

INDIA PERSPECTIVES

Volume 36 | Issue 01

**INDIA'S PRESIDENCY
OF THE ELITE G20**
A Beacon of Hope

**EXPLORING INDIA'S
COASTAL CUISINE**
The Taste of The Sea



HAMPI
**A CULTURAL
DISCOVERY**

INDIA PERSPECTIVES

Volume 36 | Issue 01

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भारत 2023 INDIA

वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्

ONE EARTH • ONE FAMILY • ONE FUTURE

INDIA TAKES CHARGE: G20 PRIORITIES

India's G20 presidency presents a significant opportunity for the country to showcase its leadership and contribute to shaping the international economic and financial agenda. With "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" as the official motto, India highlights its continued focus on promoting sustainable and inclusive growth. As the world's fastest-growing major economy, India is well-positioned to lead discussions on pressing global issues such as climate change, digital transformation, and pandemic recovery. Through its G20 presidency, India aims to ensure that the benefits of economic growth are shared equitably and contribute to a more resilient and prosperous future for all.



INDIA BRINGING THE WORLD TOGETHER

85%

G20 comprises 19 countries from Europe, Asia-Pacific, Middle East, Africa and the Americas. Together, these G20 members represent about 85% of the global GDP, over 75% of the world trade, and about two-thirds of the world's population.

200

India is hosting over 200 meetings in around 50 cities with ministers, officials, and civil society, culminating in a major summit in New Delhi in September 2023.

30

Around 30 heads of state and government, including those from G20 members and invited countries, will participate in the summit.



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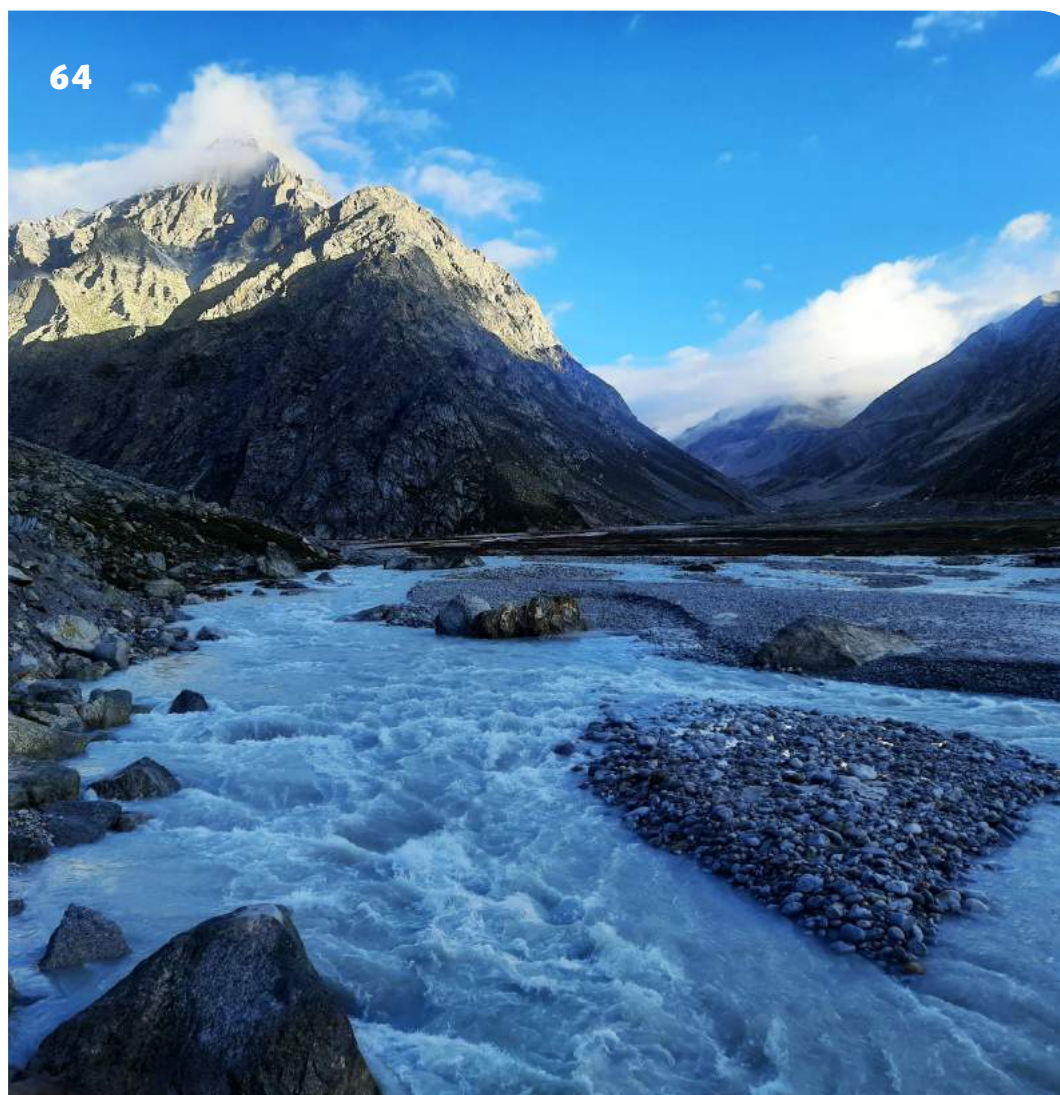
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75 YEARS OF Progressive India

As India celebrates more than 70 years of Independence, the country is all set to take up a benign leadership role, with a strong polity, stronger economy and efficient foreign policy, which is robust, resilient and result-oriented

BY AMB. ANIL TRIGUNAYAT



India has engineered Green, Yellow and White Revolutions with continuous upgradation in technology in the agricultural and food processing areas

The 75 years of free India are replete with stupendous achievements. Over the years, India has become a champion for the rights of oppressed people at the international fora while discharging its obligations as a responsible international actor and a voice of reason. In the last few decades, India has engineered Green, Yellow and White Revolutions with continuous upgradation in technology in the agricultural and food-processing areas not only to meet demand of a burgeoning population but has also emerged as a net exporter and helper to the world. Self-sufficiency across the economic spectrum has been major quest but in recent times a newly crafted holistic approach of *Atmanirbhar Bharat* with a global foot print will lead our knowledge economy to be an integral part of global value and supply chains that have been under stress during the Covid pandemic and the Eurasian war. Hence, dependable options with 'Indovation' are being created. India has



Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi attends luncheon hosted by Secretary-General during 74th General Assembly at UN Headquarters in 2019

“TODAY, INDIA’S POTENTIAL AND TALENT ARE ECHOED ON EVERY PLATFORM IN THE WORLD. TODAY, INDIA IS MOVING OUT OF THE DARKNESS OF SCARCITY TO MEET THE ASPIRATIONS OF MORE THAN 130 CRORE PEOPLE.”

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister of India



Russian President Vladimir Putin, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping at G20 summit in Osaka in June 2019

also emerged as credible nuclear and space power in the world – the tools it intends to employ for the global good.

Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, while speaking at the inaugural of curtain raiser activities of the *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav*, reiterated and reaffirmed that “We are proud of our

Constitution. We are proud of our democratic traditions. The mother of democracy, India is still moving forward by strengthening democracy. India, rich in knowledge and science, is leaving its mark from Mars to the Moon. Today,

the strength of the Indian Army is immense and economically also, we are progressing fast. Today, India’s startup ecosystem has become a centre of attraction in the world, is a matter of discussion. Today, India’s

potential and talent are echoed on every platform in the world. Today, India is moving out of the darkness of scarcity to meet the aspirations of more than 130 crore people.”

India will soon have the largest young and aspirational population, with the second-largest market and the fastest-growing market economy catering to the needs of teeming billion-plus people who take pride in the Indian story. This is what gives India the strategic advantage and a negotiating leverage on the international stage in times to come.

THE ECONOMY

India embarked on large scale economic reforms in 1991 with the troika objectives of economic liberalisation, reforms and globalisation where it had its own interest in mind. But reforms are an ongoing process and necessary to





Soon, India will have the largest young and aspirational population, with the second-largest market and the fastest- growing market economy

Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Rome G20 summit in October 2021 (left); Prime Minister Narendra Modi at White House with US President Joe Biden in September 2021(right)

make the country as an attractive destination for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) .

As a result of umpteen initiatives by the present government, hundreds of archaic laws have been dispensed with. India's global ranking for Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) has moved up several places, even as more needs to be done. India has become a favourite investment destination, garnering the highest-ever FDI of US\$ 64 billion (an increase of 27 per cent over 2019) and even surpassing that in 2021-22 to \$87 billion despite the pandemic. With a share of around 25%, the computer software and hardware industry has become the top recipient

of FDI equity inflows, indicating that India figures prominently for investors as the AI-driven Fourth Industrial Revolution moves to a higher orbit. India's fast growth in billionaire unicorns globally adds to its appeal. Moreover, given the Indian policy framework and 'Make in India' and Performance-Linked Initiative (PLI) schemes the FDI equity inflows in manufacturing rose by 76 per cent in FY 2021-22. It is remarkable and a testament to Indian economic and political resilience.

GLOBAL TIES

Likewise, for the first time Indian exports of goods and services

PARTNERSHIP

reached new heights, despite the global problems and supply constraints due to the pandemic and the ongoing Eurasian war. India has always been a trading nation and is working hard to reclaim that status yet again. Along with this, India is also focusing on self-reliance with a global footprint 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', especially in manufacturing sector.

In this context, India's participation in the I2U2 (India, Israel, UAE and US), QUAD (US, Australia, Japan and India), Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) and other regional and sub regional economically and connectivity oriented frameworks acquires a renewed salience and focus. Likewise, vigorous move to expeditiously implement INSTC (International North South Transport Corridor), strategic connectivity projects like Chabahar in Iran to Afghanistan to Central Asia and Europe or North Eastern India to ASEAN corridors or for that matter



Chennai to Vladivostok are regaining crucial linkages for India's centrality in global supply chains.

Former US President Donald Trump (R) and First Lady Melania Trump with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (L) at Gandhi Ashram in Ahmedabad in Feb 2020

THE INNOVATION STORY

As India wishes to lead through the AI-driven Industrial revolution 4.0 its Digital India, Innovate India, Start-Up and Stand-Up India campaigns have become the hallmark of a unique



India is also focusing on self-reliance with a global footprint 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', especially in manufacturing sector



digital footprint. Some initiatives like the access to internet and banking at the door step and direct payment into accounts to nearly a billion Indians are the game changer and are providing the leadership position to India in the comity of nations. PM Modi recently speaking at the inaugural of first bullion exchange claimed that India accounts for 40 per cent of global digital payments.

India's foreign policy has become more robust and confident with impeccable credentials as she pursues a value and principles- based foreign policy clearly driven by strategic autonomy to subserve her own national interests that are aligned with the global welfare. India at the UNSC no longer pleads for a place on



Digital India, Innovate, Start-Up and Stand up India campaigns have become the hallmark of a unique digital footprint

PARTNERSHIP

The United Nations declared June 21 the International Day of Yoga in 2014 and since then it is observed every year across the world, underlining its global significance



People gather for yoga near the Eiffel tower in Paris, France



Prime Minister, Narendra Modi participating in the Build Back Better for the World (B3W) event in Glasgow, Scotland in November 2021

the horseshoe table but claims it on the basis of her credentials. She is on the forefront of fight against Climate Change.

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) and Coalition of Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) or 'One Planet One Health' are the initiatives that India has launched with and for the global community as it has emerged as a first responder in crisis situations from natural disasters to the pandemic. India navigates her foreign and security policy with dignity and confidence as she engages with diverse partners across various groupings like the QUAD, BRICS, SCO, G20 and IPEF. Her neighborhood first, Act East and Link West and Africa for Africans policies provide her the effective fulcrum for mutually beneficial partnerships.

India's capacity building assistance under the Indian Technical

and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) to over 160 countries and supply of essential medicines, medical supplies and deputing professionals and paramedics and 'Vaccine Maitri' (Vaccine Friendship) during the pandemic to two-third of the world have given her the unparalleled heft as a benign and global-centric power always rising to the occasion.

As a new global order emerges out of the current churn and transition, India is all set to take up a benign leadership role during the 'Amrit Kaal', the next 25 years with a strong polity, stronger economy and efficient foreign policy which is robust, resilient and result-oriented.



Anil Trigunayat is a former Indian Ambassador to Jordan, Libya and Malta. He is associated with several think tanks and the Chambers of

Commerce & Industry.

