

Incredible India



VARANASI

AN ETERNAL LAND



A TIMELESS CITY

Along the sacred banks of the River Ganga stands the timeless city of Varanasi—an enduring embodiment of history, spirituality, and myth. Varanasi, also known as Banaras, is referred to in the scriptures, including the Bhagavad Gita, as 'Kashi'. This city derives its ancient name from the Sanskrit root 'Kash', meaning brightness, earning it the revered title: The City of Light.



ECHOES OF THE PAST

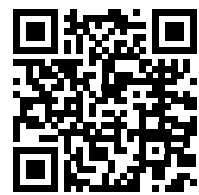
Born from the meeting of the rivers Varuna and Assi two tributaries of the Ganga, Varanasi draws its very name from this sacred confluence. With a legacy spanning over 3,500 years, it stands among the world's oldest living cities, layered with memory, myth and devotion.

According to Hindu belief, this is the land where creation first stirred; where the earliest ray of light touched the earth, kindling life and guiding humanity forward. The Shiv Purana speaks of the formless Supreme, immersed in non-duality, who willed Himself into manifestation. From this divine impulse emerged the dual principles of existence—Purusha and Prakriti, the cosmic masculine and feminine. Commanded to undertake penance for the perfection of creation, they sought a sanctified space in which to do so.

In response, the Supreme manifested a radiant city in the celestial realm—an abode infused with the essence of all energies and spanning the sacred Panchkroshi circuit. This divine city, brought forth as the ground for spiritual awakening, came to be known as Kashi—the luminous city that continues to embody eternity in earthly form.

SARNATH: THE SPIRITUAL EXTENSION OF VARANASI

Extending Varanasi's sacred landscape beyond its ancient ghats is Sarnath, one of Buddhism's most revered pilgrimage sites. It was here that Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon after attaining enlightenment, setting in motion the Wheel of Dharma. The serene Dhamek Stupa stands as a powerful reminder of that moment, its solid form rising from manicured lawns that echo with quiet reflection. Monasteries, ancient ruins and the famed Ashoka Pillar—bearing the Lion Capital that later became India's national emblem make Sarnath a profound extension of Varanasi's spiritual landscape, where multiple faiths converge in shared reverence.



Scan to explore the serenity of Sarnath





CITY AT A GLANCE

Located in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh along the banks of the sacred Ganges River, Varanasi sits at an elevation of around 200 metres above sea level and experiences warm summers that can rise to 43°C and crisp winters that dip to nearly 5°C.

Light cottons are ideal during the summer months, while woollens are recommended in winter when the chill settles over the ghats. The most pleasant time to visit is from October to March, when the weather is perfect for exploring its riverfront and temple-lined lanes. Among the experiences you shouldn't miss are the mesmerising evening Ganga Aarti at Dashashwamedh Ghat, the luminous spectacle of Dev Deepawali when thousands of lamps illuminate the riverbanks, and the vibrant celebrations of Mahashivratri, when processions dedicated to Lord Shiva fill the streets with music and devotion—revealing the city at its most radiant and unforgettable.

LIVING TRADITIONS

In Varanasi, dawn breaks to the soft glow of diyas flickering along the steps of the Ganges River, where pilgrims descend into mist-kissed waters, and priests lift rhythmic chants into the morning air. The fragrance of incense coils through labyrinthine lanes, mingling with the sizzle of kachoris and the sweetness of simmering jalebis. Temple spires rise above crowded bazaars where Banarasi silk shimmers in gold and crimson, catching the light like woven fire. At the revered Kashi Vishwanath Temple, bells resound in steady cadence, their echoes folding into the hum of daily life. Here, devotion is not an event but a pulse felt in every chant, every woven thread, every ripple of the river—making Varanasi less a destination and more an immersive, timeless experience.

How TO REACH

BY AIR

The Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport (VNS) at Varanasi is located almost 26 kilometres northwest of the city centre. It offers domestic flights to major Indian cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Bangalore, as well as International flights to destinations such as Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Kathmandu (Nepal), Bangkok (Thailand), and Colombo (Sri Lanka).

BY ROAD

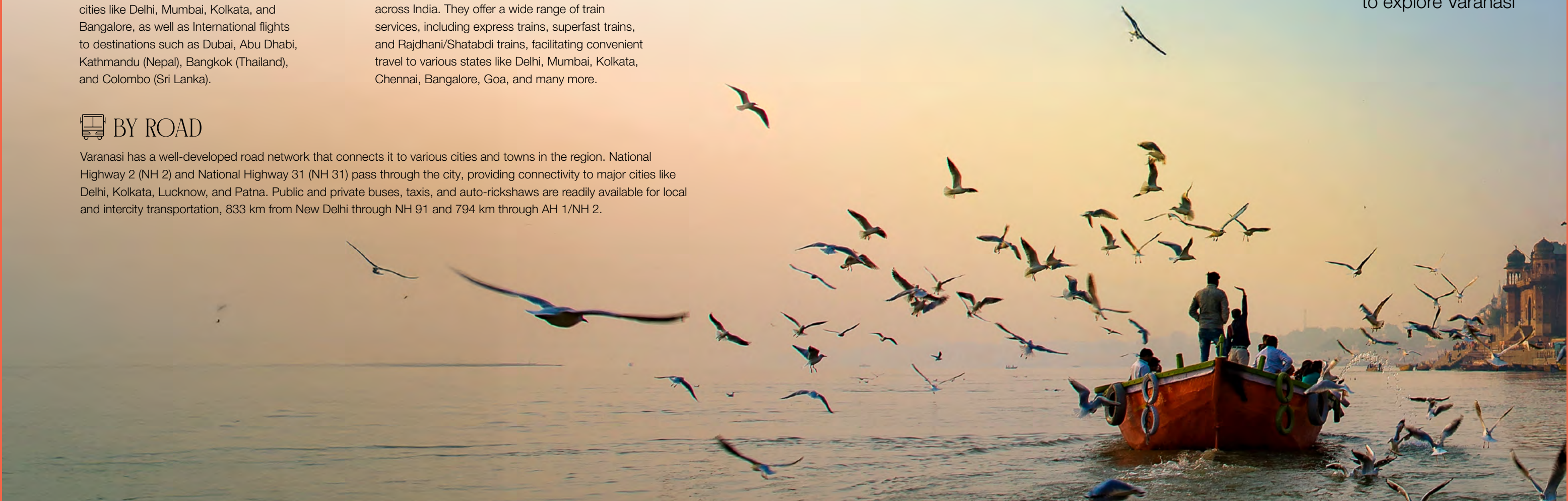
Varanasi has a well-developed road network that connects it to various cities and towns in the region. National Highway 2 (NH 2) and National Highway 31 (NH 31) pass through the city, providing connectivity to major cities like Delhi, Kolkata, Lucknow, and Patna. Public and private buses, taxis, and auto-rickshaws are readily available for local and intercity transportation, 833 km from New Delhi through NH 91 and 794 km through AH 1/NH 2.

BY RAILWAY

The railway stations like Varanasi Junction, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Junction, Banaras Railway Station, and Kashi Railway Station play a crucial role in connecting the city to major states and cities across India. They offer a wide range of train services, including express trains, superfast trains, and Rajdhani/Shatabdi trains, facilitating convenient travel to various states like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Goa, and many more.



Scan this QR
to explore Varanasi



VARANASI



Scan to trace
the timeless journey
of the Ganga



TEMPLES



KASHI VISHWANATH TEMPLE

At the heart of Kashi stands the Kashi Vishwanath Temple—the eternal shrine of Lord Shiva. It was rebuilt in 1780 by Ahilyabai Holkar after centuries of destruction and renewal. Its gold-plated spire, gifted by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and the sacred Gyanvapi well beside it make this Jyotirlinga a symbol of faith, liberation, and divine continuity.



LAAT BHAIRAV TEMPLE

Here, Bhairav is worshipped not as an idol but as a colossal stone pillar emerging from the earth. It is believed to be self-manifested, embodying the faithful guardian of Kashi's very energy. The shrine stands humble yet powerful, a silent protector at the city's spiritual threshold.

KAAL BHAIRAV TEMPLE

Built in 1817 by Bajirao Peshwa II, the Kaal Bhairav Temple honours Shiva's fierce protector form, the Kotwal or divine police chief of Kashi. Legend says that no one can enter or leave the city without his permission, making him both guardian and judge of this sacred land.



ANNAPURNA BHAVANI TEMPLE

Built in 1729 near the Kashi Vishwanath Temple, this shrine celebrates Annapurna, the goddess of food and nourishment. Known for the legend where she once fed even Shiva himself, the temple's annual Annakuta festival draws crowds to witness mountains of offerings laid before the golden goddess.



BATUK BHAIRAV TEMPLE

Dedicated to the child form of Bhairav, this temple is famed for its Akhand Deep, an eternal lamp whose oil is believed to have healing powers. The story of Batuk Bhairav slaying a demon as a child makes this a rare blend of innocence, courage, and divine guardianship.



