

तेह ठीं in india

People, Places and Golf



by Phil Ryan and Thomas E. King

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Additions and updates, which are particularly welcome for the next edition of *Tee Off in India: People, Places and Golf*, can be sent to the publisher by post or e-mail.

टेड ऑफ़ इंडिया:

People, Places and Golf



This book is intended to be a definitive guide to golf in India and will be published every two to three years.

Readers are invited to email comments, updates and suggestions to Global Golf Services.

Authors Phil and Tom hope that this book brings you as much pleasure as it gave them while researching the stories. Enjoy all that India has to offer, especially its wonderful golf courses.



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Above: India is a land of saints and seers.

Clockwise from top: Myriad and varied flavours of regions, cultures, attire, celebrations, languages and subgroups make India what it is—unity in diversity.

INDIA

As Diverse as the Horizon

A country of over one billion people, five thousand years of history, sixteen regional languages and at least six major religions. Its two major languages—Hindi (official language) and Tamil (Southern India)—are linked through widely spoken English, a vestige of the British colonial times. French and Portuguese have left major marks in Pondicherry and Goa, respectively. Chinese and Asian migrants have a presence in the North and East, and an Arab influence is found in Mumbai through its trading links.

Diverse? I think, we can safely say India fits into that category.

From the mighty snow-covered Himalayan mountains in the North to the sandy beaches of the tropical South and in every variation in between, India is

a kaleidoscope of terrain, colour, vegetation and native wildlife. There is just too much of it to fit into any one visit.

Problems—of course there are just like any country in the world. Since Independence, in 1947, India has developed into the world's largest democracy, and while elections are vibrant, these have resulted in relatively peaceful transitions of power. Being the second-largest population in the world with a growing economy, the infrastructure and social support have struggled in some areas to keep up.

Poverty is still a problem, but this is not different from many parts of the world and religious organisations of all denominations give some support to the less fortunate, while governments are slowly developing programmes to lift the quality of life. It is a big job and, generally, India



is doing a fine job of balancing the social, political and economic needs of such a diverse place.

It is sometimes a surprise to first-time visitors, who have images of the Tiger, the Taj Mahal and the Turban, to see just how much there is to India. Some visitors do not like the organised chaos, the smell of spices as they walk past a restaurant, cows walking down the roads or a myriad of other Indian norms. But if they can get past the first few days and remember some basic tips for health, they, like so many others, will fall in love with the place.

Is it the temples, historical monuments, forts or palaces? Well, they are spectacular, but after you have seen a few (Taj Mahal excepted) you have little more to surprise you.

Is it the climate, dramatic variations in scenery, lovely food, great golf-course experiences, unique wines or restful little resorts? Well, all top quality reasons to want to come again; but other parts of the world have similar to offer.

What, then, makes India a place you

could fall in love with? Easy, just meet the people. Indians are very generous to visitors, and go out of their way to assist them if they can, they are welcoming and quick to smile.

They are all different, from North to South, East to West, and each proudly proclaims their region and people to be the best. However, if there was ever a national emergency or international cricket match (same thing, actually) they come together in a very positive way, with pride for mother India.

Indians work hard, appreciate a bit of humour and nothing pleases them more than to be able to show off their India. Collectively, they are willing India forward as a nation, engaging the international community, while still fiercely protecting their heritage.

Not all the people you will meet in your travels will be everything you wish, but this applies to all countries, races and religions. In India, the diversity and general demeanour of the people are the icing on the cake of a feast for the visiting senses. ✨





Top: Bobby Jones (Captain of the USA team) and I.S. Malik (Captain of the Indian team) in 1958 at St Andrews for the Eisenhower Cup. Both men were born in 1902.
Above: The great game of golf as it was played in the early days of the British Raj.

Play a Round with History

Bagpipes and bureaucracy weren't the only contributions the British made to Indian society during some 335 years of the Raj. They also introduced the great game of golf.

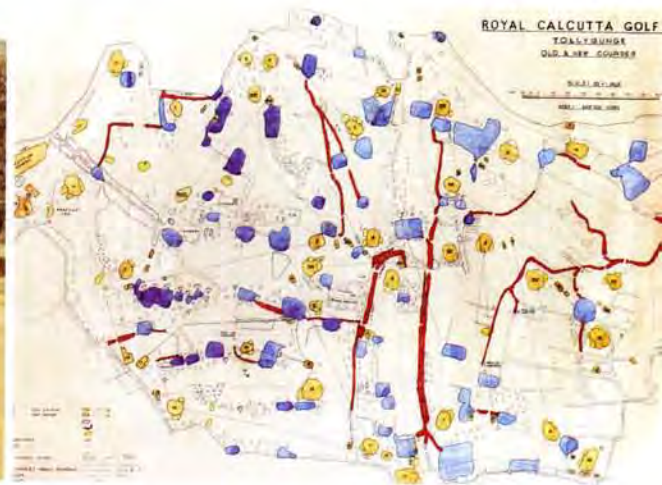
While there's still debate as to whether golf was played in 18th-century India, it's well documented that the land of the Taj and tigers was the first country outside the United Kingdom to take up the sport.

Royal Calcutta Golf Club (RCGC) takes top honours as the oldest golf club in India. It opened in 1829, eight years before a girl named Victoria ascended the British throne. In late November 2004, RCGC celebrated its 175th anniversary, with a week of celebrations.

The operative word at RCGC is club because its course was relocated several times before finding a permanent home in the suburb

of Tollygunge, in 1910. During an official visit in 1911, King George V and Queen Mary elevated the status of the revered course when they conferred the title "Royal", but diminished the standing of the city by announcing that the capital of British India would shift to Delhi!

It wasn't Delhi but Bombay that was selected as the site for India's second golf course. Though the circa 1842 Royal Bombay Golf Club no longer exists, it was a social and sporting hub for many years. There is doubt as to the country's third golf club. Established in 1876, Bangalore Golf Club is generally regarded to be in the No. 3 spot. However, Trivandrum Golf Club preserves records asserting that the royal family of Travancore commissioned the course "some time during the 1850s". Both clubs are still in existence today, and both courses are in the same location as when they were built.



Towards the end of the 19th century, not only were there a dozen golf associations in India, there was also sufficient interest to initiate a pan-India tournament. The first truly national-level golf competition was played in 1892 when the inaugural All-India Amateur Championship was organised at Royal Calcutta.

Meanwhile, the ladies did not lag in their efforts to tee off. In Calcutta they were able to putt across their own greens from 1891, only three years after the founding of the first course in the USA! Located near the largest monument to Queen Victoria outside the UK, Calcutta Ladies' Golf Club is still in existence today.

The first Ladies All-India Amateurs Competition was played in 1906 at Royal Calcutta Golf Club. The event continues to be a stepping stone for talented female players. The men have also set many records. The first Indian golf champion was Mohinder Bal, who won the All-India Amateurs in 1949. The celebrated I.S. Malik took the title in 1950, 1955 and 1956.

Incidentally, it was Ashok Malik, son of I.S., who went on to win five all-India titles. Further to that he was the first Indian to win an international event—the Singapore Amateurs in 1977.

It was during I.S. Malik's reign that another milestone in Indian golf was reached—the formation of Indian Golf Union (IGU) in 1955. IGU, the paramount controlling body for golf in India, continues its role to promote the sport and maintain high standards.

Now affiliated to the World Amateur Golf Council, IGU began its initial training camp for assisting pros and caddies at Royal Calcutta Club in 1957.

Seven years later, the first Indian Open was played at Delhi Golf Club. Peter Thomson, five-time winner of the British Open, won the event. The following year at Royal Calcutta, P.G. (Billoo) Sethi took on all challengers, including Thomson to win the title as an amateur player. India's next major achievement was a medal in team golf at the IX Asian Games in New Delhi in November 1982. The victory catapulted the nation onto the world's golfing stage although it was Ali Sher's win of the Indian Open in 1991 that captured public attention. Not only was he the first Indian professional to prevail at the event, Sher was a man of very humble means, earning a living as a caddie at Delhi Golf Club.

Golf continued to progress, with the registration of Professional Golfers Association of India, in 1994; the launch of the Asian PGA Tour, in 1995; and the opening of the first signature golf resort in 1997—the Classic—outside New Delhi. In the 1990s and now in the 2000s, players have become celebrities. Jeev Milkha Singh, the first Indian to qualify at the US Open; Jyoti Randhawa and Gaurav Ghei, the first Indians to make the grade at the British Open; Smriti Mehra, the first Indian to play in the Ladies Golf Professional Tour of Asia; Arjun Atwal, the first player in the Asian PGA to win over US \$1 million... these names and many more are forever inscribed in the annals of Indian golf history. ⌘



Top left: Labour-intensive turf management has, for the most part, been mechanised.

Top: The plan of the original 36 holes at Royal Calcutta Golf Club, found in 1993.

Above: I.S. Malik and H.S. Malik in the final of the All-India Amateurs in 1920 at the Gulmarg Golf Course in Kashmir.



Smooth as Silk

Thai Airways International

The evolution of Thai Airways International from a small domestic operation in the Kingdom of Thailand to a full-fledged award-winning global airline is the direct outcome of the far-sighted vision of its founders and a single strategy—service.

From its inception, the company embarked on a course of building reputation as a regional leader by pioneering routes to unusual destinations. Thai further strengthened its reach by forming strategic alliances with major airlines and becoming a key partner in a route network that now spans the globe.

One of the main reasons for Thai's popularity among travellers comes from its comprehensive services and efficient on-time operations.

More than that, however, the airline is well-known for its gracious ground and in-flight service. This attention to detail has

earned the Kingdom of Thailand's flag carrier a special place in the hearts of the travelling public.

Thai Airways links India to Asia and beyond through regular flights to Delhi, Kolkata (Calcutta), Chennai (Madras), Bangalore and Mumbai (Bombay).

This is an airline that has many ancillary functions devoted to enhancing the pleasure of travel; for instance, Thai has been a driving force in developing golf tourism through its subsidiary, Royal Orchid Holidays (ROH).

ROH operates a programme, called "Golf in Thailand & Asia Pacific", which includes tee off at 47 golf courses in 16 destinations. A novel innovation allows players to choose from two- and three-day packages of instruction that are designed to improve all aspects of their game. ♪

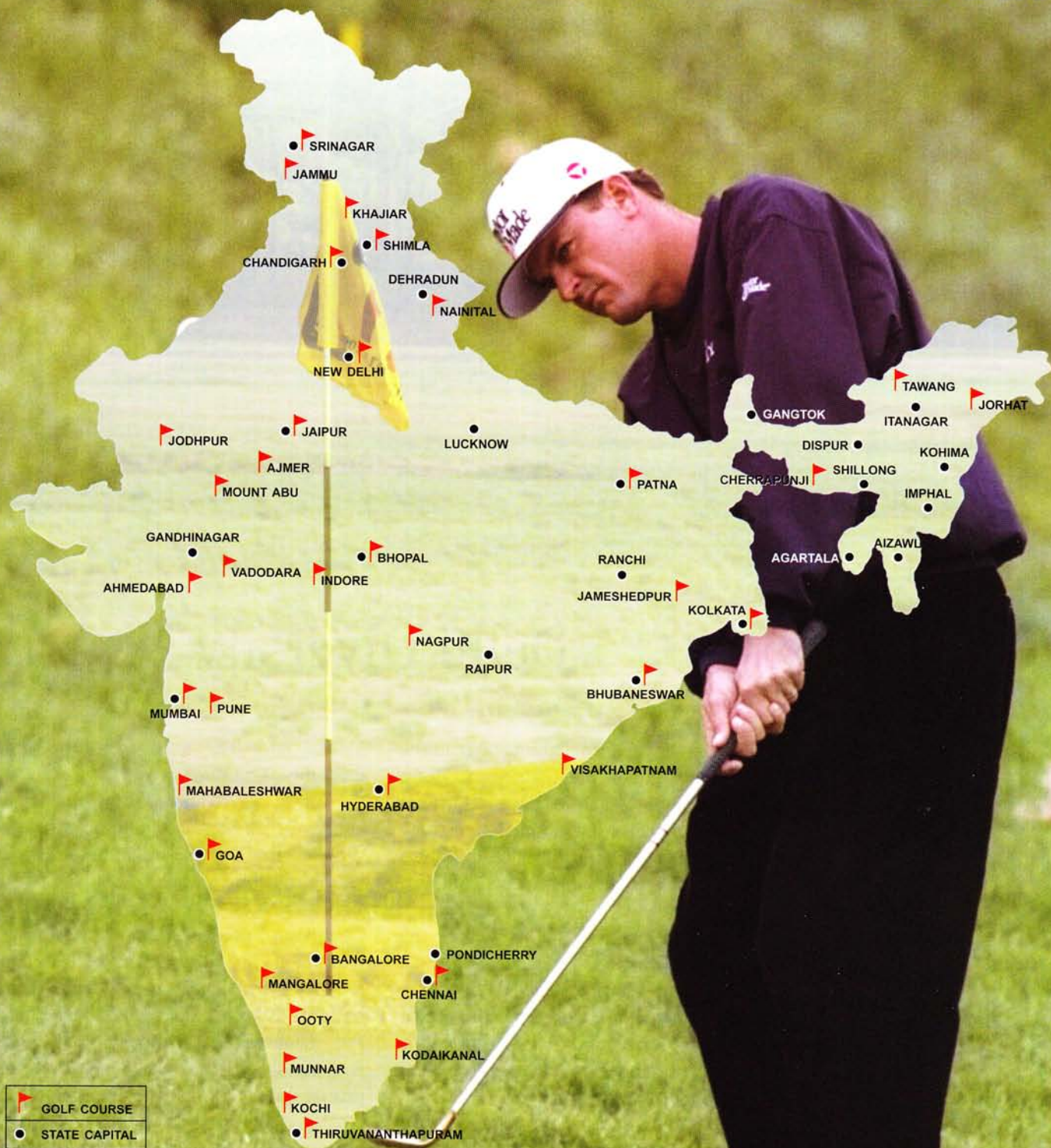
*For more details, see
www.thaiairways.com*



Top: Thai Airways International operates a state-of-the-art fleet to key destinations.

Above: There's always a gracious welcome from Thai's in-flight staff.

GOLF COURSES IN INDIA



 GOLF COURSE
 STATE CAPITAL

Map not to scale.
 Only for illustration purpose.



Top: Humayun's Tomb served as the model for the construction of Taj Mahal.

Above: Rashtrapati Bhawan is the official residence of the President of India.

Delhi

Delhi Diversity

Any city that can take its place as the capital of well over one billion people who speak 16 national languages plus English and some 820 dialects must surely be special. India's capital of New Delhi is special and for many reasons.

For starters, there is not one but seven 'Delhi's' that the archaeologist's pick and shovel have revealed. While there are monuments and sites from these past lives, most tourists find that the attractions of Old Delhi and New Delhi evoke more than enough interest.

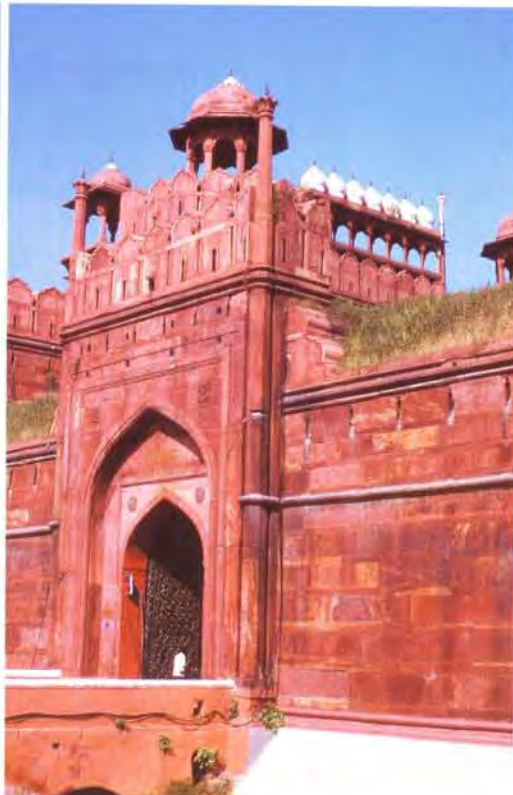
Old Delhi dates from around 1648 when the nucleus of the city was planned by Shah Jahan, the Moghul emperor and master builder responsible for Taj Mahal. He also constructed the two most important monuments of Old Delhi: Jama

Masjid and Red Fort, the city's most magnificent monument.

Part palace, to house the imperial family, and part fortress, to contain an army and supplies, Red Fort, so called because of its red sandstone walls, was built on strategically low lying ground.

Inside the remarkably preserved monument is a wealth of art and architecture. The most remarkable buildings in it are the two audience halls: the *Diwan-e-Aam*, meant for public audiences, and the *Diwan-e-Khas*, where private audiences met the emperor.

Jama Masjid, sited across a spacious green expanse from Red Fort and atop an impressive flight of stairs, is particularly beautiful in the setting sun. At this time of day it may be a bit difficult to clearly see all the lines of the massive red-stone-and-



Extreme left: Located in suburban Delhi, Qutab Minar is the tallest stone tower in India.

Left: Lahore Gate is the main entrance to the amazing Red Fort.

Above: Raj Ghat marks the spot where Mahatma Gandhi was cremated in 1948.

marble mosque, but the silhouettes of the minarets and fleeting pigeons make interesting and unforgettable photographs.

Cameras don't stop clicking when tourists leave Jama Masjid and venture into New Delhi, a city planned by British architects, Lutyens and Baker, in 1911.

New Delhi may be a modern metropolis, but it also has an impressive line-up of monuments and attractions, beginning in the hub of the city at Connaught Place. Here coffee houses, cinemas showing English and Hindi films, handicraft shops, ice-cream kiosks, smart boutiques, bookshops, elegant restaurants, department stores, shoe shops and airlines and travel offices are all to be found.

Wide, tree-lined streets radiate in nine directions from Connaught Place, with one street taking you past National Stadium, which featured prominently in the 1982 Asian Games, to the Delhi Zoo, the most modern one in the country. Here, along with the rare one-horned Indian rhinoceros, magnificent Bengal Tigers and Himalayan black bears is a four-acre man-

made swamp that has become a remarkable sanctuary for birdlife in the heart of the city.

At the end of another street originating from Connaught Place is the Lakshmi Narayan temple. This is a Hindu temple with two slight differences. It's not centuries old like the many other temples encountered in India, as it was built in 1938 by an industrialist and its bright red-and-white exterior gives it a rather candy cane-like appearance.

New Delhi has a number of interesting storehouses, such as the National Museum, with its fine collection of Indian bronzes, terracotta and wood sculptures dating back to nearly 2000 years.

Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Museum, at Teen Murti, is much smaller, but it's worth taking time to see the residence of the first prime minister of India. A battered briefcase lies in a corner of his study. The books that the statesman used line the walls and files are piled in the tray to the left of his desk... Everything is exactly as it was when he died in 1965.

TRAVEL NOTEBOOK

Access: There are separate domestic and international terminals at the Indira Gandhi International Airport. Coaches and prepaid taxis are available for the 20-km journey to the central city.

Stay: There is a wide variety of hotels to suit all budgets, including a choice of Taj hotels. The 296-room Taj Mahal Hotel, Tel.: (11) 2302 6162, is centrally located.

Action: Most of the chain hotels have discotheques and bars.

Shop: Try Connaught Place and the nearby Baba Kharag Singh Marg, on which most Indian states have handicraft outlets.

Info: India Tourism Delhi
88 Janpath
Tel.: (11) 2332 0342.



Top Right: Jet Airways continues to attract foreign tourists because of its extensive network.

Top: The airline operates a fleet of classic and next-generation Boeing 737s.

Above: The airline has its own comfortable lounges in key centres throughout India.



Jet Airways

Tomorrow's Airline Today

Well before Jet Airways commenced operations on May 5, 1993, one objective was foremost on the minds of its savvy executive team: to become India's preferred domestic airline by providing high quality and reliable air travel.

Research revealed that a high percentage of domestic air passengers comprised business travellers. Consequently, the company's focus from the beginning was to emerge as the "Businessman's Preferred Airline".

The means by which such an enviable result has been achieved is noteworthy because it involved the choice of Boeing 737-300 aircraft—new to Indian skies at the time—and utilised the training facilities of an experienced Australian airline for the instruction and conversion of its pilots.

Acknowledged as the largest private domestic airline in India, Jet Airways has

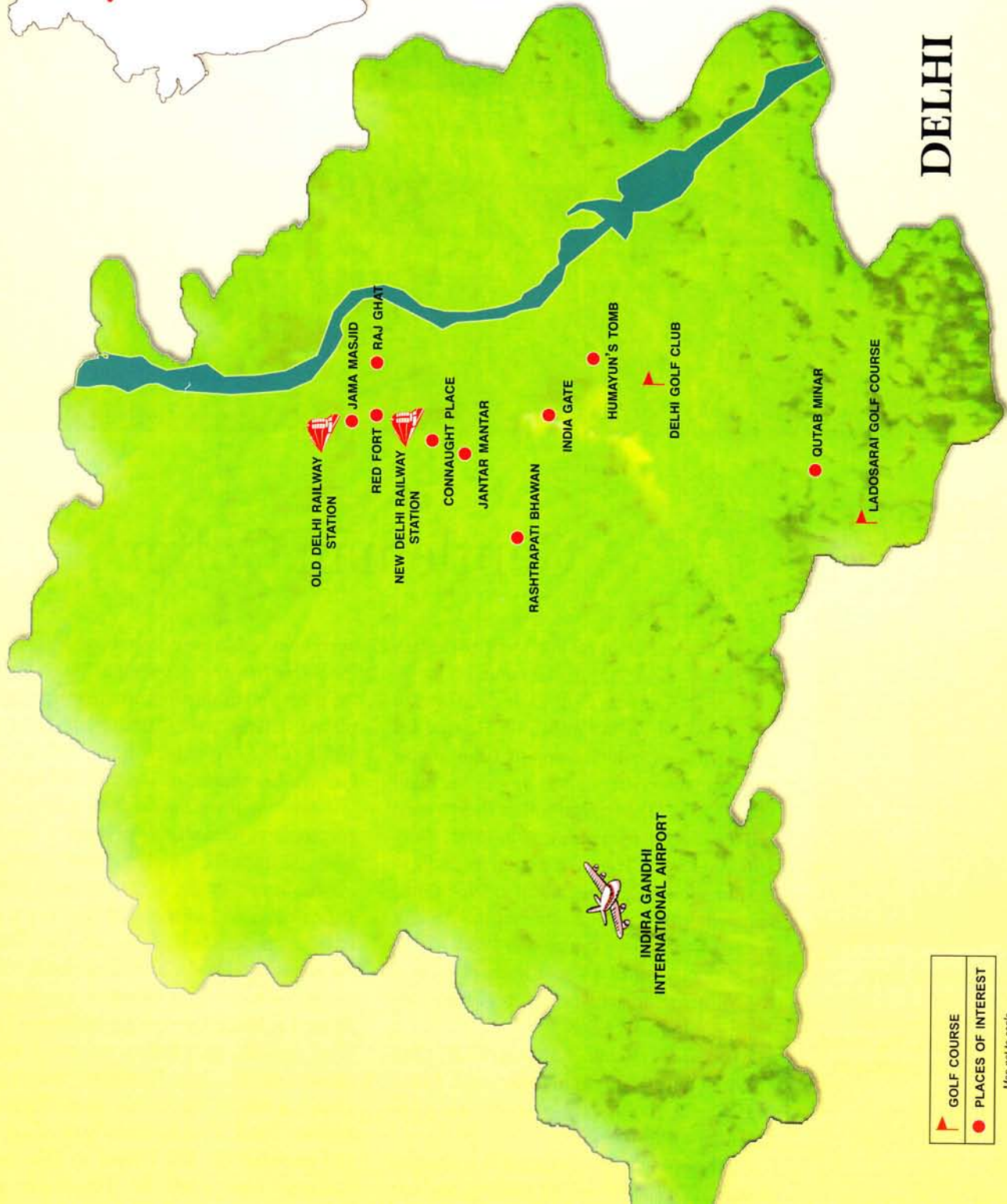
notched up an impressive growth with some 40 aircraft. The carrier operates over 260 flights a day to 44 destinations, including daily flights to Colombo and Kathmandu.

Along the way, the multi-award winning airline has introduced a number of innovations to benefit domestic as well as foreign passengers.

The carrier offers business class (Club Premiere) on most B737 flights and a full in-flight service on all flights in economy class. As well, Jet Airways was the first domestic airline in India to introduce 24-hour reservations, through check-in, same-day return check-in facilities for domestic as well as passengers connecting from international flights and vice versa. And, as every ardent golfer knows, less time spent checking-in means more time on the golf course! ♪

For more information, see www.jetairways.com

DELHI



OLD DELHI RAILWAY STATION

JAMA MASJID

RED FORT

NEW DELHI RAILWAY STATION

CONNAUGHT PLACE

JANTAR MANTAR

RASHTRAPATI BHAWAN

INDIA GATE



HUMAYUN'S TOMB

DELHI GOLF CLUB

GHAT VARANASI

LADOSARAI GOLF COURSE

INDIRA GANDHI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

	GOLF COURSE
	PLACES OF INTEREST

Map not to scale.
Only for illustration purpose.



Top: Ashok Malik at Royal Calcutta Golf Club.

Above: Ashok Malik outside Royal Calcutta Golf Club during its 175th birthday celebrations.

Ashok Malik

A Gentleman Golfer

He has been President of Indian Golf Union, Captain of Royal Calcutta Golf Club and Captain of Delhi Golf Club. He won his first All-India Championship in 1958 (a year after his father's last appearance in the final) at the age of 20 (a record to last thirty years) and then backed it up with wins in 1960, 1963, 1967 and 1969. He was a regular for India in the Eisenhower Cup from 1958 to 1968 (India stopped playing due to South Africa's involvement) and again played in 1980. He still holds the record of 14 East India titles, won the Western India title three times and the Northern India title once.

In 2004, Royal Calcutta Golf Club celebrated its 175th anniversary and Ashok Malik still holds the record as Club Champion (23 titles).

Ashok Malik, for whom golf is a passion, is part of an Indian golfing dynasty, and has

been involved in every aspect of the game in India. He has a deep personal knowledge of the game and its development in India, having played a large part in it himself from the 1950s till today where he is still on the Green's Committee of Delhi Golf Club.

Ask him about Indian golfing heroes and you see him immediately go back in time to when his uncle, H.S. Malik, started making an impression on Indian golf in the early 1920s, a time when no Indian could even join a golf club in India. He played in the British Amateurs and Open Championships in 1921.

But even a larger influence was Ashok's father, I.S. Malik, the younger brother to H.S., who was the first Indian to win a major championship (the Northern Indian, in 1923), a title he was to win many times and lastly in 1963, a full 40 years later, at age 61. He was also the first Indian to join Royal Calcutta Golf Club in 1946. He also



managed to get his name on the All-India Amateur Cup three times (he won his last All-India, in 1956, at age 54) as well as winning many other events. He was the second President of IGU, Captain and President of Delhi Golf Club.

But India's golfing greats within the family are quickly added to with names like Billoo Sethi (five All-India Amateurs and the first Indian to win the Indian Open in 1965) and Raj Kumar Pitamber, who were both teammates to Ashok for the Eisenhower Cup from 1958 to 1968. Another great who's career was cut short (he passed away at age 29) was Mohinder Bal, the first Indian to win the All India Cup in 1949.

Now, most golfers reading this may think, OK these guys were good but so are the golfers of today.

Not so, I am afraid. Try playing golf during the 1950s and 1960s in India when import restrictions prevented any golf gear from coming into the country, golf balls were like gold, clubs were smuggled in and there was a severe lack of decent golf courses. Now, that's dedication!

Remember, these guys were amateurs and also developed distinguished

careers whilst carving out India's golfing history. Ashok eventually became Joint Managing Director of Shaw Wallace and Pitamber, Managing Director of Mahindra & Mahindra.

The word *character* emerges as one of the key ingredients in Ashok's heroes and though reluctant to apply it to himself, I think it has been one of the guiding principles of his involvement in golf and life, in general.

Ashok felt that such character is not always apparent in all of today's golfers and if missing in role models, does not set a guiding example for the young people who are taking up the sport. He is excited that golf has become popular and though still expensive by Indian standards sees this trend increasing over the next few years. This is in part due to the many Indian golf professionals now taking on the international fields, and in Ashok Malik these pros have an enthusiastic supporter.

