PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

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Swaminarayan Temple (Nilakhanth Dhan), Poicha

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Contents

Superb South Gujarat

Nature Trail	Pg. 06
Architectural & Engineering Marvel Trail	Pg. 18
Spiritual Heritage	Pg. 30
The Parsi Trail	Pg. 34
Crafts Trail	Pg. 40
Gujarat: Celebrating Pilgrimage and Freedom	Pg. 48

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rom the Narmada district to the Dang district near the border with Maharashtra, Gujarat's southern districts offer a variety of attractions many of which still need to be explored for their potential. Geographically, South Gujarat is the wettest region of Gujarat with high rainfall compared to other regions of the state. The western part of this region largely includes the estuaries of the Narmada and the Tapi River. The eastern parts have thick forests like the Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary, Vansda National Park and Purna Wildlife Sanctuary. Gujarat's most spectacular waterfalls, Malsamot in the Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary and the Gira Falls in the Mahal Bardipada forest reserve are most impressive just after the monsoon. Let's explore the wholesome South Gujarat in this edition.

NATURE TRAIL

Ranging from the river beaches of Narmada district to the dense forests of the Dang district, South Gujarat has some beautiful places to explore.

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Street C. Martin Barris

Narmada River

he Narmada district has scenic places from the ravines around Chanod to the forests of Shoolapeshwar Sanctuary. The river itself is a home to some interesting aquatic and semi-aquatic wildlife species. The Smooth-coated Otter is a semi-aquatic mammal with sleek, smooth and dense fur. Being a fish eating specialist, the smooth coated otter is an indication of a healthy riverine ecosystem in a landscape. These otters are social and hunt in groups, spending the night in dens along the river. The mugger crocodile, also called

marsh crocodile, is seen at various points of the Narmada River. This is a medium sized crocodile with a broad snout. A powerful swimmer, mugger is seen basking on riverbanks especially during the cooler seasons. Freshwater turtles also abound on the Narmada. The river also supports fishes, crustaceans and other aquatic life. The fish diversity is especially high at the estuary, with about 85 species recorded in the 72km stretch. Waterside birds and waterfowl can be seen at the Sardar Sarovar Dam and along the Narmada River.

Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary

ome of the finest forests of Gujarat lie in the Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary. Earlier called the Dumkhal Sloth Bear Sanctuary spanning 150.87 square km, the protected area was enlarged to 607.70 square km and renamed Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary. This sanctuary primarily comprises semievergreen and moist deciduous forests with a profusion of bamboo brakes. The sanctuary is also a botanically interesting area with more than 575 species of flowering plants reported by the forest department. The main predator of the sanctuary is the leopard or panther. The sloth bear, listed as vulnerable by IUCN, largely feeds on fruits, ants and termites using its long lower lip and palate to suck out insects. Since both the leopard and the sloth bear are largely nocturnal, you need to be lucky to spot one. Spotted deer, barking deer and the chowsingha, the world's only four horned antelope, are the main herbivores in the sanctuary. Wild boar sightings are fairly frequent. There are many smaller mammals in the sanctuary like civets, jungle cats and porcupines. The giant brown squirrel and rusty spotted cat are some notable

species that have been recorded in this area.

The sanctuary is very interesting for birdwatchers with notable species like the heart-spotted woodpecker, eagle owl, grey and red jungle fowl, and recent reports of the nocturnal frogmouth. The Dediapada taluka is the prime habitat of raptors like the crested serpent eagle, changeable hawk eagle and oriental honey buzzard. With many fruit bearing trees, the forests are also very good for frugivorous birds like grey hornbill, tropical green fruit pigeon, barbets and parakeets.

The scenic highlight of the sanctuary is Malsamot and the nearby Ninai Falls, in Dediapada taluka. The waterfall is most spectacular during and just after the monsoon. The water falls 30 ft to a pool set in thick forests. Sagai-Malsamot Eco Campsite is located in this area for those who want to spend the night.

