

# TODAY'S traveller

CORPORATE BUSINESS, AVIATION, MICE & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

MAY 2018 | ₹50

**KASHMIR: BLUE SKIES &  
FLOWERS IN BLOOM**

**JAL – CONSISTENCY,  
COMFORT AND CARE**

**MTM + LLTM:  
SUCCESS RUN**

**THAILAND: OPEN TO  
THE NEW SHADES**

**24 HOURS IN  
CAPE TOWN**

**SHAHNAZ HUSAIN: TRAVEL ADDS A  
WONDERFUL DIMENSION TO ONE'S LIFE**

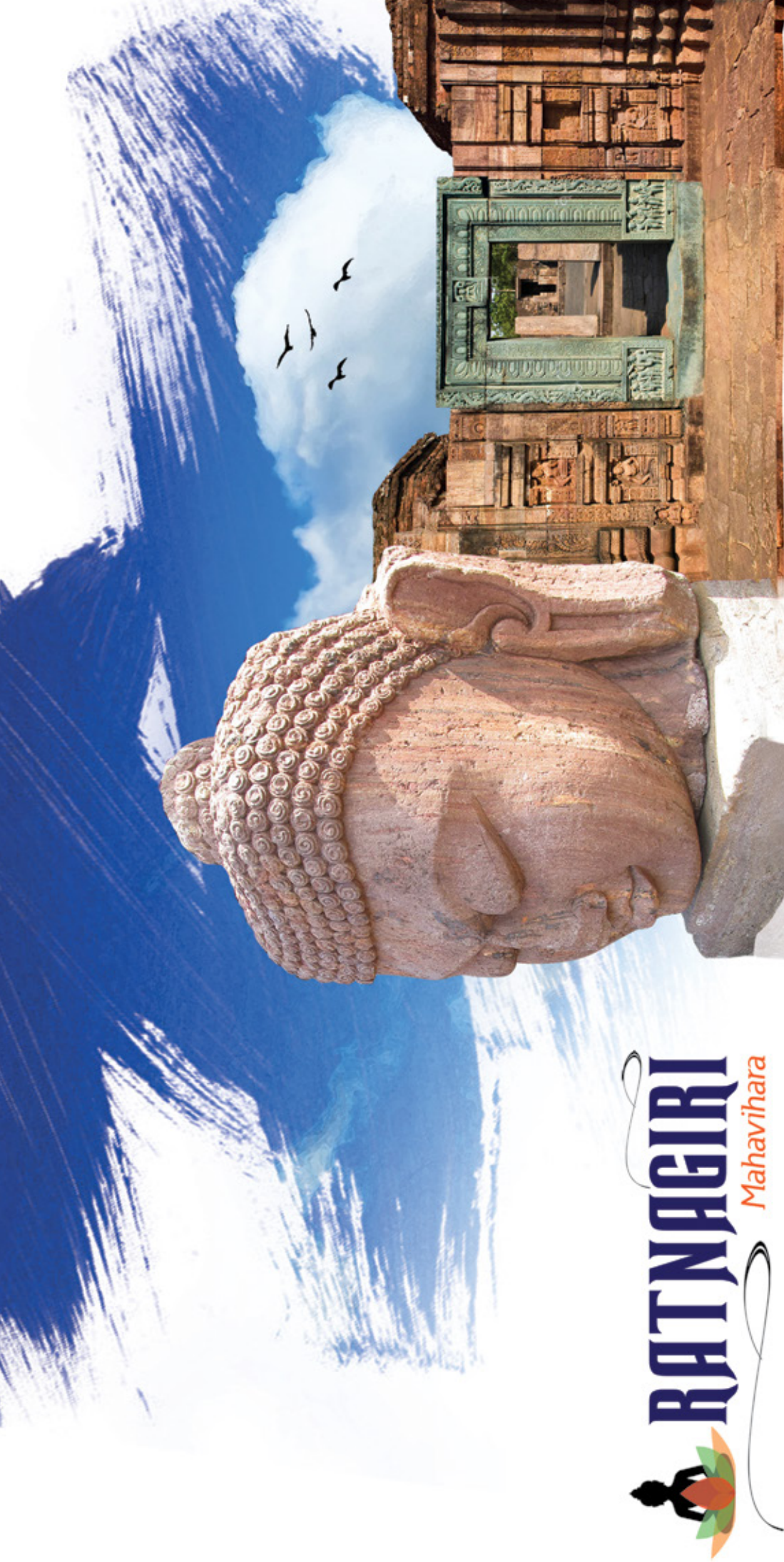


**TODAY'S**  
**TRAVELLER**

**12<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards  
& Cover Launch of Coffee  
Table Book 2018  
&  
21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary  
Celebrations of  
TODAY'S TRAVELLER  
Magazine**

**7<sup>th</sup> August, 2018  
Durbar Hall,  
Taj Diplomatic Enclave, New Delhi**

Contact: Safal Saalwar - 09953701567, Prakhar Bhardwaj - 09311234537,  
Vagish Mishra - 09958666552, Ajith Kumar LR: 09990094948



# RATNAGIRI

## Mahavihara



Dhauligiri



Chandragiri



Lalitgiri

Ratnagiri boasts of an impressive Stupa surrounded by votive stupas of varying dimensions, with curvilinear tower, which is one of its kind discovered in Odisha. Large number of stone sculptures, few bronze and brass image of Buddha prove that Ratnagiri was a great centre of Tantric Buddhism. It is part of the Diamond Triangle with other nearby Buddhist sites such as Lalitgiri, Udayagiri and Languidi Hills.



ODISHA  
TOURISM

The Soul of Incredible India

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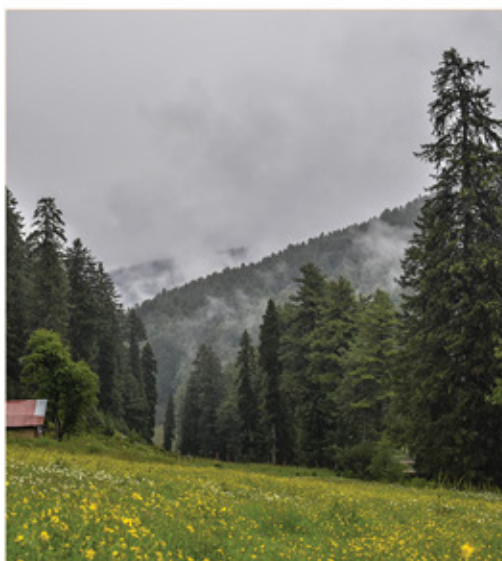
**GRAPHIC DESIGNER**  
DEEPAK RASTOGI

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

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*Celebrating*  
Estd. **20** years 1997

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## ANIL KAPOOR RESTYLED FOR SONAM KAPOOR'S WEDDING



Anil Kapoor gets restyled at Madame Tussauds Delhi in a traditional turban wedding attire for Sonam Kapoor and Anand Ahuja's big fat Punjabi wedding on May 8, 2018.

## RADISSON HOTEL GROUP: 200 HOTELS IN SOUTH ASIA BY 2022

Radisson Hotel Group announced that the company aims to expand its portfolio to more than 200 hotels in operation and under development by 2022 in South Asia.

The Group has already signed Radisson Blu Resort Visakhapatnam, Radisson Panipat City Centre and Country Inn & Suites by Radisson Agra, in the Q1 of 2018. Radisson Gwalior opened last month and the group is on track to open another eight more hotels in India this year.

Katerina Giannouka, President, Asia Pacific, Radisson Hotel Group, said, "We look forward to working with various stakeholders across the country as we accelerate the expansion of our portfolio."

The Group is focussed on enhancing profitability, ensuring brand standard compliance and uplifting guest experiences while aiming to open landmark hotels in strategic locations and growing its mid-scale brand footprint.



There are 90 hotels operational under the Radisson Hotel Group across the country, which is expected to reach 100 hotels by the end of 2018.

## MUMBAI GETS NEW FLOATING RESTAURANTS

Shripriya Dalmia Thirani, Delhi-based businesswoman, will be launching Mumbai's new floating restaurants, with cruise ships from Turkey. The initiative was ideated by Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Road Transport and Highways of India, Government of India.

Each of these ships has a capacity to host 400 diners. Passengers will be picked up from designated points across Mumbai's coastline and taken on board the ship for an "unparalleled dining session coupled with a cruise between the Gateway of India and Chowpatty that would allow people to see the city from the sea," says Thirani.



She added, "I will have multiple restaurants in multiple levels of the vessel, offering various cuisines – both international and local. It will be an eclectic mix of high-end fine and casual dining. The food will be of the highest quality and the chefs preparing them will be the world's finest artists." The restaurants, which are slated to open in October 2018, promise to be a one-of-a-kind experience.

## UNWTO APPOINTS MESSI AS AMBASSADOR FOR RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Lionel Messi was recently appointed by the World Tourism Organisation's (UNWTO) Secretary-General, Zurab Pololikashvili, as Ambassador of UNWTO, to promote the value of Responsible Tourism.

"The UNWTO, as a specialised agency of the UN, works to make tourism a source of development and I am happy I can join this mission of promoting Responsible Tourism," said Messi.

"Messi is a unique sportsman and an example of how willpower and constant hard work yield good results. It is a great honour to have Messi joining UNWTO in promoting the positive values and benefits that tourism represents," said Pololikashvili.





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



## OMAN AIR UNVEILS NEW FIRST CLASS MINI SUITE

Oman Air, the award-winning national airline for the Sultanate of Oman, unveiled the new First Class Mini Suite of its Dreamliner 787-9 fleet at ATM, in Dubai.

HE Maitha Al Mahrouqi, Undersecretary, Oman Ministry of Tourism, unveiled the Mini Suite at the Oman Air stand. The suite offers unparalleled levels of comfort and ultimate luxury with one of the longest lie-flat seats available on any commercial airliner, electronically controlled privacy divider, à la carte dining, as well as an in-suite mini-bar.

Abdulaziz Al Raisi, Acting CEO of Oman Air, said, "The launch of the First Class Mini Suite on board our Dreamliner 787-9 fleet comes as a result of responding to the needs of our travellers and providing them with industry leading luxury."

### Mini Suite Feature Highlights:

- Fully enclosed, Suite with doors to ensure privacy (55" tall surrounds)
- Fully flat bed (180 degrees)
- Full-size bed length) 76" to top of headrest, 78" to soft wall
- Seat width Between the arms 23", Bed width 30"
- Seat pitch of 82 inches



## DALMIA BHARAT LIMITED ADOPTS RED FORT, DELHI AND GANDIKOTA FORT, KADAPA

Dalmia Bharat Limited recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Ministry of Tourism for adoption of the Red Fort monument under the "Adopt a Heritage" project.

With an estimate of over Rs. 5 crore per year, Dalmia Bharat Limited joins 'Monument Mitras' from other various private sector companies to look after the operations and the maintenance of this heritage site for the next five years.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Chief Guest KJ Alphons, Minister of State for Tourism (Independent Charge), and other senior officials of Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

Puneet Dalmia, Managing Director, Dalmia Bharat Group said, "Adopting a Heritage Project is a unique endeavour by the Ministry of Tourism which envisions the developing of monuments, heritage and tourist sites across India to enhance their tourism potential and cultural importance."

## NEW DIRECTOR FOR KARNATAKA TOURISM

Ramu B., IAS, took charge as Director of the Karnataka State Tourism Department, on April 24, 2018. The 2010-batch IAS officer had earlier served as the District Collector of Chamarajanagar. He said his priority in the new role would be to improve the marketing of Karnataka Tourism.

Stated the Director, "One State, Many Worlds' is all about selling an experience. I need a few months to study and understand the kind of experience we are trying to market. Be it Responsible Tourism or Adventure Tourism, I would really like to market the state to varied sections of society."

He added, "The officials of the Tourism Department have prepared some plans, and I too, have some ideas. We will implement them in due course, which will give a boost to the tourism industry in the state."



## VIVID SYDNEY 2018 CELEBRATES 10 GLORIOUS YEARS

Vivid Sydney is set to once again transform the city into a dazzling creative canvas when the festival returns for its tenth anniversary. It will be held over 23 nights, from May 25-June 16, 2018. 147,400 visitors from India visited New South Wales (NSW) in 2017, compared with 125,500 in 2016, which is an increase of 17.5%.



## MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL INAUGURATES 100TH HOTEL IN INDIA

Marriott International marked an important milestone in India with the opening of its 100th hotel in the country – the Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center, in Bengaluru. Marriott International President and CEO, Arne Sorenson, attended the opening of the hotel and visited other hotels in the company's portfolio during a week-long visit to India. The company is poised to further grow its leadership presence in India in the years to come, with more than 50 signed projects in its pipeline.

"India is one of Marriott International's most important markets in Asia, with the second highest number of hotels and rooms after China," said Paul Foskey, Chief Development Officer, Marriott International. The 360-room Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center features 39 suites and panoramic views of the garden city. Growth prospects in the secondary and tertiary markets will continue to be a major focus for Marriott in 2018, leveraging strong demand for Marriott's select-service brands and the growing demand for its upper upscale and luxury portfolios.



A woman with a yellow flower in her hair, wearing a blue patterned dress, is sitting on the edge of a swimming pool. In the background, there are blue statues and white columns. A diamond-shaped logo with the text 'amazing THAILAND' and a smile icon is overlaid on the image.

