

A drive through history

A road trip from Mumbai to Hampi helps cover some interesting spots on the way which include Pandharpur and Bijapur

Aruna Gracias Rathod

A road trip from Mumbai, via Pandharpur and Bijapur to Hampi, is a great way to soak in the glorious history and culture of two states.

We mapped the 700 km road trip from Mumbai, and decided to take overnight stop overs; visit the famous Vitthoba temple at Pandharpur; stay over at Sholapur before proceeding to Northern Karnataka to do a bit of Bijapur and the final stop at Hampi.

At the crack of dawn, we hit the expressway to reach Pune, and headed towards the state highway for Satara that was full of scenic spots – large lakes, with cattle grazing, local shepherds in bright pink turbans minding the sheep, fields of crops and rustic farm houses. It set the mood for the rest of the holiday.

PANDHARPUR & BIJAPUR

Our first halt was the Vitthoba temple at Pandharpur. Parking the car at a distance from the temple, we walked through the lanes flanked with tiny colourful stores that sold malas, sindoor, Prasad, idols, bells, and a variety of puja items.

Once done with the temple visit, we decided to take a break and stay over at Sholapur. There are decent hotels with reasonable tariffs. Next morning, after breakfast, it was a smooth drive to the Karnataka border where we entered to reach Bijapur. The roads were laden with bright cheerful sunflowers. We headed towards the Ibrahim Rouza monument, shrouded in mystery and history. It was built in 1580 and completed in 1627, and consists of his tomb and mosque. An architectural wonder it has many elements that balance and define the structure.

You can hire a guide for a nominal amount, and he takes you through the

GLORIOUS HAMPI

Post lunch, we started for Hampi. The highway stretched into the horizon, smooth and easy, picture perfect with the blue skies above, the sunflower fields appearing at intervals and the pink rocks and boulders appeared – the first sign of Hampi! Since it was almost evening, we drove straight to our hotel, located in the Vidyannagar complex.

The hotel staff informed us to have a look at Kaladham, an art complex that is open till late evening that captures the glory of Hampi through images and graphics. It was the best thing we could have done that night – an interactive tour at Kaladham, a dedicated gallery that's the work of a quarter of a century of chronicling the sights at the site.

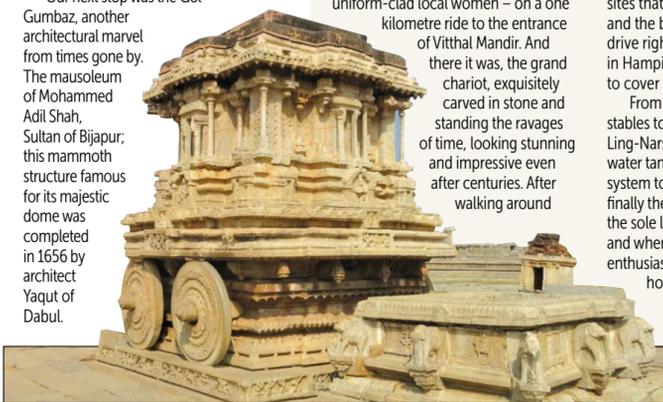


THE GLORY OF HAMPI UNFOLDS

Since we had an idea about how to manage the vast kingdom, we started, drove down past the Daroji Bear Sanctuary, taking the right from Kamalanagar, to our first site of Hampi – the Vitthal Mandir. The Jain temple at the beginning of the route was a first feel of the historic city lying in ruins today. After parking the car, we proceeded in an electric buggy – manned by young, uniform-clad local women – on a one kilometre ride to the entrance of Vitthal Mandir. And there it was, the grand chariot, exquisitely carved in stone and standing the ravages of time, looking stunning and impressive even after centuries. After walking around

majestic structure and narrates the story of Ibrahim Rouza.

Our next stop was the Gol Gumbaz, another architectural marvel from times gone by. The mausoleum of Mohammed Adil Shah, Sultan of Bijapur; this mammoth structure famous for its majestic dome was completed in 1656 by architect Yaqut of Dabul.



the complex, taking in the sheer scale and grandeur of the place, we walked down to the Tungabhadra right behind the Vitthal mandir, where coracle rides ply on busy days and warning boards of crocodiles and tricky undercurrents spell the dangers of the river to the visitors.

After a breather on the riverside, we drove down to the other side and started with the string of earmarked sites that are just a few minutes apart – and the best part is you can pretty much drive right up to the gate of all the sites in Hampi. Having the car is a great way to cover Hampi's historic monuments.

From the Lotus Temple and Elephant stables to Ganesha Temples and Shiv Ling-Narsimha statues; from the stepped water tank with its own purification system to the Queen's Palace, and finally the Virupaksha temple that is the sole live temple with its idols intact and where puja is conducted with enthusiastic participation by the visiting hordes.

