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FROM THE CMD'S DESK



AJAY SINGH
Chairman and Managing Director

DEAR READERS,

Welcome aboard SpiceJet!

As India's evolution as a key global aviation market gains momentum, domestic airlines powering the rise witnessed record growth of 43% year-on-year (YoY) in number of passengers. Between April 2022 and April 2023, the month-on-month (MoM) growth rate increased by 22.18% indicating a sustained momentum and growth opportunities in domestic aviation. As India's favourite airline, SpiceJet is expanding its fleet to enhance capacity and provide safe and efficient service to its esteemed customers. The work on reviving our grounded planes is going on in full swing and they should start joining back the fleet very soon, giving us the needed capacity and resource to add more connections and new destinations to our network. We will also induct three Q400s and ten B737s, including five B737 MAX in the coming months.

With a view to enhance service delivery, we have signed a partnership agreement with aerospace engine service supplier FTAI Aviation Ltd under CFM56 revitalisation programme. This partnership will revitalise SpiceJet with access to a pipeline of high-quality engines, in addition to reducing the airline's maintenance costs. It will also minimise aircraft downtime and enhance the airline's

performance. With critical spares and maintenance requirements effectively addressed, our attention is now focussed on strengthening operations and developing innovative services and solutions for our passengers.

We have successfully completed the first phase of our Haj operations carrying pilgrims from Aurangabad, Vijayawada, Bhopal, Gaya and Srinagar to Jeddah between June 7 and 22. Return flights from Medina are scheduled from July 17 to August 2, 2023. This is the highest-ever multicity operation; and the first time wide-body A340 aircraft are being deployed for our annual Haj operations. More than 200 special flights and close to 22,000 pilgrims are part of this year's operations.

We are humbled by the continued love and patronage of our customers and we remain committed to a path of innovation and exceptional service to honour this relationship. Our position as the airline with the highest passenger occupancy rate at 94.8% remains unchallenged in May 2023.

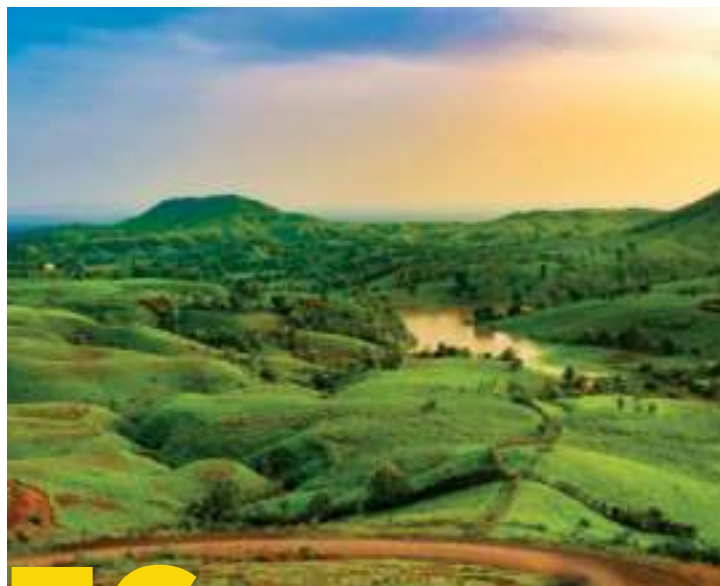
Our innovative approach also extends to lending a helping hand to the society at large. With the recent collaboration with internationally renowned Michelin-star chef, Vikas Khanna, we re-designed our in-flight menu and extended support to girl child education and empowerment as well. A significant part of the proceeds collected from the sale of these exclusive meals will go to Mijwan Welfare Society, an NGO that works in India towards empowering girls by educating them and enabling them to stand on their own feet.

I congratulate Indian men's doubles badminton team of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty for becoming the World Number 3 after their stellar performance at the Indonesia Open.

I also congratulate the women's junior hockey team for their win at the Women's Junior Hockey Asia Cup. In a heart-warming display of talent, team-work and perseverance, the team clinched the title by defeating four-time champions South Korea. My best wishes to the team for the upcoming FIH Women's Junior World Cup 2023 to be held in Santiago, Chile.

Jai Hind!

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From spiritual cities to commercial hubs, fly with us to these unexplored destinations in India



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The dark clouds have arrived with the scent of rain, promising life and joy. In the July issue of *Spice Route*, come celebrate monsoon with us!

spice route

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HEALTH BEGINS AT HOME. HERE'S HOW YOU CAN MAKE YOUR CHILD RUN, HOP AND EAT NUTRITIOUS FOOD



If there is one concern we often hear from parents of all age groups, it is their children's lethargic lifestyle. Even as technology becomes faster and smarter, the younger generations are cooped up at home, thanks to smartphones, iPads, gadgets, and the omnipresent social media presence. Parents, teachers and doctors are equally worried about this unhealthy lifestyle of Gen Z, as obesity is not a metabolic disorder for adults anymore.

It is a worrying trend, and we all deserve a slice of blame for that," says the Founder of SSVM Group of Institutions, Dr Manimekalai Mohan. As an educationalist with nearly three decades of experience, Dr Manimekalai urges parents, teachers, students and everyone to make health a top priority for a better tomorrow.

Today's children have a super unhealthy lifestyle and eating practices, and this trend is not healthy for our society. What have you observed in students of these times?

As an educationalist, I have interacted with students my whole life. This generation of children is sharp, smart, and highly intelligent, but some of them are extremely ignorant of the fact that their unhealthy eating habits may lead to decreased concentration, reduced energy levels, and potential challenges with cognitive functions. Today, our children have forgotten the fun of playing with friends outside their houses. However, it is worthwhile to note that efforts are being made globally to address these concerns. Educational institutions, healthcare professionals and parents well-recognise the importance of promoting a healthy lifestyle. Let's prioritise their well-being, foster support, and promote healthy choices for a brighter future.

One of the common red flags for child's health is obesity. Doctors are highly concerned about it. What should parents do to handle weight issues?

Being chubby is cute when your child is a baby, but overweight is unhealthy. As parents, we should be aware of the ill-effects on overall wellbeing and try all possible measures to curtail them. Include fresh vegetables and fruits in your daily diet and encourage your child to play vigorous sports on the playground. Dance classes, martial arts, and cycling can also

help burn extra calories and maintain metabolism.

How can parents educate their children to care for their health?

Be open and discuss family health history. There is nothing wrong with that, and your child should be aware of chronic and other health conditions that run in the family. As they say, prevention is better than cure, and today's kids are very adaptable to changes. Explain why health is true wealth and how to make it a top priority.

Getting glued to gadgets is a common phenomenon, and how should parents handle this at home?

Make rules and give reward. Cut down gadget time to 30 minutes a day. Do not let your child eat food or munch on snacks while watching television or playing a video game. Make your kids accountable for their actions but acknowledge their efforts by giving small rewards. This slowly takes the mind off these distractions, and the child will spend more time productively.

How to ensure a child's health and overall well-being?

- Lead by example and eat healthy food
- Do not get tempted by outside foods, and cut down on online deliveries
- Replace unhealthy snacks with fruits, nuts, and homemade goodies
- Enrol your child in workout classes or extracurricular activities
- Ensure that the entire family sits down for dinner every night to track their eating habits.



Dr. Manimekalai Mohan
Founder & Managing Trustee
SSVM Institutions,
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu



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@DrRajeshOrtho1

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@mohitshah1234

@flyspicejet was travelling today from Gorakhpur to delhi it was extremely choas situation at the airport. Thanks to Vaibhav Tiwari for making security checkin so much easier and swift for me. Spicejet ground support staff is absolutely helpful and supportive.

@akanshamishra09



@flyspicejet Thankyou @Spicejet for a wonderful flight from Gorakhpur to Mumbai. Had an amazing experience, Special thanks to the in-flight cabin crew.

@15_anilmishra

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BUILDING A BRIGHT FUTURE: TAMIL NADU GOVERNMENT'S EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES

Tamil Nadu Government's Health, Education and Empowerment Initiatives for a Brighter Future

The Tamil Nadu government, under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister MK Stalin, has implemented a series of transformative initiatives to improve the lives of its people. From ensuring nutritious breakfast for school students to empowering women, the government's efforts are paving the way for a brighter future in Tamil Nadu.

Healthy Start, Bright Future: Tamil Nadu Government's Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme and Health Initiatives Ensure a Bright Future

The Chief Minister's Breakfast scheme provides nutritious breakfast to school students. Initially covering 1,968 government schools and benefiting 1,54,170 students, the scheme has received an additional fund of Rs. 500.49 crores to expand its coverage to all government primary school students.

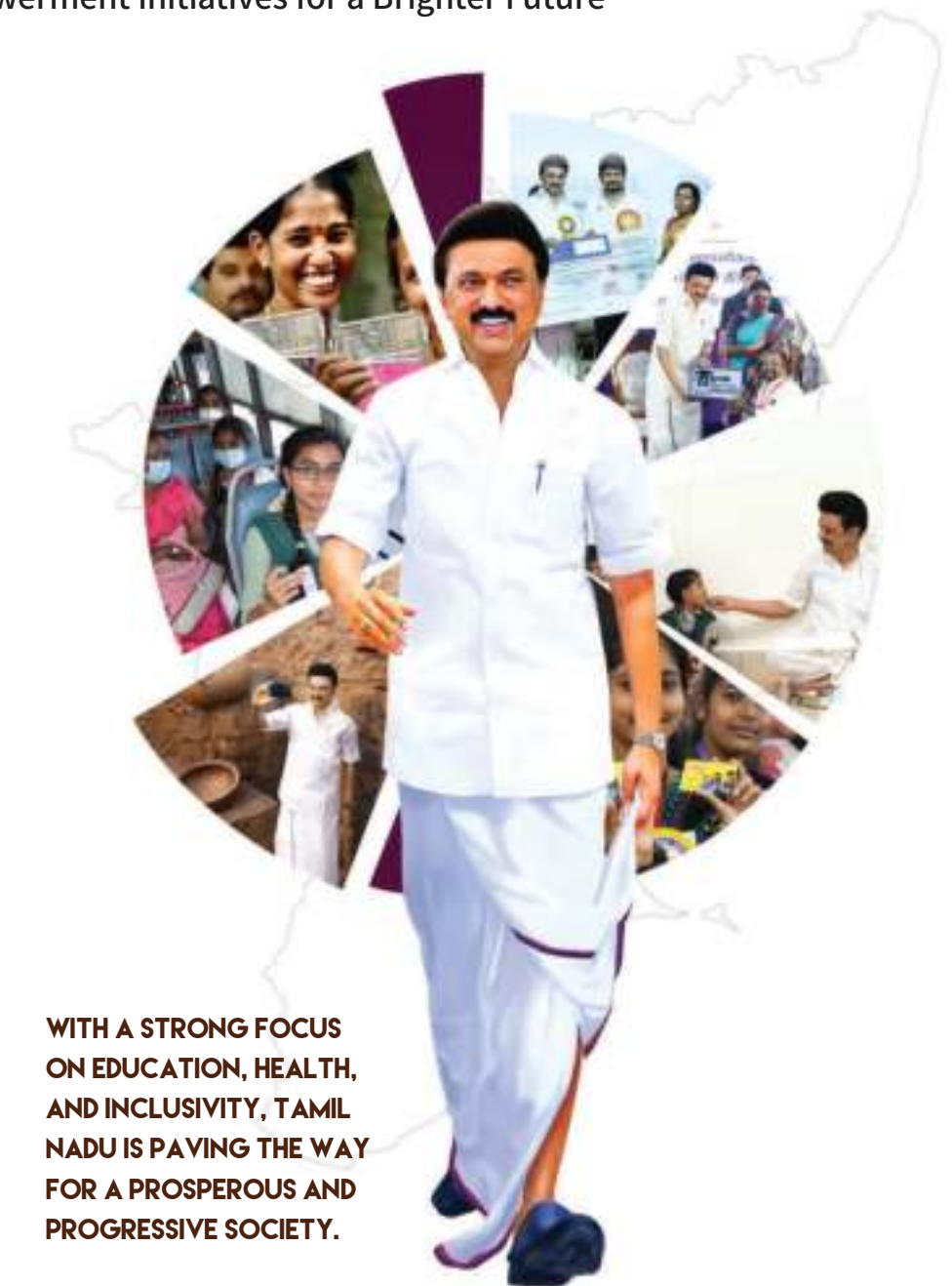
Apart from that, the government has also taken steps to address anaemia among children under 6 years through the Anaemia Awareness Campaign. This campaign educates parents and caregivers about anaemia and its effects, especially in districts with a higher incidence of the condition.

