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CORPORATE BUSINESS, AVIATION, MICE & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

APRIL 2016 | ₹50

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**4** PRE-SCHEDULED  
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**5** MICE, LUXURY  
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# CON

April  
2016

**Cheers to life** 12  
Corporate professionals often find it hard to take a break. Here is a guide for them to rejoice life

**Dining in style** 14  
When dining to seal a business deal, remember these essential tips to create a good impression

**A touch of opulence** 16  
Mumbai's very own luxury hotel, The Leela Mumbai defines the city's cosmopolitan culture

**Making a mark** 18  
Saurabh Rai, Executive Vice President, Preferred Hotels & Resorts, speaks to Today's Traveller

**Bespoke royalty** 20  
The ITC Mughal Agra is a celebration of a time gone by

**Corporate jetsetters** 22  
Know where the corporate world goes for the perfect vacation

**Re-building history** 26  
Delhi gets a brand new Haveli hotel in the form of The Haveli Dharampura, managed by WelcomHeritage Hotels

**Q&A with Gaurang Shetty** 30  
Gaurang Shetty, Whole Time Director, Jet Airways, elaborates on the airlines gaining new grounds in the travel world

**AAI named best service provider** 32  
Airports Authority of India creates a new milestone as the best service provider

**Aviation** 34  
Lufthansa Group chooses Amadeus to deliver new load control system

## Erratum

*The interview with Jalil Gary Khan, CEO, Hyderabad Convention Visitors Bureau (HCVB), in March 2016 issue, printed a wrong image of the building. The correct image for HCVB is here below.*







# TENTS

Corporate Business, Aviation, MICE & Leisure Travel Magazine | Volume 19 | No. 9

## Fly Turkish

36

A host of entertainment keeps you occupied when flying with Turkish Airlines

## Darjeeling unlimited

38

West Bengal's very own Darjeeling is heaven on earth for travellers

## In the lap of nature

40

Seek the thrill and enjoy nature with these fascinating Scandinavian capitals

## Living it up in Thailand

42

Turn to Thailand when seeking an adventurous holiday

## Lounging by the beach

44

Here are some of the best beaches in the world for you to explore

## Outing on a weekend

48

A close look at a few Indian delicacies that are synonymous to deliciousness

## Romancing spring by the lakes

52

Revel with nature this spring, take a trip to some of the finest lakes in the world

## 24 Hours in Tokyo

56

Enjoy a day of Oriental fun at Japan's very own Tokyo



Point your mobile at this image to view our site

Hotels	04
Destinations	06
News	08
Appointments	10
People and Events	28
What When Where	58
Pick of the Month	60

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## PREFERRED HOTELS & RESORTS COLLABORATES WITH KATARA HOSPITALITY

Preferred Hotels & Resorts and Katara Hospitality have entered into a master partnership agreement for the recently launched Murwab Hotel Group, Katara Hospitality's standalone hotel operating division.

This move brings nine new hotels from the Middle East and Europe into the Preferred Hotels & Resorts portfolio by 2017, under the helm of Saurabh Rai who has now taken on a larger regional role as Executive Vice President for Preferred Hotels & Resorts.

"Fulfilling our continuous goal to expand the Preferred Hotels & Resorts brand into new destinations, I am thrilled to share this partnership announcement with the Indian market. This new association with Katara Hospitality establishes our brand in Qatar, and I am looking forward to working closely with the Katara team and other partners as I assume oversight of development in the region," said Saurabh Rai, Executive Vice President of Preferred Hotels & Resorts.

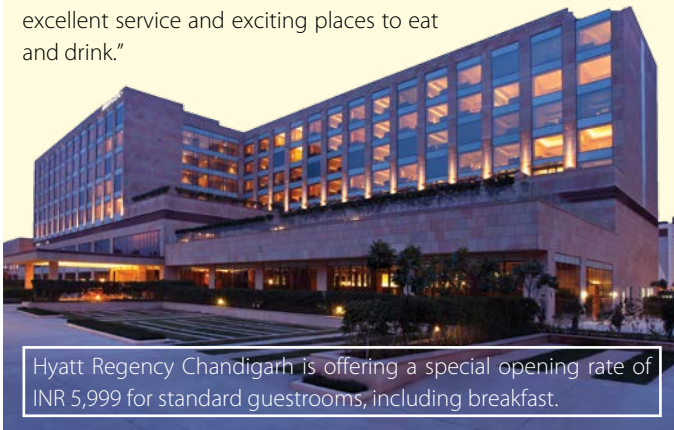
"We are delighted to be partnering with Preferred Hotels & Resorts for our recently relaunched hotel operating division, Murwab Hotel Group and are confident that the services provided by Preferred Hotels & Resorts will be strategically aligned with the principles underpinning Katara Hospitality's presence on the global stage," commented Hamad Abdulla Al Mulla, Chief Executive Officer of Katara Hospitality.

## HYATT REGENCY CHANDIGARH OPENS ITS DOORS

Hyatt Hotels & Resorts recently announced the official opening of Hyatt Regency Chandigarh in Northern India. Located 246km from India's capital of Delhi, Hyatt Regency Chandigarh is the first Hyatt-branded hotel to open in Chandigarh, the city planned by world renowned Swiss-French architect and planner Le Corbusier.

"We are delighted to welcome the first Hyatt-branded hotel to the beautifully planned city of Chandigarh," said Kurt Straub, Vice President of Operations for Hyatt in India. "Hyatt Regency Chandigarh has been thoughtfully designed to make guests feel welcome, comfortable and relaxed, so that they can socialise, connect and celebrate any occasion. I am confident that this contemporary new hotel will add to the appeal of Le Corbusier's charming city and introduce Hyatt's well-known hospitality to guests and residents."

"We are delighted to bring this hotel to the heart of Chandigarh's Tri-City," said General Manager Puneet Bajjal. "Hyatt Regency Chandigarh is a modern hotel that embodies both the city's design ethos and its residents' desire for modern accommodations, excellent service and exciting places to eat and drink."



