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11 August 2015

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The Today's Traveller Awards were incorporated in 2007, with the objective of recognising exceptional achievers who have inspired others in their respective industries.



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# CONTENTS

July 2015

**The flipside of travel** 04  
A spotlight on travel and friendship

**Luxury meets business** 10  
JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar provides the best of luxury for its business guests. In conversation with GM Saeid Heidari

**Corporate jet-setters** 12  
Know where the corporate world goes for the perfect vacation

**Aviation** 16  
Airports Authority of India celebrates International Yoga Day

**Turkish Airlines** 18  
Quality time in Turkish Airlines

**Your monsoon getaway** 20  
Grand Hyatt Goa is your perfect monsoon holiday spot

**MICE redefined** 22  
With state-of-the-art technologies and impeccable services, these are some of the most important business hotels

**The wine collective** 26  
Today's Traveller brings to you the four most

expensive wines and their origins

**East or West, Guangxi landscape is the best** 30  
The charming Gunagxi landscape is unmatched by any other

**Where the wild flowers bloom** 32  
Romantic Indian places for the perfect holiday this monsoon

**The cultural face of Odisha** 36  
Indulge in Odisha's deep-rooted culture and tradition

**Istanbul: shoppers' stop** 38  
A shoppers' paradise, Istanbul offers a host of items for travellers

**Immerse yourself in the world of festivities** 40  
Travel through the world in search of some of the best festivals

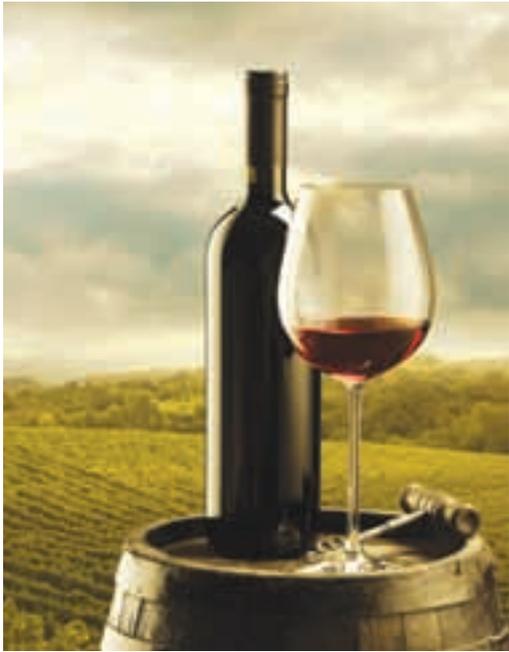
**24 hours in Rome** 44  
The historical city of Rome in a day

**Riding luxury** 46  
The new Jaguar XF is an elegant car and a performer in all quarters

**Conventions India Conclave: a step towards MICE** 50  
An event that looks to build relationships between organisations

**A bridge to the divine** 52  
The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra through Sikkim allows pilgrims to experience the divine

|                 |    |
|-----------------|----|
| Apps            | 08 |
| Glamour         | 56 |
| What when where | 58 |
| Products        | 60 |



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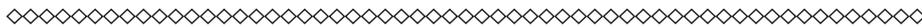
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# THE FLIPSIDE OF TRAVEL

**SEVEN PER CENT FRENCH AND 16 PER CENT JAPANESE DECLARE THEY HAVE NO CLOSE FRIENDS – READ ON TO KNOW IF FRIENDSHIP IS SYNONYMOUS WITH TRAVEL**

## TT BUREAU

**F**ocussing on the theme of building friendships in an era of high-velocity technological advances and booming travel, Mercure Hotels conducted a survey in collaboration with Institut TNS Sofres. Carried out on a sample of 5,500 individuals from 13 countries, the survey sheds new light on the notion of friendship in an era characterised by Web 2.0 and a surge in travel.

### FRIENDSHIP IN 2015

These days, the circle of close friends consists of three to four people in all the countries surveyed, though 7 per cent of the French declare that they have no close friends. The Japanese are the most solitary, with 16 per cent of them declaring that they have no close friends.

Not surprisingly, the notion of close friendship is described as the sharing of values, the absence of judgement and total availability for one another. More than anything else, 83 per cent of responders expect to be able to count on a close friend.

### MAKING NEW FRIENDS THROUGH TRAVEL

People's spheres of friends have also evolved and been transformed as a result of the increase in travel. We are no longer just friends with the people who live near us, but increasingly with people we have met when travelling in our own country or abroad.

For example, more than half of the travellers (56 per cent) have

forged friendships during a trip. The Brazilians (84 per cent) and most surprisingly, given the language barriers, the Chinese (71 per cent), are keenest on these cosmopolitan encounters. Conversely, the Japanese are the most reserved, with only 11 per cent of travellers declaring that they have made friends this way.

The survey also found that travellers make huge use of the social networks to organise their itinerary and benefit from the sound advice of locals before exploring the part of the world they are travelling to in the most authentic way possible.

For example, 45 per cent of the people travelling said they contact friends of friends on their social network when travelling. They seek their tips (49 per cent) and their company (30 per cent). As well as the pleasure of knowing someone locally, the respondents also show great foresight since 35 per cent of them say they find it reassuring to be able to count on an acquaintance if there's a problem or emergency.

It's worth noting that the Australians go a step further and contact friends of friends mostly to ask if they can stay with them on their trip (35 per cent of respondents).

People stay connected when they are on holiday with, 77 per cent of travellers staying in touch with their friends on social networks. Travel now confers status, and people share their discoveries with their friends back at home or at work. Post cards are dead! Long live photos (36 per cent) and posts (32 per cent)!

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## SOCIAL NETWORKS (RE)CREATE FRIENDSHIP

Though social networks cannot replace genuine friendships, they do create new opportunities for encounters and serve to maintain friendship bonds. Let shyness be gone, now it's time for virtual encounters: 44 per cent of social network users have already become friends online with someone they've never actually met! Of the social network users, the Chinese are the biggest "recruiters" of virtual friends, since nearly 72 per cent of them become friends online with people they've never met. The Brazilians follow closely behind at nearly 67 per cent. As for the French, they are the last on this list, with just 26 per cent of social network users declaring that they have become friends online with a person they have never met.

Social networks are also used to stay in touch with 'real' friends: 58 per cent of social network users have already asked a person they have actually met to become a friend online. Once again, the French appear to be shyer than other nationalities with only 42 per cent declaring that they have done this, which means they are at the bottom of the ranking compared with the rest of the world.

Lastly, the Internet encourages the birth and above all the preservation of friendships; people rediscover their best friend from primary school (61 per cent of the people questioned consider this to be the key advantage of social networks); they don't forget their loved ones' birthdays (40 per cent) and they send their friends and family thoughts and photos (51 per cent), all of which creates a sense of daily proximity and sharing.

## THE SIX-FRIEND THEORY

The 'six-degrees-of-separation' theory, which claims that we are all only six people away from everyone else on the planet is known the world over. One third of the people surveyed have already heard of it. Since they are very active in social networking, this theory is best known in China, where 67 per cent of respondents knew about it.

It would seem, therefore, that according to this theory, everyone can have potential friendship connections with people who seem inaccessible. In answer to the question, "Who would you dream of meeting thanks

to the Six Friends Theory?" – all the French respondents said they would like to meet a celebrity, preferably a singer, a musician or a DJ (14 per cent), especially the women.

(source: Mercure Hotels)

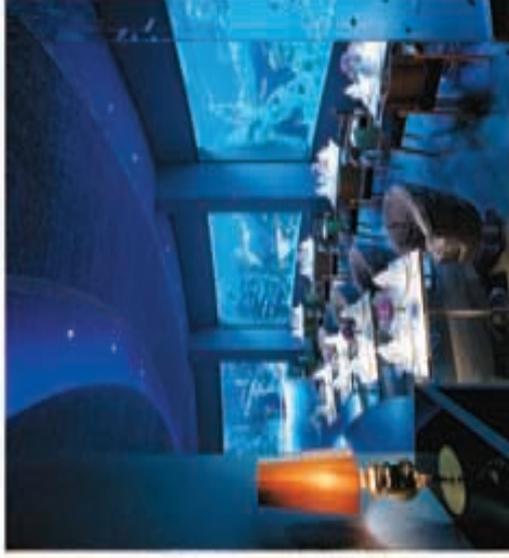
- 56 per cent people made friends while travelling
- 77 per cent contacted their friends on social networks while travelling
- 45 per cent contacted friends of friends from their social network when travelling



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## DATING IN THE TIME OF TECHNOLOGY

### THE LATEST MOBILE APPS THAT ARE READY TO TAKE YOU ON A WHIRLWIND TOUR OF THE DATING WORLD TO FIND YOU THE RIGHT MATCH

#### TINDER

Perhaps the most popular application for hooking up with strangers, Tinder is a fun app. The app is fairly easy to use – all you have to do is log-in with your Facebook account and your name, photos, interests along with your age would be uploaded to the app. You can browse through the list of people who are in proximity to your location and you can show your interest or disinterest in the person by swiping his or her profile right or left, respectively. You can also check for mutual friends, browse through their profiles in search for more images, and so on.

Platform (s):



#### POF: FREE ONLINE DATING

A rather popular dating app, in fact it is considered to be the highest rated mobile dating app, POF is safe, because by registering for it you are not linking it up with any social sites. The application has a matching algorithm that will help you to hook up with someone; you can also sort your matches by finding out the last online, newest users, and more. Another great feature of the application is that it permits you to send and receive unlimited free messages. If you have been using the online version of this app, then you can use the same account for your phone.



#### LOVEFLUTTER

With that old adage – “All that glitters is not gold,” pinned on their sleeves, the folks at Loveflutter have made a pretty impressive application. This application will ask you to give in an interesting fact about yourself, which would then be superimposed over your blurred image. If you happen to like the factoid on someone’s profile, you can move further down to look for additional information about that person, such as mutual friends, similar interests, and so on. This will definitely allow you to meet interesting people. There is an added feature titled, ‘Suggest a Date,’ which will recommend nearby places for you to go on a date.

Platform (s):



#### DOWN

Initially known as “Bang with Friends,” the application created quite a buzz at the start. You as the user have to log in with your Facebook account and then you can go through your Facebook friends list and even their friends list. You can then tag people whom you find sexy, and in the event of a mutual interest, the app will let you know! Finally it is up to you and the other person to take it forward. The best part is that your Facebook friends will not know about your choices if you do not want them to.

Platform (s)



#### MATCH.COM

Another app dedicated to end your “search,” it allows its users to set up online profiles where they can upload their images and engage in online flirting by sending winks to prospective matches. The app also delivers new matches to users regularly. You can also keep a tab on people who have checked your profile and liked your pictures. In the iOS version of this app, there is a feature called, ‘Stream,’ which is meant for checking out matches in your vicinity. You can also send a like or a pass to potential matches.

Platform (s):



#### COFFEE MEETS BAGEL

An application that allows you to meet interesting new people, this app will keep aside all hassles from you as you will not have to go through a dozen profiles and get invites from random people. As the name suggests, the app has an interesting way of working. Every day at noon, the app will send you a “bagel,” which is basically a curated match (someone who shares mutual Facebook friends), which you can then pass or like. This, of course, happens after the app is fed information by you regarding your preferences. In the event of mutual interest, that is, if you and your bagel express interest for each other, then the app will set you two to a private chatroom. You can plan a date and take it forward from there!

Platform (s)



# CORPORATE CONNECT





# LUXURY MEETS BUSINESS

Saeid Heidari, General Manager, JW Marriott Hotel Mumbai Sahar, in conversation with Today's Traveller



## TT BUREAU

### What is your hotel's corporate positioning?

The JW Marriott Hotel Mumbai Sahar is situated 1km away from Chhatrapati Shivaji Airport and is more suited for a business traveller. It's a perfect transit destination for a business traveller who seeks understated luxury. Our meeting spaces make JW Marriott Hotel Mumbai Sahar a suitable venue option for hosting large to small scale conventions and events. Our vibrant dining options make it a perfect networking zone; for not just the in-house guests but also for residents of this city.

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

The hotel offers 56,000sq.ft of indoor and outdoor space, with 11 meetings rooms that have audiovisual technology.

Our Grand Ballroom of 10,350sq.ft offers the flexibility of space with three

breakout rooms for hosting large to intimate events. The Junior Ballroom is best suited for smaller capacity events. The well landscaped Dining Theatre (7000sq.ft) and JW Lawns (13000sq.ft) make for the perfect wedding and reception settings.

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

Guests can explore distinct dining options on property. The chic and contemporary JW Café is an all-day dining multi-cuisine restaurant with an alfresco seating area while Romano's offers authentic, home-style Italian fare. The Romano's Lab (bar) also offers decadent cocktails and mocktails as well as a premiere selection of revered Italian wines. Located at the heart of the

property is the JW Lounge, which serves as a cafe by day and a stylish lounge by night. The JW Baking Company offers indulgent pastries, coffee and deli favourites. Spa by JW features seven treatment rooms including one couples treatment room and one Ayurvedic treatment room that offers ancient beauty rituals using fresh and natural ingredients. Other facilities include a private couples jacuzzi, a dressing and make-up room, two steam and sauna rooms and two separate jacuzzis for men and women. Spa by JW hopes to be a one-stop shop for ultimate relaxation and rejuvenation, whether travelers are on a tight schedule or have time to spare. Additional facilities include, The JW Fitness Centre open 24-hours a day with the state-of-the-art equipment, catering to the needs of the fitness conscious.

Poolside cabanas make a perfect place to unwind and soak up the sun.



# CORPORATE JET-SETTERS



**MANEESH GOLCHHA**  
**VICE PRESIDENT – BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**  
**PRUDENT INSURANCE BROKERS PVT. LTD.**

**Q: Most memorable trip to any destination?**

A: It has been these two unforgettable trips, one to Vienna (Austria) and the other to Prague (Czech Republic). Vienna for the monuments and museums and Prague for it lives to its moniker of being called the “Disneyland for Grownups.”

