



U.P. nahi dekha, toh India nahi dekha.



EXPLORE PRAYAGRAJ
The Sangam of Spirituality and Modernity



U.P. nahi dekha, toh India nahi dekha.

EXPLORE
PRAYAGRAJ
The Sangam of Spirituality and Modernity

EXPLORE PRAYAGRAJ

The Sangam of Spirituality and Modernity

Editor-in-Chief: Awanish Kumar Awasthi, I.A.S.,
Additional Chief Secretary/DG Tourism,
Government of Uttar Pradesh

Editors:

Dr. Ashish Kumar Goel, I.A.S., Divisional Commissioner, Prayagraj,
and Chairman, Prayagraj Mela Authority

Vijay Kiran Anand, I.A.S., Mela Officer, Prayagraj Mela Authority

Dinesh Kumar, Deputy Director, Tourism, Prayagraj

Anupam Srivastava, Regional Tourist Officer, Prayagraj

Author: Shashank Tripathi

Photographs: Pankaj Singh

Times Group Books

Editorial: Chandna Arora, Monali Banerjee

Design: Subhasish Munshi

First published in India, 2019

Explore Prayagraj: The Sangam of Spirituality and Modernity

Copyright ©UP Tourism, 2019



**A division of
Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd.**

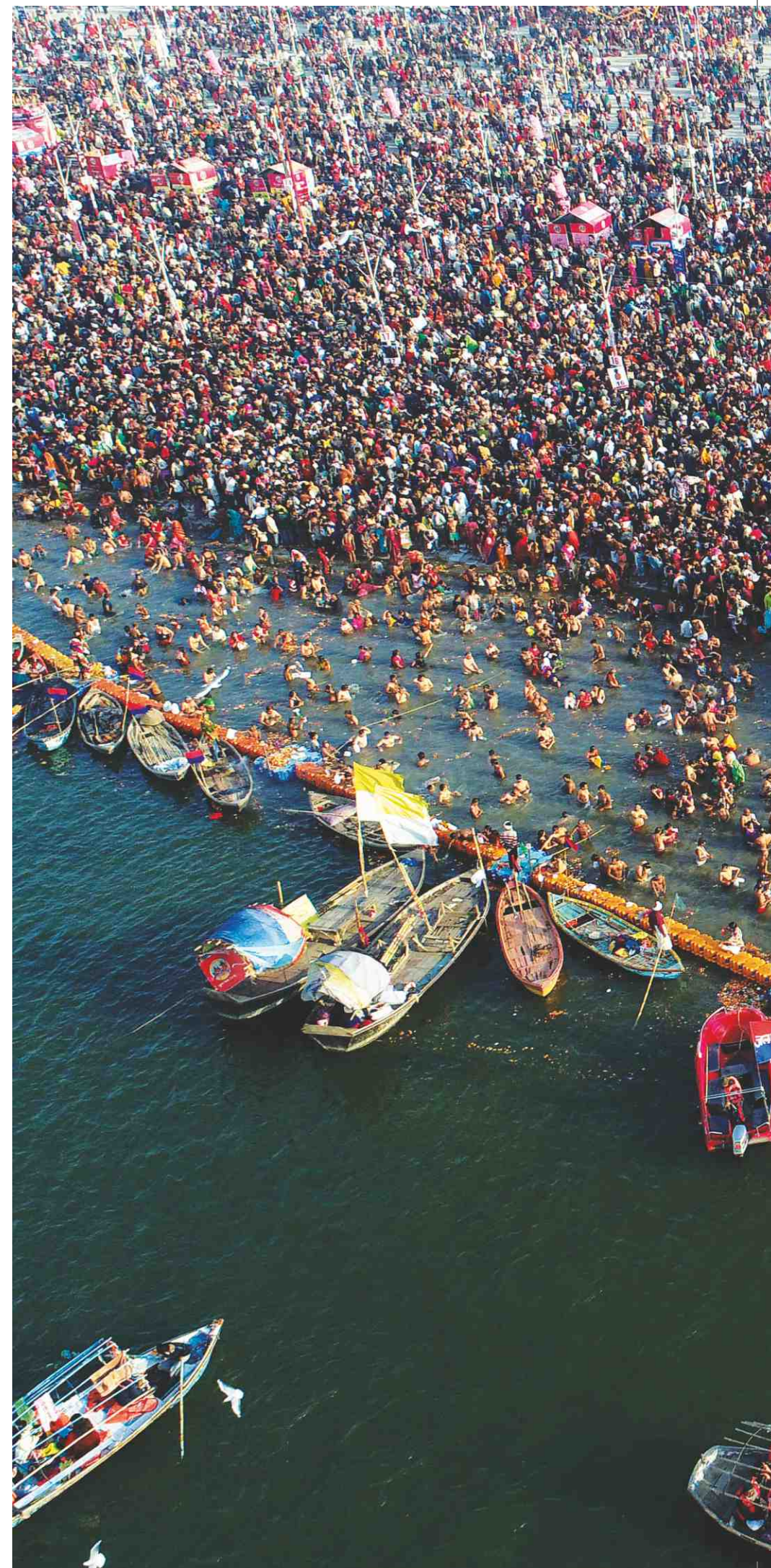
The Times of India, 1st Floor, Gulab Bhawan, 6, Bahadurshah Zafar Marg,
New Delhi-110002, Phone: 011-40738253, Email: tgb@timesgroup.com; www.timesgroupbooks.com

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means (graphic, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, tape, web distribution, information storage and retrieval systems or otherwise) without prior written permission of UP Tourism and the publisher.

Disclaimer

Due care and diligence has been taken while editing and printing the Book. Neither the Publisher nor the Printer of the Book holds any responsibility for any mistake that may have crept in inadvertently. UP Tourism and BCCL will be free from any liability for damages and losses of any nature arising from or related to the content. All disputes are subject to the jurisdiction of competent courts in Lucknow.

Printed at: Cirrus Graphics Pvt. Ltd.







United Nation
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Intangible
Cultural
Heritage

“

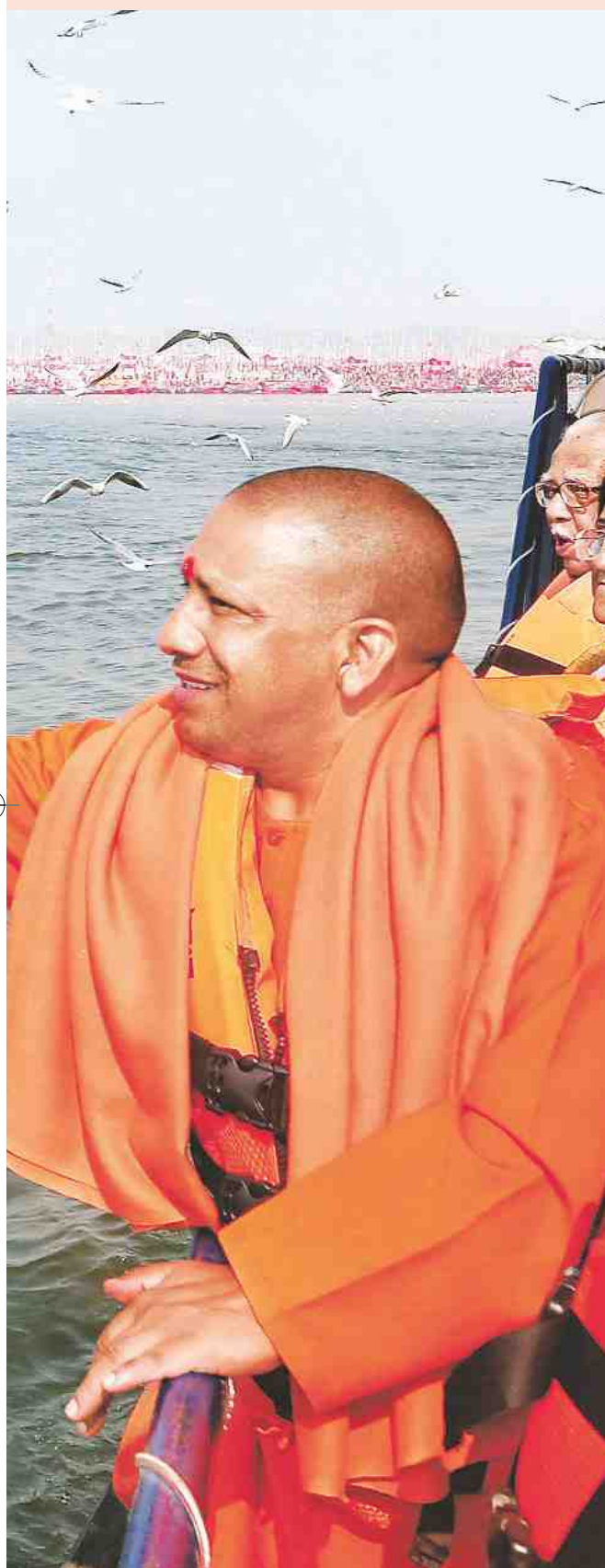
Kumbh Mela (the festival of the sacred Pitcher) is the largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims on earth, during which participants bathe or take a dip in a sacred river. Devotees believe that by bathing in the Ganges one is freed from sins, liberating her/him from the cycle of birth and death. Millions of people reach the place without any invitation. The congregation includes ascetics, saints, sadhus, aspirants-*kalpavasis* and visitors. The festival is held at Allahabad, Haridwar, Ujjain and Nasik every four years by rotation and is attended by millions of people irrespective of caste, creed or gender. Its primary bearers, however, belong to *akhadas* and ashrams, religious organizations, or are individuals living on alms. Kumbh Mela plays a central spiritual role in the country, exerting a mesmeric influence on ordinary Indians. The event encapsulates the science of astronomy, astrology, spirituality, ritualistic traditions, and social and cultural customs and practices, making it extremely rich in knowledge. As it is held in four different cities in India, it involves different social and cultural activities, making this a culturally diverse festival. Knowledge and skills related to the tradition are transmitted through ancient religious manuscripts, oral traditions, historical travelogues and texts produced by eminent historians. However, the teacher-student relationship of the sadhus in the ashrams and *akhadas* remains the most important method of imparting and safeguarding knowledge and skills relating to Kumbh Mela.

**Inscribed in 2017 (12.COM) on the Representative List
of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**









“

The confluence of two rivers is a prayag and in Allahabad, three rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati meet. Hence, it is the king of prayags. That is why it is Prayagraj.

– **SHRI YOGI ADITYANATH**

Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

CONTENTS

13



**PRAYAGRAJ
AN INTRODUCTION**

18



**PRAYAGRAJ
ATTRACTIONS**

- Sangam... 20
- Heritage Sites... 32
- Temples... 64
- Churches... 84
- Parks
and Gardens... 88

94



**PRAYAGRAJ
FAMOUS
PERSONALITIES**

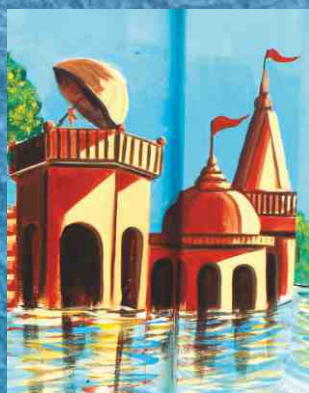
98



PRAYAGRAJ KUMBH 2019

- Sanskriti Gram... 103
- Kalagram... 108
- Peshwai... 114
- Akhadas... 118
- Kalpavasis... 119
- VIPs in the Maha Kumbh 2019... 122
- Cultural Events... 130
- Theme Gates... 134

136



PRAYAGRAJ PAINT MY CITY

- Paint My City... 139
- Tree Paintings in the City... 152

154



PRAYAGRAJ CHANGING LANDMARKS

- Sculptures in the City... 161
- Dividers... 171
- Greenery... 173
- Uniform Colour Decoration on Roads... 175

176



SHOPPING AND EATING OUT IN PRAYAGRAJ

- Shopping... 178
- Eating Out... 180

184



SURVIVAL GUIDE

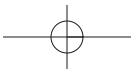
- Accommodations...185
- Universities and Educational Institutes ...186
- Hospitals...186

188



EXCURSIONS FROM PRAYAGRAJ

- Kaushambi... 190
- Shringverpur... 192
- Sitamarhi... 196
- Chitrakoot... 198



PRAYAGRAJ

AN INTRODUCTION

Prayagraj is an ancient city that has been significant for thousands of years. From its centrality in ancient Hindu scriptures to its importance as a Buddhist, Mughal and then British centre, the city has seen and witnessed civilization after civilization, ruler after ruler. That is true of many places in India, but Prayagraj is astounding in the fact that its many lives can still be sensed and even experienced, side by side, inspiring awe in visitors. Perhaps it can be said that, like its name, the city is both ancient and new at the same time.

CENTURIES OF DIVINITY

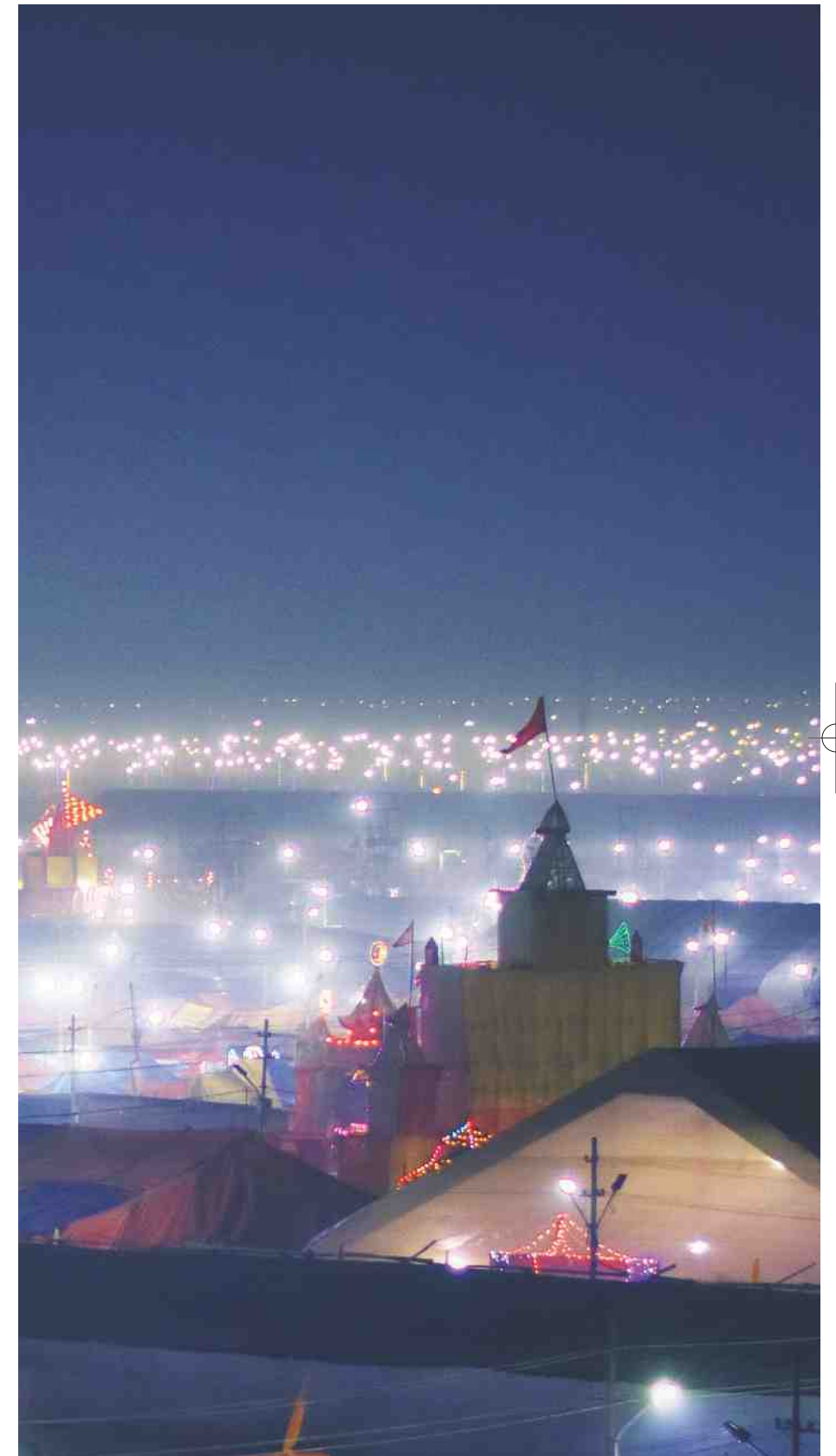
Situated on the confluence of three rivers – the Ganga, the Yamuna and the mythical, underground Saraswati – Prayagraj is called the king of all tirthas (pilgrimages), ‘Tirthraj’. The *Rig Veda*, the Puranas, the Mahabharata, the smritis, the shastras, *Sriprayagmahatmya Shatadhyayi* and many other ancient Hindu scriptures make innumerable references to the sanctity of Prayag. The annual Magh Mela and the 12-yearly Kumbh Mela are extant elements of the city’s centuries-old spiritual lineage and potency.

It is said that the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva successfully conducted their yagnas here, hence the name Prayag – ‘pra’ for ‘*prakrishta*’ (great) and ‘yag’ for ‘yagna’ (Vedic consecration ritual). It is said to be the birthplace of Brahma,

Som and Varun (the reference can be traced to the ‘Aadi Parva’ of the Mahabharata) and was once described as the abode of 88,000 rishis.

One of the holiest objects in Prayagraj is the purported Akshayvata, a banyan tree that is said to still exist in the precincts of the Allahabad Fort. It is said to be an ancient banyan that was the only thing that survived the ‘Mahapralaya’, the great deluge from which Lord Vishnu started recreating the world. Lord Shiva is also said to have performed the *tandava*, the dance of the cosmic cycle of creation, preservation and dissolution, near this holy tree. The tree finds mention in the *Matsya Purana* and the Ramayana (Lord Rama, Lakshmana and Sita are said to have rested beneath it), and Jain *tirthankara* Rishabhanatha is said to have performed *tapasya* beneath it.

Besides being the seat of Vishnu, Prayag has also been the seat of some of the most influential Hindu saints. One of them is Maharshi Bhardwaj, the father of Dronacharya, the guru of the Pandavas and the Kauravas, who, along with his students, is credited with creating the sixth book of the *Rig Veda* and contributing to the Puranas. The Puranas record that Yayati, the first king of the Pauravas (an ancient Indian dynasty), left Prayag and conquered the Saptasindhu, or the entire world. His five sons – Yadu, Druhyu, Puru, Anu and Turvashas – became the progenitors of the main tribes of the Vedic Age.





In ancient India, the Vatsas of the Doab became part of the Kuru dynasty of Hastinapura, and later, Kaushambi near Prayag became the seat of this dynasty, making this city the centre of post-Vedic culture and a major centre of Hinduism. According to historians, the Prayag region has

been a part of the Maurya and Gupta empires, and of the Kushan and Kannauj empires.

Scattered around Prayagraj even today are sites and ruins that underscore its primacy as an administrative and religious centre in ancient times – Kaushambi, a thriving Buddhist centre and the

seat of the Vatsas; Pratisthan Pur, capital of the Chandra dynasty; the medieval site of Kara, the site of the fort of Jaichand of Kannauj; and Shringverpur, an ancient site discovered later.

FOUNDING OF ALLAHABAD

Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang has mentioned his visit to Prayag and the Kumbh Mela, as well as the Akshayvata and the temple where it was found, in his memoirs. In the turbulent period when plunderers and rulers from West Asia coursed through the Indian plains, there was probably a prosperous city at or near Prayag. However, Mughal rule gradually steadied, and according to the *Akbarnama*, the Mughal emperor Akbar built the fort there between 1574 and 1583. Some accounts say he was impressed by the strategic, and some say the spiritual, location of the confluence. He called it Illahabas, or 'the abode of Allah'. Eventually, Akbar's son Salim, later Jahangir, became the sovereign in the region. The city saw turbulence within the Mughal administration but remained in Mughal hands till the mid-eighteenth century. The East India Company by then wanted the fort and city for its strategic location, and signed a treaty with the then Mughal emperor Shah Alam II and the Nawab of Awadh. After a brief period of Maratha rule, when the Mughals and British both vied for control of Allahabad, it passed into British hands in 1801, from the Nawab of Awadh, to whom it had been ceded. The fort was turned into a garrison for British troops, and remains an ordnance depot for the Indian army till date.

BRITISH RULE AND THE INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE

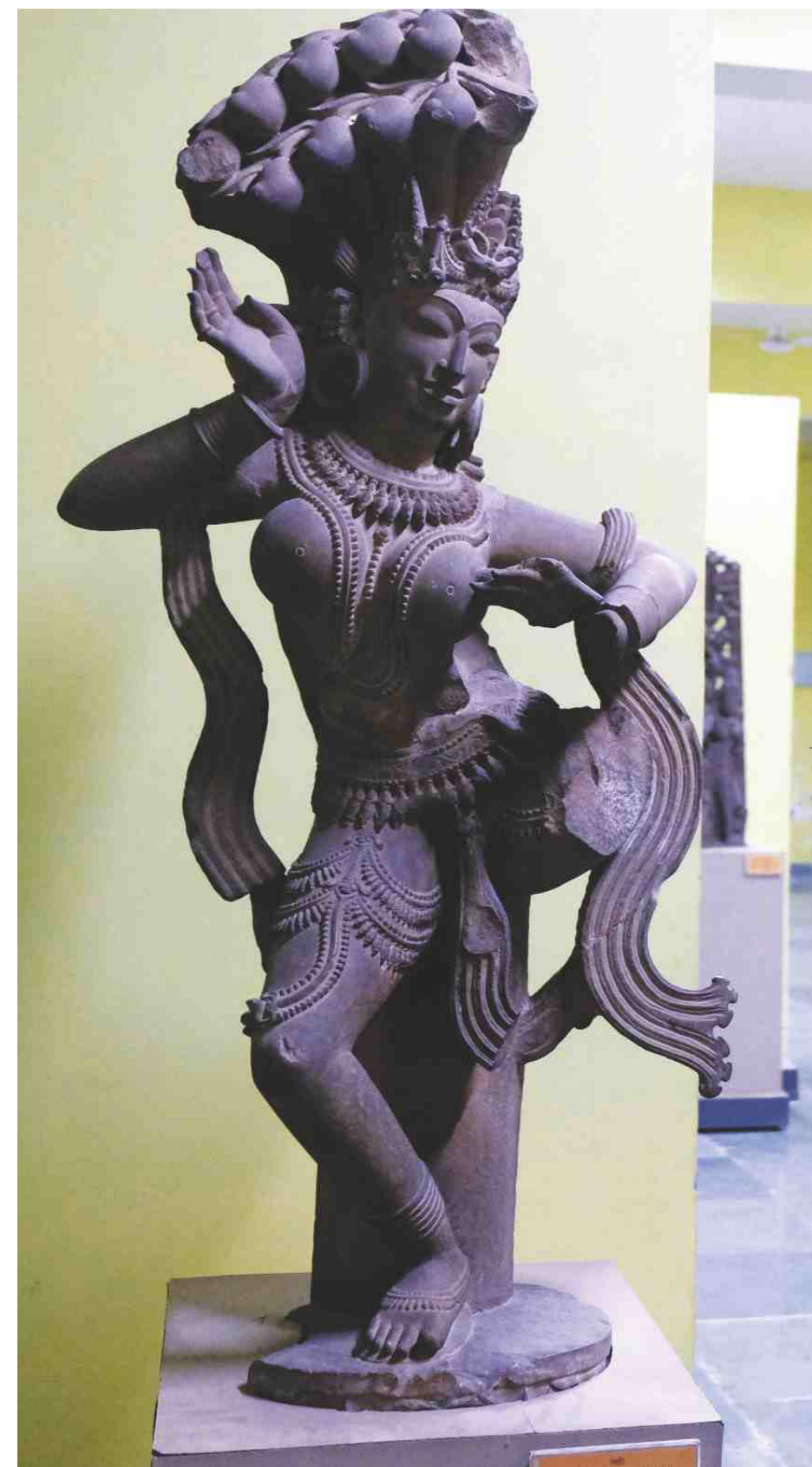
Allahabad was one of the most prominent cities in the North-Western Provinces established by the British. It later became the capital of the Provinces,

and then the capital of the new state called United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. It was taken over by the Indian rebels in the War of Independence in 1857. After the British quelled the mutiny, they established a high court, a police headquarters and a Public Service Commission in the city, turning it into a modern administrative centre.

By this time, Allahabad was also a major centre of education and literature, and fostered much of the intellectual upheaval that drove the struggle for independence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The fourth and eighth sessions of the Indian National Congress were held in the city in 1888 and 1892, respectively, on the grounds of the Darbhanga Castle, Allahabad. By 1900, the city was a major hub of anti-British activities. In 1931, freedom fighter Chandra Shekhar Azad was gunned down here by the British police that surrounded him in what was then Alfred Park. Anand Bhawan and Swaraj Bhawan, the homes of eminent lawyer Motilal Nehru, became centres of the freedom struggle and the activities of the Indian National Congress. Thousands of *satyagrahis* from the city went to jail. When freedom was attained, the country's first prime minister, Pt Jawaharlal Nehru, as well as several Union ministers such as Mangla Prasad, Muzaffar Hasan, KN Katju and Lal Bahadur Shastri, were from Allahabad.

LITERATURE AND EDUCATION

The city has been one of the foremost centres of literature and learning in modern India. Allahabad University was founded in 1887 and is the fourth-oldest university in the country. It has been a major centre of Hindi literary studies and works all through the twentieth century. Many of the Urdu and Hindi literary giants in the first half of the twentieth century, as well as many freedom fighters and political leaders, had their roots in Allahabad. There are far too many literary greats





from this city to list in one place, but Munshi Premchand, Mahadevi Varma, Sumitranandan Pant, Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala', Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, Upendranath 'Ashk' and Harivansh Rai Bachchan are some of the better known among them. Sanskrit scholars like Ganganath Jha, Dr Baburam Saxena, Pandit Raghuvar Mitthulal Shastri, Professor Suresh

Chandra Srivastava, and Dr Manjushree Srivastava were both students and teachers at the University of Allahabad. Prominent Arabic and Persian scholars from the city included Dr Abdul Sattar Siddiqui and Muhammad Naeemur Rehman. Many of the great writers and poets, like Firaq Gorakhpuri (real name Raghupati Sahay) and Bachchan, were either teachers or students, or both, at Allahabad University in their heyday. Firaq Gorakhpuri and Mahadevi Varma were awarded the Jnanpith Award, the highest literary honour in the country, in 1969 and 1982, respectively. It is, therefore, no surprise that Allahabad was also a major publishing hub, with the firm Kitabistan one of its most prolific. It published books by Pt Nehru, among others, and was the first Indian publishing firm to open a branch in London.

PRAYAGRAJ TODAY

Today, Prayagraj remains one of the foremost Hindu spiritual centres in the country, with lakhs of devotees visiting the Triveni Sangam and the Kumbh, Ardh Kumbh and Magh Melas held there. The city's many famous temples, like the Patalpuri, Mankameshwar and Bade Hanumanji mandirs, add to Prayagraj's spiritual magnetism.

