

COVER STORY CITIES

shwara and Mangaladevi temples, and St. Aloysius Church whose interiors bear sacred paintings by Italian Jesuit Antonio Moscheni — tell of the city's multicultural heritage.

Mangaluru's beaches are a popular spot for enjoying the sand and sea as is Pilikula Nisarga Dhama, an eco-education and tourism development project spread over a large area with a lake and lush greenery. By virtue of its seaside location, Mangaluru has a relaxed tropical ambience with palms and sloping red-tile structures adding to the charm.

HYDERABAD

Hyderabad, the capital of Telangana, seamlessly embraces the past, present and future in its vast spread. Founded towards the end of the 16th century, the city steadily grew over the centuries. Royal patronage of architecture, arts and crafts of times past specially of the dynasty of the Nizams, industrialisation of the second half of the 20th century and the founding of technology companies at the turn of the century have seen it become a cosmopolitan and developed city. A sense of the city presents itself in the modern airport and the drive from it to its different neighbourhoods and the technology township Cyberabad.

The city has much to offer from the spectacular Golconda Fort spread out across a hill to the charming Charminar in the heart of the bustling old city; the regal Chowmahalla Palace; the Salar Jung Museum, home to manifold galleries of



The many layers and structures of Golconda Fort in Hyderabad

prized artefacts; many religious places for people from different faiths; centres of cultural events and public gardens; the exquisitely restored palace-hotel Taj Falaknuma Palace; the Hussain Sagar lake with the imposing yet serene statue of the Buddha; shopping for pearls that the city has long been famous for; and the Ramoji Film City.

TIRUPATI

Tirupati, located in southern Andhra Pradesh, is regarded as the spiritual capital of the state. The town stands at the foothills of the Tirumala Hills that has seven peaks and on one of the summits stands the deeply revered Tirumala Venkateswara Temple dedicated to Lord Sri Venkateswara, an incarnation of Vishnu. Tirupati also has many historical temples and holy waterfalls, and the presence of all these holy sites makes it one of the holiest Hindu pilgrim sites.

From the tall statue of Garuda, the vahana (vehicle) of Lord Vishnu, located at the Golden Gate entrance, to the pilgrimage and the darshan with the deity, devotees are embraced in the aura of a pilgrim town. The imprint of the feet of Lord Sri Venkateswara at Srivari Padalu making the spot where he first appeared is an important shrine.

The presence of imposing mountains adds to the aura of divinity as devotees undertake the pilgrimage to the temple on foot taking the well-planned steps. Devotees typically pray at the Sri Varaha Swamy Temple before the darshan of Sri Venkateswara.

After the pilgrimage and visit to temples, devotees may visit the Sri Venkateswara Museum that has exhibits about Tirumala and its heritage.

DELHI

The capital city continues to hold fort as a destination that has much to see and do. History buffs will love the city as there are

Delhi's Qutub Minar is one of its iconic sights



several monuments here that are sure to give you a feeling of the days gone by. Start at the India Gate designed by Edwin Lutyens and one of the most popular monuments whose foundation was laid in 1920. Dedicated to all the Indian soldiers who died in World War I, the monument is set amidst landscaped gardens and is lit up at night. The 73 metre high Qutub Minar built in 1193 has five towers built with red stone and marble and is an iconic sight in the city. At the Humayun's Tomb you will be able to admire Persian architecture and Red Fort is a fine example of Mughal-style architecture.

The Canopy, Coronation Durbar Park, Rashtrapati Bhavan, Safdarjung's Tomb, Isa Khan's Tomb and Alai Darwaza are some of the other historical sights to see. Spiritual seekers can check out the Lotus temple, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Hazrat Nizamuddin Dargah, Jama Masjid and Gurudwara Bangla Sahib. Some of the other places that must be on your itinerary are Nehru Park, Lodi Garden, Chandni Chowk, Hauz Khas Village, National Gallery of Modern Art and Shankar's International Dolls Museum.

AHMEDABAD

While it was always known to be an industrial and economic hub, the historic city of Ahmedabad was declared as India's first UNESCO World Heritage City in July 2017. Located on the banks of the