

[48 HOURS IN HYDERABAD]

Royal Touch

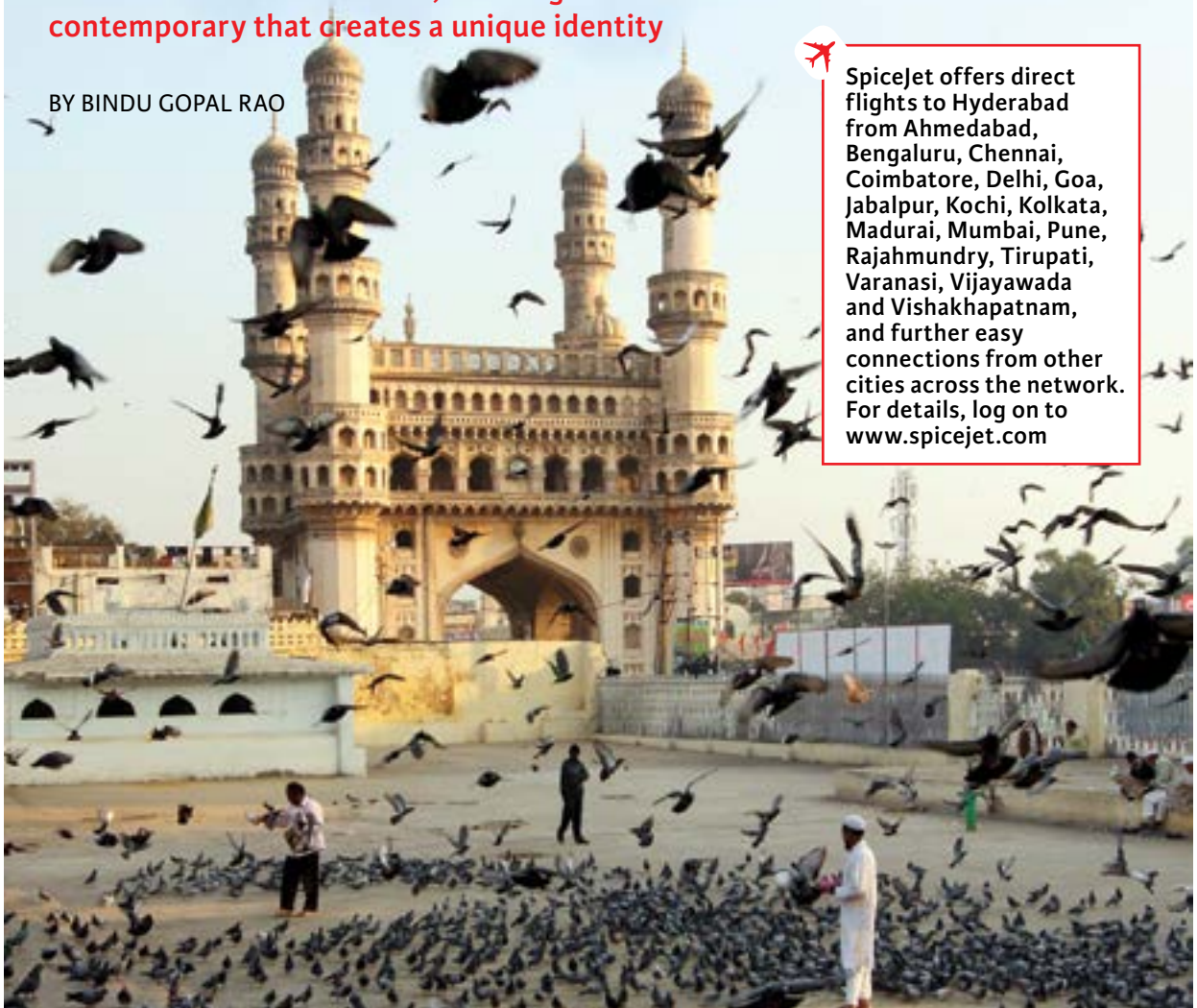
City of the Nizams, Hyderabad is a potpourri of cultures that effortlessly blends the old with the new, an amalgamation of the traditional with the contemporary that creates a unique identity