Apart from that, Triveni Sangam, All Saints Cathedral, Allahabad Museum, New Yamuna Bridge, Allahabad University, Anand Bhawan and Alfred Park are only a handful of the places that will fascinate both casual visitors and history buffs.

Prayagraj's primary revenue was earlier from tourism, but the economy has now been bolstered by real estate and financial services. The Prayagraj district generates the second-highest revenue in Uttar Pradesh, and the fast-growing, modern Prayagraj city is home to colleges, research institutions and two dozen Central and state government offices.

THE KUMBH MELA

There are many stories about why the Kumbh is celebrated on earth. The one that is most famous is related to Samudra Manthan. Once, while riding his elephant, Lord Indra came across the short-tempered sage Maharishi Durvasa. The sage offered Indra a special garland given to him by Lord Shiva. Indra accepted it and placed it on the elephant's trunk, but the elephant threw it on the ground. The sage was livid and cursed Indra and all the devas to become bereft of all strength, energy and fortune. When all the deities lost their power, the asuras invaded and defeated the devas. Following this, all the deities went to the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva with their problems. The trinity listened to their plight and suggested that the only way to end the curse was by drinking the amrit, the nectar of immortality, that was hidden in the depths of the

ocean of milk, the Kshir Sagar. However, that required churning the entire ocean. Since the devas had lost their strength, they agreed to share half the nectar with the asuras in exchange for their help in the churning. However, when the *amrit kumbh* (the urn containing the nectar) emerged during the churning, Indra's son Jayanta flew away with it. The asuras chased him and tried to overpower him, which resulted in a fierce battle that lasted 12 days. According to the story, during Jayanta's flight, a few drops of nectar fell at four places on earth – Prayag, Haridwar, Ujjain and Nashik – and hence, the Kumbh Mela is organized at these four places. Since the fight lasted for 12 days and one day of the gods is equivalent to one human year, the Kumbh comes to the same city every 12 years.

The Kumbh Mela at Prayag is different from the melas at the other venues in many respects.

This is the only place where *kalpavas* is practised. According to the Vedas, a *kalp* means a period equal to the total number of years in the four yugas – Satyuga, Tretayuga, Dwaparyuga and Kalyuga. Observing *kalpavas* at the Triveni Sangam in *Magh* for one month is supposed to be equivalent to doing *tapasya* for an entire *kalp*.

The Kumbh has been recognized globally as the only phenomenon of its kind. It is the largest peaceful gathering in the world, and considered the world's largest congregation of religious pilgrims. An estimated 120 million people visited the Maha Kumbh in Allahabad in 2013 over a two-month period, including over 30 million on a single day, 10 February 2013. It is estimated that 150 million people visited the Kumbh in 2019. It was included in UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2017.



PRAYAGRAJ ATTRACTIONS

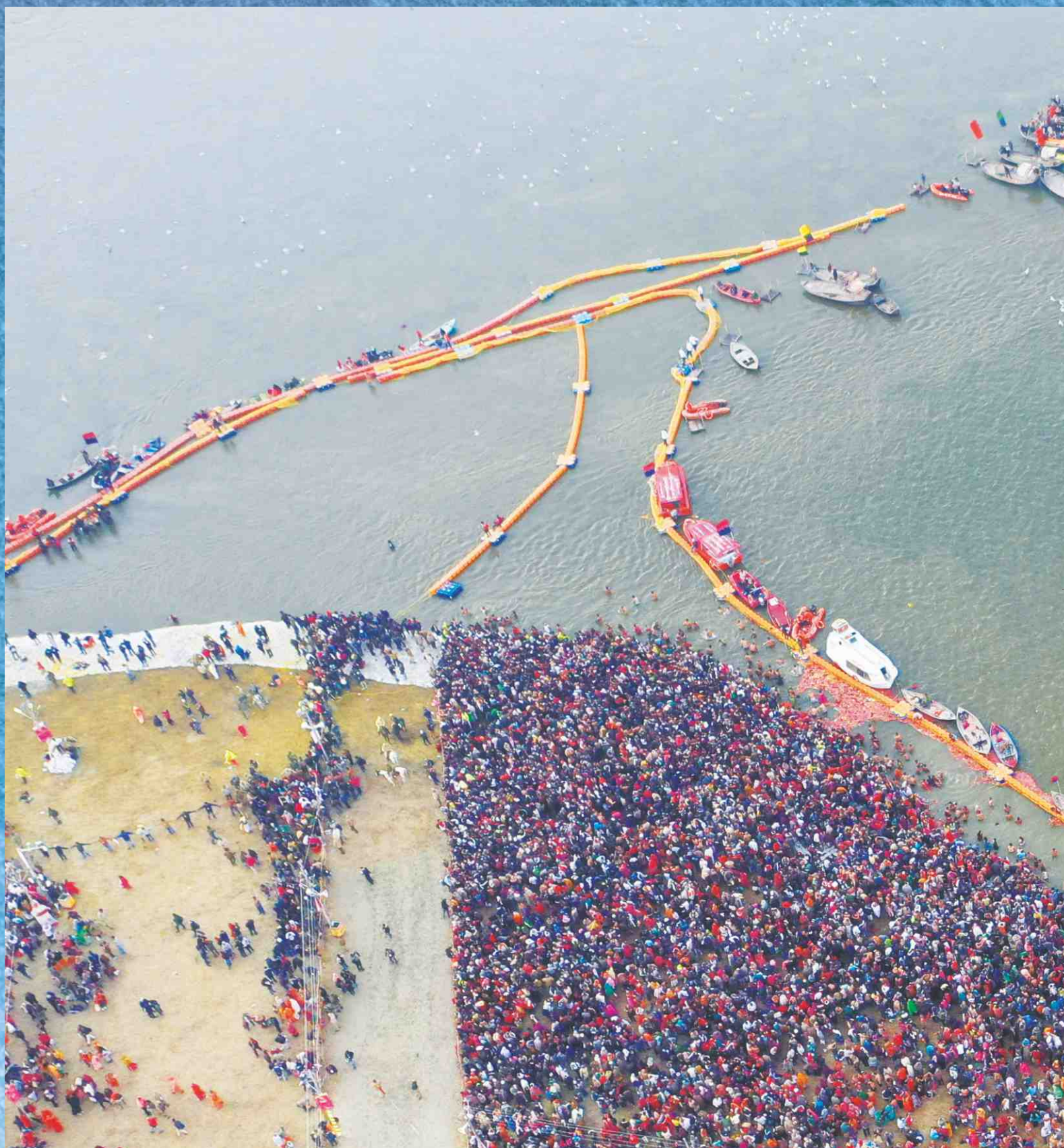
Famous for the Triveni Sangam, the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati, Prayagraj is one of the most important pilgrim destinations for tourists. The primary events here are Magh Mela (annual), Kumbh Mela (every six years) and Maha Kumbh (every 12 years). Other places of historical and religious significance include the Allahabad Fort, built by the Mughal emperor Akbar in 1583, which houses an Ashokan pillar, Patalpuri Temple and the Akshayvata. The Ashokan pillar bears edicts from King Ashoka's time and estimates say it was erected in the third century BC. The Patalpuri Temple houses old idols of deities and is believed to have been visited by Lord Rama. The Akshayvata, the undying banyan tree and the permanent abode of Lord Vishnu, according to legend, is known worldwide. Other tourist attractions include the Dwadus Madhav temples, dedicated to the 12 incarnations of Lord Vishnu, with Veni Madhav being the reigning deity of the city; the 15 Shivalayas, of which Mankameshwar and Someshwar Mahadev are the most prominent; the *shaktipeeths*, which include Alop Devi Temple and Lalita Devi Temple; Anand and Swaraj Bhawans, residences of the Nehru family; Allahabad High Court; Bharadwaj Ashram, the place where Maharshi Bhardwaj, the father of Guru Dronacharya and the architect of the sixth book of the *Rig Veda*, once lived; and Chandra Shekhar Azad Park, among many others. Prayagraj is also close to Kaushambi, Sitamarhi, Kada Dham, Shringverpur, Jhusi, Arail and Vindhyachal and one can easily travel to these places from the city.



SANGAM

TRIVENI SANGAM

One of the primary attractions of the city is no doubt the ancient site of the Triveni Sangam, the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati rivers. The meeting of the differently coloured waters of the Ganga and the Yamuna is a sight that attracts travellers and devotees in huge numbers even today. It is a site of great religious significance, and the mammoth Maha Kumbh Mela (held here every 12 years), the Kumbh (held every six years) and the annual Magh Mela are held here. The *Rig Veda* says that a bath in the Sangam waters washes off all the sins that one has committed and frees one from the cycle of rebirth. The ashes of many national leaders, including Mahatma Gandhi, have been immersed here. Boats are available on hire to reach the Sangam and the night *aarti* on the banks is a memorable sight.

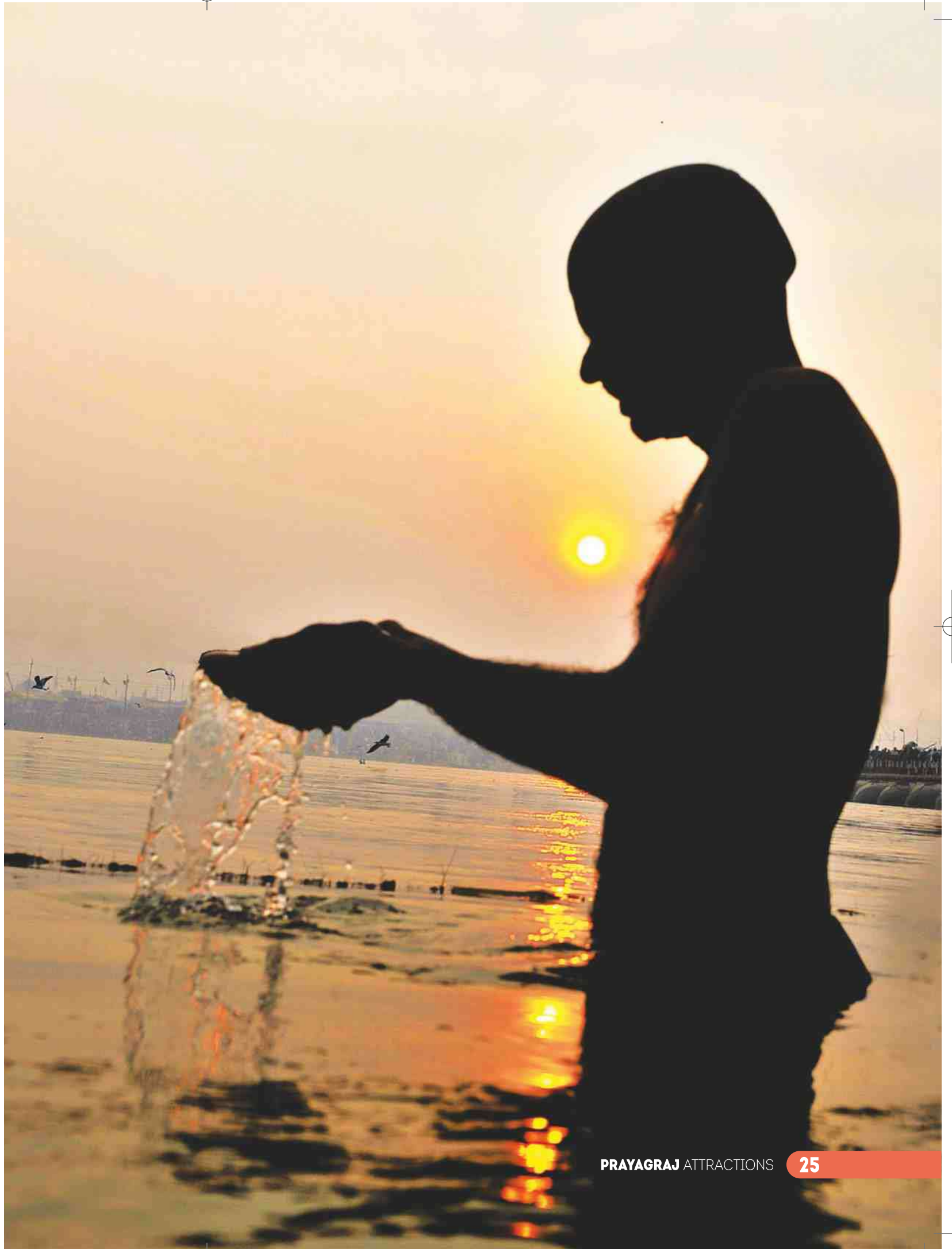
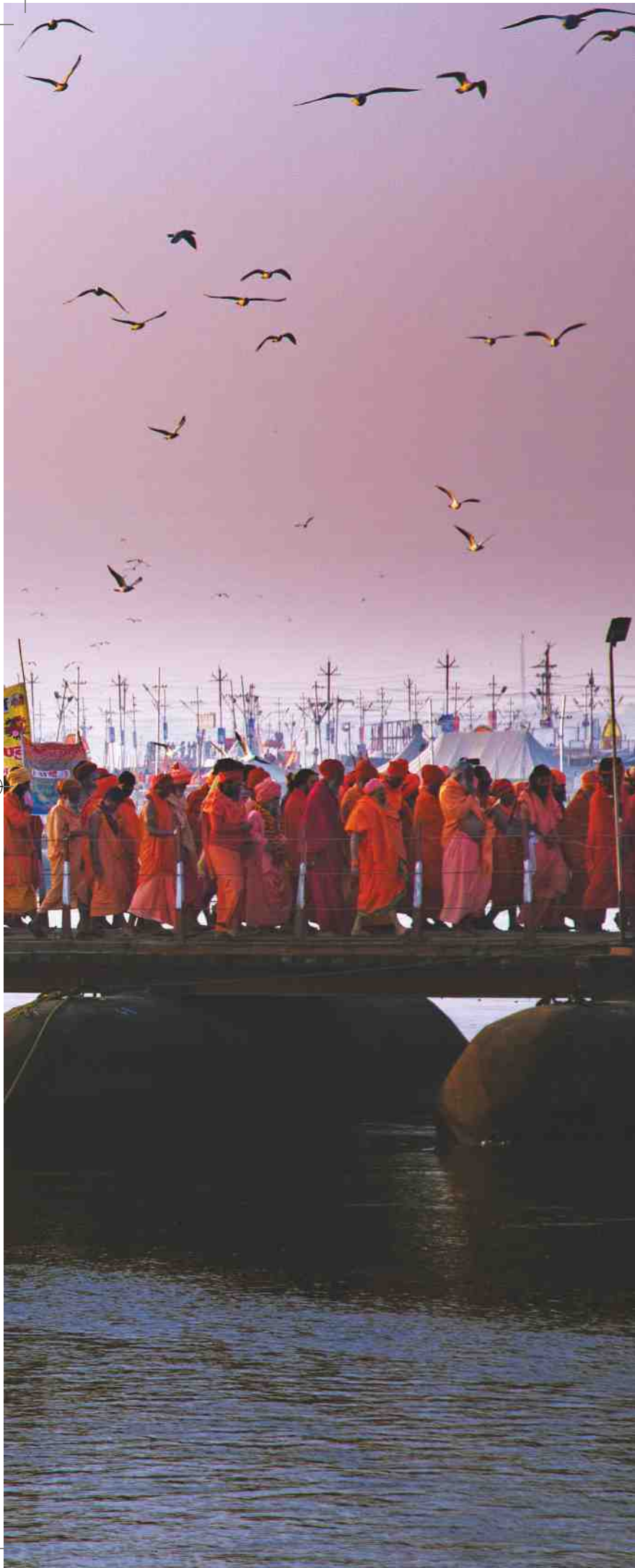














SARASWATI KOOP

Saraswati Koop is a holy well situated inside Allahabad Fort. It is believed that the invisible Saraswati river flows under this well.

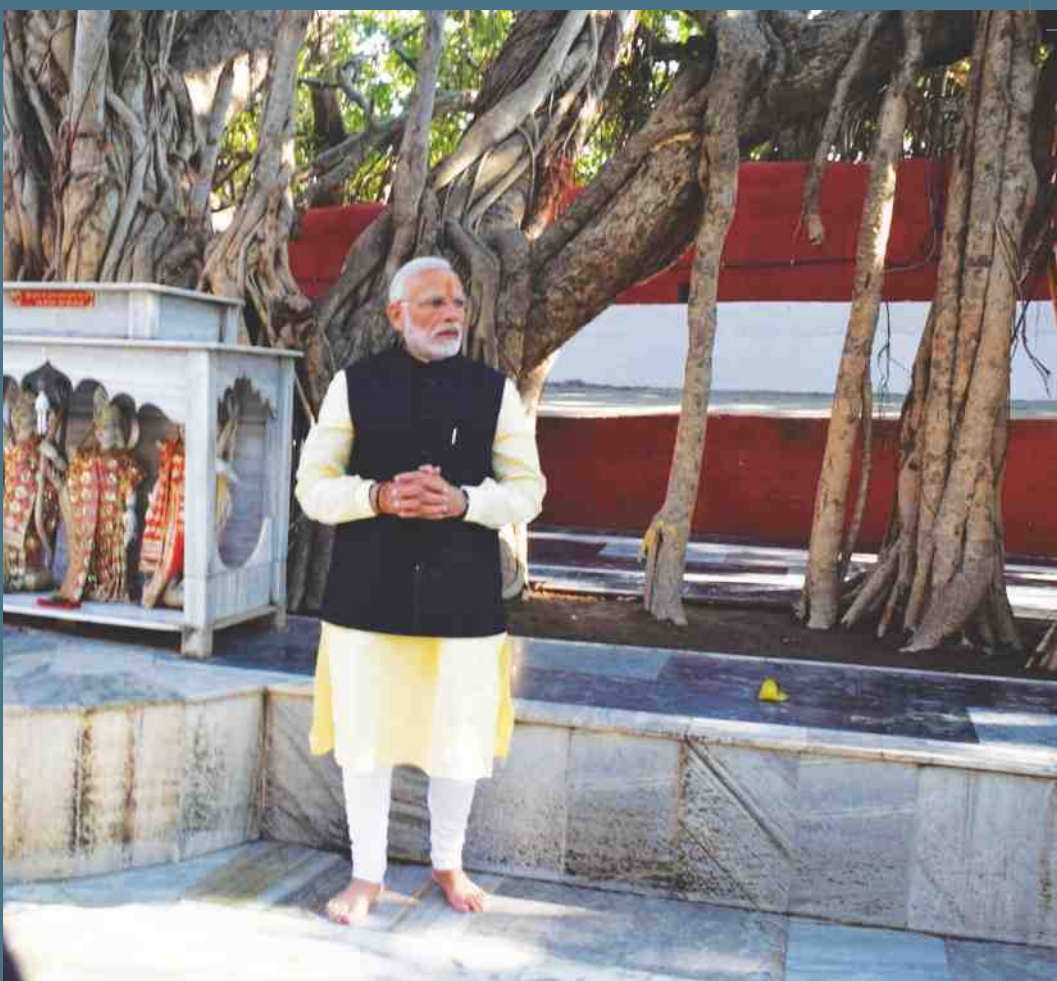
Pilgrims coming to take a holy dip in the Sangam always asked about the Saraswati river, and hence, during Kumbh 2019, the state government installed a grand statue near the well to guide pilgrims to the place where River Saraswati is present. The place is now opened for all and pilgrims can come here to worship and do a parikrama.

AKSHAYVATA

According to legend, the Akshayvata is an undying banyan tree, the only one that survived the great deluge. The *Matsya Purana* says that the great sage Markandeya once asked Lord Narayana to demonstrate to him an example of his heavenly power. Lord Narayana flooded the entire world for a moment, amid which only the Akshayvata was seen standing erect over the swirling waters. The Ramayana makes reference to a banyan tree at Prayag underneath which Lord Rama, Lakshmana and Sita are said to have rested. The Jain *tirthankara* Rishabhanatha is also said to have performed *tapasya* beneath the Akshayvata.

It is said that the original Akshayvata was in the temple in the centre of the Allahabad Fort and was 'moved' to a temple on its outskirts by the British. There are other trees in Gaya, Varanasi and Kurukshetra that are also worshipped as the Akshayvata.







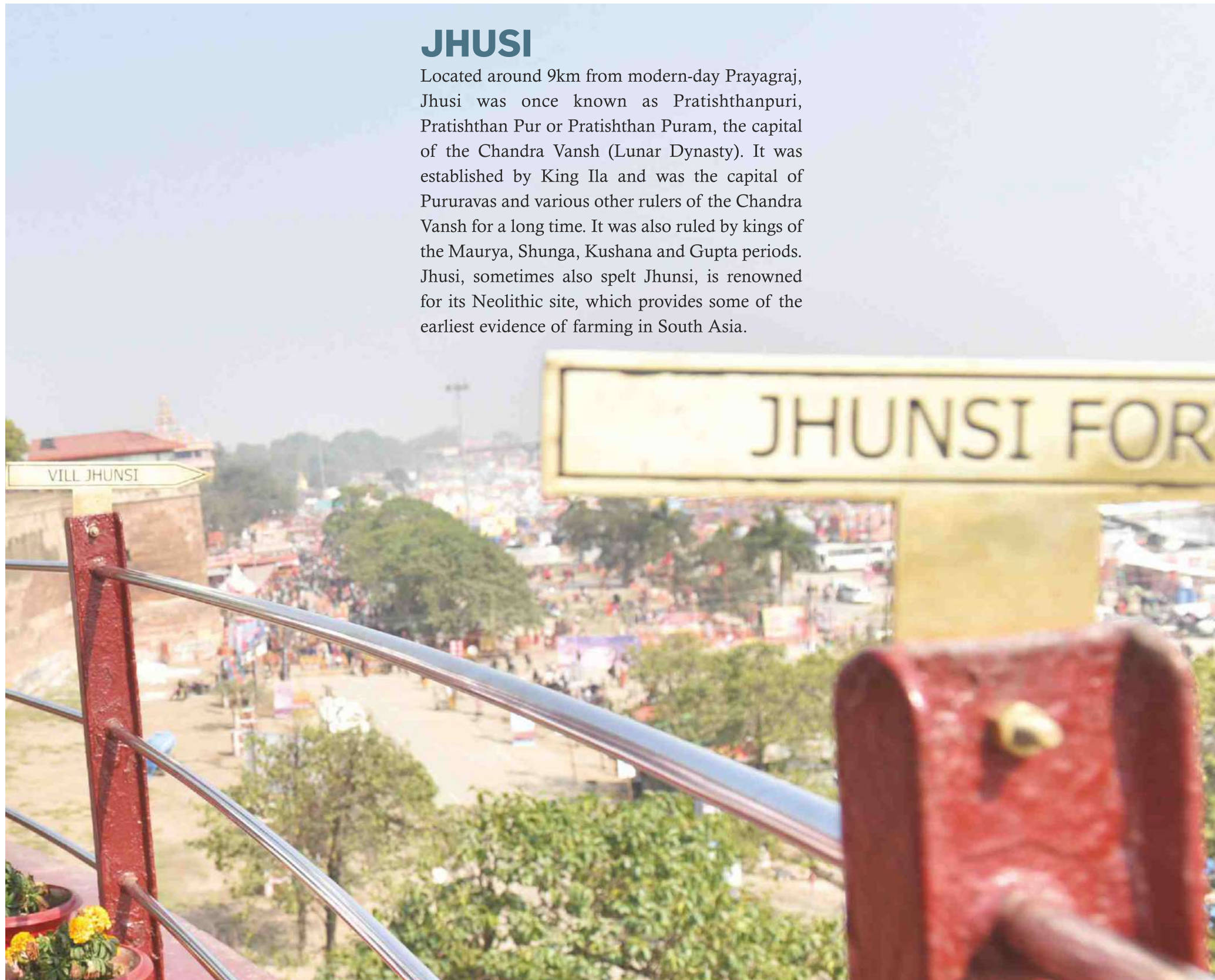


ARAIL

Situated across River Yamuna from the Triveni Sangam, Arail is a prominent place and attracts throngs of explorers and travellers. There are many important religious sites here, including temples of Lord Someshwar Nath, Chakra Madhav, Aadi Beni Madhav and Narsingh, to name a few. Even some famous ashrams, like Shri Sachcha Baba Ashram, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi Vidya Peeth and Ishwar Prem Ashram, also have branches here. However, the main tourist attraction, by all accounts, is the Triveni Pushp, a more-than 100-ft-tall structure overlooking the Yamuna, which has become a popular tourist spot.

JHUSI

Located around 9km from modern-day Prayagraj, Jhusi was once known as Pratishtanpuri, Pratishtan Pur or Pratishtan Puram, the capital of the Chandra Vansh (Lunar Dynasty). It was established by King Ila and was the capital of Pururavas and various other rulers of the Chandra Vansh for a long time. It was also ruled by kings of the Maurya, Shunga, Kushana and Gupta periods. Jhusi, sometimes also spelt Jhunsi, is renowned for its Neolithic site, which provides some of the earliest evidence of farming in South Asia.



Its history can be traced from its high mounds, from which various articles dating back to the sixth century BC and other antiquities belonging to five cultural phases, ranging from the Chalcolithic to the early medieval period, have been excavated.

Jhusi also has a Lord Hanuman Temple and the Samudra Koop, which is considered sacred and has historical significance. It belongs to the period of Samudragupta, a famous ruler of the Gupta Empire and son of the Gupta emperor Chandragupta I, who expanded his dynasty's political power over a vast area.

Kalidasa makes a reference to Pratishtana in his Sanskrit text *Vikramorvashiyam* (a five-act Sanskrit play on the Vedic romantic tale of the king Pururavas and an apsara named Urvashi). He wrote a beautiful description of this city, which is used as a reference point by many scholars even today. Even the legendary Hindi writer Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, in his ballad *Urvashi*, portrayed the tale of affection between Urvashi and Pururavas.

An engraving of Trilochanapala, the Pratihara ruler, was also found at the site in 1830. Trilochanapala was among the last rulers of the Hindu Shahis of Kabul, a Hindu dynasty that ruled the Kabul Valley and Gandhara (present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan) during the early medieval period.

Historians claim that the naming of Jhusi has a legend related to it. It was once led by Har-Bonga, an ineffective ruler under whose rule confusion prevailed. It is said that there was an upheaval and the capital, Pratishtana, was turned upside down using magical powers, following which it was known as 'Ulta Quila'. There was also a blaze that burnt the city to the ground and the remains were known as 'Jhusi', 'a burnt town', from the Hindi root '*jhulasna*'.

