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# SWAGAT

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE FEDERATION OF KERALA HOTELS ASSOCIATION

BI-LINGUAL BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION

FEATURE

## DIRIYAH THE CITY OF EARTH

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COVER STORY

## THE DUTCH INTERLUDE FORT KOCHI'S DUTCH LEGACY

EDITORIAL

## NAVA KERALAM VS NARCOTICS KERALA'S FUTURE-DEFINING BATTLE

FKHA  
GETS A NEW  
HOME





**STORM**  
- STRONG SODA -

**SWAG**  
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FKHA Magazine

# SWAGAT

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE FEDERATION OF KERALA HOTELS ASSOCIATION

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## Swagat

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# Editorial

## Nava Keralam vs. Narcotics: Kerala's future-defining battle



**V. Sunil Kumar**

President, FKHA  
Editor, Swagat

Kerala is initiating a mass movement against the grave menace of drugs. Excise and police raids, along with daily news reports, reveal that deadly narcotics—from cannabis to synthetic drugs like MDMA—are now easily available in the State. The government and society have been awakened by the alarming rise in crimes—robberies, murders, and violent attacks—committed by drug addicts and the mafia behind the drug trade, leading to chaos, anxiety, and fear in families and communities. Under the leadership of the Chief Minister, extensive campaigns and action plans have been devised to curb this epidemic and free students and youth trapped in addiction. The Police and Excise Departments have already stepped up vigilance. The Chief Minister has called upon local government institutions, school and college authorities, political parties, voluntary organizations, youth associations, resi-

dents' associations, and religious-community organizations to join the fight against this crisis.

Kerala accounted for drugs worth less than ₹100 crore over the past five years, against the total drug value of ₹82,478 crore. It is a fact that Kerala has the lowest drug availability in India and is the State that has caught and punished the most drug syndicates. However, a key factor behind Kerala's current predicament must be highlighted. Since 2015, the Federation of Kerala Hotels Association (FKHA) has repeatedly warned the government that unregulated liquor and drug sales would lead to major social issues. In 2014, the then-UDF government shut 712 bars and 78 FL1 outlets. Following this, the production and distribution of illicit liquor and narcotics, including drugs, surged. Additionally, when the legal drinking age was raised to 23, youth shifted from low-potency alcohol to stronger narcotics, including

# SAY NO TO DRUGS



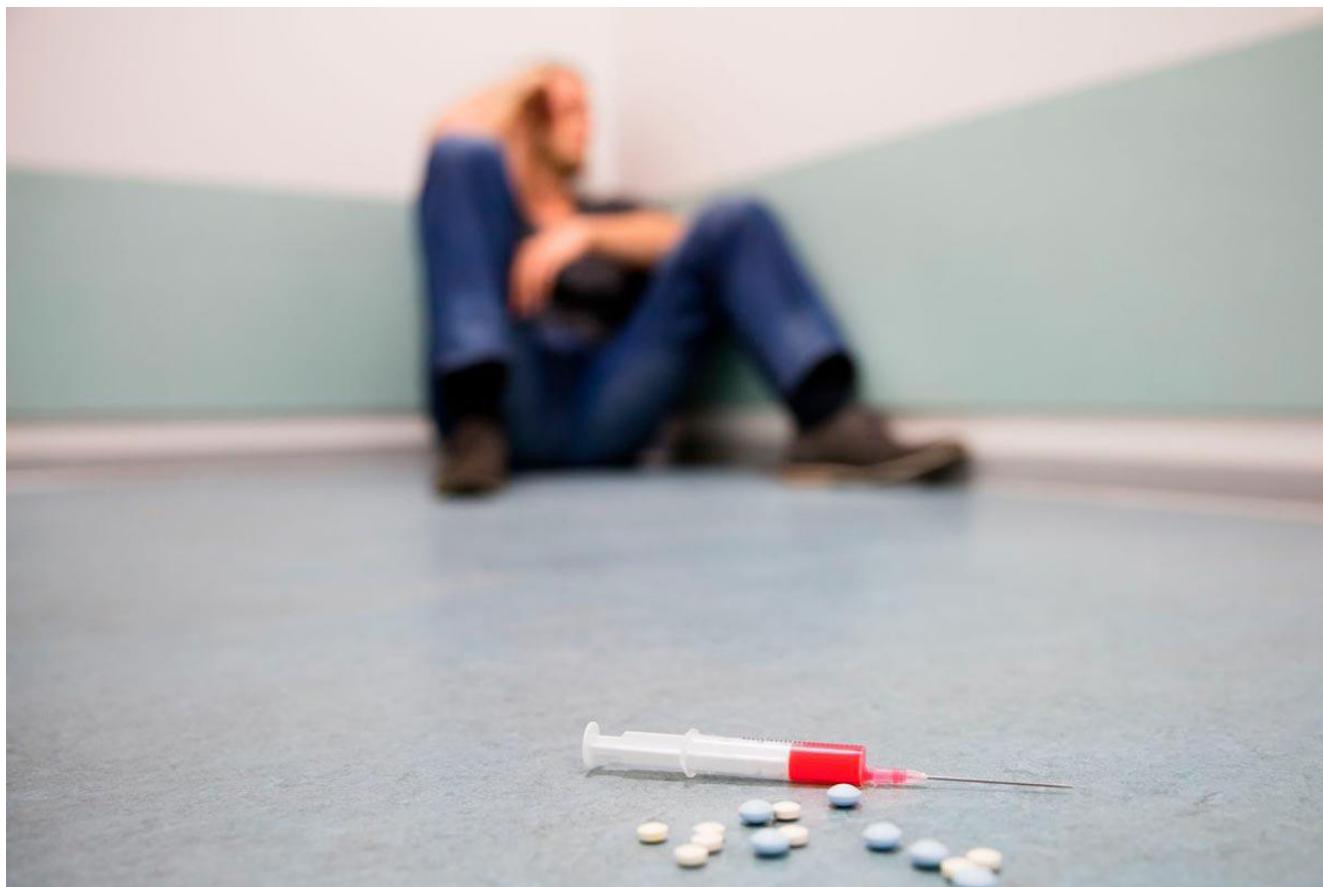
synthetic drugs.

The Excise Minister's recent reply in the State Assembly confirms this trend: In 2011, only 438 NDPS cases were registered. This rose to 1,065 in 2014, 1,430 in 2015, 2,981 in 2016, and 5,945 cases in 2017. Over the past few years, at an average of 6,600 cases being registered annually, the total number of such cases has skyrocketed to 26,000. This unnatural spike is directly linked to the unavailability of legal alcohol. While cannabis consumption has existed in society for long, the shift to deadly narcotics and synthetic drugs among youth is primarily due to the scarcity of low-potency alcohol. Kerala law prohibits sale of alcohol to those under 23, but no such age restriction exists in the case of drugs and none is possible because drug trade happens beyond the confines of law. Today, children as young as 10 are found using narcotics, knowingly or unknowingly. Drug abuse is rampant among youth and stressed professionals. Ninety per cent of drug users are under 23. The Excise Min-

ister recently disclosed that 588 children below 18 have sought treatment at de-addiction centres in the past two months. Over the last four years, 194 NDPS cases were registered against minors alone. In March, 'Operation Clean Slate' was launched, and within the first 10 days, the Excise, Police, and Motor Vehicles Departments conducted a massive State-wide inspection targeting vehicles, schools, colleges, bus stands, railway stations, labour camps, and toddy shops. Narcotics worth ₹2.15 crore, including MDMA, heroin, methamphetamine pills, brown sugar, cannabis-laced chocolates, charas, and hash oil, were seized. 'Operation D-Hunt' that followed has seen over 100 arrests daily. These figures validate our earlier warnings.

The government should have acted earlier to nip the drug mafia in the bud. Still, it is heartening to note that the system has been awakened. While the government's awakening to this crisis is welcome, stronger measures are needed. Police,

**Kerala's crackdown on narcotics must succeed.**



## Kerala's war on drugs is a fight for its future.

Excise, and all agencies must collaborate in a coordinated crackdown. The real challenge is to trace the drug sources and ensure that drug cases reach convictions without delay. Out of 26,453 NDPS cases registered in five years, only 139 identified suppliers, exposing their mostly-untraceable inter-State and international links. Central and inter-State cooperation is crucial here. NDPS cases often languish in courts for years, discouraging police from filing charges. Fast-track justice is needed for NDPS cases. Special courts and investigation teams must expedite trials. A joint task force must be created to intensify enforcement, trace drug sources, and dismantle inter-State and international networks. Once, Kerala faced a flood of illicit liquor; today, it's minimal. Similarly, drug supply chains must be blocked. Dedicated teams, not just local police or excise, should handle this. Airports, seaports, and check-posts need stringent checks. Sniffer dogs should monitor suspicious gatherings. Unauthorized liquor production and distribution must be curbed, but this should not be at the cost of the State's

tourism promotion efforts. Low-alcohol beverages like beer should be promoted in tourist hubs. The government's revised liquor policy is a step forward in this direction.

Alternative highs—hope, arts, sports—must replace drugs. Kerala's Sports Council, cultural bodies, and tourism sector must engage with youth. Physical and mental wellness programmes, strengthened tourism infrastructure, and recreational facilities are vital. Schools need scientific monitoring. Committees of teachers, parents, and volunteers should track students' movements, friendships, and mental health. Student organizations like NCC, SPC and Scouts & Guides can help. Colleges must enforce strict penalties, including university-level bans for offenders. Youth must understand that drug use and possession carry severe consequences, including a ruined future. Only by eradicating this scourge can Kerala's march towards 'Nava Keralam' continue unhindered. We sincerely hope that the government's efforts to rid the State of the drug menace would succeed. ■

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Though overshadowed by British and Portuguese rule, the Dutch once held sway over Kerala's spice trade, commanding key ports like Cochin, Kollam, and Cranganore from 1604 to 1795, writes **George Thundiparambil**.

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### WELCOME CHANGES IN LIQUOR POLICY

While political pressures have stalled some reforms, the government's partial acceptance of FKHA's proposals while finalising the 2025-26 liquor policy is a step forward, writes **Sqn Ldr K.B. Padmadas (Retd.)**, General Secretary, Federation of Kerala Hotels Association (FKHA).



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### A DECADE OF CHALLENGES AND VICTORIES

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Kerala's hotel industry weathered a decade of unprecedented crises. Through resilient leadership and strategic advocacy, the Federation of Kerala Hotels Association (FKHA) not only ensured survival but also spearheaded the sector's revival, growth, and professional transformation.



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## WELCOME CHANGES IN LIQUOR POLICY



**Sqn Ldr K.B. Padmadas (Retd.)**

The budget announcements of this financial year and the new liquor policy have sparked much debate, especially concerning the hotel industry. The Opposition and some community organizations have accused the government of siding with liquor manufacturers and bar hotels to promote alcohol consumption in the State. However, the government has clarified that in a State with an industry-friendly environment, allowing new distilleries will benefit tax revenue and employment. They argue that some existing excise laws are not favourable for tourism growth, and that the changes in liquor policy were necessary adjustments in response to persistent demands from stakeholders. So, what is the truth?

Every year, before the budget and liquor policy announcements, the government holds discussions with relevant stakeholders. This time, representatives of the

Federation of Kerala Hotels Association (FKHA) participated in two government-called meetings, highlighting the challenges faced by the hotel industry and urging necessary measures to protect this integral part of tourism. Their demands included collecting Turnover Tax (ToT) at the first point, granting amnesty for ToT arrears, and granting industry status to the tourism sector, among others.

While it cannot be said that all the demands were fully accepted in the budget, neither were they entirely rejected. The Finance Minister has taken a mature approach to one of the long-standing demands. Although an amnesty for tax arrears of bar hotels from 2005-06 to 2017-18 was announced in the 2019 budget, most hotels could not avail it because almost the entire industry was in a crisis following the UDF government's closure of 712 bar hotels in 2014. Though the 2017 LDF government had taken steps to reopen these hotels, the financial burden of investing crores in star facility upgrades had created a significant economic strain.

The subsequent years were even more crisis-ridden as hotels had to be shut down during the Covid-19 pandemic. In short, the industry remained stagnant for years, making it difficult to obtain personal loans or bank loans due to poor credit scores. This is why the 2019 amnesty scheme could not be utilized. Consequently, we have been demanding relief to clear pending tax arrears from 2021 onwards. This demand was not considered in the last four budgets. However, in this budget, the government has shown the willingness to provide some minor relief. A three-month amnesty scheme has been announced, allowing full payment of the principal tax amount along with 50% of the interest to waive off the remaining interest and penalties for arrears up to 2021. We welcome this decision by the government.

Although the demand to grant industry status to tourism was not considered, several new initiatives announced in the budget to promote tourism are commendable. These include: health tourism projects, coastal highway and inland waterway-linked tourism initiatives, loan schemes for constructing hotels to promote MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) tourism, pilgrim tourism projects, plans to enhance tourism connectivity, infrastructure development projects at tourist centres, and nightlife projects in major cities. However, since tourism has not been granted industry status, investors in the hotel sector do not receive the same benefits available to other industrial entrepreneurs.

Last year, the liquor policy was not announced. Though this year's policy includes some changes in line with the tourism sector's demands, the government has made no significant alterations to the long-standing liquor regulations. The Federation of Kerala Hotels Association (FKHA) had proposed several reforms, including: adjusting bar operating hours, relaxing distance norms for new bars and liquor shops, lowering the legal drinking age, issuing bar licenses based on the number of hotel rooms, and removing dry days on the 1st of every month and festival days. However, the government did not respond favourably to any of these demands. As a result, Kerala's liquor regulations remain uniquely restrictive compared to other

Indian States.

Bevco, the State-run liquor retail chain, has been opening new outlets near existing bar hotels, blatantly violating the mandated distance rules-5 km in urban areas and 10 km in panchayat regions. While the new policy claims to maintain these restrictions, in practice, Bevco has been relocating previously closed shops as "premium outlets" near bars, effectively flouting its own rules.

Bars in Kerala used to operate from 8 AM-12 AM earlier, but they can operate only from 11 AM to 11 PM, with only tourist hubs allowed to operate until midnight. No other State imposes such restrictive timings. While Bevco outlets open at 10 AM, bars must wait until 11 AM to open-an unfair disparity. This contradicts Kerala's push for nightlife, destination weddings, and international conferences, which require flexible liquor service hours. Also, Kerala remains the only state enforcing dry days on the 1st of every month-an illogical rule the FKHA has





long opposed. Though the new policy exempts MICE tourism, destination weddings, and conferences from dry days, bars must pay an exorbitant ₹50,000 fee per day for this exemption. Given that bars already pay ₹35 lakh annually in license fees, this additional charge is unjustifiable. The government should abolish dry days entirely.

Kerala, a land of festivals, sees hundreds of celebrations between December and May. Local authorities increasingly impose liquor bans during these events, sometimes for multiple days. While festivals should be joyous occasions, unscientific liquor bans only fuel illegal alcohol and drug trade. Historically, the Excise Department permitted liquor sales at festival grounds with special permits, even extending operating hours post-midnight. However, since 2019, liquor bans have been imposed even in non-sensitive areas, creating opportunities for bootleggers and drug peddlers. Bars lose 25–30 working days a year due to such restrictions—a situation unheard of elsewhere in India.

The new liquor policy focuses heavily on combating narcotics and synthetic drugs—a crisis the FKHA had warned about years ago. In 2014, the UDF government closed 712 bars and 78 FL-1 outlets, leading to a surge in spurious liquor and drug trafficking. Raising the legal drinking age from 21 to 23 further pushed youth towards harder substances. While Karnataka reduced its drinking age to 18, Kerala's restrictive policies backfired, making drugs more accessible than regulated alcohol. A

well-organised mafia, often with Police and Excise complicity, dominates the illicit liquor trade, especially during dry days. Weak penalties allow offenders to resume operations after minor fines. Despite FKHA's demands for stricter enforcement, the new policy lacks concrete measures to curb this menace. The unchecked sale of 'arishtam' (ayurvedic liquor) as a cover for illegal alcohol also remains unaddressed.

The policy encourages Kerala's traditional toddy industry, allowing hotels and restaurants to sell it. While efforts to ensure growth of the toddy industry is welcome, it cannot be at the expense of the hotel industry. The lack of quality control risks consumer harm and could hurt foreign liquor sales in bars. Additionally, permitting liquor licenses for private yachts raises concerns about misuse.

Despite flaws, the policy has some merits. These include: nil increase in license fees, promise of stronger anti-narcotics enforcement, eased partnership/directorship changes and promise of liquor licenses for IT parks and for setting up breweries. Under the new regime, change of partnership/directorship need not have prior approval. The same need be communicated to the Excise Commissioner within 30 days, failure to do so attracting only a nominal ₹10,000 penalty. This was FKHA's long-standing demand. While political pressures have stalled some reforms, the government's partial acceptance of FKHA's proposals is a step forward.

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# A DECADE OF CHALLENGES AND VICTORIES

Staff Reporter

Over the past decade, Kerala's hotel industry has endured some of the most turbulent years in its history. The complete shutdown of bars in 2014-15, a series of natural disasters, and the Covid pandemic severely impacted the sector. Despite these setbacks, the Federation of Kerala

Hotels Association (FKHA) and its current leadership confronted each crisis directly, ensuring the survival, sustenance, and continued progress of the industry. The closure of bar hotels in 2014-15, following controversies over the liquor policy, threatened the very existence of the FKHA, which was established in 1991. The situation

improved when the LDF government assumed power in 2016 and revised the UDF Government's liquor policy. At a pivotal meeting in Thiruvananthapuram on July 22, 2017, bar hotel representatives from across Kerala elected a new leadership team, tasking them with steering the industry forward through collective effort.



Under the stewardship of Mr. V. Sunil Kumar (President), Mr. K.B. Padmadas (General Secretary), and Mr. Binoy Joseph (Treasurer), the FKHA transformed into a disciplined, united, and socially committed organization. For the past eight years, this leadership has served with dedication, earning the trust of its members.

With the support of the LDF government, the FKHA leadership effectively presented industry concerns to authorities, engaged in skillful negotiations, and secured crucial support. Their consistent efforts have significantly improved the industry's position compared to a decade ago.

The 2014-15 crisis had forced all but

29 of Kerala's 748 bar hotels-those with five-star status-to close. Entrepreneurs faced massive losses, and thousands of workers' livelihoods were at risk. The situation began to improve only after the LDF government amended the Abkari Policy, allowing star-classified hotels to operate bars. This, however, required significant investment from hotels to upgrade facilities and attain star status. Following these efforts, the government restored licenses to 442 hotels under the revised policy, though 306 hotels remained unable to upgrade due to financial constraints.

Just as recovery seemed possible, the Covid pandemic struck, dealing another blow to the industry. Hotel operators, burdened by loans taken for facility upgrades and star classification, found themselves unable to repay debts or clear substantial tax arrears. During this challenging period, the FKHA leadership engaged persistently with the government, ultimately securing relief measures for hotel owners. This process, spanning the last four years, required careful, strategic action, always considering the broader interests of Kerala society and the sensitivities surrounding the bar hotel sector.

Today, Kerala boasts over 1,000 operating bar hotels. The industry-friendly environment is largely due to the FKHA leadership's inclusive approach and the supportive policies of successive LDF governments. The government's willingness to address FKHA's demands and incorporate them into liquor policy and the State budget is a testament to the leadership's credibility. This year, key FKHA proposals were again adopted by the government, underscoring the recognized importance of the hospitality sector in Kerala's development.

The FKHA has also actively supported government relief efforts



**V. Sunil Kumar**  
President, FKHA

**Sqn Ldr K.B. Padmadas (Retd.)**  
Secretary, FKHA

**Binoy Joseph**  
Treasurer, FKHA

during natural and health crises, such as the 2018 floods, the Covid pandemic, and the Wayanad disaster. The organization contributed Rs 3.5 crore to the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund for flood mitigation, Rs 1 crore during the Wayanad disaster, and donated five ambulances and substantial medical supplies during Covid.

Over the years, the FKHA leadership has remained responsive to members' financial and business needs as well, establishing a mutual benefit scheme that allows members to access emergency funds. This initiative benefits both members and the organization as a whole.

Recognizing the need for professionally trained staff, the FKHA launched the Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) in 2019 to train candidates from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Since then, about 1,000 young men and women have been trained and are now employed in Kerala, other Indian states, and abroad. The IHM offers free education and accommodation, a Rs 4,000 stipend, a government-recognized diploma, and 100% placement in member star hotels. IHM centres operate in six districts: Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Thrissur, and Kozhikode. Additionally, a staff empowerment program allows

current hotel employees with no professional qualification to receive training while working. No other organization in India offers such comprehensive training in this field.

The FKHA is also committed to

**The government's willingness to address FKHA's demands and incorporate them into liquor policy and the State budget is a testament to the leadership's credibility. This year, key FKHA proposals were again adopted by the government, underscoring the recognized importance of the hospitality sector in Kerala's development.**





*FKHA's contribution to the Wayanad Disaster Relief Fund being handed over to Hon'ble Chief Minister Sri. Pinarayi Vijayan by FKHA General Secretary K.B. Padmadas and Treasurer Benoy Joseph.*



*FKHA ambulance being flagged off by Hon'ble Minister for Tourism and Public Works Sri. P.A. Mohammed Riyas in the presence of Hon'ble Health Minister Smt. Veena George. FKHA President Sri. V. Sunil Kumar is also seen.*

promoting Kerala's tourism and hospitality sectors and addressing misconceptions about the bar hotel industry. The organization launched 'Swagat', a robust bi-monthly publication that showcases Kerala's arts and culture to tourists and addresses hospitality sector issues. The magazine has become a valuable resource for both hotels and their guests.

A major milestone for the FKHA was establishing its own office in the capital. The new complex, located on 30 cents of land on the Pattom-PMG One Way, houses the State Committee office, District Committee office, IHM head office, and Swagat magazine office. The office complex will be inaugurated by the Honourable Minister for Education & Labour, Shri. V. Sivankutty, on July 2.

Today, the FKHA stands as a strong, unified organization. Over the past eight years, the current leadership has kept the membership united, built public trust, and fostered positive relations with the government. Yes, these years have been marked by significant challenges, but there have been meaningful victories. Full credit to the FKHA leadership team. ■

# THE DUTCH INTERLUDE

## Fort Kochi's Dutch Legacy





When you walk through the weathered streets of Fort Kochi, the scent of the sea lingers in the humid air, mingling with the faint aroma of spices and foodstuffs. Sounds are almost like everywhere else in Kerala but, at Fort Kochi, the sights are an amalgam of the indigenous and the foreign, with the colonial structures from the Portuguese, Dutch and British periods, adding to the sublime charm of the place. The town carries the weight of history, its streets lined with relics of Portuguese, Dutch and British colonial rule—town houses with austere facades, gabled roofs, and deep-set windows. The Portuguese were the first to set up shop in Fort Kochi, at the dawn of the 16th century. They were followed by the Dutch and then the British, each wave altering the face of this quaint part of Kerala with new structures that reflected the cultural climate of the Europeans. Almost nothing of what the Portuguese built in the area remain now, every structure having been

Pic. Vikas Ramdas



### Fort Kochi: Where History Walks the Streets

Fort Kochi is a blend of sea breeze, spice-laden air, and colonial charm. Portuguese, Dutch, and British architecture lines its streets, each structure telling a story of trade, conquest, and cultural fusion.

razed to the ground by the Dutch, whose architectural creations, along with those of the British, now dominate the tree-lined streets of Fort Kochi. The Dutch buildings have their outer walls supported by long, slanted beams jutting out toward the street. There's more to their posture than mere aesthetics. The Dutch, ever the pragmatic builders, designed their homes this way to prevent the front walls from collapsing—an essential adaptation for a settlement built on reclaimed land, much like Amsterdam itself. The Dutch influence here is more restrained, emphasising clean lines, symmetrical facades, and functional elegance. Many buildings feature shuttered windows with slatted wooden panels designed to let in the breeze while keeping out the relentless tropical sun. The masonry is solid and practical within white plaster details.

