

KHASI HILLS-THE LAND OF ABUNDANT WONDERS

Khasi Hills is perhaps best known for Sohra (Cherrapunjee), geographically famous for being the wettest place on earth and also Shillong, one of the most beautiful hill stations in India. Infact the entire Khasi Hills region that forms the central part of Meghalaya is richly endowed with natural beauty. Everywhere you go, you will never cease to be mystified by the spectacular charm the state offers.

SHILLONG (East Khasi Hills District)

The capital city of the State as well as the District headquarter of East Khasi Hills District. Shillong is the only hill station in the country that is accessible from all sides. The name Shillong is derived from U-Shyllong, a powerful deity and is situated at an altitude of 1,491m above sea level. This beautiful city is 103kms. from Guwahati, the nearest air and train link. The presence of many well reputed educational institutions, many of them established by various missionary groups make Shillong the hub of education for the entire north-east.

1. **Lady Hydari Park** - A popular spot both with locals and tourist, it is located in the heart of the city with an abundance of plants and flowers. The best months to see the flowers in bloom are April and October.
2. **Ward's Lake** - A beautiful manmade lake named after Sir William Ward, the then, Chief Commissioner of Assam. A beautiful little lake with short garden walks and boating facilities - this is a popular spot for both local and visiting tourists.
3. **Cathedral Catholic Church** - In the heart of the city, there stands a beautiful cathedral of Roman Catholics dedicated to Mary Help of Christian.
4. **Capt. Williamson Sangma State Museum** - For those interested in ethnic tribal culture and tradition this Govt. Museum under the control of Art and Culture Department offers insights to the lifestyle of the people. This museum is in the State Central Library complex where monuments for the great patriots of the state had been erected besides the statue of Smt. Indira Gandhi and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.
5. **Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous Cultures** – A three-in-one Institution combining a museum with a research and publication centre, for promoting and preserving the rich cultural heritage of North East India -a unique fusion of all the sister states under one roof.

With seven stories, 56,000 square feet of floor space and 15,154 square feet of display wall space, it ranks among the top 36 or so cultural centres of its kind in the Salesian world. Museums/ Cultural Centres in practice appear to be a significant aspect of the Salesian mission

Even in terms of design the DBCIC is startling: built in hexagonal shape, its seven floors represent the seven states of North East India. The building rises to form a flame, expressing the reality that if cultures are understood well, they can form a communion of cultures for a better society.

DBCIC contains seventeen galleries displaying cultural artefacts and paintings. It offers study and research facilities throughout its specialised library of 10,000 volumes, a media hall and a conference hall. It is frequented by school students and older research students and anthropologists, since this area of India is an anthropologist's paradise.

6. **Golf Course** - Shillong Golf Course one of the oldest and best natural golf course in the world is considered to be the "Gleneagle of the East" by the United States Golf Association and Museum. The site where the Golf Course is located provides a scenic view. It was set in an undulating valley covered with thick groves of pine and rhododendron trees at an altitude of 5200 ft in 1898 as a 9 (nine) hole course and later converted into a 18 (eighteen) hole course in 1924 by Captain Jackson and C. K. Rhodes.

7. **Spread Eagle Falls** - Located within the Shillong Cantonment, on the outskirts of the city, lies a sparkling waterfall which looks like an eagle with wings spread. Hence the name Spread Eagle Falls. The falls is locally known as Umkaliar or the falls into which Ka Liar slipped. A soothing setting amidst the calmness of nature - a treat to the eyes.
8. **Sweet Falls** - Situated near Happy Valley at a distance of about eight kilometers from Shillong. It resembles a straight pencil of water emerging from a large size water pipe, as it drops vertically over a distance exceeding two hundred feet. Most suitable for a day's outing and picnic, Explore it!
9. **Elephant Falls** - 12 kms on the outskirts of the city the mountain stream descends through two successive falls set in dells of fern-covered rocks. At a short distance beyond the falls, there are two smaller falls which are none the less beautiful and captivating. These are the Wei laplam Falls and the Wir Phang Falls. A well paved footpath and a small wooden bridge facilitate access to these falls.
10. **Shillong Peak** - An ideal picnic spot, 1965 metres above sea level and 10 kms from the city, offers a panoramic view of these country side, and is also the highest point in the State. Obeisance is paid to U Shulong at the sanctum at the peak's summit every springtime, by the religious priest of Myllem State. In the evening the city lights below appear like a star-studded abyss.

SOHRA (CHERRAPUNJEE) (East Khasi Hills District, Sohra)

Sohra, previously known as Cherrapunjee, a Sub-Division in the East Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya, is set upon a plateau on the southern slopes of the state. Sohra is dotted with waterfalls cascading over deep gorges. The swift flowing rivers and streams flow in a southerly direction to the plains.

Sohra is 56 kms from Shillong and is literally the high point of any visit to Meghalaya. One of those ultimate eco-friendly destinations, a place renowned all over the world for having the privilege of receiving the highest rainfall in the world. Set against the backdrop of breath-taking landscape, it is a place to discover the Indian summer monsoons. An unique annual meteorological phenomena directly influenced by the south west monsoon and the north east winds. The heavy monsoon rains over these mountains undoubtedly creates in Sohra one of the rarest bio-diverse vegetations in the world. Truly a beautiful corner in north-east India, waiting to be discovered and explored.

The four main seasons of Meghalaya are Spring (i.e. March to April), Monsoon (May to September), Autumn (October to November) and Winter (December to February).

