

From Thar to the Top

**Building Businesses
Carrying Legacies**



RAJASTHAN BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL GROUP, UAE

METEORA DEVELOPERS

Praveen Sharma is Meteora's Founder and Chief Executive Officer. As the leader of a diverse team, he focuses on business management and strategy to support the projects developed by the firm. Praveen has had the opportunity to be a part of the Big 4 firms in senior financial roles and has also been on the client-side as well as an investor and owner's representative in the property markets

As CEO of Meteora, armed with an experience spanning 25 years in Dubai, Mr. Sharma focuses on managing the ongoing relationships with Meteora's equity partners; sourcing new capital relationships; providing direct management oversight of Meteora's investment management; and investigating and recommending new business lines for Meteora.

He assembled, and continues to build, an outstanding team and leads the development of the Company's core business strategy, which features the continuous repositioning and strategic upgrading of the portfolio, emphasizing high-quality properties in central locations serving tenants globally. Furthering the services in this sector and as an extension of Meteora Developers' core business, he launched Maisour - a crowd funding platform in the business of fractional ownership of real estate properties.



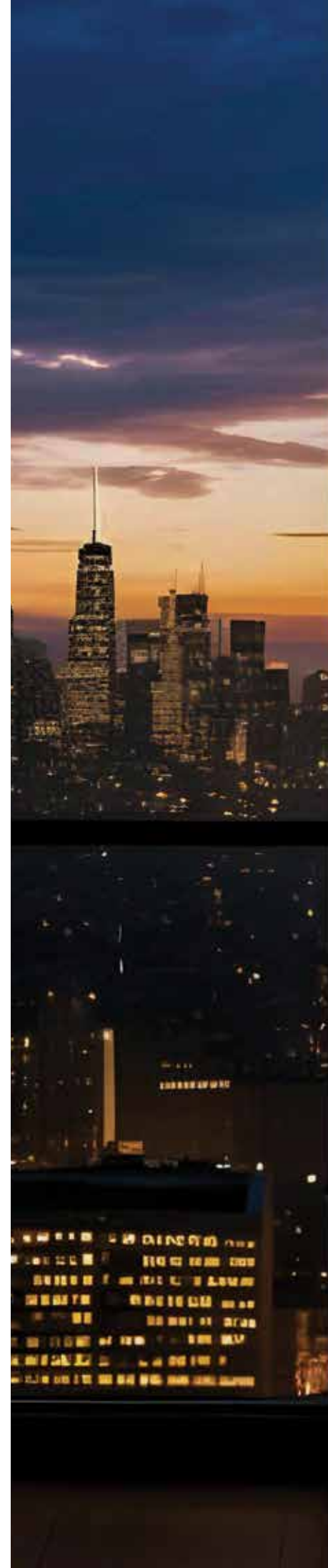
Praveen Sharma,
Group CEO & Founder,
Meteora & Maisour.

Given his successful track record and industry expertise, Mr. Sharma is frequently cited and interviewed by leading media outlets regarding the real estate marketplace. Along with other citations, he was also recognized as an 'Icon of UAE', awarded by the India Today Group. Under his leadership, Meteora Developers also won the Ultimate Realty Award for Best Customer Service in 2024. A long-time supporter of philanthropic activities, he has pledged significant funds for CSR initiatives to benefit children with special needs, labourers, construction workers and also our environment through aggressive drive to plant trees,

A strong proponent of Arts and Culture, Mr. Sharma has also established the brand 'Meteora Developers Presents' under Meteora Developers and has brought sell-out concerts by famed Bollywood artists such as Asha Bhosle, Arijit Singh, Alka Yagnik, Kumar Sanu, Udit Narayan, Abhijeet Bhattacharya, Rahat Fateh Ali Khan and Jubin Nautiyal along with Grammy winning artists Snarky Puppy, 50Cents, Akon, Nayo, Arrested Development and the likes.

Meteora Developers and Maisour jointly supported the International Indian Film Academy Awards (IIFA) 2024 - the widely watched and the biggest award show honoring Indian Cinema. The three-day extravaganza held at Abu Dhabi attracted the who's who of not only of Bollywood and all mainstream regional cinemas of India; it also was attended by prominent people residing in the UAE.

An avid golfer himself, Mr. Sharma also owns the golf team 'Meteora Magicians' and was instrumental in hosting Season 2 of the World Tennis League featuring a stellar line-up including WTA world No. 1 Iga Swiatek, No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka as well as world No. 4 Elena Rybakina, men's world No. 3 Daniil Medvedev, Andrey Rublev and Stefano Tsitsipas. His strategic decision to be the owners of the cricket team England Champions in the World Championship of Legends (WCL), 2024 has further catapulted the recognition and popularity of both Meteora Developers and Maisour brands globally.



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ABOUT RAJASTHAN BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL GROUP (RBPG)

The Rajasthan Business & Professional Group (RBPG) serves as a leading platform that connects entrepreneurs, business professionals, and thought leaders with roots in Rajasthan. It aims to offer resources, support, and opportunities that helps members achieve their goals, while contributing to the overall growth and prosperity of Rajasthan's business landscape



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BOARD MEMBERS & TRUSTEES

The Board Members and Trustees of RBPG are the pillars of the organization, providing strategic leadership and governance. With their expertise and commitment, they guide RBPG in achieving its vision, fostering growth, and empowering professionals and entrepreneurs from Rajasthan

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EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

They oversee daily operations, implement strategic plans, and coordinate events, ensuring the smooth functioning of RBPG. They play a vital role in driving the organization's goals and supporting its members

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MEMBERS

The members of RBPG are a diverse group of professionals, entrepreneurs, and business leaders with strong ties to Rajasthan

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RBPG members are a skilled and accomplished group, bringing diverse talents from various industries. Their expertise and achievements inspire growth and excellence within the community

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EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

A visual showcase of RBPG's vibrant events and activities, including business forums, workshops, cultural celebrations, festivities and CSR initiatives.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



From Thar to the Top

QUOTES BY THE UAE PRESIDENT



Our responsibility is to secure a bright future for our youth, and achieving that depends on the work and effort we put in today.

**H.H SHEIKH MOHAMMED
BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN**

President of the United Arab Emirates



One of the most important lessons from both ancient and contemporary history is that the progress of countries, peoples and civilizations starts with education. The future of nations starts in their schools.

H.H SHEIKH MOHAMMED BIN RASHID AL MAKTOUM

**Ruler of Dubai, Vice President and
Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates**





It is a matter of pride for all of us that India has become the fifth largest economy of the world, and we are set to soon be among the top three economies of the world. This success has been possible only due to the tireless hard work of farmers and workers, farsightedness of policy makers and entrepreneurs and the visionary leadership of the country

**SMT DROUPADI
MURMU**

President of India



“

The world is seeing India with a ray of hope and our diaspora can play a crucial role in further spreading it. The Indian community does not settle abroad to enter into politics or take a seat in the global politics. Wherever they go, they think and act towards benefit of the society.

SHRI NARENDRA MODI

Prime Minister of India





From Thar to the Top

MESSAGE FROM CHIEF MINISTER OF RAJASTHAN



CHIEF MINISTER
RAJASTHAN

Message

Rajasthan is a land of rich heritage, vibrant culture, and indomitable spirit. From the timeless sands of the Thar desert to the dynamic vision of a Viksit Rajasthan, our State has been a beacon of resilience, progress and innovation.

The journey of Rajasthan, as captured in this book beautifully reflects our State's transformation. This book not only delves into our historical roots and cultural richness but also highlights the incredible achievements of Rajasthanis across the globe, especially in the UAE.

Non-Resident Rajasthanis (NRR) and their organisations such as Rajasthan Business & Professional Group (RBPG) have played a pivotal role in this journey, aligning their mission and objectives with our vision of Viksit Bharat and Viksit Rajasthan.

As we look forward to a bright and prosperous future, I am confident that this book will serve as an inspiring testament to our past as well as limitless possibilities that lie ahead.

My best wishes to the Board of Directors, Trustees, and all members of RBPG.

(Bhajan Lal Sharma)



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دبي

CONSUL GENERAL OF INDIA
DUBAI

November 20, 2024

MESSAGE

It is my privilege to convey my best wishes to the Rajasthan Business & Professional Group (RBPG) on the release of your Coffee Table Book.

RBPG has played a remarkable role in fostering strong ties among the Non-Resident Rajasthani community in the UAE, promoting business collaboration, and celebrating the vibrant cultural heritage of Rajasthan. Your commitment to strengthening the bonds between Rajasthan and India with the UAE is truly commendable.

I am confident that this will inspire many and further strengthen the bonds between our communities.

Wishing the RBPG continued success in all its endeavors.


(Satish Sivan)





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आयुक्त



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राजस्थान फाउण्डेशन
राजस्थान सरकार

Foreword

It gives me immense pleasure and pride to extend my warmest greetings to the Rajasthan Business & Professional Group (RBPG), Dubai on the launch of their first Coffee Table Book *'From Thar to the Top.'*

Rajasthan, with its rich heritage, vibrant culture and enterprising spirit has long been a source of inspiration. The Rajasthani Diaspora scattered across the globe continues to uphold this legacy with distinction and pride. This Coffee Table Book *'From Thar to the Top'* beautifully encapsulates the remarkable journey of our people, celebrating their achievements and unwavering determination to excel, no matter where they are.

RBPG has been instrumental in strengthening the bonds within the Rajasthani community in the UAE. Their unwavering dedication to enhancing trade and investment between Rajasthan and the UAE, while elevating Rajasthan's reputation globally, is commendable.

This Coffee Table Book stands as a testament to the strength, vision and global reach of the Rajasthani Diaspora. It symbolizes a connection between our rich traditions and bold aspirations, paving the way for future generations to build upon. I am confident that this book will inspire readers from all walks of life, sparking pride and ambition in equal measure.

I extend my best wishes to RBPG, its office bearers and members for this outstanding accomplishment and look forward to witnessing their continued success in the years ahead.

Best Wishes!

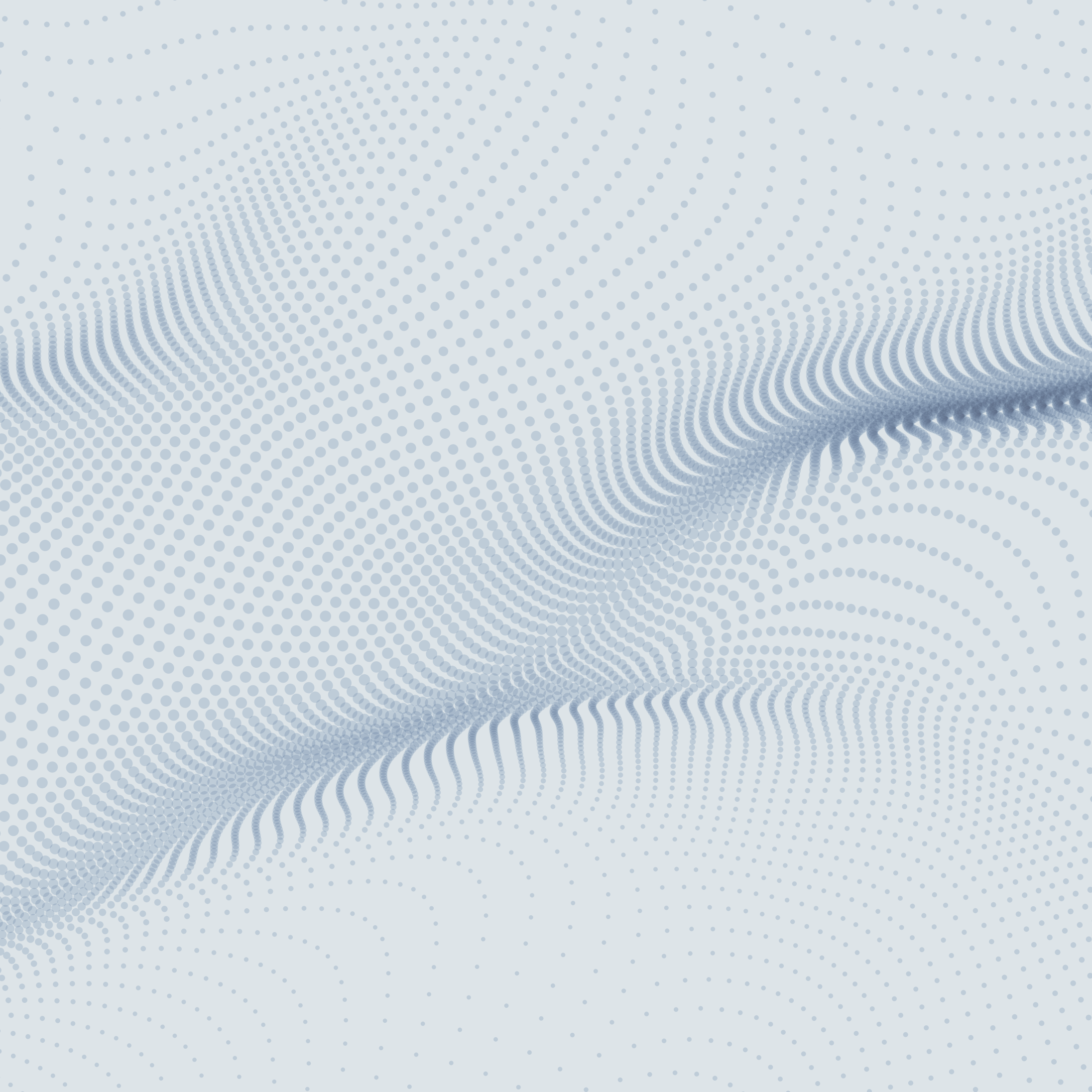

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Shri Ashok Odhrani
Chairman - Rajasthan Business and
Professional Group, UAE



This book is a visual odyssey, celebrating the vibrant tapestry of Rajasthani culture through the lens of our thriving community in Dubai.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

It is with great pleasure and pride that we present to you this magnificent coffee table book. This publication is not just a collection of pages, it is a visual odyssey of the vibrant tapestry of Rajasthani culture, as seen through the lens of our thriving community in Dubai.

As members of the Rajasthan Business and Professional Group (RBPG) in Dubai, we stand at the intersection of two rich cultures, of heritage meeting innovation, of age-old traditions finding new expressions in a modern landscape.

From the golden sands of Rajasthan to the gleaming towers of Dubai, we have carried with us the values of hard work, integrity, and entrepreneurship that are the hallmarks of our culture and carved

out our paths in business and professional spheres.

Each photograph and narrative in this book is a testament to the threads of our Rajasthani identity that we have woven into the cosmopolitan fabric of Dubai, celebrating our identity, shared values, and the bonds that unite us across borders.

May the spirit of our Rajasthani oasis continue to shine brightly in the heart of Dubai, inspiring generations to come.

With warm Regards and Best wishes,

Shri Ashok Odhrani
Chairman - Rajasthan Business and
Professional Group, UAE



From Thar to the Top

FOREWORD - PRESIDENT



CA Harikishan Rankawat
President, RBPG



In just seven years, RBPG has become a vibrant platform where social bonds and business relationships flourish, showcasing our culture and expanding opportunities for all

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It gives me great pleasure and pride to announce that the Rajasthan Business and Professional Group LLC (RBPG), UAE, has successfully completed 7 remarkable years since its inception. In this time, RBPG has truly created a "Rajasthan in Dubai" and extended its influence to "Rajasthan for the World."

Through this vibrant platform, thousands of Rajasthani residents have strengthened social bonds, forged meaningful business relationships, and celebrated our rich cultural festivals together. Notably, we held a strategic meeting with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), opening numerous avenues for our members to invest in Rajasthan. In turn, CII members have expressed interest in investing and doing business in Dubai and across the UAE.

This year has been exceptional on both the family and social fronts. Our Kavi Sammelan event was the highlight of the year, showcasing the beauty of our heritage. We were also honored to hold a special meeting with our trustees and the new Honorable Consul General of India, His Excellency Satish Kumar Sivan.

During the year 2024, we have organized total 15 events including Members Business Networking Events, Rajasthan delegation summit, Corporate Tax event, NRI Tax event, Indoor Sports event including Deepotsav 2024 event till 13th October 2024.

Moving forward, we will organize many more events and remain committed to collaborating with the global Rajasthani diaspora, the Government of Rajasthan, and, of course, the Rulers and Government of the UAE.

As proud Rajasthani ambassadors, we embody the rich traditions and culture of our homeland, and with unwavering dedication, we continue to contribute to the prosperity of the land we now call home. I wish you and your family, a very Happy New year and request each one of you to bring at least one new member to RBPG so that we can double our members strength during the year 2025.

Thank you and kind regards,

CA Harikishan Rankawat
President, RBPG



Dr. Romit Purohit
Trustee & Vice President, Rajasthan Business
and Professional Group (RBPG)



This coffee table book captures the essence of a community that has carried its heritage from the sands of the Thar Desert to the heights of success in the UAE

VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Khamma Ghani,

Rajasthan is a land where dreams take shape in the form of architectural marvels, vibrant colors, exquisite handicrafts, and a rich cultural heritage. Imagine palaces and forts built with intricate detail, bustling towns filled with the hum of life, wildlife sanctuaries teeming with diversity, and festivals that burst with energy. Rajasthan captures all of this and more, offering a glimpse into a world where tradition meets modernity. Even as the vestiges of its royal past turn sepia, the state continues to enchant travelers with its timeless allure.

Rajasthan narrates stories of chivalry, valor, and royal extravagance—tales of dynasties and rulers as if they were from just yesterday. For food lovers, Rajasthan is a paradise. This ancient state, with over 5,000 years of history, presents a rich tapestry of cultural diversity and culinary delights. Each town offers unique recipes that reflect its heritage, from the iconic ker sangri and daal baati churma to Jodhpur's mawa kachori, Alwar's mawa, Bikaneri rasgullas, and Pushkar's malpuas.

When this rich cultural heritage is transplanted to the United Arab Emirates, it creates a vibrant mosaic of diversity and excitement. The UAE is home to a thriving Rajasthani community that has made significant contributions to the country's business and professional landscape. This community includes over 500 Chartered Accountants, 400 Doctors, 100 Entrepreneurs, 350 Firms, 90 Developers, 200 Restaurant Owners, 100 Educationists, 40 Tourism Firms, 150 home-based businesses, and 100 artists, among others. Together, they form a remarkable part of the UAE's business fraternity, accounting for nearly 12.5% of it. Since its inception in 2016, the Rajasthan Business and Professional Group (RBPG) has grown to over 1,200

members. This group has become a cornerstone of UAE's infrastructure development, with 40% of the skilled blue-collar workforce coming from Rajasthan. Their expertise and dedication have contributed significantly to the growth of the UAE, creating an economy within an economy.

For me, being born in Rajasthan is a privilege, and being involved with the Rajasthani community in the UAE is an honor. For the past 42 years, I have been culturally and socially connected with some of the best business and professional minds. My father, Dr. Shive Krishna Purohit, a well-known social figure, established our roots in the UAE, making it our second home. Today, as a member of the Board of Trustees and the current Vice President of RBPG, I am fortunate to engage with our community members, fostering trade, investment, and opportunities that promote Rajasthani cultural values and strengthen social bonds. As Vice President, my role allows me to stay connected to my roots while helping others grow and evolve within this vibrant community.

"From Thar to the Top" is not merely a coffee table book; it is a testament to the journey of the Rajasthani community in the UAE. This book is a celebration of "Being Rajasthani" in a foreign land, showcasing the evolution of generations who have stayed together and thrived. It chronicles the stories of professionals, entrepreneurs, and social workers, highlighting the rich cultural growth and diversity that the Rajasthani community has brought to the UAE. This book is a symbol of pride, capturing the essence of a community that has successfully transplanted its heritage from the sands of the Thar Desert to the heights of success in the UAE.

Dr. Romit Purohit
Trustee & Vice President, Rajasthan Business
and Professional Group (RBPG)

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<p>7N 8D</p>  <p>Exciting Eastern Europe Visit Hungary, Slovakia, Austria & Czech Republic</p>	<p>9N 10D</p>  <p>London, Scotland & Ireland Visit London, Manchester, Lake Windermere, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Belfast & Dublin</p>	<p>9N 10D</p>  <p>Scenic Scandinavia Visit Finland, Estonia, Sweden, Norway & Denmark</p>	<p>11N 12D</p>  <p>Highlights of Europe Visit France, Germany, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, Vatican & Italy</p>

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<p>4N 5D</p>  <p>Kenya Wildlife Safari Visit Nairobi, Masai Mara & Lake Naivasha</p>	<p>4N 5D</p>  <p>Amazing Thailand Visit Pattaya & Bangkok</p>	<p>7N 8D</p>  <p>Wonders of Japan Visit Tokyo, Mt. Fuji, Hiroshima, Nara, Kyoto & Osaka</p>	<p>9N 10D</p>  <p>Scenic New Zealand Visit Auckland, Rotorua, Queenstown & Christchurch</p>
<p>7N 8D</p>  <p>South African Escapade Visit Cape Town, Oudtshoorn, George, Sun City & Johannesburg</p>	<p>9N 10D</p>  <p>Asian Delights with Cruise Visit Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bahru, Singapore & Cruise</p>	<p>10N 11D</p>  <p>Vietnam with Cambodia Visit Da Nang, Hanoi, Ha Long Bay, Siem Reap & Ho Chi Minh</p>	<p>10N 11D</p>  <p>Australian Extravaganza Visit Melbourne, Cairns, Gold Coast & Sydney</p>

AMERICA

<p>10N 11D</p>  <p>South American Delights Visit Rio De Janeiro, Iguassu Falls, Lima, Cusco & Buenos Aires</p>	<p>11N 12D</p>  <p>Grand Bargain America Visit San Francisco, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Niagara, Hershey, New York & Washington D.C.</p>	<p>12N 13D</p>  <p>Canadian Delights Visit Toronto, Niagara, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City, Calgary, Jasper, Kamloops, Whistler & Vancouver</p>
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About Rajasthan Business & Professional Group (RBPG)

Rajasthan Business & Professional Group (RBPG) is the official business and professional group of the people of Rajasthan living in the UAE. It has been created to unite and help the Non-Resident Rajasthani community as well as promote business and community activities among the people of Rajasthan.

One of its core objectives is to foster greater economic, social and cultural relations between Rajasthan and the UAE. In order to achieve this, RBPG seeks greater cooperation between the business community of Rajasthan and the UAE to increase the flow of trade and investment. It is playing a role in increasing the engagement between the business communities of Rajasthan and the UAE by exchanging business delegations, create awareness on the economic opportunities in both the economy.

Diasporas play an important role in the economic development of their own countries. Beyond remittances, they also play a crucial role in promoting trade and investment, create business

opportunities, spur entrepreneurship and transfer knowledge and skills.

Rajasthan is the largest state in India, occupying more than ten percent of the land area of India. It is also the seventh largest economy in India – when compared to the other states. The Government of Rajasthan is attracting large-scale foreign investment into the state and it also invites UAE investors to invest in the state. The government is offering good incentives to foreign investors to invest in manufacturing and industrial sectors that will create employment in the state.

RBPG was founded in June 2017 by Shri Dinesh Kothari, Shri G.R. Mehta, and Shri Kesar Kothari with the vision of uniting overseas Rajasthanis into a cohesive business and social community. Their primary aim was to create a platform for fostering connections among the diaspora while giving back to their homeland. Today, RBPG is led by a dynamic leadership team, including Chairman Shri Ashok Odhrani, President CA Harikishan Rankawat, Board Member Shri Gul

Vision

- To inspire, evolve, innovate, create, and foster Rajasthan's spirit and values in the UAE for generations to come.

Mission

- RBPG is committed to fostering and developing Rajasthan's cultural and socio-economic growth in the UAE, aligning its efforts with Rajasthan Mission 2030.

Vaswani, and Vice President Dr. Romit Purohit, supported by a dedicated executive committee and administrative team.

Initially formed with around 50 members, RBPG has grown significantly over the years from strength to strength. As of February 2024, the group has expanded to include more than 1,000 members and continues to attract more individuals. It is a registered entity with the Government of UAE and the only recognised body by both the Indian Consulate and the UAE Government representing the Rajasthani diaspora. Additionally, RBPG is recognised by the Rajasthan Foundation, Government of Rajasthan, India, for its contributions to the Rajasthani community in the UAE.

Rajasthan has a long history of migration. The traders from Marwar, Shekhawati and adjacent states of Rajasthan migrated to other Indian states and abroad and became one of the most successful business communities of India. They spread to many regions as they expanded their business and trade networks between the 17th and 19th century.

Rajasthani diaspora is a diverse and dynamic global community connected to Rajasthan through ties of culture, heritage, citizenship, and affinity who retain a strong sense of Rajasthani identity.

In size of the emigrant population under the Emigration Check Requirement (ECR), Rajasthan was the third among states in 2019. The total num-



ber of individuals who emigrated from Rajasthan under the ECR category between 2017-2021 was 104,178, which constitutes 8 percent of India's total emigration under this category.

Activities and Achievements

In pursuit of its goals, RBPG has successfully organised numerous business and professional seminars, webinars, social events, including cultural and festive gatherings, CSR activities, and member interaction programs. These initiatives have received overwhelming responses from the Rajasthani community in the UAE, leading to



Diverse Membership and Dynamic Platform

RBPG's diverse membership includes:

- Chartered Accountants
- Doctors
- Engineers
- Entrepreneurs
- Professionals
- Owners of Business Houses
- Consultants
- Artists
- Home-based Women Entrepreneurs
- Eminent Socialites and Philanthropists

RBPG serves as an exceptional networking platform, enabling its members to connect with representatives from leading organisations both regionally and globally. The group facilitates engagement with CEOs, business leaders, entrepreneurs, professionals, government organisations and officials, as well as businesses ranging from small enterprises to multinational corporations. The group acts as a bridge between SMEs, MNCs, corporates, and consulates worldwide.



Objectives Aligned with Rajasthan Mission 2030

Aligned with Rajasthan Mission 2030, RBPG is dedicated to achieving several key objectives:

- **Enhancing Business and Professional Relations:** Strengthening connections among RBPG members to foster collaborative opportunities.
- **Increasing Trade and Investment:** Promoting and facilitating increased trade and investment between Rajasthan (India) and the UAE.
- **Promoting Rajasthani Culture:** Preserving and reviving Rajasthani culture and traditions within the UAE.
- **Strengthening Social Bonds:** Creating a sense of extended family among all Rajasthani residents in the UAE.
- **Assisting Rajasthanis in Distress:** Providing support and assistance to community members facing difficulties.
- **Global Collaboration:** Enhancing social and business relations with Rajasthani associations worldwide.

a significant increase in membership and trusteeship within RBPG.

Since 2022, RBPG has launched several innovative initiatives to further strengthen the community which includes:

The Annual Rajasthan International Premier League (RIPL) - Cricket has become one of the most anticipated events of the year, featuring both indoor and outdoor formats and played to international standards. The league, which started with 4 franchises, grew to 9 by 2023, and aims to reach 12 in 2024.

RBPG has also focused on youth engagement through RBPG 2.0, a platform dedicated to skill development, financial literacy, health and well-being education, and career guidance.

Meanwhile, the Chartered Accountants of Rajasthan (CAR) platform, with nearly 200 members, provides a forum for professionals to exchange ideas and participate in seminars.

To further enhance its reach, RBPG developed a dedicated mobile application in 2022, which allows members to stay updated on news and events, access educational resources, and connect

with one another. This innovative app is unique among community organizations in the UAE.

In addition, RBPG has created Sur Aur Saaz, a music platform that brings together over 120 community members each quarter for gatherings featuring karaoke and traditional Rajasthani cuisine, and Nari Shakti, a platform dedicated to empowering women within the community through cultural, social, and recreational activities.

RBPG has been actively involved in philanthropy and social responsibility. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the group collaborated with the Rajasthan Foundation to provide oxygen cylinders, concentrators, and free online medical consultations. In 2023, some RBPG members adopted villages in Rajasthan to support healthcare campaigns in partnership with the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin and Doctors of Rajasthan International (DORI).

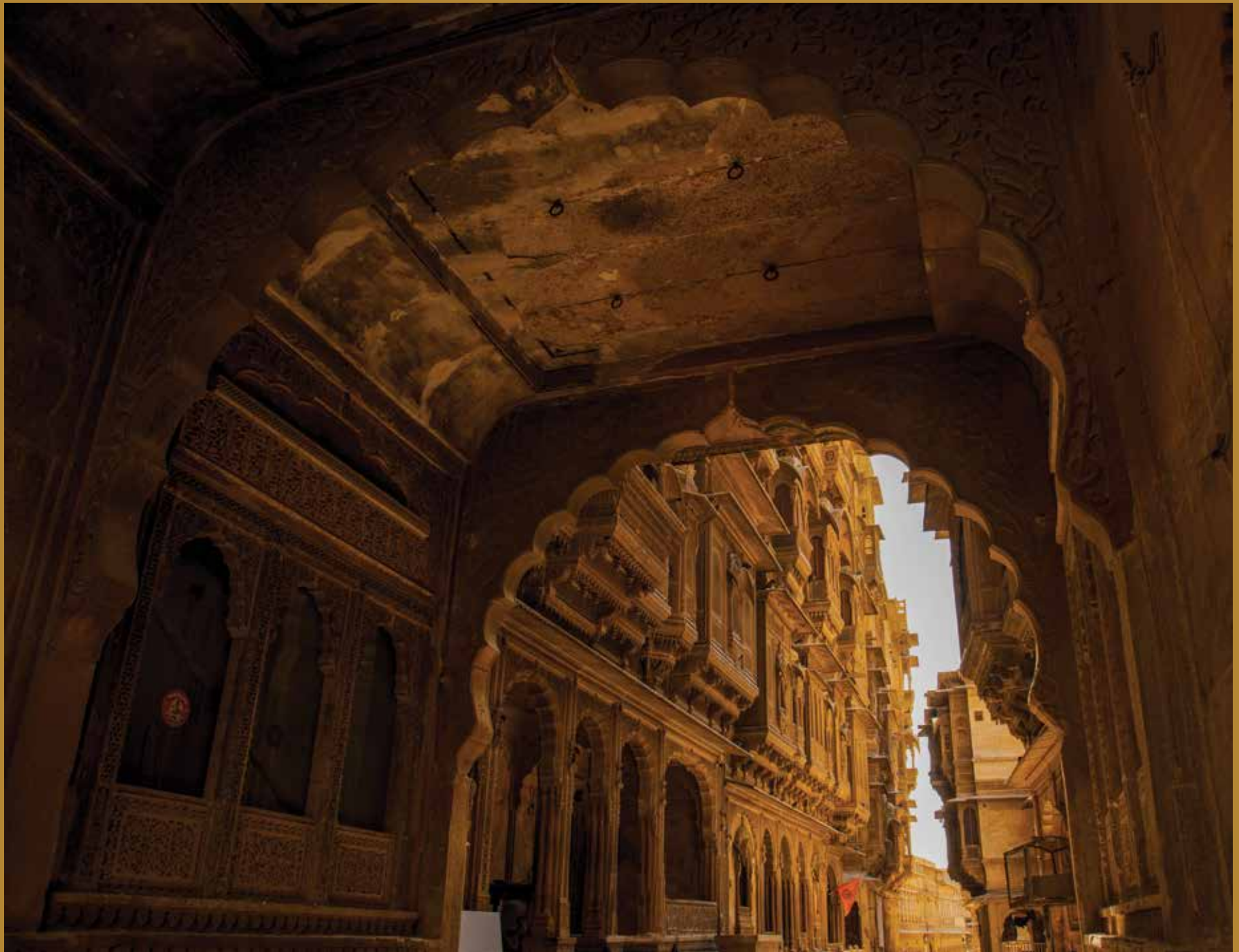
The group has also played a significant role in fostering investment opportunities between the UAE and Rajasthan. In 2022, RBPG led a delegation to the Invest Rajasthan Summit in Jaipur, and in 2024, it will once again lead a delegation to the Non-Resident Rajasthani Conclave under the auspices of Chief Minister Shri Bhajan Lal Sharma. ■







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Discovering RAJASTHAN



The story unfolds...

Hello, my name is Dhola and I am joined here by Maru to take you down memory lane deep into the history, culture and heritage of Rajasthan and perhaps bring you up to speed with the latest developments that are taking place in this historic and cultural place.

Before we take you through this journey, let us tell you a bit about us. I am Dhola, the Prince of Narwar and Maru is my wife from the Kingdom of Pooral. We were married at childhood and after a lot of life-drama and tragedy, I was united with Maru, to live happily ever after. So, here we are, to take you through this journey of re-discovery of Rajasthan.

Since many of you don't have much idea about this beautiful state in India, let me tell you, Rajasthan is a state of forts, palaces, kings, queens, wars, bravery, architecture, rich culture, history, heritage, diversity and vibrant colours. Most of you might recall the image of the Maharaja that was part of Air India livery for a long time. The Maharaja not only symbolises India, but also Rajasthan, in many ways.

You might already know that Rajasthan is an emerging economic powerhouse, but you might be unaware that it will push the India story to the next level, especially if we examine the new developments that is shaping the socio-economic landscape of the state. It is the hidden gem of India that is gradually becoming the new growth engine of India.

Maru, how do we introduce Rajasthan to foreigners? Where do we start?

Dhola, why not start with India first, dear! That would be a good beginning. Let’s start with India and then zoom into the state.

As you might recall, India – ‘One Nation, Countless Destinations’ – used to be the tagline of an advertisement campaign that ran for years, to promote tourism in India. Well, it is true to its real sense. Rajasthan is one of the very many destinations that define India.

There is another way to look at India – ‘Unity in Diversity’ – as it is a country with diverse cultures, ethnicity, languages, religion and political beliefs that all have united under India, which is a country divided into 29 states – most of them have different language, culture and social norms. Despite

these differences, the country remains united and the unity is getting stronger day by day.

There is a saying, “If you haven’t seen India, you haven’t seen the world.” India is more than a continent rich in cultures, religion, diverse ethnicities, nationalities and heritage. Although India is part of a sub-continent, it is, in reality, more than a continent. From Himachal Pradesh in the east to Punjab in the west and from Kashmir in the north to Kanyakumari in the south, India embodies the essence of the great eastern culture.

Similarly, if you have not seen Rajasthan – its northwestern state, you have not seen India, therefore your discovery of India and the world remains incomplete without Rajasthan. Rajasthan is the shorter version of what represents India – its language, people – their ethnicity, cultural diversity, deep-rooted history and heritage enriched

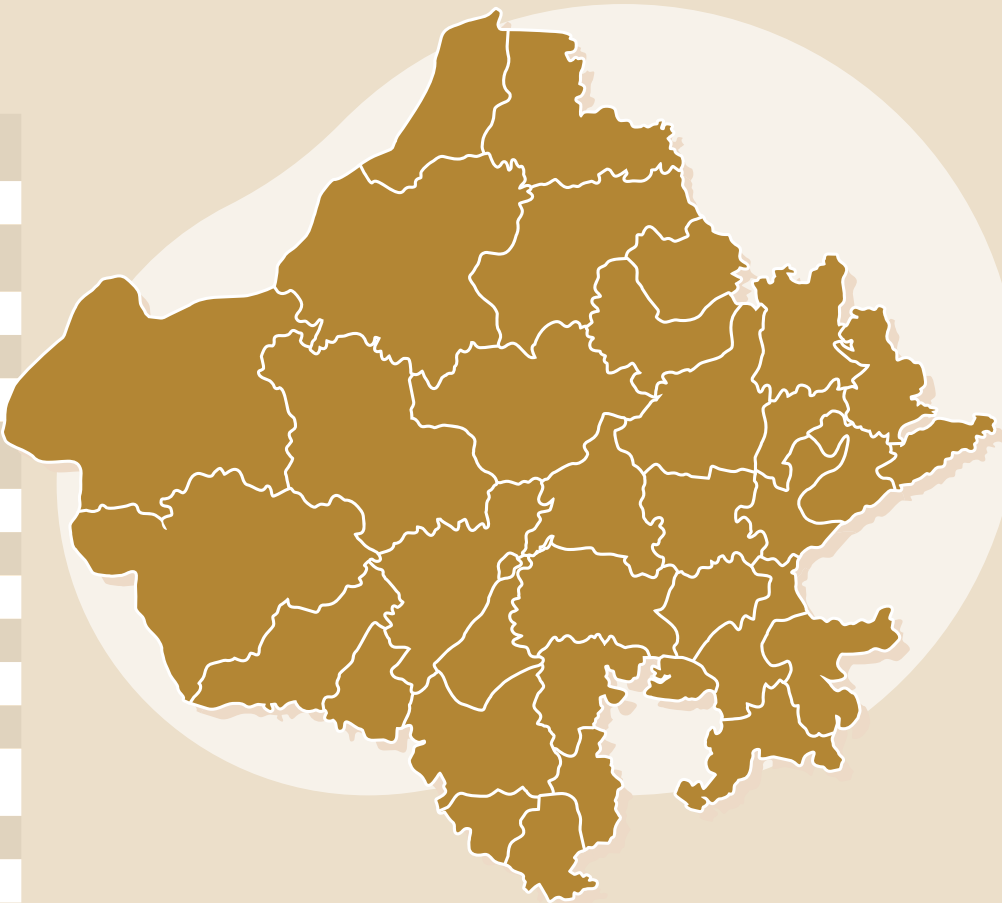
by multiple civilisations, over the course of three millennia. Even in its numerous forts, palaces and vibrant colours – Rajasthan embodies the essence of India and the great East which makes it one of the must-visit destinations in the world. A visit to Rajasthan will give you a peak into the breath-taking grandeur and landscape enriched by forts, palaces, riotous colours and romantic sense of pride and honour.

