

Chhattisgarh



full of surprises



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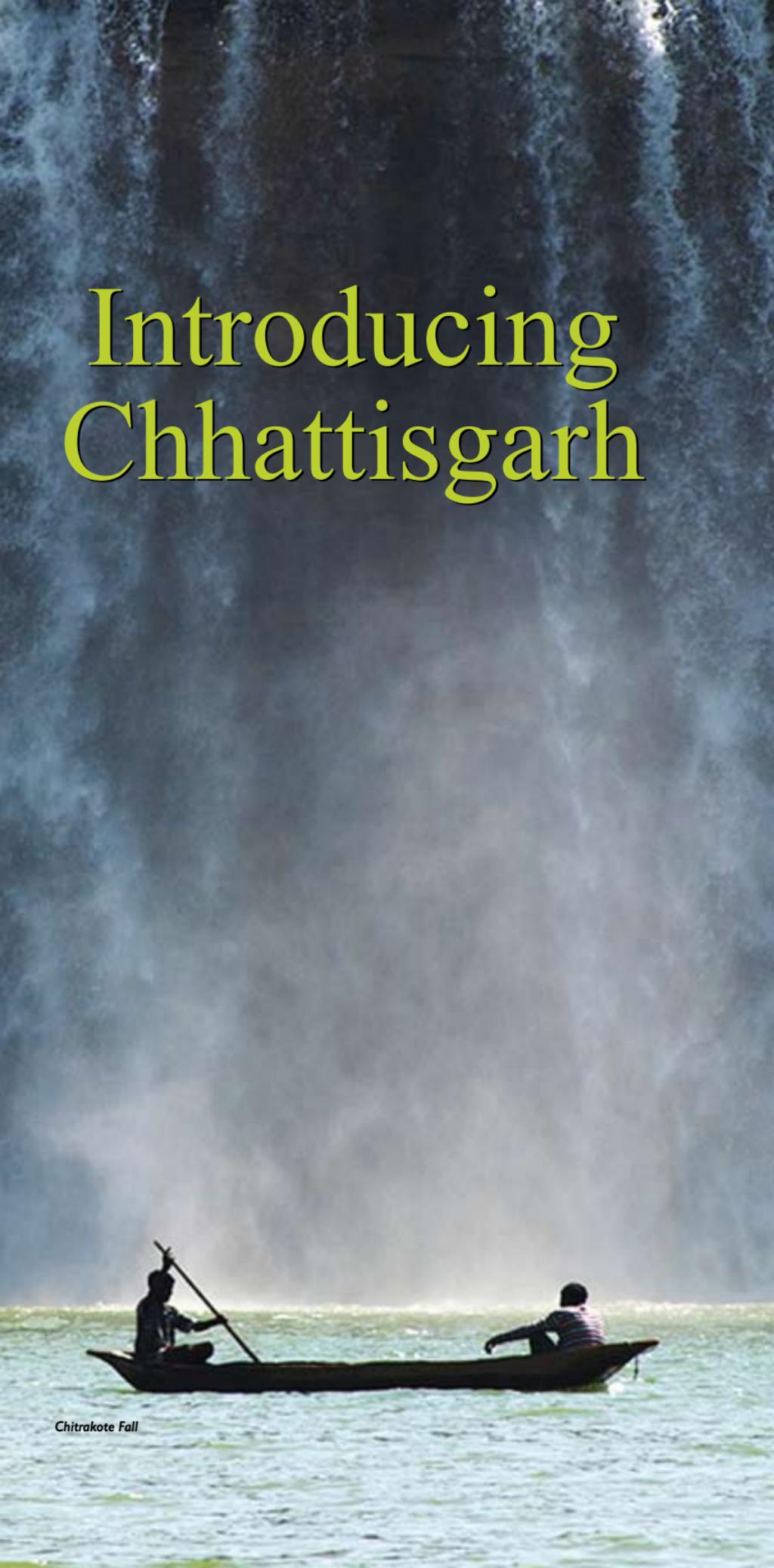
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Contents

Introducing Chhattisgarh	4
The Land and its History	5
Tribal Culture	16
Handicrafts	28
Cultural Traditions	39
Destinations	47
Raipur and Around	48
Bilaspur and Around	77
Bastar Division	104
National Parks and Sanctuaries	121
Practical Information	130



Introducing Chhattisgarh

A photograph of a massive waterfall, identified as Chitrakote Fall, with mist rising from its base. Two people are in a small wooden boat at the bottom left of the falls.

Chitrakote Fall

The Land and its History

Chhattisgarh was a part of the state of Madhya Pradesh up till 2000, after which it was declared as a separate state with Raipur as the capital city. The state borders shares the states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh. Located in central India, the state comprises of 27 districts. Chhattisgarh is endowed with rich cultural heritage and is a home of some of India's ancient caves, waterfalls, temples, Buddhist sites, rock paintings, wildlife and hill plateaus.

Historically Chhattisgarh shares its boundaries with many kingdoms. The reason mentioned in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. X, 1908 notes that 'being far-removed from the routes of armies and protected from invasion or disturbances by the precipitous ranges which fringe the plain on three sides'.

Located on the Chhattisgarh plain, it forms the upper Mahanadi River basin. The basin lies at an elevation that ranges from about 800 to 950 feet (250 to 300 metres) above the sea level. Hillock, undulating interfluves (areas between adjacent watercourses), and valleys flanked by belts of clayey soils are characteristic of the region. The upper Mahanadi basin is separated from the upper Narmada basin to the west by the Maikal Hills (part of the Satpuras) and from the plains of Odisha to the east by ranges of hills. The southern part of the state lies on the Deccan plateau, in the watershed of the Godavari river and its tributary, the Indravati river. The Mahanadi is the chief river of the



The river side view

Chhattisgarh contains the source of one of the most important rivers of the South Asian peninsula—the Mahanadi. This river originates in a village near Raipur. It flows westward for about 125 miles (200 kms) and meets the Shivnath River about 8 miles (13 kms) from Bilaspur. Thereafter it flows toward the east and enters Odisha, ultimately emptying into the Bay of Bengal. Among the other rivers that drain Chhattisgarh are the Indravati, Arpa and Pairi.



A carving in Hindu temple of Malhar village



Sal—the state tree of Chhattisgarh

In *Maria Suicide and Murder* (1943), Verrier Elwin wrote that the “Anga gods have a flair for detecting witches and other criminals” and “are often employed to discover thefts and surprise the secrets of black magic”.

state. The other main rivers are Hasdo (a tributary of Mahanadi), Rihand, Indravati, Jonk, Arpa and Shivnath.

This newest state is located on the oldest rocks of the Indian subcontinent. Here one can find the Archaean granites and gneisses and the Gondwana formations dating back to 250-300 million years bearing coal deposits. Also can be found an old Deccan Trap, formed from volcanic basalt flows capped with laterite that dates back to 65 million years. About 100 miles (160 kms) wide, the Chhattisgarh plain is bounded by the Chota Nagpur plateau to the north, the Maikal range to the west, the hills of Raigarh to the northeast, the Raipur upland to the southeast and the Bastar plateau to the south. These highlands comprise mostly erosional plateau forms reaching an elevation of more than 2,300 feet (700 metres) in the Maikal range and

Chitrakote Fall



the Dandakaranya hills. The Maikal hills coincide the Vindhya and the Satpura, extending 1430 sq kms. Its elevation is highest at Lafagarh standing tall at 1067 m, 75 kms north of Bilaspur. On the north-east and the Raipur uplands to the south-east is the Raigarh hill. The plains run out in the formerly princely state of Kanker on the south, beyond which is the Keshkal *ghats*.

In the Kutumsar and Dandak caves in Bastar district, remains of plant and burnt charcoal have been discovered.

Chhattisgarh known as the rice bowl of India and is immensely rich in natural resources. There are dense forests on the south, Maikal Hills on the north-east and the River Mahanadi on the east. The biggest occupation providing sector to the state is agriculture. Chhattisgarh is also referred as the richest biodiversity habitats in the country and consist of several species of exotic flora and fauna and abundant non-timber forest products, with tremendous potential for value addition. Chhattisgarh is the tenth largest state in India and is also an important electricity and steel producing state of India.



Maikal hill in Chhattisgarh



The misty hilltop



Adivasi woman



Adivasi woman with her child

Cave paintings are found in Kanker, Raigarh and Sarguja district which proves that this region was inhabited from the early times.

The exact history of the state cannot be outlined but it has been traced that Lord Ram stayed here during his exile days and the region was referred as Dakshin Koshala in the ancient times. During the Mughal reign, it was called the Ratanpur territory. Experts believed that various versions of the name Chhattisgarh including 'Chattighar', and 'Chedisgarh' came into being, owing to the heavy influence of the caste system in those ages. The earliest clue from the historical era is an Ashokan stone inscription of 257 BC at Rupnath north of Jabalpur. But regardless to all this, the unbroken history of Chhattisgarh or South Koshala can be traced back only from the 4th century AD. Between the 6th and 12th centuries AD the Sarabhpurias, Panduvanshi, Somvanshi, Kalchuri and Nagvanshi rulers dominated this region.

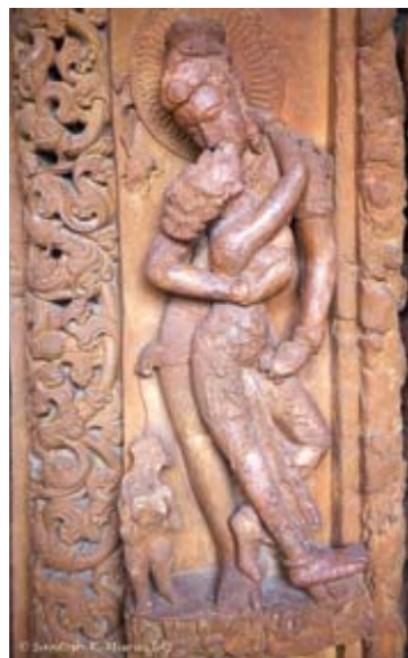
In the medieval period, the region came to be known as Gondwana and became the part of the kingdom of the



Bhorumdeo temple

Kalchuris who ruled the region till the end of the 18th century AD. The Muslim chroniclers of the 14th century AD have described well about the dynasties that ruled over the region. The region also came under the suzerainty of the Mughal Empire around the 16th century and later to the Marathas in 1745.

The first ruler of state was the Satavahanas, who have ruled during the 2nd - 4th century AD. The Satavahana king Mahendra was defeated by Samudragupta in 4th century AD. The next ruler who ruled the region was the Panduvanshi whose king Mahashivagupta Balarjuna is famous for freeing his country. It was during 595-655 AD, during his reign Hieun Tsang visited Dakshin Koshala. During his visit, he wrote, 'This country was more than 6000 li (3000000 m) in circuit and was surrounded by mountains and was a succession of woods and marshes, its capital being above 40 li (1li equals approx 500m) in circuit. The soil of the country was rich and fertile, the people were prosperous, the king was a Kshatriya by birth, a Buddhist in religion and of noted benevolence.'



Budha Vihar, Sirpur



Kutumba cave

In the early 11th century it was referred that Chedis came in power. King Ratnadeva founded his capital at Ratanpur and from there they started calling themselves Haihaya. The dynasty split in the 14th century and the elder brother remained at Ratanpur and the younger brother settled at Raipur.

By the year 1758, the whole region of Chhattisgarh was annexed by the Marathas who plundered its natural resources mercilessly. Also the word ‘Chhattisgarh’ was popularised during the Maratha period and was first used in an official document in 1795. With the British entry in the early 19th century, much of the territory was subsumed into the Central Provinces. From 1854 onwards the British administered the region as a deputy commissionership with its headquarters at Raipur.

Chhattisgarh also took part in the 1857 Revolution when Vir Narayan Singh, a landlord of Sonakhan, grew up to challenge the injustice of British rule in the region. After a prolonged battle with the British forces, Vir Narayan Singh was finally arrested and later hanged on the December 10th, 1857. In the year 1904, British reorganised the region and transferred Sambalpur to



Above: Tribal dance
Below: 32 pillar temple Barsur



Odisha and added the estates of Surguja to Chhattisgarh.

The northern and southern parts of the state are hilly, while the central part is a fertile plain. Deciduous forests of the eastern highlands forests cover roughly 44 per cent of the state. The state animal is the Van Bhainsa or Wild Buffalo. The state bird is the Pahari Myna or Hill Myna. The state tree is the Sal (Sarai) found in Bastar division.

In the north lies the edge of the great Indo-Gangetic plain. The Rihand River, a tributary of the Ganges, drains this area. The eastern end of the Satpura range and the western edge of the Chota Nagpur plateau form an east-west belt of hills that divide the Mahanadi river basin from the Indo-Gangetic plain. The outline of Chhattisgarh is like a sea horse. The central part of the state lies in the fertile upper basin of the Mahanadi River and its tributaries. This area has extensive rice cultivation. It is situated in the east of Madhya Pradesh.

Right Above: The metal craft of Chhattisgarh
 Right Below: Majestic Kailash Gufa waterfall
 Below: Budha Vihar



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The Forts and Palaces of Chhattisgarh

Apart from its diverse culture, mesmerising natural beauty and biodiversity, Chhattisgarh also has the chief drawing card of the Forts and Palaces. These forts and palaces represent rich royal culture of Chhattisgarh.

During old times, a number of districts of Chhattisgarh were erstwhile princely states. The rulers of Chhattisgarh built several massive palaces during their rule, which now provide a glimpse of the bygone era. Chhattisgarh gives you a taste of royal hospitality in the magnificent palaces. Kawardha palace (Kawardha), Kanker palace and Bastar palace are the most beautiful palaces of Chhattisgarh.

BASTAR PALACE

The palace of Bastar is situated in

Bastar palace at Jagdalpur



Jagdalpur, the district headquarters of Bastar. The Bastar palace is 80-years-old building. A part of the palace has been converted into a medical college. The palace is one of the main attractions of the Chhattisgarh heritage tour. The palace in Bastar is an extensive and impressive fort that glitters in the sun. It was built at the time of the shifting of the capital to Jagdaplur from Barsur where it was situated earlier. The main attraction here is the exquisite carvings and engravings that one can find on the walls and ceiling of the palace. There is a museum inside the palace, wherein tourists can enjoy seeing various artefacts and the portraits of the former kings. The beautiful gardens that encircle the palace are a sight to behold. Shopping at the weekly 'Haat Bazaar' held near the Batsar palace is one of its kind experience. The best time to visit the palace is during Dussera (October) when the whole palace is adorned with lightings and a 75 day long tribal festival is celebrated.

KAWARDHA PALACE

Kawardha palace is located at Kawardha (Chhattisgarh). This peaceful town overlooked by the Maikal hill range is in the heartland of Chhattisgarh. Of India's many jewels, Kawardha is truly a treasure trove of splendid scenery and mesmerising reminders of India's cultural heritage. Palace Kawardha was designed and built by Maharaja Dharamraj Singh in the period 1936-39. There is the representation of the artisans, craftsmanship at a display. This palace is now the residence of successors of Maharaja Vishwaraj Singh. The elegant building is a mix of Italian, Mughal and



Outer view of Kawardha palace



Above Below: Interior view of Kawardha palace

colonial styles of architecture. Inside are grand staircases and sweeping verandahs perfect for reading, relaxing or having a quiet cup of tea. The main durbar hall, a magnificent domed room with corinthian pillars, is open to all. The top floor, private residence of the royal family, is out of bounds to guests.

KANKER PALACE

Kanker palace, the residence of the erstwhile ruling family of the princely state of Kanker, has been developed as a retreat from where sensitive and interested international tourists might access the region. Built in the first quarter of the last century and rebuilt and set in a garden in 1937, Kanker palace was earlier known as Radhanivas bagicha. The residence of the British agent during the raj, it is now lived in by the royal family. With its colonial style architecture, the palace is stately, elegant, and has an old world charm and ambience. Kanker palace is a mid-way on the Raipur - Jagdalpur route and is a region situated in the dense tropical forestlands of Kanker, Chhattisgarh.

Kanker palace





Ratanpur fort

RATANPUR FORT

Ratanpur fort in Bilaspur district, is an old fort whose exact date of construction is cloaked in mystery. The fort is guarded on all four sides by gorges. It has four entrances - Singh, Ganesh, Bhairav and Semar Dvars. Near the entrance of the fort is a huge stone statue presumed to be that of the valiant king Gopal Rai, of which only the head and the feet remain. A little further down the road, one can see the Laxmi Narayan Temple which was built by the Maratha queen, Anandi Bai. It is next to the much older Jagannath temple, built by Kalyan Rai that houses beautiful images of Jagannath, Balaram and Subhadra. The west gate of the fort faces Motipur, where the twenty queens of Lakshman Rai is said to have performed Sati. Bilaspur's Ratanpur fort, at present, lies in a dilapidated state. Over the years, the fort has lost its grandeur and splendour. It is not difficult to form a conception as to how the fort looked during its prime.

Kosagaigarh Fort

The fort of Kosagaigarh, on the hills of Phutka Pahad, is on the outskirts of Korba. This old fort is camouflaged by dense vegetation. It can be accessed only through a tunnel, which in times of war was used for rolling rocks down on the enemy waiting at the other end.

Tribals of Chhattisgarh

Verrier Elwin has written very extensively of food of the Murias and other tribes. He says, "Of things to eat the Murias has a considerable variety, much more than would be available to people of similar economic status in a town. All the rich and varied produce of the great Bastar jungles is open to them; the state has not yet interfered with the right to natural roots, fruits and leaves-they may take what they want..."

Situated in central India blessed by nature and gifted with rich culture is the state of Chhattisgarh. Dense forests, amazing waterfalls, exotic and diverse flora and fauna, ancient monuments, carved temples, you name anything and it is found in this beautiful and recently formed state. Unexplored and unspoilt and with a large tribal population Chhattisgarh offers new destination with a new culture to tourists through its Tribal diversity. One can explore this land with its tribal tourism.

The Tribal tourism in Chhattisgarh is a focus of interest and is gradually flourishing in the state. The Bastar district of Chhattisgarh has the largest tribal population in the state with Gonds being the most prominent tribes. Each tribal group in Chhattisgarh has its own distinct culture and tradition. They like to stay away from the modern civilization and live in their own world. The tribes in Chhattisgarh speak different languages. Their attire is also very different and colourful and they love wearing jewellery

Right: **Bison Horn Maria tribe**
Below: **Fhagun Mandeyi**







Woman of Muria tribe

made of beads and metals. They believe in adult marriages and usually marry within blood relations. They are very vibrant and colourful and their main source of entertainment is their own folk songs and dance. The tribals of Chhattisgarh celebrate various festivals throughout the year. Navakhana, Mati Puja, Goncha are some of the festivals they celebrate.

GONDS

The Gonds tribes, who are also recognised as the Koytorias are widely dispersed throughout the state. However they mainly predominates the dense forests enclosed in southern Chhattisgarh's Bastar district that accounts for more than 20 per cent of Chhattisgarh's population. The three principal sub castes of the aboriginal Gonds are the Dorla, Maria and Muria races.

ABHUJ MARIA

The fascinating tribal culture can be witnessed by visiting this picture perfect state. Amongst the various tribals residing in Chhattisgarh, the Abhuj Maria races of aborigines deserve special mention. The Abhuj Maria races of tribal people are one of the principal sub castes of the Gond tribals. They live in isolation and inhabit the secluded

Young Baiga tribal women



enclaves of Narayanpur tehsil of Bastar District. The areas inhabited by the Abhuj Maria tribals are a dense forest that sprawls across nearly 1500 miles of lush greenery. The Abhuj Maria tribals at times are hostile to strangers. They still follow their age-old practices of livelihood.

BISON HORN MARIA

This tribal community of Chhattisgarh derived their name from their unique custom of wearing a distinctive head-dress, which resembles the horns of a wild bison. They generally wear that head-dress during ceremonies. The main distinct language spoken by this tribe of Chhattisgarh is Dandami Maria. Some



Above: Dhokra artisan
Left: Tribal women wearing a distinctive head-dress
Below: Muria tribal women performing dance



of them even speak understandable Gondi dialects, which is an oral language of Dravidian origin.

MURIA

The populace of Chhattisgarh is mainly dominated by tribals, of which the Muria race of aborigines holds a special place. The Murias are one of the innumerable tribes that inhabit Chhattisgarh. They are a prominent sub caste of the Gonds. The Muria tribesmen primarily reside in the dense forest zones of Narayanpur and Kondagon of Bastar district, the home of majority of the tribals.

HALBA

The Halba tribe is popular tribes who are happily settled in the bucolic lands of Chhattisgarh in the districts of Durg, Bastar and Raipur. The Halba tribals are widely dispersed all over Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha. Three sub clans have been integrated to form the Halba tribe. They are, namely Chhatisgarhia, Bastaria and Maratia.

KORVA

The Korva tribals are found in Bilaspur, Sarguja and Raigarh district and are divided into two main territorial groups – **Pahari Korva** (hill) and (dihariya) **Plains Korva**. They usually carry bow and arrows and practice agriculture and collect forest produce as well. Both men and women of Korva tribes are fond of ornaments and they wear it a lot.

Above: Young Muria girl
Right: Tribal dance of Muria tribes



Kaksar is a dance performed by the Abujmarias of Bastar named after their deity before the onset of the rainy season to seek the blessings for rich harvest. It also provides an occasion for the young men and women of the tribe to choose their life partners. Boys clad in long white robes and girls dressed in their finery dance together.

KAMAR

Kamar tribes main occupation is hunting and is found in the Raipur and Bastar region. Kamar tribes worship iron and various forest deities as well. The Kamar tribes pay homage to the mother earth by sprinkling few drops of liquor before consuming it. They also pay homage to local deities and their own ancestors by doing so.

BAIGA TRIBE

The Baiga tribe dwells not only in Kawardha but occupies a significant amount of area in the Bastar region that stretches itself to the parts of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. In fact, a considerable portion of total population of tribal community in India comprises

Right: Tribal women at a local haat
Below: Tribal men bedecked in their traditional jewellery



The Anga Devs, are probably the most important gods of the tribes in Chhattisgarh. Made of wood hewn from a special tree, Anga Dev has two legs as limbs and a plank joining in the centre as its body. The primary role of the deity is that of inquest.



the Baiga tribe. The Baigas are among the most primitive tribal communities in India. The tribal culture in Kawardha is fundamentally centered on the Baiga tribe. Another interesting aspect of this population is that the number of females in Baiga tribe exceeds the number of males. Endogamy and consanguineous marriage are features that are commonly prevalent in the society of the Baigas. Agriculture, fishing, hunting, extracting forest products, forging metal goods in cottage industries, etc. are the prime occupations of people belonging to the Baiga tribe.

