

**WELCOME**

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**THE SYMPOSIUM ON MOLLUSCA**

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF

**THE MARINE BIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF INDIA**



**SOUVENIR**

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# IMPORTANT TOURIST CENTRES IN AND AROUND KERALA

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## The Wild Life Sanctuary

Cradled in the Western Ghats with the pleasant comfort of the cool hills, the Wild Life Sanctuary at Thekkady is unique in India. It offers the tourist the luxury of cruise on boats in the Periyar Lake and the thrill of watching a variety of wild animals.

Situated 914–1828 metres above sea level in and around the Periyar Lake the Sanctuary is 777 sq. km in area. The lake formed by a dam across the Periyar river, is spread over 26 sq. km with its curves, spurs and bays. The dense tropical jungles provide a natural home for animals like the elephant, bison, wild boar, sambar, antelope, tiger and leopard.

From Cochin the distance to Thekkadi is 192 km. The starting point of the exciting journey to Thekkadi is Kottayam. This city, 70 km from Cochin, with its excellent tourist bungalow atop a hill, provides a fine midway halt before the climb to Periyar. The drive from Kottayam is itself a thrilling journey. The ascending road lies through rich plantations of pepper, rubber and, higher up, tea and cardamom and every bend of the spiral road bring in view a fresh panorama of scenic glory.

At Thekkady there is a western-style

hotel, Aranya Nivas, managed by the State Tourist Department. Edappalayam Tourist Bungalow is located right inside the sanctuary and can be reached by boat from Aranya Nivas Hotel. It would be necessary to reach the Hotel jetty by 5 P.M. to be ferried over the Periyar Lake. The stay at Edappalayam, ringed by a protective ditch, will be a memorable experience, for here at night you have a chance of seeing wild animals across the ditch. There is an Economy Class Tourist Bungalow also close to the to the Aranya Nivas Hotel.

Scheduled cruises by the launch 'Periyar' of 30 seat capacity and a few more launches are available on hire. Canoes could also be hired by those who prefer to row on their own. Each scheduled cruise takes three hours. The best part of the day for boating is either early morning or dusk, when the animals come out with their young ones.

Apart from a quiet holiday on the hills, Thekkadi offers unique opportunities for fishing. Furnished fishing huts are available at three places, Thannikkudy, Mullakudy and Manakkavala. These have also observation posts close

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by to watch wild animals. Lodging charges at these places are moderate.

The Periyar Wild Life Sanctuary is already on the world's tourist map and should be a must on your itinerary.

### Trivandrum

Trivandrum, the capital of Kerala State is a modern city. With dense greenery undulating roads, slopes and parks it is a very picturesque city. Known as 'Anantasayanam' in ancient days, it has been a sacred place of the Hindus. In 1750, it became the capital of Travancore State when Raja Marthanda Varma shifted his royal seat from Padmanabhapuram (further south) to Trivandrum.

Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple at Trivandrum is historically and architecturally the most important landmark. It is a fine specimen of South Indian architecture. The *gopuram* (tower) rising in seven storey, seen against the reflecting pool in front, provides a grand sight. Over three hundred granite pillars line its corridor and exquisite mural and ornamental structures adorn its walls.

Among the modern buildings in Trivandrum are the Kaudiyar Palace, the Kanakakunnu Palace, the Observatory, the Secretariat, the Legislative Chambers, the Victoria Jubilee Hall, and the University buildings and colleges. These impress a visitor with their predominantly indigenous designs.

One of the most attractive structures in Trivandrum is the Museum, a colourful turreted edifice standing on crest of the popular Public Gardens near the Observatory Hill. It has a good collection of bronzes, sculptures, models and zoological specimens. A 300 year

old temple car, a cluster of rare musical instruments of various periods and regions, the vivid model of a Nair joint family *tarawad* (house) etc., may be specially noticed. Around the Museum lie the zoological gardens, with a beautiful landscape garden. Though of modest proportions in its layout and in its attractions, it is one of the best in India.

Close to the Museum, in the same compound, is located the Chitralaya or the Art Gallery. It houses a rich and representative collection of paintings of the various Indian and East Asian Schools. The former includes a large collection of Raja Ravi Varma's paintings and copies of Kerala's exquisite murals. Paintings of the Rajput, Mughal and Tanjore schools, reproductions of the murals of Ajanta, Bagh and Sittannaval are prominently on view. The collection of Eastern art include paintings from Japan and China, the ritual and dance masks of Java and Bali. The canvases of the Roerichs, vividly capturing the colours of the Himalayas, are also to be seen.

The other tourist attractions of Trivandrum are the Aquarium near the beach, the Observatory and the Oriental Manuscript Library. The Library has a large collection of ancient palm-leaf manuscripts.

### Kovalam-on-the-Sea

Kovalam is a sheltered bay and is endowed with unusual natural beauty and lies about 12km from Trivandrum. The tourist can relax comfortably in the bath house or take a refreshing bath in the cool waters of the blue sea.

Framed by a rugged promontory of rocks intruding into the sea on one side and by the long, gentle curved beach-

line fringed heavily by the swaying coconut palms, the panoramic view of the bay extending to the ocean-line and the sky is infinitely picturesque. At night when the moon and stars pour their soft radiance on the rippling waves, the sea-pool presents an unforgettable sight. The waters here are safe for seabathing even for a novice. Catamarans (a tie-up of light wood) can be hired by swimmers who wish to go into deeper waters.

