

TODAY'S traveller

CORPORATE BUSINESS, AVIATION, MICE & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

MARCH 2018 | ₹50

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KEWAL GILL

PUBLISHER/EDITOR
KAMAL GILL

MANAGING EDITOR
ARJUN GILL

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER (MKTG)
VAGISH MISHRA

SENIOR MANAGER (MKTG)
SAFAL SAALWAR

MANAGER (MKTG)
PRAKHAR BHARDWAJ

GENERAL MANAGER (ADMIN)
AJITH KUMAR LR

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
DEEPAK RASTOGI

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For correspondence and advertising:
504-505, 5th Floor, Sheetla House
Building No. 73-74, Nehru Place,
New Delhi - 110019
Tel: 011 41029079, 41029979
Email: publications@gillindia.com

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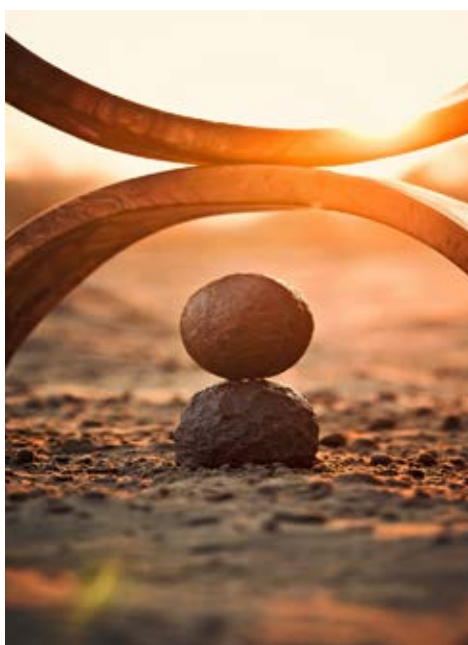
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OMAN AIR ANNOUNCES THREE NEW ROUTES

Oman Air, the national carrier for the Sultanate of Oman, is launching three new routes in 2018, to Istanbul, Turkey, in June; Casablanca, Morocco, in July; and Moscow, Russia, in October. While Istanbul and Moscow will be served by Oman Air's Boeing 737-800, Casablanca will be served by 787-8.

The new flight to Istanbul will launch on June 1. The flight duration will be approximately 5 hours and 25 minutes. The new Casablanca flight will start on July 1 and will be the only non-stop service to Casablanca from Oman. Moscow will be launched during the Winter Schedule 2018. The direct flight will be operated daily and it will be the only non-stop operation between Oman and Russia.

In order to equip its B737 MAX fleet with best in-flight entertainment systems, Oman Air has signed an agreement with Thales. Oman Air relies on Thales' advanced, state-of-the-art AVANT IFE System to equip its B737 MAX fleet. Oman Air's B737 MAX business class passengers will enjoy the largest screens provided on a single aisle aircraft. Thales' unique passenger interface will enable Business and Economy passengers to access an impressive list of entertainment and informative features.



PARK PLAZA KOLKATA BALLYGUNGE NOW RADISSON KOLKATA BALLYGUNGE

Park Plaza Kolkata Ballygunge has announced its rebranding to Radisson Kolkata Ballygunge – a brand synonymous with outstanding service and comfort. "I am glad to welcome our first Radisson hotel in the heart of Kolkata. West Bengal is a key market for us and Kolkata remains a promising destination due to its thriving leisure and business footprint. We appreciate the investment that Mukti Group has made in upgrading this hotel and the trust they have demonstrated in the Radisson brand", said Raj Rana, Chief Executive Officer, South Asia, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group.

Radisson Kolkata Ballygunge features 92 well-appointed, spacious and modern rooms across Superior, Business Class, Junior and Executive Suites categories. Equipped with modern amenities, new upholstery, superior bath amenities and colourful art work, the hotel assures a comfortable and enjoyable stay for guests. The property has over 9000 sq.ft. of flexible meetings and events space that can be split into five expansive conference and banquet areas. Ideal for weddings, socials as well as meetings and corporate cocktails, the banquets can accommodate over 1000 guests.



GRAND HOTEL EXCELSIOR VITTORIA PARTNERS WITH SERENE EXPERIENCES

With an aim to expand its footprint in the Indian hospitality market, Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria is partnering with Serene Experiences. The iconic Amalfi Coast hotel was founded by the Fiorentino family in 1834, in Sorrento, Italy. A member of the 'Leading Hotels of the World' since 2000, the Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria is a 5-Star luxury hotel of exclusive style and elegance.

On the new partnership, Guido Fiorentino, President & CEO, Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria, said, "India is a rapidly growing and important market for us. We are therefore delighted to be partnering with Serene Experiences. Their experience and understanding of the complex Indian market will help us to reach out to the various segments."

Naresh Chandnani, Founder & CEO of Serene Experiences, adds, "We would be showcasing this truly unique and amazing hotel to high networth individuals and the experienced traveller through various marketing activities, tying up with complementing luxury brands and through bespoke campaigns, individually crafted to acquaint the Indian luxury traveller with one of the most amazing experiences of the Amalfi Coast, Italy."



IBTM ARABIA WITNESSED HUGE SUCCESS IN MICE MARKET

The 12th edition of IBTM Arabia, which took place from February 5 - 7, in Abu Dhabi, has been hailed a success with 2,700 business meetings taking place between the elite group of event planners and exhibitors. Delegates also attended 12 networking events and a series of inspiring education sessions during the event.

Several changes were made to this year's event, including enhancements to the Hosted Buyer programme, which saw the IBTM team pre-selecting and qualifying Hosted Buyers, ensuring that a select group of event planners, tailored toward the exhibitor mix, were present. This meant that time was focussed on meeting people with whom there was already a very high chance of doing business.

Shinu Pillai, Event Director, IBTM Arabia, said, "We're delighted with the immediate feedback from our customers on the success of this year's event, in terms of the quality of meetings, the networking opportunities and the results of the enhancements we've made."



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MINISTRY OF TOURISM ORGANISED THE GREAT INDIAN BLOG TRAIN

Keeping in mind the importance of Social Media as an effective tool for destination branding and marketing, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, organised a Social Media Key Influencers' Campaign, 'The Great Indian Blog Train'. Bloggers from all around the world were invited to travel to destinations in the country on the luxury trains operating in different states.

A total of 60 Bloggers from 23 countries, including India, will be travelling on a week-long journey on four luxury trains – Palace on Wheels, Maharaja Express, Deccan Odyssey and Golden Chariot, in groups of 15 bloggers on each train.

The objective of the campaign is to position luxury trains of India in the domestic and overseas markets. Rashmi Verma, Secretary (Tourism), Suman Billa, Joint Secretary (Tourism), and Meenakshi Sharma, Additional Director General (Tourism), Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, and other officials of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, visited the Safdarjung Railway Station to interact with the domestic and international bloggers.

SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM ORGANISES ROADSHOW IN INDIA

South African Tourism begins 2018 with the 15th edition of its biggest travel trade initiative in India. South African Tourism's Roadshow travelled to five Indian cities, namely, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Delhi and Ahmedabad, from February 12 - 19, 2018. The participation and scale is a reflection of the strong consumer demand witnessed from India, which is currently the 8th largest international source market for South African Tourism. The Roadshow capitalised on the growing demand and aligned efforts to meet the evolving demands of the Indian traveller. Nearly 450 travel agents from Delhi met up with 60 South African suppliers to better align efforts and address the ever evolving demands of the Indian traveller.

One of the key focus areas is to go beyond the immensely popular Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg and surrounds, and Kruger National Park, and create awareness about new destinations, such as Oudtshoorn, Knysna, Plettenberg Bay, Port Elizabeth and the Drakensberg region. These are picturesque areas where travellers can pack in a lot of action into shorter time-spans.

RADISSON JODHPUR DEBUTS IN RAJASTHAN

Radisson Jodhpur has opened its doors to the magnificent city of Jodhpur. The hotel is the first Radisson – a brand synonymous with outstanding service and comfort to open in the city.

"I am delighted to welcome our first Radisson Hotel to Jodhpur. The hotel's architectural grandeur, combined with the brand's service ethos, will enthrall guests travelling to the city," said Raj Rana, Chief Executive Officer, South Asia, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group. Spread over around 70,000sq.ft. the hotel's architecture is reminiscent of Rajasthan's erstwhile culture and style. The hotel constitutes 96 rooms across Superior, Business Class, Studio Suites, Single Bedroom Suite, Two Bedroom Duplex Suites and Presidential Suite categories.



CREATIVE TRAVEL HONoured WITH SITE CRYSTAL AWARD

Creative Travel Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, India and Amway Europe, were recognised by the Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE) with a Crystal Award for Excellence in Incentive Travel: Asia Pacific, at the Crystal Awards Recognition Ceremony, held during the SITE + MPI Global Forum, in Rome, Italy. This is the seventh time that Creative Travel has been the recipient of a SITE Crystal Award. The award was received by Rajeev Kohli, Joint Managing Director, Creative Travel, and Bob Postins, Head of Special Events, Amway Europe, at an award function comprising 600 industry members.

"Creating a dream incentive requires one to have a dream client. Amway Europe put its complete faith in us to deliver a one-of-a-kind trip in a country that had never done anything of this scale before," commented Rajeev Kohli, CIS, joint Managing Director for Creative Travel.

SINGAPORE TOURISM ORGANISED TWO-CITY ROADSHOW IN INDIA

To deepen the relationship with the Indian travel trade, Singapore Tourism Board (STB) organised a two-city roadshow in Mumbai and Jaipur. India has moved up to third position from the fourth in terms of visitor arrival to Singapore, along with a double digit growth of 17% until October 2017 and it continues to be the third largest tourism receipts generating market for Singapore. The first roadshow was flagged off in Mumbai, on January 23, followed by Jaipur, on January 25.

The roadshows featured stakeholders from Singapore, representing hotels, airlines, integrated resorts, attractions, Destination Management Companies (DMC) and cruise operators interacting and networking with STB's travel and trade partners in India. The delegation was led by G.B. Srithar, Regional Director (SAMEA), for Singapore Tourism Board.



*It's time to escape
never-ending chores and
water-tight schedules.*

*It's time to get away from
mindless chatter and lifeless smiles.*

*It's time to
break free and live again.*

It's time for Kerala.

TRANQUILLITY IN THE HEART OF LUXURY

With an eye for artistic detail, dazzling architecture and an aesthetically pleasing environment, Daios Cove stands for everything exquisite

TT BUREAU

Located in the privacy of a pristine cove in Vathi Crete, Daios Cove Luxury Resort & Villas offers a peaceful setting that elevates the overall travel experience. The impressive sea view synchronises perfectly with the resort's natural surroundings, thus creating a natural hub of beauty and serenity.

The striking architecture includes meticulously selected furnishings and fine works of art, which adorn all interior and exterior spaces. From sophisticated lighting arrangements to fine linen and plush fabrics, all the way to refined colours, elegant decoration details, Italian touches and chic vibes, the Daios Cove Luxury Resort & Villas lifts the 5-Star luxury accommodation experience to new heights.

The Luxury Beach Resort in Crete offers easy access to the private beach, thus offering guests an opportunity to fully unwind while enjoying a 24-hour support from its fully staffed Reception and concierge. Electric mobility, a state-of-the-art spa, a sea water infinity pool, a water sports centre, a fitness area, tennis courts, and opportunities for recreation and excursions to Crete's must-see hotspots, historical sites and archaeological treasures, all at one place, ensure an unforgettable stay.

Daios Cove also offers an exceptional dining experience in all of its six restaurants and bars, where guests can savour everything from nouvelle cuisine dishes to traditional delicacies with a modern twist. Daios Cove Luxury Resort & Villas is a one-of-a-kind resort, that blends nature and contemporary luxury.



FERNANDO HIERRO NAMED UNWTO AMBASSADOR FOR RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

International football star Fernando Hierro has been named Ambassador for Responsible Tourism by World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

"As tourists, each of us can change the world if we act responsibly with regard to the places, the people and the cultures we visit. I feel part of this team and I support the World Tourism Organization in its efforts to ensure that tourism benefits everyone," said Hierro after accepting the distinction from UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili. Fernando Hierro joins Vicente del Bosque, the legendary Spanish football coach, who was named Ambassador for Responsible Tourism last year in January during the annual UNWTO Awards for Tourism Innovation.



KERALA PROPOSES FUNDING FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING

The tourism arena in Kerala will receive added support from the government with the state budget 2018 setting aside close to Rs 381 crore towards development and promotion of the sector. The budgetary provisioning is Rs 36 crore more than the Rs 345 crore that was set aside last year. Presenting the Budget in the Kerala Assembly, Dr Thomas Isaac, Minister for Finance, said the state government will focus more on conservation and preservation of heritage monuments in the coming financial year.

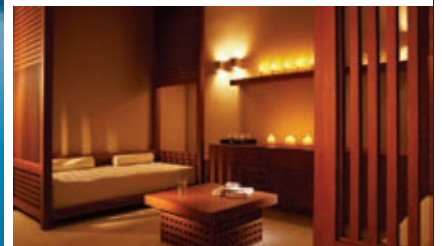
The Finance Minister set aside Rs 82.50 crore towards marketing of the tourism sector. The government also proposes to bring boat races under the league competitions, and will be supported with an amount of Rs 10 crore. An amount of Rs 4.95 crore has been earmarked towards Responsible Tourism initiatives, while development of eco-tourism products would get Rs 4.24 crore. The Finance Minister also proposed to set aside Rs 13.75 crore towards infrastructure facilities and matching grants for Central Government-sponsored schemes.

LE MERIDIEN COLLABORATES WITH THE INDIA ART FAIR

Le Méridien Hotels & Resorts announced its official hospitality partnership for the sixth consecutive year with the India Art Fair – South Asia's largest contemporary art fair. The Le Meridien Hub at the Art Fair site in New Delhi converted into a visual experience where the work of celebrated photographer Lucie Robinson was showcased, bringing to life the brand's newest 'Follow Me' programme.

Le Meridien's Follow Me campaign is a visual journey through five artists & Lucie Robinson being one of them. The campaign was launched 11 years ago to provide artists a platform to showcase their work to a global audience while inspiring guests and locals to experience the European heritage of Le Méridien Hotels & Resorts through a creative lens. Lucie is currently in New Delhi to capture the sights & sounds of India's capital city through her Rouge lens.

