

The DIALOGUE

DELHI INDIRA GANDHI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT GMR

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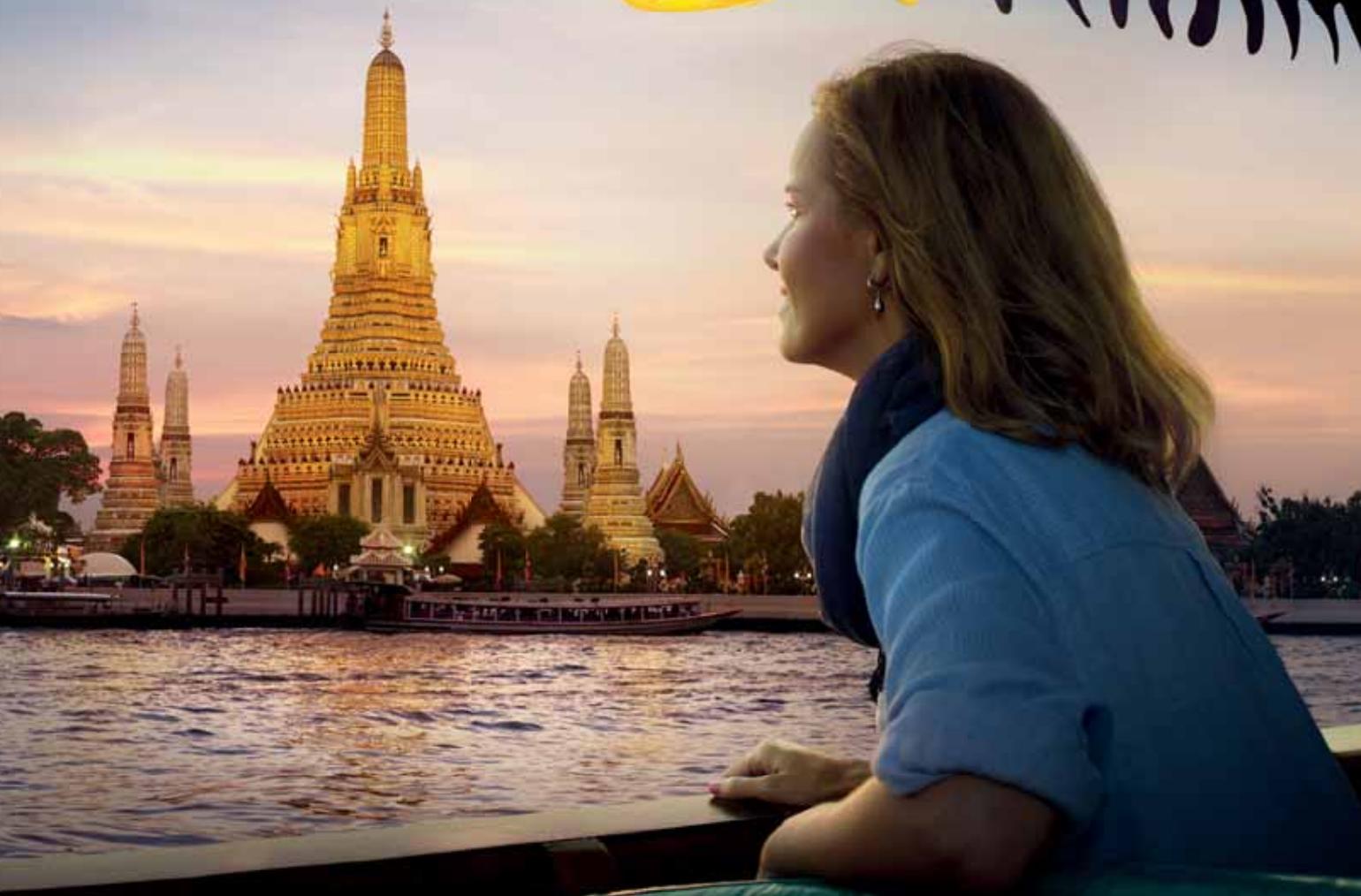
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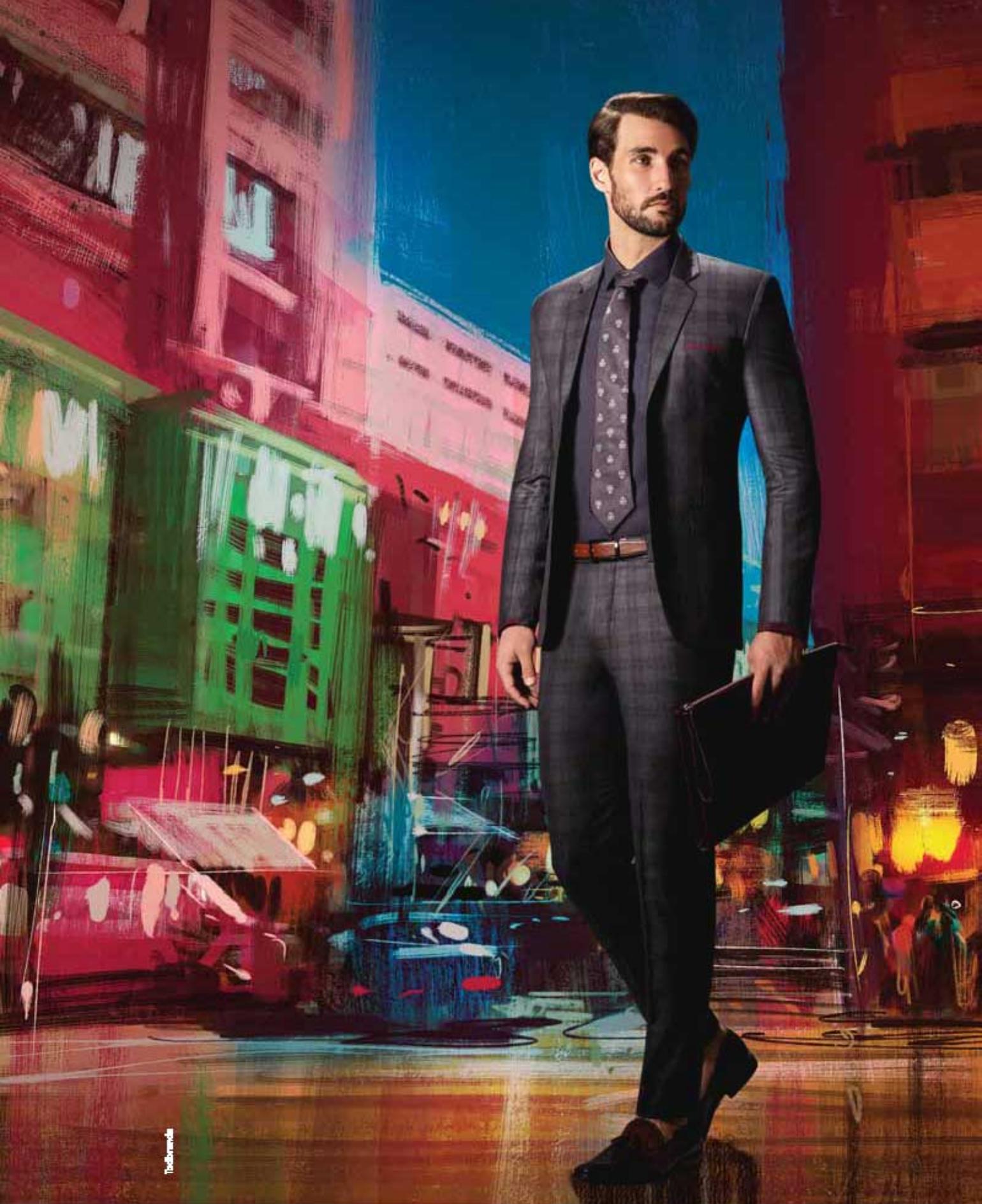
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EDITOR'S LETTER

REGIONAL CINEMA IN BLOOM

A major contribution of regional channels on TV is the access they have allowed us to the world of entertainment in our respective mother tongues. With satellite TV beaming cultural programmes — cinema, music, drama, humour and so on — viewers resident in regions other than their home States need not feel homesick any more. Someone like me, who is perfectly tri-lingual, fluent in English, Hindi and Bengali, find my evenings better spent than before — a dramatic deviation from the time there was only one TV channel, that too purely terrestrial. Regional satellite channels are enabling families to bestow traditional culture on their progeny far away from their native State and sometimes even their native country.

Arguably many regional films became accessible with the advent of DVDs, but the process of hiring and returning copies was cumbersome. I often caught up with Bengali films, apart from Hindi cinema that I may have missed, on flights, especially Air India, or while travelling abroad to and from India. On a long-haul flight earlier this year to and from Mexico by Emirates, I recall having watched seven Hindi films, repeating a few in the process.

If you like a movie, one often wants to watch it again. That's what happened when I ran through the listings in the paper and found a Bengali channel promising to screen *Posto*, a touching story of a child being brought up by retired grandparents living in idyllic Shanti Niketan where Rabindranath Tagore located Visva Bharati University. Seeing a movie a second time allows you to absorb many nuances and it becomes a more enriching experience than the first sight. Some may feel I am moving from sublime to the ridiculous, but the fact is I love watching Rohit Shetty's rip-roaring *Golmaal* series over and over because his brand of cerebral comedy needs time to internalise!

Posto (name of the child in the film which is derived from a uniquely Bengali preparation of *khas-khas* or poppy seeds) allowed me a close glimpse of Shanti Niketan, showcasing its languid but academic character and the superb portrayal of the relationship between a grandfather and grandson. The child's parents lived in Kolkata and visited him only occasionally. Then a day came when the parents decided to migrate to London, taking their child with them. Both the grandparents and the child were equally heartbroken, but they were left with no option. In a dramatic and tense climax sequence, played out at the entrance to the Kolkata Airport, *Posto's* stubbornness won the day and he was reverted to his beloved grandparents.

May be the story is predictable, but under the masterly baton of directors, Shiboprosad Mukherjee and Nandita Roy, Soumitra Chatterjee's controlled portrayal of "Guruji" the grandfather and the talented yet emotionally wracked *Posto* steal the show. The influence of Rabindric culture, clean and environment-conscious, is classically played out, leaving a deep imprint on the viewers' emotions.

In recent times, Bengali cinema has undergone a renaissance, both in the quality of direction and width of themes. *Bhooter Bhabishyat*, a comic film woven around ghosts "living" in an abandoned *haveli*, became quite a cult film. Even *Praktan*, from the same production team as *Posto*, was a breezy yet quality film. I am encouraged by the growing expanse of a range of regional cinema and sorry I am not fluent in more Indian regional languages.

CHANDAN MITRA, *Editor-in-Chief*
[The DIALogue and The Pioneer Group]

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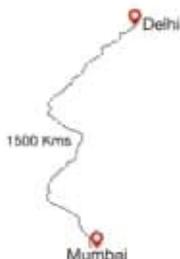
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GE'S AFFINITY™ MAKES FOR EFFICIENT FLIGHTS

GE Aviation has announced that it has completed the initial design of the first supersonic engine purpose-built for business jets. This new engine class, revealed last month as GE's Affinity™ turbofan, is optimised with proven GE technology for supersonic flight and timed to meet the Aerion AS2 launch.

The name "Affinity" was chosen because it reflects this engine class' harmonious assemblage of GE's commercial, non-civil and business aviation propulsion technologies to bring a true step-change in commercial supersonic propulsion.

The Affinity is a new class of medium bypass ratio engines that provide exceptional and balanced performance across supersonic and subsonic flights. It integrates a unique blend of proven military supersonic experience, commercial reliability and the most advanced business jet engine technologies.

GE's Affinity is a twin-shaft, twin-fan turbofan controlled by a next generation Full Authority Digital

Engine Control (FADEC) for enhanced dispatch reliability and onboard diagnostics. It is purposefully designed to enable efficient supersonic flight over water and efficient subsonic flight over land, without requiring modifications to existing compliance regulations. The engine is designed to meet stringent Stage 5 subsonic noise requirements and beat current emissions standards.

"In the last 50 years, business aircraft speeds have increased by less than 10 per cent," said Brad Mottier, GE vice president and general manager for business and general aviation & integrated services. "Instead of going faster, cabins have increased in size and become more comfortable — and range has become longer. With large, comfortable cabin, long range aircraft in the marketplace, the next step is speed . . . made possible with GE's Affinity."

After two years of a preliminary study, GE Aviation and Aerion launched a formal process in May of 2017 to define and evaluate a final engine configuration for the AS2 supersonic business jet. A GE project team, supported by a dedicated engineering team, continue to work with Aerion in a formal and gated process. The next design review is targeted for 2020, signalling the beginning of detailed design and test article production.

Aerion is collaborating with GE Aviation, Lockheed Martin and Honeywell to develop the AS2.

"Our mission is to enhance global mobility with supersonic speed, starting with business aviation, and following with successively faster and larger designs for business and commercial aviation," said Aerion CEO Tom Vice. "GE Aviation is making this new efficient, sustainable supersonic era possible through its pioneering work on the Affinity engine."

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CHINESE AIRCRAFT TAKES OFF FROM WATER



China's home-grown amphibious aircraft AG600, claimed by Beijing as the world's largest, carried out its first take-off and landing on waters today.

Developed and built by the state-owned aircraft giant, Aviation Industry Corporation of China, the seaplane took off from the Zhanghe Reservoir in

Jingmen, Hubei's province, at 8.51 am and stayed airborne for about 15 minutes, the state media reported.

Xinhua news agency said the aircraft was piloted by four crew members. Code-named "Kunlong," the AG600 made its maiden flight at the coastal city at Zhuhai in December 2017.

The AG600 is the third member of

China's "large aircraft family" following the large freighter Y-20 and large passenger aircraft C919, Xinhua said.

Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory note on the development, saying the successful take-off of the AG600 "marked another significant achievement through independent innovation by China's aviation industry."

DOGGY BAG



A passenger travelling from Ecuador was relieved of leftovers when an intrepid beagle found a roasted pig's head in baggage at the world's busiest airport.

The US Customs and Border Protection says the Agriculture Detector dog named Hardy alerted to the baggage at Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. CBP agriculture specialists then discovered a two-pound (one-kilogram) cooked pig's head, which was seized and destroyed.

The agency says pork and pork products from other continents are not allowed into the United States in an effort to avoid introducing foot and mouth disease, classical swine fever and other animal diseases.

CBP Area Port Director Carey Davis hailed Hardy's work as illustrating "the tremendous expertise of our four-legged K-9 partners in protecting the United States."



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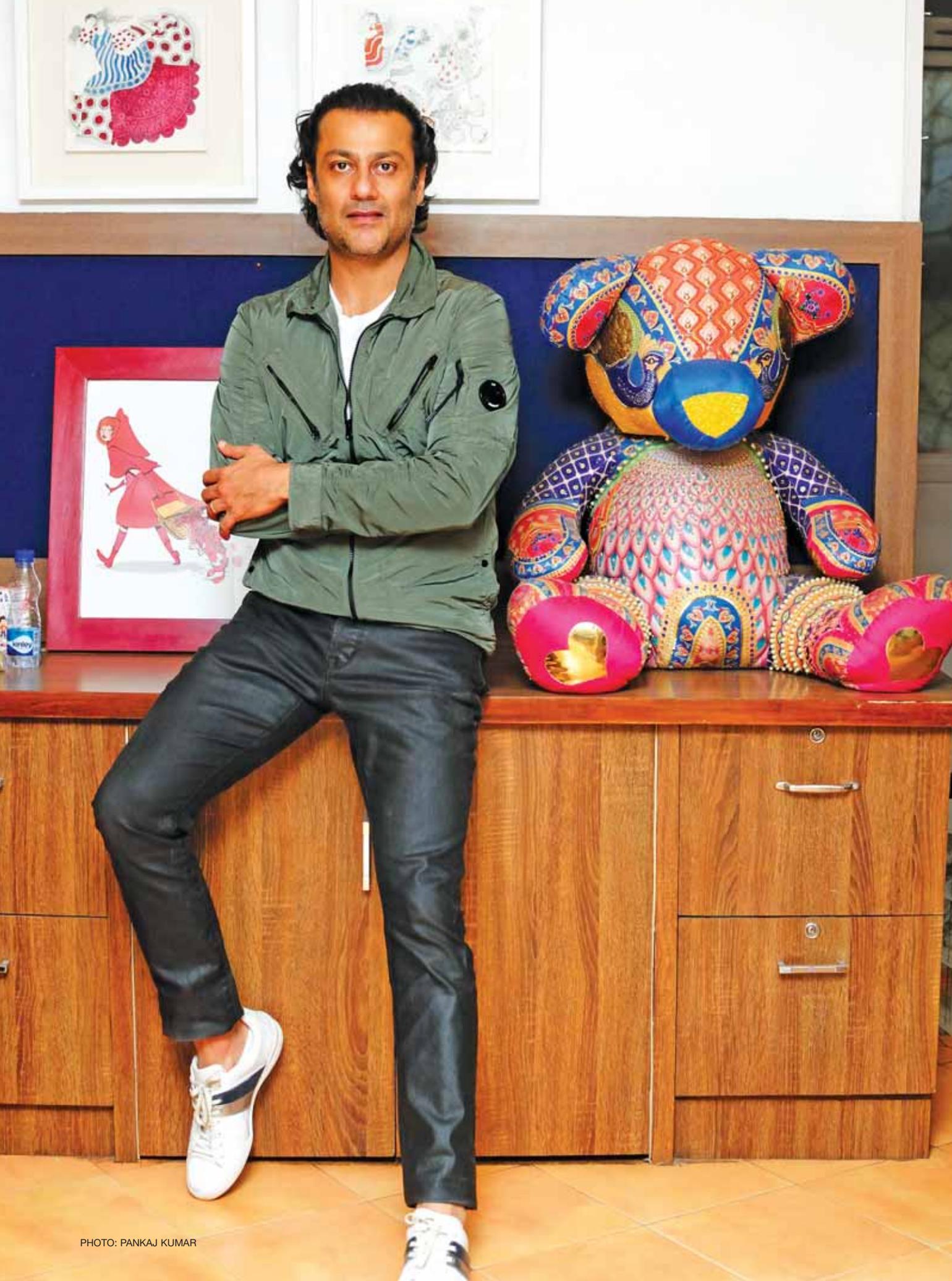
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FILMMAKER ABHISHEK KAPOOR MAY BE KNOWN FOR *ROCK ON!*, *KAI PO CHE* AND *FITOOR* BUT HE HAS BEEN THERE, DONE THAT. A FLOP ACTOR AND A TERRIBLE DEBUTANT DIRECTOR, NOBODY WOULD HAVE EXPECTED HIM TO RISE FROM THE ASHES OF FAILURE, SOMETHING NOT TAKEN TOO KINDLY TO IN THE FILM INDUSTRY. BUT HE KEPT WRITING AND ASKING EXISTENTIAL QUESTIONS. THAT'S HOW THERE'S AN EVOLUTIONARY PATH THAT ALL HIS PROTAGONISTS EMBARK UPON IN HIS FILMS THAT HAVE WORKED SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY TOUCH OUR HEARTS SOMEWHERE. NOW HE IS BACK WITH A LOVE SAGA THAT IS BORN FROM THE RUINS OF DESTRUCTION AND IS A METAPHOR FOR HEALING AND HOPE. HE SHARES HIS PILGRIMAGE DIARY WITH RINKU GHOSH

►► What inspired you to come up with *Kedarnath's* tagline "Love is a pilgrimage" because we feel there is a bit of Rumi there too?

I've done many trips to Vaishno Devi as a child but then you do not understand the essence of a spiritual quest and you are swamped by the arduous physicality of the trek, the many sights, sounds, colour and experiences around it. When you grow up, you see everything differently. So I had my own self-desire and self-realisation. These faith shrines, be it Kedarnath, Amarnath, Badrinath or Vaishno Devi, are all really hard and difficult treks that have existed for hundreds of years and tested human endeavour and will, challenging our limits, physical and metaphorical. That faith improves and elevates us. People don't really understand Hinduism, it is a life philosophy that is being misinterpreted and being confined to religiosity. Little wonder then that everybody gives it their best shot, not for himself/herself but to realise another person's dream and hope. The porters at these shrines are all Muslims, there are so many vendors to keep the local economy going, yet all get pulled by tidal faith to help pilgrims reach their destination. It is such a multi-faith exercise towards God realisation that the mind boggles. The local *bakarwals* carry the oldest and the weakest of pilgrims, taking them one step closer to hope. I thought that defines us so beautifully as a community, as a nation, as Hindus and who we are. This is just the right ingredient for a story to be told in today's times.

Besides these shrines are far away from civilisation, in the remotest pockets and near wayward villages. Yet they have the most progressive people with the most evolved ideologies and a sameness of purpose. I was able to grasp



the magnitude of this idea on my last trip to Vaishno Devi. So the story of the film birthed from this experience. While in Mumbai, you are always surrounded by people in the business and are talking shop most of the time. Which is why I travel frequently to broaden my horizons and understanding of life. And I find these beautiful Indian stories. They need to be told for my people. What better way to understand the core of India than to travel through every inch of our country.

▶▶ The film is set in the backdrop of the floods of 2013 that wreaked mammoth devastation. Is the tragedy an equally important character?

I chose it because of its epic scale and to amplify the contrast between the enormity of devastation that one could still override with a thread of hope. Around 6,000 people died, 50,000 people were rescued by the armed forces and a 100,000 people went missing. Bodies kept flowing downstream for many months after the calamity. The destruction was mammoth, perhaps the biggest this century but in India lives are cheap, so we tend to disregard the scale. During recce, I have seen how the entire topography was changed by the brute force of nature. By some mystic force, a boulder saved the waters from hitting the shrine. Everything around it changed our memory of it. There was a vacuum of human loss — of lives, memories and sustenance — that I could only comprehend while revisiting it. This film is an attempt to heal that loss and restore faith in humanity. No matter how we may try to rewrite our destinies, we don't know what the universe has in store for us. We cannot beat that immensity but we can attempt our own recovery.

▶▶ Do you ever think that the more exposed we are to a knowledge society, the more revisionist we have become? Would you say that the inter-religious love story would have attracted the same attention a few years ago as it does today?

This divide is a man-made construct. This has been sharpened deliberately



PHOTO: PANKAJ KUMAR

PEOPLE DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND HINDUISM, IT IS A LIFE PHILOSOPHY THAT IS BEING MISINTERPRETED AND BEING CONFINED TO RELIGIOSITY. LITTLE WONDER THEN THAT EVERYBODY GIVES IT THEIR BEST SHOT, NOT FOR HIMSELF/HERSELF BUT TO REALISE ANOTHER PERSON'S DREAM AND HOPE. THE PORTERS AT THESE SHRINES ARE ALL MUSLIMS, THERE ARE SO MANY VENDORS TO KEEP THE LOCAL ECONOMY GOING, YET ALL GET PULLED BY TIDAL FAITH TO HELP PILGRIMS REACH THEIR DESTINATION. THE LOCAL BAKARWALS CARRY THE OLDEST AND THE WEAKEST OF PILGRIMS, TAKING THEM ONE STEP CLOSER TO HOPE. I THOUGHT THAT DEFINES US SO BEAUTIFULLY AS A NATION

over the last 40 to 50 years for various reasons but we as a people lived honestly before. When I talk to my grandparents and some of my older relatives, they talk of our eclecticism and absorptiveness in a celebratory context. My grandmother told me, “*Hum saath saath rehte the, khaate the, peete the, kabhi poocha nahin koi Hindu hai ya Mussalman.*” I try to revive this essence in the film though I must clarify that it has nothing to do with love *jihad* as is being alleged. Besides, in these days of instant opinionating, people are reacting after seeing a one-minute teaser or a two-minute trailer. They are manifesting their fears before watching the film in its entirety.

▶▶ Very few people know you are a Shiv *bhakt*. What is your concept of Shiva? So much has been spoken about Lord Shiva, be it from the religious or spiritual perspective. Somebody like Sadhguru has so much to add on what Shiva is as

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a concept. But the most essential, beautiful and simplest part of Shiva is that he generates the desire, willingness and the compassion in you to sacrifice something of yours for the betterment and good of humanity. *Kehte hain agar aap mein seva karne ka bhav hai, toh aap mein shraddha hai, chaahе aap Hindu, Mussalman ya Christian ho.* (If you dedicate your life in the service of others, you are a true seeker irrespective of which religion you belong to.) This is the universal belief system, our civilisational truth. We as a people are born inclusive and the world knows us for our immense capability of absorbing diversity. I feel this needs to be celebrated.

▶▶ After *Rock On*, you are back with an original story. Both *Kai Po Che* and *Fitoor* were book adaptations. Yet for you *Kedarnath* is the story that you have been looking for?

This is an Indian story to its core because nowhere else in the world will you find the idea of yatra as a metaphor for self-ascension and God realisation. There are all kinds of journeys being made simultaneously, outward and inward. This kind of faith is difficult to find. When we go on a pilgrimage, some of us introspect during the walk, some of us get taken in by the amazing beauty of the landscape but once we reach our destination, there's a different sense of fulfillment. Not only do you feel the presence of God, you feel the divinity inside you. One can sit over there in absolute submission to whatever shrine is in that place. And a lot of answers come to you because you are so humble at the end of this quest. When the bell rings, it's so beautiful. This wisdom is beyond our normal comprehension. It is easy to espouse words like "If you set out to seek God, you will find him" but to understand and live that, you need to really have an open mind.

