

PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

Published by PRAVEG COMMUNICATIONS LIMITED | www.praveg.com
(Formerly known as PRAVEG COMMUNICATIONS PVT. LTD.)

February 2018

Vol. : 3 | Issue : 6 | Pages : 56 | ₹ 200 RNI Regd. No. GUJENG/2015/70098

A high-end monthly magazine

PICTURE
PERFECT
GUJARAT

Salvation in
Badrinath

Angalamman
The Mahashivratri
Festival in Tamil Nadu

15

Inexpensive
Destinations in
Europe

BeaCHARM



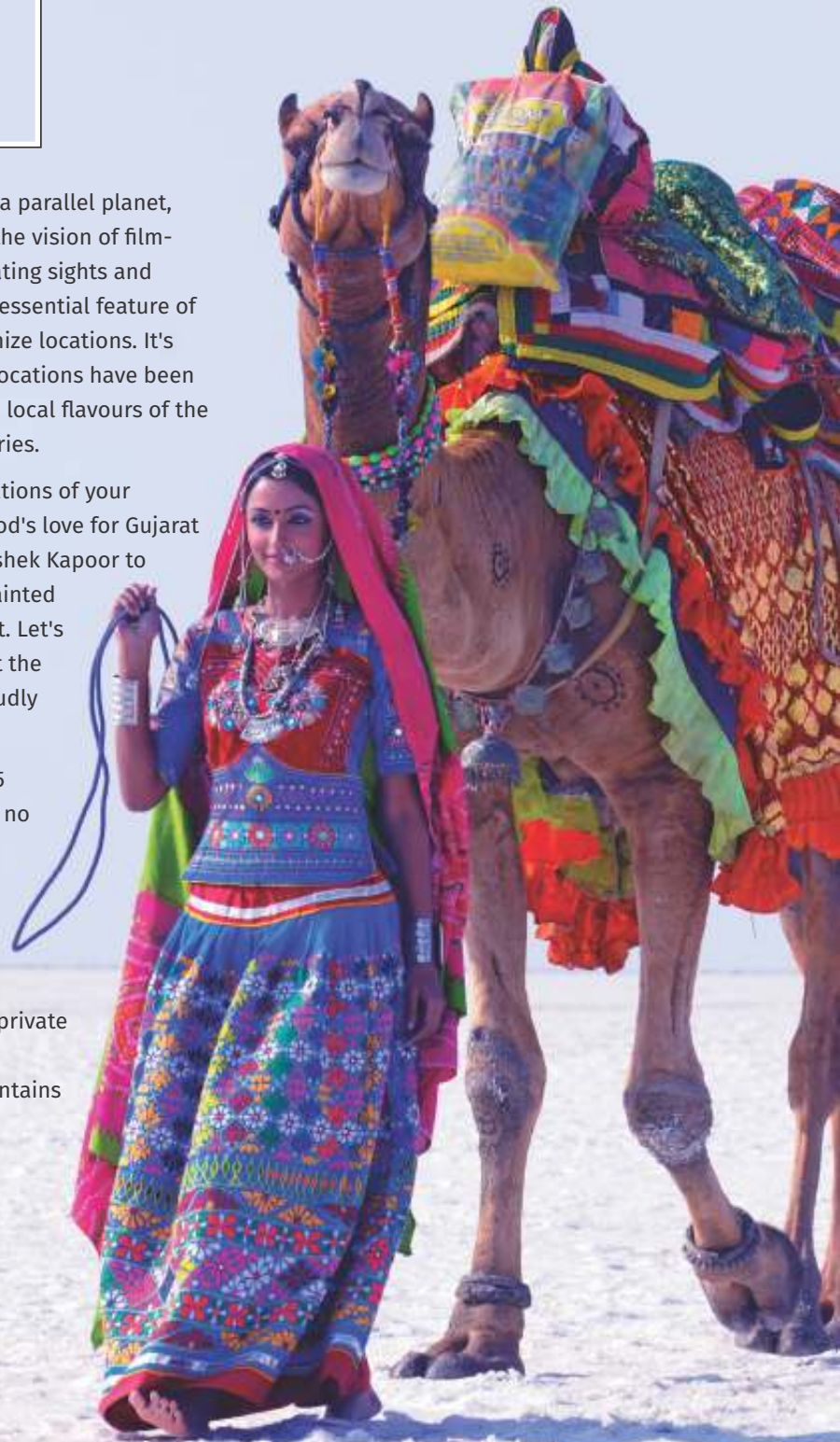
THE FILMY WAY

'Movies' is a world of imagination. It acts as a parallel planet, where many people get transported to live the vision of film-makers through dynamic characters, captivating sights and interesting plot of story. Of course, another essential feature of any film is its set-up. Some films just epitomize locations. It's like you fall in love with the way particular locations have been featured in the film. And some films capture local flavours of the State beautifully with its characters and stories.

In the present issue, we take you to the locations of your favorite films that have manifested Bollywood's love for Gujarat onscreen. From Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Abhishek Kapoor to Ashutosh Gowariker, many directors have painted their imagination with the colours of Gujarat. Let's take a walk to all these destinations, so that the next time it appears on screen, you can proudly say, "Hey, I have been to this place!"

For the real life experiences, we bring you 15 picturesque destinations of Gujarat that are no less than a dream. And these dreamy destinations (unlike their image) will not burn a hole in your pocket. Sounds awesome, isn't it? If planning to go local, read our "Two hours on a fairytale train journey in Kashmir" and experience India's private paradise with the train passing through the expansive rice fields, scenic Himalayan Mountains and spectacular apple orchards.

Read on!



PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

February 2018

Editor

Paraskumar M. Patel

Editorial Team

Drumil Patel
Prolina Barada
Priyanka Desai

Design Team

Mahesh Patel
Yagnesh Bhavsar
Vipul Gadhavi

Published & Printed By



PRAVEG

Accelerating ideas

Praveg Communications Limited

(Formerly known as PRAVEG COMMUNICATIONS PVT. LTD.)

102, Shanti Arcade, 132ft Ring Road,
Naranpura, Ahmedabad 380013.

Tel.: +91-79-27496737

e: tourismone@praveg.com

www.praveg.com

DISCLAIMER: All information in Praveg's TOURISM ONE is derived from sources we consider reliable. It is passed on to our readers without any responsibility on our part. All images are copyrighted by their respective owners unless otherwise stated. Opinions/views expressed by third parties are not necessarily shared by us. Material appearing in the magazine cannot be reproduced, whether in part(s) or in whole, without prior permission.

Be a part of Praveg's Tourism One:

Share with us some enthusiastic inputs like photographs, essays or anything related to tourism.

Have some suggestions for us?

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

FOR SUBSCRIPTION QUERIES, CONTACT:

tourismone@praveg.com

Printed, Published and Owned by

Paraskumar M. Patel

On behalf of, Praveg Communications Limited

102, Shanti Arcade, 132ft Ring Road,
Naranpura, Ahmedabad 380013.

Tel.: +91-79-27496737, 99251 71538

Email: tourismone@praveg.com

Printed At:

Le Griffé Offset Pvt. Ltd.

3, Lower Ground Floor, Popular House,
Ashram Road, Ahmedabad - 380009

Download an e-copy of Tourism One from
www.praveg.com



Contents



Incredible India

Picture Perfect Gujarat
...pg 4

Where the Mouse is Sacred
...pg 10

Salvation in Badrinath
...pg 14

Angalamman:
The Mahashivratri Festival
in Tamil Nadu
...pg 20

Two hours on a fairytale
train journey in Kashmir
...pg 24

A Spiritual Trail in Bihar
...pg 28

ICIT to organize India's first-ever
Conference on Photo Tourism
...pg 34

Far Far Away

15 Inexpensive
Destinations in Europe
...pg 36

Incredible India



If you want to visit the architectural gems where Salman Khan romanced Aishwarya Rai in *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam* or the grand bungalow of Ahmedabad featured in Shahrukh Khan-starrer *Raees*, we guide you to some of Gujarat's most prestigious Bollywood locations.

PICTURE PERFECT

GUJARAT

With its many palaces, forts and havelis, picturesque monuments and unique landscapes like the Great Rann of Kutch, Gujarat is fast becoming a popular destination for film shooting. From Bhojpuri films, Bollywood blockbusters, Television series to Advertisement films, Gujarat's locations are more frequently seen on the small or big screen. As a committee member of the Heritage Tourism Association explains, "Rajasthan is saturated and with so many tourists, it is difficult to take a palace on full charter for a series of shoots. Gujarat has equally impressive palaces, with less flow of tourists and limited exposure. This has also helped us to get business from the television and film industry".

GONDAL

Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*, Rajshri Production's *Prem Ratan Dhan Payo*, *Carry on Kesar* (Gujarati feature film), Prabhu Deva's *R... Rajkumar*, *Saraswatichandra* (Sanjay Leela Bhansali's soap opera and romantic drama), *Hawaizaada*, *Sanskaar* (a 2013-soap opera that was broadcasted on Colors TV) and a number of TV series and advertisement films have been shot at various locations in Gondal town of Rajkot district.



Riverside Palace



◆ REEL LIFE

In one of the defining moments of *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*, Vanraj (Ajay Devgan) drags Nandini (Aishwarya Rai) down the staircase of his house - this scene was shot at the Orchard Palace in Gondal. A song sequence of *Prem Ratan Dhan Payo* is filmed at the Riverside Palace on Prem Dilwale (Salman Khan) and Rajkumari Maithili Devi (Sonam Kapoor) playing football in the ground, while the fuming Rajkumari Chandrika and Rajkumari Radhika watch on from their palatial property.

● REAL LIFE

The capital of the one of the first class princely states of Saurashtra, Gondal is rich in architectural gems. From 1888 to his death in 1944, Maharaja Sir Bhagwatsimhji Sagramsimhji proved to be a progressive ruler. During his reign, Gondal was planned with good roads, street lights, underground electricity and sanitary drainage.