**Q: You dream of going to?**

A: I have always had this desire to go to Canada or the Swiss Alps in a motorcycle. Canada is beautiful for its wilderness and the Swiss Alps for its picturesque beauty; nothing can match up to the experience of riding around these two places in a bike.

**Q: Favourite airline and why?**

A: Among the international airlines it has to be Emirates for its hospitality and warmth, while Domestic has to be Indigo for always being on time.

**Q: Best hotel experience and why?**

A: I was simply stunned by the Intercontinental Prague. It has a wonderful location and the hospitality is unmatched to any other.

**Q: A place you plan to visit again?**

A: I would like to go to Vienna over and over again, the number



of museums they have there is phenomenal, absolutely gorgeous place.

**Q: Your best holiday with friends?**

A: Motorcycle trip to Panaji, Himachal Pradesh amidst heavy rainfall and then cook outs and barbecue. We definitely had the time of our life.

**Q: Great food you enjoyed and where?**

A: Well, I had Chaat in Bangkok, and it was probably equally good as what you get in Delhi. Loved it!

**Q: What to look out for while travelling?**

A: It is important to connect with locals, and try and learn the heritage of the place. The way locals can tell you the history, no tour guide can tell. Be adventurous yet don't be disrespectful of local customs.

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

A: Travel light and look for handmade crafts made by local artisans, not talking about made in China Souvenirs but real hand crafted items by locals.

# WHAT COULD BE A BIGGER NIGHTMARE THAN INDIA'S BRIGHTEST LEAVING ITS SHORES? THEM COMING BACK TO ITS CITIES.



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Why? Because they shift their base to countries that offer them an ecosystem which embraces their talent, while they create substantial business and wealth in return.

No wonder 40% of the founder-members of start-ups in Silicon Valley are Indians. But did you know that many of them would actually like to come back to India and work?

And if these enterprising folk were to do so, could our cities support them enough to be as successful? With most cities at their breaking point, the answer is a resounding "No".

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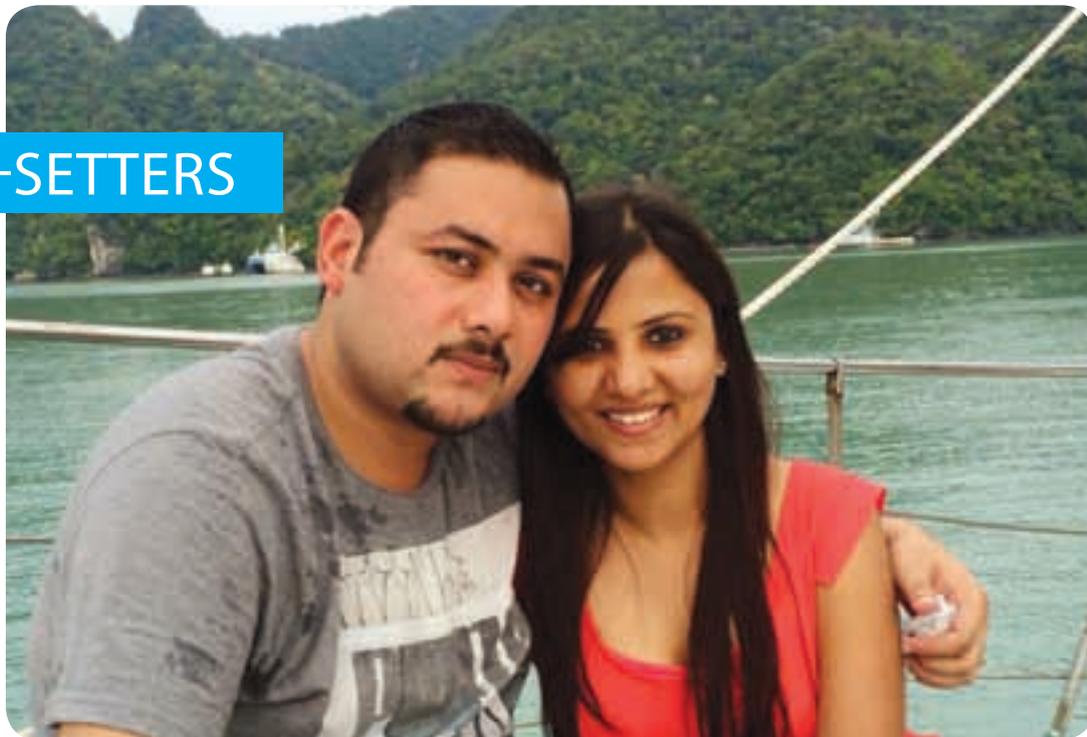
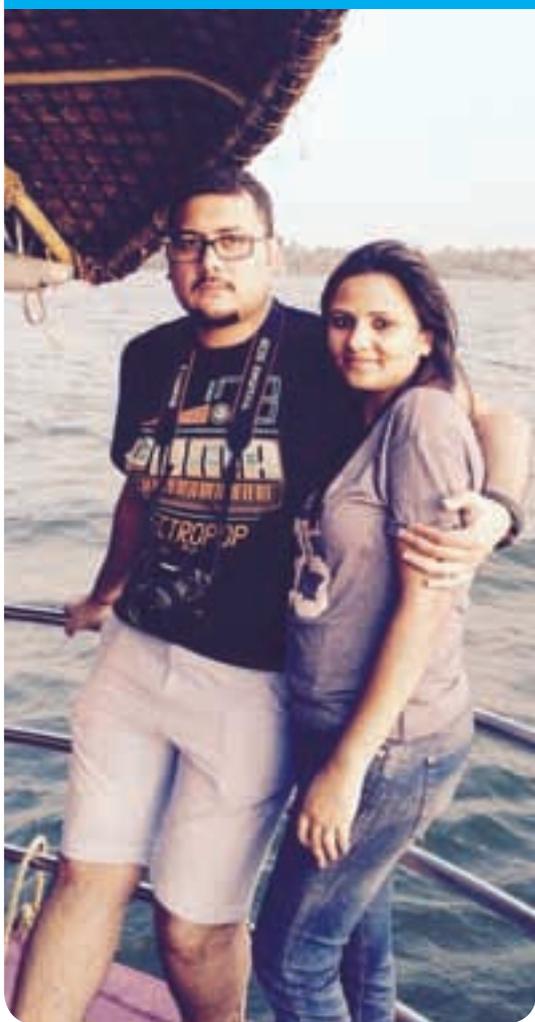
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## LAVASA

### UNLOCKING INDIA'S POTENTIAL

## CORPORATE JET-SETTERS



### **SUNNY GOEL** **VICE PRESIDENT – BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT** **ALMONDZ INSURANCE BROKERS PVT LTD**

#### **Q: Most memorable trip to any destination?**

A: Our trip to Malaysia has been the most wonderful experience, the days spent in Langkawi were nothing less than a fairytale.

#### **Q: You dream of going to?**

A: A backpack trip to New Zealand, Istanbul or Greece would do! I have always fantasised being in these places, I really want to be lost in the beautiful environs of these countries.

#### **Q: Favourite airline and why?**

A: I prefer Emirates for international travel, because I am highly impressed by their unmatched hospitality and care on board. Among the domestic ones, I prefer Air India and Indigo, due to their timely departure.

#### **Q: Best hotel experience and why?**

A: I am in awe by the food and services of Crown Plaza Dubai and Trident Cochin. I would love to go back to these two hotels to experience their excellent hospitality.

#### **Q: A place you plan to visit again?**

A: I like Dubai, because of its brilliant infrastructure and food. So, I think I would love to re visit this place over again.

#### **Q: A family vacation that stands out?**

A: A week's stay in Kerala has been beautiful, from Munnar to Kovalam, every place has its own charm.

#### **Q: Your best holiday with friends?**

A: Auli and Manali, the narrow roads of Old Manali and the superb view of Auli are unforgettable. We had a blast there.

#### **Q: Great food you enjoyed and where?**

A: Trident Cochin and Novotel Singapore, simply because the authentic cuisine they served was mouthwatering.

#### **Q: What to look out for while travelling?**

A: A traveller must look out for the culture of the place, also the various historical monuments and countryside sightings. These make for the perfect holiday.

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

A: We always look for comfort in all corners. Away from home and work that is what we require to revive and rejuvenate ourselves. Comfort is mandatory.

# AVIATION



## LUFTHANSA ANNOUNCES #COOKANDFLY CONTEST

Lufthansa Passenger Airlines, in partnership with The Leela, announced Season 2 of the Star Chef contest in its new avatar, #CookandFly contest for aspiring chefs across the country. Conceived under Lufthansa's "Non Stop You" positioning and "More Indian Than You Think" philosophy, the #CookandFly contest is the second season of Lufthansa's unique culinary talent hunt and aims to engage with India's budding culinary experts and give them a chance to feature their personal best recipe on Lufthansa's Business Class in-flight menu. Lufthansa announced Lufthansa Star Chef Contest in 2013, in partnership with The Leela, which received phenomenal response and over thousands of recipe entries.

Speaking on the contest, Sangeeta Sharma, Manager, Marketing Communications, Lufthansa Passenger Airlines, said, "The Cook and Fly contest is a strategic engagement initiative and an extension of our More Indian Than You Think brand campaign. The Cook and Fly contest gives us another opportunity to engage with our target group with a unique platform and what better topic than 'food,' which is one of our key focus areas and also one of the key drivers

when it comes to a customer's choice of an airline. Our brand philosophy of "Nonstop You" gets very well integrated with the contest as the winning recipe becomes a part of our inflight menu. This definitely goes on to reflect a more Indianised version of the brand."

Commenting on the campaign, Rajiv Kaul, President, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts, said "We are delighted to partner with Lufthansa and extend the finest Indian culinary experiences from our signature Kitchen – Jamavar - to the skies. Our Master chefs Kunal and Vinod are excited to participate in the Season 2 of the Star Chef contest in its new avatar, a one-of-a-kind campaign, that has successfully showcased latent culinary talent from around the country."

Kunal Kapur, Executive Sous Chef at The Leela Ambience Gurgaon, added, "The best of Indian food is probably home cooked food. It's time to unlock and share your home recipes and serve it to the world. Lufthansa's Cook & Fly contest provides the right platform for such hidden talent to emerge and shine; the entire journey is a culinary delight and I look forward to a truly exciting time ahead."



## JETPRIVILEGE ENTERS INTO A FREQUENT FLYER PARTNERSHIP WITH AIR SERBIA

JetPrivilege, the Frequent Flyer Programme of Jet Airways, has entered into a Frequent Flyer Programme partnership with Air Serbia, the flag carrier of the Republic of Serbia, effective June 2015. Air Serbia, an Etihad Airways Partner airline, becomes the 27th Frequent Flyer Programme partner for JetPrivilege.

The partnership between the two carriers will result in seamless travel for JetPrivilege members on flights operated and marketed by Air Serbia, including popular and new destinations in Europe, such as Athens, Amsterdam, Budapest, Bucharest, Copenhagen, Dusseldorf, Larnaca, Malta, Munich, Madrid, Vienna, Paris, Rome, Sofia, and Zagreb.

Manish Dureja, Managing Director, JetPrivilege, said: "JetPrivilege is pleased to welcome Air Serbia on board. With the introduction of this partnership, nearly 30 Euro-Mediterranean destinations become available for our international business and leisure guests, widening the opportunities for our members to earn and redeem JPMiles."

Dane Kondić, Air Serbia Chief Executive Officer, said: "We are delighted to conclude this agreement as it will provide a strong pillar to support our commercial cooperation. Moreover, this will provide guests of both airlines, greater flexibility and choice in which to earn and redeem miles across the networks of both Air Serbia and Jet Airways."



## AAI AIRPORTS CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY



In tune with the worldwide appeal of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to observe "International Yoga Day" as declared by the United Nations, for the welfare and well-being of all, Yoga Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm at various airports of AAI (Airports Authority of India), including Chennai, Kolkata, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Lucknow and Guwahati and also at Regional Headquarters and Corporate Headquarters at New Delhi. Further, talks on the importance of Yoga in day to day life with exercises for executives were also held at Corporate Headquarters' library at New Delhi. Since AAI is a coordinating agency at airports, the officials from BCAS, CISF and Airlines also participated in the International Yoga Day at airports.



## QATAR AIRWAYS INCREASES FREQUENCY TO 12 POPULAR DESTINATIONS

Qatar Airways has announced network frequency increases to multiple destinations across its global network. The national airline is adding frequencies to its popular routes – Dubai (UAE), Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), Peshawar (Pakistan), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), Belgrade (Serbia), Sofia (Bulgaria), Asmara (Eritrea), Djibouti (Djibouti), Najaf (Iraq), Luxor (Egypt), Salalah (Oman) and Zanzibar (Tanzania), all of which are launching over

the coming months.

The increases in frequency will provide business and leisure travellers to and from these destinations with more flexibility and greater choice to connect onto Qatar Airways' extensive global network, covering Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia Pacific, North America and South America.

## SOLOMON AIRLINES PARTNERS WITH BOOKING.COM

Solomon Airlines has partnered with Booking.com to enable the airline's passengers the opportunity to directly book their Solomon Islands accommodation at the same time as booking their flights via their website.

Under the arrangement, the airline's passengers can now book accommodation at a total of 14 Solomon Islands' properties, currently available on Booking.com, with more hotels and resorts to be added soon.

Booking.com has one of the largest varieties of accommodation options online in the Solomon Islands, with eight properties in Honiara, four in Gizo,



one in Munda and one in Buala, ranging from five-star hotels to boutique resorts, eco lodges and even self-catering apartments.

