

# INDIA PERSPECTIVES

Volume 32 ■ Issue 2 ■ April-June 2018



Vishwa Hindi Sammelan 2018

Celebrating Hindi in all its glory

**STRENGTHENING  
TIES WITH EUROPE**

**ODISHA DIARIES**  
EXPLORING KALINGA

**MORE THAN SACRED**  
INDIA'S MOSQUES

**FIND PEACE**  
YOGA FOR THE MIND



# POTPOURRI

## UPCOMING EVENTS ACROSS INDIA



### HEMIS FESTIVAL

One of the biggest festivals to be organised in Ladakh's monasteries, this commemorates the birth of Guru Padmasambhava.

**WHEN:** June 23-24, 2018

**WHERE:** Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir



### CHAMPAKKULAM BOAT RACE

The oldest snake boat race in the state of Kerala, this kicks off the annual boat race season on River Pampa. Massive boats vie for victory as participants hum traditional boat songs.

**WHEN:** June 28, 2018

**WHERE:** Alappuzha, Kerala

### DREE FESTIVAL

The Apatani tribe of Arunachal Pradesh's Ziro region celebrates this agricultural festival with traditional dances, folk songs and other cultural performances.

**WHEN:** July 5, 2018

**WHERE:** Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh



### RATH YATRA

This festival celebrates the journey of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra from the Jagannath temple to the Gundicha temple in Puri, believed to be His aunt's house.

**WHEN:** July 14, 2018

**WHERE:** Puri, Odisha



### INDEPENDENCE DAY

This year, India will observe its 72nd Independence Day. Grand celebrations will be held at the Red Fort in New Delhi.

**WHEN:** August 15, 2018

**WHERE:** Across the country



### AMARNATH YATRA

Thousands of devotees from across the world undertake this challenging annual pilgrimage in Jammu and Kashmir to offer prayers to Lord Shiva.

**WHEN:** Till August 26, 2018

**WHERE:** Jammu and Kashmir

# FOREWORD

The 11th Vishwa Hindi Sammelan (World Hindi Conference), to be held from August 18-20 in Mauritius, will bring together Hindi enthusiasts from across the world on a platform that honours the heritage of the language and takes it to the world. In this issue of *India Perspectives*, we relive the legacy of the important event and get a glimpse into what its 11th edition holds in store.

A series of significant diplomatic engagements have kept the Indian government occupied over the last few months, with several bilateral and multilateral meetings having yielded noteworthy agreements and outcomes. Read about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's successful state visits to Sweden, the UK and Germany and his participation at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting from April 19-20 in London. Also gain insights into a series of official visits made by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj: Italy, France, Luxembourg, Belgium and South Africa.

In our travel section, come with us to Odisha as we traverse its greatest treasures: from the magnificent temple of Lord Jagannath in Puri and the vibrant artists' village of Raghurajpur to the bustling bylanes of Cuttack and the incredibly serene Chilika Lake.

In our photo feature section, be awe-struck by the most stunning mosques across India as we honour the holy month of Ramadan and usher in Eid al-Fitr on June 16, 2018.

From being born by the roadside to earning international renown for sporting excellence, let top-ranked Indian archer Deepika Kumari's journey inspire you in our Cinema section as we speak to the makers of *Ladies First*, an award-winning documentary based on her life. As you read about her commitment to putting her best foot forward against all odds, find echoes of similar sentiments in the musical journeys of India's new-age rappers, who have been utilising this form of poetic expression to convey significant social messages of immense contemporary relevance.

Finally, enjoy a special article by Indian cricketer Harbhajan Singh where he gives us the insider's perspective on the Indian Premier League and how it brings the world together on the cricket pitch.



Raveesh Kumar





# INDIA PERSPECTIVES

Volume 32 ■ Issue 2 ■ April-June 2018

**Editor:** Raveesh Kumar

**Assistant Editor:** Rajat Bhatnagar

**Ministry of External Affairs**

Room No. 152, 'A' Wing, Shastri Bhavan,  
New Delhi - 110001, India

Tel.: +91.11.23388949, 23381719

Fax.: +91.11.23384663

Web: [www.indiaperspectives.in](http://www.indiaperspectives.in)

**For feedback:** [osdpd2@mea.gov.in](mailto:osdpd2@mea.gov.in)

**Maxposure Media Group India Pvt Ltd**

**CEO & Managing Director:** Prakash Johari

**Director:** Vikas Johari

**Editorial Director:** Jayita Bandyopadhyay

**Head Office**

Maxposure Media Group India Pvt Ltd

#TheAddress, Plot No 62, Okhla Phase-3,  
New Delhi-110020, India

Tel: +91.11.43011111, Fax: +91.11.43011199

CIN No: U22229DL2006PTC152087

**For inquiries:**

[indiaperspectives@maxposuremedia.com](mailto:indiaperspectives@maxposuremedia.com)



FOR INQUIRIES | MMGIPL

Tel: +91.11.43011111

FAX: +91.11.43011199

[www.maxposuremedia.com](http://www.maxposuremedia.com)

*India Perspectives* is published in Arabic, Bahasa Indonesia, English, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Pashto, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Sinhala, Spanish, Tamil, Chinese and Japanese.

*India Perspectives* is published by Raveesh Kumar, Joint Secretary (XP) and Official Spokesperson, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Room No. 152, 'A' Wing, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi - 110001, India. It is printed and published on behalf of the MEA by Maxposure Media Group India Pvt. Ltd. (MMGIPL), #TheAddress, Plot No 62, Okhla Phase-3, New Delhi-110020, India. *India Perspectives* is published six times a year. All rights reserved. The writing, artwork and/or photography contained herein may be used or reproduced with an acknowledgement to *India Perspectives*. MEA and MMGIPL does not assume responsibility for loss or damage of unsolicited products, manuscripts, photographs, artwork, transparencies or other materials. The views expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the MEA or MMGIPL.

Follow us on:

<http://www.facebook.com/MEA>

<http://www.twitter.com/MEA>

<http://www.youtube.com/MEA>

For a copy of *India Perspectives*, contact the nearest Indian diplomatic mission.





# CONTENTS



06



80



76

## साझेदारी

गौरवशाली अतीत .....06

“चलो मॉरीशस...” .....10

## PARTNERSHIP

Sochi Summit.....14

Building bridges of peace.....18

A sign of three.....24

French connection.....30

In step with the Union .....34

Forging a deeper friendship .....38

Act East.....42

Fruitful dialogue .....48

## SPORTS

A pitch for camaraderie .....50

## SNAPSHOT

More than sacred.....54

## TRAVEL

In the heart of Kalinga .....62

## MUSIC

Lyrical identity.....68

## HERITAGE

A walk to remember .....72

## CINEMA

Courage first.....76

## CUISINE

Flavour of spice.....80

## PROGRESS

Yoga for the mind .....86

# गौरवशाली अतीत

हिंदी को देश की राष्ट्रभाषा तथा अंतरराष्ट्रीय भाषा बनाने की दिशा में 10वां विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन उपयुक्त मंच सिद्ध हुआ था। समय के साथ अब तो हिंदी का उपयोग भी बढ़ रहा है

लेख: वीणा सबलोक पाठक



राष्ट्रपिता महात्मा गांधी ने कहा था, “राष्ट्रभाषा के बिना राष्ट्र गूंगा है। मेरा यह मत है कि हिंदी ही हिंदुस्तान की राष्ट्रभाषा हो सकती है और होनी

चाहिए।” गांधीजी की उक्ति को सार्थक करने की दिशा में देश की सरकारों ने हिंदी के प्रचार-प्रसार के अथक प्रयास किए। इसी क्रम में विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन आयोजित करने का मन बनाया गया। अगस्त, 2018 में 11वां विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन का

आयोजन मॉरीशस में किया जाएगा। इस प्रकार के कार्यक्रमों का उद्देश्य यही है कि अधिक से अधिक लोग हिंदी को अपनाएं। वैश्विक स्तर पर हिंदी को पहचान मिले। निस्संदेह ऐसे आयोजनों से उद्देश्य की आपूर्ति हुई है।

11वां विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन अगस्त, 2018 में मॉरीशस में होगा, इसी प्रस्ताव के साथ भोपाल में आयोजित 10वां विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन समाप्त हुआ था। यह कार्यक्रम 10 से 12 सितम्बर, 2015 को हुआ था। पहली बार हिंदी भाषा पर केंद्रित इस सम्मेलन





**मुख्य पृष्ठ:** भारत के प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने भोपाल में आयोजित 10वें विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन का उद्घाटन किया था। इस अवसर पर डाक टिकट भी जारी की गई। इस आयोजन में भारत की विदेश मंत्री श्रीमती सुष्मा स्वराज, विधि व आईटी मंत्री श्री रविशंकर प्रसाद एवं मध्य प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री श्री शिवराज सिंह चौहान भी उपस्थित थे। **ऊपर:** हिंदी का प्रचार-प्रसार बढ़ाने की दिशा में अनेक महत्वपूर्ण सत्रों का भी आयोजन किया गया था

में 12 विषयों पर विचार-विमर्श किया गया। भोपाल में आयोजित तीन दिवसीय सम्मेलन में अलग-अलग चर्चाओं के बाद इनसे जुड़े उपाय भी सम्मेलन में पेश किए गए थे। यह तय किया गया कि इन उपायों पर अमल के लिए केंद्र सरकार एक समीक्षा समिति भी बनाएगी। उस सम्मेलन में सरकार की ओर से आश्वासन दिया गया था कि जो सिफारिशें पेश की गई हैं, उन पर हर संभव अमल होगा। भोपाल में आयोजित सम्मेलन का आयोजन विदेश मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार द्वारा मध्य प्रदेश सरकार के सहयोग से किया गया था। इसका मुख्य विषय 'हिंदी जगत: विस्तार एवं संभावनाएं' था।

इस कार्यक्रम में मुख्य अतिथि भारत के प्रधानमंत्री माननीय श्री नरेंद्र मोदी थे जबकि विशेष अतिथि मॉरीशस गणराज्य की शिक्षा व मानव संसाधन मंत्री श्रीमती लीला देवी दुकन लछुमन थीं। इस अवसर पर श्री मोदी ने कहा, "दुनिया में भाषा के रूप में हिंदी का महत्व बढ़ रहा है। हिंदी को समृद्ध बनाने के लिए उसे अन्य भारतीय भाषाओं से जोड़ना होगा। साथ ही डिजिटल इंडिया में इसका उपयोग बढ़ाना होगा।" इसमें कुल 12 शैक्षिक सत्र आयोजित किए गए थे — गिरमिटिया देशों में हिंदी, विदेशों में हिंदी शिक्षण — समस्याएं व समाधान, विदेशियों के लिए भारत में हिंदी अध्ययन की सुविधा, अन्य भाषा भाषी राज्यों में हिंदी, विदेश नीति में हिंदी, प्रशासन में हिंदी, विज्ञान क्षेत्र में हिंदी, संचार एवं सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी में हिंदी, विधि एवं न्याय

क्षेत्र में हिंदी और भारतीय भाषाएं, बाल साहित्य में हिंदी, हिंदी पत्रकारिता और संचार माध्यमों में भाषा की शुद्धता तथा देश-विदेश में प्रकाशन: समस्याएं व समाधान। इस अवसर पर श्री मोदी ने 'गगनांचल' नामक पुस्तिका का भी विमोचन किया। इस अवसर पर पुस्तक के लेखक श्री अशोक चक्रधर एवं श्रीमती सुष्मा स्वराज मौजूद थे। इस सम्मेलन में कई प्रौद्योगिक कंपनियों ने भी हिस्सा लिया था। इसमें कई विदेशी कंपनियां जैसे गूगल, एप्पल, माइक्रोसॉफ्ट, वेबदुनिया हिंदी के साथ-साथ कई भारतीय संस्थाएं जैसे सी-डेक, केंद्रीय हिंदी संस्थान, भारत कोश, राष्ट्रीय विज्ञान प्रसार केंद्र शामिल रहीं।

इस अवसर पर केंद्रीय गृहमंत्री श्री राजनाथ सिंह ने कहा, "हम जब 21 जून को योग दिवस मनाने के लिए दुनिया के 171 देशों का समर्थन प्राप्त कर सकते हैं तो हिंदी को संयुक्त राष्ट्र की आधिकारिक भाषा बनाने के लिए 127 देशों का समर्थन क्यों नहीं प्राप्त कर सकते।" अभी अंग्रेजी, फ्रेंच, स्पैनिश, रूसी, चीनी व अरबी संयुक्त राष्ट्र की आधिकारिक भाषाएं हैं। विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन की संकल्पना राष्ट्रभाषा प्रचार समिति, वर्धा द्वारा 1973 में की गई थी। समिति के तत्वावधान में प्रथम विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन 10-12 जनवरी, 1975 को महाराष्ट्र के नागपुर में आयोजित किया गया था। सम्मेलन का उद्देश्य इस विषय पर विचार-विमर्श करना था कि तत्कालीन वैश्विक परिस्थिति में हिंदी किस प्रकार से सेवा का साधन बन सकती है।

# A GLORIOUS PAST

As the 11th Vishwa Hindi Sammelan is organised in Mauritius in August, we look back at the previous edition of the festival and its significance

**M**ahatma Gandhi had once said, “The nation is dumb without the national language. I am of the opinion that Hindi can be the national language of India and should be.” To fulfil Gandhiji’s dream, over the years several steps have been taken to promote and popularise Hindi within India and also to focus on its importance internationally. Among these, the most prominent initiative has been

the World Hindi Conference. First organised in Nagpur in 1975, the Vishwa Hindi Sammelan (World Hindi Conference) is held once in three years and it has played a very important role in establishing Hindi’s prominence as a language of the masses and classes. This year, the event marks its 11th edition, and it is being organised in Mauritius, which has a large population of India-origin people and Hindi is a prominent language there. During the 10th Vishwa Hindi Sammelan, organised between September 10



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing the gathering at the 10th Vishwa Hindi Sammelan in Bhopal in 2015





PM Modi and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj felicitating those promoting Hindi at the 10th edition of the conference in 2015

and 12, 2015 in Bhopal, discussions were held on several aspects of promoting Hindi. The conference also led to a host of recommendations being made. The Government of India has decided to set up a review committee, which will analyse if these recommendations have been turned into actions and what steps have been taken in this direction to achieve the goals set in 2015.

The Bhopal edition, which focussed on “Hindi World: Expansion and Potential”, had Prime Minister Narendra Modi as its chief guest and was organised by the Ministry of External affairs, under the leadership of External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj. Several renowned Hindi scholars, including Dr Ashok Chakradhar were also present. The event also saw the participation of information technology companies like Google, Apple and Microsoft, which discussed the inclusion of Hindi in various people-friendly softwares and applications.

Speaking at the conference, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh addressed the issue of inclusion of Hindi as one of the official languages in the United Nations, “when India could manage 177 votes for the declaration of the International Day of Yoga, why can’t India manage 127 votes needed in the UN to get Hindi included as one of the official languages?”

The current official languages of the UN are English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Arabic. Since the first Vishwa Hindi Sammelan was held between January 10 and 12, 1975, 10 such conferences have been organised in different parts of the world. The concept of the conference was mooted by the Rashtrabhasha Prachar Samiti, Wardha, in 1973. The first edition of the conference was organised by the Samiti. The objective of the conference was to deliberate on how Hindi could become a medium of serving mankind in the prevailing environment.



विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन

मॉरीशस, 18-20 अगस्त, 2018

# ‘चलो मॉरीशस...’

हिंदी केवल एक भाषा नहीं अपितु अपने आप में संस्कृति भी है।

11वां विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन इसी भाव को परिलक्षित करेगा

लेख: डॉ. हरीश नवल

‘चलो मॉरीशस’ यह नारा ग्यारहवें विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन का प्रतीक नारा है जिसे दिया है स्वयं भारत की विदेश मंत्री स्वनामधन्या श्रीमती

सुषमा स्वराज ने। मॉरीशस में विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन तीसरी बार आयोजित होगा। सन 1976 में पोर्ट लुइस, मॉरीशस में दूसरा विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन और 1993 में पोर्ट लुइस, मॉरीशस में ही चौथा सम्मेलन सम्पन्न हुए थे।

...और अब ग्यारहवां सम्मेलन पुनः पोर्ट लुइस, मॉरीशस में आयोजित किया जा रहा है। ग्यारहवें सम्मेलन का आधार विषय ‘हिंदी विश्व और भारतीय संस्कृति’ तय किया है। हिंदी केवल एक भाषा नहीं, यह स्वयं में संस्कृति भी है। विश्व की सबसे अधिक बोली जाने वाली तीन भाषाओं में हिंदी का स्थान निर्धारित है। विश्व की कुल जनसंख्या में अनुमानतः 18 प्रतिशत हिंदी जानते हैं। विश्व में भारत के अतिरिक्त राज-काज या कार्यालयी भाषा के रूप में हिंदी का प्रयोग मॉरीशस, फीजी, सूरीनाम,





पोर्ट लुइस स्थित  
गंगातालाब पर  
वाराणसी की भाँति  
गंगा आरती का भव्य  
आयोजन किया जाएगा

गयाना, नेपाल आदि देशों में होता रहा है। विश्व के अनेकानेक देशों में हिंदी का प्रयोग व्यवसाय, शिक्षा, साहित्य या सांस्कृतिक सरोकारों के रूप में हो रहा है। ऐसे देशों में, कहा जाता है कि दो करोड़ से अधिक प्रवासी और आदिवासी भारतीय हैं जो इन प्रयोगों का दायित्व वहन कर रहे हैं।

हिंदी का सांस्कृतिक उद्घोष मॉरीशस के 'गंगातालाब' पर 17 अगस्त की संध्या से प्रारंभ हो जाएगा। विदेशी प्रतिभागियों के लिए वाराणसी से 'पूजा-प्रतीक' रूप में एक दिव्य उपहार भी प्रस्तावित है। 'गंगा-आरती' का आयोजन और रात्रि भोज मॉरीशस सरकार द्वारा होगा। शनिवार 18 अगस्त, 2018 को प्रातः 10 बजे 'दीप-प्रज्वलन' और वेदमंत्र पाठ से सम्मेलन का विधिवत 'शुभारंभ' स्वामी विवेकानंद अंतरराष्ट्रीय सभा केंद्र में होगा।

इसमें मंच पर भारत की विदेश मंत्री, अन्य मंत्रीगण आदि और मॉरीशस सरकार के उन्नायक उपस्थित होंगे। उद्घाटन सत्र में कुछ विशिष्ट लोकार्पण होंगे जिनमें सम्मेलन-स्मारिका, सरकारी पत्रिका 'गगनांचल' का सम्मेलन विशेषांक, मॉरीशस की हस्तलिखित पत्रिका 'दुर्गा' का प्रकाशित रूप, राजभाषा-विभाग (भारत सरकार) की पत्रिका का

विशेषांक सम्मिलित है। सूचना-प्रौद्योगिकी से संबद्ध क्या लोकार्पित होंगे, इसकी जानकारी तभी मिलेगी, समझ लीजिए जो होंगे अप्रतिम होंगे। इस जिज्ञासा को थामे रखिए।

ग्यारहवें विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन के परामर्शमंडल में माननीय विदेश मंत्री ने हिंदी के पांच हिंदीधर्मियों को मनोनीत किया है:- डॉ. अशोक चक्रधर, प्रो. गिरीश्वर मिश्र, डॉ. राम मोहन पाठक, डॉ. कमल किशोर गोयनका तथा डॉ. हरीश नवल। डॉ. हरीश नवल को परामर्शदाता मंडल का संयोजक घोषित किया गया है। इनके अतिरिक्त इस मंडल (समिति) में दोनों विदेश राज्य मंत्री माननीय डॉ. वी. के. सिंह और माननीय श्री एम. जे. अकबर, गृह राज्यमंत्री माननीय श्री किरन रिजिजू, सचिव (पूर्व) श्रीमती प्रीति सरन, संयुक्त सचिव (विदेश प्रचार) श्री रवीश कुमार तथा संयुक्त सचिव (हिंदी एवं संस्कृत) श्री अशोक कुमार भी होंगे।

सम्मेलन के लिए जो शुभंकर बना है, उसके लिए एक प्रतियोगिता की गई थी। भारत के राष्ट्रीय पक्षी मोर तथा मॉरीशस के राष्ट्रीय पक्षी डोडो का सहचर्य चयनित शुभंकर में चित्रित है जो सच्ची मित्रता का द्योतक है!



# ‘LET’S GO TO MAURITIUS’

The island nation is gearing up to make the 11th edition of the Vishwa Hindi Sammelan a mega success

**L**et’s go to Mauritius!” This is the slogan for the 11th Vishwa Hindi Sammelan, coined by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj. And the words seem to truly echo the popular sentiment in India, as Mauritius gets ready to host the prestigious conference to promote Hindi for the third time since the event’s inception more than a decade ago. The island country first organised the

conference in 1976 and then in 1993. The theme of the 11th edition, to be organised in Port Louis, Mauritius’ capital, on August 18 to 20, focusses on the theme of “Hindi World and Indian Culture”.

Hindi is not merely a language. It is a culture in itself. Hindi is among the top five most spoken languages in the world. Studies say approximately 18 per cent of the total world population uses Hindi. It is among





The scenic Ganga Talao at Port Louis, Mauritius

the recognised languages for official work in several countries, including Mauritius, Fiji, Suriname, Guyana and Nepal other than India. These countries have a sizeable population of Indian origin, who use Hindi in some form or the other. Over centuries, around two crore Indians have migrated to countries around the world and they have kept the language alive in their newfound homes.

The event at Port Louis will commence on the evening of August 17 at Ganga Talao. On Saturday, August 18, the conference will be inaugurated with the chanting of Vedic *shlokas* and a lamp lighting ceremony at Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre. The inaugural session will include the launch of several special editions of publications like *Gagananchal*, a Hindi journal published by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations and *Durga*, a magazine created by

the Raj Bhasha department, Government of India. Being organised under the aegis of External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, the festival is being planned and executed by a five-member committee, which includes Dr Ashok Chakradhar, Prof Girishwar Mishra, Dr Ram Mohan Pathak, Dr Kamal Kishore Goenka and Dr Harish Naval. Minister of state for External Affairs Dr VK Singh, minister of state for External Affairs MJ Akbar, minister of state for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju, secretary (East) Preeti Saran, joint secretary (External Publicity) Raveesh Kumar and joint secretary (Hindi and Sanskrit) Ashok Kumar will be other members of the advisory committee. A contest was organised to select the mascot of the conference. The imprint of the selected mascot shows coexistence of the Indian national bird peacock and the national bird of Mauritius, dodo; a symbol of true friendship!

# SOCHI SUMMIT

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Russia on May 21, 2018, where he met Russian President Vladimir Putin for an informal summit to discuss and exchange views on international and regional issues



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin greeting each other



**O**n May 21, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Russia on the invitation of Russian President Vladimir Putin. The two leaders met for an informal summit in the Black Sea resort city of Sochi.

On the occasion, PM Modi and President Putin exchanged views on international and regional issues, upholding the tradition of regular high-level political exchanges between India and Russia.

A statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India (MEA) states: “The two leaders agreed that the Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between India and Russia is an important factor for global peace and stability”. The relations between the two countries were elevated

to that of a Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership during President Putin’s visit to India in 2010.

Both leaders shared the view that India and Russia have an important role to play in contributing to an open and equitable world order. In this regard, PM Modi and President Putin recognised each other’s respective roles as major powers with common responsibilities for maintaining global peace and stability.”

**Both leaders shared the view that their countries have an important role to play in contributing to an open and equitable world order**



Prime Minister Narendra Modi receiving a warm welcome in Russia

### India and Russia recognised each other's respective roles as major powers with common responsibilities

“Russia is India’s old-time friend. We share long-standing historical ties. Mr President [Putin] is my personal friend and a friend of India,” the Indian Prime Minister said during the meeting. Turning to President Putin, he added, “For the past four years, you and I [have] stood side by side in the bilateral format and on the international stage. I am very glad that it [has been] so.”

#### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETING

Several important issues were addressed and several important points agreed upon during

the meeting. Both leaders engaged in an in-depth discussion on major international issues and agreed on the importance of building a multipolar world order.

“They decided to intensify consultation and coordination with each other, including on the Indo-Pacific region. PM Modi and President Putin also agreed to continue working together through multilateral organisations such as the United Nations, SCO, BRICS and G-20,” said the MEA statement.

The two leaders also communicated their deep concern about terrorism and radicalisation, and expressed their determination to combat the issue in all its forms and manifestations.

In this context, PM Modi and President Putin endorsed the importance of restoring peace and stability in Afghanistan, in an atmosphere free from the threat of terrorism.



PM Modi with President Putin during the informal summit





**Right to left:** PM Modi and President Putin shaking hands; The two leaders visiting the Sirius Educational Centre in Sochi

## PM Modi and President Putin welcomed the idea of holding informal Summits as an additional engagement at leadership level

They also agreed to work together towards achieving this objective.

### IMPORTANT DECISIONS TAKEN

During the meeting, the Indian Prime Minister and Russian President also took a few important decisions on certain matters of mutual concern. Both leaders agreed to institute a Strategic Economic Dialogue between NITI Aayog of India and the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, to

bring about greater synergy in trade and investment. "They noted with satisfaction, the expanding cooperation in the energy sector and, in this regard, welcomed the arrival of the first consignment of LNG under a long-term agreement between Gazprom and GAIL [in June]. The two leaders also reiterated the significance of a longstanding partnership in the military, security and nuclear energy fields and welcomed the ongoing cooperation in these areas," the MEA statement added.

The leaders also welcomed the idea of holding informal summits as an additional engagement at the leadership level, besides the Annual Summits already organised between them.

PM Modi has invited President Putin for the 19th Annual Summit to be held in India later this year.

# BUILDING BRIDGES OF PEACE

Marking a significant step forward in the bilateral relationship between India and China, Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited China from April 21 to 24 and April 26 to 28, respectively

BY S VENKAT NARAYAN

**W**hat happened in Wuhan in central China on April 27-28, 2018 is the stuff of history books. Leaders of two Asian giants - Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping - held an unprecedented informal summit in Mao Zedong's favourite holiday spot to plot a joint strategy for bettering the future of their 2.75 billion people, and the world at large. It was as if the dragon and the peacock had decided to dance together on the world stage!

The Wuhan summit was an effort to rebuild trust and improve ties which were hit by the

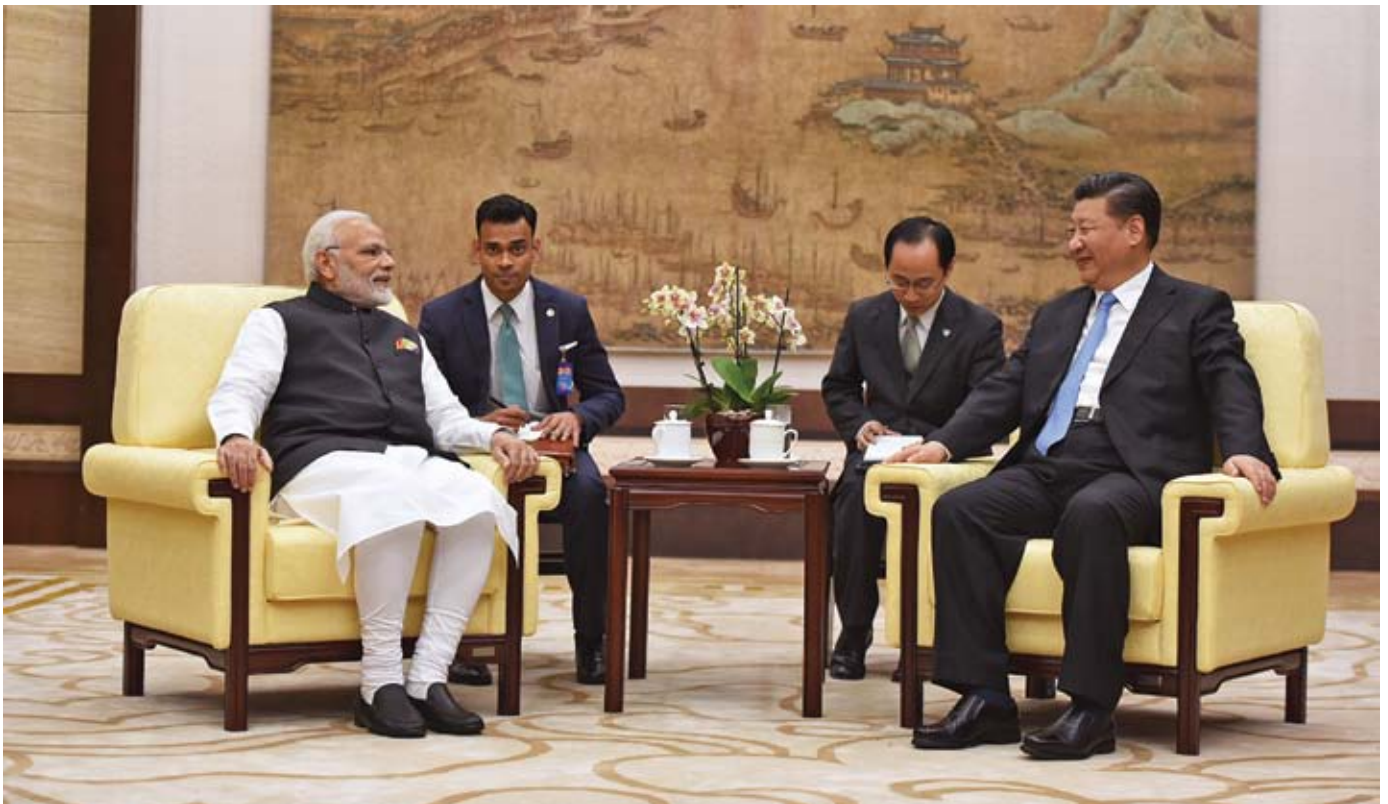
73-day-long Doklam standoff at the India-China-Bhutan trijunction last year. This was PM Modi's fourth visit to China and his 13th meeting with President Jinping since assuming office in May 2014. The former had hosted the latter in Mahatma Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad in 2014. In return, the Chinese president had hosted the Indian Prime Minister in his hometown, Xi'an, in China. The rapport built up over a series of meetings facilitated a smooth discussion.

Once PM Modi arrived for the visit, the leaders shook hands, posed for photographs and watched a cultural programme at the museum before heading for one-on-one meetings. They had four such interactions. Later, they held delegation-level talks accompanied by six top officials from each side. President Jinping also hosted a banquet for PM Modi at the state guest house by the famous East Lake.

