



INDEPENDENCE DAY OF INDIA (August 15) Special Edition

The INDIAN PANORAMA

Will bring out a profusely illustrated special edition to mark the 75th Year of Independence Day of India, being celebrated by government of India as "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav".



Articles and advertisements are invited for the historic occasion. All material-whether articles or advertisements- may please be mailed to salujaindra@gmail.com by August 2, 2022.

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Boris Johnson resigns in the face of a virtual revolt in the government and Tory Party

THE RACE TO SUCCEED JOHNSON HAS ALREADY STARTED



Boris Johnson resigned as Conservative Party leader on July 7, and would stay as a caretaker Prime Minister until Autumn when a new leader is chosen

I.S. SALUJA

LONDON (TIP): Boris Johnson would have completed 3 years as Prime Minister of UK on July 24. But that was not to be. A man who rode to power with an 80-seat majority three years ago as charismatic leader fell from grace as a host of his Ministers, including those who were appointed days earlier, publicly called for his resignation on Wednesday, July 6. Johnson, a journalist-turned-politician who rose to the pinnacles of power riding the Brexit wave, tried to cling on to his position till the last minute. But despite Downing Street's fightback, the intra-party rebellion spread like wildfire, engulfing even the loyalist inner circle.

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Brittney Griner Pleads Guilty to Drug Charges in Russia



Brittney Griner arrived at a court hearing near Moscow, July 7, where she pleaded guilty to drug possession. File photo

MOSCOW (TIP): The detained American basketball star Brittney Griner pleaded guilty to drug charges in a court near Moscow on Thursday, July 7, her lawyer said.

"I'd like to plead guilty, your honor. But there was no intent. I didn't want to break the law," Ms. Griner said in English, which was then translated into Russian,

Reuters reported. Ms. Griner has been detained in Russia since Feb. 17, accused by the Russian authorities of having a vape cartridge with hashish oil in her luggage at an airport near Moscow.

Aleksandr Boikov, her lawyer, said cartridges appeared in Ms. Griner's luggage "because of carelessness."

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Indian-origin Attorney General Suella Braverman is an early contender for UK PM race

LONDON (TIP): Even before Boris Johnson stepped out of 10 Downing Street on Thursday, July 7, to deliver his resignation speech as Conservative Party leader and triggering a leadership race for a new British prime minister, at least one Indian-origin candidate is already lined up to compete for the "best job in the world".

Goan-origin Suella Braverman, currently the Attorney General in the UK Cabinet, is among the early Tory members of Parliament to formally declare her leadership bid, with other Indian-origin colleagues Cabinet minister Rishi Sunak and Home



Suella Braverman is among the early Tory members of Parliament to formally declare leadership bid. File photo

Secretary Priti Patel also seen as possible contenders for the top job.

The 42-year-old barrister and the government's senior-most legal official is likely to command some support within the pro-Brexit wing of her party.

"I am putting myself forward because I believe that the 2019 manifesto is fit for purpose, presents a bold and inspiring vision for our country and I want to deliver on the promises

contained in that manifesto. I want to embed the opportunities of Brexit and tidy up the outstanding issues... and cut taxes," said Braverman.

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INDIA SECOND LARGEST COUNTRY OF BIRTH FOR NATURALIZED US CITIZENS

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): The United States welcomed 661,500 new citizens as of June 15 in the fiscal year 2022, with India the second largest country of birth for naturalized American citizens in the first quarter after Mexico. "Throughout our nation's history, the promise of both life and liberty, and the freedom to pursue happiness, is what has drawn millions from across the globe to call America their home," US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Director M Jaddou said on Friday, July 1.

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Among the top countries of birth for persons naturalizing in 2020, Mexico was the leading country (13 per cent of the total), followed by India (7.7 per cent). Photo for representation only

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Visit to Karripode village in God's own country



The lush green paddy fields at Karripode.



A giant tree at Karripode Village.

Murli Menon

One has just returned after a close encounter with nature at Karripode village in Kerala State. Karripode is a 30 minute drive away from Palakkad, on the fringes of the "Neliampathy Hills".

