

A Peep through Window on Pilani Rajasthan - World Tourism Day Special

Every region of the world is distinct and thus has something both to offer and gain through travel and tourism. The theme for this year is Celebrating Diversity and Pilani has it all and much more.

Pilani, Rajasthan, September 29, 2009 /[India PRwire](#)/ -- September 27 every year is celebrated as World Tourism Day, a special day set by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to remind the general population on the importance of the tourism industry, not only as the globe's major economic activity and source of employment, but also as a means to achieve cultural understanding and as a significant contributor towards the goals of alleviating poverty and improving livelihoods.

Pilani is a small town, located on the fringes of the shifting sands of the Thar, in the desert state of Rajasthan in India at Latitude 028°37' North and Longitude 075°75' East. The climate of Pilani is generally dry and pleasant. Summer temperatures normally peak at 45°C. In winter, temperatures may drop to 0°C. Annual rainfall is about 30 cm. In February the temperature ranges between 10°C to 30°C. It is about 200 km West of Delhi and about 220 km North of Jaipur which are nearest International Airports. Pilani can be reached by road.

The trackless sands, moving dunes and shifting hollows present an eternal thirst, an infinite hunger, an antithesis of life. And yet the desert of Rajasthan has not been able to defeat man who marks over it every day new triumphs; many unknown, some noticed and a very few achieving the glory of Pilani, a fountainhead of education, unmatched in the Indian sub-continent. Pilani is indeed an incredible reality in the middle of the desert.

The striped wilderness of the desert, the scorching heat of the sun, the hypnotic stillness of the dunes become vague memories as one enters the verdant groves of the Vidya Vihar campus and stroll through the well laid-out gardens, under the fountains and along the Shiva Ganga canal. The life here bursts on with a breath-taking jolt and a world of pleasant sounds and colourful sights spreads around the visitor.

At the beginning of the twentieth century there was a tiny village, Pilani like many other villages braving the desert but remaining insignificant. Its pride, of course was the Pathshala - a sort of kindergarten which was started in 1901 by Seth Shiv Narainji Birla for educating his grandsons, late Shri G D Birla and late Shri R D Birla.

With the passing of time, one day the village awoke up to strange happenings. There were strangers quartering and marking land; others making blueprints of the future constructions; and yet others slugging building material to the site. The tiny village bloomed into a vast complex of schools, educational institutions, research laboratories and centres of technological developments.

Today Pilani is everything that is modern and scientific. Birla Education Trust is responsible for starting all that Pilani is today. The Birla Institute of Technology and Science - BITS- at Pilani has come to its own as a top ranking university in India with an international reputation. When it comes to Industry University Symbiosis, BITS Pilani has indeed become a name to reckon with.

The task of a University is the creation of future and no university in the world has ever risen to greatness without a correspondingly great library. The Library - the Pusthak Mahal - of BITS Pilani which is housed in an architectural marvel of a building is talked in the same breath as the Hawa Mahal of Jaipur.

The fact that Spirituality in India is an integral part of the material world has not been ignored in the Vidya Vihar campus. The temple of Saraswati (Goddess of Learning) in the campus is a dream in itself. A majestic imposing architectural harmony and Euclidean symphony has been woven in white marble. The figures of saints, philosophers, thinkers, scientists and leaders of the world are sculptured on the outer walls of the temple thus imparting to it a unique universality.

A Science Museum - one of the finest - was created to reinforce the classroom education. The Birla Museum is the first of its kind in the country to represent an educational and practical character. It is as much a part of the campus as the classrooms and the laboratory. It exhibits the achievements of modern science and technology in form and figure

The idea is that while the museum records the march of man in the technological and scientific world, it also helps the visitors to get a better and a deeper understanding of these events. To this effect, the museum makes liberal use of animated models and exhibits. The art gallery of the Museum has its own attraction and importance. It displays both classical and modern works of art. Best of the Western and Oriental works are also represented in the gallery.

The classic form of the old village culture mingles smoothly with the scientific activity on the campus. The technology is balanced by the glory of nature, the magnificence of the flora and the majesty of the fauna. The dancing peacocks, the desert ships-camels, the old motifs and murals preserved in the village havelis, are all there to remind the visitor of the ancient past of Rajasthan. For those who want to contemplate the mystery of the universe in depth, the atmosphere by the majestic statue of Lord Shiva in Shiva Ganga provides all that is necessary for meditation: seclusion, peace and calm.

One of the leading CSIR laboratories Central Electronics Engineering Research Institute- CEERI- is also located at Pilani. Another attraction in Pilani is the Panchavati which is a theme park displaying scenes from the great epic Ramayana with larger-than-life sized sculptures amidst serene gardens with a deer park

The Ram temple as well as the Durga temple and the Hanuman temple on a nearby hillock are other attractions located outside the Vidya vihar campus. Pilani town has a vibrant market with an array of shops dealing with Rajasthani handicraft items, embroidery, paintings etc.

The Birla Haveli which is the ancestral family house of the Birlas constructed in 1862 has breath taking wall paintings - frescos - of the Shekhawati region of Rajasthan and also houses a museum consisting of family treasures of the Birla family.

Pilani is neither a beginning nor an acknowledgement. It is a link that reaches way back into the Vedic era when education was enlightenment and not a mere instrument for securing employment. One cannot miss the nostalgic touch of the teacher-pupil relationship in the educational institutions at Pilani. It also yearns to reach out into the future to the ultimate realization of the human knowledge.

The author gratefully acknowledges the booklet - Window on Pilani - designed and produced by ace photographer Kishor Parekh several decades ago.

Notes to Editor

Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS) Pilani Rajasthan which has the reputation of pioneering the online examinations for admissions through the path breaking BITSAT and setting a bench mark in industry university collaborations is one among the top ranking universities towering above the rest in various best college surveys in India today. BITS offers degrees in various disciplines presently at Pilani, Dubai, Goa and Hyderabad campuses apart from an array of work integrated learning programmes for HRD of a vast spectrum of Indian corporates. The alumni of the Institute who are who is who in various professions and Proud to be BITSians peaking with Passion Quotient for Alma mater are spread across the globe from Australia to America.

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