

TODAY'S traveller

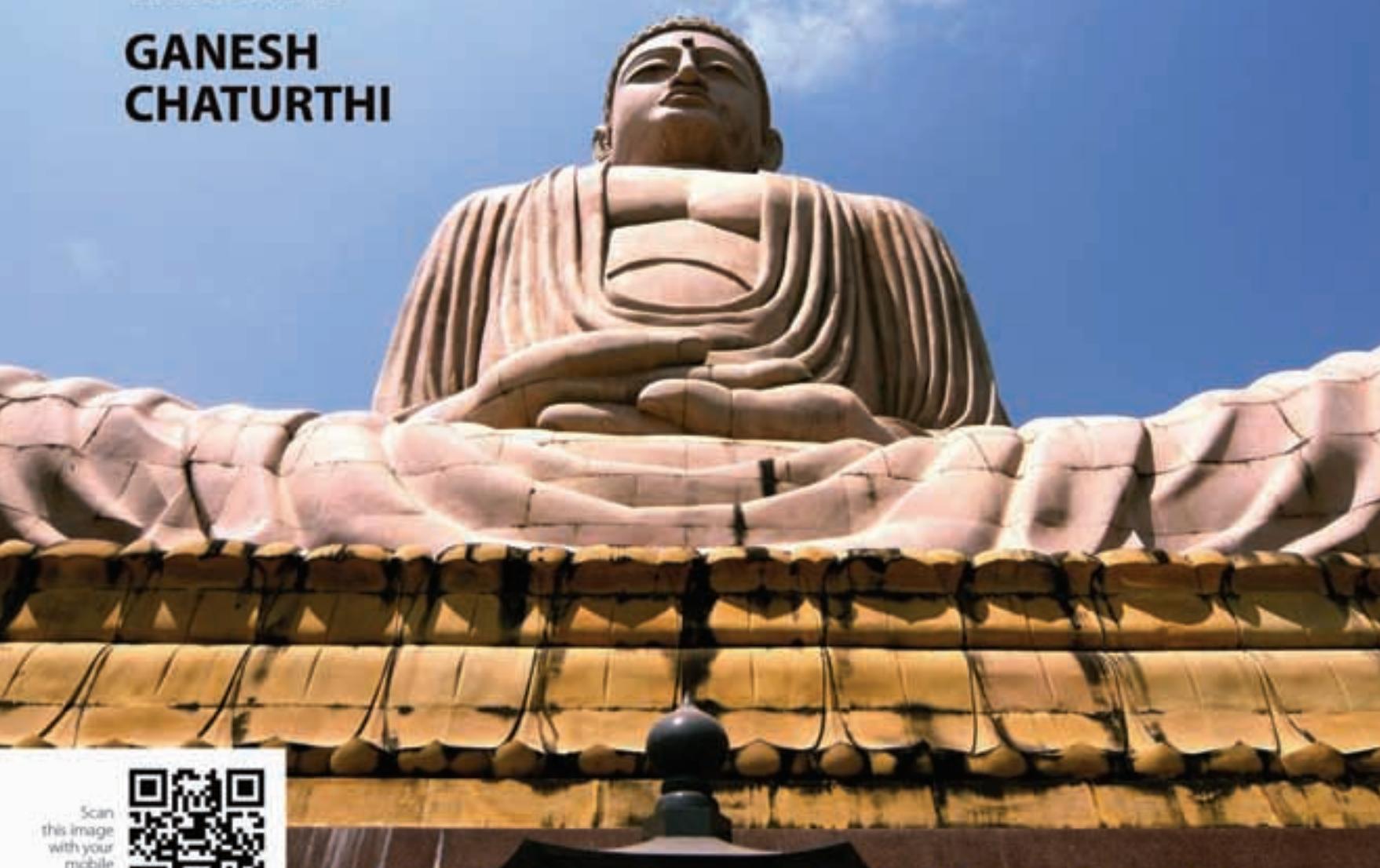
CORPORATE BUSINESS, MICE & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

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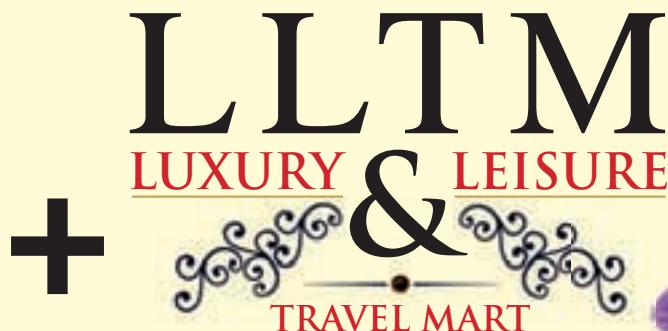


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CONDE

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Trending now

Take a look at the top trends of the modern times

Alluring Crowne

In conversation with, Greesh Bindra, Area General Manager – Northern region, IHG and General Manager, Crowne Plaza Greater Noida

Corporate jet-setters

Know where the corporate world goes for the perfect vacation

Aviation

SpiceJet launches 'Book Now, Pay Later' scheme

Turkish Airlines

Fly Turkish Airlines for a remarkable experience

Elegantly opulent

Stay at the Radisson Blu Alibaug to experience the best of leisure

Downing a good Scotch

Drinking scotch is an art, perfect it and know more about this great drink

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TODAY'S
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TRENDING NOW

Keep yourself at the helm of affairs as Today's Traveller takes you through a few classic trends that are sure to never go out of style

APPLE WATCH

Having taken the smart watch market by storm, the Apple Watch is sure to win many wrists and hearts. The watch is beautifully designed, comfortable to wear, available in different materials to suit most pockets and with a choice of straps that ensures it fits with most people's style. Fun features, unique communication methods and attractive design make this gizmo a 'must have' on everyone's list.



YOGA

Derived from the Sanskrit word 'yuj', Yoga means union of the individual consciousness or soul with the Universal Consciousness or Spirit. Yoga is a 5000 year old Indian body of knowledge. Though many think of yoga only as a physical exercise where people twist, turn, stretch, and breathe in the most complex ways, these are actually only the most superficial aspect of this profound science of unfolding the infinite potentials of the human mind and soul. The science of Yoga imbibe itself the complete essence of the Way of Life, including - Gyan Yoga or philosophy, Bhakti Yoga or path of devotional bliss, Karma Yoga or path of blissful action, and Raja Yoga or path of mind control.



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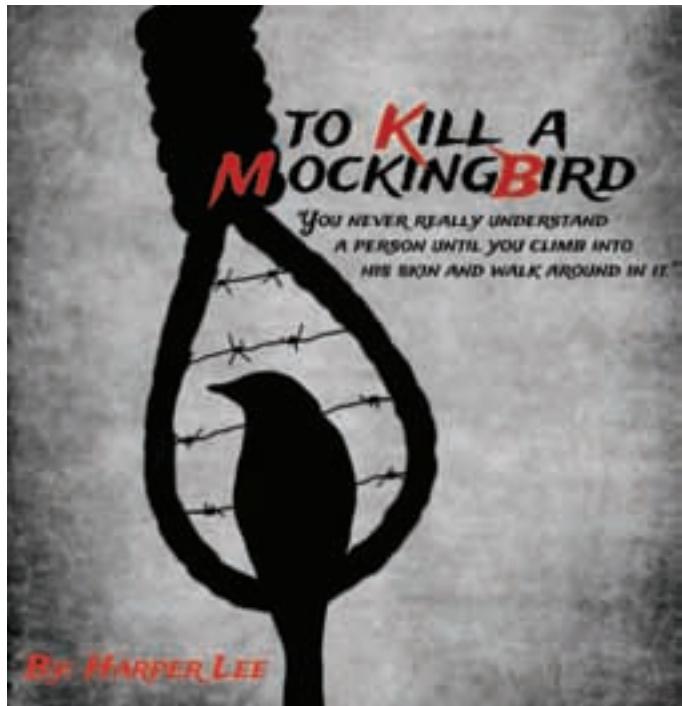
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BOOK: TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

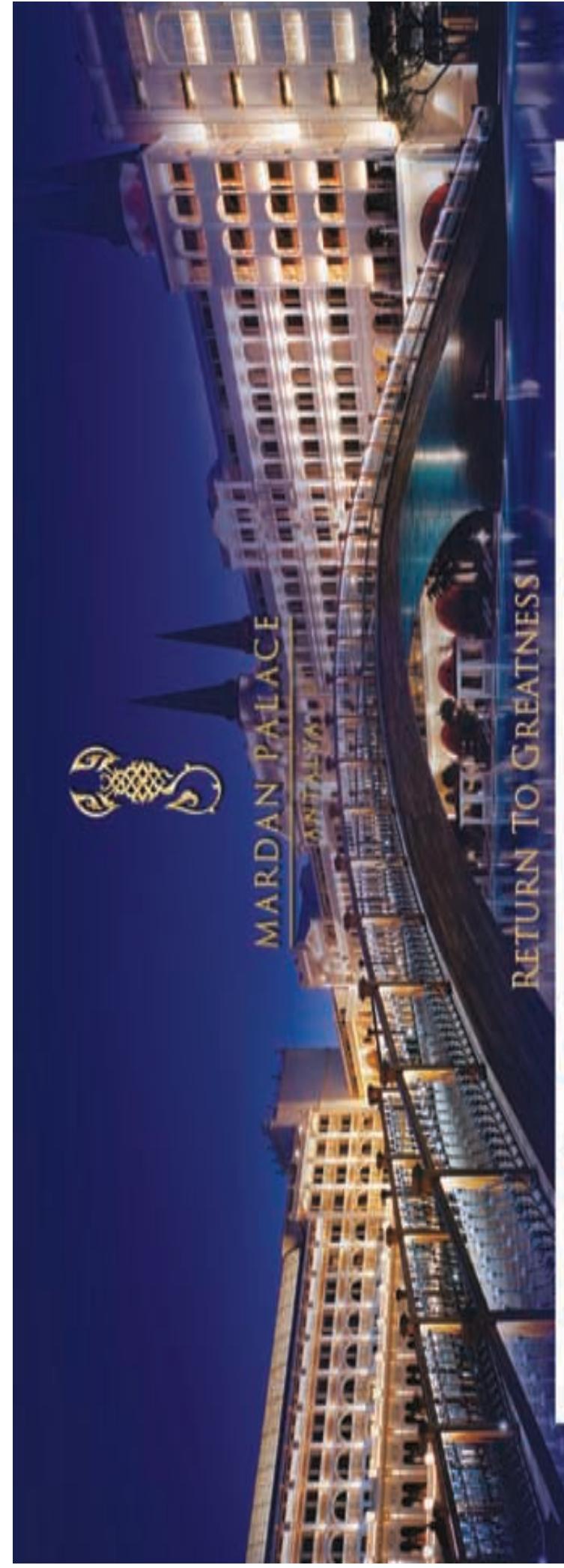
The unforgettable novel of a childhood in a sleepy Southern town and the crisis of conscience that rocked it, To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee, became both an instant bestseller and a critical success when it was first published in 1960. It went on to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1961 and was later made into an Academy Award-winning film, also a classic. Compassionate, dramatic, and deeply moving, To Kill A Mockingbird takes readers to the roots of human behaviour – to innocence and experience, kindness and cruelty, love and hatred, humour and pathos. Now with over 18 million copies in print and translated into forty languages, this regional story by a young Alabama woman claims universal appeal. Harper Lee always considered her book to be a simple love story. Today it is regarded as a masterpiece of American literature. One can also watch, To Kill a Mocking Bird on DVD. With Gregory Peck, John Megna and Frank Overton, the movie released in 1962 and is a classic must watch.



FITNESS TRACKERS

Getting into shape, losing weight, and moving more are tough goals to achieve. But an activity tracker can help. The moment you start to see for yourself how much exercise you do (or don't) get day-by-day and week-by-week, you'll become more aware of your habits and patterns, which is the first step to change. Even just that little bit of information can motivate you to start taking the stairs more or walking the dog an extra lap around the block. At the very least, it will make you more mindful of your present activity level. Some of the fitness tracekrs that one can try their hand at are Fitbit Flex; Withings Pulse; Fitbit One; Garmin Vivofit, Basis Peak; Jawbone UP24; Misfit Shine; Striiv Band; Samsung Gear Fit and Polar Loop among others.

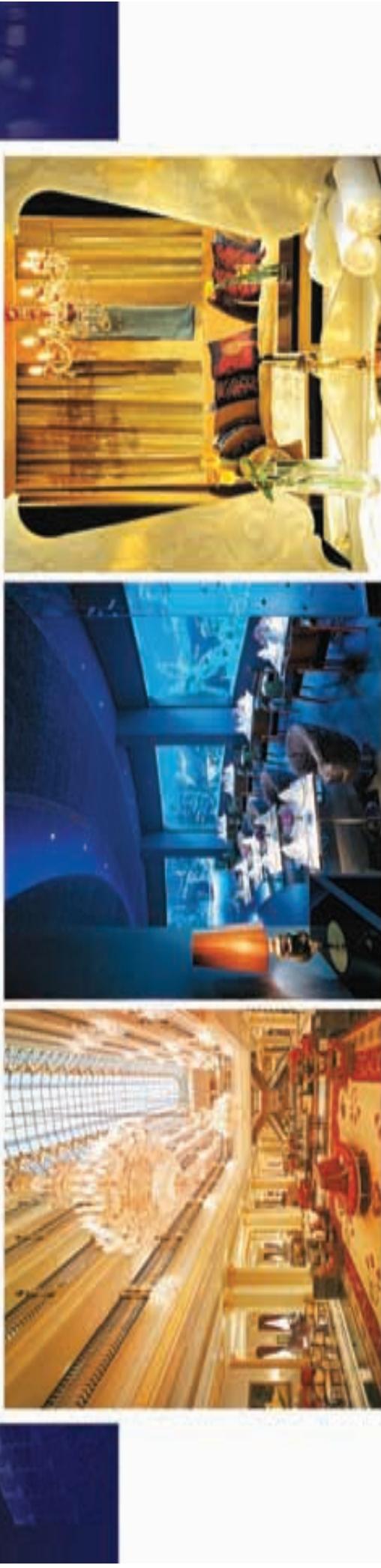




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CLIMATE CHECK

HERE IS A LIST OF 6 REALLY USEFUL FREE CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS APPS WHICH WILL ALWAYS KEEP YOU ON ALERT WHILE YOU ARE ON THE MOVE.

