



COMFORTS NEAR THE WILDERNESS

LOCATED ON THE PERIPHERY OF THE KANHA TIGER RESERVE, CLUB MAHINDRA KANHA IS STILL A POPULAR CHOICE FOR A COMFORTABLE STAY AND LOCAL EXPERIENCES. BY RAJU BIST

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Indoor Activities: Table tennis, chess, carRom, pool, soccer, art & craft, PS4, pottery, etc.

Outdoor Activities: Nature walk, village tour, cycle ride, Segway ride, swimming pool zorbing, sumo fight, foam party, etc.

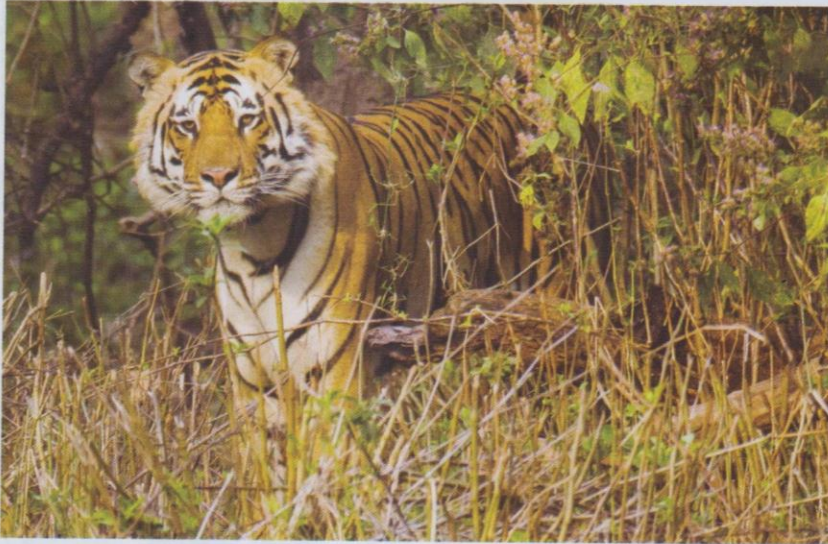
Tribal Dance: The Baiga are forest-dwelling aboriginals from Central India. They perform traditional music and folk dances at lodges around the parks. Performers dress in elaborate costumes and headgear, with woven grass braids, peacock feather shafts in their hair, and heavy metallic anklets on their feet. Traditional instruments include a drum called *mandar* and a wooden instrument with knobs called the *thiski*.

Munna is on the prowl and the good folks at Club Mahindra Kanha are asking their guests to stay within the boundaries of the popular resort in Madhya Pradesh. A mini-celebrity among locals, Munna is a 17-year-old tiger who often strays out of the Kanha Tiger Reserve nearby. He is the second oldest tiger in India, long past his prime and unable to compete with younger rivals for partners or kills. So every now and then he forays out in search of cattle and stray dogs. Munna has not been known to attack any human

being but then, it is always better to be safe than sorry.

Back from their tiger safaris (organised between sunrise and 10 am and 3.30 pm and sunset every day), the resort's guests discuss Munna who they have never seen — or other tigers they have spotted on their forays. Spanning an area of 1,900 sq km, Kanha Tiger Reserve has a large population of the striped beauties, and sightings are common, especially in the summer months when they congregate at the watering holes. The animated discussions take place in the vast green lawns of the resort, at its well-appointed

HOSPITALITY RESORTS



From top: A tiger spotted in Kanha; the Kanha river runs through the reserve

lobby and over dinner at Spices, the decor-rich restaurant.

When not shooting the breeze about the reserve's tigers – and other prominent mammals like barasingha, Indian flying fox, chital, leopard, wild boar, gaur, wolf, nilgai and hyena – the guests at Club Mahindra Kanha can

be seen actively participating in one of the many interesting games or activities on offer (see box item). The activities have been curated in a manner that takes one back to the basics of rustic life. Games are organised on a daily basis and the lucky winners also get to take home attractive gifts and prizes.

Having had their fill of the myriad activities, the guests troop to Spices. The restaurant is a multi-cuisine one and is particularly known for its special dishes like biryani prepared in Bhopal style, kebabs, kheema and Gosht Korma. Also available are local delicacies like Baafra (an unleavened wheat bread eaten with dal), Bhutte ka Kees (a semi-dry dish made with grated corn and milk) and Chakki ki Shaak (steamed wheat dough with curd). You can round all these off

with mouth-watering desserts which are a specialty in Madhya Pradesh – Mawa Bati, Khoprapak, Shrikhand and Malpua.

You will be forgiven if you overstuff yourself at Spices. A gingerly walk around the property will help. There's lots to observe, beginning with the witty and enlightening observations on many of the trees.

Here are just two of them: 'I absorb 22 kg of carbon dioxide in a year. All I ask in return is that you let me live' and 'Every day I supply oxygen for up to four people. Don't you think I am worth saving?'

Then there's James Bond, the lordly, handsome, in-house rooster. At one time, there were seven more of his brothers around. But each of them got eaten up by stray dogs. James Bond is smart and he survived by making one of the upper branches of a tree near Spices his home. He sleeps there at nights. During the day, he struts in the gardens attached to the 62 rooms all over the property, acting like he owns the place.

The rooms are divided into 18 one-bedroom and 32 studio units along with 12 tents. Club Mahindra Kanha also has its own organic farm spread over 2.1 acres. More than 15 vegetables and fruits are grown here including spinach, bottle gourd, pumpkin, banana, papaya and watermelon. The property also boasts of a solar power generation system that was inaugurated on June 8, 2018. The solar farm spans over two acres and has a capacity of 450 kWp.

Apart from being environmentally friendly, Club Mahindra Kanha is also socially conscious. It supports communities in the area. The resort team has installed 50 solar street lights in a nearby village. It also regularly purchases dairy, vegetables and poultry for F&B from the local community to provide them a source of income. ■