

# The **DIAL**ogue

**DELHI** INDIRA GANDHI  
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

MAY 2018



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## DOWN MEMORY RUNWAY

**I**n my youth, Delhi was still considered an overgrown village. Residents of my hometown, Calcutta, turned up their noses at Delhi's apparent lack of sophistication in every sphere. When Naxalite violence drove many of us out of Calcutta, I landed in Delhi feeling like fish out of water. The hustle and bustle of Calcutta's roads and bazaars, the glitz and glamour of Park Street, its magnificent colonial buildings, its opulent theatres and even the quaint character of its sophisticated cinema halls, like the lush carpets with liveried waiters serving gin and tonic in the first floor lobby of Metro, were all sorely missed in Delhi.

The National Capital's airport too was an unsophisticated shell of a building, situated amid acres of wheat fields with cattle happily grazing all around. Once, coming early in the morning from the University to Palam airport as it was then called (some flights still operated out of the now abandoned Safdarjung), I dozed off in the bus waking up only somewhere near present day Gurugram, then a cluster of villages. The airport had only one ramshackle terminal then; and it was only in the mid-70s that an international terminal came up where T1 now stands.

To think that in less than 50 years the Delhi Airport, now run by GMR, has become one of 20 busiest airports of the world boggles the mind. T3 ranks among the global best, having been rated No1 for several years and currently stands at No 2. This truly marks a quantum leap for the quality of aviation infrastructure in this country. In the last decade, even Tier 2 cities have acquired new airports with modern amenities. To cite just one example, the Ranchi airport was housed in a tin shed in the 1990s but now boasts a perfectly decent 21st century aerodrome.

But for a vast country like India where air traffic is growing in leaps and bounds and a steadily prospering middle class is fast abandoning trains in favour of airplanes as the preferred mode of travel, we need many more cities to be connected by air. Furthermore it is necessary to plan airports that are scalable so that new Greenfield projects don't have to be commissioned every few years. In that context, it is commendable that the Government has decided to go ahead with a near international airport at Jewar to cater to Delhi's burgeoning air passenger load. Its location may seem very distant today, but with the Yamuna Expressway rapidly becoming a hub of industrial and residential expansion, Jewar won't seem very far from the Capital in a few years' time. Besides it will offer easy access to other tourist hotspots like Agra and Jaipur.

Similarly, we need to plan for bigger airports to cater to passenger growth in the years to come. Many airports constructed recently had to be demolished and new buildings erected in their place because the projected traffic growth outstripped all calculations. Therefore when planning newer and bigger airports, we ought to take a 50-year horizon rather than the 20 years that we seem to account for.

Perhaps some lessons can be learnt from China which believes "big is beautiful". Their urban development may appear over-hyped initially, but experience has shown that new buildings, roads, stations and airports get filled up sooner rather than later. India is set to enter a new phase of rapid urbanization. Our planning must anticipate this. Among other things, airports must budget for passenger growth to be accommodated till at least 2120 if not further ahead in time.

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

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# contents

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**20 ICONS**  
Golden Girls: **Manika Batra** and **Manu Bhaker** keep the Indian tricolour flying high at CWG

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## THIS ISSUE

**30 TRAVEL**  
Roar of the snow leopard:  
**Pallavi Mohan**

**38 EXPLORE**  
Just water

**42 KIDSTOP**  
Inside out: **Activities**

**46 HOME**  
It takes a little effort:  
**Eco-friendly measures**

**48 FOOD**  
Pick a punch:  
**Summer coolers**

**52 HIDEAWAY**  
The oldest twins:  
**Garli and Pragpur**

**58 TRAVEL**  
Be a little mermaid: **Aarhus**

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**CHANDAN MITRA**

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# WHEN FLYING BECAME AFFORDABLE

THE 21ST CENTURY SAW THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR THE FIRST TIME IN CIVIL AVIATION AS WELL AS IN CREATION OF GREENFIELD AIRPORTS. THE SKIES WERE FINALLY OPENING UP



Several private airlines had entered into the aviation business and many more were about to debut in the Indian skies. Low-cost carriers like Deccan Airlines, GoAir and Spicejet and others introduced the budget experience to family travellers.

On **October 2**, Sahara Airlines was rebranded as Air Sahara. The Tata group again partnered with Singapore Airlines to bid for a 40 per cent stake in Air India. The plan did not materialise after Singapore Airlines withdrew from the venture. Air India introduced services to Shanghai, China.

On **January 8**, the Airbus A300 is certified and becomes the first wide-body airliner with cockpit accommodation for two to be certified.

On **March 21**, during a single flight, an RQ-4 Global Hawk unmanned surveillance aircraft flying from Edwards Air Force Base in California set both a world endurance record for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) of 30 hours, 24 minutes, 1 second, and a world absolute altitude record for UAVs of 65,381 feet.

On **July 5**, The European Union's European Aviation Safety Agency is established.

On **October 18**, Boeing reveals its Bird of Prey stealth technology demonstrator, which has conducted a number of flights during the period 1996 to 1999.

In **November**, Air India acquired the first Boeing 747-4B5 on lease from Korean Air. In the interest of maintaining the convention of naming the cities after places of architectural or tourist interest, the first leased aircraft registered VT-EVJ was called "Fatehpur Sikri" after the world heritage site of sandstone.

# 2000

# 2001

# 2002



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# 2003

Boeing established a wholly owned subsidiary in India – Boeing International Corporation India Private Limited.

**October:** Iftar meals were served to passengers on India /Gulf, Gulf/India sectors which were effective during the Ramadan period.

**October:** Air India introduced daily standardised departure flights to/from Dubai to Mumbai, Delhi and Kochi. In addition, it also enhanced its frequencies from Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode to a daily operation.



# 2004

Government approved setting up of private greenfield airports at Hyderabad and Bangalore.

**February:** Air India awarded the prestigious international flight catering association mercury award (Bronze), which was held at Frankfurt. The Evergreen 747 Supertanker makes its first flight. Based on the Boeing 747-200 cargo aircraft and capable of carrying 74,194 litres of water, it is the world's largest aerial firefighting aircraft.

**May:** Air India launched a wholly owned low cost subsidiary called Air-India Express connecting cities in India with the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

# 2005

Indian Airlines was rebranded as Indian. The Government designated Air India, Indian Airlines, Jet Airways and Air Sahara to operate international services.

On **January 18**, the world's largest passenger plane, the Airbus A380, is unveiled in an elaborate ceremony in France.

On **May 14**, the first helicopter landing on the summit of Mount Everest takes place, as French pilot Didier Delsalle, a Eurocopter test pilot, lands an unmodified Eurocopter AS350 B3 helicopter there at an altitude of 29,030 feet in 121-km/hr winds. The landing and takeoff set the world record for the highest helicopter landing.





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DESPITE MASSIVE ADVANCES IN AVIATION TECHNOLOGY, THE AGE OF SUPERSONIC AIR TRANSPORT SEEMS TO BE BEHIND US. WHAT WENT WRONG? QUITE A LOT OF THINGS ACTUALLY, SAYS **KUSHAN MITRA**

# FAST FLIERS

**T**he aftermath of World War II saw a dramatic transformation of human history. Of course, as Indians what is important was the tragic partitioning of our country, a horrible price to pay for independence. But it was also a time of immense scientific progress. The war had dramatically accelerated development in new technologies, one of which was obviously nuclear technology, and the post-war era was rightly known as the “Nuclear Age.” The war had also seen a dramatic development of new aviation technology. At the time it started, many air forces were still flying biplanes and long-distance passenger routes had until the late-1930s been using airships. Seaplanes were still in vogue. But the war saw immense developments in aerodynamics and engine technology, most notably with the British and Germans flying jet aircraft.

Indeed, the jet engine and its parallel and unrelated development in Britain and Nazi Germany exacerbated another problem in aviation. Piston-powered propeller planes were getting ever faster as super-charging technology progressed. Planes like the North American P-51 Mustang and the Hawker Typhoon were reaching the limits of flights and were flying so fast that at times they were uncontrollable. The air around the wings and control surfaces such as the elevators and ailerons got disrupted and the air became so compressed that in some cases, planes shook themselves apart.

Towards the end of the war, these problems killed several experienced airmen. At the end of the war, the Americans and British in particular also got access to German technology and scientific papers that said that the Germans had also dealt with the same problem.

Long story short, the problem was that these planes were approaching the speed of sound and as they



Concorde



The cockpit of Bell X-1 with its stubby straight wings and rocket engine was effectively a flying bullet



approached the speed of sound, the air began to behave strangely by “compressing.” The sound barrier it seemed was impassable, according to some scientists. But not to others. The war had left the Americans with a huge amount of resources and they acquired technology from Britain and Germany and developed a series of experimental test aircraft which they flew over the Californian desert. One of those planes was the Bell X-1, which with its stubby straight wings and rocket engine was effectively a flying bullet. Some aerodynamicists reckoned that if a bullet could travel faster than sound, so could a plane. And on October 14, 1947 piloted by Chuck Yeager, (more on him in a future column, I promise) the Bell X-1 broke the sound barrier. From

then on, it was a succession of records for these experimental aircraft. Developments were rapid and the test planes moved from rocket power to jet-engine power rapidly, and the United States developed the first supersonic fighter jet, the F4D Skyray, which flew for the first time in 1951, but the primary supersonic fighter of the era was the F-100 Super Sabre. The Soviets quickly developed the MiG-19 in 1953 and the British the English Electric Lightning in 1956 with the French Mirage III also flying for the first time that year.

Supersonic technology was not a secret anymore and the basic principles of supersonic flight — from controls and engines — was known all around. So some smart people got together that thought “Why couldn’t a supersonic passenger plane be developed?” Teams across the world started working towards answering that question. And it quickly became apparent that the

The primary supersonic fighter of the era was the F-100 Super Sabre. The Soviets quickly developed the MiG-19 in 1953. French Mirage III flew in 1956



IT IS REMARKABLE THAT AT A TIME OF SUCH TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS AND ENGINEERING SKILLS, WITH SUPERCOMPUTERS AIDING PLANE DEVELOPMENT, MANKIND APPROACHING THE 2020S HAS FAILED IN SOMETHING THAT WE ACHIEVED IN THE 1960S. ONE DOES HOPE THAT WE CAN RETURN TO SUPERSONIC TRAVEL, IMAGINE FLYING TO THE UAE FROM INDIA IN JUST OVER AN HOUR, OR FLYING BETWEEN DELHI AND LONDON IN ABOUT FOUR HOURS

question would not be an easy one to answer. To this day, supersonic fighter jets have a problem — they have very limited range, or what is described as time over target. Their combat range is often not measured in distance but in time. Without airborne refuelling and with some very expensive aviation fuel (carrying that stuff into the air adds so much cost that you'll be glad of the current fuel prices you pay) most of these aircraft can't reach very far. Sure, there are exceptions to the rule but to fly far, most modern combat aircraft actually fly at a more reasonable and economical subsonic speed.

To develop a supersonic passenger aircraft that could fly a reasonably long distance and at a consistent speed was going to be a challenge and a very expensive one. A challenge for which the British and French finally decided to join forces to develop the "Concorde." The Soviets kept on developing and the Americans, despite pouring billions of dollars into it and even making a mock-up of their proposed Boeing 2707, found that the costs of funding the space-race and a supersonic transport were a bit much even for them. They continued with developing the Saturn V moon rocket. Although some suspect that the Americans had, thanks to their considerable fighter jet experience, learnt something that would keep supersonic transport from being viable.

The Anglo-French and Soviet developments continued to carry on, and the Concorde even won orders for over 200 planes, including some from Air India. But the developments were victims of Cold War subterfuge. Apparently the Soviet spy agency KGB infiltrated the Concorde development

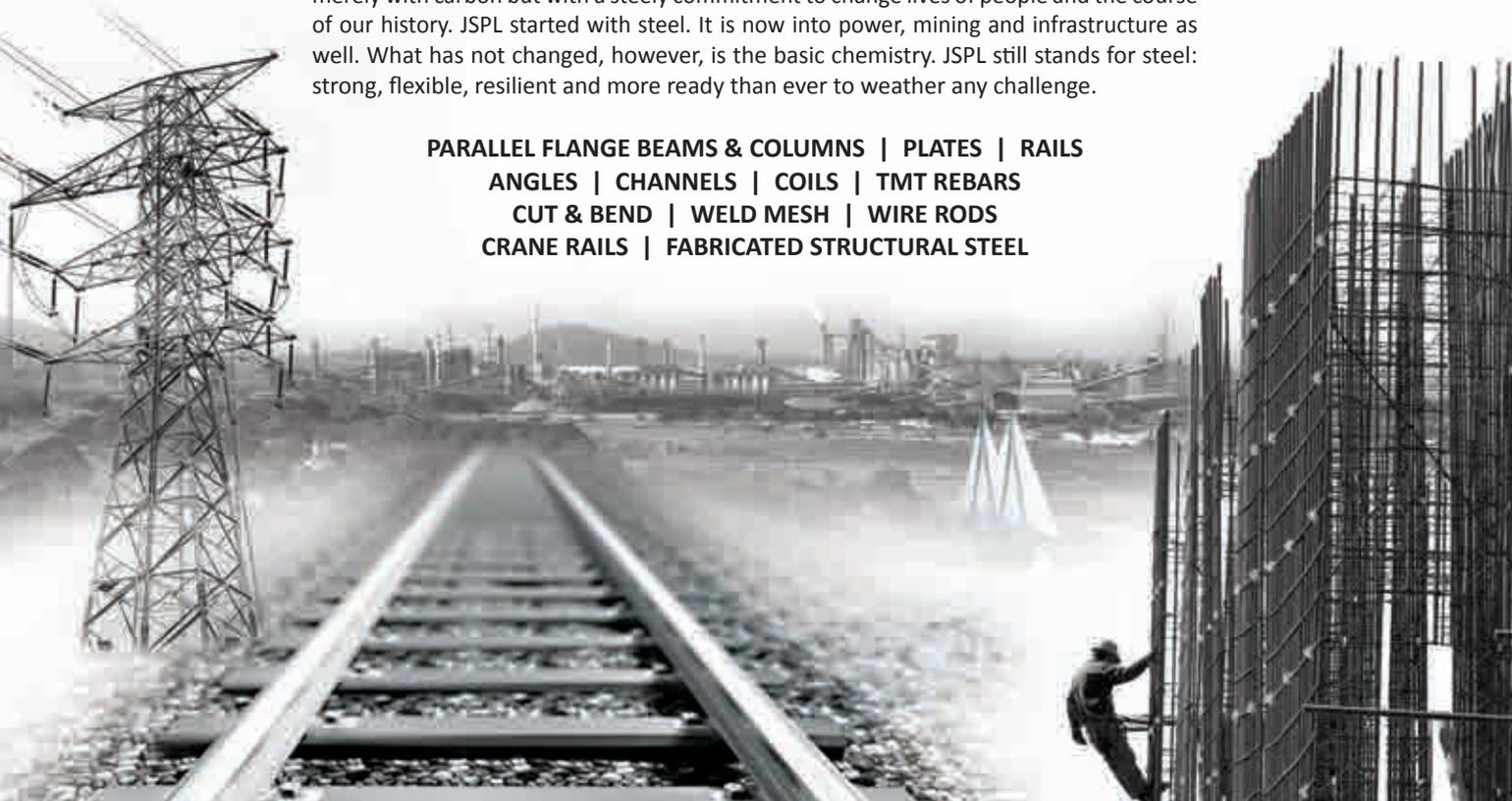
Tu-144,  
the imitator



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The Concorde flew for the first time in 1969 and was promptly hailed as a massive success

programme and the Soviet supersonic aircraft, designed by the Tupolev design bureau with the model number Tupolev Tu-144, was referred to by many in the West as the “Concordski” because of its similarities to the Concorde design, although there were significant differences, particularly with the wings and the engines. But most importantly, the Soviets got their plane into the air first, in 1968. The differences in design, particularly with the thirstier engines and the less efficient wings, did eventually condemn the Tu-144 to limited service. A controversial crash at the Paris Air Show in full view of the public, apparently due to a French reconnaissance aircraft, condemned the Tu-144 to a life of mediocrity.

The Concorde itself flew for the first time in 1969 and it was promptly hailed as a massive success but problems were to strike quickly. First, as the Americans discovered, supersonic flight over land has a bad negative. That is the sonic boom. Whenever an aircraft crosses the speed of sound the very action of breaking the sound barrier leads to a huge “bang”, similar to that of a bullet. But when an object as big as a plane makes that noise, even at 40,000 feet or more, the noise travels all the way to the ground. So much so that it can smash windows. This led to several governments banning overland flights of supersonic transports. With most lucrative routes over the continental United States and Europe out of reach of the the plane, it was only to see limited service on trans-Atlantic services. But even those were to suffer as a result of the 1973 Arab-Israeli conflict and the Arab oil embargo on the West in retaliation for their support of Israel.

**G**lobal geopolitics coupled with noise issues made the Concorde unviable and only 20 were ever built, only 14 of which saw commercial service. Half for Air France and and half for British Airways. Even though ironically the Concorde was to actually make money at least for British Airways, which flew the plane between the financial centres of London and New York, the project itself did not make money. The

collaboration between the two countries led to the eventual formation of Airbus and technologies developed for the Concorde, including aspects like ‘Supercruise’, which allowed planes to efficiently fly for long durations at supersonic speeds, did make their way into combat aircraft development.

**B**ut a tragic accident of an Air France plane taking off from Paris after a piece of debris punctured its fuel tank during the process at Paris’ Charles De Gaulle airport condemned the plane into an enforced hiatus. Even after repairs, the combined impact of the accident, the aftermath of the terror attacks in New York and the subsequent slowdown in air travel dealt it a body blow. The last Concorde commercial flight flew on October 22, 2003 which included a flypast over London as it approached London Heathrow. The age of supersonic travel ended as the Information Technology era was just beginning.

Fifteen years later, we are no closer to returning to commercial supersonic travel, whether as a commercial airline transport or a private plane. Many proposals have been floated and funds have been raised by start-ups to develop a new plane. While aircraft engines have become immensely more fuel-efficient, the answer to the sonic boom has not been resolved satisfactorily enough for governments to remove the ban on overland flights, so nobody has built a prototype that demonstrates lower noise emissions. It is remarkable that at a time of such technological progress and engineering skills, with supercomputers aiding plane development, mankind approaching the 2020s has failed in something that we achieved in the 1960s.

One does hope that we can return to supersonic travel. Imagine flying to the UAE from India in just over an hour, or flying between Delhi and London in about four hours. It can be done and the engineer and entrepreneur that can achieve that have probably already been born. This writer cannot wait for that plane to enter service.



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The Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi, presents a book on handloom weaving to the first NIOS learner who enrolled for the course

## REVIVING TRADITIONAL INDIAN KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL: TEXTILES

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at their own pace. The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) is the largest open schooling system in the world for Secondary (class X) and Senior Secondary (class XII) courses. It reaches education to different classes of people

like weavers, divyangs and other less privileged sections.

NIOS is working for the revival of ancient craft, handloom and handicraft that play a significant role in the nation's economy. Weaving is an Indian tradition and its revival and promotion is a matter of great pride for the country. A recent handloom census reveals that the education level of 83.3 per cent handloom workers is below High Senior Secondary. As a part of its vocational courses and in order to uplift the weavers and fulfill the vision of the Prime Minister of India, NIOS joined hands with Directorate of Handlooms under an initiative launched by the Minister of Textiles, Ms Smriti Irani. Under this scheme BPL, women and SC/ST categories would be given free education in handloom weaving. The learners can take one language and any four vocational courses to get Secondary certification with primary focus on weaving.

The weavers can choose from courses like Fibre to Fabric, Handloom Weaving, Design Development, Dyeing and Printing as well as Entrepreneurship for Handloom Weavers and they can enroll in these throughout the year. These would equip them with additional skills and enhance the marketability of their products.

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AIRBUS ANNOUNCES COMFORT PODS AND BERTHS FOR ECONOMY PASSENGERS IN THE LOWER DECK CARGO AREA

# SLEEP IN THE HOLD

Soon when you fly in an Airbus jet and you fancy a bit of shut-eye, all you will need to do is make your way down to the cargo hold. European aircraft giant Airbus has announced that it is teaming up with Zodiac Aerospace to develop and market lower deck sleeping facilities for passengers that could be operational in A330 wide-body jets from 2020.

The sleeper compartments “would fit inside the aircraft’s cargo compartments,” Airbus said in a joint statement with Zodiac, a subsidiary of the French aerospace company Safran. The modules “will be easily interchangeable with regular cargo containers,” the statement said.

Airbus and Zodiac said the sleeping berths will enable airlines to add value for their commercial operations. “Airlines will initially be able to choose from a catalogue of certified solutions by 2020 on A330,” for

the sleeper pods, with the possibility of fitting them into A350 XWB airliners also being studied. The sleeping berths would not only improve passenger comfort but also enable airlines to add value for their commercial operations. “This approach to commercial air travel is a step change towards passenger comfort,” said Geoff Pinner, head of Airbus’ cabin and cargo programme. “We have already received very positive feedback from several airlines on our first mock-ups.”

Christophe Bernardini, head of Zodiac’s aerospace cabin division, said the project “reaffirms our expertise in lower-deck solutions. An improved passenger experience is today a key element of differentiation for airlines.” In November 2016, the Air France-KLM had put forward the idea of sleeping berths for passengers in the economy class, either down in the hold or above the cabin in aircraft of the group’s new low-cost subsidiary, Joon.

— (Courtesy: AFP)



### BAGGAGE DROPS

Technological advancements are also helping to bring about a revolution in the baggage space. Self-service bag drop is now widespread but a new wave of developments is starting to entirely redefine baggage handling as we know it. Airports around the world are having to process more passengers and bags than their terminals were originally designed to handle.

Some stakeholders are already taking action. The Lufthansa group, for example, has partnered with BAGTAG in a move that allows passengers flying with Lufthansa, SWISS and Austrian Airlines to purchase a re-usable, electronic bag tag, instead of having to have traditional paper bag tags attached to their suitcases every time they fly.

This is a big year as IATA Resolution 753, which is all about baggage tracking, will come into effect in June, so airlines and airports must ensure they are ready to provide real-time, accurate baggage tracking throughout the process.

Also six airlines have started testing remote baggage drop technology. Remote bag check-in stations have been installed in the airport's car parks and can be used by the passengers. The trial has been launched ahead of a planned permanent implementation later this year.



NO MORE LOST IN TRANSLATION



Technology could have squeezed this one into the “artificial intelligence” category but such is its potential, we decided it deserves a mention in its own right. The travel experience can be daunting when you’re in an unfamiliar environment and don’t speak the local language but this could be solved thanks to artificial intelligence and machine learning technology.

The Google Pixel Bud Bluetooth earphones support live translation between 40 languages. Also a number of technology giants, including Microsoft and Facebook as well as Google, are investing heavily in translation technologies, and airports and aircraft could provide ideal environments for these technologies to flourish.



