



Tenzin Palayu with her dog

In the nomadic settlement of Puga

Located in the Eastern Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir is Puga, a geothermal field and a site for the nomads of Changthang to settle down for the winter and tend to their animals in the subzero Himalayan temperatures in this scenic land

NEEHARIKA SATYAVADA

Snow crunched under my heavy boots as I stepped out of the heated SUV, into the freezing winter of Ladakh. It was -16 degrees and we had just arrived in Puga, a little nomadic village in the Changthang valley.

Identified to be one of the important geothermal sites in India by the Geological Survey of India, Puga is a 12-kilometre stretch of Himalayan valley in the Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary. A harsh and unpredictable land interspersed with geysers and hot springs, come winter it is blanketed in snow.

Puga serves as the winter home to Changpas, Tibetan Nomads, who follow the same migratory routes in Ladakh every year, only to settle in Puga for the four cold months. Living in the same encampments, these Nomadic Pas-

toralists bring their livestock to the same seasonal pastures every year. This is where we decided to stop for lunch, setting up kitchen in one of the stone walled corrals. By the time we had warmed ourselves with some Kashmiri Qawah, we were surrounded with curious eyes and runny noses. Little nomads were everywhere, shy but interested in the newcomers all bundled up in their down jackets.

"That's my dog, see he is a nomad dog," said Tenzin, in hesitant but clear English, perceptive to the point that she knows that we regular people would find anything 'nomadic' fascinating. Hanle, which is 115 kilometres from Puga was where she went to school but Sumdho was the closest town. We had passed by it on our way here so I naturally assumed this is where these little nomads who spoke such good

English would go to school. But only in conversing with her did I realise just how far across the Himalayas the Changpas traversed for livelihood.

The Changpas rear yaks, horses, sheep and also of course the famous 'pashmina' goats and the geothermal ice fields of Puga served them well as winter pastures. Winters are important for the Changpas. January and February are the birthing months and this is also when the pashmina fur grows. Besides it is the snow and its melt that brings greenery to this high altitude cold desert. The Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary is spread across India and Tibet and historically the Changpas of Ladakh would migrate with their herds into Tibet. But with how things are politically today, this is no longer an option for them.

About 1,600 kilometres from Delhi, and 700 kilometers from Srinagar, this is a must visit village for those looking to explore the little known side of a much exploited tourist spot.



Ice fields of Puga

TRAVEL BUZZ

Great outdoor art cities in the US

For some, seeing art can be a meditative experience worth doing alone. Going at an individual pace allows for intimate moments, reflection and extra time to sketch or write, for the creatively inclined. While the US has no shortage of galleries, beyond the museum walls lies a sprawling canvas of incredible sculpture parks, street murals and public installations that are prime for solo exploration. Here are few must-see attractions.

Poydras Corridor – New Orleans, Louisiana

It's where American jazz was born, Creole cooking was invented and Mardi Gras was perfected. Now, the Poydras Corridor Sculpture Exhibition is putting New Orleans on the map for its visual art. Created after Hurricane Katrina to lift the spirits of residents, the outdoor rotating exhibit features more than 26 sculptures from contemporary artists, allowing solo visitors to enjoy the works while strolling Poydras Street.

Coney Art Walls – Brooklyn, New York

Coney Island, the popular boardwalk in Brooklyn, New York, is be-

coming a destination for its latest amusement: the Coney Art Walls. Take your time wandering this outdoor museum alone to appreciate the detail poured into lively murals and graffiti from 20 renowned street artists. Afterward, head down to the beach to take in the colorful locals and spend an afternoon of inspiration on the shore.

Midtown Viaducts – Detroit, Michigan

Once the capital of the US automobile industry, Detroit, Michigan, is revitalising its forgotten byways into illuminated works of art at the Midtown Viaducts. Three once-deteriorated viaducts in the city's TechTown District are prime for solo photography enthusiasts. The viaducts are outfitted with colorful reflectors, LED light boxes and interactive installations that light up with the movements of cars and pedestrians. Afterward, check out the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, both in the area.

Neon Boneyard – Las Vegas, Nevada

This outdoor exhibition space (part of The Neon Museum) features more than 200 bygone signs including the Bow & Arrow Motel, The Silver Slipper and the Hacienda horse and rider. Solo travelers have a better shot at squeezing into a spare spot on a guided tour.

Olympic Sculpture Park – Seattle, Washington

Stroll through roughly 20 works from renowned artists at this free, 3.4-hectare plot situated along the waterfront that's open sunrise to sunset daily. And make sure to grab a selfie with the city's architectural gem, The Space Needle.



Poydras Corridor – New Orleans, Louisiana