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CORPORATE, BUSINESS, AVIATION, MICE & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

MARCH - APRIL 2019 - ₹50

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## SOUTH AFRICAN MINISTER OF TOURISM VISITS INDIA



The Hon'ble Minister of Tourism, South Africa, Derek Hanekom, recently visited India to engage with key representatives of the travel and tourism ecosystem in an ongoing effort to strengthen tourism ties between the two nations. Accompanied by Sisa Ntshona, CEO, South African Tourism, and Maropene L Ramokgopa, Consul General, South Africa, the Hon'ble Minister reiterated commitment to enhance destination marketing support in India, which has consistently been among the top 10 source markets for South Africa. Visa Simplification Agreement, e-Visas, direct air connectivity and MICE Tourism were some of the agendas discussed during the visit.

Speaking on the occasion, the Hon'ble Minister said, "We want 2019 to be the year of the great leapfrog for tourism from India. The growth in total spend and the average length of stay signifies that Indians travelling to South Africa are staying longer, exploring more and experiencing newer activities than ever before. This certainly is a positive indicator of the potential growth in the market and gives us the confidence to continue introducing new regions and experiences."

## INDIAN HOSPITALITY ENTERS A NEW ERA AS FIRST SURESTAY HOTEL OPENS IN AMRITSAR



Best Western® Hotels & Resorts has launched its new SureStay Hotel Group concept in India with the opening of a brand new hotel in Amritsar. SureStay Hotel by Best Western Amritsar - situated in the heart of Amritsar at Ranjeet Avenue - welcomed its first guests last month. This modern hotel will provide guests with the international standards and services one would expect from a Best Western-branded hotel, at a reasonable price point. The hotel features 30 contemporary guestrooms, all equipped with comfortable beds and convenient amenities, including complimentary Wi-Fi, Café Sure - multicuisine restaurant with bar, elegant banquet hall and Let's Talk - the private dining room-cum-meeting room.

Unveiling the new hotel, Atul Jain, Best Western's Chief Operating Officer for India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, said, "We are delighted to unveil SureStay Hotel by Best Western Amritsar, an exciting new hotel that will redefine the smart economy hotel sector. By combining the ease and affordability of economy hotels with the international standards of a global chain, SureStay Hotel Group is sure to appeal to business and leisure travellers alike."

## FORTUNE SELECT, SOLAN: MEANT FOR GALA EVENTS

Fortune Park Hotels Ltd. recently announced the opening of Fortune Select Forest Hill, Solan. Owned by M/s Forest Hill Resort Pvt. Ltd, this is a charming property located amidst a forest perched on a hill that offers a wide range of guest services and facilities to the today's traveller. Set in the Solan Valley, this is a new hill destination in Himachal which is easily accessible by air, rail and road. The hotel is beautifully planned with a fusion of classical, colonial and contemporary architecture, with a tasteful sprinkle of art deco. Guests can enjoy majestic mountain views from the rooms and live in the comfort of idyllic bliss. The hotel offers 3 signature food and beverage destinations - Zodiac, an astral coffee shop, Neptune bar and lounge, and Fortune Deli. The grand and spacious ballroom can house up to 250 guests and cater to spectacular destination weddings. With state-of-the-art banquet facilities, a dedicated team, lip-smacking gourmet options and tailor-made services, the hotel is meant for destination weddings and social celebrations.

Commenting on the launch, Samir MC, MD, Fortune Park Hotels Ltd, said, "We are excited to present a new destination for holidays and are confident of its success as a preferred destination for family getaways and social celebrations."



## 'ZONE BY THE PARK' LAUNCHED IN NEW TOWN KOLKATA

Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Ltd. recently launched Zone by The Park. Zone by The Park Kolkata, the 117-room hotel is strategically located in New Town Kolkata. It has 3 banquet halls and 2 boardrooms making it ideal for weddings, conferences, events and high-powered meetings. It features Bazaar, the 24-hour signature restaurant; two bars - The Lobby Bar, an exclusive bar at the lobby level, and Ten, located by the roof-top pool with spectacular views of the surrounding cityscape.

Hon'ble Mayor, Minister In charge of Urban Development and Municipal Affairs, Government of West Bengal, Firhad Hakim, was the Chief Guest at the inauguration ceremony. Karan Paul, Chairman, Apeejay Group, and Vijay Dewan, Managing Director, Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Ltd. were present along with Debasish Sen, Chairman and Managing Director, HIDCO.

Speaking about the launch, Priya Paul, Chairperson, Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Ltd, said, "This launch marks the entry of our social catalyst brand into the city and we are confident that 'Zone by The Park' will appeal to the growing millennial Indian and international travellers coming to Kolkata. This is the third hotel of the group after The Park Kolkata and the historic The Denmark Tavern in Serampore."







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## MODI YOGA RETREAT OPENS AT RISHIKESH



**M**odi Yoga Retreat at Rishikesh is all about feeling replenished, not just pampered. The retreat has 29 luxury rooms, equipped with all modern amenities to suit the needs of the contemporary traveller. Each room offers a different level of luxury with the promise of discreet comfort, uninterrupted relaxation and complete privacy. The eateries offer an eclectic array of contemporary cuisine from around the world in addition to Indian regional and Ayurvedic food, including meals especially recommended for specific treatments.

The spa at the retreat includes 10 spa rooms (2 vichy showers, 2 Ayurveda rooms, 6 international therapy rooms and 2 consultation rooms) and offers traditional Ayurvedic and international therapies, a unique blend of yoga, nutrition and proactive healthcare facilities for a personalised wellness experience. The retreat also offers lifestyle and well-being consultations with in-house naturopathy, Ayurvedic and proactive healthcare physicians.

Speaking at the launch, Dr BK Modi, Founder & Chairman – Smart Group, said, "In today's age, well-being has a renewed significance. New technologies have changed the concept of ageing, and living happy, healthy and beyond 100 is now possible. To embed the philosophy of 'Beyond 100' one must be stress free and have access to the right air, nutrition and wellness practices. Being a follower and believer of this myself, I decided to launch Modi Yoga Retreat."

## DELHI TOURISM ORGANISES 32<sup>ND</sup> GARDEN TOURISM FESTIVAL



**C**elebrating the hues of Mother Nature and the fervour of Spring Season, the 32nd Garden Tourism Festival was organised by Delhi Tourism. The festival was inaugurated by Manish Sisodia, Hon'ble Dy. Chief Minister & Minister of Tourism, Govt. of Delhi.

With the objective to create awareness about the environment and showcase the rich floriculture of Delhi, the three-day extravaganza was themed 'Plants-Lifeline for Everyone'. Emphasising on the importance of plants in one's home, the festival brings together various elements that help one create flourishing home gardens. The theme narrates the important role gardening plays in our life with various health and environmental benefits.

A large variety of seasonal and exclusive flowers were displayed and competitions were held in various categories. Special cultural programmes were organized to entertain the visitors and create a festive atmosphere. A variety of food stalls and several amusement facilities for children were a part of the Garden Tourism Festival.

## SHIAN TOURS AND TRAVEL LIMITED APPOINTS TRAC REPRESENTATIONS AS ITS DMC REPRESENTATIVE IN INDIA

**S**hian Tours and Travel Limited, a leading tour operator offering a wide range of travel solutions in East Africa and beyond, have appointed TRAC Representations as their DMC representative in India, to strengthen trade relations and execute marketing initiatives by promoting Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and South Africa as a destination for diverse segments of travellers. The key objective is to enhance these as the most favoured travel destinations for leisure and business amongst the Indian travellers. TRAC Representations Pvt. Ltd. is absolutely thrilled and overwhelmed with this appointment and privileged to be representing Shian Tours and Travels in India.

Jane Macharia Gituto, MD, Shian Tours and Travel Limited, said, "Shian Tours and Travel Ltd is happy to appoint TRAC Representations (India) Pvt. Ltd. as our representative for the India market. With the vast Kenyan expertise they have, we know they will be able to support our partners in India and get more on board."

Rajeev Nangia, COO, TRAC Representations, expressed, "Our vast experience in B2B marketing and expertise in region is going to assist us in taking Shian's product diversity in India Market. This tie-up is aimed at providing Indian Agents with a diversified product for Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and South Africa, at value pricing."



## STERLING RESORTS WELCOMES YOU TO STERLING MOUNT ABU

**S**terling Holiday Resorts Limited, has launched its latest resort, "Sterling Mount Abu". This is Sterling's third resort in Rajasthan, which increases their total holiday network to 36 resorts across the country. The resort is close to the famous Dilwara Temple, widely regarded as one of the most beautiful Jain pilgrimage sites in the world.

Sterling Mount Abu features 69 well-appointed guestrooms and offers amenities such as a 24/7 fitness centre, a well-equipped holiday activity centre, a spa for rejuvenation, a luxurious swimming pool, yoga and meditation room, and a state-of-the-art conference hall, which can accommodate up to 140 guests. The resort has a poolside bar and multi-cuisine restaurant which also serves delectable regional cuisines. As a special experience, the resort also has a private entry from the resort to the forest which facilitates bird watching or a hike exclusively for Sterling guests.





# DIVINE AND BEAUTIFUL



Let serenity and sublime thoughts surround you, as you tread the paths taken by Gautama Buddha and experience the centre of attractions of Buddhism in Bihar.



## IHCL OPENS VIVANTA KATHMANDU



The IHCL recently introduced Vivanta brand in the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal with the opening of Vivanta Kathmandu. This will be the company's second hotel in the region after Meghauli Serai, a Taj Safaris lodge in Chitwan National Park. Located in the UNESCO World Heritage Site, Patan Darbar Square, the hotel is a perfect gateway to explore the land of yaks and yetis, snow peaks and ancient temples.

Commenting on the launch, Rohit Khosla, Executive VP – Operations, North & West India, IHCL, said, "We are thrilled to embark on this exciting new venture in Kathmandu which will complete the tourist circuit by providing a stopover to UNESCO-listed Chitwan National Park. Nepal offers medieval cities and sacred sites to Himalayan peaks and wildlife safaris, catering to a multitude of experiences. We look forward to working with our partners, CG Group on this project, reiterating our commitment to the region."

## PRIYANKA CHOPRA LAUNCHES HER FIRST EVER FIGURE AT MADAME TUSSAUDS NEW YORK



Priyanka Chopra recently launched her first-ever Madame Tussauds figure in New York City. Truly a global superstar, the collaboration will see the actress and humanitarian immortalised across four continents, with figures also launching in London, Sydney and Asia, in 2019.

Launching her wax figure, Priyanka said, "It is absolutely a dream come true to be immortalised by Madame Tussauds. To launch this figure in New York City is mind-blowing and I am so honoured and thrilled that I will also soon have a presence in London, Sydney and Asia."

The Vogue cover star, fashion icon and Met Gala favourite, worked closely with Madame Tussauds' artists, including a private session inside her New York City apartment, choosing to recreate her iconic Emmy Awards look with a gown by Jason Wu.

## ANTO: SHOWCASING AUSTRIA THROUGH ROADSHOWS

The Austrian National Tourist Office (ANTO) recently held its annual roadshow in 3 cities – Mumbai, followed by Ahmedabad and Delhi. Delegates from local tourist boards, incoming agencies, attractions, hotels and travel partners were part of the roadshow to showcase Austria as a destination for summer 2019. Partners from Vienna, Salzburg, Innsbruck and Swarovski Crystal Worlds informed the media about the growth of visitor arrivals from India in 2018 and laid down the plans for 2019.

Christine Mukharji, Director, ANTO, said, "Austria witnessed 192,900 arrivals from India in 2018, which was a 8.6% increase from 2017 and the overnights went up to 351,300 which is a 8.4% increase from last year. India is one of the important markets for us. We believe Austria is the perfect destination for Indian families and offers everything for the Indian traveller, from culture, history to shopping, adventure sports and soft sport activities."



## SONEVA FUSHI OPENS ITS LATEST DINING OUTLET: SHADES OF GREEN


Soneva, the leading luxury resort operator, has opened Soneva Fushi's newest dining outlet, Shades of Green. It is located in the resort's organic garden, with the concept and menu created by Carsten Kyster, a Danish chef who has worked alongside Jamie Oliver at the River Café and Peter Gordon at The Sugar Club in London. Chef Carsten wants to tap into the global movement that places an emphasis on fresh, organic, and local produce as being important for a healthy lifestyle, while also being a climate-conscious food choice in keeping with Soneva's values.

The experience at Shades of Green begins with all diners going on a guided tour of the garden to learn about the herbs, vegetables and fruits grown there. The menu features simple yet experimental plant-based dishes, blending Maldivian and Southeast Asian cuisines, which are then prepared using Nordic techniques such as smoking, salting, fermenting, and pickling.

The menu celebrates the garden and the season revolving around colours (red, green, yellow), green umami (the fifth basic taste) or around one vegetable prepared in multiple ways. Each menu has six courses with dishes falling under: cleansing, crispy, raw, grain, fire and sweet. There will also be a cold press of the day, flavoured lemonade, fragranced iced tea, and cocktails.







To go with the flow, along slow-moving  
canals, to find deep journeys  
in little country boats, to catch the  
drift of conversations under quaint  
log bridges, and discover  
close-knit lives on distant islands.

# HUMAN *by* NATURE

STARK Film 87-91

  
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## SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM PLANS TO SURPASS 100K INDIAN VISITORS IN 2019



Nelswa Nkani

Recently, South African Tourism kick-started 2019 with its biggest travel trade initiative in India – the 16th edition of their Annual Roadshow. The roadshow intends to capitalise on the strong potential consumer demand in India in order to surpass the target of 100,000 Indian visitors to South Africa in the current year. Recognising the evolving demands of the Indian traveller and in continued efforts to enable trade partners, the 56-member South African trade delegation, which included 6 new SMEs, reiterated the tourism board's emphasis on expanding the destination and product offerings. In addition to experiences, representatives from accommodation establishments, DMCs, airlines, tourism associations displayed their products and engaged Indian travel and trade partners.

Speaking on the occasion, Nelswa Nkani, Hub Head, MESEA, South African Tourism, said, "Our brand research shows that Indian travellers prefer South Africa as a holiday destination, due to the memorability and value for money it offers. We will continue to drive this demand by introducing a wider geographical area, thus allowing us to introduce new experiences. We remain focussed on customising our engagements and product offerings to suit the unique requirements from each of our target regions within India."

## THAI AIRWAYS INCREASES ITS SERVICE FROM DELHI



THAI Airways will operate triple daily services from Delhi to Bangkok and beyond, making a total of 21 flights a week. The additional day flights will offer more options to passengers travelling to destinations within Thailand (Phuket and Chiang-Mai), Singapore, Malaysia, Hongkong, Cambodia, Vietnam, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Mainland China, Australia and New Zealand.

Increase in services to Bangkok will enable the airline to capitalise on the steadily growing, round-the-year demand on the highly popular sector, offering guests greater flexibility and choice throughout the day, and helping to create a far superior and well-differentiated travel experience for them.

Thai Airways also operates daily services from Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bengaluru to Bangkok. In addition, Thai Airways operates daily service from Jaipur, 5 times a week from Lucknow, and daily seasonal flights from Gaya and Varanasi to Bangkok through its wholly owned subsidiary Thai Smile.

## NYC & COMPANY HIGHLIGHTS NEW YORK CITY AT DELHI AND MUMBAI



NYC & Company, New York City's official, destination marketing organisation recently led a media and tourism delegation to India to present a new global initiative – "2019: A Monumental Year" – spotlighting several iconic and large-scale openings and developments debuting in the city along with a historic anniversary that will make New York City a must visit destination this year. The delegation was led by Fred Dixon, President & CEO, NYC & Company, accompanied by Christopher Heywood, SVP-Global Communications and Makiko Matsuda Healy, Managing Director – Tourism Market Development.

Giving details, Fred Dixon, President & CEO, NYC & Company, said "It is a particularly exciting time in New York City, with unprecedented developments in terms of attraction and amazing hotel openings. The city is constantly evolving and now there is even more to look forward to." He added, "We want to encourage visitors to enjoy these brand new attractions and plan ahead for what is regarded as a seminal year for New York City."