The government's commitment to nutrition is further exemplified through the "Ensure Nutrition" scheme, which provides special nutrition for severely malnourished children up to 6 years of age. This program aims to address the nutritional needs of vulnerable children and improve their health outcomes. The ongoing study conducted by the Department of Community Medicine at Madras Medical College will assess the project's progress and effectiveness.

Bridging the Gap between Education and Employment: Tamil Nadu Government's Remarkable Strides in Higher Education

The Tamil Nadu government has made remarkable strides in higher education, empowering students and providing abundant opportunities for success. Innovative schemes like the Naan Mudhalvan Scheme introduce dynamic curriculum courses in collaboration with the Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation, equipping students with industry-specific skills. The scheme also offers intensive coaching for competitive exams, enhancing placement prospects in multinational companies.

Another significant program is the Pudhumaipenn Thittam, which aims to provide higher education opportunities for



WITH A STRONG FOCUS ON EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND INCLUSIVITY, TAMIL NADU IS PAYING THE WAY FOR A PROSPEROUS AND PROGRESSIVE SOCIETY.

economically disadvantaged girls. Under this scheme, girls who have studied from 6th to 12th standard in government schools receive a monthly stipend of Rs. 1000 directly into their accounts, ensuring uninterrupted support for their higher education. In the year 2022-2023, around 2.09 lakh girl students have benefited from this scheme, with an expenditure of Rs. 100.11 crore.

Additionally, the government has introduced women-friendly diplomas and

industry-specific add-on courses to enhance employability. Admission of government school students to engineering colleges and the recruitment of Assistant Professors further strengthen the higher education system in Tamil Nadu.

These achievements exemplify the government's dedication to bridging the gap between education and employment. The increased enrolment of girls, emphasis on skill development, and commitment

to inclusivity reflect the government's determination to create a brighter future for Tamil Nadu's youth.

Women's Empowerment in Focus: Chief Minister MK Stalin's Transformative Initiatives in Tamil Nadu

Apart from schemes focussing on higher education for economically disadvantaged girls, Chief Minister MK Stalin has implemented various initiatives to empower and uplift women in Tamil Nadu.

The Chief Minister has prioritised the well-being of women through various measures. The Marriage Assistance Scheme provides financial support for marriages of poor women. Free bus travel for women has been introduced, resulting in 260.59 crore trips taken by women, with an expenditure of Rs. 4169.44 crores.

Efforts to enhance women's safety and welfare include the construction and renovation of government working women hostels in different locations, providing upgraded amenities and enhanced security. Various programs have been organised to promote the health and nutrition care of pregnant women, benefiting 90,000 antenatal women.

Furthermore, the Chief Minister has taken steps to create employment opportunities for women by reserving 25% of posts in Anganwadi centres for widows and deserted women. The retirement age for Anganwadi helpers has been increased to 60 years, and qualified female legal heirs are appointed as Anganwadi workers on compassionate grounds.

Transforming Transportation in Tamil Nadu: New Buses, Fare-Free travel, Electronic Ticket Booking and Cashless Transactions

The Transport Department in Tamil Nadu has celebrated its two-year achievements. The department has introduced several measures to improve bus travel for passengers, including fare-free travel for women, transgender people, and the differently-abled, as well as introducing new bus routes and resuming old ones. The department has also established information centres and grievance redressal centres for passengers during festival seasons.

The Transport Department has also allocated funds for the procurement of new buses and the refurbishment of old ones, as well as implementing electronic ticket booking, cashless transactions, and introducing a Chennai Bus App for passengers. Additionally, the Metropolitan Transport Corporation (Chennai) Ltd has appointed a consultant to prepare a business plan to make it a world-class transport company with financial assistance from the World Bank.



■ **WOMEN DEVELOPMENT**

- Rs.1,000 Magalir Urimai Thogai from September 15 onwards
- Rs.47,034 Cr. Bank Loan to 8,57,949 women self help groups

■ **PUDHUMAIPENN THITTAM**

- Higher education incentive to 2.09 Lakh girl students at Rs.350 Cr.

■ **BREAKFAST SCHEME**

- Benefitting 18 Lakh Primary School Students at Rs.500 Cr.

■ **BUS TRAVEL WITHOUT FARE**

- 276 crore times women travelled at Rs.4,426 Cr.
- 15.87 Lakh times transgenders travelled at Rs.254 Cr.
- Saving of Rs.888 Per Month

■ **NAAN MUDHALVAN**

- 8,11,879 Arts & Science College students and
- 4,60,734 engineering college students benefitted.

■ **HISTORY OF INDIAN SUBCONTINENT**

- Keeladi Archeological Museum at Rs.18 Cr.

■ **INDUSTRIAL GROWTH & EMPLOYMENT**

- 222 Memorandum of Understandings
- Rs.2,72,322 Cr. Investments
- 4,09,651 Employments

■ **HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE**

- 58.27 Lakh persons benefitted under Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme at Rs.3,185 Cr.

- Treatment for 1.51 Lakh persons under Innuyir Kaappom Nammai Kaakkum 48

■ **FARMERS' WELFARE**

- Rs.23,127 Cr. crop loan to 31.53 Lakh Farmers
- Free Electricity Connection to 1.50 Lakh Farmers
- 5.36 Lakh acres under Kuruvai Cultivation

■ **JOB FAIRS**

- 1,44,961 jobs in Private Companies through 1,241 Job Fairs

■ **SPORTS DEVELOPMENT**

- 44th Chess Olympiad conducted at Rs.114 Cr.
- Chief Minister's Trophy competitions at Rs.51 Cr.

■ **RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

- Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam at Rs.2,610 Cr.
- Periyar Ninaivu Samathuvapuram renovated at Rs.257 Cr.
- Mudhalvarin Grama Salaikal Membattu Thittam at Rs.4000 Cr.
- Household Tap connections provided to 79,00,647 rural houses out of 1,25,51,754

■ **SOCIAL SECURITY PENSION**

- 5,88,640 New Beneficiaries

■ **DAIRY DEVELOPMENT**

- Reduction in Aavin Milk price by Rs.3 per litre
- Milk procurement price hiked to Rs.3 per litre

■ **TRANSPORT**

- 2,000 new buses and renovation of 1,500 old buses at Rs.1,000 Cr.



When:
July first week

Where:
Champakulam,
Alappuzha, Kerala

Map not to scale



KERALA BOAT RACE

Kerala's identity is as synonymous with its famed backwaters as it is with the snake boat races. And the race held in Champakulam, a village in the Alappuzha district, on the Pampa river is not only the oldest in the state but also kicks off the annual boat racing season. Massive boats splitting the waters as traditional songs are hummed make for an exhilarating experience.

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When: July 9-10

Where: Dilli Haat INA, Delhi



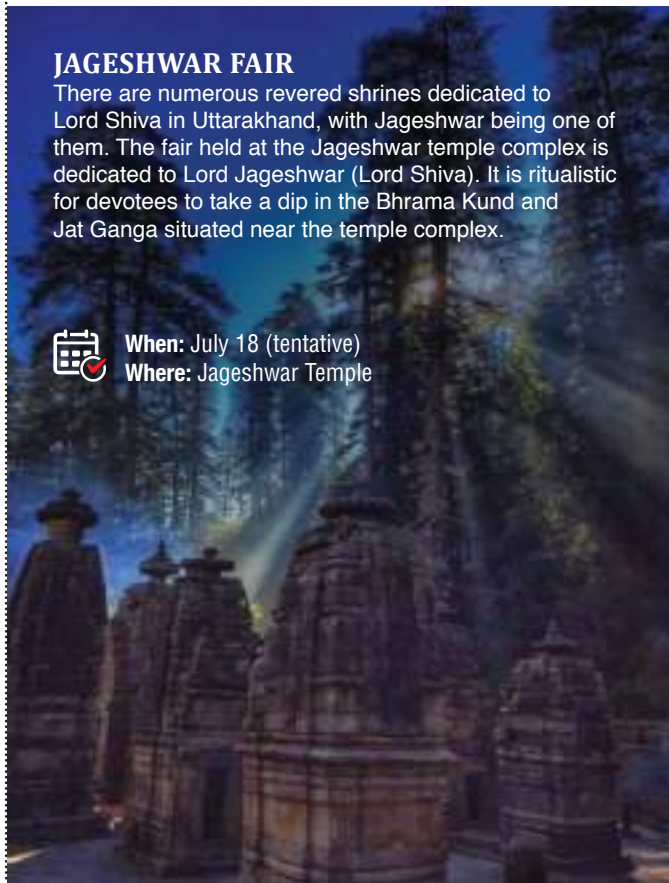
JAGESHWAR FAIR

There are numerous revered shrines dedicated to Lord Shiva in Uttarakhand, with Jageshwar being one of them. The fair held at the Jageshwar temple complex is dedicated to Lord Jageshwar (Lord Shiva). It is ritualistic for devotees to take a dip in the Bhrama Kund and Jat Ganga situated near the temple complex.



