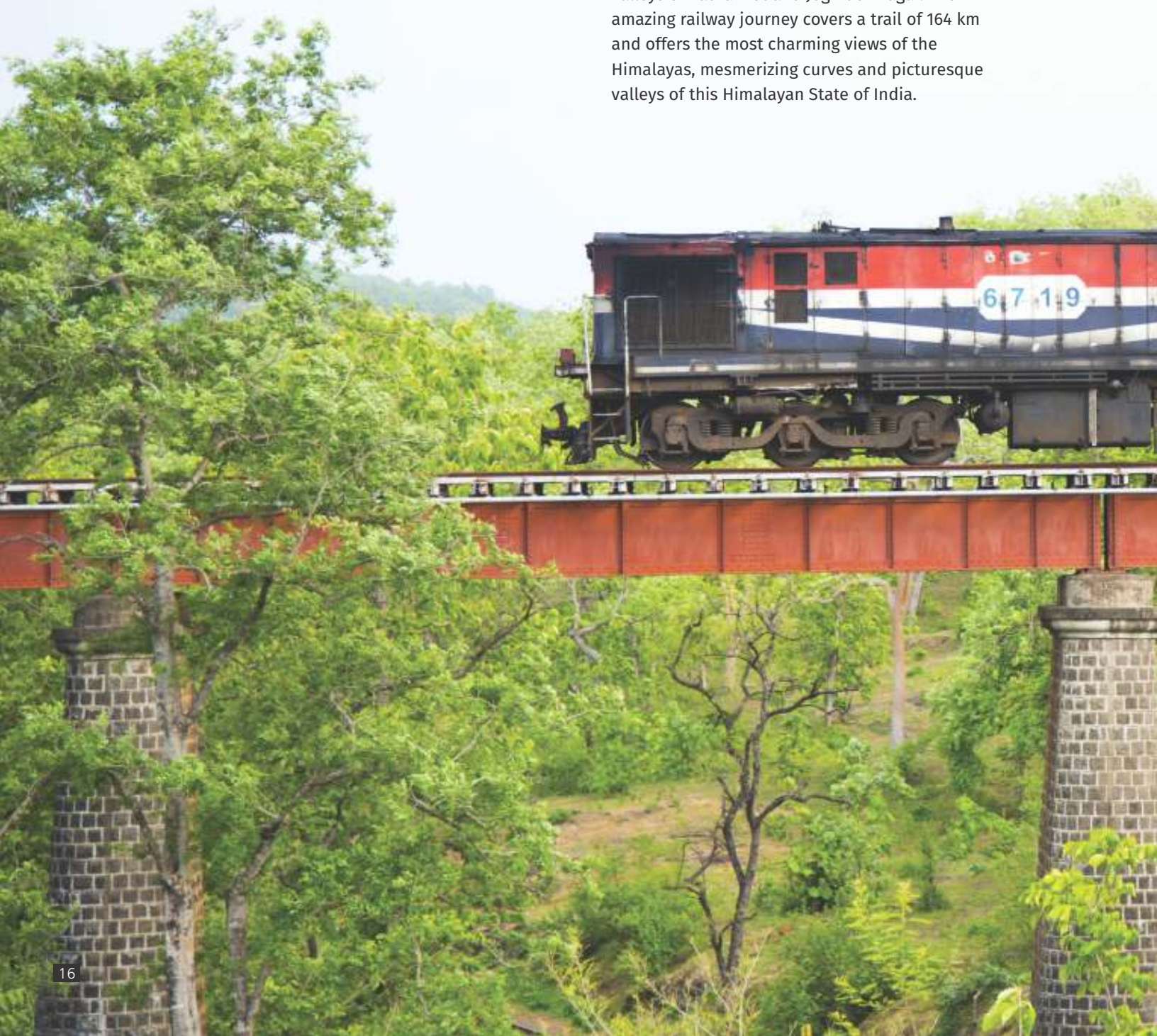
So if you're a traveller (and not a tourist) who is craving to sneak into undiscovered cultures, gaze into unexplored landscapes and soak in the refreshing air, relish a 'railish' journey as we bring you some of the most enthralling train routes in India that offer totally scenic landscapes – from wide seas, steep mountain slopes to narrow valleys. Let's go through the list and get a ringside view of India's most gorgeous landscapes.



Kangra Valley Railway

Himachal Pradesh is unquestionably a bliss for the travellers. The snow-covered peaks of the Himalayas, dense green forests, enchanting passes and vibrant vistas at Himachal lure adventure, nature and leisure travellers from different corners of the globe.

Kangra Valley is one of the major attractions of Himachal. If you want to feel the thrills of deep gorges, river bridges and amazing flora, Kangra Valley Railway operates between the picturesque valleys of Pathankot and Joginder Nagar. The amazing railway journey covers a trail of 164 km and offers the most charming views of the Himalayas, mesmerizing curves and picturesque valleys of this Himalayan State of India.





Konkan Railway

The railway line runs along the Konkan coast of India from the Village Tokur, a small town in coastal district - Dakshina Kannada in Karnataka state, to the train station, Roha in the state of Maharashtra through Goa, along the west coast of India and the mountain chain called 'Western Ghats'.

Konkan Railway's journey through the Ghats provides stunning views of Arabian Sea beaches, distant mountains, mysterious tunnels, the green horizon merging with the orange skyline during sunset and stormy falls, while traveling from Mumbai to Goa. Do not forget to take out your handycam or camera and capture the highlights of the amazing journey.



Tamil Nadu - Rameshwaram

Ever imagined yourself surrounded by nothing but the expansive water bodies? Train travel from Mandapam in Tamil Nadu to Rameshwaram on Pamban Island will give you all the 'Life of Pi' thrills and adventure apart from calm and serenity.

One of the most beautiful train routes in India intersects the ocean through the second longest bridge of India, the Palk Strait, which is the only route that connects mainland India to Pamban Island. The bridge, the second longest in India, is touted as one of the most thrilling train routes of India.







Jaipur - Jaisalmer

The royal Rajasthan trip will get an extra bright shade with a train trip from Jaipur to Jaisalmer. If you're opting for the 'Desert Queen', it will take 6 hours to reach the destination.

The journey through the desert offers diversified topography like the various shades of golden, grazing camels in the unending desert expanses, vegetation and scattered settlements of the desert inhabitants. In all, the train trip will present the feel of desert safari before reaching the land of the Golden Fort.



Darjeeling Himalayan Railway

(New Jalpaiguri-Darjeeling)

Initially built as a tramway to exploit the price-difference of potatoes between Darjeeling and Siliguri, the UNESCO World Heritage Site – fondly known as 'Toy Train' takes its lovers through the scenic hills and mountains on the way at a speed of 12 km/h. The 2ft narrow-gauge blue train curves around tea plantation, rolls alongside breezy forests and takes its passengers amid the swirls of cloud drifting up the hillside. Famed for its loops, reverses and spiral at Agony Point, the little toy train is a hit among the locals and tourists.



Nilgiri Mountain Railway

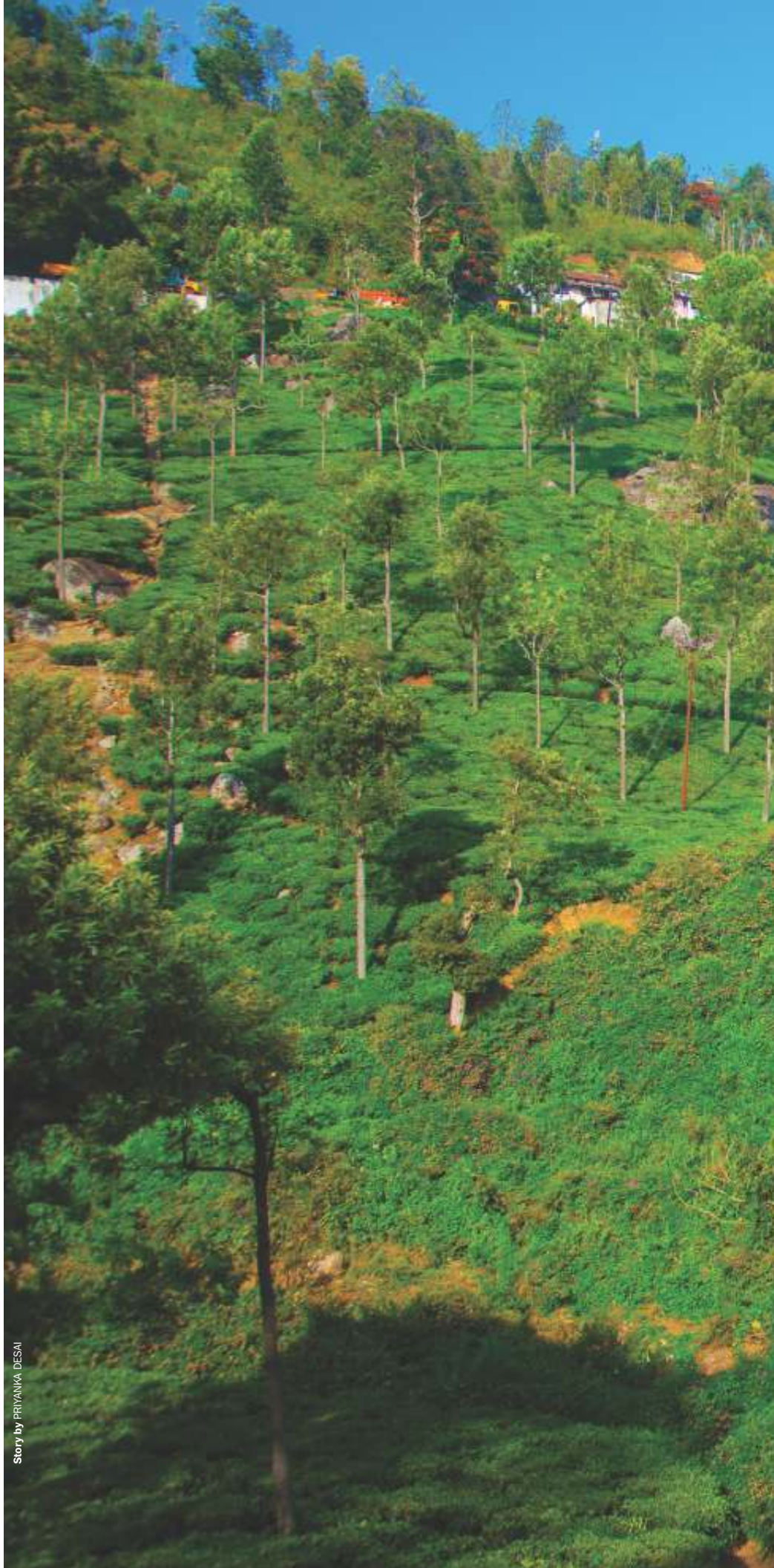
If you've not seen this route already, watch Shahrukh Khan's peppy song 'Chhaiyya Chhaiyya' to get the glimpse of the Nilgiri Mountain Railway that runs between Mettupalayam to Ooty. The train, covering 45 km track, takes its passengers at an elevation of over 7000 feet to present the most beautiful perspective of the nature packed with lush green hills, tea gardens and tall girder bridges. The exclusivity of the route is that it passes through 16 tunnels and 250 bridges on the way. This mountain railway is listed as the World Heritage Site in 2005.