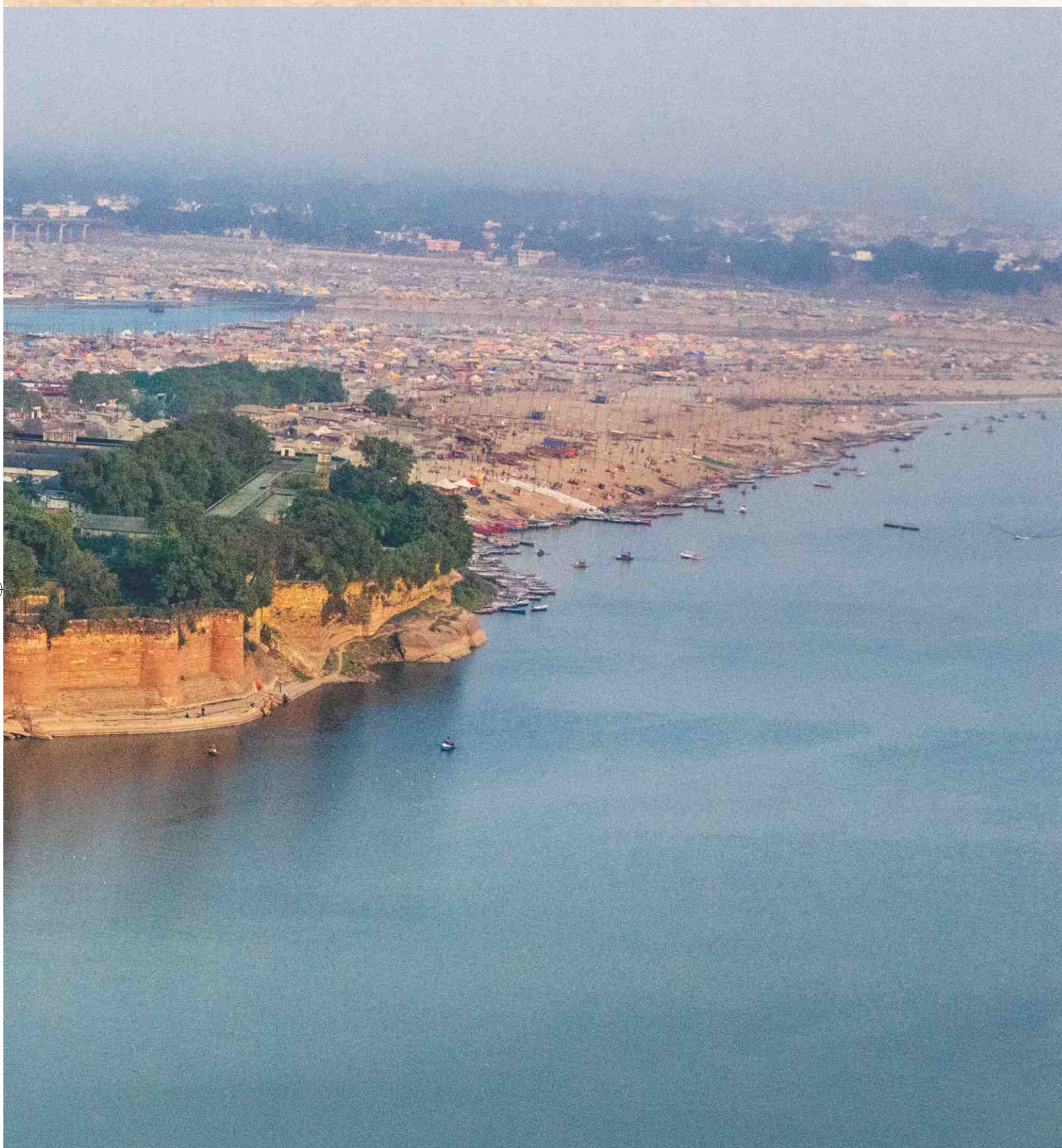


THE ICONIC TREE OF JHUSI

In Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's *Mann Ki Baat* programme, someone from Mahoba asked the PM about a tree in Jhusi quite like another one in Mahoba, UP. Following this, the PMO stepped in and instructed the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) to send a status report on this tree, which is worshipped by both Hindus and Muslims. This tree, one of its kind, is over 1,000 years old. Followers of Baba Shaik Taqi (Saiyid-Sadar-ul-Haq Taqi-ud-din Muhammad Abdul Akbar), whose *mazaar* (tomb) is located beside the tree, believe that the tree was planted by the Baba. The story goes that Shaik Taqi had placed his *datoon* (twig used as a toothbrush) upside down on the ground, and it grew into this tree. The Sufi saint was born in Jhusi in 1320 and died in 1384.

HERITAGE SITES





ALLAHABAD FORT

Built by Mughal ruler Akbar in 1583 on the banks of the Yamuna, the Allahabad Fort is recognized by the Archaeological Survey of India as a monument of national importance. It is presently in use by the Indian army and only a limited area is open to visitors.

This is the largest fort that Akbar built. He called it 'Illahabas', 'blessed by Allah', which later became Illahabad and then Allahabad under the British, giving the city its former name. The outer wall of the fort is unblemished and stands on the water's edge. It was built to enclose the Akshayvata tree, and it is speculated that this was done to prevent Hindus from committing suicide by jumping into the waters from the tree.

The fort was first garrisoned by the British East India Company troops in 1765 as a component of the Treaty of Allahabad. After a bitter tussle with the Mughal rulers over the next nearly forty years, it was finally ceded to them. It was turned into a military depot then and continues to be an ordnance depot today.



ASHOKAN PILLAR

Ashoka was the best remembered ruler of the Maurya dynasty for his conversion to a philosophy of non-violence after several military conquests. After his successful but deadly campaign in Kalinga, a remorse-stricken Ashoka converted to Buddhism and spent the rest of his life propagating non-violence. He famously had various edicts engraved on rocks, columns and caverns all through his vast domain. The Ashokan column in the Allahabad Fort is said to have been raised in the third century BC, probably in Kaushambi, and later moved to Allahabad during Mughal rule. The column, made of polished sandstone, stands 10.7m in height and is inscribed with an Ashokan edict, another inscription from the time of Samudragupta and a later inscription by Jahangir.









ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT

ADDRESS: Drummond Road

WEBSITE: www.allahabadhighcourt.in

TIMINGS: Monday to Friday, 10am–5pm

The Allahabad High Court was the fourth high court to be set up in India. It has jurisdiction over the territory of Uttar Pradesh. It was established as the High Court of Judicature for the North-Western Provinces in Agra on 17 March 1866 by the Indian High Courts Act, 1861.

This building, a feat of engineering that shows a combination of eastern and western styles, was designed by architect Frank Lishman. Notable are its domed pedimented centre, arcaded wings, stone balustrades and curves. Sir Walter Morgan was the first chief justice of the Allahabad High Court. At present, there are more than a hundred judges working in the judicature of Allahabad and Lucknow.









ANAND BHAWAN

ADDRESS: Near Balson Crossing

TIMINGS: Tuesday to Sunday,
9.30am–5.30pm

Anand Bhawan was the home of the Nehru family in Allahabad. Motilal Nehru, former PM Jawaharlal Nehru's father, bought it in the early 1900s when their previous home, Swaraj Bhawan, was converted into the regional headquarters of the Indian National Congress during the freedom struggle. Both buildings stand in the same park.

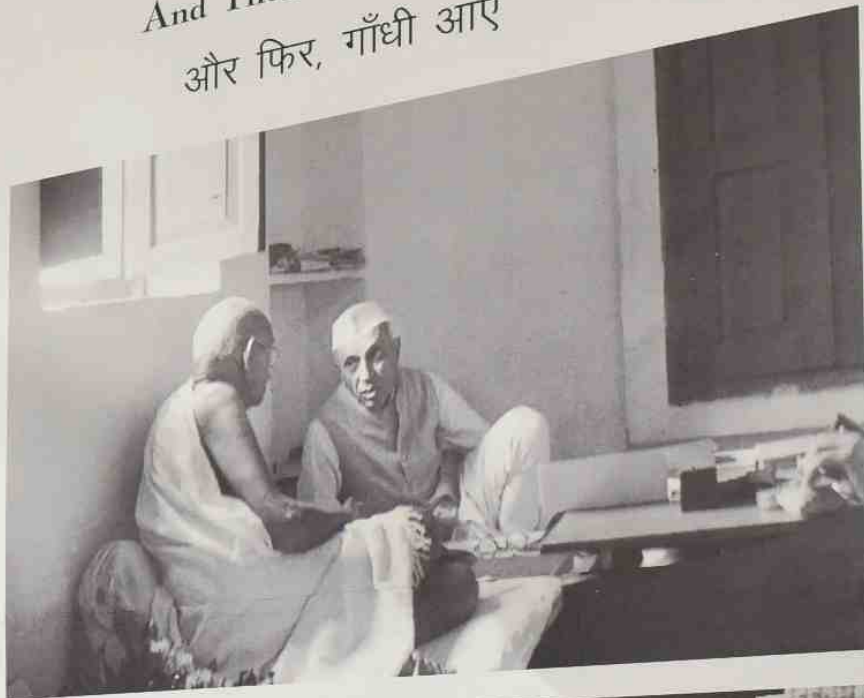
Anand Bhawan is now a popular house museum for the Nehru family, displaying the personal effects and artefacts of three Nehru generations. It was donated to the government by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1970. It contains the famous Jawahar Planetarium and Jawahar Bal Bhawan.











जवाहरलाल के शब्दों में—

“फिर गाँधी आए।
जैसे कोई ताजी हवा का झोंका आके हमें उठ खड़े होने और
गहरी सांसें लेने को मजबूर करे — जैसे कोई रोशनी की तीव्र
किरण घोर अंधेरे को छिन्न-भिन्न कर दे, जैसे कोई आंधी हर
चीज़ को उलट-पलट दे, सबसे ज्यादा लोगों के सोच-विचार के
द्वारे। लगता था, कि वह भारत के जन-समूह के बीच से उठी एक
आवाज़ हमसे कह रही है, देखो इन लोगों को, समझो इनके
हालात को, इन किसान और मजदूरों के सीने पर जो बोझ बने
हुए हैं। इस सामाजिक शोषण की व्यवस्था को खत्म करो, जो
गरीबी और दरिद्रता का बुनियादी कारण है।”

In Jawaharlal's words,

"And then Gandhi came.

He was like a powerful current of fresh air that made us stretch ourselves and take deep breaths, like a beam of light that pierced the darkness and removed the scales from our eyes, like a whirlwind that upset many things but most of all the working of people's minds. He did not descend from the top; he seemed to emerge from the millions of India, speaking their language and incessantly drawing attention to them and their appalling condition. Get off the backs of these peasants and workers, he told us, all you who live by their exploitation; get rid of the system that produces this poverty and misery."

Right to Left: To the Nehrū family, Gandhi was much more than a political mentor; he was 'Bapu' – a beloved friend. We see in these pictures the deep, non-familial relationship the Acharyas had with the Nehrus, and saying goodbye to Indira and Jaganmohal, sharing a playful moment with little Indu waiting on him during a fast, Bhagubhai and Mahatma Gandhi and Rajendra Prasad in the library of Anant Thakuram (from left to right) Acharya

[illegible]

SWARAJ BHAWAN

ADDRESS: Near Balson Crossing

TIMINGS: Tuesday to Sunday, 9.30am–5.30pm

Swaraj Bhawan, in the same complex as Anand Bhawan, was the home of Motilal Nehru, the father of Jawaharlal Nehru. He had the large property restored from a state of disrepair and turned it into a veritable palace. The Nehru family home, which was furnished with souvenirs and furnishings from Nehru's frequent travels abroad, witnessed the birth of Indira Nehru, who would be the second prime minister in the family.

However, by 1920, the Nehru House was a hub of meetings and activities for the Indian National Congress and was donated officially to it by Nehru in 1930. A second building was raised to serve as the family home, and the previous Anand Bhawan was rechristened Swaraj Bhawan during the country's freedom struggle.

It has 42 rooms and much memorabilia, including a *charkha* used by Mahatma Gandhi, photos of the Indian freedom movement, personal belongings of the Nehru family and a basement that is said to have been used for gatherings.













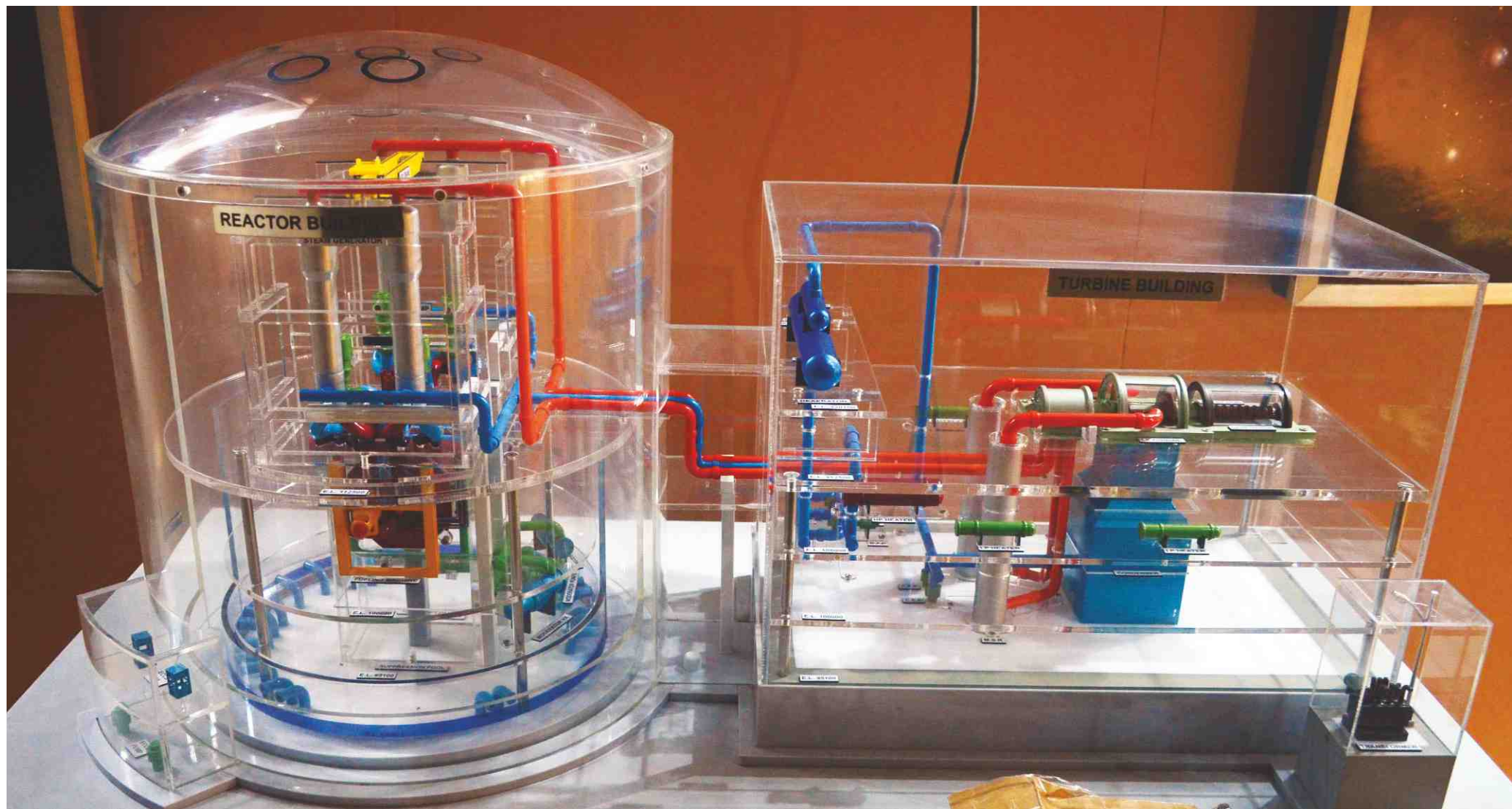
JAWAHAR PLANETARIUM

ADDRESS: Tagore Town

TIMINGS: Tuesday to Sunday (Mondays closed), 11am–4pm

The building housing the Jawahar Planetarium was built in 1979 and is situated close to Anand Bhawan, the home of the Nehru family, which is now a home museum. The planetarium is run by the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, established in 1964, the year former PM Jawaharlal Nehru passed away, and has its headquarters at Teen Murti House, New Delhi.

Every year, the renowned Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Lecture is held at the planetarium on 14 November, the birth anniversary of India's first prime minister. The planetarium has been endeavouring to engender a scientific temper among the masses through its spectacular shows on space, the solar system and other celestial bodies.









ALLAHABAD MUSEUM

ADDRESS: Near Chandra Shekhar Azad Park, Kamla Nehru Road

WEBSITE: <http://theallahabadmuseum.com>

TIMINGS: Tuesday to Sunday, 10.30am–4.30pm

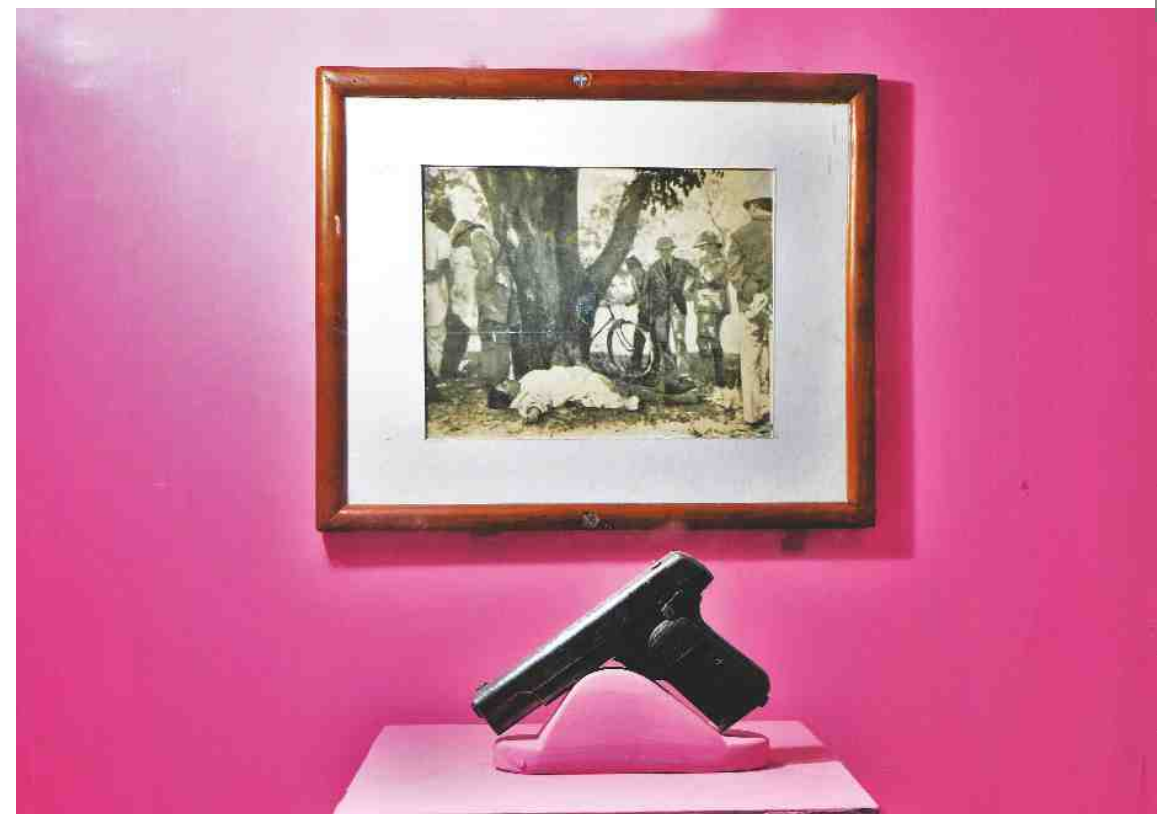
This museum in Prayagraj's Chandra Shekhar Azad Park is one of the best and largest in India. Established in 1931 as a natural history museum, Allahabad Museum has become well known for its rich collection of art, stone sculptures, terracotta, coins, other archaeological finds and paintings.

The museum is especially notable for its individual galleries that are devoted to archaeological findings, art, natural history exhibits and artefacts. It also gives a clear insight into the history, culture, heritage and Independence movement of India.

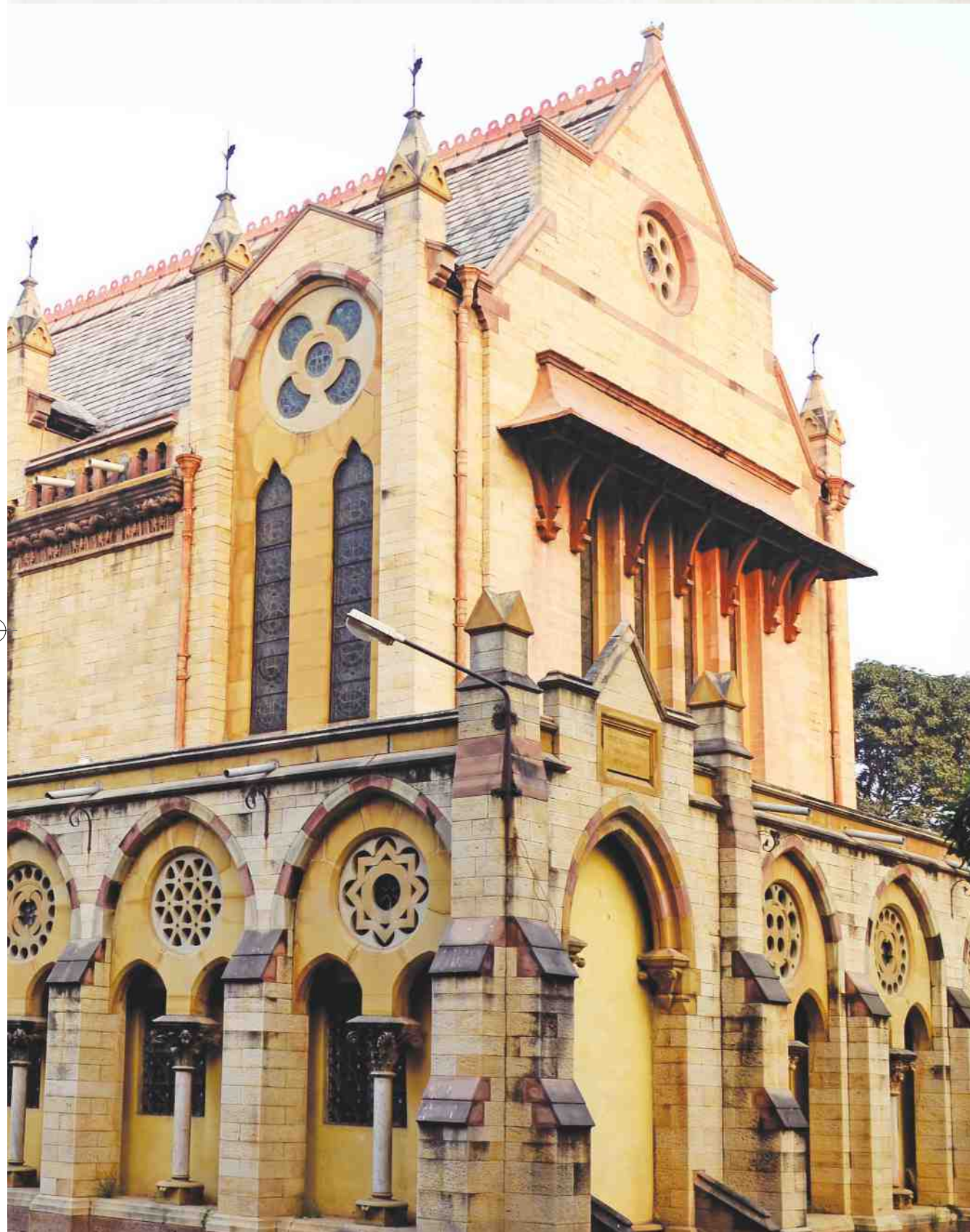
The foundation stone of the present museum building was laid in December 1947 by Jawaharlal Nehru, and it was opened to the public in 1954. In 1985, it was declared an institution of national importance. The museum houses various rock sculptures, miniature paintings from Rajasthan, terracotta from Kaushambi, and literary and art works from the Bengal School of Art. Its rock art gallery has the largest collection of prehistoric paintings displayed in India, dating from 1400 BC to 2000 BC. Those interested in Indian literature will find much reference material on many prominent writers in Hindi and Urdu.

The museum boasts 19 exclusive canvasses painted by Russian painter Nicholas Roerich. The museum has galleries devoted to Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. The pistol of Chandra Shekhar Azad, a Colt Model 1903 Pocket Hammerless semi-automatic .32 bore, is displayed in the entrance hall of the museum. Another valued possession is the Gandhi Smriti Vahan, the Ford lorry on which Mahatma Gandhi's ashes were taken for immersion in the Triveni Sangam on 12 February 1948.







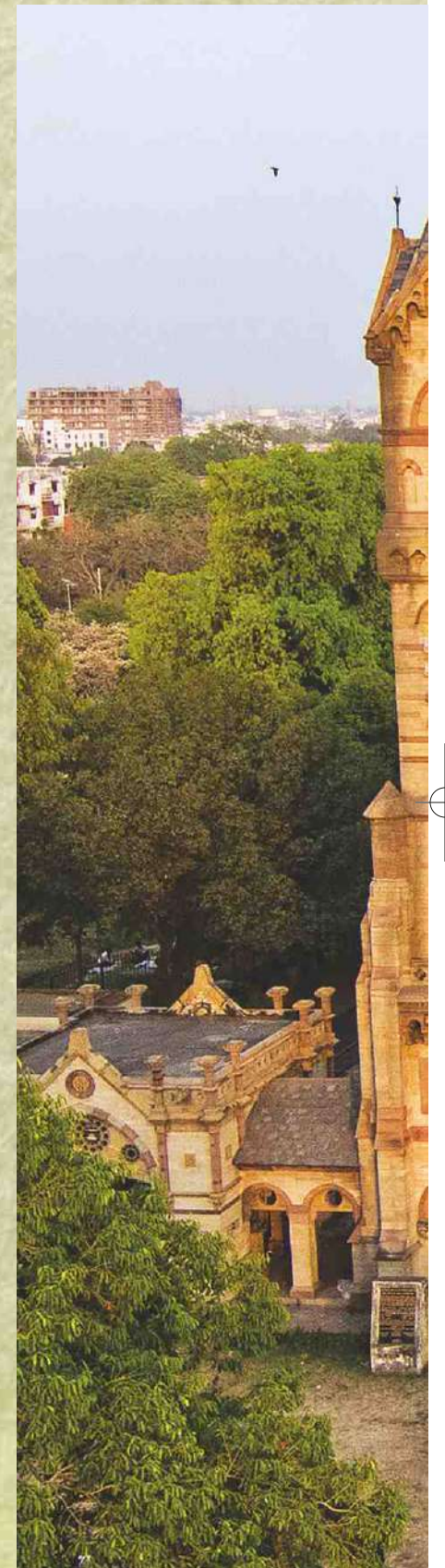


PUBLIC LIBRARY

Established in 1864 in Chaitham Lines, this is the oldest library in the city and houses a large number of rare books, manuscripts and journals. This collection includes about 1,25,000 books, forty types of magazines and 28 newspapers in Hindi, English, Urdu and Bangla, besides 21 Arabic manuscripts. There is also a collection of old government publications, parliamentary papers, and blue books of the nineteenth century.

This landmark building served as the house of the legislative assembly during the British Raj, when Allahabad was the capital of the United Provinces. In 1879, the Public Library was moved to the present premises inside the Chandra Shekhar Azad Park, earlier called the Company Garden, and even earlier, Alfred Park.

The building is also known as the Thornhill Mayne Memorial and was designed by Richard Roskell Bayne in the Scottish Baronial style with sharp columns and turrets of granite and sandstone.





