Your freedom is only in the field of action, and not in the field of bringing about the fruits of action. Never take yourself as the cause of bringing about a karma-phala (situation), and never resort to a life of inaction.
Kurukshetra - Heritage Extravaganza

Kurukshetra is renowned all over India and abroad for its ancient and glorious cultural and religious heritage. It was a cradle of Vedic civilization and a famous place of pilgrimage.

Kurukshetra in ancient times, was situated between the two sacred rivers, Saraswati on the North and Drishadvati on the South. Its location then was not confined to the modern Kurukshetra as it exists today and it encompassed a wider area comprising 48 Kosas or 92 miles on a circuit covering the five districts of the State of Haryana - Kurukshetra, Karnal, Kaithal, Panipat and Jind.

History remembers Mahabharata not for its battle alone but for the song celestial “Bhagawad Gita” which is believed to have been delivered by Lord Krishna himself to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. The wisdom of Bhagwad Gita is eternal and timeless. In the contemporary world of conflict and unease-the message of Gita becomes all the more relevant. Symbolically Arjuna is only a state of mind and the dilemmas, anxieties and fears that he experienced, confront us everyday in our lives. Arjuna when faced with killing his own friends and relatives would rather renounce the world. This is the challenge we all face today. Confronted with injustice and tyranny, we must stand up and fight resolutely for the righteous cause, without worrying about the end result. This is the essence of Gita-Action (Karma) should always be performed with a sense of detachment.

In ancient times, the glory of Kurukshetra had spread far and wide. A 5th century AD inscription found at Laos, begins with an invocation of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and mentions the greatness of a place called Kurukshetra. The king of Laos, Devanika-wanted to build a city called “New Kurukshetra”.
Origin of the land Divine

The land divine- soil that witnessed the royal battle of Mahabharata and where the words of wisdom were once spoken by the Almighty Himself-has an interesting story behind its origin. A noble Aryan king called Kuru renounced his kingdom and started for a pilgrimage and chanced to come upon the banks of the holy river, Saraswati. He wanted to make the adjoining area, the of ethics and values.

Lord Vishnu appeared before Kuru and asked him as to from where would he find the seeds for the same. Kuru started offering his limbs one by one with alacrity and Lord Vishnu had strewn those all over the area and named the place-Kurukshetra, meaning, meaning Land of Kuru. Years after, members of the ruling tribe and descendants of King Kuru Pandavas and Kauravas (cousins) fought the battle of Mahabharata. Pandavas turned out to be the victors under the guidance of Lord Krishna. The epic battle symbolizes the victory of good over evil.

Kurukshetra is dotted with numerous spots of historical & religious importance that offer more than a sneek preview into India’s rich cultural past.
Kaithal
Kurukshetra
Karnal
Jind
Panipat
48 Kos Kurukshetra
Cultural Heritage - 48 Kos Kurukshtra region

Since ancient times the land between the rivers Sarasvati and Drishadvati has been known as Kurukshtra. It was also called Brahmavedi or Samanta panchaka. Geographically, this land Kurukshtra, now comprises of five districts of Haryana viz. Kurukshtra, Karnal, Kaithal, Jind and, a portion of Panipat. This greater Kurukshtra is popularly called '48 Kos Kurukshtra Bhumi' within which lie 360 tirthas. Out of these only 135 tirthas have survived the onslaught of time. At many of these tirthas various religious, architectural and artistic structures in the form of tanks, ghats, temples, sculptures and murals of immense artistic excellence can be seen.

Kurukshtra town dates back to the time of Harappan civilization (2200 to 1700 B.C.). There are many archaeological sites of immense historical and cultural importance such as Thanesar the ancient capital of Harsha, Bhagwanpura, Raja Karan ka tila, Mirzapur, Daulatpur which bear testimony to this. The scientific excavations of these sites have revealed the story of this great civilization. The artifacts, broken earthenware, ruins of buildings, stone sculpture and temple murals reported from various tirthas and archaeological sites throw eloquent light on the cultural heritage of this region from its earliest time to the modern period. Throughout its history it has been an important centre for art, culture, and religion.
Jyotisar
- the sacred spot where
Lord Krishna delivered the eternal and timeless
sermon of Bhagavad Gita-the song celestial.

One of the most revered places of Dharama-Kshetra Kurukshetra is Jyotisar. It is here under the holy banyan tree that Lord Krishna is believed to have delivered the eternal message of Bhagawad Gita to Arjuna before the commencement of the battle of Mahabharata.