Dhola, do you know where did the name of the state come from?

Maru, the name ‘Rajasthan’ has been coined with two Hindi words – ‘Raja’ (King) and ‘Sthan’ (Land) – which collectively means the ‘Land of the Kings’. Rajasthani people are of Indo-Aryan origin branched into a number of ethnic groups such as Rajputs, Marwaris, Jats, etc. Rajasthan is also known for its linguistic diversity. The primary lan-

RAJASTHAN FACT-FILE

Name	Rajasthan – or Raja-sthan, the land of the Kings
Establishment	March 30, 1949
Area	342,239 square kilometre (Largest state in India)
Population	82.19 million (2024 projection)
Capital City	Jaipur
Districts	50
Economy	US\$213 billion (INR17.81 trillion – 7th largest economy in India)
Per capita GDP	US\$1,400
Ethnicity	Rajputs, Jats, Marwaris, etc
Chief Minister	Shri Bhajan Lal Sharma
State Legislature	200 seats
Lok Sabha	25 seats
Rajya Sabha	10 seats
Installed Power	43.41 GW (Including 22.41 GW of Solar Power)
Economic Zones	6
UN Heritage Sites	9





From Thar to the Top

guage spoken in Rajasthan is Hindi, which serves as the official language. However, several regional languages and dialects are also widely spoken in the state.

Rajasthan is the largest state in India, spread over 342,239 square kilometres, occupying around 10.4 percent of India's total area. In terms of land area, it is comparatively five times bigger than Sri Lanka, three times bigger than Czechoslovakia, nearly two and a half times bigger than Bangladesh, more than twice the size of England and slightly smaller than Japan. With a population of 82.19 million, it is the seventh most populated state in the country.

It is surrounded on the north and the northeast by Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh, on the east and southeast by Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, and on the southwest by Gujarat. It is the bordering state of India, sharing a large section of India's international border with Pakistan.

Interestingly, the shape of Rajasthan state is like a quadrilateral. The length of the state from north to south is 826 kilometres. And the width from east to west is 869 kilometres. Its land borders are 5,920 kilometres long. Its international border with Pakistan is 1,070 kilometres long that mostly is part of the Thar Desert, or the Great Indian Desert – that is spread across 200,000 square kilometres in India and Pakistan. In terms of land area, it is the world's 18th largest desert.

Politically, Rajasthan is divided into 25 Lok Sabha (Lower House of the Indian Parliament) constituencies and it nominates 10 Rajya Sabha (Upper House) members while the state legislature comprises of 200 members representing 200 constituencies. Administratively, Rajasthan is divided into 50 districts with state capital in Jaipur – also known as the Pink City – and a major tourism destination.

Rajasthan is a land known for bravery and courage that has stories of wars, renunciation, penance and sacrifice, and has been a centre of attraction for tourists since the beginning.

The state is diagonally divided into the hilly and rugged south-eastern region and the barren north-western Thar Desert. There are plenty of historic cities, incredible fortresses awash with legends, and rare gems of impressionistic beauty, such as Udaipur.

DISCOVERING RAJASTHAN

25 Lok Sabha constituencies

Politically, Rajasthan is divided into 25 Lok Sabha constituencies and it nominates 10 Rajya Sabha members while the state legislature comprises of 200 members representing 200 constituencies.

The Aravali Mountain ranges are high and low like a girdle and at some places there are plateaus and plains. The landscape of Rajasthan has also been enriched by the desert, lakes and the mountain ranges. At some places you will find a sea of sand spread for miles and Kurjan birds flying in a row above it, while in some places you will find deep shimmering lakes like Jaisamand, Nakki and fishes frolicking in them.

There are also a number of urban centres that attract travellers from far and wide, such as Jaipur – the state capital that is also known as the Pink City, Pushkar with its holy lake, and the desert city of Jaisalmer, which resembles a fantasy from 'The Thousand and One Nights'. Rajasthan is one of India's prime tourist destinations. The state hosts nine UN Heritage Sites reserved for tourism – one of the largest contributors to the state's economy.

Predominantly an agrarian economy, Rajasthan is known for producing large quantities of crops, oilseeds, milk and other agricultural products. In recent years, investment in infrastructure and industries has changed the state's economy and it is on its way to become a major economic hub.

Rajasthan has a large skilled manpower base. Several premier higher education, engineering, and training institutions are based here that provide human resource capital to multinational companies recruiting throughout the country. These include BITS, Pilani; NIFT, Jodhpur; National

Law University, Jodhpur; IIT, Jodhpur; IIM, Udaipur; AIIMS, Jodhpur; MNIT, Jaipur; and Footwear Design and Development Institute, Jodhpur.

Besides, the state has the largest number of universities – 83 and two dedicated skill universities. Around one-third of India's chartered accountants and cost accountants are from Rajasthan. There are about 1,909 industrial training institutes (ITI), 152 polytechnic institutes, and 237 engineering and technology colleges imparting high-quality education in the state..

THE PEOPLE

Maru, let us introduce the people of the state to our readers. Who are Rajasthani people? How do they look like? What defines the people of Rajasthan? How do you identify them among others?

Yes, sure, Dhola. Go ahead. Let us also introduce the main communities of Rajasthan.

Well, you might have seen the image of a tough-looking tribal woman draped in a colourful saree in the backdrop of sandy desert and a camel. That perhaps represents the common image of the Rajasthani people. It reflects the hardship that is seen in the woman's rugged and tough appearance, as well as the beauty. The hand-crafted saree with colourful stones and glasses woven on it reflects the rich cultural heritage while the camel and the sand dune at the backdrop shows the environment in which the people of Rajasthan live. The toughness on the woman's beautiful face reflects the hardship that the people of Rajasthan have to endure in harsh and extreme desert climatic conditions.

In general, Rajasthani people or Rajasthanis are a group of Indo-Aryan peoples native to Rajasthan. Their language, Rajasthani, is a part of the western group of Indo-Aryan languages.

A walk down memory lane will show the ethnic, cultural, religious and social diversity among the people. The beauty and cultural diversity of Rajasthan emanates from its people who are known for their rich culture, vibrant traditions, heritage and warm hospitality. Rajasthan is famous for its colourful attire, handicrafts, and folklore. It is also known for intricate work and craftsmanship on any surface – from saree and dress materials to woodworks or building walls.

In terms of ethnicity, Rajasthan is home to various ethnic groups, including Rajputs, Meenas, Marwaris, Jats, Bhils, and others, each with its unique customs and traditions. Among various ethnic and social groups, the Rajputs (clans of landowning rulers and their descendants), though representing only a small percentage of Rajasthan's residents, are perhaps the most-notable section of the population in the state.

Aboriginal (tribal) peoples constitute more than one-tenth of the population of Rajasthan. In the eastern part of the state, you will find those groups such as the Mina and Meo – most of whom are farmers; the Banjara, who have been known as traveling traders and artisans; and the Gadia Lohar, another historically itinerant tribe, who traditionally have made and repaired agricultural and household implements.

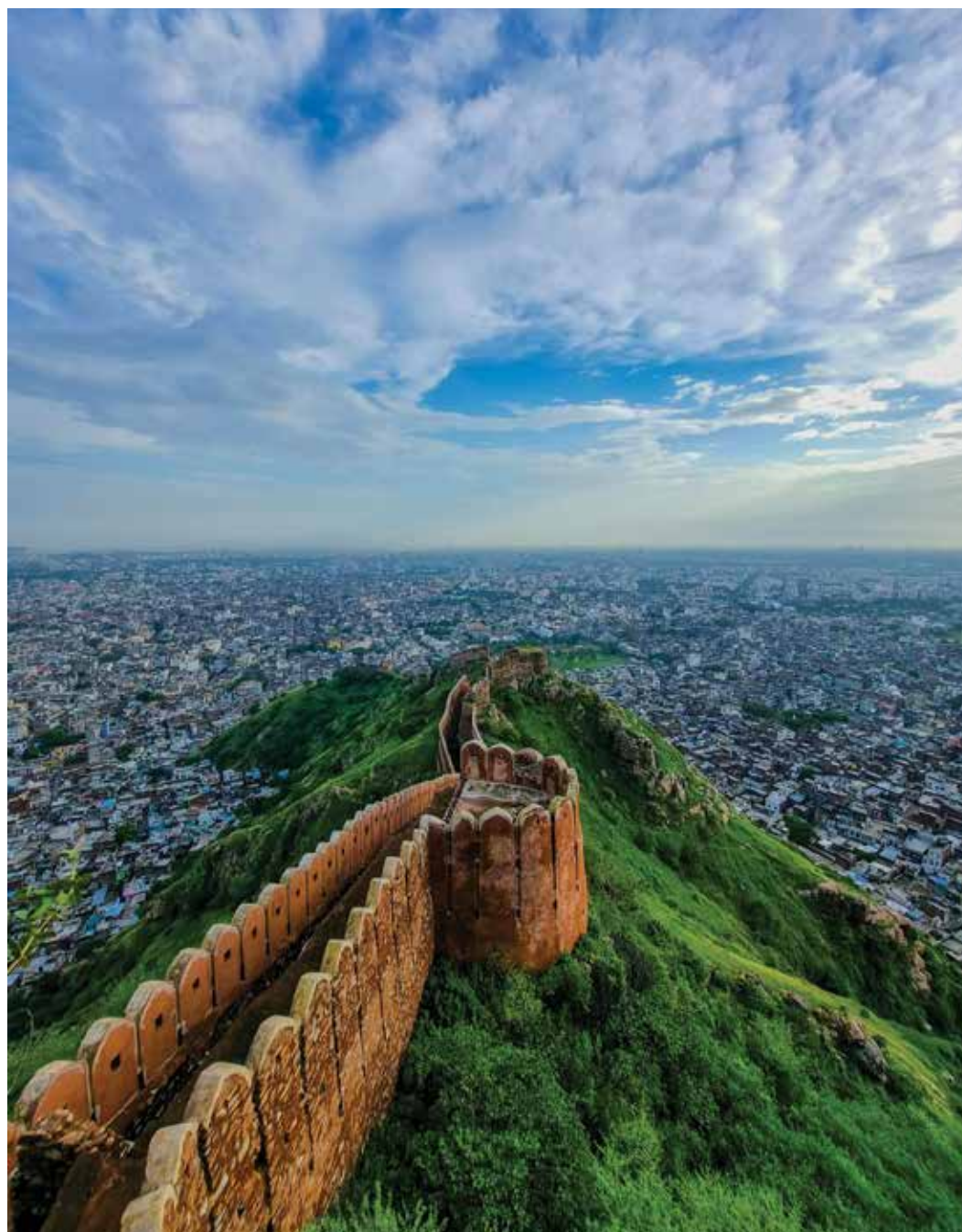
The Bhil, one of the oldest communities in India, generally live in southern Rajasthan and have a history of possessing great skill in archery. The Grasia and Kathodi also largely live in the south, mostly in the Mewar region. Sahariya communities are found in the southeast, and the Rabari, who traditionally are cattle breeders, live to the west of the Aravallis in west-central Rajasthan.

The Marwaris who originate from the Marwar region, are known for their skills in commerce and business.

This particular region is famous for its handicrafts, including block printing, pottery, and jewellery making. The craftsmanship is often showcased in local markets and fairs. Traditional Rajasthani music and dance, such as Ghoomar and Kalbeliya, are integral to cultural celebrations and are characterised by their energetic rhythms and colourful costumes. Rajasthani people are known for their welcoming nature, often treating guests with great respect and generosity.

Overall, the culture of Rajasthan is a vibrant tapestry woven from its history, geography, and the daily lives of its people, making it a fascinating region in India. The Rajasthani people are ethnically diverse, comprising several communities, each with unique cultural practices and traditions. Let us take a look at some of the major ethnic groups:

1. Rajputs: The warrior class of Rajasthan with a rich history of valour and chivalry, Rajputs were at the centre of the state's culture and history. They



Nahargarh Fort

Nahargarh Fort stands on the edge of the Aravalli Hills, overlooking the city of Jaipur. Built mainly in 1734 by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh, the king of Jaipur, the fort was constructed as a place of retreat on the summit of the ridge above the city. Walls extended over the surrounding hills, forming fortifications that connected this fort to Jaigarh, the fort above the old capital of Amber.



From Thar to the Top

DISCOVERING RAJASTHAN

played a crucial role in the region's feudal system and were known for their bravery in battles against invaders. Rajputs belong to various clans, each with its own lineage and history. Prominent clans include the Sisodias, Rathores, and Tomars. They have a rich tradition of folklore, music, and dance, celebrating their history through stories of valour and heroism. Festivals and rituals often reflect their martial heritage. Rajputs were renowned for their grand forts and palaces, many of which are now popular tourist attractions, showcasing their architectural prowess. Rajput society is characterised by a strong sense of honour and pride. Marriages are often arranged within the community to maintain lineage and status.

2. Meenas: An indigenous tribe with a significant historical presence in the region, the Meenas have a rich cultural heritage and are known for their agricultural practices and traditional dances. Traditionally, the Meenas were predominantly agriculturalists and hunters, utilising the forests for sustenance. In contemporary times, many have diversified into various professions and trades, including government services, education, and

business. The Meenas have a well-defined social structure with their own customs and traditions. They are known for their community gatherings and strong kinship ties, vibrant cultural practices, including folk music, dance, and local festivals. One of the significant festivals they celebrate is the 'Teej', which marks the onset of the monsoon season and is associated with various rituals.

3. Bhils: The Bhils are indeed one of India's largest tribal groups, with a rich cultural heritage. Their art forms, particularly the famous Bhil paintings that often depict nature and folklore, are significant aspects of their identity. Music and dance play a vital role in their festivals and rituals, showcasing their vibrant traditions.

Their lifestyle is closely tied to their natural environment, often relying on agriculture, hunting, and gathering. The Bhils have a deep connection to the land and the forests they inhabit, which influences their customs and practices.

The Bhili and Bhilodi languages reflect their unique cultural identity, and many Bhils are bilingual,

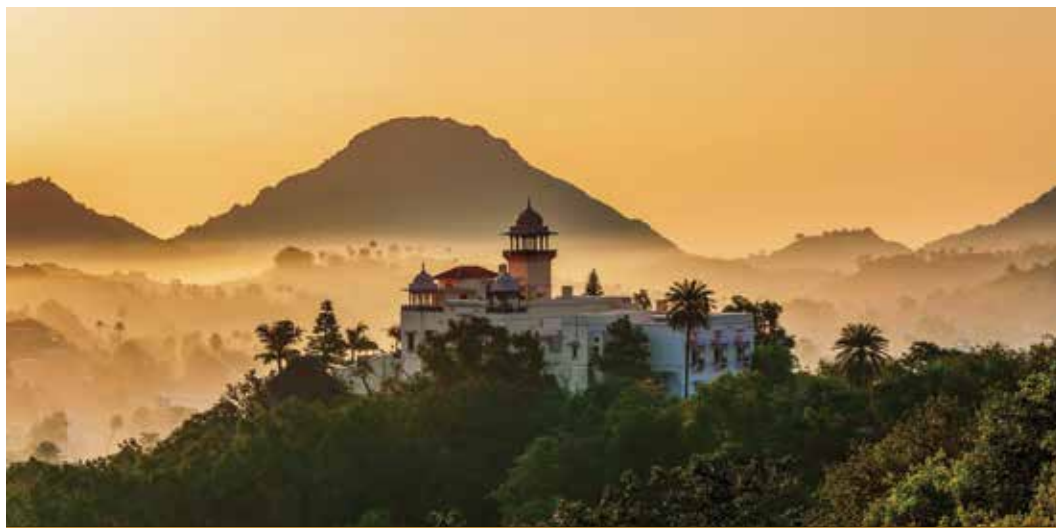
using Hindi or local languages for broader communication. Their communities often face challenges related to modernization and access to resources, but they continue to preserve their age-old traditions while adapting to changing circumstances.

4. Gurjars: Traditionally herders and farmers, the Gurjars are known for their strong community ties and have a significant presence in Rajasthan. They are an important ethnic group primarily found in northern India, particularly in Rajasthan, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh. They have a strong social heritage and play a significant role in the region's agricultural and social landscape. The Gurjars are believed to have originated from the Gurjara region, which encompasses parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat. Historically, they were known as pastoralists and warriors. Gurjars are organized into clans (gotras), each with its own lineage and traditions. This clan-based system governs social interactions and marriages.

5. Jats: Predominantly an agrarian community, the Jats are a significant ethnic group primarily found in northern India, including Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, and parts of Uttar Pradesh. They have a rich cultural heritage and play an important role in the agricultural landscape of India. The origins of the Jats are somewhat debated, with various theories suggesting links to ancient tribes and the Indo-Aryan migration. Historically, they were known as warriors and agriculturists. Jats have played a notable role in various historical events, including resistance against Mughal rule and participation in significant uprisings.

6. Brahmins: This priestly caste plays an important role in the religious and social fabric of Rajasthan, often engaged in education and temple rituals. Traditionally, they are regarded as the priestly class and have played an essential role in religious, educational, and administrative spheres. Brahmins trace their origins to ancient Vedic texts, where they were designated as scholars, priests, and teachers. In Rajasthan, they have historically held positions of influence in royal courts and temples.

7. Banjara: Also known as Lambadis, the Banjara community is known for their vibrant dress and nomadic lifestyle, historically involved in trade and transportation. They are traditionally associated with a semi-nomadic lifestyle and are known for their vibrant culture, colorful clothing, and dis-



Rajasthan's Diverse and Captivating Terrain

The Aravali Mountain ranges are high and low like a girdle and at some places there are plateaus and plains. How unique is the land of Rajasthan, where at some places there is a sea of sand spread for miles and Kurjan birds flying in a row above it, at some places there are deep shimmering lakes like Jaisamand, Nakki and fishes frolicking in them, which attracts the tourists effortlessly.



tinct music and dance forms. Banjara also refers to the language spoken by the Banjara people, which is a mix of several dialects and influences.

8. Kshatriyas: Kshatriyas are one of the four main social classes in Hindu society, traditionally associated with the roles of warriors and rulers. The term "Kshatriya" broadly refers to individuals in the warrior class, which includes Rajputs. While Rajputs are a specific community within the Kshatriya class, the Kshatriyas as a whole have been involved in governance, defense, and warfare throughout Indian history. They encompass various communities and clans across India, each with its unique customs and traditions. Kshatriyas have contributed significantly to Indian culture, including literature, arts, and music, often reflecting their historical roles as protectors and rulers.

9. Marwari: They are a prominent ethnic and cultural group from the Marwar region of Rajasthan, particularly known for their business acumen and entrepreneurial spirit. Marwaris are traditionally known as successful traders and businesspeople. Many prominent Indian industrialists and entrepreneurs hail from this community. Cities like Jodhpur and Udaipur have historically been centres of trade, with Marwaris playing a crucial role in various industries, including textiles, handicrafts, and agriculture. The Marwari language, a dialect of Rajasthani, is widely spoken among the community, although many also speak Hindi and English. Marwari cuisine is vegetarian and includes dishes like dal baati churma, gatte ki sabzi, and various sweets like ghewar and besan chakki. Overall, the Marwari people are an integral part of Rajasthan's identity, contributing significantly to its economy, culture, and social fabric. Their entrepreneurial spirit and cultural richness continue to thrive, making them a vital part of India's diverse heritage. Each of these communities contributes to the rich tapestry of Rajasthani culture, with their own languages, traditions, and customs, making the region one of the most culturally diverse in India..

RAJASTHANI CULTURE

Rajasthan is more famous for its cultural heritage. Over centuries, it has been enriched by many artistic traditions that reflect the ancient Indian way of life. This historical state of India attracts tourists and vacationers with its rich culture, tradition, heritage and monuments.



Diverse Cultural Heritage

The culture of Rajasthan is a vibrant tapestry woven from its history, geography, and the daily lives of its people, making it a fascinating region in India. The Rajasthani people are ethnically diverse, comprising several communities, each with unique cultural practices and traditions.

Its cultural world includes folk music, movies, food and all other essentials that enrich the way of life. The conventions are all dynamic, the history, people, tunes and places. It is the culture of Rajasthan that makes it lovable and royal. Being a part of their 'Atithi Devo Bhava' greeting, in which visitors are regarded equally to God, would make you feel wonderful. Would you like to be a part of this paradise?

Depending on their culture, they celebrate numerous festivals, such as Teej, Diwali, Pushkar Mela (Fair), Kolayat Fair, Kabir Yatra, Kumbhalgarh Festival, Mewar Festival, Brij Holi, Mahashivratri, Ashwa Poojan, and Makar Sankranti, often with elaborate rituals, folk dances, and music.

Each region of Rajasthan has its own culture and it



From Thar to the Top

DISCOVERING RAJASTHAN

is the folk art that has contributed to the development of the culture of Rajasthan. The folk art represents the true culture of Rajasthan and has also helped in preserving it with recreation. One of the most famous art forms is Phad, Pichwai, and Miniature. The first two are done on cloth whereas the third one is done on paper with vegetable dyes. Thewa art is also famous, in which paintings are made of gold on Belgium-coloured dresses.

The folk music of Rajasthan is euphonious and can even make the desert bloom. The sweet, complex and intense lyrics are used during occasions and festivals. The most famous and renowned folk music are ballads which portray stories of bravery, and romance and also serve as a source of refreshment and entertainment in rural and urban areas. The several communities inhabiting the state practice singing as a profes-

sion which has also helped to preserve the culture. Taal Bandi is a good option if you want to hear narration in a distinct style.

RAJASTHANI CUISINE

Dear Maru, since you have spent preparing tasty food for a long time, I am sure you can give our readers a taste of the Rajasthani cuisine?

Sure, Dhola. When it comes to food, we all know that Rajasthani cuisine is renowned for its distinct flavours, featuring dishes like dal baati churma, gatte ki sabzi, and various sweets, such as Ghewar, Malpua and Mawa Kachori. The food often reflects the arid landscape, with ingredients that are readily available. The state is also famous for red chillis. A visit without tasting Rajasthani cuisine and sweets will remain incomplete.

It might not be known to most people that Rajasthani cuisine was influenced by various factors like the warlike lifestyles of its inhabitants, the availability of ingredients in the arid region and by Hindu temple traditions of sampradayas like Pushtimarg and Ramanandi. Food that could last for several days and could be eaten without heating. Scarcity of water and fresh green vegetables have all had their effect on the food habits. Signature Rajasthani dishes include Dal Baati Churma (full meal), Panchratna Dal (pulse), Papad ro Saag (papad curry), Ker Sangri (local curry), Gatte ro Saag (local curry). It is also known for its snacks like Bikaneri bhujia, Mirchi bada and Kanda kachauri (local dishes).

Other famous dishes include Dal Baati, malaidar special lassi (lassi) and Lashun ki chutney (hot garlic paste), Mawa lassi from Jodhpur, Alwar ka mawa, Malpauas from Pushkar and rasgolla from Bikaner, 'paniya' and 'gheriya' from Mewar. Originated in the Marwar region of the state is the concept Marwari Bhojnalaya or vegetarian restaurants, today found in many parts of India, which offer vegetarian food of the Marwari people. The history also has its effect on the diet as the Rajputs preferred majorly a non-vegetarian diet while the Brahmins, Jains, Bishnois and others preferred a vegetarian diet. So, the state has a myriad of both types of delicacies.

More than 74.9 percent of the population in Rajasthan is vegetarian, making it the Indian state with the second highest percentage of vegetarians.

HISTORY

Let's take a trip down memory lane on our history. Dear Maru, could you kindly do the honours?

Sure, dear Dhola. You know, history, heritage and culture combinedly has made Rajasthan what it is today.

Rajasthan's rich and diverse history that dates back thousands of years, is marked by its majestic forts, palaces, and a blend of cultural influences stemming from various dynasties and empires. There are over 300 historic forts in the state, showcasing its royal heritage and architectural brilliance. Some of them are part of the UN World Heritage Site.

If you take a walk in parts of the state, you will see numerous palaces and historic sites that carry



Rajasthan's Soulful Folk Music

The folk music of Rajasthan is euphonious and can even make the desert bloom. The sweet, complex and intense lyrics are used during occasions and festivals. The most famous and renowned folk music are ballads which portray stories of bravery, and romance and also serve as a source of refreshment and entertainment in rural and urban areas. The several communities inhabiting the state practice singing as a profession which has also helped to preserve the culture. Taal Bandi is a good option if you want to hear narration in a distinct style.

the signs of wars, political rivalry, bravery, struggle and resistance against foreign invasion. Local tribes had built forts to protect their communities from foreign occupation. These forts not only serve as popular tourist attractions but also represent the rich cultural era of Rajasthan that has gone by. Each fort has its own unique history and architectural style, contributing to the diversity of the region's heritage.

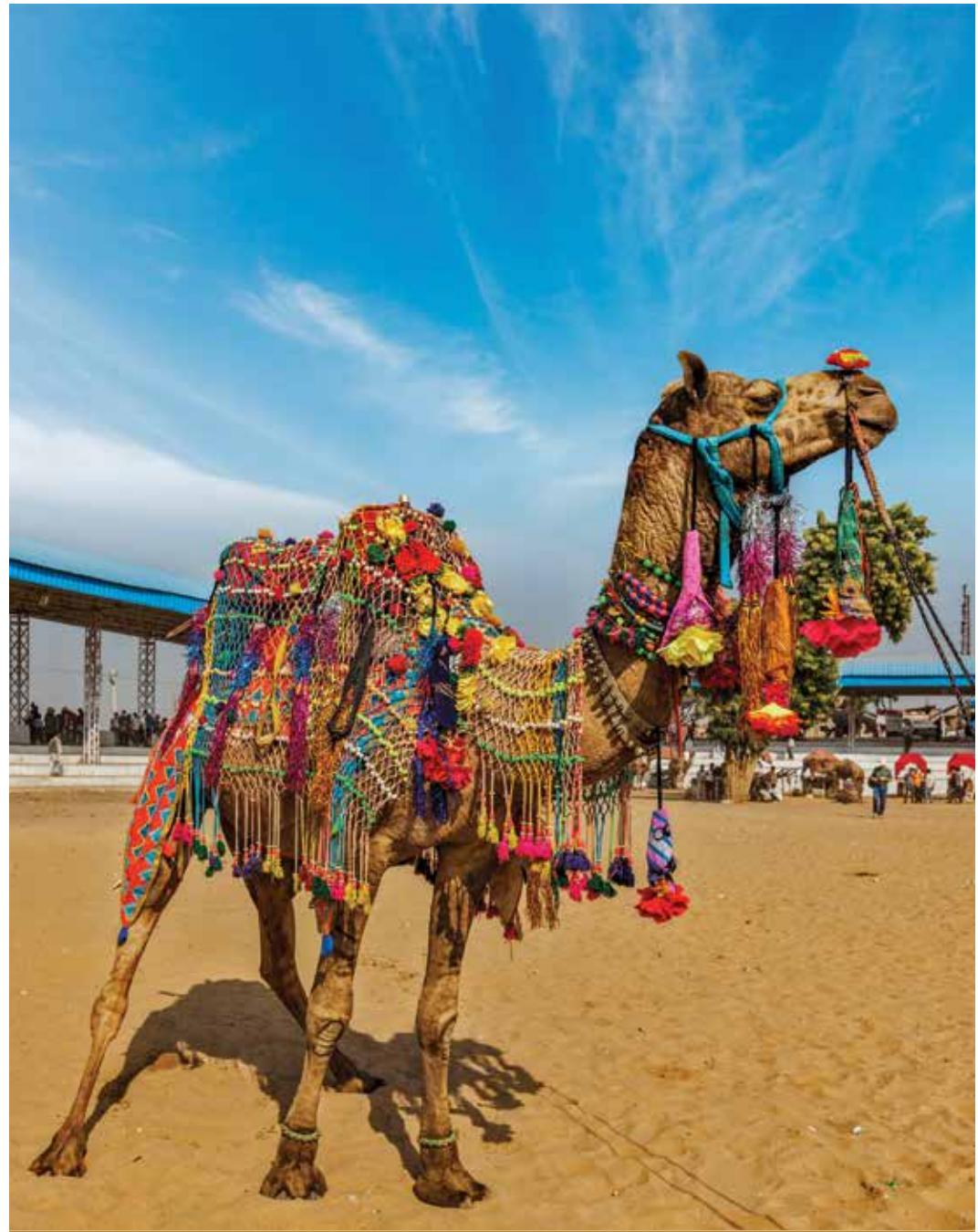
According to Encyclopedia Britannica, archaeological evidence indicates that early humans lived along the banks of the Banas River and its tributaries some 100,000 years ago. Evidence of human habitation in Rajasthan can be traced back to the Paleolithic period, with archaeological findings at sites like Bhimbetka and other locations.

Most people probably aren't aware that Rajasthan was inhabited long before 2500 BC. The people and culture of Rajasthan evolved through a number of civilisations in its eventful history, including the Vedic and Indus Valley Civilisation since the ancient times.

The northern part of Rajasthan was influenced by the Indus Valley Civilisation, particularly in the regions like Kalibangan, which was one of the key sites of this ancient civilisation. "The Indus (Harappan) and post-Indus civilisations (3rd–2nd millennium BC) are traceable at Kalibangan in northern Rajasthan, as well as at Ahar and Gilund, both near the city of Udaipur in the south. Pottery fragments at Kalibangan date to 2700 BC," according to Britannica.

"The discovery near Bairat (in north-central Rajasthan) of two rock inscriptions from the 3rd century BC indicate that the area was at that time under the rule of Ashoka, the last great emperor of the Mauryan dynasty of India. The whole or parts of present-day Rajasthan were ruled by Bactrian (Indo-Greek) kings in the 2nd century BC, the Shaka satraps (Scythians) from the 2nd to the 4th century ce, the Gupta dynasty from the early 4th to the late 6th century, the Hephthalites (Hunas) in the 6th century, and Harsha (Harshavardhana), a Rajput ruler, in the early 7th century."

The Indus Valley Civilisation is believed to have had its foundation here in north Rajasthan itself. The state traces its history to the oldest kingdom in Rajasthan -- the state of Alwar -- around 1500 BC. The Bhil and the Meena tribes were the earli-



Pushkar Mela

The 100-year-old Pushkar Mela (Fair) is one of the world's largest camel and livestock fairs, held annually. More than 30,000 camels are traded during the Pushkar Mela every year. Apart from cattle and camel trading, the Pushkar Mela in parallel holds a festival of folk music and dances, Ferris wheels, magic shows, cultural events, and competitions.



From Thar to the Top

est dwellers of this area, according to the Rajasthan state government documents.

Dhola, following is a brief snapshot of our history over the last two millennia.

Vedic and Early Historic Period

Rajasthan saw the presence of Vedic tribes. The region was known for its warrior clans, referred to in the ancient texts. It was also part of several Mahajanapadas (ancient Indian kingdoms) known for its trade and a robust system of governance.

Medieval Period

Rajput Kingdoms: From the 6th century onwards, Rajasthan became the centre of numerous Rajput clans, such as the Sisodia, Chauhan, Rathore, and Tomar, among others. The Rajputs were known for their valour, honour, and a warrior ethos. For a long time, they dominated the history of Rajasthan.

One of them, Maharana Pratap, the crowned ruler of Mewar, is still remembered in the state as a hero. He was born in 1540 and died on January 19, 1597. The Mewar ruler was regarded as one of the bravest Rajput warriors and was well-known for his memorable fights against the Mughals. Known by his people as Mewari Rana, he passed away as a hero for his people.

Following his father's death in 1572, senior courtiers believed Pratap was the perfect candidate for king and that his exceptional qualities would enable them to deal with the situation they were facing with Mughals at the time. In 1572, Maharana Pratap took over his father's throne and ruled Mewar. Unlike the previous Rajput emperors, Maharana Pratap resisted the vast Mughal army that came before him, fighting bravely till his very last breath. He represents Rajput bravery, devotion, and chivalry to both his people and the next generation. Even though centuries have passed since his death, Rajasthan still honours the Mewar ruler as a hero for all of his bravery, sacrifice, and determination.

The early medieval period saw the rise of many Rajput kingdoms such as the Chauhans of Amer, Sisodias of Mewar, Gurjara-Pratihara and the Rathores of Marwar, as well as several Rajput clans such as the Gohil and the Shekhawats of Shekhawati.

Gurjara-Pratihara: The Gurjara-Pratihara Empire acted as a barrier for Arab invaders from the 8th to the 11th century, it was the power of the Prati-

DISCOVERING RAJASTHAN



Rajasthan's Ethnic Diversity

In terms of ethnicity, Rajasthan is home to various ethnic groups, including Rajputs, Meenas, Marwaris, Jats, Bhils, and others, each with its unique customs and traditions. Among various ethnic and social groups, the Rajputs (clans of landowning rulers and their descendants), though representing only a small percentage of Rajasthan's residents, are perhaps the most-notable section of the population in the state.

hara army that effectively barred the progress of the Arabs beyond the confines of Sindh, their only conquest for nearly 300 years.

Chauhan Dynasty: The epic battles of the Chauhan dynasty, particularly against the invading forces, are notable during this period. The most famous among them is the battle of Tarain against Muhammad Ghori in the late 12th century. Prithviraj Chauhan led a coalition who defeated

the Ghurid army and continued to resist against heavy odds eventually giving rise to the leadership of Maharana Hammir, Maharana Kumbha, Maharana Sanga, Maharana Pratap and Maharana Raj Singh.

Sisodia Dynasty: The Sisodia clan, particularly Maharana Pratap, is celebrated for its resistance against the Mughal Empire.

The Mughal Era

By the 16th century, much of Rajasthan came under Mughal influence. Rajasthan's rulers, particularly the Rajputs, maintained a degree of autonomy while serving the Mughal emperors. This era witnessed a blending of cultures, leading to advancements in architecture, art, and literature and the construction of magnificent palaces and forts.

Maratha Influence

In the 18th century, as Mughal power waned, the Marathas expanded into Rajasthan. The Maratha Confederacy had a significant influence on regional politics until they faced opposition from local rulers.

British Colonial Period

During the early 19th century, the British East India Company established control over Rajasthan. The region was divided into numerous princely states, many of which retained their monarchies under British suzerainty. The period saw the emergence of social and political reform movements aiming at modernising Rajasthan.

Post-Independence

After India gained independence in 1947, the princely states of Rajasthan were integrated into the Indian Union and initially declared as a state in 1949. Since then, Rajasthan has been developing in various sectors, including tourism, agriculture, and industry. The state is an important cultural and historical tourist destination due to its forts, palaces, and vibrant traditions. With a focussed industrial development plan, today Rajasthan has emerged as a major economic powerhouse.

HERITAGE

Dhola, could you kindly take us on a heritage journey on Rajasthan?

Sure, Maru. In one sense, we both are part of the Rajasthani heritage. Let me explain, how. To start



with, our attires are a clear reflection of the rich Rajasthani heritage. Look at your beautiful dress – you look great and more Rajasthani in this attire.

Rajasthan is one of the most heritage-rich states in India with a strong legacy that reflects its rich history, culture, ethnic diversity that are seen in almost every part of this state that draws a large number of foreign tourists every year. Its rich heritage is visible in almost everywhere in more than 300 historic forts, temples, in architecture, artefacts, in public places and among its people – in their attire, habits, cuisine, music and in their daily life. The people live in the heritage, literally. One will find the heritage in one's home and in their daily rituals.

The people of Rajasthan live and thrive in its rich culture, which includes traditional music, dance, festivals, handicrafts, and a rich culinary heritage. The Land of Kings owes to its royal history. It is also famous for its colourful festivals like Teej, Gangaur, and Pushkar Camel Fair, among many others. They celebrate various festivals with great fervour, including Diwali, Navratri, and Teej, reflecting its diverse religious ethos.