### Dutch Palace (Mattancherry Palace)

One of the finest examples of Dutch colonial architecture is the Dutch Palace (Mattancherry Palace). Though originally built by the Portuguese to appease the then sovereign of the princely state of Cochin, the Dutch destroyed it and later renovated it in their characteristic style, blending their love for symmetry with Kerala's native sloping roofs and intricately carved wooden ceilings. Inside the palace, the walls are adorned with breathtaking mural paintings depicting Hindu epics. The Portuguese built the palace around 1545 CE as a present to King Veera Kerala Verma of the Kochi dynasty and was used by the rulers of Kochi to conduct official ceremonies like coronations. It is modelled on the traditional nalukettu (four-winged homes). This is a two-storey structure, the four wings forming part of the first story. The ground storey forms the enclosure of the Pazhayannur Bhagavathy Temple, located in the large central courtyard of the palace. There are two other temples on either side of the palace, dedicated to Lord Shiva and Lord Krishna respectively.

The living chamber occupies the lower story of a wing that extends from the south east corner of the Palace and is therefore not part of the temple compound. Above it is a spacious hall. The ceilings of the large, spacious halls at both levels are embellished with floral designs carved in wood. The ceilings are decorated with brass cups and the floor done to perfection with a blend of lime, plant juices, burnt coconut shells and egg white. Life sized statues of Kochi kings who ruled from the year 1864 stand proudly adorned in their coronation robes in the coronation hall of the palace. There are also Dutch maps of ancient Kochi, royal umbrellas made of silk and brass, the ceremonial royal sword, royal palanquins with floral designs, silver sequined gowns and other such exquisite objects on display in the palace. Daggers, spears and sheathed swords are also on display. The fame of the Dutch Palace rests mainly on intricate murals that adorn it. These murals in the royal bedchamber portray the entire story of Ramayana. It is believed that these paintings were done between



Pic. Vikas Ramdas

the 17th and 18th century. On the staircase walls are mural paintings of Hindu gods and goddesses. The Ladies Chamber features five mural panels depicting deities Vishnu, Krishna, and Shiva, emphasizing both themes of bhakti and romantic love. One mural illustrates Shiva and Parvathy in an intimate embrace, surrounded by their children and attentive devotees. Another mural portrays Krishna with the Gopis, highlighting his divine love and the affectionate interactions with his companions. The murals are framed by painted borders and reflect a style similar to those found in Hindu temples of Kerala. The chamber's secluded location suggests it may have been a space for the King to enjoy female companionship.

The most outstanding among the murals are those that depict the Ramayana epic in a unique narrative style and with great emotional depth. The paintings prioritize emotional expression, particularly the veera (heroic) and raudra (furious) emo-

tions of the rasa aesthetic system. Vishnu's appearance in the first panel signifies the divine nature of Rama, who is otherwise portrayed as a human hero. The battle scenes, especially Rama and Lakshmana's confrontation with Ravana, dominate the west wall and are three times longer than the other panels. The legacy of Mattancherry Palace is not confined by its architectural grandeur or artistic treasures but rather, it is one that transcends time. It is a symbol of the cultural confluence that defines the State and even today it is a reminder of the region's resplendent history of trade and trade--and, above all, the astoundingly syncretic culture that flourished in this part of the globe.

#### Bastion Bungalow

Situated near the Vasco da Gama square, on River Road in Fort Kochi, the Bastion Bungalow is a testament to the fusion of European and indigenous styles that were

#### Dutch Palace: A Fusion of Art and Empire

The Dutch Palace in Mattancherry is a symbol of Kerala's syncretic past. With its sloped roofs, Dutch symmetry, and vivid murals of Hindu epics, it showcases a seamless blend of European design and Indian tradition.



Pic: Vikas Ramdas

a signature of colonial era constructions in Kerala. Originally one of the seven bastions of the 17th-century Fort Immanuel built by the Portuguese, the fort had bastions, ramparts and many other structures. When in 1663 the Dutch defeated the Portuguese and conquered Kochi, they destroyed the fort and only a third of it was left. The fort originally had seven bastions, but all that remained after the Dutch assault was the Stormberg bastion, which was later transformed into the Bastion Bungalow. With spacious rooms, high ceilings, open, long verandahs and tiled roofs with beautiful geometric patterns, the bungalow has been built into a wall of the

erstwhile fort. The materials used for construction largely include latérite, wood and brick. The Bungalow was such a beautiful structure that even when the British destroyed the walls during their 1806 invasion, they left the building untouched. The building has been declared a protected monument by the State Archaeology Department.

#### **The Thakur House**

The Thakur House, which reflects the opulent lifestyle of the colonial era, has lovely lawns, caressed ceaselessly by sea breeze. Built in the 1700s, this is a two-storeyed building with characteristic spacious rooms, wooden floors and bay windows. Both the floors are

**A blend of Dutch design and Kerala charm, Bastion Bungalow is the last standing piece of Fort Immanuel—gracefully preserved with high ceilings, open verandahs, and historic walls.**





marked by astonishing symmetry. The original building consisted of several halls and verandahs, and though the original structure was altered several times by its various occupants, its essential Dutch character is still resplendent. Glass lamps hang from the roof beam, and several paintings decorate the walls.

During the 17th century, the building, on account of its strategic position, served as a prominent look-out point near the Cochin Harbour. It is believed that the house has several tunnels leading to far-off places in Fort Kochi such as the St. Francis Church and Bishop's House.

The Dutch built the Thakur House as a club and community centre for the Dutch East India Company. During the last decades of the 19th century, the bungalow was occupied by a prominent spice trading family of Mattancherry. In the early 1900s, it was used as lodging

for the managers of the National Bank of India. The ownership of the bungalow again changed hands and went to a well-known tea-trading firm.

#### The Dutch Cemetery

The Dutch Cemetery, established in 1724, is believed to be the oldest of its kind in the country. Within these hallowed grounds lie 104 epitaphs and tombs, modest and pared down, each describing the person who found his or her final resting place in this land far off from their homes.

The Dutch Cemetery is today managed today by the Church of South India (CSI) and St. Francis CSI Church nearby maintains meticulous records of those interred, preserving their memory for future generations. One notable figure among those buried here is Captain Joseph Ethelbert Winckler, whose resting place in 1913 marked the end of an era in this solemn resting ground.



Pic. Vikas Ramdas

# The Dutch Legacy in Kerala

George Thundiparambil

While reading the colonial history of India, the involvement of the Dutch is minimal or unheard of, considering the dominance of Great Britain and other European players like France and Portugal in the unravelling of India's modern history. It is not because of any lack of intentions or ambitions that the Dutch became an obscure player in Indian history. It may perhaps be called fate, but it could also be a certain naivety or a lack of understanding of the Indian cultures on the part of the Dutch that led to their early departure.

At one time, the Dutch were a formidable force on the Malabar Coast. The Dutch colonial presence in Kerala, primarily on the Malabar Coast, was a significant chapter in the history of European trade and power struggles in India. The Dutch East India Company

(Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie or VOC) arrived in the early 17th century intending to monopolise the lucrative spice trade. Their presence lasted from 1604 to 1795, during which they established control over several key territories and engaged in battles with the Portuguese and local rulers. However, their influence gradually waned, particularly after their defeat by the Kingdom of Travancore in the Battle of Colachel (1741) and the eventual takeover of their territories by the British in 1795.

**Dutch Arrival and Establishment (1604–1663)**

The Dutch arrived on the Malabar Coast in 1604, motivated by the lucrative spice trade. At that time, the Portuguese held significant power over the region's ports and trade routes. The Dutch initially attempted to establish trade agreements with local rulers but soon realised that direct military

intervention was necessary to challenge Portuguese dominance. The Dutch VOC engaged in naval and land battles with the Portuguese and captured Cochin in 1663. A particularly gruesome takeover of Fort Cochin marked the beginning of their dominance on the Malabar Coast. This victory

**Though overshadowed by British and Portuguese rule, the Dutch once held sway over Kerala's spice trade, commanding key ports like Cochin, Kollam, and Cranganore from 1604 to 1795.**

● ● ●





also led to their acquisition of several other strategic ports and fortresses, significantly weakening Portuguese influence in Kerala.

#### Dutch Territories in Kerala

At the peak of their control, the Dutch held several important territories and forts in Kerala. The Dutch had Cochin (Kochi) as their primary headquarters and administrative centre. They controlled Cochin from 1663 to 1795 after expelling the Portuguese. Another significant trading post for spices was Quilon (Kollam), which remained under Dutch rule from 1661 to 1795. Cannanore (Kannur), a fortified location crucial for maritime control, was under Dutch dominance between 1663 and 1790. Cranganore (Kodungallur), an inland trade hub, was controlled by the Dutch from 1662 to 1789, ensuring their hold over the spice trade routes. Additionally, they seized Pallippuram in 1663, maintaining control until 1789. Though their presence in Kayamkulam

was brief in the late 17th century, it still played a minor role in Dutch trade activities.

These territories were supposed to consolidate the Dutch's trade monopoly, particularly in pepper, cardamom, and cinnamon, but the idea backfired due to the non-co-operation of the local rulers, following many unruly incidents on the Malabar Coast involving Dutch soldiers, including a raid on the Guruvayur temple.

**Dutch Trade and Economic Policies**  
Unlike the Portuguese, who focused on religious conversion alongside trade, the Dutch were primarily interested in commerce. They established trade agreements with local rulers, particularly the Zamorin of Calicut, and attempted to regulate the spice trade to benefit Dutch merchants. They restricted local traders and imposed high prices, leading to dissatisfaction among native merchants and rulers.

The Dutch also contributed to agricultur-

**Battle of Colachel: Turning the Tide**  
In 1741, Travancore's Marthanda Varma defeated the Dutch at Colachel—a landmark victory that marked the first time an Asian power triumphed over a European colonial force in open battle.

## Legacy Beyond Rule

Despite their short-lived reign, the Dutch left lasting imprints on Kerala's architecture, military reforms, and even language—with words like "kakoo" (toilet) tracing back to their presence.

al techniques and improved local trade infrastructure. However, their rude monopolistic policies created resentment, which contributed to their downfall in the region.

They completely misread the situation and failed to understand the local trade laws, which, at that time, were traditional unwritten rules generally called the Perumal Code. While signing the monopoly agreements with local Rajas, they were unaware that these rulers had little or no control over local chieftains, producers and merchants, and whose privileges existed since the time of the Perumals, the Chera rulers that declined towards the end of the first millennium CE.

### Dutch Decline and the Rise of Travancore (1741-1795)

The Dutch faced strong resistance from Marthanda Varma, the ruler of Travancore. The most decisive conflict was the Battle of Colachel (1741), where the Dutch forces suffered a historic defeat. This battle was significant because it marked the first time an Asian kingdom had decisively

defeated a major European colonial power in open combat.

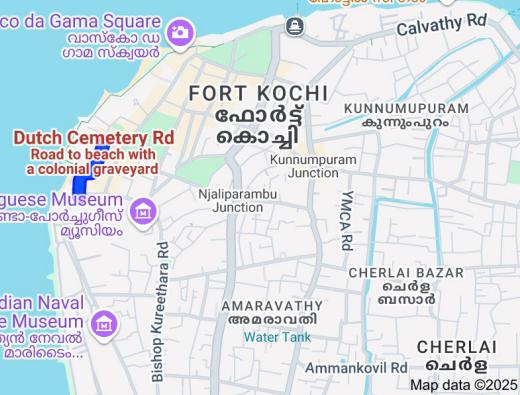
Incidentally, Marthanda Varma was successful not only in challenging the Dutch commercial ambitions but also in turning around the ancient Perumal laws by radical reforms that included raising a European-style army.

After their defeat, the Dutch influence in Kerala began to decline. They lost control of Cranganore and Pallipuram to Travancore in 1789, further weakening their hold over the region. The Dutch shifted focus to other parts of their Asian empire, particularly Indonesia, where they were more successful.

### British Takeover and the End of Dutch Rule (1795)

By the late 18th century, the Dutch were weakened not only by local resistance but also by European conflicts. The Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815) led to British intervention in Dutch colonial affairs. In 1795, by what is known as the Kew Letters, the British took control of Dutch settlements on the Malabar Coast as part of their





broader colonial expansion in India.

The Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1814 formally ended Dutch rule in Kerala, as the British consolidated power over former Dutch territories. Despite their decline, the Dutch left a lasting impact on Kerala, particularly in Architecture. Dutch-style buildings and forts, such as the Dutch Palace in Mattancherry, which still stands today.

The Dutch are also known for introducing new trade regulations and infrastructure that influenced Kerala's economy all along the coast. They also innovated spice cultivation techniques, some still in use.

Militarily, too, the Dutch contribution is significant. The Battle of Colachel remains a symbol of native resistance against Euro-

pean colonisation. However, the victory of their enemy, Travancore, was a turning point. Almost all of the defeated soldiers joined the Travancore army. Raja Marthanda Varma of Travancore appointed the commander of the enemy forces, Eustachius De Lannoy, as the new Commander-in-Chief of his army.

De Lannoy was a captain in the Dutch East India Company and led the Dutch forces in the Battle of Colachel (1741) against the Kingdom of Travancore. The Dutch were decisively defeated, and De Lannoy surrendered. However, instead of being executed, he was pardoned and offered a job. He accepted and became the commander-in-chief of the Travancore army.

De Lannoy played a crucial role in

modernising Travancore's military by introducing European-style training, firearms, and fortifications. He served Travancore loyally for several decades and was instrumental in the kingdom's territorial expansion and defence. His tomb is located at Udayagiri Fort in present-day Tamil Nadu.

#### Indelible signatures

The Dutch colonial period in Kerala was marked by economic ambition, military conflicts, and strategic alliances. While they successfully displaced the Portuguese and controlled key ports for over a century, their ignorance of local traditions and customs, rigid trade policies and military losses—especially against Travancore—led to their downfall. Eventually, British expansion sealed their fate, ending Dutch rule in Kerala permanently in 1795.

Though their reign was short-lived compared to the Portuguese and British, the Dutch influence is still visible in Kerala's architecture, trade history, and cultural legacy. Today, Dutch-era buildings and forts serve as historical reminders of Kerala's role in global colonial history. A Fort Cochin baker still bakes an old traditional Dutch cake (that modern Dutchmen have forgotten to make) in his bakery at Pattalam, and Kerala's toilets have the generic name of "kakoo", echoing the Dutch who contributed their "Kakhuis" to Malayalees. ■



Pic. Vikas Ramdas



Pic. Vikas Ramdas

While the cemetery is typically closed to the public, visitors can arrange special access to explore its tranquil corridors and pay homage to its storied past. Stepping through its gates is like stepping back in time - a journey into Fort Kochi's rich multicultural heritage and the lasting imprint left by the Dutch East India Company.

#### David Hall

David Hall, reminiscent of the Dutch glory of yesteryears, is situated on one side of the Parade Ground in Fort Kochi. The history and architectural grandeur of the halls woos many visitors. Today, it houses an art gallery and acts as a cultural centre to support young exponents of visual and performing art forms.

David Hall was built around 1695 by the Dutch East India Company as the residence of the renowned Dutch governor, Hendrick Adrian Van Rheede tot Drakenstein, who initiated a pioneering study on the flora of Kerala that resulted in the 12-volume classic, the *Hortus Malabaricus*. However, the building gets its name from a later occupant David Koder, a Jewish

business icon.

The characteristic features of this Dutch building have not been altered drastically either by time or by its various occupants. The recent alterations made in the David Hall are in adherence with the Dutch typology. The typical Dutch architecture is visible on all elements including the wooden roof which is made of flat face rafters, supported by horizontal beams and trusses.

The three-foot wide walls and the four-column windows are the other characteristics of the building and they add to its elegance. A well-manicured garden and the old trees in the courtyard too help the David Hall retain its grace intact.

#### Brunton Boatyard

This seemingly old, seemingly Dutch building is actually neither old nor Dutch, but showcases detailing particular to Dutch architecture—high ceilings, laterite and lime walls, and large windows.

#### Old Harbour House

Built in 1808 tea brokers Carrit Moran

#### Thakur House

Once a Dutch club, now a colonial relic, Thakur House charms with sea-kissed lawns, wooden floors, and whispers of Fort Kochi's trading legacy.



Pic. Vikas Ramdas



Pic. Vikas Ramdas

# ODATHA PADI

Birthplace of 'Hortus  
Malabaricus'

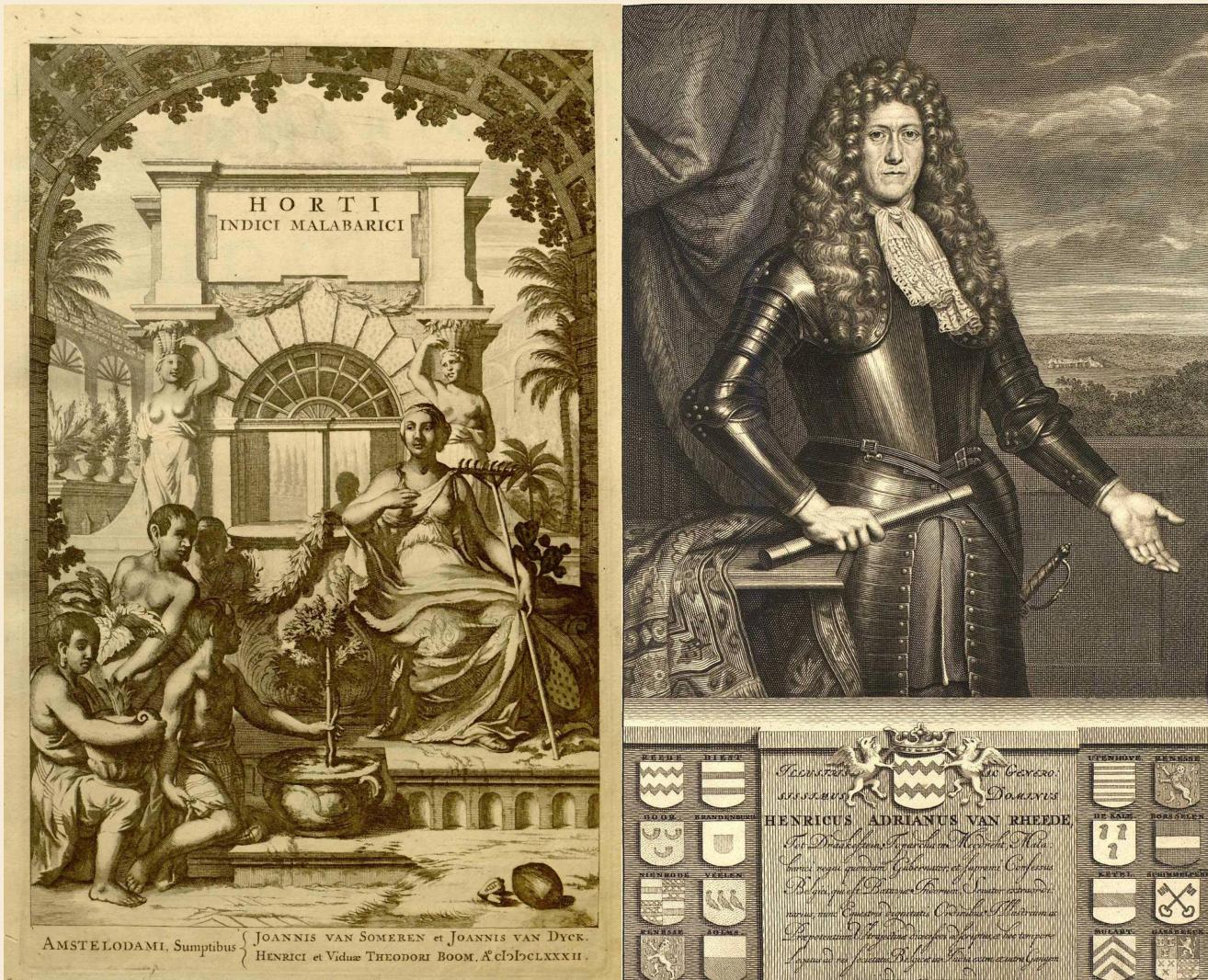
Anil Menon

In the heart of Fort Kochi's Veli area lies a site of immense historical and botanical significance—Odatha Padi, the birthplace of the renowned *Hortus Malabaricus* (The Garden of Malabar).

This monumental 17th-century botanical treatise, conceived by Hendrik Adriaan van Rhee de tot Drakenstein, the Dutch Governor of Malabar (1636–1691), remains a priceless treasure for scientists, medical practitioners, and historians worldwide. Yet, few know that its roots trace back to this unassuming corner of Kerala.

Van Rhee de's vision for *Hortus Malabaricus* was ambitious. He employed a team of 25 local botanists, scholars, and traditional healers to document and study the medicinal properties of Kerala's flora. Over nearly three decades, they meticulously described 740 plant species, cultivating many in a dedicated garden established in Fort Kochi.

This collaborative effort culminated in a 12-volume masterpiece first published in Latin between 1678 and 1693 in Amsterdam. The



text also recorded plant names in multiple languages, including Malayalam, Arabi-Malayalam, and Konkani, reflecting its inclusive approach to knowledge preservation. The work not only catalogued plants but also bridged cultures, blending indigenous botanical knowledge with European scientific methodologies. It became a cornerstone for understanding tropical plants and their medicinal uses, influencing botany and medicine for centuries.

#### Odatha Padi

While Hortus Malabaricus gained global acclaim, its birthplace—the garden in Fort Kochi—faded into obscurity. Today, all that remains are fragments: a solitary pillar and part of another that once marked

the entrance to the garden. These remnants stand at Odatha Padi, a name derived from the Dutch word "Hortha" (garden) and the Malayalam word "Padi" (step or entrance). The nearby Gumathore Odatha Road further hints at its origins; "Gumathore Odatha" is believed to be a localized version of "Commodore Hortus," meaning "Commodore's Garden."

Historical accounts suggest that this garden likely housed a chemical laboratory where researchers studied plant properties. The frontispiece of Hortus Malabaricus even includes an illustration of the garden gate, offering a glimpse into what might have been. However, time has erased most physical traces of this once-thriving hub

of botanical research. Odatha Padi's connection to Hortus Malabaricus underscores its importance as a site of cultural and scientific heritage. Yet, this significance remains largely unknown to many. The neglect of this historical landmark contrasts sharply with the enduring legacy of the book it birthed—a testament to Kerala's rich biodiversity and traditional knowledge systems.