Announcing the news, Solomon Airlines General Manager Operations and Commercial, Gus Kraus, said the Booking.com agreement was a further example of where the national carrier was employing the latest in online technology to further enhance overall client service delivery.

"This marks a very important step forward for Solomon Airlines and one that further propels both the airline and the destination on the international travel scene," Kraus said.

## TRAVEL LIGHT, SAVE MORE WITH SPICEJET



With the launch of the new Hand Baggage Only fares, SpiceJet is offering a discount for those passengers who carry hand baggage only. The Hand Baggage Only fare will be available on most direct domestic flights (including via flights), with minimum 15 days advance

purchase. International and connecting flights are not included.

Travellers with check-in baggage can still check in their 15 kg baggage for free using their normal SpiceSaver and other fares. SpiceJet is not charging for checked baggage for those who select the normal fares that exist.

Under the new fare, passengers with hand baggage only and who book at least 15 days in advance, will pay Rs.200 less than the normal SpiceSaver fare per one-way flight. While for a round trip the discount can be as high as Rs.500. Hand-baggage allowance remains the same as before: one handbag up-to 7 kg per passenger, plus a standard-sized shoulder laptop bag or ladies purse. For those who book these fares but later decide to check-in luggage, a fee of Rs.500 for up to 10kg, and Rs.750 for upto 15kg, will be payable at the airport during check-in.

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# HOSPITALITY





# YOUR MONSOON GETAWAY

Chase your monsoon blues away as you live, dine and relax in Grand Hyatt Goa

## TT BUREAU

Conveniently located, just over seven kilometres from the capital city of Panaji and a 20-minute drive from Dabolim Airport, Grand Hyatt Goa is truly an enchanting destination resort and spa, set along the calm waters of Bambolim Bay; conveniently located between North and South Goa amidst lush green lawns. Guests can unwind and relax in splendidly appointed rooms and suites, blending spectacular water views with the grand elegance of Indo-Portuguese architecture and the warm hospitality of a traditional Goan residence.

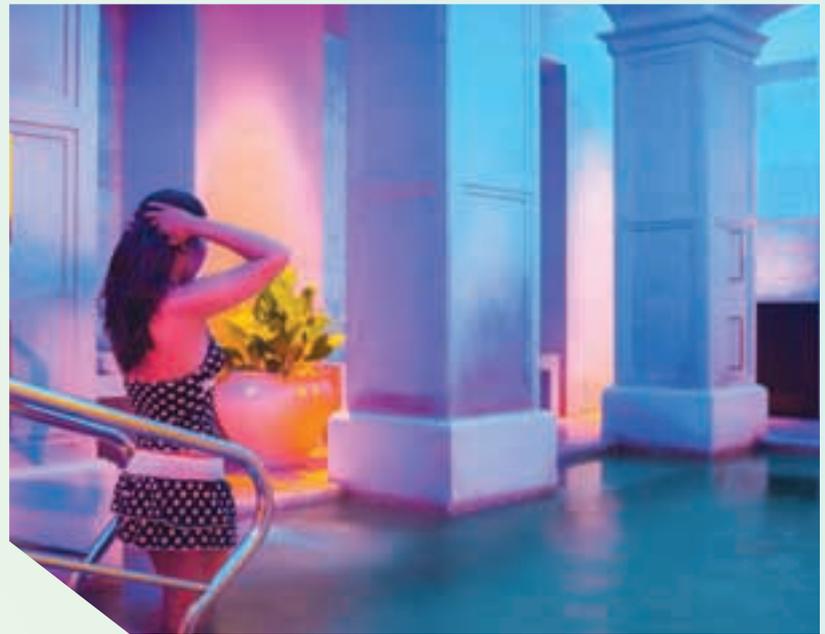
Culture, cuisine, festivity and a collection of unique experiences — there's so much packed inside Grand Hyatt Goa. You are spoilt for choice with seven award-winning restaurants, bars and lounge that offer a wide selection of authentic cuisine and flavours from across the globe.

Guests at the resort can embark upon a delightful journey this monsoon as Grand Hyatt Goa celebrates seven days of world cuisine. At the pristine and award-winning 'The Dining Room,'

guests can explore and familiarise themselves with the delectable cuisines from across the globe. There is Malaysian Street food on Mondays with a Laksa station, followed by Indian cuisine at its best on Tuesdays. Authentic flavours of Italy are available on Wednesdays and indulge in some Middle Eastern favourites on Thursdays, where one can find classics such as Chicken Shawarma, Lamb Tagine, and much more. On Fridays, experience Southeast Asian cuisine, giving visitors a chance to indulge in spicy pork belly ribs or Vegetable Phad Thai. Everyone's favourite Indian street food is on the menu every Saturday. And finally, for those who missed the flavours of the week, wind down the weekend with delicacies from a world cuisine spread on Sundays.

Shamana Spa at Grand Hyatt Goa is the resort's temple of tranquillity, that offers a peaceful and serene retreat to all its guests. It features 19 treatment suites, comprising single suites, six couple suites with plunge pools and an Ayurveda treatment suite. In addition, it also includes a fitness centre, relaxation lounge, indoor and outdoor pools, and wet areas with sauna, steam and whirlpools. This monsoon Shamana Spa features a package that will rejuvenate guests back to their energetic self. The two-hour special includes a Green Tea Scrub, Coconut Butter Wrap and foot massage.

Guaranteed to keep you engaged during your stay, the resort offers a versatile recreational menu for guests of all ages. You can also speak to the hotel's Resort Centre team, a one-stop-shop that helps you design the Grand Goa Plan and explore Goa in and around the resort. Take your pick from a collection of weekly merriment to celebrate your vacation.



## Celebrations – by the day

### MONDAY – DETOX MONDAYS

Detox Mondays is designed to restore balance to your body's systems, to cleanse the body of toxins and to relax and prepare the mind for the coming week with renewed health and energy. The detox programme at Shamana Spa includes a combination of yoga, aqua exercise, lymphatic drainage treatment and a royal wellness bath along with healthy drinks and herbal teas.

### TUESDAY – DISCOVER THE CHEF IN YOU

Don't just eat like a local, learn to cook like one too. Let the chefs from Chulha teach you to prepare your favourite Indian recipe and then take the opportunity to share the masterpiece with your family and friends.

### WEDNESDAY – HOPS AND NIBBLES

Walk into Capiz Bar to experience new flavours in beer and food pairing. Try something new every Wednesday as the pairing changes each week; Tapas, Yakitori and more to experience.

### THURSDAY – CHULHA COCKTAIL BAR

Begin your weekend early at the vibrant cocktail bar at the Chulha. Experience the flavours of your much loved buzz in different forms; and if you are in for some fun – learn to make

them too! The hotel's bartenders will give you an opportunity to learn how you can make your favourite cocktail, not only at Chulha, but also at home.

### FRIDAY – FONDUE EVENINGS

When the monsoons are upon you, relish the hours spent indoors by fondueing. Equally perfect for an intimate evening or a casual dinner with friends and family, fondue is more than bread and cheese (but it is that, too). Enjoy evenings with a combination of different fondues and live music at the Capiz Bar

### SATURDAY – CHEESE AND WINE

Enjoy Grand Hyatt Goa's finest selection of wines and cheese every Saturday, at The Verandah. Treat yourself to an exclusive wine tasting and exotic cheese table, carefully crafted by the resort's very talented Executive Chef Mark Long.

### SUNDAY – BRUNCH

Relish a sumptuous meal over five interactive food counters along with free flowing beverages and live music by Goa's singing sensation – Chrystal. Enjoy complimentary WiFi and access to the outdoor swimming pool while the little ones are looked after at Camp Hyatt – the kids club.

# REDEFINING MICE

**RAHUL SINGHA**

Today, hotels have reinvented MICE activity, providing hi-tech furnishing, avant garde technology and unmatched services

Today, MICE activities are an integral part of all organisations. Not only are major decisions taken here, but meetings and conferences are held, setting the tone of the organisation. Every establishment today is looking at hotels that provide their troop with unmatched professional comfort and value for money. Sprawling spaces, state-of-the-art audio-visual technology and a delectable culinary spread has brought a new meaning to meetings and conference venues. Today's Traveller takes you through a few hotels that provide impeccable services and are sure to spoil you for choice.

## ITC GRAND CHOLA CHENNAI

ITC Grand Chola offers one of the most sophisticated spaces for hosting meetings, conferences, conventions, symposiums, banquets and performances with state-of-the-art facilities and amenities. Rajendra – the palatial ballroom with its enormous 2465sqm multi-purpose area and a dedicated VIP entrance, can be divided into eight separate sound-proof sections, accommodating 50 to 3000 guests. Apart from this, there are four board and meeting rooms, which can accommodate 12 guests each; Tanjore, the hi-tech Board Room, which can accommodate up to 24 guests; while Kalai, the unique 45-seater state-of-the-art auditorium offers exclusive previews.

The ITC Grand Chola also provides one of the most comprehensive selections of fine dining and F&B options to guests, which include flavours from India, Asia and Italy.





## THE LEELA AMBIENCE GURGAON

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts have one of the most well-appointed conference halls in India. Whether it is for personal celebrations with family and friends or company-wide corporate meetings and functions, rest assured The Leela, with their state-of-the-art meeting venues, will deliver the best. And that's an assurance, irrespective of the size of the celebration or the level of sophistication one demands. Be it intimate cocktail parties or mega-indoor/-outdoor functions, meeting venues across all Leela hotels in India will be prepared with five-star dining options and lavishly appointed conference halls to provide you with one of the best professional experiences ever. The Leela also has exotic dining options from India and abroad. A series of classic Indian restaurants capture the spirit of the royal cuisine of the maharajahs, while selected concept restaurants from around the world offer the best in contemporary gastronomy.



## RADISSON BLU PLAZA DELHI

Meetings are not just about gathering people in the same room. 'Experience Meetings,' an initiative by Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi helps you deliver high-quality meetings and enhance your meeting experience. Experience Meetings, tools and services, will make meetings easier and delegates happier. Discover a whole new way to meet. Free Internet is one of the core Radisson Blu service offerings and delegates can stay connected on emails, social networks or work on research through the availability of free Internet. Brain Box is Radisson Blu Experience Meetings' alternative to a more indulgent and flexible meeting room environment that makes use of bright colours, walls to write on, high-tech idea sharing, flexible furniture and lighting to build an atmosphere that supports delegates' creativity. Brain Food is an innovative, responsible Food and Beverage solution for meetings and events. Developed in collaboration with nutritional experts, chefs and food supply partners, Brain Food keeps the delegates' blood sugar levels constant, helping them feel fresh, stay focussed and enhance brain energy.



## CROWNE PLAZA CHENNAI ADYAR PARK

One may be far from home and the office, but the on-site Business Center and Services of Crowne Plaza Chennai Adyar Park ensure one is never far from what keeps guests well connected and productive. Whatever one's business needs are the hotel is here to assist. The hotel swears by – no request is too big or too small. From parking to onsite Internet facilities, Crowne Plaza Chennai Adyar Park, provides its guests with the all required amenities to make meetings, events conferences and events a productive, comfortable success. The hotel has a variety of food and drink options throughout the day, from fine dining to lighter meals at their restaurant and lounge area. Work or relax at leisure with convenient in-room dining.



## JW MARRIOTT HOTEL MUMBAI SAHAR

The indoor and outdoor convention spaces available at JW Marriott Hotel Mumbai Sahar are spread over a large area with 11 well-appointed meeting rooms with state-of-the-art conferencing facilities. Another distinct aspect is the pillarless Grand Ballroom with natural daylight filtering through the day and the mood lights which completely transform the venue for an evening event. The property also has the largest crew lounge, a duplex-styled Executive Lounge with exclusive meeting rooms and business facilities. The spacious JW Lawns and Dining Theatre are ideal for weddings and social gatherings. Guests can choose to dine at the classy, contemporary JW Café, an all-day dining multi-cuisine restaurant with an alfresco seating area, where the specialties of North Indian cuisine, alongside an array of International fares such as Japanese, Thai, Arabic and Western can be savoured.