The oldest palace of Gondal, the Darbargadh encompasses the Navlakha Palace and a number of other residential and administrative structures. The

palace has marvelous stone carvings with exquisite balconies, brackets, columns and facades. The complex now houses museum collections of silverware, textiles, utensils, crockery, turbans, dolls, toys, horse carriages and other princely memorabilia. Continue from the

Darbargadh to the Orchard Palace, which is now a heritage hotel with large high-ceiling rooms appointed with antiques and European colonial architecture. The palace ground has one of the royal rail saloons of the Maharaja and excellent collection of vintage and classic cars. An alternative place to stay is the Riverside Palace, which was once the Yuvraj Bungalow where the prince stayed, with massive rooms and plenty of antiques. Around this property, you can see other historical buildings like the Sagramji High School and Swaminarayan Temple.

✈ GETTING THERE

Gondal is 5-hour drive from Ahmedabad Airport and 1-hour drive from Rajkot Airport.

📍 ACCOMMODATIONS

The Riverside Palace and Orchard Palace offer heritage accommodations in Gondal.





MANDVI

Scenes from *Lagaan*, *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam* and *Commando - A One Man Army* were shot on locations at the Vijay Vilas Palace of Mandvi.



REEL LIFE

Nandini (Aishwarya Rai Bachchan) is the daughter of Pandit Darbar (Vikram Gokhale), a renowned proponent of Indian classical music, who lives in a palatial property. Sameer (Salman Khan) comes to seek the guidance of Pandit Darbar and lives in this grand palace. This part of *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam* was shot at the Vijay Vilas Palace of Mandvi. This palace was the British palatial home in the film *Lagaan*. The song *Saawan Bairi* of *Commando - A One Man Army* was filmed at this palace.

REAL LIFE

Located where the Rukmavati River meets the Arabian Sea, Mandvi was once a major port of Kutch and summer retreat for the Maharao. The old city was enclosed in the fort wall and remains of the fort wall can still be seen. The dhow-building yards around the river are remnants of a 400-year old shipping industry of Mandvi. Today, the place is one of the top beach holiday destinations of Gujarat.

The main sightseeing attraction of Mandvi, the Vijay Vilas Palace has a few rooms opened for visitors to get an insight into the days when the Maharao of Kutch spent his summer months in this coastal town. The palace estate fronts a beautiful beach.

GETTING THERE

Mandvi is about two hours drive from Bhuj Airport.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Serena, Vijay Vilas Heritage Resort and Beach at Mandvi Palace are top three places to stay near the beaches of Mandvi.

THE RANN OF KUTCH

Many films have been shot at locations like the Little Rann of Kutch and the Great Rann of Kutch. Kareena Kapoor and Abhishek Bachchan's debut film *Refugee*, Nikhil Advani's thriller *D-Day*, Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Goliyon Ki Rasleela Ram-Leela*, Kareena Kapoor Khan and Imran Khan starrer *Gori Tere Pyar Mein* and *Rambo Rajkumar*, are among the many Bollywood films shot at Bhuj, the Rann of Kutch and the forts of the district. Successful Telugu films like *Dookudu* and *Magadheera* were also filmed in the Rann of Kutch. *The Good Road*, selected as the Indian entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 86th Academy Awards and the award winner for Best Gujarati Film at the National Film Awards, was filmed in Kutch.



Lakhpat Fort

◆ REEL LIFE

Those who follow South Indian cinema will remember the song sequence on Mahesh and Samantha, which was shot at the Little Rann of Kutch and the chariot race sequence that was shot in the Dholavira area of the Great Rann of Kutch. The film *Refugee* has scenes shot at various locations of Kutch such as the Great Rann of Kutch, Banni villages, BSF posts, the heritage village of Tera, Lakhpat fort, Khera fortified village and temples of Kutch.

● REAL LIFE

The Rann of Kutch is a large area of salt covered flat desert and marshes located mostly in Gujarat, which is divided into the Great Rann of Kutch and the Little Rann of Kutch.

Start your tour with the Little Rann of Kutch, a vast expanse of short grasslands, salt covered desert plains and lakes. This part of the Rann is home to various forms of wildlife that have adapted to the often harsh conditions of this vast area. Driving across the Little Rann of Kutch, you can see herds of the Asiatic wild ass and a variety of birds like the Macqueen's

bustard, sandgrouse, larks, bush chats and desert wheatear. The Indian gazelle, desert and Indian foxes and other wildlife can be seen here.

Travel from here to Khadir Bet, set in the heart of the Great Rann of Kutch. The highlight of this area is the archaeological site of Dholavira with substantial remains of the Indus Valley Civilization. The prehistoric fossil site nearby is also worth a visit. From here, you can travel to Bhuj, which is known for its palaces. From Bhuj, the road goes through the Banni grasslands with its craft villages to the Great Rann of Kutch, site for the Rann Utsav.



Wild Ass



✈ GETTING THERE

From Ahmedabad Airport, it is a drive of about two hours to the Little Rann of Kutch. Bhuj Airport is ideal for touring the Great Rann of Kutch.

📍 ACCOMMODATIONS

Rann Riders, Royal Safari Camp, Desert Outpost and Camp Zainabad are some of the good places to stay near the Little Rann of Kutch. Gujarat Tourism offers accommodation at Dholavira. White Rann Resort is a good place to experience the Rann Utsav.

AHMEDABAD

Many key places in the city of Ahmedabad have featured in films like *D-Day*, *Raees*, *OK Jaanu*, *Kai Po Che!*, *2 States* and many more.



Adalaj Stepwell

REEL LIFE

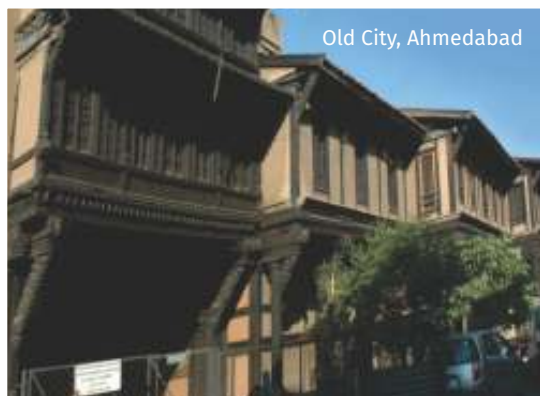
Shraddha Kapoor and Aditya Roy Kapoor in Karan Johar's *Ok Jaanu* are seen visiting CEPT University. Shraddha's tour of Ahmedabad takes her to the Jama Mosque and Sabarmati Ashram. In the film *Raees*, much of Ahmedabad's heritage is shown from the Divan's Bungalow (which is a heritage hotel) and monuments like the Sarkhej Roza and Adalaj Stepwell. Likewise, the pols of Ahmedabad featured in *Kai Po Che!*, together with other historical places of Gujarat like Vadnagar and Porbandar and also neighbouring Diu.

REAL LIFE

Ahmedabad is the first city in India to be notified as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The walled city, founded 600 years ago by Sultan Ahmed Shah, has medieval monuments, including majestic mosques and the Bhadra Fort. Within the walled city are old neighbourhoods called 'pols', which are lined with intricately carved wooden facades of havelis, colourful Jain and Hindu temples and historical institutions.

The markets here are fascinating for shopping – look for textiles, jewellery and handicrafts. This area is also famous for its street food – you will find the bhajiya houses of east Ahmedabad in Arjun Kapoor and Alia Bhatt-starrer *2 States* and the street food at Manek Chowk in *OK Jaanu*.

Cross the river to the western side of Ahmedabad, which has some good museums, art galleries and premium institutes. Continue to Sarkhej with its magnificent mausoleum. On the road to Gandhinagar from Ahmedabad, you can see the Adalaj Stepwell, an architectural gem.



Old City, Ahmedabad



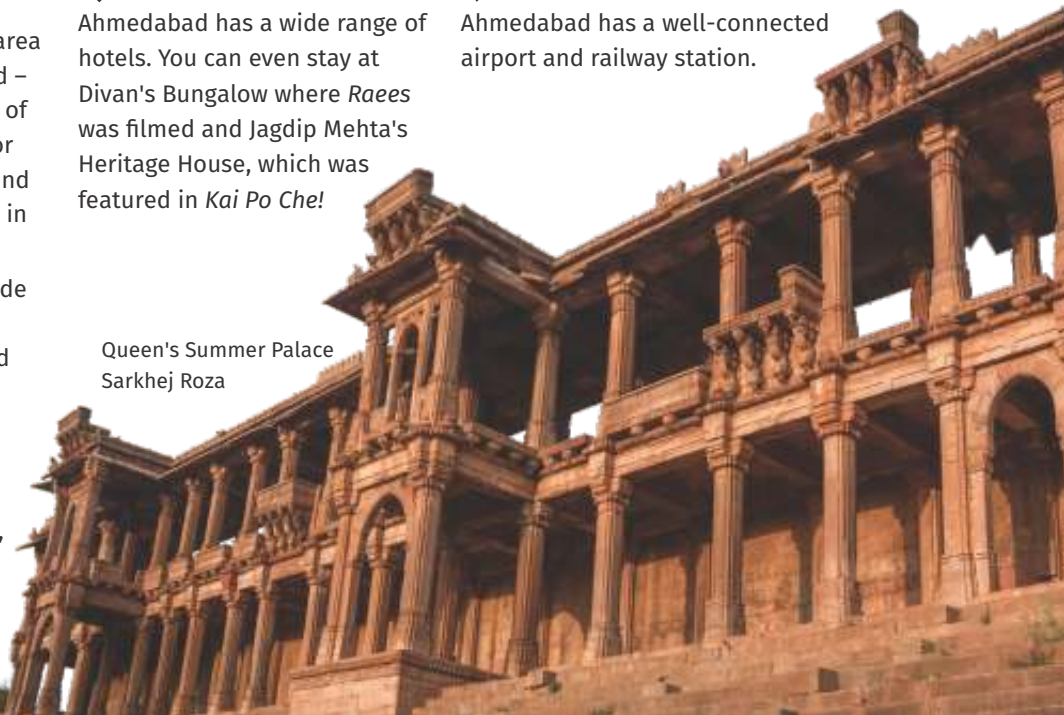
ACCOMMODATIONS

Ahmedabad has a wide range of hotels. You can even stay at Divan's Bungalow where *Raees* was filmed and Jagdip Mehta's Heritage House, which was featured in *Kai Po Che!*

GETTING THERE

Ahmedabad has a well-connected airport and railway station.

