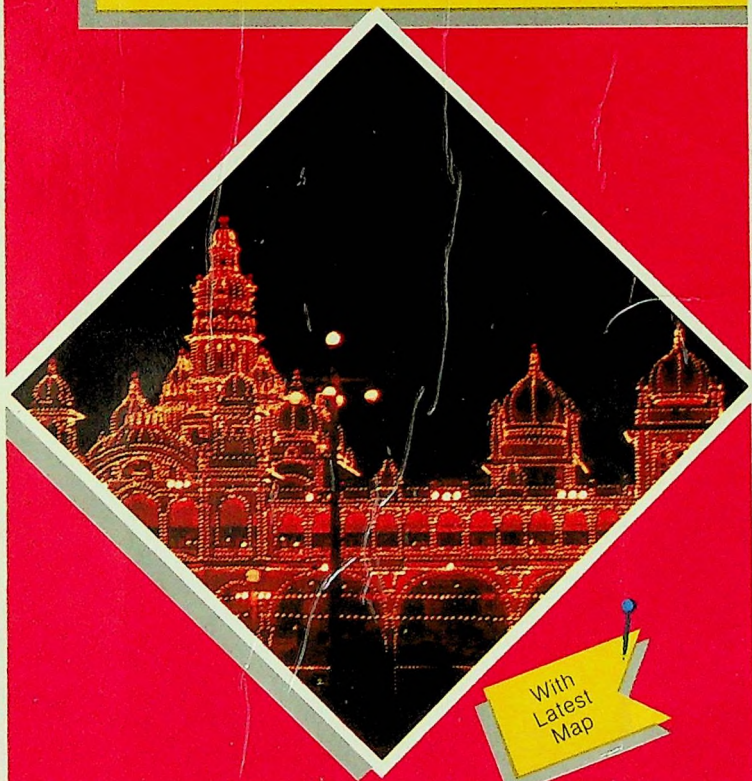




A ROAD GUIDE TO

KARNATAKA



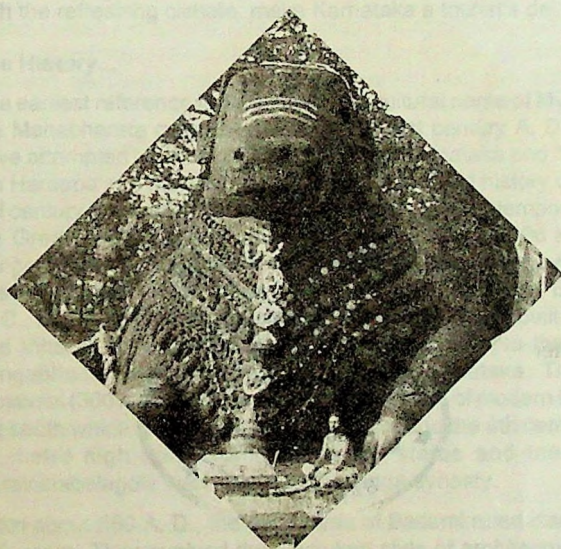
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KARNATAKA



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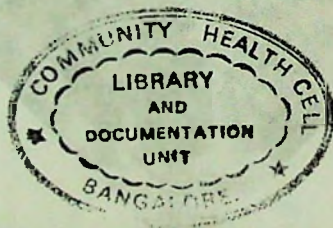
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KARNATAKA

Karnataka is the sixth largest state in India. It is the only state in India where gold is found. It is the land of silk and sandal, of coffee and cardamom, of the 17 m statue of Jain saint Gomateshwara and of the enchanting sculptural wealth of Belur and Halebidu, of the historical ruins of Hampi and monuments of Bijapur; it is the land that gave India the engineer-statesman Sir M Visvesvaraya and the great generals, General Cariappa and General Thimmaiah.

Karnataka, known as "the priceless gift of indulgent nature", is a unique blend of a glorious past and a rich present. Situated on the lower west coast of South India, it was formerly known as the Mysore State. Apart from being the most industrious state in India, Karnataka also has the credit of being the first state to step into the Industrial dawn. Even today, Karnataka is one among the leading states in science and technology. The pleasant hill resorts, wide sandy beaches, ancient palaces, the piquant Udupi cuisine, together with the refreshing climate, make Karnataka a tourist's delight.

The History...

The earliest reference to Karnataka, the cultural name of Mysore, appears in the Mahabharata composed around the first century A. D. Some scholars have attempted to trace back the history of Karnataka and its people even to the Harappa and Mohenjo-daro culture. Recorded history dates back to the 3rd century B. C., when Chandragupta Maurya, a contemporary of Alexander the Great, spent his last years at Shravanabelagola, 96 km from Mysore. His grandson, Ashoka the Great, ruled over a large part of Karnataka and raised edicts and stone pillars in Raichur and Chitradurga. By the 1st century B. C., the Satavahanas succeeded the Mauryas and built Buddhist stupas and Viharas on a large scale. They ruled over upto the region north of Tungabhadra, later known as Hyderabad Karnataka. The Kadambas of Banavasi (300 A. D.) ruled over almost the whole of modern Karnataka except the south which was under Ganga rule. Around the 4th century, the massive 17 metre high Lord Gomateshwara's statue and the Jain temple at Shravanabelagola were built by the Ganga dynasty.

From about 550 A. D., the Chalukyas of Badami ruled Karnataka for about 250 years. They evolved the Chalukya style of architecture and built cave temples. When the Chalukyan power declined after Pulakesin II - 609 to 642 A. D., the Rashtrakutas consolidated their power gradually in order to defeat the Chalukyas in the early part of the eighth century. The Rashtrakuta Kings encouraged poetry and fine arts.

Among the dynasties that followed, the Hoysalas achieved supreme fame for their magnificent buildings and sculptures with intricate stone carvings at Belur, Halebidu and Somnathpur. Till the 12th century A. D., the Kalyan dynasty, an offshoot of the Chalukyas, ruled over Karnataka. During the 12th century, two separate kingdoms emerged, one in the north and other in the south. The northern kingdom was that of the Yadavas of Devagiri and the southern one of the Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra. Incessant wars between the two weakened them enough to enable the Mohammedans to defeat both during the 13th century. But before they could consolidate and emerge as a real power in Karnataka, a new empire was founded in 1336 A. D. - that was the famous Vijayanagara Empire. This empire became famous in the whole world for its great capital, fabulous wealth, trade and military prowess. Gigantic temples of granite and other monuments were constructed at Hampi, its capital. Vijayanagara held strong for over two centuries, when the rest of India had fallen before the invasions.

The Bahmani Muslim Kingdom at Bijapur and Bidar were also adding their share to the architectural and cultural glory of Karnataka. These Sultans were prolific builders who built many structures in the domed Islamic style. The best remembered is the famous Gol Gumbaz with its fantastic whispering gallery at Bijapur.

After the fall of the Vijayanagara Empire in 1556, the region came under a number of petty rulers. Ultimately, the southern half came under the Wodeyars of Mysore after they repulsed Shivaji's forces. Northern Karnataka, however, came under the Maratha rulers.

In 1791, Hyder Ali, a Muslim soldier, overthrew the Wodeyar dynasty and came to power. He and his son Tipu Sultan, resisted the British and ruled their kingdom from Shrirangapattana. Tipu Sultan constructed tanks and dams, and also the Lal Bagh gardens at Bangalore. The British defeated and killed Tipu Sultan in 1799, and once again brought the Hindu Maharajas of the Wodeyar dynasty to power. The Hindu Maharajas ruled the state till independence, and one of them became the Governor of Karnataka.

The advent of British rule further dismembered Karnataka. Thus at the time of Independence in 1947, instead of one united Karnataka, there were five Karnatakas united emotionally and culturally, but divided politically. These were - Old Mysore State, Bombay Karnataka, Hyderabad Karnataka, Madras Karnataka and Coorg.

The old princely State of Mysore was converted into a Part B State of the Indian Union soon after independence. It included the districts of Bangalore, Mandya, Mysore, Kolar, Tumkur, Hassan, Shimoga, Chickmagalur and Chitradurga. Bombay Karnataka consisted of the districts of Dharwar, Bijapur, Uttar Kannad (North Kanara) and Belgaum. Hyderabad Karnataka had parts of three districts of the former princely State of Hyderabad. These are Bidar, Gulbarga and Raichur. Together they constitute the most backward area of

the State. Madras Karnataka included the districts of Dakshin Kannad (South Kanara) and Bellary and Kollegal taluk of Coimbatore district. Finally, Kodagu (Coorg) district constituted the former centrally-administered territory of Coorg.