When: July 18 (tentative)

Where: Jageshwar Temple



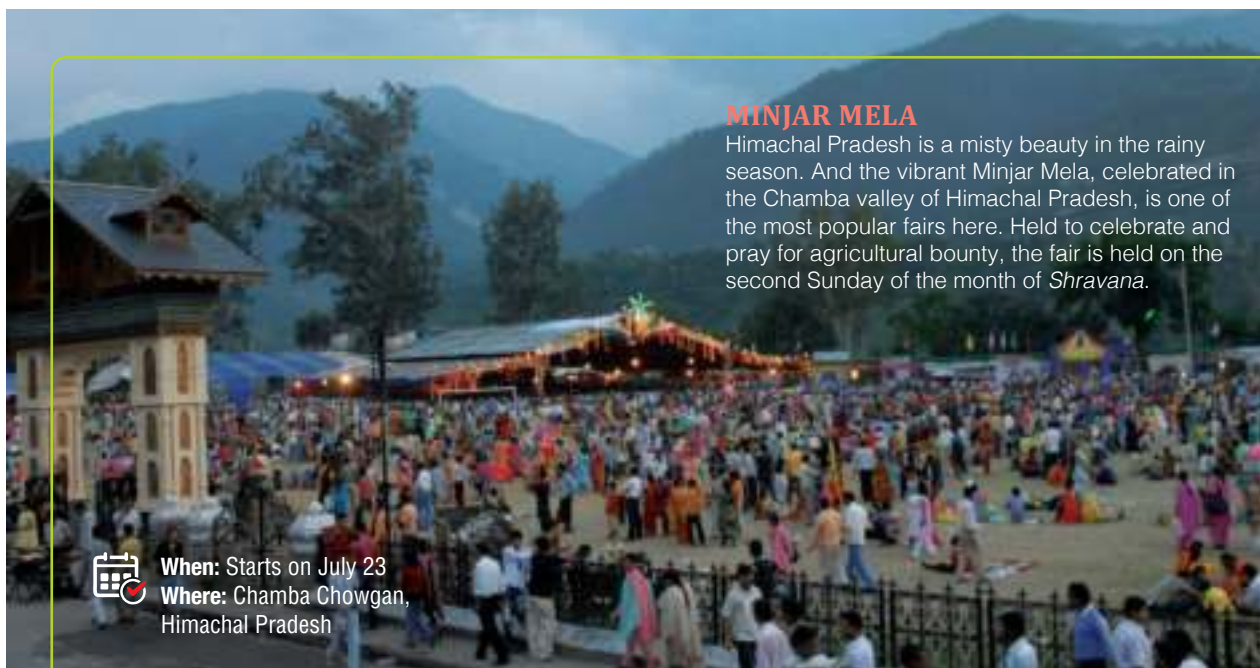
MINJAR MELA

Himachal Pradesh is a misty beauty in the rainy season. And the vibrant Minjar Mela, celebrated in the Chamba valley of Himachal Pradesh, is one of the most popular fairs here. Held to celebrate and pray for agricultural bounty, the fair is held on the second Sunday of the month of *Shravana*.



When: Starts on July 23

Where: Chamba Chowgan,
Himachal Pradesh





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Movies | Lifestyle | Sports

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THE WIMBLEDON CHAMPIONSHIPS

The oldest and the only Grand Slam to be still played on a grass court, Wimbledon is one of the major tennis championships (other than Australian Open and French Open). The 2022 championships was won by Novak Djokovic and Elena Rybakina, and they will be back to defend their titles. Catch the action at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, London, the venue of the championship since its inception in 1877.



When: July 3-16

Where: AELTC Club, London, the UK

18

“The mind is the limit. As long as the mind can envision the fact that you can do something, you can do it, as long as you really believe it 100%.”

Arnold Schwarzenegger

Actor, bodybuilder and politician



SIX YARDS OF SHEER GRACE!

From *chanderi* and *kora* to *Banarasi* and *tussar* - sarees are an indispensable part of a woman's closet. All these and more are a part of the second collection launched by Five Point Five, an online start-up for sarees. The brand sources its exquisite weaves from expert craftsmen across the country in a bid to promote Indian textiles and support the weavers.



CRICKET

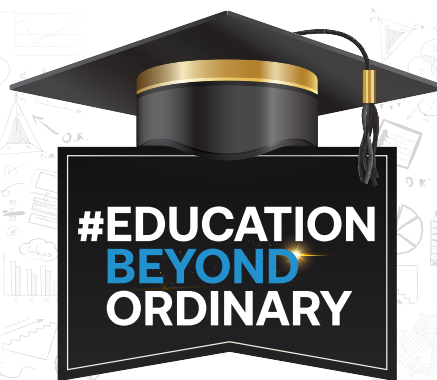
The India tour of West Indies 2023, is scheduled to begin on July 12 and will end on August 13, 2023. The first ODI will be held on July 27 at the Kensington Oval in Barbados. The second ODI will also take place at the same stadium on July 29. After the ODI series, a five-match T20I series will be contested between the two teams. The teams will be playing two Test matches also.



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GNIDSR is the 1st Dental College in West Bengal to get the prestigious **NAAC Grade 'A'** Accreditation.



JISCE has received **NIRF Innovation Ranking 2023** under Rank/ Band : 101-150.

NIT, SURTECH & AEC has received **NIRF Innovation Ranking 2023** under Rank/ Band : 151-300.

GNIPST has retained **NIRF Ranking** for the last 7 consecutive years (2017-2023) in Pharmacy.

JIS UNIVERSITY has received **NIRF Ranking** in Pharmacy with Rank/ Band : 101-125 in 2023.

NIT has retained **NIRF Ranking** for the last 6 consecutive years (2017-2022) in Engineering.

JISCE has received **NIRF Ranking** for the 3rd consecutive year (2020, 2021 & 2022) in Engineering.

GNIT has received the **NIRF Ranking** for the 2nd time (2022) in Engineering.

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The first **National Legislators' Conference Bharat** hosted **1870 legislators** from across the country in a three-day event from June 15th to 17th in Mumbai. **Shri Om Birla**, the Hon'ble Speaker of Lok Sabha, inaugurated the conference in the presence of former Lok Sabha Speakers and NLC Patrons, **Smt Sumitra Mahajan**, **Shri Shivraj Patil**, **Dr Meira Kumar**, and **Shri Manohar Joshi**. **Shri Eknath Shinde**, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra, **Shri Devendra Fadnavis**, the Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra, and **Shri Rahul Narwekar**, the Speaker of Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, also attended the event.

Hon'ble President of INC, **Shri Mallikarjun Kharge**, addressed the gathering virtually.

The conference featured speeches by the Former Hon'ble Vice President, **Shri M Venkaiah Naidu**, Hon'ble Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha, **Shri Harivansh**, Hon'ble Former Chief Minister of Maharashtra, **Shri Prithviraj Chavan**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Rajasthan, **Shri Ashok Gehlot**, Hon'ble Deputy Chairperson of Maharashtra Legislative Council, **Dr Neelam Gorhe**, and other distinguished leaders.

In the first edition of NLC Bharat, **3 Governors**, **3 Chief Ministers**, **86 Ministers** from different states, **15 Leaders of Opposition**, **28 spiritual leaders**, **25 Legal Luminaries**, **32 political leaders** representing various parties, **28 Secretaries of Vidhan Sabhas**, and **54 business leaders** from Indian Merchant Chamber (IMC) participated.

The legislators engaged in discussions and deliberations with **24 Vidhan Sabha Speakers/Chairpersons** and **68 social and thought leaders** from diverse sectors of society.

Messages from the Hon'ble Prime Minister, **Shri Narendra Modi**, and Former INC President, **Shri Rahul Gandhi** were read out during the conference. The conference structure was guided by the **24 Speakers/Chairpersons of Vidhan Sabhas/Councils**.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra, **Shri Eknath Shinde**, proudly handed over the "**Rajdand**" for the second edition of NLC Bharat to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Goa, **Shri Pramod Sawant**. Goa will host the second edition of **NLC Bharat in November 2024**. The **Government of Karnataka** through the Speaker of Legislative Assembly **Shri. U. T. Khader** offered to host the **third edition of NLC Bharat**.

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their travels without spending a lot. You need to simply decide on the theme of your vacation, such as pilgrimage, honeymoon, heritage, wildlife, beach or hills, and the travel solutions platform throws up a wide variety of deals in terms of location, hotel arrangements among others.

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GORAKHPUR

From bustling commercial hubs to holy cities, traverse the country with SpiceJet. We start with Gorakhpur, a city steeped in spirituality and culture



Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, takes its name from the revered saint Gorakhnath. The Gorakhnath Mandir stands here in the honour of the saint and is a major attraction. The evening light and sound show is very popular. Gorakhpur is also associated with Gautam Buddha and Lord Mahavira. Several eminent personalities like poet Firaq Gorakhpuri, author Munshi Premchand and sage-poet Kabirdas lend the city a rich cultural and historical relevance.

KNOW WHAT

About 50 km away is Kushinagar, one of the principal centres of Buddhist pilgrimage, where it's said Lord Buddha left his corporal self. And 25 km away is Chauri Chaura, known for its role in India's freedom struggle.

DON'T MISS



Dedicated to Lord Krishna, Gita Vatika is a beautiful and popular religious site in Gorakhpur. The city is also home to the legendary Gita Press, where Hindu religious books can be bought.

MUST SEE



A must-visit site is the historic Imambara, built by Hajrat saint Roshan Ali Shah. It's said, a *dhuni* (smoke fire) has been burning here for centuries. Don't miss the Veer Bahadur Singh Planetarium and the Rail Museum, with a toy train.

EAT & SHOP



If you're a street food lover, try snacks like *chaat*, *kanji bada*, *gol gappe*, *raj kachori*, *bhel puri*, etc. Also satisfy your sweet tooth by sampling the famous sweet dishes here such as *jalebi*, *rabdi*, *faluda* and *burfi*.



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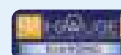


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DURGAPUR

An ancient settlement that is now a thriving industrial city

26



DON'T MISS



The famous Durgapur Barrage on the Damodar is one of the most popular attractions. It's a serene picnic spot with stunning sunset views!

MUST SEE



Around 60 km away is Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore's university town Santiniketan. Make an easy day trip.

An industrial hub sitting by the banks of Damodar River in the mining heartland of Bengal, Durgapur is a flourishing cosmopolitan centre dotted with neat residential neighbourhoods and lush green parks. While Durgapur, called West Bengal's Steel City seems new-age with its glitzy malls and entertainment parks, excavations have revealed traces of civilisation from the Paleolithic/ Mesolithic age. History says this region, bound by rivers and hills, was once a dense forest with Santhal tribe habitation, and sheltered many looking for refuge. Folklores refer to Bhabani Pathak (an associate of Devi Chaudhurani, a brave queen immortalised by legendary author Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay), who used to wield power here. Even today, a mound called Bhabani Pathak's Tilla with tunnels (now closed) is popular.



KNOW WHAT

Near Durgapur is the dense Garh Jungle, which is believed to be among the oldest inhabited places in the country. Inside is the Maharishi Medhashram.

EAT & SHOP



Try street-foods like egg-roll and *phuchka*! Also have traditional Bengali cuisine, including desserts. Benachity and City Centre are commercial hubs, where you can shop and dine!