Queen's Summer Palace
Sarkhej Roza



Other Key Shoots in Gujarat

WANKANER

If you were fascinated by the scenes showing palaces in *Matru Ki Bijlee Ka Mandola*, head for Wankaner, which has one of Saurashtra's grandest palaces. You can stay at the Royal Oasis.



SURENDRANAGAR

Dariba Diaries, a mystery series produced by the Hindi EPIC Channel, was set in Delhi but the shoots happened in Surendranagar district of Gujarat. You can stay at Ambika Niwas Palace of Muli and Bell Guest House of Sayla, both of which were featured in television series.



DEVGADH BARIA

Though *Saheb Biwi Aur Gangster* and *Saheb Biwi Aur Gangster Returns* are stories of Uttar Pradesh, they were largely filmed on location at the palaces of Devgadhi Baria in Eastern Gujarat.

JUNAGADH

Remember *Rootha Kyun*, the song from *1920 London*? It was shot at the mausoleums and fort of Junagadh.

BALARAM


Balaram Palace Resort, Chitrasani Village, near Palanpur was where the Amitabh-starrer *Sooryavansham* was largely shot. Television series were also shot at this palace resort. 📺

VADODARA & CHAMPANER


The magnificent palaces of Vadodara are often seen in advertisement films and have also featured in Bollywood films. Parts of *Grand Masti* was shot at the Laxmi Vilas Palace. *Sweetie Weds NRI* is a story revolving around Vadodara and shows monuments of Champaner-Pavagadh. The title song of *Rabba Main Kya Karoon* was also shot at Champaner.







Where the Mouse is Sacred



One of India's unusual tourist attractions, the Karni Mata Temple near Bikaner is also called the Mouse Temple (or Rat Temple) because of the hundreds of rats that gather in and around the temple. The rats are considered sacred and are fed sweets and milk by the priests and visitors, who believe that they are reincarnated holy men. This temple is one of the major Shakti shrines of Rajasthan.





The temple is dedicated to Karni Mata, the incarnation of Goddess Durga. Karni Mata, a lady who lived in the 14th century, is credited with many miracles. Karniji or Deshnok Mata lived her life as a Charani, a nomadic woman bard from a wealthy family of Phalodi area where she was born in 1387. Members of the Charan, caste of musicians, believe that incarnations of the Goddess Durga periodically appear on earth, one of whom was Karni Mata. These incarnations are said to have healing powers and could be Purna Avatars to avert a crisis. Karni Mata's miracles included water divination and bringing back the dead to life. Thus, she became the most powerful religious leaders for farmers, Jats and other residing in the region.

According to a legend, when her youngest son Lakhan or Laxman drowned, she asked Yama,



the God of Death, to bring him back to life from Kapil Sarovar in Kolayat Tehsil. He said she had the power to permit her children to live again. Laxman and all of Karni Mata's male children were permitted to be reincarnated as rats. Many charans in the area believe that they are descendants of Karni Mata and will be born as rats called kabas.

Another legend is about a 20,000 strong army who deserted a nearby battle and came running to Deshnok. Upon learning of the sin of desertion, punishable by death, Karni Mata spared their lives but turned them into rats, and offered the temple as a future place to stay. The army of soldiers expressed their gratitude and promised to serve Karni Mata evermore.

Karni Mata was patronized by Rao Bikaji of the Rathore dynasty who felt that her stamp of approval would help him in his





ambitions. After receiving her blessings, he successfully defeated local chieftains and established his independent rule in the region. He consulted her for major decisions and she laid the stone of the Junagarh Fort at Bikaner. She is featured on the royal flag of Bikaner Princely State and even the Camel Corps say Shree Karniji as their battle cry.

A stunning set of silver doors leads to the grand marble temple, which was completed in its current form in the early 20th century by the Maharaja of Bikaner. Across the doorway are more silver doors with panels depicting the various legends of Deshnok Devi. Kundanlal Verma of Karni Jewelers, in 1999, further decorated the temple. The rustic stone and log shrine to the Devi is enshrined within the marble building. Subsidiary shrines revere Karniji's granddaughter and a shepherd boy who died protecting Karniji's livestock.

The temple opens at 4.00am and Charan priests perform Mangla-Ki-Aarti and offer Prasad or Bhog. Devotees make offerings to the rats, which teem around the temple. White rats are considered to be especially holy, associated with Karni Mata herself and

her four sons. Sighting them is a special blessing and visitors put in extensive efforts to bring them forth, offering prasad.

Huge Fairs are held at the temple during the Navratri Festival. 📖



Incredible India

Salvation in Badrinath



The journey to any pilgrimage centre is always difficult. The tortuous journey of winding roads seemed never ending. The black granite mountains rising abruptly in Joshimath dwarfed me by its sheer immensity. I was traversing through a land of terrifyingly deep chasms and towering ridges. A narrow road, that can accommodate only two vehicles, wound precariously upwards from Joshimath to Badrinath.



As with all pilgrimage centres, this place too was humming with people. It was the third day of the opening of the Badrinath temple. Though not particularly inclined to theism, I decided to visit the temple anyway. Despite the inclement weather, the queue for the temple was at least a quarter of a kilometre long. Our piety notwithstanding, we fail miserably when it comes to observing queue etiquettes. As I neared the door of the temple, people started pushing, pulling and jumping the queue. All these activities increased in direct proportion to the proximity of the temple-door. By the time I managed to reach the temple doors, the right was with the might! As Katha Upanishad presciently observes “To cross over razor’s edge is difficult, so is the path to salvation!” I had no option but to exercise my might too, if I ever had to have a chance getting my cut of salvation!



PHOTOGRAPHY IS PROHIBITED
INSIDE
TEMPLE & PREMISES
BKTC

मन्दिर परिसर में
फोटोग्राफी प्रतिबंधित है।
BKTC

Inside the temple, there was no let up in the wayward behaviour of the pilgrims in their desire to be as close to the Murti as possible. They came with eagerness and hope, surrendering themselves completely to the Gods before them - oblivious to the shoving humanity, the noise or the heavy incense filled atmosphere. It was wrenching to see the imploring look on their faces. Will the Gods oblige them? The obeisance had to be brief. The impatient humanity behind did not allow you a longer communion with the Gods. Only when I was pushed out of the temple did I realise that I had forgotten to ask anything from my Maker. Well, God is everywhere, I consoled myself.

The head priest conducting the rites in the temple, is always a Namboodiri from Kerala, a practice followed to this date on the dictum of Adi Shankaracharya in the 8th century AD.

The Namboodiri are Brahmins from Kerala. Adi Shankaracharya was himself a Brahmin from this State.

The next day held more exciting prospects - a 4-hour trek to the Vasudhara falls. No throngs of people accompanied us. The propitiation done, the crowds had vanished. For much of the trek, I did not meet anybody. The trek to the falls was not too difficult. The ascent was gradual and despite the elevation of the place, I did not much feel the discomfort of the rarefied conditions. The pebble strewn path was not too easy to walk on, though; next time, I decided, I would wear shoes with a firmer base.

The narrow path was through a vast expanse of the valley. The left side of the path gradually receded away to a rivulet of melting glaciers and steadily rose again to dizzying heights. The crests of the mountains were clothed in





pristine snow, which glistened in the afternoon sun against the backdrop of deepest of blue skies.

To my right, the rocky mountains rose steeply halting the stray cumulus clouds. When the wind blew in sudden gusts, I instinctively looked around for some shelter. There was none. In this vast expanse of space, height and chasms, I felt utterly alone and exposed to the elements. It was not a comfortable feeling.

There is always a tendency on treks to see how much of the journey is still left. When I met a wandering shepherd, I eagerly asked him “Aur kitna jana hai?” His energy sapping reply would be “Aur bahut hai...” The path seemed endless. I was tired and thirsty, all I wanted was just to curl up and have a short nap in some quiet nook of a rock. There were

no Dhabas or any kind of tea stalls en route.

When Edmund Hillary was summiting the Everest, the destination had seemed without end. Tired and bitterly cold, like a zombie, he just kept climbing. Then suddenly, he found that he was not climbing anymore! The ground was falling away from him. He had reached the top!

That was how we reached the waterfall. We clambered over several small cliffs and then suddenly there, in the distance, was the waterfall in all its splendour. Falling from a height of about 200 metres, the cascade broke up into myriad minute droplets of spray. A small rainbow arched through the mists of spray.


