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CORPORATE BUSINESS, AVIATION, MICE & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

JANUARY 2017 | ₹50

Face to Face:
ASHWANI LOHANI,
CMD, AIR INDIA

24 Hours **IN**
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Sun Temple (Konark)

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CON

JANUARY 2017 Estd. *Celebrating 20 years* 1997

06 Turnaround in the Skies

Face to face with Ashwani Lohani, Chairman and Managing Director, Air India

15 Annual SA Tourism Roadshow is Back

South African Tourism is back with the 14th Annual Roadshow

18 The Wow Experience

In conversation with Vishvapreet Singh Cheema, General Manager, Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi

22 Corporate Jet-Setter

Find out where the corporate world is headed for vacations

23 Hospitality Unrivalled

In conversation with Richard Barooah, General Manager, Radisson Udaipur

24 The Magnesium Car

Presenting the Lister Knobbly Stirling Moss edition – the car of victory



26 Dubai Calling

Here are the highlights of the captivating Session devoted to Dubai and MICE

28 Global Tourism Council Goes Live

The Global Tourism Council (GTC) is finally launched and came into force, effective December 9, 2016

30 iNFHRA FM Excellence Awards : Pune Chapter

The Third FM Excellence Conference & Awards was held in Pan Card Clubs, Pune

32 The Entrepreneurs Meet

Entrepreneurs congregated at The TIE Global Summit held at Hotel Taj Palace, New Delhi

36 Aviation

Fly High with Air India on 'Special Fares'



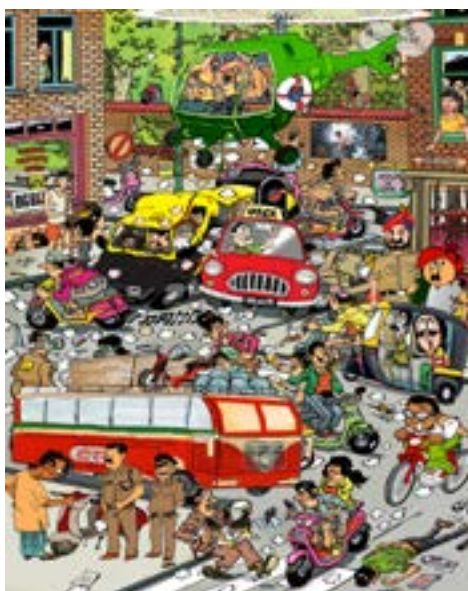
TENTS

CORPORATE BUSINESS, AVIATION, MICE & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE | VOLUME 20 | No. 6

- 40 Let the Spirit Be Free**
Welcome to Shantiniketan – where the spirit is free
- 42 Magnificent Mystery**
The magnificent Sun Temple at Konark displays a grandeur that is unparalleled
- 50 MTM+LLTM: Corporate Speak**
Corporates speak at the MTM+LLTM successfully held at The Ashok Hotel, New Delhi
- 52 Dubai Parks and Resorts Debuts Largest Theme Park Destinations**
Dubai Parks and Resorts marked the opening of 'MOTIONGATE™ Dubai,' with a spectacular event
- 54 Season of Love**
This Valentine's Day, get away to distant shores to make the most of this special day
- 56 24 Hours in Bhubaneswar**
In the temple town of Bhubaneswar in Odisha, spirituality combines beautifully with nature

Page 44

20 YEARS OF DELIGHTFUL DÉJÀ VU



ADD ONS

NEWS.....	04
ACCESSORIES.....	16
WHAT WHEN WHERE.....	58
PICK OF THE MONTH.....	60



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House

of Han's expatriate Chinese Chef Lee Tuck Seng, along with his culinary team, will present his specialty dishes using sophisticated cooking skills to meet local preferences.



CROWNE PLAZA JAIPUR DEBUTS MONGOLIAN FOOD THEATRE

Crowne Plaza Jaipur launched Mongolian Food Theatre at House of Han. A Chinese specialty restaurant. Mongolian Griddle originated in Taipei, after a stir-fried dish that was developed in a Taiwanese restaurant, beginning in the early 1950s, and was later adapted as a popular cooking practice in the Chinese restaurant.

Speaking on the occasion, General Manager, Ashwani K Goela said, "We are delighted to launch Mongolian Food Theatre at House of Han so that our guests can have another reason to enjoy the experience with their families and loved ones. We are also introducing a new signature menu by our Chinese expatriate Chef Lee Tuck Seng. I am positive that our guests will continue to patronise our Food & Beverage venues for family and business dining." **tt**

THAILAND : THE ULTIMATE GOLF PARADISE

Every year, a whopping 600,000 visiting golfers criss-cross this golfing paradise to try their hand in some of the 300-odd designer golf courses dotting Thailand, as the Thailand cake for golfing tourists is undoubtedly the golfing experience. Most of the courses are designed by the biggest names in the business, from Jack Nicklaus, Greg Norman, Peter Thomson, Phil Ryan, to a host of American, Japanese, Australian and British designers. Thai designers, too, have taken to the trade in a big way and the Banyan Golf Club in Hua Hin, the finest in all Thailand, is designed by a Thai golf architect.

But, no mention of Thailand golf would be complete without mention of their caddies. Yes, there are caddies and caddies. But, what makes Thailand special is that the caddies are all women. Most of the better golf courses have these smartly dressed young women caddies who make a world of difference to your golfing experience. **tt**



ITDC WINS BIG AT PSU AWARDS 2016

India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) has been bestowed with "Best PSU award for CSR Initiative" in Miniratna Non Financial Category, at the 4th Edition of Governance Now PSU Awards 2016. The award was presented to ITDC at a star studded award ceremony in New Delhi, where Umang Narula, Chairman & Managing Director, ITDC, and Piyush Tiwari, Director, Commercial & Marketing, ITDC, received the esteemed award from Ram Vilas Paswan, Union Minister of Food and Public Distribution and renowned actor Jeetendra.

ITDC has adopted Qutub Minar as a part of its CSR initiative under the aegis of Government of India's Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and organises regular cleanliness drives at the monument's premises. It has provided a dedicated workforce to supplement the staff of ASI involved in maintaining cleanliness of the monument. **tt**



BE MOVED IN SHANTINIKETAN

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TURNAROUND IN THE SKIES

Generations of air travellers in India and overseas have been making Air India their preferred airline. We catch up with Ashwani Lohani, Chairman and Managing Director, Air India, who has been hitting the right notes the past one year

KAMAL GILL

India's national carrier, Air India, needs no introduction, nor does the man at the helm of its affairs, Ashwani Lohani. Having served as Chairman and Managing Director for India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) and Managing Director of Madhya Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC), he slips into the shoes of Chairman and Managing Director of Air India with equal grace and élan.

On the various roles that he has reprised as Managing Director of MPTDC, ITDC and finally at Air India, Lohani comments, "While all three are commercial

organisations, their way of doing business is different and so are the complexities associated with the business. What is uncommon is the tremendous complexity of airline operations as compared to hotel and tourism operations. And there was no past debt as far as ITDC or MP tourism was concerned. Here, we have a massive debt. These were the differences."

With a well-earned track record of turning around companies, Lohani shares his insight: "There are two basic components of turnaround, one is the financial component and second is the physical component. Financially, we turned around last year. In 2015-16, Air India scored, making more money than what we actually spent, on a year-to-year basis, not taking into account the past dates. That was a major step forward, which is continuing this year. Second, is the physical component. The number of disruptions to flights has gone down, the services have improved, we have started getting positive media, even encouraging comments. Of course, we receive negative comments also and that will also take a longer time to handle."

Reviewing Air India's 2016 performance, Lohani remarks, "Financially, we have achieved operational profits, which means we made more money than what we actually spent, on a year-to-year basis. This was a major step forward and is continuing this year. Our services have considerably improved and we have garnered positive feedback from people outside the Air India family, as well as positive media attention."

Future plans 2017, what does Air India have on the cards?

Looking forward in 2017, Air India has chalked an ambitious growth chart. Lohani discloses, "In 2017, there will be a lot of expansion, both in the domestic sector – between metros and between Tier II and Tier III cities and international. We are going to add another five 787s in 2017. That means, at least 5 to 6 more international destinations. Now, in terms of domestic connectivity, this is a big role that Air India has taken on in terms of expansion. Currently in the domestic sector, Air India's share is only 14 per cent. We intend to improve this. We will be inducting 14 planes, A-320s this year and 10-15 ATRs within this year. India is growing. The economy is growing, the purchasing power is going up, so obviously the domestic market has to grow. It has been growing at 20 per cent, and will keep growing at 20 per cent."

For good measure, he adds, "And, you will see improvements in services; you will see improvements in punctuality and improvement in service delivery."

Speaking about the on-board services provided by Air India on the domestic sectors, Lohani comments, "Air India is definitely the cheapest airline in India, if you take into account the 10kg excess baggage that the airline offers, and other add-on services that we provide, which are complimentary, and which include food and

refreshments, better leg-room space, a frequent flyer programme that is loaded with many benefits and connectivity to the highest number of destinations for India – 69 and counting."

Challenges of the marketplace in 2017?

Speaking candidly of challenges Air India faces as it goes ahead, Lohani discloses, "The biggest challenge is the challenge of the merger, which happened a decade back – of Air India and Indian Airlines, which was not really called for. There were a lot of problems in the wake of the merger. From HR issues to



'WE ARE WORKING ON FINANCIAL RESTRUCTURING. IF THAT HAPPENS, THE AIRLINE WILL SOAR IN THE SKY. IF IT DOESN'T HAPPEN, THEN PERHAPS WE WILL HAVE A SERIOUS ISSUE ON OUR HANDS.'



process-related issues to, the merger actually created a mess. That is one major challenge. The other major challenge is the huge deficit which piled up in the aftermath of the merger. After the merger, the airline started going into losses, and a huge debt piled up. So, these are two major challenges."

Lohani identified Air India's debt restructuring as a key parameter for the airline's turnaround. AI's total loan is about Rs 50,000 crore, of which Rs 28,000 crore is working capital loan at an interest rate of 10 per cent. It is

seeking to convert whatever possible of this working capital loan to seven per cent LIC loan. Switching a Rs 10,000-crore loan will lead to a saving of Rs. 300 crore annually in debt servicing.

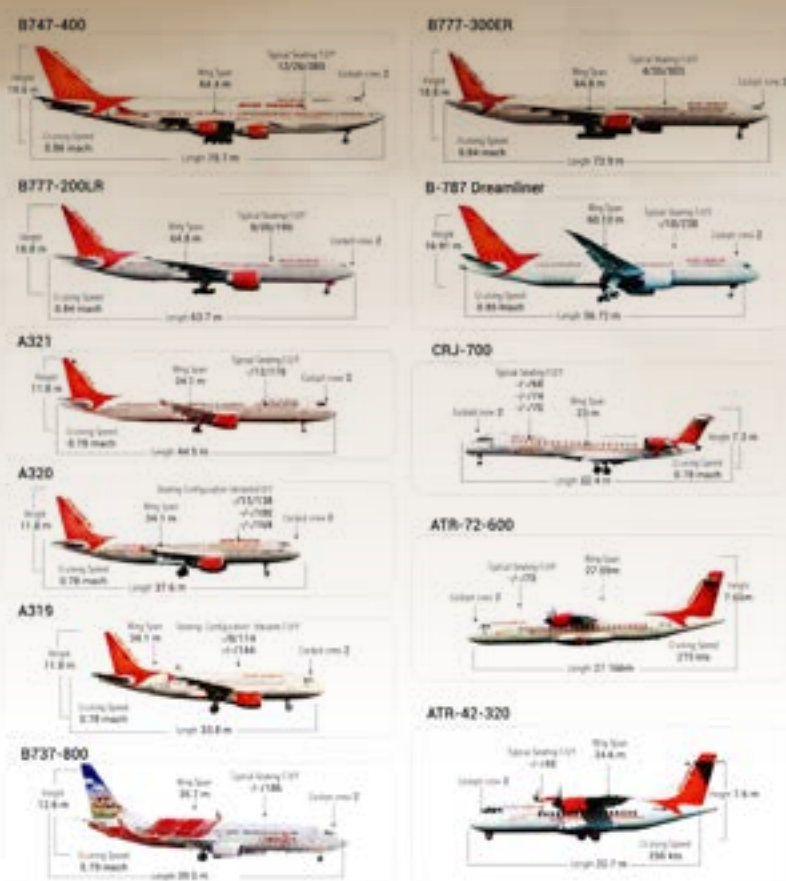
Lohani admits that Air India comes with a past baggage that is extremely heavy. "Therefore," he acknowledges, "sustainable turnaround will happen only when we are able to handle and find a solution to debts of the past, which is to the tune of Rs 50,000 crores. We are working on financial restructuring. If that happens, the airline will soar in the sky. If it doesn't happen, then perhaps we will have a serious issue on our hands."