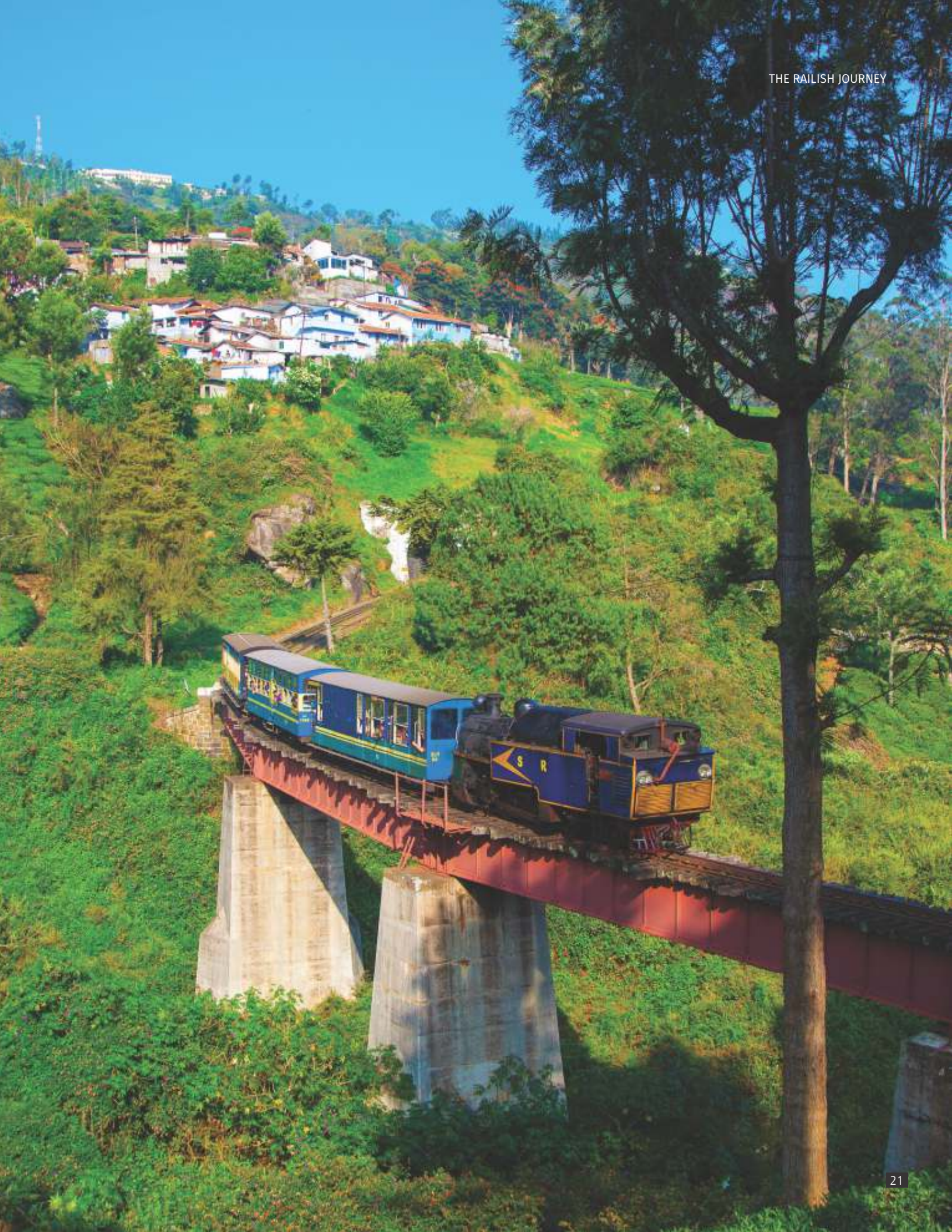


The Kerala Anubhavam

(Ernakulam-Kollam-Trivandrum)

Nothing is better than taking a train ride from Ernakulam (Cochin) to Trivandrum via Kollam (Quilon) to experience the God's own country – Kerala. The route presents a complete holiday package from the pristine lakes, enchanting backwaters, a glance of the rural life of Kerala and the coconut palms fencing the water channels. 📌







Hippie hangouts in India



Wanna be a little careless on your next vacations? Then, spend your next trip in a happy hippie way, just like the happy-go-lucky hippies always celebrate life without caring for anything in the world. Here, we have listed some of the amazing destinations in India where you can get high to settle your lows!





Goa



Goa is the first place that comes to our mind when we plan a trippy vacation. Whether you want to lose yourself to eccentric psy-trance music in North Goa or find yourself in the tranquility of the South Goa, you'll find everything in this hippie town! Thousands of hippies settle down in Goa forever, simply because they can't get enough of the sand and the sun.



Kasol



Prefer hills and valleys over beaches? This beautiful Himalayan hamlet is a must-visit destination for hippies and becoming very popular among the stoners. You will forget your worries once you visit Kasol endowed with mesmerizing mountains that are set as backdrops. *Babas* smoking 'pot' in chillums is a common sight here.



Malana



If there's one trip after which nothing remains the same, it has to be the hilly trip to Malana. Situated in Himachal Pradesh amidst the snow-capped Himalayas, this beautiful town is famous for its weather and picturesque views. This is what makes this place home to numerous hippies.

Rishikesh



The yoga capital of India has a lot more to it. It is paradise for the backpackers and adventure enthusiasts. Mostly rife with foreign tourists, Rishikesh is where you'll see hippies smoking with the *bawas*. Camping on the banks of Ganga, river rafting and many more fun activities are waiting for you!

Almora



Situated in Uttarakhand, Almora is a small town that's going to leave you begging for more. More than anything, it is famous for a hill known as the "Crank's Ridge", also known as Hippie Hill, just above Almora. The place has the old world charm of the 60s and 70s, which explains why it is so loved by the nirvana-seekers.



Varkala



Varkala is situated in Kerala. Popularly known as the "hippie haven", Varkala offers you a spectacular beach view and allows you to get lost in your deep thoughts. No one will disturb you here because no one cares. Great music, small cafes and similar kind of tourists make it a perfect hippie destination.

Varanasi



Colourful and spiritual, this land is one of the oldest hippie destinations in India. The idea of *moksha* is visible in the endless lines of saints and *sadhus* smoking their chillums. So many hippies are settled in this holy city, to seek nirvana.

Gokarna



Wish to visit somewhere less crowded but as hippie as Goa? Then, Gokarna should be on your wish list. Situated in Karnataka, Gokarna is known for its famous Mahabaleshwar Temple. However, Gokarna is not only about history and religion, it's about miles of tranquil pristine beaches and spiritual discovery.

Kodaikanal



Kodaikanal lives up to its name, which literally translates to "The gift of the forest". The picturesque scenes of the place invite tourists from all over the globe. The mesmerizing knolls are the most perfect respite, away from the hustle-bustle of the daily life. Just look around and you will feel the calmness the place is famous for.





CHRONICLES OF ARROWHEAD

the queen of Ranthambore

India is a land of wonders. With its geographical diversity, the country is a home to many species of wild animals. More than 25% of the land in the country is dense forest, and there are around 400 national parks in India. The country is also an abode to the largest wild cat (the Tiger) and the smallest wild cat (the rusty spotted cat).

Ranthambore National Park is one of the largest national parks of India. Situated in Sawai Madhopur District of Rajasthan state, the national park is spread across 392 sq.km. and is famous for its Royal Bengal Tigers that can be seen near the marshes and lakes even during the daytime.

Let's take a walk through Ranthambore National Park and witness some of the sensational moments of Arrowhead - the tigress through the photo-feature.