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BHAVNAGAR

A prosperous port town in the heart of Saurashtra, Gujarat



An erstwhile princely state and a major port, Bhavnagar in Gujarat has a rich historical and cultural heritage, with several architectural marvels from the past. Visit this commercial centre and explore the Gandhi Memorial, the Barton Library that is said to be more than 150 years old, and the Gaurishankar Lake. Visit the beautiful Takhteshwar temple, which offers panoramic views of the city and the Gulf of Cambay.

KNOW WHAT

Approximately 50 km from Bhavnagar is one of the world's largest ship-breaking yards called Alang, where supertankers, car ferries, container ships, and ocean liners are dismantled and recycled.



28

DON'T MISS



The grand Nilambag Palace is a reminder of Bhavnagar's royal past. Commissioned by Maharaja Saheb Takhtsinhji, the stately building (now a hotel) is a mix of grand imperial charm and contemporary luxuries.

MUST SEE



The Blackbuck National Park is around 40 km from Bhavnagar. It's known for its population of blackbucks, a species of antelope. Also around 50 km away is the famous Palitana Jain temple complex on the Shatrunjaya hill.

EAT & SHOP



Do not miss traditional Gujarati snacks like *fafda* and *gathiya*. *Bateta bhungra* is another popular dish to try here. In Bhavnagar, shop for embroidered textiles, jewellery, woodwork items and handmade earthenware.

Image: lyting.com/



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JHARSUGUDA

A mineral-rich ancient human settlement that is today a flourishing manufacturing centre

MUST SEE



Ulapgarh is a hillock, where it is said, revolutionaries of the Indian freedom struggle took shelter. Also visit Ram Chandi Mandir temple inside a cave by a river.

DON'T MISS



Visit the lovely Koilighugar waterfall and the ancient Lord Shiva temple. Another tranquil spot is Pikalghugar, a beautiful water body amidst forests and rolling hills. Explore the Bikramkhoh cave with ancient carvings.

EAT & SHOP



Indulge in local delicacies like *chungdi malai* (coconut shrimp curry), *pakhala bhata* (rice dish) and sweets like *chhena poda* and *rasabali*. You can buy cotton and silk textiles.

KNOW WHAT

Around 50 km away is Hirakud Dam on the Mahanadi River. Perched on the bank of the dam is the Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary, one of Odisha's prettiest with a rich flora and fauna.



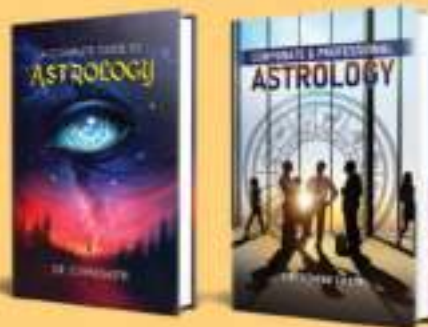
Image: odishatourism.gov.in

Folklore says modern-day Jharsuguda in Odisha was the site of an ancient human settlement nestled in a dense forest. Once known as Jharguda, this mineral-rich land was a part of the powerful Sambalpur kingdom. With the advent of industrialisation, it wasn't long before the British government built a railway station. Soon enough, tradesmen arrived. Today, this commercial hub has several sobriquets to its merit like the "Powerhouse of Odisha", owing to the thermal power plants. It's also called "Little India" referring to its diverse demography and culture.



Dr. Sohini Sastri

*Life Coach and President Award
Winning Astrologer*



Best astrologer in India, Dr. Sohini Sastri, does not need an eloquent introduction. Currently she holds the record of "most searched astrologer in India". Dr. Sohini Sastri has received multiple national awards and recognized as 'best astrologer in Delhi', 'best astrologer in India' by media houses like Times of India, Business Standard, Hindustan Times, Amar Ujala etc. She has also been felicitated by several universities and honored with degrees like Doctorate, D.Litt.

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Dr. Sohini Sastri: The women who changes the dynamic of Vedic Astrology



"We all have certain role to play for the sake of mankind and those who are privileged should always stretch their hands towards those who are in need." - this is the philosophy Dr. Sohini Sastri believes and maintains. Dr. Sohini Sastri has been following the path of spirituality since her early age and always keen to help her followers with the divine knowledge and power she possessed. They say, if you can achieve one quality in life, 'be kind', Dr. Sastri manifested that saying, through her journey so far. Her wholehearted involvement in numerous social activities, humbleness, and candid nature helps her to stand out from others.

Astrologer, Life Coach, and Philanthropist Dr. Sohini Sastri specializes in Krishnamurti Paddhati, popularly known as KP astrology. It is regarded as the most accurate system of present time.

Along with Vedic astrology, Dr. Sohini Sastri also excels at Palmistry, Numerology, Vastu Shastra, and Color therapy. Being a certified Gemologist, she always recommends and helps her followers to choose genuine gemstones & rudraksh. She has never backed down from spreading the positivity she draws from her spiritual practices. Over the last few decades, she has helped thousands of her followers with astrological prediction and cosmic energy. They say, she has a divine aura and positive vibes around her, which gives a calmness and a sense of certainty to the most disturbed person. In an interview, Dr. Sastri revealed how spirituality and her belief in supreme power has helped her to keep calm and overcome all the difficulties. She has suggested the same for us. She says, "Think one step at a time, keep your calm, meditate, and do something good and impactful for the society through your journey. In the process, you will realize you are not alone, the universe is working for you."

Her enormous contribution to astrology and social reformation made her part of numerous esteemed communities in both astrology and social awareness sector. Among numerous awards and accolades Dr. Sastri has received, few of the latest are -

- Champion of Change, 2018 from Honorable Vice President Shri Venkaiah Naidu
- Champion of Change, 2019 from former President Late Shri Pranab Mukherjee
- Pride of Nation, 2019 from Honorable Defense Minister Shri Rajinath Singh
- Indian Achievers Award, 2020 from Honorable Union HRD Minister Dr. Ramesh Pokhriyal
- Champion of Change, 2020 from Honorable Governor of Maharashtra Shri Bhagat Singh Koshyari
- Felicitated by Governor of West Bengal Shri Jagdeep DhanKhar
- Felicitated by Honorable Governor of Uttarakhand Shrimoti Baby Rani Mouriya
- Femina Brand Award, 2021 by Femina India
- Honoured by World Book of Record 2022 for her contribution in astrology, palmistry, vastu shastra etc.

To spread awareness about astrology she has started writing books in laymen language and those books are getting immense popularity. Within a very short career span as an author, she has already published 3 books, i.e. A Complete Guide to Astrology, Handbook of Corporate and Professional Astrology, and Career Astrology Made Easy.

Being a woman entrepreneur, she always expresses the need of woman empowerment and how it can help the society. She says, "Be proud of being a woman, celebrate your womanhood".

We can all agree that she is creating an impact on the society in many fields, be it astrology, women empowerment, or social activities; Dr. Sohini Sastri is the name we are, and we will be hearing repeatedly.



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The CALL OF *Rain*

Monsoon is the season to rejoice, refresh and relive. Rejuvenate yourself in these offbeat destinations this season

TEXT: BINDU GOPAL RAO

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BANSWARA, RAJASTHAN

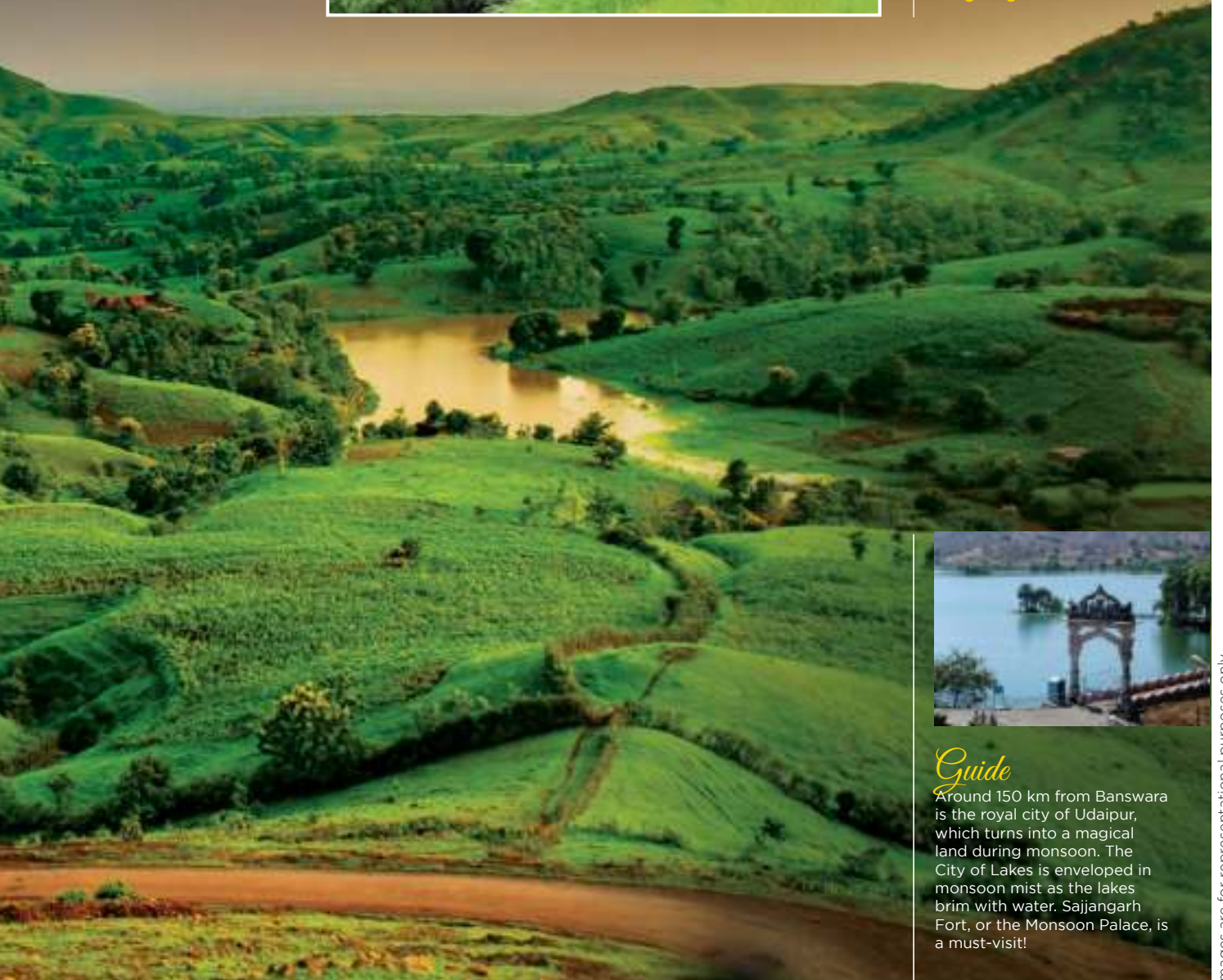
Evergreen all year round and surrounded by lakes and waterfalls, lush Banswara is a hidden gem just three hours away by road from royal Udaipur. An ancient land, which has been the home of the Bhil tribe for centuries, this serene town is nestled between Udaipur and Chittorgarh. Drenched in rain during monsoon, Banswara takes on an even darker hue of green, its lakes brimming with shimmering blue.