AIR INDIA: CONNECTING LIVES

With 72 destinations across the length and breadth of India and 42 abroad, spread across US, Australia, Europe, Far and Southeast Asia and the Gulf, the airline truly connects people and hearts. Air India, with its strong fleet of 130 aircraft – a mix of B787 Dreamliners, B777s, A320 family, apart from CRJs and ATR aircraft, is one of the youngest in the world. While the technology advanced Dreamliner has been a game changer for the airline, it is the B777s that ushered in an era of non-stop long haul flights. The latest non-stop flight was introduced between Delhi and San Francisco in December. The airline also operates B777 non-stops to Chicago, New York and Newark.

The B787 Dreamliner has been a game changer for Air India. With 23 of these fuel-efficient aircraft in its fleet, Air India has been offering its passengers a comfortable and enjoyable experience with its non-stop connections from India to several destinations like London, Rome, Milan, Osaka, Hong Kong, Sydney, Melbourne, Dubai, Vienna, Madrid and more. Besides, the Dreamliners have been hugely popular for their domestic operations in Kolkata, Bengaluru, Mumbai and Amritsar.



WORLD'S LONGEST NON-STOP FLIGHTS

Recently, Air India introduced one of the world's longest non-stop flights, with a B777 operation from Delhi to San Francisco. The US is already connected with non-stop flights to Chicago, New York and Newark. London being a preferred destination for Indians, Air India has five daily flights from India to London, the recent one being one from Ahmedabad to London. Air India also has code-share agreements with international partners, including other Star alliance member airlines, thereby offering options and seamless connectivity to passengers.

Within the country, there is an increasing emphasis on regional connectivity, with smaller cities being linked to the major hubs and thereby, promoting tourism, business and employment opportunities. The air traveller is the direct beneficiary; the socio-economic structure of the country also gets strengthened. Far-flung areas of the Northeast, Ladakh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands are brought into the economic and social mainstream, thanks to the lifeline offered by Air India flights. No wonder, one of the main reasons for consumers choosing Air India is its excellent seamless connectivity.

HOSPITALITY ON-BOARD AIR INDIA

Air India has always delivered keeping consumer needs in mind. Be it connectivity, frequency of flights, on-board service, competitive pricing, aircraft comfort or cuisine, Air India has responded to passenger feedbacks with improvements. Proof of this is its frequent flyer loyalty programme, Flying Returns, with its huge base of nearly 15 lakh members. Air India has launched a completely new app for its more than 18-million passengers, which will take the user experience to a new level. Built by global technology provider SITA, using its state-of-the-art mobile platform, the app makes it even easier for passengers to book, check-in and manage every aspect of their journey from their mobile device.





AIR INDIA TO THE RESCUE

From standing by the nation during any crisis, reflecting the tradition and culture of the country, to showcasing the strength of emerging India – Air India has always been identified with India. Recently, Air India played a key role in the evacuation of Indians and other nationals from the war-torn country of Yemen.

While the Yemen evacuation was still fresh in the minds of people, the national carrier was again called upon to bring back stranded people in the quake devastated country of Nepal. Whether it is a natural calamity or war – Air India always spreads its wings to be with India and Indians. A graphic testimony to the role that Air India plays as the nation's second line of defence has been highlighted in the recent Bollywood classic – 'Airlift' – which showcases Air India's epic evacuation of over 1,70,000 Indians stranded in war-torn Kuwait, through 488 rescue flights over a period of 59 days, way back in 1990.



PARTNERING WITH STAR ALLIANCE GROUP

The Star Alliance partnership in 2014, the first for an Indian carrier, has put Air India into the big league, with 27 other top airlines. For passengers, it is time to enjoy a host of benefits, such as seamless transfers, more combined frequent flyer loyalty points, code sharing, leading to a wider choice of flights and access to facilities at more than 1000 lounges worldwide. The alliance network currently offers over 18,500 daily flights to 1316 airports in 192 countries.

Air India has cleared the IOSA (IATA Operational Safety Audit) renewal successfully, which includes Safety Management System's implementation. Air India has always been committed to the highest level of safety in all its aspects of operations. It has met best international standards and practices besides meeting standards set by DGCA. The national airline was the first airline in India to obtain IOSA and ISAGO (IATA Safety Audit of Ground Operations) certifications.

The traditional Indian-ness, be it the aircraft livery, the delicious Indian cuisine on board or the warm Indian hospitality and service or just the comfort of having Indian crew around, in particular for senior citizens travelling on Air India's international flights, all add to the appeal of brand Air India. The wide seats and extra leg room, extra baggage allowance, extensive domestic and international network, state-of-the-art B787 and B777s, innovative offers and pricing and Star Alliance member benefits, all go to make Air India one of the most trusted and dependable brands for air travellers in India and abroad.

On International Women's Day, Air India flew an all-women crew flight and filed a Guinness World Record for the same.

PREFERRED HOTELS & RESORTS WELCOMES 24 NEW MEMBER HOTELS

Preferred Hotels & Resort, announces the addition of 24 member hotels over the past three months, which mark the company's debut in key regions, signal the expansion of existing partnerships, and represent enhanced presence in key markets.

Travellers can further enhance their guest experience when booking a stay at these new hotels and resorts by enrolling in the iPrefer™ Hotel rewards programme, which offers perks such as points redeemable for free nights and other on-property expenditures, elite status, and complimentary Internet upon every eligible stay at more than 600 participating properties worldwide. Properties that joined the Preferred Hotels & Resorts brand portfolio, include, The Hari London – London, United Kingdom; Lancaster Bangkok – Bangkok, Thailand, and Vivienda Granada and Vivienda Residences – Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, among many others **tt**



KARNATAKA DECLARES 2017 AS “YEAR OF THE WILD”

The Year of the Wild,” a brand new campaign, to kickstart the year, was launched by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, in the presence of Priyank Kharge, Minister of State for IT, BT & Tourism, along with AN Mahesh, Chairman, JLR, Secretary Tourism, Naveen Raj Singh, IAS, Dr N Manjula, IAS, Director-Tourism and Kumar Pushkar, IFS, MD – KSTDC.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said, “I am happy to know Karnataka Tourism, in its endeavour to promote the state has declared 2017 as the Year of the Wild. We are committed to preserving our precious natural heritage and this is one of the many steps taken to fulfill this objective.”

Priyank Kharge, said, “We, at Karnataka Tourism, are doing our duty in conserving our environment in every way possible.”

Naveen Raj Singh, said, “Our objective in declaring 2017 as the Year of the Wild is not limited to wildlife alone. And, we welcome you all to experience the many wonders that await you here.”

Dr N Manjula, said, “The Karnataka Government has also established the Karnataka Eco-Tourism Development Board to help the government in protecting wildlife, creating awareness about it, encouraging eco-tourism, forest safaris, etc.” she concluded.

Kumar Pushkar, said, “The Mobile App has been launched on the Android platform, which is now available on Play Store and the IOS version would be launched very shortly. KSTDC, a Government of Karnataka Undertaking, has a chain of 18 Mayura Hotels, various tour packages operated through its fleet of 42 luxury buses, and also operates the only luxury train of Peninsular India, i.e., The Golden Chariot.” **tt**

FICCI LAUNCHES INDIA'S TRAVEL STARTUP LAUNCHPAD

As part of its mandate to further enhance India's digital drive in the travel and tourism industry the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) launches its maiden initiative aimed at travel startups. “Travel Tech Launchpad” will be a platform that encourages innovation and growth of travel startups during the second edition of FICCI's flagship event, titled, “Digital Travel, Hospitality and Innovation Summit,” scheduled to be held on March 22-23, 2017, in New Delhi.

The Indian Travel & Tourism industry has been growing steadily and needs to be explored with new innovations. The sector's direct contribution to GDP is expected to grow by 7.2 per cent per annum during 2015–25, as per IBEF. The tourism sector has witnessed investments worth \$42.9bn in 2015 and is expected to attract \$132.9bn by 2025.

“FICCI is launching The Travel Tech Launch pad with an objective to encourage entrepreneurship and technology innovation in the field of Travel & Hospitality,” said Rahul Chakravarty, Director and Head – Tourism, FICCI.

“India's Travel and Tourism sector is a highly competitive industry; innovation with technology, customer service and prudent fiscal management must go hand in hand with a well-defined image and brand strategy that is inculcated at an early stage,” commented Carl Vaz, CEO, Charson Advisory, an image and brand management agency **tt**

J&K CELEBRATES CHRISTMAS AT DILLI HAAT

Domestic and International tourists, Delhiites, kids, parents, families and their friends celebrated Christmas day with three Santas from Jammu & Kashmir. Dancing, drawing, selfie, photo sessions, were done by kids and families at J&K Food, Craft & Culture Festival 2016, organised by Jammu & Kashmir Tourism and JKTC, at Dilli Haat, Opp. INA Market, New Delhi. **tt**



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SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM



SARANGKHEDA CHETAK FESTIVAL 2016

Maharashtra's much awaited event. The Sarangkheda festival, was organised by Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) for the first time in order to boost tourism in Nandurbar. The festival witnessed the arrival of more than 2000 horses at its market place, which is also one of the largest horse fairs in the country. The festival also showcased a horse dance show and Powra, a tribal dance by the locals of Nandurbar district, which grabbed the eyeballs of tourists.

MTDC also organised a host of initiatives such as the Tourism Conclave, Uttar Maharashtra Ratna Gaurav Puraskar and Horse Painting exhibition, which were inaugurated by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, in the presence of Jaykumar Jitendrasingh Rawal, Minister of Tourism, Government of Maharashtra; Valsa Nair Singh IAS, Principal Secretary, Tourism and Culture, Government of Maharashtra; Dr KH Govinda Raj IAS, Managing Director, MTDC; Satish Soni, Joint Managing Director, MTDC and Swati Kale, General Manager, MTDC. The event witnessed huge participation of local as well as national tourists.

Jitendrasingh Rawal stated, "Practising the 'Atithi Devo Bhava' philosophy, MTDC will continue to work towards the provision of better facilities and arrangements for the tourists in the coming year."

Valsa Nair Singh said, "Sarangkheda Festival 2016 is an ideal platform to attract tourists from other parts of Maharashtra and we are pleased to be associated with this festival."

KH Govinda Raj said, "From horse show to sports and dance performance, the 15 day-festival has a lot to offer." **tt**

PATA QUARTERLY TOURISM MONITOR



India and Sri Lanka took the top two spots in South Asia with year-on-year growth of 14.2 percent and 12.0, percent respectively.

In Northeast Asia, Korea (ROK) reported a tremendous year-on-year growth of 68.3 percent during the third quarter of 2016, driven by an 85.1 per cent increase in visitor arrivals from China. Japan took second place with 17.1 percent growth for the same period. Arrivals from China to Japan grew by a solid 16.3 percent.

Vietnam witnessed arrivals growth of 35.7 percent, making it the strongest in the region of Southeast Asia. Northern Marianas dominated the Pacific region, witnessing a 27.1 per cent year-on-year growth for the third quarter of 2016. Australia followed, with an increase of 12.6 per cent.

China continues to be a strong and highly influential source market for destinations across the Asia Pacific region. Thailand, for example, enjoyed year-on-year arrivals growth of 14.5 percent from China during the third quarter of 2016. However, Hong Kong SAR and Macao SAR saw slight decreases in the same period. **tt**



WWF PATA BAGH MITRA AWARDS

PATA India and WWF successfully conducted WWF PATA Bagh Mitra Awards, on December, 2016, at WWF Secretariat office at Lodhi Estate, New Delhi. Inder Sharma, Life Member PATA India, along with Ravi Singh, WWF India, Secretary General, presented the awards to the winners.

The PenchBor Tiger Reserve Conservation Foundation, awarded in the organisation category, received the honour on the basis of their work to promote job-based skill development aimed at the youth and women folk of the region. MS Reddy received the award on behalf of Pench Bor Tiger Conservation Foundation.

Ashish Tiwari, Special Secretary, Forest & Environment, Government of Uttar Pradesh, awarded under the Individual category, has played an instrumental role in bringing various stakeholders such as inter-agency cooperation involving enforcement agencies, civil society representatives like WWF, Katarniaghat Foundation, media, judiciary and the trans-boundary Nepal police and forces on a common platform. He has worked in Dudhwa Tiger Reserve for more than six years and has been at the helm of operations in the Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary for over two years. **tt**



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21

अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे
(3 सिविल एन्क्लेव तथा
3 संयुक्त खतम हवाई अड्डे)
International Airports
(3 Civil Enclaves &
3 Joint Venture Airports)

+

08

कस्टम हवाई अड्डे
(4 सिविल एन्क्लेव)
Custom Airports
(4 Civil Enclaves)

+

77

अन्तर्देशीय हवाई अड्डे
Domestic Airports

+

19

अन्य सिविल एन्क्लेव
Other Civil Enclaves

=

125

हवाई अड्डे
Airports



2017: INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM FOR DEVELOPMENT

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, recalling the potential of tourism to advance the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The International Year aims to support a change in policies, business practices and consumer behaviour towards a more sustainable tourism sector than can contribute effectively to the SDGs.