Another spectacular waterfall in Narmada district is Zarwani waterfalls, 28km from Rajpipla near the Thawadia check post of Shoolpaneshwar Sanctuary. A visit to this waterfall can be combined with the Sardar Sarovar Dam and the new Shoolpaneshwar Temple.

The South Gujarat Seacoast

rom Shoolpaneshwar Sanctuary, take the road south to the Tapti River, which flows through Surat. Dumas, near Surat, is a popular seaside place to enjoy the sea view. Continue south from Surat to Valsad, an area known for its fruit orchards. Near Valsad, Tithal near Valsad is an extremely popular beach. Lined with casuarina trees, the beach has places to sit and relax.

Valsad Beach

Vansda National Park

bout 80km from Valsad, Vansda National Park lies near the town of Vansda or Bansda, a princely state with palaces and old buildings. The deciduous forest area having groves of "Katas" bamboo owes its beauty to the protection accorded to it from decades. This is the place to look for mammals, birds and reptiles typical of the Western Ghats. You can also see butterflies and

spiders of many species. Some of the bird species worth seeing are the grey hornbill, grey-fronted green pigeon, yellow backed sunbird, Malabar trogon, jungle babbler, forest spotted owlet, shama, great Indian black woodpecker and jungle fowl.

The Botanical Garden is situated on Waghai-Saputara Road and can be visited on the way to Saputara.

INATURE TRAIL

Saputara Lake

Saputara

rom Vansda, travel to Saputara, which literally means the abode of serpents, a unique hill station developed after independence. The hill station is splendidly situated in the Sahyadri mountain range. The centerpiece is the Saputara Lake with picturesque gardens and amusements around it. There are many points for viewing the sunrise, sunset and panoramic mountain landscape. The hills have many old forts.

For an insight into the tribal culture of the Dangs district in which Saputara falls, visit the Saputara Museum where there are models of houses, dioramas of tribal lifestyle, and examples of their pottery, utensils and weapons. This museum will give you an introduction to the lifestyle, costumes, heritage and ecology of the tribal Dangs. Although the presentation lacks character, it is worth visiting to learn about many major forms of tribal expression such as a stone funerary column, grass ornaments, stuffed birds, woodcarving, clay ritual objects, body tattoos, and masks used in dance-dramas, and musical instruments.

APUTARA, DISE. DANG

The surrounding forests are good for trekking. A variety of wild flora including orchids, butterflies and characteristic hill forest birds can be seen in these forests. The region is also known for its bamboo.

Legend has it that Lord Rama spent 11 years of his exile in these very forests and many sites here are associated with the epics and mythology. It also makes a base to visit tribal villages of the Bhils, Kunbis, Warlis, and Gamits, and to see their dances.

This is also an adventure destination - paragliding and hang gliding events have been held here, and there are also other adventure sports.

Gira Falls

Mahal Bardipada Forest

rom Saputara, travel to Ahwa, which is the capital of Dang. Just near Ahwa, the Gira Falls is one of the beauty spots of South Gujarat. The waterfall is spectacular with lovely rock pools and surrounding forests. The forests have several spiders – walk in the forest to see the giant wood spiders.

ARCHITECTURAL & ENGINEERING MARVEL TRAIL

rom the Statue of Unity, World's Tallest Statue to the palaces of Rajpipla and the Dutch tombs and British buildings of Surat, there is a wide range of architectural wonders and heritage in South Gujarat.



Statue of Unity

Ne of the greatest attractions of Gujarat, the Statue of Unity is the world's tallest and most amazing statue. The colossal bronze Statue stands tall in Rajpipla, Gujarat in the walking pose towering the Narmada Dam. This inspiring memorial site, with a number of edutainment components, is located between the Vindhyachal and Satpuda Ranges rising weir Narmada River, impounded by Garudeshwar, the Sardar Sarovar Dam and the town of Kevadia.

Standing as a towering symbol of unity, the statue is a realistic, full-length standing figure of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who was the key person behind the integration of India into a united new country. Visitors cannot but be awed by the sight of this colossal statue looking up over the surrounding landscape in the Narmada River Valley.