Rajasthan is home to numerous historic forts, palaces, temples and pilgrimage sites, including the Dilwara Temples in Mount Abu and the Jain Temples at Ranakpur. Its heritage is also reflected in the blend of Rajput, Mughal, and Hindu architectural styles that is prominent throughout Rajasthan. Intricate jharokhas (overhanging enclosed balconies), chhatris (elevated dome-shaped pavilions), and havelis (traditional mansions) showcase the architectural finesse of the region.

The Thar Desert contributes to the unique lifestyle of the Rajasthani people, influencing their traditions, clothing, and livelihood. Camel rides and desert safaris are popular among tourists seeking to experience the desert's beauty.

Rajasthan is famous for its handicrafts, including textile weaving, pottery, and block printing. The state is known for its vibrant tie-dye fabrics and handmade jewellery. Traditional paintings like Phad and Miniature paintings are celebrated forms of art that depict religious and historical themes – all reflect its heritage and culture.

Rajasthan's heritage is a tapestry that weaves together history, art, culture, and natural beauty.



Rajasthan's Historic Constructions

If you take a walk in parts of the state, you will see numerous palaces and historic sites that carry the signs of wars, political rivalry, bravery, struggle and resistance against foreign invasion. Local tribes had built forts to protect their communities from foreign occupation. These forts not only serve as popular tourist attractions but also represent the rich cultural era of Rajasthan that has gone by. Each fort has its own unique history and architectural style, contributing to the diversity of the region's heritage.



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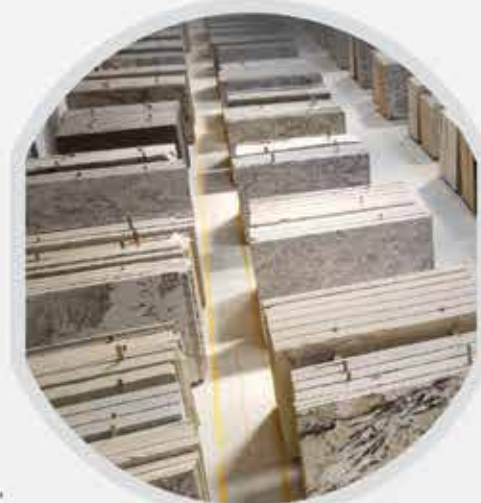
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Its society reflects a blend of tradition and modernity, making it a fascinating destination for tourists and scholars alike. Whether it's exploring the ancient forts or savouring the local cuisine, the state offers a rich experience steeped in history and tradition. In conclusion, Rajasthan's history is characterised by a resilient spirit and a rich cultural tapestry resulting from centuries of tradition, conflict, and synthesis.

Pushkar Mela

The 100-year-old Pushkar Mela (Fair) is one of the world's largest camel and livestock fairs, held annually. More than 30,000 camels are traded during the Pushkar Mela every year. Apart from cattle and camel trading, the Pushkar Mela in parallel holds a festival of folk music and dances, Ferris wheels, magic shows, cultural events, and competitions.

The Pushkar Mela is not just a livestock fair; it is a grand celebration of Rajasthan's rich heritage, showcasing the region's traditions, customs, and the spirit of community. The fair is held in Pushkar, a sacred town famous for its lake and the only Brahma temple in the world. During the fair, traders gather to purchase and trade livestock, particularly camels, horses, and cattle.

The Pushkar Mela is a vibrant and colorful celebration in the heart of Rajasthan. From letting you witness the beauty of the golden sand to embracing the vibes of Rajasthani culture, this fair is a land of colors you must visit.

Jaisalmer Desert Festival

The Jaisalmer Desert Festival is a vibrant, annual cultural event that takes place in the heart of the Thar Desert, Rajasthan, usually in February. Celebrating the rich heritage of the region, the festival spans over three days, transforming the golden sands into a colourful extravaganza. Visitors can witness traditional Rajasthani folk music and dance performances, including the mesmerising Ghoomar and Kalbeliya dances.

One of the highlights is the camel parade, showcasing beautifully adorned camels in a lively procession. The festival also features unique competitions such as the turban-tying contest, mustache competition, and camel races, which draw significant attention. The event concludes with a breathtaking display of fireworks, lighting up the desert sky. The Jaisalmer Desert Festival is a true



A Celebration of Culture and Tradition

The people of Rajasthan live and thrive in its rich culture, which includes traditional music, dance, festivals, handicrafts, and a rich culinary heritage. The Land of Kings owes to its royal history and is also famous for its colourful festivals like Teej, Gangaur, and Pushkar Camel Fair, among many others. They celebrate various festivals with great fervour, including Diwali, Navratri, and Teej, reflecting its diverse religious ethos.

spectacle of Rajasthani culture, offering a captivating experience for both domestic and international tourists, making it a must-visit event for anyone traveling to Rajasthan.

ECONOMY

Dear Maru, from history and heritage, let's now look at something different – our economy. How has it transformed our lives over centuries, where we stand now and what is in store for our future?

Rajasthan state's diverse economy is characterised by agriculture, mining, tourism, and manufacturing – although for decades, it remained agrarian and people's livelihood would be met with the local agricultural produces. Most people's community life would be limited to the local marketplace where the farmers would sell their produces and buy essentials with the income. For ages, Rajasthan remained somewhat isolated from the rest of India's growth and vibrancy.

The state ranks first in India in the production of oilseeds, rapeseed and mustard and is the second largest producer of garlic, coriander and cumin. However, things have changed a lot, thanks to the development initiatives taken by the successive state governments to transform it into an industrial economy.

Industrialisation and economic diversification drive has helped the state's overall economy to grow fast. With a gross domestic product (GDP) of INR17.81 trillion (US\$213 billion), it is now the seventh largest economy in India. Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma recently announced that his government has set an ambitious goal of doubling the state's economy to INR30 trillion (US\$350) billion in the next five years.

Service sector contributed around 43.74 percent and agriculture and allied sectors contributed 28.95 percent to state's Gross Value Added (GVA) at current prices in 2022-23. Many booming busi-



From Thar to the Top

ness opportunities in Rajasthan in organic and contract farming as well as in infrastructure developments related to agriculture can be explored.

Total merchandise exports from Rajasthan stood at US\$10.11 billion in FY24. Engineering Goods and Gems and Jewellery accounted for a majority share in the overall exports from the state. In FY24, the total exports of Engineering Goods from Rajasthan stood at US\$3.41 billion.

The state has attracted investment from a large number of global corporations with a presence in Rajasthan including Hero, Honda, JCB, Ashok Leyland, Cairn, Lafarge Cement, Cargill, Saint-Gobain, Bosch, Nbc, Roca, Tafe, Daikin, ITC, KEI, Havells, Perto, PITTIE, Ambuja Cement, and Jaguar.

Agriculture

The state's economy is significantly supported by agriculture, employing a large percentage of the population. The state ranks 4th in food grain production and 2nd in oilseeds production, from staple crops like wheat, barley, pulses to sugarcane and oilseed to cash crops like cotton and tobacco. Rajasthan is the largest producer of coarse cereals and coriander and the second-largest producer of pulses, oilseeds, cumin and garlic in India.

Agriculture sector represents around 26 percent of the state's GDP while 62 percent of its

DISCOVERING RAJASTHAN

300 historic forts

There are over 300 historic forts in the state, showcasing its royal heritage and architectural brilliance. Some of them are part of the UN World Heritage Site.

population depend on the sector for work and livelihood. Although agriculture is a traditional economic activity, technology and innovation are changing this important sector where new investment is transforming the sector and helping it to increase output.

The state has 11.26 percent of the country's livestock population and contributes about 12.93 percent of the total milk production and 32.89 percent of the total wool production in the country. As a result, animal husbandry contributes to more than 1/3rd share of the agriculture sector.

Rajasthan hosts 956 food processing units and the number is growing by the day due to an increase in agricultural output. The state offers business opportunities for contract farming, organic farming, agritech, and support infrastructure. There are four agro-food parks and 10 agro-climactic zones across the state. More and more food processing industries, agro-tech companies and start-ups are investing in the state's economy that will accelerate the growth of the economy in the coming years.

The state faces challenges such as water scarcity and drought, which can impact agricultural productivity. However, initiatives like rainwater harvesting and investment in irrigation infrastructure have been promoted to fix this problem.

Mining and Minerals

Rajasthan is rich in mineral resources; it is one of the leading states in mineral production in India.

Around 82 varieties of minerals are available in the state and 57 minerals are produced on a commercial scale. It also contributes significantly to the production of dimensional and decorative stones, such as marble, sandstone, granite etc. Major minerals include sandstone, limestone, marble, gypsum, and rock phosphate, which are important for both domestic use and export.

Textiles and Handicrafts

Rajasthan is renowned for its textile industry, particularly for traditional fabrics like block prints, tie-dye, and embroidered textiles. The handicraft sector is also significant, producing items such as pottery, metalwork, and leather goods, contributing to both local and export markets. When it comes to traditional Indian attire, such as choli, lehenga, dupatta, ghagra or the Jodhpuri dress, no one can beat Rajasthan.

Manufacturing and Industry

Dear Maru, let me tell you something and that is -- one of the best things that is happening in Rajasthani economy right now -- is massive industrial development.

Although predominantly an agrarian economy, Rajasthan has a strong industrial base. Most people wouldn't know that the state hosted 10,237 factories that were producing various products in 2022. It is the leading producer of cement-grade limestone in India. Production of limestone reached 87.68 million metric tonnes during 2021-22. The state has about 26 percent share in proven limestone reserves in India that will fuel the growth of the cement industry.

In May 2024, JSW Cement announced to invest INR30 billion (US\$359.84 million) on building an integrated manufacturing facility at Nagaur in Rajasthan. Shree Cement, the second largest cement-maker in India, in December 2023, commissioned a new kiln at its integrated production facility in Nawalgarh, Rajasthan. The plant, set up at INR35 billion (US\$419.82 million) can produce 3.5 million tonnes of cement per annum.

The state is developing various industrial sectors, including automobile manufacturing, IT, and renewable energy (especially solar energy). Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and industrial parks have been established to attract investments and boost manufacturing. Industries contribute 27.8 percent to the state's economy.

Rajasthan's Ancient Rulers: From Ashoka to the Rajputs

The discovery near Bairat (in north-central Rajasthan) of two rock inscriptions from the 3rd century BC indicate that the area was at that time under the rule of Ashoka, the last great emperor of the Mauryan dynasty of India. The whole or parts of present-day Rajasthan were ruled by Bactrian (Indo Greek) kings in the 2nd century BC, the Shaka satraps (Scythians) from the 2nd to the 4th century CE, the Gupta dynasty from the early 4th to the late 6th century, the Hephthalites (Hunas) in the 6th century, and Harsha (Harshavardhana), a Rajput ruler, in the early 7th century.

Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation Ltd. (RIICO) has developed 415 industrial areas over about 93,000 acres of land. Special focus is now on development of connected industrial infrastructure along the state's new transportation arteries. These include two mega industrial development zones along the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC).

Energy and Power

As of March 2024, Rajasthan had a total installed power generation capacity of 43.41 GW, of which 3.76 GW was under the central utilities 8.8 GW under state utilities and 30.76 GW under private sector. Rajasthan has 66.33 million wireless and 1.13 million wireline subscribers.

Rajasthan has great potential for renewable energy, particularly solar power, due to its high solar insolation. The state has set ambitious targets for solar energy production and aims to expand its renewable energy capacity to 33,600 MW by 2031-32, opening up significant investment opportunities in green energy projects. It is becoming the green energy hub of India.

The state is also among the top five states in India in terms of installed wind generation capacity. One of the world's largest fully operational solar power plants – the 2,245 MW Solar Park in Bhadla is located in Rajasthan.

Challenges and Opportunities

However, water scarcity, unemployment, infrastructure development, and the need for diversification of the economy are ongoing issues facing the state. With a focus on skill development, investment in infrastructure, and promoting tourism and renewable energy, Rajasthan has the potential for robust economic growth.

The state is moving towards addressing its challenges while exploring opportunities for sustainable growth and development. The good thing is, the present government has taken effective steps to address these challenges, such as water scarcity and skills shortages, that will soon see the development of new environmentally-friendly water sources coming up while thousands of skilled professionals entering the industries to boost productivity.

Infrastructure

According to Invest India, Rajasthan provides access to around 40 percent of India's market in



Living Heritage in Every Corner

Rajasthan is one of the most heritage-rich states in India with a strong legacy that reflects its rich history, culture, ethnic diversity that are seen in almost every part of this state that draws a large number of foreign tourists every year. Its rich heritage is visible in almost everywhere in more than 300 historic forts, temples, in architecture, artefacts, in public places and among its people – in their attire, habits, cuisine, music and in their daily life. The people live in the heritage, literally. One will find the heritage in one's home and in their daily rituals.

the neighbouring states and also serve as an indispensable medium of transport between North-Indian states and the ports on the Western coastline of India, thanks to its growing infrastructure.

Rajasthan has the third largest network of national highways, second largest rail network in India, nine Inland Container Depots, one Air Cargo Complex as well as seven airports with direct international and national connectivity.

According to the Rajasthan Regional and Urban Planning Bill, 2024, the state plans to develop road network of 53,000 kilometres and 2,650 kilometres of greenfield expressways in the next five years at an estimated cost of INR600 billion. Construction, upgradation, repair, and maintenance of state highways, bypass road, flyovers, and ele-

vated roads will be carried out at an estimated cost of INR90 billion.

Rajasthan Irrigation Water Grid Mission will cover projects worth over INR500 billion across five years. It aims to develop irrigation facilities across all districts in the state. Electricity generation capacity in the state will be expanded to 20,500 MW from conventional sources and 33,600 MW from renewable energy sources by 2031-32. Smart meters for all electricity consumers will be installed in a phased manner. As many as 2.5 million smart meters will be installed in 2024-25.

Urban Development

According to the Census 2011, the urban population in the state was 17.0 million with a total of 297 towns including 184 municipal towns. Since then,



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98 more municipal towns have been added making the number 282.

The real-estate sector too has taken quantum leap due to proactive involvement of the state government, the private sector and increasing aspirations of the consumers, all aspiring to shape a decent physical environment. Physical environment has a great impact on the health of the human being, besides improvement in the overall social life and in promotion of the work efficiency of the citizens.

Hence, it is necessary that new developments in urban areas are planned with adequate social and economic facilities, green spaces and road networks. With this background, the new state government has issued a new Rajasthan Township Policy 2024, which has been based on the experiences of the past Township Policies promulgated in 2002 and 2010.

Under the new policy, the government will act as a facilitator, allowing private sector to benefit from the opportunities being created by the socio-economic development in the state.

INVESTMENT

Rajasthan, long overlooked by the investors, has started to gain attention from global investor community in recent years. The state is emerging as a pivotal player in India's industrial and investment landscape, driven by government initiatives and a focus on inclusive growth. With a strong emphasis on infrastructure development, renewable energy, and fostering an investor-friendly environment, the state is positioning itself as a key destination for global and domestic investors.

In June 2024, Rajasthan's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow was US\$76.76 million, which is an increase from US\$39.48 million in March 2024.

The average FDI inflow from December 2019 to June 2024 was US\$203.05 million.

The state government has chalked out an elaborate programme to attract domestic and foreign investment to develop new industries in the state and make it a bigger economic powerhouse for India. In order to achieve this feat, it is organising 'Rising Rajasthan Global Investment Summit' in December 2024 that is expected to attract local, regional and international investment into the state.

The policy environment has been made favourable for the establishment of industrial units. A single window clearance system (SWCS) for investment approvals is operational in the state and the Bureau of Investment Promotion (BIP) was set up to focus on investment above US\$2.2 million. Rajasthan stands sixth among Indian states in rankings based on ease of doing business and reforms implementation as per a study by the World Bank and KPMG.

The state's e-governance initiatives and regulatory reforms are creating a conducive business environment that is attracting investment. Rajasthan is focusing on faster project approvals, risk mitigation, and ease of entry and exit for investors to promote a more dynamic and competitive industrial ecosystem.

Under the state's Raj Nivesh – time-bound approval and clearance programme, Rajasthan has received 71,747 online investment applications resulting in 35,177 project registrations with ₹951.97 billion investment that will create 190,034 good-paying jobs, according to the state government.

The total value of memoranda of understanding (MoUs) signed for investments in Rajasthan under the upcoming global investment summit swelled to ₹12.50 trillion, with new agreements worth ₹8 trillion inked in New Delhi recently.

Tata Power has inked an initial pact with the Rajasthan government for investment of ₹1.2 trillion, including ₹750 billion in green energy, in the state's power sector. The 10-year plan aims to support Rajasthan's transformation into a power surplus state, providing 24/7 clean, affordable, and reliable power supply.

Companies with which MoUs have been signed include Tata Power, Indian Oil, Avaada Group,



A Tapestry of Art, Culture, and Timeless Heritage

Rajasthan is famous for its handicrafts, including textile weaving, pottery, and block printing. The state is known for its vibrant tie-dye fabrics and handmade jewellery. Traditional paintings like Phad and Miniature paintings are celebrated forms of art that depict religious and historical themes – all reflect its heritage and culture.

NHPC, Reliance Bio Energy, Torrent Power, Sterlite Power Transmission, Mahindra Susten Private Ltd, THDC India, Oil India, Jindal Renewable Power, Essar Renewables, Indraprastha Gas, Adani Logistics, JK Cement, BL Agro Industries, Titagarh Rail Systems, among others.

Approximately 40 percent of the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) also passes through Rajasthan. Apart from this, the peaceful law and order conditions, amicable industry – labour relations, availability of quality power, abundant land and education hub has made Rajasthan one of the best destinations for investment in India.

TOURISM

Dhola, let's talk about the tourism industry, which is popular among international tourists. Well, Rajasthan is one of the leading tourist destinations in India. The state is famous for its rich cultural heritage, historic forts, palaces, and vibrant festivals, attracting both domestic and international tourists. Major tourist destinations include Jaipur (the capital), Udaipur, Jodhpur, and Jaisalmer, all of which showcase Rajasthan's royal history and architectural grandeur.

Historic palaces, especially those in Jaipur and Udaipur, offer opportunities to expand the luxury tourism segment, with an increasing number of tourists visiting wildlife sanctuaries and desert locations. The number could increase in the next few years.

Looking back a few years ago, a total of 15,117,239 domestic tourists and 446,467 foreign tourists visited Rajasthan in 2020, while 21,988,734 domestic and 34,806 foreign tourists in 2021 and 108,328,156 domestic and 39,684 foreign tourists visited in 2022, the state government said. About 324.4 million domestic tourists and over 2.22 million foreign tourists came to the state from January 2020 to December 2023 to visit its heritage sites.

As of August 2024, the total number of hotels in Rajasthan reached 3,729. However, the state will need more hotels, resorts and accommodation facilities for tourists as the numbers are expected to grow in the coming years. Tourism and hospitality sector has been accorded full Industry Status by the government. Tourism sector contributes to around 12 percent to Rajasthan state's GDP. In 2022, Rajasthan ranked 7th in terms of domestic as well as international tourists.



Shaped by the Thar

The Thar Desert contributes to the unique lifestyle of the Rajasthani people, influencing their traditions, clothing, and livelihood. Camel rides and desert safaris are popular among tourists seeking to experience the desert's beauty.

In addition to being home to numerous historical forts, palaces, and heritage sites, such as the Amber Fort, Mehrangarh Fort, and City Palace that draw tourists interested in history and culture, the state's geographical diversity offers a variety of landscapes, from the Thar Desert to the Aravalli Range, providing opportunities for diverse tourism experiences, including desert safaris, wildlife tours, and trekking.

When it comes to tourism development, communication, connectivity and infrastructure are crucial for international tourists. Rajasthan is well-connected by air, road, and rail. Major cities like Jaipur, Udaipur, and Jodhpur have airports with flights to and from key Indian cities and international destinations. This makes it accessible for both domestic and international tourists.

It is part of the Golden Triangle that adds a great advantage to the state's tourism industry. Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan, is part of the famous Golden Triangle tourist circuit, which also includes Delhi and Agra – that hosts the Tajmahal, India's

most important tourism attraction. This circuit is popular among tourists for its rich cultural heritage and historical landmarks.

Development of Tourism Sector

Although tourism sector contributes 12 percent to the economy of Rajasthan, it has a great potential to contribute more if promoted aggressively. From December 2018 to June 2023, a total of 802 tourism units have been approved in Rajasthan, under which the state would have received an investment of ₹104.63.47 billion. These approved tourism units were expected to generate employment opportunities to 40,785 people in the state.

Rajasthan state government had launched its last tourism policy in 2020 that envisions it to reposition the state as a preferred tourism destination for both domestic and international tourists by offering high quality experience. The policy underlines a number of specific initiatives including attracting more investment in hotel, resorts and also creating new tourism attractions and packaging them for foreign visitors. It aims to strengthen and



Wedding in India

Rajasthan, among other attractions, is also a growing wedding destination in India. The state has witnessed several high-end weddings, including those of Elizabeth Hurley, Katy Perry and Russell Brand, and Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas.

diversify existing tourism products, provide innovative tourism products and services with focus on lesser-known destinations, promote rural tourism, desert tourism with innovative packages.

Most of you might not know that the state has approved more than 25 guest houses and more than 850 home stay or paying guest facilities, under the new policy.

The policy also emphasizes on large-scale investment to develop new accommodation facilities across the state. As Rajasthan is gradually becoming an economic powerhouse, it will attract a large number of business visitors in future, in addition to leisure tourists. Hence, the state will need more convention facilities for the Meetings, Incentives, Conference and Exhibition (MICE) tourism industry that will bring a large pool of international business community to the state, who will also visit the heritage destinations while coming to the state for business.

The policy also emphasizes to reduce red tape in securing approvals for tourism services, to strengthen the efficiency level.

As many as 372 Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) have been signed in 2022 with estimated investment of ₹135.88 billion to build 166 resorts, 142 hotels, four camping sites, two amusement parks, two wellness centres and 60 other tourism facilities. Of these, 27 projects worth ₹3.17 billion have been implemented while 136 tourism projects worth ₹41.15 billion are under implementation.

In 2022, the Rajasthan cabinet approved the Rajasthan Film Tourism Promotion Policy 2022 with the objective of promoting film production activities in the state. The policy makes provision for offering loans to film producers if the films are shot in Rajasthan and if the stories evolve around the state's culture and heritage.

The policy identifies 2-3 historic monuments or sites in each of the seven administrative divisions for the development of tourism products. These sites are to be developed as iconic tourism destinations offering holistic visitor experience. The policy also focuses on the development of special heritage villages for experiential tourism so that international visitors could taste the real culture and heritage of the state when visiting these sites.

In addition to these, the government plans to strengthen adventure tourism, wildlife and eco-tourism in the state. However, it emphasizes on improved service delivery, certification of the tourism professionals to ensure international best practice so that its industry service delivery could be on par with the developed tourism industries in the world.

The five-year tourism policy expires next year. The government is expected to announce a new tourism policy this year for 2025-2030. Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma recently invited South Korean investors to invest in his state's tourism industry that is growing at a breakneck speed.

Religious Tourism

Rajasthan has also emerged as a hub for religious tourism in India, not only for Hindu devotees, but also for Muslims in South Asia, who travel to the shrine of the famous Muslim preacher and saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer.

The tradition of 'Deshatan' in the form of pilgrimage existed in Rajasthan even before independence. With the unification of 19 princely states in 1949, people from far and wide continued to visit the religious places of Rajasthan in the form of pilgrimage. With time this pilgrimage transformed into tourism which is growing as more and more people now can afford to travel for pilgrimage.

Under the 'Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive' (PRASHAD) scheme, the state government approved the Integrated Development of Pushkar/Ajmer project. Additionally, Shri Karni Mata Mandir in Bikaner District and Sun Temple in Budhahita, Kota District were recognised as key sites. Under Swadesh Darshan 2.0 (SD2.0), Bundi (Keshoraipatan) and Jodhpur have been identified sites for development in Rajasthan.

The mythological and historical importance of Kolayat, the main pilgrimage center of Bikaner, a city situated in the north-west of Rajasthan, has been quite popular among the devotees coming here for a long time. Bathing in the holy Kapil Sarovar of Kolayat, the holy place of Maharishi Kapil, has its own significance.

As a centre of religious faith and devotion, Kolayat has been an important pilgrimage centre of the state since before the independence. It is said that Maharishi Kapil had taught Sankhya philosophy

to his mother Devahuti at this very place. Maharishi Kapil, grandson of Brahma and son of Kardam Rishi, invoked Ganga at Kolayat itself for the bath of his mother Devahuti and there he invoked Ganga, later that Ganga became famous as Kapil Sarovar. On the day of Kartik Purnima, devotees coming from every corner of the country flock to Kolayat, the holy place of Kapil.

Maharishi Kapil had performed penance in Kolayat for years. There are many small and big temples on this land of his penance. Maharishi Kapil's temple is built near Kapil Sarovar, there is also a unique tradition of donating lamps in Kapil Sarovar on Kartik Purnima.

Along with being the holy place of Maharishi Kapil, Pushkar, the pilgrimage site of spiritual unity even before 1947, has been the centre of reverence for

devotees across the country. It is said that the religious journey of the pilgrims is not considered complete without visiting Tirtharaj Pushkar and that is why devotees keep coming to Pushkar only after the pilgrimage to Badrinath, Jagannath, Rameshwar and Dwarka.

The origin and importance of Pushkar, situated on the west side of the Aravalli mountain range, has also been described in the Padma Purana. According to the Padma Purana, Brahmaji, when he wished to perform a yagya on earth, he dropped flowers from heaven at three places, which later became the three sacred lakes of Pushkar. The unique temple of Brahma is in Pushkar itself, Pushkar is the oldest place of worship in the country as a spiritual place," she says.

Maru, do you know that the Muslim population in



Jaisalmer Desert Festival

The Jaisalmer Desert Festival is a vibrant, annual cultural event that takes place in the heart of the Thar Desert, Rajasthan, usually in February. Celebrating the rich heritage of the region, the festival spans over three days, transforming the golden sands into a colourful extravaganza. Visitors can witness traditional Rajasthani folk music and dance performances, including the mesmerising Ghoomar and Kalbeliya dances.



From Thar to the Top

DISCOVERING RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan has exceeded 9.1 percent of the state's total population? How does that contribute to the state's tourism industry?

Well, Dhola, lots of Muslims come to the Dargah of Muslim Saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer – considered as an important religious site for Muslims in South Asia, that helps the religious tourism sector to flourish, especially during the winter season.

According to historians, Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti came to India from Iran to propagate the Sufi sect and resided in Ajmer. During the days of the month of Rajab in the Islamic calendar, his Urs is celebrated to perpetuate his sacred memory and honour the good deeds done by him.

Some historians say that after the birth of a son, in 1570, Mughal Emperor Akbar came on foot from Agra to visit the Dargah of Khwaja in Ajmer and it took him 15 days for this journey. Followers of all

religions have faith in Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti of Sufi tradition, that is why Ajmer Sharif is famous as a holy place.

Khwaja wanted to see the world prosperous and due to this attraction, pilgrims have been coming to Ajmer for decades. There are four big mosques in the Dargah of Khwaja in Ajmer, during the time of Urs, Qawwali programmes are organised in the Dargah. Inside the Dargah itself there is a Mahafilkhana, around which there is a sixty-foot long and eighteen feet wide gallery.

Wedding in India

Rajasthan, among other attractions, is also a growing wedding destination in India. The state has witnessed several high-end weddings, including those of Elizabeth Hurley, Katy Perry and Russell Brand, and Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas.

Last year, the election body in India changed the voting date for Rajasthan from November 23 to

November 25, as more than 50,000 weddings were scheduled for November 23 alone. Due to its potential wedding business, the state has several expansive hotels, including brands such as Raffles, Fairmont, Oberoi, Radisson Blu, Leela, and The Westin. Recently, the inaugural Wed in India Expo was also organised in Jaipur, during which the Indian tourism ministry promoted the country as the next big wedding destination.

TOURISM ATTRACTIONS

Dhola, as I have mentioned earlier, Rajasthan is a land of historic forts, palaces, pilgrimage sites, desert landscape and lakes. It is home to nine UNESCO World Heritage Sites. A haven for leisure tourism, it is popular among tourists from the western countries for its historic forts, palaces, handicrafts, artefacts, deserts, among other attractions.

There are numerous royal palaces and forts spread across the state, like the Chittorgarh Fort, Jaisalmer Fort, Amber Palace, Umaid Bhawan Palace, etc. Besides that, religious landmarks in Rajasthan, like the Birla Mandir, Karni Mata Temple, Ajmer Sharif, etc., are also some of its main tourist attractions.

In order to understand the depth of Rajasthan, a visitor needs to spend 8-15 days in the state hopping amongst the major tourism destinations. Like India, Rajasthan is also like – One Nation, Countless Destinations – a good collection of numerous historic destinations.

Jaipur – The Pink City

Known as the Pink City due to the abundance of pink-coloured structures, Jaipur is the state capital of Rajasthan and the prime gateway for international visitors to the state. A walled city surrounded by hills, the settlement was founded in 1727 by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh to replace nearby Amber (now Amer, a part of Jaipur) as the capital of the princely state of Jaipur (founded by the Rajputs in the 12th century), according to Encyclopedia Britannica.

Jaipur grew dramatically in size in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, doubling its population between 1991 and 2011. It has a mixed Hindu-Muslim population. It is a popular tourist destination and a commercial trade centre with major road, rail, and air connections. Jaipur's famous arts and crafts include the making of jewelry, enamel,



Textiles and Handicrafts

Rajasthan is renowned for its textile industry, particularly for traditional fabrics like block prints, tie-dye, and embroidered textiles. The handicraft sector is also significant, producing items such as pottery, metalwork, and leather goods, contributing to both local and export markets. When it comes to traditional Indian attire, such as choli, lehenga, dupatta, ghagra or the Jodhpuri dress, no one can beat Rajasthan.

metalwork, and printed cloths, as well as stone, marble, and ivory carving.

“The city is known for its beauty, and it is unique in its straight-line planning. Its buildings are predominantly rose-coloured, and it is also called the ‘Pink City’. The chief buildings are the City Palace, part of which is home to the royal family of Jaipur; Jantar Mantar, an 18th-century open-air observatory that was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2010; Hawa Mahal (Hall of Winds); Ram Bagh palace; and Nahargarh, the Tiger Fort. Other public buildings include a museum and a library. Jaipur is the seat of the University of Rajasthan, founded in 1947,” Britannica says.

Udaipur

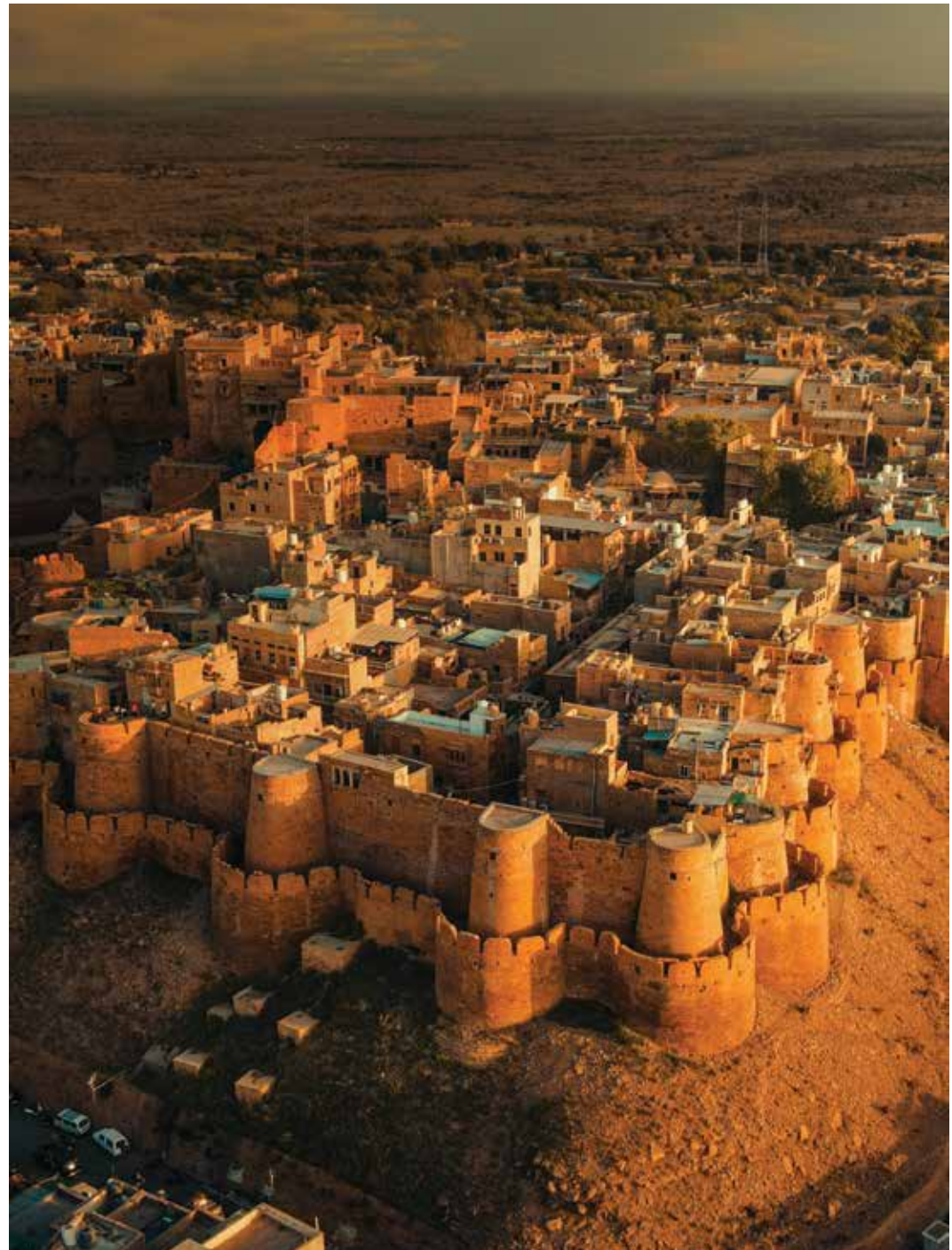
Known as the Venice of the East, Udaipur boasts several sparkling lakes against a backdrop of the Aravail hills. Jag Niwas and Jag Mandir, islands in Fateh Sagar Lake, are the site of Udaipur Solar Observatory and Nehru Garden. Famous palaces include the magical Lake Palace, now a luxurious five-star hotel, Sajjangarh Monsoon Palace, Leela Palace, and the massive City Palace on Pichola’s east bank, featuring epic courtyards and stunning paintings.

It has a series of art galleries and a royal heritage collection of sites that is good enough to keep a tourist busy for a few days.

Hill Forts of Rajasthan

Like a picture speaks a thousand words, a fort depicts the history of thousands of years. More than 300 historic forts depict the heroic past heritage of Rajasthan and their epic stories still does the rounds among the people. These tales of the heroic past make the visit to the forts and hill forts of Rajasthan worthwhile. Each fort is part of a great history and is part of the state’s rich heritage for which Rajasthan remains a famous and must-visit place.

The Hill Forts is a serial site, includes six majestic forts in Chittorgarh; Kumbhalgarh; Sawai Madhopur; Jhalawar; Jaipur, and Jaisalmer. “Within the State of Rajasthan, six extensive and majestic hill forts together reflect the elaborate, fortified seats of power of Rajput princely states that flourished between the 8th and 18th centuries and their relative political independence. The eclectic architecture of the forts, some up to 20 kilometres in circumference, bears testimony to the power of



Jaisalmer Fort

Jaisalmer Fort, situated in the city of Jaisalmer, is the second oldest fort in Rajasthan, built in 1156 AD by the Rawal (ruler) Jaisal from whom it derives its name, and stood at the crossroads of important trade routes (including the ancient Silk road).



From Thar to the Top

the Rajput princely states that flourished in the region from the 8th to the 18th centuries," says the UNESCO World Heritage Convention.

"Enclosed within defensive walls are major urban centres, palaces, trading centres and other buildings including temples that often predate the fortifications within which developed an elaborate courtly culture that supported learning, music and the arts. Some of the urban centres enclosed in the fortifications have survived, as have many of the site's temples and other sacred buildings. The forts use the natural defences offered by the landscape: hills, deserts, rivers, and dense forests. They also feature extensive water harvesting structures, largely still in use today."