## EXTENSION OF TERMINAL BUILDING AT SURAT AIRPORT

Recently, the Foundation Stone for the extension of Terminal Building of Surat Airport, in Gujarat, was laid by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India. The ceremony took place in the august presence of Vijay Rupani, Chief Minister, Gujarat and other esteemed dignitaries.

The terminal building of the airport is being extended by AAI, at the cost of Rs. 354 crore. The existing terminal building will be extended by additional 17046sq.m. to have a total area of 25,520sq.m. After the extension, the terminal building will be capable to handle (1200 Domestic + 600 International) i.e., 1800 passengers during the peak hours. Surat Airport will then be able to handle 2.6 million passengers annually.

While addressing the public at the ceremony, the Prime Minister said, "To better prepare Surat for global investments and business opportunities, it is pertinent to have an upgraded world-class airport."





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13 - 15 April 2019



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## SINGAPORE WEEKENDER IN NEW DELHI



The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) continues to bring the Passion Made Possible brand to life in India, this time, with a series of engaging activities at the Singapore Weekender in Delhi. As part of its second phase promotions of the brand to highlight the Passion Tribes of Culture Shapers, Socialisers and Action Seekers, the STB has partnered with the St+art India Foundation for a three-day experiential festival at Lodhi Colony, KONA and antisocial outlet at Hauz Khas.

Since the launch of the Passion Made Possible brand, the STB has embarked on a series of marketing campaigns and activations to showcase Singapore's passions and talents through storytelling, and to allow visitors to discover a deeper side to Singapore as a destination. This year, the STB, in collaboration with the St+art India Foundation, will launch a special project titled "Singapore Weekender" as part of the St+art Delhi 2019.

## THE WORLD'S 50 BEST RESTAURANTS AWARDS TO TAKE PLACE IN SINGAPORE



The World's 50 Best Restaurants, sponsored by S.Pellegrino & Acqua Panna, recently announced that its 2019 awards ceremony will be hosted at Sands Theatre within the iconic Marina Bay Sands in Singapore on June 25, 2019.

The world-renowned celebration recognises the very best in global gastronomy and will be preceded by a full programme of associated events and activities for international culinary professionals and food lovers alike. Singapore will be the first city in Asia to host the world's biggest annual gathering of chefs, restaurateurs, producers, media and VIPs, reflecting the city-state's global reputation as an exciting and diverse foodie hotspot.

The World's 50 Best Restaurants is proudly hosting a series of events beyond the awards evening itself, supported by the Singapore Tourism Board. The programme includes #50BestTalks, where foodies will have the opportunity to hear about the latest trends in gastronomy from leading figures in the restaurant world. This exclusive thought-leadership event platform will take the form of a live stage show, with tickets available to the public as well as invited guests.

## FOUNDATION STONE LAID FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ROPEWAY FROM DEHRADUN TO MUSSOORIE

FIL Industries Ltd and POMA S.A.S France have been awarded the prestigious Dehradun - Mussoorie Ropeway Project in a public private partnership (PPP) with the Government of Uttarakhand. In an impressive ceremony at Mussoorie, the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Trivendra Singh Rawat laid the foundation stone of the project in the presence of senior management from FIL Industries Ltd, POMA France, as well as senior functionaries and officials from the Government of Uttarakhand.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said, "The ropeway project will definitely boost the tourism in Mussoorie. Around 1000-1200 people can be transported at one time using the ropeway. We will ensure there is also a proper transportation system in place to bring tourists from ISBT, railway station and airport to the ropeway".

This landmark project is the longest passenger aerial ropeway development in India and will be amongst the top 5 globally in terms of length for mono-cable ropeway system. The project will also include developing two terminals each at Dehradun and Mussoorie, parking spaces along with other facilities like ticket counters, waiting lounges, food & retail, public amenities, etc. The estimated cost of the project is Rs 300 crores.



## BELFAST FILM FESTIVAL INVITES AAMIR KHAN AS THE SPECIAL GUEST

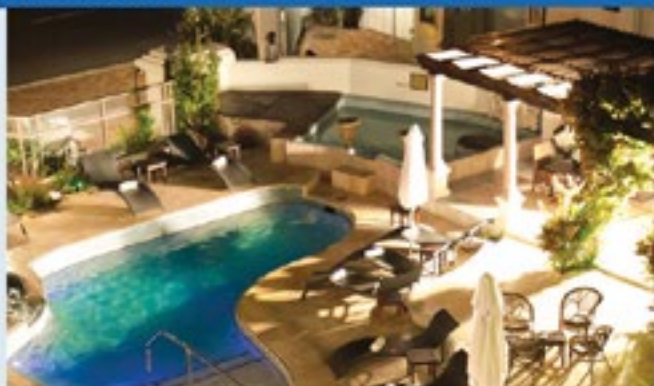
During the 19th Belfast Film Festival, Aamir Khan will participate in 'In Conversation' event at the Waterfront Hall, Belfast. This event will be held on April 16, 2019, and will celebrate Aamir Khan's body of film work and pay tribute to his humanitarian activities. The evening will be hosted by Nasreen Munni Kabir, who has authored 17 books on Hindi cinema, and has made over 80 TV programmes on Indian film for Channel 4 and continues to curate C4's annual Indian film season.

Mark Cousins, Chair of the Belfast Film Festival, said of Aamir Khan's visit, "Many of us fell in love with films because of big-hearted movies like 'It's a Wonderful Life' and Tom Hanks' 'Big'. That's the sort of films that Aamir Khan makes. His epic entertainments have the spirit of Frank Capra movies. He uses his stardom as boldly as Jane Fonda. We are honoured that he will come to the Belfast Film Festival."





## MISTY WAVES BOUTIQUE HOTEL HERMANUS FEATURES AMONG THE TOP 25 HOTELS IN SOUTH AFRICA



**M**isty Waves Boutique Hotel Hermanus has been awarded the 2019 Travellers' Choice Award by Tripadvisor amongst the top 25 hotels in South Africa. Based on reviews and opinions from millions of travellers, we are in the top 1% of hotels in the world.

Clinton Lerm, Owner, Misty Waves Boutique Hotel Hermanus, who also owns SA Forest Adventures, remarked, "We are honoured to be recognised for this award which demonstrates the level to which our guests uphold our brand. Thanks to the travellers for choosing and voting Misty Waves, and most importantly thanks to all our staff and personnel for their contribution to this immense achievement. We would also like to extend our gratitude to our partners and business associates."

Misty Waves Boutique Hotel is a Luxury Hotel accommodation in Hermanus, South Africa, with best land-based whale watching in the world, Great White Shark cage diving, famous Wine Routes in Hemel-and-Aarde valley, penguin viewing, blue flag beaches and all nature can offer.

## WELCOMHERITAGE AYATANA DEBUTS IN COORG

**W**elcomHeritage (WH) has expanded its horizon in South India with WelcomHeritage Ayatana, Coorg, Karnataka. The property with its picturesque location and breathtaking views will attract huge number of travellers. Spread over 100 acres of endless lush green landscapes amidst the gentle rolling hills, WH Ayatana is a perfect location where you can breathe in fresh, clean air, take lazy walks, or simply enjoy the natural surroundings. The resort features 53 magnificently designed individual cottages offering a spectacular view of the valley and the primeval forest.

Talking about the fabulous response received by the property, Sanjeev Nayar, GM, WelcomHeritage Ayatana, shared, "This is the 33rd property of WelcomHeritage and we are extremely happy to share that we are experiencing good occupancy from the month it was flagged off. WelcomHeritage is determined to promote the country's cultural heritage as well as the natural beauty, and with WH Ayatana, it is our sincere effort to bring forward the untamed beauty of South India to the world."



## BE THE FIRST TO DISCOVER A LIFETIME OF MEMORIES AT DESARU COAST

Discover your perfect getaway at Desaru Coast, Malaysia. Home to globally-renowned hotels and resorts, one of the world's biggest waterparks, two championship golf courses, a conference centre and a riverside dining haven, Desaru Coast is the ultimate destination for both fun-filled family vacations and romantic getaways.



### HOW TO GET THERE BY AIR

- Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA/KLIA2)
- Changi International Airport, Singapore
- \* 45-minute flight from Kuala Lumpur to Senai International Airport, followed by 45-minute scenic drive to Desaru Coast.

### BY SEA

- 30-minute ferry ride from Changi Ferry Terminal to Tanjung Belungkor Ferry Terminal, followed by 30-minute scenic drive to Desaru Coast.

### BY ROAD

- 1 hour 15 minutes from Johor Bahru\*\*
- 1 hour 30 minutes from Singapore\*\*
- 4 hours from Kuala Lumpur

\*\* Shuttle bus service is available.



### THE WESTIN DESARU COAST RESORT

Begin your 'happily ever after' with a magical experience at The Westin Desaru Coast Resort. This luxurious resort with lovely banqueting options is the picture-perfect setting to exchange your vows of eternal love as you escape to fairytale moments and create wedding day memories to last a lifetime.

### DESARU COAST RIVERSIDE

Eat, drink, indulge and relax at Desaru Coast Riverside, a 23-acre waterfront landscaped retail and lifestyle village located in the heart of Desaru Coast, offering exciting retail outlets, restaurants, cafes and entertainment outlets as the central hub of Desaru Coast.



### HARD ROCK HOTEL DESARU COAST

Experience the rock star treatment and never-ending family fun activities at Hard Rock Hotel Desaru Coast. A hotel with attitude and style, guests can enjoy stylish accommodation, Hard Rock's legendary service and vibe, and an unmatched assortment of offerings including signature brand programmes.



### DESARU COAST ADVENTURE WATERPARK

Enjoy thrills, gills and adrenaline pumping action at one of the world's biggest waterparks. Set against the backdrop of a Malaysian fishing village, visitors can immerse themselves in one of the biggest wave pools in the world and experience the first water coaster in the region. Featuring 30 different slides and a unique mix of wet and dry rides, Desaru Coast Adventure Waterpark promises endless fun and action for the whole family.



## EASEMYTRIP: EASING YOUR JOURNEYS TO MUMBAI



**E**aseMyTrip has come up with a solution for passengers travelling to Mumbai this March. For coming few days, flying to and from Mumbai Airport is going to be difficult for the travellers. Mumbai Airport will see no flight movements on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between 11 AM and 5 PM till 31st March, 2019 due to the ongoing construction work. This has resulted in a sharp increase in airfares by over 20 to 30% during the period as lesser flights would be operational.

To ease out the customers' problems, EaseMyTrip is offering a free bus ticket to Mumbai from the nearby airports. So if a customer is planning to visit Mumbai, the company is recommending them to take a flight to the nearby airports like Pune, Nashik, Nagpur or Nanded for travelling to Mumbai. If a customer books flight ticket to Mumbai from EaseMyTrip, the travel agency is offering a free bus ticket to Mumbai to make their journey simpler.

## RENOVATION OF RUNWAY AT TIRUPATI AIRPORT



**R**ecently, the foundation stone for extension and strengthening of existing runway at Tirupati Airport in Andhra Pradesh was laid by the Hon'ble Vice President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu. The ceremony took place in the august presence of Jayant Sinha, Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation amidst other esteemed dignitaries.

The existing runway of 2286m. will now be extended to 33810m, after which it will be suitable to accommodate wide-bodied aircraft. The work for Extension of Runway, Strengthening of Existing Apron, Expansion and Strengthening of Existing Isolation Bay for wide-bodied aircraft, pavement against Blast Erosion & Provision of Runway End Safety Area (RESA) will be carried out at the total cost of 177.10 crore.

While addressing the public gathering during the ceremony, Hon'ble Vice President said, "The Aviation Sector is playing an important role in promoting connectivity and creating jobs. Apart from playing key role in economic development, Aviation Sector also facilitates nation's integration into the global economy".

## JAPAN AIRLINES AND VISTARA ENTER CODESHARE PARTNERSHIP

**J**apan Airlines (JAL) and Vistara recently entered a codeshare partnership that will open up more routes between India and Tokyo than ever before. With the signing of this agreement, Vistara becomes the only codeshare partner for JAL in India. As part of the agreement, JAL will add its 'JL' designator code to approximately 32 Vistara-operated flights each day across India covering seven Indian cities, namely, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Pune.

Commenting on this key partnership, Sanjiv Kapoor, Vistara's Chief Strategy & Commercial Officer, said, "We're delighted to further strengthen our partnership with Japan Airlines with this codeshare agreement, which is a step that underlines our commitment of partnering with some of the leading airlines in the world and of putting Vistara on the global map. The codeshare flights will offer convenient connections to and from a daily flight that JAL already operates to Delhi directly from Narita Airport in Tokyo. JAL and Vistara flights operate from the same terminal at Delhi (T3), making connections at the airport even more convenient and seamless. JAL customers travelling on Vistara will enjoy complimentary meals and will be able to choose between three different cabins, including India's only Premium Economy class.



## IHCL UNVEILS A NEW BRAND IDENTITY FOR TAJSATS

**T**he IHCL recently unveiled a new visual brand identity for TajSATS. TajSATS works with over 40 domestic and international airlines, serving over 65,000 meals a day. The launch of the new identity is a part of the ongoing evolution of TajSATS.

Puneet Chhatwal, MD & CEO, IHCL, and Chairman, TajSATS, said, "TajSATS is an integral part of the IHCL ecosystem. It is currently the market leader in airline catering and we look forward to strengthening this further by unlocking its potential in non-aviation businesses as well. The new identity is a bold re-imagining of brand TajSATS and presents the company as modern and progressive." The new logo brings together the best of Taj and SATS, with an agile and innovative design that resonates across generations. Carefully balancing tradition and modernity, it tells the story of the company's past and signals the vision for the future. The logo is set against the backdrop of a bold new visual identity that is inspired by the art of plating and the culinary arts. The branding embodies an organization that is reinventing itself with an unwavering commitment to continuously raise standards.





## AEROSTRUCTURES ASSEMBLIES INDIA AWARDED CONTRACT FROM SAAB FOR OWD

**A**erostuctures Assemblies India Pvt Ltd (AAI), a joint Venture between Aequs Aerospace and Saab AB (publ), has been awarded a contract from Saab Aerostructures to manufacture the structural assembly for the Over Wing Doors (OWD) on the Airbus A321Neo program. The Over Wing Doors are a critical part of the aircraft used for emergency exits. There are four Over Wing Doors on the A321Neo aircraft. The structural assembly comprises machined aluminum parts, which will be assembled by the AAI team in Belagavi, Karnataka, and delivered to the Saab Aerostructures Assembly Line in Linköping, Sweden.

AAI has evolved into a strong supply chain player for producing aerostuctures assemblies in India. AAI has been delivering door plugs for Airbus A321neo Cabin Flex configuration since 2017 and produced wing panels and D-nose assemblies for the A380 program since 2014. Besides end products, its capabilities also include development of assembly tools, jigs, and fixtures. With this award, Saab and AAI further cement its strong partnership. Production deliveries will begin at the end of 2019 and ramp up in subsequent years.



## ISRAELI AIRLINE ARKIA TO LAUNCH DIRECT FLIGHTS TO GOA AND KOCHI FROM TEL AVIV



Israeli airline Arkia will soon introduce two new routes to India starting from September 28, 2019, using recently acquired Airbus A321LR. The carrier confirmed to begin nonstop flight operations from Tel Aviv to Goa and Kochi with 220 seats and a full flight service on board. With one-way duration of seven hours, Arkia will fly once a week to Goa and twice a week to Kochi. This announcement has come at a time when Israel Ministry of Tourism has recorded a 21% growth with 70,800 Indian tourist arrivals to Israel in 2018 vis-à-vis 58,700 travellers in 2017, leading India to the 12th position as the source market for the destination.

Speaking about the new development, Hassan Madah, Director, Israel Ministry of Tourism – India & Philippines, said, "We see India becoming one of the key source markets for Israel in the coming years and with Arkia's direct flights to Goa and Kochi, the Indian traveller's interest will surely increase. Goa attracts many Israeli tourists for leisure holidays, while Israel has recorded a notable mix of pilgrimage and leisure travellers from Kochi."