ALLAHABAD UNIVERSITY

ADDRESS: University Road

WEBSITE: www.allduniv.ac.in

TIMINGS: Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm

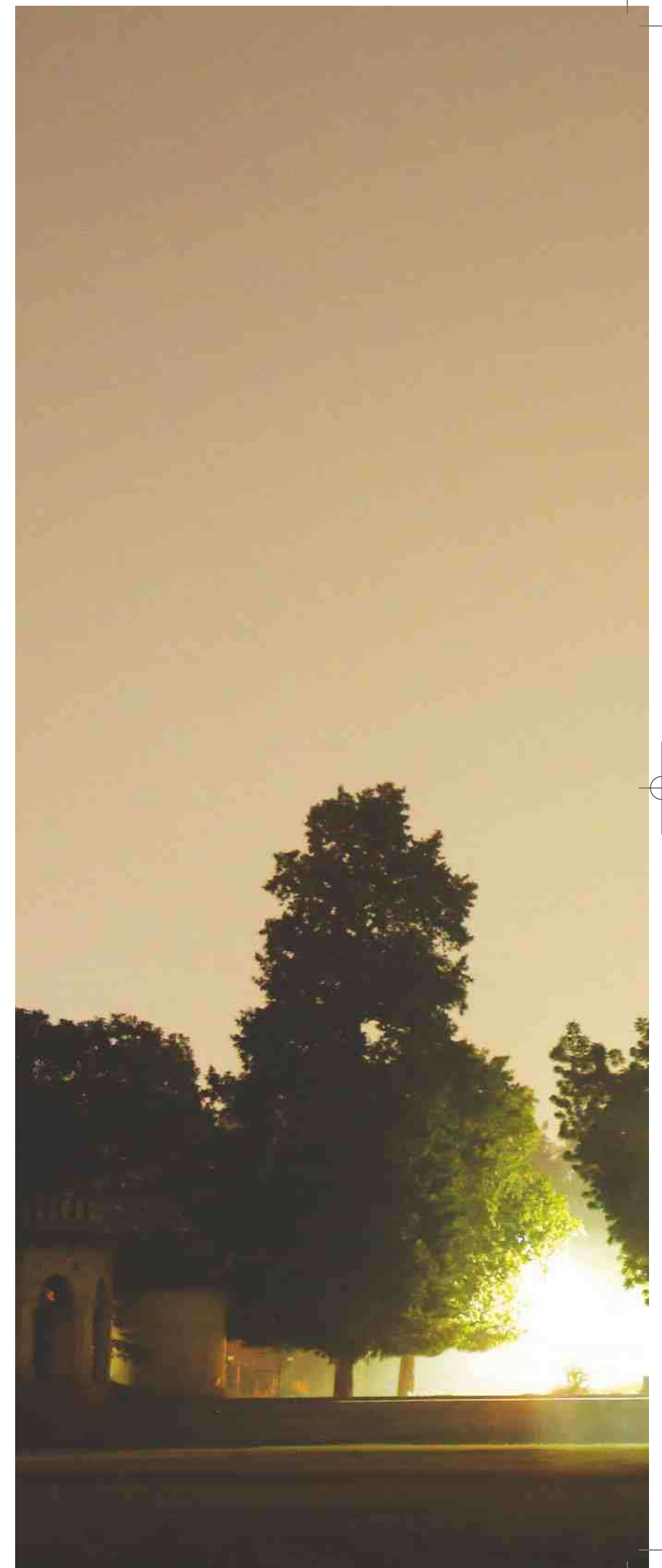
The Allahabad University, a public Central university, was established in 1887. It is the fourth-oldest modern university in the country, after Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Its origins lie in the Muir Central College, named after the British Lieutenant Governor of the North-Western Provinces, Sir William Muir, in 1876. At first, it functioned under the University of Calcutta, but in 1887, it became an autonomous university.

Over the years, the faculty has featured a large number of government officials and statesmen, including one president and two vice-presidents of India, two prime ministers, several Union and state ministers, at least four chief justices of the Supreme Court, besides several administrators. In 1992, the state government formally recognized it as a 'Premier Institution (Vishesh Agrani

Sanstha)'. It has five faculties and three institutes.

The university's precursor, the Muir Central College, was well regarded as an institution of advanced education established by William Muir in 1872. However, it was merged into the university after the Allahabad University Act was passed in 1921. At one point, the university was known as 'the Oxford of the East'.

The library of the Muir Central College, otherwise called Central Library, was formally started in 1916. Its foundation stone was laid by Sir John Hewett in 1910. It, too, has been a focal point of learning for over a century. Besides the library, some of the other must-see buildings of the university include the Department of Mathematics, the Department of Science and the Senate Hall.







PRAYAG SANGEET SAMITI

ADDRESS: Kamla Nehru Road

WEBSITE: www.prayagsangeetsamiti.co.in

TIMINGS: Monday to Saturday, 10am–5pm

When it was established, the Prayag Sangeet Samiti was a valiant attempt at rescuing music from the disrepute it had fallen into during the period from the fifteenth to the seventeenth

centuries. Since its inception in 1926 by Major (Dr) Ranjit Singh, Baijnath Sahai and Satyanand Joshi, the Prayag Sangeet Samiti has been the premier institution for the practice and propagation of music in India.

Founded with the aim of popularizing the cause of Indian classical music in India, it awards degrees and certificates to students of the Hindustani classical arts in music and dance. It is through the efforts of this institution that music was included as one of the subjects in the high

school and intermediate examinations curriculum in Uttar Pradesh.

The institute's activities are concentrated in North India, and it has produced stalwarts from the states of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar and the north-eastern states. Its annual music gatherings have, for a long time, remained a point of convergence of cultural activities in Uttar Pradesh.

NORTH CENTRAL ZONE CULTURAL CENTRE

ADDRESS: CSP Singh Marg, Near Circuit House

WEBSITE: www.nczccindia.in/

TIMINGS: Monday to Saturday, 10am–5pm

The North Central Zone Cultural Centre (NCZCC) is one of the seven zonal cultural

centres set up to provide facilities for the creative development of the arts and literature, with special emphasis on folk and tribal arts. The zonal centres were set up to emphasize the diverse identities of the states in their zones, and also to bring out the cultural kinship between them. They were intended for the restoration of vanishing arts and increase of cultural outreach by organizing cultural performances for average citizens.

NCZCC covers seven states – Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana,

Uttarakhand and Delhi. The Governor of Uttar Pradesh is the chairman of the Centre and the general supervision is done by the Central government.

The undertakings of the Society are overseen by two bodies – the Governing Body, and the Executive Board with its two committees, the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee – which help the apex bodies in their working.





BADE HANUMAN JI

Situated close to the Sangam, this temple is extraordinary for its colossal, recumbent statue of Lord Hanuman, installed a couple of feet beneath the ground. When the Ganga is in spate, this temple gets submerged. There are numerous accounts of how this temple was built, the most popular being one about a merchant from Kannauj. It is said that the merchant desired a son, and so he had a huge statue of Lord Hanuman made in the mountains of Vindhyachal. He decided to bathe this colossal statue at various pilgrimage sites, but at Sangam, he dreamt that if he left the statue here, his wishes would be fulfilled. Over time, the statue was covered by soil till it is said that a sadhu discovered it, dug it out, and the temple was built.





DWADUS MADHAV

The name Dwadus Madhav denotes 12 incarnations of Lord Vishnu and they mark their presence in Prayagraj through 12 different temples known as the Dwadus Madhav Temples. The Lord Veni Madhav Temple is one among the 12 temples and is supposed to be the chief divinity of Prayagraj. It is said that during the times of the Ramayana, when Lord Rama, Sita and Lakshmana were in exile, even Lord Rama visited this temple.



VENI MADHAV TEMPLE

According to sacred texts, there are 12 Madhav deities at various places in the city of Prayagraj. The Veni Madhav (or Beni Madhav) Temple in Daraganj is one among them. It is an old Lakshmi-Narayan temple devoted to Lord Vishnu and Goddess Lakshmi, and, according to local beliefs, was visited by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The sanctum of the Veni Madhav Temple enshrines the magnificent, ancient black stone idols of Radha and Krishna. Adjacent to it are the Narsingh, Jagannath and Shiva temples.

OTHER MADHAV TEMPLES

- ¢ Shankh Madhav (near Chhatnag Sadafal Ashram)
- ¢ Chakra Madhav (Arail, behind Yamuna Bank)
- ¢ Gada Madhav (Naini Cheoki Railway Station)
- ¢ Padam Madhav (Sujavan Dev, Bhita)
- ¢ Anant Madhav (near Sangam)
- ¢ Bindu Madhav (Draupadi Ghat, near CDA-P office)
- ¢ Manohar Madhav (Johnstonganj, near Asha Radio Company)
- ¢ Asi Madhav (near Nag Vasuki Temple)
- ¢ Sankasht Har Madhav (Jhusi, near Gangoli Shivalaya Road)
- ¢ Aadi Madhav and Aadi Beni Madhav (Arail, behind Yamuna Bank, near Triveni Pushp)

SHIVALAYAS

Prayagraj houses about 15 important Shivalayas, but most prominent among them are Mankameshwar and Someshwar Mahadev. Pilgrims chanting the *mahamantra* 'Om Namah Shivaya' throng these temples during the pious month of *Sawan* (July-August), on Mondays and on the occasion of Mahashivratri, which are considered to be the special days of Lord Shiva. Even on Pradosh, a special day according to the Hindu calendar, people gather in these Shivalayas in large numbers for darshan.



MANKAMESHWAR TEMPLE

Situated close to Minto Park on the banks of the Yamuna, the Mankameshwar Temple is one of the primary spiritual destinations in the city. 'Mankameshwar' means 'the lord of the fulfilment of wishes'. This temple is believed to have been built by Lord Rama himself on his way to Chitrakoot. The main Shivalingam here is made of dark stone. It is said that this Shivalingam has a presence even beneath the ground. The period of *Sawan*, or the monsoons, is the most favourable time for darshan, as indicated by the Hindu calendar. Mondays are also considered auspicious days to visit.



NAG VASUKI TEMPLE

The Nag Vasuki Temple is situated on the banks of the Ganga in Daraganj. There are references to it even in the Puranas. It is dedicated to Vasuki, the king of all serpents, and is a fine specimen of medieval architecture. It has statues of Nag Raj and Ganesh–Parvati. Adjacent to the temple is a huge, one-of-a-kind statue of Bhishma Pitamah in a reclining posture. An annual fair is held here on Nag Panchami, when large numbers of devotees come here for darshan.



SHAKTIPEETHS

The story of *shaktipeeth* dates back to the time when Lord Shiva's wife Sati immolated herself and the grieving Shiva travelled through the skies with her dead body. Afraid that Lord Shiva might destroy the entire universe in his anger and agony, Lord Vishnu cut Sati's body into 51 pieces, which fell in 51 different places in India. Sanctified by the touch of the goddess' body, these places were deemed as holy sites for pilgrimage and became *shaktipeeths*. However, in Prayagraj, there is a dispute between two temples, Alopi Devi and Lalita Devi, as to which one is the original *shaktipeeth*. There are anecdotes and myths related to both these temples and hence devotees pay equal respect to both the temples.

ALOPI DEVI TEMPLE

Situated opposite the Shankaracharya Ashram in the city's Alopibagh locality, the Alopi Devi Temple is believed to be one of the 51 *shaktipeeths*. It is a peculiar temple since there is no statue of any goddess here. Instead, a wooden carriage or *doli* is worshipped. The name 'Alopi' (vanished) comes from the legend that after the death of his wife Sati, the lamenting Lord Shiva journeyed through the skies with her dead body. When Lord Vishnu's *chakra* cut Sati's body into several pieces, the last part fell in this area. After that, the entire body disappeared, hence the name Alopi. However, this claim is often debated since there is just one *shaktipeeth* in Prayagraj, and many say it is the Lalita Devi Temple, where Sati's fingers are believed to have fallen.





LALITA DEVI TEMPLE

Said to be one of the 51 *shaktipeeths* and located in Meerapur, the Lalita Devi Temple is one of the most renowned temples in the city, where pilgrims from all across the country congregate for darshan. It is believed that the fingers of Goddess Sati fell here when Lord Vishnu, in an attempt to relieve Lord Shiva from his agony over the death of his wife, directed his *chakra* at her corpse. However, some believe that the Alopi Devi Temple in another part of the city is the real *shaktipeeth*.





BHARADWAJ ASHRAM

The Bharadwaj Ashram is an image of a continuum of Hindu religious belief since time immemorial. River Ganga probably once flowed by the ashram as it was said to have been situated on its banks during the time of Lord Rama. A shrine marks the spot on which the hermitage of Maharshi Bharadwaj, one of the most highly respected Vedic sages, is believed to have stood.

An economist, scholar and physician, Maharshi Bharadwaj is considered the father of Ayurveda. His contribution to ancient Indian texts, mainly the Puranas and the *Rig Veda*, provide an insight into the local culture of ancient times. In fact, he and his students are viewed as the writers of the sixth book of the *Rig Veda*. He was also the father of Dronacharya, the guru of the Pandavas and the Kauravas.

This ashram once was a famous educational centre. It is said that Lord Rama visited this place with Sita and Lakshmana on his way to Chitrakoot during his exile, and had a long exchange with the Maharshi. Redesign and renovation has been carried out recently and a 30ft statue of Maharshi Bharadwaj has been erected to make the landmark more attractive.



HANUMAN TEMPLE RAMBAGH

Dedicated to Lord Hanuman, this temple is situated in the Rambagh area and is supposed to be quite old. The temple has special significance because it is one of the rarest *dakshin mukhi* or south-facing Hanuman temples in the country. As per ancient Hindu scriptures, south-facing Hanuman temples have special significance.



HANUMAN TEMPLE CIVIL LINES

The Civil Lines Hanuman Temple was made by Ramlochan Brahmachari and is over six decades old. It is said that this saint built this temple all by himself. According to a story, the Bacchaji family, which was supposed to be among the richest families of the city during those times, had told Brahmachariji that for every rupee he collected to build this temple, they would donate ₹2.

NAVAGRAHA TEMPLE

Built on the land belonging to the Pathar Chatti Ramlila Committee, the uniqueness of the Navagraha Temple lies in that it is dedicated to all the nine planets of the solar system. It houses idols of all the nine planet gods in the temple and is one of the latest additions to the city temples. This beautifully built temple is close to the old city and the Rambagh railway station.





SHANKAR VIMAN MANDAPAM

Situated close to the Allahabad Fort and the Lord Hanuman Temple, this 130-ft-high, four-storey temple, built in the South Indian style, has the idols of Kumaril Bhatt, Jagatguru Adi Shankaracharya, Kamakshi Devi (with 51 *shaktipeeths* around), Tirupati Balaji (with 108 Vishnus around) and Yog Shashtra Sahasrayoga Linga (with 108 Shivas around). The temple is surrounded by various other religious structures like the Shri Ramanandacharya Math, Laxmi-Narayan Temple, Radha-Krishna-Gopal Temple, Triveni Temple, Jagdish Bhagwan Temple and others.



RUPA GAUDIYA MATH

About 2km from the Sangam, the Rupa Gaudiya Math was established in 1929 by AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, also known as Srila Prabhupada, the founder of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), in the Tula Ram Bagh locality. This place is credited with giving *deeksha* to him. Followers of ISKCON revere Srila Prabhupada as a messenger of Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, a mystic and saint who was the chief proponent of the Achintya Bheda Abheda and Gaudiya Vaishnavism tradition within Hinduism. Srila Prabhupada travelled to the USA in 1965, where he established ISKCON at the age of 69. He went to various countries all over the world nearly 14 times, and established over 100 Krishna temples.



PANDILA MAHADEV TEMPLE

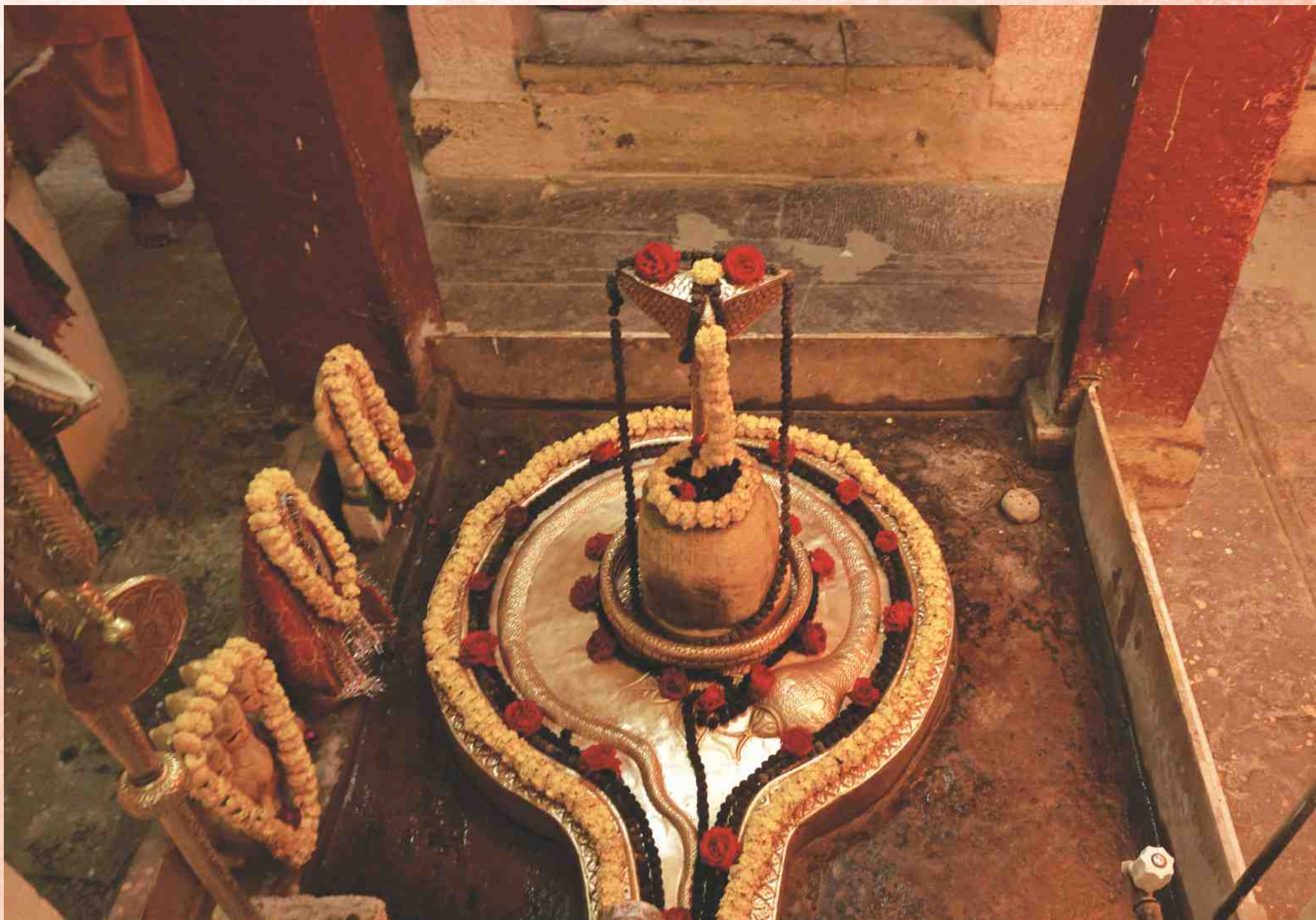
Located about 3km from the city in the Phaphamau area, this temple is an integral part of Prayag's Panchkoshi Parikrama (5km circumambulation), which is said to absolve pilgrims of their sins. Dedicated to Lord Shiva, the Pandila Mahadev Temple is also known as Pandeshwar Mahadev. According to legend, Lord Krishna, during the Mahabharata period, established this temple on the advice of the Pandavas. The temple is made completely of stones, and fairs are held here to celebrate Shivratri and *Phalgun Krishna paksha*.



KALYANI DEVI TEMPLE

Located in Attarsuiya, the Kalyani Devi Temple is a centuries-old Mahashakti Siddhapeeth, and is as popular as the Lalita Devi Shaktipeeth. Since Lalita and Kalyani are two names of Goddess Mahashakti, both these temples have equal significance. Archaeologists believe that this temple is over 1,500 years old. However, there is no concrete, verified information about this temple. As per the *Brahma Vaivarta Purana*, in Tretayuga, Maharshi Yajnavalkya had installed a 32-fingers-tall idol of Goddess Kalyani here and since then, this place has been revered. Both the Navratri festivals – one in *Chaitra* (March) and the other in *Ashwin* (October) – are celebrated with grandeur in these temples.





PATALPURI TEMPLE

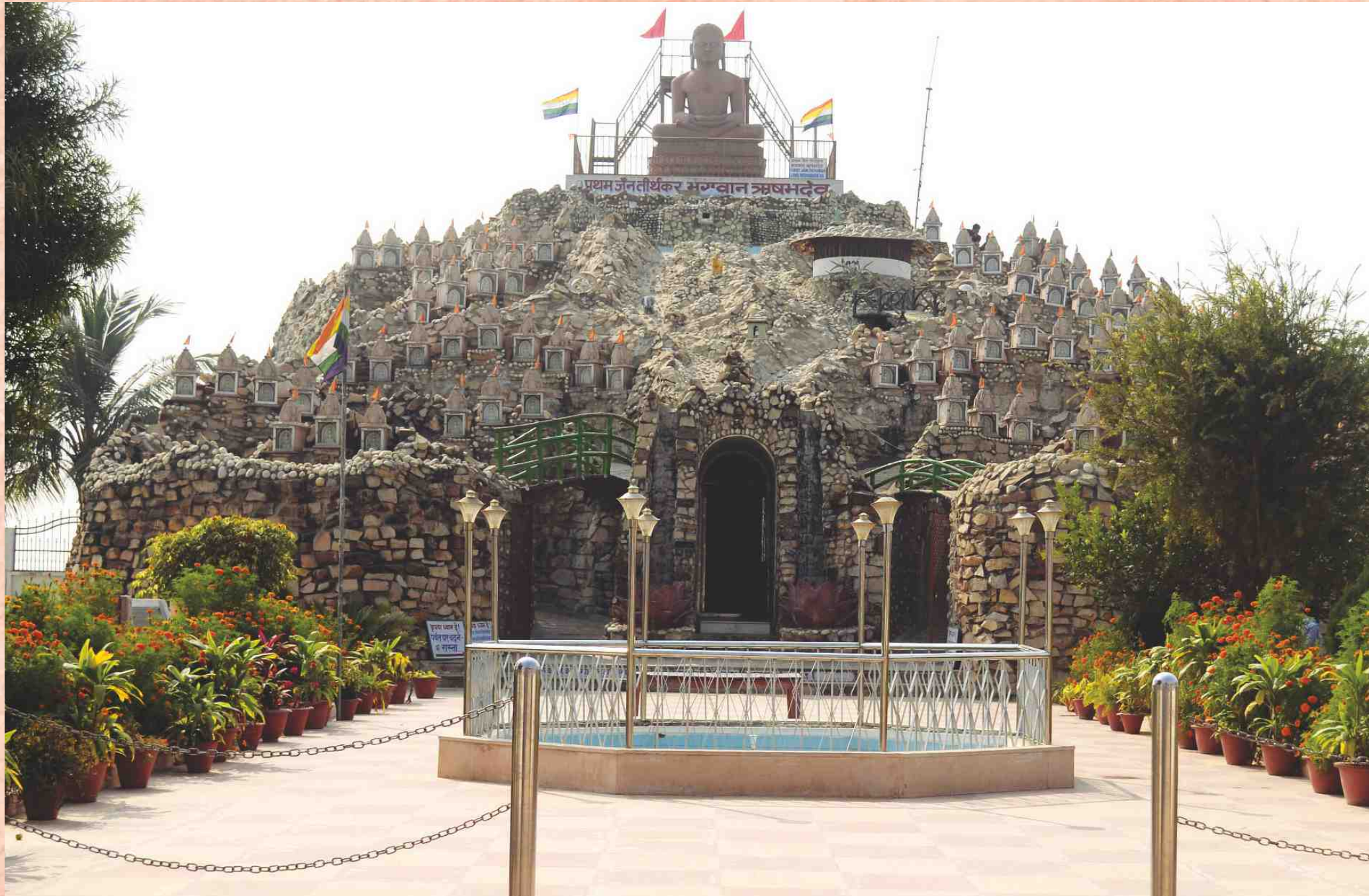
This underground temple, situated in the outer part of the Allahabad Fort, houses old symbols of divinities and is said to have been visited by Lord Rama. It was noted and mentioned by the well-known Chinese traveller and essayist Hiuen Tsang, who came to India in the seventh century. The temple is said to contain parts of the Akshayvata as well. One requires permission to visit the temple.



SAI BABA TEMPLE

Located on Thornhill Road, close to the AG's office and Circuit House, this Shirdi Sai Baba temple attracts the largest number of devotees on Thursdays. Shirdi Sai Baba was a spiritual leader who is regarded as a saint and a fakir by his disciples, and is even considered by some to be the incarnation of Lord Shiva and Dattatreya. As Sai Baba is revered by Hindus and Muslims, devotees from both religions come here to offer prayers, making this a popular spiritual spot.





RISHABHANATHA

Named after Rishabhanatha, the first of the 24 Jain *tirthankaras*, this temple is like an artificial hillock with 127 steps, and has historical as well as religious significance. According to the Jain scriptures, this place was in the jungle where Lord Vrushabhnaath took *deeksha* and attained omniscience. Its impressive construction was done under the supervision of Aryika Gyanmati Mataji, and the Tapowan, Samavsaran, Kailash mountain, cave temple and glory pillar are must-see features, even for tourists. The 14-ft-tall idol of Rishabhanatha in padmasana is also a major attraction.

CHURCHES

ALL SAINTS CATHEDRAL

Situated close to the Allahabad Junction railroad station, this imposing cathedral was designed by William Emerson, who also designed the Victoria Memorial in Kolkata (earlier known as Calcutta), in 1870. All Saints is one of the finest Anglican cathedrals in Asia. Built in the thirteenth-century Gothic style, it is among the Gothic Revival structures built by the British during their rule in India. Its stained glass panels and impressive marble altar are certainly a must-see for every tourist. The cathedral is famously called the 'Patthar Girjaghar' locally. Its nave is around 40ft wide and 130ft long. The approximate length of the church is around 240ft and the inner width is around 56ft. It is designed to accommodate 300 to 400 people. Some of the other prominent churches of the city include Holy Trinity Church (1839), Jamuna Church (1847), St Dwindle's Church (1874) and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Cathedral (1879).







METHODIST CHURCH

Also known locally as the Lal Girijaghar for its red brick structure, the church is built in the Indo-Roman style and is a part of Methodist Churches in India under the Protestant Christian denomination. It is close to the Allahabad Junction railway station. The Church of South India and the Church of North India have been formed by the mergers of the Methodist Churches and have a very large membership.

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

Constructed in 1839 and sanctified by Bishop David Wilson, the fifth bishop of Calcutta, in 1841, this is the second-oldest church in the city. Situated on Jawaharlal Nehru Marg, this is a fine structure modelled after St Martin-in-the-Fields in London. It houses artefacts and memorabilia from the Gwalior battle of 1843 and the 1857 War of Independence. It was built under the supervision of Lieutenant Sharp and was designed by Major Smith in the colonial Gothic style. The church stands on eight pillars, each about 125ft by 70ft.

