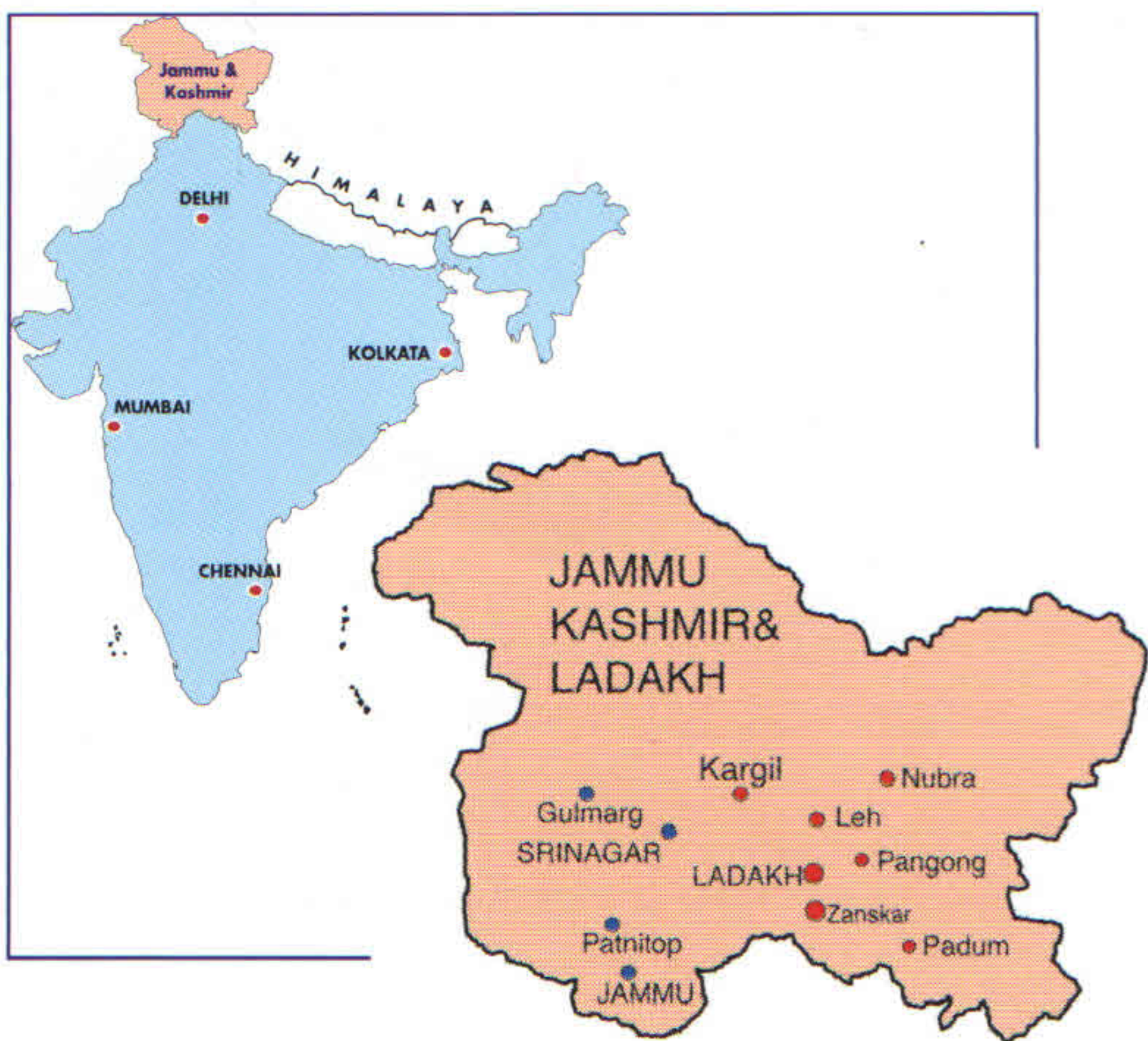


# JAMMU KASHMIR LADAKH



Incredible!ndia





# Jammu

*Romantic green meadows, majestic mountains, bewitching lakes and valleys... yes, Jammu has the uncanny ability to surprise you at every turn. Tucked snugly between glittering shikhars on ancient temples and holy shrines perched atop hillsides, lie the most picturesque scenes you can ever imagine. But, these fascinating places have to be discovered.*

The Winter capital of the State Jammu and Kashmir, Jammu is perched on the first sloping ridge rising from the plains of Punjab. The meandering Tawi river flows in the foothills and in the backdrop is the imposing Tikuta range. Jammu is worth a visit for the temples and for being the cradle of Dogra culture. Jammu is also fast emerging as a commercial centre.

<b>Area</b>	: 20.36 Sq.km
<b>Altitude</b>	: 305 metres.
<b>Temperature</b>	: Max. Min.
<b>Summer</b>	: 43.0°C 23.4°C
<b>Winter</b>	: 26.2°C 4.3°C
<b>Rainfall</b>	: 107 cms (July to September).
<b>Best Season</b>	: September to April.
<b>Clothing</b>	: Summer: Light Cottons, Winter: Woollens.
<b>Languages</b>	: Dogri, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu and English

## PLACES TO SEE

### Peer Khoh

A cave shrine located on the Circular Road, 3.5kms, from the heart of the town. There is a Shiva Lingam formed naturally in the cave.

### Ranbireshwar Temple

Located on Shalimar Road near the New Secretariat, and built by Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1883 AD, Ranbireshwar Temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva.

### Raghunath Temple

Situated in the heart of the city and surrounded by a group of other temples, this temple is dedicated to Lord Rama.

### Mahamaya Temple and City Forest

The city forest surrounds the ancient Mahamaya Temple overlooking the river Tawi.

### Bahu Fort

Situated on a rock face on the left bank of the river Tawi, this is perhaps the oldest fort and edifice in the city only 5 kms. from Jammu

### Bagh-e-Bahu

The Fort provide a pleasant view of the city.

### Peer Baba

Behind the Civil Airport is the famous Dargah of the Muslim saint, Peer Budhan Ali Shah.

### Mubarak Mandi Palace

The architecture is a blend of Rajashthani, Mughal and even Baroque European influences. The most stunning segment is the Sheesh Mahal.

## MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERIES

### Amar Mahal Palace Museum

Exhibits: Pahari paintings, family portraits of rulers of Jammu and Kashmir, a library. Of interest by itself is the building, a former palace designed like a French Chateau, in which the Museum is housed.

### Dogra Art Gallery

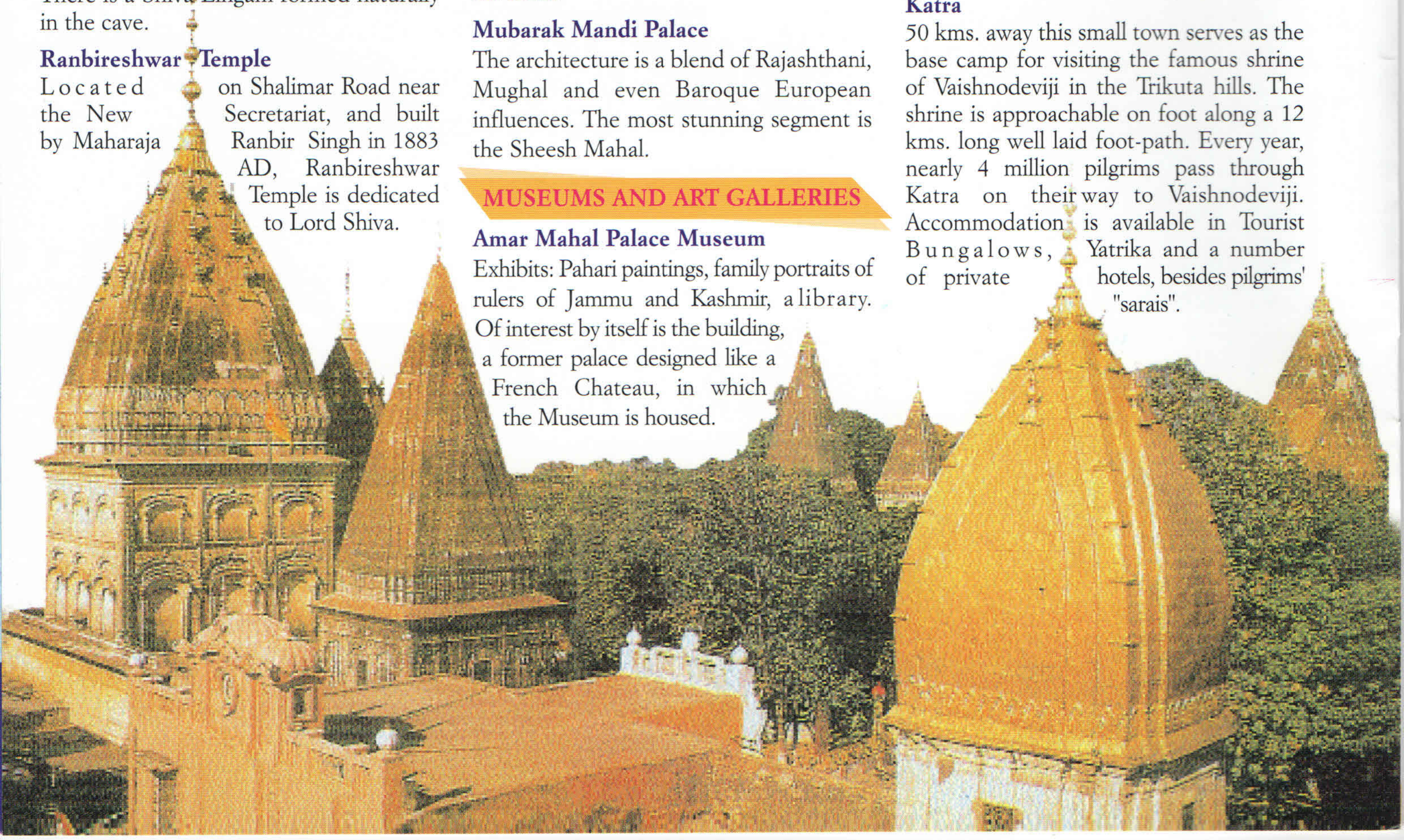
This is located in the erstwhile Pink Hall of the old Mubarak Mandi Palace Complex.



## EXCURSIONS

### Katra

50 kms. away this small town serves as the base camp for visiting the famous shrine of Vaishnodeviji in the Trikuta hills. The shrine is approachable on foot along a 12 kms. long well laid foot-path. Every year, nearly 4 million pilgrims pass through Katra on their way to Vaishnodeviji. Accommodation is available in Tourist Bungalows, Yatrika and a number of private hotels, besides pilgrims' "sarais".





**Kud** (103 kms.)

This popular resort is situated on the Jammu-Srinagar highway, at an altitude of 1738 meters.

**Patnitop** (110 kms.)

This famous hill resort is perched on a beautiful plateau, at an altitude of 2024 meters across which the Jammu-Srinagar highway passes. Enveloped by the thickly wooded forests, Patnitop offers beautiful picnic spots, peaceful walks and breathtaking views of the mountainscape of the Chenab basin. In winter, the resort is generally covered with a thick mantle of snow thus providing opportunities for various snow games including skiing.

**Sanasar**

129 kms. from Jammu and only 19 kms. from Patnitop, Sanasar is a cup shaped meadow surrounded by gigantic conifers. A place for a quiet holiday, the meadow has now been developed as a golf course. It also provides opportunities for paragliding.

**Batote** (125 kms.)

Situated at an altitude of 1560 meters on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway, this resort straddles the forested slopes of the Patnitop mountain range, overlooking the spectacular lie of the Chenab gorge.

**Gauri Kund**

Short of Sudh Mahadev is the legendary spring where the Goddess Parvati used to bathe before commencing Her daily prayers at Sudh Mahadev. This spring came to be named after Her as "Gauri Kund".