India's up and coming golfers have a lot to live up to in Ashok Malik. The rich golfing heritage created by his family and peers has inspired generations and if these new golfers have even half the character of the Malik clan then Indian golf is in good hands. ♪



Top left: Phil Ryan and Ashok Malik at Delhi Golf Club, in 2004.
Above: Ashok Malik is still a regular player at Delhi Golf Club.



Top: The panorama down the ninth green of the Peacock Course to the main club building and the adjacent Lal Bangla. **Above:** A peacock takes the right of way on the 16th green.

New Delhi

Delhi Golf Club

India has many unique golf courses across all of the variations of settings you could imagine, but Delhi Golf Club (DGC) somehow manages to stand above the rest. Located in the middle of the city with over twelve million people this is a genuine oasis as well as a great test of golf.

The 27-hole course is fully grassed, is in excellent condition, and is only minutes away from major hotels or 10 minutes from Connaught Place. Golfers should note that Peacock Nine is being redesigned and redeveloped in 2005 to a new par-35, 3265 yards so some closure of this course will occur. A full in-ground automatic irrigation system will also be installed in 2005.

Visitors can use the Annexe (restaurant), but the pub can be used only during the day. Changing facility is also available. A good pro shop as well as

lessons—Rs. 600 per hour for Category A and Rs 400 per hour for Category B—are added features.

Originally set up in 1928 by the Public Works and Horticultural departments as an 18-hole golf course set among the tombs of the Lodhi period, it was extended to 27 holes in 1931. (It was first known as Delhi Lodhi Golf Club.) Following Indian independence in 1947, the government considered closing the site, but in 1950 the present Delhi Golf Club came into being and consolidated the site to its present configuration.

The main 18-hole golf course gets its name from the historical Lodhi period, as there are nine monuments (many of them tombs) from the Moghul period of that name dotted around the course, providing a spectacular backdrop to the golf holes, including both the Mir Taqi and



Above: View from the 16th/14th tee zone.

Left: The Annexe and restaurant of Delhi Golf Club.

Barakhamba tombs.

Peacock Nine is an obvious christening after the many peacocks that make DGC their home. In fact, the birds are so much at home that a golfer playing may well have to wait until they move out of the way, as they are unperturbed by the

presence of people with 'sticks' in their hands hitting a white little ball. DGC members proudly protect both the peacocks and deer that roam the course, are avid promoters of tree planting and prominently display at the entrance to the club a large board depicting some of the over three hundred different varieties of birds recorded on the course over the years.

Delhi Golf Club has been the venue of many exciting Indian Open tournaments, national amateur events, corporate and amateur international events over the years, and is selected not only for its good



golf but also for the hospitality accorded to visitors from everybody at the club.

Delhi Golf Club and Royal Calcutta GC are the two most prominent golf clubs in India, and with DGC being based in the Capital it has attracted diplomats from all

countries, royalty, bureaucrats and captains of industry, all of whom become simple golfers when they leave the first tee.

The golf course has built its reputation on fairways lined with thick scrub that make for an extremely difficult recovery if you can actually find the ball; however, the fairways are gently undulating and reasonable in width. The greens are a good size, have interesting but gentle contouring and putt well with bunkers giving good protection on most holes.

On any list of the best of Indian golf you will always find DGC near the top. ⌘

TEE TIPS

DELHI GOLF CLUB
Dr. Zakir Hussain Marg
New Delhi 110 003
Enquiries: Tel.: (91 11) 2436 5105, 2436 2235

Fax: (91 11) 2436 5104
Email: delhigolfclub@vsnl.net

Play: Weekdays, US \$30; weekends, US \$40 for 18 holes. Visitors welcome. Handicap 18 or below required to play the Lodhi Course or else they can play the Peacock Nine.

Club Rental: Rs 100.

Caddie: Rs 80 per 18 holes. Lodhi Course closed on Mondays and Peacock Course closed on Wednesdays.

Course: Main (Lodhi) course of 18 holes, par 72, 6882 yards. Peacock Course: Nine holes, par 30, 1910 yards.





Delhi Golf Club is the only golf course in the world containing mosques and tombs from the Moghul and Lodhi dynasties.



Call of the Jungle

Wildlife in India



Top: Wild goats inhabit the high mountainous hinterlands of India.

Above: Viewing of the elusive Royal Bengal tiger is never guaranteed.

Imagine the thrill of taking an early morning cruise to view a herd of elephants grazing beside a tranquil lake or an evening safari on elephant back to watch a tiger lazing by a waterhole.

Although Africa has a greater number of animals, India has a larger variety. These are safeguarded in some 450 national parks and sanctuaries. The total area of protected wilderness is about 90,000 sq. km. or about three per cent of India's total land area.

Wildlife adventures come in many shapes and sizes in a country where the fauna is as diverse as its people.

There are around 350 different species of mammals, 1200 different species of birds, and for the sharp eyed observer tens of thousands of species of insects, fish, reptiles and amphibians to be found in India.

A number of mammals are unique to or closely associated with the massive country:

the Asiatic lion of Gir, the white tiger of Rewa, the wild ass of Kutch, the golden langur and the great Indian one-horned rhinoceros of Assam, the blackbuck of Karmur, the *barasingha* of Kanha, the *chowsingha* (the male of this species is the only animal with four horns), the Royal Bengal tiger, the Indian elephant, the *gaur* and the *sambhar*.

Some animals, like the cheetah, no longer roam the Indian jungles. Other species, like the *sanghai* or Panipur brow-antlered deer and the *lungul*, or the Kashmir stag, are on the brink of extinction.

Much of the nation's vast menagerie of wildlife can be safely viewed in a network of gazetted national parks and more than a hundred wildlife sanctuaries operated by state governments. Touring is by car or a 4-W drive vehicle, on elephant or pony back, in a boat or, in some instances, even on foot.



One of the most sought-after creatures is the lion, the strongest of all carnivores. The only place in the continent where the rare Asiatic lion can be found is in Gir National Park. This remote, 1400-sq. km retreat in the state of Gujarat is reached after making a short flight northwest of Mumbai to Keshod, followed by a 50-minute drive.

Gir's unique species of lion (*Panthera leo persica*) differs from its African cousin by having a scantier mane, a longer tassel of hair at the end of the tail and heavier tufts of hair on the elbows. It's also said to have a more calmer disposition!

In addition to lion, Gir is alive with leopards, hyenas, foxes, wild boar and a number of different types of deer and antelope. If you're lucky, you might well see the largest antelope in India, the *nilgai*, as well as the graceful *chinkara* gazelle and the multi-pronged *chowsingha*.

These three sleek animals are favourites on the dinner table of the tiger, the national animal of India since 1972.

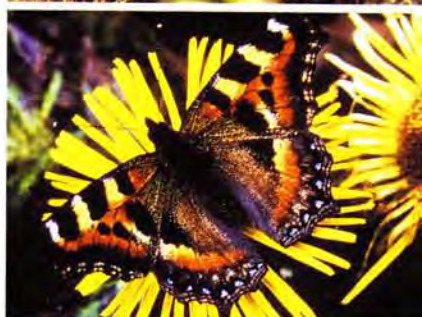
An individualist, the tiger usually wanders through the forest in solitude.

Despite a massive decline in numbers, from an estimated 40,000, a figure registered up to the 1930s, but around 2500-3500 today, the Indian tiger is still the most abundant of the subspecies.

Corbett National Park, northwest of New Delhi, and Kanha National Park, in the wilds of Madhya Pradesh, are two good forested localities to see this elusive animal. Even in sanctuaries where there is a large tiger population, a sighting is never guaranteed.

A favourite place for many to view the majestic striped creature, however, is in Rajasthan's Ranthambore Tiger Reserve. The park is sited just 14 km from Sawai Madhopur, and there is sophisticated safari-style accommodation such as the stylish Maharaja Lodge, managed by the Taj Group.

Ranthambore, a much-heralded example of Project Tiger's successful efforts to foster tiger conservation, is located in a vast tract of eastern Rajasthan. The stark Aravali and Vindhya ranges provide a wonderful safari setting for travellers wanting to explore wild India. ✎



Top left: Several species of deer inhabit the forested jungles.

Top: The best way to see India's diverse wildlife is on an elephant safari.

Above centre: Indian bison, often referred to as *gaur*, roam the Nilgiris in South India.

Above: The protected forests of India shelter countless species of butterflies.



Top: Ancient crags enhance the fifth green on the Canyon Course.

Above: Gourmet delights are available even on the course.

Facing page: The large swimming pool is a favourite with many guests.

New Delhi

Classic Golf Resort

New Delhi's position as the nation's prime business, convention and tourism destination has been set in stone with the addition of several sophisticated golf resorts in the past decade. The Indian capital is now at the top of the leader board when it comes to offering the widest choice of quality golfing experiences in India.

World-class golf has been available to local players and visitors since mid-1997 when Classic Golf Resort, a swish country club, set well beyond innovative skyscrapers and imposing government buildings, officially inaugurated its 27 signature fairways during a gala celebration that is still being talked about.

This was only a few years after a rugged expanse, criss-crossed by *mullahs*, or small irrigation canals, creeks, ravines and rocky outcrops, had been 'presented' to Jack Nicklaus to craft it into one of India's

first international standard championship golf courses.

The mission was to overlay a modern American-style resort in a traditional rural-Indian setting. The results are outstanding as the master craftsman drafted three distinct nine-hole layouts over the 308-acre plot: the 3541-yard Valley Course, 3573-yard Ridge Course and the Canyon Course, which meanders alongside the stark cliffs of the Aravalis for most of its 3155 yards.

Out of the Aravalis, jackals and antelopes occasionally amble across fairways, and porcupines nibble on the ornamental plants that accent meticulously kept fairways. There has even been sightings of the rare blue bull, a hefty relative to deer. As well, more than 150 species of birds, including several varieties of kingfisher, have been recorded.

While Classic Resort is an exclusive members' club, visiting golfers are welcome



to admire the birds and try for birdies! Walk-ins are allowed on weekdays unless a tournament has been organised, though bookings are preferred.

It's nearly impossible to play even a nine-hole game on weekends or on public holidays; and unless you accompany a member, forget about a game in the brisk mornings or cool afternoons of a typical winter weekend when the course is at its busiest.

The course, in line with modern golf design philosophy, is both friendly to the environment and community. For instance, local stone has been used in the construction of the clubhouse and other buildings in the complex. Local workers were employed in quarrying the stone and transporting it to the site. Compost, rather than chemical fertilisers, as well as agro waste water is used on the fairways and greens of the three layouts.

More than 1,00,000 trees have been planted alongside fairways to green the undulating landscape. For instance, Alestonia, which grows to 10 metres, and Alenthus, which soars to over twice that height, provide temporary shade for sun-pursued golfers.

Brilliant frangipani and bougainvillea blossoms enliven the scene, with even more colour coming from mango, mulberry, guava and lemon in season. To ensure blooming results the resort even has its own horticulture department. The people living in nearby Tauru village also benefit from this as they receive vital assistance in improving crop yields and quality.

Local people, who live in a rural area of high unemployment, also benefit from employment opportunities at the resort. In fact, 90 per cent of the non-executive staff are village people, with some of them employed as golf assistants, the resort's quaint term for caddies!

A select few work in Golf Sanctuary, where just 30 guests can be accommodated in 15 well-appointed luxury tents. This unique lodge has all the requisite facilities for a comfortable stay. Start the morning with a hearty breakfast served in the spacious dining tent; conclude it with a cheery bonfire and a barbecue dinner for the never-to-be-forgotten experience of living in wilderness, just an hour from the heart of the Indian capital.

TEE TIPS

CLASSIC GOLF RESORT
NH 8 Delhi-Jaipur Highway,
Hasanpur Tauru District
Gurgaon 110 105

Enquiries: Tel.: (11) 2614
7417/7507 (Head Office)

E-mail: lbase@vsnl.com

Website: www.cgronline.com

Play: Weekdays, US \$35;
weekends and public
holidays, US \$70.

Club Rental: Rs 500.

Golf Assistant: Rs 200.

Course: Ridge Valley Course:
7114 yards; Valley Canyon
Course: 6708 yards; Canyon
Ridge Course: 6676 yards.

Stay: Available on-site, at
Golf Sanctuary. Golfers can
also choose from numerous
hotels, including Taj Mahal
Hotel, Tel.: (11) 2302
6162; and Taj Palace Hotel,
Tel.: (11) 2611 0202, in
the city.





Left: Get set for the action on the seventh hole of the Ridge Course.

Top: It's between a rock and a hard place at the Canyon's eighth hole.

Above: There's classy on-site accommodation at Golf Sanctuary.



Golf—The Toro Story



Top and Above: Toro equipment field day training and seminar (on turf maintenance practices or agronomy) sponsored by Toro-India.

The Toro company started life in the USA during 1914 creating engines and in 1921, it created the first mechanical golf course maintenance equipment by mounting five lawnmowers behind a Toro tractor to mow the fairways at Minikahda Country Club, in Minnesota. In 1928, Toro entered the international marketplace, shipping golf course and grounds maintenance products worldwide.

While Toro is strongly identified with golf course irrigation and machinery, it also produces general landscape, sports facility and home products as well. It has representation in every country in the world and has established a strong presence in India during the early 1990s, where it was part of a small pioneering group to establish India's first golf exhibition in 1993. Detailed information on the company and contact information for India can be obtained through their website, www.toro.com

Nearly all of the major golf courses in

India have either Toro irrigation or turf machinery. Toro has also been the leader in training golf course staff for the operation and maintenance for both machinery and irrigation. This commitment to training programmes ensures that golf courses protect the investment in such products and staff gain greater work satisfaction as a result.

Some of the world's best golfers have played on Toro turf at prestigious events such as the U.S. Open, the Ryder Cup and the British Open. The company is also the official supplier of turf maintenance equipment and irrigation systems to the PGA European Tour and PGA European Tour courses. And it invests in the future of golf by partnering with Audubon International and other environmentally oriented organisations. Golf is still developing in India, and as new golf courses come on line it is important to know that reliable supporters of products, people, environment and golf clubs are committed to the longer term. That's the Toro story. *✍*



Ashwani Khurana

Setting New Standards



Top left: Anki and Ashwani Khurana at Karma Lakelands.
Top: Ashwani Khurana.
Above: Ashwani Khurana is committed to a cleaner, greener Delhi.

Even though there are hundreds of thousands of hues and shades, New Delhi-based entrepreneur Ashwani Khurana doesn't hesitate in nominating his favourite colour. It's green.

A dedicated activist with a passion for environmental causes, Khurana has powered his business energies into a number of innovative and ultimately profitable ventures.

Committed to greening Delhi with a pledge of planting 1,00,000 trees—a figure that, in fact, has already crossed the 1,40,000 mark—Khurana, a former lottery tycoon, is also cleaning Delhi. In the late 1990s he set up India's first compost plant on a plot provided without cost by the municipality.

The resulting biomass is sold to farmers as an economically and environmentally sound alternative to chemical fertilisers. As well it's used to enrich the 260 acres that have been transformed into India's first eco golf resort, Karma Lakelands.

Khurana's fundamental beliefs about nature and the environment and those of his business partner and life partner, Anki, have been interwoven through his biggest project to date. She is a landscapist par excellence, as well.

For instance, in keeping with his interest in nature, 85 per cent of the upmarket recreational and residential retreat is green. The well-landscaped estate already has a forest cover of over 40,000 trees.

"Unitech Karma Lakelands," said Khurana, "is a no-pollution zone, as polythene bags are not allowed and it's a no-horn precinct as well. This makes it clean and tranquil for residents and visitors alike." Many eco-friendly principles, like using treated waste water for irrigation and channelling 100 per cent of rainwater into lakes or the subsoil to recharge the water table, are cutting edge ideas in India. Can such principles be adopted on a larger scale? The trendsetter thinks so, as he perfects a model of environmental sustainability that he wants to be his "environmental contribution to the universe".



New Delhi

Unitech Karma Lakelands



Top: It's an easy ace on the second hole.

Above: The opening celebrations at the resort were spectacular.

In a different age when camel caravans transported goods and people from Old Delhi to desert towns, like Jaipur, in neighbouring Rajasthan state, the arduous journey over the sandy track could take weeks. Today local residents and foreign visitors make most of the comfortable trip on a six-lane expressway in around three hours.

But why hurry when an inimitable oasis outside the Capital beckons one and all to break their journey and linger amid luxurious surroundings? Unitech Karma Lakelands is certainly not a mirage, though this eco-friendly sports resort positively shimmers in the arid environs beyond New Delhi.

Designed to offer a "holistic approach to recreation" by appealing to mind, body and soul, Karma Lakelands is an integrated resort and an upmarket residential complex emphasising sound environmental practices without compromising on luxury, comfort or

golfing challenges.

Offering a range of recreational pursuits, including swimming, tennis and riding, the sporting centrepiece of the resort for many guests, however, is its world-class, 2543-yard course, master-planned by Pacific Coast Design. Nine well-contoured and solidly bunkered fairways appeal to several types of sporting enthusiasts.

Because Karma Lakelands is a planned residential community, blending premium home comforts and abundant recreational facilities with environmental sustainability, the biggest push, obviously, is on an increasing number of affluent local residents to purchase designer villas. Some residents bought homes in this up and coming outer suburb of New Delhi merely because of its eco-centric theme. Others purchased homes because of the quality golf course and range of other sporting amenities. An international-standard



Left: A variety of shrubs line the canal.

Above: There's a fine vista at the second green and third tee.

clubhouse with an all-weather swimming facility is on the cards.

Also on the rise is the number of residents from Delhi and adjoining satellite towns who make weekend blitzes to see the 18th-century treasures of Jaipur. Karma Lakelands is well positioned to cater to their stopover needs, from a delicious restaurant meal or a swim in the resort pool to an interlude with nature or a tryst with the tees.


Unitech Karma Lakelands has a particularly breathtaking appeal to visitors seeking a foliage-filled change from capital city chaos. More than 40,000 trees have been planted on the 200-acre site to act as a natural habitat for birds and as air purifiers for humans. Karma truly offers a breath of fresh air.

The multi-faceted resort also appeals to business executives as it's just 26 km from the country's northern air hub, the Indira Gandhi International Airport. This means that time-tight corporates can taxi out to the green haven, attempt to improve their game or simply unwind on the driving range, savour a splendid meal and still get back to the airport in time for onward flights.

Regardless of who they are, where they come from or how they arrive, casual visitors, business executives and permanent residents alike are dazzled with what they find and stunned with what they hear, actually, don't hear.

As Karma is a noise-free precinct with a no-horn policy, the need for automobiles has, in fact, been minimised. A network of walking, cycling and horse riding trails interconnects all facilities at Karma Lakelands. Zero-emission battery-powered vehicles are available for on-site use and transport.

A golf cart path encircles the course, while environment friendly electric carts enable golfers of all ages and ability to go the distance. Beyond this, multiple tee positions provide a pleasing game for the novice and a test of skill for the hard hitter.

On the lovely par 3 second hole, golfers can struggle from the back marker or soar from the front tee position. Or they can simply bask in the leafy, lake-enhanced surrounds of a unique resort that is in intimate communion with nature. 

TEE TIPS

UNITECH KARMA LAKELANDS
NH 8 (Delhi-Jaipur
Highway) Manesar 122 005
Haryana

Enquiries: Tel./Fax: (11) 2613
1051

E-mail:
team@karmalakelands.com

Website:
www.karmalakelands.com

Course: Nine holes, par 33,
2543 yards. A second set of
tees is played on the back-nine.

Stay: Karma Lakelands plans to
introduce villa-style
accommodation overlooking the
golf course. Those requiring
accommodation close to the
course can now stay at the
Trident Hotel, Gurgaon,
Tel.: (11) 95124 245 0505, or
at the Radisson Hotel, National
Highway 8, Tel.: (11) 2677
9191. In Delhi, there is Taj
Mahal Hotel, Tel.: (11) 2302
6162, and Taj Palace Hotel,
Tel.: (11) 2611 0202.





But why hurry when an inimitable oasis outside the Capital beckons one and all to break their journey and linger amid luxurious surroundings?



NOIDA, Delhi (National Capital Region)

Jaypee Greens Golf Resort

While the drive from the centre of Delhi is dependent on traffic and does take a while, the trip is certainly worth the effort as Jaiprakash Associates Limited (Developer) is putting together one of the largest resort facilities available in India to date.

The resort has extensive options for accommodation for residential purposes and also conference, spa and sports facilities (see website for details).

There is a restaurant at the clubhouse, with a pro shop next door giving excellent service to the golfer, from bag pickup to organisation of cart, etc.

The golf course is designed by Greg Norman, and while a monster from the back tees, it has multiple tee systems so that

the average golfer can also enjoy the round.

The golf course is still relatively young, having been open only a few years and so is fairly open until such time as the landscape establishes itself. The landscape, however, is not extensive and the openness and the well-groomed rough allows for golfer recovery on most holes.

The characteristic Norman bunkers (big) are present, as are also nine large lakes that come into play on at least eleven holes of the eighteen. There is a full golf cart path around the course, which would assist on those hot summer days. The golf course was certainly well maintained when visited.

The resort has another nine holes (designed by Graham Cooke) opening late in 2005. ⌘

Top: Vista down the current 14th hole to the green.

Above: View down the par-5, 17th hole.

TEE TIPS

JAYPEE GREENS GOLF RESORT
G-Block, Greater NOIDA 201 306,
Gautam Buddh Nagar, UP

Enquiries: Tel.: (91 121) 232 6725,
Fax: (91 121) 232 0453

Website: www.jaypeegreens.com

Play: Weekdays, US \$30; weekends,
US \$60, for 18 holes. Handicap card
required.

Caddie: Rs 150 per 18 holes.

Club Rental: Rs 350.

Golf Cart Rental: Rs 800

Course: 18 holes, par 72, 7343 yards.



Agra, Uttar Pradesh

Agra Golf Club

As the mid-winter sun struggles to rise over a thick carpet of dream-like mist, the top of the gleaming white central dome of the Taj Mahal can just be seen above a forest of leafy Neem trees that line the right boundary of the sixth fairway at Agra Club Golf Course.

The Taj Mahal was commissioned by Shah Jahan in memory of his wife. It was finished in 1652 with the help of some 20,000 workers. The records for Agra Club Golf Course are not so complete. For instance, the name of its British designer is unknown, although 1904 is generally acknowledged to be the course's opening year.

The sole course in the city of the Taj is located on land that has belonged to the Uttar Pradesh State Horticultural Department since 1952. (The course was designed to be a 'green' buffer zone and ensure that industrial development would not

take place next to the Taj.)

The golf course, which had been situated on the other side of the road, was compactly repositioned that year to its current 56-acre plot.

Golfers merrily played the game on the six greens and the three browns that were subsequently created, until 1985 when 'green' became the universal colour. In 1996 the course was restructured to be more demanding. Today the par-70, 6245-yard course has 18 tee positions and 10 greens. (The short 140-yard seventh, which scores the most holes-in-one, and the 190-yard 16th are played only once.)

And so it is to the par-five, 490-yard sixth, one of the only two holes with dog-leg difficulty. The alternate tee placement for play, as the par-five, 470-yard 15th on the back-nine reduces the length and the handicap index but not the thrill of having another glimpse of the glorious Taj Mahal. ⚡



Top left: There's a shaded start at the sixth tee.

Above: The 14th has jungle for a hazard.

TEE TIPS

AGRA CLUB GOLF COURSE
M.G. Road, Agra 282 001

Enquiries: Secretary, Agra Club
Tel.: (562) 236 3579

Play: Rs 250 for a full day of golf!

Club Rental: Rs 50.

Caddie: Rs 50.

Stay: Agra is well served with ample accommodation, including the Taj View Hotel,
Tel.: (562) 223 2400.



Top: The second green is backdropped by the distant Nahargarh fort.

Above: Hawa Mahal is a striking landmark of Jaipur.

TEE TIPS

RAMBAGH GOLF CLUB

Bhawani Singh Road

Jaipur 302 005

Enquiries: Tel.: (141) 238 4482

E-mail:

rambaghgolf_jaipur@hotmail.com

Website: www.rambaghgolfclub.com

Play: Rs 600.

Club Rental: Rs 100.

Caddie: Rs 100.

Course: 18 holes, par 71,

6383 yards.

Jaipur, Rajasthan

Rambagh Golf Club

For centuries the gregarious people of Rajasthan have enlivened the often stark landscape of their desert state by wearing bright colours and embellishing their towns and villages with a multitude of hues and shades. The state capital of Jaipur, for example, is known as the 'Pink City' because its founder, Maharajah Jai Singh II, decorated municipal buildings in this favoured colour.

Although the city's pink-fronted facades can't be seen from Rambagh Golf Course there are still several reminders of the long rule of the maharajahs.

The signature ninth hole, for instance, has a perfect perspective of the distant Nahargarh fort and the Moti Dungari palace. Closer is the Rambagh Palace, which still belongs to the royal family of Jaipur.

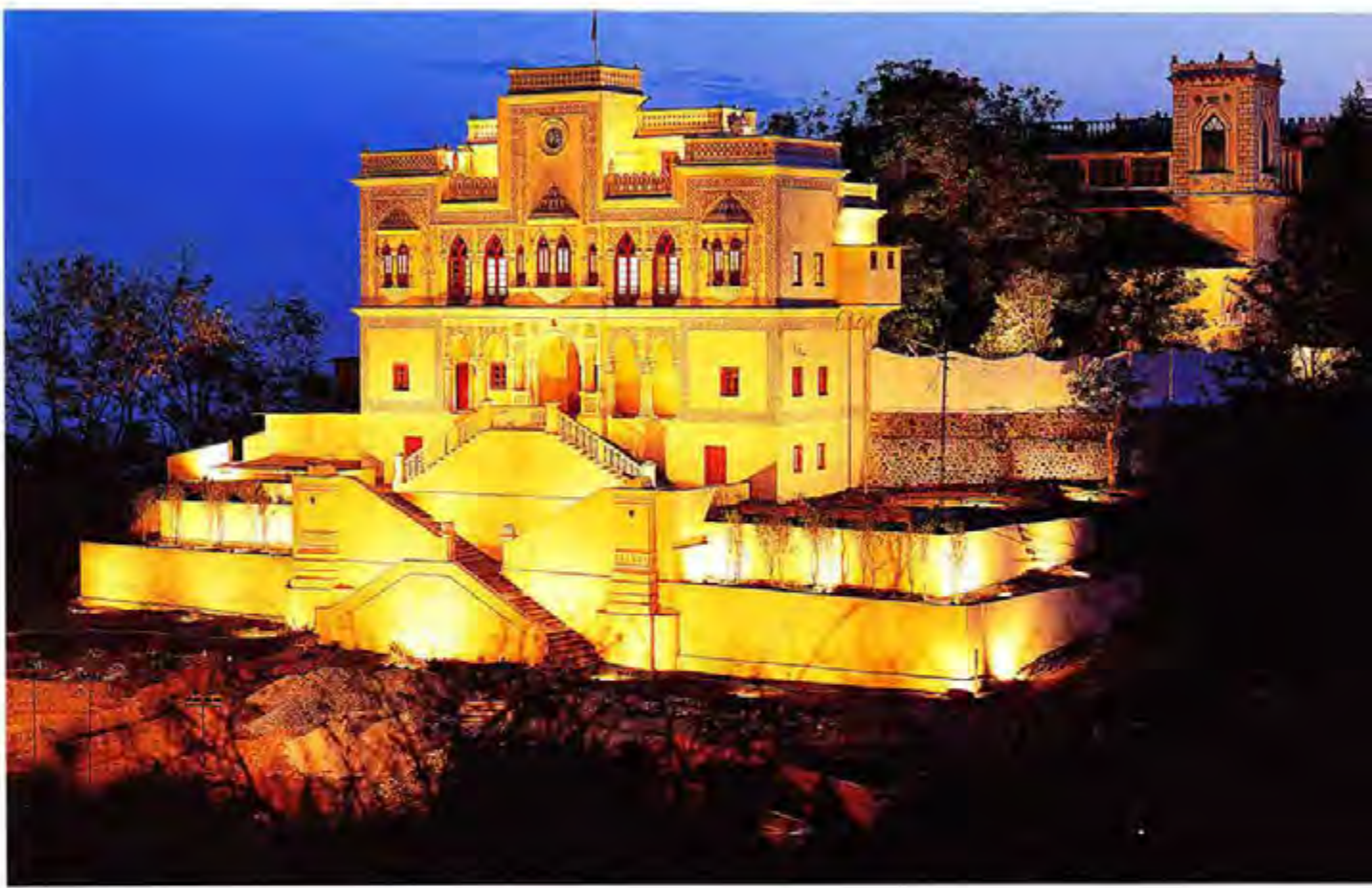
The beautiful property, which shares a

common boundary with the course's 85 acres of green turf, has been carefully converted into a lavish palace hotel managed by the Taj group.