India's POWER PINNACLE

The highest office of the country has an impressive history. With Rashtrapati Bhavan now open for public viewing for five days in a week, visit the sprawling President's House and its tech-enabled museum that tells many stories



Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum has storytelling audio-visual narratives from the birth of Delhi as the British capital until recent times



When the Britishers decided to shift their capital to Delhi from Kolkata (then Calcutta)

in 1911, Sir Edwin Lutyens was given the task of designing a lavish mansion to be used as the Viceroy's House. Lutyens stated that the dome of the new palace was inspired by the Pantheon of Rome and has Mughal and European colonial architectural elements. C. Rajagopalachari became the first Indian resident to occupy the building as the first Governor-General of India. On January 26, 1950, when Dr Rajendra Prasad became the first Indian President and occupied this building, it was renamed Rashtrapati Bhavan. Spread over 320 acre, the sprawling estate has about

340 rooms which include the official residence, guests rooms, ceremonial halls and presidential gardens, known as the Mughal Gardens. Situated at the back of Rashtrapati Bhavan, the Mughal Gardens incorporate both Mughal and English landscaping styles and feature a wide variety of flowers.

A few years ago, the President's House had an addition – Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum. Inaugurated by the then President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, this museum has storytelling audio-visual narratives from the birth of Delhi as the British capital until recent times. The museum gives visitors an insight of Rashtrapati Bhavan, its art and architecture as well as educates them on the lives of past Indian presidents.

The world class museum traces

Rashtrapati Bhavan, the Presidential House in New Delhi, India.

PARTNERSHIP

Inaugurated by the then President of India, Dr Pranab Mukherjee, the Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum has storytelling audio-visual narratives from the birth of Delhi as the British capital until recent times



history in a high-tech story-telling format, with contextual stories woven around original collections. Its uniqueness lies in its concept of an event-based history museum in contrast with traditional object-based museums. The story of Rashtrapati Bhavan is told through virtual and augmented reality, interactive digital cascading table, video wall, three-dimension stereoscopic projection, holographic projection and sound-light-video synchronised stage settings. Digital story-telling ensures compatibility to otherwise abled visitors as well.

The museum features a range

The museum gives visitors an insight of Rashtrapati Bhavan, its art and architecture as well as educates them on the lives of past Indian presidents





of artifacts, including a beautiful jar of blue cut glass with an etched portrait of Dr Rajendra Prasad and furniture designed by Edwin Lutyens. Simulated battlefields representing the Anglo-Sikh and Anglo-Afghan wars are also on display, among many other items. A number of drawings by Lutyens, when the master architect was giving imaginative shape to what the British viceroy's grand residence should look like, are also on display. Lutyens was partial to the circular shape of his spectacles and often used it while designing decorative



elements and furniture for Rashtrapati Bhavan. Each of the cubicles exhibit priceless artefacts received by the past presidents. These include gold wreath with ivy leaves presented to Pratibha Patil by Prime Minister of Greece Kostas Karamanlis, a carved elephant tusk depicting the story

The 11,000 square meter of space has been designed and built completely underground with the heritage structures designed by the architect Lutyens

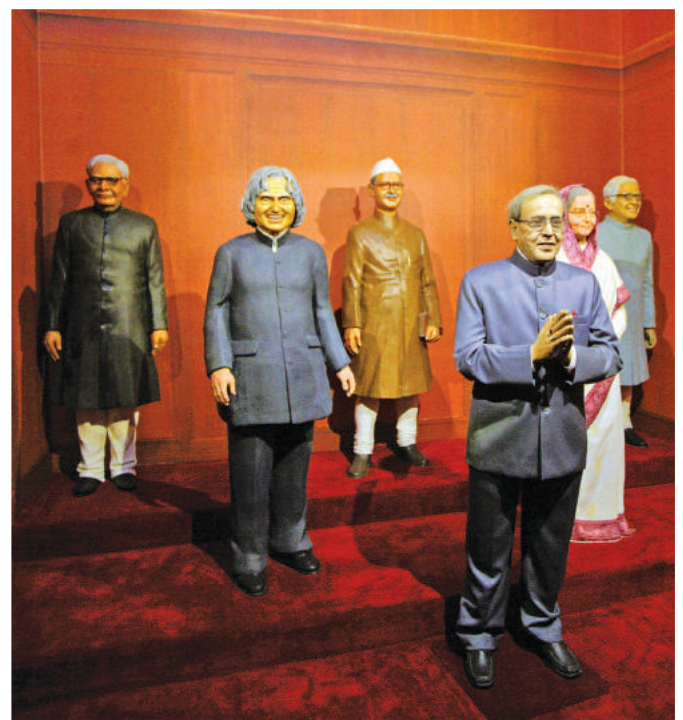
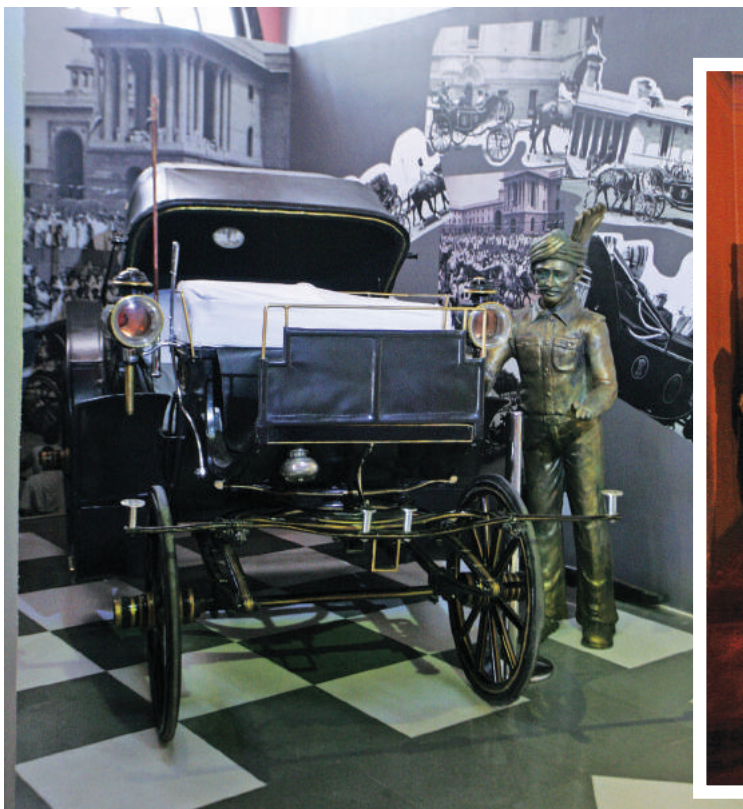
PARTNERSHIP



of Lord Krishna on one side and the story of Lord Rama on the other, and a model of Golden Temple presented to Dr Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy by the then Chief Minister of Punjab Prakash Singh Badal in 1978.

The museum showcases simulated scenes of events like Delhi Durbar of 1911, Gandhi-Irwin pact of 1931, Jawaharlal Nehru's oath-taking as the first Indian prime minister and swearing-in of Dr Rajendra Prasad. Latest technological innovations have been introduced in this museum including digital surfaces and interactive media to make it easier

The uniqueness of this Museum lies in its concept of an event-based history museum in contrast with traditional object-based museums in the country



- From December 1, 2022, Rashtrapati Bhavan has opened up for the public for five days a week. The President's official residence will be accessible to the public on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. However, it will remain closed on gazetted holidays.

- Guided tours of the Rashtrapati Bhavan main building (Circuit 1) will be available to the public between Wednesday to Sunday. Circuit 1 includes Main Building, Forecourt, Reception, Navachara, Banquet Hall, Upper Loggia, Lutyens Grand Stairs, Guest Wing, Ashok Hall, North Drawing Room, Long Drawing Room, Library, Durbar Hall, Lord Buddha Statue.

- Meanwhile, Circuit 2, which includes the Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum Complex will be open for six days between Tuesday to Sunday. All circuits will remain closed on gazetted holidays.

- Visitors will be allowed at the Rashtrapati Bhavan between 10 am to 4 pm. As for registration, a charge of Rs 50 per visitor per Circuit will be levied.

- Visitors below the age of eight years will be exempt from the payment of registration charges.

- Moreover, every Saturday, people will also be able to witness the change of guard ceremony at the Forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhavan from 8 am to 9 am. For booking and more information, visit, https://rb.nic.in/rbvisit/visit_plan.aspx



A model of Golden Temple presented to Dr Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy by Sardar Prakash Singh Badal in 1978 (Above); a carved elephant tusk depicting the story of Krishna on one side and the story of Lord Rama on the other (Right)



for the visitors to know more about Indian history. The tableau section has a computerised digital sensor, helping visitors know the story behind these exhibits with a finger touch on the screen opening up a page of information. One of the rooms has fibre figurines of Jawaharlal Nehru, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Sardar Patel and others sitting around a table on June 2,

1947 when the fate of the subcontinent with the Partition of India was decided. This is the same table used on the historic occasion.

And interesting showcase is the Mercedes Benz – 500 SEL bearing Regn. No. DDB – 3817, that has served five Presidencies since 1990 to 2012, as the main and spare car of the President's Carcade.

AFLOAT A fantasy

Live on the wondrous waters and lakes of Kashmir and Kerala
with a heavenly houseboat experience

BY SUPRIYA AGGARWAL



The backwaters of Kerala and the serene lakes of Kashmir have an enchanting experience to offer

Cruising across the ocean is one thing, cruising across cultural treasures, another. The backwaters of Kerala and the serene lakes of Kashmir have an enchanting experience to offer, and nothing makes it as immersive as a few days – or months – spent on a houseboat.

Whether you are a first-time traveler or an experienced cruiser, a professionally trained crew pampers you with the best of services aboard this one-of-a-kind ride. Chartering the two extreme corners of the

country, Kashmir and Kerala, these regions represent two distinct worlds in terms of culture, architecture and natural beauty. If Kashmir is like an exquisite stage, the houseboats on Dal and Nigeen Lake are Shakespearean dramas waiting to unfold. The majestic houseboats in God's Own Country, Kerala, on the other hand, boast of timeless architecture and untouched natural pockets.

ADRIFT PARADISE

The view of the mighty Himalayas from a houseboat in the middle of Dal Lake

Houseboats, the floating luxury hotels in Dal Lake, Srinagar, India





The wooden houseboats drifting casually through the placid waters makes for an experience of a lifetime

is awe-inspiring. Living on water is a part of *Kashmiri* tradition, and no visit to the 'Paradise on Earth' is complete without a visit to these grand wooden boats. Away from urban humdrum, these intricately carved vessels transport you to a world of tranquility. From simple, sustainable designs to luxurious interiors replete with kingly finery, the houseboats are bathed in tasteful indulgence. The rooms open up on a terrace where one can sip *Kashmiri kahwa* in the evenings, and a verandah where one can wake up to take in the glorious sunrise from behind the mountains. Each boat has

a separate kitchen which also acts as home to the boat keeper and his family who attend to the guests. These are classified in similar fashion to hotels on comfort and services parameters.

These retreats have been popular through history. During colonial rule, a number of Britishers visited the Valley frequently, opening a new chapter in the economy. Testimony to the fact are colonial era motifs and large window panes on these boats. But it is not only the pre-Independence era that witnessed a surge in houseboats. In 1966, sitar maestro Ravi Shankar taught legendary musician George Harrison to

Beautiful wooden porches
of house boats on Srinagar
Lake, Kashmir at night



Local people use 'Shikara', a small boat for transportation in the lake

Must know

Another unmissable experience in Kashmir is the shikara ride. These wooden boats are one of the best ways to enjoy the picturesque landscape and like Venetian gondolas, these are the cultural symbol of the state. The shikaras comes in various sizes and are rowed softly across the placid waters, with their magic increasing manifold during sunrise and sunset. Local trinket and flower sellers often cross your path on the waters.





A houseboat is anchored in a lake at the Kerala Backwaters in India

Known as Kettuvalam, these boats were traditionally used to transfer rice and spices from the hills to the market towns

play the sitar on one of the houseboats here.

LUSH LAGOONS

Bathe in the splendor of the backwaters and verdant green and palm fringed landscape while on a houseboat in Kerala. Known as *Kettuvalam*, these boats were traditionally used to transfer rice and spices from the hills to the market towns and have now been converted into floating hotels. Made by tying huge planks of jackwood together, great amount of skill and precision is required to make these

houseboats. Remarkably, not a single iron nail is used in their construction. Back in the day, an entire clan of specialized artisans was dedicated to make these houseboats. Nowadays, these have become an interesting way of holidaying and very proudly represent the distinctive culture of the southern state.

