

WRITE-UP FOR ECONOMIC TIMES

Far-out destinations: (i) St. Petersburg, which is Russia's greatest historical and cultural treasure and is also known as its "Northern Capital";

(ii) Vancouver in Canada because of its beautiful location.

Indian Surprise: Sikkim, Leh, Laddakh because of natural beauty.

I was enchanted by Tsongmo Lake or Changu Lake, which is a glacial lake in the East Sikkim. This Lake is about 40 kilometres away from Gangtok at an altitude of nearly 12,500 ft. This Lake is at an aerial distance of merely 5 kilometres from the Chinese border but the road to the border is about 18 kilometres.

Khardung Pass is on the way to Nubra valley, passing through Khardung La or Khardung pass. The sheer beauty of Rock Mountains, green valleys and the beautiful Karkoram range is breath-taking.

Tso Moriri Lake, which is an off-beat tourist location-away from the madding crowd, is located to the south east of Leh in the middle of the valley of Rupshu. This lake which means 'the mountain lake' derives its name from the water from the Changthang Plateau. This area is inhabited by Wild Ass, Marmots, Black-necked Geese, Redfox and the highly endangered Snow Leopard.

Bon Vivant Moment: While in Paris, we wanted vegetarian food. We went to a carnival but there was nothing that we could eat. Finally, we zeroed in on Soup, which was prohibitively costly-more costly than most

alcoholic beverages available there. But the Soup was quite enjoyable and hence, well worth the drain on our pocket.

Outdoor Activity: Walking around new places and exploring various shops, locations for buying things, food, etc.

Emptied your pockets on: Indian food at locations outside India and on clothes.

Panoramic views: Himalayas in Nepal, Pokhara Nepal.

Best Drive: Dwarka to Jamnagar alongside sea with windmills spread across vast tracts of land.

Gourmet Delight: Food in temple town of Uttarakhand, Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri.

Gourmet gaffes: Various types of soup taken in Russia turned out to disaster.

Street food Surprises: Gullis/ Mohallas of Aminabad/ Hazratganj/ Chowk for street food in Lucknow.

Best bar: Being a teetotaler, I cannot comment on this.

Bazaar bargains: Streets of Bangkok.

Goofy Traveler moment: Journey to North Welsh in UK.

I had a Management Development Programme in 1992 with several Indians and participants from other countries. North Welsh is a beautiful place with

hills, mountains and river beds. But we did not understand Welsh language. Hence, communication was a problem for us.

As part of an excursion, all participants had to reach the top of a mountain. Most of us chose the long way. But a stout participant chose the short way, which had to be navigated through a rope. He failed miserably in his attempt and had a nasty fall. He had to be rescued by a lady participant, who had a parachute. All of us had a big laugh at his fall but the stout man did not find this experience funny because he had to be rescued by the lady participant and thus he was quite embarrassed about the whole experience.

Traveler Tips: Always carry currency of the local/host country, US \$ because they are easily accepted in all parts of the world and Credit Card. Nowadays, Bitcoins is also emerging as an interesting option of carrying money abroad.

Interesting strangers: During an outing from London by coach via 8 countries in 10 days in 1999, found an old couple of 75+ who became friends for life.
