

TODAY'S traveller

BUSINESS & LEISURE MAGAZINE

PATA GOLD AWARDEE

MAY 2014 | ₹50

**CORPORATE
AGENDA**

**CORPORATE
JET-SETTERS**

**CORPORATE RAISE
THE BAR AT MTM&LLTM**

**WEDDING
DESTINATIONS**

SOUTH AFRICAN DIARY

Scan
this image
with your
mobile
to view
our site



KASHMIR: PARADISE ON EARTH

Snow-clad mountains, deep blue lakes and thick forests make Kashmir the proverbial heaven-on-earth destination

VAIBHAV BHUJANG

Kashmir – the name evokes fond memories of Bollywood movie scenes, with nubile actors running around in the snow amidst a picture-perfect background. The place is exactly like a dream destination. When a great Mughal emperor was asked about Kashmir, he replied, “If there is a heaven on earth, it is truly here”.

The first things you notice about Kashmir as you are about to land at Srinagar airport are the snow-covered peaks and the vegetation of the place. Peaks that rise higher than the clouds welcome you to an experience that is poles apart from anything a tourist catalogue can guarantee you. As you leave the airport to enter the city, a signboard welcomes you saying, “Welcome to Heaven on Earth.”

SRINAGAR

Srinagar is the capital of Kashmir. Being the capital, it is the epicentre of most activities. With huge markets catering to the needs of the local and tourist population, it is truly a city filled with the vibrancy that one has been informed about. The main



attraction of Srinagar is Dal Lake, which is also referred to as the “Jewel in the crown of Kashmir”. The lake is an important source of commercial operations in fishing and water plant harvesting. The lake is full

of boats known as ‘shikaras,’ that take you around. As soon as you enter one and reach a certain distance, many boats come your way selling local handicrafts, flowers and seeds, authentic Kashmiri attire to get your photograph clicked in, kebabs, etc. The boat takes you around the lake in what seems like a really short time. The stillness and the serenity of the lake is what make even a 2-hour boat ride seem like 15 minutes. The highlight of the boat ride is when it takes you to a floating market at the end, where huge boats have been converted into shops which sell everything from spices to handicrafts, etc.

PAHALGAM

Pahalgam is situated in the northernmost region of Kashmir. At a distance of around 87 km from Srinagar,



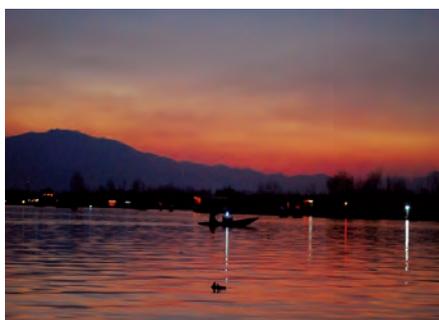
Pahalgam is the quintessence of what Kashmir is all about. Pahalgam has the proud distinction of countless Bollywood films being filmed in this region. The local guides give you a brief description of how the famous actors strutted through this beautiful valley. A half-hour horse



ride takes you to what is known as "Mini Switzerland". This place is snowbound, with no indication of any commercialisation around, and therefore, truly a tourist's dream. Most of the area around this place is protected by the Forest Department, which maintains the splendour by keeping private organisations out. Beautiful pine trees, higher than the city's multi-storey buildings, are covered with snow, which make sure your experience of fantasy land remains intact.

SONMARG

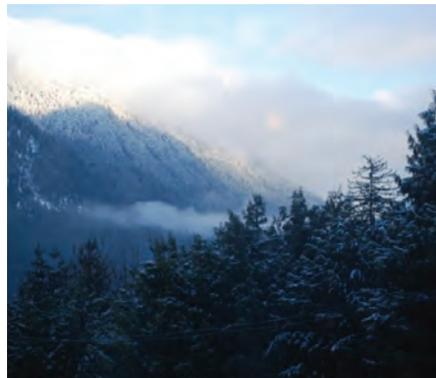
At a distance of around 80 km from Srinagar, Sonmarg is truly a driver's paradise. The drive to this place is considered as one of the world's most beautiful. The only expression one can conjure up after arriving at a place like this is one of awe. Thousands of tourists gather here every day to gobble up the local sights. Hoards of locals wait for you at the base to take you to the many local sights, which include a waterfall, fishing lake and zero point. Sonmarg offers a different perspective to the beauty of



Kashmir. The diverse nature of the place is what makes it truly beautiful.

GULMARG

Around 50 km from Srinagar, Gulmarg is another hill station that you cannot miss. Even though it is sunny in Srinagar, it is mostly snowing in Gulmarg. This place is, again like Pahalgam, covered with snow for most of the year. Gulmarg boasts the highest cable car in Asia, referred to as the Gondola. This cable is made with the help of French technology and covers a distance of almost 13,000 ft. The cable car takes you through two phases. The first phase is one where tourists normally go during summer – this place is famous for skiing and other winter sports. The first phase comprises many restaurants and has a hot water spring as well. The second phase is quite tough to get acclimatised to during winter, but is worth a try just for the cable car ride. Beyond the second phase lies the military establishment.