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# EYE ON THE BALL



**MANIKA BATRA**, THE FIRST INDIAN WOMAN TO HAVE WON A TABLE TENNIS INDIVIDUAL GOLD MEDAL IN THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES, IS FOCUSED ON PERFORMANCE RATHER THAN ON FEAR, SAYS **PIYUSH BISHT**

**T**he 22-year-old held herself remarkably, concealing a tremble of emotion, as the Indian tricolour crested high at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. Manika Batra had just become the first Indian woman to have won a table tennis individual gold medal. That maturity of toning down a swelling moment of pride said a lot about the prodigy who is known for extreme agility and alertness.

Ever since her return home, laden with a rich medal haul — a team gold, an individual gold, a silver in the doubles and a mixed doubles bronze — a usually shy

Manika seems to be enjoying the reception she got following her successful campaign. With the Commonwealth Games impressively done and dusted, the trial by fire for Indian table tennis is likely to come against the Chinese, the Koreans and the Japanese as early as August this year in the Asian Games. Manika, however, remains undeterred of the fearsome reputation these countries hold.

“It’s just our mentality,” Manika pointed out at a felicitation ceremony. “As soon as it occurs to us ‘Oh, it’s China’ or ‘Oh, it’s Korea’, we lose then and there,” she added before highlighting her focus on performance rather than on fear. “I just want to continue motivating



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**‘MY PLAYING STYLE IS QUITE DIFFERENT AND I DON’T THINK ANYBODY ELSE WILL UNDERSTAND IT BETTER THAN MY COACH. SANDEEP (GUPTA) SIR DOES. SO, AT THE MOMENT I WOULD LIKE TO FOCUS ON TRAINING CLOSE TO SANDEEP SIR HERE IN INDIA AND IMPROVE IN THE STYLE OF PLAY THAT DEFINES ME’**



myself and my team that we should cast this mentality aside. We must focus upon what we have picked up during all those years of training and then deliver our 100 per cent when the time comes, instead of dwelling upon the mental fear we have created within ourselves towards countries like China and Korea.”

**M**anika’s stance clearly marks the emergence of a young leader in India’s table tennis fraternity. This follows an announcement by the country’s seasoned paddler Sharath Kamal, wherein he declared his willingness to pass the baton of responsibilities to her. Currently placed 48th in world rankings, Kamal has won seven Commonwealth Games medals for India, including four golds, two bronzes and one silver and is also remembered as the gold medallist of the 16th Commonwealth Table Tennis Championship held in 2004 in Kuala Lumpur, an accomplishment that won him the Arjuna Award during the same year. Manika, the recently coronated queen of Indian table tennis, considered herself privileged to take on the responsibilities from Sharath Kamal.

“I am very happy and thankful that he is transferring his responsibilities to me. And I feel really grateful that a player like Sharath *bhaiya*, who has brought so many medals to the country, is trusting me with these duties. I will definitely try my best to fulfill those responsibilities and win more medals for India,” Manika said.

However, the 22-year-old remains wary of going

through stints in Europe, unlike Sharath who has enjoyed spells in Spain and Sweden and is currently playing in the German Bundesliga. “My playing style is quite different and I don’t think anybody else will understand it better than my coach. Sandeep (Gupta) sir does. So, at the moment I would like to focus on training close to Sandeep sir here in India and improve in the style of play that defines me,” Manika explained. The “style of play” in question refers to Manika’s efficient use of pimped rubber on her paddle which saw her demolish her opponents at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games.

Along these lines, Manika also expressed her hesitation towards opting for foreign coaches, saying, “Sandeep sir has been my mentor since I was four and no one else can be in a better position than him to understand my style of play. Any other coach at this point will take time to understand my style of play. For me that would mean starting all over again.”

**A**nother person, who has played a key role in shaping Manika, is that of Neha Aggarwal. Emerging as the only woman from India to feature in table tennis at the Beijing Olympics in 2008, Neha explained how the Sandeep Gupta-led Stag table tennis academy inspired Manika to take her on the road to glory. “I played in the Olympics when I was 18. Manika, who is six years younger than me, took inspiration from there as we instilled a belief in her that



**'I JUST WANT TO CONTINUE  
MOTIVATING MYSELF AND MY  
TEAM THAT WE SHOULD CAST THIS  
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OURSELVES TOWARDS COUNTRIES  
LIKE CHINA AND KOREA'**

she can do even better. We told her that simply representing India at the Olympics should not be the aim anymore. I was a representative in 2008 but Manika has just bettered our prospects. That inspiration has come along with a journey that lasted a decade. It took 10 years for Sandeep sir to bring a big result. Ten years, they worked together, learning from my career, trying not to repeat the mistakes that we made back then and reducing every margin of error so that she could be a better version of me," Neha revealed.

**S**he then went on to note the qualities that define Manika. "She is one athlete who just accepts so well. She learns and adapts really well. She is smart. She understands the game, contemplates it and applies it to her performance. And that I think is a mark of a true champion," she said.

The 2008 Olympian continues to be a role model for aspiring young players at Stag academy, admitting that the young ones still count on her whenever they find difficulties in training.



# I AM 16, GOING ON....

**MANU BHAKER** WILL LINE UP AT THE FIRING RANGE IN CHANGWON AT THE WORLD CUP, HOPING TO WIN ANOTHER MEDAL. GOLD COAST IS OLD COAST FOR HER ALREADY



**M**anu Bhaker has been shooting high scores for fun and has hardly ever returned from a tournament without a medal. It had just been a couple of hours since the 16-year-old, won the 10 m air pistol gold. It was a dominating performance, smashing records and beating compatriot and the more established Heena Sidhu by 6.9 points, making her one of the youngest gold medallists in the country.

But Manu doesn't care. She wants to be left alone, doing what she enjoys the most. The pistol is still a toy to her. Shooting just a hobby she is good at. Extremely good at. Moments after her final, she saw a new table tennis table and unused paddles inside the Games Village. The Class XI student from Jhajjar sprinted upstairs to her room, kept her gold medal by the bedside and returned to the recreation zone for a game of TT — like any other teenager would do after submitting her final exam paper.

This, however, wasn't Manu's final test. Rather, it is the beginning of many more that will follow. Just how special a shooter Manu is has been well-documented. She's been shooting high scores for fun, and has hardly ever returned from a tournament without a medal.

For someone of her calibre, the Commonwealth Games were hardly a challenge. A final in a first-ever major appearance comes with its own load indeed but Manu doesn't seem to fretting over the pressure. Last month was the medal in Mexico at the senior World Cup. Then in Sydney at the junior World Cup. And now, a few hundred miles up north from Sydney, at Gold Coast.

Ask her what she is thinking about now, and she says "South Korea." Manu will line up at the firing range in

Changwon at the World Cup, hoping to win another gold medal at the year's second World Cup. Gold Coast is old coast for her already. In a sport that demands stillness, she is a restless soul.

Jaspal Rana, her coach, says his challenge will be to keep her 'newness' factor relevant for as long as he can. "If that means selecting her tournaments wisely before the World Championship, then so be it," Rana says. The World Championship, in Changwon from August 31 to September 14, will give shooters the first chance to secure qualification for the Tokyo Olympics.

Rana adds his challenge is two-fold. "If I give you a chocolate every day, you'll eventually get bored of it. My task is to ensure Manu doesn't lose interest and remains focussed. The second big task is to keep the distractions away," Rana, a former Commonwealth Games gold medallist himself, says.

The distractions, which Rana talks about, will come straight up. "We return to India for three days this week. During that period, there'll be so many functions and ceremonies to attend. It's surely motivating but at the same time, it is also easy for an athlete to lose track of herself," Rana says. How Manu handles the

attention is a key question. Not many have succeeded, her competitor on Sunday, Heena Sidhu, being a prime example. A world record holder, Sidhu catapulted to spotlight after becoming World No. 1 pistol shooter in 2014. Since then, she has been on a downslide, although she firmly remains one of India's best pistol shooters.

Sidhu's reputation of stumbling in pressure scenarios precedes her and the same was repeated when she crawled up the leaderboard to end up with a silver medal. Sidhu's coach and husband Ronak Pandit says it is





**'I AM VERY HAPPY... IT IS MY FIRST COMMONWEALTH GAMES AND I WON WITH A QUALIFICATION RECORD ALSO. THE GAP BETWEEN ME AND THE SECOND COMPETITOR, THAT WAS A HUGE MARGIN. SO IT WAS PLEASURE WINNING THIS MEDAL FOR INDIA'**

important to handle a shooter like Manu with care. "She is a natural product. We just need to polish her. At the same time, most people her age are like that when they come in. It's that rawness, they have no idea about the world. But once they start performing, expectations build up. That is a crucial state." But Manu does not care. She wants to be left alone and continue winning medals.

The noise of children playing outside barely registers in the room as the twang! twang! of pellet guns pierces the air. About 10 students are shooting at targets in silence, their eyes fixed on the small black circle 10 metres away, shoulders squared, one hand in their pockets. Younger children are lifting and dropping bricks with one arm, to work on their alignment. It is practice time at the shooting range in the Universal Senior Secondary School, Gorla village, Jhajjar district in Haryana, 125 km from Delhi. It is in this room that 16-year-old Manu Bhaker spent many silent hours, sharpening her aim.

### **FAMILY BACKGROUND**

**L**ocated amidst green fields, in wheat country, in a state known for rampant sex selection, the Universal school is an aberration. Run by Manu's family (her mother is principal and her uncle started the school), it offers shooting as a sports option for all students above class five.

The facilities are hardly state-of-the-art. Instead of an automatic machine that costs nearly ₹2.5-₹3 lakh, the manual one used at Gorla village is for ₹12,500. "The whole range was set up with ₹2 lakh in 2013," says Ramkishan Bhaker, Manu's father, a marine engineer with the Merchant Navy. Consumables like pellets and targets can cost up to ₹1,200-1,400 every month, which has to be borne by the students but the school provides dummy guns and pistols. Ketan Pillania, who studies in Class X, has been shooting for two years now. "I want to be like Manu," he says. Ketan bunked Hindi and Sanskrit classes and spends time before and after school to train in the shooting range.

Manu's classmate, 15-year-old Yukta, also started shooting two years ago. Manu's performance, which she watched on YouTube, has been a huge inspiration. "When I saw her do well, I thought I can do this too," she says. Yukta says she spends about five hours training and the rest catching up on her studies. "I am not on Facebook or WhatsApp, nor do I watch much TV." She wakes up at 4.30 am to do an hour of yoga, before making breakfast for the family and then heads to school. After a rigorous day at school, it's back to running or stretching before hitting the books.

**THE MANU EFFECT**

Some are as young as 11, like baby-faced Rohan Dhakkar, who studies in class V but has pestered his parents to splurge on a ₹1.6 lakh pistol. "I have set up a wooden box that I use for a target to practice and improve my shot at home," he says. The investment has not been in vain, because he qualified for the state championship last year.

The Manu effect has been such that the coach's phone has been ringing non-stop since news of the gold medals broke. "People from neighbouring villages are calling to seek admission," he says.

Stories of Manu's hard work are shared among classmates. Says the coach: "She is very determined. If she says she is going to practice till 5 pm, there is

nothing that can make her budge, not hunger or tiredness." Expenses like entry fees of competitions and travel, lack of awareness or sometimes just conservative attitudes act as barriers to these dreams.

**THE GIRL WHO EMPOWERED HERSELF**

In a state where patriarchy is entrenched, Manu was lucky to have parents who encouraged her every adventure. "We went to Rishikesh for rafting and she decided to jump into the river for a swim. She finds zip lining and rappelling thrilling," says her father Ramkishan.

Manu's mother Sumedha says she has brought up her daughter to be fearless. "I was very keen that she learn martial arts and become strong and independent," she says. A yoga enthusiast, Sumedha gave Manu and her brother lessons when they were toddlers.

Manu took to sports like fish to water, excelling in everything. She has won competitions in racing, boxing, martial arts like Thang Ta and judo. It was only two years ago that Manu started shooting, a sport she opted for after an eye injury during boxing practice.

Sumedha recalls how till December last year, Manu was busy with the nationals where she won 15 medals. She then hit the books for two months before her class X exams.

— With agencies



**'I DIDN'T THINK OF IT (MEDAL). I JUST TRIED TO FOCUS ON MY TECHNIQUE, TO BE PERFECT'**



DESIGNER PALLAVI MOHAN TREKS THROUGH LEH TO  
TRACK THE ELUSIVE GHOST OF THE MOUNTAINS

# ROAR OF THE SNOW LEOPARD





**T**he villager thrusts a snow leopard into my hands....a furry, toy version. For that's the closest you can get to feeling the elusive big cat who can beat the chameleon at its own game of deception. It blends with the rugged desolation of the rocks, its striated coat patching seamlessly with the pock-marked and worn rockface, as vigilant and still against the howling winds. Even the most trained spotter has difficulty nailing it as it soft-paws around. Only when it drops guard, maybe a flick of the tail or an itchy twist of the ear, can you sense its presence. "Don't hunt for the predator. Look out for the prey. That's where the snow leopard lies," says our guide. Snow leopards are known to feed on blue sheep, also called *bharal*. Wild ass, ibex, marmots and pika are also a part of its food chain. Despite them being territorial and shy — and the area is home to only nine of them — we are hopeful and determined. So I get rid of the consolation of a soft toy

and set out in a gamely search of these herds of wild prey that exposes us to a remarkable variety of Himalayan fauna. And some virgin vistas of Ladakh.

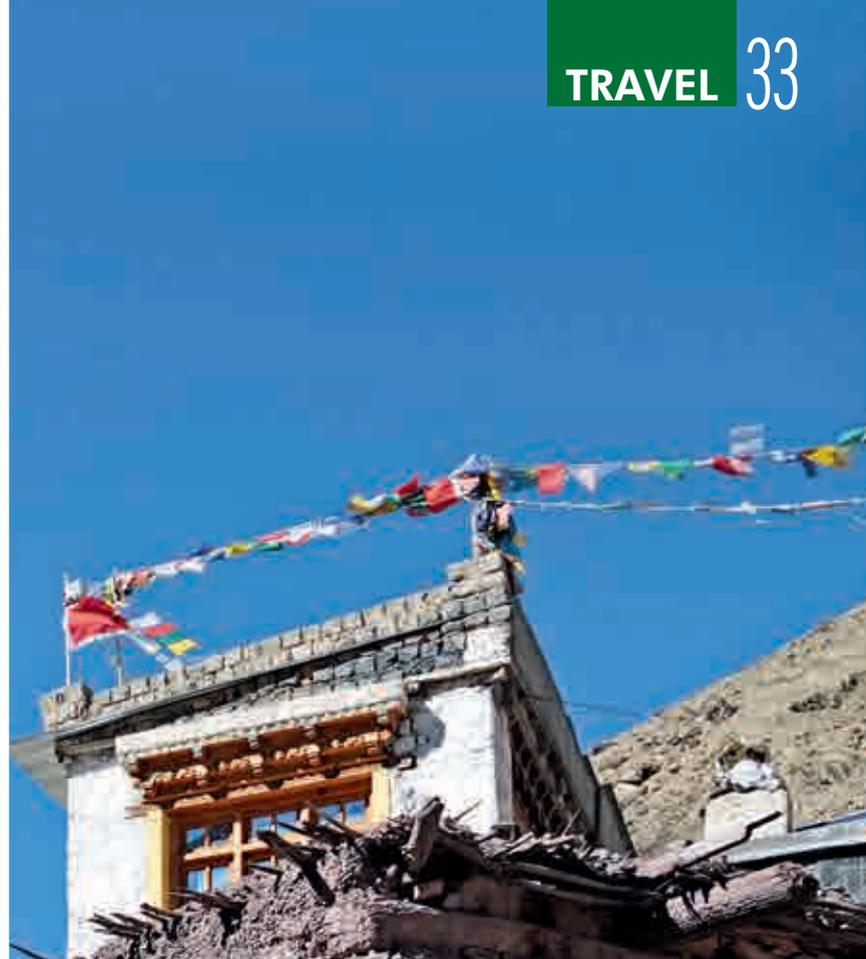
Travelling is an activity that requires a lot of energy but somehow this relaxes my soul. In fact, for all my co-travellers, it's a welcome break from the chaos and monotony of our daily lives. While travelling together, we realise how much we have in common, thanks to our love and appreciation for exploring the possibilities of Creation. The sheer quiet, distance and isolation from everything we know make us feel reborn. The thought of a group of people, from different walks of life, coming together to be immersed in nature and the wild is beautiful to me. It's almost primal. Perhaps justified as we turn up our five senses in this theatre of survival, between the hunter and the hunted. Shorn off human ego, I engage in the game of basic instinct.

We catch the morning flight to the trans-Himalayan town of Leh, spend the day at a pace that is slower than normal to properly acclimatise to the high altitude. The

first day is easy and we are given much-needed info on how the next few days will be like. On Day 2, we explore the beautiful monasteries of Thiksey and Matho and visit the Siddhartha School in Stok. Perhaps enlightenment in the immensity of nature comes easy, perhaps it is the monastic discipline of seclusion but I get close to my zen moment.

**W**e set out for Hemis National Park with an hour-long drive to Zingchen on Day 3. From there, the trek begins with a walk to our camp about an hour-and-a-half away. We spend the daylight hours searching for the elusive ghost of the mountains through binoculars or telescope with the expert spotters. In the evenings, we huddle around the kitchen fire and tuck into our ultra-warm sleeping bags. But still no feline fortune. The next few days, we explore Hemis National Park for wildlife such as the *argali* (Great Tibetan Sheep), *bharal* (Blue Sheep),









## POINTERS

If you're planning on taking up this adventure, here are a few pointers to keep in mind to be fully prepared:

❑ **TWO DAYS IN LEH:** Don't miss out the two days in Leh. It is essential to acclimatise you to the environment, so the sudden temperature change won't shock you.

❑ **GO WITH A GUIDE:** Especially if it's the first time you are trekking, it is best to travel with people who know the place and are familiar with the surroundings. This ensures you get the best sights and are safe.

❑ **CHECK AHEAD FOR TEMPERATURE AND CLIMATE:** This is something we should keep in mind whenever we travel. Check ahead for the climate, so you are well-prepared with warm clothes. Carry plenty of thermals, innerwear, socks (we need three layers in Leh!).

❑ **TREKKING TOOLS:** If you are embarking on a trek, don't forget to carry the essentials — mountaineering sunglasses, appropriate shoes, water pack, walking sticks.

❑ **EAT HEALTHY:** When you are trekking, your body extra nourishment to stay up and at it! Eat healthy, nutritious food to keep yourself going

❑ **TRAVEL LIGHT:** It is best to carry not too much stuff. You only need the above mentioned items. Call ahead to inquire all the items that will be provided so you don't carry extra items unnecessarily.

*shapu* (Ladakhi urial) but the snow leopard doesn't cross our paths. Our camps are moved depending on intel reports of sightings around the valley. Instead, we content ourselves with stories, of how the hunter snoops through the day and strikes at night, stealing a lamb from its mother unnoticed, snuffing out life instantly, slinking noiselessly away from the shed and indulging in the coldest slaughter. Sometimes there is a carcass of a bull in the middle of nowhere. On paths which have been traversed by herders. Each day, we trek for a few kilometres, as little as 2 km per day and as much as 8 km per day. I remember getting up early

every morning just to check if there's a movement somewhere, if the rocks have shape-shifted somehow. "You cannot make plans here. You walk as the cat walks, rest as it rests. It is looking at you all the time and you, too, have to keep looking," our guide says, encouraging us as if on a pilgrimage.

**A**nd then dawns Day 4. In rather a dramatic fashion. Waking up, the fresh morning breeze freezing my nose, I peel my eyes and keep them glued to the telescope on the nearest ridge. And then there's a blotch of a movement. Falling rocks or a chimera?



A boulder? The guide signals to me animatedly. And there I see him, a male, through the lens in all his feline grandeur, the black rosettes on the white coat, like molten patches of snow on rock. Powerful and regal, he scales the steep slopes with ease, springing up on his hind legs, his tail ramrod straight down the edge, vaulting himself for a liftoff, almost six times the length of his body. And then comes the jump over the ledge and the disappearance into thin air. A moment of sheer aggression that had a tautness and ferocity of its own. Reality or illusion? The raspy air cuts across my face. For millennia, there's a reason why this magnificent cat is the king of the mountains. He deigns to oblige you when he

wants. Only when he thinks you have earned it. And freezes you into complete subservience.

It is not easy to sum my up experience in a few words. I still remember walking in extremely challenging terrains only to find out that the mischievous leopard has moved to a completely different territory, leaving us to follow his footprints. Looking back, the trip was challenging and pushed all of us much beyond our comfort zone, living without electricity, no washrooms, no access to hot water and creature comforts we take for granted in the big cities. But when I revisit the roaring sight of the mighty beast, it all makes sense — he had challenged my limits and I had excelled.



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# JUST WATER

DELHI CAN NEVER RUN DRY IF WE RESORT TO TRADITIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT, USE AND REVIVING OLD STEPWELLS AND TANKS. **DIALOGUE** TAKES YOU OUT ON PROJECT AQUA

**FIND A HAMAM:** When it comes to spa in summers, there's no beating the traditional logic of some hydrotherapy that has been handed to us down the ages. The Lodhi has recreated a Turkish hamam with luxuriant mother of pearl. Usually, the insides are done in pine wood to seal in the fragrant sauna-like atmosphere. I slip into a *peshtemal*, a large, towel-fringed, cotton cloth wrapped around the torso and enter the domed chambers. There's a monolithic marble platform, griddle-hot from the steam chambers underneath and sizzling everytime water is poured on to it. Sliding slippery on the slab, you feel much like kebabs in various stages of preparedness. The smiling masseur slaps some tepid water on me from a marble bowl and has me face lying down, waiting for my skin pores to open up and disgorge all impurities. And just when I seem flaccid and malleable, almost falling asleep, she brings out the *kese*, a rough cloth mitten to scour the dirt out of my pores and deliver a bracing massage alongside. She moves in circles, opening up all pressure points and balancing the energy flow with the rhythm of the universe. Then she soaps me over and gives me a final rubdown with a scrub pad of plant fibres. And when I feel the gentleness of being after it, almost silken, she covers me with foaming suds from an olive oil soap, bubbly and light.

The hamam has a ritual and its own grammar. There can be no shortcuts. So once I have slid off the hot treatment, the masseur takes me to the wet area with marble fountains full of lukewarm water. She pours the water with a *tas* or a silver bowl (it can also be brass or copper) and washes me with its goodness. Finally, I dunk into a cool jacuzzi with rain showers from the top to seal in the benefits under my skin. The principles of hot and cold treatments are the same as the great baths of yore. To round it off, sip on herbal tea and a platter of fruits.