#CLIMATE

#Climate is a free and smart app. It uses social media as a platform to keep you informed about latest climate change and also allows you to share and act on those updates. If you care for mother earth and want to get into the action of contribution then this is a perfect app for you. The app needs a sign-in to access it fully and it is compatible with all the major social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter etc. Not only are you encouraged but this app also allows you to share the updates and stories with your social media contacts.

Platform (s):



CHASING ICE

This app showcases the efforts of famous photographer James Balog and the extreme Ice Survey to keep you informed about the status of disappearing glaciers and ice sheets. The app will give you a stunning audio visual experience and deliver stunning time lapse videos and photographs of the world's disappearing glaciers. So, if you are planning your next adventure on snow capped mountains and preparing to feel the cool icy breeze then you should keep this app handy. This app is also useful for people who love ice adventure and mountaineering.

Platform (s):



WWF TOGETHER

It is a must have app if you are a wildlife enthusiast. This app will let you know about WWF's (World Wildlife Fund) latest conservation projects through some stunning photographs and audio-visual presentations. The app will let you examine the impact of human activity and climate change on wildlife. The app maintains an exhaustive list of endangered species and provides informative data on the same. This app is a tool to remind us of our responsibility towards the resources which have direct impact on the climate.

Platform (s):



IMAGES OF CHANGE

NASA's Images of Change app is a wake-up call to humanity. It highlights the issue of climate change and other updates from around the world through vivid photographic presentations. This app is curated from NASA's Global Climate Change Website so it is a pretty serious app dealing with some serious issues. Through this app you can view retreat of the Muir Glacier at ground level. This app also lets you view other developments like the expansion of agriculture in the Saudi Arabian desert, and other places around the world.

Platform (s):



EARTH-NOW

This is another high power app developed by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory of NASA. Through this app you will be able to visualise the latest climate change data superimposed over a Google Earth-style 3D globe. This app also delivers time lapse videos along with information like Air temperature, Co2 levels, Sea level variance etc. Colour-coded legends are provided to indicate relative strength or weakness of an environmental condition. The resulting 3D model of the Earth may be rotated by a single finger stroke, and may also be zoomed in or out by pinching 2 fingers.

Platform (s):



JUST SCIENCE

The app illustrates the changes in Earth's temperature between 1800 to modern day compared to local averages between 1950 and 1980. It uses data fetched from Berkley Earth Surface Temperature study and also uses data from British Navigational logbook to modern meteorological stations. The app's interactive video map will let you watch the change in world temperatures since the industrial revolution. This is a pretty successful app and does not require any scientific knowledge to grasp the concept of climate change and its impact on earth.

Platform (s):

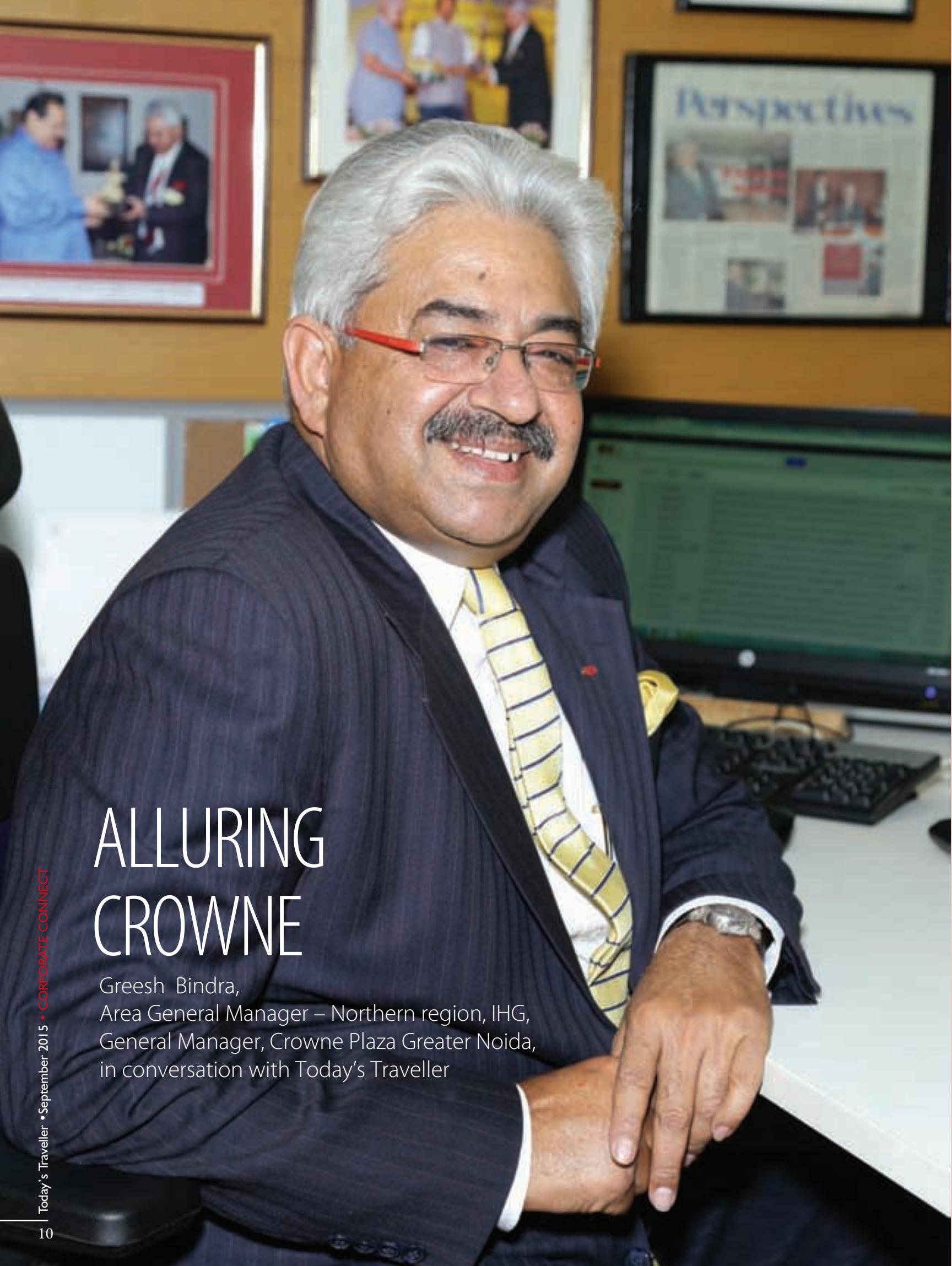


CORPORATE CONNECT



ALLURING CROWNE

Greesh Bindra,
Area General Manager – Northern region, IHG,
General Manager, Crowne Plaza Greater Noida,
in conversation with Today's Traveller



TT BUREAU

What is your hotel's corporate positioning?

Crowne Plaza Greater Noida is an upscale Business brand which is targeted to MICE events and a complete hotel solution for guests travelling to the business hub of Noida and Greater Noida. This is your preferred International brand for business, events and celebrations.

What are the facilities that your hotel offers for business and meetings?

With the largest meeting facility in Noida and Greater Noida. The hotel offers expansive and versatile venues that are ideal for conferences, conventions, meetings and corporate events. A standalone convention Centre adjoining the hotel building is also available for hire for major conventions. The hotel boasts 11 meeting rooms, two outdoor spaces totaling to almost 47,000sqft of banqueting space. An interesting fact about our hotel is that we are the only hotel in Delhi NCR which can provide up to 16 breakout rooms for the largest of conferences.

A dedicated Crowne Meetings Director is our brand hallmark, where a specialised team is attached to each event ensuring Meetings' success. With the newest technology, the hotel also provides state-of-the-art business tool for end to end business solutions.



What are the options for corporate visitors to entertain their guests?

Our Corporate visitors have a choice of up to six outlets to entertain their guests. A Chinese and Italian specialty – Chaobella, is ideal for a formal evening dinner, with handmade pastas and authentic regional cuisines.

For an informal entertainment – our all day dining Mosaic, offers a variety of cuisines to choose from. One can even consider holding a business meeting over a working lunch at our private dining room.

A quick rendezvous over a steaming cup of coffee is also an option at Mosaic, the pastry lounge.

The Connexions Bar, has a slightly groovy atmosphere to help you unwind from a hectic schedule. As the name suggests, this venue has a no-work policy,

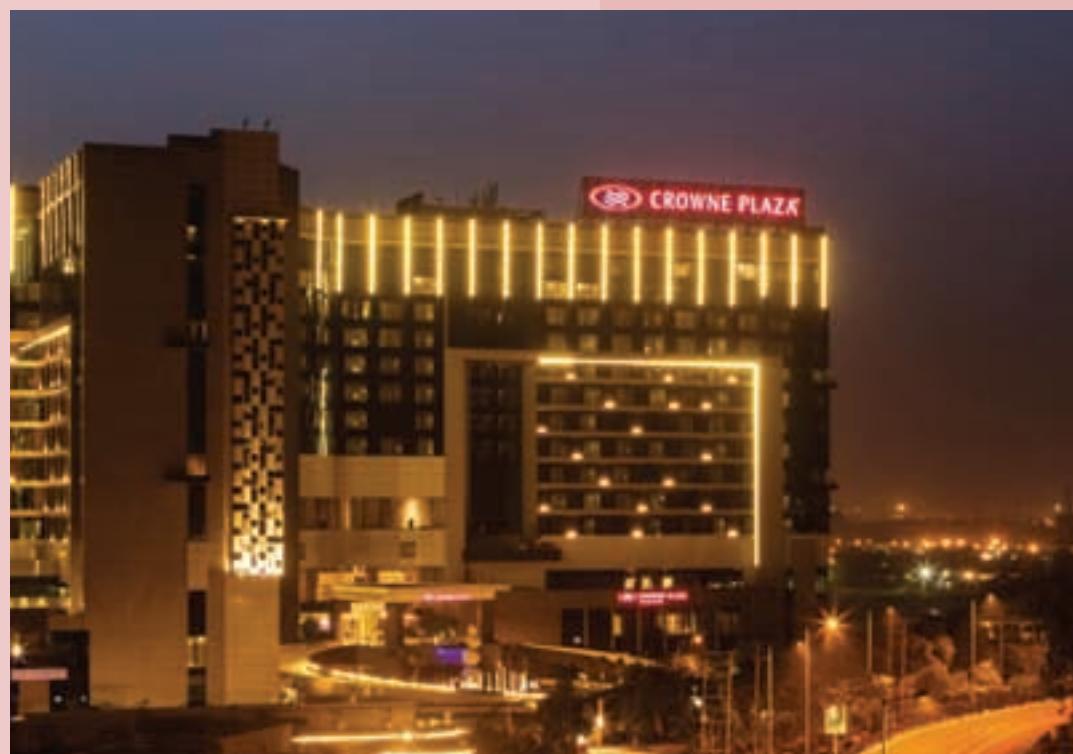
where social connections are made over a chug and a cheer. Outdoor options for a wine and dine situation is also available.

Coming up soon is our Belgian Beer Café, – the first of its kind in Delhi and also the renowned Spice Art, with some delectable North West Frontier cuisines.

What is your corporate outreach programme?

IHG Rewards Club is our worldwide loyalty programme – the first and the largest loyalty programme. This programme has some of the most unique benefits including no blackout dates, no point expiration and also we are the first to offer free WiFi to all our members.

On the same lines, IHG has its new loyalty programme for corporates bookings for business – a way for us to say thank you for choosing IHG Hotels.



CORPORATE JET-SETTERS



**KHUSHBU SAHAY
MANAGER – MARKETING,
TI INFOTECH PVT. LTD**

Q: Most memorable trip to any destination?

I have had very memorable trips to Thailand and Goa, they were by far the best and I really had a great time.

Q: You dream of going to

The beauty of the Bora Bora Island has always enchanted me. I have always wanted to visit this beautiful place, and I hope that I will.

Q: Favourite airline and why?

The Thai Airways is a great airline, and I love travelling with them. They have plenty of leg room and extremely friendly staff.

Q: Best hotel experience and why?

I simply love Orange County in Coorg. It's a green paradise that has excellent hospitality. I strongly recommend this to all the leisure travel freaks.

Q: A place you plan to visit again?

It has to be Goa!! It is very important to take a trip to Goa every year.

Q: A family vacation that stands out?

I am very fond of Ooty. I have been there a lot of times. Doddabetta, the highest mountain in the Nilgiri hills was an overwhelming experience.

Q: Your best holiday with friends?

It was a trip to Sat Tal, a group of freshwater lakes in the lower Himalayan range. We all had a great time Trekking, Kayaking, Rock climbing, Rappelling and River crossing. We made some great memories there for sure.

Q: Great food you enjoyed and where?

I loved Goan fish curry, Hyderabadi Biryani from Paradise and the Hyderabad House.

Q: What to watch out for while travelling?

