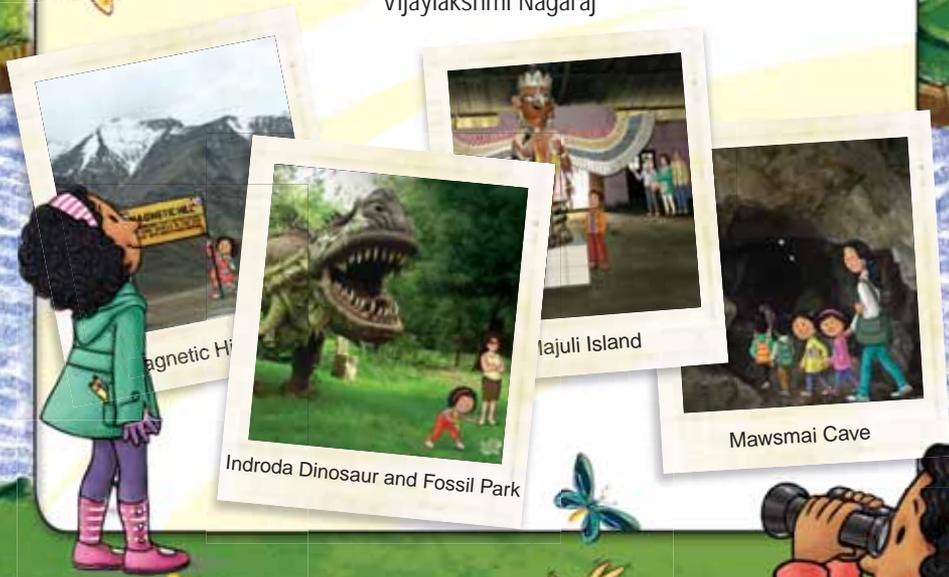


The Natural Wonders of India

Vijaylakshmi Nagaraj



Magnetic Hill

Indroda Dinosaur and Fossil Park

Rajuli Island

Mawsmai Cave



From the desk of Dr R K Pachauri

The vast terrain of India unfolds a diverse environment, which is unique, extraordinary, and beautiful. From the snow-clad Himalayas and the stark and rugged beauty of Ladakh to the Cardamom Hills in the Western Ghats, from the raw splendour of Kaziranga to the bare vastness of the Kutch wilderness in the West, nature has created some very unique and extraordinary regions that attract people to learn in amazement about them.

Our cities are growing rapidly into huge concentrations of human activity. Needless to say, this is happening at the cost of forests and other natural spaces. The use of toxic substances has posed dangers to several species of animals and birds, besides ruining many places that were endowed with nature's breathtaking beauty. To cite an example, a leopard recently sought shelter inside a shop in the Indian state of Odisha. This was a plain example of the confusion and mess that we have created by shrinking the territory which belonged to wildlife as against the ever-expanding human population in this country and the inevitable urbanization which has taken place at an accelerating pace.

Recent research by psychologists reveals that human beings experience the greatest happiness while in the midst of places replete with scenic beauty or in the company of nature. Urban areas, unfortunately, lack the beauty and richness of the natural environment. In order to make up for these, people often find retreat in places endowed with nature's bounty, eventually polluting them and leaving them bereaved of their beautiful legacy.

The Natural Wonders of India is a journey through 10 not-so-famous, but wonderful, places in India, travelled through the eyes of the twin sisters Reva and Sarayu. While having fun exploring the beauty of these mysterious locations and spreading awareness to the readers about their own country, these girls make sure that they don't disturb the magnificence of these places. I hope that the readers of this book receive the message contained in these pages and help Reva and Sarayu in conserving the rich heritage of the Natural Wonders of India.