The nucleus of the present State of Mysore was the erstwhile princely State of the same name constituted in 1799. It consisted of only nine south-eastern districts of the present State covering an area of about 76,245 sq. km. A few minor enclaves here and there and the major part of Bellary district of the then Madras State were added to the State in 1950 and 1953, respectively. In November 1956 when the States were reorganised, it acquired an additional area from the neighbouring States of Madras, Hyderabad and Bombay, and the centrally-administered territory of Coorg. The formation of the new State incorporating all the Kannada-speaking areas not only gave a new political and cultural identity to the land that is popularly known as Karnataka, but also new opportunities and scope for the people to shape their future and thus to contribute their mite in the stupendous task of re-building the nation.

The Geography...

Most of Karnataka is situated on the western edge of the Deccan Plateau and it is rhomboid in shape. Surrounded by Maharashtra on the north, Andhra Pradesh on the east, Tamil Nadu on the south and the Arabian Sea on the west, it stretches from 11° 5' N to 19° N latitude and from 74° E to 78° 6' E longitude. Its luxuriant coastline apart, Karnataka is geographically divided into what the locals term the *malnad* and the *maidan*. The *malnad* comprises a low-lying plateau with a mean height of about 600 m (2,000ft.) and the densely forested Western Ghats that are the source of several rivers. The slopes of the Ghats are covered with coffee and tea plantations, sandalwood, teak and bamboo forests. The monsoon forests of these ghats are also rich in wildlife - tiger, elephant, bison and deer abound here. The eastern *maidan* on the other hand, is open plain and scrubland with scanty rainfall and subdued landscape lacking the bountiful greenery of the ghats.

The Seasons...

There are four main seasons characterised by different climatic conditions in the State. These are, January-February: a cool and dry season, March-May: a hot and dry season, June-September: the main rainy season and October-December: a subsidiary rainy season.

The Climate...

The climate of Karnataka is essentially a tropical monsoon type. During January and February, the temperatures are relatively low and except in the coastal belt of the State, they vary between 15°C and 21°C in the southern part and between 21°C and 25°C in the northern part. At higher elevations, especially in the southern parts of the State, the high temperatures do not stay for long. The rainfall during this period is rather low.

During March to May, temperatures can go as high as 40°C in the northern *maidan*. In the south they range from 25°C to 40°C.

Cool cotton clothes can be worn throughout the year, with light woollens during the winter months.

The People...

The total population of Karnataka is 4,49,77,201. The Kannadigas, as they are locally known, are famous for their hospitality and friendly and cultured attitude towards visitors. The people of Karnataka are accommodating, often, to a fault. Violence is a rare phenomenon, for the people are peace-loving.

The Culture...

To the composite culture of India, the contribution of Karnataka, is in no way inferior to that of any other region of India. In fact, in many fields, Karnataka's contribution far exceeds that of the other regions individually. This is specially so in the fields of art, music, religion, and philosophy.

The Lifestyle...

As major part of the State is rural, the people live a very simple life. The cities however, present a different picture, being more modern, fast and cosmopolitan in nature.

The Languages...

Kannada is the main language spoken, read and written. In urban areas, one can get by with the knowledge of English and Hindi.

The Religions...

As in most States of India, the population here is predominantly Hindu. Followers of Saivism, Vaishnavism and Veera Saivism form the majority. But all faiths are represented here, and by and large, people live in amity and co-operation. Muslims and Christians are in considerable numbers, while Jainism has struck deep roots in Karnataka. Jains form a sizable section of the population and have become prominent in the business sector. There are also Buddhists and Parsis in the State. Religious tolerance is in the very blood of the Kannadigas, and so conflicts between followers of the different faiths are rare.

The Fairs and Festivals...

Karnataka celebrates the national festivals, the Independence Day and the Republic Day, as well as Gandhiji's birthday. In recent times, the birthday of Dr Ambedkar is being celebrated in different parts of the State by different organisations, stretching over days. Apart from these, Karnataka is witness to a number of festivals because of its multi religious population. Fortunately,

these festivals generate no conflicts and are celebrated with dignity and in peace.

Yugadi, which falls usually in the second half of March or in early April, is the Kannadiga New Year's Day. This is a festival celebrated with devotion and delight. It is a practice to begin the festival dinner with a mixture of jaggery and neem leaves - symbolic of the joys and sorrows interwoven in life and the need to accept both with equanimity.

Makara Sankramana, Sri Ramanavami, Sri Krishna Janmashtami, Ganesha Chaturthi, Dasara and Deepavali are other festivals which stimulate devotion combined with excitement. Special worship is offered at homes and temples. Despite the sophistication in society, the practice of visiting relatives on Vijayadasami day (the last day of Dasara) and seeking the blessings of elders and receiving 'banni' leaves from them still prevails.

The Dasara is Karnataka's pride. The rulers of the Vijayanagara Empire used to celebrate Dasara with éclat. In more recent times, the rulers of Mysore continued the tradition. The Maharaja held 'darbar' on nine days, and on the tenth day, went in a procession on a caparisoned elephant. With the ending of the rule of the royal family, there has been a change in the celebrations organised by the State government. A picture of Bhuvaneshwari, the patron goddess of Karnataka, is taken out in procession. Although the procession has lost something of its glamour and grandeur, it is still an attraction. The ninth day of Dasara is also a special occasion; it is 'Mahanavami' - the day when man remembers with gratitude the implements and vehicles that have brought him ease and prosperity; tools and vehicles are decorated and worshipped. It is a unique and significant festival of the Hindus.

As in other parts of the country, Deepavali, the Festival of Lights, is a joyous occasion. Ganesha festival and Krishna Janmashtami are welcomed alike by elders and children.

In Karnataka, Yugadi and Sri Ramanavami have an added dimension to them. They are not one-day affairs. A number of organisations provide opportunities to listen to the music of a wide range of musicians - from maestros to highly promising young talents. The festivals brighten early spring, when the opportunity of listening to music in the open is particularly welcome. Concerts organised in different parts of the State draw considerable crowds. Specially on Ramanavami and the days following it, the experience of the concert by moonlight is truly enchanting.

'Karaga' is a unique festival. It is celebrated on the full-moon day in Chaitra, the first month of the Hindu calendar, towards the end of March or in early April. It is a festival in honour of Draupadi, the fiery heroine of the Mahabharata, who has suffered a hundred sorrows and a hundred wrongs such as no other woman has known. She is said to have assumed a form such as would strike terror in the beholder, in order to overcome a demon who tried to harass her. A community known as Vahnikula Kshatriyas (or, Thigalas) is in

charge of the celebrations. The celebrations start at the Dharmaraya temple in the heart of Bangalore city, where the festival is celebrated with special pomp. It is also celebrated in other towns of the State as well.

Celebrations and observances of the Muslims follow the pattern in the rest of the country. The emphasis here is on congregational prayers. The special days are: the birthday of Prophet Mohammed, Bakrid, dedicated to the peerless devotee Ibrahim, etc.

Important Christian festivals are New Year's Day, Good Friday and Christmas Day.

Buddha Poornima and Mahaveera Jayanthi are celebrated in different parts of the State.

For centuries Kannadigas had been scattered in different parts of South India. Their dream for a separate State was realised on the 1st of November 1956. This day is celebrated as Rajyotsava Day, which is a State Festival. On this day, citizens who have made a significant contribution in various walks of life are honoured with the Rajyotsava Award. Rejoicing and introspection go hand in hand in these celebrations.

Children's Day celebrations (14th of November) include a spectacular show in Bangalore city by children in the morning with a number of cultural programmes.

The Art...

In music the contribution of Karnataka is indeed unsurpassed. 'It developed a school of music which is called the Carnatic School and which has spread all over the South.' In the arts of dance and drama, Karnataka has shared with the rest of the country, specially the South, the rich heritage which is still seen in exquisite dance poses depicted on the temple walls of Karnataka.

Karnataka's folk theatre has an ancient and rich tradition, the two principal forms being Yakshagana and the puppet theatre. Yakshagana, a powerful and vibrant spectacle is somewhat similar to Kathakali tradition of Kerala in the choice of its elaborate costumes and vigorous dancing.

Bhotada Kunita (Dance of the Divine cult), Nagamandala and demon dance are some quaint rituals prevalent only in Dakshina Kannada coastal area and they embody the profound drama of life.

The Architecture...

Karnataka's contribution to art and architecture is not only great but also original. In architecture at least four styles are easily discernible, that is, Kadambas, Ganga or Jain Chalukya, Hoysala and Vijayanagara. The Chalukya style is a continuation of the Dravidian style which flourished in South India but the Hoysala style is the original contribution of Karnataka

to the world of architecture. The Chalukya style is seen in the temples of North Karnataka such as those of Badami, Aihole, Pattadakal, Ittigi and Kurvatti. The Hoysala style is found in the Belur and Halebidu temples, a miniature form of which is also found at Somnathpur.