▶▶ Would you say you went through that very crucial transition phase personally? When I went there after the floods, I had a different perspective. The mountains were just as huge, gigantic and beautiful



KEDARNATH IS A STORY OF HEALING AND HOPE. THE MOST ESSENTIAL, BEAUTIFUL AND SIMPLEST PART OF SHIVA IS THAT HE GENERATES THE DESIRE, WILLINGNESS AND THE COMPASSION IN YOU TO SACRIFICE SOMETHING OF YOURS FOR THE BETTERMENT AND GOOD OF HUMANITY

around the dots that we had become. Right in the middle was the temple standing like an eternal sentinel; nothing had happened to it. Yet around it was the most devastating impact of nature's fury, in the scars of the rocks violently torn down, in the complete decimation of old human settlements, in the complete annihilation of what humans had ever achieved at these heights. Yet some rocks girded the shrine during the cloudburst and the waters just split around it. It is mystic. I stood there at that exact point. You may be a believer, non-believer or the seeker, but you will be reassured about the continuity of life as it is meant to be, not what we want it to be. I got my answer. Miracles happen to remind us of some cosmic force. By strategising, planning and being argumentative, one doesn't get anything. I do believe in science but I think it hasn't reached the level to explain such phenomena. If you get into science, you'll find multiple dimensions and see that we all actually exist in molecules. We are just particles colliding with each other, operating within a humongous energy field.

▶▶ The backdrops of your films are almost characters themselves, be it the Gujarat culturescape in *Kai Po Che* or the Kashmiri backdrop in *Fitoor*. How deep-set are your reference points? It's all organic. The idea is like a living organism and if I really believe in it, then it starts breathing. So whatever that idea demands from me, I just follow it and fill out the details. I am then prepared to do anything to get it right. Physicality is no challenge but my story-telling has to be honest. The process is much like cooking biryani on *dum*. You've got to let it sit nicely after cooking, it is well-rounded and has many layers to it. My story shouldn't be superficial. Everyone who comes to the theatre should get it that in every shot and scene, there's a reason why that shot has been taken. So it begins with a scratch, then becomes a whirlwind. There's no defined process.



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▶▶ You faced a lot of hurdles too while making *Kedarnath*. You had to change producers mid-stream and attracted a lot of bad press for not being cooperative with the first one. What's your side of the story?

The making of *Kedarnath*, too, is a lot like life imitating art and like a pilgrimage, was beset with hurdles. Anyway, suffice it to say that I got caught up with a certain set of people who were new in the industry but were already being promoted by some big stars. So I kind of bought into that idea. I am sure it's legitimate. But once I started working with them, I found them being very dishonest to the story. They were blatantly cheating and there was no

I THINK STARS ARE MORE MODELS AND BRAND AMBASSADORS THAN ACTORS TODAY. OTHER THAN ACTING, THEY'RE DOING EVERYTHING ELSE. BUT THAT IS A RESULT OF A LOT OF INSECURITY. THERE'S NOBODY WHO CAN AFFORD TO SAY OKAY, I WILL HONE MY CRAFT, ACT AND THEN BUILD A REPERTOIRE. HE/SHE WOULD HAVE LOST OUT TIME. SO THEY'RE FEEDING THE PUBLIC WITH SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS AND UPDATES AND WANT YOU TO THINK OF THEM ALL THE TIME

transparency. I was going through a lot of pain and they were sucking the life out of the film. They had come to a point where they had sold it to multiple people without my knowledge or thoughts about it. The film belongs to me in the end. So to get out of that equation, I wanted to pay them back. But they wanted to choke the movie and kill it and started planting stories in the media slandering me. At that point, I could do nothing but just keep my mouth shut. I had to secure my film first. I thought completing the film and bringing it to the theatre would be the best answer I could give anybody.

▶▶ You have a production company but to finance a film like *Kedarnath*, you need co-producers. And while some independent producers want to make an honest film, most will have to traverse the market imperatives like distribution and satellite deals, finding overseas markets and showcasing at festivals. How can you reconcile all this as a producer?

It all depends on every producer and what he wants to become. There are producers backing filmmakers, who are doing films that sail only on star power. Then there are those who have faith in filmmakers like me who have developed a certain amount of credibility down the line as a storyteller and as one who can work with new actors too. I have very simple rules. I have my own pace and I don't get into a *mandi*-like zone *ki aapne kya becha aur usne kya becha* (who sold what and to whom). I don't do this comparison. I don't connect on that level. Luckily, content-oriented films have created their niche and let me tell you the audience is evolving constantly. As a filmmaker, you have to be two steps ahead of your audience and anticipate their mindset if you have to be relevant.

It is because of this far-sighted vision that I could get through someone like Ronnie Screwvala. We had done *Kai Po Che* and *Fitoor*. I got a call from him while I was in the middle of deep trouble. He then came to the edit room and saw



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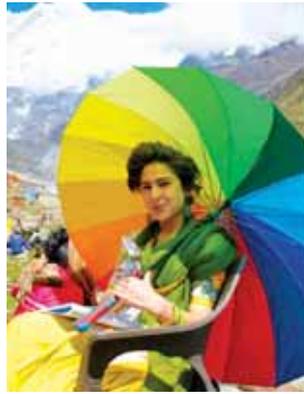
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what I had. I told him that the earlier producers had created such a negative vibe that nobody would believe that I wanted to still go for it. He told me what could be done to see it through. Ronnie Screwvala is actually a great guy, he is a visionary. More than anything else he is a mentor, a teacher. And then there was my other producer, my wife, who stood by my vision. She was five months pregnant then.

▶▶ So you are saying that the business of production is as much personality-oriented?

Of course, absolutely. Large corporations work like machines and with Excel sheets. The people working for them are job-oriented, so they don't take a risk. They may know better but they don't want to be pulled up when a film tanks and justify or explain why they didn't go by the playbook. So they operate within this sells, that doesn't. They churn out crap but they secure themselves first. When their books tally, no senior can say why did you or didn't sanction this and that? There is no human participation in this regimented drill. There are no mavericks and you need them if the industry is to touch greatness. We need more people who can say junk the Excel sheets, let's go with the vision. Ronnie Screwvala is that guy. He has money and he knows the business and he seldom goes wrong. Fortunately, when it comes to the work ethics, we're always on the same page and have never had a difference of opinion. He's a creative person himself and we value his inputs too.

With the studios coming in, the structuring of the business has been undoubtedly great but I feel studios need to be instinct-driven. If you have the power and if you're not strong enough to take risks, then this business can become just like the petroleum business. There's an opportunity to enhance the cultural heritage of our country and bring it at par with what's happening the world over. But we are too scared to do it. I wish the decision-makers would gather more courage.



LARGE CORPORATIONS WORK LIKE MACHINES AND WITH EXCEL SHEETS. THE PEOPLE WORKING FOR THEM ARE JOB-ORIENTED, SO THEY DON'T TAKE A RISK. THEY MAY KNOW BETTER BUT THEY DON'T WANT TO BE PULLED UP WHEN A FILM TANKS AND JUSTIFY OR EXPLAIN WHY THEY DIDN'T GO BY THE PLAYBOOK. WE NEED VISIONARIES IF OUR INDUSTRY IS TO ENRICH OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE

▶▶ So how did Sara Ali happen to you? Not by design. Most of the time new people get work because the older ones are busy. And I am not big enough to tweak schedules. In fact, I even chanced upon Farhan during *Rock On*, not sure if he would indulge his acting chops at all. It helped though that I had known him for so many years. I asked him if he could sing and the next day he came with his guitar to the studio and sang eight to 10 songs of Coldplay. I was like, wow man couldn't have asked for better. For *Kai Po Che*, I was looking for new actors because no A-lister wanted to share space. In a story of three friends, everyone wanted to be the main hero and treat the others as flunkies. That was not to be.

This time around I needed to make the film fast. So I met Sandeep Khosla and he's related to Sara. When she came to meet me, I knew she had a personality. She wasn't a regular starlet, was sure of herself, well-spoken, articulate and knew what she wanted. I sussed her out and saw that she had the potential. On a comparative scale, if any film is a 100-metre race, here it's a 5 km marathon. So actors had to prepare mentally, physically and psychologically for this level of intensity and more importantly team work. She was up for it and has worked very hard because she's had no experience before.

▶▶ Sushant, of course, is a talented actor...

Yes, and we have a rhythm. And his role demanded a physical discipline.

▶▶ How come you have not forayed into the digital space yet?

I don't write stories because there is a medium to say something. The stories should have something to say. There's no competition about who has the maximum platforms. And there's no end to how much money one can take home. I am only interested in leaving behind a legacy of quality work.

▶▶ Do you think we should also gather courage to tell Indian stories, tapping into our folk literature?

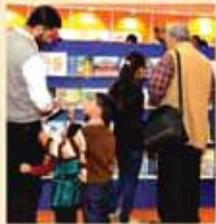
Absolutely, there is so much. A lot of



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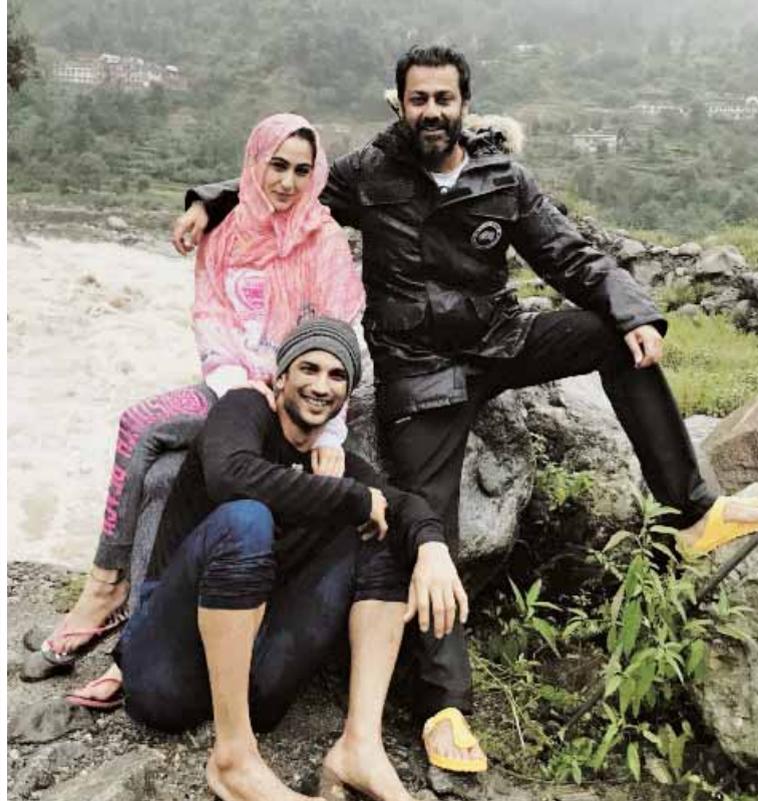
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filmmakers are also diving in but they do not get exposure or the box office muscle, the latter being dictated by stars. If you are looking to make a great film, everybody should think what they can do for the movie. But a star thinks what it can do for his/her stardom. A big star can get a project green-lit but he'd work towards fortifying his brand value.

▶▶ After the failures of multi-starrers like *Thugs of Hindostan* and even Salman Khan's last few films, would you say that stardom is crumbling in popular perception?

I don't think it's crumbling. See without a star, every bit of that one hour 50 minute film has to be engaging and flawless. With a big star you have to devote one-third the amount of work on the script. If you give a star five good lines, he can carry 20 minutes and fans are thrilled. When you don't even have those five lines in the script, the film completely collapses.

However, I think stars are more models and brand ambassadors than actors today. Other than acting, they're doing everything else. But that is a result of a lot of insecurity. There is never going to be enough money, no surety that fans that love you today will love

WHEN SARA CAME TO MEET ME, I KNEW SHE HAD A PERSONALITY. SHE WASN'T A REGULAR STARLET, WAS SURE OF HERSELF, WELL-SPOKEN, ARTICULATE AND KNEW WHAT SHE WANTED. I SUSSSED HER OUT AND SAW THAT SHE HAD THE POTENTIAL

you tomorrow. So they're feeding the public with social media posts and updates and want you to think of them all the time. There's nobody who can afford to say okay, I will hone my craft, act and then build a repertoire. He/she would have lost out time. I don't know if it's a good or bad thing, it is what it is. I am not going to judge but I can say what it is.

▶▶ Do you feel the pressure to be relevant all the time?

I don't feel the pressure because I have spent too much time in failures. I found my balance before I became a director. I set out to become an actor, having been born to an industry family. Aditya Chopra and I were best friends from school. I did *Aashiq Mastaane*, *Uff Yeh Mohabbat* and a few films didn't even release. Then I did terrible TV work. Being an actor was the easy way out but that didn't quite work out for me. Then I moved to direction. But my first film with Sohail Khan called *Aryaan* didn't do well. That was another huge struggle in my life. I kept on writing till I got better with practice.

▶▶ Do you expect a PIL on *Kedarnath*?

We just have to take it as it comes. There's nothing to offend anyone. We have not been informed. The film is about healing and love.



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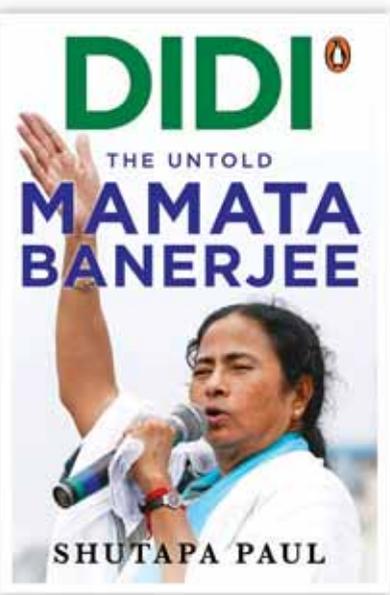
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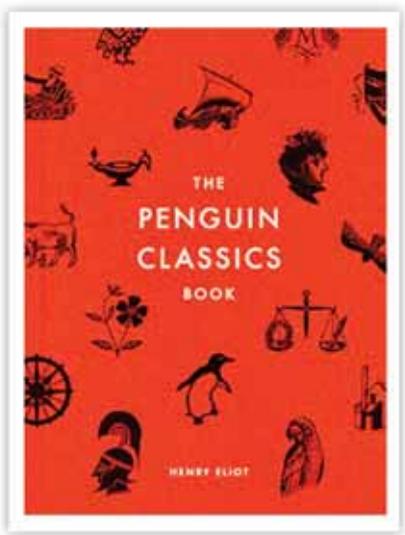
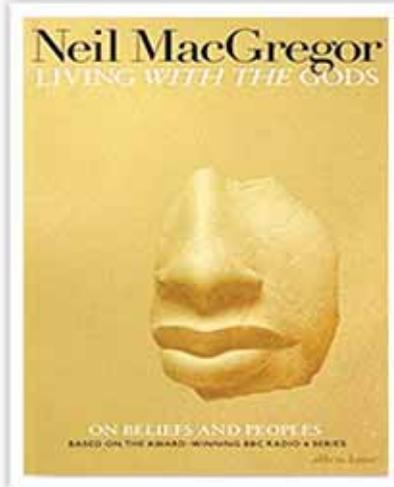
reader's block



DIDI: THE UNTOLD MAMATA BANERJEE [Author: Shutapa Paul] This is the first biography of Mamata Banerjee written for a national audience. She occupies a unique place in Indian politics and this has everything about one of India's toughest women — from her years of college politics, to defeating the Left Front, to the role she will play in 2019 elections.

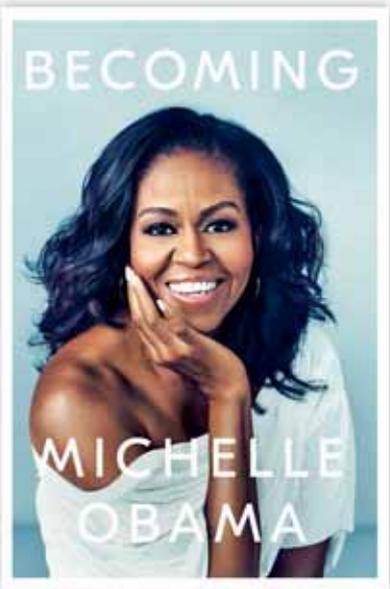
LIVING WITH THE GODS

[Author: Neil MacGregor] This book is about the stories which give shape to our lives and the different ways in which societies imagine their place in the world. It interrogates objects, places and human activities to try to understand what shared beliefs can mean in the life of a community or a nation, how they shape the relationship between the individual and the state, and how they give us a sense of who we are. For in deciding how we live with our gods, we also decide how to live with each other.



THE PENGUIN CLASSICS BOOK

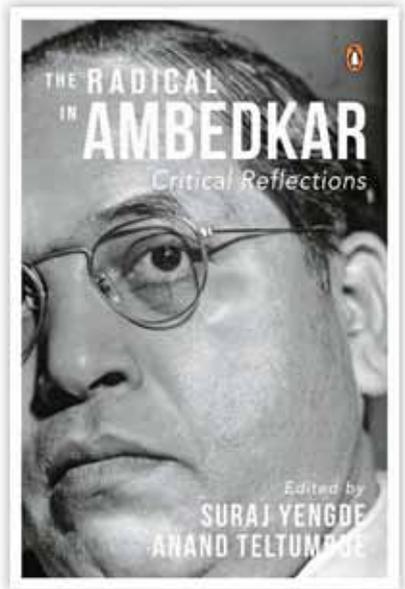
[Author: Henry Eliot] Spanning 4,000 years from the legends of Ancient Mesopotamia to the poetry of the First World War, with Greek tragedies, Icelandic sagas, Japanese epics and much more in between, the book is filled with lively descriptions, cover designs, literary connections and the surprising stories behind the 1,200 books in the world-famous list. Every title in the Black Classics series has an entry in the book.



BECOMING [Author: Michelle Obama] In her memoir, a work of deep reflection and mesmerising storytelling, the author chronicles the experiences that have shaped her—from her childhood on the South Side of Chicago to her years as an executive balancing the demands of motherhood and work, to her time spent at the White House. She describes her triumphs and her disappointments, telling her full story as she has lived it—in her words and on her own terms.

THE RADICAL IN AMBEDKAR: CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

[Edited by Anand Teltumbde and Suraj Yengde] This volume establishes B R Ambedkar as the most powerful advocate of equality and fraternity in modern India. This volume unpacks the radical in Ambedkar's legacy by examining his lifework from hitherto unexplored perspectives. The essays in this book are by Jean Drèze, Partha Chatterjee, Sukhadeo Thorat, Manu Bhagavan, Anupama Rao and others.





KEDARNATH

The love story is set on a 14-km pilgrimage from Gauri Kund to Kedarnath, the 2,000-year-old holy temple of Lord Shiva. Mansoor, a reserved and reticent *pithoo* (porter), helps pilgrims make an arduous journey to the temple town. His world turns around when he meets Mukku and is drawn in a whirlwind of love but destiny has other plans for them.

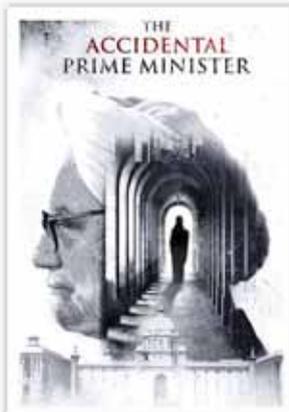
Release date: December 7



ZERO

The story revolves around Bauua Singh, a vertically challenged man, who is charming and witty, with a pinch of arrogance. He is born to a wealthy family in Meerut and when he meets two women, his experiences take him on a journey to complete himself and broaden his horizons to find a purpose he never knew existed.

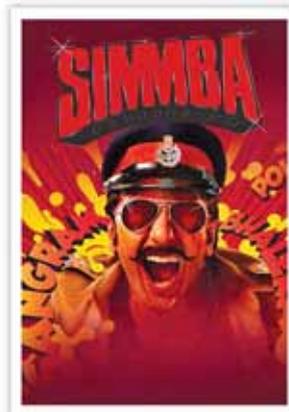
Release date: December 21



THE ACCIDENTAL PRIME MINISTER

Based on the memoir by Indian policy analyst Sanjaya Baru, the film explores Manmohan Singh's tenure as the Prime Minister of India, and the kind of control he had over the cabinet and the country.

Release date: December 21



SIMMBA

The story of a corrupt cop who turns over a new leaf after he falls in love with a beautiful yet simple girl. The film is a remake of 2015 Telugu film *Temper*.

Release date: December 28

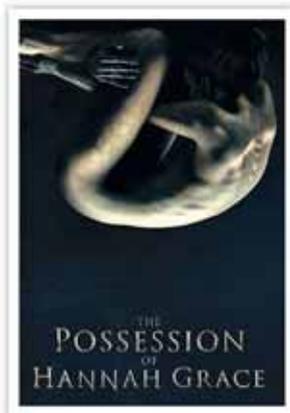
FRESH PICKS



BEN IS BACK

Follow Ben Burns who returns home to his unsuspecting family one fateful Christmas Eve. Ben's wary mother Holly Burns welcomes her son but soon learns he is still very much in harm's way. During the 24 hours that may change their lives forever, Holly must do everything in her power to avoid the family's downfall.

Release date: December 7



THE POSSESSION OF HANNAH GRACE

A shocking exorcism spirals out of control, claiming the life of a young woman. Months later, Megan Reed is working the graveyard shift in the morgue when she takes delivery of a disfigured cadaver. She begins to experience horrifying visions and starts to suspect that the body may be possessed by a ruthless demonic force.

Release date: December 7



SECOND ACT

Maya is a middle-aged woman stuck in a dead-end job, whose biggest regret is not fulfilling her career ambitions. When life offers her a second chance in the form of a coveted Madison Avenue job, she sets out to claim her rightful due and prove a point to the world.

Release date: December 21

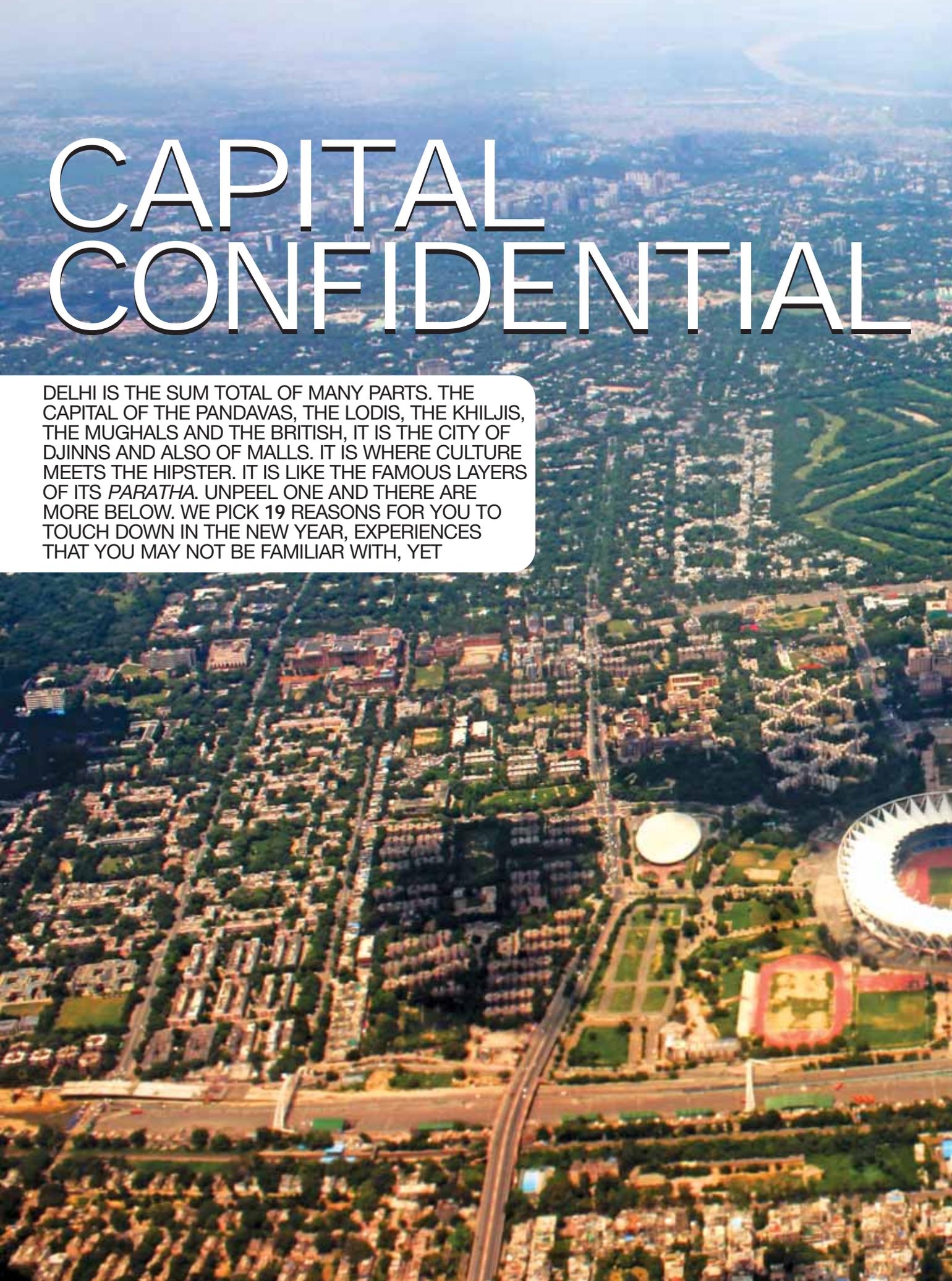


SHERLOCK GNOMES

Following a series of garden gnome disappearances, Gnomeo and Juliet seek the help of legendary detective Sherlock Gnomes in solving the mystery.