**Mantalai**

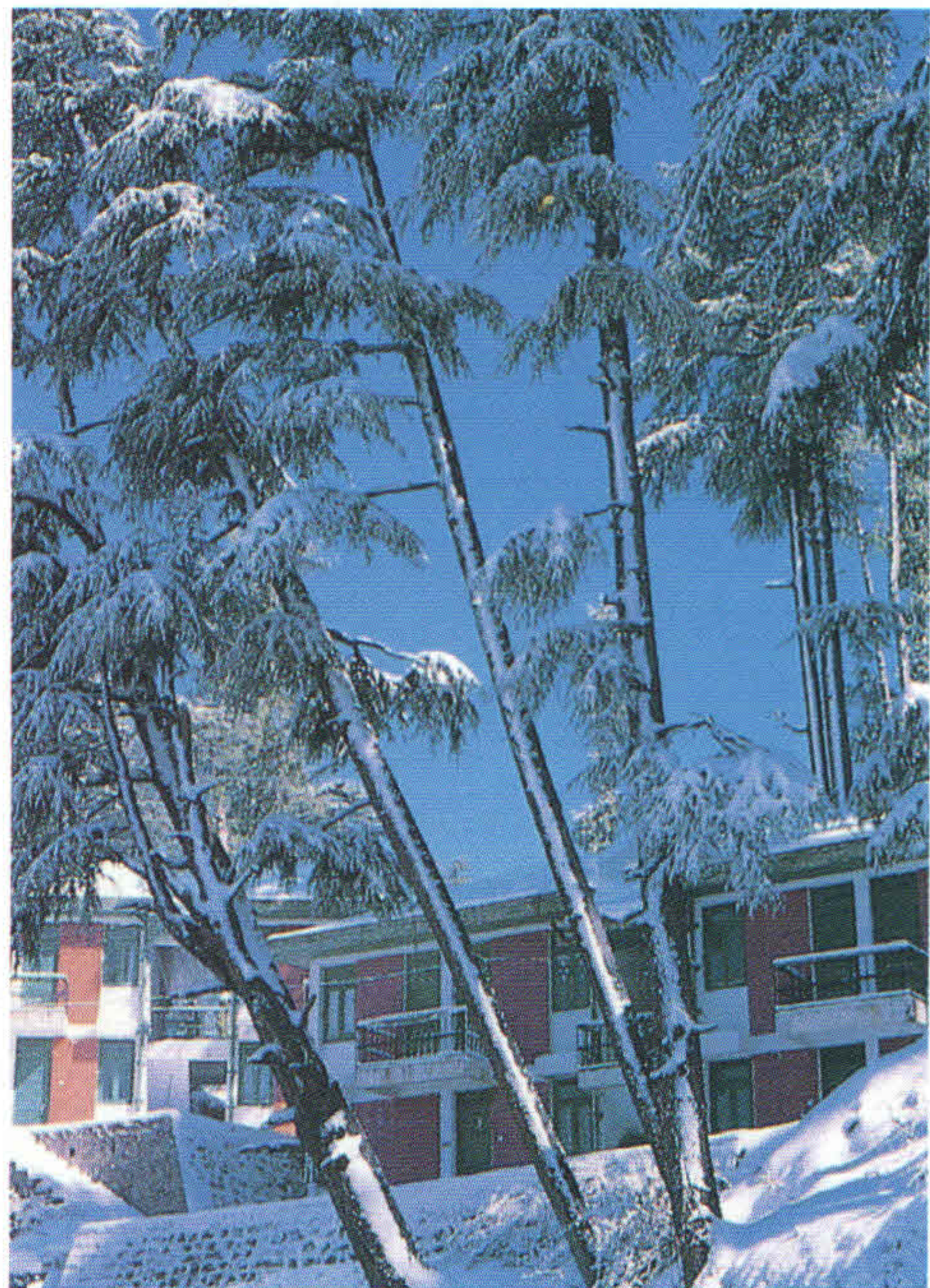
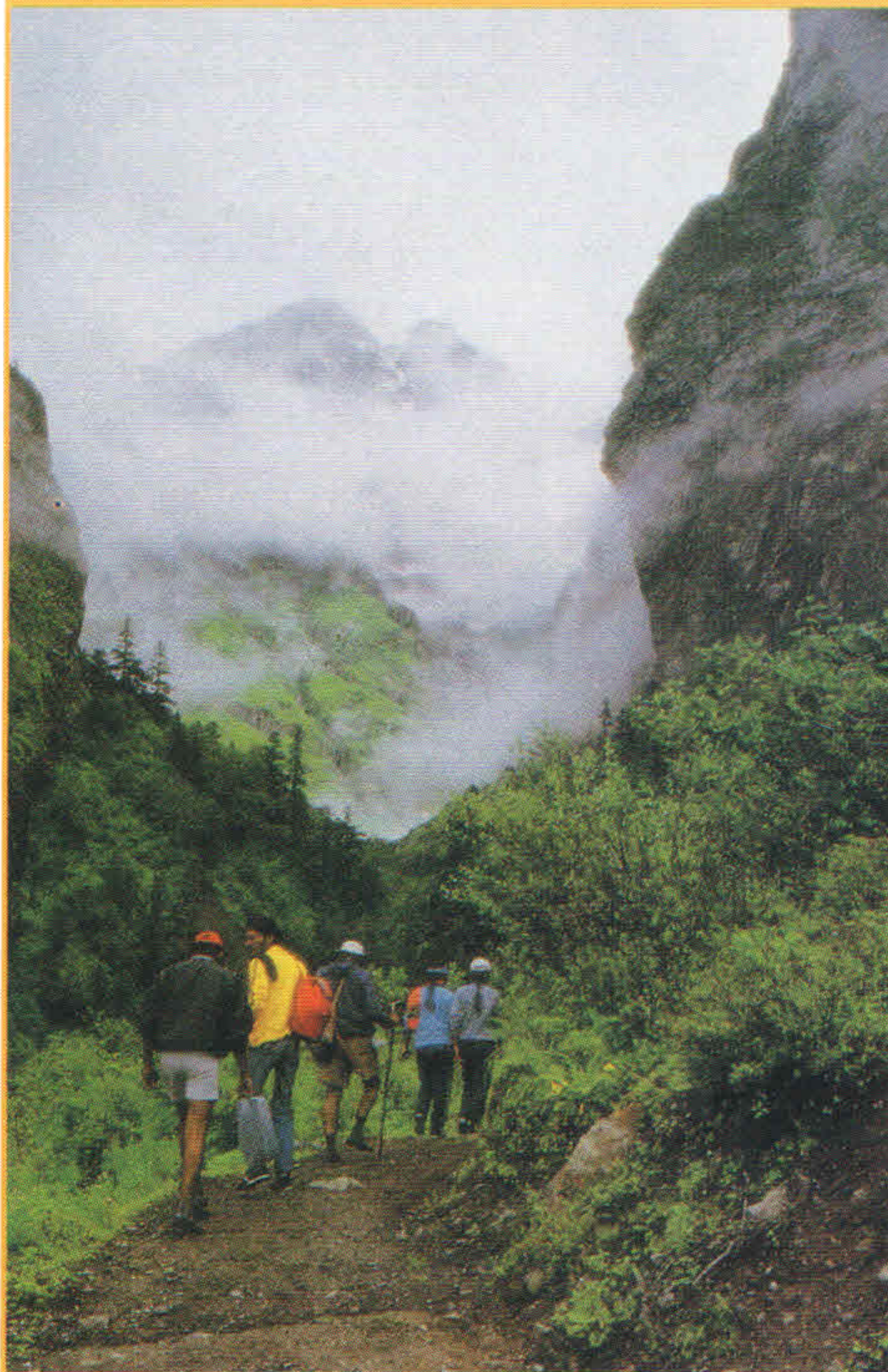
It is believed that Lord Shiva got married to the Goddess Parvati here.

**Mansar Lake** (62 kms.)

A beautiful lake fringed by forest-covered hills. Boating facilities are available on the spot.

**Surinsar Lake**

It is a picturesque spot with a lake surrounded by wooded hills.

**ADVENTURES SPORTS****Trekking**

A large range of trekking options are available in the Jammu area. Summer is the season when all the routes are open but some trekking routes are open in winter. There are excellent camping sites in the wilderness where you can camp when you are trekking for 2-3 days. The Sudarani-Jungle Gali-Jasar Kote-Sanasar route in the jungle gali area lets you choose from any of the three exciting treks.

*Facilities Available*

The Tourism Department has 'Trekking Equipment Hire Shops' at Jammu, Kud and Rajouri. These stock local and imported trekking gear. Trekking parties and trekkers can hire the equipment at fixed rates.

**Skiing**

At Patnitop, ski courses are conducted in the months of January and February. During the Winter months there are introductory courses for tourists. The gentle graded ski slopes of Patnitop are ideal for beginners. Madha Top (5-6 kms. from Patnitop on the Sanasar Road) has excellent possibilities for all levels of skiing. After the newly planned ski-lift becomes operational, Madha Top will offer a range of skiing options for both professional skiers and beginners.

*Facilities Available*

For tourists taking the J&KTDC package tour, ski equipment are available at Patnitop and Sanasar. Also available are wooden sledges locally.

**Aero-Sports**

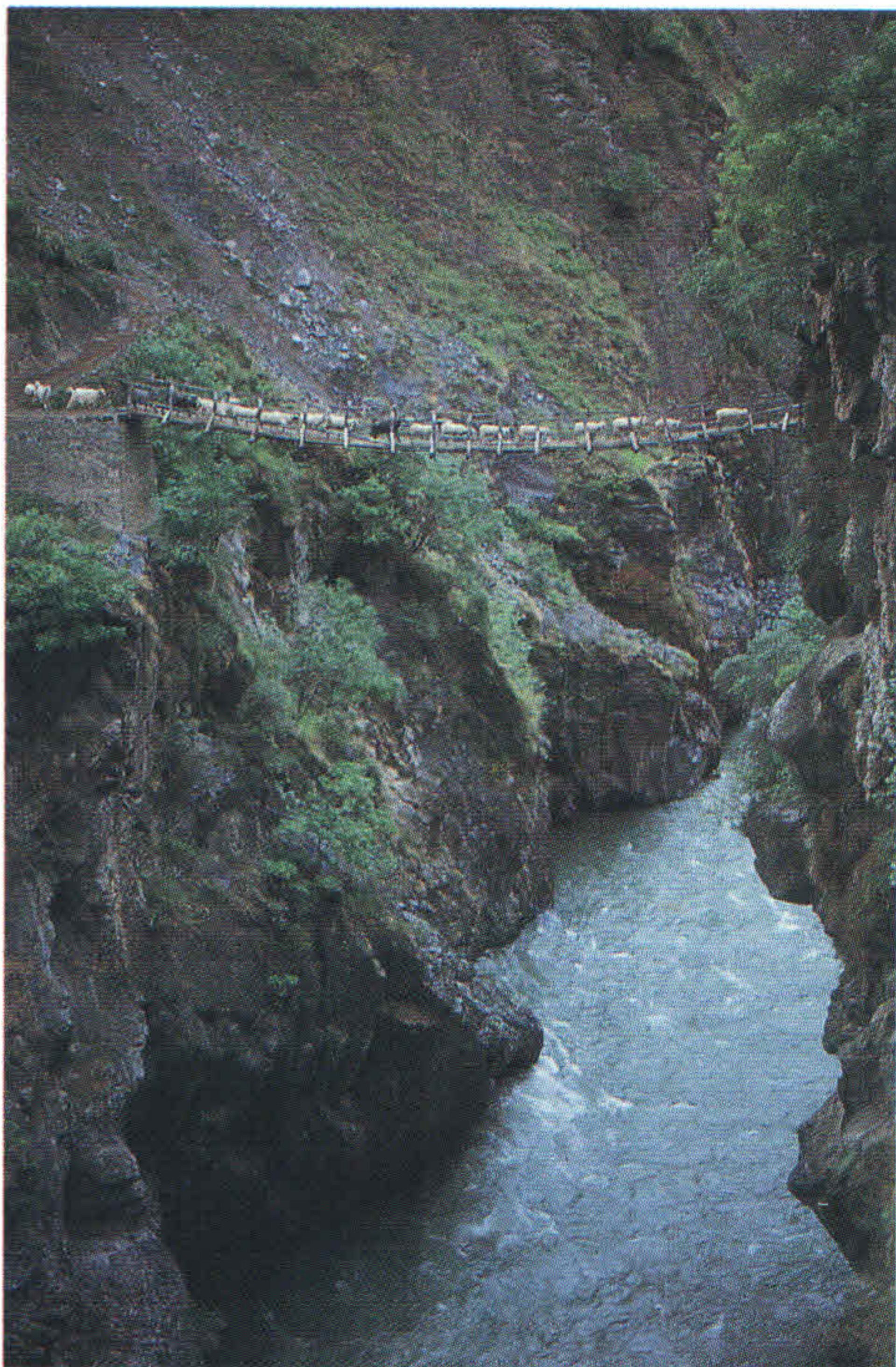
J&K Tourism has introduced Paragliding at Sanasar and Jammu.