The extensive fortifications optimised various kinds of hill terrain, specifically the river at Gagron, the dense forests at Ranthambore, and the desert at Jaisalmer, and exhibit an important phase in the

DISCOVERING RAJASTHAN

development of an architectural typology based on established "traditional Indian principles".

The vocabulary of architectural forms and of ornaments shares much common ground with other regional styles, such as Sultanate and Mughal architecture. Rajput style was not 'unique', but the particular manner in which Rajput architecture was eclectic (drawing inspiration from antecedents and neighbours) together with its degree of influence over later regional styles (such as Maratha architecture) do make it distinctive.

Within the defensive walls of the forts, the architecture of palaces and other buildings reflects their role as centres of courtly culture, and places of patronage for learning arts and music. As well as housing for the court and military guard, most had extensive urban settlements within their walls, some of which have persisted to the present day. And some also had mercantile centres as the forts

were centres of production and of distribution and trade that formed the basis of their wealth.

Most of the forts had temples or sacred buildings, some pre-dating the fortifications and outliving the Rajput kingdoms, and many of these remarkable collections of buildings still attract followers. Collectively the forts contain extensive water harvesting structures, many of which are still in use.

Chittorgarh Fort

Sprawling over a high hill near the Berach River, stands the historic Chittorgarh Fort or Chittor Fort in the present-day city of Chittorgarh in Rajasthan, it is one of the largest forts in India. The fort was the capital of Mewar. It sprawls over a hill 180 metres (590.6 feet) in height spread over an area of 280 hectares (691.9 acres) above the plains of the valley drained by the Berach River. The fort covers 65 historic structures, which include four



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palaces, 19 large temples, 20 large water bodies, 4 memorials and a few victory towers.

In 2013, at the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, a group of five Hill Forts of Rajasthan, including Chittor Fort, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is believed to have been built in the 7th century by a local Mori Rajput Ruler Chitrangada Mori. It is a must-see for all visitors.

Kumbhalgarh Fort

Kumbhalgarh Fort is a 15th century fortress in the Rajsamand district of Rajasthan, located in the Aravalli Hills, about 84 kilometres from Udaipur. The fort's 38-kilometre-long wall is one of the longest continuous walls in the world, and is sometimes called the Great Wall of India.

The fort was built by Rana Kumbha and was a refuge for the Mewar rulers during times of war. It was also the birthplace of Maharana Pratap, a legendary king and military leader. The fort has seven fortified gateways, a number of Jain and Hindu temples, and the Lakhola Tank. The Badal Mahal, or palace of the clouds, is a picturesque temple in the fort. The fort is a convenient stop for travellers driving between Jodhpur and Udaipur. It's also about four hours from Chittorgarh, the state's most famous fort.

Ranthambhore Fort

The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ranthambhore Fort is located within Ranthambhore National Park. The Ranthambhore Fort was the site of the first settlement in the area surrounding Sawai Madhopur, according to historic references. The exact origin of the Ranthambhore Fort is still debated, but it is widely accepted that a settlement existed on the site of the Fort as early as the 8th century AD.

The construction of the Ranthambhore Fort is widely believed to have begun in 944 AD. during the reign of Chauhan Rajput King Sapaldaksha. Another theory holds that the Ranthambhore Fort was built in 1110 AD by King Jayant, who was also a Chauhan Rajput. The fort's construction most likely began in the mid-tenth century AD. and continued for several centuries after that.

The Ranthambhore Fort was highly coveted by the rulers of North India because it controlled the trade routes between North India and Central

India. The Ranthambhore Fort flourished during the reign of King Rao Hammir, the last ruler of the Chauhan dynasty (1282 - 1301 AD).

The ruler of Delhi, Alauddin Khilji, sent his army to capture the Fort in 1300 AD. After three failed

attempts, his army finally conquered the Ranthambhore Fort in 1301 and brought an end to the Chauhans' reign. The Ranthambhore Fort changed hands several times over the next three centuries, until Akbar, the great Mughal emperor, finally took over the Fort and dissolved the State of Ran-



Hawa Mahal: The Palace of Winds

The Hawa Mahal, or "Palace of Winds," is a stunning five-story palace in Jaipur, Rajasthan, built in 1799 by Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh. Known for its unique honeycomb design, the palace features 953 small windows, or "jharokhas," allowing cool breezes to flow through and offering a discreet view of the city for royal women. Crafted from pink and red sandstone, the Hawa Mahal is an architectural marvel blending Rajput and Mughal styles, and it's one of Jaipur's most iconic landmarks, symbolizing Rajasthan's rich history and artistry.



From Thar to the Top

thambore in 1558. The Mughal rulers held the fort until the mid-eighteenth century.

Amer Fort

The Amer Fort was built by Kachwaha Rajputs and acted as their governing seat prior to shifting to Jaipur. According to Indian Cultural Ministry, the fort took 100 years to complete.

Started in the 11th century, it took close to 100 years to complete the structure. Among the rulers of the Kachwaha clan, Man Singh I, Mirza Raja Jai Singh I and Sawai Jai Singh II possessed a great flair for architecture. This is reflected in the spectacular design of the fort. The architecture of Amer Fort can be summed up as a perfect blend of art and nature. The fortifications and palaces inside it were made of red sandstone and white marble. The use of white stones, mirrors, and intricate carvings were also harmoniously blended into this robust structure.

The history of Amer Fort is filled with battles, unlike others. Cannons currently displayed within the fort are some of those protected it during external sieges.

Gagron Fort

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Gagron fort is situated at the bank of the Kali Sindh River in Jhalawar Rajasthan. It is surrounded by nature from all the sides, Kali Sindh River and Ahu River have passed the Fort from three sides and the greenery had covered the fourth side. It is spread across an area of about 4 square kilometres. Due to its sheer size, there is a chance one can get lost, that's why it is suggested to go with a tourist guide. Another advise will be to carry food and water as there are no restaurants nearby.

At one side of the Fort is a Dargah of Khwaja Hamid Uddin Chishti. Along with Dargah there is a mosque, the gate to enter the Dargah is gigantic and named as Buland Darwaza meaning huge door. The mosque usually is a bit crowded during prayers. There is a small population around the Dargah, and rest of the nearby areas are open and abandoned.

The place is very peaceful and calming, away from the noise of the city. Great place to spend some alone peaceful time or some time with close friends and family. At one end of the Fort there is a Gagron Fort watch point from where people

DISCOVERING RAJASTHAN



12 %

Although tourism sector contributes 12 percent to the economy of Rajasthan, it has a great potential to contribute more if promoted aggressively

can see the two different rivers Ahu and Kali Sindh emerging into one. The scenery from the top of fort is just too good to portray in words. One can forget all the life problems for a while, watching the magnificent scenery from there.

Jaisalmer Fort

Jaisalmer Fort, situated in the city of Jaisalmer, is the second oldest fort in Rajasthan, built in 1156 AD by the Rawal (ruler) Jaisal from whom it derives its name, and stood at the crossroads of important trade routes (including the ancient Silk road).

It is one of the very few living forts in the world as nearly one fourth of the old city's population still resides within the fort. For the better part of its 860-year history, the fort was the city of Jaisalmer. The first settlements outside the fort walls, to accommodate the growing population of Jaisalmer, are said to have come up in the 17th century.

The fort's massive yellow sandstone walls are a tawny lion colour during the day, fading to honey-gold as the sun sets, thereby camouflaging the fort in the yellow desert. For this reason, it is also known as the Swarn Durg, Sonar Quila or Golden Fort. The fort stands amidst the sandy expanse of the great Thar Desert on Trikuta Hill, hence also known as Trikutgarh.

It is today located along the southern edge of the city that bears its name; its dominant hilltop location making the sprawling towers of its fortifications visible for many miles around. In 2013, at the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Jaisalmer Fort, along with five other forts of Rajasthan, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site under the group Hill Forts of Rajasthan.

The Jantar Mantar, Jaipur

The Jantar Mantar, in Jaipur, is an astronomical observation site built in the early 18th century. It includes a set of some 20 main fixed instruments, according to UNESCO World Heritage Convention. They are monumental examples in masonry of known instruments but which in many cases have specific characteristics of their own.

"Designed for the observation of astronomical positions with the naked eye, they embody several architectural and instrumental innovations. This is the most significant, most comprehensive, and the best preserved of India's historic observatories. It is an expression of the astronomical skills and cosmological concepts of the court of a scholarly prince at the end of the Mughal period," said a report by UNESCO World Heritage Convention.

"The Jantar Mantar observatory in Jaipur constitutes the most significant and best-preserved set of fixed monumental instruments built in India in the first half of the 18th century; some of them are the largest ever built in their categories. The observatory forms part of a tradition of Ptolemaic positional astronomy which was shared by many civilisations. It contributed by this type of observa-



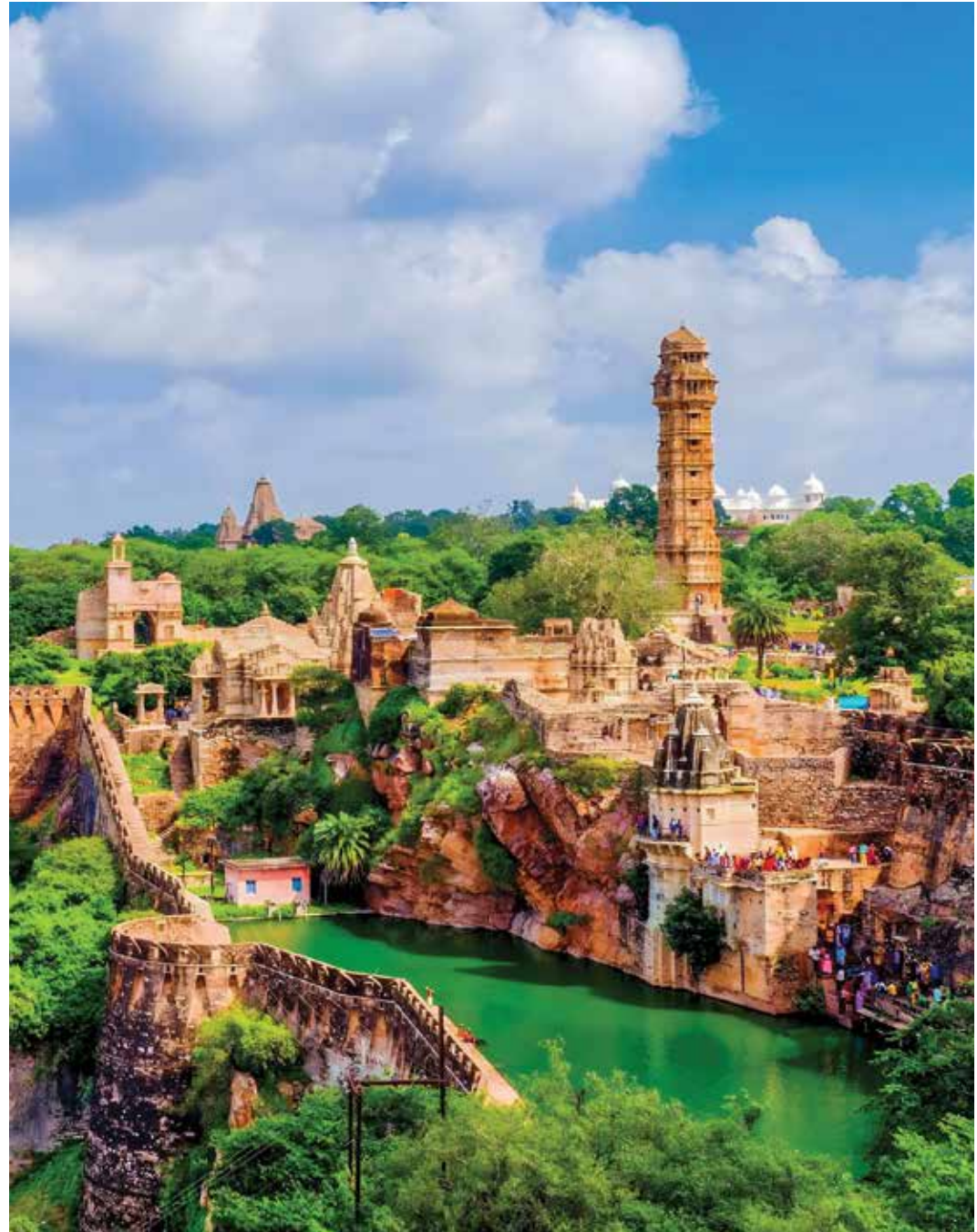
A Feast of Bold Flavors

Rajasthani cuisine is renowned for its distinct flavours, featuring dishes like dal baati churma, gatte ki sabzi, and various sweets, such as Ghewar, Malpua and Mawa Kachori. The food often reflects the arid landscape, with ingredients that are readily available. The state also famous for red chillis. A visit without tasting Rajasthani cuisine and sweets will remain incomplete.

tion to the completion of the astronomical tables of Zij. It is a late and ultimate monumental culmination of this tradition.

“Through the impetus of its creator, the prince Jai Singh II, the observatory was a meeting point for different scientific cultures, and gave rise to widespread social practices linked to cosmology. It was also a symbol of royal authority, through its urban dimensions, its control of time, and its rational and astrological forecasting capacities. The observatory is the monumental embodiment of the coming together of needs which were at the same time political, scientific, and religious.”

It remains a major tourism attraction for international and domestic tourists till date.



Chittorgarh Fort

Sprawling over a high hill near the Berach River, stands the historic Chittorgarh Fort or Chittor Fort in the present-day city of Chittorgarh in Rajasthan, it is one of the largest forts in India. The fort was the capital of Mewar. It sprawls over a hill 180 metres (590.6 feet) in height spread over an area of 280 hectares (691.9 acres) above the plains of the valley drained by the Berach River.



From Thar to the Top

Keoladeo National Park

Keoladeo National Park is an important wintering ground of Palaearctic migratory waterfowl and is renowned for its large congregation of non-migratory resident breeding birds. According to the UNESCO World Heritage Site, a green wildlife oasis situated within a populated human-dominated landscape, some 375 bird species and a diverse array of other life forms have been recorded in this mosaic of grasslands, woodlands, woodland swamps and wetlands of just 2,873 ha.

“This ‘Bird Paradise’ was developed in a natural depression wetland that was managed as a duck shooting reserve at the end of the 19th century. While hunting has ceased and the area declared a national park in 1982, its continued existence is dependent on a regulated water supply from a reservoir outside the park boundary. The park’s well-designed system of dykes and sluices provides areas of varying water depths which are used by various avifaunal species,” the UNESCO World Heritage Site says in a report.

Due to its strategic location in the middle of

Central Asian migratory flyway and presence of water, large congregations of ducks, geese, coots, pelicans and waders arrive in the winter. The park was the only known wintering site of the central population of the critically endangered Siberian Crane, and also serves as a wintering area for other globally threatened species such as the Greater Spotted Eagle and Imperial Eagle, the report says. During the breeding season the most spectacular heronry in the region is formed by 15 species of herons, ibis, cormorants, spoonbills and storks, where in a well-flooded year over 20,000 birds’ nest.

Umaid Bhawan Palace

Umaid Bhawan Palace, one of the world’s largest private residences, is located in Jodhpur, Rajasthan. It is named after Maharaja Umaid Singh, grandfather of the present owner, Gaj Singh. The palace has 347 rooms and is the principal residence of the former Jodhpur royal family. A part of the palace is a museum.

Another part of the palace is managed by Taj Hotels. The groundbreaking for the foundations of the building was carried out on 18 November 1929

by Maharaja Umaid Singh, the 37th Rathore ruler of Marwar at Jodhpur, and the construction work was completed in 1943. However, there is an interesting history behind the project and it reflects how the then rulers helped their people.

The history of building the Umaid Bhawan Palace is linked to a curse by a saint who had said that a period of drought would follow the good rule of the Rathore Dynasty. Thus, after the end of the about 50-year reign of Pratap Singh, Jodhpur faced severe drought and famine in the 1920s for three consecutive years.

The farmers of the area, faced with this hardship, sought the help of the then Maharaja Umaid Singh, to provide them with some employment so that they could survive the harsh conditions. The Maharaja, in order to help the farmers, decided to build a lavish palace. He commissioned Henry Vaughan Lanchester as the architect to prepare the plans for the palace.

Lanchester was a contemporary of Edwin Lutyens, who had planned the buildings of the New Delhi government complex. Lanchester patterned the Umaid Palace on the lines of the New Delhi building complex by adopting the theme of domes and columns. The palace was designed as a blend of western technology and Indian architectural features.

The palace was built at a slow pace as its initial objective was to provide employment to the famine-stricken farmers in the area. The foundation stone was laid in 1929. About 2,000 to 3,000 people were employed in its construction. Occupation of the palace by the Maharaja came after its completion in 1943. There was some criticism for embarking on an expensive project but it had served the main purpose of helping the citizens of Jodhpur to face the famine situation.

The cost of building the palace was estimated in those days around INR11 million. When it opened in 1943 it was considered one of the largest royal residences in the world. Today, it remains a great historic landmark and a tourism spot in the state.

EMERGING RAJASTHAN – THE FUTURE

Dear Maru, it we have spoken about the past a lot. However, what about the present and the future? How is the future of Rajasthan look like?



Keoladeo National Park

Keoladeo National Park is an important wintering ground of Palaearctic migratory waterfowl and is renowned for its large congregation of non-migratory resident breeding birds. According to the UNESCO World Heritage Site, a green wildlife oasis situated within a populated human-dominated landscape, some 375 bird species and a diverse array of other life forms have been recorded in this mosaic of grasslands, woodlands, woodland swamps and wetlands of just 2,873 ha.

Well, the state of Rajasthan is on a roll – with investment and development, the state government is accelerating the pace of economic growth through increased investment. We might have started a bit late compared to a few other states, but we are catching up fast. There are a number of initiatives that are currently at various stages of conceptualisation, planning, design, construction and completion, that will change the future of Rajasthan.

Urban Transformation

According to a latest report, Rajasthan boasts some of the best-planned cities in the country. As these cities continue to experience rapid growth and increasing population influx, the demand on urban infrastructure is rising significantly. Addressing urban development and housing remains a top priority for the State Government.

But first things first – the state is transforming the state capital Jaipur into a futuristic smart city as most of the state's development is going to be spearheaded from here. So, a lot of things are currently taking place in Jaipur.

The state Department of Information Technology and Communication has developed a 3D City solution for Jaipur, creating a 'Virtual Twin' of 3,000 square kilometres using technologies like aerial photography, LiDAR surveys, and DGPS. This enables government departments to visualise, plan, and execute projects within a 3D GIS environment, improving urban management, emergency planning, and collaborative development.

The Centre of Excellence for Blockchain (CoE-Blockchain) aims to enhance governance through secure, efficient, and transparent blockchain technology in various sectors like land records and financial services. The Service Management with Artificial Intelligence and Real Time System (SMART) project will automate beneficiary identification and real-time service delivery without applications. The statewide geospatial platform 'RajDharaa' promotes good governance and sustainable development by providing a comprehensive GIS asset management system.

The Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) is also spearheading the High-Tech City project, a visionary initiative aimed at creating a modern township that integrates IT, FinTech, Financial Management,

Artificial Intelligence, and Machine Learning. This project will establish institutions and companies focused on new-age subjects. The project will span an area of 5,000,000 square meters and fall under the Integrated Development/Urban Development sector. The High-Tech City is expected to generate employment for around 50,000 individuals. The project aims to accommodate a capacity of 200,000 people. This initiative represents a significant step towards urban development and economic growth in Jaipur.

Rajasthan stands at the cusp of an economic renaissance, driven by its rich natural resources, strategic location and proactive investment promotion strategies. It has 415 industrial parks spread occupying 51,500 hectares of industrial land across the state, including 17 of the 41 best performing economic zones in India – many located along the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC). The state hosts eight Internal Container Depots (ICDs) to facilitate export of finished products.

The Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation Ltd. (RIICO) has developed numerous industrial parks across vast tracts of industrial land. The state aims to achieve an annual

growth rate of 15 percent in both the manufacturing and services sectors, with a target of generating 1 million employment opportunities by 2027.

RIICO has proposed several investible projects to enhance various industrial sectors. These include developing a state-of-the-art park for petro-chemicals and polypropylene products, a plug-and-play industrial infrastructure for light industries like apparels, gems, and jewellery, and providing affordable living conditions for migratory workers. Plans also feature a world-class industrial park with modern facilities, a modern co-working space for the service sector, and upgrading CETP systems for effluent reuse.

Additionally, a dedicated FinTech industrial park, a medical device manufacturing park with common scientific facilities, and the Khushkhara-Bhiwadi-Neemrana Investment Region focusing on manufacturing, logistics, and technology are proposed. Lastly, a sustainable industrial township with world-class infrastructure is planned to boost regional economic growth and environmental protection.

The state's initiatives, such as the One-Stop Ser-



Umaid Bhawan Palace

Umaid Bhawan Palace, one of the world's largest private residences, is located in Jodhpur, Rajasthan. It is named after Maharaja Umaid Singh, grandfather of the present owner, Gaj Singh. The palace has 347 rooms and is the principal residence of the former Jodhpur royal family. A part of the palace is a museum.



From Thar to the Top

DISCOVERING RAJASTHAN

vice (OSS) Centre for Investment or Raj Nivesh, Rising Rajasthan Investment Promotion Summit and the Invest Rajasthan digital channel has accelerated foreign and domestic direct investment into the state's economy that will soon change the economic landscape of Rajasthan. The fruits of the State Government's initiatives have already started to bear fruits while new investment deals are being signed in regular intervals.

For example, the UAE has signed an investment memorandum with Rajasthan Government to explore the development of a 60 GW project in the Indian state. The agreement will look at solar, wind and hybrid energy opportunities in the Western district of Rajasthan. The partnership builds upon the wider Investment Cooperation established between the UAE Ministry of Investment and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy of

the Republic of India in which the development of such a project was first outlined.

Rajasthan's plan is in line with that of India. It is making significant strides in its clean energy transition, aiming to reduce carbon intensity by 45 percent by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2070. Currently, 40 percent of India's power capacity comes from non-fossil fuels — nine years ahead of schedule.

The Rajasthan Government is currently channeling all its services through eGovernment and Smart Government platforms that makes the government services more transparent and accountable. It is currently connecting 9,892 panchayats and 183 municipal areas, districts and all remote organisations to the online public service delivery platforms by ensuring 24/7 services to the citizens.



Bhadla: World's Largest Solar Park

The state is also among the top five states in India in terms of installed wind generation capacity. The world's largest fully operational 2,245 MW Solar Park in Bhadla is located in Rajasthan.

Startup Rajasthan

Maru, what else is in story for the future of Rajasthan? What about fintech and start-ups?

Amid the startup boom in India, the Rajasthan government launched the iStart Rajasthan initiative in 2017 to foster innovation, create jobs and facilitate investments in the state. The government aims to accelerate economic growth and development, facilitate knowledge exchange and offer easy access to funding.

About 400 startups have received funding under the initiative since its launch. iStart Rajasthan has facilitated the creation of more than 29,000 jobs within the state and has not only become a magnet for global talent but also gained national recognition.

In order to boost investment in startup, Rajasthan Government created Angel Rajasthan programme to provide investors with the much-needed know-how to ace startup investing and bolster the startup ecosystem.

Out of the 3,900 startups onboarded under the iStart Rajasthan programme, more than 1,100 are focused on cutting-edge technology, such as AI, AR/VR, animation, IoT, enterprise solutions, and green technology. These entrepreneurs looking to grow their ventures have received incubation support under the iStart Rajasthan initiative. In the recent budget announced by the Rajasthan government in February 2024, it has proposed to allocate INR10 billion for Atal Innovation Studios and Accelerators, which will include software coding, robotic labs and equipment for VFX and multimedia. Besides incubation support, the startups have also received over INR6.70 billion as additional venture capital funding.

MEGA PROJECTS

In order to accelerate economic growth and further help the movement of goods, services and people, Rajasthan Government has undertaken a number of mega projects.

Amritsar Jamnagar Expressway: One of the upcoming megaprojects is the Amritsar-Jamnagar Expressway. Once complete, this under-construction 1,257 kilometres long, 6-lane wide expressway will change the way people commute in the north-western part of India.

The expressway will reduce the distance between Amritsar and Jamnagar from 1,430 kilometres (889 mi) to 1,316 kilometres and the travel time from 26 hours to only 13 hours. It is being constructed as part of the Bharatmala and Amritsar–Jamnagar Economic Corridor (EC-3).

The expressway will pass through four states Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Gujarat. It will be the first expressway in India to connect three oil refineries Bathinda, Barmer, and Jamnagar. Additionally, the completion of this expressway is set to connect three of the country's biggest oil refineries, including HMEL Bathinda, HPCL Barmer, and RIL Jamnagar.

Delhi-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail: High-speed rail corridors are the future of India and the Delhi-Ahmedabad Bullet Train is one that deserves a special mention. The completion of this high-speed rail line will make it the second high-speed rail line after the Mumbai-Ahmedabad HSR corridor's extension.

As the name suggests, the bullet train will connect two major cities in the country – Delhi and Ahmedabad. With the estimated travel speeds of up to 217 mph, the travel time will be significantly reduced between the two cities. With a lot of work to be involved in the process including land acquisition, getting clearances, NOCs, etc., the project is estimated to be completed around 2031.

Jaipur Metro Expansion: Termed the Jaipur Metro Phase 2, this is another project expansion that will include the Orange Line, to the existing Jaipur metro railway network. The expansion will cover a distance of around 23.51 kilometres and connect 21 more stations.

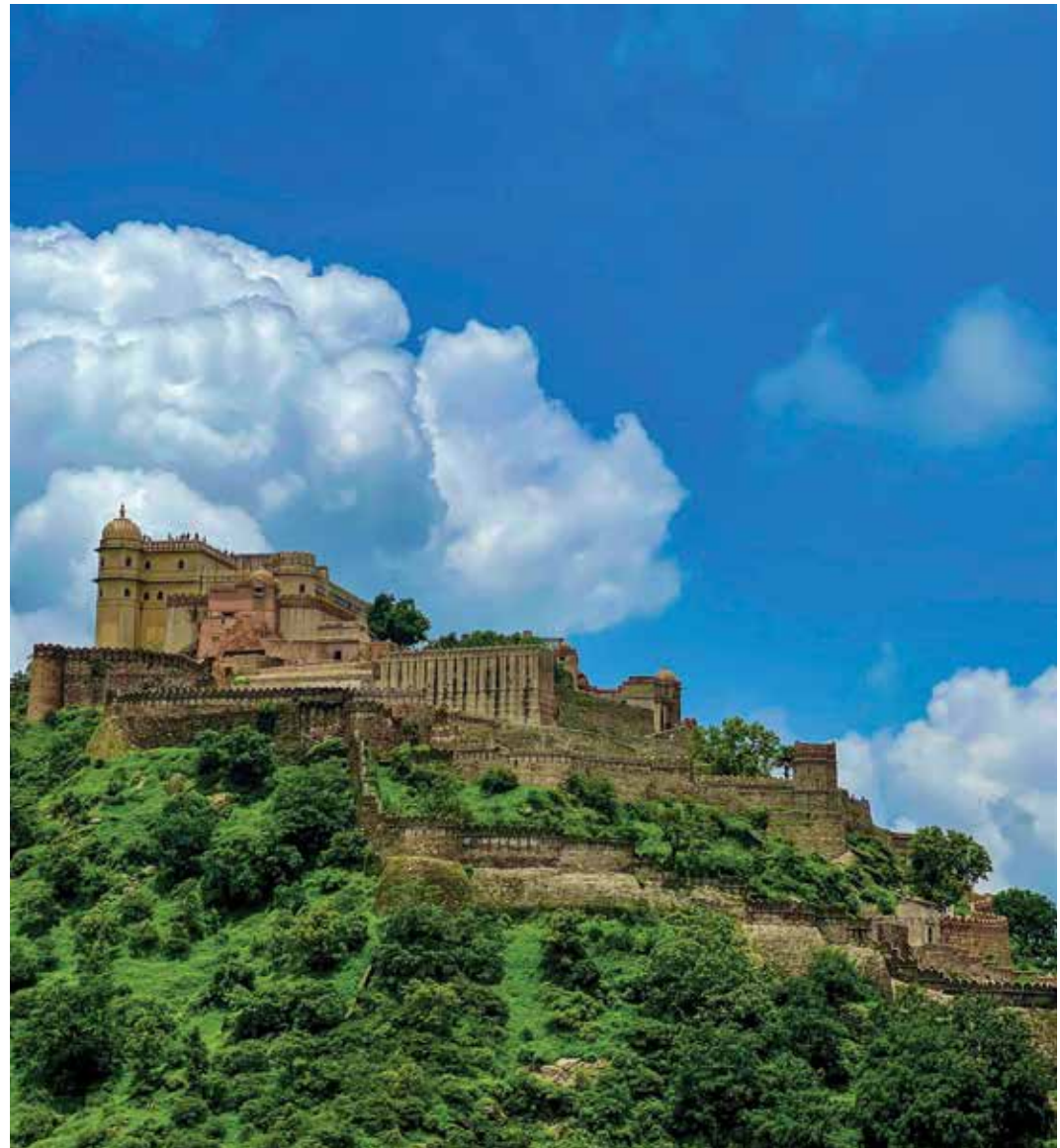
According to reports, the construction of this new line will not only make transportation easier but also connect certain commercial parts of the city to the residential areas, making commuting a lot easier and streamlined. The estimated deadline for the project is set to 2030 and a budget of INR45.46 billion has been set aside.

Delhi Alwar RRTS: Delhi Alwar RRTS or the Delhi-Alwar Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS), which is a 164-kilometer-long semi-high-speed rail corridor under construction will connect Delhi, Gurgaon, Rewari, and Alwar.

This is one of the three RapidX corridors that have been planned and proposed under the first phase of the Rapid Rail Transport System of the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC). According to reports, these rapid transit trains

will be able to attain a maximum speed of around 160 km/hr, enabling the commuters to reach their destination within 104 minutes.

The total budget that has been set aside for



Kumbhalgarh Fort

Kumbhalgarh Fort is a 15th century fortress in the Rajsamand district of Rajasthan, located in the Aravalli Hills, about 84 kilometres from Udaipur. The fort's 38 kilometre-long wall is one of the longest continuous walls in the world, and is sometimes called the Great Wall of India.



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As the founder of Al Musallas Building Construction L.L.C., established in 1989, Mohammed Sadiq Ahmed Behlim has spent over three decades dedicated to excellence, upholding the highest standards of quality and client satisfaction. Inspired by the vibrant city of Dubai, which he considers his second home, Mohammed Sadiq Ahmed's vision extends beyond constructing buildings - he is committed to building lasting trust and meaningful partnerships. For 35 years, Al Musallas has specialized in crafting luxury villas and premier structures for discerning clients, fostering loyalty and relationships built on respect and integrity. Beyond his professional work, Mohammed Sadiq Ahmed is deeply committed to philanthropy. He actively supports children's education, provides housing for those in need in his native place, Fatehpur Shekhawati (Rajasthan, India), and contributes to community projects in both Dubai and Mumbai.



Al Musallas Construction
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the project is INR370 billion and the first phase of the construction is estimated to be done by December 2024. The completion of this project will significantly streamline transportation without any hassle.

Delhi-Mumbai Expressway: The Delhi-Mumbai Expressway is one of the largest expressways in India, which is reportedly going to be 8-lane wide and will be expandable up to 12 lanes. The total length of the expressway will be 1,350 kilometres long and the foundation stone for the project was laid in 2019.

The expressway will cover six states, including Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra. It will connect major cities such as Gurugram, Jaipur, Kota, Indore, Vadodara, and Surat. The total estimated budget for the entire project is set to around INR1.1 trillion and is being looked over by the National Highways Authority of India. The construction of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway began in March 2019 and is expected to be completed by December 2024. The expressway is expected to be opened to traffic in phases.

Jaipur New International Cricket Stadium: The Jaipur New International Cricket Stadium is going to be the second-largest cricket stadium in India. It is currently under construction in Chonp village, Delhi Road, Jaipur, and is being constructed by the Rajasthan Cricket Association (RCA). Once complete, it will host a total of 75,000 spectators.

The stadium is being built on a 100-acre plot of land and will have all the modern amenities required for hosting international cricket matches, including floodlights, a drainage system, and a state-of-the-art scoreboard. The stadium will also have several other facilities, including a clubhouse, an indoor cricket academy, ample car parking and a swimming pool.

Kota Riverfront: Besides the redevelopment of the railway station, Kota is also getting a new riverfront, which is being developed by the Kota Municipal Corporation and is expected to be completed by 2024. The project includes the development of a 6 kilometres long riverfront along the Chambal River. The riverfront will feature a variety of amenities, including a walking track, a cycling track, a children's park, a food court, a water sports

complex, and a museum. It will also be equipped with a lighting system that will illuminate the riverfront at night.

Not only will it provide more public space, but reports suggest that the completion of this project will also increase tourism and boost the economic activity in the area. The riverfront is also reportedly going to improve the environment in the city reduce air pollution and provide a good habitat for the wildlife to exist in.

Jaipur Fintech City: In 2021, the Government of Rajasthan announced the creation of Rajasthan Fintech City, to create a futuristic financial hub where innovators, technology experts and investors would create new advanced financial solutions powered by technology.

RIICO was entrusted to carry out the operations for the FinTech park which would cover more than 408,000 square metre area. With the aim to attract INR30 billion investment as well as IT

and financial firms in its capital city, Jaipur, the FinTech park is said to offer large workspaces to businesses in the financial sector, once complete. The project that includes developing basic infrastructure, community facilities and a public utility area, is being developed at a government-allocated land. Major development of the project is currently under various stages of tendering and construction and is expected to attract regional and global investment in the fintech area.

New Industrial Areas: RIICO is planning to develop 14 new industrial areas in the state. It is part of an effort to leverage its manufacturing sector. These include Kankani, Bichoon, Salarpur and Keru. The work is in full pace to set up the industrial areas in 11 cities, including one near Udaipur, Kota, Rajsamand and Pali.

Manufacturing sector contributes about 24 per cent to its gross state domestic product. RIICO has so far developed 415 industrial areas in the state with over 44,400 functional industrial units.



Gagron Fort

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Gagron fort is situated at the bank of the Kali Sindh river in Jhalawar Rajasthan. It is surrounded by nature from all the sides, Kali Sindh river and Ahu River have passed the Fort from three sides and the greenery had covered the fourth side. It is spread across an area of about 4 square kilometres. Due to its sheer size, there is a chance one can get lost, that's why it is suggested to go with a tourist guide. Another advise will be to carry food and water as there are no restaurants nearby.



Ranthambhore Fort

The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ranthambhore Fort is located within Ranthambhore National Park. The Ranthambhore Fort was the site of the first settlement in the area surrounding Sawai Madhopur, according to historic references. The exact origin of the Ranthambhore Fort is still debated, but it is widely accepted that a settlement existed on the site of the Fort as early as the 8th century AD.

Kota Greenfield Airport

Airports Authority of India (AAI) had announced the development of an international airport to be built at Shambupura village in Kota district, approximately 15 kilometres from Kota, 20 kilometres from Bundi and 50 kilometres from Rawatbhata, in Rajasthan, India.

In November 2021, the Rajasthan Government's Cabinet approved the airport's construction and allocated land free of cost. The Environment Ministry's Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) approved the greenfield airport in December 2022. In the same month, the State Government approved a budget of INR115 crore for the construction of the airport.

A tripartite MoU was signed in July 2024 between the AAI, the Urban Development Department, and the Civil Aviation Department of Rajasthan Government for the development of the airport. Construction of the airport project is expected to start in May 2025 and it is scheduled for commercial operation in December 2027.

Kota Greenfield Airport site is within 10 kilometres of the Chambal Ghariyal wildlife sanctuary and within 10 kilometres of the Mukundara Hills National Park. The proposed airport falls in the notified buffer area of Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary and will use 466 hectares of forest land.

According to AAI's project report submitted for forest clearance, the airport is being planned on 1250 acres for Airbus A320 type of aircraft in Phase 1, with a provision for 2,900 metre long runway and an apron suitable for three Narrow-body aircraft. AAI will construct a terminal building measuring 15,000 square metres, with a peak hour capacity of 800 passengers.

An Air Traffic Control tower and technical building, a car park for 250 vehicles and a public transport zone is also planned as part of Phase 1. In Phase 2, the runway will be extended to 3581 metres for operation of Code 4C aircraft along with precision approach CAT-1 lighting for IFR operations. Fifteen additional parking stands and a full-length parallel taxiway will also be built as part of Phase 2.