Reviving awareness about Odatha Padi could serve as an opportunity to honor this forgotten chapter in history. It stands not only as the birthplace of one of botany's greatest works but also as a symbol of cross-cultural collaboration and scientific inquiry. ■



Pic. Vikas Ramdas

## Dutch-built heritage like David Hall and Kashi Art Café in Fort Kochi blend colonial charm with clever design, echoing a legacy of adaptation and elegance.



and Company., the Old Harbour House is a deceptively simple structure that blends of Dutch and Portuguese architecture. The Dutch influence is prominent in the arches of the building while the Portuguese feature is revealed in the setting up of the courtyard. Initially, used to house sailors, it later became the residence of the officials of the tea broking firm before being converted to a heritage hotel. The Old Harbour House owes its grandeur to the skilled craftsmanship of the engineers and workers of the early 19th century. Large arched entrance and red-tiled roof are some characteristics of the Old Harbour House and its solid structure will never escape the attention of the visitors. The building, with its well-maintained garden and its great view of the waterfront, has a charm that is refreshing given the changing contours of the Kochi skyscape.

### Kashi Art Café

For art lovers and enthusiasts, this little cafe and art gallery housed in an old Dutch row-house on Burgher Street is a must-visit. In Dutch, Burgher means clerk. During the Dutch reign, clerks and other officials lived in these row-houses built houses adhering

to the Dutch style. It is in such a house that Kashi Art Cafe, a prime haunt of art lovers, is located. Dorries Younger, a Dutch woman, renovated the house to launch the beautiful cafe. Soon, the place turned out to be one of the favourite hangouts of both Kochi denizens as well as foreigners. Known for bringing contemporary art to Kerala, here you can find the freshest ideas in art, along with a freshly brewed cup of coffee to go with them...

Major structures at Fort Kochi reflect the Dutch and British architectural styles, each pulling down existing structures to mount their own. For the Dutch, Fort Kochi wasn't just about building on the past; it was about building for the future, a future that included the inevitable monsoon floods. The region's geography demanded a clever solution. And so, the Dutch two-storey houses rose, practical and resilient.

While the ground floor, cool and dark, served as a robust storage space for barrels of spices and the tools of trade, the living quarters, elevated and airy, provided a refuge from the dampness below. The Dutch architecture here reveals a direct response to the environment. The houses feel solid and grounded, with a sense of quiet strength.

These buildings are not mere historical relics; they are living testaments to the Dutch presence, a tangible connection to a bygone era. The thick stone walls, the high ceilings, the practical layout – they all speak of a people who adapted, who understood the land and built accordingly. ■

### Image credits:

1. Fort Kochi (Old): British Library, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=15646083>
2. Fort Emmanuel Gunnery: Malayalam Wikipedia, CC BY 2.5, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=12611420>





## KTM'S WEDDING AND MICE CONCLAVE FROM AUG 14 TO 16

India's first Wedding and MICE Conclave to be held in Kochi from August 14 to 16 will act as a B2B networking platform for the integrated development of the tourism sector in the State, Tourism Minister Mohamed Riyas has said. Announcing the conclave, being organized by Kerala Travel Mart Society (KTM Society) in collaboration with the State Tourism Department, Mr. Riyas said the conclave aims to tap Kerala's potential in the fast-growing Wedding and MICE segment, leveraging the State's unique advantages to transform it into a global MICE and wedding tourism hub. Recalling the government's farsighted efforts to sustain and develop the tourism sector during the Covid Pandemic, the Minister said the State Tourism Department has since then done extensive marketing within and outside the country to showcase Kerala's potential for Destination Wedding and MICE tourism. Other than

five-star hotels and resorts, the Tourism Department will focus on the development of home stays, PWD rest houses and tourism guest houses to attract more tourists into the State as part of the integrated development of the sector, he noted.

The KTM and Tourism Department with the help of private enterprises facilitate a seamless and enjoyable experience for tourists who visit the state for destination weddings and MICE tourism, the minister said. Development of the tourism sector and a steady surge in tourist arrivals will propel the overall social and financial condition of the society. From auto drivers to resort owners, everyone involved will have the opportunity to prosper, said Mr. Riyas.

"Our efforts have proved to be a success with an estimated 1000 destination weddings being conducted in various tourist locations across Kerala in the last one year alone. When we examine the post

Covid era, the graph of tourist inflow in the state is higher than global and national average, the minister noted. Apart from the natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, panoramic beaches, back waters and a host of other factors including world class hospitality, infrastructure and road connectivity make Kerala a highly promising destination for wedding and MICE tourism," said Mr. Riyas.

Tourism Secretary K. Biju, KTM Society President Jose Pradeep, Secretary S. Swaminathan, Immediate past president Baby Mathew Somatheeram, and former presidents E. M. Najeeb and Abraham George also attended the press meet.

So far 360 buyers from within the country and 40 from abroad have registered for the conclave, which is expected to go up in the coming days. Also 65 sellers who are part of the MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) Wedding sector have

also registered for the event. The inaugural session of the conclave will be held at 5 p.m. at the Grand Hyatt in Bolgatty Island, Kochi on August 14. The business meetings and exhibitions on the subsequent days will be held at Le Meridien.

"With 'Center Stage Kerala' as the focal theme, the conclave seeks to leverage Kerala's reputation as one of world's most-preferred destinations to ramp up MICE and Wedding Tourism," said Jose Pradeep. "The conference will bring together organizers of wedding, corporate conferences, operators of large convention centers and tourism and hospitality service providers under a single umbrella, for a calibrated promotion of the

segment," he added. The meet will host training camps, innovative marketing strategies, logistics and technology deployment in collaboration with large MICE and wedding companies, besides using local supply chains. An exhibition being held on the sidelines of the event will serve as a platform for businesses with extensive experience in the MICE sector to showcase their products. Wedding planners, luxury resorts, destination wedding venues, floral designers, photographers, catering units, and bridal services providers will have the opportunity to display their talent.

The buyers coming for the conference will be taken to places across the state such as Kochi, Munnar,

Kumarakom, Kollam, Kovalam, Thrissur, Kozhikode, Wayanad and Bekal. The meet will prominently showcase attractive wedding tourism sites such as beaches, backwaters and mountains. Cultural heritage, ancient architecture and delicious cuisine will also be integrated with the event's theme. The business meetings at the conclave will be held as per a schedule prepared in advance. The event will hold expert-led training workshops and exhibitions of all the attractions that Kerala has to offer in the wedding industry. There will be business meetings from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm on August 15 and 16, besides seminars with the participation of international experts. ■



## GOVT. SANCTIONS RS 75 LAKH FOR MTB KERALA 2025

Kerala Government has sanctioned Rs 75 lakh for organising the seventh edition of the International Mountain Biking Challenge (MTB Kerala 2025), which has put Kerala on the global map of mountain biking competitions.

The MTB Kerala, promoted by the State Tourism Department, will be held at the Priyadarshini Tea Plantation in Mananthavady. Indian and foreign cycling stars will participate in the championship.

The amount has been sanctioned for the championship, including the stars' travel expenses, accommodation, prize money, and other expenses.

The Kerala Adventure Tourism Promotion Society (KATPS) and Wayanad District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC) are organising the championship in collaboration with the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) and the Cycling Federation of India (CFI).

"Adventure tourism is drawing much attention globally," Tour-

ism and Public Works Minister PA Mohamed Riyas said. "Kerala has excellent potential to emerge as a destination for adventure sports." The five-kilometre track where the MTB Kerala competition is held is at an altitude of 3,000 feet. The championship's main attraction is the cross-country competition section, which covers terrains such as mud, rocks, and water. Cyclists from many foreign countries are expected to participate in the tournament. In addition, amateur competitions for Indian cyclists will be organised. The winners of this race will compete with foreign players in the MTB Kerala International Competition. MTB Kerala has also been included in the calendar of Union Cycliste Internationale, the Switzerland-based world governing body for sports cycling.

The competition categories are International Cross Country XCO (Elite Men), National Cross Country XCO (Elite Men), National Cross Country XCO (Elite Women), Intermediate Cross Country XCO (Elite Men), and Intermediate Cross Country XCO (Elite Women).

# KERALA ALLOTS RS 6 CRORE FOR RT INITIATIVES IN ECO-FRIENDLY WASTE MANAGEMENT, TRAINING



Kerala Government has approved Rs 6.01 crore in funding for projects promoting eco-friendly waste management and providing training for various Responsible Tourism (RT) units, especially those of women. The funds have been allocated for biogas plants for homestays, carbon-neutral packages, training programs, and publicity campaigns through four orders.

Biogas plants will be provided to homestays operated by women registered with the State RT Mission Society. This project will initially be implemented in one homestay in each district. Additionally, two waste treatment plants will be allocated to one Experience Ethnic Cuisine and one Agri Tourism unit in each district. Five kayaking units registered with the RT Mission Society will receive Rs 40,000 each as financial assistance to implement carbon-neutral packages. Funds have

also been set aside to implement Kerala Digital Science Innovation and Technology Mission's recommendations for other programmes promoting environmental responsibility.

The total amount allocated for environmental projects is Rs 50 lakh, while Rs 75 lakh has been designated for various training initiatives under different RT Mission societies. This includes training on digital marketing and artificial intelligence in the tourism sector, as well as training on RT projects for newly elected local government representatives. As many as 100 workshops would be organised across the state to create awareness among teachers and Plus one, Plus Two and college level students about RT principles and packages so that they could consider visiting RT project sites during their study tours.

Additionally, allocations have been made to raise awareness about

these projects, conduct special training programmes in the Athirappally region to engage the tribal community through responsible tourism and general tourism activities, operate the RT Mission Society Training Centre, and manage various training programmes, including a digital training initiative.

The state has also allocated Rs 76 lakh for organising a cultural exchange programme and a cultural tourism policy preparation workshop to promote the significant local interventions of the RT Mission activities such as STREET, PEPPER and Model Tourism Villages, to an international audience. This initiative also includes a training programme to promote cultural tourism and develop policies that involve global RT communities. Further, the government has allocated Rs 2 crore to promote and market the RT Mission Society and another Rs 2 crore for other regular expenditures. ■



## CENTRE CLEARS KERALA'S TWO BIG TOURISM PROJECTS

In a big boost to Kerala Tourism, the Centre has given administrative and financial sanction for two major projects with a total outlay of Rs 169.05 crore for enhancing the tourist appeal of water tourism in Alappuzha and the Malampuzha Garden in Palakkad.

Both the projects were submitted by the State Tourism Department, seeking clearance under the Swadesh Darshan 2.0 scheme of the Union Tourism Ministry. The Detailed Project Report (DPR) drawn up by the State Tourism Department was reviewed by the Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee of the Union Tourism Ministry.

The 'Alappuzha- A Global Water Wonderland' project, which seeks to integrate the water tourism of the area, involves a total cost of Rs 93.17 crore, while the 'Enhancement

of Tourist Experience at Malampuzha Garden and Leisure Park' project is estimated to cost Rs 75.87 crore.

Welcoming the Centre's decision, Kerala Tourism Minister P.A. Mohamed Riyas said these projects will reinforce Kerala's standing as a major destination of the country, boosting both international and domestic tourism.

The Global Water Wonderland project will firm up Alappuzha's position as a global water tourism hub and bring benefits to the sectoral stakeholders and the local community in the entire south Kerala, the Minister said.

"Malampuzha Garden and Leisure Park has for long been one of the most-visited tourism sites of north Kerala. The implementation of this project will be a further boost to tourism in north Kerala by making

the site more appealing to visitors," he said.

The Minister recalled that he had taken up these projects with the Union Tourism Minister during his visit to the State capital earlier this month for the review of tourism activities in Kerala.

The Alappuzha project envisages beach front development, canal side transformation, waste management systems, an international cruise terminal and facilities for cultural and community engagements.

The Malampuzha project envisages development of theme parks, water fountains, recreational zones, walkways, cultural sites, hospitality areas, landscaping, improved amenities and sustainable waste management systems.

Both the projects are to be completed before 31st March 2026. ■



The Cochin International Airport (CIAL) is on track to become a pioneering global aviation hub with the establishment of a dedicated railway station, seamlessly integrating rail, road, water, and air transport networks. This ambitious project, initially conceived in 2010 and recently revitalized with a strategically relocated site, promises to enhance connectivity, reduce transportation costs, and stimulate economic growth in the region.

The newly proposed Cochin Airport Railway Station will be situated approximately 500 metres towards the Aluva side from the previously considered location near the Akkaparambu railway gate. The site comprises land already owned by the Railways, with the added advantage of adjacent land belonging to CIAL being available for future expansion on both the eastern and western sides.

A key benefit of the new railway station will be the provision of a cost-effective transportation alternative for both domestic and international tourists. Upon arrival by train, passengers will no longer be solely reliant on taxis, gaining access to budget-friendly onward travel options. Furthermore, the establishment of the railway station is anticipated to generate new employment opportunities and foster business growth in the surrounding areas.

CIAL's vision extends beyond mere rail connectivity. With the forthcoming operationalization of Kochi's waterways to the airport and the planned extension of the Metro Rail to the airport premises, Cochin International Airport is set to join an exclusive group of global airports offering a comprehensive integration of air, rail, road, and water transport modes.

Adding to the synergistic benefits,

the recently inaugurated cargo village at the airport is conveniently located in close proximity to the proposed railway station. This will provide a significant advantage to exporters, enabling the efficient and cost-effective transportation of cargo from various parts of Kerala and neighboring states directly to the airport via rail.

CIAL has indicated its willingness to consider handing over its land to the Railways for the realization of the Kochi Airport Railway station. The current design for the station includes two platforms, for which the existing railway-owned land is sufficient. Plans are also underway to introduce electric or hydrogen-powered bus services. Additionally, CIAL is exploring the feasibility of launching buggy services or constructing a skywalk to further enhance passenger convenience and accessibility. ■



## Idukki site yields remnants of ancient human settlement

Excavation carried out by the Kerala Council for Historical Research (KCHR), at Aanappara in Anakkara village in Idukki district, has thrown up evidence of dwellings situated in close proximity to burial sites in ancient Kerala. The excavation, conducted between December 2024 and February 2025, has revealed a significant co-location of a settlement and a megalithic burial ground, which is stated to be the first-ever such sighting in the State.

The remnants of a human settlement was found located approximately 150 metres from a burial site. KCHR chairperson K.N. Ganesh said this was a rare finding in Kerala's archaeological history, emphasizing that while megalithic burials are widespread, associated settlement remains have been



exceptionally scarce, thus filling a crucial gap in the understanding of the region's early historic period. The excavation, led by Dr. Dineesh Krishnan and V. Selva Kumar, yielded diverse array of artefacts, including pottery fragments such as black and red ware, black ware, coarse red ware, and russet-coated painted ware, along with iron fragments, terracotta discs, stone and glass beads, iron slags, and notably, etched white carnelian beads. These findings offer valuable insights into the material culture of the ancient inhabitants. The finds will be subjected to scientific testing to accurately determine their age. The Aanappara site is geographically significant, featuring a large granite rock formation where the ancient settlement is located on its eastern, southeastern, and northeastern slopes, with habitation evidence extending westward. The discovery includes a cist burial found south of the settlement and a menhir identified nearby, indicating a potentially extensive ancient landscape. ■

# കാഴ്ചയുടെ വർണ്ണ വസ്ത്രം

വൈവിധ്യ സമൂദ്രിയാൽ  
ധന്യമാണ് വയനാടൻ  
പക്ഷിലോകം.

ടി.എ.ഇയിൻ

**ബോ** കമ്മൺസുല്ല  
സാഭാരപ്പിയർ  
ഇരുവട്ടമെക്കിലും  
കാണാനും അനുഭവിക്കാനും കൊതി  
കുന്ന ദേശമായി വികസിക്കുകയാണ്  
വയനാട്. പ്രകൃതി ഒരുക്കിയ വിസ്മയകാഴ്ച  
ചാകളും അതിസന്നദ്ധയായ ചാലിയ പൊതു  
കവും ശോതരഭീവിതത്തിന്റെ നേർക്കാഴ്ച  
കളും മാത്രമല്ല സാഭാരികളെ വയനാടൻ  
മല്ലിലേക്ക് ആകർഷിക്കുന്നത്. വന്മാരിക  
ഇടുകയും അതുപുറിവ ഇന്ത്യൻഭിൽപ്പട്ടക  
കൂടാനും സാമ്പാഡാനുള്ളടക്കയും ആവാസവും  
സമയമുാണ് ഇവിടുക്കിലും.

ക്രൂസർ, കോഴിക്കോട്, മലപ്പറാഡ്, കർണ്ണാട  
കയലിലെ മെസുരു, കുർഗ്, തമിഞ്ചാടിലെ  
ബിലഡിൽ ബിലുകളുമായി അതിരുപ്പകിടുന്ന  
വയനാടിനെ ശ്രദ്ധേയമാക്കുന്നതാണ് വന  
ത്തിനകത്തും പുറത്തുമായി വാംശിച്ചു  
കിടക്കുന്ന പക്ഷിലോകം. കാഷിയും കു  
രുമുളകും എലപാറും തേയിലയും നെല്ലും  
വിളക്കുന്ന വയനാടിന്റെ മിറുക്കുടുക്കയാണ്

പക്ഷി വൈവിധ്യം പ്രകൃതിയെ പ്രണയി  
കുന്ന സാഭാരികളുടെ വ്യാദയത്തെ തൊ  
ട്ടുന്നതുമന്ത്രാണാണ് പക്ഷികളെ കണക്കും  
കേടും വയനാടൻ വഴികളിലും വരുന്നതു

300ലീപാരം ഇന്നു കിണ്ണികളുടെ വാസ ഭൂമി  
യാണ് വയനാട്. വനാ-വന്മാരി വകുപ്പിലും  
നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ വനത്തിലും മലത്തലപ്പുകളിലും  
ഡിസ്ട്രിക്ട് നടത്തിയും നടത്തിയ സർവ്വേ  
കളിലാണ് ഇത്തരയിക്കം ഇന്നു പക്ഷികളുടെ  
സാമ്പാഡം സ്ഥിരിക്കില്ല. പക്ഷികളിൽ തണ്ട്  
ശീയരും ദേശാടനം നടത്തുന്നവയും ഉണ്ട്.

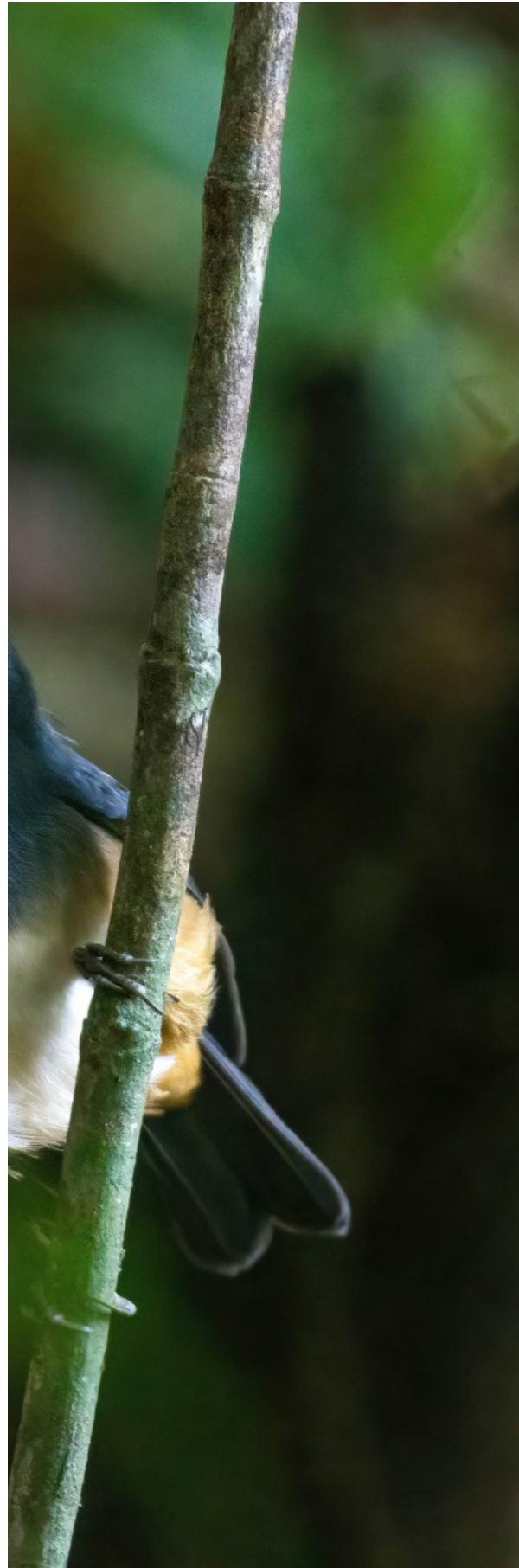
## ആകാശ പീംപുകളെ ധന്യമാക്കി

### 120 കിലോമീറ്റർ

എക്കേണം 120 ഇന്നു കിണ്ണികളാണ് വയനാട്ടിൽ ആകാശ പീംപുകളിൽ (മലത്തലപ്പുകൾ) വസിക്കുന്നത്.

പശ്ചിമാംധ്ര മലാർന്നെയിൽ വയനാടിന്റെ തെക്കേ അറുത്തിനും വടക്ക് ക്രൂസർ ബിലു  
യിലെ ആറ്റം വന്മാരി സങ്കേതവുമായി





അതിൽത്തു പകിടുന്ന അനുഭവായെക്കും ഇടയിൽ നിവാരി ആകാര വീപ്പകളുണ്ട്. സമുദ്രത്തിന്റെനു 1,500 മീറ്ററിനു മുകളിൽ സവിശേഷമായ ആവാസ വ്യവസ്ഥ നിലനിൽക്കുന്ന പർവത ശ്രേണികളെയാണ് ആകാര വീപ്പകളായി കണക്കാക്കുന്നത്. സമുദ്രത്തിന്റെ നീന് 2,100 മീറ്റർ വരെ ഉയരത്തിലുള്ള കുറിച്ചുമല, ബാണാസുരമല, സൗരമ്യമല, ബ്രഹ്മഗിരി, ചെറുവ, വെള്ളംമല, മണംമല, അമുമല, വല്ലൂത്തിമല എന്നിവ ആകാരവീപ്പകളുടെ പട്ടികയിൽപ്പെട്ടു. വോല-പുരി വന്നുമുച്ചുയാം ഈ പ്രദേശങ്ങളുടെ സവിശേഷതയാണ്. തദ്ദേശവാസികൾ വാണികുന്നതുമായ നിരവധി വാസി വിശ്വാലണ്ടുകളുടെ ആവാസ വ്യവസ്ഥയാണ് ഈ മലനിരകൾ.