"This is a unique opportunity to build a more responsible and committed tourism sector that can capitalise its immense potential in terms of economic prosperity, social inclusion, peace and understanding, cultural and environmental preservation," said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai.

Accounting for 7 per cent of worldwide exports, one in eleven jobs and 10 per cent of the world's GDP, the tourism sector, if well managed, can foster inclusive economic growth, social inclusiveness and the protection of cultural and natural assets.

The International Year will promote tourism's role in the following five key areas:

- Inclusive and sustainable economic growth
- Social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction
- Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change
- Cultural values, diversity and heritage
- Mutual understanding, peace and security **tt**



AUSTRALIA WELCOMES OVER 250,000 INDIAN TRAVELLERS

In 2015, the destination achieved a milestone when it welcomed over 200,000 Indian travellers during the year. Adding another feather to its cap, Australia has now notched an impressive 253,100 arrivals from India as of Year Ended (YE) October 2016. This number reflected a growth of 11.3 per cent vis-a-vis the same period last year, making India the ninth largest inbound market for arrivals to Australia. The month of October 2016 alone saw 20,400 Indian arrivals to the destination, an impressive growth of 24 per cent over the same period in 2015. Most importantly, holiday sectors have driven the overall market growth with an impressive 20 per cent and 19 per cent increase in arrivals and spend, respectively.

Nishant Kashikar, Country Manager, India & Gulf, Tourism Australia, said, "We are elated that arrivals from India into Australia have witnessed a consistent growth trajectory over the years. Leveraging the continually increasing interest in Australia, we will continue to drive innovative and focussed promotional activities."

The Tourism Forecasting Committee (TFC) has predicted 265,000 visitors from India for the July 2016 - June 17 period, a 9.6 per cent increase over 2015-16. Arrivals from India are expected to perform well with an average annual financial year growth rate of 6.4 per cent through to the financial year 2021-22. **tt**

ANIL BHANDARI HONOURED WITH LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD 2016

Anil Bhandari, former Chairman of India Tourism Development, and former Advisor, ITC Ltd – Travel, Tourism, Real Estate and Hotels, was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award on the occasion of Hotelier India Awards 2016, organised by ITP Publishing India, which was held at The Leela Ambience, Gurgaon.

Bhandari thanked ITP Publishing India, Hotelier India and the panel of judges for the recognition of his extraordinary contributions to the Indian Hospitality Industry. He said it was a great honour for him to receive the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award as it was an incentive for him to further promote Indian Tourism. Recalling his role in the advancement of ITDC, he said it was a major achievement in his career. **tt**



ANNUAL SA TOURISM ROADSHOW IS BACK

South African Tourism is back with the 2017 edition of their biggest travel trade engagement—the 14th Annual Roadshow

TT BUREAU



The much-anticipated, India-wide, four-day congregation is set to take place from January 30 to February 3, 2017, in Chennai, Bengaluru, Delhi and Mumbai.

The purpose of the roadshow is to bring together members of the local tourism trade and familiarise them with the Indian operator market.

This year, nearly 65 South African exhibitors, both destination-marketing companies and product owners, are expected to be part of this interactive programme, which has been designed to increase destination awareness among travel planners in India. The highlight of this year will be the presence of numerous first-time participants who will be showcasing some exceptionally unusual experiences, adding a new dimension to the destination's appeal. Each year, the roadshow has provided a great platform for travel operators from India to further expand their understanding of South Africa as a leisure holiday and MICE destination.

Encouraged by the potential of the Indian market and the tremendous growth

opportunities it offers, many first-time South African suppliers have joined in to participate in this year's mega gathering. Year-on-year, the response from Indian trade partners has also been moving northwards and the registrations for this year predict the 2017 edition to be host to one of the largest ever attendances so far.

Elaborating on the event, Hanneli Slabber, Country Manager, South African Tourism India, said, "We are proud to organise one of the biggest annual trade roadshows in the travel and tourism industry in India over the past 13 years. Seeing the increasing outbound travel demand and potential from the Indian market and the year-on-year success of our roadshows, we have put in our best efforts to get an even more diverse mix of South African suppliers to this year's roadshow. The annual roadshows have proven to be a great learning tool for us to grow in the Indian market by improving our travel trade outreach and engagement in the country. We are positive that this platform will help further develop and strengthen business opportunities with our Indian travel agents."



THE GUY THING

The Maison continues to push boundaries and evolve the expression of fine craftsmanship across each of its product categories

TT BUREAU

The pioneering spirit which has guided Montblanc since 1906, has revolutionised the culture of writing, thanks to breakthrough innovations. Every new innovation heralds new functionalities and ground-breaking designs which remain grounded in the Maison's heritage of sophistication and crafted to the highest standards through the skills of its artisans. The Montblanc Emblem has set a mission for itself – creating fine lifetime companies born from outstanding pioneering ideas, and with that in mind, has set the standards in terms of performance, innovation, quality and expression of style.



MONTBLANC INTRODUCES BRONZE INTO ITS 1858 COLLECTION

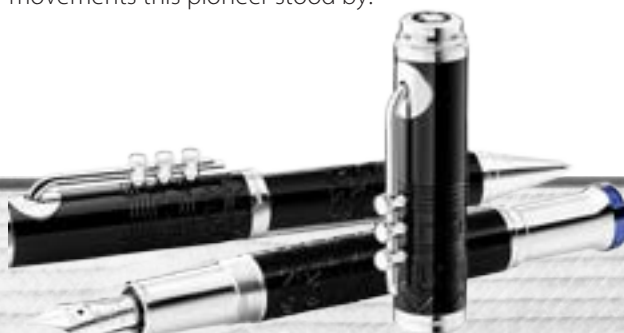
The vintage style of the Montblanc 1858 Collection has been further enhanced by the introduction of bronze – a first for the Maison. Through this choice of metal, Montblanc combines traditional Swiss artisanal watchmaking with a genuine material from watchmaking history, embodying the true military spirit of the 1930s. Bronze complements both the colours of the dials and the antique-style straps with its warm sheen, unifying all the elements for a true vintage design. For the first time in the watchmaking industry, bronze is coupled with steel for two new models, and it results in a bi-colour, bi-material combination that brings out the best of vintage design at an extremely attractive price point.

INTRODUCING NEW ADDITIONS TO MEISTERSTÜCK SELECTION SFUMATO

Blending age-old traditions with the Maison's passion for finest craftsmanship and innovation, each item is a painted masterpiece inspired by "sfumato", the ingenious Renaissance painting technique pioneered by Leonardo Da Vinci and his followers to achieve fine shading and the most delicate graduation between colours.

MONTBLANC'S GREAT CHARACTERS MILES DAVIS: A TRIBUTE TO A PIONEER OF JAZZ MUSIC

With a limitation number based on the year of his birth, the trumpet-shaped Montblanc Great Characters Miles Davis Limited Edition 1926 is a masterpiece of the finest Montblanc engraving. The elegant design staged on the platinum-coated cap and barrel brings to life Miles Davis' imprint on the evolution of American music, picking up the different movements this pioneer stood by.



TODAY'S
traveller
20
Years
Est. 1997



CORPORATE



THE WOW EXPERIENCE

In conversation with
Vishvapreet Singh Cheema
 General Manager, Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi

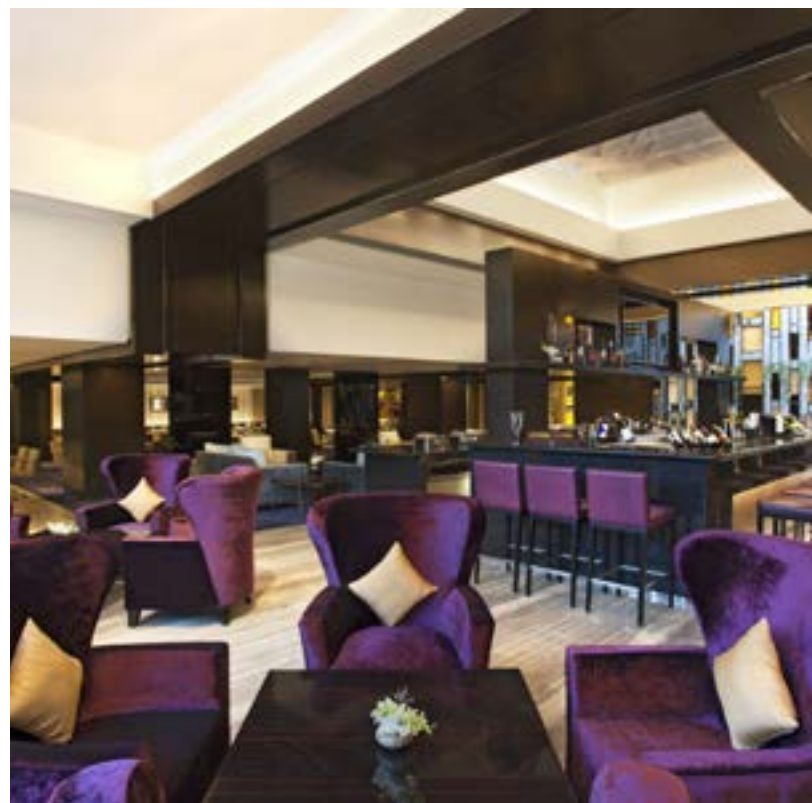
TT BUREAU

What are the USPs of the Hotel?

There are many USPs that the hotel possesses, the key areas being - 100% Guest Satisfaction Guarantee, the Yes I Can! spirit of service, proximity to the booming corporate hub of Gurugram and the international and domestic airports, making Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi the ideal place to stay for business travellers. Even for leisure travellers, the easy accessibility to city sights makes it an eager tourist's delight.

Apart from this, we have provisions for an early Check-in or late Check-out, providing a lot of flexibility to guests staying with us. Our rates represent excellent value for money. We have a bouquet of complimentary services such as breakfast, airport transfers and Wi-Fi access for all rooms in the hotel. And, for those who are leaving early in the morning, there is a wholesome 'Grab & Run' breakfast. This includes coffee, tea, bottles of water, fruits and energy bars.

We have different rooms to suit different needs. There is a choice





of Superior, Premium or Business Class rooms and Executive or Deluxe Suites and a Presidential Suite sold at various price points.

Our expansive and luxurious R the Spa, accredited by National Accreditation Bureau for Health, a hallmark of quality within the healthcare business, has been very well received by guests. Guests find it of great value with its Rejuvenate, Relax & Replenish philosophy. The hotel also offers superlative dining experiences that include the iconic, The Great Kabab Factory, which is a must-do Delhi experience, while the multi-award-winning restaurant, Neung Roi, showcases unexplored Thai cuisine from the Isan, Lanna and Yabi regions, and is a must-try for lovers of authentic Thai food.

We also have state-of-the-art business meeting spaces that includes a Business Centre with its own meeting rooms and the full portfolio of high-tech business accrements, as well as banqueting spaces Crystal and Ebony, featuring exquisite Czechoslovakian crystal chandeliers. All our banquet halls are equipped with the latest high-definition, hi-fidelity technological aids.

And, for those seeking a private space during meetings, there is the Plaza Lounge. It's an exclusive lounge for guests staying in Business Class Rooms and Suites.

Any new developments at your property?

In December, we have launched our new avant garde bar, The Orb. It has an eclectic, lively atmosphere and offers great music, exotic drinks and the Chef's special food menu. There will be drinks from all over the orbit—some exotic, some all time favourites and some specially curated by internationally reputed mixologists for our guests. It's a place where you can unwind with your friends and celebrate all your special occasions.

What are the facilities that your hotel offers to luxury and leisure travellers?

Luxury for us is a combination of many things, but foremost is our ability to surpass guest expectations and create a WOW experience for them. For instance, while our Business Class Rooms and Suites may be as luxurious as in any part of the world, our Plaza Lounge just surprises them. It's an exclusive, dedicated lounge for guests staying in Business Class Rooms and Suites who desire private Food & Beverage options in the hotel. There is Wi-Fi, daily buffet breakfast and cocktails, plus pre-dinner hors d'oeuvres – guests can enjoy these complimentary offerings at The Plaza Lounge during their stay.

Similarly, our fine dining restaurants with their authentic taste and exquisite cuisines are another dimension of luxury. While there is authentic Thai at Neung Roi, and delicious kebabs at The Great Kabab Factory, the 24X7 dining restaurant NYC offers something unique every day. Here, you can savour all kinds of cuisine, be it Spanish, Mexican, Californian and many more.

Again to reiterate, R the Spa has been very well received by guests who find great value in its offer of Rejuvenate, Relax & Replenish. We have self contained suites in the spa which facilitate delivery of extended spa treatments featuring specially designed therapies. We also offer a Day Spa package, which allows guests to directly check into the spa instead of going into the room. This is specifically designed keeping in mind jet-lagged and transit travellers.

Anything else you would like to share with our readers?