The best way to navigate the backwaters is to hire a private houseboat which generally travels around 40-50 km through the backwaters in a single day. The backwaters of Kerala are a crisscrossed

Must know

Kumbalangi backwaters, a part of Vembanad Lake, located near Kochi is famous for its village tourism, where small canoes are used to navigate a maze of mangrove forests



The backwaters of Kerala are a crisscrossed network of lakes, lagoons, canals and rivers



A houseboat ride offers the breathtaking view of the untouched

network of lakes, lagoons, canals and rivers. One gets to experience local life and laze around during afternoons while sipping coconut water and gazing at coconut palms, jackfruits, papayas and mangroves. One can stop at one of the banks and take a stroll among the whitewashed homes and churches and hire a houseboat for as little as a day or as long as a week.

Vembanad is the most accessible backwaters where the Vembanad Lake opens to sea at the Cochin Harbour, dotted with interconnected islands that adorn the 'Queen of the Arabian Sea'. The southern Vembanad Lake is

known for its large expanse of water, sandwiched between districts of Alappuzha and Kottayam.

Taking in the sublime sunsets, you can move around in traditional thatched roof houseboats in the backwaters of Alleppey, one of the best places to hire a boat in the state or choose to go on an adventurous ride through Kumarakom, Alummkadavu (near Kollam) and Kottayam. You can combine your houseboat cruise with an ayurvedic treatment, guided meditation, yoga sessions or even a traditional entertainment performance in a nearby village or aboard.

INDIA'S Presidency of G20

India will assume the Presidency of the elite G20 (Group of 20) countries on December 1, 2022. Here's a roundup of the Group's history and what India's presidency signifies for the nation and the world

BY ASHOK SAJJANHAR



Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Bali for G20 Summit in November 2022



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi with US President Joe Biden and Indonesian President Joko Widodo at the summit in Bali for G20 Summit in November 2022

The G20 is an international forum which includes 19 of the world's largest economies including both industrialized and developing nations, and the European Union. Its core mandate is to address the major challenges related to the global economy and financial architecture such as international financial stability, climate change mitigation, sustainable development, among others. It seeks to evolve public policies to resolve them.

SIGNIFICANCE OF G20

Together, the G20 members represent 85 per cent of the global gross product; 75 per cent of international trade; two thirds of the world population; 80 per cent of global investments in research and development, and 60 per cent of the world land area.

Because the G20 is a forum, its agreements or decisions are not legally binding but they do influence countries' policies and global cooperation.

The G20 is small and cohesive enough to allow concrete in-person discussions to find solutions to the new challenges on the international economic and financial agenda, and is broad and inclusive enough to represent the vast majority of world economic production.

THE BEGINNING

The G20 was conceived in 1999, while the repercussions of the Mexican peso crisis (1994), Asian financial crisis (1997) and the Russian rouble crisis (1998) were still being felt. In a meeting of finance ministers and presidents of central banks of the G7, it was decided to expand the group and make it more

PROGRESS

representative in order to generate policies that would have a wider impact on the global economy. A group of key emerging economies was invited to a new forum of finance ministers and presidents of Central Banks. This became the G20.

The G20 upgraded to the Summit level from the finance ministers and presidents of central banks became the main instrument to face the global financial crisis of 2007-'08.

While economic and financial issues tend to lead the agenda, other areas have gained prominence in recent years. Recent additions include participation of women in the labor market, sustainable development, global health, fight against terrorism and inclusive ventures, among others.

The group's stature has risen significantly during the past decade. It is however also criticized for its limited membership, lack of enforcement powers, and for the alleged undermining

of existing international institutions. Summits are often met with protests, particularly by anti-globalisation groups.

The G20 seeks to enrich the content of its dialogues by encouraging the participation of civil society through affinity groups. Each of them focuses on an issue of global importance and meets independently throughout the year. From the dialogue in the various meetings, each group delivers a series of recommendations to the G20. Currently, the affinity groups comprise of: Business 20 (B20), Civil 20 (C20), Labor 20 (L20), Science 20 (S20), Think 20 (T20), Women 20 (W20), Youth 20 (Y20).

THE INDIAN PRESIDENCY

On the conclusion of the Indonesian presidency, India will assume the leadership of the G20 from 1st December, 2022.

Releasing the logo, theme and website of India's G20 Presidency on 8th November, 2022, PM Narendra Modi



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the working Session on food and energy security of G20 Summit in Bali, Indonesia



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi with other world leaders in Bali at the G20 Summit in November 2022

stated: “India’s G20 presidency is coming at a time of crisis and chaos in the world. The world is going through the after-effects of a disruptive once-in-a-century pandemic, conflicts and lot of economic uncertainty.”

The world has been subjected to huge instability and volatility over the last three years and more. The Covid-19 pandemic has had adverse impacts on countries worldwide, affecting not only health and social aspects but also economic arenas.

The ongoing conflict in Europe has had global implications through high inflation, shortages of food, fertilizers and energy, unsustainable debts, supply chain disruptions and more.

In addition, the challenges of climate change, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and others continue to unsettle the global community. It is in these circumstances that India has been entrusted with the responsibility of steering the activities of the G20 in the coming year.

Because of its impressive performance in handling the shocks of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, India has emerged as a beacon of hope in an otherwise dark and gloomy global scenario.

During its presidency, India is committed to focusing on issues of critical importance to the

world. The theme identified by India for its presidency is “One Earth, One Family, One Future.” This flows from the philosophy of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” (The World Is One Family) which appears in our ancient scriptures and forms the foundation of our foreign policy.

The concept of ‘Lifestyle for the Environment’ (LiFE) was introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26) in Glasgow, 2021. Mission LiFE was launched by PM Modi in the presence of UN Secretary General at the Statue of Unity, Gujarat in October, 2022. Mission LiFE is envisioned as an India-led global mass movement that will encourage individual and collective action to protect and preserve the environment. India can be expected to highlight LiFE as a critical focus area for discussion and action during its presidency.

India, as a result of its own experience, particularly during the pandemic, believes that digital technology and digital public platforms

are key to deepening engagements of government with citizens, reducing corruption and promoting expeditious delivery of services, and financial transactions. Digital solutions to traditional problems have transformed and elevated the lives of people across the world. During India’s presidency, it would like to share its success stories for the benefit of the global community.

India will aspire to deliver outcomes in areas of critical interest such as integrating the climate and development agenda, accelerating progress towards achieving the SDG 2030 mandate, furthering development cooperation, supporting small and marginal farmers, enhancing food security and nutrition, addressing global skill gaps, promotion of blue economy and coastal sustainability, digital health solutions, green hydrogen and tech-enabled learning.

India would also like to promote the outreach and potential of its initiatives in the climate change and disaster risk reduction spheres as envisaged in the International Solar Alliance and Coalition

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi with other G20 Leaders’ planted mangroves at the Taman Hutan Raya Ngurah Rai forests in Bali





Unveiling of logo, theme and website of India's G20 Presidency by Prime Minister Narendra Modi

for Disaster Risk Initiative projects.

India would like to ensure that the G20 stays committed to its original mandate of dealing with the financial and economic challenges and not allow important but extraneous geo-political issues like the Russia-Ukraine conflict to impact the broader agenda. The G20 should exhibit the necessary leadership and flexibility to accommodate differences among its members to effectively deliver outcomes.

India's G20 Presidency will comprise around 200 events to be held across all the states and Union Territories. The endeavor would be to create a uniquely Indian experience which is spiritually invigorating and intellectually rejuvenating.

While releasing the logo, theme and website of G20, PM Modi called upon all State governments, political parties and individuals to not look upon India's G20 Presidency as the responsibility only of the Central government. This honour and prestige belongs to the

whole country, he said, and there should be an "all of the country" approach to make the year-long event successful and memorable.

CONCLUSION

India received the mantle of the G20 Presidency from Indonesia. India will hand over the baton to Brazil at the end of November, 2023. It is for the first time in the history of the G20 that the troika comprising of the current, past and future Presidencies will comprise of three major developing and emerging economies. This provides a unique opportunity to India, supported by Indonesia and Brazil, to make a significant contribution to peace, security, stability and prosperity in the world.



Ambassador **Ashok Sajjanhar** has worked for the Indian Foreign Service for over three decades. He was the Ambassador of India to Kazakhstan, Sweden and Latvia, and has worked in diplomatic positions in Washington DC, Brussels Dhaka and Bangkok, among other nations.

Nine yards OF NUANCE

Is it a shawl? Is it wearable art? It's Poothkulli, an enchanting embroidered garment of the Toda community of Tamil Nadu

BY KALYANI PRASHER



Known by the name, Pugur in Toda language (meaning flower), the embroidery is done on stripes of red and black colour

In the magnificent blue mountains of the Nilgiris that line the outskirts of Tamil Nadu lives the Toda tribe, a small indigenous community, known for their unique culture, traditions, and customs, which have been passed down from generation to generation. Commanding attention for their unmistakably Grecian appearance, many claim they are Greek descendants who never left the land. Among their unique traditions is intricate embroidery on a nine-yard shawl, which is called Poothkulli.

This unparalleled art form has a GI status, which means it is protected from being plagiarised and has uniform pricing throughout markets. The art, practised mostly by Toda women, involves weaving a white cloth with black and red stripes (like bands) towards the end so that Poothkulli looks like a modern-day shawl. In between these bands, the women stitch a pattern using the age-old thread-count method.



The Todas draw much of their inspiration from nature

This unparalleled art form has a GI status, which means it is protected from being plagiarised and has uniform pricing throughout markets

The Todas drape Poothkulli across themselves much like Grecian robes, adding more testimony to the Greek descendant theory

The fabric used is coarse half white cotton cloth with bands

Embroidery is done on the “inside” of Poothkulli so that the front has a rich embossed pattern but in effect you can use Poothkulli on both sides. This is the original reversible wear of Indian tradition!

The designs, slightly different for men and women, are geometrical with motifs from nature depicted in the embroidery. As the buffalo is sacred to Todas, it is one of the most

popular patterns to feature. Black and red parallel striped bands form the base design for all Poothkullis. The embroidery is done in between and around these bands in a systematic manner. The patterns made to the left of the black band are known as *karnol* while the ones on the right are called *karthal*. The Todas drape Poothkulli across themselves much like Grecian robes, adding more testimony to the





At a wedding in Toda community, people wear heavily embroidered Poothkullis that have been passed down generations as heirloom

Greek descendant theory.

At a wedding in Toda community, people wear heavily embroidered Poothkullis that have been passed down generations as heirloom. Interestingly, the most delightfully embroidered shawls are seen during funerals. Traditionally, vegetable fibre was used as threads. In recent times, modern embroidery threads are used.

Young girls of the Toda community learn the art from their mothers at an early age. They don't need any stitching patterns to refer to or

consult any rule books to create these beautiful patterns that are passed skilfully by hand.

Toda embroidery was on the brink of extinction but help and funding from NGOs and developmental organisations helped in preserving the art form. In keeping with contemporary trends, you can witness traditional embroidery not just as Poothkulli shawls but in articles of everyday use like bags, table mats and bed covers, providing an opportunity for the art form to thrive in the modern world.

The woven bands on the fabric consist of two bands, one in red and one band in black

Unearthing

MADURAI'S RICH PAST

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) recently dug out one of the largest human settlements of Sangam Age known so far

BY DHRUV BANSAL



The urban port boasted of a well-planned city scheme, which can be closely studied through the insights preserved at the ASI museum.

Items found at
the nearly carved
settlements



The small hamlet of Keezhadi in Sivaganga district near Madurai in the state of Tamil Nadu recently got its share of international recognition as it became a site of historical importance. A number of square-shaped trenches were dug out by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to reveal what archaeologists believe to be the largest human settlement of the Sangam Age, apparently dating back to the 3rd century BC, nearly

2,500 years ago.

The excavation project took off in February this year on a private farm with tall coconut trees swaying. Soon, it was one of the biggest ASI projects in the region. According to historians, the square-shaped trenches could belong to the Pandya era of the Sangam Age. Referring to an ancient period of South Indian history, the Sangam Age dates from the 3rd century BC to 4th century AD. It covers the entire Tamil-speaking region of that period with the

The excavation project is one of the biggest ASI projects in the region. According to historians, the square-shaped trenches could belong to the Pandya era of the Sangam Age

The Sangam Age dates from the 3rd century BC to 4th century AD. It covers the entire Tamil-speaking region of that period with the Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas being the dominant kingdoms

Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas being the dominant kingdoms. Antiquities like glass, pearl, beads and figurines made of terracotta and early historic pottery like black and red ware were unearthed. The neatly-carved settlements contained brick walls, wells, mud vaults, pottery, shells, rusted old coins, weapons and tools made of bones and iron, all trapped in layers of soil.

