



**BIHAR  
TOURISM**  
*Blissful Bihar*

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**BIHAR  
TOURISM**  
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**MAGNIFICENT  
BIHAR**



Nalanda University Ruins

## BIHAR: THE CRADLE OF INDIAN CIVILISATION

The enamouring state of India, Bihar got its name from the word "Vihara" meaning Monastery or a place occupied by monks. Here different religions, cultures and beliefs coexist in harmony. The region has significant spiritual sites of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Muslim and Sikh religions.

In the past, Bihar was the focal point of energy, learning and culture in India for a long time. India's first realm, the Maurya Empire and one of the world's most noteworthy religion, Buddhism emerged from the district that now makes present-day Bihar. Magadha realms, under the Maurya and Gupta dynasties, unified the extensive parts of South Asia under one central rule. The capital city - Patna, earlier known as Pataliputra, was an imperative political, military, and monetary centre of Indian civilization during the historic era. It is here, the remnants of the world's foremost university Nalanda sleeps in the void of time.

Situated in the eastern part of India, Bihar is bolted between West Bengal in the east and Uttar Pradesh in the west. Moreover, with Nepal in its north and Jharkhand towards the south, Bihar's climate is affected by the lesser Himalayas that starts at the foothills of Nepal. The slopes or hilly terrain of Bihar, especially the Rajgir slopes, are much famous for their Buddhist and Jain connections.

The Bihar plain is parted in two unequal parts by the Ganges, which streams from west to east. Bihar's soil is essentially productive, due to the presence of the Ganges and its tributaries. The Gangetic plain is tremendous and is a standout amongst the most populated zones in the nation. The atmosphere of Bihar is usually warm, however, October, November, February and March are mostly favourable for tourism.



Nalanda University Ruins

## EARLY HISTORY OF BIHAR

Many of Sanatana (Eternal) Dharma or Hinduism's ancient myths and legends are associated with Bihar. The region holds the merit for bringing forth numerous religions. It was here that Prince Gautam accomplished enlightenment and transformed to Buddha at the present Bodh Gaya, a town in central Bihar and gave birth to Buddhism. The district is brimming with stays of the religious communities known as Stupa. Lord Mahavira, the author of Jain religion was also born here and attained nirvana. The site is just a

couple of miles toward the south-east of Patna at present the town of Pawapuri.

The tenth Guru of the Sikh religion, Guru Gobind Singh Ji was born here and became a proficient Sikh saint. A grand Gurdwara (Sikh temple) - Takhat Sri Harmandir Ji Sahib also regarded as Patna Sahib was constructed in the eastern Patna to celebrate the Guru's memory. The Gurdwara is one of the five holiest spots of worship (Takhat) for Sikhs.

The Magadh and Licchavi kingdoms thrived during 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. The rulers of this time implemented an arrangement which is not only a predecessor of modern art of statecraft but of the linkage of statecraft with the financial aspects. A counsel to the Magadh King Chandragupta Maurya, Kautilya (also regarded as Chanakya) and the creator of Arthashastra, the first treatise on the modern economics also lived here.

The famous Mauryan king - Ashoka was the first to set firm doctrines for the effective administration of people in around 270 B.C. The doctrines were inscribed on stone columns and placed across the kingdom. The column was decorated with the statue of at least one lion sitting over a platform which was shown with slings of wheels. The lion denoted strength, wheel denoted eternal nature of truth, hence the name Dharma Chakra. This figure of lions, on a platform, with engravings of a wheel, was adopted as the official symbol of the independent Republic of India in 1947. Dharma chakra is also inscribed in the national flag of India. Remnants of these pillars still exist at Lauriya-Nandan Garh in the district of West Champaran and at Vaishali.

Set-up in Bihar - Nalanda (5<sup>th</sup> century) and Vikramshila (8<sup>th</sup> century) are famous centres of learning. They are considered to be the oldest international and secular universities that imparted knowledge and wisdom to students from across the borders.

For the Hindu pilgrims, Gaya stands out as the most sacred destination for offering prayers to ancestors. Ramayana and Mahabharata, the fantastic sagas of India, still have numerous unforgettable tales associated with different places in Bihar. The creator of Ramayana, Valmiki was also a native of Bihar region. Sufism also developed in Bihar because a significant number of Sufi saints started spreading peace and brotherhood between Hindus and Muslims. The Sufis settled here during the Islamic period. Sufi saints like Imam Taj Faqih from Maner, Shihabuddin Pir Jagot are some popular names. The Qadri order, presently considered to be one of the central Sufi orders in the state, had one of the most notable representatives, Syed Muhammad of Amjhar Sharif, situated in the Aurangabad district of Bihar.



Ashoka Pillar, Mauryan Empire

## BIHAR TOURISM

Bihar boasts of a vast choice of destinations for tourists. The visit can be a religious one or simply experiencing the sheer splendour of the archeological sites and the untouched natural surroundings of Bihar. A traveller may explore Buddhist Circuit, Jain Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Sufi Circuit, Hindu Circuit, Sikh Circuit and other places of interest spread across the state.

### PATNA THE CAPITAL CITY

The modern-day town of Patna, capital of Bihar is one of the oldest riverine cities. The heritage of Bihar dates back to the Vedic age. A number of these have been mentioned in the Buddhist and Jain literatures, dating as back as the 1000 BC. Magadh started from here, which is the most prominent of all. The center of the kingdom was the south of the Ganges in Bihar. The first capital was Rajagriha (modern Rajgir), then Patliputra (now Patna). Magadh flourished and acquired most of Bihar and Bengal with its conquest of Licchavi and Anga respectively and thereafter much of eastern Uttar Pradesh and Odisha.

Bihar expanded under the rule of Mauryans. Chandragupta Maurya and his son Bindusara held control over a significant empire, which stretched from Bengal to Afghanistan. The Ganges, navigable throughout the year, was the main river highway from Delhi to Bengal. Through the banks of Patliputra (Patna) and Champa (near Bhagalpur), Mauryan vessels sailed as long as to Sri Lanka and Java. Emperor Ashoka (Chandragupta's grandson) who ruled from 273 to 232 B.C. became one of India's most illustrious rulers. Together with his conquest of Kalinga, maritime business alongside

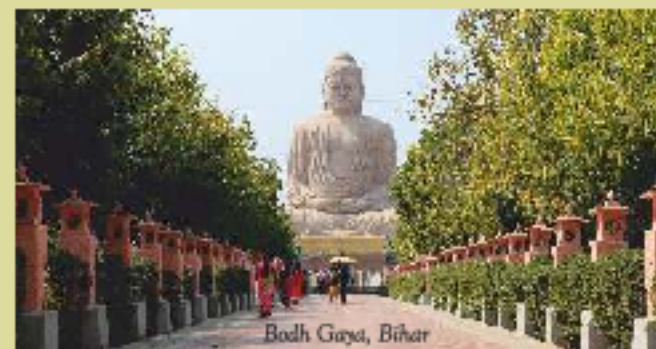
the Ganges reached its peak.

Patliputra or the present Patna holds a significant spot in the medieval history, especially for Hindus. It is considered to be related to Goddess Patan Devi. The Greek historian Megasthenes and the Chinese language explorer Fa-Hien, both have recorded vibrant accounts of the town in their travelogues. Nearly every dynasty in north India, like the Mughals, Sikhs, and Nawabs of Bengal, fought for control over this area. The warfare of Buxar in 1764 mounted the foothold of the East India organisation right here, which eventually brought about British supremacy over the Northern Provinces.

At the time of British rule, Bihar was ruled by the Viceroys and the public buildings in Patna reflect this fact. Moreover, like any other north Indian state of India, Patna's architecture displays the various forms of rulers. In 1912, Patna was the capital of the provinces of Odisha and Bihar whilst the Bengal Presidency became partitioned, and later in 1936, Bihar got statehood and Patna became its capital city.

## TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Patna is well connected by rail, road and air. The city has regular train connectivity from major cities of India. There is also the Loknayak Jayaprakash Airport in the city that is well connected to other cities by international and domestic flights. Road transport is also available from many north Indian cities. The best season to visit Patna is from the month of October to February. There are a number of luxury and budget hotels in Patna with all amenities. Tourists visiting Patna must visit local bazars to buy traditional weaves like the locally-made sarees and Madhubani paintings which are available at Patna Haat, Upendra Maharathi Silk Sansthan, Patliputra Industrial Area, Patna Market and Hathwa



Bodhi Tree, Gaya, Bihar

Market. Travellers can also relish local delicacies like litti chokha, milk pedas and chaats available in the markets.

The major tourist attractions of Patna are New Bihar Museum, Khuda Baksh Oriental Library, Golghar, Patna Cemetery, Padri-Ki-Haveli (a church), Takhat Sri Harmandir Sahib, Agam Kuan, Buddha Smriti Park, Maner Sharif, Gurdwara Pahila Bari aka Gurdwara Gae Ghat, Gurdwara Bal Lila Maini Sangat, Gurdwara Guru Ka Bagh, Kamaldah, Khankah Mujibia (Phulwari Sharif), Khankah Emadia (Mangal Talab, Patna City), Dargah Sharif, Mithan Ghat (Patna City), Sadaquat Ashram, Martyr's Memoria land a host of other structures. Places that are close by include Gaya, Rajgir, Bodh Gaya and Nalanda, where one of the oldest universities of the world was established.

The other tourist attractions of Patna are discussed below :-

## NEW BIHAR MUSEUM

This museum is the brainchild of Shri Nitish Kumar, the honourable Chief Minister of Bihar. Recently Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the New Bihar Museum and was mesmerized by it. It is a grand showcase of the pre-historic ages to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century AD. With a total of seven galleries - History, Historical Art, Contemporary and Regional Art, Bihari diaspora, Visual Storage, Children's and Orientation, the museum stands on the site of the capital of India's ancient Magadhan Empire, Patliputra. Spread across 13.9 acres, the museum possess two treasured displays. One, the Didarganj Yakshi- a Mauryan statue and a 6,000 kg Buddha begging bowl.

New Bihar Museum



## AGAM KUAN

The bottomless well, is an ancient relic of the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka. It is believed to be a part of the legendary hall created by Ashoka.

## BUDDHA SMRITI PARK

This park was built to mark the 2554<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Buddha. The Patliputra Karuna Stupa, standing tall at 200 feet high, situated in the middle of the park is the principal attraction of this park which was inaugurated by the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. Every evening a laser show is hosted to showcase the history of Bihar from the time of Ramayana to post Independence.