The temperature starts warming by the third week of May and continues right to the end of September and sometimes gets extended well into the middle of October. The average rainfall is 12,000 mm a year, with the maximum rainfall occurring over the southern slopes of the Khasi Hills in Sohra. The highest recorded total annual rainfall was 24,555 mm in 1974. The maximum for a single day was recorded in 1876 in Sohra, when 1,040 mm fell in 24 hours. Sohra also holds the World Record for a month's rainfall when 9,300 mm fell in July 1861.

The old Cherra or Sohrarim was the original Cherra village but with the coming of the British who set up their headquarters further south, the village came to be known as 'Sohra' or present day Cherrapunjee. It was here that the British realised the enormity and intensity of the rainfall and set up a meteorological office for measuring the rain.

Sohra was declared by the British to be the capital of Assam in 1832, which was later shifted to Shillong in 1866 due to the inclement weather.

1. **Mawkdok Dympep Valley View** - A few kms from Umtyngar, as one takes the right turn from the road junction, one comes across a beautiful bridge known to the locals as the Duwan Singh Syiem Bridge, that is the entrance to the Sohra tourist circuit. From here the landscape abruptly changes into picturesque deep gorges. The Forest Department has constructed a view-point where visitors can stop a while and enjoy the spectacular natural beauty.
2. **Sa-I-Mika Park** - Located on the way to the world famous 'Dainthlen Falls' and about 3 kms before reaching Sohra town is Sa -I - Mika Park, a one stop tourist destination. Set amidst 69 acres of pristine surroundings, Sa -I - Mika offers not only accommodation but a host of activities that caters to people from all ages and walks of life. At present there are four double bedded rooms with all modern amenities and two traditional cottages. On offer are well appointed rooms, hot and cold running water, room service priced at Rs.1200/- and Rs.1500/- per night. There is also a 200 capacity conference hall which is suitable for hosting cooperate and departmental events, seminars, workshops and concerts. On request, the management can also arrange to organise barbecues, bonfires, tour guides, traditional Khasi dance and local cuisine and drink.
The park has the distinct advantage of being located close to the waterfalls and one can arrange treks and tours to these places, as well as the caves and other areas of tourist interest. Since the management is closely associated with the community, one can also opt for a homestay in one of the villages, to experience life with a typical Khasi family.
3. **Dain-Thlen Falls** - Just before reaching Sohra, a road to the right, leads one to the falls which is 5 kms away. The waterfall derives its name from a Thlen or a snake of gigantic size which dwelt in a cave. Legend has it that the people destroyed the snake in order to rid themselves of its reign of terror. Adjacent to the very spot where the Thlen was slaughtered lies the Dain-thlen Waterfalls. Natural rock carvings of the episode draw visitors to see the image of the Thlen, the symbol of greed, corruption and evil.
4. **Noh-Kalikai Falls** - A hauntingly beautiful waterfall, cascading down from the top of the gorge to the mystic deep green pool below, reminding one of the tragic legend associated with it, of a grief stricken mother who plunged to her death, unable to overcome her sorrow over the murder of her daughter by her husband.
5. **Ka Kper Syiem Sohra (cremation ground of the Sohra Syiemship)** - y the side of the Pomsohmen stream lies the cremation ground of the Sohra Syiemship (Cherra Chieftain). Cremation of the dead Syiem (Chief) of Sohra is one of the most expensive and intricate ceremonies. The body of the Syiem is normally kept for years together, if customary formalities are not performed by the Syiem-elect.
6. **Nongsawlia** - is about 2 kms south of Sohra, the place that the first Welsh Missionaries visited during the year 1942. Their visit not only enriched the life of the locals, but Khasi Literature was also enriched by the invention of the Khasi Alphabet by Thomas Jones. Thus the Sohra dialect became the lingua-franca of the Khasis. The mission started here in Nongsawlia later spread to many parts of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills.
7. **Mawmluh Cave** - Access to the cave is via the river, which lies to the south east of the Cement Factory. The entrance is about 10 ft. above water level. A single entrance leads to a double passageway, where the upper portion in certain areas have caved in due to the intensive quarrying of limestone above the cave. The river enters the cave and forms pools of water within the cave. This cave stretches for about 4,500 meters but is marred by pollution entering the cave from the cement factory. Locally known as Krem Mawmluh, it is one of the longest caves in the Indian subcontinent.

8. **Eco Park** - A large "Eco Park" established by the Meghalaya government in the plateau, which hosts several hybrid and indigenous orchids in the Green House donated by Shillong Agri-Horticultural Society. Also the Eco Park offers breathtaking view of distant Sylhet Plains of neighbouring Bangladesh.
9. **Mawsmmai Cave** - 6 kms from the Sohra market to the south lies the village of Mawsmmai in the direction of Bangladesh border. At the village crossing, one passes grasslands surrounded by forests, ending in a clearing. From this clearing, a concrete pathway through the jungle leads up to the main cave entrance. This cave is the only cave that is fully lighted. The cave can be divided into two parts (old and new). Of the two, the new cave is yet to be lighted. It has impressive formations of large passages and chambers.
10. **Noh-Sngithiang Falls** - also known as Mawsmmai falls, is 1 km south of Mawsmmai village and derives its name due to the fact that the waterfalls are situated in a south westerly position and get illuminated by the sun from dawn to sunset. The vibrant colours of the setting sun on the waterfalls make it beautiful to behold.
11. **Thangkharang Park** - Managed and well maintained by the State Forest Department, this park on Mawsmmai - Shella Road - about 8 kms from Sohra is a popular tourist spot. There are many rare and exotic orchids and some rare species of plants endemic to the area. A panoramic view of the plains of Bangladesh is clearly visible on a clear day from the park.
Thangkharang Park laid on the high rocky cliffs overlooks the plains of Bangladesh. You can spot the imposing Kynrem falls cascading down majestically in three stages. The bird sanctuary at nearby Thangkharang with the awesome view of the imposing waterfalls set against the backdrop of Bangladesh plains is a bonanza for tourists, both foreign and domestic.
12. **Ka Khoh Ramhah** - also known as Motrop, is an imposing single rock formation in the shape of a giant cone. According to folklore, this was the fossilized cone shaped basket of an evil giant. It lies in close proximity to two other very similar rocks standing like a pair of giant sentinels. During the heavy monsoons, water flows between the two rocks and the cascading waterfall presents a breathtaking sight. The place attracts a lot of visitors throughout the year and is an idyllic picnic spot.
13. **Kynrem Falls** - The highest waterfall in Meghalaya, it cascades down in three stages from the top of the hill and overlooks the Thangkharang Park.