Hyatt Regency Chandigarh is offering a special opening rate of INR 5,999 for standard guestrooms, including breakfast.

## MASTERCARD AND ACCORHOTELS PARTNERSHIP OFFER EXCLUSIVE PRIVILEGES

MasterCard and AccorHotels announced a partnership that will offer MasterCard cardholders exclusive privileges when they stay at selected AccorHotels properties in Asia Pacific. From delicious meals and award-winning spa retreats to a complimentary night's stay, MasterCard cardholders can look forward to an exciting range of indulgent treats and deals when they stay at more than 550 AccorHotels properties in the region.

"We are very excited to partner with MasterCard to offer their cardholders special privileges and offers when they stay with AccorHotels and hope that this partnership will encourage their members to explore more of our hotels and resorts across Asia Pacific," said Michael Parsons, AccorHotels Vice President Marketing & Strategic Relationships, Asia Pacific. "AccorHotels has more than 550 participating hotels across 17 countries and we continue to open one new hotel per week on average across the region, so there are choices for every type of stay, from city centres to beachside resorts and everything in between."

"Asia Pacific has long been home to some of the world's top tourist attractions, and MasterCard's Global Destination Cities Index 2015 showed that six of the most visited cities in the world are now right here in Asia," said Nagesh Devata, group head of Merchant & Acceptance Development, Asia Pacific, MasterCard. "Through our partnership with AccorHotels, we want to provide MasterCard cardholders traveling to countries in the region with not just great value but also access to an array of exclusive rewards and privileges that will make their trips even more priceless. AccorHotels' impressive and expanding footprint across this region also means travelers will be able to enjoy these privileges wherever they travel to."

## PLAZA PREMIUM GROUP UNVEILS BRAND AEROTEL IN SINGAPORE CHANGI AIRPORT

Plaza Premium Group recently announced the official debut of Aerotel in Singapore, the airport transit hotel arm under the Group that offers a stylish hideaway in the heart of airports.

Aerotel Singapore is a one-of-a-kind airport transit hotel in Changi Airport to provide travellers in transit with excellent accommodation and convenient booking hours. Located on



Level 3 in Terminal 1 of the airport (near Boarding Gate D41), Aerotel Singapore is the Group's inaugural flagship transit hotel and the world's only

transit hotel equipped with an outdoor swimming pool, Jacuzzi and pool-side bar in the airport restricted area.

"Aerotel Singapore is our first airport transit hotel which meets the demand of transit passengers by promising a comfy airport accommodation, swimming and gym facilities, and convenient booking hours, bringing them a brand new home-away-from-home experience in Changi," said Mr. Song Hoi-see, Founder and CEO of Plaza Premium Group at the grand opening ceremony today. "By offering a first class Aerotel service but at economy prices, we are confident that this wonderful facility for transit travellers will also help improve the load factor and yield of airline flights using Changi Airport as their transit hub."





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## BHUTAN TAPS GUJARAT MARKET

As part of its growing popularity as an international destination, the Kingdom of Bhutan has positioned itself as a destination that thrives on making Happiness its key denominator. With the latest Regional arrivals touching 1,09,052 demonstrating an impressive growth of 57 per cent over last year, India remains as the biggest market for both regional and overall arrivals. As part of its India agenda, Tourism Council of Bhutan has focused on Gujarat as one of the key source markets to enhance its Indian footprint in the year 2016, through a road show targeted at key travel agents in Ahmedabad. This would be the first of many initiatives to tap the Gujarat market.

Damcho Rinzin, Head, Marketing and Promotion Division, Tourism Council of Bhutan, "As a leading international tourism destination, Bhutan is seeking to diversify its source markets and attract new visitors. Countries like India are emerging more and more in the world outbound tourism sector, and Bhutan believes it could offer a special proposition to visitors from India. Further, international travelers to Bhutan are lured by the myriad of offerings that include heritage, culture, natural beauty and a range of quality world class hospitality and tourism industry which make a strong proposition for Bhutan as a destination."



## KENYA PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES MAJOR SUPPORT MEASURES TO BOOST TOURISM

The government has waived visa fee for children less than 16 years of age beginning next month as part of the strategy to recover the tourism sector. Park fee will also be capped at 60 USD down from 90 US dollars for the financial year 2016/17.

The head of State, Uhuru Kenyatta has directed the National Treasury to follow up on the directive and make necessary amends on respective laws for its full implementations. He made remarks while launching Marina English Point Hotel in Mombasa.

The Visa fee waiver for children below 16 years of age applies to all nationalities and is aimed at positioning Kenya as a family holiday destination thereby encouraging more family visitors into the country. This will make family holidays at the coast cheaper and combined with the recently-announced charter incentives overall, will reduce the cost of vacations to Kenya. The incentive package for charter operations, worth US\$30 per seat, was extended to June 30, 2018, an additional year beyond the initial time frame of next year



## KARNATAKA TOURISM DEPARTMENT HOSTS KARNATAKA HABBA

The Department of Tourism, Government of Karnataka has recently hosted a three day extravaganza-a festival called "Karnataka Habba" at Kolkata, Bengaluru and Mumbai between February to March 2016. The 3-day fest was an initiative by Tourism Department of Karnataka to showcase the state in all its glory to the people of Kolkata, Bengaluru & Mumbai.

Over 25-125 stalls displaying the best of tourism, handicrafts, cuisines, art, craft, culture, handlooms, etc. from various departments of the state Government as well as the other states were put up during the occasion. Famed Mysuru silk, Dharwadkasuthi, rosewood inlay, sandalwood articles, ganjifa paintings, mirror embroidery, Spices, Bidriware, terracotta items, honey, wine, coffee, tribal jewellery, lambani art and many more were on display and were also handy for visitors to purchase right at the venues.