DHURVAA

These tribes are located in Bastar region. These tribes depend on agriculture and are good craftsman of forest products.

BHATRA

The tribes are located in Bastar and



Raipur district. They are ranked first in terms of social hierarchy. They worship mahua trees. Most of the people from this tribe work as village watchmen.

Tribals with musical instrument



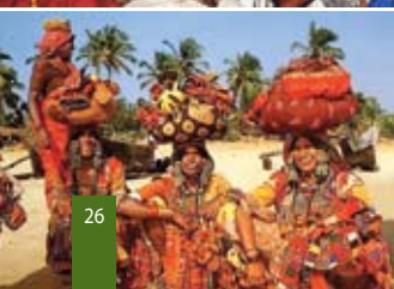
Hence, the tour to Chhattisgarh is made an educative experience by the presence of the Baiga tribes. Undoubtedly, it is one of the tourist attractions in Kawardha, which one rarely comes across in the various places in India.



Tribal Jewellery



Both men and women wear ornaments - in fact, at celebrations, it is the men who are more gaily bedecked. Most of the ornaments are made of beads (made from bones, seeds, wood) worn as laces, ropes, fillets and collars. Jewellery from Chhattisgarh is dexterously crafted in gold, silver, bronze and mixed metal. Ornament made out of beads, cowries and feathers are part of tribal jewellery. Tribal men and women both wear traditional ornaments, which are attractive and vibrant. Earlier, iron, brass and copper wires were into armlets; now a days, silver and gold are used. Gold is worn mainly on the ear, nose and neck (men wear gold collars to indicate their standing in the village), not on the hands and legs. Silver is worn on the neck (as a hoop); on the wrist (as a loose, hollow, twisted tubular bracelet); on the legs (as a solid, square-bar anklet, arched below the ankle-bones). Conical twin-tops are common in the nostrils and ear lobes. Rings are worn on the helix of the ear. Precious stones are not very popular, but when used, red and green stones are preferred, mainly because of their bright colours. Tassels of red wool are still worn by both men and women of the Hill-Maria tribe. One can buy tribal ornaments and combs from any of the major haat bazars as well.



as from the jewellery showrooms in the towns of Jagdalpur, Kanker and Kondagaon.

Jewellery such as neckpieces made of metal casts, silver ghungroos, chunky wooden bangles, etc. is worn widely by the tribal population. Ghungroos and beads made of silver and other material make a tinkling sound and add to the already-high spirit of the festivals.



COSTUMES OF CHHATTISGARH

Chhattisgarh is a state with a rich heritage, striking diversity, lush green forests, distinct geographical features and a multitude of ethnic groups. The presence of several ethnic tribal groups adds more hues to the costumes of Chhattisgarh.

The costumes of Chhattisgarh exhibit colours. Fabrics such as linen, silk and cotton are used in the costumes made here. The craftsmen of this state have borrowed various fabric-making techniques from its neighbouring and parent state of Madhya Pradesh. Batik, weaving and tie-dye are the various techniques used in fabric-making. Threads are tied up firmly, dipped in multi-coloured dyes and are tied to pieces of cloth to produce various imprints. This technique is known as Bandhani. Fabric is painted with molten wax and is dyed with various colours of cold dyes to produce a design called 'Batik'. Though these cloth-making practices are not widespread in Chhattisgarh, they are practiced to a certain extent

Left: Tribal men and women dressed in their tribal costume and jewellery

in the state. In the urban areas, trousers and shirts, sarees and salwar suits are worn by men and women respectively. The costumes worn here are just like those worn all over India. They have no characteristic features or specialties. Sarees in varieties such as Maheshwari silk, Orissa silk, Chanderi silk, Batik print sarees, etc. are worn by the women in the urban areas here.

It is the tribal costumes of Chhattisgarh that endow the costumes of the state with a unique identity and arise interest among the tourists. The tribal men and women wear bright and colourful costumes. Use of a variety of colours is the distinct feature of the costumes worn here. Men in tribal groups such as Halbas, Abhuj Mariahs, Murias, etc. wear dhotis and headgears like cotton turbans, for protection from the harsh sun during the day. The women wear knee-length or full length sarees in bright colours. A wonderful display of tribal costumes can be witnessed during festivals. Peacock feathers, bright headgears, chunky ornaments made of wood, metal, etc. lend a colourful atmosphere to the air of festivities. Gaudy costumes in striking colours too are features of the tribal festivals. Ornaments made of beads, feathers and cowries are seen amply during festivals.

Chhattisgarh, is synonymous with natural beauty and cultural richness. Home to numerous tribal communities and unique way of living, Chhattisgarh is the cultural potpourri of central India. Tribal men and women wear colourful clothing on festivals and special occasions such as weddings. Use of colour is a distinctive practice among these communities. The typical costume for men from tribal communities such as the Mariahs, Murias and Halbas is a dhoti and headgear in the form of a turban. Women wear knee-length or full-length saris in bright colours. As one moves outwards into the more urban areas of the state, women wear a wide range of sari materials, ranging from the ethnic Batik sari to Chanderi silk, Orissa silk and Maheshwari silk.



Tribal ornaments





Handicrafts



Chhattisgarh nurtures some unique kinds of handicrafts that are integral part of the tradition of the state. Chhattisgarh handicrafts are well known in the country, especially the traditional bell metal, bamboo craft and the craft items made out of wood. The beautiful forms of handicrafts in Chhattisgarh or Chhattisgarh crafts are popular for its intricate work. The arts and crafts of Chhattisgarh truly represent the dexterity of its artisans. Chhattisgarh is well known for the metal crafts, jewellery and paintings. The people of Chhattisgarh have proved their mastery in the making of these wonderful art and craft items. Amazing wood carvings, bamboo work/furniture, bell metal handicraft, figures of terracotta, tribal jewellery, paintings, and

clay pieces are some of the specialties from the state. Chhattisgarh is a place to behold the ancient as well as refined form of arts and crafts.

BELL METAL

Bastar and Raigarh districts of Chhattisgarh are popular for crafting bell metal handicrafts using brass and bronze. Tribes such as 'Ghadwas' of Bastar and 'Jharas' of Raigarh mainly practice this art form, also known as **Dokra art**. This is done with lost wax technique or hollow casting. Dokra metal casting is perhaps the only living tradition of metal image making in eastern India. The technique has managed to survive many centuries and change of dynasties owing to its modesty of application in everyday lives of traditional tribal people of Bastar, Chhattisgarh.

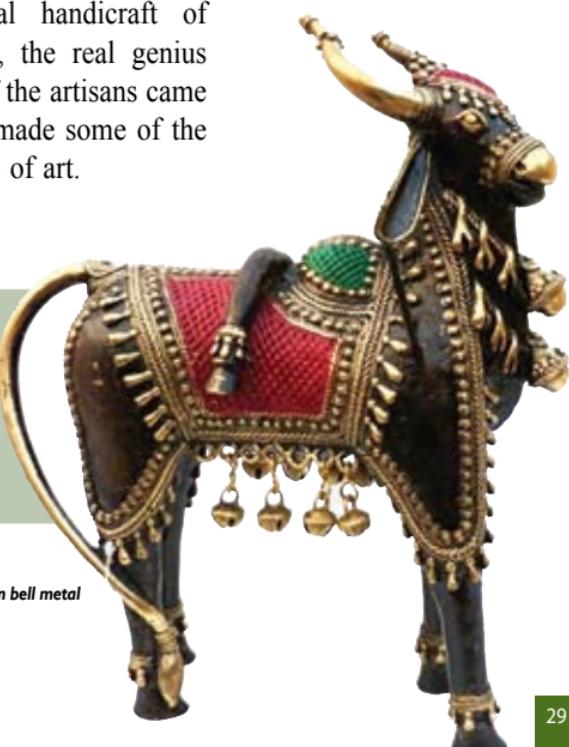
The artifacts prepared from Dokra technique use the cow dung, paddy husk and red soil in the preparation, beeswax being the most important one. Apart from contouring, wax wires are also used for decoration purposes and for giving a finishing touch to artifacts. From the bell metal handicraft of Chhattisgarh in India, the real genius and creative faculty of the artisans came into picture and thus made some of the most wonderful pieces of art.



A nine-time National and State award winner **Jaidev Baghel** lives in Bhelwapadar, a *para* in Kondagaon. Jaidev Baghel belongs to an aboriginal artisan community whose traditional craft is cire perdue casting (bell metal). He received his D.Lit. from the Ravi Shanker Shukla Univ., Raipur, Chhattisgarh in 2003. Jaidev has been recognised for his outstanding skills through various awards. Besides these, Jaidev's works have also been exhibited in Russia, Germany, Britain, Australia, USA, Japan, Switzerland. He stays with his son Bhupinder Baghel a National Award winner.

International sculptor, Sushil Sakhija's Dokra Nandi is famous and available at government's Shabari handicrafts emporium, Raipur.

Figurines crafted in bell metal



Facing Page: Terracotta toys
Below: Iron artifacts

The iron objects are made by hammering them into shape; they are not cast or moulded. The hot iron is beaten repeatedly to the desired shape while the unnecessary portion is cut away and filed to remove the sharp edges. Hollow images - usually bigger than solid ones - are made out of beaten iron sheets, folded, cut and filed to shape.



IRON CRAFT

The ironsmiths or lohars of Kondagaon village in Bastar have been engaged in iron craft for generations together and indulge in making farm implements, lamps and other household objects. The furnace comprises three parts namely jatar or bhathi (bellows), chulha (mouth of the furnace) and pathar, a big stone slab embedded inside the floor, on which the red-hot iron bit is hammered. Muthli and Muthla - light and heavy hammers, Chimtas - large iron forceps, Sandasis - tongs, chheni - a chisel and Soja - a thick, cylindrical tool for making holes are the major tools used by these craftsmen.



WOOD CARVING

Another form of craft is the woodcraft. People of Chhattisgarh make use of wood for many things. Over the years, they have started using wood for carving objects and other forms of carpentry. A tribe called Badhais is skilled in this craft. Traditional wood carving in Chhattisgarh is an ancient craft, the skills of which are passed on from generation to generation. The craftsmen are rich in experience and make products such as fixtures of houses, pillars, bows and arrows, Mata Jhulas, farm implements and ritual items. Life size figures of animals, birds, gods, goddesses and humans are made



Wood carved mask



Some of the important craftsmen of Wood Craft in Chhattisgarh:

1. Shri. Pandiram Mandavi, Narayanpur
2. Shri. Ram Dhani, Ganjadhand, Ambikapur
3. Shri. Sukhpal Dhurva, Bastar
4. Shri. Kalipad Mandal, Jagdalpur
5. Shri. Padumdas Pant, Bastar

in Raigarh and Sarguja.

CLAY POTTERY AND TERRACOTTA

Like many other states, terracotta has found a place in the handicrafts created by Chhattisgarh. Terracotta pottery represents the rituals and customs of tribal life in the state and symbolises their emotions. Votive terracotta figures are found widely in the districts of Bastar, Sarguja.

This is amongst the oldest and most widespread form of handicrafts. Historical records of prehistoric era have been found in the remains of pottery. It is believed to have existed since 7000 BC in the Neolithic period.

The soil of Indravati river is used by the *kumhars* or potters of Bastar to create

Terracotta forms





Matkas made from the soil of Indravati river

magnificent clay and terracotta forms. The potters with the help of wheel and wooden spatula make different forms and bake them gently in fire to give them a strong and firm shape. Then these forms are coated with the river soil giving them a dark sienna tone. In the early days, only *handis*, pitchers and pots were made but gradually with the increase in demand different shapes such as masks, animals and sculptures are being made.

Tribal terracotta masks form a part of all community celebrations and are very popular in the regions of Bastar and Sarguja.

The Chher Chhera festival is celebrated with young men and women wearing masks dancing and singing. Clay masks are made out of clay pots or matkas with holes for eyes and with clay noses stuck on them. Masks are coloured red and are used in folk plays and dances. Matkas turned upside down with bold and grotesque features are seen fixed on bamboo poles in fields acting as scarecrows. The tribal groups such as Gond and Baiga make attractive



Potter at work



Tumba craft

Known in Chhattisgarh as tumba, this less known craft is widely produced in the Bastar region. The origin of tumba craft lies in the widespread use of hollow gourd shells as containers by the tribals to store water and salti.

grain storage bins embellished with carved animal and human figures.

BAMBOO

Bamboo is abundantly found in the forests of Chhattisgarh and thus it is put in variety of use by the tribals. Bamboos these days are being widely used in the construction of houses and fences as well as for making bows and arrows, hunting tools, fish and bird traps. The well-known craftsmen are the Kamars of Raipur.

PAINTING

Traditional wall paintings of the state is associated with rituals. Floors and walls are painted with colours and in almost every instance the depiction being associated with some ritual. These paintings originated in the tribal area of the central India which is presently in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh and depicts the offering to gods. These paintings are usually done on the occasion of marriages, childbirth and other occasions of fulfillment of wish etc. In most of these tribal houses one can



Bamboo craft

The Narayanpur Bamboo Project

The Narayanpur Bamboo Project, affiliated to the National Bamboo Mission, is a joint venture of the Department of Rural Development and the Chhattisgarh Handicraft Development Board. Located within a sprawling campus, the Bamboo Project includes worksheds with state-of-the-art machinery and accommodation for artisans working in bamboo. Narayanpur is also the place where the famous bamboo whistle, invented by Pandi Ram Mandavi, comes from, and there are craft clusters that solely specialise in this product.



Born 1928, Late Sonabai possessed an in-born gift for seeing beauty even in ordinary objects. Sonabai was the recipient of a President's Award, she is the subject of a multi-award winning documentary film, a book, art exhibitions in the United States and Australia. There is an award for folk art instituted in her name — the Sonabai Rajwar Puraskaram and there was even a move to rename the village after her! Sonabai Rajwar, if she had been alive, would have been mystified.

find paintings. The colourful paintings are made using natural colours.

STONE CARVING

The pink and white stone available in Bastar called sudapaal is soft and easily carved. Large tool called basulas are used for cutting the stone. Pataasis or chisels of various shapes and sizes are used for finer carvings. The artisan make free-hand carvings with these chisels, embellishing the basic motifs with intricate detailing. The idols are later polished with sandpaper to give them a sheen. Tatiya saaj idols are carved on a thick rock as two-dimensional relief work while akshang idols are three dimensional. There are no prescribed measurements: the artisans cut, shape and carve the idols from an inherent sense of proportion and experience. Simple tools of measurement such as the guniya or compass are used. When completed, the idols are polished with polishing stones called battas. The polishing is done mainly by women and children.

TATTOOING

For the Adivasis or the tribals of Chhattisgarh the tattoo marks have a social importance and so they widely practice this art of tattooing. Though the tattooing is done almost all over the body it is forbidden on the waist and the hips. The tattooing starts at an early age of seven years and can be done till marriage. But tattooing after marriage is considered inauspicious. Tattooing is a status and is a reflection of their group codes. It gives them security as they believe that though all ornaments of a woman are removed at the time of death, totoos are the only one she can carry to the next world.

Lamps or diyas are also common terracotta products. The famous chidiya diya of Sarguja is a complicated wheel-thrown oil lamp and works on the siphon principle. The bird's belly is detachable and has a tube-like opening by which it is filled with oil. Since it is kept lit at the devgudi of the Mother Goddess, it is known as Mata Diya or Mother Lamp.



Traditional wall painting

THE FABRIC OF CHHATTISGARH

Silk weaving is the main handloom industry in Chhattisgarh. Kosa also known as Tussar is found in this region. Primarily this silk is found in Raigarh and Champa, weaving of saris and fabrics is also done in the region. Chhattisgarh is known for '**Kosa silk**' and 'lost wax art'. Besides saris and salwar suits, the fabric is also used to create lehengas, stoles, shawls and menswear including jackets, shirts, achkans and sherwanis.

The forest in Chhattisgarh helps in the production of Kosa. It is drawn from the cocoons grown on arjun, saja or sal trees. Naturally these Kosa silks are obtained in shades of cream, beige, yellow, honey and ash. To colour them vegetable dyes are used. Kosa silk is known for its sturdiness and is preferred as pure silk in the state of Chhattisgarh.

Every single cocoon woven by the Kosa silkworm's results in 1-2 grams of raw silk yarn which is equal to about 300 yards of silk thread. There is another variety of yarn attributed to Kosa silk

Murals by Sonabai





Woman selling beautiful Kosa sari

which is woven on twigs of a tree by the Kosa larvae. This is the sturdiest version of the Kosa silk yarn and is used for making a whole lot of utility items and décor objects such as doormats, rugs and cushion covers, which at times are decorated with mirror work.

The Kosa comes in variety of pattern and are then block-printed, embroidered or painted to make them look gorgeous. The famous of them is the *kantha* embroidery. Besides, are the *fera* and *jaala* weave patterns.

More than the technique, it is Kosa silk – the fabric which is the heart of every silk in Chhattisgarh.

*Woman in Bastar, Chhattisgarh
threading Kosas — a form of natural silk*



Cultural Traditions

THEATRE

Theater is known as Gammat in Chhattisgarh. Pandavani is one of the lyrical forms of this theater. Several acclaimed plays of Habib Tanvir, such as *Charandas Chor*, are variations of Chhattisgarhi theater and heavily use Chhattisgarhi folk songs and music.

Pandavani (songs of Pandavas) and Nacha are a form of folk ballat and is performed predominantly in Chhattisgarh. It depicts the story of the Pandavas, the leading characters in the epic Mahabharata with musical accompaniment and Bhima as hero. This form of folk theatre is popular in Chhattisgarh and in the few neighbouring tribal areas of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. The artists in the Pandavani narration consists of a lead artist and some supporting singers and musicians. There are two styles of narration in Pandavani, Vedamati and Kapalik. In the Vedamati style the lead artist narrates in a simple manner by sitting on the floor throughout the performance. The Kaplik style is livelier, where the narrator actually enacts the scenes and characters.

Teejan Bai is one of the most renowned singers of Pandvani, followed by Ritu Verma. The origins of this style of singing are not known and according to its foremost singer Teejan Bai, it might be as old as the Mahabharata itself, as very few people could read in those times, and that is how perhaps they passed on their stories, generation after generation.

Pandavani, literally means stories or songs of Pandavas, the legendary brothers of Mahabharat and involves the



Habib Tanvir, born in Chhattisgarh was one of the most popular Indian urdu and hindi playwrights, a theatre director, poet and actor. He is the writer of plays such as, *Agra Bazar* (1954) and *Charandas Chor* (1975). A pioneer in urdu, hindi theatre, he is most known for his work with Chhattisgarh tribals, at the Naya Theatre, a theatre company he founded in 1959 in Bhopal, and went on to include indigenous performance forms such as nacha, to create not only a new theatrical language, but also milestones such as *Charandas Chor*, *Gaon ka Naam Sasural*, *Mor Naam Damad* and *Kamdeo ka Apna Basant Ritu ka Sapna*. During his lifetime he won several national and international awards, including the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1969, Padma Shri in 1983, Kalidas Samman 1990, Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship in 1996, and the Padma Bhushan in 2002; apart from that he had also been nominated to become a member of the Upper House of Indian Parliament, the Rajya Sabha.



Teejan Bai a Padma Shri and Padma Bushan awarded (born April 24, 1956) is an exponent of Pandavani, a traditional performing art form, from Chhattisgarh, in which she enacts tales from the Mahabharata, with musical accompaniments. At the age of 13, she gave her first public performance in a neighbouring village, Chandrakhuri (Durg) for ₹10, singing in the Kapalik Shaili (style) of 'Pandavani', a first time for a woman, as traditional women used to sing in the Vedamati (the sitting style).

lead singer, enacting and singing with an *ektara* or a *tambura* (stringed musical instrument), decorated with small bells and peacock feathers in one hand and sometimes *kartal* (a pair of cymbals) on another.

It is a part of the tradition of the tellers-of-tales present in every culture or tradition (such as Baul singers of Bengal and Kathak performers), where ancient epics, anecdotes and stories are recounted or re-enacted to educate and entertain the masses. Without the use of any stage props or settings, just by the use to mimicry and rousing theatrical movements, and in between the singer-narrator break into an impromptu dance, at the completion of an episode or to celebrate a victory with the story being retold, yet in its truest sense Pandavani remains an accomplished theatre form.

During a performance, as the story builds, the *tambura* becomes a prop, sometimes it becomes to personify a gada, mace of Arjun or at times his bow

or a chariot, thus helping the narrator-singer play all the characters of story.

The singer is usually supported by a group of performers on *harmonium*, *tabla*, *dholak*, *majira* and two or three singers who support the lead singer and provide backing vocals.

Each singer adds his or her unique style to the singing, sometimes adding local words, improvising and offering critique on current happenings and an insight through the story. Gradually as the story progresses the performance becomes more intense and experiential with added dance movements, an element of surprise often used.

The lead singer continuously interacts with the accompanying singers, who ask questions, give commentary, interject thus enhancing the dramatic effect of the performance, which can last for several hours on a single episode of Mahabharata. Eventually what starts out as a simple story narration turns into full-fledged ballad.

Influences of Pandavani can be clearly seen in the plays of Habib Tanvir who used folk singers of Chhattisgarh in his plays, creating a free-style story narration format, typical of Pandavani.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The local language of Chhattisgarh is Chhattisgarhi. The dialect of Sadri and Halbi is understood by many tribal groups of Chhattisgarh. The most widely used dialects are Surgujia, Kalanga, Sadri Korwa, Binjhwari, Kavardi, Bhulia, Baigani, Khairagarhi and Chhattisgarhi. Many dialects are also



Like Teejan Bai, **Ritu Verma** also adopted the Kapalik style of Pandavani, where the singer improvises considerably, as opposed to the Vedmati style where the singer sits and narrates the stories. And when barely seven, Ritu Verma performed in a nearby village. There has been no looking back for her since then - at 13, she went to Japan as part of a Pandavani party and since then has performed in several countries. In 2009, Sangeet Natak Akademi has honoured Ritu Verma with Bismillah Khan Award. Ritu Verma has achieved a glorious destination in Pandvani singing with her art practice which is an inspiration for other artists working in this discipline.