The ASI museum exhibits that had been created here centuries ago

During 2013, the Tamil Nadu state Archaeology department conducted a year-long research and dusted off nearly 293 towns along the course

of River Vaigai which belongs to the Sangam Age. The research took place within an area of 5 km from the river on both the banks. It started from Theni district, the originating place of River Vaigai, and went on to Ramanathapuram district where the river ends. The different unearthed towns were classified as places of worship, trading points, residential sites, granaries or ports.

The recent excavation at Keezhadi was carried out at two different locations on the farmland. Both these places yielded different items.



As per researchers, they represent a social hierarchy. The larger of the two settlements has more trenches and is believed to have belonged to the rich and the educated as items such as jewellery, gemstones, semi-precious stones and more than a dozen Tamil Brahmi inscriptions were unearthed. Brick structures appear more refined in this area. Even pottery items have typical Sangam-Age TAMILIAN names like Thisan, Aadhan and Udhiran in Tamil Brahmi letters inscribed on them. According to superintending



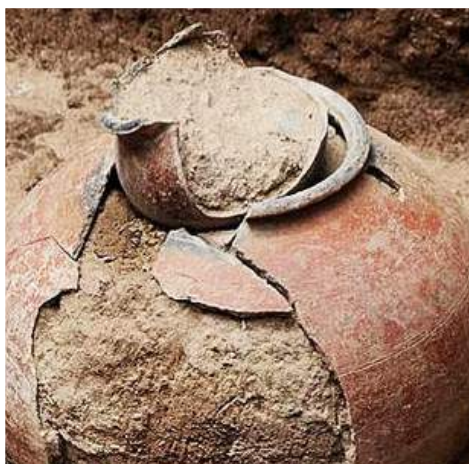
The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) had conducted three excavations in Tamil Nadu – in 1947, 1965 and 2005 – before turning to Keezhadi



Brick structures appear more refined in this area. Even pottery items have typical Sangam-Age TAMILIAN names like Thisan, Aadhan and Udhiran in Tamil Brahmi letters inscribed on them

HERITAGE

The larger of the two settlements has more trenches and is believed to have belonged to the rich and educated. This is supported by the items that were unearthed, which include jewellery, gemstones, and semi-precious stones, among others



A view of the excavated trenches and the objects found here.

Red ware pots with stands found at the excavaton (Top); An ivory dice (Bottom left); terracotta figurines (Extreme right)



archaeologist K Amarnath Ramakrishna, the Pandya dynasty had maintained trade contacts with the Western world.

“The finding of rouletted pot shreds puts this place before 3 CE because the manufacture of such earthenware stopped in Rome by 1 CE for some unknown reasons. Arretine pot shreds establish trade links with Rome,” he said. The appearance of beads of materials like agate, quartz

and carnelian confirms that the dynasty had trade with Rome. The smaller settlement has a lot of graffiti on its pottery and weapons. Most of them have a symbol of fish on them, which as per records, represents a clan. Red and black pottery and decorative tiles were used on roofs. The excavation project continued for around nine months during which the site was opened for public and researchers.

ROCK SOLID

A keeper of evolutionary secrets and a historian's delight, the archaeological site of Bhimbetka is spotted with humankind's earliest dwellings

BY SUNITHA KUMAR



A UNESCO World Heritage site, Bhimbetka is home to unusually shaped rock formations that gave man a canvas to express his creativity on

Within the precincts of Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary in Raisen district of Madhya Pradesh lies Bhimbetka. A UNESCO World Heritage site, Bhimbetka is home to unusually shaped rock formations that gave man a canvas to express his creativity on. Viewed from a distance, these rock formations resemble a small fortress, rising nearly 100 m above the surrounding area on the hill upon which they stand. They are the result of intense chemical and physical weathering by natural elements over centuries.

While the caves and potholes within the rocks became a place for



A rock site at Bhimbetka

All over the rock formations here is a riot of rock art that showcases not just man's imagination but in the process depicts his evolution as a social being

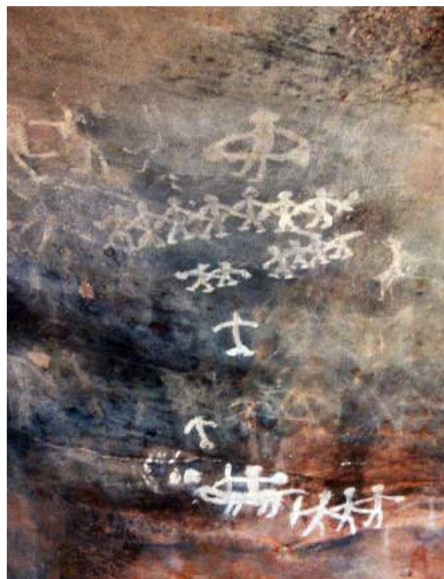
HERITAGE

man to shelter within, the flat surfaces of these rock formations turned into an easel for his creative instincts.

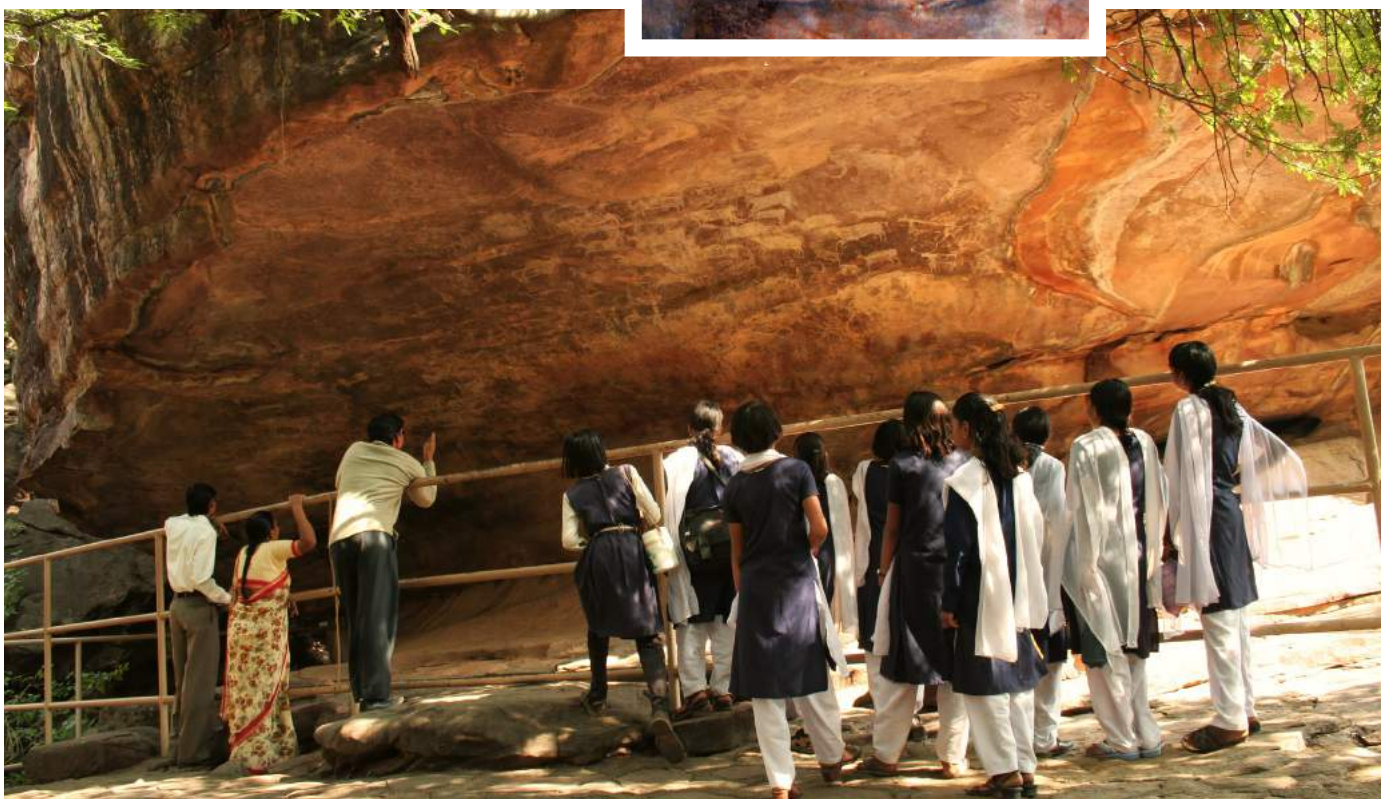
All over the rock formations here is a riot of rock art that showcases not just man's imagination but in the process depicts his evolution as a social being and thus acts as a treasure trove for historians to piece his story together. According to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), excavation at Bhimbetka has revealed human occupation from the lower Paleolithic period to the Medieval era. Given that the former period is recorded between 100,000 years to 40,000 years ago, the time span of

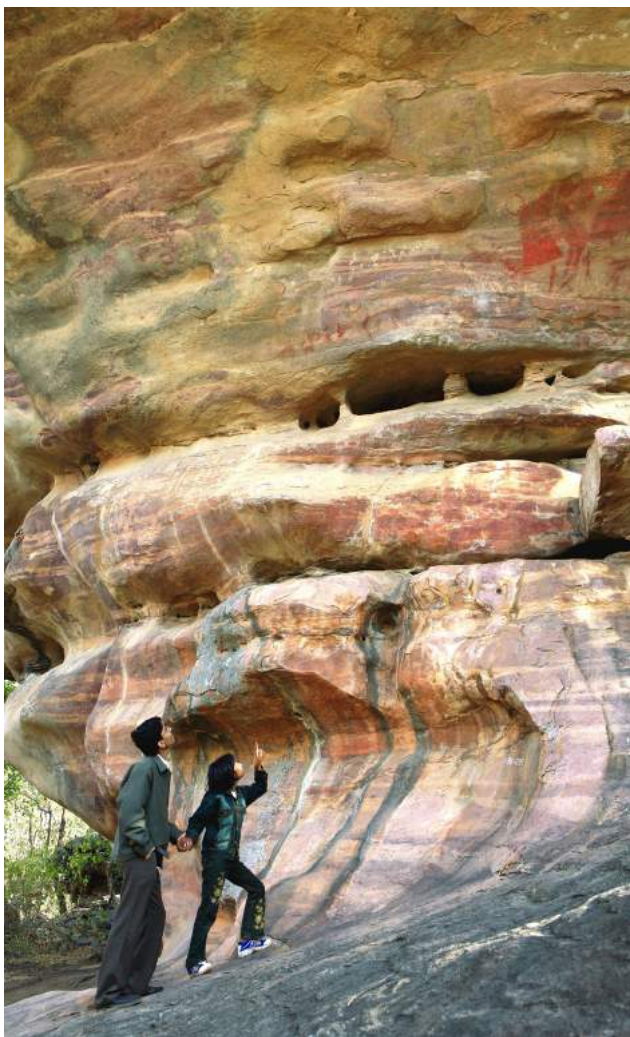
occupation is incredible.

The rock paintings depict human forms, animal figures, trees and geometric patterns. Figures depicted on walls are engaged in activities ranging from hunting to battle to



While most paintings are on flat surfaces, some are found in corners





Several figures are represented only in outline form while many others have been filled in

cultural aspects such as dancing. Some figures look to be moving stealthily towards animals, while on a hunt. Many creatures find a place among the rock paintings, virtually bringing alive the place. The geometric patterns resemble signs from a Da Vinci code equivalent. There is the wheel, various other circular patterns as well as half-circles, dotted lines, hand prints and finger prints. Clues to a vast human jigsaw that historians have been piecing together.

Several figures are represented only in outline form while many



others have been filled in, either by using patterns or in the same colour as the outline. Red and white are the dominant colours with hints of blue and yellow. Natural mineral colours mixed with water and even animal fat have been used to create patterns and outlines using thin brushes made of twigs. While most paintings are on flat surfaces, some are found in corners while others appear at a considerable height, making it apparent that the artists were standing on a high rock that has since disappeared. The rock formations here are surrounded by

thick forest, making one wonder how the site was discovered.

As per ASI records, Bhimbetka was first referred to in a paper published in 1888 by W Kincaid who spoke of the “Bhimbet hill” as being a Buddhist site on the opposite side of Bhojpur Lake. True exploration took place only with the arrival of Dr Vishnu Wakankar. A scholar who had explored rock art sites in the Chamal Valley and in Europe, Dr Wakankar was once travelling by

train through the region. Seeing the similarity in landscape, he broke his journey and found these strange rock formations. The rest, as they say, is history. He was back a year later, accompanied by a group of students. A detailed survey report was prepared which went unheeded till the 1970s when exploration began in right earnest. Tools found at the site revealed its antiquity and timeline.