The tiny water droplets coalesced into ice crystals forming a huge mound

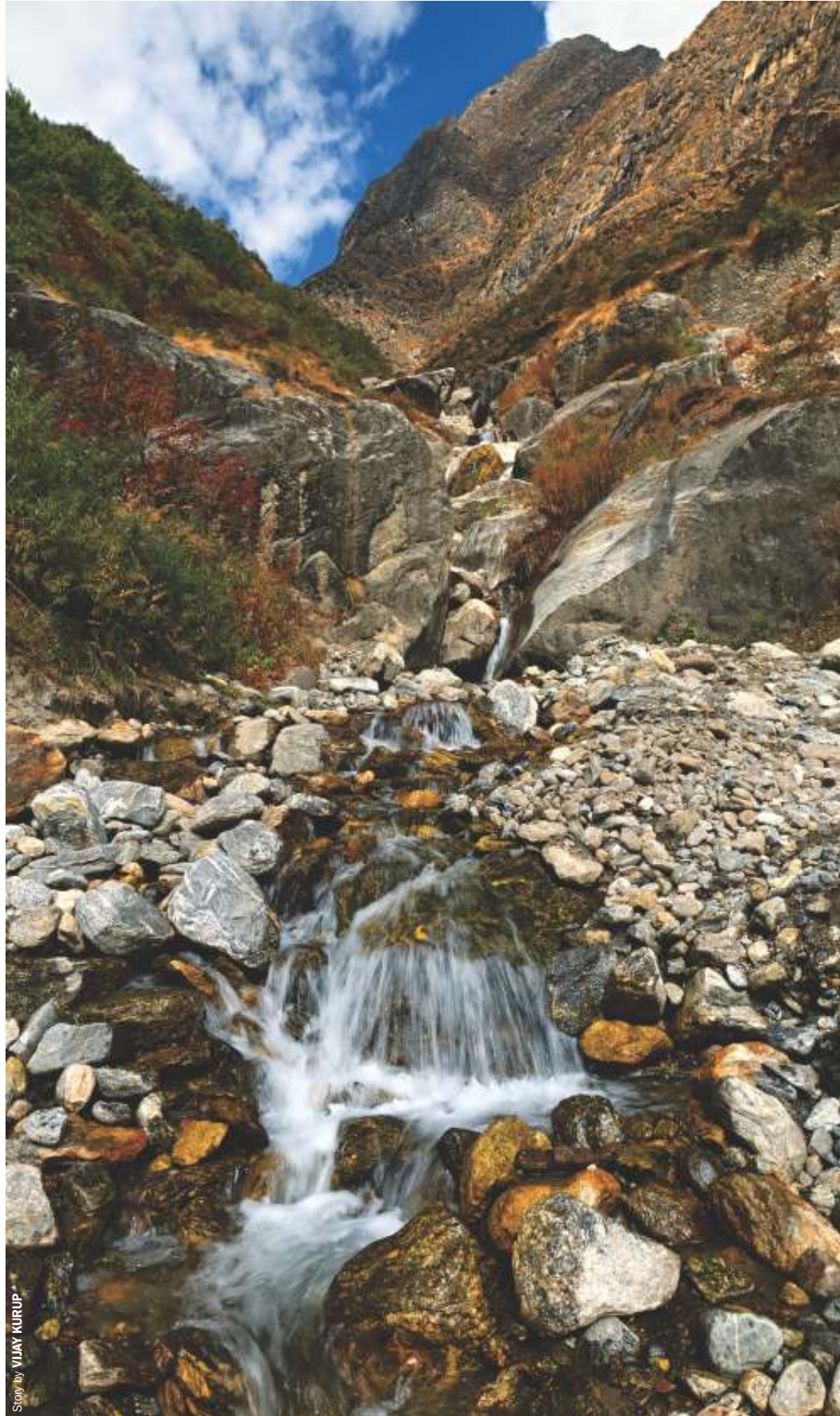
at the base of the waterfall. After the hard trek, it was refreshing to feel the fine droplets of ice cold water gently settle on your face in the hot afternoon sun. From this vantage point, I could see several mountain ranges receding into the distance. I surveyed the panorama in front of me and wondered what was beyond these ranges. What mysteries and virgin lands lay there? Perhaps it is common for any man to wonder what lay beyond the realm of time and space.

On the way, we had to ward a stream of icy waters cascading down the mountains. The flow was quite strong and we had treaded our way carefully jumping over boulders. However on the way back, the stream had become a raging torrent. The afternoon heat had melted a large amount of snow. With alarm, we surveyed the torrent of



flowing water. There was a distinct danger of being swept away or getting ourselves completely wet. We moved further up, hoping the gorge would narrow for us to hop across the rocks. It was only through sheer athleticism that we managed to hop across the boulders without plunging into the icy waters.

Earlier, a glimpse of the snow-clad mountains from the lower plains would have me longing to be on those mountains so far away. Now as I looked back from the window of the car at the receding landscape, I could proudly say "I was there!" But I knew that the windswept valleys and the pristine white snow-covered mountains against the backdrop of the intense blue skies would act as a lodestone to lure me once again to these mountains. 



ANGALAMMAN

The Mahashivratri Festival in Tamil Nadu

Every year, Angalamman Festival is celebrated with much fervor in a small town of Kaveripattinam in Tamil Nadu. The day after Maha Shivratri, tens of thousands of devotees converge in this town to worship the deity Angalamman. The deity is regarded as the kuldevi in various parts of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

During the festival, the town comes to life with worshippers painting their faces and dressing up to look like the Goddess Kali.





2



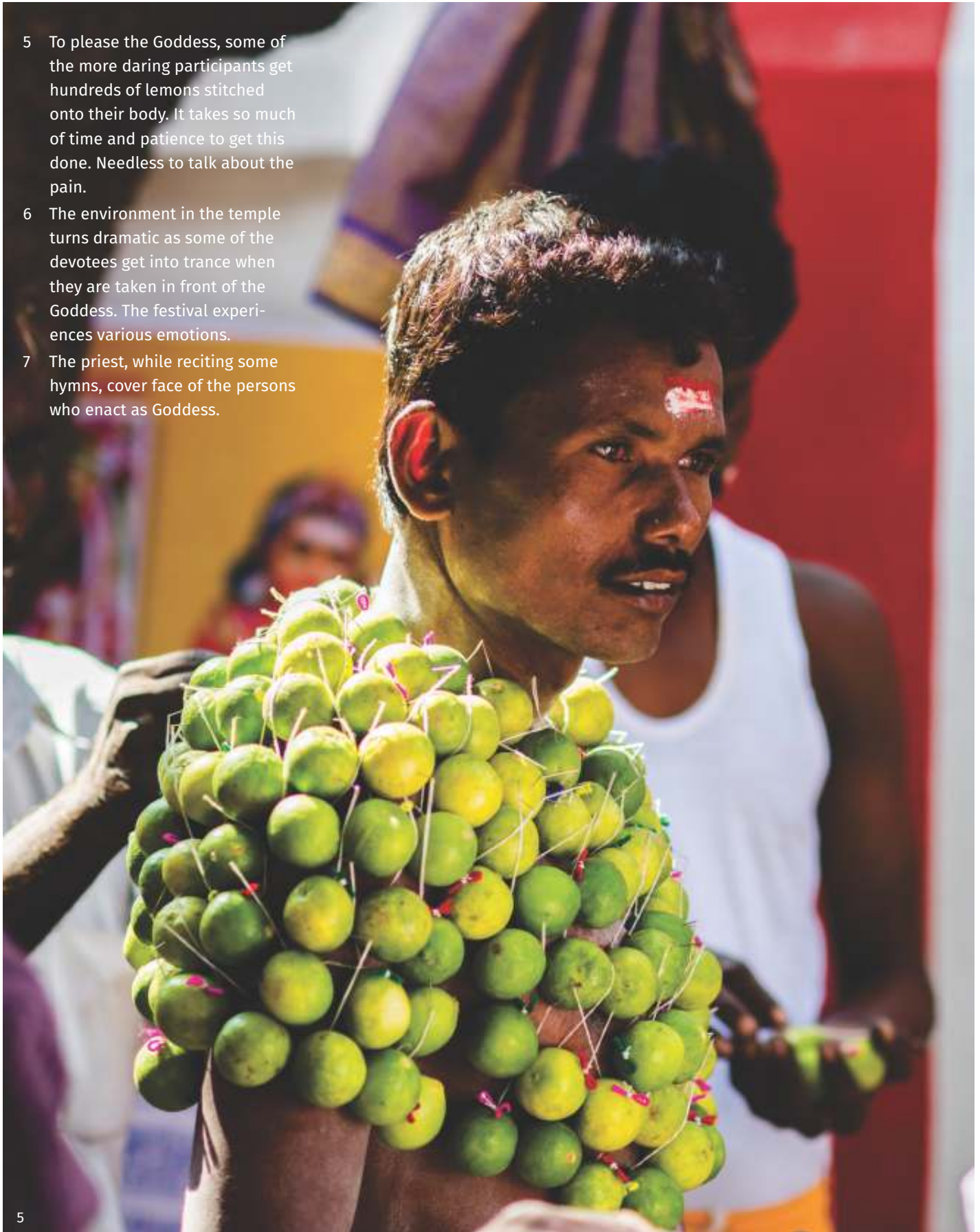
3



4

- 1 Hundreds of thousands of devotees, many of them barefooted, join procession that features huge statues of gods.
- 2 Many devotees wear the Kali make-up for the procession.
- 3 Another ritual that takes place is piercing of the body. A lot of people pierce their body parts with a knife or metal rod, while a few devotees pierce metal hooks onto their bodies and use them to pull chains through the village.
- 4 The Goddess of the festival fully deck-up with flowers.

- 5 To please the Goddess, some of the more daring participants get hundreds of lemons stitched onto their body. It takes so much of time and patience to get this done. Needless to talk about the pain.
- 6 The environment in the temple turns dramatic as some of the devotees get into trance when they are taken in front of the Goddess. The festival experiences various emotions.
- 7 The priest, while reciting some hymns, cover face of the persons who enact as Goddess.





6



7

Incredible India

TWO hours on a fairytale train journey in Kashmir

It is 8 AM in the morning, pleasant breeze flows across a train station filled with some 20 people. This station is unlike most of the railway terminals, halts, junctions in India. The tracks appear from the mountains from one side and then vanish into the other.

This is Srinagar railway station. The route of the most beautiful train journey you'll ever experience in your life. This train takes you to Banihal, from where Jammu is just six hours away by bus. Out of multiple ways to travel from Jammu to Srinagar, this train journey is the fastest and the most convenient. The train passes through rice fields, magnificent Himalayan Mountains and apple orchards. Traveling on this route is like a fairytale coming to life.