It is a well known fact that our hotel is a popular destination for weddings and big banquet functions. But, what is not very widely known is that we are amongst the best in the city in organising a private party, a group celebration, a corporate party or even a social gathering. Our warm yet modern spaces are ideal for everything, from birthday and anniversary parties to family reunions. Whatever our guests have in mind, our event planning resources can help book the right kind of space, secure guest accommodations, manage guest lists and more.

At our hotel we do not let shortage of options cramp your partying spirit. We aim to create a festival of the senses, one that can include a range of options, right from an open-air panorama with customised decorations at the poolside to the colonial bar setting.



CHRISTMAS EVE CELEBRATIONS AT ADTOI

ADTOI had its General House meeting at Hotel Metropolitan & SPA, New Delhi, on the eve of Christmas. Large numbers of ADTOI members, including PR/Media, participated in the meeting. PP Khanna, President, thanked Reena Chopra, EC Member and Chairman, Women Empowerment and General House Cultivation Committee, for organising the Christmas Eve celebrations, with the support of other lady members and members in general. **tt**

VFS GLOBAL LAUNCHES CZECH REPUBLIC VISA APPLICATION CENTRE IN AHMEDABAD

The Embassy of the Czech Republic and VFS Global have launched a Czech

Republic Visa Application Centre in Ahmedabad, to make visa application facilities more accessible for residents of India's fastest emerging business hub in the western region. The centre was inaugurated by HE Milan Hovorka, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to India, at a ceremony held on January 09, 2017. The inauguration was also attended by other key members from the Embassy and VFS Global.

Speaking about the launch, HE Milan Hovorka said, "Yet again, we continue to expand our footprints in the seventh major city in India, where people can submit their Schengen visa applications for travel to the Czech Republic by going to the visa centre of VFS Global."

Commenting on the launch, Vinay Malhotra, Chief Operating Officer -Middle East and South Asia, VFS Global, said, "We are pleased to further enhance the visa services network for the Czech Republic in India, through this modern visa application facility in Ahmedabad." **tt**



EAT OUT



WINTER BRUNCH AT EROS HOTEL

Eros Hotel, Nehru Place, is celebrating the pink winters with lavish Winter Sunday Brunch at Blooms, the all-day-dining restaurant and Coffee Shop. The hotel serves extensive buffet spread of multi-cuisine delights available to all in-house and walk-in guests, featuring elaborate delicacies with appropriate beverages to get along and much more. Live music and warm hospitality enhances the experience furthermore. The Sunday brunch at Blooms scores points for its fabulous poolside setting with lush green lawns soaking up the warmth of afternoon sun. Dine on a luxurious spread of Indian, Chinese, Mediterranean and continental cuisine and enjoy an array of activities for the entire family with a dedicated kids zone and kids special activities. **tt**



VISIT CALIFORNIA CONDUCTS LUXURY WORKSHOPS IN NEW DELHI & MUMBAI

Visit California, in partnership with FRHI Hotels & Resorts, conducted a Luxury Workshop in Delhi and Mumbai in December 2016. The workshop targeted travel companies focussing on luxury and high-end travellers. Senior agents from selected travel companies in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Ahmedabad were invited to be part of the workshop. It was a closed door session to discuss various high-end destinations and experiences in California, including what's new. A total of 38 agents attended the workshop. **tt**

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CORPORATE JET-SETTER



VINITH VIJAYAN
DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER
ADITYA BIRLA GROUP

Most memorable trip to any destination?

Boracay, Philippines, is one of the best places that I have visited. It has clear and neat beaches, a very vibrant and entertaining atmosphere, besides activities that keep you entertained all day, not to mention their amazing casinos.

You dream of going to?

I have always wanted to go to Switzerland.

Favourite airline and why?

I would say Air Seychelles. They provide excellent customer service.

Best hotel experience and why?

I really enjoyed my stay at Hotel Marco Plaza, Cebu, Philippines. The reasons were their professional service standards, latest facilities, superb Wi-Fi, an excellent buffet, and a memorable December 31, night which included an awesome party and exciting fireworks.

A place you plan to visit again?

Undoubtedly, it would be Ocean Park, Hong Kong. It's so huge that you need at least 2-3 days to fully explore the place.

A family vacation that stands out?

All our vacations are memorable, but the underwater walk done at Mauritius provided the ultimate thrill.



Your best holiday with friends?

I had a great time with my friends at Ganpatipule, Maharashtra.

Great food you enjoyed and where?

I really enjoyed the local non-vegetarian fare in Kerala wherever I went.

What to watch out for while travelling?

Read up on the local information beforehand and not to miss out on anything /or any place, and also to be aware of the local customs, etc. It's very important to be dressed as per the culture of the place and also to know local rules.

As a travel buyer, what's your philosophy?

Always opt for buying the locally produced items.

HOSPITALITY UNRIVALLED

We catch up with Richard Barooah, General Manager, Radisson Udaipur, as the property completes one year in operations

TT BUREAU

As your hotel completes one year – What are the highlights of the year?

Since Radisson Udaipur completed its first year of operations by end December 2016, it was fairly easy to measure its performance. Being the city's first upscale MNC business hotel managed by Carlson Rezidor, it had to do its positioning very distinctly among all other hotels of the city, and it was indeed a very successful exercise.

Previously, most of the business clientele used to stay scattered, residing mostly in resort properties. At Carlson Rezidor hotel, we understand the needs of today's discerning business travellers as our domain expertise. We mostly focussed on business travellers and mid-size MICE business along with some FIT business segments. This gave a boost to the hotel, by generating a higher occupancy and more business from corporates. Hence, the hotel never saw any low season, which is common in a tourist destination like Udaipur.

Apart from this, our main focus was on guest satisfaction, and we managed to close in amongst one of the top performing hotels, along with over 90 per cent employee satisfaction. As a business hotel we also leveraged on Food & Beverage business from the local market, where we introduced various food festivals for all local dwellers of Udaipur, as most properties in Udaipur focussed mainly on in-house guests. This has set a new precedence among the local people to try world cuisines which are different from their regular fare. We usually host these festivals every month, and call specialty chefs from our various properties.

Radisson Udaipur's F3, is the first night club of the city which hosts various events with popular DJs from the music world. This was again a new concept for the city, but it has been accepted very well by all kinds of travellers along with the young local crowd, as the city was missing out on night life. Overall, the hotel has been closed with the highest occupancy in the city, and this being the first year of operations, it was something to factor in and cherish.

What will be different and new in Radisson Udaipur in the New Year?

We will provide more exciting options on the food festival front and host bigger events with celebrity DJs and invite famous music bands from across the country.

We would like to launch a variety of books from renowned publishers and host various art and craft exhibitions to promote local talent into the global market. In terms of food, we would like to introduce various innovative food festivals using alternative healthy and organic food options, which would be a new concept in Udaipur.

What kind of feedback and impressions have you had from your guests since the opening of the hotel?

As I mentioned earlier, we have closed as one of the topmost performing hotels among Carlson Hotels in Southeast Asia in terms of customer satisfaction. In terms of external feedback, we have received over 90 per cent excellent customer feedback. We have grown by leaps and bounds on our online ranking by over 120. Today, it is with great pride that I can say, Radisson Udaipur is one of the most popular hotels in one of the world's top tourist destinations, Udaipur.



THE MAGNESIUM CAR

The Lister Knobbly Stirling Moss edition was the car Moss drove to victory at the Silverstone racing circuit in 1958

TT BUREAU

Stirling Moss, the former Formula One British driver, was invited by Brian Lister to drive for Lister on three separate occasions, at Goodwood in 1954, Silverstone in 1958 and at Sebring in 1959. In the year 1958, Stirling was at the wheel of a super lightweight Lister Knobbly. A victory for Silverstone was assured beforehand, thanks to this unbeatable car. Later, when he was quizzed about whether the 1958 Lister Knobbly was a competitive car or not, Stirling replied simply, "Well, who was going to beat you?"

Sir Stirling has been a significant and hugely loved figure of motorsport for over half a century and rightly deserves his place in the International Motorsports Hall of Fame. Between the years 1947 and 1962, he participated in 529 races and won 212 of them, including 16 Formula One Grand Prix titles. Therefore, associating the word "legend" with him is hardly an exaggeration.

Lewis Hamilton, the Formula One Champion, in the Foreword to his new biography – "Stirling Moss – My Racing Life," writes, "'Ever since I became fascinated by motorsport as a young boy, I knew, as everybody else did, the name of Stirling Moss. He is considered by many to be the greatest British racing driver of

all time. Of course, I was never able to see him race during his professional career, but that didn't stop him from being one of the motivations that drove me on to reach the top of the motor racing tree for my country."

Each car will be powered by a 3.8-litre original specification racing engine, professionally built around an original period Jaguar engine block, producing 350 bhp at 4,950 rpm. This is linked to an original specification four-speed gearbox, manufactured for Lister by renowned engineers, Crosthwaite and Gardiner.

Technical Specs

Lightweight

Body shell, engine sump, rear differential, gearbox & clutch casings honed from ultralight magnesium.

Limited Edition

Solid sterling silver plaque with Sir Stirling's signature engraved and numbered 1 to 10.

Historic Race or Road Use

Available with Historical Technical Passport papers for historic race use or Individual Vehicle Approval pass for the road.

Design

Long wing design, lightweight tubular chassis, classic Lister green and yellow coachwork as in period.



The magic of *Virgin coconut oil*

Purest form of coconut oil extracted from coconut milk

Treasure trove of vitamins, minerals & anti-oxidants

Source of Lauric acid & Vitamin E

Rich in medium-chain fatty acid, anti viral, anti bacterial & anti fungal

**Smoothens
skin and hair**



**Strengthens
teeth**



**Good for
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**Reduce
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DUBAI CALLING

The recently concluded MTM+LLTM held at The Ashok, New Delhi saw an entire section solely devoted to Dubai and MICE, here we bring you some of the highlights of this captivating Session

TT BUREAU

Dubai has fast earned the reputation of being a leading MICE destination. The reason being that Dubai has everything that MICE seekers require, whether it is ease of travel, the kind of properties Dubai offers, the destination features, entertainment options, and most importantly, the warm hospitality that is its trademark.

The Dubai Business Events Focus Session was moderated by Carl Vaz, Director – India, Dubai Business Events, and the panellists included Captain Rajesh Sharma, Vice President- Office Services, Resources; Vibhu Narayan, Vice President, Reliance Jio; Amit Kaul, Head- Corporate Real Estate & Administration, Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce, Life Insurance Company Limited; Rajan Verma, Deputy General Manager, JK Lakshmi Cement Ltd, Amaresh Tiwari, Managing Director, AT Seasons & Vacations Travel Pvt. Ltd.



Carl Vaz,
Director – India, Dubai Business Events



Rajan Verma,
Deputy General Manager,
JK Lakshmi Cement Ltd



Vibhu Narayan,
Vice President, Reliance Jio

The Session saw a detailed insight on Dubai by Carl Vaz, the broad spectrum of services available at the destination and why it has remained a favourite among corporates and travel agents alike.

During the Panel Discussions, Vibhu Narayan explained, "The broad spectrum of services offered to you on a table is unparalleled. Dubai has emerged as a major finance destination where the who's who of the finance world are present, and the kind of services that you expect from any world-class organisation or a world-class industry are there for the asking."



Dubai has transcended from being just a destination with world-class facilities to a country that is warm and inviting, Rajan Verma offered a different take with his comment, "Stakeholders look forward to Dubai not only as a destination with world class-facilities, but a mature destination comfortable with itself. In terms of sightseeing, you get modernity mixed with the traditional which



"EVEN WHEN CHINA HAD TO DO AN INCENTIVE PROGRAMME INVOLVING 26,000 PEOPLE, THEY COULD FIND ONLY ONE DESTINATION WHICH COULD MEET THEIR EXPECTATIONS – AND THAT WAS DUBAI."

— AMARESH TIWARI



both natural and manmade. Dubai developed their attractions on a year-to-year basis, finding new attractions each time, thereby proving to the world how tourism could be developed even in the absence of significant nature-based attractions. Outstanding accommodation, great accessibility, minds blowing attractions and ancillary services – these are what make Dubai a great destination."



Amit Kaul,
Head- Corporate Real Estate & Administration,
Canara HSBC OBC, LIC Ltd



Captain Rajesh Sharma,
Vice President- Office Services, Resources



Amaresh Tiwari,
Managing Director, A.T. Seasons &
Vacations Travel Pvt. Ltd.

has been kept alive, and which very few countries have. For instance, you could have the tallest skyscraper in the world, and alongside, a traditional Arab house which has been kept intact."

Be it for single women travellers or a family on vacation, destination Dubai is one of the safest places in the world, observed Amit Kaul. Dubai has always been at par and above in terms of safety and security for tourists and citizens alike.

Amaresh Tiwari on his part reminisced, "When Dubai started developing their tourism industry, they did so totally on a textbook basis. For tourism to succeed, you first need the attractions –

airlines – Emirates, which connects the entire world to Dubai. The airline has also played a very important role in arranging visas for all those who want to travel and spend 48 hours in Dubai, for shopping or any other reason.