The Indian Prime Minister recalled that India and China have been friends for over

**PM Modi invited President Jinping to visit India for the next informal summit in 2019. The latter readily accepted the invitation**





**Top:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi meeting Chinese President Xi Jinping at the East Lake Guest House in Wuhan on April 27; **Bottom:** PM Modi and President Jinping having a discussion at the Hubei Provincial Museum, Wuhan



**PM Modi said: “[As] India and China [move] towards peace...I see five very positive elements: thought, contact, cooperation, dreams [and] resolutions”**

2,000 years. And, together, they account for over 50 per cent of the global GDP (Gross Domestic Product). The two sides now have a “big opportunity” to work together for the benefit of their people and the world. Speaking at the delegation level talks, PM Modi said: “[As] India and China [move] towards peace...I see five very positive elements in it: thought, contact, cooperation, dreams [and] resolutions, which can become the strength of world peace and world prosperity.”

PM Modi thanked President Jinping for his invitation, saying that the two nations should strengthen dialogue, exchanges and cooperation, along with maintaining peaceful co-existence and ever-lasting friendship. He invited the Chinese President to visit India for the next informal summit in 2019. The latter readily accepted the invitation.

As the two largest developing countries and emerging economies in the world, India and China are stabilising factors in the international scenario. They should together make a greater contribution towards the peace, stability and prosperity of Asia and the world in the 21st century, both leaders held. Agreeing to maintain high-level strategic communication, they decided to stay in touch with each other.



**Top:** PM Modi and President Jinping admiring an ancient decorative bronze vessel at the Hubei Provincial Museum in Wuhan; **Bottom:** PM Modi and President Jinping enjoying a cup of tea while taking a boat ride at the East Lake in Wuhan





PM Modi and President Jinping exchanging a handshake

## **President Jinping said: “I look forward to in-depth communication [so that] we can build a common understanding”**

The Indian Prime Minister said that the two countries have a common concept, a common resolve and a common vision in developing bilateral ties, and suggested that the two sides strengthen contact and cooperation, enhance mutual understanding and trust, properly handle and control their differences and boost people-to-people friendship, so as to upgrade bilateral relations to a new level.

India firmly pursues an independent foreign policy and supports globalisation

and democratic international relations. It is ready to work with China towards promoting the common interests of all developing countries, PM Modi affirmed.

President Jinping, on his part, said: “I believe in the future we will meet in [a] format like this from time to time. I look forward to in-depth communication with [you, so that] we can build a common understanding and help to take the China-India relationship to the next level. The friendship between the two countries should continue to grow like the Yangtze and Ganges flowing forward!” he declared.

“International security is at a crucial period of adjustment. China and India are both important engines for global growth and we are central pillars for promoting a multi-polar and globalised world. A good China-India relationship is an important



and positive factor for maintaining peace and stability in the world,” he added.

China and India are both important repositories of global economic growth, as well as backbone forces for promoting multi-polarisation and economic globalisation. The trend of peace and development is irreversible. A sound India-China relationship is an important, positive factor for safeguarding

world stability, and means a lot to the development and progress of all human beings, he argued.

The two nations face similar tasks in their pursuit of development and rejuvenation, as socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, and the goal of building a “New India” has been proposed, the Chinese president said. In developing relations between major countries, China upholds strategic autonomy and insists on building a new framework for international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness, justice and cooperation, which are in line with the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence jointly

**EAM Swaraj affirmed that India is committed to consolidating and enriching SCO even further**





**Left:** Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj with the foreign ministers of SCO nations in Beijing; **Above:** EAM Swaraj during the SCO Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Beijing

## The EAM said: “We believe that economic globalisation should be more open, inclusive, equitable and balanced”

advocated by India and China as Panch Sheel in the 1950s, he pointed out.

Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj also visited China (April 21-24) to participate in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Foreign Ministers' Meeting on April 22, and to hold a bilateral interaction with China's state councillor

and foreign minister Wang Yi. Her meeting with the minister was part of the regular high-level engagements between the two nations. She affirmed that India is committed to consolidating and enriching SCO even further, and emphasised the government's commitment towards working with SCO for strengthening economic and investment ties in the region. “We believe that economic globalisation should be more open, inclusive, equitable and balanced for mutual benefits. Protectionism in all its forms should be rejected and efforts should be made to discipline measures that constitute barriers to trade,” she said.





---

# A SIGN OF THREE

Making three important international visits within five days, from April 16 to 20, 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has effectively strengthened the bilateral relations India shares with Sweden, the UK and Germany

**P** rime Minister Narendra Modi embarked on a series of visits on April 16, 2018, beginning with state visits to Sweden (April 16-17) and the UK (April 18-20), followed by a stopover at Germany (April 20). Besides holding bilateral discussions in the first two nations, he attended the India-Nordic Summit and Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Sweden and the UK respectively.

## SWEDEN

PM Modi made his first state visit to Sweden on the invitation of Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven. His was the first state visit to Sweden by an Indian Prime Minister in three decades. Arriving in Stockholm on April 16, he was accorded a warm welcome by PM Lofven at the airport. He had last met the latter on his visit to India in February 2016 to participate in the 'Make in India' Week in Mumbai.

**Left:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven

**Right:** PM Modi and PM Lofven interacting with children dressed in traditional Indian costumes at the Stockholm City Hall





## **PM Modi and PM Lofven laid special emphasis on establishing stronger economic relations between India and Sweden**

The two leaders held an extensive discussion on strengthening the bilateral ties between India and Sweden, with special emphasis on establishing stronger economic relations as well as addressing important global and regional issues. PM Lofven also hosted a special lunch for PM Modi, and a Joint Declaration on India-Sweden Innovation Partnership for a Sustainable Future was later signed between the two nations. The

two prime ministers also participated in a round-table meeting with nearly 30 CEOs of Swedish enterprises. On April 17, the Indian Prime Minister had an audience with Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf. He later addressed a gathering of select Swedish business leaders and also interacted with members of the Indian community in Sweden. This state visit has come at an opportune time, when the economic ties between India and Sweden have become considerably stronger. The annual bilateral trade between the two nations stands at around USD 1.8 billion.

During PM Modi's visit, the first India-Nordic Summit was also organised on April 17. Besides the Indian and Swedish prime ministers, the summit was attended



Prince Charles welcoming the Indian Prime Minister at the Science Museum in London





**Right:** PM Modi addressing the Indian community in the UK at an event titled 'Bharat Ki Baat Sabke Saath' in London

**Below:** PM Modi and UK's Prime Minister Theresa May attending the India-UK CEO Forum in London

by the prime ministers of all other Nordic nations: PM Lars Lokke Rasmussen of Denmark, PM Juha Sipila of Finland, PM Katrin Jakobsdottir of Iceland and PM Erna Solberg of Norway. PM Modi also held separate bilateral meetings with each of them on the day of the summit, discussing seminal bilateral issues and signing a series of important MoUs.

## THE UNITED KINGDOM

The Indian Prime Minister visited the UK as a Guest of Government on April 18, at the invitation of UK's Prime Minister Theresa May. During the course of the visit, the two leaders held extensive discussions on several issues of mutual interest, emphasising the "strategic partnership and growing convergence on regional and international issues" between the two nations, according to the joint statement released by MEA.





With an aim to reinforce the strategic partnership between India and the UK based on “shared values, common law and institutions”, it was emphasised that the two democracies are committed members of the Commonwealth and “share a global outlook and commitment to a rules-based international system that strongly opposes unilateral actions that seek to undermine that system through force or coercion”. The two leaders affirmed that they would work closely with other member nations

of the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth Secretariat as well as other partner organisations to address global challenges such as terrorism and climate change. PM Modi also attended the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in London from April 19-20. The CHOGM is organised every two years to discuss and shape the Commonwealth’s agenda for the next two years. Also held during this state visit was the India-UK CEOs Forum.





PM Modi with other heads of government at the formal opening of the CHOGM Summit in London

## **“A UK-India Technology Partnership is central to our joint vision and to our prosperity, today and for our next generations,” the joint statement said**

The primary focus of PM Modi's sojourn in the UK was the technology partnership between the two nations. The joint statement says: “A UK-India Technology Partnership is central to our joint vision and to our prosperity, today and for our next generations. Our nations are at the forefront of a technology revolution. We will share knowledge, collaborate on research, innovate and create partnerships between our world-class innovation clusters. We will deploy our complementary technological strengths to create high-value jobs, enhance productivity, promote trade and investment, and tackle shared challenges.”

### **GERMANY**

On German Chancellor Angela Merkel's invitation, the Indian Prime Minister made a brief stopover in Berlin, Germany after concluding his state visits to Sweden and the UK, on April 20. PM Modi and Chancellor Merkel held a meeting during the quick visit, and exchanged views on a number of regional, bilateral and global issues. This was the first meeting between the two leaders since the latter began her fourth term in March this year. It stands testimony to the commitment of the two nations towards maintaining the momentum of high-level exchanges.



# FRENCH CONNECTION

Marking 20 years of India and France's strategic partnership, French President Emmanuel Macron made a state visit to India from March 9 to 12, 2018



French President Emmanuel Macron and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Hyderabad House, New Delhi

**T**he India-France strategic partnership, established in 1998, is among the most important and comprehensive bilateral engagements in the world.

Characterised by regular high-level exchanges and founded on deep political understanding, it has ensured enduring cooperation in the fields of defence, security, space, energy and more. The two nations have also been working

together to address several issues of mutual as well as international concern, such as terrorism, climate change, sustainable development, smart urbanisation and youth exchange. With an aim to further strengthen the economic, political and strategic dimensions of the bilateral ties between the two nations, French President Emmanuel Macron, accompanied by his wife, Brigitte Marie-Claude Macron, made a state visit to India from March 9-12, 2018.

According to the joint statement released by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India (MEA), Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Macron held wide-ranging discussions on various subjects of mutual interest, underlining “the growing convergence between the two countries on regional and international issues”. This visit also marked the 20th anniversary of the India-France strategic partnership, and both leaders reaffirmed their commitment towards strengthening it based on the shared values of democracy, freedom, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

### **ON STRATEGY**

PM Modi and President Macron signed the “Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of France regarding the Exchange and Reciprocal Protection of Classified or Protected Information” in New Delhi, reflective of the depth of the strategic trust the two nations

share. They also emphasised the importance of cooperation in the maritime domain, especially in the Indian Ocean region. They stated that this is essential for the maintenance of safety in international sea lanes, unimpeded commerce and communications in accordance with international law, countering maritime piracy and terrorism, and bringing about “greater coordination in regional/international fora” in the region.

Regular joint military exercises were also emphasised, and the two prime ministers welcomed the successful conduct of the Varuna

**PM Modi and President Macron emphasised the importance of cooperation in the maritime domain, especially in the Indian Ocean region**



President Macron and his wife with Indian President Ram Nath Kovind, his wife, and PM Modi at Rashtrapati Bhavan



## **PM Modi and President Macron called on all countries in the world to work towards rooting out terrorist safe havens**

naval exercise and the Shakti army exercise held in France in April 2017 and January 2018 respectively. Both sides agreed to “maintain the operational quality level of these exercises in the future”, according to the joint statement.

### **ON TERRORISM**

Denouncing terrorism in all its manifestations, including cross-border terrorism and terror-related incidents in France as well as India, PM

Modi and President Macron recalled the joint statement on terrorism that had been adopted by the two countries in 2016 and reaffirmed their commitment towards eliminating terrorism from across the world. They also agreed that the international community needs to play a greater role in stemming the financing of terrorism, and welcomed the organisation of an International Conference on Fighting Terrorism Financing to be held in Paris in April 2018 by the French government.

### **ECONOMY AND EXCHANGE**

Acknowledging the good relations between India and France in the domains of economic cooperation, education, science, culture and tourism, PM Modi and President Macron signed



Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj calling on President Macron in New Delhi on March 10



PM Modi and President Macron inaugurating the 100 MWp solar power plant in Mirzapur on March 12

## The Indian Prime Minister and French President underlined the necessity of more youth exchange programmes between their nations

a bilateral partnership agreement on migration and mobility. According to the joint statement, this agreement will “facilitate student and professional mobility between France and India by simplifying the conditions for entry and long-term stay in the two countries”.

The two leaders stressed the significance of continued people-to-people exchange and underlined the necessity of more youth exchange programmes. To aid their vision, they welcomed the launch of the France-India Programme for the Future, a French initiative aimed at fostering youth exchanges.

On March 10, Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj called on President Macron to

discuss further enhancement of the strategic partnership between India and France in the domains of trade, investment, security, defence, culture, education and people-to-people ties.

## CLIMATE CONCERNS

Reiterating their commitment to leading the global fight against climate change based on the principles of “climate justice, fostering climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development”, both sides affirmed that they would fully implement the Paris Climate Agreement. They agreed to do so “as a part of an irreversible global process [of] combating climate change”.

PM Modi and President Macron jointly inaugurated a 100 MWp solar power plant in Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh, during the course of the visit, and welcomed the Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) coming into force, looking forward to co-hosting the ISA Founding Conference on March 11, 2018 in New Delhi.



# IN STEP WITH THE UNION

Undertaking productive visits to four nations in the European Union from June 17 to 23, 2018, Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj gave a boost to the momentum of high-level exchanges between India and EU



Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj with Henri Albert Gabriel Félix Marie Guillaume, Grand Duke of Luxembourg

**C**overing four nations in one trip, Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj made official visits to Italy, France, Luxembourg and Belgium from June 17 to 23, 2018. This European sojourn proved to be immensely significant with respect to several aspects of India's foreign policy, and provided avenues for a series of important exchanges and dialogues on a wide range of bilateral, regional and global issues. All four visits together served as a step towards strengthening India's strategic relations with the European Union.

#### **ITALY**

Marking the first major political exchange between India and Italy since the swearing in

of Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte in June 2018, EAM Swaraj arrived in Italy on June 17. On her agenda in Rome were a meeting with PM Conte and another with Italian foreign minister Enzo Moavero Milanesi. During her meeting with the Italian Prime Minister, EAM Swaraj reiterated India's commitment towards strengthening bilateral relations with Italy. According to a press release disseminated by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India (MEA), she also stressed that the two nations need to continue to work together and "coordinate positions in multilateral forums". The two leaders agreed to identify new areas of cooperation, especially within the economic sphere. In her discussions with the Italian foreign minister, EAM Swaraj highlighted the need to build a wide-ranging partnership in



EAM Swaraj meeting Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte



areas such as trade and commerce, culture, science and technology, and people-to-people exchanges. The two ministers also welcomed celebrations in both countries marking 70 years of diplomatic ties between India and Italy.

### FRANCE

Following up French President Emmanuel Macron's state visit to India in March 2018, The Indian External Affairs Minister visited France from June 18 to 19. Meeting her French counterpart, Jean-Yves Le Drian, she put forth her views on subjects of mutual and international interest as the two nations also marked two decades of strategic partnership. She also called on President Macron to convey the personal greetings of Indian President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Some of her other engagements in France during the visit included attending a

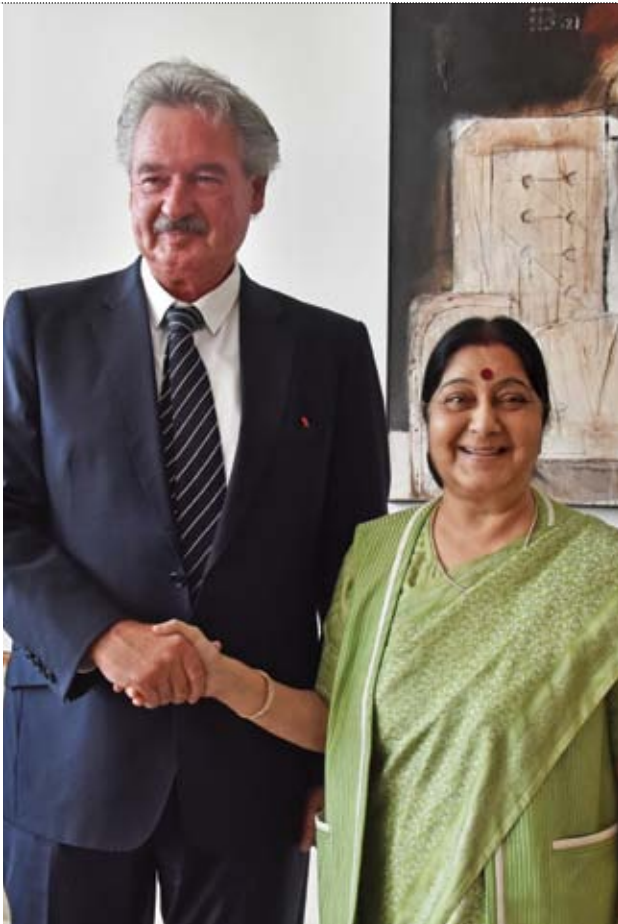
ceremony to name the Indian Culture Centre after Swami Vivekananda as the chief guest, visiting Maison de l'Inde, a hostel for Indian students in the International University City in Paris, and attending an Indian community reception at the Embassy of India in the city.