### **Padmanabhapuram Palace**

53 km on the Trivandrum-Cape Comorin highway, with a slight detour (at Thuckalay town), lies the Padmanabhapuram Palace, the ancient seat of the Travancore rulers. The palace contains relics of antiquity having historical and artistic value. The earliest structure here has been dated as of the 13th century. The Council Chamber, the intricately designed corridors, the Mother Palace and the Nritta Mandapam (Dance Hall) claim special attention in the complex of structures. The Dance Hall, with its beauty of design, unity of conception and its austerity of decorative details, will give the visitor an aesthetic thrill. It is a real gem of Kerala's architecture. The incredible smoothness of its floor and the feeling of cool comfort it creates make one marvel at the architect's skill. Adjoining the structure lies a latticed chamber for royal ladies to watch unseen the dance and music performances.

The greatest attraction of the palace lies in its numerous multi-coloured paintings, depicting scenes from the epics. Executed in the 17th and 18th centuries, these paintings are truly remarkable for their fine technique and harmony of composition. Among the more notable murals are 'Anantasayanam' (Sri Padmanabha reclining on Serpent Ananta),

Lord Ganesa and the Dance of Siva (Nataraja).

### **Cape Comorin**

A further drive of 33km from the detour on the main road takes one to Kanyakumari or Cape Comorin (Madras State), the land's end of India, where one can watch the sun rising or setting on the ocean.

### **Madurai**

256 km from Trivandrum and approachable by air, road or rail lies Madurai with the imposing Meenakshi Temple. With its nine majestic towers, the pillared portico with a tank of the Golden lotus, and the court of thousand pillars there is no finer example of temple art. The tank, according to tradition, was a testing place for works of literature—a manuscript devoid of literary qualities was believed to sink when placed in the water. The thousand-pillared court, built in 1560, is unique; its motif of the stylized dragon is not found elsewhere. The columns present a kaleidoscopic view from any point inside the hall. In the outer corridor, there are the musical pillars; tap on them you will find that each pillar produces a different musical note. The temple is dedicated to Meenakshi, a local princess who married Sundareswara (Lord Siva).

The delicately-carved figures and the countless pieces of sculpture with varying themes—religion, statesmen, soldiers and dancing girls—show that the rulers of Madurai were not mere warriors but were keen patrons of the arts. The dancing figures of Siva and Kali and the graceful stone images of temple-dancers spotlight the grandeur of the monuments. Known to have been the

most important centre of Tamil culture, Madurai was the seat of atleast three great academies, the oldest of them dating back to a few centuries before Christ.

Another place of interest in Madurai is the Tirumalai Nayak Mahal—an imposing 17th-century palace of the Nayak rulers. This palace of late mediaeval Hindu architecture, with its Saracenic features, is famous for the stucco work in domes and arches. The portico in the front known as the *Swarga Vilasam* (the celestial pavilion) is an arcaded octagon, crowned by a huge dome 18 metres in diameter. A unique feature of this dome is that it is wholly constructed of brick and mortar, without a single rafter or girder to support it.

152 km from Madurai by road or rail, at Mandapam Camp is the Headquarters of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute. 19 km from Mandapam Camp is the holy town of Rameswaram. It is on an island in the Palkstraits at the extreme South-eastern limit of the Indian Peninsula. It contains are of India's most venerated temples, which is also a fine example of South Indian architecture.

### Bangalore and Mysore

Bangalore, the capital of Mysore State is one of the prettiest cities in India. Situated at an altitude of 914 m. above sea level, the city enjoys a salubrious climate for most part of the year. The city is well laid out, has long avenues, spacious parks, palatial buildings, big factories, commercial houses and two well-known centres of scientific research. This city has also some of India's

biggest industrial undertakings belonging both to the State and private sectors. Principal attractions in the city are the 16th century Fort of Kempe Gowda, rebuilt by Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan two centuries later; Tippu Sultan's Palace; the Botanical Gardens of Lal Bagh; the Cubbon Park with it is Museum; the Palace and the Vidhan Soudha, which is the Government Secretariat. 71 km from Bangalore is the Nandi Hill, a popular hill-resort.

138 km from Bangalore and connected by an excellent road is Mysore, a lovely city full of palaces and parks. Nearby is the picturesque Chamundi Hill with an imposing ancient temple and the Raja's palace.

19 km from Mysore by road are the famous Brindavan Gardens, laid out below the Krishnaraja Sagar Dam. Under artificial illumination, which is done on Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays and other holidays, these terraced gardens with cascades, leaping fountains and multi-hued flower-beds are transformed into a fairyland.

### Operation of Kheda

Mysore is also famous for its *Kheda* or elephant-capture operations. One of the most thrilling spectacles of its kind anywhere, the *Kheda* is the method for driving wild elephants into an arena ringed by deep trenches. Thus caught alive, the captured elephants are roped and later trained to obey the dictates of man. This fascinating venture, involving the co-operative endeavour of more than a thousand skilled men, is hazardous and costly. In January 1968 a *Kheda* operation is planned.