Nacha: Folk Theatre of Chhattisgarh

Nacha, is a kind of folk theatre found in the entire state of Chhattisgarh in India. Although there are four different forms of Nacha, Khare Saaj Nacha; Gandawa Nacha; Dewar Nacha and Baithe Saaj Nacha, the troupes performing Khare Saaj, Dewar or Gandawa Nacha are very few. The most popular form today is Baithe Saaj Nacha. Comedy is an essential and a most entertaining aspect of the Nacha folk theatre. The humorous skits of Nacha also incorporate themes on social issues to create awareness.



Omkar Das Manikpuri born in the year 1970 is an Indian stage and film actor, native of Brindanagar in Bhilai, who has been a member of folk-theatre dozen Habib Tanvir's, the Naya Theatre company for several years. He made his Hindi film debut as a male lead in Aamir Khan productions' *Peepli Live* (2010). Omkar Das started his career at the age of 17, as a performer in the local form of folk theatre called Nacha and joined an itinerant village theatre group. Performing often in makeshift and open air stages he honed his skills as a singer, dancer, mimic and a stand-up comic.

dying away such as Parji, Kurukh and Gondi that are facing near – extinction among the languages of Chhattisgarh. Whatever language or dialect one uses, the written script is always in the Devanagari script.

PERFORMING ARTS OF CHHATTISGARH

The most prominent performing arts in Chhattisgarh is **Chandaini Gonda** which is performed in the district of Dantewada. Representing the rich cultural heritage and tradition of the region, Chhattisgarh is famous for its unique performing arts that have captured the imagination of the world. Endowed with a rich cultural history, Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh boasts of its unique folk traditions that are reflected through various dance forms, folk songs and folk dramas.

Sonha Bihan represents the rich cultural heritage of the bygone days. Dressed in colourful attire, the performers of Sonha Bihan enact the role of several mythological characters through their beautiful dance styles and positions. Sonha Bihan portrays the rich folk culture of the region that has percolated to the modern era through the various performing arts of the region.

The beautiful folk dance drama of **Lorik Chanda** of the Durg district portrays the unique folk traditions and the rich historical ancestry of the state. Blessed with rich cultural legacies, the district of Durg boasts of varied and unique folk traditions that are reflected in the numerous folk dances, melodious folk songs and expressive folk dramas.

Gammatiha is a well known dance



drama of Chhattisgarh that reflects the traditional folk culture of the region. Gammatiha epitomises the rich cultural heritage and traditional antecedents of region. Based on folklores, mythological stories, historical facts and religious legends, the beautiful folk dance drama of Hareli represents the varied yet rich cultural traditions of the ancient times that has percolated to the modern times.

Endowed with rich traditional legacies, the Durg district is famous for its folk culture that is expressed through the beautiful dance forms, melodious songs, and dance dramas. Based on the folklores, mythological events, historical legends or religious stories, the beautiful and expressive

Indira Kala Sangeet University is a public university located in Khairagarh, Chhattisgarh. Established in 1956, it was inaugurated by Late Priya Darshani Indira Gandhi. The aim of the university is to provide instructions in all branches of Music and Fine Arts, to make provisions for research and advancement of studies in Music and Fine Arts and dissemination of knowledge. It is Asia's only university dedicated to performing arts.

folk dance drama of **Kari** reminds one of the rich antecedents of the glorious past.

Rahas epitomises a harmonious blend of traditional cultural heritage coupled with modern values. The beautiful dance drama of Rahas represents the rich cultural tradition of the modern times which has been inherited

Bison Horn Muria tribes performing dance





Anurag Basu was born and brought up in Chhattisgarh. Basu directed television serials among which *Tara* (1993) became one of the first soap operas on Indian television. He also directed Balaji Telefilms' *Koshish Ek Aasha* (1997) and *Miit* (2002), which was based on Rabindranath Tagore's *Noukadubi*. He made his debut in movies with *Kuch Toh Hai* (2003). Basu's third film was 2004's *Murder*. Basu's next film *Gangster* also did well at the box-office. He also made *Life In A... Metro* in 2007 followed by *Kites*. His next film was *Barfi* with Ranbir Kapoor and Priyanka Chopra.

from the glorious past.

A unique dance style of the cowherds of Chhattisgarh, the dancers of **Raut Nacha** enact the scene of the violent battle between King Khansa and the cowherds who belonged to the Yadav community of the region.

Panthi dance reflects the rich culture of the indigenous tribal groups of the region. Representing the vibrant and dynamic cultural life of the local inhabitants of Chhattisgarh, Panthi dance epitomises the unique dance styles of the state. This dance form is followed by Satnami sect.

Sua dance casts a magical spell on the audience with its unique dance steps. The spectators of the traditional folk dance of Sua are spell bound with its unique dance steps. Dressed in colourful costumes, the performers of Sua dance perform with full enthusiasm, vigor and dedication which is reflected in their flawless performance.

Karma form of dance is performed by the tribal groups such as Gonds, Baigas and Oraons. The Karma dance is symbolic of the fecundity of nature that manifests itself in the greenery and fruitfulness that marks the advent of spring. In this style of dance, both men and women perform by following the lead singer of the group. The tour of this picturesque region is incomplete, if one does not experience the unique dance and culture of these tribal people.

The **Saila** tribal dance of Chhattisgarh is performed after the season of the harvests is over. The dance is generally performed by the young boys belonging to the plains of Chhattisgarh by going to each and every home of the adjacent

village. This dance is basically performed in the month of Aghan. The dance is performed with the help of the sticks.

FOLK SONGS

The rich cultural heritage of Chhattisgarh is reflected in its music, dance, art and craft etc. Chhattisgarh folk songs occupy an eminent place in the culture of the state.

Many schedule tribes such as Gond, Kamar, Kanver, Korva, Birhi, Baiga, Halba, Pando, Urany, Binjhwar live in Chhattisgarh. While celebrating various festivals and marriages these tribes gets indulge in dance and music. Some of the festivals celebrated by the people of Chhattisgarhi are Navakhani, Hareli, Ganga Dussera, Sarhul Chherka, Dipawali, Karma, Kartika.

Sohar songs are sung after the birth of a child, specially the birth of a son. In the Indian society it is very common that the birth of a son is celebrated with a lot of pomp and grandeur. Sohar songs are sung by most of the hindi speaking regions of India. In the Bhojpuri dialect, the meaning of the word Sohal means feeling good. In different parts of India the song is called by different names such as Sogar, Sohilo Somar or Sohla.

Sua songs are very popular in the Bilaspur and Dantewada districts. These songs accompany the sua dance performances. This

is a folk genre and is still kept alive by the rural people of this state. The performances of this style of song and dance are the special attraction of the celebration of Diwali in Dantewada.

Representing the religious fervor of Chhattisgarh, **Goura songs** are sung in praise of gods and goddesses of the region. Goura songs are one of such folk devotional songs that casts a magical spell on the audience with their enchanting melodies. Goura songs are sung to appease Lord Shiva and his divine consort goddess Durga. Goura songs represent the rich artistic caliber and creative imagination of the singers.

Khuduwa bears a touch of parental affection and warmth. Composed of enchanting melodies and simple yet meaningful words, the traditional folk song of Khuduwa plays an important role in the balanced personality development of the child.

They are generally sung in the native dialects and are a part of every festival and celebration that occurs in the state. **Pathoni** song is an integral part of Chhattisgarh's quintessential culture. The songs are highly emotional and sung during gauna, an auspicious occasion that bids adieu to a newlywed bride.

The **Sawnahi** songs are sung during the rainy season. The lyrics here inform you of the different natural changes that take place with the advent of the first rain

Among some tribes there is a great variety of musical instruments, producing more complex sounds. For example, the Muria has got more or less 18 instrument dedicated to its music god, Lingo, who is believed to have set the rules regarding who can play which instrument. Thus the drum can only be played by the men while the cymbals and jingles can only be played by Muria girls. Different tribal groups use different types of drums. The Tirududi or Jhunki, which is the dancing stick of the Bison-horn Marias, is one of the oldest instruments used by the Baster tribes. Dhankul is another ancient musical instrument of Chhattisgarh; this musical instrument is created by putting together five things such as a huge pot, a bow and a traditional cane window and is worshiped before playing.



Turahi

of the year. The natural elements, trees, flowers, etc are integral part of the lyrics of the Sawnahi song of rains.

The **Cher Chera** song is a style that celebrates the growth of crops. The occasion that it celebrates speaks for the fact that it is essentially a rural style of song. It is a genre of song that is very closely associated with the lifestyle of the tribal people of this region.

Composed of simple words and enchanting melodies, the traditional folk songs of **Kau Mau** play an important role in the development of a balanced personality. The enchanting melodies of the traditional folk songs of Kau Mau form a veritable impression on the tender mind and heart of the small children. The beautiful folk song of Kau Mau is an effective way of expressing the parental love and warmth to the young children who are overwhelmed with joy. Kau Mau songs are an essential part of one's childhood.

Chhattisgarh is blessed with many indigenous performing arts of unique dance styles, melodious folk songs and colourful dance dramas. **Dewar songs** are songs of merriment, joy and happiness. Representing the vibrant and dynamic tribal culture, the melodious Dewar songs refreshes and re-energises the mind and soul of the indigenous population.

Danda songs are one such classic example of the traditional folk culture and an important part of the Chhattisgarh folk songs. Composed of simple and poetic expressions and enchanting melodies, the traditional folk Danda songs reflect the rich musical heritage of Chhattisgarh.

Destinations

A close-up photograph of a large, reddish-brown rock formation with prominent horizontal sedimentary layers and vertical fissures. In the lower right foreground, a small stack of flat, light-colored stones or tiles is balanced against the rock.

Raipur and Around
Bilaspur and Around
Bastar Division
National Parks and Sancturies

Raipur and Around The Capital City

Raipur airport is the only airport of the state which connects it with the major cities of India. This is an ideal point for the travellers from where they can proceed their journey to other destinations.

From Raipur one gets an opportunity to explore the beautiful destinations around. One can travel to temple town Rajim, Champaran, the birthplace of the Saint Vallabhacharya, Balaji temple contains shrines dedicated to Balaji, Dongargarh, the temple of Maa Bambleshwari. Arang is famous for temples, Sihava, a place full of natural beauty, Sirpur an archaeological site and Barnawapara a wildlife sanctuary.

Raipur district is important from historical and archeological point of view. This district was once part of Dakshin Kosha and considered to be under Maurya Kingdom. Raipur city had been the capital of the Haihaya dynasty's Kalchuri kings, controlling

The college was established in 1882 by Sir Andrew Fraser, Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces and Berar and the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal in Jabalpur. The motto of the school, understandably, read thus: 'A raja is honoured in his own country but a learned man throughout the world'. In 1894, RKC was shifted to Raipur. It is one of the oldest educational institutions and has played a seminal role as a centre of learning in the region.





The Jagannath temple

the traditional forts of the Chhattisgarh for a long time. The town of Raipur has been in existence since 9th century; the old site and ruins of the fort can be seen in the southern part of the city.

Raipur was founded by the Kalchuri King Ram Chandra of Raipur in last quarter of the 14th century AD. Now, Raipur is the headquarters of the district and division of the same name centrally located in the newly formed state Chhattisgarh. Raipur is the biggest city of the region and a fast developing important industrial centre.

It is also believed that King Ramachandra's son Brahmdeo Rai had established Raipur. His capital was Khalwatika (now Khallari). The newly constructed city was named after Brahmdeo Rai as 'Raipur'. It was during his time in 1402 that Hajiraj Naik the temple of Hatkeshwar Mahadev was constructed on the banks of river Kharun. The decline of this dynasty's rule came with the death of King Amar Singh Deo. This region had become the domain of Bhosle kings after the Amar Singh Deo's death. With the death of Raghuji the III, the territory was assumed by the British government from Bhonsla's of Nagpur and Chhattisgarh was declared a separate



Above: NIT Raipur

Facing Page: A bustling city mall in Raipur

Below: Dudhadhari monastery & temple
in Raipur

commissionery with its headquarters at Raipur in 1854. After independence Raipur district was included in central provinces and Berar.

Purani Basti is one of the oldest sections of Raipur and this entire settlement was divided into colonies or paras on the basis of caste and profession. Each colony had its own customs, traditions and architecture.

Awadhiapara was the area where the migrants from Awadh settled and next to this is the **Burha Talab** the largest lake in the Raipur city. The name literally means aged (burha) lake (talab). The beauty of





this lake is enhanced by the presence of an island in its midst. The island has numerous trees and gardens. This lake is also known as Swami Vivekananda Sarovar. The settlement next to it came to be known as Burhapara. Tatyapara is adjacent to this and both of them were once under the dominance of Maratha.

Dudhadhari monastery and temple is located in the southern part of Raipur city near Maharajbandh lake. This ancient temple dedicated to Lord Rama, was built in the mid of 17th century by King Jait Singh. The temple has beautiful murals. The monastery was named after Swami Balbhadra Das who only had 'Doodh' (milk) as his food. Burials of the former Mahants can also be seen here.

Mahamaya temple located in Raipur old fort area. Mahamaya is the presiding deity — a goddess with all the good qualities, supposed to be a combination of the powers of Vishnu and Shiva. She is also known as Durga and Mahishasura Mardini or Jagdambe. This temple originally belonging to the Kalchuri era

Purkhouti Muktangan

This is an open air art Museum cum Park Developed by Tourism Ministry of Chhattisgarh, depicts whole of Chhattisgarh in one theme park. The habitat, artifacts, folk dances, food habits of the tribal's are displayed here. Medicinal and traditional plantation is also grown here. Purkhauti Muktangan is refreshingly devoid of stereotypes and structures. It aims to conserve endemic knowledge, socio-cultural lifestyle and customs of rural communities in an enriching experience.





Statue of Swami Vivekananda at sarovar



has been renovated later. Nearby is the Samleswari temple dedicated to goddess Samlai.

One of the best-known temples in Raipur, the **Jaitu Sau Math** was completed in 1877. It took artisans and labourers from Jaipur (Rajasthan) seven years to complete this structure. The temple served as the headquarters of the noted scholar and freedom fighter, Mahant Laxmi Narayan Das. Both Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru

Mahamaya Devi temple





Cityside view of Raipur Airport

stayed in the Math during their visits to Raipur.

The Jagannath temple at Raipur was established in 1860. It is located at Sadar Bazaar and is the first Jagannath temple of Chhattisgarh. The main festival celebrated here is the ‘Rathyatra’. It is also known as Lord Jagannath’s ‘Rathyatra’. In this yatra Lord Balbhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath are taken in different chariots or raths, which are pulled by their disciples. On full moon day the Rathyatra goes back to the Jagannath temple.

Near the Jai Stambh Chowk stands the **Kaiser-e-Hind Darwaza**. Built with the support of the people of Raipur in 1877, it was meant to honour Victoria as the new Empress of India (Kaiser-e-Hind). Most parts of this ornamental gateway have been pulled down, and the facade incorporated in Ravi Bhawan, a commercial complex. A little distance away from the Kaiser-e-Hind Darwaza is the ornate Jawahar gate, once the entrance to Philips Bazaar, now renamed Jawahar Bazaar.

Once known as the **Victoria Jubilee**

Travel Guide

Raipur is connected by air with Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bhubaneshwar, Bhopal and Jabalpur. Raipur is well connected by train and roads of National and State highways with the important District and Headquarters of the Nation. It is an important station of S.E. railway on Mumbai, Nagpur-Kolkata Route. The National Highway six passes through the city and National Highway No.43 links it with Vijaya Nagar.

Hall, the Town Hall was inaugurated in 1887. The stones used to construct the building came from the Raipur Fort.

Mahant Ghasidas Memorial Museum in Raipur is listed amongst the leading museums in central India. Located near D. K. Hospital in Raipur, the museum was established by the famous Raja Mahant Ghasidas of Rajnandgaon in the year 1875. Later on in the year 1953, it was renovated and restored by Queen Jyoti Devi and her son Digvijay Das. Spread on almost two hectares of land, Mahant Ghasidas Memorial Museum is one of the finest museums in Chhattisgarh. The priceless collections at the museum include inscriptions, weapons, ancient coins, Kalachuri sculptures, carvings, Buddhist bronzes, and items such as clothes and ornaments that were being used all over Chhattisgarh.

Apart from **Hatkeswar Mahadev temple** many other temples have been built around it. One can hire boats on the steps of the ghat and sail on the river. Scholars opine that the area around **Mahadev Ghat** comprised the first Kalachuri settlement in the Raipur region.

Victoria town hall





A sadhu during the Rajim Kumbh

Rajim Prayaga of Chhattisgarh

Rajim is probably the holiest place in Chhattisgarh as it is situated at the eastern bank of Mahanadi river, just below its junction with Pairi and Sondhur rivers. Due to its location, on the junction of three rivers, it is often classified as **Prayaga** of Chhattisgarh. Mahanadi enjoys the same status as that of Ganga, hence taking bath and performing rituals at the bank of Mahanadi is considered very sacred. Rajim-Mahatmya mentions that Mahanadi is known as Chitrotpala below its junction with Pairi and Utpalesvara before the junction. It is also believed that your journey to Jagannath temple of Odisha is not complete if you do not visit Rajim. Mahashivaratri is celebrated with full faith and vigour.

It is not only the holiest but one of the most ancient towns of Chhattisgarh. It has attracted historians, archaeologists and vivid travellers since ages and it continues to mesmerise with its cultural, historical and social heritage. J D Beglar visited Rajim in 1871-72 and reported its

As per Hindu mythology, Kumbh mela can only take place at a spot where the almighty himself resides. Rajim is believed to be home of lord Vishnu's re-incarnated form, Rajeev Lochan. Every year sages from all across the country reach the Kumbh mela which begins from Maagh poornima and lasts till Mahashivratri. Also, lakhs of devotees visit Rajim to take the holy dip.

Travel Guide

Rajim is at a distance of 47 kms from Raipur from where bus and taxi facilities are available. Rajim is the nearest railways station. Raipur is the major rail junction with Rail connectivity to rest of India.

antiquities. He was not allowed to enter inside the temples hence his account is very limited. Alexander Cunningham, who visited Rajim in 1881-82, describes it in detail. He tells that Rajim was a small village of about 3000 inhabitants and the holiest place of Maha-Koshala present Chhattisgarh.

The **Rajiv Lochan temple** in Rajim was constructed during the 8th - 9th century and has an interesting legend behind it. The **Kuleshwar Mahadev temple** is situated at the extreme end of a spur of land at the junction of the two rivers. The temple, which consists of a long rectangular axis with steps and a mandapa, has its sanctum facing east. This narrow mandapa is supported by pillars, arranged in two lines of four each. The shikhara is pyramidal, composed of horizontal tiers which terminate at the griva (neck) below the amalaka.



Glimpses of Rajim Kumbh





The **Daneshwar Mahadev temple** was built during the later Kalachuri period. The temple, facing east, is built on a high plinth, comprising Nandi-mandapa, Sabhamandapa, Antarala and Garbhagriha. The shikhara is pyramidal, capped by an amalaka, thus combining the Dravida and the Nagara styles.

Above: *Rajiv Lochan temple in Rajim*
Below: *The massive doorframe of the sanctum of Rajiv Lochan temple*



Interior of Vallabhacharya

Champanar

Champanar, formerly known as Champajhar, is a village in the Raipur district which lies about 60 kms from the state capital of Raipur. The village is identified with Champaranya and therefore has religious significance as the birthplace of the Saint Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya, the reformer and founder of the Vallabh sect also known as Pushtimarg. A temple has been constructed in his honour. Near this is a temple of **Champakeshwara Mahadeva**.

There are two temples dedicated to Shri Mahaprabhiji in Champanar. The first one is known as Prakatya Baithakji Mandir, The second Baithakji is Mool Prakatya which is normally known as Chhatti Baithak. Apart from this there is a Haveli temple dedicated to Shree Girrajji and Shri Balkrishnalalji.

A small stream of Mahanadi

river flows near the temple which is believed to be a form of Yamuna river and is worshipped. **Mahaprabhuji's Prakatya Utsav** is celebrated every year on 11th day of Baisakh and many followers of the sect gather at the temple to pay homage. The Annual Fair of Champaran is held with great festivities in the month of Magh every year. Large number of pushtimargiya vaishnavs visit Champaran every year.

Travel Guide

Nearest airport and railway station is capital city of Raipur from there one can easily book a taxi or get a bus for Champaran. Champaran is accessible from Raipur both via Arang. From the junction of Arang-Rajim Road at the village of Jonda, there is a paved road to Champaran. Buses are available from Raipur and Arang.



Left: Champakeshwara temple

Right below: Champaran Vallabhacharya temple

Below: Colourfull corridor of Vallabhacharya birth place at Champaran





Bhand Deul temple

Arang

Known as one of the famous temple towns of Chhattisgarh state, Arang is situated within the geographical premises of Raipur district. **Bhand Deul temple** which is dedicated to the Jain sect is the prime attraction of Arang city in Chhattisgarh. Bhag Deul temple is the other historical shrines of the city.

The appealing traits of Bhand Deul temple in Arang involve outstanding sculptures of Jain tirthankars made up of black stone. Apart from the idols, the entire structure of the temple speaks of the sophisticated grandeur of its makers. This shrine is believed to be one of those rare places where all the 24 tirthankars of Jainism can be found engraved in one single stone. Another unique tourism attraction of Arang lies in the shaiva temple of Bhag Deul built in the Khajuraho style.

Travel Guide

One can easily get regular trains to Arang from other major cities of the country. Nearest airport is Raipur Airport. Nearest bus stand is Raipur.