Buddha Smriti Park



## MANER SHARIF

In the early ages, Maner was a centre of learning. Maner contains two well-known Mohammedan tombs, that of Shah Daulat or Makhdum Daulat, known as Chhoti Dargah, and the other that of Sheikh Yahia Maneri or Makhdum Yahia, called the Bari Dargah. Maner Sharif walls contain carvings and high finish. A great dome crowns it, and the ceiling is covered with carved inscriptions from the Quran. The architectural nuances bears the testimony to Jehangir's times.

## GAYA

Gaya is also one of the best places to visit and is an important pilgrimage site for Hindus. It is believed that a Hindu will attain salvation if his last rites are offered under the immortal banyan tree in the yard of Vishnupad temple. Mangla gauri Temple, Sita Kund, Akshay Vat, Ramshila Hill, Dukhharni mandir, Mahabodhi Temple, Thai Temple, Gurdwara Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji – Gaya.

Pretshila Hills are some other important temples, where large number of pilgrims visit every day. The other few tourist attractions of Gaya are discussed below-



## MAHABODHI TEMPLE

This UNESCO world heritage site is located at Bodh Gaya. The Mahabodhi Temple Complex was first built by Emperor Ashoka. The present temple dates from the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> centuries from the late Gupta period.

Thai Temple



## THAI TEMPLE

The sole Thai Temple in India boasts of a 25 meter high bronze statue of Buddha. Located next to the tourist bungalow, the Thai Temple is adorned with sloping and curved roof which is covered with golden tiles.

## VISHNUPAD MANDIR

This mandir is located along the Falgu River, marked by a footprint of Lord Vishnu. The Bhumihar Brahmins of the state have been the traditional priests at this Mandir as Gayawal Pandas. Several legendary saints as Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya, Sankaradeva and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu have visited this shrine.

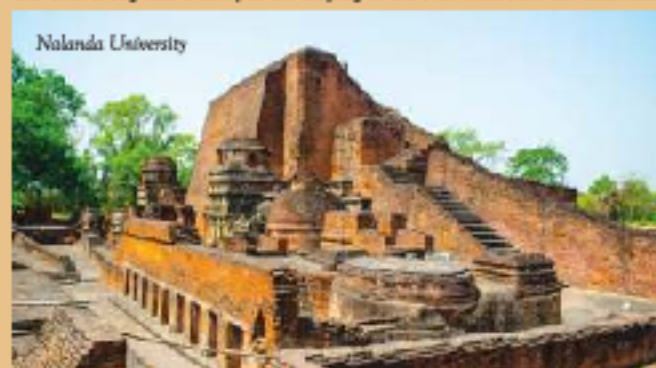
## NALANDA

Nalanda is another historical place worth visiting, where the world's first residential university was established in 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. At the peak of its glory, the University had over 10,000 students and 2,000 teachers. Buddha is believed to have visited Nalanda a number of times. The Chinese traveller Huan Zang stayed here for five years to learn Buddhism. His travelogues mention the vivid descriptions of the glorious learning centre at Nalanda. The excavation of the original site has revealed the ruins of 11 monasteries and several temples and monuments like Pawapuri, Kundalpur, Nalanda Bari Dargah (Bihar Sharif, Nalanda), Chhoti Dargarh (Bihar Sharif, Nalanda).

The other few tourist attractions of Nalanda are discussed below-

### NALANDA UNIVERSITY

Ancient emperor Kumargupta established Nalanda University in 450 AD. Offering courses in almost every area of learning, the University attracted students from all over the world. The terracotta seal from the University has been put on display in the ASI Museum at Nalanda.



Nalanda University

### PAWAPURI

Lord Mahavir, the last Tirthankar attained 'Nirvana' at Pawapuri, 90km away Patna. This is a holy site for Jains as Lord Mahavir was also buried here, where presently the Jainmandir stands.



Jainmandir, Pawapuri

## RAJGIR AND BODH GAYA

Rajgir is located in a green valley surrounded by rocky hills. This place is sacred to both Buddhists and Jains as the Buddha delivered his earliest sermons here and the Lord Mahavira visited it often. The first Buddhist council or conclave was held here in the Saptarni Cave, which is also the main source of the Rajgir hot water springs. A cable car provides access to the hilltop Peace Pagoda temple which was built by the Japanese, making it an ideal sightseeing place in Bihar. It is a world heritage site, declared by UNESCO in year 2002. Bodhgaya is where the Buddha attained enlightenment. This makes it one of the most important Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the world. There are a number of famous structures in these two places such as Ajatashatru's Fort, Bimbisara's Jail, Swarna Bhandar. The

Peace Pagoda, Cyclopean Wall, Ghora katora, Pandu pokhar.

The other few tourist attractions of Rajgir and both gaya are discussed below-

### GHORA KATORA

Also known as the horse bowl, this lake is a renowned tourist destination of Rajgir district. What sets this destination apart from other tourist spots is the 7km phaeton drive from Rajgir to Ghora Katora amidst lush green forests.

### PANDU POKHAR

This sprawling park offers a 4.5m-wide jogging track, play area for children, food and beverage counters with sitting areas and a lush green park having a bhool-bhulaiya among other amusements.

## NAWADA DISTRICT

The famous destinations of Nawada district are Kakolat and Gonava Jee.

### KAKOLAT

This is a waterfall in Gobindpur police-station, about 21 miles away from Nawada. The waterfall is about 150 to 160 feet, from the ground level. The view is panoramic due to all-round green forest area, which is very pleasant to the eyes.

## SASARAM DISTRICT

Among other things Rohtasgarh Fort, Gurdwara Chacha Phaggu Mal are very popular places in Sasaram district.

### ROHTASGARH FORT

Situated 39 kilometers from Sasaram, Rohtasgarh Fort is considered as the major and strongest hill forts in India. This fort served as a safe shelter for treasurers and families of Sher Shah Suri, Shah Jahan, Maan Singh, Mir Qasim and others.

### SHER SHAH TOMB

The Sasaram town was built in memory of Emperor Sher Shah Suri, a Pathan from this place in Bihar, who defeated the Mughal Emperor Humayun and ruled for 5 years till his death. His tomb is an example of Indo-Islamic architecture.



Sher Shah Tomb

## AURANGABAD DISTRICT

### DEO SUN TEMPLE

King Bhairavendra Singh built the 100-ft high sun temple. But what sets this sun temple apart is the fact it faces the west, unlike most sun temples. Deo sun temple is also the best location to witness chhath puja.

## ROHTAS DISTRICT

### MUNDESHWARI TEMPLE

One of the oldest Hindu monuments of Bihar, Mundeshwari temple has an octagonal shape. It is located in Kaimur district, close to Bhabhua Road.

### GUPTA DHAM

Gupta Mahadev temple or Gupta dham is dedicated to lord Shiva. The locals believe that the Shiva lingam inside the temple is there from an ancient time.

## WEST CHAMPARAN DISTRICT VALMIKI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

This sanctuary covers an area of 880 sq. km. (approx) and houses leopards and tigers along with the fishing cats, chitals, sambar, black bucks, langur, sloth bears, gaurs.



Valmiki Wildlife Sanctuary

## GURU CIRCUIT



Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the tenth of the ten Sikh Gurus, the eleventh being the living perpetual Guru, Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (the sacred text of Sikhism) was born in Patna on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 1666. A saint, soldier, poet and revolutionary, Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji inspired a strong bond among Sikh community. His notable contribution was to the continual formalisation of the faith which the first Guru, Guru Nanak had founded as a religion in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Guru Gobind Singh Ji initiated the Sikh Khalsa in 1699. At the birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh Ji in Patna is the Gurdwara - Takhat Sri Harmandir Sahib which is revered as one of the five Takhts by the Sikhs.

### TAKHAT SRI HARMANDIR SAHIB

Maharaja Ranjit Singh Ji, the first king of the Sikh Empire, took up the reconstructions of this sacred birthplace of the great Guru in 1839. The present gorgeous edifice of Harmandir Takhat was reconstructed in 1954 as the earthquake of 1934 destroyed some part of it.

There are four more Gurdwaras in the vicinity of Takhat Sri Harmandir Ji, Patna Sahib:-

### GURDWARA PAHILA BARI AKA GURDWARA GAE GHAT

Popularly known as Gurdwara Gae Ghat, it is dedicated to Guru Nanak Dev Ji, who stayed here during his visit to Patna in the early 1500's.

### GURDWARA BAL LILA MAINI SANGAT

Situated close to Takhat Sri Harmandir Sahib Ji, this shrine stands at the former home of Raja Faateh Chand Maim. His wife or the Rani

treated young Gobind Rai as her own son. When Gobind Rai left Patna, the Rani had a Gurdwara built in her home.

### GURDWARA SHRI GURU GOBIND SINGH GHAT

Situated close to the bank of river Ganga this place is also linked with Guru Gobind Singh Ji's childhood.

### GURDWARA GURU KA BAGH

This Gurdwara commemorates the arrival of Guru Tegh Bahadur to Patna. After four years of touring Eastern India, the Guru returned to Patna to join his family.

### GURDWARA HANDI SAHIB DANAPUR

This Gurdwara was built in the memory of Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. An old lady whose name was Mata Jasni cooked Khichdi in a handi and for Guru Ji offered it to Satguru Ji. So this place is known as Handi Sahib.

## THE OTHER GURDWARAS IN BIHAR

### GURDWARA BARI SANGAT SHRI GURU TEGH BAHADUR JI CHAUKI

Gurdwara Bari Sangat Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji Chauki - Bhagalpur had two Sikh Sangats when Guru Tegh Bahadur visited it in 1667. The place itself is named Gurdwara Bari Sangat Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji Chauki Sahib. An old hand-written copy of Guru Granth Sahib acquired from the former Udasi priest of the Shrine is preserved in Gurdwara Singh Sabha.

### GURDWARA CHACHA PHAGGU MAL- SASARAM

The Gurdwara Chacha Phaggu Mal is the principal Gurdwara of the town housed in a spacious high-ceilinged hall with a gallery at

mid-height. Three copies of Guru Granth Sahib are seated side by side under a domed rectangular pavilion of white marble.