An engineering marvel is built from iron recovered from agricultural implements and tools donated by farmers.

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The Statue complex has several attractions like the Museum, Audio-Visual Gallery, Sound and Light Show, Exhibition Centre, Valley of Flowers, among others. This monumental statue has a heavy-load open lift that enables visitors to rise to different levels of the statue, walk into a viewing gallery, and enjoy a panoramic view of the Sardar Sarovar Nigam project and the surrounding region from a height of about 400ft.

A visit to the Statue of Unity must incorporate the multiple parks, gardens and thematic attractions nearby like Ekta Nursery, Butterfly Park, Cactus Garden, Vishwa Van, Butterfly Garden, Dino Trail, Glow Garden, Children Nutrition Park along with Jungle Safari, River Rafting, Boating, and a delightful stay at Tent City Narmada.

Sardar Sarovar Dam

Dicated at the end of a long gorge on the Narmada River as it descends from the Mathwar hills of Malwa. The huge expanse of water has a scenic location among lush green hills.

This gravity dam on the Narmada River is among the largest concrete dams in the world. One of the 30 dams planned on river Narmada, this is the largest structure to be built as part of the Narmada Valley Project, a large hydraulic engineering project involving the construction of a series of large irrigation and hydroelectric multipurpose dams on the Narmada River.

Narmada Darshan Model Room is an informative display about the dam's technical features. From here, the scenic drive around the water body offers a number of viewpoints, dykes and gardens, which offer good views, and an insight into the engineering wonder that is the Sardar Sarovar Dam. Some of the interesting sites are the foundation stone, boating point, the first lock gate and a trekking point for students participating in nature camps.



Sardar Sarovar Dam



PLACES OF INTEREST, KEVADIA SEF 18 STATUE OF UNITY 5 6 10



CHILDREN NUTRITION PARK
 EKTA MALL
 AROGYA VAN
 RIVER RAFTING, KHALVANI

5 BOATING 6 SARDAR SAROVAR DAM 7 DAM VIEW POINT 8 DINO TRAIL 9 VALLEY OF FLOWERS
10 JUNGLE SAFARI
11 TENT CITY NARMADA
12 VISHWA VAN

FOOD COURT
 CACTUS GARDEN
 BUTTERFLY GARDEN
 EKTA NURSERY

17 EKTA CRUISE 18 SEAPLANE SERVICE



Rajpipla

he headquarters of Narmada district, Rajpipla was the capital of a First Class Princely State falling under the Rewakantha Agency.

Today, Rajpipla has many grand buildings and palatial residences that stand testimony to its princely heritage. On the shores of the Karjan River, Vijay Mahal is an Italian inspired palace with a marble fountain surrounded by palms in the forecourt, a classical colonnaded semi-circular portico as the entrance, Corinthian pillars, Gothic arches, European domes and views of the river Karjan and the Satpura hills at the rear. The palace houses a museum of princely memorabilia and a tribal and folklore museum.

The grandest palace of Rajpipla, the Indrajeet Padmini Mahal, better known as Vadia Palace (as the entire village of Vadia was demolished and relocated to build and complete this palace in the 1940s), was designed by Burjor Sohrab J. Aga, and executed in a predominantly Indo-Saracenic style, with a few western features Shapoorjee N. Chandabhoy & Company with the building contractor being Navroji Shethna. Inside, however, the palace retains much of the European character one would expect from a palace erected during the 1930s and 1940s. The palace was set in a 151 acre estate, with well laid out formal gardens and mango-and-lime orchards, and the building itself covered almost 4320 sq yards. The building was designed in a

predominantly Indo-Saracenic style, with a few western features. Located on the eastern outskirts of Nandod (the historical name of Rajpipla), he named it Indrajit Park after his then eight-yearold son Prince Indrajitsinh. It was later known as Indrajit-Padmini Mahal and popularly called the Vadia Palace.