Apart from that, one thing which makes Dubai stand apart is its multi-ethnicity and multi-cultural diversity, which makes you feel at home wherever you go, whether you are in the mall, or in the desert, or in the Deira or taking a harbour cruise. One gets a distinct home-away from home feel! Clearly Dubai is an inspirational destination.

Captain Rajesh Sharma remarked, "Dubai as a destination is that is also attractive on account of its proximity – just a short flight from India. You see a lot of companies taking this into account when they plan MICE activities."

Be it flight services or a visa procedure, Dubai is impeccable. One has regular flight connectivity, even if one conducts activities in multiple places. Dubai is the hub for one of the world's favourite



GLOBAL TOURISM COUNCIL GOES LIVE



The Global Tourism Council (GTC) is finally launched and comes into force effective December 9, 2016

TT BUREAU

The core team of GTC – Advisors, Business Entrepreneurs and Tourism leaders – represent the best of the breed from across all sectors of the industry. GTC's key focus is on increasing Tourism, Destination Promotion, Education, Real Estate and Tourism Investment between India and abroad.

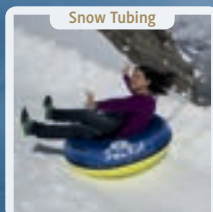
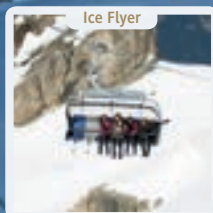
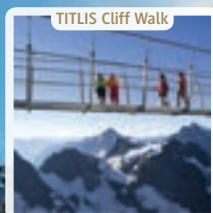
GTC is a coming together of the best professionals from across India and the world as knowledgeable partners with a commitment to advancement of the global trade and tourism industry.

The Board of Trustees of GTC has appointed the Governing Council members, namely, Iqbal Mulla as the Chief Council, Rajiv Duggal as Deputy Chief Council and Manoj Gursahani and Sheldon Santwan as Governing Council Members.

Talking about the initiatives of the Council, Iqbal Mulla said, "The Council will address the problems and focus on all segments of the travel and tourism industry, like aviation, road transport, bilateral tourism, inbound travel, etc. Moreover, we have people in the council who know the industry in-toto."

Expressing his views on this initiative, Rajiv Duggal said, "We are elated at the launch of the Global Tourism Council, bringing together distinguished members with years of experience to play the role of advisors to travel and tourism professionals. With GTC, we will partner with trade and tourism professionals and help facilitate partnerships. With the Global Tourism Council, we will finally be able to guide the industry in the right direction."





ONE MOUNTAIN – ALL SEASONS

Imagine a bright blue sky and the touch of sparkling fresh-fallen snow. Explore the world of eternal ice. Feel like an eagle and hover over stunning glacier crevasses. Enjoy snow tubing at the Glacier Park. Mount TITLIS is a spot not to miss!

TITLIS GLACIER MOUNTAIN

Discover the highest glacier mountain in the heart of Switzerland.

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Ascend to a height of 10.000 feet in the world's first revolving cable car.

ICE FLYER CHAIR LIFT

Glide safely over stunning glacier crevasses.

TITLIS GLACIER PARK

Slide down the hill on a snow tube or a sledge.

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+ TITLIS GLACIER MOUNTAIN WELCOME TO THE HEART OF SWITZERLAND

APPOINTMENTS



VIJAY KRISHNAN has been appointed as the General Manager of Alila Fort Bishangarh, Jaipur. Prior to his appointment with Alila, Krishnan was the General Manager of Four Points by Sheraton Jaipur, where he had successfully completed the conversion of The Anya, Gurgaon – Member of Design Hotels to Starwood Hotels & Resorts. A driven, passionate hotelier, he started his career with the Oberoi Hotels & Resorts and went on to build his credentials over the years with Starwood Hotels & Resorts, The Park Hotels, Hyatt Regency and Le Meridien.



RAJAT SETHI has been designated as the General Manager of The Grand New Delhi. An industry veteran with over 18 years in the hospitality industry, Sethi brings with him holistic experience, including pre-opening and expertise in revenue analysis, yield management and sales and marketing. An alumnus of IIM Chandigarh, he possesses an in-depth understanding of the Delhi NCR market, coupled with a sound knowledge of hotel operations. In his new role he will be in charge of overseeing the transformation of The Grand New Delhi.



PREMA CHOLKAR has been appointed as the Regional Director Sales & Marketing at The Accord Metropolitan. She comes with over 18 years of experience and is an Economics graduate from Mumbai University. Her last stint was with Raintree Hotels as their Regional Sales Manager – West. Described as hardworking, tenacious and a self starter, she believes in progress by accepting responsibilities and newer challenges. She has also been associated with Royal Orchid Hotels, Fortune Park Lake City and Clarks Group of Hotels, to name a few.



NAZMA MAMAJI has been made Director of Sales and Marketing at Novotel Hyderabad Airport. In her new role, Mamaji will be responsible for scaling new heights of revenues for the hotel, bringing in greater visibility and aiming for higher team engagement in the surging hospitality market of Hyderabad. A seasoned hotelier, she comes with over a decade of hospitality experience with deep expertise in business development and team handling. Prior to joining Novotel Hyderabad Airport, she was associated with leading hotel chains such as Hilton, Hyatt Hotels, IHHR Hospitality and Indian Hotels Co Ltd.



PAYAL SHAH has recently joined as the Communications Manager at the Trident, Bandra Kurla, Mumbai. With a career span of half a decade in the hospitality industry, she will be currently responsible for the overall marketing and communication activities for the property. Shah is an experienced hospitality professional as can be seen from her work ethic and began her career with the Goa Marriott Resort & Spa as a part of the Voyager programme.

iNFHRA FM Excellence Awards : PUNE CHAPTER

The Third FM Excellence Conference & Awards was held in Pan Card Clubs, Pune, on December 21, 2016, with the support of leading industry veterans

TT BUREAU



VM Sawant,
Regional Labour Commissioner, Pune



Winners and Runners-Up

The Third iNFHRA FM Excellence Conference & Awards in the series, and PUNE's first ever FM Excellence Conference & Awards was organised at Pan Card Clubs on December 21, 2016, and was supported by leading industry bodies like Software Exporters Association of Pune (SEAP) and Hinjewadi Industries Association (HIA).

The occasion was graced by the presence of VM Sawant, Regional Labour Commissioner, Pune and Sonal Bhatawdekar, Additional Director, Software Technology Parks of India (STPI), Pune.

The day was also graced by the presence of Prasanna Patwardhan, Chairman and Managing Director, Prasanna Purple, Rishi Agrawal, Chief Operating Officer, Bluefin Technologies Inc, Jaydeep Wakankar, Vice President Finance, Allscripts (India) and CA Anil Patwardhan, Chief Finance Officer, KPIT Technologies Limited, who shared the dais and share their experience in

India's first ever Panel Discussion on **CXO's Expectation from the FM & Admin department.**

The prominent jury comprised industry professionals from Bajaj Allianz, Bajaj Finance Ltd, BMC Software India Pvt Ltd, CBRE South Asia Pvt Ltd, John Deere India Pvt Ltd, KPIT Technologies Pvt Ltd, Mahindra Sanyo Special Steels, Mantri Constructions, Master Card, Prasanna Purple Mobility Solutions, Principal Global Services, Thermax Limited, and Treebo Hotels.

Below are the Winners & Runners-Up across various categories:



Corporate Real Estate & Space Management powered by TREEBO HOTELS

Winner: Kiran Kudlingar, BMC Software

1st Runner-Up: Ajay Kankrej, Tech Mahindra Ltd

2nd Runner-Up: Rahul Rajopadhye, Amdocs Development Centre India



CXO Panel



Corporate Travel, Transport & Logistics powered by VIA.COM and supported by NEXA SHIVAJINAGAR PUNE, OLA CORPORATE, S RIDE & PRASANNA PURPLE MOBILITY SOLUTIONS

Winner: Amol Undre, Persistent Systems Limited

1st Runner-Up: Amit Kaul, Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce Life Insurance

2nd Runner-Up: Kiran Kudlingar, BMC Software



Ecological Sustainability powered by ARRAYSTORM and supported by SMART ENVIRO SYSTEMS

Winner: Sanjay Chaudhari, Persistent Systems Limited

1st Runner-Up: Shailendra Potdar, Matrix Property Management Services

2nd Runner-Up: Nilesh Jadhav, WNS Global Services (Weikfield IT-CITI INOPARK)



Innovation & Technology powered by CARZONRENT INDIA and supported by INNOFITT

Winner: Madhav Karandikar, Symantec Software India

1st Runner-Up: Kiran Kudlingar, BMC Software

2nd Runner-Up: Nilesh Kulkarni, Jones Lang LaSalle (Accenture Account)



Safety & Security Award powered by CHECKMATE INDUSTRIAL SERVICES and supported by INTERNATIONAL HOUSEKEEPING AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES

Winner: Rajesh Vaidya, HDFC Life

1st Runner-Up: Robin Hyam, Persistent Systems Limited

2nd Runner-Up: Sarath Premachandran, Mercedes-Benz Research & Development India

The Awards were also supported by Fuego Furniture, Testo India, DMS Designs, Shree Sai Caterers, Today's Traveller and Industrial Safety Review magazine.

The next three Cities of the Tour are scheduled in Hyderabad, on January 18, 2017; Mumbai, on February 15, 2017, and Chennai, on March 10, 2017.

For more information on the awards and to associate with the same, kindly email on support@infhra.com



Sonal Bhatawdekar,
Additional Director, Software Technology
Parks of India (STPI), Pune



Jury Members



THE ENTREPRENEURS

Over 3,000 entrepreneurs from all over the world congregated at the The TiE Global Summit held at Hotel Taj Palace, New Delhi, on December 16 and 17, 2016

MEET

TT BUREAU





The Summit was held in partnership with leading agencies of the Government of India, 20+ TIE chapters from India, Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia and Dubai, and saw entrepreneurs from all over the world attend The TIE Global Summit, held at Hotel Taj Palace, New Delhi, on December 16 and 17, 2016. The event highlights included Lets Speed Network; Workshop; Excellence Awards – Triumph Lived; Young Achiever Award; Koffee with Keynotes; Meet & Greet Charter Members; The Networking App and Spirit of Manufacturing Awards.

The event included keynote speakers like Amitabh Kant, CEO, Niti Ayog, Government of India, Travis Kalanick, Co-founder, Uber, and Alia Bhatt, Indian actress to name a few.



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AVIATION





FLY HIGH WITH AIR INDIA ON SPECIAL FARES

National carrier Air India once again brings the joy of booking air tickets at the price of Rajdhani Express, 2nd AC. Passengers travelling on select domestic sectors in the Economy Class can avail this exclusive offer.

The "Special Fares" scheme commences from 6th January, 2017. Tickets booked between 6th January and 10th April will be valid for travel period between January 26th, 2017 to April 30th, 2017. Tickets can be purchased

only from the Air India website, airline city booking offices and travel agents. Also, a lucky draw on select flights will be conducted every Tuesday and Wednesday on the special fares route during the validity of the schemes.

Around 20,000 passengers travel in Rajdhani Express trains on a daily basis across the country. Passengers booking their tickets under this scheme can reach their destination at the same cost of Rajdhani Express in much lesser time.

In June, last year, Air India introduced "The Super Fares" scheme, under which passengers unable to get confirmed bookings on Rajdhani Express had the opportunity to book tickets 4 hours prior to the flight departure, at fares equivalent to Rajdhani Express (1A). The scheme received a good response because of which it is introduced again. tt

JUST IN
Air India will now commence a direct flight to Chandigarh from Pune for the first time, from January 16, 2017. This new flight is a move to promote regional connectivity by the national carrier. tt



SWISS EARNS IATA FAST TRAVEL PLATINUM AWARD

SWISS has been honoured with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Fast Travel Platinum Award for its wide range of innovative self-service facilities. SWISS CEO Thomas Klühr accepted the prestigious distinction from IATA at SWISS's Kloten headquarters.

"Tapping the very latest technologies to offer our customers the most comfortable and convenient air travel experience is one of our paramount service priorities," said Thomas Klühr when accepting the award. tt



TURKISH AIRLINES LAUNCHES DIRECT SERVICES TO ZANZIBAR

Turkish Airlines has launched its direct flights between Istanbul and Zanzibar. Following the addition of Zanzibar, Turkish Airlines will now be flying to 293 destinations worldwide, 50 of which are in Africa. These include the east African city hubs of Dar es Salaam, Kilimanjaro, Nairobi, Mogadishu, Djibouti, Asmara, Addis Ababa, Kigali, Entebbe and Zanzibar.

Ahmet Olmüştür, Chief Marketing Officer at Turkish Airlines, said, "We are delighted to open the new route to Zanzibar, a truly remarkable destination. We continually seek out opportunities to expand our network and look forward to welcoming our passengers on their way to Zanzibar in the near future." tt



ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES MARKS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY DAY WITH ORPHANS

Ethiopian Airlines colourfully marked orphan children's Christmas party at its headquarters, providing the children drawn from 14 humanitarian organisations with giveaway items and entertaining them with lively artistic performances. Present at the celebration were ET management staff, orphan children and parents from 14 NGOs, Ethiopian Brand Ambassador, Hanna Godefa, and employees from different working units.