Release date: December 24

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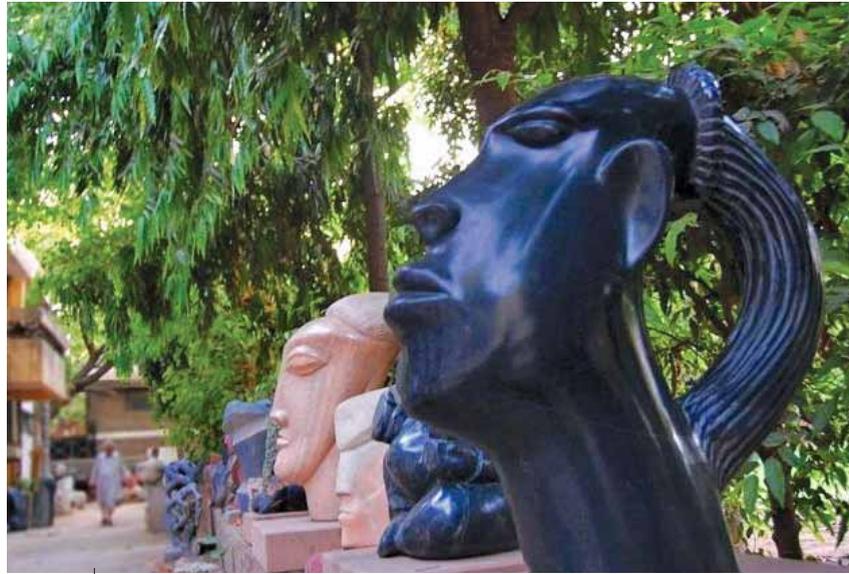
[1] ART FRAT



LADO SARAI ART HUB: A cluster of contemporary art galleries located in the same street has created a vibrant art district in South West Delhi. They come together occasionally to host an Art Night where they simultaneously open new shows and guests are encouraged to wander the street and go gallery hopping. The first gallery to pioneer this themed enclave was Anant, which opened in 2009, attracted by securing a larger space at a more affordable rent than other traditional areas for galleries. Soon Anant was joined by many more, and today Lado Sarai is home to over a dozen galleries. **PLACE:** Old MB Road, Lado Sarai Village, just behind Crescent Mall at the Qutb

KHIRKI LIVING LAB: This is the brainchild of Sreejata Roy and her husband, Mrityunjay. The project, which started less than a year ago, focuses on building a network of social relationships through the daily act of cooking, sharing recipes, documenting them, and eating together in their living lab in Khirki Extension once a month.

South Delhi is dotted with refugees and migrants. While most of them have created their own pockets in the motley neighbourhood, Roy's endeavour to bring them together through food is an interesting beginning. **PLACE:** Malviya Nagar



GARHI LALIT KALA ARTIST STUDIOS: A little distance away from Lado Sarai is this studio complex, located on a four-acre site in the urban village of Gargi Zharria Maria. It is run by the Lalit Kala Akademi. Today over 150 artists, many from rural India, work here across a variety of disciplines including ceramics, graphic arts, sculpting, painting and printmaking. The studio buildings are set within a garden that has pathways lined with installations created by the artists. An interesting range of exhibitions are held here. **PLACE:** Kalka Garhi Village, Kalka Devi Marg, near East of Kailash

PHOTOINK: Delhi's only dedicated photography gallery is located in a stylish, large space. It has an active exhibition programme, presenting both Indian and international artists, as well as hosting lectures and book releases. Photoink represents some of India's best photographers, including Pablo Bartholomew, Raghu Rai, Ketaki Sheth and Vivan Sundaram. They also index and catalogue vintage archives, publish books and monographs and have a small bookstore at the gallery. **PLACE:** A4 Green Avenue Street, off Green Avenue, Church/Mall Road, Vasant Kunj



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**[2] THE FLOWER SPREAD
GHAZIPUR FLOWER MARKET:**

Delhi's wholesale flower market is the biggest in India. Mountains of colourful varieties are sold by hundreds of vendors on a huge site. Be it the festive garlands of marigolds, bunches of roses and fragrant jasmine or exotic imports like orchids and tulips, if celebration is on your agenda, head here without a fret. **PLACE:** Ghazipur Flower Mandi, near Anand Vihar ISBT

[3] IRON LINKS

LOHA PUL: Built in 1866, this iron bridge is the oldest over the Yamuna river in Delhi. Built by the East India Railway Company, it was the last link of the trunk line joining Kolkata to Delhi. Before it was built, passengers travelling to the capital were ferried across the river in boats. Today, the bridge is a sign for commuters that they have reached Delhi and the devout often toss a few coins into the river as an offering. **PLACE:** Gandhi Nagar, Seelampur, Shahdara

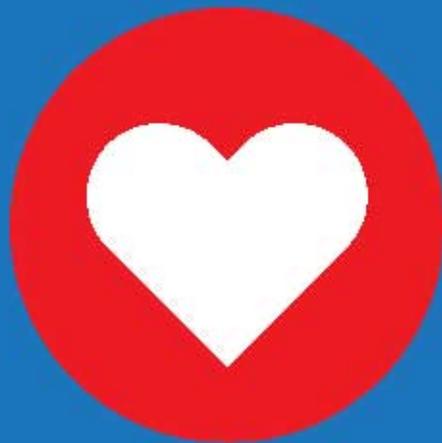


[4] KERNEL TRUTHS

DELHI SEED BANK: In an effort to restore the native trees of Delhi, which have been under threat because of rapid urbanisation, environmentalist Pradip Krishen started a project within Asola forest. It involves collecting seeds, growing saplings and encouraging the planting of native species in public spaces as well as in private gardens. The goal is to create widespread awareness that by planting native trees, those that are suited to the micro habitat of Delhi will put less demands on the water table and have the added benefit of being preferred by birds and other local fauna. **PLACE:** Asola Forest, near Tughlaqabad Fort, Mehrauli Badarpur Road



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[5] SPIRITUAL FOCUS



DARGAH OF KHWAJA QUTBUDDIN BAKHTIYAR: Delhi is traditionally known as *Baais Khwaja Ki Chaukhat*, the threshold of 22 Sufis, although in reality there are hundreds of important Sufi shrines throughout the city. The oldest of this is one belonging to the 13th century Sufi mystic, Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki. It is believed that the city of Delhi cannot be destroyed as long as this particular shrine exists and it is one of the most important and busiest dargahs (shrine built over a tomb) in the city. There is exquisite mirror detailing of the shrine in Mehrauli. **PLACE:** Mehrauli



DARGAH OF QUTB SAHIB: Qutb Sahib, a predecessor to the famous Hazrat Nizam-uddin, was an early Sufi saint and his tomb is one of the most important Sufi pilgrimage centres in India. The most attractive buildings in the complex are the gateways, the *baoli* (stepwell), the mosque, which was built in 1785, and the elegant small grave enclosure of the Nawabs of Loharu. Equally stunning is the finely carved *jaali* (lattice) screen around the shrine itself. **PLACE:** South of the entrance to Mehrauli Village

[6] SPICE ROUTE

KHARI BAOLI: Asia's largest spice market has been operating continuously for over 400 years and many of the traders are the tenth generation of their family to work here. *Baoli* means "step-well" and *khari* means "salty." It is believed that the name is derived from a saline water stepwell that existed on the site in the 15th century. Today the bustling bazaar is a maze of small lanes, some only a few feet wide, lined with stalls selling spices, of course, but also herbs, dried fruits, nuts, grains, sweets, kitchenware and Ayurvedic supplies. Be seduced by the visual and fragrant splendour but be aware that most traders sell only by the sack or by the kilo. Follow your nose to the landmark Gadodia building, the chilli market and climb to the rooftop for spectacular views. **PLACE:** Chandni Chowk



[7] COLOUR CODE

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATORY: Located within a reforested park, this conservatory is in a saucer-like area with sloping sides harbouring native vegetation, which act as host plants. Since the inception in 2006, the conservatory has increased the butterfly species in the park from just 14 to over 90. **PLACE:** Aravalli Biodiversity Park, Vasant Kunj

[8] INTERSECTION OF FAITH

YOGMAYA MANDIR: The present temple dates back to the 19th century but is believed to be a descendant of a much older shrine that existed in ancient times. The *Phool Waalon ki Sair* (flower seller festival) is a major inter-faith festival that takes place annually in October. The grand procession starts from the nearby Sufi dargah of Qutbuddin Khwaja Bakhtiyar Kaki and stops here at the temple to offer floral tributes to the Goddess Yogmaya, culminating in a celebration at the nearby Jahaz Mahal (ship palace) located next to the Hauz-i-Shamsi water body. **PLACE:** Mehrauli



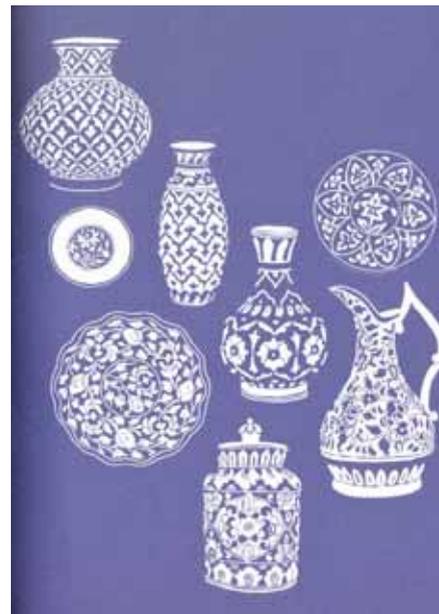
[9] RAJ RUN

ST JAMES' CHURCH: Colonel James Skinner built this church in 1836, making it one of the oldest in the city. Its construction was the result of the vow he made when wounded on a battlefield, that if he survived his injuries, he would build a church. The flamboyant half-Scottish, half-Rajput soldier was the founder of Skinner's Light Horse cavalry regiment in the Indian Army, which later was renamed the 1st Bengal Lancers and still exists in the Indian Army today. His tombstone is near the altar in the church and the front pew is still reserved for the Skinner family. **PLACE:** Lothian Road, just south of Kashmere Gate



[10] CYAN CERAMICS

DELHI BLUE POTTERY: Padmashri Sardar Gurcharan Singh started Delhi Blue Art Pottery in 1952. Inspired by the blue Persian glaze he saw on his travels on the Silk Route, he set up a production and teaching centre for pottery and is regarded as the father of studio pottery in India. His distinctive work, including *jaalis* (lattice work) and tiles, can be seen on some landmark buildings in Delhi including the India International Centre and the Shankar's International Dolls Museum. Today, Gurcharan's son, Mansimran, who is also an eminent potter, runs the Delhi Blue Pottery Trust, which offers a wide variety of courses, workshops and artist residencies. **PLACE:** Delhi Blue Pottery Trust, Delhi Blue Apartments, Safdarjung Ring Road

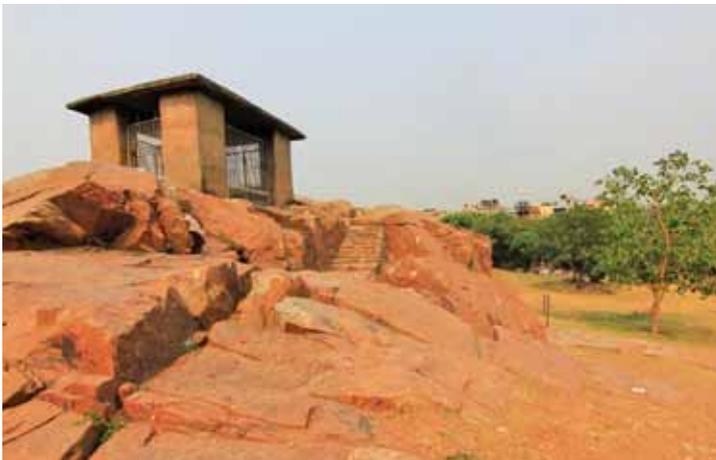


[11] STAMP STOP

NATIONAL PHILATELIC MUSEUM: This museum, which is run by the Postal Service, showcases an extensive collection of stamps, including the first one issued in 1854. The comprehensive collection includes every stamp, issued post-Independence as well as some rare ones released before Independence by the Princely States of India. The thematic section covers all aspects of society including festivals, music, art, cinema, railways, aviation and wildlife. There is even a "Brides of India" section. The museum has an artists' corner that displays the process of designing stamps, a philatelic sales counter where you can buy special stamps, a souvenir shop and a unique service where you can buy sheets of personalised stamps with your own photograph. **PLACE:** Dak Bhavan, Sardar Patel Chowk, Sansad Marg



[12] FLASHBACK FUN ANTIQUES MARKET: This leafy market square in a quiet residential area offers Delhi's most genteel shopping environment with respected art galleries, jewellers and close to a dozen antique shops. Pick up vintage goods and collectibles but be aware that there is a healthy trade in replicas. **PLACE:** Sunder Nagar Market, Mathura Road, south of the Purana Qila

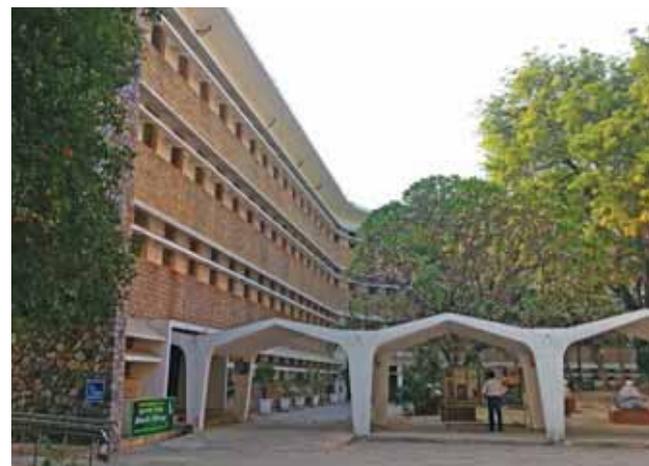


[13] Emperor's proclamation

ASHOKAN ROCK EDICT: Delhi is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world and has an incredible array of ruins and monuments that reveal the city's rich history. In the 3rd century BC, Emperor Ashoka issued edicts exhorting people to follow Buddhism. These were carved into rocks and specially commissioned pillars across the Indian subcontinent. Delhi has three of these extraordinary pieces of antiquity, and this one is believed to be the oldest surviving monument in the city.

It is housed in a humble shelter on a rocky outcrop in a neighbourhood park where Delhi's youngest residents play beside it, unaware of this important historical marker. A barrier protects it, so it is no longer possible to see the ten-line inscription which is written in Brahmi script. Its presence indicates that an important settlement existed on this ground thousands of years ago. **PLACE:** East of Kailash

[14] MUSIC MANTRA MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS GALLERY: Located within the Sangeet Natak Akademi, this musical treasure trove has a collection of over 700 indigenous musical instruments, out of which about 250 are on permanent display. Many of the exhibits were sought out by the Akademi's archive team, who went to the remotest parts of India and collected the instruments over the course of the last 50 years. The museum bears testament to India's rich musical history and is also a hugely important resource to preserve and nurture our folk and tribal musical traditions. **PLACE:** Sangeet Natak Akademi, Rabindra Bhavan, Ferozshah Road



[15] ROYAL GARDEN

THE PRINCE'S PARK: In 1920, King George V established a Chamber of Princes in Delhi, where the rulers of India's princely states could interact with the British Government. Each of the rulers then required a residence in New Delhi and sites were allocated close to India Gate. These palaces were built in the 1930s and they lined a hexagonal park, which became known as the Prince's Park.

The most architecturally impressive of these is Hyderabad House, which was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and today is home to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Baroda House is used as the Northern Railways headquarters, Patiala House is a district court, Jaipur House is home to the National Gallery of Modern Art and Bikaner House is an active cultural centre run by the Rajasthan Government. **PLACE:** India Gate

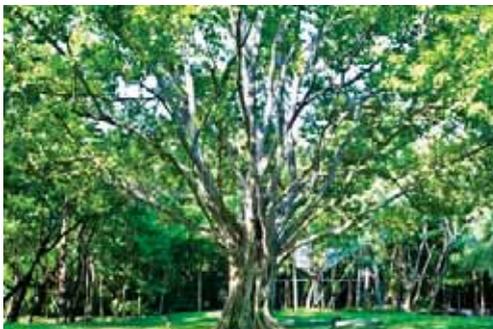


[16] LIVING LEGACY

TIBET HOUSE MUSEUM AND LIBRARY: His Holiness the Dalai Lama said, “A museum’s purpose is to bring the heritage of the past in close contact with values that are current among living, thinking and conscious people. A museum has to be the vehicle for this collective contact. It must pass on to the present all that is vital and living from the past.” This is exactly true of Tibet House that was founded in 1965 by the Dalai

Lama. Today, the museum collection contains over 200 precious thangka paintings as well as religious statues in copper, gilded bronze, sandalwood and stone. Other artefacts include ritual objects, jewellery, costumes, household articles and even ancient weapons. The library also has nearly 5,000 volumes of rare and valuable manuscripts and books.

PLACE: Institutional Area, Lodhi Road



[17] EVERGREEN ENLIGHTENMENT

THE BODHI TREE: It is believed that Buddha attained enlightenment while meditating under a very large and sacred peepal tree in Bodhi Gaya, which came to be known as the Bodhi tree. It no longer remains but a sprig from it was taken to Sri Lanka and grown into a tree known as the “Sri Maha Bodhi.” A sapling from the Sri Lankan tree was then brought to Delhi in 1964 and planted here in the park. It is now one of the most venerated trees in the city. **PLACE:** Buddha Jayanti Park, Vande Mataram Marg, Central Ridge Reserve Forest

[18] WEDDING WOVES

KINARI BAZAAR: This small lane in Old Delhi, which is also known as the wedding street, is the edgings and trimming market. It is the centre of all things that glitter and shine. Shop here for brilliant ribbons, lace, sequins and pretty baubles that are used to augment wedding outfits. Kinari Bazaar is also a favourite spot for Delhi’s fashion designers to buy supplies.

PLACE: Chandni Chowk



[19] CULTURE CALLING

SANSKRITI KENDRA: The Sanskriti Kendra Cultural Centre, opened in 1993, is set within a landscaped five-acre garden with over a hundred varieties of trees and an abundance of birds. It has three museums and a creative hub with specialist art centres for ceramics, enamel and block printing. It holds exhibitions, workshops, classes and festivals, including some for children.

One wing has the finest textiles on display while another showcases our brightest examples of terracotta art, from simple common earthen pots to a complete Ayyanar shrine with massive equestrian statues that would normally be found on the edges of villages in Tamil Nadu. At the Museum of Everyday Art, there are over 1,000 objects on display connected with the customs, beliefs and practices of both the urban and rural populations of India.

PLACE: Anandgram, Mehrauli-Gurgaon Road

— Courtesy: 401 Reasons to Fall in Love with Delhi



OLD DELHI THROWS UP SOME DELICACIES
THAT ARE UNIQUE TO THE SEASON

WINTER WARMERS



A generous dash of *ghee*, a handful of dry fruits and a toss-up of spices like mace and nutmeg which are renowned for their warming qualities — winter calls for food that is rich, heat-giving and shields the body from infection. And what's better than taking a trip down Old Delhi in search of some which are just available here, have survived the test of time and stood to the *hakim's* logic.



DAULAT KI CHAAT: Winter signals the appearance of carts laden with *Daulat ki Chaat*. This creamy wonder is prepared exclusively to resemble snow-tufted days in the hills and is frothy, foamy and pillowy. Milk is boiled, mixed with cream, cooled and aerated overnight. They say drops of dew that seep in make for the real magic. Whisked for hours, it gets a soft and velvety consistency. It is then topped with chunky pistachios, *khoya* and powdered sugar. **Available at:** Multiple locations across Old Delhi, especially Chawri Bazar

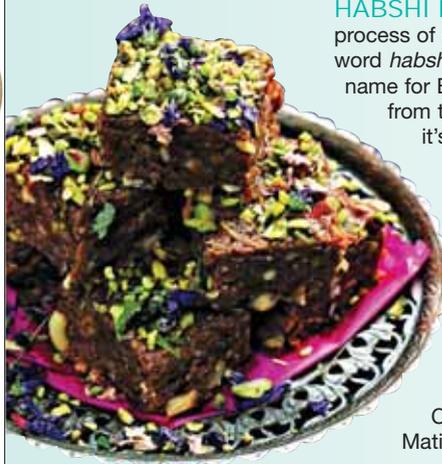
GONDH KE LADDOO:

Gondh in Hindi means gum. *Gondh ka laddoo* is a winter staple made extensively in North Indian households. These are made with fried gum crystals, dry coconut, dry fruits and jaggery. These are especially fed to nursing mothers for lactation and strength. The wholesome and indulgent *laddoos* are packed with nutrients that can keep cold and flu at bay. **Available at:** Kaleva Sweets, all outlets



GUR KA HALWA

Winter and *gur* (jaggery) are a winning combination that dates back 1,000 years. Prized in Ayurveda for its ability to fight cold and flu, jaggery is an indispensable part of every household kitchen. But shops in old Delhi take it to another level where it forms the basis of a *halwa*. Made with oodles of ghee, semolina and jaggery, *gur ka halwa* is topped with cardamom powder, saffron, pistachios, almonds and served piping hot. **Available at:** Chaina Ram, Sindhi confectioners, 6499, Fatehpuri Chowk, Chandni Chowk



HABSHI HALWA: This is made after a long and tedious process of curdling, sweetening and flavouring the milk. The word *habshi* is the Urdu equivalent of the politically incorrect name for Black people. The name of this dish obviously came from the deeply caramelised *halwa*, which is so dark that it's almost black. The milk is usually boiled for almost eight hours until it is reduced to a gooey mess and packs in ingredients such as saffron, dried fruits, ghee, sugar, *kewra* water and of course, *maida*. Since the dessert is so warm and rich, it is supposed to be an aphrodisiac for men. The *halwa* is also generously garnished with dried fruits, nuts and topped with ghee. A great source of energy, it is recommended that you have this in the winter. **Available at:** Chainaram Sindhi Confectioners, 6499, Fatehpuri Chowk, Chandni Chowk; Kallan Sweets, Shop 4-5, Bazaar Matia Mahal, Jama Masjid



SAFED GAJAR KA HALWA: While all of us are familiar with the red and in some cases even the black *gajar halwa*, the white one is harder to find. This unique one is made with white carrots, a pigment-free variety of parsnip, milk, *khoya* and dry fruits. The carrots are rare though and some even make use of similar species. What makes it special is the melt-in-the-mouth texture. **Available at:** Sheeren Bhawan, 1466/67, Bazar Chitli Qabar, Jama Masjid

GHEEKAWAR KA HALWA: This slightly less sweet Indian dessert is made with the ubiquitous aloe vera. While desserts are usually considered sinful, this one has some benefits as well. The *gheekawar* halwa is especially good for those suffering from joint inflammation and dry skin. Usually mixed with desi ghee and dry fruits. **Available at:** Sheeren Bhawan, 1466/67, Bazar Chitli Qabar, Jama Masjid





OLD FORT? A NEW CASTLE OF WARMTH

KARUNA M JOHN FINDS HER WAY AROUND ITANAGAR AND CHANCES UPON SIGHTS AND SOUNDS THAT BECOME HER PERSONAL MARKERS OF SELF-DISCOVERY IN THIS UNUSUAL HILL TOWN



So this is how clean air feels. Close your eyes and inhale deep. Like you have just surfaced, after a dive in the deep blue, and your lungs are hungry for a gasp of air. It rushes in with the freshness of chilled champagne, jolting you awake, and leaves you craving for a second, deeper breath.

Breathe when you are in Arunachal Pradesh, where the skies are blue and the air is clean. But then reality strikes, and you are now standing in line, like an obedient puppy waiting for chow. Applying for, and then waiting for your inner line permit (ILP), is one of the first things you will do here. It is a gentle reminder how bureaucratic procedures teach us a lesson in patience, as they move slower than you knew possible. Time crawls as systems reboot, photos get clicked and printouts materialise. Don't have patience? Too bad! All Indian citizens need an ILP to enter Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram. It helps that this time-consuming procedure is done right there at the Naharlagun railway station, where an overnight train has got you from the the bustle of Guwahati. At the crack of dawn. Before your first cup of coffee.

It may be around 5 am but the sun is out bright, egging you on to get going. There are only three ways



PHOTO: MANJULIKA PRAMOD



to get into Arunachal: by train, road, or helicopter if you are rich/a celebrity/an official. The overnight train is by far the most comfortable way to get in. Paper in hand, you step out of the station to a view you will be most grateful for. Naharlagun itself is a picture perfect little town, and the station, the first that came up in this state, sits in the lap of verdant hills cloaked in the bluest skies any one coming in from North India may have seen this season. The place, unlike so many other railway stations across the country, is spotlessly clean.