Food courts serving various types of cuisines from different parts of the state were put up, to showcase a whole unique range of Karnataka food. All in all, Karnataka Tourism truly succeeded in bringing a "mini Karnataka" to Kolkata, Bengaluru and Mumbai cities.



## ANDHRA PRADESH TO BOOST TOURISM IN STATE

The sunrise state of Andhra Pradesh, offering a plethora of enchanting yet unexplored tourist destinations, in its efforts to fuel the engine of growth in the tourism sector eyes investments worth Rs. 20,000 Cr by 2029. The state has set a target of Rs. 10, 000 Cr investments by 2020. In year 2015, the State has seen a jump in the tourist footfalls to the tune of 30 per cent, increasing from 93 million in 2014 to 122 million in 2015.

In a bid to match investor expectations with the state's resoluteness of intent, the Government of Andhra Pradesh in its award winning Andhra Pradesh Tourism Policy 2015-20 has announced an array of incentives to investors for taking up tourism infrastructure projects and services such as a fixed land rental of 2 per cent of basic market value for investors, reduction in VAT slabs to 5 per cent for hotels and resorts, and a 3 year tax holiday on luxury and entertainment tax among others. The state also beholds investment opportunities for tour operations and travel agencies to further augment tourist inflow to the state.

YS Chowdary Union Minister of State, Science and Technology and Earth Sciences said, "I strongly believe that Andhra Pradesh's tourism sector has a lot of potential for investments and am confident that it will emerge as one of the biggest growth engines, driving our state's economy. The State will extend Red Carpet++ Model for investors".

Neerabh Kumar Prasad, Principal Secretary to Government, Tourism & Culture said, "The state is working towards creating 6 tourist hubs – Visakhapatnam; Rajahmundry-Konaseema-Kakinada; Vijayawada-Amaravati; Tirupati; Ananthapuramu-Puttaparthi and Srisailem." With an investment of Rs. 12,000 crores already tracked, development of a sturdy tourism infrastructure is what will give further fillip to the sector." he further added.



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## BEST WESTERN SIGNS SORREL HOSPITALITY AGREEMENT IN INDIA

Best Western Hotels & Resorts recently announced that it has inked a master franchise agreement with Delhi-based Sorrel Hospitality. Led by a team of seasoned hospitality industry veterans with extensive experience building and managing hotel portfolios, Sorrel will be responsible for Best Western's future positioning, growth and development across India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

"We see tremendous potential right now in India and we are delighted to have aligned with a company like Sorrel Hospitality, which has an outstanding track record of success, as we work to expand our footprint in India," said Ron Pohl Senior Vice President, Brand Management, Best Western Hotels & Resorts. "We are confident that Sorrel is the right partner to help us move closer to our very ambitious international expansion goals, and we look forward to working with their team."

Sorrel has put together a team of leading experts to guide Best Western's efforts in India, including Gurmeet Singh Uberai, Promoter Director, Atul Jain, Chief Operating Officer and Tajinder Singh, Vice President Sales & Marketing. Together, the team will execute a multi-pronged, multi-year development initiative.

"Sorrel Hospitality is pleased to be working with Best Western and we look forward to leveraging our experience in the Indian market in a variety of ways," said Atul Jain. "This will include the rollout of a management model, we feel it will better retain the brand's identity and optimise for success. We look forward to partnering with Best Western to capitalize on the opportunities that exist in this region."

## TURKEY VISA APPLICATION CENTRES UNVEILED IN 18 CITIES

The Embassy of the Republic of Turkey and VFS Global announced the launch of Turkey Visa Application Centres across 16 cities in India. Two more centres are also being launched in Nepal and Maldives.

The launch was announced by His Excellency Dr Burak Akçapar, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to India, Nepal and Maldives, at the agreement signing ceremony, attended by senior consular officials and members from the trade fraternity, in New Delhi. As an exclusive partnership, VFS Global has become the only authorised visa processing service provider in the three countries for the Government of the Republic of Turkey.

Speaking at the launch, Akçapar said, "Starting from 1 April 2016, the VFS visa application centres will be the main channel for submitting applications for Turkish visas from India, Nepal and Maldives. Currently, we are receiving about 100 visa applications a day. This is a major improvement which gives the applicants a better and easier visa service."



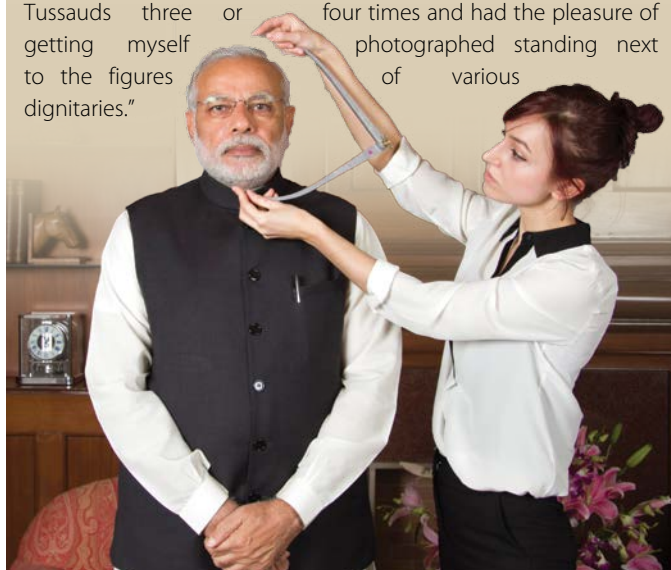
Vinay Malhotra, COO – South Asia and DVPC, VFS Global, said "Turkey has always been a highly attractive destination for outbound travellers from India for both leisure and business. We are truly privileged to partner with the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey and believe the opening of these centres in India, Nepal and the Maldives will well serve the needs of travellers keen to visit this beautiful country."

## PM NARENDRA MODI AT MADAME TUSSAUDS

New wax figures of one of the most influential statesmen on the world stage, Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, will be joining the ranks of world leaders at four Madame Tussauds attractions in London, Singapore, Hong Kong and Bangkok this April.