Often called the “city of a hundred islands”, Banswara is drained by the Mahi River, whose waters fill the large Mahi Dam and its serene backwaters. The nearby Kagdi Lake and adjoining

garden make for beautiful picnic spots. The lake is a huge draw for birds and birders. Enjoy a lazy cruise on the lake and soak in the beauty of the blue bounded in by rolling green hills. On the outskirts of Banswara is the Chacha Kota backwaters dotted with hundreds of little islands covered with pastures and forests, which come alive in the rains with lively waterfalls streaking down the forested hillsides. With an abundance of greenery and the horizon-kissing blue, these backwaters are the best off-grid destination ever! Relax in the pristine landscape and watch the local tribal communities make a simple living!



Surrounding Banswara are several waterfalls, which come roaring to life during monsoon. Some of the most popular ones are Jua Falls, Singhpura Falls, Jholla Falls and the Kadeliya Falls. Also nearby is the Anand Sagar Lake, often referred to as the Bai Talab, commissioned by an erstwhile queen. It is popular for “wish-fulfilling” *kalpa vriksha* trees nearby! The elegant Raj Mandir, or City Palace, perched on a hilltop, offers splendid views of Banswara and its verdant surroundings. The royal summer retreat, Badal Mahal, is located on the shoreline of Diablab Lake, a lotus-filled tranquil water body. Banswara is also popular for a variety of mangoes grown here.



Guide

Around 150 km from Banswara is the royal city of Udaipur, which turns into a magical land during monsoon. The City of Lakes is enveloped in monsoon mist as the lakes brim with water. Sajjangarh Fort, or the Monsoon Palace, is a must-visit!

In monsoon, driving through the Western Ghats is a serene experience. You can meander through mist-laden Amboli Ghat, or the Anmod Ghat.

Monsoon in Goa



During monsoon, Goa's serene emerald beauty shines through! Go rafting on the Mhadei river, visit the spice gardens, and enjoy local festivals like Bonderam.

CHORLA GHAT, GOA

A forest that glows in the monsoon may seem like magic. But in Goa, just 60 km from Panjim, the forest in and around Chorla Ghat starts emitting an iridescent light during the rainy season. This light comes from a type of bioluminescent mushroom that glows in the dark. Abundantly found in this biodiversity hotspot of the Western Ghats, these mushrooms flourish during the monsoon months and cover logs, twigs and stumps of trees, especially the ones that are decaying. After sunset, they start giving off an unusual greenish glow that lends the forest a magical, mystical air! However, one needs to tread deep into the forest to witness this glow and also its brightness depends on the amount of moisture in the air - the mushrooms glow when they have the right level of moisture in them.

But even if you do not catch the light, Chorla Ghat in monsoon is a mist-enveloped fairy-tale nestled in the green Sahyadri range. Explore the Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary and make pit stops at the serene Anjunem Dam. Mhadei has flourishing flora and fauna, including the royal Bengal tiger. The Amthane Dam is also nearby. As you navigate the green, you will see silvery waterfalls zigzagging down. Another highlight here is the thundering Vajra-Sakla waterfalls and a trek can be an exhilarating experience. The rainforests here have been recognised as an important birding site as well, and you can spot many winged friends. Enjoy the drive through rural Goa - quaint villages, old churches, paddy fields and backwaters!



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Popularly known as Maharashtra's Valley of Flowers, Satara, about 50 km from Mahabaleshwar is home to the Kaas Plateau or Kaas Pathar, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. From July to October, the area turns into a riot of colours, with wildflowers carpeting the land till the horizon. More than 850 species of flowering plants are found on the plateau, including several rare ones. Walk or hike around the plateau to soak in the feast of colours. Kaas Plateau's unique ecosystem also allows several endangered species of plants to thrive. A few kilometres away is the village of Bamnoli on the bank of the Koyna lake, where you can enjoy boat rides. Just beyond the Kaas plateau is the beautiful and serene Kaas Lake that sits pretty amidst rolling mountains. Carry a picnic basket and spend some time by the lake! The lake is also a birdwatchers' haven. Around five km away is the mighty Vajrai waterfall thundering through the lush valley and making for a stunning visual. The panoramic view of the valley with the waterfall and the low floating clouds is magical.

Between
July and
October
Kaas
Plateau
turns into
a carpet of
flowers

Satara is also known for its history, as it was the erstwhile capital of the Maratha empire and is home to many temples and historical sites. An important site is the Ajinkyatara Fort and the Mangalai (Mangala) Devi temple nearby. The city has many other ancient temples.



Don't Miss

Near Kaas Plateau, explore Sajjangad Fort, Lingmala Falls, Elphinstone Point and the Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary. The sanctuary, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a haven of solitude and during the rains, is a velvety carpet of undulating green. While exploring do try the local Kolhapuri cuisine, including the spicy *tambda rasa*!

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AGUMBE, KARNATAKA

For an off the grid monsoon holiday, plan a trip to Agumbe, a sleepy village in the Western Ghats of Karnataka. Known as one of the wettest places in the country, life in Agumbe is geared to welcome the long, wet days. As the opaque curtain of silver drops down from the sky, hardly anyone hurries to take cover; they let the rain be a part of their daily life. When it rains, sloping roofs drain into gurgling roadside streams and lush gardens overflow their fences! And if you still can't imagine, think of *Malgudi Days*, as this is where the popular television series (based on the stories of R.K. Narayan) was shot!

The dense forests surrounding Agumbe, are a leafy haven throughout the year. But in monsoon, they truly come alive. As the rain pours, the tranquil forest celebrates with a magical orchestra. Steams gurgle, waterfalls roar, puddles are born and mature into ponds overnight, frogs croak and mushrooms spring up in the most unexpected places. To learn more about the region's wild residents, visit the Agumbe Rainforest Research Station (ARRS), which, among many other topics, also studies the king cobra, a common resident of Agumbe.



Don't Miss

If you want to relive the charm of *Malgudi Days*, you can stay at the Dodda Mane homestay, where the series was filmed. The charming, century-old house is designed in traditional style with carved wooden doors, narrow stone staircases, cosy rooms, a well and a large courtyard. Try its traditional local meal for a taste of local culture!

Agumbe is a trekking paradise. You can trek to the nearby Barkana Falls, one of the highest in India, with the route offering gorgeous valley views. Try hiking to the Jogi Gundi and Onake Abbi falls as well. During the treks, take time to study the forest and its monsoon habitat – rare species of insects, frogs and even snakes!

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THE ROYAL RAJ OF BIHAR

Darbhanga, in Bihar, is known for its princely heritage. But the city's claim to fame is also a mouth-watering and sweet delicacy

TEXT: SANTOSH OJHA

44

If you are a mango lover, especially the sweet and fragrant Maldah (Malda) variety, spare a moment to thank emperor Akbar before you take a bite of the fruit. It's said that it was this Mughal ruler who planted an orchard of mango trees in Darbhanga in Bihar, among which the Malda was the sweetest! According to lore, emperor Akbar had planted thousands of mango trees here and the Lakhi Bagh area still stands in the city!

While the Mughal may have faded from the region's memory, the mango remains. And as you travel in Darbhanga, through unending mango orchards, the sight of trees laden with fruits (season is till August), is tantalising. Make-shift stalls near the orchards sell heaps of freshly-plucked mangoes, their aroma filling the air!





Map not to scale

HIGHLIGHTS



WHAT TO SEE

For a glimpse of the luxurious *zamindar* life, visit the Chandradhari Museum and the Maharaja Lakshmeshwar (Laxmiswar) Singh Museum.



USP

Maithili language, spoken in this region, is supposed to be among the sweetest in the world.



WHAT TO DO

Visit the Kusheshwar Asthan Bird Sanctuary, which gives shelter to several species of migratory birds.



WHAT TO BUY

Vibrant and finely woven *sikki* grass baskets and decor items. These traditional baskets are made with the seasonal glossy grass.

Things to Know



ART AND CRAFT

Darbhanga is known for Sujni embroidery and Mithila paintings. The popular painting style is common to neighbouring Madhubani district as well. The art has been used for centuries to tell stories from mythologies. Traditionally, it's done with natural colours on paper and cloth.

FOOD

While Malda is the most popular mango here, the region also produces other varieties of the fruit. Other than mangoes, Darbhanga is known for *makhana*, or fox nut, a traditional staple for Biharis and which is now being recognised worldwide as a superfood. The region produces 90 per cent of the world's *makhana* crop. It can be roasted to be had as a snack but the most popular is the *makhana kheer* (milk dessert).



CULTURE

Darbhanga has been a centre for music and has produced many well-known Dhrupad (a form of Indian classical music) musicians.



THE RAJ CONNECT

The Darbhanga Raj *zamindars* (land owners) ruled over large parts of north Bihar, with Darbhanga as hub, which was also the nerve centre of the Mithilanchal region. Patrons of art and culture, they left behind several palaces, temples and gardens. There are a number of palaces built by the family, the important among them being the Nargauna (Nargona) Palace, Anandbagh and Bela palace. A number of the buildings are today used by educational institutions. The Darbhanga Fort is a grand and imposing complex with palaces, gardens and mango orchards. A popular attraction, the heritage monument used to be the residence of the Darbhanga *zamindar* family. Also known as Raj Qila, it includes palaces like Ram Bagh Palace and Nargauna Palace. Said to have been modelled after the fort in Fatehpur Sikri, near Agra, the Darbhanga fort also houses the Kankali temple.

Anandbagh Palace (also known as Lakshmivilas Palace) was constructed during the reign of Maharaja Lakshmeshwar Singh in the 1880s but was severely damaged during the 1934 earthquake. It was rebuilt thereafter. The palace reflects the rich Mithila culture with spectacular architecture both inside and outside. The most beautiful and finely decorated room inside this palace (now a university) is the

Some say the name Darbhanga was derived from Dwar-Banga or Dar-e-Bang meaning "the gateway to Bengal"

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Darbar Hall, which is known to have Venetian mosaic flooring, with exquisite chandeliers.

The Bela Palace, the best-preserved royal icon in Darbhanga, is a majestic European-style building sitting amidst lush gardens. It's now an education institute. On the outskirts of Darbhanga is another *zamindar*-era relic, the opulent Navlakha or Rajnagar Palace with its elegant arches and columns, reminding all of its grandeur.



FROM THE EPICS

Darbhanga also finds a mention in the Hindu epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. It is said Goddess Sita's father, king Janak, ruled over the ancient Mithila region. Folklore says when Lord Rama was travelling to Mithila to participate in Goddess Sita's

Swayamvar (an ancient practice where women chose their husband), he reversed a curse put on sage Gautama's wife Ahilya. Ahilya Asthan is a famous temple dedicated to Ahilya and is said to have been built near the site of the sage's *ashram*. Large fairs are held here every year on the occasion of Ramnavami.