Jaipur was founded in 1727; and Rambagh Golf Club dates to 1944. Rajmata Gayatri Devi, a member of Jaipur's royal family, is club founder and captain for life. The octogenarian is occasionally seen on the fairways and so is her grandson, Prince Vijit Singh.

Designed to international standards, the greens are sand based and covered with imported Bermuda. The fairways are narrow to create a tunnelling effect.

Ornamented with 40,000 trees, this 'oasis' in the desert is playable throughout the year—weekday walk-ins are easy—though the months between October and March are idyllic for an outstanding game in the Pink City. *J*



Palaces and Bungalows

Accommodating India

A number of years ago a guide to the best 300 hotels in the world was published. What probably surprised many people was that nine of the hotels were in India. What probably astounded nearly everyone was that the author's choice of the finest hotel in the world, the Lake Palace, was also in India.

It's rather hard to compare the incomparable Lake Palace in Udaipur, Rajasthan, with any other hotel in the world because it's not like any other hotel. The low-profile Lake Palace has only 85 rooms and it wasn't even intended to be a hotel.

Now managed by the Taj group, Lake Palace, lavishly built of white marble in the 17th century, was originally constructed as the luxurious royal summer residence of the Maharajah of Udaipur.

This alone would go a long way towards putting the hotel at the top of the list. But

the Lake Palace's crowning glory is its superb location, on a tiny island in the middle of the blue waters of Lake Pichola.

India has all standards of hotels, ranging from luxury five-star hotels, with well-stocked shopping arcades, air-conditioned rooms with private facilities, high-speed Internet connections, ultra-modern health spas and award-winning restaurants serving a choice of international cuisines, to very basic travellers' bungalows where the accent is on the budget.

A different type of accommodation option is the paying-guest scheme. India Tourism offices can easily arrange for tourists to stay with an Indian family as a paying guest.

And, as any traveller in India knows, there's no better way of beginning to understand this intriguing country than by staying with its hospitable people. ✎



Top: Located north of Delhi, Ananda, in the Himalayas, is India's first exclusive spa resort. **Above:** Taj-managed Lake Palace, in Udaipur, has been gazetted as the best hotel in the world.



Vale of Kashmir

Jammu and Kashmir is divided into three regions. Jammu is a transition zone between the plains and the Himalayas, while Ladakh is a high-altitude, dry plateau north of the Himalayas.

Kashmir, or the Vale of Kashmir, is a large valley surrounded by mountains in the north of the State.

Having first visited Kashmir in 1982 I was captivated by the splendour of the scenery and the charm of its people; so when I visited again this year (2004) I was prepared to be disappointed. To the contrary, those same fantastic mountainous views and the friendly people were still there and maybe more so as this region attempts a comeback into mainstream tourism.

Srinagar is the gateway to Kashmir and is set in a valley at 1730 metres (altitude) and in its heart are the lakes Dal and Nagin where houseboats rule the waters. The wooden (cedar) houseboats provide excellent accommodation in a tranquil setting. Each

boat is run by a family and they provide all the comforts, from deluxe class to G class and everything in between. The boats are all controlled through the tourism department and prices range from Rs 200 to Rs 1000 per night.

Kashmir is a place for all seasons and there is always something to do, but you must plan ahead, as the seasons can dictate access into some areas. Highlights around Srinagar are the Mughal Gardens (there are three of them) with great views over Lake Dal by sunset and the Shankaracharya temple.

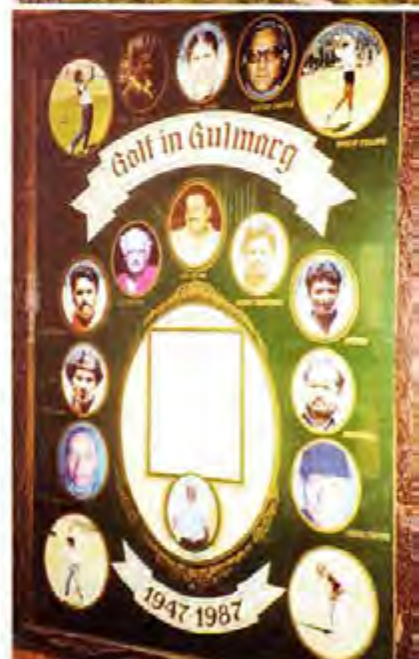
A Visit to Pahalgam

This beautiful valley is 96 km from Srinagar to the east, but it can take up to two hours by road, depending on the traffic. However, well worth the drive as you climb to an altitude of 2130 metres to find yourself in a pine forested valley at the junction of two rivers (Lidder and Sheshnag) with spectacular views of the surrounding mountains.



Top: View across Gulmarg Golf Course.

Above: Play amid the pines on the Pahalgam Golf Course.



During July-August, pilgrims, or *yatris*, make the trek from Pahalgam to the cave at Amarnath (it takes a few days), which is revered as an abode of lord Shiva by Hindus. There are normally over 1,00,000 *yatris* walking during the same period every year—quite a sight!

The walk to the golf course, however, is much shorter, with it being near the middle of the town and set in a wonderful pine forest.

Pahalgam Golf Course needs no booking (no telephone anyway) and anyone in town can easily tell you where it is. It is a nine-hole, par-34, 2386-yard course. You can play all day for Rs 100.

There are a couple of caddies and one

chap has been at the course for the past 40 years, so should know his way around.

Step Back in Time in Gulmarg

I visited Gulmarg in 1982 and the golf course was covered in snow, and skiing being the preferred sport of the day. When I returned in July 2004 it was summer and there was snow only on the distant peaks. At an altitude of 2730 metres the town was established by the British as a holiday destination in the 1800s and you can still see the influence on the food, lodging and signage.

It will take you about 1.5 hours via road (good condition) from Srinagar, with the last portion having some great views across

Top left: Phil Ryan and wife, Gayle, at Gulmarg in 1982.

Top: The modern gondola cable car at Gulmarg.

Above: History board at Gulmarg Golf Club.

Left: View over Lake Dal and houseboats at sunset.



Top: Mountains overlook Gulmarg Golf Course.
Above: View down the Sindh Valley with Sonmarg in the foreground.

the mountains.

Gulmarg has hardly changed over the years except for the addition of a new gondola cable car that takes visitors through pine forests for spectacular viewing up the mountain nearby, well worth a visit. It is a unique place in that all of the locals live in a village further down the mountain, so

TRAVEL TIPS

Access: Jammu can be reached from Delhi by road, rail and air. An all-weather road links the city and Srinagar. There are also flights connecting New Delhi with Srinagar and Ladakh.

Seasons: Daytime summer (May to August) temperatures in Srinagar range from 25° C to 35° C. Leaves turn colour in autumn (September to November), with temperatures between 10° C and 23° C. Winter (December to February) is cold but perfect for skiing at nearby resorts, with spring (March and April) bringing warmer weather and blooming flowers.

nighttime is very quiet, with all of them having departed, but do not worry as the cooks and waiters still remain.

As a promoted ski resort in winter, the preferred activity during summer is the golf course. Set up by the British in 1904 this links-style course is promoted as the highest greens golf course in the world. The fairways in winter are skiing slopes and ski tows line two of the fairways.

The golf course has a great history and the boards on the wall in the clubhouse have names such as Ashok Malik (father and uncle also), Billoo Sethi, Raj Kumar Pitamber, Mohinder Bal, Brandon De Souza, Ghalib Mohi-ud-din Shah and Ghulam Mohammad, who is renowned in Kashmir as a golf teacher and promoter of golf.

The tourism department is currently looking to redevelop the golf course, as during the troubles of the past ten years it has unfortunately been let go a little. It is a par 72 of 6805 yards and you definitely need a caddie to show you the way. *7*



Srinagar, Kashmir

Royal Springs Golf Club

There are three golf courses in Srinagar—two very old, short, nine-hole courses (Police Club and Kashmir Club) and the new eighteen-hole Royal Springs Golf Club. You can play at any of the courses, but Royal Springs, designed

by Robert Trent Jones Jr., is a standout.

The golf course is set between the hills surrounding Srinagar and Lake Dal, and is not only great golf but also spectacular scenery, with many opportunities for great views from tees. It is not far from the centre of the town and has some nearby hotels within minutes. The course is mostly lightly wooded in the roughs, leading to heavier forested areas farther back.

This is a long golf course, but the use of four multiple tees make an enjoyable round for the full range of handicappers. The fairways are undulating with good bunkering, greens are large and subtly contoured and on selected holes water features also come into play. A great golf course and very close to being the No. 1 course in India. The club has a restaurant, bar, outdoor terrace, function rooms and changing facilities of good standard. *1*

TEE TIPS

ROYAL SPRINGS GOLF CLUB
Cheshma Shahi Boulevard Road
Srinagar, 190001

Enquiries: Tel.: (91 194) 248 2581;

Fax: (91-194) 245 7672;

Email: greenscape@rediffmail.com

Play: Rs 400 (US \$20 for foreigners)
for 18 holes; Rs 300 for nine holes.

Caddie: Rs 100 per 18 holes.

Club Rental: Rs 200.

Electric Golf Cart: Rs 500.

Course: 18 holes, par 72, 6984 yards.



Top: The magnificent clubhouse offers excellent facilities.

Above: There's a fine panorama across the course towards Lake Dal.



Top: The arid state of Rajasthan beckons visitors with its colourful festivals and wondrous palace hotels.

Above: The ancient step well was a source of water for Neemrana.

Maharaja Nights

Heritage Hotels in India

In the sun-splashed state of Rajasthan there are only two seasons: hot and hotter. Reigning over this parched and often forbidding land for a thousand years was a succession of erstwhile rulers, each claiming his own pocket-size princely state and each erecting his own legacy in stone.

Designed with turrets and towers, a maze of rooms, hidden chambers, high ceilings and thick walls, maharajahs built their retreats and residences to withstand the constant onslaught of the elements as well as the occasional clash with neighbouring overlords.

A number of these regal buildings have endured the test of time and today some have been reincarnated as exclusive heritage hotels where visitors can relax in surroundings unparalleled elsewhere in the world.

The oldest desert veteran to have undergone a metamorphosis from a relinquished ruin to a magnificent manor, fit

for both royalty and heritage-minded visitor is the Neemrana Fort Palace.

Located just off the NH 8 and about midway between New Delhi and Jaipur, Neemrana dates to 1464. Deceivingly concealed between two hillocks, Neemrana was built of stone by the descendants of Prithviraj Chauhan III, a Rajput king of Rajasthan known for his bravery. (*Rajasthan* actually means *Land of Kings*, while the Rajputs were a group of warrior clans that controlled this part of India with a code of chivalry and honour similar to that which guided the conduct of the knights during the Middle Ages.)

The secluded locale in the outlying foothills of the Aravali Range was originally selected because the first Rajput resident wanted to have an elevated vantage point on the passing parade without being seen.

Neemrana was used as a princely



residence by a succession of Rajputs from the mid-15th century until 1949, when India gained its independence. After extensive rebuilding and restoration, 27 stylish and very individualistic guest rooms were crafted in the seven-storey structure, lavishly appointed with antiques and given evocative names like 'the Sun Palace'.

A contingent of 40 staff, some in red shirts and white slacks, pamper visitors, alerting them to wandering wildlife, serving gin and tonics at sundown and offering extra servings of choice Rajasthani or French dishes.

Neemrana overlooks a village; Bhanwar Vilas Palace is in the village of Karauli where 15 generations of maharajahs have lived since the 1340s.

Built in the 1930s, the Bhanwar Vilas Palace has just four luxury suites and 11 deluxe rooms available for visitors. It's not the intention of the current Maharaja of Karauli, Krishna Chandrapal, to turn the palace into a huge commercial venture. Whatever money is made, goes into its preservation, to the well-being of a

stable of exceptional horses and a fleet of vintage vehicles.

In the 1930s, well before there were sealed roads in the then 900 sq. mile principality, the Maharaja of Karauli owned 12 cars. Still taking pride of place is a 1936 Buick with only 6000 miles on the odometer!

None of the prized Marwari horses have travelled anywhere near that distance, but visitors can take them out for independent 'test' drives!

Escorted horse and jeep safaris can also be arranged to the idyllic countryside and a nearby game sanctuary. Another appeal is a camel ride or a bullock cart ride from Bhanwar Vilas to the old City Palace, which was the traditional residence of the royal family of Karauli for many generations.

An attempt is being made to restore the architectural grandeur of the old palace. Funds are limited, however, and age is its worst enemy. No plans have been made to transform it into Rajasthan's next heritage hotel, but that may well be its only salvation. ✎

Top left: The Maharaja's 1936 Buick, at Bhanwar Vilas Palace, is a classic car.

Top right: The late Shiv Raj Singh sits before a portrait of his royal ancestor Bijendra Singh at Laxmi Vilas Palace.

Above: Dating from the mid-15th century, Neemrana is the oldest heritage hotel in India.



Golf and the Environment

India has some of the oldest golf courses in the world, and the culture of golf here has always had a respect for the environment. Playing at Delhi Golf Club, you would pass deer and peacock happily co-existing in the middle of this huge metropolis with the hundreds who pass through the fairways everyday.

They are not in a cage, they are protected and cherished by the golfers and have the freedom of the 177 acres of golf course. The outside wall of the course is more to protect them than keep them in. There have been recorded sightings of over three hundred different birds at the golf course making this the ornithological capital as well as the political capital of India. However, Delhi Golf Club is not the exception but the norm among the golfing fraternity of India.

India's cities are growing at an alarming rate, with infrastructure struggling to keep pace. In the rush to develop in many cities

an unfortunate side effect has been the reduction in open space and trees, with landscaping around newer developments taking a more hard-scape approach rather than an urban forest feel. Eighteen-hole golf course sites generally are of 100-150 acres and are made up of grass, trees, plants and waterways providing an ideal habitat refuge for native wildlife.

There are those that would have such large tracts of land not allocated to golf but converted to more useful pursuits like housing complexes or shopping malls. Trees and turf-grass are the major producers of oxygen, with an average golf course producing oxygen for over 1,00,000 persons per day; we wonder how much oxygen is produced by a shopping mall!

It is all about balance, Golf courses in India are developed and maintained by the golfers themselves, and in most newer golf projects the course will be integrated with residential and



Top: Sign on golf course protecting sensitive area.
Above: At the entrance to Delhi Golf Club is a poster displaying some of the birds found on the golf course.



resort facilities for a wider usage. While such private developers are building the new golf courses with their own money, the wider community will still be benefiting as they not only produce oxygen but also absorb gaseous pollutants from vehicles and industry; reduce noise by absorbing, deflecting, reflecting and refracting sound; and assist in glare reduction.

Turf-grass traps as much as an estimated 12 million tons of dust and dirt released annually into the atmosphere and with the soil are the major entry points for water for recharging of the ground water table.

The use of water is becoming a critical issue not only in India but across the world and golf courses can play an important part in water conservation. Golf courses use water to maintain a healthy turf, but any excess water not used by the grass and trees returns to the ground and finds its way back to the water table. Nearly all new golf course projects are now utilising treated effluent water, where previously (and in some cases still) this valuable resource was being dumped into the local *nullah* (drain) and polluting the waterways. Such treated effluent water is filtered

by the turf grass and soil on the golf course and returns to the water table as clean water, ready to be reused by the community.

The maintenance of golf courses can be a cause for concern if not undertaken responsibly, but this is certainly no different than general agriculture. Modern golf courses utilise an integrated pest management (IPM) approach to maintenance, where cultural practices, initial construction and an acceptable degree of infestation is adopted as an agreed programme for the golf course.

IPM involves the use of treated effluent water (if available) as a nutrient base, organic fertilisers and the promotion of good growth rather than a curative approach based on chemicals.

We all have a responsibility to future generations to ensure we leave them with a sustainable future. Earth is not a renewable resource and it is our duty to assist its general health in every way possible. Well-planned, constructed and managed golf courses do enhance the environment and native wildlife, trees, grass and waterways add significant benefits to local and regional areas. ♪



Top left: A peacock wanders across the rough at Delhi Golf Club.

Top Above: Over 30,000 trees and plants have been planted at Eagleton Golf Village, outside Bangalore.

Above: Bangalore Golf Club is a green oasis in the heart of the South Indian metropolis.



Northern Tees

Golf in North India

Visitors often glowingly refer to New Delhi, Jaipur and Agra as India's 'Golden Triangle' because these much-visited and easily accessible centres contain a wealth of scenic and historic attractions. This trio of alluring cities could also be considered to mark the boundaries of India's most prominent 'Golf Triangle'.

With some 15 green playing fields in and around Greater Delhi, plus an attractive 18-hole, fully-turfed course adjoining a former maharajah's palace in Jaipur and a rustic little retreat next to the 350-year-old Taj Mahal in Agra, golfers are spoiled for choice.

Despite the many opportunities for memorable games in this golf triangle, numerous golf gems await discovery elsewhere in the northern region.

North India comprises the states of Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, Jammu &

Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh, as well as the Union Territory of Chandigarh and the National Capital Territory of Delhi.

The development of golf continues to varying degrees throughout the North. In addition to a handful of Western style country clubs coming into play just beyond major gateway cities, there is a golf bag full of long-established courses where green fees are modest and visitors are rare, but revered.

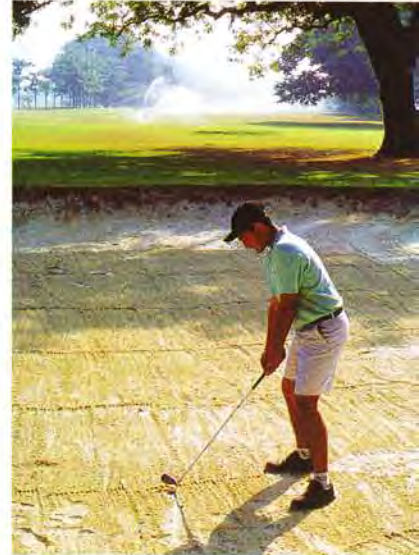
The agricultural powerhouse of Uttar Pradesh is sprinkled with golf courses. In the western reaches of this elongated state, commonly called U.P., is an Army-managed 18-hole diversion at Meerut, a million-strong city located some 70 km north of New Delhi.

After a game you may want to wander amid the history-crossed town, which was the scene of the Indian Uprising of 1857.



Top: DLW Golf Course shares its expanse with other sporting facilities.

Above: The fourth hole on the Naldehra Course often has moving hazards!



Following a protracted conflict, which was finally suppressed by colonial troops, the British Government took direct control of the country.

In the eastern quarter of U.P. you'll want to include the ancient city of Varanasi in your sightseeing and sporting itinerary. Sited about midway between New Delhi and Kolkata and on a curve of the sacred Ganges river, Varanasi is a pilgrimage centre for devout Hindus.

Visiting golfers—admittedly there aren't many—come for a round at the rustic DLW Golf Club in suburban Varanasi. Designed for the use of sports-minded workers at the biggest locomotive factory in Asia, DLW's flat, but tree dotted, nine-hole layout has separate tee positions to create a 6388-yard course well beyond the crowds and chaos of the old city.

Like Varanasi, Lucknow is also an important tourist destination in U.P. Unlike Varanasi, the well-maintained course at Lucknow Golf Club has established the culturally rich historic city as a worthy sports destination.

A fixture on North India's tournament circuit, all 18 holes at the 6355-yard layout have names. The first, for instance, is known as Jump Start.

Although it's not called Resting Place, it would be a fitting name for the seventh hole. The fenced tomb of Lt Augustus Mayne, killed in the Relief of Lucknow in November 1857, is just off the fairway of LGC's most difficult hole.

The picturesque nine-hole playground at Naldehra, in the mountainous state of Himachal Pradesh, also has a strong link with the British. The charming course and its delightful surrounds were a place of relaxation for the British who developed nearby Shimla as their summer capital.

The tranquil environs at the 2044-metre-high course—now managed by Himachal Tourism—were once enjoyed by the likes of Lord Lytton and Lord Curzon, Viceroys of India.

These days, the 100-year-old, pine-and-fir bordered playground welcomes anyone wanting an unforgettable golfing holiday in the mountains of northern India. ♪

Topmost left: Ultra picturesque surrounds at Lion Golf Course, in Kalimpong.

Top left: DLW Golf Course in Varanasi is flat but well maintained.

Top: Lucknow's fine 18-hole course attracts locals and an increasing number of visitors.

Above: The 100-year-old Naldehra Golf Course was started by a Viceroy of India.



Mumbai Meanderings

India's biggest and busiest port, the country's most Westernised city, a centre for one of the world's largest textile and cinema industries, the nation's financial, communications and transport hub and the tourist gateway to India and the subcontinent... This is Mumbai, a metropolis of 13 million still widely known as Bombay.

The Portuguese were responsible for the latter name. After they arrived in the early 16th century they called a group of seven swampy islands *Buon Bahia*, or Good Bay. When Charles II of England married Catherine, a Portuguese princess in 1662, the British crown received the islands of Bombay as part of the dowry. The British drained the swamps, fused the islands with loads of landfill and left a legacy of Neo-Gothic arcaded masterpieces.

Many of the city's magnificent buildings, like those at Mumbai University, date to the 1870s. The stand-out 'star' at the

university is the Rajabi Clock Tower, which rises 80 metres above the Oval Maidan, a cricket-friendly expanse that fronts majestic university buildings as well as another imposing edifice built by and for the British Raj, the High Court.

Lesser-known, but still of interest to cultural buffs, is the School of Art where John Lockwood Kipling was principal. His son, Rudyard, was born in Bombay in 1865 and spent his early years in this port city.

Mumbai can't boast of many ancient monuments. The best-known and most-visited site with a historic pedigree is Elephanta.

You will need to take a motor launch for an hour's ride to this small island located in the outer harbour. Persistent boat captains and vessels of varying seaworthiness await at the dock just beyond the Gateway of India, a stately monument built to commemorate the visit of George V and Queen Mary in 1911.

The lure of Elephanta—other than being

Top: Flyovers and multi-lane roads have improved traffic conditions in the mega city.

Above: This artist prepares a giant hoarding to advertise a Bollywood production.



Top left: Situated in front of the Taj Mahal Hotel, the Gateway to India commemorates the visit of King George V.

Top right: The architecturally embellished Central Railway terminal is worth a visit even for those not travelling by train.

Above: The High Court and adjacent Bombay University buildings were built in the 1860s and 1870s.

a pleasant half-day excursion away from the hustle of the city—is its World Heritage listed cave temple. The subterranean sanctuary is famed for its sculpted panels and the focal point of interest is a three-headed image

TRAVEL NOTEBOOK

Access: Chhatrapati Shivaji International Terminal and Santa Cruz Domestic Terminal are about 28 km and 26 km, respectively, north of Nariman Point's centrally located hotels and offices.

Stay: There are many quality hotels. A top property opposite the Gateway of India is the Taj Mahal Hotel, Tel.: (22) 5665 3366.

Action: Mumbai is party town, though nightclubs, pubs and lounges located throughout the city may not start buzzing until after 10.30 PM!

Shop: Fixed-price handicrafts are sold at government emporia in the World Trade Centre, while it's necessary to bargain in the Chor Bazaar.

Info: India Tourism Mumbai 123, M. Karve Road (opposite Churchgate Station), Tel.: (22) 2207 4333/4.

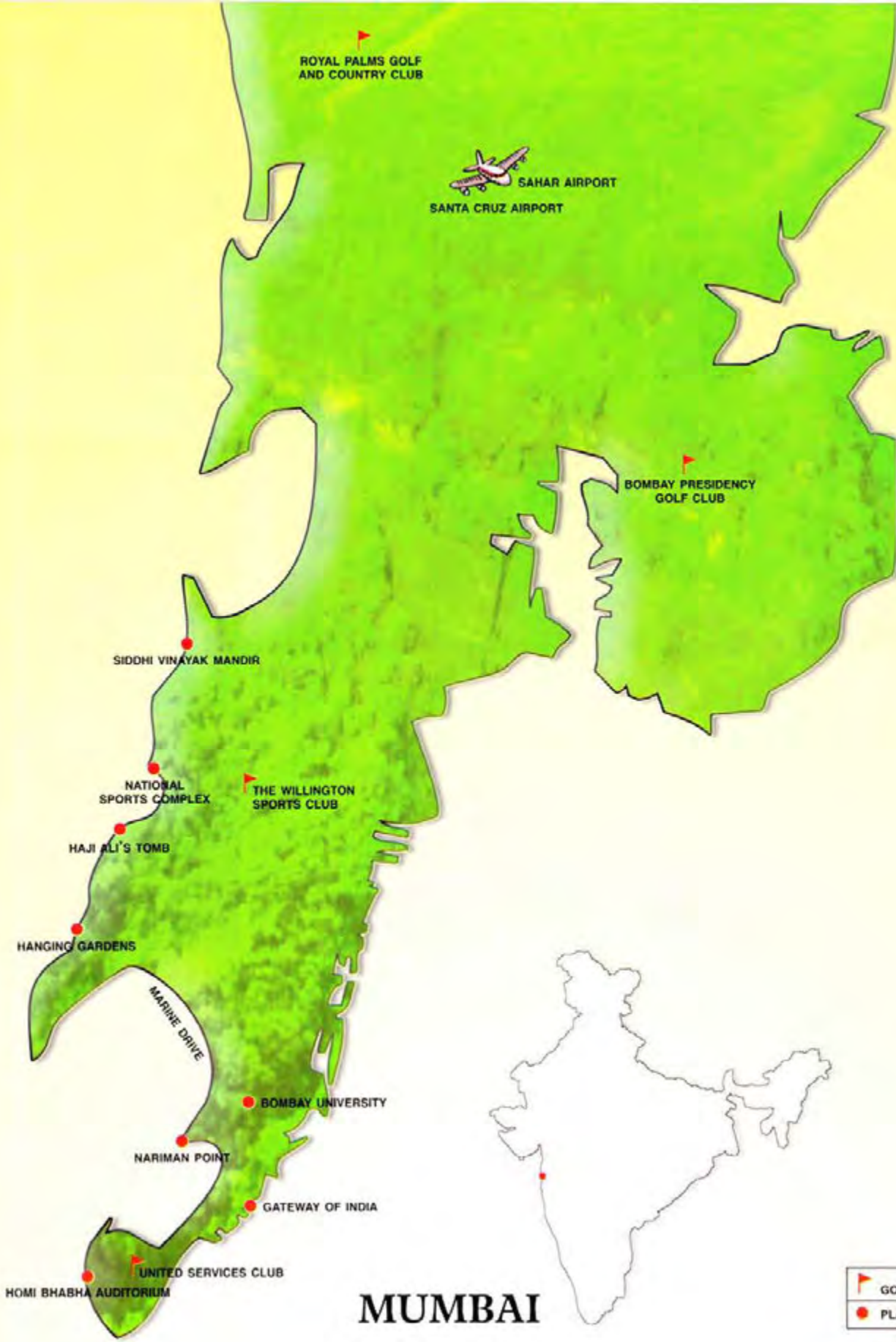
of the Hindu God Shiva.

Back in the city—don't miss the mid-afternoon boats as there's no accommodation on the small isle and it's too far to swim—dive back into the chaos by meandering through its heart. If you suffer from claustrophobia then it might be best to avoid the pulsating life of Zaveri Bazaar or Crawford Market.

Few actually forego these very local places to shop and stroll, however, as the former has some 3000 shops and stalls and a maze of streets. The latter is housed in a circa-1867 Bombay-Gothic style structure that was decorated by Kipling, the artist.

In Mumbai, a guide with specialised knowledge in such areas as art, architecture, history, craft, culture or even religion can devise a personalised itinerary that will offer a different perspective on the city.

For instance, a specialised guide can relate the particulars about the 2000-year-old Buddhist Kanheri Caves in far North Mumbai, as well as little-known facts about Mahatma Gandhi when he resided in the city and formulated plans for an independent India. ✕



ROYAL PALMS GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB

SAHAR AIRPORT
SANTA CRUZ AIRPORT

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY GOLF CLUB

SIDDIHI VINAYAK MANDIR

NATIONAL SPORTS COMPLEX
THE WILLINGTON SPORTS CLUB

HAJI ALI'S TOMB

HANGING GARDENS

MARINE DRIVE



BOMBAY UNIVERSITY

NARIMAN POINT

GATEWAY OF INDIA

HOMI BHABHA AUDITORIUM
UNITED SERVICES CLUB

MUMBAI

	GOLF COURSE
	PLACES OF INTEREST

Map not to scale
Only for illustration purpose.