SHALIMAR BAGH

Shalimar Bagh is at a distance of around 17 km from Srinagar. These beautiful gardens were made by the emperor Jehangir for his wife Noor Jahan. Shalimar Bagh exhibits a typical Mughal-style architecture of the gardens, with multiple layers and water fountains. Covered with huge Chinar trees, it is one site you cannot afford to miss.

Surrounded by scenic mountains on all four sides, the lush green fields provide a backdrop for every artist's dream. Living in such a place has its effects on the locals, too. While the men do outdoor jobs, the women make handicrafts and beautifully designed artefacts which are not just famous in India, but all over the

world. Go into any shop and you will be welcomed with a spectrum of beautiful colours, just waiting for its owner. From finely woven carpets to papier-mâché boxes with the most beautiful Kashmiri designs, to furniture made from wood that is rot-resistant. Most of Kashmir's earnings are through tourism and the handicraft business.

AIR CONNECTIVITY TO SRINAGAR

Srinagar is a defence airport where the Airports Authority of India (AAI) maintains a civil enclave. The civil enclave at Srinagar was established in 1979 for facilitation of civil passengers. Srinagar Airport was declared an international airport in March 2005.

Srinagar Airport is at a distance of 12 km from Srinagar's city centre. The airport is spread over an area of 67.1 acres. Srinagar airport is situated at 1700 m (5435 ft.) above mean sea level, and is 100 km north of Delhi.

DESIGN AND CONCEPT OF THE TERMINAL BUILDING

The north facing Terminal Building has a fascinating silhouette of the lower Himalayan range, which has been emulated in the form of the Terminal Building. The imposing sloping roof structure is made to stand heavy snowfall and optimise air-conditioning for the interiors. The radial plan of the building is a stark break from the conventional linear prototype designs. The unique highlight of this design is the high efficient utility of areas from the technical point of view. The convex profile on the air side accommodated higher number of in-contact aircraft bays, while on the concave profile of the city side it emerges in a welcoming stance, focussing at the porch. The staggering curvilinear roof profile was intended to introduce clerestory lights, and open the two edges of the building for glazing. The roof has been spanned in space frame structure. The stepped roof levels helps break the rigidity of the volume while the radial tubular interlocking form imparts a more fluid



125 स्थान जहाँ भरें भा.वि.प्रा के संग उड़ान
125 Destinations to FLY with AAI

21 अन्तरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे (3 विहित एन्क्लेव तथा 3 संयुक्त तथा हवाई अड्डे)
International Airports (3 Civil Enclaves & 3 Joint Venture Airports)

78 अन्तरदेशीय हवाई अड्डे
Domestic Airports

19 अन्य विहित एन्क्लेव
Other Civil Enclaves

07 कस्टम हवाई अड्डे (4 विहित एन्क्लेव)
Custom Airports (4 Civil Enclaves)

भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण Airports Authority of India

उड़ानों का सुरक्षित, संरक्षित तथा प्रभावी ढंग से प्रबंधन
Manages flights in a safe, secure and efficient manner

अत्याधुनिक हवाई अड्डों का विकास
Develops modern State-of-the-art infrastructure

उच्चतकनीक एयर-कार्गो टर्मिनलों का प्रबंधन
Manages Hi-tech Air Cargo terminals

imagery. The glazed edges contribute to the daylight factor of the interiors. The cutouts on the facades acquire a faint resemblance to the celebrated arches of traditional designs.

Overall, the design results in a very vibrant interior volume, and is very different from the conventional designs of airports.

TERMINAL BUILDING

Srinagar has a one-and-a-half level, integrated Terminal Building with a total area of 16900 sqm; all operations in respect with international and domestic traffic are conducted from here. The New Terminal Building has state-of-the-art facilities with a see-through concept using maximum steel and glass in its structure besides the latest specialised materials like ACP cladding, insulated profile sheet roofing on the space frame structure, frameless glazing, etc. The Terminal Building is also equipped with modern amenities like Passenger Boarding Bridges (PBB's), escalators, elevators, central air-conditioning and heating system. Special considerations have also been made to facilitate Haj pilgrims in the New Terminal Building. The peak hour capacity of the Terminal Building has been upgraded from 500 passengers to 950 passengers (450 Intl' passengers + 500 Domestic passengers).

The writer is a young travel enthusiast and an active traveller who enjoys contributing travel tales for discerning travellers.

Present Status

- Srinagar Airport belongs to Indian Air Force (MOD), and Airports Authority of India maintains a Civil Enclave.
- Presently, the Runway dimension is 12000 ft X 150 ft. (3658 m X 45 m).
- The airport is suitable for operation of AB-300 type of aircraft in all weather conditions.
- The Terminal Building is suitable for 950 passengers at a time (500 Domestic & 45 International).
- The apron can accommodate 7 passenger aircraft (2 E & 5 C type) and 2 cargo aircraft.
- Presently, Air India, Spice Jet, Jet Lite, Indigo and Go Air are operating schedule flights.

Work Completed

- Expansion of apron to park 7 passenger aircraft and 2 cargo aircraft.
- Expansion & Modification of Terminal Building to cater to 950 passengers (500 Domestic and 450 International).
- ILS commissioned w.e.f. 04.02.2011.

Work Planned

- Construction of cargo complex – Plan finalised/estimate under preparation.
- Expansion of car park, etc.