# BANQUETS & FACILITIES



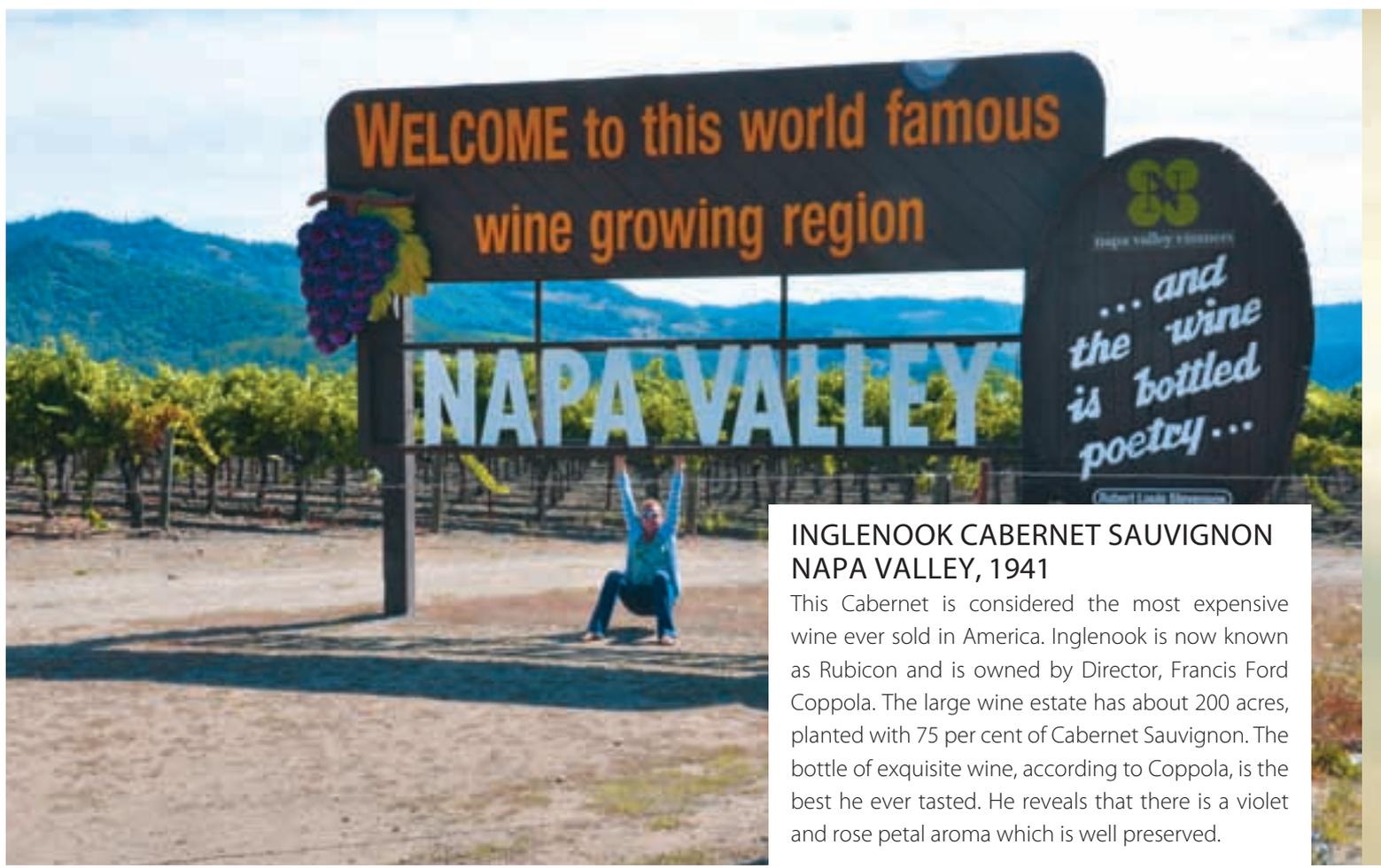
# THE WINE COLLECTIVE

The evolution of wine has brought us to such a time and period that it is a luxury to swirl, sniff and twist

## ARKA ROY CHOWDHURY

The evolution of wine first began many years ago, with the earliest evidence of the cultivation of grapes and the further fermentation of their juices dating back as far as 6000 B.C. History has it that wine had gained major popularity during the Roman era, with wine bars set up on the streets for public consumption. In the contemporary context, wine was first successfully produced in the 19th century, and records suggest that in America, Ohio was the first state to cultivate grapes for wine. Today, wine is a much sought after drink, some attach it to luxury, thereby allowing this alcoholic beverage to have an immense presence in the food and beverage industry. Wine is in fact a very important commodity in cultures across the world; it has surpassed the tag of being just a drink and has appealed to the sensory experience of civilizations. Today, diners are always looking for a bottle of good quality wine, and this has paved way for innumerable vineyards to cultivate the finest grapes which goes through the most sophisticated wineries in order to ferment and produce the best possible wine. It is a unique drink, produced with intrinsic detail, which appeals to the senses. Here we have listed the most expensive wines that the wine industry has to offer.





### INGLENOOK CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY, 1941

This Cabernet is considered the most expensive wine ever sold in America. Inglenook is now known as Rubicon and is owned by Director, Francis Ford Coppola. The large wine estate has about 200 acres, planted with 75 per cent of Cabernet Sauvignon. The bottle of exquisite wine, according to Coppola, is the best he ever tasted. He reveals that there is a violet and rose petal aroma which is well preserved.



### DOMAINE LEFLAIVE MONTRACHET GRAND CRU, COTE DE BEAUNE, FRANCE

The production of this white wine is a little off-beat. The wines are biodynamic in nature, and this means that their growing cycle takes the phases of the moon and the position of the planets into consideration. The wine is produced in the estate of Puligny-Montrachet. This wine is said to be among the top 5 Le Montrachet wines, and is the most expensive wine from Cote de Beaune. The wine has an elegant touch with the perfect balance.



### CHATEAU LAFITE, 1787

Perhaps the most famous wine estate in France, owned by the Rothschild family, the 1787 bottle of wine was supposedly owned by Thomas Jefferson. Lafite is a Gascon term – “La hite,” meaning “small hill.” Lafite is one of the only four wine-producing Châteaux of Bordeaux that was awarded with the First Growth status in the 1855 Classification. The bottles made here have qualities of cedar, cassis, tobacco, truffle and spice, mixed with the freshness of fruit. Chateau Lafite is definitely the most refined among the “first growths,” with remarkable staying powers.

### DOMAINE JEAN-LOUIS CHAVE ERMITAGE CUVÉE CATHELIN, RHONE, FRANCE

Steeped in rich legacy, the Domaine JL Chave is owned by the Chaves family and dates back to 1481, making it one of the world’s oldest and greatest wines. Today the 16th generation of the Chave family maintains and runs this historical wine estate. The Domaine Jean-Louis Chave Ermitage Cuvee Cathelinin is a rare find, an exotic bottle of wine that has hints of coffee, chocolate, licorice, black cherry and blackberry aromas. It is said that the wines here have great depth and harmony.



# EXPLORER





# EAST OR WEST, GUANGXI LANDSCAPE IS THE BEST

The beautiful Guangxi region is a charming proclamation of the natural China

## TT BUREAU

**G**uangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, located in the southern border of China, in southeast Asia, and bordering upon Vietnam, is a fascinating destination, boasting beautiful landscapes, enchanting sub-tropical beach scenery, simple and unsophisticated ethnic customs, as well as the mysterious border scene for sightseeing and vacationing in four seasons. Its capital is Nanning, and its most famous tourist city is Guilin.

From 28 May-3 June, 2015, a group of Indian travel businessmen successfully took part in the China-AESAN Expo Tourism Exhibition in Guilin and a familiarisation trip in Guangxi Region. All of them were appreciative of this exotic and splendid destination. Here is their take on the unique features of Guangxi tourism are.

The first one is the natural landscape of karst land forms spread over the region, which is famous for green hills, clear water, fantastic caves and spectacular rocks, and is represented the Guilin scenery. The second one is the sub-tropical beach scenery around the Beibu Gulf, which is known for the clean seawater, white and fine sands, and genial sunshine, and is represented by Beihai Silver Beach, the No.1 beach in China. The third one are the simple and unsophisticated custom of the ethnic groups who inhabit in the 12 autonomous regions of Han, Zhuang, Miao, Yao, Dong, Jing, etc., who have kept their own charming traditions and customs. The fourth is the mysterious and charming border scenery and folkways. And, the fifth is the abundant historical culture. Mr. Vikas Khanduri, CEO of Holiday Merchants, says, "This new



China (Guangxi) is fantastic and a must-visit. The scenery and landscapes are unforgettable and I still have cherished memories of them."

So, Guangxi Region can provide a series of tourist products to meet the varied needs of different tourists. Nowadays, Guangxi is promoting seven characteristic tours listed as follows: Tour of the Golden Tourist Belt along the Guihai (Guilin – Beihai) Expressway; Tour of Guilin Scenery and Folklore; Tour of Folkways of the Southern Border; Tour of Coastal and Border Area around

over point for travelers to cross border to Vietnam and viceversa. It can be as enjoyable as any other cities in China. One thing that I notice is the charming old Chinese lifestyle in Nanning still well kept intact although the city is undergoing modernization."

The communications and tourist facilities in Guangxi are modern and convenient. Touring in Guangxi, you will be deeply impressed by the beautiful landscapes, charming folklore, enchanting seashore, and, you will realise that east or west, Guangxi landscape is the best.



the Beibu Gulf, Tour of Eco-environment, Landscapes and folklore in West Guangxi; Tour of Famous Historical, Cultural and Religious Sites in East Guangxi, and Tour of Zhuang Folklore in the Hometown of Liu Sanjie (the Third Sister Liu) .

Mr. Amitabh Sarma, Senior Manager of Jungle Travels India, opines, "Nanning is a big metropolitan city and a popular stop-

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# WHERE THE WILD FLOWERS BLOOM

Walk into the wilderness and explore nature like never before by travelling to these enchanting and romantic destinations of India

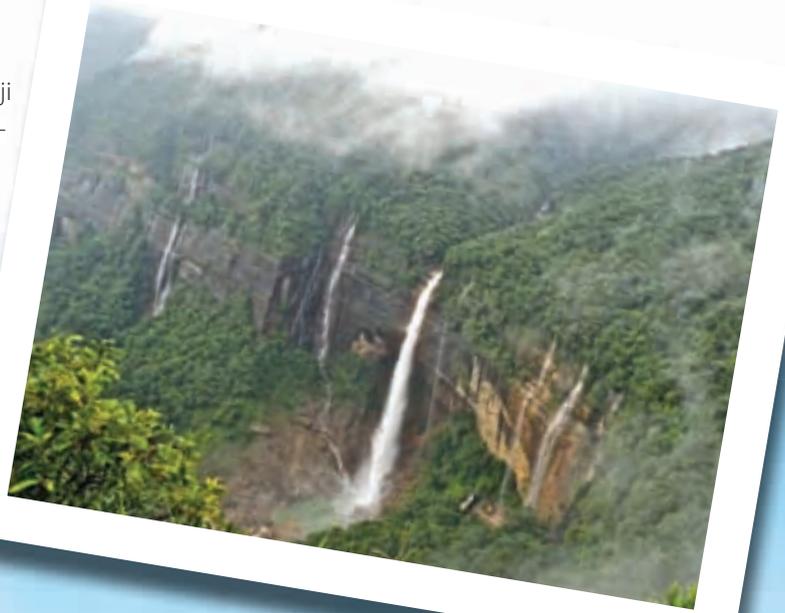
## ARKA ROY CHOWDHURY

In travel, one seeks wisdom, it eliminates the unnecessary chitter chatter, and extracts the deep hidden sentiments of life. To travel is to feel the heart of romance, and in travel we have often found ourselves freed from the shackles of a dreadful existence. When you are at the end of tolerance and are looking to escape, try these locations around India, for there is nothing as beautiful as finding the sun in a new sky while hobnobbing in the wilderness. Get away from the world rigged with tragedy, and live life in terms of an innocent wanderer exploring far away virgin lands, where the wildflowers bloom.



## CHERRAPUNJI

Considered one of the wettest places on earth, Cherrapunji is the place you need to visit if romance is what you seek – the misty valley of Cherrapunji with its forever cloudy skies will stun you. A sub-divisional town in the East Khasi Hill district, Cherrapunji is located at 4,500ft, with stunning natural locales. It is a natural green haven for tourists, with fascinating natural spectacles such as the 'living root bridge,' which can be experienced when you trek. Furthermore, there are falls such as Nohkalikai Falls, Kynrem Falls and Nohsngithiang Falls, along with beautiful caves, parks, and old churches. The monsoon is considered the best time to visit this place, with endless rain mesmerising the senses Cherrapunji is quite naturally your monsoon destination. The annual average rainfall of Cherrapunji today is at 10,871 mm.



## COORG

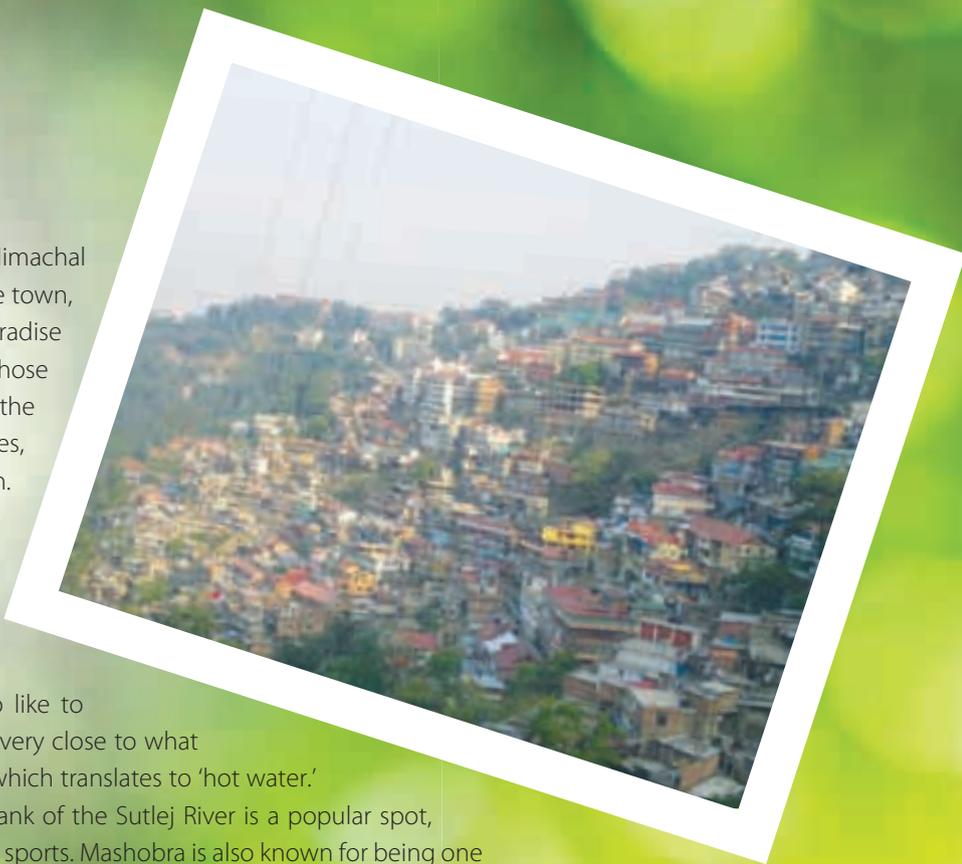
A picturesque destination with mountains, greenery and coffee plantations, Coorg is an administrative district in Karnataka, which is located in the magnificent Western Ghats. The romance of this place is resplendent in its beautiful Abbey Falls in Madikeri, the Jungle Trek in the Western Ghats and the greenery that surrounds its endless

winding jungle roads. The Nagarhole National Park, which is now known as Rajiv Gandhi National Park, is a must-visit when in Coorg. The park has animals such as, tiger, jungle bison, sloth bear and the Asiatic elephant; it also boasts 300 bird species, among which include the blue face Malkhoa and the white-cheeked barbet. The serenity of this beautiful place in the Western Ghats should be explored, its hidden romance felt.