The colossal statues of Gomateshwar at Shravanabelagola, Karkal and Venur remind one not only of the mighty days of Jainism but also of the equally great contribution that they have made and continue to make towards the creation of a world where the human personality is as glorious as that of Gomateshwar and the world is as peaceful as the environment where these statues stand. The cave temples at Badami and Aihole and the architectural marvels of Hampi still recall the glory that was Karnataka.

The Handicrafts...

Karnataka is famous for its aesthetic craftsmanship in sandalwood and rosewood. Eye-catching items of furniture, in-lay work, coffee tables, wall hangings etc. are worth while purchases. Rich silks, wooden toys, leather puppets, Bidriware and artifacts make ideal mementos.

Silk and cotton textiles are produced on handlooms. Sandalwood and ivory carving and in-lay works are located in Mysore, Madikeri, Kumta etc. Brass work in Nelamangala and silver in-lay work in Bidar are famous. Rattan works and pottery also exhibit the special skills of craftsmen in the State.

The Economy...

The State of Karnataka is fairly well placed in the matter of natural resources - soils, minerals, water and forests - although many of these are still awaiting their full utilisation. The black and alluvial soils are among the richest in the world and the red loam which covers almost the whole of the southern *maidan* is amenable to rapid improvement by careful management. Coffee, rubber, tea, cardamom, betelnut and cashew are grown as plantation crops.

Karnataka contributes almost all the gold and silver produced in India. It has extensive deposits of iron which are of excellent quality and has fairly good reserves of manganese and chromite. The water resources, both underground and surface are also fairly large. Its perennial rivers like the Krishna, the Tungabhadra and the Kaveri and their tributaries together with the innumerable tanks, probably as ancient as agriculture itself, offer excellent opportunities for the development of irrigation facilities. No wonder then, that the State has been the pioneer in irrigation and power generation schemes in India. Karnataka's forests are extremely rich and yield sandalwood, teak, bamboo, rosewood and a variety of medicinal plants. The Bababudangiri hills and Kappadagudda near Gadag and Chandrona Parvat in Chickmagalur district have hundreds of species of medicinal plants. Tradition says that the latter was the mountain to which Hanuman came for Sanjivani.

The Industries...

Karnataka, even during feudal rule, was a pioneer in agricultural and industrial development. Industrialisation, however, is spotty and is confined to a few growth areas and industrial nodes such as Bangalore, Davangere, Bhadravati, etc. As such about 62 % of the State's income is derived from agriculture.

Although the First Five-Year Plan of the old Mysore State started in 1950-51, the concept of planned development was not new to the State. As early as 1910, the Mysore Economic Conference was organised with a view to suggesting policies and strategies for the economic and social development of the State. Many schemes designed to accelerate the development of agriculture, industry, infra-structure and social services were the direct contribution of this conference.

BANGALORE

Bangalore – the capital of Karnataka, is one of the most liveliest and charming of all Indian cities. It is a serene and spacious city, with avenues lined with acacia and flame of the forest trees. Situated at an altitude of 914 metres, Bangalore has a salubrious climate that made it once, a summer resort of the British Raj. This city of gardens, was founded in 1537 by Kempe Gowda, a Vijayanagar Chieftain.

Bangalore is today, the fifth – largest city in India, with a population of over two million. It is also the country's main industrial city, with eight huge industrial belts housing about 10,000 industries – including aircraft, telephones, electronics, pharmaceutical, textile and machine tool factories.

Bangalore is also a modern fun city with famous restaurants, night clubs, discotheques, theatres, cinema halls and elegant shopping complexes. With its rich variety of the old and new, Bangalore is an ideal gateway to the rest of the region.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Basavangudi or the Bull Temple (5 km)

Built by Kempe Gowda, is typical of the Dravidian style of Architecture. The temple has a majestic monolithic bull 6.1 metres long and 4.6 metres high. According to local folklore, the Nandi bull is supposed to have outgrown the temple. A groundnut fair is held near the temple premises every year.

Cubbon Park (2 km)

Planned and laid out in 1864, this beautiful 300 acre park contains the public library and the museum. The illuminated "fairy fountain" and the elegant graeco – colonial style buildings, add to the beauty of this park.

Gangadhareswara Cave Temple

Built by Kempe Gowda, this temple with four remarkable monolithic pillars, is dedicated to Lord Shiva. The temple also has a rare, beautiful idol of Agni, the God of fire. The annual festival is on Makar Sankranti day (mid-January) when thousands of devotees flock to see the sunrays fall on the Sivalinga between 17.00 hrs to 18.00 hrs.

Government Museum (2 km)

Established in 1886, this beautiful structure with splendid Corinthian Columns, houses a wonderful collection of a archaeological and geological artifacts and old jewellery.

Timings: 09.00 hrs to 18.00 hrs.

Closed on Wednesdays and Public holidays

Indian Institute of Science

Founded by the Tatas, this premier science institute was the alma mater of many famous Indian scientists. The nobel prize winner C.V. Raman and space scientist Vikram Sarabhai are among the many eminent people who have done research here. Its stately buildings are in classic European style, with a central quadrangle decorated with attractive Persian motifs.

Jawahar Bala Bhavan

An imaginatively planned amusement park and recreational centre meant for the young at heart. The main attractions are the toy train and Dolls museum. The park also contains a 20 million years old fossilised tree – a gift from the Geological Survey of India.

Jumma Masjid

Built by a Mughal Killedar, with tall ornamental granite pillars, this is the city's oldest mosque. Damaged by cannon fire during the third Mysore war, the Mosque was renovated in 1836.

Lal Bagh Gardens (4 km)

These 240 acre gardens were laid out during the Muslim era (18 century) by Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan. They contain the largest collection of rare tropical and sub-tropical plants, century-old trees, fountains, terraces, lotus pools, rose gardens and a deer park. Lal Bagh has a magnificent glass house built in 1840, on the lines of London's Crystal Palace. The Annual flower, fruit and vegetable shows are regularly held here. Lal bagh also houses the offices of the Karnataka Horticultural Society.

Season: January and August

Maharaja's Bangalore Palace

Built in 1887, on the lines of medieval castles in Normandy and England, the Bangalore palace is a fairly close imitation of Windsor Castle. Set amidst a sprawling garden, the majestic turrets and ornamental stone work add to its grandeur.

St Mark's Cathedral

A 1926 structure with a row of Roman arches and an imposing central dome. It is noted for the intricate wood work in its interior.

St Mary's Cathedral

Built in 1882, by a French missionary, it is a grand gothic-style basilica, with an impressive tower and typically gothic pointed arches.

The Fort (4 km)

Built initially in 1537, by Kempe Gowda as a crude, mud structure, it was rebuilt in stone by Hyder Ali in 1761. This fort was the strong hold of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, through several fierce and bloody battles. Though the fort is in ruins now, it still retains an aura of might and glory.

Near the fort, is Tipu's palace, begun by Hyder Ali and completed by Tipu Sultan in 1791. Constructed mainly of wood, it has five intricately sculptured arches surmounted by exquisite minarets.

Timings: 06.00 hrs to 18.00 hrs

Vidhana Soudha (2 km)

Located at the northern boundary of Cubbon Park, this majestic building, with a total plinth area of over 5,00,000 sq ft houses the Secretariat, the state legislature and several other government offices. The gleaming white domes, pillars and archways, resemble the architectural pattern of Mysore's old palaces. The huge, carved doors of the cabinet room are made of pure sandalwood. The entire building, when flood-lit on Sunday evenings, presents a truly breathtaking picture.

Visveswarayya Industrial and Technological Museum (2 km)

A wonderland of information about the marvels of science. The museum has several rooms, each devoted to one discipline of technology.

Timings: 10.00 hrs to 17.00 hrs.

Closed on Mondays and Public holidays

OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST

Attara Kacheri

Built in 1867 to house the secretariat, it now houses the highcourt and several lower courts. It is two-storeyed structure with a spacious front and elegant, fluted Ionic columns.

Public Buildings

Bangalore has many public buildings, which are reminders of the city's glorious past. The Daly Memorial Hall (1917), Mayo Hall and Puttanachetty Town Hall (1935) are a pleasing blend of Indian and old European architecture.

Venkatappa Art Gallery

Though the main exhibition displays works of the famous Mysore artist, K. Venkatappa, the works of painters and sculptors representing India's contemporary or modern school are also displayed in the gallery.

EXCURSIONS

Bannerghatta National Park (21 km)

This densely forested hilly area has been made a sanctuary for wild animals. Besides various wild animals like bison, elephants, panther and wild boar, the park also has more than 100 species of birds. Other attractions in the park include a crocodile farm, a serpentarium, pet's corner and a prehistoric animal park.

The Champakadharmeswara temple situated in the Bannerghatta town contains inscriptions in Tamil, belonging to the 13th century.