**Fishing**

River Tawi is famous for a variety of fish like Mahaseer, Cat fish, Labio, Mahi, etc. Permits for fishing can be obtained from The Deputy Director, Fisheries Department, Jammu.

**OTHER PLACES TO SEE**

Shiv Khori, Dera Baba Banda, Purmandal, Krimchi, Jajjar Kotli, Akhnoor, Salal Dam and Lake, Baba Dhansar.

**SHOPPING**

Jammu and Kashmir is famous for its handicrafts. Main shopping areas of Jammu are Vir Marg, Raghunath Bazaar and Hari Market.

**Government Emporium**

J&K Government Arts Emporium, Vir Marg.

**HOW TO GET THERE****Air**

Jammu is on the Indian Airlines and Jet Airways Network, connecting it with Delhi, Leh and Srinagar.

**Rail**

Jammu is linked through convenient overnight trains. It also has excellent rail connection with other parts of the country with many fast and superfast trains.

**Bus Service**

Daily bus services operates to and from Jammu to Delhi, Amritsar, Ambala, Chandigarh, Shimla and Manali.

**Local Transport Coaches**

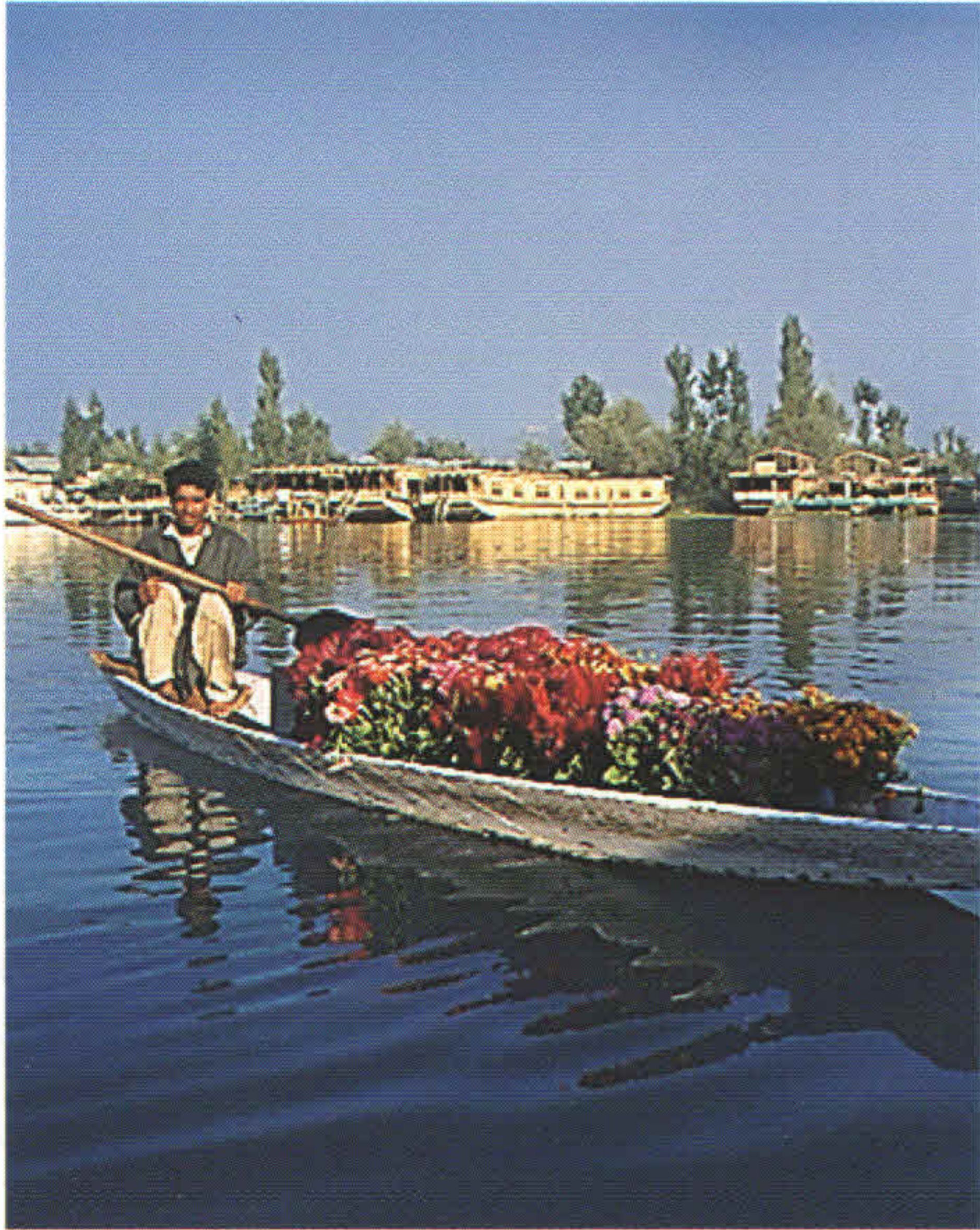
Luxury coaches are operated by J&K Tourism Development Corporation and the J&K Road Transport Corporation.

**Tourist Taxis** are easily available everywhere.



# Kashmir

Kashmir is a multi-faceted diamond set like a jewel on the map of India. Two major Himalayan ranges, the great Himalaya and the Pir Panjal, surround the Valley from the north and south respectively. The Mughals aptly called Kashmir 'Paradise on Earth' and travelled long distances to spend the summers in its cool environs. Here they discovered the Valley's fabled hill stations and laid Srinagar's famous Mughal Gardens. They also patronized the development of art and crafts and left behind a rich heritage of exquisite artisanship.

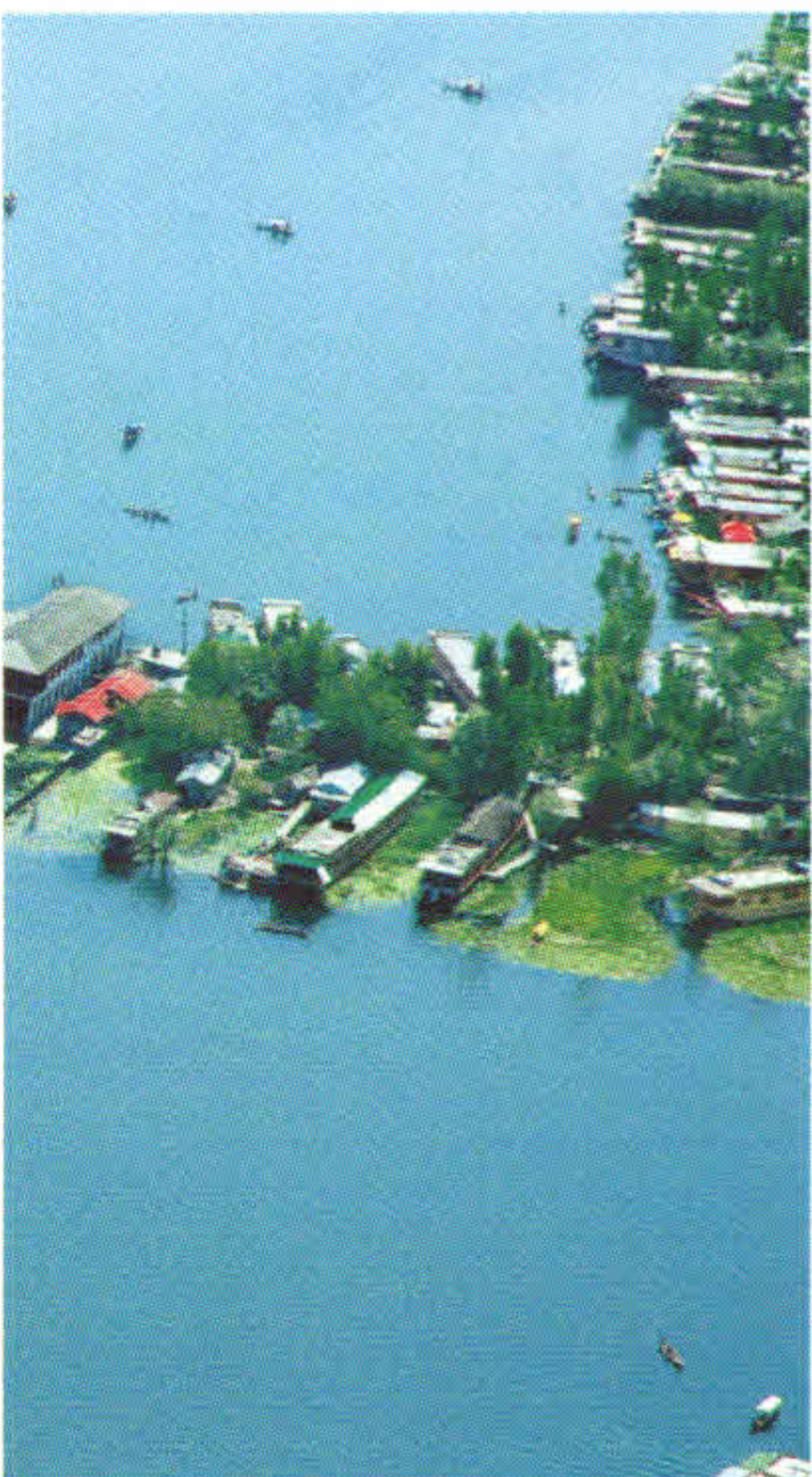


## Srinagar The Lake City

**S**rinagar (1,730 m) is the hub and heart of Kashmir. The **Dal & Nagin Lakes** enhance its picturesque setting. An ancient city steeped in legend and history dating back to the BC era, Srinagar today is a resort for tourists to experience the magical beauty of the valley that has attracted visitors from all over the world since time immemorial.

## Dal Lake

**T**he Dal Lake is Srinagar's most distinctive landmark. It is divided by causeways into four parts, the Nagin Lake being one of them. Not merely a lifeless body of water, the Dal is unique for the communities that have made it their home, from fishermen to houseboat owners. There are fields of lotus blossoms in parts of the lake, vegetable patches, shops, and even villages. The best way of exploring the lake and the sites on its shores is by Shikara boat. **Srinagar's** main attraction is the charm of staying in a houseboat. The experience of



Kashmir is a land where many holiday ideas are realised, a gift of its spectacular landscape and distinctive seasons. In winter, when snow carpets the valley, you can go **skiing and sledge riding** along the slopes of Gulmarg. Or, stay back in **Srinagar** and simply enjoy the bare snow-covered landscape from the windows of a heated room. In spring and summer (April-August), the honey-dewed orchards, flower-carpeted meadows, rippling lakes and blue skies beckon everyone to sample the many delights of the Valley.

