

PACK YOUR BAGS



The 'nirvana' retreat

SOMEN SENGUPTA

For those seeking a break from humdrum life, Sarahan in the Himalayas can offer the best with its divine milieu of history, mythology, spirituality and ineffable scenic beauty

The earliest sound of an ideal day in Sarahan is not the call of the Himalayan bird that leaves its nest as soon as the first rays of the sun washes over the horizon of Mount Sreekhand, but the rather unusual sound of instruments played by the custodian of the temple of Goddess Bheemakali. The sound is reminiscent of the Buddhist gongs and trumpets and completely different from the cognizable Hindu cymbals and bells. It marks the time to say "Good morning" to life. This is also the time to bow before Goddess Bheemakali of Sarahan.

Sarahan is a small hamlet in the lap of the Himalayas in Himachal Pradesh — a place of pristine beauty, unaffected by the atrocities modern life. The whole place exudes a medieval aura; it wakes up from its slumber exactly like the princess described in folk tales. This awakening of nature is gradual, almost like the rising notes of Bhairav Raga.

The place is not just a mark on the map; its heritage and history go a long way back, into the fort of mythology. This village, which was the summer capital of Bussahir royal family, is also a 'Shaktipeeth', one of the most sacred places for a devoted Hindu. It is believed that when Lord Shiva was performing *tandava*, his apocalyptic dance of death by holding the dead body of his wife Sati on his shoulder, Lord Vishnu unleashed his Sudarshana Chakra to sever Sati's body into many parts, to appease Shiva's anger. The mythology says that Sati's ears fell at a place in the Himalayas which was named as *Shronitapur*, meaning 'the city of sound'. Through the passage of time and dialectical shifts, *Shronitapur* is now called Sarahan.

The descendants of the Bussahir clan proudly call themselves the successors of the mythological demon Banasura whose reference we can find in the Mahabharata. The epic contains a story that Banasura's beautiful daughter Usha got emotionally involved with Aniruddha, the grandson of Lord Krishna. Aniruddha approached Banasura to seek the hand of his daughter but that made Banasura furious. It culminated into a war where Krishna and Lord Shiva got involved. Finally, Usha and Aniruddha got married at the Bheemakali temple. Some local legends have it that Bheema, the second Pandav, established this Kali temple here.

Vajrajana Buddhism engulfed India from the end of 6th century and its path from Tibet to the heartland of India passed through this region. It deeply influenced the temple's architecture. The pagoda looking temple is a wonderful blend of stone, mortar and wood. The wooden crafts on its tower and roof are marvelous. The golden gate of the temple is brilliant, while the idol of Parvati presently prevailing in sanctum sanctorum is more than 200 years old. Temples of Narasingha, Raghunath, Usha and Shreekhanda Mahadev are significant among other temples within the premises. The temple even houses a small museum.



Bheemakali temple was once infamous for human sacrifice following the Shakti cult. However, that barbaric system is long abolished but animal sacrifices, especially during Durga puja still take place. On Mahashtami day, an animal is sacrificed and a special prayer to Devi is conducted by members of the royal family and this attracts huge number of subjects from near villages. Even larger congregations gather at the temple on Dashami, the final day of the puja. Local music and dance are performed with great pomp and gaiety.

Next to the temple is the royal palace of Bussahir family. Though it is no more open to the public, but just a look at the gate is enough to make one realize the beauty of the stone and wood building.

It is not merely temples and a palace for which Sarahan is famous for. The breathtaking panorama of the Himalayas visible from this place is perhaps the main attraction today.

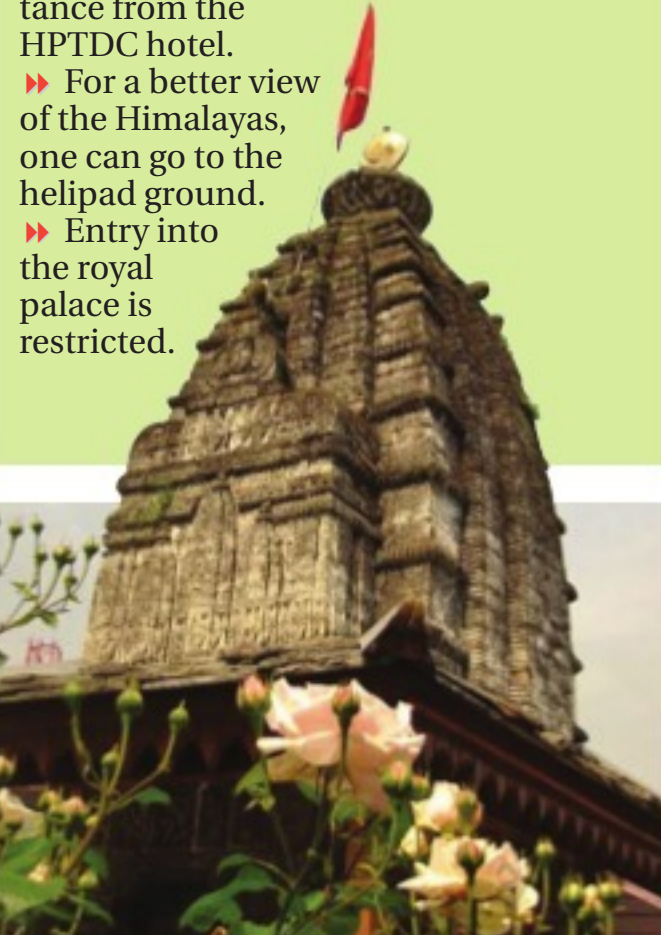
Known as the gateway of Kinnar, Sarahan offers to every visitor the opportunity to enjoy the wild beauty of 1850 meters high Mount Shreekhanda and the Kartik Swami peak. There is not a single dull moment in that paradise, rather if one seeks a break from humdrum life in the Himalayas with a touch of history, mythology, spirituality and of course, ineffable scenic beauty, Sarahan can offer the best with its divine milieu.