While delivering a keynote speech on the occasion, Ato Mesay Shiferaw, A/VP Corporate HRM at Ethiopian, said, "We are increasingly embarking on corporate social responsibility endeavours so as to sustainably ensure the social and economic wellbeing of the children; and today's Christmas party is a continuation of our commitments to be alongside the children and make them self-reliant citizens." tt

DIGITAL TRAVEL, HOSPITALITY & INNOVATION SUMMIT

March 22-23, 2017, FICCI, Federation House, New Delhi



SOME OF THE EMINENT SPEAKERS



Dr. Arun Kumar Manocha
Chairman &
Managing Director, IRCTC



Deep Kalra
Chairman &
Group CEO MakeMyTrip



Geeta Jain
CEO
Carlson Wagonlit Travel



Raja Natesan
CEO
Uniglobe Travel South Asia



Indiver Rastogi
President – Global Corporate
Travel, Thomas Cook



Ashish Kumar
Managing Partner
Agnitio Consulting



Ajay Bali
Managing Director
BCD Travel



Sharat Dhall
President
Yatra Online Pvt. Ltd



Vishal Suri
Managing Director
SOTC



Ajay Kumar
Vice President & General Manager -
India, American Express Global
Business Travel



Hari Nair
Founder & CEO
Holiday IQ



Abhishek Rajan
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Travel Marketplace , Paytm



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HERTZ GLOBAL IS NOW CATHAY PACIFIC'S EXCLUSIVE CAR RENTAL SERVICE PROVIDER

Hertz Global has become the exclusive car rental service provider of Hong Kong-based international carrier Cathay Pacific, following the signing of a two-year-agreement between the companies. As part of the agreement, the car rental company has launched a specifically-created Hertz, Dollar and Thrifty website to provide Cathay Pacific's passengers with convenient access to a broad range of vehicles and offers at around 10,000 locations globally. In addition, Cathay Pacific passengers will now receive an automatic 5 per cent discount on Hertz Rent a Car basic car rental globally.

"Becoming the exclusive car rental service provider of Cathay Pacific is a significant milestone in our long standing partnership with the airline," said Eoin MacNeill, Vice President, Hertz Asia Pacific. "

Roberto Abbondio, Managing Director, Cathay Pacific Holidays, said: "At Cathay Pacific, we care about our passengers' experience at every stage of their journey – from the moment they visit our website to make their booking, until they reach their destination and beyond – and our exciting new partnership with Hertz Global underlines our commitment to a 'Life Well Travelled.' tt

GVK LOUNGE WINS BIG AT WTA 2016

The GVK Lounge at the Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport (CSIA), operated by Travel Food Services (TFS) and Performa has bagged the World's Leading First Class Airport Lounge at the 23rd edition of the World Travel Awards 2016, held at The Sun Siyam Iru Fushi, Maldives. tt



VISTARA OFFERS IATCI WITH AIR FRANCE, KLM & JAPAN AIRLINES

Building on the commitment of offering a seamless flying experience to its customers, Vistara announced an Inter-Airline Through Check-In (IATCI) partnership with Air France, KLM and Japan Airlines. The partnership enables customers to enjoy a seamless 'Through Check-in' facility when connecting to or from a domestic Vistara flight in India and more than 100 countries across the globe on these airlines. Customers can now get their boarding passes at the first point of departure for all the travel sectors, both domestic and international, that are on the booking, with their baggage checked through to their final destination.

The new partnership comes in addition to an existing through check-in agreement Vistara has with Singapore Airlines and Silk Air that allows this comfort and ease to their connecting passengers.

Sanjiv Kapoor, Chief Strategy & Commercial Officer, Vistara, said, "The through check-in facility will offer great convenience to customers connecting from domestic routes on Vistara to our foreign airline partners, while allowing inbound passengers to seamlessly 'Fly the new Feeling' on Vistara on their domestic onward flight. We are delighted to partner with leading global airlines, Air France, KLM and Japan Airlines, in addition to our existing partnership with Singapore Airlines and SilkAir, and look forward to working together in providing a hassle-free air travel experience to our joint customers." tt

JUST IN

Vistara will fly direct flights from Delhi to the holy city of Amritsar, from March 1, 2017, and from Mumbai, starting March 8, 2017. The airline will operate direct flights between Delhi and Leh on weekends from March 25, 2017, and thereafter, increase the frequency to daily flights, starting May 10, 2017 onwards. tt



TODAY'S
traveller
20
Years
Since 1997

EXPLORER

LET THE SPIRIT BE FREE



“The highest education is that which does not merely give us information, but makes our life in harmony with all existence” – Rabindranath Tagore

TT BUREAU



Rabindranath Tagore envisioned a place of learning where the ideas and aspirations of young minds would be unfettered by superficial barriers, and that is how Shantiniketan came into being. Established in 1863, it sought to rescue education from the confines of the classroom, while merging it with nature. In due course of time, Shantiniketan evolved into the Visva Bharati University, where the seeds of creativity and talent flourished beautifully.

In the year 1862, Maharishi Debendranath Tagore, father of Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, on a boat ride through Birbhum, came across a landscape with red soil and lush green paddy fields that was a perfect picture of tranquillity. Enchanted by the kaleidoscopic beauty, he bought the large tract of land, built a small house and planted some saplings, and that is how Shantiniketan was established.

In 1901, Rabindranath Tagore established a school which consisted of five students, including his eldest son, with an equal number of teachers. Modelled on the lines of the ancient Gurukul system, he named it Brahmachary Ashram, in the tradition of ancient forest hermitages called “tapoban.” In the year 1913, Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature for his book of poems, Gitanjali; and within the same year he transformed the school into the Visva Bharati University.

FESTIVALS

Poush Mela, held every year in December, is celebrated on the Founding Day of the University. On this occasion, the entire place is immersed in a festive atmosphere and one can witness folk songs, group dances, and some of the most incredible performances delivered by the Bauls (traditional wandering minstrels of Bengal). Similarly, Nandan Mela, which was originally started to raise money for underprivileged children, is today celebrated as an event where the university students display their art and craft. Other festivals like Sarodotsav (Autumn Festival), Maghotsav (Founding Day of the Shantiniketan campus) and Briksharopan Utsav (Tree Planting Festival) are all celebrated with great pomp and enthusiasm.

UTTARAYAN COMPLEX

The Uttarayan Complex in Shantiniketan consists of five homes that Tagore lived in at various stages in his life. The first of these homes was Konark, which served as a venue for poetry recitations and play rehearsals, while Shyamali (an eco-friendly mud house) was an experiment conducted by Tagore to see if a permanent mud roof could be built. The outer walls of the houses in the Uttarayan Complex are adorned with mud murals, which were painted by students of Kala Bhawan in 1935, under the supervision of the eminent painter Nandalal Bose. The Uttarayan Complex has also hosted many eminent people, including Mahatma Gandhi, who stayed here in 1940.



RABINDRA BHAVAN MUSEUM

Rabindra Bhavan Museum was designed by Rabindranath Tagore's son, Rathindranath, and houses several original manuscripts, gifts, photographs, letters and medallions that were collected by Tagore during the course of his travels worldwide. However, the main attraction of the museum comprises a display section and the five homes lived in by Tagore. In this section, one would also find the original paintings of Rabindranath and many others by other artists, along with countless photographs.

SRINIKETAN

In 1922, Sriniketan, which was intended as a centre for rural construction, was established in Shantiniketan. This centre, besides devoted to the growth and development of arts and crafts, pottery, leatherwork, batik print and woodwork, also exposes its students to the socio-economic problems facing India, agriculture, welfare of villages, adult education, and so on. Some other places of interest for visitors include the Deer Park and Kala Bhawan.

HOW TO REACH

Rail: The nearest railhead is Bolpur, 2km away from Shantiniketan. Trains connect Bolpur with Howrah and Sealdah (Kolkata).

Road: An excellent road connects Shantiniketan with Kolkata.



MAGNIFICENT MYSTERY

It's in the magnificent Sun Temple at Konark that the architectural tradition of Odisha reaches its culmination, displaying an unparalleled grandeur

TT BUREAU

Odisha, located in the central part of India, pulsates with the spirit of Indian culture. Known throughout history as Kalinga, Utkala or Odra, it acts as a bridge between the northern and southern parts of the country. It has gone through successive rules of different dynasties, assimilating and synthesising the best of Buddhist, Jain and Hindu temples. The temple culture condenses the quintessence of India. Whether it's the sacred environs of the Puri Jagannath temple, the mysterious caves of Udayagiri and Khandagiri or the mystical monasteries of Buddhism, the glories of the past still speak to you eloquently. It is perhaps the only state where one can study the chronological development of temple architecture from the earliest specimens of the 6th century AD to 13th century AD. A visit to the temples in Bhubaneswar alone takes one on a walk through five centuries of the golden age of Hindu temple building, with the architectural style developing, expanding and refining all the while. However, it's in the magnificent Sun Temple at Konark that the architectural tradition of Odisha reaches its culmination, displaying a grandeur that seems unparalleled. A visitor to this temple is left speechless with the spectacle staring him in the eyes, even as he wonders if the architectural and artistic magnificence of man extends into infinity.

HISTORY OF THE SUN TEMPLE

The Sun Temple at Konark was built by King Narasimhadeva in the 13th century, designed in the shape of a colossal chariot, carrying the sun god – Surya, to the heavens. The image of the sun god traversing the heavens is an ancient one, an image which arrived in India with the arrival of the Aryans. It has been listed as a World Heritage Monument, and commending its beauty, Nobel Laureate Poet Rabindranath Tagore said, "Here the language of stones surpasses the language of man."

ARCHITECTURE OF THE SUN TEMPLE

The Sun Temple is a solitary splendour surrounded by drifting sand, located 3km from the sea. Originally, it was reported to be even closer, at which point it was



used as a navigational point by European sailors, who referred to it as the "Black Pagoda."

The temple is set at the centre of a spacious courtyard, enclosed by a compound wall, along with subsidiary shrines and structures. The temple complex consists of broken Deula(main temple) and Jagamohana (porch), on a raised platform. The Natamandir (Hall of Dance), which is situated in front of the Jagamohana, and a shrine of Chhaya Devi on the southwest corner, are two detached structures. Just outside the temple compound one can find a monolithic stone panel with images of nine planets housed in the Nabagraha Shrine (a living shrine in active worship).

ART OF THE SUN TEMPLE

The famous jewel-like quality that defines Odisha art is evident even in the Sun Temple. The temple chronicles in stone the religious, military, social and domestic aspects of the 13th century royal world. Thousands of images that adorn this temple include deities, celestial and human musicians, dancers, lovers and myriad scenes of courtly life. All of them depict

scenes ranging from hunts and military battles to the battles of courtly relaxation. These are interspersed with birds, animals, mythological creatures and a wealth of intricate botanical and geometrical decorative designs.

LEGEND BEHIND THE TEMPLE

A popular legend has it that the son of god Krishna, the vain and handsome Samba, ridiculed a holy, albeit ugly, sage. The sage took his revenge by luring Samba to a pool where Krishna's escorts were bathing. While Samba stared at them, the sage slipped away and summoned Krishna to the site. Enraged by his son's apparent impropriety with his stepmothers, Krishna cursed the boy with leprosy, with the realisation later dawning on him that Samba had been tricked, but it was too late to withdraw the curse. He was therefore advised to pray to the sun god, who, it was believed, possessed the powers to cure him of the ailment. Samba then travelled to this place and performed 12 years penance to Surya who, pleased with his devotion, cured him of the dreaded disease. In thanksgiving, Samba erected a temple at the spot.



20 YEARS OF

1997

Airline ticketing has simply changed hands from off-line to on-line and domestic airlines fight it out for passengers, whereas 20 years ago international airlines played the GSA field in a similar tussle for passengers. Travel agents in their brick and mortar avatar have morphed into the present omnipresent OTAs. Halfway through the two decades, agents

KAMAL GILL

had their commissions trimmed systematically by international airlines, but they got their own back with an arsenal of online technology and once again have taken pole position for bookings.

Hotels have emerged under bigger, newer, bolder brands with a new set of challenges, but they face the same measure of stress in the room rate, manpower crunch and land rates, not to mention red tape and taxes as they did 20 years ago.

2017

ISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

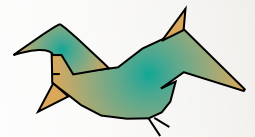
The more things change, the more they remain the same. How true. We, at Today's Traveller, decided to map the events over the last 20 years and found that while events take on different shapes, and job profiles take on new designations, the status quo stays much the same



DELIGHTFUL DÉJÀ VU



They think flying's tough?
They should try migrating.