The paintings form a pictographic

Red and white are the dominant colours with hints of blue and yellow





As per ASI records, Bhimbetka was first referred to in a paper published in 1888 by W Kincaid who spoke of the "Bhimbet hill"

The rock formations here are surrounded by rugged terrain and dense forest, which makes one wonder how the site was discovered

record of man's evolution. Some pictures show him as a hunter, walking through forests and climbing trees. Latter ones show him on a chariot, depicting a different era. But Bhimbetka's rock art goes beyond just one site. Bhimbetka hill is one of five such sites spread over an area of 1,892 hectares with nearly 700 rock shelters between them.

It is a mind-boggling number of nearly 400 having rock art. Beyond immediate vicinity, a line of rock art sites, punctuated by hills, forest and fields, runs all the way to the Shyamla Hills near Bhopal. The sites, though documented, are difficult to reach and hence, see few visitors. The intrepid few who reach are able to see one of man's finest treasures.

A Gourmand's SHORE

The brilliance of India's coastal cuisine possibly surpasses the beauty of the 7,517-km coastline itself

BY MADHULIKA DASH



Succulent salmon fish kebabs, grilled to perfection and bursting with flavour



Group of South Indian food like masala dosa, idli, wada or vada, sambar, served over banana leaf with colourful coconut chutneys

There is a reason why coastal cuisine and seafood go hand in hand. They have been promoted likewise.

Seafood is not only readily available on the coast, but widely eaten as well – and this includes the vintage yet stunningly contemporary coastal cuisine of India. But that is not all to this lesser-explored food culture that predates the Silk Route and is considered to be made for the

sophisticated palate.

Baked fish and coconut curries are just appetisers to this 21-course sit-down meal, each course comprising, at least, 100 select dishes. Sample this: The 7,517-km coastline gives India its favourite tiffin – *idli*, *vada* and *dosa* – just three items of the five dozen-odd *appams*, *chakulis* and *pithas* made in this region. It gives us the fritters (*pakoras*) including the famous *vada* of *vada pav*, *bhel*, *jhalmuri* and banana chips – a few

The 7,517-km coastline gives India its favourite tiffin – *idli*, *vada* and *dosa* – just three items of the five dozen-odd *appams*, *chakulis* and *pithas* in this region

of the hundreds of snacks that the southern half of India doles out including the famous fried chicken, popularly called Chicken 65. The famous fried fish, *pathuri maach* (that led to the iconic Parsee *patrani machchi*) and the stew (that made South the oldest innovator of curries) come from this region. The coconut chutney is one among the several relishes in coastal Indian cuisine, including the tomato *khatta* (that changed Spanish salsa), curd dips and wood apple *chutney*. The oil-free *kottu*, which inspired the *jalfrezi* later, is again the gift of the coast. It has the largest section of innovative desserts including the Kerala black *halwa*, the hard-to-replicate *mutta mala*; the delicious *khaja*, Mysore *pak*

and the unignorable *rosogulla* and its brethren.

Beside popularising the art of creating dishes that cater to all the five palate senses, coastal cuisine has been at the forefront of innovations as well, partly thanks to the maritime trade that brought the best of influences to the coast and partly due to the communities that made the coast their home.

For instance, *poe* – a Goan bread – became the first unleavened bread to enter the Indian culinary ledger which till then was predominantly rice, *puri* and *appams*, *chakulis* and *pithas* made of fermented rice batter. The Goan bread eventually became the bun and led to the emergence of *vada pav*. Likewise,

Here you can see the delicious indian sweet, Mysore *pak*





Solkadhi or *Kokum* curry, a famous drink from Goa or Maharashtra's Konkan region

laddoo and *kashtayam* were easy ways to administer medication, but soon became sweetmeats. *Rasam*, India's traditional consommé, was developed both as an appetiser and health builder. Such was the addiction to *rasam* (and *payasam*) that Vasco da Gama actually borrowed Zamorin's two cooks so he could relish it on whim. *Sol kadi* had the same fan following and made *kokum* as popular an export as palm toddy and coconut sugar. As for the

laddoo, the interesting melange led to the birth of *chikkis* or *pralines*. Legend has it that Lonavala's famous Maganlal *chikki* began as a way to sustain the rail workers who didn't have time for a lunch break.

Yet another popular dish that coastal cuisine excelled in was stir-fry satays. According to old Sangam literature, the Chola kings preferred a mutton dish that was made thus: large pieces of the thigh portion marinated with pepper, dry ginger

paste, then roasted in fire on wooden skewers and tossed with *arugampul* (Bermuda grass) for flavour. This is said to have influenced Chengiz Khan who adopted the dish in parts to sustain his army and eventually created the first form of what the world knows as *kebabs*.

The art of flavouring rice – not with stock but a spice or two – was yet another innovation from coastal India. While the origin of flavoured rice dishes like curry leaf rice or coconut rice was necessity based – rice is an anecdote in every meal – not many know that it was Asia's first *pilaf*, which unknowingly created the first fried rice. The legend has it

that when Ma Huan arrived in India as part of the Imperial Chinese fleet under Cheng Ho in 1403, he was stunned to find *pilafs*. It is said that he stayed back to learn the art of making it and also discovered many versions of using it.

The *iddiappam* is said to have inspired the Chinese, who visited India to sell their silkware, to create noodles and later, egged the Arabs to develop the popular *sewiyen*. The handmade *sewiyen* was the first industry that was footed by Arab traders, who settled in the Muziris, as an alternative to the long grain rice they had back home. It was the Sangam- era *mappillai samba*

According to old Sangam literature, the Chola kings preferred a certain type of mutton dish



It was the Sangam-era *mappillai samba* rice that supposedly reached the Ottomon Empire that led to the creation of *pulav* and *paella* in Spain



Basmati rice cooked with Soyabean or Soy Chunks and spices, also called *pulao* or *pilaf* in India

rice that supposedly reached the Ottomon Empire that led to the creation of *pulav* and *paella* in Spain. Of course, there is an argument made in favour of the *muri ghonto*, a Kalinga-Bangla specialty and a port delicacy at Kalingapatnam and Tamralipta, which could have inspired the *paella*, given the use of seafood and parboiled rice. Much like how the mutton *chukka* of Karikal Chola time inspired the Indonesian satay and the *Sikanderi raan* led to the creation of

the *kutti chara* – a whole goat stuffed with chicken or *arika* – mussels and rice flour cooked in – shell.

It wasn't just the art of stuffing that coastal India was known for. Two of the interesting culinary techniques that emerged from the coastal India was the no-oil cooking (*santula* and *patua* for example) and the art of combining vegetables with meat for flavours like the Bengali *chorchuri*. Another example of culinary brilliance in the coastal cuisine is the ingenuity

The Bahmani kings, who eventually toppled the Vijayanagara Empire, were instrumental in popularising yam and jackfruit by making traditional dishes part of their elaborate meal



Left: Jackfruit/Kathal biryani with raita is a flavourful blend of raw jackfruit pieces, and long-grained *basmati* rice, typically seasoned with whole garam masala

Above: Ras Malai (Rossomalai) - A sweet dish from Bengal, India made up of balls of *paneer* soaked in *malai* (sweet cream) and garnished with chopped *pista* and *kesar*

Below: *malai kofta* curry - classic North Indian dish. vegetarian alternative to meatballs served with *tandoori roti* or indian bread and green salad



to use a plant completely. So while the banana fruit is used as ready sweetener for breakfast (*chuda-dahi*-banana or *pottu-sugar-banana*), the flower was used initially to create a variety of *kebabs* and *koftas* that eventually was adopted for meat-lovers. In fact, *manja* (banana stem) much like yam and jackfruit, was as big a part of the meat-eating community of coastal India as for



This sweet dish is referred to by many names. Some of these are phirni, feni, rice pudding, rice kheer or vermicelli

non-meat lovers. The Bahmani kings, who eventually toppled the Vijayanagara Empire, were instrumental in popularising yam and jackfruit by making traditional dishes part of their elaborate meal which were later picked by Shahjahan to be a part of his feast.

According to old Silk Route ledgers, the all-popular *phirni* first came to the southern coast of India as *bahtiyeh* from Khuzestan (Iran) along with *balal*, a tangy style of corn on the cob. *Bahtiyeh*, which in its earlier iteration was a gruel of rice powder and milk boiled together,

was incorporated into the *payasam* category and refined further by adding jaggery and cardamom. While it developed into a grainy *kheer* in the south, in Odisha, it developed into *gointa gudi* or what many food historians today believe could have led to the idea of *rasmalai* and the Maharashtrian *modak*.



Madhulika Dash is a seasoned food appreciator who writes on Indian restaurants and cuisines across different platforms. She also has been on the food panel of *MasterChef India Season 4*.

THE FORGOTTEN weave

Khun, a 4,000-year-old handwoven fabric, was almost extinct when designer Vaishali Shadangule chanced upon its magic. We retrace her journey and the art's revival

BY PRIYA RANA

It's akin to the search for the Holy Grail but of a rare handloom weave of India, *khun* or *khana*. Traditionally favoured by women in north Karnataka and some parts of Marathwada and Vidharbha regions in Maharashtra, this light-weight cotton or cotton-silk handwoven fabric is used to stitch *ravike* or *choli* (blouse) to be paired with *Ilkal sarees* from the same region. With an intricate brocade pattern, which is 4,000 years old, *khun* is dotted with small delicate motifs. Once a staple among village women from the region, over the centuries and under the onslaught of

powerlooms, the original handloom fabric had almost disappeared: neglected and on the verge of dying a slow death. That was when Mumbai-based fashion designer Vaishali Shadangule chanced upon the textile and embarked on a journey of rediscovery. "Nobody in the markets of Mumbai or Pune had seen the fabric, which has a distinctive brocade pattern, much like the *Banarasi*. It seemed it had become extinct," says Shadangule. After some research, in 2012 she reached Guledgudda, a small nondescript village in Bagalkot district of Karnataka, the home of *khun*.

Guledgudda was once a flourishing

While there is no definite historical evidence about the origin of the weave, folklores say it started in the 8th century when the Chalukya dynasty was in power



With an intricate brocade pattern, which is 4,000 years old, *khun* is dotted with small delicate motifs



hub of handloom weaving, with every household having its own loom and every family member involved in the weaving of the fabric. While there is no definite historical evidence about the origin of the weave, folklores say it started in the 8th century when the Chalukya dynasty was in power in this region. It is said weavers in this village started weaving this typical fabric to accompany Ilkal sarees. It is also said that during religious festivals, these pieces of fabric would be folded in triangles, placed on a saree and offered to the goddess. Some say, it's the folding pattern of the fabric into small squares that got it the name *khana* or *khun*. Nature and mythology inspired the fabric's unique motifs.

Unfortunately, later, as most of these age-old traditions started becoming irrelevant, so did *khun*. The traditional designs were almost lost, and the generation of authentic weavers disappeared, with the few remaining shifting to powerlooms. "When I had first visited the village around five years ago, there were around 500 handlooms, a drastic fall from 4,000 a few decades ago," says the designer.

"I was in New York and I returned to India from the US after a long gap and realised the fabric was still being neglected. Everyone was talking about

This light-weight cotton or cotton-silk handwoven fabric is used to stitch *ravike* or *choli* (blouse) to be paired with *Ilkal* saris

Chanderi, Banarasi, and Maheshwari, and no one even knew of *khun*,” she adds. Adamant to revive this textile, she returned to Guledgudda and to her dismay, found only one loom in working condition.

She got to work, reviving and adopting 50 looms and sitting with the weavers to chalkout a revival plan to make it popular among a global urban audience. “It’s an intricate brocade weave and very lightweight,” says Shandugle, adding that she wanted to present *khun* as it is, in bright colours. “If you go to any village, people are so updated, they don’t follow a trend yet are connected with nature. So there are greens, metallic shades, combinations of wine, mustard, and fluorescent green in them,” she says.

Explaining the painstaking weaving process, Shandugle says: “When you change the colour of even one patch of the fabric, the weaver has to connect by hand 4,000 yarns on the loom, and this process takes the entire day to be completed. Even today, the time taken remains the same but the earnings have less than halved, with a weaver earning only INR 400 a day!”