### LUXEMBOURG

EAM Swaraj's visit to Luxembourg was significant as the first ever state visit to the country by an Indian external affairs minister. Her agenda from June 19-20 included meeting the Grand Duke of Luxembourg Henri Albert Gabriel Félix Marie Guillaume and interacting with Luxembourg's Prime Minister Xavier Bettel. She also had meetings with the nation's foreign minister Jean Asselborn and finance minister Pierre Gramegna. Acknowledging investment and trade as the foundation of India and Luxembourg's enduring diplomatic relations, which complete 70 years in 2018,



**Right to left:** EAM Swaraj at Maison de l'Inde, a hostel for Indian students in the International University City in Paris; EAM Swaraj meeting French President Emmanuel Macron



**Right to left:** EAM Swaraj shaking hands with the foreign minister of Luxembourg, Jean Asselborn; EAM Swaraj with Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission

## **EAM Swaraj acknowledged investment and trade as the foundation of India and Luxembourg's diplomatic ties**

EAM Swaraj discussed with PM Bettel the importance of enhancing commercial ties between India and the European Union, along with digital and space cooperation.

### **BELGIUM**

Concluding the series of visits with Belgium, the Indian External Affairs Minister arrived on June 20 in Brussels, the headquarters of the European Union. Her agenda till June 22 included meetings with Didier Reynders, the

Belgian deputy prime minister and foreign minister, Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission, Antonia Tajani, president of the European Parliament, and her counterpart Federica Mogherini, high representative of the European Union for foreign affairs and security policy and vice president of the European Commission. Some of her other engagements included delivering the keynote address at an event organised by the European External Action Service titled 'Climate, Peace and Security: Time for Action' and leading the celebrations of the fourth International Day of Yoga on June 21 at the European Parliament. Over 200 people, including several members of the European Parliament, the European Commission as well as the Indian community in Belgium, attended the latter.



# FORGING A DEEPER FRIENDSHIP

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to Nepal (May 11 to 12, 2018) stands testimony to the strong and friendly bilateral relationship the two neighbouring nations share



Nepalese Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli welcoming Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of the delegation level talks in Kathmandu



PM Modi being welcomed at the Ceremonial Reception in Kathmandu on May 11

**M**arking the first high-level visit from India since the formation of the new government in Nepal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a two-day state visit to the country from May 11-12, 2018. “Although I have had [a] very old connection with Nepal, this is my third visit to [the country] as [India’s] Prime Minister. This clearly reflects how deep [the Indian government’s] commitments are towards Nepal and India-Nepal relations,” PM Modi said in a press statement in Kathmandu on May 11, adding, “India’s relations with Nepal are familial and friendly, [and] stand on the strong foundations of mutual and deep relationships between [the] people.” This visit was in line with the tradition of regular high-level exchanges between the two neighbouring

nations. Nepalese Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli had also made a state visit to India in April this year.

PM Modi and PM Oli held delegation level talks on the first day of the visit, in an atmosphere of cordiality and warmth. Recalling their previous meeting in New Delhi, during the Nepalese Prime Minister’s visit to India, they reaffirmed their commitment to undertaking effective measures for the implementation of all agreements, as well as all bilateral initiatives in the areas of agriculture, railway linkages and inland waterways development. “I consider our cooperation in inland waterways particularly important. Nepal should not be land-locked, but rather land-linked and water-linked,” PM Modi affirmed in the press statement. “Our agriculture ministers will meet soon and will work



### **“Nepal should not be land-locked, but rather land-linked and water-linked,” Prime Minister Narendra Modi affirmed in his press statement**

on preparing a roadmap for cooperation in agricultural research, agricultural education and agricultural development. [A] survey for [the] new railway link between Raxaul and Kathmandu will start soon. And to further strengthen our relationship in trade and investment, we will [soon conduct] a comprehensive review of the Treaty of Trade,” he added. The Indian Prime Minister also called on Nepalese President Bidya Devi Bhandari.

### **ECONOMIC COOPERATION**

The two leaders also discussed the expansion of their partnership for socio-economic development in both countries, based on the principles of mutual trust and benefit, equality and respect. Talking about the trade and economic ties between India and Nepal, the joint statement released by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India states that PM Modi and PM Oli “welcomed the outcome of the recently held Inter-Governmental Committee meeting on Trade, Transit and Cooperation to control unauthorised trade [and] jointly initiate a comprehensive review of the bilateral Treaty of Trade, and to consider amendments to the Treaty of Transit and related agreements with a view to further facilitating Nepal’s access to the Indian market, enhancing overall bilateral trade, and facilitating Nepal’s transit trade.”



PM Modi meeting  
Nepalese President  
Bidya Devi Bhandari



PM Modi visiting the Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu on May 12

## The two leaders acknowledged the importance of people-to-people contact in maintaining and enhancing friendly bilateral ties

### PEOPLE MATTER

The two leaders also highlighted “the catalytic role of connectivity in stimulating economic growth” as well as promoting the movement of people between the neighbouring nations. They acknowledged the importance of people-to-people contact in maintaining and enhancing friendly bilateral ties. Resolving to “take further steps to enhance the economic and physical

connectivity by air, land and water”, PM Modi and PM Oli directed officials to expand cooperation in the civil aviation sector. They also called for an “early technical discussion on additional air entry routes to Nepal by [the] technical teams [of both nations]”.

### CULTURE CIRCUIT

With a view to strengthen the cultural ties between India and Nepal, the two prime ministers launched the Nepal-India Ramayana Circuit bus service during the visit. The circuit connects Janakpur in Nepal, believed to be the birthplace of Sita, with Ayodhya in India, as well as other sites associated with the Indian epic Ramayana. PM Modi and PM Oli flagged off the inaugural direct bus service between Janakpur and Ayodhya on May 11.



# ACT EAST

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visits to Indonesia (May 29 to 31, 2018) and Singapore (May 31 to June 2, 2018) marked a step towards strengthening India's Act East Policy

**T**he primary objective of India's Act East Policy is to enhance economic, cultural and strategic ties with countries in the Asia-Pacific region through sustained engagement at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. Upholding this objective, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to three countries in the region - Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore - marked a decisive step in strengthening India's strategic relationship with each of the three ASEAN nations. While Indonesia and Singapore hosted PM Modi for official state visits, his stopover at Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia included a brief yet insightful encounter with the country's newly elected prime minister, Dr Mahathir Mohamad.



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi being welcomed at a community event in Indonesia on May 30, 2018. He is wearing a shirt that bears a traditional Indonesian print



**Above:** PM Modi with Indonesian President Joko Widodo; **Left** (top to bottom): PM Modi and President Widodo holding delegation level talks at Istana Merdeka in Jakarta on May 30, 2018; The Indian Prime Minister being welcomed by Indonesian children in Istana Merdeka, Jakarta

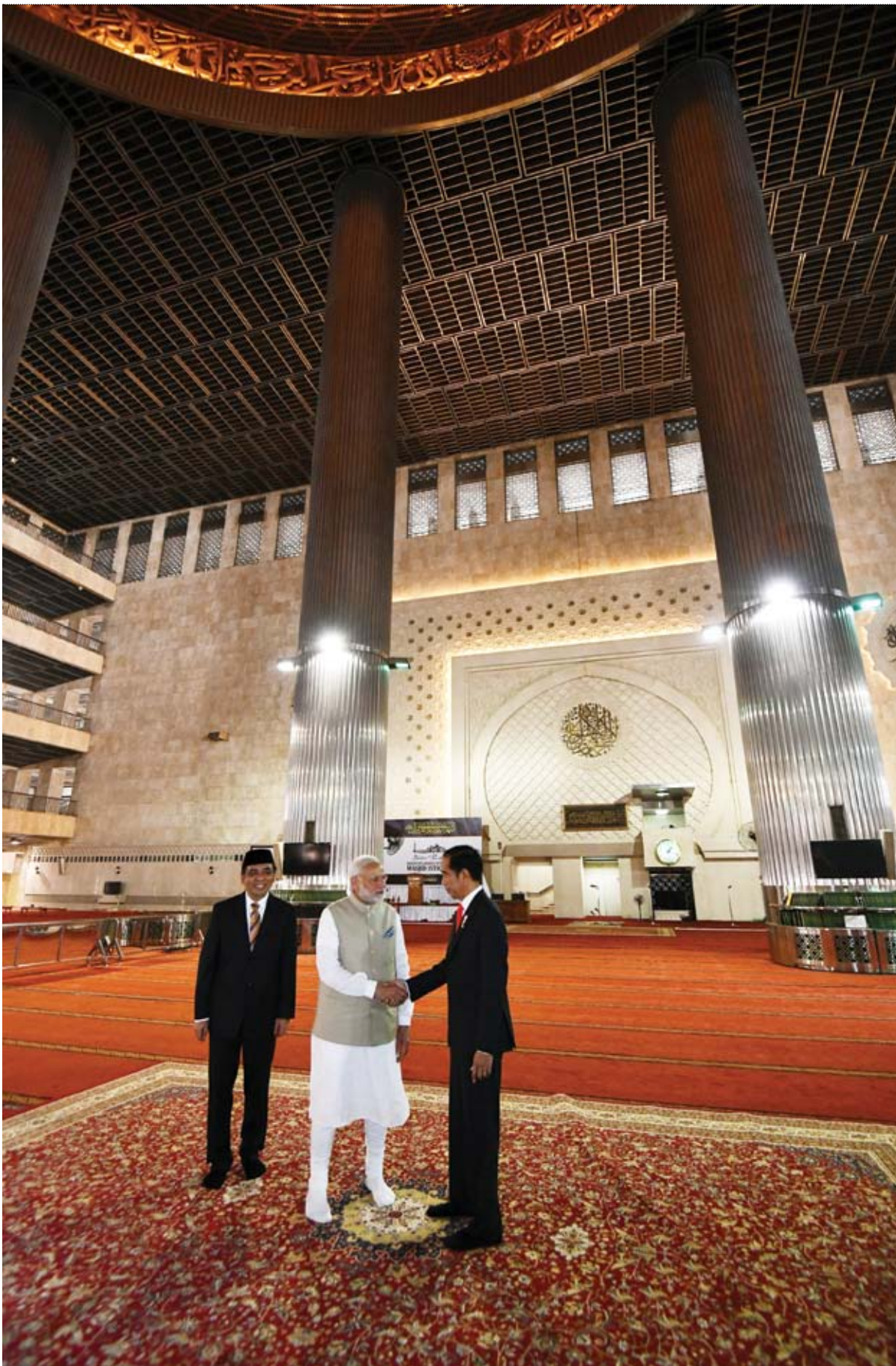
## INDONESIA

PM Modi arrived in Indonesia on May 29 for his first official visit to the country, on the invitation of Indonesian President Joko Widodo. His agenda for the visit included a bilateral meeting with President Widodo, followed by a delegation-level meeting between the two nations. The meeting with the Indonesian President occurred within a cordial atmosphere, where both leaders held extensive discussions on important bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest and determined the road ahead towards enhancing the strategic ties between India and Indonesia. It was agreed upon to conduct regular Annual Summit meetings, including interactions on the margins of multilateral events.

According to the joint statement released by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India (MEA), the Indonesian President and the Indian Prime Minister also welcomed the adoption of the “Shared Vision on Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region between India and Indonesia”. They expressed the belief that the cooperation between the two countries in the maritime sector can be further enhanced and also

**PM Modi and President Widodo stressed their commitment to sustained cooperation in the field of defence**





PM Modi and President Widodo visiting Istiqlal Mosque, the national mosque of Indonesia and the largest mosque in South East Asia





PM Modi departing from Kuala Lumpur after his stopover in Malaysia, escorted by Malaysia's deputy prime minister Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (right)

## It was agreed upon to conduct regular Annual Summit meetings, including interactions on the margins of multilateral events

serve as a source of stability in the region at a larger level. They welcomed the growing strategic ties between India and Indonesia in areas such as politics, defence, security and economy, and “agreed to strengthen cooperation in all areas by establishing a New Comprehensive Strategic Partnership to take Indonesia and India’s bilateral relationship into a new era.”

With the signing of the Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA) between the two nations, President Widodo and PM

Modi stressed their commitment towards sustained cooperation in the field of defence. Looking forward to the Sixth Joint Defence Cooperation Committee in August 2018, they also agreed to build “mutual trust through regular meetings and staff talks between armies, navies and air forces of the two countries”.

In the economic sphere in particular, the two leaders emphasised the need for early conclusion of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and instructed relevant officials to work towards strengthening cooperation between India and ASEAN to establish mutually beneficial trade relations between the two entities. Highlighting the importance of infrastructure development, President Widodo also acknowledged India’s contribution to Indonesia’s economy.





The Indian Prime Minister and Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong during a meeting in Istana on June 1, 2018

### SINGAPORE

The Indian Prime Minister and Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong held a bilateral meeting on June 1. At the outset of the meeting, both leaders expressed their satisfaction over the healthy progress of bilateral relations between India and Singapore since the signing of the Joint Declaration on a Strategic Partnership during PM Modi's previous state visit to Singapore in November 2015. They also

expressed their commendation for the armed forces of both nations, for sustaining annual exercises, goodwill visits and professional exchanges, looking forward to the 25th edition of SIMBEX, the bilateral annual naval exercises.

Acknowledging the cooperation between India and Singapore in regional as well as international fora, the two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation in the, World Trade Organisation, the United Nations, Indian Ocean Rim Association, Non- Aligned Movement, Commonwealth and related forums, and other regional cooperation mechanisms. One of the primary agendas of PM Modi's state visit

**“Today, we are being called to rise above divisions and competition to work together,” PM Modi said**

PM Modi delivering his keynote address at the Shangri La Dialogue on June 1, 2018



### Highlights from PM Modi's keynote address:

- “The destiny of the world will be deeply influenced by the course of developments in the Indo-Pacific region.”
- “Our ties with Japan – from economic to strategic – have been completely transformed. It is a partnership of great substance and purpose that is a cornerstone of India's Act East policy.”
- “We will start a new tri-lateral exercise with Singapore soon and we hope to extend it to other ASEAN countries.”
- “ASEAN represents the greatest level of diversity of culture, religion, language, governance and prosperity of any grouping in the world.”
- “Back home, our principal mission is transforming India to a New India by 2022, when Independent India will be 75 years young.”

