

# Pole Act...

**Malkhambh – an advanced form of gymnasium developed in ancient India is slowly losing its ground. Prathamesh Jadhav finds more about this vanishing sport**



**S**hyam Deshmukh, an ardent Malkhambh lover, has been teaching the sport for almost 10 years now. But Deshmukh is apprehensive that the advanced form of gymnasium developed in ancient India is on the brink of extinction.

Malkhambh is acrobatic, 'yogic asnas' and gymnasium blended into one. It requires tremendous concentration and equally toned and agile body. In fact one who practices malkhambh regularly gets blessed with above attributes. The sight of young kids performing malkhambh can take your breath away! Malkhambh needs precision of a surgeon's knife and patience of a hunter. No doubt this sport makes you look and feel healthy in totality.

"One can start practising malkhambh at an early age; the earlier the better. As it helps body to take proper shape and improves posture. It can either be performed on a wooden pole called pole-malkhambh or on the rope where participants slide up and down with magical ease," informs Deshmukh who practiced malkhambh ever since he was 10 years old. "Today most of the kids go to gymnasium, gymnastics or swimming but malkhambh stands out as it gives the benefit of all these sports. Importantly, since it only requires a pole and zeal to perform, anyone can afford it with less than a nominal cost," says Deshmukh. Though various competitions of this otherwise rare sport are held every year across Maharashtra, somehow the number of participants is diminishing every year.



This sport has a history, a solid foundation of culture behind it and its being eroded in the changing times. "More and more students from European countries like Spain, Italy, Poland are flocking here to learn this skill but we have no time to pay attention to a sport as rich and as dynamic as this," complains Ajinkya Sathe, an avid fan of malkhambh. So don't be surprised if this sport gets developed and flourished somewhere in the Alps and comes back to India with some exotic name to lure people here.

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## Rafting through the river

**Looking forward to doing something thrilling and spectacular, then here's your perfect vacation activity – River rafting!**

**M**onsoons are coming to an end, but the excitement is not yet over! You can still plan something exciting and interesting. How about river rafting this weekend?

River rafting or white water rafting is not something unheard of. This adventurous sport of late has gained popularity. It's a challenging recreational activity that utilizes a raft to navigate through the river.

If you are fit enough and don't have any kind of hydrophobia, then river rafting can be your sport. You can easily become a skilled rafter after few hours of training available at various rafting venues in the country. The Western Ghats are full of swift and short flowing rivers. However, there aren't many river rafting locations in Maharashtra due to its uneven terrain.

But this does not restrict you from enjoying the sport. Kundalika River, just 100 kms from Mumbai, provides exceptional river rafting facility. The best time to visit this place is during monsoons as the water levels are high and good for sport. But river rafting can be done throughout the year depending upon the water levels.

"It's the ultimate team building activity. The rush of the water is so exciting that one cannot resist being in the raft," says Mohammad Asif of Nature Knights, who have been organising river rafting trips. "Eight people manoeuvring the raft tune in so well that the ultimate success creates an exhilarating experience for each one of them," he adds further.

"I had a thrilling experience. The moment our raft turned down in the water, I was so scared but I enjoyed it a lot," says Ankit Shukla who went river rafting in Rishikesh with his friends. Likewise Veronica Jose who went to Sikkim for river rafting says, "River rafting is a nice experience, some-



#### CHARGES:

Rs. 1200/- (per person) only rafting.

Rs. 2450 (per person) rafting + overnight stay.

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thing different and adventurous." There are mostly two guides who accompany you in the raft throughout the journey.

Life jacket and head gear is provided for your safety. As far as clothing is concerned, avoid cotton clothing while rafting as it takes away the warmth from your body, especially during spring and autumn. In summer, you can go for a simple swimsuit, nylon shorts and tennis shoes or sandals.

This sport is perfect for those who love adventures. It's also suitable for youth groups, corporate teams and even families with children over 13 years of age (and body weight of 40 kgs minimum).

So if you are looking forward to doing something thrilling and spectacular, then here's your perfect vacation trip – river rafting!

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