ST PETER'S CHURCH

Built around 1875, this church has historical significance as it was constructed using the funds received by the British after the First War of Independence in 1857. A Gothic, uncovered cruciform structure in brick and plaster, this church has a central corridor, with an apse, wooden truss and tiled rooftop. It additionally has a belfry tower, space for the altar and houses a dispensary, school building and a parson's residence. Its foundation stone was laid in 1872 by Sir William and Lady Muir. This church has a military burial ground dating back to the nineteenth century. The Sikander Orphan Press was moved here in 1858.

UNION CHURCH

Built in 1818 in Civil Lines, this is the oldest church in the city. Initially, 'union' places of worship comprised two churches of different denominations that utilized the same property and possessed it together rather than one church leasing the property from the other. Union Churches were built all around India in British colonial times, initially for British officers to use. Today, it is the home of Yesu Darbar North, the first branch church of Prayagraj's Yesu Darbar in Naini.

ST JOSEPH'S CATHEDRAL

Built in 1879, St Joseph's Cathedral is the cathedral of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Prayagraj. Known for its arches and domes, it is a fine example of Italian design. It is said that skilled workers and materials for the construction of this cathedral were brought from Italy. It sits



between two prominent schools of the city, St Joseph's College and St Mary's Convent, and acts as an intersection point between the two.

CHOWK CHURCH

Built in 1840, this is the third-oldest church in the city. With exposed brickwork and plaster edgings, which emphasize its leanness, the tower of this church is situated towards the east of an asymmetrical corridor, 80ft by 40ft in size. The two-storeyed structure has been built in the Gothic style. It is right in the heart of Chowk, the old city's most crowded area, and located opposite the Jama Masjid. It is a rare church with no compound wall and is accessible from the street.

GARRISON CHURCH

Sanctified in 1889 by the bishop of Calcutta, Edward Babbott, very little is known about the history of this church. It is said that it came to be known as St Thomas Orthodox Syrian Church in 1948. It has a central hall, side paths, a bell tower, a large portico and two small rooms on either side of the altar. The structure also has a little belfry on the entrance porch and its floor is made of local stone. Located right in the centre of the city, this picturesque structure is not to be missed.

PARKS AND GARDENS

88

EXPLORE PRAYAGRAJ THE SANGAM OF SPIRITUALITY AND MODERNITY

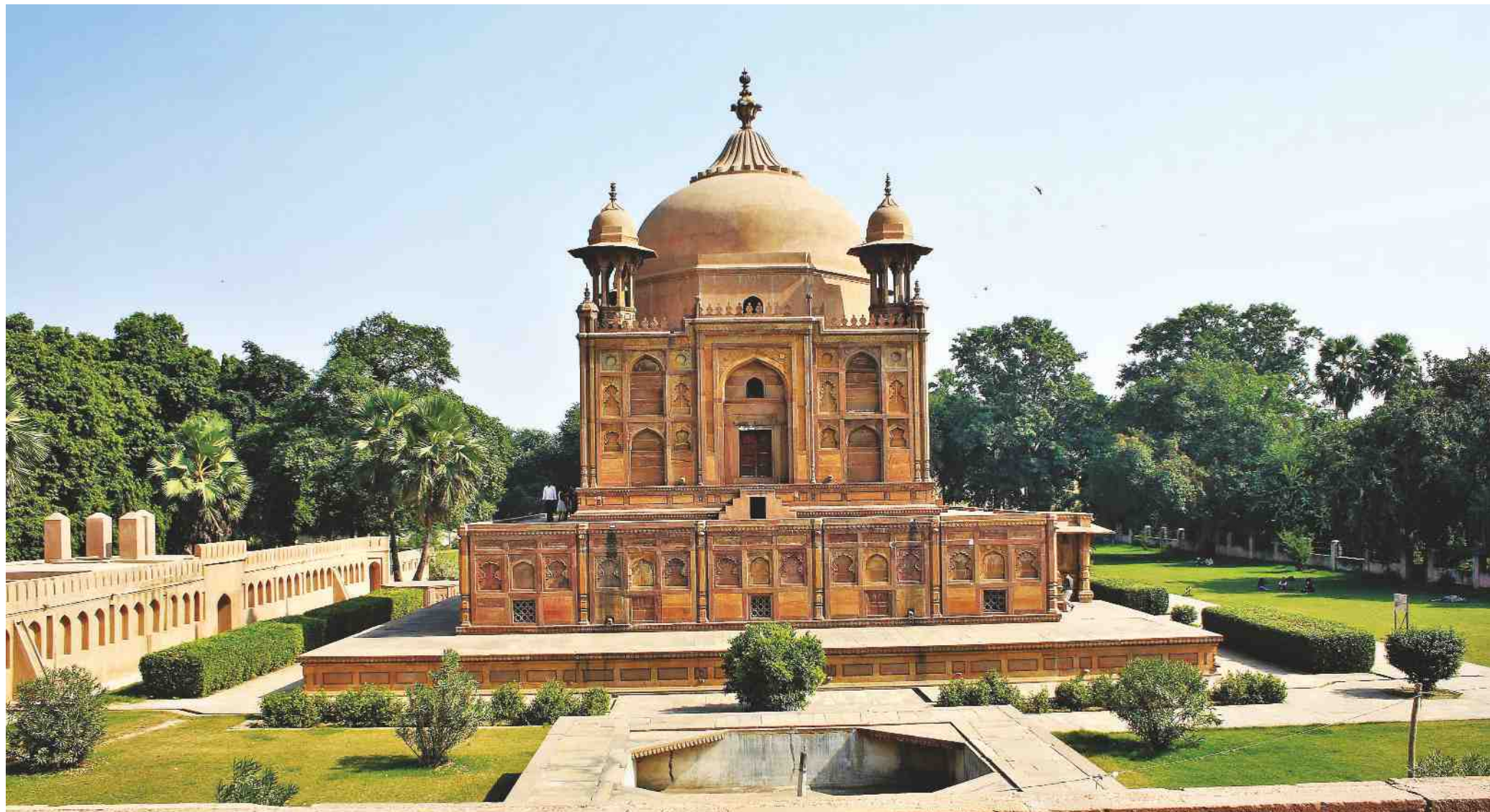




KHUSRO BAGH

Spread across over a rambling 40 acres and designed as a quadrangle, Khusro Bagh is a wonderful garden that contains the mausoleums of Shah Begum (Manbhawati Bai, Jahangir's Rajput wife and the daughter of Maharaja Bhagwant Das), Nithar Begum (Jahangir's daughter, Khusrau Mirza's sister), and Khusrau Mirza (Jahangir's oldest child and for a short while, the heir to the Mughal throne). It has been recognized among the Indian Monuments of

National Importance. The three sandstone mausoleums are exquisite examples of Mughal architecture. The design of its main entrance has been credited to Aqa Reza, Jahangir's foremost court craftsman. The intricately decorated mausoleum of Nithar Begum, however, is empty and does not contain her tomb. During the Revolt of 1857, Khusrau or Khusro Bagh became the headquarters of the rebelling soldiers under Maulvi Liaquat Ali.



CHANDRA SHEKHAR AZAD PARK

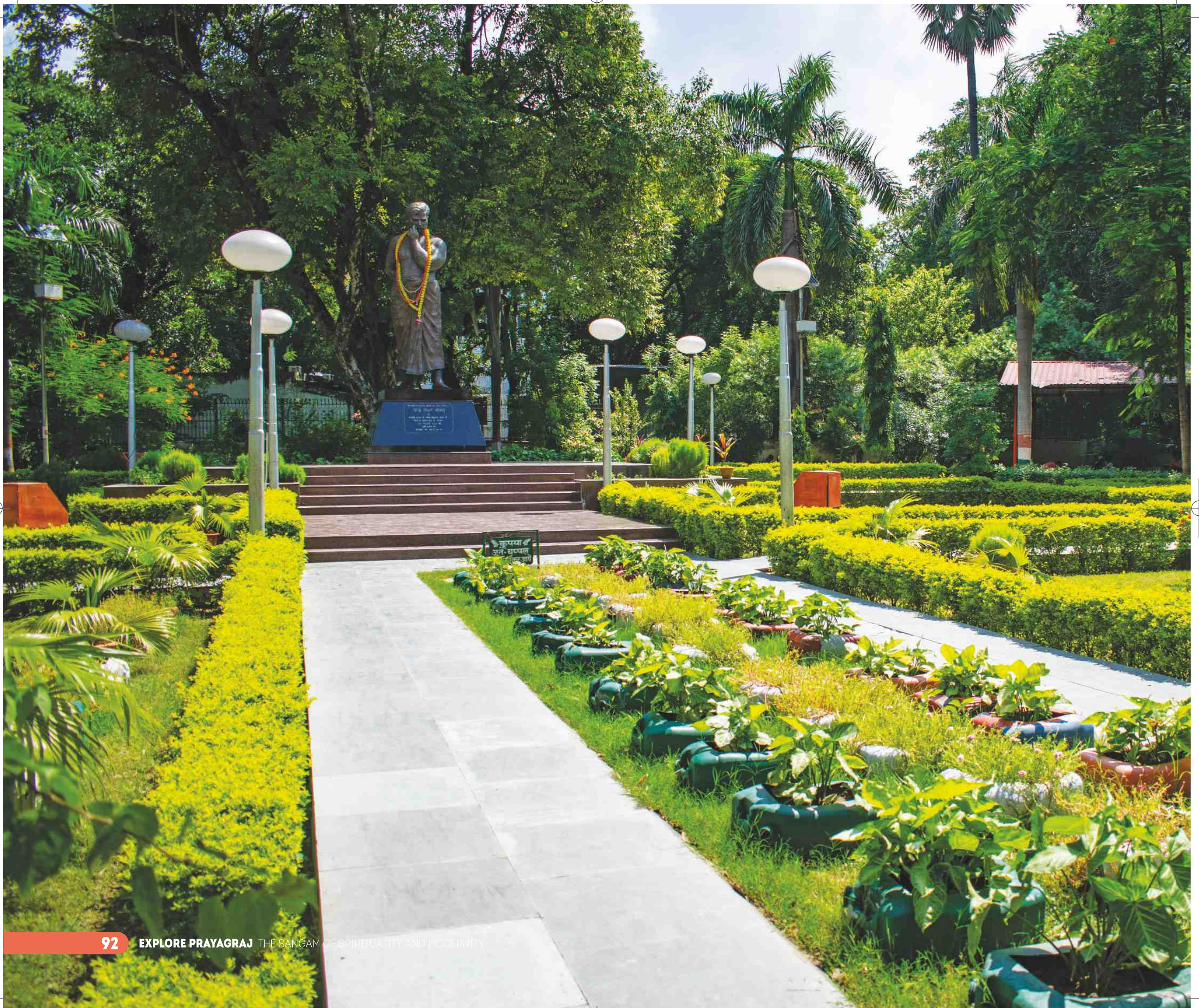
ADDRESS: Thornhill Road

TIMINGS: 6am–9pm

Formerly known as Alfred Park or Company Garden or Bagh (during the Company Raj), this public park in Prayagraj is now known as Amar Shahid Chandra Shekhar Azad Park. Spread over 133 acres of land, it is the biggest garden in the city and was developed in 1870 to mark Prince Alfred's visit to the city. A large canopy, made of Italian limestone, was built to house a statue of Queen Victoria (which was later removed). The park was the grounds for the official functions of the British Raj.

A sprawling park with various places of interest, it is here in 1931 that revolutionary freedom fighter, Chandra Shekhar Azad, when surrounded by British soldiers, took his own life and allowed his companion, Sukhdev, to escape. The Chandra Shekhar Azad Shaheed Sthal bears a large statue of the brave freedom fighter. Of late, this recreation centre has been redesigned and has







become a popular venue for events organized to pay tribute to freedom fighters.

Besides its historical significance, this park is also a major tourist destination because of its greenery, landscape and serenity. The garden is strategically situated in the heart of the city and also houses the Allahabad Museum within its premises.

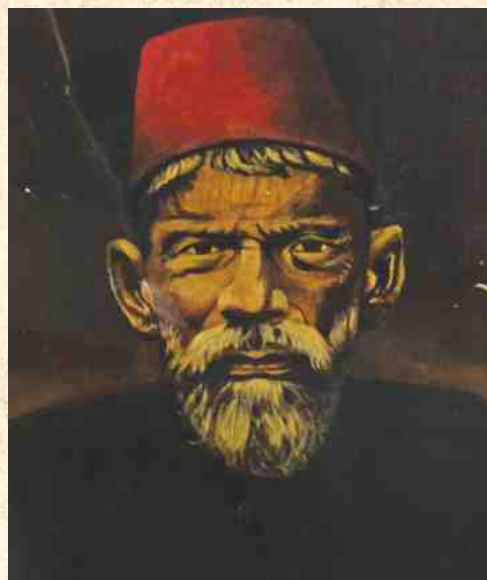
PRAYAGRAJ

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES

Prayagraj has always been a centre of intellectual excellence and is known for some of the greatest literary figures of the Hindi, Urdu, English and Sanskrit literary pantheons. From Munshi Premchand to Maithili Sharan Gupt and Subhadra Kumari Chauhan to Mahadevi Varma, several great contributors to literature have had a close association with the city. Many 'isms' and literary movements were born here, and the dynamism of literary thought and activity here in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries fuelled and supported the struggle for independence, of which the city was also a major centre.

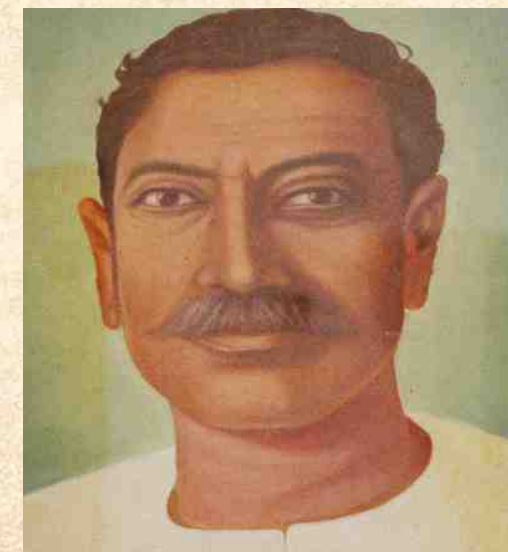
AKBAR ALLAHABADI (1846 1921)

Akbar Hussain Rizvi, popularly known as Akbar Allahabadi, was a celebrated Urdu writer, who, having received essential education at a madrasa, eventually proceeded to study law and retired as a sessions judge from Allahabad High Court. He achieved literary distinction for parody in his poetry. His satire was often directed at the highly Westernized Muslim elites of his time.



SIR GANGA NATH JHA (1872 1941)

A scholar of Sanskrit, Indian and Buddhist philosophies, Sir Ganga Nath Jha was a specialist of *Nyaya Shastra*. Besides Sanskrit, he knew Persian and English, and taught Sanskrit at Mayo College in Allahabad. He later became its vice chancellor. There is a hostel in his name at Allahabad University. Some of his significant works include *The Prabhakar School of Purva-Mimansa*, *Kavi Rahasya*, *Nyay Prakash* and *The Philosophical Discipline*, to name a few.



MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA (1861 1946)

An educationist, lawyer, journalist and politician, Madan Mohan Malaviya was one of the pillars of the Indian independence movement. He served as the president of the Indian National Congress and was the founder of the Banaras Hindu University (BHU), established in 1916 at Varanasi, and served as its vice chancellor from 1919–38. He was posthumously conferred the Bharat Ratna on 24 December 2014, a day before his 153rd birth anniversary.

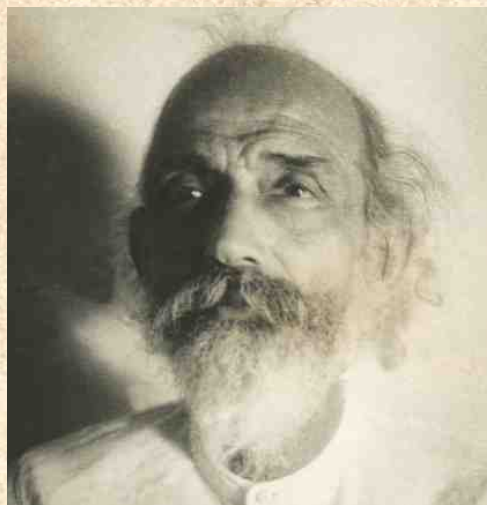


MUNSHI PREMCHAND (1880 1936)

One of the celebrated essayists of the Indian subcontinent, Dhanpat Rai Srivastava assumed the name Munshi Premchand. He was not an Allahabad native, but this city was close to his heart because he and his children had studied here. An author, essayist and playwright who was regularly alluded to as 'Upanyas Samrat', Premchand wrote more than a dozen books, and about 250 short stories.

PURUSHOTTAM DAS TANDON (1882 1962)

A prominent freedom fighter who played an integral part in the freedom movement, Purushottam Das Tandon is best remembered for his efforts in achieving the *Official Language of India* status to Hindi after Independence. A lawyer by profession, he began practising at the Allahabad High Court. However, he gave up practise in 1921 to focus completely on public activities. He was the professor of Hindi at Victoria College, Gwalior. Tandon was a member of the Indian National Congress for many years and in 1906, represented Allahabad in the All India Congress Committee. He was also part of the Congress Enquiry Committee that enquired into the events of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919. He was popularly referred to as 'Rajarshi' (royal saint, coined by Mahatma Gandhi) and as 'UP Gandhi'.

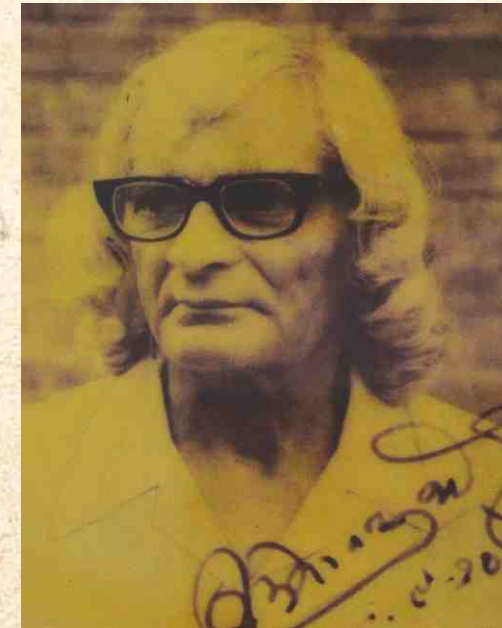
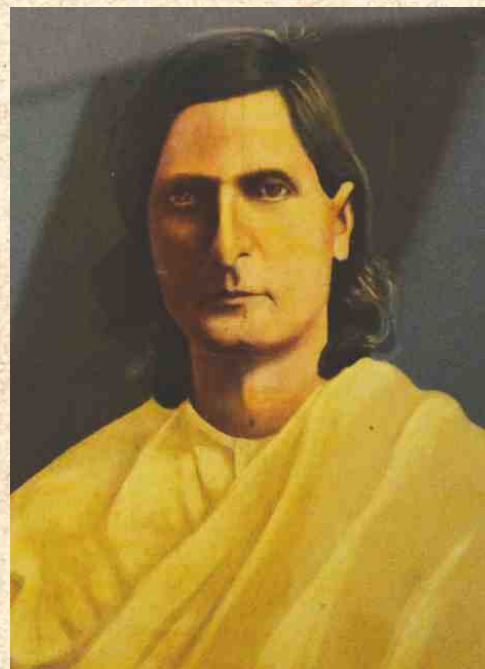


RAGHUPATI SAHAY FIRAQ (1896 1982)

Known by the pseudonym Firaq Gorakhpuri, Raghupati Sahay was an author, critic and a stalwart among contemporary Urdu poets. Despite the fact that he was chosen for the Indian Civil Service, he gave it up to join Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement against the British government. He composed the majority of his Urdu verses while teaching in Allahabad University, including his most illustrious, *Gul-e-Naghma*, for which he was awarded the Jnanpith Award and the Sahitya Akademi Award. A prolific writer in Urdu prose and poetry, he also wrote prose in Hindi and English on literary themes. He resisted the government's attempts to label Urdu as the language of only Muslims and fought for secular principles.

SURYAKANT TRIPATHI NIRALA (1896 1961)

Despite having studied in a Bengali-medium school, Suryakant Tripathi (he went by the pen name of 'Nirala'), studied Sanskrit and English at home. Nirala was deeply motivated by Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore. *Ram Ki Shakti Puja*, *Dhwani*, *Apara*, *Saroj Smriti* and *Parimal* are some of his most celebrated poems, while *Apsara*, *Alka*, *Prabhavati*, *Nirupama* and *Chameli* are a few of his prominent books. Nirala's life was marked by upheaval and tragedy – he lost his mother, his wife and then his daughter. Literary acceptance also eluded him until decades later, as he wrote strongly against social injustice and exploitation. Today, however, he is hailed as a visionary writer.



SUMITRANANDAN PANT (1900 1977)

One of the most well-known and acclaimed left-wing poets in Hindi, Sumitranandan Pant was known for his romantic poetry. He belonged to the Chhayavadi School of Hindi writing and generally wrote in Sanskritized Hindi. He produced 28 works, including verse, plays and essays. His romantic works were inspired by people and nature, but he also wrote on progressive, socialist and philosophical themes, the last influenced by Sri Aurobindo. He was the first Hindi poet to get the Jnanpith Award, India's highest writing award, for his most celebrated collection of poems, *Chidambara*. For *Kala Aur Budhdha Chand*, he received the Sahitya Akademi Award, and in 1961, he was honoured with the Padma Bhushan.



SUBHADRA KUMARI CHAUHAN (1904 1948)

A popular poetess known for her rousing Hindi poems imbued with *veera rasa*, one of the nine *rasas*. Among her various Hindi verses, the most well known is her composition *Jhansi ki Rani*, describing the valour of Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi. She and her husband joined Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement against the British. Chauhan was the first woman *satyagrahi* to court arrest in Nagpur and went to jail twice for protesting against British rule. Besides *Jhansi ki Rani*, some of her other compositions, including *Veero ka Kaisa ho Basant*, *Rakhi ki Chunauti* and *Vida*, talk about the struggles of the freedom movement.

HARIVANSH RAI BACHCHAN (1907 2003)

Poet and academician credited with enriching modern Hindi vocabulary, Harivansh Rai 'Bachchan' used a multitude of dialects and languages, including Awadhi, Hindi and Urdu. A former student of Allahabad University, BHU and Cambridge University, he taught in the Department of English of the University of Allahabad from 1941 to 1952. An integral part of the 'Nayi Kavita' scholarly development (the romantic upsurge), he was renowned worldwide for *Madhushala* and his interpretation of Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*, Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *Othello* and the Bhagvad Gita.



UPENDRANATH ASHK (1910 1996)

A prominent writer and dramatist, Ashk started his literary career with Punjabi and Urdu. However, he switched to Hindi later in life after Munshi Premchand exhorted him to do so. He worked as an editor, reporter and translator in newspapers through the 1930s, and then joined All India Radio in 1941 as a playwright. He also wrote dialogues, stories and songs for films. Ashk was the first Hindi dramatist to get the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for playwriting in 1965. He wrote over a hundred books in nearly all genres of literature. His notable works include *Sitaron Ka Khel*, *Girti Deewarein*, *Garam Rakh*, *Bari Ankhen* and *Dachi*.

MAHADEVI VARMA (1907 1987)

A freedom fighter, educationist and a prominent Hindi poet, she was broadly viewed as a modern-day Meera. She was one of the four most prominent poets in the Chhayavad school and was well regarded in *kavi sammelans*. A former student of the University of Allahabad, she was first the principal, and later the vice chancellor, of the Prayag Mahila Vidyapeeth. Her poetic talent was discovered in school by her roommate and senior, Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, with whom she started writing poems in Khariboli. Her notable works include *Neelkanth*, *Gaura* and *Yama*. She taught for many years alongside her literary work, and also wrote editorials that were later compiled into a single volume.



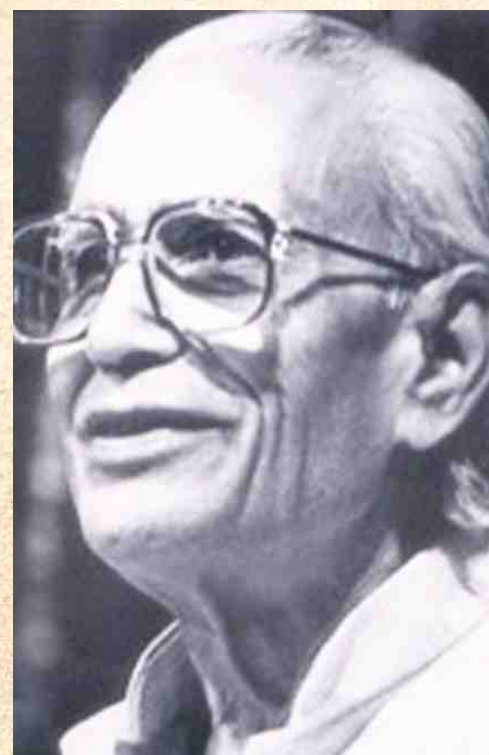


AMRIT RAI (1921 1996)

The son of Munshi Premchand, Amrit Rai was an author, writer and biographer. He made his literary debut with the novel *Beej*. He authored an acclaimed biography of his father, *Premchand: Kalam Ka Sipahi*, which later won him the Sahitya Akademi Award. He also compiled two volumes on his father's letters with the latter's biographer. Amrit Rai's book *A House Divided* is a fascinating record of how Hindi/Hindavi semantic convention got separated into Hindi and Urdu. He also co-wrote the Satyajit Ray-film *Sadgati*, which was based on a short story by Munshi Premchand. This much-awarded writer was also an acclaimed translator, including texts like *Spartacus* and *Hamlet*. He was a part of the freedom movement and was jailed for it. He was married to Subhadra Kumari Chauhan's daughter.

AMARKANT (1925 2014)

Despite the fact that as a prominent writer, Amarkant had written six books, he was best known for his short stories *Deputy Collector*, *Dopahar Ka Bhojan*, *Zindagi Aur Jonk* and *Hatyare*. A graduate of Allahabad University, he interrupted his studies to participate in the Quit India Movement in 1942. He worked with several local Hindi newspaper in Allahabad. He was among the few writers who stuck to the socialistic realism of Premchand when contemporaries were writing in the Nai Kahani style, concentrating on the urban settings and man-woman relationships of independent India. For *Inhin Hathiyaron Se*, he was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2007 and the Vyas Samman in 2009. He was also a recipient of the Jnanpith Award.



KAMLESHWAR (1932 2007)

A notable twentieth-century Hindi author, Kamleshwar was well known for works which were adapted into movies like *Andhi*, *Mausam*, *Chhoti Si Baat* and *Rang Birangi*. He was one of the league of Hindi authors like Mohan Rakesh, Nirmal Verma, Rajendra Yadav and Bhisham Sahni who reflected the sensibilities of the new, post-Independence India in their writing and started the Nai Kahani movement in Hindi literature in the 1950s. He wrote over 300 stories and received the Sahitya Akademi Award for his novel *Kitne Pakistan*, which was translated into English as *Partitions*. A graduate of the University of Allahabad, Kamleshwar was also bestowed the Padma Bhushan in 2005.