## TRADE RELATIONS OFFICER - MEISEA (MIDDLE EAST, INDIA & SOUTH EAST ASIA)

South African Tourism is searching for a results driven, credible representative office to appoint a candidate for the position of Trade Relations Officer

### KEY OUTPUTS:

- Provide trade support to Trade Manager
- Provide administrative support
- Service trade inquiries
- Maintain and update trade communication channel
- Track trade performance
- Co-ordinate and manage key trade events
- Collate trade reports and manage collateral
- Willing to travel when required

### CRITERIA, QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

- Should have minimum 5 years of work experience in trade, trade relations, marketing, sales or business development
- Candidate should have a bachelor's degree

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF:

- Possess knowledge of the tourism
- Have sales, negotiation, problem solving, planning and organising, presentation skills, people and project management skills
- Be fluent in English and writing skills
- Attributes: innovation, team work, resilience, customer service focussed and be proactive

Visit us at [www.southafrica.net](http://www.southafrica.net)  
Detailed Proposal to be sent to: [ajay@southafrica.net](mailto:ajay@southafrica.net)  
Closing date: 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019

Should you not hear from us within one week after the closing date, kindly consider your application unsuccessful. Proposals to be submitted without fees.







**ANMOL AHLUWALIA** has been appointed as General Manager, North Goa and will now take charge of two hotels – Taj Holiday Village Resort & Spa and Taj Fort Aguada Resort & Spa, Goa. Prior to this, Ahluwalia took over as the General Manager of Taj Wellington Mews, Mumbai. He is a Hotel Management graduate from the Institute of Hotel Management, Mumbai and holds an Advanced Diploma in Hotel Management from The Oberoi Centre of Learning & Development.



**MEENA BHATNAGAR** has been appointed as the General Manager at Taj Wellington Mews, Mumbai. She was previously associated with Taj Lands End, Mumbai. A Commerce graduate, Bhatnagar holds a Diploma in Hotel Management from Delhi University and a Bachelor of Education from Anamalai University. Bhatnagar has over 30 years of experience in hospitality and joined the company in 2004 at Rambagh Palace, Jaipur.



**RITESH SHARMA** has been appointed as the General Manager at Taj Santacruz, Mumbai. He has previously held the position of General Manager at Taj Falaknuma Palace, Hyderabad. Sharma holds a degree in Hotel Management from SRM Institute of Hotel Management, Chennai, and undertook the Executive Management Program from S.P. Jain Institute of Management. He started his career with IHCL 18 years ago, in the Front Office department, at Taj Coromandel, Chennai.



**PARVINDER BUAL** has been appointed as the General Manager at Taj Falaknuma Palace, Hyderabad. Prior to this, Bual held the position of General Manager at Taj Madikeri Resort & Spa, Coorg. A Hotel Management graduate from the Welcomgroup Graduate School of Hotel Administration, Bual joined IHCL in 1997 in the Front Office department at Taj Mahal, New Delhi.



Palace, Mumbai.

**SHAUN COOPER** has been appointed as the General Manager at Taj Madikeri Resort & Spa, Coorg. In his previous role, Cooper held the position of Director of Rooms at Taj West End, Bengaluru. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the Institute of Hotel Management Goa. He joined IHCL in 2005 in the Front Office department at The Taj Mahal



**JASPREET SINGH** has been designated as the General Manager at Azaya Beach Resort, Goa. An industry veteran, with over a decade in the Hospitality Industry, he brings with him a deep understanding of the industry. In his new role, he will be accountable for offering guests cordial hospitality and intuitive custom-made services. Prior to this, Singh launched the 1st Andaz hotel in India, adding to Hyatt's luxury lifestyle collection of 15 other Andaz hotels worldwide. He has also served as the DOSM (South West Asia) for InterContinental Hotels Group. Singh has also been associated with the Oberoi group for 14 years of his career.



**NISHANT KUMAR** has been appointed as General Manager, Great Destination Hotels and Resorts, a Bengaluru-based hospitality major started by GD Group. His previous stint was with Bur Al Hickman Hospitality LLC, Oman, as Chief Operating Officer, where he spearheaded four operating brands across two different countries in the Middle East. He brings 19 years of experience in the Hospitality Industry. Kumar has earlier worked with The "O" hotels & Ramada Bangalore and Pune as F&B Manager and at Vivanta by Taj, Kovalam as Assistant F&B Manager.



**CHEF KS MAGESWARAN** has been designated as the Senior Executive Sous Chef at Radisson Blu Resort Goa Cavellissim Beach. He started off his culinary journey as a Chef at Trident Oberoi, Bangalore and possesses an experience of 19 years. He has earlier been associated with some of the leading hotels like Poconos Manor Resort in Pennsylvania as Chef De Cuisine (CDC), Sherman Oaks, Embassy Suites, and Milpitas, California as CDC. At Radisson Blu Resort Goa Cavellissim Beach, his ultimate responsibility will be to assure the quality of serving a wholesome meal, customer retention, and satisfaction.



**CHEF TENZIN NAMKHA** has been designated as Chef De Cuisine at Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway. In his new role, he will be responsible for overseeing the restaurant's dining venues, catering and culinary events, as well as further enhancing the restaurant's celebrated culinary offerings. Prior to this, he was working with Ritz Carlton Hotel Bangalore as their Sous Chef of The Lantern Restaurant and Bar. He has earlier worked with Leela Palace Hotel and Resort Bangalore, Ista Hotel Pune and Hyderabad, Ananda in the Himalayas and Hyatt Hotel Ahmedabad.



TODAY'S  
traveller  
*Celebrating* 22 YEARS

**CORPORATE**



# ALTRUISTIC ENTREPRENEUR

Binod Chaudhary, Chairman, CG Corp, and Nepal's first Forbes billionaire, sheds light on the Hospitality Industry, his flagship brand Wai Wai Noodles, and his journey towards spiritual fulfilment

KAMAL GILL

For Binod Chaudhary, Chairman of CG Corp, a multinational business conglomerate headquartered in Nepal, touching lives of people is ingrained in the DNA of his business. Whether it is helping the earthquake victims of the country rebuild their broken lives or promoting spiritual welfare in the country, the CG Corp has always been at the forefront of doing business with a deep sense of social and ethical awareness. Today's Traveller caught up with this entrepreneur-cum-philanthropist, who spoke at length about his wide-ranging business interests, his conglomerate's flagship product – the immensely popular Wai Wai noodles – and his spiritual journey with Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.



## How has your journey been so far?

As a conglomerate, we are extremely proud of our journey thus far. Although our presence in the Hospitality Sector has not been for more than two decades, today, we are a name to reckon with. We are highly diversified in terms of our business interests and strategies. We are owners and business partners and have forged joint ventures with some of the leading names in the industry. We also have acquisitions and funding arms to our credit.

Presently, we have more than 85 hotels in nine countries and aim to expand our portfolio to 200 hotels by 2020. Our hotels range from mid-scale to upper mid-scale, from wellness resorts to business hotels, from in-house brands to partner properties. Some of our most popular brands include, CHC Bungalows, The Farm at San Benito, The Zinc and The Fern. The Group also has a tie-up with The Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) and after an extremely successful stint with Alila Hotels & Resorts, we sold it out to the Hyatt Group. We are now developing a new product called The Zinc Journey, a chain of boutique hotels that aims to provide luxury boutique experience to travellers. The first destination chosen for the opening of this brand is Sri Lanka, but this is to be followed by similar properties in Hunan, Nepal, Bhutan and other such exotic places. We are extremely proud of the fact that we are partners of well-known properties across the world, such as Taj Exotica Maldives, Taj Samudra, Taj Safari Meghauli Sarai, etc.







*Binod Chaudhary*



**You have an extensive business portfolio – how do you remain connected to your diverse business interests?**

My businesses are like my babies. It has been a long journey of 45 years, although I must acknowledge the role played by my father, who started the business in a humble way. Now, my sons are involved in the business. I have delegated the charges of various departments to my sons, Rahul, Nirvana and Varun. While I have taken a backseat, they bring in business, strike new deals and so on. Despite having a wide range of business concerns,



our linkages run deep, our roots remain firm. Finally, we believe that whatever we do we must touch people's lives positively. No wonder, our tagline is, 'Touching life everyday'.

**Given the current uncertainty in the business environment, how do you respond to the changes taking place around you?**

Although our business interests are quite diversified, our core values are intact; our heads are firmly on our shoulders. It is difficult to disrupt our business overnight. While there are quite a few disruptive players in the Hospitality and Travel Industry today, not all of them are equally successful. While companies such as OYO Rooms and Airbnb have changed the game to a considerable extent, they have also faced the challenges. I do recognise the full potential of technology-driven travel, but some fundamentals in the hotel industry will not change any time soon. You still need to be physically present at a property and experience it for yourself. No amount of technology can change that.

**Apart from your business, you have a spiritual side to your personality. Would you like to share your spiritual journey with us?**

To embark on a path of spirituality, you must experience, what I call, 'Guru's Calling.' This is something you cannot consciously cultivate – it must come naturally to you. When you are rich and powerful, you may indulge in spirituality as a public relations exercise, but that will not work. This is not something you can plan. When your Guru believes that he has a role to play in your life or you have a role to play in his life, it will automatically happen. I can say this with certainty, since I myself have experienced this. I tried to avoid meeting Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, though Kavita Khanna, wife of late Vinod Khanna and a dear friend of mine, was constantly pushing me to meet him. Eventually, I did meet him almost 15 years back and my life has never been the same ever since.

**You do write about your spiritual journey in your autobiography, don't you?**

Yes, I do. My autobiography, titled 'Binod Chaudhary Atmakatha,' published in Nepali, narrates my spiritual journey at length, which had a profound impact on my life. I come from a hardcore business background, where everything is about cracking deals, pushing yourself and the people you are surrounded with, so imagine the impact this life-changing experience would have had on my life.



**Has this spiritual connect helped you to realign your business interests with people's interests in mind?**

I can say without a shadow of doubt that my Guru has showed me the path which I follow. Our Shaswat Dham is a place to seek divine knowledge, natural bliss and peace of mind. We have provided over 500 artificial limbs and plan to provide another 500 soon to below-the-waist amputees, in partnership with BMVSS of Jaipur Foot. In the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in Nepal, we went to the remotest corners of the country to help people rebuild their homes. As I look back at my life, it seems to me that we have been touching people's lives since the beginning of my career.

When we launched Wai Wai noodles, little did we realise that it would enjoy a cult following. It has proved to be a great leveller, cutting across the class divide in the country. It is also a great convenience product, which gives you 350 calories at Rs 10. In fact, an interesting anecdote is that during the period of political turmoil in Nepal, both army men and Comrade Prachanda's boys were surviving on Wai Wai noodles. That's why I say, Wai Wai noodles has greatly touched people's lives. My association with Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has only reinforced my commitment towards helping the people of my country.



**Incredible India**



## Kodaikanal Hill Station

Kodaikanal is the second largest hill station in Tamil Nadu and also known as the gift of the Forests. The hill is known for its remarkable climate and lush green surroundings. The best time to visit between April & June and October to January.

## Tamil Nadu Tourism

Chennai- 600 002 Tamil Nadu, INDIA.  
Toll Free No: 1800 4253 1111 Email: [dotdeptourism@gmail.com](mailto:dotdeptourism@gmail.com)  
For Tours: [tours@tdtconline.com](mailto:tours@tdtconline.com) Web: [www.tamilnadutourism.org](http://www.tamilnadutourism.org)



# ROYAL BENGAL

With its passion for perfection and its pursuit of elegance, ITC Royal Bengal aims to represent Bengal and the unique fervour of its citizens in their celebration of the aesthetic and the finer things of life

TT BUREAU



Scheduled to debut in 2019, the ITC Royal Bengal is the second luxury property of ITC Hotels in Kolkata, after ITC Sonar. Designed in sync with ITC Hotels' philosophy of Responsible Luxury and creating indigenous experiences, the ITC Royal Bengal is rooted to the ethos of the land. The hotel's architecture is inspired by local history and culture. At a height of 130m, the ITC Royal Bengal is one of the tallest buildings in Kolkata and is a tribute to the region's architectural heritage.

Bengal has celebrated intellectual sensibility through the ages – where literature, poetry, painting, sculpture, theatre, cinema, science have not only blossomed, but been the very fabric of the State's narrative. ITC Royal Bengal pays tribute to the towering achievements of the great minds of Bengal and its people who encouraged and appreciated this effervescence in the field of arts and science and the finest experiences that life can offer – an effervescence that continues to this day.



Envisioned and created with the luxury of space and the burnished gleam of décor inspired by the finest buildings of this land, ITC Royal Bengal celebrates the finest nuances of culture, art, music and a zest for truly sublime experiences.

The ITC Hotels at Kolkata – ITC Sonar and ITC Royal Bengal – are a tribute to this unique amalgamation. Both hotels celebrate glorious moments from days gone by while inviting one into a tomorrow which is more promising. Contiguous by location, unique in spirit, the ITC Hotels, Kolkata, are an embodiment of the eternal spirit of Bengal, with the warmth of Indian Hospitality at the heart of each.

#### ROOMS & ACCOMMODATION

The 456 keys luxury hotel (including 82 serviced apartments of 1-2 BHK for extended stays) is designed by architects from WATG Associates, Singapore, and landscaped by Belt Collins of



Sonar's existing, award-winning F&B offerings. ITC Royal Bengal is set to create new cuisine and beverage benchmarks with five signature restaurants and a roof top bar.

The hotel will also house ITC Club Prive, an exclusive, paid membership club, comprising a lounge, bar, reading facility, private dining and meeting spaces, and boardrooms – a haven in which the emphasis is on meticulous service and access to complete privacy.

#### Convention Facilities

The ITC Royal Bengal offers elegant spaces that provide an ideal setting for every occasion. From a sprawling 16400sq. ft. pillarless magnificent ballroom, to exquisite arrival lobbies and huge lawns ideal for Kolkata socials, the ITC Royal Bengal



Singapore. Together, the two properties bring superlative luxury in the accommodation, with 693 rooms, suites and serviced apartments.

#### F&B Offerings

ITC Royal Bengal endeavours to bring ITC Hotels' signature food and beverage repertoire to Kolkata. This is in addition to ITC

offers versatile banquet options for both business meetings and events, with total banquet and convention facilities covering an area of 61000sq.ft. Together, there are 22 banqueting and meeting options spread over an area of 1,00,000sq.ft. The ultimate destination of the luxury global traveller and an important MICE and Wedding destination, the ITC Royal Bengal is ITC Hotels' humble ode to the City of Joy.





Impeccable hospitality and nature combine to bring you the best of experiences in terms of ambience, accommodation and services at The Gateway Resort Damdama Lake Gurgaon

**TT BUREAU**

**D**erived from the existing landscape, The Gateway Resort Damdama Lake Gurgaon welcomes discerning urban travellers to a nature-inspired sanctuary. The stellar resort is located just 45km from IGI Airport Delhi, on a sprawling 20-acre area at the heart of the Aravalli Hills, near Damdama Lake. This enchanting lake is a well-known weekend getaway for leisure seekers from Delhi NCR.

Here is where the always-connected traveller can unplug and unwind at the specially designed Spa. Recharge your mind with a brisk walk through acres of lush greenery, listening to a symphony of birds. Soak in the crystal waters of the swimming pool or get active with extreme adventure sports facilities in the resort and beyond, or indulge in a morning of golf with mini-putting greens. Find your escape, so near, yet so far from the hustle and bustle of daily life.

Enjoy your stay at chic, expansive rooms in a pollution-free environment, along with an impeccable staff, trained to give you a home-away-from-home experience. The Gateway Resort Damdama Lake is known for delivering quick and hassle-free services with professional efficiency. Furry friends

are welcome as well at this pet-friendly family resort. The resort features Superior Resort Rooms, Deluxe Resort Rooms, and Gateway Suites, replete with modern facilities and amenities designed to cater to the needs of the urban traveller. Gateway Suites come with spectacular garden views and royal luxury inside. Tastefully designed, blending the traditional with the contemporary, the Suites are ideal for a weekend getaway or a long, slow-paced leisure trip.