### GURDWARA PAKKI SANGAT

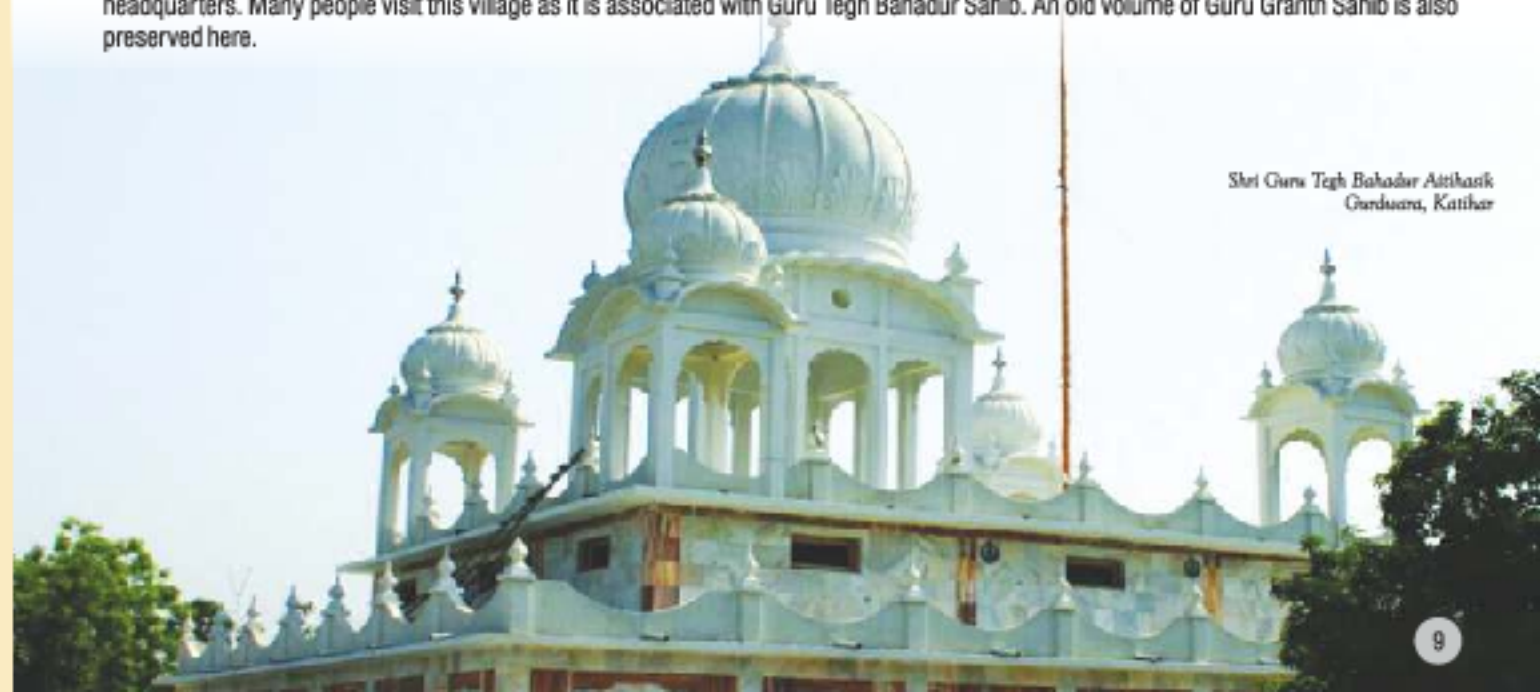
Monghyr Gurdwara Pakki Sangat - Monghyr, a district town, 170 km. east of Patna Sahib by rail, is another place where Guru Tegh Bahadur is known to have stayed during his eastward journey. It was during his stay here that he got the news of the birth of Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

### GURDWARA SHRI GURU TEGH BAHADUR JI - GAYA

Gurdwara Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji - Gaya is an ancient Hindu pilgrimage on the bank of Phalgu River, a tributary of the Ganges, where the pilgrims go to worship and ceremony is conducted by local priests for the benefit of their ancestors.

### SHRI GURU TEGH BAHADUR AITIHASIK GURDWARA, KATI HAR

This historical Gurdwara is situated at Lakshmipur Panchayat of Barari Block of Katihar District. It is approx 40km from the district headquarters. Many people visit this village as it is associated with Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib. An old volume of Guru Granth Sahib is also preserved here.



Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur Aitihasic  
Gurdwara, Katihar

## JAIN CIRCUIT

Jainism, a prominent religion of India flourished in Bihar. This is a sacred destination as the birth place of the 12<sup>th</sup> Tirthankara Vasupujya and 24<sup>th</sup> Tirthankara Mahavira. Mahavira spent most of his time around this region and attained Mahaparinirvana at Pawapuri which has become the most holy site for any Jain devotee. Champapur is also a very revered place as it is the birth place of the 12<sup>th</sup> Tirthankara Vasupujya Swami.

### KAMALDAH, PATNA

In the area called Kamaldah (Gulzarbagh, Patna) is a high mound of brick ruins on which two Jain temples stand. There is mausoleum of Jain saint Sthoolhbhadra and the temple of Sudarshan Swami.

### KUND GRAM, MUZAFFARPUR

As per Jain scriptures, Lord Mahavira, the 24<sup>th</sup> Tirthankar, was born at Kundagrama and his residence was at Vaniyagrama. Both the places were either part of or near Vaishali. The modern village of Bania is at the site of ancient Vanigram and Kund Gram is identified with the modern village of Vasokund, about 2 km northeast of the gadh mound.

### KUNDALPUR, NALANDA

A beautiful Jaisalmer stone temple is situated close to the ruins of ancient Nalanda University at Kundalpur. This houses statues of Lord Mahavira, Adinath Swami and Gautam Gandharva. This place is believed to be the birthplace of Gautam Gandharva, the first disciple of Lord Mahavira. An ancient Jain temple is also here.

### JALMANDIR, PAWAPURI

Also known as Apapuri, the sinless town, is a very sacred Jain pilgrimage centre. As per Jain Mythology and belief, Lord Mahavira, the greatest propounder of Jainism, attained Nirvana at Pawapuri. Hundreds of thousands of his disciples and devotees took away the ashes after his cremation here. The rush was so

great that even the soils of the area were taken away and it became a tank. Later on, a beautiful temple known as Jalmandir with white marble was constructed in the center of the tank to commemorate the Lord's Nirvana.

### OTHER IMPORTANT PLACES SAMOSARAN

This beautiful temple honours the place where Lord Mahavira sat to teach his disciples. The temple is constructed with white marble, rising by low steps into several concentric terraces with a beehive shaped shrine on the top containing the footprints of Lord Mahavira.

### MANIYAR MATH

This monument is situated on the way to the Son Bhandar Caves, almost in the center of the ancient inner city enclosure. Legend is that Srenika or Bimbisara had 32 wives to whom he daily gave new ornaments and threw the old ones into a well, which is still there. At this place there is a modern small Jain temple.

### SONE BHANDAR

There are two rock-cut caves, adjacent to each other, excavated on the southern face of the Vaibhara hill, facing the western portion of the valley. Of these, the western one is locally called as Son-Bhandar (Gold Treasury). As per local belief, the piece of rock within this space is an ancient wedge blocking the passage to the treasury of gold in the body of the hill. It consists of a rock-cut chamber and its front part has fallen. Inside the southern wall of the cave there are six small figures of Jain. Tirthankaras carved in relief and representing Padmaprabha, Parshvanatha and Mahavira.

### GONAVA JEE, NAWADA

Gonava village is situated at around one kilometer north of Nawada on Patna-Ranchi road. This is a pilgrimage site for the Jains of both sections. The Digambar Jain temple is just by the side of main road while the Shwetambar Jain temple is behind it. The temple is famous and known as a place of Nirvana of Lord Mahavira's first disciple, Gautam Gandharva.

### LACHHUAR, JAMUI

Situated at about 8 km west of Simaria and 7 km south of Sikandra, this pilgrimage site has a large number of Jain temples and dharamshala built in 1874 by Rai Dhanpat Singh Bahadur of Murshidabad, for the benefit of Jain pilgrims, who visit some places in the adjacent hills. The nearest are about 5 kms of Lachhuar and are marked Muth Boodhroop and Muth Purusnath.

In the two small shrines situated in the valley between two parallel ranges of hills, there are small statues of Mahavira dating back to Samvat 1505, where as the other statues are older than this. Some Jains hold Lachhuar to be the birthplace of Mahavir Swami.

### BISRAM, BHOJPUR

This place in the town called Arrah houses 45 Jain temples. Lord Mahavira, the 24<sup>th</sup> Jain Tirthankara, took rest here for some time during his wanderings and hence this place is called Bisram (rest). Jains from every part of the country visit Bisram throughout the year where a Jain temple with an idol of Lord Mahavira exists.

### MASADH, BHOJPUR

This village is located at around 9 km southwest of Arrah town. An ancient Jain temple dedicated to Parshwanath with eight images dating back to 1396 A.D. as per archeological records is situated here. The temple was completed in the year 1819 A.D.

### MANDAR HILL, BANKA

Situated around 48 km south of the Bhagalpur town, the Mandar hill is about 700 ft high that consists of a huge mass of granite overgrown near the summit with low jungle. The Skand Purana associates Mandar or Sumeru with the old story of Amrita-Manthana or churning of the ocean. The story goes that the Gods and the Demons (Devas and Asuras) with a view to secure amrita (the divine liquor), consuming of which is believed to confer immortality, used this Mandara or Sumeru Mountain as the churning stick or rod. The great mythical serpent, Vasuki, was used as the rope. Due to this mythical association, the hill has assumed considerable religious significance and is a place of pilgrimage. Two Jain temples are situated on the summit of the hill where the Jain pilgrims worship Lord Vasupujyanatha.

### CHAMPANAGAR, BHAGALPUR

A western suburb of the Bhagalpur town, Champanagar is mentioned as one of the places, where the last Tirthankara Mahavira stayed for three rainy seasons in the course of his religious wanderings. According to Jain tradition, it is believed that Jain Tirthankara Vasupujya was born at Champanagar or Champapuri. There are two Jain temples of considerable size, both entirely built at the expense of the family of Jagat Seth, a devotee. At the nearby hamlet of Kabirpur there is another Jain temple with the footprints or padukas (footwear) of the 24 Jain Tirthankaras with an inscription dated V.S. 1694 or 1637 A.D.

### KUNDGHAT

It is around 6 km from Lachhuar, where the temple of Kundeshwari Devi is situated and which is considered sacred by the Jains.



