

Hyderabad, also called the City of Pearls, is the common capital of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. An interesting juxtaposition of the ancient and the modern, the city is home to several tourist attractions. Here is a list of the most important ones.

TEXT **ARUNDHATI NATH**

24hrs in... HYDERABAD

► **RAMOJI FILM CITY**

Spread on a sprawling 2,000 acres, Ramoji Film City was established by film producer Ramoji Rao in 1996. It is the largest film studio complex in the world. Watch a variety of live shows—ceremonious opening and closing acts, various cultural performances and stunt shows—while learning about film-making and sound-mixing. A bird park with several species of exotic birds and the numerous gardens will leave you mesmerised. Guided tours for visitors are organised in charming, vintage-looking buses. Here you can see replicas of several historical sites and buildings including the Mughal Gardens, Hawa Mahal and Statue of Liberty.



Illustration: Swapnil Redkar, DINODIA/Dinodia Photo/Dinodia



▲ CHARMINAR

This splendid monument is an iconic building of the city and is considered the Arc de Triomphe of the East. The Charminar or the four minarets is an impressive structure with four intricately designed minarets and four grand arches with a mosque on the fourth floor. Its design exhibits Indo-Islamic architecture. Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah built the Charminar in 1591 to commemorate the eradication of a dreaded plague that had ravaged the city.

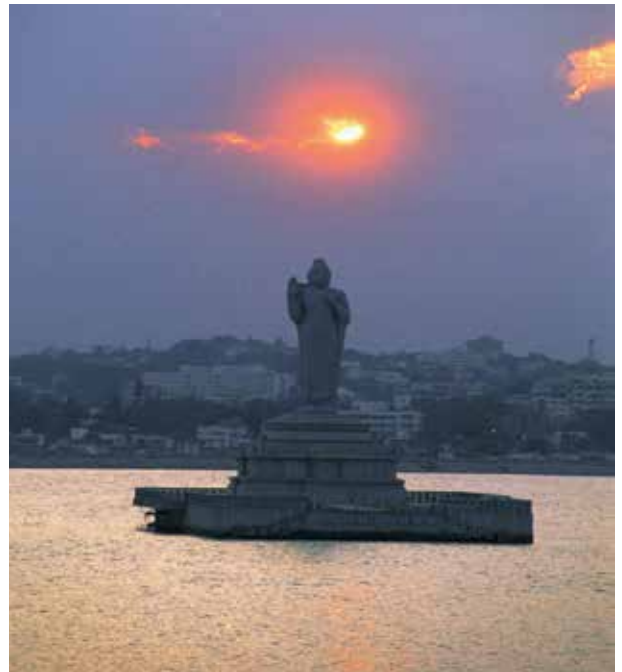


▲ LAAD BAZAAR

Love buying jewellery? Laad Bazaar is your haunt! This centuries-old market is famous for its glass and lacquer bangles available in every imaginable colour. Wedding finery, a variety of attar, henna, pearl jewellery, silverware, paintings, and hand-embroidered fabric in silk, cotton and velvet, are also on sale in this kilometre-long shopping arcade. This market is believed to have been built by Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah for royal guests during the wedding of his daughter.

CHOWMAHALLAH PALACE

Experience Nizami grandeur at its best at Chowmahallah Palace. The seat of the Asaf Jahi dynasty and the residence of the Nizams of Hyderabad, it is a glimpse into the royal lives of the Nizams. The interiors of the palace have huge, elaborately decorated glass chandeliers hanging from the ceiling, and the upper floors showcase the items used by the Nizams. In 2010, Chowmahallah Palace was awarded the UNESCO Asia Pacific Merit Award for cultural heritage conservation.



▲ HUSSAIN SAGAR LAKE

A large manmade lake built by Hazrat Hussain Shah in 1562, Hussain Sagar is an ideal sunset spot. Spread across 5.7 sq. km, this lake has a huge monolithic statue of the Buddha at the centre. The statue weights 350 tonnes and is entirely made of white granite. Take a boat ride from the shore to the Buddha statue and enjoy the calming evening breeze. You can also stroll through NTR gardens and Lumbini Park in the vicinity.

PARADISE FOOD COURT

Hyderabad is famous for its authentic dum biryani and Paradise Food Court is one of the best places to try it. This biryani is prepared by sealing the edges of the cooking vessel with dough to keep the flavours intact. Different spices and condiments along with succulent meat give it a superior, tangy taste. Try it with *mirchi ka salan* and raita.

▼ **SALAR JUNG MUSEUM**

This is the single largest one-man collection in the world and the third largest museum in India. Nawab Mir Yousuf Ali Khan, renowned as Salar Jung III had a great passion for objects of art and literature. After relinquishing his position as prime minister to the Nizam, he spent his entire life collecting an extensive range of different forms of art from around the world. His collection is now on display at this museum. A few interesting items on display are a marble statue of the 'Veiled Rebecca' a 19th century musical clock from England and a book stand, made of jade, called Rehal.



▼ **FALAKNUMA PALACE**

Retrace the path trodden by the wealthy Nizams, soak in the royalty of the Europeans of a bygone era and feel awestruck by the sheer brilliance of the architectural marvels of this exquisitely designed palace. One of the most splendid palaces in India, Falaknuma Palace was built by Nawab Vikar ul Umra and was later owned by the Nizam of Hyderabad. In 2010, the property was given on lease to the Taj Group of Hotels and it has now been restored into a plush heritage palace hotel.



▲ **MANGATRAI PEARLS, BASHEERBAGH**

Aptly called the City of Pearls, Hyderabad has been a world leader in pearl trade for centuries. You'll find pearl earrings, bangles, necklaces, pendants, hairpieces, finger rings and more on display at Mangatrai Pearls at Basheerbagh. They offer a wide variety of pearls in different colours and price ranges and you are likely to have a difficult time making a choice!



▲ **GOLCONDA FORT**

Taking its name from the Telugu words *Golla Konda*, meaning Shepherd's Hill, Golconda is one of the oldest forts of Hyderabad. Originally belonging to the Kakatiyas of Warangal, it was taken over by the Bahmanis and then owned by the kings of the Qutb Shahi dynasty. Clap your hands while standing in the centre of the entrance and you'll be surprised to hear the echo of the clap from far away points of the fort. Engineered with perfection, this fort was built using acoustic signaling devices several centuries ago!

◆ **QUICK FACTS**

GETTING THERE

Jet Airways operates daily services to Hyderabad from major Indian cities.

ACCOMMODATION

Hyderabad has a variety of options for a luxurious and comfortable stay.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.telanganatourism.gov.in/hyderabad.html