Chamrajsagar Reservoir (35 km)

This dam, built across the river Arakavati, is an excellent picnic spot with facilities for fishing.

Channapatna (59 km)

The land of toymakers. Colourful lacquered and wooden toys in various shapes and sizes are the speciality of this region. Wooden beads, bangles, boxes and light furniture are also made here.

Hesaraghatta Lake (29 km)

This lush fertile area, with its wonderful climate, is a haven for horticultural research. The delightful artificial lake, spread over 1,000 acres, provides facilities for sailing. A livestock breeding and poultry centre have been established here as part of the Indo-Danish dairy project.

Kanva Reservoir (69 km)

An excellent picnic spot, with facilities for fishing.

Magadi (46 km)

This birth place of Kempe Gowda, it now has the remnants of an old fort and four temples of unspoiled charm.

Mekedata (Goat's leap) (98 km)

A famous picnic spot situated within the limits of the Muggur forest. Here, the river Kaveri flows through a deep ravine. On top of it is a chasm 5 m wide, narrow enough for a goat to leap across.

Muthyala Maduvu (Pearl Valley) (44 km)

Picnic spot with an enchanting waterfall and a small temple.

Sangam (103 km)

The river Arkavathi joins the Kaveri at Sangam, inside the Chilandavadi forest. A temple built during the Chola period is situated here. This enchanting place is just 5 km away from Mekedata.

Savandrug (60 km)

Also known as the Magadi Hills, this a towering granite hill, 1207 metres high, with a base of about 10 km in circumference. It has temples dedicated to Basaveswara, Narasimhaswamy and Veerabhadrasamy.

Shivaganga (60 km)

This famous hill-top pilgrim centre has temples dedicated to Gangadhareswara, Hanna Devi and a cave spring called Pattala. When viewed from a distance, the outline of the hill resembles the figure of a bull (Nandi) on the east, that of Ganesha (the elephant-headed God) from the west, that of a Cobra on the north and that of a Sivalinga on the south. Shivaganga is also known as Dakshina Kasi, or the Varanasi of the South.

Vasanthapura (12 km)

A small hillock with an ancient, delightful temple dedicated to Sri Vasantha Vallabharayaswamy.

HOW TO GET THERE

Air: Bangalore is well connected with all the important cities in India by air. Though Bangalore does not have an international terminal, many foreign airlines have offices here for reservation and cargo.

Rail: Bangalore is connected to all major Indian cities by rail. Bangalore is also connected to Chennai by several super-fast trains.

Road: Connected by National Highway to Mumbai (998 km) and Chennai (331 km). Several buses of the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation connect Bangalore with many towns and cities in the state.

BAGALKOT

Bagalkot is the headquarters of this newly formed district. Known as Bagadage in the inscriptions and located on the banks of Ghatprabha river, this place was the headquarters of Bagadage-seventy under the Chalukya. At present, Bagalkot is a major centre of trade, commerce, education and manufacturing industries - particularly cement. The chief temples here are those of Shri Bhavani, Panduranga and Kothalesh. Among the mosques, the Panka Masjid is a fine stone structure.

EXCURSIONS

Aivalli (46 km)

Known for its temples built between the 6th and 8th centuries. It was the capital of the Chalukyas between the 4th and the 7th centuries and symbolises Hindu temple architecture in its formative years.

Badami (66 km)

Once the capital of Chalukyan Empire, Badami is noted for its rock-cut cave temples.

Kudala Sangama (38 km)

Located at the confluence of the rivers Krishna and Malaprabha, Kudala Sangama is an important pilgrim centre.

Pattadakal (63 km)

A scene of great architectural activity between the 7th and 9th centuries known for its temples build during the Chalukyan period.

HOW TO GET THERE

The nearest airport is Belgaum. Bagalkot is connected by rail and road with almost all the important places in South India.

BELGAUM

Belgaum, the headquarters of this district, is an ancient town of considerable historical interest. During the 13th century, Belgaum flourished as the capital of the Ratta Kings. Today, it is modern cantonment town.

PLACES OF INTEREST

The Fort

This ancient, oval shaped stone structure encloses an area of about 40 hectares and has two gates. Mahatma Gandhi was once imprisoned here.

Jain Temple

This shrine has fine carvings and intricately worked roofs.

The Safa Mosque

This mosque is found inside the Belgaum Fort.

EXCURSIONS

Gokak Falls (80 km)

This river Ghatprabha plunges into a rocky bed 170 feet below, in the picturesque Gokak Valley. Traces of ruined temples can be found on the banks of the river.

Season: June to September.

Halashi (70 km)

The second capital of the Kadamba dynasty, Halshi is a place of historic importance. This village of great antiquity, has three large temples of which, one is built on a hill nearby. This temple has a sacred pond also.

Annual fair: September to October.

Kittur (44 km)

A place of historical importance. The Queen Channamma of Kittur bravely resisted the imposition of British rule in 1824. The Basava temple here, contains inscriptions on stone, belonging to the 12th century.

Saundatti (85 km)

A major pilgrim centre.

HOW TO GET THERE

Belgaum has a small airport. It is also connected by rail with Bangalore and other major cities.

BELLARY

Bellary city, the headquarters of this district, is situated around two rocky hills known as the Fort Hill and the Face Hill. Both these hills seem to have been the sites of pre-historic settlements.

EXCURSIONS

Hampi (74 km)

Once the flourishing capital of the Vijayanagar empire, Hampi was abundant in wealth, military prowess, aesthetic sensibilities and culture. It was visited by travellers from Italy and Arabia during the 15th century.

Today, its ruins spread over an area of 26 sq. kms. The Pampati Swami Temple, the Queen's Bath, the Lotus Mahal and the musical pillars of the Vittala temple evoke memories of bygone splendour.

Hospet (61 km)

Founded by Krishnadevaraya, this town was a gate of entry into the city of Vijayanagara. There is a picturesque temple of Jambhunatha, on a hill nearby.

Tungabhadra Dam (6 km from Hospet)

This 162-foot-high dam, is one of the largest irrigation dams in South India with a waterspread of 378 sq kms. The 2 km long dam offers a panoramic view of the surrounding countryside.

HOW TO GET THERE

The nearest airport is Belgaum, and is well connected by rail and bus services with other parts of the State.

BIDAR

Bidar was the capital of the Bahmani Kings in the early 15th century. The only subterranean stream of Karnataka, Narasimha Jeera, is in Bidar. According to a legend, Bidar was visited by Guru Nanak when the land was in the grip of famine. Hence, Bidar is an important pilgrim centre for the devotees of Guru Nanak.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Chaubara

An old cylindrical watch tower, which seems to have served as an observation post.

The Fort

Built by Ahmad Shah Bahmani between 1426 and 1432 AD, this fort is regarded as one of the most formidable forts in the country. The palaces of Rangeen Mahal, Chini Mahal and Turkish Mahal are found inside the fort. The external circumference of the fort is 4 kms.

Madrarasa of Mahmud Gawan

Built in 1472 AD, during the reign of Muhammad-III, it is an architectural marvel. The main features here are the lofty towers and minarets with decorated tiles which lend a unique charm to the building.

EXCURSIONS

Basavakalayan (77 km)

An ancient centre of wealth and learning, hallowed by illustrious saints like Basaveshvara. The Fort contains ancient sculptures that have survived the ravages of time. Other places of interest in the town are the Basaveshvara Temple and Anubhava Mantappa. The tomb of Syed Tajuddin attracts pilgrims during the annual urus.

HOW TO GET THERE

Rail and road facilities connect Bidar with other important towns and cities in South India.

BIJAPUR

A medieval Muslim walled city, 613 km north of Bangalore, Bijapur is characterised by domes and minarets. Its founders called Bijapur, Vijayapura or the city of victory. Bijapur experienced a great burst of architectural activity under the Adil Shahi dynasty. The Adil Shahis encouraged building activity to such an extent that Bijapur itself has over 50 mosques, more than 20 tombs and a number of palaces.

Asar Mahal (5 km)

Constructed in 1646 by Muhammad Adil Shah to serve as a hall of Justice. The Mahal contains some relics of prophet Mohammed. There are landscape paintings and designs on the walls and ceiling of the hall.

Bara Kaman (5 km)

The unfinished mausoleum of Ali Shah.

The Fort

Built by Yusuf Adil Shah I, the fort is six and a quarter miles in length, with deep moats all around. The fort has five massive gates.

Gagan Mahal (Heavenly Palace) (5 km)

Constructed by Ali Adil Shah I in 1561, it served as the Royal Palace and the Durbar Hall.