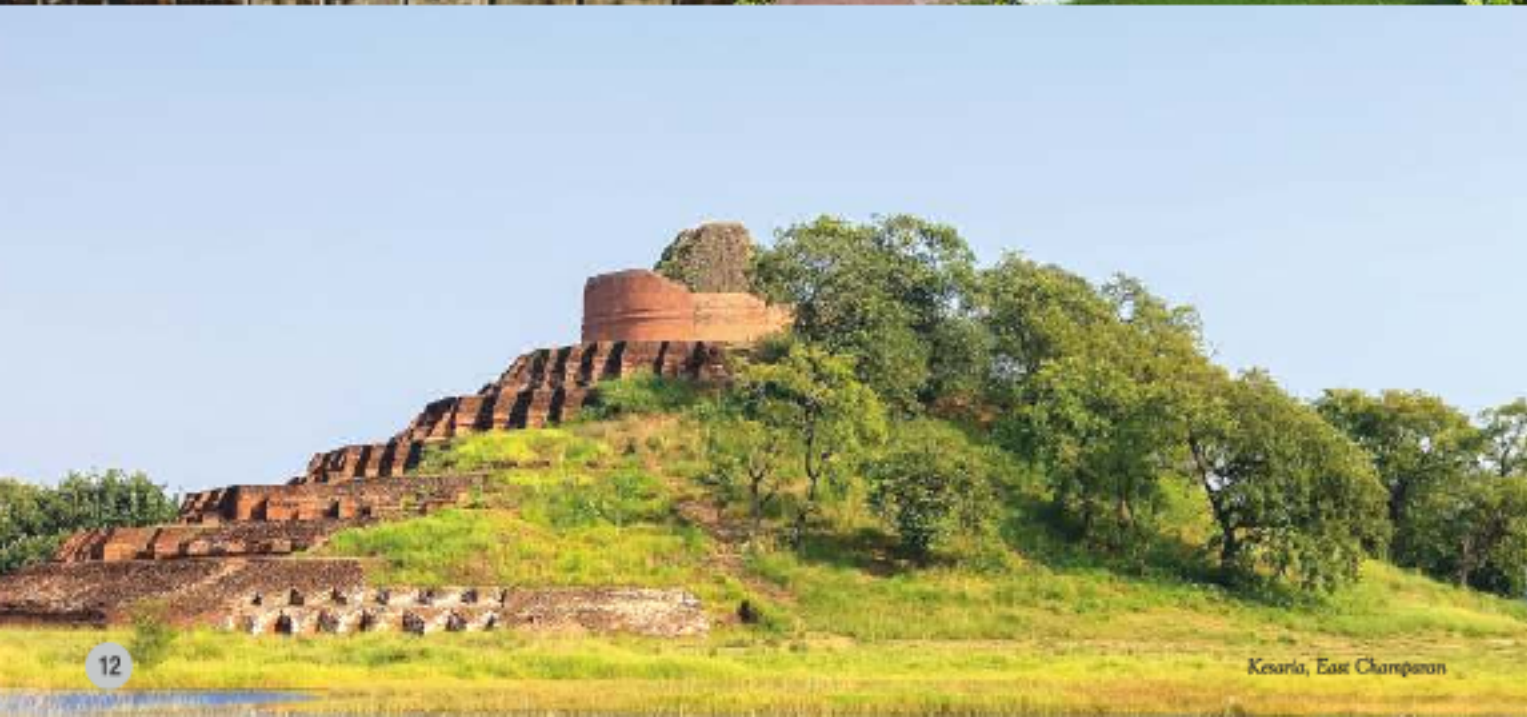
Jalmandir, Pawapuri

## BUDDHIST CIRCUIT



Lauriya Nandangarh

Mahabodhi Temple - Bodhi Gaya



Kesaria, East Champaran

Bihar is the land from where Buddha began his journey to search the solution for suffering and finally got enlightened. The magnificent Mahabodhi temple and the revered Bodhi tree attract Buddhist pilgrims from all parts of the world. It is here that Lord Buddha attained enlightenment and propounded a new religion known as Buddhism which is today followed by millions of people throughout the world. The sacred footsteps of the Buddha, evolved into pilgrimages are trailed through the Buddhist Circuit.

## IMPORTANT BUDDHIST SITES

### VAISHALI

Vaishali is a famous city adorned by numerous Buddhist spots and the seat of first republic of the world. Vaishali was made immortal with frequent visits of Lord Buddha who came here to give sermons and lectures. The main attractions of the city are Ashoka Pillar, Buddha Stupa, Fort of King Vishal and Shanti Stupa. Patna is just 55 km from here and is well connected with number of buses.

### NALANDA

Nalanda was the seat of learning thousands of years ago and the remains of the world's first residential university. At the peak of its glory, this residential university housed more than 10,000 students and over 2000 teachers from around the world. Nalanda came into prominence when Lord Buddha visited here to deliver sermons and speeches. Apart from the ruins of Great Nalanda University, one gets to see here some wonderful collections in Nalanda Archaeological Museum. Situated opposite the university complex, the museum houses both Hindu and Buddhist bronze statues, some of which are undamaged. The main attraction in the museum is the two huge terracotta jars of the first century. One can also visit the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, which is an institute completely dedicated to study and research in Pali Literature and Buddhism. Nalanda is situated around 90 km from Patna.

### BODH GAYA

This is undoubtedly the most important Buddhist destination in India and probably in the world too. It is here that Prince Siddhartha attained enlightenment under a Bodhi Tree and became Lord Buddha and gave rise to a new religion called Buddhism. Thousands of pilgrims from around the world pay visit to the famous Mahabodhi Temple, Bodhi Tree and other revered places. Bodhi Gaya is scattered with numerous stupas carved with statues of Lord Buddha in different postures. There are many international monasteries and temples here that belong to

different countries. The most beautiful and grand one is the Thai Temple situated on the western side of Mahabodhi Temple. Bodhi Gaya is nearly 110 km from Patna and is well connected by road and rail transportation.

### RAJGIR

Rajgir is situated just 10 kms. from Nalanda. Lord Buddha used to give sermons here on the Griddhokut Hill, which has made it a special place for Buddhists. Just 10 km from Rajgir is Kundalpur having a famous Jain Temple and Pawapuri- the most sacred place for Jains, where Lord Mahavira attained Nirvana and eternal Salvation. The main attractions of Rajgir are the Ajatashatru's Fort, Bimbisara's Jail, Swarna Bhandar, the Peace Pagoda and the Cyclopean wall. The peace pagoda is situated on top of the Griddhokut hill. A path is there to reach the top of the hill, but the best way to reach the hill top is an aerial chairlift. The views over the Rajgir Hills will leave one mesmerised and spellbound.

### KESARIA, EAST CHAMPARAN

Kesaria has a lofty brick mound capped by a solid brick tower of considerable size, which is the remains of a Buddhist Stupa. The mound is a ruin with a diameter of 68 feet at its base and a total height of 5½ feet. Originally it was crowned by a pinnacle which must have stood 80 or 90 feet above the ground. General Cunningham dated this monument to AD 200 to 700, and held that it was built upon the ruins of a much older and larger stupa. Interestingly, Kesariya stupa is believed to have been built to honour the place where Lord Buddha had spent the last days of his journey, before attaining Nirvana. It is said that Lord Buddha handed over his begging bowl to the Lichhivis, people of Vaishali and requested them to go back to Vaishali after his death. To venerate the end of the life of Lord Buddha, the Lichhivis are said to have built this stupa. While formerly, it was only a mud stupa, it gained its present structure in the Maurya, Sunga and Kushana period.

### LAURIA NANDANGARH

Lauria Nandangarh is a rural community in the region of Champaran. An attractive skeleton of an enormous stupa is present here. It is a 26 metre elevated ancient block reflected to be the stupa where the remains of Lord Buddha were preserved. At a distance of half km. from the community, the renowned pillar of King Ashoka exists. The pillar is the only slab of refined stone more than 32 feet (10 m) tall. The peak is bell formed with a round cone decorated by Brahmi birds sustaining the figure of a lion. The pillar is emblazoned by the decree of Ashoka in apparent and delightfully hack lettering.

## RAMAYAN CIRCUIT

Ramayana is not just another tale, it is an influential allegory – an indispensable part of Hindu religious canon. The land of Bihar is a place which replete with stories from the epic Ramayana, written by sage Valmiki Muni. There are many places which are connected to different occasions of Goddess Sita and Lord Rama's life. According to believes Mithila state was once facing adverse drought conditions. To impress Lord Indra for rain, King Janak started plowing a field. A time had come when the plowing reached Panaura and the plough hit a vessel. The vessel broke and Goddess Sita sprung to life. Thereafter, this place is known as Sitamarhi. The King Janaka of Videha and his wife Sunaina adopted Sita. Thereafter, the place is known as Sita Kund. Bihar witnesses sites mentioned in the Ramayana right from birth of Sita Goddess to demon killing by God Ram and rescuing a lady like Devi Ahalya from a curse.



### JANKI TEMPLE (PUNAURA):

This temple is about 5 km south west of Sitamarhi. This temple is claimed to be the birth place of Sita and is considered to be sacred place where people go for a pilgrimage.

### JANKI TEMPLE (SITAMARHI):

This more than 100 years old Hindu temple, situated near Sitamarhi, is related to Goddess Sita's life. The temple is believed to be the birth place of Goddess Sita.

### PANTH PAKAR (SITAMARHI):

An age old banyan tree still stands here about 8km north east of Sitamarhi. It is said that when Sita left Janakpur in a palanquin for Ayodhya after the marriage with Shri Ram, she was given rest for

a while under this very banyan tree.

### HALESHWAR STHAN (SITAMARHI):

This is an ancient temple of Lord Shiva about 3 km north west of Sitamarhi. According to myths the King of Videha on the occasion of Putrayesthi Yagna, founded this temple.

### AHILYA STHAN (DARBHANGA):

The village is situated about 24 km north west of Darbhanga and about 4 km from Kamtaul Railway Station. It is known for the temple of Ahilya, which is associated with the well-known legend of the sage Gautam and his wife Ahilya as told in the epics and Puranas. Inside the Shrine is a flat stone said to contain the foot prints of Sita, wife of Ram, as the main object of worship.

