

TIME TRAVELLING

What if I tell you that you that time travel is possible? Well, not scientifically, but you can delve into the past by visiting various heritage destinations around India which still carry the essence of ancient India

BY ANUJ SARMA

India is a country culturally and historically rich and recounts number of great stories that have prevailed since yore. From sprawling monuments of the maharajas to the remnants of our colonial past—India is a mixed bag of a diverse heritage that has been passed on through centuries. Here is a list of five of the stunning heritage destinations, handpicked for you.

Mandu & Orchha

The erstwhile capital of the Malwa rulers, the fortress town of Mandu (or Mandavgarh) was an important military outpost. Scarred by battles and natural forces, Mandu stands majestic even in ruins. The fortress town is replete with monuments which depicts architectural excellence. One should visit the Jahaz Mahal, which is built between two artificial lakes on a narrow strip of land. Around 10 hours drive from Mandu lies Orchha, on the banks of the Betwa

river. Orchha served as the capital of Rudra Pratap, a Bundela ruler, in the early 16th century. The Jehangir Mahal and the Lakshmi Narayan temple was built by Bir Singh, a compulsive builder who had commissioned the construction of these landmarks. The Ram Raja Temple is a must-visit, which is the only temple where Lord Rama is worshipped as a King and not as an incarnation of Vishnu.

Heritage Hotlist:

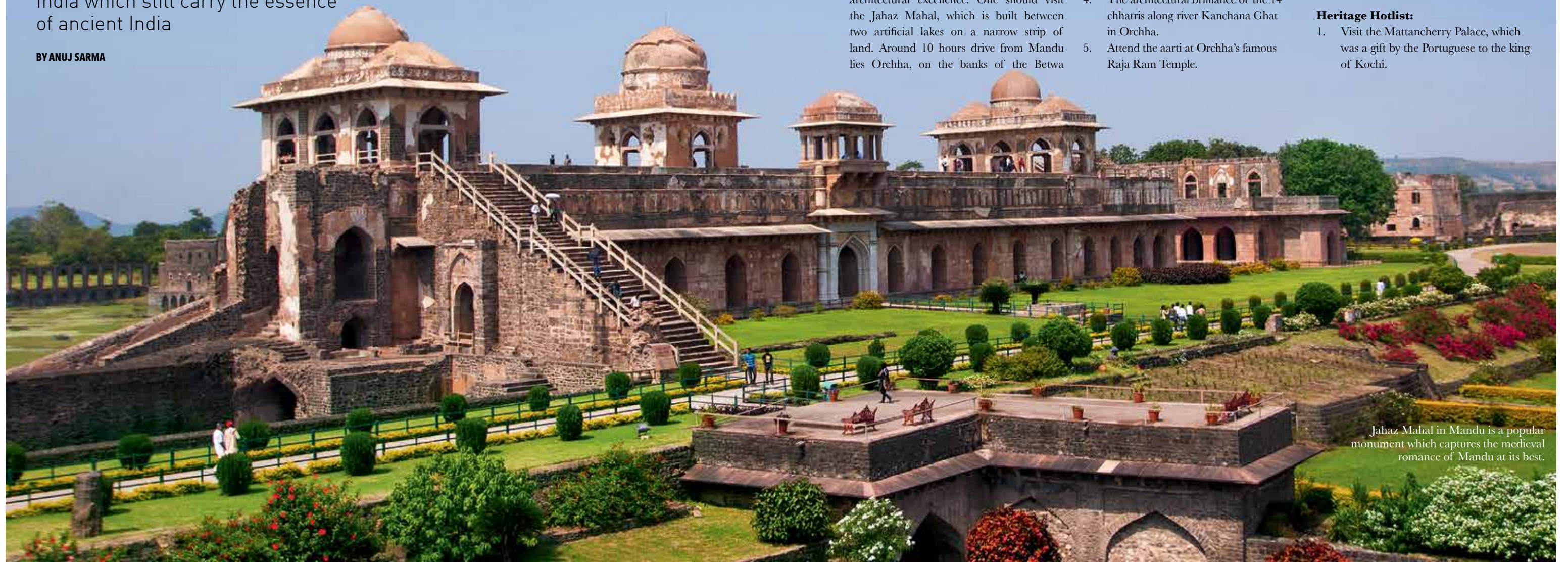
1. Visit the Neelkanth Palace in Mandu
2. See the marvel of the Hindola Mahal and the various darwazas in Mandu.
3. Watch the sunset from Mandu's Ashrafi Mahal.
4. The architectural brilliance of the 14 chhatris along river Kanchana Ghat in Orchha.
5. Attend the aarti at Orchha's famous Raja Ram Temple.

Fort Kochi

An erstwhile Portuguese settlement, Fort Kochi served as a refuge for Sephardic Jews who were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492. Later on in 1663, the Dutch renovated the palace. Also, visit the oldest active synagogue in the Commonwealth of Nations, the Paradesi Synagogue, which was built in 1567 and the Jew Town was built around it. Synonymous with the backwaters of Kerala and captured a lot by photographers, the Chinese fishing nets have been used in the area since 1400 AD from the court of Kublai Khan. The Dutch Cemetery near Kochi beach has the graves of the Dutch traders and soldiers.