Hampi requires a couple of days or more to soak in the history and appreciate the glory of the Vijayanagara Empire.



Dong Valley: Witnessing the first sunrise of India



Babita Angle

Dong Valley in Arunachal Pradesh is renowned for being one of the most extraordinary locations in India, where the first rays of the sun kiss the Indian soil. The phrase "First sunrays that fall on Indian soil" evokes an overwhelming sense of excitement, and for many, it is a journey that, once believed in with conviction, eventually manifests. This trip to Dong was one such manifestation, and the excitement of reaching this special place was palpable.

The journey to witness the first sunrise of India was both thrilling and manageable. A 2.5 to 3-hour trek early in the morning was all it took to reach the top of a hill, where the breath-taking sight of the sun's first red glow awaited.

Dong, a clean yet relatively undeveloped area, had a somewhat poorly managed restaurant, but it didn't detract from the beauty of the surroundings. After a brief rest, the travellers set off to explore Dibrugarh before embarking on the 360 kilometres journey to Dong Valley.

The drive from Dibrugarh towards



with the locals at a homestay, the travellers enjoyed lively conversations, exchanged stories with fellow guests, and experienced the peacefulness of the rural community. The wind was strong, and the sounds of wild dogs echoed nearby as the locals, men and women alike, began their work with the sunrise.

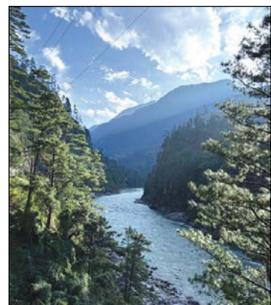
The group stopped at several picturesque locations on their way to Dong Valley. They arrived at Velho by 5:30 pm, and though it was already dark by the time they reached, the beauty of the homestay greeted them with warmth. The homestay, run by a missionary family, was impeccably clean with spacious rooms, fresh linens, and delicious food. The lady of the house, with her fine eye for aesthetics and impeccable manners, made a lasting impression. She served hot ginger lemon tea, which was a refreshing and revitalizing treat after the long journey.

The morning vistas from the homestay were breath-taking. Majestic mountains, draped in pines, stood tall against the early morning light, offering a serene and peaceful view. Dong Valley, a relatively densely populated area in the Anjaw district of Arunachal, offered a mesmerizing journey that took the travelers through some incredible experiences, including a suspension bridge that offered an adrenaline rush.

While there, an artist set up camp on the hilltop, preparing to sketch the unfolding moment. Vloggers with drones and gadgets gathered around a small campfire, serving hot black tea that warmed the cold air. As the first rays of sunlight touched the opposite hill, a red glow spread across the landscape, resembling an artist's brushstroke. It was a stunning sight – the first rays of sunlight illuminating Indian soil. The moment was exhilarating.

As the artist finished his sketch, the group began descending, accompanied by a young boy from the Meyor tribe, who shared stories of his tribe, their agrarian lifestyle, and their festivals. His deep connection to his community and the environment was both inspiring and humbling.

After a short rest and a hot breakfast, the group began their journey back to Wakro. With well-deserved rest that evening, they departed for Dibrugarh the next morning, bringing their journey to a close. Reflecting on the adventure, this journey to Dong Valley, it is fitting to share the quote, "Every adventure starts with a single step."



Dong Valley was mesmerizing, with several scenic stops along the way. The first stop was at Namsai, home to the Tai Khanti tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. This progressive tribe traces its roots to Burma, having migrated in the 16th century. Known for their appreciation of art and literature, they are the only tribe in Arunachal with their own script, Lik-Tai, and follow Theravada Buddhism, much like the Burmese. The group had lunch at a local restaurant, where they enjoyed a traditional meal of dal, rice, local greens, chicken cooked with bamboo shoots, and optional pork.

The next stop was the Golden Pagoda, also known as 'Kongmu Kham' in the local dialect. This newly constructed architectural marvel was heavily influenced by Burmese designs, standing in stark contrast to the gompas and monasteries typically seen in other parts of India.

The group was fortunate enough to witness a full rehearsal of Kalaripayattu by the Madras Regiment, an incredible martial art display. A cycle rally for civilians, supported by the army, also took place to commemorate the Battle of Walong, a tribute to the bravery of soldiers who fought in extreme conditions. After some time spent engaging

Don Bosco College students visit Divar Island on educational field trip



The FY BBA Group Eco Restorers, in collaboration with Club Ecotiva of Don Bosco College, Panjim, organized a field trip to Divar Island. This activity aimed to raise awareness about the importance of ecological restoration, promote sustainable practices, and educate students about the rich biodiversity of Goa's coastal ecosystems. The field trip was attended by students from the FY BBA and FY BBA (Travel & Tourism) programs, along with faculty members, including Assistant professors Glenda Mascarenhas (Faculty in charge of the Ecotiva club), Shareen Alphonso, and Sr Catherine Prislida.