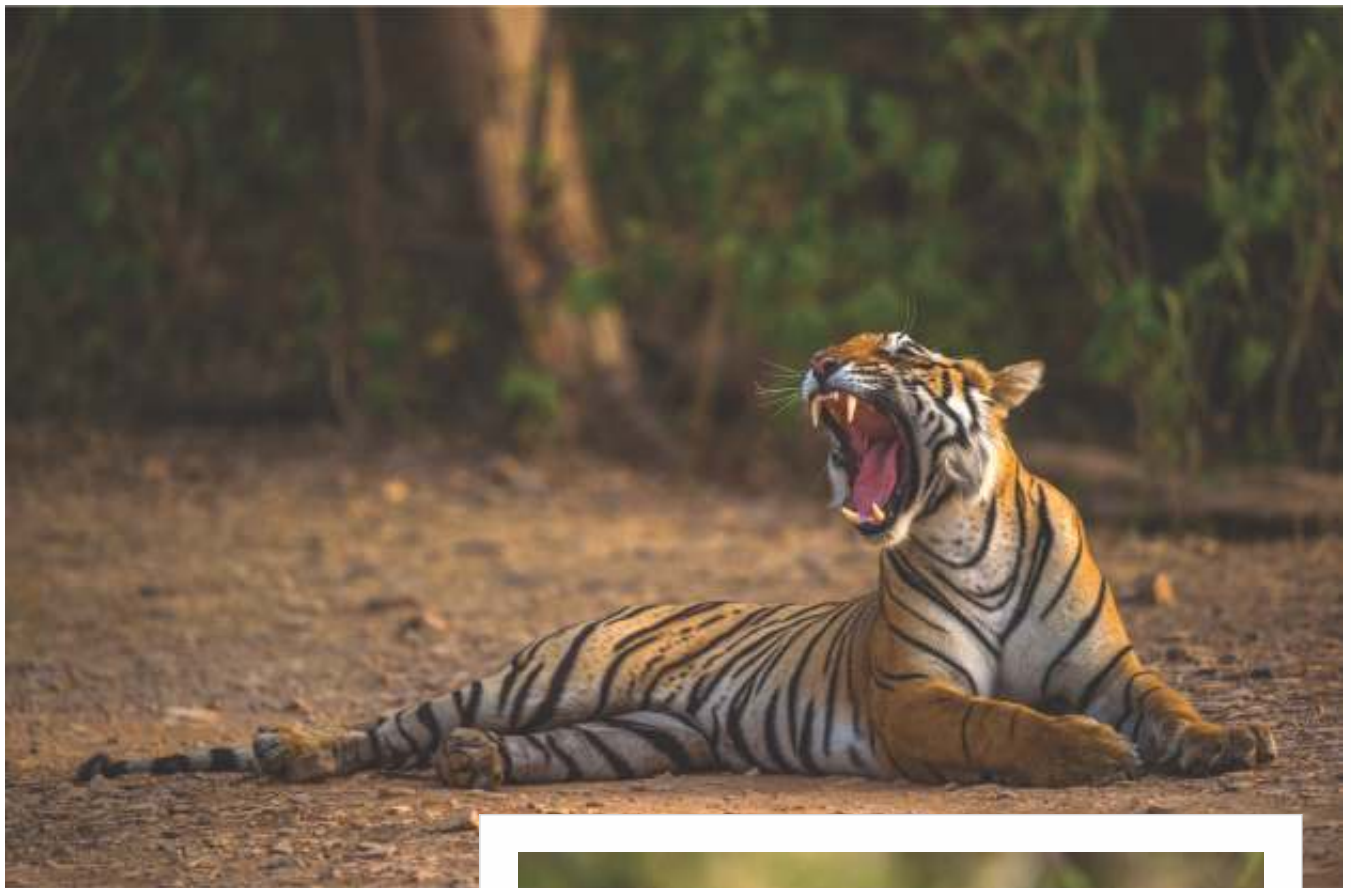
Photo feature by PRANAY PATEL - A wildlife photography enthusiast



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A mighty roar

Meet Arrowhead aka 'Machli Junior', grandchild of the world's most photographed tigress 'Machli'. She's called Arrowhead because of the arrow mark on her left cheek, somewhere like what 'Machli' also had.

In search of prey

Arrowhead has got bravery from her grandmother 'Machli'. Her imposing presence is mostly felt around the lake of Ranthambore National Park, where she walks with pride in search of prey.





The hunting mood

The superstar tigress of Ranthambore, Arrowhead, was captured by the lens just when she was scanning her territory for hunt. Quite a magnificent pose to call her the upcoming queen of the National Park.



And the
countdown
begins...

Ferocious body language of the predator conveys that she has spotted her potential prey. The chase to catch a big game has just begun.





The quantum leap

Near Rajbag Lake, the dramatic moment of Arrowhead's attack on Sambar was captured. The Sambar was trying to cross the lake full of crocodiles cautiously, only to bump into Arrowhead hidden in Khus grass near the lake.



Survival of the fittest

The intense battle between Sambar and Arrowhead lasted for about 45 minutes. The deadly efforts of Sambar to save his life were overpowered by Arrowhead's devastating attack.





Bloody feast

After 45-minute long struggle, it was now time for Arrowhead to relish the feast. The impatient wild beast took no time to finish her big catch of the day.



Queen walks alone

Arrowhead, as spotted from the jeep, taking a walk near the lake after a satisfying and rewarding day.





10 most haunted places in India



India is often considered as the land of undiscovered mystery. For centuries, travellers from around the world, who have made their journey to India, have been thrilled by the mystical energy that surrounds the country.

Even the abandoned places in India have become places of interest for those who are fascinated by the supernatural. For those who are too afraid to visit these places in person, reading about and sharing stories of these mysterious places in India might be the next best thing!

It should also be noted that these ghostly places in India have come under the spotlight as they have been visited by 'supernatural detectives' wanting to experience or debunk the strange events occurring at these places. In fact, the modern-day 'Ghostbusters' camp at these places overnight to record any strange occurrences, which they monitor before jumping to any final conclusions.

So steel your nerves and take a peek into the list of haunted places in India, which have sprung to the forefront either on the basis of what many people have deduced, by way of research or just by word-of-mouth.



1. Indian Ghost Town of Bhangarh, Rajasthan

The Indian Ghost Town of Bhangarh, Rajasthan is one of the scariest places in India to visit, in addition to being one of the most abandoned places in India. However, this tag has not perturbed visitors from making frequent trips to this ghost town.

The town lures many visitors from all around the country. However, it should be noted that if you decide to visit the town after sunset, you will not be allowed. In fact, the Archaeological Survey of India has forbidden access of the place between sunset and sunrise. According to one of the legends, the city of Bhangarh was cursed by a wizard named Singhiya, who was in love

with the princess of Bhangarh. The wizard attempted to win love of the princess by placing a spell upon a fragrance purchased for her. However, the princess, who was also a disciple of the occult, learned of his plans and found a way to kill him.

Even before his death, the wizard casted a dark spell on the palace and the town, which caused its doom. Despite the story surrounding the ruins, it still is a fascinating place to visit. In fact, it has also been officially promoted as a tourist destination. However, once the sun sets, the place becomes deserted, leaving the darkness to engulf it once again till the next morning.

2. Dumas Beach, Gujarat

Dumas Beach in Gujarat is located near Surat, one of the developed cities

of Gujarat. The beach draws countless visitors almost every day as legend has it that the winds, which blow fiercely, come along with whispers. It is also believed that the beach was for long used as a Hindu burial ground, therefore, it has been the resting place for many souls.

3. Tunnel 33, Shimla

Tunnel 33 has instilled fear in the minds of travellers being one of the creepiest haunted places in India. This tunnel falls on the Shimla-Kalka railway stretch. It is the longest and straightest tunnel located close to the Barog railway station.

The tunnel holds historical significance. It was supposed to be built by Captain Barog, a British engineer. As he could not complete the work assigned to him, he was fired from the job and was ridiculed. In



Bhangarh, Rajasthan



Dumas Beach, Gujarat

depression, he went to the tunnel and shot himself. It is believed that his friendly spirit still haunts the tunnel. Many paranormal activities were reported inside the tunnel in the past.

4. The Mansion, Residency Road, Pune

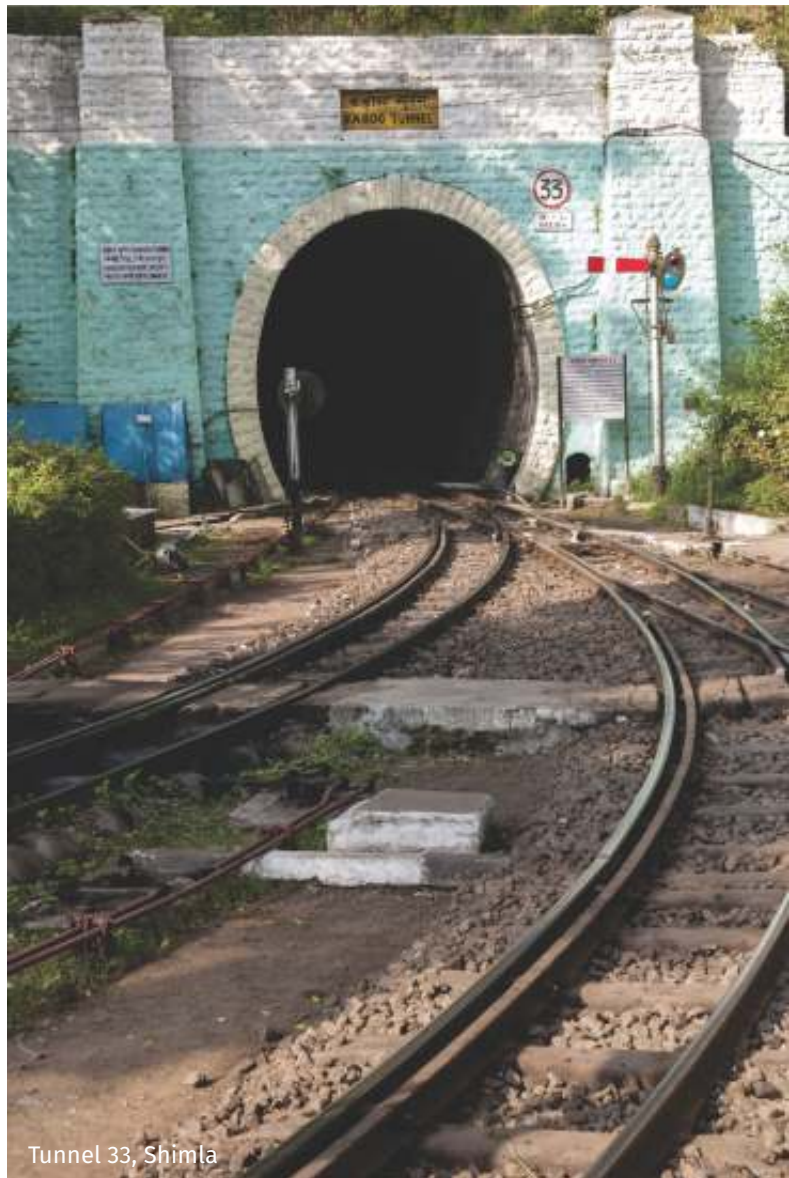
Have you ever been to Residency Road in Pune? Did you come across the frightening side of the Mansion? No wonder, if terrifying sounds, weird laughter and loud screams have also accompanied you late at night. The locals tell a tale that this place is haunted by an old lady.