**F&B OFFERINGS**

The Gateway Resort Damdama Lake serves some of the choicest traditional and international cuisines. On offer are flavours from across the world – from sumptuous delicacies to health foods, so pamper your palate with whatever your body craves. Choose to dine at any of four fine dining restaurants – At Buzz, enjoy delicious cuisine, right from authentic international cuisine to a delightful spread of traditional home-styled Haryanvi delicacies. It also features a special Active Foods Menu for health-conscious individuals. Indulge in mouth-watering Chinese cuisine at Sian, where authenticity has found favour with creativity. The spread includes dishes that have made





traditional recipes evolve into brilliant modern masterpieces.

At Picnic Table, indulge in nature's bounties and enjoy a flavourful lunch amidst lush lawns, tall trees, gentle rolling slopes, as expert chefs ensure that your dining experience reaches new heights. This is as good as the outdoors can get. Craving for a relaxed evening with friends or colleagues? Enter Swirl, an eclectic bar space that is both stylish and sleek, and treat yourself to classic cocktails and the choicest of wines. If a relaxed, casual evening with friends and colleagues is your fervent desire, this is your go-to place.

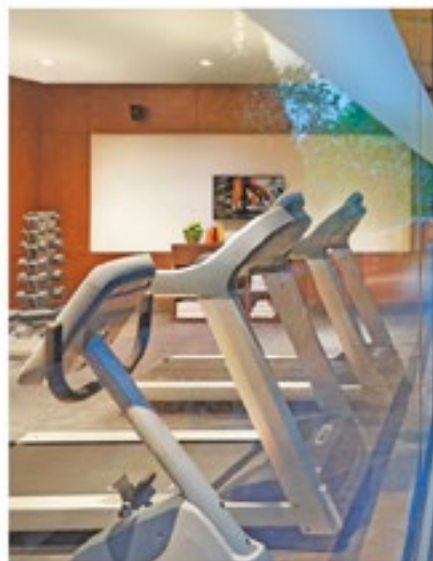
#### MEET & CELEBRATE

The hotel is well-equipped to host corporate as well as social and festive events. From theme to catering to decoration, you can rely on the hotel's experienced staff to design events that are as unique as you are. The Gateway Resort Damdama Lake has all your business needs covered.

#### WORK & UNWIND

Along with 24x7 quick and hassle-free services, you can also enjoy contemporary recreational facilities. If you want to venture out into the city or explore nearby sights, you can rely on the hotel to make all the arrangements on time. Other facilities at the resort include a 24x7 Fitness Centre, complete

with the latest equipment and a swimming pool, an Adventure Zone, a gym, and spa, to recharge your spirits and revitalise your body.



*"The Gateway Resort Damdama Lake Gurgaon is an urban sanctuary inspired by nature, offering visitors a refuge from the daily humdrum of life by creating a rustic homely atmosphere nestled in the natural environment."*

*-Paramveer Singh,  
General Manager, The Gateway Resort  
Damdama Lake Gurgaon*



# CORPORATE JET-SETTER

VINITH VIJAYAN

Sr. General Manager – Admn,  
Aditya Birla Group

TT BUREAU

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

The hot air balloon ride at Cappadocia, Turkey, at - 11 degrees. The sheer thrill of the trip will be remembered for lifetime.

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

I have always wanted to visit Switzerland.

**Q: Favourite airline & why?**

Air Seychelles. They have an excellent customer serving attitude and are so proud about their country and always eager to talk to all the tourists visiting their country. A lesson we Indians need to learn.

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

Hotel Akra, Antalya, Turkey. Best location, best views of sea and mountains, proximity to airport and all other tourist places, excellent and fast service, and overall real 5-Star services made my experience a really good one.

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

It will be to Boracay, Philippines, for its beaches, water activities, entertaining atmosphere and carefree life.



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

The visit to Govardhan Eco Village, near Wada district, Maharashtra, stands out as our finest family vacation, for some serious religious learnings and detoxifications.

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

Trip to Mahabaleshwar with two families.

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

In Sri Lanka, we had enjoyed the non-veg cuisine a lot.

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

Read up on the local customs and rules before visiting and behave accordingly. Do not miss out on any place, event, etc. which is particularly famous in that place. Be dressed according to that region and do learn a few basic sentences in the local language.

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

Buy from all the places that you visit to get memorable items back home and don't wait to buy from the duty-free shops at airports. You may miss out some local items in the bargain. Do encourage the local handicraftsmen by buying from them to promote their crafts.



**11<sup>th</sup> Edition**  
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# WHERE EAST MEETS WEST

Let your curiosity flourish as you unearth Azerbaijan's many untold secrets and stories while experiencing the fascinating East-meets-West vibe spread across its rich landscapes, says Florian Sengstschim, CEO, Azerbaijan Tourism Board

**KAMAL GILL**

**S**ituated at the crossroads of Eastern Europe and Western Asia, Azerbaijan is one of the fastest growing tourist destinations in the world, offering a melange of experiences, ranging from its interesting geographical contours, the richly textured gastronomical scene, contemporary arts, cultural tours, to luxury shopping and beautiful hiking trails.

In a recent bid to spur the growth of Tourism in Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijan Tourism Board launched its marketing campaign, 'Take Another Look,' at the 26th edition of SATTE 2019. The country's recent investments in tourism and country promotion are geared towards projecting it as a premium MICE destination. Today's Traveller recently caught up with Florian Sengstschim, CEO, Azerbaijan Tourism Board, who highlighted the USPs of Azerbaijan, the challenges faced by the country as a tourism destination, and why India outbound market is important for Azerbaijan's tourism growth.

## **What attracts Azerbaijan Tourism to the India outbound market?**

By nature and history, Azerbaijan is a country characterised by odds, whether it is the fact that Azerbaijan has nine of the world's eleven climate zones, offering travellers a European experience at affordable prices all year round, or the different cultures that shaped the country's present. An Eastern country with a Western outlook, Azerbaijan is an exceptional combination of antiquity and novelty with several sites of interest for Indians looking for unforgettable experiences.

Azerbaijan's unique geography and location have resulted in a culture and cuisine influenced by the land's natural ingredients and the different travellers that crossed it. As such, Indian travellers can enjoy different eateries serving local and international delicacies, as well as the many Indian restaurants that serve vegan food, with the help of a large community of local Indian chefs working in the Hospitality Sector.



### **What are the USPs of Azerbaijan that you will be showcasing to Indian travellers?**

Azerbaijan has the perfect landscape for every kind of holiday that Indian travellers will want to choose from. The country has every kind of geographical contour, ranging from mountains and plateaus to the lowland sand coast, which allows visitors to plan an itinerary that is unique and unforgettable.

Modern art and traditional masterpieces could alone be the central theme for a trip to Azerbaijan, be it through galleries, restaurants or music festivals.

### **What are the challenges for Azerbaijan as a tourism destination vis-à-vis India?**

We believe that once a person visits Azerbaijan, there will be many return trips! However, raising awareness for all the offerings available in Azerbaijan is challenging in a dynamic market like India. Throughout 2019, we will launch a series of campaigns such as, "Take Another Look," to promote the possibilities within the borders of Azerbaijan and highlight the charms of Baku and beyond.

### **What are the key attractions for India?**

From Baku's modern Flame Towers, to the depths of the medieval UNESCO World Heritage site, there's something for everyone in Azerbaijan. A constantly evolving tapestry of life and energy from bazaars to jazz clubs makes it an ideal destination for family holidays and honeymoon travel as well as a host for destination weddings. Additionally, Azerbaijan is set to host high-profile events such as the Formula 1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix and UEFA Europa League Final in 2019. For tourists looking to take a break from the hustle and bustle of the city, they have plenty of luxurious getaways to choose from, ranging from summer countryside hotels to cottages nestled in Azerbaijan's snowy slopes.

### **Is Azerbaijan being promoted as a health and wellness destination?**

Azerbaijan is home to about half of the world's discovered mud volcanoes and several of them are accessible from Gobustan. Volcanic clay and mud are used in the treatment of diseases related to the nervous system, skin and rheumatism.



*“ Let your curiosity flourish as you unearth Azerbaijan’s many untold secrets and stories while experiencing the fascinating East-meets-West vibe spread across its rich landscapes ”*

*-Florian Sengtschmid*

Azerbaijan's burgeoning spa resorts are already popular as destinations for natural cures. Naftalan city, a well-known petroleum spa resort, has no equivalent in the world. A 10-day course is recommended, and the curative properties of the unique Naftalan oil are known to be helpful towards the treatment of musculoskeletal system diseases, as well as neurological, skin and other ailments. Duzdagh, one of the oldest salt deposits in the world, has been transformed into an asthma treatment spa and hotel resort. Visitors can also slot in visits to Chenot Palace in the heart of a breathtaking forest and Galaalti Hotel and Spa for restorative therapies.





# MONACO: GLAM GETAWAY

The recently concluded MTM Think Tank, in Mumbai, focussed on attracting customers from lucrative segments like Indian weddings, corporates, MICE groups and luxury travellers to the Principality of Monaco, for enjoying the enduring popularity of Monaco as a high-end business and leisure destination

TT BUREAU



Tucked in Southern Europe and sitting between Italian and French Riviera on the shores of the Mediterranean, the royal Principality of Monaco is a gorgeous and glittering stretch of land, known for its seductive scenery, with its deep blue sea, swaying palm trees, and balmy weather. Despite its small size, Monaco is a renowned destination, known for its glamour, hospitality and entertainment. Located at 25km from Cote d'Azur International Airport (at Nice, in France), Monaco is well-connected to more than 100 international destinations via Nice Airport, including

daily flights to and from Europe's main hubs. Monaco exudes an air of extravagance, which can be seen in its upscale hotels, designer boutiques, and opulent restaurants. In the past few years, several successful campaigns regarding its potential as a great MICE destination have led to increase in tourism in the principality.

Keeping Monaco at the core and powered by Visit Monaco, this MTM Corporate Think Tank discussion was centred on, 'MICE in Monaco', which resulted into a brainstorming session among corporate decision makers of the industry. Held on





February 14, 2019, at Hyatt Regency, Mumbai, the discussion included delegate Rajeev Nangia, Chief Operating Officer, TRAC Representations (I) Pvt Ltd.

Rajeev Nangia addressed the gathering with the destination offerings and shared why India is important to Monaco. The discussion focussed on 'MICE in Monaco', a country that offers enriching experiences to MICE travellers, including the stunning Oceanographic Museum and 6m. deep Aquarium, Museum of Racing Cars and Vintage Cars, Casinos, Annual Formula One Grand Prix, Living the high life – Shopping and Nightlife, apart from Engaging Road Trips to nearby destinations in France and Italy, Memorable Cuisine, and Incomparable Riviera Culture and Heritage, to pull up a great event together.

The discussion brought out awareness about destination offerings and why Monaco is a must visit destination among global, high-end MICE travellers. Rajeev Nangia shared his views regarding how Indian market has been a great contributor towards tourism in Monaco in the past few years, with 4-6 conferences and incentives from India held every year in Monaco and, in 2017, Monaco jumped to 14th position from 22nd rank, in terms of global arrivals.

The session further developed into a round table discussion, which was well attended by leading corporate travel purchasers. Rajeev Nangia addressed queries of buyers over the 120-minute session, which was moderated by Kamal Gill, Director-OptiMICE Events Pvt Ltd. Other speakers for the event included – Jai Tondak, Vice President & Head - Corporate Service Group,



nThrive; Sachin Khanna, Head - Administration, Hexagon India; Tapojit Sur Roy, DVP - Functional Head Administration, Bandhan Bank; Aditi Mohan, Vice President - Corporate Services, FNF India Private Limited; Bibin Jose, Manager - Global Travel, IBS Software Private Limited; Nisheed Gopalakrishnan, Corporate



Services - Travel, UST Global; Neeraj Rathee, VP – Premises Infrastructure & Procurement, Fullerton India Credit Company Limited; Nirmal Chandnani, Head-Travel Management, GMR Group; Pramod Shetty, Director - ICRES Travel & Transport COE, Capgemini Technology Services India Limited; S Bobby Jena, VP - Procurement & Operations, Indiannica Learning Pvt. Ltd; Pankaj Dalal, APAC Travel Lead, NICE Interactive Solutions India Pvt. Ltd; Sonia Makhija, Vice President, MasterCard; Warren Gladstone, VP - Chief Security Officer, Administration & Transport, Hinduja



Global Solutions (HGS); Gary Grover, VP - Administration, HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company Limited; Vibhu, Narayan, Vice President- India Head: Corporate Services - Jio, Reliance Industries Limited; Rajesh Chaprala, Sr. Manager - Global Travel Sourcing & Administration, Lupin Limited, to name a few.

The MTM Corporate Think Tank provided an interactive platform for the who's who of Corporate MICE & Travel decision makers to discover solutions to the challenges faced while planning and hosting an international business event in the Principality of Monaco.



# MTM+LLTM: WHERE THE BEST CONVERGE

The 18th MTM+LLTM event held at NESCO Exhibition Center, Mumbai, on February 15, 2019, went off seamlessly, providing a unique platform for India's leading Corporate Buyers to interact and explore business opportunities with Service providers catering to the MICE, Luxury and Leisure travel industry

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The 18th edition of the MICE Travel Mart (MTM) and Luxury & Leisure Travel Mart (LLTM), organised by OptiMICE Events Pvt Ltd, went off to a flying start with an impressive gathering of over 300 seasoned professionals, who congregated at the Convention Hall at NESCO Exhibition Center, Mumbai. Amongst those present were pan-India Corporate purchasers, Luxury and Leisure travel agents, and other travel-service providers. There were tailored knowledge sessions aimed at event planners and other buyers looking to stay ahead of trends and learn about the industry's hottest topics in the emerging meetings and events market.

The event saw a footfall of over 400 invited buyers and created a hi-energy business platform for Buyers and Sellers of the MICE, Luxury and Leisure travel segments.



In attendance at the MTM+LLTM event were an impressive assemblage of senior executives from the Corporate world, leading Hotels, Destination Management Companies, National Tourism Boards, State Tourism Boards, Tour Operators, Wedding Planners and Event Planners. Visitors enjoyed one-to-one





business meetings with exhibitors, with a range of networking events and targeted educational sessions.

The 60 fixed corporate-led meetings at the REVERSE MARKETPLACE saw buyers from Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Pune, Calcutta and Mumbai in face-to-face meetings with exhibitors in a calm, unhurried and relaxed environment. The event witnessed a strong blend of returning and new exhibitors, which include international exhibitors SOTC, Sheraton, Radisson Hotel Group, Singapore Airlines, Hyatt, Best Western Hotels & Resorts, Malaysia Tourism, etc.

As with earlier events and lending credence to the occasion, was the presence of noteworthy dignitaries, such as Mohd. Hafiz Hashim, Director, India, Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board; Nishant Pittie, Founder – EaseMyTrip; Jagat Mehta, President – ETAA; Iqbal Mulla, President – Global Tourism Corporation; Gladwyn Pinto, Exec. Secretary General– TAFI; Anoop Kanuga, Managing Committee Member – TAAI; Vasuki Sundaram, Chairman IATO – Maharashtra Chapter; and Kewal Gill, Chairman, Gill India Group. Eminent personalities represented associations like TAAI, TAFI, IATO, ETAA and ADTOI.







The event was partnered by Destination Canada as Principal Country Partner, EaseMyTrip as Corporate Travel Partner, Treasure India as Gold Partner, Eco Rent A Car as Mobility Partner, and NESCO Exhibition Center as Hospitality Partner. The event was supported by Incredible India, TAAI, TAFI, IATO, ETAA and ADTOI.