Film City Jaipur

Rajasthan state capital could become a film production hub in future if the planned Film City Jaipur

pur becomes a reality. The government has been planning to establish a film city in Jaipur with private participation for some time. It will roll out a package of incentives under the Rajasthan Investment Promotion Scheme (RIPS), to prospective project promoters.

Recently film producer KC Bokadia has expressed his desire to partner in the Film City Jaipur. A land was finalised for the project in which KC Bokadia will become an investor.

The state government had earlier said, it will offer exemptions and subsidies by way of investment subsidy, employment generation subsidy, electricity exemption for seven years, land tax exemption for seven years, stamp duty exemption and others. Incentives will be customised for investments of over INR100 crore, and for providing direct employment to more than 200 persons.

Further, a film tourism cell would be set up to ensure approvals are made available within 15 days of application, whereby all district-level clearances will be facilitated by this cell. Moreover, the government has proposed a fee exemption for the shooting of films in monuments, including a 15 percent upfront subsidy on the production cost of any film shot in Rajasthan.

Additionally, the state government plans to open a branch of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) in Rajasthan.

HIDDEN GEMS

Avocado Farming

For those unaware, Rajasthan is producing avocados in commercial quantities due to its growing popularity among health-conscious consumers who want to expand their life span. It has outperformed many other Indian states to become one of the leading among the few Indian states that produce avocados, despite having harsh climate

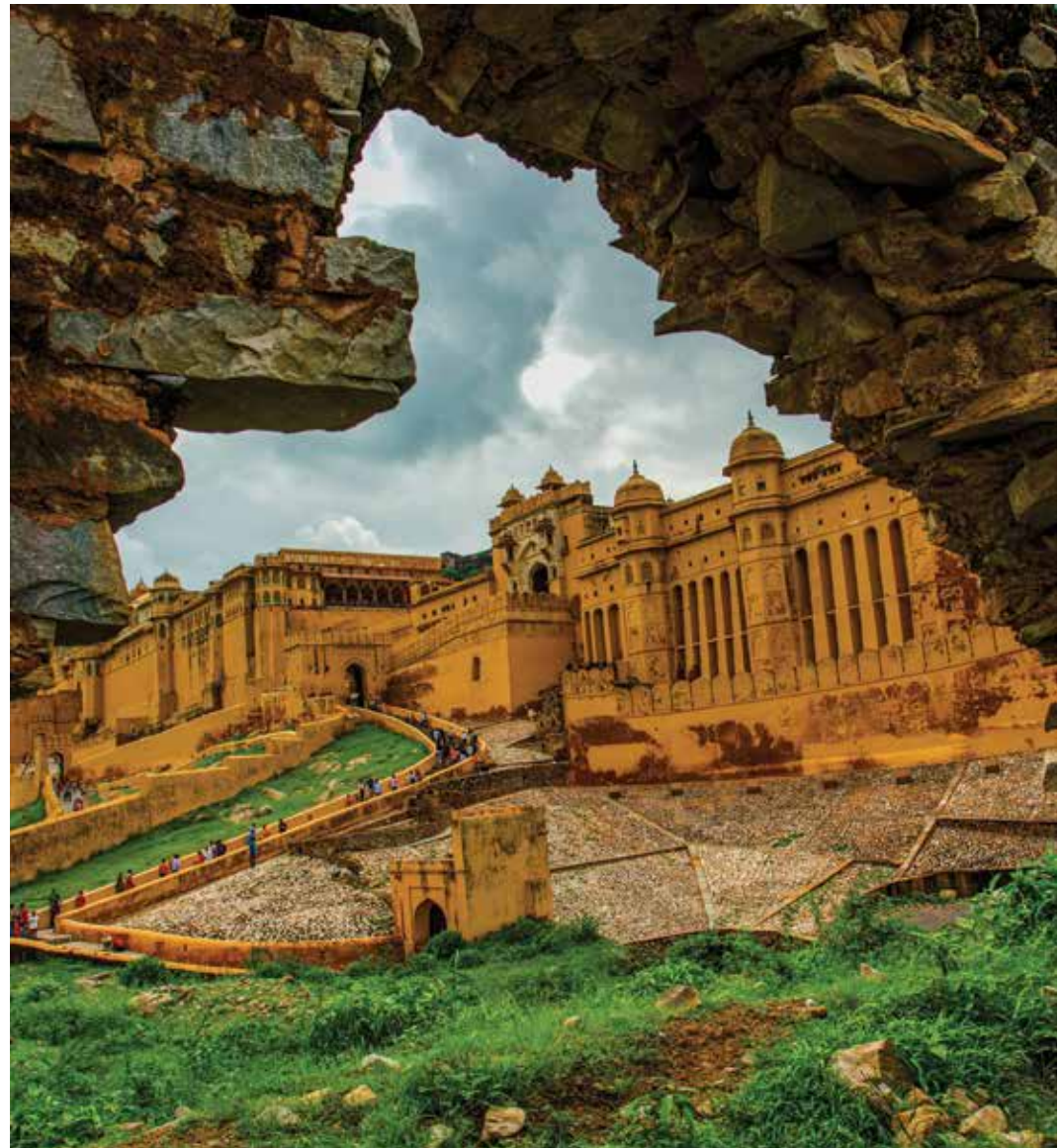
Sambar Salt Lake

The Sambhar Salt Lake, India's largest inland salt lake, is located in Sambhar Lake Town, Jaipur district of Rajasthan, India, 80 kilometres southwest of the city of Jaipur and 64 kilometres northeast of Ajmer, Rajasthan. It surrounds the historical Sambhar Lake Town.

The lake receives water from six rivers: Mantha,

Rupangarh, Khari, Khandela, Medtha and Samod. Lake has 5,700 square kilometres catchment area. It is an extensive saline wetland, with water depth fluctuating from as few as 60 centimetres during the dry season to about 3 meters at the end of the monsoon season. It occupies an area

of 190 to 230 square kilometers based on the season. The lake is elliptically shaped with a length of approximately 35.5 kilometres and a breadth varying between 3 kilometres and 11 kilometres. The lake straddles Nagaur and Jaipur districts and borders on the Ajmer district. The circumference



Amer Fort

The Amer Fort was built by Kachwaha Rajputs and acted as their governing seat prior to shifting to Jaipur. According to Indian Cultural Ministry, the fort took 100 years to complete.



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of the lake is 96 kilometres, and it is surrounded by the Aravali hills on all sides.

Vertical Farming

Rajasthan has witnessed a number of vertical farming, especially hydroponic projects that could strengthen India's food security. According to UN

report, 53 percent of Indian population is expected to live in cities by 2050. Vertical and hydroponic farming, can ease pressure on agricultural lands for a healthier and more sustainable future.

It is a contemporary practice of cultivating crops in stacked layers within protected indoor envi-

ronments that can help in addressing diminishing agricultural resources due to climate change. According to a recent research report, the India vertical farming market is expected to demonstrate a compound annual growth rate of 25.4 percent during 2023-2028, which will propel economic growth. ■

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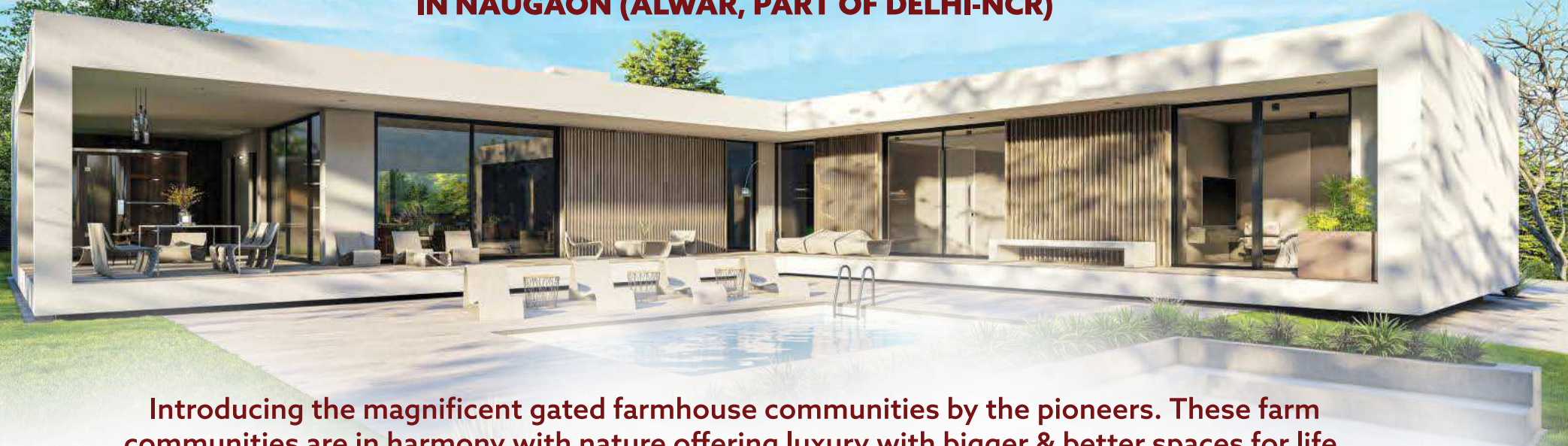


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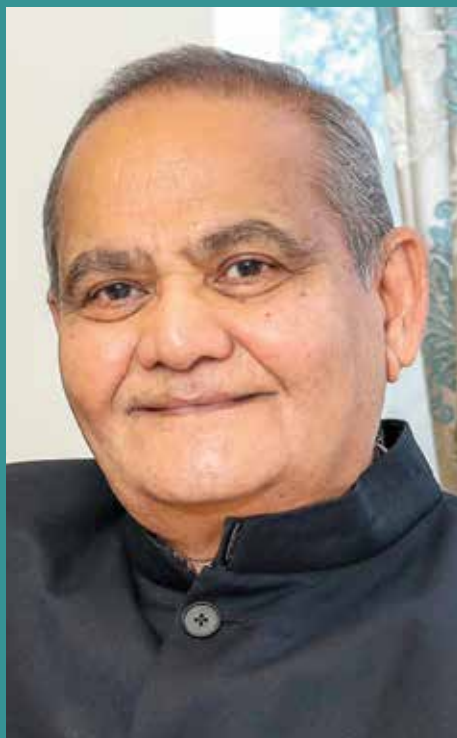


BOARD MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES

As guardians of stories and legacies, we, Dhola and Maru, have watched generations build and protect their heritage. Here, in the company of RBPG's Board Members & Trustees, we see a similar devotion—a group of wise and distinguished leaders committed to guiding this organization's journey with strength and vision.

These Trustees come from diverse paths, each bringing skills and experiences that fortify RBPG's foundation. Just as we faced trials together and embraced new horizons, so too do they—leading with courage, foresight, and an unwavering sense of purpose. Through their guidance, RBPG not only thrives but also adapts to a changing world, staying true to its mission.

In these profiles, you'll find stories of remarkable achievements and dedication. Each Board Member & Trustee stands as a pillar of support, not only for RBPG's present but also for its future. As we share their journeys with you, we honor the wisdom they bring and the legacy they are building—one that, like our own, will endure the tests of time.



CA Dinesh C Kothari

Dinesh C. Kothari, hailing from Jodhpur, Rajasthan, has a distinguished career and family legacy. His grandfather, late Shri Shugan Chandra Kothari, was the Chief Conservator of Forests for the Government of Rajasthan, and his father, late Shri R.C. Kothari, served as the General Manager of Hindustan Paper Corporation. Mr. Kothari pursued his B.Com from Jodhpur University in 1969 and qualified as a Chartered Accountant from S.B. Billimoria and Co. in 1972.

Mr. Kothari's professional journey began in Dubai in 1974, where he initially served in the corporate sector. His deep desire to give back to society led him to establish the first 'Not for Profit' school in Jodhpur, India, which now educates 5,000 students. This venture inspired him to serve the Indian diaspora in the UAE by setting up schools and institutes of excellence offering both Indian and British curricula in Sharjah, Dubai, and Ras Al Khaimah. Today, his company, Interstar Education Services in Dubai runs institutions that cater to 13,000 students of various nationalities.

Throughout his career, Mr. Kothari has faced numerous challenges, which he met with resilience, introspection, and a willingness to learn from others. He believes that there is no mantra for success, emphasizing the importance of maintaining an open mind and continually striving for improvement. His guiding principle is to never become complacent with achievements, as he feels that doing so would diminish the drive to grow.

Mr. Kothari attributes much of his success to the lessons learned from his parents. His father taught him to never give up and that people perform their best under pressure, while his mother instilled strong values during his formative years. His future aspirations reflect his belief that the race to excellence has no finishing line and that the journey of self-improvement is ongoing.

Personally, he enjoys Hindi poetry, reading, and listening to soulful music. His core values emphasize integrity, comparing it to a pearl that loses its value with even the smallest scratch. He urges the Rajasthani community abroad to make India proud through their integrity and hard work.

Mr. Dinesh Kothari is married to Neelam Kothari, daughter of the late Shri R.S. Bhandari, General Manager of Fertilizer Corporation of India. They are blessed with two children, Amit Kothari and Priyanka Kothari, and grandchildren Mira, Avni, and Arjun (Amit's children) and Anika (Priyanka's daughter). ■



CA Dinesh C. Kothari with his wife



CA G. R. Mehta

A Chartered Accountant from the May 1975 batch, G.R Mehta has made significant contributions to the finance and business communities, particularly in Dubai. He has served as the Chairman of the ICAI Dubai Chapter for three terms from 2004 to 2007, where he played a pivotal role in strengthening the chapter's influence and impact.

In addition to his leadership at ICAI, G.R Mehta is a founding member of the ICAT Toastmasters Club and serves as a Board Member of the Rajasthan Business and Professional Group LLC. His expertise and leadership extend beyond finance, as evidenced by his appointment as Vice Chairman of the Dubai Business Group for Tobacco by the Dubai Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Mehta is also the Director of Kaane American International Tobacco Company FZE, Dubai, where he continues to demonstrate his business acumen and leadership in the tobacco industry.

His dedication to social work and humanitarian efforts has been recognized with an Honorary Doctorate from the Global Triumph Virtual University, India.

Throughout his illustrious career, Mr. Mehta has received numerous accolades

- The Emirates Business Award in 2022
- Maharana Award
- Global Excellence and Leadership Award in 2021
- Inspiring Leaders Award in 2021
- The Institute of Directors Leadership Award in 2015

These achievements reflect his commitment to excellence, leadership, and service in both the professional and social spheres. ■



CA G. R Mehta with his family



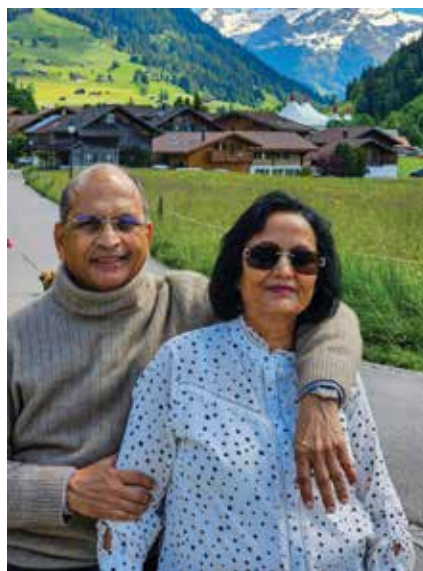
Dr Kesar Kothari

An engineer and entrepreneur, began his career after graduating with a Bachelor of Engineering from BITS Pilani in 1979. He started as a UPSC-appointed officer in India in 1981 before moving to Saudi Arabia to work as a Project Manager. In 1988, he founded his own business, initially focusing on trading and contracting electrical equipment. Using German technology, he expanded into manufacturing specialized engineering equipment, establishing a dynamic and successful career. Over time, his business grew into a significant enterprise known for innovation and leadership and was awarded second best industrial unit in Ajman free Zone by H.E Sheikh Ammar bin Humaid Al Nuaimi, Crown Prince of Ajman. In 2022, Dr. Kothari earned a Ph.D. from BITS Pilani UAE, reflecting his dedication to continuous learning and professional excellence.

Dr. Kothari is the founder of the Elfit Arabia Group, which now has a significant presence across the United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sultanate of Oman, Qatar, and India (Mumbai). The group also operates manufacturing plants in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, reflecting his vision and commitment to growth and innovation. Beyond his entrepreneurial endeavors, Dr. Kothari has played a pivotal role in the community as the founder and director of the Rajasthan Business and Professional Group (RBPG) in the UAE. He also served as the Ex-President of the BITS Pilani Alumni Chapter and was the CEO of the BITSAA Global Meet in Dubai in 2017.

Over the years, Dr. Kothari has achieved several notable accomplishments. He produced the first Bollywood film made in the UAE, "Rehguzar" (2006), starring Jimmy Shergill.

His leadership extends to various professional and social groups, including associations with RBPG, IPF, IBPC, JITO, JSG, and IAA in the UAE. Dr. Kothari is also dedicated to charitable causes, supporting initiatives like the Vision Foundation, Jaipur Foot, donating oxygen cylinders to Rajasthan during Covid period, and organizing medical camps for workers in the Ajman Free Zone. A strong advocate for green energy, he has installed solar panels at his workplace and residence, uses a water generator from humidity, drives an electric vehicle, and supports tree plantation projects.



Dr Kesar Kothari with his wife



Dr Kesar Kothari receiving an Industrial Excellence award

Personal Achievements

- **Founder and Chairman:** Elfit Arabia Group (KSA, UAE, Qatar), Falcon Ropes (Fujairah, UAE), and RBPG (UAE).
- **Bollywood Producer:** Produced "Rehguzar" (2006), the first Bollywood movie made in the UAE, starring Jimmy Shergill.

Awards and Recognitions

- Ranked 83rd on Forbes' List of Indian Leaders in the Arab World (2015-16).
- Runner-up in the Industrial Excellence Award for Best Foreign Entrepreneur, Ajman (2007).
- Awarded "Green Personality of the Year 2022" by Ajman Free Zone authorities

Born in 1956 and rooted in Rajasthan, India, Dr. Kothari is married to Anju Kothari, with whom he has two sons and three grand children.

Dr. Kothari's journey exemplifies entrepreneurial spirit, leadership, and a dedication to professional success and social responsibility, establishing him as a notable figure in the Arab world and beyond, by finding a place in Forbes magazine listing ■



Shri Ashok Odhrani

Ashok Odhrani's entrepreneurial journey began in 1967 when he moved to Dubai to work for a company specializing in automotive spare parts and services. After six years of hard work and gaining deep market insights, he decided to establish his own business. In 1973, he founded the Supertech Group, which has today grown into a leading name in the industrial products and services sector. Originally from Jaipur, the capital city of Rajasthan, India, Mr. Odhrani is married to Sunita and has three children: Deepak, Jitendra, and Hema. Outside his professional commitments, Mr. Odhrani enjoys traveling, reading, and playing golf.

The Supertech Group, under his leadership, has been a pioneering force in the industry for over five decades. In 2000, he expanded the company by adding an engineering division, Sun Power Gen Systems & Services, to diversify its offerings. Today, the Group's comprehensive portfolio includes expertise in process instrumentation, fluid connectors, lubrication, tools

Mr. Odhrani's impact extends beyond his business endeavors

He has been a consistent advocate for corporate social responsibility and philanthropy. He serves as the chairman of the Smt. Mohinidevi Lekhranj Odhrani Charitable Trust and the Managing Trustee of Monilek Hospital & Research Centre in Jaipur, which he operates alongside his brothers. The hospital specializes in kidney transplants and offers critical medical services to underprivileged patients.

and equipment, filtration and separation, flow control valves, fluid power engineering, engineered mechanical solutions, turbine and rotary equipment services, and electrical automation and calibration.

While Supertech initially focused on serving the oil and gas industry, Mr. Odhrani strategically expanded its reach into complementary markets such as power generation, ship repair, metal, transportation, and other heavy industries. From 1973 until 2000, he managed the business alongside his brothers. In 2000, his sons, Deepak and Jitendra, took over the business operations, continuing to drive the company forward with a commitment to quality and excellence. Their philosophy of delivering high-quality products and services has earned the Supertech Group strong credentials in the market and brought the family great personal fulfillment.

Ashok is also an active member of The Hindu Cremation Ground in Dubai, reflecting his deep connection to his community. His career and personal life are marked by a dedication to both business success and social welfare, making him a respected figure in both fields. ■



Shri Ashok Odhrani with his sons



Shri Ashok Odhrani with his wife



From Thar to the Top



Shri Gul Vaswani

The Chairman of Chokhi Dhani Group, Mr. Gul Vaswani is a visionary leader dedicated to celebrating and promoting Rajasthan's rich heritage. With a background in engineering and a flair for creativity, he established the first Chokhi Dhani ethnic village in 1990, with the ambition of bringing Rajasthan's unique culture to a wider audience. Under his leadership, the Chokhi Dhani Group has evolved into a multifaceted enterprise, expanding its reach into various sectors while staying true to its cultural roots.

BOARD MEMBER & TRUSTEES

In hospitality, the Chokhi Dhani Group is well-recognized, offering authentic Rajasthani experiences through resorts and restaurants in Jaipur, Indore, Meerut, London, and Dubai. Notably, the group also operates the Chokha Punjab Restaurant and Pink Pearl Hotel and Waterpark in Jaipur, as well as The Palace Hotel and Desert Camp in Jaisalmer, providing visitors with immersive local experiences.

Beyond hospitality, Mr. Vaswani has successfully diversified into other industries. Through Rigid Industries in Dubai and Haus Luxuriant in Jaipur, the group manufactures luxury furniture, bringing high-end design to interior spaces. In the FMCG sector, Chokhi Dhani Foods continues to grow, and Kalagram, another of Mr. Vaswani's initiatives, supports Indian artisans by promoting handicrafts both domestically and internationally.

Recognizing Dubai's strategic location, Mr. Vaswani has also leveraged the city's connectivity to drive international expansion. He believes that hospitality and property development hold vast, untapped potential in India's market, and the Chokhi Dhani Group plans to leverage its expertise in these areas to develop real estate projects across the country. This expansion aligns with his vision of tapping into India's growing demand for quality development, positioning Chokhi Dhani Group as a contributor to urban growth.

Mr. Vaswani's approach combines traditional Rajasthani culture with modern business practices, making Chokhi Dhani Group a cultural ambassador through its resorts, food processing, e-commerce, and handicrafts. As he looks ahead, Mr. Vaswani continues to steer the group's growth, poised for further contributions to India's economic landscape and cultural heritage. ■

A strong advocate for family involvement

Mr. Vaswani has his son, Anmol, and daughter, Kriti, actively participating in the business, ensuring a seamless generational transition and infusing fresh perspectives into the group's future endeavors.



CA Harikishan Rankawat

Success is a journey, not a destination, and Harikishan Rankawat's story exemplifies this truth. As the Founder and Managing Partner of RNG Auditors, Former Chairman of ICAI-DUBAI Chapter, President of the Federation of Indian Industry (FII) - Dubai Chapter, Board Member of the International Agro Arbitration Centre (IAAC), Trustee of Majha Ghar Foundation, and President and Trustee of Rajasthan Business & Professional Group (RBPG), Mr Harikishan stands as a beacon of hard work, self-discipline, resilience, and determination.

Mr. Harikishan's roots trace back to a modest Marwari family in Jodhpur, India, where culture and aspiration were equally valued. He dedicates his success to his parents, Brij Behari and Parwati Devi. The unwavering support of his wife, Dhruvshri, has been a cornerstone in his journey, fostering a nurturing and fulfilling family environment. Dhruvshri has also started a successful real estate consultancy, Prime View Properties LLC, in Dubai. Their children, daughter Kirti and son Himank, are pursuing higher education in Europe.

After completing his schooling at Sardar School and graduating in commerce from Jodhpur University, Mr. Harikishan cleared his CA in 1996 and CPA from the USA in 2006. His professional journey began in Mumbai, serving as Assistant Manager with the prestigious B.K. Birla Group. In 2002, Harikishan moved to Dubai to join Al Futtaim Group, gaining invaluable international experience in financial management.

His qualifications and diverse experience made him a sought-after professional in the financial sector. This entrepreneurial spirit led to the establishment of RNG Auditors in 2014. As Founder and CEO, he provides financial advisory services and strategic guidance. His commitment to education is evident in his role as a Faculty for UAE VAT Law and UAE Corporate Tax

Law. He is a regular speaker at forums and a contributor to local newspapers and radio.

Mr Harikishan's decision to contest elections at the ICAI Dubai Chapter resulted in a resounding victory, marking him as a prominent figure in professional organizations. His wife encouraged him to start his own audit and tax practice, which led to the founding of RNG Auditors, now a thriving firm with a team of 30 qualified professionals.

His journey underscores the importance of continuous learning and dedication. He aims to expand RNG Auditors to an MNC with 1,000 employees within the next five years and create employment opportunities for community members. As a Trustee of Majha Ghar Foundation, he supports their mission to provide food and shelter to the destitute in Maharashtra.

Mr Harikishan's hobbies include chess, meditation, and cricket. His positive attitude, honesty, and integrity, instilled by his father, have been central to his success. As the newly elected President of RBPG, he aims to enhance business and professional relations among members and promote Rajasthani culture in the UAE. His journey is a narrative of dedication, community values, and the pursuit of excellence, inspiring aspiring professionals in the field of finance. ■



CA Harikishan Rankawat with his family



Dr Romit Shive Krishna Purohit

Dr. Romit Purohit, from Jodhpur, Rajasthan, hails from a family rooted in education and public service. His father, Dr. Shive Krishna Purohit, is a UAE-based medical practitioner, wife, Sonal, is an award-winning artist and his three daughters: Ridhima, studying architectural design, and Shagun and Shanaya. His brother, Mohit, is a system engineer & real estate consultant in the US. Dr Romit co-founded Doctors of Rajasthan International (DORI) and is the Founder and General Secretary of Doctors of Indian Origin, UAE. He credits his mothers, Indu and Kalpana Purohit, for instilling in him strong values which shaped his personal and professional life.

TRUSTEE & VICE PRESIDENT

Dr. Romit Purohit comes from a distinguished family with a strong presence in civil service, the judiciary, politics, and healthcare in Rajasthan. His family includes 21 engineers, 22 doctors, two MBAs, two chartered accountants, and several lawyers. He is the nephew of Justice Rajendra Prasad Vyas of the Rajasthan High Court and the grandson of Shri Gauri Vallabh Purohit, a former Tehsildar, equivalent to today's collector.

Educational Background:

- MBBS, University of Pune, Maharashtra, India (2000)
- Masters in Healthcare Administration (MHA), Touro University, USA (2007)
- MS in Sports & Exercise Medicine (Sports Orthopedics), Queens Medical Center, University of Nottingham, UK (2009); Board Certified – NHS, UK
- Specialist in Occupational Health (2013)
- Certified Mental Health First Aider & Coach (2022)

Additional Certifications:

- Strategy Management, DEWA Academy, Dubai, UAE (2009)
- Lead Auditor – ISO 45001, ISO 9001, SA-8000, ISO 14001, Bureau Veritas, Germany
- IOSH Certified, Nottingham, UK (2008)
- Lead Auditor Excellence, European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), Brussels (2011)
- Leadership Management, DNV, Dubai (2016)
- ISO 33001 – Enterprise Risk Management (ERM), DNV, Dubai
- Motivational Coach, Queens Medical Center, University of Nottingham, UK (2009)
- Management Certification, Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Chennai, India (2012)
- Certified Psychosomatic & Stress Analyst, Rashid Hospital, Dubai (2010)



Dr. Romit Shive Krishna Purohit with his family

Dr. Romit arrived in Dubai in 1979, with his family settling permanently in 1985. Over the past four decades, they have embraced Dubai's modern, culturally rich environment. He currently serves as the Head of Health for the Dubai Electricity & Water Authority (Ministry of Energy). His father continues his medical practice, while his wife manages her art business.

Inspired by his father's philosophy that "giving is happiness," he has not charged for medical consultations for the past 22 years, focusing on giving back to society. Alongside his medical career, he is an entrepreneur with interests in finance and investments.

He attributes his values of generosity, logic, and resilience to his mother & father, Dr. Shive Krishna Purohit; his uncles, Justice Rajendra Prasad Vyas and Ravi Prasad Vyas; and his father-in-law, Retired Superintendent of Police Shri Naval Kishore Purohit. His wife, Sonal Purohit, is his big support and inspiration.

Dr. Romit aims to connect Rajasthani culture internationally while preserving its roots. He loves singing, music, cricket, and cooking, finding joy in these hobbies. He admires the talents he has been blessed with, which shape his hobbies and personal interests. He dreams of traveling the world to explore diverse places and is currently writing his own book, guided by the belief in honesty and living without expectations. Milestones & achievements

- **National Awardee (2021):** APJ Abdul Kalam Award in Healthcare Services, Government of Maharashtra, India
- **National Awardee (2021):** ATAL Award for Contribution to Sports Medicine, Government of India
- **Excellence Awardee in Training (Motivational Coaching):** 14 times (2009-2023), Government of Dubai, UAE
- **Motivational Coach for Team India:** Indoor Cricket World Cup, 2017
- **Innovator of the Year Award (2018), ME Utility Awards,** Government of Dubai
- **COVID-19 Assurance Award:** United Kingdom, 2020-2021
- **World Book of Records Holder (2020):** Recognized for Frontline Warrior Service
- **Maharana Award:** Rajasthan Foundation, Govt of Rajasthan - 2021



Shri Mahesh Advani

Mahesh Advani is a distinguished entrepreneur, philanthropist, and motivational speaker based in Dubai. As the Founder and CEO of Blossom Trading Dubai, which he established in 1988, Mr. Advani has played a pivotal role in the import and distribution of Kandora fabric for Arab menswear, serving the Gulf and Middle Eastern markets. The company sources fabric from countries like Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, Korea, Vietnam, and India, distributing it across the UAE and re-exporting to other countries in the region.

His journey began in 1982 when he left his hometown of Ajmer, Rajasthan, to pursue opportunities in Dubai. Starting at a clerical position in a textile trading company, he quickly advanced and, within six years, launched his own business. Today, Blossom Trading has grown into a large conglomerate with interests spanning textiles, hospitality, and e-commerce. Mr. Advani credits his success to hard work, constant innovation, and the ability to build enduring relationships.

In 2001, he expanded into the hospitality industry by founding MyGovindas, an Indian vegetarian restaurant known for its Sattvic (holistic) approach to healthy and wholesome food. The restaurant's success is built on exceptional food quality and customer service, leading to five outlets in the UAE and plans for international expansion. That same year, he also launched Trufrut, a brand of 100% natural, preservative-free ice cream available in stores across Dubai.

Mr. Advani is now set to revolutionize the online bespoke fashion industry in the UAE with his latest venture, MyThoby, an online platform connecting users with top tailoring houses across the country.

Beyond his business endeavors

Mr. Advani who is married and has three children is a dedicated philanthropist and a motivational speaker. An active member of the ISKCON movement, he has a profound interest in Yoga and Ayurveda. He is also recognized for his engaging talks on sacred texts like the Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Puranas. His lectures are available on his YouTube channel.

As President of the Dubai Textile Merchant Charitable Trust, Mr. Advani leads several charitable initiatives, including building homes for impoverished families and providing scholarships to underprivileged students in India. He also serves on the board of ISKCON Tribal Care, which supports tribal villages in India with clean drinking water and education. ■





From Thar to the Top



CA Alok Bhargava

Alok Bhargava is a professionally qualified Chartered Accountant from India, distinguished as a merit holder in both Chartered Accountancy and a B.Sc in PCM from Udaipur, Rajasthan. His career began in 1995 in Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania, where he worked as a Financial Controller for an international institution. In 1996, he ventured into commodities buying and selling before transferring to Kenya, marking the beginning of his expansive focus on the African marketplace. Since then, he has become a globetrotter, diversifying and exploring markets across several countries.

TRUSTEE

In 2005, Mr Bhargava relocated to Dubai, UAE and joined an MNC as a Partner/Director, riding its boom across the African continent. His efforts extended to countries including Tanzania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Malawi, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Uganda. In current years, his influence has also reached Canada and Russia.

With over a long time of professional experience and big know-how of diverse products and origins, Mr. Bhargava launched PRARAMB AGRI TRADING DMCC in 2016 in Dubai, UAE. As Director, he continues to leverage his information to offer products which include sesame seeds, flax seeds, groundnuts, pulses, spices, and cashews from numerous origins which includes Africa, Canada, and Russia.

PRARAMB AGRI TRADING DMCC was recognized as the 'Emerging Re-Exporter of the Year 2018' by Dubai Exports in association with DP World. Bhargava was also awarded the title of Most Iconic NRI of the Year in 2018 by the Ministry of External Affairs India in the food category. A regular

Alok Bhargava's Beliefs

- **Success:** In Business.
- **Change:** Is the only permanent thing in life.
- **Knowledge:** Is never complete

speaker at various oilseed organization meetings, he presents trends in African sesame seeds and groundnuts and has served as a panel expert at the World Pulses Conference, focusing primarily on African pulses.

In 2021, Mr. Bhargava obtained the Maharana Awards (Emerging Entrepreneur Award in Agri Industries) and the FIN/Forbes Africa Award for Best Innovative Business Leader. In 2023, he became venerated by way of the World Book of Records, London, as an Ambassador of International Fair Trade (Agri). He often shares his mantra- "Have a dream, trust in it, pursue it." ■



CA Alok Bhargava with family



Shri Rajkumar Bohara

Rajkumar Bohara was born and raised in Udaipur, Rajasthan, where his family settled after relocating from their ancestral village in 1952. His father, a Chartered Accountant and former MLA, established one of Udaipur's oldest CA firms, embodying integrity and commitment to public service. Mr. Bohara shares his life with his supportive wife, Nita, and their three children: Chinmay, who is married to Tanvi; Pranoy, married to Akanksha; and Ananya, their youngest, who is currently finishing high school.

He completed his schooling in Udaipur, later earning a bachelor's degree in commerce from Udaipur University. His interest in accounts and finance led him to qualify as a Chartered Accountant, after which he joined his father's firm, gaining 16 years of professional experience in finance, accounts, and auditing. Eventually, Mr. Bohara's drive to apply his expertise in a

more versatile environment led him to explore diverse business sectors, including finance, the stock market, construction, and contracting. In 2007-08, he relocated to the UAE and established a successful limestone mining and transportation business.

Music and cricket are among his enduring passions. Legends like Kishore Kumar and Mohammad Rafi hold a special place in his heart, and he finds joy in their timeless melodies. Cricket, a sport he has loved since childhood, remains an active part of his life. He has represented his university and continued playing within the CA community into his 50s, cherishing the camaraderie and competitive spirit the game fosters.

As a Trustee and Member of the Rajasthan Business & Professional Group, Mr. Bohara is dedicated to supporting the network of Rajasthani professionals and entrepreneurs in the UAE. Through his role, he works to strengthen connections, encourage knowledge exchange, and foster collaboration, while honoring the values of his heritage and embracing the opportunities of the region. ■

Throughout his career

Mr. Bohara has encountered numerous challenges, from financial pressures and market volatility to operational difficulties and intense competition. These experiences have shaped his resilience, adaptability, and focus on ethical business practices. Inspired by his father's unwavering principles, he strives to uphold integrity, emphasizing long-term goals and building a reliable support team.



Shri Rajkumar Bohara with his family



From Thar to the Top



Shri Anil Chandirani

A man of profound knowledge, dedication, and passion, Mr. Anil Chandirani is the Founder and Chairman of the Satguru Group of Companies. With a strong business acumen, a focus on exceptional customer service, and a visionary approach to revolutionizing the travel industry, Mr. Chandirani has led Satguru to become one of the world's leading travel management companies.

TRUSTEE

Starting in 1989 with Satguru Travel & Tourism, Mr. Chandirani transformed a small operation in Rwanda into an international corporation. What began as a modest company with just 12 employees in one country has expanded into a global enterprise, now operating in 78 countries with over 2,500 employees working collectively to achieve remarkable results.

Mr. Chandirani's perseverance, discipline, and unwavering commitment to a customer-centric approach have been pivotal in establishing Satguru Travel as a successful organization. The Satguru Group has grown into a diverse global enterprise, with operations in over 78 countries and more than 5,000 employees. Its ventures span multiple industries, including education, hospitality, destination management companies (DMCs), imports and exports, fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), automobiles, general trading, textiles, cargo, airline representations, and technology. Today, the group is recognized as one of the largest and fastest-growing travel management companies worldwide, known for its world-class services.