Hire a taxi and embark on a lovely drive, sometime dusty on under-construction roads, into Itanagar, the state's capital. The city centre, where most of the hotels, and guesthouses are, is as tiny as any hill town but the best part of Itanagar is spread across seven hills. So ideally, use the hotel like a base camp, the hotel being just a place to freshen up, stow luggage and return to sleep. For the rest of your trip, be it just a weekend, or longer, you need to be out at the crack of dawn (earlier than you think people, this is where the sun rises), till sunset (it happens way earlier too, obviously) and take your time to imbibe its essence and relax at its many impromptu spots. Itanagar is yet to become the regular

tourist hub and apart from the locals (especially on a weekend, or holidays), you are unlikely to encounter another ILP-wielding outsider. Sighting a foreign tourist is even rarer. Strange though because this seems like a perfect destination for every seeker of solace.

This city is just a sampler of what the rest of Arunachal has to offer and is a great place to start. It is safe, even for single travellers, affordable and the locals are friendly and helpful. There is even a newly-launched tourist police app (for android phones) to help you when needed. Take long walks and longer meal stops therefore. Enjoy the sights and sounds off the beaten track. Like the Holongi highway, or the local bazaar, called the Ganga Market, in the heart of the city. Try your best to ignore the commercial beers here, even if they are way cheaper, and go looking for *apong*, the local rice beer. Be nice and the ladies of the farmers' market may tip you off. This refreshing, mild drink is like sipping the essence of the land. And the best part... no hangover! Remember you will want to get up early and walk to explore another part of this beautiful city at dawn tomorrow. Go on, give yourself a dose of joy and fresh air. What else is the point?

PHOTOS: MANJULIKA PRAMOD



HOLONGI

This area is the home of one of the most picturesque national highways in the country. A near-perfect four lane mountain road winds around lush green hills and connects the state to neighbouring Assam. This is the road route into Itanagar from Assam's capital Guwahati. Ride along this road and you may stumble across the weekly farmer's market towards the end of the road, full of happy and juicy vegetables and fruit. This is also a perfect place to unpack a picnic on a sunny afternoon. Sunshine and fresh air are free, bring your own food and water though. Go, before the proposed airport becomes a reality, and traffic drowns the sounds of bird song.

ITA FORT

Today, there are just sections of walls and ramparts that remain as relics. Atop a hill, above a posh neighbourhood, remains of this 14th-15th century monument give you a lesson in what "vantage point" means. The walls seem to have run along the natural curves of the hillock. The brickwork that remains is a reminder of how the city got its name. It's not buzzing, you may not find guides or much information about the legends, archaeological

findings or cultural and historical relevance here but the place has great views and will fetch you many instalikes for sure.

Set on a hillock in the heart of the city, it has three entrances on its eastern, western and southern sides. With a steep unscalable cliff on one side and deep valleys and wilderness all around, the remarkable fortification comprises more than 16,200 cubic metres of brickwork. The fort is attributed to the Ahom kings while some records suggest it was built by Jitari King Ramachandra of Mayapur. The gates were closed owing to renovation work but our persistence won over the neighbourhood. Sourcing a key from a bunch of lads playing carrom nearby, we snuck in and gained access to the Observatory Tower near some ruins for a better view of the fort.

A STORY OF HILLS

Itanagar is a rather piecemeal experience, spread as it is over hills. So one of the hillocks has been transformed into a sanctuary of peace and spirituality. A massive painted gateway at the base signals the Siddhartha Vihar monastery and a flight of steps beyond the trees leads to a beautifully tended garden. The Itanagar Gompa or Centre for Buddhist Culture sits





like the Buddha, obliterating the din of the city with its sublime silence. A stone tablet proclaimed the foundation stone laid by the Dalai Lama in 1983. Poles and strings adorned with fluttering prayer flags canopy above us, scattering chants in the breeze. Inside the *gompa*, a small group of artists deftly retouch the wall paintings with vibrant colours. A large statue of the Buddha looks on us with a benevolent smile, reassuring and uplifting, cresting our consciousness. Outside, towards the right, a large, white sculpted Buddha sits in a meditative repose under a banyan tree under a network of billowing prayer scrolls, emaciated by penance. Down below is the countryside. In one sweep, I get my lesson. Down below is earthly reality, swinging between achievement and denial. But there can be no enlightenment till we have suffered the pain of life experiences and done our penance selflessly.





CULTURE CLUB

On our way downhill, the Jawaharlal Nehru Museum turns out to be a wonderfully packaged crash course on Arunachal's rich cultural heritage. A fabulous array of dioramas reveals unique woven textiles, beaded jewellery, weaponry, handicrafts,

household items and living habits of the state's various native tribes. Be it Galo, Adi, Nyishi, Monpa, Mishmi, Nocte, Wancho, Tagin, Khampti or Apatani, the diversity is mind-boggling. With a vast collection of books, maps and antique items on display, the place can keep one engaged for hours and draws a decent number of visitors everyday.

Inspired by the items showcased at the museum, we make a beeline to the Craft Centre and Emporium to hunt for souvenirs. Wall paintings, tribal costumes, shawls, scarves, cane and bamboo craft, wooden carvings, beaded necklaces and bags... travellers have an irresistible list for retail therapy.

GANGA LAKE

Truly hidden and slightly more touristy (you can take paddle boats out on the water here) this is a wonderful spot that you cannot miss. Officially named Gyakar Sinyi, a moss and fern-lined flight of stairs cuts into the mountainside and takes you to to this emerald drop that sits still under the sapphire sky. Tranquil and deep, both metaphorically and literally, the lake is home to a variety of carp and even turtles. Though if you do spot one consider yourself lucky, feel blessed and make a wish.

TALLEY VALLEY: A WILD WORLD

As our wheels turned away from Itanagar's flatlands towards Lower Subansiri district, the roads began to climb slowly and paddy valleys dropped lower as we headed towards the alpine hills of Ziro.

Life had literally slowed down and turned silent when we reached the trail to Talley valley, a wildlife sanctuary with a biodiversity so rich, there are several species of plants, animals and insects still unclassified and undiscovered! Strange coloured beetles crawled in the undergrowth, exotic orchids hung like garlands from branches as birds flitted and twittered in the dense canopy of trees. We caught a Verditer Flycatcher darting into a thicket in a flash of turquoise. Being surrounded by mountain ridges and hillocks, Ziro has several trekking options. The pine and bamboo grove areas and the scenic grasslands enroute to Talley valley witness a steady trickle of hikers and nature lovers.

Back in town, at the craft centre, we saw local women of different tribes seated in their elegant handspun *galle* (wraparound skirts or sarongs) busy at their looms. Some wove *galles* and material to be stitched into coats and blouses while others knotted small woollen carpets. In separate units for blacksmiths and carpenters, men crafted local machetes, bamboo artefacts and metal sculptures. With interactive displays that made you value the artiste's labour of love, the store offered a selection of products for tourists. Set in a quaint building with multiple halls, the District Museum at Ziro holds a fantastic display of Arunachal's tribal culture. Models in traditional costume and a fine collection of heirlooms, textiles, agricultural tools and tribal artefacts make it worth a visit. It emboldened us to probe deeper into the lost world.

The story of a massive Shiva *linga* led us to Kardo Forest, 4 km from Hapoli. A half-a-mile walk into the jungle opened into a clearing where a 25 ft rock soared above a cluster of pilgrims at its base. According to the caretaker priest Sachidanand Dubey from Muzaffarpur, the ninth *khand* (part) of the 17th *adhyaya*



(chapter) of the Shiv Purana mentions the presence of an *agni linga* that fulfills all wishes. Since it is believed to be located at a site that receives the first rays of the sun, this place in Arunachal (literally "the shelter or home of the sun") acquires deeper significance. The sacred monolith of Siddeshwar Nath was apparently found in the holy month of Shraavan (July end) in 2004 by a group of Nepali workers who were chopping trees. To their surprise, the trees fell on the opposite side instead of the rock. Noticing a "natural garland" on the rock, a terrified worker fled to inform his master. They dug around the site and a gigantic *linga* possessing a magnetic aura appeared. The rock column with a girth of 28 ft bore strange symbolic images of Lord Ganesh, Goddess Parvati and the sacred mount Nandi, drawing people to worship it ever since. We watched devotees collect water as a divine blessing from a natural spring at the base of the *linga*.

GANGA MARKET

Save the best for last. Or at least when the twilight unfolds and the official tourist spots listed above are closed to the public. This market is not for the tourists, it is for the locals. And that is a good reason to go there. But remember to walk into the area behind the main shops, where the farmers bring their produce. The vibe here is alive in more ways than one. Edible bugs, both live and dried, vegetables and herbs you may not have encountered before, are all up for grabs. As a bonus, the lady selling you those, at the most wonderfully affordable prices ever, will even part with quick easy recipes if asked. Stock up on bay leaves, bamboo shoot pickles, smoked meat and fish, and all the ghost pepper and poppy seeds you desire. There are also the most exquisite handicrafts, especially bags and shawls, made by local artisans. Whatever you do, buy local and don't bargain. Save that for when you get back to your big city.



PHOTO: MANJULIKA PRAMOD

GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON PRIMARY HEALTH CARE



STRENGTHEN KEY HEALTH CARE PROGRAMMES

ACHIEVING UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE (UHC) IS ONE OF THE MAJOR AREAS OF FOCUS OF THE GLOBAL HEALTH COMMUNITY WITH PRIMARY HEALTH CARE (PHC) AS A PRINCIPAL FOUNDATION FOR THESE EFFORTS

Primary healthcare is the first level of contact that individuals and communities have with the health system. PHC is concerned with three main areas — empowered people and communities; multi-sectoral policy and action; and primary care and essential public health functions as the core of integrated health services. This comprises of ‘comprehensive primary health care’ which is used to refer to preventive, promotive, curative, and rehabilitative care.

The Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, JP Nadda, during his address at the ‘Second Plenary Session of 2nd International Conference on Primary Health Care towards Universal Health Coverage and Sustainable Development Goals’, at Astana, Kazakhstan, recently said, “Multi-sectoral action is a key to addressing social and environmental determinants and India has developed operational strategies to build a shared goal and vision between sectors such as nutrition, drinking water and sanitation, education, rural and urban development departments”.

The minister spoke on the theme — ‘The Future of Primary Health Care’ and further communicated that India’s progress in making improvements in maternal, child health and communicable diseases is largely due to its sustained focus on and investments in strengthening the health systems for these services. Reiterating the commitment of the government, the minister elaborated that India’s focus on improved and outreach primary health care services with established referral linkages including transport and strengthened secondary care services has yielded results not only in terms of positive health indicators but also in a robust health systems platform that now gives boost to move from selective to comprehensive primary health care services.

The government is committed to achieve the goals of the National Health Policy 2017, and of the SDGs by 2030, and has achieved impressive results in terms of accessibility and quality of services which resulted in reduced deaths of mothers, newborns and children, and improved health outcomes overall.



'MULTI SECTORAL ACTION IS A KEY TO ADDRESSING SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINANTS AND WE HAVE DEVELOPED OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES TO BUILD A SHARED GOAL AND VISION BETWEEN SECTORS SUCH AS NUTRITION, DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION, EDUCATION, RURAL AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENTS'
— JP NADDA, UNION MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE



The recently launched, Ayushman Bharat, an initiative that is ambitious in scale and scope will also act as a catalyst for achieving UHC for the rural and financially weak population. The Ayushman Bharat scheme has two components — establishing about 1,50,000 health and wellness centres for the delivery of comprehensive primary health care and the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, which will address the needs of the secondary and tertiary health care for nearly 40 per cent of the country's population.

In order to address the disparities in health indicators in states and to ensure the equal access of high quality health care to all people, the government has identified 117 districts under the 'transformation of aspirational districts' programme so as to achieve the vision of a New India by 2022. The e-Mitra (Mobile Integrated Toolkit RMNCH+A) application has been designed to complement the aspirational district programme.

The role of biotechnology in public health has been used to good effect, particularly in primary health care. The use of point of care diagnostics, which are gradually being made available at the health and wellness centres, will enable providers to resolve more and refer less, thus improving continuum of care, reducing patient hardship, and consequent out of pocket expenditure.

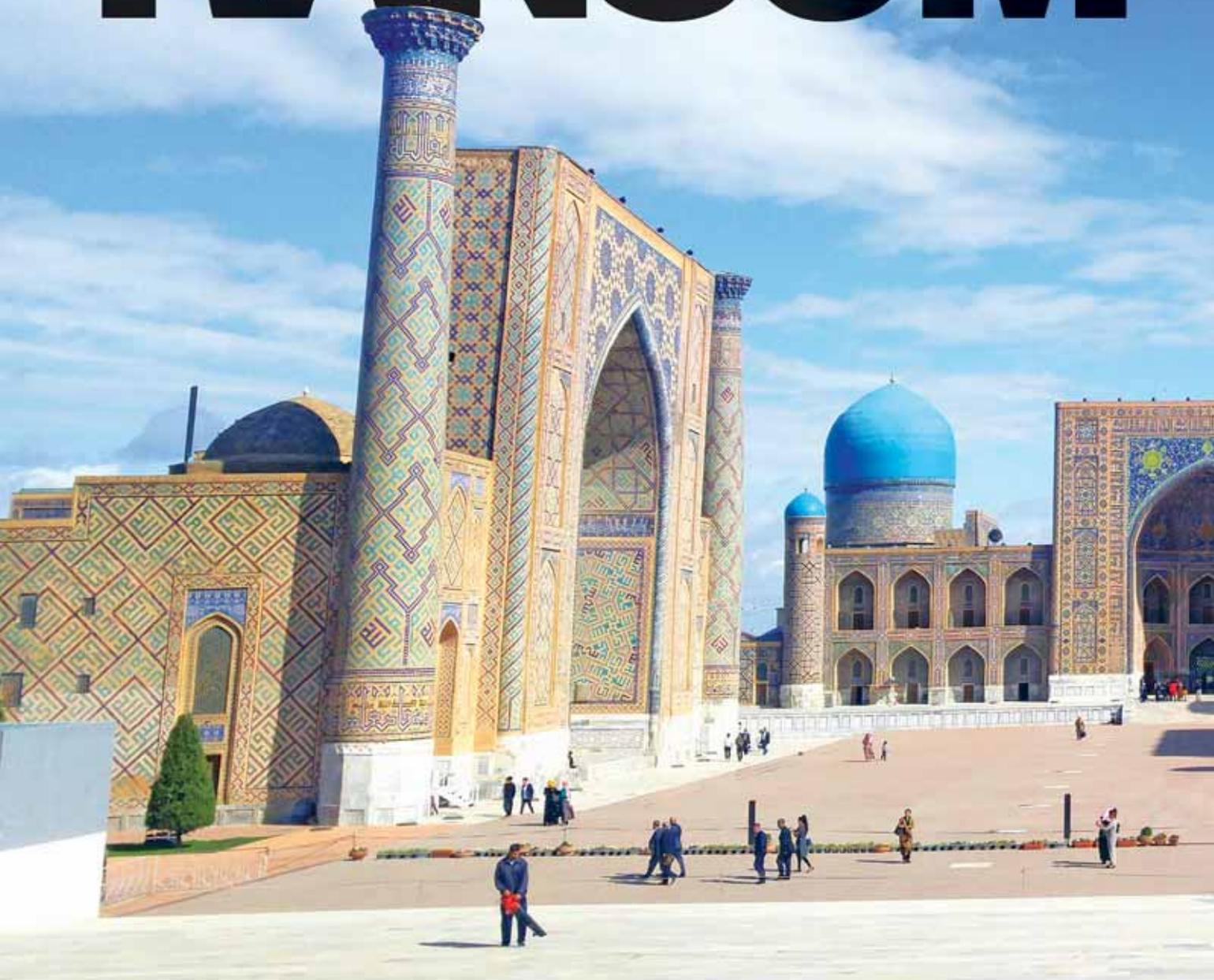
India is committed to reforms in health service delivery using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) under the 'Digital India Program'. Some of the initiatives of the health ministry are applications for the reproductive and

child health (RCH), non-communicable diseases (NCD) and tuberculosis. The National Health Portal provides a single point of access for consolidated healthcare related information to citizens of India with the objective to improve health literacy and access to health services; and thereby reducing disease burden in the country. Other digital health IT initiatives include an inter-operable electronic health records (EHR) system, patient engagement in improving service delivery through MeraAspatal, personal health record management system (PHRMS), national identification number (NIN) for both public and private health facilities (a unique identification number for health facilities), and mhealth (mCessation programme and mdiabetes). Hospital Information System (HIS) is also being implemented for computerised registration and capturing EHR/ EMR of patients in public health facilities up to primary health centre level.

The Online Registration System (ORS) is a framework to link various hospitals for online registration and appointments, online diagnostic reports and enquiring availability of blood online. The government is also aiming at establishing an electronic database in all its districts by the year 2020, to reduce the burden of paper-based data collection, recording, and storage.

The UHC is not an end in itself, its goal is that all citizens of the country can achieve full health potential at every age by using health services that are appropriate to them, and can contribute to socio-economic and sustainable development.

KING'S RANSOM



MAJESTIC AND BEAUTIFUL, SAMARKAND IS ONE OF THE OLDEST CONTINUOUSLY INHABITED CITIES IN CENTRAL ASIA WITH A HISTORY AS OLD AS ROME'S WHICH HAS SEEN RULERS FROM CYRUS TO ALEXANDER, GENGHIS KHAN AND TIMUR, SAYS PRACHI JOSHI

From Cyrus, the founder of the Achaemenid Empire, to Alexander the Great and from Genghis Khan to Timur, Samarkand captured the imagination of every conqueror. Its position in the Zarafshan Valley put it right at the centre of the Silk Road, with trade routes from China, India and Europe intersecting here. Both the thriving trade and the various invasions shaped the city's culture into an eclectic potpourri of Persian, Indian, Mongolian and Western influences. From Alexander's Marakand to present-day Samarkand, the city's history is a fascinating deep dive into the forces that shaped the region (and the world order).





Mural inside Afrasiab Museum Samarkand that once adorned the reception hall of a palace.

SIX FEET UNDER

Even before Alexander conquered it in 329 BC, Marakand (as Samarkand was known then) was a formidable city with a citadel and fortifications, a network of roads and a flourishing crafts centre. It was the capital of the Sogdia (or Sogdiana) province of the Achaemenid Empire, the first Persian Empire that reigned in the region from 550-330 BC. While not much remains above ground from this period, archaeological excavations reveal an interesting story. I begin my exploration of Samarkand in Afrasiab (variously Afrasiyab and Afrosiyob), a grassy hillock in the northern part of the modern city. The ancient settlement was built on higher ground for effective defence and its location between the Zarafshan River and a large fertile plain made it a prosperous city. Spread over 220 hectares, Afrasiab is largely an archaeological site today that has been under

excavation since the late 19th century. Many of the artefacts discovered here are on display at the Afrasiab Museum adjacent to the site. I wander its halls, admiring the collection of ossuaries, fragments of ancient swords, knives and arrows, coins, painted ceramics, terracotta figurines, and jewellery. There's even the remnant of a sewer system on display, all in all some 22,000 artefacts that tell the story of Afrasiab.

But the centrepiece of the museum is the Afrasiab Painting or the Ambassador's Painting, an elaborate, large scale 7th century wall mural that once adorned the reception hall of a palace. The mural was accidentally discovered when the local authorities started digging a road in the vicinity of Afrasiab in 1965. It occupies the walls of one of the exhibition rooms in the museum, much like it would have adorned the palace hall. Strategically placed lighting highlights the rust browns, burnt yellows and bold blues of a symbolically rich life



The carved, arched portal of Rabot Malik caravanserai has been restored

sealed in the frame. Parts of it have been damaged but a massive three-year restoration was completed in 2017 with the assistance of UNESCO and French specialists. The mural presents a vivid picture of a ceremonial procession with envoys bearing gifts and paying their respects to the then King of Samarkand, Varkhuman.

On the northern wall, China is represented by a festival of dragon boats with the empress in a flotilla surrounded by musicians while the emperor (apparently of the Tang dynasty) is shown to be hunting. On the southern wall, there's a funerary procession representing Persia/Iran and on the eastern wall is presumably India depicted as a land of pygmies and astrologers (stereotypes seem to have been around even in the 7th century). On the main wall, Chinese envoys in exquisite silks and Korean ones with feathered headgear mill about and in the centre, astride a horse is King Varkhuman himself (though only a fragment of this portion remains). He is followed by equestrian troops while a decorated elephant leads his parade. The mural is a rare example of Sogdian art and underlines the importance of Samarkand on the world stage.

MERCHANT TRAIL

The mere mention of Samarkand evokes the legends of the Silk Road, of caravans bearing silks, spices and porcelain passing through on their way from China or India to Europe, of bustling marketplaces and of merchants making merry in caravan *serais* that dotted the route. There are



Women selling Samarkand bread which is crispy on the outside and chewy on the inside

very few remains from that time but the busy Siyab (Siyob) Bazaar gives you a taste of the past. A market has existed at this spot since the times of the Silk Road, and even today locals throng here to buy their daily necessities, from fruits and vegetables to meat and poultry, and of course, the famed Samarkand bread. This flat, round bread with a shiny glazed top is crispy





(Clockwise) Rabot Malik Sardoba looks like a brick igloo with steps leading into the ground where there's a small pool of water; Shah-i-Zinda Necropolis has tombs ranging between 9th and 15th centuries and Sher-Dor Madrasah at Registan has the tiger mosaics depicted on the arched gateway, a decidedly un-Islamic motif

on the outside and chewy on the inside, and is said to last for several months if stored properly. I walk through the bread section, which is filled with the most heavenly aroma and the heat of several tandoors or clay ovens, where bakers are in a flurry to meet daily demands with assembly line perfection.

I head outside Samarkand on the M37 Highway that connects it to Bukhara. This was a major arterial route during the Silk Road era and was called the King's Road. At Rabot Malik, a small town on the way, I stop to see a 14th century *sardoba* or water reservoir. The Silk Road was interspersed with such reservoirs at regular intervals where the merchant caravans could stop for drinking water and washing up. The *sardoba* looks like a brick igloo with steps leading into the ground where there's a small pool of water. Across the highway stand the ruins of an 11th century *caravanseraï*. The carved, arched portal has been restored but beyond it lies an expanse of the ruins where once sleeping rooms, bathhouses and dance podiums might have stood. A goat herd nonchalantly drives his flock amid the foundations while I think about Marco Polo who purportedly stopped here on his travels.

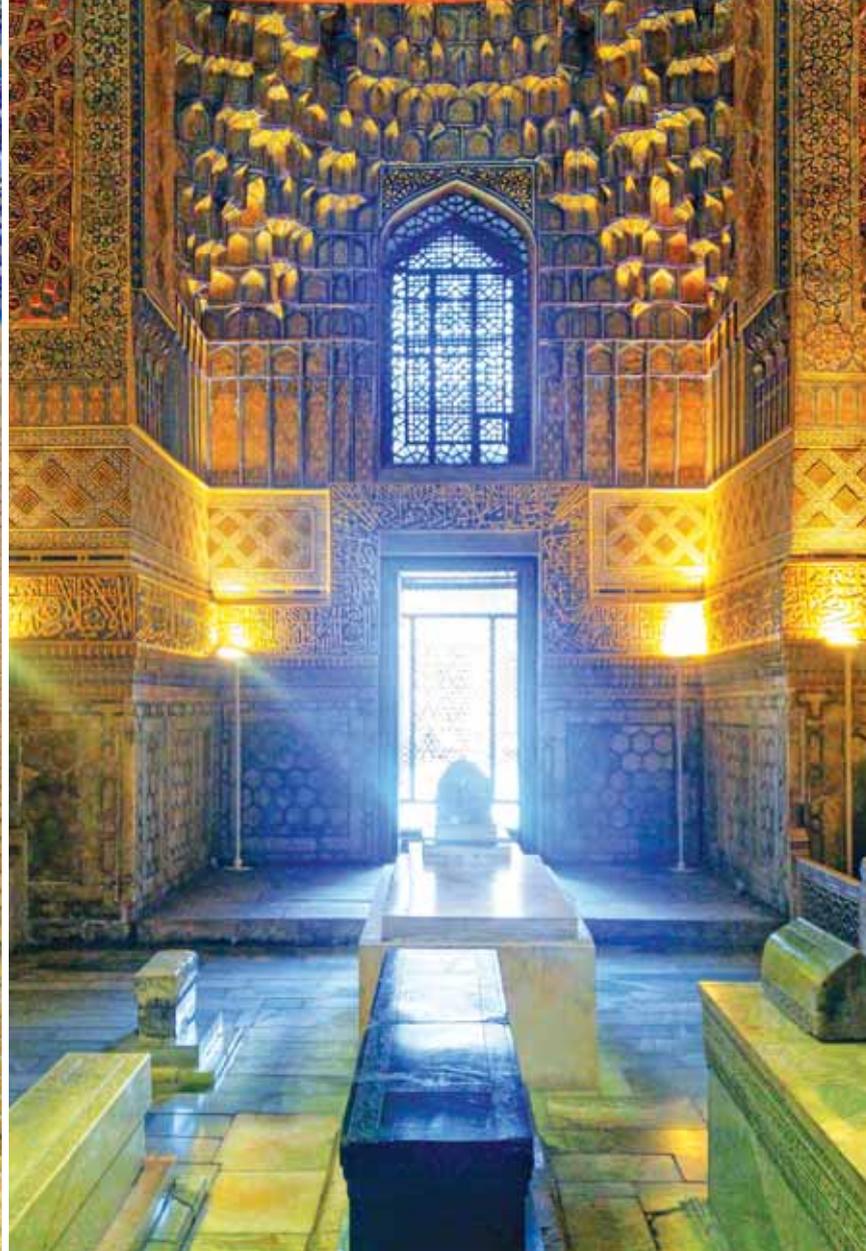
Samarkand imbibed not just cultures and traditions but also arts and crafts from different parts of the world. The Sogdians learnt paper-making from Chinese traders and improved upon it such that Samarkand's silk paper came to be known for its superb quality. Many ninth and 10th century Persian and Arabic manuscripts were written on it and considered as royal paper, only *emirs* could afford it. In the tiny village of Konigil, 10 km from Samarkand, I visit Meros Paper Mill where the owners are reviving the ancient art of making paper from mulberry bark. I watch two women industriously scraping and cleaning the bark. It's then boiled and beaten to pulp before being pressed into sheets. Once the sheets are dried, one of the mill workers polishes them with granite stone. The end result is a smooth, pale yellow paper that is long lasting and a joy to touch, and, of course, to write on. The paper mill has a gift shop and I pick up a couple of bookmarks made with the silk paper.



