



PHOTO: KAZI TAHASIN AGAZ APURBO

Best place to take snaps? Your guide will direct you to them—do not ask for any help from ravenous freelance photographers who might sneak up on you.

After page 10

buy sweaters, mufflers and gloves. The shopkeeper encouraged us to buy some more warm clothes, especially when he heard we were going to Manali next day.

We were really happy next morning to be able to shield ourselves from the chilly winds as our coaster scaled the

winding path. But the roads were getting increasingly muddy and bumpy and caused discomfort among some of us. Sleeping may be the best way to distract yourself from the sharp turns and the road constructions. Note that these roads are constantly being repaired throughout the year since they get damaged by mudslides often. Thankfully, we reached

Manali without much trouble, and we were greeted with icy breezes and piles of snow on the roadside. If you are a winter person, this is the city where you would want to spend the rest of your life. If you are not, well, console yourself: this is the closest you'll get to experience the North (oh wait, I swore to myself to never talk about *Game of Thrones* again) without selling your kidney. The apple blossoms were still budding when we visited, or else we would have had a more majestic view of their bloom. Love snow and ice? Head to Solang Valley, but before that you will need to rent or buy special winter suits and gumboots to help keep you alive. The hot water springs may seem therapeutic, but somehow you will always find them to be occupied by fat, balding, mustached men—definitely not suitable for your female companions. The momos in Manali were particularly exquisite, as were the Palak Paneers and Dahi Vadas.

Our final destination before heading to Kolkata was Chandigarh. By the time we were halfway to Chandigarh, we were busy shoving all our warm clothes inside

our bags. Chandigarh weather should be pleasant to everyone: neither too cold nor too hot. The first thing you should see when you get there are the Rock Gardens and the Cactus Gardens (not creative names at all, I agree). But we missed out on them, and you should not. However, we could roam around the Rose Garden (creativity: level 9000) and it was indeed a brilliant sight. It was also pretty fun to meet a camel right outside the park—afterwards I regretted not getting on top of it. Carpe diem, man, carpe diem.

Like all good things in life, the journey had to end. But I promise, I will return to the magical land once again. Perhaps Kashmir will be my next destination. I was relieved about one thing though—no more vegetarian dishes. The first thing I did when I got back home was buy myself a packet of oily Kacchi. Home: sweet, meaty home.

Muhtasim Jawad is your next-door wizard with a 99 percent Pathao rating. He recently lost his magic quill, so please help him find it. Send duas at jawad.mmjr@gmail.com

AN ITINERARY IN RETROSPECTION

KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

Itinerary—it's a list of to-do activities on a trip which never goes according to plan. Truth is, a three-day two-night (3D, 2N) trip to your hometown could turn out to be more exciting than the annual 5D, 4N trip to Bangkok, even if that comes with a concert.

Over the years, I have travelled over 50,000 kilometres in nine countries. Yes, I use a travel assistant app that keeps track of that data. Some of the trips have been amazing, some not so great; each was an experience worth emptying my pockets for. And because every day on a trip isn't the same, it's only the "highlights" that shine through my Instagram stories.