MAWPHLANG (East Khasi Hills District)

One of the most remarkable features of the Khasi Hills are the sacred forests, which have been preserved by traditional religious sanction, since the ancient days. One of the most famous sacred forests is the Mawphlang Sacred Forest, about 25 kilometres from Shillong. The sacred grove has an amazing life form of plants, flowering trees, orchids and butterflies. An ideal destination for nature lovers.

The sacred-groves which have been preserved since time immemorial, are in sharp contrast to their surrounding grasslands. These groves are generally rimmed by a dense growth of *Castanopsis kurzii* trees, forming a protective hedge which halts intrusion of *Pinus kasia* (Khasi pine) which dominates all areas outside the sacred groves. Inside the outer rim, the sacred groves are virtually Nature's Own Museum. The heavily covered grounds have a thick cushion of humus accumulated over the centuries. The trees in every sacred grove are heavily loaded with epiphytic growth of aroids, pipers, ferns, fern-allies and orchids. The humus-covered grounds likewise harbour myriad varieties of plant life, many of which are found nowhere else.

LAITKYNSEW (East Khasi Hills District)

15 Kms further from Sohra (Cherrapunjee) there is a holiday resort run by a private party. The resort offers visitors treks around the picturesque hills, spring bath, the thrills of caving and many other forms of excitement. Close to the resort there is the living root bridge across a torrential stream, that any visitor would love to see.

In the adjacent village of Nongriat two such living bridges have been created by weaving and inter-twining roots of the same banyan tree. It has come to be referred to as Jingkieng Nongriat or more commonly Double Decker.

MAWSYNRAM (East Khasi Hills District)

Mawsynram is a small village in the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya state in north-eastern India, 56 kilometres from Shillong. Reportedly the wettest place on Earth, Mawsynram receives an average annual rainfall of 11,872 mm (about 39 feet). However, as there has been no meteorological department office in the area and for all practical and statistical purposes, Cherrapunjee has been recorded as the wettest place in the world.

Mawsynram is a place where nature-loving people frequently visit wherein they take pleasure in the steep, sliding slopes, the fresh air, the rolling green mountains and the deafening but beautiful waterfalls. In Mawsynram, there is a cave called the Mawjymbuin Cave which is one of the well known caves in Meghalaya. This cave, due to years of weathering and due to dripping of mineralized solutions and deposition of calcium carbonate, it has thus given rise to some magnificent stalagmites. These stalagmites are not only important and of great interest for geological research but also because of their exquisiteness. The stalagmite of the Mawjymbuin Cave is shaped into a massive Shivalinga. The cave also has a dome shaped rock with a flat top called the Symper Rock.

MAWLYNNONG VILLAGE (East Khasi Hills District)

Mawlynnong Village has earned the distinction of being the cleanest village in India. It is situated 90 kms. from Shillong and besides the picturesque village, offers many interesting sights such as the living root bridge and another strange natural phenomenon of a boulder balancing on another rock.

Mawlynnong nestled in the pristine hill state of Meghalaya, is along the Indo-Bangla border. This cute and colourful little village is known for its cleanliness. The main occupation of the villagers is agriculture. They mostly grow betel nut. About 82 households live in Mawlynnong. Keeping the surrounding environment clean is an age old tradition. Discover India magazine declared the village as the cleanest in Asia in 2003.

A dustbin made out of bamboo is found all along the village. Every one makes it a point that dirt and waste are not thrown everywhere. All the waste from the dustbin is collected and kept in a pit, which the villagers use as manure. The villagers are now on a mission to ban plastic. The village with cent per cent literacy is conscious and they are spreading the message of conservation and protection of the forest. Locals plant trees to ensure that the virgin forest is kept intact and also replenished.

Mawlynnong's fame is now drawing an endless stream of guests from across the country and abroad. Although residential facilities are still scarce and are in the process of being developed, the existing one constructed from bamboo and thatch is quite hospitable and restful. Mawlynnong is an artist's delight and the sort of getaway that would titillate creative writers and poets.

JAKREM (East Khasi Hills District)

Jakrem located about 64 km from Shillong on the Shillong-Mawkyrwat road, is famous for its hot water springs of sulphur water which is believed to have curative medicinal properties. Jakrem has now developed as a potential health resort. People from all parts of the region throng here to take a dip in the

hot spring. Bathing compartments are available around the spring for the use of the public. It is also a favourite picnic spot during winter.

UMIAM LAKE (Ri Bhoi District)

More popularly known as Barapani, this is the biggest artificial lake in the State. Surrounded by sylvan hills and wrapped in the beauty of an assortment of green Khasi-pines and the azure blue skies is the majestic Umiām lake. The lake situated just 15 km from Shillong on the Guwahati-Shillong National Highway has left a lasting impression on each and every person who has come to this lake.