BUILDING BLOCKS

A rampaging Genghis Khan invaded and destroyed Samarkand in 1220, killing thousands of people and levelling their homes, markets and the citadel. Instead of rebuilding the city at the same spot, the locals moved a bit south. But the real resurrection of Samarkand happened in the 14th century when Timur or Tamerlane formed the Timurid Empire and made Samarkand its capital. He built a central high street lined with shops to encourage trade and revive the merchant economy. He was a great patron of the arts and was constantly building grand new buildings in a style that came to be known as Timurid architecture. It is often considered the peak of





Timur is buried in Gur-e-Amir Mausoleum that has been restored to its former glory

Islamic art in Central Asia characterised by patterned turquoise tiles adorning terracotta façades and massive azure cupolas crowning the buildings. A prime example of this is the Bibi Khanym Mosque near Siyab Bazaar. Timur built this with the loot he brought back from his infamous sack of Delhi. When it was built, it was the largest and most stunning mosque in the Islamic world. Another must-see Timurid marvel is Shah-i-Zinda, a sprawling necropolis with tombs ranging between 9th and 15th centuries. There are plain headstones and elaborately decorated mausoleums but the most important structure here is the (supposed) grave of Kusam ibn Abbas, Prophet Muhammad's cousin.

Timur himself is buried in Gur-e-Amir, a stunningly decorated mausoleum that has been heavily restored to its former glory. It holds not just his tomb but also those of his two sons, two grandsons and that of his teacher Sayyid Baraka.

Interestingly, Samarkand's most iconic architectural masterpiece was built after Timur's time but it nevertheless follows his style. Registan stands in the heart of the city, a grand square that was used for everything from weekly markets to royal proclamations to public executions. The square is flanked by three madrasah built between the 15th and 17th centuries. The oldest is the Ulugh Beg Madrasah built by Timur's son Ulugh Beg, a stunning edifice with a mosaic-tiled entrance arch, soaring minarets and an inner courtyard with a mosque, lecture rooms and dormitories. The other madrasah are the Sher-Dor Madrasah and the Tilya-Kori Madrasah, the former especially interesting for the tiger mosaics depicted on the arched gateway, a decidedly un-Islamic motif (Islam bans the portrayal of living beings on religious buildings). But then that's Samarkand, standing at the crossroads of world cultures and embracing everything that comes its way.

Towards Skilling India



- Over 50,000 youth skilled.
- Recognition of Prior Learning certification at Delhi and Hyderabad Airports.

Faith is the bird that feels the light



...SO SAID OUR POET LAUREATE RABINDRANATH TAGORE.
 BIRDER MANJUNATH GOWDA LISTS FIVE PLACES
 YOU CAN VISIT FOR A SIGHTING OF OUR AVIAN FRIENDS, BE IT THE MIGRANT SETTLER
 OR THE HOME-GROWN, MUCH LIKE THE CITY ITSELF

There they are, the two of them choreographing a duet with blushing pink legs, leaping and bowing in sheer excitement and celebrating the end of their journey. The Siberian cranes have swooped down on the still waters at the Okhla bird sanctuary. Ignorant of them, woodpeckers are assiduously tapping on the bark to set up home for the winter, unwittingly setting off a chorus that echoes through the hollows of a tree trunk.

Many of the cities in India are not lush or have abundant foliage that allows ornithophiles to observe birds in their daily activities. Thankfully many parts of New Delhi and the areas surrounding it have ample spaces where different species fly in during the winters. It is a serious but passionate pursuit, for which activists have also worked towards staying construction activities so that the habitat is not disturbed. For amateurs and otherwise, it can be a good way to de-stress away from their hectic lives among the green trees and wildlife.





Streak Throated Woodpecker and Oriental Honey Buzzard

KAMLA NEHRU RIDGE: The North Delhi Ridge is in proximity to the Vishwavidyalaya Metro Station and is the northern terminal part or spur of the Aravalli Hill Range. All parts of the Delhi Ridge are excellent bird-watching sites and visitors here can expect to see birds like the crow pheasant, oriental honey buzzard and woodpeckers.



Plum headed Parakeet



THE OKHLA BIRD SANCTUARY: Over 320 species of birds can be found at the Okhla bird sanctuary. Out of these 20 are common resident water bird species and 44 common resident woodland species while there are 43 migratory water birds species and 26 migratory woodland birds species.

Some of the birds seen here are critically endangered. Birds such as the white-rumped vulture, sarus crane and Indian peafowl can be observed here. The closest metro station to this sanctuary is the Okhla Bird Sanctuary Metro Station.

SULTANPUR BIRD SANCTUARY: At this sanctuary more than 100 species of migratory birds from as far as Europe, Siberia and Afghanistan land each year. A number of other species of birds have made this sanctuary their permanent home. For bird lovers, December is one of the best months to visit this sanctuary when birds like the Siberian crane, greater flamingo, Asian Koel, yellow wagtail, rosy pelican, Eurasian wigeon, comb duck, blue throat and many others make it their home. Some of the resident species are common hoopoe, paddy field pipit, purple sunbird, little cormorant, Eurasian thick-knee, gray francolin, black francolin, Indian roller, white-throated kingfisher, spot billed duck, painted stork, white ibis.



Asian Koel

There are four watch towers (machans) at different points to spot birds easily.



Red Wattled Lapwing

SURAJPUR BIRD SANCTUARY AND BIODIVERSITY PARK:



White Throated Kingfisher



Black Shouldered Kite



Red Crested Pochard

This sanctuary is located near Surajpur village in Gautam Budh Nagar in Greater Noida and is home to more than 180 species of birds including the spot-billed duck, lesser whistling duck, cotton pygmy goose, comb duck, red-crested pochard, greylag goose, northern shoveler, bar-headed goose, gadwell, and the common teal. December is

a good time to visit as many migratory birds can be seen here at this time.

Balanced by wetlands, it also has a natural trail which takes visitors to the dense forest and circles around date trees that form the natural borders of the water body. One may also adore the beauty of a Bengal Florican which was photographed in 2014.

EQUIPMENT & TOOLS



Bird-watchers know that it's very difficult to observe the playful antics of birds with the naked eye. To really enjoy bird-watching, it's very important to have equipment that allows one to see into far off distances. Usually binoculars with an 8X and 10X magnification are used by birders.

If you're interested in photographing



them, a camera with a long focal length, typically anything more than 400mm, is ideal.

An additional requirement for making birding expeditions a success are apps that guide bird lovers to destinations where bird species they want to see are present. Birding is an activity with many followers, thousands if not more people

enjoy bird watching and by using an app each bird lover gets access to a global community that helps members get the most out of each birding expedition. Birding apps reveal where and at what time a certain species of bird was spotted. Ebird app is a popular choice. It is like a networking site that updates about bird spotting. Not only do apps help increase the chances of seeing the species of birds one wants to see but they also allow bird lovers to learn which species of birds are common in sanctuaries across the world.



Jerdons Leaf bird



ASOLA BHATTI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY: This lies on the Delhi Ridge making it adjacent to the Tughlaqabad fort. On entering the premises you would find the Conservation Education Centre (CEC), run by the Bombay Natural History Society. They organise walks inside Asola and keep nesting boxes for birds.

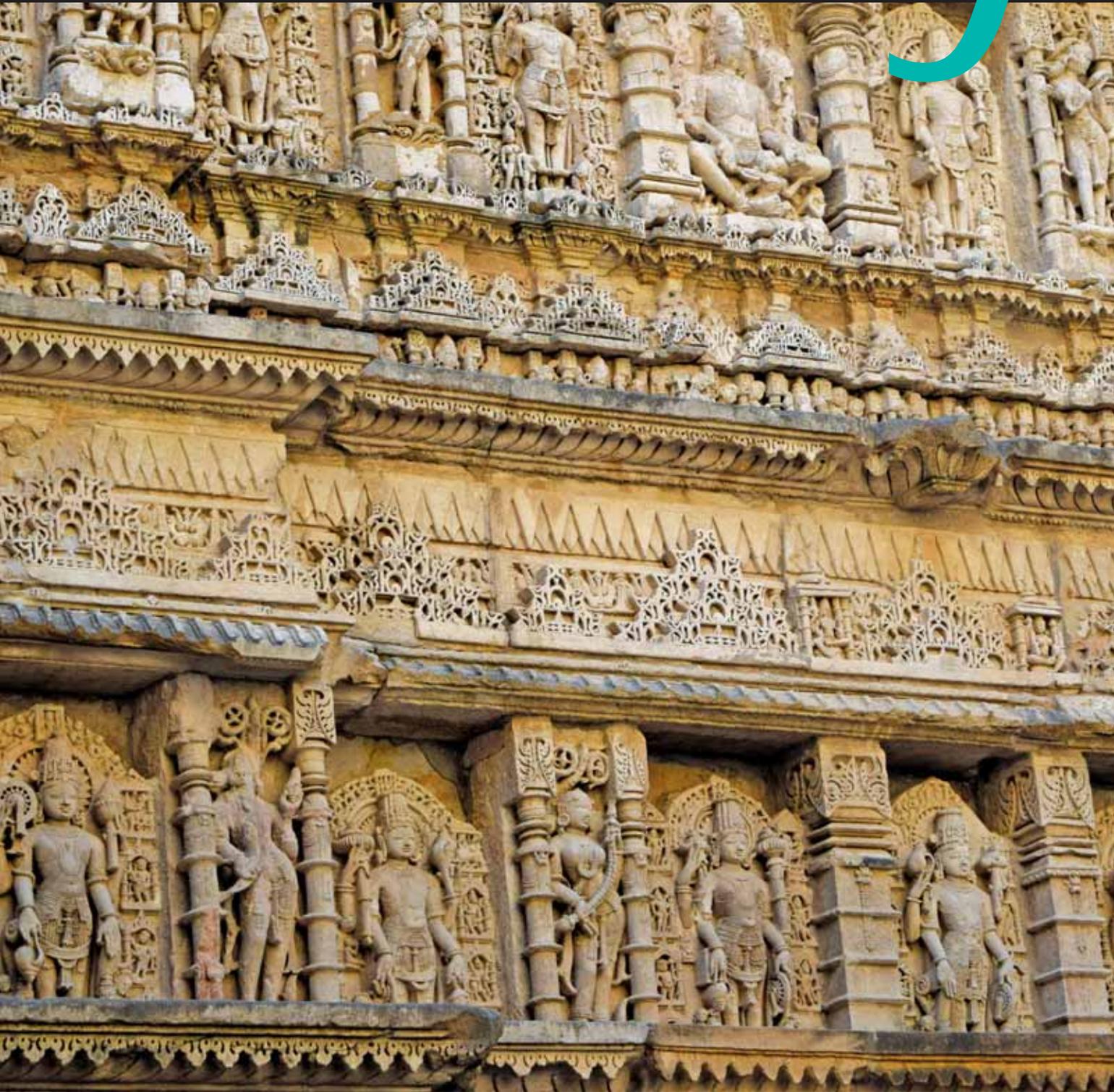
This sanctuary has vast expanses of dry scrub forests which were once home to large animals like leopards, lions and chinkaras. Although the large animals are now less frequently seen in this sanctuary, a wide variety of birds like the yellow-eyed babbler, Orphean warbler and the Sirkeer malkoha are commonly found.

The sanctuary has over 250 species of trees, 200 species of birds, 10 species of mammals, 10 species of reptiles, eight species of amphibians and 90 species of butterflies.

— The writer is an expert with WildTrails



Poetry



IN STONE AND SILK



THE INTRICATELY SCULPTED PANELS OF THE RANI KA VAV STEPWELL FIND THEIR WAY INTO THE WEAVES OF THE PATOLA THAT GUJARAT'S PATAN IS FAMOUS FOR, SAYS SHOMA ABHYANKAR

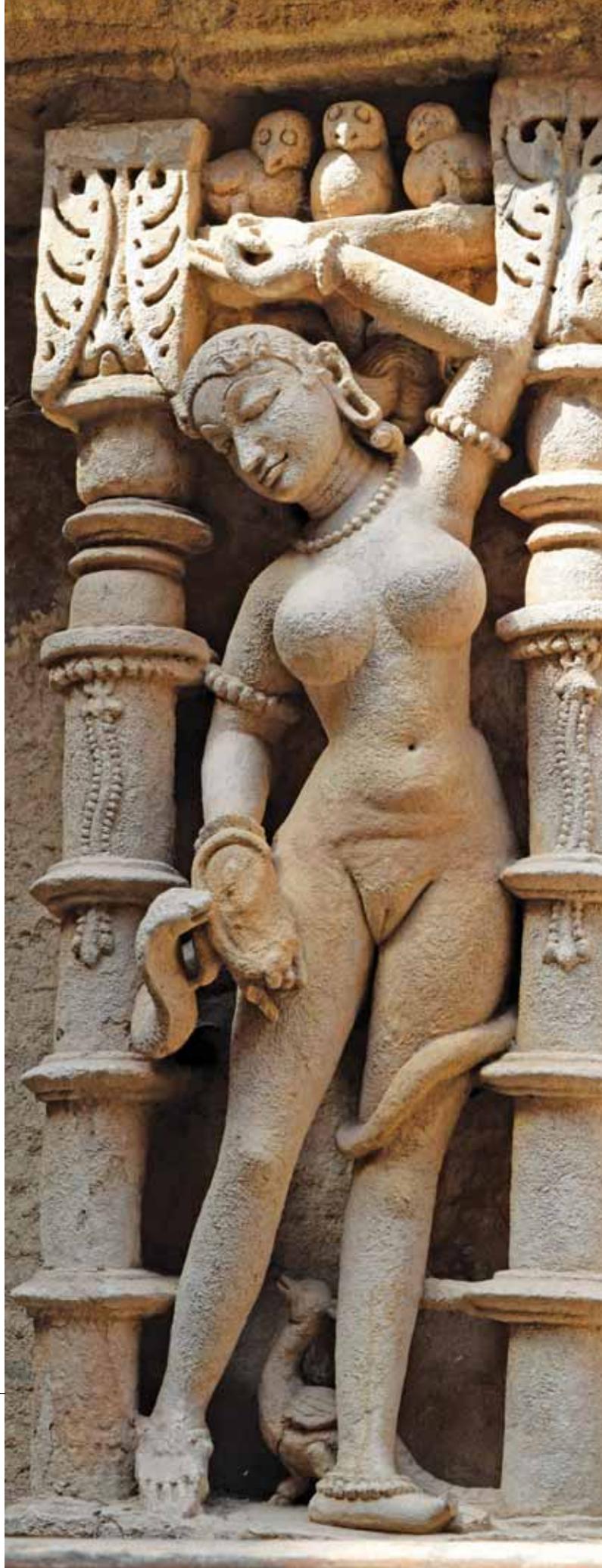


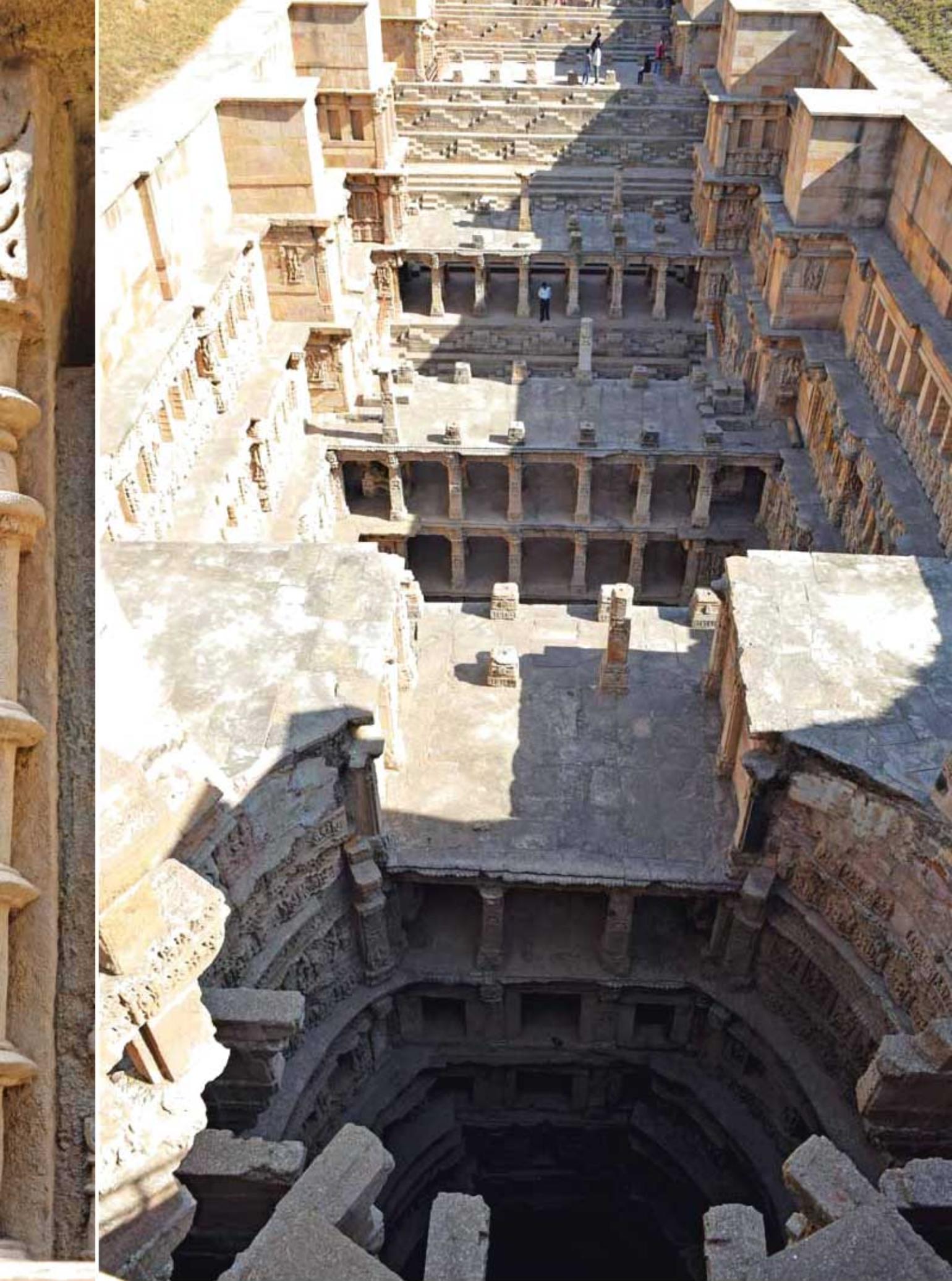
By the time the bus wheeled into the parking lot outside the UNESCO heritage site, it was already high noon and the sun blazed mercilessly above me. Alighting from the bus, I wasted no time in covering myself with a customary red and white tie and dye *odhani* that I had purchased only the previous evening at Ahmedabad. As I hot-footed the stone pathway through a well-laid green expanse hurriedly in an attempt to beat the scorching heat, I missed noticing the criss-cross pattern of steps. It was only after taking refuge in the shade that I realised a sudden shift in temperature as a cool draft of air calmed my flustered self.

I was at Rani ka Vav or the Queen's Step Well, the name anglicised for the benefit of foreign tourists, at Patan a couple of hours from Ahmedabad in Gujarat. An ancient fort city, Patan, founded by Vanraj Chavda in the eighth century, was originally named Anhil Pataka after the king's close friend and Prime Minister Anhil Gadaria. A bustling and prosperous city, it could well have been the 10th largest one in the world around 1000 AD. The capital of Solankis from 10th to 13th century, the city came under attack around 1200 AD. The invaders like Qutub-ud-din-Aibak ransacked and pillaged the town till it was completely destroyed by Allaudin Khilji in 1298. The later Patan town rose from the ashes of this ancient town of 'Anhil Pataka' or 'Anhilwara.'

Though the step wells had been built around the eighth century, it was during the Solanki rule in the 11th century that the need for water reservoirs was met with increased construction of step wells. These are usually subterranean tanks surrounded by rows of galleries and approached by flights of steps descending towards the womb of earth. The architectural and engineering skills of craftsmen reached a pinnacle by the time Rani ka Vav was conceived and constructed. A casual walk was a lesson when art was a part of everyday life given the sculpted balconies with balustrades, marble domes and lintels of *havelis*. Once I reached the shaded pillared pavilion of the stepwell, I could appreciate the exquisite imagery that was on display on every nook and corner of the pillars and walls. Of the originally seven floors, four floors have stood the test of time.

(Left to right): A sculpture of the Vishkanya and view from above of the ancient step well





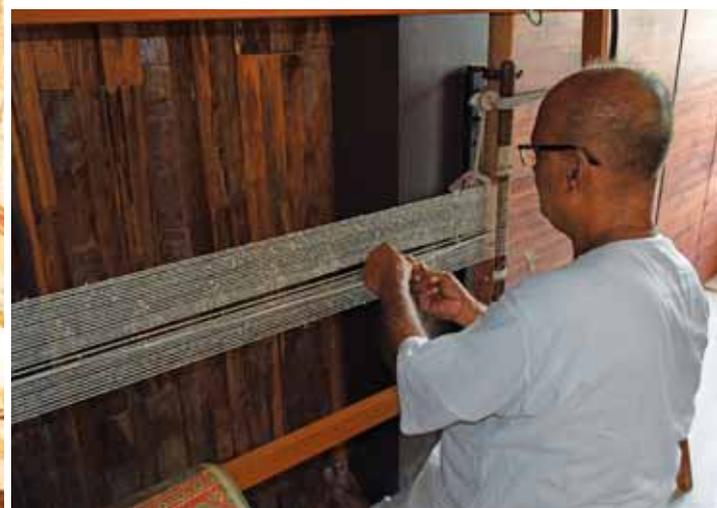




The well, located near the ancient river Saraswati, was silted years ago as a result of floods and a change of course. But if nature wrought calamity, it became a preserver too. It was this silting that preserved the intricate carvings and finest sculptures from damage for centuries. When the Archaeological Survey of India rediscovered and excavated the well, almost all of its 500 big and over 1,000 small sculptures, motifs and patterns were in excellent state, the curl and the sinuous edges holding off time.

From the steps that led me down to one of the corridors and pavilions, I could see the step well stretching towards a rectangular tank and a 30-metre deep well on its western-most edge. The wall at the far end was adorned with a sculpture of Vishnu reclining over the coil of Sheshnag, the celestial serpent. This occupied the centrestage and such was the sense of architectural perspective that it could be seen from each pavilion.

Built as an inverted temple with seven floors to emphasise the sanctity of water as elixir, this vav in Maru-Gurjara architectural style is the largest in Gujarat, 64 metre long, 20 metre wide and approximately 30 metre deep. The stepwell also hides a tunnel in the water tank that led to another village called Sidhpur for the royalty to escape if need be. The construction of the vav began as a memorial to King Bhima I by his widowed queen Udaymati but gradually became a prominent religious, cultural and functional structure. Not only did the villagers congregate in the pavilions for festivals but also to find



(Left to right) Front view of the Rani ka Vav and Patola weaving in process



View from one of the pavilions

respite from oppressive heat and socialise in the middle of their everyday work lives. Travellers too found a cool resting place in the shaded pavilions.

Descending to one of the floors, I was awestruck by each panel that was brimming with fine artistry. The 10 incarnations (*dashvatar*) of Vishnu were vividly carved on the walls. Some panels depicted the goddesses and mythological stories depicting her cosmic energies. There was a perfect balance of *Prakriti* and *Purush*, the sacred feminine and male divinity, in representation, harking me back to our civilisational core. A very distinct panel was that of Durga as “Mahishasurmardini” or the slayer of demon Mahishasur. Other panels were replete with celestial nymphs adorning themselves depicting *shringar*. The guide pointed towards a particular sculpture of Vishkanya, a femme fatale that had a snake wrapped around her. These Vishkanyas, if lores are to be believed, were used by kings to honey trap and kill their rivals by administering poison.

If sculptures were breath-takingly beautiful, the intermittent spaces between panels and pillars were equally exquisite with geometrical and floral motifs. In fact, these architectural patterns on stone have been

used as blueprints for designs that were often woven in silk threads on Patola saris, another ancient and traditional craft that Patan is famed for. The delicate fabric was once patronised by the royalty. The weavers of Patola were brought in from Jhalna town in southern Maharashtra to settle in Patan centuries ago.