"Prime Minister Modi is a hugely important figure in world politics, a position supported by his place in the top ten of Time Magazine's Person of the Year List 2015," commented Global Head of Media Relations, Kieran Lancini, Madame Tussauds. "His massive social media presence – he is currently the second most followed politician on twitter after U.S. President Obama – also confirms the intense interest the public have in him, a fact supported by the requests our guests have made for us to create his figure. We are delighted to be including the Prime Minister's figure in our attractions in London, Singapore, Hong Kong and Bangkok."

"Madame Tussauds has crafted figures of very distinguished dignitaries from around the world – how could I regard myself worthy of being alongside them? But when I was informed that your decision had emanated from public opinion and public sentiment, I was comforted, said Prime Minister Modi. "During my sitting, I observed the team carefully and was deeply impressed by its dedication, professionalism and skill. I have visited Madame Tussauds three or four times and had the pleasure of getting myself photographed standing next to the figures of various dignitaries."



## JAYPEE VASANT CONTINENTAL TO PROVIDE 1 LAKH LITRE TREATED WATER TO SDMC

In an effort to contribute to the environment, Jaypee Vasant Continental Hotel Vasant Vihar would be providing 1 lakh litres of treated water, free of cost to South Delhi Municipal Council (SDMC) daily.

The event was inaugurated by Venkaiah Naidu, Union Minister of Urban Development, Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation.

Speaking on the occasion, Managing Director of Jaypee Hotels & Resorts, Manju Sharma, said, "It gives us immense pleasure to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with SDMC for providing 100 KLD (1 lakh litres per day) of treated STP water free of cost and everyday for irrigation purposes in the area. Jaypee Vasant Continental is first hotel in the Capital to provide treated water free of cost. The hotel has always strived to achieve excellence in sustainable practices adopted hence this is another milestone crossed".





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## MOVEMENTS



**PATRICK MANTHE** has been appointed as the General Manager at Chatrium Hotel Riverside Bangkok and Chatrium Residence Riverside Bangkok. In his new role, Manthe is responsible for the entire operation of Chatrium Hotel Riverside Bangkok and Chatrium Residence Riverside Bangkok and directs all areas of the two properties operations, including guest services, sales and marketing efforts, and hotel administration.



**SABYASACHI CHATTERJEE** has been appointed as the General Manager at the Park Plaza Delhi-NCR Faridabad. A Calcutta University Science Graduate, Chatterjee, brings with him over 18 years of operational excellence and key deliverables across cross cultural teams. Prior to this, he was the General Manager at Optus Hometel, Bhiwadi.



**PUNEET BAIJAL** has been appointed as the General Manager at Hyatt Regency, Chandigarh. With a hospitality career spanning more than 17 years, Bajjal is known for his expansive knowledge of the hotel industry, and brings with him to Chandigarh a broad experience of working with a number of Hyatt brands. On his rare days off also, Bajjal keeps it lively as he likes to explore nearby destinations, watch cinema, try out different dining options and jog along the Sukhna Lake along with his wife.



**ANIRVAN SANIYAL** has recently been appointed as the General Manager at Ambar Sarovar Portico, Gandhidham. He brings with him an experience of over 15 years in the hospitality industry. He was earlier associated with Sarovar Hotels & Resorts as the Regional Training Manager for Western Zone.



**DHANANJAY KUMAR**

has been appointed as the General Manager at The Suryaa, New Delhi. With over 21 years of experience, for brands like Radisson Blu Hotel (Chennai), Hilton (Chennai), Technopak Advisors Private Limited(Gurgaon), to name a few, Kumar specialises in hotel operations, revenue management, performance enhancement, best practices implementation, setting up process and implementation, organisation development and human resources and training.



**INDRANEEL BENADIKAR**

has been appointed as the Market Director of Sales and Marketing, Marriott properties, Pune. In his new role, he will oversee Sales and Marketing activities with a focus on developing and implementing multi-hotel strategies for all participating properties. Benadikar holds a Diploma in Hotel Management from IHM Ahmedabad and an MBA from Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies.



**RICHARD BAROOAH** has been appointed as the General Manager of Radisson Udaipur. A result oriented hospitality professional, Barooah, brings with him over 16 years of hands-on experience with various International hotel brands in various managements across Asia Pacific region. His last stint was with Holiday Inn Pune as General Manager.



**MEENA REWARI** has been appointed as the Director of Sales & Marketing at Hyatt Regency Chandigarh. A voracious reader, Rewari has done her Post Graduate in English literature and hails from Panipat. Her career in Hospitality Sales spans almost two decades across association with brands like The Park Hotels, The Oberoi Group and Hyatt Hotel Corporation.





**CORPORATE**



# CHEERS TO LIFE



As a corporate, it is not easy to find a work-life balance. These simple guidelines tell you how to break free from work routine and monotony

## TT BUREAU

**A**s a business professional, it is not easy for you to just set off for a vacation even if you are on the verge of burning out. Numerous hurdles come in the way, like office responsibilities, maintaining deadlines, meeting the requirements of clients, or even losing a loyal clientele to your competitor while you are away. The sliding rupee also acts as a major dampener to your travel plans.



However, a periodic break from the hectic work schedule is a must if you want to sort out not only your professional life, but also your personal life. Working incessantly may lead to decreased productivity, and you may lose your sanity, or even go into depression.

A vacation after six months, or even a year, will not only take your mind away from work, but you will also be able to re-energise yourself, and come back with fresh ideas and approaches. The creative juices—most valuable for a businessman—will again start flowing.

What you need to do is manage your work smartly and plan in the right manner, so that work doesn't suffer when you are not in office, and you remain in constant touch with your clients while on a vacation. Today's Traveller offers a few guidelines.