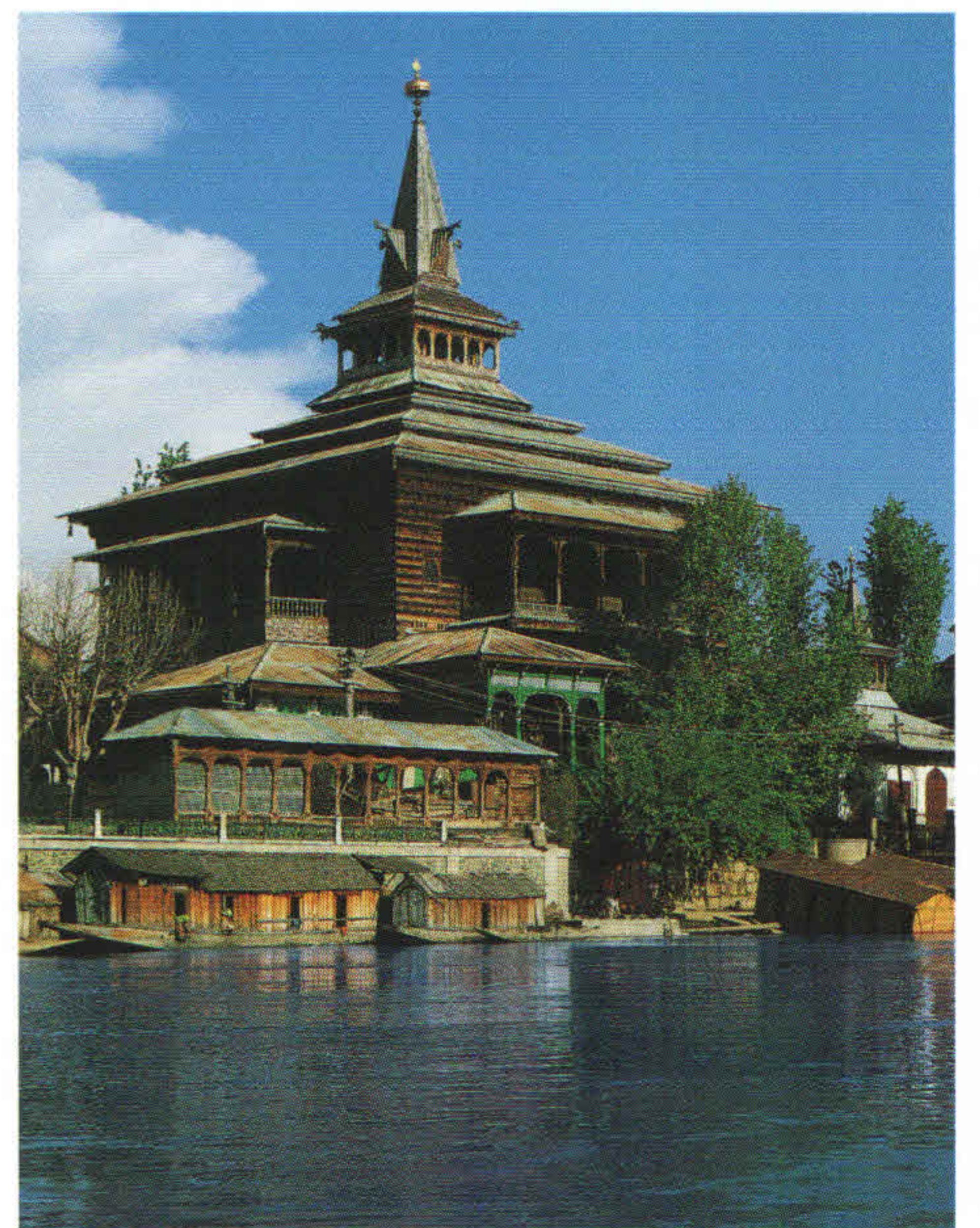
living on the lakes in a cedar-panelled elegant bedroom, with all the conveniences of a luxury hotel is unique and endearing.

## Mughal Gardens

**A**nother distinctive feature of Srinagar is the **Mughal Gardens** with their terraced lawns, cascading fountains and bright flowerbeds, overlooking the panorama of the **Dal Lake**. **Shalimar** (15km) the farthest of the three gardens was built by Emperor Jahangir for his wife **Nur Jehan**. **Nishat Bagh** (11 km) was designed in 1633 AD by Asaf Khan, brother of **Nur Jehan**. Chashmashahi (Royal Spring), the spring of refreshing sweet water cherished by the Mughals, is surrounded by a **Mughal Garden** laid out by Shah Jahan in 1632 AD. On a nearby spur of the mountain is the ancient monument of **Pari Mahal**, planned out by **Dara Shikoh** as a Sufi School, surrounded by a beautiful garden.

## The Old City

**A**very interesting and informative sightseeing option in Srinagar is the "Old City" which has a quaint medieval charm of its own and a strong tradition of handicrafts. Travelling through its labyrinthine alleyways, one catches sight of gaily embroidered fabric-raw material for exquisite carpets and shawls-hanging out to dry from top-floor windows of houses. The old city also conceals within its maze, Kashmir's many ancient shrines and mosques among which **Shah-i-Hamdan**, **Makhdoom Sahib**, **Patthar Masjid**, **Jama Masjid** and **Pir Dastagir Sahib** are the most prominent.



## SIGHTSEEING

**S**rinagar is endowed with many historic buildings and heritage sites. **Hazratbal** situated on the western shores of Dal lake is the most prestigious mosque. It houses a hair of **Prophet Muhammad** which is displayed to the public on religious occasions, usually accompanied by fairs. **Jama Masjid**, the other prominent mosque, is a historic building of mammoth proportions, built in the Indo-Saracenic tradition around a courtyard and supported by 370 wooden pillars. Located at **Nawhatta** in the Old City, it was originally built by **Sultan Sikandar** in 1400 AD, and later enlarged by his son, **Zainul-Abidin**. Another historic mosque of Srinagar is the **Shah-i-Hamadan Mosque**, the first mosque ever built in Kashmir. Shah-i-Hamadan, who came from Persia in the 13th century, was responsible for the spread of Islam in Kashmir. The mosque was first built in 1395 on the same spot where Shah-i-Hamadan offered prayers.





The **Shankaracharya Temple**, another prominent landmark of Srinagar, is built on a high **octagonal plinth**, on the hill known as **Takht-i-Sulaiman**. The site dates back to 250 BC and is associated with the Hindu philosopher **Shankaracharya** who visited Kashmir ten centuries ago.

The **Mughal Fort** on the hill called **Hari Parbat** dominates Srinagar. It was developed to its full size in the 18th century by the Afghan governor, Ata Mohammed Khan. The hill of Hari Parbat is considered sacred to the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs alike. For the Hindus it is sacred due to the presence of the temple of Sharika, a form of Goddess Durga or Shakti. On its southern side is the historic shrine of **Makhdoom Sahib**, a Sufi Saint of Kashmir revered by people of all faiths. Further down the hill is the historic Gurudwara Chhatti Padshahi near the Kathi Darwaza gates of the Fort. It is associated with the visit of the sixth Sikh Guru to Kashmir.

Outside Srinagar, Pampore (18 km), located on the National Highway, is famous for the saffron that grows here in September and October. Further ahead is Awantipora (29 km), ruins of the ancient township founded by King Avantiverman who ruled Kashmir during the 9th Century AD. This complex consists of two imposing temples in stone; the larger one of Siva is marked by huge stone walls while the smaller one of Vishnu is half a mile up the main complex. Near the town of Anantnag (65 km) is the medieval temple complex of Martand built by King **Laitaditya Muktapida** (7-8 century AD). Its main feature is the colonnaded courtyard dedicated to Surya, the "Sun God".

Kheer Bhavani (27km) in Tulla Mulla village is another of Kashmir's living Hindu heritage sites. It is a temple in the middle of

a spring which symbolises the goddess Ragnya Devi, and is affectionately known as **Kheer Bhawani** on account of the tradition of offering 'kheer' by throngs of devotees to the sacred spring. The spring water magically turns black if any disaster is to occur in Kashmir.

## SHOPPING

Srinagar is the shopper's paradise for Kashmir handicrafts which are prized everywhere for their exquisite craftsmanship. Kashmir carpets in both wool and silk, is a lifetime investment with selections ranging from the simple to the



most intricate patterns handed down the generations. Other handicrafts include papier-mache items, carved walnut wood furniture and accessories stone jewellery boxes, woollen shawls, kashmiri embroidery, and many more. The main shopping areas for handicrafts are the Boulevard, Dalgate, Polo View, The Bund, Residency Road and Lal Chowk.

## GOLFING

Kashmir is famous for its long golfing seasons stretching from April to November. The golf course at **Gulmarg** (2,650 m) is the world's highest green golf course; the Gulmarg Golf Club was set up by the British in 1904. The Kashmir Golf Club in Srinagar has an 18-hole course with common fairways. The latest addition to Kashmir's golfing infrastructure is the ultra modern Royal Springs Golf Course at **Chashmashahi**, designed by the famous golf course designer, Robert Trent Jr. One of the most picturesque courses in Asia, the Royal Springs is the venue of many prestigious golfers.

## EXCURSIONS

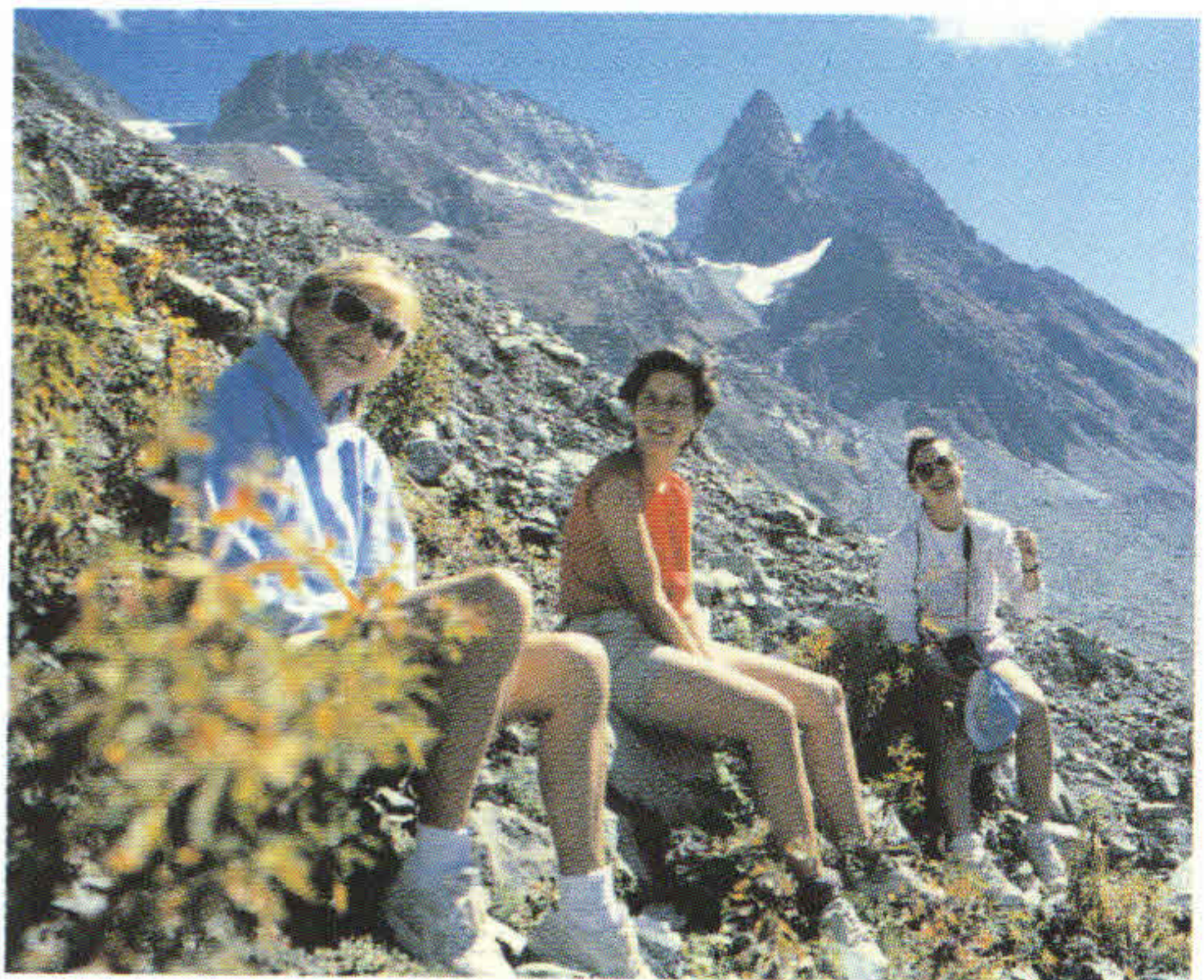
Gulmarg (2,650 m/56 km) is one of India's premier hill resorts. Historically a favourite haunt of Emperor Jahangir, Gulmarg today is not merely a mountain resort of exceptional beauty- it also turns into India's premier ski resort in winter. The famous shrine of **Baba Reshi**, a highly revered Kashmiri Sufi saint, is another attraction of Gulmarg and is thronged by thousands of devotees all year

round.