## MASHOBRA

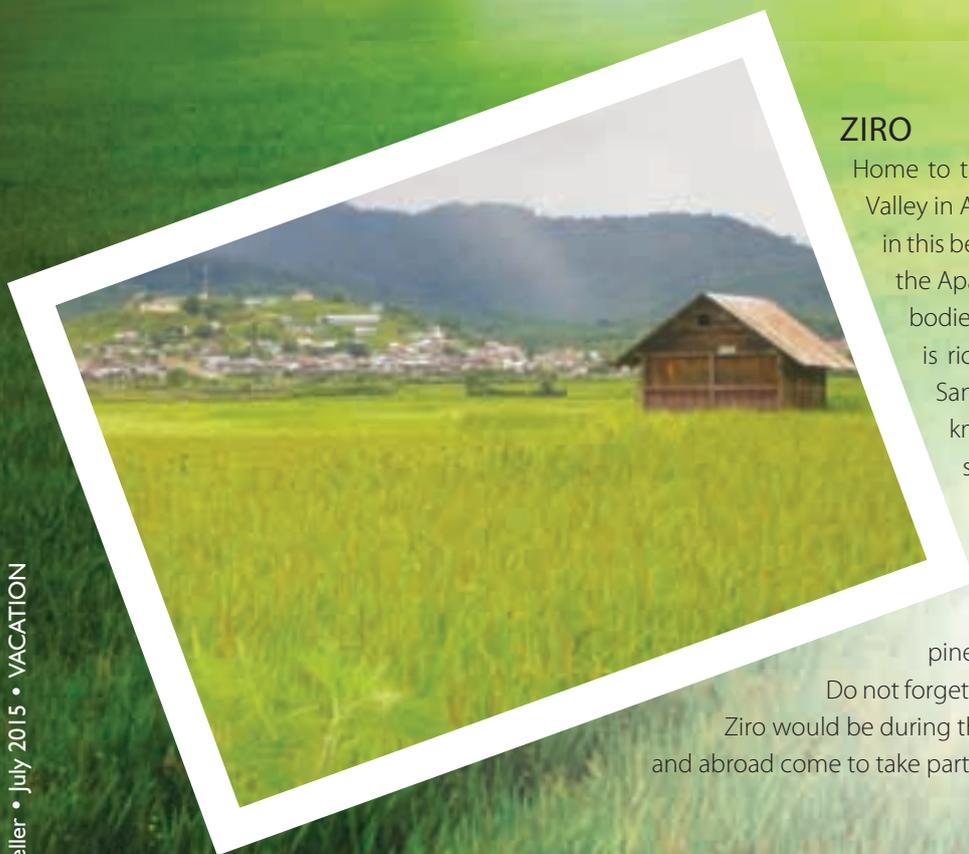
Located in the Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh, Mashobra is a quaint little town, perfect for a quiet holiday. A paradise on the hills, Mashobra is for those who want to get lost amidst the dense woods of oaks and pines, and seek nature in its purest form. The Himalayas stand against the backdrop of this town, while allowing tourists to seek bliss in the wilderness. Its exotic flora adds to its beauty, and makes for a perfect getaway for those who like to explore on foot. Mashobra is also very close to what the local people call, "Tattapani," which translates to 'hot water.' The hot sulphur springs on the bank of the Sutlej River is a popular spot, and also caters to many adventure sports. Mashobra is also known for being one of the two Presidential retreats in India, the other being Rashtrapati Nilayam, in Secunderabad.



## ZIRO

Home to the immensely popular, "Ziro Music Festival," Ziro Valley in Arunachal Pradesh is a lost world. Immerse yourself in this beautiful land of exotica, from expansive rice fields to the Apatani tribal folks wearing extensive tattoos on their bodies, complemented by tribal jewellery. The place is rich with biodiversity and the Talley Valley Wildlife Sanctuary is proof of that. With a vast land of 337sq. km, it is home to some of the most endangered species on the planet. You could also visit the Meghna Cave Temple, which is said to be 5,000 years old and is located at an altitude of 300ft, thereby offering a magnificent view. Mostly, Ziro is a place for you to just get lost, amidst its verdant pine trees, orchids and the very many local delights.

Do not forget to try authentic tribal cuisine. The best time to visit Ziro would be during the music festival, as musicians from all across India and abroad come to take part in it.



## MUNSIYARI

Far away from the chaos of city life lies this gem of a hill town in the Kumaon region of the great Himalayas. Munsiyari is such a quaint little town that it does not even have an ATM machine, so people should carry all the cash they want. Surrounded by lofty snowcapped peaks, you could spend some of your best times here at Munsiyari. There are a host of places which you can visit, such as Thamri Kund, Nanda Devi temple, Masterji's Museum, and Khalia Top, which is thronged by trekkers every year. Munsiyari is basically the place you go to for a trek amidst the wild, to experience the thrill of nature and to get lost in its charm. Run away to the great outdoors that this beautiful hill town has to offer and share some of the most intimate moments with nature.



## KHAJJAR

Immensely popular, and known as the Switzerland of India, Khajjar is another magnificent hill town located in the state of Himachal Pradesh. The hill station is perched at a height of 6,500ft above sea level, in the foothills of the Dhauladhar ranges of the Western Himalayas. Khajjar has been gifted with thick forests and green meadows, while the Himalayan peaks form the backdrop. It has recently become one of the most feted tourist destinations in India. Tourists visiting this hill town should enjoy the splendid Khajjar Lake and Chamera Lake. As with most areas around the state of Himachal Pradesh, Khajjar is best known for being a trekkers' paradise, and you are recommended to enjoy the thrills of nature on foot. The Kalatop Wildlife Sanctuary is something that you wouldn't want to miss when you are here.



## TT BUREAU

The history of Odisha is rooted in antiquity and its indelible fame and glory is rooted to its past, in the kingdoms of Kalinga and Utkal, in its maritime trade and stories of heroic deeds. It was here that the great Emperor Ashoka abandoned his expansionism and war adventures, took asylum in Buddhism, and finally became its greatest exponent and propagator.

Odisha has a rich cultural heritage, which is a harmonious blending of art, religion and philosophy interwoven around 'Lord Purusottam Jagannath' – the internationally famous Vaishnavite god at Puri. The state has splendid historical monuments depicting glamorous heroic deeds and cultural upheavals. Puri, popularly known as the 'Jagannath Dham,' because of the sacred shrine of Lord Jagannath, has a special place in the cultural history of the country.

Through the centuries, Odisha has retained its cultural identity within the pan-Indian cultural mainstream. A land of rich and diverse artistic achievements, Odisha's art and culture are the products of a long historical process in which the spiritual, philosophical and the human dimensions have merged to yield the finest effects of a cultured and civilized life. The cultural heritage of Odisha is reflected in its vibrant art forms. Culture imparts flavour and animation to the social and religious activities of the people and flows as an undercurrent of inspiration below the surface of daily life.

Dance and music form an inseparable part of the rich culture of the state. Together with festivities and events, they are enduring expressions of the soul.

### KONARK FESTIVAL

Every year, hordes of visitors make their way across the scintillating seashore at Konark to the magnificent portals of the Sun Temple. Modelled after the floating chariot of the mythical Sun god, the temple is the quintessence of the imaginative craftsmanship of ancient Odisha. The temple architecture was designed as a chariot drawn by twelve exquisitely carved stone wheels and



# THE FACE OF ODISHA'S CULTURE

Be a part of Odisha's rich cultural heritage which is reflected in its vibrant dance forms, music and festivals

seven galloping horses. The kings, queens, generals, foot soldiers, sages, etc, depicted with finesse on the walls and panels open a nostalgic window to medieval Odisha.

The annual Konark Festival, which is held in an open-air auditorium with the temple as backdrop, showcases a magical parade of India's classical and traditional dance forms. Eminent dancers and their troupe delight visitors with dramatic choreographies in the wintry evenings of early December.

Visitors are treated to exquisite temple sculptures in a dedicated Artist Camp. The Sand Art exhibition is an added attraction. Organised for the first time in 1989, under the aegis of the Government of India, the festival lasts for a period of five days, from December 1 to 5, every year.

### DHAULI KALINGA FESTIVAL

Organised by Orissa Tourism, the Kalinga Mahotsav, or the National Festival of Martial Dance, celebrates the Oriya people's heritage and way of life. The spirit of revelry crosses languages, continents and cultures. An annual occasion celebrated for two days, it usually takes place in the first half of January-February, at Dhauli Hill, on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar.

Kalinga Mahotsav celebrates the victory of peace over war and pays tribute to Emperor Ashoka's conversion from a war hero to an enlightened Buddhist. The Vishwa Shanti Stupa (Peace Pagoda), built in 1972, is the backdrop for the Kalinga Festival. Martial art dancers from all over India gather here to

participate in this amazing festival. The raw energy of the dance performances, the gracefulness of the precise movements and powerful body language is for all to enjoy at this incredible Mahotsav. It is a true conglomeration of the diverse folk cultures of India. Some of the prominent martial dance performances of Kalinga Mahotsav include Chhau, Malkhumb and Paika from Odisha, Thang Ta from Manipur and Kalaripayattu from Kerala.

### RAJARANI MUSIC FESTIVAL

One of the famous festivals of Odisha, the Rajarani Music Festival is organised annually by the State Tourism Department, in collaboration with other organisations, like Bhubaneswar Music Circle, Orissa Sangeet Natak Academy, NALCO and the Union Ministry of Tourism. The festival showcases the glorious tradition of Indian classical music in an evening musical concert held for two days amidst the backdrop of the 11th century Rajarani Temple complex. Main highlights include the best of Hindustani, Carnatic and Odissi classical Indian music performed by various famous vocalists and instrumentalists from different parts of the country.



### MUKTESWAR DANCE FESTIVAL

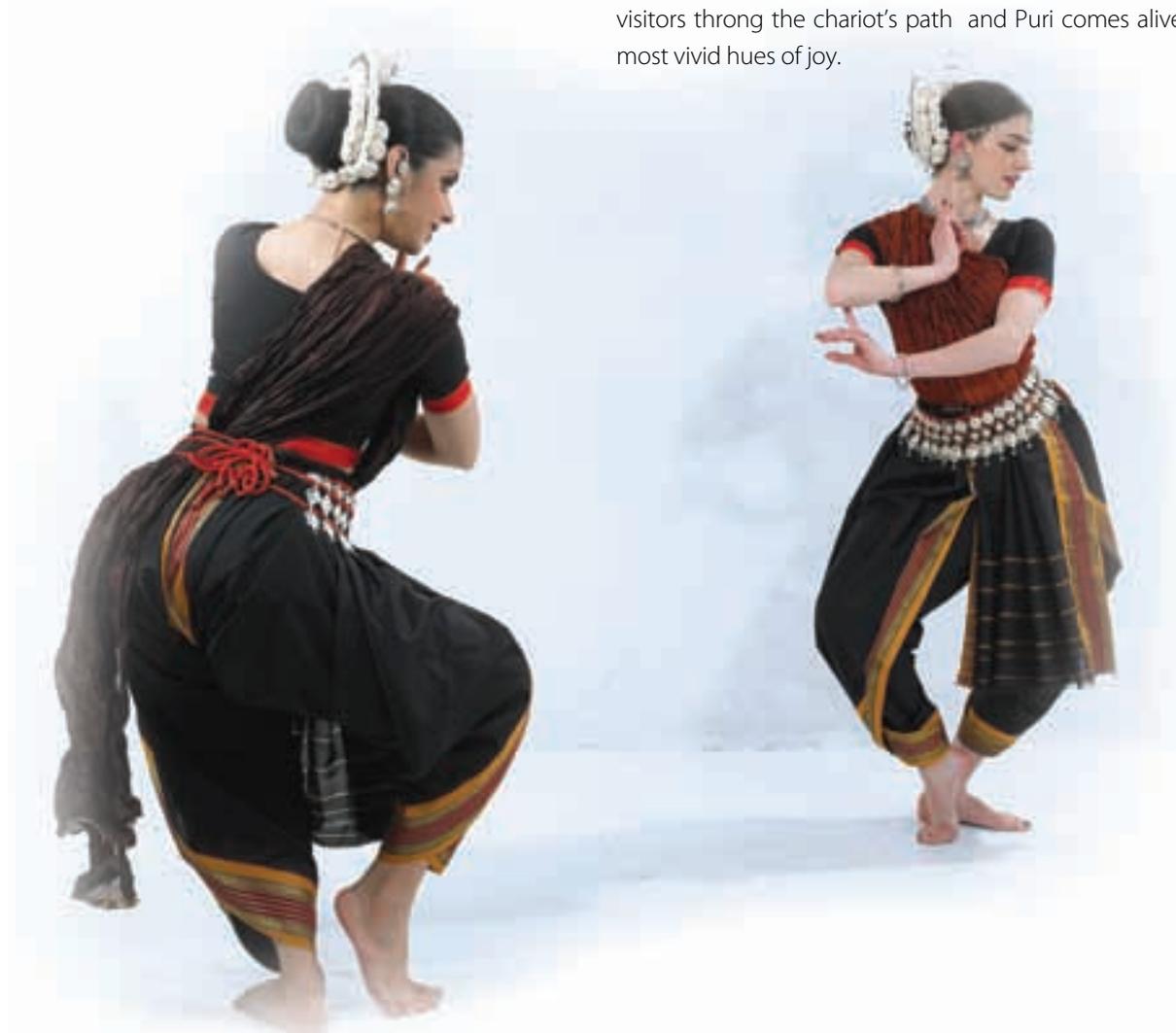
Classical Odissi dancers perform amidst the backdrop of the ancient Mukteswar Temple. The festival features both male and female performances in solos, duets and groups.

