

# POLITICALTOURS

Travel beyond the headlines

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## The New India

Dates:

**February 2019, Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> to Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup>**

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### **Mumbai, Ranthambhore, Jaipur, New Delhi**

*Led by Siddharth Varadarajan & Nilanjana Bhowmick*

India has shaken off its post-colonial mantle and undertaken huge economic reforms. Soon it is tipped to become one of the great powers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. But huge challenges remain, our wide-ranging journey explores those recent changes. We also get to enjoy some of India's remarkable beauty and wildlife.

We start in Mumbai, famed for its multi-cultural mix and home to a booming economy situated alongside some of the largest slums in the country. We also explore Hindu nationalism which has fueled religious tensions. These tensions are now seen as the largest threat to India's democratic institutions, all the while encouraged by the governing BJP.

From there we fly north to Jaipur – the pink city – home to some beautiful architecture and fierce political rivalry between the BJP and Congress. We look at how cast remains a key issue in Indian politics.

Next, we go to one of India's most famous national parks, Ranthambhore, home to tigers and a charity that is working to improve local education and healthcare. The tour ends with visits to the parliament and meetings with a wide range of politicians and experts.

The tour is led by *Siddharth Varadarajan* the former editor of the Hindu, India's largest paper, and *Nilanjana Bhowmick*, formerly with Time Magazine.

**Price: £5030.00**

**Single supplement: £730.00**

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*Like all our tours the itinerary is focused on current affairs. Events on the ground may change and the final schedule may be adjusted accordingly.*

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## **Itinerary – 10 nights**

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### **Day One: 3 February – Mumbai**

Our tour starts in the evening in the thriving city of Mumbai home to over 18 million people. We get an introduction to the tour ahead with the Political Tours experts and staff. How India is shaping a new identity for itself. Experts talk over dinner. *Overnight in Oberoi Hotel, Mumbai*

### **Day Two: 4 February – Mumbai**

We get an overview of India's largest city (by size). Mumbai is proud of its multi-cultural mix, home to major Hindu and Muslim shrines as well as its financial centre and not least, Bollywood, India's booming film industry. A packed first day covers business, show biz and the mix of religions; we tour the city and meet with leading figures in all three areas. *Overnight in Oberoi Hotel, Mumbai*

### **Day Three: 5 February - Mumbai**

Mumbai faces major challenges – not least of all over population and groaning infrastructure. We visit Dharavi, one of the most densely populated areas in India and look at a project trying to improve local lives. We visit the home of a more middle-class family to learn about their life in the city. Later we look at transport – just getting to and from work is a major feat for most city dwellers. Pollution is another factor both in the air and on the ground. Environmentalists and urban planners give us their take. In 2008 the city was subject to one of the worst terror attacks in India's history. We look at its legacy. *Overnight in Oberoi Hotel, Mumbai*

### **Days Four & Five: 6-7 February – Jaipur**

We fly north to Jaipur, one of India's most prominent and beautiful cities.

Mumbai - Jaipur by air: AI 611 Economy class 11.35 - 13.15

(Please contact Political Tours to book your flight with our travel partners)

The pink city is the capital of Rajasthan one of the most contested politically in India with traditionally close rivalry between the BJP and Congress. We visit the regional assembly learn about recent elections (Dec 18) and see how cast continues to play a critical role in Indian politics. There will also time to explore the city centre and architecture. *Overnight in ITC Jajputana Hotel Jaipur – 2 nights*

### **Days Six & Seven: 8-9 February - Ranthambhore National Park**

We leave Jaipur by road for Ranthambhore National Park, formerly a hunting ground of the Maharajas of Jaipur and now home to a huge diversity of wildlife, include tigers and leopards. We have two early morning trips with rangers.

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We are staying in a beautiful camp on the edge of the park in luxury accommodation run by a charitable foundation. Money raised from the camp goes towards funding local hospitals, and schools and we will see their work. While the state is still incredibly weak at providing such services, charitable foundations take on much of the burden. *Overnight at Khem Villas – 2 nights*

**Day Eight:** 10 February - Ranthambhore – New Delhi

After a morning in Ranthambhore we leave by train at lunch time for New Delhi, this is included in the price. Check into hotel for dinner and an introduction to Delhi with Nilanjana Bhowmick. *Overnight at The Manor Hotel, New Delhi.*

**Days Nine and Ten:** 11-12 February - New Delhi

New Delhi is the cauldron of national politics and we get the most diverse view of what is happening in the city. We visit the offices of two leading national papers. Is nationalism undermining Indian democracy? We look at the courts and meet with university students at the elite Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), a left-leaning liberal stronghold, to talk about a crackdown on political dissent. Maoism is alive and well in India; we speak to a leading politician who was also one of the leaders of the women's protest movement against rape. We'll also be visiting local homes, speaking with think tanks and meeting with senior politicians from the BJP and opposition in parliament. There will be the usual opportunity to own ask questions. At our last dinner our experts review the week. *Overnight at The Manor Hotel, New Delhi.*

**Day Eleven:** 13 February

*The tour ends after breakfast on our last day.*

*Please contact us for options to extend the tour to visit the Taj Mahal, Agra.*

As on all our expert-led tours the groups are deliberately small and will not exceed 14 people. Most meals and all accommodation are included in the price. Flights are not included in the price and need to be arranged by customers or with an agent.

***International Passenger Protection Insurance (IPP)***

*All our travel arrangements are covered by the UK's package tour regulations and are financially guaranteed. We are a land-only tour operator and flights are not included.*