Gol Gumbaz (1 km)

Gol Gumbaz, the tomb of Mohammed Adil Shah is an astounding engineering feat. Its enormous "Whispering" dome is second in size only to St. Peter's

Basilica in Rome. The dome stands unsupported by pillars. The fantastic acoustical system in the dome carries the faintest whisper around the dome and returns it to the listener nine times. Even the tick of a watch or the rustle of paper can be heard across a distance of 37 m in the whispering gallery. The gallery around the dome provides a fabulous view of the town.

Ibrahim Rauza (2 km)

This palatial mosque and tomb, with its delicate minarets, is very beautiful and symmetrical. Chosen by Aurangzeb as his residence, this structure is said to have inspired the Taj Mahal of Agra.

Jama Masjid (1 km)

Built between 1557 and 1686, it is the largest and first constructed mosque in Bijapur. Covering a total area of 10,810 sq m, the mosque is known for its graceful minarets and bulbous domes.

Malik-i-Maidan (Monarch of the plains) (1.5 km)

Perched on top of the fort wall, the Malik-i-Maidan is the legendary cannon of the Adil Shahis. Measuring 4.45 m in length, 1.5 m in diameter and weighing 55 tons, it is one of the largest bell metal guns in the world. A unique feature of this gun is that it is always cool, even under the blazing sun and when tapped gently, it tinkles softly like a bell.

Mehtar Mahal (1 km)

This finely wrought gateway to a mosque is an excellent example of Indo-Saracenic style of architecture.

Taj Bawdi (1.5 km)

The great tank commemorates Ibrahim II's first wife, Taj Sultana. Its front is a majestic arch flanked by two octagonal towers. The east and west of the towers form spacious rest houses.

EXCURSIONS

Basavana Bagevadi (43 km)

The birth place of Basaveswara, the great social and religious reformer of Karnataka.

Kumatagi (16 km)

The lake and water pavilion found here, were built by the Adil Shahis.

HOW TO GET THERE

The nearest airport is at Belgaum (209 km). Bijapur is connected by rail and road with almost all the important places in South India.

CHAMRAJNAGAR

This district has been recently bifurcated from Mysore district. Chamrajnagar is the district headquarters. The original name of this place was Arokotara. It was renamed in 1818 by Krihsnaraja Wodeyar of Mysore. In 1825, he built a temple of Chamarajeswara here. The ruins of an extensive city of antiquity, known as Manipura, are found nearby.

EXCURSIONS

Bandipur Wildlife Sanctuary (52 km)

Situated on the Mysore-Ooty Road, this wildlife sanctuary adjoins the Mudumalai sanctuary in Tamil Nadu and the Wayanad sanctuary in Kerala. Herds of bison, spotted deer, elephants and sambar can be seen here. Tigers and leopards can also be spotted occasionally. Bandipur has been brought under 'Project tiger' since 1974. Bandipur is considered as one of the best wildlife sanctuaries in India.

Biligirirangana Hills (109 km)

The temple of Biligiri Rangaswami is situated on these Hills, at 1567 metres above sea level. This temple is a large Dravidian structure of great antiquity.

Kaveri Fishing Camp

The river Kaveri at Bhimeswari, abounds in a variety of fish including the Carnatic Carp and the Mahseer. This place is a protected area for the fish, as the anglers are advised to release the fish, after catching them. The wild beauty of the river and the countryside, are sure to hook any tourist.

Mahadeswara Hills (94 km)

Situated well above sea level, this hill station is a popular pilgrim and tourist centre.

HOW TO GET THERE

The nearest airport is at Bangalore. Chamarajanagar is well connected with the rest of India by rail and road services.

CHIKMAGALUR

The district takes its name from the headquarters town of Chikmagalur, which literally means younger daughter's town. The town is situated in a fertile valley, south of the Baba-Budan range and is surrounded by lush coffee growing hills. A centre of education, trade and commerce, the town enjoys a salubrious climate and has venerated monuments of all religions.

PLACES OF INTEREST

The Fort

The fort and its moat, the Parashurama temple and Kali shrine are the other places of interest, well worth visiting.

Ishwara Temple

Once in Hiremagalur, it is now part of the Chikmagalur town. The 1.22 metre high idol was installed by King Janamejaya during his serpent sacrifice.

St. Joseph's Cathedral

St. Joseph's Cathedral is newly built and has an attractive shell-shaped portico.

Kodandarama Temple

This temple is a synthesis of Hoysala and Dravidian style of architecture.

EXCURSIONS

Bhadia Wildlife Sanctuary (38 km)

The diverse wildlife of this region can be viewed while driving along the 10 km long road maintained inside the sanctuary.

Bhadra Reservoir (76 km)

20 km from Bhadravati town, the Bhadra reservoir is a massive irrigational project with a wholesome variety of wildlife around it. There is scope for water sports as well.

Kemmangundi (54 km)

An ideal retreat of solitude and natural beauty, Kemmangundi is located on the most fascinating spot in the Baba-Budan range. Placed at a height of 4,702 ft above sea level, Kemmangundi has a bracing climate, mineral-enriched water and a tranquil verdant mountainscape. The two waterfalls-Kalahasti and Hebbe are ideal picnic spots. Kemmangundi is also famous for its high grade iron ore.

Kudremukh (95 km)

Literally means 'horse face'. The deep valleys and steep precipices of this hill station have great natural beauty. Kudremukh is 1,894.3 metres high and is rich in iron ore deposits.

Sringeri (103 km)

This well-known pilgrim centre is situated on the banks of the Tunga river. The Sringeri mutt was founded by Sri Adi Shankara, the exponent of the

Advaita philosophy. In the Vidya Shankara Shrine, there are 12 Zodiac pillars, which are so constructed that the rays of the sun fall on the pillar corresponding to the month.

HOW TO GET THERE

Rail and road facilities connect Chikmagalur with other important towns and cities in South India.

CHITRADURGA

Chitradurga gets its name from Chitrakaldurga, an umbrella-shaped lofty hill found here. Tradition dates the district to the period of the Ramayana and Mahabharatha. The district was part of the Satavahanas, the Kadambas, Rashtrakutas, Hoysalas, Vijayanagar and later Hyder Ali. The whole district lies in the valley of the Vedavati river, with the Tungabhadra flowing in the North-West.

PLACES OF INTEREST

The Fort

Built in parts, by the Palegars, Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, the fort has seven series of enclosure walls. Many ancient temples can also be found inside the fort.

EXCURSIONS

Hosdurga (63 km)

This town has the remnants of a hill fort which was erected by Chikkanna Nayaka, a Pelegar of Chitradurga.

Molakalmuru (82 km)

Nearby is a fortified town of the Kadambas. Molakalmuru also has a temple, a large reservoir and a rock which produces a chain of echoes. The town is also known for its silk weaving industry.

HOW TO GET THERE

Chitradurga is connected by rail and road with almost all the important towns and cities in the State.

DAKSHIN KANNAD

Mangalore, the district headquarters, is a beautiful palm-fringed port on the Western Coast of Karnataka. Mangalore is located near the backwaters formed by the converging Netravathi and Gurupur rivers. It was once a major sea-port and ship building centre of Hyder Ali's kingdom. Today it is a major export

centre of coffee and cashew nuts. The backwaters and the pleasant climate, make Mangalore a unique haven.

PLACES OF INTEREST

The Sultan Battery

A remnant of Tipu Sultan's fort, which once guarded his Naval station here.

Ullal Beach (11 km)

A picturesque sea-side village situated at the mouth of two rivers entering the sea.

EXCURSIONS

Dhramastala (69 km)

Noted for the Manjunatha Temple. The town is surrounded on all sides by the river Netravati.

Ghati Subrahmanya (107 km)

A popular pilgrim centre with the famed ancient temple of Subrahmanya.

HOW TO GET THERE

Mangalore is connected with Mumbai, Bangalore and Kochi by air. Road and rail services link Mangalore with almost all the important cities and towns in the country.

DAVANGERE

Davangere, the district headquarters, now an important commercial, industrial and educational centre, was part of the kingdom of the Devagiri Yadavas. It is famous for its textile and cotton mills.

EXCURSIONS

Anagodu (16 km)

An ancient temple belonging to the 11th century is found here.

Anaji (19 km)

Kadamba inscriptions dating back to 450 A.D. are found here. On a hill nearby are found the relics of a mud fort and a shrine of Yoganarasimha.

Hadali (12 km)

Inscriptions dating back to the 11th century are found, along with an ancient temple of Ittigekallu Ranganatha. The sculptures found in the former fort area indicate the possibilities of ancient monuments here.

Harihar (14 km)

A town of great antiquity, it has the temple of Harihareshwara, built in the Hoysala style. The town is located on the banks of the Tungabhadra river, and is therefore, an ideal picnic spot.

Mayakonda (30 km)

The place is noted for its temple of Keshava and Obala-Narasimha.

HOW TO GET THERE

Davangere is well connected to almost all the main cities of India by rail and road.