The word 'Jyotisar' constitutes of two parts-'Jyoti' meaning light and 'Sar' meaning 'tank' and 'essence'. Thus Jyotisar, symbolically signifies the essence of enlightenment.

A beautiful marble chariot depicting Lord Krishna delivering the eternal message of Gita to Arjuna, canopied by a banyan tree exists at the site.

Recently, a Sound and Light Show, on the theme of Bhagawad Gita has been mounted by ITDC and Haryana Tourism at Jyotisar. This show tries to capture the drama of Mahabharata with special emphasis on the teaching of Bhagawad Gita.
Brahma sarovar
- obeisance for salvation

Brahma sarovar, as the name suggests, is associated with lord Brahma, the creator of the Universe. Since times immemorial, Kurukshetra has been the venue of the great purification ceremonies for moksha (salvation) for pilgrims from the four corners of the country. The Matsya purana and Padma Purana, ancient Hindu text tell us that if an individual takes a holy dip in the sacred tanks of Kurukshetra, on the occasion of a Solar Eclipse, he attains the merits of a thousand Ashwamedha Yajna. The last Solar Eclipse held on 19th March, 2007 at Kurukshetra witnesses more than a million pilgrims from India and abroad visiting the banks of Brahma Sarovar for a holy dip.

It is believed that the Mughal Emperor akbar, accompanied by his court historian Abul Fazal, too visited Kurukshetra during the Solar Eclipse in 1567. Abul Fazal’s Akbarnama refers to the Eclipse in Kurukshetra and the pilgrims bathing in the Brahma Sarovar. The French traveller Francois Bernier of the Mughal Emperor Shajehan’s era also mentions the sacred tanks of Kurukshetra.

The word Brahma means nucleus or gigantic. Brahma Sarovar happens to be the largest man made tank in India. On seeing this huge water body, Abul Fazal, the famous historian called a ‘miniature ocean’.
Sannehit Sarovar-the sacred tank

The word sannehit means to congregate or assemble. This sacred water body is named after the word sannehit as on the day of the solar eclipse and amavasyas it is believed that all the sacred waters or tirthas assemble here. According to legend, a dip in this tank during-amavasya and on eclipse absolves one of all sins and endows the merit of aswamedha yajna. Purushartha is the amalgamation of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Among the four, Dharma is supreme and moksha is the ultimate aim. Pilgrimage to sacred places and taking a dip in the tanks of sanctity ensures the liberation of the soul from the perpetual cycle of birth and death-such is the age old belief. Since time immemorial, millions of pilgrims and tourists throng to kurukshetra during the Solar Eclipse to take a dip in the sacred Sannehit Sarovar. It is the resort of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Shiva became sthanu (stationary) by residing at this place. It is here that the Rigvedic sage Dadhichi gave up his life for the sake of Indra, the God of the Thunder. The Bhagavata Purana mentions that at this place, on solar eclipse, Krishna met with the gopis and other kinsmen who came here from Braja. By the side of the tank are situated temples of Surya Narayana, Dhruv-Narayana and Lakshm-Narayana.

Sannehit Sarovar also holds sancity for a special reason. It is believed to be the seat where the wandering souls of the unhappy, deceased ancestors find Moksha or release from worldly ties. Prayers and 'Pind-Daan' for unnatural deaths is recommended to be performed here under the guidance of priests.

The approach from the Northern side to this tank is through the Surya Dwar. The façade of the gate shows the luminous image of Surya or the Sun God seated in a chariot driven by his charioteer Aruna. The chariot is being pulled by seven horses and is flanked on either sides by two female attendants.
Sheikh Chehli’s Tomb
-a symbol of religious harmony

It is a beautiful monument of medieval times. It contains the mortal remains of the great Sufi saint Abudul-Karim popularly known as Sheikh Chehli, who was also the spiritual teacher of the scholar prince Dara Shikoh, son of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan.

Built of buff sandstone, the tomb is crowned by a pear shaped dome of marble on a high circular drum. The cenotaph of the revered saint is in the centre of the chamber while the graves rests in the lower. Another tomb of sand stone with a dome of marble decorated with floral designs is situated on the western wall of the enclosure. It is said to be Sheikh Chehli’s wife. The beautiful monument resembles the Taj Mahal and in view of its architectural and historical importance, has been declared as a ‘protected monument’ of national importance by the Archaeological Survey of India.