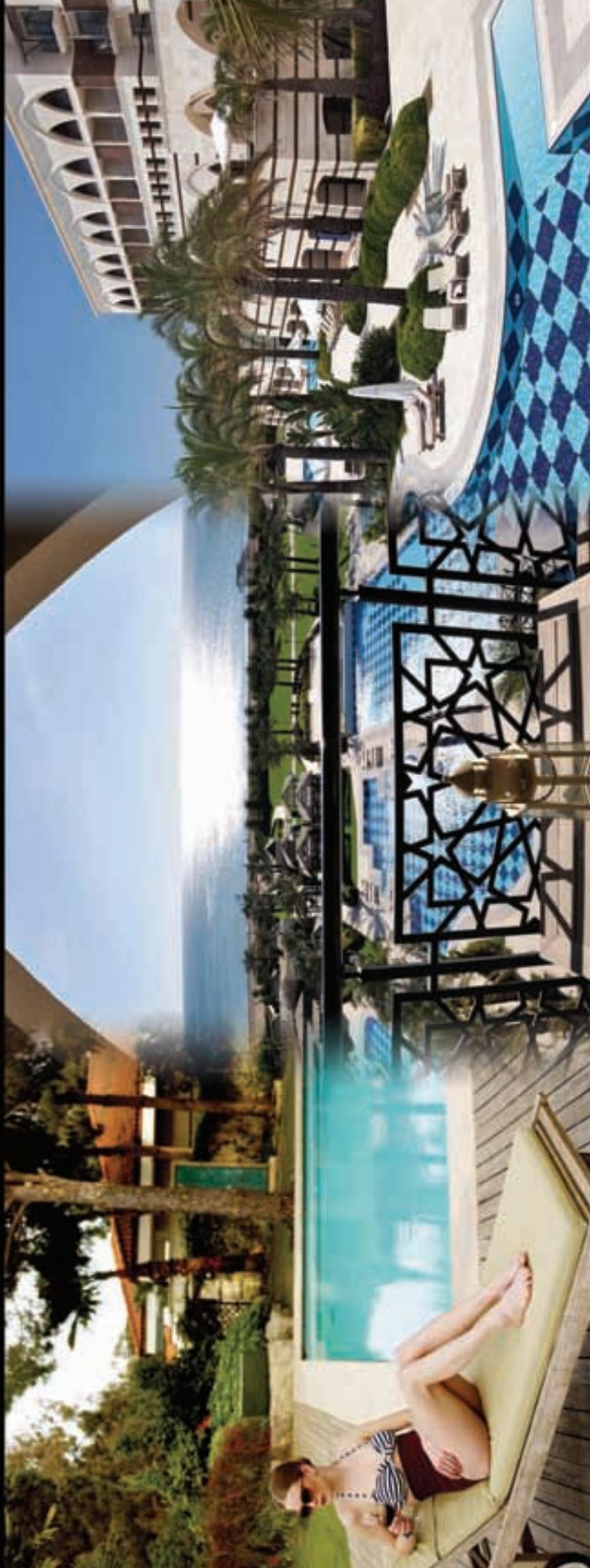
Healthcare and money traps. It is very important to always carry some basic medicines and keep a track of your finances.

Q: As a travel buyer, what's your philosophy?

As a traveller I am always looking for the best service possible. When I experience good service, it delights me. So I always look for the best of services.



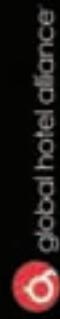
Kempinski Hotel
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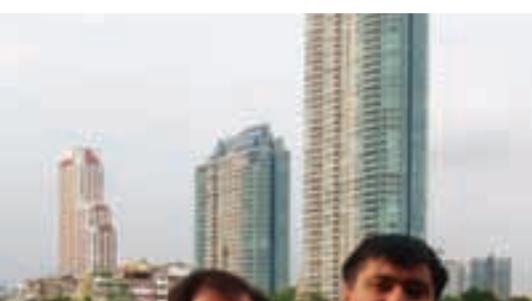
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CORPORATE JET-SETTERS



RAJPAL SINGH
HEAD – HR & FINANCE
RAJASTHAN PRIME STEEL PROCESSING PVT. LTD

Q: Most memorable trip to any destination?

A: I had quite a nice time in Japan, really liked the people and the place; very hospitable.

Q: You dream of going to?

I would like to go to New Zealand and Greece, as both these countries have some very beautiful places.

Q: Favourite airline and why?

For an international journey, I prefer Lufthansa, it has excellent hospitality. For domestic journey I always prefer to travel by Indigo Airlines just because of its on-time departure and arrival at destination.

Q: Best hotel experience and why?

I have had great experiences at the Hyatt Grand Cypress Hotel at Orlando, USA. It was one great trip.

Q: A place you plan to visit again?

I would like visit Japan once again, because I had loads of fun there. I would love to go back.

Q: A family vacation that stands out?

It was years ago, I have very faint memory of it, but what I can recall is that I was very happy with my parents, it was a beautiful

place. For some reason, despite the fact that it's been so many years, I cannot let go of that feeling.

Q: Your best holiday with friends?

There was this trip we had taken during our college days, and it was spontaneous. It was at this hill town in north India, a small village that had a beautiful mountain facing resort. We had the best of time there.

Q: Great food you enjoyed and where?

I think my Japan trip has been a revelation in terms of food! I kind of liked the Japanese cuisine, and I will not forget the taste of sushi, it's different, and I enjoyed it.

Q: What to watch out for while travelling?

It is important to eat from hygienic places, it is also important to drink clean water when travelling. Above all, it is most important to experience the culture of the place.

Q: As a travel buyer, what's your philosophy?

As a travel buyer one should always get souvenirs that hold some meaning, something that is indigenous to the place. Also, when shopping, we must look out for reasonable places, and try to get the best deals.

AVIATION



TURKISH AIRLINES STARTS ADDITIONAL VENICE-ISTANBUL ROUTE



Turkish Airlines, awarded the "Best European Airline" by Skytrax survey of 2015, for the fifth year in a row, has recently announced that it will keep on reinforcing its presence in the Northeast of Italy, increasing the flight frequencies to Istanbul by offering a new route. As well as the already existing 24 weekly flights connecting the Venezia Marco Polo Airport to the Istanbul Atatürk Airport, from August 24th the air carrier inaugurates a new connection to the Sabiha Gökçen Airport, located in the Asian side of the city. This new flight will be operated daily, thus increasing to 31 the total number of weekly connections between Venice and Istanbul.

400 AAI OFFICIALS PARTICIPATE IN 'RUN AGAINST DRUG ABUSE'



Appreciating the need of the hour to prevent Drug Abuse in the youth, this year Airports Authority of India (AAI) too has come up in a big way to participate in the event as "Main Partner" with nearly 400 AAI officials participating in the RUN under the leadership of RK Srivastava, Chairman, AAI and Anuj Aggarwal, Member (HR), AAI. AAI's enthusiasm & visibility during the event was appreciated by one and all.

The Run was flagged off by Thaawarchand Gehlot, Union Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment, RK Srivastava, IAS, Chairman, Anuj Aggarwal, Member (HR) and other dignitaries including Dr Sunita Godara, Director - Health Fitness Trust, the coordinating NGO partner for the event. At the end of the Run, the winners were given prizes and mementos for their meritorious achievements.

THE 'AIR FRANCE MANISH ARORA CONTEST' RETURNS

After the overwhelming response, the "Air France Manish Arora Contest" returns for the fifth consecutive season offering aspiring designers yet another exciting opportunity to engage and learn first-hand from the noted designer. This time, the contest will be carried out in association with an official media partner, Verve Magazine, which celebrates 20 years in December.

Max Smits, Air France-KLM General Manager- Indian Subcontinent said that, "We are proud to launch season five and offer a platform to aspiring designers with India's leading designer Manish Arora that helps nurture young talent in the country. The contest has received tremendous

response in the last four seasons and we are looking forward to yet another exciting season of enthusiastic participation."

Manish Arora shared, "I am delighted to be associated with Air France India through this contest, which not only offers a fantastic opportunity for the aspirants of fashion industry to showcase their creativity but also allows them to witness the latest in trends in the midst of the fashion capital of the world. The previous four seasons have resulted in discovery of some interesting talents who have contributed to my collection in the past and I am looking forward to the same in future."



SPICEJET LAUNCHES 'BOOK NOW, PAY LATER' SCHEME



SpiceJet, recently announced the launch of 'Book Now, Pay Later,' a convenient Equated Monthly Instalment (EMI) scheme. This offer allows passengers to save significantly (up to 70 per cent interest cost reduction) on deferred/delayed payment interest costs relative to traditional credit card fees. This is valid on India-issued credit cards of Axis Bank, HSBC Bank, Kotak Bank, and Standard Chartered Bank (other banks will be added shortly). Passengers holding credit cards issued by these banks can pay as per their own preference of schedule that may vary between 3 and 12 months, at interest rates in the range of 12-14 per cent, compared to typical credit card interest rates in excess of 36 per cent. For example, for a ticket costing Rs 5,000, this scheme can result in savings of over Rs 1,000 in terms of interest charges relative to credit cards for a 12-month deferred payment plan. SpiceJet's Chief Marketing Officer, Debojo Maharshi said, "Providing customer convenience and enhancing options through unique travel schemes and offers are central to SpiceJet's philosophy. We are confident that this scheme will make air travel more economically-viable than ever before for those customers who want to travel now, but pay later." The facility is available for bookings made through the SpiceJet website. In case of airfare refunds, customers will have to bear the costs of the interest rate already billed for that particular booking.

JET AIRWAYS SPREADS HAPPINESS WITH 'FLIGHT OF FANTASY' INITIATIVE

Jet Airways, India's premier international airline, fulfilled the dreams of more than 130 children by enabling them to experience the joy of flying on board its unique 'Flight of Fantasy'. The special guests had a memorable experience as the state of the art Boeing 737-800 aircraft took off from the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), New Delhi.

Jet Airways partnered with Teach For India, Save The Children India, YouWeCan and SDMC Primary School to give wings to children's dreams. These organisations are engaged in the development, education and care of children from less-privileged sections of society.

Cramer Ball, Chief Executive Officer, Jet Airways said, "The 'Flight of Fantasy' is our humble contribution towards making a positive impact on the minds and lives of these children. The smiles that lit up their faces during the flight is our true reward. The 'Flight of Fantasy' is in keeping with Jet Airways' focus on supporting community initiatives related to education and development of children. We thank our partners Indian Oil, Taj SATS, GMR and Green Gold Animation for supporting this special flight."

Meghna Rakshit, Communications Director, Teach For India, said: "We are very excited with the opportunity to have our children participate in the Jet Airways 'Flight of Fantasy'. We believe that an excellent education for all children is a combination of exposure and access to the world around them, values and mindsets, and academic rigor. This experience has given our children exposure to the airline industry and instilled in them a sense of possibility and wonder."

TIGERAIR TO DEBUT IN LUCKNOW



Tigerair, one of the leading Singapore-based budget carriers announced the launch of new non-stop service between Singapore to Lucknow. Starting from 3rd December 2015, Tigerair will be the only airline providing non-stop flights between Changi International Airport and Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport thrice a week. The flights to Lucknow will be available three days a week operating on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday.

Tigerair already flies to five Indian cities in South - Chennai, Bangalore, Trichy, Hyderabad and Kochi. The addition of the Lucknow route, will mark Tigerair's foray into North India.

"Lucknow is our first destination in our route map from North India. We hope that the direct flights from Lucknow to Singapore will be helpful to boost tourism between the two countries." said Teh Yik Chuan, Sales and Marketing Director for Tigerair Singapore.

JET AIRWAYS SPREADS HAPPINESS WITH 'FLIGHT OF FANTASY' INITIATIVE

I Prabhakara Rao, CEO, Delhi International Airport Private Limited, said: "We are proud to partner with Jet Airways in this very noble cause of making the dreams of children come alive. I see a lot of smiles here today. Having these special children take a flight might just ignite a generation of future flight attendants, pilots and engineers. On behalf of the GMR Group, I would like to convey my best wishes to the teams from Jet Airways and Delhi International Airport for working together on this Flight of Fantasy."



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HOSPITALITY



ELEGANTLY OPULENT

The Radisson Blu Resort & Spa Alibaug complements the romantic hues of the beach town of Alibaug

TT BUREAU

Radisson Blu Resort & Spa Alibaug is the region's first International Upper Upscale Five Star resort. The resort stands surrounded by magnificent settings of the Sahyadri Ranges, is located on the banks of the Vaishvi lake amidst picturesue flora and ethnic surroundings. Spread on an area of 16 acres. Amidst manicured landscapes, interspersed with water bodies, the property exudes sheer opulence amidst relaxed elegance. Adorned with Sri Lankan architecture and Thai Balinese Interiors, the property exudes sheer opulence and a relaxed elegance.

WELL-APPOINTED ROOMS AND SERVICES

The resort features different accommodation categories to choose from, a combination of Rooms, Suites, Duplex Villas, Spa Villas and Top Suites. All Rooms offer complimentary internet facility. The resort also features five-different meeting areas to conduct an offsite or a conference.

The perfectly appointed 156 rooms include the most sought after Lake-View Duplex Villas, Executive and Deluxe Spa Villas and the Top Suite. An array of Food and Beverage options and an assortment of acclaimed facilities and services catering to holidaying, conferencing, wellness and celebrations confer the resort its originality and individuality.

Guests are spoilt for choice at the Radisson Blu Resort & Spa Alibaug, they can choose from one of the many resort venues like the Pool Side, Mango Deck, Lawn, Courtyard, Razz Ma Tazz Terrace, to host a private event, cocktails or team building activities. Alternatively, guests can enjoy a live piano recital at the Piano Bar & Lounge every evening or shake a leg at At Razz Ma

Tazz (the state of the art discotheque) at the resort; enjoy indoor games at Time Out; swim at the Olympic size Swimming Pool or spend the evening at the Thinking Room or just go back in history reading Coffee Table Books at the Library, and not to forget the kids, Wonder world (Toddler Zone), is there to keep them busy.

DELECTABLE FARE

Aparanta, the all-day dining option, presents bountiful spreads along with multi-cuisine à la carte recommendations from the Mediterranean, Oriental, Continental and Indian fare. Kokum & Spice, showcases original ingredients and authenticity of food preparation from the Raigad stretch, Alibaug to Goa, it adds a different dimension to costal cuisine. The relaxed elegance at the Lounge Bar, the discernng opulence at the Piano Bar and the tranquil aura at the Pool Bar, combined with the finest spirits, cigars and single malts, fittingly harmonise the gourmet delights at the property.

Radisson Blu Resort & Spa Alibaug, also takes pride in pairing ideal meeting venues with immaculate services. Be it exclusive Board Meetings, Conferencing or Corporate Celebrations, every event is made special and is poised to leave indelible impressions on the guest.

Be it a formal business meeting, a brainstorming session, a strategy break out, or an incentive to reward top performers, the resort has everything required to make the event a resounding success. Perhaps one of the most unique aspects here is the availability of beautiful outdoor venues that lend a touch of class to any event. Truly, this is business combined with pleasure that also satisfies guests' senses.

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DOWNING A GOOD SCOTCH

Follow these few simple rules and master the art of drinking Scotch



TT BUREAU

In English folk music, John Barleycorn is the personification of barley and the alcoholic beverages made from it. The legend of John Barleycorn has been immortalised by poet Robert Burns who in the year 1782 re-wrote the fascinating verses that explained the process barley goes through in order to transform into alcohol. In the modern world, the legend of John Barleycorn is much forgotten, what remains today is the intrinsic art of drinking the age old reserves that the world so delicately calls, Scotch. Drinking Scotch is an art, and just like the practice of any art form, here are five essential things all partakers should know.

