

# Purulia

## History, Culture, Nature



Discover a different Purulia. Far from the madding crowd, enchanting Purulia beckons to experience her living heritages and unravel her untapped mystery, calm, serenity and wondrous beauty. This western most district of West Bengal is part of the Chotanagpur plateau. The landscape is rocky and undulating. The deciduous forests are rich in bio diversity. Sprightly rivers run across the rocky landscape dotted with hills and monadnocks. Tribal ethos enriches the mystic charm and natural beauty of this land of red soil and red blooms of Palash flower. The region is the home of different tribal communities like Santhals, Kurmis, Kherias, Shabars, Birhors etc. Songs and dances are an intrinsic part of the life of the tribal people. Relics of centuries old stone and terracotta temples, ruined palaces and sculptures lying in barren fields and glades are built heritages bearing testimony to the days of Jain Tirthankars and tribal kings.

Purulia is a land of fairs and festivals, songs and dances. The indigenous people of Purulia say – *Senge Jujung, Kajigo Durung* – we dance, as we walk and sing, as we speak. Purulia, to some, is synonymous to Chau – a vigorous form of masked dance and drama, known for its style, elegance and strong visual presentation. There are more than 400 Chau groups in the district and seeing their performance in full gear will be a memory to cherish. Experience the pulsating rhythm of *Madol* and *Jhumur* songs in your bloodstream amidst serene nature. Join the young village lads and lasses in a Santhal dance at night around a fire. If you love history you can spend a day in the ruins of Bandhar Deul with monumental temples of burnt brick exquisitely sculptured with intricate designs, dating back to 750 A.D. You may also spend a moment of reflection beside the fast flowing *Kansai* or *Kumari* river. And of course experience the tribal hospitality and lifestyle, their hardships and poverty and yet their richness of their culture and their strong bondage to their roots. Make a point to visit the 2 resource centres at Bamnia and Chelyama which are now prized possession of the Chau and Jhumur artists of Purulia and embodiment of their rich cultural heritage. You may like to watch a Chau performance there and have a discussion with the renowned Chau artist Binadhar Kumar regarding its origin and advent.

The cultural tour will remain incomplete if you do not visit the Lac and Tassar hubs in Purulia. In Balarampur, which produces the best lac (*gala*) in the country, you will find artisans making trendy handicrafts from lac. If you are there in January or July you can also see the villagers planting seed lac on trees. Raghunathpur is an age old centre of Tassar Silk weaving and you will find these woven wonders in different shops in Raghunathpur at a much lesser price. If you are visiting Bagmundi, do stop at Chorida village to see how Chau masks are made and also collect a variety of attractive home décor and smaller mementoes like sculptures of animal figures, gods and goddesses. And as you move back homeward after your tour in Purulia with the slowly fading drum beats reverberating in your ears, you will feel that unknowingly you have endeared the music of the roots, the vibrant dances of the braves, the meandering streams and the simple lifestyle and philosophy of the people.

### How to reach:

The most convenient journey to Purulia is by train (333 Kms). Rupasi Bangla Express (Train No.12883) leaves Howrah station at 6 a.m. and takes about 6 hours to reach Purulia town. In the after noon there is Howrah Purulia Express (Train No 12827) which leaves Howrah station at 4:50 p.m. Train fare is ₹ 367 per person in AC Chair Car and ₹ 104 in non-AC.

Distance by road is close to 400 Kms. Take Durgapur Express-way and before reaching Durgapur take a left turn to Bankura. Drive till Dhalda crossing and turn towards Poyabagan. The road from Poyabagan will take you directly to Purulia town.

### Basanta Utsav 2012

Celebrating holi, the festival of colours, at Purulia comes with a different meaning. The Palash trees set against the tapestry of the hills and rivers, are in full bloom making the jungle wild red. The colours of Holi mixes with the thrill of Chau and Jhumur dance and creates a different chemistry. This time Basanta Utsav will be celebrated during 8 - 11 March, 2012 at Deulghata at Joypur in Purulia.

### Chau Utsav 2011

This year the Chau Utsav will be held at Bamnia in Jhalda-II from 16 - 18 December, 2011

### Package

#### 2 Days, 2 Nights trip to Purulia

##### Day 1.

- Morning train from Howrah to Adra
- Stay at Resource Centre in Chelyama in a budget hotel.
- Visit Bandhar Deul, Telkupi, Kashipur Palace, Joychandi hills in the afternoon. On the way back visit Raghunathpur-II to see Tassar Weaving.
- Enjoy *Jhumur/Karam/Pata Naach* at night.

##### Day 2.

- Early morning trip from Chelyama to Purulia town. Check-in at hotel.
- Visit the lac producers at Balarampur and the picturesque dam on *Kumari* river.
- Visit the old temples and monuments (dating back to 750 A.D) at Deulghata in Joypur, beside the panoramic *Kansai* River. Spend the day among the ruins and enjoy lunch there.
- Visit Bamnia Resource Centre in Jhalda-II and see a Chau performance.
- Dinner at Hotel in Purulia.

##### Day 3.

- Early morning departure from Purulia by train

### Charges

For a group of 5 persons, tour charges per person will be ₹ 3400 which includes lodging at Chelyama and Purulia town, food (breakfast, lunch dinner, snack), packaged drinking water, performances by artists and local transportation by car.