Haryana’s history has been synonymous with religious tolerance and communal harmony. During the Sultanate period, (C-1206-1526 A.D.), Haryana witnessed the growth of Sufism on its soil. The earliest seat of this order in this region-the Chistis, named after its founder, the great Sufi saint Mouiniddin Chisti had its centre at Hansi. Thanesar and Panipat also emerged as important centres of Sufism.
Sufism

Sufism represents the in word esoteric side of Islam, it may for the sake of convenience, be described as the mystical dimension of Islam. From time immemorial, the concern of the religious mystic had been the quest for reality, but all genuine mystics found their experiences in expressible and indescribable. The path by which the follower of Sufism seek God are in numbers as the souls of men. Asceticism, purification, love and gnosis assist Sufi in finding the Universal Self. These are merely means to an end, and not the end itself. According to a scholar” Mohammed was as Sufi when on his way to becoming a Prophet. Sufis believe that Muhammad was indeed a Sufi throughout his whole life and an early chapter on the divine revelation imparted to him, addressed his this way.

During the Mughal period the centres of Sufism were Shahabad, Thanesar, Karnal and Panipat. Thanesar figures in almost all the records and memorises such as Al-Beruni, Abul Fazal etc. But curiously enough it is quite different on the part of the scholars to identify the saint Shaikh Chaheli who does not figure in any of the Sufi literature. However it is popularly believed that he can be identified as Abd-ur-Rahim of Bannuri.

Although Dara Sukoh was not a contemporary of Jallaluddin yet the seat of Jallanddin and its Sufi practices were not over. Dara Sukoh was a great patron of Sufism. He was convinced that the individual superiority of the first four caliphs of the prophet had been graded according to the order in which they became caliphs. However he also noted that Ali, the first Imam of the Shi’is, was accepted by all Sufis order as founder of their system.
Kurukshetra Panorma and Science Centre.

This centre is situated adjacent to the Sri Krishna Museum and the great battle of Mahabharata is the theme of the Panorma project managed by the National Council of Science Museums.

Housed in a tall and imposing building the centre brings to life the epic battle of Mahabharata with special acoustic effects. The chanting of Gita and distant war cries in fusion with lighting illusions create a spectacular ambience.

In addition, there is another important attraction—the Science Section whose focal point is to highlight the 4,500 years old scientific background and heritage of ancient India.
Sri Krishna Museum

Situated near Brahma Sarovar and set up by the Kurukshetra Development Board, it is one of the finest museums on the theme of Krishna. It has a collection of wide variety of beautiful sculptures, paintings and other artistic creations relating to the legend of Krishna.

The Sri Krishna Museum comprises of six galleries in which a variety of art objects such as wood carvings, metal castings, ivory carvings, miniature paintings, palm leaf etches, illustrated manuscripts, tableaux depicting facets of life and exploits of Sri Krishna have been displayed.

Paintings of the Kangra and Madhubani styles, pattachitra-folk paintings of Orissa depicting scenes from Mahabharata have been prominently displayed.

At the entrance of the Sri Krishna Museum, visitors are greeted by splendid sculpture of Ganesh in a dancing mudra (posture).
Buddhist Monuments & Remains in Greater Kurukshetra

The holy land of Kurukshetra has been a witness to moments events of historical, cultural and religious importance. During Buddha’s time, the king of Kurus was called Koravya, and his debates with the elder Rattahpala, also a scion of the noble family of Kurus, are embodied I the Rattahapala Satta (The Buddhist Text). The famous Buddhist nuns Nanduttrara and Mittakali also belonged to this place. According to Dipavamsa Buddha went to a town of the Kuru region and received alms on the bands of Anotatta lake, which he crossed. Udena’s queen Magandiya belonged to the land of the Kurus, and Aggidatta, the prist of the Kosala king, lived on the boundary between the Kuru, Ariga and Magadha regions, and was honoured by the people of these kingdoms for forming his dutied honorably and efficiently. The Chullavagga mentions Aggalpura (Agroha) as a stronghold of Buddhism while the Miaya Pitaka recounts the visit of renowned physician Juvaka to the town of Rohtak. From the Somanassa Jataka it appears that at one time the Kuru kingdoms extended as far as Uttarapanchala, a town in the Kuruattha with Renu as its king.

Buddhist stupa at Thaneswer near Kurukshetra University

The Chinese pilgrim also gives an account of the location of the location and importance of Asokan stupa at Thaneser
Colourful Fairs & Festival Galore

The backdrop of the longest Indian Epic-Mahabharata, the land of Kurukshetra is full of religious and cultural activities round the year. Festivals here are celebrated with a different verve and in a different spirit altogether.