DHARAMVIR BHARATI (1926 1997)

A socialist thinker who was an author, dramatist and a prominent Hindi writer, Dharamvir Bharati was also the chief editor of the well-known magazine *Dharmayug*, a prominent Hindi weekly. He was honoured with the Padma Shri for his literary work, and his novel *Gunaho Ka Devta* became a classic. Bharati's story *Suraj Ka Satwan Ghoda* was considered a seminal work and was made into a motion picture by Shyam Benegal, which received a National Film Award. His iconic play *Andha Yug* is still widely performed, and he was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for playwriting (Hindi) in 1988.



PRAYAGRAJ KUMBH 2019

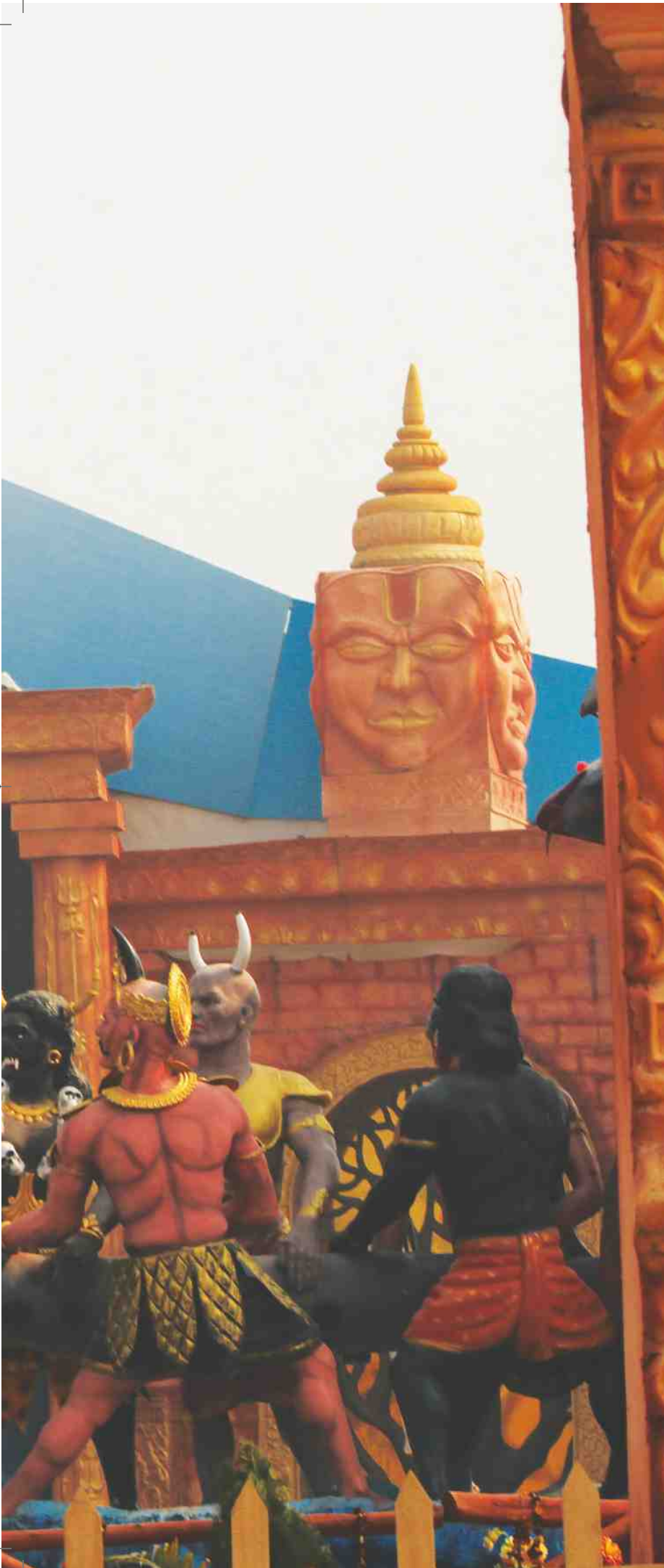
Apart from a holy dip in Triveni Sangam, there are a number of new things that Kumbh 2019 offered visitors. Sanskriti Gram, located in a rambling 7-acre campus, is an ideal impression of India's rich legacy. Kalagram, beautifully designed and developed to showcase distinctive Indian artwork, leaves visitors totally mesmerized. To add to the grandeur and make the Mela area more vibrant, over 25 temporary thematic gates were also erected this time, with each gate having its own identity. Besides, the Government of Uttar Pradesh unveiled tourist walks (and introduced new routes for the tourists); arranged for facade lighting on all trans-river spans and prominent structures; decorated the city roads in uniform colour themes; installed terminals to run *CL Kasturba* (a semi-cruise conducted by IWAI) for joyrides; and made special arrangements for a laser light and sound show and some water sports. An important initiative was taken to use technology to enhance user experience – the 360-degree virtual reality digital experience during Kumbh 2019. Various stalls were set up where visitors and pilgrims could watch Kumbh 2019 videos of major events, such as the *peshwai* (grand procession of *akhadas*), auspicious bathing days (*snaans*), Ganga *aarti* and others, using VR sets.









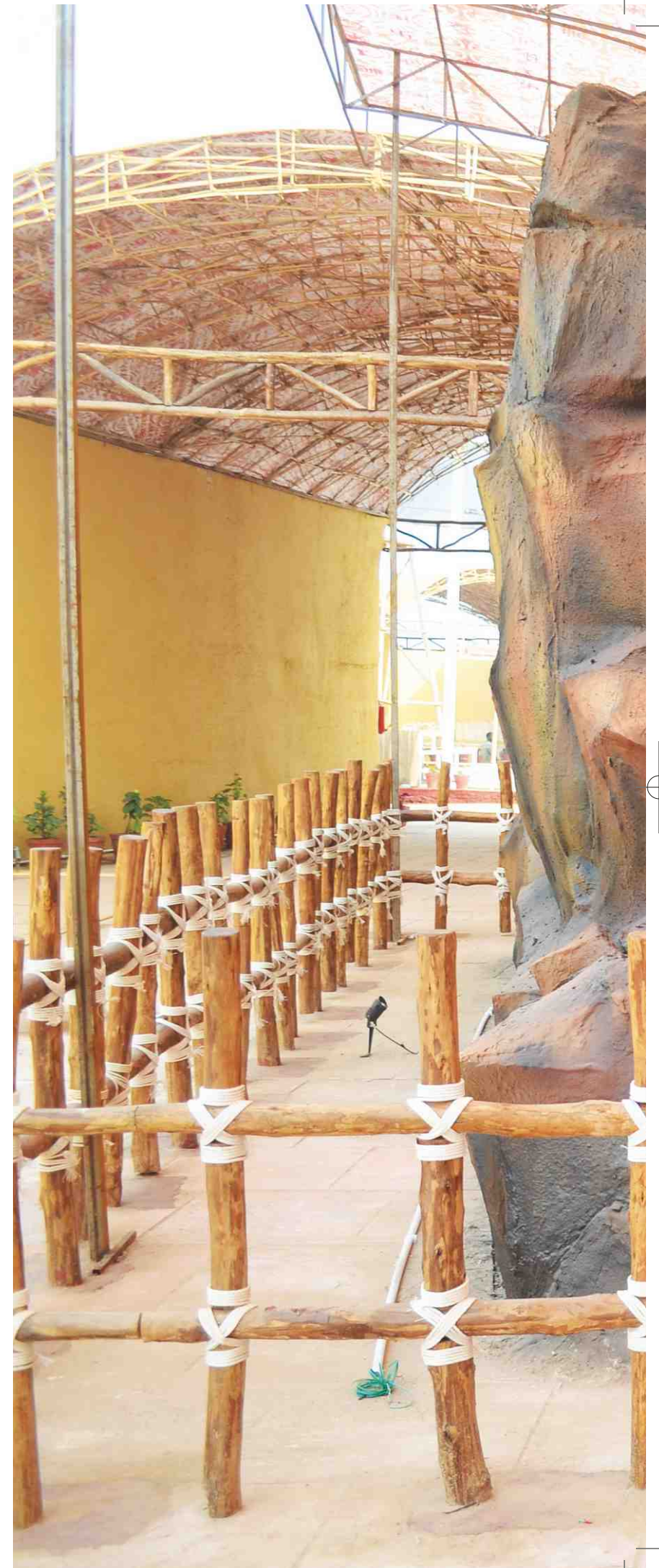


SANSKRITI GRAM

Developed in a sprawling 7-acre campus, Sanskriti Gram is a perfect reflection of India's rich cultural heritage. The structure is the simulation of the Sun and has been designed in such a manner that the Sun is in the centre with 17 rays emerging out of it in different directions, at the end of which are 17 galleries. Each gallery is 75ft long, and each has a different theme. These themes include the Indus Valley Civilization, Vedic Age, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, Buddha, Mahavira, the Mauryan Empire, the Kalinga War, the Buddha leaving his home, the Gupta Age, Architecture of Medieval India, Bhakti Movement, Indo-Islamic Mughal architecture, the Magadha Empire, the Revolt of 1857, and the Freedom Movement. While the first 40ft of each gallery covers maps, illustrations, written information and paintings, the remaining portion showcases sculptures based on that particular theme. The main entrance of this mega structure opens up to a colossal sculpture resembling a Samudra Manthan sight, where gods and goddess are seen fighting the *asuras*. Eco-friendly materials like thermocol, bamboo, paper pulp and cloth have been used to make this mega structure. More than 500 artists, including sculptors and expert painters, have worked day-in and day-out to make this gallery exquisite by making the best use of clay and water-based colours. The idea was to develop a mini-museum for visitors and devotees and educate them of their glorious past through these artworks. The gallery has been developed with a total investment of ₹7 crore.









KALAGRAM

Designed in the most aesthetic manner to showcase distinctive Indian artwork, this creative village was divided into a number of pavilions with each pavilion developed under a unique theme to provide a glimpse of India's rich cultural heritage to the visiting pilgrims. While seven of these pavilions were dedicated to the seven cultural centres under the North Central Zone Cultural Centre (NCZCC), eight other pavilions were also developed. These included Vedic Exhibition Gallery by Indira Gandhi National Cultural Academy (IGNCA); Maha Kumbh exhibition by Allahabad Museum; Government of India – Exhibition by TRIFED; Live Portrait Symposium by Lalit Kala Akademi (LKA); Academy Books exhibitions by Sahitya Akademi (SA); and Exhibition on Mohandas to Mahatma by Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti. These pavilions turned out to be the major attractions at the mela as hundreds of artists from across the country were roped in to give this mega structure a grand look. Around 15 shops in each of these pavilions were also developed from where aesthetically designed craft items could be bought.









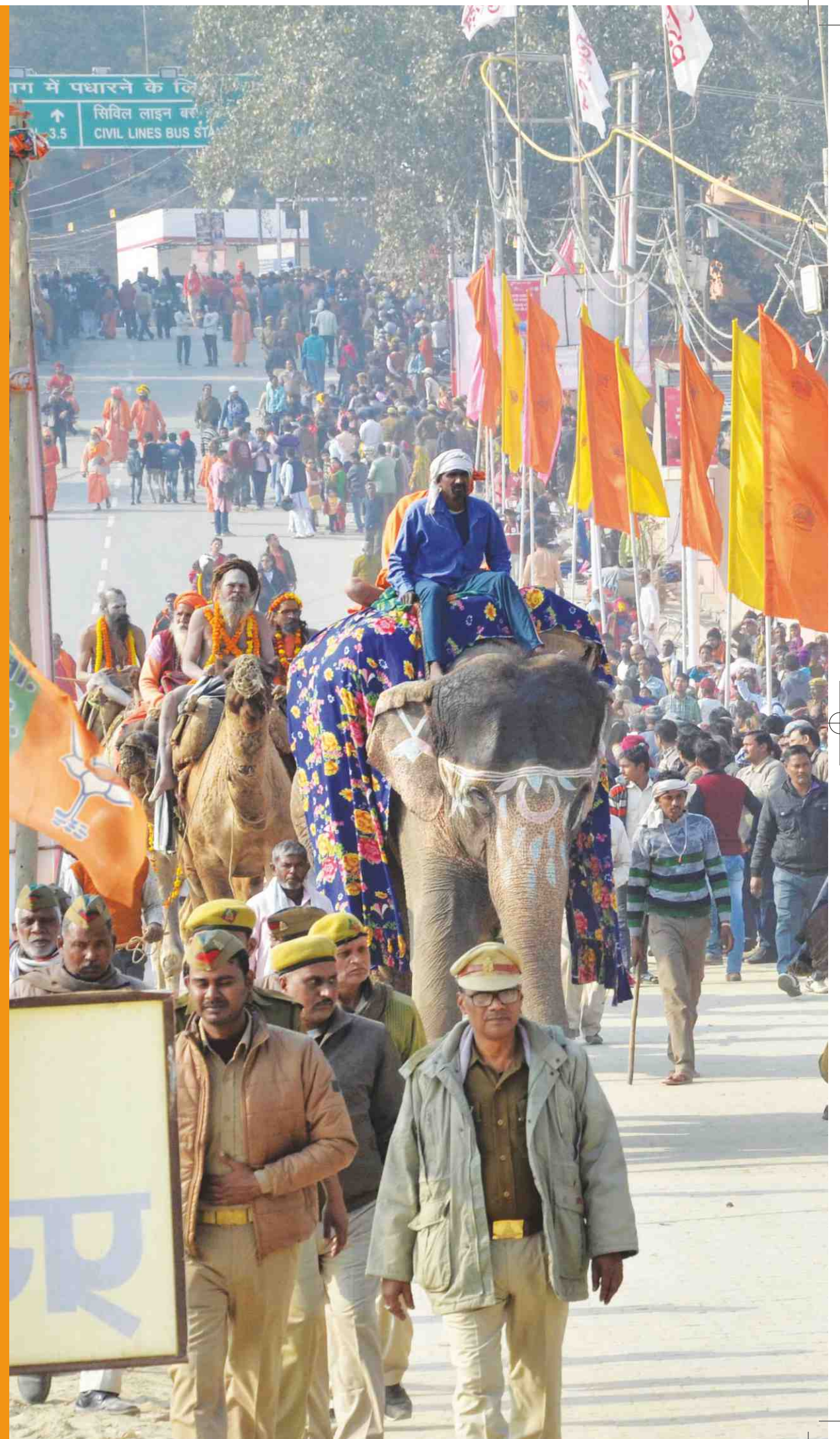




PESHWAI

Peshwai is the grand and royal procession carried out to mark the arrival of *akhadas* or sects of saints with their groups on elephants, horses and lavish carriages into the Mela area. It marks the beginning of Ardh Kumbh and Kumbh Melas and a large number of disciples and members of these *akhadas* also participate in the processions to render their services as attendants. While ascetics perform acrobatic skills and breathtaking displays of martial arts with the help of weapons during the *peshwai*, the attendants shower petals of flowers on the passing *peshwai* in tune with the festive mood. Special routes are demarcated for these processions and traffic restrictions are imposed so that general people do not get in the way of the *peshwai*.

peshwai akhadas









peshwai

AKHADAS

The *akhada* translates literally into a 'circle' or 'core', and refers to monastic schools where students of a sect or a sport, like wrestling, were trained. Religious *akhadas* were probably more like monasteries, where students did not live domestic lives in the home of their guru, but led lives of renunciation as they were trained in their *sampradaya*. According to popular belief in Hinduism, Adi Shankaracharya, when he founded the Dashanami Sampradaya, divided the sadhus into *astradharis* (weapon-wielding) and *shaastradharis* (scripture-bearing), probably in response to attacks from foreign invaders.

Altogether, there are 13 *akhadas*, with each *akhada* having its own *isht* (deity) and weapon, protected by mantras. The *akhadas* have been divided into three categories: Shaiva, Vaishnava and Advait. There are seven Shaiva *akhadas*: Atal, Mahanirvani, Anand, Niranjani, Avahan, Juna and Agni. There are three Vaishnava *akhadas*: Nirmohi, Nirmani and Digambar. The three Advait *akhadas* are Bada Udasin, Naya Udasin and Nirmala. The *akhada* with the most number of sadhus is Juna Akhada, followed by the Niranjani and the Mahanirvani.

All these *akhadas* gather at Prayagraj during the Kumbh and Maha Kumbh Melas and follow a set sequence during the *shahi snaan*.



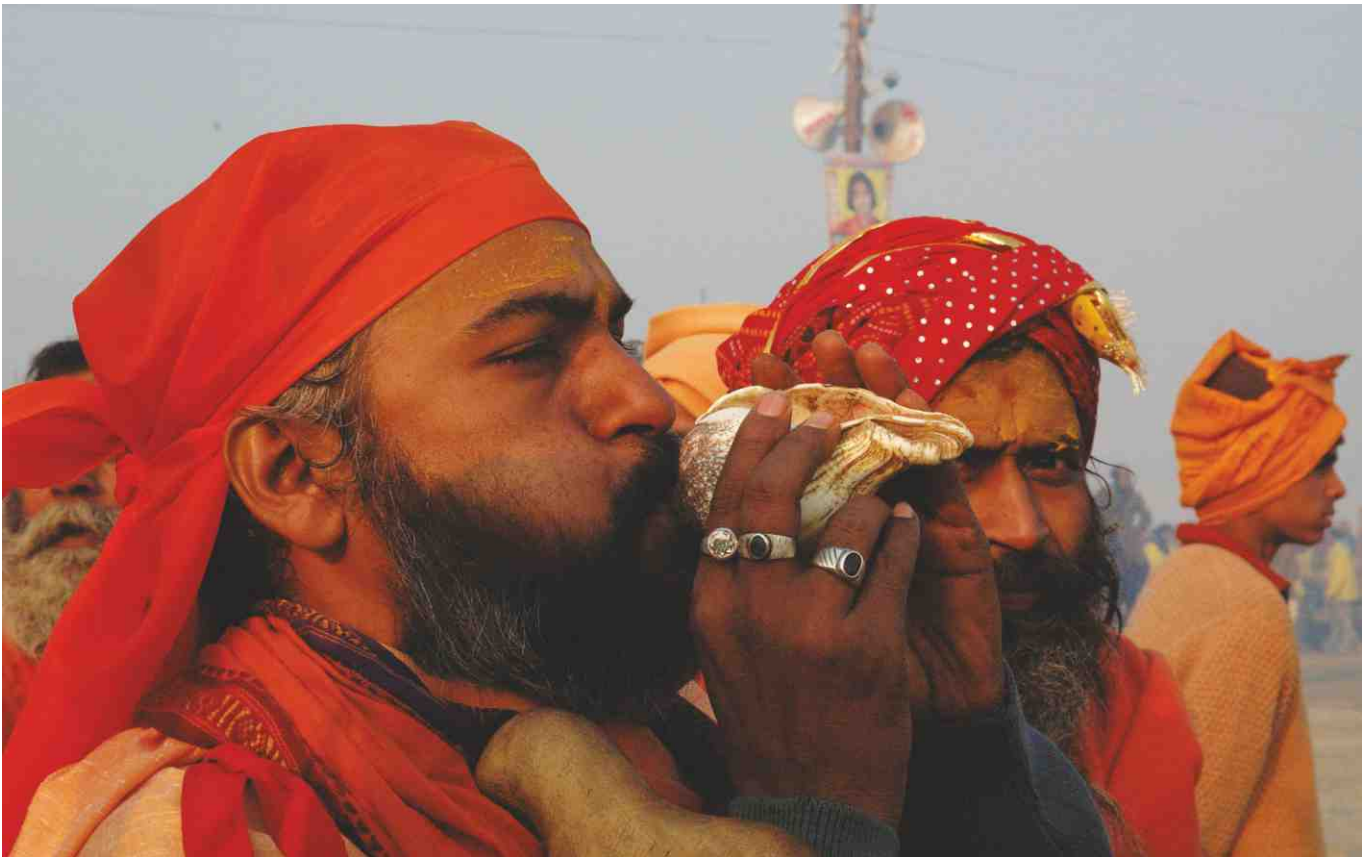


KALPAVASIS

Kalpavasis are people who stay in the makeshift tents at the banks of the Sangam for a period of one month (in Magh as per Hindu calendar) and live an ascetic life of prayer and fasting. According to the Vedas, *kalp* is the period equal to the total number of years in four Yugas: Satyuga, Tretayuga, Dwaparyuga and Kalyuga. Hence, staying here for a period of one month during *kalpavas* and Kumbh Mela and living the life of an ascetic is equivalent to living it for four yugas. Thus, by doing *kalpavas* during this period, a devotee can absolve all his sins of previous births and is able to escape the cycle of *janma* (birth) and karma.



kalpavas



rudraksha

bhasm
chhatras



VIPs IN THE MAHA KUMBH 2019



















CULTURAL EVENTS

In an attempt to exhibit the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the country, special arrangements for cultural activities that could be showcased in different cultural pandals, equipped with state-of-the-art technology for musical performances by both modern and folk artistes on a daily basis for the entire Mela period were made. While Ganga Pandal, with the highest capacity, was made to host all major events, Pravachan

Pandal, along with a number of convention centres, was also created for everyone's entertainment. Some renowned Indian artistes who performed during the Mela at various pandals included Hema Malini, N Rajam, Hariprasad Chaurasia, Anuradha Paudwal and Bharti Shivaji. Various Uttar Pradesh government organizations, along with the NCZCC, Sangeet Natak Akademi and SPIC MACAY, played an integral part in making this happen.







THEME GATES

To add to the grandeur of Kumbh 2019 and make the Mela area more vibrant, over 25 temporary thematic gates were built this time with each gate having its own identity, strongly rooted in the local context and deeply inspired by Indian culture, tradition and socio-religious factors. Strategically placed mostly on the approach roads and at the beginning of each sector, these gates not only helped visitors, tourists and devotees to identify sectors but were also a visual delight at the Kumbh Mela. A perfect specimen of vernacular construction methods, these gates were designed keeping practicality and reusability in mind, for which a framework of bamboo and other eco-friendly materials were used. Craftsmen and artisans from across the country, including Kolkata and Varanasi, were involved in making the gates. Some of the famous gates on different roads and sectors include Shankh Dwar, Dhanush Dwar, Nandi Dwar and Airawat Dwar, to name a few.



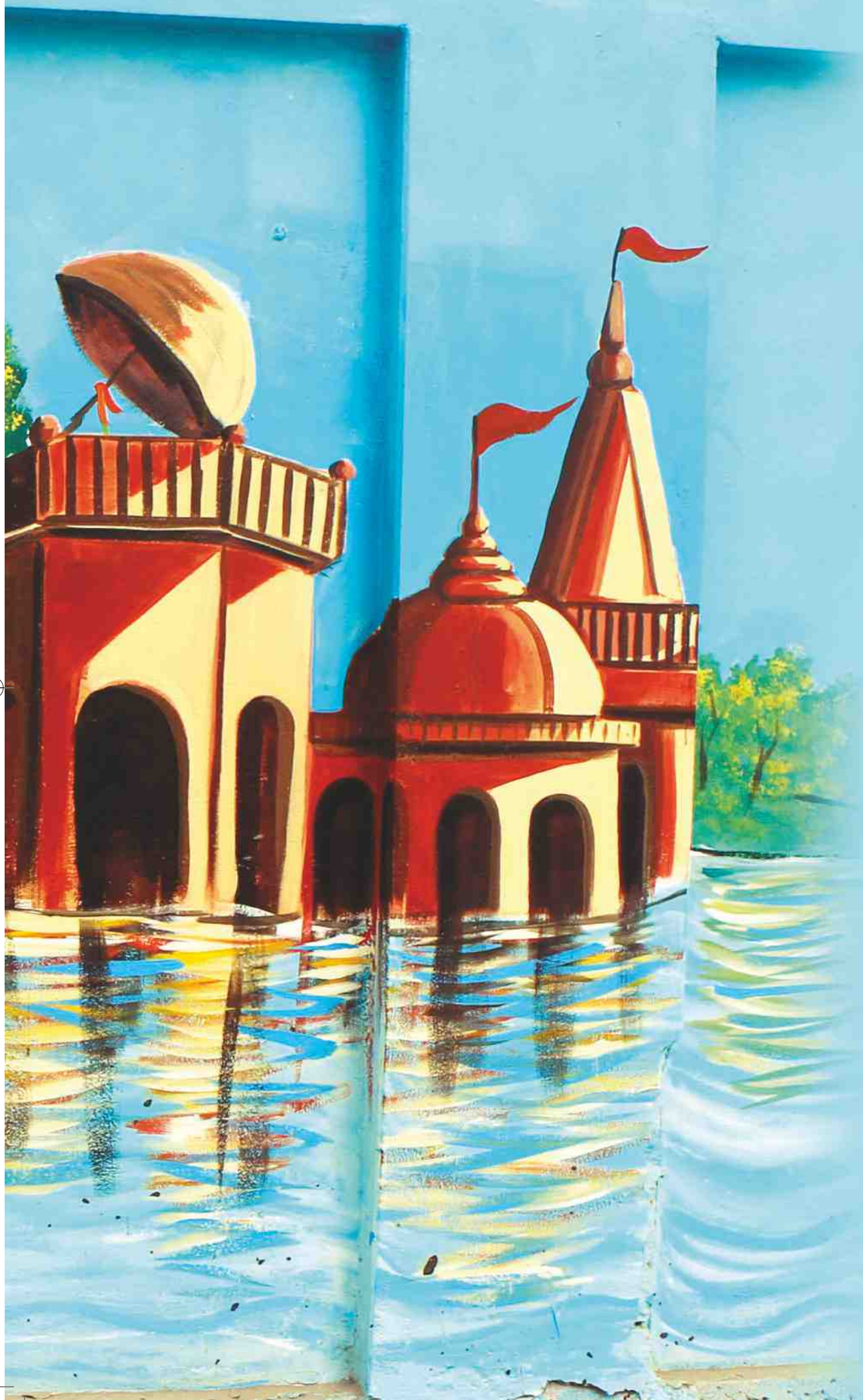


PRAYAGRAJ PAINT MY CITY

Taking inspiration from Western countries where the city roads have become canvases of society's prevalent art and culture, the Uttar Pradesh government decided to give the entire city of Prayagraj a festive look before Kumbh 2019. A decision was taken to paint Prayagraj in different hues that showcased the spirit of Kumbh Mela under the campaign 'Paint My City'. Since the Kumbh Mela is the time when millions of pilgrims visit Tirthraj Prayag to absolve themselves of their sins and seek peace of mind, it was decided to create an aesthetic ambience that reflected the mythical, astrological and scientific significance of this mega event through artwork. For this, a testing ground was set-up in the form of a small pilot project initially with the help of university students who were invited to share their designs. However, realizing later the magnitude of the work, professionals were involved. As the city is, and has also been, the intellectual and political hub of the country for over a century now, apart from highlighting the mythological stories behind the Kumbh Mela that included the Samudra Manthan story, political and literary personalities including Mahatma Gandhi, Subhash Chandra Bose, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Madan Mohan Malaviya, to name a few, were also given space in this art campaign. Everything, from e-rickshaws to flyovers to poles under the bridges and even the hostel buildings of the universities, became a canvas to display the festive mood of Kumbh Mela.







PAINT MY CITY

Street art, today, is a socially respected accent that reflects a society's art and culture. Composed primarily to convey what the general public believes in, it simply complements the architectural elements of a given space and makes it exquisite. Sydney or San Francisco, every city has made its art available to all, by putting it on its walls!