### CHANKI GARH (WEST CHAMPARAN):

Also known as Janaki Garh, this village is situated about 9 km east of Ram Nagar Railway Station. There is a large mound in the eastern part of the village. It is a mass of solid brickwork and is 90 feet high. It was probably originally a fort and the remains of fortification can still be seen. The local tradition asserts that it was a fort of King Janak.

### VALMIKI NAGAR (WEST CHAMPARAN):

This is a village on the Indo Nepal border 42 km north east of Bagaha to which it is connected by a metal road. There is a Valmiki Ashram, which is said to be the place where Maharshi Valmiki lived. On the occasion of Makar Sankranti every year a fair is held on the bank of River Gandak. Besides an old Shiva temple constructed by the Bettiah Raj, there are also ancient temples of Nara Devi and Gauri Shankar at Valmiki Nagar.

### SINGHESHWAR STHAN (MADHEPURA):

Singheshwar Sthan has been the abode of Lord Shiva from the ancient times. Though there are various stories about establishment of the Singheshwar temple, the one that is widely and popularly accepted, relates to Rishi Shringi. In the ancient time Singheshwar was situated on the bank of the river Kosi and was surrounded by dense and lush green forest. It was ideally situated for 'Tapasya' (Meditation) and it is here that Vibhandak Rishi along with his son Rishi Shringi devoted all his time in deep meditation.

### PHULLAHAR (MADHUBANI):

Situated about 6 km west of the block headquarters at Urngaon, the village houses temples of Goddess Girija. It is said that Sita, the daughter of king Janak, used to come here everyday to worship the Goddess. Lord Rama saw her for the first time at this place.

### PRETSHILA HILLS (GAYA):

About 8 km north-west of Gaya, the 873 feet high Pretshila Hills is situated. The literal meaning is 'Hill of Ghosts'. On the top of the hill is a small temple, appropriately dedicated to Yam (The God of death).

### KAKO (JEHANABAD):

Situated 10 km east of Jehanabad Railway station, it is believed that Lord Ramchandra's stepmother, Rani Kaikeyi of Ayodhya lived here for some time and the village took its name after her. The village also has a tomb of Hazarat Bibi, Kamal Sahiba, a great Muslim lady saint. It is said that this lady was the aunt of Haryat Makdum Saheb of Bihar Sharif possessed divine powers.

### RAINCHURA (VAISHALI):

The place is situated in Vaishali block, where a fair is held every year on Ram Nawami day. The local tradition has it that lord Ram Chandra had a stopover here for a bath on his way to Janakpur. There are some marks on stone, which are said to be his footprints.

### AHIRAULI (BUXUR):

Situated about 5 km north east of Buxur, this village has a temple of Devi Ahilya. According to the legend, Rishi Gautam cursed his wife and she turned into a stone. When Lord Ram's feet touched the stone, Ahilya became alive out of it.

### RAIN REKHA GHAT (BUXUR):

According to the legends, lord Ram Chandra and his younger brother Lakshman with their teacher Rishi Vishwamitra had crossed the Ganga here on their way to Janakpur where Lord Ram took part in the Sita swayamvar (the public ceremony of Sita's Marriage).

### TAR (BHOJPUR):

Situated about 10 km north west of Piro, the village derives its name from Tarka, a she demon killed by lord Rama. There is an old tank in the village that is said to be the wrestling ground of Tarka.

### GIDDHESHWAR (JAMUI):

According to local legends, on Ravan's Way back to Lanka after abducting Sita, the epic fight between the vulture Jatayu and Ravan took place here on the hill that is situated about 13km south of Jamui. There is a temple of Lord Shiva, which draws big crowds on the occasion of Shivratri and Maghi Purnima.

### SITA KUND (MUNGER):

Situated in a village about 6 km east of the Munger town there is a hot spring known as the Sita Kund. The story goes that Lord Rama, after rescuing his wife Sita from the demon king Ravan, suspected her chastity and Sita, to prove her chastity, agreed to enter a blazing fire. She came out of the fire unscathed, and dissipated the heat she had absorbed from the fire in the pool in which she bathed. The hot spring is now enclosed in a masonry reservoir and is visited by large number of pilgrims, especially at the full moon of Magh.



Sita Kund, Munger



Janki Temple, Punaura



Singheshwar Sthan (Madhepura)

## SUFI CIRCUIT

During the medieval period, the spiritualistic aura enjoyed by Patliputra (Patna) attracted many Sufi saints who preached in a very humanistic way that made the region a hub of pilgrimage for the devotees of all religions.

### MANER SHARIF (MANER, PATNA)

It is a large village of historical antiquities, situated in the extreme north west of Danapur Sub-division, about 32 km west of Patna on Patna-Arrah Highway. In the early ages, Maner was a centre of learning and it is said that grammarian Panini, and also Bararuchi, lived and studied here. Maner contains two well-known Sufi tombs, that of Shah Daulat or Makhdum Daulat, known as Chhoti Dargah, and the other that of Sheikh Yahia Maneri or Makhdum Yahia, called the Bari Dargah. Makhdum Daulat died at Maner in 1608, and Ibrahim Khan, Governor of Bihar and one of the saint's disciples completed the erection of his mausoleum in 1616. The building is exceptionally fine one, with walls containing carvings of great delicacy and high finish. A great dome crowns it, and the



Maner Sharif Tomb

ceiling is covered with carved inscriptions from the Quran. Every detail of it is characteristic of the architecture of Jehangir's times, and it is by far the finest monument of the Mughals in Eastern India. Inside the compound there is a mosque also built by Ibrahim

Khan in 1619, while a fine gateway bearing an older inscription corresponding to 1603-01, and affords access to the north. The tomb of Yahia Maneri lies in a mosque walls and ghats, and pillared porticos jutting out into it, which is connected with the old bed of the River Sone by a tunnel 400-ft long.

### KHANQUAH MUJIBIA (PHULWARI SHARIF, PATNA)

Situated nearly 7 km from Patna Railway Station, Phulwari Sharif is an important Islamic pilgrimage centre. It has been always a favourite abode of Sufi saints, especially Hazrat Pir Muzibullah



Khanquah Mujibia

Quadri in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The Khankah Muzibia, founded by him at Phulwari Sharif is called the Bari Khankah. An old Madrasa here has been the most important centre for teaching of Islamic philosophy since its establishment.

Sacred hairs of the beard of Paigamber Hazrat Muhammad Saheb are preserved here in Banri Khankah that attracts throngs of his followers and a big mela is held every year. There is also an archeologically important and worth seeing ancient Sangi Masjid (mosque) built of red stones at Phulwari Sharif. It was built by the Mughal Emperor Humayun.

### KHANQUAH EMADIA (MANGAL TALAB, PATNA CITY, PATNA)

One of the offsprings in the family of prominent Sufi Saint Hazrat Pir Muzibullah Quadri had founded another Khankah during 19<sup>th</sup> century near a tank called Mangal Talab that is situated in the Patna City Chowk area. It is called Khankah Emadia that houses a Madrasa. An Urs is held here annually when throngs of devotees assemble and pay their respect to their beloved Sufi Saint.

### DARGAH SHARIF, MITHAN GHAT (PATNA CITY, PATNA)

A beautiful double storied mosque was built by Mughal Prince Azim on the banks of Ganges at Mittan Ghat, Patna City area that was previously called Azimabad during the reign of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. This mosque was built for Mulla Mittan who was teacher of the Prince. It was the place from where the great Sufi Saint Hazrat Makhdum Munnem used to preach his disciples during the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The ancient mosque still exists and is popularly known as Dargah Sharif. Every year, after 5 days of "Eid", an annual Urs Chiraga is held here when devotees assemble at this Dargah Sharif in great numbers.



Dargah Sharif, Mithan Ghat

### HAJIPUR KARBALA (VAISHALI)

It was constructed 175 years ago by Shah Alam which attracts a large crowd of Muslims throughout the years.

### HASANPURA (SIWAN)

Situated about 21 km south of Siwan on the bank of Dhanal River, it is believed that this village was founded by Makhdum Salyed Hasan Chisti, a saint who came from Arabia to India and settled here. He also founded a Khankah (religious institution) here. The village contains remains of a large mosque and tomb of the Saint, which is visited by both Hindus and Muslims. The grave is a large open court to the west of the village. In front of it is a basalt image of Vishnu which has been treated ruthlessly. It is believed that an inauspicious fiend had turned it into stone by the holy Makhdum and must not be raised or placed erect. It contains no inscription but its style shows it to belong to about the seventh century A.D.

### BIBI KAMAL SAHIBS (KAKO, JEHANABAD)

The village is the headquarters of the block of the same name and is situated on the Jehanabad-Bihar Sharif road, about 10 kms east of Jehanabad railway station. According to a local legend, Ram Chandra's stepmother, Rani Kaikeyi of Ayodhya live here for some time and the village took its name after her. The village has also a tomb of Hazrat Bibi Kamal Sahiba, a great Muslim lady saint. It is said that this lady was the aunt of Hazrat Makhdum Saheb of Bihar Sharif and possessed divine powers.

### BADDI DARGAH (BIHAR SHARIF, NALANDA)

This town is known as Bihar Sharif, owing to its many Muslim tombs that still retain traces of its importance as a Muslim pilgrimage centre. There is a hill called Pir Pahari, about one meter to the northwest of the town. At its summit is the dargah or mausoleum of the Saint Mallik Ibrahim Bayu, around which are ten smaller tombs. It is a brick structure surmounted by a dome and bears inscriptions showing that the saint died in 1353. Another great dargah is that of Mokhdum Shah Sharif-ud-din, also called Makhdum-ul-Mulk, who died here in 1379. The inscription over the entrance shows that his tomb was built in 1569. This tomb, which stands on the southern bank of the river, is held in great veneration by the local Mohammedans, who assemble here on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of Sawan to celebrate the anniversary of his death. The Chhoti Dargah is the shrine of Badruddin Badr-I-Alam, a famous saint who died here in 1440.

### CHHOTI DARGAH (BIHAR SHARIF, NALANDA)

Dargah of Makhdum Hazrat Sultan Ahmed Charampose, Bihar Sharif (Nalanda). The biggest and the oldest building of Mohalla-Amber in the Bihar Sharif Town (Nalanda) is Tomb of Hazrat Makhdum Sultan Salyad Shah Ahmed Charampose Teg Barhana Rohmatulla Alaib. He was born in the year 1236 and passed away in 1335 (according to Islamic calendar 657-776 Hizri). He is regarded with high esteem among other Sufi saints and Auliahs. Thousands and thousands of people participate in the 'Urs' celebrated here in memory of the Saint every year.