Kamal Gill, Director, OptiMICE Events Pvt Ltd, addressed the gathering, saying, "India's corporate meeting and event market is a mixed bag. On the one hand, corporate spend in MICE segment is expected to show a significant increase over the next few years. On the other hand, increased pressure to show return on investment (ROI) for their meetings and events will result in cost control by corporations, resulting in tighter budgets."

The meet was activated with the MICE Seminar that included a Destination Panel Discussion on Destination Canada. The lively discussion highlighted the signature experiences that Canada

offers to globetrotters, Luxury and MICE travellers, visiting the country for its sheer beauty, incomparable culture and heritage, and other unparalleled experiences. There were prominent delegates from the Corporate, Travel and Event sectors, like Zeelam Chaubal, Director, Kesari MICE; SD Nandakumar, President & Country Head B2B & Forex, SOTC; Carl Vaz, CEO & Strategic Director, India, GSA – Destination Canada; Birju C Gariba, CEO & Exec Director, Platinum Incentives and Events; and Gaurav Seth, Vice President, Thomas Cook. The panel was moderated by Kamal Gill, Director, OptiMICE Events Pvt Ltd. The seminar took note of new trends in the Luxury and MICE space and proceeded on a successful note, promising newer business avenues for delegates. This session was followed by an interesting and educational Destination Presentation on Canada for travel agents through a video tour of the country.







The event saw a galaxy of corporates. Some of the top companies at MTM+LLTM were Godrej Industries, Capgemini Technology Services India, Reliance Industries, MasterCard, GMR Group, HDFC Life Insurance Company, Indianna Learning, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., Reliance Infrastructure, Yes Bank, Tata Motors, Aegon Life Insurance Company, CignaTTK Health Insurance Company, Lupin Limited, Sharekhan Limited, UltraTech Cements, Raymond Limited, Tata Sky Limited, Welspun Group, Willis Towers Wilson, Aditya Birla Management Corporation, Essel Mining & Industries, Zycus Infotech, Oberoi Realty, AGS Transact

Technologies, VIBGYOR Group of Schools, SBI Life Insurance Company, Edelweiss Financial Services, Reliance Capital, Asus India, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Accelya Kale Solutions, Micro Labs Limited, HTC Global Services (India), Hinduja Global Solutions (HGS), etc.

The event received a great response from the hand-picked invited corporate travel purchasers, travel agents, wedding planners, exhibitors, and other buyers, making for a successful business endeavour. The event concluded with cocktails in the evening, thereby providing an informal networking opportunity for exhibitors and buyer delegates.

## NETWORKING AT ITS BEST

The experience is very nice and the event has been very well organised. The REVERSE MARKETPLACE concept is absolutely perfect. We've met many corporates and travel agents from the industry. We got enough opportunities for interaction. Also, administratively, the event was very well organised.

ADITYA SHAMSHER MALLA,  
DOUBLE TREE BY HILTON, PUNE - CHINCHWAD

This is our first participation at the event, since we launched our new hotel recently. This is an excellent opportunity to showcase our newly opened hotel. People are very happy to see a new player in the Hospitality Industry and I'm really thankful to the organisers for bringing buyers and sellers together on one platform. REVERSE MARKETPLACE is best for time efficiency and productivity, wherein we meet so many corporate clients in just a span of one day.

ANSHUL GOSWAMI, DIRECTOR OF SALES AND MARKETING  
VIVIDUS HOTELS, BENGALURU





The experience has been perfect for us, as we met around 60+ senior corporates at the REVERSE MARKETPLACE. This is a much better experience compared with other B2B events. The corporates that we met today were very positive and co-operative.

ARJUN BAHRI, SR. VICE PRESIDENT, **EASEMYTRIP**

Amazing platform! REVERSE MARKETPLACE is a great concept – an effective, efficient, and innovative tool to boost our business. This is our first participation, and we are happy with the event.

DUSHYANT SINGH NARUKA, CROWNE MEETING DIRECTOR, **CROWNE PLAZA JAIPUR**

We have had a very good experience and the people we got to meet were decision makers in the industry. I would like to see more international hotels and tourism bodies participate in the event. REVERSE MARKETPLACE is a fantastic idea and we met many corporates at the RMP session.

BRAJESH THAKUR, REGIONAL SALES DIRECTOR SOUTH ASIA, **RADISSON HOTEL GROUP**

It's a very good platform for exhibitors to showcase their products. We've been participating year on year, and the best thing is we get to meet so many corporates in a single day which saves us a lot of time. Today, we've met many corporates, which is just great!

ROHIT MHATRE, REGIONAL MANAGER WEST, **INDIA TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD.**

The event is very promising and we hope to receive best results from this mart.

SARIKA BULSARA DALVI, REGIONAL HEAD SALES (WEST), **THE RAINTREE HOTELS**

The entire session has been very satisfactory and we've met some new corporate clients. We had some very interactive sessions with the corporates. The main reason to come to this event was to meet new clients and understand their requirements. The event has been very helpful in achieving that for us.

DINESH BARAI, VICE PRESIDENT – WEST & SOUTH ASIA (MICE), **CLUB 7**

The entire exhibition is really good and it has been very helpful in making contacts, since there are many corporates at the mart. This event is a win-win situation for us, as we get to interact directly with our prospective clients. We've met many clients. The organisers have managed the event very well.

SUPRIYA, SALES MANAGER, **THE INDIAN HOTELS COMPANY LTD.**



It's been a pleasure to come here and meet some very interesting people from the travel fraternity, including corporates and travel agents. All in all, it was a well-spent day and we hope to receive good footfall from MICE travellers in Austria after this.

RENUKA SHOREY, ANTO REPRESENTATIVE, **ANTO**





MTM+LLTM is a great mix of travel agents, corporate travel purchasers, industry experts, and destination management companies. The panel discussion was very educating because we learnt a lot about Destination Canada and MICE Industry. Since, it's a one-day event, we get maximum return on time compared to two-day events. Today, I personally met several corporates from the industry and my team interacted with them. We met pan-India and Bombay-based travel agents and travel management companies. All in all, it was a good promotional event for Eco Rent A Car and Europcar.

ADITYA LOOMBA, JOINT MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
**ECO RENT A CAR AND EUROPCAR**

The experience is good and we've managed to meet a lot of corporates. In events to come, we would like to meet more such corporate decision makers from the industry.

BLANDINA FERNANDES, SR. MANAGER,  
**TRAVELPORT**

We feel it's a great platform to showcase our properties. This being our first participation, we've got to meet several new clients.

SANDEEP NADRE,  
GENERAL MANAGER, SALES & MARKETING,  
**FARIYAS HOTELS & RESORTS, LONAVALA**

Our experience has been very good at MTM+LLTM. Till now, we've met many travel agents and my team has met several corporates as of now. It's been good overall.

KEVIN MARTIS, GENERAL MANAGER,  
**THE FERN HOTELS & RESORTS**

It's been a good experience for us, as we got to showcase our products to many travel agents and corporates. Overall it was a good exposure for our company.

PRAVEEN KUMAR, SALES MANAGER,  
**JUNGLE LODGES AND RESORTS**

The experience is really nice, the stall and every other arrangement is good. The organising team has been very supportive. The session on Canada was really very educating for us.

AGNES, OPERATIONS,  
**KESARI MICE**

We have met some of the big corporates here at the MTM+LLTM event. It's been a very good experience for us overall. Whatever we expected, we got here at the mart. Overall arrangements have been very good.

AMOL SATHYE, MICE TEAM,  
**VEENA WORLD**







It's been great being here, and we've had a very good experience at MTM+LLTM.

**BRIDGET BRAGANZA, SALES OFFICER, SIA**

It's been a good day for us. We've had lot of interactions with new clients and we met many corporates. MTM+LLTM is good for us, in the sense that we get to interact with clients directly.

**RONALD FERNANDES, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF SALES, THE LEELA PALACES, HOTELS AND RESORTS**



It's been very good participating here at MTM+LLTM. We've met lot of buyers, sellers and travel agents today.

**SUHAIL AHMED, DOS EXECUTIVE, TREASURE TOURISM CORPORATION LTD.**









# MTM&LLTM: RECOGNISING THE BEST

At the recently concluded 18th edition of MTM&LLTM 2019, held at NESCO Exhibition Center, Mumbai, MTM Corporate Star Awards recognised achievers from the Corporate world in various segments

MTM recognised corporates for their singular achievements and for setting benchmarks in the field of Business Travels, MICE activities and Training Programmes, by honouring them with the MTM Corporate Star Awards. The awards were presented by Iqbal Mulla, President - Global Tourism Corporation; Tajinder Singh, Vice President Sales & Marketing - India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, Best Western Hotels & Resorts; and Arjun Bahri, Senior Vice President at EaseMyTrip.com.

## THE CORPORATE STAR AWARDS RECIPIENTS INCLUDED:

- ❖ **Accelya Kale Solutions Limited** for Best Incentive Programme for Employees/Associates.
- ❖ **Aditya Birla Management Corporation Pvt. Ltd.** for Most Well-Planned Business Travel.
- ❖ **AGS Transact Technologies Ltd.** for Best Meeting/Exhibition Programme.
- ❖ **Asus India Pvt. Ltd.** for Best Incentive Programme for Distributor/Dealers.
- ❖ **Raymond Ltd.** for Most Well-Planned Business Travel.
- ❖ **Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd.** for Most Well-Planned Business Travel.
- ❖ **Essel Mining & Industries Ltd.** for Best Training Programme for Employees/Associates.
- ❖ **Godrej Industries Ltd.** for Most Well-Planned Business Travel.
- ❖ **Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd.** for Best Meeting/Exhibition Programme.
- ❖ **HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company Ltd.** for Most Well-Planned Business Travel.
- ❖ **Lupin Limited** for Best Incentive Programme for Employees/Associates.
- ❖ **Reliance Industries Ltd.** for Most Well-Planned Business Travel.
- ❖ **Reliance Capital Ltd.** for Best Incentive Programme for Distributor/Dealers.
- ❖ **Sharekhan Ltd.** for Most Well-Planned Business Travel.
- ❖ **Vodafone Idea Ltd.** for Best Incentive Programme for Distributor/Dealers.
- ❖ **Welspun Group** for Most Well-Planned Business Travel.
- ❖ **Fullerton India Credit Company Ltd.** for Best Incentive Programme for Employees/Associates.
- ❖ **Willis Towers Watson** for Most Well-Planned Business Travel.
- ❖ **Reliance Infrastructure** for Most Well-Planned Business Travel.
- ❖ **SBI Life Insurance Company Limited** for Best Training Programme for Employees/Associates.
- ❖ **Bharat Bijlee Limited** for Most Well-Planned Business Travel.











# CONNECTING MINDS, CREATING THE FUTURE

Expo 2020 Dubai will take the emirate's standing as a world-class leisure, culture and business destination to the next level, helping increase tourism and cementing the UAE's reputation as an international business hub, says Sumathi Ramanathan, Director – Destination Marketing, and Dr Shaun Vorster, VP Business Programming - Content & Programming, Expo 2020

## TT BUREAU

In November 2013, Dubai won the bid to host the World Expo in 2020. Since then, the emirate has embarked on a mission to deliver an outstanding exposition and a world-class event that will create a positive impact in the UAE and beyond.

Expo 2020 Dubai's theme 'Connecting Minds, Creating the Future' is set to bring the world together for a six-month celebration of human ingenuity and progress, with national pavilions showcasing the latest in innovation and technology, cultural programming, and other experiential offerings. Expo 2020 will be a global destination with something for everyone, whether it be thought-provoking exhibits, events and dialogues or food, music and culture from around the world.

Today's Traveller team caught up with Sumathi Ramanathan, Director – Destination Marketing, Expo 2020 Dubai, and Dr Shaun Vorster, VP Business Programming, Content & Programming, Expo 2020 Dubai. They shared insights into the creation of the first World Expo to be held in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia (MEASA) and what the six month-long event aims to achieve with its wide range of event offerings and visitor experiences.

Ramanathan said: "We are turning our theme of 'Connecting Minds, Creating the Future' into reality by creating an unforgettable visitor experience that can be customised to suit

every preference. No matter who you are or where you're from, you are guaranteed to find something to inspire you at Expo 2020 Dubai.

"We expect to attract 25 million visits between 20 October, 2020 and 10 April, 2021 – that's equivalent to welcoming the population of Australia through our gates in only six months. More than 200 participants, including companies, multilateral organisations, educational institutions and 190 countries, are coming together to deliver a global celebration of human ingenuity and progress.

"From live entertainment and world culture, to activities that bring to life education, health and well-being in fun and engaging ways, the next World Expo will feature something to suit every taste."





She added, "We have three major thematic districts at Expo 2020 Dubai – inspired by the key drivers of future progress – Opportunity, Mobility and Sustainability. The Opportunity District, which is where the India Pavilion will be located, will focus on how each of us can support the Sustainable Development Goals. The Mobility District will explore the movement of people, goods, and ideas. Hence, one of its key elements is travel. The Sustainability District will look at how we can continue human development in harmony with the planet."

"Expo 2020 will also collaborate with a multitude of travel, tourism and MICE organisations."

Elaborating on the promotion of Expo 2020 Dubai in India, Dr Shaun Vorster said, "Throughout 2019, we will be actively engaging with the Indian MICE market, participating in industry tradeshow and visiting a number of cities across the country, in collaboration with the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing. India is a very significant market for Expo 2020, and we chose to start our year at SATTE 2019 to engage with the events industry, to promote our newly launched Dubai Exhibition Centre – a state-of-the-art facility co-located within Expo 2020 Dubai – and to discuss the business opportunity this presents to the market in India."

#### EXPO 2020 DUBAI – HIGHLIGHTS

- This global six-month celebration of creativity and innovation, to be held from October 20, 2020 to April 10, 2021, will offer an incredible array of experiences for families, groups and travellers in a state-of-the-art setting. Expo 2020 will be a perfect time to engage in meaningful dialogues that will have a positive impact on your business, while renewing your connections or strengthening ties.