**INDOOR SKI:** When we took the toboggan down the slope, we had no idea that by the time we reached the bottom we would be on our bellies. That's how unpredictable sliding down snow is. We were trying hard not to get our hands frozen and managing to barely save our dignity by not slipping on ice and landing on our backs. This though is not the Himalayas but India's first sci-fi themed Snow Planet at Noida's DLF Mall of India. It is a planet alright. And it has its own unique species of creatures, too. You can meet Dr Kit and D-Fly, the super inter-galactic penguins and Z-Timo (Snow Planet's version of an eskimo) and Orran, whose voice will guide you through the "planet" and all the snow-filled adventures you can be a part of.

This unique land of dreams has been conceptualised and brought to life by Chiliad Procons, the people behind Mumbai's Snow World. Said Prasuk Jain, co-founder and managing director of Ski India, "The winter themed sports activities, so far, have been untapped, pan-India. Therefore, we decided to conceptualise an all-year round indoor snow sport resort introducing indoor skiing for the first time in India."

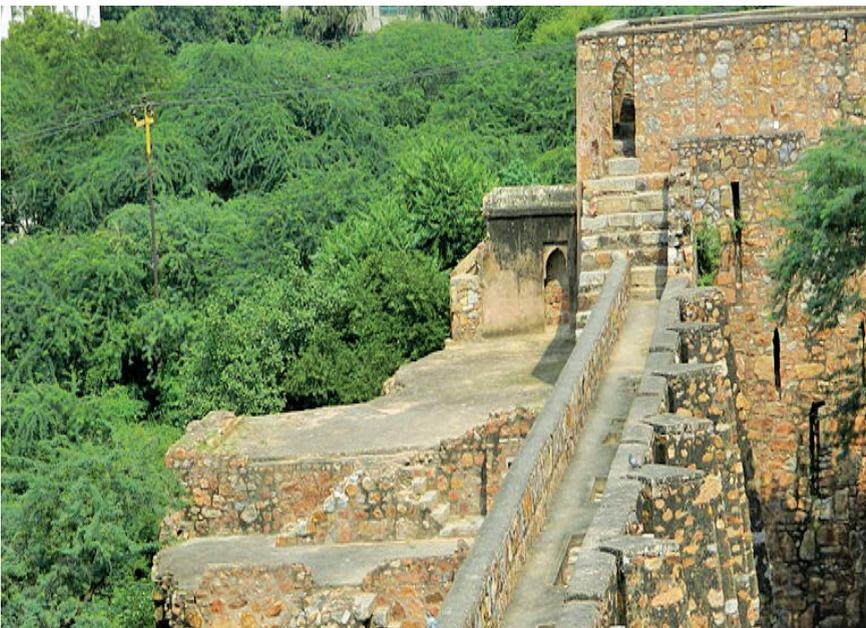
The entire look of the arcade is very international, with a huge space given to the storage of proper snow clothes — jackets, gloves and boots — in all sizes. The temperature inside the planet is -15 degrees. Although the layer of snow is not that deep, where you have to pull your leg out or can build a snowman, but it is enough to engage in a snow fight with. With 42 degrees outside, inside our fingers were going numb and smoke billowing out of our mouths and nostrils. Still there was no stopping us from taking pictures, either with the reindeer sledge with a big snowman on it or with the figurines of the inter-galactic species strewn all over the snow floor.

To get the place to freeze at that temperature through the year was an arduous task but the makers did not make any compromise in bringing in the latest international technology and installing more than the required number of coolers and ACs. It is no less than a snow resort where you can choose from various gradient tubes, toboggan down a 100 feet slope (or take the bob sledge) and have fun. "Escape from the heat outside for sometime," Benny, from the design team put it. He took us through the special cave, housing more species from the planet. We imagined walking and moving creatures but they were figurines. But we were amazed to see several versions of penguins and Eskimos.

This snow park opens to the public around next week and tickets are priced at ₹1,200 (per head) for a one hour and 45 minutes of frozen experience. And it's not just the summers that the Ski India is going to be active. You can throw snow balls in winter too.

Take your excitement to a whole new level and challenge your adventurous streak. With 6,000 sq m of the area covered in real snow, you can experience winter wonderland right here in Delhi. Jump into a pile of snow or encounter your first snowfall; engage in a playful snow fight or make the perfect snow angels; do all of this and more only at Ski India Resort.

**BHARDWAJ LAKE, ASOLA:** If you want to spend your time with nature and crystal calm waters, then you must visit Bhardwaj Lake of Asola. The area is located on the border of Delhi. Aditya Arya, a photographer who has researched the area says, "This is a man-made lake which has remained unexplored for many years. A few decades back, these lakes were large open pit mines. Large-scale dynamiting turned the nearby hills into troughs. Groundwater seeped in, rainwater collected and that's how these lakes were formed." It's clean and quite deep too. You can take a swim in the lake and there are several perches where you can dive. Besides this rocky surface, pebbles, sand and gravel, visitors to this region can expect to behold a lot of butterflies, feathered friends, rabbits and blue bulls. Word has it that wild animals also abound this forest, though they hardly make themselves visible.



**PEACOCK LAKE, FARIDABAD:** Also known as the Surajkund Lake, the Peacock Lake was historically a reservoir with a half-moon amphitheatre right next to it. You will also witness the ruins of a sun temple on the western ghats of the lake. It was built in the 10th century by King Surajpal of Tomar dynasty, who incidentally happened to be a worshipper of the Sun God. Ravi Jillapalli, a student wildlife activist, wrote of his research in the area: "This is the only live lake in summer on which all wildlife depends. We have 200 plus species of birds, and a number of animals like spotted deer, hares, rabbits, wild boars, monitor lizards, mongoose and other stray animals." The lake attracts thousands of visitors every year who often come for relaxed picnics, photography or just to unwind amidst so much serenity. The view from here is quite spectacular as you can see the Aravalli Hills contouring the outskirts.



### CHILL AT DELHI'S COOLEST BAR

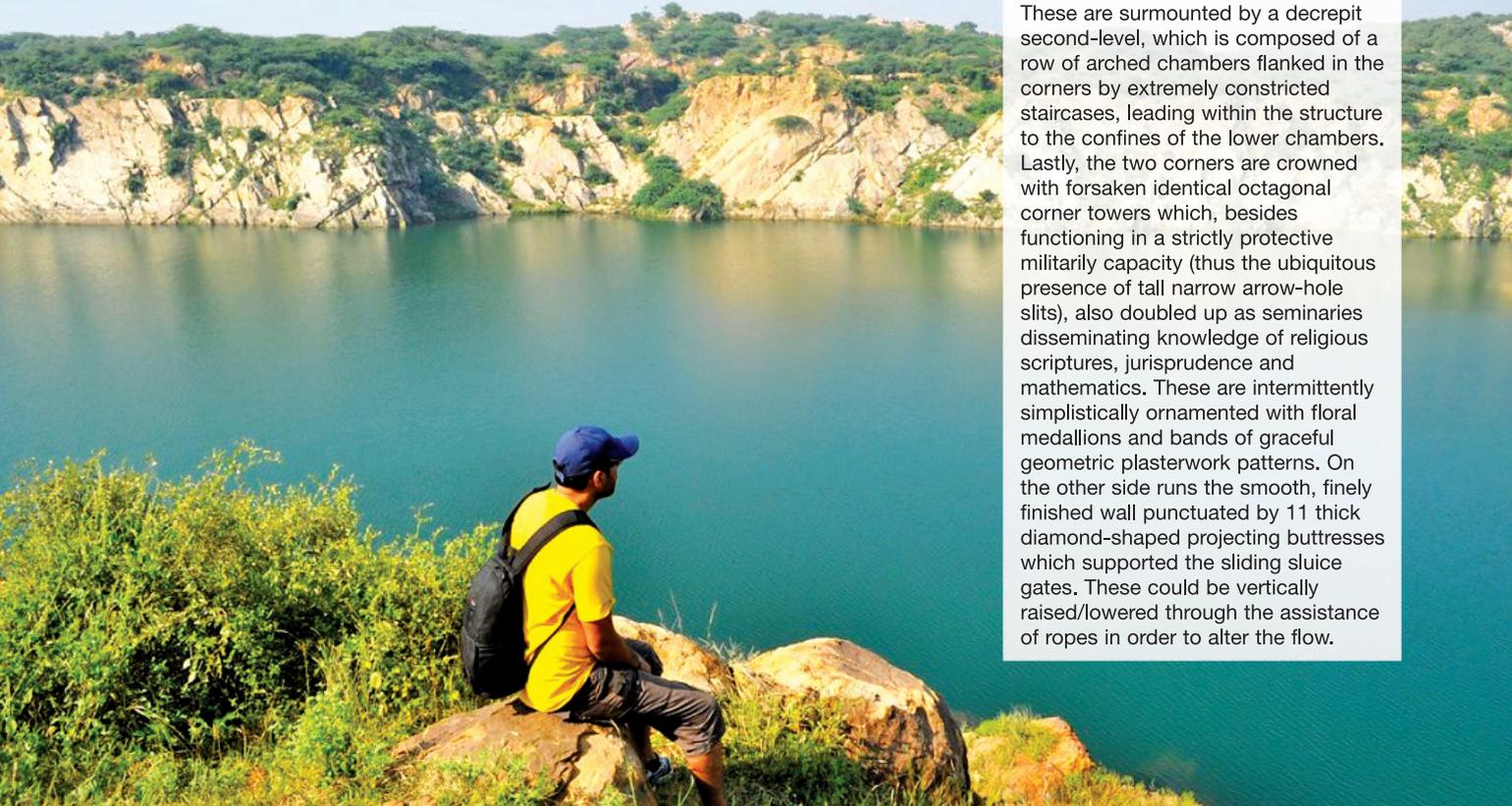
How does it feel when you visit a place where everything is made of ice, starting from the walls to sofas to tables and chairs? Well, you are not visiting Antarctica by the way. The place is an ice lounge. Much like other frozen hotels of the world, everything you see and touch is made of crystal clear ice, which makes you shiver and tremble in cold unless and until you cover yourself up completely. You won't be surprised when your favourite drink is served in ice glasses and your favourite snacks and food items on frost platters. Well, as you drink, you touch the ice glass to your lips, and you can very well see how the warmth of your mouth creates an indent in the frost glass.



**SATPULA BRIDGE:** The bridge was built in 1323. It's a seven-opening (pul) arch with a magnificent piece of Muhammad bin Tughlaq architecture, connecting the principal cities of Delhi. It was a remarkable ancient water harvesting dam. Says historian Sohail Hashmi, "The objective of building the weir was providing water for irrigation and also, as a part of the city wall, to provide defence security to the city against attacking armies."

It's a gigantic three-tiered weir bridge designed to control stream flow. It is characteristic of a rainwater-fed water channel draining into the mighty river Yamuna in order to bring extensive neighbouring areas under the scope of agriculture and irrigation to sustain the local population. Says Hashmi, "The location of the Satpula, which is a part of the east-west wall protecting the southern part of Jahanpanah, drains a catchment comprising a series of low hills on the south, east, and west." The stream draining the catchment area, known as Barapulla Nallah, was planned to be tapped to store the run-off water of the catchment. Command area for irrigation was identified in a large open plain on the northern side for providing water supplies from the proposed storage behind the Satpula, to grow irrigated crops and sustain a large population.

The bridge consists of seven arched, chamber-like openings on the lowest level and two additional similar openings on each flank built on successively perceptibly higher levels. These are surmounted by a decrepit second-level, which is composed of a row of arched chambers flanked in the corners by extremely constricted staircases, leading within the structure to the confines of the lower chambers. Lastly, the two corners are crowned with forsaken identical octagonal corner towers which, besides functioning in a strictly protective militarily capacity (thus the ubiquitous presence of tall narrow arrow-hole slits), also doubled up as seminaries disseminating knowledge of religious scriptures, jurisprudence and mathematics. These are intermittently simplistically ornamented with floral medallions and bands of graceful geometric plasterwork patterns. On the other side runs the smooth, finely finished wall punctuated by 11 thick diamond-shaped projecting buttresses which supported the sliding sluice gates. These could be vertically raised/lowered through the assistance of ropes in order to alter the flow.



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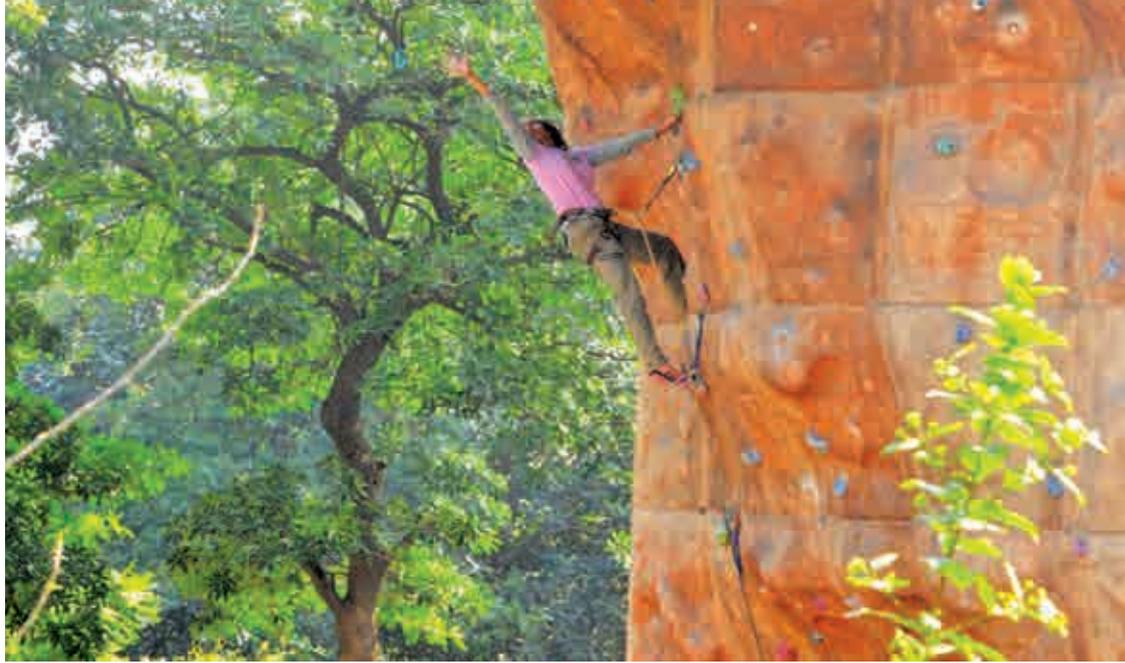
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### INDIAN MOUNTAINEERING

**FOUNDATION:** If you want your child to develop an aptitude for the great outdoors and take to the Himalayas, the Indian Mountaineering Foundation in Moti Bagh is the place to go to if you want to build his/her strength, grit and endurance levels. Climb the artificial wall or go bouldering. It is not just about physical stamina but developing will power and the can-do spirit. Sign up for their preparatory courses.

# INSIDEOUT

SUMMERS CAN BE PUNISHING WHEN IT COMES TO OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES IN THE CITY. THE SANITISED ENVIRONS OF A MALL WITH AMUSEMENT TOOLS DO LITTLE TO ENHANCE YOUR CHILD'S ABILITIES. **DIALOGUE** LISTS SEVERAL INDOOR PURSUITS AND CAMPS THAT CAN BE AS ENRICHING



**BAL BHAWAN/NATIONAL CHILDREN'S MUSEUM:** Bal Bhavan has been planned in a way that takes into consideration a child's psychology and his/her approach of looking at the world around. And while there may be digital classrooms with 3D graphics at work, nothing can beat the touch and feel of the real world. The museum possesses a rich collection of objects that fascinate children including toys and dolls from different countries, stone and bronze objects, traditional jewellery, utensils, art and craft material, musical instruments, head gear and currency of different countries. The museum provides numerous opportunities to children to help them realise their potential as artists, craftsmen, performers or scientists by organising workshops in different areas. Besides the museum exhibits, participatory activities are also conducted, where children are free to experiment, observe and analyse.

**LIGHT AND SOUND SHOW AT OLD FORT:** For every generation of Delhiites, picnics at the Old Fort and the Zoo have been a must-do in winter. But come summer evenings and with the breeze blowing in from the water moat, the willows swaying like giant fans and boats bobbing in the water, it is the balm you need in the gush of the city. Then there's The Light and Sound show that takes you down the annals of history and gives you an insight into our origins. With the fort anchoring us to our past, contemporary arts performers and practitioners keep their tradition alive by staging shows against its backdrop.

**Timings:** The show is held between 7 pm and 8 pm in Hindi and 8:30 pm and 9:30 pm in English.

**Cost:** The tickets are priced at ₹80 for adults and ₹40 for children.



**BOOK CAFES:** Imagine spending a quiet afternoon sipping fruit punches and munching on a cake, reading through a rivetting book.

#### WHERE TO GO

**Cafe Turtle:** Aside from the usual coffees and teas, Cafe Turtle offers a full-fledged healthy menu and lets you browse through books of your choice as well as introduce you to new genres.

**May Day Cafe and Bookstore:** One of the best places to go with friends in Delhi to read and also discuss culture and stories with the friendly staff

**CMYK bookstore:** Sweep through graphic books on every subject and learn how pictures tell a thousand stories more powerfully than a documentary. Flip through the pages with your favourite chocolate coolers.



**SHOOT 'EM DOWN WITH PAINT BALL:** Bond with your friends over paintball. Just head to the nearest facility for an exciting day. Visit Rockshot Paintball Sports at Noida or The Paintball Co in Gurugram or Lock 'n Load at Pacific Mall in Subhash Nagar. A great lesson in team-building and exploding all your creative energies.

**NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART:** Museums may seem passé but this modern gallery is not. Spend a day exploring not just the fantastic locations but also the breathtaking art that the city has at its disposal. Be surprised by an amazing collection of contemporary paintings and sculptures. Not just the interiors, the exteriors too play host to magnificent sculptures like the one done by Subodh Gupta.



**HOGO BUS TOUR:** If you don't want to stay put at one place and explore all of Delhi, hop on to the HoHo bus. It covers over 19 different destinations in the city. You can get off wherever you like and stay as long as you want, then hop on to the next HoHo that comes along.

**Ticket:** ₹500 per person, available on the bus and on hohodelhi.com.

**Tip:** The HOHO bus doesn't run on Monday.

**INDIA HABITAT CENTRE:** A pit-stop for a host of activities, the IHC offers theatre workshops by the likes of Barry John and VK Sharma, cartooning by Ajit Narayan, creative writing by Sharmila and Abhijit Sinha and calligraphy by Shruti Dimply.



**STELLAR CHILDREN'S MUSEUM:** The museum is the first of its kind in India, modelled after some of the best children's museums in the world. The extremely interactive and play-based exhibits offer a safe and interesting place for young ones to play, learn and discover the world around them in exciting ways. Designed by experts from Chicago, the Stellar Children's Museum boasts of multiple galleries full of fun and learning.

It is the perfect solution for parents who want their children to be entertained throughout the year. The museum has a number of role-play and collaborative work exhibits that give the child valuable learning opportunities. It is also the much needed solution for rainy/sunny days and the "I'm bored!" feeling in kids. It is a safe, confined indoor area and so the parents can sit back and relax as their children play and explore the museum.



While exhibits and play areas may seem incredibly simple to the adult eye, they all present the world to the child in a unique way where the simplest things end up being the most fascinating.

Some aspects we like are:

□ **INVENT IT:** Visitors are transformed into budding scientists in this exhibit area. Through experimentation, interactives encourage the exploration of various physical sciences including air, gravity and magnetism.

□ **BUILD IT:** Visitors can investigate the applied sciences by combining and rearranging components to alter existing objects or create new objects in interactives that utilise simple machines and other tools.

□ **CREATE IT:** The Create It gallery offers the space and materials for young artists to explore various media and foundational concepts of the visual arts; colour, line, form, texture, and composition. Kinetic, tonal and role-playing activities teach the

fundamentals of music and performance.

□ **LIVE IT:** The Live It exhibit gallery provides opportunities for role play and self expression in a comfortable environment. Various interactives also encourage the development of problem-solving and reasoning skills through activities that involve sorting, counting, guess and check, and other early learning skills.

□ **DISCOVER IT:** The Discover It exhibit gallery presents visitors with an overview of the fascinating world they live in. Various interactives encourage the exploration of cultures and regions through touch and sight while also providing fine motor challenges that emphasise problem-solving skills for all visitors. This area transports visitors across the globe as it integrates people, places and ideas from around the world into kinesthetic, tactile experiences through a series of designated pods with activities that utilise fine motor skills and encourage visitors to stop

and learn through moments of discovery.

□ **EXPLORE IT:** The Explore It area transports visitors on a journey to the depths of the forest, providing opportunities for sensory investigation and gross-motor challenges. Grab a pair of binoculars and get ready to venture into the tropical forest where visitors are encompassed by a physically active space that encourages the investigation of the surrounding world through gross-motor skills including climbing, jumping, rolling and crawling!

□ **SPLASH IT:** Here, children and their adult friends explore the way water moves by watching it, touching it and redirecting it. Children tumble boats and roll balls down the zig-zag water ramps or float them safely through a channel they construct using the lock system. Kids and grown-ups work together to build mazes to redirect the flow of water, use their problem-solving skills to construct systems with elements that are both simple and wildly unpredictable.

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WITH SUMMER TEMPERATURES SET TO SOAR, HERE ARE SOME ECO-FRIENDLY AND SIMPLE WAYS TO KEEP YOUR COOL. AND THEY DON'T COST MUCH

**T**he heat is soaring and temperatures, according to met experts, are all set to rise further this season. Sheathing homes from the raging sun means you could be blinded by exorbitant electricity bills — or may be not. For here are some eco-friendly ways to keep cool even during the peak of summer at minimal cost.

If you are living on the top floor of a building, you are sure to get the full blast of the sun's heat. Minimise it by covering the roof's surface with gunny bags which can be sprinkled with water once or twice a day. This simple system cools the house in two ways. The evaporating water from the soaked gunny sacks cools the roof while the ceiling fan inside the room drives the cool air down. For added cover, mount a green net on a frame to stop the sun from heating up the roof surface or the gunny bags. This simple module is a very effective air-conditioning system with very little energy and cost involved. The sacks last for about two years, after which they need to be replaced. Needless to say, the cost is miniscule as compared to the



cost of running the AC 24x7. Besides, the cooling process is not dependent on erratic power supply. Works best in dry areas.

Another eco-friendly way is to cover the roof with earthen *sikoris*, which are available at the local potter. Earthenware has the quality of bringing down the temperature through evaporation. Additionally, when placed face down, the air trapped inside insulates and prevents the rooms from heating up further.

**A** coat of white lime wash on a flat terrace can help the slab to remain cool throughout the summer. In much the same way ice/snow reflects UV rays instead of absorbing the heat, white roofs/terraces reflect the heat and help cool the house. However, this washes away in the rains, so a re-application is required every summer. A more long-lasting though expensive solution is to use solar reflective white paint to coat the roof. Those with resources could also go a step further and have the outer walls of their house coated with mud (which acts as an insulator against the heat).

