

Ministry of Tourism organises 26th Dekho Apna Desh webinar titled 'The Tenacity of Survival -Inspirational story of Kutch'

The webinar showcases different aspects of Kutch with the message of “Kutch nahi Dekha toh Kuch nahi Dekha”

Dekho Apna Desh Webinar Series is an effort to showcase India’s rich diversity under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

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The 26th session of the Dekho Apna Desh webinar series of Ministry of Tourism on 30.05.2020 titled “The Tenacity of Survival”-Inspirational story of Kutch showcased the history, culture, crafts, textile heritage of India’s largest district Kutch, Gujarat and the resilient spirit of the people of Kutch to fight natural calamities, the skills that form the report card of the continuous dynamics defining the Indian civilization. The webinar displayed the message of Kutch that “Kutch nahi Dekha toh Kuch nahi Dekha”. Dekho Apna Desh Webinar Series is an effort to showcase India’s rich diversity under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

This session of webinar moderated by Ms. Rupinder Brar Additional Director General, Ministry of Tourism and was presented by Dr. Navina Jafa, Director, Indian Cultural Heritage Research.

Ms. Jafa through her powerful narration skills presented the contrasting geographical features, and genetic cocktail that defines India in the most dramatic manner.

Kutch is a land of salt desert, grasslands and mangroves. Interestingly, the mangroves here are known for an amazing phenomenon of being world’s only Inland Mangrove. The Rann of Kutch alone produces three-fourth of total salt supply of India. The place is also the home to the Kharai breed of camel which has the special ability to survive on both dry land as well as in the saline water. They can even swim in sea water and feed on saline water and plants. They are well-adapted to the extreme climate of the desert and high salinity of water.

The key highlights of the presentation were virtual visit to the community of Ajrakh traditional block printers. Ajrakh is one of the oldest types of block printing on textiles still practiced in parts of Gujarat and Rajasthan in India. Textiles printed in this style are hand-printed using natural dyes on both sides by a laborious and long process of resist printing (a method of printing in which designated areas in the pattern are treated to resist penetration by the dye).

The seminar then took the participants visit to Bannithe Salt Desert in Kutch where the work of three major indigenous communities engaged in pottery, embroidery and leather work was showcased. Ms. Jafa also spoke about the monastery of the ear torn ascetics (the siddhi sidhhant sect) and the langar (Community kitchen) run by the Monastery.

The presentation also covered the coastal town of Mandavi, where regional Sufi beliefs guide traditional boat builders on the Arabian Sea.

The other salient attractions of Kutch showcased in the webinar included:

- Dholavira- UNESCO World Heritage Site and second largest Harappan site located in India. It is indeed a marvellous example of town-planning and architecture.
- Fossil Park
- Rann of Kutch-Salt Desert of Arabian Sea
- Kala Dungar
- Guru Gorkanath Temple
- Narayan Sarovar Temple
- Lakhport Fort & Port
- Surhando- Unique peacock-shaped instrument plays a melodious music
- Thaali Dance- A balancing dance performed to commensurate the celebrations of marriage and child birth
- Tooofaan- Famous wild dance of the ocean also known as “Samundar ki Masti”
- Waai Sufi Mystics

Dhordo is a village in Bhuj taluka of the Kutch district of Gujarat. The eco-system of this place not conducive for any other activity boosted tourism like anything. The Rann Utsav which is annually organised from November to March has become the main driver for tourism in Gujarat. This transformation of the most challenging Dhordo White Rann to the most happening tourist destination of Gujarat has led to many temporary and permanent accommodation structures in and around Dhordo. The sheer human grit, imagination and enterprise have transformed a harsh and unusual terrain in to an engine of socio economic and cultural vibrancy, bringing to its people a sense of self reliance and pride. The most popular of them all is the Rann Utsav Tent City organized with the support of Gujarat Tourism.

Rann Festival held every year is celebrated from December to February. The Bhuj city is converted into a Tent City with basic amenities. The festival has attractions of BSF Band, Hot Air Ballooning activities, a cultural fiesta of folk music and dance, shopping and tasting the traditional cuisines.

An itinerary for 3-4 days and 7-8 days was shared for capturing the real spirit of Kutch. The itinerary aimed to guide the tourists travelling to Kutch, have a bird's eye view of things, locations or the tourist sites and to look into the culture, traditions, textiles, block printing, musical instruments, market places, village tours and dance forms.

Bhuj is a well-connected by road from its neighbouring cities in Gujarat, good rail connectivity from various parts of the country especially from Delhi and Mumbai and is also accessible by air from the Rudra Mata Airport.

The sessions of webinars are now available on the https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbzIbBmMvtvH7d6Zo_ZEHDA/featured and also on all social media handles of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

The next episode of the Webinar scheduled on, 2nd June 2020 at 11:00 am, is titled ‘Haryana: Culture, Cuisine and Tourism’. Please register here: <https://bit.ly/3dmTbmz>

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