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Websites: [www.tourismthailand.org](http://www.tourismthailand.org) | [www.tourismthailand.in](http://www.tourismthailand.in)

# AN ENCHANTING ODYSSEY

Whether you're looking for an exotic destination wedding, a romantic getaway, a family vacation or a business conference, the MarBella Corfu Hotel in Greece is the perfect fit

## TT BUREAU

When it comes to choosing an island getaway, discerning travellers know that life's more than a beach. Today's travellers seek much more than languid days on the sands – biking, hiking, sea-kayaking, climbing, diving and sailing, along with exploration tours, are the stuff that dream vacations are about. The MarBella Corfu Hotel in Greece is a stunning beach paradise that most fits into this groove.

With stately cypresses, shimmering olive groves and rugged mountains, Homer's "beautiful and rich land" lies off the west coast of Greece. One of the greenest of Greek Islands, Corfu has much to offer, including the beautifully preserved Old Quarter – A UNESCO World Heritage Site, which boasts Venetian influences.

Within this picture perfect frame is the MarBella Corfu Hotel, with its breathtaking Ionian sea view – the perfect romantic luxury getaway. Its strategic location ensures that you can easily visit the island's most renowned sites and attractions. Guests can

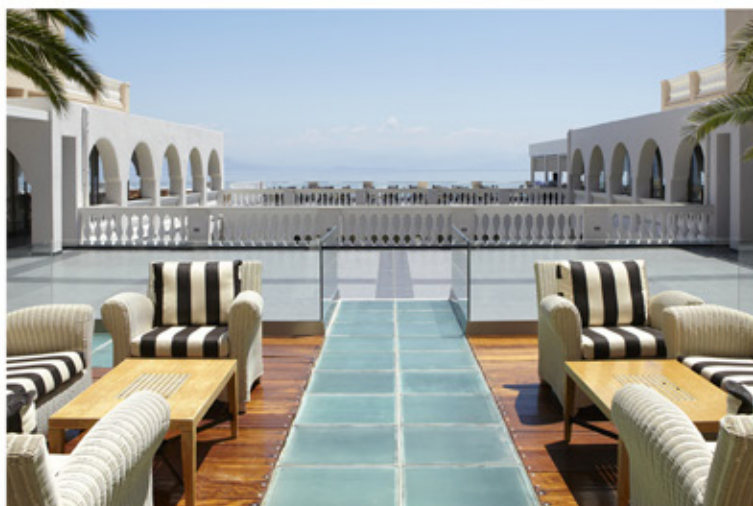


relax by the Ionian Sea, explore the island's offerings and take daily excursions to the island's celebrated monuments.

Combine your Ionian island holiday in Corfu within the precincts of the MarBella Corfu Hotel and enjoy the finest in island hospitality. The lavish 5-Star hotel showcases a range of 388 exquisite rooms and suites. And, if you're visiting with family, you can benefit from a wide variety of complimentary essentials as well as the age-specific children amenities and services provided, including children menus, modern comforts, a great range of entertaining and enjoyable activities, happenings, sports and events particularly planned for the younger guests.

Delectable cuisine includes international flavours at the hotel's six restaurants. Enjoy your favourite sundowner at one of four lounge bars. Unwind at the wellness and spa with a series of comforting spa therapies and treatments with the use of natural Apivita products. Or relax at the sauna and hammam room.

Fitness junkies can try out the gym or go biking, hiking, sea-kayaking, climbing, diving and sailing. Other choice activities include Yoga, dining under the stars, playing volleyball and archery.



## KARNATAKA TOURISM SHOWCASES AT ARABIAN TRAVEL MARKET 2018

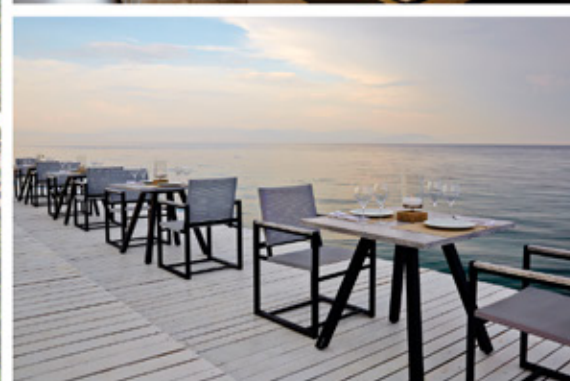
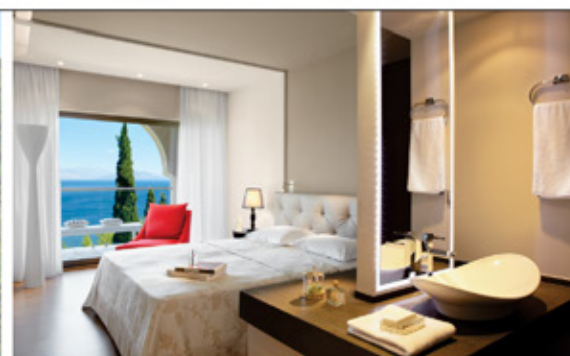
Karnataka Tourism participated in the recently concluded Arabian Travel Market 2018 (ATM), at World Trade Centre, Dubai. True to its tag line, "Karnataka is Truly One State, Many Worlds," it showcased Heritage, Culture, Nature, Beaches and Wildlife. Karnataka is primarily known for its Heritage destinations and its Wildlife/National Parks. Apart from that, it is also famous for its alluring hill stations, spectacular waterfalls, pilgrimage centres and a 320-km-long coastline, dotted with pristine beaches – making it an ideal choice for a traveller with diverse interests.

Karnataka Tourism pavilion presented the splendid architecture of the UNESCO World Heritage Site – Hampi. The stall highlighted the ornate Lotus Mahal and the architecture of Hampi with a touch of wildlife as the background.

The Karnataka Tourism delegation was led by Director-Tourism, Manjula N, IAS. Five private players from Karnataka participated: Citrus Hotel & Resorts, Ibini Spa Resort, Shatayu Yoga Retreat, SwaSwara and Windflower Spa and Resort.

Speaking on the occasion, the Director-Tourism said, "Karnataka Tourism has been participating in ATM since the past many years and provides a unique opportunity for the whole global travel trade industry to meet and conduct business. ATM Dubai is the the premier tourism trade fair in the Gulf (GCC and Middle East). ATM has been a very good market for us and provides an opportunity to tap the lucrative Dubai and GCC countries. The audience here looks out mainly for wildlife and wellness tourism; both of which are in Karnataka. And, we welcome you all to experience the many wonders that await you here."

The eye-catching pavilion gave great visibility to the state and generated lot of enquires. All these are expected to bring in more tourists to Karnataka from the GCC region and give a much-needed fillip to tourist footfalls in the state.



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**SAURABH PRAKASH** has been appointed as Vice President, Commercial, Asia Pacific of Radisson Hotel Group. Based at the company's Asia Pacific headquarters in Singapore, Prakash is a member of the Asia Pacific executive committee and will oversee all aspects of the region's commercial activities, including sales, revenue optimisation, distribution, marketing

and loyalty. Prakash comes with an experience of 15 years and has worked for leading hotels across Asia Pacific. He spent a majority of his career with Marriott International, where he worked in India, Malaysia, China and Singapore. Prior to this, Prakash was General Manager & Vice President, Asia Pacific, with TSA Solutions, a leading hospitality consultancy and solutions provider, in Singapore.



**MAYANK KINGER** has been designated as the Regional Head, Goa, Coastal Karnataka and Maharashtra at SaffronStays. His role will include facilitating growth and development of SaffronStays and will be spearheading operations in the region. Before joining SaffronStays, Kinger operated his own F&B venture. In his new avatar, Kinger will play a key

role in planning and shaping of business blueprints as well as building on the brand's outstanding reputation for service and delivery to clients with full responsibility for the strategy development and execution of SaffronStays' Coastal business.



**SURAJ KUMAR JHA** has been designated as the General Manager of Hotel Crowne Plaza, Gurugram and part of the InterContinental Hotels Group. Prior to this, he was the General Manager with Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport for over four years. Before joining IHG, he served as the General Manager at Hotel Radisson Blu Greater Noida. Earlier,

he worked with Zuri Hotels & Resorts, Unitech's Hospitality arm for the development of Marriott hotels, and Radisson, among others.

With a career spanning over two decades of experience in operations, development and business development, Jha brings with him an extensive understanding of the hospitality industry in India.



**AMEET RAJ KUNDU** has been appointed as Director of Sales and Marketing of Radisson Blu Temple Bay Mamallapuram. Kundu is responsible for spearheading the Marketing and Sales function and product and revenue management. He comes with over 14 years of industry experience, starting his career with

Trident Hilton Chennai, followed by quality years in Novotel Hyderabad, Westin and Sheraton Hyderabad in a cluster role.

Seasoned and versatile management professional with cross-functional experience across highly reputed business establishments, Kundu has specialized skills in Sustainable Business Growth, Expansion and New Acquisitions, Event Management New Segment Launching, Strategic planning, Business Development, Key Accounts Management, Sales Operations, Budgeting & Forecasting, Marketing Management, P&L Accountability, Liaison & Coordination and Target Achievement.



**NISHENDRA KASHYAP** has been appointed as the Director of Food and Beverage of The Den Bengaluru. In this role, he will provide strategic leadership and execution for the hotel's food and beverage. He will work closely with the core team and chefs to manage the overall operations for The Creek, The Nest, The Coldpress, The Deli and Layla.

Kashyap comes with an experience of over 15 years in handling F&B operations with some of the most renowned properties in India. Prior to this, he has worked in The Middle East with The Ramee Grand and Hotels and Spa in Bahrain. He has also worked with international hotel chains such as The Westin – Starwoods Hotels and Resorts, Taj Residency, Taj Malabar and Le Meridien. He started his journey with TGI Fridays and his last stint was with Movenpick Hotel and Spa Bengaluru.



**ABHISHEK CHANDE** has been designated as the Front Office Manager of Hotel Sahara Star, where he will supervise the daily operations of the Front Office team to maintain guest delight standards at the hotel. Chande has completed his higher diploma from International Management Institute & BBA from YCMOU. He started his

career as a Guest service associate at Courtyard by Marriot in 2010. Later, he worked at St Regis Mumbai for four years and Waterstones as Assistant Front Office Manager for two years.



**AMIT GANPULEY** has been appointed as the Food & Beverage Manager at Hotel Sahara Star. In this role, he will be instrumental in processes such as Restaurant Operations, Guest Experience Management, Administration, Restaurant Revenue Forecast, F&B Strategy, Concept Promotions, Cost Control and Beverage Initiatives. Ganpuley

has over 20 years of experience in hotels, airports operations and restaurants, with pre-opening and operating stages covered in each vertical. His previous assignment was with Resort Rio, Goa.



**HAMESH SHETTY** has been appointed as F&B Manager at DoubleTree by Hilton Pune Chinchwad. Shetty is a customer-oriented and service-minded professional and has 13 plus years of extensive experience in Food & Beverage operations. Prior to this role, Shetty had worked as a freelance Event and Bar Manager and Consultant. His most recent

tenure was with Marriott Resort & Spa, Goa, as Assistant Food and Beverage Manager.

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**CORPORATE**

# MTM + LLTM: SUCCESS RUN

With a strong and thoughtful strategy in place – that of providing an ideal platform for Corporate buyers and travel agents to meet and conduct business with travel service providers from across the globe – MTM & LLTM Mumbai showcased a record number of business appointments between corporate buyers and exhibitors

TT BUREAU



The 16th edition of MTM & LLTM Mumbai proved beyond a doubt that success in any venture takes more than just execution – that memorable events don't just happen. It takes meticulous planning and organising for a business event to take off. With a strong and thoughtful strategy in place – that of providing an ideal platform for Corporate buyers and travel agents to meet and conduct business with travel service providers from across the globe – MTM & LLTM Mumbai showcased a record number of business appointments between corporate buyers and exhibitors.

The event showcased multiple products and B2B meetings, with as many as 60 corporates seated at the table at one time, with discussions spilling over to the exhibitor space and leisure areas as well. The aim of MTM & LLTM has always been to keep innovating and to bring something different to the table each year. This time round, it was no different, with the presence of eminent speakers and content from varied disciplines coming together to connect the dots. The forum aimed to provoke, surprise and inspire and it did this in a genial and interactive manner.

Organised by OptiMICE Events Pvt Ltd at Sapphire Ballroom, Hotel Sahara Star, Mumbai, the event witnessed a gathering





of over 400 people, which included senior executives from the corporate world, leading Hotels, Destination Management Companies, National Tourism Boards, State Tourism Boards, Tour Operators, and Event Planners.

"Almost 2 lakh people travel from India to Korea, but the majority of them are business travellers. We want to expand MICE and leisure travel also," said Sandeep Dutta, Marketing Manager, Korea Tourism Organization.

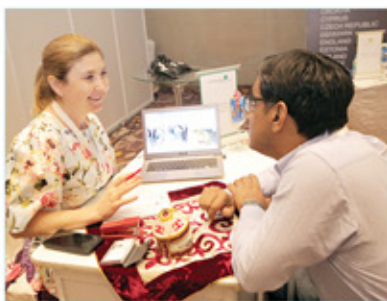
The incentive part of the MTM & LLTM umbrella had some noteworthy inclusions. The morning seminar and panel discussions were followed by the hugely acclaimed Reverse Marketplace, after which 350 corporates, exhibitors and delegates congregated for the Networking Lunch, which provided much food for thought for the lunch session.

After all the serious business of networking it was time for a mood change and this was more than ably rendered by the Lucky Dip jamboree, which took place towards the latter part of



the MTM & LLTM event. Comprising lucky dips for corporates attending the event, gifts were presented by hoteliers representing top brands, such as RHG Group, Shiv Vilas Hotel Jaipur and Best Western Hotels, among others.

A regular participant, Best Western Hotels & Resorts has celebrated more than 70 years of hospitality and is an award-winning global family of hotels located in over 100 countries and territories, offering accommodations for all categories of



travellers. "Independently owned and operated, each brand has its own personality and style, but all share the same commitment to delivering superior customer service, exceptional value and modern amenities," said Tajinder Singh, Vice President, Sales & Marketing - India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka - Best Western Hotels and Resorts.

The MTM & LLTM experience closed with Networking Cocktails, a befitting finale to a highly rewarding event, validating the fact that frequent meetings and engagements with stakeholders and corporates in the form of MICE events builds mutual trust and helps to maintain a healthy relationship among all the parties involved.





# CORPORATE JET-SETTER

**Harmesh Dua**  
**Head - Administration**  
**Miles Software Solutions Pvt. Ltd.**  
**Mumbai**

TT BUREAU

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

When it comes to holidays I can only think of a beach or mountain destination. Most of my trips with family have been memorable, whether it was to Kashmir, Pondicherry, Matheran, Goa, Chandigarh, Uttaranchal or Manali. Manali was the most memorable, being a resort town nestled in the mountains of Himachal Pradesh, near the northern end of the Kullu Valley, at an altitude of 2,050m, in the Beas River Valley.

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

I have plenty on my list, including Kerala, Bali, Srilanka Valley, Bangkok and many more, but the next on my to-do list is the Bullet ride to Ladakh and Jim Corbet during the rainy season.

**Q: Favourite airline and why?**

Jet Airways, because it is a premium airline and has good and affordable connectivity around the world.

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

Ibiss Hotels and the cottage in Manali. Ibis Hotels, because they have presence across the world, impeccable service and in-house ambience, all at a reasonable cost. Rashpa Cottage at Manali has a warm ambience and splendid surroundings. Moreover, it gives you a home-away-from-home feel. Breakfast is served in the garden, while Lunch and Dinner are served in the



dining room adjoining the kitchen, and all guests sit together for their meals.

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

Goa and Manali – I can never have enough of them.

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

Bangkok and Kerala are my best family vacations.

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

It has not happened so far, but I am hoping to visit Leh with friends.

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

I loved the Punjabi dhaba food at the Punjab Highway Dhaba.

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

One must have a route plan, good time management and more importantly, select a hotel that ensures maximum comfort during your travels.

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

To get the best at the best discounted price.





# *Traditional Wonders*

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# QUALITY SLEEP FOR OPTIMUM WELLNESS

One of the most fundamental dimensions of wellness, sleep optimises health, energy levels, hormones and improves productivity



## TT BUREAU

**W**hen it comes to healthcare, most of us are on a slippery wicket. Today, diseases like diabetes and hypertension have become commonplace, which is something to be alarmed about. More than ever before, it has become important to take care of your mind, body and spirit.

Wellness is more than being free from disease – it is a dynamic process of change and growth. Why are wellness and health so important? Because, maintaining an optimal level of wellness is absolutely crucial for living a higher quality life. Wellness matters, because everything we do and every emotion we feel relates to our well-being. In turn, our well-being directly affects our actions and emotions. It's an ongoing circle. Therefore, it is important for everyone to achieve optimal wellness in order to subdue stress, reduce the risk of illness and ensure positive interactions.

There are several aspects to wellness – including occupational, emotional, spiritual, environmental, financial, physical, social, and intellectual. Each of these aspects is interrelated with the other and each is equally vital in the pursuit of good health

One of the most fundamental aspects of wellness is sleep. The New York Times calls sleep “the new status symbol,” while experts ascribe it to being the most important part of your wellness routine. Lack of sleep makes us obese, sick and imbalanced. Sleep deprivation is a serious malady and neither Yoga nor meditation can make up for lost shut-eye. Long-term sleep deficiency could lead to increased risk of diabetes, obesity, heart disease and stroke. Stress is another reason for lack of sleep and conversely, inadequate sleep causes stress.

In fact, today, sleep is a measure of success, a skill to be cultivated and nourished and experts believe good quality sleep promotes better memory, more focus, less stress, optimal blood pressure, improved productivity, happier days and prevents premature ageing.

Getting a good night's sleep may seem like an impossible goal for some, but you have much more control over the quality of your sleep than you probably realise. Getting in sync with your body's natural sleep-wake cycle, or circadian rhythm, is one of the most important strategies for sleeping better. Also, exercise, Yoga, winding down before going to bed, meditation, deep breathing – all these will help you destress before you hit the bed.

Sleep could well be equated with meditation – both have strikingly similar benefits. A mattress could be likened to a meditation mat, albeit with a great deal more impact. When it comes to attaining good quality sleep, sleep specialists recommend several measures. The body must be well supported,



with no pressure points pressing against pressure-sensitive parts while lying horizontal, as in hip, shoulder, ankle and ribs. The spine should be well aligned with the rest of your body and body weight well distributed across your frame and sleeping surface.

The ideal mattress offers all three sleep boosters and generally comprises medium-firm memory foam, latex, or coil spring to ensure you are well supported. Simultaneously, a good mattress must provide enough cushion and plush to feel soft and comfortable to your body parts depending on personal factors such as weight, sleeping style, position and so on. The bottom line with the wellness-mattress connect is that a good mattress is an excellent facilitator for quality sleep, which in effect, is one of the mainstays of good health.

#### SEALY & THE WELLNESS CONNECT

In the mattress domain Sealy commands the highest respect in the bed brand category worldwide and has been growing steadily for over 100 years. Sealy offers luxury mattresses with comfort as its overriding quality, plus all the support needed to provide a restful night's sleep. From soft and gentle to medium to luxury, there is a mattress for anyone with any needs when it comes to getting ample rest and relaxation.

Built with exquisite craftsmanship and possessing a timeless aesthetic appeal, Sealy ensures a great night's sleep with a new level of luxury, so you can avoid back pain, soreness and insomnia. Plus, Sealy's wellness benefits stay with you through the day, ensuring a happier lifestyle.



# iNFHRA FM EXCELLENCE CONFERENCE & AWARDS 2017-18

The 2nd edition of iNFHRA FM EXCELLENCE CONFERENCE & AWARDS took centre stage when it arrived at Mumbai – the Finance Capital of India

## TT BUREAU

- NFHRA is an industry body and member based association, representing more than 1800 members from the Facility Management & Administration, Workplace & Infrastructure, Corporate Travel & Hospitality, Corporate Real Estate, Safety & Security & Procurement professionals.

Building on the objectives of iNFHRA's Facility Management Committee of promoting the facility management profession through Recognising Excellence, iNFHRA organised the 5th City of its Second Edition of "FM EXCELLENCE CONFERENCE & AWARDS 2017-18" 6 City Award Tour in the Finance Capital city, Mumbai, on February 23, 2018. The programme was organised at Mumbai Cricket Association Recreational Centre, in BKC.

The programme was supported by the Ministry of Labour, Government of Maharashtra.

iNFHRA FM Excellence Awards are India's only Jury Driven Award for the fraternity and are being supported by CBRE South Asia Pvt Ltd, Cushman & Wakefield and Jones Lang LaSalle as Outreach partners.

The Title Partners for the programme was Muttha Group, one of the leading commercial developers and co-working space providers in India, which believes in enhancing the life of the people around the world, through both real estate projects and philanthropy.

The prominent jury comprised industry professionals from more than 15 industry leaders from Mumbai.



The programme was attended by more than 300 delegates, the largest gathering ever in an evening event of the fraternity.

The event showcased diverse presentations on "Relocations Industry and Writer Relocations dominance in this Space" and "boxC.in-India's First Cloud-based Platform for Beverage Services," and organised a couple of Panel Discussions as well. Below are the Winners & Runners-Up across various categories:

**Corporate Real Estate Awards** powered by **Muttha Group**

- Winner - Col S Vipin Chandran, Reliance Greens
- 1st Runner-Up - Anil Nair, Reliance Industries Ltd. [Jamnagar]
- 2nd Runner-Up - Kirtan Gupta, Tata Motors Ltd.

**Corporate Travel, Transport & Logistics Awards** powered by **Treebo Hotels** and **Via.Com**

- Winner - Karthikbabu Narayanasamy, Godrej Industries Ltd.
- 1st Runner-Up - Vishal Khot, HDFC Life
- 2nd Runner-Up - Girish Sanzgiri, Retd, S H Kelkar and Company Ltd.

**Ecological Sustainability Awards** powered by **Writer Relocations** and **Lithium Urban Technologies**

- Winner - Mumbai International Airport Pvt. Ltd.
- 1st Runner-up - Oberoi Mall
- 2nd Runner-Up - Dr. Amit Mahimkar, Huntsman International India (P) Ltd.

**Innovation & Technology Awards** powered by **MoveInSync Technology Solutions** and **PIKKOL**

- Winner - Santosh More, Reliance Retail Ltd.
- 1st Runner-Up - Atul Halde & Asif Ansari, Godrej Industries Ltd.
- 2nd Runner-Up - Pallav Bhatia, Cushman & Wakefield Property Management Services India Pvt. Ltd.

**Safety & Security Awards** powered by **International Housekeeping & Maintenance Services**

- Winner - INDUSIND Bank Ltd., Mumbai
- 1st Runner-Up - Samir Kumar Jha, Bharat Diamond Bourse
- 2nd Runner-Up - Oberoi Realty - Commerz Two

**Best Project - Corporate Award** powered by **Arraystorm Lighting & Workplace India**

- Winner - Chandrashekhar Sonsale, KPIT Technologies Ltd.
- 1st Runner-Up - Ashok Karale, Reliance Retail Ltd.
- 2nd Runner-Up - Maj. Nitesh Kala, Viacom18 Media Pvt. Ltd.

**Best Project - Architecture & PMC Award** powered by **Arraystorm Lighting & Workplace India**

- Winner - Alhad Gore, M/s. Beyond Design Architects & Consultants Pvt. Ltd.
- Runner-Up - Aditya Yamsanwar, Team One Architects (India) Pvt. Ltd.

The Mumbai Awards were also supported by BVG India, Central Cargo Packers and Movers, Chai Point, CIRIL Real Estate Consultants Network, Humanscale, Hungerbox, Mahindra & Mahindra, Raymond Made to Measure, Tripeur, Zeta, Commercial Design & Today's Traveller magazine.

For more information on the awards and to associate with the same, kindly email on [support@infhra.org](mailto:support@infhra.org)





# DISCOVER INNOVATIVE DÉCOR AND WARM SERVICE

Designed with contemporary chic, Gordon House Hotel offers discerning business and leisure travellers the best of accommodation, sumptuous food and impeccable facilities

## TT BUREAU

We're celebrating the pampered life in May and what better way to luxuriate in the waning weeks of summer than by jetting off to an urban architectural wonder. The Gordon House Hotel marries cutting-edge contemporary minimalism with the vintage charm of early architectural details. The hotel is ideally located in the heart of the city, close to the Gateway of India. The Mediterranean rooms are quintessentially Spanish, with stone beds, charming walls and aesthetic lighting. The European countryside theme with blankets adorning the walls and pleasant, bright lighting truly compliments the vibe. The spurts of blue and monochrome artwork in the Scandinavian theme will transport you to a clutter-free environment. The Suite Room showcases French grandeur, while the chandelier, hardwood floor and chequered bathroom floor with all-marble sinks take the design aesthetics to another level.

The Gordon House Hotel does Mumbai's popular street-style food proud with its Oriental kitchen, All Stir Fry. The

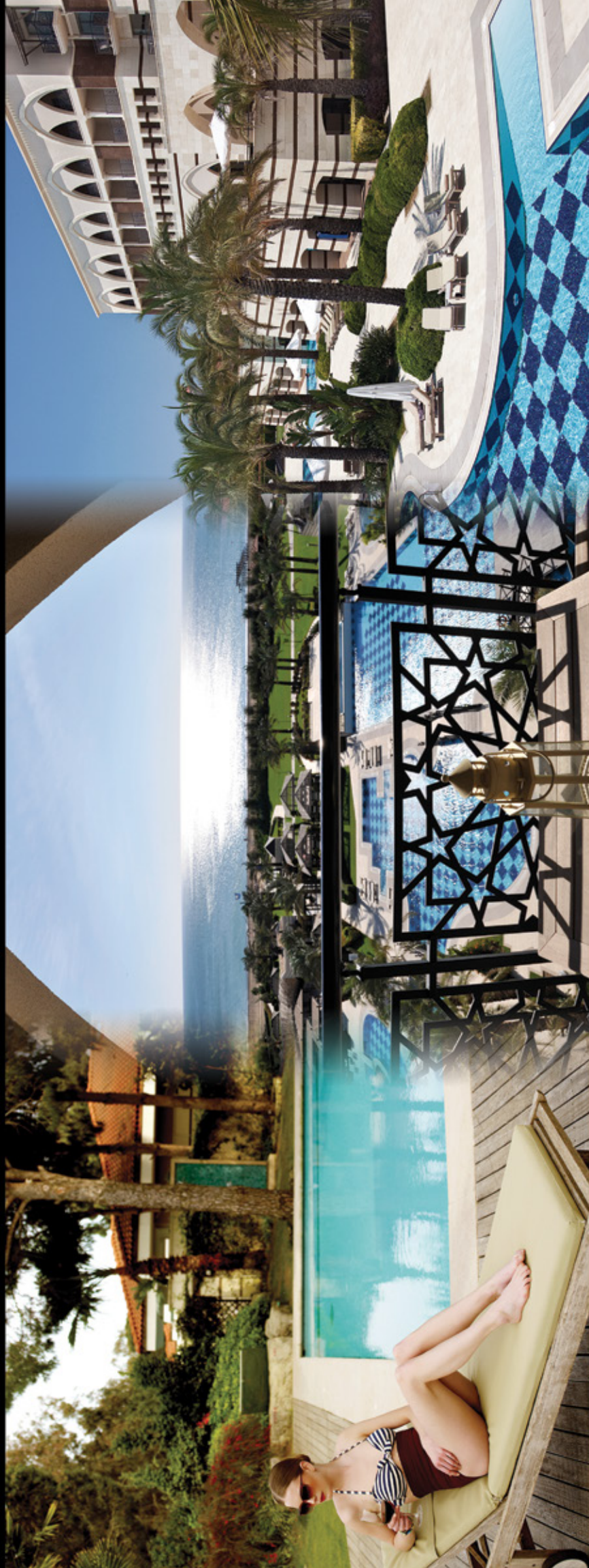
restaurant, with its open noodle and produce bar, allows for an interactive wok cooking with a wide variety of exotic and select ingredients. Using only the finest and freshest ingredients, the talented culinary team applies delicate and exciting touches to traditional dishes, infusing them with originality and character. The sit-down restaurant offers delectable dishes for every palate and every age. The Kiddie Wok lets kids select the ingredients and watch the wok being prepared to give them a feeling of independence in their food choices.

The Gordon House Hotel has also opened the doors to its popular Meeting Room – a venue that evokes exceptional style and offers an ambience that is perfectly designed for successful events. Aesthetically pleasing surroundings, exemplary service and a scrumptious selection of food makes for indelible experiences. Equipped with modern technology, the venue can host a minimum of 25 pax to a maximum of 65 pax. The Meeting Room is an excellent option for corporate enrichment initiatives, while the adjoining patio makes for a perfect casual dining location.



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# PEDALLING PERFECT EXPERIENCES

India's premier bike tour company, Bike Street Boys provides end-to-end serviced cycling holidays and active vacations to foreign tourists visiting India

## TT BUREAU

There's nothing like going off into the great outdoors with the sun in your face and the wind in your hair. And if you're on a bike, all the better, because cycling is healthy and it's a green player. Today, cycling holidays have become specialised – there are road cycling holidays, mountain bike holidays, leisure holidays for those who ride on and off-road, plus the mix and match variety, where you can bike and combine other activities alongside. India's very own premier bike tour company, Bike Street Boys, provides end-to-end serviced cycling holidays and active vacations to foreign tourists visiting India.

Promising long-haul holidays of a lifetime, Bike Street Boys, are by their own admission, "a bunch of fitness enthusiasts, cyclists and globetrotters," with a passionate India connect. The company has a single agenda – to change how the world sees and experiences India and they envision themselves as a strong and sustainable bridge between the real India and the rest of the world.

Ideated solely for cyclists who are on an India sojourn, Bike Street Boys does the honours seamlessly and discerningly,

mapping out exciting itineraries that include incredible India's staggering diversity in its heritage sites, vibrant markets and breathtaking landscapes. Curating a mix of experiential villas, heritage properties and boutique hotels/B&Bs, the company's repertoire includes premier quality bicycles and equipment, the most scenic, remote and countryside routes, excellent accommodation and a dedicated tour support.

With a vision that focusses on the company's sustainability, of creating inspiring Indian experiences, a 5-Star rating that lauds the dedicated service of skilled trip leaders and consultants, Bike Street Boys' raison d'être is to provide an unmitigated and seamless joy to its riders.

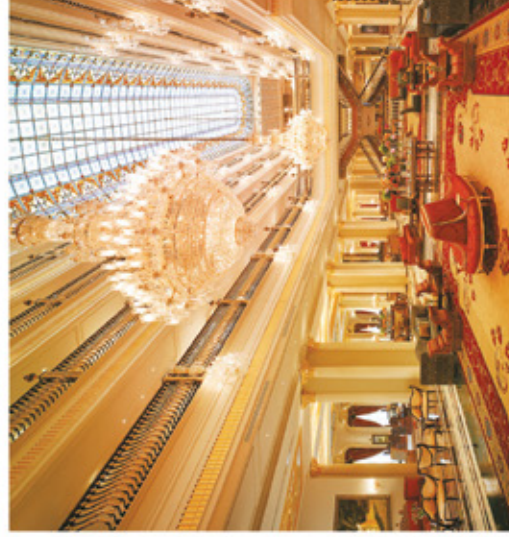




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ELEVATION VIEW FROM DANDI KUTIR SIDE

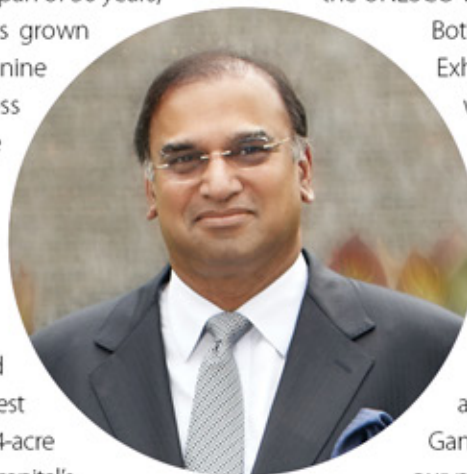
# DOUBLE BONANZA FOR THE LEELA

India's premier luxury brand, The Leela Palaces Hotels and Resorts, has won the competitive bid and management contract to operate India's largest Convention and Exhibition Centre and launch The Leela Gandhinagar in Gujarat

## TT BUREAU

The Leela Palaces Hotels and Resorts have been on a continuous journey of delighting guests who have come within their ambit. The brand's objective has been to provide guests with memorable experiences, where the narrative dwells on the quintessence of India, rendered in deluxe luxury. Within a span of 30 years, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts has grown to comprise a world-class collection of nine award-winning luxury hotels spread across key destinations in India with many more on the anvil.

Adding to its expansive bouquet of luxury hotels across the country, The Leela Palaces Hotels and Resorts, India's premier luxury hotel brand, recently announced that it has bagged the competitive bid and management contract to operate India's largest Convention and Exhibition Centre – the 34-acre Mahatma Mandir – and launch Gujarat state capital's largest hotel, the 300-room The Leela Gandhinagar, which is expected to open in January 2019.

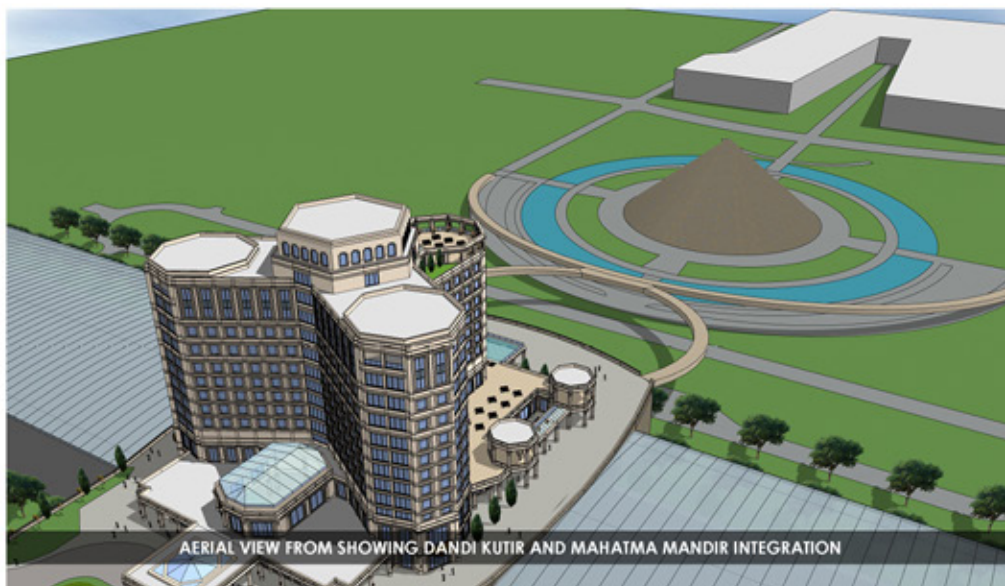


Vivek Nair,  
Chairman and MD, The Leela Palaces,  
Hotels and Resorts

The Leela Gandhinagar is expected to be a 300-room-5-Star hotel, built on the airspace rights of the Railway Station, in the vicinity of the Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre by The Leela. The Convention and Exhibition Centre is located close to the famous Dandi Kutir and is well connected to the UNESCO World Heritage City of Ahmedabad.

Both the Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre and The Leela Gandhinagar will operate in a complementary yet distinctive manner, and will be in sync with The Leela's trademark excellence of impeccable service and heartfelt hospitality.

Reflecting on the expansion, Vivek Nair, Chairman and Managing Director, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts, said, "The addition of Mahatma Mandir and The Leela Gandhinagar to our MICE portfolio reinforces our plans to expand further into the international conferences and events space, and underscores our asset light growth strategy. The projects



combine grand space with global standards of service and cater to the growing demand for world-class venues. Together with the government of Gujarat, our endeavour is to help transform Gandhinagar into the convention capital of India."

Commenting on the announcement, RK Beniwal (IAS), MD Gandhinagar Railway and Urban Development Corporation Ltd (GARUD), opined, "Our tie-up with The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts will be a strategic one as The Leela has a very high brand value in the premium hospitality space. We are very confident that The Leela Gandhinagar and Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre will be ably managed for a wider global distribution and accentuated positioning in the International and domestic MICE market."

Located 400m from the Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre, The Leela Gandhinagar will be built 25m above ground. Accommodation comprises three wings of ten floors, and two wings of eight floors, including 300 spacious guest rooms and suites, two extraordinary restaurants, an

elaborate lounge and Boardroom, and 800sq.m. of flexible meetings, conventions and event space, all with breathtaking views and complemented by the outstanding Leela service.

The 34-acre Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre, a world-class facility for national and international conferences, exhibitions and events, is designed to reflect the life and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. The environmentally-friendly complex is spacious and handles up to 15000 people, including a Convention Hall boasting seating capacity of 6000 people, as well as state-of-the-art Exhibition Centres, hi-tech Conference Halls and Seminar Rooms, among a wide-array of features. It is a 25-minute drive from Ahmedabad International Airport.

With this contract, The Leela has expanded its hotel portfolio to ten acclaimed properties across India. Upcoming projects include a resort in Jaipur, a palace hotel in Agra, where every room will face the Taj Mahal, and business hotels in Bengaluru and Hyderabad.





# FAST'S SEMINAR: FOCUS ON ALL-INCLUSIVE CONNECTIVITY

The FAST Seminar emphasised the importance of the push and pull relation between tourism and civil aviation to drive economic growth in India's small, medium towns and remote areas

**TT BUREAU**

**F**oundation for Aviation & Sustainable Tourism (FAST), with support from the Ministries of Civil Aviation and Tourism, organised the Seminar on "Incredible India: Connectivity – Driving Tourism for Inclusive Growth," on April 12, 2018, at New Delhi.

While welcoming the delegates, President of FAST, Gen. KM Seth, former Governor of Tripura & Chhattisgarh, stated that Tourism and Aviation are natural allies and mutually support each other. India has immense opportunity for growth by connecting small, medium towns and remote areas by air, which remain to be fully realised yet.

The Seminar's main focus was on seamless connectivity by air, rail and road, with affordable and world-class accommodation and memorable experiences. Today's discerning tourist seeks a secure destination and it behoves the host country to ensure a safe environment.

In his video recorded speech, Suresh Prabhu, Minister of Civil Aviation, highlighted that places with tourism potential can see

significant growth if connected by air, rail, road and waterways. Providing air connectivity to inaccessible regions would make travel more convenient and time effective and increase demand.

Airports Authority of India (AAI) has a great role to play in providing air connectivity between small cities and regional hubs – for which adequate emphasis has been laid down in the National Civil Aviation Policy 2016. There is an urgent need for convergence of efforts by all concerned, including Central and State Governments and their respective departments to synchronise the developmental efforts so as to provide an efficient tourism infrastructure that meets the expectations of tourists.

Secretary (Tourism), Rashmi Verma, emphasised that aviation acts as a propellant for the tourism industry. Similarly, growth in tourism acts as a pull factor to enhance growth in civil aviation.

The Seminar was a grand success in terms of participation, deliberations and outcome and was attended by about 150 delegates drawn from the Tourism and Aviation Industry.

# WHY? TO GET A STEP AHEAD OF DISEASE.

Today's lifestyle puts your body through a lot. Lack of sleep, irregular food, and stress. Although seemingly small, each of these opens a doorway to disease.

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# SHAHNAZ HUSAIN: TRAVEL ADDS A WONDERFUL DIMENSION TO ONE'S LIFE

Today's Traveller talks to Shahnaz Husain, Chairperson & Managing Director of the Shahnaz Husain Group of Companies, about her travel experiences around the world...