## PM Modi and PM Loong highlighted cooperation between India and ASEAN to establish mutually beneficial trade relations

to Singapore was to deliver the keynote address at the Shangri La Dialogue on June 1, 2018. During his speech, he highlighted the importance of Singapore in India's foreign policy, saying: “Singapore is our springboard to ASEAN. It has been, for centuries, a gateway for India to the East.” Talking about building a comprehensive agenda of regional cooperation through the Indian Ocean Rim Association, he added, “We also work with partners beyond the Indian Ocean Region to ensure that the global transit routes remain peaceful and free for all.” In line with the

spirit that lies at the heart of India's Act East Policy, the Indian Prime Minister affirmed that India's growing engagement with South East Asia is underlined by the objective of forging deeper economic and defence cooperation in the region. “This is a world of inter-dependent fortunes and failures. And, no nation can shape and secure [them] on its own,” he asserted, highlighting the importance of maintaining peace and stability as a larger goal for the East as a unit. He added, “The Indo-Pacific is a natural region. It is also home to a vast array of global opportunities and challenges. I am increasingly convinced with each passing day that the destinies of those of us who live in the region are linked. Today, we are being called to rise above divisions and competition to work together... Inclusiveness, openness and ASEAN centrality and unity, therefore, lie at the heart of the new Indo-Pacific.”



# FRUITFUL DIALOGUE

Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj made a state visit to South Africa from June 3 to 7, 2018 and marked 25 years of diplomatic ties between the two countries



Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj departs for India after her five-day visit to South Africa

**O**n the afternoon of June 3, 2018, Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj arrived in Johannesburg, South Africa. The purpose of her five-day visit was to attend the BRICS Foreign Ministers meeting in Pretoria and also to chair a meeting of IBSA Foreign Ministers. She received a warm welcome at Johannesburg from South Africa's minister of international relations and cooperation, Luwellyn Landers. The year 2018 is important for India-South Africa relations as it marks 25 years of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two nations.

## **BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS**

On the first day of her visit, EAM Swaraj called on South African President Cyril Ramaphosa. The latter fondly recollected his meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Commonwealth Summit. According to a statement released by the Ministry of

External Affairs, Government of India (MEA), EAM Swaraj also mentioned how 2018 marks the 100th birth anniversary of iconic South African leader Nelson Mandela, as well as the 125th anniversary of the Pietermaritzburg incident where Mahatma Gandhi was evicted from the first class compartment of a train. Their discussion addressed several areas of bilateral cooperation such as skill development, agriculture and information technology.

## **MEETING WITH BRICS MINISTERS**

On her second day, EAM Swaraj attended the second BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Pretoria, where she met Lindiwe Sisulu, South Africa's minister of international relations and cooperation, who chaired the meeting; Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov; Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi; and the Brazilian foreign minister, Marcos Bezerra Abbott Galvao.

According to the MEA release, the ministers "exchanged views on current issues of global



EAM Swaraj delivering her address at the commemoration dinner for the 125th anniversary of the historic event at Pietermaritzburg Railway Station

## **EAM Swaraj stated that the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting was aimed at setting the groundwork for the 10th BRICS Summit**

significance in political, security, economic, financial and sustainable development spheres, as well as intra-BRICS cooperation." All the ministers and dignitaries also reaffirmed their resolve to foster a global economic governance architecture that would be more effective and reflective of the global economic landscape that is currently prevailing. This will also enhance the voice and representation of emerging markets and developing economies.

In her statement during the opening session of the meeting, EAM Swaraj said, "In less than

two months from now, our leaders will meet in Johannesburg for the 10th BRICS Summit. Our deliberations today are, therefore, significant in preparing the groundwork for a successful Johannesburg BRICS Summit."

### **IBSA FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING**

On the same day, EAM Swaraj also attended the informal meeting of IBSA Foreign Ministers. It was attended by South African foreign minister Sisulu and Brazilian foreign minister Galvão.

At this meeting, the official dignitaries exchanged views on development cooperation and South-South cooperation. As per the MEA release, "The ministers adopted and jointly released the IBSA Declaration on South-South Cooperation, to contribute to greater understanding of development cooperation as a common endeavor of the Global South."





# A PITCH FOR CAMARADERIE

Glitz, glamour and thrill aside, the Indian Premier League is also about bringing together different cultures and belief systems, and fostering passion for the game

BY HARBHAJAN SINGH

It is indeed true that the Indian Premier League (IPL) has transformed Indian cricket, since its inception in 2008. Having now played each of its 11 seasons so far, I can talk endlessly about its benefits. But let me tell you, instead, a story about the 2011 edition which, I believe, was a landmark.

While the Mumbai Indians didn't win IPL that year, the tournament went a long way in improving my relationship with an Australian cricketer - Andrew Symonds. There's a history involving Symmo (as he is affectionately called) and myself, as most cricket enthusiasts will already know. We were engaged in an altercation during a Test match in Sydney, in 2008. There was a lot of bad blood and mistrust.

In 2011, Symmo was acquired by the Mumbai Indians and we had to share the same dressing room. There was a lot of speculation about how we would get along. To everyone's delight, things went off smoothly. We were able to leave all baggage from that incident behind, and play for a common cause - to win matches for our team. We went out for dinners and had some

Cricketers from the Kolkata Knight Riders team congratulate bowler Jacques Kallis for taking a wicket during an IPL match in Kolkata



One of the most significant things IPL has done for Indian cricket is that it has given unknown players a chance to play for the Indian cricket team

**Virender Sehwag**  
Indian cricketer

”



IPL is as hard and competitive as international cricket. It has not only helped Indian cricketers, it has helped all cricketers around the world

**Sachin Tendulkar**  
Indian cricketer

”





One of the things that make IPL unique is that cricket fans get to experience all aspects of the game in fast forward

**Sunil Gavaskar**  
Former Indian cricketer

”



You learn about different cultures, languages, food habits, likes and dislikes for the seven weeks of IPL every year. You play for 40 overs, but make friends for life

**Harbhajan Singh**  
Indian cricketer

”

heart-to-heart chats too. It felt good and made us more comfortable with each other.

This, for me, is what IPL is all about – building bridges and strengthening relationships with international players. For an outsider, IPL may be more about glitz, glamour and money, but from where I'm looking, it is a veritable melting pot where cricketers from different parts of the world are brought together for a common cause. You learn about different cultures, languages, food habits, likes and dislikes for the seven weeks of IPL every year. You play for 40 overs, but build friendships for life.

How else would you explain why the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru reverberates with chants of “ABD...ABD...” when the mercurial AB de Villiers comes out to bat against India in a Test match? This comes from the enormous amount of popularity he has gained in the country over the years, playing for the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB). IPL is literally the only platform where you would find

Fans cheer in the stands during an IPL match between the Rajasthan Royals and the Delhi Daredevils in Jaipur





**Left to right:** Cricketer Mohammad Sami with Delhi Daredevils coach Ricky Ponting during an IPL practice session; AB de Villiers celebrates with Amit Mishra during an IPL match between the Deccan Chargers (now Sunrisers Hyderabad) and the Delhi Daredevils

## **IPL is not only about cricket or entertainment. It is about ‘cricketainment’, a marriage of both**

Australian legend Ricky Ponting giving batting tips to India’s Under-19 cricket captain Prithvi Shaw at the Delhi Daredevils nets. I have even seen young Englishman Sam Billings try to pick Mahendra Singh Dhoni’s brains at the Chennai Super Kings nets.

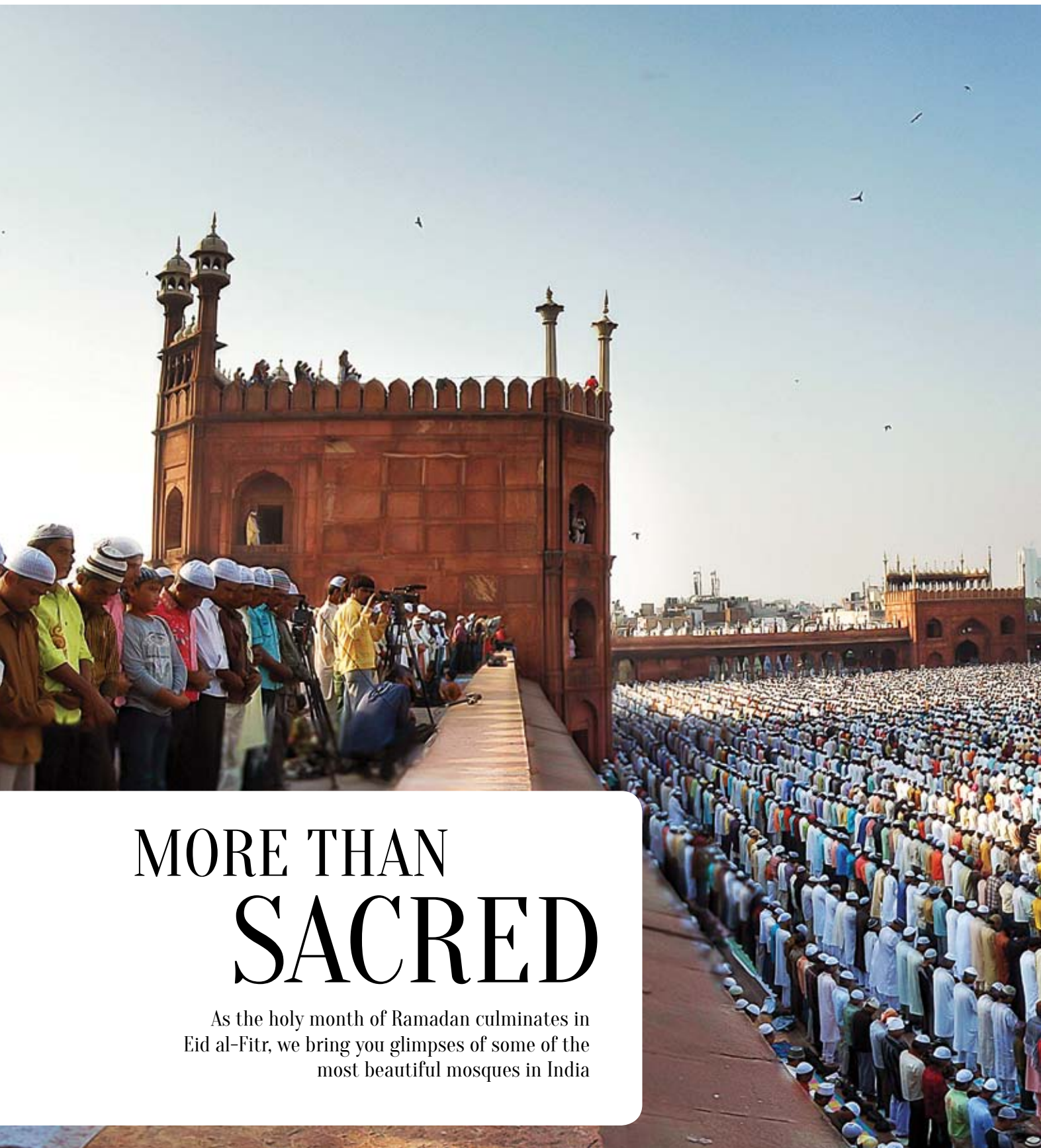
Gone are the days when cricket was a game for the elite, with classifications like Gentlemen (the elite class) and Players (working class) as they existed in the United Kingdom during the 20th century. At IPL, you see an auto rickshaw driver’s son (Mohammed Siraj of Hyderabad) and an LPG cylinder delivery man’s son (Rinku Singh from Aligarh) turn into millionaires overnight by sheer merit, skill and talent.

This is also a tournament that has helped India build stronger bonds with our neighbouring countries such as Afghanistan

and Nepal. India has always shared a good relationship with Afghanistan and IPL has been a means to tap into the talent of Afghan cricketers. Rashid Khan is now a household name in India for his IPL performances. In this year’s edition, 17-year-old Mujeeb Zadran, who was spotted by the franchise’s talent development wing, enthralled Indian crowds with his crackling performance. After all, IPL is not only about cricket or entertainment. It is about ‘cricketainment’ – a marriage of both.

Another thing IPL has successfully done is bringing in a new crowd that loves to live on the edge, romancing with the thrill of the game. For them, the soaring sixes and rattling stumps are more appealing than traditional Test matches. With more than 100 Test matches under my belt, I remain a purist at heart, but I can’t ignore the fact that the next generation wants a different kind of entertainment. They want to watch their favourite sports stars in action for three hours and be given pure entertainment after a hard day’s work. IPL gives them exactly that, and they aren’t complaining. It is truly here to stay.





# MORE THAN SACRED

As the holy month of Ramadan culminates in Eid al-Fitr, we bring you glimpses of some of the most beautiful mosques in India









**Vizhinjam mosque, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala** (above): Nestled in a tiny fishing village about 2 km away from Kovalam, this mosque is a perfect combination of quaint and vibrant.

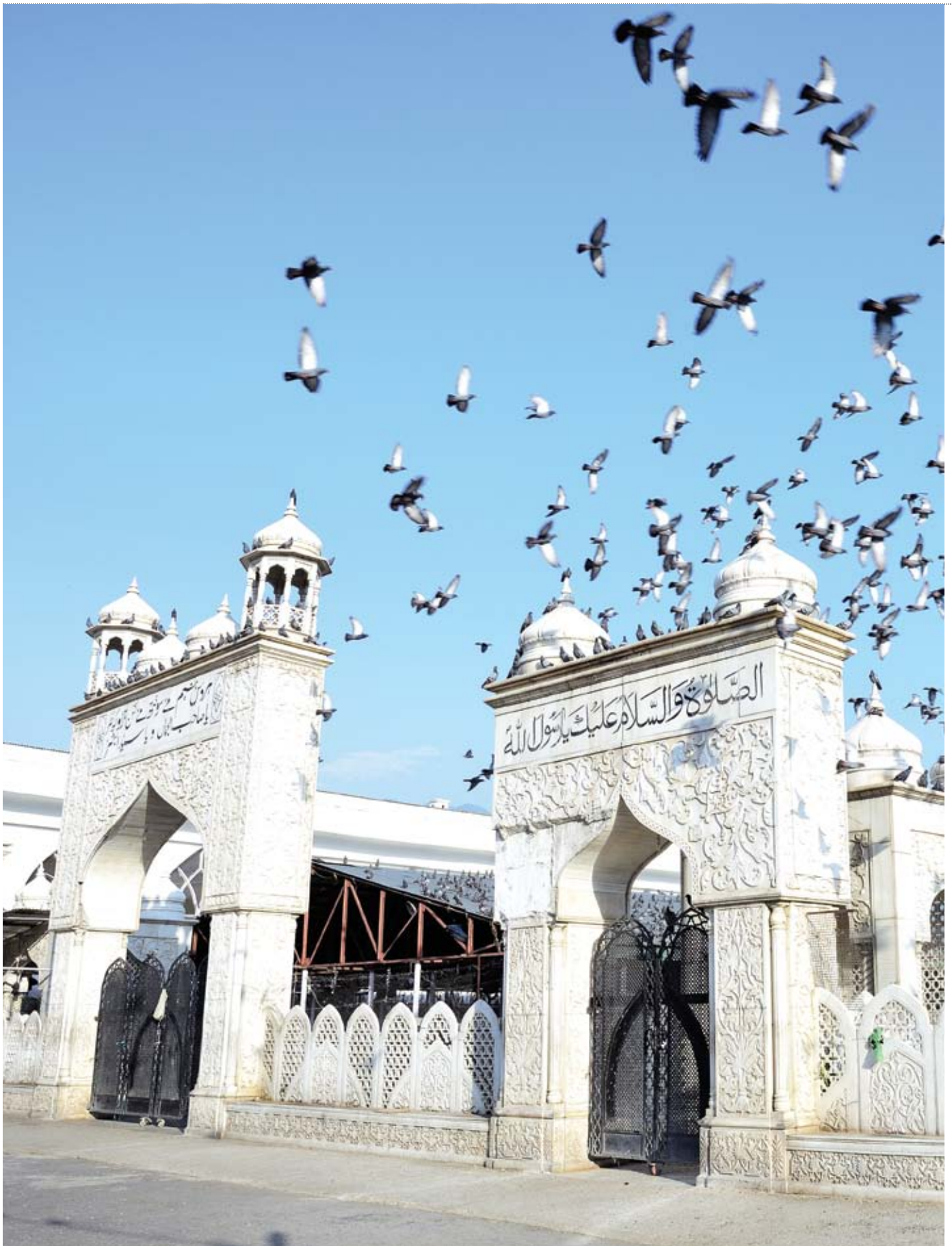
**Asafi Mosque, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh** (right): Located within the compound of the iconic Bara Imambara, the Asafi Mosque matches the popular monument with its grandeur as it towers above visitors in all its glory.