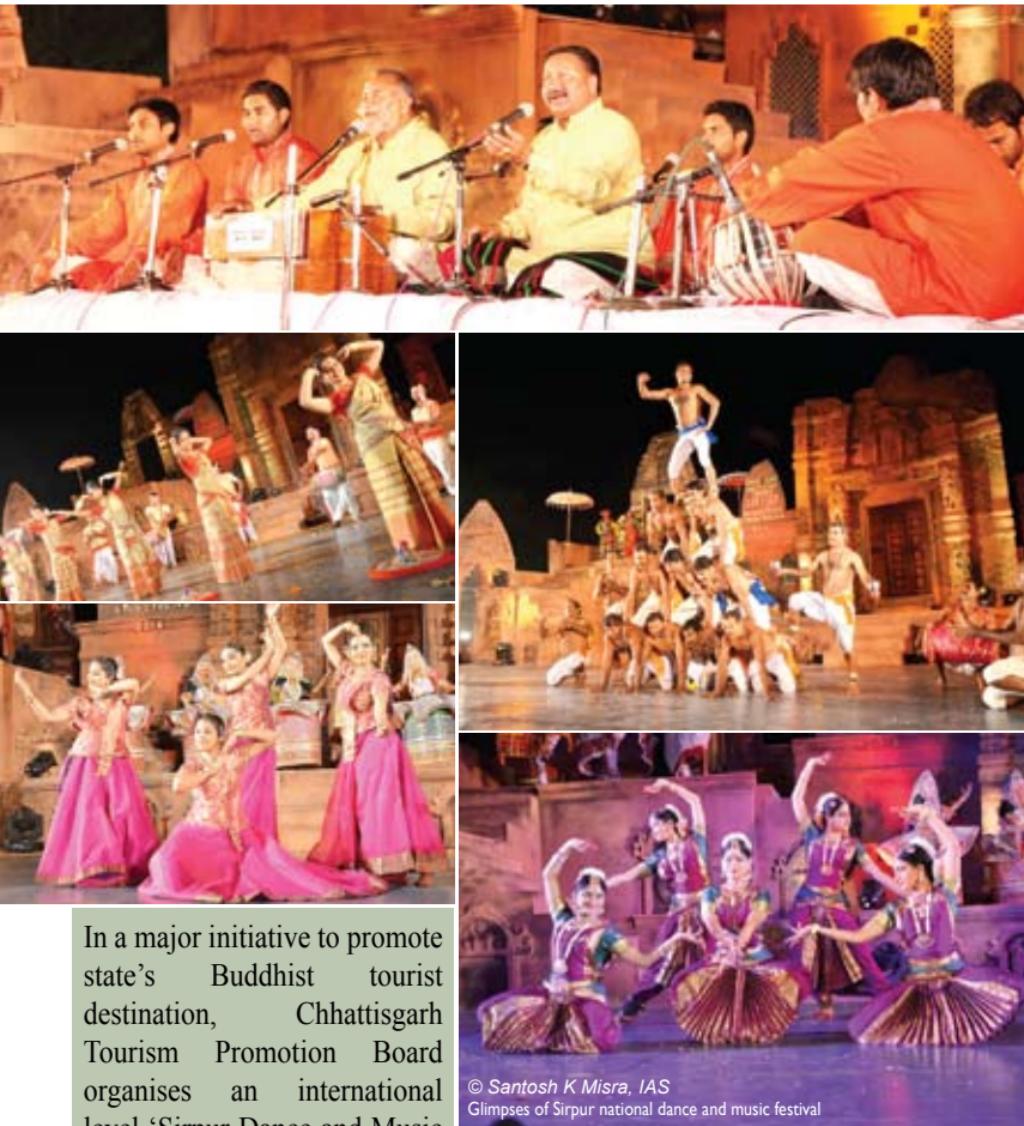


Lakshman temple, Sirpur

Sirpur

Sirpur or Shripura as it was known in ancient times, is a small village located on the right bank of Mahanadi 83 kms to the north-east of Raipur. It was the capital of Dakshin Koshala under the Sarabhapuriyas and Panduvanshis. The Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang visited Sirpur in 635 AD. Sirpur has archaeological remains associated with Shaiva, Vaishnava, Buddhist and Jain faiths. Excavations at Sirpur have yielded extensive ruins of ancient structures scattered over a vast area. Among the numerous temples and Buddhist monasteries (viharas), the most notable are the **Lakshman temple, Gandheswara temple, Anandaprabhu Kutir vihara** and **Swastika vihara**.

The **Lakshman temple** belonging to the mature phase of Gupta architecture can be assigned to the 7th century. Located in a well-tended garden, it is one of the finest brick temples of India.



In a major initiative to promote state's Buddhist tourist destination, Chhattisgarh Tourism Promotion Board organises an international level 'Sirpur Dance and Music Festival' every year. The state's aim is to promote Sirpur at an international level as an extension to Buddhist circuit beyond Sarnath and Sanchi in central India. The festival also aims to attract foreign tour operators from important Buddhist countries such as Japan, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Bhutan. To promote Buddhism every year ambassadors from South East Asian countries are invited. The festival held recently has witnessed the presence of ambassadors from Sri Lanka and Korea.

© Santosh K Misra, IAS
Glimpses of Sirpur national dance and music festival

As indicated by the epigraphical data noticed during the clearance of debris from the mandapa (now preserved in the Raipur museum), it was the widow of the Somavanshi king Harsha Gupta Vasata who originally dedicated the temple to Lord Vishnu during the reign of their son Mahashivagupta Balarjuna.

Surang Tila temple stands unique for its amazing structure. The imposing Surang Tila is a Panchayatan style Shiva temple complex. The findings at Surang Tila are perhaps the most intriguing of all sites in Sirpur. The



*“Really amazing, the history
of Sirpur is glorious, I am now
carrying the memories of Lord
Buddha from here.”*

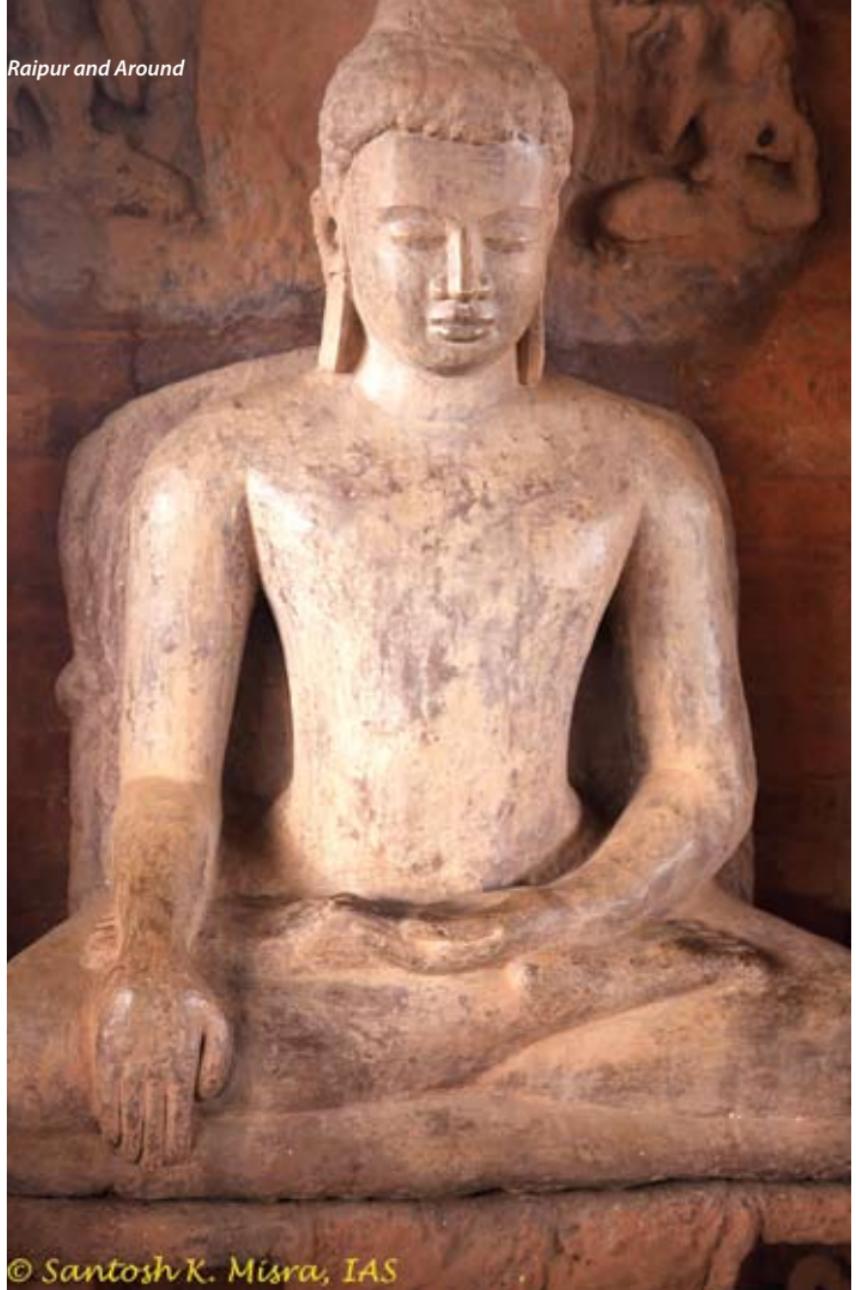
— Dalai Lama

The Dalai Lama who was on a three-day visit to the state of Chhattisgarh (March 2013) said on his visit, “Really amazing, the history of Sirpur is glorious, I am now carrying the memories of Lord Buddha from here.” His Holiness Dalai Lama remarked at Sirpur, after visiting the historical site which is about 83 kms from Raipur.

The great spiritual leader Dalai Lama who was on a three-day visit to the state of Chhattisgarh (January 2014) took a trip of the sprawling Sirpur and had a glance of Laxman temple and Buddha viharas as well. His holiness did an hour long meditation at Teevardev Vihar.

Dalai Lama visited Chanda Dai Caves located in the forests of Singhadurva. The cave is more than 200 metres deep in the hill and as per the travelogue written by Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang, famous Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna had spent some time here.

excavations revealed a mammoth stone structure with five shrines built atop a massive platform. This platform, rising to a height of 4.68 m is, according to archaeologists, highest for any Hindu



© Santosh K. Misra, IAS

Buddha statue at Buddha viharas

Travel Guide

Sirpur is about 83 kms away from Raipur on National Highway Number six on way to Sambalpur. There is a bifurcation at 61st kms stone on this highway at village Kohari. Sirpur is 17 kms from this point. One can also reach Sirpur from Mahasamund which is 29 km far. Mahasamund is the nearest railhead and Raipur is the nearest airport.

Temple in India. The remaining structure measures about 5.20 m high. The top of the tila is reached by a steep flight of stairs. The steps tilt inwards, perhaps due to an earthquake; signs of which have been noticed in some other Sirpur structures as well.

Anandprabhu Kutir Vihar located at some distance from the main village of Sirpur and the other archaeological finds, this complex had two viharas laid side by side. The seated image of Buddha in one of the viharas is still extant. The ruins give the visitor a good idea regarding the life of the resident monks

and their way of instruction. In the centre of the village, a hoard of copper plates of Mahashivagupta Balarjuna was recovered from a mound.

Swastik Vihar, situated near the famous Anand Prabhu Kutir Vihar, is believed to be an ancient center for meditation and study purposes of Buddh bhikshus. This place has been recently excavated, and is a major tourist destination. Swastik Vihar, a monastery with two mandapas in the central part and entrance from the west. The shrine on the eastern end contains a stone image of Buddha flanked by standing Padampani on either side.

Today popular as the biggest monastery, the **Teevardev Maha Vihara** is located at about 1km away from the Laxman Temple. Complete in every sense, this monastery reflects the entire Buddhist culture and emanates a sense of pride for the entire nation. It is beautifully crafted in every sense and has stood the test of time with its amazing brick construction.

Truly blessed with scenic beauty,

Surang Tila





the **Buddha Vihara** exudes warmth and portrays religious harmony. Brick constructions and underground rooms stand testimony to a mystical era. The tone blend reminds of the Gupta dynasty's temples and residential buildings. Witness unmatched design and architectural brilliance as one come across the six feet tall statue of Buddha touching the earth and let mystery enchant you as many residential, meditation and study rooms give you a glimpse of the Lord's long lived glory.

The **Gandheswar temple**, remarkable for its architecture, is situated on the banks of the Mahanadi. It is generally believed that the present temple is a reconstruction of the much older original one, which had succumbed to the ravages of time. Images of the Buddha in Bhumisparsa Mudra, Uma Mahesvara and Gangadhara Shiva found outside the temple along with a statue of Vishnu on Garuda and Vamana, chiselled in granite, deserve mention.

Bhilai

Bhilai is a city in the Durg district of Chhattisgarh. The city is located 25 kilometres (16 mi) west of the capital Raipur, on the main Howrah–Mumbai rail line and National Highway 6. Bhilai is famous for the Bhilai Steel Plant, which is the largest steel plant in India and known for being the only manufacturer of rails in the country used by Indian Railways.

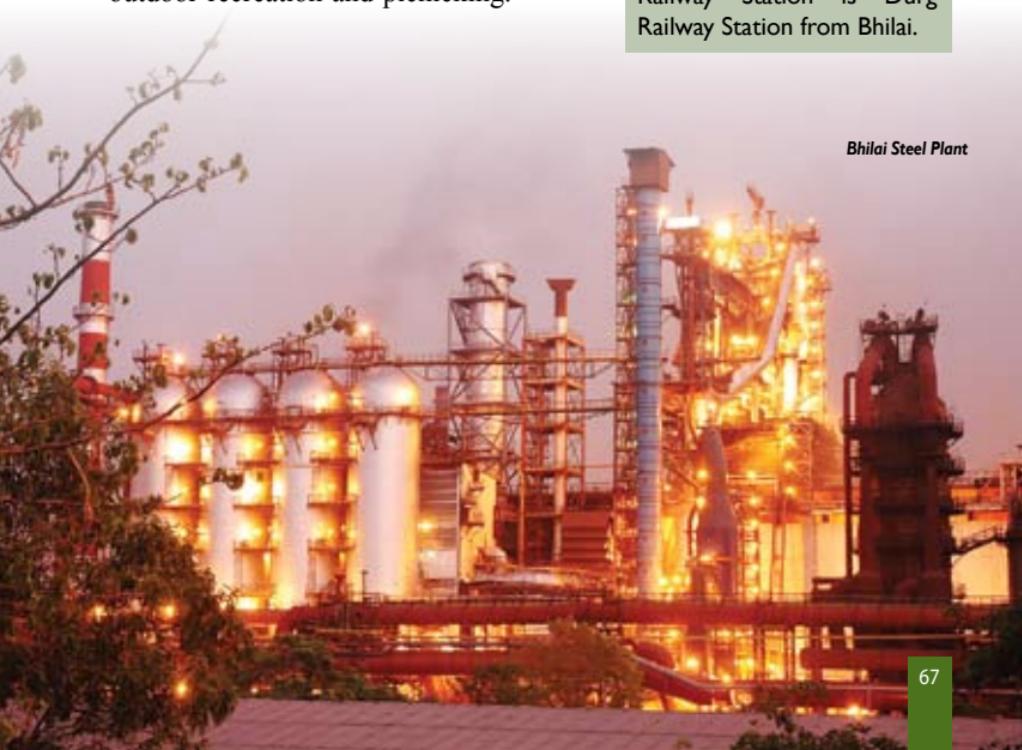
Dhamdha is one of the most visited places in Bhilai. One can also find ancient temples here which along with the palace is a popular tourist attraction.

Maitri Bagh is a zoo and a park established by the Bhilai Steel Plant in Bhilai. It is one of the best family friendly attractions and a top picnic spot in Chhattisgarh. A visit to the city is considered incomplete without visiting this place as there is something for everyone. Also known as Friendship garden, it is a favourite spot where locals as well as visitors come here for outdoor recreation and picnicking.

Travel Guide

The nearest International Airport from Bhilai is Swami Vivekanand Airport, Raipur. Bhilai is 30 kms from Raipur, and is connected through Chhattisgarh State Road Transport Corporation (CSRTC) and some private travel services. The nearest Railway Station is Durg Railway Station from Bhilai.

Bhilai Steel Plant



Durg

For people interested in architecture, the district collectorate in Durg would serve as a highlight. Built in 1907, this imposing structure uses a mixture of limestone, gum, sand and fruit pulp as the binding agent.

The general slope of the district comes under Mahanadi river slope and is towards the north and north-east and locally in some places towards east. The main rivers of Mahanadi are Sheonath, Kharun, Tandula, Kharkhara and Aamner. **Sheonath** is the main river of the district which originates from **Panabarās hill** (625 m) and flows towards north-east. This river is the main tributary of Mahanadi river.

Hindi Bhawan is a famous ancient building that is now converted into a municipality office. Durg district court building is an old building with a British architecture. Close to the city is the Jain temples of Nagpura which is famous for its grand construction and carvings. A naturopathy centre also runs in Nagpura where patients come from different parts of country for naturopathy treatment.

Chandi Mandir is located in the heart of Durg city as a famous pilgrim spot. Chandi mata is worshipped by all castes and religions of Durg and nearby places.

Chandi Mandir



Deobaloda

Deobaloda is famous for the ancient temple of Lord Shiva that dates back to the 5th century. Deobalod a small village in Chhattisgarh is also famous for Sri Hanuman Mandir, Sri Kali Mandir, Sri Ram Mandir, Sri Jagannath Mandir, and St. Vincent Palloti Church. Besides the Lord Shiva temple, a pond is located.

Statue of Nandi is placed at the entrance of Lord Shiva temple. Sculptures of Lord Shiva and Lord Ganesha, along with other deities have been placed within the temple. Outside the temple, sculptures of warriors, dancing men and women, animals and gods can be found. Walls of the temple are adorned with few erotic sculptures.

Travel Guide

There are many buses that run directly to the city from all nearby locations. Nearest railway station is at Durg. Nearest airport is at Raipur.



Glimpses of the Shiva temple in Deobalod



Dongargarh

Travel Guide

The nearest airport is at Raipur and the nearest railhead is Dongargarh Railway Station. Dongargarh has good road communication and buses and taxis are available from Rajnandgaon to reach here.



Goddess Bamleshwari at Dongargarh

Dongargarh is a major religious centre. A popular landmark of the place is **Maa Bamleshwari Devi temple** situated on a hilltop which is 1,600 ft high. It is of great spiritual importance and a legend is associated with this shrine.

Another famous shrine in the vicinity is **Chhoti Bamleshwari temple**. The devotees flock these temples during Navratri. Lord Shiva temple and the temples dedicated to Lord Hanuman are also located here. The ropeway is an added attraction and is the only passenger ropeway in Chhattisgarh.

A famous Jain temple is also being constructed on a hill known as **Chandragiri**. The temple is specially recognised for an ancient statue of Teerthankara Shri Chandraprabhuji.

It is also famous for Pragyagiri. Pragyagiri is a well-known Buddhist destination. The temple of Pragyagiri has a Buddha statue which is 30 ft high.



The ropeway at Dongargarh

Nagpura

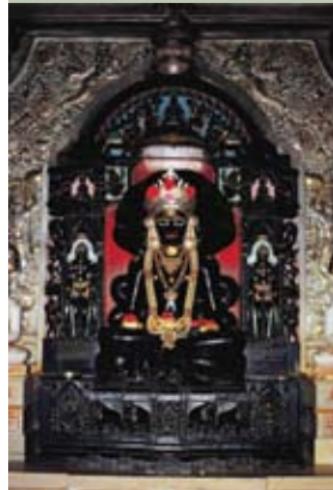
Nagpura is situated on the bank of the river Shrivardhan. **Shri Uwassaggaharam Parshwa Tirth**, Nagpura, has a unique distinction of acquiring unprecedented fame and adoration as a pioneer Jain Shrine. This holy place documents India's glorious rich cultural past with its rich architecture, it tells a tale of unshakeable, faith, unflinching devotion, selfless dedication.

The temple commemorates the visit of the 23rd Trithankara Parshwanath to this region around 3,000 years ago as sharman (a wandering mendicant). The footprints of the saint are placed in a special shrine on the right hand side of the main temple, making it a first place of worship.



Travel Guide

Nagpura is well connected by road and rail. Nearest railway station is at Durg. Raipur airport is the nearest airport.



Idol at Jain temple

Kawardha

Kawardha town is centrally located between Durg, Rajnandgaon, Raipur and Bilaspur districts of Chhattisgarh state. Kawardha is 118 kms away from Durg 120 kms from Rajnandgaon 120 kms away from Raipur towns. Area of Kawardha district also touches the area of Balaghat, Mandla districts of Madhya Pradesh.

Tourist attractions of Kawardha includes: **Madwa Mahal** was originally a Shiva temple but due to its shape, like a marriage shamiyana, it is known as 'Madwa Mahal'. It is also called Dullhadeo. Nagavanshi emperor Ramchandra Deohas built it in 1349 A.D. The Shivalinga is inside the 'Garba Grah' and the 'Mandap' rests upon 16 pillars'.

Kabirdham is a peaceful and attractive place located on the southern bank of river Sakri. Due to the advent

Kawardha palace



of Kabir Sahib and the establishment of the seat of descendants of his disciple Dharmdas, it was named as Kabirdham. Before Damakhera, district Raipur, this was the seat of Kabir Panthis.

The **Kawardha palace**, the traditional with some of the modern structures robs the town of its singular character and charm. In 1991, Maharaja Yogeshwar Raj Singh Ji decided to restore this luxurious palace into the finest luxury palace hotel. The Royal family renovated the arched corridors, the residential quarters and its courtyards with small amplifications. The specially designed frescoes deciphered with the finest work and rare palace furniture. The elegance personified and the renowned hospitality is served in its eight well-appointed rooms and beautiful cottages with extreme intimacy and caring personal service in the reborn palace Kawardha.

Travel Guide

There are many buses that run directly to the city from all nearby locations. Nearest railway station is at Raipur. Nearest airport is Raipur.