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO



SpiceJet offers direct flights to Hyderabad from Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Coimbatore, Delhi, Goa, Jabalpur, Kochi, Kolkata, Madurai, Mumbai, Pune, Rajahmundry, Tirupati, Varanasi, Vijayawada and Vishakhapatnam, and further easy connections from other cities across the network. For details, log on to www.spicejet.com

48



Currently joint capital of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Hyderabad is a cosmopolitan city that has something for everybody. Founded by Sulthan Mohammed Quli Qutub Shah, the 5th King of the Qutub Shah dynasty in 1590,

the city has everything from historical sites to lakes and parks, museums, zoo and a new hi-tech city. Wherever you go, you can feel the distinct vibe of the city.

DAY 1

Check out the heritage sites and take a

historical tour. Have a hearty breakfast and start your day.

10:00 A.M. SALAR JUNG MUSEUM

This museum has a repository of antiques, artefacts and art work all collected by Mir Yousuf Ali Khan, Salar

Jung III. The display covers a period from 2nd century BCE to early 20th century CE and showcases items from Greek, Roman, Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, Christian and Islamic history. The collections range from Indian Art, Middle Eastern Art, Far Eastern Art and European Art and there is a children's section as well. On display are Persian carpets, Moghul miniatures, Chinese porcelain and Japanese lacquerware, The statue of the Veiled Rebecca and the double-faced statue carved as a soldier from the front and a lady from the back which can be seen from the mirror fitted in the back wall. All are highlights not to be missed. The museum also publishes guides, brochures and research journals and houses a huge library consisting of nearly 60,000 books, manuscripts and journals.

1:00 P.M. CHARMINAR

If there is one monument that can be considered Hyderabad's most prominent landmark it has to be the Charminar. Built in 1591, this is one of the city's most recognised monuments and also houses a mosque. Flanked by the Musi river on the east and Lad Bazaar on the west, the name Charminar is derived

from the translation and combination of the Urdu words Char and Minar or Meenar, translating to "Four Towers". Built in the Indo-Islamic architecture style with distinct Persian influences, this structure stands about 66 feet tall with four grand arches. It is made up of granite, limestone, mortar and pulverised marble and you can reach the upper floor by taking a flight of about 150 steps. The surrounding area of the monument is also known by the same name and the area is famous for its shopping market that is primarily known for its bangles and pearls. This part of the town captures the true spirit and essence of the old city and should not be missed when visiting Hyderabad.

3:00 P.M. LAD BAZAAR AND PATHER GATTI

Lad Bazaar (also known as Choodi Bazaar) and Pather Gatti or the pearl market are the traditional and old time and yet amongst the most

popular shopping markets in the area surrounding Charminar. Located on one of the four main roads that open up from Charminar, the narrow lanes are usually always teeming with shoppers and are choc-a-block with rows of shops



Lad Bazaar

selling the trademark lacquer bangles studded with stones. As the name indicates, Laad means "lacquer" and hence the market is popular for lacquer bangles, semi-precious stones and pearls. There is also the traditional silverware, Nirmal and Kalamkari paintings as well as Bidriware handicrafts that are local to the region. The pearls of the old city deserve a special mention and no trip to this historic city is complete without picking up a souvenir or two and Pather Gatti which is the pearl market must be on your list. You can also pick up some exquisite brocade, velvet and gold embroidered fabric as well as the unique Khara Dupattas and perfumes.

5:00 P.M. CHOWMAHALLA PALACE

Built by the Nizams between 1857 and 1869 over several phases, this is a set of heritage buildings and has four palaces in Moghul and European styles. The palace gets its name from Chow which means four and Mahal which means Palace. Chow-Mahalla therefore means four palaces - Afzal Mahal, Mahtab Mahal, Tahniyat Mahal and Aftab Mahal. The main palace is double storeyed and the buildings house an interesting collection of antique weapons, clothes, chandeliers, vintage cars, ceramics and paintings. The well-maintained space has elegant courtyards and fountains as well as a throne room. A combination of several architectural styles and influences, the palace complex has been meticulously restored.