DHARWAD

Dharwad is a reputed university town with good educational facilities. Dharwad has a history of more than 8 centuries, and was known as Kutala Desha. The place is also said to be associated with the Pandavas, who spent part of their exile here. Some relics of this period can be found at Ron, Hangal and Itgi.

EXCURSIONS

Hubli (20 km)

Hubli and Dharwad are the two important towns in this district.

HOW TO GET THERE

Hubli is an important junction in the rail route between Bangalore and Goa. Both Dharwad and Hubli are linked by road and rail facilities with other parts of the country.

GADAG

Gadag is a newly formed district, with its headquarters at Gadag town. This is a place of great antiquity. In ancient days, it was a renowned seat of learning. The Viranarayana temple here was built in about 1117 A.D. by the Hoysala King Vishnuvardhana.

EXCURSIONS

Betigeri (7 km)

At a place called Mallarayanakatte, 15 memorial stones known as Virkals or Vira Sasanas are found.

Shirhatti (30 km)

An old fort, Arlingavva Mutt and the Mutt of Fakirsvami are famous here. In April-May, a huge fair is held here in honour of the Fakirsvami.

HOW TO GET THERE

Gadag is well connected by rail and road with the nearby towns.

GULBARGA

Gulbarga, the district headquarters, was formerly known as Kalburgi. The town rose into prominence during the early Bahmani period when the founder of this dynasty shifted his capital from Daulatabad. Gulbarga continued to be the capital of this kingdom till about 1,424 AD.

PLACES OF INTEREST

The Fort

Originally built by Raja Gulchand, it was later strengthened by Ala-ud-din Bahmani. The fort contained 15 towers and 26 guns of which one was 8 metres long. Within the ramparts of the fort, there is an imposing mosque which resembles the great mosque of Cordona in Spain. This mosque is the only one of its kind in the entire country. Several tombs of the Bahmani Sultans can be found in the eastern outskirts of the town.

The Jama Masjid

Situated within the fort walls, it has stilted domes and narrow entrances typical of the Persian style of architecture.

The Shrine of Saint Sharana Basaveshwara

The shrine of an eminent Hindu religious teacher and philosopher who preached religious and social equality. This temple has been developed into a pilgrim centre. The annual fair, lasting for a fortnight, is held during the month of May.

EXCURSIONS

Gangapur (38 km)

A noted pilgrim centre. The rivers Bhima and Awarja unite here, and pilgrims visit this place, throughout the year for a holy dip. The annual fair is held in February.

Shorapur (108 km)

Formerly known as Surapura, this is the place where Raja Venkatappa Naik, rebelled against the British in 1857. The temple dedicated to Lord Krishna under the name Gopalaswamy is an object of considerable religious importance. A fair is organised at this place, every year on Sri Krishna Janmashtami day.

HOW TO GET THERE

Gulbarga is connected by rail and road facilities with almost all the important towns and cities in the State.

HASSAN

Hassan, the district headquarters has been developed into a prominent tourist centre because of its proximity to Belur and Halebidu. This fairly large city is located on the national highway linking Mangalore with Bangalore. Apart from being a centre of transport and commerce, the district is also known for its salubrious climate.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Hasanamba Shrine

A temple shrine with an ant-hill representing Hasanamba, the presiding deity. This shrine remains closed all through the year except for about a week during the Ashvija month.

Siddeshvara Temple

An ancient temple constructed by Venkatappa Nayaka.

EXCURSIONS

Belur (34 km)

Situated on the banks of the river Yagachi, the Chennakesava temple, built by the Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana is a monument of supreme architectural beauty.

The intricate carvings on the stone walls and the gravity pillar in the courtyard are the unique features of this temple. The interior of the temple considered even better than the outside, contains many exquisite panels and richly carved pillars. Belur was once, a flourishing city under the Hoysala rulers some 800 years ago.

Gorur (22 km)

A dam site across the river Hemavathy. This place is a pleasant picnic spot.

Halebidu (39 km)

Sixteen kilometres from Belur, the Hoysaleswara temple at Halebidu is more impressive than the one at Belur. Built in 1121 AD, the walls of the temple are covered with detailed friezes and sculptures depicting scenes narrated in Hindu epics. The sculptures found here, have been carved by skilled hands, giving importance to even the most minute details. The temple also contains two massive Monolithic bulls. The Archaeological Museum located on the temple premises displays many interesting stone sculptures.

Shravanabelagola (52 km)

A popular Jain pilgrim centre, Shravanabelagola is wedged between two rocky hills – Indragiri and Chandragiri. The monolithic statue of Lord Gomateswara, a Jain saint, standing atop the Indragiri Hills is 17 metres high and is said to be one of the tallest and most graceful monolithic statues in the world. Nearly 1,800 years old, the naked statue is symbolic of the renunciation of worldly possessions. This Colossus is ceremonially anointed with milk, curds, ghee, saffron and water once in 12 years on the occasion of Mahamastakabhisheka. The last Mahamastakabhisheka was held in December 1993.

HOW TO GET THERE

The nearest Airport is in Bangalore (187 km). Hassan is connected by rail and road with other towns and cities.

HAVERI

This place was an important centre of the Kalamukha sect. As many as 32 inscriptions were found here. At present, it is a renowned centre of cardamom trade.

EXCURSIONS

Byadgi (15 km)

Inscriptions about the Rashtrakuta King Krishna II (901 A.D.) were found here. This place is well known for the special variety of chillies found here known as Byadgi chillies.

Ranibennur (26 km)

This place is famous for the Siddheshwara temple found here. The tomb of a Muslim Saint, Hazrat Jamal Shah (1785) is also famous here. Annual prayers are held in his honour.

Savanur (35 km)

This town was developed by Abdul Raufkhan. The Nawab's palace, ruins of the fort, mosques are well worth a visit. The annual fair of Sathyabodhasvami Mutt attracts a huge crowd.

HOW TO GET THERE

Haveri is well connected with almost all the important towns and cities in the State.

KODAGU

Kodagu (Coorg) district, once the smallest in the state, is also the most beautiful hill station in the state. This thickly wooded grandeur on the Western Ghats, is home to the bold and beautiful Kodava people.

Madikeri (Mercara), the largest town in Kodagu, is also the district headquarters. Situated at 4,000 ft above sea level, Madikeri is filled with dense forests, coffee plantations, orange groves and paddy fields. Madikeri was founded in 1681 by Muddu Raja of the Haleri dynasty.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Abbey Falls (5 km)

Formerly known as Jesse Falls, this place is a noted picnic spot.

The Fort

This fortress was built by the Rajas of Coorg on a hill overlooking the town. It now accommodates several offices of the state government.

Omkareswara Temple

Noted for its peculiar combination of the Hindu and Muslim styles of architecture.

EXCURSIONS

Nagarhole Game Sanctuary (77 km)

This game sanctuary is located in the Nalkeri forest region along the Kabini river amid deciduous forests, winding streams and belts of swampy ground. Once an exclusive hunting preserve of the Mysore royalty, this park is an ideal habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. Wild elephants, tiger, deer, panther and jackal are some of the wild animals that can be found here. The Hebballa elephant camp is a must for every visitor.

Season: October to May.

Tala Kaveri (40 km)

The sacred river Kaveri originates at this place, on the slopes of the Brahmagiri hills. The annual Tala Kaveri Jatra begins on the auspicious Tula Sankramana day in October, as water gushes out from a conduit. The annual festival in April attracts a large gathering. Salam Kallu is the place where the pilgrims can get the finest view of Tala Kaveri.

HOW TO GET THERE

Madikeri is 124 km from Mysore and 248 km from Bangalore. It is well connected by good roads with other cities in the State.

KOLAR

Kolar town, the headquarters of this district was formerly known as Kuvalala. Kolar was the first capital of the Gannas, till about the 4th century A.D. In 1004 A.D. The Cholas annexed Kolar with their empire. Later, Kolar came under the Vijayanagar empire, before being taken over by the British in 1768. In 1792, Kolar was given to Tipu Sultan, by the British.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Kolaramma Temple

Attributed to Rajendra Chola, this Dravidian structure has a well carved door and numerous inscription stones that belong to the Chola period.

Kolar Betta

This hill also has a legendary name Shata-Shata-Shringa Parvata (the hundred peaked mountain). This hill has an extensive plateau on the top.

The Makbara

The tomb of Fateh Muhammed, the father of Hyder Ali.

EXCURSIONS

Gulur (108 km)

It has an enchanting temple dedicated to Lord Ganesha, the elephant-headed god. This temple has no permanent deity.

Kolar Gold Fields (45 km)

The gold mines here have the deepest mine pits in the world. The champion reef gold mine is at a depth of 9,959 ft. A double decker elevator carries the visitors deep down where gold-bearing quartz can be seen.