Pony riding is a popular and exhilarating activity in Gulmarg. The **Gondola Cable Car** offers rides to the upland meadow of **Kongdori** for viewing the Himalayan peaks in summer and for downhill skiing in winter.

Pahalgam (2,130 m/ 90km) is situated at the confluence of the **Sheshnag** and the Lidder streams. Once a humble shepherd's village it is now Kashmir's premier summer resort, cool even during the height of summer. The resort is surrounded by many places of interest, the best being the upland meadow of **Baisaran. Hajan**, on the way to Chandanwari, is an idyllic spot for picnics. Mamal, one of the eight tiny villages of **Pahalgam**, has a 5th century Shiva temple. Chandanwari (2,895 m), 16 km from Pahalgam is the starting point for the annual Amarnathji Yatra held in July-August. The **Amarnath Cave** (3,952 m) houses an ice stalagmite in the shape of a natural **Shivling**, which waxes and wanes with the moon and is the focus of worship of more than 150,000 devotees who go on the annual pilgrimage.

**Sonamarg** (2,730 m/ 84 km) lies at the head of the Sindh Valley. The drive through this valley presents a spectacular facet of the Kashmir countryside. Sonamarg is surrounded by colourful mountains and thick pine forests. There are many attractive walks, the best being a trek or pony ride to the **Thajiwas glacier**. Sonamarg also serves as a base for the **Amarnath Yatra** from the Baltal route.





## WINTER IN KASHMIR

Winter is off-season in Srinagar, but it is the time of the year when you'll be able to enjoy the clear, crisp air and the luxury of a heated room in a houseboat or a lake-side hotel. Enjoy the bare tree, blue skies in winter of Kashmir.



## FACT FILE

**BY AIR:** Indian Airlines and Jet Airways operate regular daily flights to Srinagar from Delhi, Mumbai and Jammu. Sahara Airlines operates daily direct flights from Delhi. Srinagar airport is 14 km from the city.

**BY RAIL:** Jammu Tawi is a major railway junction of Northern India and receives a large number of Express, Mail and Passenger trains from most parts of India. Buses and taxis to Srinagar are available from the railway station & city centre.

**BY ROAD:** National Highway 1-A, connecting Srinagar with Jammu, is an all-weather road maintained by the Border Roads Organization (BRO). The famous Jawahar Tunnel that connects

Jammu with the Kashmir Valley across the Pir Panjal range falls en route. J&KSRTC operates various categories of buses between Jammu and Srinagar, and a daily Video-Coach service from Delhi. J&KTDC also operates deluxe coaches between Jammu & Srinagar on demand. Taxis are available for Srinagar from the Special Taxi stands in Jammu City, Railway Station and Airport.

**SEASON:** Best season for visiting Kashmir is May to July and again September to October. Winter tourism begins with the first snowfall generally by mid-December and lasts till March during which skiing and other snow sports are possible at Gulmarg.

## HOTELS & ACCOMMODATION

*Srinagar has a wide variety of accommodation ranging from 5-star deluxe hotels and Deluxe Houseboats to modest guest houses. The best location for hotels is the Boulevard around the Dal lake. In the hill resorts of Gulmarg and Pahalgam too, a range of hotels are available. J&K Tourism Development Corporation (J&KTDC) has a large number of self-contained alpine cottages and Tourist Bungalows at Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Sonamarg.*

### **JAMMU (Tel. Code 0191)**

#### **Hotel Asia Jammu-Tawi \*\*\*\***

Tel: 2435757-60 Fax: 2435756

E-mail: asiaotel@sancharnet.in

#### **Hotel Jammu Ashok\*\*\*\***

Tel: 2543571-6 Fax: 2547110

#### **Hari Niwas Palace Hotel (Heritage)**

Tel: 2543303, 2547216, Fax: 2543180

#### **Hotel Jewel's \*\***

Tel: 2520801 Fax: 2547170

E-mail: jewels@vsnl.com

#### **Hotel Vardaan Jammu (Govt. Approved)**

Tel: 2547414 Fax: 2548286

E-mail: vinns@vsnl.com

#### **K.C. Residency (Govt. Approved)**

Tel: 2520770 Fax: 2575222

E-mail: kcr@kcreidency.com

#### **Modern Hotel (Govt. Approved)**

Tel: 2543425, 2546066, Fax: 2433517

E-mail: kcindustries@hotmail.com

#### **Hotel Samrat**

Tel: 2548212 Fax: 2575711

### **SRINAGAR (Tel. Code 0194)**

#### **Grand Palace Hotel, Palace Road,**

Tel: 2456701-03, Fax: 2453794

#### **Centaur Lake View, Chashmashahi**

Tel: 2475631-33, 2475131-33,

Fax: 2471877

#### **Hotel Broadway \*\*\*\*\***

Tel: 2459001- 3 Fax: 2459004

#### **Meena Group Houseboats \*\*\*\*\***

Tel: 2474044 Fax: 2477662

E-mail: surya@sancharnet.in

#### **Intercontinental The Grand Palace Srinagar Heritage**

Tel: 2470101 Fax: 2453794

E-mail: srinagar@interconti.com

#### **Metro Hotel@Khazir Travels (P) Ltd.,\*\***

Tel: 2477126 Fax: 2478256

E-mail: metrokhaz@sancharnet.in

#### **Ahdoo's Hotel (Govt. Approved)**

Tel: 2472593, 2471984, Fax: 2455251

E-mail: ahdooshotel@yahoo.com



*For further information, please contact local India Tourism Office (or)*

**Director General Tourism, J&K Government, Srinagar:** Tel: 0194-2472449 / 2452690-91. Fax: 2452361

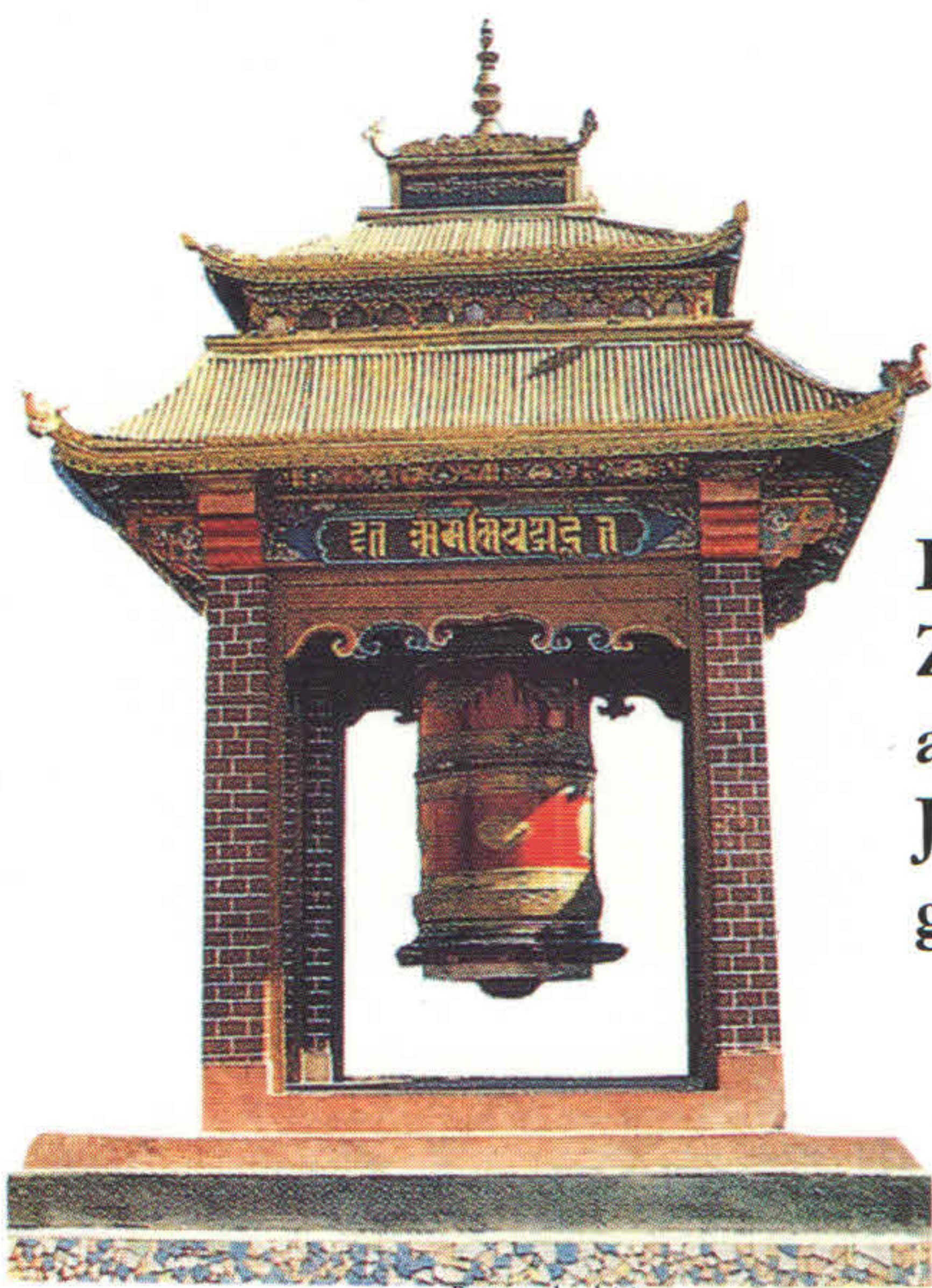
**Jammu:** Tel: 0191-2544527. Fax: 2544842; E-mail: dgt@jktourism.org

**Director Tourism, Jammu:** Tel: 0194-2520409/2548172. Fax: 0191-2548358.



# Ladakh

## The Land of Celebrations



Prayer wheel, lab

### General Information

**Area:** 97,000 sq kms out of which nearly 38,000 sq. kms are under Chinese Occupation since 1962.

**Languages:** Ladakhi including Balti / Purgi, Shina or Dardic, Urdu / Hindi.

**Altitude:** Leh 3505 m, Kargil 2750 m

#### Temperature:

	Maximum	Minimum
Summer	25 deg C	8 deg C
Winter	(-) 5 deg C	(-) 20 deg C

**Rain-fall:** 15 cm, 6" (annual average)

**Clothing:** Cotton & light woollens in summer and heavy woollens including down-filled wind proof upper garments in winter.