Those who have experienced this call the Mansion one of the most haunted places in India. Don't take up a challenge and explore this place, because the residents here vouch for its spookiness.

5. Three Kings Church, Goa

The Three Kings Church is located in Goa. As per the dark story, there were three kings, who were fighting to get this property and even killed each other in this battle. Locals and visitors claim that this church is possessed by the spirits of these three kings.

They believe that their soul roam around the premises.



Tunnel 33, Shimla



Agrasen ki Baoli, New Delhi

6. Towers of Silence, Mumbai

Towers of Silence is situated at the Malabar hills in Mumbai. The circular, raised structure was built by Zoroastrians for excarnation – i.e. for dead bodies to be exposed to carrion birds. As per the rituals and customs, this community leave those who are dead on the rooftop of this tower, to be eaten by the vultures.

These spine tingling rituals are further backed by stories that

say that these towers are an abode to paranormal happenings. It is believed that the ghostly forces originate from this cemetery at the Grand Parsi Towers.

7. Writers Building, Kolkata

The Writers' Building was an age-old building from the British era. It was built for the writers who worked for the East India Company. Unfortunately, it was destroyed in a natural disaster. The government then rebuilt a new Writer's Building at the same place, which is believed to be possessed by the victims.

According to another story, the soul of Late Captain Simpson who worked with the British East India Company dwells in this building ever since being murdered by three revolutionaries. Residents claim that they have heard footsteps and voices post sunset.

8. Agrasen ki Baoli, Hailey Road, New Delhi

Do you know how it feels to be stalked? Being constantly watched and followed, wherever you go. It is even more terrifying when the entity follow-



ing you is not living and unknown. The Agrasen ki Baoli is an age-old step well located on Hailey Road in New Delhi.

It is very popular for its antiquated architecture, but unfortunately has no records of who built it and when. According to the sources, people who have visited Agrasen ki Baoli claim that something invisible followed them and the faster they ran, the quicker it chased. Presently, the site is being taken care by the ASI as it holds historical significance.

9. Jatinga, Assam

Mass suicide has always managed to freak us out. Imagine walking on a road and watching birds fall to death. These are mass suicide committed by birds. Jatinga, a village in Assam, has witnessed this paranormal phenomenon for years. What is strange is the fact that this happens only on no-moon days between

6.00 PM to 9.30 PM, during the months of September and October. It is also said that these bird-suicides happen only on a stretch of 1 mile by 600 ft. land.

Many have tried to explain this occurrence through theories, but none of them have been convincing. This unusual happening intrigues several travellers and researchers.

10. Ramoji Film City, Hyderabad

Ramoji Film City is a famous shooting site for movies. Many actors have confessed that they have seen ghosts in the mirror when they were getting ready for the shoot. The light men here have also witnessed some spooky incidents. The film city is built on war grounds of the Nizam sultans. It is believed that the soldiers died in the war are trying to make their presence felt. 📺



ROMANCE IN THE RAINS

Monsoon is a season of romance. So if you're planning for a romantic getaway, go ahead and celebrate love with the earthy smell, flourishing landscapes and exciting company of your loved one with the places suggested by us.

Athirappally

A paradise for nature-loving couples

With its spectacular waterfalls, lush forests by the Chalakudy River and attractive places to stay, Athirappally is one of the most idyllic places for newly wedded couples to enjoy a secluded and intimate holiday during their initial days together.

Fly to Cochin from where it is a drive of about two to two-and-a-half hours to Athirappally, which lies at the entrance to the forested Sholayar range. The 80ft. high waterfall is one of Kerala's most spectacular falls. The water of the Chalakudy River surges around big rocks before coming down in cascades that flow in three separate plumes. After landing, the waters are still white for about one kilometer.



The stunningly beautiful Athirappilly Falls

The best views of the falls can be enjoyed from Rainforest, a seven acre boutique resort set in fine forests. Tuck into a meal at their restaurant with its open terrace facing the falls and stay in rooms that have large picture windows each of which has a direct view of the waterfalls. This is a unique hotel where the views can be enjoyed even from your bed itself. Though set in rainforests as the name suggests, the resort has a gamut of modern conveniences. The celestial room even comes with a walk-in wardrobe and foot massager!

For absolute seclusion, nature-loving couples can book the Tree House created by a Swiss architect, designed to ensure that the tree is unharmed while the tree house remains a safe abode.

Standing in your tree house and looking out at the top of the trees in the rainforest, with the thundering



Tree House at Rainforest Retreat



Athirappilly landscapes

sound of the waterfalls nearby, is an exhilarating experience. This jungle stay comes with wide ranging amenities.

There is also a beautiful swimming pool in a scenic setting and ayurvedic treatments. Walk around the resort to watch hornbills and other strikingly coloured birds, giant squirrels and perhaps even a deer. The forests beyond are the habitat for elephant, leopard, endangered monkeys, other big mammals and rare birds. You can also stroll in the butterfly gardens.



South Goa

Luxury by the sea

If you are a luxury-loving couple, South Goa is the place for you. This is where you have some of India's most luxurious beach resorts: Taj Exotica, Park Hyatt Goa Resort and Spa, Leela Goa, Kenilworth, Majorda, Ramada and Alla Diwa Goa are among the many in this area that front a beautiful beach. Sprawling across acres, each of these resorts has lovely gardens, tastefully furnished interiors, superbly designed rooms, a wide range of recreational facilities and a pool. Leave your shoes in the resort and stroll out on the sands of the gorgeous South Goa beaches.



Park Hyatt Spa and Resort



Spa at Park Hyatt

While it is tempting to just stay in the resort, swim, rejuvenate at the spa and enjoy the sea views to enhance your holiday leisure. The monsoon also beckons to explore the Western Ghats of Goa that are green and romantic in the rains. There are some fine forests that trill with birdcalls and are rich in brilliantly coloured butterflies. In the coastal plains, quaint towns, picturesque fields and historical sites are aplenty. You must go down to Palolem with its pretty beach, hill views and myriad eating places.



Cola Beach, South Goa

Kaas

Explore the Valley of Flowers in Western India

The more famous Valley of Flowers in the Himalaya is rather hard to get to, but Kaas in the Western Ghats is equally stunning in the monsoon. Walking on the Kaas plateau, you can see an abundance of seasonal flowers and butterflies. Kaas has more than 850 different species of flowering plants and most of them bloom in August-September.

From Pune, head for the historic city of Satara, from where you can take the road to Kaas. Kaas Holiday Resort, Sahyadri Nivas or Sahyadri Pushp, offer breathtaking views of the forested Sahyadri hills and the Kaas Valley, which has a pretty lake. The resort has modern rooms and the restaurant offers a range of Maharashtrian cuisines.

When you have had enough of seclusion, head a couple of hours away to the popular hill stations of Mahabaleshwar and Panchgani, which are superbly scenic in the monsoon.



Walking in the Kaas plateau



Waterbody at Kaas





Upsana Retreat

Malnadu

A getaway in the lap of nature

The hills of Malnadu in Karnataka feature virgin wildernesses like the Agumbe rainforest and the picturesque Kudremukh hill.

As you drive from Bangalore, you come to the hill town of Chikmagalur famous for its coffee estates and nearby peaks - Mullayangiri and Baba Budangiri, which are among the highest in Southern India. Chikmagalur has some splendid resorts and plantation retreats that are worth a few nights.

When you want to get away to a more secluded place, take the road to Kudremukh. This little hill station gets its name from the horse face like Kudremukh peak, which is among Karnataka's three highest. The chain of rolling hills with a mosaic of natural grassland and shola forests is superbly scenic in the rains - an average annual rainfall of 7000 mm ensures the lush evergreen vegetation of Kudremukh. The open grasslands are excellent for long walks together. The Kudremukh National Park is home for many endangered species. Upasana is a place to stay situated overlooking the picturesque village of Samse, bordering the Kudremukh National Park at an elevation of 960 metres above sea level.

From Kudremukh, you can drive to Agumbe to enjoy the views of the rain forest and the Jog Falls, one of India's highest waterfalls.



A walker's paradise



Abby Falls, Madikeri

Madikeri

A honeymoon in the hills

Madikeri in the hills of the Kodagu district, also well known as Coorg, is a popular hill destination for holidays because of its forests, plantations, rivers, scenic view-points and resorts.

Arrive at Mangalore, a sea-side city set in one of the wettest sections of the Western Ghats. From here, the road climbs the Ghats to the city of Madikeri, the capital of Kodagu district. While the city centre is expectedly crowded, there are some attractive views from its outskirts. Just 7km from the city centre, the Abby Falls are spectacularly situated among plantations – walk down to the bridge that offers the finest view of the cascading water, most impressive in the rains. Madikeri's other worthwhile points

are Raja's Seat and the Fort, which has a church converted into a museum.