“

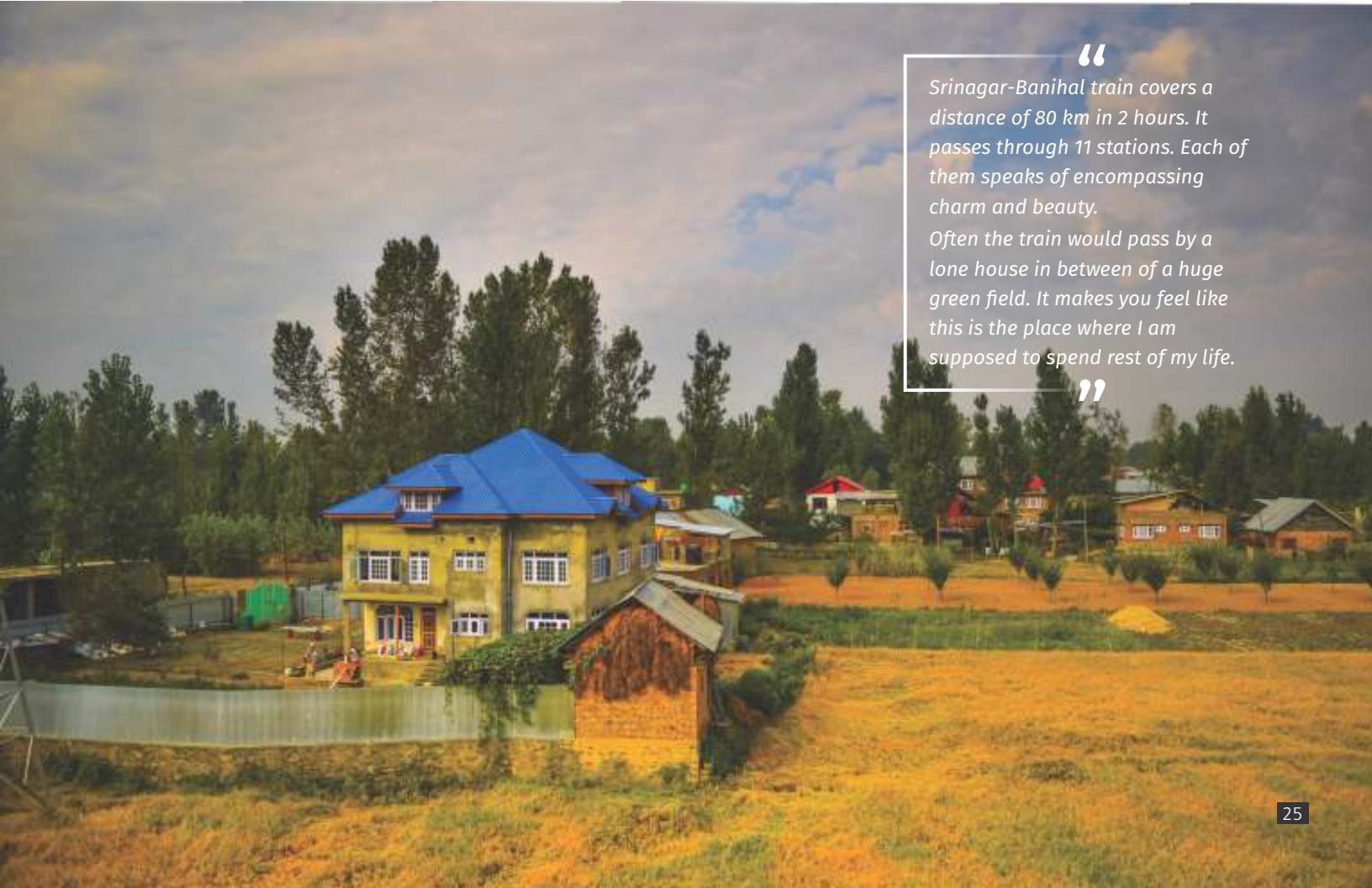
Srinagar Banihal train journey takes you through the gorgeous mountains of PirPanjal range. The views will leave you awestruck. The moment I got in the train, I felt like a child left alone in a candy store. Gorgeous views on the both side. Green fields, mountains, I had never been on a journey like this ever in my life.

”





“
The railway stations during this train journey will mesmerise you. These stations look like they have appeared straight out of one of the romantic novels.
”



“
Srinagar-Banihal train covers a distance of 80 km in 2 hours. It passes through 11 stations. Each of them speaks of encompassing charm and beauty. Often the train would pass by a lone house in between of a huge green field. It makes you feel like this is the place where I am supposed to spend rest of my life.
”

PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

“
Since the train is filled with locals, it is quiet amusing for them to see you running with your camera. They'll even ask you about your travel experience in their beautiful state. If they like you, they'll even invite you to visit their village on your next trip.
”



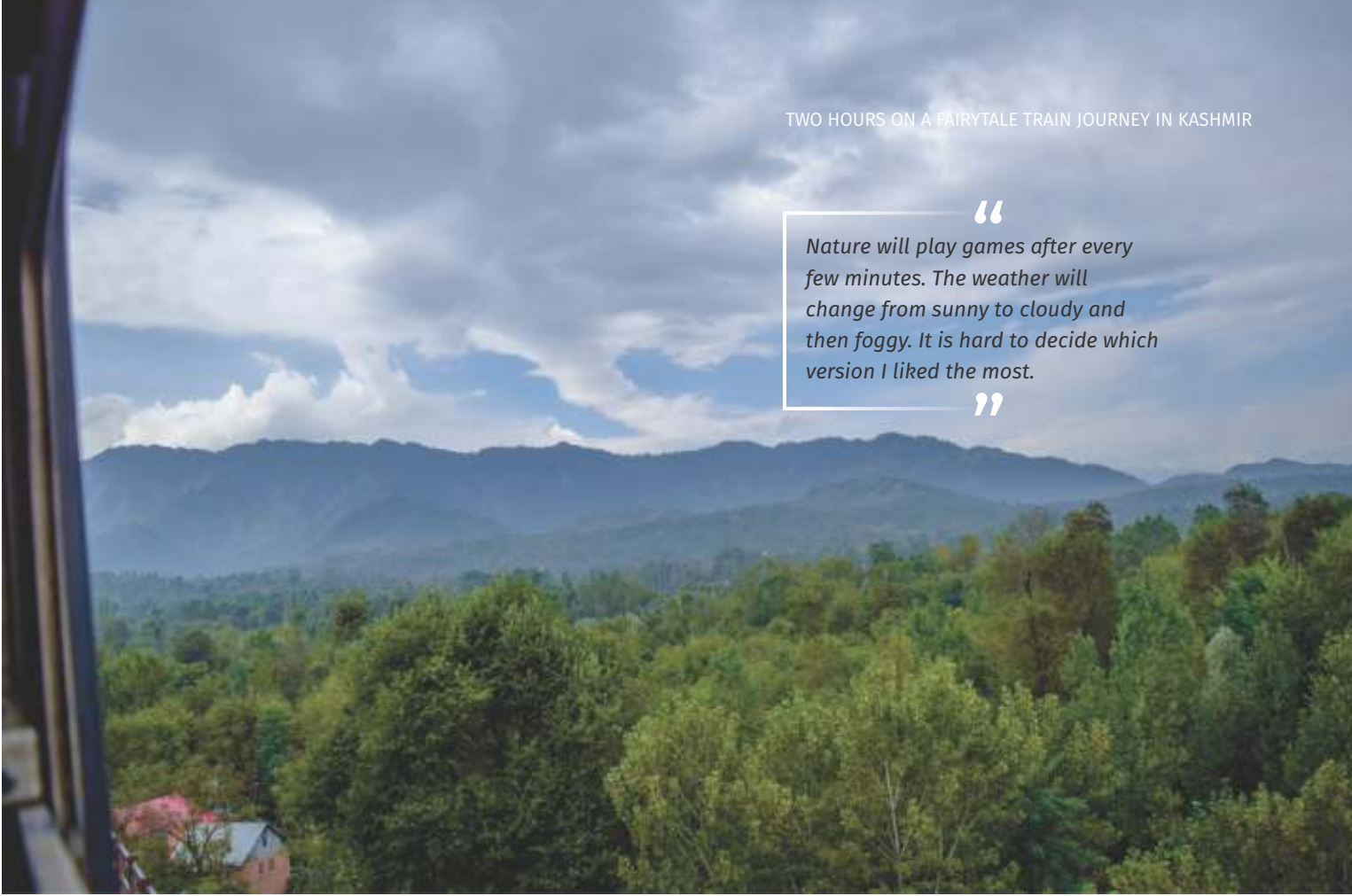
“
Every corner of Kashmir holds endless amount of beauty within itself.
”



“

Nature will play games after every few minutes. The weather will change from sunny to cloudy and then foggy. It is hard to decide which version I liked the most.

”



Bihar has some of India's holiest shrines, attracting Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh and Muslim pilgrims from across the world.

As you enter Bihar, you can see the magnificent Islamic monuments of Sasaram with Sher Shah's mausoleum and the mausoleum dedicated to Sher Shah's father, Hassan Khan, in about 1535 AD. From here, you continue to Bodh Gaya.

A Spiritual Trail In **BIHAR**

Buddhist temples of Bodh Gaya

Bodh Gaya's Mahabodi complex is where Buddha, after renouncing the world, meditated under a peepal tree. After getting Sambodhi, he was called Buddha. The tree was named the Bodhi tree and the site is the most sacred for Buddhists. The main temple has a single plastered brick spire, which stands tall over the trees in its compound and is surrounded by four small towers in each corner (said to have been added by Burmese Buddhists in the 1800s) giving it the five-shrine style on a broad and high plinth. A second century BC railing surrounding the temple on three sides has really fine carvings.