## GANDHI CIRCUIT

Mahatma Gandhi is revered as the 'Father of the Nation'. He is known as Mahatma, meaning 'great soul', because of his work on non-violence, Satyagraha and selfless service to the people of India. Mahatma Gandhi spent 20 years in South Africa working and fighting against discrimination. It was there that he created his concept of 'Satyagraha', a non-violent way of protest against injustices. After returning to India in 1914, he became the backbone of the non-violent struggle for India's freedom from British clutches.

### MOTIHARI (EAST CHAMPARAN)

Motihari was the first laboratory of Gandhian experiment in Satyagraha against the forced farming of indigo and probably it will not be very incorrect to say that it has been the spring board for India's independence. Champaran district generated a wave of enthusiasm and inspiration to the people who were thirsting for a selfless and saintly leader. The technique followed by Gandhiji in Champaran was what later attained the name of Satyagraha.

### HAZARIMAL DHARAMSHALA, BETTIAH (WEST CHAMPARAN)

It is at Bettiah in the Lal Bazar area. Gandhi and his companions used to camp here and it was the epicenter of his "Satyagraha". The State Govt. has declared this building a protected monument. The Bettiah Raj Kutchehri and the Dharmashala where Mahatma Gandhi stayed are well worth visit.

### BHITHARWA ASHRAM (WEST CHAMPARAN)

This is a village in the Bettiah Sub-division under Gaunaha Block. This was one of the centres for social work selected by Gandhiji, when he was in Champaran in 1917. At present there is a Khadi Centre working under direct control of the Bihar Khadi Samiti. There is a Gandhi Ashram where Mahatma Gandhi had stayed during the Indian freedom struggle.

### BRINDABA (WEST CHAMPARAN)

It is a small village in the Bettiah sub-division under Chanpatia Block. It has the Gram Seva Kendra, which has been planned to work out the deals of the Gandhi seva sangh. The All India Gandhi Seva Sangh held their annual conference at this village in 1937, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Rajendra Prasad attended it. Gandhiji stayed here in 1939 and started an Ashram, which is still functioning.

Gandhi Sangrahalay

### SHRI RAMPUR (WEST CHAMPARAN)

Situated in the Gaunaha Block of Bhitharwa Panchayat. Gandhiji had stayed here on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 1917.

### KOELDIH (WEST CHAMPARAN)

Under Gaunaha Block in the Belwa Panchayat. Gandhiji had visited this place on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 1917.

### AMOLWA (WEST CHAMPARAN)

Under Gaunaha Block in the Majharia Panchayat, where Gandhiji spent a night on the 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1917 with his other companions.

### MURLI BHARHAWA (WEST CHAMPARAN)

It was the native place of Pandit Raj Kumar Shukla who had been a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi during the Champaran Satyagraha Movement. Pandit Shukla took a lead role in bringing Mahatma Gandhi to Champaran.

### SARISWA (WEST CHAMPARAN)

This place is in Ratanmala Panchayat under Majhauria Block. Gandhiji and his companions had taken statement of raiyats in an open yard in front of the temple.

### HARDIYA KOTHI (WEST CHAMPARAN)

It is under Bishunpur Panchyat of the Nautan Block. It was the house of Mr. G. P. Edward, a British indigo planter. Remains of this building are in a slightly better condition in comparison to other such old buildings.

### SADAQUAT ASHRAM (PATNA)

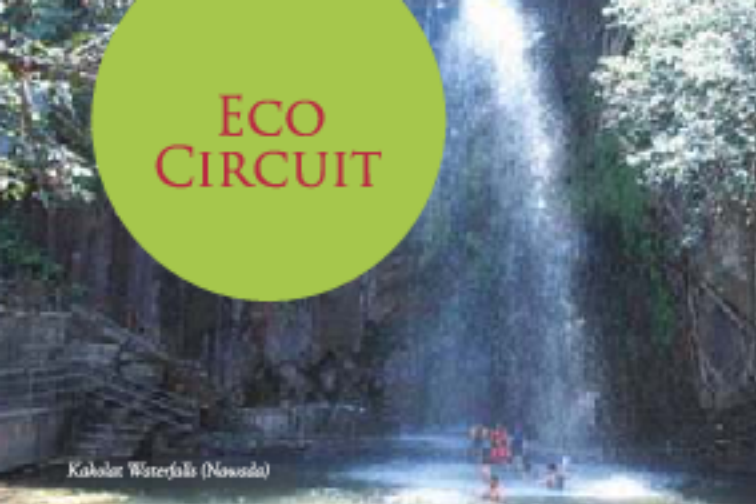
It is situated in Digha area on Patna Danapur Road and in pre independence days guided the freedom movement in Bihar. It is associated with the memories of Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Maulana Mazharul Hagee and other leaders.

### GANDHI SANGRAHALAY (PATNA MUSEUM)

Close to the western end of Gandhi Maidan in Patna, the Gandhi Sangrahalaya houses a large number of items and artifacts related with Mahatma Gandhi and his satyagraha movement in Bihar. It also has a vast collection of Gandhian literature and photographs depicting his life and works. A "Charkha" (Country made spinning wheel) used by Mahatma Gandhi is also well preserved in this museum.



## ECO CIRCUIT



Kakolat Waterfalls (Nawada)

### KAKOLAT (NAWADA)

It is a waterfall in Gobindpur, about 21 miles away from Nawada. Just below the fall, there is a deep natural reservoir. The fall is about 150 to 160 feet, from the ground level. The scene is panoramic due to all around green forest area, which is very pleasant to the eyes. According to the legend, in Treta Yuga a king was cursed by a rishi and had to take the shape of a python and lived here. The place was visited by the great Pandavas during their exile and the king who was cursed got salvation from the bad effects of the curse. The king after getting rid of the curse proclaimed that one who would bathe in the waterfall will not take the yoni of snake and that is why a large number of people from far and near bathe in the river. A big fair is held on the occasion of bishua or Chait Sankranti.



### VALMIKI NAGAR TIGER RESERVE

Spread across 880 sq km (approx), the Valmiki Wildlife Sanctuary is the safe home for the tigers, one of the threatened species of the world. Located at the cradle of Himalayan outermost Shivalk range, the region has a very undulating landscape comprising of steep rise and deep ridges with the lush green forest around. The leopards and Tigers along with the Fishing Cats, Chitals, Sambar, Black Bucks, Langur, Sloth Bears, and Gaurs make the jungle an adventurous destination for the tourists. The deep forests of Sal, Asan, Karama, Semal, Cane etc. offers a salubrious climate in the area.

### BHIMBANDH (MUNGER)

It is situated at a distance of 56 km from Munger, 20 km from Jamul Railway Station and 200 km from Patna Airport. Bhimbandh Wild Sanctuary is located in the south west of Munger District. The forests cover an area of 681.99 sq km on the hills and undulating tract of Kharagpur Hills. The vegetation of these forests is very rich where Sal, Semal and other trees grow side by side the hilly terrains, protecting from the sun rays the forms and humble creepers which grow below. A host of wild animals such as Tiger, Leopards, Sloth Bear, Nilgai, Sambhar, Barking deer, Wild bear, Four Horned Antelope are found in these forests. In the valley portions and at the foothills are several hot springs of which the finest are at Bhimbandh, Sita Kund and Rishi Kund.



Bhimbandh (Munger)

### BARABAR CAVES

The architectural beauty of Barabar Caves situated in the Barabar Hills is magnificent. These caves are located at a distance of around 25 km from Gaya. These caves were carved during the first phase of development of Buddhism in the second century BC. These rock caves are deep and finely cut and have fine glassy and shining polish inside. Buddhist literature reveals that these caves were meant for Ajivika Buddhists. Barabar Caves are divided in three types and one of them is Nagarjuna Caves. Other two are Hut Caves and Caves of Pandavas. Nagarjuna caves situated on Nagarjuna Hill are two in number; Sudama and Chaupar. These caves were meant for ascetic spiritual Buddhist monks who were truth seekers and wanted isolation and seclusion.



Barabar Caves



Ghoda Katora

### GHODA KATORA

Ghoda Katora is being developed as an eco-tourism site, which will have a huge Buddha statue which will be flanked by his four important disciples Ananda, Maha Kassapa, Maha Moggallana and Sariputta. The idea is to pay tribute to the Buddha and his disciples who are part of the cultural legacy of Bihar. The Buddha spent a considerable part of his life here at Rajgriha and around. Buddha's disciples Sariputta, Maha Moggallana and Maha Kassapa belonged to Magadha, and their contributions to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha are well documented.



Gangetic Dolphins Sanctuary, Bhagalpur

### GANGETIC DOLPHINS SANCTUARY, BHAGALPUR

Located in Bhagalpur district, the sanctuary is a 50 km stretch of the Ganga river. It is the only protected area for the endangered Gangetic Dolphins in Asia.

# HERITAGE SITES

The state houses some very exquisite heritage sites which speak volumes for its glorious past. Some of the heritage sites found here dates back to the times of Ramayana and even Mahabharata.

## AGAM KUAN, PATNA

Agam Kuan, the bottomless well, is an ancient relic of the Mauryan Emperor Ashok. Located a little distance away from Ashoka's Charitable Hospital in the Kumrahar complex is this famous Ashokan remain, the Agam Kuan, which is believed to be a part of the legendary hall created by Ashoka.

## GOLGHAR, PATNA

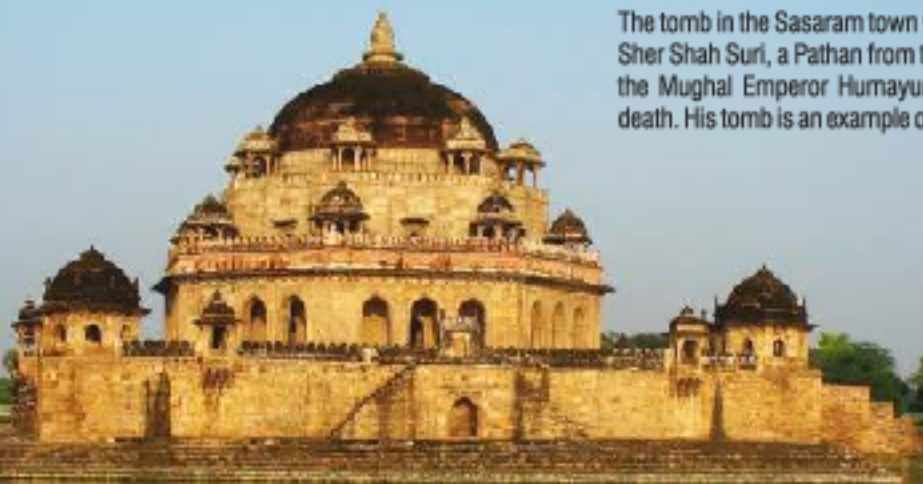
Golghar is an outstanding architectural piece. Built in the year 1786, a flight of steps winds around this 29m high building to the top, from where one gets an amazing view of the river Ganga and Patna city.



