



# *India*

**LAND  
OF OPPORTUNITIES**

# Deep Rooted & Close Ties BETWEEN INDIA AND SERBIA

THE PAST THREE YEARS HAVE SEEN THE STRENGTHENING OF BILATERAL TIES THROUGH SUCH HIGH LEVEL EXCHANGES THAT LAST TOOK PLACE ONLY 30 YEARS PRIOR. THIS HIGH LEVEL OF EXCHANGES, COMING AFTER A LONG GAP, IS ALREADY HAVING A POSITIVE IMPACT ON OUR BILATERAL TIES. THIS WILL RESULT IN MORE EXCHANGES AND CLOSER INTERACTION IN THE COMING YEARS - SUBRATA BHATTACHARJEE



The first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was marked by the intensification of bilateral co-operation between India and Serbia – as two countries that were enduringly connected through their common commitment to the Non-Aligned Movement nearly 60 years ago. In this CorD Magazine interview, Indian Ambassador H.E. Mr. Subrata Bhattacharjee says that the potential

exists for strong ties and understanding at the political level to be transmitted to the business community and strengthening economic co-operation between the two countries. He adds that, following Indian investments in Serbia, conditions have been met for exports of Serbian products to the Indian market, where Serbian apples should soon arrive!



**Your Excellency, your 2018 arrival in Serbia coincided with two major anniversaries – 70 years of diplomatic relations between India and Serbia, and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi. What would you say about your experiences in Serbia to date?**

The deep rooted ties from the days of Non-Aligned Movement still form the foundation of our close bilateral ties. The leaders of this country have traditionally shown great understanding for India's global perspective. I have also found Serbians very warm and friendly towards India. Serbians take spontaneous interest in Indian history and culture. My personal interaction with Serbians was always pleasant. I am certainly enjoying my stay here.

**We are witnessing the intensification of co-operation between India and Serbia at the highest level. What are your priorities for the period ahead?**

The past three years have seen the strengthening of bilateral ties through such high level exchanges that only previously took place 30 years ago. When then Serbian Prime Minister (now President) Vučić visited India in 2017, this was the first visit at the level of Head of State/Government from Serbia to India after 30 years. The same can be said about the visit of the Vice President of India to Serbia in 2018. First Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister Dačić also visited India in 2018, and that too came after a gap of 10 years. The visit of the Indian Minister of External Affairs to Serbia in November 2019 was also a landmark development, as the first visit at the level of foreign minister from India after more than 30 years. In 2019, we also had the good fortune to see the visit of the Indian Speaker of the Parliament after more than 30 years. In short, these high level exchanges, coming after a long gap, are already having a positive impact on our bilateral ties. This will result in more exchanges and closer interaction in the coming years.

**India's foreign minister reiterated while in Serbia recently that India will not change its position regarding non-recognition of Kosovo's unilaterally declared independence. Do you believe that Kosovo can, with the help of countries that recognise its independence, become a member of the UN – which is among the key objectives of the government in Pristina?**

As the External Affairs Minister of India stated very clearly, India supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia. Based on this principled belief, India has not recognised the Unilateral Declaration of Independence of Kosovo. India supports a peaceful resolution of the issue through negotiations and dialogue. We are aware that Serbia has taken part in talks aimed at resolving this issue in the past few years. I believe that this will shape the future solution of the problem.

**What can you say about the importance of cooperation agreements in the defence sector, which were signed by the two countries in November 2019?**

Yugoslavia was a major defence exporter to many countries, including India. Serbia has its niche

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capabilities that make it attractive for Indian companies. The Defence Cooperation Agreement signed during the visit of the External Affairs Minister of India in November 2019 will certainly strengthen bilateral cooperation in the defence sector. A number of Indian companies have visited Serbia for discussions on ties. Serbian companies are also regularly attending Indian fairs, like DEFEXPO. The Defence Cooperation Agreement will provide a stronger platform for streamlining these cooperation initiatives.

**Economic cooperation between Serbia and India lags far behind compared to the high level of understanding at the political level. Do you see ways to better connect the businesspeople of India and Serbia and, if so, in what areas?**

It is true that, despite some growth in economic ties, economic cooperation between India and Serbia has been far below its true potential. Bilateral trade has been slightly over US\$200 million, but there is greater scope to increasing it further. Fortunately, the recent exchange of visits has provided a boost to the mutual awareness

of potential among the business communities of the two countries. For Serbian producers of agricultural products, India can be a large and attractive market. New opportunities opened up with the signing of the Agreement of Cooperation in Plant Health and Plant Quarantine in 2018, during the visit of the Vice President of India to Serbia. Serbian apple growers have taken due note of it. With the visit of a technical team from India to Serbia, decks have now been cleared to launch the export of Serbian apples to India. There are many such Serbian agricultural products that can similarly find a market in India. Serbia participated in World Food India 2017, a major economic promotion event in India on the food and food processing sector. With India being a major foreign investor, India's private sector has already ventured into Serbia. Indian

companies are engaged in diverse manufacturing activities in Serbia – tractor production, food processing, IT parks, aluminium panels etc. Considering that Serbia is a member of the EU Customs Union and has FTAs with Russia and many other countries, there is great potential to attract further investment from India. Indians have a natural advantage in sectors such as IT, pharmaceuticals, bio-technology etc., which can easily find a place on the Serbian market. With greater awareness on both sides and unbounded opportunities, I expect economic ties to strengthen.

**Could you say something about the experience in Serbia to date of Indian tractor and farm equipment company TAFE, which acquired Serbia's IMT?**

Agriculture plays a major role in the Serbian economy. This provides a great opportunity for Indian manufacturers to supply agricultural machinery to Serbia. Serbians also acknowledge India as a supplier of quality agricultural machinery at affordable prices. Indian company

TAFE, which had a long association with Serbia, rightly sensed the need and acquired a leading Serbian tractor brand and its factory for manufacturing TAFE tractors in Serbia under the IMT brand name. The company's business plan is progressing well. In fact, two other leading Indian tractor companies – namely Mahindra and Sonalika – also have their own assembly lines in Serbia with Serbian partners. There are similar opportunities for various other types of agricultural machinery. It was with this in mind that the Engineering Export Promotion Council

Serbia reciprocated in 2017, by granting visa exemptions to Indians for short visits to Serbia. This has played a great role in attracting Indian tourists to Serbia. More than 25,000 Indians have travelled to Serbia since the end of 2017 by taking advantage of the visa free entry facilities. The typical Indian tourist prefers a package tour to adventure tourism. I feel that Serbian tour companies should concentrate on offering package tours and group tourism to Indians in order to attract them to Serbia in larger numbers.



brought a group of 20 Indian companies to the International Agriculture Fair in Novi Sad in May 2019. There will also be a similar participation in this year's fair. Thus, I can say that the success of TAFE on the Serbian market also motivates other Indian companies to venture into Serbia.