## മാന്നാസുര വിലക്ഷണി

ପାରିମିଳ୍ୟକ୍ରମାବଳୀରେକାଳୀରେ ପ୍ରତିମନ୍ଦରାକୁରୀ  
କୁଣ୍ଡ ପାଠକେନ୍ଦ୍ରକାରୀଙ୍କୁମୁଖୀୟତିରେ ମହାରାଜ  
ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀକାଳୀରେ ମହାରାଜ କାଣ୍ଠୁର ପକ୍ଷଶିଳ୍ପିର  
ମାଣ୍ଡ ବ୍ୟାଣୀବ୍ସୁର ପିଲାପଣ. ଶିଳ୍ପୀଯିତି  
ବ୍ୟାଗମଲ, ବୈକ୍ରିମଲ, ବ୍ୟାଣୀବ୍ସୁମଲ  
ଏଗନ୍ତିବିନ୍ଦନାଳୀରେ ହୁଏ ହନ୍ତ ପକ୍ଷିକାଳେ କା  
ଣ୍ଠୁର ରୂପାବରିଶିଳୀରୀଙ୍କ 1400-2400

ମୁଣ୍ଡର ଉଦୟରତତିଲାଙ୍କୁ ବ୍ୟାଙ୍ଗାଙ୍କୁ ଛିଲପି  
ରେଣ୍ଟ ବାସାଂ ଅରୁଣୋଦ୍ୟତପତତିରେ ପାଶକାର  
ଭିଷଣୀ ଦେଖିବୁଗା ପକ୍ଷିକଙ୍ଗର ଗଣତନ୍ତ୍ରି  
ଲାଙ୍କୁ ମୁହଁ କିନ୍ତୁ ଯିବୁଗାରେ ବ୍ୟାଙ୍ଗା  
ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ପରିରକ୍ଷଣକୁ ପାଠିବାକୁ ଆଏ  
ଯିକୁଗା କିନ୍ତୁ ଯିବୁଗାରେ ପକ୍ଷି  
ଗାସେଷକ ପାଇଯାଙ୍କ ଲୋକତରେ ଝାକୁରେଇ  
2,500 ବ୍ୟାଙ୍ଗାଙ୍କୁ ଛିଲପିଙ୍ଗାଙ୍କୁରେତ୍ରେ  
ଦେଇଯାଗିଛାନ୍ତି ଦେଇ ଲାଗୁଇଲେ ଉଠିବେଳି  
ପକ୍ଷିଯିବୁଗାରେତ୍ରେ ତଣୁପୁଜୁଛ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେରଣେ  
ଛିଲା କାହିଁକାହାକାହିଁକାହିଁକାହିଁକାହିଁ  
ଦୟିଲାଙ୍କୁ ବାସାଂ ମୁଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ନାଲ୍ବିର ପକ୍ଷିକ  
ଭାବରୁଙ୍କା କୁକୁମାଯାଙ୍କୁ ମୁହଁ ତେବେକୁଣ୍ଟି  
ପାଣରୁଙ୍କା ପ୍ରାଣିକଙ୍ଗମାଙ୍କ ଭକ୍ଷଣା  
ବୈଜ୍ଞାନିକ କଣ୍ଠପ୍ରକରିକା ବ୍ୟାଙ୍ଗାଙ୍କ ଛିଲା  
ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକତର୍ଯ୍ୟାଙ୍କ ଲେଖିବୁ ଶ୍ରୀନିଃ ଅରୁଙ୍କ  
ଶରୀରତନ୍ତ୍ରରେ ମୁକର ଭାବାଂ ନ୍ତରୁ କରୁଥିବୁ  
ନିରମାଙ୍କ ରାତି ଭାଗରେତ୍ରେ ଅର୍ଯ୍ୟିକରୁବାରେ ପା  
କାଙ୍କ କିନ୍ତୁ ଯିବୁଗା.

കരിംചെന്തൻ പാറ്റപിടിയൻ

കരുതൽ തലയും ഓണമ്പ് ശരീരവുമുള്ള  
ബഹിയ പക്ഷിയാണ് കർണ്ണരച്ചവൻ  
പാറോട്ടിയൻ. സമുദ്രത്തിൽനിന്നു 1,400  
മീറ്ററിലെക്കും ഉയരത്തിലെണ്ണ് സാന്നിധ്യം.  
നിലത്തുനിന്നു നേരു മീറ്റർ വരെ ഉയര  
തതിൽ ലഭിക്കുന്ന പ്രാണികളാണ് പ്രധാന  
ഭക്ഷണം. ചോലക്കാട്ടിനോടു ചേർന്നു പ  
ുത്തമേടുകളിൽ പുല്ലിൻ്റെ കുണ്ടകൾകുള്ളി  
ലാണ് കുട്ടിയെന്നുണ്ട്.

## നീലഗിരി ഷോലക്കിളി

ତିଲାରିମିଳିଗୁଡ଼ ପକଶିଯାରୀ ଗୀଲାଗିଲି ଷେଲାପକିଣ୍ଟି  
ସମ୍ମାନିକିଳିଗୀନ୍ତିକୁ 1200 ମିଳିଟିଲ କୁଦାତରୀ  
ଉଦ୍ୟାନରୀମିଳିଗୁଡ଼ ପୋଲାକାରୁକାଲିମାରୀ ହୁଏଯେ କା  
ଣ୍ଣାନୀରେ ଅଭିଭାବତରୀ ଗେନ୍ତି ରାଜନୀ ବେଳୁନ୍ତ ଗୀରୀ  
କାଣ୍ଣାରେ ଅଭିକାରାକୁଳିଲାରୀ ହୁଏତେକାନୀରେ  
ମଧ୍ୟାନ୍ତିକୁ ପତିକୁ ହୃଦୟିଲେ କାଣ୍ଣାନୁ ଚେରିଯ ପ୍ରାଣି  
କରି, ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକୁଳି ଏଣ୍ଣିବ୍ୟାରୀ ମୁଖ୍ୟାବକଷଣାରେ ପରମା  
ଯାଇ ରୁକ୍ଷ ନୀରୁତି ଉଦ୍ୟାନରୀଲ କୁଣିରାତ ରୁକ୍ଷମାରୀ  
ପାକିଗୁକ. ନୀକାବାରୁକୁ ନିପତତୁ ତୁଳନିତିତୁଳନିଯାରୀ  
ସାତ୍ତ୍ୱାରେ ଲୋକତରୀ ଗୀଲାଗିଲିଯିଲୁଙ୍କ ବତନାକୁଲୁଙ୍କ  
ମାତ୍ରମାରୀ ହୁଏ ପକଶି ହନ୍ତି ଉତ୍ତରିତରୀ.

## നീലതിനി ത്രഷ്ണ

പശ്ചിമാഭ്യന്തരിൽ ഉയരംകുറിയ മലനിരകളിൽ  
കാണുന്ന തഞ്ചേരിയ ഇന്ന് പക്ഷിയാണ് നിലപിടിപ്പിലെ  
ത്രംഖ് നിലത്തു തുക്കമിത്തതുള്ള പോകുന്ന ഇം ഇന്ന്  
പക്ഷികൾക്ക് സ്വീകരിക്കുന്ന വലിപ്പമുണ്ട്. മല്ലിലും ജീവിക്കരുളു  
യാണ് ദക്ഷിംഗുന്നം. ലഭിച്ച ശ്രീനം്കു കരുപ്പും വെള്ള  
യും കൂർന്നതാണ് നിരം.

പ്രാഥമിക് വാക്കുകൾ

ଓেଶାରାଟଙ୍କ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ରେଶେତୁକାହାତର୍କ ଛିଲ୍ଲୁଗୀରୀ  
ଏତରୁଗଣ ପ୍ରାଣେଷାରିକୁଙ୍ଗରୁବିତ୍ୟାଙ୍କେ ଘୁମୋଙ୍କେ ବାଢି  
ବୁଦ୍ଧି. ଅନ୍ୟାୟରୁବାନ୍ଦୀଯାଙ୍କେ ପରିଯାକୀଳ ହୁବରେ କା  
ଣ୍ଣାଙ୍କାରେ ସମ୍ମଗ୍ନରୀକରିତାଙ୍କୁ 1,500 ମିଲ୍ଲି ମରତାରୀଙ୍କେ  
ହୋଲକାଙ୍କରୁକାଳୀରେ ପାରିକରୁଗଣ ହୁବାଯେକେ ମରିଥକ  
ଲାଗିଥାନ୍ତି ପାରିଗିରିମାଙ୍କେ ଲାଇକ୍ସନ୍ତାରୀ ଅନ୍ତରାକ୍ଷି  
କୁଙ୍ଗରୁକିକାନ୍ତେକାରୀ ରେଣ୍ଟଗାରୀଙ୍କ ମଲିନୀରତାଙ୍କେ  
ଶରୀରପ୍ରକୃତି ଚିକିଟନକୁତର୍କେ ବୈଜ୍ଞାନିକ ରା କାଣାନ୍ତି ହୁଏ

വർഷം ഇന്ത്യയിൽ നടന്ന സർവ്വത്വിലാം എസ്സം വാർമ്മ സാന്നിധ്യം ചില്ലയിൽ ആരുമായി സമിൽക്കി ചെയ്ത്.

## നീലഗിരി ഫെറൈ കാച്ചർ

പാരിമില്ലെന്നതിൽ കാണുന്ന തങ്ക്കുറയ മുന്നു  
പക്ഷിയാണ് റിപാറി ഷോലകിളിയോട് സാമ്യപ്പെ  
മുള്ള റിപാറി എൻ്റെ കാച്ചി. മരങ്ങളിൽ ശാഖ  
മുതൽ ആറുംബര നീറ്റിൽ ഉയരമുള്ള ഭാഗങ്ങളിലാണ്  
ഇര തേടുന്നത്.

വയന്നൊടിലെ ആകാശ ദിപ്പുകൾ വിവിധയിനം വരെയു കിണ്ണികൾ, പുൽക്കുറവും കൾ, പുല്ലുകൾ, വെള്ളി തറിയൻ എന്നിവയാൽ സ്വന്നമാണ്. അവയുടെ പ്രജനന കേന്ദ്രത്തിലൂടെ പുൽങ്ങലുകളുടെ നംബരക്ഷ സാത്തിനു പ്രത്യേക പരിശീലന നൽകേണ്ടതുണ്ട് നും പ്രസന്നത പക്ഷി നിശ്ചിക്ഷകനും എഴു സൗംഖ്യ ഹോർ ഇക്കാളവി ആൻഡ് വൈൽഡ് ലൈഫ് ബയോളിജി ആയിരുന്നു നികെ. വിഷ്ണുവാസ് പിയുന്നു.

## നീർത്തടങ്ങളിൽ വർണ്ണ വിന്യാസം

എഴുപ്പ് വാടക്ക് ഭേദപ്പെട്ട് കാണിക്കിരുത്ത് ഭാഗമായി വയനാട് സോജ്യത്ത് മേഖലയ്ക്കി ബിവിഷന്മാ എഴുപ്പ് സെന്റർ ഫോറ്റ് ഇക്കൊള്ളിത് ആൻഡ് വൈവിഡ് ലൈപ്പ് ബാധയാളജിത്വം സംയുക്തമായി വയനാട് ടീരുപ്പ് പ്രധാന തല്ലിക്കുത്തടങ്കളിൽ പോതവർഷം സർവ്വേ നടത്തിയിരുന്നു. 48 മുന്താ റിപ്പോക്കഷികക്കാണ് സർവ്വേ സംസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ ക്രമീകൃതകിയത്. പനമരം കൈകാല്പിച്ചു, പാളിയിരുത്തുകാവ്, ആരുട്ടുതറ, കാരാപ്പുഴ, നെല്ലൂരുചാൽ, പേക്കാടി, കുറിവു, ബാണാസുര ഡാം

പക്ഷികളുടെ  
ശുസ്തദുമിയായ  
വയനാട്

விஸ்மய்கால்வக  
ஒரு ஸவாமிய  
பெறுகிறவேவ  
வருமானதைகுலா  
போகமென்றாகுல  
ஸஹாரிக்கிற  
அருக்கிணகு  
ஏசுமாகுக்காள்  
வயான் பகுதி  
தூர் அரோக்  
ஸ்ரீ ஸுஷ்மியா  
வயான் ஸஸு  
ஓலவு வாஜி  
விக்கு மிதமல்  
அதைப்புறவுமாய  
பக்ஷிரைவையிவுத்தி  
லாங் ரூபேயமாள்.





മലപ്പുറം, കോഴിക്കോട്, കല്ലുറു, കർണ്ണാടക, തമിഴ് നാട് ജില്ലകളുമായി അതിർ തൽ പജിട്ടുന്ന വയനാട് 300ൽപരം കിലീമീറ്ററും ഒരു വാസസ്ഥലമാണ്. പുൽമേടുകളും മലകളും മുളകു ആകാശവീഡുകളിൽ മാത്രം 120യോളം ഇന്ത്യൻ ഇതിൽ മാണാസുര ചില പൻ, നിലവിൽ ഷോപകിളി, നിലവിൽ ത്രഷ്ട്, മുട്ടണി വാർ ബുർ തുടങ്ങി ലോകത്തെ ത്രഷ്ടാലും അപുർവ്വമായവയും ഉണ്ട്.

റിസർവ്വയർ, അമ്മവയൽ, ഗോളുർ എന്നിവ ജില്ലയിലെ പ്രധാന നീർത്താടണ്ണലാണ്. ചേരകോഴി, അരിവാർക്കാക്ക്, ചുള്ളി എരണ്ട, പുള്ളിച്ചുണ്ടൻ താരാവ്, കന്യാസ് ത്രീ കൊക്ക്, പച്ച എരണ്ട, ചാത്രതലയൻ തിന്തിരി, കയൽപരുന്ത്, പാവ് പരുന്ത്, വെള്ളക്കാക്കാൻ കുളങ്കോഴി, പട്ടകോഴി, ചാരമുണ്ണി, മെത്രലയൻ അരിവാർക്കാക്കാൻ, കൊന്യൻ കുയിൽ, വാലൻ താമരകോഴി, ചെറിയ നീർക്കാക്ക, താമരകോഴി മുണ്ടനെ നിലുന്നതാണ് ഇപ്പുകഴികളുടെ നിർ.

#### ചേരകോഴി

നിർത്താടണ്ണലിൽ കാണുന്നതിൽ വശര നാൾ ദീഷ്ടി നേർണ്ണിനു പക്ഷിയിനമാണ് ചേരകോഴി. കാഴ്ചയിൽ പാനിഞ്ഞ പോലെയുള്ള റൂ പക്ഷികൾ ബാണാ സുര-കാരാഷു റിസർവ്വേയറുകളിലാണ്. മീനാണ് പ്രധാന ഭക്ഷണം. നീണു കഴുതുന്ന കരുപ്പുനിറവുമാണ് ചേരകോഴിക്ക്. പ്രജനകാലത്ത് പുറത്ത് സുർണ്ണിനിറ പ്രത്യുക്ഷമാകും.

#### അരിവാർ കൊക്കൻ

വയനാട്ടിൽ പ്രധാനമായും പനമരെ കൊണ്ടുതിൽ കാണുന്ന ഒലപക്ഷിയാണ് അരിവാർ കൊക്കൻ. മറു വില മുന്നേ ഒരു അപേക്ഷിച്ച് എല്ലാത്തിൽ കുടുതൽ ഉണ്ടെങ്കിലും സാരകൾ പ്രാധാന്യം അർഹിക്കുന്ന പക്ഷിയാണിൽ. കേരളത്തിൽ അരിവാർ കൊക്കൻ ഏറ്റവും കുടുതൽ കുടുക്കുട്ടുന്ന ഇടമാണ് പനമരെ കൊണ്ടുപാഠിക്കും. അരിവാർ കൊക്കനെ ദേശാടനകിളിയായി ആളുകൾ തെളിഞ്ഞിടുന്നുണ്ട്. വയനാ ടിനു പുറത്ത് തമിഞ്ചീട്ടിലേപ്പുകും കർണ്ണ ദക്കയിലേക്കും ഇവ സാമ്പാർക്കാറുണ്ട്. എന്നാൽ പ്രജനനം സ്വഭാവനെന്തെല്ലാണ്. വയലുകളിലും പുഴകളിലും തോട്ടുകളിലും മറു യാരുളു വെള്ളവും ഭക്ഷണ ലഭ്യതയും മുള മഴക്കാലമാണ് അരിവാർ കൊക്കൻ്റെ പ്രജനന കാലം. എന്തെങ്കിൽ, തെവിഞ്ഞാൽ തുറ നേരിയവയാണ് പ്രധാന ഭക്ഷണം. വെളുത്തത ശരീരവും കരുതത തലയുമാണ് ഈ ഇന്നു പക്ഷിക്ക്. വളരെ ഉയരത്തിൽ ഒരുപാടും രം പറക്കാൻ ശേഷിയുണ്ട്.



### താമരക്കോഴി

അഡികം ആഴ്ചില്ലാത്തതും ആനുല്പം താമരയും വളരുന്നതുമായ ഇലാശയങ്ങളിലാണ് താമരക്കോഴികളുള്ളത്. ആനുല്പകളുടെയും താമരകളുടെയും ഇലകളിലൂടെ നടന്നുപോകാൻ പ്രോപ്പത്തമായ നീംഭുമെ പിന്തു കാൽിവിലുകളാണ് ഇലയ്ക്കുള്ളത്. വെള്ളയും പച്ചയും കലർന്ന നീംമാണ്. കോഴിയുടെതുപോലെ നീംഭുമാണ് വാൽ. മീൻ, പ്രാണി, തവള തുടങ്ങിയവയെയാണ് ആഹാരിക്കുന്നത്. പാകുന്നതിനു പച്ചമേ നീംഭുമന്തിനും ശേഷിയുണ്ട്. വയനാട്ടിൽ കാരാപ്പുഴ റിസർവ്വേയർഡിൽ ഭാഗത്തെളിൽ താമരക്കോഴികളെ കാണാം.

### നീംഭുമാഞ്ചി

കാഴ്ചയിൽ ഭാഗിയും സാധാരണ കോഴിയുടെ വലിപ്പമുള്ളതുമായ പക്ഷിയാണ് നീംഭുമാഞ്ചി. താമരയിൽ മകുടം പോലെ ചുവന്ന ഭാഗമുണ്ട്. കോഴിയുടെതുപോലുള്ള കൊക്കാണ്. ഇലാശയത്തിൽ അഭികുകളിലൂടെ പുലിപ്പിയാണ് മുട്ടയിടുന്നത്.

### പുള്ളിച്ചുണ്ടൻ താരാവ്

ജീലിയിൽ പൊതുവെ കാണുന്ന നീംഭുമാഞ്ചിയിനാണ് പുള്ളിച്ചുണ്ടൻ താരാവ് വലിപ്പമുള്ളതുപോലെ താരാവ് വലിപ്പമുള്ള പക്ഷിയാണിൽ. മത്സ്യമാണ് പ്രധാന ഭക്ഷണം. കൊക്കിൽ അശ്വഭാഗത്തു വച്ചും വച്ചും വെള്ളം പുള്ളിച്ചുണ്ടൻ താരാവാണ്.



**മലരനാശ കീഷ്ണി നേരിട്ടുന്ന കഴുകൻമാർക്ക് വയനാട് പ്രധാന ആവാസവ്യവസ്ഥയാണ്.**

**ചുട്ടികഴുകൻ, കാതിലക്കുകൻ, തവിട്ടുകഴുകൻ എന്ന് വരയ കാടുകളിൽ കാണാം. ഇവയും പുറമേ നീംഭുമി താരാവും കൊക്കാണും മരത്തിനു മുകളിൽനിന്നും താഴേക്കു വിഴും കുഞ്ഞുമാരുളു തൊട്ടട്ടുത്ത ഇലാശയത്തിലേക്ക് തുള്ളപ്പക്ഷി നടത്തിയാണ് കൊക്കാണുപോകുന്നത്. രാത്രി ഇലാശയങ്ങൾ വിശ്രമിക്കുന്ന ചുട്ടി എരഞ്ഞെക്കൾ രാത്രിയാണ് ഇരു പിടിക്കുന്നത്. മീൻ ഉൾപ്പെടെ ഇലാശയത്തിൽ ലഭ്യമായ വിഭവങ്ങളാണ് ഭക്ഷണം. പുള്ളിപ്പിളി പോലെ പ്രത്യേക ശ്രദ്ധ**

കുയും തവിട്ടും നിന്തുവശി കലർന്നതാണ് ശരീരം എല്ലാത്തിൽ കുറവാണ്. ബാണാ സുര, കാരാപ്പുഴ റിസർവ്വേയറുകളിലും ഇടയ്ക്ക് നെൽപാടങ്ങളിലും ഇവയെ കാണാം. ദിശാമുദ്ദരും പറിക്കാൻ പ്രാപ്തിയുണ്ട്.

### പ്രാശ്രംഭം

താമരയും ആനുല്പമുള്ള ചെറിയ ഇലാശയങ്ങളിൽ കാണുന്ന ചെറിയ ഇലം പക്ഷിയാണ് പച്ച എരണ്ട. വെള്ളവും പച്ചയും കലർന്ന നീംമാണ് ആണ് പക്ഷികൾക്ക് പാകുന്നുമോ ചിന്കിൽ പച്ചനിംബി കാണാം.

### ചുള്ളം എരണ്ടം

പനമരം, കാരാപ്പുഴ ഭാഗങ്ങളിൽ കാണുന്ന പക്ഷിയിനമാണ് ചുള്ളം എരണ്ടം. നല്ല തവിട്ടുനിറത്തിലുള്ള പക്ഷിയാണിൽ. മരത്തിനു മുകളിലാണ് കുടാരുകുന്നത്. അഞ്ചുപു പത്രങ്ങു മുട്ടയിൽ കുഞ്ഞുതുണ്ടാകുന്ന കുഞ്ഞു സാമ്പാർ മരത്തിനു മുകളിൽനിന്നും താഴേക്കു വിഴും കുഞ്ഞുമാരുളു തൊട്ടട്ടുത്ത ഇലാശയത്തിലേക്ക് തുള്ളപ്പക്ഷി നടത്തിയാണ് കൊക്കാണുപോകുന്നത്. രാത്രി ഇലാശയങ്ങൾ തുണി വിശ്രമിക്കുന്ന ചുട്ടി എരഞ്ഞെക്കൾ രാത്രിയാണ് ഇരു പിടിക്കുന്നത്. മീൻ ഉൾപ്പെടെ ഇലാശയത്തിൽ ലഭ്യമായ വിഭവങ്ങളാണ് ഭക്ഷണം. പുള്ളിപ്പിളി പോലെ പ്രത്യേക ശ്രദ്ധ

മുണ്ടാക്കിയാണ് രാത്രി പറക്കുന്നത്.

### കന്യാസ്റ്റി കൊക്ക്

അദ്ദോന്ത പക്ഷിയാണ് കന്യാസ്റ്റി കൊക്ക്. വലിയ ഇനം കൊക്കാണ്. ഓഡ്യോ, സെപ്റ്റിബാൾ, ഒക്ടോബർ മാസങ്ങളിലാണ് വില്പയിൽ മുഖ്യമായ കാണുന്നത്. കഴുത്തിന് വെള്ളേൻഡിവും പുറത്ത് തവിട്ടുകലർന്ന കരുപ്പൻഡിവുമാണ്. ശർശപ്രക്രയിയാണ് ഇവ കന്യാസ്റ്റി കൊക്കാക്കുന്ന അറിയപ്പെടാൻ കാണുന്നത്. വലിപ്പമുള്ള കൊക്കാണ് മുഖ്യങ്ങൾ. തെണ്ട്, തെവും സിക്ക, മല്ലിലുള്ള ചെറിയ തവളകൾ, പാന് എന്നിവ യാണ് ആഹാരം. പാളേരു ഉയരത്തിൽ പറക്കുന്ന കന്യാസ്റ്റി കൊക്കിന് മറ്റു കൊക്കിന്തെങ്ങൾക്കാശ വും കാണാംഡാം.