Scotch is popularly known as "water of life." The first recorded reference of the modern gentleman's drink is found in the Scottish Exchequer Rolls of 1494.

History has it that Scotland's King James IV had purchased whiskey from the local barber when he had visited Dundee in 1506. This rather ordinary piece of tale from history holds significance because of the fact that in 1505, the Guild of Surgeon Barbers in Edinburgh was granted a monopoly over the manufacture of scotch, or what they called, "aqua vitae" – a fact that reflects the spirits perceived medicinal properties as well as the medicinal talents of the barbers.

Scotch whiskey grew over the next several centuries and survived taxes, government regulation, and smuggling to become a commercial industry in the 1700s. Soon, the growth of scotch had a raise as Coffey still was produced to give it the smoothness. Later, the French wine and cognac industry was nearing destruction at the hand of the Phylloxera bug in 1880, thus ensuring the smooth sail of the sotch industry.

Traditionally, Scottish distilleries have been grouped into regions. The official whisky regions are Lowlands, Highlands, Speyside, Campbeltown and Islay.

THERE IS NO 'CORRECT' WAY OF DRINKING SCOTCH

Some like it with water, which can open up a whisky beautifully. How much water to add is a matter of taste. Some like it on the rocks : the more ice the better (to prevent the ice from melting too quickly), which creates a crisp and clean whisky experience. Or, you could simply make yourself a whisky cocktail.

IT'S A THREE-STEP PROCESS

- **AROMA:** Swirl the whisky around the glass and take in the aromas as they are released. Don't poke your nose straight into the glass, as all you'll pick up is alcohol.
- **TASTE:** Take a nice, long sip and let the whisky feel its way around your entire mouth before swallowing.
- **FINISH:** A good whisky should linger like a fond memory, which you can still feel and taste long afterwards.

YOU NEED A GOOD SETUP

Using good glassware is important. If you don't have proper whisky glasses, then use wine or champagne glasses. Having water on hand is also important, not only to ensure responsible drinking, but also because adding a dash of water can help release the flavour of your Scotch.

SINGLE MALTS AND BLENDS

A single malt Scotch is made from 100 per cent barley, which comes from a single distillery, and is traditionally double distilled and aged for at least three years, although

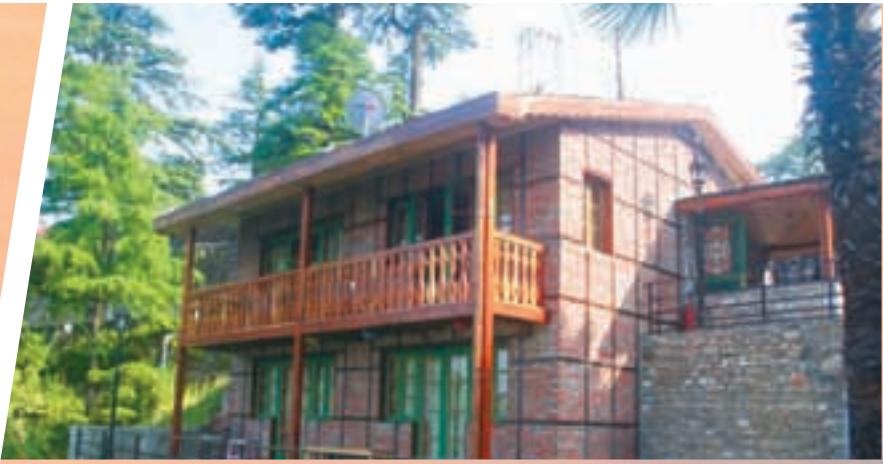


most single malts are released only when they are 10 years old or more. A blended whisky is a blend of single malt and grain whiskys (made from wheat or corn), the youngest of which must be aged for at least three years.

If the idea of a straight-up whisky is too much to handle at first, why not mix it in a cocktail? When making a whisky cocktail, it's important to use a whisky that can stand on its own against other flavours.



ROKEBY RESIDENCES: MOUNTAIN HOMES



The beauty of Landour, Mussoorie, is best experienced through Rokeby Manor's charming old homes for holidaymakers

TT BUREAU

Mussoorie, they say, is the Queen of the Hills. The town of Landour, set 1,500 ft up the ridge, is her lustrous crown, and Rokeby Manor built in 1840, is the jewel in that crown. Situated just 35km from the state capital at Dehradun, where the foothills meet the plains of Uttarakhand, Rokeby Manor & Residences make an easy excursion from Delhi, and a much-needed retreat to a finer, simpler past. For nearly 175 years, the elaborate stone house has watched the town's history unfold. But it was not until the Mars Group completed renovations in 2010 that Rokeby Manor was restored to its original glory. In 2015, Rokeby Manor won the Certificate of Excellence and was also one of Top 15 Hill Station hotels in India as awarded by tripadvisor.

Originally built by the British as an army cantonment at the edge of the Himalayas, Landour has retained its romantic, British-era charm better than perhaps any other hill station in North India. Original stone walls, charming nooks, and wooden floors

and roof beams have all been carefully incorporated into the hotel's 12 rustic rooms and suites reminiscent of English country lodges.

Rokeby Manor earlier this year launched Rokeby Residences, an array of beautiful mountain holiday homes in the heart of Landour.

DELIGHTFUL STAYS

Bothwell Bank House, a home away from home that has retained its 19th century architecture and the interiors provide a historical charm with original fireplaces, exposed wooden beams, wooden floors and natural stone that contributes to the place's welcoming environment.

Bothwell Bank Cottage, overlooking the stunning Himalayan range, is a charming small apartment house, an authentic stone clad mountain log cabin with a knotty pine wood décor which has all the comforts of a home.

With interiors inspired by a Scandinavian folklore, Pine Tree Lodge, is a two-storied lodge that is simple, stylish and colourful with patchwork-covered stools, vintage

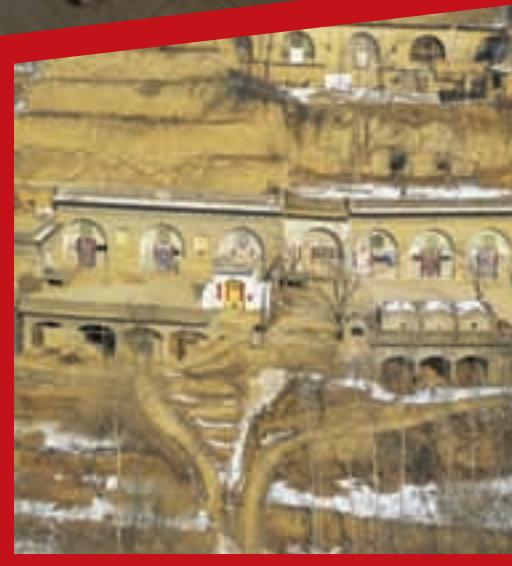
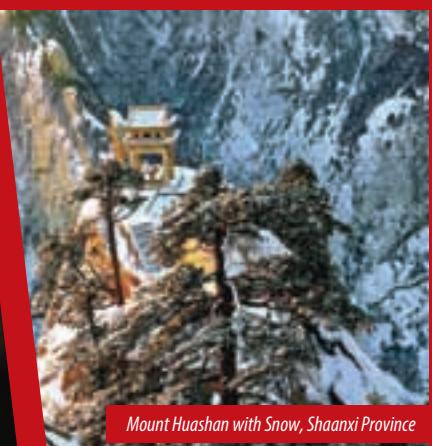
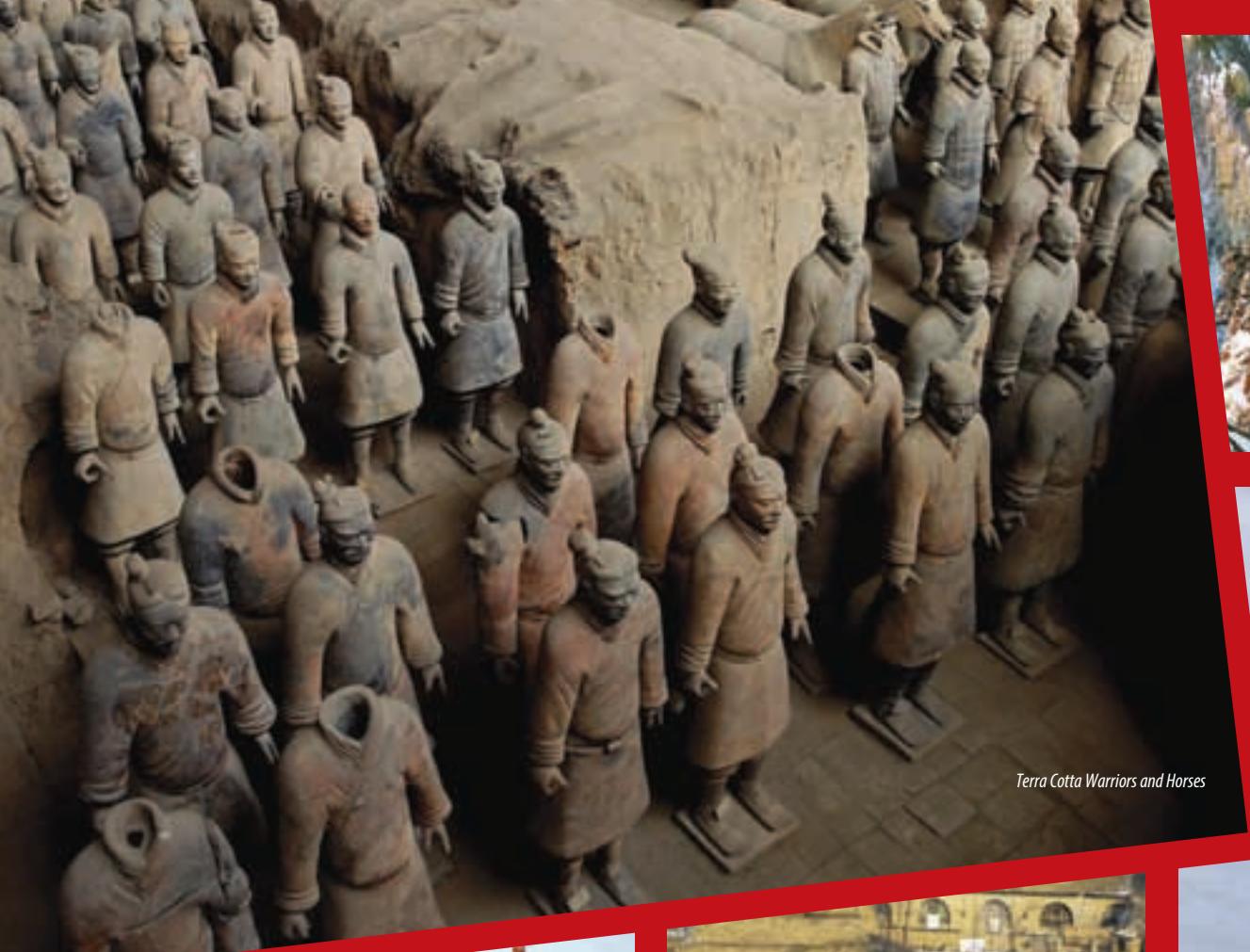
lamps and traditional finish artwork on the walls. The rooms have panoramic windows that overlook the surrounding mountain ranges and are ideal for a delightful escape to experience pure serenity.

Shamrock Cottage, is a quirky authentic house built in the 1800s, full of character with many of its original features still retained. A cozy hideaway nestled in a valley and surrounded by hills, is an ideal place to unwind. Tabor Lodge, on the other hand, is a two storied house with a separate apartment on each floor along with a tree house that sits out for enjoying beautiful views; a perfect blend of rustic charm and comfort for a wonderful escape from modern life.

Quiet streets, charming cafes (Clocktower Cafe, also owned by the Mars Group, is a favorite in town), antique shops and meandering mountain paths are what make Landour beautiful. From a relaxing base in Landour's scenic townscape you can head farther ahead for hikes along mountain trails and multi-day excursions into the hills for a majestic view of the high peaks.

EXPLORER





SHAANXI: A CHARISMATIC DESTINATION

A 'natural history museum,' the Shaanxi region stands as a glorious proof of China's rich heritage

Shaanxi Province (Shan or Qin for short) is an inland region located in the middle reaches of the Yellow River. It is one of the cradles of Chinese civilizations and has a total area of 205,800sq.km, or roughly 2.1 percent of China's total area. The railway distance between Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi and Beijing, the national capital of China, is about 1200 km.

This province has different types of climate from North to South: Temperate Subarid, Temperate Monsoon and Subtropical Monsoon. Its average annual temperature is 7-16°C, and average annual rainfall 340-1,240 mm.

HISTORY

Shaanxi is one of the few birthplaces of primitive man. It has been proved by archaeological evidence that the Lantian Man lived on earth about 650,000 to 800,000 years ago. The Emperor Qin Shi Huang Mausoleum Terracotta Army pits currently on display are truly a huge underground treasure house of works of sculptural art created by the working people more than 2000 years ago. Shaanxi is one of the earliest regions in China to engage in exchanges with the outside world. Starting in the Western Han Dynasty (202 BC-9 AD), Xi'an, called Chang'an back



Waist Drum, Shaanxi Province

then, had conducted frequent exchanges with many foreign countries. In fact, the famed ancient overland, "Silk Road," starts from Chang'an. Xi'an played a vital role in promoting China's economic and cultural exchanges with Southwest Asian countries and European countries during the ancient times. During the Tang Dynasty (618 AD-907 AD), Chang'an's exchanges with foreign countries became more active.

CULTURE

Shaanxi is a major culture-rich province. The glorious history of the Zhou, Qin, Han, and Tang Dynasties once made Shaanxi's culture the mainstream of Chinese civilizations. In fact, cultures originating in the Qinling Mountains and Yellow River have been largely preserved. To this day, the people of Shaanxi still cannot help expressing pride in the province's rich cultural heritage. The numerous cultural and historic heritage sites invariably show the completeness, richness and supremacy of cultural relics which witnessed the unprecedented prosperity of ancient China. Being the "Natural History Museum," Shaanxi has endless poetry and stories to offer. The profound and splendid aura of the Chinese civilization has subconsciously evoked a sense of nostalgia and meditation deep inside everyone who has ever visited Shaanxi.