One passes the historical village of Chittoor along the way. We are welcomed by a group of cattle egrets flying in formation, as soon as we enter Palakkad. We start our jungle safari in an open jeep and soon find ourselves in the middle of thick evergreen forests with no habitation in sight as far as eye can see. After thirty minutes of driving through the jungle, one sees a large water body in the distance. We are informed by our guide that the water body is not a lake but a fresh water spring surrounded by rocks. The water is crystal clear and transparent and surrounded on all four sides by small rocky hills.

We come to the edges of this giant lake to find hundreds of birds. It is a pleasure to watch a multitude of colourful birds at close quarters, as they flock to the edge of the water. The water is shallow and swampy and boating is not possible, so one has to be content watching the birds from a distance. However, the deep blue sky, reflected in the crystal clearness of the waters is a joy to behold. Watching the crimson sunset over the Parakund (Malayalam for Rocky lake) is memorable.

After a brief stop to watch the birds, one goes deeper into the jungle to spot the Giant Malabar Squirrel. After an hour of driving through the jungle one can see a glimpse of this magnificent creature. Giant Malabar Squirrels are black in colour but have two large elliptical brown spots one on each side of their body which makes them look incredibly attractive to behold. Giant Malabar Squirrels are shy creatures and disappear at great speed on hearing the sound of approaching humans. Hence the ideal strategy to spot these gentle and shy friends, is to alight from the tree a kilometer away and

stealthily trek towards them in a non menacing way and shoot with the zoom lens as I did. Giant Malabar Squirrels live on the peepal trees and use their sharp teeth to eat mangoes, papayas and jackfruits.

Karripode, situated on the border with Tamil Nadu is a sanctuary for the Giant Malabar Squirrel and several other colourful birds. This extraordinary area gets partly inundated by about 2 feet of water in the monsoon months (July-September). Once below sea level, this area was raised by earth movements which cut it off from the Eastern Ghats. It was broken up by later earth movements into flat farmlands (where people can be seen growing rice) and higher grounds with sandy, salt-free soil. The Giant Malabar Squirrel depends on the thorny scrub of the higher ground area for its feed. The other wildlife at Karripode includes blue bull, wolves, hyenas, desert foxes, jackals, wild-cats, and caracals.

How to get there?

Karripode is 15 km. away from Palakkad Town. The non-stop drive from Palakkad to Karripode should not exceed thirty minutes.

By road:

Visitors traveling by road have to drive from Palakkad to Karripode which is approximately 15 km.

By air:

The nearest airport to reach Pallaad is at Coimbatore. Coimbatore is connected by direct flights from most Indian cities. Karripode is a 45 km. drive from Coimbatore airport which takes approximately 60 to 90 minutes.

By train:

Palakkad Railway Station is the nearest railhead to reach Karripode. From Palakkad private buses ply to Karripode.

All trains going to Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram via Coimbatore stop



Sunset over Karripode Village.

at Palakkad.

Where to stay?

Homestays are the only option for tourists who want to visit Parakund. A family of four can avail a homestay at Rs. 500/- per night, exclusive of food. Breakfast, lunch and dinner which includes traditional Kerala delicacies like idlis, dosas, injipuli (ginger with tamarind), rice and elisseri (pumpkin) can be home delivered from the small eateries at Karripode.

Where to eat?

Lots of small restaurants serving Malayalee vegetarian cuisine dot Palakkad. Freshly steamed vegetables with spices, cooked in coconut milk, with hot freshly steamed idlis are available at most roadside dhabas. The food at the high profile hotels is only for the gastronomically adventurous who like greasy food. Vegans can opt for fresh tropical fruits including water-melons, papayas, tender coconuts, pineapples which are available at the local market.



Traditional Kerala food at Karripode served on a plaintain leaf.

(Murli Menon, is a travel writer, stress management consultant and author based at Ahmedabad, India. He is the author of "ZeNLP-Learning through stories" published by The Written Word Publications, "ZeNLP-the power to succeed" published by Sage publications and "ZeNLP-the power to relax" by New Dawn Press. He can be reached at zenlp@rediffmail.com)