### കഴുകൻമാരുടെ ദേശം

ഒക്ഷിണോന്തയിൽ അവശേഷിക്കുന്ന കഴുകൻമാരുടെ മുഖ്യ ആവാസവ്യവസ്ഥയാണ് വയനാട്ടിന് കാടുകൾ. രോബ്രോസ് പദ്മിനുപിൻകാരതെ സമുച്ചരിതെ സംരക്ഷിക്കുന്നതിൽ വലിയ പക് ഫിഡിക്കുന്ന വീഡി വർഗ്ഗമാണ് കഴുകൻ. വാംശനാര ഭീഷണി നേരിടുന്ന പക്ഷിയിനമാണിൽ. ചുവന്നി, കാതില, തവിട്ട് എന്നിവയാണ് വില്പയിലെ പ്രധാന കഴുകൻ മുത്തേണ്ടി. വന്നുഛിവി സങ്കേതത്തിലെ കാക്കപാടം, അരുളപാടം, പാറത്തവയൽ, കല്ലുമുക്ക്, ചീംകാറ, നൂത്രബന്ധി, അഓഡ്യൂക്കുളി, തൊഡ്യാറി, മരഗ്ര, എടക്കാമ്പം വന്തേണ്ട കഴുകൻമാരുടെ ആവാസക്കേട്ടേണ്ടളാണ്.

### വെന്തലയൻ കഴുകൻ (കാതിലകഴുകൻ)

ചുവറികഴുകൻകുന്നകാൾ വലിപ്പം കുറഞ്ഞത്തും നല്ല കുറു ചുവന്നിവയുള്ള പക്ഷിയാണ് വെന്തലയൻ കഴുകൻ. കാലിനും കൊക്കിനും തലയ്ക്കും പിങ്ക് കലർന്ന ചുവരിക്കുമാണ്. പറക്കുന്നേൻ അടിയിൽ വെള്ള നിറം കാണാം. എളുപ്പം തിരിച്ചറയാൻ കഴിയുന്ന കഴുകൻ മുന്നംഞിൽ. വയനാട്ടിലെ മുത്തേണ്ട വന്തുതിനു പുറത്തേ വെളിച്ചുരു, നാഡരഹോഡ്, മുത്തുമല കാടുകളിലും ഇവയെ കാണാം. 25 ഓളം വെന്തലയൻ കഴുകൻ നെയാണ് മുതിനകം സർവ്വേക്ഷിതിൽ കാണാനായത്. കാതുകൾ തുണ്ടിയാണുള്ളത്.

### ചുവറികഴുകൻ

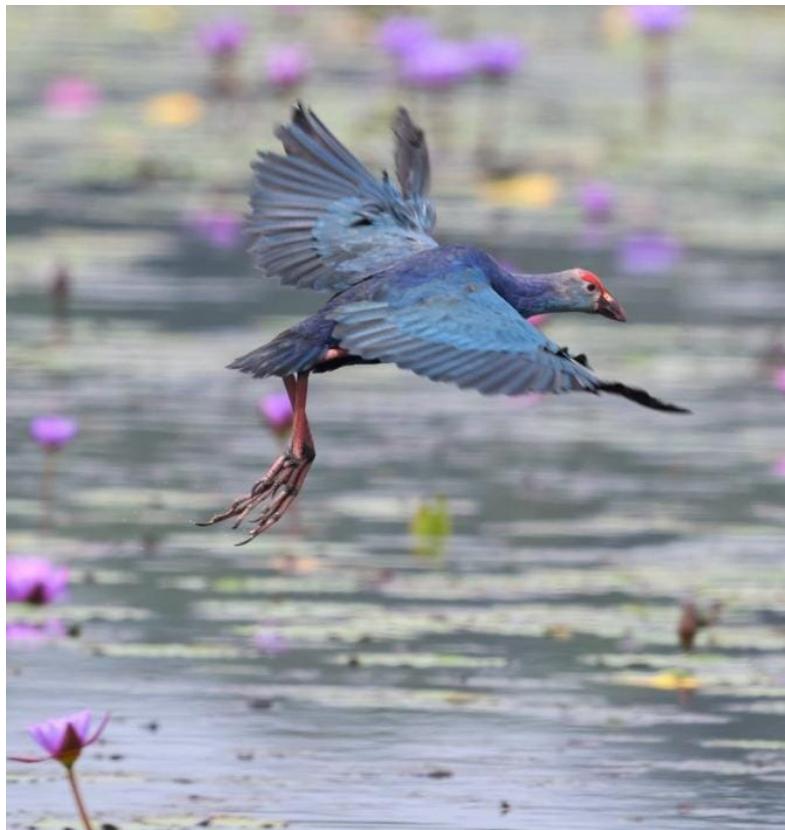
വാംശനാര ഭീഷണി നേരിടുന്ന പക്ഷിയിനമാണ് ചുവറികഴുകൻ. മുഖ്യവും തലയ്ക്ക് ചാരിരുമാണ്. തവിട്ടു നീംമാണ് പുറം ഭാഗത്ത്. പറക്കുന്നേൻ അടിവശത്ത് വെള്ള തിരം പ്രകടമാണ്. ഒരു കുടുതൽത്തിൽ നാൽപ്പ തും അൻപത്തും കഴുകൻമാരെ കാണാം. ചുവറികഴുകൻ ശർശപ്രക്രയുള്ളതാണ് തവിട്ടു കഴുകൻ. തുവലുകൾ പുറത്തേ നല്ല തവിട്ടുകുമാണ്. നീംലുള്ളതാണ് കൊക്ക്. വിമാലയൻ കഴുകൻമാരും വില്പയിൽ കണ്ടുകുമാണ്. നല്ല വലിപ്പമുള്ളതാണ് വിമാലയൻ കഴുകൻ. ഇളം പ്രായത്തിൽ കുട്ടംവിട്ടേ ഒരു കു പാനേതതുന്നതാണ് വിമാലയൻ കഴുകൻ.

### പരുതുകൾ, മുണ്ടകൾ

വയനാട്ടിൽ വന്നുജീവി സങ്കേതത്തിലും നോർത്ത്, സൗത്ത് വന്നും ഡിവിഷൻകളിലുമായി 27 പരുതുകൾ

## പരുതുകൾ മുണ്ടകൾ സംബന്ധം

മീലുത്തിൽ 27 പരു തിനിന്തേളും ഒന്ന് തുമ്പനുകളും രേവേ പെടുത്തിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഒരർബൻ ബാനി, ലൈറ്റിൻ ഫോക്സ് ലൂഗിൾ പോലുള്ള അപുർവ്വ ഇനങ്ങൾ സംബന്ധിച്ചു നിലിട്ടുതുടങ്ങിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. ലൈലും ആകാരം ദിവുകളിലുമായി ഉള്ള ആവാസവ്യവസ്ഥയിൽ കാണാം.



ഇർവ്വന്തിൽ വാസ, യുദ്ധത്തിൽ സ്വാരൂപം ഹോക്ക്, ലൈറ്റിൻ ഹോക്ക് മാർഗ്ഗം. ഇ നേരത്തെ നിലുന്നതാണ് പരുത്തവർഗ്ഗിര. പശ്ചിമപ്പട്ടണത്തിൽ മാത്രം കാണുന്ന ഒരിയ ഇനം പരുത്താണ് ഒരുംബൻ വാസ. ഇന്ത്യയിൽത്തന്നെ അപൂർവ്വമാണിവ. വയനാട് അവയുടെ പ്രധാന ആവാസ കേന്ദ്രമാണ്. തലയിൽ ഉയർന്നുനിൽക്കുന്ന കിന്നരികൾ ഇണിനും പരുത്തിന്റെ സവിശേഷതയാണ്. മണതകലർന്ന തവിട്ടുനിമാണ് മേൽ ഭാഗത്ത് അടിവശത്ത് ഓറാളീ, വെളു വരകൾ കാണാം. ഓറാൾ, അരബി, പച്ചത്തവള, ചീറിട്ട് എന്നിവ പ്രധാന ദക്ഷണമാണ്.

ଶିଲ୍ପୀଙ୍କର ମୁତରଣୀଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକୁ ବାରତରେ କାଣୁଣାତାଙ୍କ ଲୟାଙ୍କିଲ୍ ମୋହାକ୍ ଲୁଗିଲା. ପରମିମା ପ୍ରତିକିମ୍ବନ ମାତ୍ର କାଣୁଣ ଲେଖି ପରାମିରିମାନଙ୍କରେ ପାଇଲା. କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକଲ୍ଲିକୁ ବାଣୀଙ୍କୁ ନାହିଁ ଏହିବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଶରତକାରୀ ପକ୍ଷିଯଙ୍କରେ ଗୀତିରେ ଉପରେ ବୋଲାଯାଇଲା ଏହାରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକୁ ଶରିରପକ୍ଷଙ୍କଙ୍କରେ ତଲାଯିଲା ତୁରିଲୁଥିଲା ଯେବୀରିଣିକୁ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକଲ୍ଲିକୁ ନବନିର୍ମାଣକାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ଯୁଦ୍ଧମାନଙ୍କ କରିକରୁଣାରେ କୁରି ମାରି ଏହିବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଅନ୍ତର୍ଯ୍ୟାନରେ ରାଖିଲା. ମଧ୍ୟ ଯତ୍ର, ମଲତାଙ୍ଗାରୀ, କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକେକାଳୀ ନାର୍ତ୍ତକେକା ଶିତ୍କାରଣିକାରୀରେ ଯୁଦ୍ଧକାରୀଙ୍କରେ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଯ୍ୟାନରେ ଉପରେ ମୁନିଦିକରୁଣାରେ ଯୁଦ୍ଧକାରୀଙ୍କରେ

കണ്ണുവരുന്നായ്. ബോർ ഓൾ (വെള്ളി മുണ്ട്), ഫോറിന്റ് ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് ഓൾ, ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് ഓലെറ്റ് (രഖവൻ നായർ), ബ്രഹ്മൻ പിഷ്ട് ഓൾ (മീറ്റ് കുമാൻ), ഓഡിറ്റൂർ സ്കേക്കാപ്പൻ ഓൾ (സെൻറ്റ്രൂപി നായർ), ഇന്തുൻ സ്കേക്കാപ്പ് ഓൾ (ചെറിയൻ നായർ), മോട്ടർബോർ വുഡ് ഓൾ (കാലൻ കോഴി), ബ്രഹ്മൻ വുഡ് ഓൾ (കെക്കാളിക്കുറവാൻ) തുടങ്ങിയവ ചില്ലുതിലെ മുണ്ട് ഇന്തുനേഡാൻ.

അയൽവന്നതിൽ 290ൽപരും

## ഇന്ത്യൻ പാരിഷികൾ

വയനാട് വന്നുജീവി സാക്കത്തറിലെ തോൽ ചെട്ടി റോമുമായി അതിരുപ്പക്കിട്ടുന്ന കർ സാടകയിലെ നാഗരഹോള ദേശിയോദ്യാ നവധൂ പക്ഷി സാമ്പത്തിനു പ്രസന്നതമാണ്. 290 ത്തേപരം മണം പക്ഷികളുടെ സാന്നിധ്യം

വായനാടില്ലെങ്കിലും ആകാശവിപുലമുണ്ടാക്കുന്ന നിർത്തനടങ്കളും വിസ്തീര്ണമുണ്ടാക്കുന്ന പക്ഷിജാലങ്ങളെ ആവാസവ്യവസ്ഥയാക്കി മാറ്റുന്ന സോൾ, പ്രകൃതിയുടെയും ജീവജാലങ്ങളുടെയും ഭംഗിയെ അടക്കത്തിനാനുള്ള അതുല്യമായ അവസ്ഥാബന്ധം ഇന്ത്യയിൽ നാമ്പാം കാത്തിരിക്കുന്നത്.

വിവ്യാത കടവാസനക്കേതവുമായ നാശ രഹോള വന്നതിൽ സ്വിംഗ്‌കർഖ്ലിക്കുണ്ട്. ഡി.ബി.കുഷ്, ഫെറീകുഷ്, ക്ലൂഡ്. അനൈച്ച കുറ്റി, നാഗരക്ഷേമാള, മാന്ത്രിക്ഷുർ, വിനൈക്ഷേമാ സഹജ്ഞി വൈത്തിബ് ലെല്ലപ്പ് രേതുകൾ അടഞ്ഞുന്നതാണ് നാഗരക്ഷേമാള ദേശിയോ ദ്രാനും.

କୁଦ୍ରିତତ୍ତ୍ଵରୁକ୍ତିରେ ବାରତ, ମଲବାର ଅନ୍ତର୍ଗତ  
କାନାର, କାତିଲକାତ୍ତ୍ବକାରୀ, ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିକାତ୍ତ୍ବକାରୀ,  
ମୁଦ୍ରାରୁକ୍ତିରେ ତାରାର୍ଥ, କିଣାରୀ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତରୁକ୍ତି, କରି  
ବାରୁତ, ଅଶ୍ଵିକା ମନୋରୀ ଏମେତ୍ର କାହିଁର୍ଭାବ  
ଯୁଗିବ ତାଶରହେବାହୁଯିଲେ ଅପ୍ରକାଶିତ  
ଯିଙ୍ଗ କିଛିକଣାଗ୍ରୀ ଗୀପତିତତତ, କୋଣି  
ବେଶାବରୀ, କାଟକଗିରି, ବେଗୁତେଶ୍ଵରକିଳି  
ତୁଗଣତିଯ ତତ୍ତ୍ଵର ମୁଣ୍ଡ ପକ୍ଷିକିଳିଙ୍ଗ ମୁଣ୍ଡ  
କାଟକକଳିଲୁହଙ୍କେ.

വൈദ്യുതിക്കൾ നിരവധി

വയനാട്ടിലെ പക്ഷിസംഘത്രുൾ മറ്റിന്ത്തിലിലെ നേരുകളും വെള്ളവിളികൾ പല താണ്. അതിൽ പ്രധാനപ്പെട്ടതാണ് കാലാവ സ്ഥാവൃതിയാം, പഞ്ചമാലുട മലനിരകളിലെ അനിയന്ത്രിത ടുറിസു, ഭവിനിയോഗാഗത്തി ലെ മാറ്റം, വന നാശകരണം, അധിനിവേശ സസ്യങ്ങളുടെ വൃാപ്പം, കാടുകളുടെ എന്നിവ യുവജനങ്ങൾ ഉന്നത വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിനും തൊഴിലിനും വിദ്യേശരാജ്യങ്ങളിലേക്കു പോകുന്നതുപോലും ഓപ്പുവിയിലെ പക്ഷി സമ്പത്തിനെ പരോക്ഷമായി ബാധിക്കു





നൂവെണ്ണേൻ്ന് യുവ പക്ഷി ഗവേഷകൾ എറി. അരീക്കിളിത്തർ പായഗുന്നു. കർഷക കുടകും ബാംഗൻഡാളിൽ പലരും കൃഷിഭൂമിയുടെ ഭാഗം മരഞ്ഞൾ മരിച്ചുമാറ്റിയശേഷം തും നെടണ്ടോക്കി വിട്ടാൻ്ന് വിഭേദ വിജയാഭ്യാസം തത്തിനും തൊഴിലിനും പണ്ണം കണ്ണെത്തു നന്ന് കൃഷിയിടങ്ങൾ വൃക്ഷാഹിതമായ തത്തിനും മരിച്ചുമാറ്റിയാകുമ്പോൾ ഇല്ലാതാകുന്നത് വിഭിന്നയിനം പക്ഷികളുടെ ആവാസ ഇടങ്ങളാണ്. കർഷകർ ബഹിരവിള കൃഷിയിൽനിന്നു മാറി എക്കവിള കൃഷിയിലേക്ക് തിരികെടുത്തും നെൽക്കുഴിയിനും വയലിൽ അഭ്യർത്ഥിക്കുന്നതും പക്ഷി സന്ധാരിനെ ബാധിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്.

କାଳାବସମ୍ଭାବ୍ୟତିରୀଣଂ ଅର୍ଥାବସମ୍ଭାବସମା  
କଳିଲେ ତାପଣିଲେକଳ୍ପିତ ପର୍ବତରୁକ ମାର୍ଦିଂ  
ପକ୍ଷିକଳ୍ପର ଜୀବିତକମରତ ବ୍ୟାଯିକାଙ୍କୁ  
ଯାଏନ୍. ମଲକଳ୍ପର ପଲ ଉତ୍ସବରୀତିରୀଳିର୍ଦ୍ଦିର୍ଦ୍ଦ  
ମାତ୍ରାଙ୍କିତ ତଣୁପୁଣ୍ୟ ମୁଣ୍ଡିବ୍ୟାପିଲେ ମାର୍ଦିତରିନ୍  
କାଳାବସମ୍ଭାବ୍ୟତିରୀଣଂ କାରଣମାକୁ  
କର୍ଯ୍ୟାଣ୍. କେବେ ଉତ୍ସବରୀତିଲାଙ୍କ କାଣୁକ  
ପକ୍ଷିକଳ୍ପର ମର୍ଦ୍ଦ ଜୀବିତରୀତିଲାଙ୍କୁ  
ମାର୍ଦିମାର୍ଦି ରାଗୁ. ମଲରତପଦ୍ମକଳ୍ପିତ କର୍ତ୍ତିତ  
ଆଜିବିର ମାତ୍ରାଙ୍କ ତଣୁପୁଣ୍ୟ ଅର୍ଥାବସମାକ୍ରମି

വാശനാര ഭിഷണിയിലും  
അത്യപൂർവ്വതയിലും നൃത്യം  
ചെയ്യുന്ന കിളിക്കളോടൊപ്പം,  
വയനാട് സംഖാരികളെ  
പ്രകൃതിയുടെ ഹൃദയത്തിലേക്ക്  
കഷണിക്കുന്നു ഒരു  
ചീരകുകൾ തൊടുത്തുനാം  
അനുഭവത്തിലേക്ക്

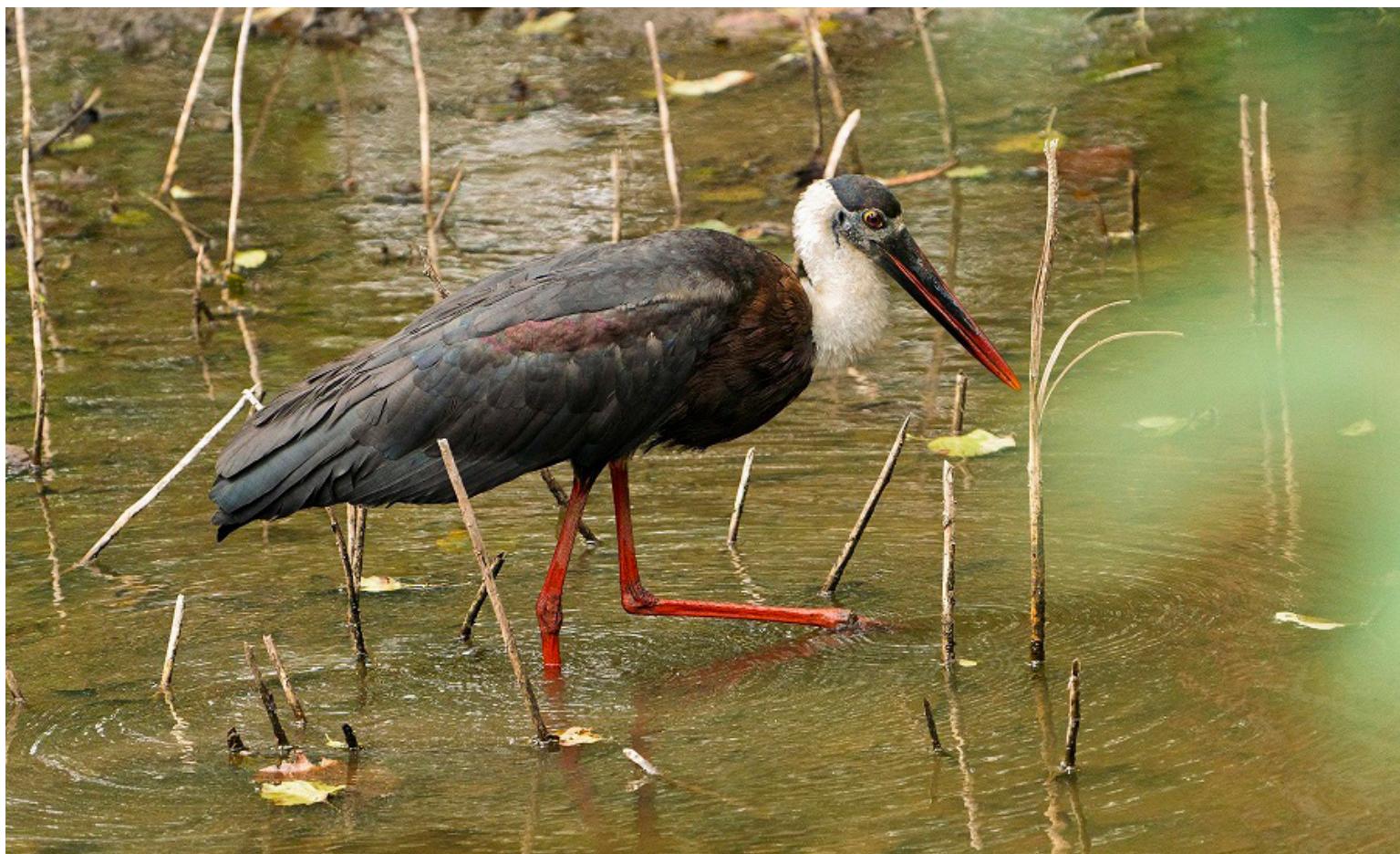
അലോസരത്തിനു കാരണമാകുന്നുവെന്ന്  
അവർ ചുണ്ടിക്കാട്ടുന്നു.

അമ്പലമുന്നേ

അയിൻവേശ സംസ്കാരങ്ങളുടെ വ്യാപനം മുലാകാത്തിലെ ആര്ഥിക വ്യവസ്ഥയിലുണ്ടാകുന്ന അപചയം വയനാട്ടിൽ പക്ഷി-മൂല-സംസ്കാരത്തോടുകൂടുന്ന മുഖ്യ വൈദ്യുതി തീയാബനാൻ വയനാട്ട് പ്രകൃതി സംരക്ഷണ സമിതി പ്രസിദ്ധീയമായി എൻ. ബാദ്യകുമാർ, സൈ ക്രീടി തോമൻ അമ്പലവയൽ മുനിവർ പറയുന്നു.

അയിൻവേശ സംസ്കാരം കീഴടക്കിയിരിക്കുന്നതാണ് വയനാടൻ വനത്തിലെ പല ഭാഗങ്ങളെയും, ഗതകാലത്ത് നൂറുകണക്കിനും ഒരു ശാഖാവിക വരം ഏകകില്ലാത്ത മാനസികതയും കാണിക്കുന്ന നാശത്തിനുകുറഞ്ഞാണെന്നായി.