**Mecca Masjid, Hyderabad, Telangana** (above): Located adjacent to the Charminar, this mosque, built with local granite, is one of the largest of its kind in India.

**Hazratbal, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir** (left and right): Along the banks of Dal Lake stands this pristine white mosque, believed to house a hair from the beard of Prophet Muhammad.











**Jama Masjid, New Delhi:** The largest mosque in India, the Jama Masjid can accommodate up to 25,000 people in its courtyard alone! The mosque remains the final extravagance of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, who began building it in 1644 AD. Highly decorative in its architectural style, it has three gates, four towers and two minarets that have been constructed using red sandstone and white marble. In these photographs, devotees are seen beside the ablution pool in the courtyard, some of them washing their hands and feet with the water as part of a cleansing ritual before prayer.



# IN THE HEART OF KALINGA

From ancient temples and vibrant artists' villages to beautiful beaches and lip-smacking seafood, here's why Odisha should be your next vacation destination

BY MADHULIKA DASH

Scholar and traveller Hiuen Tsang had once said, "The thing about Calingae (Kalinga, as Odisha was known then) is you find a newness in every single lane, even those you have traversed before." Centuries later, British official John Beames was inspired by historical accounts like Tsang's to travel to the state. After spending several months exploring Odisha's treasures, he is believed to have termed it "the most fascinating hidden secret of the great Indian soil".

Today, Odisha remains a land of untouched natural beauty and ancient mysticism even as it embraces modernity at its finest - Bhubaneswar, the capital, is now a Smart City, in line with the Prime Minister's Smart Cities Mission launched in 2015. With a wealth of artistic and cultural practices, some of the most beautiful temples in the country and a radiant old-world charm in its every bylane, the state gives you plenty of opportunities to escape the city crowd and be truly rejuvenated. After all, where else would you find the largest brackish water lake in



The famous Sun Temple of Konark







## If you're lucky, you might chance upon award-winning sand artist Sudarshan Patnaik at Chandrabhaga Beach

Asia (Chilika Lake), an assortment of pristine beaches, fascinating hot springs (Taptapani), wildlife (Simlipal, Bhitarkanika, Nandan Kanan) and even an ancient Buddhist monastery (Biswanath Hill)!

### THE GOLDEN TRINITY

Not only is the state's capital a gateway to its beating heart, but Bhubaneswar is also, in many ways, a mini-Odisha. Also known as the "temple city of India", it is home to hundreds of temples and offers every traveller an interesting paradox: the historic Old Town thrives alongside the new planned Smart City, both resonating with Bhubaneswar's dynamic spirit in perfect

harmony. Flanked by Dhauli on one side and Udaygiri, the largest Buddhist complex in Odisha, on the other, it is also near Nandan Kanan, India's first zoo and botanical garden to join the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, in 2009. If history is among your interests as a traveller, the city boasts several fascinating museums dedicated to handicrafts, tribal culture and even palm leaf manuscripts dating back to the medieval period.

A roughly two-hour drive from Bhubaneswar takes you to Konark, where you can visit the iconic Sun Temple. Considered one of the finest representations of Odisha's temple architecture, it was once described by author and poet Rabindranath Tagore thus: "Here, the language of stone surpasses the language of man." Embark for the temple town of Puri from here, but not before you've taken a walk along Chandrabhaga beach nearby - a quiet, pristine haven of sun and sand where you'll find fewer tourists than most beaches in the state. As if



**Left:** Sand artist Sudarshan Patnaik with one of his masterpieces

**Right:** Two boys enjoy a pony ride on the beach at Puri



## MUST-DOS



### Seafood on the beach

The beach at Puri has many an activity on offer, from camel rides to pony rides and more, but you must not forget to sample some seafood at any of the stalls by the beachside



### Wildlife spotting at Chilika Lake

The hills and sandy stretches surrounding Chilika Lake abound in cheetals, blackbucks, monkeys, fishing cats, mongoose, porcupines and great egrets



### Gupchup in Cuttack

If you're a lover of *gol gappas*, you can't miss Odisha's signature version of India's favourite street delicacy: spicy, tangy and thoroughly satisfying!



## ODISHA IN THREE DAYS

Although it's impossible to cover an entire state in such a short span of time, you can certainly catch a few memorable glimpses!

### Day 1

Arrive in Bhubaneswar in the morning and head for Lingaraj temple. After a quick breakfast of *bara* (fermented lentil fritters), *chop* (batter coated potato balls) and *guguni* (a spicy lentil), explore the temple and then make your way to Dhauligiri and Khandagiri. This will consume an entire day.

### Day 2

Drive to Chandrabhaga Beach early in the morning, stopping at Pahala en route to try some *chhena* (cottage cheese) sweets. Take a nice, relaxing walk and then head to the sun temple at Konark. Make your way to Puri for lunch. You can choose to either spend the rest of the day exploring the temple town or spend a few hours there and head to Raghurajpur to interact with its artisans. If you're lucky, you might even get to watch a *gotipua* performance.

### Day 3

You can spend a blissful day at Chilika Lake, admiring its breathtaking natural beauty and also sampling some great seafood cooked with minimal use of oil and spices. For more information visit: [odishatourism.gov.in](http://odishatourism.gov.in)

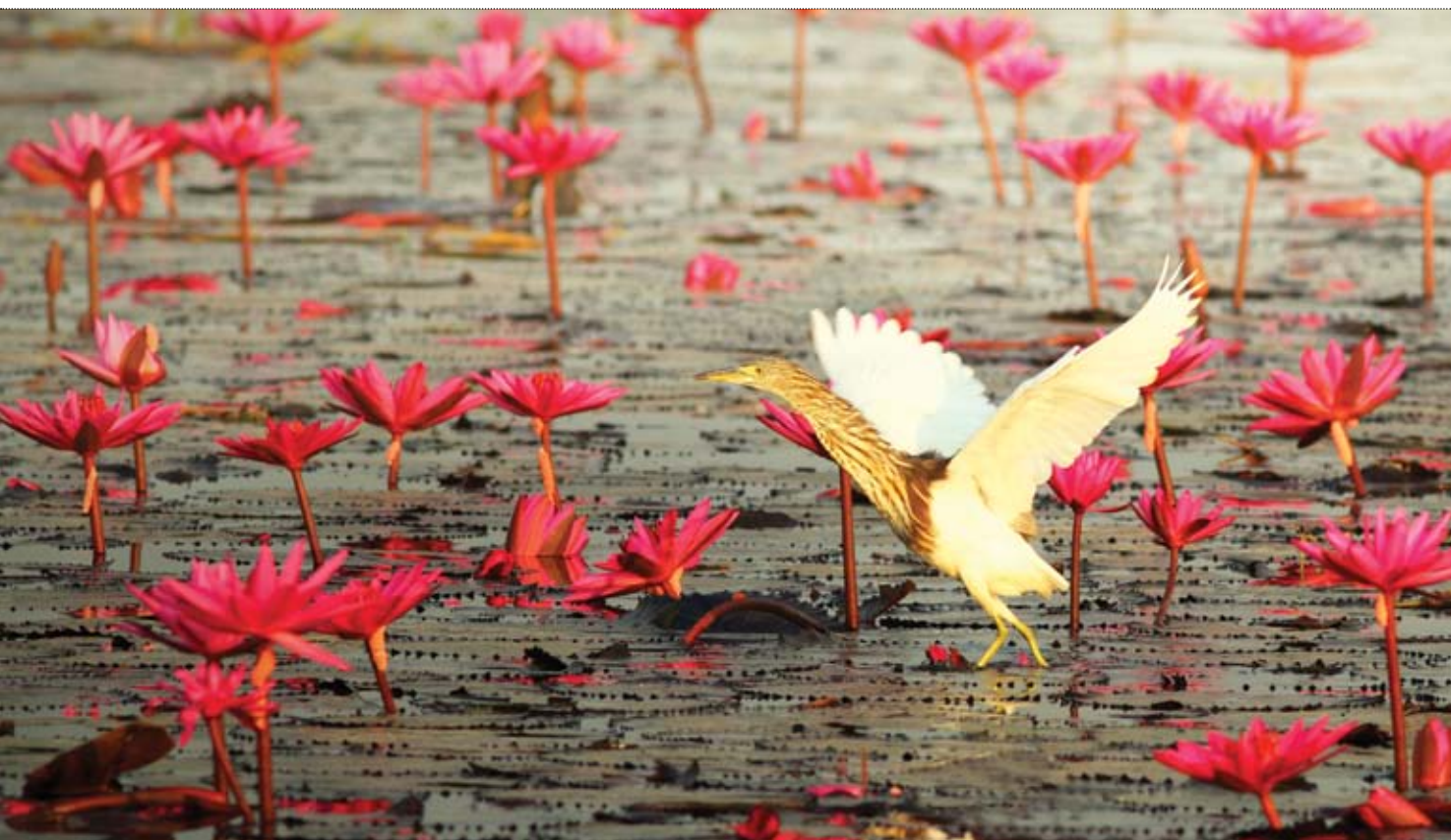
that weren't alluring enough, if you're lucky, you might even chance upon award-winning sand artist Sudarshan Patnaik, labouring away at one of his thought-provoking masterpieces.

No trip to Odisha can be complete without at least a day spent in Puri. Explore the magnificent temple of Lord Jagannath here, pay your respects to the resident deities and gorge on some *khaja* immediately outside its premises - a crispy flour-based treat that panders to the whims of anyone with a sweet tooth!

What makes a visit to Puri even more worth your while are the destinations en route, if you're driving from Bhubaneswar or Konark. Pipli, a small hamlet known for its unique appliqué work, is a must-visit, for instance. Closer to Puri, there is also Raghurajpur, an artists' village inhabited by hundreds of craftspeople who preserve and promote the state's most exquisite art and craft forms. The village is particularly renowned for its *pattachitra*, which translates literally into a painted cloth. With vibrant colours applied by skilled artists on fabric such as *tussar* silk, each piece draws upon mythological episodes to depict figures such as

An artist painting a *pattachitra* in Raghurajpur





A great egret (a migratory bird) near Chilika Lake

## Raghurajpur is home to hundreds of craftspeople who preserve the state's most exquisite art forms

Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra. Another unmissable hotspot en route is Brahmagiri. A quaint little village, it is home to the shrine of Baliharachandi. Legend has it that prayers were offered here during the shrine's heydays for the safe return of warriors and sailors.

### SUSPENDED IN TIME

One of the best ways to experience Odisha's local charm is to spend a few hours roaming the streets of Cuttack. Roads bustling with cycle rickshaws, cars and auto rickshaws in more or less equal proportion and bylanes animated by cheerful people going about their day, it is a busy city enveloped in the garb of an old

town. Home to the Barabati Stadium - with a splendid array of streetfood right outside - Cuttack is also the city that gave the state its ultimate streetfood delicacy: *dahi bara-aloo dum*, a deep-fried dough cutlet smothered in yoghurt, served with a spicy potato preparation. If you crave some retail therapy, hop over to the silver filigree market and buy yourself some exquisitely crafted silver trinkets, for a fairly reasonable price.

### ODE TO WILDERNESS

Thanks to its largely untouched forest expanse, Odisha has some of the country's finest wildlife reserves that attract migratory birds, the Irrawaddy Dolphin (Chilika) and even the Olive ridley sea turtle (Gahirmatha Turtle Sanctuary). Every year, the Simlipal National Park welcomes the ruddy mongoose, flying squirrel, black turtle and monitor lizard! The Satkosia Tiger Reserve, sprawled along a magnificent gorge over River Mahanadi, is also a must-visit.





# LYRICAL IDENTITY

From fun parody rhymes to hard-hitting contemporary poetry,  
rapping in India has come a long way

BY AARTI KAPUR SINGH

It was a chilly November night and I was on the grounds of a college in Chandigarh, in the midst of a huge crowd that had come to watch Raftaar, a leading name in India's contemporary rap scene. As I watched the Kerala-born and Delhi-raised artiste rap in chaste Punjabi, his every antic meeting with wild applause, I realised that desi rap has finally come into its own.

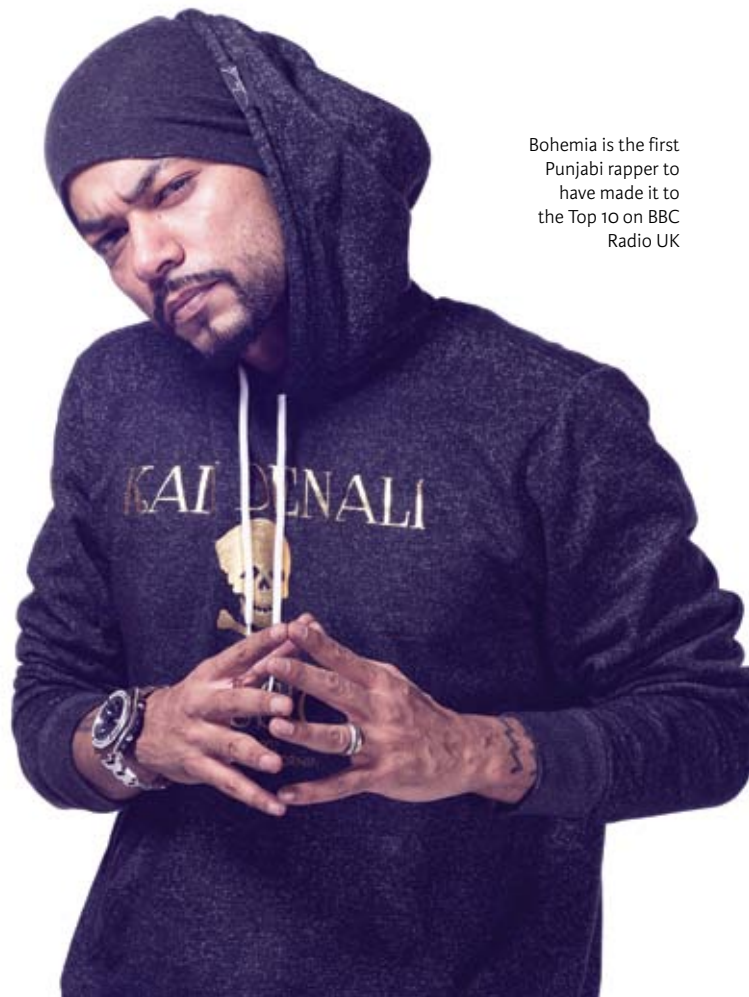
The first time we switched on our televisions and heard Baba Sehgal sing *Thanda Thanda Pani*, no one knew he was rapping - perhaps not even Sehgal himself. "I belonged to a middle-class family and had come from Lucknow to Mumbai. My father had given me six months to fulfil my dreams. When I heard a song called *Ice Ice Baby*, the melody just clicked with me and I recreated it with my own story. The record label told me it would never sell and I asked them to release it without paying me a penny," recalls Sehgal, who became a pop culture legend soon after.