Raju, 40, who’s been weaving *khun* for 15 years, is the designer’s master weaver. He says that in more prosperous times, there were 50,000 people in the village who worked at the looms. “They would work on dyeing and weaving, dedicated units for raw materials and for joining the fabric.” Today, he says, the few families who pursue this craft do it as a passion

To change the colour of even one patch of the fabric, the weaver has to connect by hand 4,000 yarns on the loom



TRADITION

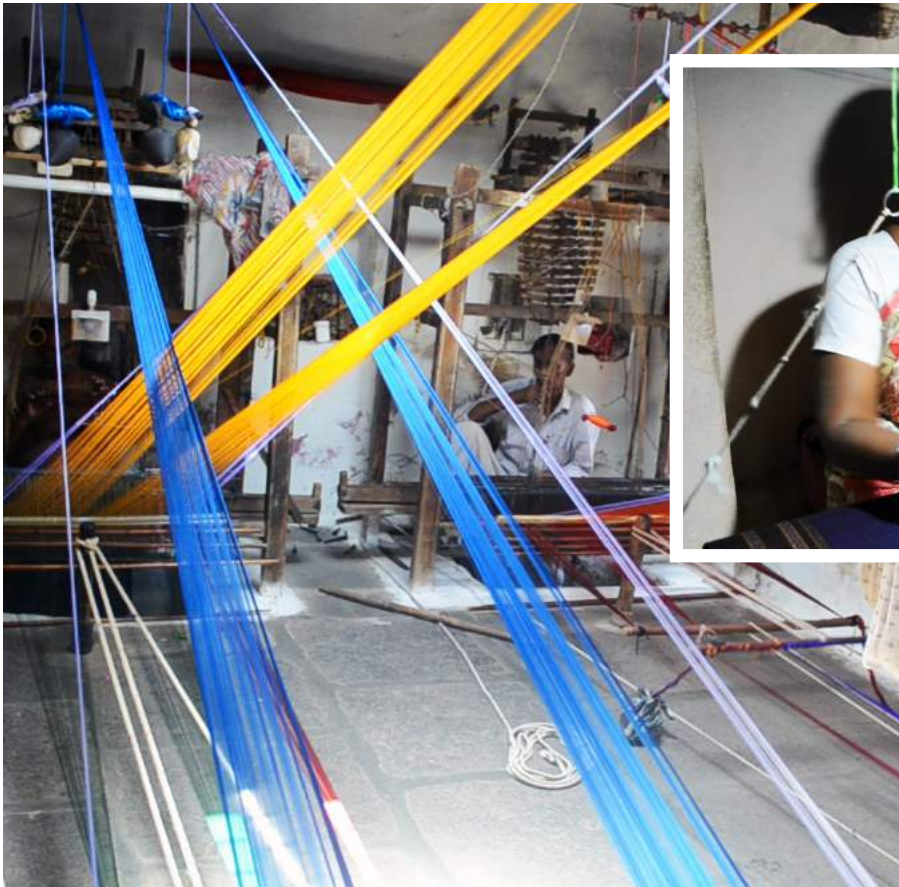
and not for money! “*Khun* is such a beautiful weave and so artful and it can be produced only in this village. It’s a tradition, not just an inanimate object. It’s influenced by the climate, motifs, everyday life and even the environment of the village,” explains the designer, who has previously worked with *Chanderi* and *Paithani* weaves.

In 2012 and 2014, she showcased two *khun*-based design collections at fashion shows held in India. The positive response, encouraged her to create another collection of contemporary garments that was showcased in 2018 at the India Fashion Week in Delhi, the most reputed design showcase of the country. “My idea of revival is to keep the soul and the functionality of the fabric intact and just design it to suit a

contemporary audience. People love the comfortable feel of the fabric on their skin and the lustre on the outside.” In her latest collection, she expanded the traditional colour palette, pairing the native oranges, greens and pinks with bronze, gold and grey. The designer showcased a 40-piece *khun* collection in New York in June 2019 and again at the globally acclaimed New York Fashion Week, a 45-piece line, including dresses and jackets. She’s also planning an Indian bridal couture show, her first ever, in July in India, with this beautiful textile. “I’m just trying to take whatever the weavers are making and giving them an assurance that I will pay them a certain sum per month. I have improved the quality of the fabric and contemporised the designs but my first aim is to make the trade lucrative

A weaver’s sits at a loom for hours to make a saree that can take four months to be completed





The need of the hour is to work towards creating a cluster of khun weavers and larger looms to produce yardages that more commercially and creatively suited

for the villagers again.”

Another challenge in the revival of *khun* is that the traditional looms are small to cater to pieces of fabric for blouses. Shadangule is now working towards creating a cluster of Guledgudda *khun* weavers and larger looms to produce yardages that more commercially and creatively suited. She also plans to diversify into using *khun* for home furnishings and home décor in addition to her clothing line.

Shadangule says that her contribution is very small and more people need to be made aware of this magical fabric. She says, “We need to respect a weaver’s hard work, who sits at a loom for hours to make a *saree* that can take four months to be completed. This is art work and

not just a piece of fabric. Only once the work brings the weaver and his family money and respect will the next generation carry the tradition forward.” Her efforts seems to have given a ray of hope to the weavers of Guledgudda village, as Raju sums it up: “I like working on the loom again. When I see the beautiful clothes being created from the fabric I weave and being showcased across the world, I feel proud. It motivates me to save the looms and the craft. I will teach my children too.”



Priya Rana is a leading fashion writer who has helmed major publications in India. Rana is currently a contributing editor with *The Man* magazine

Streams OF SANCTITY

The rivers of India are not just part of seminal spiritual texts but also custodians of the country's culture and natural wealth

BY BILL AITKEN



The holy river plays a central role in the life of Hindus in India and across the world



Rivers are one of the most revered natural resources in the Indian subcontinent through ages, featuring abundantly both in faith and fantasy but also forming an important part of occupation and trade, ecosystem conservation and tourism in the contemporary context. In fact, seven of these rivers were singled out for recognition as goddesses, not because they were providers of life and living but

importantly for the cultural and heritage that they have long been guardians of.

GANGA: PURITY AND PIETY

Topping the list is the goddess Ganga (River Ganges), emanating from the source at the ice cave of Gaumukh (cow's mouth) in the Uttarakhand, Himalayas, known for its spectacular scenery. Not even the mythology surrounding the river can match the sublime environs of its physical

The three main Himalayan rivers are the Ganga, the Indus and the Brahmaputra

Flowing through India, Bangladesh, and Nepal, the river Ganges is considered as the most important Himalayan river

Yamuna curls
around the
stupendous Taj
Mahal at Agra in
Uttar Pradesh

birth. Starting from the pilgrim site of Gangotri, she flows as river Bhagirathi. It is only on her meeting with River Alakananda at Devprayag that the name Ganga is given. Then, downstream at Haridwar, the Ganga flows into the plains where her course to the sea is marked by the confluence at Prayag in Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh. Here, Ganga is joined by Yamuna and symbolically by the third goddess, Saraswati. Varanasi is likewise graced by the waters of this divine river. The Hooghly passing through Kolkata in West Bengal, has the privilege of hosting the final

place of pilgrimage at the small island of Ganga Sagar where the goddess, after 2,525 km, merges with the Bay of Bengal.

YAMUNA: YOUNG ENERGY

Yamuna, the younger sister of the Ganga, is birthed by the hot springs at Yamnotri. She rises from the snows of the Bander Poonch massif near Uttarakhand's border with the state of Himachal Pradesh. Near Mussoorie in Uttarakhand, the winding course of the river has an Ashokan statute on its banks, exalting the virtues of peace and non-violence. The goddess





Once it nears New Delhi, Yamuna is faced with myriad urban challenges

exits the Himalayas at Paonta Sahib, a Sikh pilgrimage hallowed by the residence of the Sikh Guru Gobind Singh. Once it nears New Delhi, the capital of India, the goddess is faced with myriad urban challenges. Downstream of the capital, the river flows past the ghats at Mathura in Uttar Pradesh where the devotees of Radha and Krishna gather. It curls around the stupendous Taj Mahal at Agra in Uttar Pradesh, then winds her way through eroded terrain where

the Chambal joins her. Ultimately, before the auspicious meeting of the rivers at Prayag, 1,370 km from her source, the Yamuna is reinvigorated by the fresh waters of the Betwa.

GODAVARI: POURING PROSPERITY

Godavari, Ganga's elder sister, is a non-Himalayan river with seasonal flow. Her source is atop the black mesa formations of the north Sahyadri range. At the foot

Yamuna, the younger sister of the Ganga, is birthed by the hot springs at Yamnotri glacier and passes the states of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Delhi, finally merging with the Ganga at Triveni Sangam Prayagraj

of these mountains is the sacred Trimbakeshwar Temple near the town of Nasik in the state of Maharashtra. The river flows for 1,465 km across almost the width of the peninsula from Nasik in the Western Ghats to cut through the Eastern Ghats leading to Yanam, which was a former colonial outpost of Puducherry in Andhra Pradesh. She drains the lesser

ranges of Deccan Plateau, which receives little precipitation outside the monsoon. She holds up small towns such as Paithan in Maharashtra on an ancient trade route famous for heavy silk *sarees*. Shirdi is another small town near the Godavari that has become a place of pilgrimage. Downstream is the well-maintained *gurudwara* at Nander where Sikh

Godavari empties into the country's third-largest basin

Godavari, Ganga's elder sister, is a non-Himalayan river with seasonal flow. Her source is atop the black mesa formations of the north Sahyadri range





Guru Gobind Singh breathed his last. The southeast flow of the river after it leaves Maharashtra for the state of Andhra Pradesh is supplemented by River Manjra from the south and Pranhita and Indrawati from the tribal districts lying to the north. The goddess takes a sharp turn at the Bhadrachalam Temple in Andhra Pradesh before cleaving a passage through the Eastern Ghats. She then descends in a broad southerly flow to the agricultural town of Rajahmundry in the state of Andhra Pradesh, which marks the entrance to the fertile delta. Here, the Draksharama Temple commanding the Gautam Godavari delivers final blessings before the goddess flows via Yanam into the Bay of Bengal.

KAVERI: BANK OF CULTURE

Goddess Kaveri may be the shortest in length (765 km) but is the guardian of the most significant cultural gems. Known as the 'Ganga of the South', the goddess is depicted standing wearing a red silk sari and holding a copper water pot from which she pours her blessings. The source is known as Talakaveri and a small tank has been built to receive the overflow from the sacred spring. Kaveri (or Cauvery) rises in the hills of Coorg in the Karnataka section of the Western Ghats above the temple at Bhagamandalam. From the wooded hills of Coorg, the river flows to the confines of Mysore, then past Srirangapatnam in Karnataka where Tipu Sultan had his palace.

Kaveri serves as the main drinking water source to many cities, towns and villages in India