**The Tourism Organisation of Serbia has had its first presentation in India. Do you believe it would be possible to increase the number of Indian tourists opting to visit Serbia?**

Indian tourists are the new globetrotters. With growing prosperity and the increasing size of India's affluent class, Indians are now travelling abroad more and more for leisure and recreation. With its beautiful landscape, rich culture and appealing cuisine, Serbian tourism spots could be a new source of attraction for Indian tourists travelling abroad. In order to facilitate greater people-to-people interaction, India introduced an online visa facility for Serbians in 2016.

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**Serbian Prime Minister Brnabić announced the possibility of introducing direct flights connecting New Delhi and Belgrade. Could this idea be implemented in 2020?**

Aviation connectivity can be a serious limiting factor for promoting large scale tourism. There are currently various options for travelling to Serbia from India through various cities in Europe and the Middle East. A direct flight can naturally be a great option for Indian tourists coming to Serbia. An Air Service Agreement

was signed between India and Serbia in 2018, during the visit of the Vice President of India to Serbia. This can facilitate the commencement of direct aviation connections. Once that happens, more Indian tourists will certainly be attracted to Serbia.

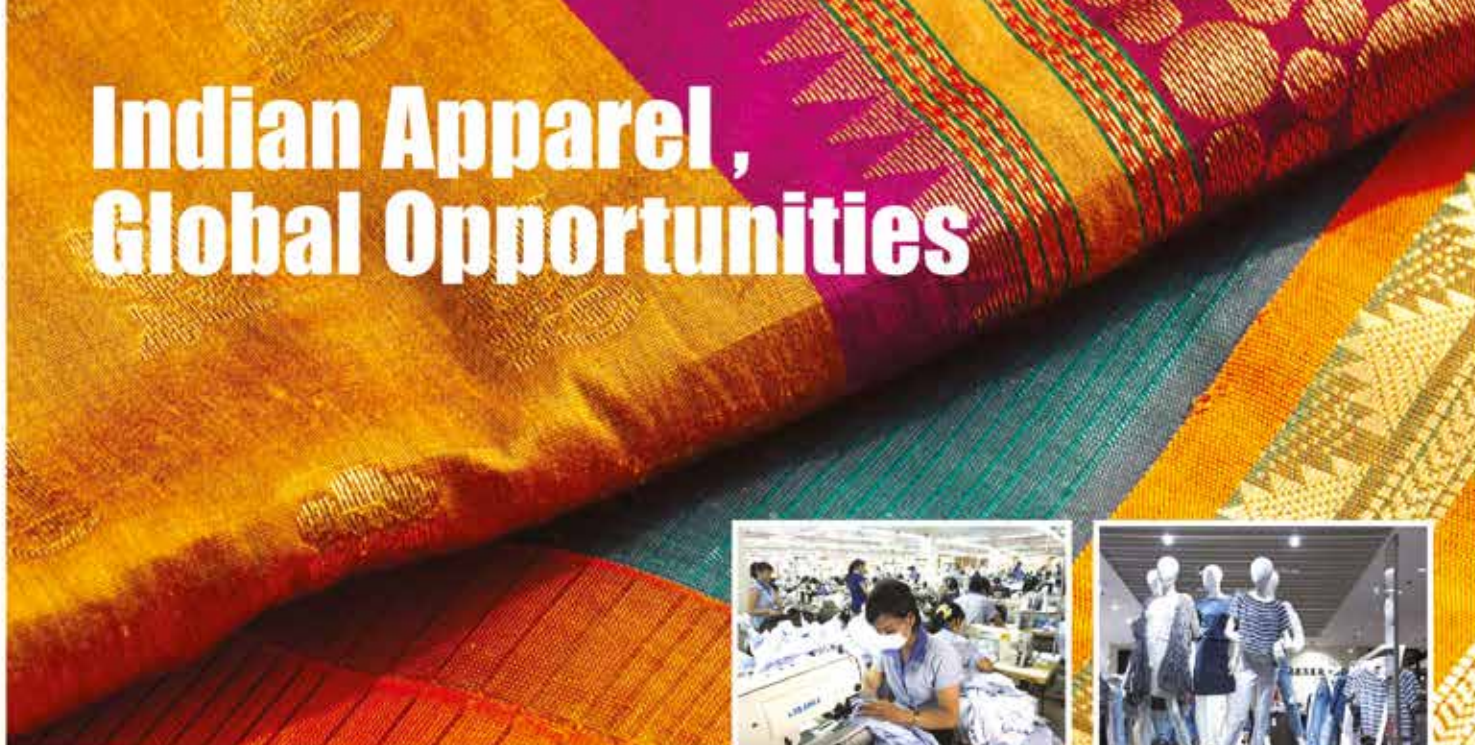
**Famous Indian producer Sajid Nadiadwala was in Serbia recently to shoot the third instalment of the popular Baaghi films. Does the film industry represent the fastest growing area of cooperation between our two countries?**

Bollywood produces the largest number of films worldwide. Moreover, India has a thriving film industry in many regional languages, like Tamil, Telugu, Bengali etc. Even in the 1970s and '80s, Indian film producers occasionally travelled abroad to shoot some scenes. This tendency grew further in the last decade of the previous millennium, while a number of Indian films were shot in Europe during the past 10 years or so. I am happy to say that Serbia is a new option on the radar of Indian film producers. Over the past few years, four or five regional films from India were shot in Serbia. During my time here, I have seen the screening of 'Soorma', which had a number of scenes shot in Serbia. 'Uri- The Surgical Strike', the first Bollywood blockbuster of 2019, was primarily shot in Serbia. I also had

the opportunity to watch shootings of a few other Indian films in Serbia. 'Baaghi-3', one of the big film productions from India, had a film shooting schedule in Serbia. Overall, this is another welcome development and can cement stronger economic ties. This is because the shooting of Indian films in Serbia not only generates revenue for Serbia, but also popularises Serbia as a tourist spot among Indian tourists. This will in turn attract more Indian tourists to Serbia.



# Indian Apparel , Global Opportunities



## BACKGROUND

The Indian textile and apparel industry is one of the largest in the world with a large unmatched raw material base and manufacturing strength across the value chain. The Indian textile Industry has inherent linkage with agriculture and with the culture and traditions of the country making for its versatile spread of products appropriate for both domestic and the export markets. The textile industry contributes to 7% of industry output in value terms, 2% of India's GDP. India's apparel industry exports is worth USD 16.2 bn in 2018-19 which contributes 5% in India's all commodity exports and 43% in Total Textile exports.

The dream of making India a 5 Trillion Dollar economy can only be fulfilled by ensuring the growth of the SME sector in the country. Apparel sector consist of 80% of SME's of which the Exports turnover are in the range of Rs.1 to Rs.10 Cr.

## APPAREL SECTOR IS THE EMPLOYMENT GENERATOR OF INDIA

We provide largest employment after agriculture and employs 12.90 million workers directly in which 65% to 70% workforce are women. The workers in apparel sector comes from weaker sections of the society.

Jobs that Indian apparel exporters creates are what India needs most today. Our factories can take someone with fifth grade education train them to become worker and within 2 months of training a person can earn Rs. 12000/- per month.

Over Rs. 25000 Cr (22% of total garment exports) is disbursed to workers per year as wages in which over Rs. 16000 Cr is the component of wages per year to women workers.