*"We believe our MICE offering is unique and we are excited to tell the world all about the opportunities to host events at Expo 2020."*

-Dr. Shaun Vorster



*"Already, 190 countries have confirmed their participation in Expo 2020, including India, which will have one of the biggest country pavilions."*

-Sumathi Ramanathan

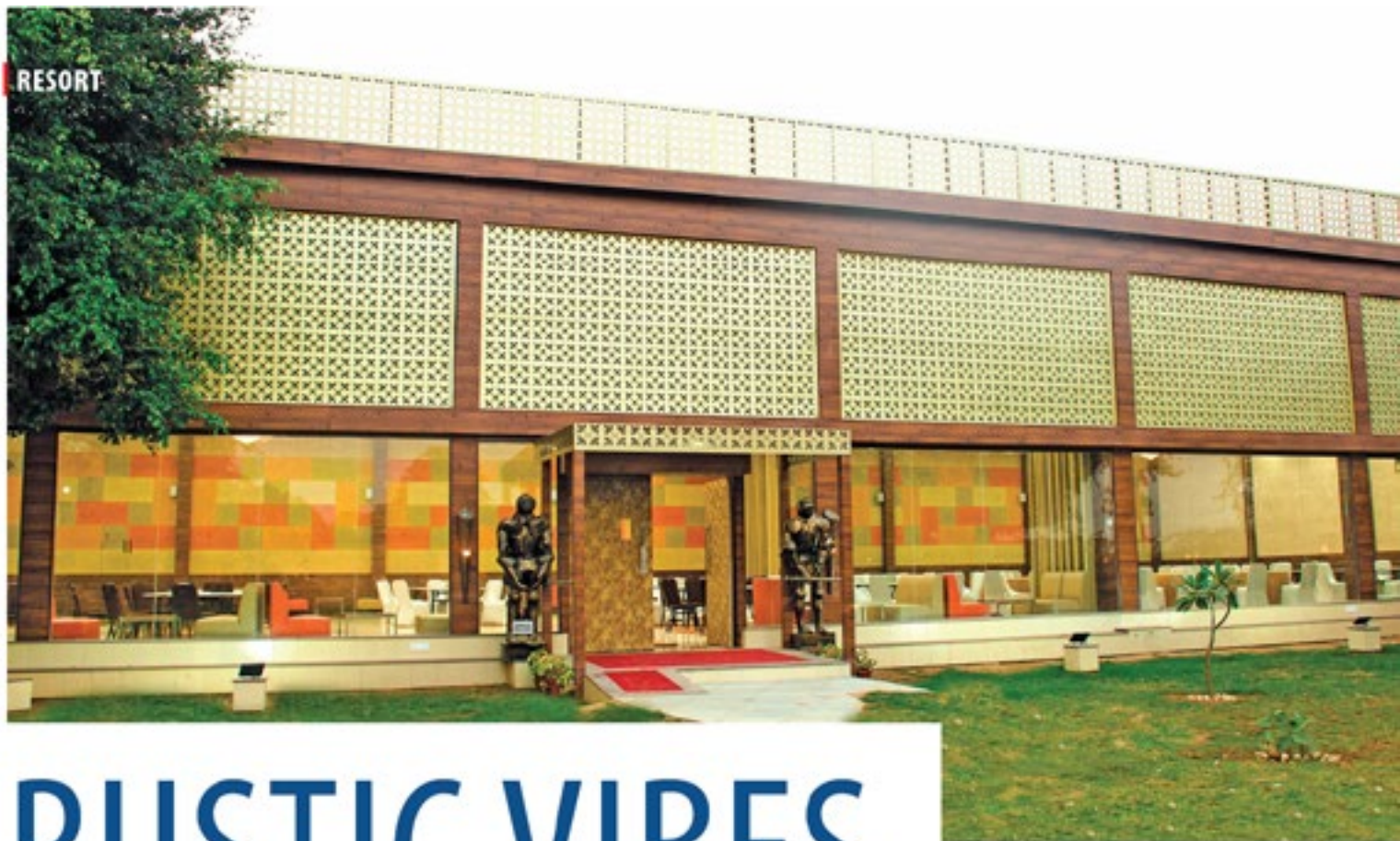
- It is the first World Expo to be held in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia (MEASA) region, and the first to be hosted by an Arab nation.
- Marking an important milestone for the UAE, Expo 2020 Dubai coincides with the federation of the UAE's 50th anniversary in 2021.
- Organisers expect to record 25 million visits, with 70 percent of visitors expected to be from outside the UAE, the highest proportion of international visitors in the Expo history of World Expos.
- 30,000 volunteers will be the face of Expo 2020, helping to welcome the world to the UAE.

#### THE EXPO 2020 SITE

The 4.38sq.km-long Expo 2020 site is located close to Al Maktoum International Airport and is easily accessible from Dubai International Airport, Abu Dhabi International Airport and Dubai and Abu Dhabi Cruise Terminals. The Expo 2020 site will attract millions of visitors from around the world. The site will feature supporting amenities and facilities, including the Expo 2020 Village for participants and staff accommodation, warehousing, logistics, transport nodes, hotels, retail and a public park. The Expo gated area will house themed pavilions of 190 countries, showcasing each one's unique architecture, culture, technology and scientific innovations. Interactive exhibitions and engaging content will explore Expo 2020 Dubai's themes of Opportunity, Mobility and Sustainability in a fun and entertaining way.

The site will also offer a wide variety of food and retail options, enabling visitors to enjoy culinary delights from around the globe and unique shopping experiences. Extensive hospitality offerings and state-of-the-art conference, meeting spaces and entertainment areas for private hire will also be available.





# RUSTIC VIBES

In conversation with Roop Sodhi, Executive Director - Club & Sales, Best Western Resort Country Club, Manesar

## TT BUREAU

**E**scape the humdrum of city life and enter the serene and soothing ambience of Best Western Resort Country Club at Manesar, for an experiential journey in a pastoral ambience and wide open spaces. Located at a relaxed, 45-minute drive from Delhi Airport, on the Delhi - Jaipur Highway, the resort is the preferred choice for conferences, events, family holidays, weekend getaways, business meetings, and weddings, making for an ideal destination for both business and leisure seekers. Bollywood, too, set their sights on this property in 1995, choosing it as their location for the second half of the famous blockbuster film DDLJ, which was shot amidst the beautiful yellow mustard fields around the resort.

In conversation with Today's Traveller, Roop Sodhi, Executive Director - Club & Sales, Best Western Resort Country Club, shares what makes the resort a favoured destination for corporates, families and millennials looking for some quality time away from the busy, hectic life of cities.

### According to you, what defines the USPs of your hotel?

The resort is situated near Manesar, away from the pollution and congestion of urban life and is the preferred choice of Leisure and Business travellers on the lookout for large open spaces. Spread over 50 acres of greenery, in the lap of nature, the hotel boasts an authentic rural ambience and pristine beauty. Unmatched facilities, including state-of-the-art indoor-outdoor

leisure activities, Adventure Games, Mini Amusement Park, Children Activity Room, DJ Dance Floor, Rain Dance Floor, an on-site international standard Cricket Ground, lighted Lawn Tennis Court, Badminton and Cricket Net Practice Courts, a







*"Suffused with acres of greenery and located conveniently from Delhi-NCR, Best Western Resort Country Club, at Manesar, is a home away from home and offers many activities and adventures for an experiential trip."*

*-Roop Sodhi*

Bird Gazing Machan, a small Fishing Lake, and animal joy rides make it an experiential resort, which is unique and distinct, like no other. We provide highly personalised services, all with a smile. Our motto: No detail is too small and no effort is too big ever.

#### **What are the challenges that you face in the marketplace?**

Currently, Gurugram is over-capacitated with hotels, which leads to cut-throat competition. The challenge for us is to stay ahead of the competition. To achieve this we do not reduce our prices, but instead provide some attractive freebies to our prospective customers. Further, unlike city hotels, we do not have a balanced daily traffic; for example, on weekends all our 120 rooms are full and on weekdays the traffic is rather low. However, on account of our unmatched facilities for events, we get a large number of business travellers for Conferences, Corporate Dayouts, Weddings and other Trade Shows, which is a profitable business segment.

#### **What does the hotel offer with regard to meetings and events?**

The resort is a prestigious destination for Conventions, Exhibitions, Dealer Meets, Product Launches, Adventure Games, Destination Weddings and other events. We have an exclusive state-of-the-art 150,000sq.ft.-covered and open garden area, including 9,000sq.ft. Banquet/Convention hall for events, with a capacity to accommodate over 1000 people. These features make the resort a preferred destination for business travellers.

#### **How do you maintain a work life balance?**

Ever so often, when the resort sees large numbers, the staff faces the challenge with their impeccable service and with a smile, even though the events may well continue till late into the night, as it gives them great job satisfaction when the guests appreciate their commendable efforts. The resort provides free boarding and lodging to about 70% of its employees and free lodging facility to employees who live with their families. The children of the employees are able to study in an adjacent Govt. Higher Secondary Co-education School and in the Amity International School, which is about 2km away from the resort complex. During their off-hours, the employees enjoy playing volley ball and cricket, and their families have access to the Mini Amusement Park and other outdoor leisure activities of the resort. Further, the resort management offers good salaries/wages and perks to its employees. All these amenities make our employees very happy and, as a result, the resort has a high retention rate of employees. All these features contribute to an excellent work-life balance at the resort.







# RETREAT BY THE COAST

Experience the otherworldly destination of Desaru Coast, where every moment is an Aha! Moment...

## TT BUREAU

**D**esaru Coast, in Malaysia, was recently showcased at SATTE 2019 by Desaru Development Holdings One Sdn. Bhd. The beautiful Malaysian coast boasts a 17-km-long pristine beachfront that not many destinations have in the world. The options of events or activities, whether it's by the beach or the garden of the hotel, apart from those held indoors, are endless. Desaru Coast is all about being outdoors amidst sun, sea and sand. Thus, staying true to its DNA, the company encourages many of these events and activities to be held outdoors. Today's Traveller recently caught up with Roslina Arbak, Chief Executive Officer, Desaru Development Holdings One Sdn. Bhd, who shed some insight on what makes Desaru Coast, a destination with a difference, whether it's for Destination Weddings, MICE, individual travellers, or family holidays.

**What attracts Desaru Coast to the India outbound market and what are the USPs of Desaru Coast which you will be showcasing to Indian travellers?**

The USPs of Desaru Coast are:

- Desaru Coast aspires to raise the bar of hospitality standards in Malaysia. The integrated destination is built and infused with world-class hospitality experiences through its globally renowned offerings, such as the Hard Rock Hotel Desaru



*“Our whole business proposition rests on the fact that we want to cater to everyone, from Gen X to the Millennials. We curate our offerings so as to make them more holistic, more enriching for travellers visiting Desaru Coast.”*

*-Roslina Arbak*



Coast, The Westin Desaru Coast Resort, Anantara Desaru Coast Resort & Villas and One&Only Desaru Coast.

Hard Rock Hotel Desaru Coast commenced its operations in September 2018, while the remaining luxury accommodations are scheduled to open in stages, in 2019.

- First-time travellers to Desaru Coast can unwind at Desaru Coast Riverside, a 23-acre waterfront landscape retail and lifestyle village offering retail, F&B and entertainment. As for our friends from India, who are looking to be pampered on their holiday, a visit to the Heavenly Spa by The Westin or the Rock Spa at Hard Rock Hotel is recommended.
- For travellers with young ones, the Hard Rock Roxity Kids Club in Hard Rock Hotel Desaru Coast, the largest of its kind in the region, comes with a water pool area for kids. Those looking for fun activities that they can do together as a family shouldn't miss out on the Desaru Coast Adventure Waterpark, which boasts a unique mix of 20 different wet and dry rides and slides, including Southeast Asia's first water coaster and largest wave pool in the region.
- Indian golf enthusiasts can also experience The Els Club Desaru Coast, a stunning 45-hole golf course manicured by world renowned golfers – Ernie Els and Vijay Singh. The Els Club Desaru Coast is also home to the Els Performance Golf Academy, which offers state-of-the-art golf training facilities and the EPGA Par 3 Academy course, offering fun for everyone, even for a first-timer. Additionally, we have a well-equipped conference centre for Indian businesses looking to host an event in the region.
- Beyond the borders of the integrated resort, those seeking to explore the area can visit the nearby fruit farm and crocodile farm; and for nature-loving guests who seek to connect with nature, there is the scenic cycling path, mangrove forest and the pristine Desaru beach to explore.
- With its extensive range of activities and facilities, all located in close proximity, we are sure that Desaru Coast will bring about a truly endless escape for every Indian traveller.



#### What are the challenges for Desaru Coast as a tourism destination vis a vis India?

Being a new destination, the first challenge we need to address is awareness of Desaru Coast among Indian travellers. To address this, we are already collaborating with Tourism Malaysia and their international office in India to raise awareness about Desaru Coast as well as participating in regional tourism trade events, such as the recent SATTE 2019. Besides that, we also work closely with local travel wholesalers, travel agents and international destination wedding planners in India to stimulate interest in Malaysia's newest destination resort and provide the best packages and promotions.





# ALITALIA SPREADS ITS WINGS

On a jubilant note, after a successful first year, Nicola Bonacchi, Vice President, Leisure Sales & International Markets, and Emiliana Limosani, Vice President, Global Business Travel Sales & Commercial Partnerships, Alitalia Società Aerea Italiana S.P.A. discuss expansion plans, business strategy and challenges confronting Alitalia in India

**KAMAL GILL**

**A**litalia, Italy's former flag carrier and one of the largest airline companies in Europe, is in expansion spree in India. Nicola Bonacchi, Vice President, Leisure Sales & International Markets, and Emilia Limosani, Vice President, Global Business Travel Sales and Commercial Partnerships spoke candidly about the future plans of the company to expand its business in India, especially in the extremely competitive business travel segment.



*Nicola Bonacchi*



**TT: In the event of your having completed one year, how do you rate your performance and how happy are you with it?**

**Nicola Bonacchi:** We are very happy, as we have crossed the first year with extremely good results. We share a fantastic rapport with our partners on the field and had a load factor of 83.5 percent. It was great for us in the first year, with sometimes more than 90 percent load factor in Economy Class and 76 percent load factor in Business Class. The focus this year is the Business Class in particular, but we will work with different segments. We will concentrate on leisure, because we know that in India, there is a market for leisure.

We have a great working relationship with all travel agents and had a successful meeting where we shared our strategy and results. Worldwide, Alitalia increased its revenue by 7 percent this year to 190 million Euros, making it one of the best years for us within the last 10 years. Alitalia is diligent when it comes to work and ranks second in Europe when it comes to punctuality. These elements will help greatly in enhancing our position in the business market and the business segment.

To discuss these issues, I would like to introduce my colleague, *Emiliana Limosani*, Vice President, Global Business Travel Sales & Commercial Partnerships, Alitalia Società Aerea Italiana S.P.A.



**Emiliana Limosani:** We are working to develop our strategy to increase the high yield segment and to drive growth in sales in the business travel segment. We are open and have launched a new route with the Delhi flight. With regard to the business travel segment, we are working closely with the TMCs in terms of new agreements, and have been working with corporates since the last three months. We have already signed around 50 contracts and 50 agreements with them, which is an optimistic number. We wish to continue working with both Italian and Indian companies. We want to work on expanding our client portfolio globally. When it comes to our product, we have an exemplary product for the business travel segment. Our Business Class has totally reclining seats and food is of exceptional quality. Wi-Fi service is free for Business and Premium Economy travellers. We have a new lounge in Fiumicino Airport for passengers travelling point to point or passengers travelling to North or South America.

**TT: How is the MICE market? Are you also tapping that market?**

**Emiliana Limosani:** MICE is part of the business travel segment. We are working on that and plan to organise trips



to Italy for Indian companies. We can offer very exclusive services for groups, starting from commercial prospective during the organisation all the way through to special and ad hoc airport assistance.

**TT: Are you planning to expand your network in India?**

**Nicola Bonacchi:** Our target now is to achieve a good profitability on the Delhi flight. We have a good load factor and the aim is to increase the average coupon value. When we arrive at a good profitability, the next step in India will be Mumbai. Regarding new destinations, we plan to open in Washington DC, in May, which is great for government traffic and for corporates or companies who travel there. All our destinations in North America are significant for leisure markets. We have a daily flight to Toronto, double daily flights to New York, daily flights to Miami, and plans are afoot to open again to Chicago. We also have a daily flight to Los Angeles. Mid-April, we have a new destination slated for leisure and MICE, which is Costa Smeralda, in the north of Sardinia. We will also increase our position in Africa, having increased one flight more to South Africa; and from next winter, we confirm Maldives and Mauritius.

We are trying to push as much as we can on the numbers, because we want to confirm the results we have this year. India is one of our most important markets, where we have made big investments. We have a strong team in Delhi and in Mumbai and we realise that the competition is strong, but we wish to strive hard and play our cards right with all that we have at our disposal in order to steer the volume from our competitors to us.

**TT: Is Delhi giving you the numbers from the feeder areas?**

**Nicola Bonacchi:** Yes. We have volume from Calcutta and Mumbai, but it is mainly leisure. Direct flights to Italy are preferred. But, we will take one step at a time. Our strategy is to arrive at a good revenue from Delhi, with the next step being Mumbai.

**TT: Finally, in 2019, what do you think is your biggest challenge?**

**Nicola Bonacchi:** The challenge from the India market is to increase the average coupon value in line with our target, which is to increase our presence in the leisure and business segments. When we arrive at the stipulated number, we will be ready to open our Mumbai flights.





*"Being the only 5-Star hotel in the states of Bihar and Jharkhand, Radisson Blu Ranchi is a name to reckon with when it comes to guest satisfaction, exclusive facilities and incomparable hospitality."*

*-Santanu Guha Roy*

# URBAN PLEASURE

In conversation with Santanu Guha Roy, General Manager, Radisson Blu Ranchi

## TT BUREAU

A beacon of cutting-edge style and sophistication, Radisson Blu Ranchi is the first international hotel in the states of Bihar and Jharkhand. In conversation with Today's Traveller, Santanu Guha Roy, General Manager, Radisson Blu Ranchi, reveals what makes the hotel a go-to destination for Leisure and Business travellers.