The trip offered participants an opportunity to engage with nature firsthand, fostering a deeper understanding of environmental

conservation and the urgent need to protect fragile ecosystems. It was part of a group activity for the subject of Environmental Psychology, led by Velroid, Siddharth, and their team. Students were



transported to Divar Island by ferry, enjoying a picturesque journey across the Mandovi River.

A guided tour was conducted by local heritage experts, who discussed the history of Divar Island, the significance of its natural resources, and key ecological observations. The trip allowed participants to closely examine the island's flora and fauna and understand the delicate balance that sustains the local ecosystem. The students had the chance to visit magnificent places of worship, the mangrove safari site, the Vanxim ferry crucifix, and observe the local fishing activities.

After the field activities, an interactive session was held, and spot prizes were awarded for a quiz. The field trip to Divar Island proved to be both educational and enlightening, providing valuable insights into the importance of ecological conservation. It deepened the participants' understanding of the island's fragile ecosystems and instilled a sense of responsibility towards safeguarding such unique natural resources.

Film screening

Sachin Chatte will host the Cinephile Film Club screening of the film, 'Fahrenheit 451' (1966) directed by Francois Truffaut. Based on the popular novel of the same name by Ray Bradbury, 'Fahrenheit 451' was French auteur Francois Truffaut's only English film. Set in the future, this dystopian tale is about firemen who burn all and any literature if it is found. One of the firemen develops a conscience and starts reading a book that he was supposed to burn. Nominated for the Golden Lion at Venice, Martin Scorsese called the film an "underrated picture" that influenced his own films.

Venue: Maquinez Palace, Panjim
Date: April 17
Time: 6.30 pm



Herald Gaming Console

Dilbert

Garfield

Wizard of id

crossword 4821

ACROSS
1- Heavenly strings; 5- Damp; 10- Dressed; 14- Have ___ in one's bonnet; 15- Pound part; 16- Jumps on one leg; 17- Fast time; 18- Baked dough; 19- Med. school course; 20- Fauna's partner; 22- Cinderella candidate; 24- Dedicated to the ___ Love; 27- Shootout; 28- Sicilians, e.g.; 32- Intended; 35- Poor grade; 36- Stagnant; 38- Luminous; 40- Comfort; 42- Facial expression used by Elvis Presley; 44- Neet rival; 45- For ___ (cheap); 47- Caught congers; 49- Once ___ while; 50- Sporting blades; 52- Study of soils; 54- Womanizer; 56- Trevi Fountain site; 57- Droopy; 60- Roof overhangs; 64- ___ want for Christmas...; 65- To the point; 68- Roman tyrant; 69- Woodstock singer Joan; 70- City in Nebraska; 71- Sawbucks; 72- Captain Hook's sidekick; 73- U-Haul competitor; 74- Cream-filled cookie;

at; 30- Author of fables; 31- Shuteye; 33- Marsh of mystery; 34- Inanimate object; 37- Conger catcher; 39- Cafeteria carrier; 41- Electrify; 43- Change the decor; 46- An earth sci.; 48- Capitol feature; 51- Potential mate; 53- Simple shed; 55- Adversary; 57- Close with force; 58- Nautical direction; 59- Alum; 61- Swerve; 62- Fish-eating eagle; 63- Fair; 64- Stomach muscles, for short; 66- ___ loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah'; 67- Corn unit;

DOWN
1- One of two equal parts; 2- Cain's victim; 3- Nevada resort city; 4- Gasoline; 5- Crowd; 6- Belonging to us; 7- Supermodel; 8- Burn with water; 9- Lack of variety; 10- College ecclesiastic; 11- Solitary; 12- On ___ with; 13- Summer hrs.; 21- Black cuckoos; 23- Rind; 25- Breaks bread; 26- Senseless; 28- Brainchild; 29- Poke fun

sudoku 4821

Instructions for Sudoku
9 x 9 letter: To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every number from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes

solution 4820

6	7	1	4	3	8	2	9	5
4	2	8	7	5	9	3	1	6
3	9	5	2	6	1	8	4	7
2	6	4	9	1	3	5	7	8
7	8	3	5	4	2	9	6	1
5	1	9	8	7	6	4	2	3
1	5	2	3	9	7	6	8	4
8	4	6	1	2	5	7	3	9
9	3	7	6	8	4	1	5	2