Originally from Rajasthan, Mr. Chandirani is a passionate and innovative leader with a keen problem-solving approach. After graduating from D.A.V. College in Ajmer, India, with a degree in commerce, he journeyed to Africa to join his father and embark on an entrepreneurial path. Despite facing numerous challenges, Mr. Chandirani's determination led him to evolve from a novice entrepreneur into a globally recognized businessman. His accidental entry into the travel industry soon revealed his passion for the field, and he successfully built Satguru Travel into a global powerhouse.

Today, the Satguru Group remains committed to creating job opportunities for passionate and ambitious youth across all continents, reflecting its dedication to global empowerment. Mr. Chandirani's vision of delivering exceptional customer satisfaction and his ability to navigate the evolving travel industry continue to drive the group's success. As he often says, "It's all about hard work and perseverance." ■

Under his leadership

The Satguru Group has become a reputable organization known for revolutionizing global travel management. His vision and strategic guidance have earned the company a place in Africa's travel forums, including membership with the Kenya Association of Tour Operators (KATO), contributing to significant advancements in Kenya's tourism sector.



Shri Amit Dhamani

Amit Dhamani, born in Jaipur, India, is a second-generation jeweler who has significantly impacted the global jewelry industry, particularly in Europe, the Gulf region, the Far East, and India. The Dhamani Jewels Group, founded in 1969 by Mr. L.N. Dhamani in Jaipur, has its headquarters in Dubai and branches in Thailand, the Gulf, and India.

In 1990, Mr. Dhamani joined the Bangkok office as Managing Director. At a young age, his innovative, dynamic, and uncompromisingly honest nature facilitated the group's evolution from a gem and diamond wholesale business to a renowned fine jewelry brand. Under his leadership, the group introduced notable brands such as Dhamani 1969, Dhamani Jewels, DuSoul, and Laviere, with Dubai as the headquarters since 1997.

He holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, and has completed the OPM program at Harvard Business School, Boston, USA. He moved to the UAE in 1997, driven by growth opportunities and the desire to expand the family business. Mr. Dhamani has faced and overcome numerous challenges, including the transformation and branding of the business, and has ventured successfully into high-end luxury retail.

Inspired by his father, who guided him to look beyond the ordinary and set forward-looking goals, Mr. Dhamani aims to establish Dhamani Jewels as a global high-end luxury jewelry brand. His commitment to excellence and innovation has been instrumental in achieving this vision. His core values—Integrity, Passion, People, Respect, Innovation, Excellence, and Ethos (IPPRIEE)—guide both his personal and professional life.

Amit Dhamani is dedicated to supporting the Rajasthan community and its members in their business and professional endeavors. He has lived in the UAE for 27 years and enjoys exploring the cultures of various countries through travel. His dedication to the jewelry industry and his community is matched by his commitment to his family. His spouse, Nupur Dhamani, and their three children provide him with unwavering support. ■



Shri Amit Dhamani with his wife Nupur Dhamani



Shri Suresh Gandhi

Suresh Gandhi is a visionary leader who exemplifies traditional values, ethics, and forward-thinking principles that have shaped both his personal and professional life. As the founder of Max Technical Electrical Trading LLC (formerly Al Samier Electricals and Equipment Trading Co LLC) in Dubai, he transformed the company from its modest origins into a globally recognized, ISO 9001-2000 accredited business, representing 40 world-class manufacturers in marine and offshore equipment.

Born in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, Mr. Gandhi's educational journey spanned several villages before he graduated from the University of Jodhpur. His academic pursuits went beyond the classroom as he actively participated in the National Cadet Corps (NCC), social service, and debate competitions. He won first prize for an essay on Swami Vivekananda's influence on the Indian Renaissance, showcasing his intellectual curiosity early on. After moving to Mumbai, Mr. Gandhi pursued Business Management studies and swiftly rose to the position of Sales Manager. His bold decision to relocate to Dubai was a pivotal moment in his career, reflecting his willingness to embrace risks and pursue growth.

Philanthropy has been a cornerstone of Mr. Gandhi's life. Deeply inspired by his father, Dr. Padam Chand Gandhi, a physician known for his selfless service to the poor, Mr. Gandhi established the Dr. Padam Chand Bilam Kanwar Gandhi Trust in Jodhpur along with his brothers. Through this trust, they founded a school in 2003, reinforcing his belief in the power of education to transform lives. Mr. Gandhi has also led numerous charitable efforts, including a 2002 blood donation camp that collected 800 units and an eye camp in Jodhpur in 2006. His compassion extended to disaster relief efforts for the Latur and Bhuj earthquakes, Rajasthan drought, the Tsunami, and COVID-19 pandemic.

As a dedicated advocate for social causes, Mr. Gandhi is associated with prominent organizations such as IBPC Dubai, India Club Dubai, Jain Social

A nature enthusiast

He has completed multiple Himalayan expeditions and supports tree-planting initiatives. His passion for knowledge led him to publish *Bhavisya Ki Or*, a 450-page commemorative edition, and is currently working on *Memoirs of the Gandhi Family*.

Group, and JITO. His exemplary service earned him a 'Lifetime Achievement Award' from FOI and IBPC Dubai. In 1999, he organized the "Millennium Meet of Gandhi Family" to promote a "United Family Structure." He also actively participated in key international events such as the 2000 Rajasthan Conclave and several Pravasi Bharatiya Divas gatherings, connecting with Non-Resident Indians around the world.

Mr. Gandhi's guiding philosophy is - Success is earned through perseverance and responsibility. He advocates for "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam"—the world is one family—urging individuals to transcend limitations of caste, community, and religion, and embrace unity in diversity. As he thrives in the UAE, his "Karam Bhoomi" (land of action), Mr. Gandhi remains loyal and grateful for the opportunities the country has provided. A devoted family man, he is supported by his wife, Rekha, and their son, Alok, both active in social service, continuing the legacy of compassion and community upliftment. ■



Shri Suresh Gandhi with his family



Shri Devendra Goenka

Devendra Goenka, originally from Fatehpur Shekhawati in Rajasthan, was born in Uttar Pradesh and raised in Ahmedabad. His family has a diversified business portfolio, with a primary focus on the textile industry. They produce premium quality cotton fabrics in Ahmedabad under the brand name YUVA, which is distributed across India and exported to various countries.

Mr. Goenka studied law at Gujarat University. His interest in the export and import of textiles led him to the UAE in 1993. His strong connection to cultural heritage, traditional fabrics, and recognizing a market gap for unique, high-quality, culturally specific fabrics inspired him to start an export business.

Mr.Devendra Goenka is the Managing Director of Tetoron Trading Co LLC in Dubai. The highly competitive textile market in Dubai has presented numerous challenges for him. However, maintaining high standards and consistent quality has enabled Mr. Goenka and his business to succeed in this demanding environment.

His father has been the most influential person in his life, shaping his values and professional outlook. His primary goal in business is to establish strategic partnerships with other organizations and businesses to enhance resources and opportunities.

As a trustee of the Rajasthan Business & Professional Group (RBPG), Mr.Goenka is committed to acting in the organization's best interest, prioritizing its social health and prestige.

Mr. Goenka is married to Madhu Goenka and has a son, Pulkit Goenka, a daughter-in-law, Ekta Goenka, and a grandson, Pushkal Goenka. He has been residing in the UAE for over 30 years. ■



Shri Devendra Goenka with his wife Madhu Goenka



From Thar to the Top

TRUSTEE



Dr Ramavtar Gupta

Born on February 5, 1948, in Alwar, Rajasthan, Dr Ramavtar Gupta hails from a business-oriented family. His father, Mr. Chandgi Lal Gupta, was a prominent industrialist in Jaipur, engaged in manufacturing auto parts and agricultural equipment, while his mother, Smt. Panni Devi, provided strong family support. Dr. Gupta completed his education in Jaipur, which set the stage for his multifaceted career.

In 1978, Dr. Gupta earned his MBBS and MD in Internal Medicine from SMS Medical College, Jaipur. He embarked on his medical career in Shastrinagar, Jaipur, where he established a diagnostic center. For over 34 years, he provided exceptional healthcare services, dedicating himself to improving the well-being of his community.

In 2003, Dr. Gupta transitioned from medicine to business, relocating to Dubai to join the family enterprise, PGI Group Pan Gulf International Metals Industry LLC. His leadership was instrumental in expanding the company's metal trading and melting operations across several countries, including Thailand, Korea, China, Pakistan, and the UAE. PGI Group specializes in producing brass, copper, and lead ingots and exporting metals such as copper, stainless steel, nickel alloys, aluminum, and zinc to over 80 countries. Under Dr. Gupta's guidance, the company continued its growth, including a major expansion project in the Sajja Industrial Area, solidifying its position as a trusted global supplier.

Dr. Gupta's family is a source of great pride. His wife, Kamlesh Gupta, a homemaker and graduate from Mathura, has been a strong support throughout his journey. Their daughter, Parul Gupta, holds

Alongside his business success

Dr. Gupta and his family are deeply committed to philanthropy. They established a charitable trust focused on education and healthcare, offering free medical treatment in Jaipur and Alwar, Rajasthan. The trust also supports educational initiatives, helping students pursue careers in engineering, medicine, and accounting.

a degree in Management Science from BITS Pilani and manages a jewelry manufacturing business, while their son, Anshul Gupta, a Chartered Accountant and CEO of the Group, is actively involved in the family's metal trading ventures.

Inspired by Shri R.L. Gupta, a pioneer in alloy steel manufacturing, Dr. Gupta's diverse career reflects a dedication to service, innovation, and family. His legacy spans both healthcare and the industrial sectors, leaving a lasting impact on the lives he touched and the industries he influenced. ■



Dr Ramavtar Gupta with his wife, Kamlesh Gupta



Shri Mohan Gurnani

At the age of 17, Mohan Gurnani joined his father's electrical business in Jaipur, Rajasthan. Under his leadership, the Gurnani Group & VETO Group grew from a small shop in Nehru Bazar to a well-known name in the region. Through relentless hard work and dedication, he expanded the business over the next 50 years into manufacturing wires, cables, and distributing products across India. Mr. Gurnani's efforts propelled the business to new heights, and today, VETO brand products are recognized nationwide.

In 1992, the Gurnani Group diversified into manufacturing, real estate, hospitality and healthcare. They also pioneered international expansion by becoming the first electrical company from Rajasthan to establish operations outside India, starting in Dubai. Today, VETO products are supplied to over 120 countries worldwide.

Mr. Gurnani, Chairman Jaipur Electricals Group Dubai, Veto Switchgear & Cable Ltd, India and Radisson Blu Hotel Jaipur is a native of Jaipur, and has always believed in the power of perseverance and hard work. Under his guidance, the company has become one of the top electrical companies in India and the UAE. His background as a member of the Sindhi community, a group that faced hardship and displacement after Indian independence, has shaped his values and vision for business and community engagement.

He passionately believes that the Sindhi community has significantly contributed to the economic development of every place they have inhabited. Reflecting on his own community's resilience, Mr. Gurnani states, "We Sindhis do not take anything for granted. We got refugee status within our own country, but we did not give up. We had unwavering faith and a spirit of innovation; we fought all odds and today stand with irrevocable dignity."

Committed to giving back, the Gurnani family has been organizing community weddings for underprivileged Sindhi boys and girls (Samuhik Vivah) for the past five years and is currently constructing a medical college and hospital to inspire Sindhi youth to pursue careers in medicine. Mr.

“Business in Mind,
Tradition in Heart.
We Sindhis are a united
community, always
striving to help and uplift
each other.”

— Mohan Gurnani

Gurnani emphasizes the importance of maintaining cultural heritage, stating, "Our vision is dedicated to serving the community with a commitment to healthcare excellence."

A meticulous and soft-spoken leader, Mr. Gurnani is also known for his belief in the importance of virtues and good manners within the Sindhi community. He is passionate about preserving their rich cultural heritage and language for future generations, fostering a shared global perspective amidst ever-evolving technological advancements.

Mr. Gurnani concludes, "Even as the world modernizes, Sindhi households continue to promote their customs and traditions. Most of us converse in Sindhi at home and honor our guests with Sindhi food. I strongly believe our culture and cuisine will endure and never wane." ■



Shri Mohan Gurnani with his family



From Thar to the Top



Shri Pyarelal Jat

Hailing from a small village near Fatehpur in Sikar, Rajasthan, Mr. Pyarelal Jat arrived in Dubai in 1993 with a vision and an unyielding determination to succeed. Starting from modest beginnings, he quickly integrated himself into Dubai's vibrant business landscape, laying the foundation for what would evolve into a remarkable entrepreneurial journey.

TRUSTEE

In 2000, he established his first venture, Stallion Metal Works, a metal fabrication company. Through years of hard work and dedication Mr. Jat steadily transformed the company into a thriving business. His commitment to quality and meticulous attention to detail, paired with his sharp business acumen, became cornerstones of his success, enabling him to expand his ventures.

Throughout his journey

Mr. Jat has been committed to uplifting others, providing support and guidance to as many people as possible, and sharing his success along the way. His commitment to helping those around him has become a hallmark of his career, reflecting a deep sense of responsibility and compassion for his community.

Recognizing opportunities in complementary fields, he founded two additional companies: K Fix International, which specializes in interior fit-outs, and Kitchen R Us, a company focused on commercial kitchen equipment. Both enterprises have flourished under his leadership, further solidifying his position as a respected entrepreneur in the UAE.

In 2021, Mr. Jat diversified his business portfolio by entering the hospitality industry with the launch of Hotel Click Collection in Sindhi Camp, Jaipur. This new venture underscores his relentless drive for innovation and growth, adding a new dimension to his entrepreneurial legacy.

Mr. Pyarelal Jat's career reflects a commitment to his vision, a resilience in overcoming challenges, and a talent for recognizing and seizing new opportunities. Through his accomplishments, he has made a lasting impact not only on the industries he serves but also on the lives of the people he has helped along the way. ■



Shri Pyarelal Jat with his wife



Shri Rajesh S Jain

Rajesh S. Jain, Managing Director of JG Group, has played a pivotal role in the company's success across various industries over the past century. Hailing from Mandawala, Jalore, Rajasthan, Mr Jain grew up in a financially challenged family, where he learned the values of hard work and perseverance.

Though Mr Jain briefly attended Delhi University, his focus remained on business rather than formal education. The real-life experiences and challenges he faced in the family business were his greatest teachers. In 1991-92, he ventured to the UAE, attracted by its vibrant business environment and abundant opportunities, which proved instrumental in expanding JG Group's reach and diversifying its operations.

Mr Jain began his business journey at 18 years, driven by the need to support his family. The challenges and opportunities he encountered fueled his passion for business. He started by exploring various markets, gradually expanding into global trading, finance, and investments. Navigating the complexities of international markets was a significant challenge, but his adaptability and strong business acumen allowed him to identify and seize new opportunities. The ability to pivot and embrace change was crucial in overcoming obstacles.

He is particularly proud of the successful transformation and expansion of JG Group into new markets and industries over the years. The recognition of JG Group as "TIMES EMERGING ICONS"

in 2019 stands as a testament to their efforts and achievements. His father, Sardarmal Ji Jain, has been a significant mentor and guide, shaping his approach to business. Additionally, the philosophy of Osho has profoundly influenced his outlook on holistic living and leadership.

Professionally, Mr Jain aspires to continue expanding JG Group's global reach and impact while fostering sustainable growth. Personally, he aims to further his work in holistic wellness through initiatives like PIYAS and continue contributing to the well-being of communities worldwide. His wife, Bhagyashree Jain, and their children, Krati Jain and Sparsh Jain, have been a constant source of support and inspiration in his journey.

Mr Rajesh Jain enjoys playing tennis, which keeps him active and focused. He also loves exploring new South Indian restaurants, allowing him to experience diverse culinary delights and cultures. His core values include 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the belief that the world is one family), maintaining long-term relationships, financial and legal prudence, and embracing holistic well-being. These principles guide both his personal and professional life. ■



Shri Rajesh S. Jain with his family



From Thar to the Top



Shri Varun Jain

Mr. Varun Jain was born in March 1984 in Kota, Rajasthan, as the youngest of four children to Vinod and Usha Jain, who instilled in him a deep appreciation for education despite never attending college themselves. His father, whom he considers a source of wisdom, provided him with foundational lessons on life and work, while his mother encouraged him to explore interests in performing arts and public speaking, which fueled his confidence as a national-level debater.

TRUSTEE

Raised in a supportive Jain Shwetamber family, Mr. Jain gained lifelong values and inspiration from his elder siblings, brother Tarun and sisters Nisha and Esha.

One of his proudest achievements was receiving an award from the late Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee for his accomplishments in school. Following high school, he studied in Indore for a few years before moving to Singapore on scholarship to attend Nanyang Technological University (NTU), one of Asia's top universities. Completing a Master's in Knowledge Management at NTU was a major milestone in his journey, where he learned the value of knowledge creation through socialization, combination, and internalization.

About a decade ago, Mr. Jain met his wife, Roopali, an inspiring woman and a gold medalist in her studies. Roopali has brought immense happiness to his life, and together, they are raising two wonderful children, their daughter, Saisha, and son, Shanay.

As a trustee of the Rajasthan Business & Professional Group, he advocates for the growth of the Rajasthani community in the UAE. His message

From Admissions Expert to Educational Pioneer

Mr. Jain's professional journey led him to the UAE in 2011 after gaining experience in admissions consulting across Southeast Asia. In Dubai, he established a boutique admissions consulting firm, where he guided working professionals and high school students to prestigious institutions such as Harvard, INSEAD, and Ivy League universities. In 2022, he founded UniHawk and Learning Lab to extend his impact to over a million students in the GCC, focusing on aligning career guidance with students' true strengths and interests.

emphasizes creating opportunities, empowering homemakers, and enhancing access to education. Guided by principles of integrity, gratitude, and a commitment to lifelong learning, Mr. Jain aspires to build a legacy that inspires and uplifts future generations. ■



Shri Varun Jain with his family



Shri Piyush Jhunjhunwala

Born and raised in Bhagalpur, Bihar, Mr. Piyush Jhunjhunwala grew up in a close-knit, traditional Rajasthani family that profoundly influenced his values and work ethic. He is married to Ekta, his wife, and together they have two daughters, Dishita and Mehika, who serve as a constant source of inspiration and support in all his pursuits.

Mr. Jhunjhunwala completed his schooling across various cities in Bihar and Bengal, where he developed a strong interest in commerce and finance. He pursued a Chartered Accountancy (CA) qualification from The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, achieving it in 2004, and subsequently earned his Certified Public Accountant (US CPA) qualification in 2006. His early career included roles at Steel Authority of India Ltd and PepsiCo India before he moved to the UAE in 2008, where he joined Reckitt Benckiser as a Senior Finance Analyst, eventually becoming the CFO of Reckitt MENA, overseeing an \$800M business. Later, he served as Revenue Director for the APAC region at Coty Inc. before transitioning to entrepreneurship with Stockify Fintech in India.

His entrepreneurial journey was inspired by his passion for the stock market. He launched Stockify, a leading platform for buying and selling unlisted and pre-IPO stocks in India. The platform has since expanded, with offices in Bangalore, Kolkata, and Dubai, establishing itself as a top choice for unlisted securities in India.

Overcoming professional challenges with resilience and hard work has been a consistent theme in Mr. Jhunjhunwala's career. He achieved signifi-

Outside of work

Mr. Jhunjhunwala is passionate about cricket, playing weekly and traveling internationally to support India in various matches. His core values of integrity, dedication, and hard work guide his personal and professional endeavors.

cant milestones, becoming a CA at 21 years of age, a CPA at 22, and a CFO of a major multinational by age 35. He considers these accomplishments, along with his success with Stockify, among his proudest moments.

Family, particularly his mother, has been a pivotal influence in his life, teaching him perseverance and dedication. Looking forward, he aims to expand Stockify's offerings in the Indian capital market and continue his journey in entrepreneurship.

As a Trustee and Member of the Rajasthan Business & Professional Group, he is dedicated to collaborating with fellow members to contribute positively to society and give back to his community and country. ■



Shri Piyush Jhunjhunwala with his family



Shri Lavanya Mathur

Born in Jhalawar district of Rajasthan and raised in Jaipur, Lavanya Mathur hails from a distinguished family of politicians, social bureaucrats, and medical professionals. His upbringing in Jaipur was shaped by his father's career as a medical professional and his mother's dedication as a homemaker. He has two elder brothers, both employed in semi-government roles, who have been instrumental in supporting his journey.

Mr. Mathur's educational background is impressive, having completed his primary and secondary education in Jaipur. He holds dual bachelor's degrees in English Literature and Political Science, as well as Journalism and Mass Communication from the University of Rajasthan. He furthered his education with dual postgraduate degrees—an MA in History from the University of Rajasthan and Marketing and Financial Management from Bhavan's College of Communication, Rajendra Prasad University in Mumbai. Additionally, he is a Certified Fund Manager from UK.

Driven by a desire to advance his career, Mr. Mathur relocated to Dubai, drawn by the city's rapid development and the opportunities it presented. His early fascination with numbers, combined with a naturally outgoing personality, led him to a successful career in private banking. Today, he serves as the Director of Private Wealth Management at ASAS Capital DIFC, where he balances the analytical demands of his work with the relationship-building aspects of his role.

In 2019, Mr. Mathur was appointed as the UAE Country Coordinator by the Government of Punjab to handle NRI affairs, a role in which he contributed significantly to the welfare of the Indian diaspora during the Vande Bharat Mission.

He attributes much of his success to the influence of his parents and two elder brothers, who instilled in him values of integrity, dedication, and team-work. He is also deeply inspired by mentors like Shri Rana Gurmeet Singh Sodhi, Mr Gaurav Bhatia and Mr Shahzad Nariyan Saxena, whose guidance has shaped his approach to both business and personal growth.



Shri Lavanya Mathur with his family

Looking ahead, he aims to leave a legacy of excellence and integrity in private banking, mentoring future bankers, and giving back to his community. He is committed to social projects that enhance equality, education, and well-being, particularly in the UAE and India. He loves spending time with his wife, Dr. Anju Mathur and his daughter, Ms. Dianaa Mathur.

As a Trustee and Member of the Rajasthan Business & Professional Group, Mr. Mathur upholds the highest standards of ethics and integrity, supporting the group's mission to advance the interests of Rajasthanis in the UAE. His message to fellow Rajasthanis is one of unity, collaboration, and leveraging professional skills to contribute positively to the community. ■

Throughout his career

He has achieved numerous milestones. He was recognized as a top producer at ICICI from 2004 to 2006 and earned accolades as an investment banker with Standard Chartered Bank and RAK Bank. In 2011, he transitioned to entrepreneurship, becoming a Director of leading Insurance Brokerage house, where he provided independent financial advice to high-net-worth clients. His success extended to the entertainment industry in 2013, where he organized award-winning events in Dubai. He is managing multi-million AUM as Director – ASAS CAPITAL, DIFC.



Dr Mahaveer Mehta

Dr. Mahaveer Mehta has been a prominent Dermatologist and Medical Director at his own medical center, Dr. Mahaveer Mehta Medical Center, in Dubai since May 1990. Previously, he held notable positions as Chairman of Dermatology at Qatar Armed Forces Medical Unit and International Hospital Bahrain, and was a faculty member at Al Fateh University, Libya, and SMS Medical College, Jaipur. He is internationally recognized in dermatology and laser treatments and was a pioneer in introducing laser technology to the Middle East.

A key advocate for health tourism in Dubai, Dr. Mehta is frequently a chair and speaker at international dermatological and laser conferences and is a member of several global dermatology and laser societies. He served on the Board of Directors for The Dermatologic & Aesthetic Surgery International League (DASIL) from 2013 to 2016 and was Congress President for DASIL's annual conference in Dubai in 2016. He also chaired the scientific committee of the International Congress in Aesthetic and Anti-Ageing Medicine (ICAAM) from 2013 to 2016.

Dr. Mehta mentors for the International Traveling Mentorship Program (ITMP) of the American Society of Dermatologic Surgery (ASDS). His contributions have been recognized with awards like the Physician Recognition Award from the American Medical Association and the Continuing Medical Education Award from the American Academy of Dermatology. He serves on the editorial boards of the Journal of Clinical and Cosmetic Dermatology and the Journal of Procedural Dermatology.

Recognized Leadership

In 2016, Dr. Mehta received the Outstanding Contribution Medal from ASDS at the DASIL conference. His medical center was honored by the Dubai government for its efforts to attract and host international conferences, enhancing Dubai's reputation as a global knowledge hub. Dr. Mehta has also been an invited chair, speaker, and trainer at national dermatology conferences in India, including the National Dermatology Conference and the Association of Cutaneous Surgery of India.

Dr. Mahaveer Mehta's dedication to dermatology and laser treatments, coupled with his advocacy for health tourism, has made him a leading figure in his field globally. ■



Dr Mahaveer Mehta with his family



Shri Pradeep Kumar Mehta

Pradeep Kumar Mehta, Managing Director of Nashat Garments FZC, hails from Ajmer city, Rajasthan, where he was born and raised in the well-known Mehta family. He completed his education at Sophia School, government schools, and government college in Ajmer before moving to the UAE in search of better opportunities and financial prospects.

Approximately 40 years ago, Mr. Mehta relocated to Dubai and began his career as an accountant with one of the largest private companies in Sharjah. His role expanded when the company decided to venture into the garment manufacturing business, where he played a key role in establishing and managing the production operations. However, after a few years, the garment industry in the UAE faced a downturn, resulting in the closure of the company and the loss of his job. This unexpected turn of events led him to enter the garment manufacturing business on his own, and he has since successfully run his business for over 33 years.

In the early days of his entrepreneurial journey, finances were a major challenge. Fortunately, his wife, Ritu Mehta, who worked as a teacher at Modern High School, Dubai, supported the family by covering daily expenses. Mr. Mehta credits his success to his discipline and hard work, which have been fundamental in overcoming obstacles and achieving significant milestones in his career. At one point, his company transitioned from being one of the smallest suppliers of Arab men's headgear to becoming a leader in one of its sectors.

Mr. Mehta attributes his financial discipline to his mother, who instilled in him the importance of living without debt and keeping expenses within one's income. As a result, his company remains entirely debt-free today. Financially, he has far sur-

Outside of work

Mr. Mehta and his wife share a passion for travel and have aspirations of seeing the world. Both are fitness enthusiasts, and Mr. Mehta particularly enjoys playing paddle tennis. His core values are honesty, discipline, and a strong belief in karma.

passed his initial dreams, and professionally, he is determined to continue working in his factory until the end, aiming to elevate the business to even greater heights.

Mr. Mehta lives with his wife Ritu Mehta, primarily a homemaker. Daughter, Nikeeta Kothari, married to Akshay Kothari, works in the HR division of Emirates, while Akshay is a businessman. Son, Nishant Mehta works as a software engineer in Los Angeles, and his wife, Ellen Mehta, is employed at Genesis in LA.

Pleased with the progress of RPBG, he feels that more opportunities should be extended to trustees, allowing them to contribute more significantly to the organization. He believes in fostering an environment where trustees can add value and enhance the organization's growth. ■



Shri Pradeep Kumar Mehta with his wife Ritu Mehta



Shri Praveen Mehta

Born and raised in Udaipur, Praveen Mehta pursued his BSc in Mathematics from Mohan Lal Sukhadia University and completed his MCA from Rajasthan University in Jaipur. In 1993-94, he developed India's first software for share market back-office operations. In 2000, he relocated to Gurgaon and created ERP software for G4S, revolutionizing their operations across India. Since 2005, he has lived in the UAE with his wife Heena Mehta, a partner in CCD -Chaat and Coffee Restaurant, and their two daughters, Aarushi and Tanushri Mehta.

Drawn to Dubai in 2005 for a significant ERP project, the success of this endeavor led to a permanent presence in the UAE. In 2017, Mr.Mehta co-founded a manpower supply firm, TRUMAX Group in Dubai which now employs approximately 4,000 individuals. His journey has been driven by a passion for excellence and a deep understanding of the region's evolving business landscape.

Some significant milestones in his career include pioneering India's first software for share market back-office operations and developing ERP software for G4S in India. He was also honored as the Best Employee in the Middle East at G4S in 2001-2002 and has received CSR awards for his manpower supply company.

His father, an engineer, has been a pivotal influence in his life, instilling in him the importance of perseverance, problem-solving, and continuous learning. An avid sportsman, Mr.Mehta has played badminton at the Rajasthan state level, a passion that keeps him active and fosters discipline and focus. Dedication, balance, and family are central to his life. He prioritizes spending weekends with his family, maintaining strong social connections, and fostering a supportive work environment.

His future aspirations include expanding his company in the Middle East and tapping into new markets and opportunities. He aims to further develop his leadership skills and foster a positive work environment.

Mr.Mehta's core values include dedication, balance, and family. He ensures to spend every weekend with his family, emphasizing the importance of family time. His wife, Heena, urges people to stay connected with their roots and values, celebrating every small thing even while away from home. She is the owner of CCD Chaat and Coffee Restaurant in Karama, Dubai. Heena's father, Harsh Chhajer, is a well-known artist from Udaipur. Their daughters, Aarushi and Tanushri, are keen sports enthusiasts and excel in their studies. Aarushi has pursued ACCA, and Tanushri has just finished her schooling and will be going to college soon.

As a Trustee and Member of the Rajasthan Business & Professional Group (RBPG), Mr.Mehta served as Joint Secretary from 2018 to 2021 and Vice President from 2022 to 2023. To his fellow



Even when I have to hire someone, I step inside that role, get familiarized with the responsibilities and duties and only with that mindset do I hire



Shri Praveen Mehta with his family

members and Rajasthanis' living in the UAE, Mr.Mehta's message is: "Understand the responsibilities and duties of a role before hiring to ensure commitment to our values and objectives. Together, we can continue to strengthen our community and uphold the proud legacy of Rajasthanis in the UAE." ■



From Thar to the Top

TRUSTEE



Shri Sanjay Mehta

A distinguished entrepreneur originally from Jaipur, Rajasthan, Mr. Sanjay Mehta embarked on his professional journey in the United Arab Emirates in 1989. As a first-generation professional turned entrepreneur, he has established himself as a dynamic leader with extensive experience in managing diverse business operations. Over the years, Mr. Mehta has developed a deep understanding of the business landscape, allowing him to navigate complex markets and create impactful business strategies.

He serves as the Managing Director of Indus Trading Co. LLC, based in Dubai. Under his leadership, Indus Trading has grown into a leading importer, stockist, and re-exporter of a wide range of building materials, including sanitary wares, ceramic tiles, plumbing materials, and other construction-related products. The company is known for offering cost-effective solutions, particularly in "bath & kitchen materials," all under one roof. His focus on delivering value through quality products and efficient logistics has enabled Indus Trading to expand its reach, serving customers across more than 20 countries throughout the Middle East and Africa.

His contributions extend beyond his business achievements. He is actively involved in a number of socio-cultural and business organizations that promote both professional development and community service. As a Founder Trustee of the Rajasthan Business & Professional Group (RBPG), he plays a pivotal role in supporting and connecting Indian professionals and entrepreneurs in the UAE. He also serves as Vice Chairman of Friends of India (FOI Events), an initiative dedicated to strengthening the ties between India and the UAE. Mr. Mehta's leadership experience includes serving as the Past President of the Sadudyama Business Group UAE and the Jain Social Group UAE. In addition, he is a key member of several organizations, including the Jain International

Through his entrepreneurial endeavors

Community involvement, and personal passions, Sanjay Mehta exemplifies the values of leadership, dedication, and service, making him a respected figure in both the business world and the community at large.

Trade Organization (JITO) Dubai Chapter, the Indian Business & Professional Council (IBPC), and India Club, where he continues to promote the Indian business and cultural community.

In his personal life, Mr. Mehta is passionate about wellness and enjoys practicing yoga, traveling to new destinations, and engaging with people from diverse backgrounds. He is also a dedicated player of bridge and chess, hobbies that reflect his strategic thinking and love for challenges. His wife, Reeta Mehta, complements his sociable personality, and together they are active members of their community. He has two sons; their eldest son is an IT professional living in the United States, while their younger son resides in Dubai and works alongside him in managing the family business. ■



Shri Sanjay Mehta with his family



CA Tirupat Mehta

Having made Dubai his home for over 20 years, Mr. Tirupat Mehta has positioned himself as a significant contributor to Dubai's business community. Being a Chartered Accountant for the past 27 years, his ability to navigate the financial and commercial intricacies of multiple sectors has allowed him to deliver innovative solutions tailored to meet the needs of his clients.

As the managing partner and director at Wise Consultancy LLC, Sunricch L.L.C-FZ, and Dynamic Resources FZC, he is known for his unwavering commitment to excellence. Under his leadership, these companies have flourished, benefiting from his hands-on approach to strategic growth, fostering of innovation, and dedication to operational efficiency.

Mr. Mehta's role extends beyond these ventures, as he serves on the board of directors for several other organizations, where his strategic insight and financial expertise have been instrumental in driving sustainable business development.

His ability to lead teams, identify growth opportunities, and optimize operational processes has solidified his position as a trusted leader across multiple industries.

On the personal front, Mr. Mehta's commitment to excellence extends to his family. His wife, Smita Mehta, is also a chartered accountant and plays a pivotal role as a partner at Wise Consultancy LLC and Sphere International FZE. Sphere International FZE specializes in the trading of pharma, plastic, polymer, petrochemical, and agricultural products in the Middle East and Africa, expanding the family's business footprint across various regions.

The couple is blessed with two sons: Divyank Mehta, who has pursued a master's degree in finance from the United States alongside pursu-

Beyond his corporate achievements

Mr. Mehta is passionately committed to community service and philanthropic efforts. He is a trustee of the Rajasthan Business and Professional Group (RBPG), where he provides valuable guidance and support to fellow business professionals. Additionally, he is actively involved in key organizations such as the Jain International Trade Organization (JITO) and the Jain Social Group (JSM), where he contributes his expertise to foster social responsibility and economic empowerment within the community. Through these roles, Mr. Mehta has had a profound impact on both the business and social sectors, using his leadership to promote collective growth and development.

ing CFA, and Vihaan Mehta, who has successfully completed his O-levels in Dubai."

With an unwavering commitment to both his professional and personal missions, Mr. Tirupat Mehta continues to be a driving force in the business world, while also making significant contributions to the betterment of society. ■



CA Tirupat Mehta with his family



Dr Kanak Madrecha

Born in Vallabhnagar, Rajasthan, in 1959, Dr. Kanak Madrecha has built a distinguished career characterized by academic excellence, leadership in business consultancy, and commitment to community service across India and the UAE. Raised in a family of six siblings, his upbringing instilled core values of hard work, dedication, and integrity.

Dr. Madrecha's academic journey is remarkable, highlighted by his pioneering Ph.D. from NITIE Mumbai on "Quality Costs & Quality Management Strategy," the first of its kind in India. He also earned a Masters in Industrial Engineering from NITIE Mumbai and a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from BITS Pilani, where he consistently excelled.

Throughout his 30-year professional career, Dr. Madrecha held pivotal roles in esteemed organizations including Mafatlal Engineering, Philips India and Siemens Information Systems Limited. His move to Dubai in 1994 coincided with the city's rise as a hub for business excellence, propelling his involvement in initiatives like the Dubai Quality Award (DQA). Recognized for his expertise, he served as a DQA Examiner and a jury member for various excellence awards.

In 2012, Dr. Madrecha established his management consultancy, specializing in excellence awards, and has since guided numerous organizations to over 100 excellence awards across diverse sectors. Beyond his professional accomplishments, Dr. Madrecha is deeply committed to community welfare and personal development. Since 1997, he has served as a Yoga and Meditation Instructor, advocating holistic well-being globally and appointing Peace Ambassadors across six continents to promote Health, Happiness, Peace, and Prosperity (H2P2).

In addition to his role as RBPG Trustee, Dr. Madrecha holds pivotal positions that amplify his impact

- Managing Director & Principal Consultant at Dr. Kanak Madrecha & Associates FZ LLE Dubai, spearheading strategic consultancy initiatives.
- Vice Chairman of the Supply Chain & Logistics Group (SCLG), under the Dubai Chamber, enhancing logistics and supply chain efficiencies.
- Trustee- Dr. D S Kothari Institute of Research & Education, Udaipur, advancing research and education initiatives.
- Trustee -Ayurvedic Medicines Project at Jain Vishva Bharati Institute, Ladnu, demonstrating dedication to traditional medicine and healthcare advancement.

Accolades throughout his illustrious career:

- Recognition by UAE Vice President & Prime Minister and the Ruler of Dubai for significant contributions to business excellence.
- Honors from His Highnesses in Abu Dhabi for contributions to business excellence.
- Distinction as the only excellence advisor in the UAE to support 45 organizations from 25 industry sectors in winning 106 excellence awards.
- Over 150 appreciations from employers, clients, and government entities.
- Authorship of over 100 professional publications, underscoring his thought leadership and expertise.

