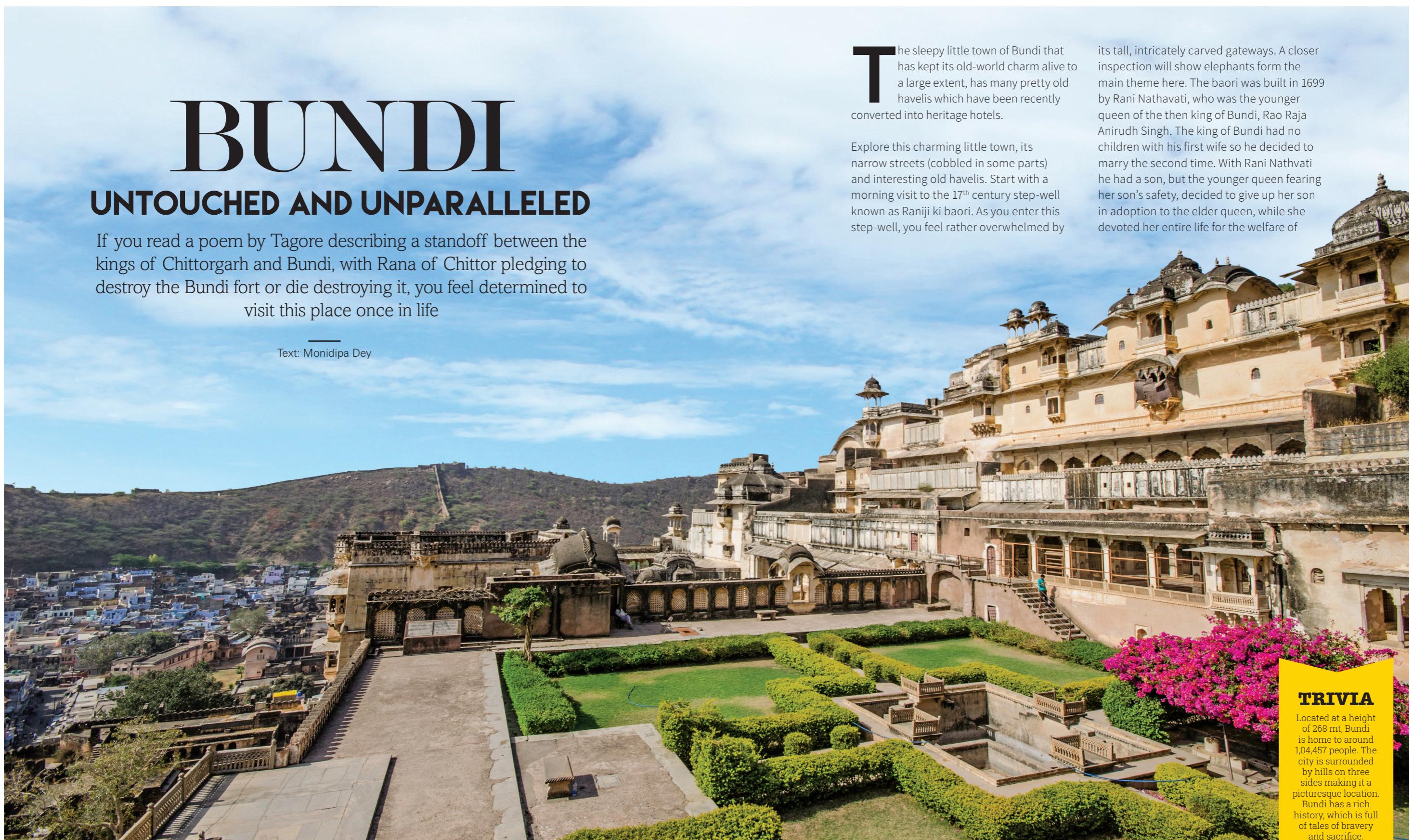


BUNDI

UNTOUCHED AND UNPARALLELED

If you read a poem by Tagore describing a standoff between the kings of Chittorgarh and Bundi, with Rana of Chittor pledging to destroy the Bundi fort or die destroying it, you feel determined to visit this place once in life

Text: Monidipa Dey



The sleepy little town of Bundi that has kept its old-world charm alive to a large extent, has many pretty old havelis which have been recently converted into heritage hotels.

Explore this charming little town, its narrow streets (cobbled in some parts) and interesting old havelis. Start with a morning visit to the 17th century step-well known as Raniji ki baori. As you enter this step-well, you feel rather overwhelmed by

its tall, intricately carved gateways. A closer inspection will show elephants form the main theme here. The baori was built in 1699 by Rani Nathavati, who was the younger queen of the then king of Bundi, Rao Raja Anirudh Singh. The king of Bundi had no children with his first wife so he decided to marry the second time. With Rani Nathavati he had a son, but the younger queen fearing her son's safety, decided to give up her son in adoption to the elder queen, while she devoted her entire life for the welfare of

TRIVIA

Located at a height of 268 mt, Bundi is home to around 1,04,457 people. The city is surrounded by hills on three sides making it a picturesque location. Bundi has a rich history, which is full of tales of bravery and sacrifice.



Chitrashala is a beautiful blend of Mughal and Rajput paintings



Tip: Try to find a hotel that gives you a close view of the famous star-shaped Taragarh fort and the Bundi palace from its rooms or terrace.

her citizens. This step-well was built by her as a community well and hence the name. The step-well is 46m deep and has some beautiful carvings on pillars, ogee brackets, toranas and a high arched gateway.

From the baori move on to see the Jait Sagar Lake, around 2 km from the town centre, towards the north. This scenic, 1.5 km long lake is surrounded by low lying hills on all sides, and the lake surface is dotted with pretty lotus leaves and flowers giving it a fairy tale like appearance. On one side of the lake is Sukh Mahal, a small summer palace, which is locked, but you can peep in through the glass doors and windows to see the now empty rooms. It was here that the noted writer Rudyard Kipling is said to have stayed while writing his novel *Kim*.



How to reach:

While Bundi is easily accessible from Delhi via train, it is also well-connected from Jaipur, which is around 218 km away and takes little over four hours to reach. Gagron fort is 12 km from Jhalawar city, which is 120 km from Bundi.

Best time to visit

Visit the place during monsoon and winter months, with monsoon turning the hills green that further add to the beauty.

Rudyard Kipling is said to have stayed at Sukh Mahal in Bundi

Next up are Taragarh fort, Bundi palace and Chitrashala. On reaching the fort's entry gate, one must toil up the steep uphill road that will lead to the fort, palace and Chitrashala. The gateway of the palace, Hathi pol, is impressive in height and carvings. Right beside the palace is the Chitrashala, which is maintained by the ASI and is a treasure pit of beautiful frescoes. This part of the palace was built by Rao Umed Singh in the 18th century, and the interiors of the mahal are entirely covered with frescoes, with Krishna standing out as the main theme. A beautiful blend of Mughal and Rajput paintings, Chitrashala is more like an art gallery.



BUNDI FACTFILE



The area around Bundi is said to be once inhabited by various local tribes. The name Bundi is believed to be derived from one of the tribal heads named Bunda Meena.



Locals in Bundi love music and incorporate it in their everyday schedules. They have songs for almost every occasion and celebration. Painting is also a part of Bundi culture.



Various dishes are cooked in Bundi for a single meal, typical of the Rajasthani culture. Food here is mainly vegetarian and consists of all traditional Rajasthani recipes.