Developed upon the reservoir of the Umiām Hydro Electric Project, the Water Sports Complex provides a choice of row-boats, paddle-boats, cruise boats, sailing boats, water scooters and speed boats. This is a very popular place for picnic, fishing and watersports. M.T.D.C. had started operating water-sports in the area. Also the Orchid Lake resort run by the M.T.D.C. cater to the need of the visiting tourists.

Adjacent to the resort is the Lum Nehru Park, a popular picnic spot.

LUM SOHPETBNENG (Ri Bhoi District)

The navel of Heaven, is a place of pilgrimage for the Khasis of indigenous religion. Located on top of a hill, legend has it, that on this spot a golden ladder connected Heaven and Earth, God and Man. However, the connection was severed in accordance with divine decree. Once a year, in the month of February the indigenous Khasi people gather here to conduct rites and rituals and offer prayers. For visitors, a view of the surrounding countryside from the hill top is breathtaking and the feeling of space and vastness is truly an experience to be cherished.

DIENGIEI PEAK (Ri Bhoi District)

Located to the west of the Shillong plateau, Diengiei Peak is just two hundred feet lower than Shillong peak. The peak presents a spectacular view of green mountainous hills. The captivating hills are dotted with tiny shining villages. Diengiei Peak is accessible by the Umiām-Union Christian College-Mawmaram motorable road which takes off from National Highway-40 at Umiām. Atop Diengiei, a visitor is greeted with a commanding view of the Umiām lake with the city of Shillong in the background. On the top of Diengiei, there is a huge hollow, shaped like a cup, which some geologists believe could be the crater of an extinct pre-historic volcano.

DWARKSUID (Ri Bhoi District, Umroi Bhoilymbong)

An enigmatically beautiful pool with wide, rocky sand banks located on a stream alongside the Umroi-Bhoilymbong Road is known as Dwarksuid or Devil's doorway. Its lotus-like rock formations are captivatingly scenic and unforgettable.

MAIRANG (West Khasi Hills District)

Half-way to Nongstoin is Mairang, the sub-divisional head-quarter, 12 kms from which, lies the imposing Kyllang rock. A massive dome shape of single rock of granite, rising to an elevation of about 5400 ft above sea level, it measures 1,000 fts. across in diameter. Kyllang rock lies 78 km from Shillong

According to geologists, this rock is about several million years old. The rock can be accessed from the northern and eastern flanks. The southern flank is inaccessible because of its slope exceeds 800 over an incline of about six hundred feet.

It is believed that the rock possesses a sort of magnetic field, so no one will fall from the slope. Enormous detached blocks of rock features the southern side and dense forests in the northern side. The forest is

thickly populated with age-old red Rhododendron trees and oaks along with white Rhododendron trees, which are not found elsewhere.

The southern side of Kyllang Rock is encumbered with enormous detached blocks of rock, while its northern side is clothed with dense forests, containing age-old red Rhododendron trees and oaks besides bushy, white Rhododendron trees.

A beautiful memorial in the honour of U Tirot is constructed here in Mairang to commemorate his great feats.

MAWKYRWAT (West Khasi Hills District)

Head-quarter of Mawkyrwat sub-division about 35 kms from Nongstoin, Mawkyrwat presents panoramic landscape. A view point has been constructed on top of Mawranglang.

MAWTHADRAISHAN (West Khasi Hills District)

Mawthadraishan peak which takes an hour and a half to reach from the main road, is located on the northern side of Nongstoin - Shillong road, near Nongshillong, Mawroh and Markasa villages. It is about 70 kms from Shillong on the Nongstoin road. On top of the range, there is a depression with about 7 to 8 fish ponds of considerable size. The apex of the peak offers a panoramic view of the plains of Assam, and the distant Himalayas after the monsoon, on clear days. The districts of Garo Hills, Khasi Hills and part of Bangladesh come within the Panoramic horizons of Mawthadraishan peak.

NONGKHNUM ISLAND (West Khasi Hills District)

Nongkhnun Island is the biggest river island in Meghalaya and the second biggest river island in Asia, after Majuli Island in Assam. Located about 14 Kms from Nongstoin, the district hqs. of West Khasi Hills, it is 20 to 25 sq. kms in area. Travelling on foot from Nongstoin through the villages of Lawse, Mawduh and Mawthar, it takes about two and a half-hours to reach the Island. There is a wooden bridge over the Weinia Fall to enter the Island.

The Island is formed by the bifurcation of Kynshi River into the Phanliang River and the Namliang River. At the point of divergence, there is a beautiful sandy shore about 100 sq. meters in area. The Phanliang River forms a beautiful lake adjacent to the sandy beach. This lake is about 400 to 500 sq. meters. The River then moves along and before reaching a deep gorge, forms a pretty fall about 60 meters high, called Shadthum Fall. At the bottom of the fall, there is a beautiful pool where a variety of fishes can be found. It then continues its journey and finally reunites with the Namliang River, near a place called Thongrin.

The Namliang River first flows towards the north and then changes its course towards the west. It then reaches a gorge and forms two narrow falls. The first one is called Riatsohkhe fall and is near Mawthar village. The second one is the wonderful and beautiful Weinia fall, which is about 60 meters high. The River then flows further west till it reunites with the Phanliang River on the western rocky shore and then flow towards the west. After a distance of about 10 kms from the Island, it reaches the deepest gorge and forms the longest fall in the region of about 335 to 340 meters high, called Langshiang fall.

The area surrounded by the two Rivers, i.e. Phanliang and Namliang forms the Nongkhnun Island. Within the Island, there are big trees and areas of grassland and natural playground suitable for playing football and golf and even for landing a helicopter. There are plenty of fishing pools, especially near the sandy shore, called Wei-Phanliang. Angling is the only way to enjoy as well as protect the fishes.