Travel and Tourism continue to push destinations, new and old. Pushkar gets a facelift; 5-star hotels come calling. Ajmer gets an airfield. New attractions surface...traditional fairs and festivals get rebranded and sold. Getting there through surface or air and staying put at new-fangled accommodations is an eternal cycle. It all lies in the eye of the traveller.

Aviation has seen glorious days before flying into the red. Over these two decades consolidation has given way to large powerful entities spreading global wings and offering networks and alliances to choose from. The domestic airline scenario has been the stuff legends are made of with low-cost airlines winging their way into passenger purses and dislodging established players. Currently, domestic airlines continue to proliferate despite bleeding revenues and cut-throat competition.

It's absolutely delightful to see how over 20 years international airlines at their meanest best



continue to tighten seat and leg space in Economy Class, only to announce without any guilt that full First Class cabins boast a room in the sky. Ah..no remorse then as now for the salivating cattle class on long haul flights!

THE DELICIOUS IRONY OF RE-DOING THE SAME

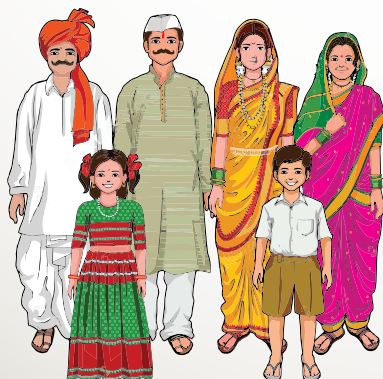
Of course, we are over simplifying things. There has been a sea change in the Travel and Tourism scenario, but the delicious irony of re-doing the same actions with a new set of customers or a changed set of circumstances stares you in the face. Sure, technology has created tectonic shifts in how travel is bought and consumed and shared experiences and customer assertion is at an all-time high. Nonetheless, the space remains interesting.

As the pyramid flexes in a developing country, so too, the consumer profile. The last 20 years has seen a coming of age of sorts of the great Indian traveller. Today's Traveller is excited that a whole new breed of experiential Indian travellers is emerging in the space being vacated by the traditional Indian arm-chair-spectator traveller. And, of course, we are delighted that the Snake Charmer India of yore has given way to Techie India. Similarly, Indians as consumers of travel, both domestic

and international, are replacing the inbound foreign traveller – and with matching if not larger purse strings. One sought-after visitor profile gives way to the other... so the rotation of purchase and travel keep the economic wheel turning.

Hotel designs are being created

1997 **VS** 2017



for the typical Indian consumer...larger rooms as they travel enfamily as well as satvic vegetarian restaurants with a 'maharaj' in tow. Recalibration takes place. At the end of the day, a hotel needs a good ARR and if it's rupees replacing dollars, it's the economics of demand and supply of the time machine.

Tourism continues to grow, despite itself. In 20 years tourism has not seen a concentrated sustainable development programme from the government despite several well-meaning initiatives. Take the E Visa programme extended to 43 countries in 2014. Great initiative with great results. Just like the Incredible India campaign in 2008...a brilliant branding exercise resonating till today but with no follow through. The narrative thread that connects weft and warp of tourism stays missing over 20 years...and nothing connects each isolated initiative with the other.

INTERESTING KARMIC CHAKRAS

Interesting karmic chakras you might say. 20 years ago, 'patal' plates were a part of the Green drive. They fell out of fashion only to reappear in 2017 as 'organic plates' fully certified by an American company. Coffee was an upmarket traveller's choice... tea was not, till Earl Gray swept the market. Today, Chaayos sells 'masala chai' in 'kullards' at cafes. Tea and the Indian taste buds are getting their right of way.

The mind's eye sees sameness even as fresh calibrations bring a smile. The ubiquitous bicycle was a turn-off 20 years ago; fashionably outfitted for fitness today. Uberisation is here big time, but it shares space with the two-decade favourite – the 'kali pili' taxi. Passengers recall the same strident calls for a strike then as now.

Similarly, auto rickshaws existed for the odd-travel but now, not only do they dodge traffic in large numbers, they are celebrity entities as recently seen in an over 300km Anniversary 'Rickshaw Run'. Public bus service continues its apathetic journey down main metros 20 years ago as they do today.

Recycled tourism instances abound. Lavish Indian hospitality replaced austere western ethos...then, back full circle in the garb of stripped bare economics. Tight efficiency substituted for manpower attentiveness only to be brought back in the form of hi-tech computerised comfort replacing the white-gloved butler; the automatically calibrated temperature in





rain showers replacing the manually laid out bathtub. It's only a matter of time when rooms reflecting newer versions of bath luxuries go back in time to an in-room spa in your bathtub with mind bending relaxation therapies. Rain shower did you say? Who wants to stand when you can lie in with bluetooth tech and water waves massaging tired neck muscles?

DEMOCRATISATION OF LUXURY

Democratisation of luxury is an inevitable off-shoot of development. As a matter of fact, travel was considered an elitist activity 20 years ago till the Indigos came along and made air travel affordable. Not luxury any more, but the term 'Connectivity' springs to mind every time you see an aeroplane.

So too, good highways and road travel make short holidays the flavour of weekends. Roadside



restaurants, highway stopovers, resorts...all create new travel options for the traveller. 20 years ago dhaba eateries were king along dusty highways. Not so today. Motorists pull over at air-conditioned cafes and motels with clean bathrooms. Sure, travel has come a long way. However, there are diehard 'dhaba' fans just waiting to revive the culture. Any bets that the new age 'dhaba,' complete with hookah and charpoy, clay oven and piping hot food is around the corner?

20 years ago it was the prerogative of every 5-star hotel to boast a flower shop selling expensive blooms and bouquets. Seeing off dignitaries at airports or welcoming them at hotels. Today, of course, blooms and bouquets, some truly exotic, are available at every roadside vendor. Nay, red roses are sold at red light stops.

We continue to have a collective preoccupation with the negative. A small window for tourism's golden run from 2006 to 2009, post which a large window of difficulties that stay to date. Every year rewires itself with challenges that come out of abundance: too many airline seats, too many rooms and too many choices. Consider this: 20 years ago the preoccupation was with an ever growing population, which 20 years later is a significant strength. Start-ups, entrepreneurs, new entities, new businesses mark the current years. A realignment of access to the masses is yet to be played out and once that falls in place abundance will, like the 'population problem,' turn up aces. Same story of plenty, rebooted.

Think about it. Look around. The territory is familiar even if the players are different. Spas and health clubs are changing hotel landscapes, but banquet space is still in pole position. The inevitable coffee shops of yesteryears which laid out sumptuous breakfast spreads boasting the best of the West...now offer idli, dosa, poha and paratha.

New products cater to changing tastes and trends and the high priest of hoteliering, The Oberoi, is being torn down brick by brick to be replaced by a new, more resplendent Oberoi. At the end, The Oberoi will remain The Oberoi – perfectionism at its best. These are the echo chambers of time and space.

Today's Traveller's journey has been magnificent in its way. Not in a shiny munificent manner...in fact, no more than a post stamp size compared to the giant scale of the travel world. Just a view from a window ...mountains to climb, places to go, things to do. We picked our road...followed our heart. In this, it's been a journey of discovery, of abundance, of grace and good humour. We wouldn't have it any other way.

The narrative thread that connects weft and warp of tourism stays missing



MTM+LLTM: CORPORATE SPEAK



The MTM+LLTM, held at The Ashok New Delhi, on November 24, 2016, successfully created a business platform for Buyers and Sellers of the MICE, Luxury and Leisure travel segments. We share feedback from Corporate Buyers and Exhibitors

TT BUREAU

The recently concluded 13th edition of the MICE Travel Mart (MTM) and seventh Luxury & Leisure Travel Mart (LLTM), organised by OptiMICE Events Pvt Ltd, saw a bevy of corporates and industry veterans attend the event in great numbers. The event was thronged by a vast concourse of Corporate purchasers, Luxury and Leisure travel agents, and other travel-service providers, on a single platform, to conduct business across the table.

SELLER FEEDBACK



I think MTM+LLTM is a great event; it helps tourism boards, such as Dubai Tourism, to connect with members of the trade who deal with luxury and leisure, and who also deal in MICE. MTM is a great platform that helps us interact, it helps us meet, it helps us connect, and I think what is important is that it gives us an opportunity to have B to B meetings, and I think that is important. Dubai Tourism wishes MTM+LLTM and all its participants all the very best for the day.

Carl Vaz,
Director-India, Dubai Business Events



MTM+LLTM has been a good experience, there have been a lot of new people visiting our stall, looking around and getting to know about us for the very first time. This is a great platform and The Ashok New Delhi is very centrally located, thus, draws a huge number of agents and operators due to its convenient location.

JK Mohanty,
Chairman & Managing Director,
Swosti Group

My MTM experience has been good, and to be honest, this is the first year that we are doing MTM. MICE has picked up big time, and thanks to MTM, they now have a platform for corporates to meet MICE and event managers. My best wishes as the day unfolds; this is just the morning session, I look forward to more exciting sessions in the afternoon and in the evening. I hope to be associated with MTM in the coming years as well.



Pradeep Kr. Mukherjee,
Director & COO, MICE,
Club7 Holidays



I am happy that MTM has considered exhibitions as a key factor, and have invited us here. You know, most of us, if you look at the MICE industry's meetings, incentives, conferences, exhibitions, are experts individually and work in our own domain. But, the very word 'MICE' has been coined because there is a lot of integration and synergy possible. My best wishes for a great job, first of all, and all the best to MTM. We look forward to more successful events.

KV Nagendra Prasad
President, IEIA



This is the first time I am attending something of this kind in India. Basically, I think it's a very good exercise because you are meeting competition. you are meeting hotels, you are meeting different sellers, the entire spectrum of the hospitality of the travel and tourism trade. I wish them all the luck and hope that they do it on a much bigger scale next year.

Sanjay Grover,
Vice-President Hospitality,
Goldfinch Hotels



The event is marvellous and beautiful. We have a very good platform here to interact with travel people regarding the promotion of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. I think it's the best place to promote tourism, and MTM is a very good platform for us to promote every sector of our tourism, and to interact with other travel partners.

Zahida Parveen
Assistant Director Tourism
J&K Tourism

BUYER FEEDBACK



Since MTM is doing so well, they must continue to do so and put in all their efforts to bring all the people on one platform. We belong to the FMCG sector, and all our activities pertain to companies, hotels and all FMCG companies. Therefore, MTM could help us work together effectively.

RK Garg, Director
Bisleri International Private Limited



I wish MTM all the success in life. It's a great place to be in, and I would love to come next year also, because there is so much information available under one roof, and I wish all the best to Mr Arjun Gill, Mrs Kamal Gill and her family and the whole MTM team.

Sanjiv Nanda
Director and CFO – Finance & Legal Practice
SmartHead Consulting



MTM has provided a wonderful platform and it was as per my expectations. It was amazingly organised, the various exhibitors were also very cooperative. It is very useful for anyone coming to these exhibitions via MTM. So, for me, it is absolutely 5 on 5. Good luck to MTM!

Kounal Gupta,
Partner, Henry Harvin Education



I am really impressed to see how the Mart has helped and advised people with regard to their travel needs. I wish Mr Arjun Gill and his family good luck for this successful programme.

Anil Mathur,
Architect and Project Management Consultant

DUBAI PARKS AND RESORTS

DEBUTS LARGEST THEME PARK DESTINATION



Dubai Parks and Resorts marked the opening of its third theme park, 'MOTIONGATE™ Dubai,' with a gala spectacular

ARJUN GILL

Over 1,500 of the world's media, UAE dignitaries and celebrities recently attended the formal inauguration of Dubai Parks and Resorts, the region's leading theme park destination. About 200 children were also invited to attend the event, in cooperation with the Awqaf and Minors Affairs Foundation and the Make A Wish Foundation.

The event was held in a specially built arena over the river, at Riverland™ Dubai, which showcased each of its three theme parks in a very special show involving the dancers and actors from Dubai Parks and Resorts' live entertainment team.

The show also featured a live performance of the Dubai Parks and Resorts official theme song, entitled, "All the Wonders of the Universe," by the composer himself, Academy Award winner,



Alan Menken, who has written the scores for many of the world's most famous animated movies.

The finale was described as having a lit-up sky above the 30.6-million-square-foot destination with a pyrotechnic spectacular.

The show was filmed live by the official media partner, Dubai Media Incorporated (DMI), and screened for guests in the parks and for residents and visitors at locations across Dubai.

The festivity marks the official inauguration of all three theme parks: MOTIONGATE™ Dubai, the first ever collaboration between three of Hollywood's most legendary studios, Columbia Pictures, DreamWorks and Lionsgate; LEGOLAND® Dubai, the first LEGOLAND theme park in the Middle East; and Bollywood Parks™ Dubai, a first-of-its-kind theme park that showcases rides and attractions based on some of Bollywood's biggest blockbusters. It will also host the LEGOLAND® Water Park, the region's first water park catering to families with children aged 2-12. The entire destination is connected by Riverland™ Dubai – a uniquely themed retail and dining destination, and guests will be able to stay at the Lapita™ Hotel, a Polynesian-themed family hotel and part of the Marriott Autograph Collection.