Madwa Mahal



Bhoramdeo

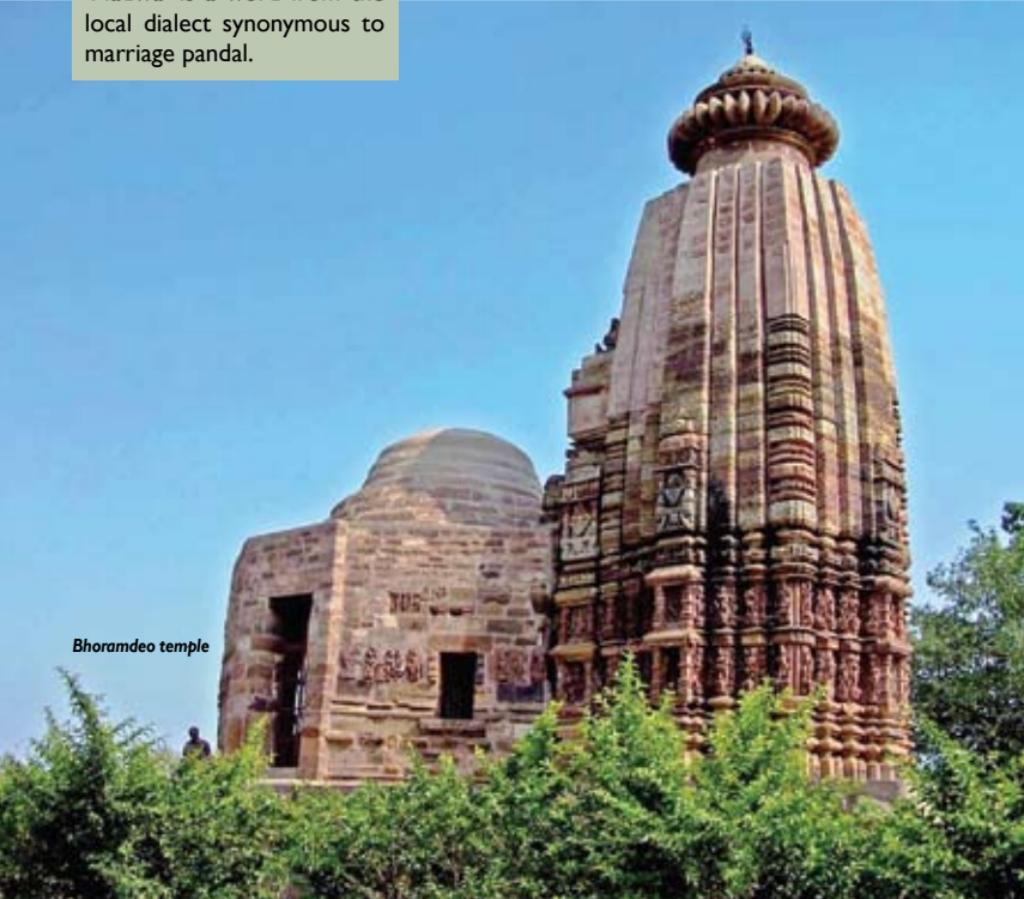
The Bhoramdeo temple is carved on the rocky stones in the Nagara style. This temple was built in the period of 7th to 11th century A.D. The Shivalinga in the temple is beautifully carved and the artistic appeal beckons the visitors. The Bhoramdeo temple has a resemblance with the Sun temple of Konark and The Khajuraho temple, and that is why it is also called the Khajuraho of Chhattisgarh. The 'Madwa Mahal' near the Bhoramdeo temple is another beautiful historic monument, worth seeing. Just one km away from Bhoramdeo, Madwa Mahal is known as the memorial of the marriage of Nagavanshi king and Haihawanshi queen. 'Madwa' is a word from the local dialect synonymous to marriage pandal.

Bhoramdeo temple is a very old hindu temple dedicated to Lord Shiva and is located at a distance of 18 kms from Kawardha town in Kabirdham district. This temple, scenically situated amidst mountain ranges, was built in the period of 7th to 11th century AD.

The temple of Bhoramdeo lies on the banks of river Sakri. This temple was built by King Ramchandra of Nag dynasty who married Princess Ambika Devi of Haiya dynasty. The temple of Bhoramdev has a special attraction for lovers of archaeology and history.

It is highly recommended that Bhoramdeo temple is visited when

Bhoramdeo temple





the **Bhoramdeo Mahotsav** is held, which would give fascinating experience for travellers. Other attractions include visiting nearby native villages to take a sneak peak of rural India by interacting with them. Trekking in the jungle of Maikal hills is another attraction that would not be missed out. Later in the evening one can enjoy the tribal dance performed by Baiga tribes. There is also **Bhoramdeo Sanctuary** nearby.

Travel Guide

Bhoramdeo temple is situated at a distance of 18 kms by road from Kawardha in Kabirdham district. Raipur is the nearest railway station on the Mumbai-Howrah main line. Regular Buses are available from Raipur (116 kms), Rajnandgaon (133 kms) and Jabalpur (220 kms) to Kawardha. Taxis are available from Kawardha to the temple site. Raipur airport is the nearest airport.



Above: Magnificent sculpture at the temple
Left: Details of sculptures at the Bhoramdeo temple



A temple in Bilaspur

Bilaspur and Around

Bilaspur is a city in Bilaspur district in the Indian state of Chhattisgarh, situated 111 kms (69 mi) north of state capital, Raipur. It is the second-largest city (after Raipur) in the state. It is the administrative headquarter of Bilaspur district. The region around Bilaspur is known for its aromatic Doobraj rice, Mango, handloom woven colourful soft Kosa silk saris, and for its rich, varied and colourful culture. Bilaspur district has a major contribution towards the naming of Chhattisgarh as 'Rice Bowl'.

The city celebrates all the major festivals of India. The town has been home of some famous literary personalities including Sri Srikant Verma (Hindi), Sri Bimal Mitra (Bengali), Sri Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Amrit Lal Dubey great writer in hindi literature and first Issury Ratna winner in Madhya Pradesh.

The place is known all over the world for its several different varieties of Mangoes, Saris, Aromatic Doobraj rice, Handloom woven Kosa silk and also for its rich and diverse culture.

Sculptures found in Bilaspur





One of the greatest sons of the city is Guru Ghasidas, the founder of the Satnami sect, after whom the university of Bilaspur is named. Guru Ghasidas had a holistic vision and felt that systemic reforms to remove social injustice and inequality would remain inadequate and incomplete without reforming individuals. All over Chhattisgarh there are numerous shrines and ashrams celebrating the perennial ideas that fed this movement. The place where Guru Ghasidas was born is known as Giraudpuri. Jaitkhamb at Giraudpuri is one of the tallest and most famous tourist attractions in Chhattisgarh.

It is very famous for its captivating sightseeing places which attract the tourists from all over the world. Some of the popular and must see attractions of the city include **Khudia dam**, **Kutaghat dam** etc.

Bilasa Tal near Koni Kanan Pendari Smriti van is a popular attraction. There are many city garden such as Konher garden, Vivekanand garden. It also has two amusement parks. Besides having places associated with its ancient and cultural heritage, the city is also famous for its wildlife variety. This is because of its situation within the state. It is reputed

Jaitkhamb at Giraudpuri





Travel Guide

The nearest International Airport from Bilaspur is Swami Vivekanand Airport, Raipur, roughly three hour drive from Bilaspur. It is well connected with major cities such as Bengaluru, Bhopal, Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, Chennai, Hyderabad, Indore, Jaipur, Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai etc.

Ancient temple in Bilaspur

for having some of the densest forests in the country and an even spread of hills and rivers. One of the places worth visiting is the Achanakmar Wildlife Sanctuary. Famous for the variety of its wildlife, the sanctuary is spread over an area of 551 km² (213 mi²) and was set up in 1975 under the Wildlife Protection Act. The sanctuary is 55 kms (34 mi) away from Bilaspur and is closed during the monsoon season.

Just before the entry into **Achanakmar Wild Life Sanctuary**, there is the **Ghongapani Jalashya** (dam) with beautiful panoramic view. Although there is no place to stay, it can be visited in the day time on way to Achanakmar. Beyond the sanctuary, on the way to Amarkantak, there are government guest houses in Achanakmar, Keonchi and Lamni as well as Chhattisgarh Tourism Board's property such as Amadob tourist resorts. These guest houses are well built and the arrangements are also good.



Ratanpur



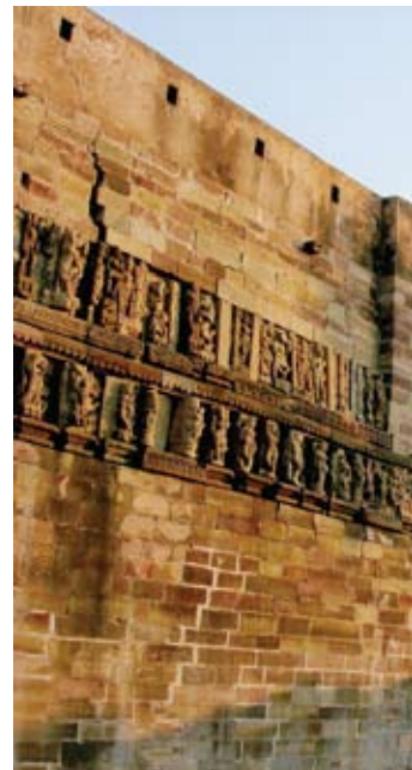
Mahamaya Devi, Ratanpur

Ratanpur was founded by Ratanraj or Ratandeva son of Kamaladeo, the grandson of Kalingaraj, who conquered the area of Chhattisgarh and shifted his capital from Tuman to Ratanpur in 11th century AD. In 1407 Kingdom of Ratanpur was divided into two parts, with junior branch ruling from Raipur. It continued to be the capital of Haihaiyavansi Kingdom till 18th century, who ruled large parts of the areas of Chhattisgarh, till the area passed into the control of Bhosle and later British.

Ratnapur is a sacred place mainly due to **Mahamaya Devi temple**. This is one of the three shaktipeeth of Chhattisgarh. Mythology of Shaktipeeths is that once King Daksha father-in-law of Lord Shiva observed a yajna. He invited various kings but not Lord Shiva. Sati considering it an insult of his husband

and jumped in sacrificial fire and died. Enraged Shiva held the charred body of Sati and started *Tandav Nritya* with an intention to destroying the whole universe. Lord Vishnu with benevolent intention of saving the universe and bringing back Lord Shiva out of the trance threw his sudarshan chakra and cut the body of sati in pieces. These pieces fell at 51 various places on the earth forming 51 shaktipeeths. It is believed that shoulder of Sati fell at Ratanpur and the area became a shaktipeeth. Ratnadev-I constructed Mahamaya temple in around 1050 AD. The temple has dual idol of Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati in garbhagriha. The idol-duo is unique. A small idol of Mahakali is installed at the back of the temple completing the sacred trio of goddesses. The temple has been a place of tantric practices from ancient time. Rise of the temple has been decorated with symbol of human skull.

Ratanpur fort is an old fort whose exact date of construction is shrouded in mystery. Just adjacent to the Ratanpur bus stand are the remains of the Hathi



Left: **Mahamaya temple**
Above: **Ganesh gate of the Ratanpur fort**
Below: **Ratanpur fort**



Travel Guide

It is around 25 kms from Bilaspur (second biggest town in Chhattisgarh state after Raipur). Journey up to Raipur can be done through plane, train or bus then regular buses and train are available to Bilaspur. It is only 15 kms from Nirdhi and 30 kms from Pali.



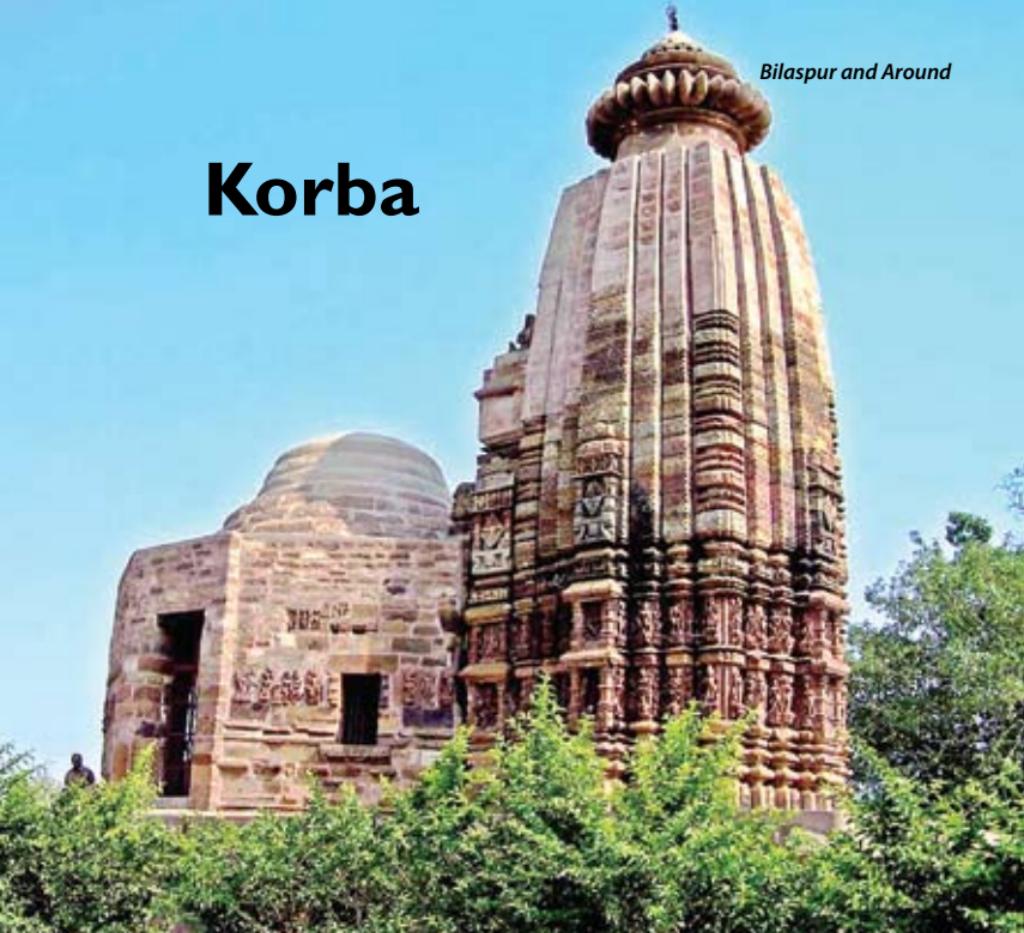
Sculpture carved on wall. This one is depicting a mythological story when Ravana, to appease Lord Shiva, offered his ten heads during penance

Qila built by king Prithvideva. The fort is guarded on all four sides by gorges. It has four entrances – the Singh, Ganesh, Bhairav and Semar dvars. Near the entrance of the fort is a huge stone statue presumed to be that of the valiant king Gopal Rai, of which only the head and the feet remain. A little further down the road, one can see the Laxmi Narayan temple which was built by the Maratha queen, Anandi Bai. It is next to the much older Jagannath temple, built by Kalyan Rai that houses beautiful images of Jagannath, Balaram and Subhadra. The west gate of the fort faces Motipur, where the twenty queens of Lakshman Rai are said to have performed sati. Recently, a hamam (bath complex) has been unearthed. Located close to both the Lakshmi Narayan and the Jagannath temples, Bilaspur's Ratanpur fort, at present, lies in a dilapidated state. Due to the absence of proper maintenance the fort has lost its grandeur and splendour. It is not difficult to form a conception as to how the fort looked during its prime. Dereliction with regard to its proper maintenance and preservation has stripped off the fort of its former magnificence. Here one can marvel and appreciate the exquisite stone sculpture over the frame of the Ganesh Gate.



Budhreshwar Mahadeo temple

Korba



An ancient Shiva temple

Situated on the banks of the rivers Hasdeo and Ahiran, Korba city is one of the most important districts of Chhattisgarh. Korba is a fascinating tribal country of Chhattisgarh and the district is homeland of the famous Korva tribes. Most of the tribes live in the thickly forested hills and so are untouched by the modern culture, completely retaining their cultural traditions. Korba is famous for its thermal plant station. It houses power generation unit of NTPC, CSEB and an aluminium producing unit BALCO. The place is quite rich in mineral and forest wealth. Korba is also known for its amazing wildlife population. With so much to offer, Korba is a must visit on your Chhattisgarh tour.

The major tourist attractions of Korba include: **Pali** – a small village 58 kms from Korba city, famous for a big and beautiful lake and remains of ancient temples including the ancient Shiva temple. **Kanki** – at a distance of about 20

The Handloom Industry in Chhattisgarh has potential to provide large scale rural livelihoods with minimum infrastructure cost. The strength of the industry is that it is independent and is low capital intensive, and has a potential for employing large numbers. The Government of Chhattisgarh is implementing various Central and State Developmental Schemes to uplift the weavers in the state. There are 17400 handlooms in the state. To ensure the integrated development of the Handloom sector, Integrated Handloom Development Scheme has been taken up in phased manner. Ten clusters Mungjhar (Gariyaband), Katgi (Baloda bazar), Chhuikhadan (Rajnandaon), Bajawand (Bastar), Champa, Chandrapur (Janigir-Champa), Saldih, Bhanwarpur (Mahasamund), Lofandi (Bilaspur), Raigarh are already sanctioned in state.

kms is famous for Shiva temple, which is popularly known as Kankeshwar Mahadev temple. **Lafagarh** – at a distance of about 19 kms has one of the strongest natural forts of India with three entrances, having beautifully decorated pillars and statues. Sitamani temples and caves are other major attraction near Korba having three rock-cut caves with one housing ancient idols of Rama, Sita and Laxman. The 55 ft high **Kendai waterfall** and **Hasdeo Banga dam** – a famous picnic spot are a must visit places in Korba.

The small village of **Tumhan** 20 kms from Katghora was once the capital of The Kalachuri Kings. It also has the Sath Khanda Mahal which stands proudly on the bank of the river Jatashankari. The temple has exquisite carvings of Ganga and Yamuna.



Left: **Hasdeo Banga dam**
Below: **Kendai waterfall, Korba**



Pali

Pali in Chhattisgarh is situated around 50 kms off from the district headquarters on the Korba-Bilaspur road. It is believed that Pali was the worship place of Raja Vikramaditya who belonged to Banna dynasty. There is an ancient Shiv Mandir, which is situated at the side of large pond. Many other remnants can also be seen here. This temple is faced towards east and its entrance is octagonal. Plinth of this temple is upon five platforms. The architecture of the sculptures carved on this temple is very much similar to the Jain Mandirs of Abu hills and temples of Sohagpur. And it is also very similar to the world famous temple of Khajuraho. Vikramaditya also known as 'Jayameyu', who was the son of Mahamandaleswar Malldeo, built it nearly in 870 B.C. In 11th and 12th century the king Jajwalyadeo repaired it. His name has been carved on the temple. The pond near the entrance of this temple has nine corners. This pond has been found to be water filled throughout the year. Two statues and two coins were found here while the archaeological department excavated this place for making boundary walls.

Travel Guide

The nearest major railway station to Pali is Bilaspur which is at a distance of 22.3 kilometres. The nearest airport is at Raipur which is at a distance of 146 kilometres.

Pali Shiva temple



Ramgarh

Ramgarh is situated in Sarguja district of Chhattisgarh.

According to historian Cunningham, Ramgarh hills are those mentioned in Ramayana as Chitrakoot. According to some legend Lord Ram along with his wife Sita and brother Laxman spent a part of their 14 years of exile in this area, which was then known as Dandakaranya.

It is also believed that the great poet 'Kalidas' became annoyed with Raja Bhoj and left Ujjaiyini. At the time he took shelter here and wrote the famous

Sita Bengra cave, Ramgarh



poetry named ‘Meghdootam’ on these hills.

Hathipol is at the lower part on the northern side of Ramgarh, there is a big cave, which is almost 39 meter long, 17 meter high at starting point and 17 meter broad. This is called Hathi (Elephant) pol or Hath pol. This is because, inside the cave, its height is so much that an elephant can walk easily. In rainy season, a spring flows from it. Inside, between stones, there is a water source which is known as Sita Kund. The water here is crystal clear.

Sita Bengra is the most interesting historical mythological leftover of this





Human foot prints made on the right corner of the Sita Bengra cave

hill is a cave named Sita Bengra, which means the residence of Sita. It is situated in the north-eastern slope on a hillock. it is 14m long, 4.2m broad and its height is 2m in front which lessens on the back side. Outside the cave, many circular mates and benches (cut from stone) are placed. In front of the cave, on the right corner, human foot prints are made. It is said that at the time of her forest stay, Sitaji lived in this cave.

By looking at the structure of Sita Bengra, it can be figured out that in olden times it was used as a theatre. The overall system is very creative. Outside the cave, almost 50-60 half circular benches were made. At the entrance, two holes are made on the floor. Most probably these were used to put wooden poles which were used to hold the curtains. The whole scene symbolises Roman theatre. Every year various cultural activities are organised at this **Natya Shala**.

Inside the cave, many human figures are made. Out of these, on one figure's head and feet **Shilalekh** is written. One inscription is of two lines, of which every line measures one meter of length. Yet another Shilalekh is in Madhyakaleen (medieval) Nagri script.

Besides Sita Bengra, there is one more cave which in known as **Jogimara**. Birds, flowers, fishes trees and human figurines are painted on its roof in red, yellow, brown, green and black. At many places some scenes are dug on the walls. Some pieces of rock art are similar to those found at Sanchi and Bharhut. Due to moisture these rock art pieces have been destroyed badly but still these are assumed to be among the oldest rock art which belongs to the 3rd century. In this cave, a Shilalekh was found which is of

five lines. It is similar to those of Samrat Ashok. Its language is pure Magadhi.

Turrapani a stream flows through a rock which stands near Sita Bengra. Its water is crystal clear and sweet. It is called Turrapani. This place is also known as Tilak Mati. Here the soil is red in colour. It is said that Shri Ramchandra put tilak on Sitaji's forehead at this place with this mud. A fair is organised here in the months of January-February, March-April and May-June.

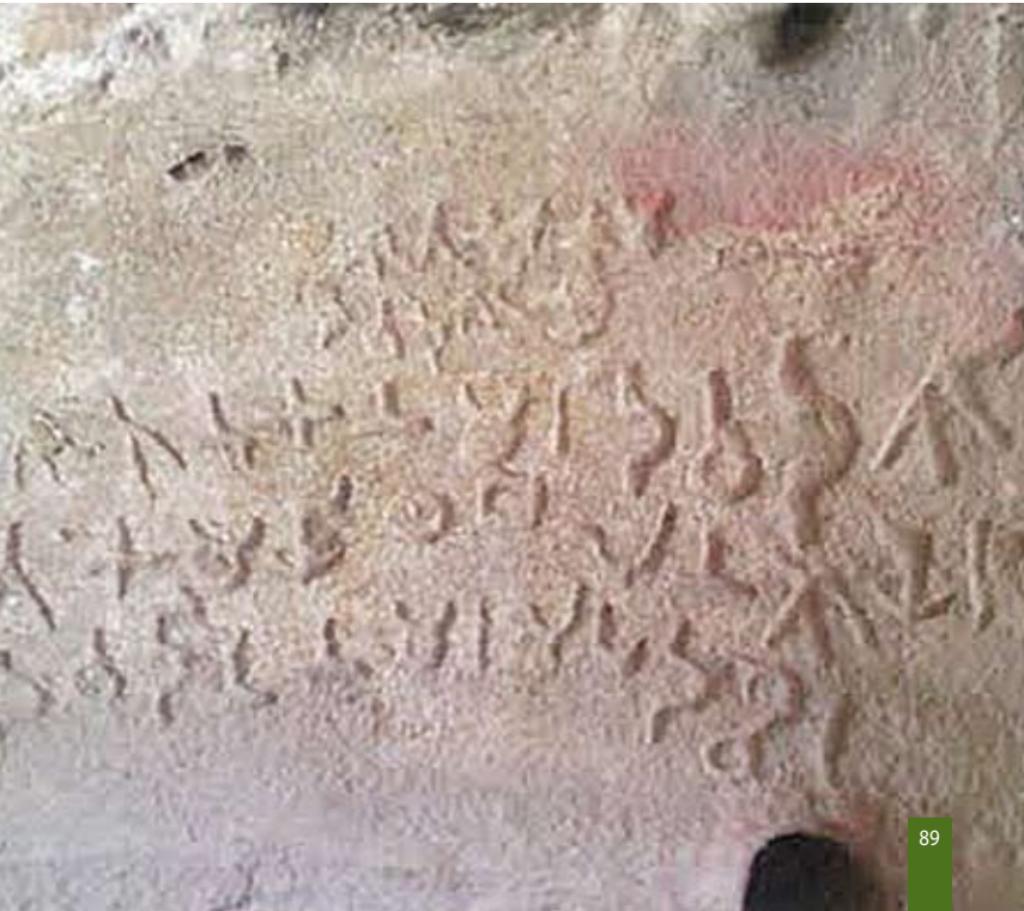
Pauri Darwaja is on the way to the main hill, there is a Dwar (door) which is made of many stone pieces. On the other side of this door way, vast stone pieces are lying which were once used to build a circular wall. After the door, there is a platform named 'Kabir Chaura', which is actually a grave of a Jogi called Dharamdas.