It was precisely this philosophy that prompted the Prayagraj Mela Authority to initiate the 'Paint My City' campaign – a vision and effort to beautify the city before Kumbh 2019, the time when over 150 million pilgrims and tourists from across the world were expected to gather and witness the largest religious gathering of humanity. Therefore, to bring the city higher on the global tourism map, a seamless and aesthetic attempt was made to explain the cultural heritage of Kumbh through the lens of street art.

An aesthetic ambience, highlighting the mythological and astrological significance, would not only visually recreate familiar stories, but also accentuate pilgrimage experience. As there was always a tendency of the people to defile the walls, running such a campaign served many purposes. Besides reflecting the spirit of



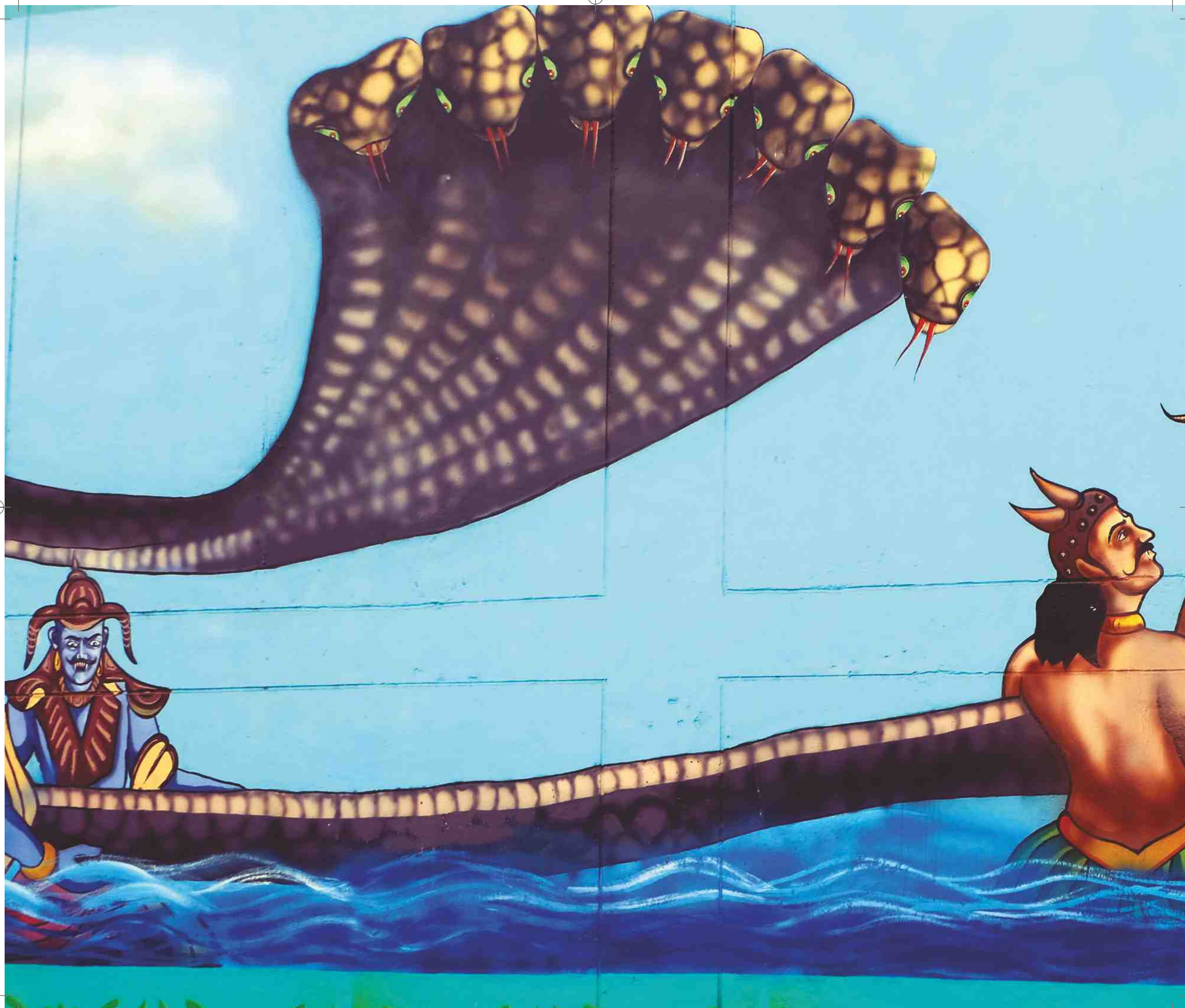


the Kumbh Mela, the campaign would also prevent defiling of walls and motivate pilgrims to maintain cleanliness.

However, the decision to paint the city in different hues was not taken overnight. Magh Mela 2018 was used as the testing ground to run a small pilot project. Students were involved to see how the walls would look if painted with aesthetic designs. From across several schools, students

participated with enthusiasm, setting the tone for the actual project. But because the magnitude of the actual project was immense, professional artists from across the country were invited to present their concepts, before a decision was finally taken.

As Kumbh is a mega event for every pilgrim where they would come to cleanse their sins and get peace of mind and happiness, the content on





these walls was expected to give a positive feeling, keeping the festival mood in mind. Subtle, beautiful and awe-inspiring pictorial messages that depicted religious, spiritual and scientific connotation of Kumbh, besides the mythological background, cultural diversity, social awareness and the heritage of the city, were thought to be appropriate for this theme. Hence, nothing provocative, obscene or negative has been reflected anywhere across the city. Messages from these

paintings and murals are subtle and reflect a feeling of wonder and amazement.

There are many stories as to why the Kumbh is celebrated on earth, but the one which is most famous is related to the Samudra Manthan. Hence, ranging from the Dev-Danav Yudh to the spilling of amrit (nectar) at four places, everything has been narrated through different art panels on the city walls. An intellectual hub since time immemorial, some of the greatest literary







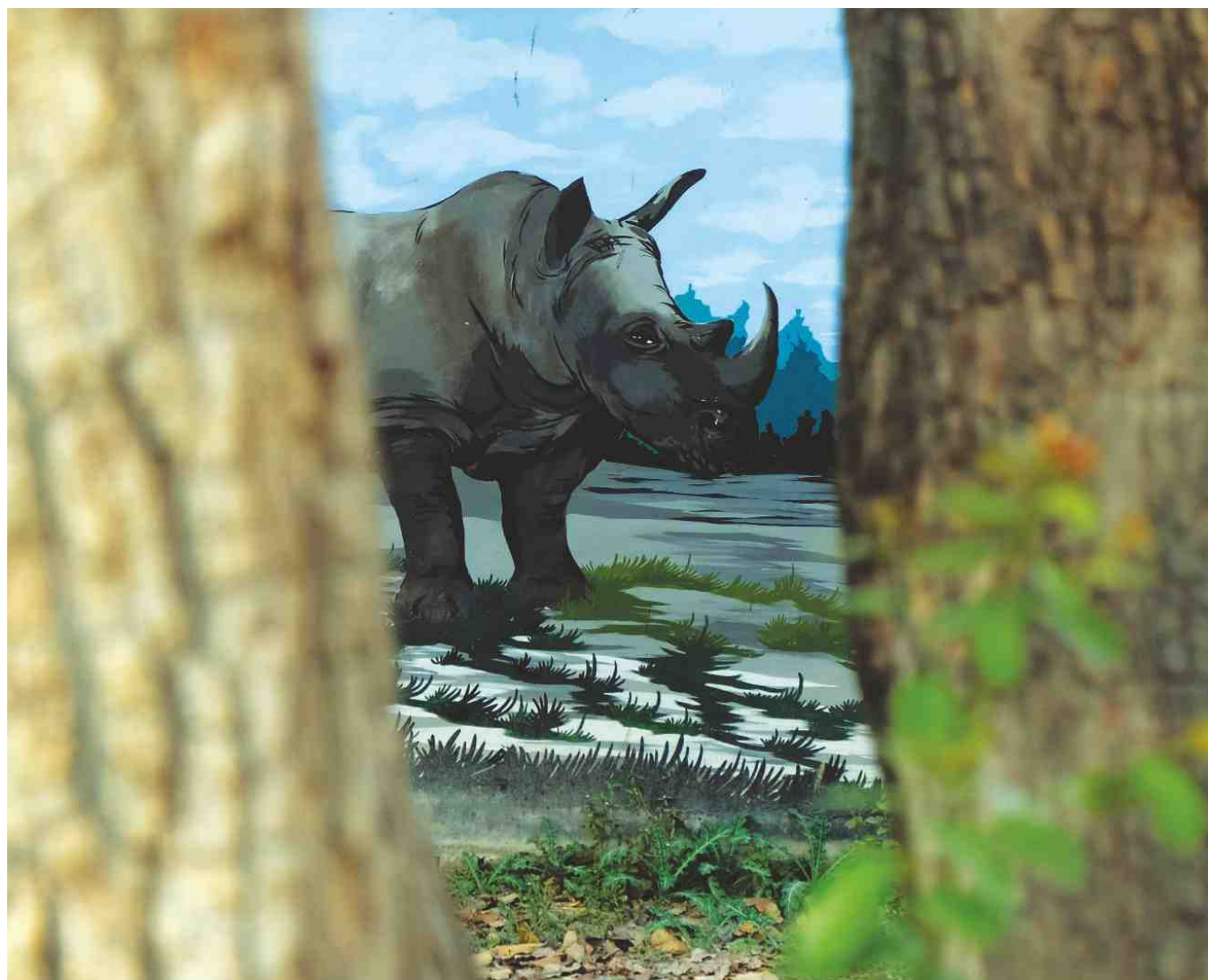


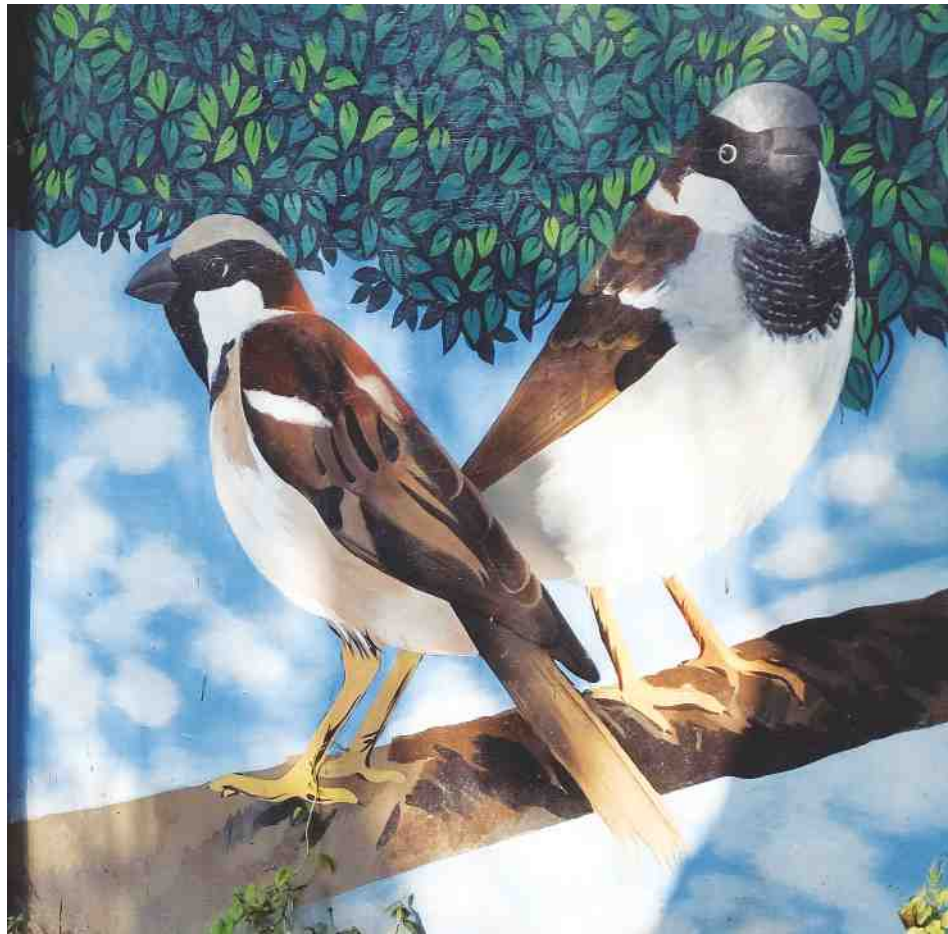




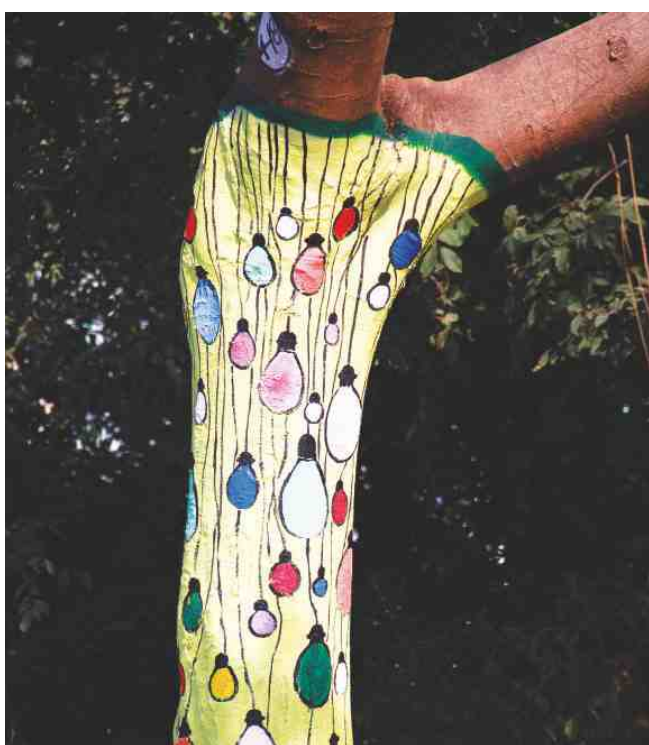
personalities of Hindu, Urdu, English and Sanskrit have been associated with Prayagraj. Besides, the city also played a leading role in the freedom movement. Hence, a number of street walls at prominent places have been dedicated to literary figures and freedom fighters like Mahamana Madan Mohan Malaviya, Subhash Chandra Bose and Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The campaign has been run near prominent thoroughfares, on strategic buildings, college campuses, organizations, offices, boats, e-rickshaws, flyovers, bus stops, railway stations and even prisons, to name a few.

Today, Prayagraj is a beautiful city, completely transformed and lively with artistic paintings, plants and flowers across its length and breadth. Each nook and corner seems to welcome one and all. And, much after Kumbh 2019 is over, 'Paint My City' will continue to live in the minds of all who would see and experience the amazing and wondrous murals and paintings – a legacy of aesthetics on various city sites.









TREE PAINTINGS IN THE CITY

Thanks to Kumbh Mela 2019, the city of Prayagraj has undergone a complete transformation. Not only were the walls of prominent buildings beautified, even the trees on Arail Road have been painted in bold and bright hues, making the entire trans-Yamuna area an open-air art gallery. The religious paintings on these trees reflect a festive mood and portray the spirit behind the Kumbh Mela.



PRAYAGRAJ CHANGING LANDMARKS

Beautifying the city to make the pilgrim's experience memorable was yet another important task which was done in the most exquisite way. For this, from facade lighting on all the trans-river bridges and all important buildings to uniform colour decoration on all prominent roads was carried out in the most attractive way possible. Folk art in the form of specially designed sculptures, keeping Kumbh's festive mood in mind and highlighting the cultural and spiritual aspect of the Kumbh Mela, was also showcased on railway underpasses, overbridges and flyovers.



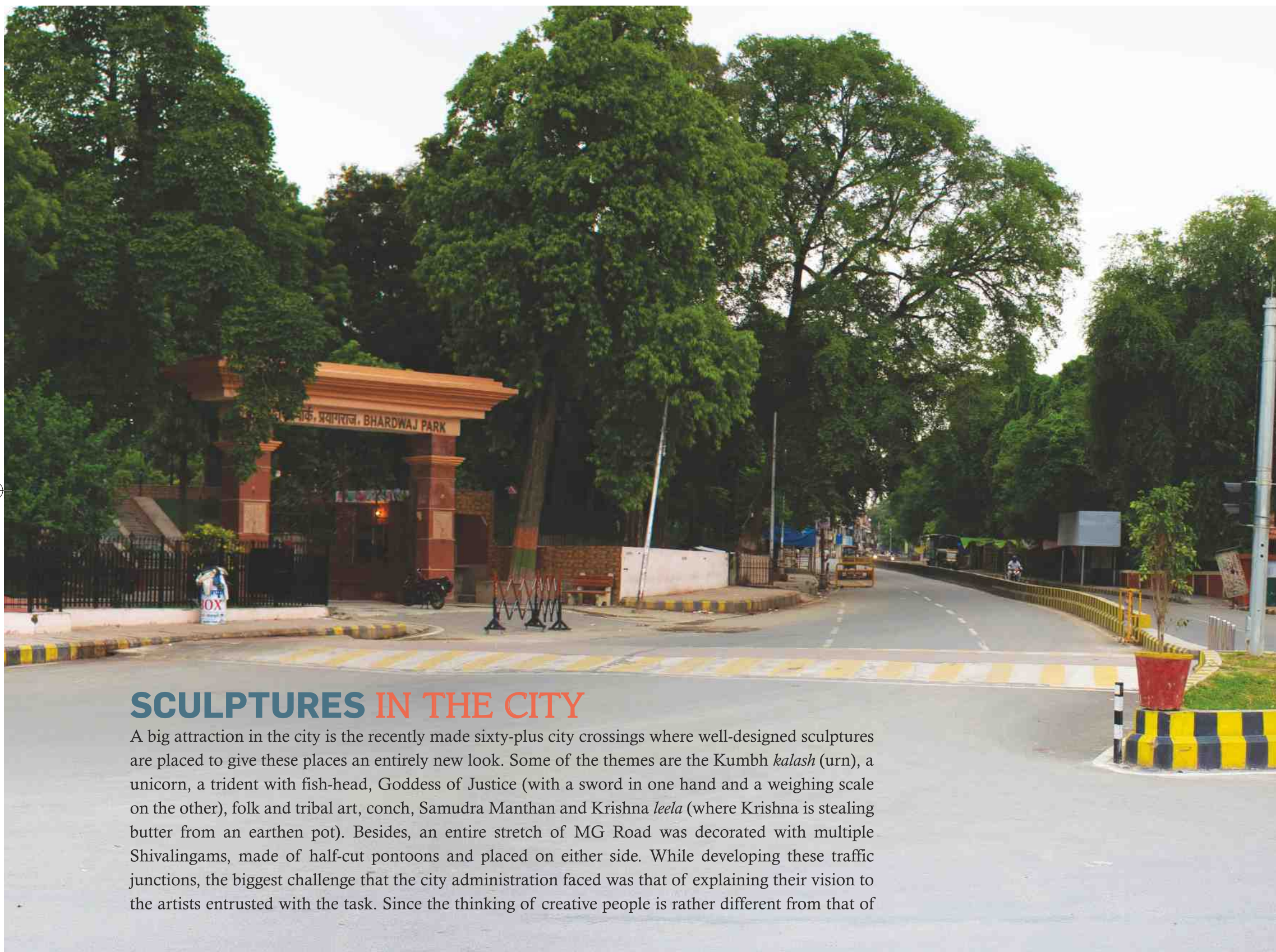












SCULPTURES IN THE CITY

A big attraction in the city is the recently made sixty-plus city crossings where well-designed sculptures are placed to give these places an entirely new look. Some of the themes are the Kumbh *kalash* (urn), a unicorn, a trident with fish-head, Goddess of Justice (with a sword in one hand and a weighing scale on the other), folk and tribal art, conch, Samudra Manthan and Krishna *leela* (where Krishna is stealing butter from an earthen pot). Besides, an entire stretch of MG Road was decorated with multiple Shivalingams, made of half-cut pontoons and placed on either side. While developing these traffic junctions, the biggest challenge that the city administration faced was that of explaining their vision to the artists entrusted with the task. Since the thinking of creative people is rather different from that of

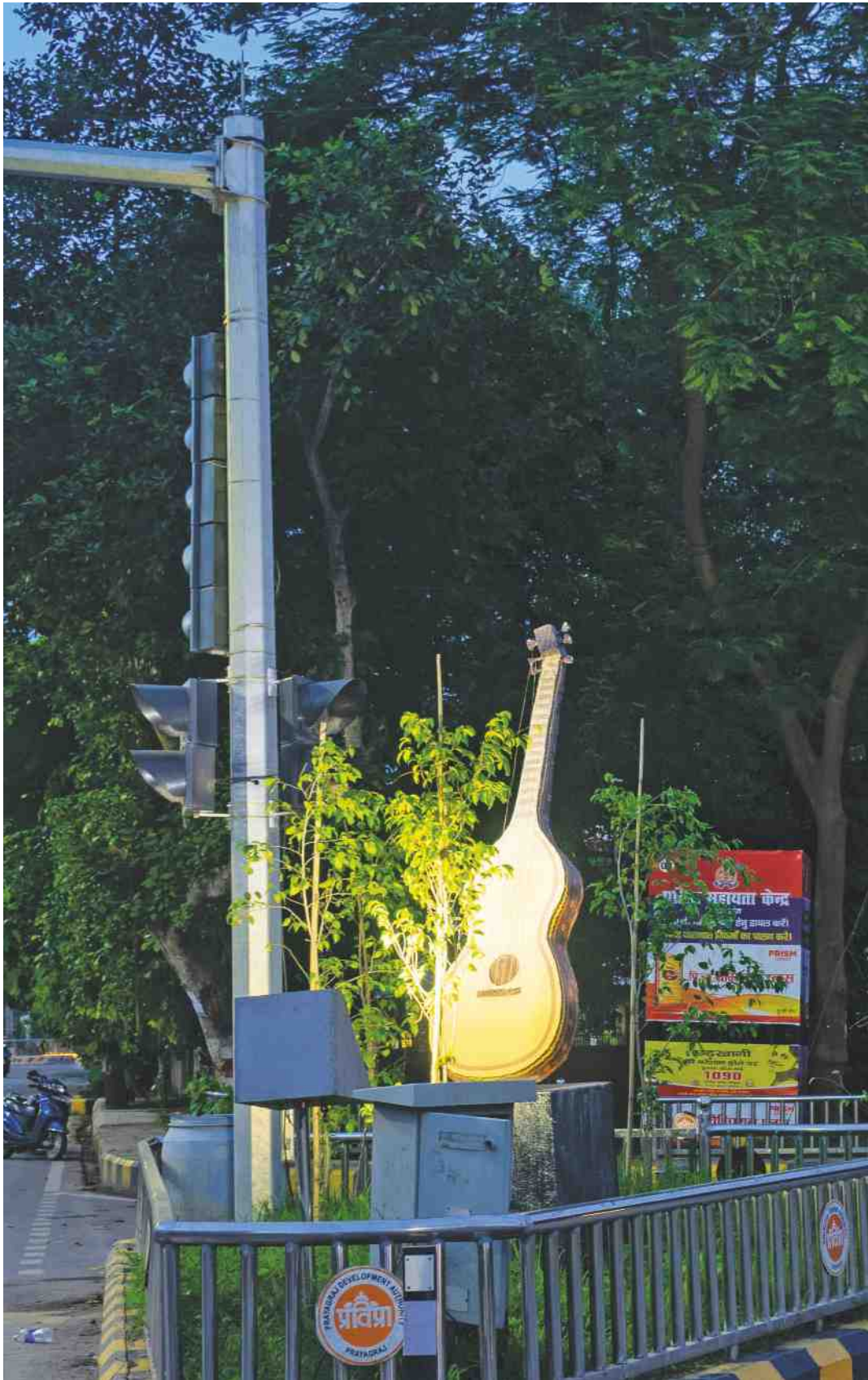


the 'non-creative', it becomes very stressful to make them understand and create to the specifications of others. Hence, ensuring that artists maintain the balance between their creativity and the administration's visions was a test of patience and communication skills. The administration would sit with them for hours and explain the perspective because once a sculpture was made it would be a waste of time and resources if it was not up to expectations. In this process, artists too would often get irritated and frustrated.



















DIVIDERS

From the perspective of tourism, beautification and safety planning in minute detail are two aspects that are worked upon whenever a city or place is developed. Hence, even the dividers of Prayagraj were built keeping these things in mind. When that work started, a big question was to take a call on the height of these dividers. The height of the existing ones were considerably negligible and people would lift their bikes (and other two-wheelers) and cross over them. This increased cross-movement and chances of accidents. Thus, there was a need to increase the height of the dividers. Besides, earlier the dividers were made of concrete, and in case of an accident, people were seriously injured. Because of them, in some cases, people died from collisions. Therefore, this time the dividers were designed in such a way that the impact would be minimum on people even after a collision, and not result in death. For the first time, the dividers were made hollow – concrete was not used – thereby reducing the strength of the dividers. It was decided that it would be better if a divider broke, in case of an accident, rather than a person dying. Though there was concern initially that the dividers were not strong enough and would break with even the smallest of impact, engineers knew that it would not happen because the hollow part was supposed to be filled with mud later to make it strong. This made it as strong as iron. It served two purposes: one, by not using concrete, fatal accidents were reduced and to a great extent these dividers worked as shock absorbers; two, they were also used as a canvas for the 'Paint My City' campaign, which contributed in making the city look more beautiful.





GREENERY

When the roads were being widened, a big challenge was to remove the trees which were on the road. However, since there was no other option but to cut the trees on the road (else the chances of accidents would have increased manifold), it was resolved that any tree not falling on the road would not be cut. So if a tree fell on the footpath, it was left untouched. Moreover, to compensate for the trees cut, the administration resolved to plant new trees and as many as 11,000 trees were planted during the same period in the city. With an eye on the future, a target to plant almost 2 lakh trees in the city has been kept.





UNIFORM COLOUR DECORATION ON ROADS

After Prayagraj was selected under the third phase of the Government of India's Smart City mission in June 2017, phase-wise development was planned. This included beautification of the city apart from permanent infrastructural development. Under the first phase of Smart City work, eight roads were identified to be developed as smart roads. Smart roads meant developing the road's infrastructure, increasing greenery on the footpaths and enhancing their aesthetics for a unique look. The concept of Uniform Colour decoration was a part of this Smart Road definition. Under this concept, all the shops and showrooms on these roads were supposed to be designed and developed under the same colour theme to give the entire stretch an enhanced aesthetic look. Sardar Patel Marg turned out to be the first road where a unique combination of red and black was implemented. The inspiration for this concept was taken from different international cities. In the second phase of Smart City development, Uniform Colour decoration will be done on many other roads too.



SHOPPING AND EATING OUT IN PRAYAGRAJ

Food and shopping are two most important components of the tourism value chain and to a great extent prime motivational factors in choosing a destination. Interestingly, Prayagraj has a lot to offer in both these domains and make a tourist's overall travel experience memorable. All one needs to know is the right place to visit. Whether it's about the best of street food at the old city or exotic Italian cuisine at the heart of Civil Lines, flea markets at Katra and Chowk or grand malls on MG Road or SP Marg, the city offers everything in its own style that would appeal to a tourist. Prayagraj is globally known for its guavas and Loknath ki Gali, which have found mention in almost every national and international tourist guide. Although the place is not famous for its indigenous artisanal handicrafts, it has a variety of products to offer made by artisans living in the adjoining cities.