## STRENGTH OF APPAREL SECTOR

Enough availability of workers. RMG sector is the largest employment provider in the manufacturing sector. Apparel sector provides 12.9 million workers. We have the capability in producing value added garments, involving embroidery & handwork having strong, innovative and Creative Design Capabilities. We also have a capacity to undertake customized and flexible-small quantity orders. With the presence of an entire value chain from fibre to fashion making India as the best sourcing destination for apparel. EU is the largest market for India.

## WHAT INDIA CAN OFFER TO GLOBAL MARKET?

Good compliant factories and a young start up fashion entrepreneur's ecosystem. Indian garment manufacturers use variety of indigenously produced fabrics in various counts, constructions and compositions. Cottons are predominantly used but equally equipped to use viscose and polyester fabrics and its blends with cotton. Specialized in hand work and embroideries using traditional Indian printing techniques such as Zardozi, Chinkankari, Kantha, Dapka, Aari, Adda, Phulkari etc. Ability to execute smaller minimum order quantities



# Through the Lens of TALENT, INNOVATION & TRUST



## TALENT



Nothing moves without this. While many developed nations are saddled with an aging population, India's median age is 29. The benefits of the demographic dividend will span across the next 20 years or longer if we can play our cards right. Currently, the 181 billion-dollar Indian tech sector employs 4 million people, of which 0.7 million are skilled in digital. It's a large base when it's seen across the world that there's a shortage of niche talent availability. However, we have set the bar a lot higher and the reskilling drive is on full swing. It should fetch us another 2 million (digitally trained people) in the next 4 – 5 years.

The demand for specialised talent in digital is galloping at a 35% CAGR and should stay on course for the next few years. The nation produces about 2.4 million STEM graduates every year, so the pipeline is long enough. The challenge is whether it is robust enough to sustain high growth. While on the one hand it's about acing the hard skills – AI, ML, Big Data and the likes, on the other it looks at new-age soft skills which are about collaboration, continuous learnability, work-life integration, alignment with gigs and not seeing digitalisation as a threat but as an enabler.

At NASSCOM we initiated a reskilling program called FutureSkills. It's gathering momentum rather quickly. We have over 0.2 million registered users from 100-odd companies. Buoyed by the success, the government has agreed to support its expansion to include other industry sectors, students of higher education and government officials too. This should impact another 0.4 million users in the next couple of years.

The mode of re-skilling is also very different from traditional "degree-based" classroom learning in premier institutions. Here, byte-sized information dissemination has been found to be most effective which can be transmitted through a hand-held device even to administer flexibility in learning hours. This has led to a whole new world of opportunities for IT Solutions Providers in MOOCs.

## INNOVATION



Innovation is about decoupling revenue growth from an equivalent talent addition. Innovation is about moving away from the labour arbitrage regime and be considered as an equal partner by the end client due to the strategic value created, which goes way beyond traditional delivery to touch the realms of outcome-based pricing. Innovation is also about high quality made widely accessible at affordable price points. Clearly, Indian IT has proven to be the best-in-class on these counts.

The nation has a population of 1.2 billion people. The storied success of Aadhaar is one of its kind. Approximately, 1.1 billion Indians now have a unique identifier (Aadhaar Number) which sets them apart from their compatriots. Levering this, government benefits can now reach the beneficiary without the interference of intermediaries, thus ensuring leakages are plugged to the tune of millions of dollars.

The best example of tech-driven Indian innovation which I can think of has a special mention of Fintechs, and the manner in which it has disrupted the traditional bastions of banks and financial institutions to offer dig-

ital payments, investment advisory, insurance aggregators, trade finance and peer-to-peer lending. During the 2016 – 19 period, there's been rapid growth of 22% in transactions. In transaction value terms, the expansion is from 33 billion USD (2016) to approximately 73 billion USD, expected early this year. In other domains, such as healthcare, retail, and agriculture, the examples are no less inclusive. India has a vast population of underprivileged people and technology is bridging these gaps.

In the last few years, the industry dynamics have changed beyond recognition. In a VUCA environment, things like "structured" or "process-driven" may have diluted its overall influence. Marked by high complexity and uncertainty, it's innovation and its sandbox approach that will sustain. In global rankings (on innovation), the nation is currently on a high-growth trajectory.

The innovation labs in India leave you with a sense of abundance with limitless possibilities. The people who work there have a tremendous ability to re-imagine a future hat may seem a bit distant today, but it's just a matter of time when most of it gets aligned with reality. There's a new term – "phygital". It's a "space" where digital meets the physical world to open up infinite possibilities. Essentially, the customer is at the centre and technology works around them to provide a unique experience in multiple ways. Instant gratification is what people want, and we have to find multiple ways to deliver it at scale. This is what the EXPERIENCE-led economy is all about.

## WINNING IN THE AGE OF TRUST



The currency of trust is perhaps the most valuable of all. The criticality is obvious – very hard to earn but remarkably easy to lose. Indian IT has covered substantial ground

in the last 4 decades to claim its own as a trusted partner. Spread over 80-odd countries in 760 offshore locations, we have left our mark deep and wide.

This block needs to be examined through many angles. Primarily, it raises the question – is my data safe, secured and being used in a manner for which I have signed up? Our Personal Data Protection Bill has been tabled in parliament. It went through hundreds of rounds (literally) of consultations. NASSCOM would have featured in at least a dozen of them. The Bill identifies clearly who are the participants and beneficiaries in the entire chain of processing personal data, their roles, responsibilities & liabilities (in case of a violation) and also the circumstances under which exceptions can be made.

Secondly, in a shared economy, we are constantly witnessing partnerships, co-innovations, M&As, acqui-hiring, Public-Private-Partnerships, academia-industry engagements, start-up engagements, and the likes. It only means that IP is being created at a blinding pace and being shared across, equally furiously. That's really the crux of what we call "exponential" growth.

Finally, in a value chain, the strength is determined by its weakest link. This is a very sensitive area. You can get all the other blocks right, but even the minutest of slippages in matters of trust can lead to catastrophes and brand equity can be severely compromised. So that's it! The three currencies – TALENT, TRUST & INNOVATION. The Indian tech sector is well placed in these areas and as it inches closer to the 200 billion dollar mark, we have to ensure that we are agile enough to align ourselves in a landscape that is characterised by its archetypal tectonic shifts.