Golghar, Patna

## TOMB OF SHER SHAH SURI, SASARAM

The tomb in the Sasaram town was built in memory of Emperor Sher Shah Suri, a Pathan from this place in Bihar, who defeated the Mughal Emperor Humayun and ruled for 5 years till his death. His tomb is an example of Indo-Islamic architecture.



Tomb of Sher Shah Suri, Sasaram



Martyr's Memorial, Patna



Navlakha Palace, Rajnagar



Rohtasgarh Fort, Sasaram

## MARTYR'S MEMORIAL, PATNA

It is a modern piece of art in front of the secretariat with life size statues of the seven martyrs who were shot in their attempt to hoist the national tricolor, during the Quit India Movement.

## NAVLAKHA PALACE, RAJNAGAR

The palace was built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D. by Maharaja Rameshwar Singh of Darbhanga.

## JARASANDH KA AKHARA, RAJGIR

The sought-after venue that hosted, indeed, the most historic and exciting battles in the history of ancient India. This larger-than-life battle between the strongest of the Pandavas, Bhima and the ardent worshipper of the Lord Shiva, Jarasandh was fought here.

## BUXAR FORT, BUXAR

Buxar Fort is known for its architectural beauty and is considered to be the most valuable treasure of the city of Buxar. Tourists have a great time in going through the artifacts and carvings of the fort.

## MUNGER FORT, MUNGER

Built on a rocky area, this is one of the essential monuments of Munger. The fort was constructed during the early time of Islamic rulers.

## ROHTASGARH FORT, SASARAM

Situated 39 kilometers from Sasaram, Rohtasgarh Fort is considered as the major and strongest hill forts in India. This fort served as a safe shelter for treasurers and families of Sher Shah Suri, Shah Jahan, Maan Singh, Mir Qasim and others.

## VIKRAMSHILA, BHAGALPUR

Situated 252 kms. from Patna in the district of Bhagalpur, Vikramshila is the site of the ancient Vikramshila University. The university was founded by king Dharmapala, in late 8<sup>th</sup> century AD. After prospering for years, it was plundered by invaders around 1200 AD.

## KHUDA BAKSH LIBRARY, PATNA

Set up at the turn of the century, the library has a distinguished collection of rare Arabic and Persian manuscripts. It also contains the only books rescued from the plunder of the University of Cordoba in Spain. It is one of the national libraries of India.



Vikramshila, Bhagalpur

## MANDAR HILL AND ANG PRADESH CIRCUIT



### MANDAR HILL

A diminutive hill at a distance of 30 km from Bhagalpur is one of the most favorite picnic spots in the region. A part from its location and charming beauty an incredibly large fair held every year on 14<sup>th</sup> January on the event of Makar Sankranti. According to mythological tales the mountain hill was used for churning the ocean to extract the nectar from its bosom (Samudar Manthan). To carry out this process in an eased way, Lord Vishnu rescued the process as a base by taking the form of a turtle 'Kurma'. You can witness the marks on the snake roughly around the hill used for Mathan. Foot prints of Lord Vishnu present here attract devotees from far and wide.

#### OTHER KEY PLACES TO VISIT:

- Papharni Lake
- Akaash Ganga
- Jain Temple in Banka
- Moksha Kalyanak Temple
- Chandrika Sthan
- Bhimbandh–Munger
- Rishi Kund

## FAIRS & FESTIVALS

Bihar is a land of festivals. Chhath, Deepawali, Shravani Mela, Teej, Chitragupta Puja, Makar Sankranti, Saraswati Puja, Holi, Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid-ul-Adha, Muharram, Kali Puja, Ram Navami, Rakshabandhan, Maha Shivaratri, Durga Puja, Lakshmi Puja, Christmas, Mahavir Jayanti, Buddha Purnima, Guru Parv and Bhai Dooj are the important festivals in Bihar.

### CHHATH PUJA

Chhath is a major Hindu festival celebrated in Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh. Almost all civilizations have worshipped the 'sun god', but it has a unique form in Bihar. Chhath Puja is the only occasion where the setting sun is worshipped along with the rising sun.

According to the Hindu calendar, Chhath Puja is celebrated on the sixth day of Kartik month. Chhath Puja, also known as Surya Shashti, is a bathing festival followed by a four day period of abstinence and ritual purity.

Chhath Puja is a four-day long strict and spiritual observance. The first day of the Chhath Puja includes taking a dip in the holy



Celebrating Chhath Puja

river/any water body. People also take the water of Ganges to their homes to perform special offerings and rituals. Houses are thoroughly cleaned on this day. The second day of Chhath, also known as Kharna, involves devotees observing a day long fast which is broken in the late evening after performing the worship of Mother Earth. The offerings to the God include rice pudding (kheer) and fruits, which is distributed among family members and friends. The third day of Chhath goes in the preparation of the prasad (offerings) for the evening offerings, also known as Sanjhiya Arghya.

In the evening, large numbers of devotees gather on the banks of rivers and make offerings (Arghya) to the setting sun. The folk songs are played displaying the culture and history of Bihar. The night of the third day witnesses a colorful event known as Kosi. A canopy is made from sugarcane sticks and lighted earthen lamps are placed inside the canopy along with baskets filled with prasad. On the fourth and final day of Chhath, family members and friends go to the banks of rivers before sunrise and making offerings (Arghya) to the rising sun. After this ritual, devotees break their fast and distribute Prasad to neighbors and relatives.

### SONEPUR MELA



Sonepur Mela

The annual Sonepur Fair is an authentic rural fair that combines spirituality with elephant, cattle and horse trading. It starts on the auspicious Hindu Holy occasion of Kartik Purnima, when pilgrims take an early morning bath in the river, and continues for around three weeks. Street magicians, spiritual gurus, snack stalls, handicrafts, amusement rides, circus performers, and theater all create a carnival like atmosphere. The Fair also commemorates the intervention of Lord Vishnu to end a great curse and long fight between elephant and crocodile in Hindu mythology. Legend goes that the elephant bathing in the river was attacked by the crocodile and was saved by Lord Vishnu. The fair is traditionally known as cattle fair.



## RAJGIR MAHOTSAV

Rajgir Mahotsav, a three day dance festival is held at Rajgir-the ancient capital of the Magadha Kings-every year during the last week of October. The event is organised by the Department of Tourism, Govt. of Bihar. Full of action, the dance festival consists of devotional music, operas, different kinds of folk dances, classical dances and ballets which creates an atmosphere of gaiety and festivity. Musicians from all over the country participate in the festival.

## SAMA-CHAKEVA

It is during the winter season that the birds from the Himalayas migrate towards the plains. With the arrival of these colourful birds, celebration of sama-chakeva starts. This is a festival especially celebrated in Mithila. Mithilanchal dedicates this festival to the celebration of the brother and sister relationship. It represents the tradition of this land as well as the art of making idols. This festival starts with the welcoming of the pair of birds sama-chakeva. Girls make clay idols of various birds and decorate them in their own traditional ways. Various rituals are performed and the festival joyfully ends with the 'vidai' of Sama and with a wish that these birds return to this land the next year.



## PITRAPAKSHA, GAYA

Pitrapaksha, the fortnight long festival of souls is organized in Gaya every year during September where Hindus from across the world congregate to worship their ancestors. 48 Vedis or altars are spread over different areas of the town and important sites such as Vishnupad Mandir, Ramshila, Pretshila, Akshayawat and Baitami. Pilgrims perform 'Pindadaan' ritual at these places to the departed souls. Tarpan consisting of water mixed with sesame seeds with Kushaa (kind of sharp bladed grass) is offered to the gods, rishis and ancestors.



## MAKAR-SANKRANTI

Also known as Tila Sankranti, the festival marks the beginning of the summer season. People believe that from this day on, the days become longer and the heat of the sun also increases. Every year it is observed on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January. In Rajgir, people celebrate Makar Sankranti in the month of Paus which is January in Gregorian Calendar. Devotees make flower offerings to the deities in the temples at hot springs and bathe in the holy water. At Mandar hill in Banka district, the festival is celebrated with pomp and a huge fair is also held at the place. According to belief, the famous Panchjanya' Sankh of Lord Krishna was found here. Traces, akin to serpent coil can be seen around the hill and it is believed that the snake god offered himself to be used as a rope for churning the ocean to obtain the nectar. People celebrate it by giving offerings to the poor.



## BIHULA

Bihula is a prominent festival of eastern Bihar especially famous in Bhagalpur district. There are many myths related to this festival. People pray to goddess Mansa for the welfare of their families. The festival nurses the brilliant Manjusha Art, which is as magnificent as the other folk arts of Bihar like Jadopetiya of Santhal Parganas and Madhubani paintings of Mithilanchal. The principal aim of Bihula or Bishahri is to please the Goddess Bishahri in order to save people from the wrath of snakes. They depict sketches of various characters and thus present a vivid description of the entire mythology attached to Bishahri puja.

## MADHUSHRAVANI

This festival is celebrated all over Mithilanchal with much enthusiasm. It is celebrated in the month of Sawan (Hindu calendar). Madhushravani Puja represents the arrival of monsoon season. It is observed by married women. During this festival, women worship Naga devatas (Serpent Gods), Gauri, Shanti Kalash, Surya, Chandrama, Navagrah, and several Nags such as Nag dampati, Bairsali along with hundred brothers, Charal, Kusumawati, Pingla, Lili, Gosauri nag with seven sisters and lastly Shasthi or Sathi.

During the festival of Madhushrava Tritiya, newly married girls stay at their parent's home as staying with parents during Shravan or at least during this festival is considered necessary. Presents (Bhar) are sent from Groom's family to Brides family. Traditionally the bride is supposed to eat only things sent from her husband's home. At least five married women accompany the bride while eating.