There is also another cave which has a very small way to go in, known as **Vashishta cave**.

Travel Guide

Ramgarh is well connected by road. Trains are available upto Ambikapur and it is 230 kms from Bilaspur. Nearest airport to Ramgarh is Raipur.

Inscription found on one of the wall of the cave



Mainpat

Mainpat popularly known as Shimla of Surguja. Mainpat is the only hilly retreat in Chhattisgarh, abounding in waterfalls, streams, dense sal forests, medicinal plants and a variety of fauna. It is truly a treat for nature lovers. Mainpat is a charming hill station situated in Surguja district of Chhattisgarh. Major tourist attractions include the Tiger Point and the delightful Buddha temple. Entire region consists of seven camps.

After Chinese annexation in 1959 when the Dalai Lama and his followers moved to India, a large population of migrant Tibetans settled here. The Buddhist temple in Mainpat, the only one of its kind is one of the area's major tourist. First monastery (Gelug) of the settlement was built by Dhakpo Rinpoche at Camp. After that a second monastery (Kagyu) came up by the grace of Beru Khentse Rinpoche at camp. Following that, after a real long time, came the third monastery (Nyingma), which is now the biggest of them (compared to the structure of the monastery building), at camp 3 in 1995 by His Eminence Penor Rinpoche. There are few other small monasteries in the settlement such as Nyingma-Choetsok monastery. A new monastery is coming up named Tsori (Kagyu) at camp no. 3.

Monks praying at the Tibetan monastery in camp no. 3



Above: **Tiger point**

Left: The famous Tibetan's temple, Mainpat



The **Mainpat plateau** is the charming hill station of Chhattisgarh – viewed from **Mehta Point** and **Pharhatia**, the valley and hills of Mainpat offers beautiful waterfalls such as **Tiger Point** and **Machali** or **Fish Point** as the river here was known for a type of fish. A strange sight includes the bouncing swap of Jaljali and charming Chota Jharanā tucked away in a pocket of jungle with a small waterfall and beautiful scenic views. Other notable sights are the beautiful Buddhist temples on this remote jungle plateau and attractions such as **Bageecha** and much more. Bageecha has got its name from the fruit orchards here. Located 78 kms from Kunkuri, on the Raigarh-Jashpur road, it makes for an interesting excursion from Mainpat. So there are plenty of inspiring adventures to be explored in this wild and remote hill station of Chhattisgarh.

Travel Guide

Mainpat is 178 kms from Raigarh, which is a major station and the other smaller station is Ambikapur which is 80 kms. away. From Raipur airport it is 380 kms by road. The railway station is at Ambikapur.

Malhar



Ruined temple

Malhar is an ancient town of Chhattisgarh and it could be the oldest one probably. J D Beglar mentions about a mud fort at Malhar during his tour in 1873-74. He also found the ruins of two temples at this town. Malhar is referred as Mallala or Mallala-pattana in the Kalchuri epigraphs of the 12th century CE. Some people suggest that Mallalais probably a derivation of Mallari, a title of Shiva. A demon named Malla is found in the Puranas, as Shiva killed this demon so he is called Mallari. Old Mallala was surrounded by three rivers, Arpa in the west, Leelagar in the east and Shivnath in the south.

Malhar lies on an ancient route which was connecting Koshambi with Puri on the south-eastern coast of India. Bharhut, Bandhavgarh, Amarkantak, Kharod, Malhar, Sirpur are few major towns on this route. Malhar was benefited with this strategic location and witnessed

cultural and political developments. Pilgrims going to Puri used to halt here and pay homage to various temples at the site. A clay seal bearing legend ‘gamasa Kosaliya’ meaning ‘of village Kosala’ discovered at Malhar can be dated to 200 CE. There are two temples and a mud fort at Malhar.

Pataleshvara Temple is the main attraction at Malhar and the complex is under the protection of the Archaeological Survey of India. The temple saw a major renovation and repair activities during the last decade of the 20th century CE. The sanctum is located below the ground floor hence is named Pataleshvar (the lord of the netherworld). The temple is constructed on a high raised platform with entrances provided from three sides. There would have been a pillared mandapa in front of sanctum as evident from the remains of various pillars.

Bhima Kichaka Temple temple was found in ruins, some renovation was done and all the stones were put in place. It is dedicated to Shiva and does not have any mandapa in front.



Rama, Lakshman and Sita statue found in one of the temple of Malhar



Sculpture found in Pataleshvara temple

Travel Guide

Malhar is about 27 kms from Bilaspur on the Bilaspur-Raipur road. Public transport is available from Bilaspur however frequency is not very good. Bilaspur is the nearest rail-head and Raipur is the nearest airport.

Tala



Squatting Bharavak Gupta face

Also known as Talagram, Tala was discovered by J D Welgar, an assistant to the well-known archaeologist Alexander Cunningham. It was also determined that the ruins discovered in Tala were remains of two temple built by Sarabhupuriya queens during 5th - 6th century AD. The temples here are in ruins but it is still a religious site. People from across the country come to Tala to perform the *Mahamrityunjay Jap* for Lord Shiva.

The major attractions at Tala are the ruins of the three temples – the **Deorani**, **Jethani** and **Jagmohan** temples. The entire three temples are dedicated to Lord Shiva. The complex that housed the three temples is surrounded by a high wall pierced by an ornamental gateway facing north. A unique sculpture was unearthed from around Deorani temple which resemble to the *rudra* and the *aghora* forms of Shiva called as Rudrashiva. This is a bulky statue which measure 2.54m in height and is 1 m wide. It is made up of number of human and animal figures put together brilliantly in a collage.

Travel Guide

Tala is about 30 kms south from Bilaspur and 85 kms from Raipur. Bilaspur is the nearest railway station and Raipur is the nearest airport. Public buses ply from Bilaspur on regular intervals.

Tala frontal



Rudrashiva at Tala



Janjgir and Champa

Janjgir-Champa district is situated in the central region of the state and so it is considered as the 'Heart of Chhattisgarh'. District headquarters of Janjgir-Champa are at Janjgir, which is popularly known as the city of Maharaja Jajawalya Dev of Kalachuri dynasty. Janjgir-Champa is a major producer of food grains in Chhattisgarh. The region is the centre of Kosa production in the state.

Janjgir is 65 kms away from Bilaspur and 175 kms from state capital Raipur. **Vishnu Mandir** reflects the golden past of this place. Vishnu Mandir of Janjgir-Champa district is an ancient artistic sample of Vaishnava community. Further, the **Hasdeobango** project has been considered as a life supporting canal for the district. Under this project three-fourth of the total area of the district will be covered for irrigation.

Here is the famous **Pithampur Shiv Mandir**, Janjgir Champa temple. It is also known as the Kaleshwarnath Mandir, which rests on the banks of the river Hasdeo. A 10 day fair is organised here during Mahashivratri. Every year, on Rang Panchami, Naga saints participate in the enactment of the marriage procession of Lord Shiva.

Chandrasini Mandir 30 kms from Raigarh (situated in Chandrapur, Distt. Janjgir – Champa) is another attraction.

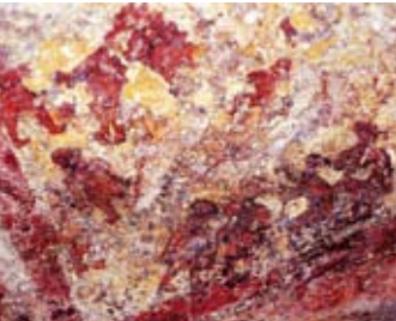
Travel Guide

Janjgir is well connected to the rest of the country through the Indian Railways and its railway station is Naila. There are regular buses and taxis to all nearby towns and cities.



Above: Janjgir Vishnu mandir
Below: Bhima talab





Chhattisgarh is very rich in rock paintings ranging in age from Mesolithic to Historical period and, some of the rock paintings dates back even to prehistoric period. Many of the rock paintings throw interesting light on the life ways and art of Early Man. By far the most prolific rock art sites in the state of Chhattisgarh are located in the district of Raigarh at Singhanpur, Kabra Pahar, Basnajhar, Ongna, Karmagarh, Khairpur, Botalda, Bhanwarkhol, Amargufa, Gatadih, Siroli Dongri, Bainipahar etc. Some of these were already known and a few were discovered during the course of two years survey in the district. At most of the sites pictures of snakes, birds, elephants, humped cattle, wild buffalo, wild boar, deer, rhinoceros, human figures, mermaids, hunting scenes, geometric designs, scenes of agricultural activity and dancing scenes in several colours have been drawn.

Raigarh

Raigarh district is a prominent district in the Indian state of Chhattisgarh. It is a small city and a municipal corporation in Raigarh district. The chief languages spoken here are Chhattisgarhi, Hindi and Oriya.

Raigarh district was created by merging the princely states of Sarangarh, Udaipur (Dharamjaigarh), Raigarh and Jashpur. However Jashpur is presently a separate district. The district is spread over a huge area of six thousand eight hundred and thirty six square kilometres. Raigarh is now regarded as one of the major producers of steel for the establishment of Jindal Steel and Power Ltd and other small producers.

Raigarh is blessed with various geographical features of swift flowing rivers of Mahanadi, Kelo and Mand, mighty mountain ranges of Gajmar and exotic caves of Kauhakunda and Kabra.

Endowed with natural scenic beauty, the district has many interesting places of tourist destination. Some of the notable tourist spots of Raigarh district are:

Ram Jharna is about 18 kms from the district headquarters. It has a natural water source. According to history, Lord Rama once had been here during his

Left & Right : Ruins of the temple in Raigarh



Vanwas (exile), and drank water from the water source. It serves as a good picnic spot.

Gomarda Reserve Forest is situated in Sarangarh. It is spread over 278 sq kms. It is a natural home for many rare wild animals such as beers, etc. It is about 60 kms from the district headquarters.

Gaurishankar Mandir, Shayam Mandir, Banjari Mandir 20 kms from district headquarter, Pahadh Mandir,

Apart from these there are other recreational places such as the Kamla Nehru Park, Haritima, Indira Vihar and others.

Chakradhar Samaroh is a music festival organised by the Ustad Allaudin Khan Sangeet Academy and the Chakradhar Lalit Kala Kendra, to commemorate the memory of Maharaja Chakradhar Singh. This former ruler, a great tabla player and dancer, wrote many books on music.

Jashpur is largely mountainous district that lies to the north of Raigarh. The place is dotted with picturesque valleys and gushing waterfalls. One of its major attractions is the **Kailash Cave**.

Travel Guide

The nearest Domestic Airport from Raigarh is Swami Vivekanand Airport, Raipur, roughly five hour drive from Raigarh. It is well connected with major cities. The town has its own railway station named as Raigarh railway station.



Kailash cave





Temple ruins

Dipadih



Travel Guide

The nearest airport is at Raipur. Ambikapur is the nearest railway station on the Mumbai-Howrah main line. Local taxis and private vehicles are available for transport from Ambikapur to Dipadih.

Dipadih in local dialect means 'holy land' and recent excavations here have unearthed six major and 74 minor temples in the area. The temples, mostly dedicated to Lord Shiva, have been discovered at the archaeological sites of Samant Sarna, Urav mound (Uravtola), Rani Pokhra and the Chamunda temple. They are dated between the 6th and 10th centuries.

The Samant Sarna site has a huge four-armed image of Parshudhar Shiva. The main Shiva temple must once have been a massive structure but now only the foundation remains. The **Shiva temple at Uravtola** has scenes from both human as well as animal life sculpted in intricate detail.





Seorinarayan

Seorinarayan also known as the Land of Vishnu is Janjgir-Champa district. Situated at the holy confluence of three rivers, Mahanadi, Sheonath and Jonk, Seorinarayan is immersed in history, myth and legend. It is also referred as the home of Shabari, a disciple of Lord Ram. A brick temple, supposedly built by Shabari with her own hands, is still extant.

One of Sheorinarayan's most celebrated temples, the intricately carved **Nar Narayan temple** is almost five hundred years old. Left of the main entrance is an ancient sculpture of Laxmi-Narayan, surrounded by beautifully executed sculptures of all the *avatars* of Vishnu. The *garbhagriha* of the temple has a beautiful image of Narayan which was discovered during an excavation.

Opposite the Nar Narayan is the **Keshav Narayan temple** also called the **Shabari temple** dates back to the 12th century. The *garbhagriha* of this temple houses an ancient Vishnu sculpture.

Shabari who lived in an *ashram* in Seorinarayan has been recognised as one of Ram's greatest disciple. One day her guru told her that Ram and his brother Lakshman would visit the *ashram*. On learning this she was filled with joy and began to decorate her cottage with flowers found around. One day when Lord Ram finally did come, Shabari was least prepared so she plucked few berries and offered it to her divine guest. To make sure that the berries were sweet she tasted every single berry before offering it to him.



Temple ruins

Koriya

Koriya, the entire district sits on the mountainous terrain, the average height of which is around 550 m above the sea level. The highest point in the district is Deogarh, which towers to a height of 1027 m. The extremely beautiful **Amritdhara waterfalls** and **Ramdaha falls** on the Banas river are major tourist attractions of the place. Ramdaha waterfalls, is acknowledged for the natural beauty and the scenic beauty that the fall lends to the place around. **Harchoka**, in the north-western part of the district is an archaeological site and also has two major tourist attraction-**Gavar Ghat** waterfalls and the **Akuri Nala**.

Koriya offers a plethora of places that tourists can visit. The panoramic



Travel Guide

The nearest airport is Raipur airport. This is well connected with Anuppur-Katni line and Bilaspur. Main Railway stations are - Manendragarh - Chirmiri - Baikunthpur

Local haat in Koriya

rhapsodies the lush greenery and the gurgling waterfalls with their shimmering silhouettes at dusk are a real treat. Besides visiting the quintessential tribal villages and participating in their Ganga Dussera, Charta, Navakhai and Surhul festivals enlighten tourists on the diverse tribal legacy.

Amritdhara waterfalls





Narmada Udgam temple

Amarkantak

The Narmada and the Son, two great rivers of India arise in this holy town of Amarkantak, in the north-western region of Chhattisgarh, bordering Madhya Pradesh. At Amarkantak the Narmada flows westwards while the Son flows to the east.

When Chhattisgarh was carved out of Madhya Pradesh, some sites in Amarkantak fell within Madhya Pradesh and some in Chhattisgarh. **Narmada Udgam**, a temple built at the source of the Narmada, is considered the holiest spot in the town. Facing the temple is the temple of Mata Narmada, a *shaktipeeth*. Narmadakund, an open pool is adjacent to the Narmada Udgam. On the south of this *kund* are temples which were built by the Kalachuri king, Karnadeva (1042-1072). The Machhendranath and Pataleshwar temples are especially interesting. One can also find a 18th century temple, the Keshav Narayan temple, which was built by the Bhonsle ruler of Nagpur. There are total of 24 temples within the complex.

Travel Guide

Nearest airports are Jabalpur and Raipur. The nearest rail head is Pendra Road on the Katni - Bilaspur section of the south-eastern railway. Amarkantak is well connected by regular bus service with Shahdol, Umaria, Jabalpur, Rewa, Bilaspur, Anuppur and Pendra Road.

At a distance of 1.5 kms from the Narmadakund is **Sonmuda**, the source of the river Son. The Greek historian



Kapildhara falls



Jwaleshwar temple



Sriyantra (tantrik) temple



The kund at Narmada Udgam

Magasthenes in one of his travel account has mentioned the Son river. He also mentioned that the river derived its name from the gold dust found in its water.

Mai ki Bagiya, a grove of mango and banana trees, where goddess Narmada is said to have come to pluck fruits is just a kilometer away from Narmadakund. North-west of Narmadakund is the **Kapildhara falls** which provides a spectacular and majestic sight of a small stream turning into a mighty river when it plunges 24 m down a cliff into a gorge.

There is a myth that when Lord Shiva destroyed Tripura (the three cities of the *asuras*) by fire, some of the ashes accidentally spilt over at Amarkantak, which led to the birth of crores of *shivalingas*. The *Puranas* referred this region as *Maha Rudra Meru* though now only one *shivalinga* is visible at the **Jwaleshwar temple**, which is situated at a distance of 8 kms from Amarkantak. An interesting account says that how once river Son and Narmada were to be wed but Son repulsed Narmada and married another. The distraught Narmada changed its course from east to west and vowed to remain a virgin.



Bastar Division

Chitrakote fall

© Santosh K Misra, IAS

Bastar

The land of tribes

Bastar and Dantewada districts were formerly part of the princely state of Bastar. Earlier studies of the region were conducted by Verrier Elwin a colonial anthropologist, who went native. After India's independence in 1947, the princely states of Bastar and Kanker acceded to the Government of India, and were merged to form Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh state. The district, which had an area of 39,114 km², was one of the largest in India. In 1999, the district was divided into the present-day districts of Bastar, Dantewada, and Kanker, and in 2012 it was divided in following district named as Kanker, Narayanpur, Kondagaon, Bijapur, Dantewada, Sukma, Bastar which constitute Bastar Division. In 2000, Bastar was one of the 16 Madhya Pradesh districts that formed the new state of Chhattisgarh. Bastar is famous for its traditional Dussera festival. The pattern of livelihood in Bastar continues to be dictated by tradition. Even today, agricultural practices are traditional. Use



Dr. Verrier Elwin was a self-trained anthropologist, ethnologist and tribal activist. Elwin is best known for his early work with the Baigas and Gonds of central India. In time he became an authority on Indian tribal lifestyle and culture, particularly on the Gondi people.

Some of his works

- *Songs of the Forest: the folk poetry of the Gonds*
- *The Agaria*
- *Folk-songs of the Maikal Hills*
- *Folk-songs of Chhattisgarh*
- *The Muria and their Ghotul*
- *Maria Murder and Suicide*
- *Leaves from the Jungle: life in a Gond village*
- *The Baiga*



Above & Below: The Bastar art piece

of wooden ploughs is overwhelming while the number of iron ploughs is negligible. The same is true of bullock carts. The number of tractors is negligible while the bullock carts are all pervasive. The tribes of Bastar region are known for their unique and distinctive tribal culture and heritage in all over the world. Each tribal group in Bastar has their own distinct culture and enjoys their own unique traditional living styles. Each tribe has developed its own dialects and differs from each other in their costume, eating habits, traditions and even worships different form of god and goddess. The magnificent **Chitrakote** and **Teerathgarh waterfalls** are situated close to Jagdalpur, the administrative headquarter of Bastar district.



Dhamtari

Dhamtari is surrounded by the Satpura range in the eastern part, which is popularly known by the name of Sihawa Pahad. In the west is Kanker district and north is Raipur.

The principal river of the district is 'Mahanadi', which is known by different names in the adjoining area such as Kankanaddi, Neelotpala, Mandvahini, Jairath, Chitrotpala etc. It has tributaries by the name of Pairy, Sendur, Sondur, Joan, Kharun and Shivnath. It is because of the presence of these rivers, that Dhamtari consists of fertile lands perfect for paddy cultivation.

A major attraction here is the **Saptarishi Mandal**. It comprises the *ashrams* of the seven sages — Shringi, Gautama, Agastya, Kanka, Muchkunda, Aangira and Sharbhanga. Some of the major tourists' attractions in Dhamtari include major dams located here is the **Gangrel dam, Sondhur and Dudhawa**. The Ravishankar Sagar dam in Gangrel irrigates 57,000 hectares of land and is the main source of water for the Bhilai Steel plant and Raipur.

Other places of attractions here include Hathi Kot, Saptarishi Mandal, Amrit kund and Dantheswari cave. Gangrel sunrise is beautiful in itself. The solar-powered resort next to Gangrel dam is a best place to stay.

Dhamtari also provides varied options of hiking and trekking as there are many jungles in the region. Other than the dams, the wildlife sanctuaries present here are also popular.



Above: Jhalmala temple
Below: Gangrel dam, Gangrel sunrise



Travel Guide

Buses can be taken from the main city of Raipur, Durg, Bilaspur. There is one overnight train to Ambikapur city which runs between Durg and Ambikapur. Nearest airport is Raipur which is 350 kms, Raipur is connected to many major cities via Flight.

Kanker

The Kanker district is situated in the southern region of the state Chhattisgarh. Previously Kanker was a part of old Bastar district, but in 1998 Kanker got its identity as an independent district.

Kanker is situated within the longitudes 20.6-20.24 and latitudes 80.48-81.48. The total area of the district is 5285.01 square kilometers. Small hilly pockets are seen throughout the area. Mainly five rivers flow through the district namely- Doodh river, Mahanadi, Hatkul river, Sindur river and Turu river.

The region of Kanker and Bastar, situated in the dense tropical forestlands of central India, is a land of unsurpassed natural beauty. Since time immemorial pristine tribal societies have created and sustained delicate rhythms of life in harmony with nature. On coming to this land, one comes across something wondrous and untouched. Kanker palace, the residence of the erstwhile ruling family of the Princely State of Kanker, has been developed as a retreat from where sensitive and interested international tourists might access the region.