Amir A. Nensey

Man with a Mission

For more than a half century Amir A. Nensey has watched Bombay—now Mumbai—grow and prosper. Determined to make the city an even better one to live in, Nensey embarked on a mega development project in the early 1990s. It's a mission that is still unfolding.

"Mumbaikars are money oriented but also relaxation oriented. Why not build a golf course surrounded by an oasis of greenery?" Nensey pondered.

Conscious of the trend that the city's commercial district is shifting northward, Nensey began transforming a 240-acre estate in North Mumbai into a prime residential and leisure destination.

When complete in 2007, Royal Palms Golf & Country Club—one of the largest projects currently underway in Greater Mumbai—will be an urban resort with an unparalleled array of recreational facilities and

accommodation choices.

The scope, size and sophistication of Royal Palms is certain to win the man with a mission even more accolades. Nensey has already received numerous awards for his business acumen and social awareness.

In 2001 he was conferred with the Rajiv Gandhi Shiromani Award, as well as the Business Executive of the Millennium. Among many awards he has also received the Glory of India International Award for promoting global goodwill, as well as the Front for National Progress Mother Teresa Excellence Award.

With interests in diversified fields, Nensey's business philosophy is straightforward: "I do what I like to do or drop it." "No partners and no borrowing" gives him great flexibility and even time to tee off four times a week. "Golf," he says, "I like the peace of mind plus it's a great walk." X



Top: Recognised for many endeavours, Amir Nensey undertakes only those projects that truly interest him.

Above: Amir Nensey lives in his own exquisite urban golf and leisure resort in North Mumbai.



Mumbai, Maharashtra

Royal Palms Golf & Country Club



Top: Practise your putting on the neat little green near the clubhouse.

Above: The 18th and the eighth hole beyond are sheltered in a small valley.

Even though you've long anticipated meandering over the green carpet maintained by Royal Palms Golf & Country Club, don't rush into a game. Pause a few moments on the broad verandah of the classy columned 60,000 sq. ft clubhouse and gaze over the peaceful panorama.

Located just seven kilometres from the international airport, Mumbai's only golf resort is an hour's drive northeast of the pounding heart of one of the world's largest cities. It feels, however, like you are at least a light year away.

In the distance is tranquil Powai Lake, and beyond it, the concrete fingers of an emerging satellite city. Farther out are Vihar and Tulsi Lakes, which also supply water to the greater city of some 14 million, and the Kanheri Caves, where Buddhist monks gouged more than a hundred caves out of

solid rock in the first century AD and occupied them for 1000 years.

Closer to home you are encircled by lush pockets of forest, a grassed colony used for dairy farming and a gated compound of Film City, where many Bollywood blockbusters are produced. Such serene surrounds are guaranteed to improve even a hacker's scorecard.

Be alert of one stipulation to play Royal Palms: you must not be apprehensive about heights as the course is not just undulating, it's downright hilly.

Rome was built on seven large hills. The par-66 course at Royal Palms doesn't cover quite as much real estate. It was redesigned and redeveloped around, over and between three small hills by Pacific Coast Design.

Constructed at a cost of US \$5 million and opened in September 1995, the championship course winds its way over a



hundred hilly acres within the 240-acre country club complex.

The greens at Royal Palms are covered with Tifdwarf, imported from Malaysia. The indigenous Bermuda grass, on the other hand, was collected from various parts of India. Planted on fairways and rough it is well maintained by a deputation of greens keepers, who are kept busy throughout the year.

Royal Palms was designed with the environment in mind. More than 60,000 trees from all over the country were planted to green the area. Palms and bougainvillea predominate.

In fact, vivid colour bursts from flowering bougainvillea accenting the third and 11th holes. Both are in the running as the signature hole, though they differ in character.

The straightforward 171-yard third is one of the easier holes, though a lake comes into play along the left side of most of the fairway.

At 492 yards, the 11th is not only the longest hole at Royal Palms, it's also one of the most difficult. Designed with double dog-leg complexity the constricted fairway

sweeps south to open before the lake. Ahead is a big decision. Play it safe and negotiate the second dog-leg or attempt to carry the lake and land on the green.

If you birdie this hole or perhaps even take a stroke or two more to sink the ball, don't be surprised to hear the polite applause of residents watching the action from the balconies of their stylish Thai style villas at the edge of the 11th.

Apart from the course, a golf academy and a 24-bay driving range, the Royal Palms development includes a number of architecturally distinct villas and bungalows. In addition are three hotel sites, an IT centre and recreational facilities offering badminton, squash, lawn tennis and billiards.

After a great round on the course, an exhilarating game of squash or tennis, a day spent pounding on computer keys or sightseeing in the city, many people gather in the massive clubhouse to conclude their day with a gourmet meal or a cool drink high above an oasis of green at the edge of one of the world's largest cities. ⌘



Left: Spanning just 171 yards, the third offers a good chance for a hole-in-one. **Above:** The skyline of Mumbai is the backdrop for the 15th.





Opposite the signature third is the lake-enhanced green of the 492-yard 11th hole.



Mumbai, Maharashtra

Bombay Presidency Golf Club

After the British introduced the finer points of golf to the citizenry of Calcutta (now known as Kolkata) in 1829, they embarked on a mission to progressively 'green' other major centres in the subcontinent. Bombay was next.

Though the circa-1842 Royal Bombay Golf Club has long since closed its massive wooden doors, hallowed traditions live on at Bombay Presidency Golf Club (BPGC).

Situated in the leafy suburb of Chembur, 30 minutes from the airport, to the north, and an hour from the Gateway of India, to the south, Bombay Presidency is an oasis of tranquillity in a city that never sleeps.

Established in 1927, BPGC has been the championship venue for countless tournaments.

BPGC is busy—there are up to 300 golfers on weekends and nearly 100 each weekday. (Weekdays are best for a casual game; telephone in advance for a tee time.)

Without exception there is praise for BPGC and its greens keepers, who ensure well-trimmed cow-grass fairways and closely clipped Tiftway greens.

And with few exceptions golfers bemoan the fourth hole. The index-one hole is long, at 494 yards. As well it has a row of stately trees on the right that are guaranteed to disrupt the game for all except the most adept player... and maybe you! *✍*



Top: Bombay Presidency has been welcoming golfers since 1927.

Above: A player tees off on the 16th, just to the left of the 10th green.

TEE TIPS

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY GOLF CLUB
Dr Choithram Gidwani Road, Chembur
Mumbai 400 074

Enquiries: Tel.: (22) 2520 5874

E-mail: bpgc1@vsnl.in

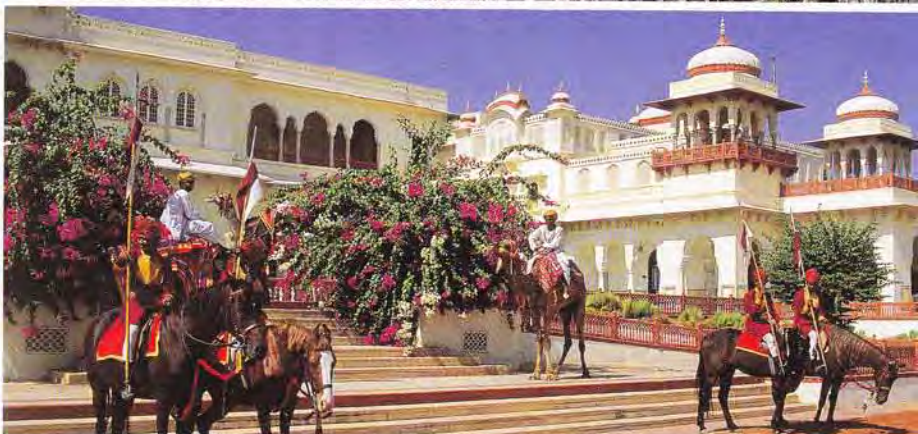
Website: www.bpgc-golf.com

Play: Weekdays, Rs 500; weekends, Rs 1000.

Club Rental: Rs 150.

Caddie: Rs 100. Handicap card required.

Course: Blue markers: 18 holes, par 70, 6189 yards; white markers: 5957 yards.



A Luxurious Experience

The Taj Group of Hotels

When the Taj Mahal Hotel made its debut in Bombay in 1903, *The Times* of London described it as “the finest caravan-serai in the East”. A stopover in the Taj Mahal Hotel—impressively sited opposite the regal Gateway of India—is still a luxurious experience.

The Taj name and its distinctive logo was once emblazoned on just one personable property. Now it is proudly displayed on a celebrated chain of hotels spanning a vast region from India and Nepal to Sri Lanka and the Maldives. The Taj Group today is the largest hotel chain in South Asia.

In recent years the Taj Group has undergone rapid expansion. India’s premier hotel organisation now offers three main categories of accommodation to discerning travellers. Epitomising the Taj experience, Taj Luxury Hotels are unsurpassed in providing lavish comforts, services and facilities. Located in major gateway cities Taj Luxury Hotels offer

a fitting introduction to an unforgettable Indian visit. Meanwhile, staff members in all Taj Business Hotels—lush properties are found in centrally sited key commercial locations—are primed to maximise every time-stretched moment for work-charged executives.

Taj Leisure Hotels, on the other hand, span the spectrum from genuine palaces and beach resorts to cultural refuges and garden retreats. They offer a chance to relax and just get away from it all. Many Taj Leisure Hotels are built close to historic monuments, pilgrim centres or wildlife sanctuaries.

Some Taj hotels are even within putting distance of a course with character. As the popularity of golf grows in India and the demand for conveniently located accommodation soars, the company may well wish to add another category to its prestigious portfolio: Taj Golf Hotels! 🏌️

For more information, log on to www.tajhotels.com



Top left: The regal Rajput Suite in the Taj Mahal Hotel, Mumbai.

Topmost: The Taj Mahal Hotel and the adjoining Tower is the flagship property in Mumbai.

Top: The Taj Rambagh Palace was a former maharajah’s residence.

Above: The Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi, is close to government offices.



A Bounty of Bargains

Shopping in India



Top: Fabrics are offered in all shades and hues.

Above: Cultured pearls are available in Hyderabad.

Throughout the diverse tapestry of India, men and women weave, carve, chisel and embroider a staggering variety of materials into quality handicrafts. Each state has something special to offer, and tourists are often overwhelmed with the diversity of goods and the number of places where a memento of handmade India can be purchased.

Delhi's bazaars on Janpath and the frantically busy Chandni Chowk, in the old city, boast of scores of shops selling brassware to textiles and the odd antique that might have been made just 'yesterday'!

Part of the game, if you shop in bazaars, is to bargain. Conservative buyers unfamiliar with the 'gentle' art of haggling may prefer to make purchases in state government emporia.

A mindboggling array of fixed-priced Indian handicrafts and handlooms from all over the country can be found in government

shops on Baba Kharak Singh Marg and the nearby Central Cottage Industries Emporium on Janpath.

Mumbai is also a shopper's paradise, with modern stand-alone arcades and classy outlets in top hotels.

It's hard, however, to resist the excitement of sidewalk bazaars on Dadabhai Naoroji Road (D.N. Road). A number of state government emporia are also to be found around D.N. Road, so it's possible to compare prices.

Half the fun of shopping in India is bargaining and browsing, and the other half must be watching handicrafts being crafted, often in a century-old way.

For starters, go to Khurja, on the Delhi-Aligarh Road, to see where glazed off-white and blue pottery is made using traditional methods. Or try Mehrauli, about 16 km from Delhi, where a unique artisan's workshop, called Naika, produces a select range of



puppets, masks, toys, garments and household linen.

Like the artisans at Naika, craftspeople from all over India produce goods using both age-old and contemporary designs. Many traditional articles have been modernised. For instance, earthenware *diyas* (oil lamps) have been electrified for use in modern homes and round silver anklets have inspired a design for ashtrays.

There is no region in the country that does not use local materials to make necklaces, earrings, nose rings, anklets, bracelets, rings and toe rings. Jewellery using precious and semiprecious stones set in gold, silver and other metals is made in Kashmir and Delhi.

Cuttack, in the southern state of Orissa, is famous for silver filigree work (a process in which thin silver wire is fashioned into jewellery). South Indian gold jewellery is prized for its fine finish, and the exquisite enamel pendants and necklaces of Jaipur are in demand everywhere. This country of handicrafts has perfected the art of textile making, as can be seen in sturdy cottons, shining silks, delicate brocades and soft woollens.

There's sure to be something of interest which can be used as a sari, shawl, home furnishing, table linen, bedcover or a wall hanging. Or for something different a tailor can transform a sari into an evening dress or stitch a business suit or safari jacket at prices lower than those encountered in other Asian countries.

It may take a bit longer to have a unique stone souvenir made, but marble is forever. In Agra (the city of the Taj Mahal) and other centres you can watch precious stones being inlaid in marble flower vases, boxes, wall plates and powder boxes.

Wood might not last quite as long but it's a widely used material for artistic expression. Sandalwood from the south, teakwood from Madhya Pradesh, walnut from Kashmir and rosewood are used in all manner of handicrafts, from vases and screens to picture frames and walking sticks.

No less impressive than these craft materials is the work done with leather, reed, shell, papier mache and horn. All are fashioned with a care and skill that goes back hundreds of years. ¶



Top: Slippers and sandals can be made to order.
Above: Horses made of clay in Kerala.



Pune, Maharashtra

Pune—A Cultural Place

Known to the British as Poona, Pune has a special place in the hearts and minds of Indians. It was in the Agha Khan Palace—complete with Italianate arches and surrounded by spacious well-trimmed lawns—that the British interned Mahatma Gandhi, his wife Kasturba and other leaders of the Congress party.

Pune is acknowledged as the cultural capital of the state of Maharashtra and is the centre of traditional Marathi culture, where education, arts and crafts and theatre flourish.


Pune is also known as the ‘Oxford of the East’ in reference to its educational institutes, which include general, medical, engineering and architectural universities as well as specialised institutes.

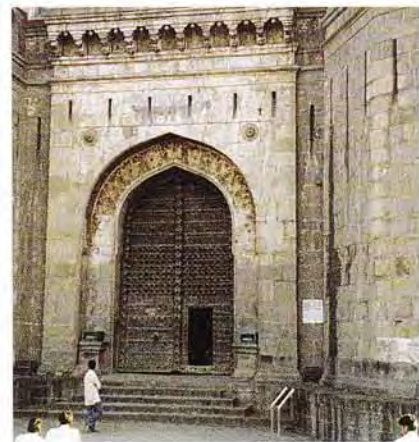
Situated at an elevation of 598 metres, Pune is a busy town that, like many Indian cities, is growing rapidly and has attracted significant industry.

Bhagwan Rajneesh’s ashram is in a quiet neighbourhood located near the centre of Pune. Modelled as a spiritual health club with a swimming pool, sauna and even a beauty parlour, it attracts thousands of foreign visitors who wish to undertake meditation courses.

You need to book ahead (commune@osho.com) and also arrange accommodation elsewhere in the city. The courses are not cheap. Additionally you need to purchase special tunics and also take an HIV test (on the spot).

Indian tourists often take a tour (Rs 10, twice a day) of the ashram just to see the foreigners.

Nearby, the spectacular hill stations of Panchgani (98 km) and Mahabaleshwar (120 km) give an excellent insight into how the British lived in their summer retreats and provide a great visual panorama of mountains, steep valleys and unspoiled natural beauty. 



Views of the old city area.

TRAVEL NOTEBOOK

Access: Pune, 185 km east of Mumbai, can be reached by road—a two-hour drive—on a six-lane expressway, or by rail or air.

Stay: A popular weekend getaway for those in Mumbai, Pune has a wide selection of accommodation, including the Taj Blue Diamond, Tel.: (20) 2402 5555.

Shop: Look for typical local crafts in bazaars as well as boutique stores.



Pune, Maharashtra

Poona Golf Club

Top left: Action along the Poona course's wide 18th fairway.

Top left below: Tree-lined panorama of the Poona Golf Course in 2004.

Above: At the course's opening were Atul Kirloskar, Committee Member, Phil Ryan, Pacific Coast Design, and Manmohan Krishan, Construction Supervisor.

Below: Atul Kirloskar, Phil Ryan and Anil Seolekar (current Poona GC Captain) at the 18th green.

Pune is one of the fastest growing cities in Maharashtra. With a more moderate climate than Mumbai, the city of 2.8 million is a budding centre for industry, software production... and golf.


Poona Club Golf is near the centre of the town, on the way from the airport and close to hotels.

The original 'Browns' Golf Course was started by S.L. Kirloskar, an eminent industrialist from Pune (in his day called Poona), and it was his grandson, Atul Kirloskar (now also an eminent industrialist in Pune), who, with Baba Kalyani (the then

captain), were the core team behind the new golf course opened in 1995, but they had a lot of help from a dedicated committee.

The new design was undertaken by Pacific Coast Design and the course laid out over the 91-acre site with sand profile greens, irrigation system and over 30,000 trees planted.

Previously the golf course was mostly sheet rock and golfers had to tee up on fairways with a triangle of cardboard (putting the golf ball on top) to prevent breaking the golf clubs on the rock. Nearly all of the topsoil had to be imported into the site and at one stage there were over 500 labourers working by hand to complete the project.

The membership has grown from around 65 members, prior to the new course, to about 750 today and is still rising. The club is currently building a new restaurant to go with the renovated change rooms and pro shop. 



TEE TIPS

POONA GOLF CLUB
Yerwada Airport Road
Pune 411 001
Enquiries: (20) 2669 4131
E-mail: pcgc@vsnl.net
Play: Weekdays, Rs 500;
weekends, Rs 700.
Club Rental: Rs 100.
Caddie: Rs 90.
Handicap card required.
Course: 18 holes,
par 71, 6604 yards.



Top: The weekly market at Anjuna attracts visitors from throughout Goa. **Above:** Explore the quaint streets in the old parts of the capital to see many 'veterans'.

Going Goa

Everywhere you go in Goa, a former Portuguese territory 600 km south of Mumbai, there are constant reminders that you are, and then are not, in India: hot curry, afternoon siestas, rupees, tidy cottages with green gables, crumbling forts safeguarding rocky promontories, whitewashed churches, Hindu temples, continental delicacies, sacred cows, guitar music... the list goes on and on. It's this rare blend of Indian and European cultures that gives Goa such a unique personality.

It's a character that began in 1510 when Goa was conquered by Alfonso de Albuquerque. He triumphantly entered the harbour with a flotilla of 20 ships and 1200 men to become the first Viceroy of Portuguese India.

Under the Portuguese, trade flourished, as Goa became a bridge between Europe and the Orient. And with the arrival of scholars

from Spain and Portugal, Goa grew to be a centre of culture and learning.

The Portuguese stayed in Goa for 451 years and filled the territory with many splendid architectural wonders. Through the majestic Viceroy's Gate (a sort of Portuguese Arc de Triumph built in 1599 to honour Vasco de Gama's discovery of the trade routes to the East) visitors can see much of Old Goa.

Located just nine kilometres east of Panaji, the current capital, Old Goa was the Portuguese capital, which was once said to rival Lisbon in grandeur. There is still a wealth of architectural masterpieces to explore during a narrated group tour or, if time permits, while wandering on your own.

For instance, there is the church of St. Cajetan. It has been built in Corinthian style and modelled after St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. There is also Se Cathedral, the largest



Top left: Homes built during the Portuguese period can be seen throughout Goa.

Extreme left: The statue in downtown Panaji reveals the best way to learn golf!

Left: The Church of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception is in the heart of Panaji.

of the churches in Old Goa. Built in Portuguese-Gothic style with a Tuscan exterior, it dates to 1562.

Of special interest is the Basilica of Bom Jesus, the most important church in Goa. Completed in 1605 by the Jesuits, the ornate stone structure, with richly gilded altars, houses the body of St. Francis Xavier, the Apostle of the Indies'.

The Jesuit evangelist came to Goa in 1540 to work as a missionary. He died in 1552 on the island of Sancian, off the coast of China.

However, for more than 450 years the body of St. Francis has remained in Goa, enshrined in an ornate silver casket and clothed in rich vestments of gold and silver. Every 10 years the body becomes the religious focal point for an internationally known exposition.


Goa's old-world churches and cathedrals are the major draw card for some tourists. For others it's the string of beaches that begin with Arambol in the north—not far from the border with Maharashtra—and then proceed

south past Anjuna and upscale Candolim to Palolem in the south—not far from the border with Karnataka.

Still other tourists come for the foods, feasts and festivals. Seafood like Goan style lobster is outstanding. Try *chourisso* (Goan sausage), *xacuti* (a spicy chicken dish) and *sanna* (small rice cakes that have been soaked in palm toddy before steaming).

Reasonable local wines are available, while the local brew is *fenni*, a potent mixture distilled from coconuts or the fruit of the cashew nut tree.

The best time to sample Portuguese-inspired dishes and see Goa's blended culture is during Carnival. During the fun-filled days that fall just before Ash Wednesday, there is uninterrupted revelry. Merrymakers wear masks, dress themselves in clownish attires and celebrate with processions, songs and dances.

If the noise of the crowd and the intensity of the festivities get too strong, you can always slip away to the seclusion of a sunny plaza for a shaded siesta. 

TRAVEL NOTEBOOK

Access: Domestic flights and charters land at Goa's Airport, Dabolim, 30 km from Panaji. Prepaid taxis and coaches are available for transfers.

Stay: There are numerous resorts and guest houses along the string of 16 beaches, including the Taj-managed Fort Aguada Beach Resort, Tel.: (832) 247 9123.

Action: Try the pubs in the old area of Panaji or beach-resort bars north and south of Panaji. Casino Goa is on a luxury boat.

Shop: Don't miss the Wednesday flea market at Anjuna, where hundreds of traders sell a wide variety of goods.

Info: India Tourism Panaji (Goa), Church Square
Tel.: (832) 222 3412.



Above: The ninth hole at Caravela is accented with palms.
Right: Several fairways at the Leela play parallel to the beach.

TEE TIPS

THE LEELA GOA

Cavelossim

Mobor 403 731

Enquiries: Tel.: (832)

287 1234

E-mail: info@leelapalace.com

Play: Rs 500 + 16% tax per round.

Course: 9 holes, alternate tees for second round.

RAMADA CARAVELA BEACH RESORT

Varca Beach 403 721

Enquiries: Tel.: (832) 274

5200-15

E-mail: itstimefor@caravelabeachresort.com

Play: Residents, US \$12; walk-ins, US \$14, for 9 holes.

Course: 9 holes; alternate tees for second round.

Goa

The Leela Goa Ramada Caravela Beach Resort

There are few golf courses in India that parallel beach lands. The small state of Goa has the lion's share with five beachside courses. For golfing tourists, these are an unexpected bonus in a destination that for 451 years was a Portuguese colony and still retains its charm with its colonial homes, striking churches and quaint festivals.

Resort guests eager to cocoon themselves amid palms and pools sometimes miss these sights and scenes. This is particularly true at The Leela Goa, where the Lilliputian sized, lagoon sited golf course beckons many to "just have a hit".

More than a mini nine-hole golf course this is more like a miniature nine-hole course. All holes are par threes, with the longest fairway stretching to 97 yards. The

course is perfect for the novice or those wanting to practise their short game.

Over at the sporty retreat located within the Ramada Caravela Beach Resort Goa the longest drive needed on the all par-three, nine-hole course is 184 yards. The fifth hole, like the eight others, plays through a botanical garden overlooking frothy waves. The blooming scene has been purposely created by planting thousands of flowers, shrubs and trees.

After completing a round near nightfall, go back to the ninth tee and up a few steps to Sunset Point. From this elevated vantage point there's a fine view over the course and the red roofed resort in one direction. In the other there's often a cloudless view of the sun setting behind the sea. It's a splendid hole-in-one conclusion to another great day on the greens of Goa. *X*



Left: Residents staying in the Taj Exotica have a fine view of the resort's Executive Course.

Above: Towering palms provide swaying challenges on the Taj Exotica's Executive Course.

Goa

The Taj Exotica The Grand Greens

The former Portuguese enclave of Goa has attracted travellers with its enticements of sun, sea, sand and spectacular resorts. Golf is another inducement, with two more beach fronting getaways coming into play in the past few years.

When the Taj Exotica opened along one of Goa's most secluded beach, golf guests were given a choice of sporting layouts.

Fragrant Anjulia bushes line the path to the nine-hole pitch and putt layout and the nine-hole Executive Golf Course.

With the longest hole, the seventh, stretching to 38 yards, the former is ideal for an introduction to golf.

Those who are confident of their game immediately tackle the latter, an all par-three course, which is laid out in front of Portuguese style villas.

Hard hitting golfers can test their limits on the international standard links course surrounding the InterContinental. The Grand Resort, Goa. Designed by Col. K.D. Bagga, a disciple of Alister MacKenzie, the Grand Greens is a nine-hole diversion laid out over the sands of Canacona Beach.

While the course features meandering fairways and unobtrusive mounding, character is provided by a Hindu temple off the par-four fourth.

The excitement doesn't stop there, as the green on the par-three, 211-yard first is 'necklaced' with four ball-swallowing contoured bunkers.

The signature eighth is a par-five marathon parallel to the Arabian Sea. Step up to the tee and an awaiting 527 yards of green knowing that this is Goa golf at its best.

TEE TIPS

THE TAJ EXOTICA
Calwaddo, Benaulim
Salcette, Goa 403 716

Enquiries: Tel.: (832) 277 1234

E-mail:
exotica.goa@tajhotels.com

Play: Guests, Rs 500 p/p per hour inclusive of equipment; walk-ins, Rs 1000 per hour.

Course: Nine-hole pitch/putt; 770-yard, 9-hole Executive Course; 1170 yards.

THE GRAND GREENS
Raj Baga

Canacona, Goa 403 702

Enquiries: Tel.: (832) 266 7777

E-mail: goa@interconti.com
Website: www.interconti.com

Play: Residents, US \$15; walk-ins, US \$25.

Course: 9 holes; alternate tees for a 7200-yard game.



Top left: The Lal Bagh Gardens contain many rare trees and plants.

Top right: The Jama Masjid is one of the most imposing mosques in the city.

Above: Tipu Sultan's Summer Palace is noted for its elegant teak pillars.

Bangalore Beauties

When Kempe Gowda erected a mud fort around a simple settlement in South India in 1537 he signalled the start of what has since become one of the most dynamic cities in the country. Apart from the earthen fortress, later replaced by one of stone, Gowda left two contributions to the Bangalore of some 500 years ago.

Gowda didn't build the Gavi Gangadhara Temple, as it was constructed during the time of the Cholas, a powerful dynasty of builders and traders, which was at its apex around the 9th-12th centuries AD. He did, however, expand its cave-secluded temple sanctuary.

This temple is normally quiet except on January 14th or 15th when throngs of devotees gather to see sun beams pass through the horns of a stone bull and illuminate the image of Hindu god, Shiva.

There's another image of Shiva in the nearby 16th century Bull Temple, built by Gowda. Apart from the size of the Nandi Bull (4.5 m high and 6.5 m long) the granite animal is slowly gaining weight as it's regularly polished with a mixture of groundnut oil and charcoal!

Gowda was not the only member of his family to leave a mark on Bangalore. His son, Kempe Gowda II, erected four elevated watchtowers to mark the boundaries of the city.

One is just outside the leafy surrounds of Lal Bagh, the second largest botanical gardens in the country. Conceived as a 40-acre royal retreat in 1760 during the reign of Hyder Ali and expanded by his son, Tipu Sultan, Lal Bagh has blossomed over the centuries.

Located in the southeastern corner of the ever-expanding city and now blooming over 240 acres, the landscaped gardens



Above: The High Court has been superbly restored to its former glory.

attract 5000 visitors a day and double that number on weekends and public holidays when they are illuminated.

Though Hyder Ali set Bangalore on a green path, it were the British who transformed Lal Bagh into a botanical masterpiece.

Bangalore's first significant contact with the British was in 1791 when the city was captured by Lord Cornwallis, Governor of Bengal, during the Third Anglo-Mysore War. Even though Tipu Sultan lost much territory, Bangalore was returned to the soldier statesman as part of the Treaty of Srirangapatnam.


While residing in the then-fortified city, Tipu Sultan often spent summer nights in a two-storey wooden palace that he completed in 1791. Amid ornate teak pillars and multi-coloured arches Tipu Sultan conducted the affairs of the state.

Due to its 1000-metre elevation on the Deccan plateau and resultant cooler temperatures, Tipu Sultan preferred Bangalore as the place to reside. It was also a favoured summer retreat for the British.