Andhra Pradesh state legislative assembly building



Cyber Towers,
HITECH City



THE ULTRA-MODERN FACE OF HYDERABAD

One of India's leading IT destinations, Hyderabad was among the earliest Indian cities to cash in on the software boom. HITEC City, located in Madhapur locality of Hyderabad, best exemplifies the giant strides the southern city has taken in this sector. Promoted jointly by engineering giant Larsen & Toubro Limited and the Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation Limited, HITEC City is the largest Information Technology park in India. It offers world class state-of-the-art IT infrastructure under one roof. Companies based here operate in the fields of IT services, IT enabled services, Telecom, Engineering Consultancy and related domains. The park is spread over 151 acres and the companies can avail of 5 million sq ft of office space and other infrastructure. There is uninterrupted power, along with additional diesel generator back-up. An additional 87 acres of land have now been acquired. These will be devoted to a residential township of independent bungalows and apartment complexes.

52

8:00 P.M. BIRYANI AT PARADISE Café

While you are in Hyderabad do not miss the famed biryani. And the best place to try it is Paradise Café. Established in 1953 in Secunderabad this well-known café was started by G Hussain and the café used to serve Irani chai, coffee and snacks. Today the café has several branches across the city serving typical Hyderabadi cuisine including the biryani. The biryani uses the same secret recipe from the last six decades that ensures that the taste retains its legendary flavour. The ingredients chosen for the biryani are fresh and only the finest go to make this delectable delicacy. The biryani is made using long grained basmati rice and hand pounded spices cooked in a traditional, coal-based dum process that captures all flavours within the dish. Do not miss the special local dessert Qubani Ka Meetha while you are here.

DAY 2

Explore history and culture with a tinge of spirituality.

9:00 A.M. GOLKONDA FORT

Situated in the western part of the city, the Golconda Fort is one of the most magnificent fortress complexes in India. Originally built as a mud fort in the year 1143, it was fortified between 14th and 17th century by the Qutub Shahi dynasty whose principal capital was Golconda.

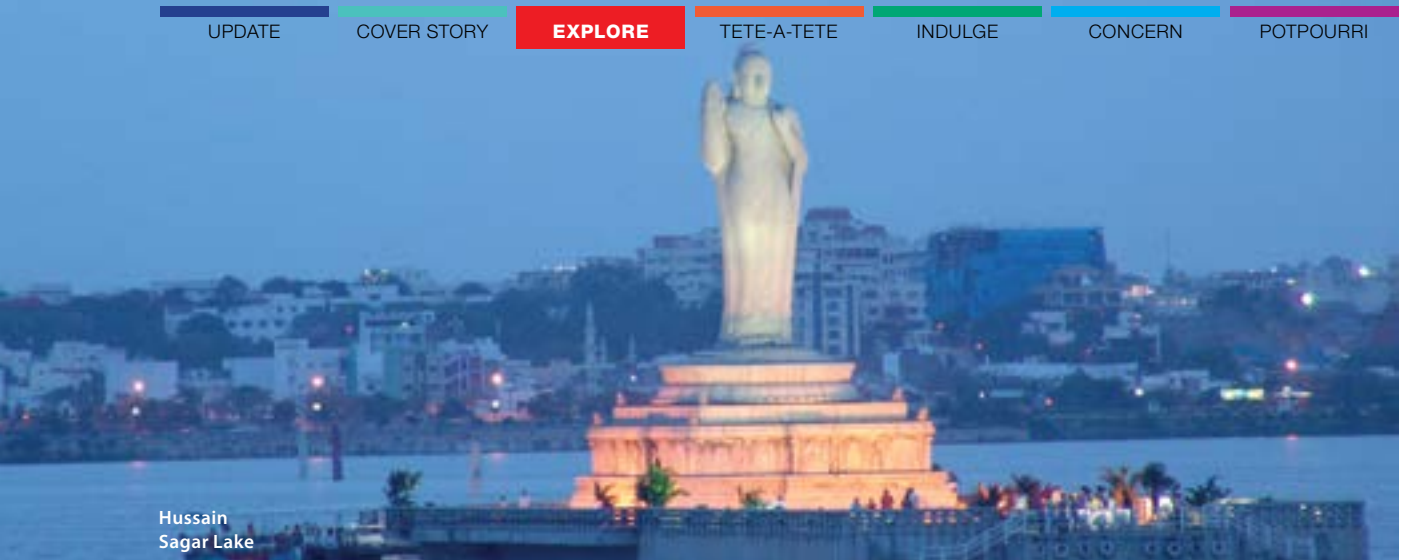
There is an outer fort as well as an inner fort and the latter contains ruins of palaces, mosques and a hill top pavilion which is about 130 metres high. A testimony to Hyderabad's glorious past, it is at Golconda that you can witness mounted cannons, four drawbridges, eight gateways, stables and majestic halls. Fateh Darwaza is one of the famous enclosures of the fort which boasts of an engineering marvel. Clapping your hand at a certain point near the dome entrance reverberates and is heard clearly at the hill top pavilion that is about a kilometre away. Meant to serve as a warning of any impending danger, this phenomenon is extremely popular with tourists and amuses visitors no end.