The city is home to many other temples, including the Shyama Temple, which is one of the most prominent ones. It enshrines an imposing statue of Goddess Kali. The temple is famous not only for its grandeur but also for its divine ambience. The Manokamna Temple, located near the Nargauna Palace, is dedicated to Lord Hanuman and it's believed that if a devotee appeals sincerely to the Lord, the prayers are answered. Interestingly, to ensure that Lord Hanuman hears their pleas, devotees scribble their requests on the temple walls with pencils and pens!



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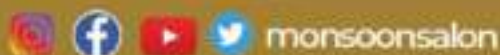
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THE SCENT OF RAIN

Kannauj in Uttar Pradesh has been bottling the aroma of monsoon for centuries. Here's how the magical *mitti attar* evokes the aroma of rain-soaked earth

TEXT: SHRUTI KOTHARI TOMAR



The first drops of rain falling on parched soil, cooling the hot air and promising new life is not just a weather condition. It's poetry. Often, it's love. And in ancient days, it was also a much sought-after perfume, in demand within many palace walls! Petrichor, or the smell of wet earth after rain, is a unique aroma that, for centuries, has been used as a perfume, and the magical fragrance of earth when first touched by the monsoon rains is still being produced in Kannauj, a town in Uttar Pradesh. The legendary perfumers of Kannauj extract the unique aroma from

parched clay that is distilled with ancient techniques to produce *mitti attar* or Earth's perfume. Often called the perfume capital of India, Kannauj has been manufacturing *attar* for hundreds of years.

THE HISTORY

The history of *attar* or oil-based botanical perfume goes back several centuries and it's said that it was brought to India by the Mughals. Mughal emperor Jehangir and his beloved queen Noor Jehan are hailed as the first royal clients of *attars* from Kannauj. Legend has it that Jehangir's



son Shah Jahan grieved his queen Mumtaz Mahal, in whose memory the Taj Mahal was built, in more ways than one. For one, Shah Jahan ceased wearing fragrant *attars* as it had been one of the couple's celebrated and joint delights. Pursued by both royalty and masses, *attars* crafted in Kannauj lent their fragrance to everything from wrists to warm baths, food, door knobs and entire homes. *Even though attars* lost their popularity in the 20th century, perfumers in Kannauj remain rooted in tradition and continue to preserve and persevere in their craft.

Today, in Kannauj almost every home is associated with the fragrance industry and it's easy to sight craftsmen steaming flower petals over wood fires and women rolling incense sticks!

The smell of rain depends on its path, intensity, the preceding dry spell and the region where the drops are falling

ART OF MITTI ATTAR

Even today, *mitti attar* is one of the most mystical scents that Kannauj produces. Says Rajat Mehrotra, a third-generation partner at Meena Perfumery in Kannauj, one of the traditional distillers still operational, "*Mitti attar* or any natural *attar* from Kannauj is made in the traditional way with copper vessels called *deg*, and *bhapka*. These days, a lot of *attars* are made through computerised heating methods. But we have not veered from tradition and follow the ancient techniques. These old methods make the *attars* unique and each bottle is exclusive."

The most important part of *attar* is its base and in Kannauj, it's made from two sources - jojoba oil that is popularly used in commercial production of *attars* and the other is 100 per cent pure sandalwood oil. "For *mitti attar*, we use pure sandalwood oil as the base, and procure mud or clay from local potters. We then distil the raw material on the sandalwood base through the hydro distillation process. Through this process, the muddy smell vapourises, converts to water and merges with the oil base. This process continues for 30 to 50 days after which the process of separating the water from the oil is done through natural means by traditional

What are attars?

Attar is a perfumery tradition that saw its fragrant beginnings with people squashing and suffusing botanicals directly into oil or water. Unlike modern perfumes, *attars* customarily use pure sandalwood oil as the base, making them flattering and highly absorbent.

Kannauj has been manufacturing attars for over four centuries, much before Grasse in France developed as a perfume hub.

Other than *attars*, Kannauj also produces aromatic oils like rose, jasmine and sandalwood; rose water and vetiver extracts.





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craftsmen. This process is done daily and as the oil and water separate, the residue left is *mitti attar*. It is then stored in camel leather containers called *kuppi* to retain their fragrance," explains Mehrotra.

THE SCENT EXPLAINED

According to science, the metallic smell that fills the air before a thunderstorm comes from ozone, a gas in the atmosphere. Likewise, the redolence that rises from earth during rain comes from a compound called geosmin. Rain also picks up scents from objects it interacts with – flowers, fruits, rock surfaces, farmlands etc. The fragrance of rain

depends on its path, its intensity, how parched a land is before the showers, and the part of the world where it's falling. The dryer the spell before rain, stronger will its scent be!

While science has its version, for perfumers in Kannauj, bottling the smell of rain is a precious art. Says Vishwas Vijayvergiya, a perfumer at Sugandhco, another Uttar Pradesh-based perfume manufacturer, "The process of making *mitti attar* requires time, skill and a deep understanding of traditional perfumery techniques. Each batch is unique, reflecting the nuances of the soil and the specific environmental conditions in which it is made. The end result is a captivating fragrance that evokes the essence of rain-soaked earth and the beauty of nature. And no machine can ever recreate it!"

In Kannauj, *mitti attar* or any other natural *attar* is made in the traditional way. Wood and cow-dung cakes are used to fire large ovens on which the distillation process is carried out. The vessels are mostly made of copper

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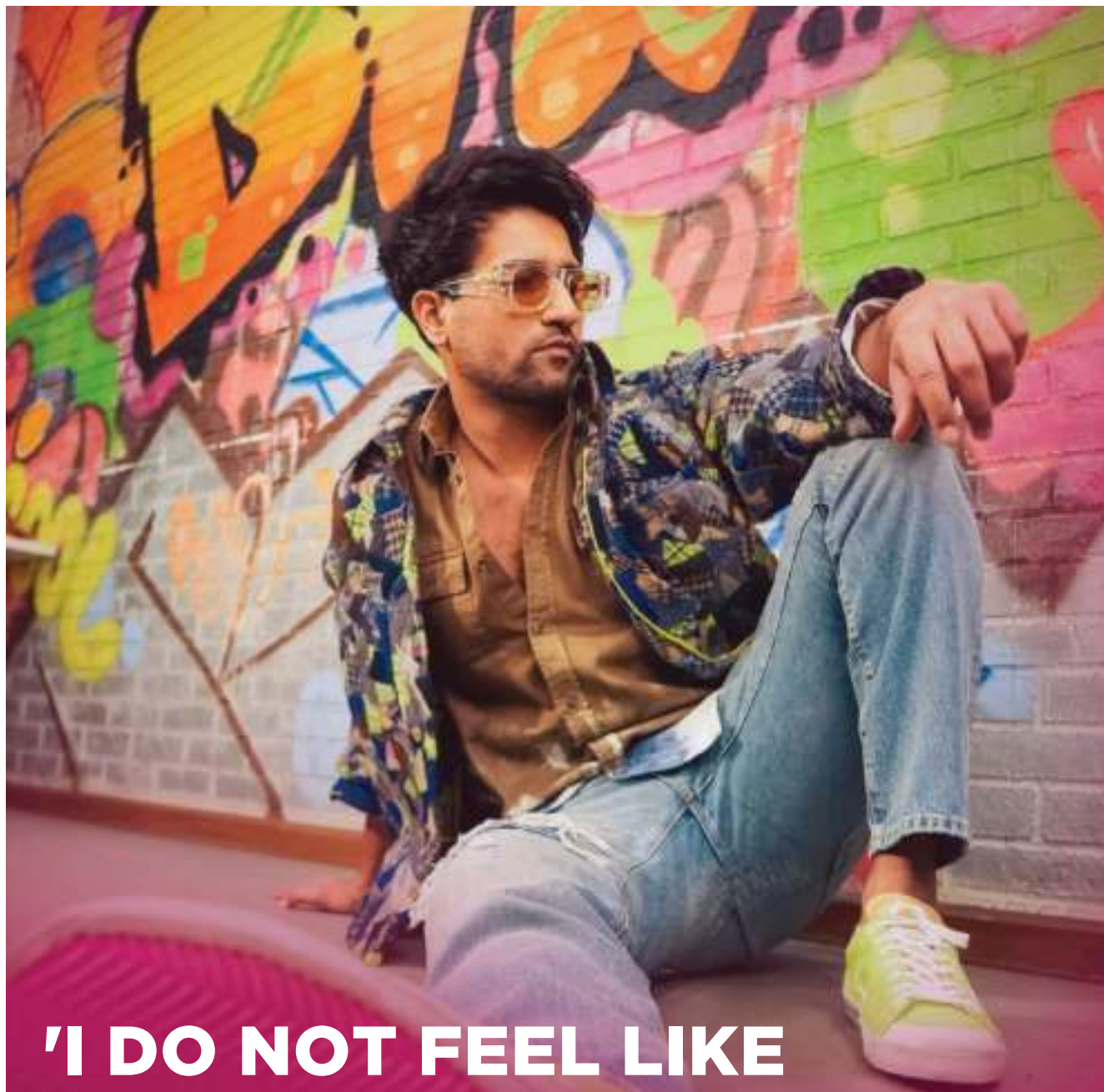


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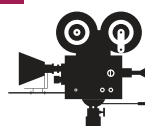


'I DO NOT FEEL LIKE A STAR'

He has won hearts and awards by essaying strong characters on the silver screen. Yet, actor Vicky Kaushal couldn't be humbler about his achievements

TEXT: AARTI KAPUR SINGH

From being an assistant director on *Gangs of Wasseypur* to winning a National Award for his film *Uri: The Surgical Strike*, Vicky Kaushal has come a long way. The acclaimed actor says he is his own biggest critic because he, in his own words, "only does films that I will watch". Starting out with an off-beat film like *Masaan* (which made him a favourite with critics), portraying strong roles in *Sanju* and *Raazi*, the actor took his own sweet time to gradually firm his



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"For me, acting is a mix of spontaneity and method. I can't always live in my imagination; I need to be real as well. But I try and make every project of mine fun for myself, my co-actors and the team!"



A poster of his movie *Uri*



His new film *Zara Hatke Zara Bachke*

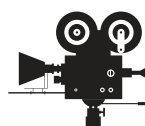
way up. The actor is honest enough to say, "I watch more films than I act in them. So when I am offered a project, I make it a point to listen to the narration as a cinema-goer. Would I like to buy a ticket to watch this film? That is the question I always ask myself. Yes, there are other considerations too - the character, the director, other aspects - but by and large, will someone in the audience pay to watch me?"

He is rather modest, considering *Uri* made over INR 300 crore on a budget of just INR 25 crore, and won several awards, and his latest release *Zara Hatke Zara Bachke*, co-starring Sara Ali Khan, is getting great reviews. From being essentially a shy guy, who did theatre to "see if he could actually act" to being someone who "never regrets any decision", the engineer-turned-actor has come a long way. Here's Vicky Kaushal, the man of the moment, and the masses.

You have often said that you have never chased stardom. But you are a star yourself. So, how does it feel?