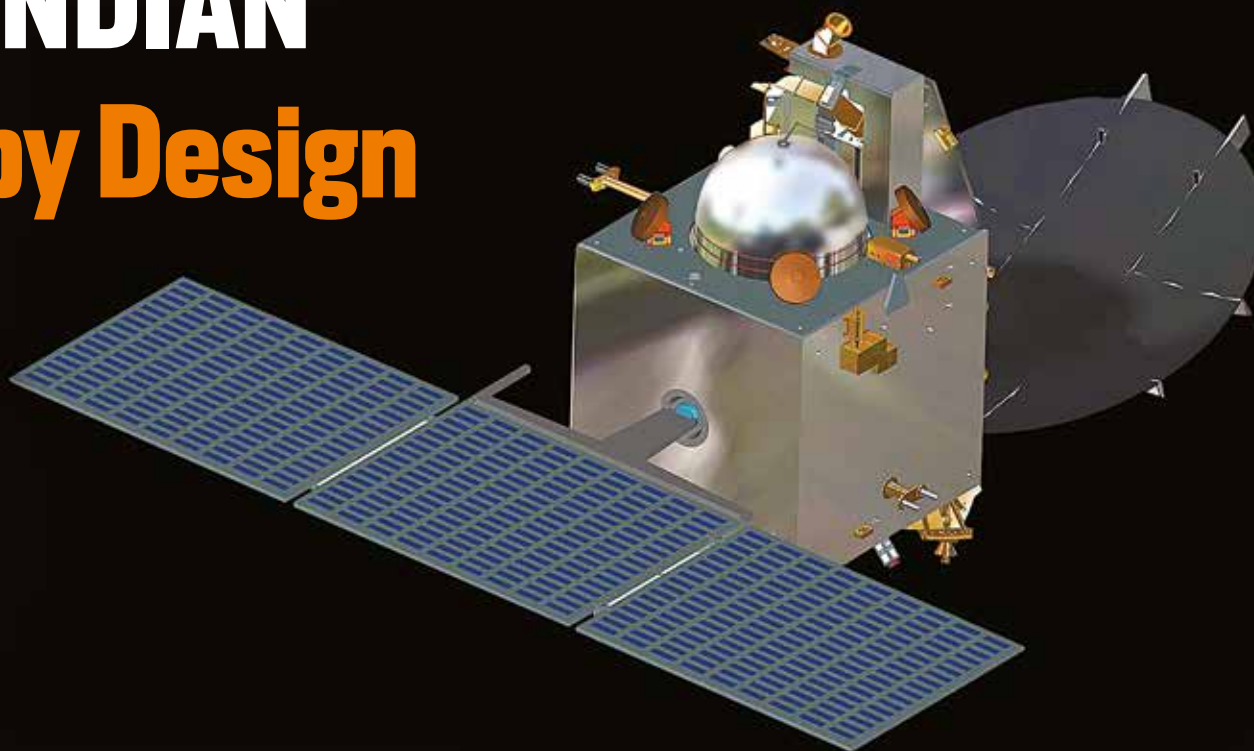
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*Author: The National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) : NASSCOM is a not-for-profit IT industry association that's the apex body for the 180 billion dollar IT BPM industry in India. It was established in 1988 and its aim is to constantly support the IT BPM industry.*

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***The 181 billion-dollar Indian tech sector employs 4 million people, of which 0.7 million are skilled in digital***

# INDIAN by Design



**SEVERAL STUDIES HAVE SHOWN HOW CUSTOMISABILITY IS A STRONG REQUIREMENT FOR THE INDIAN CONSUMER, AND EVEN INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS HAVE REALISED THE NEED FOR A DESIGN APPROACH THAT INCORPORATES 'ALL THINGS INDIAN'**

BY Prabhu Rajagopal



*The Indian approach views all objects as lying within the ambit of a unitary consciousness*

As one of the world's most ancient civilisations, India has a long history of cultural accomplishments and excellence in arts as well as the sciences. The exquisite sculptures, paintings and artefacts housed amongst ancient temple complexes are marvels of human imagination, planning and practical execution.

Indian literature also talks of advances made in ancient times in fields such as mathematics, linguistics, musical theory and astronomy. For example, the contributions on language of Panini, the great Indian linguist, who wrote a treatise on Sanskrit grammar in the 6<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, have strongly

influenced modern linguistics across the world, as acknowledged by Johan Frederik Staal or Frits Staal, one of the modern legends of Asian languages and culture, and American linguist and philosopher Noam Chomsky, among others. There are several other examples of ancient Indian achievements, like advances in science and engineering as recorded, for example, in Samarangana Sutradhara, an encyclopaedic work on classical Indian architecture written by Paramara king Bhoja, dated 1000 AD. This includes a chapter on Mechanical Automata, which refers to mechanisms that can mimic human motor action, which were a precursor to modern robots.

However, the invention of the steam engine and the subsequent Industrial Revolution in Europe seems to have overwhelmed traditional Indian engineering and crafts, and European goods and design have since reigned over the markets. As is now noted widely, India's contribution to the world's GDP dropped from as much as 24 per cent in the 18<sup>th</sup> century down





*“Make in India” can be described as an expression of the quest of India to find self-reliance in an era of globalisation*

to as low as three per cent in 1947. It is only in the last few decades that a re-invigorated Indian economy has slowly begun to rediscover its zest for engineering, arts and crafts, as well as new endeavours across various fields. Today buses, tractors, motorcycles and even cars made by Indian firms find major markets in emerging countries across the world, especially in Africa and East Asia. ‘Made in India’ artillery tanks, rifles and even railway coaches are set to debut across the world, establishing the acceptance of the Indian design theory.

### SWADESHI, OR THE INDIAN WELTANSCHAUUNG

The Indian weltanschauung (worldview) since ancient times converges into the ideals of a unitary consciousness or the fundamental state underlying all phenomena. And even today, the Indian design philosophy doesn’t believe in technology that is closed, imported or transplanted from elsewhere. We crave for freedom of ideas, search for our own answers to global challenges, and swadeshi (made in India) continues to thrive and even drive even many next generation innovations in India.

Thus, “Make in India” can be described as an expression of this quest of India to find self-reliance in an era of globalisation. Swadeshi drives us to source materials locally, look for indigenous technologies and, also importantly,

solve problems of critical national importance. For example, the Indian Space Research Organisation is among the few in the world whose major focus is actually using space research to improve the livelihoods of people through weather predictions and also for telecommunications and disaster management.



### THEORY OF MINIMALISM

Indian design theory favours extreme minimalism and utilitarian, or what is colloquially known as “jugaad”, aptly defined by the Oxford dictionary as “a flexible approach to problemsolving that uses limited resources in an innovative way”.

In simple terms, this means that the benefits of a product are maximised at minimised costs.

Jugaad is often praised as the ultimate Indian survival instinct, reflecting the Indian design theory of minimalism, our expression of frugality, even brutalism - maximising function (benefit rationalised to cost).

This minimalism manifests itself in everything – from Khaitan fans and Tata Nano cars to more recent examples, such as the S450 electric bike and the Beluga underwater ROV (remotely operated vehicle) made by IIT-Madras Start-ups Ather and Planys respectively.

Minimalism is also seen in Indian space and nuclear programmes.

Many Western commentators were in awe at how Mangalyaan, the Indian mission to Mars, cost less than the budget of a typical Hollywood blockbuster movie, and yet was successful in its very first attempted launch.



