

travelogue



Panagal Chaya Someswara Swamy Temple Complex

Less than two hours from Hyderabad is Panagal, a quiet little town in Nalgonda district, that is home to the mysterious Chaya Someswara Swamy Temple. Panagal together with the Devarakonda Fort make Nalgonda an ideal day trip destination from Hyderabad for the thrill seekers as well as the religiously inclined

Glimpse into age of miracles

NEEHARIKA SATYAVADA

Dedicated to Lord Shiva, the Chaya Someswara Swamy Temple is an ancient temple built by the Kunduru Cholas in the twelfth century. Considered to be an exemplary model of ingenious Hindu architecture, the temple owes its fame and air of mystery to the fact that there is a constant and unwavering shadow that falls on the main deity in the exact same manner all through the day, irrespective of the position of the sun.

The origin of this chaya or shadow is an unresolved conundrum and over the years many have speculated over what could be the science behind this. While some have said it could be the refraction of light and the peculiar positioning of the pillars whose shadows unite to cast a single unchanging shadow on the idol, no matter the time of the day and the direction of the light. These theories have remained as just that, theories and the mystery of the shadow continues to be. So does the legend of this ancient temple. It is this unique feature - that the temple is named after - which is considered a striking testimony to the architectural brilliance of that era. These very pillars

are also fabled for the exquisite sculptures carved into them.

There is a four-hundred-year water body just across the road from the temple that is quickly turning into a picnic spot. The Panagal Tank, also known as Udaysamudram, is a balancing reservoir that today meets the irrigation and drinking water needs of over five hundred villages near here.

Also in close proximity to this

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temple, is yet another ancient temple dating back to the eleventh century and dedicated to the same presiding deity, Someswara; albeit little

known. Known as the Pachala Someswara Swamy Temple, the idol here is carved out of green onyx giving this temple its name - literally



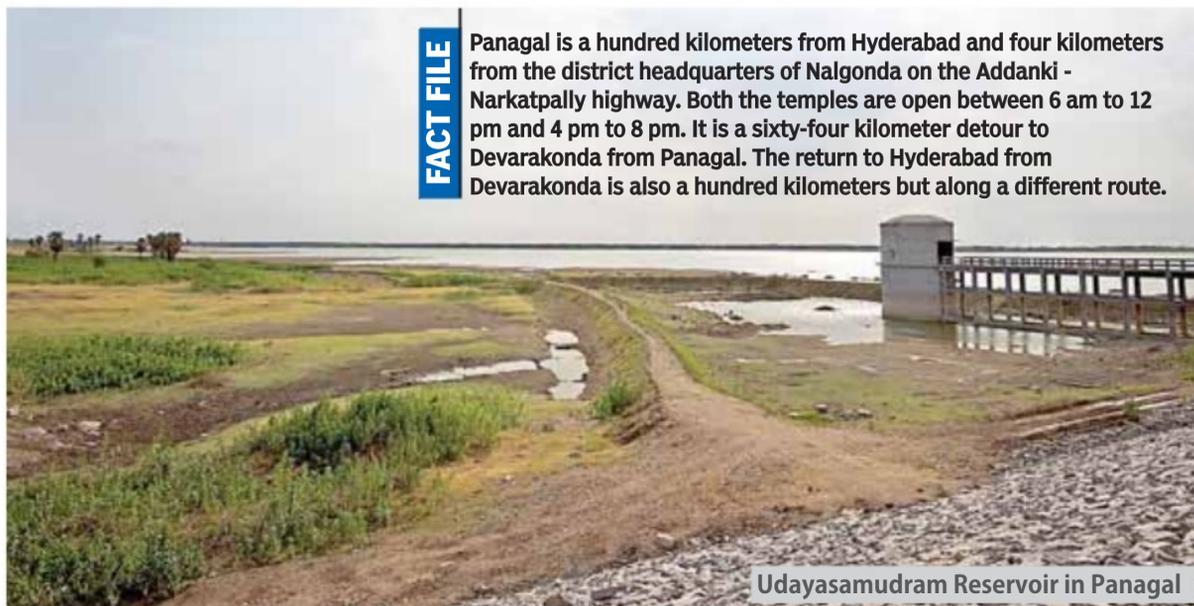
translated to mean the green Someswara Swamy temple. The temple grounds here are also home to a museum that boasts of statues and sculptures from the Ikshvaku Dynasty of the first century.

The Pachala Someswara Swamy temple together with the immensely popular Chaya Someswara Swamy Temple nearby, attract devotees in droves during the festival of Shivaratri.

One can combine this trip with a short detour to Devarakonda, where a sprawling fort lies in ruins but provides with ample opportunity for hiking. Climb up the crumbling, disappearing steps with a pleasant breeze in tow to cross hillocks, come across local herders with their sheep and kids playing which is in all likelihood one of the toughest game of hide and seek; what with the crevices, the short but steep valley sides and the thick and distinctive undergrowth of forest that covers the dark corners.

FACT FILE

Panagal is a hundred kilometers from Hyderabad and four kilometers from the district headquarters of Nalgonda on the Addanki - Narkatpally highway. Both the temples are open between 6 am to 12 pm and 4 pm to 8 pm. It is a sixty-four kilometer detour to Devarakonda from Panagal. The return to Hyderabad from Devarakonda is also a hundred kilometers but along a different route.



Udaysamudram Reservoir in Panagal

WHAT'S NEW

B'wood-all-around at Madame Tussauds Bangkok!



Prabhas

After all the buzzes and long waits, the world of Bollywood is finally in Bangkok, Thailand! The launch of the magnificent zone is a Bollywood dream comes true for the industry's die-hard fans. Featuring four Bollywood forever stars: Shah Rukh Khan, Hrithik Roshan, Amitabh Bachchan, and Prabhas, Madame Tussauds Bangkok creates full Bollywood experience in their newest zone. The immersive IIFA Awards experience and the AR Dance the new zone offers are the highlights fans must not miss!

Upon their first arrival, fans will be wel-



Shah Rukh Khan

comed by the figure of Prabhas in the flesh before entering the Bollywood Production Studio, where real filming props, the filming-in-process touch, and another superstar presence of Hrithik Roshan will

get fans reeling. Leaving the studio behind, fans, then, meet with the Bollywood Augmented Reality Dance. The dancing challenge is a fun experience filled with thematic grooves sung by the famous actor-turns-singer Varun Dhawan, and a cheeky gimmick of hidden cameras to capture fans' fun moments and display them on the large backdrop of the area. Led by the figure of the famous Shah Rukh Khan, the AR Dance area is perfectly lit with sparkling Indian-style mirrors strewn in golden delicate frames. Mahesh Babu will soon be joining the others as his statue is in the making.



Hrithik Roshan