Another way of reducing roof temperature is stacking up bundles of damp straw (a natural insulator) on a plastic sheet. Or just curate a terrace garden (the mud used to grow plants acts as an insulator) though it may be time-consuming. If you have a green thumb, fill your spaces up with a variety of plants.

# IT TAKES A LITTLE EFFORT



But not just rooftops, strategically placed plants, shrubs and vines function as living air-conditioners and can effectively cool a home. Planting shady varieties on the east and west sides of the house blocks out the heat. Vines and creepers along staircase and balcony grills act as natural purifiers. You can also grow plenty of plants in your balcony or mount vertical wall gardens to be heat blockers. For flats, window planters are another option to bring in greenery. Plants on a window ledge humidify and cool the hot air blowing in and around your house.

Inside the house, an excellent and affordable method to keep a room cool lies in the placement of three rudimentary items — a fan, large metal bowl and ice. Place the metal bowl filled with ice in front of the fan. The air coursing through it brings down the ambient temperature. While other frozen items also work, ice is a better option because even after the cubes melt, the cool water left behind continues to be effective in maintaining comfortable environs.

Keep the windows shut and draw the curtains in the morning so that radiative heat and glare do not come inside.

**W**hile everyone knows that cross ventilation or cross flow of air can bring down the temperatures, the time is a crucial factor. The best time to open the windows during summers is between 5 to 8 am and between 7 and 10 pm. During the day, one should shut the windows and draw the curtains unless you want to get the full blast of a heat wave. Banish those dark synthetic drapes, opt for cottons in white or pastel colours. Layer your windows with jute

screens and bamboo shades. Not just the curtains, switch to sheets and pillows made of cotton.

Hanging a wet sheet in front of your window can create a natural air-conditioner-esque effect. Or go for the Egyptian method of sleeping on a slightly wet sheet. As the sheet dries, it will keep you cool and fresh. If that doesn't appeal to you, sprinkle baby powder between sheets which will absorb sweat and keep things cool.

Inside the house, turn off the lights when not in use, especially incandescent bulbs. Not only do they consume more power and increase the electricity bills, they also radiate a lot of heat. It's best to replace them with cooler light-emitting diodes (LEDs) or compact fluorescents (CFLs).

Another way to bring down the heat (and the bills) is to turn off electronic items when they are running idly. These emit heat, so unplug the electronic equipment when not in use or use a smart power strip to power off electronics when they are idle and minimise the amount of heat they generate.

**T**ry doing your cooking, laundry and ironing during the cooler parts of the day or in the evening. Partially cooking your next day's meals in the evening can help reduce daytime load and keep the carbon footprint down.

Then there's the ultimate ruse of optical illusion. Adopt minimalist décor styles which trick the mind into believing it is in open and calm environs. A room that's filled with chunky furniture and souvenirs seems congested and stifling. So pack away all unnecessary knick-knacks and add some flowers, vases and pebbles to create a relaxing sanctuary.



# PICK A PUNCH

BE IT TRADITIONAL COOLERS OR MODERN TWISTS,  
THE FRUIT BURST THIS SEASON HAS A SPICY KICK

**O**ld favourites die hard. Sip on a cooling *sherbet* or *aam panna*, slurp up an ice *gola*, scoop up spoonfuls of cool *rabdi* or *kulfi* or simply feel the snuggle of a late summer afternoon with our grandparents indulging us.

How do you like your *kulfi*? “Popping out of a fruit, perhaps.” Kuremal Mohan Lal Kulfi Wale at Churiwalan can do just that. So, you can have this summer delicacy stuffed in an orange or a pomegranate and, of course, the the summer favourite — mango. There are also *kulfi* julpeps in exotic flavours like *aam papad*, *chandan*, *kewra*, *imli* besides the usual fruit flavours. To indulge in other sumptuous varieties and chunky mango *rabri*, head to Duliram Nareshchand’s shop in Kucha Patiram, at Sitaram Bazaar. Clearly tradition has emerged fresh wearing contemporary suits.

Walk down Matia Mahal to savour some more. The Shahi Tukda Cool Point shop has on offer refreshing *badam* milk (a mix of almonds and milk) and cold *rabri* (a sweet condensed milk dish) which is a hot favourite during the sizzling summer days. Walk on further and you will encounter a new take on the old milk shakes. While one might have drank banana and mango shakes, temporary moveable stalls on *thelas* now hawk milk shakes where the fruits used are watermelon and apple.

But if you want to sip some cooling sherbets inside your house, pick these up from Harnarain Gokal Chand’s 100-year-old sherbet shop in Khari Baoli. Pick up from *Thandai kesari badam*, *Khus*, *Kesar badam*, *Rose* and *Shikanji*. If *lassi* is your drink of choice, look no further than the Amritsari Lassi Store, which has been standing tall since a century. The rose-badam flavour is lick-worthy — to the last drop.

**B**ut then the newer hotels and restaurants too are trying to up their game with their offerings which offer a combination of the traditional with a contemporary twist.

Kiyan, the signature all-day-dining restaurant at The Roseate and DEL, the world cuisine bistro has an array of 10 delights specially curated to beat the summer heat. These range from *Aam* (mango), *Chickoo* (sapota), *Farm Plucked Shahtut* (mulberry), *Papaya Basil*, *Sardar Melon and Saunf* (fennel), *Coconut*, *Pudina* (mint), *Kacchi Haldi* (turmeric), *Gulab* (rose) and *Paan* (betel leaf) — which are a gastronomic delight. These cool, creamy, frothy yoghurt drinks will be available till the end of June. The steeped-in-history Imperial Hotel has specially created a saffron and papaya smoothie with basil seeds and mint. ITC’s mangotini, a twist on the martini, is quite a hit too.





**SAFFRON AND PAPAYA  
SMOOTHIE WITH BASIL SEEDS  
AND MINT**

Fresh yogurt: 300 ml  Papaya puree: 150 ml  Soaked saffron: 1 gm  
 Palm sugar: 20 gm  Honey: 30 gm  
 Fresh Cream: 100 gm  Soaked basil seeds: 1tb; Fresh mint jullion: 10  
 Mint spring for garnish; blend yogurt, papaya, saffron, palm sugar, honey and cream together  Add mint julienne to the blend; Transfer the blended smoothie in to a glass tumbler and top with basil seeds and garnish with mint sprig.

—The Imperial

**CORPSE REVIVER**

**INGREDIENTS**

Bacardi White: 25 ml  Cointreau: 25 ml  Lemon juice: 20 ml  Absinthe: 5 ml  
 White chocolate: 15 ml

**Method:** Shake and fine strain over ice cubes. Garnish with mint sprigs, white chocolate teddy, orange crisp and cinnamon powder

— Hyatt Regency



**SPICELANDIC**

**INGREDIENTS**  Vodka: 60 ml  Lime Juice: 15 ml  Sugar Syrup: 15 ml  Pineapple Juice: 15 ml  Mint

**METHOD:**

Shaken well and serve in a chilled martini glass. Garnish with mint and lemon slices.

— Hyatt Regency



### SUMMER LIME CAPRESE

**Cook Time:** 20 mins **Difficulty:** Easy  
**Serves:** 4-6

An Italian-style caprese salad is always spot on too and so easy to throw together. All you need to do is layer cool tomato slices and soft mozzarella between fresh basil leaves with a drizzle of olive oil and some cracked pepper on top... Et voilà!

#### INGREDIENTS

- 200 gm cherry tomatoes, halved
- 100 gm bocconcini, cut in small pieces
- 30 gm fresh basil □ 3-4 tsp extra virgin olive oil □ 8-10 gm Arqa Summer Lime Dressing □ Sea salt to taste □ Toothpicks/ Satay Sticks

#### METHOD

- Combine extra virgin olive oil with Arqa Summer Lime Dressing to make a smooth emulsion.
- Thread half a cherry tomato, a small piece of basil leaf and a mozzarella ball onto the toothpicks until all ingredients are used.
- Drizzle summer lime dressing generously on the sticks, leaving the end clean.
- Sprinkle sea salt to taste.
- Serve immediately or refrigerate for an hour before serving.

—Foodhall

### CUCUMBER SALAD ON HIMALAYAN SALT BLOCK

**Cook Time:** 15 minutes **Difficulty:** Easy **Serves:** 2-3 people

Flavour your regular salad by letting it rest on an Himalayan salt block and see the magic

**INGREDIENTS** □ 1 cucumber □ ½ cup thick Greek yogurt □ 1 teaspoon cumin powder □ ¼ cup chopped dill leaves □ 1 small red onion, finely chopped □ 1 pomegranate

#### METHOD

- Whisk yoghurt in a bowl along with cumin powder and dill leaves. Slice the cucumber thinly using a vegetable peeler.
- Place the cucumber slices on cold salt block and allow it to cure and absorb the flavour. It should take about a couple of minutes on each side, depending on the thickness of cucumber slices.
- Once you are done curing all the cucumber slices, put it in a salad bowl and toss it with chopped red onion. Pour the yoghurt sauce and give it a light mix.
- Drizzle some pomegranate pearls on top and serve the salad cold.

—Foodhall



### BLUEBERRY COCONUT POPSICLES

**Cook Time:** 30 minutes + chill time **Serves:** Makes 8 popsicles

Keep cool this summer with this healthy, vegan dessert

#### INGREDIENTS

□ 2 cups fresh blueberries □ 1½ tbsp water  
□ 5 tbsp maple syrup □ ¾ cup coconut milk (canned or fresh) □ ½ cup almond milk

#### METHOD

- In a saucepan, add the blueberries, water and 3 tbsp maple syrup. Bring it up to gentle



syrup over medium heat. Don't crush the berries. Let it cool.

- In another bowl, whisk together the coconut milk, 2 tbsp maple syrup and almond milk.
- Take your popsicle moulds and fill it half with the blueberry mix and half with the coconut milk mix. Let it freeze overnight so that the popsicles are solid.

—Foodhall



# THE OLDEST TWINNS

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**ASHEESH MAMGAIN**  
UNVEILS THE  
DELIGHTS OF  
PRAGPUR AND GARLI,  
OUR FIRST HERITAGE  
VILLAGES THAT  
COMBINED COLONIAL  
AND INDIC ELEMENTS  
IN A GRACEFUL AND  
AESTHETIC GRAMMAR

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**A**n old African proverb that goes something like “wood already touched by fire is not hard to set alight” could not be more apt when you talk of Pragpur and Garli, which are officially “the first designated heritage villages of India.” For they show how old grandeur can be encouragement for new endeavours and lasting legacies.

Tucked away in the mountainous folds of Himachal Pradesh and in the shadow of Dhauladhar range, are two idyllic medieval villages which possess a unique distinction and peculiar feel. Venturing into the twin villages of Pragpur and Garli will fill you up with a sense of discovery and wonderment at every turn. A little research reveals that Pragpur and Garli (they are twin villages), which are in the Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh (elevation 650 m), hold the distinction of being the country’s first officially designated heritage villages. The State Government notified these as heritage villages on December 9, 1997. In the last few years Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) has listed a total of 77 heritage buildings in the Pragpur Heritage Zone, which include both Garli and Pragpur.

Pragpur and Garli villages came up as planned settlements. In the late 16th century the local Jaswan royal family wanted to set up a town in memory of Princess Prag

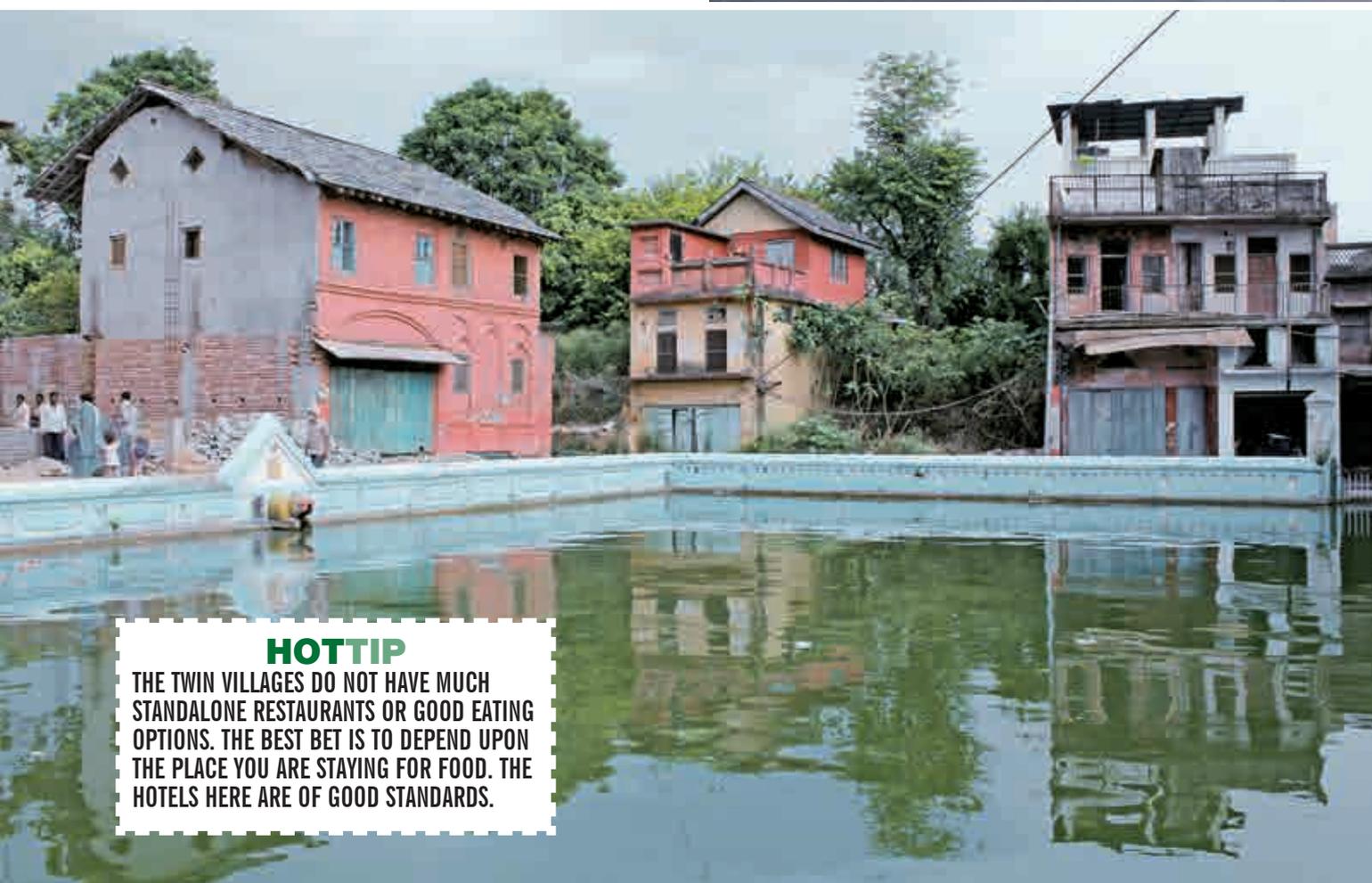
(Above) A traditional wood brick house in Garli and (below) another one in Pragpur

Dei. The job was entrusted to a Kuthiala Sood, from a merchant family. The location where Pragpur came up was found to be the most suitable as it was close to Beas river and in the middle of three *shakti peeths* of Jwalaji Mata, Chintapurni and Bajreswari. Over the years the Sood families living here flourished, especially after Shimla became the capital of the British Raj.

**T**he Sood clan consists of a number of business families who dealt essentially in spices and timber with the British in Shimla. They used their wealth thus created to build their own fanciful hamlet in Pragpur and Garli. They also had homes in Shimla and were very influential. During winters when the British used to come down from Shimla to Delhi, the Soods would return to the splendour of their homes in Pragpur Garli.

The Soods' business was spread till as far as Kabul in Afghanistan. Besides fabulous houses, they also built public facilities such as hospitals, schools, *sarais* and water tanks. Rai Bahadur Manohar Lal Sood was a businessman, advocate and a philanthropist. He was also active in the Quit India movement. The buildings he built in Garli still stand today.

Starting early morning from New Delhi, I stopped for a breakfast of *tandoori paranthas* at the famous *dhabas*



### **HOTTIP**

THE TWIN VILLAGES DO NOT HAVE MUCH STANDALONE RESTAURANTS OR GOOD EATING OPTIONS. THE BEST BET IS TO DEPEND UPON THE PLACE YOU ARE STAYING FOR FOOD. THE HOTELS HERE ARE OF GOOD STANDARDS.



(Clockwise from top) A Garli heritage house which is now a hotel; a portrait from Garli and tank square in Pragpur

## GETTING THERE

PRAGPUR IS 187 KM FROM CHANDIGARH AND 112 KM FROM SHIMLA. FROM NEW DELHI IT IS 425 KM (NINE HOURS DRIVE). FROM NEW DELHI TAKE THE KARNAL HIGHWAY (NH1) TO REACH ANANDPUR SAHIB (VIA AMBALA, RUPNAGAR AND UNA), THEN ON TO AMBALA. FROM AMBALA GO TO KALOHA. PRAGPUR IS 6 KM FROM KALOHA. THE CONDITION OF THE ROAD IS GOOD AND THE DRIVE AFTER AMBALA GETS INCREASINGLY PLEASANT.

of Murthal and ate lunch at Ambala. While driving at a leisurely pace, I reached Pragpur at around 4 in the evening. We set up base at the PWD guest house in Pragpur which is an impressive looking building.

The first impressions of Pragpur were nothing out of the ordinary. But as I was soon to find out, the village, which is more spread out, unveils its wonders slowly. On the other hand, Garli (essentially a one-street village, which we visited a day later) is quick to impress.



I started out on a mission to discover for myself all the 77 heritage buildings in the INTACH list. But it was no easy task. Chiefly because the village of Pragpur did not have any sign boards or information boards which gave directions to these heritage buildings. On second thoughts — it was better this way. With no information beyond the names of a few buildings which I had managed to find out and duly scribbled on a piece of paper, the pursuit shaped up like a treasure hunt. The best way to get

information is to break bread at the restaurants and *dhabas* at Pragpur, as I did.

The architecture here is nothing but a flight of fantasy mixed with tradition. So, you have an amalgamation of traditional Himachali (Kangra) architecture inspired by Rajasthani *havelis* which in turn is mixed with a heavy dose of European influence (including French chateau style). The outcome of all this

Getting up early morning the next day, the first thing that struck me was the fresh clear air and an abundance of greenery all round. It dawned on me that the green quotient had increased steadily as we drove closer to Pragpur the previous day. It was time now to check the village's heritage quotient. Not even half a day had passed before I realised that my first impressions were false.

is some truly amazing (and a bit eccentric) buildings which seem to belong to some distant and mythical past.

Both in Garli and Pragpur, besides the fanciful *havelis*, you will also come across many traditional mud-plastered or brick, black slate-roofed double-storeyed houses with wooden pillars, which hold their own charm. Many of these houses are in different stages of disrepair, which lend a rich character to the place. The Kathulia complex buildings (200-300-year-old), Chaujjad Haveli (200-year-old), Butail Niwas (175-year-old), Rai Mohan Lal's House, Bhagwan Niwas and Asha Devi Sood's house are some of the buildings which are sure to catch your attention. Many of these houses have been built using Mughal era Nanak Shahi bricks, which were more apt to be used for decorative houses.

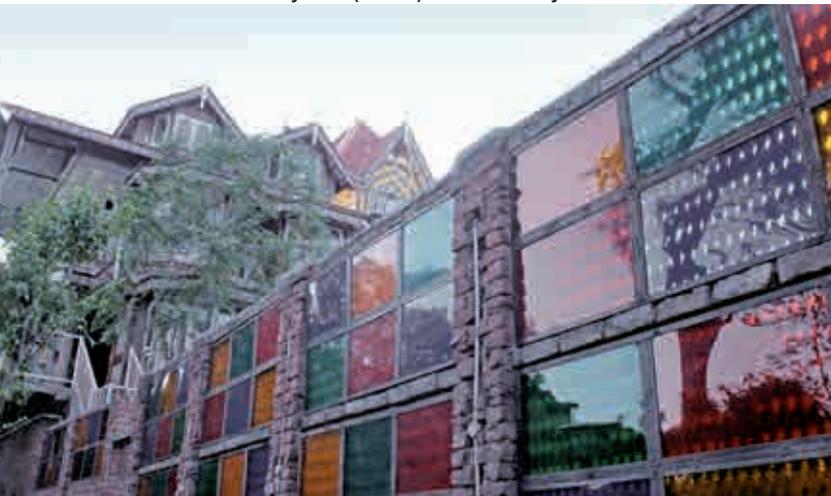
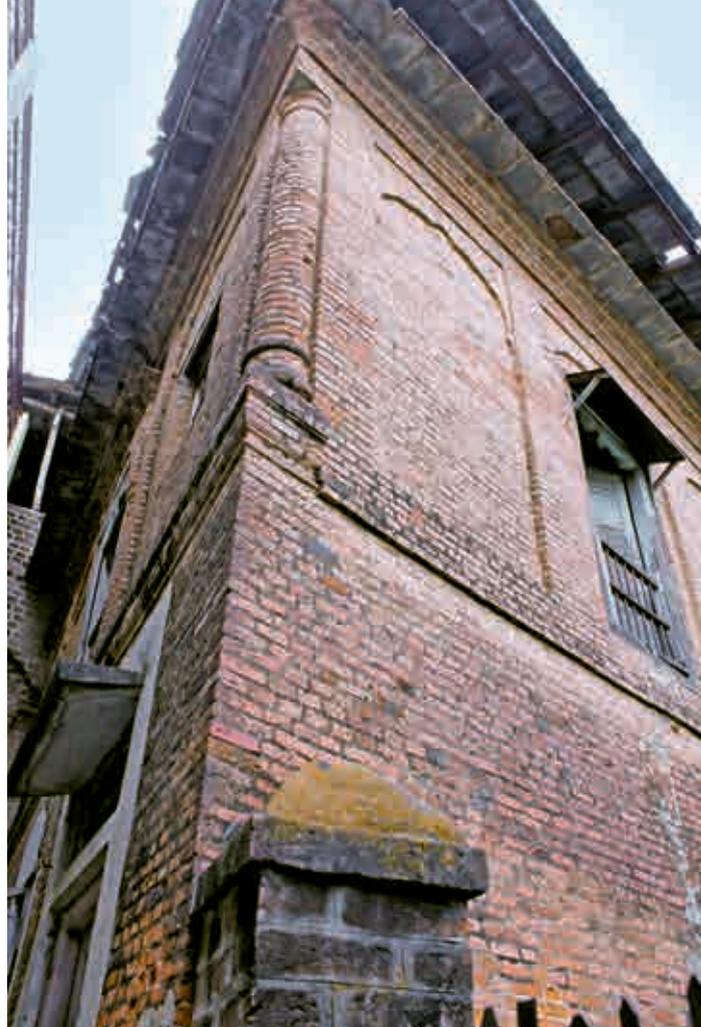
The heritage buildings sprinkled all over the twin villages on either side of the cobbled streets are interspersed by gardens, ornamental water tanks and old temples.

asked for the direction for Judge's Court — my first stop. It is a heritage property which was once owned by a native retired judge from the Raj era, hence the name. It was built by a person called Bhandari Ram for his son Justice Sir Jai Lal in 1918. It is by far the most famous building in the Pragpur Garli zone. Now a top-end hotel, which is a part of a hospitality chain, the Judge's Court complex has warm and old-worldly wooden interiors and a number of buildings spread over a huge 12-acre garden.

While in Pragpur, look for the Central Ornamental water tank which is surrounded by *havelis*. Rope in a local to explain the elaborate water system. The local community in Pragpur here has worked hard to preserve and maintain an old, elaborate and perfected drainage system through which the central tank of Pragpur is automatically filled with rain water. During our walks, we came across a few such water tanks and a couple of ponds too with clear waters.

An important thing to note is that if you see an

(Above) A house made with Nanak Shahi bricks in Pragpur; (right) an intricate doorway and (below) the boundary of a house in Garli





(Left) Kaleshwar Temple and (right) Beas river

## GET AROUND

BESIDES THREE *SHAKTI PEETHS* WHICH HOLD IMPORTANCE FOR THE RELIGIOUS-MINDED, THERE ARE ALSO IMPRESSIVE EIGHTH CENTURY ROCK-CUT TEMPLES OF MASROOR, 57 KM AWAY. ONE CAN ALSO GO TO THE KALESHWAR TEMPLE, WHICH IS SOME 6 KM FROM GARLI, ON THE BANKS OF BEAS RIVER, WHICH OFFERS A PICTURESQUE SIGHT. THOUGH RUINED BY AN EARTHQUAKE, IT IS STILL IMPRESSIVE. THE KANGRA FORT, 45 KM AWAY, MAKES FOR A GOOD DAY TRIP FROM PRAGPUR

impressive looking heritage house, which you want to explore further, then don't hesitate. The locals here are a friendly lot and welcoming (we did not meet anyone who was not). So, if you approach respectfully, they will be usually happy to help you see their homes more closely.

The best way to enjoy the twin villages is to walk around the narrow lanes and bylanes as you stumble upon one heritage wonder after another. During our walk, I liked a house in particular. So, I ventured in tentatively and to my pleasure found a very welcoming couple. They not only showed us around their house, apologising for the lack of maintenance of some portions of their ancient home (which they pointed was a difficult task) but also offered the famous Kangra tea to me.

**A**fter some days in Pragpur, I shifted to a very pleasant heritage hotel in Garli. Now this is a one-street village, which has a neat row of colonial buildings. If you walk from one end to the other, you will walk across a delightful array of mansions made of brick, wood and mud exteriors.

Many owners of these heritage buildings live far away — both in India and abroad. But some such as Atul Sood come back to take care of his heritage. He and his wife lived in New Delhi for many years till they decided to come back to their ancestral home in Garli.

Today they maintain and live in a heritage home. They have also lovingly converted an old family owned *sarai*, another heritage building, into a hotel. This *sarai* was originally built in 1920 for the stay of the then Governor General of Punjab, Sir Malcom Hailey, during his visit to Garli. Says Sood, "Garli is a very peaceful place with a slow pace of life — perfect for us after a long stay in the fast-paced metropolis. In the last few years, the small community has become aware about our common heritage and things are being done at the community level to preserve it. However, there are many heritage properties here which need urgent attention."

**T**he Soods travelled extensively during the British Raj, which exposed them to various cultures. Given their molten pot experiences, they have blended Portuguese, Italian, Islamic and Rajasthani elements and accents in an aesthetic mix. Apart from the gabled roofs with slate shingles, look for individualistic elements like rose and *gharokha* windows and brick *jaali* work. The twin villages are also known for their handicrafts, specially their silversmiths. And the local yogurt-based curries are to die for. It is the ease with which the quaint, green countryside blends with mud and timber houses and mansions and which shows that you can anchor all that trickles in from the outside world in your own soil that makes this "return of the native" journey worthwhile.

# BE A LITTLE MERMAID

WALK THROUGH THE FAIRYTALE GAMLE BY,  
A MARKET TOWN IN THE OLD PART OF AARHUS. BY **LAKSHMI SHARATH**





(Above) Horse-drawn carriages can be seen on the cobble-stoned road and (below) half-timbered buildings and homes have been assembled from 16th-19th centuries to create an illusion of a 'living town'



If you believe in fairy tales, then step on to this magic carpet with me and let us travel back in time to the land of the merpeople, the mythical race who lived underwater and above it too at times. We are in 15th century medieval Denmark and the streets are laced with cobble stones while I can hear the trotting of a horse-drawn carriage behind me. Vicars and blacksmiths, merchants and mayors greet me and invite me into their homes.

This fairy tale atmosphere of a provincial Danish market town is recreated in Den Gamle By, which is the old town in Aarhus, a charming city located on the coast of the Jutland Peninsula. I have not stopped smiling since I walked in here as the City of Smiles shows me glimpses of its medieval charm. Seventy five different half-timbered buildings and homes assembled from over 20 Danish towns dated between 16th-19th centuries have been transported and recreated here to create an illusion of a "living town." I time travel as I walk along the streets. Every lane opens into a different era and an epoch of Danish history. Den Gamle By is a living museum that takes you into the Denmark of yore, evoking the



mood of the town during the story teller Hans Christian Andersen's time.

There are many storytellers here. One of them is the widow of the late Vicar near the Eilschou Almshouse who narrates the stories of Andersen when he came here to learn poetry. In his day, a typical Danish market town would house about 700 people with their herd of cattle, sheep and pigs. Somewhere amid the enchanting row of houses, stands probably the house which inspired the fairy tale man to pen his "Det Gamle Huss" or the Old House.

The first building that came up here was a 15th century Mayor House which was initially located in the heart of the city. It was built at the market square in 1915 and even today the 12 exquisitely furnished rooms

of the Renaissance merchant complex stand as a living testimony to the many mayors who have lived in the mansion.

**T**he open-air museum is a virtual time-machine. There are townhouses, mansions, almshouses. The Mintmaster's Mansion is a showstopper by itself, designed in Baroque style with Rococo interiors and was originally built in 17th century Copenhagen. It was reassembled here in Aarhus after it was dismantled. Home to the mint masters who were appointed by the royalty, the mansion is a palace by itself.

Den Gamle By also takes you into the world of its inhabitants as you can see a carpenter or a hatter at



## FACTFILE

AARHUS IS JUST A TRAIN AWAY FROM COPENHAGEN AND ALTHOUGH IT IS A SMALL CITY, YOU NEED AT LEAST A COUPLE OF DAYS TO EXPLORE ITS DIFFERENT FACETS. THERE ARE A PLENTY OF ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS AND BEING AN UNIVERSITY TOWN, THERE IS NO DEARTH OF CAFES AND RESTAURANTS.

(Above and below) There are townhouses, mansions and almhouses





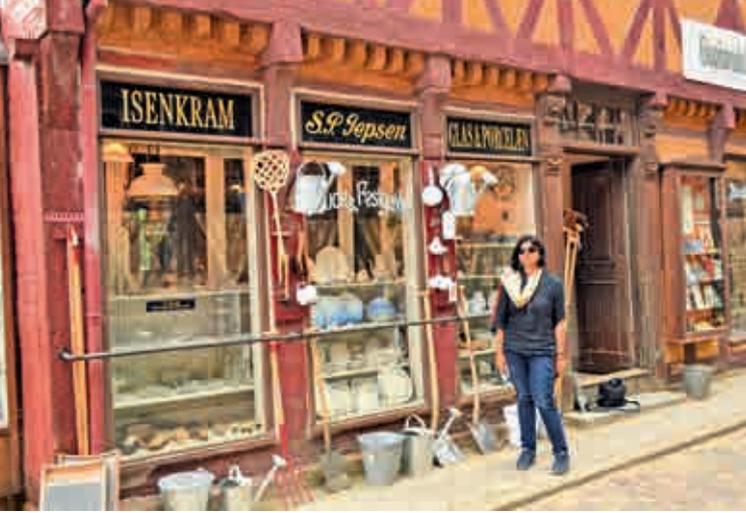
Galleries, studios, cafes, boutique and gourmet shops lend an eclectic ambience to the area

work, meet a goldsmith or a tailor and exchange pleasantries with the baker and the candlemaker. There are shows and demonstrations by these men and women, clad in period costumes, as they take you into the erstwhile past. There are over 34 workshops and shops here which need more than just a day to explore. Puttering around I see barns, warehouses, watermills, windmills and a theatre too – everything is a representation of an authentic “living town” of the medieval era.

I literally have to yank myself out of this enchanting atmosphere only to lose myself in another magical world. The sun throws its golden rays on the canals while the sky greets me with streaks of yellow as I walk along the ancient Latin quarter of Aarhus. This is one of the oldest quarters of Aarhus. While the town dates back to the eighth century and has its origins in the Viking age, it is a farrago of different influences. Aarhus is believed to be one of the oldest Scandinavian towns even though most of its Viking fortifications have been demolished.

Latinerkvarteret or The Latin Quarters were built





## GETTING THERE

AIR INDIA, EMIRATES, QATAR AIRWAYS AND FINNAIR OFFER FLIGHTS FROM DELHI WITH TWO STOPS.

around the medieval era and even today some of the streets bear the quaint historic atmosphere. While some of the old buildings still remain, I see a lot of unique and vibrant cafes and restaurants housed in these narrow cobblestoned lanes. Puttering through several lanes that take their names from castles, convents and the ramparts in the vicinity, I lose myself in the pulsating energy of street performances and touristy charm. The streets still retain their old names — Klostergade, Borrgade, Rosengade, Studsgade, Mejlgade, Badstuegade to name a few. There is Volden, which refers to the rampart and Graven that means moat which hark back to the ancient times. I eventually park myself in the Pustervig Square to watch life pass me by as I sip a cup of coffee. Surrounding me are galleries, studios, cafes, boutique and gourmet shops adding to the eclectic ambience of the area.

A trip to Aarhus is not complete without a visit to the Moesgaard Museum with its archaeological collections. You get to chronicle the history of mankind and travel down to the pre-historic era as you walk up an “evolutionary flight of steps.” Its prized possession is, however, *The Grauballe Man*, a bog body from the Iron Age, which is eerily fascinating.

If the sight of a pre-historic corpse discovered from a peat bog with his throat slit is a little morbid for your taste, then lose yourself in the colourful landscape of Aarhus from a height of 50 metre. The Rainbow Panaroma is an art installation created by the artist Olafur Eliasson atop the ARoS Art Museum and as I walk around it, it feels like am moving through a kaleidoscope of hues. I peer down at the city from a 150-metre circular walkway from where the city is drenched in shades of the rainbow. The harbour is a blend of blue and green, the youthful exuberance of the University is captured in shades of red while the medieval city retains a golden hue.

Standing there I realise that this is the best way to explore a destination with so many different facets. No wonder Aarhus was dubbed as the European City of Culture last year. The moods of the city radiate through the coloured glass. I do not have to look for a rainbow in the sky. I am right inside one and the city below basks in a wide spectrum of colours. It is the perfect way to end my tryst with this charming city, the second largest in Denmark after the capital.

IF WE FIND SOMETHING  
THAT IS GOOD FOR US,  
WE ARE FOOLISH  
ENOUGH TO THINK THAT  
MORE OF IT WOULD BE  
EVEN BETTER



# MODERATION IS THE KEY

In today's world, we have made a habit of doing everything in excess. Whatever we do, we overdo it. For instance, we don't know where to stop even with simple processes like eating. If we find something that is good for us, we are foolish enough to think that more of it would be even better. It is common knowledge that even the oxygen that we breathe will give you trouble if too much goes into you. But today, the modern world has to be constantly educated about not doing things in excess. Sadly, we have become a generation of excesses.

And this can be illustrated by an example. Shankaran Pillai's only son went to Africa as an IT professional. While exploring, he happened to meet a witch doctor, who, his friend had told him, could do many miraculous things. So he wanted to get something that would benefit his old parents back home in India. He knew that his old father was always aspiring to be youthful. So he asked the witch doctor, "Do you have something that will bring back youth; that will take years off my parents' lives? Is there something?" The witch doctor said, "yes," and gave him a few pills and said, "Ask your father to take one of these." So the son sent these pills to India. Six months later, after his project got over, he came back to India.

When he walked into his house, he found a young man, in the prime of his youth with a small infant in his hands. "Where are my parents?" he asked. A young Shankaran Pillai said, "I'm your father. The pill that you sent, I took it and it made me young. It took years off my life." "But where is mother?" the son asked. Shankaran Pillai pointed at the little infant in his hands and said, "She took three of them."



SADHGURU  
Isha Foundation

While this might be an exaggeration but we are in the midst of something similar. We are taking anything that we start to the point of destruction. We are making all the wonderful things that the physical sciences have offered us into instruments of destruction, pain and suffering for humanity. We pursued all the external sciences and technologies because we believed that they would lead to the betterment of the human race. They have brought much comfort. Never before have human beings been so physically comfortable. In spite of that, we cannot say that human beings are well, because they have not become any more

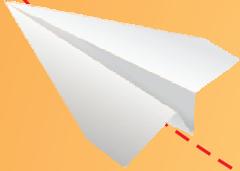
peaceful, joyful, loving or blissful than people who were here a million years ago. We are still going through the same suffering and struggle both within and outside of ourselves.

We need to understand that external science and technology come at a tremendous price. Everything that you do — whether you manufacture a safety pin or a great machine — you have to dig it out of the planet. If we don't know where to stop, science and technology is definitely going to lead humanity to a massive disaster; and we are getting there at express speed. The truth is, that whatever you give to immature human beings is dangerous. And naturally, as the instruments that they handle become more powerful and capable, they become more dangerous. It is not the science or the technology that is dangerous. Rather it is human stupidity which has always been dangerous on this planet.

— *Sadhguru is a yogi, mystic, visionary and best-selling author*



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TERMINAL 3-DOMESTIC



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**KUSHANmitra**  
*Auto & tech expert*

**TOYOTA CAN ACTUALLY CHANGE THE GAME FOR BUYERS WHO WANT A CLUTCHLESS DRIVING EXPERIENCE. ON THE SAFETY AND COMFORT FRONT, IT CAN EASILY CONVERT A LOT OF VALUE-DRIVEN BUYERS IN THE LOW-TO-MID VERSIONS OF THE SEGMENT. TOWARDS HIGHER TRIM LEVELS, IT MIGHT FACE A CHALLENGE**

**T**he Yaris is a brand name that many over here have been wanting Toyota to bring for a while but the car they're bringing is not the hatchback that you might have seen in Europe but a sedan version that Toyota developed for emerging economies. Now, to prevent confusion, but in reality to confuse you some more, the Yaris as launched in India is actually based on the Toyota Vios and is the same car that Toyota calls the Yaris ATIV in Thailand. But you can carry on about brand names and the logic behind them for hours on end. What matters is that the Yaris is here, it drops squarely into what for years was known as the "City" segment, and carmakers call this the "B High" or "B+" segment. Essentially this is a sedan segment where the car length is around 4,400-4,500 mm; and while the Yaris is the shortest car in this segment at 4,425 mm, it is not considerably shorter than the competition, and ITV is strangely enough among the wider cars in the segment.

But let's not get into the dimensions battle here, what matters is what is under the bonnet of the car.

Interestingly, Toyota Kirloskar Motors has decided not to fit the Yaris with a diesel engine. This might be indicative of the overall pricing direction with fuels that the government has been taking of late but there is also the fact that when BSVI fuel norms become mandatory on April 1, 2020, emission norms will mean that smaller diesel engines will become unviable not because of emission control but because of the additional costs of controlling emissions — the urea injector and the fuel burn required will add on considerable costs to diesel engines. That may not make a difference to cars with larger diesel engines like the Innova but in smaller diesel cars, the additional 1-1.5 lakh will make them unviable for all but those who drive for hours on end every day.

So long story short, Toyota has fitted the Yaris with a 1.5 litre Variable Valve Timing engine with 108 horsepower. That amount of power, while considerably higher than that of the woefully underpowered Ciaz, falls short of both the City and Verna which have 119 and 123 horsepower from their engines respectively. The power is

delivered through a six-speed manual or a seven-speed stepped Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) unit. A CVT automatic is in theory the most efficient gear system instead of having different gears, where power is delivered to the drive wheels thanks to a system of cones and a band (rubber or metal) connecting them. While a CVT could theoretically deliver a whole range of ratios, they are usually "stepped" that is in this case (as in the Honda City) have seven pre-programmed positions.

Now, while a CVT works excellent for small motors such as those on automatic scooters or larger engines, I have always found CVTs to be a fit off. Sometimes they can be nice, as in the case of the Honda City, but they never feel appropriate when it comes to aggressive acceleration and driving. You constantly find yourself in strange parts of the power range and the power often fluctuates between 3000-4000 revs. This is not unique to the Yaris, you feel the same way in the Baleno CVT. However, much like in Automated Manual Transmission (AMT) vehicles, you have to learn to drive a CVT as well. In a more subtle acceleration environment, the Yaris' CVT becomes quite smooth and the

power and speed rise nicely together. So unlike the Verna automatic, which sometimes has a "throw me around" vibe to it, the Yaris is a vehicle that is less get up and go and more, how do I put this, gentle? You can manipulate the CVT using the paddle-shifter and that does make things a lot nicer. However like on the City and the EcoSport, the paddle-shifter is an option only available in the top-specification.

After a few hours of the CVT variant, and Toyota does one smart thing with the CVT here, which is to offer it across all variants, I also got a chance to drive the six-speed manual. Now, I have a strong opinion about six-speed boxes, that is I don't like them. However, I must admit that I'm softening my stand. Partially because I drive a lot of automatics nowadays and also because on the highways, six-speed boxes can deliver incredible amounts of fuel economy because of the low drive ratio of the sixth gear. Both the manual and CVT top-spec VX variant also get a cruise control system, which, while not as refined as the system on Volkswagen



group vehicles, is fairly simple to operate and kept me well below the 80 km per hour highway speed limit.

Handling and ride comfort are par for the course, and on the winding road up to Nandi Hills, the Yaris dealt with the switchbacks, no questions asked. It did not feel like an involved vehicle but it did not feel out of place at any time either. So quite sedate, as was the ride comfort. The Yaris is very comfortable. Sure these were brand-new factory-fresh cars with a suspension that had not faced the rigours of daily driving on some of India's less nice roads. However, if the Altis and Innova are any indication, the Yaris should also survive unscathed if properly maintained.

Now, the looks. And immediately I have to admit that this is not the Yaris' strong suit. The car's side profile makes it look and feel like a scaled-down Corolla Altis and the rear three-quarter is really the strongest angle to look at this car. The front-on look makes the car appear even narrower than it is, it looks squashed actually and not particularly attractive by any stretch. The interior cabin again is not a bad place to be, it is relatively bright with its beige interiors and the dual-tone black and beige interiors don't look bad at all in the VX model. I also drove the fabric interiors of the "V" specification (the manual) and it felt perfectly, how to put this, ordinary. Nothing spectacular at all, but that is a good thing. However, there were indications that Toyota is going to sell this car as

"luxurious" and that frankly is a stretch, but that applies to all other cars in this segment. As for rear-loading area, it is very good and the boot is spacious, even leading an auto-writing colleague to comment that it was perfect for a CNG-tank as well as a suitcase.

The Yaris has some great and some not-so-great aspects to its interiors. The great features are things like the flat floor at the rear which makes ingress and egress easier and does not make the person in the middle seat feel like a squashed egg. The second is the ductless, fan-based and roof-mounted air circulation system. This is an ingenious engineering solution that does away with the heavy ducting required for either a centre-console mounted air-conditioning vent or the ducting for ventilated seats (which is still the Verna's single-best feature in my humble opinion). It also takes advantage of basic physics (hot air rises and cold air descends) and low-mounted air-con ducts have the effect of just cooling your knees. This solution actually helps the rear passenger and the vent can be directed forward to cool the driver and front passengers necks as well. In addition, the information cluster has an innovative feature that displays how much fuel you are saving according to your driving style and how that translates into cold hard cash. Of course, to properly test that, one will need to keep the Yaris for a month and see just how much one can save.



The not-so-great? Well, I for one was disappointed with the onboard audio system that Toyota is fitting on the car. Sure, the gesture control feature is great but it is a gimmick given the car does not have support for Apple CarPlay or Android Auto. You can still hook up your mobile device using Bluetooth but I was disappointed with the screen contrast as well. Of course, this can be corrected through an after market kit. In addition another issue was the fact that there is only one USB charging port, that too attached to the audio system on the car. The Verna has two, and believe me when you drive around with your spouse, you should not fight about who should charge their phones. Toyota has put a few 12V charging points but direct USB is the way to go nowadays and I hope Toyota quickly addresses this issue.

So how will the Yaris do? A lot depends on price, but everyone expects the car to be priced between ₹8.5-13 lakh. In

**ENGINE AND TRANSMISSION + FEATURES**

**TYPE: DUAL VARIABLE VALVE TIMING (VVTI)**

**DISPLACEMENT: 1496CC/4 CYLINDERS**

**FUEL: PETROL**

**POWER: 108HP**

**TORQUE: 140NM**

**TRANSMISSION: 6-SPEED MANUAL/7-SPEED CVT AUTOMATIC**

**SAFETY: SEVEN AIRBAGS (STANDARD) WITH ABS + EBD**

addition, given that the CVT is available across the range, I do not believe there will be a huge price difference between the manual and automatic, and Toyota can actually change the game for buyers who want a clutchless driving experience. Toyota is also offering seven airbags along with Anti-Lock Brakes as standard across all variants. So on the safety and comfort front, Toyota can easily convert a lot of value-driven buyers in the low-to-mid versions of the segment. Towards higher trim levels, Toyota might face a challenge with better equipped rivals such as the Verna, but this car may not be going after that segment at all. And then there is another thing — the Yaris is perfectly positioned in a slightly larger taxi segment. Keeping in mind that the Etios and

Innova are immensely popular with cabbies, the Yaris might just have that segment sewn up already ahead of launch.



CELEBS ARE NOW TAKING THE ETHNIC ROUTE DURING AIR TRAVEL

A self-styled fashionista, **Kangana Ranaut** wore an Anavila Misra sari to make a flying statement.

**Sonam Kapoor** wore a seriously cool pant saree from Rheson and teamed it up with an equally cool and cute floral shirt with bell sleeves from the same label.

**Aishwarya Rai** looked resplendent in a yellow and pink silk saree.

**Shilpa Shetty** wore an embroidered *angarkha* style kurta and a denim *sharara* designed by Shivangi Sahni. She styled it with embellished *juttis*, a Chanel bag and her favourite Bvlgari Serpenti watch.

**Kareena Kapoor** in a peach *salwar kameez* looked simple and elegant.

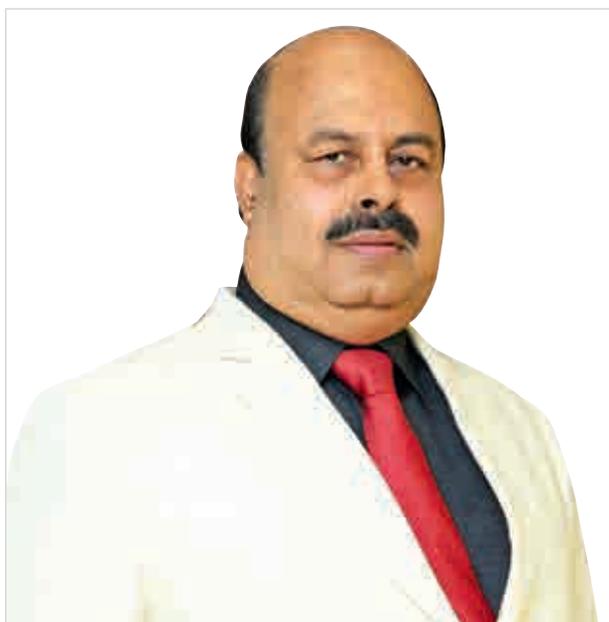


THE EYES HAVE IT



# CREATING WEALTH FOR WELL-BEING

—THE LEADER SHOWS THE WAY



Dr SK Acharya, CMD, NLCIL

**A** business expert, an able administrator and a good Samaritan rolled into one, that is how **Dr. Sarat Kumar Acharya, Chairman and Managing Director of NLC India Ltd** is described by the people and corporate world. What makes him unique is his role in turning around Neyveli Lignite Corporation, a public sector Navratna company down south in Neyveli, Tamil Nadu from a company engaged in the business of lignite mining and lignite based power generation to a total energy conglomerate with PAN India presence.

He himself describes NLC India Ltd, which was started in 1956, as a 61-year young company. Since he assumed the role of Chairman and Managing Director, NLC India has strode into areas hitherto untried and unexplored by this

public sector entity and that too with impressive performance, unparalleled in a public sector history.

The NLC, which was generating 2,740 MW thermal power with 30.6 MTPA of lignite mining capacity and 11 MTPA of coal mining installed capacity as on March end 2015 has now improved its power generating capacity to 5240 MW with mining capacity of 39.15MTPA in lignite and 31 MTPA coal as on March 31, registering a growth of 91 per cent on power side and 69 per cent on mining side. With all eyes set on the big league, the company hopes to increase its output to 16,491 MW through a bouquet of thermal, solar and wind power by 2022 and 21,011 MW by 2025 with fuel sufficiency coming from its own mines, lignite and coal.

No wonder, Piyush Goyal, the Union Minister in charge of Coal and Railways, himself complimented Dr Acharya as well as the NLC India Ltd for the outstanding performance churned out silently but steadily during last three years, stating it as an unsung story.

What is important is that being a PSU subject to bureaucratic controls and regulations, it has scaled landmark achievements in a very short span of time. Dr Acharya says it is because of his human resource engineering, he could manage all the stakeholders to help him to make NLC India what it is today. We also got an empowering environment and encouragement from the Administrative Ministry and from the industry friendly policies of the new Government, he adds. In a free-wheeling interview with Team Pioneer, Dr. Acharya opened up and recounted the hitherto little known growth saga of NLC India.

**Could you describe how NLC India Ltd reached the present position with a pan-India footprint in spite of alleged hurdles caused by politicians, trade unions, local and locational complexities?**

What you are seeing is the result of strong business acumen in work coupled with human resource engineering mobilising

goodwill, help and positive participation of all stakeholders. This company was born in 1956 pioneering the core business activities of lignite mining and lignite based power generation. NTPC, the mega power giant of India today, was launched in 1975. There was a time when NTPC engineers and technicians used to come to Neyveli to learn the skill of power production. But our own experts here did not try to expand or grow beyond this remote place Neyveli breaking their comfort zone. What I understand is that our people were quite happy with whatever they were getting. The salary was good. Working environment was excellent and the company had provided best houses and other facilities to them. People were content with whatever they got and there was hardly any urging ambition to expand, diversify and grow beyond. Their enormous potential was not harnessed and hence there was hardly any progress.

The first major break came in 2010 when NLC commissioned a lignite based power plant of 250 MW at Barsingsar, Rajasthan with a 2.1 MTPA lignite mine there. Then, in the year 2015 only it commissioned its 1st 1000 MW coal based power plant at Tuticorin, TN and its 10 MW Solar Plant in Neyveli. Practically, the transition of Neyveli Lignite Corporation to NLC India Ltd happened in a big way during last three years since 2015. From an enterprise, which was limited only in lignite mining and lignite based power generation restricted to Neyveli, it made its entry to coal mining, coal based power generation, generation of power from renewable sources like wind and solar and power trading in a big way.

In October 2015, I went to the board with a detailed road map Vision 2025 for producing 21,000 MW by 2025 all by ourselves with our fuel source from our own mines. With our basic strength as miners and expertise in power generation, we laid our plan for diversification across the energy value chain.

As a miner and power generator, we create wealth, earn profits through fair means and at the same time we keep consumers' interest uppermost in mind. Registered as a power generator using lignite from our captive mines in the same State, the roll out of Goods and Services Tax brought in a gain for our company as clean energy/compensatory cess of ₹400 Per Ton was no more applicable. Accordingly, we passed on this benefit to our consumers to a tune of around ₹630 crores total for all user DISCOMS in the south and Rajasthan and also from April, we have further reduced our power tariff ranging from 10 paise to 17 paise per kWh which will give a benefit of around ₹200 crore to consumers. This we could do by reducing cost with prudent cost management.

We had problems like staff over burden because of closure of the fertilizer branch the NLC had earlier. But we have not retrenched anybody but have been able to utilise them optimally by redeploying and streamlining the staff structure through selective addition against large number of superannuations, VRS and utilisation against expansion project. Coming to the work process, we aim at both speed and accuracy and do things in continuous mode. All these have given us tremendous results in productivity enhancing value addition per employee every year.

#### **How did you manage to get approval for mega projects in record time and start the works?**

We complete our environment, market study and back hand works much earlier and keep everything ready for the next stage of work. We work in a parallel manner instead of working in a sequential style. If you believe efficiency is the hallmark of private sector, then we work much better than the private sector. I never kept any issue pending and I work 24X7 to resolve all issues and I also encourage all my colleagues to be proactive, responsive and to faster the speed of progress. Project clearances were facilitated through sincere boundary management and encouraging help in Government corridors.

#### **In 2015, there was a 32-day strike by workers, how did it affect the company and how did you handle it?**

Here in Neyveli, there was no central union of a good stature. The trade unions are controlled mainly by the ruling party in the State Government and local outfits. These local leaders and politicians used to pressurise the management even for non-issues. This company, in spite of its good works, was getting plagued by strikes very often. When I was about to be appointed as the CMD in 2015, I had to face a 32 days strike by around 11,000 workers demanding unreasonably high wage. All my colleagues in executive and supervisory cadre stood solidly to face the unjustified strike and contract workers also joined in for work. During the entire period of strike all the normal operations of mines and power stations were carried out unaffected. The strike was declared illegal and errant leaders were handled with strong disciplinary measures.

In the meanwhile, the State leadership had written to Prime Minister's office alleging that NLC as a profit-making company was not fulfilling the demands of its workers. We submitted to the Government that NLC workers were





already best paid in the industry and the company could not afford to succumb their unreasonable demands. We also stated that being under the Ministry of Coal, we could not go beyond the norms and practices to give unreasonable hikes which may result in backlash in Coal India and also among the executive community, besides going beyond the company's affordability.

To discipline the errants, during the ongoing strike which turned unruly one day, we had to resort to summary dismissal of 11 workers. During that unruly day, many vehicles belonging to the company executives were damaged by some workers. We ensured that the expenses incurred in repairing the vehicles were ultimately made good by recovering the same from Union contributions. The strike was called off on the 32nd day and finally the agitating workers realised the futility of the strike and agreed to accept the settlement well within the industry norms. During this period, a long-standing wrong practice of giving paid C.Off of 36 days in a year to each worker was completely stopped with iron hands and as a part of settlement, performance linkage for promotion of workmen was brought in. What was the outcome of this agitation was that for the first time in NLC, strict discipline was enforced and wage revision demand was settled within the ambit of the industry norms breaking the legacy of giving in to union and political pressures.

### Could you elaborate on the growth plans of NLC India?

As told already, as a 60-year-old company, it had a lignite-based power generating capacity of 2740 MW and lignite mining capacity of 30.6 MTPA. Now over three years, this company has grown to have a total power generating capacity of 5,531 MW of which 4,240 MW is from lignite, 1,000 MW from coal and 291 MW from renewable sources of solar and wind. It is poised to add 400 MW solar and 1000 MW lignite-based thermal power generating capacity by July 2018. Further works are going on ground for adding 709 MW solar power capacity by March 2019 and 6000 MW coal based power generating capacity in Kanpur, UP and Talabira, Odisha by 2022 and by commissioning around 88.6 MTPA mining capacity ( coal + lignite) by that time. The Vision Document 2025, which I took to the Board when I took over as CMD in October 2015, is getting translated into reality as above and in all likelihood, this company will emerge as a 21,000 + MW energy major with a total mining capacity of 113.15 MTPA (coal + lignite) by 2025 with its all India presence in power generation, mining, power trading and commercial coal mining.

This vision is not my vision, restricted to me or to my Board. This is a shared vision of all 14,000 employees of this company with whom I interact and share my views regularly over various media and the Team NLC is geared to achieve many exciting things to scale newer heights in our business.

Our plans for going super critical and ultra super critical power plants with unit capacity from 660 MW to 800 MW have been chalked out with  $2 \times 660 \text{ MW} = 1320 \text{ MW}$  happening now in Neyveli complex and  $4 \times 800 \text{ MW} = 3,200 \text{ MW}$  coming up at Talabira complex in Odisha. We are into a big time for commercial coal mining businesses that we are venturing into. As a part of our expanding renewable business, apart from generating solar and wind power in a big way, we will soon set up battery charging stations along the national highways in Tamil Nadu and in other parts of the country and exploring the possibility of supplying lignite to south based power stations for blending with coal to supplement the primary fuel requirement by 10 per cent. We have a plan to extract sand from our mined overburden on commercial scale and also have plans for using lignite as a substitute for coking coal for making steel.

We believe in responsible mining, clean power generation addressing environmental and ecological concerns and doing good for the society and well-being of humanity with the wealth we create as a corporate citizen of India, Dr Acharya sums up.





# HOPE IGNITED

NLC INDIA LTD HAS GRADUATED INTO THE BIG LEAGUE OF INDUSTRIAL CONGLOMERATES AS A TOTAL ENERGY COMPANY WHILE AT THE SAME TIME CREATING A NICHE IN THE MINDS OF TAMIL NADU'S POPULATION

**H**ot and humid Tamil Nadu sneezes whenever the subject about disinvestment of NLC India Ltd crops up. Whether it is Annamalai, a school drop-out who works as a casual labourer in the open lignite mines of the power giant in Neyveli or the top political leaders of the State, all are unanimous in their demand that the “61-year-young” company should continue as a Public Sector Enterprise. Yes, according to Dr Sarat Kumar Acharya, the Odisha-born Chairman and Managing Director of the public sector giant, the company is 61-years-young! Not without reasons.

If there is one industrial conglomerate in Tamil Nadu which has created a niche among the State's population, it is NLC India Ltd. Situated at Neyveli, once a group of villages, approximately 200 km south of Chennai, NLC India Ltd is everybody's company in the State. Started in 1956 as Neyveli Lignite Corporation, a lignite mining company, this company has graduated into the big league of industrial conglomerate as a total energy company. Hence, the change in name from Neyveli Lignite Corporation Ltd's to NLC India Limited. NLC has spread its wings across the nation with myriad operations ranging from lignite mining to solar energy generation.

NLC India Ltd is synonymous with the A to Z of energy generation, a unique feature in a country like India. The brand name Neyveli could be seen now in all the Southern States and in Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand and Rajasthan as a prelude to it emerging as an Indian multinational corporation.

The lignite major has an installed capacity of 4,531 MW of power generation now and contributes a total of around 10 per cent power requirements of southern States. The last three years saw a resurgent NLC surprising the corporate world with its stellar performance. The reason: a “Make in India” strategy which propelled the company to take giant strides in an investment and industry friendly environment brought in by the new Government in India. The turnover of NLC grew by an impressive 42.46 per cent from ₹6088 crore to ₹8673 crores. The share price of NLC which was traded at ₹70.30 on March 31, 2015 commanded a price of ₹107.35 on March 31, 2017, an impressive increase of 52.7 per cent! The company has set its eyes on a target of 21,000 MW power by the year 2025 as per its vision document.

One of the laurels earned by NLC came from the Union Minister of Coal and Railways Piyush Goyal himself. The minister, while addressing a press conference exclusively for NLCIL at Delhi in March 2018, patted the CMD for the sterling performance recorded by the company during the last three years.

It is rare for a union cabinet minister to applaud the track record and achievements of CEOs of the public sector giants and this gesture of Minister was highly encouraging.

The lignite mining major was an orthodox entity till Dr Acharya, an Economics Graduate with Masters in personnel management and labour welfare from Utkal University stepped in. While most power generation giants had engineers as their

chief executive officer, Dr Acharya with specialisation in “human resources engineering” stood out. Colleagues say he has the tough exterior of a miner, sharp business acumen of a corporate wizard combined with that unique Indian quality of compassion and kindness to fellow human beings. He joined Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) as a management trainee and switched over to NTPC in early 80s. After a long stint in National Thermal Power Corporation Ltd, he joined NLC in 2010 as Director (HR) and was selected as CMD in 2015. Since then there was no looking back either for him or the company.

As a lignite miner, he saw the vast opportunities offered by lignite, which was hitherto used only in power generation. His stance that lignite could be used for other industrial applications found acceptability among the decision makers.

The question being asked is how could NLC sell power at competitive rates and how it expands its footprints over other avenues of power generation? This is where the home-grown strategy of Dr Acharya has paid rich dividends. During 2014-2015, employee cost was 46.59 per cent of the total cost of the company. By 2017 the same was brought down to 37.37 per cent, which means a reduction of 19.79 per cent achieved through redeployment in capacity additions, selective VRS and streamlined induction planning against natural wastage. The pithead generation strategy with fuel coming from own mines in the backyard is also one of the winning factors, adds Dr Acharya.

The transformation of NLC from the day it was launched till date recounted by the local population and employees of the company tell us a six decade saga full of twists and turns. “Neyveli was an area colonised by hunter tribes. The region was notorious for murder and mayhem as rays of civilisation were yet to reach here,” says Dhanasekhar from nearby Gingee village who works as a helping hand in one of the NLC establishments. “Had there



**Honour for NLC from Union Minister Piyush Goel for Swachh Vidyalaya initiative**

been no NLC, I don't know what would have happened to Neyveli and the local population,” he said.

Country's largest and longest open cast lignite mines in Neyveli stand as a question mark before environmentalists and ecologists who are staunch opponents of any kind of mining.

Lignite stock in Neyveli region would last for more than 50 years, it is estimated. The company is presently exploiting lignite only up to 150 meters depth. NLC India is reclaiming the mined areas and have started cultivating grains, fruits and vegetables on the reclaimed land. Interestingly, the productivity has increased considerably and the way the land has been reclaimed with fortified topsoil, the restoration has been highly effective.

Last year saw NLC India selling even fruits and vegetables worth ₹1.7 crore grown in the reclaimed lands. The Neyveli brand fruits and vegetables are very much in demand in the market and this itself proves that the environment has retained its pristine nature even after mining.

The motto of NLC India Ltd coined is “Creating Wealth



Promoting an inclusive culture and building universal brotherhood - CMD and Directors taking part in Ugadi Celebrations in traditional attire



WE SUCCEEDED IN CURTAILING THE COST IN MINING AND POWER GENERATION. BEFORE THE GST WAS ROLLED OUT, WE HAD PREPARED OURSELVES SO THAT WE SAVED UP TO 75 PAISA PER UNIT OF POWER WHICH IN TURN WAS PASSED OVER TO THE BENEFICIARIES

— RAKESH KUMAR, DIRECTOR (FINANCE)



PRECIOUS NATURAL RESOURCES LYING UNDERNEATH THE EARTH COULD BE HARNESSSED ONLY BY MINING. MINING IS NOT AT ALL AN ISSUE TO THE ENVIRONMENT OR ECOLOGY IF IT IS DONE PROPERLY AND AS PER THE GUIDELINES

— SUBIR DAS, DIRECTOR (MINES)



LAST THREE YEARS WERE A PERIOD OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND HAPPENINGS. WE COMMISSIONED OUR 2X600 MW COAL-BASED POWER PLANTS MAKING OUR ENTRY INTO COAL SECTOR IN A BIG WAY. NOW WE ARE ALL SET TO LAUNCH THE 2,400 MW SUPER CRITICAL POWER PLANTS IN ODISHA, THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN INDIA

— V THANGAPANDIAN, DIRECTOR (POWER)



WE WILL SOON HAVE NEYVELI STEEL REPLACING CONVENTIONAL STEEL. YOU WAIT FOR SOME MORE MONTHS

— P SELVAKUMAR  
DIRECTOR (PLANNING AND PROJECTS)



WE DESILTED 19 PONDS IN NEYVELI ALONE. WE BUILT BATHING GHATS AND INSTALLED SOLAR-POWERED PUMPSETS IN THESE BORE WELLS. ALL HERITAGE AND PILGRIMAGE CENTRES IN THE REGION HAVE BEEN PROVIDED WITH PLANTS WORKING ON REVERSE OSMOSIS TECHNOLOGY SO THAT ALL PEOPLE WHO THROUGH THE LOCATION GET CLEAN DRINKING WATER

— R VIKRAMAN, DIRECTOR (HUMAN RESOURCES)



CMD along with Directors and CVO participating in mass tree plantation and cleanliness drive in Neyveli Complex

for Well Being”. This is the hallmark of the company which is the presiding deity of the 44 sq km Neyveli Township.

The NLC India Ltd management could have rested on its past laurels as in case of other public sector giants. But Dr Acharya, who is laying down office later this year wanted to leave behind him a signature for the future generations. This gets echoed in the words of Rakesh Kumar, Director (Finance), who says the company has been put on an exponential growth path and its growth in recent years has been phenomenal and unprecedented.

But what makes NLC dear to the people of the township of Neyveli and neighbouring regions is the corporate social responsibility for the comprehensive development of the community. Neyveli, once infamous for its water scarcity, is now supplying drinking water to the capital city of Chennai, which is almost 200 km away. NLC is supplying **thirteen million** litres of drinking water per day to Chennai whether there is draught or not. The company is irrigating **30,000** acres of land in 68 villages and has installed solar power pumps in the neighbouring Panchayats. As part of a programme of augmentation of water resources, NLC has desilted three major lakes and 20 panchayat ponds in surrounding areas of Neyveli with solar powered pumps installed therein to harness ground water when needed and is replicating the same in the areas of UP, Rajasthan and Odisha wherever NLC is expanding its presence.

A visit to Neyveli and other parts of Cuddalore district is a refreshing experience as one can see hundreds of people thronging the **Jal Dhara counters set up** by NLC across these places. Free butter milk and lemon water prepared out of reverse osmosis based plants are offered free to people



who queue up in front of the Jal Dhara stalls. This is a service offered by the company throughout the summer. The smile on the faces of the people who come here is a sense of satisfaction for NLC. As a part of its CSR outreach the company has provided RO plants with 1000 Ltr. per hour drinking water dispensing capacity at heritage sites like Tirupathi, Puri, Chidambaram, Madurai etc. and also in the process of installing more such Kiosks in cities like Chennai,



Commissioning of 40 MW solar power plant: Dr SK Acharya CMD NLCIL along with Functional Directors and CVO



Bucket Wheel Excavator

Varanasi, Sambalpur and Kanpur etc. to alleviate drinking water scarcity.

Besides the 30,000 persons employed directly and indirectly by NLC India, the entire population in the region is helped directly by this Navratna enterprise. The company is engaged in creating skilled workers and employable youths. The target is to train 2000 factory workers every year to get skilled jobs wherever they go. NLC India has launched a diploma programme in mining in association with Annamalai University. Besides, NLC, as a part of Skill India Mission is tying up ITI and Diploma training courses with Department of Technical Skill and Education in various states like UP and Odisha to train the project affected persons in its respective projects with employable skills.

While there are lot of apprehensions among the environmentalists and ecologists about global warming and climate change, NLC management is confident that the concerns could be addressed with responsible mining, environment friendly reclamation and clean power generation even from fossil fuel by adopting technologies like FGD, DNOX, CFBC and carbon capture methods in days to come. There is absolutely no environmental issues in Neyveli. It is literally impossible to believe that a visitor taking a tour along the largest open mines in Asia with 4 thermal power stations in the vicinity finds the entire environment clean, green and pollution free. Neyveli has an extensive coverage of greenery, wild life, forest and some of the exotic varieties of flora and fauna and of course, a couple of man made lakes which are habituated by rare species of birds. This is a model which could be emulated by other power producers and mining companies, proudly says Mr Goel, Minister for Coal and Railways, GoI. Apart from water resource augmentation in various parts of the country as the company's main CSR focus, NLC India has taken up education, skill building and Swachhata Mission as major CSR initiatives. The company inspires, encourages and educate students from the township and peripheral areas to prepare for various professional courses. Since last ten years, around 50 students from its Neyveli Township make it to various IITs and NITs in the country every year.

Latest information is that NLC has started fish and prawn cultivation by developing water bodies and lakes in and around and it is in serious discussion with various NGO's for launching herbal gardens in the reclaimed lands and for starting dairy farms/ Gaushalas.

A golf Course, four international standard wooden floor Badminton courts and three swimming pools of global standards are unique features of NLC Township at Neyveli. From here a boy had made it to the Rio Olympics for swimming which is a rare feat for the township. Once a sleepy village, Neyveli comes



### NLCIL keeps first working day of the week car-free

alive in the evenings with lot of sporting activities. Aquatics, badminton, chess, athletics....Neyveli lads are making their presence felt in these events thanks to the sports promotion activities of NLC.

NLC India saw a **growth of 68.63 per cent capacity addition in mining front, 54.75 per cent on commissioned capacity in thermal power front and in the sector of renewable energy it grew by 29 times** in last couple of years.

With its strong roots in Tamil Nadu, the company is also spreading its wings to places as far away as Rajasthan, Odisha, Jharkhand and Gujarat.

As a power producer and miner, talking on global warming Dr Acharya says, "Yes, it is a reality which stares us. We have to be very careful to conserve, reuse and recreate and through responsible mining and environment friendly technologies the emission levels from all our factories are to be maintained at the minimum. NLC is very conscious and concerned about global warming and is dedicated to develop clean and green power in keeping with the environmental norms by adopting latest technologies."

The man-made lake and the nearby forest substantiate the stance of Dr Acharya. Hundreds of people from far and near places through the beautifully developed freshwater lakes and deer parks. More than 12,000 workers sweat it out in the mines in three shifts to fuel the thermal power stations. But Neyveli is yet to feel any pinch on the environment and ecology because of the keen eyes of its technocrats and visionary leaders. They assure to replicate the same, even do better on the environment front in their new expansion/capacity addition projects now coming up at various locations in many States of India.

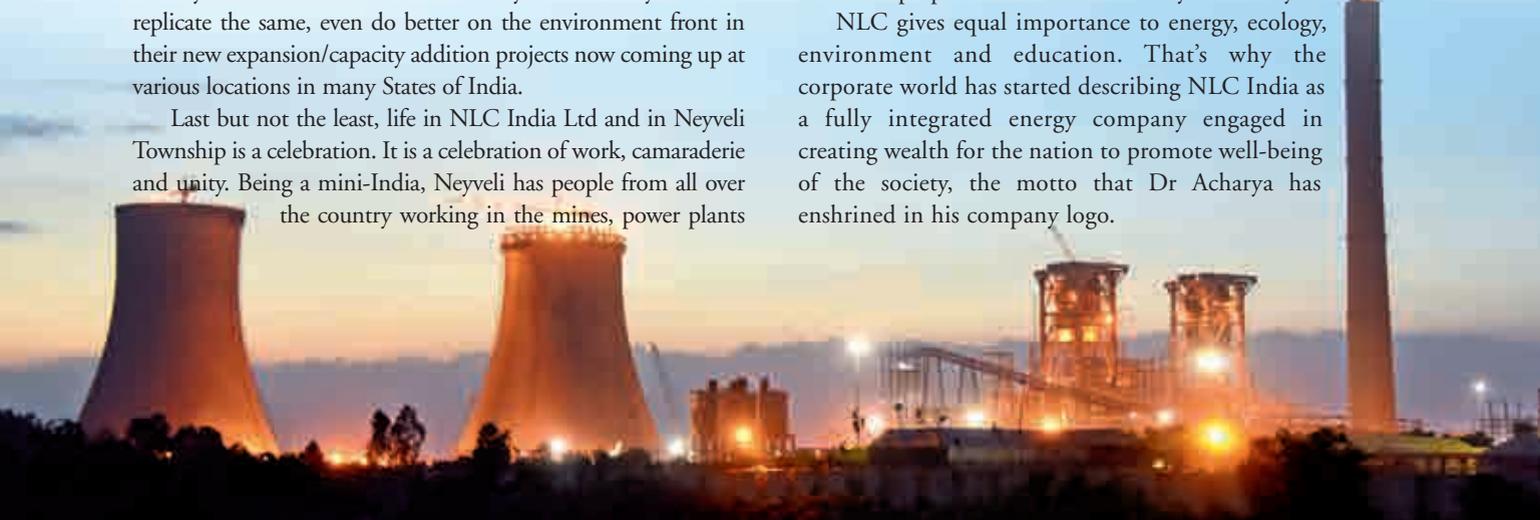
Last but not the least, life in NLC India Ltd and in Neyveli Township is a celebration. It is a celebration of work, camaraderie and unity. Being a mini-India, Neyveli has people from all over the country working in the mines, power plants



An artificial lake developed in decoaled area

and corporate office. Dr Acharya has brought in an inclusive culture making the township inmates and people in surrounding areas to celebrate and take part in festivals of all States and communities. So on Ugadi Day, the Chairman and his Directors along with employee representatives and local opinion makers join the community festival wearing typical Andhra Pradesh outfits while on Onam, they wear customary Kerala dress and participate in Onam fest and feast and so on. "This is the reason why people do not want to leave NLC India Ltd or Neyveli. Here, life is a celebration - a celebration of work and global brotherhood. We have only one community and that is the Neyveli community," said one of the employees, who has been with the company for the last three decades echoing the sentiment propounded and nourished by Dr Acharya.

NLC gives equal importance to energy, ecology, environment and education. That's why the corporate world has started describing NLC India as a fully integrated energy company engaged in creating wealth for the nation to promote well-being of the society, the motto that Dr Acharya has enshrined in his company logo.



Neyveli New Thermal Power project night view

12

*years of excellence*

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\*T&C apply.

# WEAR TO WORK



This lime green roll-up sleeve *kalidar khadi kurta* is from Jaypore. This product is hand-woven and might have natural irregularities which are part of its unique charm.



Off-white embroidered open jacket with quarter sleeves by The Loom lets you make a subtle statement even while blending in with your colleagues.



Raymond's khadi cocktail jacket over a cotton shirt is for a quick makeover on a summer evening.

Green khadi short *pathani kurta* has a shirt collar, long sleeves with shoulder tabs, short button placket, two flap pockets and side slits. This cool number by Rohit Kamra can be teamed with comfortable trousers and works as a perfect Friday dressing.



This mauve khadi, asymmetrical hem *kurta* with pocket and badge detail is a perfect outfit for any season by Ritu Beri.



This printed khadi summer jacket gives just a gentle nudge of relief in an all-black routine. Same colour voile lining with selvage edging detail at collar by Tulsi.

KHADI, THE EARTHY FABRIC THAT IS ENCODED IN OUR DNA AND HAS A STRONG IMPRINT OF OUR HISTORY, TICKS ALL THE RIGHT BOXES. IT IS POROUS, LIGHT, BREATHABLE AND COOLS YOU DURING SUMMERS WHILE WARMING YOU UP IN WINTER. **DIALOGUE** PUTS TOGETHER A LOOKBOOK OF CORPORATE STYLING



Exhibiting a classic V collar and dual slits at the back, this black jacket is a creation of Payal Jain. This will ensure a comfortable and smart fit. Wear it over a shirt with trousers.

The blue stripes lend a very nautical appeal to this maxi. Front buttoned with a concealed placket, it is made in cotton khadi by I wear Khadi.



Give a modern touch to your looks with this classy beige *kurti* fashioned on cotton khadi fabric and enriched with beautiful print work. This is perfect for office wear. Pair it up with *churidar* or jeans to create a contrasting effect, along with heels and stylish accessories.



There is nothing quite like a white piece to make an effortless style statement. Complete with buttons on the centre front, this handcrafted *achkan* is perfect for evening soirees and traditional festivities by Rohit Bal.

Pure handloom khadi linen cotton *jamdani* saree with woven *muslin pallu* by Bengal looms is the perfect pitch on days you have a presentation.

Yellow khadi jacket is the new trend this season. This long cape is comfortable to wear and soft against the skin. You can wear this with denim as well.



ELECTRONIC ASSISTANTS THAT HELP YOU GET BY THE DAY WITH EASE, AN UPDATED I-PAD AND A CAR SECURITY SYSTEM THAT LETS YOU KNOW ABOUT THE VEHICLE'S HEALTH — THERE IS SOMETHING TO FULFILL EVERYONE'S NEED THIS SUMMER



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



### AMAZON ECHO SPOT

Joining the Echo family of Alexa-enabled smart speakers is the Echo Spot, which now comes with the added convenience of a circular screen so that Alexa can show you data that complements its voice responses, such as a video flash briefing of the news or the weather/calendar as you wake up. A front-facing camera lets you start video calls with other folks using the Alexa app as well. **PRICE:** ₹12,999

# GADGET GYAN

### HARMAN KARDON ALLURE

Smart speakers are smart but aren't too good at the 'speaker' bit. Harman Kardon's Allure is the answer, at least if you're in a market for a sonically sound Alexa speaker. It helps that with the clear plastic top half accentuating the 360-degree glowing LED light ring, the Allure is a conversation piece on its own too!

**PRICE:** ₹22,490



### HUAWEI P20 PRO

Dual-camera phones are passé, what with Huawei's P20 Pro Leica-branded triple-rear-camera setup — there's a 40MP RGB sensor, a 20MP monochrome sensor and an 8MP sensor with telephoto lens, plus stellar low-light sensitivity and 960fps super slow motion video that has to be seen to be believed! **PRICE:** ₹64,999



### WD MY PASSPORT SSD

Portable solid state drives like the WD My Passport SSD serve a niche that values speed and reliability above all else. It offers blazing-fast read speeds of up to 515MB/s in a shock-resistant, compact take-anywhere design and is a great choice for media professionals and video editors to access large amounts of data in a jiffy!

**PRICE:** ₹9,599 onwards



### NOKIA 8 SIROCCO

Nokia's 8 Sirocco is the company's first phone in the past decade that takes the fight to the top phones in the market — from the dual-curved pOLED 2K 5.5-inch display with smaller bezels to the diamond-polished stainless-steel frame and Zeiss optics, the 8 Sirocco screams luxury and class. Truly an ultra-compact powerhouse this.

**PRICE:** ₹49,999





## WD MY CLOUD HOME

WD's My Cloud Home offers a central storage for all the photos, documents and media across all devices. It connects to your smart phones and computers (and cloud services), backs up your content automatically and is then available on your mobile device to access from anywhere. Think of it as cloud storage, but one that's sitting in your home and without recurring subscription charges.

**PRICE:** ₹11,999 onwards



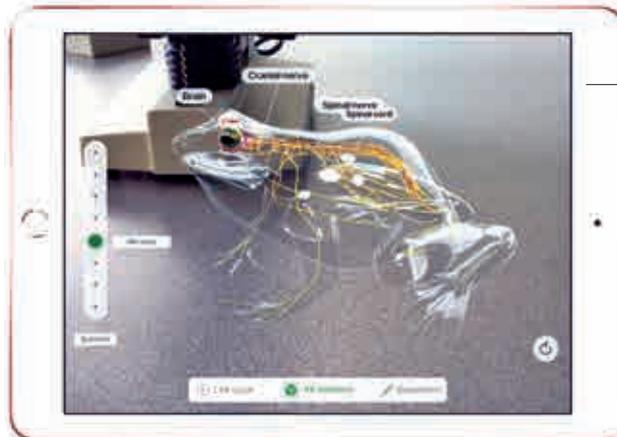
## ZICOM STREETSMART

Personal security major Zicom has tapped into the auto security market with Street Smart, an on-board diagnostic device that connects to the car's on-board computer and sensors and delivers trip, alerts and car health information directly from your car's OBD-II port to the app on your iOS/Android phone — via Bluetooth or via a pre-installed GSM SIM.

**PRICE:** ₹7,999

## GOOGLE HOME

Google Home brings the power of Google Assistant to the smart speaker space, so you can conveniently look up a recipe in the kitchen (and have Assistant read it out, step by step) or play back your favorite genre in your den. Working in tandem with Assistant on your phone, Google Home can understand context to help you with your commute, your daily schedule and managing your smart home appliances with just your voice. **PRICE:** ₹9,999



## APPLE iPad

Apple's hugely popular iPad sees a 2018 update which adds support for Apple Pencil that was till now restricted to the iPad Pro lineup, allowing users to sketch ideas, jot down notes and mark up screenshots and images with ease. All the iPad essentials are still there — the 9.7-inch Retina display and the all-day battery life — along with the A10 Fusion chip for immersive augmented reality experiences.

**PRICE:** ₹28,000 onwards

## NOKIA 7 PLUS

The Nokia flagship for the mid-range segment, the 7 Plus offers a compelling value proposition — a taller 18:9 display (a first on a Nokia), one of the best cameras in its segment, the sturdy build quality and a clean, uncluttered user interface by virtue of being part of the 'pure' Android One programme. **PRICE:** ₹25,999



## YOGA HELPS TO TAKE THE PRESSURE OFF LEGS WHILE STRETCHING AND TONING THEM



**BHARAT**thakur  
is a yoga guru and  
founder of Artistic  
Yoga

**V**aricose veins are usually associated with women but men can develop this condition as well. The symptoms are mild for some and more of a cosmetic concern. For others, varicose veins can be the cause of aching pain and discomfort and can lead to more serious problems. So, why does this happen? Arteries pump oxygenated blood from the

heart to the body and the legs and veins return de-oxygenated blood to the heart. To do this, veins in your legs have to work against gravity. There are tiny valves in your veins that open as blood flows toward your heart, then close to stop blood flowing backward. These can weaken so blood flow moves backward and pools in the veins.

The veins enlarge and become varicose. This condition can happen due to age, family history, obesity, pregnancy or if you are constantly standing or sitting for a long period of time. Yoga can help to relieve the symptoms of varicose veins

and also prevent further deterioration. This can be done by improving blood circulation and flow in the body with practices like *Suryanamaskar* (sun salutation) as well as *asanas* like *Vajrasana* and *Pavanmuktasana*, which help to take the pressure off legs while stretching and toning them. All inverted postures in yoga are very important for varicose veins. By elevating the legs, they help the pooled blood to drain back to the heart. This reduces varicose veins to more normal dimensions and helps the valves to function better. One of the most effective inversions for varicose veins is *Sarvangasana* (shoulder stand). To get the maximum benefit, it is important to hold this posture for a few minutes. This is difficult when you first start but with practice, you will find that you will gradually be able to do this. Inversions will give you

immediate relief but yoga is a total body-mind science that works both externally and internally. Yes, regular practice of postures, breathing exercises and relaxation will improve your overall vitality, strength, fitness, muscle tone and flexibility. It will also help your internal organs and systems to function more efficiently and more effectively relieve varicose symptoms.



# REIN IN THE VEINS

**TADASANA**

- ❑ Stand straight with feet together
- ❑ Breathe in and gently raise arms above your head, interlock fingers and turn palms upwards
- ❑ Stretch upwards and rise up on your toes
- ❑ Focus on a particular point for balance
- ❑ Hold for 10-15 seconds, breathing normally
- ❑ Breathe in, exhale as you come down to start position
- ❑ Repeat three-five times

**BENEFITS:**

- ❑ Stretches the spine and body
- ❑ Tones legs and strengthens ankles, feet and calf muscles
- ❑ Removes stiffness and tiredness from upper body
- ❑ Stretches abdominal muscles and intestines



**UTTHANPADASANA**

- ❑ Lie on your back with legs together, arms by your side, palms on floor
- ❑ Inhale as you raise the right leg to 90 degrees or as high as comfortable
- ❑ Hold for 10-30 seconds, holding the breath
- ❑ Exhale as you slowly bring the leg down
- ❑ Repeat with left leg
- ❑ Repeat, lifting both legs together
- ❑ Repeat this cycle three-five times

**BENEFITS:**

- ❑ Relieves pressure on the legs and feet
- ❑ Facilitates blood circulation
- ❑ Strengthens ab muscles, digestive system and lower back

**VIPREETKARNI ASANA**

- ❑ Lie flat on your back, arms by your side and feet together
- ❑ Inhaling slowly raise both your legs, keep them straight and together
- ❑ Raise your back off the floor and lower your legs towards your head
- ❑ Support the hips with both your hands
- ❑ Hold 30-60 secs or as long as comfortable
- ❑ Slowly lower the hips, bring arms by your side and slowly lower the legs
- ❑ Relax

**BENEFITS:**

- ❑ Redirects the flow of blood upwards, relieving varicose vein symptoms
- ❑ Improves blood circulation
- ❑ Strengthens the back and shoulders
- ❑ Tones the abdominal organs and improves digestion



**SARVANGASANA**

- ❑ Lie flat on your back, arms by your side and feet together
- ❑ Inhaling, slowly raise both your legs to 90 degrees, keeping them straight
- ❑ Support your back with both hands and roll and raise your legs, hips and back to a vertical position
- ❑ Gently push the chest forward so it presses against the chin
- ❑ Relax, breathe normally and hold for 30 seconds to one minute
- ❑ Slowly lower the hips, place arms by your side and slowly lower the legs
- ❑ Relax till your breath and heartbeat become normal

**BENEFITS:**

- ❑ Redirects the flow of blood upwards, relieving varicose vein symptoms
- ❑ Improves blood circulation
- ❑ Strengthens the back and shoulders
- ❑ Tones the abdominal organs and improves digestion





WHISKY IS A WINTER DRINK — ONLY IF YOU'VE BEEN LIVING UNDER A ROCK, SAYS **ROHAN BHARDWAJ**

# URBAN LEGEND

**D**o we ever think about stereotypes around the drink while sipping a whisky sour? No, right? Fittingly so; it involves whisky after all! So, talking about the stereotype of whisky being a winter drink, what I can imagine is, some tipsy guy in the Scottish highland (where you can sometimes experience all four seasons in one day) may have made a passing comment on how whisky made his cold evening so perfect. And the rest of the whisky-soaked people simply agreed and followed the lead and thereon started the



## GRANT'S AND APPLE WHISKY COCKTAIL

### INGREDIENTS

- ❑ 50 ml Grant's Family Reserve
- ❑ 150 ml Apple Juice
- ❑ 1/4 Lemon squeezed

### INSTRUCTIONS

- ❑ Pour whisky over ice into mixing glass.
- ❑ Top off with apple juice and squeeze in lemon.
- ❑ Garnish with apple slice.

'Chinese Whisper', stereotyping whisky as a winter drink. That's all I can imagine for now, because, nowhere in the first written records of distilling, has whisky been categorised as a winter drink (At least, I have never heard or read about it). So, I think it's time we banish these stereotypes and enjoy our whiskies throughout the year — the way it ought to be.

Whisky is one of the most popular spirits in the world offering distinctive blends and an extensive variety of complexities and flavours. For instance, talking about Grant's, it offers a balance of citrus, floral and fruity notes, making it a spirit, which can be used in a number of

refreshing cocktails, one can make at home, such as G&G (Grant's, Ginger Ale and Ice).

The memory I have of spirits, from my childhood is that whisky was limited to the pipe-puffing, white-bearded, whisky-drinking men and the young boys and girls were stereotyped as beer guzzlers, with limited knowledge of spirits. However, the whisky cult has now caught up among millennials and how! This change in attitude towards whisky didn't happen overnight and it took a lot of travelling by thousands of people across the globe, adopting a liberal attitude to understand that drinking whisky is not just about guzzling and getting high, but it is about getting smarter and understanding its nuanced flavours. Of course the flavours take the back stage when one gets tight and woozy after a couple drinks — which is fine isn't it? Again, its whisky after all!

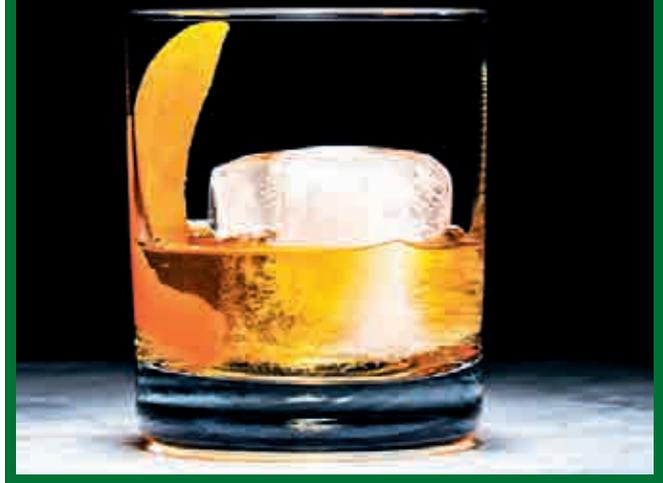
**T**his generous attitude of a millennial, which is more experimental, outgoing and more accepting of foreign cultures and eating habits has broken the stereotype. Tickling their taste buds with a variety of drinks, I believe millennials are just getting started with their whisky escapade. Additionally, few years ago, the number of bars were limited with very limited drink choices; now as drinking and merry-making hits normalcy and becomes a part of our social life, the number of bars are growing, offering more and more options to spirit enthusiasts.

My job takes me to new countries each year and

### WHISKY PUNCH

Here's a perfect house part cocktail recipe, called a whisky punch. So for instance, if you have a fun night at your place and some guests are coming in, do not restrain yourself from using whisky as the spirit for your summer punch. Here is a recipe for a punch, which can be used to delight your friends this summer: It's called Good Times Grant'd (Serves 1)

- ❑ 120 ml Grant's whisky
  - ❑ 150 ml Pineapple juice
  - ❑ 20 ml Freshly squeezed lemon juice
  - ❑ 20 ml Almond syrup
  - ❑ 20 ml Sugar syrup
  - ❑ Garnish with fresh mint leaves and a pineapple slice
- Add all the ingredients in a punch bowl and stir for about 30 seconds to ensure that all liquids have been mixed consistently. Add ice to a tall glass, pour out the drink and garnish with mint sprig and a pineapple slice.



### SOUR WHISKY COCKTAIL

#### INGREDIENTS

- ❑ 50 ml Grant's Family Reserve
- ❑ 25 ml Simple syrup
- ❑ 25 ml Lemon juice

#### INSTRUCTION

- ❑ Add whisky, simple syrup and ice to shaker.
- ❑ Squeeze in the lemon juice and shake.
- ❑ Strain and garnish with a Maraschino cherry.



### ROYALE WHISKY COCKTAIL

#### INGREDIENTS

- ❑ 50 ml Grant's Family Reserve
- ❑ 100 ml Champagne
- ❑ 1 Sugar cube soaked in bitters

#### INSTRUCTION

- ❑ Add sugar cube soaked in bitters to a Champagne flute.
- ❑ Add whisky and top with Champagne.
- ❑ Garnish with a lemon twist.



on each occasion I discovered that every country has its own extraordinary way of enjoying their spirits. I simply learn and see if it something that would work in India. One can enjoy whisky neat or with an ice cube during winters and one can also mix it with ginger ale in a tall glass, for a perfect summer drink.

However, we can't simply give away all credits to the changing attitude of a millennial for the growing whisky cult. Let's applaud whisky for breaking any associated stereotype around it because of its nuanced flavours, which give mixologists and bartenders a lot to play with. Scotch whiskies in particular give a wide range of flavours. A bartender can work with peated islay whiskies to more fruity and nutty speyside ones. It's no surprise that more and more bartenders are getting more comfortable using single malts and blended scotch whiskies as their base spirit for cocktails now.

When it comes to taste, it definitely differs from person to person. Some may like it neat, others with soda, and some just with water in it or with ice. Taste is very personal and in all my whisky years I have never been an advocate of drinking whisky in a particular fashion. While it is very true that adding a few drops of water lowers the alcohol volume and brings out more

flavour, that shouldn't be construed as the only way to drink whisky. I enjoy it with ginger ale — an 'Old Fashioned' way (It is a name of cocktail if you didn't know) or a refreshing Blood and Band as well as numerous other cocktails. Also, believe me — sometimes even in my burger patty!

**P**eople are more inclined towards blended whiskies, because they allow you to break out of convention. Blended Scotch whisky is usually more complex than a single malt whisky, as it is a blend of multiple single malt and grain whiskies from across Scotland. It is also easy to approach a blend than single malt whisky; I mean that is the reason blended Scotch whisky was created- because people would find malt whiskies very strong and flavoursome, so blenders started blending single malt with grain whiskies to make it more smooth and approachable.

Whisky lovers all over the world are so wooed by its smooth yet rusty taste today that they no longer are uptight about not having their favourite drink.