Much of the flooring is in Italian marble of different colors arranged in various geometric patterns, such that no two rooms or galleries are floored alike. At the rear is a marble fountain with intricate patterns. The palace has a number of wooden doors and windows of the Palace made from Burma teak. The Palace was centrally air-conditioned, with ducts still visible on the walls. According to the former owners, the palace had 11 bedrooms, a subterranean chamber and a suite facing the terrace, all with baths attached. The interiors have beautiful paintings of events from lord Krishna's lifetime, the prayer room has a series of wall and ceiling frescoes of Hindu deities, the reception behind the portico is painted with floral and faunal subjects. The painting was done by a European artist, yet the quality of Indian devotional paintings and other local themes is flawless. The Government of Gujarat purchased this palace in the 1960s. The building, its outhouses and the grounds house the Gujarat Forest Rangers College, which has trained many forest rangers batches since 1979, government offices and the Ayurvedic Department.





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PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

Bharuch

round 65km from Rajpipla, Bharuch has a long history of being a prosperous city because of its location on the Narmada River close to the Arabian Sea. In ancient times, Bharuch was a ship building centre and a sea port that facilitated trade with the middle-east and the western world. In the 3rd century, Bharuch port was mentioned as Barugaza. Bharuch was known to the Greeks, the various Persian Empires, in the Roman Republic and Empire, and in other Western centres of civilisation through the end of the European Middle Ages. Trade was carried out with Arabs coming to Gujarat for business.

In the 15th century, visitors to Bharuch from the west reported seeing hundreds of vessels at anchor along the sea mouth of the Narmada. The city was renamed Broach by British and the Dutch Valandas who noted Bharuch's importance and established their business centres here. The British factor wrote in 1613 that the city had a store of cotton and some of the world's best calicoes. By the 1820s, the English factory employed hundreds of weavers making fabrics for the East India Company. The availability of quality water from the Narmada for bleaching, dyeing and processing was Bharuch's unique proposition as a textile hub. During the growth of Surat, Bharuch lost its English

factory but many British buildings can be seen even today like the Victoria Clock Tower built in 1901 and the Collector's Office.

ARCHITECTURAL & ENGINEERING MARVEL TRAIL

The Fort area on the high riverbank is a hub for Bharuch. A majestic monument of the fortified city of Bharuch is the Friday Mosque, which dates from the 14th century. This mosque was built during the Delhi Sultanate. It has three domes, ornate mihrabs and an open courtyard with three gates. Another mosque, believed to be older, lies in the fort's south western corner.

The British built bridges over the Narmada in the 1880s.

PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

Surat

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One of the oldest British monuments on India's west coast is the Cemetery near Surat's Katargam Gate. The cemetery has the grand pavilion-like mausoleum of George Oxenden, the President of Surat's English factory and

Dutch Cemet

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East India trade operations from 1662 till his death in 1669, and his brother Christopher. An inscription talks about the family's political and commercial power, which is reflected in the impressiveness of the mausoleum. The mausoleum has a mix of Hindu, Islamic and European architectural elements including doors crowned by low relief carvings, pointed arches, columns and Indo-Saracenic domes. Another impressive mausoleum in the complex is associated with Gerald Aungier who was president of Surat's English factory and later Governor of Bombay after the East India Company headquarters were moved to Mumbai till 1677.

A short distance from the British Cemetery is the Dutch Cemetery, which contains the mausoleum of Baron Adrian Van Reed. This eclectic mausoleum has a Baroque façade, Indo-Saracenic features, and a double domed cupola supported by attractive columns. Inside the mausoleum are galleries, carved ceilings, epitaphs to Lord Henry Adrian Baron of Reede, and a description of the woodwork, holy inscriptions and murals that the mausoleum once contained before they were destroyed by ravages of climatic conditions and human visitors. The Dutch established their factory in Surat around the 1620s and '30s.

Next to the Dutch cemetery is the churchyard of the Armenians who formed an important trading community in Surat from the 16th century. Their cemetery has tombstones with one of epithets dedicated to the wife of a priest named Marinas who died in 1579 AD.