### CHHAU DANCE

Chhau is an ancient dance form which originated in the mock fights of the Oriya 'paikas' or warriors, who fought rhythmically to the accompaniment of indigenous music instruments. In rural Odisha, Chhau is usually performed during spring, in the month of Chaitra. Popular stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata are staged. The costumes, the headgear and other ornamental requisites are carefully selected and the dance consists of solo, duet or group performances.

### RATH YATRA

The Ratha Yatra in Puri is the grandest of all festivals of Odisha and is celebrated during June-July. It is the sacred journey of Lord Jagannath, with brother Balabhadra and sister Subhadra, from the main Jagannath Temple to another shrine called Gundicha Mandir, for nine days. Thousands of devotees and visitors throng the chariot's path and Puri comes alive with the most vivid hues of joy.





# ISTANBUL: SHOPPERS' STOP

An amazing shopping destination, Istanbul offers everything from hand-woven Turkish carpets to ceramics, designer brands and spices

**INDIRA LAUL**

**W**hen it comes to shopping there's no city in the world quite like Istanbul. With its many bazaars, markets, and specialty stores, you could go from buying high-end antiques to haggling with a street vendor over a scarf within minutes. Chain stores may be creeping into the city, but most visitors opt for the truly Turkish finds with which Istanbul is brimming.

Let the fun begin at the Grand Bazaar, one of the world's largest covered markets in the world, with 60 streets and 5,000 shops. Look for jewellery, hand-painted ceramics, carpets, embroideries, spices and antique shops. Many of the stalls in the bazaar are grouped by the type of goods available, with special areas for leather, gold jewellery, etc. Right next to the Bazaar is Nuruosmaniye Caddesi, where you can have your fill of jewellery stores and art galleries.

If you're looking for high-end sophistication, the chic stores of Nisantasi are your best bet for everything, from international labels like Gucci and Louis Vuitton to handcrafted sofas by fine

craftsmen. The shopping and entertainment area of Beyoglu includes fascinating shops that specialise in old maps and books. Later, relax in a café and people-watch as you imbibe the romantic ambience of old Istanbul.

The Spice Market or Egyptian Bazaar is another must-visit venue, consisting mainly of spices, dried fruits, and nuts that fill the 88 vaulted rooms, as well as some higher-end items like jewellery that have made an appearance in recent years. If you're a lover of all things old, visit La Turca, a chic and sophisticated antique store located in Çukurcuma, for exquisite antiques and carpets. Chalabi in Nisantasi has something for everyone, with a variety of antique pieces, paintings, Ottoman furniture and porcelain.

Just steps away from the splendid baroque mosque in Ortaköy, Hazal Hali offers a remarkable selection of unique antique Anatolian kilms and carpets, storage bags, pillows, old Caucasian rugs and sumacs. The shop is run by the elegant Engin Demirkol, who has spent almost two decades carefully choosing each of her pieces with a knowledgeable eye toward quality and uniqueness.



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# IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE WORLD OF FESTIVITIES

## TT BUREAU

Find out where you can head to for a different cultural experience, to celebrate the 'joie de vivre' of life

The world around us is thriving with different cultures, and with varied cultures come varied celebrations. For an avid traveller it should be of great interest to know the various events that are celebrated all across the world. Today's Traveller brings you some of the most famous events with cultural and historical importance, that are celebrated at various parts of the world. Experience the 'joie de vivre' of life is in to put on your dancing shoes and feel the thrill of various cultures from across the world.

Martin Hunter / Getty

## NEW ZEALAND

### TE MATATINI NATIONAL KAPA HAKA FESTIVAL

Held every two years, Te Matatini National Kapa Haka Festival is the premiere indigenous cultural event in New Zealand and the world's largest celebration of Maori traditional performing arts. Over four days, audiences can experience the best of Maori and local delicacies and shop for Maori arts and crafts. Colourful costumes, face tattoos and impressive dance moves... these are just a few of the things spectators will see during the elaborate performances of the Te Matatini National Kapa Haka Festival.



## THAILAND

### SONGKRAN FESTIVAL

As the most important date in the Thai calendar, the Thai New Year or Songkran is celebrated nationwide through various exciting events. The Sanskrit word 'Songkran' literally translates to "astrological passage," and coincides with the calendars of countries of South and Southeast Asia. Get ready to be wet during this season, as splashing water is the norm throughout. It's the official Thai New Year and is celebrated on April 13 each year, for 2 to 3 days. During the festival, the streets fill up with people looking to soak and get soaked. Water is used as a symbol of cleansing, which is exactly what the Thais want to do to start the New Year.

## SOUTH AFRICA

### KAAPSE KLOPSE

A minstrel festival, the Kaapse Klopse is a New Year's carnival that usually takes place on the streets of Cape Town, on January 2, and is therefore also known as Second New Year. Rooted in slave culture, the tradition is a modern-day take on the celebrations held when the slaves in the Cape were given a holiday at the start of a New Year. Preparations for the Cape carnival start well in advance, with minstrel troupes rehearsing songs, dance routines and parades for months. The celebration of a community's survival, this festival is a grand celebration of life and holds deep meaning for those who are part of it.





## UNITED KINGDOM

### TROOPING THE COLOUR

This impressive display of pageantry is held on the Queen's Official Birthday, in June each year, and is carried out by her personal troops, the Household Division, on Horse Guards Parade. Precisely at eleven, the Royal Procession arrives and the Queen takes the Royal Salute, followed by the Inspection, the Queen driving slowly down the ranks of all six guards and then past the Household Cavalry. The grand celebration allows one of the foot-guard regiments to troop its colour through the ranks of the guard. Later, the Royal Family gathers on the balcony of Buckingham Palace to watch the Royal Air Forcesoar across the sky.

## AUSTRALIA

### AUSTRALIA DAY

Celebrated on 26 January, Australia Day is when Australians of all backgrounds celebrate their national unity, appreciate heritage and history, take an active part in the community and remember colonial pioneers. People head to the beaches, barbecues and backyards in droves to celebrate and many cities and regional centres host fireworks displays in the evening. Whether in the city, on the coast or in a regional area, there are plenty of events that celebrate everything that's great about being Australian.



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# 24 HRS IN ROME

## COLOSSEUM

The Colosseum is the largest and most famous amphitheatre in the Roman world. Its construction was started by Emperor Vespasian of the Flavian dynasty in 72 AD and was completed by his son, Titus, in 80 AD. The Colosseum was capable of holding some 50,000 spectators who could enter the building through no less than 80 entrances. Today, it is a major tourist attraction in Rome with thousands of tourists paying to view what is left of the interior arena.



## ST. PETER'S BASILICA

The centre of the Catholic world and a major tourist attraction, the Basilica of St. Peter is a huge church and stands on the traditional site where Peter the apostle, who is considered the first Pope, was crucified and buried. Construction on the current building began in 1506 and was completed in 1615. Many famous artists worked on the complex and its surroundings: Michelangelo designed the dome while Bernini designed the great St. Peter's Square.





### FRASCATI WINE

Referred by the Romans as the golden wine, both for its colour and its value, Frascati wine is probably the most famous wine of the Frascati region, near Rome. It is delicate and perfect to be served with fish, appetisers and fresh cheeses at a temperature of 10°.

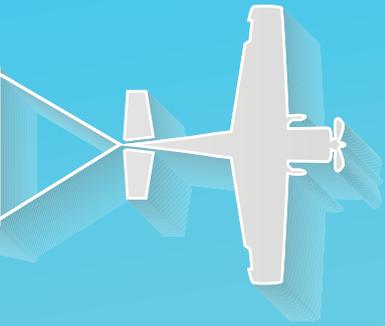
### VATICAN MUSEUMS

Founded by Pope Julius II in the 6th century, the Vatican Museums inside Vatican City boast some of the world's most important relics. Attractions of the museums include the spiral staircase, Raphael Rooms and the exquisitely decorated Sistine Chapel. Under the patronage of Pope Julius II, Michelangelo painted the chapel ceiling between 1508 and 1512. Today, the ceiling and especially The Last Judgment, are widely believed to be Michelangelo's crowning achievements in painting.



### TREVI FOUNTAIN

Completed in 1762 according to a design by Nicola Salvi, this world-famous Baroque fountain features a mythological sculptural composition of Neptune, god of the sea, flanked by two Tritons. The location of Trevi fountain marks the terminus of the ancient Aqua Virgo aqueduct and is so named on account of its position at the junction of three roads '(tre vie)'. Legend says that one who throws a coin in the fountain will one day return to Rome.



# RIDING LUXURY

The new Jaguar XF is classy, brimming with elegance and good speed, and plenty more to offer its buyers

## TT BUREAU

The first edition of Jaguar XF was unveiled in 2007 and it quickly proved itself as a serious competitor to rivals, the BMW 5 Series, Mercedes E-Class and the Audi A6. The Jaguar XF is all about distinctive style, a powerful engine that complements its handsome looks, and an interior that is nothing less than premium. Today, the British manufactured mid-size luxury Jaguar 2015 XF is making a new statement, standing a new ground, with sophistication pinned to its name.

## EXTERIOR

The stylish new model has a glossy black radiator grille which features a chrome surround, along with R-styled side sills and also a sporty bumper. The car has also been given fog lamps which would allow it to dazzle the front façade. The slim headlight – LED DRLs sits beautifully in the front, and gives the saloon a definite classy look. The car has a lower bonnet line which has been completed with a wide power bulge that runs down the centre and adds to the stance. There are three air intake sections under the bumper, and the car has been given a lavish roof with a sweeping line. The back of the car has been well lit with the LED tail lamps. The alloy wheels have 10 spokes giving it a luxurious, and yet a sort of sporty look. The exterior is overall fascinating, and the very many interesting additions have uplifted the look of the car, making it a hotshot for beholders.





## INTERIOR

An interior that is exclusively designed to give passengers a touch of luxury, the all new Jaguar XF is a pleasure to drive. The elegance and contemporary style includes aluminum and wooden inserts on the dashboard as well as the floor panels and smooth, five soft grain leather seats. The car has revised switchgear for ventilation systems and also a new central and dial-mounted screen for navigation, which complement the steering wheel. The all-over interior design of the car is simplistic, yet luxurious and unique in its own way, with a serene radiance, allowing traditional comfort for riders. The dashboard of the car has halo illumination with two tripmetres, Jaguar Drive Selector console, switch panels, Electric Parking Brake and the start-stop button. The car's boot space is large at 462 litres.

Jaguar XF has standard safety features for all Jaguar XF models, and this includes traction and stability control, antilock brakes, front side airbags and side curtain airbags, a blind-spot warning system and a rear view camera.

Gas Mileage – 19 mpg City/30 mpg Hwy

Engine Intercooled Turbo Premium Unleaded – I-4, 2.0 L

Drivetrain Rear Wheel Drive

Passenger Capacity – 5

Passenger Doors – 4

Body Style – 4dr Car

Transmission: Electronic 8-Speed Automatic – ZF 8HP70, Jaguar Sequential Shift, drive and sport modes and steering wheel mounted shift paddles.







# CONVENTIONS INDIA CONCLAVE

## A STEP TOWARDS MICE

### TT BUREAU

The Meetings, Incentives, Conventions & Exhibitions (MICE) Market is a fast growing one and has exhibited huge potential worldwide. It is recognised that international and regional conferences and exhibitions contribute greatly towards building mutual goodwill and understanding, encourage interaction between nations and bring a tremendous amount of knowledge and frontier technologies particularly for the developing countries.

There is a growing interest amongst tourists to experience the rich culture and heritage of India. With increasing opportunities for holidays and leisure, India is now becoming one of the leading venues for MICE in the region. Similarly, for exhibitions, India is now a potential destination in Asia, with more International Exhibition Organisers entering and introducing their exhibitions.

The MICE infrastructure in the country has been developing rapidly and convention hotels and conference and exhibition venues of international standards are being set up in cities across the country, while some are under construction.

India Convention Promotion Bureau was sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism, in close co-ordination and consultation with the Tourism, Conference and Exhibition industry. The membership of the Bureau comprises Airlines, Leading Hotels and Hotel Chains, Convention Centres, Tour Operators, Travel Agents, Professional Conference and Exhibition Organisers, State Tourism Development Corporations, Surface Transport Companies and other Organisations providing ancillary services.

### CONVENTIONS INDIA – 8TH ICPB MICE CONCLAVE

After the success of the Bureau's seven preceding conclaves, the 8th Conventions India – the Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibition Conclave is being organised from the 7th – 9th

August 2015, at The India Expo Mart Limited, Greater Noida, with the support of the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India.

### CONVENTIONS INDIA – OBJECTIVES

The conclave provides an opportunity to interact with the Bureau's members who are specialists in the organisation of Meetings and Conventions and also other suppliers who would showcase their products during the conclave. This is a group that forms the backbone of any major event taking place in the country.

The India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB) not only disseminates information about infrastructural facilities and related services for planning / organising of meetings, incentives, conventions & exhibitions / Events, but also assists the Indian tourism industry to market them globally. This conclave is a unique event for the participants to create an excellent sharing and learning opportunity. The speakers are active MICE industry professionals, enjoying high levels of creative experience and would offer participants a focus on the challenging and changing future. Another benefit of the conclave is the range of informal discussions which takes place outside the formal programme, often setting the basis for future long-term relationships.