ATTRACTI0NS

Terra Cotta Warriors and Horses: They are the most significant archeological excavations of the 20th century. The Museum of Qin Terra Cotta Warriors and Horses has become landmarks in all visitors' itineraries to Shaanxi. Life-size terracotta figures of warriors and horses arranged in battle formations are the star features at the museum. They are replicas of what the imperial guard looked like in the days of pomp and vigour.

Xi'an City Wall: Zhu Yuanzhang, the first Emperor of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) enlarged the city wall, built initially during the Tang Dynasty (618 AD-907 AD), creating the modern Xi'an City Wall. It's the most complete city wall that has survived in China, as well as being one of the largest ancient military defensive systems in the world.

Big Wild Goose Pagoda (Dayan Pagoda): As the symbol of the old-line Xian, it is a well-preserved ancient building and a holy place for Buddhists. It is located in the southern suburb of Xian City, about 4km (2.49 miles) from the downtown area of Xi'an. Standing in the Da Ci'en Temple complex, it attracts numerous visitors for its fame in Buddhism and its simple but appealing style of construction.

Mt. Huasha: Situated in Huayin City, it is 120km (about 75 miles) from Xi'an. It is famous for its natural vista of steep and narrow paths, precipitous crags and a high mountain range. It is also home to several influential Taoist temples, where many emperors of past dynasties took part in Taoist activities and sacrificed to the god of the mountain, making it a holy land of Taoism.

Hukou Waterfalls: The Yellow River is China's mother river. In its basin, one the country's greatest attraction – Hukou Waterfalls, a glistening pearl in the middle reaches of the Yellow River. It is the only magnificent yellow waterfall in the world and the second biggest waterfall in China after Huangguoshu Waterfall.

TRAFFIC

In Shaanxi, the cities equipped with airports include Xi'an, Yanan, Yulin, Ankang and Hanzhong, in which the Xi'an Xianyang International Airport is the largest airport in Northwestern China. Xi'an Xianyang International Airport has direct flights to over a dozen large- and medium-sized cities, such as Beijing, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Tianjin and Haikou.

Xi'an connects many top tourist cities in China by such railway lines as Lianyungang-Lanzhou Railway, Xi'an-Ankang Railway, Nanjing-Xi'an Railway, Xi'an-Huxian Railway, Baotou-Xi'an Railway, etc.

Besides the airways and railways, the tourist cities in Shaanxi also boast the convenience of express ways and highways.



LIFE IS A BEACH



The beautiful and charming beaches of Karnataka are perfect destinations for tourists

TT BUREAU

Atapestry of cultures, Karnataka is a vibrant state full of excitement for tourists. Among all its famous attractions, there are the serene beaches that the state is famous for. The state which is blessed by the Arabian Sea in the west has numerous beaches that give respite to tourists; whether it is for a long solitary walk, or a romantic evening on the sands, the beaches of Karnataka can always be breathtaking.

GOKARNA

Gokarna, a remote holy town, has five famed beaches—Gokarna beach, Kudle beach, Om beach, Halfmoon beach and Paradise beach. The Gokarna beach forms the coast of the town while the other four beaches lie to the south of Gokarna town. Out of all five, Om beach is quite popular and is named so because it is shaped like the auspicious 'Om' symbol. The way up to the winding path that leads to Gokarna is a scenic one, with the Western Ghats on one side and the Arabian Sea on the other.

MARAVANTHE

With the West Coast Highway cruising alongside the Arabian Sea on one side and the picturesque Kodachadri Hills forming a backdrop to the Sauparnika River on the other, Maravanthe

boasts miles and miles of white sand. The place takes on the look of a fairyland at sunset, when the sky turns crimson and the golden rays of the sun are reflected on the sea as well as the river. This peaceful beach is a paradise for water sport lovers as well as picnickers. Nearby attractions include Bairdur, a hamlet with a lovely beach close by; Ottinane, with overhanging cliffs, which is an ideal place for viewing the sunset; and Belaka Theertha Falls.

MALPE

Malpe, located about six kilometres from Udupi and at the mouth of the Malpe River, is an important fishing centre and enriches Karnataka's coastline with its fabulous beach. With the endless stretch of golden sand, swaying palm trees, clear blue sky and gentle breeze makes it an ideal place for a beautiful, relaxing holiday. When in Malpe, make sure you visit the Balarama and Ananteshwara Temples, Darya Bahadurgarh and Malpe's oldest tile factory, set up by the Basel Mission.

ST MARY'S ISLAND

Just six kilometres from the Malpe coast, St Mary's Island is famous for its stunning geological formations, which are actually a series of hexagonal basalt rock formations that

rise into the sky to varying heights and colours, from earthy red to black. Because of this geological asset, St Mary's Island is declared a National Geological Monument. The 100-metre-wide and 300-metre-long island is also popular as it is believed that the famous Portuguese explorer Vasco de Gama dropped an anchor when he landed here in 1498.

KARWAR

Karwar makes for an idyllic retreat, with its gentle waves, golden sand, a tranquil ambience and acres of emerald foliage.

With the captivating landscape, ringed with rugged hill ranges, thick wood and mysteriously deep valleys, this paradise inspired the great poet Rabindranath Tagore to pen down his first play. There are plenty of other must-see places in Karwar. The Sadashivgad Hill Fort with a Durga Temple, the unique octagonal church, the 300-year-old Venkatrama Temple with ochre paintings, and the Naganatha Temple, where an ant hill is worshipped, are sure to make a lasting impression. Devbagh is the most enchanting of the five islands along the Karwar coast.

KAUP

Kaup, located at a distance of 12 kilometres from Udupi, is famous for its lovely beach, a ruined fort and an old 100-feet-high



lighthouse. Don't forget to visit the two temples of Goddess Mariamma and the Jain basadis, which are now in ruins.

KURUMGAD

The tortoise-shaped island, Kurumgad, is renowned for the hilltop Narasimha Temple, which attracts thousands of devotees during the annual jatra held on Pushya Purnima every year, in early January. Located 4 kilometres from the mainland, this beach is replete with history, complete with the remains of a fort with cannon holes. Visitors can opt to enjoy the panoramic view of the sea, sand and the neighbouring islands or indulge in a range of activities, including trekking, dolphin and seal spotting, diving, snorkelling and stargazing.



TANTALISING TURKEY

Turkey is a display of rich and exotic past, luring tourists from all across the world

KAMAL GILL

Majestically draped by massive peninsulas and surrounded by the Black Sea in the north, the Sea of Marmara and Aegean in the west and the Mediterranean in the south, Turkey, which lies between Europe, Asia and Africa, is home to countless civilizations and is seen as a crossing point between the continents since ancient times. Steeped in history and astute enough to embrace modernity; shaped by ageless traditions, yet ready to be inspired by other cultures, Turkey offers an eclectic blend of the East and West. And, this intriguing mix defines Turkey's vibrant face, projecting a rhythmic diversity, a vivid cultural canvas and an array of unforgettable flavours—all making lasting impressions on your mind.

ISTANBUL

The capital of Empires, the city of dominant continents, the cradle of civilizations, the meeting point of cultures—these are just some of the

phrases used to describe Istanbul. Walk along the city's historic streets and set your sights on the architectural masterpieces of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, enjoy panoramic vistas of this unique location, explore its mystical beauties, and fall in love with this city which presents an extraordinary cultural experience at every corner. Marvel at the skyline that features both minarets and church spires and where musicians fuse western pop with traditional folk. Explore the labyrinth of historic bazaars which make it a shopper's paradise.

THE GRAND BAZAAR

The legendary Grand Bazaar, near the historic centre of Sultanahmet, which first opened its doors to traders in 1461, is a vast labyrinth of 61 covered streets encompassing 4,400 shops selling everything from jewellery and carpets to leather and antiques—intermingled with cafes, restaurants and splendid ancient architecture.

EGYPTIAN SPICE BAZAAR

The nearby Egyptian Spice Bazaar is another favourite with shoppers for its enticing array of exotic spices, jams, dried fruits, nuts, tea, coffee, and, of course, Turkish delight, in its multitude of flavours. For handicrafts, ceramics, calligraphy and miniatures, head to the nearby Istanbul Handicrafts Centre or the book bazaar for rare and interesting finds.



ANTALYA

Savour Antalya's historic past and soak up the cultural atmosphere in the old town. Since cars and heavy duty vehicles are taboo in the narrow lanes, tourists can amble around quite peacefully. Wander into the old quarter of Kaleiçi, the historic city centre of Antalya, and savour the charming ambience of old wooden Ottoman mansions and houses that have been turned into boutique hotels.

DAMLATAS CAVE

The best known and most easy to reach cave is Damlatas. This cave is located specifically at the point of connection of the peninsula with the land and on the west of the peninsula where Alanya

citadel is located. The moist and tepid air inside the cave is believed to be good for asthma, while the colourful and spectacular formation of stalagmites and stalactites attract tourists in droves.

KARAIN CAVE

Comprising three interconnected large halls, Karain Cave was a habitat right from around 50,000 BC, during the prehistoric Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Bronze ages. This is the cave's most interesting characteristic, with significant remains like various instruments belonging to the prehistoric ages, fossilised human skulls of an even earlier age (*Homo Sapiens*) and the skulls of Neanderthals, have been unearthed at excavations

made in Karain Cave. These remains are exhibited in Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilizations and in the local museum adjacent to the cave, as also in numerous museums in Turkey.

IZMIR

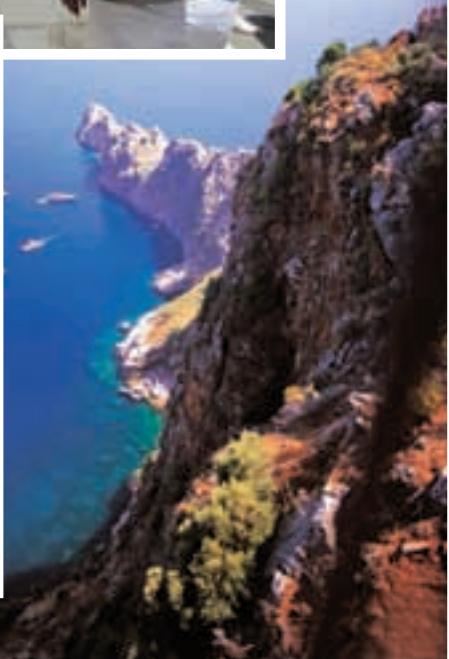
Once the ancient city of Smyrna, Izmir is now a modern, developed, and busy commercial centre, set around a huge bay and surrounded by mountains. The broad boulevards, glass-fronted buildings and modern shopping centres are dotted with traditional red-tiled roofs, an 18th century market, old mosques and churches. The city's atmosphere is more Mediterranean Europe than traditional Turkey.

AGORA

The ancient Agora, built for Alexander the Great, was ruined in an earthquake in AD 178, but rebuilt soon after by the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius. Colonnades of reconstructed Corinthian columns, vaulted chambers and arches give you a good idea of what a Roman bazaar must have looked like. Later, a Muslim cemetery was built on the site and many of the old tombstones can be seen around the perimeter of the Agora. The site is entered on the south side, just off Gazi Osman Paşa Bulvarı.

ETHNOGRAPHY MUSEUM

A little more engaging than the Archaeology Museum is the Izmir Ethnography Museum. Originally built in 1831 as the St Roche Hospital, this lovely old four-storey stone building houses colourful displays demonstrating local arts, crafts and customs. You'll learn about everything from camel wrestling and pottery to tin-plating and felt-making; embroidery and the art of making those curious little blue-and-white 'evil eye' beads. Other displays include weaponry, jewellery and wonderful illustrated manuscripts.



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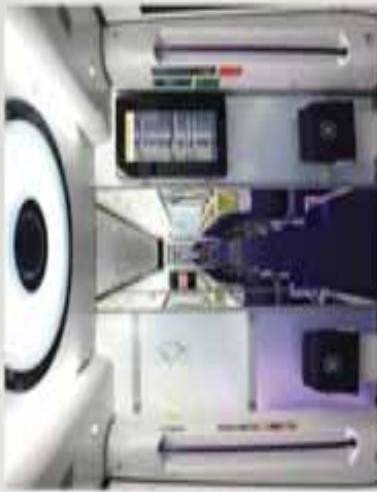
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THE OLD AND CHARMING

Having preserved its glorious past of elegant temples, exquisite art forms, and natural reserves, Bhubaneswar charms the world with its antiquity

TT BUREAU

Bhubaneswar is the capital of Odisha, largely gifted by a rich heritage; the city soaks in charming old-world splendour. Having been gifted by Mother Nature's abundant love, Bhubaneswar seems like a paradise surrounded by temples, with devotees bowing their heads, and history kissing its feet in reverence. Here is a guide to the beautifully old city and its many attractions.

Lingaraja Temple: It is the Bhubaneswar's largest and oldest temple, which perfectly represents Odisha's architectural excellence. Dedicated to Lord Shiva, the Lingaraja Temple was built in the 11th century. Also known as the Bhubaneswar temple, the Lingaraja is famous for its breathtaking sculptures and carvings on the walls. The curvilinear temple can be seen from a long distance, thanks to

its giant tower (deul), which extends to the height of over 180 feet, dominating Bhubneswar's skyline. Sprawled over 25,000 square feet, the Lingaraja temple houses 150 subsidiary shrines. The 'lingam' at the temple is quite unique as it's one half represents Lord Shiva, and the other Lord Vishnu.

Mukteshwar Temple: Richly sculpted, the Mukteshwar temple perfectly blends the ancient and the modern designs. Owing to its marvelous sculptures and patterns of intricate designs, the small temple is also referred to as the "miniature gem of Odishian architecture." Dedicated to Lord Shiva, the temple is carved with figures of ascetics in different poses of meditation. Mukteshwar's gateway (Torana) is quite attractive. The gateway is embellished with graceful female figures and intricate design patterns. The decorative





gateway—an arched masterpiece—is reminiscent of the Buddhist influence in Odisha.