Food that is rich in Vitamin B helps you to have shiny hair. So milk, green vegetables and poultry are good for you. Silica too is important to keep your hair elastic and shiny. The food rich in this are onion, bean sprouts and oats.

Q I am 28-years-old man and want to take care of my skin. It is in good condition but I have time only in the evening. Help me, please.
Dolly K, Mumbai
You should start taking proper care of your skin so it keeps looking good. Before going to bed make sure you have removed all the dirt and grime from your face and neck. Use a cleansing milk to cleanse the area around your eyes too. But do not use too much pressure as it

TRAVEL TRIVIA

- ▶ Sarahan is just 170 km from Shimla — from Delhi, the distance is 564 km.
- ▶ Bheemakali temple is open to all — one can offer special halwa bhog to the Goddess by contributing desi ghee, sugar, wheat and dry fruits to temple committee.
- ▶ Best place to stay is the HPTDC hotel which offers thrilling view of the Himalayas.
- ▶ Food is basic yet excellent.
- ▶ Bheemakali temple is walking distance from the HPTDC hotel.
- ▶ For a better view of the Himalayas, one can go to the helipad ground.
- ▶ Entry into the royal palace is restricted.



OFF THE SHELF

BENEFICIAL HERBS

SastaSundar.com has come up with its new product range of Healthbuddy Granny's Herbs Potli. Minimally processed and hygienically packed in a hand-crafted bag, the unique mix of pure and natural herbs in their dehydrated forms, are believed to have health rejuvenation attributes. The range includes Healthbuddy Granny's Organic Himalayan Tulsi Potli, Diabetic Benefit Herbal Spice Mix Potli, Cough and Cold Kadha Potli, Herbal Constipation Relief Potli, Anti Sore Throat Potli and Mouthwash Potli. It is priced between Rs 136 to Rs 191 and available exclusively at www.sastasundar.com.



AMPLIFY YOUR STYLE



Cover Story by Future Style Lab announced their Spring-Summer collection for India, called SummertimeStories. The collection speaks about the journey to discover and explore one's fashion identity and consists of women's apparel, accessories and shoes. Luxurious and contemporary designs make it versatile enough to be worn on different occasions. It draws inspiration from nine unique storylines — each designed with a catwalk trend, form, fabric, and fit in mind. It is available at www.myntra.com and www.jabong.com

DELICIOUS COMBINATION

Kurkure announced the launch of a new and tastier version of Masala Munch to capture exciting yet familiar ingredients from the kitchen in the pack. The enhanced version is a delicious mixture of kitchen spices with its genuine tastes from real kitchen ingredients. It is made from dal, rice and corn seasoned with the goodness of Ghar Ka asli Masala.



FOR CLEAR SKIN

Oshea Herbs has come up with Neempure Anti Acne and Pimple Face Pack to meet the requisite of every skin type. Amalgamated with neem and aloe vera as an active ingredient, it exfoliates the dull and uneven skin tone. It is priced at Rs 175 for 120 gm of pack and is available at all leading cosmetic outlet and major online retailers.



REDEFINE ETHNICITY

To beat the summer heat, Sabhyata launched its latest refreshing summer collection with unique patterns and fabrics. The brand believes in creating new looks to your ethnic attires and so they have come up with the most fashionable and vibrant colour patterns to give a fresh look to your style. The fabrics used are Cambric cotton and Rayon Staple with a unique style pattern.

RADIANTLOOK

Master the art of contouring and let your natural beauty shine with Natio's Limited Edition Contour Palette. This clever kit features three carefully curated shades protected in a slim, mirrored compact, with a bonus brush and easy to follow instructions for a subtly defined, radiant finish. It is available across Sephora stores in Delhi/NCR, Mumbai, Bangalore, Dehradun and Shoppers Stop outlets in Chandigarh and Delhi. Also available at Nyka, Amazon, Myntra and Jabong, it is priced at Rs 1,620.



Send your contributions in 900 words for the Travel Section to travel.statesman@gmail.com

GET GORGEOUS



THREETY IRANI & NILUFER BABAYCON

Q I am 26-years-old and have a good hair. I want to keep it looking good. Help me to make a good diet chart so I can eat the right food for my hair.
Kapur, Kolkata



Food that is rich in Vitamin B helps you to have shiny hair. So milk, green vegetables and poultry are good for you. Silica too is important to keep your hair elastic and shiny. The food rich in this are onion, bean sprouts and oats.

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can stretch the skin and give you eye bags. After cleansing, use a night cream for your skin type. Massage it into your skin gently for a few minutes but make sure you do not stretch the skin in the process.

Q What I would like to know is how many times should I shampoo my hair, I have normal hair.
Pinky, Kolkata

There is no rule about this. Shampoo as and when you feel the need to do so. Generally shampooing thrice a week is necessary especially when the weather is hot and humid. But if you have oily hair or sweat a lot on your head, you can shampoo daily but remember to use a shampoo for daily use if this is the case.



send your questions to beauty.statesman@gmail.com