RANIKOR (West Khasi Hills District)

On the banks of river Jadukata close to Bangladesh. Ranikor is a beautiful place. This area is famous for abundance of mahseer. The dark blue deep waters of Jadukata offers ample scope for water - sports.

JAIINTIA HILLS-LAND OF MYTHS AND LEGENDS

The Jaintia Hills in the State of Meghalaya is bounded on the North and East by the State of Assam. On the South by Bangladesh and on the West by East Khasi Hills District. The total area is 3,819 sq.kms. having a population of 2,95,692 (2001 Census). A land of undulating hills rich in mineral deposits. The natural vegetation changes according to the topography of the land kingdom of Jaintiapur now in present day Bangladesh.

JOWAI (Jaintia Hills District)

64 kms. from Shillong is the administrative headquarters of Jaintia Hills as well as the commercial centre. It is situated along side the Myntdu river which encircles two thirds of this over expanding township.

NARTIANG (Jaintia Hills District)

The Village of Nartiang is significant for its Summer Palace of the Jaintia King whose Capital was Jaintiapur. The remnants of the summer Palace is located on a hillock approximately two kilometres from the Nartiang market. The archway which can be seen to this day shows that they were well versed in the making of red bricks similar to the ones used by the Ahom Kings of Assam. From the cannons found in the Shiv temple it goes to show that they had skills in techniques of fire arms and metallurgy. At present there lies a Hindu temple in this vicinity and the priests who practice, there are direct descendants of the original priests that came from Jaintiapur.

NARTIANG MONOLITHS (Jaintia Hills District)

Monoliths exist throughout the length and breadth of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. However, the biggest collection of monoliths or Megalithic stones in one single area is to be found north of the Nartiang market. These consists of Menhirs (Upright stones) Moo Shynrang and Dolmens (flat stones in the horizontal position) locally known as Moo Kynthai. Within the perimeter of these Megalithic collection stands the tallest Menhir erected by U Mar Phalyngki a trusted lieutenant of the Jaintia King to commemorate his victory in battle. Other monoliths were erected by U Mar Phalyngki, U Luh Lyngskor Lamare and various clans of Nartiang village between 1500A.D.and 1835A.D.

DURGA TEMPLE AT NARTIANG (Jaintia Hills District)

Adjacent to the ruins of the Summer Palace of the Jaintia King in front of the arched gateway of red bricks stands the Durga Temple. It is believed that the temple was constructed by the Jaintia King on his conversion to Hinduism. It is said that the temple construction initially was like a typical Khasi house having a Central wooden pillar (dieng Blai) and the roof was in thatch. Later, the thatch was replaced by a corrugated tin roof. Further modification on the roof as we now see has a steeple like a Church.

During the rule of the Jaintia Kings, human sacrifices were offered to Goddess Durga. Within the temple there is a tunnel that reaches the river Myntang and it is through this hole that the heads were rolled down to the Myntang River. Human sacrifice was banned during British rule and goats are now sacrificed.

KHIM MOO SNIANG (Jaintia Hills District)

This locality derives its name from an embedded rock in the shape of a pig. The literal translation from 'Moo' is stone and 'Sniang' refers to pig. A stone deity venerated by the Jaintias for its protective power.

THADLASKEIN LAKE (Jaintia Hills District)

8 k.m.. from Jowai on National highway - 44 is a man made lake at Thadlaskein fed by a Perennial spring. According to tradition, one Chieftain Sajar Nangli had an irreconcilable difference with the King of Jaintiapur. Not wanting to be blamed for an inevitable bloodbath he decided to flee from the Kingdom with his followers. Before his departure, however, they dug the present day lake with the ends of bows as a memorial. The lake is revered by the people of Raid Mukhla who continue to offer sacrifices near the Lake. A popular picnic spot for locals.

UMHANG LAKE (Jaintia Hills District)

This lake at Wataw (Bataw) village overlooking the plains of Bangladesh is flanked on either side by lush green forests. This lake is attributed to Sajar Nangli who dined at this spot and drank water from a spring to quench his thirst. He and his followers decided to create a lake unlike any other in the Jaintia Kingdom, so they spent several months digging this magnificent lake. Here too the people of Wataw (Bataw) regard the Umhang Lake with reverence and pay homage alongwith sacrifices annually.

KIANG NONGBAH MONUMENT (Jaintia Hills District)

On the banks of the Myntdu river in the Syntu Ksiar Valley on a field known as "Madiah Kmal Blai" stands a monument dedicated to Kiang Nongbah. Kiang Nongbah, a Jaintia patriot during British rule who died as a martyr for the cause of Indian liberation from British rule. The last words uttered by him from the scaffold before the public hanging on 30th Dec. 1862 had remained true. "If my face turns eastwards when I die, we shall be free again within a hundred years. If it turns westward, we shall be enslaved forever."

SYNTU KSIAR (Jaintia Hills District)

Syntu Ksiar meaning Flower of Gold is a vast stretch of the river bank of Myntdu river where people usually go for picnics and angling, in the vicinity of Jowai which encircles two-third of the Jowai Township. The name literally means Golden Flower. On the banks of Syntu Ksiar along side the river Myntdu, an elegant monument has been erected in honour of the Jaintia patriot- U Kiang Nongbah.

STONE BRIDGE AT THLUMUWI (Jaintia Hills District)

16 kms. from Jowai on the Jowai Muktapur road to Dawki lies Thlu Muwi. This stone bridge built by U Mar Phalyngki and U Luh Lamare under the orders of the Jaintia King. Because of the rise of the Muwistream during the monsoon a bridge was required to be built for the King's journey from Jaintiapur to Nartiang. The bridge consists of huge well hewn granite stone slabs perched on equally similar pillars. Beside the stone bridge is also the Muwi Waterfalls.