Keshkal ghat



It also assumes that **Kanker palace**, with its age-old and deep ties with the people of the region, and a heritage site itself, is well placed to serve as it intends to. Given the physical difficulties in accessing the interior, Kanker palace, at a convenient distance from Raipur and its airport, as well as at one with the region itself, is ideally suited to be the base for and a ‘gateway’ to the region. Built in the first quarter of the last century, and rebuilt and set in a garden in 1937, Kanker palace was earlier known as Radhanivas Bagicha. The residence of the British Agent during the Raj, it is now lived in by the Royal family. With its colonial style architecture, the palace is stately, elegant, and has an old world charm and ambience. Five suites in the right wing of the Palace have been developed to host guests. These have modern facilities, including Western style baths and toilets. One can enjoy tour in the tribal villages, forests, boating safaris, angling in the most secluded part of rivers and back waters, jeep safaris to the wild life sanctuary and much more.

Keshkal ghat is a scenic spot located in Kanker. Keshkal ghat is a nearby attraction. It is a scenic spot and offers a spectacular view of the valley below. **Keshkal panchavati** is very famous spot of tourism. **Garh Gobarhin** is very famous pilgrim centre, where Shiva temple is situated. Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is excavating the remains of ancient temples.

Located at a distance of 12 kms from Keshkal ghat is a little village **Dhanora** also called Garh Dhanora has yielded remains of many ancient temples. About 15 kms to the south of Kanker is the source of the Doodh river, Neele Gondi. From Neele Gondi a long hilly path takes to **Malajkundam**, where the river produces three waterfalls.

Travel Guide

The nearest international airport from Kanker is Swami Vivekanand Airport, Raipur. Kanker is well connected by the cities by Chhattisgarh State Road Transport Corporation and some private travel services. The nearest Railway Station from Kanker is Raipur Railway Station.

Doodh river in Kanker



Jagdalpur



Kutumsar cave

Jagdalpur is a city and a municipality in Bastar district in the Indian state of Chhattisgarh. It is the administrative headquarters of Bastar district and Bastar division, and was the capital of the erstwhile princely state of Bastar. Jagdalpur is well known for its greenery, filled with lush green mountains, deep valleys, dense forests, streams, waterfalls, caves, natural parks, magnificent monuments, rich natural resources, magic herbs, exuberant festivity and blissful solitude. Bastar, the very name spells magic, conjours up images of the royal past and the tribes. The highlight of a visit to Jagdalpur is the sacred Danteshwari temple, found at the confluence of the Shankini and Dankini rivers.

The key attractions in Jagdalpur town are Danteshwari temple, Bastar palace, handicraft shopping complexes, anthropological museum and a couple of beautiful lakes. The prominent river of

Bastar district- Indravati, passes through Jagdalpur. There are two lakes namely Ganga Munda and Dalpat Sagar within the boundary of Jagdalpur town. These lakes are great attraction for tourists coming to Bastar in the future.

Bastar palace also known as Jagdalpur palace is another historical place which is popular among tourist. It was the headquarters of Bastar Kingdom. It was built by the rulers of Bastar state when the capital of Bastar had been shifted from Barsur to Jagdalpur.

Chitrakote waterfalls is supposed to be the Niagara falls of India. It is the broadest waterfall in India. During monsoon one can see its might. The river Indravati falls from a height of 29 m (96 ft) to form this waterfall. It is located 48 kms (30 mi) from Jagdalpur and is accessible by road only. There is a helipad but it is used by the government only.

Tiratgarh waterfalls, situated at a distance of 35 kms from Jagdalpur in south west direction can be approached through the state highway of Jagdalpur to Sukma. The waterfall is actually situated in **Kanger Valley National Park** and the height is approximately 300 ft in stages. This place is a favourite picnic spot, especially for large groups looking for a day-long picnic in a forest. The good season for visiting these waterfalls is from October to February.

Chitrakote fall



The underground caves are famed for the incredible rock formation at their entrance. The detail and symmetry of these rock formation gives the impression that the rock was actually carved by human hand. Inside, stalactites hang down in giant halls, much like chandeliers in a royal palace. The floor is smooth.

There are a chain of waterfalls and many other tourist places in Bastar. The **Mandawa waterfalls** are located 12 kms away from Tokapal of Jagdalpur. It is also a natural place of tourism. Another waterfall in Bastar district is **Chitradhara**, which is just 19 kms away from Jagdalpur and is in Potanar village of Lohandiguda block of Jagdalpur. **Thamada Ghumar waterfall** is another recently discovered waterfall which is also in Lohandiguda block. Its height is more than 100 feet and is generally formed from the water in rainy season. There are green fields on both sides of this waterfall. **Indravati National Park** situated in Narainpur is famous for tigers and wild buffaloes. It is situated 200 kms west of Jagdalpur. Also about 40 kms north-west of Narainpur is the virgin Kurschel valley, with its gigantic trees.

The anthropological museum of Jagdalpur is located in the office of the Anthropological Survey of India situated at Dharampura. It provides a perfect window-view of the lifestyles of various adivasi tribes in Bastar to a tourist hard-pressed for time.

Kailash and Kutumsar caves are the caves which are about 2 kms (1 mi) deep. They are situated at a distance of about

Dandak cave



40 kms (25 mi) from Jagdalpur. There is lack of oxygen when going deep into the cave. So, they have been restricted to a fixed point. These caves are famous for stalactites and stalagmites formation.

The **Dandak cave** is another chapter on the beauty of stalactites and stalagmites that have created many patterns on the roof and floor of the cave. The **Kanger Karpan** and **Devgiri** are some of the other caves of this area. The surroundings of Jagdalpur are abound in caves.

Dalpat Sagar is the largest artificial lake sprawling over 350 hectares. It was excavated around 400 years ago by Raja Dalpat Deo Kakatiya.

BASTAR DUSSEERA

Dussera: Dussera, Bastar's most important festival is not about Lord Ram's return to Ayodhya. The focus is principally on Shri Danteshwari Mata and her significance in the life of this land and its people.

Bastar Dussera is the unique cultural trait of Chhattisgarh. Celebrated by the local people of the state with sufficient vigor, the festival of Dussera connotes to the supreme power of goddess Danteshwari. During Dussera, the inhabitants of Bastar organises special worship ceremonies at the Danteshwari temple of Jagdalpur.

It is believed that Maharaja Purushottam Deo first initiated the festival of Dussera in the early 15th century. Since then it became customary for all the tribes of Bastar to take part in this holy festival. During the entire ten days of the occasion, the respected Raj family of Bastar arrange worship sessions in which the ancient arms of



Bell metal artifacts

Dussera is an important festival of Bastar. Dussera here is unlike the usual belief of India that is blessed by goddess Durga, Lord Rama killed Ravana which was later called as Dussera. The festival involves participation of all major tribes of Bastar. Deities from all nearby villages are gathered at Danteshwari temple in Jagdalpur. It is celebrated for continuous 75 days. It has been started by the Royal families of Bastar and has now become tradition of tribal life of Bastar.

Travel Guide

The nearest Domestic Airport from Jagdalpur is Raipur airport. Kanker Roadways etc as well as Chhattisgarh State Road Transport Corporation (CSRTC) provides good bus service. It has its own Railway Station named as Jagdalpur Railway Station. It is well connected with the cities such as Raipur, Bilaspur, Delhi, Puri and Visakhapatnam.

the goddess Danteshwari are treated as divine elements. One of the inherent traits of Bastar Dussera is that the control of the state is formally transferred to the Diwan keeping the Zamindar and similar important personalities as witnesses. Kunwar amavasya is the first day of Dussera. On the night of the first day of the festival, the customary transfer of control takes place. A mystique characteristics of this ceremony is that before handing over the power to the Diwan, a girl who is believed to have possessed the spiritual powers is asked for permission. This girl is seen with a wooden sword and stands in a war-like posture. The second day of dussera is called pratipada which is followed by aarti and salami. On the ninth day, the Raja of Bastar welcomes goddess Danteshwari who comes to the entrance of the city in a doli or palanquin. The tenth day of the festival is called Dussera when the Raja organises a darbar where people come and present their requests. Also aarti ceremony is held on the last day of Dussera. The Dussera festival is a famous event of India. But the Dussera of Bastar is completely different from the commonly known festival of the country. Bastar Dussera celebrate the divine bliss of goddess Danteshwari who is the revered deity of all the existing tribes of Chhattisgarh.

Tiratgarh waterfall



Kondagaon and Narainpur Craft centres in Bastar

Artsian work in Bastar, Chhattisgarh is continued by tribal communities signifying their cultural heritage. Government and voluntary organisation are working towards conservation and promotion of this traditional art by giving them platform to market and exhibit their products. Chhattisgarh's tribal communities have been engaged in making terracotta objects and figures for hundreds of years. The traditional craftsmen and women are renowned for their expertise in the fields of stone carving, woodcraft, terracotta, bell metal, Iron and bamboo craft.

Kondagaon, Narayanpur and Jagdalpur are particularly famous for their terracotta elephants with bells and decorative pots. Metal work is also an integral part of the crafts tradition of the Bastar tribals. Brass, silver, iron and lead are used to make various figures of gods and deities.

Kondagaon is known for its

trademark bell metal which is also known as dokra craft. The population of this Bhelwapadar colony has been engaged in the craft making for generations. Just a distance away is the potter's village called as Kumharpara. Kumharpara is a center of ceramic craft.

Narainpur known for its excellent craftworks in bell metal, wood, wrought iron and bamboo. Ramakrishna Mission centre at a must visit place where one can meet people involved in welfare work amongst the tribal's.

Saathi, a voluntary organisation is helping Bastar's tribal communities to revitalise their craft using new techniques to make and market their famous terracotta and bell metal works at the art centre, called Saathi (Companion), is run by a small group of dedicated ceramic professionals. Saathi's mission is to help, sustain, develop and market Bastar's self traditional arts and crafts in both national and international markets. Saathi has been able to impart technical and marketing skills to over 1,400 artisan families living in 90 villages across three districts in Bastar.



The bell metal artifact made at craft centre in Bastar

Dantewada

It is believed that Sati's tooth has fallen here, thus making the temple a shaktipeeth. This east-facing temple has three components - a sanctum (garbhagriha), a pillar audience hall (sabhamandapa) and a pillar dancing hall (natamandapa).

Dantewada is a beautiful district situated in southern Bastar region of Chhattisgarh state. The district is blessed with beautiful tall and long series of hills with full of thick green saal and teak forests. Rivers Indravati, Godavari and Shabhari flow throughout the district. Two more perinell rivers Shankhini and Dankiny are also there. These rivers give many panoramic views and waterfalls at many sites in the district. Apart from the scenic beauty historical places such as Barsoor, Bhadrakali and Dantewada are also worth visiting. Bailadila iron ore project township, mines, parks and hill top habitations of Aakash nagar and Kailash nagar are places without viewing which the visit of Dantewada will not be complete.

Danteshwari Devi temple, a splendid temple of goddess Danteshwari tops the list of places of interest, in the town. This temple, which is one among the Shaktipeeths of the country, is visited by devotees from different parts of the country throughout the year. Constructed, mainly on the south Indian style of (temple) architecture,

Danteshwari temple



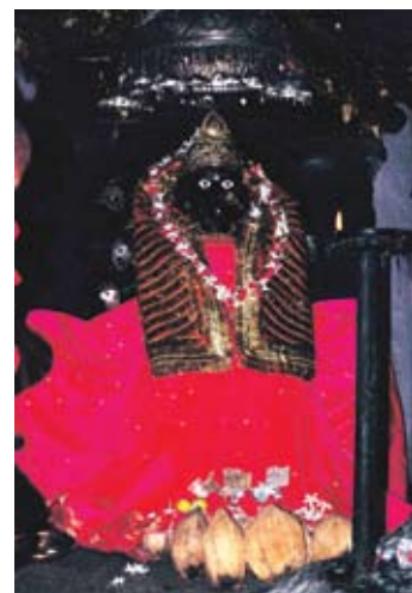
and located at the confluence of the holy rivers Shankini and Dhankini, this temple gives a pleasant feeling of peace and immense satisfaction to the minds of devotees who visit.

Apart from Danteshwari temple, the temple of Bhairm Baba is also historically important place to visit.

14 kms from Dantewada, on the way to Bacheli one small village Gamawada is located where large sized stone pillars invites the visitors to have a glance at the age old tradition of the local tribes. These giant sized stone pillars which were erected centuries back by the local inhabitants are basically the **memory pillars of Gamawada** dedicated to their diseased elders and relatives.

Bailadila, mountain range famous in the world for the enormous and top quality deposits of iron ore. Total 14 reserves have been discovered in this range out of which the mining activities are going on in three deposits. As this range of mountain contains peaks that look like the humps of the Ox at different places, this range of mountains is called as ‘Baila Dila’, meaning the hump of Ox, in the local language.

Barsur, 75 kms from Jagdalpur on the way to Dantewada a small town Geedam is situated, 24 kms towards north of Geedam village, Barsur is located. The small sleepy village Barsur happened to be the thrown of power during the tenure of the Gangawanshi rulers in as early as 840 AD. Barsur, situated on the bank of river Indrawati is famously known as the city of temples and ponds. It is believed that there used to be 147 temples and equal number of ponds here in the towering days of Barsur. Even though Barsur had lost its



Danteshwari devi idol

Travel Guide

Dantewada is connected with Jagdalpur the nearest town, by State Highway No.16 . Private luxury buses are available from almost all the big cities of Chhattisgarh. It is well connected by railways. The nearest airport is at Raipur.

glory gradually century after century, the ruins of numerous temples that are found here will still manage to attract the attention of the people. Some of the temples worth mentioning are Mama-Bhanjaa temple, Chandraditya temple, Battisa temple and a mammoth statue of Lord Ganesha. Apart from these temples one vast pond of pre-historical days is worth visiting.

Semlur is famous for an ancient Shiva temple dating back to the early Kalachuri period. The entrance of the temple is guarded by a beautifully sculpted Nandi and the garbhagriha houses a linga which is even today worshipped by the local people.

Bhairamgarh is located in the Bijapur district, at a distance of 40 kms from Jagdalpur. Remains of an ancient fortress and numerous temples have been discovered here. Amidst the ruins of a temple on the banks of the Lakhauri lake, moonstones, broken pillars and statues of Vishnu, Ganesh, Shiva, Parvati, etc., made of black stone have been found.

Maria tribals wearing their traditional attire during the dance performance

Bhongpal is situated in Farasgaon and located in Bastar district of





Ganesh idol in Barsur

Chhattisgarh. It is one of 103 villages in Farasgaon block along with villages such as Barda and Madkada.

The primitive lifestyle of the tribes of the state of Chhattisgarh can be best observed in the Chhattisgarh **haat bazaars**. The system of a weekly market is predominant in the tribal districts of the state of Chhattisgarh. This unique market is also a platform from where the tourists can gather souvenirs sold by the tribal people themselves. There are around 200 haat bazaars in Chhattisgarh.

The haat bazaar is the business center, which is open only once a week. The tribal people gather in the market to trade their products and to buy their food supplies for the week. The primitive system of exchange of goods or the barter system is prevalent in the markets and most of the dealings are conducted in the traditional fashion. All types of goods are sold in the haat bazaar of Chhattisgarh. The goods comprise food products, cattle, clothes and accessories. The ornament made by the tribal village women can also be bought from the haat bazaar.

Mama-Bhanja temple





Waterfall in Bhoramdeo Sanctuary

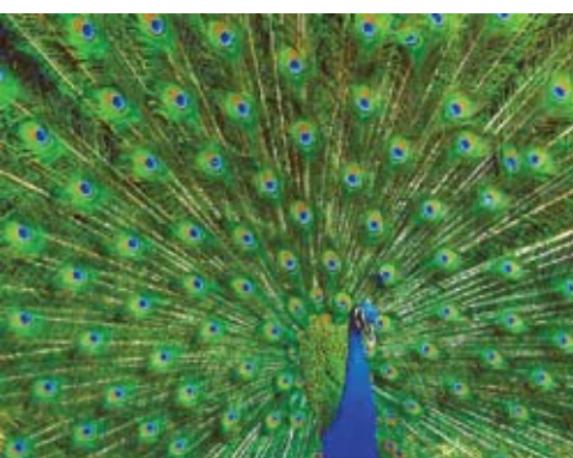
National Parks and Sanctuaries

Chhattisgarh located in central India is among the states which has the maximum land under forest area, encompassing an area of nearly 1,35,133 sq. kms. 44 per cent of the total area of Chhattisgarh comes under forests, which contributes to the 12 per cent of the of India's total forests. The state has immense possibility for wildlife and eco-tourism because of its rich bio-diversity. Chhattisgarh is blessed with some of the most endangered and rare wildlife species are found here. For wildlife enthusiasts and nature lovers Chhattisgarh is a perfect destination.

INDRAVATI NATIONAL PARK

Indravati National Park is the finest and most famous wildlife parks of Chhattisgarh. Also the only Tiger Reserve in the state, Indravati National Park is located in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh. The Park derives its name from the Indravati River, which flows from east to west and forms the northern boundary of the reserve with the Indian state of Maharashtra. With a total area of approximately 2799.08 sq kms, Indravati

The flora in the Indravati National Park mainly comprises tropical moist and dry deciduous type with predominance of the Sal, Teak and Bamboo trees. The most commonly found trees in the park are Teak, Lendia, Salai, Mahua, Tendu, Semal, Haldu, Ber and Jamun. The major wildlife in Indravati National Park include the endangered Wild Buffalos, Barasinghas, Leopards, Gaur (Indian Bison), Nilgai, Sambar, Chausingha (four-horned Antelope), Sloth Bear, Dhole (Wild Dog), Striped Hyena, Muntjac, Wild Boar, Flying Squirrel, Porcupine, Pangolins, Monkeys and Langurs among many others. The commonly found reptiles in the park are Freshwater Crocodile, Monitor Lizard, Indian Chameleon, Common Krait, Indian Rock Python, Cobra and Russells Viper to name a few. The Park also gives shelter to the large variety of birds of which Hill Maina is the most important species here.



Peacock

The flora of Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary chiefly comprises of tropical dry deciduous forest with Teak, Sal, Bamboo and Terminalia being the prominent trees. Other major plants found in the sanctuary include Semal, Mahua, Ber and Tendu. The rich and lush vegetation cover supports a wide variety of wildlife in the sanctuary. The major wildlife of the Barnawapara Sanctuary include Sloth Bear, Flying Squirrels, Jackals, Four-horned Antelopes, Leopards, Chinkara, Black Buck, Jungle Cat, Barking Deer, Porcupine, Monkey, Bison, Striped Hyena, Wild Dogs, Chital, Sambar, Nilgai, Gaur, Muntjac, Wild Boar, Cobra, Python to name a few. The sanctuary also has a sizable bird population with prominent being the Parrots, Bulbul, White-rumped Vultures, Green Avadavat, Lesser Kestrels, Peafowl, Wood Peckers, Racket-tailed Drongos, Egrets, and Herons to name few.



Gaur



Rock Python



Mynah

attained the status of a National Park in 1981 and a Tiger Reserve in 1983 under the famous Project Tiger of India to become one of the most famous tiger reserves of India.

BARNAWAPARA SANCTUARY

Located in the northern part of Mahasamund district of Chhattisgarh, Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the finest and important wildlife sanctuaries in the region. Established



Chestnut headed Bee Eater



Spotted Deer



Green backed Kingfisher

Its open forest serves as habitat of a number of wild animals such as Leopard, Hyena, Fox, Bear, Cheetal, Wild Buffalo, Nilgai etc. Bhoramdeo wildlife sanctuary encompasses mixed vegetation comprising normally of sal, saja, teinsa, kara, haldu species.

in 1976 under Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, the sanctuary is relatively a small one covering an area of only 245 sq kms. The topography of the region comprises flat and hilly terrain with altitudes ranging between 265-400 mts. The Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary is known for its lush green vegetations and unique wildlife.

SITANADI SANCTUARY

Located in Dhamtari district of Chhattisgarh, Sitanadi Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the most famous and important wildlife sanctuaries in central India. Established in 1974 under Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, the sanctuary covers an area of approximately 556 sq kms, comprising of highly undulating and hilly terrain with altitudes ranging between 327-736 mts. The beautiful



Leopard



It serves as an ideal habitat for a variety of wild animals such as Tiger, Panther, Gaur, Chital, Barking Deer, Bear etc.

Deer



Tiger spotted in Udanti Sanctuary

sanctuary derives its name from the Sitanadi river that originates in the middle of sanctuary and joins Mahanadi river near Deokhut. Sitanadi Wildlife Sanctuary is known for its lush green flora and rich and unique and diverse fauna and has great potential to emerge as one of the finest wildlife destinations in central India.

UDANTI SANCTUARY

Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary is a small but an important wildlife sanctuary in the region. Established in 1983 under Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, the sanctuary covers an area of approximately 232 sq km. the topography of the sanctuary comprises broken mass of land traversed by innumerable hill ranges intercepted by stripes of plains.

The flora in Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary chiefly comprises of Tropical Dry Peninsular Sal forests and Southern Tropical Dry Deciduous Mixed Forests. Major flora in the sanctuary comprises of Teak, Sal, Salai, Bamboo, Mahul, Semal, Mahua, Aonwla, Tendu, Harra and Ber among others. The wildlife found in Udanti Sanctuary include Wild Buffalos, Panthers, Tigers, Chital, Four-horned Antelopes, Chinkara, Black Buck, Sambar, Nilgai, Jungle cat, Barking Deer, Sloth bear, Gaur, Wild dog, Porcupine, Monkey, Jackals, Bison, Striped Hyena, Fox, Cobras, Pythons etc. The sanctuary also has a sizable population of birds with prominent being the Parrots, Bulbul, Peafowl, Racket-tailed Drongos, Egrets, Heron, Magpie robin, lesser whistling Teal, Pintail, Rollers and Herons to name few.

State animal of Chhattisgarh

WILD BUFFALO

The wild buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis arnee*) population of central India is one such example whose local existence is gravely threatened. Once found in abundance across northeast India extending to northern and central India, the species now has its last bastions in some pockets in northeast India and Chhattisgarh state.



Wild Buffalo

A Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) survey estimated not more than 50 individuals in three sub-populations in Indravati National Park, Pamed and Udanti Wildlife Sanctuaries in Chhattisgarh. A thorough count was conducted only in Udanti, as the other two protected areas faced political disturbances. The survey established that only few wild buffaloes remained in Udanti in mid-2010.