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DIMITRIS MANIKIS has been appointed as President and Managing Director for Europe, Middle East, Eurasia and Africa (EMEA) by the Wyndham Hotel Group. He will be based at the company's London offices. Manikis possesses deep knowledge of the hospitality industry, an extensive network and strong relationships with developers and customers across the EMEA region.



DAVINDER JUJ has been designated as the General Manager at Eros Hotel Nehru Place. From Executive Assistant Manager to Hotel Manager, and taking another step ahead, he is now appointed as the General Manager of the hotel. Prior to this, Juj has been associated with several other brands, such as InterContinental, Hilton and Hyatt.



ADITYA SHAMSHER MALLA has been appointed as the General Manager at Double Tree by Hilton Pune – Chinchwad. With more than two decades in the business, Aditya has been a part of some of the best global brands. In his new role, Aditya will be responsible for curating strategic initiatives that will lead the hotel to continue its guest focussed approach.



SUJU KRISHNAN has been designated as the General Manager of Vivanta by Taj – Blue Diamond, Pune. Suju is a Taj loyalist, having spent 24 years with the company. His journey with the Taj began in 1994 when he joined the organization in Front Office as part of the Taj Graduate Training Programme at Taj Bengal, Kolkata.



JAYANTA DAS has been named General Manager at The Gateway Hotel Hinjawadi, Pune. Jayanta moves to Pune from his role as General Manager at the Taj Kumarakom Resort & Spa, Kerala, where the hotel, under his leadership, won two National Tourism Awards. Jayanta began his career with the Taj in 1993, at Taj Bengal, Kolkata.



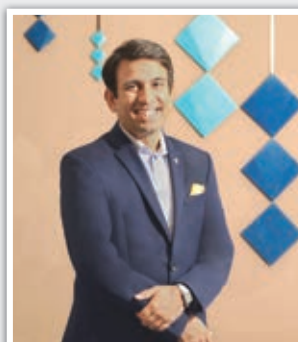
SHERIN MATHEW has been appointed as the Director of Sales and Marketing for Novotel Hotels & Resorts, Goa. With over 12 years' experience in the areas of Sales, Business Development, Strategic Planning and Team Management, he brings with him a wealth of expertise in the Sales and Marketing function.



NEESHA MOHAPATRA has been designated as the Director of Human Resources at Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel, at Brigade Gateway. Having worked with some of the renowned names in the Hospitality Industry, Neesha comes with an impressive track record of over two decades in the Human Resource domain.



N KARTHIK has been appointed as the Regional Head - South, for SaffronStays, a micro hospitality collective. His primary responsibility will be to facilitate the growth and development of SaffronStays, in South India, and to build its presence across all holiday destinations in the South. Karthik will lead a team of professionals, including Acquisition, Business Development, Marketing and Operations. Karthik had also served as the Micro Market Head, with OYO Rooms, where he was a key member of the team, responsible for the development and growth of business.



VARUN KAMRA has been designated as the Director of Sales & Marketing at the newly opened Holiday Inn Express & Suites Bengaluru. With an experience of over 14 years in the Hospitality Industry, Varun has worked with brands like The Park, Hilton, Blooms Hotel and IHG Group Inter Continental Hotels Group.

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CORPORATE



KING OF KABABS

A distinctive culinary haven with a multinational presence, The Great Kabab Factory offers delectable kababs and other savouries, in a contemporary and stylish ambience

KAMAL GILL

Why do dining experiences create their unique space in our memories? I think it has a lot to do with the warmth and comfort one feels in the place of dining, the aromas and hospitality that seep into the ambience and of course the excellence of food presented for one's selection.

Sometimes, just the novelty of the food concept being introduced sparks an interest and one becomes a regular visitor, recommending and bringing friends to the restaurant.

The Great Kabab Factory has scored on both points... novelty of concept and great food. Many a food aficionado has wondered, I'm sure, as to how the Kebab Factory has sustained its appeal over the years. Not only that, it has crossed over from metros and cities in India to international openings in other countries.





The Great Kabab Factory (TGKF) now has over 20 outlets and a presence in Delhi, Noida, Gurgaon, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Chandigarh, Coimbatore, Jaipur, Jalandhar, Pune, Ranchi, Varanasi, Dhaka and Bangkok.

It is the 'piece de resistance' at the Radisson Hotel Varanasi, for instance. I had a wonderful experience here, but I'm sure it will be the same in all its outlets.

The story about the ubiquitous kebab dates back to almost thousand years. The Indian kebab evolved greatly over time and Indian chefs have perfected it to a fine art, transforming it to the succulent, soft delicacy to be savoured at the fine dining restaurant, The Great Kabab Factory.


Here's how this delectable savoury goes through its rites of passage at the TGKF. Roasted on the tandoor or on a sikhri, shallow-fried in a tawa or a mahi tawa, deep-fried in a kadhai, steamed in pots, even grilled on stone. The result is one of the greatest gastronomic pleasures invented by man – kababs so soft, they melt in your mouth!

The menu at the restaurant changes on a daily basis, but always offers a selection of both vegetarian and meat kababs. The meat kababs are available in chicken, mutton and fish, while the vegetarian options feature regional produce. One can start one's meal with speciality Indian breads served with a lentil and vegetable of the day and end with a choice of classic Indian desserts.

When it comes to kababs, you can be sure that TGKF is unparalleled. From the time one enters, one is treated like royalty, with service that is courteous and impeccable. Master Chefs are constantly at work to create authentic recipes, while the menu continues to surprise on a daily basis. Service is table d'hôte and unlimited, so you can indulge in a never ending supply of kababs, followed by a delicious array of desserts.

No doubt about it. TGKF provides a unique dining experience at its contemporary and stylish Indian specialty restaurants, which uses recipes combining the ancient with the contemporary. TGKF brings not only sumptuous kababs from all over the Indian subcontinent, but a choice of biryanis, curries, daal, exotic Indian breads, delightful desserts and much more.





SANCTUARY OF SOLACE

The Tree of Life Resort & Spa in Varanasi captures the essence of the city and the Ghats amid expansive, tranquil spaces, offering superior comfort and impeccable facilities

KAMAL GILL

To say that spirituality resides in the city of Varanasi is to state the obvious. The city has a legendary mystic appeal that comes across in everyday living. You will find a quaint charm in the juxtaposition of temples and shrines alongside shops and offices even as sadhus and pundits go their unhurried way in overcrowded streets and chaotic traffic.

Varanasi, one of the world's oldest cities, stands as a sentinel of traditional India that has morphed into modern avatars in ways that make it impossible to deconstruct old from the new. With its rituals, mantras, Vedic chants, temples, the Ghats and the mighty Ganges, Varanasi reaches out to every visitor's subconscious mind to indulge in some soul searching.

Echoing the life force and spirit of Varanasi, is a retreat that allows your spirit and body to soar in over two acres of

expansive, serene space. The Tree of Life Resort & Spa in Varanasi, conveniently located amidst green vistas, halfway between the airport and the city and well connected to Sarnath via the new Ring Road, brings you creature comforts even as your spirit is revitalised.

One cannot but marvel at the Resort's local architectural style, with its slanted roofs, wrought iron balconies and artistic exterior coping. Shiva's Courtyard is your first real connect with spirituality. Get spellbound by handmade collections of the 12 Jyotirlingams, which are manifestations of Lord Shiva on the night of the Aridra Nakshatra.

Check into one of 18 Junior Suites, each one named after some of the over 100 names of the sacred River Ganga.

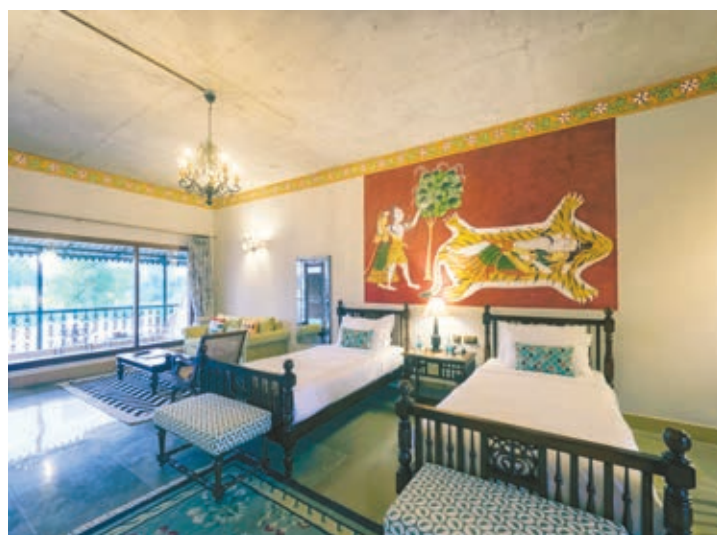
The hotel's flooring uses natural stone, and all suites look out onto the Ganga Kund, a water reservoir with broad steps,



which houses water from the holy River Ganga, and simulates the famous Ghats along the river. Avail your own quantum of solace as you sit on the deep stone steps and imbibe the chants of Shiva in the background. You could also take part in the rituals carried out at the hotel's Kuldevi Temple.

Indulge in custom-made accessories in your private space. The Junior Suites are on the ground and first floor levels. Each suite offers private space of over 700sq.ft, with separately demarcated bedroom and living room spaces. The ornate, intricately carved teak bed sports a stunning hand-painted mural as a back drop, providing a traditional touch to the luxurious ambience.

The living room comes with comfortable seating and a 42-inch-flat screen television. Other facilities include tea



service and an Espresso press in each suite, plus a large private sit out with a beautiful view of the Ganga Kund. The impressive, well-appointed bathroom adds to the Resort's sense of luxury.

Take a refreshing dip in the hotel's long rectangular Pool, which opens onto a green expanse across the fields and also offers an amazing view of the nearby century-old peepal tree. If swimming is not your thing, then enjoy a laidback day on the poolside deck beds or take time out to enjoy the steam and sauna facilities at the spa.

If you crave Varanasi's street food, but are a tad wary about hygiene, the Tree of Life Resort & Spa understands and pampers your palate with delectable cuisine – just the kind you're looking for. The menu at AnnTripti, the hotel's fine dining outlet, showcases food that is sumptuous and wholesome.

Take time off to indulge your body. Put yourself in the hands of experts as you receive exquisite wellness treatments at the holistic Ekam – The Spa, which translates to 'complete.' There is a single and a doubles treatment room, with both steam and sauna facilities.

Relax and unwind. The Tree of Life Resort & Spa lives up to its reputation as a sanctuary of solace.

CORPORATE JET-SETTER

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Sr. Vice President - Admin & Facility
AGS Transact Technologies Ltd
Mumbai

TT BUREAU

Q: Most memorable trip to any destination?

My most memorable trip was to Sri Lanka.

Q: You dream of going to?

I would love to visit London.

Q: Favourite airline and why?

My favourite airline would have to be British Airways, for its best in class service.

Q: Best hotel experience and why?

Radisson Blu Hyderabad, because I think it has some of the best rooms, along with the best amenities.

Q: A place you plan to visit again?

I think I would like to visit Singapore again.

Q: A family vacation that stands out?

I think the family vacation to Singapore stands out.

Q: Your best holiday with friends?

It would have to be with my friend Akshay, from Jet Airways.

Q: Great food you enjoyed and where?

I loved the South Indian food at Hotel Orchid, Domestic Airport, Mumbai.



Q: What to watch out for while travelling?

I think one should do a bit of research about the destination one is about to visit, and check out the available mode of transport and accommodation facility that is available there. One should also acquaint oneself with a little of the spoken language of the place, especially in South India; pack the requisite clothes and make sure you have enough cash for your trip.

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

Since most of my trips are business trips, I need some form of entertainment to relax in the evenings.





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THAILAND

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CORPORATE JET-SETTER

TT BUREAU

Ashok Ramakrishnan
Deputy General Manager-Corporate Travel
Larsen & Toubro Limited, Mumbai



Q: Most memorable trip to any destination?

The two trips undertaken with my family in 2017 to Uttarakhand, in April, and Thailand, in October, were memorable. Short visits from Mumbai to places and hill stations in Maharashtra – Lonavala, Matheran, and Mahabaleshwar, have all been enjoyable.

Q: You dream of going to?

In India, to the Northeast, with my wife and daughter, covering the Seven Sisters, namely, Assam, Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh.

In Australia, to the MCG, with my cousins, to see a test match between India and Australia. Seeing a match live at MCG would be a great experience.

Q: Favourite airline and why?

Indigo Airlines, for their methodical, punctual and professional services; Jet Airways and Air India for their friendly services with a 'desi' touch. I have also had a good experience with Turkish Airlines.

Q: Best hotel experience and why?

Hotel Ganga Exotica at Haridwar – a 3-Star hotel for their warm, homely service, good food and facilities. The hotel is located in a busy by-lane, but the River Ganga flows in its backyard and provides much needed calm.

Q: A place you plan to visit again?

Kulu Manali, in Himachal; Pahalgam in Kashmir, which is one of the most beautiful places, with scenic beauty that makes one believe that Kashmir is heaven on earth. Palakkad, in Kerala, where I belong, is a joy to visit each time.

Q: A family vacation that stands out?

Uttarakhand – an amazing state, blessed with beauty, spirituality, wildlife and the River Ganga.

Q: Your best holiday with friends?

My Kashmir trip with friends was one of the best, combining amazing locations with nature and scenic beauty. The trip included horse riding through the steep mountain ranges of Pahalgam, going up to the highest level of snow in Gulmarg and visiting the vibrant city of Srinagar with its beautiful gardens.

Q: Great food you enjoyed and where?

We enjoyed Rajasthani food while visiting Jaipur, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Udaipur. I travelled with the family in the month of February, more than a decade ago, and we had Rajasthani cuisine most of the time, across the cities and forts that we visited.

Q: What to watch out for while travelling?

Checking the weather conditions before travelling, travelling light, and most importantly, adhering to the normal law and order situation at the places to be visited with family.

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

Plan your trip in advance. Complete all bookings without delay to ensure best rates and facilities. Organise an ideal mix of travel, relaxation and fun on holiday visits with family. In case of official visits, plan meetings and complete visit as scheduled to avoid changes in travel plans.