They constructed other places of green, including the 300-acre Cubbon Park in 1864, naming it after the second British commissioner of Mysore State.

A sombre statue of Queen Victoria, Empress of India, was erected at the eastern entrance to the park. It stoically gazes down South Parade and towards the lively hub of the dynamic city.

While South Parade is now called M.G. Road, other old thoroughfares still resound with their original British names: Cavalry Road, Artillery Road and Brigade Road.

Though Brigade Road may have its heart in the 19th century, its head is most certainly in the 21st. The latest fashions sold within stylish boutiques, well-stocked bookshops, state-of-the-art shopping complexes, mirrored burger palaces, souvenir outlets stocking local specialities, Internet cafes, bowling alleys, trendy pubs and designer hotels can all be found on Brigade Road and the little lanes that radiate off this causeway of consumerism. 

TRAVEL NOTEBOOK

Access: International and domestic flights arrive at Bangalore's HAL Airport. Airport coaches and prepaid taxis are available for the 9-km journey to the MG Road area.

Stay: Bangalore has a wide choice of accommodation from inexpensive lodges to luxury hotels, like the 129-room Taj West End, Tel.: (80) 5660 5660.



Action: The city has a renowned pub culture, with numerous trendy places open in major hotels and shopping areas.

Shop: The largest concentration of shops can be found on M.G. Road, Brigade, Richmond and Residency Roads, and Church Street.

Info: India Tourism Bangalore, 48 Church St (behind M.G. Road), Tel.: (80) 2558 5417.



BANGALORE

	GOLF COURSE
	PLACES OF INTEREST

Map not to scale.
Only for illustration purpose.



Ashok Kumar

A Quiet Achiever

Just over a decade ago Bangalore-based property developer Ashok Kumar was on a mission in the Middle East to promote his latest project. A chance meeting with Phil Ryan and his team from Pacific Coast Design set the quiet achiever on a course to construct a luxurious residential and resort village centred around a world-class championship golf course.

The massive project, Ashok felt, would be a first anywhere in South India and among the pioneering efforts anywhere in the country.

The genesis for Eagleton—The Golf Village was born, though the radial idea for a residential and sporting oasis amid fresh air and wide open spaces beyond Bangalore was not without its detractors.

“Initially, the concept was criticised by everyone I knew,” said Kumar. “They said such an idea would just not work in a place like India. No one could imagine a golf course, a hotel, a

resort and quality housing to be all in one place.”

Undeterred by critics and with his characteristic approach to business—“high product quality and low costs”—Kumar proceeded with his dream to create an enclave that would be self-sustaining, allow middle-class Indians the opportunity to live in a golf community and promote the great game of golf.

Mindful that a majority of people visiting Eagleton would be non-golfers, Kumar envisioned that the complex would provide them with a refreshing interlude from the pressures of daily life.

With day-by-day involvement in the construction of the initial infrastructure and facilities, now out-of-the-way Kumar intends to step back for a little while as he steps up to the tee box. Most likely he won’t need much instruction as the time Kumar has spent in creating Eagleton has given him the knowledge and confidence of a true professional. *✍*



Top left: Kumar’s business philosophy is to provide high product quality at a low cost. **Top:** Ashok Kumar has been a pioneer in developing golf tourism in India. **Above:** Ashok Kumar stands before his Eagleton’s world-class clubhouse.



Bangalore, Karnataka

Eagleton—The Golf Village

Over the past few decades India's fifth most-populous centre and the state capital of Karnataka, Bangalore, has attained world-class status for utilising high-tech skills to foster cutting edge technology development.

As a major player in India's burgeoning IT industry, Bangalore has attracted some of the country's top scientific and business talent. Additionally, many multinational companies have set up regional or national headquarters in India's Garden City.

Recognising the recreational needs for such worldwide personnel, Eagleton—the Golf Village was conceived and constructed to not only provide a sporting venue of unparalleled comfort and class but to also stimulate growth in the local golfing community and to advance golf tourism in South India.

There are no stark craggy cliffs or

wave-washed beaches backdropping the course's Calcutta Dhube fairways or its Tifdwarf greens.

The scene, as you look out from the tee box at the 512-yard first hole, embraces many shades of green. Even the distant forest of palms and leafy giants is green, while the rolling hills beyond are nothing but variations on the same colour. Master-planned over 170 now extensively landscaped acres by Pacific Coast Design, the rest of the 18-hole, 6632-yard USPGA championship standard course is equally as pleasing.

Displaying sensitivity for the environment, the par-72 layout was sculptured around many subtle contours. Additionally, some of the course's natural hazards were left in place, where practical. For instance, the signature fifth, a scenic par three, curves around an old banyan tree that rises from a tiny isle in the midst of a



Top: It's not far to go from home comforts to a homely golf course.
Above: Sunrise and sunset are particularly pleasant on the Eagleton course.



Left: After a great game cool down in the massive free-form pool.

Above: The signature fifth hole curves around an old banyan tree.

tranquil lake. As well, rocky outcrops add style to select holes on the front nine. Mango trees, remaining from the original estate, provide substance to the 14th and 15th holes on the back nine.

Ecological considerations were foremost in mind during course development. These continue to be strictly observed. For instance, over 20,000 trees were planted at the time of construction in 1998/1999. The implementation of a modern waste-water management programme, on the other hand, has proved to be economically feasible and environmentally sound measure.

The course is not only friendly to its surroundings, it's also beautiful to behold. Look beyond the sixth green, across the par four, seventh hole and the area reserved for future housing to a hillock and a 22-metre-high statue of Aditya, the sun god. The towering figure from Hindu mythology faces the rising sun; later in the day it makes a solemn silhouette as the glowing orb sets over the Eagleton.

At this late hour golfers may be nearing the end of their game. The tiny 156-yard

17th is a favourite with many golfers. Not only does it boast of the most hole in ones, the 17th green spreads out behind a tranquil palm-lined lake that is often the watery home for ducks and geese. Although the lake on the 17th, the five other water hazards and the course occupy about a third of the 468 acres belonging to the Village, Eagleton is by no means golf-centric.

Designed much like a mini satellite town, Eagleton is a country club and a conference centre as well as a holiday resort featuring 114 suites and guest rooms and a residential enclave with 1400 plots for villas and town houses.

Should residents, conference delegates, club members or even tourists wish to improve their game or even learn the basics they can do so at the Village's professional golf academy, the only one of its kind in India. Experienced instructors use the latest video recordings to coach novices during customised 'golf capsules'. At the end of the course participants will have acquired the skills necessary to pursue a pastime that could well become a lifelong passion.

TEE TIPS

EAGLETON—THE GOLF VILLAGE

30th Km, Bangalore-Mysore Highway, Bidadi Industrial Estate Bidadi Hobli, Bangalore 560 070

Enquiries: Tel.: (80) 728 7222/33/44
E-mail: eagleton@giasbg01.vsnl.net.in

Website: www.eagletonindia.com

Play: Weekdays, Rs 500; weekends and public holidays, Rs 1000.

Club Rental: Rs 300.

Caddie: Rs 75.

Course: 18 holes, par 70, 6632 yards—men; 5599 yards—ladies.

Stay: Accommodation is available at the resort's 96-room hotel. As well, there are numerous hotels in central Bangalore, including the 129-room Taj West End, Tel.: (80) 225 5055.





The 17th is a favourite because of landscaping and the chance of an ace!



Top: Some of the magnificent trees at Bangalore Golf Club. **Above:** The Redevelopment Committee, management and construction staff during reconstruction in 2001.

Bangalore, Karnataka

Bangalore Golf Club

While Royal Calcutta GC is documented as the oldest golf club in India and the second oldest in the world, after St. Andrews GC, Bangalore Golf Club also deserves a special place in India's long and proud golf history.

Bangalore Golf Club is the oldest golf course in the same site outside of the British Isles. Established in 1876, the land was previously used as a rifle range by Pioneer Regiment, stationed in Bangalore.

The course has been transformed a number of times and was a 12-hole layout in 1898, was recorded as an 18-hole layout in 1919, and different 18-hole layouts in 1973 and 1995. In 1979 a member, Maj. Gen. Ramaswami, initiated a concept to develop recycled treated effluent water so that the course could be irrigated. In 1996 following much debate and fund raising, the

Captain of the day, B.S. Patel, finally got the project going and in September 1999 the treatment plant was commissioned.

With the advantage of water for irrigation the club, in 2000, engaged Pacific Coast Design to redesign the golf course and over two years was completely rebuilt. The golf course was constructed to international standards with sand-based greens, sand-based tees and a fully in-ground, computer-controlled, automatic irrigation system.

The reconstruction was done in two stages so that golfers could still utilise nine holes at any one time. In 2002 the new 18-hole, fully grassed course was opened and was the only golf course in India using recycled effluent water for irrigating all tees, fairways and greens.

During the treatment-plant development and golf course reconstruction, various



committees of the day were incredibly committed and had a hands-on role in project management. Captains B.S. Patel, P.S. Kashyap, G.S. Vijay Reddi and K.L. Devadas were admirably supported by their respective committees, club management and golf project manager, Prakash Alvares, who supervised the reconstruction.

History is living at Bangalore Golf Club, with annual matches between Bangalore Golf Club and Madras Gymkhana Club (The Interclub Match trophy) commencing in 1878 (travel by horseback with clubs), and are, to my knowledge, the longest running golf match in the world between clubs and involve both home and away matches each year.

The golf club itself gives a sense of returning to the past with its wide verandah, garden restaurant, and intimate bar area. Walking into the car-park area visitors are greeted with magnificent rain trees (*Samanea*



saman) that are a hallmark of Bangalore.

The layout is very testing, as it has the 18 holes laid out over only 60 acres of land among the above-established trees. All of the holes are quite tight and any shots outside of the fairway leave golfers with recovery shots through or over those same beautiful trees.

During 2003 the club hosted the Asian Senior Masters Tournament, and teams from around Asia competed. Letters following the event from the various Asian golf associations that had put forward the teams heaped praise upon the course and the hospitality of the hosts.

Members take a great pride in the golf course and are careful to retain the club's history. They recently celebrated 125 years with a delightful commemorative book, packed with photographs and recorded memorabilia. Ask at the club should you wish to buy a copy as a memento of a great day at a great course. ♪

Above left: Panorama of the 'double green' at the sixth and 14th.

Above: Aerial view of the course layout of Bangalore Golf Club, in 2004.

TEE TIPS

BANGALORE GOLF CLUB
No. 2, Sankey Road,
High Grounds, Bangalore
Enquiries: Tel.: (80) 228 1876
E-mail: bgc1876@bgl.vsnl.net.in
Play: Weekdays, US \$20;
weekends, US \$30.
Club Rental: Rs 200.
Caddie: Rs 100.
Handicap card required.
Closed on Mondays.
Course: 18 holes, par 70,
6247 yards
Golf Extra: The club has a good
pro shop and 11 rooms for
golfers, but bookings need to be
made well in advance.





A landscaped fountain area is located between the



Top: The picturesque area around the 16th green.

Above: Panorama of the greens at the KGA Golf Course in Bangalore.


Bangalore, Karnataka

KGA Golf Club

The Karnataka Golf Association is an excellent facility with a great clubhouse, restaurant, outdoor terrace, bar and changing facilities; however, the swimming pool and health club are for members only. It is a very social club where visitors are made welcome, and, given its ideal location (just next to the airport), should have a busy course most of the time. However, during rains the golf course is mostly

unplayable due to its low elevation and poor drainage. The golf club has made good efforts over the past few years with improvements to the course, inclusive of the new first hole and driving range, but a lot more will need to be done to elevate the golf features and install good drainage.

The club is currently installing automatic irrigation with treatment facility, and this should provide better turf surfaces during non-rain periods. While having very good tree-lined fairways, the layout tends to play more like a links style course due to the flattish terrain and shallow bunkering. However the trees do come into play and this makes recovery shots very interesting. The generally large greens have a good reputation within the region for fast putting and interesting contours.

The driving range is under lights and is positioned at the end of the car park, near the club. At present it is really the only place for golf practice in Bangalore. 

TEE TIPS

KGA GOLF CLUB

No. 1, Golf Avenue, Kodihalli
(off Airport Road), Bangalore

Enquiries: Tel.: (80) 529 8845 – 47,

Fax: (80) 521 7348.

E-mail: golf@bgl.vsnl.net.in

Play: Weekdays, Rs 1000; weekends, Rs 1500.

Club Rental: Rs 200.

Caddie: Rs 100.

Handicap card required.

Course: 18 holes, par 72, 6770 yards.



Jet Planes and Bullock Carts

Travelling Around India



Left: Quality coaches are used for group tours or for conference delegates.

Above: India's few remaining steam trains are very popular with visitors.

In a country as diverse as India there are many surprises awaiting the traveller, not the least of which is the variety of transport. The Indian railway system is the largest in Asia and the fourth largest in the world. Everyday about 11,000 trains cover a distance of around 13,00,000 km while operating through nearly 7,100 stations and carrying 90,00,000 passengers and about 6,55,000 tons of freight.

Because of the popularity of domestic rail travel, foreign tourists must make advance bookings. Other than that requirement and the need for a sense of adventure, rail travel is an inexpensive and comfortable way to tour India and meet its people. Indian Railways offers an excellent travel bargain. The Indrail Pass, similar to Europe's Eurail Pass, is valid for unlimited travel for seven to 90 days. It's available to foreign tourists in India. As well intending travellers can purchase tickets through select agents in foreign countries. India also has one

of the most extensive domestic airline networks in the world with three major carriers operating thousands of flights everyday.

Like Indian Railways, the domestic carriers also issue unlimited air travel passes of varying durations. They also offer various promotional fares for travel in specific regions of India and the subcontinent and concessions to youths and senior citizens travelling on their networks. Meanwhile, the Indian road network is one of the largest in the world. About 14,00,000 km of road connects major cities, towns and even villages.

Road travel has been made more popular with the addition of comfortable coach tours to important tourist centres.

Tourists wanting to venture beyond the tourist cities in search of rural India can easily, safely and inexpensively do so. But road travel by public bus isn't speedy, as the crowded roads are also frequented by other buses, cars, bicycles, bullock carts and wandering cows! ❧



The Addicts Golfing Society of Southern India

Easy Does It

There is a lot about golf in India that stands apart, but one true example is the motto of The Addicts Golfing Society of Southern India—Easy Does It.

With Prohibition in force in Madras (now Chennai) during 1948, those wishing to take a drink of alcohol had to fill out a form declaring themselves to be self-confessed addicts, which then allowed them a restricted permit. This permit status then allowed the golfers of Madras to still entertain their fellow golfers from Bangalore, who did not suffer the same restrictions on their social drinking and were loathe to come all the way to Madras, play golf then go home without a 19th-hole visit.

The annual matches between Bangalore Golf Club and Madras Gymkhana Club (The Interclub Match trophy) commenced in 1878 (travel by

horseback with clubs), are, to our knowledge, the longest running golf match in the world and involve both home and away matches each year.

Established in June of 1949 by R.C. Patterson (Fat Pat), The Addicts Golfing Society of Southern India has grown from being a social golf group, reacting to the needs of its community, to a strong force that has promoted golf throughout South India and inspired a golfing camaraderie unique in this part of the world.

A social visit to the home of G.S. Vijay Reddi, in Bangalore, with B.S. Patel gave a better insight into the Addicts. Vijay was Captain of the Society in 1999 and was also “Scribe” (Secretary and taker of the minutes) for five years. B.S. Patel was Captain of Bangalore Golf Club from 1996 to 1999 and involved in both Addicts and KGA (Karnataka Golf Association).

Top right: Addicts B.S. Patel and G.S. Vijay Reddi discuss their next golf excursion.
Top: The founder of the Addicts Golfing Society of Southern India, R.C. Patterson was known as 'Fat Pat' to his friends.
Above: A typical newsletter published by the Addicts.



Whilst the primary aim of the society was always (and still is) promotion of golf through social interaction they have a serious side and have sponsored local caddies, raised funds for golf course improvements, and through their travelling tournaments brought together the golf courses of southern India. The Addicts hold regular tournaments at Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Mysore, Ooty, Coimbatore, Kochi and Kodaikanal golf courses and today the main problem is dealing with the number of golfers wishing to take part.

With the society being founded as a response to Prohibition we are not surprised to hear in the stories a constant return to social activities reminding of the Addicts' motto. Trophies traditionally were filled with social liquid by the winner of a meet and tradition dictated that those they passed it to had to then drink from the cup.

As a bit of a joke one such trophy for the lowest score was donated and the winner found himself with an English water closet (toilet), wrapped in brown paper. Not to be outdone the winner removed the wrapping and used it to stopper the hole, filled it with beer and then proceeded to pass it around, as the



tradition prevailed, and he had the last laugh.

Soon after this event it became customary to present the lowest score with a wood spoon. We wonder why!

As many of the original Addicts were expatriate Englishmen, the society used to have

an annual meet at Seaford Golf Club, in Essex, England, where toasts were raised to both the President of India and the Queen of England. Although this English meet is no longer in existence, the society, at its Madras annual dinner, still toasts both the President of India and the Queen of England and this is done purely in respect to tradition.

Tradition is strong within the society, and members proudly wear the Addicts ties, sing the Addicts song and maintain the original rules laid down by those who acknowledged they were addicted to golf. ⚡

The Addicts Song

*I'm a Member of the Addicts
And Golf is my Game,
I cannot chip, I cannot putt
But I play it just the same.
I play not for the glory,
I play not for the Cup,
I play for what's inside it,
I hope there'll be enough.*



Top left: The Addicts founder, R.C. Patterson, made his last visit to India at Bangalore Golf Club in 1979.

Above: The golf courses played by members of the society in South India.



Chikmagalur, Karnataka

Chikmagalur Golf Club



Top: The Western Ghats spread out behind the 396-yard third hole. **Above:** Finish playing the 365-yard ninth and then relax in the clubhouse.

While Baba Budan, a Muslim saint from South India, was on a pilgrimage to Mecca, he came across a stimulating black beverage that was popular with local people, coffee. When he returned to India around 1670 AD he was carrying seven coffee seeds with him, which he planted in a hilly area near Chikmagalur, now a prosperous town of some 1,00,000 residents in southern Karnataka.

Cradled by the lush-green undulations of the Bababudangiri Range, Chikmagalur is the home of Indian coffee. Coffee, or more specifically the Arabica variety, is still grown on consolidated plantations located between 3500 and 5500 feet in the Bababudangiri Range. At 6320 feet, Muleyangiri is the tallest mountain in the blue haze accented range and the loftiest peak in the state.

More than 60 per cent of the nation's

coffee, in fact, is produced in Karnataka. A massive 90 per cent of India's total production comes from this southern state, neighbouring Kerala, to the west, and Tamil Nadu, to the east.

While coffee was cultivated here for several hundred years, British planters moved into the Baba Budan area and the nearby Coorg district in the 1840s, intent upon commercialising the commodity. In the verdant jade hills, popular today with adventurous trekkers, paragliding aficionados and wildlife enthusiasts, the British established viable coffee, tea and spice plantations.

As the affluence of British planters increased, so did their desire to create more homely comforts. In 1887 they built the Kadur Club so they had someplace to gather for social functions after a long day in their estates. With gin and tonics in hand, planters



Left: The Chikmagalur clubhouse opened in early 2004.
Above: The 153-yard fifth hole is accented with a single hazard.

would congregate by the still-existing massive teak bar to discuss the weather, the price of coffee and a far more important topic for some, golf.

At the time they could only talk about golf because opportunities to play the game were limited. The sole course of note to play was the circa-1876 Bangalore Golf Club. Ardent local players did occasionally go the distance, but the journey was long and golf-minded members of Kadur Club held dreams of their own course.

The boundless enthusiasm and tireless energy that true golfers have for their beloved game should never be underestimated. An outstanding example of this is the fervent group of tea planters and golf addicts in Chikmagalur who banded together to buy a 56-acre former potato farm just outside the town as the first step towards establishing their own playing field.

Pacific Coast Design was contacted to master-plan a nine-hole course of quality into the isolated plot at the foot of Churcheguda, a series of small hillocks that branch off from the main Bababudangiri Range.

The result is a 3030-yard ribbon of green with fairways of Calcutta Doog and greens of Malaysian Tifdwarf. Jacaranda and acacia trees planted before the course was opened in March 2002, however, are yet to mature before they can provide shade to the 240 locals who play golf for most of the year and up to 50 or so visitors who come for a round each month during the tourist season.

While walk-ins can usually be accommodated it's best to call the course supervisor and advise the number of players so caddies can be organised.

Players tee off from the 357-yard first, which is located to the left of the sophisticated clubhouse. Though this hole has a fine perspective of the dry hills in the distance the view from the signature fifth is far superior.

Finish your game before the sun sets and then listen to the call of the wild. As darkness descends the cry of barking deer and the grunt of wild boar reverberating over the course is yet another reminder of untamed wilderness so close to this little sporting oasis. ⚡

TEE TIPS

CHIKMAGALUR GOLF CLUB
 KM Road

Karadhihally Kaval

Chikmagalur 577 101

Enquiries: Tel.: (91) 98441
 87020 (mobile)

E-mail:

chikmagalurgolfclub@yahoo.com

Play: Rs 500 for 18 holes.

Club Rental: Rs 250.

Caddie: Rs 100.

Course: 9 holes, par 35, 3030 yards—men; 5442 yards—ladies. A second set of tees for men is in play for a 5751-yard game.

Stay: In addition to four double rooms near the clubhouse, Taj Garden Retreat, Tel.: (8262) 220 404, has 29 rooms set on a landscaped ridge overlooking Chikmagalur.





6 GREEN: TIGER TRAIL
MAINTAINED BY
MSR BIOTECH AGRO INPUTS PVT. LTD.

MANUFACTURERS OF
NEEM BLENDED
"GOKULA"
GRANULATED FERTILISERS
OFFICE: NO 1 BANGALORE ROAD AND WEST POST BANGALORE
PHONE NO. 8867706, 8867705 FAX: 886 30164

The 340-yard sixth hole is called "Tiger Trails" because a striped creature was seen near here in the mid 1990s.



Mysore

The Heritage City

Mysore offers an unforgettable lesson in heritage and culture. The former capital of the Wadiyar Kingdom attracts domestic and foreign visitors eager to see an extensive range of temples, palaces and historic buildings.

As well, they enjoy a distinctly different South Indian city that's not only manageable in size but due to its 770-metre elevation has a pleasant climate.

The absolute stand-out attraction is the striking Mysore Palace, one of the largest and grandest in India. Built during 1897 to 1912

in lavish Indo-Saracenic style, the palace dominates the city skyline.

Among the numerous treasures are the Golden Royal Elephant Throne, encrusted with diamonds, paintings, stained glass and ornate palace interiors.

Leave time, however, to explore the 325-metre-high Chamundi Hill, which can be seen from virtually any place in the city. Some visitors make the ascent purely for the wonderful view over Mysore; others are on a pilgrimage to the 2000-year-old Chamundeshwari Temple.

While an excursion to Chamundi Hill takes only a few hours, Mysore is an excellent base for longer outings. Farther away, but still only 60 km from Mysore, is Nagarhole National Park. Go on safari to view elephant, tiger and other wildlife.

When night comes, retire to the Kabini River Lodge and enjoy the cosy comforts of an award-winning eco-resort, perfectly positioned on the banks of the River Cauvery. *!*



Top: A statue of Maharaja Wadiyar stands before the Passing Parade in the central city.

Above: Dating to 1912, the magnificent Mysore Palace was the seat of the maharajahs.

TRAVEL TIPS

Access: Just 140 km west of Bangalore, Mysore is easily reached by road and rail.

Stay: The heritage property Lalitha Mahal Palace, Tel.: (821) 257 1265, is near the JW Golf Course. There is a good pool at the Quality Inn Southern Star, Tel.: (821) 242 6426.

Shop: Silk fabrics and sandalwood products are popular purchases.



Mysore, Karnataka

Jayachamaraja Wadiyar Golf Club

Nestling in the foothills of the famous Chamundi Hill, JW Mysore Golf Course is located on 110 acres in the premises of the Mysore Race Club. It was the Late Maharaja Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar, who, with farsightedness and a sense of scenic beauty, chose this locale in 1906 for the race and golf courses.

Racing, golf and polo were patronised by the royal family, British dignitaries and service officers stationed at Mysore. With equipment constraints and limited patronage, golf was perhaps played leisurely and with no apparent inconvenience.

In 1993 the club approached Pacific Coast Design, which was engaged to redesign the golf course and create greens and proper fairways. The new course was inaugurated by His Excellency Sri Khurshed Alam Khan, the Governor of Karnataka, on 6th July 1996.

In 1998 the club purchased 3.5 acres of land beside the course for a clubhouse. The first phase was inaugurated in early 2000 and it had a modern kitchen, restaurant, bar and lounging areas. In 2002, a new office, bag storage and toilet block was built at the first hole. A pro shop was constructed by Golfware India at the clubhouse premises and then construction of residential rooms was taken up in 2003 at the Club.

Today the JW Golf Club has over nine hundred members and is still growing. There are over 200 members on the handicap list. It has produced players of top amateur status, and Rahul Ganapathy became in 2000 the first Indian from the south to win the All India Amateur Championship in its 99-year history.

The club, like most in India, is very welcoming to visitors and you should really enjoy your stay. ⌘



Left: A selection of only a few of the many great trees at JWGC.

Above: Moonrise over the JWGC course is a magical time.

TEE TIPS

JAYACHAMARAJA WADIYAR
GOLF CLUB

Race Course Road
Mysore 570 010

Enquiries: Tel.: (821) 244 5103.

Play: Rs 200!

Handicap card required.

Club Rental: Rs 200.

Caddie: Rs 100 per 18 holes.

Course: 18 holes, par 70,
6010 yards.



Top: Anna Salai passes in front of the Thousand Lights Mosque. **Above:** Fort St George houses many architectural reminders of early colonial Chennai.

Charms of Chennai

Few cities in India have a single thoroughfare that connects a multitude of places from its long and glorious past. Chennai is an exception and you'll find out why when you springboard along Anna Salai, its 'highway of history'.

Meenambakkam International Airport is at the southwestern end of this much-used highway still known as Mount Road. At its northeastern point the roadway ends in the congested, yet colourful, core of the city still widely called Madras.

Although Mount Road spans a mere 13 km you'll cross the centuries as you pass places that have been interlinked by the highway of history to form one of India's most historically diverse cities.

The major arterial road of 6.5 million-strong Madras, Mount Road, is named for St Thomas Mount, a 76-metre-high hill fronting the thoroughfare on the 'city' side of the airport where the Apostle, who is

believed to have brought Christianity to South India, was pierced to death around 72 AD.

The site of his martyrdom is now a centre of pilgrimage for devotees who throng Our Lady of Expectation, a church built by the Portuguese in 1523.

The mortal remains of the doubting disciple—decreed the Apostle of India—are housed in the San Thome Basilica, a grand building located in suburban Mylapore, just off the highway of history.

Another brief detour beyond Mount Road is also well worth the effort. Weighing 2700 tonnes and standing 33 metres high the Valluvar Kottam memorial was hand-hewn from solid granite in the shape of a giant chariot. It is dedicated to the memory of the renowned Tamil saint, philosopher and poet. Thirukkural, who in 1,330 *kurals*, or stanzas, eloquently presented an anthology on philosophy, wealth and love.



Left: Many trains for South India leave from the beautiful Egmore Station.

Above: Ladies in Chennai are fond of wearing flowers in their hair.

The grounds where the monument is located are a peaceful place to relax and ponder over the past before diving back into the history of Madras.

Back on Mount Road, past the Cosmo-TNGF Golf Course and the Gemini Flyover, traffic is heavier and public buses are fuller. As commuters are often headed north towards the airport side of the city or south to its central business district, few get off at the Thousand Lights Mosque, an overlooked architectural gem that fronts the roadway. A thousand (or more) lights once decorated the religious buildings that were constructed around 1800.

From here on, most of the structures along Mount Road take on a more contemporary look. Many are occupied by travel agencies, airline offices, cinemas, restaurants and tourist shops.

Here and there, amid plate glass and steel giants, are a few colonial gems like Higginbothams, the largest bookshop in the city, and the office of *The Hindu*, the highly respected English daily.

Beyond these reminders of the Raj, over a bridge and on to the Fort, located on a man-made island, is the end of Mount Road. Madras was established in 1642 as the British East India Company's initial trading station on the Coromandel coast. Construction of Fort St George, the first bastion of British rule in India, started eight years later.