Gita Jayanti

Gita Jayanti is celebrated every year in November/December to mark the birth of Srimad Bhagwat Gita. The festival showcases the divine moment when Lord Krishna acted as a friend and guide to Arjuna in the form of a charioteer and delivered the Gita Upadesh advocating the path of selfless Karma, Gyana and steadfast devotion to the Almighty. The moving Aarti and Deep-daan at the Brahma Sarovar mark the event. The water-body is a scenic delight with the earthen lamps floating on it, the glow of the lamps and the shimmers of the water make the entire area glitter with mirth. Recitals of shlokas from the Gita, the colourful tableaux Shobha Yatras, ballets based on episodes from the epic Mahabharata, alongwith the seminars discussing the relevance of Gita in today’s scenario form some of the major attractions of the festival.

Shivratri

The festival that marks the marriage of Lord Shiva and Parvati, is celebrated every year in the month of February/March. The popular belief behind says that if one stays awake all night long in deep meditation of Lord Shiva one achieves Salvation or Moksha i.e. freedom from the cycle of life and death.

Somavati Amavasya

Brahma Sarovar and Sannehit Sarovar are the focal points of attractions as myriad devotees flock here to take the holy dip in waters of the two sarovars on the first day of new moon Amavasya.
Solar Eclipse Festival

Since times immemorial, Kurukshetra has been the venue of the great purification ceremonies for Moksha (Salvation) for pilgrims from the four corners of the country. The Matsya Purana and Padma Purana, ancient Hindu texts tell us that if an individual takes a holy dip in the sacred tanks of Kurukshetra on the occasion of a Solar Eclipse, he attains the merits of thousand of Ashwamedha Yagnas. Primary amongst these important occasions is the Somavati Amavasya (held on the first day of the new moon falling on Moday) and on a Solar Eclipse (held on a new moon day as the moon comes between the sun and the earth, thereby causing the eclipse of the sun). The Brahma Sarovar and the Sannehit Sarovar are the focal points of the holy purification ceremonies.

The earliest reference to the Solar Eclipse at Kurukshetra is found in the Hindu epic the Mahabharata when mention is made of pilgrims taking a holy dip at Kurukshetra during the Solar Eclipse. This also has a cross reference in the Van Parba and Udyog Parva of the Mahabharata. The Bhagwad Purana has an exclusive chapter on the visit of Lord Krishna to Kurukshetra on the occasion of the Solar Eclipse.

It is believed that the Mughal Emperor Akbar, accompanied by his court historian Abul Fazl, too visited Kurukshetra during the Solar Eclipse in 1567. Abul Fazl’s Akbarnama refers to the Eclipse in Kurukshetra and the pilgrims bathing in the Brahma Sarovar. The French traveler Francois Bernier of the Mughal Emperor Shahjehan’s era also mentions the sacred baths at the Indus, Ganges and the sacred tanks of Thaneshwar (Kurukshetra) on the occasion of the Solar Eclipse.

The last Solar Eclipse held on 19th March, 2007 at Kurukshetra witnessed lakhs of pilgrims from India and abroad thronging the banks of these sarovars for a holy dip.
Sikh Heritage

Truly a land divine! The place is revered amongst the Sikhs, the city being an important part of their heritage. There are a number of sacred Gurudwaras dotting the city. It is believed that nine out of ten Sikh Gurus visited this city.
Archeological Sites

Harsha Ka Tila
Near the fort complex, an impressive mound, popularly known as Harsha Ka Tila exists. Here, recent excavations have brought to light many a hidden layer of Indian history, ranging from early historical times to late Mughals. Quite a few Jain and Brahmanical sculptures and architectural fragments have been found.

Raja Karan Ka Tila
The mound has yielded some objects of historic importance, these include relics of Harappan period, painted Grey Ware, a mould for printing of cloth, a double inkpot and a large step-well.

Thaneshwar
Lying in proximity to the land of Kurukshetra, lies the town of Thaneshwar which was once the capital of the great Kingdom of Harsha-Vardhana (606-647 AD). The famous Chinese traveler left an interesting account of the massive fort situated here. The recent renovation activities have also transformed the dilapidated remains of the same and restored its lost glory.
Kurukshtera City of Parks

Nature has always been worshiped in the Hindu mythology, from animals to birds all have their own sanctity in the religion so ancient. No wonder the land which is so highly revered amongst the Hindus has now been beautifully dotted by dexterously built and designed parks. Purushottama Park, Harsh-Vardhana Park and Tapovan Park are some of the verdure attractions of the place, a refreshing evening or morning stroll can definitely rejuvenate your spirits.