Serenity Among 30,000 Sculptures

The Meenakshi Temple in Madurai is a cultural treasure, kept alive with a daily dose of art, faith and celebration. The over-2,500-year old temple is one of the most renowned examples of Indian temple architecture. Introspect as you walk in the 1,000-pillared hall, join the throngs of devotees and be enchanted by the emerald deity. Soak in the spirit of the temple city.



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TECH TALK

For corporates who are continuously on the move, travelling light and right is the way to go

TT BUREAU

SMART LUGGAGE

There's nothing more exciting than packing your bags and heading off to a far-flung destination. But, don't let the bane of packing take away from your travel thrill. Smart luggage brings technology to your aid so that you no longer have to endure luggage-related anxiety during any part of your trip. With built-in features like GPS locators, weight scales that prevent over-packing, USB ports to charge your devices, solar-powered batteries, and remote lock systems, smart luggage is a game-changer in the travel industry. Among the options available, Bluesmart Smart Suitcase has garnered rave reviews among critics and travellers alike.

It has built-in GPS that lets you track it anywhere in the world, so no more worries about your luggage going missing.



WIRELESS BONE CONDUCTION HEADPHONE

Made with a sleek and intelligent design and equipped with Bluetooth technology, these headphones can be connected to your mobile phone to listen to music, as well as make and receive calls in a discreet and intuitive manner. Bone conduction works by harmlessly conducting sound to the inner ear through the bones of the skull. The biggest advantage to bone-conduction headphones is that you can hear the world around you. They leave your ears free to listen for cars or people while still delivering music to your mind. Batband headphone successfully impressed the tech world with the use of three sound transducers around the head, providing a clearer, high fidelity sound quality.



HYBRID LAPTOPS

Convertible and detachable 2-in-1 laptops have swiftly taken over the market and travellers seem to take a liking to them for all the right reasons. These tablets (that double as laptops) aren't as limited in functionality as iPads and Android slates, but they're far better travellers than traditional notebooks. HP Spectre x360 13, Lenovo Yoga 720 and Asus ZenBook Flip UX360CA have made it to favourites, but Dell XPS 15 2-in-1 may soon top the segment. It's a hybrid inside a hybrid. It's 16mm thick, which is pretty thin for any kind of 15-inch laptop, and the edge-to-edge Infinity Display has 4K resolution.



COMPATIBLE STORAGE DEVICE

Maintaining a secure network is essential to protect yourself or your business from cyber security attacks. However, having a secure network won't do much to protect your data from physical theft (or accidental loss). Storing files on an unencrypted hard drive or a generic USB drive is never a good idea. Studying the issue from a travellers' context, a comprehensive selection of storage devices have entered the market. The great feature of this device is that it does not rely on software on your computer or phone, you can also format it in your chosen format, and it should still work fine. This means you can take the device and pretty much use it anywhere while still keeping your files secure. Aegis Secure Key 3z, which is a USB 3.1 key using a type A connector, comes in 5 capacities: 8GB, 16GB, 32GB, 64GB, 128GB.



PRESENTATION REMOTE

This innovative device offers an alternative to the current crop of laser pointers. One of the tech giants, Logitech, has come out with a presentation which is small and sleek. The Logitech Spotlight presentation remote allows you to move your slideshow forward and back, but to spotlight, magnify or circle areas of the screen. At one end is a USB dongle which pulls out of the device, revealing a micro-USB port for charging the unit. The dongle connects to your computer and communicates with the Spotlight via radio signal; you can also connect without the dongle using Bluetooth.



INTERNATIONAL HOTSPOT

Frequent travellers often have their business trips marred by low Internet speed. Though many rental hotspot providers have come up with their products, the upcoming Nuu's new Konnect i1 hotspot will hook you up to the Internet in 88 countries. Offering the most cost effective and best worldwide 4G LTE data and voice calling services, the product excelled above any other in the market. The hotspot uses an LTE Class 6 Qualcomm modem and works on the T-Mobile network in the US and Rogers in Canada. It connects up to five devices to the Internet and supports VPNs and Wi-Fi calling.

AIR MOUSE VOICE

It is always helpful if someone else shares the work load too, especially when you are riding solo. The arrival of Air Mouse Voice has come as a blessing to many. Air Mouse Voice adds a voice-enabled presentation remote control and motion sensitivity to high-precision desktop mouse control. Re-enforced by the device's in-air functionality, communication between the mouse and computer is carried out via wireless. It doesn't require the computer to host a USB wireless receiver as the use of Bluetooth technology enables this mouse to communicate with the computer at a range of up to 70ft or 21m. Gyration Air Mouse Voice has been the foremost choice among business professionals.



PORTABLE LAPTOP CHARGER

While preparing your notes on the laptop, running out of battery can be a nightmare situation. The launch of a power bank just for mobiles was not enough. This is why portable laptop charger battery packs were launched, which would enable you to work uninterrupted on your laptop without worry.

The best portable laptop battery chargers and power banks can even replace your original laptop charger altogether, providing you with an uninterruptible power supply wherever you happen to be. A number of portable chargers are available, including ones like the Lizone Extra Pro and Poweradd Pilot Pro2, both of which can charge multiple electronic devices.



POCKET LED PROJECTOR

A few years ago, trimming down the size of projectors to pocket size didn't seem real; however, technology always finds its way to make life easier and more enjoyable. Pocket projectors are a little larger than Smartphones and they can accommodate videos, photos, for on-the-go entertainment, in addition to slides and charts for business or classroom presentations. The ASUS ZenBeam E1 is a mini LED Projector with a long battery life and the ability to charge other mobile devices attached to it. The product is designed for entertainment wherever, whenever. Its rechargeable battery supplies up to 5 hours of playtime while doubling as a power bank.



RE-TIMER GLASSES

It is not easy for travellers to relax while travelling, and especially when changing time zones affect sleep patterns. Re-timer glasses can be used to help change wake up times and adjust to shift work, travel and time zone changes. These glasses work by adjusting the circadian rhythm through suppressing the body's production of melatonin. They are lightweight and easy to wear, and have an adjustable nose piece to help adjust the location of the green-blue light, which has been proven to be the most effective wavelength for improving circadian rhythm and sleep time.



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INDIA- HE(ART) OF HEALING: BODY, MIND & SOUL

At the core of our well-being is the intricate matrix of body, mind and soul. To find and keep this balance is the elusive fountainhead we are in search of...

KAMAL GILL

The magic of healing! The million dollar question...how does one create harmony of body, mind and soul? Is it at all possible? We don't know the intricacies that create bonds of well-being within the body, but definitely at some subconscious level, we try to get the balance right between body, mind and soul.

Physicians and psychiatrists have long understood the connect between disease on the one hand and lifestyle on the other. Lifestyle encompasses diet, exercise, mental and emotional equilibrium. We know from experience that our body, mind and soul are deeply connected and each has a domino effect on the rest of the system.

INDIAN TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

The interesting fact is that we, in India, have an ancient understanding of the art of healing in a holistic fashion and several treatises, scriptures and books have immortalised various healing systems such as Yoga, Ayurveda, Vedanta, Chakra Meditation, Unani, homeopathy, Siddha or Naturopathy, Music, Painting, and so on.

Alternative healing helps through the therapy and the technique used, as well as relaxing the patient's mind.


The wonderful part of healing in India is that a seeker can experience the fabric of the country in its living traditions. Awe-inspiring Hindu temples, Buddhist stupas and Islamic mausoleums showcase a great history. As international and domestic visitors reach out to sages and rishis in ashrams and luxury resorts to teach ancient practices, alternate healing practices in India continue their popularity run.

Practitioners of these techniques use a variety of treatments to help patients take responsibility for their own health and to achieve overall wellness.

AYUSH

An acronym used to refer to non-allopathic medical systems, AYUSH translates to Classical Health Traditions (CHT) like





Ayurveda and Siddha, which are classified and codified and Oral Health Traditions(OHT), which is rich distilled knowledge based on herbs and plants from rural and tribal areas of India.

Recognised officially by the government of India, the AYUSH Ministry includes the Department of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) systems. Under the Ministry, there are a number of hospitals, institutions and registered practitioners. In fact, India has declared June 21 as International Yoga Day.

AYURVEDA

The word Ayurveda originates from the Sanskrit; 'Ayu,' meaning life, and 'Veda' meaning knowledge/science ... a science of life.

"Ayurveda" is one of the world's oldest holistic ("whole-body") healing systems, developed more than 3,000 years ago in India.

It's based on the belief that so long as your mind, body, and spirit are in harmony with the universe, you have good health. Anything that disrupts this delicate balance will make you sick.

Ayurveda believes every person is made of five basic elements found in the universe: space, air, fire, water and earth and these combine to form three life forces or energies, called 'doshas,' namely, Vata dosha (space and air); Pitta dosha (fire and water); and Kapha dosha (water and earth).

We inherit a unique mix of the three doshas and they control how your body works. Health issues develop due to an imbalance of our doshas.

Re-connecting with these energy healing practices empowers our body's innate capacity to self-heal, and to return us to our natural state of wholeness.

YOGA AND MEDITATION ENERGY HEALING

Yoga dates back to pre-Vedic times. Mentioned in the Rigveda, Yoga was developed around the fifth century BCE. Among the most well-known types of Yoga are Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga.

While Yoga is popular as a system of physical exercise in the West, Yoga in Indian traditions, has a meditative and spiritual core in addition to physical benefits.

In India, Yoga and meditation are treated as one entity of holistic healing. Well known Yoga exercises like Surya Namaskar, which regulates digestion, agility and longevity, and Pranayama or breathing exercises, which regulate the 'prana' or vital force in a human, are practised alongside meditation.

This energy healing practice works on the understanding that our bodies should be in sync with the energy system of the universe. We need to practise to bring harmony to this latticework of energies, vibrating at different frequencies, encompassing the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects.

Trust the Indians to perfect the system of Yoga through Mudras, which is a study that indicates which points in our body vibrate to different energies and how we can bring this philosophy into play.

Ancient India practices include Mudras – the simple practise of joining different combinations of the fingers and thumbs. It is believed that the body is a miniature form of the universe: earth, water, fire, air and space, each of which corresponds to a specific finger or thumb.

Holding specific fingers and thumb combinations permit the elements to regain equilibrium. Generally, Mudras are practised during 'Pranayama' (Yogic breathing exercises) to achieve peace and spiritual energy and to channel energy to areas of the body that require healing.

INDIAN HEALING TRADITIONS—UNANI, RASASHASTRA, SIDDHA AND SA-RIGPA TRADITIONS

It is amazing how vast amounts of medical knowledge have been handed through generations to modern times. Today, traditional healing practices like Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha have entered the mainstream to complement bio-medicine to meet the healthcare needs of contemporary society.

There are other formal systems of medicine, such as Unani, Rasashastra, Siddha, and Sa-Rigpa .

Unani is an Arab medical tradition with origins in the Greek Ionian medicine, which has absorbed elements of Ayurveda and other sources.



Rasashastra is an ancient tradition of healing that uses medicines incorporating metals, especially mercury and gold, which are purified using complex procedures. The tradition maintains that Rasa formulations, in association with Yogic and Tantric practices, give extraordinary powers like arresting the process of ageing. Certain Rasa medicines were incorporated into Ayurveda and Siddha.

The Siddha tradition is an ancient South Indian system that developed especially in the Tamil speaking region and continues to be popular there. It integrates elements of Ayurveda, Rasashastra, Yoga and Tantra and uses alchemically prepared metals along with medicinal plants. The Siddha system is said to have been influenced by contacts with Chinese and Arab medicine.

The Sa-Rigpa tradition practised in Tibet and Himalayan regions is an amalgam of Ayurveda, derived from Vagbhata's Ashtangahrdayam and folk practices, along with a strong influence of Tibetan Buddhism.

The hereditary Ashtavaidya Ayurveda physicians of Kerala are among a small group of traditional medical practitioners who have endeavoured to retain the scholarly study and practices of their ancestors.

OTHER HEALING PRACTISES

Alternative healing works through the subconscious mind and gently eases patients into therapy, which assists prescribed medication by physicians.



structured exercises where participants work with colour and art supplies.

AROMA THERAPY

What can be more natural for humankind than to resort to nature around it to cure ailments?

No wonder then, that Aromatherapy as a healing and spiritual ritual has been a sacred practice in most traditional cultures -- Egypt, India, China and Greece.

The Rig Veda, written more than 5,000 years ago and is one of the oldest human records written in India describes the healing essences of herbs. Several archaeo-botanical excavations and medical treatises in the Gangetic plains of India prove the deep knowledge and use of medicinal and sacred healing plants since the 2nd millennium BCE which are still used by Ayurvedic physicians.

According to Ayurveda, the inherent qualities of various medicinal herbs and flowers harmonise the individual body and are used to prevent infections, purify the air, and energise or relax the body.



Ancient Indian texts mention sophisticated methods of concentrating the aromas. The extraction method was often perfected in the form of steam distillation.

Today, of course, these ancient healing practices have been further refined and available in treatment centres, spas and ashrams.

MUSIC THERAPY

The magical power of music to soothe and enhance psychological mood is legendary. We have all experienced it. Not surprisingly, Music Therapy as a belief system and its integrated approach in treatment of ailments is clinically and globally supported by medical practitioners.

In India, a unique characteristic of classical music is the allocation of definite times of the day or night or even seasons to perform or listen to 'Raga' melodies. Specific ragas are prescribed for ailments as it is believed that they are able to stimulate the pituitary gland, which secretes hormones that affect the nervous system and the flow of blood. Ancient texts describe how Ragas help activate the seven energy Chakras in the body.

In fact, a music library at Thanjavur in Southern India is reported to contain a study of ragas in their application in fighting common ailments.

This belief system has been in practice in ancient India as Raga Chikitcha. Today, ancient healing Indian music forms

like Nadayoga, Vedic Chanting and Raga Chikitcha are being studied by music therapy institutions.

Interestingly, the traditionally vast repertoire of 'kirtans', 'kriti's' and 'bhajans,' which are devotional in nature, has hugely beneficial psychological values.