### What are the USPs of Radisson Blu Ranchi?

Located in close proximity to the major business hubs of the city, Radisson Ranchi is the only Upper Upscale and 5-Star hotel in the entire state. Located at a 5-km distance from Ranchi Airport and 1.5km from the railway station, the downtown hotel is an upbeat destination, featuring largest pillarless banquet hall in the entire state, rooms facing the swimming pool and panoramic views of the city, state-of-the-art Gymnasium, a rejuvenating Spa, sprawling Lobby with mirror-finish water body with an art installation of boat floating on the water, and an array of restaurants.

### Tell us about the Convention facilities at the hotel?

The hotel features an expansive 10,000sq.ft. banquet and conference space, fully equipped with a Business Centre, and can accommodate virtually any function from large-scale exhibitions and multimedia conferences to elaborate weddings and gala dinners. The tastefully designed Aura Hall combined with the Poolside makes for an unique Banqueting experience for guests. The hotel is conveniently suited for

business meetings, workshops, seminars, training sessions, banquets, product launches, etc. Whether it is a large conference with associates and delegates or an intimate private gathering for family and friends, our world-class facilities are customised to ensure that guests have a unique experience.

### Tell us about the Fine Dining experience at Radisson Blu Ranchi?

The hotel offers five F&B outlets. Experience world-class dishes spread across various cuisines in buffet and a la carte menu at:

**Waterfront:** An all-day diner serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. It serves a versatile menu all over the world in both buffet and a la carte.

**The Great Kabab Factory:** It is the Signature Indian Speciality restaurant of Radisson Hotels specialising in Kababs. A different menu is set for each day and guests are served unlimited servings of each dish, either vegetarian or non-vegetarian. TGKF serves only dinner. On Sunday, it remains open only for lunch.

**Skylit Lounge:** A chic and upscale service lounge, it is ideal for social or business meetings. It serves a fine selection of exquisite wines, whiskies, exotic cocktails and a wide range of bite-size snacks and soft beverages.

**Caramel, the bistro:** This Tea Lounge at the hotel entrance offers a wide range of freshly baked sweet and savoury delights along with a pastry counter. It serves an array of tea and coffee options with light snacks.

**HEROES, the bar:** Designed on the theme of a sports bar, the Heroes Bar reflects modernity with its high-end interiors. It's the perfect place to unwind.



# FIND YOUR FORTUNE IN THE MOUNTAINS

With spring in full bloom and summers approaching fast, it's time to pack your bags and set on for the hills to discover that same old love of being in the embrace of the majestic snow-capped mountains. No matter wherever you're headed to discover your love of mountains, there's a Fortune Hotel in each of these pristine hill destinations to look after you. So, this season, don't miss out on the warm hospitality and efficient services of Fortune Hotels while you enjoy your stay at any of their beautiful properties. Come, let Fortune take you home away from the madness of city life amidst rustlings of the woods and quietness of the hills to experience the best of leisure and business trips.



## Fortune Resort Heevan, Srinagar



Fortune Resort Heevan is set in the picturesque valley of Srinagar with a magnificent backdrop of the Zabarwan Mountains. This hotel is a wonderful blend of traditional Kashmiri architecture backed by new-age conveniences and efficient service for a pleasant stay in the city. The hotel is conveniently located with popular tourist spots such as Dal Lake, Shalimar Bagh and Nishat Bagh at a walking distance. The Srinagar International Airport is 24km away and takes approximately 35 minutes to reach.



Parking



Restaurant



Wi-Fi

**Distance from:** Dal Lake: 1.5 km | Shalimar Bagh: 2 km | Nishat Garden: 5 km | Indira Gandhi Tulip Garden: 6 km | Hazratbal Mosque: 6 km | Jawaharlal Nehru Botanical Garden: 7 km | Chashme Shahi Garden: 7 km

Nestled in the hills, Fortune Resort Grace is perched cosily on a pine-covered hill slope with an enchanting view of the Doon Valley. The hotel offers a selection of contemporary guest rooms tastefully designed in a contemporary décor and equipped with modern-day amenities. This is a hotel for leisure, recreation, family and corporate bonding, and a select venue for conferences.



Parking



Restaurant



Fitness  
Centre



Spa



Wi-Fi

**Distance from:** Dehradun Airport: 55 km | Mall Road/ Camel's Back Road: Walking distance | Gun Hill: 2 km | Lal Tibba/ Landour Market/ Mussoorie Lake/ Company Garden: 4-5 km

## Fortune Resort Grace, Mussoorie





# FORTUNE SELECT FOREST HILL, MAHIYA, NEAR KASAULI



Perched above the pine trees, bursting with fairytale charm stands the picturesque Fortune Select Forest Hill in Mahiya, near Kasauli. This charming hotel is located amidst a forest and on a hill, providing you with a secluded spot to disconnect from the madness of daily life and spend some quality time with your loved ones. The hotel is a 6-hour drive from Delhi NCR and 40 minutes from Chandigarh city. All rooms are designed with a fusion of classical, colonial and contemporary architecture and are loaded with the latest indulgent amenities. Guests can enjoy majestic mountain views from all the rooms. With outdoor seating facilities at various spots, guests can enjoy à la carte breakfasts, drinks and snacks, or even have a bonfire arranged. The hotel also features a sublime infinity pool with panoramic views and the illusion of swimming into the clouds. There is also a kids- only pool for the little guests. With a team of benevolent, dedicated and ever-smiling staff, Fortune Select Forest Hill is an ideal hotel for corporate off-sites or destination weddings for up to 250 guests.



**Distance from:** Chakki Mod: 13 km  
| Kasauli: 20 km | Shimla: 70 km |  
Solan: 25 km | Chandigarh Airport:  
60 km | Kalka Railway Station: 25 km



Parking



Restaurant



Wi-Fi



Activity  
Zone



Gymnasium



Swimming  
Pool



# FORTUNE SELECT CEDAR TRAIL, MASHOBRA, SHIMLA



Amidst the subtle beauty of the captivating locales of Mashobra stands the winsome Fortune Select Cedar Trail. Surrounded by oak, cedar and pine trees and at an altitude of 2100m. above sea level, the hotel is a scenic 20-minute drive from the Shimla Mall Road. Also known as the peaceful Shimla, Mashobra takes pride in being one of the most offbeat hill stations in India. The rooms, filled with natural light, are spacious with large bay windows and private balconies. All rooms offer stunning views of the majestic Himalayas and provide a sanctuary for ultimate relaxation and rejuvenation. Spanning two floors, the hotel features banqueting space for up to 300 guests. The hotel is fully geared for corporate off-sites and spectacular destination weddings that are sure to look right out of a fairy-tale story.

**Distance from:** Shimla Airport: 33 km | Chandigarh Airport: 130 km | Reserve Forest Sanctuary: 7 km | Kufri: 12 km | Mall Road (Shimla): 16 km | Jakhoo Temple: 10 km | Tattapani River: 44 km | Lakkar Bazar: 12 km | The Ridge: 13 km

**\*OPENING IN MARCH 2019**



Parking



Restaurant



Wi-Fi



Activity Zone



Gymnasium





## Fortune Park Moksha, McLeod Ganj



Surrounded by a thick cover of pine trees with a beautiful view of the snow-capped Dhauladhar mountain range, Fortune Park Moksha is located only 6 km from the Main Square and offers easy access to all the main attractions in and around McLeod Ganj. The hotel provides beautifully furnished spacious rooms with modern guest amenities and services. For relaxation and rejuvenation, there is a well-equipped Wellness Centre featuring swimming pool, gymnasium, steam, spa and sauna. With warm hospitality, panoramic views and meticulous attention to detail, the hotel provides an ideal retreat to travellers looking for leisure and peace.



Parking



Restaurant



Swimming Pool



Fitness Centre



Spa



Steam



Sauna



Wi-Fi

**Distance from:** Dharamshala Airport: 24 km | Dalai Lama Temple Complex: 6.5 km | Trekking/ Mountaineering/ Paragliding: in close proximity | Delhi NCR: 510 km | Chandigarh: 270 km

Set on the gentle slopes of Ooty, amidst lush green lawns and a colourful patterned garden, Fortune Resort Sullivan Court is a perfect destination to unwind and relax. The hotel offers well-appointed rooms with most of them providing scenic view of the slopes. The hotel offers comprehensive banquet facilities and is perfect for hosting destination weddings, offsite meetings and conferences. The hotel also features a choice of indoor games, such as billiards, snooker, carom, chess, table tennis, children's playpen and more, for a pleasant and memorable stay with family and friends.

## Fortune Resort Sullivan Court, Ooty



Parking



Restaurant



Fitness Centre



Wi-Fi

**Distance from:** Coimbatore Airport: 100 km | Ooty Railway Station/ Bus Terminal: 2 km | Rose Garden: walking distance | City Centre/ Commercial Street: 1 km | Botanical Garden: 2 km | Ooty Lake: 4 km | Tea Factories: 6 km

**FORTUNE**  
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For Fortune Hotels details & reservations,  
call **24x7 Toll Free 1800 102 2333, 1800 419 6444** or  
visit **[www.fortunehotels.in](http://www.fortunehotels.in)**



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EXPLORER





# BEYOND NIRVANA...

Take a stimulating journey on the Buddhist trail in Bihar and experience serenity, joy, well-being and sublime thoughts

**ABHISHEK PATHAK**

**T**aking a spiritual trek is not just at the dispensation of the believers, it's something that attracts us all. To discover the path taken by Gautama Buddha, some 2,543 years, is like delving in the past and present simultaneously. This season, head out to Bihar and experience what it's like to be in the constant fold of time, as you discover the state's rich cultural legacy, architectural wonders and heritage sites through its many Buddhist-era buildings.

## **BODH GAYA – ENLIGHTENING EXPERIENCE**

Often called the focal point of Buddhism in India, Bodh Gaya is the place where Gautama Buddha attained Enlightenment or Buddhata under what came to be known as the Bodhi Tree. An object of pilgrimage and veneration for both Hindus and Buddhists, the Mahabodhi Temple is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is one of the four major pilgrimage sites related to the life and times of Gautama Buddha.

The temple complex is located 110km from Patna and features the pyramidal Mahabodhi Temple, a diamond throne, and the holy Bodhi Tree. An architectural marvel in its own





right, the temple stands tall at 170ft, featuring Chhatras built atop the temple, symbolising the sovereignty of religion. The sanctum sanctorum has a black stone statue of Lord Buddha in the sitting posture, touching the earth with his right hand – the very posture in which he attained Enlightenment. The temple courtyard has several votive stupas, built 2,500 years ago.

Spend some time at Animesh Lochan Chaitya – the same spot, where several centuries ago, Lord Buddha spent an entire week looking unblinkingly and with gratitude at the Bodhi Tree. A must-visit spot on every traveller's itinerary, Bodh Gaya has many other tourist worthy spots as well – an 80-ft statue of Lord Buddha, a Buddha Kund, Rajayatana, Brahm Yoni, a Chinese temple and monastery, a Burmese temple, a Buddhist Monastery of Bhutan, an International Buddhist House and Japanese temple, a Thai temple and monastery, a Tibetan monastery and an archaeological museum.

### NALANDA – BEYOND THE MYTH

Your next stop on the Buddhist circuit should be in Nalanda, which takes you back to periods of antiquity. This ancient city lies 62km from Bodh Gaya and is renowned for its first residential international university of the world. Steeped in history and covered in awe-inspiring ruins, this is where you will find



the famous archaeological museum that houses a beautiful collection of a number of undamaged statues of Lord Buddha. To understand the significance and architectural grandeur of this place, it is highly recommended to hire local guides, whose colloquial anecdotes and insights will make your journey to this place interesting and worth visiting. Check out the stupas, monasteries, hostels, laboratories, meditation halls, lecture halls and temples inside this visual retreat.

### RAJGIR – WELLNESS ABODE

Located in a valley, the quaint little town of Rajgir lies 15km from Nalanda and it is believed that Lord Buddha spent many years here. Rajgir is best known for warm water springs with medicinal properties and the ropeway ride to the Shanti Stupa at Gridhakuta, built atop a hill by Japanese devotees. Take a dip in the warm waters before leaving for the Stupa, either by

taking a two-hour trek or using the ropeway to the site. Visit Sonbhandar caves, which are best for meditation; Venu Vana, a monastery built by King Bimbisara for Lord Buddha to reside in; Swarna Bhandar, which, it is still believed, holds a store of gold which dates back to King Jarasandh's rule.



### VAISHALI – ATTAINING NIRVANA

After the attainment of Enlightenment in Bodh Gaya, Lord Buddha is said to have visited Vaishali to preach his teachings on life, resulting in mass followers. A spiritual destination of great importance, this is where Buddha announced his proximity to Nirvana, which is one of the eight great events in the life of Buddha. It was here that he preached his last sermon at a Buddhist monastery in Kolhua, on the outskirts of Vaishali. Explore the old architectural beauty of this town through its many buildings, standing as testimony to an era of yore. Places of Buddhist interests include Ananda Stupa, KutagarasalaVihara, Lion Pillar, and Buddha's Relic Stupa. The nearest airport to Vaishali is at Patna, 70km away. Hajipur (35 km) is the nearest railhead, and Vaishali is also well-connected by road to Patna (56km). The place attracts historians and archaeologists from far and wide who want to know more about this significant journey in the life of Gautama Buddha.





# GIFT OF THE FORESTS

Experience sublime happiness as you loosen yourself in the arms of Princess of Hill Stations – Kodaikanal

**ABHISHEK PATHAK**



KODAI LAKE

**H**ave you ever thought what it would be like to be enveloped with verdant forests, gushing waters, and mighty mountains, away from the stress and strain of the rat race of modern life, in experiencing Nirvana in the lap of nature? Well, if you haven't, then do think twice. This season, with new bursts of leaves and sunshine and life beginning over again with the summer, take out time to stress-free your life by exploring the quaint hill station of Kodaikanal and be lost in its enigmatic charm.

## KODAIKANAL LAKE

Created in 1863 by Sir Vere Hendry Levinge, the then Collector of Madurai, who retired and settled in Kodaikanal, the 24-hectare Kodaikanal Lake is the focal point of the town. His efforts paved the way for the formation of a Boat Club, in 1890, by when boating had already become a pleasurable pastime for locals and tourists alike. You can enjoy the views around this 154-year-old lake by hiring rowboats or pedal boats. The entire lake is skirted by the surrounding virgin forests of the Palani hills. You can also buy

some local spices, homemade chocolates, and eucalyptus oil from the shops that line periphery of the lake. Winters get surreal on this lake, as you meander on the fog-covered waters rowing straight into the mist. If you wander along lake's edge, you're sure to discover more and more to satiate your inner traveller.



DOLPHIN'S NOSE



# GIFT OF THE FORESTS

Experience sublime happiness as you loosen yourself in the arms of Princess of Hill Stations – Kodaikanal

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### DOLPHIN'S NOSE

Dolphin Nose is an enormous rock formation where the tip of the peak resembles a dolphin's nose, from where it gets this name. It's a flat rock projecting over a breathtaking 6,500ft. deep cliff in an undisturbed area 1km down a very steep rocky trail. One of the most scenic places to see in Kodaikanal, the views from Dolphin nose are breathtaking with amazing high mountains covered in trees. The journey towards this spot is also amazing because of the sharp hairpin bends and tea plantations on both sides. The weather remains a bit foggy as you proceed onwards. It's a perfect spot to connect with nature and click selfies.

### COAKER'S WALK

Constructed by Lt. Coaker in 1872, Coaker's Walk is a 1km-long paved pedestrian path offering scintillating views from all four corners. This watch point is situated at a height of 2000ft. from where you get spectacular views of lush green mountains, verdant valleys, and serene waters of the lake below. On several occasions, you can also get a glimpse of the rainbow cutting across the clouds. Though on a clear sunny day, you can see Dolphin's Nose in south, Pambar River valley in the southeast, Periyakulam town and even the city of Madurai.