Am I one? Really? The one person who, I feel, was a 'star' in the truest sense, was Hrithik Roshan in *Kaho Na Pyaar Hai*! The adulation he received from his fans was unbelievable. I wanted to meet him and despite my father being a film technician who has worked with Hrithik, I could only meet him once. The fact that I had to work hard to see him, mattered. The accessibility today is such that a person is a star only till he or she is in the news or, trending on social media. A real star has to have longevity - like Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan and Hrithik. Earlier in Bollywood, stardom came after decades of hard work and that fame was for life. Today, stardom is easily attainable - like instant coffee. You can even buy followers, fans, ticks and verifications.

Today's stardom is like fast food. I am grateful for the love I receive from my audience, but I do not feel like a star.





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Rapid Fire



Bollywood can get extremely stressful. How do you cope?

Sleep it off! Solutions sometimes occur to you after a good sleep. The other thing is a workout or physical activity. Whenever I play a sport, it de-stresses me a lot.

Your marriage...

I have the best companion for life. Katrina [actor Katrina Kaif] has all the qualities I ever admired in others. I could not have asked for more! She's wise, she's kind and she's extremely respectful of people around her.

Your current wish-list.

That people like *Sam Bahadur*, the film by Meghna Gulzar [the upcoming film is based on Sam Manekshaw, the Chief of the Army Staff of the Indian Army]. I am also hoping to travel to the hills.

Any film-makers on the list?

I want to work with Zoya Akhtar, Mani Ratnam, Vikramaditya Motwane, Vishal Bhardwaj and so many more.

What's your fitness routine?

I exercise every day for two hours.

Favourite cuisine

Punjabi, preferably made by my mom, or Chinese. I love *aloo paratha*, chicken and fish tikkas, and *rabri-jalebi* as dessert.



The actor has been trending on social media for his spontaneous dance moves

That's pretty modest, coming from someone who has been making songs go viral on social media.

I cannot take away from the talent of the singers and how good the songs are on their own! The songs are popular because they are good; not because I am dancing to them!

How do you approach your craft?

Like my life depends on it! And it does, no? I don't have a set method or preparation. Each role, each character, each project is different. Sometimes it's physical, sometimes it's emotional and sometimes it's mental. However, I do ensure it is fun! And that happens when there isn't too much planning, but spontaneity. That is most important. I cannot live in my head always. It is important to take life as it comes. This seems to have more than worked for me. What can I say, maybe I am the universe's favourite child!

Where is Vicky Kaushal headed next?

In terms of today, for more film promotions. But in life, embracing it all! I have a lot to be thankful for and look forward to more!

With actor and wife Katrina Kaif



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The happy bite

Originating from the tropical cacao tree, cocoa, cultivated for centuries, has a rich history. From ancient Aztec "bitter water" to the Industrial Revolution's sweet innovation, chocolate has evolved into the beloved treat we savour today.

The Indian chocolate market was valued at

USD 2.4 billion in 2022
(IMARC report)

The popular milk chocolate is lighter in colour and its global market value was approximately

USD 70.5 billion in 2022

60

In 2021, Switzerland reported the highest chocolate consumption per capita, with an average of about

11.6 kg



World Chocolate Day is celebrated on July

7

It's said it takes approximately

400 cacao beans

to make 450 g of chocolate.



Global cocoa production is expected to reach over

5 million tonnes in 2022-2023



Each cacao
tree produces
approximately

2,500
beans per year



It is said the first chocolate
bar was created in

1847

by Joseph
Fry, a British
chocolate maker

5,300
years

Archaeologists have
discovered the earliest
traces of cacao in
pottery used by the
ancient Mayo-Chinchi
culture 5,300 years ago
in Ecuador.



It is said chocolates
have more than

500

flavours available.

Forastero cacao bean
is the most commonly
grown variety and
accounts for about

80%

of the world's cocoa
production.





The Ruyi Bridge is a ribbon-shaped bridge across China's scenic Shenxianju Valley. Aside from its stunning shape, perhaps the most notable feature is its glass-bottomed floor. Linking two cliffs, the bridge resembles a huge eye from a distance and perfectly blends into the picturesque surroundings.



Image: ©RailMinIndia

Said to be taller than the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Chenab Bridge is the highest single-arch railway bridge in the world (approx 1,178 ft). An engineering marvel, it is located between Bakkal and Kauri in the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir. It is expected to open soon.



Over the bridge

With the Chenab Bridge in Jammu and Kashmir, the world's highest railway bridge, set to be opened soon, here are a few awe-inspiring bridges from around the globe

In simple terms, bridges connect places. But these structures are so much more. Some are great engineering feats, some an intangible part of a city's cultural or historic fabric, some exude sheer brilliance of design and some have become tourist landmarks of their own right. Come with us as we take you on an incredible journey across the world to a few of the Earth's most stunning bridges.

Supported by two massive stony hands emerging from the mountains of Vietnam, the Cau Vang, or Golden Bridge, soars 3,280 ft above sea level in the Ba Na Hills. This pedestrian-only footbridge is a part of the Ba Na Hills resort and connects a cable car station and a garden.



64

London's Tower Bridge, with two neo-Gothic towers rising from either side of the Thames river, is an iconic symbol of the city. A movable bridge, it opens around 800 times a year to let river traffic pass through.





Image: pexels.com

The Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco, California in the United States. When it was completed in 1937, it was the tallest and longest suspension bridge in the world. One of the most photographed bridges in the world, it set a precedent for suspension-bridge design across the globe.

An architectural wonder, the Bandra-Worli sea link is a cable-stayed bridge. About 5.8 km long and boasting eight lanes, it is the first of its kind in India to be built in open seas. Stopping on the bridge is not allowed but it can best viewed from Dadar Chowpatty, Bandra Fort, Worli Fort and Mahim Fort and beach.



For kids only

From culture to science and from young champs to movies, here's what's interesting for all the young ones

STEP INTO THE ENCHANTING WORLD OF HAYAO MIYAZAKI

Live in the fantastical worlds created by Oscar-winning filmmaker and animator Hayao Miyazaki at the Studio Ghibli theme park that's recently opened at Nagakute city in Japan, around three hours from Tokyo. Explore attractions based on several movies by the world-famous creators of the hit anime *My Neighbor Totoro*, *Princess Mononoke* and the Oscar-winning *Spirited Away*. The park includes the magical *Howl's Moving Castle*, Ghibli's Grand Warehouse, *Princess Mononoke's Village*, *Valley of Witches* and *Dondoko Forest*. There are also recreations of the mysterious cityscape from *Spirited Away*!



66



SECRET TO STAY YOUNG FOREVER

They look cute but what makes these Mexican amphibians most impressive is their ability to regenerate lost limbs and stay “young” throughout their lives! Axolotl, a species of salamander, never outgrow their larval, juvenile stage, a phenomenon called neoteny. Often found in bright colours, they have frilly gills that give them an appearance of having a unique headdress.



FROZEN PLANET II RETURNS

Explore the wild in the frozen deserts, snow-blanketed forests, high peaks and icy oceans in the world's coldest regions - the Arctic and the Antarctic - narrated in the deep, resonant baritone of Sir David Attenborough. The six-part series follows the very wild life of polar bears, penguins, snow monkeys, Siberian tigers and more, as they conquer and endure their extreme environment. The much-awaited series came after a gap of around 11 years.

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CODING MUST FOR KIDS: COOK

Apple CEO Tim Cook had recently said that coding is the only global language he wished Indian children would learn. "I wish that more Indian students, including girls, learn coding early in school days so that they can create world-class products and solve real-life problems as they grow up," he said.

He added, "Coding is the only global language. It is a way to express yourself and arguably, we need more of that in the world and bring the world closer."

? Puzzle

- 1) There's a one-storied house in which everything is yellow. Yellow walls, yellow doors, yellow furniture. What colour are the stairs?
- 2) A man who was outside in the rain without an umbrella or hat didn't get a single hair on his head wet. Why?
- 3) What can't talk but will reply when spoken to?
- 4) What can you hold in your left hand but not in your right?



Answer: 1) There aren't any—it's a one-story house. 2) He was bald. 3) An echo. 4) Your right elbow.

In Focus

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JULY 2023

YOUR FORECAST THIS MONTH



ARIES

If you feel like you're slowing down, do not worry. Things will pick up speed. Money will come in through unexpected sources. Do not be disappointed if your hard work is bearing no immediate result. Your time and effort will be aptly rewarded. Be bold and fearless in matters of the heart. Take your chances!



TAURUS

Your decisions are stemming from ego. Mellow down as it is not going to benefit you. A much-needed break is on the cards! This is going to be a better period for finances. Something has been at the back of your mind for a long while now; it is time to execute it! Relationships will mend and love will find its way to you.



GEMINI

Don't waste your time in small talk; it is time for action. A job change is on the cards. Try to keep your distance from unnecessary politics, even if you feel drawn to it. Look forward to financial gains. A property dispute will settle. You may face health problems so take good care.



CANCER

Work is slow and could be so for a while. Do not lose heart. Take this time to make some changes, both physically and mentally. Work on starting something new. Don't get swayed by what people tell you. You will soon see financial gains. Someone out of the blue will prove to be helpful!



LEO

A change in your line of career is seen. You could either change completely or will want to start something on the side. House help or office staff will cause some trouble. Deal with it calmly. Money power will increase. Someone close to you would need attention, so give your best. Stress could cause headaches. Relax!



VIRGO

You may feel tired and low and that is only because you feel you are not able to do the needful. The cards are good for you financially. If you want to start something new or change a job, wait. Remember, patience is a virtue. Socially, you will be active and popular. Family disputes will ease.



LIBRA

You need to go mend some broken relationships. It will bring good karma. You'll meet influential people related to politics or the film industry who can help boost your career. Creatively, you will perform well. Financially, it is slow at present. Someone loves you secretly even now and you are aware. Go get him/ her.



SCORPIO

You are aware of upsetting some people in the past. It is time to mend fences! An opportunity is coming your way that could change your career perspective entirely! You will suddenly gain popularity and money! Stay away from arguments. A visit to a holy place is on the cards.



SAGITTARIUS

You are unnecessarily losing your temper. Calm down. There will be discussions about starting a new project or investment in property. Financially, things are sorting out and soon, you will have enough to save. A surprise is in store for you that will make you happy! A shift in job is seen.



CAPRICORN

You need to cleanse your mind, body and soul. There is too much clutter! Change about starting a new project. You will gain popularity in your area of work. Partnerships and collaborations will happen. Work will increase. Do not ignore health issues! Relationships will become better.



AQUARIUS

Unknowingly, you are upsetting people. Try and fix it. Something new will begin in your area of work. You would pursue a new hobby and turn it into a career. Financially, a small gain is foreseen. You could buy/ sell property too. There is a change in job - it could be the company or a higher position.



PISCES

A much-needed break is on the cards. You would be in a commanding position at your workplace. New work is coming your way so, organise your routine! Don't be lazy. Stuck money will be released. Don't invest in shares as it may not be beneficial. There are plenty of positive things for you.