A short drive from Madikeri, Vivanta by Taj Coorg offers views from its lobby, which is set on a hilltop in the heart of a 180-acre rainforest. The lobby offers access to many facilities like an indoor swimming pool and spa. From the lobby, carts take you to cottages set among greenery, each one offering splendid seclusion in its own courtyard and wide ranging luxuries. Another exciting place to stay near Madikeri Heritage Resort is perched on a hilltop with a swimming pool set on the hillside offering a magnificent mountain view. Orange County is a sprawling resort with a plantation experience. Those looking for tranquility could also stay at one of the coffee plantations.



Kodagu in the mist

Mussoorie

A heritage honeymoon

At an altitude of over 6000ft above sea level, Mussoorie is a popular hill station that attracts great crowds in summer and winter. During the monsoon, it is relatively quiet and can be a good getaway with many eateries.

The highlight of Mussoorie is its heritage hotels, dating from the days when British officers, *Maharajas*, *Nawabs* and *Zamindars* built their summer palaces at this hill town.

From Dehradun, head to Mussoorie and take the road past Hathipaon to Cloudend, which was a British cottage taken over by a planter family from Dehradun. The forests quaver with birdcalls and the surroundings are lush green during the rains. Cloudend was built for the same reason as the Taj Mahal - as a sign of love. The story goes that Major Swetenham, during a walk in the mountains, heard the most melodious singing and followed the voice till he came upon the singer, a beautiful mountain girl. Frightened, the girl sped home, followed by the smitten Major Swetenham. The Major took the permission of girl's father to marry the girl and received the estate as dowry. Swetenham commissioned 500 labourers to build this house for his bride in 1838. Four generations of the Swetenhams went on to live here before it was bought by a planter. Today, it is a small nature resort.



View of Mussoorie



Mussoorie

From here, you can head for Mussoorie, which has one of India's oldest hill station hotels. One such hotel is - The Savoy, opened by Cecil D. Lincoln, an Irish barrister, in 1902, where emperors, princesses, authors and prime ministers have stayed. Now WelcomHotel The Savoy, its majestic old oaks, gardens, impressive building and the memorabilia inside, make this a great place for heritage loving couples. If you are looking for a getaway, Carlton's Plaisance is an attractive orchard mansion that belonged to a family from Lucknow with French influences. The *Maharaja* of Rajpipla's estate, Padmini Niwas, is a hotel popular with Gujaratis visiting Mussoorie because it serves *thalis*. Another heritage hotel nearby is Roselyn Estate, named after an Australian resident of Mussoorie. Claridges Nabha Resort, once a retreat of Punjabi princes, retains its old world charm.

For a princely experience, head for Welcomheritage Kasmanda Palace Hotel that is one of the oldest buildings of Mussoorie. The hotel was once a part of Christchurch Complex built in 1836 by Captain Rennie Tailour of the Bengal Engineers. It subsequently became a Sanatorium for the British forces. During the latter part of the century, it was one of the first schools to be set up at Mussoorie when this hill station town, like other mountain resorts of the Raj, became an important educational centre for British children and royal families. The *Rajas* of Kasmanda took over this property in 1915 and made it into a summer retreat from their principality near Lucknow. The interiors are full of colonial period furniture and antique artifacts.



Tea plantations of Kerala

Periyar Lake

A getaway for the adventurous couple

Forget the beaches, hill stations or backwaters of Kerala, if you are looking for seclusion in style, it is hard to beat the Lake Palace on an island of Periyar Lake.

From Cochin Airport, the drive to Thekkady is breathtaking as you go past tea estates, forested slopes, seasonal streams and waterfalls at their best in the monsoon. Thekkady marks the entrance to the Periyar Tiger Reserve. Once past the check post, go through fine forests where Nilgiri langur, sambar deer, Indian bison and giant squirrel are often seen. From the jetty, boats take you to the Lake Palace - scan the shores of lake through binoculars to look for wildlife like wild elephant, deer, wild boar and otter. The palace was once the retreat of the *Maharaja* of Travancore and its architecture is in classic Kerala style. Stay in huge high-ceilinged rooms, and enjoy quiet dinners in the dining room.

When you get into the mood for adventure, Periyar offers treks, boat safaris, bamboo rafting and wildlife walks. You can also visit spice gardens, tea plantations and villages nearby. 📍

West Sikkim

Paradise in the mountains

West Sikkim's breathtaking beauty has few equals - evergreen alpine forests, waterfalls, rivers, seasonal streams and flowering meadows are part of the lovely landscapes in the monsoon and on a clear day, you can see the sublime Kanchenjunga Peaks towering over the area.

While Pelling has become a popular destination, where you can find serenity at Rinchenpong (also spelt Rinchengpong). From Bagdogra Airport, the road runs along the Teesta and Rangeet Rivers, and then goes past the foliage of pine, Himalayan alder, chestnut, magnolia, rhododendrons, cherry trees as it rises towards Rinchenpong. There are impressive monsoon waterfalls, at places absolutely delightful gossamer curtain of water drench your car as you go along.

Yangsum Heritage Farm is one of the nicest places to stay in Rinchenpong, with a farmhouse built in 1833 and remodeled in 1966. The homestay is run by Thendup Tashi and Pema, in the midst of a 44-acre mountain farm. The rooms are attractive with touch of Sikkimese culture and the food features many local specialties. From here, you can stroll out to forests, farmlands and scenic spots. If you are in the mood for some culture, the monastery and historic places in the village are worth visiting.

You could also take an excursion to the medieval monastery of Pemayangtse, which offers superb sceneries and is rich in art.



A beautiful bridge on the way to Gangtok

EXPLORE AHMEDABAD

**India's first
UNESCO World Heritage City**

For more than 600 years, Ahmedabad has been an epitome of peace and unity. It is the city where Mahatma Gandhi began freedom struggle of India. India's only UNESCO World Heritage City has some of the finest monuments and exquisite architectural tradition.

The living heritage of the city is reflected in its 600 odd *pol*s, which are serving as residence for many centuries. The carved wooden houses of Walled City are yet another architectural tradition.

The lanes and bylanes of Ahmedabad Walled City offer a sense of living heritage, culture and architecture through the *Ahmedabad Heritage Walk* organized by Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.



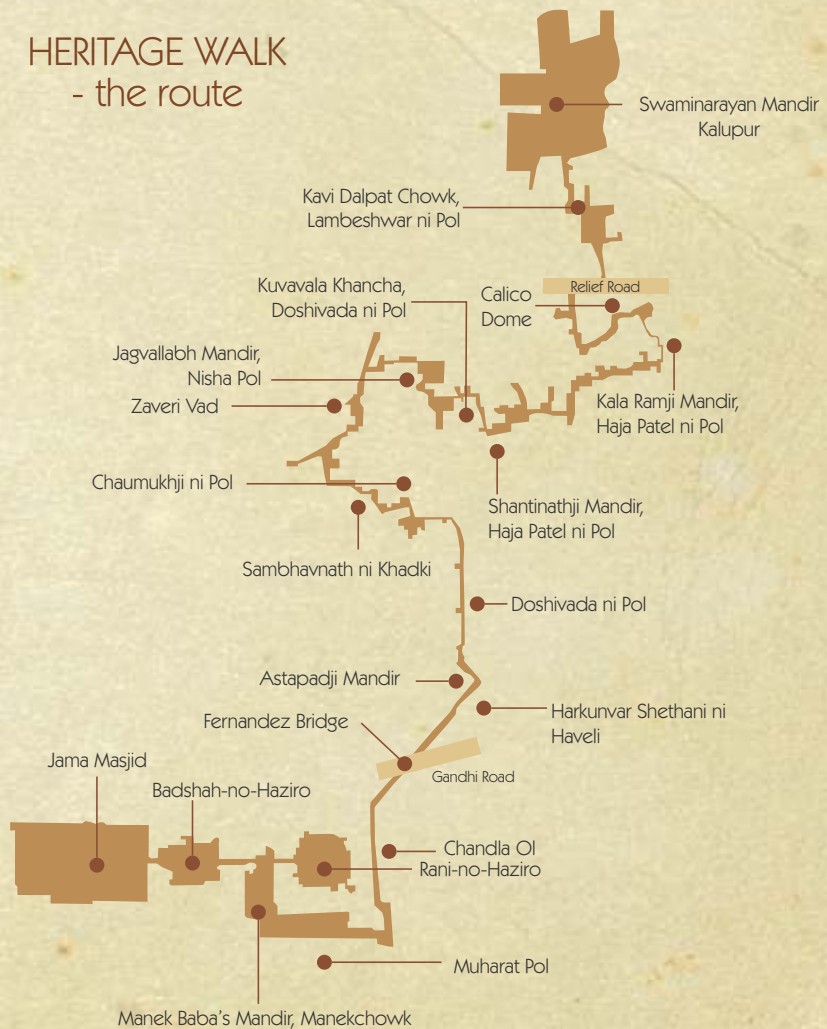
The Ahmedabad Heritage Walk was started on 19th November, 1997 as a joint initiative of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and NGOs. The walking tour was conceptualized by Debashish Nayak, an architect and heritage activist who believed that such an activity would create pride among residents of the *pol*s in heritage. Says Chandrashekhar Solanki, who was among the first volunteers of the Ahmedabad Heritage Walk, "The most noteworthy feature of the Ahmedabad Heritage Walk is that it has a guaranteed departure – there is hardly a day when this walking tour has been cancelled because of absence of a voluntary guide or lack of participants". "This was the first of its kind, because most of the heritage walks in other cities occurred only during specific heritage, tourism or art festivals," says Debashish Nayak.