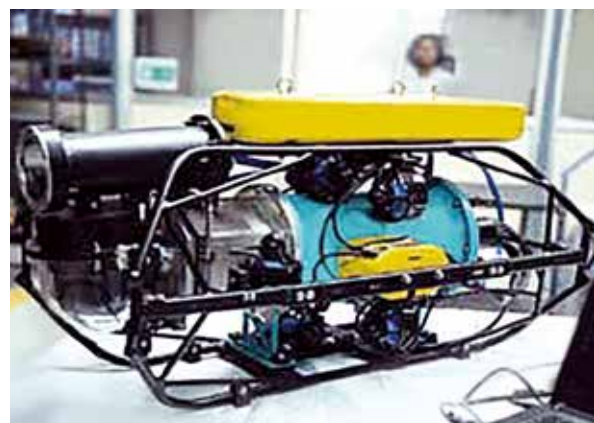
### INDIAN AESTHETICS

The Indian theory of aesthetics has one radical departure from Western aesthetics: the Indian theory holds that “beauty lies in the state of mind” and there are nava rasas or nine recognised emotional states. The Indian approach views all objects as lying within the ambit of a unitary consciousness (or, by negation, nothingness) – and hence the objects must ‘sync’ with our state of mind, and creations must seamlessly flow from within-out. This is the reason behind the exuberant use of colours in India – perhaps modern Indian products have disconnected from this aspect, but where tradition still holds sway – such as in textiles, crafts and temple art – we find the brilliant use of colour that can match every state of mind and thus appeal to every person.

### THE NEW ERA

The ideals of swadeshi, jugaad and rasa have sewn the seeds of an Indian design revolution that is set to storm the world. The philosophical settings of Gandhianism and swadeshi also have wider implications in a zeal for minimising wastage and promoting recycling, while also supporting environmentally friendly materials, technologies and processes. The Indian customer has often been found to value ease of use and durability in products, while also yielding maximum returns for a given investment.

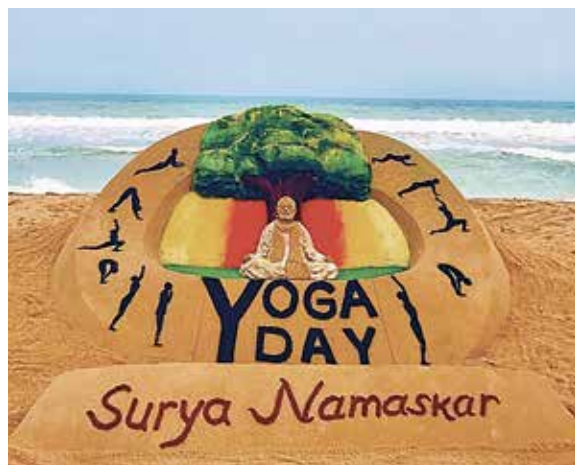
*The ideals of swadeshi, jugaad and rasa, have laid the seeds of an Indian design revolution, which is set to storm the world*





# Quintessential ASANAS

SOME ARE CALLING IT A MODERN-DAY RESURGENCE, WHILE OTHERS SAY IT MAYBE A CONSCIOUS AWAKENING; BUT YOGA SEEMS TO HAVE BECOME THE ULTIMATE PRACTICE FOR A HEALTHIER AND MORE AWARE EXISTENCE. WE TRAVEL AROUND THE WORLD TO EXPERIENCE THE BENEFITS OF THE ANCIENT VEDIC PRACTICE ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIFTH INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA (IDY), CELEBRATED ON 21<sup>ST</sup> JUNE 2019



**Above:** Hundreds perform the iconic Surya Namaskar near the Eiffel Tower in Paris

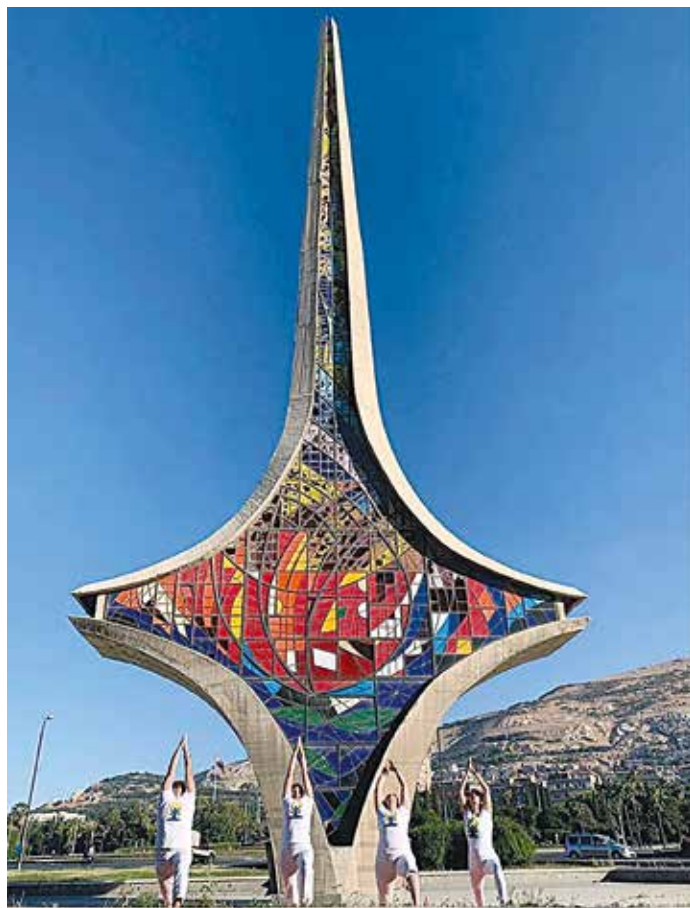
**Left:** A sand sculpture by sand artist Sudarshan Pattnaik on International Yoga Day at Puri, Odisha

**Right:** Participants practising different asanas in Dhaka, Bangladesh





*The “Yoga Sutra,” a 2,000-year-old treatise on yogic philosophy by Indian sage Patanjali, is a guidebook on how to master the mind, control the emotions and grow spiritually*



**Top left:** Pedestrians watch as enthusiasts celebrate IDY in Kiev, Ukraine

**Top right:** Participants at the celebration of the International Yoga day in Damascus, Syria

**Bottom:** Enthusiasts at a Yoga Day camp organised in Abu Dhabi, UAE







*There are six widely accepted forms of yoga, which can be practised depending on need. They are: Hatha yoga, Raja yoga, Karma yoga, Bhakti yoga, Jnana yoga and Tantra yoga*



**Left:** Yoga day celebrations organised in Brasília

**Right:** The 5<sup>th</sup> International Day of Yoga celebrations in Thimphu

# International Day of Yoga

The Embassy of India in Belgrade celebrated International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2019 on 16<sup>th</sup> June in front of the National Assembly of Serbia. Madam Vučić, the wife of the Hon'ble President of Serbia, joined the celebrations in Belgrade, while around 200 Serbians participated in the IDY 2019 celebrations.