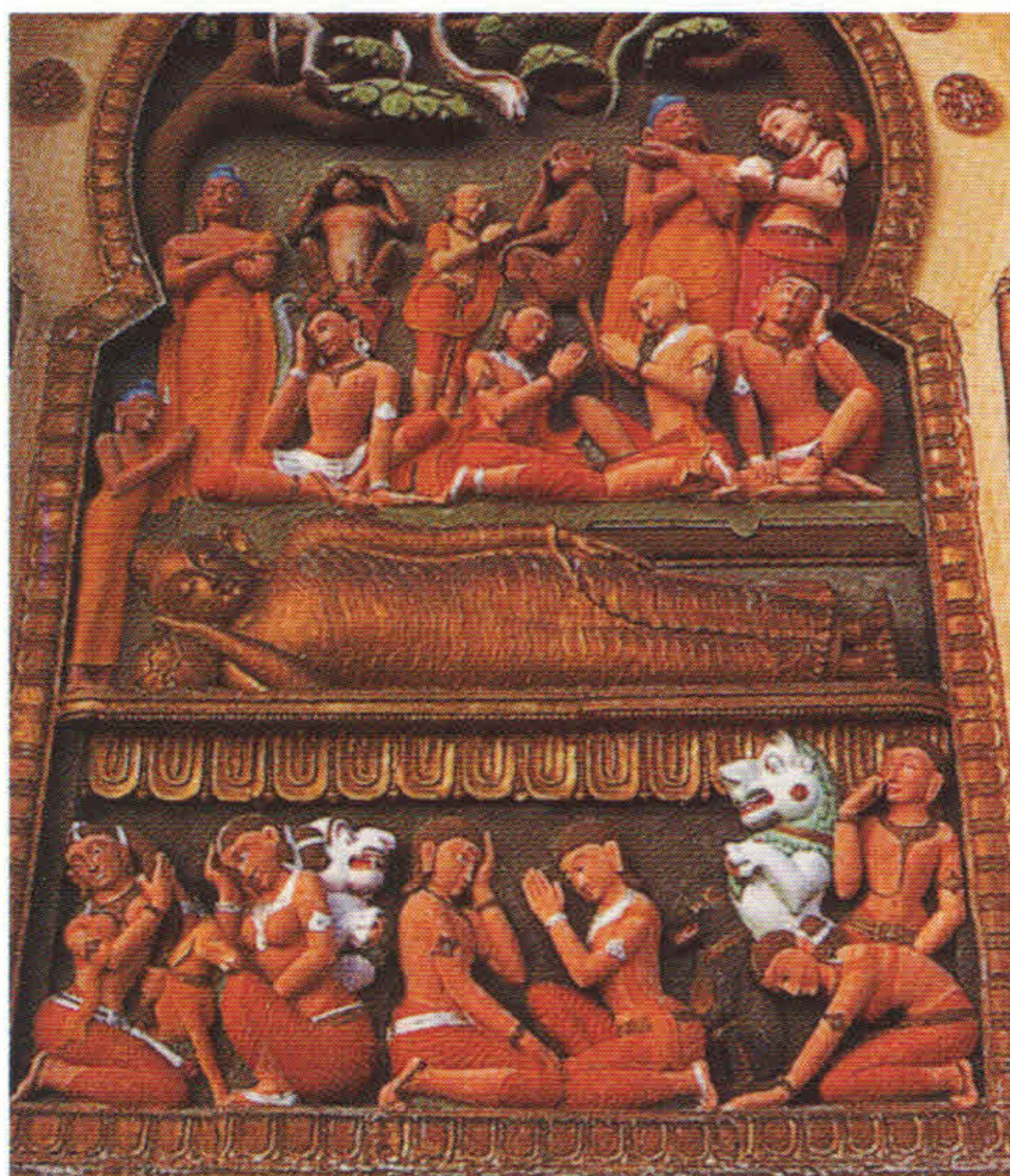
Locked between the Himalayas, the Karakoram and the Ladakh and Zaskar ranges, Ladakh is a high - altitude desert (lowest point, 9,000 ft above sea level). Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh together form the state of Jammu & Kashmir, and each region has a distinct culture, terrain, religion and lifestyle.

Ladakh is a land abounding in awesome physical features, set in an enormous and spectacular environment. Bounded by two of the world's mightiest mountains ranges, the **Karakoram** in the north and the **Great Himalaya** in the south, it is traversed by two other parallel chains, the **Ladakh Range** and the **Zaskar Range**.

In geological terms, this is a young land, formed a few million years ago. Its basic contours, uplifted by tectonic movements, have been modified over the millennia by the process of erosion due to wind and water, sculpted into the form that we see today.

Today a high-altitude desert, sheltered from the rain-bearing clouds of the Indian monsoon by the barrier of the Great Himalaya, Ladakh was once covered by an extensive **lake system**, the vestiges of which still exist on its south-east plateaux of Rupshu and Chushul, in the drainage basins or lakes of Tso-moriri, Tso-kar and Pangong-tso but the main source of water is winter snowfall.

**Dras, Zaskar** and the **Suru Valley** on the Himalaya's northern flanks receive heavy snow in winter. This feeds the glaciers from which melt water, carried down by streams, irrigates the fields in summer.



Decorative Panel at the Shanti Stupa, Leh



An image of the Buddha at Thikse Monastery, Ladakh.



Leh Palace.



## Places of Interest

### LEH The Capital City

Leh town offers a number of sightseeing options for the visitors. A historic town that served as the **royal capital** of the Old Kingdom, it is dominated by the nine-storey palace built by King Singge Namgyal in the grand tradition of Tibetan architecture which is said to have inspired the famous Potala in Lhasa built about half a century later. Above the palace on the **Namgyal Tsemo** hill are the ruins of a fort, the earliest royal residence built by King Tashi Namgyal in the 16th century.

Down in the historic bazaar the main sites to visit are the **Jo-khang**, a newly built **Buddhist temple**, and the imposing historic **mosque** founded in the late 17th century standing. Behind the main bazaar, **Chang Gali** is less bustling, but has interesting little shops selling antiques, traditional cloths and jewellery. In the other direction, down the bazaar are the **Tibetan markets** where one can bargain for **pearls, turquoise, coral, lapis lazuli** and many other kinds of semi-precious stones and jewellery.



A Drok-pa girl. One of the purest Aryan races of Ladakh

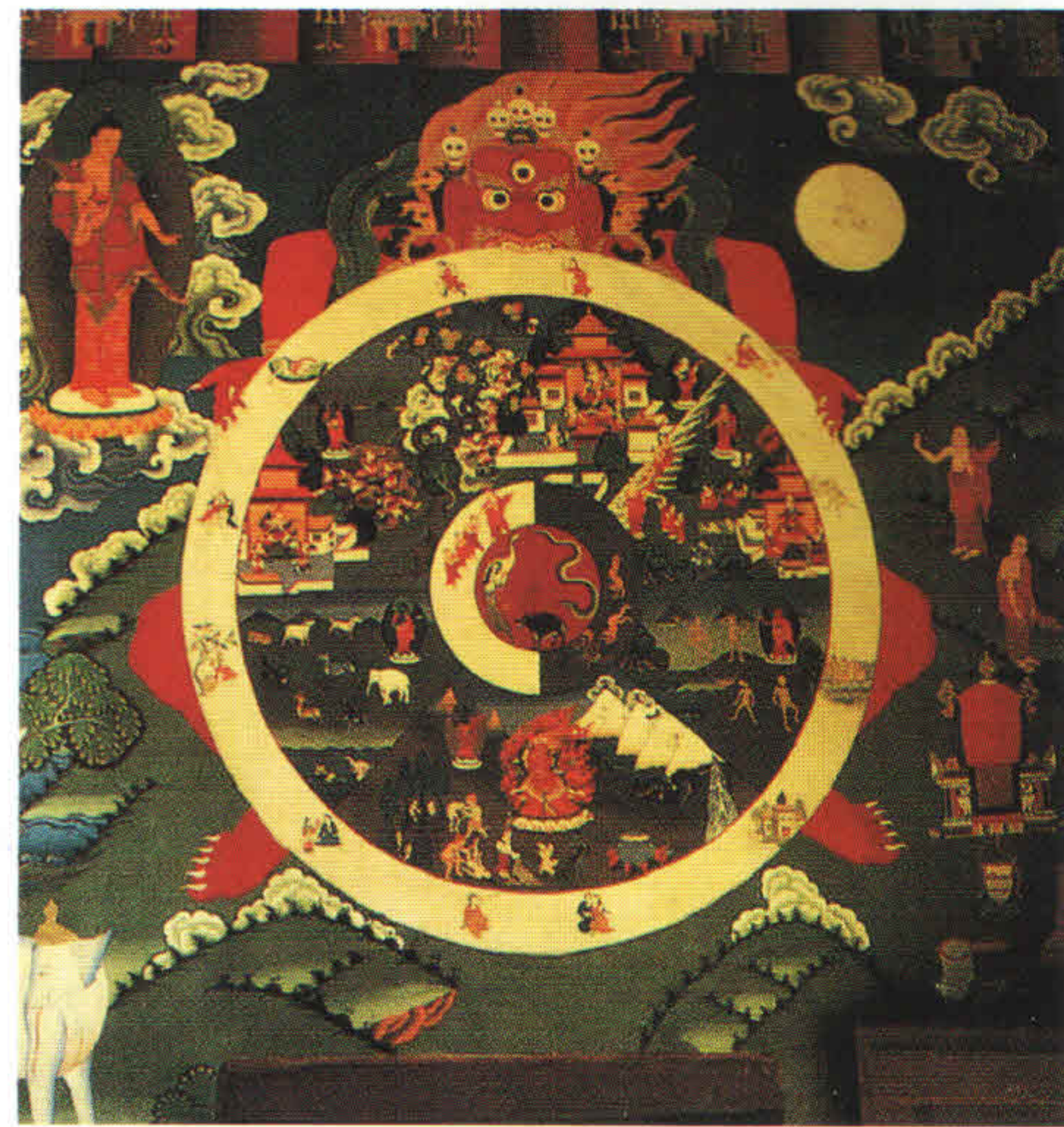
One can also strike off away from the bazaar, past Zangsti and the **Moravian Church** to the Ladakh Ecological Centre. From here a footpath across the fields leads to **Sankar Gompa**, which is half an hour's walk away.

Near the Moravian Church and turn off to Changspa, an attractive suburb of Leh, lying below the hill on which stands the imposing **Ladakh Shanti Stupa**, which can be reached by a winding road. Down past the **Tourist Information Centre** in the old dak Bungalow, follow the Fort Road to **Skara**, another beautiful and prosperous suburb of Leh town.



Camping in the beautiful Ladakh Valley.

There are also several attractive sightseeing and walking destinations within a 10-km radius of Leh. **Sabu**, a charming village with a small gompa, in the same direction, but nearer **Choglamsar**, with the Tibetan refugee settlement including a children's village, a **handicrafts centre** devoted largely to carpet weaving and the **Dalai Lama's prayer-ground, Jiva-tsal**. In the opposite direction, about 8 kms on the Srinagar road, is the turning for **Spituk** village and its imposing monastery.



An old mural of the Wheel of Life at Lamayuru.  
It represents the essential Buddhist doctrine  
— Ultimate escape from the cycles of rebirth

### Monuments

Sightseeing of the historic monuments and major Buddhist gompas (monasteries) are the main attractions of Ladakh. The region's historic heartland is dotted with all the major sites connected with the former kingdom's dynastic history, starting with Leh, the capital, since the building of its nine-storey **Leh palace** in the early 17th century. A few kilometres up the Indus is **Shey Palace**, the most ancient capital, with its captivating palace and temples. Down river, **Basgo**, right on the road, and **Tingmosgang**, a short distance up a **side-valley**. Both these places have the remains of **forts and temples** dating from the period of their brief glory.



Lamas at a prayer meeting in Ladakh.



Pangong Lake, Ladakh.



## Monasteries

The central area of Ladakh has the greatest concentration of major Buddhist monasteries (gompas). Of the twelve situated on or near the Indus, the oldest monastery is that of **Lamayuru** which is believed to have been a sacred site for the pre-Buddhist religion known as **Bon**. The monasteries of **Phiyang**, **Hemis** and **Chemrey** were all founded under the direct patronage of members of the ruling Namgyal dynasty.

The reformist **Gelugs-pa**, or **Yellow-Hat** sect, is also well represented in central Ladakh by the monasteries of **Thiksey**, **Likir**, **Ri-dzong** and **Spituk**, the last of which has branch monasteries at Stok, **Sabu** and **Sankar**. **Ri-dzong** is situated a few kilometres up a side-valley from Uley-Tokpo.