The walk begins at the Swaminarayan Temple, the first built by Sahajanand Swamy or Lord Swaminarayan who was



Swaminarayan Temple ↗

HERITAGE WALK - the route



Gate of Swaminarayan Temple ↗



Kavi Dalpatram Chowk

born in Uttar Pradesh in 1792 and undertook a spiritual journey of India before making Gujarat his home. This temple was constructed in 1822 on the land gifted by the British Imperial Government. It has fine carvings and murals that tell many historical and mythological stories.

From here, the participants are guided to Kavi Dalpatram

Chowk, named after a well-known Gujarati poet. The platform is used for performances on special occasions and for poetry recitals.

After this, the walk leads through the *Haja Patel Ni Pol*. The *pols* of Ahmedabad have narrow lanes lined with two and three storey houses, each featuring overhanging balconies. The *havelis*, which had courtyards and ventilation outlets to allow a good airflow through the residential areas, were clustered together to keep



Chabutra or Bird Feeders

their interiors free of extreme heat and direct sunlight. Water was harvested in wells and sealed tanks, called *tankas*. Hollow niches have been provided in walls for squirrels and birds who find little shelter in these largely treeless neighbourhoods. *Chabutras* or bird feeding structures is yet another fascinating feature of a *pol*.

The walk includes a number of temples – the *Kala Ramji Mandir*, which has Lord Ram with Sita, Hanuman and Lakshman, and Jain temples that have beautiful vegetable dyed walls, wood or stone carvings and corbelled hollow domes or spires featuring woodcarvings in concentric circles rising to a pendant in the centre of the dome.

In a lane called *Kuvavala Khancha*, you can see elements of Persian, Mughal, Maratha and European architecture reflecting the respective periods in which each façade was built and had emblems of the earlier owners



Jain Temple

“
The Archaeological Survey of India has nominated the walled city for UNESCO's World Heritage City tag. We are sure that the heritage walking tours inspired by the Ahmedabad Heritage Walk in other cities of India will similarly renew the interest of citizens in their heritage sites.
”



Wood Carvings ↗

above the doors. Some of the motifs on walls show important social changes - for example, there is a carving of a woman reading a book to denote the importance of girl child education and another shows a boy and girl studying together to show co-education.

The walk goes past many magnificent houses, including *Harkuwarba Shethani Ni Haveli*, which is about 92-year-old and still partially occupied, with fine stonework and an American water pump. Islamic architecture includes the mausoleum of Sultan Ahmed Shah, a fine example of 15th century architecture and *Rani No Haziro*, the tombs of the Sultan's harem, which now houses a market.

The walk continues through markets for handicrafts, fabrics, prayer objects, jewellery, stationary and metalwork, and you could catch the morning activity in the bullion market of Manek Chowk.



Exquisitely carved wooden havelis abound in Ahmedabad ↗

It ends at the Jama Masjid, built in 1423-24. This impressive mosque has a spacious marble paved courtyard with galleries on three sides and the superbly proportioned façade of the prayer hall rising on the fourth. The prayer hall has 260 columns and is covered with domes. The mosque also has a *zanana*, a latticework gallery set aside for women, rising on beams.

Says Girish Gupta, a heritage activist, "This walking tour has created much pride and interest among the local people and

visitors alike in Ahmedabad's rich heritage. Following this, House of Mangaldas has promoted an audio walking tour from their heritage hotel to *haveli café* passing through a variety of heritage sites and a night walk in the walled city to see living traditions. Other walks like the Gandhi Trail and Freedom Fighter's Trail have also been designed for special occasion heritage tours. The heritage initiatives have got many people interested in preserving Ahmedabad's heritage sites. ☐



Jama Masjid at end of walk ↗



MEDICAL TOURISM



With emerging medical technologies, seasoned medical and paramedics from India are leaving indomitable print in the heart and mind of foreign patients and relatives coming here for treatments



Mr. Shahid Parvez

General Manager - Healthcare Services
Apollo Hospitals International Limited

How has Medical Tourism evolved over the past few years? What kind of trends can be envisioned?

As per the data provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs, 45% growth is seen in the number of medical visas issued by India since 2016. Majority of the patients that come to India for treatment are from the Middle East, Africa, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, the Maldives and Pakistan.

With emerging medical technologies, seasoned medical and paramedics from India are leaving indomitable print in the heart and mind of foreign patients and relatives coming here for treatments.

What is and what could be the position of India within this market? How is India perceived abroad as a Medical Tourism destination?

India is becoming preferred destination for medical treatment. Within Asia, India, Thailand and Singapore are the three countries that receive maximum medical tourists owing to low cost of treatment, quality healthcare infrastructure and availability of highly-skilled doctors. The sector has emerged as one of the largest sectors in India and is poised to grow at an annual rate of 15 per cent. Being a matured healthcare infrastructure and services, India is truly going global.

Which are the strongest global Medical Tourism destinations and how do they build and maintain this leadership?

Not a single point ruling the whole world, but it is spread geographically. In the past few years, Asia has taken the lead as one of the most preferred destinations for medical value travel. While Thailand positions itself as a dual purpose destination for both medical and economic holiday with an attractive location, Singapore promotes itself as a destination for fine quality in medical treatment. The country is also known for its alternative treatment options such as yoga and Ayurveda.

India is known mostly for its cost-effective medical treatments along with high standards in cardiology, orthopaedics, nephrology, oncology and neuro surgery.

Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore are top destinations for foreign visitors for medical tourism. Why do you think Gujarat is lagging behind?

Flight connectivity, cosmopolitan culture including food & beverages in cities like Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bangalore are the contributing factors, resulting in relatively more influx of medical tourists to these cities.

There are fewer direct flights connecting Ahmedabad from many countries. And there is no direct flight from African countries to Ahmedabad. Besides, the city also lacks in cosmopolitan culture.

Talking about Apollo Hospitals, how many foreign patients are treated every year?

Over 7000 foreign patients are treated annually at Apollo Hospitals.

Do you attribute the growth of medical tourism to advertising or promotional activities?

Yes to some extent, but majority of cases are coming through the word of mouth - sharing experience with relatives and friends. Additionally, availability of doctors, both online and offline, plays a significant role.

What are the other initiatives carried out by Apollo to promote medical tourism?

We have pioneered in many aspects of healthcare delivery system in India, and medical tourism is one of them. We have multi approach program for catering to wide range of population from within India and overseas. Apollo Hospitals receive patients from 121 countries and so far, it has touched over 40 million

lives. Being India's largest Corporate Hospitals chain, we have 7 JCI accredited hospitals, sharing best practices at all levels. We have redefined standards of patient care at every touch point of the healthcare delivery chain and have a dedicated International Patient Service team for better understanding and deliverance.

Anything else you would like to share with us

We appreciate Government of India's initiative for introducing e-medical visa facilities for the selected countries and we are sure that the facility will be extended to other countries in near future. 🇮🇳





Event Highlights

First ever 2-day Mega exposition showcasing India's trade and culture in the US

Strategic location of the Exposition venue in New Jersey spanning over **18,000 sq.m.**

Ideal platform for interaction among **NRIs, Business Representatives** and **Government officials**

Over **10,000** products on display

Unprecedented participation of **Garments and Jewellery and Handicrafts** companies

Adorable participation by **Government organisations**

Impressive array of exhibitors including **IT & IT enabled services, Real Estate and Food products**

Over **15,000** estimated footfall in the maiden event

Enthralling cultural performances by more than **100** Indian artists

Glorious India Awards presented to **42** eminent NRIs for their exemplary global accomplishments

GLORIOUS INDIA EXPO

The Mega Indian Trade Expo in the US

CONCLUDED ON A HIGH NOTE

Glorious India Expo, the 2-day Mega Indian Show organized on 27-28 May, 2017, concluded amidst unprecedented enthusiasm and new hopes for Indian business and cultural fraternity in Edison, New Jersey. The Event was aimed at inspiring the US-based Indians to connect to their roots by bringing together the trade and cultural elements of India in the US.

In sync with the global promotion of India's business and cultural strengths, Glorious India Expo presented bouquet of opportunities for Indian business and culture that went exceedingly well with the visitors to the event. The event was marked with the august presence of the Event Chair, Digvijay Gaekwad and Event Co-Chair Dr. Raj Bhayani.

Stalls at the Mega Exhibition provided a delightful experience to the visitors by displaying thousands of 'Make in India' products, representing sectors like Garments, Jewellery, Real Estate, Handicrafts, Food products and IT services.

On the occasion, Glorious India Awards were presented to 42 eminent NRIs for their exemplary contribution in their respective fields. Women entrepreneurs

from India were also presented with the awards for their inspiring and courageous pursuits in business.

Cultural programmes at Glorious India Expo featured fascinating array of folk dances and group performances from the States like Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat and Rajasthan. The highlight of the Glorious India cultural programmes was the scintillating performances by the Pt. Vishwa Mohan Bhatt (Grammy-winning Hindustani classical music instrumentalist), Pt. Krishna Mohan Bhatt (Sitar Maestro), George Brooks (Grammy Award Winner Saxophonist) and Nihaar Mehta (Well-known Tabla Player).

Marking the culmination of the 2-day Indian Mega Show, Kabir Café Band, the Indian Band, got the crowd to their feet and sway to their rhythm with their soulful rendition.

In line with the PRAVEG's vision to constantly evolve new formats of business and cultural events that promote India's strengths and dignity across the world, the Team Glorious India will revisit the US with world-class Indian Show, much larger in terms of scale and scope, very soon.





— | Quick Guide | —

Barefoot in BALI

There is no other place like Bali. “The Island of the Gods” offers great beaches, countless waves for surfing and wonderful natural sites. And there is an unbelievably wide range of hotels and accommodation, restaurants, spas, world-class activities and

shopping - all within close distance and at very fair prices. You can choose from basic home-stays run by friendly Balinese families, 5-star beach resorts or luxurious Bali villas with your own private pool. Whatever you choose - Bali has so much to offer!