### COME OUT OF THAT HANGOVER

Although you may yearn for that exclusive break, thoughts as to why you shouldn't will keep swirling through your head when

it comes to the crunch. That is the whole irony! Jot down a list of ten reasons why you should go for a holiday. Be strong. Take up the vacation. Your friends, family and acquaintances need to hear something exciting from you other than your business talks.

### DO YOUR HOMEWORK

The more you do it meticulously, the lesser will be the agony while you are relaxing with your friends or family at a wondrous mountaintop, or at a fabulous beach. Your colleagues and clients should be aware that you will not be available for a particular period, well in advance. Delegate responsibilities and empower your staff to handle things in your absence. Leave a contact number with a few key people for emergencies.

### TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR PLANS

The nitty-gritty of your vacation like day-wise itinerary, hotels, airline reservations, places to visit... just about everything should be clearly laid out on paper. As vacations are extremely difficult to come by, you can't afford to make a mess of the one on your hands. Take charge of your vacation programme and get your secretary to jot down every small detail so that you can figure out the chinks in your holiday armour.

### MANAGE WORK AND PLEASURE

You may smell a few days of respite while on a business trip. Combine business with pleasure and extend your business trip by a few days. This will save time that you would need to spend on a complete holiday. For example, if you are travelling to New Orleans for a business trip, squeeze in a few hours to dine at the famous Emeril's restaurant, or extend your stay for a guided tour of the Big Easy.

#### OTHER WAYS TO UNWIND IF YOU ARE IN TOWN

- Read a good book, preferably fiction
- Hang out in a restaurant or in a coffee shop
- Go for a long drive with your family
- Have lunch with a friend, who is not interested in your business talk
- Watch a movie
- Attend a concert or a play
- Go to a spa





# DINING IN STYLE

From how to introduce yourself, to what to order at restaurants, these are the social rules you need to know when establishing business relationships

## TT BUREAU

**A** business dinner is much more than catching up with someone at a restaurant, chatting and feasting on some scrumptious food. This is probably the only time you are being judged, while eating. You might want to keep your best foot forward. To help you in your quest, Today's Traveller brings you some tips which will make your business dining a success.



### DRESS FOR THE OCCASION

There are a number of upscale restaurants that refuse entry (politely) to people dressed in casuals. As if it wasn't embarrassing enough, the other party you are supposed to meet shows up at the entrance while you are arguing. But not just to make sure you are allowed an entry, dressing should also be done in a way that is impressive. A crisp shirt, formal trousers, a well-fitted coat and a decent necktie will make sure you don't go wrong when it comes to dressing up.

### SHOW UP ON TIME

You might be used to reaching office late, but this is one day when your late arrival will not be appreciated. You don't want a

bad start that can ruin everything that was supposed to follow. If you think getting late is unavoidable, make sure you inform the other party well in advance.

### BASIC DINER ETIQUETTES

It is a business meeting, so you need to take care of every little thing. If there are more than one people you are meeting, make sure you wait for everyone to arrive before you order the food.

Once everybody is there, let your guests order first. You are in there for dinner, so starting with the cocktails won't be a bad idea.

### ORDER CAREFULLY

Well, this one depends. But it is advisable to avoid ordering something that you will have to eat with your hands, for instance a chicken leg or a burger. Yes you might feel like gorging on some crab leg, but this is one day when you can and you should ignore your taste call.

### TABLE ETIQUETTES

*Maintain a proper posture. You must sit up straight with your elbows off the table. While eating, try not to talk while your mouth is full. Stop the urge of combing your hair or itching at the wrong places. The restaurant will provide you with tissue papers, use them as much as you need to (you can use them more than you need to. No harm in coming across as a cleanliness freak!). If the soup is hot, stir to cool it down, don't start blowing. Things become easier when you are a seasoned business diner, but for someone new, there is much to be learned. You need to take care of certain things, especially if you are the host. And that includes paying the bill.*

# Always a little better than the last time.

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# A TOUCH OF OPULENCE

The Leela Mumbai is a much cherished hotel, taking a focal position in the stylised metropolitan of Mumbai

TT BUREAU



Located in the dynamic commercial capital of India, surrounded by shimmering lights, towering skyscrapers and a vibrant cosmopolitan culture, the Leela Mumbai boasts a stupendous position in the city. The hotel is located in close proximity to North Mumbai's commercial centre and export zone. The Leela Mumbai is an oasis of tranquillity amidst this bustling metropolis. It offers all the facilities the discerning traveller would expect from a five star luxury hotel with an experience of the essence of India. The hotel is at a convenient 5 minutes drive from the Chatrapati Shivaji International Airport and 15 minutes drive from the domestic airport.

Here at The Leela Mumbai, guests can discover the essence of India and unwind in the beautifully appointed guestrooms whether travelling for business or leisure with all the facilities of a contemporary luxury hotel. The 391 rooms and suites include

1 Maharaja Suite, 3 Junior Presidential Suites, 6 Deluxe Suites, 20 Executive Suites, 13 Royal Club Parlours, and 45 Royal Club rooms. With some first class amenities provided in the rooms, guests can indulge in a range of luxurious experiences. The Leela Mumbai is also synonymous to fine dining, and this is made possible with the dedication of the chefs and staff, working at the restaurants and eateries located within the hotel premises. The Leela Mumbai boasts four restaurants, a quintessential lounge and a cosmopolitan bar making it the preferred destination for connoisseurs.

## LE CIRQUE SIGNATURE

Le Cirque Signature offers signature and most popular specialties from the brand's fabled restaurants around the world along with new creations for Mumbai epicures. A Franco-Italian specialty restaurant, the highlights of the menu include classic Le Cirque



dishes such as Lobster salad, Spaghetti Primavera, Paupiette of Chilean sea bass and Doversole, as well as creations derived from the best local and seasonal ingredients from around the globe, such as, porcini mushrooms, lobster and burrata cheese to name a few. It is located on the hotel's 8th floor and has a 66-seat dining space, a highly personalized bar area, beautifully-appointed, well-stocked wine cellars and an intimate private dining room. Dinner here is served up till midnight.