ARJUN GILL

**S**hahnaz Husain is a pioneer and leader of the Ayurvedic beauty care movement. She has received unprecedented international acclaim for taking the Indian herbal heritage worldwide with a crusader's zeal. Today, she heads the largest organisation of its kind in the world with a global network of franchise ventures, as well as 375 formulations for beauty and health care. She belongs to a royal family, who originally came from Samarkhand and later held prominent positions in the royal governments of Bhopal and Hyderabad, during the pre-Independence days. It is also a family of eminent legal luminaries.

It is not only her franchise-based enterprise, but also her marketing strategies that are truly unique. Even at a time when the demand for the product is sustained through advertising, she does not rely on it. In fact, she was invited by Harvard Business School to speak on how she established an international brand without commercial advertising. Subsequently, she became a Harvard Case Study for brand creation. And, now, she is a Subject and part of the curriculum for "Emerging Markets."

Apart from general beauty care, Shahnaz Husain is known for her therapeutic products and treatments for specific skin and hair problems. Her premium luxury ranges like, 24 Carat Gold, Diamond, Pearl, Plant Stem Cells and Platinum Range have taken international markets by storm. The formulations, comprising highly specialised products for general care and specific skin and hair problems, contain herb, flower

and fruit extracts, essential oils and precious minerals. The Shahnaz Husain franchise is at the core of the success of the brand. The Shahnaz Husain Signature Salons have become internationally known for path-breaking treatments and innovations.

Shahnaz Husain has received several prestigious international awards, including the "Outstanding Ayurvedic Innovation Award" in the British Parliament, and the World's Greatest Woman Entrepreneur Award from Success, the U.S. based Business Magazine. She was also conferred the Golden Peacock Award in London, by Theresa May and the Padma Shri Award by the Government of India for exceptional service towards the country and distinguished achievement in her chosen field.

Shahnaz Husain is the pioneer of vocational training in beauty in India. Woman empowerment and humanitarian activities are close to her heart. She has empowered the physically challenged through her free beauty training courses for the speech and hearing and visually impaired. She has also written a beauty book, which has been put into Braille. Shahnaz has also tied up with Government skill development projects in beauty and wellness. Her beauty academy has trained and certified over 40,000 underprivileged women, distributing Tool Kits for home-based businesses.

Today, Shahnaz Husain is a legend in her own lifetime, while her achievements are a magnificent expression of her dreams, hopes and aspirations.



**Q:** What are your earliest memories of travelling and exploring the world?

**A:** My earliest memories of travelling within India are with my parents. I remember travelling to Delhi from Allahabad and staying as Pandit Nehru's guests at Teen Murti Bhavan. I was married at a young age. A few years after that, my husband was posted in Tehran. From there, we travelled to London, Paris and New York. In fact, it was at that time that I got the opportunity to study at leading beauty training institutions of the world.

**Q:** The greatest lesson you learnt while travelling?

**A:** Travel adds a wonderful dimension to one's life and personality. It enriches our experience and broadens our outlook. One gets a feel of the history and culture of the place. I learnt a great deal about different cultures, history and even cuisines. I learnt to respect the differences and to accept the people of the world as one big family. But, the greatest lesson I learnt is that there is no place like India. "East or West, wherever you may roam, be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

**Q:** How important is the cuisine and food offering of a destination to the overall experience of travelling?

**A:** I do love trying out different cuisines, because the culinary art of a country provides a wonderful insight into its history and its people. My travels have made me realise what a vast variety of cuisines exist in the world.

**Q:** Which are your favourite cuisines?

**A:** One of my favourite cuisines is Chinese. Personally, I prefer light food, like salads. In London what I really enjoy is going to Starbucks for coffee. An excellent de-stress formula is just Decafe Starbuck Frappacino Lite Coffee, accompanied with a hot Blueberry Muffin – the combination is just out of this world!

**Q:** How has travelling influenced your life?

**A:** Travelling has enriched my life and taught me a great deal about the world, the history and people. It has been a great influence in my life, in terms of exploring the opportunities for extending Ayurvedic beauty care in international markets. I have mainly travelled on work to open franchise salons and outlets, attend beauty expositions, receive awards, etc.







**Q:** Your most memorable trip?

**A:** London is my favourite destination, but one of the most memorable trips was to Mykonos, an island in Greece. I was taken up by its sheer natural beauty, clear blue skies and golden beaches. It is by the Aegean Sea and has secluded beaches, too. It is a cosmopolitan place and an elite crowd throngs its many restaurants. We came across tourists from all over the world.

**Q:** How do you get the best out of your vacations abroad?

**A:** To me, the beauty of nature is important, so nature must be there resplendent in all her beauty. A magnificent beach would score a plus point with me. I choose a destination where natural beauty is combined with good gourmet cuisine and interesting shopping. I love collecting quaint and exotic artefacts from different countries.

**Q:** What did you learn about yourself from the travels you have conducted?

**A:** It is only when you are on vacation that you get the time to relax, unwind and spend time with yourself. On a business trip, this is just not possible. A quiet, peaceful time, spent by the beach or a lake, can be a time for introspection and rejuvenation. You get rid of fatigue of both body and mind. I have learnt that the sheer beauty of nature can be a spiritual experience. It is magical. In the midst of peace and solitude, I love writing poetry.

**Q:** How do you overcome jet lag?

**A:** I have not suffered from jet lag to any great extent. In fact, very often, I am back to work, soon after I return from a trip abroad. I drink plenty of water during the flight or have fruit juices. I avoid aerated drinks. I also eat very light. I have seen that eating fruits and salads helps to ward off the symptoms of jet lag.

**Q:** How do you take care of your skin when you travel to extreme climates like deserts or snow?

**A:** It is not only the extremes of climate, but air-conditioning and heating that deplete moisture from the skin. The air pressure changes can also cause dehydration of the body and skin. Airport lounges, hotels and even the car you use to transport yourself, are all air-conditioned. I use a moisturiser called Shaflight, which I had specially formulated for air travel. Containing precious natural extracts of Dates, Carrot Seed, Sunflower seeds, Honey, Sea Shell (Shankh Bhasm), Sandalwood and Almond Oil, it keeps the skin smooth and soft. It is a light, non-greasy rehydrant, which is quickly absorbed by the skin.

**Q:** Advice to the readers... how should they take care of their hair and skin while travelling?

**A:** On vacation, one probably needs to carry more skin care cosmetics and fewer make-up aids. An anti-tan sunscreen or sun block would be good. The effects of sun exposure are greater by the waterside, or near snow, because water and snow are reflective surfaces. By the sea, avoid sun-exposure between noon and 3 p.m. Apply broad spectrum sunscreen when out in the sun, not only on the face, but on all exposed areas. Apply the sunscreen 20 minutes before going out. If you are out in the sun for more than an hour, re-apply the sunscreen. Use high SPF of 30 and above for sensitive skin. Hair cream with SPF is also available. Apart from sunscreen, you need skin and hair care essentials, like cleanser, moisturiser, leave-on conditioner and hair serum.



**Q:** Do you pack quickly for a travel? Do you travel light?

**A:** Going on a business-cum-holiday trip needs some planning before one packs. I need to think of the business meetings I may be attending. I do not travel light, because I may be carrying gifts for others or samples of products. I am also particular about my dress. Coordinated shoes, handbags and accessories are important to me.

**Q:** What do you buy generally when you travel?

**A:** As I mentioned, I buy unique artefacts of different countries, paintings and sculpture, books, gifts, some clothes and accessories for myself. I love handbags and watches.

**Q:** We sometimes want to go to places we have seen in films or a show. Any place you are keen to visit due to its portrayal in a film or show?

**A:** Some scenes from movies do inspire you. The snow-clad countryside scenes of Russia, from the film, 'Dr. Zhivago', were really beautiful.

**Q:** You spend a lot of time in hotels. Are you choosy about them? What do you like in a hotel?

**A:** There are some hotels which are my favourites and I tend to favour them when I travel. In New York, I stay at the Waldorf Astoria. In London, I have a home and office. At Mykonos I stayed at the Myconian Ambassador Hotel. If I am on vacation, I select a hotel that is close to the sea or picturesque places. When I travel on work, I like to stay at a centrally located hotel.

**Q:** A big part of travel is airports. Do you enjoy spending time at airports?

**A:** No, I don't really enjoy spending time at airports.

**Q:** Which are the places on your travel bucket list?

**A:** Morocco is on my travel bucket list. I believe it offers places of panoramic natural beauty...wonderful beaches, mountains, valleys and even a desert.

**Q:** What do you never leave home without?

**A:** Apart from my passport, my most important travel essential is my diary, which I use to jot down ideas that occur to me, or maybe some lines of poetry. Other travel essentials are my credit cards, my mobile phone and my perfume.





# TIPS FOR A HEALTHY VACATION



With some thoughtful planning, you can enjoy your vacation without worrying about piling on weight and return home feeling lighter and rejuvenated

**POOJA MALHOTRA**

Pooja Malhotra answers some frequent and pertinent questions that arise in the mind of a vacationer.

**Q.** How do you stay on a healthy eating plan while on vacation?

**A.** Healthy eating on a vacation is not impossible, more so if you plan in advance and travel well-stocked.

- Choose lean protein, whole grains and veggies from restaurant menus.
- Go easy at buffets, always start with some green salads, choose your dressings wisely. Take a look around and select a few items that you could try. Serve yourself bite-size portions and refill a few, only if you must. Do not let the lavish buffet entice you into breaching your overeating threshold.
- Portion control is your biggest saviour while eating outside. Eat to keep yourself satisfied for about 2-2.5 hours – no more, no less.
- Carry healthy snacking options like nuts, seeds, roasted chana, peanuts, granola bars, nut butters, etc.
- Hydrate yourself well, drink plenty of water. Avoid carbonated drinks and juices. Exercise moderation in alcohol intake.
- If travelling by road, plan in advance where you could stop over for a healthy meal. Also, carry snacking options like fresh fruits, nuts, roasted chana/ peanuts, etc.
- Carry probiotic capsules and consume them everyday. They help to strengthen gut micro flora and support digestion.
- Carry your regular supply of vitamin and mineral supplements; you need them more than ever. Vitamin C supplements help to strengthen immunity.
- Take your supply of routine and emergency medications.

**Q.** Should you try the local cuisine of the place you are visiting?

**A.** Visiting the local grocery store is a great way to pursue healthy eating while travelling. Local and seasonal food items are far superior in nutritive value than processed food items. So, explore the local and seasonal foods, especially fruits and veggies of the place you are visiting. It helps you to explore the culture, save huge restaurant bills as well as excess calories. Avoid eating pre-packaged and processed food items, as they lose nutrients during processing, transportation and storage.

For the same reason, it's not wise to go and look for Indian food joints in exotic locations. If you hit a burger/pizza joint for each meal, you are sure to pile on pounds, so explore the local cuisine.

**Q.** How does one follow an exercise/ fitness regime while travelling?

**A.** Following some sort of fitness regime on a vacation is very refreshing. And, it's fairly simple – as simple as taking the steps instead of the elevator and walking or riding a bicycle for sight-seeing. Most hotels and resorts have fitness centres, a gym and swimming pool. Try new fun activities like rock climbing, sailing, etc. A walk to the nearby local grocer could add a few thousand steps to your day.

**Q.** What food or beverages should be avoided on the aircraft on long haul flights?

**A.** You certainly don't want to feel sluggish or bloated when you land. So, avoid refined sugars, refined carbs and processed foods. They don't fill you up for long, make you sluggish and cause sugar spikes and lows, and soon, the craving for more. Alcohol can cause gastric distress on long flights; it dehydrates your system and interferes with sleep. You can certainly give the alcohol and caffeine a miss!

Drink plenty of water at the airport, in the flight and post landing as well. A trip to the airplane washroom allows you to stretch your limbs and that little walk will do you a lot of good. Before you head out for the airport, consume some slow-digesting complex carbs, a moderate amount of lean protein (you can skip the animal protein) and lots of veggies. Tuck in some fruits, nuts, seeds, a protein bar or granola bar into your bag, to avoid eating the processed airport food.

So, here's wishing you a happy and healthy vacation!

— Pooja Malhotra is a leading nutritionist based out of New Delhi-NCR. She has done her Masters in Food & Nutrition. She passionately believes in educating her clients and uses their metabolic individuality to customise diet plans and advises them to help achieve their goals and manage lifestyle disorders effectively.

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Santa Fe  
Kingston  
Pisa  
Texas  
Acapulco  
Tunis  
Bucharest  
Monte Carlo  
Seville  
Florida  
Genova  
Salzbourg  
Budapest  
Sao Paulo  
RIO  
Paris  
Sydney  
Berlin  
Prague  
Rome  
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AVIATION



# JAL – CONSISTENCY, COMFORT AND CARE

Reputed for its people-to-people ethos, Japan Airlines focusses on establishing high customer satisfaction levels and a seamless travel experience



KAMAL GILL

**T**he airlines business is brutally competitive, therefore it behoves airlines to do many things well in order to be successful. Consistency, customer care, comfort and innovation are core requisites, making the process of flying effortless and pleasant.

In all these areas, one can take a leaf from Japan Airlines (JAL), a brand that focusses on the human narrative, creating high customer satisfaction levels and ensuring that the whole travel experience is seamless, personal and caring.