Nandi Hills (93 km)

Nandi Hills, at 1,478 metres above sea level, has been a witness to many battles over the centuries. Today, it is a health and pleasure resort. Nandi Hills was once the summer resort of Tipu Sultan. The charming landscape is graced by two 1000 year old Shiva temples, one at the base and the other at the top of the hills. Here, where four rivers find their source, one can discover long peaceful walks around ancient brooding temples.

HOW TO GET THERE

Kolar is well connected by rail and road with almost all the important towns and cities in the State. The nearest airport is at Bangalore.

KOPPAL

Koppal is the headquarters of this district. Other places of interest are given below:

EXCURSIONS

Kanakagiri (40 km)

The old name of this town was Swarnagiri. It was the headquarters of the southern area of the Mauryan empire. During the Vijayanagar period, this was the chief town of the Bedar Rajas. Kanakachalapathi temple with its spacious halls and massive pillars is a fine specimen of the South Indian architecture of Vijayanagar times.

Kuknur (32 km)

The folklore speak of this place as the legendary Kuntalapura of Mahabharata period. The Navalinga group of temples here represent early Chalukyan architecture.

HOW TO GET THERE

Koppal is well connected by rail and road to most of the important cities of the area.

MANDYA

The district Mandya, on the south-eastern part of Karnataka, derives its name from its administrative headquarters town, which is an important commercial centre. The name Mandya itself may have originated from the popular belief that Mandavya – a holy man lived in the area in ancient times. The district covers an area of about 4850.8 square kilometres and the greatest assets of this state are its four rivers, the Kaveri, Hemavati, Lokapavani and Shimsha that give the district both religious importance and scenic beauty.

Mandya, the district headquarters has gained importance because of the Mandya sugar factory, which is now one of the biggest in India.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Janardhanaswami Temple

The principal deity is flanked by Sridevi and Bhudevi on either side. The temple's gopura, recently renovated, adds to the aesthetics of the temple.

Annual car festival: April to May

EXCURSIONS

Brindavan Gardens (43 km)

The Brindavan Gardens, usually associated with Mysore, is actually situated in the Mandya district, at the base of the **Krishnarajasagara Dam** built across

the river Kaveri. The dam, 2.4 km long and forming a 130 sq km lake, is one of the biggest in India. It has been built in stone without cement and comprises of parapets and a grotto for the river Goddess Kaveri. The terraced Brindavan gardens, with swirling fountains and illuminated by colourful lights, looks like a fairyland at night. Boating facilities are also available here.

Kokrebellur Bird Sanctuary (20 km)

This little village attracts cranes, painted storks, pelicans and other large bird visitors from as far away as Australia, Africa and Europe. The best season to spot these migratory birds is from October to March.

Maddur (14 km)

Maddur was originally known as Arjunapura, after the Pandava prince who is believed to have come here on pilgrimage. In more recent history, the town suffered heavily during Tipu's wars with the British. Among the important temples here are, the Narasimha temple of the Hoysala period, built of black stone, and the Varadaraja temple, a pre-Chola structure.

Melukote (30 km)

Melukote or 'high fort' is an important religious centre. The Cheluvarayaswami temple here, came under the special patronage of the Mysore Rajas and holds a valuable collection of Royal jewels. Built on the rocky hills of Yadugiri, the town also attracts visitors for its bracing climate and breathtaking scenic beauty.

Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary (36 km)

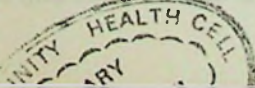
The Kaveri river is studded with small islets here. Ranganathittu is a paradise for birds coming from Siberia, Australia and North America. Visitors are taken around the lake in a boat run by the Forest Department, for a closer view of the birds. The best season to visit this bird sanctuary is between May and November.

Sivasamudram (44 km)

This island town is nature at its best in quiet seclusion. Surrounded by forested hills and valleys, the river Kaveri separates into two streams that thunder down 106.68 metres of rocky hillside. The Gaganachukki falls on the western branch of the river and the Bharachukki falls on the east, are best viewed during the monsoon, from July to mid November.

Shrirangapattana (33 km)

Shrirangapattana has been named after the presiding deity in the Sri Ranganatha Temple, built in the 15th century by Tirumala, a Ganga King. Once the capital of the Rajas of Mysore, Shrirangapattana was also the seat of government for Hyder and Tipu. The famous Fort of Shrirangapattana is



protected on the north and west by the river Kaveri. It contains the remains of Lal Mahal, Tipu's Palace, seven outlets and dungeons.

On the north bank of the river is Tipu's Darya Daulat Bagh and the elegant summer palace which was his favourite place of retreat. The building, with paintings on the wall, is an excellent specimen of Saracenic architecture. 3 km from here is the Tipu Gumbaz where Tipu and his parents are buried. The Gumbaz is built like the Taj at Agra.

HOW TO GET THERE

The nearest airports are at Bangalore (110 km) and Mysore (50 km). Mandya town is connected by rail and road with almost all the important cities in the State.

MYSORE

Mysore, aptly called the "Sandalwood city", was once the residence of the Maharajas of Mysore. It is situated at the north-western base of the Chamundi Hill. Mysore, with its numerous parks and palaces, still retains the aura of grandeur and royalty. The best time to visit Mysore is during the Dasara festival (September-October), when the city wears a bright look for 10 days, bathed in light, joy and colour.

The Royal procession on the tenth day, is a reminder of the pomp and splendour of a bygone era. For Mysoreans, Dasara is both a royal as well as a religious festival. Mysore is also known for its sandalwood oil, incenses and innumerable craft centres dealing in a wide range of ivory, sandalwood, rosewood, teak carvings and furniture.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Chamarajendra Art Gallery

The Jaganmohan Palace houses this art gallery, which has a vast collection of paintings by renowned artists like Ravi Varma and Nicholas Roerich. Also on display here are curios in ceramics, sandalwood, ivory, ancient musical instruments and furniture.

Timings: 08.00 to 12 noon
14.30 to 18 hrs

Chamundi Hill (13 km)

The legendary hill where the goddess Chamundi is said to have destroyed the monster Mahishasura, thus bringing peace to the people. The Sri Chamundeswari temple found here is 2000 years old. Half way up the hill, a 4.8 metres high, 7.6 metres wide monolithic statue of the Nandi Bull is artistically executed with rich ornaments. An imposing figure of Mahishasura can also be found on the hill.

Maharaja's Palace

Formerly the official residence of the Maharajas of Mysore, the palace is an imposing structure located in the heart of the city. Built in the Indo-Saracenic style, the palace has ornate domes, archways, turrets, colonnades and sculptures. The magnificent Durbar Hall is an extravaganza of stained glass ceiling, reflecting mirrors, mosaic floors and wooden doors with beautiful carvings. The palace is richly illuminated on Sunday nights.

Zoological Gardens

This century-old Zoo houses nearly 2000 animals. It has the distinction of breeding wild animals in captivity.

EXCURSIONS

Kabani Jungle Lodge (80 km)

Located in the eastern fringes of Nagarhole Wildlife Sanctuary. The lush, thick forests and the Kabani river, provide a perfect habitat for many wild animals and birds.

Nanjangud (22 km)

Situated on the right bank of the Kabani river, Nanjangud is an important pilgrim centre. The temple's car festival and procession is held towards the end of March every year.

Somnathpur (40 km)

The Sri Somnath Temple here is a splendid example of the Hoysala style of architecture.

Talakad (45 km)

This ancient town and pilgrim centre is situated on the left bank of the river Kaveri. The old city of Talakad is now completely buried under the sands. The town has five lingas housed in lovely temples which are worshipped with elaborate rituals during the Panchalinga Darshan festival that occurs once in twelve years.

HOW TO GET THERE

The nearest major airport is at Bangalore, 142 km away. Mysore is well connected with the rest of India by rail and road services.

RAICHUR

Raichur district was once known as Kishkindha, the legendary kingdom of the Vanaras (monkeys). Raichur is also associated with episodes from the

Hindu epics, the Ramayana and Mahabharatha. Many pre-historic sites and neo-lithic artifacts can be found in this district. Raichur town is also a place of considerable historical importance.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Ek-Minarki Masjid

Built in the Persian style, this mosque is identical in form, to the Chand Minar at Daulatabad. The mosque has a two-storeyed minaret, 20 metres high, with a winding staircase leading to the top. From the top, one can get a beautiful view of the town.

The Hill Fort

The hill fort of Raichur, is surrounded on three sides by massive, low circuit walls. The speciality of the inner walls, made of huge blocks of stone is that, they have been built without the aid of any cementing material. Kannada inscriptions can be found inside the fort.

Jami Masjid

This handsome structure contains six massive pillars, and a cemetery belonging to the Adil Shahi dynasty. Nearby, are the remains of an ancient palace.