Heritage Hotlist:

1. Visit the Mattancherry Palace, which was a gift by the Portuguese to the king of Kochi.



Jahaz Mahal in Mandu is a popular monument which captures the medieval romance of Mandu at its best.

Synonymous with the backwaters of Kerala and captured a lot by photographers, the Chinese fishing nets have been used in the area since 1400 AD from the court of Kublai Khan

2. The Paradesi Synagogue is the oldest active synagogue in the Commonwealth.
3. Soak in the history at the Indo-Portuguese museum, which is situated in the garden of the Bishop's House.
4. Visit the Santa Cruz Cathedral Basilica, which was first built in 1505 and later on rebuilt for a number of times.

Chettinad

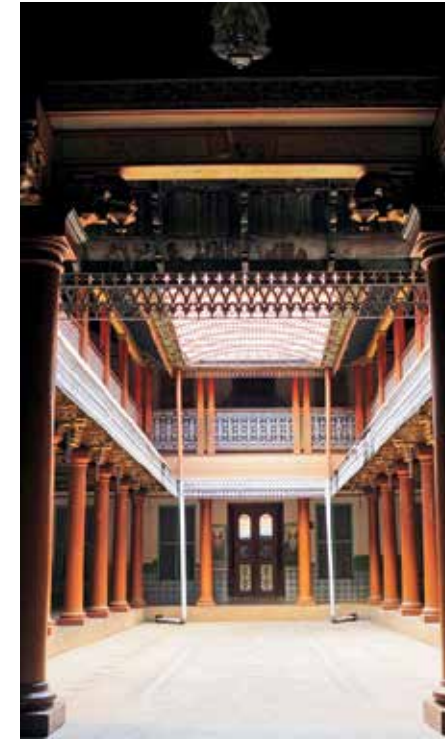
The story of Chettinad was written by the Chettiars, who were originally gem and salt merchants. The most significant aspect of that era were the homes, which are a unique combination of western and eastern sensibilities. Needless to say, the palaces and *havelis* of this little corner in southern India can give Rajasthan a run for its money. The Chettinad Heritage Museum carries on the unique lifestyle of the Chettiars and is considered a heritage home by many. Visit the Chettinad Palace, which was built in 1912 by Dr. Annamali Chettiyar. Some famous temples are Vairavan temple, Karpaga Vinayakar temple, Kundrakudi Murugan temple, Kottaiyur Sivan temple and Kandanur Sivan temple. While travelling one will come across temples at every turn as religion is a central part of the life in the region

Heritage Hotlist:

1. Visit Nattukotais (countryside fort in Tamil), the huge mansions of Chettinad which is bound to intrigue you.
2. Offer your prayers at the nine clan temples which are spread in 25 kilometres radius.



Chinese fishing nets colloquially known as Cheena vala is a common sight in the backwaters of Kerala especially around Fort Kochi. Once just a fishing accessory, it is a now a big bait for tourists.



3. Visit the makes of the Chettinad tiles (locally known as Athangudi tiles).
4. Visit the majestic Meenakshi Temple in Madurai (90 kms from Karaikudi)

Old Goa

Besides being the most famous party destination in India, the charm of Goa doesn't really end there. The colonisation by the Portuguese left back remnants that are now some of the most famous tourist attractions in Old Goa. Named as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Old Goa has one of the most famous churches, the over-400-year-old Basilica of Bom Jesus, which has the tomb that contains the mortal remains of Saint Xavier. You can also visit the Aguada Fort, which was built in 1612 to prevent entry of ships to protect Old Goa from attacks.

Heritage Hotlist:

1. Visit the Basilica of Bom Jesus.
2. Visit the Se Cathedral, the largest Church in Asia.
3. Visit the Wax World Museum, which has life size wax statues of historical figures.
4. The Archaeological Museum houses fragments of sculptures from Hindu temple sites.



The Basilica of Bom Jesus contains the tomb and mortal remains of St Francis Xavier(top)



Chidambara Vilas is a 110 year old heritage Chettiar home in Chettinad that showcase of the luxurious Chettinad lifestyles of the last century(left)

5. Visit the only surviving palace of Yusuf Adil Shah, the last Indian ruler of Goa—Adil Shah's Doorway.

a French woman, Mirra Alfassa, who was known as 'The Mother' by many. A stroll through the promenade which remains vehicle free from 5.30 in the evening till 11 pm, should not be missed.

Puducherry

A small seaside town 160 kms away from Chennai, Puducherry is quaint, quirky and exudes an air of Frenchness. The roads were laid in a formal grid pattern by the French, who had their colonial settlement till the year 1954. The French part of the town is called the La Ville Blanche and the Tamil quarters are called La Ville Noire. The internationally renowned Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Auroville, which was established by Sri Aurobindo and

Heritage Hotlist:

1. Sri Varadaraja Perumal Temple is considered to be the oldest Hindu temple in Puducherry.
2. Spend some spiritual time in Auroville.
3. Visit the French War Memorial during the Bastille Day (July 14).
4. The Pondicherry Museum offer a lot of insights on the history of the region. **FI**