R K Pachauri

Director-General, TERI

Chairman, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

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Magnetic Hills



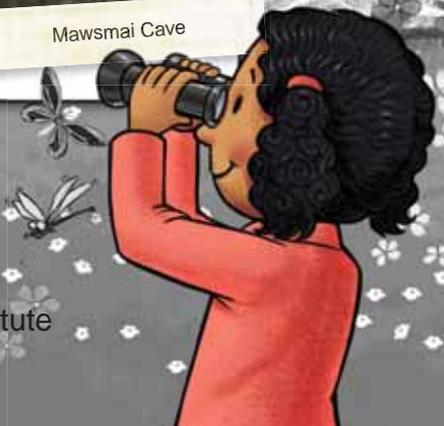
Majuli Island



Indroda Dinosaur and Fossil Park



Mawsmai Cave



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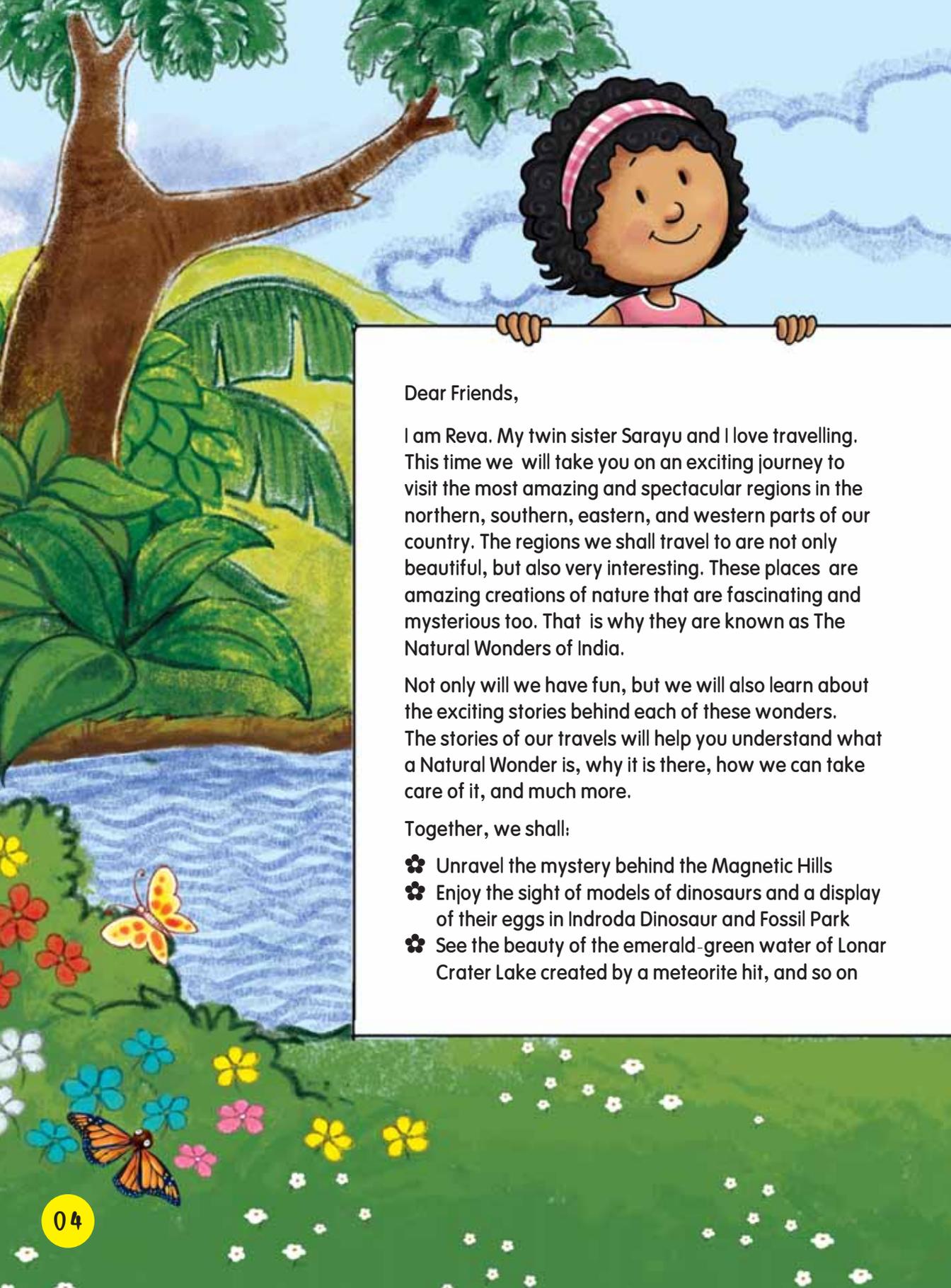
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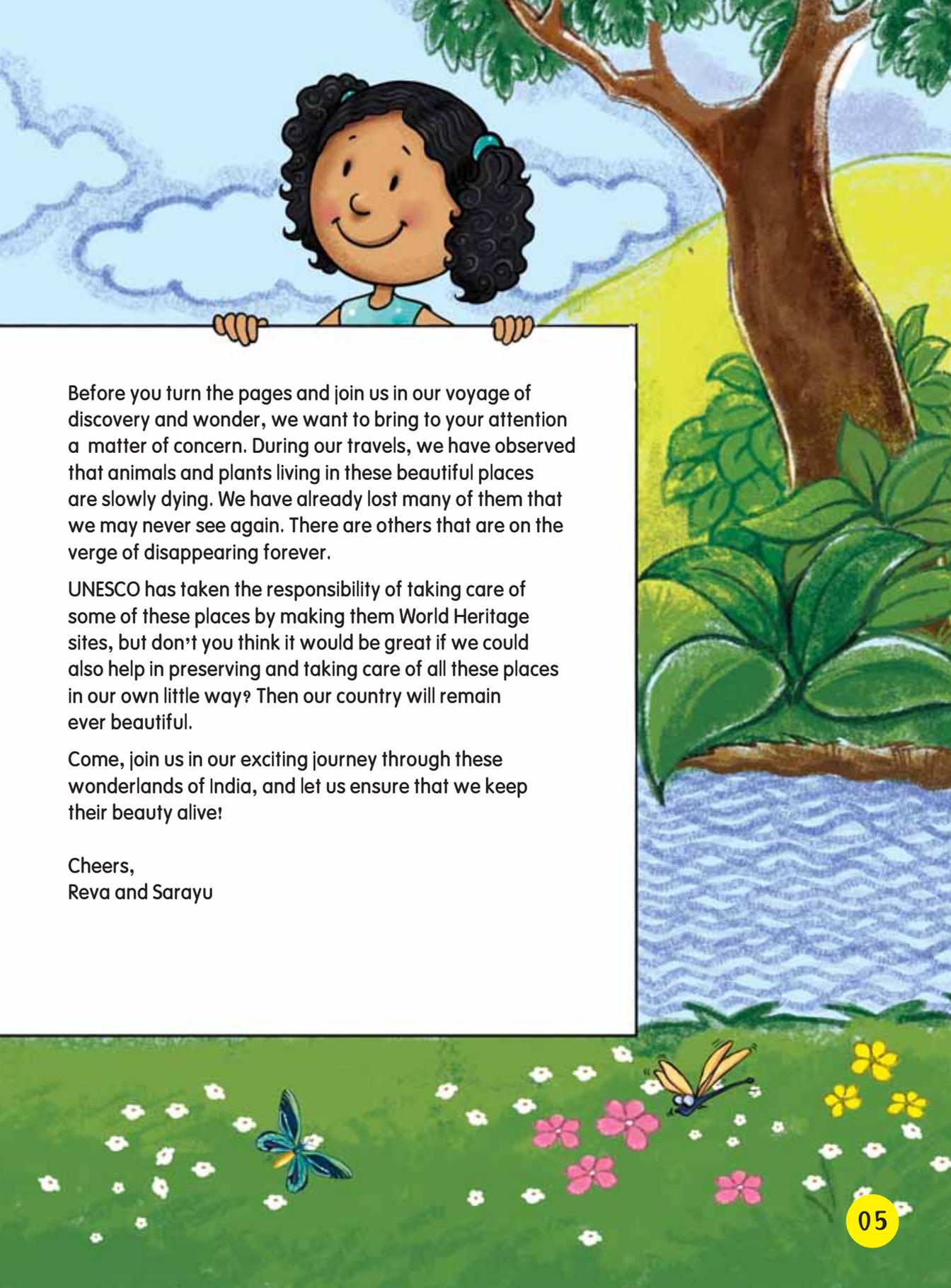
Dear Friends,

I am Reva. My twin sister Sarayu and I love travelling. This time we will take you on an exciting journey to visit the most amazing and spectacular regions in the northern, southern, eastern, and western parts of our country. The regions we shall travel to are not only beautiful, but also very interesting. These places are amazing creations of nature that are fascinating and mysterious too. That is why they are known as The Natural Wonders of India.