Patola is a complex form of double ikat weaving. Ikat means tying, knotting and dyeing of threads before being woven into a piece of cloth. The uniqueness of double ikat lies in the fact that unlike a printed cloth, these silken yards could be used from either side. While the single ikat weaving is usually prevalent in Indonesia and Thailand, the double variety with intricate designs originated in Patan.

Not far from the stepwell is Patola House, a museum dedicated to double weaving, run and managed by the Salvi family who have been encouraging this artform since generations and have been conferred with various awards including the National Award. The museum houses some very old vintage silk weaves and showcases the processes involved in making a sari.

Chhotalal M Salvi, the master weaver, sat on the softly rat-a-tatting loom, weaving a rather intricate pattern. The process involves tying, knotting and dyeing each thread of warp and weft that goes into the design.

Once all threads are dyed in concordance of design, the threads are arranged on the loom in a way that enables visibility of pattern. The weft thread goes on the bamboo shuttles for weaving.

Since raw silk is thinner than human hair, eight silk strands are enmeshed to a single string before being bleached. Natural dyes like catechu, cochineal, indigo, turmeric, natural lac, harde, madder roots, *manjistha*, *ratnajyot*, *katha*, *kesudo*, pomegranate skin, henna and marigold flower though modernity demands use of some chemicals too. Since the art form creates a double impact, patola-weaving depends on high accuracy of the weaving involved, that means positioning of the warp and weft will determine the weave of perfect design and colour.

Woven on a traditional hand-operated harness loom made of rosewood and bamboo, it takes about four to five months just to tie and dye the warp and weft threads. The weaving takes another 50 days depending on the intricacy of design. "If four or five of weavers work together, it takes over six months to weave a six yard Patola sari. It is skilled work and only two families now carry on the original traditional method of weaving" said Salvi, the master weaver proudly. The more intricate the design, the longer it takes to first dye the threads and later to weave the perfect design. There is no scope of shortcuts in the traditional weaving and perhaps that is what makes the sari a connoisseurs' item.

However with the skill and effort involved, the traditional Patola is sold in a range of ₹ 25,000 to ₹ 1.5 lakh which makes it out of reach of many. This

Patola designs etched in stone

exorbitant price has led to an increase in machine-woven and printed Patola saris which are cheaper and easily affordable for the common man.

Though the Patan Patola has been granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag but the man hours spent in weaving one sari and its limited market is one of the important factors why traditional weavers are sadly giving up on it gradually.

As I made my way out of the Patola House to travel back to Ahmedabad, I wondered how long the twin heritage that defines Patan will survive. Will the future generations witness such exquisite art and tradition or will all be lost in time? Will the depleting water table force us to rethink and revive the ancient wisdom of step wells? Will the dangers of chemical dyes and increasing pollution make us reconsider using vegetable dyes just like traditional dyeing and weaving? But as the heritage, both tangible and intangible, struggles to survive the times, it is some solace that not only the Rani ka Vav but also the Patan Patola have found mention on official government paraphernalia. While the stepwell has appeared on the new currency note of ₹ 100 issued by the Reserve Bank Of India, a postal stamp of ₹ 5 on Patan Patola was issued by the postal department way back in November 2002.

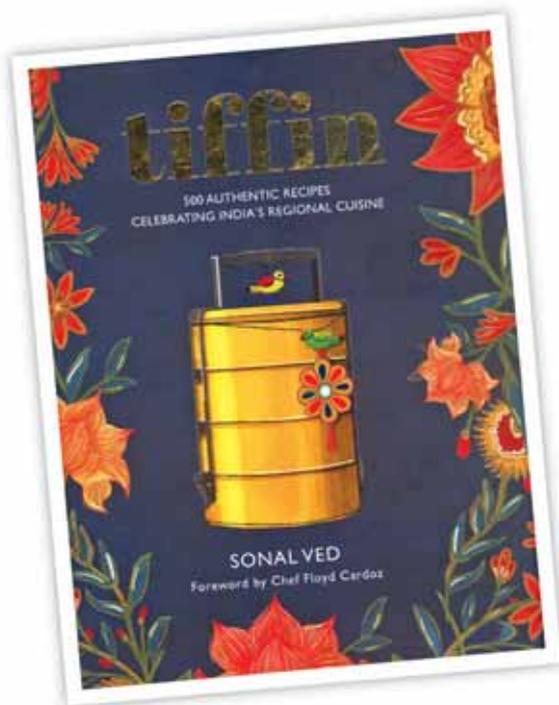
On my way back to Ahmedabad, I recalled Salvi's words, "Traditional weaving of Patola is like devotion; a *tapasya*. If devotion is lost, there is nothing else to look forward to." It gives me hope. May be all will not be lost as long as people like Salvi who take pride in traditions and strive to keep it alive are there to preserve Patan and its heritage.



INDIA IN A



LUNCHBOX



IN INDIA, THE CUISINE CHANGES EVERY FEW KILOMETRES. SO WHEN ONE DECIDES TO DOCUMENT IT, THE TASK BECOMES MAMMOTH. SONAL VED COMPILES OUR NATIONAL OBSESSION WITH SNACKS AND BREAKS AND HAS PUT TOGETHER A BOOK WITH 500 AUTHENTIC TIFFIN RECIPES

The journey of tiffin begins in our own kitchen, between the pages of a family recipe book and in childhood memories of how our grandmothers cooked. As we hold a magnifying glass over the lunch tiffins of our friends at school and later of our colleagues at work, dishes that deck our dining tables, and sophisticated amuse-bouches at progressive Indian restaurants, we experience the diversity of Indian cuisine.

From prehistoric settlements to the emergence of the Indus Valley Civilisation, the rise of religions, dynasties, empires, and, most recently, colonisation — the country's past has had a deep impact on its cuisine. In our book we have aimed to highlight what these catalysts were and how they helped shape the cuisines of different parts of the country.

Influences on Indian cuisine can be found as early as the time of the Indus Valley Civilisation. The legacy

BHOPALI KORMA

[MUTTON DISH FROM

THE ROYAL KITCHEN OF BHOPAL]

Cooking time: 1 hour Serves: 2 Origin: Madhya Pradesh

INGREDIENTS: For the mutton

- 2 cups (480 g) cubed mutton ○ 2 tbsp (30 g) ginger-garlic (*adrak-lasan*) paste ○ 2 cups (480 ml) water
- Salt, to taste

For the paste

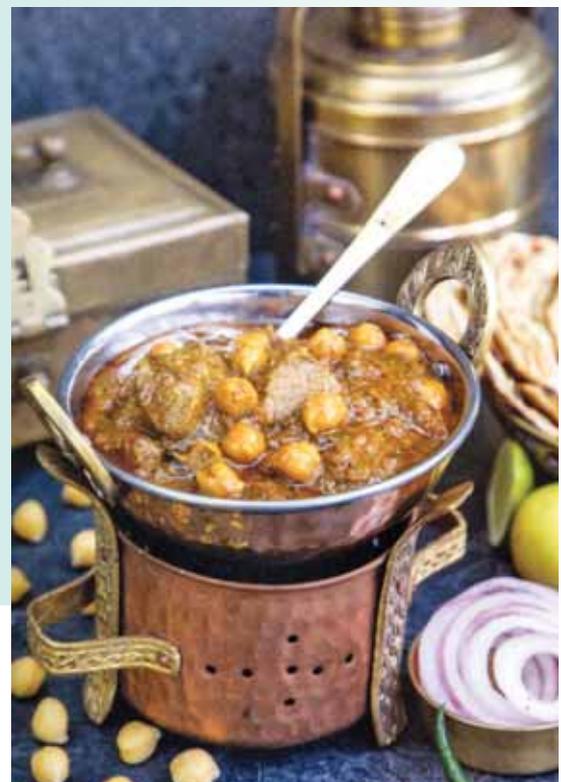
- 1 cup (240 g) fried onion ○ 1 cup (240 g) yogurt (*dahi*)
- 8 peppercorns (*sabut kali mirch*) ○ 2 tsp coriander (*dhaniya*) seeds
- 2 tsp cumin (*jeera*) seeds ○ 1 cinnamon (*dalchini*) stick
- 2 tsp cardamom (*elaichi*) seeds
- 1 tsp ground mace (*javitri*) ○ 2 bay leaves (*tez patta*)
- Salt, to taste

For the gravy

- 2 tbsp (30 g) ghee ○ ½ tsp red chillie powder
- ½ tsp fennel (*saunf*) seeds ○ Pinch ground nutmeg (*jaiphal*)
- Pinch ground mace (*javitri*) ○ 1 cup (240 g) yogurt (*dahi*)
- 2 tsp vetiver water (*kewra*)

METHOD

- To make the mutton: In a pressure cooker over medium-high heat, combine the mutton and ginger-garlic paste, water and salt to taste. Lock the lid in place and cook for three-four whistles.
- Let the pressure release and remove the lid. Remove the mutton pieces and reserve the stock.
- To make the paste: In a blender, add the fried onions, yogurt, peppercorns, coriander seeds, cumin seeds, cinnamon stick, cardamom seeds, mace, bay leaves, and salt to taste. Blitz until a paste forms.
- To make the gravy: In a skillet over medium heat, heat the ghee. Add the red chillie powder, fennel seeds, nutmeg, and mace. Saute for four to five minutes.
- Stir in the yogurt and cook for seven-eight minutes more.
- Add the onion-spice paste and stir to combine. Continue to cook the gravy for 10 minutes.
- Add the mutton pieces. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 15 minutes. Adjust seasoning and add the vetiver water. Serve hot.





BOHRI-STYLE CHICKEN NU SALANMM

[CHICKEN IN SWEET AND SOUR CURRY]

Cooking time: 1 hour Serves: 2 Origin: Gujarat

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup (240 g) chicken, bone-in pieces, chopped
- 1 tbsp (15 g) ginger-garlic-chillie (*adrak-lasan-mirch*) paste
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) vinegar (*sirka*)
- 1½ cups (360 ml) water
- 3 tbsp (18 g) chicken *salan masala* (available at grocery stores)
- 1 cup (240 g) yogurt (*dahi*)
- ½ cup (40 g) almond powder (*badam*)
- ½ cup (120 g) ketchup
- ½ cup (120 g) tomato paste
- ½ tsp red chillie powder
- ½ tsp garam masala
- Salt, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper (*kali mirch*), to taste
- 1 Tbsp (15 ml) vegetable oil
- 2 (1-in./2.5-cm) cinnamon (*dalchini*) sticks
- 2 curry leaves (*kadi patta*)
- 1 medium-size onion, finely chopped ½ cup (8 gm)
- Fresh coriander leaves (*hara dhaniya*), finely chopped

METHOD:

- In a large pot over medium heat, combine the chicken, ginger-garlic-chillie paste, vinegar and water. Cook for 20-25 minutes or until the meat is tender. Drain the chicken and reserve the stock. Set both aside.
- In a blender, combine the chicken *salan masala*, yogurt, almond powder, ketchup, tomato paste, red chillie powder, garam masala, salt, and pepper. Blend until smooth.
- In a skillet over low-medium heat, heat the vegetable oil.
- Add the cinnamon sticks and curry leaves. Cook until the leaves begin to crackle.
- Add the onion. Stir-fry until golden brown.
- Stir in the yogurt-almond mixture. Saute until the water from the yogurt evaporates.
- Add the cooked chicken pieces along with 1 cup (240 ml) of the cooking liquid. Let bubble for 10-12 minutes. Serve hot, garnished with fresh coriander. Season to taste with pepper just before serving.

left behind by the Harappans manifests in ingredients, the shapes of the vessels used for cooking and techniques such as charring or smoking. While selecting the 500 recipes in the book, we saw the wisdom of these early people: they cooked and ate out of pots that were dexterously crafted, prepared food that could last journeys and consumed superfoods such as turmeric, and ginger-ingredients that are not too different from what we cook with today

As the subcontinent witnessed the arrival of traders and invaders, the cauldron of Indian cuisine was further

stirred. From the Turks, who brought dates and nuts and used them to garnish and sweeten desserts, to the Arab traders, who brought coffee and asafoetida via the Silk Route, to the Portuguese, who brought fine bread — they changed the culinary landscape of India. Their lessons and ingredients merged with the prevailing culinary story of the land, to make Indian cuisine diverse and rich.

While on the one hand, tribal people, inspired by forests, made simple yet nutritious recipes, on the other, Indian royals enriched their local cuisines with fine and

nuanced recipes. The royal kitchens brought to the fore methods such as slow-cooking of meats and lentils, hand-pounding of spices, complex marination of meats and mixing of aromatic spices to bring a refined touch to each dish. These methods continue to be a crucial part of our cooking. They include marinating meats overnight, pre-soaking lentils and pulses and fermenting dough and batter to obtain the desired texture and flavour.

European traders and colonisers also left their mark. The arrival of the British and the subsequent

culinary exchange between the *memsahibs* (married white women) and the *khansamas* (cooks) led to the emergence of a new cuisine — glimpses of which can be seen across Indian gymkhanas, or clubs, in Indian metros.

The cuisine further changed post-Independence, when India became one of the most powerful agrarian economies in the world. Ingredients such as rice, wheat, sugar, cashew nuts, corn, and soybeans are its top exports, and milk and dairy are available in plenty. Staples of Indian cuisine are celebrated the world



SIMBA RAI

[FLESHY BROAD BEANS WITH MUSTARD SEEDS]

Cooking time: 30 minutes

Serves: 2 Origin: Odisha

INGREDIENTS:

- ½ tsp cumin (*jeera*) seeds
- 1 tsp mustard seeds (*rai*)
- 2 dried red chillies (*sookhi lal mirch*)
- 3 garlic (*lasan*) cloves, peeled
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) mustard oil
- 1 cup (126 g) broad beans (*simba*), boiled
- ¼ cup (60 g) finely chopped tomato
- 1 tsp ground turmeric (*haldi*)
- 1 cup (240 ml) water
- Salt, to taste

METHOD:

- In a food processor, combine the cumin seeds, mustard seeds, dried red chillies and garlic. Blend into a paste. In a skillet over medium heat, heat the mustard oil.
- Add the spice paste. Cook until fragrant.
- Stir in the broad beans, tomato and turmeric. Saute for five minutes.
- Add the water.
- Cook for 10 minutes. Season to taste with salt. Serve hot.

MACHHI KA HARA SALAN

[A UNIQUE KONKANI-STYLE FISH CURRY]

Cooking time: 30 minutes Serves: 4

Origin: Karnataka

INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup (72 g) roasted peanuts
- ½ cup (8 g) fresh coriander leaves (*hara dhaniya*),
- 6-8 green chillies, finely chopped
- 4 garlic (*lasan*) cloves, minced
- ½ tsp cumin (*jeera*) seeds
- ½ cup (120 g) yogurt (*dahi*)
- ½ cup (60 ml) vegetable oil
- 2 spring onions (*hara pyaz*), finely chopped
- 6 curry leaves (*kadi patta*)
- 1 cup (240 ml) water
- ½ tsp ground turmeric (*haldi*)
- 2 pieces raw mango (*kairi*), chopped
- 5 pomfret fillets
- 2 cups (480 ml) coconut milk
- Salt, to taste

METHOD:

- In a food processor, combine the peanuts, coriander, green chillies, garlic, cumin seeds, and yogurt. Process until smooth.
- In a skillet over medium heat, heat the vegetable oil.
- Add the spring onions and curry leaves. Saute for two minutes.
- Stir in the yogurt paste, water, turmeric and mango. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for five minutes.
- Add the fish. Cook for 10 minutes.
- Pour in the coconut milk and simmer until heated through.
- Season to taste with salt and serve.



over—from peppercorns from Malabar region, to tea from Darjeeling, from berries of Mahabaleshwar, to chillies from Nagaland and oranges from Arunachal Pradesh. When we set out to choose the recipes to include in our book, we kept the varied produce, techniques and culinary styles in mind. So we did the next best thing and put in a flavourful blend of favourite Indian recipes (of course there is Butter Chicken) and several lesser-known dishes by taking a leaf out of temple cuisine, street food, tribal recipes and other dishes that you might not commonly find.

While most of these have been hand-picked by culinary experts from each region, we went beyond, and reached out to the best repositories of traditional recipes—wedding caterers, who are given the responsibility of serving contemporary and traditional spreads. Each of the contributor recipes, which includes those given by grandmothers, mothers, aunts, friends, cookbook authors and chefs who champion regional Indian cooking, are marked by a miniature cloche.

The dishes are not to be savoured in an insular manner. In fact, most can be effortlessly paired with one another. When we have friends over for tea, we often daydream of matching a Jabalपुरi chicken samosa with *Khasta kachori* from Madhya Pradesh, along with *Vazaipoo vadais* from Tamil Nadu and *Kutchi kadak toasts*. And on Sundays, with brunch on our minds, we want our tables laden with *Bhojpuri dum aloo*, *Bengali luchis*, *Rajasthani gatte ki sabzi*, *Chingri cutlet*, *Assamese chicken-and-banana-flower stir-fry* and *Adhirasams* from Tamil Nadu.

Indian cuisine has few overlapping flavours. With such a diverse topography — from snow-capped mountains to arid deserts, from beautiful coastlines to leafy tropical forests — the variety of ingredients here are unlike those in any other part of the world. They are different from one another, even within the country and this is reflected in the way the cuisine changes as you move from one region to another.

— Edited excerpt from *Tiffin: 500 Authentic Celebrating India's Regional Cuisine*

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SECRET**





IT'S A WRAP

GET LOST IN THE INTRICACIES OF EMBROIDERED PASHMINAS AND FORGET THE TRENCH COATS AND THE CARDIGANS FOR THESE SHAWLS THAT TOE THE LINE OF MODERNITY AND TRADITION. HAND-CRAFTED WITH TECHNIQUES HANDED DOWN FROM MASTER TO STUDENT, THESE ARE AMONG THE BEST COUTURE INDIA HAS TO OFFER

The snug blankets and woollens are beginning to come out of the deep end of the wardrobes and storage spaces. Airing, washing, dry cleaning and finally donning them brings as much joy as comfort. But that does not necessarily mean looking all stuffed and unfashionable. In fact, with the ethnic revolution in full swing, hand-crafted shawls are ensuring you are kitted out just right. Use it like a throw, drape, wrap, scarf or just an accessory and make each evening and fireside stand out.

A Ladakh-based cooperative, **LOOMS OF LADAKH**, has been encouraging the local women to add extra weft for introducing designs to the plain Ladakh pashmina shawls. They are encouraging the young generation to learn traditional tie and dye Thigma technique from older women in the community. They are taking their effort forward by tying up with the Handloom School at Maheshwar for an advanced weaving





course and skill development for two people under the age of 30. They will be learning advanced weaving for pashmina, yak wool and Merino blends. **LOOMS'S** store in Leh market is home to traditional and contemporary designs.

VARUNA ANAND, who has put together The Heirloom Collection, specialises in Kani shawls, the pattern for which is created in the weave. Quite literally it is a manual jacquard process, based on *taalim* given by the *nakshdar* to the weaver. A *nakshdar* is the person who deciphers how the pattern has to be woven and gives the details of where each thread has to be put to create the pattern and perspective. Great skill is required in weaving a Kani shawl as only about an inch can be woven in a day. Every Kani shawl may not be perfect, so the task of putting a perfect collection together requires a lot of time, may be 10 to 11 months.

Anand has even attempted a *kalamkari* shawl, which is a perfect example of fusion between classic and modern patterns, colours and techniques. It takes around a week to paint the pattern and about two months to complete one shawl when six artisans work on one shawl simultaneously every day for two months.



Another variation, the Palledar shawl, is made by placing the pattern on the two ends. The Sui Kaam Jamavar shawl is another pashmina wonder where the pattern is first traced on the hand-woven yarn and then hand-embroidered by a master craftsman. The hand embroidery is so extensive that it is hard to imagine that a fragile fabric like pashmina can withstand so many stitches of the needle going through it and yet not tear. This is the best example of the art of shawl-making from Kashmir. It takes approximately 14-18 months to embroider it manually.

Luxury retailer Pashma is innovating on the Kashmir shawl by resurrecting the Changpa, made from the rarest and finest pashmina fibres sourced from the Changpa tribe of Ladakh who herd the purest breed of Changra goats at an altitude of 14,000 ft. These natural and undyed shawls in both traditional and modern weaves are also embellished with precious stones and pearls.

Pashma weavers think that their strength is in merging Indian

sensibilities with the modern through a combination of techniques, attention to detail and an uncompromising sense of quality assurance through every stage of transformation from fibre to final product.



KUTCH SHAWLS: The Kutchi shawls are made with acrylic wool that is dyed and woven with motifs in one solid colour throughout the body of the fabric. Made primarily in handlooms in the Bhujodi village of Kutch, it has a strong domestic and international market. In 2012, it was given Geographical Indication (GI) tag, an equivalent of a patent, so that it can't be produced anywhere else in the world and protects the weavers' community that have expertise in it.

The community, called Meghwal Wankars (weavers), believe that there is a 500-year-old history attached to this art work. Tie and dye and embroidery are the two versions of the Kutch shawls. The design is such that Rabari embroidery and mirror-work are interspersed either throughout the shawl or at the two ends.



KULLU SHAWLS: Native to Himachal Pradesh, these are created with a dovetail or slit tapestry technique and are characterised by their coarse design. It is recognised for their patterned structure.

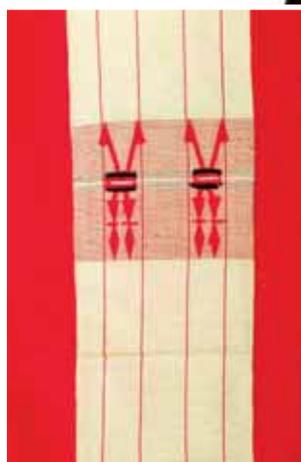
These are made from the fleece of local population of goats, such as Dshkar, Bihang, Australian Merino Tops, Angora and so on. The motifs are colourful, and based on a variety of themes such as religion, traditions or just depiction of the local philosophies about life.

The mill-spun yarn is dyed in various colours and used for the background, while a vast range of acrylic colours are used for the pattern on the border.



NAGA SHAWLS: These shawls come with complex symbolism which originate from folk stories in the region and have more of a ritualistic value than daily use. Each tribe has its unique set of pattern, design and colour involving simple and clean lines, with stripes, squares and bands being the most traditional design motifs.

These are made from wool with colours, such as red, black and blue, and are characterised by supplementary-weft patterning. This is achieved by the use of backstrap looms, as two or three segments are produced just to be stitched together later on. The central stripe is more decorative than others, which generally have a similar pattern. Designs may vary from a formal arrangement of lines to elaborate patterns of diamond and lozenge shapes.





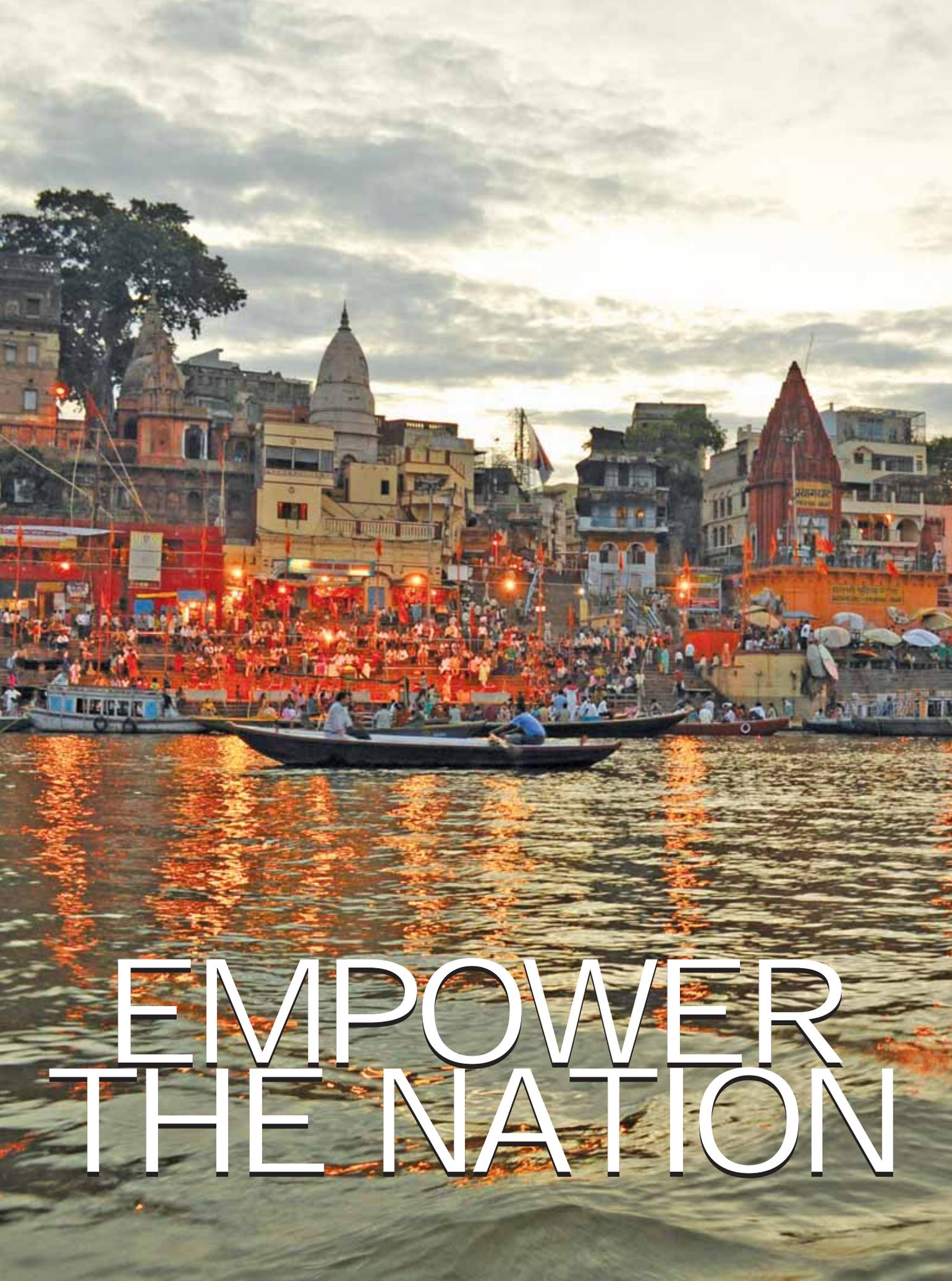
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EMPOWER
THE NATION

WITHOUT SENSITIVITY, INNER BALANCE AND THE FACULTY OF DISCRIMINATION, WIDESPREAD NEGATIVITY AND PERVERSION CREEP IN INDIVIDUALS. THIS IS HOW A HUMAN BEING OR EVEN AN ENTIRE CULTURE SINKS TO ITS DEPTHS



SADHGURU
Isha Foundation

Anation is not its land and buildings — it is its people. If we, as a nation, have to rise and become empowered, the first thing we need to do is to empower the people. Empowerment is not amassing material wealth or technology. It is an entirely inner process which is spiritual. Without the necessary sensitivity, inner balance and the faculty of discrimination, widespread negativity and perversion creep in individuals. This is how a human being or even an entire culture sinks to its depths.

