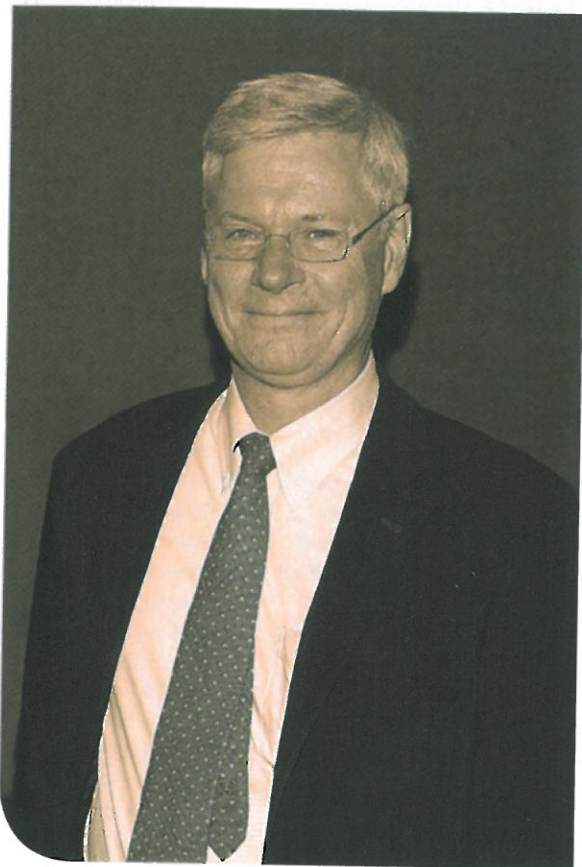


# 'INDIA HAS A LOT TO OFFER'

Ambassador of Denmark to India, Peter Taksø-Jensen, on Air India's first direct flight to Copenhagen and visiting Danish settlements in Tamil Nadu. Shrabasti Mallik takes notes



The citizens of Denmark are often called the happiest in the world. And as we sat with the ambassador of Denmark to India, Peter Taksø-Jensen, we could not help but appreciate why this is so. He was as excited talking about his desire to visit Ladakh, as he was about the beauty of his home country, especially the island of Bornholm, to which he belongs. In a candid conversation, he tells *Shubh Yatra* about his experiences in India.

## The Indian horizon

It has been two years since I came to India, and I have had quite a journey so far. I came here from the US, where I had spent seven years. In India, it has been really interesting to see how Prime Minister Narendra Modi is leading the country forward and how much optimism there is among the people. This is a nation where you feel as though you're heading towards a bright future - and that is an amazing experience.

## Similarities between Denmark and India

As democratic countries, we both share a similar set of values, apart from having rich and interesting histories. We also have several beautiful works of architecture - though the ones in India date further back than those in Denmark. Huge chunks of both our populations speak English and have a good sense of humour too.

## Places travelled to in India

I travel frequently but, unfortunately, most of it is for work and that leaves me little or no opportunity to go around a city. Whenever I do have time, I try to explore the country, its beauty and its vibrant culture. I've been to the North-east - it is beautiful and so different from Delhi! I have also been to Tamil Nadu and have visited the old Danish settlement in Tranquebar (now Tharangambadi), which was established in the 1600s and flourished till the British took over.

“ Whenever I travel by Air India, I have a pleasant experience - be it with the staff or the fantastic on-board service. I am happy that the airline has expanded so much in the last couple of years ”

MY FAVOURITES

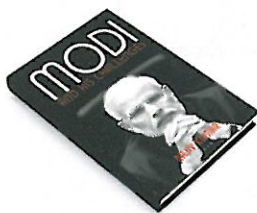


**MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT IN INDIA**  
Visiting the Taj Mahal and Kaziranga National Park



**FAVOURITE INDIAN FOOD**  
Tandoori chicken

**A BOOK CURRENTLY ON MY BEDSIDE TABLE**  
*Modi and His Challenges* by Rajiv Kumar



**FAVOURITE ACTOR AND MOVIE**  
Danish actress Ghita Nørby. I have many favourite films, of which one is *The Big Lebowski* by Joel and Elan Coen



**A GADGET I CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT**  
My iPhone



The childhood home of author Hans Christian Andersen in Odense

**Places yet to visit**

This winter, I plan to go to Kerala because I've been told that it is nice to get out of the city during Christmas. I also wish to visit Ladakh, Ranthambhore and Corbett National Park to see the tigers there. I have only been to 13 of the 29 states, so there is still a long way to go!

**What an Indian should do in Denmark**

If you are there for a couple of days, Copenhagen is the place to be. The city has transformed from an industrial harbour to where most Danes live today. If, however, you have more time, I suggest going out to some beautiful places such as Jutland and the island of Funen. While at Funen, you must not miss the small provincial town of Odense, where author Hans Christian Andersen lived. You can also visit Aarhus and move north to the picturesque Skagen, where the two water bodies – Kattegat and Skagerrak – meet.

I come from a small island called Bornholm in the Baltic Sea, 30-40 km off the coast of Sweden. On the southern part of the island, you have sandy beaches and small fishing villages – it's a fantastic place to spend a couple of days amid nature, away from the cacophony of the city.

**What a Dane should do in India**

A visit to New Delhi and Agra is a must. Close by, Rajasthan is also a fascinating place to see. India has a lot to offer – a beautiful landscape, exciting wildlife, fascinating places and very vibrant cultures and traditions that change as you move from one place to another in the country.

Danes would love the beaches in Kerala and Goa, and enjoy the experience of a safari in Kaziranga National Park, close to the rhinos. But where they would want to go or what they would like to do will largely depend on their personal interests and the time they are visiting.

**Best time to visit Denmark**

I would say between May and August, because the weather during that time is pleasant, compared to the rest of the year.

**Air India-Copenhagen direct flight**

We have received a lot of support from Air India and the airport of Copenhagen to start the first direct flight connecting India and Copenhagen. This will bring the two countries together. I am sure the flight will boost tourism, and people-to-people contact can really help in strengthening bilateral relations.