In conversation with Today's Traveller, Shinya Naruse, Regional Manager – India, JAL, sheds light on the special offerings of the airline, its India operations and future plans. Shinya Naruse informs that, "JAL is the first Japanese airline to venture overseas and its legacy has passed down through generations of professionals who value the spirit of hospitality and cater to the needs of its customers without compromising on quality."

This is evident in the awards and recognition that JAL has been honoured with. The airline has been named Best On-time Asia-Pacific Major Airline for six consecutive years and eighth in total for its Domestic and International flights, operated in 2017; plus, JAL also stood second place overall in the major International Airlines category and was recently named the Best Airline in Japan for the second consecutive year, awarded by Trip Advisor "2018 Travelers Choice Awards for Airlines."

Safety and impeccable customer service are JAL's priorities, as is regular product enhancement, shares Naruse. "In 2012, JAL switched to B787-800 aircraft and became the first carrier to fly the Dreamliner commercially in Indian skies. In FY17, JAL introduced another improvised version of the Dreamliner – Boeing 787-900 Series, on the Delhi-Tokyo route," he informs.





Passenger comfort is a major design consideration for JAL. State-of-the-art services comprising full flatbed seats in Business Class allow personal space to travellers. All seats are fitted with a universal PC power outlet, USB port, and LED light adjustable to four levels of brightness. Another benchmark for JAL is that it became the first carrier to introduce the Premium Economy Class on the Delhi-Tokyo route in FY 2009, for the mid-segment traveller. JAL SKY PREMIUM offers wider seats, more legroom space and a centre divider for added privacy among various other enhancements.

#### THE INDIA CONNECT

Expanding on the Japan Airlines-India connect, Naruse articulates on JAL's history of running successful flight operations in India. "Being the first commercial airline of Japan, JAL started its operations in India in 1962, just after 10 years of its establishment in 1951. Calcutta became the first city from where Japan Airlines started its operation with a Tokyo-Europe route via Calcutta with a Convair 880 aircraft in 1962. In 1965, JAL set up the New Delhi Airport office and started operations via Delhi on the Tokyo-London route."

Considering the increased travel flow between India and Japan, JAL started its direct operation with a twice weekly flight on the Tokyo – Delhi route, in 1996. Over the years, JAL has increased its frequency of flights in India. In 2012, JAL set another landmark by introducing the first commercial Dreamliner - Boeing 787 - 800 on the Tokyo-Delhi route and currently, the airline is using the latest JAL SKY SUITE 787-900.

When quizzed about JAL's future plans, Naruse was expansive, pointing out, "We will expand international flights with the Narita/Haneda expansion of the airport slot, in FY 2020. Both 2018 and 2019 will be preparation periods for this big business opportunity," states Naruse.

Naruse holds India close to his heart, as is evident from what he says: "With India's increasing economic growth, the number of aviation users continues to increase and the movements of people and goods are getting more active. Let's contribute to the advancement and development of India by delivering unparalleled services to customers and the world without letting delays and bottlenecks get in the way of development and growth."

#### Business Class





Continuing, Naruse informs that JAL has modified its strategies and plans to raise the bar where its network is concerned. Accordingly, the MOU with Vistara, in September 2017, was based on global strategy. The intrepid Naruse adds that JAL's fundamental vision is the improvement of services to both Indian as well as Japanese customers.

For the Delhi region, plans are afoot to improve reservation systems, as well as the website. "We will provide new values to our customers, community and society by developing and cultivating growth in business with the help of know-how and our customer base, which we have accumulated as assets," pronounces Naruse. Developing Human Resources is also on the agenda. "We will actively create opportunities for overseas, dispatch etc, and continue to develop and expand human resource development," asserts Naruse.



As part of its CSR activities, informs Naruse, Japan Airlines dedicates its resources to help nurture future generations. Japan Airlines sponsors the JAL Scholarship Program every

year for university students who are well versed with the N2 level of the Japanese language. "Through the JAL Scholarship Program, we invite college students to Japan every year from across Asia and Oceania and provide opportunities to them via varied educational workshops. The programme aims to develop understanding among young men and women who have the drive to be the potential future leader," says Naruse. As far as the India experience is concerned, Naruse is of the opinion that India is a dynamic country with vibrant people. "I am very excited. India has so many states, just like Europe. It is a fantastic experience for me," rounds off Naruse.



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EXPLORER



# ODISHA'S GLORIOUS GEMS

Odisha's Diamond Triangle, comprising Ratnagiri, Udayagiri, and Lalitgiri, has opened up new vistas for Buddhist tourism in Odisha

TT BUREAU

Odisha has a documented history dating back several thousand years, so it comes as no surprise when visitors perceive the State's age-old heritage in terms of its ancient monuments, ranging from the ruins of Sisupalgarh to the magnificent Lingaraj and Jagannath temples, from the World Heritage Site of the Konark Sun temple to the exquisitely carved Mukteswar and other temples.

The various archaeological finds at Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri, Udayagiri and other locations prove that Odisha has also been influenced by Buddhist thought. Jainism too, has left its mark on Odisha, as seen in the rock cut caves at Khandagiri and Udayagiri, as well as remains at other locations.

Take a trip to Odisha's Diamond Triangle, comprising the three Buddhist sites of Ratnagiri, Udayagiri and Lalitgiri, which ascribe to the Vajrayan sect of Buddhism, popularly known as the Diamond Vehicle, and hence the name Diamond Triangle. Located about 10 km northeast of Bhubaneswar, the Diamond Triangle is a significant Buddhist site in Orissa. Your road trip could start from Bhubaneswar and leave you spellbound as you take in Odisha's lush green landscape.

## RATNAGIRI

Your first stop could be Ratnagiri, also known as 'Hill of Jewels.' It has the most extensive Buddhist ruins in Odisha and is of



great importance as a Buddhist site – both for its magnificent sculptures and as a centre for Buddhist teachings.

Enhanced with two monasteries and a grand stupa, Ratnagiri is a treasure trove. The site showcases votive stupas, a large stupa, a courtyard with several images, various images of humans and gods, a colossal Buddha, while the most amazing of all are various giant Buddha heads and unique artefacts. Most of them are displayed in the courtyard that houses decorated cells on the left and a sanctum sanctorum, where a huge Buddha statue in the Bhumisparsha posture is placed. The 12-ft-high statue is built in sections and is teamed with two smaller statues of Padmapani and Vajrapani. The sanctum is decorated with two stone guards at its entrance.

Don't miss the incredibly embellished stone gate at the site, which is intricately carved on green granite with distinctive human

figures in royal clothing. A smaller monastery alongside houses a standing Buddha in Varada mudra. The brick mahastupa is surrounded with various votive stupas in different shapes and sizes.

### UDAYAGIRI

Your next stop is Udayagiri, the largest but the least excavated of the three sites. Excavation at Udayagiri started in 1960s and continues till date. The archaeological findings are classified in two parts, namely Udayagiri I and Udayagiri II.

Also known as 'Sunrise Hill,' Udayagiri consists of a brick stupa, two brick monasteries, a stepped stone well with inscriptions on it, and numerous rock-cut Buddhist sculptures. The stupa at Udayagiri 1 has four-seated stone statues of Lord Buddha, enshrined and facing each direction. The monastery is impressive, with 18 cells and a shrine that has an intricately carved ornamental facade. The excavation turned up many Buddhist images and stone sculptures of Buddhist divinities as well. Udayagiri 2 boasts an extensive monastic complex with 13 cells and a towering statue of Buddha, seated in Bhumi-sparsa mudra. Marvel at its vaulted arches and the unique path around the shrine.

Another attraction is the gallery of Buddhist rock-cut images, overlooking the Birupa River below. There are five images, comprising a standing life-size Bodhisattva, a standing Buddha, a goddess seated over a stupa, one more standing Bodhisattva, and a seated Bodhisattva.

### LALITGIRI

The ruins at Lalitgiri, though not as extensive as those at Ratnagiri and Udayagiri, are notably from the oldest Buddhist settlement in Odisha. Major excavations revealed a stupa, an apsidal Chaitya hall or Chaityagriha, four monasteries and numerous stone sculptures of Buddha and Buddhist divinities.

The most exciting discovery in the stupa at Lalitgiri were three relic caskets, two of which contained small pieces of charred bone, possibly of Buddha himself. The Odisha government plans to display the relic caskets in a museum at Lalitgiri, sometime in the future.

The apsidal Chaitya hall unearthed at Lalitgiri is also the first of its kind in the context of Buddhism in Odisha. The rectangular prayer hall has a semi-circular end and contains a stupa at the centre.

Climb the 45 steps to the giant Lalitgiri stupa for breathtaking views of the Odisha plains. Next, stop at the Lalitgiri Museum and view the large number of Mahayana sculptures consisting of colossal Buddha figures, huge Bodhisattva statues, statues of Tara, Jambhala and others. Conclude your trip in Lalitgiri village, where skilled sculptors still weave their age-old magic.



# BLUE SKIES AND FLOWERS IN BLOOM



If you could coin an adjective to describe Kashmir ... it would be a "mood destination," because mood is what it triggers. The deep true colours that the destination offers in its skies, flowers, rivers and mountains creates a matching mood of being true to yourself. Discover yourself as you discover Kashmir...

**KAMAL GILL**

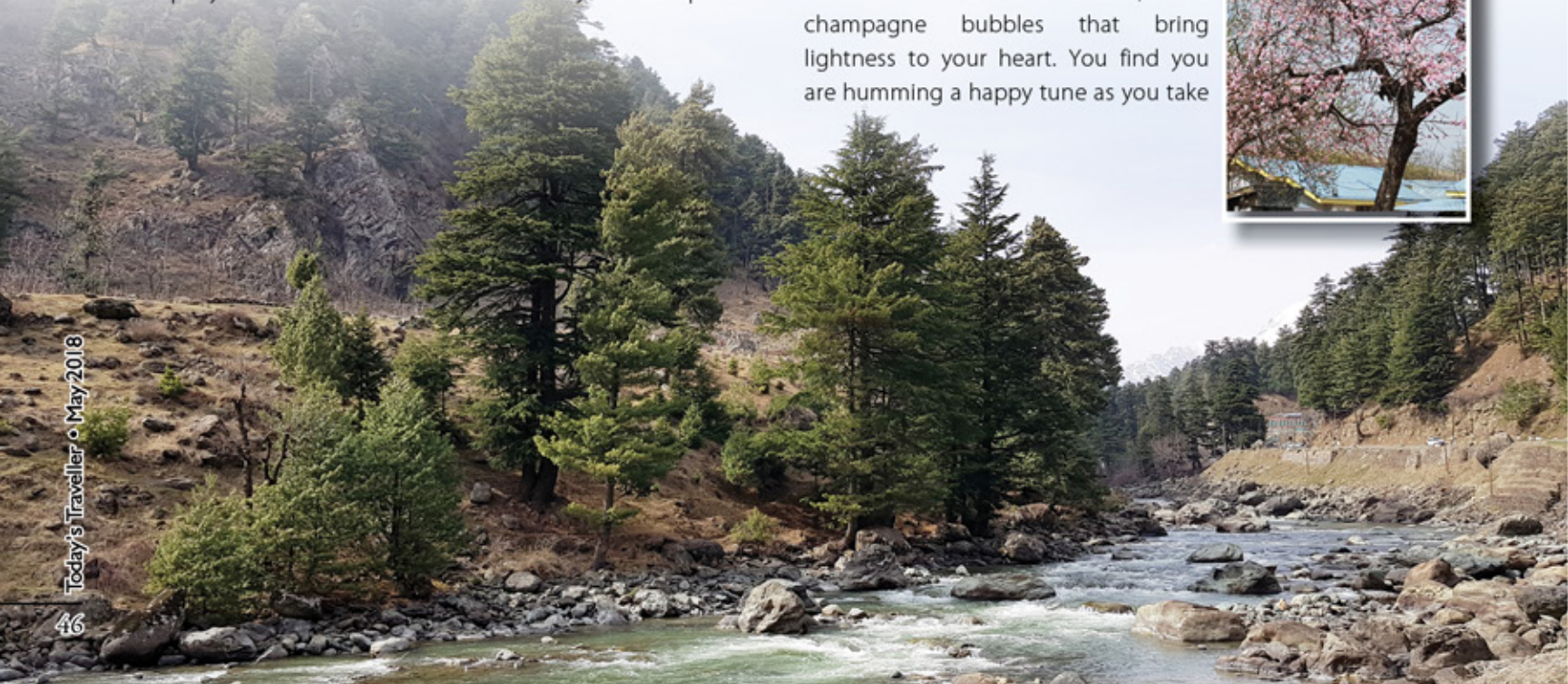
**T**here's something about Kashmir that doesn't leave you. Long after you have reached home, the imprint of experiences, reappear unbidden, as if time has stood still.

Nostalgia stays with you every time you see a star-filled night sky, a garden in bloom, a bubbling wild stream.

Why? You ask yourself. Haven't you travelled the world? Seen equally blue skies and flowers in bloom? Why is this so special?

No easy answer. Except it's the nature of the place. Your overnight stay in a houseboat in the quiet Nageen Lake in Srinagar is the start of a novel experience. A piping-hot breakfast on the cedar sundeck of the houseboat with a crisp cool breeze and warm sunshine brings a cocktail of heady sensations.

The air is effervescent, like champagne bubbles that bring lightness to your heart. You find you are humming a happy tune as you take





a shikara ride across the blue-green waters, surrounded by mountains and blossoming gardens, to the opposite shore. You begin your long-awaited trek through alleys and lanes that wind through simple village homes and fruit orchards to the higher reaches of Srinagar.