DAWKI (Jaintia Hills District)

Travelling from Shillong to the International trade route border town of Dawki is a splendid drive of 95 kilometres passing through deep gorges and ravines, which is certainly a thrilling experience. On approaching Dawki is the Umngot river, the venue of the annual boat race held during March - April at Umsyiem. The Umngot river is the natural boundary between Ri Pnar or Jaintia Hills with Hima Khyrim of Khasi hills over which is a single span suspension bridge was constructed. This is the gateway to Bangladesh where major export and import transactions take place.

IAWMUSIANG (Jaintia Hills District)

The largest Jaintia market as well as the commercial centre of Jaintia Hills, lawmusiang derives its name from the sacred - stone within the market which was brought to its present location from the village of Nongbah. The lawmusiang market day occurs once in an eight day circle. On this day people from the villages come here to sell their wares. Jaintia Hills is famous for its spices.

RUPARSOR BATHING GHAT (Jaintia Hills District)

On the Jowai Muktapur road approximately 8 kms. from Dawki is the Rupasor Bathing ghat. This bathing pool is hewn out of granite. The water which comes into the pool is through the curved trunk of an elephant fed by the Rupasor stream. This bathing pool was used by Royalty, believed to have been constructed by U Mar Phalyngki and U Luh Lyngskor Lamare under the direction of the Jaintia King. The pool measures nineteen and a half feet in length, fifteen feet in breadth and five feet deep. To the West of the pool there used to be changing rooms for the royal family.

U LUM SUNARAJA (Jaintia Hills District)

Near Umkiang village on top of the hill there is a deep lake believed by the locals to be the spot where old and aged elephants go to die by plunging themselves into the deep pool. It is also believed that valuable ivory of the dead elephants are guarded by huge serpent so that nobody can take away the tusks.

UMLAWAN CAVE (Jaintia Hills District)

The sleepy hamlet of Lumshnong village came into lime-light recently when it has been confirmed that the Umlawan cave situated in this village is the longest and also the deepest in the sub-continent. The Umlawan cave is inter connected with two other caves namely Kot-Sati and Umskor caves. The total length of these caves is more than 21 kms and about 100 m in depth. This place is 60 kms east of Jowai. Dotted across the entire district there are numerous caves and caverns with spectacular stalagmites and stalactite formations. Till now only a few of these caves have been explored and surveyed.

LADY OF GOOD HEALTH SHRINE (Jaintia Hills District)

Shrine of our lady of good health. In Raliang village, 32 Kms off Jowai road there stand, a magnificent triple storied octagonal structure consisting of only one big hall with the altar on the centre. Atop the dome of the shrine and over the altar there is an imposing statue of our Lady of good Health made of shimmering white marble standing upon a globe. The shrine is a replica of our lady of Good Health at Turin Holy.

BORGHAT TEMPLE (Jaintia Hills District)

This village is situated close to the Bangladesh border. Borghat Temple dedicated to Hindu religion is located within this village. In olden days, sacrifices were offered in this temple, however it had been damaged during the 1897 earthquake.

JARAIN PITCHER PLANT LAKE (Jaintia Hills District)

Located at Jarain, in Amlarem subdivision of War-Jaintia region amid the natural habitat of the carnivorous pitcher plant -- Nepenthes Khasiana spreads over an area of 50,000 square metres. A pretty lake sits placidly amid gravelled footpaths, arch bridges, pitcher plant garden and green house - interpretation centre. The railings of the boat-house are styled on the pitcher plant. A pitcher plant replica in the middle of the lake doubles up as a fountain -- the setting is perfect for a leisurely boat ride.

There are paddle-boats to engage visitors as they soak in the greenery of the low lying hillocks around. Four boats have been provided and the lake is attracting a lot of visitors from far and near.

KRANG SURI FALLS (Jaintia Hills District)

Krang Suri is one of the most beautiful waterfalls in the District. It is located in the Amlarem Civil Sub Division. To transform the place into a tourists destination the District Administration has initiated steps to construct Chiselled and graveled footpaths and view points to enable visitors to better appreciate the beauty of the waterfall and its surroundings. The footpaths are hewn from the natural multi colored stones available in the area, no cement has been used and stones have been placed symmetri cally to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the area.

IALONG PARK (Jaintia Hills District)

The Park is located about 8 kms from Jowai. It is known for its sacred grove and for its setting which overlooks the beautiful Pynthorwah Valley. Through the Special DRDA Tourism Project the District Administration have taken step to beautify the park by creating infrastructure such as water dams and canals, toilet facilities with changing rooms, hoardings, jungle clearance which has attracted tourist far and wide. A water eco park is also taking shape with an intention to change Ialong into a major Tourism Hub of the District.

TYRSHI FALLS (Jaintia Hills District)

Tyrshi Falls on the Shillong-Jowai Road (NH 44) is Jowai's answer to Shillong's Elephant Falls. This fall is located about 5 kms from Jowai. A pretty arch bridge connects across an expanse of green paddy fields, which opens up to the gushing Tyrshi falls thundering down to the Pynthor (paddy-fields) below. A winding footpath offering a breathtaking and panoramic view of the Pynthor Nein, eases your trek down to the bottom of the falls, which glides down like milk over a vertical drop.

LOOKSI (KUPLI) PARK (Jaintia Hills District)

looksi village in Laskein Block is located some 40 kms from the District headquarter. For the development of the park in the village the District administration through the Department of Forest (Social Forestry) have constructed an approach road to the park, ram shelters, railing in the view points, sitting benches and play items for children to attract visitors to the area.

A recreation centre has been developed on the banks of Kopili river. A local NGO, ICSO (looksi Centre School Organization), has been assigned the task of managing the project. The ICSO regularly organises boat racing and swimming competitions in the area.