But the jewel among Ladakh's monastic foundations is **Alchi**. Abandoned centuries ago as a place of active worship, it has been lovingly maintained by the monks of Likir, the nearest functioning monastery. Known as Chos-kor, (religious enclave), it comprises five temples, the richest in paintings and images being the Du-khang (assembly hall) and the three-storey **Sum-tsek**.

Visitors are advised to respect their sanctity and appreciate their heritages importance.

## AROUND LEH

### ZANSKAR

Through the Suru valley and over Pensi La is Zanskar Valley (235 km from Kargil). In remarkable contrast to the valley and Leh district, Zanskar's treeless expanse is the least developed part of Ladakh, with no tourist amenities beyond basic accommodation, and no shopping of any kind at district headquarters, Padum. Zanskar is a rich experience for the **trekker** who arrives with full provisions. **River rafting** is possible from Serchu to Nyimu via Padam.

### PADUM

You can drive to Padum, headquarters of the Zanskar sub division of **Kargil district**, along the only **motorable road** from Kargil district, along the only motorable road from Kargil, passing through the picturesque Suru Calley and Panzila Pass (14,400 ft). The road can be used only between early July and end-November. It is also the base for cross-Himalayan treks and trips to the famous monasteries around Zanskar: Karsha (9km) and Phutkal (70 km). Padum has several economy class hotels, and a five-room Tourist Bunglow.

### KARGIL

Kargil is the mid-point between Srinagar and Leh. This is where all vehicles going between these two places make a night halt. It is the only other town in Ladakh besides Leh, and is the district headquarters of the region which includes Suru and Zanskar.

Access is by private cars, taxis and J&K State Road Transport Corporation buses. Kargil is 204 km from Srinagar and 230 km from Leh.



*Crossing loose boulders enroute to the high Himalayas.*

## ADVENTURE SPORTS IN LADAKH

**Ladakh offers great scope for undertaking adventure activities amidst landscapes of breathtaking, rugged beauty. The most popular and best established among these are trekking, mountaineering and river rafting.**

### River Rafting

Ladakh offers many options for undertaking adventurous activities amidst landscapes of spectacular, rugged beauty. These mainly include river rafting, mountaineering and trekking. River rafting in Ladakh is quite unlike anywhere else in the world. It provides the best opportunity to enjoy and experience the natural beauty of the spectacular landscape with deep gorges, towering **snow-capped peaks**, **hilltop monasteries**, **hill-side villages**, and **glimpses** of the unique **wildlife**. Ladakh offers a

a range of rafting options on the Indus and its major tributaries. The best stretch for professionally guided runs in white water is on the Indus between **Spituk** and **Nimu** or **Saspol** Upstream of Spituk, the Indus has the easiest stretch up to Karu, which is ideal for basic training or "**scenic floating**". In recent years, running the Indus has become an attractive option to complement with sightseeing, and features on the itinerary of most visitors. Several travel agencies offer all-inclusive rafting packages. Ask for details at the Tourist Office at Leh.

The most difficult but exciting rafting option is available on the **Zanskar River**, along its spectacular course through a gorge in the **Zanskar Mountains**, between **Padum** and **Nimu**. This is suitable only for well-organized white-water expeditions prepared for about a week of rafting and camping in absolute wilderness.

### Trekking

**July to september** is trekking season. Trekking agencies in Leh arrange for guides, **ponies**, **tents**, **stoves** and other necessities, as there are no villages en route except for the odd nomadic encampment. The most popular trek is the 10-day **Markha Valley trek**. The most spectacular is the 20-day trek from **Lamayuru** to **Darcha** in Himachal Pradesh, through **Zanskar Valley** and two **high passes**, past **alpine meadows** and **Buddhist monstries**. The **Sarchu to Tso Moriri** goes through **Rupshu**, Ladakh's most desolate area.

If you prefer less exertion, take day-long walks (instead of treks) to tiny villages around Leh. Some villages, such as Saboo, are along the main road.

### Mountain Climbing

The area most frequented by foreign climbers is the **Nun-Kun** massif in the Great Himalayan Range. Its easy accessibility from the **Kargil-Padum** road and the shortest possible approach march to the base camps



*River Rafting in Ladakh*





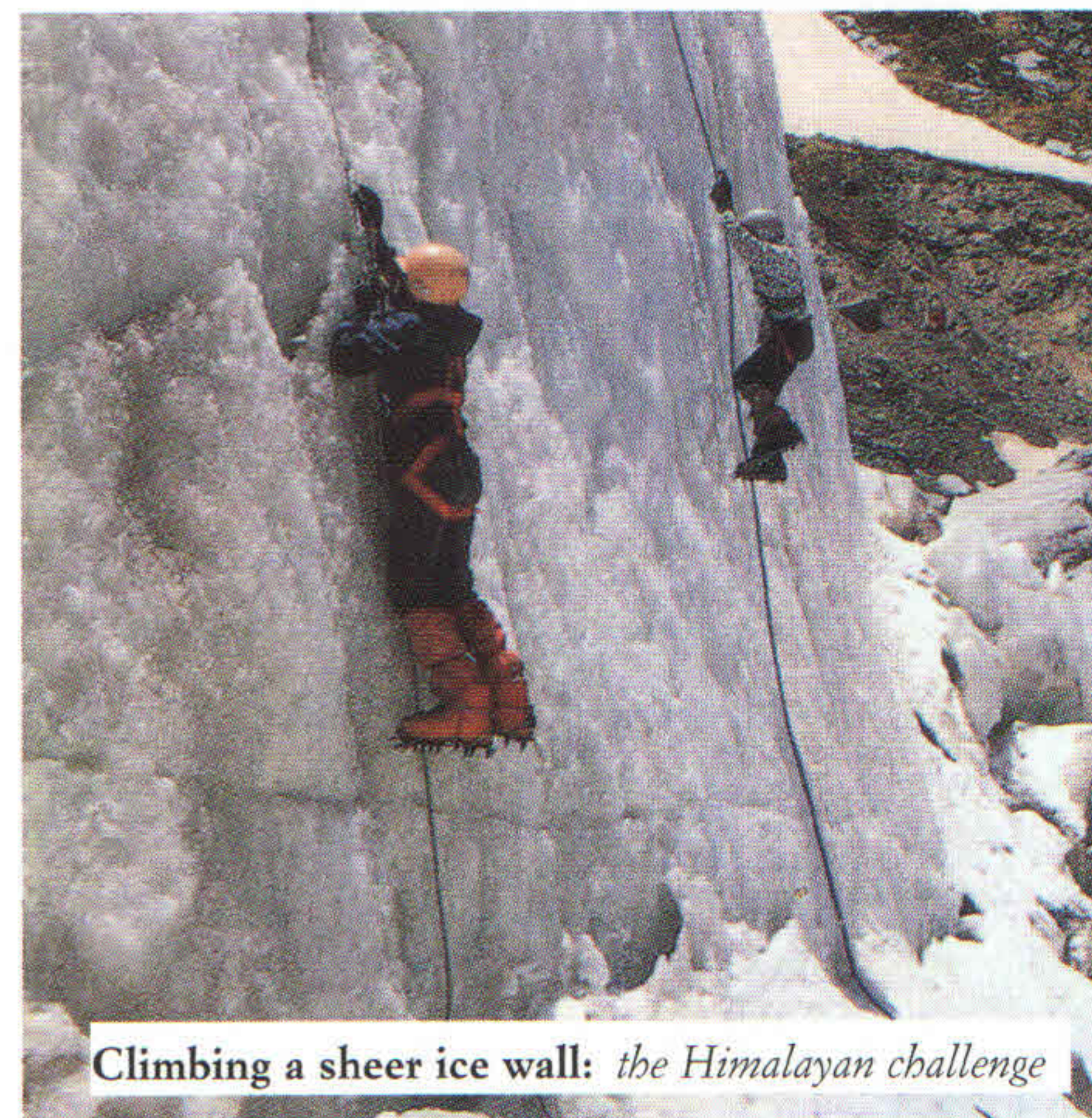
Trekkers crossing the **Shingola Pass**  
(the highest point between Manali & Zaaskarlenge)

makes this massif the most attractive climbing destination in the Great Himalayan, necessitating advance booking years ahead. Among its six known peaks accessible from the **Suru Valley**, **Nun** (7,135 m) and **Kun** (7,087 m) are the highest summits. The area nearest to

Leh is the **Stok-Khangri** massif in the **Zaskar Mountains**, south of Leh. The base camp for the various peaks of this massif is about two days' trek from the Stok village. Among its known peaks, **Stok-Khangri** (6,150 m) is the highest. It offers a spectacular perspective to the central expanse of the Indus Valley. Other peaks in the area include **Gulap Khangri** (5,900 m), **Matho West** (5,950 m) and **Kantaka** (5,275 m). The much higher **Konglacha Peak** (6,700 m) lies southwest of Leh and is reached via **Rumbak** on the first leg of the **Markha Valley** trek from Stok. Besides these there are many unnamed peaks in the altitude range of 5,500 m to 6,400 m available for climbing.

North of Leh, across the Ladakh Range and the **Nubra Valley**, lies the **Karakoram Range**. It soars to a number of known peaks which are, however, within the

restricted area and so not freely accessible to foreign climbers except with special permission from the Government of India. The most prominent summits in this range, which are accessible from various parts of the **Nubra Valley** include, **Saser-I** (7,415 m), **Saser-II** (7,513 m) and **Saser-III** (7,495 m).



Climbing a sheer ice wall: the Himalayan challenge

## FESTIVALS IN LADAKH

The religious philosophy of **Buddhism** however profound and subtle does not preclude an immense joie-de-vivre among its Ladakhi adherents, and even solemn religious enactments are made the occasion for joyous celebration. Many of the annual festivals of the gompas take place in winter, relatively idle time for the majority of the people. They take the form of dance-dramas in the gumpa courtyards. Lamas, robed in colourful garments and wearing often startlingly frightful masks, perform mimes representing various aspects of the religion such as the progress of the individual soul and its purification or the triumph of good over evil. Local people flock from near and far to these events, and



Archery - The popular, traditional sport of Ladakh.



the spiritual benefits they get are no doubt heightened by their enjoyment of the party atmosphere with crowds of women and men, the opportunity to make new friendships and renew old ones, the general bustle and sense of occasion.

The biggest and most famous of the monastic festivals, frequented by tourists and locals alike, is that of **Hemis**, which falls in late June or the first half of July and is dedicated to **Padmasambhava**. Every 12 years, the gumpa's greatest treasure, a huge thangka - a religious icon painted or embroidered on cloth is ritually exhibited. Other monasteries which have summer festivals are **Lamayuru** (also early

July), **Phiyang** (late July or early August), **Tak-thok** (about ten days after Phiyang). Like Hemis, the Phiyang festival involves the exhibition of the gigantic thangka, though here it is done every year.

**Spituk**, **Stok**, **Thikse**, **Chemrey** and **Matho** all have their festivals in winter, between November and March. **Likir** and **Deskrit** time their festivals to coincide with **Dosmoche**, the festivals of the scapegoat, which is also celebrated with fervour at Leh.





# ACCESS & ACCOMMODATION

## How to Reach

### Access

The Journey from Kashmir - The main over-land approach to Ladakh, is from the Kashmir Valley through the 434-km **Srinagar-Leh** highway, which follows the historic trade route, (also known as the 'Treaty Road'). It generally remains open for traffic from early June to mid-November.

### By Air

The flight route to Leh presents visitors with a spectacular panoramic view of snow-capped ranges spread out below, and the thrill of identifying particular landmarks. The twin peaks of Nun and Kun stand out high above the others. Indian Airlines operates regular scheduled flights to Leh from Delhi, Chandigarh, Jammu and Srinagar. Jet Airway, a private airliner, also operates daily flights between Delhi and Leh.