Kingfisher

The flora in the park chiefly comprises mixed moist deciduous type of forests with predominance of Sal, Teak and Bamboo trees. In fact, the Kanger Valley is the only region in the Peninsular India where one of the last pockets of virgin and untouched forests still left. Major Wildlife of the Kanger Valley National Park are the Leopards, Mouse Deer, Wild Cat, Chital, Sambar, Barking Deer, Jackals, Langurs, Rhesus Macaque, Sloth Bear, Flying Squirrel, Wild Boar, Striped Hyena, Rabbits, Pythons, Cobra, Crocodiles, Monitor Lizards and Snakes to name a few. The avian fauna at the Park includes Hill Myna, Spotted Owlet, Red Jungle Fowls, Racket-tailed Drongos, Peacocks, Parrots, Steppe Eagles, Red Spur Fall, Phakta, Bhura Teeter, Tree Pie and Heron among many others.

The beautiful sanctuary derives its name from the Udanti river flowing from the west to east covering major part of the sanctuary. Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary is famous for its population of the endangered Wild Buffalos.

KANGER GHATI NATIONAL PARK

Located amidst the 34 kms long and scenic Kanger Valley, a Biosphere Reserve, Kanger Valley National Park is one of the most beautiful and picturesque national parks of India. Known for its scenic beauty and the unique and rich biodiversity, Kanger Valley attained the status of a National Park in 1982. Besides wildlife and plants, there are many tourist attractions inside the park such as the Kutamsar Caves, Kailash Caves, Dandak Caves and Tiratgarh Waterfalls.



Watercock

State bird of Chhattisgarh

HILL MYNA

The state bird, the Bastar Myna, is a type of the Hill Myna (*Gracula religiosa Linnacus*), and an accomplished mimic and talker, adapt in imitating the human voice. For this reason, it has been traditionally prized as a cage-bird, resulting in it being hunted to the point of becoming an endangered species. The Bastar Myna is a colourful bird, glossy pitch black with yellow legs, orange and yellow beak, bright yellow wattles on the head and a dash of white on the side wings. It is seen in pairs or noisy flocks in preferred locations in the forests and villages.



Hill Myna

ACHANAKMAR WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

The Achanakmar Wildlife Sanctuary was constituted in the year 1975 it comprises of 557.55 sq kms. North west forest block of Bilaspur forest division. Forest vegetation mainly comprises of sal, saja, tinsa, bija , bamboo. The sanctuary is close to Amarkantak which is the origin of river Narmada. This is only sanctuary where Tigers are spotted.

The flora in Sitanadi Wildlife Sanctuary chiefly comprises moist peninsular Sal, Teak and Bamboo forests. Other major plants in the sanctuary include Semal, Mahua, Harra, Ber and Tendu. The major wildlife found in Sitanadi Sanctuary include Leopards, Flying Squirrels, Jackals, Four-horned Antelopes, Chinkara, Black Buck, Jungle Cat, Barking Deer, Porcupine, Monkey, Bison, Striped Hyena, Sloth Bear, Wild Dogs, Chital, Sambar, Nilgai, Gaur, Muntjac, Wild Boar, Cobra, Python among many others. The sanctuary also has a sizable bird population with prominent being the Parrots, Bulbul, Peafowl, Pheasant, Crimson Breasted Barbet, Teetar, Tree Pie, Racket-tailed Drongos, Egrets, and Herons to name few.

BHORAMDEO SANCTUARY

Bhoramdeo Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the eleven wild life sanctuaries of Chhattisgarh state. It is located at Kabirdham district. It is named after famous Bhoramdeo temples. Drained by river Sakari which also serves as source of drinking water to wild animals.

Red crowned Crane



Incredible Biodiversity



The dense forest of Chhattisgarh consists of varieties of trees prominent among them are Chironji, Mahua, Tendu, etc. Often used as a substitute for almonds, Chironji is an almond-flavoured nut with blood purifying and life force enhancing qualities. Called as Charoli or Chironji in Ayurveda, these dried modest seeds have been in use in the Ayurvedic medicine for treating digestive disorders such as diarrhea, ulcers and irregular bowel movements.

The newly formed Indian state of Chhattisgarh is famous for its enchantingly beautiful natural landscapes, rich cultural heritage and unique tribal populations. With over 44 per cent of its total area under forests, Chhattisgarh is also amongst the greenest states of India. The Chhattisgarh region is known as a great repository of biological diversity. The unique combination of rich cultural heritage and biological diversity makes Chhattisgarh an ideal eco-tourism destination.

Chhattisgarh has some identified regions with a very high possibility for eco-tourism. The green state has launched an eco-tourism project covering three potential tourist tracks - Raipur-Turturia-Sirpur, Bilaspur-Achanakmar and Jagdalpur-Kanger Valley National Park. In addition, a number of herbal gardens and natural health resorts have been created with increased local participation. The use of ethno-medicine, which has been practiced by aboriginal tribes since centuries is also being promoted in Chhattisgarh. The major eco-tourism attractions, which are getting prime attention in Chhattisgarh, includes the protection and development of the wildlife areas, camping grounds and trekking facilities. With so many initiatives, Chhattisgarh is destined to become the most favourite eco-tourism destination in India and few among best in the world.

Endowed with 22 varieties of forests, the main trees found here are teak, sal, sirsa, mahua, amla and tamarind. The forests of Chhattisgarh are home to wild buffalo, crocodile, civet, gaur, leopard,

Neem leaves





Tribes of Chhattisgarh prefer medicine they derive from trees found in the region. Mahua is a large tree with broad, oval leaves, pointed at the tips. In the tribal belt of central India, it is valued above all other trees, and is never felled. Mahua tree and its seed are used by the people of central India for its medicinal properties. The tree is considered a boon by the tribals who are forest dwellers and are keen conservators of this tree. Mahua is also an indigenous drink that the tribals love.

macaque, otter and many species of birds. Major steps are being taken by the Government of Chhattisgarh to preserve the unique biodiversity of the region.

Also being promoted as the ‘herbal state’ over 500 species of plants is found here such as mahua, kusum, imli and kalmegh. Some of them are used for medicinal purpose. From migraines to malaria, cures for all ailments are possible. Bhuineem (*Andropgraphis paniculata*) soaked in water cures malaria. For snake bites one can take anantmool (*Hemidesmus indicus*).

The largest market for medicinal herbs and plants is Dhamtari. About 7,000 Joint Forest Managing (JFM) Committees and 913 Primary Committees are involved in the herbal medicine trade. Herbal Medicine Board has also been set up. Chhattisgarh is slowly and steadily emerging as a major centre for herbal medicine.



Tendu tree



Medicinal herbs found in Chhattisgarh



Hemidesmus



Practical Information

WHEN TO COME TO CHHATTISGARH

Chhattisgarh is one amongst the landlocked states of India. It is gaining popularity not only as a fascinating sightseeing destination but also as an eco-tourism destination of India. The best time to travel to Chhattisgarh are the months spanning from October to March. The weather is usually dry and pleasantly cool. Well around May and by the end of June it is fairly hot and Chhattisgarh has a tropical climate due to which mercury rises high in the months of mid-April to June end. Monsoon arrives in Chhattisgarh in the mid June and lasts till October.

Ministry of Home Affairs

26 Jaisalmer House
Mansingh Road, New Delhi
Ph: 011-23389286,
23074217-19
Timings: 10am-12 noon

Foreigners Regional Registration Office, New Delhi

East Block 8, Level II
Sector 1, R.K. Puram
New Delhi
Ph: 011-26711443,
26711384, 26711074

Foreigners Regional Registration Office, Raipur

Senior Superintendent of Police
S.P. Office, Collectorate Campus
Ph: 0771-4240304

HEALTH

Precautions Before Travelling

One of the common health problems that the foreign travellers experience while there trip to Chhattisgarh is stomach-upset. To avoid this one should take proper immunisations and vaccinations.

HEALTH CARE IN CHHATTISGARH

In Chhattisgarh one can find several pharmaceutical shops including the major tourist areas. The hotels in Chhattisgarh also have a doctor on call facility, so don't get upset if somehow you get ill. There are also several government and private hospitals in the state you can get a proper treatment. Some of the main hospitals are in the cities of Raipur, Raigarh, Bilaspur and Jagdalpur.

ARRIVING IN INDIA

Air

There are 12 international airports in India. Even in smaller cities there are airports that handle few international and domestic flights.

TRANSFER FROM AIRPORTS

Taxis

There are prepaid taxi counters in the arrival areas of all major airports. One can hire a prepaid taxi to avoid hassle.

Auto rickshaws

These are cheaper than taxis and can carry upto three passengers.

MONEY

Indian Currency

The Indian currency is called the Ruppee (₹), available in the denominations of 1000, 500, 100, 20, 10, 5, 2, 1.

Automated Teller Machine (ATM)

Bank ATMs are found in big cities and even in small town. If travelling to a rural area, it is preferable to carry cash.

CREDIT CARDS

All major international credit cards including Visa, Amex, Mastercard, Diners, Club etc can be used in any state of India. But it is always good to find out the acceptance of credit card before handing it.

STD Codes

New Delhi	011
Bengaluru	080
Bhopal	0755
Bhubaneswar	0674
Chennai	044
Hyderabad	040
Kolkata	033
Mumbai	022
Nagpur	0712
Vishakhapatnam	0891
Raipur	0771
Bhilai	0788
Bilaspur	07752
Dantewada	07856
Jagdalpur	07782
Raigarh	07762



Websites

http://tourism.cg.gov.in
http://bilaspur.gov.in
http://kawardha.gov.in
http://durg.gov.in
http://rajnandgaon.gov.in
http://surguja.gov.in
http://korea.gov.in
http://jashpur.gov.in
http://korba.gov.in
http://dhamtari.gov.in
http://bastar.gov.in
http://kanker.gov.in
http://dantewada.gov.in
http://raigarh.gov.in
http://janjigir-champa.gov.in
http://mahasamund.gov.in
http://raipur.gov.in
http://kankerpalace.net
http://palacekawardha.com

Chhattisgarh Tourism Board

Paryatan Bhavan, Indira Gandhi Marg,
Raipur-492006,
Chhattisgarh
Phone: 91-771-4066 415
Fax: 91-771-4066 425
E-mail: visitcg@gmail.com,
Web: <http://tourism.cg.gov.in>

Hospitals

AIIMS Raipur

AIIMS Campus, Tatibandh
Raipur, Chhattisgarh

Suyash Superspeciality Hospital

Kota Gudhiyari Road, Behind
Hotel Piccadily
Raipur
Ph: 077 12 575275

Shree Narayana Hospital

Near Ganj Mandi Behind
Sector - 5 Devendra Nagar,
Pandri Raipur (C.G) -
492001
Fafadih, Raipur,
Ph: 077 13 001234

Shri Medishine Hospital

New Rajendra Nagar,
Amlidih
Raipur
077 14 222999
Ameri Road, Nehru Nagar
Bilaspur
Ph: 094 06 111999

COMMUNICATIONS

Mobile Phones

Country has GSM and CDMA based mobile networks. One can buy prepaid sim from the local network service provider by providing a photo identity card.

Email

Internet cafes can be found in the urban and semi-rural areas. The cost charged is per hour.

RAIPUR

By Air

Raipur airport is well connected by regular flights to cities such as Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Pune, Hyderabad, Bhopal, Bhubaneshwar and many more. From the airport, taxi services are available. It has its own Domestic Airport named as Swami Vivekananda Airport, roughly 23 minutes drive from the city.

Swami Vivekanand Airport or Raipur Airport or Mana Airport is located 20 kms (12 mi) south of Raipur, in the state of Chhattisgarh. It is the sole commercially operating airport in the state of Chhattisgarh.

By Road

Raipur is well connected by road. Raipur is 113 kms from Bilaspur, 290 kms from Jagdalpur, 574 kms from Bhubaneshwar and is linked through Chhattisgarh State Road Transport Corporation (CSRTC) and some private travel services. State buses connect Raipur to Vijay Nagar and other towns in Chhattisgarh.

By Train

Raipur is well-connected by trains as it lies on the Mumbai-Nagpur-Kolkata route. It has its own railway station named as Raipur railway station which is connected to the major cities of Chhattisgarh. It is well connected with the cities such as New Delhi, Mumbai, Bhopal, Jabalpur, Chennai, Bengaluru, Kota, Ahmedabad and Jaipur via Bilaspur Express, Bilaspur Rajdhani, Howrah Sup Express, Pune Hatia Superfast and Pa Bilaspur Express.

BILASPUR

By Road

There are many ways to reach Bilaspur. It is 113 kms from Raipur, 402 kms from Nagpur and 814 kms from Kolkata. Moreover, NH 111 starts from Bilaspur which connects the city to Ambikapur and Varanasi. Bilaspur is well connected by other cities such as Amarkantak, Shahdole, Allahabad, Jabalpur, Mungeli, Kawardha and Mandla. There is a good bus service from Bilaspur to other nearby cities.

Hospitals

Shriram Care Hospital

Ameri Road, Nehru Nagar
Bilaspur
Ph: 094 06 111999

Apollo Hospital

Village lingiadih, Seepat road
Ph: 07752-243300

Sai Krupa Hospital

Telipara, Bilaspur



Hospitals

Maharani Hospital

National Highway 16,
Nayapara
Jagdalpur

MPM Hospital

Housing Board Colony,
Dharampura-01
Jagdalpur
Ph: 077 82 229030

Vivekanand Tribal Hospital

Darampura, Jagdalpur,

By Train

Bilaspur is on the main Mumbai-Kolkata railwayline and there are many trains that connect Bilaspur to Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Bhopal, Indore, Chennai, Patna, Tirunelveli, Kolkata, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Roorkee, Haridwar, Vishakapatnam and Rourkela. Bilaspur is one of the busiest junctions of Chhattisgarh.

JAGDALPUR

By Road

There are many ways to reach Jagdalpur. It is 290 kms from Raipur and 338 kms from Bilaspur. Some private bus operators such as Mahendra Travels, Kanker Roadways etc as well as Chhattisgarh State Road Transport Corporation (CSRTC) provides good bus service.

By Train

It has its own Railway Station named as Jagdalpur Railway Station. It is well connected with the cities such as Raipur, Bilaspur, Delhi, Puri and Visakhapatnam.



Exclusive Package Tour

CHHATTISGARH TOURISM BOARD

Eco-Ethno Delight

(3 Nights/4 Days)

Itinerary

Raipur – Jagdalpur – Chitrakote – Kanger Valley National Park – Barsur – Dantewada - Kondangaon – Gangrel – Raipur

Enchanting Highlands

(3 Nights/4Days)

Itineary

Bilaspur – Ratanpur – Khutaghat – Hasdeo
Bango Dam – Kendai Waterfall,
Buka Island – Mainpat – Ramgarh – Bilaspur

Maikal Retreat

(3Nights/4 Days)

Itinerary

Dongargarh – Khairagarh – Bhoramdeo – Achanakmar – Amarkantak – Bilaspur

Heritage Trail

(2Nights/3Days)

Itinerary

Raipur – Sirpur – Seorinarayan – Barnawapara – Rajim – Champaran – Purkhoti Muktangan – Raipur

Call of the Jungle

(3Nights/4 Days)

Itinerary

Raipur – Barnawapara – Achanakmar – Amarkantak – Bilaspur

Shaktipeeth Abode

(3Nights/4 Days)

Itinerary

Raipur – Dantewada – Dongargarh – Ratanpur – Bilaspur

Hiuen Tsang Trail

(2Nights/3 Days)

Itinerary

Raipur – Sirpur – Barnawapara – Raipur

Sylvan Surroundings

(2Nights/3 Days)

Itinerary

Bilaspur – Achnakmar – Amarkantak – Bilaspur

Temple Trail

(2Nights/3 Days)

Itinerary

Raipur – Rajim – Champaran – Dongargarh – Khairagarh – Bhoramdeo – Raipur

Buddhist Circuit

(3Nights/4 Days)

Itinerary

Dongargarh – Sirpur – Mainpat – Bilaspur

Archaeological Treasure

(3Nights/4 Days)

Itinerary

Bilaspur – Pali Temple – Tala – Malhar – Madkudweep – Bhoramdeo – Sirpur – Raipur

Places to Stay

The Taj Gateway Hotel

GE Road, Behind Magneto Mall,
Raipur, Chhattisgarh - 492006

Tel: +91 771 6661000

Email: gateway.raipur@tajhotels.com

Hyatt Raipur

Magneto The Mall, N.H. 6
Labhandi, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India, 492 001
Tel: +(91 771) 424 1234
Email: raipur.hyatthotels@hyatt.com

Chhattisgarh Tourism Board Hotels

Sonbhadra Tourist Resort, Amadob
Hareli Eco Resort, Mohda-Barnawapara
Dandami Resort, Chitrakot Bardiha Lake View Resort,
Gangrel Hotel Johar Chhattisgarh, Raipur
Hiuen Tsiang Tourist Resort, Sirpur
Shaila Tourist Resort, Mainpat Sarjuja

Hotel Babylon International

VIP Road, Rajiv Gandhi Marg, Raipur 492006
Tel: +91 0771 4255555
E-mail: reservation@hotelbabylon.com

Chitrakote Resort



The Piccadily

GE – Road, Mohaba Bazar,
Raipur 492001

Tel.: +91 771 2575202

E-mail:piccadily_raipur@rediffmail.com

Hotel Golden Tulip

VIP Chowk, Airport Road,
Raipur 492001

Tel: 07714039002

Hotel Shamrock International

Opposite new bus stand, Behind Jai Hind
Hosiery Market, Pandri, Raipur 492004

Tel: +91-771-4299111

E-mail: reservations@hotelshamrock.com

VW Canyon

V I P Road II, Phundahar,

Near Agrasen Dham,

Raipur C.G.- 492 006

Tel: + 91 771 42 77777

E-mail: info@vwcanyon.com

For more information visit:<http://tourism.cg.gov.in>



Heritage properties of **Chhattisgarh**

BASTAR PALACE

Bastar palace is 80-years old building which is one of the main attraction of

Chhattisgarh heritage tour. Bastar palace is an extensive and impressive palace and the main attraction here is the exquisite carvings and

engravings that one can find on the walls and ceiling of the palace. The Bastar Palace is spread over 27 acres with a beautiful garden in front and the Dalpat Sagar lake at the back. This 110 year old left wing of the palace is now open for tourists to have a taste of the old world charm with modern amenities. Be a part of the function or festivals that revolve around the palace which will make your trip more memorable and outstanding.

Travel Guide

Visiting the Bastar Palace becomes much more fun when you avail the local transport of the city – horse carriage. Taxis and shuttle buses that connect the palace with the city hub are available.



Interior view of the Bastar palace

KANKER PALACE

Kanker is another heritage property in Chhattisgarh where travellers can spend their vacation in a true royal style. The residence of the erstwhile ruling family of Kanker, the palace has been re-developed as a five-star retreat which interests the foreign tourists coming to this region. Earlier the palace was known as Radhanivas bagicha, the palace was rebuilt in 1937 and was also the residence of British agent during the raj. Built in colonial style the, the palace is stately, elegant, and has an old world charm

Travel Guide

There are regular deluxe bus services from Raipur. Private cars are also available on hire. Raipur is the nearest railhead and airport.



Interior view of the Kanker palace

and ambience. Kanker palace is a midway on the Raipur - Jagdalpur route and is a region situated in the dense tropical forestlands of Kanker, Chhattisgarh.

KAWARDHA PALACE

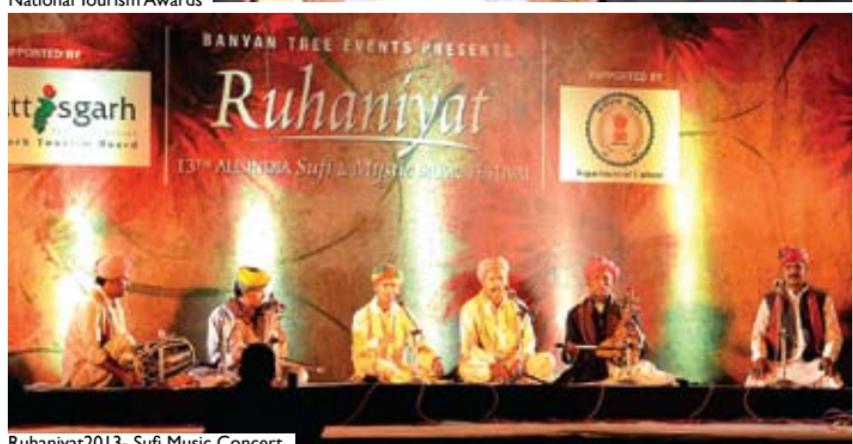
Kawardha palace was restored by Maharaja Yogeshwar Raj Singh in the year 1991 into a finest luxury palace. This luxurious hotel is built in old traditional style equipped with modern amenities. The Royal family renovated the arched corridors, the residential quarters, and its courtyards with small intensification. The specially designed frescoes deciphered with the finest work and rare palace furniture. The elegance personified and the renowned hospitality is served in its eight well appointed rooms and beautiful cottages with extreme intimacy and caring personal service in the reborn Kawardha palace. The place mesmerises its visitors with its charm and authentic structure.

Travel Guide

Kawardha can be easily reached from Raipur by road. The nearest railhead and airport is at Raipur.



Events & Achievements



FOREIGN DIGNITARIES PRESENT IN CTB EVENTS



Czech ambassador H.E. Miloslav Stasek at Niche tourism summit



Ambassador South Korea H.E. Lee Joon Gyu at the inaugural ceremony of Sirpur festival



Srilankan High Commissioner Mr. Prasad Kariyawasam addressing at the inaugural ceremony of Sirpur festival

Note:





Legend

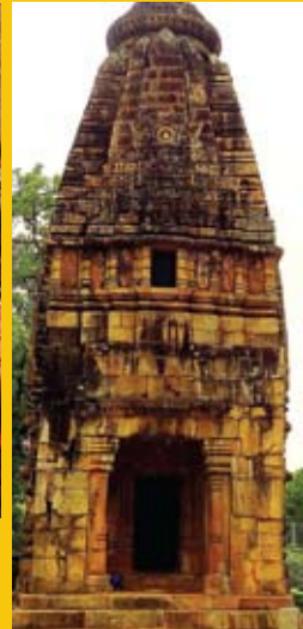
- ◆ Tourist Motel / Resorts
- ◆ Major Tourist Spots
- National Highways
- - State Highways
- Main Roads
- River / Stream
- State Capital
- Major Cities

Chhattisgarh
full of surprises
Chhattisgarh Tourism Board

Chhattisgarh



full of surprises



- In-depth historical details
- Comprehensive details about the land and its history
- A special section on Cultural Traditions and Handicrafts
- Detailed information on the major tourist destinations
- Special focus on National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries
- Details on places to stay and tours and guides
- Complete Practical Information



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