## CULTURE

Home to many historical and culturally important places, Bihar has rich and vivid cultural heritage.

### ARTS AND CRAFTS MADHUBANI PAINTING

Otherwise known as Mithila painting, this style of painting is exclusive to Bihar and adjoining Terai region of Nepal. This painting is done with a coloured paste made from rice powder. It is believed to be originated at the time of Ramayana, when King Janak commissioned artists to make paintings for his daughter Sita's marriage with Ram. This painting was originally done on freshly plastered wall but, now it is made on cloths and canvases as well.

### PATNA SCHOOL OF PAINTING

Also known as Patna Gallaamas as well as Company Painting, this style of painting is an offshoot of the well-known Mughal Miniature School of Painting.

### CRAFTS

Bamboo-made baskets, cups and saucers painted with vivid colours are found in Bihar homes. A special container called pauti woven out of Sikki grass is given to bride as a gift when she leaves for her in-laws after wedding. Cotton durries and curtains are also found in plenty. Bhagalpur is well-known for its sericulture, making good amount of tussar silk.



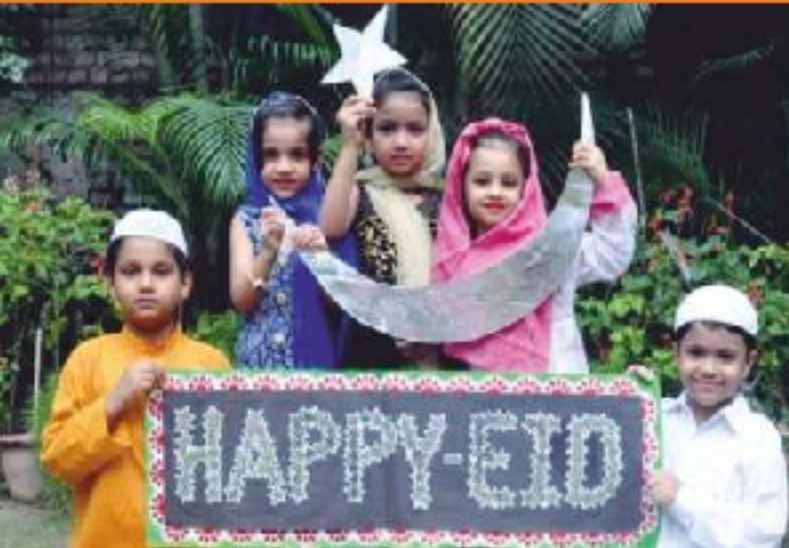
### MUSLIM FESTIVALS

The Muslim festivals in Bihar are celebrated with equal pomp and show and all the communities take the same interest in these festive celebrations as well. The important Muslim festivals celebrated in Bihar are Muharram, the two Eid's and Shab-e-Barat.

### JIVITPUTRIKA VRAT

Jivitputrika Vrat, also known as Jiwit Putra or Jitiya fasting, is observed on the eighth day in the waning phase (Ashtami of Krishna Paksha) of the Ashwin Month. Jitiya Fast is observed for the well being of the sons by mothers. After early morning bath and prayers, mothers start the fast and do not take any food during the whole day.

The rituals associated with the Vrat vary from region to region but the purpose is the same.



## TEEJ

A highly auspicious festival, Teej is celebrated by married women to prolong their husbands' health and lead a happy married life.

### FOLK DANCE

Bihar is a land of many types of folk dances which manifest in its rich traditions and ethnic identity. Some popular folk dances are: sohrai nach, dhobi nach, manjhi, jhumar nach, gond nach, more momi, jitiya nach, dom-domin, bhulababa, kathghorwa nach, rah baba, Jat jatin, bamar nach, jharni, jhijhia, launda nach, natua nach, bidapad nach, and Gond nach.

### FOLK SONGS

Bihar has a very old tradition of folk songs, sung especially during important occasions, such as marriage, birth ceremonies, festivals, etc. These folk songs are usually accompanied by

musical instruments such as dholak, bansuri, tabla and harmonium. Bihar is also famous for its tradition of lively Holi songs 'Phagua', marked for its fun rhythms. The divine Chhath songs are also very popular throughout the state and country.

### LITERATURE

Bihar is famous for its ancient and modern literature. The State has given birth to many writers and scholars, such as Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Ram Avatar Sharma, R. K. Sinha, Raja Radhika Raman Singh, Dr. Bhagwati Sharan Mishra, Shiva Pujan Sahay, Ramdhari Singh 'Dinkar', Divakar Prasad Vidyarthi, Ram Briksh Benipuri, Janaki Ballav Shastri, Fanishwar Nath Renu and many more.

## BIHARI CUISINE/ BIHAR'S CUISINE

Bihar cuisine has a long history that can be traced back to the culture that flourished in this region or to the kingdoms that ruled the territory. Rice forms the main course of food. The cuisine is predominantly vegetarian, but fish, chicken and mutton are taken sparingly. The food is simple, made with fresh and seasonal ingredients and vegetables that are treated with simpler techniques. Mustard oil is predominantly used for cooking and the aroma of various ingredients coupled with the flavour of mustard oil gives it a natural taste and flavour. The state is famous for dishes such as stuffed parathas, spicy mashed potatoes and fish curry. Dairy products are a must

in this state. Commonly buttermilk, ghee, lassi and butter are used in cooking. The cuisine of Bihar is a mixture of North Indian and East Indian cuisine. The daily traditional meal thali at a Bihari Hindu home comprises roti, tarkaari (vegetables), daal, bhat, dahi and achaar; often accompanied by ghee, papad, chatni and salad.

Some of the popular Bihari cuisines are mentioned below:

### LADDOO

When the talk is about Bihari cuisine, one cannot forget the laddoo of Maner. Laddoo is a ball shaped sweet made of gram-flour, sugar and ghee. Though, it is sold in every sweet shop, the laddoo made in Maner, about 30 km west of Patna, are famous and the best.

### KHAJA

Silao village, situated about 15 km from Bihar Sarif and 8 km from Rajgir, is known for its ancient tradition of khaja making. A sweetmeat prepared with maida (wheat-flour), sugar and ghee, it is available in many varieties - Chandshahi, Round, Palvidar and Gandhi Topa. Amongst these, the one with rectangular shape is the most popular.



Khaja

### BELGRAMI

Belgrami is another sweet preparation of Bihar, which is made from cheese, sugar and ghee. The place in Bihar that is most famous for this sweetmeat is Udwanagar, which falls between Arrah and Buxar.

### TILKUT AND ANARSA

Gaya is not only famous for its association with Lord Buddha, but it is also famous for Tilkut and Anarsa. While Tilkut is made with white sesame seeds (til) and sugar, Anarsa is made with a combination of rice flour, white sesame seeds and sugar. The Ramna Road of Gaya is the place where one should head to for tasting these sweets.



Tilkut and Anarsa

### MALPUA

The luscious and mouth watering malpua, which is a speciality of Bihar is prepared from a combination of maida, milk, banana, grated coconut, cashew nut, raisin, sugar, water and green cardamom and fried in ghee.



Malpua

### LAI

Barh, a small town in Patna district that lies between Bakhtiarpur and Mokama is famous for Lai, a ball or cake-shape sweet that is prepared with 'lithobi' or 'Ramdana' seeds, 'Kho'a' and sugar.

### SOAN PAPDI

Even though the entire state is popular for this sweet; it is a



Soan Papdi

speciality of the towns of Buxar and Munger. Soan Papdi is prepared by combining sugar, gram-flour and ghee.

### PERUKIA

Perukia, for which Chhapra town of Bihar is particularly famous. It is prepared by mixing sooji (semolina) or khoa with sugar and wrapping the mixture in thin-leaves made from a mix of maida, water and ghee. The sweet is then deep fried in ghee and served.



Perukia

### BALUSHAHI

Runi-Saidpur, which falls on the Muzaffarpur-Sitamarhi route, is the town that is famous for its Balushahi. The sweet comprises a specially treated combination of maida (wheat flour) and sugar, which is cooked with ghee.

### MAKHANA KHEER

It is a sweet dish prepared with milk, sugar and makhana, considered to be a speciality of the Darbhanga region of north Bihar.

### SHAKARPARA AND THEKUA

Shakarpara and Thekua are the sweets made from maida (wheat flour) and sugar. They are prepared only on special occasions like Chhath by straining the combination of maida and sugar in ghee.

### DALPURI

In the context of the traditional food of Bihar, dalpuri is the first name that comes to mind. It is basically a type of bread, made of salted wheat flour, which is filled with boiled-crushed gram-pulse that is fried with special spices. Though mostly a domestic preparation, it can be had in restaurants as well as from roadside-vendors.



Litti - Chokha

## LITTI - CHOKHA

Litti is another main-course dish that forms a part of Bihari cuisine. It is nothing, but wheat flour cake that has been salted and baked. Litti is filled with sattu (fried gram flour) and some special spices and served with ghee. Litti is similar to Bati in appearance but there is a little difference. Litti is best eaten with brinjal bharta or mashed potato. Litti-Chokha is now making its presence internationally.

# TEXTILES & HANDICRAFTS

## SIKKI ART

The sikki grass articles made by women of north Bihar are entirely different from what one sees in any other part of the country. As the very name indicates, sikki is a plant, which automatically grows by the riverside or roadside of rural area. The places where the weather is humid are also suitable for the growth of this plant.

## BHAGALPUR SILK

Bhagalpur is known as Silk City as it is famous worldwide for its silk production. This silk is of a distinct and special type. It is known as Tussah or Tussar Silk. Silk weaving is an age-old traditional household industry of Bhagalpur.

## KHATWA

Khatwa is the name given to applique works in Bihar. Khatwa is done by cutting of one fabric and stitching the pieces to another fabric. Khatwa is mainly used to create designer tents, canopies, shamianas and much more. Making of such tents involves work by both men and women. While cutting of clothes is done by men, women use their expertise in stitching part. Khatwa is also used in designing women garments as well.



Khatwa

## PARWAL KI MITHAI

Parwal ki Mithai is cooked by stuffing the pointed gourd with khoya giving it the right balance of sweet and salty effect.

## DAL PITHA

A Bihari version of dumplings, this delicacy is made with kneaded rice flour stuffed with special Bengal gram paste and steamed.



Dal Pitha



Marjasha Kala



Bhagalpur Silk