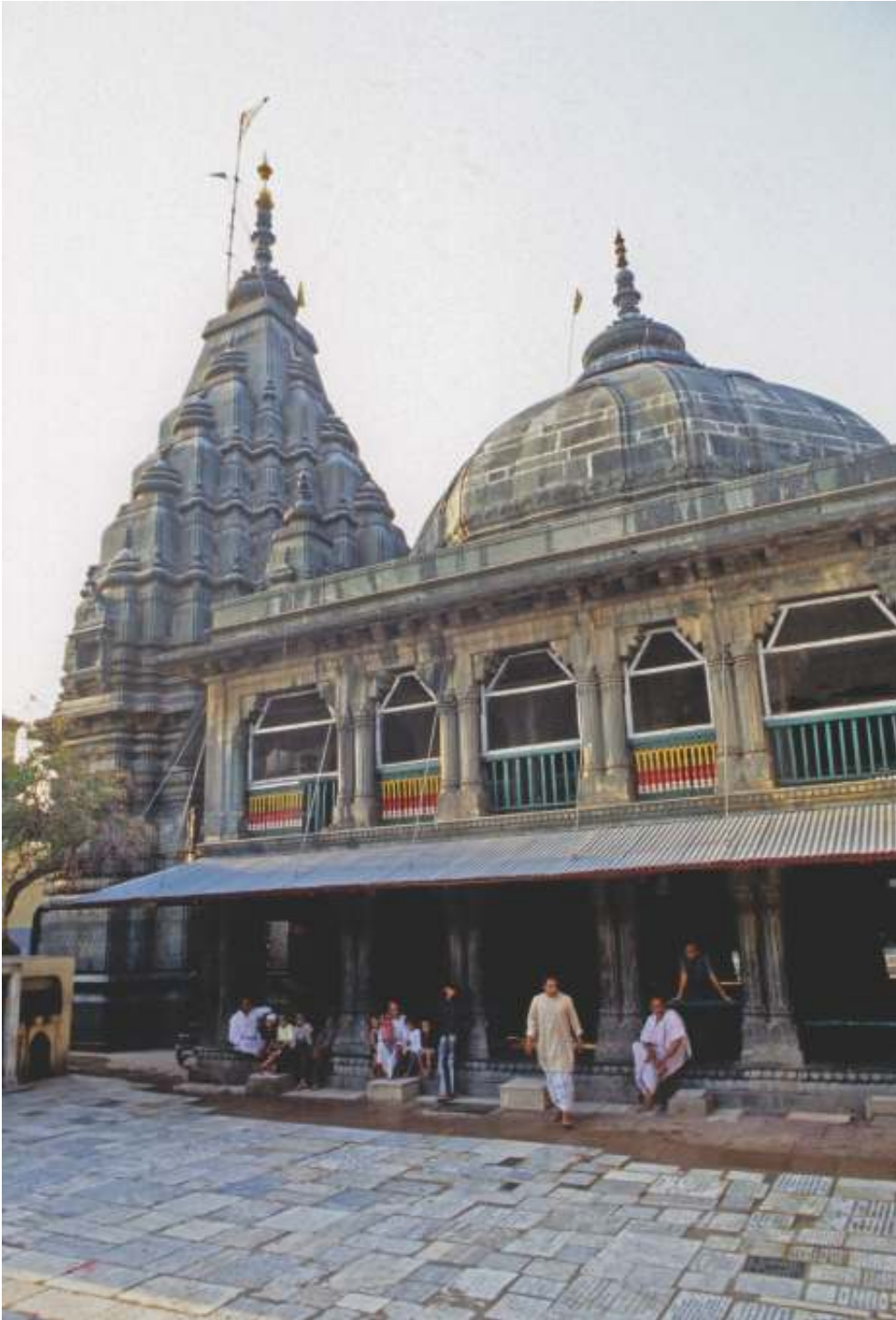
The circumambulation path raised around the temple offers a good view of the small stupas and shrines in the leafy temple grounds, some of which have intricate carvings depicting scenes from Buddha's life. The carvings show lotus pond (where Buddha is said to have bathed), the large Bodhi tree (an



offshoot of the original tree), the stone slab called the *Vrajasana* or *Vrajshila* (where Buddha is said to have sat), the Animesh Lochana temple (the spot where Buddha stood and gazed at the Bodhi tree in gratitude after getting enlightenment) and the *Chankramana* (a first century platform with lotus flower carvings marking the promenade where Buddha walked).

The aura of the complex is of devotion, peace and tranquillity. With pilgrims from Japan, Thailand, China, Myanmar, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and other countries, Bodh Gaya has many international monasteries, temples and guest houses - the Japanese complex and the one-columned Vietnamese temple are especially impressive.





Hindu Pilgrimage Sites of Gaya

A short distance from Bodh Gaya, Gaya is one of the most populated towns of Bihar. It is said that Gaya was the name of a demon (Asura) whose body was sanctified after he performed rigid penance and secured blessings from Vishnu. It was said that the Gayasura's body would continue to

be known as Gaya Kshetra. This city finds mention in the great epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata – this is where Rama and Laxman offered pind-daan to their father Dasharath. The Vishnupad Mandir is the centre for pilgrimage at Gaya, an important place for Pitru Shraddha.



Buddhist and Jain Heritage of Rajgir

From Gaya, travel to Rajgir, which has many Buddhist and Jain shrines. You will pass through a stupa and other historic sites before reaching the chair-lift to the Japanese Peace Pagoda, at a hilltop site of Griddhakuta where Buddha set his second wheel of learning in motion. Two

caves, cut into the hill, were Buddha's favourite retreats, and this is said to be the place where Buddha subdued an elephant – a scene often shown in Buddhist art. The first Buddhist council met at the Saptaparni caves.

There are many Jain shrines in Rajgir,

a town where Mahavir spent 14 rainy seasons and a Jain tirthankar was born, making this an important pilgrimage for Jains too. The town is full of sites associated with Bimbisara of Magadha and his son Ajatasatru (5th century) as well as Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism, Lakshminarayan temple near the hot springs being the most important.

Buddhist Remains of Nalanda

Nalanda was a Buddhist university where students from the world over came to study. In the 5th century, the university had over 5000 international students and teachers. When Tsang visited, he found 1000 monks studying here. Excavations have revealed one of the most orderly complexes in the

whole of India, showing the Buddhist civilisation of the period, with seven levels of occupation. See the monastic rooms set in three-storeys around a courtyard, and temples including Temple-3 with high and smaller stupas, some with sculpture that offers a good view of the remains.



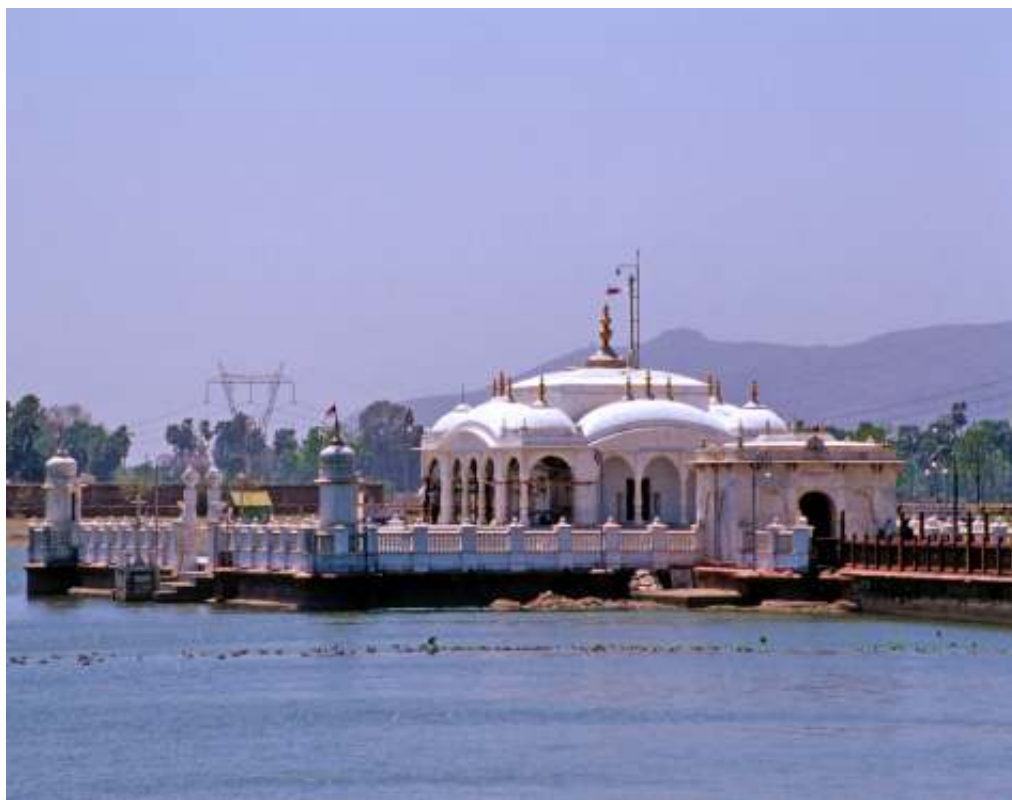


Sufi Shrine of Bihar Sharif


From Nalanda, continue to Bihar Sharif, which has some important Sufi shrines. One of the most visited shrines is the tomb of Ibrahim Baya, which is located atop the Pir Pahari hill. Ibrahim Malick came to India around 1339 CE and served as a general in Sultan Mohammad Tughlaq's army. He was also revered as a devout religious saint.

The Jain Temple of Pawapuri

Further ahead from Bihar Pawapuri is an important place of Jain pilgrimage. Around 5th Century BCE, Mahavira, the last of the twenty-four Tirthankara attained Nirvana or moksha (liberation). He was cremated at Pawapuri, called as Apapuri (the sinless town). There was a great rush to collect his ashes, which devotees believe caused a pond to be created. An exquisite marble temple in the middle of a lotus pond, the Jal Mandir, occupies on a rectangular island. Samosharan is where the Lord Mahavira delivered his last teaching. Gaon Mandir is the spot where Mahavira is said to have attained Moksha.