The participants from overseas would also have an opportunity to join the post conclave tour being organised to give them an opportunity to inspect the infrastructural facilities and also to view the diversity of India.

The conclave is an opportunity for participants from many diverse but related disciplines to interact, seek information and share experiences. Also, with the aim of strengthening the brand positioning of 'Incredible India' as a MICE destination, buyers from overseas have also been invited to meet with suppliers from India's MICE industry and experience the products for themselves.



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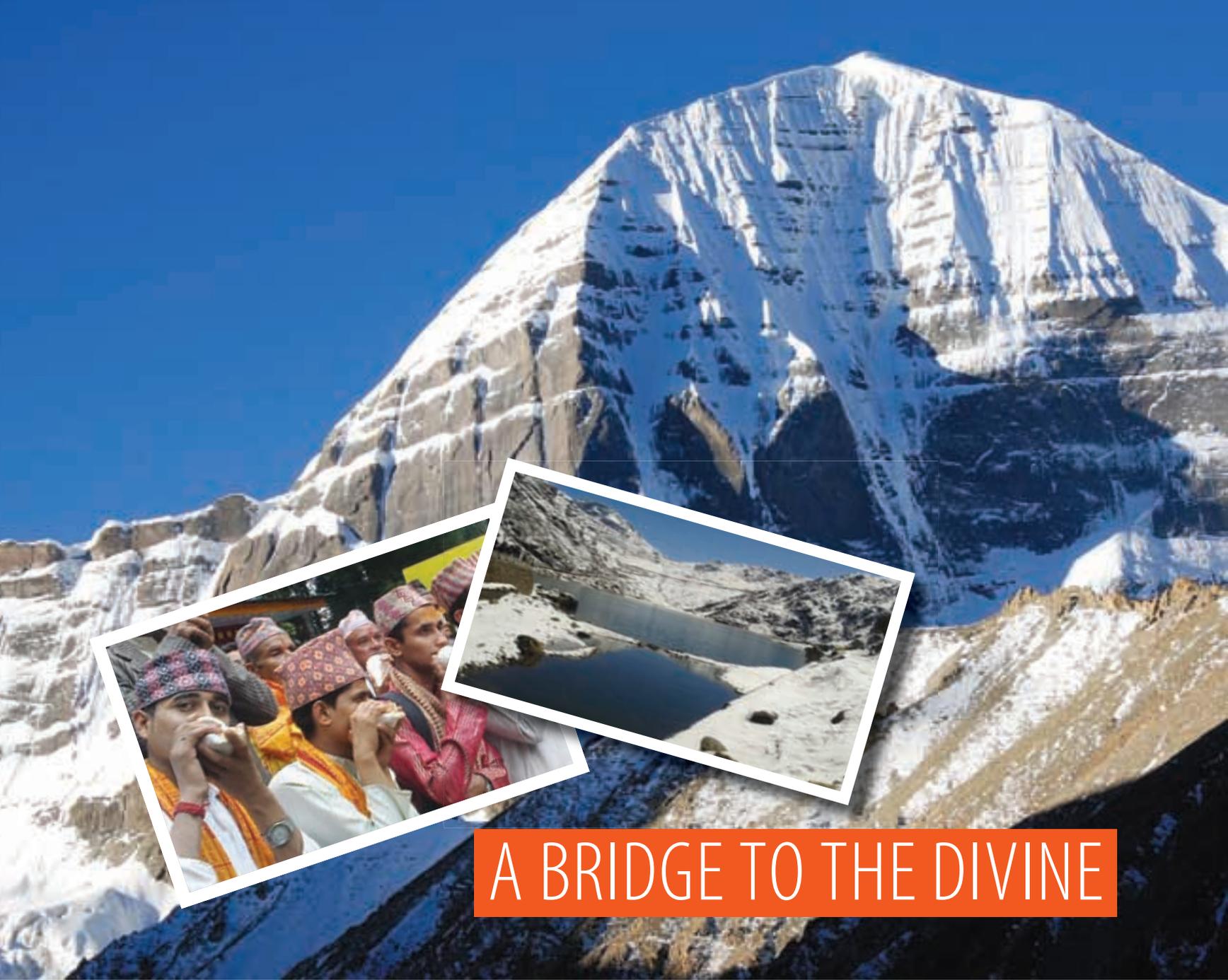
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## A BRIDGE TO THE DIVINE

The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, which commences through Sikkim, and goes through the Nathu-la Pass, is a bridge to the divine

**Alok K Shrivastava, ADDITIONAL C.S, GOVT. OF SIKKIM**

The new route of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra (KMY) through Sikkim, that started on 18 June 2015, was a memorable and momentous day in the contemporary history of Sikkim. The Ridge Garden, a famous landmark on top of the state capital, witnessed the joint flagging off of two buses (carrying 20 pilgrims each to Mount Kailash and Mansarovar) by Shri Niwas Patil, Governor of Sikkim and Pawan Chamling, the CM of the peaceful state of Sikkim. A Commemorative Special Postal Cover by the Department of Posts was released to mark the occasion. Prior to the flag off, colourful balloons were released by the Chief Guests, along with the traditional blowing of conches (Sankh) by young Hindu priests and the Buddhist Lamas while butter lamps burned and prayer flags ruffled in tow. These added the

needed colour and flavour to the long awaited ceremony. Both, priests and performing artists with ethnic musical instruments belonging to three main communities, impressed a disciplined gathering of 5000 persons, representing the Government and the non-government sectors alike.

The experience of half an hour simply mesmerised the tourists and pilgrims, many of whom were visiting this beautiful part of the country for the first time. The Singhi Chaam (Snow Lion Dance) and Yak Dance not only stole the show, but also set the ball rolling. Bonhomie prevailed all over. The weather, which was inclement for a month, including an early morning downpour (leading to blockage of NH10 Highway to Gangtok), did not play spoilsport. The 88-year-old Motilal Lakhota and one or two others from the pre 1962-Nathula trade days,



together with traders connected to the post 6 July 2006 trade route, were conspicuous by their presence. After all, the small and beautiful state of Sikkim was celebrating its 'ethnic trade connection with China,' after 9 years. A fresh round of international trade had been resumed from 6 July, 2006, at an altitude of 14,400ft., following several rounds of talks, after a gap of 42 years. Though the temperature on the last occasion was in the range of minus 5 degrees to minus 3 degrees, in Gangtok, it was a pleasant 14 degree.

The Chief Minister, in his speech, expressed his gratitude to the PM for acceding to this long pending demand within a year of his taking over. He hinted that with the dynamism and speed of the PM, more optimistic days will be ahead for brightening the prospects of an organic, crime free and poverty-free Sikkim. He went on to add that the state was a peaceful one with communal harmony, having been adjudged as a "Nirmal" state, having received accolades for its rural development, tourism initiatives and environment conservation efforts.

In view of the significance of the occasion, he indicated that Hindus, Buddhists and all others were living in unison, as there was no discrimination according to the traditional Varna system. The statues of Guru Padmasambhava at Samdruptse and Lord Buddha at Ravangla, along with the Char Dham (replicas of 4 Dhams and 14 Jyotirlingams) at Solophok, exemplify the unity and diversity of the state. Therefore, he

asked the first batch of pilgrims to visit some of them on their return through Sherathang after 19 days.

He also promised them a few "organic gifts" on return. Reference or expected respect to Jai Bhole Nath (Lord Shiva), the presiding deity of Mt. Kailash, was the common chord in the deliberations of both the CM and the Governor. This was also heard loudly when the actual flag off materialised. Earlier, the day began with offering of prayers and butter lamps together with plantations of saplings by the dignitaries and presentation of mementoes and scarves to the yatris, who not only felt elated and cheerful, but expressed the same as well, in a candid way.

Talking of facts and figures, the per capita expenditure on the new route will be in the range of Rs. 1.7Lakhs for a journey of 2800km, with stretches between Delhi and Bagdogra having 1200km and the Bagdogra – Gangtok – Nathula – Kangma – Laji – Jongba – Mansarovar stretch involving a distance of 1585km, with one halt each at Gangtok, 15th Mile, and Sherathang on the India side. The yatra, may also require a trekking of 26km in addition to the 19km Parikrama of Mt. Kailash.

The new route is likely to be a very attractive and relieving proposition, especially for senior citizens or those belonging to a relatively young age group, but not in a position to take the rigorous trek through Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand.



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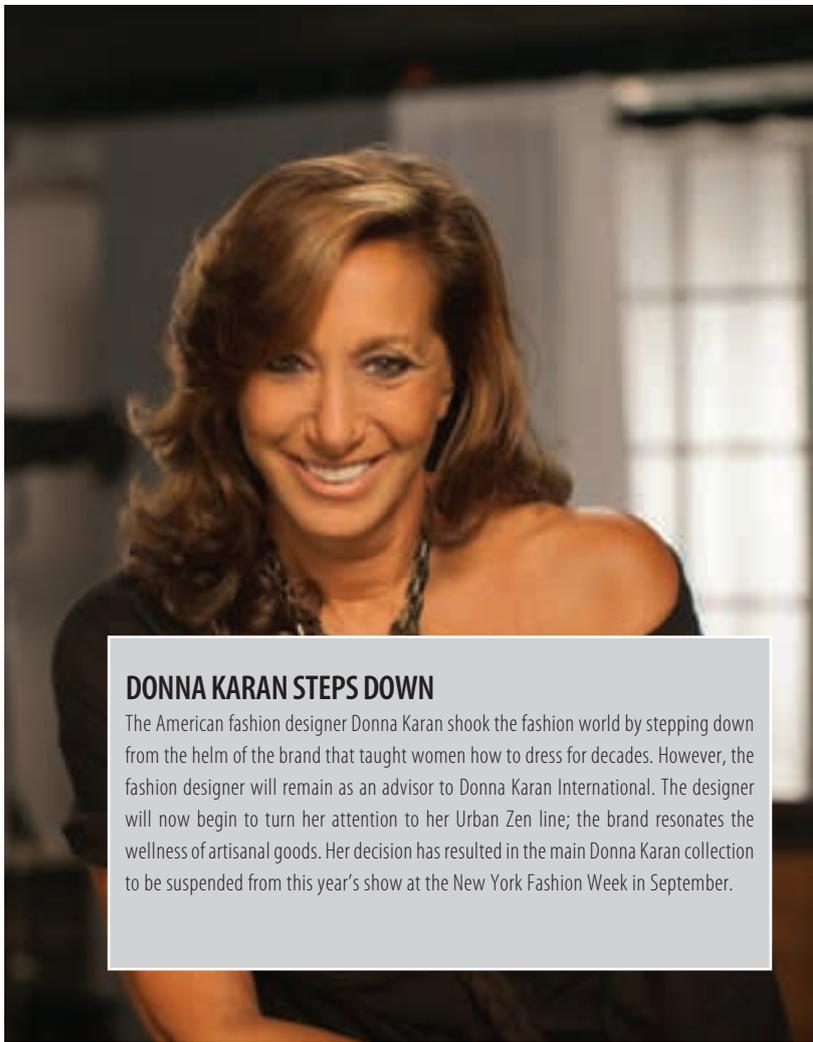
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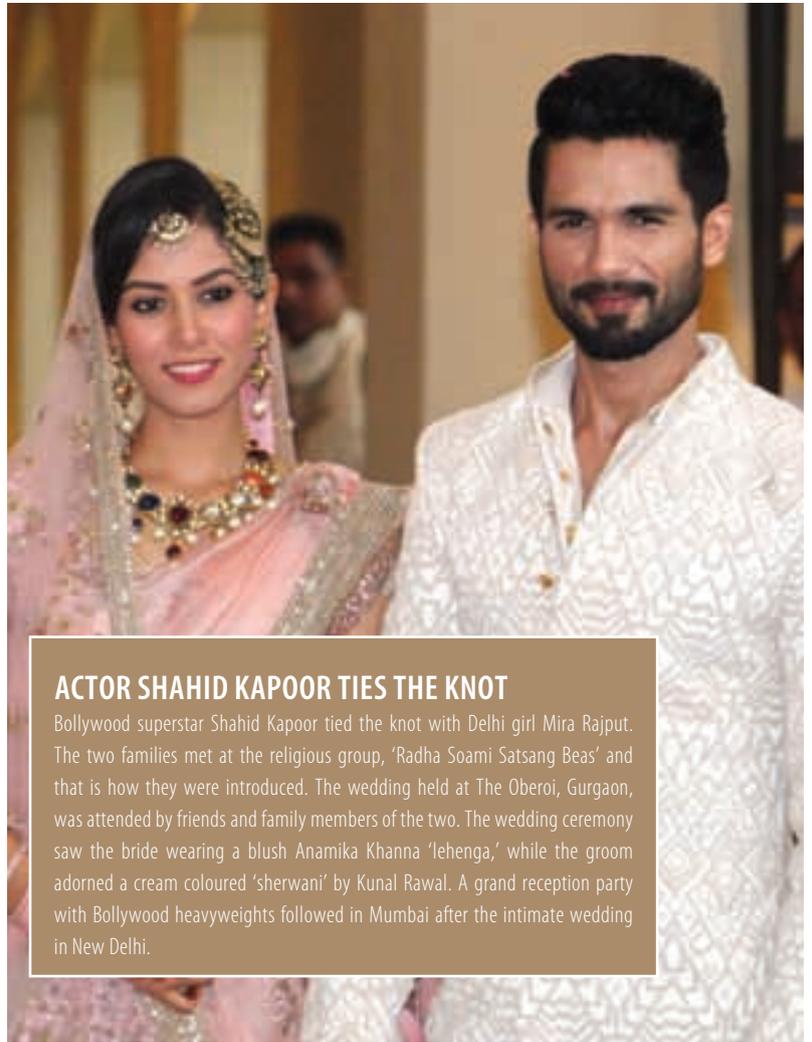
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### DONNA KARAN STEPS DOWN

The American fashion designer Donna Karan shook the fashion world by stepping down from the helm of the brand that taught women how to dress for decades. However, the fashion designer will remain as an advisor to Donna Karan International. The designer will now begin to turn her attention to her Urban Zen line; the brand resonates the wellness of artisanal goods. Her decision has resulted in the main Donna Karan collection to be suspended from this year's show at the New York Fashion Week in September.