INDIA'S FIRST UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE CITY AND GUJARAT'S LARGEST, AHMEDABAD, IS A PARADISE FOR TOURISTS. WITH ITS ELEGANT MONUMENTS, VIBRANT MARKETS AND AN ECLECTIC CULINARY SCENE, IT OFFERS UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES

BY Sarah todd



# Flavours of **AMDAVAD**

I can hear the waters of the Sabarmati river gurgling as it flows in the distance. Above me, on a high branch two birds break into a song as a gust of wind sweeps over, bearing the promise of rains. I am standing in the serene green grounds of the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad and I have never been more at peace. Here, I do not hear the cacophony of the city, neither am I surrounded by the cloud of frantic activity that I have grown accustomed to in my kitchen. Instead, I walk through the exhibits of the museum that document the life, time and philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi. His humble living quarters, immaculately preserved here, gives me a glimpse of the ideals he believed in. It is easy to spend a few hours at the ashram, located on the west bank of the river.

From 1917 to 1930, during the struggle for India's independence, the ashram served as Gan-

dhiji's headquarters. Sabarmati Ashram is one of the first landmarks in Ahmedabad or Amdavad as it's locally known, that I visit, and by the time I leave, it's almost time for lunch. Cities in India can be identified by their food. South India by idlis, dosas and appams, and north India by stuffed parathas, matar paneer and choley kulchey. Although you can taste all these fares anywhere in the country, Ahmedabad is one city where all these and more are savoured best. From melt-in-mouth dhoklas and tantalising Gujarati kadhi to syrupy jalebis – I am spoilt for choice.

I settle for an elaborate Gujarati thali (spread) the traditional way, in pital (brass)

utensils. Before food is served I am offered a small bowl to wash my hands in, with water poured from a metal pot which, I am told, is an age-old custom. Slowly, my plate is filled with tiny portions of local delectables starting with an assortment of pickles and chutneys such as dhaniya (coriander) and pundina (mint) chutney, and gajar mirch achaar (carrot and chilli pickle). These are served on a leaf that is placed on the plate. "The leaf is to make sure that the khatta (sour) of the pickle does not react with the brass," the waiter explains.

Then the main dishes roll in – ringana batata nu shak (eggplant cooked with potato), chora

*A trip to Ahmedabad is incomplete without a round of shopping. Don't miss out on the breathtaking bandhni fabrics, created using traditional techniques*





nu shak (an aromatic black-eyed beans gravy), Gujarati khatti mithi daal (sweet and sour lentil soup), undhiyu (mixed vegetable prepared with spinach paste), bhindi sambhariya (ladyfingers curry), Gujarati kadhi (a sweet thin gravy prepared with yoghurt and gram flour), rice and khichdi (an Indian dish consisting chiefly of rice and split pulses) along with such an assortment of breads as bajri and makai no rotlo (roti or flatbread made with the flour of the bajra millet and corn) and puran poli (a sweetened bread). I relish every bite, and every now and then am offered culinary advice on how to savour a Gujarati thali the right way.

The bowl of sweet halwa, for example, is to be had with the meal and not as dessert! With contrasting textures and flavours, it leaves me intrigued on so many levels. Hunger satiated, I visit the Adalaj Vav. Nestled in the quaint village of Adalaj, located approximately 18 km from the city centre, this magnificent 15<sup>th</sup> century five-storey octagonal vav (stepwell) takes my breath away. It is said that this vav was built not just as a cultural and utilitarian space but also as a spiritual refuge that villagers would visit daily and offer prayers to the deities carved into its walls. And it is cool inside. I see no devotees around but meet with many visitors here – some local, some tourists. I am mesmerised by its intricate architecture that boasts Indo-Islamic influences, and observe with wide-eyed-wonder the harmonious play of intricate Islamic patterns seamlessly fusing into Hindu and Jain symbolism. I take in as much as I can of this charming place before bidding adieu and heading back to the city.

Evening calls for tea and snacks and the streets of Ahmedabad invite you with delectable aromas of steaming chai (sweet tea made with milk), street-side vendors frying dal pakora (fritters made from lentil paste) and several other mouthwatering treats. I opt for the city specialties – chai, maska bun (fluffy buns toasted with oodles of butter) and dalvada (lentil paste fritters). Ahmedabad knows how to cater to the taste buds of those who crave Gujarati food – like me. In fact, I love the cuisine so much that I have actually created my version of a vegan khakra (a traditional Gujarati cracker-like snack made with wheat flour and oil) using baked carrot, pickled cauliflower and chilly dipped tofu aioli. Anyone familiar with my work knows that I love creating vegetarian foods which go beyond ingredients like mushroom and paneer (cottage cheese). I like to give local foods a twist and make them my own. However, I enjoy such signature Gujarati delicacies as dhokla, handvo, buttermilk, fafda, sev usal, dhebhra, thepla, mohan thaal among others which reinstates, time and again, that Gujarati food is a perfectly balanced combination of sweet, salty and spicy flavours.

A trip to Ahmedabad is incomplete without a round of shopping, and I could not resist picking up some breathtaking bandhni fabrics that are created using the ancient tie and dye techniques. Needless to say it's indigenous to this state and holds quite a special place in the rich Indian textile industry. As much as I want to stroll around the city, taking in its sights, sounds and smell, my adventure is cut short by work. But I don't leave before I make a mental note of my return.

## Must-Dos



### *Bun Maska and Masala Tea*

*The perfect evening snack, Bun Maska (butter toasted sweet-bread) and masala tea is a staple snack around the streets of Ahmedabad.*



### *Dandiya*

*Raas or Dandiya Raas is the traditional folk dance form of Gujarat. It is the iconic form of celebration during the various festivals of Navratri and Holi. It is performed as a dance form with brightly-coloured batons.*



### *Shop for handicrafts*

*The city is famous for the brightly coloured and kaleidoscopic patterns that line the many vibrant bazaars around Ahmedabad.*

**NUTRITIONAL AND TASTY SEEDS  
HAVE BEEN USED IN INDIAN CUISINE  
SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL.  
TODAY THEY ARE BEING  
REDISCOVERED AS A SUPERFOOD**

BY Madhulika Dash

# Seeds of WELLNESS



A scoop of pumpkin seed paste in a curry. A sprinkle of basil seed on a lemonade. A touch of poppy seed powder in pasta. A dash of kalaunji (nigella) seeds in bread... the list can be endless.

Roasted, grounded or soaked in water, indigenous seeds have been an integral part of Indian cuisine since ancient times.

Now chefs and nutritionists are delving further into their usage and health benefits.

Celebrity chef Sabyasachi Gorai (culinary director, Grid), who has been working with seeds for more than a decade, calls them the “master

tastemakers”. Nutritionist Kavita Devgan calls them nutrition boosters.

“Common seeds found in India are great sources of nutrition, including fibre and minerals. They also contain healthy monounsaturated fats and vitamins. They are easy to procure and consume, and make a flavourful addition to a diet,” Devgan explains.