While many vestiges of the early colonial era remain, like St Mary's, the oldest Anglican Church in India, and Wellesley House, the home of Col. Arthur Wellesley, who later became the Duke of Wellington, the Fort now houses the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly and Council and offices of the State's Secretariat.

Linger in the Fort amid the shadows of the past, delve into neighbouring pedestrian-packed and vehicle-clogged Georgetown with its maze of streets and hotchpotch of dwellings or venture back again along the highway of history turning still more pages in the never ending story of Madras. ✎

TRAVEL NOTEBOOK

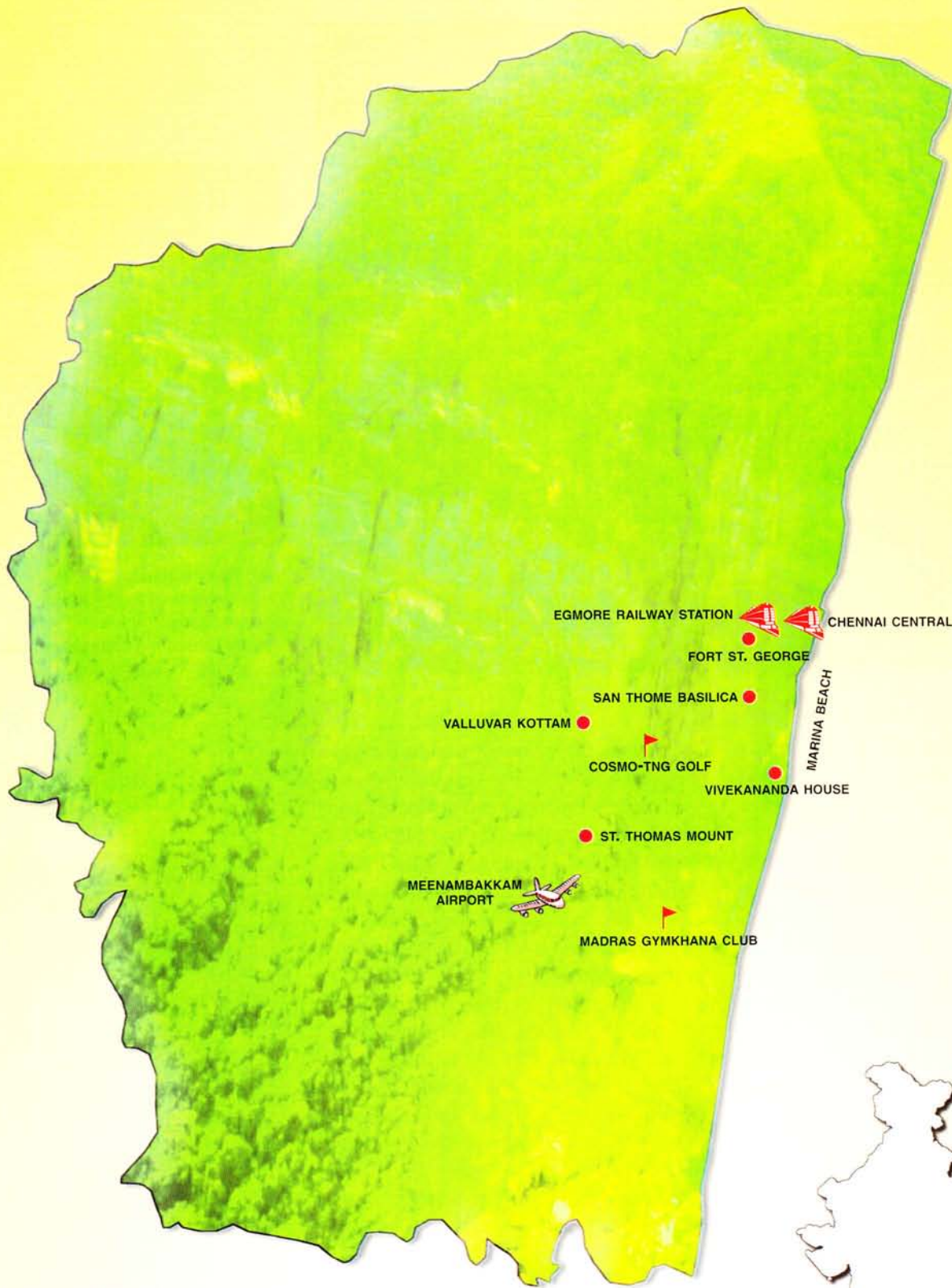
Access: The Kamaraj Domestic Terminal and adjoining Anna International Terminal are 16 km from central Chennai. Prepaid taxis and coach services are available.

Stay: There's a wide choice of accommodation, including Taj Coromandel, Tel.: (44) 2825 710 and Taj Connemara, Tel.: (44) 2852 0123.

Action: The city's nightlife has improved in recent years with the opening of pubs and clubs in leading hotels.

Shop: Anna Salai, from Thousand Lights to *The Hindu* office, has a concentration of shops, including Spencers' Plaza, the biggest mall in the city.

Info: India Tourism Chennai, 154 Anna Salai (opposite Spencers' Plaza), Tel.: (44) 2846 0285.



EGMORE RAILWAY STATION CHENNAI CENTRAL

FORT ST. GEORGE

SAN THOME BASILICA

VALLUVAR KOTTAM

COSMO-TNG GOLF

VIVEKANANDA HOUSE

ST. THOMAS MOUNT



MEENAMBAKKAM AIRPORT

MADRAS GYMKHANA CLUB

MARINA BEACH



CHENNAI

	GOLF COURSE
	PLACES OF INTEREST

Map not to scale.
Only for illustration purpose.



Chennai, Tamil Nadu


Madras Gymkhana Club

First-time golfers marching down the fairways and parading across the greens of the Madras Gymkhana's pancake-flat golf course do not realise that they are treading in the footsteps of history.

Established as a trading post, Madras became a British stronghold by the middle of the 18th century. The British Army trained in a large area well north of the central city. The scene shifted from marching to racing and golfing in 1886 when club officials authorised a course and

encircled it with a track.

Enhanced over the years since then, the par-70, 6667-yard course remains entrenched with the 2400-metre-long oval of the Guindy Race Course. One of the oldest golf grounds in the state, the Gymkhana's fully turfed 18-hole course is flat and fast, with occasional intersecting fairways, elevated tee boxes and sloping greens.

While there is not even a single tree to affect play, the breeze off the nearby Bay of Bengal is one variable that has to be factored into every game. As the course receives only around 50 to 60 players a day it's not difficult to walk in for a weekday game. (Call a day or two in advance if weekend play is planned.) The hole to watch out for is the index-one, par-four fifth, but not on race days when the entire course is temporarily out of bounds. Otherwise, prized horses would be moving hazards! 



Top left: Players prepare for a 426-yard challenge on the ninth.
Above: The Gymkhana course is flat and encircled by a race track.
Below: The flower-festooned putting green is always busy.

TEE TIPS

MADRAS GYMKHANA CLUB GOLF ANNEXE

Race Club, Guindy, Chennai 600 030

Enquiries: Tel.: (44) 2223 0093

E-mail: gymkhana@md4.vsnl.net.in

Play: Weekdays, Rs 300; weekends Rs 500.

Club Rental: Rs 150.

Caddie: Rs 100.

Course: 18 holes, par 70, 6667 yards—men; 5585 yards—ladies.

Stay: The golf course is about 5 km from the 205-room Taj Coromandel, Tel.: (44) 2827 2827.





Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Cosmo-TNGF Golf



Top: Opened in 1938, the clubhouse was a gift from the Maharajah of Travancore.
Above: A bevy of grounds keepers ensures the course's fully turfed greens are well-tended.

Madras has a history dating back several thousand years. The city, officially gazetted as Chennai, was, however, founded only in 1642 as the British East India Company's initial trading station on the Coromandel coast.

Many centuries before Madras became the first British foothold in the Indian subcontinent the independent villages of Mylapore, Triplicane and Tiruvottiyur, seaside suburbs that have since been amalgamated into India's fourth largest city, were important centres of religion, culture and trade.

Through these rudimentary ports local kings traded with Persia, Africa, China and Ceylon in the 11th century. After months of sailing treacherous seas in primitive craft the returning sailors would unload their precious cargo on crude wharves.

As centuries passed, conditions improved. Eventually multi-masted British clipper ships began to ply sea lanes between England and the increasingly prosperous port town of Madras. They were still loaded to the brim, but in the late 19th century valued payloads included golf sticks.

As British influence spread so did their propensity for the great game of golf. It was said that wherever flat land was available and grass would grow, the British would build a golf course! There are notable instances, however, where neither of these principles was observed, particularly in quaint little outposts in the hills of North and South India.

The first course the British built in what has since become the state capital of Tamil Nadu was laid out inside a race track in suburban Guindy in 1886.



Left: Cosmo's enthusiastic committee has worked tirelessly to upgrade its course.

Above: Chennai's strong sun necessitates that golfers seek extra protection.

The second course was originally known as the Cosmopolitan Club's Golf Annexe. Still in use today, the Travancore Pavilion was inaugurated by the Viceroy, the Governor-General and a host of local dignitaries on January 15, 1938.

Still referred to as the Cosmo—and known only by that name to many taxi drivers—the late Raj-era course has, in more recent years, been taken under the wing of the Tamil Nadu Golf Federation to become known as Cosmo-TNGF Golf.

So what do golfers find after the brief drive along Chennai's highway of history (see previous story) to suburban Nandanam? The answer is a slightly undulating 18-hole layout with two large water hazards and mature tamarind trees. Birdlife abounds, while deer are sometimes seen cavorting in scrub lands on the periphery of the course.

The modern course is courtesy of Peter Thomson, who undertook a major redesign some years back. The Cosmo's very enthusiastic committee has also put in many

long hours to upgrade the veteran. Offering a revamped course, the club has been able to attract many more playing members, though it's easy for walk-in visitors to get a weekday game.

The front-nine fairways are rather tight, but there are a few other surprises. One is a tough 310-yard opening hole that dog-legs left around a water tank.

The back-nine holes, in contrast, open out to provide relief to poor scoring golfers. Players need to be especially alert on the closing hole. After a good attempt at a hole-in-one on the 165-yard 17th—this hole, as well as the eighth and the 13th, has recorded the most aces—it's onto the 18th, which shares a common fairway with the first.

Theoretically it's possible for golfers, who have teed off at opposite ends of the common fairway, to have balls collide after perfectly coordinated second shots. That rather improbable event hasn't happened yet and the odds are rather high that it never will! ❧

TEE TIPS

COSMO-TNGF GOLF
334 Anna Salai, Nandanam
Chennai 600 015

Enquiries: Tel.: (44) 2435 9687

E-mail: tngf@vsnl.com

Website:

www.cosmopolitanclubchennai.com

Play: Rs 350 a day.

Caddie: Rs 75.

Course: 18 holes, par 72, 6289 yards—men; 5444 yards—ladies. Only members and guests can play on weekends.

Stay: Taj Coromandel on M.G. Road, Tel.: (44) 2827 2827 is the closer of two Taj hotels to Cosmo. Taj Connemara, Tel.: (44) 2852 0123, is adjacent to the massive Spencer Plaza, the largest shopping mall in South India.



Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu

Coimbatore Golf Club



Top: Coimbatore's opening hole spans 390 yards to a sloping green.

Above: The idyllic setting around the 13th is a favourite with many players.

Foreign tourists rarely linger on in Coimbatore. All too often they are in transit, as the third largest city in the state of Tamil Nadu is well linked by air, road and rail to other places of interest in South India.

If they do stop, more often than not it's to change trains or buses for onward journeys. Most visitors head off to the British-built hill stations of Coonoor and Udthagamandalam, two popular outposts with 18-hole golf courses of distinction.

Other adventurers seek tiger as they travel through dense jungle to the 1400-metre-high Indira Gandhi National Park and Annamalai Wildlife Sanctuary. Though facilities are basic at best in this isolated place it has rare flora, exceptional fauna and intense natural beauty.

Coimbatore is far better equipped to cater to visitors, but most are domestic

business travellers dealing in textiles.

Blessed with rich hinterland soil and an advantageous climate, this area has been under cotton cultivation since the second century. It wasn't until 1888, however, that the British built the first textile mill. Today there are more than a hundred mills in this flourishing million-strong city known as the "Manchester of Tamil Nadu".

As prosperity grew so did the desire for sophisticated sporting facilities. A golf enthusiast could only dream of a course in Coimbatore, though.

Ardent players had to travel to tee off on fields of green. There were, of course, turfed tracts in the hills plus other courses in Chennai, Bangalore and Mysore.

It was at the 19th hole on one of these courses that the idea of forming a golf club in Coimbatore was first proposed. The suggestion became a reality in 1977 when



Left: The trimmed practice area beyond the clubhouse is often busy.

Above: The 601-yard 10th hole is tough, but beautifully landscaped.

Coimbatore Golf Club was registered with 20 members. The membership fee was Rs 250!

While this was a golf club without a golf course, the members realised that if the game was to grow it was necessary to have a coach to instruct local people.

A renowned instructor was obtained, but a coach without a practice range, let alone a course, was of little use. So a small parcel of land was leased in the heart of the city and a few holes were randomly laid out without much thought other than the joy of the game.

Resolute members, however, weren't satisfied; they wanted a properly planned course of their own. Subsequently a 120-acre plot, about an hour outside the city, was purchased. The owner must have been overjoyed to sell because he had struggled to grow crops!

Club members were equally ecstatic because at last they had enough space to construct an 18-hole championship layout. They didn't however, have the resources for such an ambitious project, so

the course had to be undertaken in stages.

The priority was to create an enviable course. This has most certainly been achieved because a sprinkler system for the fairways of local grass and the greens of California Blue Grass has turned desolate land into a golf haven.

The first nine holes were laid out amid coconut, neem and Tamara trees in 1985. One of the most difficult holes on the front-nine is the tricky 180-yard, par-three fourth, which features a narrow fairway and four bunkers surrounding the green.

The second nine holes, which are visited by peacocks, rabbits and the occasional snake, came on line five years later. Planning hasn't stopped, as there is now a proposal to build a clubhouse with a swimming pool, health club, and tennis and squash courts.

The silver jubilee of Coimbatore Golf Club was not just a celebration of longevity. A committee was also formed to raise funds and ensure the continued prosperity of this dream club. ¶

TEE TIPS

COIMBATORE GOLF CLUB
Chettipalayam,
Coimbatore 641 201

Enquiries: Tel (422) 265 5258
E-mail:

coimbatoregolfclub@yahoo.com

Play: Rs 500.

Club Rental: Rs 200.

Caddie: Rs 75.

Handicap card required.

Course: 18 holes, par 72,
6973 yards—men; 5930
yards—ladies.

Stay: There is a selection of quality hotels, including the Residency, Tel.: (422) 220 1234, and the Hotel City Tower, Tel.: (422) 223 0681.

Golf Extra: Take an excursion to the nearby cool Nilgiris. In addition to scenic and historic delights there are highland golf courses located in Wellington near Coonoor and at Udhagamandalam (Ooty).





The area's normally arid conditions are a challenge to course maintenance.



Wellington, Tamil Nadu

Wellington Gymkhana

The Western Ghats is a formidable mountain range that stretches some 1400 km from north of Mumbai, across the states of Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka and Kerala, to almost India's southernmost tip in Tamil Nadu. Thickly covered with lush tropical and temperate forests, this largely still-untouched expanse of wilderness shelters shy tribal people as well as rare plants and exotic animals.

The British found the climate and conditions to offer a refreshing and tranquil respite from the heat and crowds of the plains, so they developed a series of sylvan hill stations. In Tamil Nadu, the British built three towns along a spur of the Western Ghats, known as the Nilgiri Hills.

The most developed hill station in the Nilgiris has the tongue twisting name of Udhagamandalam. Fortunately, most people still call the 2240-metre-high 'Queen of Hill

Stations', Ootacamund or just plain Ooty. Not far away is tiny Kotagiri, the oldest and quietest forested retreat. Then there's Coonoor, the closest hill station to Coimbatore and the plains.

A railway link was built to connect the three centres with the plains. Part of the journey still uses coal-fired steam engines!

Well positioned on a prominent ridge of the Nilgiris, 1850-metre-high Coonoor developed as a town for civilians. Nearby Wellington, on the other hand, remains a military cantonment area that began in the mid-19th century.

While flat land is rare in such hilly environs, a suitable site was found and a recreational area was cleared from the jungle. Initially the field was used as a race course as well as a marching ground. Golf came into the picture at the turn of the 20th century, and the name Wellington Gymkhana was used for the



Top: There are few obstructions on the final few flat holes.

Above: Tea plantation workers pluck the bushes just beyond the third.



first time in 1916.

By the 1930s the cosy little club, secluded in the bosom of the Nilgiris was a hotbed of tennis and golf. It still is, but because of its remoteness few foreign players take to the tees at the Gymkhana.

Tourists are welcome to play golf, however. No handicap card is required, as this is not a commercial course and the fairways, clubhouse and tennis courts are laid out on land belonging to the Indian Army.

You will need to ask for permission from the chief executive of the Gymkhana Club before proceeding to the course. Most likely the start of your game will be delayed as a suave executive, most likely a retired Army officer, serves tea and tells tales about the unique



course. With pleasantries exchanged and mindful of the club's high standards and its long traditions, you will be eager to tee off.

The par-five signature first hole encapsulates the 'spirit' of the Gymkhana with a sweeping view of the rustic clubhouse to the left, the pine-clad and wildlife-rich hills, which unfold well beyond the first green and a jade-green tea garden, to the right.

There's a closer view of the latter at the second because the elevated tee box is semicircled with hardy tea bushes.

As you putt across the Blue Grass greens—the third and 14th share common turf as do the first and 13th—there might be a temporary halt in play.

Occasionally a helicopter, with senior military personnel on-board, uses a corner of the course. On other days, play is curtailed for a few hours if the name of the game is polo.

Usually, though, you'll have an unhindered and unforgettable game in the hills. Relax and reflect after concluding your round with a nice cup of Nilgiri tea that could well have come from the picturesque plantation opposite the course.

Left: The drive through the Nilgiris is unforgettable.

Above: Is it 'tee off' or 'tea off' at Gymkhana's 351-yard second hole?

Below: Past the double green used for the first and 13th is tea and then forest.

TEE TIPS

WELLINGTON GYMKHANA CLUB
Wellington (Nilgiris) 643 231

Enquiries: Tel.: (423) 223 0254

E-mail: wgc@sigy.com

Play: Rs 200 for 18 holes.

Club Rental: Rs 125.

Caddie: Rs 50.

Closed Mondays.

Course: 18 holes, par 69, 5960 yards—men; 5091 yards—ladies.

Golf Extra: It's just 18 km north to the Ootacamund Gymkhana Club. The 18-hole 6207-yard course has been a fixture on the golf circuit in Southern India since 1895.



Golf in South India

Southern Tees

With its predominately tropical climate, jade-green rice paddies, palm-bordered beaches, intimate hill stations—developed by the British more than a century ago, rich cultural heritage and hospitable people, South India is a well-defined holiday and sports getaway.

A peninsula flanked by great seas, South India embraces the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and tiny Pondicherry, a former French colony. As well, the island state of Lakshadweep is also an integral part of the appealing southern region. Like Pondicherry it welcomes tourists, but it, too, lacks golfing facilities.

In addition to courses of standing in Bangalore, Chikmagalur, Mysore, Chennai, Coimbatore and Wellington, visiting players can enjoy a glorious game at other noteworthy courses spread across the diverse

terrain of the South.

For scenic beauty it's hard to surpass the 18-hole playing field at the Ootacamund Gymkhana Club, because it's accented by a blue haze that hovers over the Nilgiris. (The evaporation of oil droplets from Eucalyptus trees is responsible for the mist.)

Tamil Nadu's fashionable hill station of Ootacamund, better known as Ooty, is easily accessible by road or rail from Coimbatore. The town's British-initiated golf course, in fact, is only 18 km uphill from the one they established in Wellington.

Situated at an altitude of 2316 metres, the course, built in 1895 over 192 sloping acres, is the second highest in India. (Only the Gulmarg Golf Course, at 2681 metres, is higher.)

The first hole really gets you in the mood for what's ahead, as play is downhill for nearly 575 yards. Along the way you'll see towering



Top: An old pump house is the landmark feature at Trivandrum Golf Club.

Above: Coral Garden Golf Link, outside Port Blair, is one of India's most isolated courses.



oaks, rhododendrons, firs and short Scottish grass, called gorse, with the even more wooded spur of the Nilgiris as the backdrop.

The background at the Hyderabad Golf Association's new golf course couldn't be more different. Instead of hazy mountains, this still-being-developed course is set over 50 acres outside Naya Quila, a part of the 16th-century Golconda Fort complex and 110 acres within the compound.

A driving range and three holes are currently available for play. The remaining 15 holes are expected to be constructed during 2005-6.


Hyderabad is a busy city, with a population exceeding 5.5 million. The sparsely populated Coorg district, in Karnataka, in contrast, is a tranquil tract the British fondly called the "Scotland of India". British planters established the coffee industry as well as a series of rustic nine-hole courses.

On most early mornings and late weekday afternoons a group of ardent locals gather for a friendly game at Mercara Downs Golf Club, a rural sports retreat located outside Madikeri, the district's small and quiet capital.

While some forest has made way for pasture lands there is still raw jungle around the nine-hole course, where a second set of tees comes into play to create a par-66, 4977-metre challenge.

The best view of uninterrupted wilderness is to be seen from the hilltop-hugging seventh tee. The panorama of jungle and plantation unfolds to a horizon highlighted by the purple silhouette of the Western Ghats, the spiny mountain range that snakes through this part of the country.

As entrancing as the scene may be, another worthy layout awaits in neighbouring Kerala State. Trivandrum Golf Club's striking clubhouse exemplifies the state's distinctive architecture. It's a fitting introduction to a par-34, 2645-yard course that was squeezed into a 27-acre strip.

Pay particular attention to the pump house located midway down the 273-yard first fairway. Originally known as the Maharaja's Well, this structure straddled the source of water for a garden course established by the royal family of Travancore in the 1850s. 



Left: The blue haze of the Nilgiris adds a special charm to the Ooty Gymkhana Course.

Above: Kerala's distinct architecture is seen in Trivandrum Golf Club's striking clubhouse.



Southern Comforts

Houseboats and Ayurveda

For centuries, bulky barges, laden with rice, spices, coir (coconut fibre), timber and copra (dried coconut kernel), criss-crossed an interconnected watery highway in southwestern India. Poled by one or two men these wooden wonders were manoeuvred along a 900-km network of waterways.

As the road system in the state of Kerala developed, trucks replaced the venerable country craft. *Kettuvallom*, as these keel-less wooden barges are called, were relegated to an uncertain future until an innovative plan was devised to utilise them as comfortable tourist transport.

Alappuzha, or Alleppey, as the “Venice of the East” is still generally known, is the hub of houseboat activity, with around 125 canopied barges transporting leisure-minded visitors through the area’s vast

labyrinth of backwaters.

On arrival, guests are greeted by smiling attendants. Fluent in English they serve refreshments at any time and dish out local specialities at mealtimes on board your 20-metre-long floating hotel.

During your stay you’ll slowly cruise through lovely canals and past palms and paddies, where the everyday staple is cultivated in fields located below water level. Dykes, made of pounded earth, hold back the water and ensure that fertile areas remain productive.

Every now and then, you’ll see another floating hotel, equipped with modern en suite facilities, gas stove, icebox and battery lighting, glide past.

The unhurried pace of life on-board a houseboat—a mirror of the sedate scene seen throughout much of Kerala—massages the mind and soothes the soul.



Top: Houseboats meander through Kerala’s tranquil waterways.

Above: Excellent accommodation, gourmet meals and Ayurvedic treatments have earned Somatheeram numerous awards.



Left: Day's end on the beaches south of Thiruvananthapuram is a much-photographed event.
Above: Mohiniyattam, Kerala's enchanting dance form, reflects the gentle nature of the state.

In fact, houseboat getaways have become the state's main tourist draw card. They are now virtually synonymous with this southern state's pleasures.

Travellers seeking solutions to life's more finite problems, however, gravitate to another unique aspect of Kerala. They equate the state with the natural healing powers of Ayurveda, the knowledge of life and the science of divine healing.

Ayurvedic physicians believe, and so do a growing number of followers from East and West, they can promote health in body, mind and soul by administering natural medications prepared from herbs, leaves, barks, roots and even stems of certain shrubs. Spices and, occasionally, even precious metals, like silver and gold in purified powdered form, are also included in the list of ingredients that go into making Ayurveda's miraculous medicines.

Such natural remedies, coupled with a stringent diet and daily mediated oil massages, have been credited with achieving some quite astounding and often otherwise unexplainable results for those experiencing stress or even more serious afflictions.

Though treatments are traditional, using timeless methods, they no longer need to be administered in rustic and often isolated surroundings. Ever since

Somatheeram Ayurvedic Beach Resort opened in 1992, comfort and convenience have been associated with the ancient practice of herbal healing.

The pioneer Ayurvedic resort in India, Somatheeram offers a different approach to a stress-free and healthy lifestyle by combining oil massages, diet, yoga and meditation in luxurious tropical surroundings. Ayurveda's premise is to make a positive change in a person's life.

Located south of Thiruvananthapuram, on its own beach headlands, Somatheeram is different from the other beach resorts in India. For instance, no other holiday getaway has a well-tended garden filled with over 600 varieties of Ayurvedic plants within sight of a 59-room heritage hotel set in 15 acres of terraced gardens.

Somatheeram has won not only the best Ayurvedic Centre Award from the Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala, for five years, but the resort and its more intimate neighbouring sister property, Manaltheeram, has been honoured with Green Leaf classification (the highest award given to an Ayurvedic centre) by Kerala's Department of Tourism.

Find out more by logging on to www.somatheeram.com as well as www.somahouseboats.com



Conserving Calcutta



Top: Spanning the Hooghly River, the Howrah Bridge is silhouetted against the setting sun.

Above: The circa-1872 High Court of West Bengal awaits urgent preservation measures.

The citizenry of colonial Calcutta must surely have been awestruck when a glistening architectural masterpiece was dedicated on a hot day in 1813. They had seen the majestic Town Hall being built for nearly a decade with money that had been raised through a public lottery instigated by Lord Wellesley, the then Governor-General of India and brother of the Duke of Wellington.

Far more than just a columned showpiece the building was used for many years as a place for public meetings and recreation by British and Bengalis alike. But while such activities were taking place in the foreground, maintenance wasn't being undertaken behind the scenes. The building's decline began virtually unnoticed and the condition of the Town Hall went from bad to worse.

During the 1990s, Homage Trust, a body of heritage conscious officials and

business people, began a fund-raising campaign committed to conserving the Town Hall. Today the still stunningly white completely refurbished building is again full of life.

It's also of tourist interest because it houses the state-of-the-art Calcutta Museum, a repository devoted to telling the story of a metropolis that has long since celebrated its tercentenary.

Job Charnock, of the East India Company, is credited with establishing the settlement in August 1690 when he sailed up the Hooghly and set up a factory in Kalikata. This small village was the namesake for Calcutta's current, but often ignored, official moniker of Kolkata.

While the Union Jack was first raised over Fort William, a defence built to protect the fledgling trading post, in 1702, it wasn't until 1757 when Robert Clive defeated Siraj-ud-daula, the Nawab of



Left: The tank at BBD Bagh used to be Calcutta's only source of drinking water.

Above: Kolkata has some 1350 buildings and sites listed on the city's heritage register.

Bengal, at the Battle of Plassey, that the decision to mould Calcutta into the capital of British India was taken. By 1772 much infrastructure was complete and Calcutta became a capital administered by the British East India Company.

Following the First War of Independence in 1857 and until 1911, when the decision was announced to transfer government headquarters to Delhi, Calcutta was the capital of the Raj. The city, which reached its architectural apex between 1780 and 1820, was ruled by the British Crown through a Governor-General and a Viceroy.

The surviving historic core of central Calcutta, known as BBD Bagh, is the focus of current conservation discussions. One organisation, Action Research in Conservation of Heritage (ARCH), a non-profit NGO dedicated to preserving Kolkata and West Bengal, has been involved in establishing the Dalhousie Square Heritage Zone.

The crowning achievement of British colonial architecture in Calcutta is located at the southern end of the Maidan, a cricket-

friendly patch in the centre of the huge city. The Victoria Memorial is a relatively newcomer to the city's diverse skyline, as it was the Prince of Wales, later George V, who laid the foundation stone in 1906. In 1921 Edward VII dedicated the largest monument to Queen Victoria outside Great Britain.