Several others like Stylebhai, Blaaze and Devang Patel followed. Giving the genre a more fusion feel, UK-based Indian rapper Apache Indian belted out a series of hits during the 1990s. Despite the popularity, however, rapping still seemed like a big risk, and there weren't many takers within the industry. While it was already a widely

appreciated genre in the West, it remained an unconventional route to stardom in India.

As an art form, rap had originated in Africa and the US as a medium of protest, giving a voice to those at the margins of society. But what exactly is rap today? Is it still a form of protest poetry? Raftaar says, "The full form of rap is 'rhythm and poetry'. You fit an entire story into a two-minute bar. And it is a story about what you see and hear around you."

Bohemia is the first Punjabi rapper to have made it to the Top 10 on BBC Radio UK



**As an art form, rap had originated in Africa and the US as a medium of protest, giving a voice to those at the margins of society**





**Top to bottom:** Baba Sehgal; Raftaar; Hard Kaur

## The rap wave that emerged during the 90s is now seeing a resurgence with Punjabi rap music making it to the mainstream

The rap wave that emerged during the 90s is now seeing a resurgence with Punjabi rap music making it to the mainstream. The credit for this, to a great extent, goes to artistes like Bohemia, the first Punjabi rapper to make it to the Top 10 on BBC Radio UK with his very first album, *Vich Pardesan De* (2002). It was also because of his influence that an underground band called Mafia Mundeer began to emerge from the shadows. The members of this band are today wielding the torch of desi rap in India - Honey Singh, Badshah, Raftaar, Ikka and more.

“When I started rapping in 2003, there were only a handful of people writing their own rhymes,” Raftaar recalls, adding, “in the beginning, very few people had listened to Western rappers like Tupac Shakur or NWA. There was no source of inspiration and rap was just about rhyming and fun. Today, rap is being understood as a serious art, focussed on storytelling and poetry.”

In 2007, Hard Kaur emerged as India's first female rapper and broke a lot of stereotypes. “I have been doing rap for 20 years. Initially, rap was just fun and music, and then it was about people's personal experiences. Later, it began to be used to talk about social and political issues. Sure, there is a more frivolous kind of rap too, but it's ultimately about what you choose to listen to. For serious rappers, the form is about having and expressing an identity of their own.”

Bohemia believes that rapping is an expression of personal and social evolution.



Prabh Deep

His poetry, for instance, serves as a constant reminder of his roots. “People like Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Mirza Ghalib are my icons and most of my poetry is inspired by them. For example, in one of my songs, I talk about ‘going beyond the stars’, the idea of which is from Allama Iqbal’s *‘Sitara Se Aagay Jahan Aur Bhi Hain’*.”

Perhaps the greatest shift that has occurred as part of rap’s resurgence in popular culture, is the emergence of underground, indie rap that tackles aspects of social reality mainstream rap doesn’t always touch. Prabh Deep, a 23-year-old rapper from Delhi who has been drawing attention for socially-conscious rhymes, documents life in the alleys of West Delhi’s Tilak Nagar in gritty, realist detail. He represents the rap that is being reclaimed by the streets, back to its rawest and truest form – just the way it was meant to be.

## RAP FOR A STATEMENT



### Khasi Bloodz

An indie rap collective from Meghalaya, their poetry is born out of the issues affecting the youth in their city, Shillong



### ALLOK

Kannada actor and rapper Alok Babu, or AllOK as he is known, uses rap to promote Kannada culture and language



### Raja Kumari

Her poetry and her look make a statement about who she is: a fusion of cultures, with mixed Indo-American heritage





# A WALK TO REMEMBER

Scattered across India are historical and cultural treasures that merit more than a cursory glance. Heritage walks in different states are introducing travellers to many of them anew. We bring you glimpses of four that you must experience

BY MADHAVI KAPOOR





**Left to right:** The facade of a colourful house in Kashmir; A mosque along the heritage walk from Patthar Masjid to the shrine of Khanqah-i-Mualla in Kashmir; A house in Kashmir



**E**ven as some of India's most iconic landmarks continue to draw travellers from across the world, hidden across its vistas are treasure troves of history that are waiting to be explored. Curated by a bevy of organisations today, heritage walks are gaining a lot of popularity in the country. Introducing people to unseen facets of various cities, boasting rich cultural and architectural heritage, they are enabling them to see more of the India they are already proud of, in all its glory.

### **KASHMIR, JAMMU & KASHMIR**

Kashmir has about 12 heritage corridors. But the one that encapsulates the art, culture, heritage and architecture of the state most evocatively begins from the historic Patthar Masjid, near River Jhelum, and concludes at

the shrine of Khanqah-i-Mualla. "The 18th-century Patthar Masjid was built by Noor Jehan and stands tall today as a symbol of power," says walk leader Taha Mughal, who leads us across the old Zaina Kadal bridge, one of the seven scenic bridges over River Jhelum constructed by king Zain-ul-Abidin. The Jhelum ghat is one of the best places to view the local architecture from. "The homes here are the finest examples of Kashmir's architecture and also reflect colonial influences. The structures are built using the construction system of *dhajji dewari*, which consists of a braced timber frame in different patterns. The gaps between the frames are filled with stone or brick masonry traditionally laid into mud mortar. This technique is said to make the structures earthquake resistant," Mughal adds.





**Left to right:** The Jahangir Mahal in Orchha, Madhya Pradesh; The Mahakavi Bharathiyar Memorial Museum in Puducherry

### ORCHHA, MADHYA PRADESH

The quaint town of Orchha in Madhya Pradesh is laden with stories. It is believed to have been the second capital of the Bundelkhand dynasty and was founded by its first king, Rudra Pratap Singh. Nitin Kumar Khare, the walk leader, shares that one of the highlights of a heritage walk in Orchha is Jahangir Mahal, an ornate palace built in honour of Mughal emperor Jahangir. With several exquisite arches and domes, it was built by Bir Singh Deo sometime during the 17th century. As I am led through it by the walk leader, it becomes for me a maze of steep staircases, mysterious passages and intricate lattice windows.

Another must-visit along the walk are the Chhatris, or the 14 royal cenotaphs built in honour of Orchha's kings. A walk across the shallow water gets me an endearing glimpse of local life, as people bond over the washing of clothes and indulge in cheerful banter.





The view from Mawphlang sacred forest, Meghalaya

## PUDUCHERRY

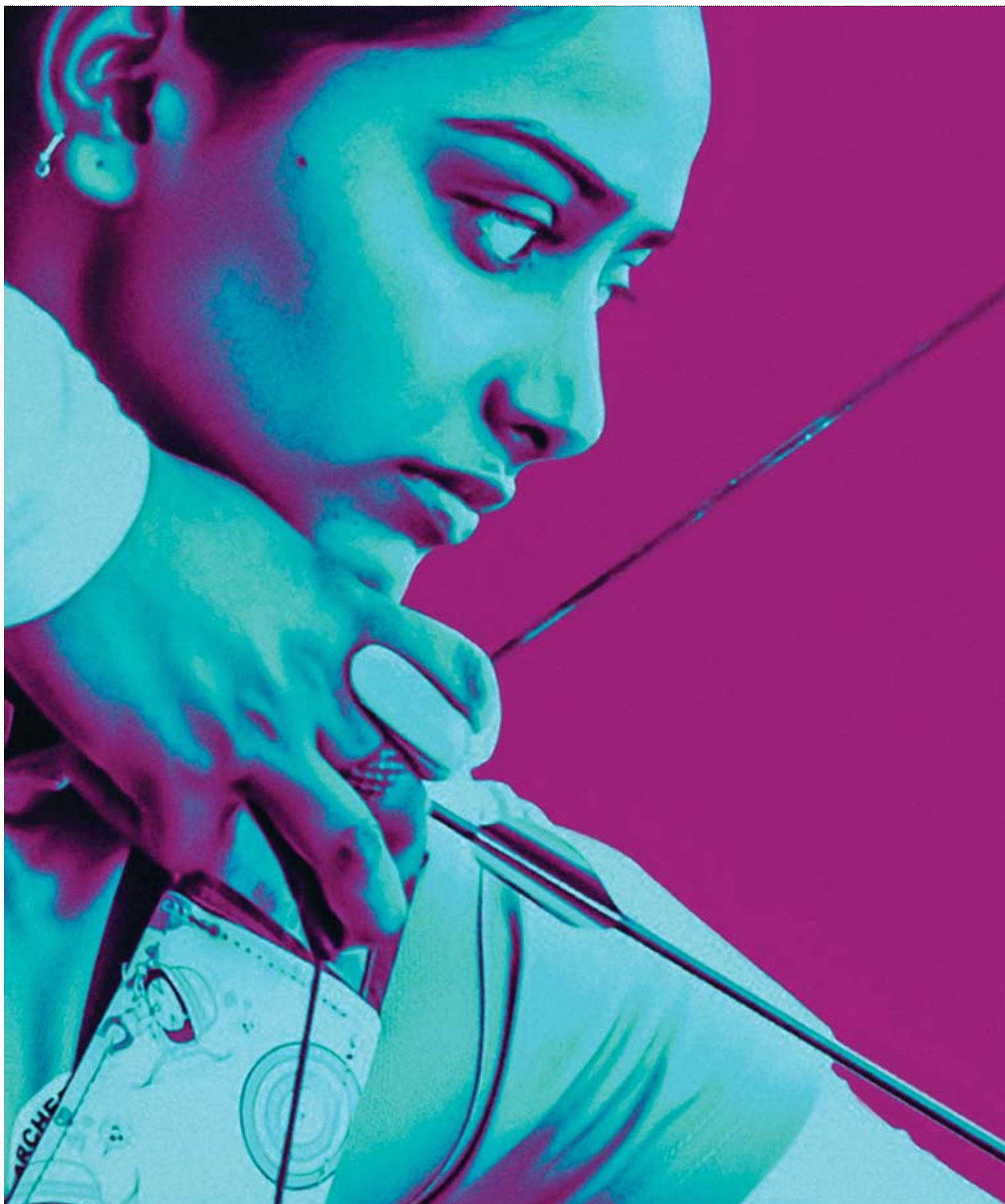
Hundreds of people walk in and out of the Easwaran Dharmarajan Koil Street in Puducherry every day. But few among them are aware of its significance. This is the same street where poet Subramania Bharati, one of the pioneers of the Independence movement from South India, lived and worked for several years.

Lata Iyer, the walk leader, tells us: “The reason I conduct this heritage walk is to familiarise people with Bharati and Bharathidasan, two of the most venerated figures of South India. People walk past Bharati’s house daily without knowing that it is the centre from where he gave a clarion call for India’s freedom struggle and composed some of his best verses. He also inspired his student, Bharathidasan, who sang of social justice, equality and the eradication of poverty.” Bharati’s last known residence in Puducherry has been renovated to house the Mahakavi Bharathiyar Memorial Museum, which sheds light on Bharati’s life and work.

## MAWPHLANG, MEGHALAYA

Did you know that tucked away amidst the lush green foliage of the Khasi Hills in Meghalaya, lies a forest that has been considered sacred by natives for centuries? The Mawphlang Sacred Forest, located approximately 25 km from Shillong, is a haven of flowering trees, exotic orchids and vibrant butterflies. Naphibahun Lyngdoh, a Shillong-based walk leader, tells me that it might also be home to sacred beings. “It is believed that this forest is the abode of *U Ryngkew U Basa*, its guardian spirit or protective deity,” he says. A few minutes later, I step beyond the green veil into a space of peace and untouched, untrammelled wilderness. Harming the trees in any way is a taboo here – nature holds tremendous significance in Khasi culture and the spirit of conservation is embedded as deeply in the lifestyle of the natives as it is in the thriving forest I see around me. As Lyngdoh tells me more, I wonder how many more such secret treasures there are in India, scattered across its landscape.





# COURAGE FIRST

A glimpse behind the scenes of *Ladies First*, a documentary on top-ranked Indian archer Deepika Kumari that has been making waves at international film festivals

BY AEKTA KAPOOR

**O**n Women's Day this year, a different sort of 'wonder woman' film made it to the screens of Netflix viewers around the world. Unaided by visual effects, the heroine displayed superhuman capabilities nevertheless; she broke through the shackles of poverty and the limiting circumstances of her gender and birth, and made it to the international sporting stage. The protagonist was Deepika Kumari, India's gold medal-winning archer at the Commonwealth Games, an Arjuna Award winner and Padma Shri, who had to first fight extreme hardships and challenges in her hometown of Ranchi, Jharkhand, before she could be a part of Indian sporting history.

The 39-minute documentary film was *Ladies First*. And the couple who made

Deepika the star of her own film and an international icon, was husband-wife duo Uraaz Bahl and Shaana Levy Bahl.

A sports buff, Uraaz had first come across Deepika Kumari's name while watching the 2012 Olympics. "Since Deepika didn't win, there was not a lot of media coverage about her," he recalls. "But as the Rio Olympics 2016 approached, I remembered her talent and looked her up." That's when he discovered the archer's inspiring journey - from being born by the roadside to winning gold at the age of 16, and becoming world number one! "I knew I had to tell her story," he says. He shared the idea with Shaana, who recalls: "I understood immediately that this was not about archery, or winning or losing - this was much bigger than any of that. Her story could inspire a lot of



## Besides Deepika Kumari's sports training, the film also delves into Jharkhand's culture and social fabric

women and athletes in India.” The couple then contacted the Tata Archery Academy in Jharkhand, where Deepika was training for the Rio Olympics. The archer was wary at first, since she had had negative experiences with the media earlier and did not want any disruptions to her schedule. “But once she realised we just wanted to document her life and training, the barriers came down and we developed a close bond of trust,” Uraaz shares.

The filmmakers followed the athlete's journey for three years, staying discreet and working around her needs and timings. “We

wanted her to win more than anything, and the last thing we wanted was for the cameras to throw her off!” Shaana says and adds that they opted for a Netflix release over cinemas because they wanted to make the film more accessible to a global audience.

As a first-time director, Uraaz not only had to face his own set of challenges in narrating a powerful real-life story, he also faced personal moments of frustration at the injustices he witnessed in the process. “The obstacles that athletes like Deepika have had to face in the past really angered me,” he says. Besides her sports training, the film also delves into Jharkhand's culture and social fabric. “Now, after having made *Ladies First*, my dream is to contribute more significantly to sports in India and help more talented athletes flourish on the world stage,” he affirms.

Terming the project “a little film with a big heart”, he is overjoyed with the



Deepika Kumari (centre) poses with her gold medal with Alison Williamson of England (left) and Dola Banerjee of India (right) at the Delhi 2010 Commonwealth Games



Deepika Kumari pumps her fist after winning the gold medal in the Individual Women's Recurve Archery at the Delhi 2010 Commonwealth Games

response *Ladies First* has received from the Indian as well as international media. After the film's release, the 23-year-old archer visited Shanghai and was inundated with compliments from coaches and players about how inspirational the film had been for them. She is still in touch with Uraaz, who makes sure he speaks to her every week.

Shaana also recalls instances of mothers thanking her for making the film: "After watching the film, they agreed to send their daughters to a swimming class they had been longing for, or signed them up to play a sport of their choice! It really reinforced the power of storytelling as an incredible tool and catalyst for change," says the producer, who believes that sport can be used to reduce the vulnerability of girls and provide them with the opportunities and skills required to negotiate life's transitions. "I am proud to have been able to share Deepika's spirit and story with the world."