Sikh Pilgrimage to Patna

Takht Sri Patna Sahib also known as Harmandar Sahib was built to commemorate the birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs on 22 December, 1666. It was built by Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839), the first Maharaja of the Sikh Empire. Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru, was born in Patna, in 1666. Besides being the birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh, Patna was also honored by visits from Guru Nanak as well as Guru Tegh Bahadur. 

ICIT to organize **India's first-ever**
Conference on

Photo Tourism



Recognizing the importance of good travel pictures and travel blogs in promoting tourism, Innovative Council of Indian Tourism (ICIT) is organising India's first ever Conference on Photo Tourism in India on 21-22 February, 2018 in association with Gujarat Tourism at White Rann Resort, Dhordo, Kutch.



On this momentous occasion of the first ever Conference on “Photo Tourism in India”, ICIT reinforces its commitment to develop, encourage, support and promote the photographer and blogger communities in India who strive to promote Indian Tourism through their esoteric skills, knowledge and dedication.

Praveg Communications Limited is the Event Partner for the Conference. ICIT has invited renowned travel photographers and bloggers from India amidst the presence of media professionals to attend the 2-day Conference.

The objectives of the event are to encourage photo tourism in India towards promoting India's tourist destinations worldwide, facilitate networking and interaction among travel fraternity, discuss emerging trends in photography and chart the roadmap for photo tourism in India.

ICIT Photography Awards 2018 and ICIT Blogging Awards 2018 will be organized as a part of the event to recognize the exemplary achievements of national travel photographers and bloggers. During the event, ICIT will make special arrangements to encourage and attract the awardees to capture the magnificence of Rann Utsav and the tourist destinations of Kutch.

Far Far away



15

Inexpensive Destinations in Europe

This goes without saying, but Europe is on every traveller's list to visit at least once in their life. You may not be able to visit the most famous and expensive destinations in Europe but when the whole continent is full of magical places, why stop? We have a list of budget destinations in Europe that are probably affordable for most of the travel junkies.





1

Netherlands

One way flight fare starting from New Delhi at: 25,000 INR*

Accommodation: Average cost of hotels in Amsterdam begins at 3,000 INR

The old Holland country, Netherlands is fast growing among the backpackers and hippie travellers. Here, you will witness some of the best engineering and architectural marvels, the canals paving the way through the cities, the chilled crafted beers and the breweries, the horticulture and the vibrant gardens around the city and the number of music festivals that throb the city from time to time. There is no reason why it isn't an ideal destination for the young travellers. The best way to roam around the city is to hire a bicycle and absorb the beauty of the city as you ride across the town.

Places to visit: Amsterdam city, Rotterdam, The Hague, Gouda, Groningen, Haarlem, Maastricht, Delft, Leiden



2

Berlin GERMANY

One way flight fare starting from New Delhi at:
18,000 INR*

Accommodation: Average cost of hostels begins
at 1500 INR

Put together the modern lifestyle and ancient architecture and you will get Berlin. Germany is soon becoming the hub for budget travellers. The hostels are available in abundance and well, the beer, as we all know it begins from as low as €2. Tour around the city during the day to marvel the modern as well as ancient German architecture and make your night lively by visiting the nightclubs, bars and clubs.

Places to visit in Berlin: Brandenburg Gate, Museum Island, Charlottenburg Palace and Park, The Rebuilt Reichstag, The Berlin-Dahlem Botanical Garden and Museum.





3

Budapest HUNGARY

One way flight fare starting from New Delhi at: 25,000 INR*

Accommodation: Average cost of hostels begins at 2000 INR per day

Budapest is the capital city of Hungary, which is divided by the river Danube. The river not only divides the capital city but bifurcates the culture and architecture as well. On one side, you encounter the modern European culture filled with bars and nightclubs at every step and on the other side, you get to witness the ancient architecture of Europe that includes some of the most magnificent edifices and palaces. Hungary is also known for its natural hot water springs that are located in the countryside.

Places to visit in Budapest: Buda Castle, Danube Promenade, Gellert Hill, Heroes' Square and hot water springs a few miles away from Budapest city





4

Ibiza SPAIN

One way flight fare starting from New Delhi at:
30,000 INR*

Accommodation: Average cost of hostels begins at
3000-5000 INR

We all know Ibiza as the coolest party destination in Europe. Look beyond because with the beautiful beaches, the calm sea and plenty of natural spots, Ibiza is much more than just a beach party destination for the youngsters. If you are looking for the beach holiday, you can choose Ibiza and some of its unexplored places to mark your budget holiday in Europe.

Places to visit in Ibiza: Ses Salines Nature Park, Cala Llenya, Playa d'en Bossa, Santa Eulalia del Rio, Sant Antoni de Portmany, the nightclubs and cruise parts are obviously aren't worth a miss.





5

Albania

One way flight fare starting from New Delhi at:
30,000 INR*

Accommodation: Average cost of hotels begins at
2,000 INR

If you get to witness the Swiss Alps' beauty at the much cheaper cost, would the offer not attract you? You not only get to marvel the beauty of Alps but also the timeless Mediterranean beaches. Albania will carry you back in time with the suburban beauty as well. The architectural wonders of the city that are set amidst the natural beauty of the country will give you the glimpse of the history and European colonial culture as well. Besides, it is one of the safest places to travel.

Places to visit in Albania: Albanian Riviera, Main Square of Tirana, Llogara Pass, Kruja, Theth National Park, Ksamil Islands and Koman Lake



6

Bulgaria

One way flight fare starting from New Delhi at:
25,000 INR*

Accommodation: Average cost of hotels begins at
3000 INR

Bulgaria is a small country in Europe with a variety of geographical distinction from Black sea, the Danube River and mountain ranges. Sofia is the capital city of the country set against the backdrop of Balkan mountain ranges. It is a great Europe destination for the adventure lovers as it opens up the way for a number of hikes and treks amongst the great mountain ranges. The highest mountain peak of Bulgaria is Musala of the Rila mountain range.

Places to visit in Bulgaria: Sofia, Seven Rila Lakes, trek to Rila mountain ranges, the black sea beaches, Rila monastery, Plovdiv old town, Belogradchik





7

Nice FRANCE

One way flight fare starting from New Delhi at:
25,000 INR*

Accommodation: Average cost of hotels begins at
2,000 INR

On the foothills of Alps and on the shore of Mediterranean sea, Nice is often referred to as winter retreat of France. It holds charm of the old French architecture lined across its coastline and natural beauty of the Alps adorning the backdrop. You can take a bike trip around the city to get the best experience of this French beauty.

Places to visit in Nice: Vieille Ville, Promenade des Anglais, Colline du Château, Musée Matisse, Musée Marc Chagall



8

Lisbon PORTUGAL

One way flight fare starting from New Delhi at:
25,000 INR*

Accommodation: Average cost of hotels begins
at 1,500 INR

The capital city of Portugal is definitely one of the best places to take a budget trip. It is endowed with the extravagant culture, the palatable cuisine, the inexpensive bars, European architecture and an array of beaches on the Atlantic Ocean. The sunshine capital has the old authentic charm of Portuguese culture on one hand and modernity on the other.

Places to visit: Belém Tower, São Jorge Castle, Lisbon Oceanarium, Praça do Comércio, Carmo Convent





9

Sicily ITALY

One way flight fare starting from New Delhi at:
30,000 INR*

Accommodation: Average cost of hotels begins at
5,000 INR

The autonomous region of Italy, Sicily is the largest island of Mediterranean region with no dearth of coastal beauty and the Italian culture. It is one place in Europe to enjoy the extremely tranquil holidays that fit within your budget. You can take the trips to the numerous islands of Sicily and the amazing cruise experience to explore this Mediterranean beauty.

Places to visit in Sicily: Valley of the Temples, Aeolian Islands, Tindari, Etna, Syracuse



10

Kiev UKRAINE

One way flight fare starting from New Delhi at:
30,000 INR*

Accommodation: Average cost of hotels begins at
1500 INR

Along with the splendor of architecture, Kiev is also one of the most tourist-friendly destinations in Europe. Located on the banks of river Dnipro, the old style architecture of the city is worth the praise and as the night crawls, it turns the city into a party destination.

Places to visit in Kiev: Kyevo-Pecherska Lavra, Maidan Nezalezhnosti, St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery, Holodomor Memorial, PinchukArtCentre, Hryshko National Botanical Garden





11

Turkey ISTANBUL

One way flight fare starting from New Delhi at:
22,000 INR*

Accommodation: Average cost of hotels begins at
2,000 INR

Turkey is one of the best places in Europe for backpacking. The food has influence from Middle Eastern, Asian and European cuisines. The large part of the country has been inspired by the old Mesopotamian civilization and culture, which will open the books of history for you. You can also explore the modern city of Turkey and get on the suburbs to witness the old, ancient ruins of the Turkish culture. Don't miss to smoke the Turkish hookah and get back home with the beautiful Turkish handicrafts and souvenirs.

Places to visit in Turkey: Ankara, Mardin, Antalya, Marmaris, Bodrum, Ephesus



12

Barcelona SPAIN

One way flight fare starting from New Delhi at: 22,000 INR*

Accommodation: Average cost of hotels begins at 2500 INR

If you are an architectural and history buff, then nothing can serve you better than Barcelona. The city of Gaudi, every nook and corner of the city has so much to speak and say through the art of architecture. You won't find such vivid art and the number of museums in any other part of the Europe. It is the economic center of the Spain. Barcelona is also known for its amazing nightlife and its nightclubs serving delicious food and cocktails. It also homes the largest Basilica designed by Gaudi whose construction began in 1882 and will take another 30 years to complete.