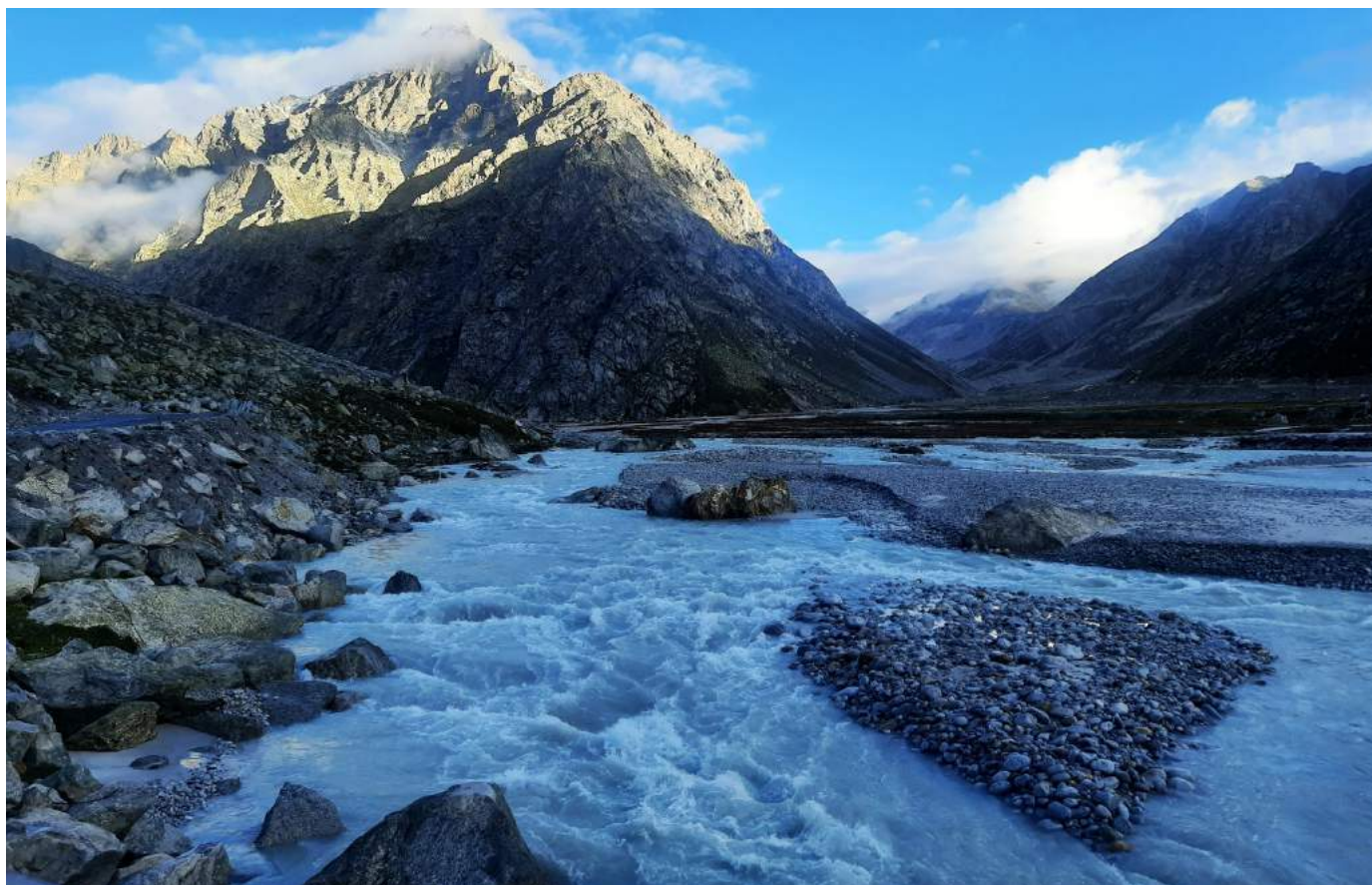
On the banks of Kaveri at Talakad near Mysore in Karnataka stands a spectacle of medieval temples silted up by the sand and wind. The goddess in her regal mood is seen at the spectacular Shivanasamundra Waterfalls and then again at the dramatic cataracts of Hogenakkal near the border of Tamil Nadu. As she approaches the delta region, the goddess unleashes a display of artistic, architectural and musical marvels. The Trichy fort, the devotional rendering of Tyagaraj's songs at Thiruvaiyaru in Thanjavur district in Tamil Nadu, Sriramgam's extensive godly enclosure, the

exquisitely poised bronze images of Cholan figures and Thanjavur's towering temples and are a few of the living treasures of the delta region. The recognised channel of the Kaveri debouches into the Bay of Bengal near the coast at Poompahar in Tamil Nadu known to Roman traders as Kaveri Emporium.

SARASWATI: SWAN SONG

The holy river, Saraswati, is the Hindu goddess of learning. Saraswati holds the ancient stringed veena and is seated upon a swan. In ancient scriptures, she was a broad river that used to irrigate the Rajasthan desert.

The existence of the Saraswati river goes beyond the physical realm, according to the Hindu mythology



It is believed that the Triveni Sangam was formed by the confluence of the sacred Indian rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati



Over the years, historians, religious scholars and scientists alike have made several attempts to locate or recreate the course of the 'lost' Saraswati river

According to satellite imagery, the course of the dried-up river can still be discerned and in Hindu folklore, and the Saraswati remains of the Harappan civilization is very much alive. Recently, at Ad Badri in the Shivalik foothills of Haryana, the source of a small river, known as the Sarsutti, has been developed as a pilgrim centre. Both Kurukshetra in Haryana and Pushkar in Rajasthan have lakes associated with this lost sacred river and host huge gatherings of pilgrims on auspicious bathing days. It is believed that the Saraswati

poured into the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat and eventually into the Arabian Sea.

NARMADA: SHIVA'S GIFT

Narmada, daughter of Lord Shiva, is to many the most beautiful of all. Her source is at Amarkantak amidst the leafy Maikala Hills of eastern Madhya Pradesh. It then passes through tribal territory thick with bamboo and rich in iron ore. At the medieval fort of Mandla in Madhya Pradesh, the river broadens out. The erstwhile ruling dynasty of the area boasts of

It then passes through tribal territory thick with bamboo and rich in iron ore. At the medieval fort of Mandla in Madhya Pradesh, the river broadens out

being the last to hold out against the Mughal advances. Near Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh are the Dhuandar waterfalls in the fabled marble gorge. The many hues of marble are said to be auspicious for carving temple images. Large smooth basaltic *lingams* are also found in Narmada's bed. Jabalpur lays claim to inventing snooker; it is said to have first been played here in colonial times. Omkareshwar is a scenic island with an ancient Jyotirlinga Temple and in contrast, this pilgrim site is followed downstream by the princely bathing

ghats at Maheshwar. These were built by the widowed Holkar queen Ahalya Bai of the Maratha-ruled Malwa kingdom who bravely stood up for her family faith in the face of bigotry. Lower in its course, the river is dammed to form the Sardar Sarovar, a gravity dam near Navagam in Gujarat. Finally, at the estuary town of Bharuch in Gujarat, it flows into the Arabian Sea.

INDUS: ROAR OF THE LION

The Indus gave its name to India – foreigners referred to it as the land

Large smooth basaltic *lingams* are found in Narmada's bed





It is said that the name 'India' originates from the River Sindhu

that lies “beyond the Indus.” Also known as the Lion river, the Indus (or Sindhu) is one of the largest in the subcontinent, flowing for 3,200 km from undistinguished springs in Tibet, north of Mt Kailash. It is said that the name ‘India’ originates from the River Sindhu, from the ancient Indus valley civilization. This mighty river delimits the western end of the Great Himalayan range and the towering height of the Naga Parbat massif at the river’s sharp turn to outflank the mountain astounds all

who behold it. From Tibet border, it flows northeast through Leh past the town’s huge and fascinating mud fort. At Nyemo, the Zaskar River joins the Indus at perhaps the most sublime confluence in the Himalayas. The flow of the river is determined by season – it diminishes in winter while flooding its banks between July and September. The river is worshipped by fishermen downstream in the Pakistan province of Sind where the shallow and sluggish Indus reaches the Arabian Sea.

CANVAS OF history

Dating back to the 17th century, the wall paintings of Gujarat are splashed in culture, colour and diverse strokes of creativity

BY SUPRIYA AGGARWAL



One of the frescoes depicting Krishna Leela



Through times immemorial, man has sought relief and meaning in art, and India has led the way with some of the most fascinating forms discovered through the centuries. Paintings with text sketches, multiple aesthetics and anecdotal accounts suggest that it was not uncommon for households to adorn their doorways or facades or even interior rooms with a rich display of culture. Cave paintings from Ajanta, Bagh and temple paintings attest a love for nature and

human compassion. Painting was also a medium of expressing visual fantasies. Birds and flowers, trees and creepers are often depicted graciously by Indian sculptors and painters alike.

Gujarat is known for its rich heritage of arts and crafts, but few know of its penchant for paintings. Wall paintings are a form of representative art that traces its origin to the 17th century and are vibrant portrayals of the ethos and life of the land. They represent various mythical chapters from folklore, daily tasks, and mirror

The making of wall paintings thrived due to the encouragement of rulers

fantastical adaptations of flora and fauna. However, one discovers at Patan, in the dome of Raghunath Temple, paintings based on astrology and diseases causing death, a rare depiction.

Major districts where wall paintings are located include Kutch, Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Banaskantha, Kheda, Vadodara and Bharuch. Despite the period of upheaval in the late 18th century through the late 19th century, the making of wall paintings thrived due to the encouragement of rulers of various

former states and small principalities in Gujarat. These wall paintings reflect the social and cultural activities of the different periods in which they were painted.

Aristocrats and masses followed the custom. In Kheda district, a boost by patrons of the Swaminarayan sect gave inspiration to these activities. Many temples and mansions built during this period were enhanced with wall paintings founded on parables and legends from *Vishnu Purana* and *Shiva Purana* (both mythological



Wood ceilings
of houses with
nymphs and other
celestial figures



Hindu texts, part of 18 *Mahapuranas*) and from Krishna folklore. Royal processions, *darbar* (king's court) scenes, hunts, romantic escapades and flowers of a purely ornamental nature found place on the walls. These paintings were majorly influenced by Maru-Gurjar and Marathas as well as European influx in the region. Eventually, modern subjects like railways, steamships and bicycles, games like cricket and

horse racing started to appear on walls. Beautifying wood ceilings of houses with nymphs and other celestial figures was a clear Western influence. It was largely believed that the act of art on walls would attract prosperity and divine blessings.

In the erstwhile Saurashtra region, in the later part of the medieval period, these paintings were carried out by *salats* (masons) who knew how to draw with a focus

In the later part of the medieval period, these paintings were carried out by *salats* (masons) who knew how to draw with a focus on folk art



Interior of room with old frescoes in an ancient haveli in Mandawa. With a population of 21000, Mandawa is a popular site of Shekhawati architecture.

on folk art. With trained artisans, other communities like *mochis* (cobblers), *malis* (gardeners) as well as *kachhiyas* (greengrocers) started painting walls of houses in villages in Kheda district. They painted animals, birds, flowers and creepers.

While characters of men in the art wore contemporary attires such as *dhoti*, *angarkhu* (coat/ shirt) and *pagdi* (turban), the women were dressed in *saree-choli* and long skirts. The prevailing custom among men to grow moustaches was applied to gods like Rama and

Krishna. The body structure was shown as short and stout.

In later 18th century, the Marathas ruled Gujarat. A chapter of financial revival followed in the district which prompted craftsmen and artists, who had formerly deserted, to return to the region.

Peace prevailed and prosperity returned due to safety and security for the merchants; it enabled them to dwell in mansions decorated with wood carvings and wall paintings. Many temples were built by rulers and merchants during this period, their walls

The prevailing custom among men to grow moustaches was
applied to gods like Rama and Krishna



Many temples and mansions built during this period were enhanced with wall paintings founded on parables and legends

embellished with paintings.

This art flourished well into the 19th century, continuing up to the first quarter of the 20th century. Nonetheless, due to migration of the benefactors of this art to more economically developed cities across the subcontinent and even to foreign shores in the later part of the 19th century, the tradition saw a decline. This is also attributed to the socio-economic changes

of the region as well as arrival of other mediums of expression and decoration.

The paintings not only make the structure pretty but serve a historical purpose by throwing light on the society through outfits, ornamentation, musical instruments, arms and armoury and a host of other details depicted through them. Thus, they occupy a vital place in the history of Gujarat.

Awe-Inspiring Ruins Of HAMPI

Hampi, designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site, served as the capital of the powerful Vijayanagara empire that has withstood the ravages of both man and time, yet it exudes the splendour of a glorious past