BHARAT MATA TEMPLE

Inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi in 1936, the Bharat Mata Temple houses no idols but a marble relief map of undivided India—its mountains, rivers, and frontiers carved with devotion. Built by freedom fighter Babu Shiv Prasad Gupta, it stands as a symbol of patriotism, unity, and cultural pride.



GURUDHAM TEMPLE

Built in 1814 by Raja Jai Narayan Ghoshal, this octagonal temple honours spiritual teachers rather than gods. It has eight entrances named after sacred cities and philosophies. Blending Nagara, Bengali, and colonial styles, the temple stands as a rare architectural testament to faith as learning.



VISHALAKSHI TEMPLE

One of the 51 Shakti Peethas, the Vishalakshi Temple marks where Sati's earring is believed to have fallen, sanctifying the site. Revered especially by South Indian pilgrims, it also houses a Shri Yantra installed by Adi Shankaracharya in the 8th century.

SUMERA DEVI TEMPLE

Erected in the late 18th century by Raja Balwant Singh, this temple features Rajput-inspired carvings of gods, sages, and animals across every surface. Dedicated to Goddess Durga, it comes alive during Navratri when centuries-old stonework glows with devotion and festivities.



SANKAT MOCHAN TEMPLE

Born from a vision of Hanuman appearing before Tulsidas, this temple is where faith meets devotion in whispers and chants. Every evening, the Hanuman Chalisa reverberates through its walls, turning prayers into collective energy for strength and protection.



TULSI MANAS TEMPLE

Built in 1964 around where Tulsidas once composed the Ramcharitmanas, this white marble temple has walls etched with verses and scenes from the epic itself. It turns scripture into space, inviting visitors to walk through poetry, devotion, and storytelling.



TILBHANDESHWAR TEMPLE

This ancient shrine houses a self-manifested Shiva linga that is believed to grow by the size of a sesame seed each year. Linked to Mata Sharda and famed for its Mahashivratri fair, it blends Banarasi traditions with rare Kerala influences in its rituals and architecture.



TRILOCHAN MAHADEV TEMPLE

One of Kashi's oldest Shivalingas, Trilochan Mahadev represents Shiva's third eye and is praised in the Kashi Khanda for its unique spiritual power. Its sacred well, Padodaka Kupa, is famed for its healing waters and its timeless power to grant wishes.



PANCHAKROSHI TEMPLE

Dedicated to the sacred 88 km Panchakroshi Yatra, this temple symbolises the entire pilgrimage route through miniature shrines. For those unable to walk the full circuit, a visit here is believed to carry the same spiritual merit.

SANKATA DEVI TEMPLE

Built in the 18th century by the King of Baroda, this temple honours Sankata Devi, the goddess who removes difficulties and fears. Every Friday, devotees arrive with prayers for protection, leaving with a sense of comfort and strength.



KRITTIVASHESHWARA TEMPLE

Celebrated in the Kashi Khanda, this temple embodies total knowledge through its sacred linga, said to symbolise all eighteen branches of learning. It was once one of Kashi's most elegant and revered Shiva shrines.



NEPALI MANDIR

Commissioned by the exiled King of Nepal in the early 19th century, this pagoda-style Shiva temple mirrors Kathmandu's Pashupatinath Temple. Built with termite-resistant wood and tantric carvings, it forms a cultural bridge between Varanasi and Nepal.



GAURI KEDARESHWAR TEMPLE

This modest shrine near Kedar Ghat venerates Shiva as Kedareswar alongside Goddess Gauri, offering spiritual merit equal to visiting Kedarnath itself. It serves as a divine substitute for devotees unable to undertake the arduous Himalayan pilgrimage.



SWARVED MAHAMANDIR

Swarved Mahamandir, on Varanasi's outskirts, is dedicated to the Swarved scripture, composed by Sadguru Sadafal Deo Ji Maharaj. One of the world's largest meditation halls, it seats 20,000, blending modern architecture with spiritual symbolism. Beyond meditation, the temple fosters education and charitable programmes.



VYASA KASHI TEMPLE

The existing Vyasa Kashi Temple, honouring the revered sage Ved Vyasa, was built in the 18th century, by the local ruler of Ramnagar. Legend says that Vyasa performed intense penance here after being exiled from Kashi. The Temple reminds us that the great epics were born in humble silence by the Ganga's flow.

KARDAMESHWARA MAHADEV TEMPLE

The first halt on the Panchakroshi Yatra, this 12th century temple was built by the Gahadavala rulers and survived centuries of invasions. Its sacred tank, Kardama Kunda, and well, Kardama Kupa, continue to be sites of ritual purity and devotion.



MARKANDEY MAHADEV TEMPLE

The Markandey Mahadev Temple, built on the legend of young Markandeya, enshrines the linga where Lord Shiva appeared as Kalantaka to shield his devotee—blessing all who come here with the promise of finding Shiva before death can claim them.



DURGA KUND TEMPLE

The present temple, built in the 18th century by Rani Bhavani of Natore, venerates Goddess Mahishasura Mardini — the slayer of demons and protector of dharma. Believed to be self-manifested, she came to embody fearlessness, especially for women who saw in Durga a reflection of their own strength.



NEW VISHWANATH TEMPLE

Conceived by educationalist Madan Mohan Malaviya and built with support from the Birla family, this temple was designed as a modern homage to the original Kashi Vishwanath Temple. Its soaring 250-foot Nagara-style shikhara makes it one of the tallest temple towers in the world.



ADI KESHAV TEMPLE

Adi Keshav Temple, built where the Varuna joins the Ganga, is believed to be where Vishnu first set foot in Kashi, retreating after aiding Shiva's return to the city. A dip at the confluence is said to liberate one from the cycle of life and death.



BENI MADHAV TEMPLE

Located near Scindia Ghat, Beni Madhav Temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu, worshipped here as Beni Madhav—'the Lord of the Beni', referring to the bends of the Ganga that gently curve through Kashi. Devotees offer tulsi leaves and light small oil lamps, seeking protection, harmony, and the quiet blessings that Vishnu bestows.

BINDU MADHAV TEMPLE

The Bindu Madhav temple was recovered and reinstalled in the 19th-century, commissioned by Maratha ruler Bhavan Rao. According to legend, Sage Agnibindu bathed here, living on drops of sacred water, and Vishnu blessed the spot by staying here eternally as Bindu Madhav, making this temple one of the Pancha Madhava shrines that cleanse karmic stains through devotion.



DEHLI VINAYAK TEMPLE

Here, Vinayaka—the remover of obstacles—awaits, believed to be the Ashta Vinayak of Kashi's sacred circuit. Legend says that when a pilgrim completes the Panchkroshi Parikrama, worshipping at Dehli Vinayak blesses their journey with success. The temple is simple: a small structure with a Ganesh idol inside, accessible around the clock so seekers can perform pooja at any hour.



PRAYAG MADHAV TEMPLE

According to the Kashi Khanda, Prayag Madhav is one of the sacred Vishnu Madhav forms—deities consecrated by Lord Brahma himself. Here, Vishnu is worshipped as "Prayag Madhav", uniting the energies of the Ganga and Varuna rivers. The shrine's name also connects it to the nearby sacred waters of Prayag Ghats, where pilgrims bathe before offering prayers.



DHUNDIRAJ GANESH TEMPLE

Legend says that Lord Vishwanatha invited Ganesha to Varanasi as the astrologer Dhundi, whose playful confusions guided pilgrims back to the divine, earning him the name Dhundiraj, the 'king of confusion.' Devotees believe the pilgrimage is incomplete without first bowing to his swayambhu idol, with three eyes and flanked by consorts and sons.



RATNESHWAR MAHADEV TEMPLE – KASHI KARVAT

Legend says that a devoted servant built the temple for his mother Ratna Bai. Proud of repaying her debt, he named it after her—only for Ratna Bai to curse it, saying maternal debt is eternal. Soon, the temple began to tilt. While earlier 19th-century drawings show the temple upright, by the 20th century the lean became visible.



BHELUPUR JAIN TEMPLE

Bhelupur is an important site for Jains, home to the Parshvanath Jain Temple that reflects ancient Jain history and philosophy. According to texts, it marks the birth, conception, and penance of Lord Parshvanath. It also preserves his sacred footprints and is believed to be the place where Acharya Samantabhadra composed the Swayambhu Stotra.

SHITALA MATA MANDIR

Built in the 18th century by Queen Ahilyabai Holkar and later maintained by the Maharaja of Bundi, Shitala Ghat holds a temple that has withstood both floods and faith. Shitala Devi, once invoked during smallpox outbreaks, is revered as the goddess who cools fevers and disease, and is still honoured during Shitala Ashtami in spring.



CHANDRAWATI JAIN TEMPLE

This sacred site honours the Janma (birth), Tapa (penance), and Gyan (enlightenment) Kalyanaks of Lord Chandraprabha—defining milestones of his spiritual journey. According to Jain texts, he was born to King Mahasena and Queen Lakshmana Devi, renounced his throne, and attained omniscience within three months beneath a Naga tree on the banks of the Ganges.