Looking ahead, Dr. Madrecha aims to support Dubai in achieving ambitious targets like Dubai 2033, UAE's NET ZERO by 2050 goal, and the Centenary Plan 2071. His vision revolves around advancing business excellence, sustainability, and societal development.

Dr. Madrecha's journey epitomizes the synergy of academic rigor, professional excellence, and community commitment, leaving an enduring legacy in business consultancy, education, and community service. ■



Dr Kanak Madrecha with his family



Shri Murli Odhrani

A true philanthropist not only achieves success but leaves behind a legacy of compassion and community. Mr. Murli Odhrani, a prominent figure within the Indian community in Dubai, UAE, exemplifies this philosophy. As the Chairman of Monilek Group, a major provider of services and solutions in oil and gas production, Mr. Odhrani has not only built a thriving business but has also earned deep respect for his commitment to giving back.

Raised in humble surroundings in Jaipur, Rajasthan, Mr. Odhrani attributes his achievements to his parents' values, the steadfast support of his wife, Rajni, and the love of his children, Samaira and Bharat, along with his grandson, Vivaan. His legacy of integrity and generosity is further reflected in his son, Bharat Odhrani, who serves as Managing Director of Monilek Group and is dedicated to expanding the company's influence across the Middle East, upholding his father's values.

Mr. Odhrani's journey began in Jaipur, where he spent his formative years before relocating to the UAE nearly five decades ago. Despite his global success, he remains deeply connected to Jaipur, frequently visiting and investing in its community. In honor of his late parents, Smt. Mohani Devi and Shri Lekhraj Odhrani, he serves as a trustee for the Monilek Hospital & Research Centre, a nonprofit hospital committed to providing healthcare to the local population. His philanthropic reach in Jaipur also extends to ventures such as the Leisure Inn Grand Chanakya, a renowned boutique hotel that contributes to local tourism and economy.

In both Jaipur and Dubai, Mr. Odhrani is celebrated for his humility and generous spirit. For him, business is not merely a vehicle for profit but a means to uplift and transform lives. His approach to social entrepreneurship is grounded in a genuine desire to support the underprivileged, mentoring others and providing resources to help them reach their potential.

His actions reflect a commitment to compassion and integrity, as he treats all with respect and devotes himself to making a positive impact. With the support of his family, Mr. Odhrani actively participates in charitable initiatives aimed at aiding the underprivileged in Jaipur, commemorating his parents through these



Shri Murli Odhrani with his family

efforts. He is also a patron of Sadhu Vaswani School in Jaipur and leads a project focused on educating underprivileged children, fulfilling a longstanding dream of providing educational opportunities to those in need. ■

Mr. Odhrani's message to Rajasthan resonates with his values

He calls for a community where the affluent assist the less fortunate, offering education, employment, and pathways to self-reliance. "I am willing to contribute to forming such a society," he affirms, inviting others to join in building a network of growth and mutual support. Through his legacy, Mr. Odhrani continues to inspire, demonstrating that true success lies in uplifting others and leaving a lasting impact on one's community



Shri Narendra (Nari) K. Odhrani

Shri Narendra K. Odhrani, affectionately known as Nari, hails from Jaipur, Rajasthan. Raised in a large and close-knit joint family, his upbringing was deeply rooted in love, respect, and strong values, instilled by his father, the late Shri Lekhraj Odhrani. With seven siblings, family has always been the cornerstone of Mr. Odhrani's life, providing a solid foundation that has supported his many endeavors.

Arriving during the UAE's oil boom of the 1970s, Mr. Odhrani naturally gravitated toward the engineering industry, leveraging his education and passion for the field. His career has been defined by a deep commitment to learning, relationship-building, and upholding core values of discipline, ethics, and commitment. These principles have guided him through professional challenges, enabling him to achieve market leadership in a highly competitive industry. His persistence and focus have been crucial in establishing and maintaining a strong market presence.

Arriving during the UAE's oil boom of the 1970s, Mr. Odhrani naturally gravitated toward the engineering industry, leveraging his education and passion for the field. His career has been defined by a deep commitment to learning, relationship-building, and upholding core values of discipline, ethics, and commitment. These principles have guided him through professional challenges, enabling him to achieve market leadership in a highly competitive industry. His persistence and focus have been crucial in establishing and maintaining a strong market presence.

Among his proudest achievements is the expansion of his business into an Engineering Division, which now offers comprehensive design, manufacturing, and service capabilities. This transformation from supplying components to providing complete engineering solutions has positioned ESMA Group as an industry leader, known for its reliable and sustainable offerings.

The most influential figure in his life has been his late mother, who instilled in him values of compassion, humility, and responsibility. Her teachings continue to inspire him in both his personal and professional life.



Shri Narendra (Nari) K. Odhrani with his family

Mr. Odhrani is blessed with a loving family, including his wife, Vimla N. Odhrani, his daughters Sujata (Dhanisha married to Mahesh Hardasani) and Gayatri (Pasham, married to Vishal Lakhani), his son Yogesh (married to Aarti Odhrani), and six cherished grandchildren..

Looking ahead, Mr. Odhrani aims to continue growing his business while fostering a healthy, supportive environment for his team. He is also committed to giving back to society, particularly in the areas of healthcare and education for the underprivileged.

As Chairman of ESMA Group and a Trustee of the Rajasthan Business & Professional Group (RBPG), Mr. Odhrani encourages Rajasthanis in the UAE to contribute their rich cultural heritage and professional skills to the region's growing landscape. He is proud to be part of a community that values discipline, ethics, and a strong connection to their roots. ■

A Journey from Jaipur to Dubai

Mr. Odhrani completed his education in Jaipur, attending Shri Mahaveer Digamber Jain High Secondary School and Maharaja's College. He later pursued an ITI in Automotive Engineering, equipping himself with technical skills that would shape his future. In 1973, driven by a desire to build a better future, he joined his father in the UAE, who had been working since 1966. Mr Odhrani's journey to the UAE was a significant one, traveling by passenger ship from Bombay to Dubai, symbolizing the beginning of a new chapter filled with opportunities.



Shri Ashok Puri

Ashok Puri, a Kenyan national of Indian origin, was born on June 30th, 1955, in New Delhi. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Business and International Affairs from the University of Delhi, an ACCA from London, and is a Fellow of the British Institute of Management. He is married to Manju Puri, and they have a son, Neev Puri, who is graduating with a degree in Finance from the American University in Dubai.

Mr. Puri began his professional journey in 1975 with the Mehta Group in Kenya, where he worked until 1981. He played a key role in setting up the South Nyanza Sugar Factory in Awendo, Kenya, in 1979. Before this, he launched his career working with NGOs and the World Bank in Kenya, focusing on finance, logistics, and projects. His early experiences laid the foundation for his later successes in various industries.

In the 1980s, Mr. Puri established Maitha General Trading (MGT) in Dubai, transforming it into a multi-purpose entity. His hands-on approach and willingness to work in challenging environments, including hazard areas and war zones, earned him a reputation as a dedicated and resilient entrepreneur. Under his leadership, MGT became known for its commitment to honoring commitments and delivering on time, striving for excellence in every aspect of its operations.

Today, MGT has expanded into a diverse portfolio, including logistics support, shipping, oil and gas supplies, safety, security, and surveillance. The company is represented in 11 countries, with a workforce of 2,000 skilled employees. MGT enjoys a high level of credibility in the financial sector and provides services to the U.S. and UAE defense organizations, as well as relief supplies and services for UN missions.

Milestones in Leadership

Mr. Puri's career highlights include setting up the South Nyanza Sugar Factory, mobilizing 1,200 TATA vehicles to Uganda under the World Bank, and introducing Europcar to India. His involvement in reconstruction and rebuilding efforts in war-torn countries, as well as his work in oilfield equipment and agency supplies, showcases his expertise and leadership in various sectors.

Beyond his business achievements, Mr. Puri is committed to giving back to society. He has developed an NGO that sponsors a school for 475 children in India, supports two leper colonies, and contributes to a blind school in New Delhi. His philanthropic efforts also include sponsoring meals for the underprivileged in New Delhi.

His innovative and dynamic leadership has driven the growth of the MGT Group, which now encompasses fourteen successful companies. His belief in giving back to society and his dedication to using his talents and opportunities for the greater good are central to his philosophy. ■



Shri Ashok Puri with his family



Shri Amara Ram

Born into a craftsman community in the village of Bhikamkor near Jodhpur, Rajasthan, Mr. Amara Ram developed an eye for detail and refinement from an early age. His family instilled values of care, hard work, and generosity, which he carried with him to the UAE in 1978, arriving as a carpenter with a dream. Over the past 40 years in the GCC, he has not only founded the renowned Rajasthan Furniture Ind. LLC in Ajman and Jaipur Restaurant in Sharjah, but also mentored and supported numerous other business ventures across the region.

Despite his busy professional life, Mr. Amara Ram's dedication to social work has been unwavering, particularly in aiding blue-collar workers since 1981, whom he believes are the backbone of the infrastructure around us. His commitment to these workers has been a driving force throughout his life.

Mr. Amara Ram currently serves as the International President of Akhil Bhartiya Jangid Maha Sabha-Delhi, Trustee and Joint Secretary of Rajasthan Business & Professional Group (RBPG) Dubai, and a member of IBPC UAE. His journey began with Eastern Ltd. in 1978, followed by a pivotal role in the inaugural team of Al Zahra Hospital, Sharjah, where he worked until 1992. While still at the hospital, he established Rajasthan Carpentry in 1991, which later expanded with the support of Dr. Sheikh Faisal bin Khalid Al Qassimi into Rajasthan Furniture Ind. LLC in Sharjah. In 2008, he built his own warehouse and accommodation facility in Ajman to ease commuting for his workers and staff.

Mr. Amara Ram has passed his values on to his sons, Pradeep A. Jangid (BA Hons. Arch, UK) and Manish

Amara Ram Jangid holds multiple leadership roles

- Chairman, Rajasthan Furniture Ind. LLC, Ajman & Jaipur Restaurant, Sharjah
- International President, Akhil Bhartiya Jangid Maha Sabha, Delhi
- Trustee, Rajasthan Business & Professional Group (RBPG), Dubai
- Patron, Shilpi Foundation (Education), Jodhpur
- Founder, VPBG Group, UAE
- President, Shree Vishwakarma Suthar Hitkari Trust, Osian

Jangid (BBA, Dipl. ID), who now assist him in running the business, allowing him more time to focus on societal contributions. His efforts were recognized in 2018 when he received the Excellence in Joinery & Furniture award at the India-UAE Summit by H.E. Sheikh Suhail Mohammed Al Zarooni.

As a patron of Shilpi Foundation in Jodhpur, he actively supports talented students from the Vishwakarma community. Recently, he helped secure the release of a community member, Mr. Rakesh Jangid, who was imprisoned in Saudi Arabia, and has assisted many workers involved in accidents or disputes across the Gulf, ensuring they return home with dignity. ■



Shri Amara Ram with his wife





CA Dheeraj Ranasaria

Dheeraj Ranasaria was born and raised in Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan, India, in a close-knit, traditional Rajasthani family that instilled in him strong values and a solid work ethic. He is married to Neha, and they have two children, Avni and Arsh.

He completed his schooling in Jhunjhunu, developing a keen interest in commerce and finance. He pursued a degree in commerce from the University of Rajasthan, followed by enrolling in The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, where he completed his Chartered Accountancy (CA) in 2006. This education provided him with essential skills for a career in finance and accounting.

In 2007, Mr. Ranasaria moved to Dubai, UAE, drawn by its vibrant economy and global business opportunities. He began his career with a reputable Chartered Accountants firm, gaining valuable experience in the region's diverse business environment. In 2010, his passion for numbers and business management led him to establish Mac & Ross Chartered Accountants LLC, offering services such as auditing, tax consultancy, accounting, company formation, management consultancy, and corporate financial services.

Launching a new firm in Dubai's competitive market presented challenges like building a client base and navigating complex regulations. Through strategic planning, continuous learning, and a client-centric approach, Mr. Ranasaria overcame these obstacles, earning a strong reputation and long-term client relationships. Mac & Ross's recognition as a network member firm of the Forum of Firms highlights their commitment to high standards and global competitiveness. He also serves as treasurer of the ICAI Dubai Chapter and has been an executive committee member since 2022, contributing to the professional community.

Family has been Mr. Dheeraj Ranasaria's biggest inspiration, particularly his father. Professionally, he has been guided by exceptional mentors. He aims to expand Mac & Ross, explore new markets,



CA Dheeraj Ranasaria with his family

and diversify services. Personally, he is committed to community contributions and spending quality time with his family. ■

Outside of work

He enjoys reading books on leadership, management, and personal development, and traveling with his family to explore new cultures and traditions. Integrity, dedication, and continuous improvement are core values in his work and personal life. As a Trustee and Member of the Rajasthan Business & Professional Group, he fosters a supportive network for Rajasthani professionals and entrepreneurs in the UAE, promoting collaboration and excellence.



From Thar to the Top



Shri Vijay Samyani

Based in Dubai and originally from Ajmer, Rajasthan, Mr. Vijay Samyani is the Founder & Chairman of Concepts Brands Group. He has established 22 of the biggest outlets under the brands4u label across the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Known for his dedication and perseverance in the business fraternity, he was first person from Rajasthan to receive a 10-year Golden Visa in the UAE on his birthday, June 26, 2019.

TRUSTEE

Born in 1974 in Ajmer, Mr Samyani began working at the age of 10. After the deaths of his father and uncle, he became the sole provider for his family. With the help of a friend of his late father, he moved to Dubai in January 1992. His first job in Dubai was at Sheeba General Trading, Meena Bazaar.

Mr. Samyani completed his studies up to the 10th grade at Adarsh Vidyalaya Ajmer and later pursued business courses in Dubai. His interest in fragrances led him to work in the perfume industry, where he now owns multiple brands.

Despite financial challenges, competition, and limited education, his confidence, determination, and proactive thinking helped him succeed. He built a temple in Ajmer in his mother's name and leads Concepts Brands Group, supporting over 300 families. Inspired by his grandmother, he remains calm and self-believing.

Concept Brands Group, a leading luxury products brand house in Dubai, aims to cater to brand-conscious customers by offering luxurious products at competitive prices. The company's activities include supplying to retail chains and hypermarkets, importing and exporting, organizing large-scale events, and distribution within the GCC. One notable event is the Concept Big Brands Carnival, the largest of its kind in Dubai, featuring luxury goods such as perfumes, cosmetics, skincare products, watches, jewelry, designer footwear,



Shri Vijay Samyani with his family

“ Everything is possible. Just keep up the hard work, and the results will follow ”

and apparel. This event offers up to 75% discounts during key shopping seasons like Summer, Ramadan, Christmas, and New Year.

Mr. Samyani's goals include settling his two daughters and expanding his business to India. He enjoys family time, watching educational videos, and believes family is the most important inspiration in life. As an RBPG Trustee & Member, Mr. Samyani encourages others to stay positive and keep striving, assuring them that they are on the right track.. ■

Mr. Samyani has received numerous awards and acknowledgments, including

- An award from H.E Mr. Ali Ibrahim, Deputy Director General of Dubai Department of Economic Development (DED).
- Dubai Police Appreciation Certificates in 2016 and 2018.
- An award from His Highness Sheikh Saeed Bin Tahnoun Bin Mohammed Al Nahyan for contributions to the environment, communities, and society.
- The Noor Award for CSR support.
- The title of "Fastest Growing Luxury Retail Chain" from Syed Shahnawaz Hussain and Anil Kapoor.
- The International Award for Indians by Sanskriti Yuva Sanstha.
- "Fastest Growing Luxury Retail Chain 2021" at The Fashion Connect Season 9 by Filmfare and Brands4U.



CA Naveen Sharma

Naveen Sharma is a distinguished finance professional and community leader who has made significant contributions to the UAE's business landscape since his arrival in 1998. He resides in Dubai with his wife, Sunita Sharma, and their two children, Karan and Vaishnavi. Hailing from Jaipur, Rajasthan, Mr. Sharma was profoundly influenced by his father, the esteemed Commissioner of Income Tax, whose values of discipline, hard work, and integrity shaped his upbringing and career.

He completed his schooling in Sawai Madhopur and Jaipur before embarking on a rigorous academic journey. Mr. Naveen Sharma earned his Chartered Accountancy (CA) and Company Secretaryship (CS) in India, followed by obtaining CPA, CFA, CISA, and CIA certifications from the USA. Seeking better career prospects, he moved to Dubai, where he has since thrived professionally. Naveen Sharma is at present the Director of Internal Audit at Al Shirawi Group, Dubai.

Growing up in the Income Tax Colony, Mr. Sharma was inspired by his father's vision for him to become a Chartered Accountant, a dream he fulfilled with distinction. His articleship at S Bhandari & Co, Northern India's largest and most prestigious CA firm, was a pivotal experience that connected him to an extensive alumni network in the UAE.

Mr. Sharma has actively contributed to various professional and community organizations. He has served in the ICAT Toastmasters Club, including a term as President, and held multiple positions in the ICAI UAE Dubai Chapter, including Chairman in 2017-18. He has been involved with the Indian Business and Professional Council (IBPC) for seven years and on the Board of India Club for five years. Additionally, he served as Vice President and President of the Rajasthan Business & Professional Group (RBPG) and co-founded the Taxation

A lifelong learner

He achieved his CA in 1990, CS in 1993, a Post Graduate Diploma in Investment and Development Banking in 1994, CIA and CPA in 2002, CISA in 2003, and CFA in 2008. His dedication to continuous education underscores his commitment to professional excellence.

Society. Currently, he is the founder chairman of the Indian Brahmin Community, UAE.

His father, O.P. Sharma, also known as ITO Saheb, was a significant mentor who instilled in him values of discipline, hard work, honesty, and kindness. Mr. Naveen Sharma was also influenced by Shri S. S. Bhandari and Mr. P. P. Pareek from S Bhandari & Co, and Mr. Mohan Valrani, founder of Al Shirawi Group.

He aspires to serve society and has practiced yoga and meditation for 30 years. His core values include discipline, ethics, fitness, honesty, and fairness. As a trustee of RBPG, his message to members and the community is to serve with humility and contribute positively. ■



CA Naveen Sharma with his family



From Thar to the Top

TRUSTEE



Shri Pukhraj Sharma

Mr. Pukhraj Sharma hails from a humble background, inspired by the dedication and skill of his grandfather, a respected carpenter in their community. Driven by a desire to uplift his family and build on his grandfather's legacy, he took on family responsibilities early, starting from his college years, always envisioning a future where he could create something impactful.

In 1996, with aspirations of growth, Mr. Sharma moved to Zambia, Africa, where he served as a finance controller for one of the nation's leading trading companies. Over 11 years, he established a strong professional foundation, preparing himself for greater challenges and opportunities. In 2008, he took a pivotal step by relocating to Dubai, taking on the role of Managing Director for Swati Interior LLC, Dubai, and expanding the company's influence to international markets.

Swati Interior, a family-run company with a 50-year history of success in India, extended its reach to Dubai under Mr. Sharma's leadership. Over 13 years, Swati Interior LLC has completed numerous high-end projects, serving a prestigious clientele and establishing a robust presence in the Dubai joinery and fit-out sector. He attributes the company's success to a core philosophy: creating happiness by making clients' visions a

reality. Recognizing the substantial emotional and financial investment people place in their spaces, He prioritizes fulfilling client expectations with uncompromised quality and meticulous attention to detail.

His commitment and the dedication of his hard-working team have earned Swati Interior an impressive reputation, reflected in a client-driven success rate that Mr. Sharma holds in high regard. With gratitude, he attributes the company's achievements to the support of their clients and the unwavering effort of his team.

He firmly believes that the key to personal and professional growth lies in fostering genuine relationships. This guiding principle shapes his approach to life and work, emphasizing integrity, collaboration, and mutual respect as the foundation for meaningful success. ■



Shri Pukhraj Sharma with his wife



CA Vijay Somani

Vijay Somani serves as the CEO and Managing Director of Union Cement Company PrJSC, RAK, UAE, a subsidiary of Shree Cement Group, India. A Chartered Accountant from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), he brings over 37 years of diverse experience across multiple countries, including India, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Turkey, and the UAE.

Born into a middle-class Marwari family in Pali Marwar, Rajasthan, Mr.Somani credits his success to the unwavering support of his family, particularly his parents, whose guidance shaped his career and life philosophy. His wife, Sangeeta Somani, a postgraduate in English literature and a dedicated homemaker, has been a constant source of strength, enabling him to achieve his professional goals. Their daughter, Sanvi Somani, an MBA with a specialization in HR who interned at ENOC in Dubai, is a source of immense pride for him.

Mr.Somani completed his schooling in Pali Marwar and earned a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, consistently achieving top marks. At the age of 22, he passed his CA examinations in July 1987, a notable accomplishment during a period of intense competition.

He began his professional journey in New Delhi with SR Batliboi & Co, where he completed his remaining article training. His dedication and skills led him to a position with the Aditya Birla Group, where he kicked off his career with Indo Gulf Fertilizers Ltd. He subsequently worked with other prestigious organizations, including the Indorama Indonesia Group and Shree Cement/ Union Cement Company, honing his expertise in commercial leadership, team management, and strategic problem-solving.

In 2005, he embarked on an entrepreneurial path, leaving a secure position in Indonesia to join the Dubai Gold and Commodities Exchange (DGCX) as a founding member. He remained among the top ten members during the exchange's formative years before transitioning to new professional opportunities.

Mr.Somani joined Shree Cement Group in Dubai and



CA Vijay Somani with his family

“ Dream big when you are not sleeping, irrespective of your field is ”



played a critical role in acquiring one of the largest cement plants in the UAE. His sharp business acumen and entrepreneurial drive saw him rise to the position of CEO and Managing Director of Union Cement Company PrJSC in less than two years.

Since the acquisition in July 2018, under his leadership, Union Cement Company has achieved a 30-35% increase in productivity without additional capital expenditure, doubled WHR power generation, and improved fuel and power efficiency, making it the lowest-cost producer in the UAE.

Outside of his professional life, Mr.Somani is an active member of the ICAI Chapter Dubai, IBPC Dubai, India Club, and a trustee of RBPG. He is passionate about mentoring aspiring CAs, promoting Rajasthani culture, and strengthening business ties between Rajasthan and the UAE. A keen movie enthusiast and traveler, he enjoys long walks, playing badminton, and spending quality time with his family.

He is a firm believer in positive thinking, hard work, and integrity, and maintains that life's challenges can be overcome with dedication, strategic planning, and the support of a strong community. ■



CA Rajesh Somani

Rajesh Somani is a prominent leader in the global commodities trading industry, currently serving as the Managing Director and CEO of Global Smart Comtrade Pte. Ltd., a Singapore-based international trading firm. Since February 2023, he has successfully steered the company towards new growth opportunities, strengthening its position in the highly competitive global market for select bulk commodities.

Mr Somani's success is built on a strong educational and professional foundation. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, and earned his Chartered Accountant qualification from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), New Delhi, in 1985. He further qualified as a Company Secretary from the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) in 1990 and completed the Advanced Management Program at Harvard Business School in 2009. In 2018, he completed an executive education program on Leading with Big Data Analytics and Machine Learning at the National University of Singapore, showcasing his commitment to continuous learning.

His career began in 1985 as an Audit Officer with M/s B. R. Maheshwari and Company, a leading Chartered Accountancy firm in New Delhi. He held various financial leadership roles, including Manager of Finance for the Bangur Group's MSUM Ltd., and General Manager of Finance & Accounts at Indian Rayon & Industries Limited (now Aditya Birla Nuvo Ltd.). Somani later became the Managing Director & CEO of Swiss Singapore Overseas Pte. Ltd., where he served from 1993 to 2021, transforming it into a major international trading company with revenues exceeding \$5 billion annually.

From 2021 to 2022, Mr.Somani served as an Advisor for Commodities at the Aditya Birla Group, providing strategic insights to a global enterprise with annual revenues surpassing \$60 billion. His con-

Recognized for his achievements

Mr.Somani has received the Chairman's Individual Award for Outstanding Leader in the Aditya Birla Group (2008), the Asia Pacific Entrepreneurship Award (2018), the Chairman's Individual Award for Exemplary Services from Kumar Mangalam Birla (2019), Member of the year by ICAI, New Delhi, and the International Leaders Award, 2018.

tributions extend beyond business to community and professional service. He has been an active leader in various organizations, including the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) Dubai Chapter, where he serves as Chairman (2024-25) and has been a member since 1993. He is also a trustee of the Rajasthan Business and Professional Group (RBPG) in the UAE and a member of the Indian Business and Professional Council (IBPC) and the International Vaish Foundation. Mr.Somani has been recently nominated to Members of expert Committee of Global Commodity Trading by IFSCA-Government of India in the city of Ahmedabad.

Rajesh Somani's career reflects a blend of strategic insight, operational expertise, and a deep commitment to both professional excellence and community service. ■



CA Rajesh Somani with his family - Varsha (wife), Vikram (son) and daughter Garveeta



Shri Ganesh Hanumant Suthar

Ganesh Hanumant Suthar, Chairman and Managing Director of Karani Group of Companies, hails from a distinguished family in Nagour, Rajasthan with deep-rooted interests in interior design, fit-out, contracting, and craftsmanship. His journey into the industry was significantly influenced by his family's dedication to traditional craftsmanship and values.

Mr. Suthar completed his Bachelor's in Civil Engineering from India, laying a strong foundation for his career. In 1989, his father brought him to the UAE, where he embarked on a journey that would define his professional life. The family's commitment to craftsmanship and traditional values guided him into the world of interior design and construction, aligning with his passion for creating high-quality, impactful work.

Since moving to Dubai, he has navigated the challenges of a dynamic and ever-changing landscape. Maintaining financial stability while meeting evolving customer demands has been central to his approach. His focus on meticulous administration and delivering high value to clients has been instrumental in overcoming these challenges.

One of the key milestones in Mr. Suthar's career was the expansion of Karani Group into the Indian subcontinent. This strategic move, along with significant growth in the company's existing interior design and construction verticals, marked a period of substantial development for the business.

Throughout his career, he has been profoundly influenced by his father, Mr. Hanumanth Suthar, who remains a pivotal figure in his life. His father's guidance and values have shaped his approach to business and craftsmanship.

Looking to the future, Mr. Ganesh Suthar is committed to sustaining value delivery and upholding the

36 years

Mr. Ganesh Suthar has been a key figure in the UAE's business landscape for 36 years and continues to lead Karani Group of Companies with vision and integrity.

highest standards of integrity and craftsmanship. He believes that integrity in work, time consciousness, and sustainability are essential principles that drive his professional and personal life.

In his personal life, he cherishes the time spent with his family, which he considers a source of great enrichment. Balancing family life with professional responsibilities, he values the moments shared with his wife and two daughters.

His dedication to his craft, combined with his commitment to ethical business practices and family values, underscores his role as a respected leader in the interior design and construction industry. ■



Shri Ganesh Hanumant Suthar with his family



From Thar to the Top

TRUSTEE



Shri Lalaram J. Suthar

Lalaram J. Suthar's journey from the arid landscapes of Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, to becoming a leading figure in the UAE's business community is marked by vision, resilience, and exceptional leadership. As the Managing Director of Noaf Group, he has played a pivotal role in transforming the group from a modest beginning into a prominent entity within the UAE. His success is rooted in his commitment to strong family values and his dedication to making a significant societal impact.

The foundation of Mr. Suthar's professional life was laid by his father, Jetharam B. Suthar, who worked for 18 years with a joinery company in the UAE before founding the parent company of Noaf Group in 1993. Growing up in Rajasthan, Mr. Suthar was instilled with the values of hard work and dedication. After completing his master's degree, he gained experience with an architectural firm in Jaipur, providing him a solid industry understanding. In 2004, he joined his father's company, marking the beginning of a transformative phase for Noaf Group.

His entry into the family business was not just a continuation of a legacy but a leap into innovation and expansion. Under his leadership, Noaf Group evolved from a small company into a significant player in the UAE's business landscape. Recently celebrating its 30th anniversary, Noaf Group has become a notable name, particularly in high-end joinery projects, and employs nearly 500 professionals. The group is now exploring growth opportunities in India and Saudi Arabia, reflecting Mr. Suthar's forward-thinking approach.

Philanthropy is a central aspect of Mr. Suthar's life, reflecting his respect for tradition and his desire to make a positive societal impact. Both he and his father are recognized for their charitable contributions, which highlight their commitment to giving back to the community.

In his message to the Rajasthan community, Mr. Suthar stresses the importance of staying connected to cultural roots while striving for societal change. He encourages others to remain true to traditional values and work diligently to drive meaningful progress.

Lalaram J. Suthar's story is a testament to the power of vision, innovation, and familial dedication, inspiring others to embrace opportunities and contribute positively to their communities. ■



Shri Lalaram J. Suthar with his wife

His leadership is guided by three core principles

Adaptability to change, a commitment to creative thinking, and the ability to identify opportunities within challenges. These principles have driven the diversification of Noaf Group's portfolio into sectors such as joinery, advertising, marble, steel, building material trading, and coatings and paint. His innovative mindset, emphasis on thinking outside the box, and focus on doing things differently have been central to the group's success.



Shri Manoj Kapurchand Vanchand

An Indian entrepreneur originally from Khiwandi, Rajasthan, Mr. Manoj Kapurchand Vanchand was raised in Mumbai. He embarked on his business journey at the young age of 18. Mr. Manoj's wife, Jayanti Jain, is a homemaker, and they have two sons, Mehul and Nitin, who have since joined the family's business ventures.

He completed his schooling at Marwadi Vidyalaya High School in Mumbai. In 1986, while visiting Dubai with friends, he recognized its potential as a growing hub and decided to establish his career there in the gold bullion industry.

Gold has always been an ancestral business for Mr. Manoj, and he learned the trade from a young

age under his father's guidance. With a natural inclination for business, he embraced Dubai's emerging market, frequently traveling between India and Dubai from 1986 to 1988 to better understand the region. In 1992, he partnered with supportive individuals to establish his first company, Viren Jewelers.

He takes pride in his professional journey and his support for Jain community activities in both Dubai and Mumbai. He actively participates in the Jain Sangh Group Dubai as a committee member, valuing the opportunity to contribute to his community. His family, especially his father, brothers, and wife, has been his greatest source of strength and inspiration throughout his career.

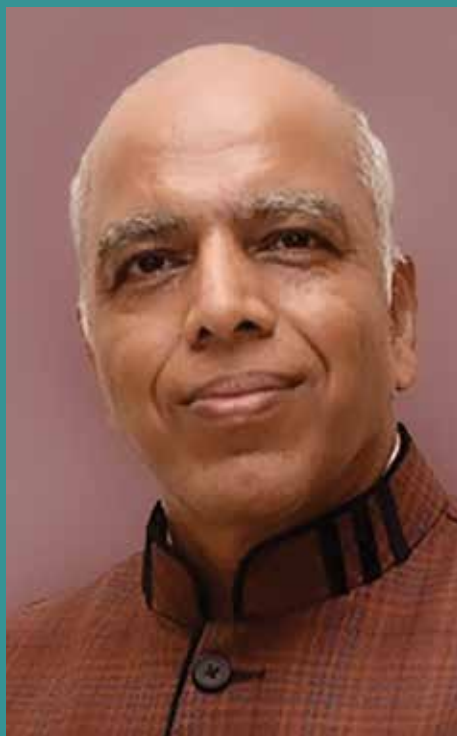
As a Trustee and Member of the Rajasthan Business & Professional Group, His mission is to elevate the Rajasthani community on an international platform, fostering professional and personal growth. He encourages all Rajasthanis in the UAE to unite as one community, emphasizing the strength and success that come from mutual support and respect. ■

Personally and professionally

Mr. Manoj is driven by the pursuit of happiness, believing that true fulfillment lies in positively impacting others. He is also deeply committed to meditation, a daily practice that enriches his life, along with his interest in movies and spending time with friends. Guided by transparency, integrity, and respect, he upholds these values in both his personal and professional life.



Shri Manoj Kapurchand Vanchand with his wife Jayanti Jain



Shri Sushil Verma

A passionate CAD and IT professional from Jaipur, Sushil Verma graduated from MBM Engineering College, Jodhpur, in 1985. With a strong foundation in engineering and technology, he has built a distinguished career, founding and leading several successful ventures in the UAE.

Mr. Verma is the founder and owner of AllCAD Solution FZC, an enterprise recognized as an Autodesk Gold Partner, Adobe Gold Partner, Bitrix CRM Gold Partner, and a leading CAD solution provider. His business activities extend to AllCAD IT Solutions LLC, which offers comprehensive IT infrastructure solutions, CRM, project management, and other essential business IT services. Additionally, he oversees AllCAD Services Pvt Ltd, which focuses on software development and digital transformation solutions.

He is deeply involved in charitable activities through initiatives like the iEducation Charitable Trust, which develops educational video content, and the Jaten Devi Charitable Trust. Through these efforts, over 154 schools have received TVs with 1TB hard disks containing over 6,000 educational videos, enabling learning without internet access. Additionally, these initiatives primarily offer educational content on YouTube to the schools, with plans to add 50 more schools by end of 2024.

Beyond his leadership roles, Mr. Verma is also a sought-after consultant and advisor. He leverages

On a personal note

Sushil Verma is married to Hansa Soni, a devoted homemaker. They have two children: Gaurav Soni, a Computer Science graduate from BITS Ranchi, who plays an integral role as a partner in AllCAD, and Priyanka Soni, who holds a Bachelor of Interior Design degree from the American University of Sharjah and Master's from University of Winnipeg, Canada.

his expertise to help businesses improve their efficiency and profitability through the adoption of advanced automation techniques, including cloud computing solutions, workflow automation, and Internet of Things (IoT) solutions with analytics.

Through his entrepreneurial spirit and dedication to technological innovation, he continues to make significant contributions to the CAD and IT sectors while maintaining a strong commitment to family and community. ■



Shri Sushil Verma with his family



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

We, Dhola and Maru have witnessed the profound strength that unity and purpose bring. Today, we are honored to introduce, along with the office bearers, the dedicated Executive Committee members of RBPG—leaders entrusted with implementing and executing RBPG’s Vision and Mission, preparing them for strategic and leadership roles in the future. RBPG’s strategy is anchored in the globally esteemed Kaplan & Norton 2000 strategic model.

These members are the essence of RBPG, turning its mission into meaningful action through insightful leadership, swift decision-making, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. Each member brings deep expertise from diverse fields, forming a team as dynamic as it is strong. Together, they carry out the strategic plans from the board and office bearers, steering daily operations with a shared vision that propels RBPG forward. Through their united efforts, RBPG not only accomplishes its current objectives but also lays a foundation for future success.

The profiles that follow highlight the essential roles these executives play, from shaping strategy to ensuring seamless execution. Their dedication to innovation, integrity, and efficiency shines through in every endeavor. As Dhola and Maru, we celebrate the unique strengths each member brings and the unity they embody, guiding RBPG toward a future of lasting impact and growth.



CA Priyanka Gupta

The General Secretary of RBPG, Mrs. Priyanka Gupta is a dynamic and energetic Chartered Accountant known for her excellence in event management and community building. As an entrepreneur, she successfully managed a retail business in the Philippines and chaired an NGO in India. She also served on the committee of ICAI's Dubai Chapter.



Passionate about organizing professional and social seminars, she has played a key role in fostering a thriving community of Chartered Accountants in Dubai through the New Dubai CA Group. Her leadership of the book project "Kitchen of Chartered Accountants" during the COVID-19 lockdown highlighted her ability to unite and inspire professionals across industries.

With a creative mindset, she is constantly new ventures while balancing her roles as a dedicated mother and active community leader. Her positive outlook and "can-do" attitude make her an inspiring figure in every initiative she undertakes.

Shri Anshul Purohit, FCCA

After earning his B.B.A. in Finance & Banking from the American University in Dubai (2010) and completing ACCA (2016), Anshul Purohit began his career in Assurance Practices at PwC Dubai before moving into Internal Audit. He has since gained substantial experience across industries in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, valuing continuous learning as key to success.



His journey with the Rajasthan Business Professional Group (RBPG) began as a guest at the 2018 inaugural event hosted by founders CA Dinesh Kothari, Dr. Kesar Kothari, and Dr. Romit Purohit, and he now serves as an Executive Committee Member. He has seen the group's growth in recognition, event scale, and impact, and takes pride in being part of an organization that connects professionals, hosts cultural events, and serves the community. His message to fellow Rajasthanis is to embrace change and contribute to the prosperity of Rajasthan and India.