Physicians cite stories of people in semi-vegetative states returning to consciousness through a recalled melody or patients finding their memory through musical tunes. Music as a pain reducer or its ability to help partially paralysed people as they cue their walking to a piece of music, combined with physical therapy, is a common medical practice. Learning to play the guitar or the piano, singing lessons or simply hearing music helps the emotionally stressed.

HEALING AND FULLFILMENT

Healing as a renewing process that soothes, calms and rejuvenates body, mind and soul is a sought after elixir, because it brings a guaranteed quality of life in its wake.

In the last few decades, there has been growing interest in alternative forms of therapy globally. While this has stimulated the development of tourism for well-being in India, there is no doubt that alternate healing centres, institutions, spas, hotels and ashrams offering different kinds of simplified holistic treatments in the country, have finally come of age.

ANCIENT TEXTS ON SURGERY, CHILD HEALTH AND GYNAECOLOGY

Classic health traditions have developed from Vedic/ classical texts and treatises like Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda, Charaka Samhita (text on ancient Indian medicine), Susruta Samhita (text on ancient Indian surgery), Ashtanga Samgraha, Ashtanga Hridaya (text on ancient Indian medicine and surgery), Kashyapa Samhita (text on Gynaecology and Child health), and other numerous related text books in both Sanskrit and regional languages.

BODY, MIND & SOUL

BODY

Ayurveda
Pranayama
Asanas
Hatha Yoga
Raja Yoga

MIND

Meditation
Chakras
Tantra
Mantras
Music
Art

SOUL

Vedas
Upanishads
Gita
Vrat
Moksha



SMART CITIES COME OF AGE

India's Smart City approach will make living and work spaces sustainable and create new business opportunities in the Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Sectors

The nomenclature 'smart' seems omnipresent today – we have smart cars, smartphones, smart TVs, and smart hotels. When it comes to smart cities, there's a global endeavour to connect the dots and bring everything within the city under one ambit in order to make it more liveable and sustainable.

A destination that pursues this approach will see new business opportunities emerge, especially in travel and tourism. And, in the Hospitality Sector, Smart City technology uses data to augment visitor experience.



DAHEJ



Dahej is a Special Investment Zone situated on the southwest coast of Gujarat. Dahej will be developed on the lines of 3R oriented, environmentally smart community development concept. The aim of the state government is to make Dahej a Smart City and turn it into a hub for 3R industry.

Fortune Park Dahej, Dahej SEZ

Location: Dahej SEZ

Fact file: 84 Rooms | Orchid – The Multi-cuisine Restaurant | Banquet capacity for up to 200 persons

Packages starting from Rs. 4499 + taxes per night, includes stay on double occupancy, buffet breakfast & dinner and Wi-Fi connectivity.



Fortune Park BBD, Lucknow

LUCKNOW



The state government is keen to transform its Art City to Smart City. It believes that in addressing the next generation of urban challenges, the authority need not overhaul the entire city. Lucknow aims to improve resource management by adding connectivity and intelligence within the existing infrastructure.

Fortune Park BBD, Lucknow

Location: Central, near Hazratganj

Fact file: 63 Rooms | Earthen Oven – a North Indian specialty restaurant | Orchid – the Multi-cuisine Restaurant | Fortune Deli | Neptune Bar & Lounge | Banquet capacity for up to 500 guests

Packages starting from Rs. 4499 + taxes per night, includes stay on double occupancy, buffet breakfast and Wi-Fi usage.

HARIDWAR

Due to rising urbanisation, Haridwar will soon be under the radar of Smart City. The state government has worked on a separate master plan for the holy city, along with conservation of its natural resources.

Fortune Park, Haridwar

Location: 5 km from SIDCUL, the industrial hub

Fact file: 48 Rooms | Orchid – The Multi-cuisine Restaurant | Fortune Deli | Banquet capacity for up to 125 persons

Packages starting from Rs. 4999 + taxes per night, includes stay on double occupancy, buffet breakfast & dinner, 15% off on in-room dining and laundry.



Fortune Park, Haridwar

BHUBANESWAR

The capital of Odisha, Bhubaneswar is part of a larger metropolitan region, which is known for growing the IT and education hub. Also known as Temple City, Bhubaneswar is popular as a tourist destination with Puri and Konark situated in proximity.

Fortune Park Sishmo, Bhubaneswar

Location: Gautam Nagar

Fact file: 72 Rooms | Orchid – the Multi-cuisine Restaurant | The Oriental Pavilion – an Oriental specialty restaurant | Neptune Bar & Lounge | Banquet capacity for up to 150 persons

Packages starting from Rs. 4899 + taxes per night, includes stay on double occupancy, buffet breakfast, airport transfers, Wi-Fi connectivity and 15% off on food & soft beverages and spa vouchers worth Rs. 1000.



Fortune Park Sishmo, Bhubaneswar



Fortune Inn Promenade, Vadodara

VADODARA



The pick of the projects proposed by VMC under its Smart City proposal include the Railway Station Area Redevelopment Plan, City Command and Control Centre (CCCC), Vishwamitri Riverfront Development, Slum-free city and Smart Urban Transport.

Fortune Inn Promenade, Vadodara

Location: City centre, near Akota Gardens

Fact file: 86 Rooms | Orchid – The Multi-cuisine Restaurant | Fortune Deli | Banquet capacity for up to 100 persons

Packages starting from Rs. 4199 per night + taxes, includes stay on double occupancy, buffet breakfast, railway station/ bus terminal pick-up, 10% off on in-room dining.



WelcomHeritage Sirsi Haveli, Jaipur



WelcomHeritage Traditional Haveli, Jaipur

JAIPUR



Jaipur stood at third place when the first 20 names were declared for the country's maiden Smart City project. Popularly known as the 'Pink City,' Jaipur forms the 'Golden Triangle' tourist circuit along with New Delhi and Agra, with both of them situated approx. 250km from the city. The vision of the authorities will be to balance heritage with Smart City elements.

WelcomHeritage Sirsi Haveli, Jaipur

Location: Village Sirsi, Distt Jaipur, Rajasthan

Fact File: 23 Rooms | Coffee Shop | Restaurant Jiman – Serves Multi-cuisine

Packages starting @ Rs. 2,750/-* per night on double occupancy, inclusive of breakfast. Taxes extra.

WelcomHeritage Traditional Haveli, Jaipur

Location: AC-4 (C), Gayatri Marg, Sawai Jai Singh Highway, Bani Park, Jaipur, Rajasthan-302016

Fact File: 24 Rooms | Zaika - Multi-cuisine Restaurant | #BC - Bar

Packages starting @ Rs. 3,000/-* per night on double occupancy, inclusive of breakfast. Taxes extra.



WelcomHeritage Ranjit Vilas, Amritsar

AMRITSAR



Amritsar has started off its Smart City campaigns with primary focus on smart infrastructure that will reflect the city's unique physical and cultural traits.

WelcomHeritage Ranjit Vilas, Amritsar

Location: Village Heir, Palm Grove, Pearl Lane, Airport Road, Amritsar – 143001, Punjab

Fact File: 22 Rooms | The Indian Rasoi- Serves authentic Indian cuisine

Packages starting @ Rs. 7,000/-* per night on double occupancy, inclusive of breakfast, lunch or dinner. Taxes extra.



BHOPAL



Bhopal was featured among the very first 20 cities out of the 98 cities in India to get the opportunity to recast the country's urban landscape.

Also known as one of the greenest cities in the country, Bhopal is determined to carry on its reputation by unlocking the value of underutilised land, thereby presenting smart architectural marvels.

WelcomHeritage Noor-Us-Sabah Palace, Bhopal

Location: V.I.P. Road, Koh-E-Fiza, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh - 462001

Fact File: 57 Rooms | The Dynasty - The pan Asian restaurant | Marble Arch - An Open Air restaurant | Za-aïqa - Peshawari and Mughlai cuisine | Cafe Latte

Packages starting @ Rs 9350/- per night on double occupancy, inclusive of breakfast. Taxes extra.



WelcomHeritage Noor-Us-Sabah Palace, Bhopal



WelcomHeritage Panjim Inn, Panaji

PANAJI



Panaji, the capital of Goa, is a heritage city with a unique socio-cultural environment, with green spaces and heritage structures. After being shortlisted for 98 cities under the Smart City initiative, Panaji has defined its vision and goals, which will transform the city into a sustainable one.

WelcomHeritage Panjim Inn, Panaji

Location: E-212, 31st January Road, Fontainhas, Panaji, Goa

Fact File: 37 Rooms | Goan & Continental Dining | In-house Bar

Packages starting @ Rs. 7,300/-* per night on double occupancy, inclusive of breakfast, lunch or dinner. Taxes extra.

AHMEDABAD



With a merit score of 66.81, Ahmedabad was included in the first list of India's Smart City plan. It is the largest city in Gujarat and the seventh largest metropolitan area in India, thus serving as an important economic and industrial hub. With new industrial estates in planning, Ahmedabad has proven worthy to house world-class infrastructure.

WelcomHeritage Mani Mansion, Ahmedabad

Location: Behind Mehdi Nawaz Jung Hall, Beside Bank of India, Shantikunj Society, Paldi Cross Roads, Ahmedabad-380006, Gujarat

Fact File: 25 Rooms | Fresh Roast - A Multi-cuisine Café | Rudu Bhojan - Traditional Gujarati cuisine | Pizzeria | In-house restaurant

Packages starting @ Rs. 5,500/-* per night on double occupancy, inclusive of breakfast. Taxes extra.



WelcomHeritage Mani Mansion, Ahmedabad



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Seoul
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Geneva
Sarajevo
Brasilia
Tallin
Monaco
Bronx
DALLAS
Las Vegas
Minsk
Tokyo
Los Angeles
Riga
Hanoi
Oslo

AVIATION



AAI INAUGURATES AOCC AT GOA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

With the objective of improving overall efficiency of airport operations for the benefit of passengers and other stakeholders, Guruprasad Mohapatra, Chairman, Airports Authority of India (AAI), inaugurated Airport Operations Control Center (AOCC) and a Help Desk, at Goa International Airport.

Goa airport has become the 12th airport to have an AOCC. This centre will provide real time information about flights, like actual Time of Arrival/Departure, boarding gate number for departing passengers and baggage conveyor number for arriving passengers on Flight Information Displays. It will also help AAI, airline operators and ground handling agencies to ensure optimum utilisation of available resources.

AAI has also awarded an expenditure contract for Operation and Management of Help Desk and Reserve Lounges at Goa Airport. A dedicated Help Desk/ Information Counter will have flight information Display and Computer system, which will provide latest flight information and assistance to passengers/visitors during their travel through Goa International Airport. The Help Desk will also supervise the operations of airlines as well as the ground handling agencies at the airport. A dedicated round-the-clock Help Line number will also be launched soon. **tt**



GARUDA INDONESIA PARTNERS WITH THALES AVANT

Garuda and Thales announced their partnership to equip their new Airbus A330neo with the AVANT IFE system, featuring powerful new lightweight High Definition (HD) monitors. Garuda's choice of Thales' IFE system will help drive the airline's strategic positioning to attract more passengers as Indonesia expects to see a double-digit increase in passenger growth this year.

Business Class passengers will enjoy the Avii touch screen handsets, a second-screen application platform that enables passengers to select, control and enhance their multimedia experience. "We are excited to partner with Garuda Indonesia, the world-class airline rich in service culture. As the carrier evolves digitally and implements the latest technologies to enhance travel experience for passengers, Thales is pleased to work with Garuda and help accelerate their digital journey by delivering state-of-the art in-flight entertainment," said Dominique Giannoni, CEO, Thales InFlyt Experience. **tt**

AIR CANADA REITERATES ITS COMMITMENT TO THE INDIAN MARKET

The Delhi-Vancouver – Delhi direct and non-stop flight, which was launched in October 2016 as a seasonal flight will now be a four-time weekly, year round flight. "Customer response to our non-stop Delhi – Vancouver – Delhi seasonal flight has been extremely positive and we are very pleased to extend this flight to year round, beginning June 2018," said Ben Smith, President, Passenger Airlines, Air Canada.

He added, "These flights, together with our direct and non-stop Delhi to Toronto and Mumbai flights, represent three year-round routes to India, launched within the last two and a half years. Air Canada is committing close to \$1.5 billion worth of aircraft between Canada and India, underscoring our commitment to this vibrant market and to our continuing strategic, global expansion."

Air Canada's state-of-the-art Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner which service this route feature 29 International Business Class lie-flat seat Suites, 21 Premium Economy and 247 Economy Class seats, with upgraded in-flight entertainment at every seat throughout the aircraft. **tt**

LUFTHANSA SELECTS SITA FOR SERVICE CENTER COMMUNICATION NETWORK

Lufthansa InTouch, responsible for managing customer service across the Lufthansa Group, has again selected SITA to manage its Service Center Communication Network and key infrastructure elements, ensuring that more than 11-million customers are connected to service agents every year.

SITA, a long-standing partner with Lufthansa InTouch, will continue to manage and maintain its Service Center Communication network and key infrastructure to meet the airline group's constantly evolving needs. The service provided by SITA has transformed how customer calls to Lufthansa Group airlines are handled.

A close integration between SITA's global voice network and Lufthansa InTouch's Genesys contact centre platform, ensures a caller – regardless of their location – is automatically and directly routed to a consultant best equipped to meet their specific requirements. Through this optimisation, Lufthansa InTouch has benefited from savings in transmission costs of up to 20% as well as significantly improved call quality, notably by eliminating forwarding of calls between sites. **tt**



MUMBAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT WINS TOP HONOURS

GVK Mumbai International Airport Private Limited (MIAL), the company that manages the Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport (CSIA), was bestowed with the coveted Award for Excellence in 'Air Traffic Management Productivity in Indian Aviation,' at the recently held CAPA India Airport & Airspace Summit 2018, in Mumbai.

The award was presented to Rajeev Jain, CEO, MIAL, by Ralph Hays, Consul General & Trade Commissioner, New Zealand Consulate-General Mumbai, at the summit held in Mumbai.

The award recognises the airport's committed focus on improving airside efficiency. Mumbai Airport has managed to increase runway capacity considerably over the past few years. The efficiency of air traffic management places Mumbai airport amongst the best in class globally for a single runway operation.

CAPA's Awards were aimed at rewarding airlines and airports that were successful and provided industry leadership in the challenging environment. **tt**

SINGAPORE AIRLINES ADDS FIFTH WEEKLY FLIGHT FROM AHMEDABAD

Singapore Airlines introduced its fifth weekly flight from Ahmedabad to Singapore to cater to the increased travel demand during the summer holiday season. The additional flight will operate every Friday, from April 27 – 25 May, 2018.

David Lim, General Manager India – Singapore Airlines, said, "Ahmedabad continues to be a key market for Singapore Airlines and we are pleased to offer an additional, seasonal frequency to meet the growing demand. The new flight will provide travellers an additional departure window to travel to Singapore and to onward destinations."

Furthermore, travellers from India can redeem a complimentary S\$20 Changi Dollar Voucher for use at all participating shops, restaurants and lounges when they transit at Singapore Changi Airport. Indian nationals can also avail one-way, Visa Free Transit Facility for up to 96 hours in Singapore with a valid onward ticket and a valid visa from selected countries. The transit facility will be provided at the discretion of the immigration authorities. **tt**



ALITALIA RANKED MOST PUNCTUAL AIRLINE

With 91.89 per cent of flights landing on schedule, FlightStats, the authoritative US independent data services society, has ranked Alitalia as the most punctual airline in the world, in January 2018.

The data related to the month of January follow the success registered during 2017, confirming the Italian airline's excellent on-time performance. With 82.78 per cent of flights arriving on time, Alitalia was ranked third most punctual airline among European Major Airlines and sixth among Major International Airlines, in the year 2017.

With the score obtained in 2017, Alitalia continues in its efforts to improve its operational performances with respect to the previous

two years when the on-time performance of its flights landing on schedule was 78.9 per cent in 2016 and 75.3 per cent in 2015. **tt**



SRILANKAN AIRLINES TO EXPAND ITS FOOTPRINT IN INDIA

SriLankan Airlines has been focussing on the Indian market to strategically expand its operations in the country. During the past years, SriLankan Airlines has established a strong market presence and lasting relationship with the travel partners and industry stakeholders of India.

India has been a vital partner in SriLankan Airlines' route network from the early days. The Airlines hold the widest coverage in India, and India is Sri Lanka's No. 01 source of inbound tourist traffic. According to Chinthaka Weerasinghe, Country Manager, SriLankan Airlines, "We are keen on increasing the destinations and flight frequencies in India as the demand is constantly on the rise. We have already introduced three new destinations in 2017, namely, Visakhapatnam, Hyderabad and Coimbatore, and commenced operations with four frequencies a week."

SriLankan Airlines is focussed on expanding the operation and enhancing the services in India. The Delhi- Northern India and Bombay-Western India flights were increased to 11 frequencies from 7, in July 2017. Subsequently, due to the high market demand they intend to further increase these frequencies to 13 flights per week to Delhi-Northern India and 14 flights a week to Bombay-Western India, by 2018. **tt**



VISTARA TO EXPAND ITS NETWORK FROM CHENNAI

Vistara has inaugurated daily direct service between Delhi and Chennai. The airline will double the frequency between the two cities from March 1, 2018, providing convenient same-day return options in both directions. In addition, Vistara will fly daily direct between Chennai and Port Blair from 1 March, 2018, and will further expand its operations from the city from March 25, 2018 with daily direct flights between Chennai and Kochi and double daily flights between Chennai and Kolkata. With the inclusion of Chennai to its expanding network, the airline now flies to all Indian metros.

In addition, Chennai customers can connect through Delhi to many additional destinations including Srinagar, Jammu, Amritsar, Chandigarh, Lucknow, Varanasi, Bagdogra, and Guwahati.

Commenting at the launch of the destination, Sanjiv Kapoor, Vistara's Chief Strategy & Commercial Officer, said, "Many of our customers had been waiting for us to bring 'the new feeling of flying' to Chennai, and we're pleased to finally inaugurate our service to the city. We may have been late in coming to Chennai, but our aggressive expansion plan from the city truly signals its importance to Vistara. We are confident the Vistara experience will delight travellers and win us a special place in the hearts of all Chennai residents." tt



TRAVELPORT ANNOUNCES NEW PRODUCTS

Travelport unveiled its product roadmap to extend its content offering to airline customers using the International Air Transport Association (IATA) New Distribution Capability (NDC) standard. This will enable travel agency customers to access such content via Travelport's platform. The company is consolidating and extending its lead by industrialising its NDC capability and incorporating NDC content within its suite of products for airlines and travel agencies.

These products will allow travel agencies to connect through Travelport's platform in a single workflow combining traditional content and new NDC content. They will be enhanced and optimised continuously based on the evaluation of users and customers.

Travelport Chief Commercial Officer, Stephen Shurrock, commented "Building on our unique NDC Level 3 status we are extending our range of products ready for the new mixed-economy era of airline distribution." tt

ETIHAD AIRWAYS ADDS SECOND DAILY FLIGHT TO ROME

Etihad Airways has added a second daily direct flight from its Abu Dhabi hub to Rome, effective March 25, 2018. The new service will take the total number of Etihad Airways' flights on the route to 14 a week.

The additional frequencies will be introduced in phases, beginning March 25, 2018, with five extra weekly flights, rising to a twice-a-day service from May 1, 2018. The double-daily schedule will provide greater choice to local passengers travelling between the capital cities of the UAE and Italy, and further increase connectivity to and from both countries.

The new early morning departure from Abu Dhabi and midday return service from Rome will offer links to popular cities across Australia, China, Japan and Korea. With the additional service, Etihad Airways' frequency between Abu Dhabi and its two Italian gateways of Rome and Milan will increase from two flights to three flights a day. tt



32bFORM IV (See rule 8)

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Kamal Gill
Signature of Publisher
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TODAY'S
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20
Years
1994-2014

EXPLORER

HAPPY-EVER-AFTER PLACES

After the rites of passage, get set to start your new life in some inspiring places around the world

TT BUREAU

Your honeymoon is perhaps the most significant holiday you're likely to take as a couple, but after the stress of planning a wedding, deciding on a honeymoon destination could well prove a daunting task. Here are some choice honeymoon locales that best represent what a honeymoon couple most look out for – romance, change of pace, comfort, style, and adventure.



PARIS: CITY OF LIGHTS

You could go blue in the face saying there's nothing original about a honeymoon trip to romantic Paris, but it remains irrefutable that the City of Lights is one of the most inspiring places in the world for couples.

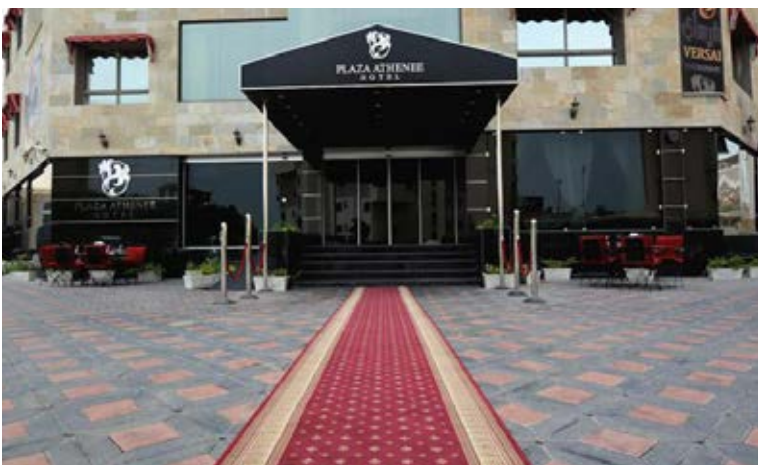
If you thought romance was passé in Paris, banish the thought. Start your honeymoon by writing your name on a 'love lock' and lock it onto one of the bridges in Paris, then throw the key into the River Seine as a symbol of your undying love.

WHERE TO STAY

As one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world, it's no surprise that Paris offers visitors the entire spectrum of accommodation possibilities. Some upscale hotels include Four Seasons Hotel George V, located right next to the famed

Champs Elysees. All rooms in this exquisite hotel are intricately and lavishly decorated. Amenities include Bvlgari toiletries and arguably Paris' finest concierges, many of them members of the prestigious Clefs d'Or. Enjoy fine dining at Le Cinq, its 2-star Michelin restaurant featuring inventive French cuisine.

Hôtel Plaza Athénée is the epitome of Parisian luxury with spectacular views of the Eiffel Tower. Discover the hotel's subtly updated Parisian interiors and beautiful new event rooms, inspired by haute couture, including the beautiful new ballroom. Stay in luxurious comfort overlooking either the Eiffel Tower or the charming courtyard with its signature red awnings, perfect for al fresco summer dining and in winter features its own ice rink. Dine at the Alain Ducasse au Plaza Athénée restaurant and experience an extraordinary culinary concept amidst a stunning ceiling of crystal.





WHAT TO DO

If it's your first time, there are several iconic sites that you absolutely must visit. Start with the iconic Eiffel Tower, The Louvre, and Musee D'Orsay, as well as landmarks like the Notre Dame Cathedral, L'Arc de Triomphe, Sacre Coeur and Palais Garnier. Take a stroll down the Champs-Élysées with your loved one.

Lovers looking for a fun night out should visit the neighbourhoods of Pigalle and Montmartre, which are home to many romantic places. Wander through Montmartre and visit the quaint Place des Abbesses and take a ride on its merry-go-round.

WHERE TO EAT

Lovers looking to indulge in gourmet food must visit Michelin-starred, Le Cinq at the Four Seasons Paris, which embodies true French luxury and cuisine at its finest. Le Relais Plaza at Hotel Plaza Athénée serves delectable French cuisine. Chocolate lovers can't miss a trip to Un Dimanche à Paris which features a chocolate shop, tea salon and restaurant.

LUCERNE: ROMANTIC CITY

Quintessentially Swiss, Lucerne is perhaps the most romantic of all Swiss cities. Walk around the gorgeous Lake Lucerne, sit on a cafe terrace in one of the narrow alleys along the River Reuss, sip champagne atop nearby Mt. Pilatus, plus ample nightlife, restaurants, and arts.

WHERE TO STAY

Lucerne offers more than fifty places to rest your head. Among the most romantic: Hotel Schweizerhof Luzern, located at the mouth of Lake Lucerne, and whose expansive white façade dominates the romantic landscape.



There are more than 200 rooms and suites, each pairing traditional décor with modern amenities. The hotel was built in 1845, underwent its last renovation in 1999, and is still family owned and operated. A private funicular will take you up to Art Deco Hotel Montana, which offers stunning views of Lucerne from its hillside promontory.

WHAT TO DO

Cross the main bridge by the mouth of the lake to enter Lucerne's high-end shopping area. Shop for watches and jewellery by Bucherer, Gübelin and Rolex. Around here are also Lucerne's most famous chocolate makers. Pop in and out comparing kirsch-filled bon-bons.

Take in Lucerne's very own mountain, Pilatus, is one of the most legendary places in Central Switzerland. On a clear day the mountain offers a panoramic view of 73 Alpine peaks. The mountain can be reached from Lucerne by gondola lift and aerial cable car and from Alpnachstad with the world's steepest rack-railroad.



WHAT TO EAT

Here's how you could make a perfect perfect night of it in Lucerne: Have a drink at the happening bar at Pacifico, a Mexican restaurant in Schiller hotel, for a happy-hour caipirinha. Then, hop on to the funicular for succulent veal and delicate artichokes at the Montana's fantastic restaurant, Scala. Get back to the lakeside promenade for a romantic walk, and stop for a digestif at Schweizerhof's famous bar. Afterwards, double back to the nearby Grand Casino Luzern, and try your hand at roulette and blackjack.

CAPE TOWN: AFRICA'S PRIDE

Nothing could be more romantic than Cape Town, nestling as it does on the slopes of the iconic Table Mountain and hugged by glittering oceans and dramatic mountain ranges. An eclectic city pulsing with a vibrant energy, it's a destination that offers a new discovery each day, ending with sunset cocktails and sumptuous, candle-lit dining.

WHERE TO STAY

Located in one of Cape Town's most prestigious enclaves high on the slopes of Table Mountain, Kensington Place is a true boutique hotel with only eight individually-decorated rooms, exceptional service and outstanding attention to detail. A cosmopolitan collection of modern art and eclectic modernist furniture make up the interior, while the exterior is given over to the aquamarine plunge pool and a sophisticated terrace

that has sweeping views of the twinkling city lights by night and of historic Table Bay by day. Twelve Apostles Hotel & Spa offers guests a variety of rooms with sea or mountain rooms, a spa, plenty of dining options – the Leopard Lounge & Bar is a favourite with locals – and even a private 16-seater cinema.

WHAT TO DO

Opt for an hour's helicopter ride for a bird's-eye view of Table Mountain and the Cape Peninsula. Breakfast at Festa Restaurant on Kleinevalleij Estate, then indulge in a couple's spa session at Ways of Wellness. How about a romantic horse-drawn buggy ride that will take you past all the major historic sites, including St George's Cathedral, Church Square, the South African National Gallery and the Grand Parade. Take your love to dizzying heights and watch from atop Table Mountain as the sun sets and the city becomes awash in hues of pink and orange.

WHAT TO EAT

Enjoy fine dining at Aubergine, a Cape Town icon. The menu is a tribute to the South African ingredients, such as kabeljou, ostrich and springbok, that are woven together with Western and Eastern influences. The Crystal Towers Restaurant in Century City is revolutionising hotel dining in Cape Town – try the confit shallots that come with the pan-fried linefish, a main that's served herb crusted on a bed of Patagonian squid cooked rustically in a tomato and white wine sauce.



SUN, SEA AND SAND

Whether you seek solitude or wish to be one of a bevy of people, shallow waters or pounding surf, find the perfect beach amongst these exotic ones

TT BUREAU

The waters of the bright blue ocean extend into a vast expanse, the pristine air caresses your skin gently, while the echoing rhythms of the rolling waves dance in a frenzy. The beach is the perfect place to delve deep into your inner self, even while absorbing the exciting opportunities offered by it. Undoubtedly, the utter chaos, the unnerving bustle and din occupying the cities, and the perpetual tension generated by the city lifestyle exacts its heavy toll, both mentally and physically, and sometimes, with serious repercussions.

The beaches, in contrast, are an escape into an entirely different world, described by the unique settings that define them. Sinking your feet into the moist sand, even while attentively listening to the harmonious medley created by

the chirping of birds, can transport you to a heavenly solace. Every beach located in every popular destination or spot in the world carries its peculiar characteristic that contributes in a great measure towards its overall allure and attractiveness. But, as with all things earthly, some of the beaches have endeared themselves in a tremendous way to the vast group of beach lovers.

BAIA DO SANCHO, BRAZIL

Baia do Sancho is the king of all beaches, quite literally so. Crowned as the best beach in the world by various travel websites, it has endeared itself to countless visitors and travellers. The marvellous beach, adorned by comforting white sand, is grandly spread out on a secluded bay on the main island of Fernando de Noronha,



which is an archipelago of 21 smaller islands. The tempting aquamarine waters overlooked by the lush tropical forests covering the towering cliffs only serve to enhance its overall allure, and increase its mysticism greatly.

ELAFONISI BEACH, GREECE

The islet of Elafonisi, resting gleefully about 82km northwest of Chania town, contains this lovely beach. It is famous for its pink coral sand and sparkling turquoise waters which dance with every gush of wind blowing on its surface. Perhaps, the shallow waters bordering the beach, which enable one to reach the islet from the mainland quite easily, have contributed to it being named "Elafi," or a deer, in Greek. Its impeccable beauty,

combined with its affable landscape, makes it the ultimate destination for an eventful family trip.

ANSE SOURCE D'ARGENT, SEYCHELLES

Sparkling white sand, with enormous blocks of granite rocks in the background, and the graciously swaying palm trees come together to create Anse Source d'Argent. Along with its azure waters, this haven is paradise on Earth. The perpetually calm and shallow waters of the sea adjoining it make it a safe attraction for children and adults alike. Whether it's simply meditating on the biblical landscape enveloping the beach, or attempting to mount the enormous granitic boulders, it definitely promises to keep you thoroughly engaged during your sojourn there.



WHITEHAVEN BEACH, AUSTRALIA

Nothing is more treasured by the Australians more than their cricket, beer, and, unsurprisingly, beaches. Whitehaven Beach, located in Whitsunday Island, has earned several distinguishing accolades and laurels to its name, besides being the most photographed beach in Australia. It owes its enormous popularity to the brilliant white sand that gets its colour from the 98 percent pure silica contained in it. The sands here remain pleasantly cool throughout the day, an inexplicable peculiarity shrouded in mystery. Hill Inlet, a cove sitting at the northern end of the beach, displays a fabulous concoction of colours created by the tidal shifting of sand and water, and a fantastic opportunity to capture some exquisite pictures for your next collection!

PALOLEM BEACH, GOA

Spread out magnificently in the southern part of Goa, this exciting combination of a beautiful beach set in a wonderful village, has justifiably earned the recognition of being one of the three most beautiful beaches worth visiting in India. Shacks inhabited by fishermen line up the shore of this magnificent beach, with the headlands jutting out from both sides of the beach, creating a gentle sloping bed. Its unique topography has contributed to its amazing popularity and charm.



GRACE BAY BEACH, CARIBBEAN

The Caribbean people live through their music, dance, and all round festivities, which they engage in rather fervently. Their beaches, too, seem to have borrowed some of this infectious fervour for vigorous celebration. The Grace Bay Beach, starting from the island town of Leeward and stretching about 19km to Thompson Cave, is an idyllic beach located in the island of Providenciales. The cool azure waters disappear into the distance, and the enormous expanse of pale sand cover an impressive distance of almost 4.8km. A part of Alexandra National Park, this serene beach also boasts a coral barrier reef fringing it at a distance of 1.6km.

CHAWENG BEACH, THAILAND

Picture yourself laid out on the beach, your skin pleurably soaking the sun's rays, while the masseur kneads and pommels your body, and the contrasting sounds of the rolling waves ring harmoniously in your ears. This is the kind of experience that the Chaweng Beach offers to its constant stream of thronging visitors. Situated in the island of Ko Samui, this incredible beach offers a range of activities to keep you interested throughout your time on the beach. Enthusiastic vendors stroll perpetually on the beach, carrying delightful edibles and offering various kinds of services. And, if simply lazing around freaks your mind out, embark on the various kinds of water sports that are accessible from the premises of the beach itself.



PLAYA PARAISO BEACH, CUBA

Playa Paraiso Beach, a pure stretch of white sand, with the pristine Caribbean waters caressing its shores, decorates the island of Cayo Largo del Sur. The beach, and the entire environment surrounding it, reflects the presence of unadulterated virginity. The gradually rolling waves, echoing a stronger sound with each progression, the waft of cool air brushing against the skin, and the waters disappearing into the distance, all present a wonderful setting for simply whiling away one's time, lost in deep contemplation and purposeful rumination. One trip to this pleasing beach and you will be hankering for many more.

RADHANAGAR BEACH, ANDAMAN, INDIA

Havelock Island is the largest island of a group of islands that comprise the Ritchie's Archipelago. Radhanagar Beach, laid out graciously on the island, has amassed a continuously surging popularity. It was named the 'Best Beach in Asia' in 2004, by the reputed Time magazine. This is the beach one would flock to for experiencing a day of pure bliss, contemplative tranquillity, a refreshing swim, or, just idling by doing nothing but absorbing the ethereal beauty spread out magnificently. Visitors also throng this beach to catch the spectacular view of the sunset, an incredible sight to behold and cherish.



THE WONDER THAT'S INDIA

A land of unlimited wonders, India is a kaleidoscope of culture, heritage, spiritual healing, folklore and the arts. Today's Traveller showcases some of these many wonders

TT BUREAU



A nation of great diversity, a confluence of cultures dating back to thousands of years, India has been rightly summed up as 'a subcontinent of nationalities.' The country has seen numerous emperors and foreign rulers, thereby contributing to a rich treasure trove of cultures and customs. With the varied cultures come the various eras in history, each with their own particulars in various forms and shapes, thereby creating a nation of varied interests. In this vast land, one can

find historical relics, scattered across its length and breadth, standing as testimonies to the concept of a subcontinent of nationalities. Taking a leaf out from India's many wonders, Today's Traveller brings you a few that present a historically and culturally diverse nation.

KONARK SUN TEMPLE

Located in Puri district, Odisha, The Sun Temple of Konark is a fascinating old structure, which is a culmination of Oriya



architecture. Built in 13th century by King Narasimhadeva, the temple is designed in the shape of a colossal chariot with seven horses and twelve wheels, carrying the sun god Surya, across the heavens.

The name Konark comes from the amalgamation of two Sanskrit words, 'Kona' meaning 'corner' and 'Arka' meaning 'sun.'

The Sun temple comprises a sanctum with a lofty (over 68m high) sikhara, a jagamohana (30sq.m. and 30m high) and a detached nata-mandira (hall of dance) in the same axis, besides numerous subsidiary shrines. The temple used to be referred to as the Black Pagoda in earlier days, by the Europeans.

KHAJURAO GROUP OF TEMPLES

Located in the state of Madhya Pradesh, Khajurao is a fascinating temple complex that is visited by tourists from across the world. Built by the Chandella rulers, between AD 900 and 1130, during the golden period of the Chandela dynasty, it is believed that every Chandela ruler built at least one temple here.

The intricately carved erotic designs are much revered and considered to be one of the finest examples of temple

carvings. The images sculpted on the temple walls actually represent the divine Shakti and Shiva, the male and female principles. The temple is scattered over an area of 9sq.m and some are dedicated to the Jain pantheon and the rest to Hindu deities – to the holy trilogy of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and various Devi forms, such as the Devi Jagadambi. The temple complex is under the UNESCO World Heritage's protected sites.

AJANTA AND ELLORA CAVES

Significant discoveries in the history of India, the Ajanta and Ellora Caves have been inducted in the UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites. The caves depict paintings beginning with the 2nd century and continuing to the 6th century AD, inspired by Buddhism. The Ajanta caves are located 107km from Aurangabad and 60km from Jalgaon. Comprising 32 caves, it is a protected site under the aegis of the Archaeological Survey of India. The Ellora Caves consist of 34 caves, which are Buddhist, Hindu and Jain religious monuments carved in rock. The caves consist of Chaitya shrines which are dedicated to Lord Buddha and Viharas (monasteries) used by Buddhist monks for meditation and the study of Buddhist teachings.



Also, Cave 16 in Ellora houses the famous Kailasa temple, the abode of Lord Shiva.

GOLDEN TEMPLE

Also known as Sri Harmandir Sahib, the Golden Temple is the spiritual abode of the Sikhs and is located in Amritsar, Punjab. The central focus of the Temple is the tank around which the shrine stands. The tank, known as Amrit Sarovar, from which Amritsar takes its name, was excavated by guru Ram Das, the fourth guru of the Sikhs, in the year 1577.

The holy book, Guru Granth Sahib, is installed every morning inside the temple and is later returned to the Akal Takhat at night. The Golden Temple has an elegantly carved marble section at the lower level, above which is the shimmering second level in gold panels. The tip of this is a

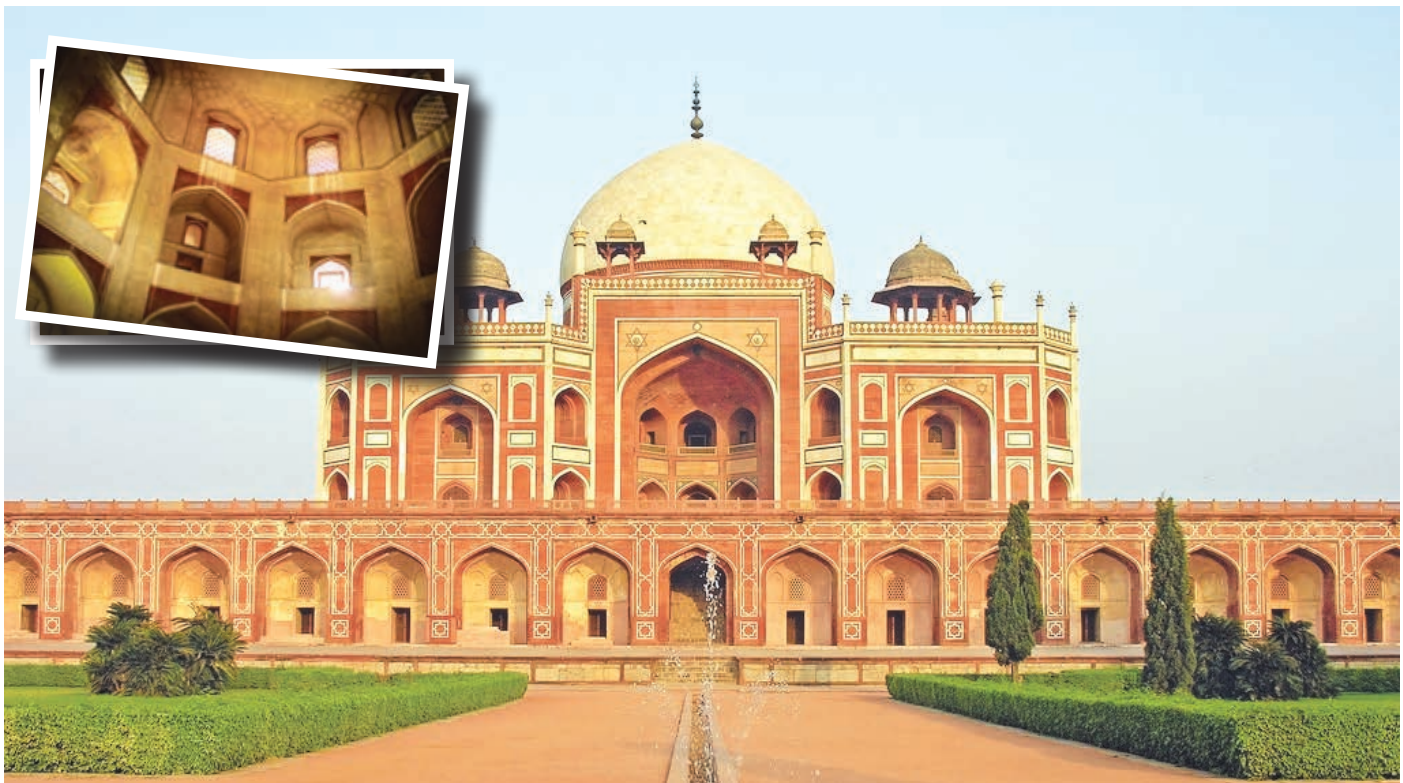
golden dome of 750kg of gold. Inside, one could lose oneself in the exceptionally soothing music and chanting from the Guru Granth Sahib, as performed by priests and musicians throughout the day.

HUMAYUN'S TOMB

Built in the year 1770, Humayun's Tomb, located in New Delhi's Nizaamuddin East, is of great cultural and historical significance and is considered to be the first garden-tomb in the Indian subcontinent.

The incredible architecture of the tomb has inspired many others, including the famous Taj Mahal. The tomb stands at the centre of the square garden and is divided into four main parterres, known as 'charbaghs,' in the centre of which ran shallow water-channels. The high rubble-built enclosure is





entered through two lofty double-storeyed gateways on the west and south. A baradari (pavilion) occupies the centre of the eastern wall and a hammam (bath chamber) in the centre of the northern wall.

The tomb has many rulers of the Mughal dynasty buried here, including Humayun, for whom it was built. The tomb has now been restored and is open to visitors.

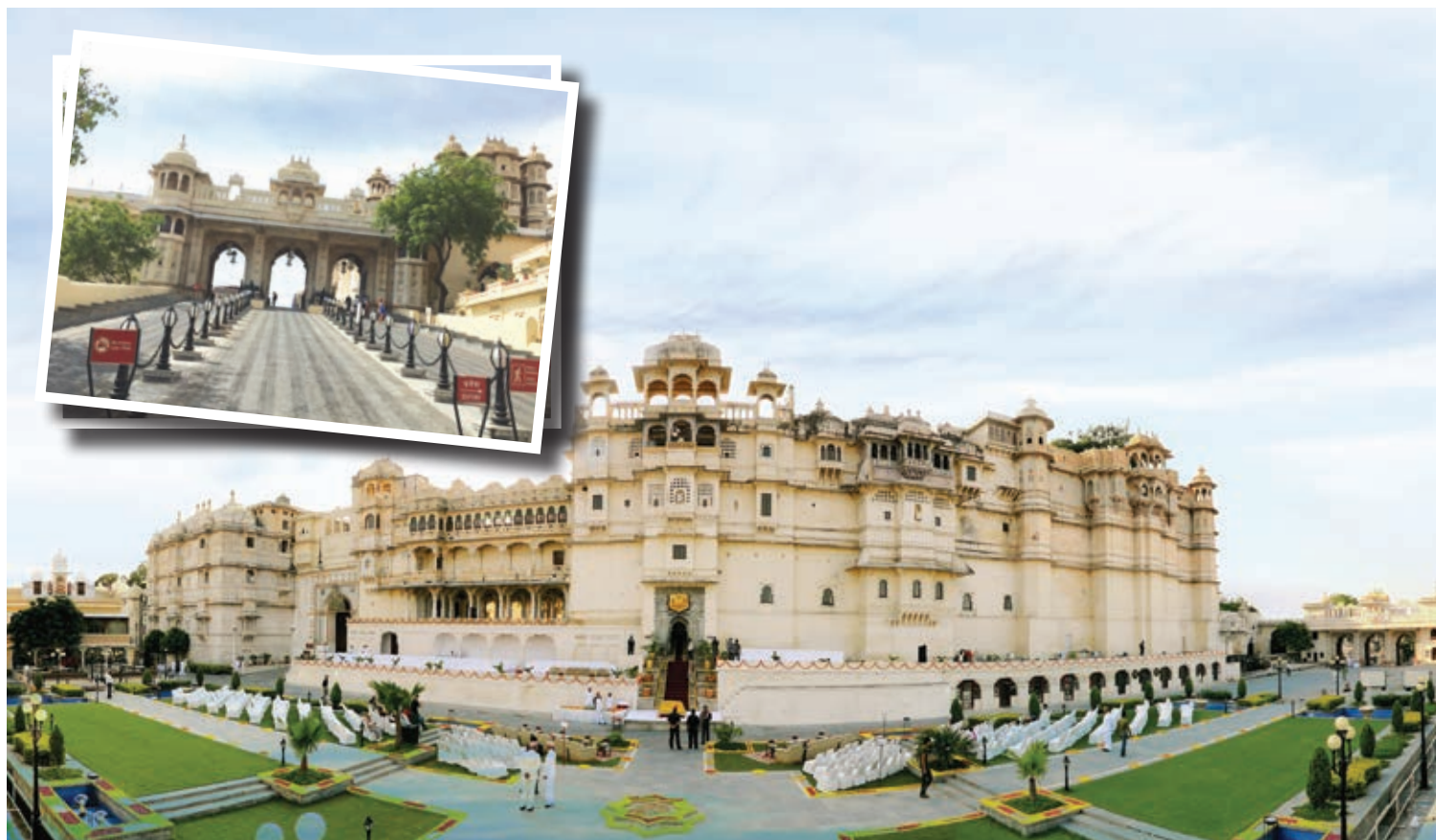
TAJ MAHAL

Located on the banks of the River Yamuna, in Agra, the Taj Mahal is widely revered in India and abroad. The ivory-white

marble mausoleum was commissioned by the then Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan, in 1632 AD, to house the tomb of his favourite wife, Mumtaz Mahal. Initially, the mosque, the guest house and the main gateway on the south were completed in 1648 AD; later, the outer courtyard and its cloisters were added to complete it in 1653 AD.

Considered to be the epitome of love, the Taj Mahal is a hot favourite among couples coming to visit India. In terms of architecture, the structure is in perfect balance of composition, the octagonal tomb chamber in the centre, encompassed by the portal halls and the four corner rooms.





CITY PALACE

Located on the banks of Lake Pichola, Udaipur City Palace is the most visited tourist attraction of the city. Its construction was initially started by Maharana Udai Singh, but the present form of the Palace had been renovated by his successors. The assortment of courtyards, pavilions, terraces, rooms and hanging gardens exhibit the history of the region. City Palace is structured in a way that it offers a splendid 360-degree view of the entire city and the lake from all its balconies and towers.

Encircled by fortifications, City Palace majestically reflects a blend of Medieval, European and Chinese Architecture. There are 11 wonderful palaces within the site, and each one holds a special place in the annals of history. While the architecture of the City Palace speaks volumes about the history of the Rajputs, tourists are also interested in

its in-house shopping complexes, which include unique indigenous attires and decorative items.

MYSURU PALACE

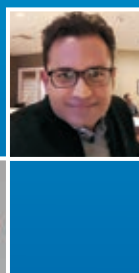
Situated at the home of the Wodeyars who once ruled Mysuru for more than 500 years, Mysuru Palace is an architectural reflection of the city's quaint charm. The palace's royal lineage can be traced back to 1399, which served as the official residence of the Wodeyar dynasty. The palace was designed by Henry Irwin and it stands as one of the finest achievements of Indo-Saracenic architecture. Popular attractions inside the palace include the Ambavilasa, Gombe Thotti (Doll's Pavilion), Kalyana Mantapa and Public Darbar Hall. The dramatic three-storeyed stone building with its majestic interiors and decorative frescoes is an enduring reminder of the history of the Mysuru maharajas.





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FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

Take the road less travelled and visit some offbeat destinations in Kerala for a satisfying and meaningful travel experience

TT BUREAU

Popular destinations are enticing enough for a visit, however, with the constant thronging of tourists, accompanied with all the usual revelries and merry-making, they tend to lose some of their charm. Amongst many factors, one which attracts people to places is the tranquillity of a place. Kerala has earned its fame for its beautiful backwaters, soothing massages steeped in Ayurvedic traditions and natural beauty, which extends to every nook and corner of the land. While many of these witness and attract a constant inflow of tourists the year round, there are many off beat destinations that remain to be explored and will work wonders to uplift sagging spirits and senses.

KUMBALANGI VILLAGE, COCHIN

Kumbalangi is a quiet little village seated on the outskirts of the city of Kochi, and is enveloped by the legendary Kerala backwaters. But, that is not what lends to its fascinating quality. The village contains a treasure of rich aquatic life, made possible by an array of mangroves which separate the land from the water, thus providing a breeding ground for crabs, prawns, oysters, and small fishes. Apart from tasting the delectable cuisine consumed in the village, it's a delight walking on village roads surrounded by greenery, going on a fishing trip, or simply marvelling at the gently-flowing waters.

KUTTANAD, ALAPPUZHA

Kuttanad is a village that has earned the distinction of being a rice granary, and one where farming is carried out below sea level. The place is known as the rice granary of Kerala, one where enormous stretches of paddy fields interweave with the exciting backwaters to create a fabulous sight. It's a privilege watching the typical village sights – men tilling the land and labouring and women carrying their lunch boxes to the fields. This village is also replete with a robust avian population, with flocks of parrots flying lazily above the paddy fields, creating a happy setting.

BANASURA SAGAR DAM, KALPETTA

The idea of Banasura Sagar Dam was conceived as part of the Indian Banasura Sagar Project, and it is now the largest dam in India and second largest in Asia. Located about 15km from Kalpetta, its spectacular beauty is derived from the chain of mountains standing majestically in the background. Legend has it that King Banasura performed severe penance on these hills, and thus, they were named in honour of him. During the monsoons in particular, this place becomes a photographer's delight, as the small islands dotting the crystal clear water are visible during this time. Besides, the scenic background also serves as the starting point for trekking enthusiasts.



BEYPORE , KOZHIKODE

This place traces its history to ancient times, and as such, is a pilgrimage site for historians, who are quite enchanted by its defining beauty, and the history embedded in it. Beypore is greeted by the waters of the Chaliyar River, and served as a major port for trade and maritime centre in earlier times. Its historic value lies in its shipbuilding industry, which goes back to more than 1500 years. The construction of Uru, or the Arabian trading vessel as it is called, is pursued with an undying enthusiasm here, and watching the men at work, deftly crafting the intricate woodwork into perfection, is such a delight.

PONMUDI HILL STATION, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

About 61km away from Thiruvananthapuram is the beautiful hill station of Ponmudi. It is characterised by the typical traits of a hill station, with its cool and quiet environs, undisturbed solitude and narrow winding roads disappearing into the distance. The eminence which Kerala has earned for its tea gardens can also be witnessed at their best here, along with the dancing mountain flowers and the mist-covered valleys. Besides, the feeling of losing yourself in the environs of the hills, or simply going on a trek is simply indescribable.



ODISHA'S TALENTED TRIBES



Traverse through Odisha's beautiful mountains and forest ghat roads and you will encounter the state's culturally vibrant tribes

TT BUREAU

With the diversity of tribal communities in India, Odisha takes centre stage for cultural and traditional glorification. The tribal communities of the state have successfully contributed to its history and heritage. Odisha's tribes remain in isolation and away from the urban legend and under nature's guidance, thereby expressing a cultural identity that is unique.

This uniqueness includes a distinguished language, rituals, festivals, dress, ornaments and arts and craft. In order to understand the true spirit of the state, one must delve deep into its traditional aspect. The skills of the tribal people are omnipresent in all aspects of art, such as, dress, ornaments, wall paintings, handicrafts, wood carvings, dance and music.

TRIBAL CULTURE AND HANDLOOM

There are 62 tribes residing in different parts of Odisha. Each tribe has its own social organisation within which it works and lives. The dormitory is known to be the core of a village culture, where traditions are reinforced. In Odisha, the Juangs call it Majang, and Durbar; the Kondhs call it Dindaghar, the Buhyans call it

Dhangarabasa and the Bondos call it Ingersin. This dormitory is much like the school of dance and expression where the elders assemble every day for important events. Matters related to the welfare of the village are also discussed here. One could well refer to these dormitories as the hub of the social, economic and religious life of the village. The different attires of these tribal communities depend on their surrounding and their necessity. While some tribes such as the Bondi and Gadaba weave their own clothes, there are others who purchase their apparel from another community.

The tribes of Odisha use their indigenous materials in order to weave their clothes and use bamboo and other trees to get the fibre. A wooden loom is installed in front of the house or in the backyard, and some are installed in the narrow path of the village.

Both men and women partake in weaving the indigenous clothing. The tribes take great pride in their traditional attire and use different costumes for each ceremony or festival. Interestingly, a tribal women's dress



varies throughout her life as attires change according to the various stages of life. These gorgeous traditional attires can be witnessed in the remote areas of the state and are of great interest to tourists.

HANDICRAFTS

This rural art form is an exceptionally skilful work that requires an intricate eye for detail and a knack for art and craft. Odisha is popular among tourists for its skilled craftsmen who produce some of the most astonishingly beautiful handicrafts, mainly metal, Saora paintings and pottery.

POTTERY

The craftsmen of the state create a variety of roof tiles, and utensils such as pots, bowls, plates and jars. Cooking stoves are used to meet daily life requirements. Potters also create figures like bulls, elephants and horses, which act as symbols of the state.



CANE, BAMBOO, REEDS, GRASSES AND WOOD

All of these items are used as raw materials by the craftsman to give shape to their masterpieces. Bamboo is used for its structural qualities, high tensile strength and pliability, while cane is used for its elasticity and sturdiness and is beneficial for domestic use, like a stool. Reeds and local fibres are used to make ropes, strings, brooms, etc.

SANTHAL AND SAORA PAINTINGS

Santhal and Saora tribal paintings of Odisha reflect a unique and admirable glimpse into the culture of the state. The wall mural paintings are dedicated to a particular deity as the practice is an integral part of religious ceremonies. Today, the paintings have become popular among tourists as they buy souvenirs like greeting cards and clothing items adorned with Santhal and Saora art.



LEAF STRAW AND DRIED FLOWERS

Tribal women happen to be traditional gatherers of leaves, which are used to design hats for farm grazers and labourers. Also, food is served in leaf plates and bowls in the temples and villages during feasts. It is a hygienic and durable technique which helps protect the environment.

METAL

Tribal Odisha plays a big role in some very interesting pieces that are crafted using metal. The techniques and form of production combine both the functional and the aesthetic style. From the riveting of flexible brass fishes, snakes and crocodiles of Phulbani district, to the tiny bronze-cast beads shaped like grains, metal is almost omnipresent in the tribal areas of Odisha.



TAMIL NADU: DIVINE STATE

A rich cultural heritage, incredible pilgrimage and eco-tourism sites, besides being a leading medical destination – Tamil Nadu is distinctive in every way

TT BUREAU

Tamil Nadu's development is not linked with economic growth alone. The state's development is inseparable from its culture and heritage. Tamil Nadu is home to the world's oldest cultures, historical monuments and sites, some of the most outstanding temple architecture and has two clusters of World Heritage sites.

With its distinctive and ancient Dravidian culture, plus its myriad attractions, Tamil Nadu draws tourists, pilgrims and business travellers. The state's agenda is to promote Tamil Nadu as an attractive tourist destination at the international level and it has therefore introduced some new tourism products and initiatives. Apart from being a leisure hotspot, Tamil Nadu showcases Eco-Tourism, Rural Tourism, Adventure Tourism, Medical Tourism and Heritage Tourism.

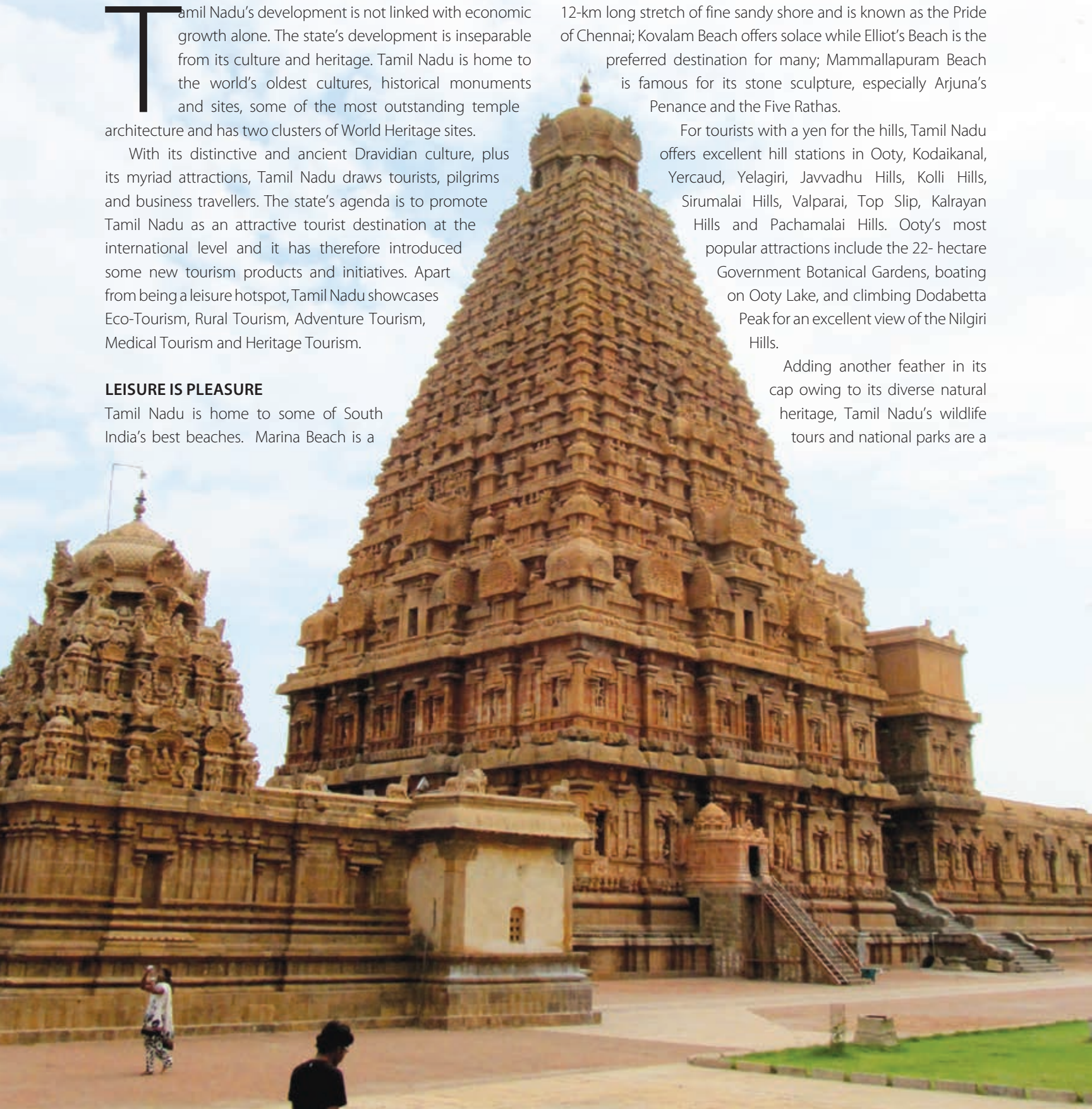
LEISURE IS PLEASURE

Tamil Nadu is home to some of South India's best beaches. Marina Beach is a

12-km long stretch of fine sandy shore and is known as the Pride of Chennai; Kovalam Beach offers solace while Elliot's Beach is the preferred destination for many; Mammallapuram Beach is famous for its stone sculpture, especially Arjuna's Penance and the Five Rathas.

For tourists with a yen for the hills, Tamil Nadu offers excellent hill stations in Ooty, Kodaikanal, Yercaud, Yelagiri, Javvadhu Hills, Kolli Hills, Sirumalai Hills, Valparai, Top Slip, Kalrayan Hills and Pachamalai Hills. Ooty's most popular attractions include the 22- hectare Government Botanical Gardens, boating on Ooty Lake, and climbing Dodabetta Peak for an excellent view of the Nilgiri Hills.

Adding another feather in its cap owing to its diverse natural heritage, Tamil Nadu's wildlife tours and national parks are a





rage among tourists. A glimpse of Tamil Nadu's diverse heritage can be obtained by a stopover at some of the following sanctuaries – The Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park houses a range of wild animals, including the macaque, tiger, panther, elephant, gaur, etc. Other sanctuaries include Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Mukkurthi National Park, amongst others.

A separate Eco-Tourism Wing has been established by Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC) to promote sustainable eco-tourism by integrating facilities at the hill stations, waterfalls, forests, bird sanctuaries, wildlife sanctuaries and national parks to woo tourists. Various packages will be developed to promote Eco-Tourism in the state on a sustainable basis.

AWESOME HERITAGE

Tamil Nadu's rich cultural heritage is a major draw. The state is blessed with five World Heritage Sites, the highest for any state – The rock-cut monuments at Mamallapuram, the Big Temple at Thanjavur, the Iravadiswara Temple at Darasuram, the Brahadeeswarar Temple at Gangaikondacholapuram and the Nilgiris Mountain Railway.

Heritage building owners are encouraged by the Tourism department to convert heritage buildings into heritage hotels. Kanadukathan, a Chettinad village, 15 km from Karaikudi, is a heritage village, with unique architecture, expansive courtyards, intricate woodwork and a peaceful ambience. Chettinad Mansion offers a variety of rural activities, including distinctive Chettinad cuisine, plus a cycle or bullock cart ride and to see the 170-odd mansions in the Chettinad area.

The State Government has declared 48 tourist places in Tamil Nadu as Heritage Places. The Heritage places declared by UNESCO in Tamil Nadu will be linked with temples in Trichy, Madurai, Chidambaram, Rameswaram, Tiruvanamalai, Thanjavur, Kumbakonam, Nagapattinam, Tirukadaiyur, Gunaseelam and six abodes of Lord Muruga, which attract a drove of visitors.

Tiruvannamalai expends a profound spiritual energy, attracting both pilgrims and spiritual seekers. Rameshwaram is a peaceful little pilgrim town, where devotees pay obeisance at the Ramanathaswamy Temple. Ancient Madurai in Tamil Nadu is home to the most impressive and important temple in South India – the Meenakshi Temple. Kanyakumari, located



on the furthestmost tip of India, houses the Swami Vivekananda Memorial and the towering statue of Tamil poet Thiruvalluvar, located on a rocky island off the shore. Kanchipuram, the "City of a Thousand Temples," is also famous for its silk saris. Kanchipuram, Mammallapuram and Chennai are often referred to as Tamil Nadu's Golden Triangle for tourists.

WELLNESS IS ALL

Tamil Nadu is one of the leading medical destinations in India. Well-equipped corporate hospitals, less waiting time and skilled medical professionals are what brings medical tourists from afar, especially from the UK, UAE, Singapore, Malaysia, Mauritius, African countries, Maldives, and West Bengal, and the Northeastern states of India.

ADVENTURE TRAVEL

Adventure Tourism is gaining much popularity among tourists. Trekking in low altitude hill areas, paragliding in Yelagiri, water sports offered by Muttukadu and Mudaliarkuppam Boat Houses are some of the innovative sports activities promoted under Adventure Tourism.

REFRESHINGLY RURAL

Rural tourism is all set to gain recognition in Tamilnadu with Navabashanam, Theerthamalai, Vadanemmel and Tirupudaimaruthur getting a nod from the Tamil Nadu Government. These villages are ideal destinations to enjoy rural life, savour rural cuisine, see culture and tradition, explore nature, for trekking and visiting temples.

24 HOURS IN BERLIN

High on popularity among hedonists and history buffs, Berlin has established itself as one of the most stimulating, creative and cultural centres in Europe

TT BUREAU



POTSDAMER PLATZ

Located in the heart of the city, Potsdamer Platz is a must visit, with its fusion of modern architecture, restaurants, shopping centres, cinemas and theatres. The Potsdamer Platz today is vastly different from its earlier avatar, and its rebirth in the early 1990s was Europe's biggest building project. The buildings were designed by international star architects Renzo Piano, Richard Rogers and Arata Isozaki. In the span of five years, the site, which earlier used to be a wasteland with the Berlin Wall, transformed to a new urban centre. The glass-fronted Sony Center and the Panoramapunkt observation deck are the main attractions of the site.

BRANDENBURG GATE

An 18th century neo-classical monument, Brandenburg Gate is Berlin's most famous historical landmark that once divided the city. After the fall of Berlin in November 1989, Brandenburg Gate reinvented itself into a symbol of peace and unity. The Gate, erected between 1788 and 1791, was designed by architect Carl Gotthard Langhans, who was inspired by the Propylaea in Athens' Acropolis. After visiting the monument, travellers can stop at the "Raum der Stille" (Room of Silence), situated in the north wing, for a quiet break.



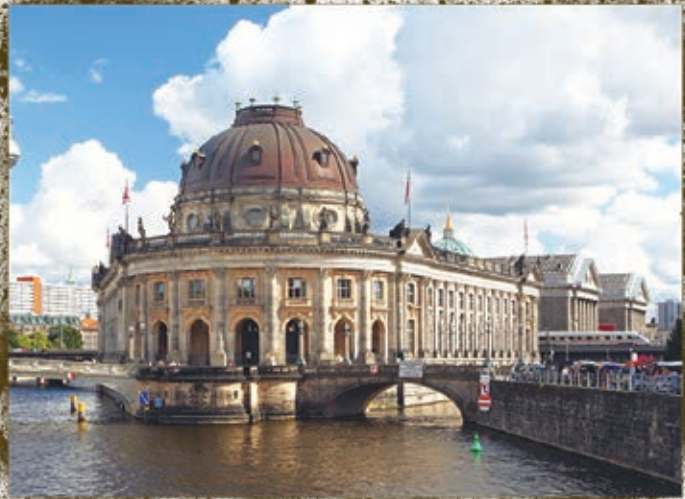
MUSEUMSINSEL

Berlin's Museumsinsel or Museum Island houses an outstanding ensemble of five world-renowned museums and boasts works from Ancient Egypt, Byzantium and Berlin. With over 6000 years' worth of art, artefacts and sculptures, the five grand museums were built between 1830 and 1930. The island's top attraction, the Pergamon Museum, attracts around one million visitors annually, for its remarkable Ishtar Gate, Processional Way, and the fascinating collection in the Museum of Islamic Art. The Bode-Museum houses an extensive collection of medieval sculptures.



REICHSTAG

Situated in proximity to Brandenburg Gate, Reichstag had been burnt, bombed, rebuilt, and finally turned into the modern home of the German Parliament. After the reunification, the site had undergone restoration and renovation under the direction of British architect Norman Foster. Its most distinctive feature is the glittering glass dome, which sits directly above the debating chamber. A mirrored cone at its centre directs light into the Reichstag, increasing the building's energy efficiency and letting visitors view the parliamentary proceedings below.



BERLIN WALL

From August 13, 1961, until November 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall divided the city into East and West Berlin. In 1990, more than 100 artists came together from over 20 countries to decorate the stretch with their art works. The East Side Gallery is the longest surviving stretch of the Wall and people can locate the traces of the Wall all across the city. Of the innumerable and eye-catching artwork on the remnants of the Berlin Wall, the most famous is the 'Fraternal Kiss,' depicting a kiss between Russian leader Leonid Brezhnev and East Germany's SED Party Chairman, Erich Honecker.



JEWISH MUSEUM

An architectural wonder, the Jewish Museum strikes visitors with its zigzag shapes and sharp angles. The museum artistically narrates the 2000 years of Jewish history in Germany. The whole structure (inside and out) reflects the life of the Jews. Architect Daniel Libeskind's building unfurls in zigzagging corridors and empty spaces, known as 'voids', which appear throughout the structure, and are not accessible until you reach the Memory Void – reminding visitors of the voids left behind as a result of the Holocaust.

PICK OF THE MONTH

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



MUSIC: VANCE JOY, NATION OF TWO

Though he has not made a major mark among the masses, Australian Indie folk singer/songwriter, Vance Joy is notably known for his 2013 catchy folk-pop single, 'Riptide.' Born James Keogh, Joy has finally released his second studio album, Nation of Two. The opening song of the

track is, 'Call If You Need Me,' which is also called 'Fluorescent Light Song'. 'I'm With You' and 'Lay It On Me' are other popular tracks, which have proved to be early live favourites. The singer took the name Vance Joy from a character in Peter Carey's novel 'Bliss,' in order to better separate his personal and professional life.

Genre (s): Alternative

VANCE JOY NATION OF TWO



BOOK: THE GONE WORLD BY TOM SWETERLITSCH

Who doesn't love a creative mystery genre and especially when a novel has been pitched as – Inception meets True Detective. Tom Sweterlitsch's much awaited novel of the 2018 – 'The Gone World,' has already grabbed a movie adaptation deal with District 9's Director, Neill Blomkamp. The story takes place in western Pennsylvania, in 1997, where Shannon Moss, member of a clandestine division within the Naval Criminal Investigation Service, is assigned to solve the murder of a Navy SEAL's family and find his vanished teenage daughter. During her investigation, Moss discovers that the missing SEAL was an astronaut aboard the spaceship U.S.S. Libra – a ship assumed lost to the currents of Deep Time. What follows next is Moss' journey ahead in time to find out possible versions of the future and how it affected the situation in the present.

Genre(s): Science Fiction, Mystery



DVD: WONDER

Beautiful and inspirational, 'Wonder' is based on The New York Times bestseller of the same name, by R.J. Palacio. The movie stars Hollywood stalwarts Julia Roberts, Owen Wilson and Jacob Tremblay, who plays the couple's son, August Pullman. The story centres on August aka Auggie, who suffers from a severe facial deformity that has prevented him from studying in a regular school. As he joins mainstream school for his fifth grade, his teachers and other students struggle to accept him. However, Auggie doesn't let his deformity define who he is as he believes that he was born to make a difference.

Genre(s): Drama, Family



GAMES: KINGDOM COME: DELIVERANCE

Kingdom Come: Deliverance is one the most anticipated games of 2018 as the gaming world has been waiting for this open-world RPG to release since its announcement way back in January 2014. Its commitment to a semi-realistic presentation of life in 15th century Bohemia has been embraced by the gamers. The final product, released on PlayStation 4, Windows PC and Xbox One, has been named as one of the most beautiful landscapes on a computer screen. However, Kingdom Come was not designed to be a sword and sorcery game. As a player, you will spend a considerable amount of time with a pointy stick at the beginning, before you can manage to come by another one. This game's weapons feel lovingly crafted and each of them gives combat a different experience.

Genre (s): Role-Playing



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