***The fact that seeds have been a part of Indian cuisine heritage makes it easier for contemporary chefs to adapt them***

## VARIETY AND VERSATILITY

Chef Sharad Dewan of the Park hotel in Kolkata, who has been working towards bringing seeds to the fore of experimental Indian cuisine, says, “The beauty of seeds lies in the versatility of their taste and texture. By that, I not only mean the texture and taste that has made them such an integral part of our culinary repertoire, but also in terms of nutrition.” He explains that seeds need not only be used as a garnish or puree, but can be an exciting alternative to work with for both old and new dishes. Nutrition therapist Sveta Bhassin says that seeds are, in fact, the quintessential needed fat and protein pack that works far more effectively than any processed supplement. Little wonder, then, that most ancient Indian recipes had a good amount of seeds added to them at various stages. Til ke laddoo (sweet balls of sesame seeds) are a good example. This age-old dessert is made in winter to keep the body warm and the gut fit enough to fight seasonal ailments. Traditionally, ajwain (carom) and nigella seeds were added to make rotis (baked Indian flatbread) crunchier and keep the gut healthy. The practise of adding chaar magaz (a mixture of pumpkin seed, musk melon seed, water melon seed and cucumber seed) to a curry also harks back to this thought.



“Seeds can be used to replicate all elements of taste. Nigella, for instance, gives a bitter taste, fennel is on the sweeter side, sesame is rich in oil, and mustard’s pungent. Coriander can be used both as a sweet and savoury and goes beautifully with layered sole breads like taftan,” says Akshraj Jodha, executive chef at ITC Windsor Bengaluru. The same is the case with alsu or teesi (flaxseed), which

says Jodha. Chef Shantanu Mehrotra of Indian Accent restaurant favours the use of seeds in everyday cooking. “Take the case of carom.

Since it aids digestion and adds a unique flavour, it’s still used,” says Mehrotra.

#### RIGHT USAGE

Chef Balpreet Singh Chadha, director of Culinary Operations, at AnnaMaya in Delhi,

suji ka halwa (semolina pudding) or by Sharad, when he makes his popular pumpkin seed raita (curd dish) for his pumpkin haleem (a mutton dish).

The fact that seeds have been a part of Indian cuisine heritage makes it easier for contemporary chefs to adapt them. Chef Megha Kohli of the restaurant Lavaash By Saby, says, “I was introduced to cooking with seed as a



***Seeds are the quintessential needed fat and protein pack that works far more effectively than any processed supplement***

can add both crunch and a bittersweet taste.

Another example of how wonderfully seeds work is Bengaluru-based chef Vikas Seth’s beetroot tacos served with amaranth seeds. “Introducing seeds into a dish isn’t just about creating a contrast in appearance and taste, but also enhancing the flavour,” says Seth.

#### NUTRITION DELIVERED

The tradition of adding seeds to a dish, explains Jodha, wasn’t only to make it richer. “It is a fallacy that chaar magaz was a poor man’s alternative to cashew paste. These seeds absorb minerals and vitamins, and pack in healthy fats,”

says that in most culinary cultures, including India, seeds are usually consumed raw, lightly toasted or at best in the form of a light sauce. Chef Jodha says seeds should be added in the end and simmered just enough so that the heat can release the flavour and activate the nutrition. An excellent example of this is a recipe of safed maas, a mutton dish, in which he adds the chaar magaz paste at the end to give it a rich flavour. The paste, says the chef, is made by first soaking chaar magaz in water and grinding it into a coarse paste. It is the same technique that is followed by straight Chadha, to give a distinct sesame flavour to

child and loved using it as a garnish without realising how it added to a dish. It was the familiarisation with seeds that enabled me to use them to create an interesting palate play. At the restaurant, we use seeds to not only give richness to our dishes, but also accentuate a dish’s theatrics like Matnakash Claypot bread (soft rustic flavoured bread), which is made with chironji (almondette) seeds.” As chefs discover the benefits of delving deeper into the roots of Indian cuisine, discovering unique health benefits of ingredients, native Indian seeds are being seen as the new heroes of natural flavours and wellbeing!

# Armed with NavIC, INDIA ASSERTS SELF-RELIANCE!



**DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA'S AEROSPACE HAS NOT ONLY PROVEN THE COUNTRY'S METTLE IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, BUT ALSO ENSURED THE NATION A PLACE AT PAR WITH SOME OF THE MOST POWERFUL IN THE WORLD**

BY Gajanan Khergamker

Soon you will not be checking GPS (Global Positioning System) in your smart phone or car! Instead, you will be using an indigenous version of the same developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Global standards body 3GPP, which develops protocols for mobiles, has recently approved India's regional navigational system NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation) for commercial use by international and domestic mobile device makers.

While today ISRO rejoices this achievement, the story of NavIC started in 1999, when Pakistani troops positioned themselves in Kargil. The Indian military sought satellite

data of the region from the U.S.-owned Global Positioning System (GPS). The navigation system would have provided vital information about the situation on the Indo-Pak border, but India was denied the data. This made the nation realise the need to have its own homegrown satellite navigation system.

Then, on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013, India launched IRNSS-1A, the first satellite in the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) followed by a series of satellites over the next six years till finally IRNSS-1L launched on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2018, completing the constellation of nine functional satellites to provide fool-proof satellite-based navigation signals. It was

following the successful launch of navigation satellite IRNSS-1G on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016 that Prime Minister Narendra Modi named the new system 'NavIC' (boatman in Hindi) dedicating it to the people of the country and said SAARC countries can also take advantage of its services. PM Modi expanded 'NavIC' as 'Navigation with Indian Constellation'. With the launch India joined the elite group of nations, like the U.S., China, Russia and the European Union, to own a satellite-based navigation system. But the journey wasn't smooth. Three atomic clocks on-board IRNSS-1A to be used for precise coordination and to account for the effects of general relativity, failed. To replace it and complete the constellation of seven satellites, the IRNSS-1H was launched on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017. This was the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) eighth navigation satellite and the first of its kind in the country to be built by the private sector and supervised by the space research organisation. However, the satellite was not able to complete the fourth stage of its orbital placement.





*The Prime Minister named the new system 'NavIC' (boatman) and said SAARC countries can also take advantage of its services*

But that did not, in any way, mar ISRO's spirit. Living up to its reputation, it pooled in all its resources and within eight months, launched IRNSS-1L on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2018, completing the NavIC constellation of eight satellites. The 1,425-kg satellite was made by Bengaluru-based Alpha Design Technologies in collaboration with ISRO and is the second satellite to be actively built by the private industry.

NavIC, built indigenously, is aimed at aiding terrestrial, aerial and marine navigation, vehicle tracking and fleet management, disaster management, mapping and geodetic data capture, and visual and voice navigation for drivers. Also capable of being integrated with mobile phones, NavIC is all set to be the perfect navigation tool for hikers and travellers across India. A restricted service providing enhanced access will be used by the military for missile delivery and navigation and tracking of aircraft.

Interestingly, compared to the American system, NavIC covers only India, the Indian Ocean and its surroundings, and is, thus, considered to be more accurate. It will provide standard positioning service to all users with a position accuracy of five metre. The GPS, on the other hand, has a position accuracy of 20 -30 m. India's NavIC uses dual frequency (S and



L bands). When low frequency signal travels through atmosphere, its velocity fluctuates due to atmospheric disturbances. India measures the difference in delay of dual frequency and can assess the actual delay. NavIC, therefore, is not dependent on any model to find the frequency error and hence more efficient than GPS.