1:00 P.M. QUTUB SHAHI TOMBS

Located about 2 km north-west of Golconda Fort are 21 magnificent domed granite tombs mounted on a cubical base amidst the picturesque gardens of Ibrahim Bagh. These tombs were erected in memory of the departed kings of Golconda and have been built in an architectural style which is a mixture of Persian, Pathan and Hindu forms. The tombs differ in size and the most elegant one is the tomb of Hyderabad's founder, Muhammed Quli Qutub Shah which has a height of 42.5 metres. Ironically, the tomb of Sultan Quli Qutub-ul-Mulk, the founder of the Qutub Shahi dynasty is

Qutub Shahi
Tombs





Hussain Sagar Lake

the most modest one at about 12 metres. There are also tombs that belong to non-ruling members of the royal families like the immediate families of the rulers.

3:00 P.M. HUSSAIN SAGAR LAKE

Hussain Sagar is a lake built by Hazrat Hussain Shah Wali in 1562 and is spread across an area of 5.7 square km and is fed by River Musi. In the midst of the lake is a large monolithic statue of the Lord Buddha on the Gibraltar rock. Adjacent to Hussain Sagar is the 5 acre Lumbini Park that has a laser auditorium, boating facilities and musical fountains. The Sanjeevaiah Park located to the north of the lake has excellent open landscapes. On the opposite side is the NTR Memorial, a small urban park that houses the memorial of former chief minister and matinee idol N T Rama

Rao as well as 34 well-sculptured bronze statues of important Telugu personalities that are mounted on high platforms.

5:00 P.M. BIRLA TEMPLE

Located in close proximity to the Hussain Sagar Lake is the serene Birla Mandir. The pristine white facade of this temple which is located on 280 feet high hillock Naubath Pahad is spread over 13 acres. The temple architecture is a mix of Dravidian, Rajasthani and Utkala styles and is constructed using 2000 tons of pure white marble. The granite idol of the presiding deity Lord Venkateswara is 11 feet in height and has a carved lotus as an umbrella on the top. A key feature to note is that this place has no bells as it is meant to be a place for mediation. There are several other shrines of numerous Hindu gods and

goddesses and the walls have selected teachings of holy men and the Gurbani engraved.

8:00 P.M. SHILPARAMAM

To round off your stay at Hyderabad, head to Shilparamam. Started in 1992, this is where you head for arts, crafts and cultural activities. Spread over 65 acres in Madhapur adjacent to Hi-tech City, this is where artisans from across India showcase a variety of arts, crafts and culture. Whether it is Indian pottery, varying weaves, woodwork, jewellery, clothes or local crafts, Shilparamam is a kaleidoscope of all this and more. On the premises you have a rural museum, with 15 life-sized huts, authentically constructed out of baked clay and thatch that depict rural and tribal lifestyles. The Rock museum has a rock garden and has several natural rock formations. The best part is that this is a shopping centre and you can pick up a host of things like toys, carpets and textiles.

A special Artisan Bazaar showcases original art forms directly from the artists. The Shilpa Sandhya Vedika or Night Bazaar is a one of its kind tourism project designed to promote Indian culture, tradition and genuine craftsmanship. Theme based stalls give you a taste of unique culture and cuisine and the complex is open well past midnight.



Shilparamam