The Tomb of the Muslim Saint

This is a beautiful structure, built in the Bijapur style, with a rectangular hall and a beautiful dome.

EXCURSIONS

Hatti Gold Mines (70 km)

This ancient gold mining site, has now been transferred into a new township due to the intensification of gold mining activity.

Mudgal (105 km)

A historical town, Mudgal has several inscriptions belonging to the Yadavas of Devagiri. The main attractions here are the remnants of the Mudgal fort and an ancient Roman Catholic Church built by the Jesuits before 1557.

HOW TO GET THERE

Raichur is on the main broad gauge trunk route from Chennai to Delhi via Hyderabad. Raichur is also well connected with other cities by good roads.

SHIMOGA

The district of Shimoga, situated roughly in the mid-south-western part of the State, derives its name from its administrative headquarters town, Shimoga. The western part of the district has superb tropical forests and beautiful hilly areas. The eastern region is less dense but has several lakes and river valleys.

The town of Shimoga, on the banks of river Tunga, lies about 274 km, south-west of Bangalore city. It was an important stronghold of the Keladi Nayakas during the 16th century and a stately old building, now converted into a museum, was the palace of Shivappa Nayaka. Shimoga is now, an important industrial, commercial and educational centre.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

This imposing structure, built in the Roman and Gothic styles of architecture, has beautiful stained glass panes.

The Government Museum

This museum displays palm leaf manuscripts, coins, copper plates and statues made in the Hoysala style. An interesting exhibit is a 18.29 metre long ancient accounts book.

The Shimoga Fort

Though the fort is largely in ruins, the recently renovated Seetharamanjaneya shrine is an excellent example of the elegance of Hoysala workmanship.

EXCURSIONS

Agumbe (90 km)

At 826 metres above sea level, Agumbe is an enchanting place that can be reached through a winding ghat road. The sunset watched from this hill top, is a truly brilliant sight. A platform for visitors has been erected, specially for this. As the sun sets each evening, it takes on different shapes, colours and postures, which the western sea reflects. The little streams that run down wooded hills, add to the beauty of this place. The best season for viewing is from November to January.

Bhadravati (18 km)

Bhadravati, popularly known as the "Steel Town", is situated on the banks of the river Bhadra. The first state owned iron and steel factory was started here in 1923. The 13th century Lakshminarasimha temple, belonging to the Hoysala period, is found in the centre of the old town. Besides other interesting features, the temple also has an exquisite 0.92 metre high Ganapathi idol.

Gajanur (10 km)

Situated near a crest of the western ghats, Gajanur has an elephant camp and a dam constructed across the river Tunga. The hillocks near the Gajanur tank, provide an enchanting view of the area.

Jog Falls (103 km)

At this magnificent place, the river Sharavathi, flowing over a rocky bed, reaches a steep chasm of 292 metres and leaps down in four distinct falls – Raja, Rani, Rocket and Roarer – presenting a spectacle of breathtaking beauty. The Mahatma Gandhi Hydro-electric Power Station was installed here more than 40 years ago.

Nearby is the **Sharavathi Valley Wildlife Sanctuary**, 40 kms from Sagar town.

Mandagadde Bird Sanctuary (30 km)

This natural bird sanctuary, is located on the banks of the river Tunga. Every year, flocks of migratory birds take shelter on the leafless trees found here. Season: July to October.

Tavarekoppa (10 km)

The forest department has set up the Shettyhally Lion safari here.

HOW TO GET THERE

The nearest airport is at Mangalore, 200 km away. Shimoga is connected by railway with Bangalore, Mysore and Hubli, and by road with all the important towns and cities.

TUMKUR

Tumkur district, situated in the eastern part of Karnataka, has very few places of tourist interest. Tumkur town, established by Kante Arasu of the Mysore royal family, is now the most populous town of the district. It is the chief administrative, commercial and business centre of the district.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Lakshmikanthaswamy Temple

This Dravidian structure, constructed during the early Vijayanagar period, is the largest and most ancient temple in the town.

Siddhaganga Kshetra (5 km)

A temple of Siddalingeshwara and a gurukula-type higher education centre for the Veerashaivas is located here. The natural spring found here, is considered sacred by the devout.

Turuvekere

The town contains three temples and a few inscriptions belonging to the Hoysala period. Among the beautiful sculptures found here, the large recumbent bull, carved in black stone, found in front of the Gangadhareshvara temple is a fine piece of sculpture.

EXCURSIONS

Devarayanadurga (10 km)

A fortified hill, set amidst picturesque scenery. Near a spring, known as Ane-done, are the remains of the tomb of an elephant. Nearby are, the Narasimha temple, the Bukkasamudra tank, and the Hanuman temple. Near this hill, is a small natural spring called Namada Chilume, which fills and overflows the mortar cut in the rock.

Sira (52 km)

Sira once served as the headquarters of a province under the Mughals, Bijapur Sultans, Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan. Hence, all the major Muslim monuments in the district, are found here. Remarkable among these, are the Jumma Masjid and the Dargah of Malik Rihan, built in the Saracenic style.

Yadiyur (52 km)

Yadiyur is an important place of pilgrimage. The Siddhalingeshvara temple found here is a large Dravidian structure, which attracts devotees all through the year. The annual car festival is during the bright half of Chaitra (March to April).

HOW TO GET THERE

Tumkur is connected by rail and road to Bangalore.

UDUPI

Udupi is newly bifurcated district. It has as its headquarters Udupi town, which is a famous centre of pilgrimage. It gets its name from Udupa the moon, associated with the Chandramouleshwara temple situated here. Famous Hindu saints such as Chaitanya, Purandaradasa and Kanakadasa visited this place for the dharshan of the Lord Krishna.

EXCURSIONS

Kallianpur (4 km)

The ruins of an old fort dating back to Vijayanagara days, are found here. Temples of Kenchamma, Veerabhadra, Mahalingeshwara and Ganapathi are famous here.

Karkal (44 km)

Famous for its 13 m high monolithic statue of Lord Gomateswara, a Jain Saint.

Malpe (4 km)

This port town has a beautiful beach.

Manipal (3 km)

This is a prominent industrial and commercial centre.

Maravanthe (54 km)

An excellent beach resort.

HOW TO GET THERE

Udupi is well connected by rail and road to most major cities in India.

UTTAR KANNAD

Uttar Kannad, located on the western coast, is a place of varied historical, cultural and religious importance. It is one of the major touristic districts in the state. An added attraction is its proximity to Goa on the north.

Karwar, the district headquarters, surrounded by beaches, is an excellent beach resort. The town has been chosen as the site for a major naval base. The drive from Hubli (Dharwad Dist.) to Karwar, a distance of 160 km, takes one through hills and valleys covered with dense tropical jungles and plenty of wildlife.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Karwar Harbour

The Karwar bay, apart from its scenic beauty, also boasts of an excellent harbour which is fit for use during all seasons.

River Kalinadi

The river Kalinadi, flows through the town into the Arabian sea. Motor launches are available for boating up the river Kali.

Muslin Factory

Karwar town is known for its fine muslin. The muslin industry was started in 1638, by Sir. William Counten, who opened a factory here.

EXCURSIONS

Banvasi (147 km)

Situated on the left bank of the Varada river, Banvasi is a place of great antiquity. Once the capital city of the Kadambas, the main objects of interest here are the Madhukeshvara temple, the ruins of a Buddhist stupa, the Veerabhadra temple, and the several idols and Jain icons.

Dandeli (105 km)

Dandeli, an industrial township, is surrounded by an abundance of forest and mineral wealth. A wildlife sanctuary is also situated here. Wild elephants, bison, panther, tiger, sambar and chital roam freely in an area of 207 sq km. The watch towers inside the sanctuary are inaccessible during the monsoon months of June to October. The other tourist spots near Dandeli are, Najheri view, Kawala caves, Synthery Rocks, Vincholi Rapids, Sykes Point and the suspension bridge across the Kaneri.

Lushington Falls (110 km)

This famous waterfall is located in Siddapur taluk, on the Shimoga border. The falls is named after a district collector, who discovered the falls in 1845.

Magod Falls (125 km)

Here, the river Gangavati, forms a picturesque waterfall, leaping in a series of cascades over the cliffs in three stages and presents an enchanting sight.

Yana (72 km)

Yana, also known as Bhairavakshetra, is an important pilgrim centre, situated in a beautiful valley between the Jaddi ghat and the Devimane ghat. To reach this place, one has to trek a distance of about 10 km by foot amidst thick forest. The hills provide a fine view of the Yan valley. A hillock, rising about a hundred metres high, contains the shrine of Bhairaveshvara. On the occasion of Mahashivaratri, a fair is held here every year.

HOW TO GET THERE

Karwar is well-connected by road with all important towns in the State. It is also an important sea port.

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Figure 1

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NOTES

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