SARNATH JAIN TEMPLE

Also known as Shri Digambar Jain Temple, and Shreyanshnath Temple, it is a sacred place for those who follow the path of non-violence. It was built in 1824, marking the birthplace of Shreyanshnath, the 11th Jain Tirthankara, one of four who were born near Varanasi.



BHADAINI JAIN TEMPLE

Local traditions recount that this sacred spot witnessed four Kalyanaks or holy milestones of Suparshvanatha: conception, birth, renunciation, and enlightenment. His devotees believe that celestial events marked each stage and devoted pilgrims set foot here long before formal temples arose.



SRI GURU NANAK DEV JI GURUDWARA

On Shivratri in 1507, Guru Nanak Dev Ji visited Varanasi, pausing at Guru Ka Bagh, a shaded garden to engage Brahmin scholars in a dialogue on devotion and humility. Though the original garden no longer exists, the site now hosts a white-marble sannidhi built in the early 1970s during Guru Nanak's 500th birth anniversary.

GURU RAVIDAS JANMA STHAN MANDIR

This temple marks the birthplace of Guru Ravidas, the Bhakti poet-saint of Kashi, revered for his message of equality and unity. Long unmarked, the site was identified in 1965 by Sant Sarwan Dass of Dera Sach Khand Ballan, who laid its foundation.

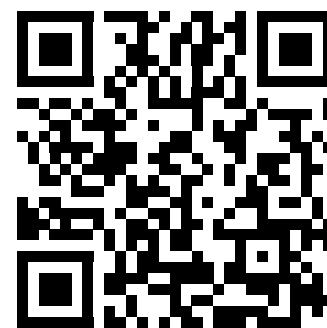


BABA KEENARAM ASHRAM

Founded in the early 17th century by Baba Keenaram, who is revered as an incarnation of Shiva, the mandir upholds the Aghor path, where sacred and profane unite to dissolve fear and stigma. Born in 1601 in Ramgarh, Baba Keenaram rests here in jeevan-samadhi, beneath a canopy surrounded by disciples' samadhis.



VARANASI



Scan to watch
the ghats come alive
with light



GHATS



ASSI GHAT

Assi Ghat, where the Assi meets the Ganges, is said to be named after Goddess Durga's sword. Saints like Tulsidas and thinkers like Annie Besant once walked its steps. Today, it is alive with yoga, tea stalls, boat rides, and the 'Subah-e-Banaras' programme of prayers, music, and culture.



TULSI GHAT

Here, at this very ghat, Tulsidas composed portions of the Ramcharitmanas, a retelling of the Ramayana—not in Sanskrit, but in Awadhi, the language of the people, and a dialect of modern-day Hindi. For the first time, the divine story of Lord Ram was no longer locked away in temples or scrolls.

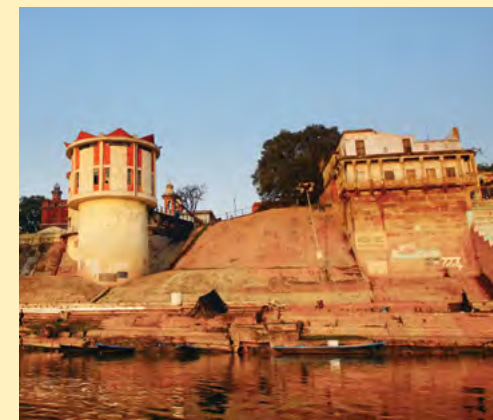
GANGA MAHAL GHAT

The Ganga Mahal Ghat was built by the Raja of Banaras, Prabhu Narayan Singh in 1830. He also constructed a huge palace on the ghat, that eventually came to be known as the Ganga Mahal. The Radha-Krishna temple of Nagar Shaili is located within the Mahal.



BHADAINI GHAT

Bhadaini Ghat, also called Jalkal Ghat after the still-functioning water station built in 1907, is not known for spiritual rituals. Named after the nearby Bhadaini village, it is a reminder that not all devotion is loud, and not all ghats need to be ancient to be sacred.



REWA GHAT

Rewa Ghat, which was earlier named after Lala Misir, a family priest of the King of Punjab, Raja Ranjit Singh, has two parts—a palace and an auxiliary house. In 1955, the King of Banaras donated this place to the Banaras Hindu University, which now uses it as a dormitory for students of performing arts and music.



JANKI GHAT

The ghat was originally built by Rai Girdhara Lal and known as Nagamber Ghat, then later purchased and developed by Rani Kunwar of Sursand by 1870, who also installed a shrine with an image of Janaki or Goddess Sita, the consort of Lord Rama. Favoured by women saints, this ghat echoed Sita's story as a mirror of sacrifice, resilience, and silent power.



MA ANANDMAYEE GHAT

This used to be a clay-banked ghat, called Imiliya ghat and Rai Baldev Sahay ghat. In 1944, Ma Anandmayee bought this ghat from the British and established her ashram and stone-paved this ghat. The ghat was named following the establishment of an ashram here in her memory.



NISHADRAJ GHAT

Nishadraj Ghat has a huge settlement of the Nishad community, and is named in honour of Nishadraj Guha, the humble boatman and forest chief from the Ramayana, who ferried Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana across the River Ganga during their exile. Till the early 20th century, the Nishadraj Ghat was part of the Prabhu Ghat.

VACHCHHARAJ GHAT

This ghat was built by a famous Jain merchant, banker and philanthropist, Vachchharaj of Banaras, thereby giving its name of Vachchharaj Ghat. It is also the birthplace of the 7th Tirthankara Suparshvanath who was believed to have been born in the neighbourhood.



JAIN GHAT

The Ghat features an elevated dome-shaped Digambar Temple, built in 1885 in commemoration of the birth of the 7th Jain Tirthankara Suparshvanath, where Jain devotees come to pray and bathe. It was once part of Vachchharaj Ghat, but when Babu Shekhar Chanda built this part separately and gave the name with support of Jain monks, it came to be called the Jain Ghat.



PANCHAKOT GHAT

Built by the King of Panchakot, a zamindari estate from present-day West-Bengal, this ghat served as their riverfront residence—a spiritual home away from home in the sacred city of Kashi. It was built in the 19th century and is known for its unique structure with pillars featuring small baskets near the riverbank, often illuminated in the evenings.



PRABHU GHAT

The Prabhu Ghat was constructed by a rich merchant from Bengal, Nirmal Kumar in the mid-19th century, but was eventually renamed after the Raja of Banaras, Prabhu Narayan Singh.





CHET SINGH GHAT

Named after Raja Chet Singh, the valiant ruler of Benares in the late 18th century, this ghat is famous for the 1781 battle between Maharaja Chet Singh and the British Governor-General Warren Hastings. The battle that followed, right here on these steps and within the fort above, turned sacred ground into a battlefield.



SHIVALA GHAT

Shivala Ghat, framed by the 18th-century Shivala Palace, blends history, devotion, and quiet reflection. Built by King Balwant Singh and extended by Chet Singh, it shelters the South Indian Brahmendra Math and a Shiva temple.

NIRANJANI GHAT

It is named after the Niranjani Akhara, a revered Shaivite monastic order whose very name—nirajan—means “stainless”, “untainted”, or “without illusion”. Home to the ferocious Naga ascetics of the Niranjani Akhara, it was originally part of the Chet Singh Ghat before being gifted to the naga saints.



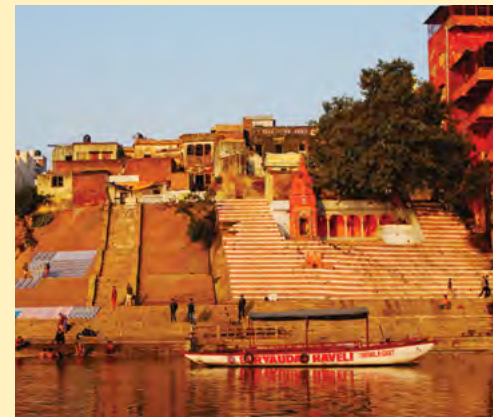
GULARIYA GHAT

Gulariya Ghat, named after the sacred gular tree that still spreads its vast canopy here, lies in Varanasi’s quieter north. The ancient fig, rooted deep along the riverbank, has long sheltered pilgrims, saints, and wanderers.



MAHANIRVANI GHAT

Mahanirvani Ghat is named after the Mahanirvani Akhara built in 1915. This ghat belongs to the naga sadhus, fierce, ash-smeared ascetics who carry the weight of centuries-old vows on bare shoulders. According to legend, the mythic sage Kapila used to live here. Folk legends also tell that Buddha had once taken bath at this site.



DANDI GHAT

Dandi Ghat, built in the 19th century by Lallu Ji Agarwal, honours the Dandi Swamis—ascetics who carry a single staff as a mark of discipline. Rebuilt in 1958, its steps still bear holes for their sticks.