There are way too many attractions in Bali - from waterfalls, lush green rice fields, sea-facing temples to water sports and cultural events. The number of things to do in Bali will amaze visitors and keep them coming back for more. The must-do activities in Bali are:



Visit Uluwatu - the most important sea temple

Imagine a large rugged limestone cliff with a temple perched on it, almost like a scene from cliffhanger, to add to its dramatic grandeur. Uluwatu Temple is also known as Pura Luhur. It is situated in the island known as Bukit Peninsula, which houses Bali's few best beaches like Balangan and many good surfing spots.



Dolphin sightings at Lovina

Lovina is one of the best places in Bali to make dolphin sighting boat trip. Leave the beach at dawn to spot the dolphins. Though it may be quite crowded, the visual of a pod of dolphins makes it a totally worth-visiting place. Lovina offers many other attractions, activities and even boasts some backpacker scenes where you can chill out in cafes with live music.



Don't miss out on the scenic expanses of rice fields in Ubud

One place you cannot miss in your visit is Ubud. It is still the heart of Bali, where all the action is and all the people and energy are focused on. Ubud is packed and condensed with the best of Bali, ranging from nature, culture and people, temples, museums, rolling rice/paddy fields and man-made gardens and parks.



Shop at Pasar Seni, Ubud

Here you can find beautiful silk scarves, lightweight shirts, handmade woven bags, baskets or hats; statues, kites and many other hand-crafted goods.



Party at Kuta Beach

Kuta is the most popular beach in Bali, which means you can be sure to find the life and party scene here. Head here if you are looking to socialize, party and mingle with like-minded folks.



Watch Kecak Dance in Pura Dalem Taman Kaja

Kecak dance is one of the traditional dances and musical dramas in Bali that is enchanting and favourite among travellers. The dance form features 150 performers wearing check cloth around their waist and, chant the word “cak” while throwing up their arms in the depiction of the battle of Ramayana.



Go on a full-day sea voyage on a cruise

Just trust us, you won't regret it!



Get yourself an authentic Balinese massage

Any trip to Bali is incomplete without this, you know it.



Climb Mount Batur at Kintamani

Mount Batur is an active volcano, which attracts tourists from around the world for its beauty and adventure involved in the trip. Climb the mountain to witness the captivating sunrise from the top of an active volcano.



Visa arrangement

Bali offers Visa-on-Arrival facility for Indians. The cost of the visa is US\$25 and is valid for up to 30 days' stay in Indonesia. The visa is extendable for another 30 days. Ensure that your passport is valid for at least another 6 months and should have enough space for the visa stamp.

How to reach?

Ngurah Rai International Airport/Denpasar International Airport is located in South Kuta district and is just 13 kilometres from Denpasar, the capital of Bali. Flights from major international cities regularly fly in and out of the Denpasar Airport.



The upcoming women-only trip to Bali

Dates: December 1-5, 2017

Cost: Rs. 23,000/- per person

This tour includes: Accommodation in a luxury property, transportation and sightseeing, 2 hrs of authentic Balinese massage, Kintamani volcano tour, walk to Ubud village, water sports, Uluwatu temple visit. For complete details you can call on 9892229782

From roaming around in crowds to solo trip, there are a few tricks to getting the best out of a trip to Bali. We have rounded up top tips for your next visit to the Island of the Gods.

* Expect crowds

It is one of the popular islands on earth. We suggest you to head to the central mountains, or Bali's more chilled-out north and west coasts.

* Dress for the occasion

Beachwear doesn't always cut it in Bali – many higher-end bars, restaurants and clubs enforce a dress code. If you're unsure, call ahead to save the potential embarrassment of being turned away.

* Respect religious customs

Conduct yourself appropriately when visiting temples and holy sites.

* Be cautious of wild and stray animals

Give wild and stray animals a wide berth. They may look cute, but rabies and other diseases are serious risks in Bali and monkeys are notorious for their thieving ways.

* Learn some local lingo

A few basic words of Bahasa Indonesia will take you a long way in Bali. Try selamat pagi (good morning), tolong (please) and terima kasih (thank you), for the beginning.

* Bargain respectfully

You can bargain for many items and services in Bali, but do so respectfully and with a smile on your face. You'll know when the vendor has reached their limit, and at that point, don't push it.

THE SPORTY SOUTHWEST FRANCE



Southwest France is an exciting destination for sports lovers. The mountainous terrain, stunning seas and exciting infrastructure make it a perfect sporty getaway. Ranging from the snow clad Pyrenees to the Atlantic coast beaches, there are a wide variety of adventure sports that can be enjoyed in this region.



PAU

Fly to Paris and change planes for Pau-Pyrenees Airport, which has a view of snow-clad Pyrenees peaks. Pau has several high level clubs and top class facilities for sports. It is said that about 70 different sports are played or witnessed in this commune!

For those who like jogging and walking, the Gave de Pau river bank is an excellent footpath for a walk that starts near the castle and passes along Pau's golf course heading west. Another spot is Pont-Long wood, north of the town. The SUAPS climbing wall is the highest climbing wall of Aquitaine and Midi-Pyrénées. It is a top place for Pyrénéan climbing training. Pau is also the base for countryside hiking and treks.

The town of Pau has long been a center of activity for French canoe slalom. The natural rapids in the center of town are still equipped with hanging slalom gates. However, the sport is most often conducted in the artificial white waters of Whitewater Stadium of Pau-Pyrénées, which is a man-made basin fed by the Gave de Pau. It is also a whitewater park for recreational use by the general public.

If you like basketball, plan watching a game at the Palais des Sports de Pau,



which is an indoor arena that can accommodate 7,707 spectators. The largest basketball facility in France is a home ground of the Élan Béarnais Pau-Orthez. It is one of the most prestigious French sporting clubs and often hosts national level championships. Rugby matches can be watched at the Hamlet Stadium, a 13,966-seat stadium with two covered grandstands, a fitness room and a club house. Fencing, baseball, soccer, American football, handball and other sports are also played at competitive levels in Pau. A popular regional sport is

Basque pelota, court sports played with a ball using one hand, racket, bat or basket, against a wall, on the ground or on two sides of a net. Canoeing championships, Marathon de Pau and the walking race called Feminine de Pau are regular features at Pau. The city has also hosted tennis, gymnastics, parachute jumping and chess championships. Pau and Pyrenees often host the Tour de France, one of the world's leading cycle races.





EQUESTRIAN SPORTS

Pau is excellent for those who love horse-riding. The region is proud of its equine traditions from the mountain pony breed used in the Pyrenees to having one of France's first stud farms. There are many riding farms in and around Pau, which offer riding facilities. Pony treks are offered by operators in farms in the countryside and in the Pyrenees hills. The CentreEquestre d'Orthez, the Club Hippique de Lescar and La Cavilier at Sailes de Bearne are destinations for horse-riding enthusiasts.

For watching races, the historical Pau Racecourse attracts more than 50,000 spectators on race days from December until mid-February. The equestrian field of Sers is one of the top European courses for steeplechase. The Étoiles de Pau or Stars of Pau is a 3-day event held in Pau that is one of the highest level of competition in equestrian eventing. Each horse and owner compete others across the three disciplines of dressage, cross-country and show jumping. Held annually in October, it is one of the only six annual competitions in eventing that receive the highest rating of CCI**** from equestrianism's world governing body, the FEI. It's also the only event of this level in France.

Another horse-related sport that is exciting to watch is mock fox hunting. The fox hunt clubhouse dates back to 1890 and is like a museum of fox hunting memorabilia. Fortunately, for the fox and animal lovers, the days of the blood sport of fox-hunting is over, and this is now a place for those who love horses and dogs. A fox-hunting demonstration is also organized for the guests. A scent is dragged over a trail and a pack of fox-hounds released to race towards the 'drag'. Riders go in pursuit, jumping over stiles, gates and ditches, and in the end kennel the hounds.





MOTOR SPORTS

For true adrenaline-pumping excitement, the Pau Arnos circuit racing track for automobile and motorcycles is up to 3030m long. The nearby kart track is up to 900m long. The facility hosts track days, test drives, competitions and a race driver school. Sip coffee on the terrace and watch powerful cars taking on the circuit. Don helmets, gloves, race suits and boots before getting into a saloon or an open legend car with an experienced driver at the wheel for an exhilarating drive on the circuit. The Pau Grand Prix is a spectacular event for those who love cars.



AIR SPORTS

Pau is an important aviation centre from the days of the Wright Brothers. In January 1909, the Wright family arrived in Pau. The first flight on the "Flyer" took place on 3rd February, 1909. The flying school, founded by the Wright Brothers, was entrusted to Paul Tissandier who, for some time, continued to train civil and military pilots. After becoming the first man to fly across the English Channel in his Blériot XI monoplane on 25th July, 1909, Blériot came back to Pau and opened his own flying school in November of that year.

The Aéro-Club du Béarn, the oldest Aero-Club of France, was founded by Paul Tissandier in December 1908 to approve the flights that the Wright Brothers were to perform in Pau. This club conducts air sports. The weather and conditions of Pau make this a favoured destination for parachuting. The Pau-Lasclaveries parachuting club is the place for free fall baptism alone or in tandem. Admiring the peak of the Midday of Ossau or the chain of the Pyrenees at a height of 4000m is an extraordinary experience and Club Pau Skydive offers you complete training to obtain your parachutist's certificate.

The Pau Pyrénées Air Club (CHP), founded in 2004, is a club dedicated to aerobatics. It is located in the Pau Pyrénées airport sheds.



MOUNTAIN SPORTS IN THE PYRENEES

From Pau, you can take the road to the Pyrenees, a range of mountains that forms a natural border between France and Spain. Reaching at a height of 11,168 ft., the Pyrenees is excellent for alpine sports like skiing, trekking, mountaineering, whitewater rafting, mountain cycling, pony treks, body boards, rock climbing, potholing and canyoning.