### BRYANT PARK

Located close to Kodaikanal Lake, this is one of most beautiful parks in town, opened in 1908 by HD Bryant, a forest officer from Madurai, and showcases a variety of colourful blossoms in combination of fragrances. The park is a rainbow of colours reflecting from stunning flowers during the blooming season. The park houses 325 species of trees, shrubs and cactuses, and a large section is dedicated to nearly 740 varieties of roses. It's an ideal place to enjoy leisure walks and relax amidst swathes of greenery. This kind of a place can instantly bring a smile to anyone's face.



### LAKE VIEW POINT

Head to Lake View Point, after you're done relaxing at Bryant Park, for a good 45-minute walk and from here you can observe the blueness of the Kodai Lake and the enveloping beauty all around you. The sunset view from here is like a cherry on top, as the setting sun spreads its golden hues on the green mountains, making the scenery even more lively with colours.







# FESTIVE MARCH

From being drenched in kaleidoscopic colours of Holi to celebrating the zenith of the Spring in Chichen Itza in Mexico, these upcoming festivals in March are the best way to celebrate the season of joy

TT BUREAU

The Winter has bid adieu and a new season is just round the corner. In traditional cultures, this is the time when people celebrate their last season's harvest and pray for bumper crop next year. While Indians celebrate Holi, the festival of colour, to mark the triumph of the good over evil, in Western cultures, people break their six-week-long Lent fast to celebrate Easter, which symbolises the resurrection of Jesus. Here's a list of top Spring festivals from round the world which you cannot miss.

## HOLI, MARCH 20

The Hindu festival of Holi is celebrated across large parts of North India and Nepal. Popularly known as the festival of colour, the festival marks the end of Winter and the advent of Spring. It also symbolises the triumph of good over evil and gives the participants to observe a day of celebration and drunken revelry, when restrictive societal norms are loosed up a bit. In North India, people get to streets throwing powdered colours and water colour-filled balloons at unsuspecting travellers.



Edible preparations of Cannabis, such as bhang-filled smoothies and shakes, ladoos, gujiyas and malpuas (traditional Indian sweet preparations) are served. People celebrate with Holi songs, often chartbusters from Bollywood movies, and young revellers get a chance to mix with one another freely. Sometimes, in parts of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, restrictive caste norms are relaxed and lower-caste women beat up upper-caste men with brooms and sticks. The festival gets its name from the mythological slaying of the devil Holika by Hindu god Vishnu to save his devotee Prahlad. This is a great time to visit North India, when the weather is neither too hot nor too cold. It is sunny and warm, with just the right temperature, to allow you to celebrate outside with the local crowd.



#### GOA CARNIVAL, MARCH 2-5

Immerse yourself in the colonial Portuguese culture with the Goa Carnival. If your pocket does not allow you to sway to the tunes of Samba in Rio Carnival, then this festival is probably your next best option. The colourful Goa Carnival was started by the Portuguese way back in the 18th century. Dancers, floats, day-long colourful parades mark the festival. The festival ends with a Red-and-Black Dance celebration in Panaji, where colour-coordinated dancers sway their hips to local songs. The local delicacies, especially the seafood for which Goa is well-known, are just too good to be given a miss. A visit to the Carnival is a must when you are in this part of the country.





#### RAJASTHAN FESTIVAL, MARCH 30

Organised by the Tourism department of the state, the Rajasthan Festival celebrates the Foundation Day of the state. Radiant, regal and resplendent, the festival celebrates the regal heritage of the state in all its multihued vibrancy. The nerve centre of all the activities is Jaipur, where you will get to enjoy vibrant dances, musical concerts, captivating film festivals, army pageant, police tattoo show and many other unique activities.

#### CAPETOWN INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL, MARCH 31

If you are a lover of music, especially Jazz, you cannot afford to miss the International Jazz festival in Capetown. It is the largest music festival in Sub-Saharan Africa and attracts over 37,000 visitors every year to the city. Over a period of two days, some of the greatest living jazz musicians gather in the city to celebrate this sophisticated music form in all its glory. There is also a photographic festival that happens every year on the sidelines of the festival. Experts say, this is a great time to visit Cape Town, since, believe it or not, it is autumn in Cape Town at this time of the year. The trees turn into various shades of red, orange and gold, while the weather is warm and mellow, just like it is in Spring in the Northern Hemisphere. If you can take out time from the Jazz festival do pay a visit to the vineyards of Constantina Valley and Stellenbosch area.



#### OTHARA PATAYANI, MARCH 15

Othara Patayani is a 10-day-long festival that is dedicated to Puthukulangara Devi and is held annually in the Pathanamthitta district of Kerala. The festival is a celebration of Patayani, a vibrant ritual art form of Kerala. If you are a lover of traditional ritual performances, this festival is tailor-made for you. One of the striking highlights of this festival is the appearance of the Bhairavi Kolam (a traditional dancer wearing a ritualistic mask dedicated to Goddess Bhadrakali) which is made of 1001 painted areca nut fronds. This makes for a spectacular event during the festival. The Patayani performance starts with the beating of the Thappu drums, a Patayani percussion instrument, creating a great acoustic atmosphere. This is followed by rituals such as Pula dance and Thavadi. Following this all the kolams get ready for the dance that is the highlight of the festival. A ritual steeped in local tradition and culture, this festival should surely be on your bucket list.





#### BALI SPIRIT FESTIVAL, MARCH 19-26

A new entrant in the festival calendar, this celebration of dance, music, yoga and wellness is now in its eighth year. The festival takes place in Ubud, the cultural heart of Bali, where international yoga teachers come for conducting seminars, workshops, talks and lectures. Art installations, art works of renowned artists are showcased, as the city virtually turns into an art gallery. Come night, the city streets turn into concert halls, where music lovers gather to sway to the tunes of internationally famous musicians who take the centre stage.



#### GRAPE HARVEST FESTIVAL, MARCH

In the Mendoza province of Argentina, the wine growers of this region all come together to celebrate grape harvest for the preparation of wine. The festival dates back to the 1930s and today, it is a major tourist attraction bringing in hordes of tourists every year. More than 20,000 revellers participate in the event, which is marked by colourful parades, vibrant songs and dances

and the availability of delicious local wine. In the evening, a stunning music and dance event takes place at the foot hills of the Andes in Mendoza in which dancers and musicians perform at a stunning decorated stage — the whole performance is indeed a sight to behold.

#### SPRING EQUINOX, MARCH 19-22

Equinox means equal nights. It celebrates the zenith of Spring in the cycle of Seasons. The ancient Mayan civilisation understood this natural astronomical phenomenon and observed it as a festival. Witness the power of Mayan astronomical accuracy at the Temple of Dolls in Dzibilchaltun and the descent of the Feathered Serpent Shadow (Mayan term from a light and shadow play in the sky) at the great pyramid of Chichen Itza. The light and shadow of late afternoon creates an illusion that a great serpent is slithering down the steps of the Pyramid until it reaches the snake-head sculpture of the serpent god Kukulkan.



#### EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 21

Easter, with its overall ritualistic importance, officially marks the end of Spring and the beginning of hot summer months. Although technically it is not a March festival, it does find an honourable mention in the list of Spring holidays. Symbolising the resurrection of Jesus, it is marked by scrumptious Sunday lunch with family, egg hunting and of course the presence of Easter Bunny, a folkloric Pagan figure, originating in Germany, that is today loved by all children.





# 24 HOURS IN JOHANNESBURG

South Africa's largest city and the seat of its apex court, is also a fun and vibrant destination for holiday makers. From historic monuments such as Apartheid Museum to amusement parks such as Gold Reef City, from the administrative nerve centre Constitutional Hill to plush casinos like Montecasino, Johannesburg combines a bit of the old and the new for the wanderlust

## TT BUREAU

### APARTHEID MUSEUM

Architecturally interesting and packed with thoughtful exhibits, Apartheid Museum sheds light on the most shameful episodes of the country's modern history, the now defunct Apartheid system. The museum allows visitors to experience firsthand the various means of racial segregation adopted during the Apartheid era. Permanent exhibits to the museum include those dedicated to the rise of Black consciousness, the 1976 uprising, when South African youths took to the streets protesting about racial laws, Nelson Mandela's rise to power, his imprisonment and subsequent release, and finally the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to promote forgiveness among the perpetrators and victims of racial violence. Unlike other museums of the world, the Apartheid Museum invites its visitors to immerse themselves in the faithful recounting of history as participants rather than as observers.



### GOLD REEF CITY

Packed with movie theatres, adrenaline-pumping rides, snazzy casinos and restaurants serving mouth-watering delicacies, Johannesburg's biggest amusement park, Gold Reef City, is a sheer delight for the whole family. The theme park offers 16 thrilling rides, 14 of which are for the kids. If you want the fun to continue, then spend the night at one of the luxurious hotels in the park, such as Golden Reef City Theme Park Hotel or Southern Sun Gold Reef City Hotel. For movie buffs, there is The Barnyard Theatre, while for theatre aficionados, there is The Lyric, which hosts world-class theatrical productions.





### CONSTITUTIONAL COURT OF SOUTH AFRICA

The highest court in South Africa, which today stands as a symbol of South Africa's journey from an authoritarian, racist polity to a constitutional democracy, is also a brilliant architectural specimen, combining exhibits steeped in symbolism and rich artworks. The court complex, although situated in the place where the Old Prison Complex stood, is open and inviting. Visitors can take guided tours and brush up their knowledge about the tumultuous phase of South Africa's history.

### MANDELA HOUSE

Former South African President Nelson Mandela lived in this house from the 1940s to 1990s, after which he donated the house to Soweto Heritage Trust. Today, the house is a world-class tourist attraction meant for the preservation of the Nelson Mandela heritage. Tourists would love the rare old photographs of Mandela and his family and the inspiring quotes which are printed on huge posters that grace the walls of the house. A trip to Mandela House is perfect if you wish to give your child a hands-on lesson in history.



### JOHANNESBURG ZOO

Nature lovers who cannot visit the Serengeti could make do with the world-famous Johannesburg Zoo, an extensive property featuring 320 species of mammals, birds and reptiles. It is the only zoo in the world that has successfully bred exotic and endangered species such as the white lion (a genetic mutation of the African lion) and Siberian tigers, the largest cats in the world. However, the most famous resident of the zoo was undoubtedly Max, the gorilla, who sadly died in 2004. Visitors can now admire the lifelike bronze statue of Max that graces the precincts of the zoo, which offers a number of dedicated tours for senior citizens, kids and even night-time safaris.

### MONTECASINO

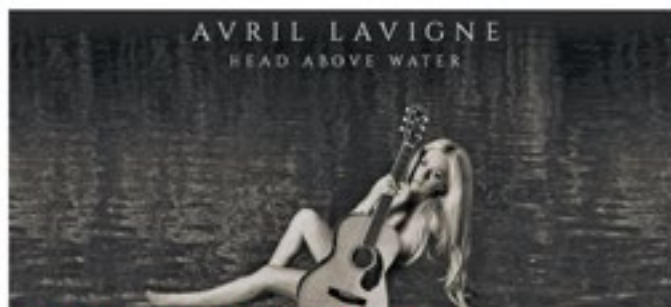
Montecasino is a leisure and casino complex, which opened its doors in 2000. It meticulously replicates a Tuscan village and is quite a treat for the eyes. This award-winning complex comprises various sections, including Teatro, dedicated to theatre and performances, The Pivot, a designated office and retail space, and the area where all the top luxurious hotels, such as Palazzo, Southern Sun and SunSquare, are located. Visitors wandering through the streets of Montecasino will not help but feel that they are in a quaint Tuscan village, basking under the Mediterranean sun.





# PICK OF THE MONTH

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

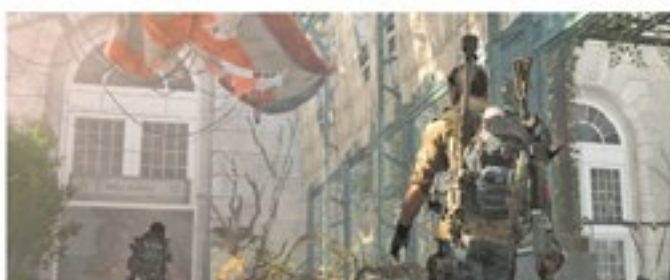


## MUSIC: HEAD ABOVE WATER

Head Above Water is the sixth studio album by Canadian singer Avril Lavigne. It was released on February 15, 2019, through BMG Rights Management. It is Lavigne's first studio release since her self-titled fifth studio album (2013), marking the longest gap between two of her studio albums. Lavigne assumed an integral role in the album's production and collaborated with several producers including Stephan Moccio, Chris Baseford, Johan Carlsson, Lauren Christy from The Matrix, Ryan Cabrera, Travis Clark of We the Kings, Bonnie McKee, JR Rotem and Mitch Allan among others.

Head Above Water draws inspiration from Lavigne's battle with Lyme disease, with her describing the album as an "emotional journey". "Head Above Water" was released as the lead single from the album in September 2018, followed by "Tell Me It's Over" as the second single in December and "Dumb Blonde" as the third single the week of the album's release, a collaboration with rapper Nicki Minaj. The album became her sixth consecutive album to chart in the top 5 of Lavigne's home country, Canada.

Genre(s): Pop



## GAME: THE DIVISION 2

As shared-world multiplayer games go, Tom Clancy's The Division has enjoyed such an interesting, surprisingly long lifespan. Ubisoft's third-person shooter, set in the snowy streets of smallpox-afflicted New York City, was a commercial success at launch, but the sparse end-game content eventually left many players cold. Undeterred, the development team kept refining the game with years' worth of improvements, leading to what is now a cult hit with a small army of dedicated players. The Division 2 aims to build on that success, taking place in Washington, D.C. seven months after the events of the first game's outbreak. With the new class system, eight-player raids, and an overhauled game engine, there should be a lot to love in The Division 2 for anyone who enjoys shooting thugs and looting their bodies for better gear.

Genre(s): Combat



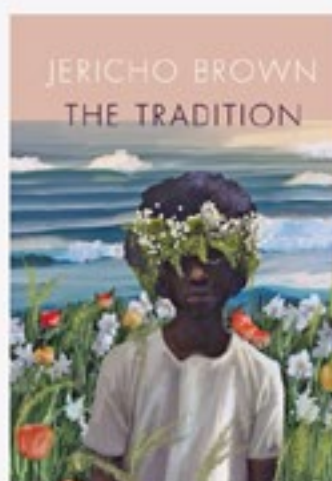
## MOVIE: THE FAVOURITE

Early 18th century. England is at war with the French. Nevertheless, duck racing and pineapple eating are thriving. A frail Queen Anne (Olivia Colman) occupies the throne and her close friend Lady Sarah (Rachel Weisz) governs the country in her stead while tending to Anne's ill health and mercurial temper. When a new servant Abigail (Emma Stone) arrives, her charm endears her to Sarah. Sarah takes Abigail under her wing and Abigail sees a chance at a return to her aristocratic roots. As the politics of war become quite time consuming for Sarah, Abigail steps into the breach to fill in as the Queen's companion. Their burgeoning friendship gives her a chance to fulfil her ambitions and she will not let woman, man, politics or rabbit stand in her way.

Genre(s): Drama

## BOOK: THE TRADITION

Jericho Brown's daring new book *The Tradition* details the normalization of evil and its history at the intersection of the past and the personal. Brown's poetic concerns are both broad and intimate, and at their very core a distillation of the incredibly human: What is safety? Who is this nation? Where does freedom truly lie? Brown makes mythical pastorals to question the terrors to which we've become accustomed, and to celebrate how we survive. Poems of fatherhood, legacy, blackness, queerness, worship, and trauma are propelled into stunning clarity by Brown's mastery, and his invention of the duplex – a combination of the sonnet, the ghazal, and the blues – testament to his formal skill. *The Tradition* is a cutting and necessary collection, relentless in its quest for survival while reveling in a celebration of contradiction.



Genre(s): Poetry, LGBT



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