HANUMAN & OLD HANUMAN GHAT

Hanuman Ghat, once Rameshvara Ghat, was rebuilt in stone by Mahant Hariharanath in 1825, alongside Old Hanuman Ghat. Its Rama Temple enshrines five lingams linked to Rama, Sita, his brothers, and Hanuman. Vallabhacharya once lived here, and the Juna Akhara still anchors the ghat with ascetic rigour and wrestling tradition.



LALI GHAT

Lali Ghat, named after the 18th-century mystic Lali Baba of Champaran, carries a quiet, welcoming charm. His monastery, Gudaradas Akhara, still sanctifies the site with spiritual presence. Later, in 1890, the Raja of Vijayanagaram stone-paved the ghat.

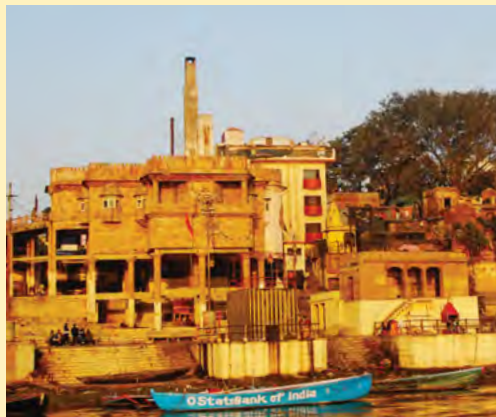
MYSORE GHAT

Mysore Ghat, once part of Hanuman Ghat, was built by the Raja of Mysore as a refuge for southern pilgrims, complete with a dharamshala. Also called Karnataka Ghat, it extends Harishchandra's sacred ground.



VIJAYANAGARAM GHAT

Vijayanagaram Ghat, built in 1890 by the Raja of Vijayanagaram, reflects southern devotion on Kashi's riverfront. The palace here, gifted to Swami Karpatri, is now his ashram. The Ghat's quiet Dravidian grace lingers in its stonework and rituals.



HARISHCHANDRA GHAT

Harishchandra Ghat, the city's oldest cremation ground, burns with solemn continuity. Known as Adi Manikarnika, it embodies the tale of King Harishchandra, who surrendered everything, even himself, to uphold truth.



KEDAR GHAT

Kedar Ghat, one of Varanasi's five sacred ghats, is home to the Gauri Kedareshwar Temple. Revered by South Indian pilgrims, it follows Dravidian traditions with Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada chants. The presence of Sringeri Shankara Math and Gauri Kund enrich its sanctity.



CHAUKI GHAT

Chauki Ghat, once a river watch post, blends history with sanctity. Built by Sri Kumaraswamy Mutt in the 19th century, it is famed for Naga worship beneath a sacred fig tree adorned with serpent idols. Linked to Chauki Baba's meditation, it marks where Kashi's bustling heart met quiet thresholds.



NARAD GHAT

Narad Ghat, once known as Kuvai Ghat, was renamed after the Naradeshwar Shiva Temple built in the 19th century. Dedicated to sage Narada, it carries a unique belief married couples avoid bathing here, as the ghat honours celibacy.

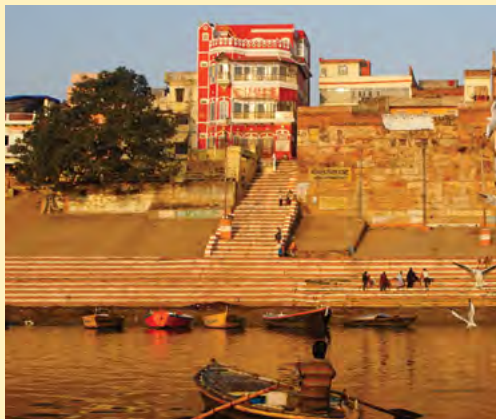
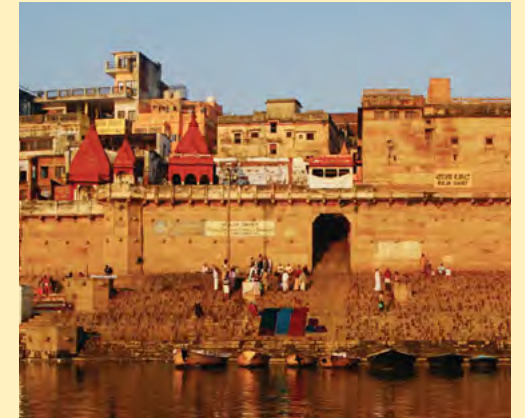
KSHEMESHWAR GHAT

Kshemeshwar Ghat, once called Someshwar and Nala Ghat, lies in Varanasi's Ghasi Tola. Named after the Kshemeshwar Mahadev Temple, it blends legend and history linked to demon Kshemak's devotion to Shiva, refurbished in 1958, and strengthened by a Tamil monastery. Its self-manifested Shiva Lingams draw pilgrims, especially during Naga Panchami and Mahashivratri.



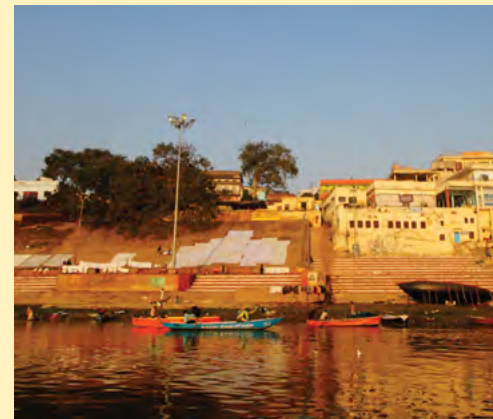
RAJA GHAT

Formerly known as Amrita Rao Ghat, this ghat was built by Maratha Chief Balaji Bajirao in 1720. It was slowly rebuilt with stone slabs between 1780 and 1807 by Peshwa Amritrao. The Ghat is still part of the Amritrao Peshwa Annapurna Trust today.



MANSAROVAR GHAT

Mansarovar Ghat was built in the late 16th century by Raja Man Singh of Amber. The Ghat has a pond called Mansarovar, which as per the belief, has the same benefits of the Mansarovar Lake in Mount Kailash. Locals believe that the waters here carry cleansing power.



KHORI GHAT

Also known as Ganga Mahal Ghat, the Khorri Ghat was made pucca in the late 19th century by Kavindra Narayan Singh. At the top, a compound of 5 temples presents a magnificent view. Presently, this ghat is less popular with respect to religious and cultural festivities.



PANDEY GHAT

Pandey Ghat, once called Sarveshwar Ghat after its temple, was renamed for famed wrestler Babua Pandey, who founded an akhara here. Alongside the Sarveshwara Temple stands the Naga Kupa, a serpent-worship well.



RANA MAHAL GHAT

Rana Mahal Ghat, built in the late 17th century by Raja Rana Jagat Singh, features a sandstone palace of Rajasthani elegance. According to the Kashi Khand, the palace houses 64 yogini temples.

DIGPATIA GHAT

Digpatia Ghat, built around 1830 by the King of Digpatia, features a palace in Bengali style infused with Rajput elements. More spiritual retreat than royal display, it became a haven for scholars and seekers. Legends recall nationalist thinker Bhudev Mukhopadhyay here.



DARBHANGA GHAT

It has a greatly embellished riverside palace which was originally part of Munshi Ghat, built in 1812 by Shridhara Narayana Munshi and later purchased by the Raja of Darbhanga in 1915, giving it its current name. Today, the BrijRama Palace, with its Rajput-Mughal architecture, offers heritage stays and a serene view of the Ganga Aarti.



CHOUSATTHI GHAT

Chousatthi Ghat, built in the 16th century by King Pratapaditya of Bengal and later restored by Raja Digpatiya, honours the 64 Yoginis. The Chousatthi Devi Temple once housed their idols, a few of which remain. During Navratri and Rangbhari Ekadashi, the ghat draws devotees for ritual bathing, offerings, and meditation.



MUNSHI GHAT

Munshi Ghat, near Dashashwamedh in Varanasi, was built in 1812 by Sridhara Narayana Munshi, minister of the Raja of Nagpur. He constructed the ghat, its palace, and adjoining temple.



AHILYABAI GHAT

Ahilyabai Ghat, built in 1785 by Queen Ahilyabai Holkar of Indore, was the first Varanasi ghat named after a person. With a palace, temples, and serene courtyards, it reflects her devotion, architectural vision, and benevolent leadership.



PRAYAG GHAT

Prayag Ghat, south of Dashashwamedh in Varanasi, is a quiet sanctuary named for “Prayag,” symbolising sacrifice and confluence. Built by Balaji Bajirao in 1778, it mirrors Prayagraj and serves as a sacred site for ancestral rituals like Pind Daan, believed to bring peace and liberation to departed souls.

SHITALA GHAT

Shitala Ghat, named after the goddess Shitala Mata, is revered for protection against diseases. Rebuilt by Queen Ahilyabai Holkar in the 18th century, it houses the Shitala Devi temple. Devotees, especially mothers, offer prayers for wellness.



DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD GHAT

Once part of Dashashwamedh Ghat, this site—originally Ghoda Ghat, named for its ancient horse trade—was renovated in 1984 by the Uttar Pradesh government and renamed Dr. Rajendra Prasad Ghat, honouring India's first president.