### JAMAVAR

An authentic fine dining restaurant, Jamavar offers North and South Indian cuisines. The dishes reflect the distinctive cooking styles and dining rituals of India's ancient nobility. Traditional Indian spices are intrinsic to the flavours of the specialties served. The menu offered will take you on a culinary journey from succulent kebabs to rich curries and fragrant "dum biryanis" a long grain basmati rice preparation. The soft lighting and mellow music provide an intimate and relaxed setting for diners.

### CITRUS

True to its name, Citrus is a refreshing contemporary casual dining restaurant. Under the streams of natural light, an ambience of relaxed



Also, Sunday, being a special day, Citrus offers special Sunday Brunch featuring international specialties with interactive counters.

### THE GREAT WALL

The Great Wall brings to you a variety of Chinese specialties to suit your palate and mood in a classical surrounding. The natural light creates a cosy ambience for a relaxed lunch here. This is accentuated with the calm interior colours along with wooden furnishing. Traditional Chinese décor is highlighted with the marble lions placed at the entrance, delicate paintings, large porcelain vases and artefacts. For an exclusive private and family style dining, the restaurant offers a separate private dining area for 6 and twelve diners.

### THE LOBBY LOUNGE

The Lobby Lounge is the ideal 24-hour venue that provides



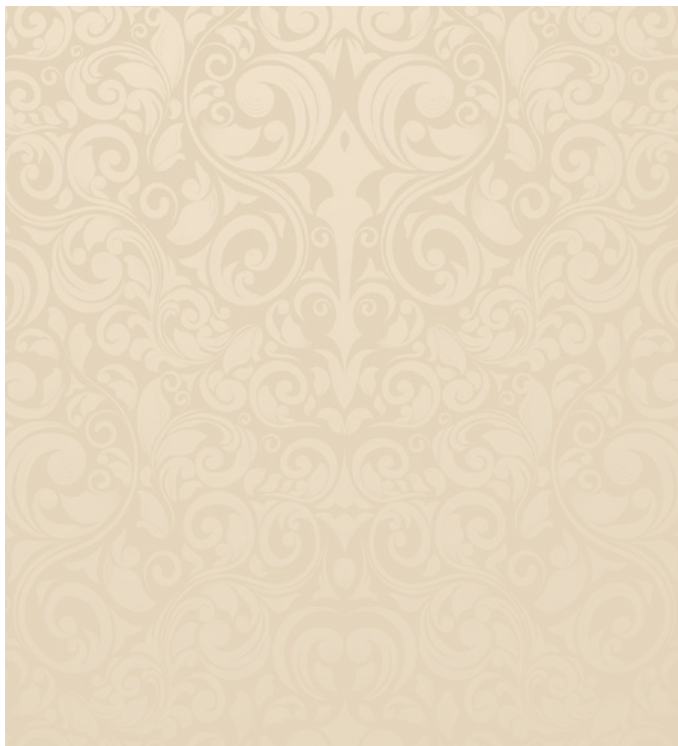
sophistication, comfortable and stylish environment, Citrus is a place where one can enjoy a hearty breakfast, a casual lunch, an afternoon tea or a glass of champagne and a leisurely dinner. Diners can enjoy the incredible view of the lush green outdoor and cascading waterfalls. Here at Citrus, the show kitchen sits as the main attraction where guests can interact with the chefs and have your food prepared just the way you like it. The lunch and dinner buffet offers selections of international specialties to suit all palates. In addition to the regular international dinner buffet one can indulge in a sumptuous themed spread offering you the experience of a different taste each day – Thai, Mediterranean, Italian, Spanish, American and Indian. There is also the quintessential Japanese culinary experience as chefs prepare sushis and sashimis behind the dedicated Japanese counter here.

a convenient meeting place to conduct formal or informal conversations over a cup of tea, a light meal or a glass of wine. The décor has an Indian feel with a cosmopolitan look. Brocade tapestries and ethnic bronze statues add an Indian touch to this convivial location. The glass panelled garden front is designed to visually merge the interiors with the lush outdoors and picturesque setting of the azure poolside, cascading fountain, floating lotus plants and verdant gardens.

Vibrant music, small plates and expertly crafted cocktails define Six Degrees – The Cosmopolitan Bar at The Leela Mumbai. The inviting mood lighting at the bar counter and the breathtaking floor to ceiling wall display of champagne and vodka on either side exudes style and stunning décor. Six Degrees also offers the timeless luxury of unwinding outdoors at its spacious poolside terrace.



# Q&A



## MAKING A MARK



Today's Traveller speaks to Saurabh Rai, Executive Vice President, Preferred Hotels & Resorts, regarding the group's continuing presence and the state of hospitality

**TT BUREAU**

**Q. When did Preferred Hotels & Resorts come into the Indian market and how has the company grown to date?**

We came to India back in September 2002, when we signed our first flagship hotel in the country, The Imperial New Delhi, which continues to be our member hotel till date. We have had a very strategic and structured growth since. Our intent was to mark our presence in all relevant business cities and leisure circuits in the country. Over the past 13 years, this is exactly what we have executed during our portfolio expansion curve. Having grown to 32 member hotels and resorts in the country, we have some of the best in class independent hotels and strong regional brands in our portfolio.

**Q. What are the travel trends that you see from India recently? How does Preferred aim to meet these changes and set apart as an industry leader?**

India continues to grow and evolve as a relevant source market for business and leisure travel, for international as well as domestic hotels. World economy has been in a bit chaotic space over the past 12 months. Some of the major source markets like China, Russia, Europe and the Middle East have their own share of socio-economic issues that have negatively impacted the traveller sentiment. India however is holding strong, both in terms of leisure as well as business travel.

We have continued to invest in expanding our on-ground Global Sales infrastructure by investing in key markets. We hired new Global Sales resources in India, Korea and South Africa over the past year.