Cheers to that.

— *The author is the first Indian brand ambassador for Grant's*



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## EXPOSING MODUS OPERANDI AIMED TO DECEIVE THE AIRLINES AND SECURITY SYSTEM BY STRICT IMPLEMENTATION OF SECURITY REGULATIONS



**A**n attempt to hoodwink the check-in and security process of airlines by two unscrupulous passengers was foiled by the CISF personnel as they alerted the airline about the modus operandi of the passengers who tried to cheat on them in collusion with an airport staffer. Using profiling techniques, **Constable N K Singh**, who was deployed in Crime & Intelligence Wing, kept a watch on two passengers who entered the terminal building on forged tickets and checked in their baggage. Later on, these passengers were seen exiting the terminal building without their baggage. The airline was asked to reconcile the baggage of the said flight and it was confirmed that no unattended baggage was onboard.

On further enquiry, it was learnt that 10 pieces of their baggage had been booked in the name of another passenger who was travelling by the same flight. The passengers were handed over to Delhi Police for further necessary action. A joint interrogation of the said passenger and the GHA staff was conducted by IB & Delhi Police Special Cell.

# TOGETHER WE SHINE

---

THE PERSONNEL AT THE IGI AIRPORT ARE CENTRAL TO ITS SMOOTH AND SAFE OPERATIONS

---

## EFFICIENT AND COORDINATED EFFORTS BY ATC STAFF FOR ENSURING OPTIMUM RUNWAY UTILISATION

**T**he Indira Gandhi International Airport is the gateway to India. It is by far the busiest airport in the country and is well-connected to various parts of India and the world. IGI Airport is frequently handling more than 1,350 Air Traffic Movements (ATMs) a day and it achieved a high of 1,389 ATMs on April 7, as per the airport runway data, making it one of the busiest airports in South East Asia.

To sustain such high frequency operations, the three runways at IGI Airport are used simultaneously by the Air Traffic Controllers (ATCOs), to maximise the traffic handling capacity. Through the application of various Air Traffic Control procedures, during peak periods IGI Airport has more than one take-off or landing occurring every minute. This is achieved through the professional capabilities of the ATCOs who ensure that the airport's runways operate safely, efficiently and in an optimal manner at all times. The Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP) for IGI Airport, Airports Authority of India, is continuing to upgrade the operational equipment and skills of the ATCOs, to meet the challenges of rapid traffic growth and gearing up to enhance the airports future capacity.

The new ATC tower is ready for commissioning and will give a 360-degree view of the airport to the ATCOs who will be able to get a clear view of runways, aprons and taxiways.



## USE OF BEHAVIOURAL TECHNIQUES TO THWART AN ATTEMPT OF SMUGGLING GOLD AT IGI AIRPORT



**C**TV operator Lady Constable Rekha, using her surveillance techniques, observed a passenger who had arrived from Dubai, displaying conflicting behavioural aberrations. She immediately informed the observation to SI Kuldeep Dubey who was on ground in international arrivals. They started keeping a watch over him by physical and technical surveillance techniques. The passenger was detained by CISF Crime and Intelligence Wing personnel. On thorough search, 1,370 gm of gold which was concealed in a cigarette packet was found in his possession. The passenger was handed over to the Customs for necessary action at their end.





NAFED made an impressive turnaround with record profit for FY 2017-18 which enabled it to pay ₹220 crore as cash payment to its lender banks. This was part fulfillment of its one time settlement amount of ₹478 crore. The agreement was signed at its headquarters in New Delhi

# GREEN MILES

THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE MARKETING FEDERATION OF INDIA (NAFED) HAS DIVERSIFIED INTO BIO-GAS AND BIO-FERTILISERS TO ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

**T**he traditional occupation of farming has been followed since time immemorial. It plays a vital role in India's economy especially since 54.6 per cent of the Indian population is engaged in it and its allied activities (census 2011). It contributes 17.4 per cent to the country's Gross Value Added (current price 2014-15, 2011-12 series).

The National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) not only works in the procurement of grains but is also engaged in production of bio-fertiliser and in the distribution of grains among consumer as well as different institutions under various schemes.

## PRICE SUPPORT SCHEME

The MP government requested the Central government to make procurement of pulses and oil seeds of Rabi 2018 under Price Support Scheme (PSS) of Government of India. Initially the Central Government had allocated a quantity of approximate 10 lakh MT and NAFED started procurement in the state from April 10, 2018. The procurement is continuing at more than 300 centres.

## PROCUREMENT

Rabi 2018	QTY sanctioned (MT)	QTY procured (MT)	Rs in crore
Masoor	1,36,808	11,905.17	50.60
Gram	4,50,930	77,561.68	341.27
Mustard	3,90,400	4,902.89	19.61

During the year 2017-18, NAFED procured record quantity of 3,26,244.00 MT of pulses and 5,137.55 MT of onion under Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) and a quantity of 2,86,493.18 MT of oilseeds and pulses under PSS. NAFED also recorded its highest gross profit of ₹225.85 crore (pre-audited figures) in last two decades.

NAFED is one of the central nodal agencies of the Government of India for procurement of notified oilseeds, pulses and cotton under PSS. It achieved a turnover of ₹2838.54 crore in domestic trading of agricultural commodities. NAFED procured oilseeds and pulses valued at ₹14,072.61 crore under PSS and ₹1,626.21 crore under PSF during the year 2017-18. NAFED marketed groceries and other consumer items valued around ₹6.45 crore directly to the consumers and also catered to the institutional supplies valued at ₹12.33 crore. NAFED handled eggs valued at ₹1.74 crore during 2017-18.

It has a godown capacity of 50,200 MT, cold storage capacity of 9,565 MTs, onion storage capacity of 4,400 MTs and empty container yard of 20,008 sqm.

## SUPPLY OF MILLED PULSES TO ARMY, CPMFS AND STATE GOVERNMENTS UNDER PDS, MDM AND ICDS

During the year 2015-16 and 2016-17, NAFED created a national buffer of around 20 lakh MTs of different pulses at the instance of the Government of India under PSF by procuring raw pulses from the farmers directly at remunerative prices. This stabilised the prices of pulses in the country and protected consumers' interests.



**WE ARE COMMUNICATING WITH FARMERS THROUGH NAFED APP WHICH HAS BEEN MADE USER-FRIENDLY AND PROVIDES REAL TIME INFORMATION ON PROCUREMENT CENTRES TO THEM**

**— Sanjeev Kumar Chadha IFS, Managing Director, NAFED**



**NAFED**

## FOCUS ON ORGANIC FARMING

### BIO FERTILISERS

The indiscriminate use of chemicals has led to high cost of cultivation, low quality of agricultural output due to the presence of toxic chemical residues and soil and water pollution. To gradually phase out chemical fertilisers, NAFED has set up bio-fertiliser plants and promoted bio-agri-inputs. The use of bio fertilisers is essential to protect the land from getting barren, improving fertility, protecting environmental and public health.

The first unit for manufacturing bio-fertilisers was set up by NAFED in 1984-85 at Indore (Madhya Pradesh) and the second unit in 2000-01 at Bharatpur (Rajasthan). The efforts of these units in capacity utilisation, quality control and extension and promotion of biotechnology have been recognised by the National Productivity Council (Government of India) and NAFED has got the Best Performance Award 11 times till date.

### CONSUMER PRODUCTS

The Consumer Marketing Division sells quality consumer products of daily need through its retail outlets at affordable rates in Delhi and Shimla. It also provides door-step services by operating mobile retail shops in Delhi. It also supplies grocery and other items to hospitals, hotels, public sector undertakings, schools, hostels and so on. The total turnover of Consumer Marketing was ₹20.42 crore during the year 2017-18.

It also supplies eggs to E.S.I hospitals as well as

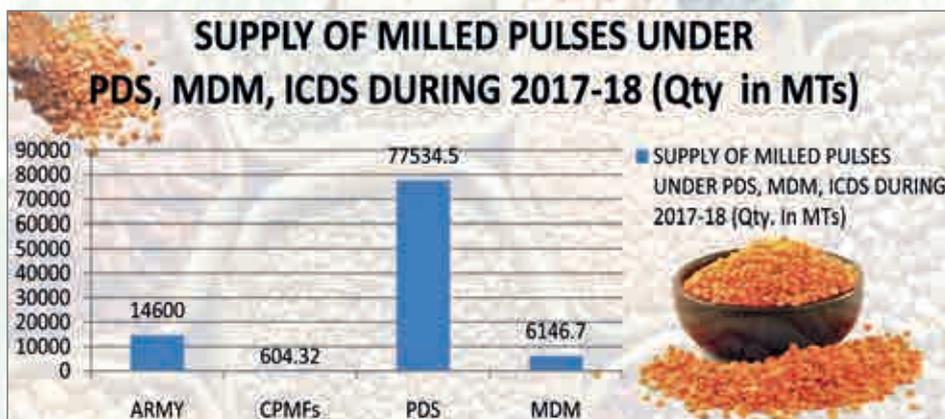
RML and other institutions. The total sale value of eggs was ₹174.59 lakh during the year 2017-18.

### A STEP TOWARDS FARM-WASTE MANAGEMENT

Besides bio-fertilisers, NAFED is taking their fight against pollution ahead further. It has signed an MoU with the Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL), a Maharatna PSU, for production and marketing of compressed bio-gas/bio-CNG and bio-manure. Its aim is to educate the farmers not to burn their farm waste and generate revenue by using it for production of bio-gas/CNG and bio-manure, generate rural employment, reduce dependence on polluting fuels and create a pollution free environment for everyone.

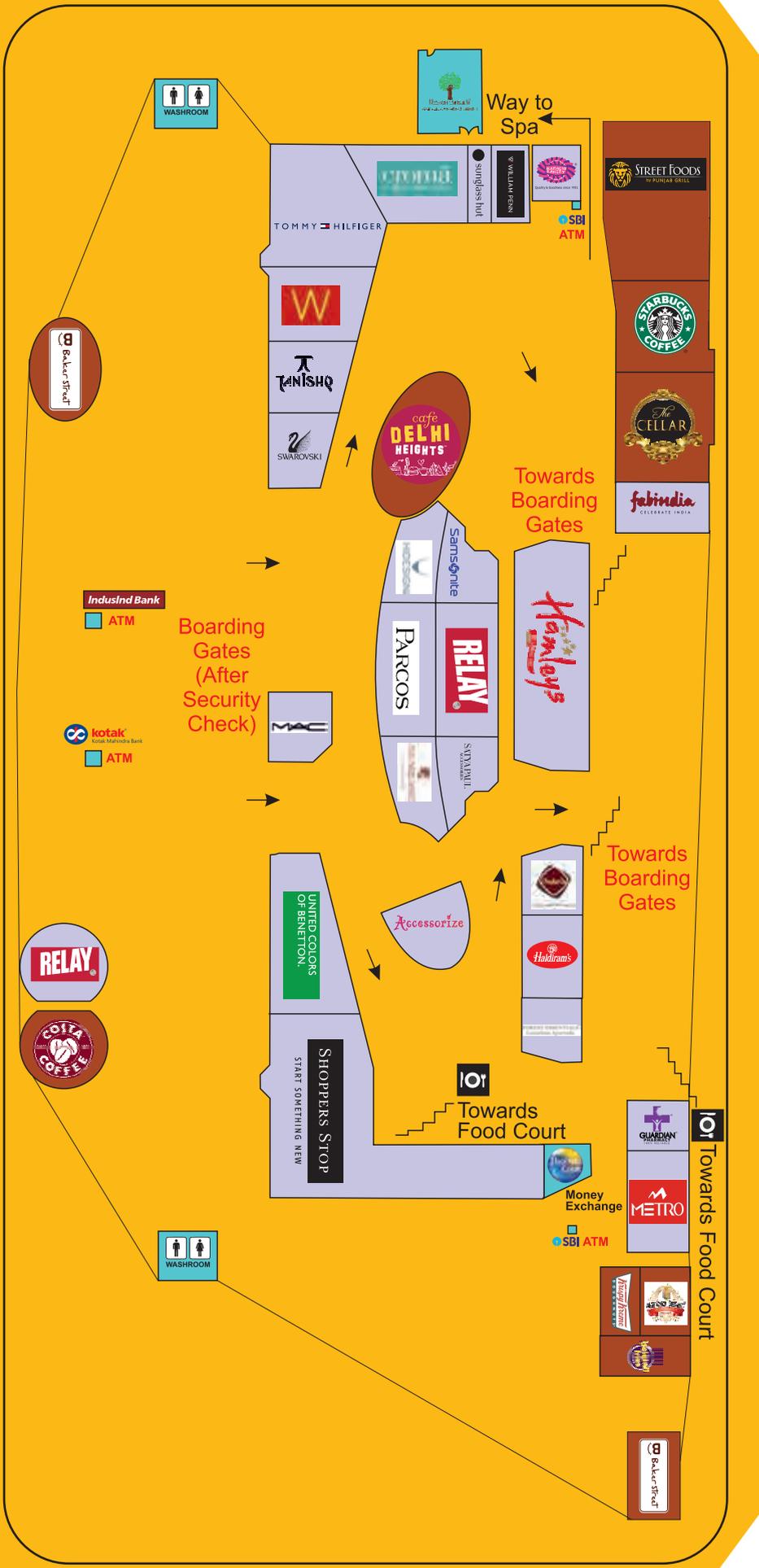
During 2017-18, the Government of India inter alia disposed-off the stocks by supplying milled pulses to Indian Army, Central Paramilitary forces and State Governments to meet their pulses' requirements through NAFED.

It has been designated as a Central Agency for supply of pulses out of the national buffer under the MDM and ICDS schemes all over India and therefore NAFED is expected to supply 5 lakh MTs of milled pulses under the schemes to all states between 2018 and 2019.



To complete the task, NAFED has empanelled more than 200 millers across India for milling, packing and delivery to different institutions. NAFED has a transparent and online system for effective management of these tasks.

Besides this, the government launched National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) scheme to enhance transparency in transactions and increase the reach of farmers to markets where they can sell their produce to buyers of their choice at their convenience. A national web-based unified agri-marketing portal for inter-market and inter-state trading of agri-produce has been created. Transparency and competition fetch better prices for the produce and ensure cashless payments to the farmers' bank accounts. There are 585 wholesale markets which will be integrated with e-NAM.



# KNOW YOUR AIRPORT

## TERMINAL 1 (DEPARTURE)



SHOP AT DELHI AIRPORT  
GREAT VARIETY  
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RETAIL

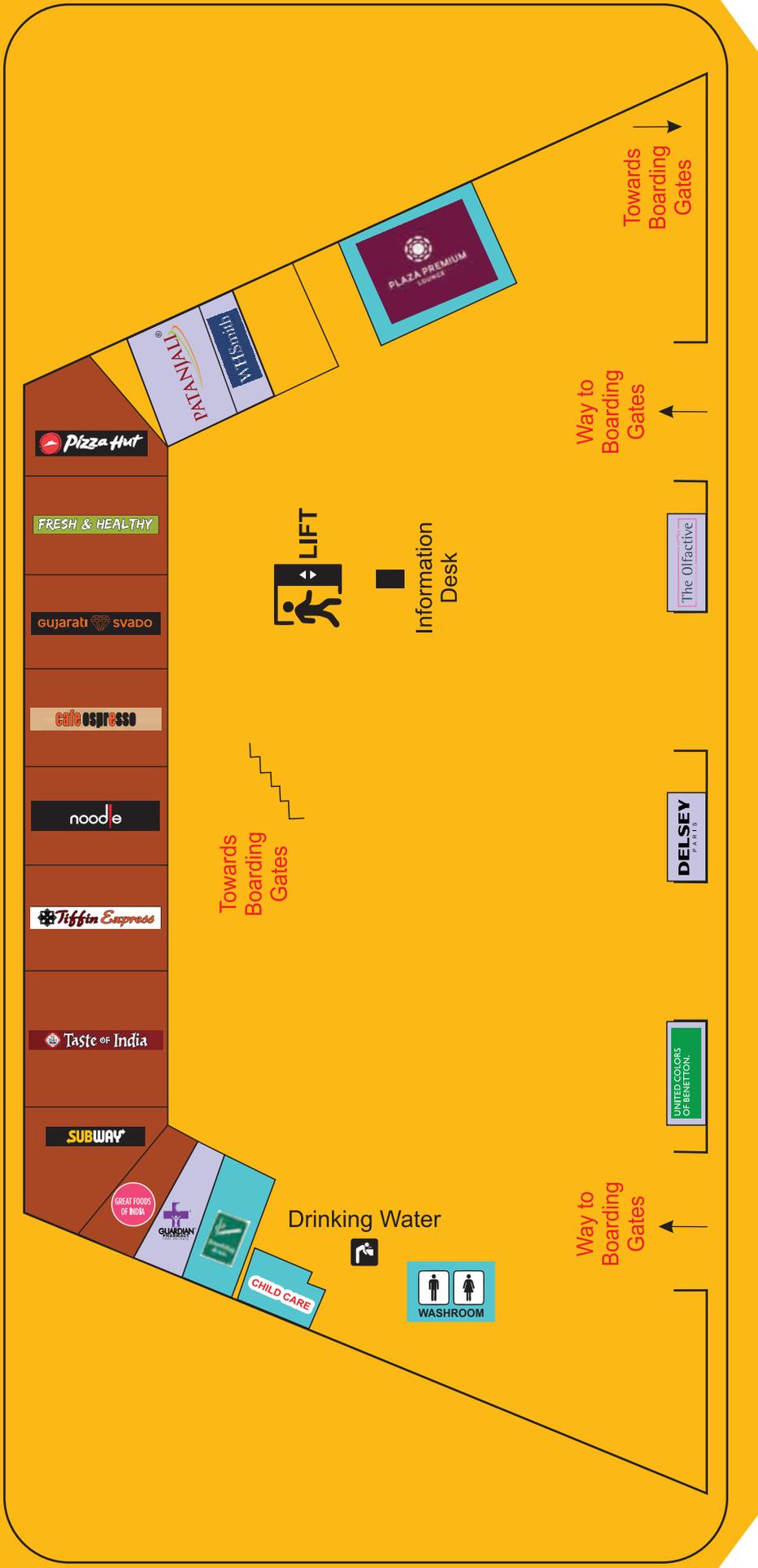


SERVICES



F&B

\*This map is not to scale



# KNOW YOUR AIRPORT

## TERMINAL 2 (DEPARTURE)

SHOP AT DELHI AIRPORT

**GREAT VARIETY  
GREAT PRICES**



\*This map is not to scale



# KNOW YOUR AIRPORT

## TERMINAL 3 (DOMESTIC, DEPARTURE)

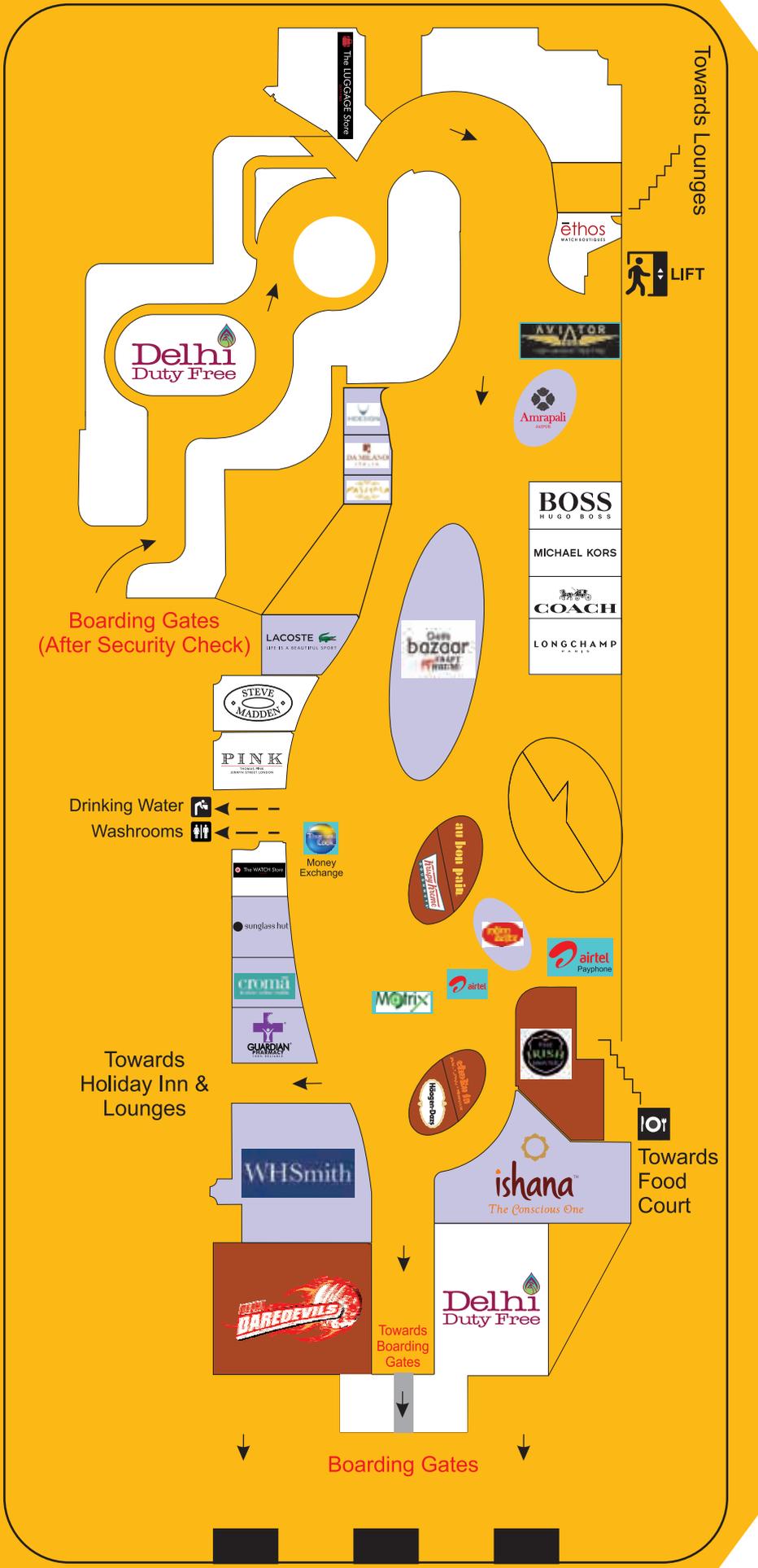


# SHOP AT DELHI AIRPORT

**GREAT VARIETY  
GREAT PRICES**



\*This map is not to scale



# KNOW YOUR AIRPORT

## TERMINAL 3 (INTERNATIONAL, DEPARTURE)

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AT DELHI  
AIRPORT  
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Mirage like, almost mingled in the dry foliage, the gentle, controlled, sauntering... Lion!  
Not just one, many. The entire lot begins moving towards us, getting closer and closer... and  
is now a few feet away from my hand!!

And why do I still wish that they had come closer? Maybe they will, in your tour.

*Antony Baccan*



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