SHOPPING

If you know the right place to buy what you need, shopping can be a beautiful experience and in Prayagraj there are a number of big and small markets which can make your shopping experience memorable. One can find some of the most exotic products with an ethnic touch here because from handicraft items to some of the most luxurious showrooms, all are present here. Although there are a number of prominent roads on the sides of which many famous markets are present, the markets are famous area-wise. If Chowk, followed by Katra, are the biggest retail and wholesale markets, Civil Lines is the most high-end market in Prayagraj. As the city is also divided into trans-Ganga and trans-Yamuna areas, there are separate markets for the denizens living in the outskirts. All in all, the city markets have everything a tourist would be keen to buy.

CIVIL LINES

Mahatma Gandhi (MG) Marg: This is one of the major shopping streets of the city and has several shops and showrooms on both sides. It stretches from Allahabad High Court in the east and passes through Civil Lines intersecting Sardar Patel Marg at Subhash Crossing, a notable town square of the city. People of the city as well tourists enjoy walking down the road and picking up their

favourite stuff on this street. The city's second-biggest mall, Atlantis, is also on this road.

Sardar Patel (SP) Marg: Part of the Civil Lines area, this is another prominent street on which some of the biggest showrooms, including auto showrooms, have their presence. The city's biggest mall, Vinayak City Center, stands on this road.



Chowk: Part of the old city area, Chowk is the biggest retail and wholesale market of almost everything in Prayagraj. Although one would not be able to see fancy showrooms here, it is the historic city centre where the oldest and the largest business markets have their presence.

Katra Market: This is also one of the oldest markets of the city and is located adjacent to the University of Allahabad. One of the prominent roads, the University Road – famous for buying books and study material related to numerous competitive examinations – passes in front of the science faculty of the University of Allahabad and is part of Katra Market. After Chowk, this is the second-biggest retail and wholesale market for almost everything.

Shankar Dhal Naini: Located around 10km from Prayagraj in the trans-Yamuna area, this market is part of the Naini industrial area. Apart from every possible retail product, handicrafts are also sold in this market.

Phaphamau Bazaar: Located in trans-Ganga area, Phaphamau Bazaar is the local retail market for the people living in the outskirts of the city near Phaphamau. It is a wholesale market for fruits and vegetable as people from the nearby villages come here to sell their produces.



EATING OUT

Talk about the variety of cuisines and the city of Prayagraj is second to none. However, what the city is more famous for are the street-side shops that have been serving locals as well as travellers for generations. If Netram in Katra is famous for its Kachori-Subzi, then Loknath ki Gali in Chowk is a one-stop shop for any vegetarian foodie in the world. Ranging from lip-smacking Lassi and Rabdi to the world-class Hari's Deshi ghee Samosa and namkeen, a number of items are available within this small lane of the old city. Some of the other important must-visit food destinations of the city include Dehati Rasgulla at Behrana; Churmura Shop near Subhash Crossing, Civil Lines; Sulaki Sweets near Mansarovar; and Tinkonia Chat Corner and Rajesh Kachori near Chandralok. As the tradition of having a specially prepared paan (betel leaf) right after a meal is still popular in Prayagraj, Sophiya Laurence, perhaps the most famous paan shop in the city, has opened a number of shops over the years, and has become a must-visit place.









SURVIVAL GUIDE

More and more tourists are coming into Prayagraj these days – for pilgrimage, vacation, business, volunteerism, and to visit friends and family. Whatever one's reason for travelling, the information given here will help one to be prepared. A prepared tourist will be able to enjoy Prayagraj in all its majestic glory. One will have a safe trip, save money and avoid sickness and scams.

HOW TO REACH



Prayagraj Airport is located in Bamrauli at a distance of 12km from the city and is operational for domestic flights only. A new terminal, constructed at a cost of nearly ₹164 crore, also commenced operations in January 2018. Regular flights to/from Delhi, Indore, Lucknow, Nagpur and Patna are currently operational. Shuttle service is available to travel to/from the airport and the city. Two other airports closest to Prayagraj are Lal Bahadur Shastri Airport in Varanasi (150km) and Amausi International Airport in Lucknow (200km).



Being the headquarter of the North Central Railway (NCR), Prayagraj has over eight railway stations, including Allahabad Junction, Prayag Station, City Station at Rambagh, Subedarganj Railway Station, Naini Railway Station and Cheoki Junction. These stations are well connected to many of the major cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Bhopal, Gwalior and Jaipur, to name a few. Two of the 44 fastest-running trains in India originate from and terminate at Allahabad Junction.



Prayagraj is well connected with National and State Highways. NH2, which links Delhi-Kolkata, passes from Prayagraj, while NH27 starts from Prayagraj and ends at Mangawan in Madhya Pradesh. NH76 links Prayagraj with Rajasthan. Two main bus stands of Prayagraj Civil Lines Bus Stand and Zero Road Bus Stop cater to different routes of the country through interstate bus services. Local transportation such as tourist taxis, cabs, auto rickshaws and local buses are also available that connects with the neighbouring cities.

ACCOMMODATIONS

LUXURY HOTELS

HOTEL KANHA SHYAM

22/1, Strachey Road, Civil Lines,
Prayagraj
G 0532-2560123, 2560132

HOTEL YATRIK

33, Sardar Patel Marg, Civil Lines,
Prayagraj
G 0532-2260923-24

HOTEL MILAN PALACE

Civil Lines, Prayagraj
G 0532-2421505-06

HOTEL GRAND CONTINENTAL

Sardar Patel Marg, Civil Lines,
Prayagraj
G 0532-2260631-32

RAVISHA CONTINENTAL

Near High Court,
Prayagraj
G 0532-2420764

HOTEL PRAYAGRAJ REGENCY

16, Tashkant Marg,
Prayagraj
G 0532-2407519, 2407736

MEDIUM RANGE

RAHI ILLAWART TOURIST BUNGALOW (TOURISM DEPARTMENT)

35, MG Marg, Civil Lines, Prayagraj
G 0532-2407440, 2408374
Email: rahiilawart@up-tourism.com

RAHI TRIVENI DARSHAN TOURIST BUNGALOW (TOURISM DEPARTMENT)

Yamuna Bank Road, Kydganj
G 0532-2558646
Email: rahitrivenialahabad@up-tourism.com

HOTEL PRAYAG-IN

Daya Nand Marg, Ashok Nagar,
Prayagraj
G 0532-3244942

HOTEL AJAI INTERNATIONAL

Civil Lines, Prayagraj
G 0532-2422870

HOTEL SAMRAT

49A/25A, MG Marg, Civil Lines,
Prayagraj
G 0532-2561200-07

HOTEL MILAN

46, Leader Road, Prayagraj
G 0532-2403776

BUDGET HOTELS

HOTEL PRAYAG

73, Noorulla Road, Prayagraj
G 0532-2656416, 2655596

HOTEL SAKET

Civil Lines, Prayagraj
G 0532-2427677

HOTEL VASHISHTHA

Johnstonganj, Prayagraj
G 0532-2405470

HOTEL SUNCITY

Leader Road, Prayagraj
G 0532-2405130, 2405372

HOTEL RAM KRISHNA

Civil Lines, Prayagraj
G 0532-2407785

HOTEL SUNDRAM

Vivekanand Marg, Prayagraj
G 0532-2400259, 2400779

HOTEL CROWN PLACE

Rambagh, Prayagraj
G 0532-2557137, 8765428707

HOTEL STAR REGENCY

LB Shashtri Marg, Civil Lines,
Prayagraj
G 0532-2420713



UNIVERSITIES AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES

UNIVERSITY OF ALLAHABAD

Senate House, Central University of Prayagraj, Prayagraj
Website: <http://www.allduniv.ac.in>
G 0532-2461083

RAJENDRA SINGH (RAJJU BHAIYA) UNIVERSITY, PRAYAGRAJ (FORMERLY ALLAHABAD STATE UNIVERSITY)

CPI Campus, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Civil Lines, Prayagraj
Website: <http://www.alldstateuniversity.org>
G 08400919565

GOVIND BALLABH PANT SOCIAL SCIENCE INSTITUTE

Banaras Road, Near Shashtripur Bridge, Jhusi, Prayagraj
Website: <http://www.gbpsi.in>
G 09450505050

HARISH-CHANDRA RESEARCH INSTITUTE (HRI)

Chhatnag Road, Jhusi, Prayagraj
Website: <http://www.hri.res.in>
G 0532-2569509

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IIIT-A), ALLAHABAD

Devghat Jhalwa, Prayagraj
Website: <http://www.iiita.ac.in>
G 0532-2922004

MOTILAL NEHRU NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (MNNIT)

Teliarganj, Prayagraj
Website: <http://www.mnnit.ac.in>
G 0532-2545404, 2545407

U.P. RAJARSHI TANDON OPEN UNIVERSITY (UPRTOU)

Sector-F, Shantipuram, Phaphamau, Prayagraj
Website: <http://www.uprtou.ac.in/>
G 0532-2447036

SAM HIGGINBOTTOM UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCES

Rewa Road Old Bridge, Near Yamuna, Naini, Prayagraj
Website: www.shiatsmail.edu.in
G 0532-2684781

UNITED INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING AND MANAGEMENT

A-31, UPSIDC Industrial Area, Naini, Prayagraj
Website: <https://www.united.ac.in/>
G 0532-2686070

SHAMBHUNATH INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

Utthan Road, Near Police Chowki, Kabir Nagar, Devprayagam Colony, Jhalwa, Prayagraj
Website: <https://www.siet.in>
G 09336667242

B.B.S COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY

Phaphamau, Prayagraj,
Website: www.bbs.ac.in
G 0532-2447811, 2447812

HOSPITALS

KAMLA NEHRU HOSPITAL

Tagore Town, Prayagraj
G 0532-2608830, 2600469

SWAROOP RANI NEHRU HOSPITAL

MG Road, Prayagraj
G 0532-2603782

DUFFERIN HOSPITAL

Chowk, Prayagraj
G 0532-2651822

MOTI LAL NEHRU HOSPITAL

Colvin Road, Prayagraj
G 0532-2652141, 2654546

NAZRETH HOSPITAL

13-A, Kamla Nehru Marg, Near Hathi Park, Prayagraj
G 0532-2600430, 2601796

TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU HOSPITAL

Stanley Road, Prayagraj
G 0532-2642687

NORTHERN RAILWAY HOSPITAL

Near Railway Station, Prayagraj
G 0532-2624085

JEEVAN JYOTI HOSPITAL

162, Lowther Road, Bai Ka Bagh, Prayagraj
G 0532-2417248

PHOENIX HOSPITAL

49/163A, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Tagore Town, Prayagraj
G 0532-2465514

VATSALYA HOSPITAL

6, 8, Lal Bahadur Shastri Marg, Civil Lines, Prayagraj
G 0532-2407500



EXCURSIONS from PRAYAGRAJ

There are a number of places within a reasonable distance from the city where tourists can go to. While Kaushambi and Pabhosa, two important centres of Buddhism and Jainism, are close by, the famous temple of Vindhyaachal – one of the 51 *shaktipeeths*, is also hardly a 2-hour drive away. Chitrakoot, which came to limelight when Lord Rama travelled through it during their exile period; Jhansi, once known as Pratihthanpuri, the capital of the Lunar Dynasty or Chandra Vansh; and Arai, another prominent religious place known for its Shivalayas, Dwadus Madhav Temples and ashrams, are some of the other places one must include in the itinerary while travelling to Prayagraj.





KAUSHAMBI

Kaushambi district was carved out of Allahabad district on 4 April 1997. It is surrounded by the districts of Chitrakoot in the south, Pratapgarh in the north, Prayagraj in the east and Fatehpur in the west. It is about 56km (via GT Road) and 68km (by NH19) from Prayagraj.

Before the Mauryan period, Kaushambi was the capital of the Vatsa *janapada* (districts). The *Satapatha Brahmana* mentions an individual called Proti Kaushambeya, a local of Kaushambi. This antiquity of the city is affirmed by the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, the former attributing its establishment to Kusamba, the third child of the Chedi king Uparica Vasu and the latter to Kusamba, the child of Kusa.

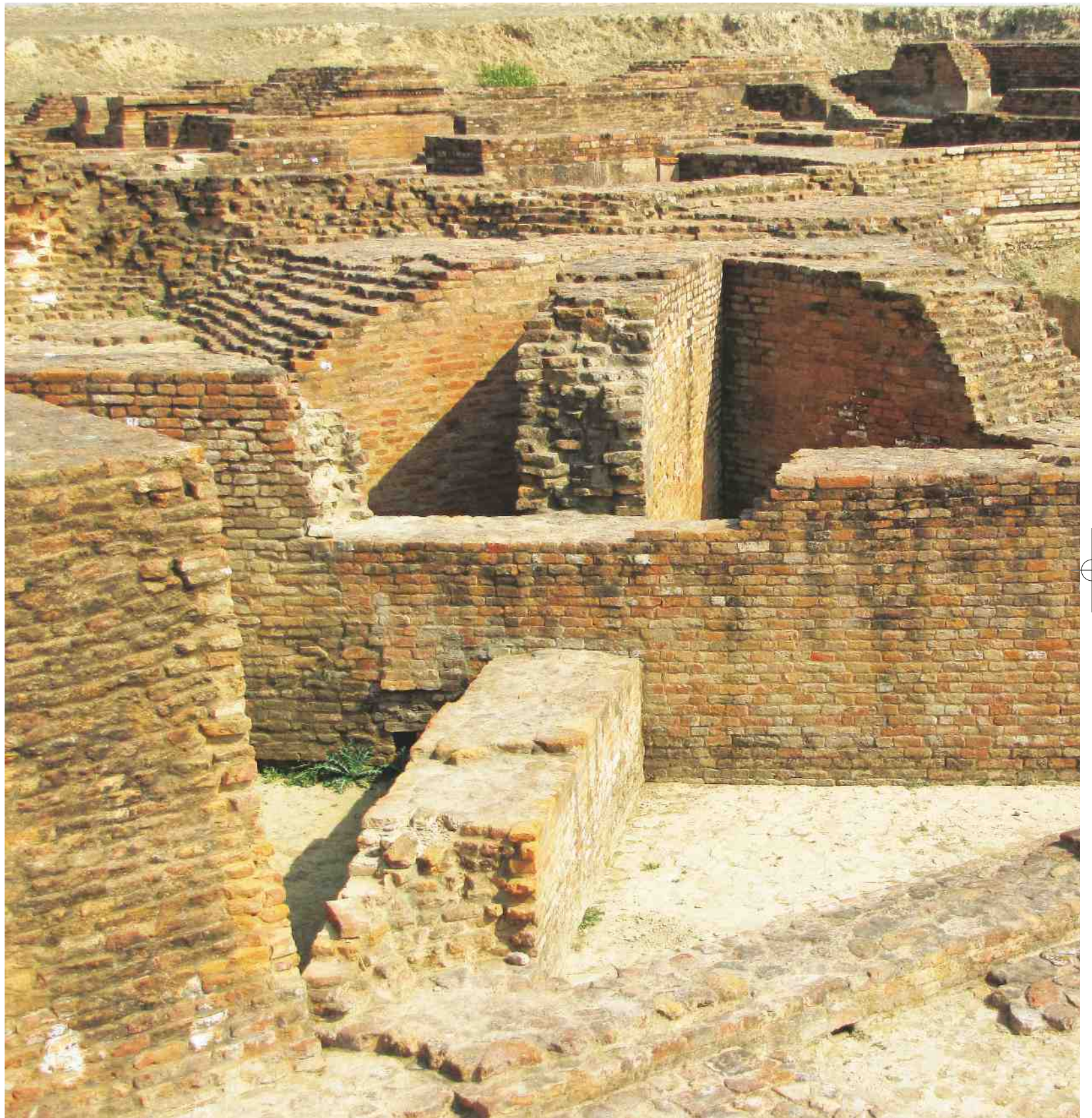
As per the Puranas, Nichakshu, sixth in line from Parikshit, moved his capital from Hastinapura to Kaushambi when Hastinapura was ravaged by flood, an infestation of locusts and upheaval within the Kuru family.

As indicated by the *Paramattha Jyotika*, which is a commentary on the *Suttanipata* (a Buddhist scripture), Kaushambi was the site of the hermitage of the sage Kosamba, after whom it was named. According to Buddhaghosa (a fifth-century Theravada Buddhist commentator, translator and philosopher), Kaushambi was so named because, in the course of establishing the city, countless Kusamba trees were removed. Moreover, *Vividha-tirthe-kalpa* (a widely cited Jain text composed by Jinaprabha Suri in the fourteenth century CE) also mentioned that Kaushambi abounded in Kusamba trees.

During the Buddha's time, Kaushambi was one of the six most-significant and prosperous towns in India. The principal routes from north to south and east to west met at the city. The Buddha made a few visits to Kaushambi in the sixth and the

ninth years after his enlightenment. The city retained its importance at least up to the sixth century CE, when it was visited by the Chinese pilgrims Fa-Hien and Xuanzang.

The primary places of historical interest in Kaushambi are an Ashokan pillar, the famous Ghoshita Ram Monastery and the Digambar Jain Temple.



SHRINGVERPUR

Located 40km from Prayagraj (and 168km from Ayodhya), Shringverpur is believed to be the place where Lord Rama crossed the Ganga accompanied by wife Sita and brother Lakshmana, all on their way to Chitrakoot during their exile, making it a sacred site for Hindu devotees.

Excavations at the village have yielded a temple dedicated to Shringi Rishi, from which this place is believed to take its name.

The Ramayana says that this was the capital of the kingdom of Nishadraj (the king of fishermen). It is said that Lord Rama, Sita and Lakshmana spent a night here because boatmen had refused to take them across the river, and Nishadraj himself



intervened to solve the problem. However, he said that Lord Rama would cross the river only when he allowed the king to wash his feet. Lord Rama acceded to Nishadraj's request and gave him permission, and the king washed Lord Rama's feet with the water of the Ganga. The place where Nishadraj washed Lord Rama's feet has been marked by a platform and named 'Ramchura'. There is a small temple at this quiet place where people go for darshan. It is also believed that it was here that Lord Rama sat under the sheesham tree.

Classical Sanskrit writer Kalidasa, in his book *Raghuvamsa*, has mentioned Lord Rama's visit to Shringverpur. The later Sanskrit writer Bhavabhuti has also described Shringverpur in Lord Rama's reminiscences in *Uttarramacharit*. Even Goswami Tulsidas has mentioned Shringverpur in *Ramcharitmanas*.

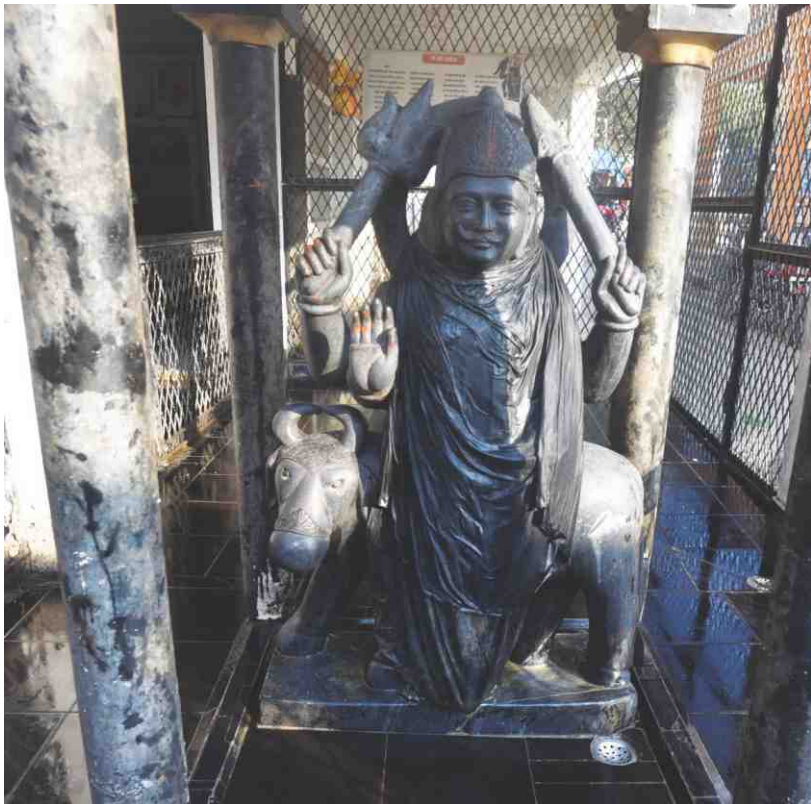
Today, the village, situated on the banks of the Ganga, is a wonderful, lush green place with four tiny hills. There are archaeological ruins, an ancient hydraulic system and other things to see, besides the temple. The easiest approach is from Prayagraj, and this is a convenient day trip from there as well.



Charan Chinha







SITAMARHI

According to the Ramayana, Sita descended into the earth after Luv and Kush reunited with their father, Lord Rama. Sita prayed to Mother Earth to take her back. Soon after, the earth split open and Sita disappeared into it. Sita Samahit Sthal or Sitamarhi, on NH2, is situated between Prayagraj and Varanasi.



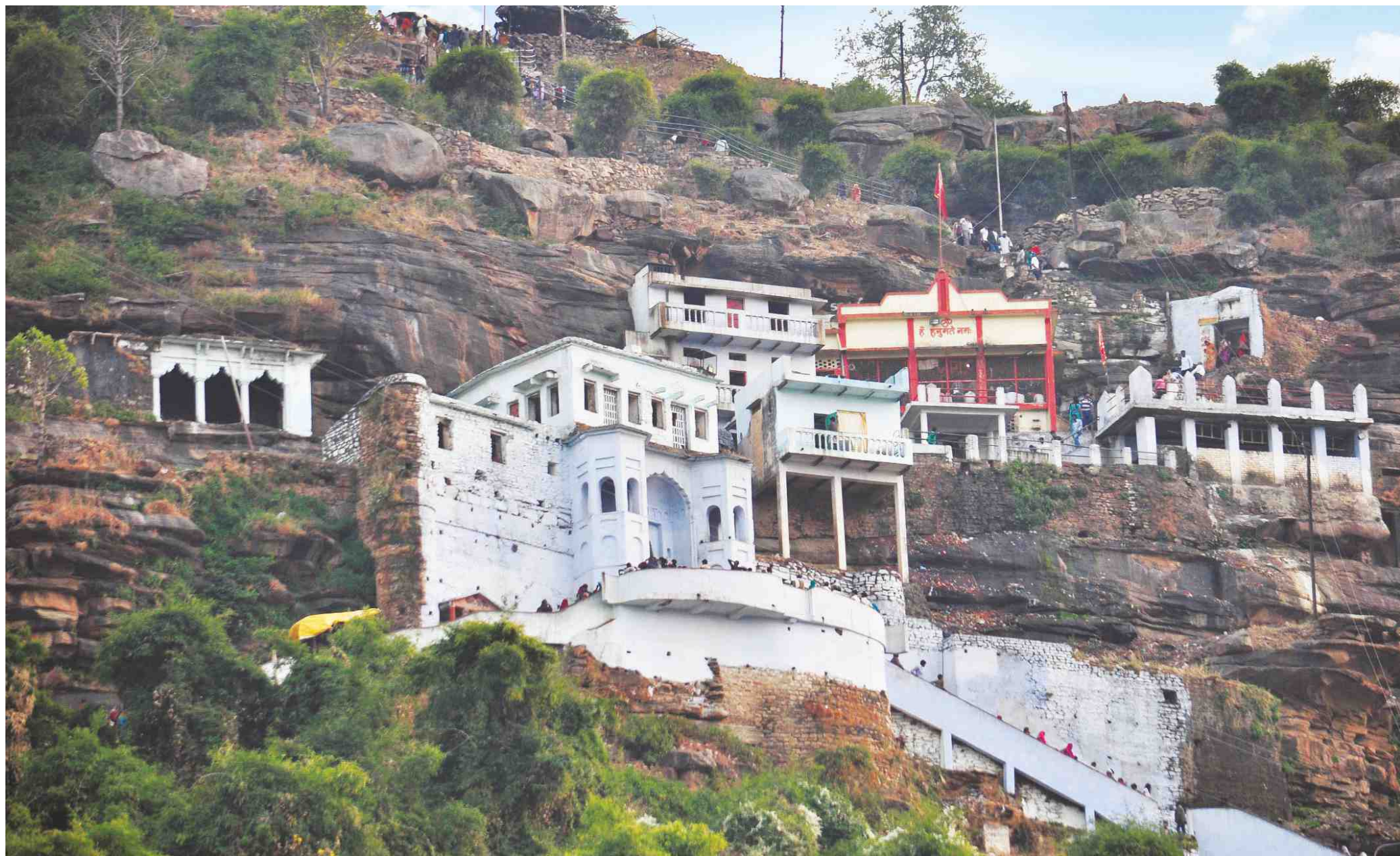


CHITRAKOOT

Straddling the border of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, this important riverside Vaishnavite pilgrimage spot, also called Chitrakoot Dham, is venerated for its association with the legends of Lord Rama. This is where Lord Rama spent a large part of his 14 years in exile. Located on the banks of River Mandakini,

Chitrakoot (131km from Prayagraj; 274km from Ayodhya) is a picturesque and serene place. Hindu legends say that the supreme triumvirate of deities – Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh – revealed themselves here in several avatars.

Sage Atri and Sati Anusuya are said to have meditated by the tranquil serenity of the Mandakini river, lined by sacred ghats and venerable shrines. The numerous bathing ghats





attract throngs of devotees, especially on Dussehra and Diwali, which are pivotal festivals in the Rama legends.

The parikrama of the holy Kamadgiri Hill, with its scattering of shrines, is believed to be very auspicious, bestowing the same benefits as going to all the other tirthas. Atop the Kamadgiri Hill stands the Kamtanath Temple, where the enshrined deity is said to be an incarnation of Lord Rama.

Of special significance is Ram Ghat, where Lord Rama used to bathe. Do spend an evening here, enjoying the *aarti* conducted at Ram Ghat. Upstream from the Ram Ghat, is the Sphatik Shila, a small boulder said to bear the imprint of Lord Rama's feet. This is believed to be the spot where Mother Sita would do her *shringaar* (make-up). Another legend says that this is where Jayanta, Lord Indra's son, disguised as a crow, pecked Sita on her foot.

Bharat Koop, a huge well near Bharatpur village, is located around 20km west of Chitrakoot. Water from all the holy places were brought home by younger brother Bharat to sanctify the *rajabhishek* (coronation ceremony) of Lord Rama. But when he wasn't able to persuade Lord Rama to return to his kingdom and take his place as the king, he poured the holy water in this well. It is said that taking a bath from the water of this well is equivalent to bathing in all the *tirthasthans*. There is also a temple here dedicated to Lord Rama, Sita and other members of the family. Important festivals here include the Ramayana Mela, Diwali, Ramnavami, Vijay Dashami and Amavasya Mela.

Other sacred spots are the Tirupati Bala Temple, Hanuman Dhara, Janki Kund and Ram Darshan. Rajapur, about 40km away, is the birthplace of the poet Tulsidas, renowned for writing the *Ramcharitmanas*.