Not only will we have fun, but we will also learn about the exciting stories behind each of these wonders. The stories of our travels will help you understand what a Natural Wonder is, why it is there, how we can take care of it, and much more.

Together, we shall:

- ❁ Unravel the mystery behind the Magnetic Hills
- ❁ Enjoy the sight of models of dinosaurs and a display of their eggs in Indroda Dinosaur and Fossil Park
- ❁ See the beauty of the emerald-green water of Lonar Crater Lake created by a meteorite hit, and so on



Before you turn the pages and join us in our voyage of discovery and wonder, we want to bring to your attention a matter of concern. During our travels, we have observed that animals and plants living in these beautiful places are slowly dying. We have already lost many of them that we may never see again. There are others that are on the verge of disappearing forever.

UNESCO has taken the responsibility of taking care of some of these places by making them World Heritage sites, but don't you think it would be great if we could also help in preserving and taking care of all these places in our own little way? Then our country will remain ever beautiful.

Come, join us in our exciting journey through these wonderlands of India, and let us ensure that we keep their beauty alive!

Cheers,
Reva and Sarayu

Pangong Tso

Colonel Ram had planned an exciting summer vacation for his twin daughters Reva and Sarayu. The girls with their mother joined him in Leh, where he was posted.

“Leh, the capital of Ladakh, is a high plateau and is also called **Shangri-la**. It means a calm, beautiful place”, said Ram.

“No running, jumping, or hopping till you get used to the altitude”, said Anju.

“Why, Ma?” asked the twins.

“The air here has less oxygen. So, you can get **breathless** easily”, she replied.

“Tourists are asked to rest for the first 24 hours so that they don’t suffer from high-altitude sickness”, their father added.

“What kind of sickness is that?” Reva asked.





“You get headaches and have difficulty breathing. Also, you may not be able to sleep and eat”, Col. Ram explained.

Early next morning, they left by road to see a beautiful Natural **Wonder**.

“Where are we going, Papa?” Sarayu asked.

“Pangong Tso”, her father replied.

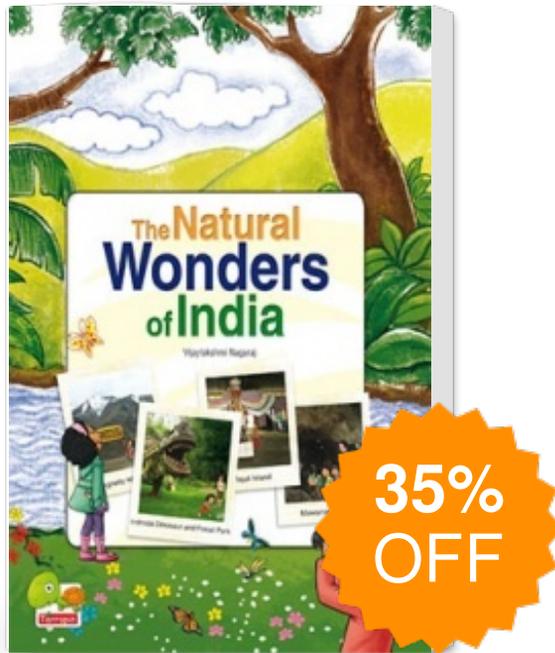
“And what is that?” asked Reva.

“*Tso* means lake and Pangong Tso is a 130 km-long lake, located at a height of 14,500 ft. One-third of the lake is in India and the rest extends into western Tibet”, he explained.

The six-hour journey, along a winding road, took them across Chang La, **one** of the **highest** motorable roads, to reach the Lake.



The Natural Wonders of India



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