DASHASHWAMEDH GHAT

Dashashwamedh Ghat, Varanasi's most vibrant riverside, comes alive each evening with lamps, conches, and the grand Ganga Aarti. Rebuilt in 1748 by Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao, it bears centuries of devotion, trade, and ritual. Named for Brahma's ten Ashwamedha Yagnas, it embodies both spectacle and timeless spiritual connection.



MAN MANDIR GHAT

Above Man Mandir Ghat rises the 16th-century Man Mandir Palace, built by Raja Sawai Man Singh. Raja Jai Singh II later added a stone observatory with massive yantras for tracking time and stars. Here, devotion and astronomy intertwined, now preserved in a modern virtual museum celebrating Kashi's cosmic heritage.



VARAHI GHAT

Varahi Ghat in Varanasi holds the revered Varahi Devi Temple, a Shakti Peetha where Sati's tooth is believed to have fallen. Guardian of Kashi at night, Varahi Devi rests by day. Mentioned in Skanda Purana, she is worshipped for protection, wealth, and harmony, especially across Southern India.



JALASEN GHAT

Jalashayi Ghat, also called Jalasen Ghat, is linked to Lord Shiva and cremation rituals in Varanasi. A submerged Shivlinga in the Ganga here receives offerings, believed to grant moksha. Renovated by Raja Baldevdas Birla in the 20th century, it also houses a Dharamshala. Unlike other ghats, it isn't used for bathing.

MIR GHAT

Mir Ghat, formerly known as Jarasandha Ghat, was built by Mir Rustam Ali in 1735. Home to the Vishalakshi Devi Temple with Dravidian architecture, it incorporates sites of the Jarasandhesvara Temple and Vridhaditya. Linked to Mahabharata legend, Jarasandha's soul is believed to have found peace here after his defeat by Bhima.



MANIKARNIKA GHAT

Manikarnika Ghat, among the oldest and most sacred cremation grounds in Varanasi, is believed to grant liberation as Lord Shiva whispers the Tarak Mantra to the departed. Legends link it to Vishnu, Parvati, and Sati, while its eternal fire burns ceaselessly. Unlike elsewhere, cremation here is holy, not polluting.



LALITA GHAT

Lalita Ghat, built in the early 19th century by Nepal's King Rana Bahadur Shah, is named after Goddess Lalita and also called Nepali Ghat. It houses the pagoda-style replica of Kathmandu's Pashupatinath Temple.



SCINDIA GHAT

Rebuilt by Ahilyabai Holkar in 1780 and later patronised by Rani Baija Bai Scindia, Scindia Ghat is famed for the leaning Ratneshwar Mahadev Temple, partly claimed by the Ganga. Once called Vadeshwar Ghat, it houses the Yamadharmeshwar Temple and numerous ashrams, serving as a spiritual hub for diverse ascetic traditions.



SANKATHA GHAT

Sankatha Ghat in Varanasi, named after Sankatha Devi, the goddess who protects from dangers, is a place of faith and refuge. Renovated in the 19th and 20th centuries by patrons from Baroda, it reflects devotion and resilience.



MEHTA GHAT

Mehta Ghat, built in 1960 by Ballabh Ram Shaligram Mehta, stands between Ganesh and Ram Ghats. Renovated in stone and named after its patron, it also hosts a 1962 hospital. Home to Marathi settlers, this quiet ghat offers a serene view of Ganga Aarti—immersed in spirit, yet away from crowds.

BHONSALE GHAT

Bhonsale Ghat, built in the 18th century by the Maratha rulers of Nagpur, reflects their devotion and patronage. Once called Nageshwar Ghat, it houses a Laxminarayan temple, palace, and serpent icon. Carved with Maratha-Rajput influences, its stone whispers quiet faith, preserving the Bhonsle legacy in Varanasi's sacred riverfront.



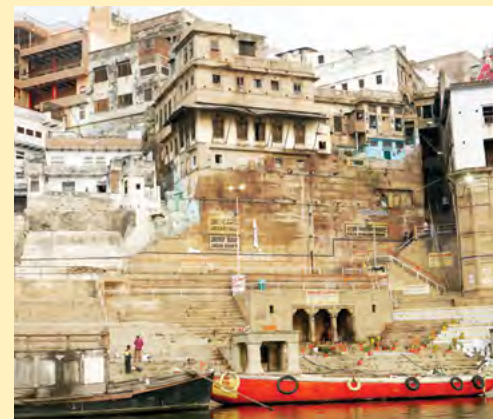
RAM GHAT

Ram Ghat, named after Lord Rama, is a serene stretch on the Ganga, where legend holds Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana once bathed. Nearby lies the Sangved Sanskrit Vidyalaya, dedicated to Rigveda study, and the quiet Upshanteshwar Temple.



GANESH GHAT

Ganesh Ghat is named after Lord Ganesh. This was part of the Agnishwar Ghat till the beginning of the 19th century. Peshwa Amritrao stone-paved and constructed an Amrit Vinayak or Ganesh Temple here in 1807, and hence the name Ganesh Ghat.



JATAR GHAT

Jatar Ghat, built by the Diwan of the Raja of Gwalior, is one of Varanasi's quieter riverfronts. Home to a grand palace and Laxminarayan temple, it's also called Lakshmanbala Ghat. Its name, linked to Vedic rituals, recalls ancestral rites and sacred ceremonies once performed here.



GWALIOR GHAT

Gwalior Ghat, once part of Chor Ghat, was renovated in the 19th century by Maharaja Jiyajirao Scindia and renamed after the Gwalior royals. Linked to Jatar Ghat, it is famed for Akash Deep celebrations and royal visits. Its architecture preserves Rajput grace with arches, murals, and riverside symmetry.



DURGA GHAT

Durga Ghat, named after the goddess of strength, was built in 1740 by Narayan Dixit and later renovated in 1958. Home to the Brahmacharini Durga temple, it is part of the sacred Panch-Tirtha Yatra.

BALAJI GHAT

Balaji Ghat, built by Peshwa Bajirao and later expanded by Jiyaji Rao Scindia with a Balaji temple, blends Maratha legacy, southern devotion, and Varanasi's music. Beside it stands Jathar Mandir of Laxmi Narayan. Ustad Bismillah Khan often played here at dawn, making the river his audience.



BRAHMA GHAT

Brahma Ghat, named for Lord Brahma, was cemented in 1740 by Narayan Dixit and houses a 13th-century Brahma statue and the Brahmeshwar lingam. Though modest, it exudes quiet energy, where pilgrims pause to reflect, reminding that even creation bows before the sacred Ganga in Varanasi.



PANCHGANGA GHAT

Panchganga Ghat, where five sacred rivers are believed to meet, is one of Varanasi's most revered riverfronts. Linked to saints like Kabir, Tulsidas, and Guru Nanak, it also housed the Bindumadhav Temple and now the Alamgir Mosque.



BUNDIPARKOTA GHAT

Bundiparkota Ghat, once a riverside retreat of Bundi's rulers, was stone-paved in the 16th century by Maharaja Rao Surjan. Originally Adi Vishweshwar Ghat, it hosted Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in 1516. Rajput architecture lingers in faded frescoes and balconies, blending history, devotion, and daily riverfront life in quiet reverence.



LAL GHAT

Lal Ghat, partially built by the Maharaja of Tijara and expanded by Raja Baldev Das in 1935, is linked to the washerman community and hosts the Bhiva Spirila Sanskrit Vidyal, a charitable school. It reflects royal patronage, devotion, and everyday community life along Varanasi's sacred riverfront.



BADRI NARAYAN GHAT

Badri Narayan Ghat in Varanasi replicates the Badrinath Temple, granting devotees the same spiritual merit. A dip in the Nar-Narayan Tirtha and worship at the temple are believed to bestow Badrinath's blessings. Formerly Mehta Ghat, it symbolizes that the divine travels with the devotee, not confined to one place.

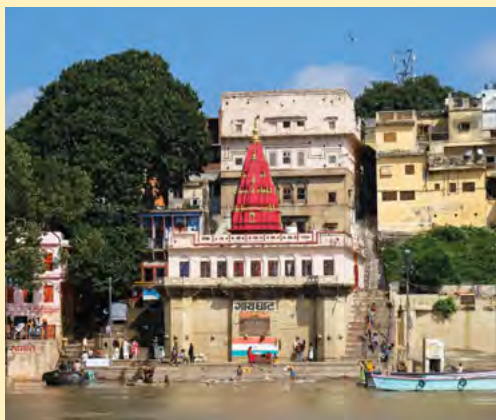
HANUMAN GARHI GHAT

Hanuman Garhi Ghat, once part of Gaiya Ghat, gained religious significance in 1950 when Shyamalal Mahatyagi Baba built a Hanuman Temple. Later developments included the Mahatyagi Ashram and Ganga Akhara.