23 മുന്നും അയിൻവേശ സംസ്കാരാണ് വയനാട്ട് വന്മാരി സങ്കേതത്തിൽ താഴ്ചയും വളരുന്നത്. നീലമിൻ ജൈവ മണ്ഡലത്തിൽ അയിൻവേശമനസ്ത്വങ്ങളിൽ അയിൻകവഴം 344.4 ചതുരശ്ര കിലോമീറ്റർ മാത്രം വിന്റെയും തിയുള്ള വയനാട്ട് വന്മാരി സങ്കേതത്തിന്





வெளிப்பூர், நாஸ்ரஹோட், காவேரி, வினாக்கல் தீ, நூற்று, தமிழ்நாட்டிலெல் முதலூல் வடனங்களுக்கு அயினிவேச ஸங்கங்களுக்கெல் பிள்ளையாள். ஸாபாவிக் ஸாபுவதாளிக்கலை நாளில் குடும் அயினிவேச ஸங்கங்கள் காட்டில்லை ஸாதங்குலம் தகர்க்குக்கடியாள். பக்ஷிமுரு திக்ரிக்கீலி காளி உதகுடும்பத்திலை அயினிவேச ஸங்கங்கள் வழங்கும் வடப்பேசு ஸங்கம். வடந்திலை நிருவாயக்கலையும் அவர் ஹப்பாய்ம் செய்யுக்கடியாள். ஜில்லாயில் ஸாதர் வடந்தாக், நோற்றர் வட நாக், வெவ்வெல் வெலபாம் யிவிஷங்குக்கலையாய் ஏக்கடேசம் 200 சதுரகிலை கிலோமீற்ற தேக்க், யூக்காலிப்ஸ், காட்டாகி தொட்டுண் ஒள்கள். வூவாஸாயிக் விக்ஸதன்டின் 1950 முதல் 1980க்குக்கூட துக்ககா வரை ஸாபாவிக் வடந்தங்கள் பெட்டித்தறிச்சீல் உள்ளாகி யதாள் ஏக்கிழுத்தொட்டுண்டால், வடாஷிலி ஸகேத்துறித் 10148 சதுரகிலை கிலோமீற்ற ஏக்கிழுத்தொட்டுண்மாள். நெடுங்கிரிக் வடந்தில்லை பிள்ளைக்குப் பெறுவதாகிக்கூட ஸாவெஸ்டிட்டிக்டேந்தாலும் ஸுப்பிர்யாமாளை நீங்கூட்டு ஸாரக்ஷன் ராஜதாநகரத்திலை பியாகுந்தி.

## കീഴ്പ്പറ്റിയായി കാട്ടുത്തി

വേന്തിക്കാലണ്ട്രും വന്നതിലും മലക്കു ലും ഉണ്ടാകുന്ന തിപിടിത്തം പക്ഷി സന്ന തനിന് വലിയ ദീക്ഷണിയാണ്. വന്നേന്നും ഗണങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടായും പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നതിനും തിലും കാടുത്തി വിഴുകയാണ്. ചുവന്നമല, ബാണാസുമല, കുറിപ്പുമല എന്നിവിടങ്ങൾ തിലും പ്രേമാർഗ്ഗിൽ കുന്നുകളിലും വേന്തിയിൽ കാടുത്തി അപേക്ഷിക്കുതയല്ല. കത്തിയമരുന്ന ഷോലക്കാടുകളും പുൽമേടുകളും നിരവ ധിയിനും വെറുപ്പക്ഷികളുടെയും ശവഷി നാകുകയാണ്. തിപിടിക്കുന്ന മരങ്ങളിലെ കിളിക്കുടുകളും കുണ്ണതുനീളും വെള്ളീ റായി മാറുകയാണ്. ഉയരത്തിൽ പിന്നീ അകലാണ് കഴിയാതെ പക്ഷികളെയും തീ വിഴുതും. മിക വേന്തിലും ഹെരും കണക്കിന് അടിക്കാടാണ് വയനാടൻ വന തനിൽ നശിക്കുന്നത്. മനുഷ്യനിർത്തിയഥാണ് വനത്തിലെ തിപിടിത്തണ്ട്രും പലതുരുമ നന്താണ് യാമാർപ്പം. കാടുത്തി പ്രതിരോധ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളുടെ ഭാഗമായി വന്നു-വന്നു ജീവി വകുപ്പിൽന്നു നേരുത്തിൽ വേബാധത് കരണം, പയറി ലൈൻ നിർമ്മാണം തുടങ്ങിയവ നടത്താറുണ്ട്.

Pix. By Special Arrangement

# DIRIYAH

## *City of Earth*

Diriyah, the “City of Earth” on the outskirts of Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, is undergoing a remarkable transformation into a global tourism and cultural hub. With its rich heritage rooted in Najdi architecture and the UNESCO-listed At-Turaif District, this \$63 billion project seamlessly blends history with modern innovation, writes Umashankar

For centuries, the ancient mud brick walls of Diriyah, crafted in the distinctive Najdi architectural style, have weathered the relentless desert winds. Though time has eroded much of these historic structures, decades of meticulous preservation have safeguarded their charm and authenticity. Now, a monumental \$63 billion initiative is transforming this storied site into a vibrant fusion of heritage,

architecture, and modern innovation.

Upon completion, Diriyah promises to become a gateway for travellers seeking an immersive journey through history and culture. At the heart of Diriyah lies the UNESCO World Heritage Site of At-Turaif District, a destination that feels like stepping into an open-air museum. Welcome to the “City of Earth,” where tradition and progress converge in stunning



From ancient mud brick structures to luxury hotels, museums, and world-class dining at Bujairi Terrace, Diriyah promises an unforgettable journey through time while redefining urban development in line with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.



# SAUDI HERITAGE TO THE FORE

**The history of the Al Saud royal family will come alive at Diriyah, which will showcase the remarkable craftsmanship of Najdi culture and the visionary spirit of the kingdom's founders.**

**D**iriyah is the ancestral home of the Al Saud royal family and the birthplace of the First Saudi State. This gives it immense historical and cultural importance. The At-Turaif District, a UNESCO World Heritage site within Diriyah, underscores this historical significance.

The project focuses on meticulously restoring historical sites, preserving traditional Najdi architectural styles, and showcasing Saudi Arabia's rich cultural heritage. Diriyah aims to seamlessly integrate traditional Najdi architecture with modern urban planning and infrastructure.

As a "giga-project" under Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, Diriyah represents a massive construction effort which offers opportunities for global construction companies and architectural firms. When

completed, it will be a showcase of modern construction technology. Diriyah is being developed into a world-class cultural and tourism destination, aiming to attract millions of visitors annually. It will offer a diverse range of attractions, including museums, cultural institutions, luxury hotels, fine dining, and entertainment venues.

The project is a key component of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which seeks to diversify the economy away from oil dependence. Tourism is a central pillar of this diversification strategy.

The Diriyah project presents significant investment opportunities for international businesses in various sectors, including hospitality, retail, and entertainment. The project is expected to create numerous jobs and contribute significantly to Saudi Arabia's GDP.

Diriyah is a vehicle for Saudi Arabia

to present its culture and open up to the world, creating new business and cultural relationships, honour Saudi Arabia's historical roots, promote cultural tourism, drive economic growth, and position Saudi Arabia as a leading global destination.

## At-Turaif

Celebrated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a cherished emblem of national pride, At-Turaif showcases the remarkable craftsmanship of Najdi culture and the visionary spirit of Saudi Arabia's founders.

At-Turaif rises gracefully over Wadi Hanifah and the verdant Diriyah oasis. Crafted from mudbrick in the traditional Najdi style, this regal citadel once thrived as the heart of the Emirate of Diriyah, the First Saudi State (1727-1818), setting the stage for the birth of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

## The Royal Diriyah Opera House

Diriyah Company and the Royal Commission for Riyadh City have announced plans for Saudi Arabia's first opera house, the Royal Diriyah Opera House. Located in the heart of Diriyah, the project will stand as a cultural icon in the Saudi capital city's 300-year-old heritage quarters and the birthplace of the Kingdom.





## Boosting In- do-Saudi Ties

Diriyah aims to deepen trade ties, add \$18.6B to GDP, and create 178,000 jobs—drawing strong interest from Indian CEOs.

harmony.

Founded in the 15th century BCE and later becoming the capital of the first Saudi dynasty in the mid-1700s, At-Turaif is a testament to Saudi Arabia's rich history. Its mud brick structures, decorated with intricate Najdi designs, are not just architectural marvels—they are storytellers of a bygone era.

The crown jewel of At-Turaif is Salwa Palace, the royal residence of Imam Mohammed bin Saud, founder of the first Saudi State. Spanning 10,000 square metres across three floors, this palace was once the administrative hub where leaders deliberated over politics, business, and social affairs. Today, visitors can explore its seven sections, including a mosque, a museum,

and a public gathering space—a window into 18th-century Arabian life.

## Architectural Legacy

Diriyah's architecture is a celebration of Najdi craftsmanship. The sturdy mud brick structures have stood resilient for centuries, embodying both functionality and beauty. Privacy-focused designs reflect cultural values while welcoming traders and scholars from diverse backgrounds—a hallmark of inclusivity.

The restoration of At-Turaif under UNESCO guidelines has been meticulous. Developers have seamlessly blended traditional Najdi styles with modern sustainability practices. Local materials like mud and palm wood have been used to preserve

authenticity while introducing contemporary comforts. This harmonious fusion allows visitors to experience Diriyah's historical essence alongside urban sophistication.

Diriyah has always been more than a city—it's been a cultural beacon. By the 18th century, it boasted over 30 schools where students excelled in calligraphy and cultural preservation. Storytellers known as "Al-Rawi" kept history alive through captivating narratives, while music and poetry filled its streets with vibrancy. This legacy continues today with plans for eight museums dedicated to Saudi history and culture. From curated exhibitions to performances at the Royal Diriyah Opera House, visitors can immerse themselves in both traditional art forms and contemporary innovations. Diriyah is reclaiming its role as an educational and cultural hub—one that celebrates its past while inspiring future generations.

### A Culinary Journey

For food lovers, Diriyah offers an unparalleled dining experience at Bujairi Terrace. Overlooking Wadi Hanifa—a serene valley integral to Diriyah's history—this destination combines luxury with authenticity. Savour traditional Saudi dishes or indulge in international flavors while enjoying breathtaking views of restored heritage sites. The terrace is more than a place to eat; it's an invitation to connect with Diriyah's soul. Whether you're dining under starlit skies or sipping coffee amidst palm trees, every moment feels like poetry in motion—a sensory delight that

lingers long after your visit.

Diriyah is poised to become one of Saudi Arabia's premier tourist destinations as part of Vision 2030—a national initiative to diversify the economy beyond oil dependence. Attractions like At-Turaif and Bujairi Terrace have already drawn millions of visitors annually, setting the stage for even greater tourism growth.

With plans for over 40 luxury hotels, more than 1,000 shops, 150 restaurants and cafes, museums, an opera house, and even an international equestrian centre, Diriyah is redefining what it means to be a global tourism hub. Scenic walk-

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With plans for over 40 luxury hotels, more than 1,000 shops, 150 restaurants and cafes, museums, an opera house, and even an international equestrian center, Diriyah is redefining what it means to be a global tourism hub.





ing paths encourage exploration on foot while historical landmarks provide endless opportunities for photography enthusiasts.

#### India-Saudi Collaboration

India has emerged as one of Saudi Arabia's most significant trading partners with bilateral trade reaching \$52.8 billion in 2022-23. Indian businesses are playing an active role in shaping Diriyah's future across sectors like construction, IT, energy, and hospitality. Several

Indian firms have shown a keen interest in investing in Diriyah. "At Diriyah, we are keen to enhance the impact of India as one of Saudi Arabia's biggest trading partners, ranking among the top in bilateral trade, with a trade volume of approximately \$52.8 billion in 2022-23," Inzerillo told news agency PTI. Attending the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2025 at Davos, Inzerillo said over 3,000 Indian companies are already operating

in the Kingdom, contributing to sectors such as construction, IT, energy, and telecommunications, strengthening the economic partnership between the two nations. "Diriyah is very keen to work with firms that are here already and those based in India. This is a \$63.2 billion project backed by the Public Investment Fund and it means the investment opportunities in Diriyah are countless and cover multiple asset classes," he said. "The scope for the Indian in-

There is already a lot of interest from Indian companies - especially the hotel sector. The Taj Hotel Group is set to open its 250th property in Diriyah—a luxurious hotel with 202 rooms—while Oberoi Hotels is developing another property near the equestrian centre.



vestment community and partners is enormous. Diriyah already has multiple partners on board from around the world, but there remains an amazing array of opportunities for Indian companies and organizations across the full spectrum of urban development to partner with Diriyah," Inzerillo said.

There is already a lot of interest from Indian companies - especially the hotel sector. The Taj Hotel Group is set to open its 250th property in Diriyah—a luxurious hotel with 202 rooms—while Oberoi Hotels

is developing another property near the equestrian centre. These collaborations highlight India's contribution to enhancing Diriyah's global appeal. Beyond hospitality ventures, Indian firms have opportunities across mixed-use developments including residential complexes, office spaces, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and retail outlets. Over 200 Indian professionals are already working on various aspects of the project—from engineering design to financial planning—underscoring their ex-



pertise in shaping this ambitious vision.

Diriyah is expected to contribute \$18.6 billion annually to Saudi GDP upon completion while creating approximately 178,000 jobs across various sectors. Its development aligns with broader efforts to position Riyadh as one of the world's top cities by population growth and economic output.

As "The City of Earth," Diriyah symbolizes not just Saudi Arabia's

past but also its aspirations for the future—a place where heritage meets progress seamlessly. Diriyah offers travellers an experience unlike any other—where ancient ruins whisper stories of resilience and modern luxuries redefine comfort. Whether you're exploring Salwa Palace or dining at Bujairi Terrace; whether you're marveling at mudbrick palaces or attending performances at the opera house—Diriyah promises an unfor-

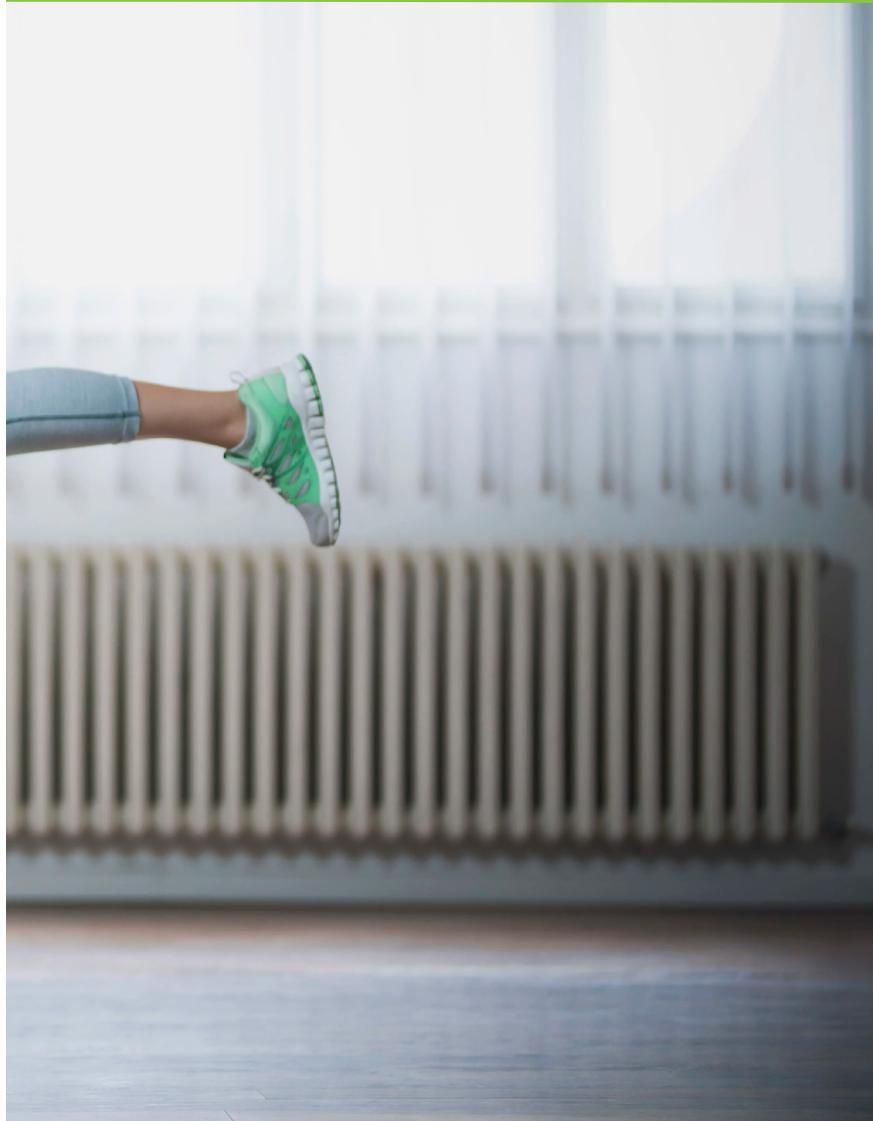
gettable journey through time. For those seeking authenticity coupled with luxury or investors looking for unparalleled opportunities in urban development—Diriyah has something extraordinary for everyone. As it transforms into one of the world's most iconic destinations by blending history with innovation—it truly earns its title as "The City of Earth." (With PTI inputs) ■

# EXERCISES TO IMPROVE YOUR CORE STRENGTH



The rewards of exercise are for everyone, no matter what the age, sex or physical ability of a person, writes

**Giji K. Raman**



**S**tarting a fitness program may be one of the best things for health. Physical activity can lower the risk of diseases, such as heart disease and cancer. Exercise can improve balance and the ability to move smoothly, called coordination. It can help with weight loss and boost self-esteem. The rewards of exercise are for everyone, no matter the age, sex or physical ability.

#### **Aerobic activity**

Get at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity a week. Or get at least 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity a week. You also can get an equal combination of moderate and vigorous activity. Aim to spread out this exercise over a few days or more in a week. For even greater health benefits the guidelines suggest getting 300 minutes a week or more of moderate aerobic activity. Exercising this much may help with weight loss or keeping off lost weight. But even small amounts of physical activity can be helpful. Being active for short periods of time during the day can add up and have health benefits.

**Strength training:** Do strength training exercises for all major muscle groups at least two times a week. One set of each exercise is enough for health and fitness benefits. Use a weight or resistance level heavy enough to tire your muscles after about 12 to 15 repetitions.

Regular exercise can help you control your

## Why Exercise?

Starting a fitness program is one of the best things you can do for your health. It lowers disease risk, improves coordination, helps manage weight, and boosts confidence. No matter your age or ability, the benefits are for everyone.

weight. It can lower your risk of heart disease and some cancers. And it can make your bones and muscles stronger.

If you haven't exercised for a while and you have health concerns, you might want to talk to your health care professional before starting a new fitness routine.

When making your exercise plan, keep your fitness goals in mind. Think about what you like and don't like. Think about what keeps you from exercising. Then find ways to keep your fitness program on track.

Starting a fitness program doesn't have to overwhelm you. Start slowly and build up over time. By planning and pacing yourself, you can make fitness a healthy habit that lasts a lifetime.

### Core-strength Exercises

Core-strength exercises strengthen the core muscles. Core muscles include the abdominal muscles, back muscles and the muscles around the pelvis. Strong core muscles make it easier to do many physical activities.

You can do core-strength exercises on a carpeted floor or mat. Breathe freely and deeply during each core-strength exercise. Focus on tightening the deepest abdominal muscle and the one you feel contracting when you cough, also called the transversus abdominis.

Aim to do one set of each exercise for 12 to 15 repetitions. If you have back problems, osteoporosis or other health concerns, talk to your health care professional before doing these core-strength exercises.

### Abdominal crunch

Abdominal crunches are a classic core-strength exercise. To do an abdominal crunch:

Lie on your back and place your feet on a wall so that your knees and hips are bent at 90-degree angles. Tighten the abdomi-



nal muscles.

Raise your head and shoulders off the floor. To avoid straining your neck, cross your arms on your chest rather than locking them behind your head. Hold for three deep breaths.

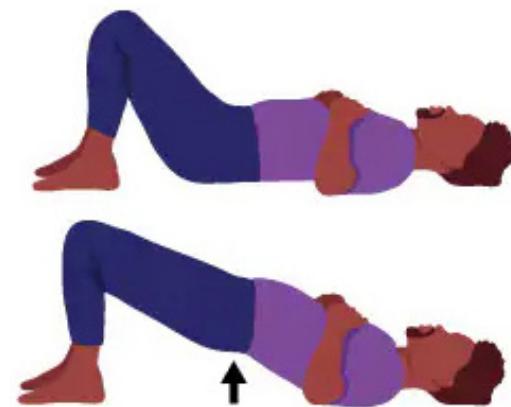
Return to the start position and repeat.

### Bridge

To improve core strength of many muscles at one time, try a bridge, sometimes called a back bridge or a glute bridge: Lie on your back with your knees bent (top photo). Keep your back in a neutral position, not arched and not pressed into the floor. Try not to tilt your hips. Tighten the abdominal muscles.

Raise your hips off the floor until your hips line up with your knees and shoulders (bottom photo). Hold for three deep breaths.

Return to the start position and repeat.



### Single-leg abdominal press

The single-leg abdominal press is another popular core-strength exercise. To do this exercise:

Lie on your back with your knees bent (top illustration). Keep your back in a neutral position, not arched and not pressed into the floor. Avoid tilting your hips. Tighten the abdominal muscles.

Raise your right leg off the floor so that your knee and hip are bent at 90-degree angles. Rest your right hand on top of your right knee (bottom illustration).

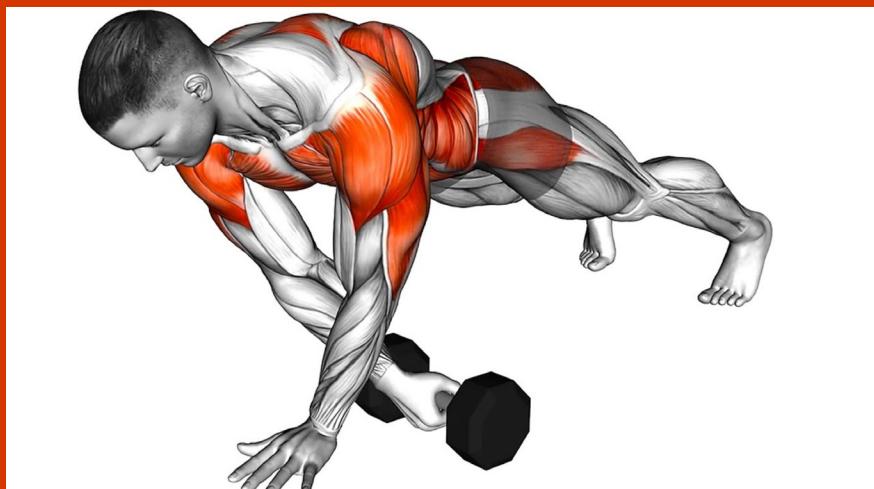
Push your hand against your knee while using the abdominal muscles to push your knee toward your hand. Keep your arm straight. Hold for three deep breaths. Return to the start position and repeat using your left hand and left knee.

## Want a stronger core? Skip the sit-ups

Sit-ups once ruled as the way to tighter abs and a slimmer waistline. Now plank exercises, in which you assume a position and hold it, are the gold standard for working your core, while classic sit-ups and crunches have fallen out of favor.

One reason is that sit-ups are hard on your back. They push your curved spine against the floor and work your hip flexors, the muscles that run from the thighs to the lumbar vertebrae in the lower back. When the hip flexors are too strong or too tight, they tug on the lower spine, which can create lower back discomfort.

