

## 2 NIGHT / 3 DAYS VARANASI

### **Day 01** Arrival transfer from Varanasi airport / station to hotel



### **Evening AARTI ceremony**

Aarti starts just after sunset, as darkness begins to spread all over. People start arriving at the ghats as early as 5:00pm. We would also reach there before time and have occupied our places as the crowd increases with the time. Dasaswamedh ghat becomes a hub of activity, with people sitting and waiting for the Aarti, buying flowers and other things from nearby shops or performing puja. Hold your cameras in your hand because you will get some very unique and breathtaking pictures here. A bunch of young men choreographing to the chanting, holding the lamps. As the aarti begins, men take their positions at the platform and begin swinging the lamp to the tune of chanting. Big lamps look beautiful after darkness sets in. The choreography is excellent and worth seeing. We would come back to our hotel and take dinner. Overnight stay in hotel.

O/night hotel in Varanasi

### **Day 02** AM River tour



Also known as the Golden Temple, it is dedicated to Lord Shiva, the presiding deity of the city. Varanasi is said to be the point at which the first Jyotirlingas, the fiery pillar of light by which Shiva manifested has supremacy over others gods, broke through the Earth's crust and flared towards the heavens. More than the Gath and even the Ganga, the Shivalinga installed in the temple remains the devotional focus of Varanasi. Standing on the western bank of India's holiest river Ganges, Varanasi is the oldest surviving city of the world and the cultural capital of India. It is in the heart of this city that there stands in its fullest majesty the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in which is enshrined the Jyotirlingas of Shiva, Vishweshwara or Vishwanath. Here gravitate the teeming millions of India to seek benediction and spiritual peace by the darshan of this Jyotirlingas which confers liberation from the bondages of Maya and the inexorable entanglements of the world. A simple glimpse of the Jyotirlingas is a soul-cleansing experience that transforms life and puts it on the path of knowledge and Bhakti. Vishweshwara Jyotirlingas has a very special and unique significance in the spiritual history of India. Tradition has it that the merits earned by the darshan of other jyotirlingas scattered in various parts of India accrue to devotee by a single visit to Kashi Vishwanath Temple. Deeply and intimately implanted in the Hindu mind, the Kashi Vishwanath

Temple has been a living embodiment of our timeless cultural traditions and highest spiritual values. The Temple has been visited by all great saints- Adi Shankaracharya, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekanand, Goswami Tulsidas, Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati, Gurunanak and several other spiritual personalities. The Kashi Vishwanath Temple attracts visitors not only from India but abroad as well and thereby symbolises man's desire to live in peace and harmony with one another. Vishwanath being a supreme repository of this spiritual truth thus strengthens the bonds of universal brotherhood and fellow feeling at the national as well as global levels. On January 28, 1983 the Temple was taken over by the Govt. of Uttar Pradesh and its management ever since stands entrusted to a Trust with Dr. Vibhuti Narayan Singh. Former Kashi Naresh, as president and an Executive Committee with Divisional Commissioner as Chairman. The Temple in the present shape was built way back in 1780 by Late Maharani Ahilya Bai Holkar of Indore. In the year 1785 a Naubatkhana was built up in front of the Temple by the then Collector Mohd. Ibrahim Khan at the instance of Governor General Warren Hastings. In 1839, Two domes of the Temple were covered by gold donated by Punjab Kesari Maharaja Ranjeet Singh. Third dome but was remained uncovered, Ministry of cultures & Religious affairs of U.P. Govt. took keen interest for gold plating of third dome of Temple.



### ***Bharat Mata Mandir***

Bharat Mata Mandir or Bharat Mata Temple is one of its kinds in Varanasi. Contrary to what most of the tourists believe, this temple is not dedicated to any God, Goddess or certain deity for that matter. It is dedicated to the human manifestation of India popularly called Mother India or Bharat Mata in Hindi. The temple was inaugurated by none other than Mahatma Gandhi, The father of the Indian Nation.



### ***Banaras Hindu University***

BHU was built in the year 1916-1917 under the special act of parliament passed in the year 1915 named BHU act. The act was passed by the interim parliament that worked under the imperial British government. Mahatma Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Annie Besant did the conceptualization and implementation of this university. Raja of Kashi donated 1350 acres of land for the construction of the sprawling campus.



### ***Kashi Vishwanath Mandir***

The Vishwanath temple is synonymous to Varanasi. Vishwanath Temple is the most sacred and the most famous temple in Varanasi. In fact, Vishwanath Temple is extremely popular in other parts of India too. A considerable chunk of foreign visitors in India come to Varanasi every year to get a glimpse of the Vishwanath Temple even though the followers of Semitic religions are not allowed to enter the sanctum of the temple.



### ***Durga Mandir***

*Goddess Durga is a significant manifestation of Parvati, the consort of Lord Shiva. In fact she is said to be Shakti, or the manifestation of Parvati that signifies the female element of Power and harmony in nature. This is precisely because a Bengali Maharani built this temple in the 18th century.*



### ***Sankat Mochan Mandir***

*Sankat Mochan Mandir do not have much historical significance but is a good place to visit at least once. No body knows who established this temple. It was actually very small in its early phase. In the due course various 'Mahants' collected funds to upgrade the structure and today it boasts off a large complex.*



### ***Tulsi Manas Mandir***

*Tulsi Manas Temple has a very historical as well as cultural importance for not only Varanasi but also for the whole of India. This is because Ramayana was composed at this very place. Goswami Tulsi Das was the man who composed Ramayana in Hindi in the form of "Ram Charit Manas"*

## ***Afternoon visit to Sarnath :-***

***Sarnath***, 10 km from Varanasi, where the Buddha preached his first sermon in the Deer Park, contains the most impressive remains, as well as a modern temple. The Dharmarajika, Chaukhandi and Dharnak stupas are outstanding. There are also the remains of a monastery, and the beautifully polished Lion Capital of Ashoka. Sarnath contains a rich library and at the Mula gandha Kutir Vihara there are excellent frescoes by Kosetsu Nosu. The Sarnath Museum, not far from the site, contains some of the finest specimens of Buddhist sculpture. At all centers of Buddhist worship, the Vaisakha (April-May) full moon is observed as the anniversary of three important events - the Buddha's birth, Enlightenment and death, while the Asadh (July - August) full moon is observed as the anniversary of his first sermon. Sarnath is one of the four most important Buddhist pilgrimage centres of India. Buddha, the great sage, after attaining enlightenment (Bhudda-hood) at Bodh Gaya came to Sarnath and delivered his first sermon to five disciples (i.e. Kaundinya, Bashpa, Bhadraka, ahanaman and Ashvajit) for redeeming humanity. It is this place where foundation of a new order of monks (Sangha) and a new order of religious doctrine (Dhamma) was laid. Sarnath is also sacred to the Jains because they look upon it as the site of asceticism and death of Shreyamshanath, the 11th Trithanka

***Day 03*** Arrival transfer from hotel Varanasi airport / station to hotel

*Later transfer from hotel to Varanasi airport / Station.*