Mr. Purohit also led the project overseeing the design, content, and publication of RBPG's Coffee Table Book. The book celebrates RBPG's mission to build a strong NRR community and showcases Rajasthan's rich heritage, success stories of its Trustees, and cultural and professional events, aiming to inspire a prosperous future for Rajasthan through industry and tourism investment.

CA Rakhi Agarwal

Hailing from Kota, Rajasthan, Rakhi Agarwal is a distinguished Chartered Accountant and Managing Partner at Trinity Globus Alliance, a leading audit, accounting, and taxation firm in Dubai. With over 14 years of consulting and advisory experience, she has rapidly expanded her firm, showcasing exceptional leadership and strategic vision.



As Joint Treasurer of RBPG—the first and only officially registered entity with the UAE Government representing Rajasthan—Rakhi is pivotal in managing finances and ensuring transparency. Her role is crucial in promoting business development, fostering cultural exchange, and supporting the Rajasthani community in the UAE.

Rakhi is also deeply committed to community service and has a strong passion for cricket, reflecting her love for teamwork and strategy. Her vibrant social media presence allows her to share valuable insights, connect with others, and inspire the community.

Shri Alok Kumar Sharma

Originally from Jaipur, DTM Mr. Alok Kumar Sharma has been a resident of the UAE since 2004. As the Executive Director of ACT Universal FZE LLC, he is actively engaged in various educational initiatives, including public speaking, leadership programs, and cultural events like the International Bharat Parv. He also oversees multiple examination centers for Indian Classical Dance and Music in North Carolina, USA, Kuwait, UAE, and India.



A Distinguished Toastmaster, Mr. Sharma currently serves as the Division H Director for District 127 of Toastmasters International and acts as the UAE Ambassador for the Global Championship of Public Speaking. He has been a part of the Rajasthan Business Professional Group (RBPG) UAE since its inception and serves on its Executive Committee, managing events and stage coordination.

He encourages RBPG members to recognize and nurture young talent, believing it will bring pride to families and the nation.



Shri Dilip Jain

A dynamic Chief Financial Officer based in Dubai, Mr. Dilip Kumar Jain is celebrated for his corporate expertise and dedication to community service. Since the formation of the Rajasthan Business and Professional Group (RBPG), he has served as an Executive Committee Member, demonstrating his commitment to professional excellence and social engagement.



In addition to his role in RBPG, Mr. Jain is actively involved with several organizations across the UAE and India. His connection with First India TV and First India Entertainment showcases his engagement in the media industry, where he notably organized the Dubai Auditions for "Super Singer Plus Rajasthan," a music reality show by First India Entertainment.

A seasoned Toastmaster, Mr. Jain has earned several awards as a Humorous Speaker at the Club and Area levels. Twice crowned - "Mr. Rajasthan, UAE," he is also recognized for his work as a celebrity interviewer. Originally from Jaipur, he resides in Dubai with his wife, Jyoti Jain, and their daughters, Desna and Vedika.

Smt Jaya Chhatwani

Originally from Ajmer, a city known for its warmth and educational heritage, and home to the unique Brahma Temple in Pushkar, Mrs. Jaya Chhatwani pursued her Bachelor of Computer Applications (BCA) at MDS University, Ajmer, graduating in 2008. She has lived in the UAE for the past 11 years, growing both personally and professionally.



In 2018, she joined RBPG, the first officially registered Rajasthani entity with the UAE government, founded by Dr Kesar Kothari. Over the past seven years, she has witnessed the group's dynamic growth and the vibrant community spirit it fosters, celebrating festivals and creating a sense of belonging by uniting all the people from Rajasthan.

As a member of the Executive Committee, Mrs. Chhatwani values the camaraderie, teamwork, and shared vision of the group. She is committed to contributing her best efforts to support the ongoing success and growth of this vibrant community.

CA Dixit Jain

A seasoned Chartered Accountant with deep expertise in international tax law and compliance, CA Dixit Jain is the founder and CEO of The Tax Experts DMCC, a prominent tax consultancy firm in Dubai, UAE. His career began with GP Kapadia & Co where he became a partner and established their Dubai operations, leading the company in this region. Known for his specialization in NRI Taxation and FEMA, he has carved out a niche in these fields.



With over 11 years of experience, he has guided numerous clients in managing their tax obligations and minimizing liabilities, covering areas like International Taxation, VAT, customs duty, excise duty, income tax, and corporate tax. His skills extend to financial management, accounting, and auditing. A member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, he also teaches taxation at ICAI Dubai Chapter Classes and contributes regularly to Khaleej Times and Gulf News on NRI and tax matters.

Shri Madan Singh Chauhan

An engineering graduate from MBM Engineering College, Jodhpur, and a Master of Management Studies from MNIT Jaipur, Mr. Madan Singh Chauhan has built a notable career in banking over the past two decades. Beginning his professional journey with UTI Bank (now Axis Bank), he has worked with various Indian and multinational banks. Currently, he serves as Senior Vice President – International Business at IndusInd Bank in Dubai.



Residing in Dubai since 2014, Mr. Chauhan lives with his wife Varsha Chauhan, the founder of 'Vrushali by Varsha', model, and Branch Ambassador for 'She Pageant', and their two children, Divija Singh Chauhan and Atharva Singh Chauhan.

A strategic team player, he joined RBPG in 2019 as a family member and now serves on the Executive Committee. His passion lies in supporting the Rajasthani community in the UAE through various social, professional, and networking events. He has roots in Ajmer and Jaipur.



CA Manoj Kumar Prajapat

Manoj Kumar Prajapat, a 33-year-old from Bidasur, Churu, is a qualified Chartered Accountant since May 2014 and also holds a degree in Master of Commerce. He started his career with KPMG India in Risk Advisory, focusing on Governance, Risk, and Compliance Services for over four years.



In December 2018, he moved to the UAE and joined Elite Agro as an Assistant Manager - managing finance and accounts, financial modeling, budgeting, cost optimization, VAT compliance, auditing, and implementing internal controls and automation.

Beyond his professional commitments, Mr. Prajapat is actively involved in various social programs and supports causes he finds meaningful. He values a solution-oriented approach, respect for women, and maintaining strong relationships. He joined RBPG three years ago and is currently serving as an Executive Committee Member, actively contributing to the management of cultural and business events throughout the year.

Shri Ramesh Kumar Tibrewal

Ramesh Kumar Tibrewal, originally from Churu, Rajasthan, is currently based in Dubai, where he leads Ocean International LLC, focusing on insurance advisory and saffron trading. Since 2018, he has also been actively engaged in stock market arbitrage and trading in India, leveraging his deep financial expertise to explore diverse investment opportunities.



A graduate of Kolkata University in 1994, he joined RBPG in 2019 as a key administrative member, contributing significantly to the organization's smooth operations.

Despite his professional commitments, he maintains a strong connection to his roots, residing in Kolkata with his family which includes his parents, wife, and two sons. For him, family remains a central and cherished part of life, reflecting his values and dedication to both personal and professional endeavors.

Shri Krishna Kant Kumawat

Originally from Sikar, Rajasthan, Mr. Krishna Kant Kumawat completed his Master's in Computer Science (M.Sc. 2008) and began his career as an IT professional. Since September 2015, he has been working as a Cloud Server Database Administrator with Dolphin Solutions FZ in Dubai.



His journey with RBPG has been filled with rewarding and memorable experiences. He fondly recalls attending the Holi event in 2018 and expresses his gratitude to Dr. Romit Purohit and CA Alok Bhargava for their confidence in him, allowing him to join the Executive Committee.

Mr. Kumawat has had numerous opportunities to serve the RBPG community and connect with professionals and business leaders. Through networking and cultural events, he and his family feel deeply connected to their Rajasthani roots, despite being far from home. He is married to Sumitra Kumawat from Kuchaman City, Nagour.

CA Rashmi Kedia

With over 20 years of experience, Rashmi Kedia is a leading figure in Chartered Accountancy, known for her commitment to financial integrity and innovation. As the founder of Kedia Tax Consultants in Dubai and R. Kedia and Associates in India, she excels in navigating complex regulations and tax strategies, integrating cutting-edge practices to deliver exceptional value.



She has led high-profile projects, consistently achieving optimal results and building long-term relationships based on trust. Beyond her professional accomplishments, she is deeply engaged in cultural and social initiatives, including supporting underprivileged children's education in India.

For the past three years, Mrs. Kedia has been an active member of the RBPG, contributing significantly to organizing various professional and cultural events as an Executive Committee member.



Shri FCA Sanjay Gagarani

A seasoned professional with over 25 years of experience across various industries, including Oil & Gas, Logistics, Hospitality, Trading, Manufacturing, and Shipping, FCA Sanjay Gagarani has held key roles in India, the Maldives, and the UAE with leading multinational companies.



As an Executive Committee member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, Dubai Chapter (NPIO), he actively contributes to the growth of the accounting profession. He specializes in financial analysis, risk assessment, internal audit, international taxation, and compliance management and is known for developing strategies that drive cost optimization and enhance business performance.

An advocate of digital transformation, Mr.Gagarani leverages automation and analytics to streamline financial operations. He also leads training programs on financial management and internal controls. Married to Sweta Gagarani, he has two sons: Parv, studying Quantum Engineering in Finland, and Hardik, a grade 11 student in Dubai.

Smt Shweta Soni

A dynamic leader from Beawar and Chittorgarh, Rajasthan, Mrs.Shweta Soni brings over 21 years of experience in Dubai, UAE. She is currently a partner at MICS International, a comprehensive advisory firm providing services from incorporation to liquidation. MICS International, backed by a team of 35 plus professionals (including over 10 Chartered Accountants and CFAs), specializes in Corporate Finance, Audit, Corporate Taxation, VAT, International Taxation, Risk, Restructuring, M&A, Debt, Corporate Services, Company Formation, and Investment advice.



With expertise in licensing, banking, business structures, and compliance, Mrs. Soni has successfully helped companies establish themselves in the UAE's free zones, mainland, and international markets. She has opened bank accounts for clients from 78 nationalities, including those in high-risk sectors like gold and oil trading.

Her leadership is driven by continuous learning and collaboration. She believes success is not just about achievements but the journey and the impact made on others.



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Private Equity Investment
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Dematerialization of Shares

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MEMBERS

We, Dhola and Maru have witnessed countless journeys woven by heritage, purpose, and community. Today, we are honoured to introduce the esteemed members of RBPG, a vibrant network of over 1,000 individuals from the Rajasthani diaspora who have made the UAE their second home. United by a shared Rajasthani lineage and cherished values, these members are the heart of RBPG, each contributing meaningfully to its mission.

While RBPG's membership is extensive, this section highlights distinguished individuals whose active dedication shapes the organization's vision and growth. Each member featured here offers unique talents and perspectives, strengthening ties within the Rajasthani community and beyond. Their efforts bring life to RBPG's goals: to celebrate cultural heritage, foster business and professional acumen, and build connections rooted in the Rajasthani culture that inspire pride and purpose.

As readers explore their stories, they gain a glimpse into the diverse achievements that amplify RBPG's impact in the UAE and across borders. Through these profiles, RBPG honors the vital roles each member plays in uplifting their shared heritage, ensuring that Rajasthani traditions flourish and that the RBPG community continues to thrive.



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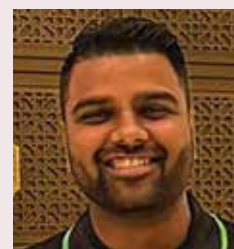
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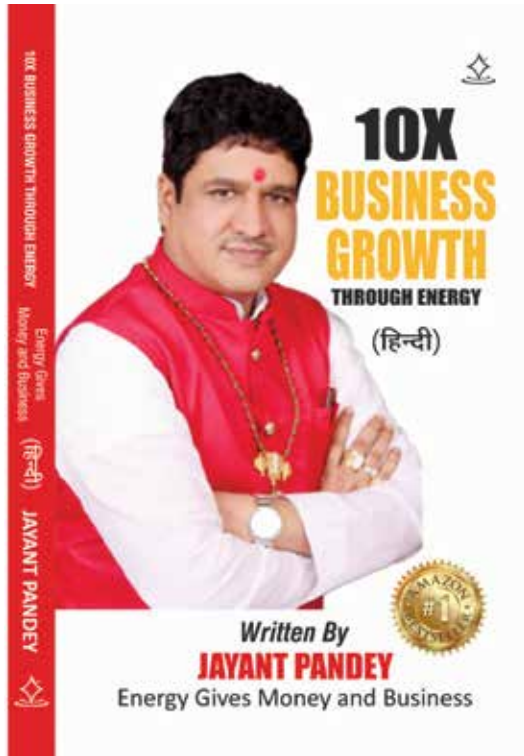


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MEMBERS TALENTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

My dear partner Maru, just as we have always journeyed together, so too does our RBPG community shine through the remarkable talents and achievements of its members. This section reveals the community's depth of skill and dedication across art, poetry, writing, and CSR activities. From visionary entrepreneurs and accomplished professionals to our talented young members excelling in various fields, RBPG is home to individuals who bring expertise, creativity, and an unyielding passion for success.

Their accomplishments are a testament to their hard work and commitment—not only to their personal goals but also to the broader mission of RBPG. Whether through pioneering business ventures, preserving our rich cultural heritage, or driving impactful community initiatives, these members lead with purpose and inspire others with their dedication.

Together, they form the heartbeat of RBPG, advancing the organization through leadership, collaboration, and excellence. This section honors their individual and collective contributions, which are key to enhancing our reputation and fostering continued growth, both in the UAE and beyond.



Pragya Singhvi
Sr. Project Manager, TBS
Age: 34

From the Sands of Rajasthan to the Shores of Dubai

From Rajasthan's golden sand,
To Dubai's shining, modern land.
Desert winds carry stories, both old and new,
Linking two lands where cultures grew.

Rajasthan's forts stand proud and tall,
Echoes of history within every wall.
Dubai's skyline pierces the sky,
Symbols of progress reaching high.

The Thar Desert sings of courage and pride,
Of regal palaces where kings once did reside.
Dubai's streets are filled with light,
A city that glows, day and night.

In Rajasthan, dancers twirl in colorful dress,
With traditions that impress.
Dubai's nights are bright and grand,
A place of dreams in a desert land.

Two deserts, strong and proud,
With spirits that stand out in the crowd.
From Rajasthan's crafts to Dubai's new,
Both lands hold stories deep and true.

Rajasthan holds the past in its hands,
While Dubai builds dreams on shifting sands.
Together they tell a story so grand,
Of heritage rich and futures planned.

Oh, Rajasthan and Dubai, a tale of two lands,
Where tradition and ambition walk hand in hand.
One honors heritage, the other inspires,
A cultural bond that never tires.





Vedika Jain

Age: 10.
Daughter of Dilip Jain
and Jyoti Jain

Kindness Sails with Vedika

In the bustling world of childhood dreams and creativity, 10-year-old Vedika Jain, daughter of Shri Dilip Jain and Smt. Jyoti Jain, stood out with a heart as big as her imagination. Inspired by her elder sister Desna's intricate paper art, Vedika decided to try her hand at something special. With a stack of colorful paper and a lot of enthusiasm, she began crafting paper boats.

As her little fingers deftly folded and shaped each boat, Vedika created not just a fleet of hundreds of vibrant vessels – she set the stage for an extraordinary act of kindness. Determined to turn her paper boats into something meaningful, she chose to sell them at Kite Flying event organized by Rajasthan Business Professional Group (RBPG). Each boat was priced at AED 1, equivalent to INR 22, and to her delight, she raised a total of INR 2,200.

But Vedika's generosity did not stop there. As her birthday approached, she decided to

augment the proceeds from her paper boat venture by adding her piggy bank savings. With the combined funds, she thoughtfully assembled goodie bags, each filled with small joys and treats. These bags were then donated to the little girls at Aashray Orphanage in Jaipur, specifically to those diagnosed with HIV.

She also had the privilege of meeting Mrs. Sushila, the compassionate founder of Aashray Orphanage. The heartfelt exchange left her with a profound sense of fulfillment and joy and, she was thrilled to see the smiles her initiative brought to the faces of the underprivileged children.

Her small but impactful gesture serves as a reminder that even the simplest acts of kindness can serve as a catalyst for creating significant changes.

— Contributed by: **Dilip Jain**





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Shiv Mohan
Dubai Tram Project
Director
Work- Project
Management in transport
sector

राजस्थान की शौर्य गाथा

दुनिया तो गा रही है, हर गीत अब हमारा।
धरती के लोग सुन लो, ये है राजस्थान प्यारा।।

चित्तौड़ हल्दीघाटी, नागौर भी गरज थे।
सदियों लड़ा निरन्तर, स्वातंत्र्य रक्त म्हारा।।

मेवाड़ फिर सुना दे, राणा की वो कहानी।
चेतक की वो रवानी, अकबर भी हार माना।।

सांगा की वीरता को, चम्बल तू ही बता दे।
लोधी का खानदानी, तेरे ही तट पे हारा ।।

घावों से था तू लथपथ , पर हार भी ना मानी।
सौ युद्ध तो लड़े थे, धरती को मातु माना।।

कैसे हम भूल जाएँ इतिहास को हमारे।
अब नाम करना रोशन, कर्तव्य है हमारा।।

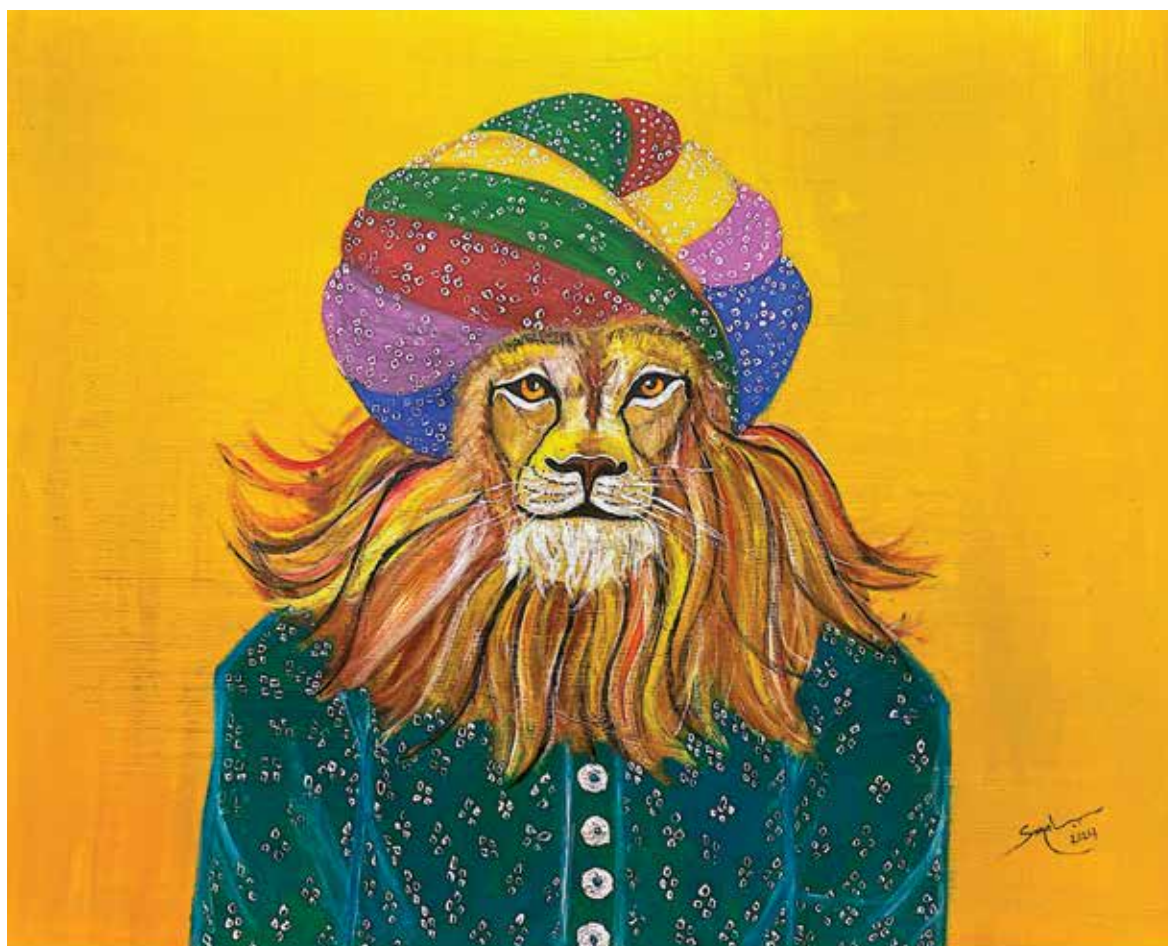
राजस्थान का युवा तो, दुनिया में छा रहा है।
निष्ठा है दिल में पूरी, जीतेंगे जग ये सारा।।

डंका तो बज रहा है, हर क्षेत्र में हमारा ।
राजस्थान सबसे आगे, चहुँ ओर गूँजे नारा।।

होगा भविष्य उज्ज्वल, माटी का अब हमारी।
बतला रहा है हमको, हर युवा अब हमारा।।



Sonal Purohit
Founder & CEO –
The PaintBrush Art
Community





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Darshee Kedia
Age 9,
Grade 5-, Daughter of Vipin
and Swati Kedia



**Dr. Poonam
Chauhan**
Professional Artist,
PhD Fine Arts





Veena Purohit
Partner – DubaiFood L.L.C

NOSTALGIC ALLEYWAYS

The old town of Blue City has always offered the same mundane routine every evening – youth or pot-bellied middle aged men riding on the scooter emitting cacophonous sounds and soot; cart-pullers dragging their array of fruits and vegetables while announcing loudly to potential dwellers to grab his fresh offerings before he disappears from their sight; children either playing sitolia or street cricket much to the chagrin of the milling pedestrians and cantankerous rickshaw drivers, and a group of saree-clad women, holding jute bags containing cloths; household commodities or their cosmetic paraphernalia, chattering and guffawing so loudly that even the passerby; running dogs; mooing cows and chirping birds would get to know that Kalla family has bought a new villa in Mount Abu or the Sanjeev Chhangani's only son has decided to marry someone against the family choice. If that's not enough, men dressed in their loincloth and singlet standing on the porch loudly gossiping with their neighbours while slurping on their sugary milk tea and mirchi bada.

Oblivious to this repetitious societal activity, I stood on the terrace of my house watching the orange-red sunset rays illuminating the Mehrangarh Fort and Jaswant Thada. Since it was almost prayer time, the sound of conch shells and bhajan from the nearby Krishna Temple being played draped a calming effect on the listeners and subdued the foghorns that had become synonymous with the alleyways.

Witnessing this landscape since childhood, I was told that my great-grandfather was lucky to have bought the piece of land in a place that gives one of the best views in the world – something for which tourists were willing to shell any exorbitant amount to have a romantic dinner; make social media reels or enjoy a drink while soaking into the view of these historical marvels.

But, as they say – “One's worth is only known when millions of strangers appreciate it”. What I learned about my place and the beautiful treasure of my city as an adult, I failed to grasp its importance as a child. I would always wish to

distance myself from this place as this was not my image of a 'civilisation'.

If only I knew what the real meaning of culture; society; traditions; heritage and civilisation is.

If only I understood what true beauty and bliss is.

If only I chose to understand the importance and relevance of the gifts of my land rather than seeking its validation from those who would wish they were born in my place.

While the sun has set and the evening bhajans have stopped, the façade lighting on Mehrangarh Fort shimmered to enhance its beauty. Within moments, dark clouds covered the night sky and before I could think of checking for the weather update, it began to rain heavily. Sounds of dwellers shouting while running on the streets or dogs barking were audible even with the deafening sounds of the droplets. My neighbours staying two blocks ahead of my house began their revelry by playing Bollywood songs and gorging on steaming hot potato fritters and tea to celebrate the sudden cloud burst. However, I remained still on the terrace to simply gaze at the rainy view of the fort even though the heavy downpour was causing a hazy atmosphere while getting intrigued by Mother Nature's mysterious ways of creating such a soothing environment that could make anyone forget their past worries and present stress.

With a peaceful smile, I lifted my arm to soak into this intoxicating mix of heritage; blissful weather, and old-world charm. For a moment, I considered myself the wealthiest person on the planet because of these intangible and invaluable treasures that I was surrounded by and, just when I felt ecstatic, the banal alarm on my smartphone shuddered me awake. With wide-opened eyes, all I could see was the ceiling lights and the sunrays crashing in my room. Sweat drops covered my face due to the breakdown of the air-conditioning system in the middle of the night. It was a dream. A lucid dream. My brain knew what



I was seeing while my eyes were shut but chose to succumb to the heavenly moments I visualised of my hometown.

I jumped out of my bed, while wiping my face with a tissue, and walked towards the window

that offered a bird's eye view of skyscrapers on Sheikh Zayed Road. It was only 6:30 AM but the sun shone brightly with uncountable cars on the road adding to the congestion.

Many consider me lucky for staying in a

place that offers the best city view. Yes, I do have a view of concrete buildings; tarmac roads; cloverleaf flyovers; speeding cars, and chugging metro but do I consider myself lucky to have them at the expense of the sight that I dreamt of?

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EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

The Rajasthan Business & Professional Group (RBPG) in the UAE embodies the spirit of the timeless tale of Dhola and Maru, symbolizing unity and tradition. Inspired by these values, RBPG strengthens and empowers the Rajasthani community through diverse cultural, social, and economic initiatives.

RBPG supports community growth with initiatives like the Rajasthan International Premier League (RIPL), an annual cricket tournament celebrating Rajasthani pride, and RBPG 2.0, a youth-focused platform providing skill development, financial literacy, and career counseling. Sporting events like Desi Khel Kood and Patangbaazi along with Thrills of Thar celebrate traditional games, enhancing community engagement. For professionals, the Chartered Accountants of Rajasthan (CAR) forum creates a collaborative space, while the Business & Networking Platform hosts seminars on business, health, and legal matters.

RBPG has also embraced digital innovation with the launch of a mobile app, offering seamless access to event registrations, updates, and resources. Cultural initiatives like Sur Aur Saaz, a music group, and Nari Shakti, a platform for women's empowerment, Hasya Kavi Sammelan foster strong social connections within the community. Signature events such as Deepotsav, Teej Puja, Rang Barse, Food Mela and Starlight featuring a pop music sensation, celebrate Rajasthani traditions, uniting and enriching the community.

Recent initiatives by RBPG include collaborations on healthcare and rural support programs in Rajasthan. Recognized by Rajasthan's Chief Minister, RBPG will lead a delegation to the Non-resident Rajasthani Conclave - Rising Rajasthan Summit 2024, reinforcing its role as a bridge between Rajasthanis in the UAE and their homeland.

RBPG also excels in fostering professional connections. A Trustee Meeting held on May 8, 2024, hosted by Shri Gul Vaswani at Choki Dhani, welcomed delegates from the Employers Association of Rajasthan and Young Indians of CII, with H.E. Ismail Naqi, DG of Ajman Free Zone, as a guest.

The group's networking events further support professional growth. In 2024, CA Rishi Chawla led a discussion on corporate tax readiness for SMEs, CA Sheetal Soni shared insights on passive investing, and CA Dixit Jain addressed NRI tax laws for Indian expatriates. Motivational talks by speakers like Dipak Bhadra add personal development to RBPG's offerings.

Here's a glimpse into the many activities RBPG hosts to enrich the lives of Rajasthanis in the UAE.





Networking Meeting

Second in the series of Members Trade & Services Meet Up at Hyatt Place, Mina Rashid, Jumeirah, Dubai on 24 March 2024 by inviting keynote speaker CA Sheetal Soni to speak on the Power of Passive Investing. Some of the attendees also used this platform to showcase their companies or their professional unique selling points (USP) to the audience to gain prominence and foster business contacts.







Business Networking – NRI Tax Talk

Fifth business networking event held at Millennium Plaza Downtown Sheikh Zayed Road on 10 August 2024 by inviting two keynote speakers – CA Dixit Jain of FAME Advisory to discuss the Tax Laws in India and how it impacts the Indian citizens staying abroad and Dipak Bhadra to give a motivational speech on the topic, “Updating Yourself & Upgrade Your Life.”







Business Networking

Corporate Tax Readiness for SME:
Fourth business networking event held at Hyatt Place, Mina Rashid, Jumeirah, Dubai on 02 June 2024 by inviting keynote speaker CA Rishi Chawla, Partner of Premier Brains Global to give a presentation on Corporate Tax laws in UAE and steps to be undertaken by small-medium enterprises (SMEs) to prepare their business in face of the changing regulations.







Trustee Meeting

RBPG Board Member Shri Gul Vaswani hosted a gala dinner at Choki Dhani on 08 May 2024 to welcome 'Employers Association of Rajasthan' and 'Young Indians of CII' delegates. All the Board Members and Trustees of RBPG UAE attended this event. Special invitee H.E Ismail Naqi, DG of Ajman Free Zone, graced the occasion with his presence.







Rising Rajasthan Summit 2024

An event organised in collaboration with Indian Business Professional Group (IBPC) Dubai; Vishwakarma Business & Professional Group and IPF Rajasthan Council UAE in Crystal Ballroom of India Club, Dubai on 17 September 2024. This was part of the Dubai Roadshow conducted by prominent business people from Rajasthan to showcase their business in this high-delegation meet and create collaborations with established business within UAE. It was graced by Honourable Minister for Industry & Commerce, Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore, Govt. of Rajasthan.





All India Food Mela

Organised by India Club on 04 February 2024. Participants had the opportunity to showcase their food stalls and also enjoy live music; free henna design; kids zone and bouncing castle. RBPG participated in this event and it won the award for the 'Best Food Stall'.





Rang Barse 2024

A colourful combination of splash of colours; delicious food; foot-tapping songs and games to celebrate Holi. One of the signature events of RBPG held on Annual basis – it was organised on 03 March 2024 in Coral Beach Hotel in Sharjah.







Desi Khel Kood and Patangbaazi

The first event in the calendar year to mark the auspicious occasion of 'Makar Sankranti', it took place in Delhi Private School Sharjah on 14 January 2024. Members not only enjoy kite-flying; showcase their competitiveness in three-leg race and lemon-spoon race but relive their childhood memories through sitolia and kabbadi. One of the key event of RBPG, this has been taking place annually since the past six years.







Thrills of Thar

Annual Indoor Sports Event organised in Safeer Mall Sports Arena, Sharjah on 22 September 2024. Members had the opportunity to participate in games such as badminton; volley ball; table tennis; carom and Cricket League Tournament (both Women and Men). Children also had a chance to showcase their drawing and be part of team activities in a fun and frolic manner.







Hasya Kavi Sammelan

An evening of poetry and laughter, this Annual event coincided with the 75th Indian Republic Day celebration by bringing together some of the finest poets and stand-up comedians, Padamshri Dr. Sunil Joggi; Sardar Manjit Singh; Dr. Suman Dubey; Shri Ajathashatru and Shri Shambhu Shikhar, who present the everyday mundanity; political environment; cultural observations in a humorous manner to the audience. It was hosted in Sheikh Rashid Auditorium near Indian High School Dubai on 21 January 2024 and was graced by His Excellency Shri Satish Sivan, Consul General of India in Dubai.







Teej Pooja

Organised by India Club on 22 August 2024 in collaboration with RBPG, this was done to mark the Teej Festival, which is a significant Hindu festival in Rajasthan celebrated by married women to honour the divine union of Lord Shiva and Devi Parvati and also pray for the good health; prosperity and happiness for their husband and their family. An annual event in which both Sindhi Puja and Rajasthani Puja is held for the attending married women.







Deepotsav

Another signature event of RBPG organised annually to coincide with Diwali celebration since the past six years. In 2023, Raja Hassan was the main performer invited to enthrall the audience with his musical repertoire and fireball energy. This tradition was continued in 2024 by inviting Mame Khan to bring to the stage the same zeal and captivating beats to keep the audience hooked and groove to the music. Delicious food; photo booth; lucky draws; tambola and lots of giveaways created a memorable evening for the guests.







Starlight 2023

Final event of 2023 to welcome 2024 with a bang by inviting 90s Pop Sensation, Baba Sehgal, to enthrall the audience with his foot-tapping numbers and electrifying energy to make all the members groove to his beats. Competitions such as painting for the children; best dressed couple / individual and singer kept the momentum among the audience.







From Thar to the Top

EVENTS OF RBPG

Rajasthan Indian Premier League (RIPL)

RBPG's own version of IPL organised in March 2023 in Ajman Cricket Stadium.







From Thar to the Top

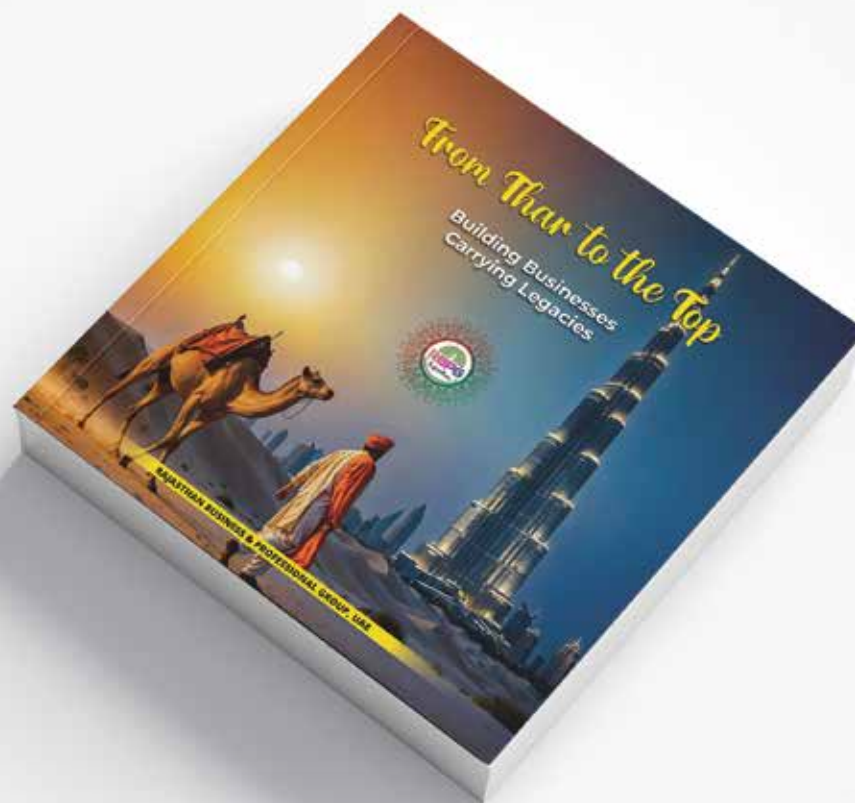
EVENTS OF RBPG

Wicked Pins

New feature in the RBPG event portfolio introduced in 2023 as a summer fun activity for members to gather for bowling and snacks.







From Thar to the Top

“From Thar to the Top – Building Businesses; Carrying Legacies” – a tagline that instantly became the defining concept behind the creation of RBPG Coffee Table Book. It not only encapsulated the spirit; culture and ethos of Rajasthan but also solidifies the growing presence of Non-Resident Rajasthanis (NRR) in United Arab Emirates (U.A.E). Their contribution and success story had become backbone of UAE stupendous growth, which has created a ripple effect in India, especially in Rajasthan, to open several avenues of investments and opportunities. The new Rajasthan has the foresight; vision; hunger and desire to make the State become one of the biggest contributors in the Indian growth story and the support extended by the NRR is turning this dream into reality. ‘From Thar to the Top’ not only captures the NRR’s aspirations to grow and succeed but also showcases how its culture is celebrated with enthusiasm that connects every Rajasthanis seated in the Top position to the humble roots in Thar.

The journey behind creation of this book was only possible due to the immense support from our

- Members, who have been a vital part of RBPG’s journey since its inception.
- Founders Members of RBPG, who created a vision and mission to unite all Rajasthanis in UAE with a common goal of culture and community welfare.
- Trustees, who have spent considerable period in UAE and have contributed richly to the social fabric of the society and are leaving behind their legacies in terms of learnings and experience with the new generation.
- Sponsors, who have aligned with our vision to create a book that has the feel of a cosmopolitan UAE and the touch of diverse Indian society in the form of stories; viewpoints and facts, and
- Lastly, the talented; dynamic and experienced team, whether through direct involvement or through shared experience, to help realise the output that surpassed everyone’s expectations.



**RAJASTHAN BUSINESS AND
PROFESSIONAL GROUP, UAE.**

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