A century of grime was recently removed from the outside of this very beautiful building. On the inside, structural integrity has been restored through the untiring efforts of a battalion of specialists.

Far more visible, however, is the result of ongoing restoration efforts to preserve the priceless Raj-era art works on display in its much-visited galleries. Despite the fact that she never visited Calcutta the monument in white marble was erected to commemorate Queen Victoria's rule as Empress of India.

Though the solemn countenance portrayed in the statue fronting the Memorial disguises any emotion, Queen Victoria would undeniably be pleased that more and more architectural treasures in the 'second city of the British Empire' are being faithfully restored to their former glory. ¶

TRAVEL NOTEBOOK



Access: There are international and domestic terminals at Netaji Subhas Chandra Basu Airport, commonly called Dum Dum Airport. Prepaid taxis and airport coaches are available for the 22-km journey to the central city.

Stay: Accommodation in all-price categories is adequate, but tight during the peak season. A leading hotel is Taj Bengal, Tel.: (33) 2223 3939.

Action: While there are some pubs and clubs in larger hotels and on Park Street, Kolkata is devoted to the arts, with cultural events staged throughout the year.

Info: India Tourism Kolkata "Embassy", 4 Shakespeare Sarani, Tel.: (33) 2282 1402.



	GOLF COURSE
	PLACES OF INTEREST

Map not to scale.
Only for illustration purpose.

KOLKATA



Kolkata, West Bengal

Calcutta Ladies' Golf Club



Left: Calcutta Ladies' Golf Club has been a driving force in encouraging female players to take up the game.

Top: During the day trams regularly pass by the edge of the course and it's often trespassed by pedestrians!

Above: The cosy clubhouse is actually on wheels, though they have sunk into the ground!

While many golfers tee off on the 'power courses' at Royal Calcutta and Tollygunge Club, there's a third field of green that has also been a fixture on the city scene for well over a hundred years.

Neither as well-known nor as well-equipped as the other two 'players', Calcutta Ladies' Golf Club, nonetheless, has several distinguishing features that makes it unique not only in India but in the world.

Exasperated because they were not allowed to tee off at Royal or Tollygunge, a group of sports-minded ladies decided to form their own golf club in 1891.

They approached the local authorities, which allowed them to site a nine-hole course on a triangular patch of turf opposite Fort William provided they didn't construct any permanent structure on the Army land. This included a permanent clubhouse.

The nine-hole course promptly laid out that year was enthusiastically welcomed by all 12 members. The all-woman membership today is in hundreds.

Calcutta Ladies' is not only unique because it admits only women—men can play with permission and there are a few males on the administrative staff—but also because the quaint wooden clubhouse, in keeping with the Army's proviso, is on wheels!

After a game on the very flat course, where only the first green is slightly elevated and the eighth and ninth fairways parallel tram tracks, players gather to relax and discuss golf.

More likely than not, the topic is about a forthcoming tournament. Perhaps even more importantly, however, is the pioneering role this veteran club has taken to encourage more young female players to take to the tees.

TEE TIPS

CALCUTTA LADIES' GOLF CLUB
Casuarina Avenue
Kolkata 700 003

Enquiries: Tel (33) 2248 2404

Play: US \$5 for 18 holes.

Club Rental: US \$2.

Caddie: US \$1.

Course: 9 holes, par 34, 1822 yards. The same tees are played for the second round.



Kolkata, West Bengal

Royal Calcutta Golf Club

During your next dinner party, pose this sporty question to the assembled gaggle of trivia-hungry guests: Where is the second oldest golf club in the world? Unless you have invited a contingent of well-travelled golfers or a detachment of sports-trivia specialists, it's most unlikely that anyone would nominate Kolkata... or Calcutta, as India's second largest city is still known. But Kolkata, or Calcutta, it is!

Royal Calcutta Golf Club was, in fact, constituted in November 1829 at Dum Dum, a northeastern suburb of present-day Kolkata. A simple layout was plotted over flat lands, which have since become the international and domestic airport.

English gentlemen played the game in pristine rural environs until 1885, when the course was relocated to a vast expanse of green in the heart of the Imperial Capital,

the Maidan. Backdropped by the lavish-for-its-time Maidan Pavilion, the first Calcutta Cup was played the same year.

The commencement of construction of the Victoria Memorial—the largest monument to the Queen Empress of India outside the United Kingdom—in the Maidan in 1901 was a forerunner to yet another move. Work started on the third—and current—course in 1908 in the leafy South Calcutta suburb of Tollygunge. It opened with considerable fanfare in 1910.

During a visit to the city in 1911 King George V and Queen Mary conferred the title 'Royal' to what was already an institution in its own right. All 18 holes were in play by the following year. As the popularity of the game spread, another 18-hole course was built by RCGC.

Royal remained India's only 36-hole course until 1972 when due to high



Top: Well-matured trees line much of the length of the 362-yard 16th fairway.

Above: The Royal Calcutta Golf Club emblem is emblazoned on the front gate.



Left: Take a breather at the refreshment stall near the 10th hole.

Above: The 194-yard 13th has been an easy ace for a number of players.

maintenance costs half of the club's real estate was sold. Today 18 fairways wind through 179 acres of prime property in one of the most desirable sectors of the metropolis.

The modern course you'll play—weekday access is easy unless it's tournament time—is far superior to the one that opened with flourish so long ago.

A succession of committees made change after change. In 2002 Peter Thomson completed a major upgrade. Although his mission was to redesign fairways, reshape greens and create five tee positions that range from 7014 yards for power hitters to 5727 yards for 'pussy cats' the course retains much of its original character.

The most conspicuous features, apart from thousands of trees and shrubs that were planted on the former paddy field, are several strategically located water tanks and a number of natural water hazards. The most prominent of the former are the two large bodies that create havoc on the 415-yard signature seventh hole.

Control is the key to conquering this index-one hole, with the second tank located in the landing area some 260 yards from the tee. A narrow fairway, with mounds on the right side, an OB running down the left side and an elevated two-tiered sloping green guarded by two large bunkers, causes chaos for all except the most proficient.

India's best golfers play the RCGC's hallowed turf. For instance, Calcutta-born pro Arjun Atwal is a club member while another top city-born player, Feroze Ali, is also very familiar with the esteemed club, which celebrated its 175th anniversary in late November 2004.

Apart from longevity and prestige, RCGC has notched up a number of achievements. The first Amateur Golf Championship of India was played at Royal during 1892. Golfers came from Ceylon, Burma, Penang and Singapore for, what some pundits affirm was, the first amateur golf championship organised anywhere in the world. Possibly this fact could also find its way into your next dinner party! ♪

TEE TIPS

ROYAL CALCUTTA GOLF CLUB
18 Golf Club Road

Tollygunge
Kolkata 700 033

Enquiries: Tel.: (33) 2473
1352/1288

E-mail: rcgc@vsnl.net
Website:

www.royalcalcuttagolfclub.com

Play: US \$50.

Club Rental: Rs 150.

Caddie: Rs 50.
Handicap card is required.

Course: 18 holes, par 72, 6692
yards—men; 5727 yards—ladies.

Stay: Golfers can stay in Royal when a 30-room accommodation block is commissioned. Nearer to the city in the leafy suburb of Alipore is the 229-room Taj Bengal, Tel.: (33) 2223 3939.



1914

PLEASE DO NOT PARK HERE

PLEASE DO NOT PARK HERE

PLEASE DO NOT PARK HERE

PLEASE DO NOT PARK HERE

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Even though it's been expanded and modernised, the RGGC clubhouse has the charm of another era.



Kolkata, West Bengal

Tollygunge Club



Top: After finishing the 18th, discuss the play of the day in the Shamiana.

Above: Plan your mental game by studying the course layout in the Shamiana.

Bhowani Junction”, “Safari Park” and “Raja’s Nest” could be whistle stops on a fascinating train journey across India. “Redeemer”, “Photo Finish” and “Straight Eight”, on the other hand, could be championship thoroughbreds trotting around a well-trod race track somewhere in the massive country. While it’s plausible it’s not possible because these are the names of century-old fairways at Tollygunge Club, Kolkata’s golf course of distinction.

The Tolly, as it’s affectionately known, can’t claim to be the oldest golf club in the metropolis, but with historic roots that have intertwined with those of the great city for well over 200 years it certainly is the most colourful course.

Lavishly contoured over 100 verdant acres in south Kolkata, the challenging layout at Tollygunge Club is not duplicated for style

or substance anywhere in the subcontinent, quite likely the world.

Green hasn’t always been the predominate colour at the Tolly. Long before the first golfer teed off down its wide fairways more than a century ago it was indigo, as the fertile area was a plantation producing the valuable export crop for the British East India Company.

An early employee of the famed trading organisation, Richard Johnson, was responsible for the construction of vast gardens in 1781 and later, a beautiful multi-columned house.

The property passed to the family of Tipu Sultan, a princely ruler of Mysore. Under the watchful eye of son, Prince Ghulam Mohammad, it was extensively developed into a royal park and named Bara Bagh.

In 1895, Sir William Cruikshank, a



Left: With its water and greenery, the Tolly is best described as a garden course.

Above: Another jolly group at the Tolly putts across the green on the 323-yard 17th hole.

banker of note and a keen sportsman, acquired the estate from the royal family, founded Tollygunge Club Ltd “to promote all manner of sports” and became its first president. The stately Johnson home became the clubhouse that golfers and visitors alike first see today as they arrive for a round or simply to admire a living legend.

A nine-hole golf course was laid over the club’s elongated acreage in 1896. Six years later all 18 holes, each with a distinctive name, were in play.

Apart from such personalisation, the Tollygunge Club’s golf course has a number of other interesting anomalies, including a fine collection of flowering trees and tropical plants that have been brought in from as far a field as Australia and South America and double greens on the first and seventh holes and the 13th and 16th holes.

Then there’s the par-four, 325-yard 15th hole. Christened Hydrophobia, it’s well-named because its monster water hazard ‘eats’ golf balls. When you tee off

here as early as 5 AM on a humid summer morning you’ll have to cross a large water tank, built by Prince Mohammad and now covered with water lilies, to reach the green on the other side.

An even bigger body of water has been ‘conveniently’ sited to the left of the par-five, 491-yard, dog-leg seventh hole, called Devil’s Elbow, and near the green on the par-four, 411-yard third hole, appropriately named Think Tank.

Try as they might golfers can’t always spot exactly where their long shots land. At the Tolly they don’t have to worry because they can hire a pair of ‘eagle eyes’ belonging to a Fore Caddy. The sole task of this far-sighted assistant is to pinpoint the temporary resting place for the small white projectile.

As you proceed around this garden course your Fore Caddy will even point out the final resting place for the Johnson family. Both are entombed in simple, whitewashed vaults beneath a sheltered canopy of towering trees just off the sixth fairway. ⌘

TEE TIPS

TOLLYGUNGE CLUB
120, Deshapran Sasmal Road
Kolkata 700 033

Enquiries: Tel.: (33) 2473 4539/5954

E-mail: tollygolf@vsnl.net

Website:

www.thetollygungeclub.com

Play: US \$40.

Club Rental: Rs 50 - Rs 100.

Caddie: Rs 50 - 100.

Handicap card required.

Course: 18 holes, par 70, 6305 yards—men; 5576 yards—ladies

Stay: The Tolly has its own 76-room hotel. More central is Taj Bengal, Tel.: (33) 2223 3939, located near the Maidan and Calcutta Ladies’ Golf Club.

Golf Extra: Depending upon traffic, a taxi to Tollygunge Club can take up to 30 minutes. A concierge at the Taj can organise transfers.





Backdropped by the Tolly's magnificent clubhouse, a player attempts to tackle "Raja's Nest".



Curry in a Hurry

A Taste of India

If you thought India is all curry and that all curry is hot, you're in for a pleasant surprise. Curry is India's best-known food, and if a visitor knows any Indian word it is likely to be *curry*, a taste sensation that can be made with any meat, fish, eggs or vegetables.

The types of curry are so diversified that the only common elements seem to be that the mixture is always fried in *ghee* (clarified butter) or a vegetable fat, that it is spiced according to the cook's or diners' wishes and that it is always served with rice.

Chicken and lamb curries are generally good throughout India, with Mumbai and Kolkata especially known for their beef curries. If you want your curry in a liquid form try Mulligatawny soup. It's made from the same ingredients as used in curry—chicken, lamb, spices and onions—but it's boiled, instead of fried.

There's far more to Indian cuisine. For instance, there are kebabs, which are skewered pieces of meat roasted over charcoal; or *buffath*, which is meat boiled with vegetables and then sliced, spiced and fried.

One of the most delectable meat dishes is biryani, which is prepared with chicken or lamb and whole, not ground, spices smothered with rice and garnished with raisins, sliced almonds and orange segments.

Biryani is a menu favourite of Northern India; another is the variety of tandoori preparations. Chicken, fish or other meats are spiced, baked in tandoor clay ovens and served with cool bowls of yogurt and thin, tandoori breads.

A pleasant conclusion to any meal is a kind of rice pudding, called *firnee*. Decorated with raisins, almonds and pistachios, on festive occasions this cooling dessert is adorned with edible gold and silver leaf. ❧

GOLF COURSE GUIDE TO INDIA

Agra, Uttar Pradesh

Agra Golf Club
Circuit House Campus.

M.G. Road
Agra 282 001

Enquiries to the Secretary at the neighbouring
Agra Club.

Tel.: (91 562) 236 3579/738

Overview: This nine-hole course is located within sight of the Taj Mahal. A second set of tees is played to make it a par-70, 6245-yard, 18-hole course.

Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Ahmedabad Golf Course
Ahmedabad 380 002

Aalloo Hills Golf Club
Ahmedabad 380 013

Tel.: (91 79) 2754 4031

E-mail: bpgroupad1@sancharnet.in

Overview: This nine-hole, 1772-yard executive golf course, set over 30 acres, is surrounded by farmlands well beyond the city centre.

Ajmer, Rajasthan

Ajmer Golf Course
Ajmer 305 001

Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh

The Defence Services Golf Club
McPherson Park
Allahabad 211 005

Overview: This nine-hole course, belonging to the Air Force, is near the airport.

Triveni Golf Course

The 18-hole turf layout at Bamrauli is not open to the general public.

Ambala, Haryana

Kargha Golf Club
Ambala Cantonment
Ambala 364 215

Overview: The 6805-yard turf course is frequented by military personnel and retired officers.

Aurangabad, Maharashtra

Aurangabad Golf Course

This nine-hole course belongs to the Army and is not open to the general public.

Bangalore, Karnataka

Bangalore Golf Club
No 2, Sankey Road
High Grounds
Bangalore 560 001

Tel.: (91 80) 228 1876

Fax: (91 80) 225 7997

E-mail: bge1876@vsnl.net.in

bge1876@hgl.vsnl.net.in

Overview: Located in the heart of the Garden City and founded in 1876, this is the second oldest golf course in India and the oldest on the same location anywhere in the country. Redesigned and redeveloped by Pacific Coast Design, the par-71 course plays to 6703 yards.

Eagleton—The Golf Village

30 Km Bangalore-Mysore Highway

Bidadi Industrial Area, Bidadi

Bangalore 562 109

Tel./Fax: (91 80) 728 7222/233/244/ 255

E-mail: eagleton@giasbg01.bsnl.net.in

Website: www.eagletonindia.com

Overview: Master planned by Pacific Coast Design, this 18-hole, 6632-yard, par-72 course is located 30 km north of Bangalore on the Mysore Road.

Karnataka Golf Association

1 Golf Avenue

(Off Airport Road)

Kodihalli

Bangalore 560 008

Tel.: (91 80) 529 9281/529 8845/47

Fax: (91 80) 529 8841/521 7348

E-mail: gollf@bgl.vsnl.net.in

Website: www.karnatakagolf.com

Overview: A five-minute drive from Bangalore Airport, this 6347-yard, par-72 18-hole course opened in 1973.

Army ASC Golf Course

This nine-hole course is not open to the general public.

Belgaum, Karnataka

Infantry Institute Golf Club

Camp Cantonment

Belgaum 590 001

Tel.: (91 831) 243 4288

Overview: This 18-hole, 6223-yard course belongs to the Army.

Bharuch, Gujarat

Narmada Golf Links

1-B, G.I.D.C.

Narmada Nagar

Bharuch 392 015

Tel.: (91 2642) 246 416

Fax: (91 2642) 247 591

E-mail: abc.breh@gnahd.blobalnet.ems

Overview: This nine-hole course plays to 3895 metres.

Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

Bhopal Golf Course

Bhopal 462 003

Overview: This nine-hole course is located inside palace grounds.

Bhubaneswar, Orissa

Bhubaneswar Golf Club

KMT Premises

Ghatikia

Khandagiri

Bhubaneswar 751 003

Tel.: (91 674) 258 0396

Fax: (91 674) 240 7733

Overview: This nine-hole, 3200-yard "L" shaped course is backdropped by the lower ranges of the Patia Hills.

Military Golf Club

Patia

Bhubaneswar 751 031

Overview: This nine-hole course is 10 km outside Bhubaneswar.

Chalsa, West Bengal

Chalsa Golf Course

Chalsa 735 206

Overview: This lovely nine-hole course, located in the scenic Doors Valley, is host to the annual Duncan Rungtee-Knngliot Golf Tournament in December.

Chamba, Himachal Pradesh

Chamba Golf Course

Chamba 176 310

Chandigarh, Punjab

Chandigarh Golf Club

Sector 6

Chandigarh 160 019

Tel.: (91 172) 274 0327

274 0350

Fax: (91 172) 274 1047

E-mail: CGC@cha.i91.net

Overview: Beginning in 1962 as a nine-hole course, the 7052-yard fully turf championship course was commissioned in 1983. The 18-hole course is set over 132 acres in the planned city of Chandigarh. The course is dotted with thick mango, jammu, eucalyptus and kinar groves. As well there is a variety of rose bushes.

Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Cosmo-TNGF Golf

334, Anna Salai, Nandanam

Chennai 600 035

Tel.: (91 44) 2435 9687

Telefax: (91 44) 2435 7136

E-mail: tngf@vsnl.com

Website:

www.cosmopolitanclubchennai.com/golf

Overview: Cosmopolitan Club has been a fixture on the city scene since 1873, though the Golf Annex, spread over 65 acres, was inaugurated on September 29, 1934. This suburban 18-hole, 6859-yard course was redesigned by Peter Thomson, who introduced a number of water hazards.

Madras Gymkhana Club Golf Course

Race Club

Guindy

Chennai 600 032

Tel.: (91 44) 223 0093

Fax: (91 44) 253 6836

E-mail: gymkhana@md4.vsnl.net.in

Overview: Founded in 1886, much of this par-70, 18-hole, 6325-yard course is set inside the 2400-metre oval of the Guindy (Madras) Race Course.

OTA Golf Club

Officers Training Academy

St Thomas Mount

Chennai 600 016

Tel.: (91 44) 234 2631 Extn. 3081

Fax: (91 44) 234 2639

E-mail: ota@eth.net

Overview: Started in 1962 this par-72, 18-hole, 6297-yard course is located near the Mohite Stadium. A unique feature is that the course has been designed within about 50 acres of land.

MEG Golf Course

This private, nine-hole golf course is not open to the general public.

Cherrapunjee, Meghalaya

Cherrapunjee Golf Course
Cherrapunjee 793 108

Overview: Often bathed in clouds, the rustic nine-hole course is well watered, as Cherrapunjee has the dubious distinction of being the place where the world's highest annual amount of rainfall was recorded.

Chikmagalur, Karnataka

Chikmagalur Golf Club
Karadhihally Kaval
Chikmagalur 577 101

Tel.: (91) 98441 87 020 (mobile)

E-mail: chikmagalurgolfclub@yahoo.com

Overview: Pacific Coast Design master-planned this nine-hole course on 56 acres near the area where coffee was first grown in India.

Navy Golf Course

This all-'browns' course is not open to the general public.

Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu

Coimbatore Golf Club
Cherripalayam
Coimbatore 641 201

Tel.: (91 422) 265 5258

Fax: (91 422) 265 5398

E-mail: coimbatoregolfclub@yahoo.com

Overview: Established in 1977, this course, with its tranquil 18-hole, 6122-yard layout is located just outside the busy commercial city.

Danapur, Bihar

Bihar Warriors Golf Course
Bihar Regimental Centre
Danapur Cantonment 801 503

Delhi (Greater)

Classic Golf Course

Hasanpur, Nauranpur, Tauru District
Gurgaon, 122 105 Haryana
Tel.: (91 11) 2616 5645/ 98100 26853/95124 2378770

Fax: (91 11) 2614 3535

E-mail: lbase@vsnl.com

Website: www.cgronline.com

Overview: This is the first signature course in South Asia designed by Jack Nicklaus. The 18-hole Championship Course and the nine-hole Canyon Course are set on 300 acres of land at the foothills of the picturesque Aravalis. Opened in 1997, the classically styled country club is in Gurgaon, 50 km outside New Delhi and just off the Delhi/Jaipur NH 8 National Highway.

Delhi Golf Club

Dr Zakir Hussain Marg
New Delhi 110 003
Tel.: (91 11) 2436 5105/2235
Fax: (91 11) 2436 5104
E-mail: delhigolfclub@vsnl.net

Overview: Established in 1931 and renovated in 1977 by Peter Thomson, the 18-hole, 6869-yard course has several holes back dropped by ancient Moghul monuments, 300 species of birds, including 500 peacocks, and 200 kinds of trees. There is Lodhi 'A' Course and Peacock 'B' Course, which is being redesigned by Pacific

Coast Design. Delhi Golf Club was the host of the first-ever golf tournament at the Asian Games in 1982.

DLF Golf and Country Club

Designed by Gary Player. India's first fully floodlit golf course opened in August 1999. It's located in Gurgaon, 10 km from New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport. This course is open only for members and their guests.

Golden Greens Golf Course

N-H 8 Highway
Gurgaon 122 105 Haryana
Tel.: (91 11) 2614 7738
Fax: (91 11) 2614 8409

Website: www.goldengreensgolf.com

Overview: Designed by Dr Martin Hawtree. Golden Greens is spread over a 275-acre expanse 25 km beyond Delhi's international airport. The links-like 18-hole 7100-yard championship course was carved through the meandering desert dunes of the Aravali Range.

Jaypee Greens Golf Resort

Sector G, Kasna Road
Greater Noida, 201 306 Uttar Pradesh
Tel.: (91 121) 232 6725
Fax: (91 121) 232 0453

E-mail: response@jaypeegreens.com

Overview: This Greg Norman designed 18-hole golf course set over 450 acres is located in Greater Noida, an integrated planned township outside New Delhi. Extending over 7343 yards, this is the longest golf course in India and the third longest in Asia.

Unitech Karma Lakelands

NH 8 (Delhi - Jaipur Highway)
Manesar 120 005 Haryana
Tel./Fax: (91 11) 2613 1051

E-mail: team@karmalakelands.com

Website: www.karmalakelands.com

Overview: Master Planned (Pacific Coast Design) as a residential/resort golf community over a 280-acre estate between New Delhi and Jaipur, Unitech Karma Lakelands is an integrated resort and luxury residential complex centred on an international standard 2543-metre, nine-hole course. Offering a range of other recreational pursuits, including swimming, tennis and riding trails, the planned community has been landscaped with more than 40,000 trees.

Best Western Resort Country Club

Pachgaon - Tauru Road
Gurgaon 122 105 Haryana
Tel./Fax: (91 124) 2232 5280

E-mail: trcc@vsnl.com

Website: www.resortcountryclub.com

Overview: The first golf resort in India affiliated to RCI, this country club is 60 km from the capital on the Delhi-Jaipur Highway. The nine-hole course shares the 50-acre plot with a 46-room resort hotel.

Ladosarai Golf Course

Lado Sarai
South Delhi
Tel.: (91 11) 2696 5597

Overview: Often called the Qutub Golf Course, this 18-hole, par-70 layout set over 52 ha, has a good view of the historic Qutub Minar. The

course also has a 250-yard driving range. It's the first public course to open in New Delhi.

BSF Golf Course

Chawala Camp
New Delhi

Overview: The Defence Force owns this 18-hole course.

Noida Golf Club

Sector 38
NOIDA 201 303 Uttar Pradesh
Tel.: (91 91) 2457 0115
Fax: (91 91) 2457 3015

Overview: Started in 1989, this 18-hole course is located on the site of the Battle of Delhi. It is a popular golfing haven for people living in this satellite town of New Delhi.

DDA Siri Fort Sports Complex Golf Course

Siri Fort Sports Complex

South Delhi

Overview: Instigated by the Delhi Development Authority, this nine-hole, par-27, 542-yard pitch and putt course is popular with 'lunchtime' golfers in the area.

Aravalli Golf Club

NH-3 Highway
Faridabad 121 007

Haryana

Tel.: (91 124) 2541 4810

Fax: (91 124) 2541 8608

Overview: Established in 1989, this nine-hole course, with alternate tees for an 18-hole game, is located 30 km beyond Delhi, near the Nalhar Singh Stadium. The course is managed by the Haryana Tourism Corporation.

Railways Golf Course

New Delhi

Meadows Golf Course

This golf course is temporarily closed.

Air Force Golf Course

This nine-hole course, located 10 minutes from the international airport, is not open to visitors.

Dhaura Kuan Golf Course

This 18-hole course belongs to the Army and is not open to the general public.

Dehradun, Uttarakhand

Golden Key Golf Club
14 Inf. Division Provost Unit
Clement Town
Dehradun 248 001
Tel.: (91 135) 264 0123

Overview: The nine-hole course is about 11 km from the Dehradun Railway Station.

Frima Golf Club

Indian Military Academy
Dehradun 248 004
Tel.: (91 135) 268 3834 ext 252 & 294
Fax: (91 135) 268 3838

Overview: Established in 1995, this nine-hole course is 25 km from the Jolly Grant Airfield.

Dibrugarh, Assam

Dibrugarh and District Planters Club Golf Course
Dibrugarh

Membership at the club and use of the nine-hole turf course is limited to tea planters, although visitors may be allowed to play on application

Digboi, Assam

Digboi Golf Club
Digboi 786 171
Tel.: (91 37539) 264 711

Duliajan, Assam

Zaloni Club
Duliajan 786 602
Tel.: (91 374) 800 089
Fax: (91 374) 801 680
E-mail: prabalchoudri@rediff.com

Faizabad, Uttar Pradesh

Army Golf Course
Faizabad 224 001

Garhwal, Uttaranchal

Ananda in the Himalayas Golf Course
The Palace Estate, Narendra Nagar
Tehri Garhwal 249 175
Tel.: (91 11) 2689 9999
Fax: (91 11) 2613 1066
E-mail: sales@anandaspa.com
Website: www.anandaspa.com
Overview: Located near the holy town of Rishikesh and set amid a Sal forest within the precincts of the 100-acre Palace of the Maharajah of Tehri Garhwal, the 6-hole, 489-yard course has been crafted on ridges that overlook the majestic Himalayan range. There is also a separate driving range where private golf lessons can be organised in a unique environment.

Goa

Ramada Caravela Beach Resort Goa
Golf Course
Varca Beach 403 721
Tel.: (91 832) 274 5200 - 15
Fax: (91 832) 274 5225
E-mail: itstimefor@caravelabeachresort.com
Overview: This all par-3, nine-hole resort course is located next to the Arabian Sea. The course is located inside the 23-acre hotel property.

The Leela Goa Golf Course

Cavelossim
Mobor 403 731
Tel.: (91 832) 287 1234
Fax: (91 832) 287 1059
E-mail: info@leelapalace.com
Overview: This well-landscaped, nine-hole course is set amid lush gardens and sparkling lagoons.

The Grand Greens

Raj Baga
Canacona 403 702
Tel.: (91 832) 266 7777
Fax: (91 832) 264 4711
E-mail: goa@interconti.com
Overview: A second set of tees for men makes this course a par-72, 7200-yard 18-hole layout. The course is located within the grounds of the 40-acre Baroque-Portuguese influenced InterContinental Resort.

Taj Exotica Goa Golf Course

Calwaddo, Benaulim
Salcette 403 716

Tel.: (91 832) 277 1234
Fax: (91 832) 277 1515
E-mail: exotica.goa@tajhotels.com
Website: www.tajhotels.com
Overview: Set within the 56-acre Taj Exotica property is a nine-hole pitch and putt course and a nine-hole, all par-3, 1170-yard Executive Golf Course.