Another major emerging trend is the upcoming wave of regional corporate companies that may not be as big as the Fortune 500's, but have reasonably good volume of business into several international countries. Our Global Sales team has been tapping into many such regional corporate companies to be able help our independent hotels contract with such organizations, as they may or may not have a structured online contracting process.

**Q. What's lacking in the Indian / Asia-Pacific hospitality industry? What changes would you like to see or pioneer?**

The hospitality industry in India is at a peculiar crossroads situation this year. On the one hand is India's desire and ambition to be recognised as one of the foremost tourism economies in the world, and on the other, are some very tangible issues that our industry has been facing for decades. These challenges have a direct impact on how much one is able to accelerate and growth.

The government has shown good intent and commitment in endorsing the travel and hotel sector. Therefore, one hopes that a few long pending concerns like rationalization of high taxes in the sector are addressed sooner than later. An over twenty five percent tax situation for hotels in India hinders our destination's competitiveness in the region. We really don't need to reinvent the formula here, as we have some very successful examples in the region. Hospitality and Tourism focused economies like Thailand and Malaysia have clearly exhibited what works. Objective is to deliver a 360 destination experience where all touch points are geared towards a consistent level of service delivery, at a competitive cost. This objective is at the

very centre of India being perceived as a desirable destination to visit, which will directly drive a higher number of international tourist arrivals and further propel domestic tourism spend as well.

Hotels in India have been suppressed for a prolonged period. Cyclicalities have to prevail and government policies on taxation, lending rates and durations and infrastructure status for hotels need to come through. It is not feasible to continue to deliver a superior hotel experience when you just can't make good business out of it. We have been globally known to produce some of the most unique and exceptional hotel products and service standards, particularly in the upscale to luxury segments. It is not a best kept secret that the rates these hotels have been commanding over the last 3 to 4 years are well below par. The equilibrium of charging a reasonable and acceptable rate is critical, which is fair to the consumer and also to the business.

**Q. Let's talk about your recent partnership with ITC. How do you see this partnership growing and what does Preferred bring to the relationship?**

We initiated our partnership with ITC Hotels about 02 years ago, and have strategically grown our partnership together. This partnership is with the WelcomHotel and Fortune brands from the ITC stable, and has now grown to a total of 11 hotels, i.e. 02 WelcomHotels, 02 My Fortunes and 07 Fortune Hotels. These are very strong regional brands backed by the power of ITC as a conglomerate.

Our role in this partnership is to take WelcomHotel and Fortune brands international. Since the start, we have been aggressively promoting our partner brands internationally by way of Global Sales, Marketing and PR. Sustained results have started to show, and we are keen and hopeful of expanding this alliance further.

**Q. What are Preferred Hotel's expansion plans for the future in India and the region? Which markets are of top priority and why?**

We have ambitious growth plans in the region. As for India, we have grown into a very balanced portfolio, so our intent here is to fill the gap cities where we still don't have any member hotels and do have the potential to support hotels with business. These would be cities like Pune, Chandigarh, Cochin and Jaipur on the business cities and destinations like Jodhpur, Hampi, Shimla and Kumarakom on the leisure front.

In the region, we are looking to expand our portfolio in Sri Lanka, Nepal and the Indian Ocean islands and this is where we have our main development focus in 2016.





# BESPOKE ROYALTY

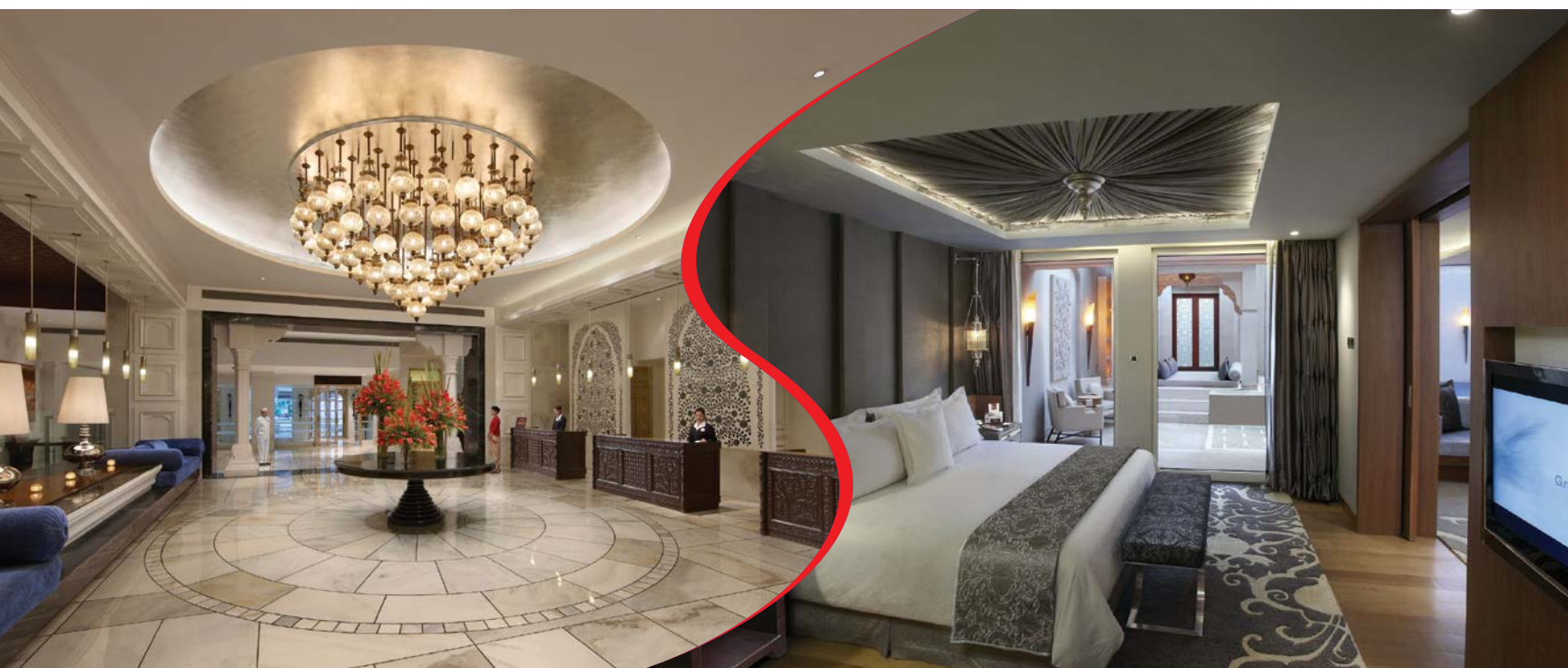
The ITC Mughal Agra brings back lost time, capturing royal sensibilities and pleasures of the Mughal era