Khandagiri and Udaygiri: The twin hills of Khandagiri and Udaygiri are famous for rock-cut caves, which were once meant for dwelling of the Jain monks. A total of 33 caves exist in Khandagiri and Udaygiri—separated by a narrow row. The caves are known for stupendous carvings. Elephant Cave (Hathi Gumpha), Queen's Cave (Rani Gumpha) and Ganesh Cave are some of the must-see sites, which are popular for elaborate sculptural friezes. While amazing statues of elephants are installed at the Elephant Cave, the Queen Cave is known for carvings related to historical scenes and religious functions. It is believed that most of the Khandagiri's caves were used to meditative purpose.

Nandankanan: Picturesquely carved out of the Chandaka forest, Nandankanan is the perfect location for nature and wildlife enthusiasts. Situated in the serene vicinity of Kanjia Lake, the Nandankanan wildlife sanctuary is home to white tigers, Asiatic lions, Black panthers endangered Gharials, European Brown Bear, Himalayan Black Bear, and a host of endangered birds. Literally meaning the 'Garden of Heavens,' Nandankanan also houses a botanical garden, which is popular for its rosarium,

GETTING THERE

By Air: Nearest airport to Bhubneswar city is Biju Patnaik.

By Rail: Bhubneswar's railhead is well linked to major cities of the country.

By Road: Well connected to important cities by the national highway No. 5.

Best time to visit: Through Bhubneswar is comfortable throughout the year, the ideal time to visit is from October to March.

and children's park.

Dhauli: Situated around seven kilometers from Bhubneswar, on the banks of the Daya River lies the Dhauli hills—the site for the historical Kalinga wars, which greatly influenced the great Ashoka, who later embraced Buddhism, deciding to give up violence (ahimsa). Dhauli is popular for its Buddhist Peace Pagoda, popularly known as Shanti Stupa. Built in the early 70s by the Japan Buddha Sangha and Kalinga Nippon Buddha Sangha, the Shanti Stupa is in the shape of a dome.

Atri: Situated in scenic surroundings replete with greenery, Atri, situated around 42 kilometers from Bhubneswar, is famous for hot sulphur springs. It is believed that the hot spring water is potent to cure skin diseases and other ailments.



INTO THE WILD

If you dream of encountering nature's most amazing creatures in their natural environment, visit one of these world's top wildlife destinations

TT BUREAU

The sonorous call of the wild enchants the mechanical human lives; amidst the decadence of concrete and the perils of an otherwise struggling life, humans are attracted to the wild. The wondrous hues of nature and the wild animals shuffling through her is a sight as astonishing as no other. Visiting the wild can often be an experience of a lifetime, to see wild animals we usually see inside cages roaming free, is no less than a jaw-dropping experience.

Today's Traveller brings to you some of the most beautiful wildlife experiences from the world.

BELIZE

The Central American country of Belize may be small, but it is considered as one of the top places in the world to see wildlife. The country has various parks where you can explore freely, seeing animals in their natural habitats. Other protected areas,

which are home to endangered species, require guides. The coastal stretch of the country is also well-suited for diving and snorkelling among sharks and stingrays.

BOTSWANA

Thanks to its conservative environmental policies, the African nation of Botswana tops the list of world's best places to see wildlife.

The country is home to unspoilt wilderness, including the largest inland delta on earth, which is populated by giraffes, cheetahs, lions, elephants and other animals. Visitors to Botswana can stay at deluxe lodges, from where they can head out on safaris in the morning and again at dusk, spending the time in between watching birds and relaxing.

KHAO SOK NATIONAL PARK

Located in Southern Thailand, Khao Sok National Park is one of the largest preserves of its kind in the world. At the park, which was established in 1980, travellers can canoe along the river after which it is named, surrounded by a rainforest that has survived for millions of years and is populated by tigers, elephants, bears and leopards.

COSTA RICA

The Central American country is home to more than 500,000 species of flora and fauna, making it one of the 20 countries with the highest biodiversity in the world.

Due to the wide variety of habitat within the small country, including tropical rainforest, deciduous forest, coastline (both Atlantic and Pacific), cloud forest, and mangrove forest, a wide variety of mammals, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and insects call Costa Rica their home.

Listen for the bay of the mantled howler monkey, look closely for the camouflaged coat of the sleepy sloth, and hope you're lucky enough to spot the colourful plumage of a resplendent quetzal.



ADDO ELEPHANT NATIONAL PARK

A diverse wildlife conservation park which is located close to Port Elizabeth, South Africa, the Addo Elephant National Park is a blissful bastion of the wild.

The original park has been expanded now, and includes the Woody Cape Nature Reserve, this now extends from the Sunday River to Alexandria and a marine reserve which also includes St. Croix and Bird Island. At the Addo Elephant National Park visitors can now witness the Big 7, namely, elephant, black rhino, buffalo, lion, leopard, great white shark and sperm whale.

The park is considered to be the third largest in South Africa, while offering some very interesting outdoor activities such as, horse riding, guided walking, hiking, 4x4 trails and an area available for picnic. This magnificent wildlife reserve is a marvellous place for visitors to have a great time.



LEGACY REVISITED

Experience the heritage of India through these historical and enchanting sites



TT BUREAU

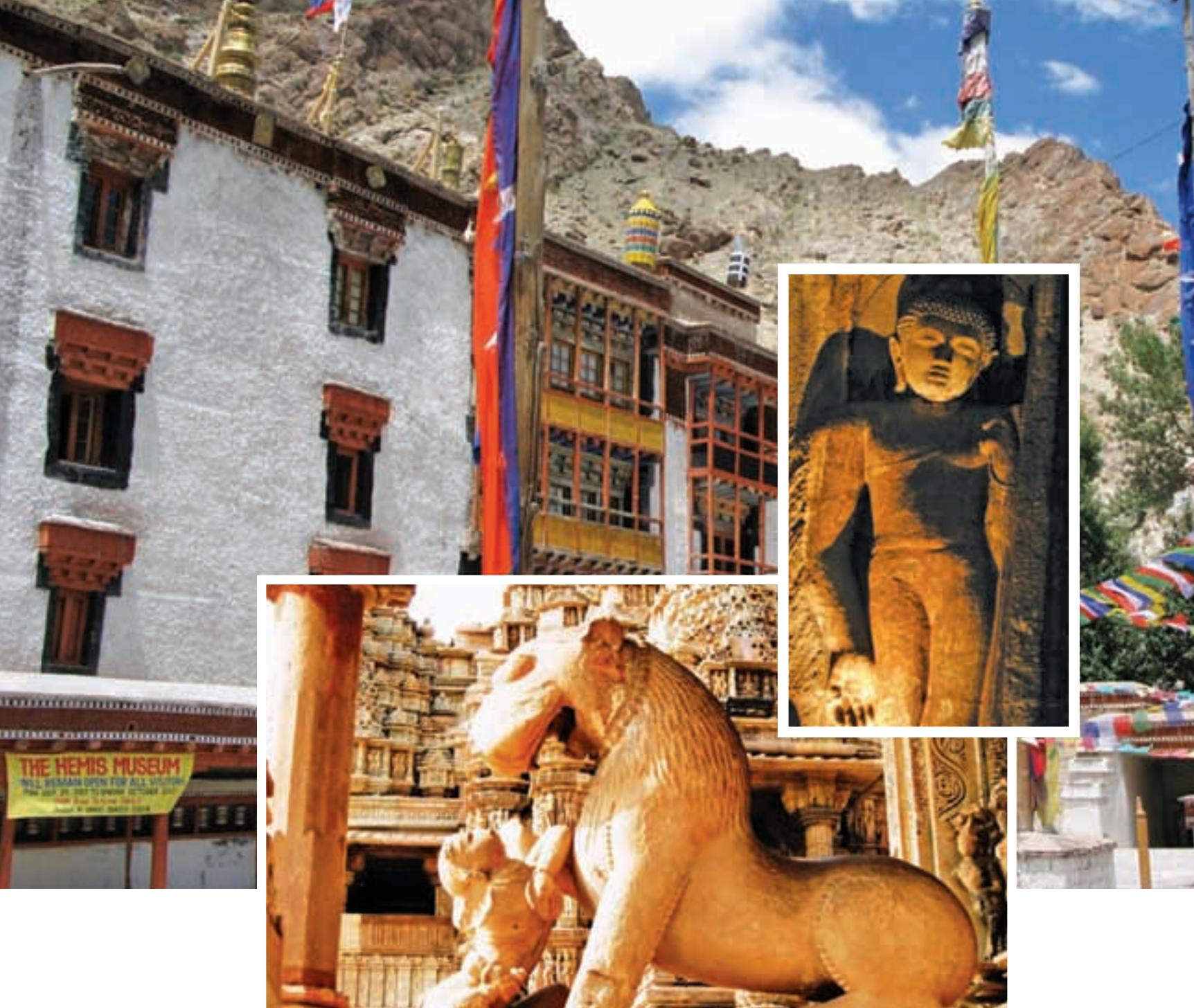
India is a nation seeped in history, with its vast geographical and cultural diversity the nation brings forth all the experiences that one can ask for. Every heritage site has a story of its own, a history as old as time. India, over time has become one of the most sought after tourist destinations, and that is precisely because of the cultural lineage of the nation. There are hundreds of great heritage sites that have great significance in history. We list some of these fountainheads of history for you:

TAJMAHAL

One of the most prominent legacies of India, the Taj Mahal is a monument of quintessential love. Built by Shah Jahan in the memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal, it took 22 years for over twenty thousand workers to erect it. Exquisitely carved out of white marble, the complex has serene greenery within it and stands majestically besides the River Yamuna. A boat ride fulfils the journey to the greatest wonder of royal India.

WESTERN GHATS

Running parallel to the west coast of the Indian peninsula, the Western Ghats is a mountainous range that has diverse soil and climatic conditions, suitable for a variety of flora and fauna. The 150-million- year-old range blocks rainfall to the Deccan Plateau and is one of the greatest bio-diversity spots in the world. The hills also form a catchment area for India's riverine drainage systems as numerous lakes, reservoirs, peaks and wildlife sanctuaries are part of the area.



AJANTA, ELLORA AND ELEPHANTA CAVES, MAHARASHTRA

Within these caves, exploit and adventure has a whole new meaning. The ancient caves of Ajanta and Ellora illustrate the brilliance of Buddhist architecture at its peak. Ajanta dates back to 100 BC; Ellora is around 600 years younger; and the Elephanta Caves are datable from 6th to 7th century AD. The excavations came about at various periods in the history, and the artistry exemplifies a melting pot of meticulous work, intricate carvings and minute chisels on the stone walls. The Ajanta Caves are located in the Aurangabad district of Maharashtra. The Ellora Caves are 30 kilometres northwest of Aurangabad, and the Elephanta Caves are 10 kilometres to the east of Mumbai. The Elephanta Caves consist of five Hindu caves dedicated to Lord Shiva and two Buddhist caves. The Brahmanical rock-cut architecture and vibrant sculptures promise to mystify and astound you.

MONASTERIES OF LEH AND LADAKH

The region is renowned for its beauty and heritage. Teeming with numerous gompas, where Buddhist monks and nuns practise their religion, Ladakh is home to rich Buddhist art and culture. From Thangka paintings and artifacts to scenic monuments, tourists have immense opportunities to experience lost Tibetan traditions and enjoy stunning mountain locales. The weather kisses nature, creating one of the most fascinating landscapes in the country.

KHAJURAHO

The monuments of Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh are an important tourist destination and popular for being centres medieval Hindu and Jain religions. Khajuraho also has one of the largest groups of temples and shrines known for their erotic sculptures and stone works. Located in Chhatarpur District and about 620 kilometres southeast of New Delhi, it is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



HAMPI'S MONUMENTS

Hampi, also recognised as Pampakshetra of Kishkindha, and once the mighty seat of the Vijayangara Empire, is a monumental account of the golden period of Hindu art, architecture and philosophy. Spread over an area of about 26 square kilometres, it was built by Sage Vidyaranya in 1336–1570 AD. The stunning ruins have been an inbound tourist hotspot and continue to be an enigma for guests.

FATEHPUR SIKRI, UTTAR PRADESH

Built by Akbar in the second half of the 16th century, Fatehpur Sikri was the capital of the Mughal Empire for over 10 years. Akbar left Fatehpur Sikri to fight the Afghan tribes and shifted the capital to Lahore. The Mughal city sits on a rocky plateau, south of an artificial lake and is surrounded by fortified walls from three sides. The various monuments within the complex include Jama Masjid, Buland Darwazah and the tomb of Sheikh Salim Chishti, Khas Mahal, Shahi-Bazar, Maina-Bazar, the Panch-Mahal, Khabga, Diwan-i-Khas, Anup –Talao, Chaupar and Diwani-i-Am. The architecture is Indo-Mughal and a confluence of numerous architectural styles prevalent in India at that time.



SUNDERBANS NATIONAL PARK

The world's largest delta formed by the mighty Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna has impenetrable mangrove forests and is rich in bio-diversity. It is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Sunderbans swathes over 4264 square kilometres and incorporates a tiger reserve and a national park. The place remains an untouched paradise with numerous rare wildlife species dwelling here. The park also has floating watch stations and camps to prevent poaching. Though relatively inaccessible, the nearest railway station is only a 5-hour drive away.