Treks range from exploration of the valleys, foothills and cultural trips to meeting shepherds, exploring historic places, and travelling through magnificent high routes like the one circuiting from the Cirque de Gavarnie to the Orodessa Canyon, rich in alpine wildlife. Rocky crags and mountain tops combine with sleepy villages and river valleys making terrain a pure delight. Some of the trails involve rough walking on high and remote mountains. Summer is the best season for trekking.

In winter, you can enjoy snow and ice-sports.

One hour by train or taxi from Pau, Gourette is one of the convenient places for winter sports.

There are activities like ski lessons, a choice of about 27 skiing runs, ski lifts and tows, snow shoe trekking trails and other snow activities.

Cauterets is a winter sports resort where one can enjoy downhill skiing and cross country skiing. There are 36 km of cross country tracks at Pont d'Espagne and 25 downhill pistes at Cirque du Lys between 5,600 ft and 8,200 ft altitude, which are mainly suited for beginners and intermediates. A new cable car was built in 2005, which can transport 2000 skiers per hour to the Cirque du Lys area.

Some of the region's top winter sports are in the Vallee du Baretous where the La Pierre Saint-Martin ski station provides perfect conditions for activities such as skiing, tobogganing, snow shoeing, mountain biking and scooter riding on the snow, snow tubing and big airbag.

There are also places for more difficult levels of skiing.

The Pyrenees range has a wealth of rivers to practice canoeing, kayaking, rafting, hot dogging, white water swimming, kayak polo and other sports. These rivers are good for rafting or kayaking. Torrentuous stretches of the river can be challenging for the white water enthusiast.

Rivers like the Gave de Pau, Gave d'Oloron, Gave d'Aspe, Gave d'Ossau and Mauléon are also exciting for anglers who like fly fishing.





GOLFING

Interestingly, Pau has the oldest golf course outside Scotland in the world. Built in 1856 for British expats, this course has been extended over the years to become an 18-hole golf course with a historical club, pro shop and

golf school. The clubhouse has a museum which stores antique golf clubs, golfing memorabilia, paintings and pictures of the days when only the British could play golf here and the French boys were caddies. The dining room and bar are superb setting for a drink or a meal. For golfers, the course is attractive with mature trees and river views from many points. Another golfing facility at Pau Artiguelouve is a highly rated 18-hole golf course.



SURFING AND WATER SPORTS

From the Pyrenees, the roads slope down to the Basque coastline, which has splendid places for surfing, water skiing, jet ski, kayak surf, fly board and other water sports. The Biarritz Grand Plage, Chambre d'Amour, Hendaye Plage, La Barre, La Côte des Basques and Plage des Basque are among the popular places for surfing. Biarritz is a luxurious seaside destination where a tourist can combine a holiday with world-class surfing. One of the Biarritz has two main surf beaches. La Grande Plage is known for its hollow waves and suits all standards. The town has a strong surfing culture and is known worldwide for its surfing scene and the competitions. Basque pelota, rugby and golf are other sports of this town.

The ports of La Rochelle and Rochefort are very attractive for yacht sailing. 10





Saudi Arabia

One of the only countries in the world that doesn't have rivers.



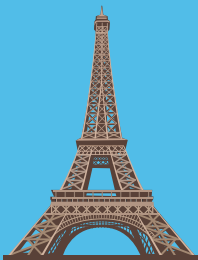
Indonesia

The country with 127 active volcanoes.



Bangkok

The official, full name of Bangkok is *Krung Thep Mahanakhon Amon Rattanakosin Mahinthara Ayuthaya Mahadilok Phop Noppharat Ratchathani Burirom Udomratchaniwet Mahasathan Amon Piman Awatan Sathit Sakkathattiya Witsanukam Prasit.*



Paris

Once every seven years, the Eiffel Tower gets a fresh paint job. It takes more than 60 metric tons of brown paint.



Denmark

Denmark has twice the number of bicycles as cars.

Did you know?



United State of America

The country of high-flyers, where at least 61,000 people are flying on planes at any given moment.



Switzerland

Where average person consumes a whopping 22 pounds of chocolate a year. Slurp!



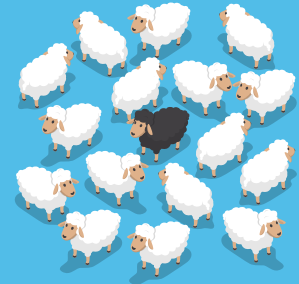
Canada

60% of world's lakes are found in Canada



Benin

The Central American nation has more twins than any other country. There are 27.9 twins for every 1000 people.



Falkland Islands

Remote islands, where sheep outnumber people by at least 200 to 1.



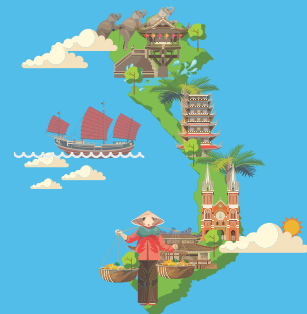
Singapore

The island nation has no farms. It is completely urbanized.



Monaco

The tiny nation is smaller than Central Park in New York City.



Vietnam

The Vietnamese language has six different tones, and a change in tone changes the meaning of a word.

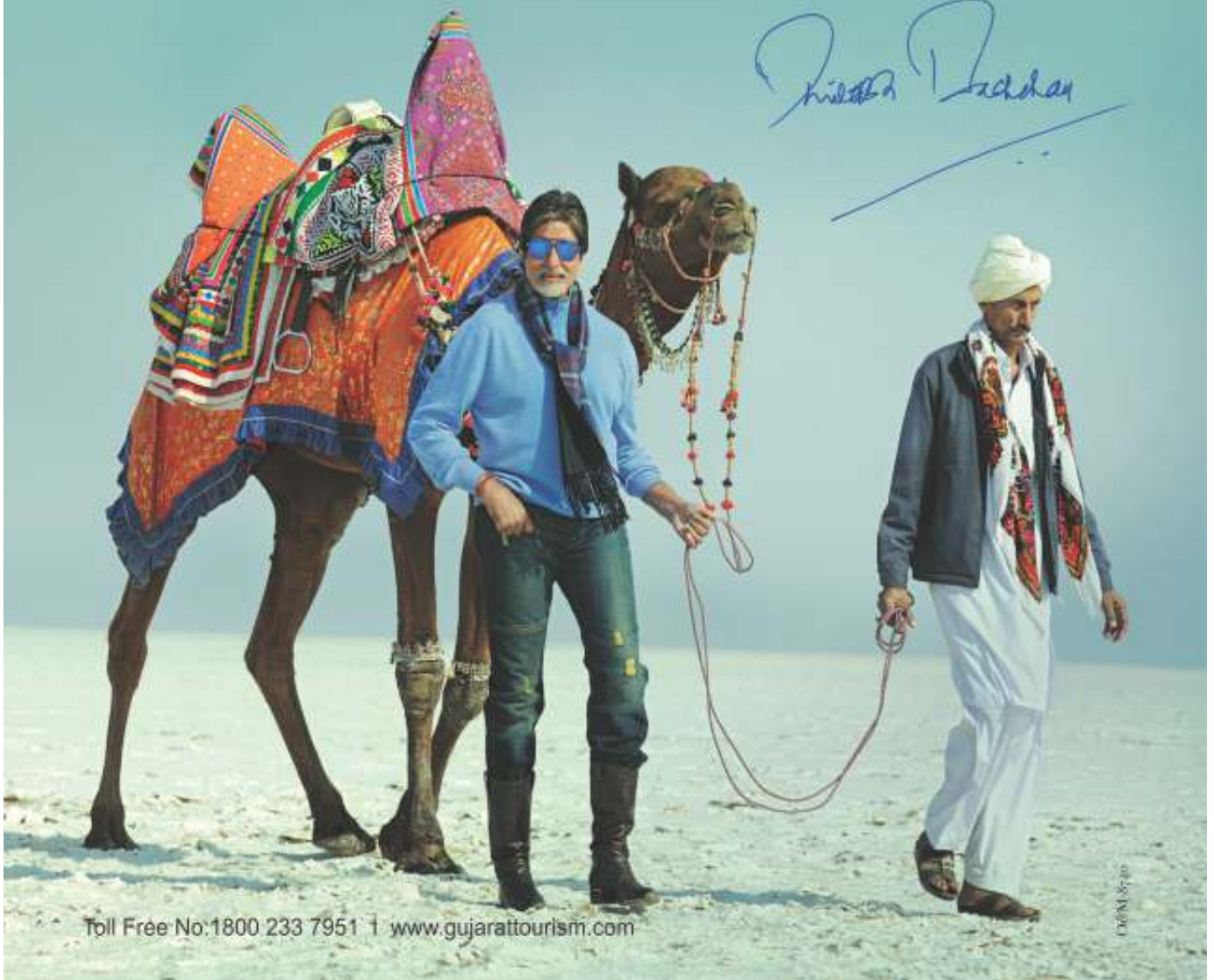


BARFEET IN BALI

During the Rann Utsav, Gujarat's festival of art, crafts and dance, I saw spinning skirts with mirror work that would make a goddess jealous. The Aari embroidery done here was so intricate, even the vendors looked sad to part with a piece. The music hypnotised me, the food tempted me, the colours dazzled me. Set against the white desert, I felt as if the festival was our way of showing off to the heavens; almost saying 'look at what we can do!'



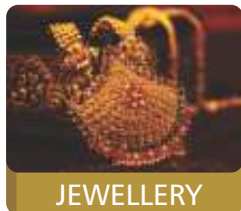
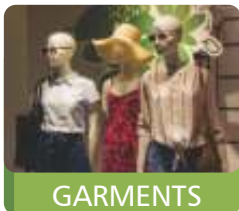
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