From the cemetery, the road continues past an impressive 16th Muslim mausoleum before coming to the Mughal Sarai with its huge dome and archway surrounded by intricate workmanship. Now housing municipal offices, the Mughal Sarai was constructed during the reign of Shah Jahan as a resting place for Mecca-bound pilgrims and travellers who took the ships from Surat. Lanes from the Serai lead to balconied houses in the old guarters.

As you head towards the Chowk, you can see the Chintamani Jain Temple, a Portuguese building now called Ukkadji's Dharamshala and the British-period LP Mission school building. The Chowk is a square surrounded by imposing colonial buildings built after a fire destroyed much of Surat like the JJ Sorabji Training College established as a school by the industrialist Jeejeebhoy in the late-1800s, the Andrews Library building erected in 1907 AD, and an Anglican Church built in 1895.

Looming up beside the Chowk is the entrance to the Surat Castle. This castle was built during the reign of the Gujarat ARCHITECTURAL & ENGINEERING MARVEL TRAIL

Sultanate in the 1540s following Portuguese raids on Surat. The castle was erected by Turkish warrior Agha Khan whom the Sultans gave the title of Khudavand Khan. The castle is about an acre in area with thick walls. Today, it houses government offices.

From the Chowk, lanes lead to an historical Parsee Fire Temple and the Saraswati Mandir, restored home of Kavi Narmad who wrote the famous poem, 'Jai Jai Garvi Gujarat'. This was where the freedom fighters, poets and community leaders gathered during the freedom struggle.





SPIRITUAL HERITAGE

drive of about 55km from Vadodara to Chandod leads through fertile areas with sugarcane fields, banana orchards and other cultivation, interspersed with patches of wilderness. Chandod lies at the convergence of the Narmada, Orsang, and mythical Saraswati rivers. As river is the holiest at a confluence, this is one of the most visited places for rituals along the Narmada. From the village, steps lead down to the Narmada. At platforms and halls, priests offer to guide you through prayers and rituals. There are numerous ghats on the river such as Badrinarayan Ghat, Nanderia Ghat, Marwadi Ghat, Chakratirth Ghat,

Kapileshwar Mahadev Ghat, Jivan Nath Ghat, Sangam Ghat, Somnath Ghat, among others.

You can take a boat ride from here to the confluence called Chanod Karnali Triveni Sangam, which is an important place for ritual bathing and the immersion of ashes. Chandod abounds in temples like Kuber Bhandari, Kapileshwar Mahadev, Lakshmi Narayan, Hatkeshwar, Swami Narayan, among others. About 10km from Chandod is the Nilkanth Dham with the Swaminarayan Temple of Poicha.

Along the Narmada, Nilkanth Dham has an exhibition zone, a park, a play area for children, food court and other facilities for visitors. The temple looks most attractive when lit up in the evening. The milk pudding here is an added attraction for visitors.





Kabirvad

From Chandod, it is a drive of about 21km to Rajpipla, the headquarters of Narmada district. Rajpipla was once ruled by Parmar Rajputs who brought the Harsidhhi Mataji Idol from Ujjain as their Kuladevi.

Around 18km from Rajpipla is the Datta Mandir of Garudheshwar. Garudeshwar is closely associated with Vasudevanand Saraswati, also known as Tembe Swami, a saint who is regarded as an incarnation of Dattatreya. Vasudevanand Saraswati's body was immersed into the Narmada River where the Samadhi (tomb) has been built on the river bank at Garudeshwar.

From Rajpipla, it is a scenic drive of about 56km to Nareshwar passing green fields and sprawling trees. Nareshwar is associated with the spiritual leader, Rang Avadhoot, called Pujya Bapji by his disciples who after considerable travels across decided to settle here in the 1920s. From his shrine, there are steps down to the Narmada.

Around 46km from Nareshwar, Bharuch derives its name from the great sage Bhrigu. Though Bharuch today is largely known as the headquarters of a heavily industrialized district, this city still retains many places of historical and religious importance including ghats on the Narmada and numerous temples. Bhrigu Rishi Temple is one of the most visited.