### By Road

The Road journey from Manali - The 473 km Manali-Leh Road is open for about three months in the year from early July to September. For much of its length it passes through areas so barren that it is entirely void of habitation. Lahoul district, through which the road passes, is a typically trans-Himalayan landscape.

### Transport Facilities

The J&K State Road Transport Corporation (J&K SRTC) operates deluxe and regular buses between Srinagar and Leh with an overnight halt at Kargil. Taxis are also available at Srinagar and Leh for the journey.

## Where to Stay

Leh offers a variety of accommodation to suit almost every pocket or preference. Most hotels are family-run establishments and as such, the services are more personalized than professional. Hotels are classified into A, B, C and Economy categories while Guest Houses fall under Upper, Medium and Economy class. Tariff quoted in the A and B category hotels includes all meals, a system followed by most establishments.

There are also some Government-run Tourist Bungalows located mainly along the Srinagar-Leh road. These offer the best value in the medium range, but room availability is uncertain unless you hold a confirmed reservation. This is possible only if a written requisition has been sent to the Tourist Office at Leh or Kargil in advance.

During the peak tourist season (i.e., early June to mid-September) it is advisable to book hotel rooms in advance. By late September, as the tourist rush starts to decline, advance booking is not necessary. However, tourists planning winter trips may have to book accommodation in advance so as to ensure provision of heating arrangements during the period of their intended stay.

### Tourist Information

At the Tourist Offices at Leh, Kargil and Padum, detailed information is available on all aspects of Ladakh. This will help tourists prepare detailed itineraries to suit every pocket, preference and time-frame. Tourists undertaking climbing expeditions, hard trekking, white-water rafting expeditions, etc., are well advised to inform the nearest Tourist Office about their routes and probable schedule so that they can monitor their welfare and extend help in case of accidents or illness.

## The New Tour Circuits Open

Certain areas of Ladakh which were formerly closed to foreigners on account of their sensitive strategic position or proximity to international borders, have recently been opened. Movement within these areas, however, is limited to a number of specifically designated circuits, and foreign visitors are allowed to go only in groups, accompanied by a recognised/registered tour operator. The maximum time allowed on a circuit is seven days. Permits must be taken from the Deputy Commissioner, Leh, but citizens of **Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Myanmar** will be issued permit only with the prior approval of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi. Foreign diplomats and members of the United Nations and other international organisations are required to apply for permits to the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi.

**The newly opened circuits are:**

#### The Drok-pa Area Circuit

Khalatse-Domkhar-Skurbuchan-Achinathang-Biama-Dah and return.

#### The Nubra Valley Circuit

Leh-Khardung-la-Khalsar-Tirit-Tegar-Sumur-Panamik and return.

#### Pangong Lake Circuit

Leh-Karu-Changla-Durbuk-Tangtse-Lukung-Spangmik and return.

#### Tso-Moriri Lake Circuit

Leh-Upshi-Debring-Puga-tsomoriri-korzok and return.

Leh-Upshi-Chumathang-Mahe-Puga-Tsomoriri and return.

For Further information please contact:

**Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir**

**Srinagar:** Tel: +91 194 2472449 / 2452690-91 Fax: +91 194 2452361

**Jammu:** Tel: +91 191 2544527, Fax: +91 191 2544842, E-mail: dgt@jktourism.org

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**J&K Tourism Offices at:**

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Tel: +91 11 23714948 Fax: +91 11 23714947,

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Tel: +91 22 22189040, Fax: +91 22 22186172

**Kolkata:** 12, Chowringhee. Tel/Fax: +91 33 22285791

**Chennai:** II-Floor, 36 / 36 - A, North Usman Road

Tel / Fax: +91 44 28340958

**Ahmedabad:** Airlines House, Lal Darwaza

Tel/Fax: +91 79 25503551

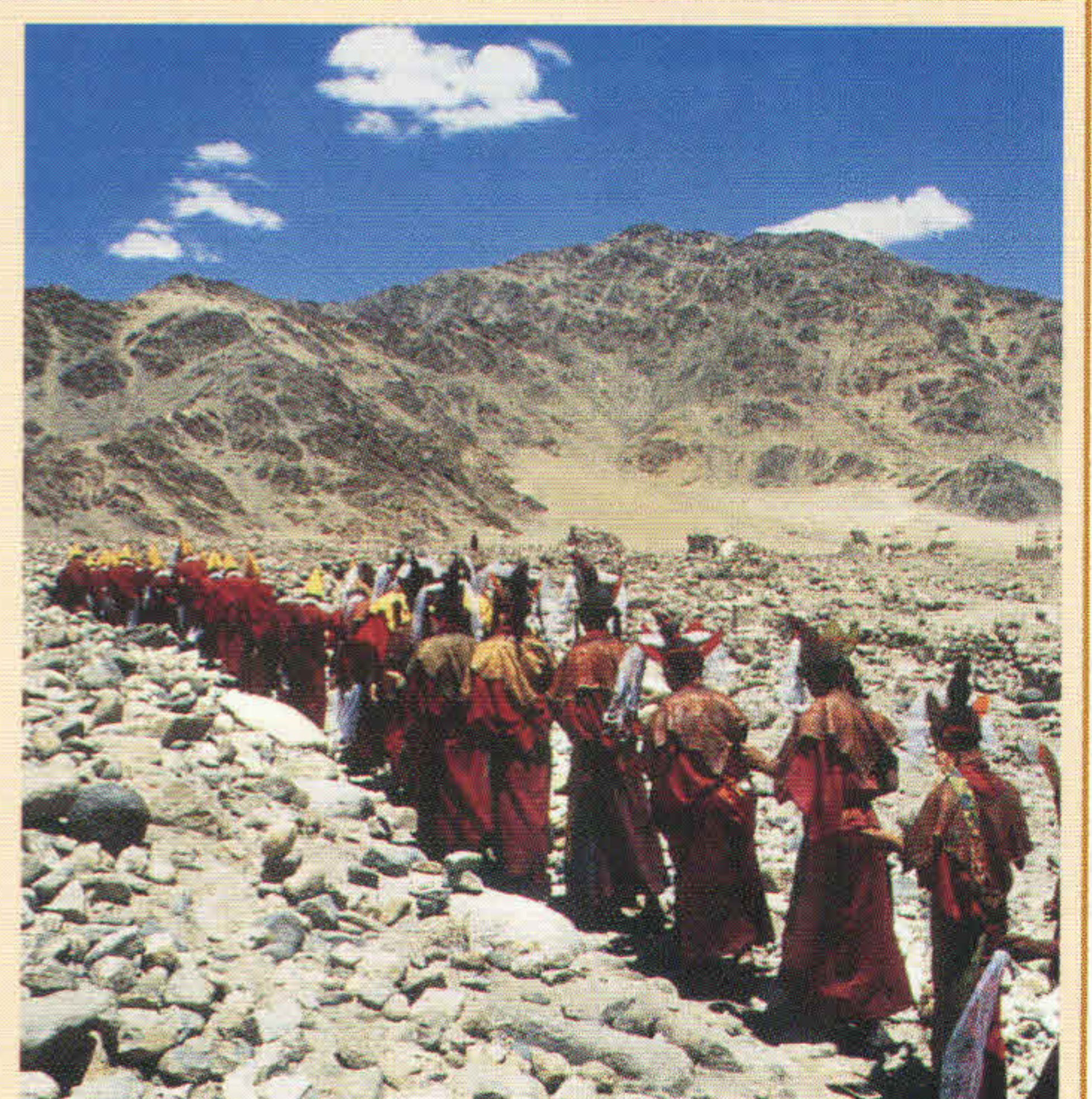
**Hyderabad:** 5th Floor, Left Wing, Chandra Vihar Complex, M.J. Road Tel/fax: +91 40 24734806

For timely assistance & guidance please contact Tourist Police on the following telephone Nos.: Dy

Director Tourism (Enf.): +91 194-2477224 • e-mail: sptourism@rediffmail.com

Tourist Police Station, TRC, Srinagar: +91 194-2484627

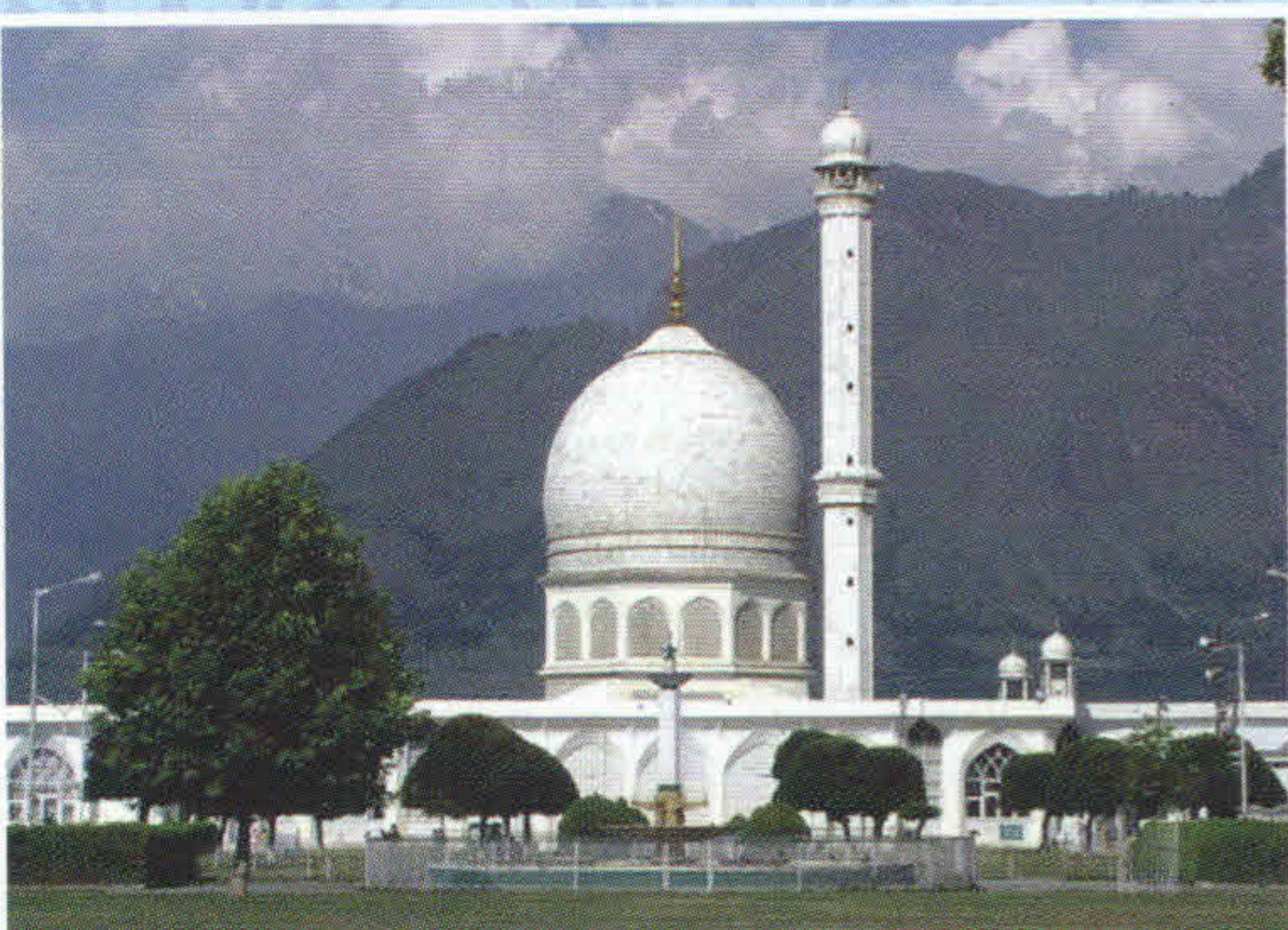
Tourist Police Post, Railway Station, Jammu: +91 191-2473856



The information given in this brochure is liable to change. You are requested to verify the information when finalising your travel plans.



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