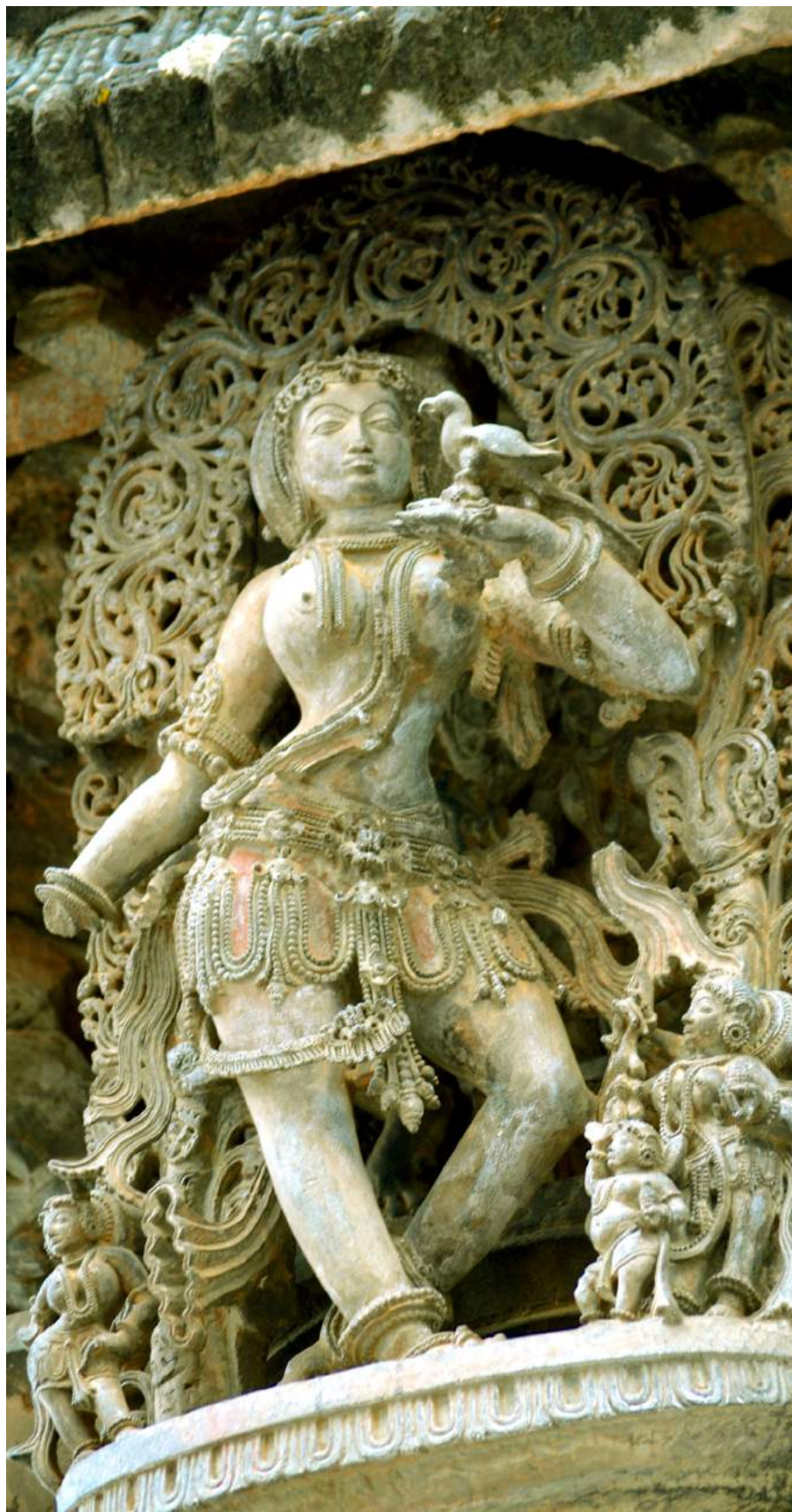




The intricate carvings and sculptures adorning many of the buildings showcase the architectural brilliance of the Vijayanagara era.

SNAPSHOTS

Hampi is an exceptional site that represents the glory of the Vijayanagara Empire, which flourished during the 14th–16th centuries. The site contains over 1,600 surviving remains, including temples, palaces, markets, and a remarkable system of water infrastructure, that testify to the power and wealth of the empire.





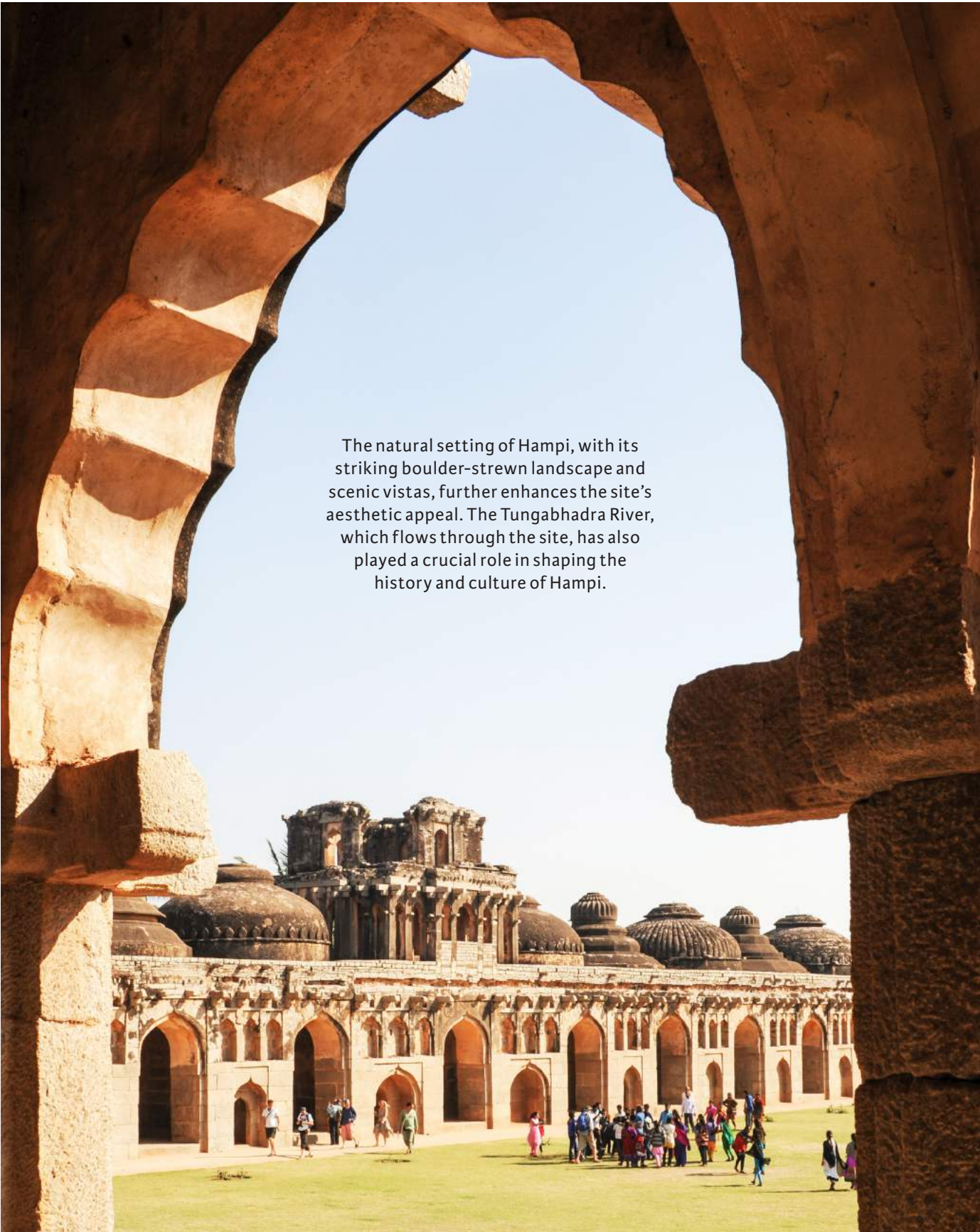
Hampi's system of water management is considered one of the most advanced in the ancient world. The city had a complex network of canals, tanks, and wells that ensured a reliable supply of water for its residents and crops throughout the year.

The tanks in particular are a marvel of engineering, with the largest tank, the Pushkarani, measuring over 1.5 kilometers in length and nearly 50 meters in width.





The awe-inspiring site of Hampi is considered as the last capital of the last mighty Hindu Kingdom of Vijayanagar in this time period. The Dravidian temples and palaces won the commendation of travellers between the 14th and 16th centuries.



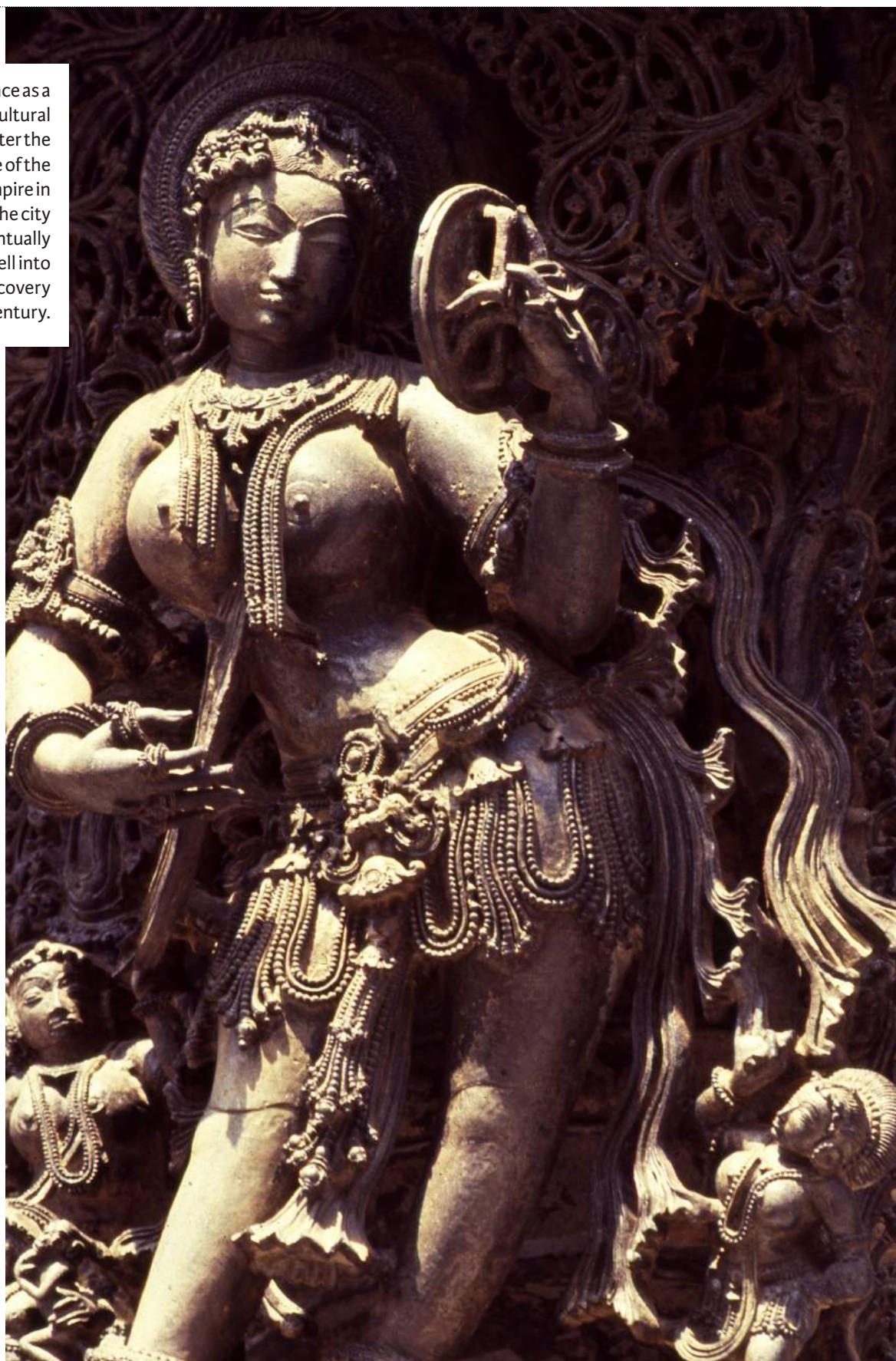
The natural setting of Hampi, with its striking boulder-strewn landscape and scenic vistas, further enhances the site's aesthetic appeal. The Tungabhadra River, which flows through the site, has also played a crucial role in shaping the history and culture of Hampi.

SNAPSHOTS



Hampi's outstanding universal value lies in the fact that it was a highly prosperous and well-planned city during the medieval period, with its architecture, urban layout, and landscape design representing a unique blend of Indian and Islamic influences. The site includes numerous temples, shrines, and public buildings, along with fortifications, water features, and residential areas.

Hampi's importance as a religious and cultural center waned after the decline of the Vijayanagara Empire in the 16th century. The city was eventually abandoned and fell into ruins, until its rediscovery in the 19th century.



SNAPSHOTS



Hampi remains an important pilgrimage site for Hindus, with numerous temples and shrines dedicated to various deities. The annual Hampi Utsav, a cultural extravaganza, attracts visitors from all over the world and showcases the rich cultural heritage of the region.



Hampi's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site recognizes its exceptional cultural and historical significance.

INDIAN IMPRESSIONS

Know India a little more with these interesting facts



AJANTA'S RECLINING BUDDHA: A MASTERPIECE

Ajanta's Cave 26 features a majestic 5th-century sculpture of the Reclining Buddha, measuring 24 feet in length and 9 feet in height. On the base of the sculpture are shown his disciples sitting in mourning. Sculpted on top are celestials who are rejoicing because of the Buddha's arrival in heaven.

THE GOND ART FROM MADHYA PRADESH

Gond art is a traditional form of painting practiced by the Gond tribe of central India. It involves using natural colors to create intricate designs and patterns on various surfaces such as paper, canvas, and walls. The themes of Gond art often revolve around nature, mythology, and everyday life. The art form has gained recognition in recent years, with artists showcasing their work in exhibitions and galleries around the world.



THE NILGIRI TAHR: THE PRIDE OF TAMIL NADU

The Nilgiri tahr, a shaggy-coated, endangered ungulate with curved horns, is the only mountain ungulate in southern India. It's found in a 400 km stretch across Kerala and Tamil Nadu and is one of the 12 ungulate species in India. The animal is also Tamil Nadu's state animal.



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