Rosy-cheeked children smile shyly as they peep behind their mothers woollen *phirans* in dark wooden doorways. You are greeted warmly and invited into a simple home where my generous hostess offers fragrant *kahwah* poured from an old copper vessel, a samovar, which intrigues.

Over conversation about the weather, you begin to understand how this soul-warming Himalayan drink keeps the Kashmiris warm and healthy through the winter months. You love the saffron and almond tea and promise you will learn to make *kahwah* at home.

Bidding adieu to your newfound friends, you hear a child calling out. A father in a grey *phiran* and *poots* holds his grandson's hand as the four-year-old child tugs to run ahead with a few grazing goats. He greets you with warmth and tells you that you should try the local noon chai, which is salty, with a touch of cardamom and cinnamon.

Later, the next day, on your return from an exhilarating trek through thick pine and cedar forests on the way back from Betaab Valley, Chandanwari in Pahalgam, you take up the offer from a Kashmiri family to try out the noon chai along with homemade *lavasa*...a thin unleavened flat bread which is crisp. As you begin your second cup, you try out the other bagel-like bread in a wicker basket, *chochwor*, which has aromatic sesame seeds and has been freshly made in the smoke-filled mohalla bakery across the alley.



Emperor Jahangir's description of Kashmir is apt: "Agar Firdaws  
ba roy-i zamin ast, hamin ast-u hamin ast-u hamin ast," meaning,  
"If there is Paradise on earth, it is this, it is this, it is this."



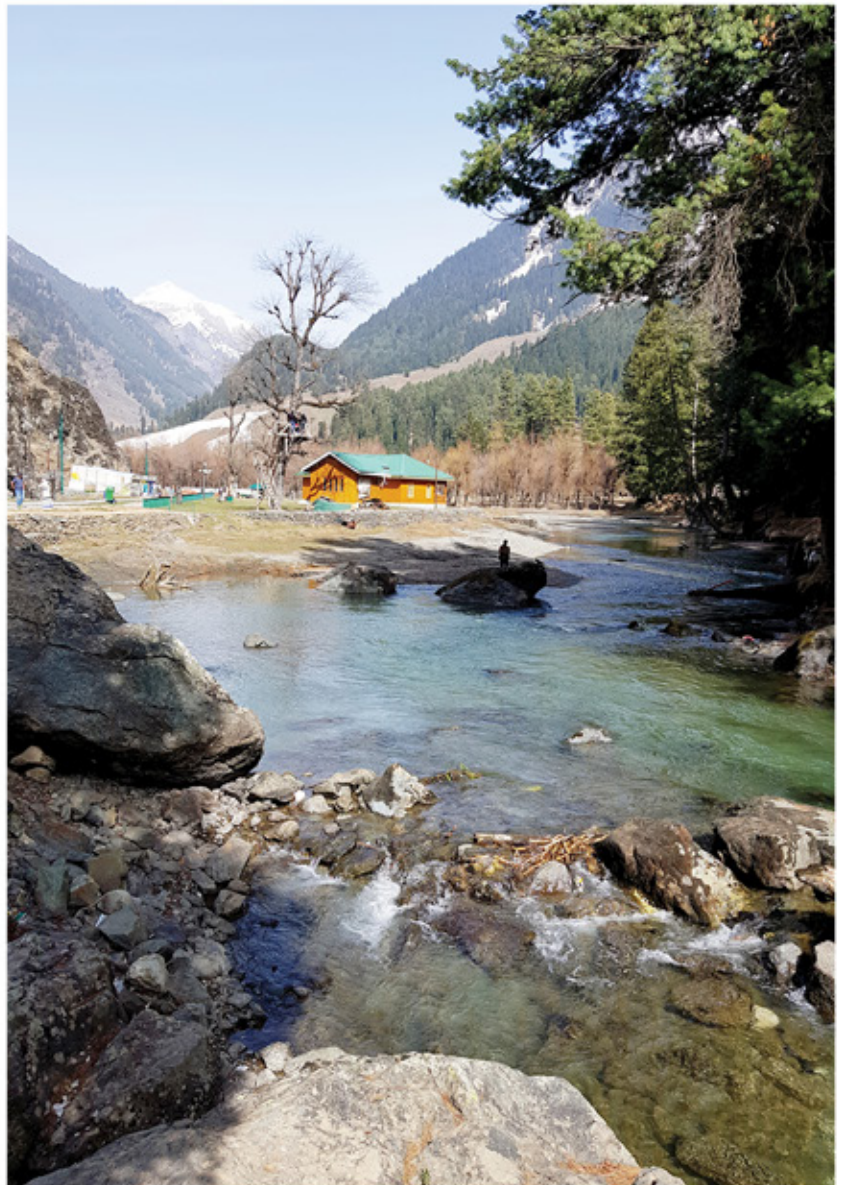
There is simplicity all around in the rustic setting. When you leave and trek away to a higher ridge – the village from a distance is picture perfect with smoke curling from chimneys, a stream running nearby, snow-capped mountains around, green pastures, the evening setting in.

Of course, you are aware that nothing is perfect. Not enough opportunities, declining demand for all things traditional, low incomes, dismal long winters, unrest that affects tourism...so many issues.

Still, despite challenges, you know there is an indestructible optimism all around ... fed by the purity of the warm springs that dispel the chill, the balm of a full sun shining on ice and snow-covered pastures, the green shoots of blossoming fruit orchards that promise a harvest of plenty.

Ah yes! Nature cares for its own. Up in the misty heights of Gulmarg, on my next day's trek, a wonderful morning takes birth, bringing a soft radiance to colours. Across the greens of the world's highest golf course, it flows, benign, like the waters of the Liddar, buoyant like the bluebells, tulips and buttercups dotting hill-slopes, innocent as a child's laugh.

It's true. There's something about Kashmir that doesn't leave you. Instead, you leave a little bit of yourself in Kashmir.



## Here And Now

It's perfect  
An early spring evening  
In Srinagar

Crisp air rustles  
Snow-tipped mountains  
Blue skies smile upon  
Red tulips  
Sparkling streams reflect  
Pink apple blossoms

It's tranquil  
And very quiet  
Here on the lake  
Waters lap  
Against the shikara  
A small arc-shaped boat  
Slices  
The deep blue-green Nigeen.

I can hear the trill  
Of a water bird  
The soft flap of wings  
Skimming the water  
The hum of some  
Little insect

The distant echo  
Of the muezzin calling  
In prayer  
Over the vastness  
Of time

The rhythm  
Of the paddle

Against the water  
As the boatman rows  
Gently soothes  
And stills  
My restless mind

For the moment  
I am in  
A womb  
Of softness  
Disturbed only by  
The sudden eruption  
Of the colours of a sun  
Setting ablaze  
The blue-green waters  
Into flaming oranges and reds.

The unfolding colours  
Drum up sounds  
Of unbelievable beauty  
As ochres burst into  
Glorious deep flames  
Colouring sky and water  
With the same brilliance

Sunset on a shikara ride  
Is a here and now moment  
A fissure of discovery  
As the shikara glides  
A golden path  
Of awe and wonder

- Kamal Gill

Nigeen Lake, Srinagar, Kashmir

# THAILAND: OPEN TO THE NEW SHADES



Make most of Thailand's 'Open to the New Shades' concept and discover new perspectives in the realms of Thai gastronomy, destinations, craft, and lifestyle

## TT BUREAU

**W**e all travel the world for different reasons – for adventure, curiosity or just the desire to escape. But, whatever your reason for travelling, there's no denying that travel could change you. Travelling to countries other than your own helps you set aside your conceptions and to see things for how they really are, and opening your mind to new ways of thinking, living, and understanding.

This summer, travel to Thailand and be in sync with the 'Open to the New Shades' concept, which invites visitors to open their minds and hearts to deepen and widen their experiences into a new perception of the attractions and variety of experiences in Thailand. Get an insight into Thailand's staggering diversity as Thai Tourism offers compelling experiences through its

niche products – Thai Gastronomy, Shades of Thai Arts and Crafts, Culture, Thai Beach and Nature, and Shades of the Thai Way of Life.

### NEW FRONTIERS

Thailand is a kingdom of wonder, filled with spectacular natural, cultural, and historical attractions. Visit Sukhothai, Lampang, Rayong, Trat, Phang-nga, Krabi and Ranong to discover Thailand from a new perspective.

Visit Sukhothai province, once the kingdom and the first capital of Thailand 700 years ago. Marvel at Phra Mae Ya Shrine, located in front of the City Hall, by Yom River, and for nature lovers, the Khao Naria peak in Ramkhamhaeng National Park is a must. Gorge on Kanom Kliao, made from wheat flour and

eggs, seasoned with pepper, salt, and made it into a twist-shaped dough, fried and mixed with sugar.

Rayong, a province on the east coast of the Gulf of Thailand, boasts abundant seafood and varied fruits. Replete with incredible beaches, Koh Samet is the ideal beach paradise. Explore Hat Sai Kaew and Hat Praow beaches for singular experiences. Have fun at the Rayong Fruit Festival in May and indulge in a host of fun activities, including the fruit parade, fruit competition, etc.

Krabi is famous for its scenic view and breathtaking beaches and islands. Natural attractions include Noppharat Thara Beach National Park, Koh Phi Phi, Khao Phanom Bencha National Park, Koh Lanta, Khao Khanap Nam (the Twin Mountains), and many more.

### GASTRONOMIC DELIGHTS

Thai cuisine is world famous, and all Thai culinary delights have their roots in Thai agriculture, which has been the mainstay of its economic livelihood well before tourism. Thai food offers a variety of flavours, a generous use of herbs, spices and market-fresh ingredients and is famed for its balance and harmony.

Thai cuisine is varied as it is delectable. Thailand's heartland offers signature dishes like Phat Phak Bung Fai Daeng (stir-fried water spinach), Kaeng Wan (Green curry) or even the famous Phat Thai, along with fragrant steamed rice. In the North, steamed glutinous rice is preferred. Popular dishes from the North include Kaeng Hang Le (Pork curry), Khao Soi (Curry broth with egg noodles and meat) and Sai-Ua (Pork sausage). Enjoy a Khantoke Dinner, the traditional meal setting during which diners sit around low tables.

### BEST BEACHES

Southern Thailand is reputed to have the best beaches in Asia. Visit Ao Nang, a resort town in southern Thailand's Krabi Province, known for a long Andaman coast beachfront and access to dive sites off the nearby islands in its bay.

Ko Samui, Thailand's second largest island in the Gulf of Thailand, is known for its palm-fringed beaches, coconut groves and dense, mountainous rainforest, plus luxury resorts and posh spas. The landmark 12m-tall golden Big Buddha statue at Wat Phra Yai Temple is located on a tiny island connected to Ko Samui by a causeway.

### ARTS & CRAFTS

Thailand art and craft is woven into the country's rich cultural heritage and is an inherent part of Thailand's history and national identity. Traditional Thai art and craft ranges from paintings and musical instruments to beautiful silk, silver wear, pottery, puppets, Khon masks, model warships, bronze wear, soap carving, sculptures, wood and stone carvings, ceramics and much more.

Not to be missed are Borsang Umbrella and Thai Handicraft Village, which offer a wide range of Thai handicrafts, but most noted for its parasol umbrellas.



### THAI WAY OF LIFE

Enjoy and experience a local fishing village in Rayong, visit the largest fruit orchard in the area and see how the locals live. Visit the fascinating two-day Creative Lamphun Festival – a wonderful opportunity to experience the local culture of Thailand's northern province of Lamphun, known for its old-world charm, natural beauty and agro-tourism.

# NIRVANA AND BEYOND

Take an inspiring journey on the Buddhist trail and encounter serenity, joy, well being and incredible cultural insights

TT BUREAU

Spiritual treks are not only for believers – they can be fun, inspiring, challenging yet rewarding and don't have to do with prayer. However, the best ones do involve a bit of a trek. Even if you don't find nirvana, long walks through lush green forests, hills and valleys, are great health boosters.

The Buddhist trail in India is a prime example of a tried and tested route that is popular even today. For instance, the 13km-long forest trail which Buddha took to reach Rajgir, Bihar, from Bodh Gaya, around 2,543 years ago, has hundreds of pilgrims converging on this route, in the Buddha Heritage Walk, introduced by the Bihar Tourism Development Corporation (BSTDC). The route is well-documented and is



believed by scholars to be the only authentic one among several other such routes taken by Buddha during his 45 years of preaching in various parts of India. Take a journey with Today's Traveller to some inspiring places where the Buddha trod, that will make you look inside, above and beyond.

## LUMBINI, NEPAL

Begin your journey at Lumbini, Nepal, the place where Buddha was born, and where he lived for 29 years before taking to the road. Stroll around in Lumbini Garden, visit Mayadevi Temple, cited by many as Buddha's birthplace.





#### **SARNATH, UP**

In a deer park in Sarnath is where Buddha gave his first sermon. India's national emblem, the Ashoka Chakra, once stood in this park on a pillar erected by the Mauryan emperor, and now lies in a museum nearby. Sarnath is one of the four sacred Buddhist places in India with structures such as Dhamekh Stupa and Chaukhandi Stupa that celebrate its historical significance.