*Ladies First* talks about my life as an archer, but it also shows many other shades of my life. It is a story of...things we do and the struggle surrounding them

Deepika Kumari  
Archer

”



The response to the film really reinforced the power of storytelling as an incredible tool and catalyst for change

Shaana Levy Bahl  
Producer

”









# THE FLAVOUR OF SPICE

The big four among Indian spices – cumin, coriander, turmeric and chillies – come with fascinating narratives of their own. We give you a peek into what makes them quintessentially Indian, no matter where their origins lie

BY MARRYAM H RESHII

**T**he story of spices is more or less the story of Indian cuisine itself, with its myriad riffs, as it meanders from one state to another; from one community to another. While some spices integral to Indian food today trace their origins to other countries, they have found a permanent home in the many regional cuisines that together weave the nation's vibrant culinary tapestry. Every household has a space for them on its kitchen shelves, and some of them also figure at the heart of Ayurvedic treatments and remedies for toothaches, muscular spasms, cold, cough, indigestion and more. The four most widely used spices in India are cumin, coriander, turmeric and chillies. Though they can be used





**Above** (left to right): Cumin; Red chilli powder

singly just as well, all four are frequently used together as the base of several gravy preparations, as well as in stir-fries.

### **CUMIN**

One of the oldest spices recorded in history, cumin is believed to have originated in Egypt, and to have been in use in various parts of the world over 5,000 years ago! Today, not only is it used across India but also figures

**There is no vegetarian-compliant ingredient whose umami quotient is as high as dark roasted cumin**

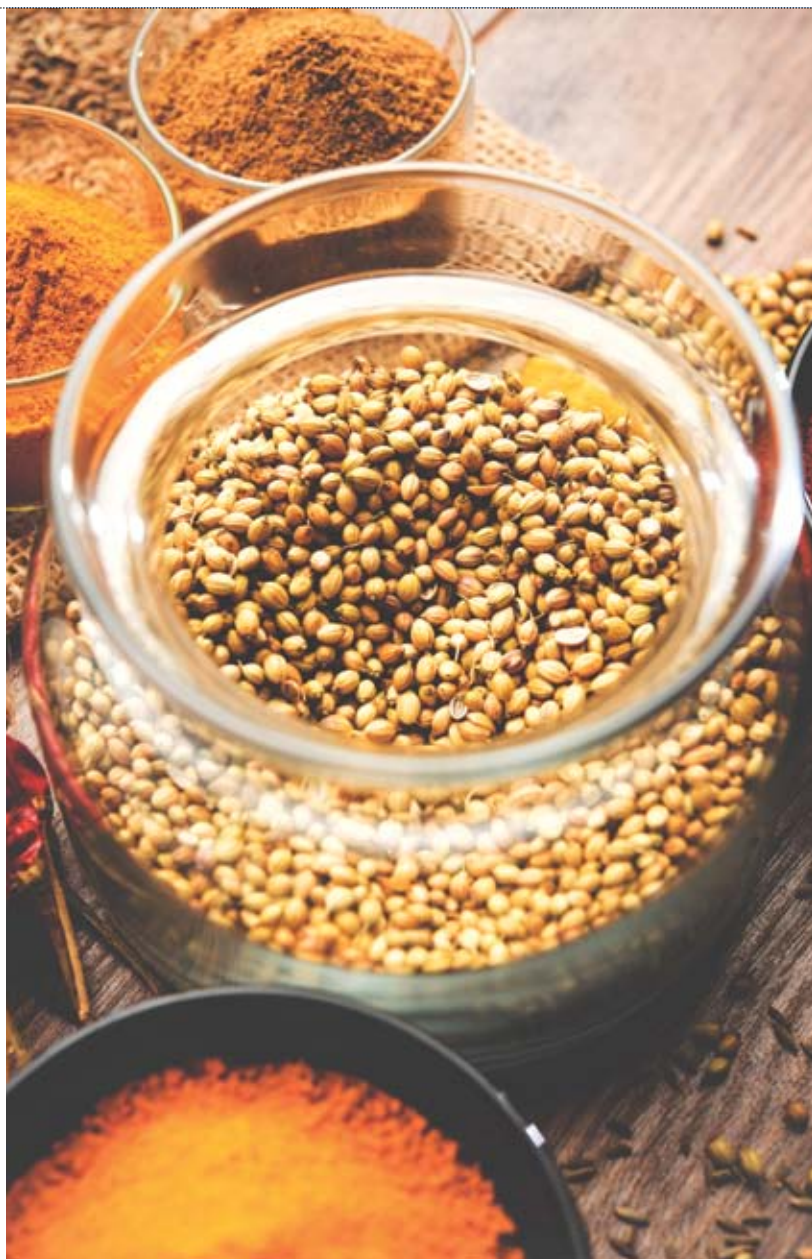
prominently in the cuisines of Mexico and North Africa. In India, as cumin or *jeera* grows best in dry, arid regions, the lion's share comes from Rajasthan and Gujarat. Coincidentally, these two states also account for a large proportion of vegetarian communities in the country, including Jains and Marwaris, and there is no vegetarian-compliant ingredient whose umami quotient is as high as dark roasted cumin. While every household throughout the country uses *jeera*, there is a difference in how vegetarian households prepare it. Roasted gently with a drop of pure ghee till it becomes cinnabar-brown and fragrant, it is ground to a fine powder and stored. The spice is then used to temper various Indian vegetable and dal preparations.



***Indori* coriander is the largest seed in the country, with a beautiful, elongated shape**

## CORIANDER

Along with *methi* (fenugreek), coriander is believed to trace its origins to Greece. If there is one spice that can be used to create a subtle base note in a cooked dish, it is coriander seeds. While the entire coriander plant, from roots and seeds to stem and leaves, is edible, only the seeds are considered a spice. The rest of the plant is considered a herb. Madhya Pradesh is where the giant's share of the country's coriander crop is grown. However, farms around Bhopal grow coriander for its leaves, while those around Indore grow it for its seeds. Interestingly, *Indori* coriander is the largest seed in the country, with a beautiful, elongated shape in comparison to the small,



**Above** (left to right): Turmeric; Coriander seeds

round seed found elsewhere. Ayurveda tells us that cooking with cilantro (as the leaves are called, to distinguish them from the seed) can reduce the harsh effects of hard water. In states that receive a regular supply of hard water, the cuisine incorporates more cilantro in its everyday meals.

## TURMERIC

Locally known as *haldi*, this most elemental of spices has its origin in India – Tamil Nadu,



to be precise, and within Tamil Nadu, it is the Kunkunad district that grows the most turmeric. This is one spice that has, over the ages, become an intrinsic part of not only Indian cuisine, but also Indian culture. Couples to be married dye their wedding clothes in turmeric to denote auspiciousness in Tamil Nadu, and a paste of turmeric and water is vital for a pre-wedding ceremony in West Bengal, for instance. There is no disputing that *haldi*

grows in every corner of the country, including the Northeast where, in addition to being used as a spice, it is also used as a dye for raw silk garments. In Goa, coarsely pounded rice steamed between two leaves of the turmeric plant makes for a monsoon delicacy. The fragrance of turmeric permeates the *patoleo*, as the preparation is called.

### CHILLI

No other spice has reached Indian shores as recently as chillies have. Nor has any spice been subsumed into our cuisine quite as enthusiastically. While the records are often conflicting, one thing more or less agreed upon by historians is that the Portuguese brought chillies to India through Goa, presumably from Brazil. All chillies are green

***Patoleo* is a Goan monsoon delicacy made by steaming coarsely pounded rice between two turmeric leaves**



A woman sells spices at a market in Goa



when they first appear on the vine, and turn red once they are ripe. There are some exceptions, however. *Gollapadu*, from the eponymous village in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh, never turns red, making it a great delight with pickle makers who want green chillies. For the rest, hybrid varieties and the cultivation of ‘*Kashmiri*’ chillies in Karnataka means that there are thousands of chilli varieties, each of which has specific and distinct uses.

In South Indian states, a hotter bite is preferred, as a general rule, whereas flavour is prized more in North India. In the South, pickle that is less red in colour is sought after, while the opposite is true in the North. Communities that use broken open chillies for tempering delicacies require chillies with thick skin, whereas for making chilli powder, those varieties are needed where the skin is fine and capable of being powdered.

Cumin, red chillies, turmeric and coriander are staple ingredients used in various Indian delicacies



## MORE SPICES

Besides the big four among Indian spices, here are four more that are native and unique:

### Kalpasi

Also known as *daagar ka phool*, this is a kind of lichen found in Tamil Nadu and is used in Chettinad cuisine

### Kokum

A fruit belonging to the mangosteen family, this is widely used in the Konkan region: Goa and Maharashtra

### Guntur

Native to the eponymous region in Andhra Pradesh, this is a kind of locally produced chilli that works well in pickles

### Moringa

The powdered leaves of the moringa tree can be enjoyed as an addition to tea, dal recipes and even parathas







Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a mass yoga session at the Forest Research Institute in Dehradun, Uttarakhand on the fourth International Day of Yoga

# YOGA FOR THE MIND

As the world celebrated the fourth International Day of Yoga on June 21, 2018, we bring you six asanas that prove how yoga can not only give you a healthy body but also a calm, positive mind

BY SHILLPI A SINGH

A recent study conducted by the Michigan Technological University (MTU) attempted to gauge how mindfulness meditation (often practised as a part of yoga) can impact a small group of participants. It found that not only did it reduce anxiety levels, but that this effect could last for several days! Ushering in the fourth International Day of Yoga on June 21, 2018, we can see one of the most important aspects of yoga as a part of our daily lives emerging more clearly than ever before: its ability to soothe our minds. In the modern world, as we carry out our daily chores and do our best to cope with a hectic, fast-paced urban lifestyle, a few minutes devoted to certain yogasanas can help us manage and release stress better than any medication could, and enable us to stay balanced and positive. Here are six such yogasanas that you can incorporate into your daily routine. With regular practice, you will see sustained results.





While many powers in the world divide us, yoga unites us. It gives peace to an individual. Instead of further animosity, yoga assimilates

**Narendra Modi**  
Indian Prime Minister

”



Breath is the key in yoga. The more you are conscious of your breath, the more you will be able to control the waves of your mind

**Dheeraj Vashistha**  
Yoga guru

”



A man practises *adho mukha svanasana*

### **ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA**

This asana derives its name from the Sanskrit words *adho* (half), *mukha* (face) and *svan* (dog). Kneel on the mat, lean forward and plant your palms in front of you. Pushing against the ground, slowly lift your hips as you breathe out and straighten your elbows and knees, the soles of your feet planted on the mat as completely as possible, and your back straight. Hold the posture for a few seconds and then slowly bring your knees back down to the mat.

Apart from stretching your shoulders, arms and legs, this asana enhances the flow of blood to your head and calms the brain, helping relieve stress and even mild depression. It also helps release tension from the spine, eases headaches, insomnia and fatigue.

### **PRASARITA PADOTTANASANA**

The *prasarita* (wide stance), *pada* (foot), *uttana* (intense stretch) pose is a calming forward bend. Begin by standing straight, inhale and step outwards from the sides, planting your feet three to four feet apart. Keeping your back straight, exhale and place your palms next to

your feet, bending your elbows. Use your arms to pull your forehead down towards the mat. Breathe deep and slow, and hold the posture for about a minute. To release, reach your arms out to the sides and inhale as you straighten back up. This asana must only be done on an empty stomach, at least 10-12 hours after a meal.

### **VRIKSHASANA**

This asana resembles the stance of an upright tree. Stand straight and drop your arms to the sides. Bend your right knee and place your right foot on your inner left thigh. Once you have assumed this position, breathe deeply as you focus on your centre of gravity. As you inhale again, gently raise your arms over your head and bring your palms together in a namaste position. Fix your gaze on a distant object and hold it there to maintain balance. Your spine must remain straight throughout, and you must keep taking deep breaths. To release, bring your arms back down first, followed by your

leg. Repeat the posture with your left leg. Best practised in the morning, this asana relaxes your central nervous system, helping you develop better concentration.

### **SUPTA BADDHA KONASANA**

Deriving its name from *supta* (reclining), *baddha* (bound) and *kona* (angle), this asana is a restorative posture. Lie flat on your back on the mat and gently bend your knees, bringing the soles of your feet together and placing your heels as close to your pelvis as possible. With your palms planted on the mat next to your hips, exhale and ensure that your abdominal

***Adho mukha svanasana* enhances the flow of blood to your head and calms the brain, helping relieve stress and even mild depression**



**Left to right:** Women practise vrikshasana and prasarita padottanasana



## PROGRESS



**Clockwise from top left:** A group of people practises *sarvangasana*; A woman practises *supta baddha konasana*; A woman practises *balakasana*

muscles contract as your tailbone moves closer to your pubic bone. Release slowly, hugging your knees and rocking from side to side. You can use a bolster under your back to make this easier and more comfortable. Avoid this asana if you are suffering from knee, hip, shoulder or back problems. You can practise *supta baddha konasana* in the evening, to release the entire day's tension.

### **BALAKASANA**

This asana is a resting pose. Kneel upright on the mat, your toes tucked under your heels. Spread your knees wide, inhale and then exhale



Image: liveyoganow.com

as you bend forward and place your torso between your thighs. Place your arms on your sides or stretch them forward to place them above your head. You can hold this posture for a few minutes, and then slowly inhale as you lift your torso back to an upright position. You can practise this asana a few hours after any meal in the day. Those suffering from diarrhoea and pregnant women should avoid it. Regular practise of *balakasana* helps release fatigue and enhance blood circulation.

### **SARVANGASANA**

This asana is sometimes called the queen of all asanas because it uses all your limbs at the same time. It is essentially a shoulder stand - the entire weight of your body rests on your shoulders. Lie flat on your back, keeping your legs together and your arms by your side. With one swift movement, lift your legs, hip and back, bending your elbows and placing them on the ground as your hands support your back. Make sure your spine is absolutely straight and your weight is resting on your shoulders and upper arms, not your head or neck. Release slowly till you are flat on your back again. Avoid this asana if you are suffering from a headache or high blood pressure.



## E-MAGAZINE IS AVAILABLE IN SIXTEEN LANGUAGES

HINDI | ARABIC | ENGLISH | FRENCH | GERMAN  
| INDONESIAN | ITALIAN | PASHTO | PERSIAN  
| PORTUGUESE | RUSSIAN | SINHALESE  
| JAPANESE | CHINESE | SPANISH | TAMIL

# READ INDIA PERSPECTIVES ON THE GO»

THE FLAGSHIP MAGAZINE OF THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, INDIA PERSPECTIVES, IS NOW AVAILABLE ON ALL MOBILE PLATFORMS AND APP STORES, IN 16 LANGUAGES:  
APPLE | GOOGLE PLAY | WINDOWS 8 | SAMSUNG | AMAZON | HUAWEI



# CONSULAR GRIEVANCES MONITORING SYSTEM

## 01 Step

Click on "Register (New User)" and fill required details

## 02 Step

Click on "Activation" link sent in email (or OTP sent in SMS to Indian Mobile Holders) to activate the account.

## 03 Step

Log in to the Consular Grievances Monitoring System (MADAD).

## 04 Step

Click on "Register Grievances" link to fill details of your grievances.

## 05 Step

Click on "Track Grievances Status" link to View latest status and processing done on your grievance.



# MADAD

Because You Are Us

[myMEA.in/madad](http://myMEA.in/madad)