### ACTOR SHAHID KAPOOR TIES THE KNOT

Bollywood superstar Shahid Kapoor tied the knot with Delhi girl Mira Rajput. The two families met at the religious group, 'Radha Soami Satsang Beas' and that is how they were introduced. The wedding held at The Oberoi, Gurgaon, was attended by friends and family members of the two. The wedding ceremony saw the bride wearing a blush Anamika Khanna 'lehenga,' while the groom adorned a cream coloured 'sherwani' by Kunal Rawal. A grand reception party with Bollywood heavyweights followed in Mumbai after the intimate wedding in New Delhi.



### STARSTRUCK MEN'S WIMBLEDON FINAL

The men's Wimbledon Final at the Centre Court witnessed a star-studded attendance. The match featuring Djokovic and Federer was a much talked about world event which was eventually won by the former. Present at the occasion, Bradley Cooper wore a cream three-piece suit with black tie, while Hugh Grant wore a suit which was a shade darker. Others in attendance were Benedict Cumberbatch, Kate Winslet with actor Clive Owen, Sacha Baron Cohen and Isla Fisher, who were seen together in the crowd. Kate Middleton was seen seated in the Royal Box, while David Beckham grabbed headlines by catching a misfired shot.



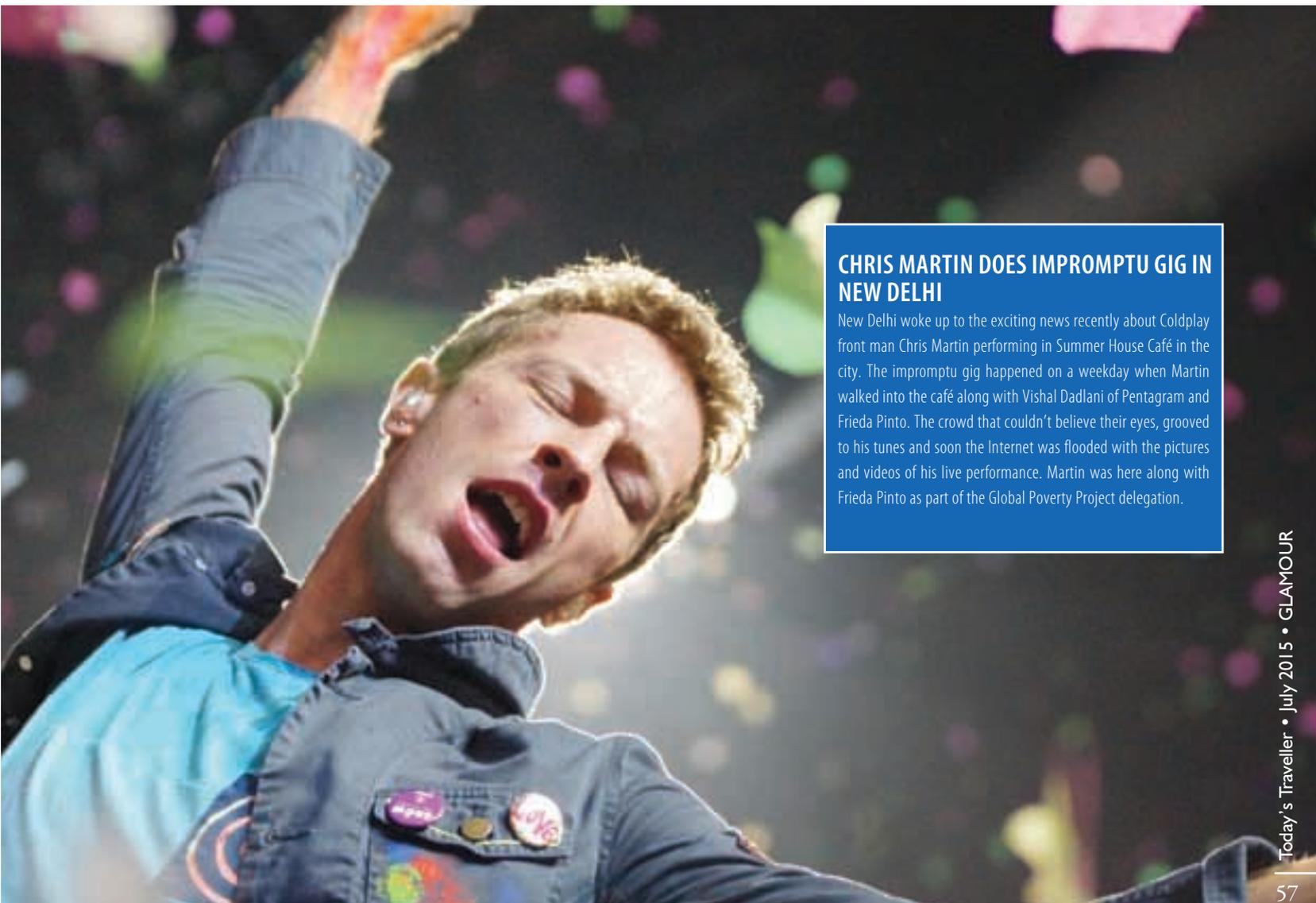
### AMITABH BACHCHAN BRAND AMBASSADOR FOR FIRSTCRY.COM

Superstar Amitabh Bachchan has been appointed the brand ambassador of a children-based e-commerce company, firstcry.com. The baby and childcare products retailer has successfully raised \$36 million in a Series D funding led by venture capital firm New Enterprise Associates and San Francisco-based Valiant Capital. The company launched by Maheshwari and Amitava Saha is a company that is owned by Brainbees Solution, who are product suppliers for pregnant women and children.



### OMEGA CELEBRATES THE LAUNCH OF CONSTELLATION PLUMA WITH CINDY CRAWFORD

The Taj Palace in Mumbai recently saw the presence of yesteryear's supermodel Cindy Crawford, who was here for the launch of OMEGA's Constellation Pluma – an elegant wristwatch that takes its name from the Latin word for "feather." Cindy Crawford has been associated with the watch company for two decades and was accompanied by Raynald Aeschlimann, OMEGA Vice President & International Sales Director, Member of Swatch Group's Extended Group Management Board, and the brand's Indian ambassador, Abhishek Bachchan.



### CHRIS MARTIN DOES IMPROMPTU GIG IN NEW DELHI

New Delhi woke up to the exciting news recently about Coldplay front man Chris Martin performing in Summer House Café in the city. The impromptu gig happened on a weekday when Martin walked into the café along with Vishal Dadlani of Pentagram and Frieda Pinto. The crowd that couldn't believe their eyes, grooved to his tunes and soon the Internet was flooded with the pictures and videos of his live performance. Martin was here along with Frieda Pinto as part of the Global Poverty Project delegation.



**WHAT:** Eid-ul-Fitr

**WHEN:** 17 July

**WHERE:** All over the world

Eid-ul-Fitr is the first day of the Islamic month of Shawwal. It marks the end of Ramadan, which is a month of fasting and prayer. Muslims attend communal prayers, listen to a 'khutba' (sermon) and give 'zakat-ul-fitr' (charity in the form of food) during Eid ul-Fitr.

**WHAT:** Festival of Chariots  
**WHEN:** 18 July, 2015  
**WHERE:** Bada Danda, Puri, Orissa

The country's Hindus throng Bada Danda, Puri's main drag, to honour their deity, Lord Jagannath. An image of this avatar of Lord Krishna is transported, along with those of Jagannath's brother Balabhadra and sister Subhadra, in three large, colourful raths or chariots.



**WHAT:** Festival of the Redeemer

**WHEN:** 18-19 July

**WHERE:** VENICE, ITALY

Between 1575 and 1577, a terrible plague swept through Venice, claiming some 50,000 lives – one-third of the city. When the epidemic abated, the Senate, thanking the Redeemer (Jesus) for answering its prayers, built Il Redentore Church and started an annual festival.





**WHAT:** Hemingway Days Festival

**WHEN:** 21-26 July

**WHERE:** 201 Duval St, Key West, Florida, USA

The Hemingway Look-Alike Contest attracts 150 hopefuls, complete with beards, barrel chests and booming voices, to Sloppy Joe's Bar, where 'Papa' spent most of the 1930s slamming back daiquiris.

**WHAT:** WOMAD

**WHEN:** 23-26 July

**WHERE:** Charlton Park, England

Established by World Music aficionado and former Genesis frontman, Peter Gabriel, the WOMAD festival offers unique opportunities to hear the music of countries from Mali to Mongolia. WOMAD was first started in England in 1982, and is now a global festival network.



**WHAT:** Elvis Week

**WHEN:** 8-16 August

**WHERE:** Elvis Presley Blvd, Memphis, Tennessee, USA

On the anniversary of the King of Rock 'n' Roll's death, Elvis impersonators converge on Memphis, Tennessee, where Presley ate his last peanut butter n' jelly sandwich in 1977. Events include an Elvis trivia treasure hunt and music and film nights and screenings of classics.

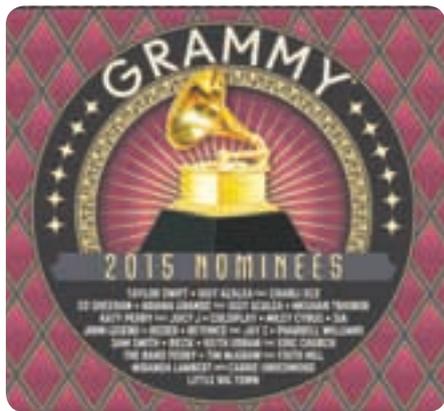


# PICK OF THE MONTH

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

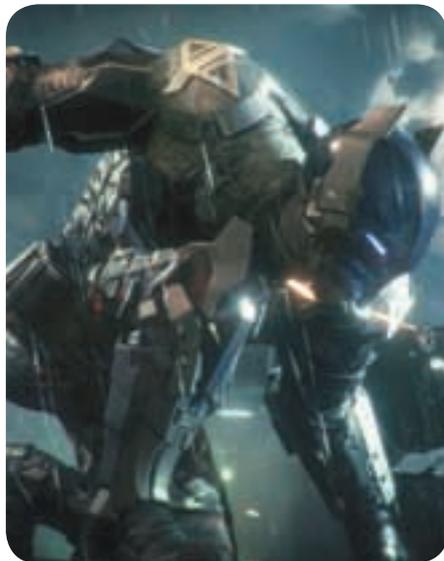
## GRAMMY: 2015 NOMINEES

The essential music compilation of the year, this is the collection that is a must for every music lover. "Grammy: 2015 Nominees," includes some of the popular artists of the current times who were



nominated in it. The artists include Taylor Swift, Iggy Azalea, Beyonce and Coldplay. This amazing album has songs such as Shake it Off, A Sky Full of Stars, Wrecking Ball and Drunk in Love. Grab the best of recent music through this album.

**Genre (s): Mixed**



## EXODUS: GODS AND KINGS

A biblically inspired film directed by Ridley Scott and starring Christian Bale in the lead, Exodus is a



fascinating tale. The story revolves around Moses, the defiant leader who has rose against the Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses and in the process, has set 600, 000 slaves on an epic journey. This journey was an escape from Egypt and what gripped the nation – the terrifying cycle of deadly plagues. Aaron Paul of the television series, 'Breaking Bad' fame has played the role of Joshua.

**Genre (s): Epic Fantasy**

## BATMAN ARKHAM KNIGHT

One of the favourite superheroes of all time, Batman is here to take on evil. The city has been threatened by dark forces, by villains who have made it unsafe for innocent citizens. This darkness can only be fought with the help of the other darkness, called Batman. The game is developed by Rocksteady Studios and is published by Warner Bros. Inactive Entertainment. This time around, Batman is at war against his deadly new foe, Arkham Knight.

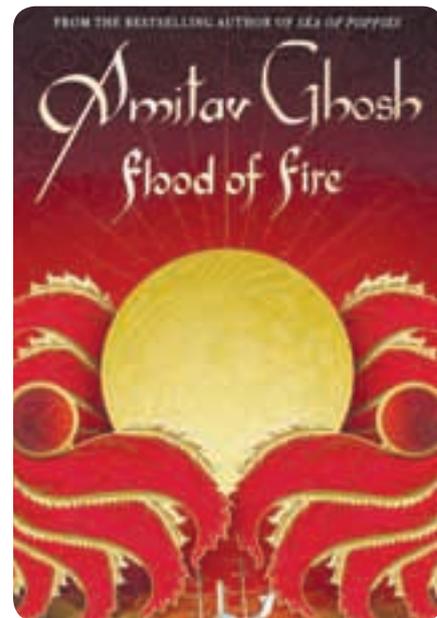
Genre (s): Action Adventure

**Genre(s): Puzzle**



## FLOOD OF FIRE

The final book in the IBIS trilogy, acclaimed India writer Amitav Ghosh's Floor of Fire is a masterpiece.



The book is the third and last in the series, after 'The Sea of Poppies' and 'The River of Smoke.' The book revolves around the year 1839 when there was tension between China and British India, following a crackdown on opium smuggling by Beijing. The tension forces the colonial government in India to declare war, and thus begins the extraordinary journey of the Hind, a vessel that travels eastwards from Bengal to China, sailing into the midst of the First Opium War.

**Genre (s): Fiction**



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