Tarot card reader and holistic healer Poonam Sethi believes in the power of giving. With a career spanning more than three decades, Sethi today is an internationally-acclaimed tarot card reader, Reiki healer, colour therapist, Feng Shui practitioner, crystal healer, a specialist in removal and balancing the negative evil eye energies and a *rudraksha* consultant. She is also the author of *The Power of Feng Shui*, which offers 90 practical and efficient tips to improve one's life. For details, contact – poonamsethi27@hotmail.com



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NEWS

SpiceXpress partners with Ekart for its first and last mile cargo delivery

SpiceXpress and Logistics Pvt. Limited has partnered with Ekart, one of the largest supply chain services providers in the country, to strengthen its door-to-door delivery capability. As a part of this partnership, Ekart will provide first mile pickup of cargo shipments and will also help deliver them through last mile connectivity across all serviceable pin codes in the country.

The partnership will enable SpiceXpress, a tech-enabled logistics company, to significantly expand its reach and offer value, speed and transparency for its customers. With Ekart's extensive network, SpiceXpress will offer an end-to-end service to its customers across all major industries.

Kamal Hingorani, Chief Officer, SpiceXpress, said, "SpiceXpress is delighted to enter into this partnership with Ekart that will further strengthen our delivery

service and significantly expand our reach and ability to make deliveries right at the customer's doorstep. This is an exciting phase for SpiceXpress as we move forward expanding across the length and breadth of the country and creating value, accessibility and speed. With this latest partnership, SpiceXpress will offer its customers a one-stop solution for all of their door-to-door shipment requirements."

Ekart offers brands, platforms, and businesses end-to-end supply chain management, including dropship, inventory management, distribution, aggregation, and more, built on years of extensive experience and supported by a large footprint of infrastructure.

Mani Bhushan, Chief Business Officer, Ekart, said, "Ekart is delighted to partner with SpiceXpress as this is a great opportunity for both the companies to offer best-in-class

solutions to customers across the country by bringing our expertise together. We are excited to embark on this journey, where value, speed, and transparency converge to unlock new possibilities and drive business growth. Through our tech-enabled solutions and logistics expertise, we aim to continue to enhance and strengthen the last mile delivery services nationwide. We are committed to providing cutting-edge solutions to brands and businesses in India to streamline their supply chain and contribute to the larger economy by fostering greater business capabilities."

SpiceJet finalises settlement with major lessor of Q400 aircraft; three repossessed aircraft to return to fleet

SpiceJet has entered into a settlement agreement with Nordic Aviation Capital (NAC), a major lessor for its Q400 aircraft. The agreement settles all past liabilities for the Q400s leased by NAC to SpiceJet. The airline presently operates five Q400 aircraft from NAC in its fleet.

Separately, the airline will be inducting three additional Q400 aircraft from NAC back into its fleet. These three planes had been repossessed by the lessor. The induction of the three planes in addition to the fleet revival and restoration programme launched by the airline would result in a substantial addition of planes in the SpiceJet fleet in the coming weeks.





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My Town

In our series, in which we travel to various Indian cities with a SpiceJet family member, this month, Shyam Sivadasan, Senior Cabin Crew, takes us around Kerala

Are you originally from Kerala?

I am from Thrissur in Kerala, which is also known as "God's Own Country".

What is the best thing that you like about the place?

Kerala is host to a plethora of traditional festivals, of which I have many cherished memories. I love how each of the festival is celebrated. There are huge processions, grand feasts and massive displays on the streets with enthusiastic crowds from across the world.

What is the quality of life here like?

The beauty of Kerala is beyond words and while retaining traditional values, Kerala has also adapted to the modern lifestyle. People here have created a life that revolves around nature and they are very protective of their traditional



SHYAM SIVADASAN

SENIOR CABIN CREW, THRISSUR



customs, rituals and practices. They are also very hospitable.

What is the night scene here like?

Kerala has everything to make an ordinary night into one full of enjoyment. The ideal spots to explore at night are near the backwaters like Marine Drive, Kerala Kathakali Center and Kashi Art Café. Another fascinating experience is the overnight camping at Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, which is well-known for its aquatic life and diverse flora and fauna.

Are you a foodie? Which is your favourite eating place?

I wouldn't say I am a foodie but I love to eat at Iskcon South Vrindavan in Thrissur. The food here is unique, delicious and different from other places. I can spend my entire day in the exquisite aura of this place. They have a variety of dining options including Italian, Indian and much more.

How did you discover it?

I live in the same community and was fortunate enough to be present during the inauguration of the temple. Devotees had come from



different countries and while dining we got to see and hear peacocks. Such a wonderful and serene sight mesmerised me. It has taught me about simple living and high thinking.

Which are the best places to hang out in Kerala?

Alleppey (Alappuzha) is famous for its silent backwaters and bountiful natural beauty. It is one of my favourite places to hang out with friends. One should not miss out on the stunning hill station Wayanad. It is all about fantasy, untouched nature, unforgettable moments and just pure merriment. Munnar is yet another gorgeous hill station with lofty clouds, picturesque mountains, rolling hills and a soothing ambience.

What attractions in Kerala would you recommend to a tourist?

One must visit Athirappilly Waterfalls, a serene spot that attracts people for sight-seeing and picnics. Adorned by the magical charm of the Vembanad Lake, Kumarakom is another beguiling backwater destination, with evergreen coconut grooves, breezy rice fields and a lot more. The spice capital of Kerala, Thekkady, is another popular tourist destination

with numerous exotic wildlife species. And if you are looking for adventure, then Vagamon is your destination, with activities like paragliding, mountaineering, rock climbing, trekking, etc. I would also suggest a trip to Kochi (Cochin), fondly called the 'Queen of the Arabian Sea'. Another place is Kozhikode. This kaleidoscopic city is dotted with an array of historical landmarks and is reminiscent of the Dutch and British eras in India.

What are the people here like?

People here are simple and down to earth. Their lifestyle is uncomplicated and they are happy and content with the simple pleasures of life and always insist on education, health and hygiene. They maintain healthy eating habits and follow a very simple dress code.

Which are the other places where you have stayed in India? How is Kerala compared to them?

India is unique but Kerala has my heart. With a mix of hill stations and beaches, places like the Western Ghats to rejuvenate; homemade food, and magnificent nature, Kerala has everything a person desires.

YOUR FAVORITE DISH

I am very fond of sweets but nothing beats the *paal payasam* of Kerala. It's creamy, delicious and comforting, especially when it is served hot on a banana leaf. The aroma is mouth-watering!





Stars Of SpiceJet

Meet the achievers of the month from the SpiceJet family, who have stood out for their outstanding work

Inflight crew

RAHUL KHANDELWAL
AHMEDABAD



Internal appreciation: On behalf of all the passengers on board, please accept my appreciation for the excellent job SpiceJet and your cabin crew have done on Flight SG 15 from Ahmedabad to Dubai. It was an enormous undertaking, but it went smoothly and efficiently! When we go for a journey on any plane, it is only the cabin crew who make the journey better and more comfortable. Special thanks to Mr. Rahul, Cabin Crew member, who gave me remarkably good service and attention to everyone.

Experience with SpiceJet: I started my journey with SpiceJet and my career is going great. When passengers appreciate my work, it makes my day. When I recall their satisfied and smiling faces, I feel happy that I did my work honestly. I also take pride in the success of my colleagues. Working with SpiceJet gives me immense satisfaction.

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Customer Relations

SAKSHI GUPTA
GURGAON



Internal appreciation: Ms. Sakshi is a sincere employee with a customer-centric approach. She is always proactive, accountable for her work and willing to support those around her whenever needed. We appreciate her commitment to her work and we are fortunate to have team member like her.

Experience with SpiceJet: It has been an amazing experience working with SpiceJet for the past four years. I am grateful for this opportunity to work with such an amazing airline. Working under the guidance and support of such an experienced team has given me a lot of exposure and has helped me enhance my skills. Here, I have learnt to never give up and be consistent and committed to my work.

Security

SUMAN MANGU
HYDERABAD



Internal appreciation: Mr. Suman is always active at work and reflects sincere dedication towards operations. His overall performance in coordination with both external and internal agencies has resulted in remarkable security operations.

Experience with SpiceJet: I started my career with SpiceJet in 2007 as a trainee security executive and now I hold the rank of security manager. It's been 16 years and I feel proud to be a part of such a wonderful organisation, where I have experienced many ups and downs that have made me stronger. SpiceJet has provided me the invaluable direction and support needed to grow as an individual. SpiceJet is the best place to work and to build a career.

IT

SAKSHI RAWAL
GURGAON



Internal appreciation: Ms. Sakshi plays a critical part in guaranteeing all the software systems used by the SpiceJet's in-flight services work in perfect condition. Her job entails constant co-ordination between our cabin crew, cockpit and IT teams. She keenly understands their requirements and helps in designing solutionse.

Experience with SpiceJet: From 2021 till date it has been a spectacular journey. I have grown to lead and learn at the same time. I'm extremely grateful for all the opportunities I have been given. I would like to thank my wonderful colleagues for trusting and helping me become a better version of myself. I am immensely grateful to my mentor and manager, Mr. Piyush Jain for trusting and believing in me.



If you have any feedback or suggestion on any aspect of our services, please send us an e-mail at custrelations@spicejet.com

You may also send your feedback to the following:

NODAL OFFICER:

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+91 124 3913939

APPELLATE AUTHORITY:

Mr Kamal Hingorani
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THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION, Government of India, has

upgraded its Air Sewa portal, which is accessible through both interactive web portal and mobile app. The new version includes the following features:

- a) Secure sign-up and log-in with social media
- b) Chatbot for travellers' support
- c) Improved grievance management, including social media grievance
- d) Real-time flight status and detailed flight schedule

Air Sewa is available at www.airsewa.gov.in

The Mid-Air Feast

Take your pick from SpiceJet's delicious menu. Here's a glimpse of the mouth-watering options

BREAKFAST

RASEELE CHOLE

with mix vegetable
parantha &
vegetable tikki



MASALA OMELETTE

with grilled chicken
sausages & hash
brown



LUNCH

PANEER METHI MALAI

with jeera rice &
dal makhani



CHICKEN TIKKA EGG BIRYANI

with mirch ka salan



DINNER

TAWA PANEER KHURCHAN

with steamed rice &
tadka masoor dal



MURG LABABDAR

with palak pulao &
dal panchrattni





SNACKS

PANEER TIKKA SHASHLIK 
with sliced stuffed
tandoori aloo &
vegetable croquette



 **SLICED CHICKEN SEEKH KEBAB**
with sliced stuffed
tandoori aloo &
vegetable croquette



SANDWICHES

SPINACH, CORN AND CHEESE SANDWICH 
in marble bread



 **ROAST CHICKEN, SUNDRIED TOMATO AND BASIL SANDWICH**
in marble bread



CHEF'S CHOICES

VEGETABLES IN RED THAI CURRY 
with steamed rice



 **GRILLED CHICKEN BREAST**
with mushroom sauce,
yellow rice, sautéed
carrots & beans baton



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