Never before has mankind been as comfortable as it is today. A hundred years ago even kings did not have the conveniences and creature comforts available to the common man today. Today our pursuit of these is so vigorous that the very life of our planet is being threatened. Yet, we are not any happier than our forefathers. This is because we are trying to create an outwardly perfect life, when the quality of our lives is essentially based upon our interiority or what lies inside us.

With the advancement of science and technology, we have brought ourselves to a self-threatening situation. It would take just one fool to blow everything up. So spirituality is no longer a fancy pursuit but an absolute necessity for our own and the planet's survival. Unless some sense of oneness touches us, especially our leadership, self-destruction is a live threat.

IN EVERY SOCIETY IT IS NECESSARY TO HAVE PEOPLE WHOSE PASSION IN LIFE IS BEYOND THEIR OWN WELL-BEING. EVERY SOCIETY NEEDS THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL GO ON PLANTING MANGO TREES WITHOUT THINKING WHETHER THEY WILL GET TO EAT THE FRUITS OR NOT

Developing the spiritual core of humanity does not mean propagating any particular religion. Unfortunately, today most religions have been reduced to mere belief systems. And these are bound to conflict with one another. Spirituality means to raise the body, mind and spirit to its true potential. Once this is established, other challenges can be handled effortlessly. When we strive to create human beings functioning at their ultimate potential, their general well-being is naturally taken care of.

In every society it is necessary to have people whose passion in life is beyond their own well-being. Every society needs those individuals who will go on planting mango trees without thinking whether they will get to eat the fruits or not. Of all the degenerations we have suffered, the most damaging is that this nation has been deprived of its greatest strength of producing exalted beings who are rooted in a different dimension of existence and whose very presence is a blessing to the planet. We value this culture not because we are born into it, but because this culture had perfected the technology of producing such beings. One example that the world is familiar with is Gautama Buddha. As a prince, he could have had a few more wives and children and ruled over his little kingdom. But as an Enlightened Being, he went on to change the course of life on the planet.

Even today, producing such human beings is not a distant dream, we just need to work towards it. With the spiritual legacy of this land, with the spiritual processes that are available to us today, it is definitely a possibility. If we dedicate ourselves to making this happen around us, we will see something tremendous happening in our own lifetime.

— *The author is a yogi, mystic, visionary and bestselling author*

Indigestion or discomfort in the stomach happens after eating or drinking and can manifest in different ways. It could be an acidic taste in the mouth, uncomfortable fullness, burning, bloating, nausea, belching, passing wind or a reflux, which is basically ingested food or fluid thrown up from your stomach.

These symptoms are often related to lifestyle — from not chewing food properly, eating too fast, over-eating, rich or overly-spiced food, long gaps between meals, not drinking enough water, late meals, sleeping immediately after eating, not enough exercise, stress and anxiety. Ongoing symptoms can also indicate a more serious problem and should be checked.

We should understand that our bodies need food and water to survive. The digestive system processes what we eat into substances that the body can absorb for energy, growth and repair. The rest is excreted as waste. So not only is what we eat and drink important but also how and when we have our meals. Good physical and mental well-being is affected by how well our body digests food. This is why yoga places such importance on the digestive system, on practices that cleanse and strengthen the digestive



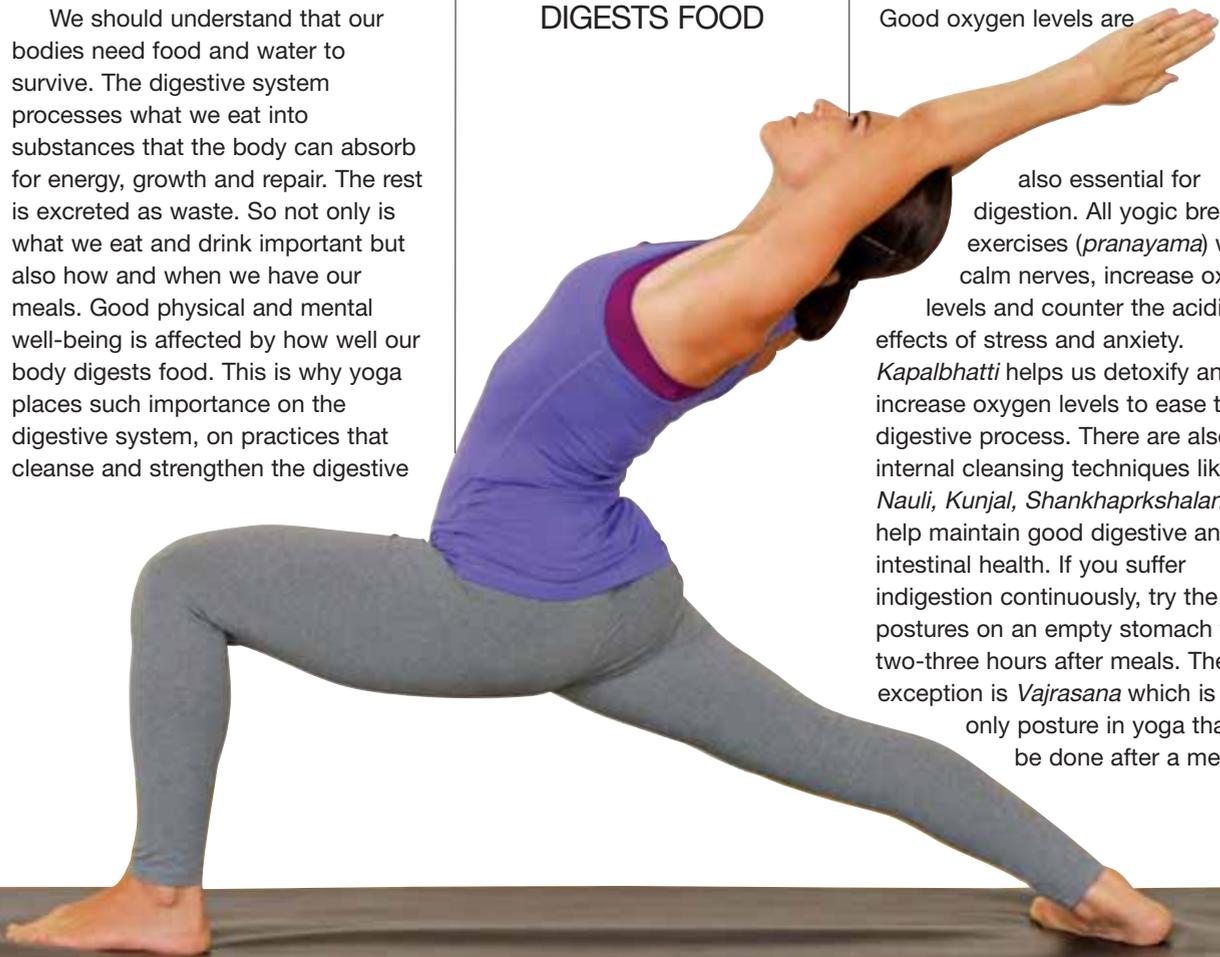
BHARATthakur
is a yoga guru and
founder of Artistic
Yoga

WHAT WE EAT AND
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PHYSICAL AND
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and excretory organs as well as the navel area which houses the digestive organs. According to yoga, *Manipur Chakra*, symbolised by the fire element, is located four fingers above the navel. This is where *jatragini* (fire) is generated that regulates and maintains the body's electrical circuit (*nadis*), body temperature, metabolic processes in the body and health.

Many yoga postures bend the body forward, backwards or twist it. This improves circulation, compresses, massages, tones and strengthens the abdominal area and digestive organs to ensure that they function effectively. *Asanas* like *Pavanmuktasana* help to release wind while a practice like *Agnisar Kriya* increases the stomach's peristaltic movement. Good oxygen levels are

also essential for digestion. All yogic breathing exercises (*pranayama*) will calm nerves, increase oxygen levels and counter the acidic effects of stress and anxiety. *Kapalbhatti* helps us detoxify and increase oxygen levels to ease the digestive process. There are also internal cleansing techniques like *Nauli*, *Kunjali*, *Shankhaprakshalan* that help maintain good digestive and intestinal health. If you suffer indigestion continuously, try the postures on an empty stomach for two-three hours after meals. The exception is *Vajrasana* which is the only posture in yoga that can be done after a meal.



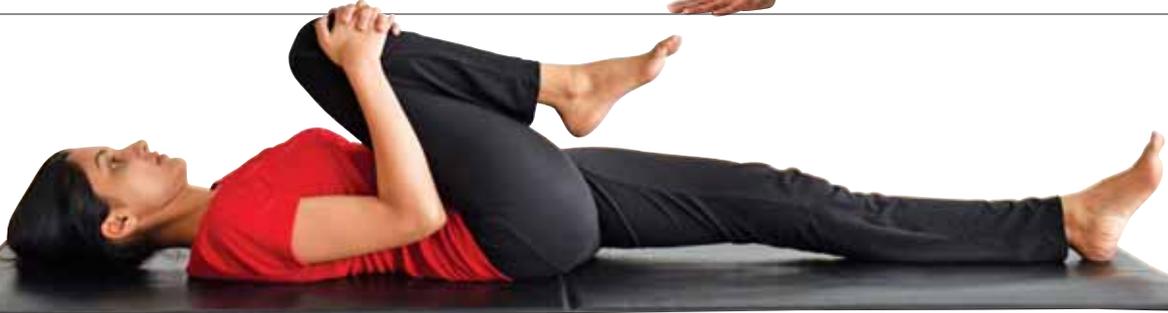
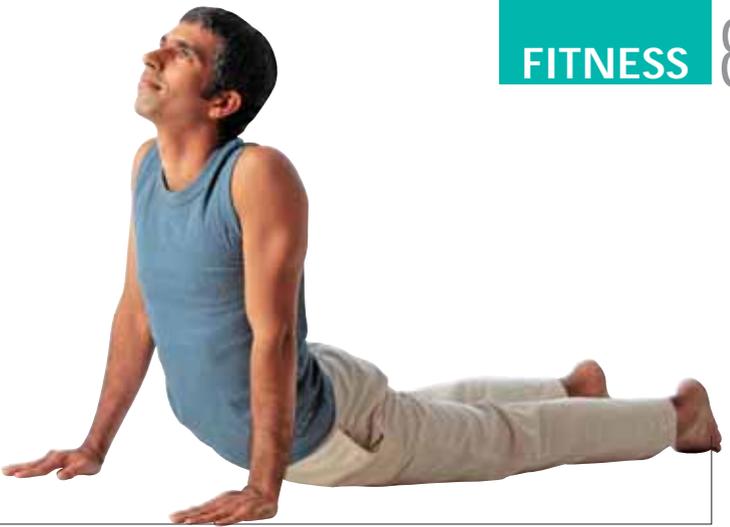
STEP UP TO EAT WELL

BHUJANGASANA [COBRA]

- Lie on stomach, forehead on ground, palms beside shoulders, elbows close to body, feet close together
- Inhale as you stretch your upper body upwards, straighten elbows, arch back to look up at the sky
 - Hold for 10-30 seconds, breathing normally
 - Exhale and gently come down to start position

BENEFITS:

- Stimulates the digestive organs
 - Relieves constipation
 - Increases spine flexibility and strength
- Strengthens back muscles, removes lower back pain



PAVANMUKTASANA

[WIND RELEASING POSTURE]

- Lie on back, arms by side, legs together
 - Inhale and raise right leg
 - Bend right leg, interlock hands below knee and exhale as you bring head to knee
 - Breathe normally and hold for 10-30 seconds
 - Breathe in, exhale as you lower head and straighten leg

- Repeat with left leg
- Do two more rounds, relax

BENEFITS:

- Massages the abdomen and digestive organs
- Helps release wind and remove constipation
- Strengthens the lower back muscles

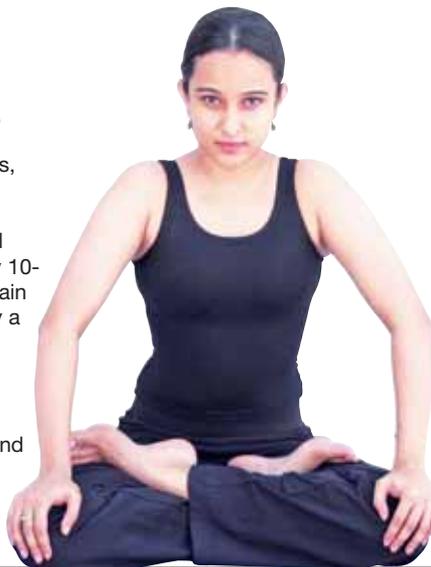
AGNISAR KRIYA

[ACTIVATING DIGESTIVE FIRE]

- Sit back on heels or in *padmasana* (lotus pose)
- Inhale deeply, exhale through mouth, emptying lungs
- Lean forward slightly, palms on knees, straighten elbows, gently press down on knees
- Holding breath out, pull in abdominal muscles, then push out. Repeat rapidly 10-20 times without breathing in. Don't strain
- Raise head, inhale slowly and deeply a few times till breathing is normal
- Do two more rounds

BENEFITS:

- Activates peristaltic movement in stomach, resulting in better digestion and excretion
- Strengthens abdominal muscles and removes fat
- Raises energy levels markedly



VAJRASANA

- Sit with straightened back and legs stretched in front of you, arms by your side
 - Bend the right knee under your buttock
 - Repeat with left leg
 - Toes should touch, heels turned outward
- Sit comfortably on your heels, relax, breathe normally
- Hold for five minutes or as long as comfortable
 - If it is difficult for you, place a cushion under ankles or between the hip and ankles

BENEFITS:

- The only yoga posture that can be done after eating
- Improves the digestive process
- Relieves stomach ailments like hyperacidity and peptic ulcers



ALTERING THE MARKET?

Is the Mahindra Alturas G4 the best vehicle to ever wear the Mahindra badge? By a country mile but as Pawan Goenka, the Chairman of Mahindra's automotive group, quickly told this reviewer, "it is also the most expensive." To be fair, I was not aware of the price when I first drove the Alturas G4, the alpha-numeric suffix signifying that it is the fourth generation of the Ssangyong Rexton (actually this is just the second-generation of the Rexton but the fourth generation of cars developed by Ssangyong), the vehicle that the Alturas is called elsewhere. In fact, the only change on the Alturas is the front radiator grille and the Mahindra badge, which replaces the Ssangyong badge.

But a quick rewind and reminder, Ssangyong Motor was bought by Mahindra & Mahindra in August 2010. As far as purchases go, it has not been the cash cow that Jaguar Land Rover was for Tata Motors. Ssangyong was a slight basket-case of a company when Mahindra bought it over; they had just come off a period of ownership by Chinese firm SAIC Motor and a major workers' strike. In addition, the Chinese were alleged to have illegally transferred hybrid technology to their own engineers. Now, the Chinese are past masters at this across the world, and there is no doubt that over the past few years that SAIC has become a global leader in battery-electric and hybrid technology. Anyhow, the South Korean Government, which had bailed the loss-making carmaker out, sold it to Mahindra. And a few years ago, as a result, India got the previous-generation Ssangyong Rexton.

Frankly, the Rexton was an excellent car but it was on the slightly expensive side being an import and went up against the first-generation Fortuner. Those who own the Rexton love the car, but it did not quite sell, partially because there was no separate Ssangyong network to service the car and Mahindra dealers found themselves a bit stretched when it came to the Rexton, as a few owners have narrated.

Now, surprisingly Mahindra did not bring the new Ssangyong Tivoli, the first new Ssangyong product since the takeover, to India. The Tivoli is a Creta-sized car and has been doing relatively well on



KUSHANmitra
Auto & tech expert

THE SSANGYONG REXTON IS REBORN AS THE MAHINDRA ALTURAS G4. WE TAKE IT FOR A SPIN NEAR LONAVALA



global markets. Maybe the Tivoli's price would have been far too similar to that of the XUV500. What was not surprising is that Mahindra decided to bring in the new Rexton but badge it with a Mahindra tag, change the name and slot it above the XUV500 in the Mahindra line-up. The Alturas, while assembled by Mahindra, is coming as a kit from Ssangyong's factories in South Korea though.

And let us be honest, when someone is buying an off-road capable large SUV in this segment, you go up against the Toyota Fortuner, and particularly the white Fortuner that every budding *baahubali* in North India desperately wants. The Fortuner has managed to show off success without implying massive amounts of wealth. It might not have the best interiors, gimmicks or even off-road capabilities (the Ford Endeavour's 'Terrain Response System' is far superior) but the Fortuner has bullet-proof

build quality and a residual value that drives other carmakers green with envy, even though the Fortuner is topped by the Innova when it comes to residual values.

So let us start on the car — The word 'Alturas' is Spanish for altitude or height. Unlike the previous generation Rexton, which was born from an earlier partnership with Mercedes-Benz and Ssangyong and thus had Mercedes underpinnings, this car has an all-new chassis and a new Ssangyong 2.2 litre engine which produces 178 horsepower. It still retains the Mercedes-Benz 7G-tronic seven-speed gearbox though. It is a large car and the visual cues from the front and back make it feel even larger. The Mahindra radiator grille and badge, the only change from the Rexton, do impart a bit of a family look to the Alturas. The lines above the wheel arches make it look more muscular. If there is



something odd from the exterior, it is the sharply raked rear quarter-glass. Now that sharp rake is there on many SUVs nowadays, but it does have a major price to pay.

The front of the Alturas is really where you want to sit, the quilted leather (in tan) feels superb, the front seats are ventilated, a feature I am glad a carmaker beyond Hyundai has taken up in an “affordable” segment. The infotainment screen takes a few seconds to fire up but is pretty good with all the standard fitments such as support for Android Auto and Apple CarPlay. A large digital display between the dials on the instrument cluster has a lot of gimmicks for someone driving to play through. The steering controls are intuitive and the overall fit and finish, including that of the plastics of the car, feels far more premium than on any other vehicle that wears a Mahindra badge. To be honest, I did not try the air-conditioner given the very pleasant weather.

Getting into the second row, however, is not that easy given the ride height of the car and any owner should seriously consider fitting the optional stepping board, even though that might not suit the lines of the car. That said, the second row has a grab handle to enter unlike the driver and front passenger.

The big problem I have with the Alturas is in the third row. Now third rows are not that comfortable and really not a place that I would want to spend any part of my life. But in a pinch it works, even on this car. But that sharply raked windowline I talked about, well that gives a very thick pillar at the back and this makes the Alturas’ third row feel dark. I was out on a sunny morning and that third row, already cramped by virtue of being a third row, felt downright depressing. And I am very sure I am not the only one feeling this way.

How is the Alturas to drive? Well, on power it is between the Fortuner and Endeavour and the 2.2 diesel is torquey



SPECIFICATIONS MAHINDRA ALTURAS G4

DISPLACEMENT
2,157 CC

MAX POWER
178 BHP @ 4,000 RPM

PEAK TORQUE
400 NM @ 1,600 - 2,600 RPM

TRANSMISSION
7-SPEED AUTOMATIC



enough that even 178 horsepower feels enough. The car does accelerate very well up to speed and importantly feels planted at highway cruising speeds. However, I will not call the steering precise but that is something par for the course for large SUVs. The car will have a four-wheel drive option with the ability to change from two-wheel high ratio to four-wheel high ratio drive on the fly. The Alturas is more than capable enough as a two-wheel drive car and while I had the option, I never used four-wheel drive.

What I did like about the Alturas was its ride comfort, and driving on some rough unpaved roads, it did not clatter and clang as one might expect and even managed to keep up a decent rate of knots. The gearbox is extremely smooth and gear changes are made without a judder, even the kickdown when needed feels alright. However, if there is a teeny-weeny issue I had, it was with the manual gear-shifting option, which is just a little clicker on the gear-lever, not an ‘H-gate’ like many cars and there is no paddle-shift option either.

As a vehicle though, the Alturas is a compelling proposition. It is comfortable and luxurious and previous-generation Rexton owners will be pleased. The problem is that there were far too few previous generation Rexton owners and if Mahindra is to make the Alturas a success, it will not just be the price. The Alturas G4 as we indicated earlier is available in two variants, one two-wheel drive and one with four-wheel drive, both variants have all the other creature comforts we spoke of. The two-wheel drive model is at ₹ 26.95 lakh and the four-wheel drive at ₹ 29.95 lakh; honestly a great price for what you get. The big problem will however be reliability (the Fortuner, as mentioned above is brilliant) as well as service but most importantly retailing the car. Selling a 30-lakh vehicle to a ‘sophisticated audience’ in the same showroom as a Bolero might be a challenge.



CHRISTMAS GOODY BAG

PLUM CAKES ARE HARBINGERS OF GOOD TIDINGS. **DIALOGUE** LISTS MORE SEASON SPECIALS TO TOY AROUND WITH



What's Christmas without a tree, friends, bells and of course the customary plum cake? Traditionally, the special cake was considered a harbinger of good tidings and in 17th century Europe, bakers got ready with the arrival of the harvest season, using the fresh fruits, mostly plums, and nuts to make a luscious mix that they would let sit for a month. Sugar, liquor and fruit juices helped preserve the cake and made for a good anytime energy bite.

The ingredients in the plum cake include raisins, black currants, prunes, glazed dates, cherries, candied orange, lemon rinds, spices and nuts like cashews, pistachios and almonds. They are marinated in liquor so that they develop a taste and aroma.

At The Imperial, New Delhi, executive chef Prem Kumar Pogakula and pastry chef Vivek Chauhan tossed up varieties of candied fruits, peels, assorted nuts, juices and soaked them in all-important spirits like cognac, rum and Grand Marnier. These were then blended for an exotic dough to mature beautifully in time for Christmas and to be churned out as plum cakes, puddings and Stollen. Chef Prem said, "The mix of exotic ingredients gets soaked in liquor for at least a month. The more the ingredients are marinated in a vat of spirits, the better the taste. It is prepared in a distinct way with mounds and mounds of brown dates, black raisins, red cherries, cashew nuts, topped with powdered cloves, cardamom, ginger peel, lemon peel, orange peel, dry figs, walnuts, apricots, prunes, dry black currants, pistachios, almonds, pepper and other exotic spices. All are mixed with 50 litres of liquor and fatten up with infusion. Then our chefs will combine flour with mixture for the dough to be baked to perfection for 1.5 tonne of cakes which are richer, yummiier and divine in taste."

ATTEND A MASS: Join the celebrations at the beautiful Vatican Embassy chapel, which is constructed in traditional Roman style. It has a beautiful Nativity scene and a giant Christmas tree. **Where:** 50-C Niti Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi-110021

SHOP: One of the popular Christmas markets in the city is the German Christmas Market where you'll find German cakes, sausages and beer, apart from the usual gift items and Christmas decorations. **Where:** German House, 2 Nyaya Marg, Chanakyapuri.

For gifts, decorations and baubles, there are Khan Market, Promenade Mall (Vasant Kunj), Select Citywalk (Saket) and South Extension markets.

VOLUNTEER: Christmas is the time for giving, so how about spreading some festive cheer among the less fortunate among us or finding a home for our furry friends? There are several NGOs where you can head to for the same.