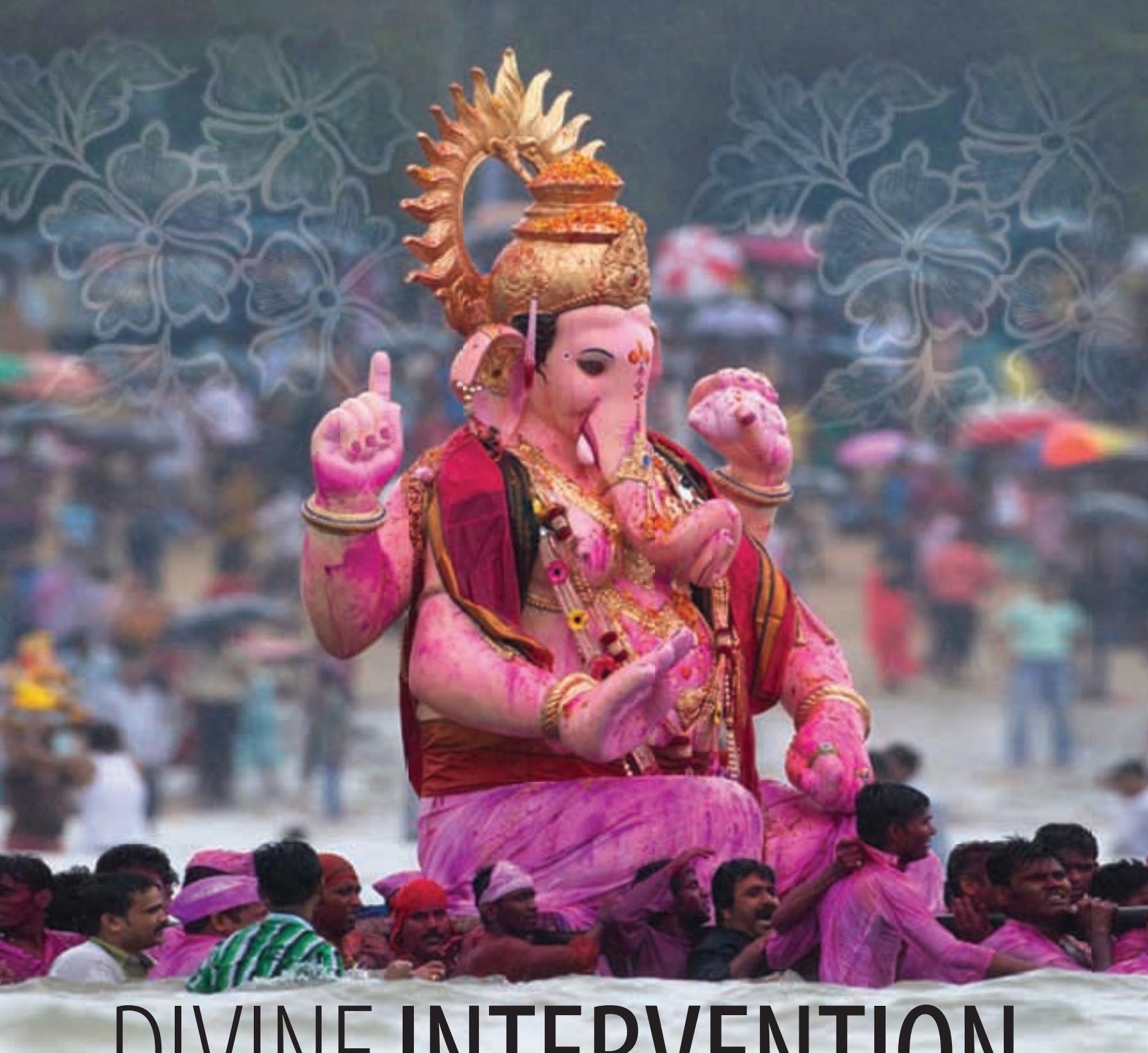
CHAMPANER-PAVAGADH ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK

Located 50 kilometres from Baroda and at the foothills of the Pavagadh Hill, Champaner is built of reddish-yellow stones and is one of the oldest rock formations in India. At a height of 800 meters above sea level and sitting on the Mauliya plateau, it is famous for a Hindu fortress built by the Solanki Kings of Gujarat. Sultan Mahmud Begarah took possession of the fort and renamed it Muhammadabad. The temples date back to the 10th and 11th centuries and others dedicated to Hindu and Jaina sects are from 13th to 15th centuries.

JAISALMER FORT

Among the mocking winds and swaying sand dunes, the gigantic Jaisalmer Fort has been standing in the heart of the Thar Desert for over 800 years. Since the times of the busy silk routes, the Fort has always had a significant position in history. It was home to the valiant rulers of India, a place where great wars took place that changed the course of history and a region where Hindu art and architecture flourished for ages. There are four entrances to the fort and are popularly called Ganesh Pol, Bhoot Pol and Hawa Pol. They lead you to exquisite havelis with subtle, latticed windows and a group of colourful Jain temples. There are five interconnected palaces in this sandcastle.





DIVINE INTERVENTION

Although Ganesh Chaturthi is celebrated across Maharashtra with vigour, it is in capital Mumbai that the festivities become larger than life

The Lord of Success, Ganesha, is worshipped all across India, but none like in the state of Maharashtra, especially Mumbai. The Ganesh Chaturthi festival is observed from the fourth day after the new moon in the Hindu month of Bhadrapada, which falls in August or September, every year. The community worship which is known as Ganesh Chaturthi was made popular by social reformer Bal Gangadhar Tilak in the late 19th century. Ganesha, is believed to be the son of Hindu gods, Shiva and Parvati, and is worshipped with much pomp and show, and the locals of Mumbai fondly call him, Ganpati-Bappa.

LALBAUGCHA RAJA

The iconic Lalbaugcha Raja – the King of Lalbaug, is unquestionably the most famous Ganesha idol in the 'Maximum City.' The community festival committee, or mandal, was founded in 1934 and has grown to be the most visited Ganpati in the city. Tens of thousands of devotees throng the pandal to seek blessings from the wish-fulfilling deity. Over the years, this much-hyped pandal has gained fame and attracted media attention with the who's who of India Inc. and Bollywood making the beeline to offer their prayers to the lord.

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Location: GD Ambedkar Road, Lalbaug (Central Mumbai).

Nearest Railway Station: Walking distance from Lower Parel, Curry Road, and Chinchpokli stations.

Waiting Time: Can be 20 hours or more in the "navas" line. The general line takes around five hours.

When to Visit: It's open around the clock. However, the busiest time is in the evening until midnight.

MUMBAICHA RAJA

The Mumbaicha Raja, located a few lanes down from the Lalbaugcha pandal in Ganesh Gali, is considered the second most popular Ganesha festival in Mumbai.

Started as a community worship by mill workers in 1928, it is believed to be one of the oldest community Ganesh Chaturthi festivals in the city. Known for its lavish themes, which are usually based on famous monuments or places from across India, the pandal is a major crowd puller.

Location: Ganesh Galli (Lane), Lalbaug (Central Mumbai).

Nearest Railway Station: Chinchpokli, Curry Road, and Lower Parel railway stations are close by.

Waiting Time: Can be as little as 20 minutes, or a few hours.

When to Visit: It's always busy. Peak hours are in the afternoon and night from 3 p.m. until 2 a.m.

KHETWADI GANRAJ MANDAL

Established in 1959, the Khetwadi Ganraj Mandal rose to fame a decade back, installing the record highest Ganesha idol in the country – standing 40 feet tall in all its grandeur. Located in Girgaon



in South Mumbai, the larger-than-life idol is celebrated for wearing authentic gold jewellery.

Location: 12th Lane Khetwadi, Girgaum (South Mumbai).

Nearest Railway Station: The nearest stations are Charni Road and Sandhurst Road.

When to Visit: It is best during the day.

Peak time is in the evenings from dusk to midnight.

GSB GANESH MANDAL

Famously known as the "Gold Ganesha of Mumbai", the GSB Ganesh Mandal is touted as the wealthiest mandal in the financial capital. Started in 1954 by Gowd Saraswat Brahmin community from Karnataka, this eco-friendly clay idol is bedecked with more than 60 kg of pure gold fineries. Located in King Circle in Central Mumbai, the celebrations are conducted in a unique South Indian tradition.

Location: GSB Sports Club Ground, Near SNDT Women's College, R.A. Kidwai Road, King's Circle, Matunga (Central Mumbai).

Nearest Railway Station: Kings Circle on the Harbour Line and Matunga on the Central Line.

When to Visit: This Ganesh idol only stays for the first five days of the festival, so see it early.

ANDHERICHA RAJA

Started by mill workers, who had moved from Lalbaug to suburban Mumbai to be close to their workplace, the Andhericha Raja is to the Mumbai suburbs what the Lalbaugcha Raja is to South and Central Mumbai. Though, not as grand or extravagant or patronised by the media or celebrities, the modest Ganesha pandal here is popular with the locals. The idol here is renowned also for fulfilling wishes and is revered as "remover of obstacles."

Location: Vera Desai Road, Azad Nagar, Andheri (Western Mumbai suburbs). Nearest Railway Station: Andheri.

When to Visit: Evenings are the busiest; however, devotees have an extra day to see the god. The idol is the only one in Mumbai to be immersed on Sankashthi Day, which is the day after Anant Chaturdashi.



AN EVENING TO REMEMBER



9th Annual Today's Traveller Awards

Dr Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism & Culture and Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Government of India, felicitates remarkable achievers with Today's Traveller Awards 2015



The 9th Annual Today's Traveller Awards, 2015, organised by Gill India Group, took place at a magnificent event at Taj Palace, New Delhi, on August 11, 2015.

The Chief Guest, Dr Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism & Culture and Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Government of India, launched the cover of the Today's Traveller Coffee Table Book 2015 – 'Success Redefined,' and gave away the 9th Annual Today's Traveller awards to the industry's best.

Kamal Gill, Executive Editor and Managing Director, GICPL, said, "The warm world of the tourism fraternity to which we belong and without whose support this wonderful journey of 18 years would not have been possible are star achievers in their own right and in the spirit of this year's theme SUCCESS REDEFINED, I salute them."

The latest theme for the coffee table book – Success Redefined, "reflects the mood of the times." The environment is challenging and there are new parameters for defining success. Change



is the order of the day and leveraging change now becomes paramount to sustain businesses.

Dr Sharma congratulated the Gill India Group, on completing "18 years of its service in promoting travel and tourism, not only in India, but around the globe." He also said, "maintaining quality in travel publishing is one of its (Gill India Group) hallmarks and the Coffee Table

Book, 'Success Redefined,' is an extension of its commitment to excellence."

Amongst the dignitaries present were Sohan Singh Thandal (Minister of Tourism Government of Punjab); Lt Gen (Retd) KM Seth (former Governor of Tripura and Chhattisgarh and President, Foundation for Aviation & Sustainable Tourism); Alok Banerjee (Director Marketing, National Textile

Corporation); Sandeep Marwah (Founder of Noida Film City, Marwah Studios and Asian Academy of Film & Television); Dr Ravi Inder Singh (IAS, Principal Secretary, Gorkhaland Territorial Administration); Nidhi Mani Tripathi (Secretary Tourism, Manipur); ZU Siddiqui (Managing Director and CEO, Delhi Tourism & Transportation Development Corporation Ltd);





DR MAHESH SHARMA EMPHASISES THE NEED TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND HONOUR THE BEST IN TOURISM

“ I would like to congratulate the stalwarts of the tourism and the hospitality industry who have played pivotal roles in taking India to an international platform. India is a country with great potential, we have a lot to learn from the world and simultaneously give to the world.

As far as tourism is concerned, we are not only blessed with beautiful natural resources but our tourism market has immense potential and it has always been the work of the government and groups like Gill India to drive this potential in the right direction. India is known worldwide for hospitality to our guests. Now it is upon us to make India a year around destination for tourists.

Tourism can also be described as the industry of perception, where at times the wrong word can hit tourism hard. Hence, we need more institutions like the Gill India Group to break such perception and to take India to greater heights. India is a growing nation, with 68 years of independence behind us. I can assure you that India will make major strides in the tourism industry.

The tourism sector of India is not only responsible for bringing high foreign

exchange earnings, youth employment opportunities, women empowerment, and major strides in the technology sector, but also for bringing about national and international peace, national integrity and inter religious flow of views. This creates a two-way communication that allows the exchange of heritage and culture between nations.

Major campaigns such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Atithi Devo Bhav, International Yoga Day, Make in India and Digital India among others have led tourism in the right direction making India a favourite tourist destination all year round.

Our topography canvases over 7,500km of beautiful coastal region, 73 per cent of the great Himalayas, snow capped mountains and a large network of rivers. Ancient art museums, in-depth knowledge about wellness tourism, golf tourism, and aqua tourism are just the tip of the iceberg for tourists to enjoy during their visits. The next thing on our agenda is to tap the immense potential of medical tourism of the country. This can be a possibility in the coming years, because India has excellent world class

infrastructure in the form of medical facilities backed by an international faculty of doctors.

The Government is making positive changes to make India a preferred tourist destination and we are making improvements to strengthen and diversify the tourism economy. Great importance has been given to factors influencing tourism, such as, security, hospitality and cleanliness, so that tourists feel safe and at home while in India. Our main objective is to take the flavour of India to the corners of the world.

We should appreciate the best in the industry, that helps to take Incredible India to the far corners of the world. By recognising excellence, The Today's Traveller Awards create high levels of motivation and zeal to perform.

I would also like to applaud the Gill India Group for its constant support and endeavour for the last 18 years as it stood the test of time and innovated according to the industry needs. I wish the winners of the Today's Traveller Awards more and more success as they are ambassadors of India to the world.





Bhupinder S Bhalla (IAS, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce & Industry); Kesari Patil (Chairman, Kesari Tours Pvt Ltd); Dawa Lepcha (Member on Duty, Department of Tourism, Gorkhaland Territorial Administration); Sonam Bhutia (Executive Director, Gorkhaland Territorial Administration); Basanta Rajkumar (Executive Director, Punjab Heritage and Tourism Promotion Board); Dr Mamta Pandey (Sr. Liaison & Marketing Officer, Madhay Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation Ltd); Karma Leki (Director Tourism, Government of Arunachal Pradesh); Vinay Malhotra (COO, South Asia and DVPC, VFS Global Services); Manoj Virmani (VP Operations, ITC Limited, Hotels Division); Zubin Songadwala (General Manager, ITC Maurya); Raj Rana (CEO, South Asia, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group); Rohit Malhotra (VP Operations, Fortune Park Hotels Ltd); Dhunji Kavarana (CEO, WelcomHeritage); Rajiv Duggal (CEO, Lavasa Corporation Limited); Ranveer Bhandari (Vice President-Operations, ITC Hotels) and Gaurav Pokhariyal (Area Director and General Manager, Taj Palace).