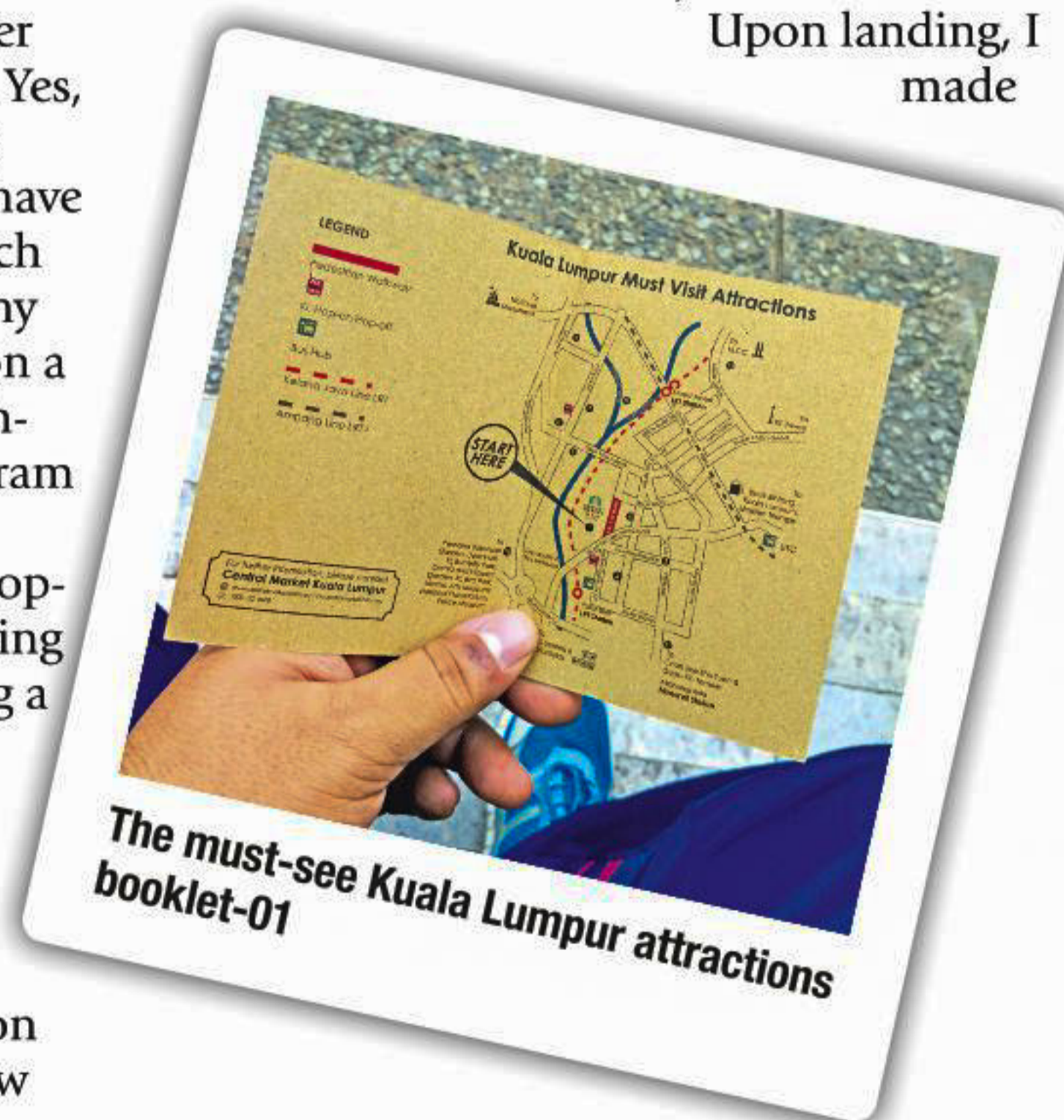
This article is an itinerary of me hopping across countries and cities, picking a highlight from each trip, presenting a montage of my travels.

DAY ONE

Arrive at the Pudong International Airport, Shanghai. The red-eye from Chongqing was not an easy feat. As the only non-Chinese passenger on the domestic flight, I had put the crew

members on alert. They were possibly thinking, "Who's this guy with the green passport?" To make things worse, the attendant serving dinner failed to comprehend my most important inquiry—"Is this chicken?"—and so I had to go with the cake and juice.

Upon landing, I made



my way through a parade of trolleys to experience the Shanghai Maglev Train, the only operational magnetic levitation transport in the world. Super sleek and futuristic, this machine took me to Longyang Road station from the airport, going up to 300 kilometres per hour. The landscape outside whizzed past as my ears

kept popping. And long before I could finish humming the tunes of one Artcell song, I was in the city. Far into the sky rose the towers of Lujiazui, their observatory decks on top of my bucket list. NIGHT ONE Enjoy street food by the Patong beach in Phuket. I can say with confidence that



Climbing Mount Vesuvius in Campania, Italy

Maliha Khan

"Walking up Mount Vesuvius is not as exerting as it sounds—it takes barely a half hour—but is a good hike nevertheless. Besides the feat of climbing an active volcano and looking down into the massive crater where you can see steaming vents, there is the breathtaking view of the cities below and the glittering Bay of Naples. You also end up pondering the scary reality of the millions living under the shadow of an active volcano and might later want to tour the ruins of Pompeii (which was buried after a Vesuvius eruption in 79 AD) nearby."

Scan the QR code to see this location on Google Maps:

