

# TODAY'S traveller

CORPORATE, BUSINESS, AVIATION, MICE & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2020 - ₹50

**NAKUL ANAND:  
INDIAN TOURISM...  
NOW & MOVING  
FORWARD**

**RANVEER BRAR:  
LESSONS FROM  
THE MOUNTAINS**

**CHINMAI SHARMA:  
FUTURE OF TRAVEL**

**MTM & LLTM:  
A UNIQUE BUSINESS  
PLATFORM**

*Dream Weddings  
2020*



TODAY'S  
traveller



# 14<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL TODAY'S TRAVELLER AWARDS 2020



The awards will be presented at  
the cover launch of  
**THE COFFEE TABLE BOOK**

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**AUGUST  
2020**

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Today's Traveller is published/printed by Kamal Gill on behalf of M/s Gill India Concepts Pvt. Ltd. from Office No: 504, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Sheetla House, Building No. 73-74, Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110019

Printed at: Sonu Printer  
B-180, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-1,  
New Delhi - 110020  
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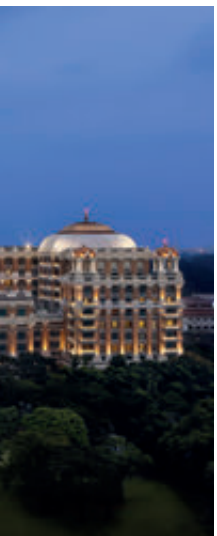
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# INDIAN TOURISM... NOW & MOVING FORWARD

## A MESSAGE FROM NAKUL ANAND, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ITC LTD.

---

***If there is one place on the face of this earth where  
dreams of living men have found home it is India***

—Romain Rolland, French Philosopher

This is what I too believe in.

India is home to the world. Year 2020 gives us many reasons to cheer. India's ranking at the World Economic Forum Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index has grown stronger every year. From #65 in 2013 to #40 in 2017 and then scaling six spots forward to #34 in 2019. In this regard I would like to highlight the contribution of the Ministry of Tourism. A highly pro-active think tank has created fertile ground for Indian tourism to take stronger and higher wings.

A big applause for the MoT. Having had the opportunity to work with various member bodies of FAITH (Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality), I can proudly say that the cohesive strength of all our members — HAI, IATO, TAAI, TAFI, FHRAI, ATOAI, IHHA, ITTA, ICPB and ADTOI, has achieved a lot towards making India the preferred destination.

### **ENABLING FAITHFUL CONVERSATIONS**

- ▶ Creation of a national platform for all tourism, travel and hospitality associations for Tourism strategy for India.
- ▶ Bringing together all Tourism and Hospitality Associations and Tourism Committees of National Chambers on a single platform for successful rationalisation of GST rate from 28% to 18% & 12%.
- ▶ Mobilising the strategy for E-Visa for India: A highly progressive move introduced in 2014, it has been strategically priced with seasonal and long term and short term rates. It has been progressively extended to cruises, private and public conferences and medical tourists.

***India is a country  
like no other. We  
are blessed with  
multiple drivers  
of growth that  
have contributed  
to making this  
country truly  
unique. India is  
richly endowed  
with sea, sun,  
snow, sand,  
mountains, flora  
and fauna. We  
have a 7500kms  
coastline & we  
are one of the  
world's oldest  
civilisations.***









- ▶ Seeking development of Mega Tourism Zones through budget
- ▶ Supporting Governments of Rajasthan, Punjab, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh on their Tourism policies.
- ▶ Enabling the first ever Tourism Ministers meeting for India
- ▶ Generating the slogan 'I respect Women,' which is tagged on all Tourism transport service providers.
- ▶ Worked towards creating the idea of traceability in Tourism scrips for forex earning tourism companies
- ▶ Seeking Public Private Partnership and Indian heritage. This led to "Adopt a Heritage & Iconic Monuments" scheme, which is gaining more ground and active participation from the industry.
- ▶ Helped towards drafting the Tourism component of Economic Surveys and NITI Aayog vision.

India is a large religious & spiritual destination and we need to Develop Religious Tourism Circuits through a Hub and Spoke Model. Almost all Indian states have world famous shrines. These would benefit most if Religious Tourism Circuits are developed through a Hub and Spoke Model. One of the first steps in this aspect is to create nodes near religious shrines, where there is already a basic infrastructure present and plan day trips from there.

### **HOLISTIC TOURISM EXPERIENCE FOR TOURISTS**

Attracting the tourist segments that are not attracted to religious sites, needs a holistic package around the religious spots. Tourists may not find it worthwhile to come all the way just for a pilgrimage. An innovative mechanism to streamline this development can be to market a religious tourism destination as an alternative tourism destination.

### **SUSTAINABILITY & TOURISM**

Sustainability is definitely dominating the narrative, and as the impact of global warming unfolds, people are going to be drawn closer to the concept of responsible tourism; the growing concern for earth and its resources. I am happy to say that ITC Hotels have set global benchmarks in sustainability and we have received global recognition for our Responsible Luxury ethos. ITC Hotels are LEED Platinum rated. That in no way compromises the lux aspect of a guest experience. Even if I say so myself, we at ITC have embraced

both sustainability and luxury in a seamless, eco-easy manner without burdening either Mother Earth or the guest. We were the first to introduce Sunya Aqua-zero mile water in glass bottles. Again, ITC Hotels has been the first to be single use plastic free by end of the year.

### **GIVING BACK TO SOCIETY**

People are driven by a need to give back to society. We need to understand this 'trend' in the guest profile. From a more 'aware' customer to a more 'conscious' one.

### **HYPERLOCAL**

From local to hyperlocal experiences: again, encouraging a low carbon footprint, supporting farm produce that is both seasonal and regional.

### **WELLNESS SPACE**

India has been at the forefront of wellness tourism for decades like the Namaste, the tradition of Ayurveda is inherent to India. It is our pride. Now, with the popularity of yoga & Ayurveda the wellness market has swelled up. We need to better market our skill and supremacy. At ITC Hotels took a conscious decision of keeping our Kaya Kalp brand truly indigenous. Instead of collaborating with a foreign partner, we chose to look inwards and tap the holistic strength of our great country.

### **TECHNOLOGY "GAME CHANGER"**

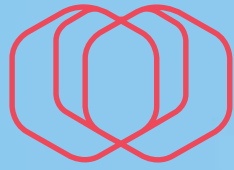
Technology has changed the way the industry functions over the last couple of decades. Apart from helping efficiency & enabling personalisation, it has put the guest in charge, to choose his experience, his price point, at his time. The guest can today calibrate their experience long before they reach the hotel. Technology has given hotels reach & the ability to create an identity globally with minimal spends. For the consumer, technology has democratised luxury.





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## ACCOR & INTERGLOBE WIN INDO-FRENCH COOPERATION AWARD



Accor and InterGlobe Enterprises Private Limited recently won the award for “Best Indo-French Cooperation” at The Indo-French Business Awards, 2019, held in New Delhi. The event was hosted by the Indo-French Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IFCCI) and Business France — the Trade & Investment Commission of the Embassy of France in India — to honour excellence and acknowledge the accomplishments of Indian and French companies, based in India and France. This award acknowledges the work being done by Accor and InterGlobe Enterprises in the field of hospitality by way of establishing hospitality brands in India. The collaboration between InterGlobe Enterprises Private Limited and Accor Asia Pacific was initiated in 2004 with InterGlobe Hotels to develop a network of ‘ibis’ hotels in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. This collaboration focusses on sustainability, growth and ensuring high quality, state-of-the-art hotels.

## RE-IMAGINED GINGER UNVEILED IN WAKAD, PUNE



Ginger unveiled its renovated and re-imagined hotel in Wakad, Pune, recently. The new look is in line with the refreshed identity of the brand that reflects a fresh and contemporary take on design. Deepika Rao, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Ginger said, “We are pleased to announce the launch of the re-imagined Ginger Pune, Wakad. The renovation has transformed the hotel to a stylish and unique offering.” The re-imagined Ginger Wakad seamlessly blends the lines of work and play. Café Et Cetera, their all-day diner, offers a delicious variety of global and local selections of comfort food. It also doubles up as a personal workstation. Additional facilities such as the fitness centre and the meeting rooms have also been redesigned. The hotel offers on-the-go breakfast and an express laundry service in consonance with the never-stop lifestyle of the guests. The redesigned spaces will bring together attractive public areas as well as spots designed for solitude. Joi Design, renowned international interior designer, has worked on the new design of the repositioned Ginger Brand.

## STATUE OF UNITY SEES INCREASING TOURIST FOOTFALL

Since it was dedicated to the nation in October, 2018, a number of new tourist attractions have been added at Kevadia, which include Jungle Safari, Children Nutrition Park, Cactus Garden, Butterfly Garden, Vishwa Van, Sardar Sarovar Resort, etc. The facilities offered include river-rafting, boating, cycling, food court, Wi-Fi facilities etc. These additional tourist attractions have led to a sharp increase in the daily tourist footfall with 74% increase over the daily average of the first year. This has further increased to 22,430 on the weekends. The Statue of Liberty of New York, United States, attracts around 10,000 visitors a day! Thus, the Statue of Unity, which has been open to public for 13 months, has overtaken the Statue of Liberty in terms of daily average footfall.



## GOLF TOURISM CONCLAVE IN JAIPUR, RAJASTHAN

PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry (PHDCCI) recently organised the 3rd edition of PHD Golf Tourism Conclave and Tournament in Jaipur, Rajasthan, with a focus to make “India: The Next World Golf Tourism Hub”. It brought all the relevant stakeholders – the government and the private sector — on one platform to discuss issues and opportunities for the promotion of Golf Tourism in India. Meenakshi Sharma (IA & AS), Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, was the Chief Guest and welcomed avid golfers from across India. The Inaugural Session was attended by H.E. Chung Kwang Tien, Ambassador, Taipei Economic and Cultural Center in India; Vinod Zutshi (Retd. IAS), Former Secretary – Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; Dr. Manisha Arora, Additional Director, Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan. Also present from PHDCCI were Anil Khaitan, Former President; Digvijay Dhabriya, Chairman – Rajasthan State Chapter; Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chairman – Tourism Committee; Suneel Dutt Goyal, Co-Chairman – Rajasthan State Chapter; and Dr. Jatinder Singh, Director. The subject was discussed at length by the panellists, who sought for various interventions from the government like accessibility, so that the sector thrives.





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## PATA PROMOTES COMMUNITY TOURISM IN THAILAND



Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) recently held its first community-based tourism (CBT) working meeting at the PATA Engagement Hub in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting brought together government, civil society and the private sector to improve CBT product offerings and the marketability of tourism in remote and indigenous communities, with the goal of providing authentic experiences and meaningful encounters that are beneficial to all. During the meeting, PATA Director of Sustainability and Social Responsibility, Graham Harper, led a panel discussion exploring the challenges and various aspects of CBT. Panellists included Watcharee Churugsa, Director of Office of Community-Based Tourism, Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA); Charlotte Louwman-Vogels, Founder & Director, Fair Tourism; Chi Ngo, Educational Travel Executive, DISCOVA, and Jakrapol Baesuvan (Joe), Senior Director of Marketing & Strategy, Local Alike. The discussion included DASTA's mission, certification process, and CBT challenges.

## FERN RESIDENCY OPENS IN MORBI, GUJARAT



The Fern Hotels & Resorts, one of India's leading environmentally sensitive hotel chains, recently opened The Fern Residency in the ceramic city of Morbi in Gujarat. This is the 16th hotel that the company has opened in Gujarat. This takes the number of hotels managed by the company to 71 across the country as well as in Nepal and Seychelles. Located 3km from Morbi railway station and 65km from Rajkot airport, The Fern Residency, Morbi, is a 51-room hotel, offering contemporary accommodations. The hotel offers four different categories of rooms, for instance, Winter Green, Winter Green Premium, Fern Club and Hazel Suite. Some of the amenities include eco-friendly light arrangement, a gym and a spa.

The hotel has two restaurants: First one known as Fountain is an all-day dining vegetarian multi-cuisine restaurant, offering world-class delicacies. The special attraction is its thali, served during lunch which offers an array of local dishes. The other attraction is Woods — the thematic non-vegetarian Indian restaurant, which serves Indian cuisine and specialises in kebabs, curries and dum biryanis, cooked in the traditional way.

## POLISH VISA SERVICES NOW AVAILABLE IN DELHI & MUMBAI

VFS Global recently opened their centre for providing Polish visa services in New Delhi. It was inaugurated by Adam Burakowski, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Poland to India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Afghanistan. Residents of India can now apply for their Polish visas through VFS Global. Visa Application Centres in New Delhi and Mumbai have commenced operations today, becoming the first of 10 locations where VFS Global will offer Polish visa services. Prior to this move, Indian travellers had to visit the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in New Delhi or the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Mumbai to apply for their visas. Adam Burakowski, said, "Poland is becoming more and more attractive for Indians. The number of visa applicants is growing fast. Also, the opening of the direct flight between Warsaw and New Delhi is a major step. We would like to make the visa application process easier and more accessible for people."



## IHCL ANNOUNCES OPENING OF TAJ FATEH PRAKASH PALACE

Indian Hotels Company (IHCL), recently announced an addition to its collection of palaces – Taj Fateh Prakash Palace, which is located within the historic City Palace on the shores of Lake Pichhola in Udaipur. The place offers panoramic views of the lake and is surrounded by the Aravalli Hills, Jagmandir Island and the legendary Taj Lake Palace.

Taj Fateh was built during the reign of Maharana Fateh Singh Mewar in the 19th century as an exclusive venue for royal functions. Meticulously preserved, the palace has 65 heritage rooms and suites, the award-winning Sunset Terrace restaurant and Surya Darshan bar. The Durbar Hall is a dramatic heritage banquet venue with a show stopping 1,000 kilogram of central crystal chandelier. Taj Fateh Prakash also features smaller meeting venues, affording guests a rare opportunity to celebrate events ranging from destination weddings to corporate conferences, while faithfully recreating an unforgettable backdrop of regal splendour of a bygone era. Guests may also choose from specially curated royal experiences — from being received in a chauffeured vintage car at the airport to unique dining choices.





## LEMON TREE OPENS HOTEL IN DUBAI



Lemon Tree Hotels Limited, through its management subsidiary Carnation Hotels Pvt. Ltd, announced the international debut of the company, with the launch of the first Lemon Tree Hotel in Dubai. Lemon Tree Hotels Limited is India's largest hotel chain in the mid-priced hotel sector, and the third largest overall. The first branded midscale hotel in the area, owned by Al Waleed Real Estate LLC, is located on Al Wasl Road, close to Sheikh Zayed Road and Jumeirah Open Beach. The hotel features 114 well-appointed rooms, complemented by a multi-cuisine restaurant, Lemon Tree Café, with a beautiful al fresco extension, a conference room, a swimming pool, a well-equipped fitness center and more. The hotel is a twenty-minute drive from Dubai International Airport, with its proximity to Dubai Internet City, Dubai Media City, Barsha Heights, and Knowledge Park, apart from having easy accessibility to other important city landmarks. Travellers to the city can also explore the iconic Burj Khalifa and other tourist attractions.

## WINTER CARNIVAL ORGANISED BY DELHI TOURISM



Delhi Tourism, Govt. of Delhi, recently organised its Winter Carnival at its three Dilli Haats and the Garden of Five Senses. Harboring the Christmas spirit, the three Dilli Haats and the Garden of Five Senses were decked to create a festive ambience and offered the visitors numerous gifting options at their shopping street. While the Visitors enjoyed a variety of authentic and mouth-watering food at the four venues, the Dilli Haats saw an inclination amongst visitors towards handicrafts stalls for Christmas gifting along with various other items. As part of grand celebration, visitors enjoyed a number of cuisines at the Garden of Five Senses, such as Qureshi kebabs, Mohd. Hussain Fry, Dilli ki Chaat, etc. While they also had a number of choices for shopping such as Brocade crafts, Benarasi suits and sarees, ethnic jewellery, Kashmiri shawls and carpets, etc. Special performances were also organised at the Garden of Five Senses.

## SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM ORGANISES ANNUAL ROADSHOW

South African Tourism marked the beginning of 2020 with their biggest, independent travel trade initiative in India — their annual Roadshow. The 17th edition of the Roadshow travelled to three Indian cities of Bangalore, Pune and Mumbai on 13th, 14th and 15th January, 2020 respectively. Capitalising on the massive growth potential offered by the Indian outbound traveller segment, the 48-member South African trade delegation took the opportunity to educate and enable Indian trade partners to sell the destination better. Representatives from accommodation establishments, destination management companies, airlines, tourism associations will display their products and engage with Indian travel and trade associates. 2019 was a yet another remarkable year for South African Tourism in India. Through the course of the year, the destination board succeeded in driving Indian traveller aspiration and demand for South Africa through aggressive consumer and trade engagements.



## GREEN CHRISTMAS AT HYATT PUNE, KALYANI NAGAR

As the Christmas and New Year festivities started, Hyatt Pune, Kalyani Nagar, embarked on an eco journey with their very first Sustainable Green Christmas Tree. With sustainability at the forefront of the holiday celebrations, the hotel encouraged its guests to spread some warm Christmas cheer. At the tree-lighting ceremony, the team from Hyatt Pune unveiled the beautiful 10-foot Christmas tree made completely with recycled materials collected from the hotel. The creative art work was made from recycled metal scraps along with over 500 plastic bottles with planters. It also made a mark by being the city's only Sustainable Tree, built from scratch by the Engineering and Housekeeping team. The festivities continued with Carols sung by the tiny tots from the Crown of Life Church as the guests were encouraged to be a part of this change by placing planters on the Christmas tree. Guests got an opportunity to give back to the community with every table booking at the hotel. Through this initiative, Hyatt Pune commenced the year 2020 with a Hi-Tea organised for underprivileged children with the guests booking tables at Baan Tao and Eighty Eight restaurants.





## INDONESIA TO HOST SATTE 2020



Taking its longstanding partnership with South Asia's biggest travel expo SATTE to a new high, Indonesia Tourism has been signed up as the Premium Partner Country for the high-profile SATTE 2020. Indonesia was one of the partner countries at SATTE 2019. The tourism board has been participating at the region's biggest travel mart year after year to further its market development plan on the Indian sub-continent and has reaped big results. SATTE 2020 is scheduled to take place in January 2020. Indonesia's tourism stake in the Indian market has witnessed tremendous growth in the last few years. At the end of 2017, India emerged as Indonesia's sixth largest tourism source market replacing South Korea. Indian arrivals have grown from just over 262,000 in 2015 to almost 600,000 in 2018 and look set to surpass its target of 630,000 for the year 2019. Popular for the resort island of Bali, Indonesia is keen to showcase its diversity of products and destinations at SATTE 2020 to attract more Indian visitors.

## HYATT REGENCY DEBUTS IN KERALA



Hyatt Hotels Corporation recently announced the opening of Hyatt Regency Thrissur in Kerala, India. With 77 well-appointed guestrooms, the contemporary hotel aims to bring the Hyatt Regency brand's signature hospitality to business and leisure guests travelling to the region. The hotel marks the continued growth of the Hyatt Regency brand in India and joins more than 195 hotels under the brand, including 12 locations across the country.

With offerings tailored to suit both leisure and business travellers alike, Hyatt Regency Thrissur aims to provide guests with a seamless, stress-free experience in Kerala. Conveniently located near prime cultural centres, such as the Thrissur IT Park, iconic monuments, museums, galleries and shopping at the Kalamandalam Centre, an hour away from Cochin International Airport and 10 minutes from the railway station, the hotel will allow guests to seamlessly conduct business while also allowing for the opportunity to visit some of the city's best attractions. Hyatt Regency Thrissur marks the second Hyatt branded hotel in Kerala and the 13th Hyatt Regency branded hotel in India.

## ITDC ORGANISES SESSION ON FINANCIAL FREEDOM

The India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), a public sector undertaking, recently organised an in-house training session for its women employees with an aim to empower them to take charge of their money and investments. The session was inaugurated by Piyush Tiwari, Director Commercial & Marketing, ITDC. Financial equality and independence are just important for women. Women not only need to keep a track of their own money but also need to have right investing skills, rather than just relying on other family members.

The session was conducted by Sanjay Mehta Financial Services (SMFS), a financial consulting company in collaboration with Ashok Institute of Hospitality and Tourism Management (AIH&TM), at Hotel Samrat. The session was designed to cover health and term insurance plan, asset allocation and planning for financially secured future.



## IHCL SIGNS A VIVANTA HOTEL IN TAWANG, ARUNACHAL PRADESH

The Indian Hotels Company (IHCL), recently announced the signing of a Vivanta hotel in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh. This hotel has a management contract with Pema Khandu. Nestled in the gentle slopes of Tawang, Vivanta has a refreshing vernacular architecture using local materials. The hotel has 88 spacious rooms with breathtaking views of the valley. Surrounded by lush foliage, the hotel features waterfalls and imposing fort-like natural retaining walls, which is characteristic of the region. Facilities of the hotel include a multi-cuisine restaurant, a resto-bar and recreational facilities such as an indoor pool and spa, meeting rooms and a banquet hall for social and business gatherings. It is a Brownfield project slated to open in 2022. Situated in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, Tawang is located at an elevation of approximately 10,000 feet to the east of Bhutan. Famous for Tawang Monastery, one of the world's largest Buddhist monasteries, it attracts travellers for its unique tribal culture, and picturesque vistas. The IHCL has eleven hotels in the North East region, West Bengal and Bhutan, including five under development.







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## ETIHAD AND KUWAIT AIRWAYS SIGN A CODE-SHARE PARTNERSHIP



**E**tihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwaiti flag carrier, Kuwait Airways, have signed a code-share partnership on select services on bookings effective December 22, 2019, for travel from January 5, 2020. Subject to regulatory approvals, Etihad will place its 'EY' code on Kuwait Airways-operated flights from Abu Dhabi to Kuwait, Najaf and Dhaka. In turn, Kuwait Airways will place its 'KU' code on Etihad flights from Kuwait to Abu Dhabi, Belgrade, Casablanca, Rabat, Khartoum, Johannesburg, Lagos, Nairobi, Male in the Maldives, and Mahe in the Seychelles. Tony Douglas, Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Etihad Aviation Group, said: "This is a great first step in what we hope will be a mutually beneficial and growing relationship between Kuwait Airways, one of the region's oldest and most experienced airlines, and Etihad, one of its youngest and most acclaimed." Kamel Al-Awadhi, CEO of Kuwait Airways, said, "We welcome Etihad as a code-share partner. This new partnership will bring enhanced connectivity and increased convenience to our customers, who can expect the same level of impeccable service that they receive from our airline when they travel on code-share flights to and from Kuwait to Abu Dhabi and beyond."

## ETHIOPIAN GROUP CEO NAMED 'AIRLINE EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR' BY CENTRE FOR AVIATION



**E**thiopian Airlines Group CEO Tewolde Gebremariam was recently recognised as 'Airline Executive of the Year' at the annual Global Aviation Awards for Excellence organised by Centre for Aviation (CAPA) in Malta. He won the title for his commendable individual influence on the aviation industry, demonstrating outstanding strategic thinking and innovative direction for the growth of Ethiopian Airlines and the aviation industry at large. Transformation of Ethiopian Airlines from a marginal airline into a major global force, with a modern fleet and world-class operation, is also attributed to him.

Gebremariam became the Group CEO of the airline in January 2011. He has received a number of prestigious accolades in the aviation industry for his outstanding leadership that propelled Ethiopian Airlines to the top of Africa's aviation industry. Apart from that, Gebremariam was also recently recognised as one of the 100 Most Influential Africans in 2019 by New African Magazine.

## ALLIANCE AIR TO CONNECT HUBLI TO HYDERABAD



**A**lliance Air, a wholly owned subsidiary of Air India, is all set to add Hubli to its list of stations with a daily direct flight connecting it with Hyderabad. This is an RCS flight under UDAN scheme initiative by government of India. The airline will deploy its 70 seater ATR 72 600 on this sector. Hubli is also known as 'Chota Mumbai' because of being commercially strong focal point for business in Karnataka. Crops like cotton and peanuts are grown aplenty here lending the name Hubli meaning 'flowering creeper' in Kannada to the city. It is the constant endeavor of Alliance Air to bolster its network and soar higher connecting India and beyond.

## DUBAI AIRPORTS TO BE PLASTIC FREE IN 2020



**I**n a bid to manage environmental impact, two of Dubai's airports — Dubai International (DXB) and Dubai World Central (DWC) — have pledged to be free of single-use plastics in 2020. Post a pledge undertaken in June 2019 to reduce the use of plastic, the two airports have been working with more than 250 of its concession and hospitality partners to execute its plastic-free pledge.

Dubai Airports, which manages the operation and development of both of Dubai's airports, DXB and DWC, said the process will involve a phased approach, which will see plastic cutlery, drinking straws, take-away food packaging and polythene bags be removed from cafés, restaurants and shops from January 1, 2020.

Through the year, other plastic products in customer spaces will be replaced. A notable partner among others is the fast-food giant, McDonald's, which will be replacing a total of 5,608,740 items with recyclable materials at the Dubai airports. Similarly, the Coffee giant Costa will also be replacing its plastic-lined cups with a 100% renewable, plant-based smart cups. A coffee cup lid made entirely from wood and paper fiber will also be introduced.

## BRITISH AIRWAYS' FIRST A350 AIRCRAFT IN BENGALURU



British Airways recently launched its state-of-the-art A350 aircraft with the highly anticipated Club Suite from Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru to London, Heathrow Terminal 5. Bengaluru is the first city in the country to welcome the Airline's sophisticated and newly branded business cabin known as Club Suite, which offers direct aisle access, a door for greater privacy and luxurious flat-bed seats in a 1-2-1 configuration. With 40 percent more storage, a vanity unit and mirror, high-speed Wi-Fi facilities, 18.5-inch inflight entertainment screens, high definition gate-to-gate programming, and PC/ USB power and other state-of-the-art features. Known as the "Hushliner", the A350 is also more environmentally friendly than its predecessors and is the quietest of any twin-aisle aircraft. With lower noise and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, the state-of-the-art aircraft's environmental benefits include 40 percent noise footprint reduction and 25 percent reduction in fuel burn. A350 which is the world's most modern wide body aircraft and most efficient large engine, with a take-off thrust of 97,000 lbs, also reflects the time of day and outside light with the help of its high ceilings and ambient lighting.

## ETIHAD AIRWAYS TREATS GUESTS WITH A SPECIAL THEMED MENU FOR CHRISTMAS



Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, treated its guests travelling on select flights over the festive season to a special themed menu designed by its in-house culinary team. The menu featured traditional roast turkey and all the trimmings along with delicious festive desserts. The special menu was available from December 24 to 26 on a number of destinations including Australia, Kenya, Lebanon, Manila, Seoul, Singapore, South Africa, the United States, and most of the airline's European gateways. Guests visiting Etihad's premium lounges at Abu Dhabi International Airport were also treated to festive favourites, including delightful gingerbread houses. Etihad's award-winning E-Box inflight entertainment featured a special collection of holiday-themed programming, including classics such as Home Alone and Elf, as well as festive-inspired lifestyle shows.

## AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA TO REDUCE CARBON FOOTPRINT



Airports Council International (ACI), a non-profit organisation representing the world's airports recently announced that four AAI airports — Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport, Kolkata; Biju Patnaik International Airport, Bhubaneswar; Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport, Varanasi and Trivandrum International Airport — have met all the necessary requirements to upgrade to Level-2 Reduction by constituting Carbon Management Plan and reducing the carbon emissions at airports as per the Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) Programme.

In line with national as well as global climate change initiatives, AAI has initiated carbon management program at four of these airports with an objective of ensuring sustainable development of aviation industry. Airport can participate at four progressive levels of accreditation – Level 1: Mapping, Level 2: Reduction, Level 3: Optimisation, Level 3+: Neutrality. The aim is to encourage and enable airports to implement best practices in carbon management.

## SINGAPORE AIRLINES TO INTRODUCE AIRBUS A350 IN AHMEDABAD



Singapore Airlines recently announced the introduction of its Airbus A350-900 medium-haul aircraft on the Ahmedabad-Singapore route. It will be the first international airline to bring this aircraft type to Ahmedabad. The inaugural service SQ531 will depart from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport on February 1, 2020, with six-time weekly services, set to increase to daily operations from 29 March 2020 subject to regulatory approvals.

The A350-900 aircraft features higher ceilings, larger windows, an extra wide body providing more space and comfort with lighting designed to reduce jetlag. The A350-900 medium haul Business Class cabin has 40 seats in a 1-2-1 arrangement that ensures direct aisle access for every customer, while the Economy Class cabin has 263 seats arranged in a comfortable 3-3-3 configuration. The aircraft is also fitted with the latest Thales AVANT in-flight entertainment system, allowing the passengers to enjoy Singapore Airlines' myKrisWorld and its selection of more than 1,800 movies, TV shows, audio programmes and games. Passengers will also have access to high-speed in-flight Wi-Fi service, with the help of Inmarsat GX Aviation's broadband connectivity system offered through SITAONAIR.





**SASCHA LENZ** has been appointed as General Manager at Park Hyatt Chennai. He started his career in 1999 with Starwood Hotels and Resorts. He has notably worked with the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, Honolulu, Hawaii; Landmark Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong, and Grand Hyatt Berlin

as Assistant Director of Food & Beverage. He also assisted with the opening of Hyatt Regency, Ekaterinburg in Russia, and then worked with Hyatt's first Andaz brand hotel in London during the Summer Olympics of 2012. Before joining Park Hyatt Chennai, he was the Executive Assistant Manager, Food & Beverage, at Grand Hyatt Goa. In his new role, Sascha aims to ensure that the hotel continues to provide guests with a top-notch hotel experience combined with truly personalised service.



**ANIMESH BARAT** has recently been appointed as General Manager of Hyatt Regency Thrissur. Barat is a seasoned hotelier with over two decades of experience in the Hospitality industry. He has been associated with the Marriott International for more than 10 years,

where he has worked with multiple hotels. In his new role, Barat will be responsible for the entire operations and will spearhead the growth and development of the hotel. Barat is a skilled food and beverage enthusiast, revenue analyst and market strategist. His core expertise lies in delivering successful outcomes by empowering the team and building efficient processes thereby generating maximum profit. On joining Hyatt Regency Thrissur, Barat, said, "I wanted to join Hyatt for their work culture and its core purpose of care for people so they can be their best. Company's strong food and beverage reputation and a young energetic team at the helm of affairs was also a reason for joining this global brand. With Hyatt Regency Thrissur, I and my team are set to discover this unexplored cultural destination and bring out the best in the city with energising experiences for our patrons."



**VIPUL KAMBOJ** has been appointed as the General Manager at India's first flagship Holiday Inn Resort — the upcoming Holiday Inn Resort Kolkata NH6. A passionate hospitality professional with two decades of experience in hotel Sales & Marketing, Kamboj brings with him an extensive understanding of revenue management.

Earlier, he worked with Marriott and the Crowne Plaza Today, Gurugram. His key plan is to position the resort as the first choice for destination weddings, MICE & leisure travelers in the Eastern part of India. He will also be responsible for all aspects of the resort's operational functions and overall revenue objectives. Kamboj is a fitness freak. In his leisure time, he loves to watch movies and spends time with his wife and daughter.



**ARVIND SHENOY** has recently been appointed as General Manager at Best Western Plus Narasapura (Bengaluru). He was most recently Vice President, Asset Management, at Blue Rock Hospitality in Mumbai. Shenoy brings more than 24 years of experience in the Hospitality

industry, working at various hotels in India, including Country Inn & Suites by Radisson Navi Mumbai, Radisson Blu Rudrapur and The Pride Group of Hotels in Bengaluru. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Hotel Management from The Welcom Group Graduate School of Hotel Administration.



**CHANDAN KUMAR CHANCHAL** has been appointed as General Manager for The Manohar Hotel, Hyderabad. He brings with him over 16 years of hospitality experience with core competency in Sales and Marketing. He has previously been associated with other reputed brands,

such as Hyatt, Radisson, Holiday Inn, Sarovar Hotels, The Lalit etc. In his new role, Kumar will oversee the overall hotel operations by providing strategic guidance to the team.



**RAHUL SHARMA** has been appointed as the Hotel Manager at Courtyard by Marriott Amritsar. He has 19 years of experience in the Hospitality industry. Sharma who holds a Master's degree in Business Administration in Sales and Marketing from Karnataka State Open University, Mysore, has spearheaded

various initiatives, which have resulted in enhanced guest experiences, along with financial profitability during and after the launch of a hotel. His notable tenures include his work as General Manager at Four Points by Sheraton, Jaipur; Executive Assistant Manager at Le Meridien, Kochi, and Director, North India, for Starwood Sales Organisation. In his new role, he will be responsible for running seamless operations of the hotel and positioning it as a market leader in Amritsar.



**KS SACHIN** has been appointed as Director of Sales and Marketing at Vividus Hotels, Bengaluru. Vividus is a brand of business hotels of GD Group. The group is starting MySpace brand, a budget hotel, which is likely to grow to 25 hotels by next year. "My objective is to drive revenue,

guest engagement and growth of more than 100 hotels with a sales domain," says Sachin. He was earlier with Royal Orchid

Hotels, driving sales and also with an additional role of South Head in the Travel-Trade domain. He has 19 years of experience in the hotel industry and is well-connected with the who's who of travel fraternity, corporate bookers and all booking sources.

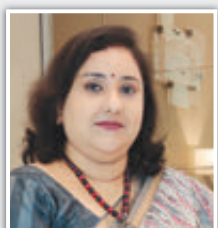


**RAJNIKANT PATEL** has joined GIFT City Club and Business Center as Director of Sales and Marketing. In his new role, Patel will be responsible for the overall Sales & Marketing of the club and its facilities, including accommodation. Patel is a seasoned hotelier with over 20 years of experience in the field of hospitality and has worked with brands, such as The Oberoi Group, Radisson Hotel Group and IHG.



**AMRENDRA JHHA** has been appointed as the Director of Sales for The Oterra Hotel, Bengaluru. A dynamic professional with over 13 years of experience in Sales and Operations domain, Jhha has previously worked with Chancery Pavilion, St Marks & Pride Hotels in Bengaluru, IHG & Hilton

Groups in Pune Market and other well-known brands. In his new role, he will be required to leverage sales strategies, tactical planning and build a strong sales team to help organisational growth and revenues of this brand operated by Velankani information Systems Ltd.



**Moumita Chakraborty** has been appointed as the Associate Director of Sales at Holiday Inn Express Kolkata Airport. A seasoned sales and marketing professional, Moumita has over 14 years of experience in the Hospitality industry. She has worked with brands such as The Astor, Chrome

Hotel, Sarovar Hotels, JHM Interstate, etc. Her recent assignment was with Accor Hotels as a Regional Sales (Eastern India) for Novotel Visakhapatnam. She specialises in management of sales teams, having worked in various managerial roles in the sales departments of various organisations. In her new role, she will be responsible for running seamless operations of the hotel's sales team and positioning it as a market leader in the city of Kolkata.



**GEETANJALI GROVER** has been appointed as the new Marketing Head at Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel Hyderabad Banjara Hills. Grover brings with her over 11 years of marketing communication experience with reputed hospitality brands, such as The Imperial New Delhi, Sujan luxury hotels, and Jaypee

hotels. While her stint on the agency side, she was the launch strategist for international hospitality clients, such as Whitbread UK's Premier Inn Goa — now Fairfield by Marriott, and Silver Heritage Hong Kong's Tiger Palace Resort Nepal.

With international work exposure, a Master's Degree in Business administration and a multi-industry experience in her kitty, at BMW Group India office, Grover is all charged up to spearhead

new marketing initiatives in 2020 for Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel Hyderabad Banjara Hills.



**AMIT BHATIA** has been appointed as Director of Food & Beverage at JW Marriott Jaipur, Resort & Spa. He is responsible for managing the overall operations of the food and beverage department and delivering excellent guest experiences. With over 11 years of experience across

a spectrum of luxury, convention & resort portfolios, Bhatia has demonstrated several skills including the creation & execution of Food and Beverage strategies, deployment of profitable business and troubleshooting operations. Bhatia has a Bachelor of Hotel Management degree from GGS, IP University, Delhi. His career began as a Food and Beverage Associate at Trident Hotel Gurgaon. His stint with Marriott International began when he joined the JW Marriott Bangalore as the pre-opening Room service Manager in 2013. He has several feathers in his cap including, Winner of "Marriott South Asia Beverage Professional" 2016 and Manager of the Year, JW Marriott Mussoorie –2015 & 2017.



**RAHUL GAUTAM** has stepped into the role of Director of Food and Beverage at The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel Delhi. He had joined the hotel from Aman Bagh, Alwar, four- and-a-half years ago. Since then, he has been successfully leading the Food and Beverage Department

as Food and Beverage Manager and has been instrumental in the enormously growing numbers at all the outlets. Gautam's previous stints also comprise Novotel in the UK, Taj Umaid Bhawan Palace, The Taj Mahal and Shangri-la, Delhi, Oberoi Cecil to name some. During his tenure at the hotel, he launched Club Cuba, a poolside lounge and revamped and re-launched two specialty restaurants, Dilli 32 and Mei Kun.



**LALIT RAI** has joined Fairfield by Marriott Pune Kharadi as the Head Chef. Born and brought up in Mumbai, Chef Rai has completed his Bachelor's Degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management from Alagappa University and a Diploma in Hotel Management from Arun

Muchhala Institute of Hotel Management. With more than 10 years of experience in the culinary department, Chef Rai comes with the comprehensive skill set and knowledge in Food & Beverage operations. A recipient of multiple awards, Chef Rai's earlier assignments included Fairfield by Marriott Lucknow, Renaissance Convention Center Mumbai, J W Marriott Marquis Dubai, The Lalit Mumbai, Renaissance Marriott Mumbai, Rodas An Ecotel Hotel Mumbai. His roles and responsibilities include the in-room dining, restaurant, banquet event operations and hotel's overall culinary operations, menu designing, profitability and menu engineering, strategic planning and market survey for upcoming menu implementation, maintain and conduct training to deliver higher quality.





**NITIN BAJAJ** has joined as Executive Chef at The Roseate New Delhi. With over a decade of experience across Indian and international markets, Chef Nitin Bajaj is proficient in handling specialty restaurants and has a flair for culinary art trends. In his new role, he will lead the kitchen operations

at The Roseate New Delhi and will head food production division of the hotel. Fourteen years of experience in star hotels, 2 AA Rosette restaurant as well as a Michelin Star restaurant made him well-versed with advanced culinary techniques such as sous vide, compressed and molecular cooking, just to name a few. Prior to joining The Roseate New Delhi, Bajaj was working in Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center as an Executive Sous Chef. He was also the co-owner and food artisan at Le Spring Restaurant, Jaipur. His exceptional leadership and trainings skills won him the 'Best Chef of the Year' Award along with the 'Best North Indian Cuisine' Award by Times Food Award 2017 in Jaipur.



**VIKAS SINGH** has been appointed as Executive Chef for Hyatt Regency Kolkata. He is responsible for overseeing the entire F&B production operations. With over 11 years of culinary experience, he brings with him a dynamic and innovative energy to Hyatt Regency Kolkata's diverse culinary

scene. Holding a strong record of streamlining operations and improving services, while preserving the highest levels of quality, menu engineering and food styling, are his prime forte. His passion to continuously learn and explore his craft has resulted in an impressive career, which includes working for 5-star hotels, such as Four Seasons, Marriott International, Accor Hotels as well as resort property Club Mahindra Resorts. The chef draws his inspiration for cooking from his father, who is an ex-army officer.



**JITENDER AWASTHI** has been appointed as Junior Sous Chef at The Westin Mumbai Garden City. He has prior experience with the Oberoi Hotel and Resort in Mumbai. Over the years, he has participated in various baking competitions and won the gold medal in the 'All India Bakery and

Pastry Challenge, 2013'. Awasthi's signature creations are chocolate pralines and decadent chocolate bonbons. In his new role, he will assist in the planning and innovation of menus, ensure quality services, train associates, manage budgets, amongst others.



**SABU RAGHAVAN** has been appointed by Hilton as Vice President, Human Resources, India. With over two decades of experience in Human Resources in the education and hospitality industry, Raghavan joined Hilton in 2011 and was most recently based in Singapore, where he oversaw Human

Resources for Southeast Asia and India. Raghavan's new role will see him focusing exclusively on India, working closely with Hilton's leadership team to drive culture and talent development among

Hilton team members. Based in the Gurugram office in India, Raghavan will report to Lara Hernandez, Senior Vice President, Human Resources, Asia-Pacific and will work closely with the India leadership team and lead the HR strategy for India.



**RANJANA PAL** has been appointed as Director of Human Resources at Andaz Delhi — a luxury lifestyle hotel by Hyatt in Aerocity, New Delhi. Pal hails from the city of nawabs, Lucknow, and has spent most of her student life in Ahmedabad. She brings with her diverse work experience spread

over more than 15 years in the field of human resources, across IT, manufacturing and hospitality industries. Ranjana's last assignment was with Marriott Hotels as Cluster Director, Human Resources, at Renaissance Ahmedabad and Four Points Sheraton Ahmedabad, where she was responsible for overseeing the full spectrum of HR functions across both the hotels. Prior to that, she has worked with the Marriott and Starwood in various roles in Human Resources. In her new role at Andaz Delhi, she will be managing the Human Resource function of the luxury lifestyle hotel, overseeing Training, Employee Welfare, Work Culture and Employee Wellness, HR Operations and all other HR-related functions.



**RAJNI SANAS** has been appointed by Courtyard by Marriott Pune Chakan as its Human Resources Manager. With a deft hand in performance management, recruitment, selection, training and development, Sanas has been known to bring out the best in an employee. A young

achiever, Sanas brings onboard a rich experience of over 12 years in Human Resources and has worked with prominent companies, such as Marriott International, Keys Klub Parc Estique to name a few. Her last assignment was with Four Points by Sheraton Bengaluru. Sanas enjoys reading and shopping with her friends. Her role as the HR manager in Courtyard by Marriott Pune, Chakan includes recruitment, management of employee relations, conducting and coordinating training programmes, and managing performances.



**NEHA BHATI** has been appointed as the Executive Housekeeper of Andaz Delhi — a luxury lifestyle hotel by Hyatt in Aerocity, New Delhi. Bhati brings along with her 11 years of experience and a coveted degree in Housekeeping Management from the Oberoi Center of Learning Development.

Bhati began her career in 2008 with the Oberoi Group of Hotels as an Assistant Manager, Housekeeping, at Trident Gurgaon. Post this, she moved within the group to several international and domestic locations, before joining Andaz Delhi in December 2019. As the Executive Housekeeper of Andaz Delhi, Bhati will oversee the housekeeping operations of the luxury lifestyle hotel, offering 401 rooms, 125 fully furnished apartments, four food and beverage venues, state-of-the-art recreation facilities and 37,500 square feet of event spaces. Sustainability and eco-friendly initiatives will remain her core focus in her role at the trendsetter hotel.

TODAY'S  
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**CORPORATE**





# GATEWAY TO THE EAST

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport combines world-class facilities with quintessential regional elements

TT BUREAU

Modern airports today are much more than transit hubs – places used by travellers to fly in and out of their chosen destinations. Today, airports woo passengers with ritzy duty-free shops, beckoning them with perfumes, chocolates and branded liquor. Some airports go the extra mile, to provide travellers with decadent spas, luxury lounges and even movie theatres!

Holding its place high in the list of top airports in the world is Kolkata's recently refurbished international airport, which is the gateway to the Eastern and Northeastern parts of India and effectively handles more than 26 million passengers each year. It is the fifth busiest airport in the country after Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and Bengaluru airports. The airport is the largest in Eastern India, with 24 international and 10 domestic airlines operating out of it and promises to become a major aviation hub in the years to come.





## INSIDE STORY

The airport, originally known as Dum Dum Airport, was built on an open parade ground, vacated by Bengal Artillery, in the 1930s. It was traditionally used as a stopover for flights to Jakarta and Australia. In 1927, KLM used it as a stopover for the Amsterdam-Jakarta flight and the very same year, the British Royal Air Force started using the runway for operating its flights.

The airport became the destination for the world's first jet-powered passenger aircraft, the Havilland Comet, on a British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) route to London. After Independence, in 1975, the airport opened its first dedicated terminal in India. Since then, this airport has witnessed an exponential growth in passenger flow and cargo movement, providing crucial linkages to the cities in Northeastern and Eastern India, and Southeast Asia. In 2013, the renovated airport was inaugurated by the former president of India, Pranab Mukherjee. At present, the airport provides flights to 35 destinations in India and 13 destinations internationally. Prominent destinations include Hanoi, Ho Chin Minh City and Guangzhou in China.

## A BRAND NEW AIRPORT

The newly refurbished integrated terminal combines aesthetics with state-of-the-art facilities and offers passengers a seamless flying experience. It is capable of handling 26 million passengers annually and has witnessed 10% increase in passenger volume in the year 2018-19, with an approximate figure of 2,18,77,350 passengers. The airport comes with the most advanced check-in facilities. It has 128 Check-in counters, providing Common User Terminal Equipment (CUTE) facilities. Additionally, there are 56 immigration counters, 18 aerobridges, 9 remote boarding gates and 63 parking stands for aircraft.

Movement across the length and breadth of the airport is made easy with 18 escalators, 13 travelators and 31 elevators. Waiting for your baggage is a thing of the past as the airport offers 16 conveyor belts in the arrival area and 8 at the departure level. Automated in-line baggage screening system is already available for international travellers, while the same is being installed for the domestic area. For winter, when conditions for flight take-offs and landing are often put in jeopardy by fog, the airport has installed the CAT-III system, one of the most sophisticated instrument landing systems presently available in the world, which allows flights to operate till visibility drops to 50m.

## NEW INITIATIVES

The airport has undertaken several new initiatives to make passenger travel smoother. Currently, an Air Traffic Control Tower is under construction. Three hangars with annexe building are also in progress on the Narayanpur side of the airport. There are also talks of a proposed domestic cargo building that will make movement of goods smoother. Further, the currently expanding Metro network will have two lines – one from Noapara and the other from New Garia – connecting directly to the airport.



## PROMOTING ART AND CULTURE

The airport is known to promote local art and culture with a focus to promote Bengal as a premier tourist hub. The roof designs are inspired by the works of the Bengali Nobel Laureate, Rabindranath Tagore.

On the other hand, three sculptures at the domestic departure, depicting Baul dance and a 3D printed Durga idol at the security hold area, depict quintessential elements of regional culture. On the occasion of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the airport, in association with Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, established a picture gallery, showcasing 24 panels.

## FOR THE LARGER CAUSE

Kolkata airport contributes generously to larger social causes. To renew its commitment towards cleaner energy, Kolkata Airport has incorporated solar powered electricity for the operation of its 2.4 lakh-sq m terminal building.

The airport has also developed a 240 sq. ft. Green Wall at the departure hall and two more at the arrival hall. The airport is also doing its bit to curtail the use of single-use plastic within its premises. Also, it is upgrading its facilities for persons with reduced mobility.





# FUTURE OF TRAVEL

Chinmai Sharma, President, Distribution, RateGain, speaks candidly about how technology is changing our familiar world of travel

## TT BUREAU

Technology has fundamentally altered our experience of travel. Gone are those days, when haggling with travel agents for cheaper tickets and hotel bookings was the norm. Technology today has not only made travel bookings easier for the consumers, it has also substantially led to the growth in the number of travellers, helping companies to increase profits and expand their operations. RateGain is a leading provider of Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) products, which are third-party host applications made available to consumers over the internet.

In doing so, it helps the revenue, distribution and marketing manager to overcome the daily challenge of generating revenue in this rapidly changing and dynamic environment. To get a clearer picture of the changing eco-system of the travel industry, Today's Traveller met Chinmai Sharma, who spoke at length about the highlights of RateGain, his views on the Indian market and the future plans in store for the company.

### IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ARE THE UNIQUE SELLING POINTS OF RATEGAIN?

RateGain is a leading provider of SaaS products, which help travel and hospitality companies with a host of services, such as cognitive revenue management, smart e-distribution, and brand engagement to maximise revenue. RateGain, presently supports more than 125,000 hotel properties globally, by providing 240 billion rate and availability updates, and powering over 30 million bookings. RateGain is trusted by 25 out of the top 30 online travel agents, world's fastest-growing airlines, 23 of the top 30 hotel chains, premier tour operators and wholesalers, top car rental companies, some of the largest cruise lines, and travel management companies.

### HOW IS RATEGAIN FARING IN THE INDIAN MARKET?

The company was founded by Bhanu Chopra in 2004. Presently, it works with the market leaders in the travel and hospitality industry on a global scale. In India, the company has partnered with OYO Rooms, MakeMyTrip, PayTM, Yatra, Indigo, SpiceJet, Oberoi Hotels & Resorts, Lemon Tree Hotels & Resorts, Wyndham International, GO Air, Leela Palaces Hotels & Resorts, Marriott International, Taj Hotels & Resorts, ITC Hotels, Ginger Hotels, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, Accor International, Hyatt International, IHG, Royal Orchid Hotels, and The Lalit, just to name a few. Over the last one year, the company has more than doubled

its revenue. The accolades and achievements we have received over the years in the Indian market speak volumes about our formidable growth. In 2019, the company won Deloitte's Asia Pacific Technology Fast 500 Award for the fourth time and the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce "Start-up of the Year" award. RateGain has also won India's Emerging 20 Award for Outstanding Performance in Technological Innovation.

### WHAT ARE THE FUTURE PLANS OF THE COMPANY FOR THE INDIAN MARKET?

As Indians, we are fortunate that the largest human capital base is here. We are a leading SaaS company in the travel industry in India, but our ambitions are global. RateGain in 2020 will be focusing on introducing more innovations, such as Market Drone and Smart Distribution across its various platforms.

The travel industry, both in India as well as globally, is undergoing transformational changes and we will be advancing our AI-powered distribution, marketing and rate intelligence platforms, in order to cope with real-time market changes designed to reduce cognitive load from users. On the merger and acquisition front, RateGain has been expanding its capabilities through key acquisitions over the past couple of years and will continue to make further inroads in core areas to strengthen its current platforms and leverage their collective capabilities. This will not only drive value but also increase profitability for our clients.

### FINALLY, HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN YOUR WORK-LIFE BALANCE?

When it comes to the service industry, maintaining a healthy work-life balance is becoming increasingly difficult. Thankfully, I am helped by my able team members who are well-equipped to share my workload. Additionally, I set aside a few hours each day just to spend time with my family.

Prioritisation of tasks also helps. RateGain's HR policies also support work-life balance for our employees. We provide benefits, such as work from home, generous leave policies, and dedicated gym facilities.

Our HR policies have fetched a host of awards and certificates, such as "Great Place to Work", "HR Strategy in line with Business Award" by World HRD Congress, "Learning Strategy of the Year Award" by UBS Forum, "Best CSR Impact Award" by UBS forums and many more.





# SOUTH AFRICA CALLING

Highlights from MTM Corporate Think Tank, powered by South Africa Tourism, on exploring new MICE destinations at ITC Maratha, Mumbai

TT BUREAU



*Hon'ble Tourism  
Minister of South Africa,  
H.E. Mmamoloko  
Kubayi-Ngubane*

Highlighting South Africa as a preferred MICE destination, the South Africa Tourism Board partnered with OptiMICE Events Private Limited to organise a roundtable discussion session with top corporates in the country. The discussion centred on exploring new destinations while planning MICE, Luxury and Leisure movements.

The Think Tank, powered by South African Tourism, was held at ITC Maratha, Mumbai on January 15, 2020. The occasion was graced by the presence of Hon'ble Tourism Minister of South Africa, H.E. Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane.

The delegation also included Dr. Marwala, Advisor to the Minister; Mr. Ravi Nadasen, Chair, South African Tourism; Ms. Sthembiso Dlamini, Head, Tourism Execution, South African Tourism; Ms. Neliswa Nkani, Hub Head, MEISEA, South African Tourism; Ms. Nompumelelo Madlala, PA to the Minister, Department of Tourism; Blessings Manale, Chief Director, Communications Department of Tourism; Ms Takalani Sithi, Deputy Director Asia and Australasia Department of Tourism; Ms. Andrea Kuhn, South African Consulate General, and Mr. Dean Hoff, South African Consulate General.

Followed by cocktails and dinner, this networking evening was a great success, with top corporates praising the Hon'ble Minister for her unique initiatives dedicated to promoting tourism to South Africa.

## STRATEGY FOR THE INDIAN MARKET

The visit of the newly appointed South African Minister of Tourism, Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane, along with the COO,





*Ms. Neliswa Nkani, Hub Head, MEISEA, South African Tourism*

had an important purpose. It was meant to chart out the tourism board's India-specific growth strategy for the New Year. As South African Tourism sets its sights on doubling international tourist arrivals from 10.5 million to 21 million by 2030, India is expected to play a significant role in achieving this long-term goal. From January to October 2019, the destination welcomed 81,316 Indian visitors to South Africa — a 5.48% year-on-year (YoY) increase. The average length of stay saw an 8% YoY increase in the first half of 2019 from 25 nights to 27 nights. Total Indian traveller spends in the first half of 2019 were at a 4-year high with South African Tourism achieving 64% of its annual spends target within this period.

#### **KEY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

In 2019, South Africa piloted a new e-visa system in New Zealand. On successful completion, the intention is to begin rolling-out e-visas in other countries, with India being amongst top priority markets. With the aim to further stimulate travel and tourism from India, the Minister indicated that the piloting of e-visas for the market was under serious consideration and would be initiated shortly.



This comes close on the heels of an initiative launched in 2018 pre-vetted visas for top tour operators to fast-track visa processing. In November 2019, the South African



Minister of Home Affairs announced that the country was doing away, with immediate effect, the need for unabridged birth certificates previously required by minors visiting from international countries. South African Hon. Minister of Tourism, Ms. Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane announced, "South Africa has taken several measures to provide ease of access to Indian tourists including bringing changes in the visa regime. The online visa application system pilot testing will happen from next week and if the pilot project goes without any glitch, a full roll out will take place from 1st April 2020. We have a positive outlook for the India market and are also in talks with India for granting multiple-entry visa to South Africa."

### PROMOTING MICE AND SPORTS TOURISM

"MICE and sports tourism are predicted to drive arrivals growth for South Africa. South Africa has also emerged as a popular wedding destination for Indians. The South African government



is also exploring interests from third country airlines willing to operate direct flights on the India-South Africa routes and any relevant proposals would be discussed with the Indian government," added the Minister.

From January to September 2019, MICE accounted for 24% of the Indian traveller visits. 43% of overall Indian arrivals to South Africa were repeat visitors. 2019 witnessed a 36.6% increase in Indian traveller spends on shopping and a 26% increase in spends on leisure activities in South Africa.





# CORPORATE JET-SETTER

**CAPT. RAJESH SHARMA**  
MD, IFM AND ASSET SERVICES,  
CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD

## TT BUREAU

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

I personally feel that there is no place like Maasai Mara National Reserve on earth. Probably, I am a bit biased because I am a big-time wildlife enthusiast. However, one must visit and spend a few days in Maasai Mara because that reminds us of our history and re-iterates the message of 'survival of the fittest'.

### Q: You dream of going to?

Serengeti in Tanzania. Being a wildlife enthusiast, I am looking forward to visiting Serengeti and hope to be there at the time of annual migration, which I missed by a few days during my last visit to Maasai Mara.

### Q: Favourite airline and why?

Singapore Airlines, especially when flying to South East Asia and Australia. Their service is excellent and they have convenient timings. Changi Airport, the hub of the airline, is a very convenient transit point.

### Q: Best hotel experience and why?

The Serena beach resort in Mombasa was a fabulous experience for me. The setting was picturesque, the facilities were great, the service was excellent and the cuisine was fabulous.

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

Canada. A truly relaxed trip that included wonderful sights like the Niagara falls, the Thousand Islands and a short trip across the border to attend a family wedding. It was great to drive around in the picturesque country in the month of July, when the weather was excellent throughout the trip.

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

A family vacation in London. The city has so much to offer in terms of history, culture and cuisine. Except for a family holiday, most of my trips to London had tightly packed business schedules with hop, skip and jump affairs. I still have Scotland, the Lake District and Cornwall in the West Country on my bucket list.



### Q: Your best holiday with friends?

It was a holiday in Goa with a group of my army batch mates and their families in August 2019. We were close to 150 and some of us met for the first time after our academy days. Goa was the perfect venue with lots to offer in terms of weather, sights, activities and cuisine. Everybody had a gala time.

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

I am not that experimental when it comes to food and tend to prefer the Indian cuisine. I have tasted some of the best Indian food in Dubai, which has some of the finest Indian restaurants in the world.

### Q: What to watch out while travelling?

Before you travel to a new destination, read a bit about the place which helps you avoid tourist traps, which can often be found in some of the major cities.

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

I firmly believe that there is no point in penny-pinching when it comes to travel, be it for business or for leisure. Getting a cheap flight with stopovers and inconvenient timings might save a few dollars, but you end up wasting time and being less productive. Best to choose your flights carefully and arrive fresh at your destination to get more out of your trip.



# CORPORATE JET-SETTER

**SAMEER SAXENA**

**Leader, India Real Estate Services  
Marsh & McLennan Companies**

## TT BUREAU

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

My trip to Kenya was one of my best vacations. During this trip, I had the opportunity to visit Nairobi, Mombasa and the mesmerising Maasai Mara National Reserve. This is one of those lifetime experiences that I will cherish forever. During this trip, I got a chance to see a lion kill its prey from very close quarters.

### Q: You dream of going to?

Touring Austria and Switzerland is on my cards. My primary objective is to experience the scenic beauty of these places.

### Q: Favourite airline and why?

Both British Airways and Emirates are fantastic for the services and the hospitality they offer. I have had many pleasant experiences while flying with these airlines and would continue to do so. This does not in any way mean that I do not like to fly with Air India.

### Q: Best hotel experience and why?

Accor and Marriott have been great places for me to stay around the globe. My personal favourite has been Jumeirah at Saadiyat Island Resort. This amazing resort is located on a protected beach, which is also a hatch ground for turtles. The views, the property and the overall ambience of this place are phenomenal.



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

I would love to go back to the English countryside again. The flora of this place just amazes me. Forest of Dean, Bourton-on-the-Water, Lower Slaughter and many such small villages are beautiful.

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

My vacation in Goa with my family and close friends is something that I enjoyed the most. Staying at Alila Diwa was one of the most enjoyable experiences that my family had. Goa is not only vibrant, but also gives you the opportunity to introspect in many ways and I always enjoy being there.

### Q: Your best holiday with friends?

My trip to Abu Dhabi was my best holiday with my friends. We had many great experiences and visited many places — from the best of hotels, to shopping malls, to the most amazing F1 tracks.

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

I am a big fan of Continental food, and, during my numerous visits to the UK, I have had the opportunity to relish them. The choice of healthy food with morning bakeries is always amazing in the UK and I love being there. I have also enjoyed a visit to a restaurant named "Carnivore" in Kenya. The ambience of the place combined with the food was awesome.

### Q: What to watch out while travelling?

I am a big fan of natural beauty and the beaches. Thus, my choices revolve around these two places. I always look for experiencing a place in the most natural way possible. I try to be at the local markets instead of enclosed air-conditioned spaces.

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

I have always been of the view that you need to be flexible with the options that you are exploring for vacations along with the timelines. On the personal front, what matters for me is the cost-effectiveness of the deal along with the experiences that I am likely to get, and both these aspects help me in my decision-making process.



# CORPORATE JET-SETTER

**RAHUL LAL, FRICS  
NATIONAL HEAD FOR  
INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES,  
REAL ESTATE & SECURITY  
DALMIA BHARAT GROUP**

**TT BUREAU**

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

Each destination offers a unique experience and there is always so much to cover. I am yet to find a destination that is singularly memorable.

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

It would be amazing to witness the magical Northern Lights in Norway. I am in awe of Mother Nature, and this is one phenomenon I would like to witness.

**Q: Favourite airline and why?**

Singapore Airlines takes the first place, always! From the service to the comfort to the cuisine, everything about the airline is superb.

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

Alila Diwa, Goa! From the comfort to the luxury, everything about the hotel is superlative. That is one hotel I have stayed at in all my trips to Goa.



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

Dubai is one city I would like to explore again. Every year, they offer something new and unique that becomes mandatory to explore and experience. I have a new bucket list for my next Dubai trip.

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

There is nothing more gratifying than spending some amazing time with your loved ones. Our recent trip to Goa was simply outstanding. Each time, Goa leaves us with some amazing new memories.

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

My recent trip to Azerbaijan was the best so far. Fun is where friends are. It was amazing to explore a new culture and enjoy the local night life. The icing on the cake was that we flew on the first direct flight to Azerbaijan.

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

Abu Dhabi has some amazing restaurants that are worth trying. No matter where I go, it's Indian cuisine that I prefer. Abu Dhabi has some excellent restaurants.

**Q: What to watch out while travelling?**

Follow the simple rules — plan in advance, know more about the place, and have a strong itinerary in place. These tips will help you to save time and enable you to get the most out of your holiday. Also know which local transport is conducive to save travelling time.

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

Learn from the experience of other travellers, look for convenience and comfort, and lastly, do a thorough research before taking any step. From start to finish, focus should be on experience, rather than just saving cost.





# HOSPITALITY EXEMPLIFIED

In an exclusive dialogue with Today's Traveller, Davinder Juj, General Manager, Eros Hotel, Nehru Place, New Delhi, shared insights on the market position and future strategies of the iconic hotel

## TT BUREAU

From being a haute luxury destination to being an emblem of quintessential Indian hospitality, Eros Hotel in the Indian national capital is immensely popular amongst the business and leisure guests alike. Equipped with world-class amenities along with a highly trained and professional staff, it is positioned as the market leader in the hospitality industry.

### WHAT DEFINES THE USP OF YOUR HOTEL?

Backed by a legacy of over 20 years, Eros Hotel, Nehru Place, New Delhi stands as a true icon of Indian Hospitality. Inspired by the British Architecture, the Hotel offers hi-tech 216 guest rooms and suites with a banqueting space of 20,000 sq. ft., capable of accommodating up to 1,200 guests. We thrive on our consistent approach of exceeding the guests' expectations.

The strategic location in the South Delhi business district with close proximity to major corporate hubs and tourist

attractions makes us a preferred destination. A range of unique shopping, dining and entertainment choices in and around the hotel helps us stand apart from our competitors. We offer a host of diverse and fascinating culinary experiences. Blooms - our 24 hour multi-cuisine restaurant celebrates diverse and delectable Mediterranean, Continental, Thai, European and Asian cuisines. Empress of China offers distinct and contrasting flavours of the famed Chinese provinces namely - Szechuan, Yunnan and Hunan.

Our Indian speciality restaurant - Singh Sahib offers the truly tasteful Punjabi dishes. Some of our prominent USP's include - biggest pool in South Delhi with a mesmerizing lawn surrounding it; a rooftop terrace garden; Chinese restaurant with a private dining room attached to a beautiful open garden along with a lounge and bar. Another attraction is a 9-hole Putting Green, specially designed for golf-lovers to practice their golf swings amidst the natural beauty.



### WHAT IS THE CORPORATE POSITIONING OF THE HOTEL?

We cater to the requirements of both Business and Leisure segments due to our proximity to the business districts in Delhi, NCR and major tourist attractions such as Lotus Temple, Akshardham, ISKCON Temple, Qutub Minar, etc. Also, prominent shopping hubs such as Select City Walk Mall, Saket and famous local markets in South Extension, Greater Kailash, Lajpat Nagar are only a short distance away.

We have one of the largest banqueting space in the vicinity topped with the finest business facilities. Equipped with the latest technology and equipment along with a stunning terrace garden ideal for small corporate gatherings, we cater to our business clientele requirements. With 216 rooms, we also bundle packages for corporate events.

Our large pre-function area, a separate entrance for banquets and a sizeable room inventory makes Eros Hotel a very compelling product for corporate clients. Spread across 20,000 sq. ft. area, Eros Hotel can host up to 2,000 guests. ROYAL – our biggest ballroom has a capacity to host up to 850 guests while four other small indoor banquets are best for small gatherings. We also facilitate an outdoor space to host events for up to 1,000 guests. Our open terrace is idyllic for small gatherings. While our specially trained team caters to all kinds of needs, specially designed menus and varied food offerings satiate your food cravings.

### WHAT ARE THE SPECIAL FACILITIES FOR CORPORATE GUESTS?

The sense of belonging that guests and clients have for the Eros brand is powered by our enduring presence, firm belief in Indian hospitality along with a highly professional and dedicated staff, which give us a huge advantage over our competitors.

Keeping in mind the guests' expectations, the hotel promises to deliver a heartfelt hospitality experience to earn their trust and loyalty. Three signature restaurants, a bakery, a tea lounge, advanced fitness centre, outdoor swimming pool, shopping arcade within the hotel and melodious music by the hotel's pianist every evening promise a fulfilling experience.

Currently, we are upgrading our engineering and laundry facilities to enhance the service level of the hotel, while the upgrades to back end services include improved in-room services such as high speed internet facilities, international TV channels, etc. With our new Executive Chef, we have introduced new food menus in our speciality restaurants for an enhanced culinary experience.

### HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN WORK-LIFE BALANCE?

"I LOVE WHAT I DO" and believe in dedicating equal time to work and home. When I am at either of the places, I ensure that I live in the "NOW" moment. Living in present and enjoying what I do gives me a lot of satisfaction. My relationship and understanding with my team, along with proper work



delegation and empowering the colleagues help me to be in control at work while the affection and care at home rejuvenate me to a great extent. Spending quality time at home early in the morning and a fruitful day at work keep me going and help me do justice to both the fronts of life.





# EAT, PRAY, LOVE

Ottimo at West View, ITC Maurya's flagship rooftop restaurant, offers a delectable range of Italian dishes paired with fine wine

## TT BUREAU

When it comes to fine dining, very few can match up to the standards of ITC Maurya's flagship rooftop restaurant, Ottimo at West View. With a stunning view of the Delhi's green belt, the restaurant offers discerning gourmands with a selection of grilled meats, fine wines and spirits, fresh garden produce and baked goodies straight from the oven.

Team Today's Traveller sat down for a special Italian menu designed by the immensely talented Chef Akshaye Bhardwaj. It featured an irresistible and authentic 5-course meal, which, when paired with wine selected by Beverage Manager Rishabh Kohli and upcoming Sommelier Manish, lifted the experience to the next level.

The sumptuous meal started with a delectable Burnt Onion and Potato Soup laced with creamy Brie Cheese. It went well with a glass of fine Gavi Cortese. Next in line was Burrata and Winter Black Truffle that perfectly complemented the rich taste of Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc. The succulent Chorizo Scallop with





Panagratto paired with Martini Prosecco and the flavoursome Celery Cod paired with Danzante Pinot Grigio were welcome additions. Of course, no Italian meal is complete without pasta. So, creamy Pappardelle Caccio Peppe, paired with Chianti Ruffina Nippozzano were there to satiate our pasta cravings. The flavoursome Celery Cod and Lamb Chops with Saint Cosme Cote Du Rohne were the main courses, and the

highlights of the evening. The meal came to an end with the beloved Italian dessert Tiramisu and Banana Ricotta that were paired with Macchioato with Vanilla Foam.

The exceptional talent of the gifted F&B professionals, Chef Akshaye, Rishab and Manish, was more than successful in creating a memorable gourmet affair with good food, delicious wine and some great conversation.





# LESSONS FROM THE MOUNTAINS

Celebrity Chef Ranveer Brar shares with us life-changing experiences from his trips to three little-known places in Ladakh

**RANVEER BRAR**





**T**ravelling can be a life-changing experience. However, I also feel it is a test of our organising, endurance and survival skills.

Himalayan pathways are not new to me. I had taken the 'high road', so to speak, nearly a decade ago. Those were spur-of-the-moment bike trips you take for the adrenaline rush. But there are times when one needs a more soul-filling experience to search for some quiet amidst the chaos that our lives have become.

I've always believed that tasting food at source adds a completely different perspective to it. For example, the warmth one gets from having a Malaiyyo in Banaras is incomparable to having it elsewhere, because it encompasses in it so much more than just the ingredients. One also experiences the weather, the culture and the essence of the city in that moment.

The Himalayas — we've read about them, fantasised about meandering through the innumerable bends, roughing it and coming back with a lifetime worth of clean lungs and life lessons. It was no different for me.

The first thing I recommend you do after landing in Ladakh is just breathe! No really! It's a great feeling to be aware of your breath in that awe-inducing calm and altitude. The moment you sync your breathing to a more rhythmic, tranquil pace, trust me, you are ready for exploring the heights.

The drive up to Khardung La is a biker's dream. At 17,582 feet, it is claimed to be the highest motorable road in the world and is the gateway to Shyok & Nubra valleys. The high that one gets after driving up, literally and figuratively, is incomparable.

Continuing the road journey from thereon, meeting the different tribes, I quickly realised one thing. In this world where we feel powerful with technology in our hands and anything seems attainable, it just takes one trip to the mountains to completely humble you.



**TURTUK:** This small village at the northernmost border of the country is as idyllic as it gets. It's surrounded by imposing mountains and is home to a mix of Indo-Aryan and Tibetan families. It's nestled in the Shyok Valley, which was interestingly a part of the Silk Route. One of the major factors that drew me to this village apart from its geography was Balti food. Turtuk is one of the few Indian regions where one can find Balti culture and cuisine.

One of the most fascinating dishes one can experience here is Kissir, a rustic pancake made with buckwheat flour, served with Tsemik. Tsemik is a yogurt-based dip or accompaniment made with a Himalayan herb of the same name, which has sharp Basil-like flavours. It's a must try. And don't miss the Khubani ka Meetha. Oh, did I mention Turtuk is famous for its apricots too? One can spot the tender apricots (if they are in season), teasingly hanging from the trees during a jaunt through the village.





However, behind the warmth and innocence of these people, lies a dark history — of the war-torn families, of people who were separated from their loved ones overnight and have met each other, perhaps only once in all these years. Stories like these give Turtuk a deep character and a silent strength, which one has to bow to.

**CHANGTHANG:** There are a lot of things in this world that we take for granted. We typically see the end product, but little do we know about its source or the tough journey it has taken through its production line. Pashmina or Cashmere, as it is known in the western world, invokes visions of elegance and affluent couture. Though the history of woollen shawls in Kashmir is said to date back to between 3rd century BC and 11th century AD, Pashmina as an industry came much later, around 15th century AD.

One of the must visit places in a Himalayan trail is Changthang, a plateau inhabited by the Changpa tribe. The nomadic people of this tribe are traditional producers of the pashmina wool in the Ladakh region. But rearing the Changra goats that yield this prized wool is no easy job. The Changpas brave extremely harsh climates to earn their livelihood. The winter temperatures here drop to as low as minus 40 degrees Celsius.

Earlier the wool was exported to Kashmir and further production of Pashmina products happened outside of the region. This was until Looms of Ladakh was founded. It is a commendable project that aims to localise the production of Pashmina in Ladakh itself. This has helped empower the people to have a sustainable livelihood. Do add it to your itinerary. The hauntingly melodious song that will greet you as you enter the workshop will be as mesmerising as seeing the women deftly cleaning, combing and extracting the fine Pashmina fibre from raw wool.



The next time you see a Pashmina or Cashmere product, do stop for a moment to appreciate the goatherds who rough it every day and can only dream of wearing it themselves. Even better, go on the Pashmina trail to discover the magic that these people spin out of this dream fibre.

**KARCHON:** Foraging ingredients has to be one of the favourite activities for a chef. And there is this one ingredient that has intrigued me for long, Caterpillar Fungus. It's known by many names — Cordyceps Sinensis or the Keedajadi or Yarsagumba, as it is locally known. It also called Yartsagungu (in Tibet). It's such an interesting phenomenon, wherein a fungus takes over the larva of a particular species of caterpillar. It basically mummifies the caterpillar and it sprouts when it rains in the meadows. The resulting mushroom like formation is foraged by the locals and sold for a fortune in the markets. We are talking around Rs 18 lakh per kilogram!

So, if you are up for a 10km-long trek from the happy village of Karchon, which, trust me, is no mean feat, then you might just be rewarded with the elusive gold of the Himalayas.

Be it trekking up Triund to view the majestic Dhauladhar mountains, camping at the iconic Pangong Tso, white water rafting on the Beas river or paragliding at the popular Bir Billing, the Himalayas can teach you truly valuable lessons — lessons in endurance, being happy with less and reverence to nature.

But there is something else too. Often, the toughest looking people are the ones with soul-hugging smiles. Their living conditions toughen them, yet they retain a heart-warming simplicity and humility that we tend to lose in our race for more. As Greg Child said, "Somewhere between the bottom of the climb and the summit, is the answer to the mystery why we climb." One day, I hope to crack that mystery.



TODAY'S  
traveller

Celebrating



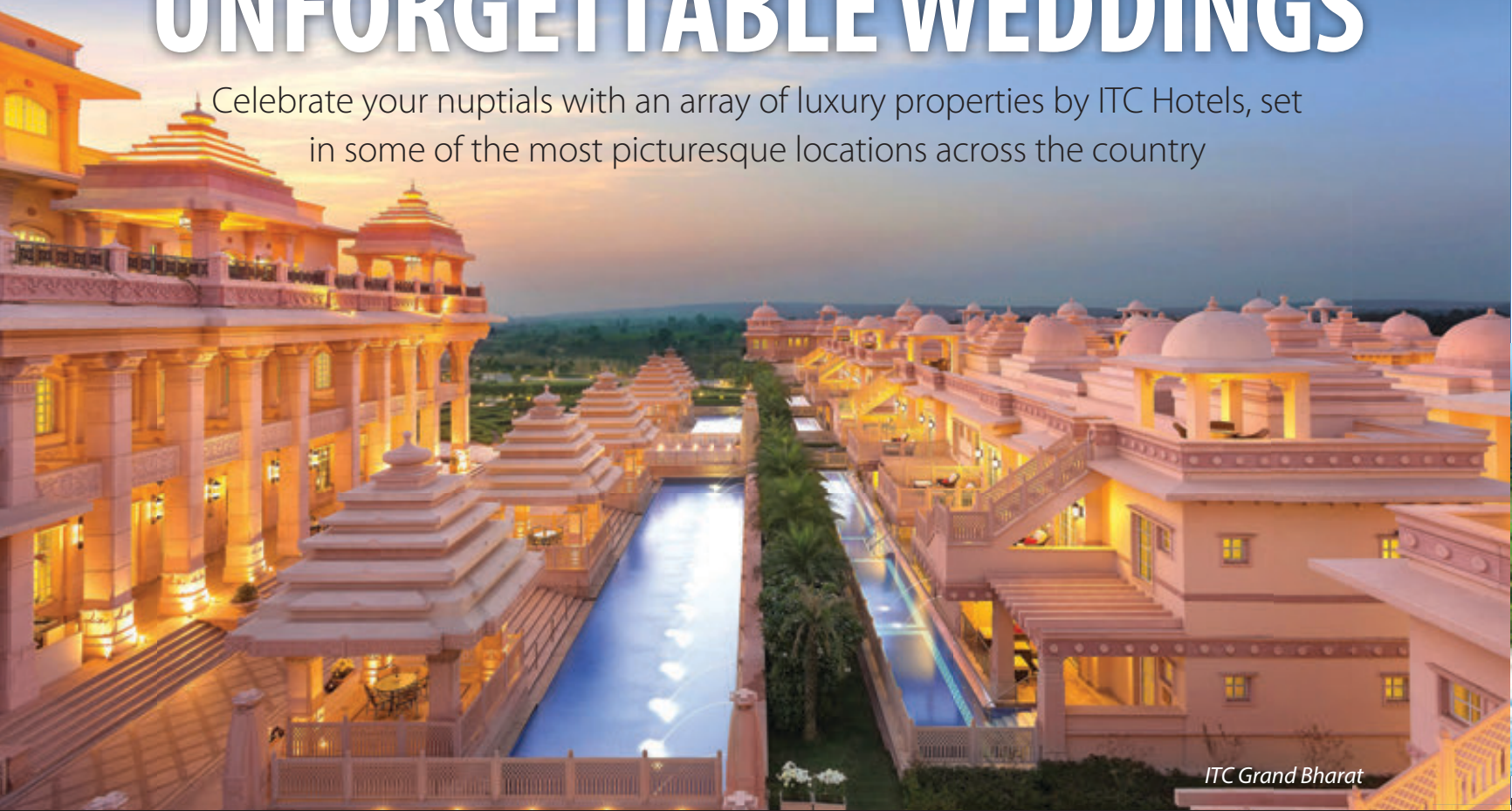
# Weddings...

AS GOOD AS IT CAN GET



# DREAM DESTINATIONS, UNFORGETTABLE WEDDINGS

Celebrate your nuptials with an array of luxury properties by ITC Hotels, set in some of the most picturesque locations across the country



*ITC Grand Bharat*

## TT BUREAU

**W**eddings can take on myriad forms. Whether it is a small, intimate gathering of your loved ones or a lavishly mounted ceremony celebrated with pomp and splendour, ITC Hotels brings you superlative choices for a venue when two people are joining their hearts in a bond of love. From immaculate service to heartwarming hospitality, from delectable gourmet cuisines to stunning locales, ITC Hotels takes care of every minute detail to make the occasion the perfect origination of fond memories. Alongside, the company makes sure that the environment is protected. From local sourcing to energy conservation, its mantra of 'Responsible Luxury' combines ethical environmental practices with restrained indulgence. Take a look at some of the properties of ITC Hotels and Welcomhotels that promise to make your happily ever after both luxurious as well as environmentally conscious.

### CAPITAL MAGNIFICENCE

Delhi-NCR is not just a seat of political power, but also the perfect mix of culture, history and stunning architecture. Located at the

heart of Delhi-NCR are three luxurious properties of ITC Hotels: ITC Grand Bharat, ITC Maurya and Sheraton New Delhi.

The preferred choice of world leaders, ITC Maurya sets the benchmark when it comes to hospitality. The iconic 438-room property offers as many as three banquet halls, a state-of-the-art conferencing system and verdant outdoor venues that are perfect for business meetings as well as social functions. ITC Grand Bharat is an ode to the country's glorious architectural heritage. Exuding classical opulence and nestled among the rugged Aravallis, this India's first all-suites luxury retreat spread



*Welcomhotel Khimsar*



over 1.2 sq. km.. Pamper your guests at the 100 regal suites or four Presidential villas. Relax and rejuvenate at Kaya Kalp– the hotel's award-winning spa. The 27-hole golf course, endless gourmet options and the hotel's efficient staff make this property an unforgettable place to celebrate your special day.

Sheraton New Delhi exudes the cosmopolitan elegance of a modern city. This red sandstone building is preferred not just by business travellers, but also by those looking to host meetings and wedding events. Majestic banquet halls and stately boardrooms offer ample space for both corporate networking and wedding festivities.

### WEDDING VOWS ON THE BEACH

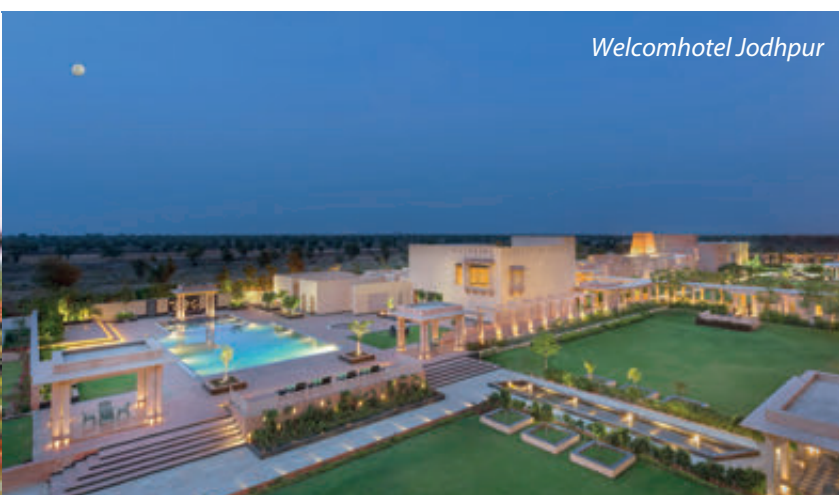
With the blue expanse of the Arabian Sea in the background and shimmering sands below, ITC Grand Goa offers an exquisite



*ITC Grand Goa*



*Rajendra Banquet Hall, ITC Grand Chola*



*Welcomhotel Jodhpur*

venue for the happy couple and their families. Sprawled across 45 acres of lush landscaped gardens and manicured lawns, ITC Grand Goa gives direct access to the pristine Arossim beach – a stunning location for a seaside wedding. Choose from an array of indoor and outdoor venues for your weddings and meetings and pamper your guests with the resort's meticulous service. While the majestic wood-panelled ballroom, Salcete, adds style and elegance to your event, the lush tropical gardens are ideal for late evening celebrations.

### EASTERN GRANDEUR

History, heritage and refinement define Kolkata. So do the twin properties of ITC Hotels – ITC Sonar and the newly-opened ITC Royal Bengal. The hotels together offer more than 690 opulent rooms, 12 food & beverage outlets, a range of suites and as many as 22 meeting and banqueting spaces. Special features, such as dedicated entry and exit points for guests, separate bridal rooms and access to VIP lounges make your wedding festivities memorable.

### SOUTHERN SPLENDOUR

Whether it is the historic city of Hyderabad or the colonial city of Chennai, ITC Hotels offers a range of luxury properties south of the Vindhyas. While Chennai welcomes discerning guests with ITC Grand Chola and Welcomhotel Chennai, Hyderabad invites visitors to ITC Kohenur and ITC Kakatiya.

ITC Grand Chola evokes the regal grandeur of the mighty Chola Empire with its more than 600 rooms and serviced apartments. The hotel also features Rajendra– an expansive pillarless hall that offers ample space for both meetings as well as social functions. Conveniently located in the central business hub of the city, Welcomhotel Chennai offers spacious, well-appointed and beautifully furnished guestrooms and facilities for memorable banquets with gourmet dining and options for events of all sizes. Like its Chennai counterparts, ITC Kohenur and ITC Kakatiya, with their lavishly mounted rooms and suites, endless dining and cuisine options, bespoke services and spacious meeting and banqueting facilities, offer families and friends the ultimate setting for nuptials.

### ROYAL RADIANCE

The state of Rajasthan invites travellers with its majestic forts and ramparts, sand dunes and palaces. Bringing alive the quintessential regal luxury of the region, ITC Hotels offers two of the most stunning properties in the country. Spread across vast swathes of the countryside, there is Welcomhotel Khimsar Fort and Dunes housed in a medieval fortress.

Perfect for a wedding set amidst wilderness, the hotel appeals to those who are a bit whimsical at heart and want an offbeat wedding. For those seeking to sample the famed Rajasthani hospitality, there is ITC Rajputanain Jaipur – a haveli-style luxury property offering 218 rooms and suites, three banquet halls and plenty of outdoor spaces for an open-air wedding.



# A LUXE AFFAIR



Taj Hotel & Convention Centre, Agra, is a state-of-the-art, modern hotel in a city that is replete with history

## TT BUREAU

The city of Agra may be famous for its fabled monuments. However, today, the city offers more than just a slice of history. It is also a modern upcoming business destination visited by millions every year. Offering a splendid view of the iconic Taj Mahal, lies Taj Hotel & Convention Centre, Agra, a modern 5-Star hotel that reimagines everything that the city has to offer. An epitome of luxury and Indian hospitality, the hotel offers both business and leisure travellers plush rooms, a rooftop pool with a magnificent view of the Taj Mahal, an invigorating spa and superlative services that could easily set new benchmarks in the Hospitality Industry.

Strategically located at the heart of the city, near the Taj, the hotel is also a short walk from other famous and frequently visited tourist attractions in the vicinity, such as the Agra Fort, the Keoladeo National Park, Mehtab Bagh, etc. The hotel offers a delightful ambience with a touch of Mughal architecture and an Infinity pool located at the rooftop, overlooking the historical monument.

## IMPECCABLE ACCOMMODATION

Synonymous with luxury, comfort and style, Taj Hotel & Convention Centre, Agra showcases 239 luxurious rooms, including 12 lavish suites and one Presidential Suite, promising a truly world-class experience for guests. Infusing a perfect





synergy of grand living and a contemporary vibe, the hotel's elegant rooms are designed to cater to guests' comfort. From the Deluxe Taj Mahal View to the Presidential Suite, each room is lavishly mounted, offering the quintessential Taj hospitality. The rooms come in four categories – Deluxe Room, Deluxe Room with Taj Mahal View, Superior Room and Superior Room with Pool View. The suites are divided into Presidential Suite, Deluxe Suite and Luxury Suite.

### FINE DINING

The hotel offers diverse choices to satisfy all gourmands. Revel in live Indian classical music while treating yourself to authentic Mughlai and Nawabi cuisine at Daawat-e-Nawab — one of the finest Indian restaurants in the city. With their special vegetarian and non-vegetarian meals, the restaurant offers the perfect blend of culinary experiences from the kitchens of India.

Palato restaurant offers a range of cuisines amidst a palatial setting of pleasant water bodies and lofty ceilings. Elaborate breakfast, lunch and dinner buffets is what the restaurant is famous for in the city. Show kitchens combined with live stations add a distinct flavour to your dining experience by adding theatrical elements.

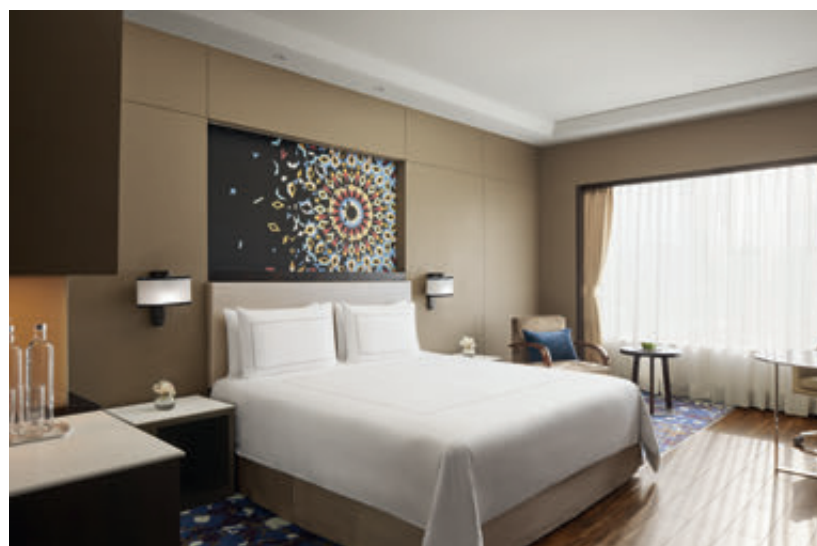
A unique rooftop lounge, Infini – The Sky Lounge, lets you feast your eyes on the unparalleled beauty of the silvery Taj Mahal like no other lounge. Enjoy the most animated evenings with innovative cocktails, luscious hand-tossed pizzas and table barbeques, accompanied with live DJs and a pulsating dance floor. What's more, you can soak in the beauty of the Taj Mahal while relaxing and rejuvenating in the infinity pool.

Boasting an exceptional selection of single malts, Liquid Lounge is a fine place to treat yourself to the best of wines, whisky and beer. Invite your friends for a spirited evening at the lounge, which has an extensive list of fine imported wines. Savour the most intricate tastes in the form of delicious cocktails in a serene and welcoming ambience. Indulge your palate at the Tea Lounge, where you can try out croissants, pastries, freshly baked bread, melt-in-the-mouth handmade chocolates with light meals and freshly brewed coffee.

### BEST FOR BUSINESS

Providing a winning combination of service, comfort, and avant-garde facilities, Taj Hotel & Convention Centre, Agra offers a range of spaces that you can choose from to organise small business meetings to grand wedding ceremonies, namely, Mansion, Grand Ball Room, Celebrations, Board Room and Meeting Rooms – all of which are fully geared to satisfy the diverse needs of business and leisure travellers.

Best suited for large conferences and ceremonies, the hotel houses one of the largest banquet halls in North India. The 40,000-sq.ft. space includes a pre-function space of 11,000sq.ft. The high-ceiling, pillarless banquet hall has separate entry and exit points to allow seamless movement of guests. With a maximum capacity of 2,000 guests, it can be customised into two smaller venues as well.



With a capacity of 450 guests and access to the adjoining lawns, the Grand Ball Room is idyllic for small events and receptions, such as Mehndi, Sangeet, Conventions, etc. The Ball Room boasts a space of 5,250sq.ft, and features a lofty ceiling. With the accompanying Courtyard Lawn, you can have a perfect small outdoor event as well.

Ideal for small conferences, the board rooms have a space of 515sq.ft. with a maximum capacity of 30 persons. Customisable as per the requirements, the hotel features 3 state-of-the-art boardrooms. There are also two meeting rooms, which have a space of 90sq.ft and a capacity of 3 persons in each room.



# THE 'I DO' DREAM DESTINATION



Setting new benchmarks in the realm of wedding planning and immaculate service, Park Hyatt Hyderabad offers bespoke experiences amidst chic luxury

## TT BUREAU

Setting new benchmarks in the realm of wedding planning and immaculate service is Park Hyatt Hyderabad, which offers more than just a wedding destination – rather, it's a sojourn that unfolds into rare and memorable experiences. It's all about attention to detail – the cornerstone of excellent micromanagement – at this ravishing, deeply luxurious epitome of chic luxury. Consider this – 17,000sq.ft. of intrinsic spaces for intimate social gatherings, 209 stylishly designed rooms and suites, 41 luxurious serviced apartments, an exquisite spa that focusses on natural treatments, an opulent salon with creative experts, a fully-equipped fitness centre, temperature-controlled outdoor infinity pool and three award-winning gourmet restaurants – Park Hyatt Hyderabad delivers on all accounts. Located in the tony neighbourhood of Banjara Hills, the hotel's proximity to the transit hubs of Rajiv Gandhi International Airport and Metro Stations makes it a plus point as a wedding destination. Weddings are a lot of work and can be very stressful for those planning and executing the perfect event.

Park Hyatt Hyderabad leverages its assets to show how you can lighten the load and ease the stress. For starters, the hotel's dedicated planners will oversee all your needs – right from exquisite floral arrangements and personalised services to an expertly crafted gourmet menu that will delight your senses. All the event menus are carefully handcrafted by award-winning chefs. From honeymoon suites to bridal spa and salon packages, the hotel's efficient event management team has it all pegged to perfection.

It's a given that a wedding is the most important day of a person's life and the right wedding venue packs the biggest style punch. Today's millennial generation is bringing about a shift in venue preferences, with discerning couples favouring personalised and unique celebrations over a cookie-cutter banquet and hordes of guests. Accordingly, hotels have gone above and beyond in making their spaces wedding friendly and acknowledging the importance of the big day with thoughtful gestures and personalised experiences.



Navigating the daunting world of RSVPs, decor, bar, etc., the hotel makes sure that every bit of your wedding is as bespoke as possible. From creative suggestions to seamless and exacting execution, the hotel's skilled staff knows how to keep things on an even keel. The hotel's 'wow' factor begins the moment you set foot into the hotel's spectacular lobby, extends to the luxurious inner spaces and continues right through to the spa, where solace and sophistication blend harmoniously with timeless tradition.

Taking its cue from luxurious residential designs, Park Hyatt Hyderabad goes further, redefining luxury, style and comfort in all its rooms. The Ballroom, the pillarless space, comes with an exclusive pre-function area, built-in bar, cloak room, and adjoining terrace – perfect for cocktail parties, celebratory get-togethers, Mehndi nights and other pre and post wedding events. Embellished with specially designed box chandeliers, created by using over a million tiny bohemian crystals, the ceilings of the ballroom will bedazzle and mesmerise you.

Elegant interiors with state-of-the-art audio-visual and communications technology and wireless Internet access, will ensure that your guests will stay connected and entertained through the event. Each of the event halls is intricately designed, making them perfect venues for intimate get-togethers. The hotel's guestrooms exude a warm and homely ambience, yet do not deviate from the hotel's upscale residential vibe. Never divorced from the

local milieu, the hotel charms with its residentially-inspired interior design and styling, the carefully curated artwork, literature, bath products and Food and Beverage offerings. A throwback to Hyderabad's opulent Nizami culture, The Spa is an oasis of urban tranquillity – where guests can detox and be rejuvenated. Combining the best of traditional wellness practices with the latest contemporary advancements, The Spa is a sanctuary to renew and delight your senses.

Pre-wedding nerves? Park Hyatt Hyderabad helps you wind down and relax, as personal trainers at the state-of-the-art fitness centre guide you through each workout on the ultra-modern cardiovascular and strength training equipment. Evoking the opulence of the Nizami culture in style and hospitality, Park Hyatt Hyderabad is the obvious choice for a regal wedding. More than anything, the hotel is your go-to destination for fulfilling all your needs in your quest for the happy-ever-after.





# PICTURE- PERFECT WEDDINGS

Expansive spaces, contemporary design, warm Indian hospitality and an expert culinary team make Hyatt Regency Pune & Residences the most preferred wedding destination in the city

TT BUREAU

It's your special day. The date's been set, the bugle sounded. But, the all-important choice of the wedding venue remains. Your choice of venue should be dictated by an emotional, considered choice rather than just pragmatic. Because, your wedding is a momentous occasion, one that requires skilful planning and executing, sans the stress. A truly memorable affair is what you would seek from your venue, along with committed planners who will strive to make your event perfect.

Hyatt Regency Pune & Residences, strategically located in close proximity to Lohegaon International Airport and the renowned entertainment parks and IT hubs, believes there's nothing more important than bringing people together in an unforgettable wedding ceremony. It achieves this by being in sync with the pulse of today's discerning generation, who look for customised and personal experiences. The

hotel leverages on its assets, ranging from exemplary facilities to dedicated wedding spaces, exclusive custom-designed menus, to an exceptional professional staff that takes care of every detail imaginable – from flowers to music to everything in between, to make your day a dream come true.

Wedding guests are ensured of a unique assortment of suites, rooms and apartments, as the upscale property features 222 spacious rooms, including 50 Regency Club™ rooms and 18 luxurious suites. Also available are the hotel's 81 fully-equipped, home-away-from-home apartments, perfect for short and long stays. State-of-the-art facilities make sure that guests have a seamless experience. For the rites of passage for your special day the hotel provides 40,000 sq. ft. of space. The events space, spread over two floors, is idyllic for grand weddings and large business conferences, while a choice of smaller, flexible venues for pre-wedding functions is also available.





The hotel's specially designed pillarless ballroom, featuring a 19-ft high ceiling and a dedicated ritual area for Indian ceremonies, creates the perfect wedding ambience. Cutting-edge audio-visual and high-speed communication equipment ensure that your business events and conferences achieve maximum success.

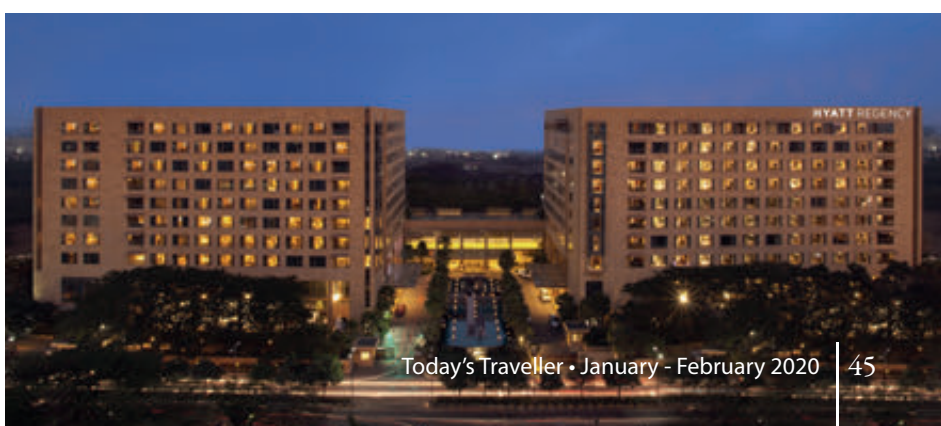
A gourmet's delight, the hotel showcases customised catering solutions with a range of cuisines. Featuring three interactive show kitchens, The Café is a vibrant dining experience, with a range of Western, Asian and Indian cuisines and picturesque indoor and outdoor seating options. Zeta emulates the unsophisticated ambience of a European bistro with its coarse murals, exposed walls and hardwood floor. Indian, European and Mediterranean cuisine, combined with a selection of delectable desserts and beverages.

Indulge your palate at Gourmet Avenue, with its freshly baked cakes, pastries, croissants and an array of light savouries, and freshly brewed tea and coffee. Raise a toast and up your spirits at Single Malt & Co., which offers the best of beverages, from coffee, healthy fruit juice to speciality tea flavours, fine wines, beers and cocktails. Create those memories to be treasured

forever at Hyatt Regency, Pune by choosing it for your destination wedding. With state-of-the-art facilities and a team of experienced professionals at your disposal, your special day is bound to be truly special. One of the finest and most chic banquet spaces in the city - EQ:IQ is idyllic for all your wedding events. Overlooking the hotel's façade and water features, a striking open-style bridge provides a fairly-take like entrance to the hotel's event spaces, which is not only awe-inspiring but also creates a sense of arrival that sets the tone for the festivities to follow.

A team of seasoned wedding planners, combined with authentic Indian hospitality and customised catering solutions, guarantee a truly delightful experience for your guests. The hotel's pastry chefs, with their forte for designing stunning wedding cakes, along with an expert culinary team, all add towards making the event remarkable. Post the wedding nuptials, the hotel's luxurious suites and club rooms are ideal for the couple's honeymoon. Alleviate pre or post wedding nerves at the avant-garde Arogya Spa & Fitness Center,

Expert wedding planners take care of all the little details to make your special day a truly memorable one, while expansive spaces, contemporary style, warm Indian hospitality and an expert culinary team curate exceptional experiences – enough and more reason to celebrate the most important day in your life at Hyatt Regency Pune and Residences.





PROMOTION



# BRIDAL BLISS

For brides-to-be and wedding parties, Serena Spa, at Four Points by Sheraton, Vashi, Navi Mumbai, is a one-stop destination for a range of premium therapies and treatments.

## TT BUREAU

A wedding is an experience of a lifetime that brings immense joy and happiness to a couple's life. However, months of planning and preparation can also be tiresome not only for the bride and the groom, but also for their families and their guests, who are equally invested in the wedding. Needless to say, some well-deserved pampering becomes the need of the hour. Thankfully, modern-day spas offer a range of therapies, wedding and post-wedding packages, and indulgent salon services that help couples bring out their very best on their special day. Serena Spa by Heaven on Earth Wellness, earlier called Aristo Spa, at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel is one such spa that leaves no stone unturned to ensure that wedding groups and the bride and groom look their very best before they step in to all the festivities.

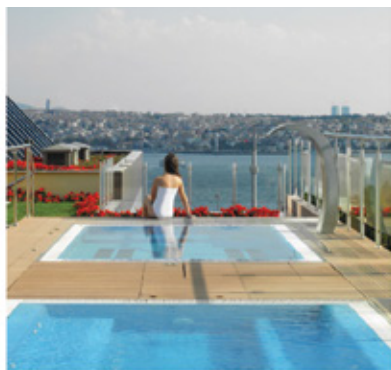
This ultra-modern rejuvenation spa in Vashi, Navi Mumbai, is a one-stop destination for well-rounded spa, beauty and salon services. The spa is located in Four Points Sheraton, which is a

premier destination wedding venue for city weddings. While the hotel takes care of the nitty-gritties associated with the ceremony and the events, Serena Spa offers specially curated services which include facials, body wraps, body scrubs, hair styling, grooming, saree draping and make-up treatments etc. for all the friends, family, bride and groom as a part of the pre-wedding packages. All these services are performed in a state-of-the-art spa facility with all natural ingredients made of essential oils, neem, tulsi, aloe vera, ginger, haldi etc.

The pampering does not end here. Serena Spa has a variety of relaxing full body massages for all the guests ranging from couples massages, serenity body massage, deep tissue massage or the cleansing body wraps. Special honeymoon packages and customized post-wedding pampering packages can also be created for perfect recovery from the wedding frenzy or to treat your guests to a few days of well-deserved pampering.

For more details on these and more please reach out to **Serena Spa +919820059549** or log on to **serenaspa.com**.





# *The Ritz-Carlton, Istanbul*

Located in the heart of the city overlooking the Bosphorus, The Ritz-Carlton, Istanbul features 243 guest rooms with its impeccable service and luxurious comfort.

More than 2,403 square meters of meeting and conference space including 11 meeting rooms and 1 Ballroom, highlighted by a magnificent Bosphorus view, are available for memorable events with superb catering, high-speed internet, state-of-the-art audio-visual services and technicians.

Guests at "Bleu Lounge" can enjoy full views of the Bosphorus while sampling creative cocktails and Mediterranean inspired dishes at our terrace restaurant.

The Ritz-Carlton Spa offers 8 treatment rooms, a unique 17-metre indoor pool and authentic Turkish Hammam, spread over an area of 1,500 sqm as well as 'Open Air Spa' terrace with jacuzzis, a sunbathing terrace, massage rooms and a pool.

**Experience the stay of a life-time at The Ritz-Carlton, Istanbul**

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**THE RITZ-CARLTON**

ISTANBUL





# ICONIC WEDDING DESTINATION

Showcasing an array of avant-garde facilities and services, Radisson Blu, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi offers an idyllic ambience, from a dream wedding to a chatter over a family lunch.

## TT BUREAU

In a bid to meet the dynamic and varying needs from regular guests to MICE travellers, hotel chains across the globe have redefined the luxury hospitality segment. New trends and developments in the highly vibrant hotel industry are in sync with what discerning travellers and millennials seek in their choice of hotel. Memorable experiences, impeccable facilities and bespoke elements define guests' choices, and this is especially true when it comes to finding the perfect wedding venue. Strategically located on the arterial ring road in West Delhi, with convenient metro connectivity, Radisson Blu, Paschim Vihar is a swanky 5-Star wedding destination. A member of the world-renowned Radisson Hotel Group, the upscale Radisson Blu property is popular for its quintessential Indian hospitality, combined with the unparalleled experiences it provides to its guests and MICE travellers.

The hotel's interior exudes the splendour of Neo-Gothic architecture. The upscale hotel features a large and customisable banquet area of 32,000sq.ft., where you can host grand weddings of any scale or style. When it comes to accommodation, the hotel's 178 spacious rooms, combined with 21 suites, offer the most soothing ambience.

Radisson Blu, Paschim Vihar also caters to MICE travellers, who have access to carefully designed board and meeting rooms, along with a state-of-the-art convention centre, which promises business-friendly services guaranteed to make your

business meetings and events infinitely successful. With the rich and bold flavours of Indian and International cuisine on its menu, Radisson Blu, Paschim Vihar also provides a plethora of international cuisine choices to satisfy your taste buds. Especially designed for vegetarian guests, Olympus – a vegetarian-only banquet, exudes enticing flavours from the Indian kitchen, along with the famous Indian hospitality. Radisson's world-renowned Pastry Chef will ensure that your wedding cake is as grand as your wedding. Rejuvenate at the advanced Vyom Spa, where internationally-trained masseurs will help your mind and body relax in the most serene ambience. With a 24-hour gymnasium equipped with the latest fitness equipment, and an outdoor swimming pool, the hotel offers a comprehensive all-inclusive health solution. Also available is an on-location salon and as many as 10 breakout areas. An in-house wedding studio and a separate bridal area are some more reasons why Radisson Blu, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi should be your go-to destination to celebrate your special day.







# PRIDE OF PLACE

From elegant rooms to superlative services, Pride Plaza Ahmedabad is redefining luxury for business and leisure travellers

## TT BUREAU

For discernible travellers today, luxury is no longer defined merely by price but by the worth and the quality of services provided. Pride Plaza, Ahmedabad understands this logic better than other hotels. As such, it concentrates on providing quality services and state-of-the-art facilities for its guests who settle for nothing but the best.

**LOCATION:** Synonymous with luxury, the deluxe hotel is strategically located next to the famous automobile corridor, Sanand, at the heart of Ahmedabad. With a plethora of local attractions situated nearby, Pride Plaza provides its guests with a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the city at leisure. Some of the important tourist attractions include ISKCON temple and Vastrapur Lake.

**ACCOMMODATION:** Room and suites at Pride Plaza property come in a variety of categories. Guests can choose from Deluxe Rooms, Superior Rooms, Premium Rooms and Royal Suite. All rooms come with satellite television, mini-bar, internet access, laundry services and 24-hour room service facilities. The elegantly designed rooms provide a relaxed atmosphere in which guests can unwind after a day of business meetings or hectic sight-seeing.

**DINING:** A prime attraction of the signature Pride Plaza property is its multi-cuisine 24-hour Café Treat restaurant, which features a multi-cultural cooking theatre, where you can enjoy scrumptious buffet at all times of the day, along with late-night snacks and hot brews. For the lovers of vegetarian cuisine, there

is South 54, which offers delectable South Indian and coastal dishes, which pay homage to traditional cooking techniques and authentic local flavours.

**LEISURE FACILITIES:** Wellness Spa of the hotel offers the most calming experience that is perfect to heal your body and soul. Well-trained professional masseurs provide all kinds of therapies in the most serene ambience. Equipped with the latest fitness equipment, the hotel's gymnasium is a great place to shed those excess calories that you may have picked up from an indulgent stay at the property.

**CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS:** The hotel is perfect for all kinds of business meetings and events. Royal, Majestic, Chancery, Presidential, Senate and Board Room are some of the specially designed conference rooms and meeting spaces that offer state-of-the-art audio-visual and communication facilities.

**EVENTS AND WEDDINGS:** Pride Plaza is also the preferred choice for couple planning to tie the knot. The property features a variety of venues where you can host anything, starting from a small intimate ceremony to a grand affair for everyone to remember. The hotel's excellent event management team will provide you with top-quality professional advice to make your event a grand success. The hotel has nine banquet halls, with the largest one being their Imperial hall, which has a total area of 6,900 sq. ft. The hall is suited for a gathering of up to 700 guests, and can easily be converted into two breakaway halls as per your requirement. Guests of the hotel can also expect an exceptionally satisfying experience at the hotel's expansive outdoor event venues.



# INDULGENT LUXURY

Sophistication and superlative services make The Oterra Hotel, Bengaluru, the epitome of excellence when it comes to hospitality

TT BUREAU



While the definition of luxury may differ from one individual to another, there are a number of qualities that are considered as hallmarks of a luxury hotel. Superlative services, luxurious rooms and suites, state-of-the-art facilities, picturesque surroundings have all come to define the guest experience today. The Oterra Hotel, Bengaluru, stands as the epitome of luxury for business travellers looking for world-class hospitality, easy connectivity to major tourist spots, and enviable comfort rarely found in run-of-the-mill business hotels.

Strategically located at the heart of the Electronic City, Bengaluru, The Oterra Hotel stands as a unique symbol of modern luxury. Specialising in world-class hospitality, this 5-star hotel, surrounded by lush green landscape, offers easy connectivity to a host of nearby attractions.

The hotel, spread over 2.5 acres of prime real estate, has 264 elegant rooms and suites, which exude luxury with sophistication. Guests can choose from a range of convenient options, such as Superior, Deluxe and Club Rooms, along with Suites that have direct access to the Oterra Lounge. All rooms and suites feature complimentary Wi-Fi, tea and coffee maker, LCD television, in-room safe and mini-bar.

With as many as four premium restaurants, a sumptuous feast awaits gourmands. Enjoy all-day dining at the 24-hour internationally inspired restaurant, 24@43, where breakfast, lunch and dinner are available. Rustic and hearty Italian flavours come alive at Alloro, where guests can enjoy a range of delicacies, paired with wine and cheese.

Set on the hotel's rooftop, restaurant East, specialising in pan-Asian cuisines, introduces guests to the diverse and rich flavours of the Far East. Relax after day of hectic meetings and sightseeing at The Terminus — the hotel's restobar, which offers the perfect ambience for relaxing with friends. With three outdoor venues, six indoor venues and neatly manicured lawns, the hotel offers a convenient range when it comes to organising meetings and weddings. Whether it is a grand, lavish affair meant to enamour your guests or a high-stake business meeting, trust the hotel and its retinue of efficient staff members to take care of your needs. State-of-the-art leisure facilities, such as a fully equipped gymnasium, an infinity pool and an indulgent spa called Aloka Spa, elevate the hotel to a fine example of a bleisure paradise.

Craft your own fairly tale with curated wedding packages from Oterra, which offer hassle-free event management help, fine dining options and a range of venues to choose from. Whether it is a simple affair with loved ones or a lavish function to enthrall your guests, The Oterra Hotel provides the perfect setting for couples seeking to tie the knot.





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We welcome you to connect with your inner self and discover the perfect harmony of mind, body and soul through the unique confluence of Yoga and Indian Tea.





COVER STORY

# GOING BIG — DREAM WEDDINGS IN 2020







It's the start of 2020... and it's a whole New Year of unbelievable trends in weddings! From quirky to outlandish to experientially cool chic to traditional-heavy...it's all about creativity and being original on the one hand and being consciously yourself with a personality that sings out to you. With originality taking a front seat at the wedding mandap, there are couples planning to stake a claim to the "Who will make it to the most talked about wedding" — and hard as it is to believe that couples want incredible wedding themes, the fact is that each year a brand new wedding craze catches the imagination... and it's all in!

Dream Wedding covers it all... everything is acceptable so long as it is creative. Going modern or staying traditional is a personal choice, but wedding planners predict that traditional will win each time!

### GOING BESPOKE

"Bespoke Weddings" are trending in 2020 and 'intimate' and 'exclusive' are the buzz words. The more exclusive the wedding, the more personalised the experience for the couple as well as for each guest. And, of course, the more expensive the experience, as it allows a visual narrative of customised gifts, headline entertainers, ultra-luxury shipments of international fruit and food, not to mention theme and set-up.

The personalised touch can be wildly imaginative as the guest list is small and exclusive...from iced bottles of Dom Perignon and caviar to monogrammed luggage to couture dresses for guests to private jets to blessings from a revered monk to 10 different dining experiences!

### EXTRAVAGANCE IS IN

A desire to flash a more-memorable-wedding-than-anyone-else is driving wedding trends in 2020. Individuality statements are taking their shape in terms of exuberance and explosive expression in Oversized or Over-the-top weddings ambience or trends. And so, one-off experiences like full-ship charters for the wedding is taking off big time! A 1000-strong guest list on a Mediterranean cruise are offered onboard experiences like dedicated Jain kitchens and Michelin star Chefs, personalised wedding logos on access cards to cabins, not to mention all





Source: belImage.com

night entertainment by international stars and casinos as well as exotic destinations where the ship docks.

Oversized decor and insta-friendly design and activities include everything from magical fireworks to giant ice-sculpted centerpieces, astrology experts and recreated zodiac signs for all 200 guests. The groom could arrive in a helicopter or a Victorian buggy, both of which will come in handy for a tik tok or video shoot. The dinner could be on silver plated thalis or eco-friendly banana leaves or a ten- course classic dinner service...the idea is to go oversize in statement.

These kinds of king-size weddings are no less than theatre productions spread over several days, with huge installations and massive and intricate detailing for a thousand guests, involving an army of engineers, food specialists, florists and even architects.

### OFFBEAT

Uncommon weddings in 2020 will have all the style and glitz that one can dream of. It will come as no surprise that a Desert Wedding does not suggest decorated tents and palm trees in a resort hotel. It means flying off with the entire entourage of guests to a desert location in Abu Dhabi or Dubai, where luxury meets sand dunes, entire souks are moved to the desert and white glove service juxtaposes personalised spa treatments, and the wedding mandap is laid out under the stars.

Closer to home, a wedding atop an 18th century palace fort, gleaming with ancient history and decked in bright colours, amazing food flavours and cultural lifestyle recreates an

authentic outdoor royal paradise complete with lights, canopies and bedecked elephants, alongside the traditional drums and music, for welcoming the Baraat lights. Obviously, some fireworks with the sun going down on an ancient landscape below the ramparts and the razzle-dazzle of an enchanting location would be swoon-worthy for social media!

For the offbeat bride who's never been one to take the normal route, it's a feverish craze for excitement and distraction – how big the bang is and how much the fun quotient plays out. Art deco styles are in and art deco jewellery, clothes,



Source: unsplash.com



architecture and styling will be a 'tour-de-force' of luxury, exotica and lots of fun in its wedding wake. Oriental splendour and theatrical embellishments juxtapose splendid in-your-face jewellery styles and brilliant colours. Location hunts for the offbeat wedding will be the order of the day. Recreating a glittering wedding ambience in a worn-down mill, an old factory or abandoned warehouse with a strong Andy Warhol spin, thereby playing up pop culture items in dramatic displays and quirky touches, promises to herald the future of designer weddings. Floral cascades and gemstone embellishments against an industrial backdrop will ensure the wedding is anything but boring.

### STYLE STATEMENTS

Among the trending wedding statements, 'Style' is making waves and themed outfits for the bride and groom and their relatives for every function...from Mehendi to Sangeet to the Pheras is keeping the cash registers ringing for designers and hotels...as the ambience and lighting play up the themed outfits, accessorise the ambience and create the mood for the wedding rituals.

Outfits with similar leitmotif on display in 2020 will showcase traditional Indian wear...read decorative turbans and designer head gear, not to mention bejeweled tattoos, rings and earrings for the groom and party, while the bride and family are likely to recreate the stylised hairstyle, jewellery and look of the 50s and 60s in a retro throwback.

The 2020 upscale 'Theme' weddings are heavily curated to present a particular mood or style, all the way from designer vintage, whimsical, modern, rustic and even a casual garden party theme, because it promises that it will remain a talked-about event.

In the same spirit of style and statement, the 'Contemporary' theme of cool chic will be coral and softer colours and brides and grooms in an all-white theme will remain a steadfast 2020 phenomenon. Western wedding gowns and veils for brides – complete with bridesmaids in tow, will be the rage. Complementing the bridal wear will see grooms in elegant three-piece suits with individual style statements like a formal hat or an informal pair of shoes. In keeping, will be sharp lines and geometric

shapes on wedding invitations and in the decor. Sheer fabrics, crystal chandeliers, and elegant centerpieces will showcase the sophisticated look. Finally, if a traditional wedding venue can be replaced with a sophisticated locale like a museum or art gallery, the contemporary theme is complete. Obviously, vintage settings will demand much of the hotel or resort, which will be expected to recreate vintage decor and classic retro detailing with artefacts inspired by design from the 1950s and beyond. Recreating mid-century nostalgia, designers are likely to embrace timeless elegance with a palette of colours like sepia with pops of gold, sparkling sequins, feathers, along with retro tableaux featuring burnt-yellow and orange furniture.

At the end of the wedding day, the thought that stays is simple: all that joyful energy brought together near and dear ones among a host of other guests to celebrate a momentous occasion. Now, it's on with the grand Reception...



Source: jalehcrush.com



Source: insplash.com





# MTM AND LLTM: A UNIQUE GATHERING

The 19th MTM & LLTM event held at The Ashok Hotel, New Delhi, on November 29, 2019, provided a one-of-a-kind platform to India's leading corporate buyers to interact and explore business opportunities with providers catering to MICE, Luxury and Travel industries

## TT BUREAU

**T**he 19th edition of the MICE Travel Mart (MTM) and Luxury & Leisure Travel Mart (LLTM), organised by OptiMICE Events Private Limited, on November 29, at The Ashok, New Delhi, was a great success. The event provided an excellent platform to India's leading buyers to explore business opportunities with service providers catering to MICE, Luxury and Leisure travel industry.

The country's premier travel mart was attended by an invited delegation of decision makers from various Corporate Houses, Travel Agencies, Wedding Planners, Event Planners and PCOs, who were pre-identified for huge MICE movements, business travel, and luxury and leisure travel. The event provided a one-of-a-kind platform for Exhibitors to showcase their products and leverage prospects in a business-driven ambience.

## TOWARDS A PLASTIC-FREE WORLD

Small changes can go a long way. Joining hands with the global cause of going plastic-free, MTM & LLTM revamped the conventional exhibition space to a whole new level, by introducing live LED walls at all exhibitor stalls. This reduced the usage of plastic at the Exhibition by more than 90 percent. The new feature provided greater benefits to all Exhibitors, as it offered a more sophisticated look and also doubled up the space for their video presentations.







## REVERSE MARKETPLACE

MTM & LLTM showcased its unique Reverse Market Place Duo, which enabled Exhibitors to meet exclusive Corporate Purchasers and do business through one-on-one meetings.

These Purchasers consisted of leading corporate buyers, wedding & event planners, travel agents and tour operators. MTM & LLTM brought into play two premium Reverse Market





Place Sessions. The Morning Session had over 30 pre-qualified Corporate Buyers from all over India — from corporate hubs in cities, such as Chennai, Bangalore, Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune — sitting in exclusive meetings with exhibitors. The Afternoon Session comprised a different set of 30 pre-qualified Corporate Buyers from the host city of Delhi.

Both the buyers and the exhibitors got an opportunity to talk about potential business opportunities in a congenial environment and at a relaxed, unhurried pace. The exclusive Reverse Market Place sessions for Exhibitors were successful in establishing a meeting setup at designated tables with the invited Buyers. The fact that the Session was able to

bring together 60 Corporate decision makers at a pan-India level for one-on-one meetings, that too in a single day, was highly appreciated by the attending delegates. There was a healthy mix of first-time and returning exhibitors, who took full advantage of this unique gathering. The Exhibitors included players from Hospitality Industry, Travel Agencies, Tour Operators, Cruise Lines, National and International Tourism Bodies, Wedding & Event Planners.

The dignitaries who graced the occasion included, among others, Ms Urvashi Dogra, Committee Member, TAFI; Mr Chander Mansharamani, Past Vice Chairman, ICPB; Mr PP Khanna, President, ADTOI; Mr. Rakesh Arora, Founder Member





& Coordinator, Membership, NIMA; Mr. Rajeev Duggal, Strategic Advisor, Jalesh Cruises; Mr. Devesh Khanna, Chief Commercial Officer, Jalesh Cruises; Mr. Mahesh NR, Owner, Ramada by Wyndham Yelahanka, Bengaluru and Mr. Aditya Loomba, Jt.

Managing Director, ECO Rent a Car. Apart from the one-on-one business sessions between Buyers and Exhibitors, there was a range of networking events, a panel discussion on the importance of Wellness with celebrity speakers, followed by cocktails.

## WELLNESS: A WAY OF LIVING PANEL DISCUSSION



The highlight of the event was a panel discussion on the importance of Wellness in today's world, powered by Tourism Corporation of Gujarat. The session, titled "Wellness — A Way of Living", was moderated by Ms Kamal Gill, Director,

OptiMICE Events Private Limited. The speakers included Ms Bhavna Vohra, Founder & Director, Heaven on Earth Private Limited; Mr Anurag Dua, Co-Founder and COO, Amatra Hotels & Resorts; Mr Colin Gary Hall, General Manager, Paro Himalayan







Wellness Retreat, and Ms Mala Barua, Owner, Mystic-Asia. The session started with an instructive video, underlining the importance of wellness in rejuvenating the mind, body and soul. It highlighted the various wellness therapies and treatment available in state of Gujarat, including Shirodhara, Yoga, Aqua Yoga and many more.

These therapies, combining the age-old Ayurvedic traditions with cutting-edge modern, scientific methods, are gaining increasing popularity among travellers and fitness enthusiasts. The session also shed light on how Gujarat is poised to grow as the country's preferred wellness destination with a focus on Yoga, Ayurvedic therapies, alternative medicine and various other kinds of wellness products.

The panel came to the conclusion that the idea of wellness today has moved beyond the narrow definition of absence of disease to a credible lifestyle choice that encompasses vitality, vigour and optimal health. The panellists also brainstormed on how to position Brand Gujarat as a premiere wellness destination in India and the strategies that might be adopted towards achieving that end. After a hectic day of intense business networking and panel discussions, the event ended with cocktails, which the guests loved. It provided yet another opportunity for exhibitors and buyers for informal networking and discussion. Overall, the event received an enthusiastic response from all the guests, who spoke highly of this innovative networking initiative and thanked the organisers for putting together this unique corporate event.









The MTM and LLTM event is great platform for networking with industry peers, including suppliers, who give you insights into the trends and the best practices of the fraternity. In particular, insights into companies, such as Jalesh Cruises and AUH tourism, during the Think Tank, were immensely helpful. The choice of suppliers was extremely relevant. It is difficult to pick one from the lot as a range of suppliers were brought under one roof, giving us, suppliers, plenty of opportunities to interact with one another.

**Tanvi Mazumdar, Head, Travel Services,  
Biocon Limited, Bengaluru**

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the organisers of the 19th MTM and LLTM event. Very few travel marts have a Think Tank following the main event. The whole set-up was nice and extremely professional. I noticed that people were freely moving around. The back screen and the equal layouts gave a better look and feel to the event. We had a fruitful interaction with Jalesh Cruises.

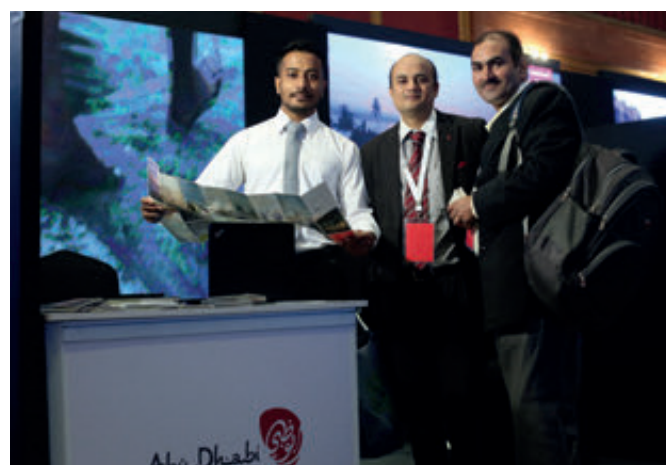
**Rajan Verma, General Manager  
JK Lakshmi Cement Limited, New Delhi**

This was a great platform to connect with corporates and service partners. The travel mart is a great initiative to engage in one-on-one interaction with service partners, thereby giving us an opportunity to learn and understand their business capabilities. The knowledge helps us to plan our corporate events based on the business demand, number of people attending, location etc. I had the opportunity to meet multiple people who are in the businesses of hotels and destinations. It was indeed a great learning experience.

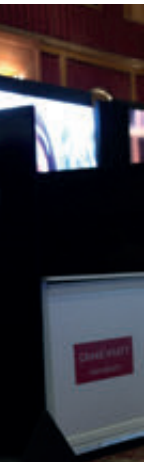
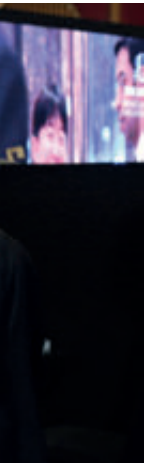
**Harikrishna Taluka  
India Head, Administration & Facilities,  
Coromandel International Limited**

I particularly enjoyed the Reverse Marketplace interaction with vendors and the Think Tank session. A particular memorable interaction was with the Abu Dhabi team. Meeting new vendors, hotels and resorts for possible future partnerships was another highlight of the event.

**Manoj Duggal, Head, Procurement & Taxation  
Bajaj Allianz**









# MTM & LLTM: SALUTING THE BEST

At the recently concluded 19th edition of MTM & LLTM 2019, held at The Ashok Hotel, New Delhi, MTM Corporate Star Awards recognised the top achievers from the corporate world in a range of categories

## THE CORPORATE STAR AWARDS RECIPIENTS INCLUDED:

- 👉 **Canara HSBC OBC Life Insurance Company Limited** for Most Well-Planned Business Travel
- 👉 **CNH Industrial (India) Private Limited** for Best Training Programme for Employees/Associates
- 👉 **EXL Service.com (I) Private Limited** for Most Well-Planned Business Travel
- 👉 **GMR Group** for Most Well-Planned Business Travel
- 👉 **Haier Appliances (India) Private Limited** for Best Incentive Programme for Employees/Associates
- 👉 **HDFC Ergo General Insurance Company Limited** for Best Meeting/Exhibition Programme
- 👉 **Indiannica Learning** for Best Incentive Programme for Employees/Associates
- 👉 **Indus Towers Limited** for Most Well-Planned Business Travel
- 👉 **JK Lakshmi Cements** for Best Incentive Programme for Distributors/Dealers
- 👉 **Max Life Insurance Company Limited** for Best Meeting/Exhibition Programme
- 👉 **Max Super Specialty Hospital** for Most Well-Planned Business Travel
- 👉 **Nestle India Limited** for Best Meeting/Exhibition Programme
- 👉 **Nagarro Software Private Limited** for Most Well-Planned Business Travel
- 👉 **PeopleStrong** for Most Well-Planned Business Travel
- 👉 **Relaxo Footwears Limited** for Best Incentive Programme for Employees/Associates
- 👉 **Star Cement** for Best Incentive Programme for Employees/Associates



Canara HSBC OBC Life Insurance Company Limited



CNH Industrial (India) Private Limited



EXL Service.cWWom (I) Private Limited



GMR Group



Haier Appliances (India) Private Limited



HDFC Ergo General Insurance Company Limited

Wellness Session Partner



Corporate Travel Partner



Mobility Partner



Hospitality Partner



Media Partner



Organiser







Indiannica Learning



Indus Towers Limited



JK Lakshmi Cements



Max Life Insurance Company Limited



Max Super Specialty Hospital



Nestle India Limited



Nagarro Software Private Limited



PeopleStrong



Relaxo Footwears Limited



Star Cement

## Lucky Draw Winner



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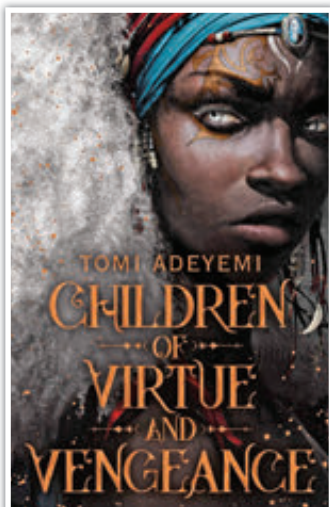




# PICK OF THE MONTH

From books to movies and music, here are our top picks to keep you hooked for the month

## BOOK: CHILDREN OF VIRTUE AND VENGEANCE



Authored by Tomi Adeyemi, a Nigerian-American novelist, this novel is the much-awaited sequel of her first novel, *Children of Blood and Bone*. Set in a fictional African kingdom, Orisha, it recounts how the protagonist, Zélie, deals with the undesirable outcomes of a ritual performed with a noble cause to prevent a civil war looming large over the African kingdom.

**Genre(s):** Fantasy, Fiction



## MOVIE: KNIVES OUT

Through this modern-day murder mystery, celebrated director and writer Rian Johnson successfully creates a gripping whodunnit. From the family to the staff, everyone is a suspect when crime novelist Harlan Thrombey is found dead, following his 85th birthday. Detective Benoit Blanc (Daniel Craig) comes on board to solve the murder mystery. Blanc delves into a web of unanswered questions to unravel the mystery behind the novelist's death. The riveting tale keeps the audience guessing till the very end.

**Genre(s):** Crime, Drama, Mystery, Thriller

## MUSIC: GOD'S COUNTRY BY BLAKE SHELTON

Touted as the comeback album of Shelton's musical career, *God's Country*, which was partially released earlier this year, has been fully released now. It is a homage to God and the power of the land, both of which make it a great Country-Rock anthem.

**Genre(s):** Country, Rock



## GAME: BLAIR WITCH

Based on the Blair Witch horror franchise, this psychological-survival-horror video game follows the former police officer, Ellis Lynch, who is in search of a missing kid in the Black Hills Forest. Focused on stealth and survival horror mechanics, and played from a first-person perspective, the game requires players to make use of items such as a mobile phone, flashlight, camera and the officer's dog.

**Genre(s):** Survival, Horror





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## REVERSE MARKETPLACE®

*Speed Dating with Corporates*

**20**  
March,  
2020

**Venue:** NESCO Exhibition  
Center, Mumbai

**Time:** 8:30 AM to 7:30 PM

**BOOK  
YOUR SPACE**



### MART HIGHLIGHTS

• Corporate Panel Discussion • Keynote Address • Meet Corporate Purchasers,  
Event & Wedding Planners • MTM Corporate Star Awards • Networking Tea, Lunch

Hospitality Partner



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Organiser



### FOR PARTNERSHIP & BOOKING SPACE PLEASE CONTACT:

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