Places to visit in Barcelona: Las Ramblas, Parc de la Ciutadella, The Picasso Museum, Font Màgica, Casa Batllo, Park Güell, Barceloneta, Sagrada Família





13

Krakow POLAND

One way flight fare starting from New Delhi at:
20,000 INR*

Accommodation: Average cost of hotels begins at
2,000 INR

Famously known as dragon city, Krakow city is located near the border of Czech Republic and hence offers the well-preserved traditions of the two varied cultures. People at times chose Krakow over Prague as it offers the Prague experience at much affordable cost. The city is known for its Gothic architecture, which dates back to the Renaissance and the medieval Jewish history. During the winters, Krakow turns into a ski destination and pub crawling remains the perennial attraction of the city.

Places to visit in Krakow: Wavel Castle, Main Square, St. Mary's Basilica, Tatras hiking and skiing, The Barbican, Rynek Underground, Bania-Luka





14

Croatia

One way flight fare starting from New Delhi to Zagreb:
22,000 INR*

Accommodation: Average cost of hotels begins at 1,500 INR

It is just the right time to visit the country, which has so much to offer, be it the history or the spectacular beaches. Croatia is a home to a number of white sand beaches shoring the crystal clear water of the Adriatic Sea. Then, you have the beautiful natural parks full of flora and fauna and the water cascades in between that make your experience a little more amazing. You get the perfect combination of beach beauty mixing up with the mountains and historic wonders as well. Main cities of the country are Split, Zagreb.

Places to visit in Croatia: Hvar, Brac, Krka national park, Plitvice lakes national park, Dubrovnik, Istria, Island of Hvar, Stradun, Pula Arena, Diocletian's Palace





15

Brussels BELGIUM

One way flight fare starting from New Delhi at: 25,000 INR*

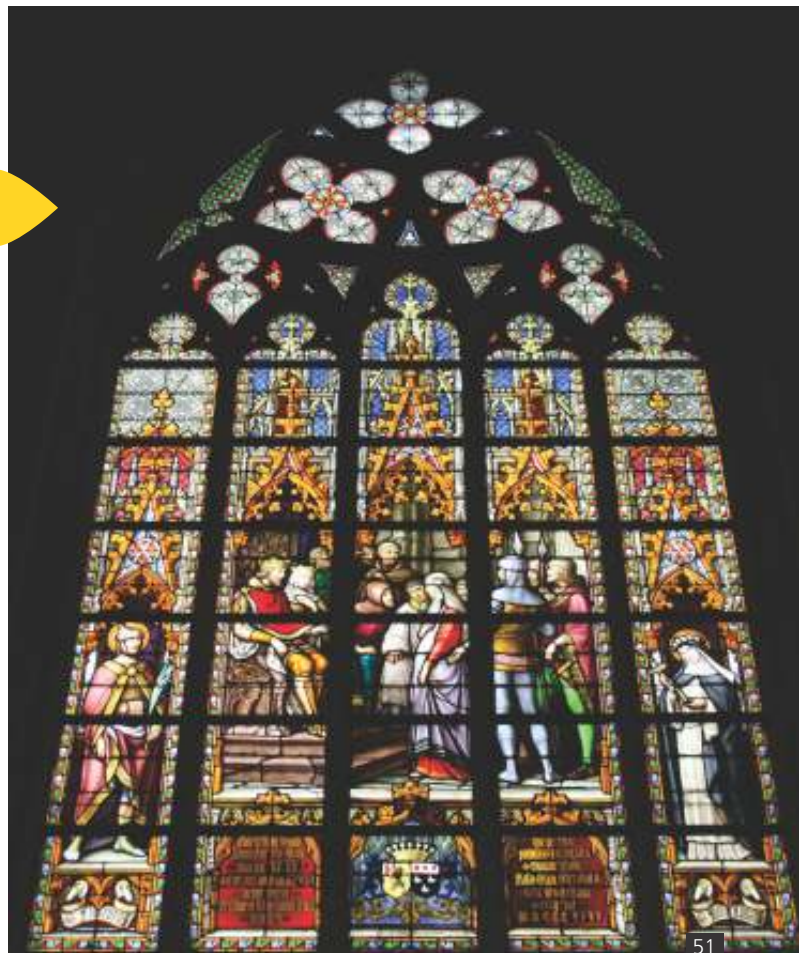
Accommodation: Average cost of hotels begins at 3,500 INR

Brussels is known for its grandeur as much as it is known for its craft beers. Did you know that Brussels has around 400 local breweries that craft beer on more flavors that you can ever imagine? Belgium is synonym to food but it is equally known as mini Europe for its majestic architecture of cathedral churches and palaces.

Places to visit in Brussels: Grand Place, Manneken Pis, Cathedral of St. Michael and St. Gudula, Belgian Comic Strip Center, Place Royale, Belgian Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Northern City Center

* The prices of the flight are approximate and can vary as per the time and demand. The estimated cost of the flight is based on booking your tickets one month before the date of departure. The cost of accommodation is of the budget hostels and may differ in different seasons.

Story by: **ShoesOnLoose** – A travel company offering unforgettable travel experiences



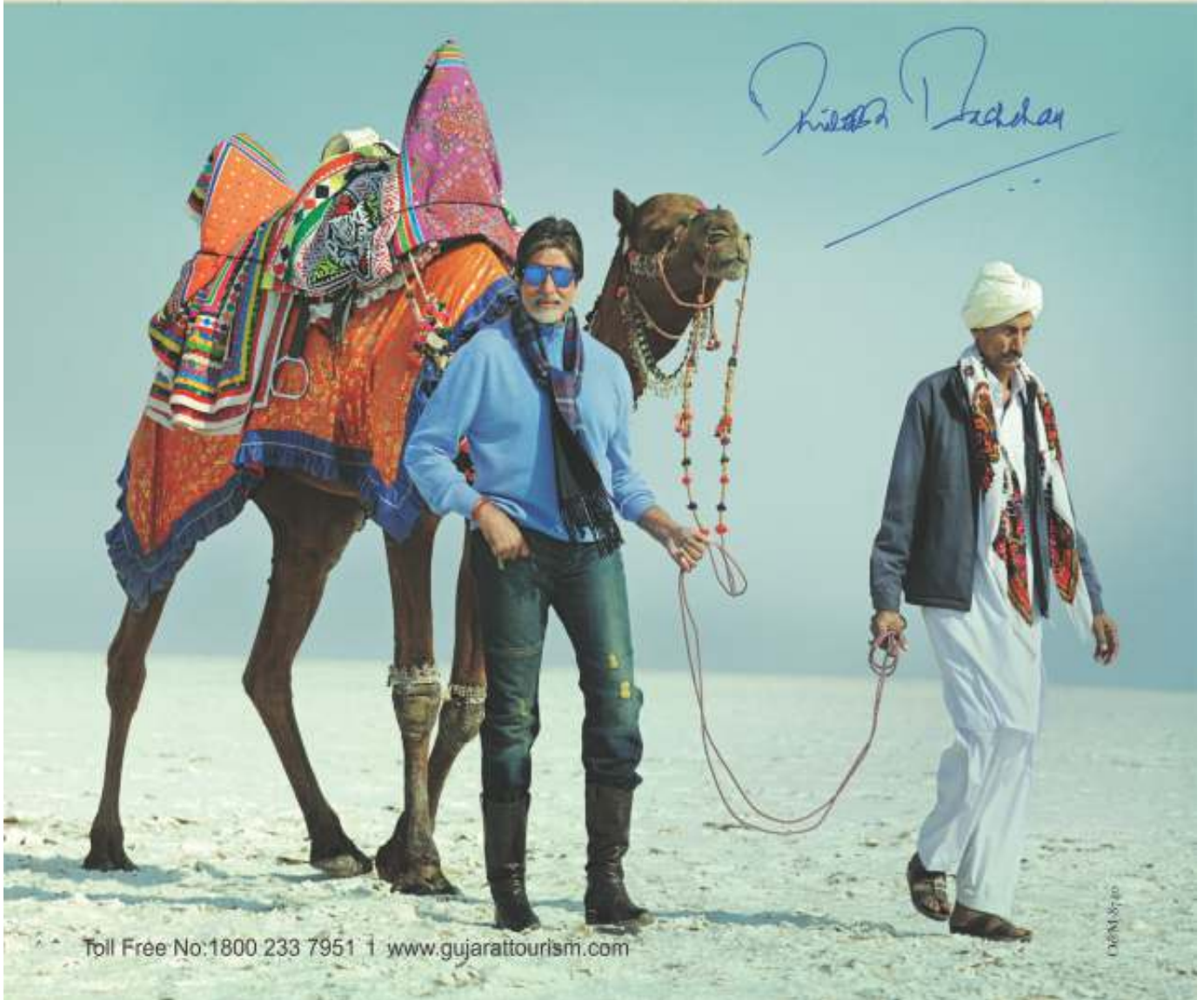
Freeze it!



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!'



Richard Branson



Rann Utsav

1st November, 2017 to 4th March, 2018

**Now Book Rann Utsav
@30% Lower Rates!**

www.whiterannresort.com



Key Attractions

- Accommodation in Premium AC Tents / Rajwadi AC Bhunga
- Visit to wonderful "White Rann"
- Complimentary Rann Safari by open-top Double Decker Bus
- Thrilling adventure park with outdoor fun - Para Motoring, ATV Rides, etc.
- Engaging indoor activities - Pool, Board Games, Library, etc.
- Shopping delight at Craft Village with Kutch's colorful handloom & handicraft
- Delectable Gujarati and Kutchi Cuisines by Courtyard Marriott
- Soul-stirring folk music of Kutch

Official Operator for Rann Utsav 
White Rann Resort
www.whiterannresort.com | Dhordo, Kutch
For booking, contact: 74 40 40 40 40

An Initiative of



Operated by