GARO HILLS-THE ECOLOGICAL CANVAS OF MEGHALAYA

Forming the western part of the State the entire Garo Hills having an area of approximately 8,000 sq kms. is densely forested and hence one of the richest spots in bio diversity.

The Garos predominantly inhabiting the three districts of the State namely East Garo Hills, West Garo Hills and South Garo Hills are basically superstitious, believe in spirits and have rich traditional tales of myths and legends. To the Garos everything that is interesting and unnatural has to have the lore of some kind.

TURA (West Garo Hills District)

Tura the headquarter of West Garo Hills, which was also the headquarter of composite Garo Hills before two more districts of East and South Garo Hills were created, is 323 kms. from Shillong via Guwahati named after a powerful goddess Durama-Imbama, this Tura town is situated at the foot of Tura peak. 5kms higher at 1400m the peak offers some of the finest views of the hills against a backdrop of lowlying plains and sweeping curve of the mighty Brahmaputra.

TURA PEAK (West Garo Hills District)

A beautiful and majestic hill stands on the eastern side of Tura at a height of 872 m above sea level overlooking the town of Tura. Local legend has it that the peak provides a sacred shelter or abode to the 'Gods' and it is also claimed that Tura was traditionally known as Dura, but due to mispronunciation by the British gave it the present name of Tura. The Tura range has been declared a reserve forest with an observatory, a Cinchona plantation and a tourist bungalow located at its vicinity. A magnificent view of the lower Brahmaputra valley as well as the golden yellow plains of Bangladesh can be seen all year round from the peak. A foot-track or path developed during the British Raj is still in existence and can be used by tourists and adventurers alike to reach Tura peak with ease and comfort.

NOKREK BIOSPHERE (West Garo Hills District)

About 40 kms, via Asanangiri and Sasatgiri but just 2 kms. from Tura peak; teeming with wild life, Nokrek hill is the home of a very rare species of citrus locally known as Memang Narang orange of the spirits. This Memang Narang is considered to be the most primitive and progenitor of all other varieties of citrus plants in the world with a view to preserve this rare species of citrus indica the first gene sanctuary of the world has been established here.

CHIBRAGRE (West Garo Hills District)

Lying at the confluence of Ganol and Rongram rivers, just 9 kms from Tura on the Tura Guwahati road is an ideal picnic spot.

IMILCHANG DARE (West Garo Hills District)

A waterfall of immense visual beauty is to be found close to the Tura-Chokpot Road in West Garo Hills district. The stream on which it is located, flows through a deep, narrow winding bed of crevice rocks till it suddenly emerges on to a broad wide opening and cascades in a thick, wide formation, over a broad chasm, creating an electrifying waterfall of unique beauty. The deep, wide pool at the bottom of the fall with its wide and expansive surroundings make it an exciting swimming pool, full of fish of varied size and colour, besides being an ideal picnic spot.

PELGA FALLS (West Garo Hills District)

Pelga falls located at the distance of 7 kms from Tura has become increasingly hot spot for anglers and picnickers in recent years. The tourism developed this place by constructing a footpath and view point. A typical traditional Garo bamboo bridge constructed over Ganol river is another added attraction.

RONGBANG DARE (West Garo Hills District)

Is another attractive tourist spot in West Garo Hills which can be easily viewed from Tura-Williamnagar PWD Road and the roadside near Rongbang dare virtually becomes mini bazaar in recent years where the Garos can dispose off their agriculture products besides running their indigenous food and tea stalls.

SASATGRE VILLAGE (West Garo Hills District)

Located on the hilly crescent-like saddle, at the foot of the Nokrek peak, in the West Garo Hills district, Sasatgre village is accessible by a jeepable road from Oragitok village which lies on the Tura-Asanangre-Williamnagar State highway.

Sasatgre has been blessed by nature in so far as orange plantations are concerned and the village is surrounded by healthy, dark green orange bushes, which are highly productive. The village now falls on the periphery of the Nokrek Gene Sanctuary-cum-Biosphere Reserve.

BHAITBARI (West Garo Hills District)

This small sleeping hamlet of Bhaitbari came into national focus when ruins of ancient kingdom dating back to 4-8 A.D. were discovered here a few years ago. This place is just 8 kms. from Phulbari near Assam border and is nearer via plains road along Assam border.

RANGAPANI (West Garo Hills District)

40 kms from Tura, near Mankachar on the Assam border there still lies the earthly remains of the great general Mir-Jumla the army general of great Moghul Emperor Aurangzeb. Mir-jumla died of malaria while returning from his excursions to the North - East. His tomb maintained by the local Muslim association lies in this village.

WILLIAMNAGAR (East Garo Hills District)

Named after the 1st Chief Minister of Meghalaya, Capt. Williamson Sangma, this riverine town built on the curve of Simsang river is the Headquarters of East Garo hills. It is 313 kms from Shillone via Guwahati and is 76 kms from Tura.

RONGRENGGIRI (East Garo Hills District)

5 kms from Williamnagar, is noted for being the last battle field where the Garos bravely resisted the British.

SISOBIBRA (East Garo Hills District)

12 kms away from Williamnagar on the Tura Williamnagar road, a beautiful place on the banks of Simsang River is of historical importance, for it was here the legendary hero Togan Sangma along with his co-patriot Gilsang Dalbot fell to the bullets of the British soldiers while bravely resisting them. A memorial has been erected at the place where the warriors fell down. District Council has constructed a twin cottage near the memorial place where visitors can stay.