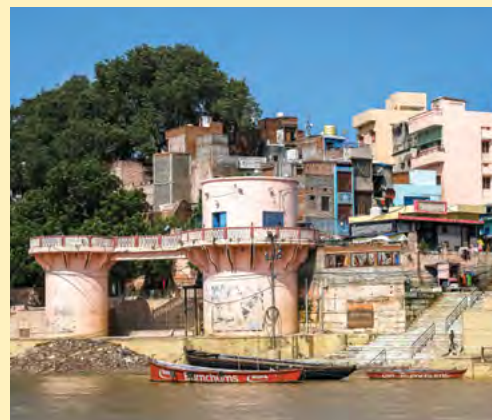
TRILOCHAN GHAT

Trilochan Ghat, named after Lord Shiva, the three-eyed one, is among Varanasi's oldest and most sacred ghats. Scriptures call it a tirtha, where bathing grants moksha. Home to the self-manifested Trilochaneshwar Mahadev Temple, it draws pilgrims, especially during Kartik and Shivratri, for ritual anointments from the Ganga.



GAIYA GHAT

Gaiya Ghat, named after the sacred cow, is a serene stretch of the Ganga where devotion and simplicity meet. Once a grazing and washing spot for cows, it now honours their spirit of nourishment and giving, marked by a large cow statue, embodying quiet sanctity along the riverbank.



GOLA GHAT

Gola Ghat, a working ghat in Varanasi, was once a bustling grain hub established by the Marwari community. Named for 'Gola' (granary), it hums with commerce rather than rituals. Even today, boats dock with goods, and the scent of wet stone and jute tells the story of generations at work.



NANDISHWAR GHAT

Nandishwar Ghat, named after Nandi, Lord Shiva's divine bull, carries an aura of devotion and guardianship. Favoured by filmmakers, it has featured in over 50 films, including Raanjhanaa and Masaan. A martial arts shala and a tucked-away shrine add to its quiet charm, where locals seek strength and steadfastness.



NAYA GHAT

In a city where time folds into itself, Naya Ghat feels like a breath of renewal. Once called Phuteshwar Ghat, it was rebuilt in 1940 by Narsingh Japal of Bihar and renamed “Naya”. Legend says that Lord Rama bathed here. Today, shrines, laughter, and marigolds keep its timeless spirit alive.

SHUKA GHAT

Shuka Ghat whispers of memory more than ritual. Named after the sage Shuka, son of Vyasa, it is said he meditated here and recited the Bhagavata Purana by the Ganga. No grand temple or festival marks it—only stillness, a sacred name, and the echo of devotion across the water.



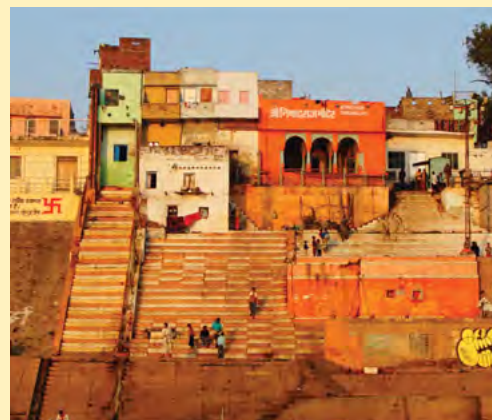
PRAHLAD GHAT

Before the river and rituals, there was faith—fierce and unyielding. Prahlad Ghat stands as a testament to that defiance. It is said to be where Lord Vishnu appeared as Narasimha to save Prahlada. It later housed Tulsidas before he wrote Ramcharitmanas. Each Holi, its fires rekindle faith's eternal triumph.



TELIANALA GHAT

Tucked away from Varanasi's grand ghats, Telianala Ghat flows with the quiet rhythm of everyday life. Once lined with oil mills and drains, it echoes the toil of the Teli community. Here, devotion and livelihood merge—a humble reminder that the city's spirit was shaped by its unseen hands.



NISHAD GHAT

Nishad Ghat honours Nishadraj Guha, the boatman who ferried Lord Rama with devotion deeper than the river. Still home to the Nishad community, it echoes with their faith and labour—a reminder that service, too, can be sacred.



RANI GHAT

Rani Ghat, built in 1937 by Muniya Sahiba of Lucknow, carries her grace in silence. Once part of Raj Ghat, it's now a haven where washermen work and colours flutter—a queen's peace, shared with all.



NAMO GHAT

Namo Ghat, a modern addition to Varanasi's sacred Ganga banks, stretches between Raj Ghat and Adi Keshav Ghat. Named for its iconic 'Namaste' sculptures, it blends tradition with contemporary amenities—floating CNG station, open-air theatre, yoga zones, and ramps for all—offering a vibrant, inclusive space where spirituality and modernity flow together.

SANT RAVIDAS GHAT

Sant Ravidas Ghat, once home to the 15th–16th century Bhakti saint and social reformer, honours his rise beyond caste through powerful words. Carved from old Raj Ghat in the 1990s, it now hosts a global temple, drawing pilgrims who celebrate his devotion, defiance, and enduring symbol of social equality.



ADI KESHAV GHAT

At the confluence of the Varuna and Ganga, Adi Keshav Ghat marks where the river and Lord Vishnu first entered Kashi. Once a clay embankment, later fortified in 1790, it holds deep mythological and historical significance. Pilgrims come here seeking beginnings, devotion, and the grace of Kashi's sacred origins.



RAJ GHAT

Raj Ghat, one of Varanasi's oldest sites, marks the city's original settlement. Archaeological remains whisper of a past older than legend. Once the Gahadavala capital, it hosts Adikeshav Temple, Chandan Shaheed mausoleum, and Vasanta College. Near the historic Malviya Bridge, the Ganga here flows wide and timeless, witnessing centuries of history.



LAKSHMI KUND

Tucked in a quiet corner of Kashi, Lakshmi Kund carries myths of purity and rebirth. Guarded by Mayuri Yogini and blessed by Goddess Lakshmi, its waters are said to grant prosperity. Each year, the Sorahiya Mela enlivens its banks, yet its essence remains—stillness, reflection, and silent grace.

VARANASI



LEARNING



SAYAJI RAO GAEKWAD LIBRARY, BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY

Established in 1917 through Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's vision and the patronage of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III, BHU's Central Library was later redesigned by Malaviya after he visited London in 1931. Completed in 1941, it now houses over 1.3 million books, including 7,200 rare manuscripts on palm leaves and birch bark.



BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1916 by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, BHU was envisioned as a place where India's ancient wisdom and modern sciences could thrive together. Now an 'Institution of National Importance,' it has nurtured leaders, scientists, artists, and teachers who shaped India's cultural and intellectual life.

SRI RANVEER SANSKRIT VIDYALAYA, BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY

Sri Ranveer Sanskrit Vidyalaya carries forward a tradition that began in 1883, when Maharaja Ranbir Singh of Jammu & Kashmir, inspired by Sri Vibhushan Brahmachari Ji, founded it as a Sanskrit pathshala. It was later guided by Dr. Annie Besant and Madan Mohan Malaviya to become part of BHU's mission to blend ancient learning with modern education.



VAJRA VIDYA INSTITUTE

Founded in 1993 by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche of the Karma Kagyu lineage and formally inaugurated in 1999 by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, this monastic college was built to preserve the profound traditions of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy.



SARASWATI BHAWAN LIBRARY SAMPURNANAND SANSKRIT VISHWAVIDYALAYA

Founded in 1907 during the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales, it is one of India's richest repositories of Sanskrit knowledge, with over 100,000 manuscripts and 1,90,000 printed books. The collection spans palm-leaf manuscripts, birch-bark scrolls, and rare works on the Vedas, Vedanta, Grammar, Ayurveda, Jyotish, and Tantra.



VARANASI



MATTS



KABIR CHAURA MATT

It is a spiritual seat dedicated to Kabir, the 15th-century poet who was born in Varanasi and raised by a Muslim weaver family. The Matt is located in the neighbourhood where Kabir is believed to have spent his early life. The Matt holds relics, manuscripts, and a serene prayer hall.



SRI ANANDAMAYI ASHRAM

Ma Anandamayi, one of the most revered spiritual figures of 20th-century India, visited this ashram often during her long journeys. The ashram was established by her devotees in 1945, and even today, it follows the rhythm she loved—early morning prayers, quiet study, and gentle acts of service.

KANCHI KAMAKOTI MATT

This Matt is one of the five Pancha Mathas established in reverence to Adi Shankaracharya, the great philosopher-saint who travelled across India in the 8th century to restore the path of Advaita—non-dualism, the idea that all is one. While the original Kanchi Matt lies in Tamil Nadu, this branch in Kashi carries that same lineage of thought.



JANGAMWADI MATT

Located near Maidagin, Jangamwadi Matt serves as a spiritual and administrative centre for the Jangam community, who are followers of the Shaiva Lingayat tradition. It was established several centuries ago, becoming a crucial link between the southern Lingayat tradition and the sacred geography of the North.



SHRI ADI SHANKARACHARYA MATT

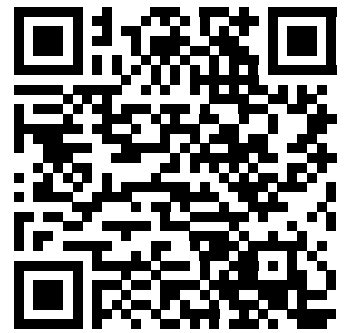
Shri Adi Shankaracharya Matt marks the presence of the philosopher-saint who once walked these banks. In Kashi, Shankara studied, debated, and composed some of his greatest works. Near the Vishwanath Temple, he encountered Shiva in disguise of a Chandala, a moment that revealed the ultimate truth of non-duality.



TRAILANGA SWAMI MATT

Trailanga Swami was a mystic from Andhra Pradesh who spent most of his life in Kashi. He is said to have lived for over 280 years, with stories about him ranging from the miraculous to the quietly profound. The Matt today holds his footprints, some belongings, and a tranquil courtyard where devotees still sit and meditate. They say the energy hasn't left.

VARANASI



Scan to explore
timeless threads of
tradition



SHOPPING & CUISINE



LAHURABIR MARKET

Located near Maidagin, on the road toward Pandeypur, is a market built of small, family-run shops. Here, you'll find fabric merchants, spice vendors, brass utensil shops, and in between it all, cycle repair stalls, bookshops, sweet vendors, and local chaiwalas who know every customer by name.



BENGALI TOLA

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Bengali pilgrims and scholars settled here, bringing their food, customs, and worship. Over time, Bengali Tola became a cultural bridge—marked by Bengali-style homes, Durga Puja pandals, Kali shrines, sweet shops, and a strong tradition of learning and literature.

THATHERI BAZAAR

This bazaar takes its name from the “Thatheras”—the traditional artisans of brass and copperware. For centuries, they’ve been shaping metal with hand tools and instinct, creating everything from puja thalis and lotas to intricate diyas and temple kalashas.



MADANPURA WEAVERS DISTRICT

Madanpura, just a few streets away from the bustling Godowlia crossing, is the living heart of Varanasi's famed weaving tradition. For centuries, this neighbourhood has been home to the master craftsmen who create Banarasi sarees.

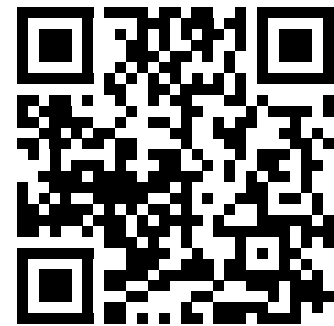


KACHORI GALI

A kachori is a popular Indian snack—a round, deep-fried, flaky pastry made with wheat flour and stuffed with a spicy filling, like spiced lentils, peas, potatoes, onions, or sometimes dry fruits and nuts. In Kachori Gali, kachoris stuffed with spiced lentils are fried golden and served with a tangy-sweet aloo sabzi, all on little leaf plates.



VARANASI



Scan to explore
Varanasi's musical
traditions



MUSIC



MUSICAL TRADITIONS OF VARANASI

Varanasi, the cultural capital of India, breathes music at every turn. Deeply woven into its spiritual and religious fabric, the city is a revered cradle of Hindustani classical music and has nurtured generations of maestros. From the soft strains of sitar and tabla drifting through its lanes and ghats to devotional chants along the Ganges at sunrise, music is an inseparable part of its soul. As dusk falls, temples and traditional venues come alive with mesmerising performances that fill the city with serenity and timeless charm.



RAMAPURA GHARANA AREA

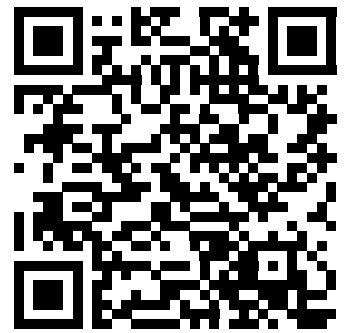
Nestled between Godowlia and Chowk, Ramapura is the cradle of Banaras' musical heritage. Home to the Banaras Gharana since the 18th century, it has nurtured maestros like Pandit Ram Sahai and generations of tabla players, vocalists, sarangi masters, and dancers.

KABIR CHAURA MUSIC HERITAGE LANE

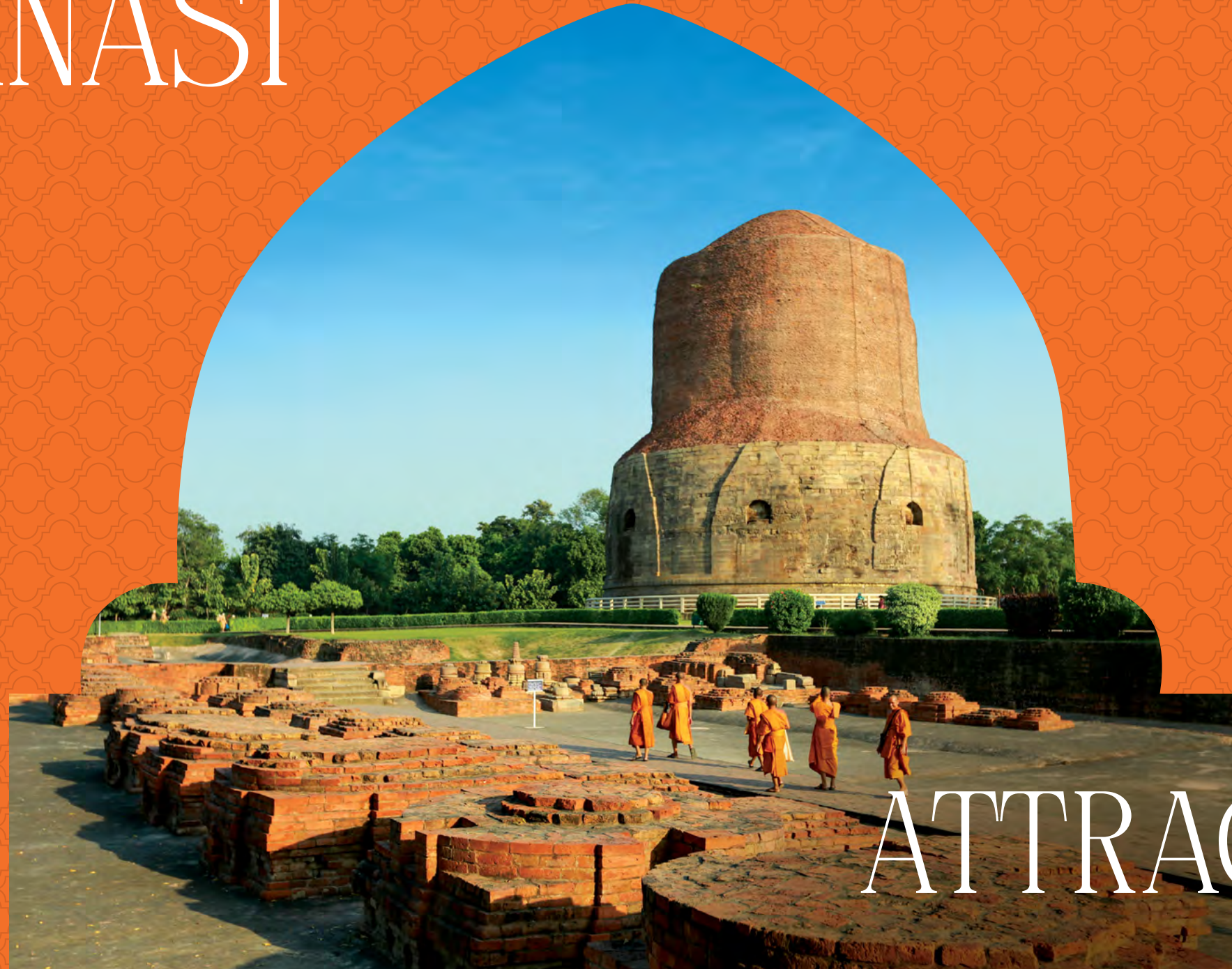
Kabir Chaura takes its name from the saint-poet Kabir, who was born in 15th-century Varanasi and spent much of his life here. This modest stretch of lanes is home to the Banaras Gharana, a prominent school of Hindustani classical music known especially for its tabla, vocal, and dance traditions.



VARANASI



Scan to discover
local crafts and
keepsakes



ATTRactions



GODOWLIA & VISHWANATH GALI

Godowlia Chowk and Vishwanath Gali are Kashi's bustling shopping streets. Here, Banarasi silk sarees, zari brocades, handloom stoles, glass bangles, wooden toys, copper lotas, and temple bells fill family-run shops. Aromas of kachori, lassi, and sandalwood mingle, making the lanes themselves a living, timeless marketplace.



NIRANJANI AKHARA

Founded over a thousand years ago, the Niranjani Akhara traces its roots to Adi Shankaracharya's revival of the monastic tradition. It is one of the seven Shaivite akharas, and while its name means "the spotless one," the path it follows is far from passive.

PANDIT DEENDAYAL UPADHYAY SMRITI STHAL

In Kashi, the Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay Smriti Sthal honours a visionary leader who championed Integral Humanism—balancing progress with culture and values. Its serene gardens and Panch Loha statue invite reflection, offering a quiet space to remember his philosophy of unity, self-reliance, and moral clarity.



AMRIT RAO PESHWA PALACE

Amrit Rao, adoptive brother of the last Peshwa Baji Rao II, built a palace overlooking the Ganga—both a personal sanctuary and a reminder of Maratha power from Pune to Kashi. Known as the Amrit Rao Peshwa Palace or 'Peshwa Kothi,' it also sheltered pilgrims, sadhus, and travellers.



MAHA NIRVANI AKHARA

Located near Panchganga Ghat, the Maha Nirvani Akhara is one of India's largest Shaiva Akharas, organised in the 10th century CE, known for embracing Naga tradition and pioneering women's leadership. It oversees temples, ashrams, charitable kitchens, and schools, playing a major role in festivals like Kumbh Mela while focusing on meditation and study in daily life.



BHARTENDU BHAWAN

In the heart of the old city near Maidagin stands Bhartendu Bhawan, dedicated to Bharatendu Harishchandra, the father of modern Hindi literature and theatre. Built on his ancestral home, the modest structure still carries the lasting legacy of his immeasurable impact on Hindi literature.



LOLARK KUND

Hidden near Tulsi Ghat, Lolark Kund glows golden in morning light. This ancient stepwell, linked to Sun God Lolark Aditya, is believed to grant children and cure ailments. With 18th-century stonework by Rani Ahilyabai, it echoes Varanasi's solar traditions, offering a quiet, sacred space where faith still lingers.



BIRTHPLACE OF RANI LAXMIBAI

Born in Kashi in 1828, Manikarnika Tambe grew into Rani Laxmi Bai, warrior queen of Jhansi. Her childhood in Varanasi shaped her courage, learning, and fearlessness. Even as she led troops in 1857's First War of Independence, the fire of Kashi stayed in her voice and defiance.

BIRTHPLACE OF MUNSHI PREM CHAND

In the quiet village of Lamhi stands Munshi Premchand's ancestral home, honouring the 'Soldier of the Pen.' Writing in Hindi and Urdu, he critiqued poverty, caste, and inequality, and championed anti-imperialism. Today, the memorial houses a museum, library, and research centre, preserving the voice of India's greatest literary conscience.



JUNA AKHARA

Near Harishchandra Ghat, Juna Akhara—founded by Adi Shankaracharya in the 7th century—houses naga sadhus devoted to discipline, meditation, and Vedic studies. Clothed in ash, they balance weaponry with scripture, living in silence and renunciation—a spiritual world within Kashi, where strength, devotion, and inner practice converge.



HOME OF USTAD BISMILLAH KHAN

In Benia Bagh, Ustad Bismillah Khan's humble house echoes with shehnai ragas. Drawn to Kashi as a boy, he transformed the shehnai into divine music, playing for the Ganga, Shiva, and the city itself. Even after global fame, he never left, keeping his melodies inseparable from Varanasi's sacred rhythm.



NAGARI PRACHARINI SABHA

Founded in 1893, Nagari Pracharini Sabha preserves the Devanagari script and Hindi literature. A hub for poets, freedom fighters, and scholars like Bharatendu Harishchandra, it published dictionaries, journals, and nurtured literary revival.



CHINESE BUDDHIST TEMPLE

The Chinese Buddhist Temple in Sarnath, built in 1939, reflects centuries of shared faith between India and China. With its serene Buddha, Chinese inscriptions, incense, and lanterns, it stands as a quiet tribute to pilgrims like Xuanzang and Faxian.



KOREAN TEMPLE (NOKYAWON), SARNATH

In Sarnath, where Buddha first taught, stands Nokyawon, the Korean Temple. Founded in 1993 by the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, it blends Korean architecture with Indian spirituality. Hosting chanting, meditation, lantern festivals, and community service, Nokyawon bridges cultures, reminding pilgrims that Buddhism's spirit continues.

THAI TEMPLE

Built in 1933 by Thai dignitaries, the Thai Temple in Sarnath reflects classic Thai architecture with golden roofs, intricate carvings, and a serene Buddha in Dharmachakra mudra. Amid quiet gardens and chanting monks, it honours India as the cradle of Dhamma and the timeless journey of the Buddha's teachings.



JAPANESE TEMPLE, SARNATH

Tucked near the Vishwa Shanti Stupa, Sarnath's Japanese Temple, Nichigai Suzan Horinji reflects Kyoto's pagoda style. Built by the Indo-Japanese Buddhist Cultural Society, it houses a sandalwood reclining Buddha.



BURMESE BUDDHIST TEMPLE

Built in 1910 by Burmese expatriates and the Maha Bodhi Society, the Burmese Temple in Sarnath reflects classic Theravada style with gilded roofs and a serene marble Buddha image. A peaceful retreat, it hosts chanting, meditation, and Burmese festivals, preserving cultural ties while offering visitors calm reflection and cross-cultural unity.



SARANGNATH TEMPLE

Perched on a hillock in Sarnath, Sarangnath Temple honours Lord Shiva as the 'Lord of Deer.' Its sanctum holds two rare lingams by Sage Sarang and Adi Shankaracharya. With its sacred kund, Sawan fair, and timeless lore, the temple embodies devotion, mythology, and peace.



DHAMEK STUPA

The Dhamek Stupa in Sarnath marks where Buddha gave his first sermon, teaching the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. Built by Ashoka and enhanced during the Gupta period, its carvings and inscriptions reflect centuries of devotion.

DEER PARK & MINI ZOO

Near Dhamek Stupa, Deer Park spans 33 acres in Sarnath, where Buddha delivered his first sermon. Once called Mrigadava, it honours compassion through deer and other wildlife. Today, the sanctuary houses over 230 animals, blending conservation with history.



CHAUKHANDI STUPA

The Chaukhandi Stupa, dating to the 5th century, marks where Buddha first met five companions after enlightenment. Later topped with an octagonal tower during Humayun's visit, its aged bricks speak of a silent presence.



MULAGANDHA KUTI VIHARA

Mulagandha Kuti Vihara, built in 1931 by the Maha Bodhi Society, is a vibrant temple in Sarnath honouring Buddha's teachings. Its golden statue, fragrant murals by Kosetsu Nosu, and Bodhi tree from Sri Lanka create a serene space where monks chant in Pali.



VARANASI



MUSEUM



SAMPURNANAND SANSKRIT UNIVERSITY & MUSEUM

The Sampurnanand Sanskrit University & Museum is one of the oldest and largest Sanskrit Universities globally, credited with the promotion of ancient Indian knowledge. Founded in 1791, it attracts students from around the world for its rich culture and its treasured library, housing one of the richest collections of Sanskrit manuscripts in the world.



LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI SMRITI BHAWAN SANGRAHALAY

The Lal Bahadur Shastri Smriti Bhawan Sangrahalay is the birthplace of India's second Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri (Born in 1904). The museum preserves his home, showcasing personal belongings—his spectacles, clothes, books, handwritten letters, and photographs—tracing Shastri ji's journey from childhood to life as a freedom fighter and national leader.

MAN SINGH OBSERVATORY & EXPERIENTIAL MUSEUM

The Man Singh Observatory & Experiential Museum, located in Man Mandir Palace was added by Raja Jai Singh II, the great Rajput astronomer-king, in the 1700s. Here, you will find astronomical marvels like the Samrat Yantra for measuring time, the Jai Prakash Yantra for tracking stars, and the Nadivalaya Yantra to understand the sun's movement.



TRADE FACILITATION CENTRE & CRAFT MUSEUM

Located in Bada Lalpur, Varanasi, the Trade Facilitation Centre & Craft Museum (est. 2017) showcases traditional handlooms, handicrafts, and modern art across three floors. Highlights of the place include wooden toys, brass and stonework, handmade carpets, and works by artists like Latika Katt and Madan Lal, alongside galleries, images of the ghats, and a souvenir shop.



RAMNAGAR FORT & MUSEUM

Away from the hustle and bustle of central Kashi is Ramnagar Fort. Built in 1750, this sandstone fort houses a museum displaying vintage cars, royal palanquins, astronomical clocks, weapons, palm-leaf manuscripts, and old photographs that offer a glimpse into a bygone era.



SARNATH MUSEUM

Established in 1910, Sarnath Museum houses sculptures, inscriptions, relics, and antiquities revealing early Buddhist history and Mauryan, Kushana, and Gupta art. Highlights of the place include India's national emblem, the Lion Capital of Ashoka (c. 250 BCE), featuring four back-to-back lions atop a pillar, set on a circular base adorned with animals and Dharma wheels.



BHARAT KALA BHAVAN

Nestled in BHU, Bharat Kala Bhavan preserves Kashi's artistic soul. Founded in 1920, it houses over 100,000 objects—from Harappan relics and Mughal miniatures to Banarasi textiles and Tulsidas manuscripts. Sculptures, coins, and folk art chronicle India's past, offering scholars and visitors a serene space where history, art, and spirituality converge.

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