In addition, plank exercises recruit a better balance of muscles on



the front, sides, and back of the body than sit-ups, which target just a few muscles.

Finally, activities of daily living such as bathing, getting out of bed, or walking, as well as sports and recreational activities, call on your muscles to work together, not in isolation, while sit-ups or

crunches strengthen just a few muscle groups.

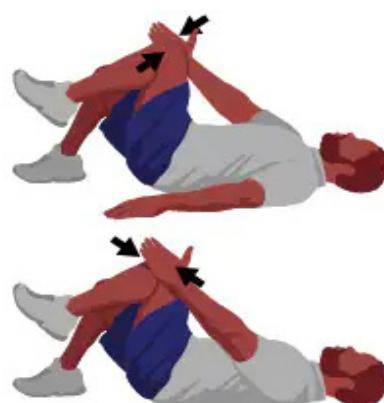
Through dynamic patterns of movement, a good core workout like plank exercises helps strengthen the entire set of core muscles you use every day, leaving you with a stronger and more balanced body.



### Single-leg abdominal press variations

To improve your core strength more completely, try variations of the single-leg abdominal press: **Opposite hand on opposite knee:** Push your right hand against your left knee while pulling your knee toward your hand (top illustration). You'll be pushing and pulling across the center of your body. Hold for three deep breaths. Then do the exercise using your other hand and leg. **Hand on outside of knee:** Place

your left hand along the side of your left knee (bottom illustration). Use your hand to push your leg inward. At the same time, create resistance by pushing your knee away from the center. Hold for three deep breaths. Then do the exercise using your other hand and leg.

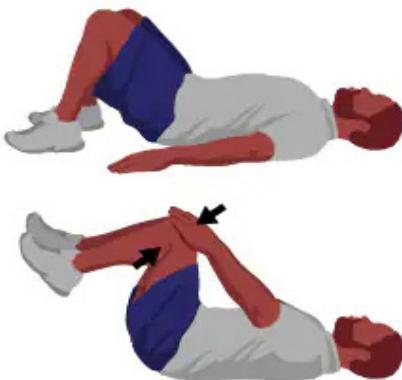


### Double-leg abdominal press

When you're comfortable with the single-leg abdominal press, try the double-leg abdominal press for

more core strength: Lie on your back with your knees bent (top illustration). Keep your back in a neutral position, not arched and not pressed into the floor. Avoid tilting your hips. Tighten the abdominal muscles. Raise your legs off the floor, one at a time, so that your knees and hips are bent at 90-degree angles. Rest your hands on top of your knees (bottom illustration).

Push your hands against your knees while using the abdominal muscles to pull your knees



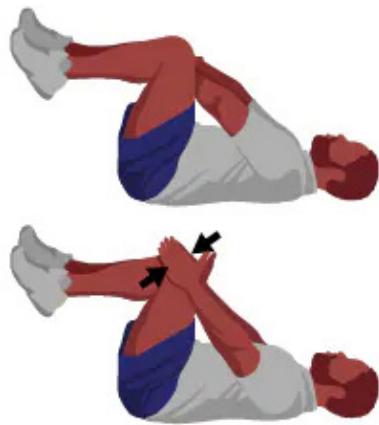
toward your hands. Keep your arms straight. Hold for three deep breaths.

Return to the start position and repeat.

#### **Double-leg abdominal press variations**

These variations of the double-leg abdominal press also build your core strength:

Opposite hands on opposite knees. Place each hand on your opposite knee, toward the inside of your knee (top illustration). Your arms will cross over each other. Push your hands against your



knees while pulling your knees toward your hands. Hold for three deep breaths. Repeat.

Hands on outside of knees. Place your hands along the sides of your knees (bottom illustration). Use your hands to push your knees inward. At the same time, create resistance by pushing your knees away from the center. Hold for three deep breaths. Repeat.

#### **Quadruped**

This core-strength exercise is called the quadruped and sometimes called the bird dog: Start on your hands and knees. Place your hands directly below your shoulders, and line up your head and neck with your back. Tighten the abdominal muscles. Raise your right arm off the floor and reach ahead. Hold for three deep breaths. Lower your right arm and repeat with your left arm. Raise your right leg off the floor. Tighten the trunk muscles for balance. Hold for three deep breaths. Lower your right leg and repeat with your left leg.

For added challenge, raise your left

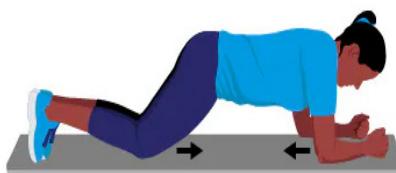


arm and your right leg at the same time. Repeat with your right arm and left leg.

#### **Modified plank**

Another good core-strength exercise is called the modified plank. In a plank, you raise yourself up on your forearms and feet while keeping your body lined up with your hips. To do a modified plank: Lie on your stomach. Raise yourself up so that you're resting on your forearms and knees. Line up your head and neck with your back. Place your shoulders directly above your elbows. Tighten the abdominal muscles. Create resistance by pressing your elbows and knees toward one an-





other. Neither should move from their positions on the floor. Hold for three deep breaths. Return to the start position and repeat.

#### Modified plank variations

For more core-strength exercises, try these variations on the modified plank:

Lie on your stomach. Raise yourself up so that you're resting on your forearms and knees. Line up your head and neck with your back, and place your shoulders directly above your elbows. Tighten the abdominal muscles.

Raise your right arm off the floor (top illustration). Hold for three

deep breaths. Repeat with your left arm.

Raise your right leg off the floor (bottom illustration). Hold for three deep breaths. Repeat with your left leg.

For added challenge, raise your left arm and right leg at the same time. Repeat with your right arm and left leg.

#### Side plank

The side plank challenges your stability and improves core strength by working the muscles along the side of your body:

Lie on your left side, raising yourself onto your left forearm (top illustration). Place your left shoulder directly above your left elbow, keeping your shoulders, hips and knees in a straight line. Rest your right arm along the side of your body.

Tighten the abdominal muscles. Hold for three deep breaths. Repeat on your right side.

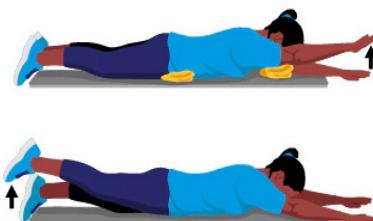
For added challenge, balance on

your left hand. Raise your hips off the floor and extend your right hand toward the ceiling (bottom illustration). Hold for three deep breaths. Repeat on your right side.

#### Superman

The superman is another core-strength exercise that can help strengthen your lower back:

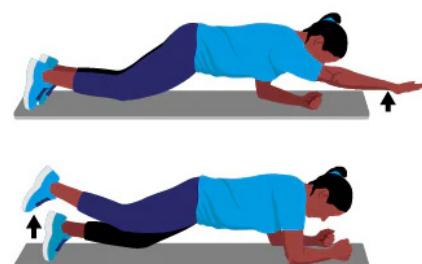
Lie on your stomach with a rolled towel or a small pillow under your hips to support your back. You



also might use a folded towel to support your head. Tighten the abdominal muscles.

Raise your right arm off the floor (top illustration). Hold for three deep breaths. Lower your right arm and repeat with your left arm.

Raise your right leg off the floor (bottom illustration). Hold for three deep breaths. Lower your right leg and repeat with your left leg. ■



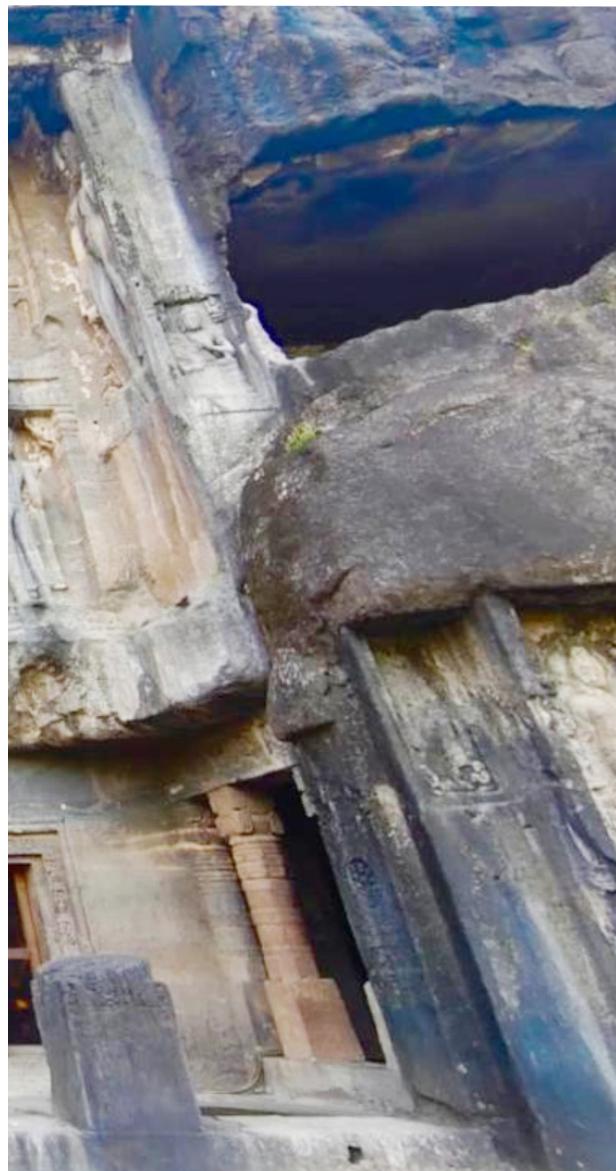
This article is based on Health Advisory issued by Mayo Clinic, USA.

AJANTA AND ELLORA

# TIMELESS WONDER CARVED IN STONE

Rajeev G Pereira





**Ajanta and Ellora, timeless marvels of ancient Indian architecture, are awe-inspiring artistic creations that blend culture, faith and masterly artistry.**



**A**urangabad. The very name hums with echoes of empires, of princely ambition and the relentless march of time. Here, amidst the Deccan plains, the memories of ancient India still linger, etched into the very fabric of the landscape.

Legends paint a vivid tapestry: of bustling trade routes threading through dense forests, carrying not just precious goods but also the vibrant exchange of cultures and beliefs; of cities like Ujjayini and Pataliputra, their voices mingling with those of distant Alexandria and Babylon; and of seekers of enlightenment who carved their spiritual journeys into the heart of the mountains. These are the mountains that cradle Ajanta and Ellora, timeless marvels of ancient Indian architecture, where stones breathe stories and time itself bends to the artistry of generations past. The 29 caves of Ajanta, located within a horseshoe-shaped mountain range, unfold like an epic poem carved in stone. Buddhist chaitya-grihas, prayer halls, libraries, monastic residences, and even spaces for music resonate with the devotion and artistry of their creators.

A gentle river, once cascading down a seven-tiered waterfall known as the 'sapt-kund', flows serenely before the caves, as if carrying the echoes of ancient chants and the murmur of flowing robes.

Stepping into Ajanta is akin to stepping back in time. The walls, adorned with vibrant murals and intricate sculptures, engage you in a silent dialogue. You become a participant in the scenes depicted – laughing,

# THE BUDDHIST LEGACY

**India's Buddhist legacy, rooted in sacred sites like Bodh Gaya and Sarnath, holds immense spiritual and cultural significance. Showcasing revered Buddha relics, India is now working to reclaim its position as the cradle of Buddhism and foster sustainable tourism and local economic growth around the Buddhist legacy writes Jyothish R.**

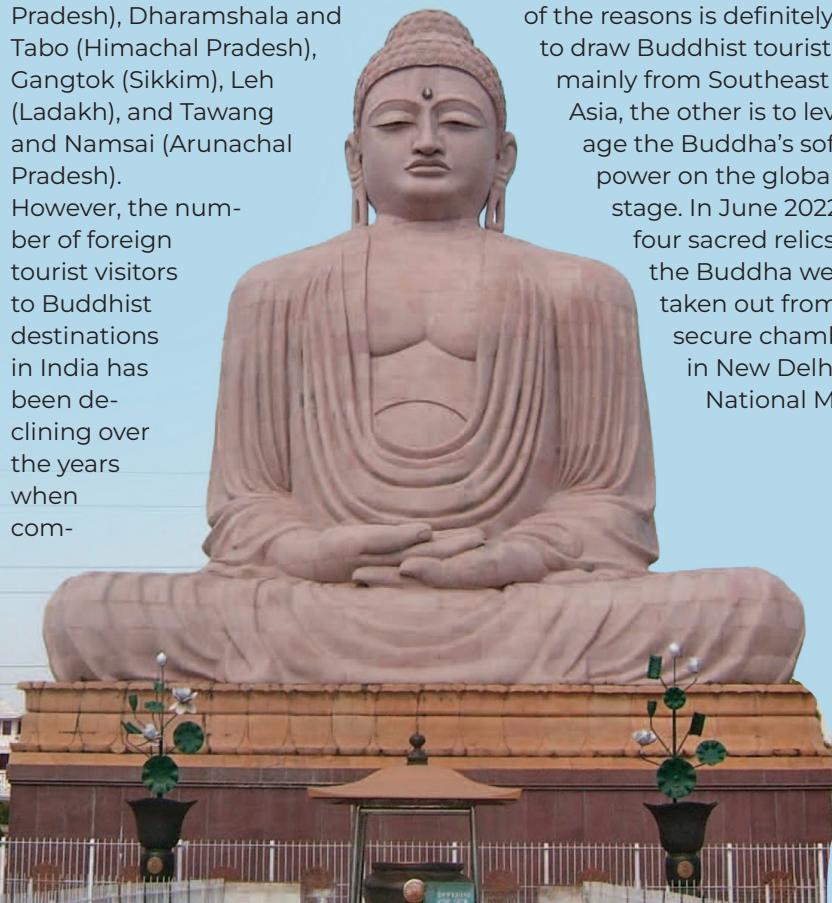
India's sprawling Buddhist circuit, from Bodh Gaya to Nagarjunakonda, reveals a powerful truth: India holds a legacy of spiritual and cultural significance that resonates deeply with millions worldwide. And India is doing something it had failed to do all these years: to use its rich Buddhist legacy to drive tourism. Except for Lumbini, his birthplace in Nepal, Buddhism's sacred sites mostly lie in India. These include Bodh Gaya (Bihar), where he attained enlightenment; Sarnath (Uttar Pradesh), where he delivered his first sermon; Rajgir (Bihar), where he expounded his dharma; and Kushinagar (Uttar Pradesh), where he died and attained parinirvana. Other notable destinations include the ancient university

town of Nalanda (Bihar), Sravasti (Uttar Pradesh), Sankisa (Uttar Pradesh), the Ajanta Caves (Maharashtra), Amaravati (Andhra Pradesh), Dharamshala and Tabo (Himachal Pradesh), Gangtok (Sikkim), Leh (Ladakh), and Tawang and Namsai (Arunachal Pradesh). However, the number of foreign tourist visitors to Buddhist destinations in India has been declining over the years when com-

pared to other Buddhist countries like Sri Lanka and the ASEAN. According to a 2022 NITI Ayog document focused on the need to promote Buddhist tourist circuits, in China, there are 200 million Buddhists but only 30,000 or 40,000 visit India. Arrivals to India from Buddhist dominated countries comprises a mere 0.005 per cent of all Buddhist adherents across the globe.

The nation is now poised to transform this profound heritage into a potent force for tourism and global influence. India is embarking on a strategic journey to reclaim its Buddhist heritage, leveraging infrastructure improvements and soft power initiatives to reassert its position as the cradle of Buddhism and challenge competing narratives.

But the government's push extends beyond global tourists and foreign exchange. While one of the reasons is definitely to draw Buddhist tourists, mainly from Southeast Asia, the other is to leverage the Buddha's soft power on the global stage. In June 2022, four sacred relics of the Buddha were taken out from a secure chamber in New Delhi's National Mu-





seum and flown to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, aboard a special IAF aircraft for an exposition. Accompanied by a high-level Indian delegation, led by Union Minister Kiren Rijiju, a Buddhist himself, the relics drew thousands of Mongolians, who lined up outside the Gandan Monastery to see them.

Later, in February 2024, another set of revered Buddhist relics travelled to Thailand, receiving the honour of a State Guest. Across four cities — Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Ubon Ratchathani and Krabi — thousands of devotees and enthusiasts gathered to pay homage, in a powerful demonstration of India's soft power and its enduring spiritual ties with the region.

During the last few years, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh have been making significant strides in the promotion of Buddhist tourism sites. In Namsai, a 108-foot Buddha statue is set to be erected soon, with donations from Thai citizens supporting the effort. The govern-

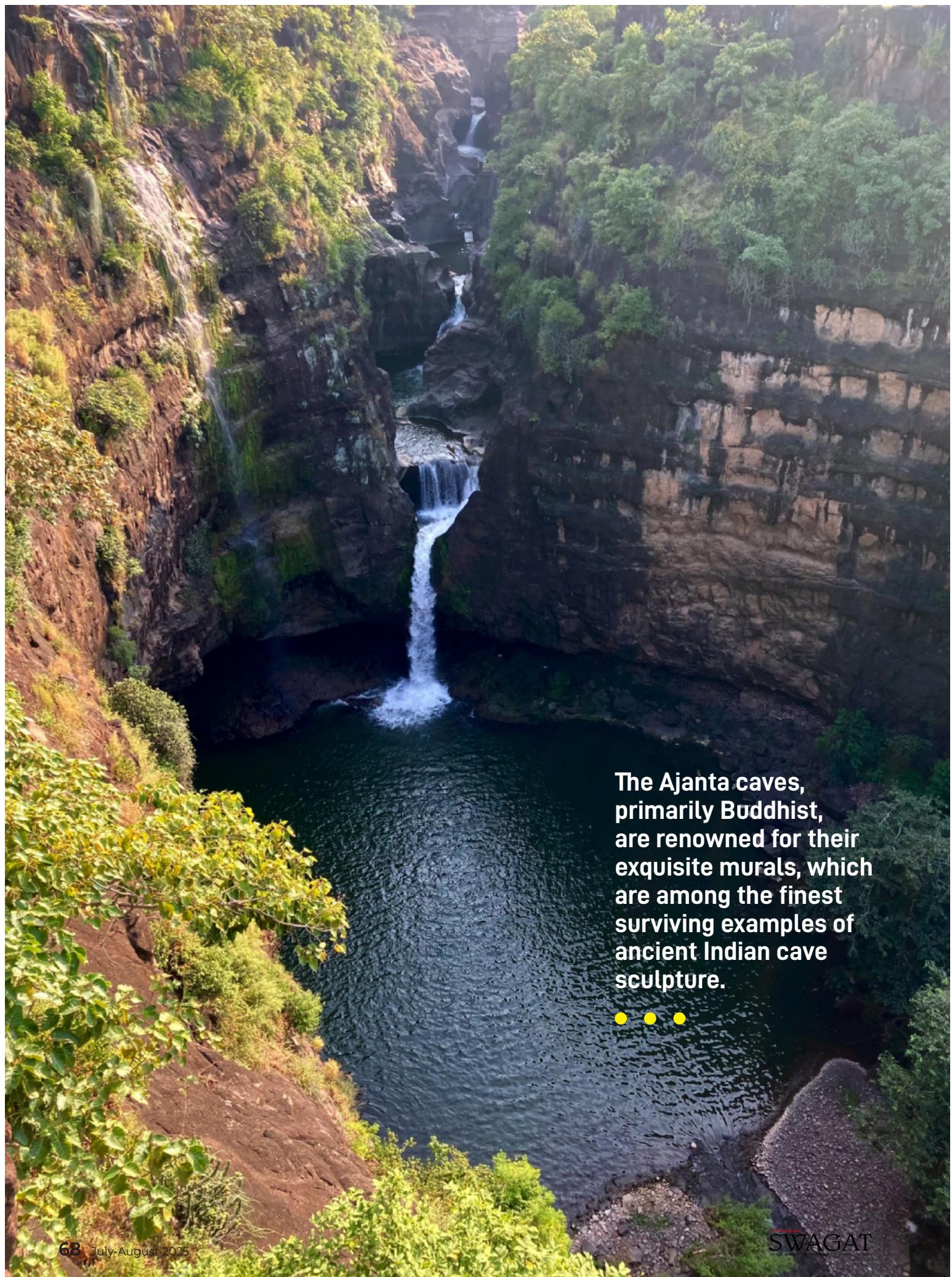
ment is also investing in improved connectivity, including enhanced air, rail, and road links, to make these historically significant locations more accessible.

The emphasis on infrastructure is coupled with a nuanced approach to cultural preservation and presentation. At sites like Nalanda, where the ruins of the ancient university stand as a testament to India's intellectual heritage, efforts are underway to enhance visitor interpretation and provide a deeper understanding of the site's historical significance. Guided tours, multilingual signage, and interactive exhibits are being introduced to create a more immersive and educational experience. Simultaneously, the government is working to promote sustainable tourism practices, ensuring that the influx of visitors does not compromise the delicate ecological balance of these sacred sites. Indian Railways operate the Mahaparinirvan Express—a luxury

AC train that periodically goes on an eight-day tour of the Buddhist circuit. This luxury train offers visitors to the Buddhist circuit a comfortable and immersive travel experience. Connectivity has also improved with airports like Kushinagar becoming operational, making it easier for international tourists to reach these sacred sites. Indian Hotels (IHCL), known for the Taj and Ginger brands, has signed a 160-room Gateway-branded hotel in Sarnath, and are exploring opportunities to extend their presence in Buddhist destinations like Nalanda and Bodh Gaya. The IHCL already has a presence in Patna, a gateway city to the circuit, with 300 rooms spread across one Taj and two Ginger properties.

The development of quality accommodations, ranging from luxury hotels to mid-market options, is essential to cater to the diverse needs of international and domestic tourists. The availability of comfortable and reliable lodging not only enhances the overall visitor experience but also encourages longer stays, boosting local economies. The need for improved infrastructure, including better roads, high-speed rail connections, and enhanced amenities, is paramount. Addressing these challenges will require sustained investment and a coordinated effort from both the public and private sectors.

Currently, India draws only 7.5% of its FTAs from Buddhist-majority nations, while Thailand attracts over 35%. A surge in international arrivals to the Buddhist circuit could bring a windfall for small entrepreneurs, including homestay owners. Local artisans, craftspeople, and tour operators also stand to benefit significantly from increased tourist traffic. The development of souvenir shops, cultural performances, and guided tours can create employment opportunities and stimulate local economies. ■



**The Ajanta caves, primarily Buddhist, are renowned for their exquisite murals, which are among the finest surviving examples of ancient Indian cave sculpture.**





weeping, experiencing the full spectrum of human emotions, yet these emotions are not your own, but rather those of the artists who breathed life into these stones. You are both the observer and the observed, caught in a timeless dance of creation and experience.

The Ajanta caves, primarily Buddhist, are renowned for their exquisite murals, which are among the finest surviving examples of ancient Indian cave sculpture. These vibrant frescoes, executed in the tempera technique, bring to life the Jataka tales, stories of the Buddha's previous lives, and

scenes from the life of Gautama Buddha. The colors, though muted by time, still retain a remarkable luminosity, and the figures, rendered with grace and fluidity, seem to step out of the walls. Imagine witnessing the compassionate gaze of the Bodhisattva Padmapani, his gentle expression radiating tranquility, or following the narrative thread of a Jataka story, with its intricate details and dramatic compositions. Ajanta is not just a collection of images; it is a visual chronicle of Buddhist philosophy, a testament to the power of art to convey spiritual truths and

inspire devotion. The caves, carved out of the hillside, become a stage for these ancient narratives, inviting the viewer to immerse themselves in the world of ancient India and experience the beauty and wisdom of Buddhist teachings.