#### **KESARIYA STUPA, EAST CHAMPARAN, BIHAR**

Visit Kesariya Stupa, said to be the largest in the world and located 50km from Vaishali. Comprising six massive circular terraces, it rises to about 100ft. Each terrace is of a different size, and the cells around the perimeters house life-sized Buddha sculptures. Said to be the world's tallest excavated stupa, it is a magnificent example of Buddhist architecture and the images of the Buddha and other decorated artefacts here make it an indispensable tourist attraction. Legend has it that this is where Buddha stopped on his journey from Vaishali to Kushinagar, where he later died.

#### **BODH GAYA, BIHAR**

The focal point of Buddhism in India, it is where Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment. The Mahabodhi Temple Complex is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Nearby is an offshoot of the famous Bodhi tree under which Buddha found enlightenment. It is an enormous green banyan



tree protected by a wall, an enclosure and guards. Sit in its shade and feel something akin to serenity. Marvel at the cross-legged, seated, Great Buddha, an 80ft statue on an inverted sandstone lotus, which in turn rests on a bed of red granite. Twelve thousand masons took seven years to build it. The incredible statue was designed by a Japanese architect and built by a Japanese engineer. There are also three monasteries and a number of organisations offering programmes and disciplines on Buddhist philosophy.

#### **RAJGIR, BIHAR**

Known as one of Buddha's favourite places, Rajgir is where Buddha gave two of his most famous sermons. Saptarni cave housed the first Buddhist council while Gridhakuta hill was where Buddha gave the Lotus Sutra and the Prajnaparamita, two of his important sutras. An equally enchanting sight here is the white Shanti Stupa which has four gold statues of Buddha.

#### **VAISHALI, BIHAR**

It is said that Buddha visited the city quite often and the second Buddhist council was held here. Buddha also came here in the fifth year of his enlightenment, in the rains. Today, the city has a number of relic stupas and shrines. Also not to be missed are many fine Ashoka pillars.

#### **KUSHINAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH**

Complete your journey at Kushinagar, one of the four sacred places for Buddhists in India, since it is here, at the age of 81, that Buddha passed away. The area houses the Rambhar Stupa, which was built at the same place where Buddha was cremated. The Mahaparinirvana temple here holds a magnificent statue of Buddha in reclining position. Other than these, there are a number of temples, stupas, shrines and a museum that you could visit.



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# 24 HOURS IN CAPE TOWN

Discover the radiant environs of Cape Town, surrounded by pristine beaches, natural reserves and wildlife, against the imposing backdrop of Table Mountain

## TT BUREAU



### TABLE MOUNTAIN

On a clear, idyllic day in Cape Town, a five-minute cable car ride to the flat-topped Table Mountain is highly recommended. Once atop the summit, sit and soak up the picturesque views of the vibrant city, cerulean waters of Table Bay, the nearby peaks of adjacent mountains and the rest of the Table Mountain National Park. You can opt for either a self-guided audio tour or a free thirty-minute guided tour.

There are three hiking trails and abseiling activities to satiate your adrenaline rush. There's a Wi-Fi lounge, gift and curio shop and café to sit, shop and relax. The nearby national park is verdant with forests and natural reserve spots endemic to the mountain, offering a refreshing and tranquil spot to linger.

### CAPE POINT

Cape Point is a nature enthusiast's paradise, for its captivating and colourful precincts. Located 60km away from Cape Town, it's famous for its eye-catching ocean and mountain scenery, 1100 native plant species that are not found or grown anywhere else in the world, stunning dive sites and 250 bird species, some of which are endemic to the area. You can have world-class cuisine at the Two Oceans Restaurant, take a ride in the Flying Dutchman Funicular, shop for curios at the three Cape Point shops, take a shipwreck trail, or see the world's largest antelope, the eland, and the Cape Mountain zebra. If lucky, you can see the gigantic whales move past Cape Point during their annual migration.



### CHAPMAN'S PEAK DRIVE

Fondly known as the "Chappies," the nine-km-long Chapman's Peak Drive offers spectacular views of azure waters, white sandy beaches, precipitous mountains, mellow sunsets and the coastal towns of the Cape. The Drive has 114 bends that offer jaw-dropping views of Hout Bay. The serene and balmy views of the coast offer a relaxing getaway from the hustle and bustle of Cape Town. The drive has major picnic spots, photography points, view points and whale spotting points along its stretch. The route is a photographic heaven and encompasses several vantage points and pull-over sections that offer vistas and views, clouds and colours, flora and fauna, wildlife and birds, to make for an impeccable and unforgettable experience.



### BOULDERS BEACH

Boulders beach attracts tourists because the crowd-pullers are none other than the African penguins, which are one of a kind. This beach houses a colony of penguins and comes under protected natural environment. It is located in Simon's Town, near Cape Town, and is a remarkable viewing point. Here, you can see penguins lounging on the white, sandy shore or taking a nap, but better stay away from those razor-sharp beaks. January is the best season to visit Boulders Beach, when you can actually see them moulting on the beach. There are boardwalks built for seeing the penguins at close hand, while the entire colony is busy eating, breeding, preening, swimming and chatting away. Do try any one of the terrific fish restaurants in Simon's Town, Kalk Bay or Muizenberg to savour the zesty local dishes.

### TOBAGO'S BAR & TERRACE

Come and redeem yourself at Tobago's Bar & Terrace with lip-smacking culinary delights and enjoy the super cool, aquamarine ocean vistas right under your nose while you relish the sumptuous South African food. The atmosphere is very relaxed at the terrace, where you dine al fresco while the Chef and his team prepare you a hearty meal, infused with local, fresh and finest ingredients to give you the real taste of South African cuisine, bringing years of experience on your platter to tantalise your taste buds. As you sink your teeth into the food, be sure to down it with the complimentary wine provided along with your meal.



# WHAT WHEN WHERE


**WHAT: VIENNA FESTIVAL**
**WHEN: MAY 11-JUNE 17**
**WHERE: VIENNA, AUSTRIA**

From May 11, the Vienna Festival will show five weeks of international stage art: 30 productions from the areas of music, theatre, performance and dance. There's also a club culture aspect again. Artistic director Tomas Zierhofer-Kin brings lots of different genres and artists to Vienna again for his second run of the Vienna Festival. The opening is a feast for everyone: the Vienna Festival gets under way at Vienna's City Hall Square, on May 11. The free open-air concert has delighted thousands of people year after year and is broadcast around the world.

**WHAT: DISTORTION**
**WHEN: MAY 30-JUNE 3, 2018**
**WHERE: COPENHAGEN, DENMARK**

Distortion, a party-culture festival in Copenhagen that attracts DJs from across the globe, sees the city's streets overwhelmed with thousands of revellers over its five-day span. Free street parties take place each day in a different district of the city. By night, clubs, record labels, magazines and party venues all host ticketed events. Plus, being eco-friendly Copenhagen, partygoers are invited to purchase a street bracelet, the funds of which go towards the clean-up afterwards, as well as future merrymaking.


**WHAT: INDEX – INTERNATIONAL DESIGN EXHIBITION**
**WHEN: MAY 26-29, 2018**
**WHERE: DUBAI**

INDEX, the International Design Exhibition, is the largest business platform for the interior design and architecture community to source products for their projects across the residential, retail and hospitality projects. With over 700 market-leading companies and brands from more than 50 countries showcasing thousands of products, INDEX remains the number one interiors event in the MENA region, attracting more than 20,000 visitors from over 100 countries. It is a master exhibition that has evolved into 9 distinct industry-specific events, all under one roof, aiming to bring a 360-degree visitor experience to interior design.



**WHAT: KOH PHANGAN FULL MOON PARTY****WHEN: MAY 30, 2018****WHERE: KOH PHANGAN, THAILAND**

Koh Phangan Full Moon Party is a world-famous institution, but its ancestral home remains the crescent cove of Haad Rin Beach, on the southernmost tip of Phangan Island, in Thailand. More than 12 powerful sound systems turn the 800-metre beach into possibly the most popular open-air nightclub in the world once a month, with a lively festival-like atmosphere, great music and huge quantities of alcohol. This one-of-a-kind event is routinely listed on bucket lists as one of the essential experiences in Thailand, which absolutely must be seen to be believed.

**WHAT: GRAND STEEPLECHASE****WHEN: MAY 19-20, 2018****WHERE: ROUTE DES LACS - 75016 PARIS**

With a distance of 6,000m, the Grand Steeplechase de Paris is one of the most iconic races in the horse-racing calendar. It originated at Auteuil Racecourse, in 1874. With 23 obstacles, the Grand Steeplechase is a difficult and challenging competition. It requires endurance, power, speed and courage. Victory here is a consecration. Jean Daumas won the event 5 times between 1959 and 1966. The Grand Steeplechase de Paris is not just a race – it is also a festive event. Visit the Hippodrome shop to find the ideal souvenir gift.

**WHAT: OOTY FLOWER SHOW****WHEN: MAY 18-20, 2018****WHERE: OOTY, TAMIL NADU**

The annual 122nd Flower Show is organised to showcase the best in garden design, flower sculptures, authentic and modern floral craftsmanship as well as encouraging young local artists through arts and cultures. Held annually for the past 122 years, the 2018 edition will take place at the Botanical Garden, in the heart of Charing Cross, Ooty, from May 18-20, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Approximately 15,000 potted plants will be on display, along with cultural activities and music. Around 3,00,000 flower saplings of over 150 types out of 52 varieties will also be on display.



# PICK OF THE MONTH



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

## MUSIC: JACK WHITE, BOARDING HOUSE REACH

American rock musician, Jack White, has released his third solo studio album, *Boarding House Reach*, which has come after a gap of four years. Known for his unpredictable and eclectic stature, White has introduced 13-track opus which will give his ardent fans a look into his curious life.

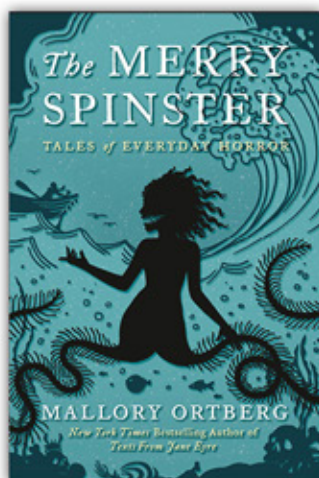


White produced and co-mixed the album and played guitars, drums, organs, and synthesizers, while also acting as the vocalist. *Q Magazine* revealed, "There's nothing here likely to be adopted as a stadium chant, but in its tethered imagination, *Boarding House Reach* is the most surprising and eccentric record White's made."

**Genre (s):** Alternative/Indie

## BOOK: THE MERRY SPINSTER: TALES OF EVERYDAY HORROR, BY MALLORY ORTBERG

The author of 'Texts From Jane Eyre' has come with a collection of darkly mischievous stories based on classic folk and fairy tales. Ortberg's narrative arrives fashionably late to the party, but beautifully turned out. The tales are



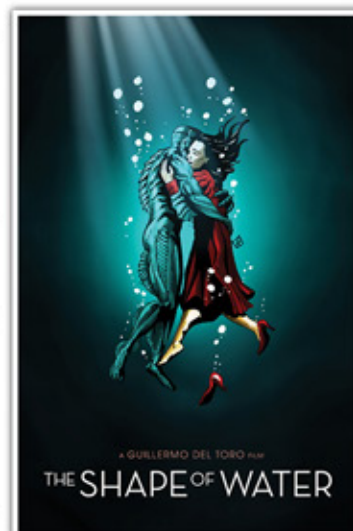
sinister and inviting, but familiar and alien all at the same time. The *Merry Spinster* brings traditional children's stories with elements of psychological horror, emotional clarity and a keen sense of feminist mischief. This new book is a unique spin on fiction, where something unsettling is always playing just beneath the surface. American writer and narrator Charlie Jane Anders says, "Mallory Ortberg has a voracious appetite for poison apples and a genius for finding the places in fairyland where all the bodies are buried. The *Merry Spinster* will ruin your most-loved fables in the best possible way."

**Genre (s):** Horror Fiction/Fantasy/Magical Realism

## DVD: THE SHAPE OF WATER

From master story teller, Guillermo del Toro, comes *The Shape of Water* – a fable set against the backdrop of the Cold War era America circa 1962. In a recently concluded Oscar ceremony, the movie won top honours, including Best Film and Best Director. The unconventional story is centred on a lonely and mute protagonist, Elisa (Sally Hawkins), who works as a janitor for a hidden high-security government laboratory. Her life takes a steep turn when her isolated routine shifts to a dangerous journey when she and co-worker Zelda (Octavia Spencer) discover a secret classified experiment which turns out to be an amphibious creature. Elisa grows close to the creature and eventually realises that it can not only communicate, but is intelligent and has emotions. All hell breaks loose when she practically goes against the top government officials and plans an escape route for the creature.

**Genre (s):** Drama, Romance, Sci-Fi/Fantasy



## GAMES: FAR CRY 5

*Far Cry* is one of those few gaming franchises that has captivated and increased its fan base, with a gripping story line and incredible graphics. Declared as the most awaited game of 2018, *Far Cry 5* is set up in Hope County, Montana, which is otherwise known as the land of the free and the brave. But, as you enter its premises you are suddenly in an open war with Joseph Seed, aka 'The Father,' who is the leader of the religious fanatical doomsday cult known as Eden's Gate. The player is part of the resistance group to save the besieged community from Joseph Seed and his siblings. As critics pointed out, Joseph Seed may be the most chilling antagonist yet and this might be the series' most mature story.

**Genre (s):** Action/Adventure/Shooter



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