ADOKGRE (East Garo Hills District)

10 kms from Duphdara on the Assam border, Adokgre was the first camp in Garo Hills when the Garos coming from Tibet under the leadership of Jappa-Jalimpa arrived the promised land of Garo Hills. It was here that they distributed the land according to their Machongs(clan).

NAKA-CHIKONG (East Garo Hills District)

15 kms from Duphdara, it is a big rock with deep hollows, in the middle of Ildek river in Badaka village just 3kms from Adokgre, this big rock is mythologically believed to be swarming with fishes, you can get tons of fishes any season of the year, but there is one belief, if any one inadvertently touches the big rock under whose hole the fishes are, all fishes immediately disappear from the river. The Hindus consider this a sacred place and regularly come here for worship and picnic.

RESUBELPARA (East Garo Hills District)

15 kms from Williamnagar Sub-Divisional head quarter of Resu Sub-Division; there is a hot spring here.

NAPAK (East Garo Hills District)

45 kms from Williamnagar there is a lake formed by damming of the upper tributary of a river during the great earth quake in 1897. Napak was once the land of the spirit until one woman working in the Jhum accidentally killed a spirit's baby. The spirits feeling insecure then migrated to Balpakram where they settled till now.

BAGHMARA (South Garo Hills District)

Baghmara the head quarter of South Garo Hills District is a fast growing township. It is situated on the banks of Simsang river on the international Bangladesh border. Nearby just below the picturesque Dilsa hill, the State Tourism Department has constructed a Tourist bungalow.

BAGHMARA RESERVE FOREST (South Garo Hills District)

At a distance of about 4 kilometers from the main town of Baghmara, this thick forest is inhabited by langurs, birds of different species, elephants, etc. Many tourists have reported sighting herds of elephants as they travel from Baghmara to Balpakram National Park via Baghmara Reserve Forest.

NENKONG (South Garo Hills District)

14 kms north of Baghmara is the well known caves Tetengkol, which balwakol measuring 5,33kms in length is one of the longest cave in the Indian Sub-continent. The other cave is Dobakkol Chibe Nala almost 2kms long and another, a little over 1 km long called Bok-bak dobakkol are also in the vicinity of the area.

SIJU (South Garo Hills District)

132 kms from Tura, Siju is famous for Dobakkol or the bat cave with impressive stalagmites and stalagtites. It is one of the longest caves in the Indian Sub-continent and contains some of the finest river passages to be found anywhere in the world. There are magnificent limestone rock formations inside, epecially named princes, Di's chamber by the excavators will fill any visitor with awe. Close by on the other side of Simsang River is the Siju bird sanctuary, a home for many rare and protected birds and other wildlife. The Siberian ducks also migrated here during the winter months. At the entrance to this bird sanctuary after a steep climb of nearly 1 km there is a stretch of fantastic rock formations that will take your breath away.

BALPAKRAM (South Garo Hills District)

The literal meaning of Balpakram is the "land of perpetual winds". There is a great precipice or deep gorge in Balpakram and is popularly compared to the Grand Canyon of U.S.A. It is believed that here, the spirits of the dead dwell temporarily before embarking on the final journey. Balpakram is sacred to the Garos as the abode of the dead spirits. As mentioned earlier, the Garos are deeply spiritual and believe in myths as interesting and awe-some as the Greeks mythlogics. In support of their beliefs, Balpakram has many mysterious and unnatural phenomena that cannot be satisfactorily explained by modern science and logic.

Some of these mysterious sites are Boldak matchu karam, Chidimak, Matchru, Areng patal, Goncho Dare, Dikini ring, Rongsaljong Agal, Rongsobok Rongkol.

Apart from the above mentioned sites there are many mysterious places which you can explore yourself. Indeed Balpakram is so steeped in myths that even the Hindus believe that it is a sacred place. They believe that when Laxman was seriously injured during the war with Ravana and a very rare life saving herb was required, Hanuman found it here but not knowing which to take also in his haste to return, broke the top of the hills and carried it away. The missing portion of that hill became a deep awning canyon. Balpakram has been declared a National Park some years ago. This place is about 220 sq kms in area and is 167 kms from Tura. This place is not only of mythological importance but also the natural habitat of many rare and exotic animals and plant life. It is also believed to be the original home of the rare citrus plant Me-mang Narang. Balpakram is exquisitely beautiful when ground orchids are in bloom. The best time to see is from April to mid June. There is the guest house at Hattisil at the entrance to Balpakram run by the Forest Department.

EMANGRE (South Garo Hills District)

This is the only village where the traditional wood carving on the posts and beams of the "Nokpante" or the bachelor's dormitory still survives.

DOMBEWARE (South Garo Hills District)

3 kms from Eman Asakgre there is a legendary lake on top of the hill believed to have been created by a merman when he eloped away with a beautiful wife of one boastful man. Some people say Bombe, the beautiful woman is still alive in the underground water Kingdom.

SIMSANG RIVER

Simsang River starts from Nokrek peak and runs towards east, passing through Rongrengiri, Williamnagar, the headquarters of East Garo Hills district, Nongalbibra, Siju, Rewak and finally Baghmara, the headquarters of South Garo Hills district. Simsang river is known as Someshwari when it enters Bangladesh at Baghmara is the most magnificent and most prominent.

Shillong to (in Kms)

Myllem	13	Williamnagar	312
Mawphlang	24	Tura	323
Umsning	30	Betasing	370
Umroi	35	Dadengiri	377
Mawryngkneng	37	Baghmara (via Tura)	445
Mairang	44		
Mawkynrew	46		
Sohra	49		
Nongpoh	53		
Pynursla	55		
Mawsynram	58		
Jowai	66		
Umling	70		
Mawkyrwat	74		
Nongstoin	93		
Shella	93		
Amlarem	93		
Khliehriat	100		