16km from Bharuch, Shuklatirth is the base to visit Kabirvad. From Kabirmadhi, boats take you to the river island, where there is a banyan tree associated with 15th century mystic-poet Kabir. It is believed that the banyan tree was sprouted from Datoon (a twig used as a toothbrush). The shrine to Kabir here is much visited by Kabirpanthis.

From Bharuch, you can travel to Sagbara near which is the shrine of Dev Mogra (also called Devmogra or Yaah Devmogi), a goddess for the Satpura hill dwelling people. The temple was said to have been created seven generations back when the then high-priest saw a vision of Dev Mogra. There is a huge tribal festival in or around February at this temple.

Narmada meets the sea at a place called Mithi Talai near Bharuch. The Narmada Parikrama, a walking pilgrimage considered to be a meritorious act that a pilgrim can undertake along both banks of the river, begins at Mithi Talai and goes along the river to the source in Maikal hills) and back along the other bank of the river, or vice versa. It is a 2,600-kilometre walk.

PRAVEG'S TOURISM: ONE

THE PARSI TRAIL

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he Parsis landed in South Gujarat more than 1200 years ago in search of refuge from their native lands of Iran. Surat has a number of schools, hospitals and other institutions built by Parsis. The fires of the Modi (Shenshai) Atash Behram and the Vakil Atash Behram in Surat were both consecrated in 1823. Surat was a prominent Parsi stronghold during the Mughal period. After the Mughal Emperors allowed the British and Dutch to establish their factories in Surat, Parsis were employed in the European trading bases. While in Surat, you can shop for bakery products from many Parsi owned bakeries.

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PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Museum

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Continue from Navsari to Udvada. As you enter Udvada, you see the striking facade of the recently restored Seth Sohrabji Jamshedji Sodawaterwalla Dharamshala, an 80-year old building, which went through repairs, restoration and renovation before being reopened in September 2011 as a guest house for Parsi religious tourists. This Dharamshala gets its name from Bai Aimai Sorabji Sodawaterwala, who handed over her residence to a trust when she passed away in 1945. This was given over to the Udwada Samast Anjuman in 1949. However, as there were few visitors then, as per the clauses of the Trust, this structure was sold for starting a school and the sale proceeds were utilized to buy the Rezashah Hotel, which is this building, and open it as a Dharsmahala. Thus Sohrabji Jamshedji Sodawaterwalla Dharamshala was inaugurated by the Udwada Samast Anjuman on 17th April, 1956. Thanks to

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SOHRABJI JAMSHEDJI SODAWATERWALLA DHARAMSHALA

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the interest taken by the priests, and heritage architects Jamshid Bhiwandiwalla and Pankaj Joshi, this structure was restored with the financial support of philanthropists from the Parsi community. Besides restoring the structure from August 2010, the rooms have also been upgraded with new facilities and the old furniture now gleams with fresh polishing. Interestingly, the high-ceilinged reception hall has a plan of Udvada

showing key buildings, historical information about the village, and a Did You Know about Zoroastrianism and Parsis. Caricatures of Parsis by Mario Miranda decorate the lobby. The plan shows that the village of Udvada lies on a north-west axis between Jhanda Chowk and the Iranshah Temple at its core, with the Merivadi Street and Sea View Street running parallel to the main spine. Most of the heritage buildings and Parsi residences are in the core area.



Chowk is a road junction at the beginning of Udvada's heritage precinct. The Mirza Memorial Hall, Unwalla Library and other historic buildings can be seen on the way to the fire temple. The Sacred Iranshah Atashbehram Fire Temple has figures of winged bulls with human heads, considered auspicious for all Parsis.

The purpose-built temple was first constructed in the 18th century by Seth Edulji of Surat and expanded in 1812 by Seth Jamdhedji Guzder. In 1830, Seth Dadabhai and Mancherji Wadia built a new structure. The present day Udvada fire temple was constructed by Lady Motlibhai Wadia in 1894, replacing the older buildings. The architect and builder of the temple was Dinshaw Dorabjee Mistry from Mumbai. The temple structure has been built spacious and well decorated. The façade of the temple is in the typical eclectic style of Parsi buildings, with Iranian, European and Indian features.