#### **Ellora: Where Faiths Converge in Stone**

Ellora, in contrast to the predominantly Buddhist Ajanta, is a confluence of three major faiths: Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism. This harmonious coexistence is reflected in the diverse styles and iconography of the caves. Here,

**Ellora, in contrast to the predominant- ly Buddhist Ajanta, is a confluence of three major faiths: Bud- dhism, Hin- duism, and Jainism.**

you can witness the colossal grandeur of the Kailasa Temple (Cave 16), a monolithic marvel dedicated to Lord Shiva, which is not just a cave but an entire temple complex carved from a single rock. Its towering structure, intricate carvings, and sheer scale are awe-inspiring, a testament to the ambition and artistry of its creators.

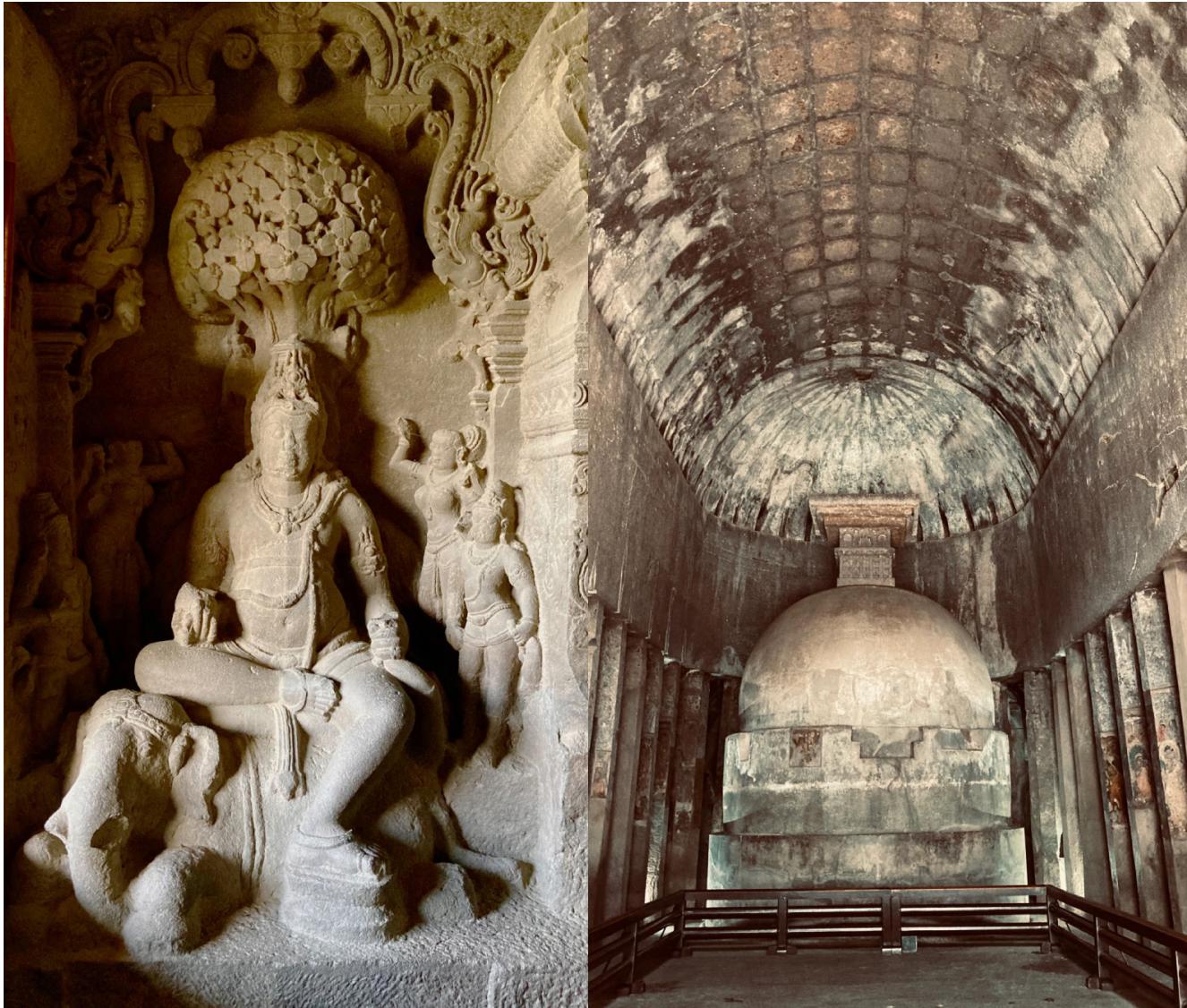
Nearby, you'll find Buddhist caves with serene images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, and Jain caves adorned with intricate sculptures of Tirthankaras. Ellora is a microcosm of India's rich religious and cultural heritage, a place where different faiths found expression in the language of stone. The caves, carved side by side, symbolize the spirit of tolerance and coexistence that has long been a hallmark of Indian civilization. Ellora is a reminder that even in the face of diverse beliefs, art can transcend boundaries and celebrate the shared human experience.

Entering the Ellora is to encounter an ancient presence, a sense of time stretching

back beyond human comprehension. The air seems thick with unspoken wisdom. One feels the presence of beings older than humanity, their thoughts, though indistinct, resonating within the very stones. They are like ancient trees, their consciousness rooted deep within the earth, their wisdom accumulated over centuries of silent observation. What mysteries have they unravelled? What truths have they gleaned from the meditations of the monks who once sought solace within these caves? Their language remains elusive, their secrets locked in the silent embrace of stone.

Within the chaitya-grihas, a profound sense of peace descends. The urge to renounce the world, to transcend the limitations of the physical realm, becomes almost overwhelming. Bliss is within reach, yet the tethers of earthly passions hold you grounded. It is in this delicate balance, between worldly attachment and spiritual yearning, that the true essence of





the art reveals itself.

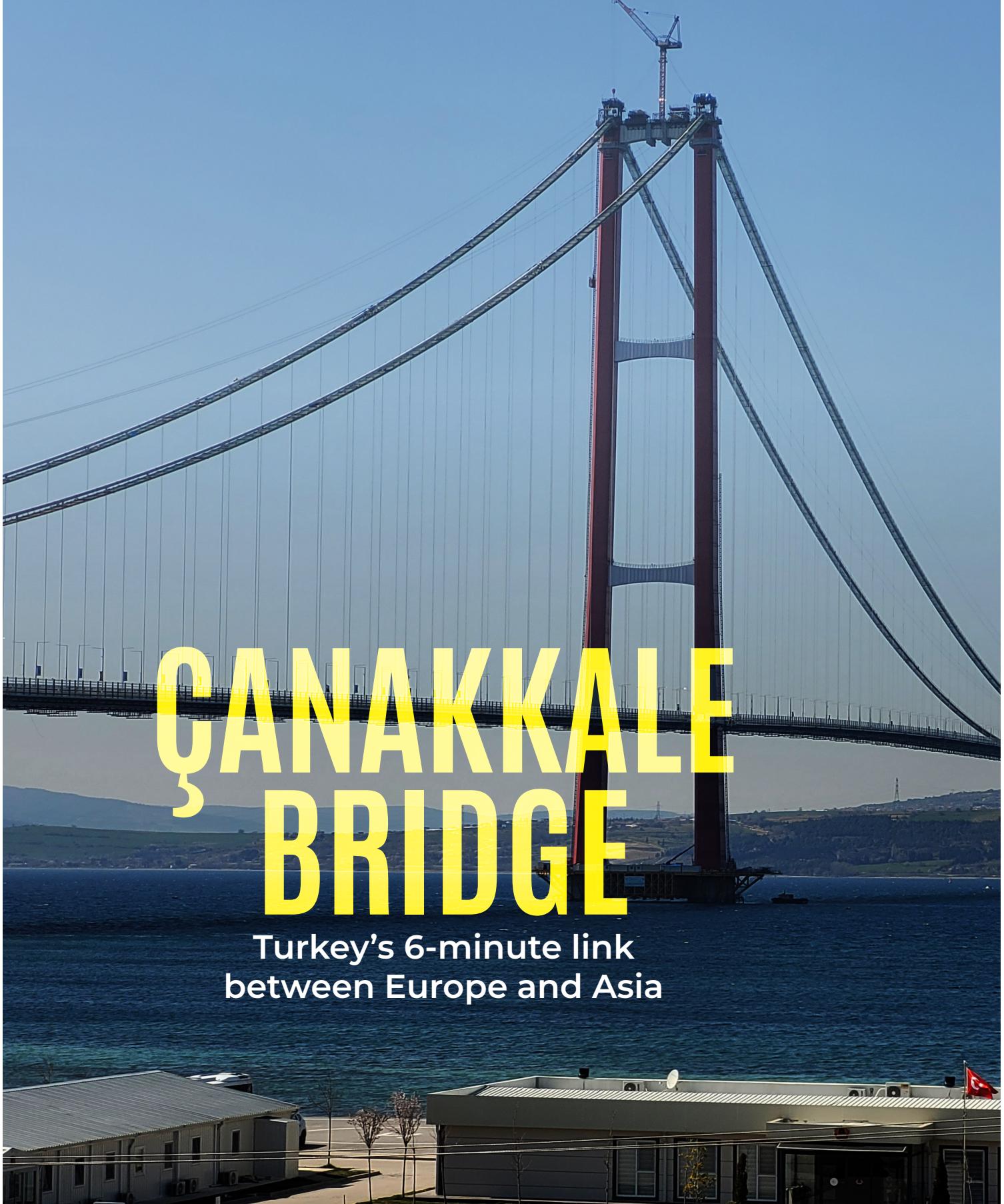
Cave 16, the Kailasa Temple is a breathtaking testament to human ingenuity and devotion. Stand there and imagine how the sculptors of this wonderful inheritance would have, like a master chess player envisioning countless moves ahead, worked from the summit of the colossal rock downwards--hewing, chipping, chiselling, carving and polishing the massive rock with meticulous precision to create this artistic wonder, every inch of which is alive with carvings of deities, humans, and beings from realms both known and imagined. It is a masterpiece of artistry, a testament to

the power of human creativity to shape the very fabric of reality.

#### Afterword

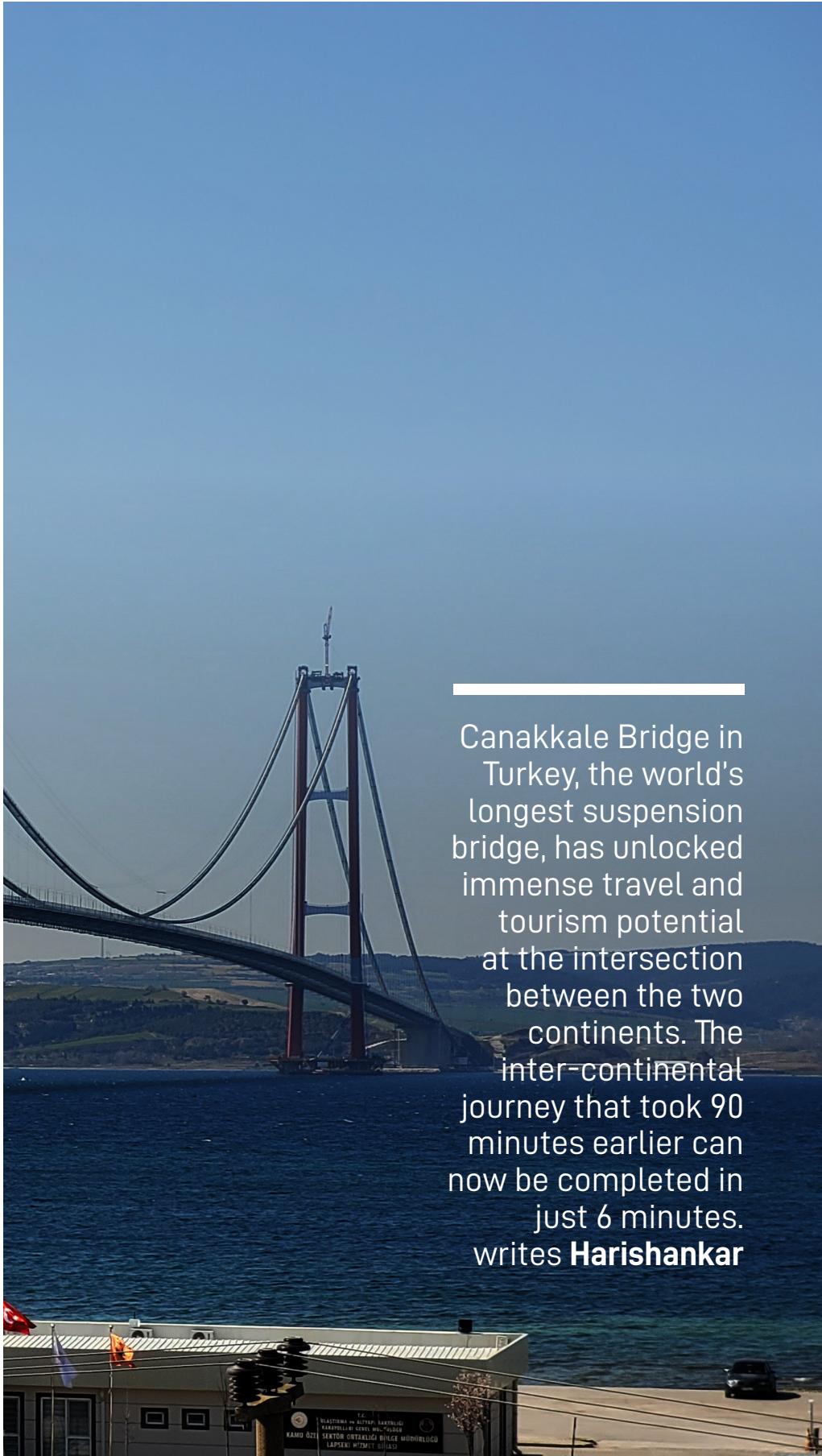
Travel is a transformative experience, a journey not just to a place, but also into oneself. The traveler is not a singular entity, but a composite of all the encounters along the way. You are the ever-patient receptionist, the resourceful auto-rickshaw driver, the itinerant vendor with a bag full of treasures and tales. You are the chameleon, morphing into a guide, a historian, an art connoisseur, as the situation demands. For you, truth and falsehood blur, and the legends etched in stone become mere anecdotes.

You are the traveler for whom home is not a fixed point on a map, but a feeling, a state of being. On the road to Ellora, the imposing fortress of Daulatabad, once deemed impregnable, stands as a monument to the ironies of history. Built to defy conquest, it ultimately fell, a poignant reminder that even the mightiest structures are vulnerable to the relentless tide of time. And so, the journey continues, through landscapes dotted with the relics of bygone eras, each stone narrating tales of empires risen and fallen, of gods and mortals, and of the enduring power of art to transcend the boundaries of time and space. ■



# ÇANAKKALE BRIDGE

Turkey's 6-minute link  
between Europe and Asia



Canakkale Bridge in Turkey, the world's longest suspension bridge, has unlocked immense travel and tourism potential at the intersection between the two continents. The inter-continental journey that took 90 minutes earlier can now be completed in just 6 minutes. writes **Harishankar**

The '1915 Çanakkale Bridge', a monumental engineering feat in Turkey (now officially known as Türkiye), has not only revolutionized transportation between Asia and Europe but also unlocked immense travel and tourism potential. Stretching 2,023 meters across the Dardanelles Strait, this suspension bridge—the longest in the world—connects Gelibolu on the European side to Lapseki on the Asian side. Its completion in 2022 marked a transformative moment in Turkey's infrastructure development, reshaping regional dynamics and offering travelers a unique gateway between continents. It is designed to carry up to 45,000 vehicles across its six lanes each day and support both tourism and commercial activity in the region. The main design work was carried out by COWI A/S, an international consulting group, specializing in engineering, environmental science and economics, with headquarters located in Lyngby, Denmark, and its execution involved several companies such as Daelim, Limak, SK and Yapi Merkezi. According to COWI, the position of the bridge posed many design challenges, including high winds and high seismic activity. It achieves its aerodynamic stability partly through a twin-box girder.



The clearance between the water and the deck was engineered to accommodate high-stacked container ships and cruise ships that need to pass under it. Before the bridge's construction, crossing the Dardanelles Strait required a ferry journey lasting approximately 90 minutes. Today, travelers can traverse this vital waterway in just six minutes—a remarkable reduction of 93% in travel time.

This newfound efficiency has enhanced connectivity between Europe and Asia, making it easier for tourists to explore both sides of Turkey's cultural and historical treasures. The bridge serves as a critical link in Turkey's motorway network, integrating the Marmara region with international corridors and boosting accessibility to attractions across Thrace, Western Anatolia, and the Aegean.

#### **Symbolism and History**

The bridge is not merely a marvel of

engineering; it is steeped in symbolism. Its name honours the Ottoman naval victory during the Gallipoli Campaign of 1915, while its dimensions commemorate significant milestones in Turkish history. The 2,023-metre main span celebrates the centenary of the Turkish Republic (1923–2023), and its 318-metre height symbolizes March 18, a key date in Gallipoli remembrance. These design elements make the bridge an iconic landmark that resonates with Turkey's rich heritage. For travelers, crossing the bridge is more than a journey—it is an opportunity to experience history intertwined with modernity. The structure stands as a testament to Turkey's ambition to bridge East and West, both literally and figuratively. The bridge's strategic location has opened up unparalleled tourism prospects. On the European side lies Gelibolu (Gallipoli), home to battlefields and memorials from

**The bridge's strategic location has opened up unparalleled tourism prospects.**

World War I that attract history enthusiasts from around the globe. On the Asian side, Lapseki offers access to scenic coastal towns along the Aegean Sea. The reduced travel time encourages day trips and multi-destination itineraries, allowing visitors to explore Turkey's diverse landscapes with greater ease.

Its record-breaking status as the longest suspension bridge in the world draws infrastructure enthusiasts and photographers eager to capture its grandeur against the backdrop of the Dardanelles Strait. Travelers driving across can enjoy breathtaking views of this historic waterway, making it an unforgettable experience.

#### Economic Boost for Tourism

The economic impact of the 1915 Çanakkale Bridge extends beyond transportation. By improving logistics and accessibility, it has stimulated growth in local tourism industries on both sides of the strait. Hotels, restaurants, and tour operators are benefiting from increased visitor traffic, while cultural interactions between

global trends toward eco-friendly travel solutions.

#### Gateway to Eurasia

The 1915 Çanakkale Bridge is more than a regional connector; it is part of a broader initiative to enhance global connectivity. As a critical component of Turkey's contribution to China's One Belt, One Road project, it facilitates seamless trade routes stretching from Beijing to London. For travelers embarking on cross-continental journeys, this infrastructure offers an efficient entry point into Eurasia. Its role in strengthening ties between Europe and Asia also mirrors broader geopolitical shifts. By fostering international cooperation through improved infrastructure, Turkey positions itself as a hub for intercontinental travel and commerce.

#### Information for Travelers

Accessible year-round without seasonal closures, the bridge offers convenience for travelers navigating Turkey's western regions. Visitors can reach it via major motorways on either side: O-3 from Europe





or O-5 from Asia. Whether arriving by car or joining guided tours that highlight its significance, crossing the bridge is both practical and enriching.

**For those seeking adventure beyond traditional sightseeing, driving across this engineering marvel provides an opportunity to witness first-hand how innovation transforms landscapes. The panoramic views from its span are particularly striking during sunrise or sunset-a must-see for photography enthusiasts.**



For those seeking adventure beyond traditional sightseeing, driving across this engineering marvel provides an opportunity to witness first-hand how innovation transforms landscapes. The panoramic views from its span are particularly striking during sunrise or sunset-a must-see for photography enthusiasts.

The 1915 Çanakkale Bridge exemplifies how infrastructure can redefine travel experiences while fostering economic growth and cultural exchange. As travelers journey across its record-breaking span, they are not only crossing continents but also engaging with history, innovation, and symbolism. Whether exploring Gallipoli's battlefields or enjoying coastal retreats along the Aegean Sea, this bridge offers unparalleled opportunities for discovery.

For tourists seeking unique experiences that blend heritage with modernity, the 1915 Çanakkale Bridge stands as an inspiring gateway between Asia and Europe-a marvel that connects people while celebrating progress. ■

# HUAIJIANG GRAND CANYON BRIDGE

World's highest bridge is set for opening in June

**C**hina is set to open the 2-mile-long Huaijiang Grand Canyon Bridge, which stands over 200 metre taller than the Eiffel Tower and weighs three times more, showcasing Chinese engineering prowess, in June.

The Huaijiang Grand Canyon Bridge, located in the South Western Chinese province of Guizhou, is being built across the Beipan River as it passes through the deep Huaijiang Canyon. Upon completion, it will be the world's highest bridge, measuring 625 metres from the bridge deck

to the bottom of the gorge. It will surpass the current highest bridge, the Duge Bridge, which crosses the same river 200 km upstream.

Work started on the ambitious project in 2022 to create a motorway connecting the Liuzhi and Anlong areas in the Guizhou Province. The bridge, costing £216 million (Rs 2,200 crore), will not only improve transportation in a rural area of China but also become a significant tourist draw, attracting visitors with its impressive engineering and stunning location. The bridge would have living

areas, a glass walkway and the 'highest bungee jump' in the world. Its steel trusses, weighing about 22,000 metric tonnes – the equivalent of three Eiffel Towers – were installed in just two months. Besides becoming the world's tallest, it will also be the world's largest span bridge to be built in a mountainous area, at 1,420 metres, or 4,650 ft. With 92.5 percent of its land covered by mountains and hills, the region has built nearly 30,000 bridges since the late 1970s and is now home to nearly half of the world's 100 tallest bridges. ■



# TAKES CHARGE



## SUMAN BILLA DIRECTOR GENERAL, TOURISM

In a significant bureaucratic reshuffle at the Additional Secretary level, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of senior IAS officer Suman Billa (IAS: 1996: KL) as the new Director General (Tourism) in the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

Billa, who is currently serving as Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, brings a wealth of experience to the role. Notably, he had earlier served as Joint Secretary in the same ministry from 2014 to 2019, where he played a pivotal role in shaping India's tourism policies and campaigns.

Following his tenure in the ministry, Billa was appointed as Director, Technical Cooperation and Silk Road Development at the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), enhancing India's global presence in the tourism sector and contributing to sustainable tourism development worldwide. ■

## MUGDHA SINHA MANAGING DIRECTOR, ITDC

Mugdha Sinha, a 1999-batch IAS officer from the Rajasthan cadre, has been appointed the Managing Director of India Tourism Development Corporation Limited (ITDC). She assumes the role at the rank and pay scale of an Additional Secretary.

Prior to this, Sinha served as the Director General of Tourism in the Ministry of Tourism, a position also equivalent to the Additional Secretary rank. She was empanelled for the Additional Secretary position in May last year. In October 2022, she held the position of Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Culture, further strengthening her extensive experience in cultural and tourism affairs. ■





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