Goa Golf Resort

Kapao Island
Kapao Village
E-mail: sales@airsonictravels.com
Overview: Construction of the state's first international-standard, 18-hole golf course is expected to start in 2005. Spread over 80 acres of a 180 island in the middle of the Mandori river, the resort will also feature 200 cottages, recreational, shopping, dining and health facilities and a helipad.

A sixth course in Goa is maintained by the Indian Navy but it's not open to the general public.

Ghatsila, Jharkhand

Mouhandar Golf Club
Ghatsila 832 103

Gulmarg, Jammu & Kashmir

Gulmarg Golf Club
Gulmarg 193 403
Overview: Situated at an elevation of 2730 metres, the 18-hole, par-72, 6805-yard Gulmarg course is the highest golf course in India.

Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh

Eagle Golf Club
Gwalior 474 003
Overview: This nine-hole course is maintained by the Border Security Force.

Harihar, Karnataka

Harihar Golf Club
Yantapur
Harihar 577 601
Tel.: (91 8197) 241 225/226

Hoshiarpur, Punjab

Jahankhelan Golf Club
Hoshiarpur 146 001
Tel.: (91 1882) 227 2806
E-mail: dannyduggal@yahoo.co.in
Overview: This nine-hole, par-36 course plays to 3100 metres.

Hubli, Karnataka

Rail Golf Club
Railway Officers' Colony
Keshwapur
Hubli 580 020
Tel.: (91 836) 236 3723
Fax: (91 836) 236 3468
Overview: This is an all-'browns' nine-hole course.

Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh

Hyderabad Golf Association
Satham Cheruwa
Beside Nadeem Colony
Golconda
Hyderabad 500 008
Tel.: (91 40) 2356 7207
E-mail: contactus@hyderabadgolfclub.com

Website: www.hyderabadgolf.com
Overview: Formed in 1992 to construct a civilian golf course to international standards, the Hyderabad Golf Association is developing a 6800-yard course over a 160-acre plot adjacent to and within the historic Golconda Fort.

Army Golf Course

Bison Training Area
Bolarum
Hyderabad 500 010
Tel.: (91 40) 2786 1943
Overview: Founded in 1888, the par-72, 18-hole, 6434-yard fully turf course located in suburban Hyderabad was brought under Army management in 1983. Spread over 160 acres in the Secunderabad area, the holes are named for historical figures or events. The 12th takes its name from young Winston Churchill's bungalow near the green, while the 14th is known as Waterloo.

There are two other Army courses in Hyderabad: the EME Centre Golf Course, managed by the EME Centre, and the Golconda Golf Club, which is under the control of the Artillery Centre. While both courses permit civilians to play by paying a green fee, they do not have facilities for refreshments, etc. Located on a mere 20 acres, Indian Railways operates a nine-hole course that is also open to civilians.

Indore, Madhya Pradesh

Royal Garha Golf Club
10-C, 'Radha Deep'
Ratlam Kothi
Kanchan Bagh Road
Indore 452 001
Tel.: (91 731) 251 6508

Jaipur, Rajasthan

Rambagh Golf Club
Bhawani Singh Road
Jaipur 302 005
Tel.: (91 141) 238 4482
Fax: (91 141) 238 5482
E-mail: rambaghgolf_jaipur@hotmail.com
Website: www.rambaghgolfclub.com
Overview: Dating to 1944, this 18-hole, 6730-yard course located adjacent to the Rambagh Palace—now a lavish heritage hotel managed by the Taj Group—has fairways that pass near the polo grounds.

Jamalpur, Bihar

Central Institute Golf Club
Eastern Railway
Jamalpur 811 214
Tel.: (91 6344) 225 806

Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir

Army Golf Course
Mira Sabh Satwari
Jammu 180 003
Tel.: (91 914) 23 126
Overview: This is an 18-hole course.

Jamshedpur, Jharkhand

Beldih Golf Course
Northern Town
Jamshedpur 831 001
Tel.: (91 657) 223 439
Fax: (91 657) 424 219

Golmori Club Golf Course
Tin Plate Company
Golmori
Jamshedpur 831 003
Tel.: (91 657) 248 7971

Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh

BHEL Golf Club
Rani Laxmi Bai Nagar
BHEL
Jhansi 284 129
Tel.: (91 517) 241 4233
Fax: (91 517) 244 5247

White Tiger Golf Club

Jhansi 284 001

Jodhpur, Rajasthan

Sardar Golf Course
Ratanada
Jodhpur 342 006
Tel.: (91 291) 243 0010
Fax: (91 291) 251 0420

Overview: This nine-hole 'browns' course is not far from the Great Thar Desert.

Black Mace Golf Club

Near Umed Bhawan
Jodhpur 342 006

Overview: The nine-hole 'browns' course has a second set of tees to make a 5566-yard game.

Jorhat, Assam

Jorhat Gymkhana
Jorhat 785 008
Tel.: (91 376) 232 0030

Overview: This nine-hole course was set up near lush tea growing areas.

Kalimpong, West Bengal

Lion Golf Course
Located at 1844 metres, this very scenic nine-hole course belongs to the Army. It is not open to visitors.

Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh

Defence Services Golf Club
This private, par-36, nine-hole course belongs to the Air Force. It is not open to visitors.

Kapurthala, Punjab

Rail Coach Factory Golf Club
Rail Coach Factory
Near Railway Officers' Club
Kapurthala 144 602
Tel.: (91 181) 258 357
Fax: (91 181) 257 091

Overview: This nine-hole course was designed for use by railway workers.

Khajjar, Himachal Pradesh

Khajjar Golf Course
Khajjar
Overview: This lovely little nine-hole course is situated in a forested glade near Dalhousie and Chamba.

Kirloskarwadi, Madhya Pradesh

Kirloskarwadi Golf Club
Kirloskarwadi 416 308
Tel.: (91 2346) 222 301-5
Fax: (91 2346) 222 311

Kochi, Kerala

Cochin Golf Club
Bolgatty Island
Kochi 682 004
Tel.: (91 484) 275 0908

Overview: The approach to this nine-hole course, on Bolgatty Island, next to a former palace, is only by boat. Established in 1922, the nine-hole course is set over just 15 acres! Golfers can stay at the Bolgatty Palace, now a heritage hotel.

Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu

Kodaikanal Golf Club
Pillar Rocks Road, Pambarpuram
Kodaikanal 624 103
Tel.: (91 4542) 224 0323
Fax: (91 4542) 224 1255

Overview: Set in the Palni Hills, the club was founded in 1895. The 18-hole, par-71 6122-yard course is host to some 50 tournaments a year.

Kolar, Karnataka

Earth Mover Golf Club
BEML Nagar
Kolar Gold Fields 563 115
Tel.: (91 8153) 263 875
Fax: (91 8153) 261 003

KGF Gymkhana Golf Club

Oorgaum
Kolar Gold Fields 563 120
Tel.: (91 8153) 260 365
Fax: (91 8153) 260 330

Kolkata, West Bengal

Royal Calcutta Golf Club
18 Golf Club Road
Kolkata 700033
Tel.: (91 33) 2473 1352/1288
Fax: (91 33) 2473 3315
E-mail: rege@vsnl.net

Website: www.royalcalcuttagolfclub.com
Overview: While Royal Calcutta Golf Club was founded in 1829, the course has been at its present location in suburban Tollygunge since 1910. King George V and Queen Mary honoured the veteran course in 1911 when they conferred upon it the title 'Royal'. India's most historic golf club welcomes visiting golfers with a handicap card to tee off on the historic 7195-yard course. RGCG celebrated its 175th anniversary in late November 2004 in the company of golf captains and representatives from 'royal' courses throughout the world.

Tollygunge Club

120, Dishpan Sasmal Road
Kolkata 700 033
Tel.: (91 33) 2473 4539/5954
Fax: (91 33) 2473 1903
E-mail: tollygolf@vsnl.net

Website: www.thetollygungeclub.com
Overview: This historic 18-hole, par-70 6305-yard course near the southern terminus of the city's underground metro train line is beautifully contoured over the well-landscaped grounds of a former indigo plantation laid out in 1781.

Calcutta Ladies' Golf Club
Casuarina Avenue
Kolkata 700 002
Tel.: (91 33) 2248 2404
Fax: (91 33) 2475 7092

Overview: Have a game at this incredible nine-

hole, ladies-managed, fully floodlit course set up in 1891 near the Queen Victoria Monument.

The fourth course in the city is at Fort William although it is not open to visitors.

Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

Lucknow Golf Club
1 Kalidas Marg
Lucknow 226 001
Tel.: (91 522) 221 0415
Fax: (91 522) 222 3318
E-mail: igcb@satyam.net.in

Overview: Golf is believed to have started in Lucknow with the formation of the United Services Club in 1880. After a period of neglect, it was revived in 1950 with the creation of a 'browns' course. The par-71, 6355-yard layout playable today was fully turfed in 1993/94. Augustus Mayne, killed at the Relief of Lucknow in 1857 is buried just off the seventh fairway.

Raj Bhawan Golf Club

Lucknow 226 001

Mauribagh Army Golf Course

This 18-hole, par-73, 6223-yard course, maintained by the Indian Army, is not open to the general public.

Mangalore, Karnataka

Pilkula Golf Course
Mangalore 575 001

Overview: Set over 35 undulating acres this nine-hole course plays to 2800 yards. The course, 12 km from Mangalore, adjoins a park, wildlife sanctuary and a lake.

Madikeri, Karnataka

Mercara Downs Golf Club
Galibeedu Village, Temple Road
Madikeri 571 201
Tel./Fax: (91 8272) 223 516

Overview: This 18-hole layout, set over 92 acres in the scenic Coorg coffee plantation area, is a par-66, 5953-metre course. The course is on the circuit of the annual Kingfisher Coorg Triangular Golf Championship along with courses in Bitangala (Virajpet) and Pollibetta.

Mahabaleshwar, Maharashtra

Valley View Resort
Mahabaleshwar 412 806
Tel.: (91 2168) 260 066
Fax: (91 2168) 260 070
E-mail: valleyview@vsnl.net

Overview: This country club in the state's most popular hill station was designed to primarily appeal to visitors from Mumbai and Pune. A number of colonial homes from the days of the Raj can be seen in this quaint town. Play on the 18-hole turfed golf course is relaxing and refreshing in the cool air.

Meerut, Uttar Pradesh

Meerut Golf Course
Meerut 250 002

Overview: The Indian Army owns this 18-hole course, which is located north of New Delhi in the historic town of Meerut. It's open to visitors.

Mhow, Madhya Pradesh

DSOI Golf Club

College of Combat
Mhow 453 441

Mt Abu, Rajasthan

Cama Rajputana Club Resort
Addhardevi Road
Mt Abu 307 501

Overview: Cradled in rolling hills, the 100-year-old club was started by the royal family of Rajasthan. Its residence has been converted into a hotel that fronts a small golf course.

Mumbai, Maharashtra

Royal Palms Golf and Country Club
Marol - Maroshi Village
Goregaon (E)
Mumbai 400065
Tel.: (91 22) 2879 4000-3
Fax: (91 22) 2842 1538
E-mail: palms@vsnl.com
Website: www.royalpalmsindia.com

Overview: Located in suburban Mumbai, seven kilometres from the international airport, the Pacific Coast Design-designed 18-hole championship course opened in 1999. The course is part of a massive premium residential and commercial community, still being built, on a 240-acre site in north Mumbai.

Bombay Presidency Golf Club

Dr Choitram Gidwani Road
Chembur
Mumbai 400074
Tel.: (91 22) 2520 5874
Fax: (91 22) 2520 0880
E-mail: bpgc1@vsnl.in
Website: www.bpgc-golf.com

Overview: Founded in 1927, Bombay Presidency is an 18-hole suburban course that plays to 6223 yards.

The Willington Sports Club

K. Khadye Marg
Tulsiwadi
Mumbai 400 034
Tel.: (91 22) 2494 5754
Fax: (91 22) 2492 5802
E-mail: secretary@willingtonclub.com

Overview: Founded in 1917, this par-60, 4477-yard course has narrow fairways and large trees that affect play for all golfers. While there are no par-fives on the course there are 12 par-three holes.

United Services Club

Robert Road
Near R.C. Church, Colaba
Mumbai 400 005
Tel.: (91 22) 2215 2109/0413(0)/0685
Tel./Fax: (91 22) 2216 0139

Overview: This is 18-hole course is in suburban Mumbai.

Munnar, Kerala

High Range Club
Chokanad Estate Road
Munnar 685 612
Tel.: (91 4865) 230 253
Fax: (91 4865) 230 333
E-mail: hrcmunnar@sify.com

Overview: Set in picturesque surroundings near tea gardens, this nine-hole course and the quaint clubhouse were built by the British.

Kundale Golf Club

Located 30 km away and surrounded by tea gardens, this nine-hole course, established by Scottish tea planters in 1918, is not open to visitors.

Mysore, Karnataka

Jayachamaraja Wadiyar Golf Club
"Golf Hut"
Maharana Pratap Singhji Road
Nazarbad
Mysore 570 010

Tel.: (91 821) 2445 1033

Fax: (91 821) 253 8457

Website: www.jwggolfclub.com

Overview: Established in 1906 and set within Mysore City's Race Course, the 18-hole, 5446-yard course was completely redesigned in 1996 by Pacific Coast Design.

Nainital, Uttaranchal

Raj Bhawan Golf Club
Nainital 263 002

Tel.: (91 5942) 236 962

Fax: (91 5942) 236 041

Overview: This nine-hole, 3200-yard course is located at an altitude of 1981 - 2286 metres amid a thick grove of pine trees. Visitors need to contact the ADC to the Governor in order to play. It was founded in 1936 as part of the 200-acre Raj Bhawan Estate.

Nagpur, Maharashtra

Nagpur Golf Course
Nagpur 440 015

Garuda Golf Course

Brigade of the Guards
Kamptee Regimental Centre
Kamptee 441 001

Overview: This suburban 18-hole turf course, 17 km northeast of central Nagpur in Kamptee, plays to 6047 yards. Kamptee was founded in 1821 when the British established a military cantonment on the banks of the Kauhan river.

Nashik, Maharashtra

Nasik Golf Club
Old Agra Road
Nashik 422 006

Ootacamund, Tamil Nadu

Ootacamund Gymkhana Club
Finger Post
Ootacamund 643 006

Tel.: (91 423) 2244 2254

Fax: (91 423) 2244 5967

E-mail: management@ootyggolfclub.org

Website: www.ootyggolfclub.org

Overview: This par-70, 18-hole, 6074-yard very hilly course was incorporated in 1896. Located at an elevation of 2286 metres it's considered the second highest course in India.

Palampur, Himachal Pradesh

Palampur Golf Course
Palampur 176 062

Pachmarhi, Madhya Pradesh

Panchmarhi Golf Course
Pachmarhi 461 881

Overview: The British developed this secluded 700-metre high hill station southeast of Bhopal—the only one in the state—and built a charming

nine-hole golf course set in a meadow-like environment.

Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir

Pahalgam Golf Course
Pahalgam 192 126

Tel.: No telephone!

Overview: This nine-hole, 2386-yard course is surrounded by pines in an idyllic setting. Golf gear can be hired at the tourist office.

Patna, Bihar

Patna Golf Club

Bailey Road

Patna 800 023

Tel.: (91 612) 228 7089

Fax: (91 612) 223 9884 (Maurya Centre)

Overview: Established in 1916 on 105 acres, this 18-hole course is popular with locals as well as foreign tourists visiting Bihar's 'Buddhist Circuit'.

Army Golf Course

This nine-hole golf course is not open to the general public.

Phillaur, Punjab

Ranjitgarh Golf Club
Punjab Police Academy
Phillaur 144 410

Pollibetta, Karnataka

Consolidated Coffee Golf Course

Coffee planters in Pollibetta, Coorg started this nine-hole course. Managed by Tata Coffee, it is a private course, though it is on the circuit of the annual Kingfisher Coorg Triangular Golf Championship.

Pune, Maharashtra

Poona Golf Club
Airport Road, Yerwada
Pune 411 006
Tel.: (91 20) 2669 4131
Fax: (91 20) 2669 4131
E-mail: pcgc@vsnl.net

Overview: The course, a 6198, par-71 layout, is the only course of four in the city that is open to foreign players. Spread over 94 acres, it offers a quiet round of golf amid 30,000 trees. The course dates to 1922 when all browns were in play. It was updated to an all-greens course in 1994/95 during a redevelopment undertaken by Pacific Coast Design.

Amby Valley Golf Course

Amby Valley
Pune
Tel.: (91) 98230 81197 (mobile)
E-mail: avslcsks@vsnl.net

Website: www.ambyvalley.com

Overview: Part of a new 10,000-acre satellite community located about an hour's drive from Pune, the 18-hole, 7100-yard floodlit championship course designed by Indian cricket notable Kapil Dev, is currently available only to those who have purchased property.

Rae Bareli, Uttar Pradesh

Rae Bareli Golf Course
Rae Bareli 229 001

Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh

Godavari Golf Club

ONGC, Danavaipeta
Rajahmundry 533 103
Tel.: (91 883) 246 0159
Fax: (91 883) 246 8136

Rampur, Uttar Pradesh

CRPF Golf Course
Group Centre Complex
Rampur 244 901
Overview: Managed by the Central Reserve Police Force and opened in 1996, this nine-hole course has a second set of tees for an 18-hole game.

Ranchi, Jharkhand

Cockerel Golf Club
Dipatoli
Ranchi 834 006
Overview: This is a par-71, 18-hole course.

Ranikhet, Uttaranchal

Ranikhet Golf Club
Ranikhet 263 645
Overview: This very picturesque nine-hole course is located six kilometres from Ranikhet at Aliku. There's a wonderful panoramic view of the snow-clad Himalayas at this 1820-metre-high course.

Salem, Tamil Nadu

Salem Golf Club
4-B Lakshmiapuram, Gandhi Road
Salem 636 077
Tel.: (91 427) 241 1790
Fax: (91 427) 241 5958
E-mail: dharaniyarn@eth.net
Overview: Established in 1990, this nine-hole course is spread over 50 acres.

Shillong, Meghalaya

Shillong Golf Club
Polo Ground
Shillong 793 001
Tel.: (91 364) 222 6872 (O)
222 3071 (Golf)
Overview: Founded in 1898 as a nine-hole course by British civil servants, the present 18-hole, 5873-yard, par-70 layout dates from 1924. The lovely course, called the "Glencloagles of the East" is set in an undulating valley covered with thick groves of pine and rhododendron. Shillong is just 56 km from the town said to be the wettest place in the world, Cherrapunjee.

Shimla, Himachal Pradesh

Naldehra Golf Club
Naldehra
Tel.: (91 177) 274 7739
Fax: 91 177) 225 2206
Overview: This nine-hole, 3908-yard, par-34 course was a favourite of the British when they retreated to their summer capital of Shimla, 23 km away. This highly picturesque course, set over 30 acres, was laid out under the supervision of Lord Curzon in 1905. He named his daughter, Alexandra, Naldehra because he was so spellbound by the area!

The Shimla Army Training Command also has a track in the Annandale area. A former race track, which now has a helicopter pad on site,

this course is not open to the general public.

Siliguri, West Bengal

Sukna Golf Course
This is a private 18-hole golf course and tourists are not allowed to play.

Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh

Sitapur PAC Golf Course
Sitapur 261 001
Overview: Designed by Mr Rai Umapat Ray, Golf Captain of the Lucknow Golf Club, this nine-hole golf course, spread over 300 acres, has a second set of tees to make a 7000-yard golf course.

Somvarpet, Karnataka

Belur Club
Somvarpet 571 236
Tel.: (91 8276) 282 081
Overview: Founded in 1904, this is a quaint nine-hole course in the beautiful heavily forested coffee growing Coorg District.

Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir

Royal Springs Golf Course
Cheshma Shahi
Boulevard Road
Srinagar 190 001
Tel.: (91 194) 248 2581
Fax: (91 194) 245 7672
E-mail: greenscape@rediffmail.com
Overview: Designed by Robert Trent Jones, Jr, this country club style resort with an 18-hole, 7234-yard golf course set opposite Dal Lake is managed by the Jammu & Kashmir Government.

Kashmir Golf Club
Maulana Azad Road
Srinagar 190 001
Tel.: (91 194) 247 6677
Overview: This 18-hole, par-70 course is set over 52 acres dotted with chinar and pine trees.
Police Club Golf Course
Srinagar 190 001
Overview: This is a nine-hole all-browns course.

Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh

Tawang Golf Course, Tawang

Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

Triandrum Golf Club
Golf Links Road
Thiruvananthapuram 695 041
Tel.: (91 471) 243 0177
Fax: (91 471) 253 9022
Overview: Instigated by the Maharajah of Triandrum in the 1850s, this nine-hole, par-34 course plays to 2645 yards.

Tirupur, Tamil Nadu

Tirupur Golf Club
Tirupur 638 601

Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu

Trichi Golf Club
Tiruchirappalli 620 001
Overview: This nine-hole course is located in the police compound.

Udhampur, Jammu & Kashmir

Chinar Golf Course
Udhampur 182 104

Vadodara, Gujarat

Gaekwad Baroda Golf Club
Indumathi Mahal, JN Marg
Vadodara 390 001
Tel.: (91 265) 243 1516
E-mail: gbge@wilnetonline.net
Website: www.barodagolf.com
Overview: Started in 1930, but redeveloped since then, this nine-hole course spans 3898 yards.

Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

DLW Golf Club
Diesel Locomotive Works
Varanasi 221 004
Tel.: (91 542) 255 428
Fax: (91 542) 255 426
Overview: This suburban nine-hole browns/greens course is set over 25 acres. It has a second set of tees to make a 6651-yard game.

DSO Gorkha Golf Club

This nine-hole course is maintained by the Army and is not open to visitors.

Virajpet, Karnataka

Coorg Golf Links
Spring Valley Annexe
Bitangala
Virajpet 571 218
Tel.: (91 8274) 256 252
Fax: (91 80) 2542 6822
(Bangalore Office)
E-mail: school1@sancharnet.in
Overview: Coffee planters in the Coorg District originally established a par-35, 3000-yard, nine-hole course in the small community of Bitangala, six kilometres outside Virajpet. The course, which is a host to the annual Kingfisher Coorg Triangular Golf Championship held in November, has been extended to an 18-hole fully turfed layout reaching to the top of the beautiful hills. In addition to golf, the 150-acre site has a 48-room resort that will be commissioned in 2005.

Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

East Point Golf Club
Mudasarlova
Visakhapatnam 530 043
Tel./Fax: (91 891) 253 0698
Overview: Established in 1884, the current 18-hole, par-72, 6800-yard course dates from 1964. Woven through mango and coconut groves and sited on 100 acres it's located near the Mudasarlova Reservoir.

Navy Golf Club

This private nine-hole golf course is not open to the general public.

Wellington, Tamil Nadu

Wellington Gymkhana Club
Wellington 643 231
Tel.: (91 423) 223 0254/6
Fax: (91 423) 223 3800
E-mail: wgc@sigy.com
Overview: This is an 18-hole course set amid lush tea gardens near Coonoor, started by the British,

Indian Golf and Travel Websites

Aaloo Hills Golf Course (Ahmedabad)	www.bpggroup.com/aaloo/golfclub	Chandigarh (UT) Tourism	www.chandigarh.nic.in
Amby Valley (Pune)	www.ambyvalley.com	Chhattisgarh Tourism	www.egtourism.nic.in
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E-mail: goitoagr@sancharnet.in

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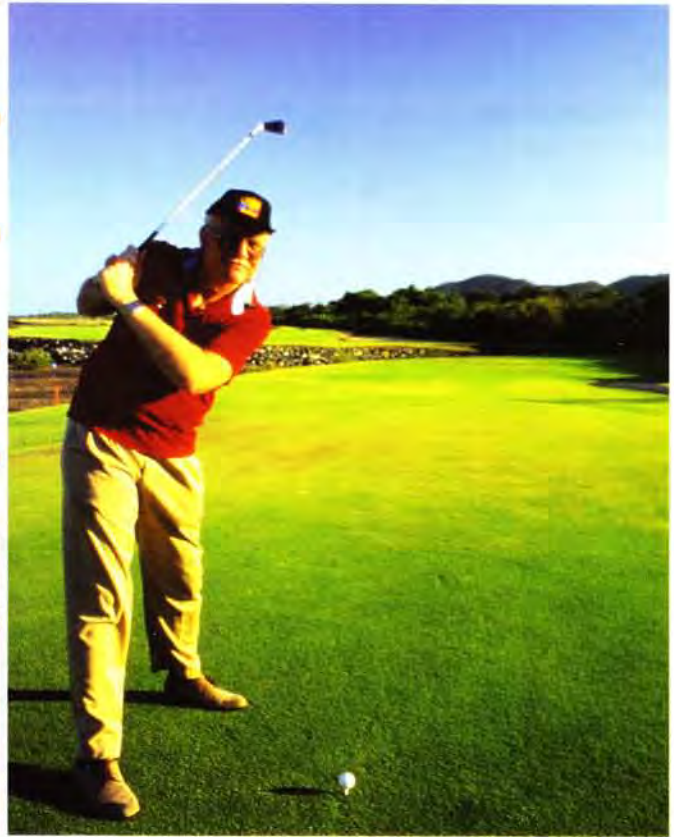
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About the Authors

Phil Ryan commenced his travels in India during 1974 as a backpacker. He made India a frequent stop on his travels until 1992 when he commenced business there and now visits on a regular basis each year.

Initially trained in civil engineering he had specialised in golf course maintenance and construction before starting his own golf course design business in 1986. As a founding director of Pacific Coast Design (PCD), Phil regularly travels throughout Asia, working with clients on golf-related projects of a residential, private membership and resort nature.

Phil has visited nearly all parts of India and seen most of its golf courses. PCD has already completed seven golf projects in the country.

Phil is based in Melbourne, Australia, and is blessed with the support of wife Gayle and daughters Melanie and Tess, all of whom have also visited India with him. India is a country of diverse wonders that never cease to amaze but it is the friends he has made in India that have enriched his life.

Thomas E. King made his first visit to India in 1973 during a four-month-long over-land road odyssey between London and Calcutta. Since then he has returned more than two dozen times, several of these with his favourite travelling companion, his wife, Kamala. Tom rates India as his favourite country although he has visited nearly a hundred nations.

Tom is Executive Editor/Bureau Chief and founder of Media East Pty Ltd, a Sydney-based editorial agency providing commissioned features to publications in Australia and Asia. A career journalist with more than 35 years of professional experience, Tom has authored five books, including *India and the Subcontinent: Overland Odyssey*, and several thousand feature articles on tourism and golf.

He has twice won gold awards from the Pacific Asia Travel Association. In 1998 he became the first journalist in the world to win the Association of South East Asia Nations Tourist Association's award for journalism excellence on two occasions. ✎

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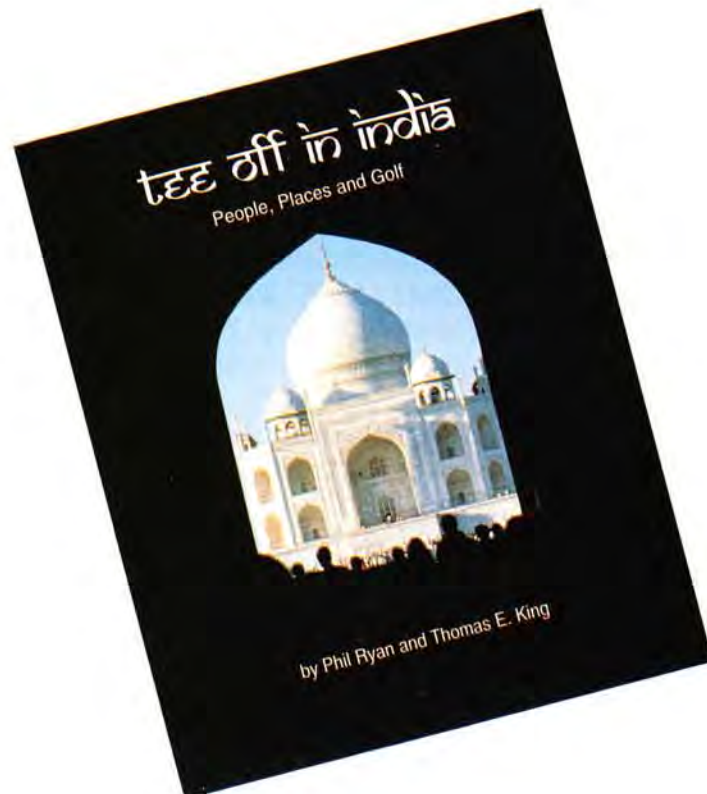
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Robert Trent Jones, Jr. (Golf Course Architect)