On festive days like Behram Roj or the annual Navroz celebrations, you can see a flow of Parsis, some of them dressed in traditional clothing, coming and going through the entrance. The anniversary, known as sālgiri, corresponding to the date of establishing the Atash Behram in Udvada and also in other Atash Behrams in India, is celebrated every year according to the Shenshai Zoroastrian calendar on the day (called Ådur) of the month (also called Ådur the ninth Zoroastrian month and the ninth day of the month); pilgrims visit not only on the day of the month but also throughout the Ådur month. Shops and vendors sell sandalwood, ritual objects, religious artifacts, Parsi food products, hand-made ice-creams and souvenirs on weekends, festive days and auspicious days when there is enough flow of pilgrims. Around the temple are other historic buildings like the Dastur Baugh and the Petit Dar-e-Maher, built by first Baronet Sir Dinshaw Manekji Petit in 1891. Some of the old hotels, near the fire temple, like Globe and Ashishvang also retain their old facades.

Since Udvada was a religious place, it was mainly the priestly families that lived here. The non-priestly families include those that have established hotels and shops to cater to Parsi pilgrims visiting Udvada. The typical Parsi homes here with their high ceilings, ornamental skirted sloping roofs and double otlas (twin porticoes), some of them over a century old, are now under threat from the real estate boom in this part of Gujarat. Eminent Parsis, Udvada's Parsi residents and conservation organizations are now working to improve the infrastructure, restore and renovate heritage buildings, and protect the environment of Udvada.

As the fire temple is not open for non-Zoroastrian, the Zoroastrian Information Centre nearby offers information about the Parsi rituals. This centre was conceptualized by Foundation for Development of Udvada, with inputs from trustees like Homai Modi and Dr Homi Dhalla. The architects Pankaj Joshi and Jamshid Bhiwandiwalla restored a colonial-style building that was in a dilapidated condition for this centre. This is a museum set in grounds with a shop at one end selling Gara embroidery and Parsi objects. The centre has five rooms that offer an insight into various aspects of the Parsi legacy. Here you can see visuals depicting the intricate Navjote Ceremony after which the child is viewed as a member of the Zoroastrian community, models and informative panels that show rituals in the sanctum, and a display of costumes like the Jabhla, which is like a silk kurta and the Gara (embroidered saris).

In one of the rooms, there are panels depicting the history of ancient Persian dynasties. Another set of panels explain the contribution of Parsis like JRD Tata, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Homi Baba, Madam Cama, etc, to the development of India.

CRAFTS TRAIL

From Bharuch to Saputara, you can discover a variety of different crafts.







PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE



Sujuni of Bharuch

he technique of weaving quilts called Sujuni is said to have originated in 1860. The quilts are woven with a double weave technique in which the cotton is filled between the fabric layers during the weaving process. Various materials are used in the process of making a quilt, and as many as three craftsmen may work at the same time to make a blanket. The result is a highly-effective warm blanket where the cotton is not stuffed into the quilt but woven in, so it does not shift.

42





Crafts of Tapi and Dang

CRAFTS TRAIL

api and Dang districts are tribal-dominated, and many of the crafts belong to the tribal communities. The pliable forms of bamboo found in this region are used to make a variety of baskets, fish traps, winnows and storage bins.

Warlis are known for their paintings – the painting style started with sacred pictographs on the walls of their huts but now they also make paintings in white on dung-paste covered cloth to create a background similar to the traditional mud walls. Souvenir versions on paper and other materials are also painted for tourists, and some of the recognized artists now make contemporary canvases and water colours that draw from their traditional style you can see these paintings at the art gallery in Silvassa. The line drawings use mainly geometric forms to depict human forms hunting, farming, dancing or performing daily chores, trees and animals. The goddess of trees and plants often makes a central theme motif.