RaedKajoor Al Nuaimi, CEO of DXB Entertainments PJSC, the owner of Dubai Parks and Resorts, said: "After three years, it is a very proud moment for us to present



the region's largest integrated theme park destination and we look forward to welcoming our guests to this very special inauguration event. Our aim was to create a legacy for entertainment in the region, for the communities and charities we will support and for the residents and tourists who will make great memories and visit us again and again. We are immensely proud of the destination we have created for the UAE and its visitors and would like to take this opportunity to thank our colleagues and partners for everything they have done to bring Dubai Parks and Resorts to life."



SEASON OF LOVE

This Valentine's Day, stay away from the usual boredom and get away to distant shores to make the most of this special day

RAHUL SINGHA

Sure, chocolates and flowers are welcome, and sunset-gazing through the bottom of a champagne glass is enchanting, but when your valentine is special, it calls for a celebration of a different kind. Like, whisking away your loved one to one of the most romantic destinations on the planet.

PARIS, FRANCE

If you are thinking of traveling to Europe for your romantic break, Paris is the place you would want to head for. Paris has long been considered one of the most romantic cities in the world, and promises plenty of entertainment for both of you. And, as dusk falls, watch Paris become the 'City of Lights' and discover its history, its tree-lined boulevards with their animated cafes and all the brilliantly illuminated monuments and squares. Watch the legendary Moulin Rouge cabaret and the French Cancan, more than 100 years old. And, can any visit to Paris be complete without visiting La Dame de Fer (The Iron Lady) – or the Eiffel Tower?



VENICE, ITALY

If you think all roads lead to Rome, think again. If you take the Aemilia Romagna passage away from Rome, you could reach Rimini, a popular seaside resort and a hot spot for nightlife on Italy's Adriatic coast. Have some Colli di Rimini (local wine) over a sumptuous lunch at the uber-chic Nomi Club in Hotel Duomo. But, for a large dose of romance, head straight for Venice. A city built on water, Venice is an intriguing, mysterious, and romantic destination for any couple. You can cruise on a romantic gondola ride, walk through the cobblestoned streets hand in hand, or sit outside and enjoy some fine cuisine as you watch the world go by. Venice is less tourist driven than many other destinations, which will make it all the more intimate for you and your partner.



NEW YORK, US

You'd think New York is far removed from romance, but the style, the ambience and the views of this vibrant town makes it infinitely romantic. From carriage rides in Central Park and boat rides below Bow Bridge, to Belvedere Castle and the Conservatory Garden, Central Park is easily New York City's most romantic place. For amazing views, there's nothing that beats the sights from atop the Empire State Building. On a clear day, you can see forever, and at night, take in the glowing city below.



24 HOURS IN BHUBANESWAR



In the temple town of Bhubaneswar in Odisha, spirituality combines with nature beautifully

VISHWAJIT SHARMA

VISIT THE LINGARAJA

Lingaraja temple is described as the “time quintessence” of Odishan architecture,” because it represents Odishan temple architecture at its zenith. Dating back to the 11th century, the Lingaraja dominates the landscape as far as 15km away. What sets it apart from the other temples is that it is still in active worship.



FANCY SOME CHHENA JALEBI?

While in Bhubaneswar, don't forget to indulge in some Chhena Jalebi. It's made from fresh cottage cheese which is thoroughly kneaded, following which, small pretzels are made from it. These pretzels, deep fried in coconut oil and soaked in sugar syrup for several hours, leave a delightful sweet taste in your mouth, leaving you craving for more.



OFF TO NANDANKANAN

Nandan Kanan combines the elements of zoo, botanical gardens and sanctuary, and is quite rightly known as the "Garden of Pleasure." Located in the splendid environs of the Chandaka Forest, along the rippling waters of Kanjia Lake, it's a haven of tranquillity and beauty. The zoo, which houses several endangered species, the 34 aquaria, lake, nature trails and other facilities, offers several opportunities for amusement, and promises to make your day.



UDAYAGIRI & KHANDAGIRI CAVES- A WORLD WITHIN

Udayagiri & Khandagiri caves possess a façade that appears mysterious, yet inviting. One of the earliest group of rock-cut shelters, the caves of Udayagiri (Hill of Sunrise) and Khandagiri (Broken Hills) occupy a unique position in the pages of history, rock-cut architecture, art and religion. These caves served as dwelling retreats of the Jain ascetics, opening directly into the front.

SAMPLE AUTHENTIC ODISHA CUISINE

Dalma, the small Bhubaneswar chain is regarded by the locals as serving authentic Odisha cuisine. A visit to this restaurant, down some steps from Lewis Road, offers you delicacies like aloobharta (mashed potato mixed

with vegetables), dalma (the speciality of the restaurant—dhal dish, cooked with coconut), chennapoda (typical Odisha's cottage cheese), besides several Odishanthalis.



TRAVEL BACK IN TIME AT DHAULI

On Dhuli Hill, at the banks of the River Daya, stand a set of rock edicts which were constructed as far back as 260 BC, by the Indian emperor Ashoka. The two edicts that are exclusively found here are public injunctions to the empire's administrators in the area, enjoining them to rule with kindness and justice. Visitors to this site are left marvelling at the rock-cut caves, Hindu temples of the early medieval period and the renovated Shiva temple, known as Dhavalesvara, seated at the top of the hill.



ODISHA STATE MUSEUM

Odisha State Museum houses a rich collection of diverse archaeological treasures for display. There are several galleries in the museum such as pertaining to various departments like armoury, manuscripts, bronze etc. There is also a library in the museum that contains books dealing with the city's art, culture and Indology.



What: Thaipusam
When: Feb 10, 2017
Where: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Thaipusam falls on a full moon and is celebrated in remembrance of Lord Murugan, the Hindu god of war. A chariot bearing a statue of Lord Murugan departs from the Sri Maha Mariamman Temple, through the streets of Kuala Lumpur on the first day. The second day witnesses participants walk barefoot on a 15km-path to Batu Caves for the fulfilment of their vows. During the arduous journey, believers carry pots of milk and huge decorated frames as a way to atone for their sins.



What: Wanderlust
When: Feb 2-5, 2017
Where: Taupō, New Zealand

Wanderlust began as a simple idea, which was executed well and later evolved into a global phenomenon. At this festival, join a group of yoga and meditation instructors, musicians, speakers, chefs and attendees for a transformational experience at the world's most beautiful mountain resorts. Regardless of one's level of expertise in Yoga, one can engage in relaxing yin classes, try stand-up paddleboard or other various forms of the art.



What: Splore
When: Feb 17-19, 2017
Where: Orere Point, New Zealand

The festival of Splore occurs every two years in a regional park, south of Auckland, in New Zealand's North Island. Incredible musical performances, caravan and tent camping, a friendly family atmosphere, all come together to create one big gala. In addition to live music and vaudevillian and burlesque troupe performances, Splore offers a variety of educational workshops on environmental education, yoga, and craft making activities. However, it's the setting against which the festival is held, a tropical beach, that defines the speciality of Splore, and all that it stands for – playfulness, frolicking and overall fun.

What: Saidai-ji Eyo Hadaka Matsuri**When: Feb 18, 2017****Where: Okayama, Japan**

In Japan, nudity is generally accepted without any public stigmas attached to it. From early ages, the communal masses have bathed together at the onsen (geothermal hot spring). This ancient ceremony, which stands for purification, centres around the belief that general good luck can be attained by undergoing a particular ritual. This festival brings together the spirit of competition and religious pilgrimage for those attending it.

The festivities start at 4pm with a mock Hadaka Matsuri for children, and traditional Taiko drumming and dance performances.

**What: Trinidad and Tobago Carnival****When: Feb 27-28, 2017****Where: Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago**

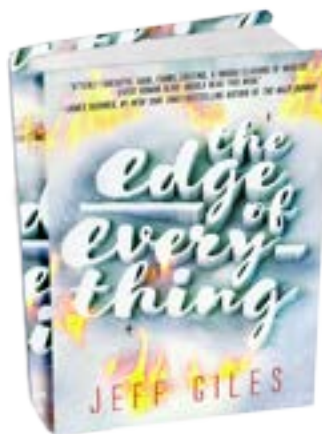
This festival has its origins rooted in history, however, its modern incarnation is a bawdy, rum-flavoured feast for the senses. This festival is nothing close to a spectator sport, rather, it requires the involvement of everyone present. Participants look forward to the masquerade by purchasing an outfit or designing one suited to their own style. Regardless of all that, being sexy is the focus here. Feather boas, sequins, brightly coloured undergarments and other such revealing clothing are the standard here. There are no inhibitions here.

**What: Envision Festival****When: Feb 23-26****Where: San José, Costa Rica**

Envision was started with the idea of creating a space where various cultures could be shared – especially those of North, South and Central America. The festival began in 2011, on a small plot in the Bohemian beach village of Dominical in Costa Rica. The festival is held at a beachside jungle, a space where people want to unplug and feel good. The festival's slogan – “Viva la Experiencia” (live the experience), reflects this attitude very clearly. However, the festival is not just about music – there are other activities to look forward to, such as plant healing, art, sacred movement, etc.

PICK OF THE MONTH

The latest collection of books, games, audio CDs and DVDs are here to keep you entertained for the month

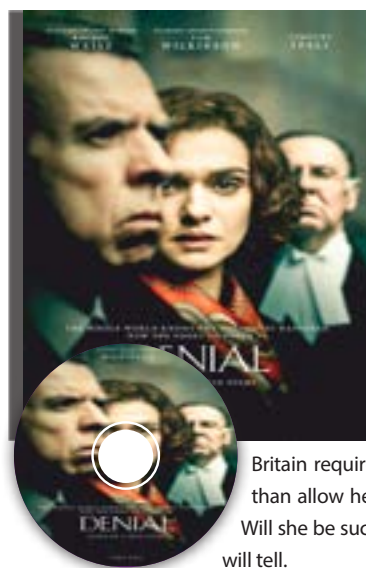


BOOK: THE EDGE OF EVERYTHING

Still reeling from her father's shockingly sudden death in a caving accident and her neighbour's mysterious disappearance, it has been a shattering year for 17-year-old Zoe. As if that was not enough, on a terrifying sub-zero, blizzard night in Montana, she and her brother are brutally attacked in a cabin in the woods – only to be rescued by a mysterious bounty hunter they call X. X hails from a Hell known as the Lowlands, and has been sent to claim the soul

of Zoe's evil attacker and others like him. As X and Zoe are about to learn more about their different worlds, they begin to question the past and their future. However, escaping the Lowlands and the ties that bind X might mean making the ultimate sacrifice for both of them.

Genre(s): Crime, Horror



DVD: DENIAL

The movie has the Holocaust as its main focus point. A renowned British historian is forced to prove the Holocaust did occur. However, things get quite complicated when a notorious Holocaust denier of its existence sues her for libel. Challenging every truth related to the history of World War II, she sets out on a mission to find physical and written proof of the genocides that occurred during the war. The laws of Great

Britain require her to disprove her accuser rather than allow herself to be proven in a court of law.

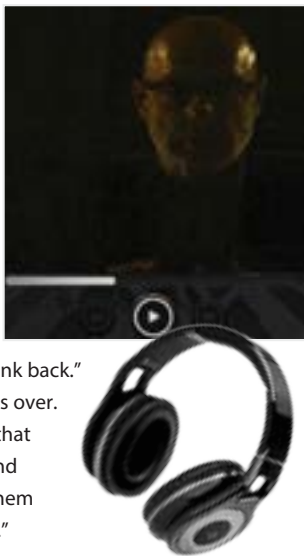
Will she be successful in this endeavour? Only time will tell.

Genre(s): Drama, History

MUSIC: REFLECTION

Without a doubt, Brian Eno is the most Brian Eno-esque musician currently working in the world by a long shot. The Suffolk-born multi-instrumentalist is hailed as a pioneer, if not the originator of the lulling, measured musical genre that we now call "ambient," but was once called "those odd noises that Brian is always playing with." His latest album, called Reflection, is a wonderful assortment of those very odd noises. The 68-year-old experimentalist revealed in a statement on his website, "Reflection is so called because I find it makes me think back." He further adds, "It makes me think things over. It seems to create a psychological space that encourages internal conversation. And external ones — people seem to enjoy them as the background to their conversations."

Genre(s): Ambient music



GAME: MASS EFFECT ANDROMEDA

BioWare's latest sci-fi epic is about to leave the Milky Way, and is headed to the Andromeda galaxy. This development promises to bring with it new ships, a new race of alien species, and vast new planets which would require further exploration. A few familiar faces will appear on the scene, of course, and the same blend of role-playing and third shooter combat. There is plenty though, that is new on the scene. The first looks at gameplay suggest a greater focus on planetary exploration with open worlds and an emphasis on crafting and discovery.

Genre(s): Action role-playing game, Third Person Shooter

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