TECHNOLOGY
EXPERT
TUSHAR KANWAR
PICKS TOP 10
MUST-HAVES FOR
THE SEASON

HP SPROCKET PLUS

The original HP Sprocket endeared itself to users with its ability to print tiny wallet-sized prints directly from a phone no matter where you were, and the Sprocket Plus takes this ability to more usable 2.3 x 3.4 inches sized photographs. Precisely the sort of phone accessory you need before you head off for your year-end vacation. **PRICE:** ₹ 8,999



COMFORT ZONE

YEELIGHT AURORA LIGHTSTRIP PLUS

Stick on the Aurora Lightstrip Plus LED strip to any surface and use its 16 million colours to create the exact ambience lighting you need, which can be controlled via the phone app or Alexa/Google Assistant voice control. Available as a 2-metre piece, the LightStrip Plus can be extended via extension strips. **PRICE:** ₹ 4,399



GRADUATE BEYOND THE REGULAR AND ADD SOMETHING EXTRA TO THE WAY YOU LIVE WITH GADGETS THAT MIGHT NOT BE ESSENTIAL BUT ARE CERTAINLY INTEGRAL TO IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE

AMAZON FIRE TV STICK 4K

Amazon's do-everything Fire TV stick moves up to 4K, with the device adding support for streaming 4K Ultra HD, HDR, HDR10, Dolby Vision, HLG, and HDR10+ standards. There's faster performance under the hood, for quicker load times and a snappier user interface, plus there's support for accessing the thousands of Alexa skills directly using the Alexa Voice Remote. **PRICE:** ₹ 5,999



DYSON PURE COOL

Combat the onset of winter pollution with the Dyson Pure Cool air purifier, which pulls in air via a 360-degree filter system to capture 99.95 per cent of microscopic allergens and pollutants which can be as small as 0.1 microns. This spreads purified air around the room using Dyson's bladeless Air Multiplier fans. Pure Cool is available in two variants — tower and desk as well as two colours — Iron/Blue and White/Silver. **PRICE:** ₹ 37,900 onwards





APPLE MACBOOK AIR

Apple's much-loved ultraportable MacBook Air sees a long overdue refresh, with the 2018 avatar bringing in a gorgeous 13-inch Retina display, the latest processors and Touch ID fingerprint authentication, all in a slimmer form than before. **PRICE:** ₹ 1,14,900 onwards

AMAZON KINDLE PAPERWHITE

The new Paperwhite e-book reader builds on its strengths — a crisp display, a myriad of reading options and multi-week battery life — and adds in more storage capacity and an all-new splash proof design that's perfect for that beach vacation you're planning. **PRICE:** ₹ 12,999



GOOGLE CHROMECAST

Google's streaming stick upgrade for 2018 features a design refresh and a bump up in performance, so it streams 1080p quality video at up to 60 frames per second. And with Chromecast and Google Home working seamlessly together, you can control your TV hands-free — just speak to your Google Home and Chromecast will start playing content from Netflix or Youtube (and other compatible services) directly on your TV. **PRICE:** ₹ 3,499



ONEPLUS 6T

Take the hugely successful OnePlus 6, reduce the screen notch, replace the rear fingerprint scanner with an in-display one and bump up the battery but remove the 3.5mm headphone jack and you have the impressive yet largely iterative OnePlus 6T. Top-tier performance — for nearly half the price of premium flagships. **PRICE:** ₹ 37,999 onwards



APPLE iPad PRO

The iPad Pro's all-screen no-home-button redesign for 2018 represents the biggest change to Apple's tablet in its history. It integrates Face ID and the powerful A12X Bionic chip into a sleeker form factor for pros on the move. Paired with the new Smart Keyboard Folio and the second-generation Apple Pencil, the iPad Pro is a stellar computing device for productivity and creativity-inclined folks. **PRICE:** ₹ 71,900 onwards



YEELIGHT CANDELA LAMP

A smart connected lamp that gives off the warm colour of candlelight, this features a built-in battery which lasts up to eight hours of use on a single charge. Pair it with the phone app and you can not only control the brightness of one Candela but also pair it with other Candela Lamps and control them as a group of 'connected candles'. **PRICE:** ₹ 5,999



GIANTS OF JAZZ VOL 4:

Vasundhara Vee Music, Jazz | English — Vasundhara Vidalur has been an active contributor to the movement that brought back RnB, Soul and Jazz into clubs and young people’s playlists in India. Her sound and her story have been showcased on the award-winning documentary series *The Dewarists* on Star World, on *Sound Trek* on Fox Traveller and many others. The single *If Only* that she recorded in collaboration with Tarun Balani has garnered significant critical acclaim and is being played on VH1 and MTV Indies for the past few months.

Giants of Jazz is the flagship festival of The Piano Man Jazz Club. In its fourth edition this year, they are bringing a stellar line-up of artists from all around the world. It is a landmark event for all the jazz lovers in the city and attracts music enthusiasts from all over the country. **Venue:** The Piano Man Jazz Club: Delhi **Date:** December 7



JASHN-E-REKHTA

It is the fifth edition of the three-day festival celebrated annually in Delhi under the aegis of the Rekhta Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation devoted wholeheartedly to the preservation and promotion of the Urdu language, its literature and culture. Plays, dastangoi performance, sufi songs, ghazals *sarayi* and *mushairas* will be staged.

Venue: Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium **Date:** December 14-16

SNEAK PEEK



PET FED

India's Biggest Pet Festival #PetFed2018 is back in Delhi. It has three acres of festival area, off-leash zones with games and rides, fashion show with Dino Morea, security dog show, dedicated cat proof play area and games, discover dogs of over 50 breeds (including *desi* ones), 100+ stalls from across the globe and more.

Venue: NSIC Ground, Okhla **Date:** December 15



RIDERS MUSIC FESTIVAL MUSIC

The second edition of the annual Riders Music Festival celebrates the spirit of bikes, music and brotherhood. It will have food, adventure, motorcycles and more. There will be live performances by Mame Khan, Burudu, Raja Kumari, Divine, Bhuvan Bam, Shirley Sethia, Lucky Ali, Nucleya and many more **Venue:** Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium **Date:** December 22



SNAP EP. 4 — BISWA, KUNAL KAMRA, RAGHAV MANDAVA

Snap is a stand-up comedy owned by Delhi based events and entertainment company Limn Entertainment. Episode 004, which is the anniversary special, features Biswa Kalyan Rath, Kunal Kamra and Raghav Mandava who will leave you in splits. **Venue:** Sirifort Auditorium **Date:** December 23

More reasons to shop at Delhi Airport

NEWLY OPENED

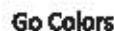
TERMINAL 2

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BLUES

 AND

 SUBWAY

NEW KID ON THE BLOCK SARA ALI KHAN KEEPS UP WITH THE TIMES AND DOESN'T SKIP A BEAT WITH HER FASHION CHOICES

Dressed in black athleisure outfit, she looked comfortable and ready to fly high before the release of her first film *Kedarnath*. The combination of black T-shirt, velvet bottoms and a black sneaker in glitter with a leather handbag lent some spunk to the young actor.

The actor rocked a traditional outfit in all white with blue embellished *chappals*, giving a sparkle of her personality. The suit in *chikan* work made Sara look like a breath of fresh air and regal.

The white cold-shoulder T-shirt with ripped blue jeans, flip-flops and a black leather bag gave a casual and college-ready appearance to the actor. A breeze.

Her traditional attire of white *churidar*, blue *chikan* kurta and a *dupatta* in checks of different shades of blue with a statement *chappal* combined the classic with a touch of contemporary chic.

The young actor looked simple and relaxed in an all-black athleisure outfit and contrasting blue sports shoes. Her accompanying multi-coloured bag complemented the get-set-go attitude she's sporting here.



STYLE MILE



DELHI INDIRA GANDHI
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

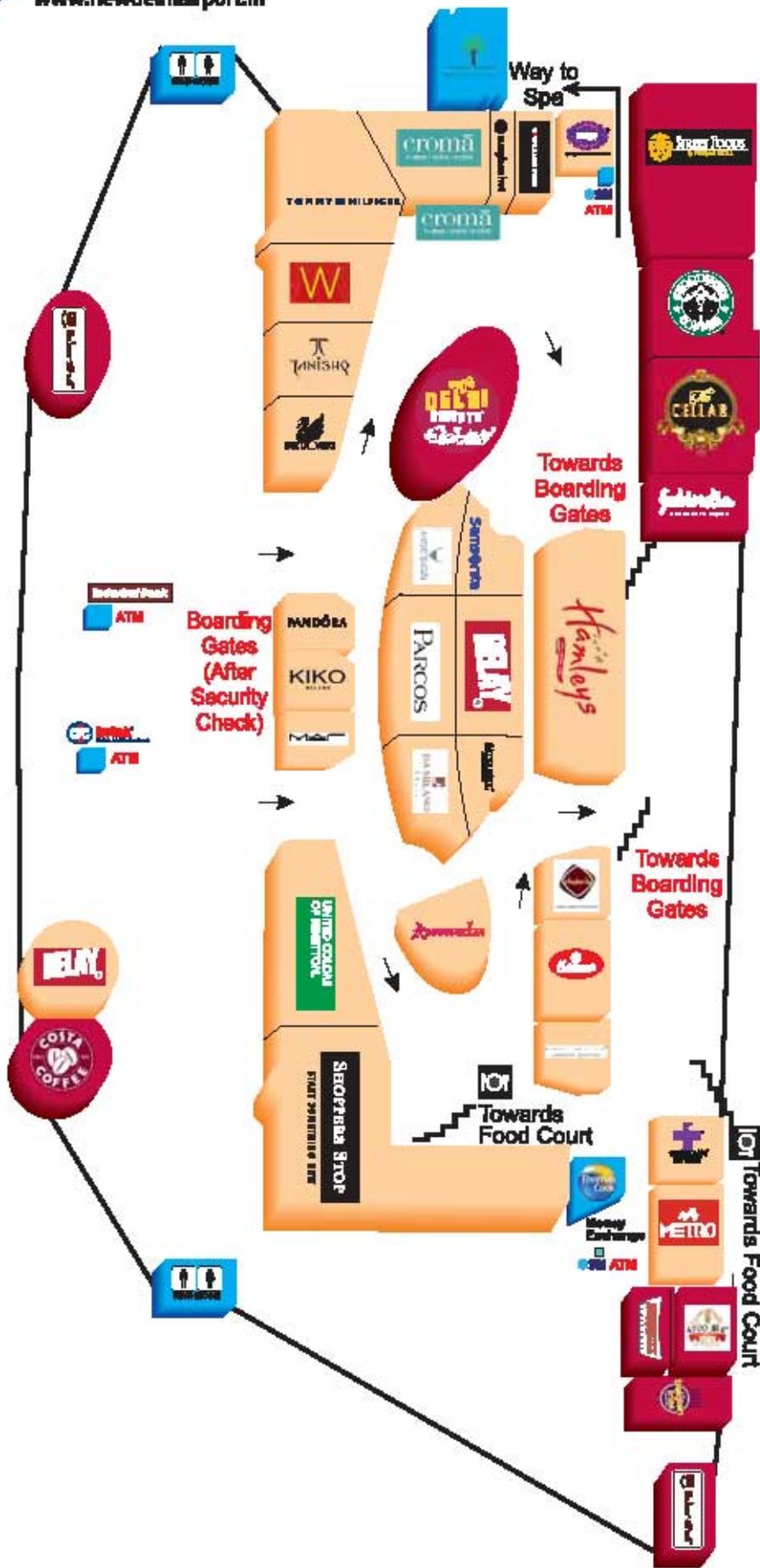
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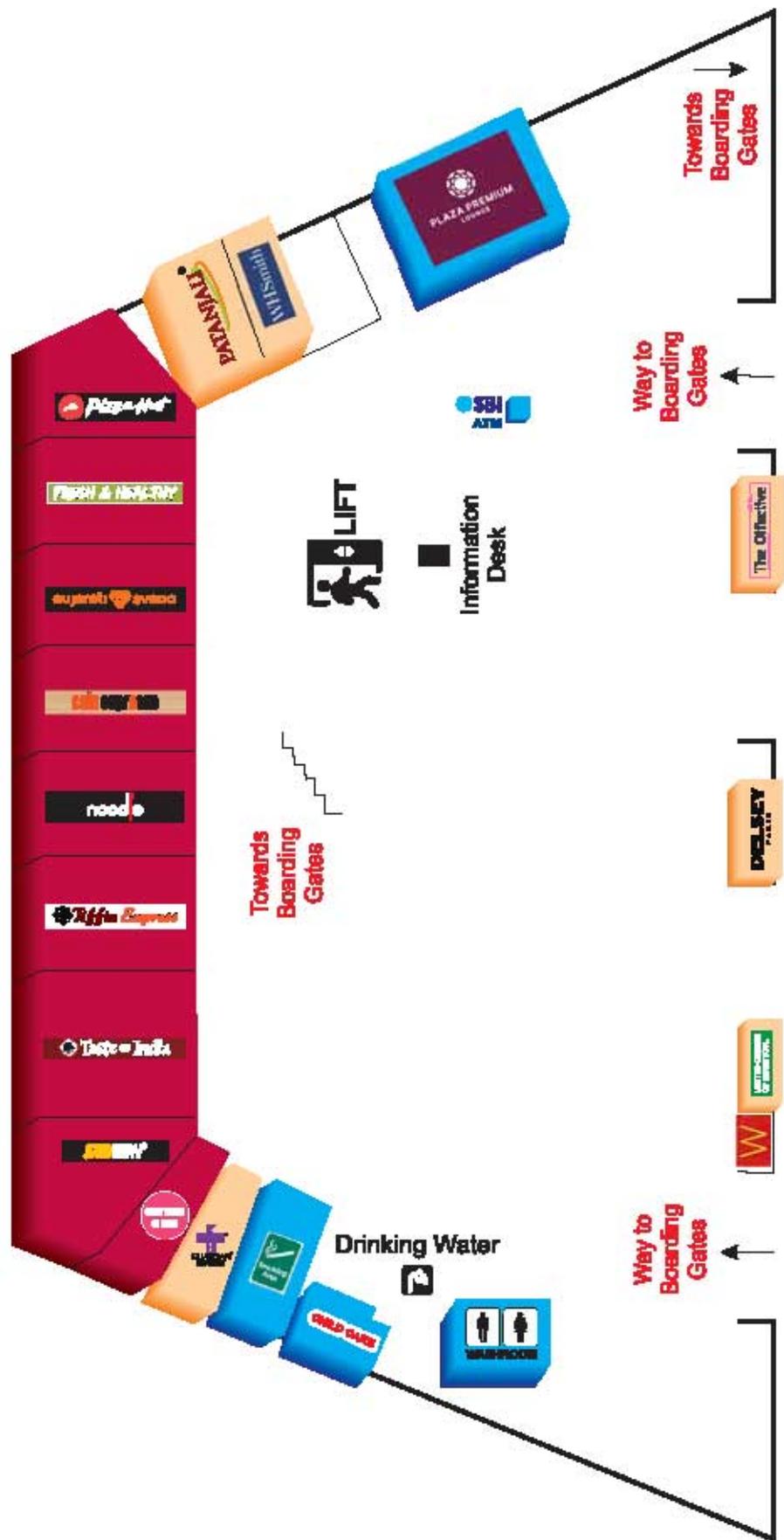
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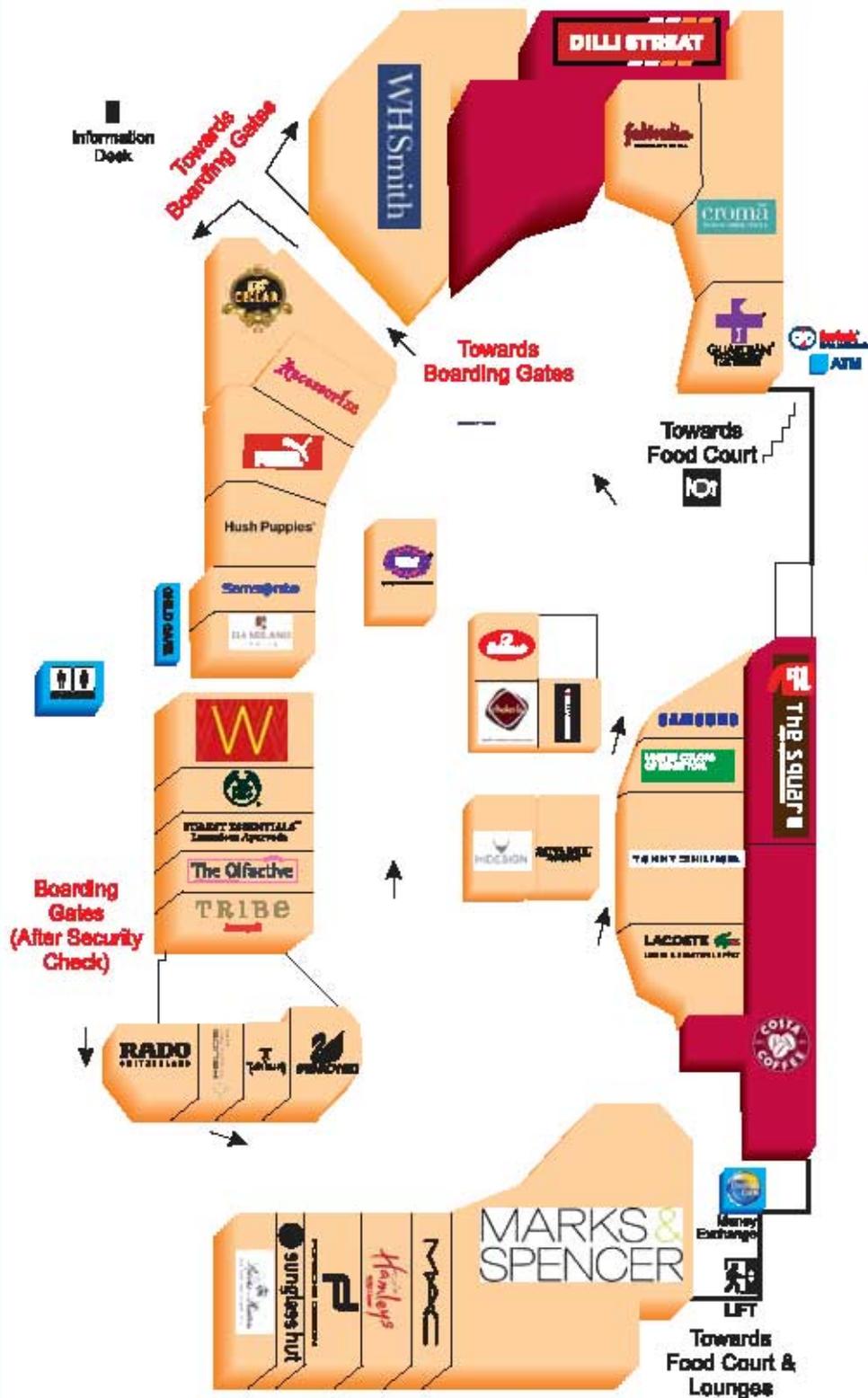


SENSES



FB

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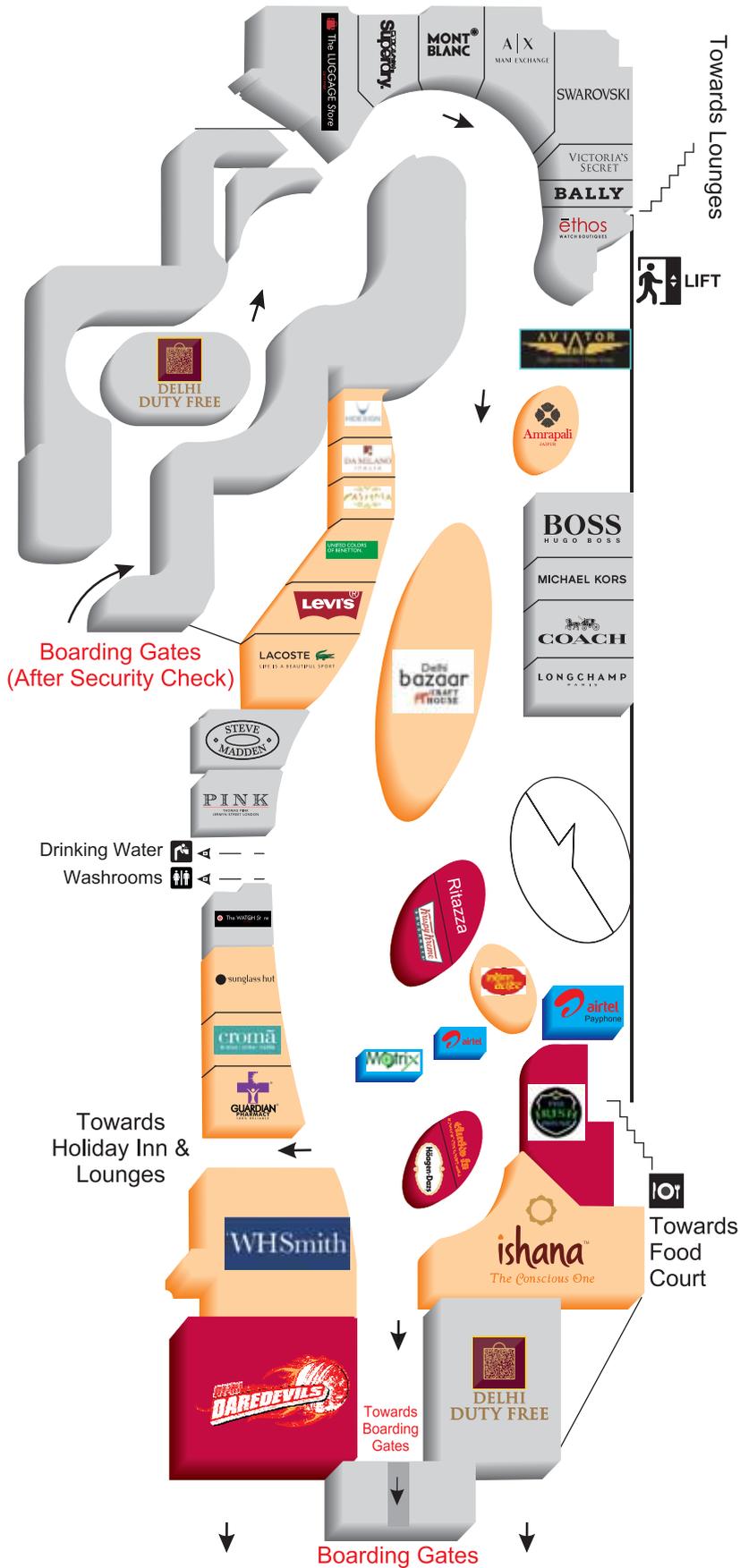
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Architect of United India

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A Notch above the Rest

The 182 metre Statue of Unity is situated at the Sadhu-Bet Island, approximately 3.5 km south of the Sardar Sarovar Dam at Kevadia between the Vindhyachal and Satpuda Ranges in the Narmada district of Gujarat. A 300 m long bridge connects the Sadhu Bet to the Memorial and Visiting Centre, which has been developed at the site having all the attractive facets of a tourist hub with both edutainment and entertainment features. An Exhibition Hall is also developed as a visitor attraction focusing on the contributions of Sardar Patel. Many other sightseeing facilities accord a rare enjoyable ambience to visitors at the Statue of Unity.

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Statue of Unity and its premises have been conceived and developed as an outstanding tourist hub. A visit to the site is going to be an unforgettable experience for every visitor.

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Monument
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Tent City



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Come to the World's Tallest Statue to know more about this Visionary Leader.

Best time to Visit: The Statue of Unity site is open to tourists for visit every day from 09:00 AM to 05:00 PM. The site remains closed on Mondays, so you can plan your trip accordingly.



For Further Information, log on to: www.gujarattourism.com
For Tent City Booking, log on to: www.tentcitynarmada.com

www.statueofunity.in

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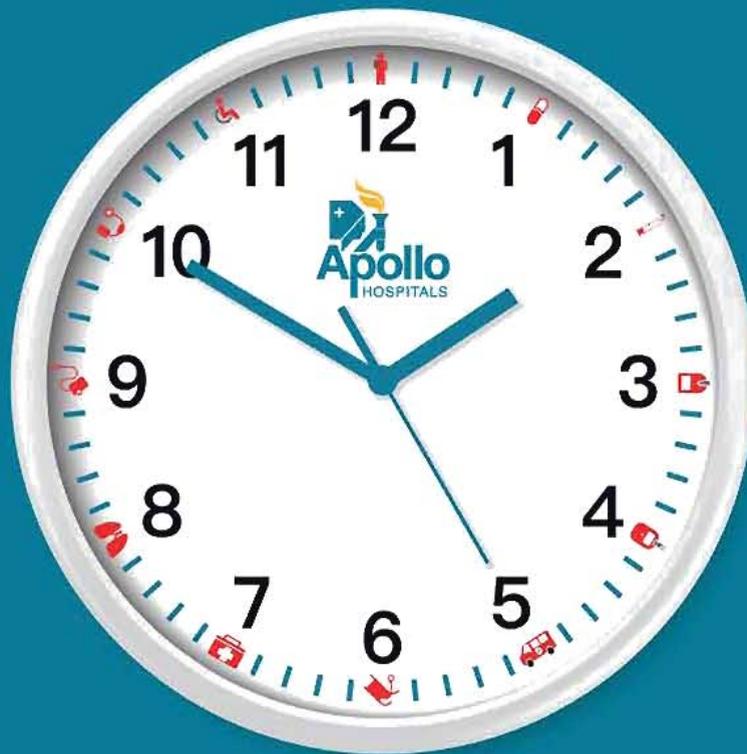


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