2 mill

PRAVEG'S TAURISM ONE

CRAFTS TRAIL



Crafts of Surat

adeli is a form of Marquetry practiced by a few artisans in Surat. Marquetry is the art of decorating the surface of wooden articles with delicate pieces of wood and other materials in precisely-cut geometrical shapes. Surat's Sadeli bears much resemblance to Khatam, Persian marguetry that developed in Iran during the reign of Safavid dynasty from 1501 to 1722. The Zoroastrians or Parsees who came to Gujarat from Iran brought the marquetry techniques to Surat about 150 years ago. While originally the art of Sadeli was used mainly for decorating doors, windows and furniture, today these craftsmen also embellish jewellery boxes, photo frames and other products. After making the wooden object, which is to be ornamented, the artisans obtain the slices from composite sections of wood and then apply these slices to create a patchwork on the surface. The quality of the craftsmanship is judged by the minuteness of detail of the geometric forms used in a surface. 250 pieces could be applied in one square inch or cubic cm of a wooden surface.

At Mandvi, near Surat, the weavers or Khattris create simple fabrics with ikat-style tied-dyed process.

Aari-work is another craft that thrives in Surat.













ndia is also known as the land of temples. Pilgrimages like Badri-Kedar in the north, Jagannathpuri in the east, Rameshwar in the south and Dwarka-Somnath-Ambaji in the west make India known as a spiritual country all over the world.

The footprints of many gods and goddesses in Gujarat establish the entire state as a religious city. We are worshiping our adored deities in all different forms. On occasions of happiness, sorrow, success, failure, etc., everyone will go to the place associated with God to get a glimpse of their deity by standing in line for hours, no matter how crowded it is.

There exists a unique energy in our pilgrimages that frees every pilgrim from mental stress and gives new impetus. The biggest thing for the state of Gujarat is that approximately 3% of the total tourists coming to the state are religious pilgrims. There are eight major pilgrimage sites in the state which include 1) Ambaji 2) Somnath 5) Dwarka 5) Girnar 5) Palitana 5) Dakor 5) Bahucharaji and 5) Shamlaji. Along with the main pilgrimages in Gujarat, the development of many pilgrimages, big and small, has accelerated. Gujarat Pavitra Yatradham Vikas Board has played a crucial role in developing proper facilities in every pilgrimage center of the state, maintaining cleanliness, propagating it properly, undertaking innovative projects and developing infrastructural facilities.

Gujarat Pavitra Yatradham Vikas Board has been actively engaged in developing and promoting these pilgrimage sites through various innovative initiatives. One such recent initiative of the Gujarat Pavitra Yatradham Vikas Board is contributing to the Government of India's 'Azadi Ka Amrut Mohatsav' that celebrates and commemorates 75 years of progressive India and the glorious history of its people, culture and achievements.

As part of the 3 year celebrations of independence in the country, various programs are planned to be organized by various organizations. Gujarat Pavitra Yatradham Vikas Board has organized grand programs in 11 pilgrimages of the state, including Girnar, Somnath, Ambaji, Dakor, Shamlaji, Bahuchraji, Palitana, Pavagadh, Dwarka, Kutch and Unai, during September to December 2021. 'Azadi Ki Baat Program' will be organized by local youth and citizens. In addition to this, plays related to freedom, freedomrelated stories and pilgrimages will be performed at the designated pilgrimages in the form of street plays. Apart from this, Maharati will also be organized in the designated pilgrimages for the auspicious purpose of offering gratitude

to the God for the freedom we have gained and to provide the right strength to serve the nation in the future. Vandemataram and national anthem will be recited during the program in all the pilgrimages.

Programmes like oratory competition featuring student participants, a grand inauguration of the celebration at Junagadh with participation and felicitation of saints will be organized.

The celebration of the Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsav will be organized with the five resolutions like 1. To fulfill the resolution to make India a world leader 2. With 100% vaccination 3. With a commitment to cleanliness 4. With 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' resolution 5. To strengthen the spirit of national devotion.

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