Along with NavIC, the country's space agency is also working on the GPS Aided Geo Augmented Navigation (GAGAN) project as a Satellite Based Augmentation System (SBAS) for the Indian airspace. If that isn't



ambitious enough, India has also initiated the process to develop the Global Indian Navigation System (GINS), which, according to ISRO, is an independent regional navigation satellite system being developed by India to provide accurate position information service to users in India as well as the region extending up to 1,500 km from its boundary. This, when implemented, will catapult the nation onto an all-powerful platform at par with some of the most powerful countries in the world. India has surely arrived and is all set to rule, even in space - the final frontier!



# A colourful MOSAIC

AS THE HEADY WINDS OF MONSOON TRANSITION INTO A PLEASANT AUTUMN BREEZE, WE TRAVEL TO DIFFERENT PARTS OF INDIA AND BRING TO YOU SOME OF THE MOST COLOURFUL AND ICONIC FESTIVALS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY

## INDEPENDENCE DAY

Commemorating India's independence from the British on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947, the country observed its 73<sup>rd</sup> Independence Day this year.

## NEHRU TROPHY BOAT RACE

The serene backwaters of Alappuzha in Kerala are transformed into a sea of humanity as thousands flock to witness the vallam kali or traditional snake boat races held on the second Saturday of August every year.

## JANMASHTMI / DAHI HANDI

Based on the legend of Lord Krishna stealing butter as a child, dahi handi involves making a human pyramid and breaking an earthen pot filled with curd tied at a convenient height.



*The dahi handi, observed in Maharashtra around Janmashtmi, is a traditional Hindu festival that celebrates the birth of Lord Krishna*





#### **LADAKH HARVEST FESTIVAL**

A near-perfect blend of Asian, Tibetan and north Indian traditions, the harvest festival celebrates a bountiful harvest and begins with a colourful procession that involves traditional dances, prayers and contests.

#### **TARNETAR FAIR**

Based on the legend of Draupadi's swayamvara, this fair is a celebration of ethnic Gujarat's folk-dance, music, costumes and arts, centred around colours, romance and music.





# A pilgrim's PROGRESS



**SUPERMODEL RACHEL HUNTER IS IN LOVE WITH INDIA, A COUNTRY THAT HAS HELPED HER CONNECT WITH HER INNER BEING. SHE TAKES US ON A GUIDED TRIP OF HER TWO FAVOURITE SPIRITUAL DESTINATIONS: VARANASI AND RISHIKESH**

It was back in 2015 when I was filming the television series Rachel Hunter's Tour of Beauty, that I landed in New Delhi late one night. As I walked outside the airport, my mind was filled with excitement; I couldn't wait to explore the unknown, but yet it seemed so known. I went to stay in one of the nearby hotels and the next morning I flew to Varanasi.

Varanasi, in Uttar Pradesh, was the first city in India I experienced. While my choice surprised many, in hindsight I realised it was the best decision I could have ever made. It is an incredibly intense, magical and transformational

city. One of the oldest and holiest cities in the world, it is said that Lord Shiva himself resides here. Some may find Varanasi's vibrant culture a little overwhelming at first, but one needs to be patient to understand this old city. One has to wait for the living heritage of Varanasi to unravel itself, one intoxicating layer at a time.

Varanasi, with a divine and devoted warmth, is of great spiritual importance, drawing the faithful from across the world. I too had come in search of faith; to replenish my soul and discover a way of life that was opposite to what the Western world follows.

My first morning in Varanasi started with the sound of chants from a nearby temple. The sky was still dark outside my hotel room, but it seemed the city was already waking up, getting ready for the daily chores of the Lord. As I walked along the bank of the River Ganges, the holiest river in India, I realised it was not just the spectacular sunrise that made the morning special. It was also the people and the pious atmosphere of the city that made the experience so special. As the sun rose over the Ganges, blazing red, silhouetting the bobbing boats, the city invoked the early rituals of bathing and honouring the gods and goddesses with prayers. The air was filled with people praying, temple chants and the ringing of bells in temples, which a priest explained was done to awaken the gods. As the city came to life, so did the river. Devotees offered prayers to the river and the Sun god, children leapt into the water making loud and gleeful splashes, yoga





enthusiasts practised asanas on the steps along the bank, while boatmen readied their boats for mesmeric early morning rides. As I sat in a boat, its hypnotic sway played on my senses, and the city of Varanasi seemed to be rising from the river, like a vision and a dream.

The river here is lined by several ghats, each earmarked differently. Later in the day, I chanced upon another ghat, Manikarnika, where cremations of the dead take place according to Hindu rituals. I observed loved ones honouring those who had passed away and seek salvation. It was as if life completes its cycle in this city.

Eventually, exploration of Varanasi took me to the Sankat Mochan temple, dedicated to Lord Hanumana. This quaint temple, tucked into a quiet bylane, is unique in its simplicity. With the glorious Hamumana Chalisa (prayers)

being chanted and monkeys, favourites of the God, roaming freely throughout the compound, it's fascinating to just sit on the floor and watch people passing through. There is a temple at every turn in Varanasi. There is so much to discover – so many paths and so many temples to explore, but if I told you where they were then the pilgrimage would be mine and not yours. One has to discover the city to feel its devotion. I remember one night, on my return to Varanasi last year, I sat at the foot of the steps of the Vishwanath Temple listening to the chanting. As I sat there, the rhythmic chant resonated deep within, I felt I had been reborn! Varanasi gives birth to a new way of thinking, allowing you to open your inner wonder, making you see life as if through the eyes of a curious child. Breathe in and breathe out to let the magic begin.

## RISHIKESH

After Varanasi, it's Rishikesh, the town of spirituality and yoga in Uttarakhand, nestled in the Himalayas, and that's my favourite in India. The town has the swiftly flowing Ganges and crowds veering towards a magnificent aarti (a ritual of lamps held along the river banks) every evening. While in Varanasi, the Ganges is a magnificent sight that's powerful yet calm, in Rishikesh it hurtles down the mountain.

As night falls, it's transformational to watch the twinkling lamps, which people float on the river, disappear into the night. When I first came to India I had come to learn yoga at the Sattva Yoga Academy in Rishikesh. Learning this ancient way of life was to be more than a wellness practise for me; more than just asanas. It became a way of life. The Kunjapuri Devi Temple is also a magical sight. Hire a tour guide to experience the magic of the temple overlooking the mountains at sunrise. Chant or just sit silently as you watch the sun rise over the Himalayas. The priest blesses devotees when the temple opens its doors. The town is an amalgamation of experiences: the rose-flavoured lassi, spicy street food, the sweet smell of incense, the buzzing conversations and even the cows standing outside shops waiting for a treat. It's not any one temple where I find solace in this town; this is all part of a spiritual journey.

And not just mine! The great pilgrimage of India has been a fundamental part of many lives, for the ways of simply looking inward, for the human ego to fall away and let one explore life fully. There is a saying: "While the rest of the world travelled externally, India went in". This is India's promise to the soul; a promise that is being fulfilled for centuries. Embrace the country and India will always love you.



I N C R E D I B L E



*India*