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PASCHIM VIHAR

Best Wedding Hotel in Delhi

RADISSON BLU PLAZA HOTEL

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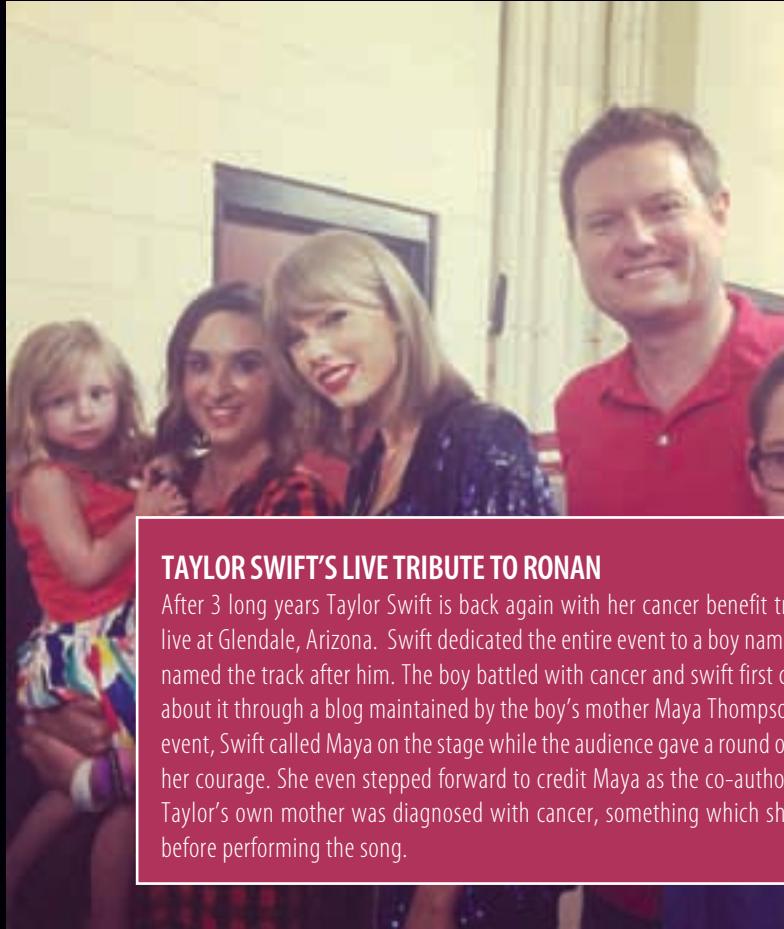


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TAYLOR SWIFT'S LIVE TRIBUTE TO RONAN

After 3 long years Taylor Swift is back again with her cancer benefit track "Ronan," live at Glendale, Arizona. Swift dedicated the entire event to a boy named Ronan and named the track after him. The boy battled with cancer and swift first came to know about it through a blog maintained by the boy's mother Maya Thompson. During the event, Swift called Maya on the stage while the audience gave a round of applause for her courage. She even stepped forward to credit Maya as the co-author of the song. Taylor's own mother was diagnosed with cancer, something which she also shared before performing the song.



BILL CLINTON IN SUPPORT OF NATIONAL CHILDHOOD OBESITY AWARENESS MONTH

Apart from terrorism, obesity is another serious threat to the American citizens, especially the children. Survey says that around 2 in 3 children are physically inactive in the US. This is raising a whole range of health issues for the younger generation. To spread the word about creating a healthy generation and healthy nation, the Alliance for a Healthier Generation (the Alliance) is launching #Commit2Ten, a social media campaign challenging the nation to add 10 more minutes of physical activity to its daily routine during the month of September. In 2005, Bill Clinton came forward to address this issue and the Clinton Foundation made an alliance with the American Heart Association. The alliance is all set to celebrate its 10th anniversary to readdress this issue. Apart from Clinton other celebrity voices include Jillian Michaels, Joy Bauer, Lorena Garcia, Rachael, Reed Alexander and Tara Stiles.

CARRIE UNDERWOOD RETURNS WITH SINGLE

The 32 year old Grammy winner, blonde bombshell, singer Carrie Underwood is back with her latest single SMOKE BREAK. The song is a part of her new album Storyteller and the album is set to release on October 23rd this year. The song was written by Underwood herself in collaboration with Hillary Lindsay & Chris DeStefano and the producer of the album is Jay Joyce. Underwood shared her photo on Instagram and the same will be seen on the album cover. So far the released photo is perfectly complementing the song title and we are all set to wait for the final release.

CARRIE UNDERWOOD SMOKE BREAK





AXL ROSE AND SLASH PATCHED UP

Real good news for rock lovers. As per recent news the front man of famous rock band Guns n' Roses, Axl Rose and lead guitarist, Slash, are coming close to forgetting their differences and patching up to excite us again. The separation happened due to the lingering conflict between Axl & Slash for quite a long time. On one occasion Axl stated – "Slash is a cancer, better removed and avoided." The break-up finally materialised when Axl replaced Slash's original guitar track with that of his friend Paul Tobias's. But all is well that ends well. Finally, we will again be able to hear some kickass music.



BB KING AS A COOL AD STAR

The great BB King needs no introduction. We all have grown up listening to his iconic guitar and magical compositions. But very few of us know that he was an equally talented Ad Star. It is not just the popularity which prompted marketers to rope him in for endorsing their products, but his grace and warmth which made him a popular face on television commercials. From 1980s till 2014 King could be frequently found in Television Commercials. He made those commercials even more attractive by blending his signature music with his warm persona. At age 89 King left this physical world but his magic and charm will remain with us forever.



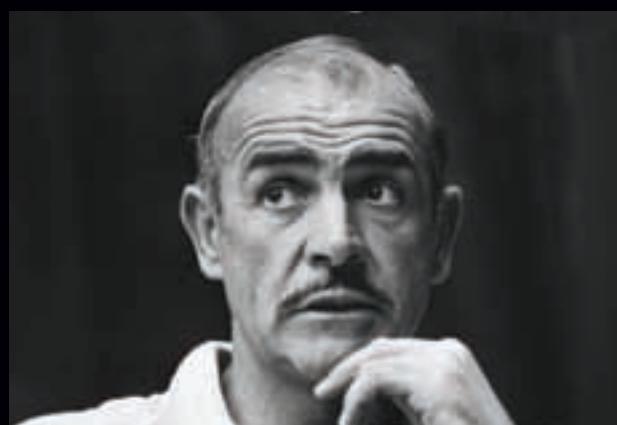
SALMAN'S SWEET TOOTH

Salman Khan has imparted a lesson to his fans and this is really inspiring. When the entire generation of young people is punishing themselves to get that perfect body, Salman Khan proved that eating one's favorite food is not relative to a perfect physique. Unlike others Salman does not follow any ultra disciplined regime but follows his heart when it comes to enjoying his favorite dish. The star is particularly fond of anything which is sweet and really loves Blueberry Muffins. But this does not mean that he is careless about his diet but when it comes to sweet, he simply cannot resist.



K MICHELLE: THE NEW BRAND AMBASSADOR OF JACK DANIELS WHISKEY

Controversy queen K Michelle is in the news again, but this time for a good reason. The singer/reality show star is always on the spotlight for her outspoken personality and due to her drinking habit. But now her habit has paid off well. She has been appointed as the new face of Jack Daniels Whiskey. Besides she has also made history by being the first Afro-American person to be considered and endorsed by the Kentucky based liquor brand.



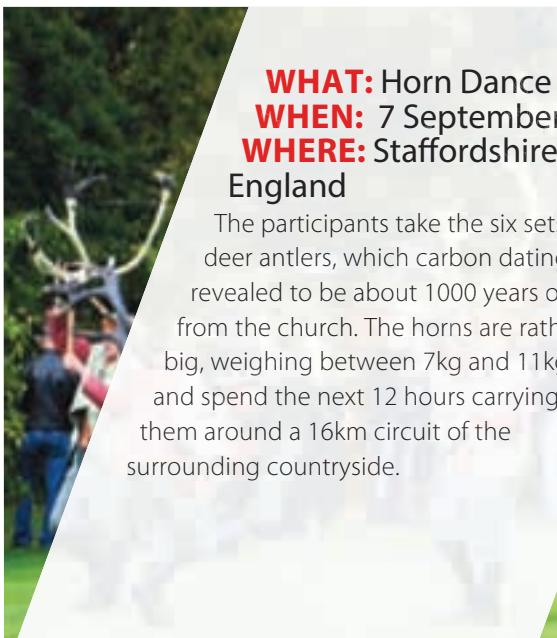
SEAN CONNERY TURNS 85

Scottish actor Sean Connery, better known for his iconic role of James Bond, turns 85. Connery is an Academy Award winning actor and had a humble beginning. He was born in Edinburg and started his career as a milkman after dropping out from school at 13. Connery also joined the Royal Navy when he was 16 and continued for 3 years. His first movie was NO ROAD BACK (1957) but the major break came when he was offered the role of BOND in 1962. Though Connery officially retired from acting, his impactful and iconic roles will continue to entertain the coming generations.



WHAT: Historic Regatta
WHEN: 6 September
WHERE: Venice, Italy

These rowing races on the Grand Canal commemorate the welcome given to Caterina Cornaro, wife of the King of Cyprus, in 1489 after she renounced her throne in favour of Venice. The event begins with a parade of boats decorated in 16th-century style and powered by crews in period costume.



WHAT: Horn Dance
WHEN: 7 September
WHERE: Staffordshire, England

The participants take the six sets of deer antlers, which carbon dating has revealed to be about 1000 years old, from the church. The horns are rather big, weighing between 7kg and 11kg and spend the next 12 hours carrying them around a 16km circuit of the surrounding countryside.



WHAT: Cows' Ball
WHEN: 20 September
WHERE: Bohinj, Slovenia

More than 50 years old, the festival marks a winter homecoming; not of men, but of cattle, which return to the alpine Bohinj valley after a summer spent in green pastures. Daisy and friends are truly the belles of the rural ball, as they are decorated with wreaths and shown off on a parade.



WHAT: Galway Oyster Festival

WHEN: 24-27 September

WHERE: County Galway, Ireland

The local molluscs are left to grow for three years in the clean waters of Brandon Bay and Clarenbridge, blooming into a juicy delicacy. Tens of thousands of the slippery critters are consumed on the Guinness Oyster Trail, on which 30 pubs give out free trays of the seafood with pints of the dark stuff



WHAT: Mid-Autumn Festival

WHEN: 27 September

WHERE: China

Also called the Moon Cake Festival, China's harvest festival is an occasion to scoff sweet treats. The cakes made of a thin dough shell containing fillings such as jelly, dates and nuts, start appearing a month before the celebration. Held during the autumn equinox, the tradition is about observing the transition of the seasons.



WHAT: Hermanus Whale Festival

WHEN: 1 October 2-4, 2015

WHERE: Western Cape, South Africa

Situated near Africa's southernmost tip, Hermanus has a front-row view of the Cape Whale Route. During migrating season, people flock to the cliff tops to glimpse the endangered southern right whale. Given that it overlooks Walker Bay, into which 70 whales have squeezed, the town once took its blubber-related fortune for granted. In an attempt to formalise the cliff top viewing, it started its festival and introduced the Whale Crier.

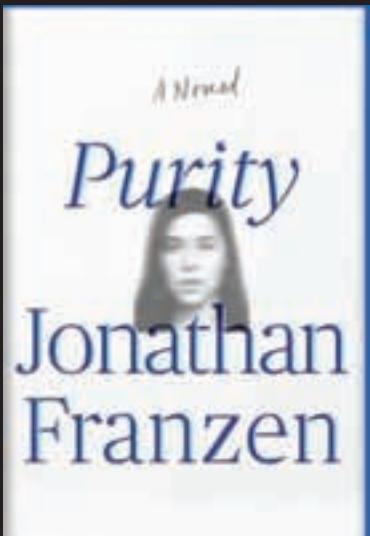
PICK OF THE MONTH

Pick your favourite from this month's all-new collection of books, games, audio CDs and DVDs

PURITY: A NOVEL

Jonathan Franzen's latest book is a take on the morally complex times we live in. Having written two big novels on the American middle class, the latest is also a critical take. It is a story of idealism during youth, extreme fidelity, and murder. The author has put together a world of original characters, Californians and East Germans, parents who are good and then those who are bad, journalists and leakers. Purity is the most daring and penetrating book yet by one of the major writers of our time. The book is definitely an essential for every book-lover.

Genre (s):Fiction



BOOK OF SOULS

British heavy metal band, Iron Maiden is coming out with a brand new album after five years. This album will be the band's first studio double album, and is of a total length of 92 minutes. The album has received thumbs up from most quarters up until now. The interesting part about the new album is that the album includes a song dedicated to Robin Williams. Front-man Bruce Dickson said in an interview, "My favorite song is one I didn't write. It's 'Tears of a Clown,' which talks about Robin Williams. I ask myself how he could be so depressed when he always seemed to be so happy."

Genre (s):Heavy Metal



INTO THE STORM

A gripping movie on storms and tornadoes, Into the Storm is a document of everyday townspeople who are tormented by an onslaught of tornadoes creating havoc in their town of Silverton. The movie is spanned in a single day when the entire town seems erratic due to the deadly storms and cyclones. In the chaos, people seek shelter, while some run towards the vortex to get that once-in-a-lifetime-experience. The film stars, Richard Armitage and Sarah Wayne Callies. For all you thrill seekers, this is a must buy.

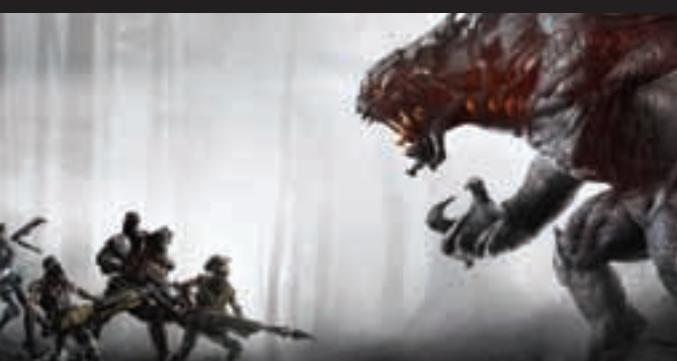
Genre (s):Action/Thriller



EVOLVE

This single-player/multiplayer cooperative first person game is based on shooting. Set in distant future, the player goes to a savage planet where he has to accomplish what he is set to do. The story follows the attempt of man to take control of the alien planet Shear, but the inhabitants of Shear hate humans. The gameplay of Evolve sees four human Hunters going toe-to-toe with a single, powerful monster from Shear. As a human, you get to pick one of the four Hunter classes, they are the following: Assault, Medic, Trapper and Support.

Genre (s):Action Adventure





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