TT BUREAU

The medieval charm of Agra acts as a befitting backdrop to ITC Mughal – nestled amidst 35 acres of luxurious gardens, it has the distinction of being the winner of the First Aga Khan Award for Architectural Excellence in Asia, and till date, the only Indian Hotel to have won this prestigious International recognition. In its search for consistency in a historical context, ITC Mughal has achieved a fine balance of outer and inner space, using detailed landscaping and magnificent water bodies. The three bridges connecting the lobby to the rooms through a cluster of garden courts have been named after Emperor Akbar's wives – Jodhabai, Mariam and Manumati. The quaint lotus ponds at the entrance introduce one to Emperor Humayun's fine taste, the grandeur of the porch is dedicated to Emperor Babur's love for style and the Grand Lobby, is inspired by Emperor Akbar's Darbar.

ITC Mughal offers 233 elegantly appointed rooms, including suites, Mughal Chambers and the Mughal Room, that make an understated appreciation of timeless grace and sophistication. Here at ITC Mughal, the Royal Mughal Suites is an all-suites wing with opulent 43 suites and rooms, where the ultimate endeavour has been to recreate a traditional Mughal Paradise offering today's Contemporary facilities. The Grand Presidential Suites cover an area of 96.56m<sup>2</sup> with a private plunge pool to indulge the soul, and the experience is spectacular. The Five Grand Presidential Suites have been named after the Mughal queens – Mumtaz Suite, Nur Jahan Suite, Zeenat Suite, Nusrat Begum Suite and Farzana Suite. Mumtaz and Nur Jahan suite offer the luxury of experiencing SPA treatments in the suite itself as they include a massage and a steam room with a Vichy shower. ITC Mughal, Agra also has two Presidential Suites – The Raja Mansingh Suite and The Tansen Suite. The Man Singh Suite is named after Emperor Akbar's main advisor, Raja Mansingh and offers a regal combination of royal ambience and modern luxury. The Tansen Suite is named after the legendary musician Mian Tansen, one of Emperor





Akbar's favourite musicians. Both the Presidential suites have 2 bedrooms.

At ITC Mughal, Agra, you cherish the gardens as much as the monuments. Champagne breakfast at the Jharokha-e-Taj, is synonymous to an appointment with the Taj Mahal – a splendid view, it does not get more romantic than this. Maikhana, is the well-stocked lobby bar, while the Bagh-E-Bahar Lounge is a retreat inspired by the singular Mughal sensibility of leisure, overlooking the Mughal styled garden, Nishat Bagh and the cool blue expanse of the pool. Here, guests can set aside the pressures of the day and settle down into a relaxed pace with the finest selection of wines, cocktails and delectable lounge bites. Experience the luxury of choice at the Mughal Pavilion – the all-day fine dining multi-cuisine, Ala carte restaurant and ITC's signature branded cuisine offering rustic flavours of the North-West Frontier at Peshawri.

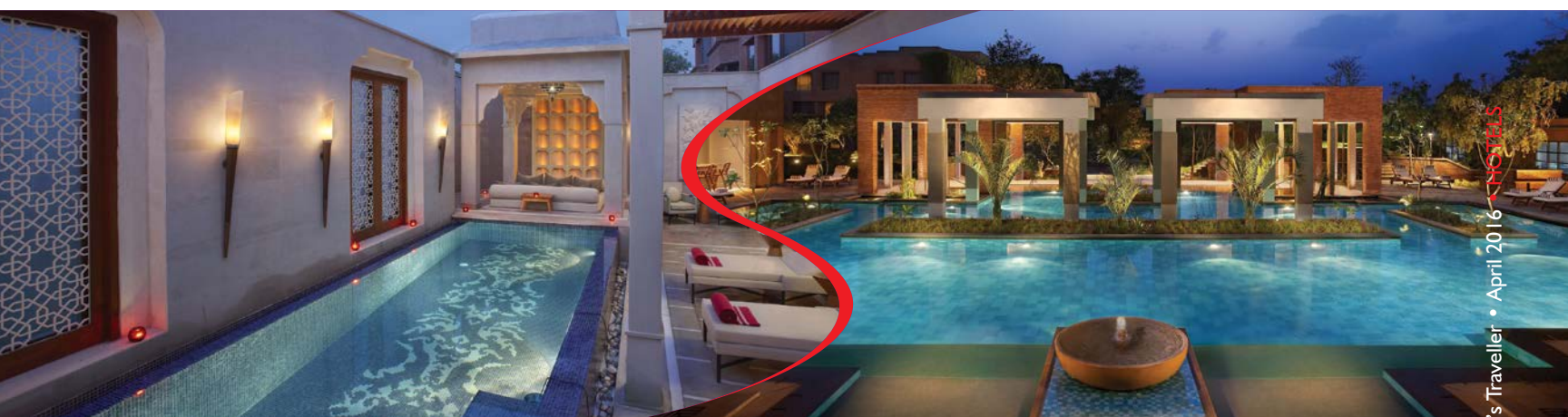
ITC Mughal specializes in customised banquets, tailored to suit the exact requirements and taste – from a Rajput extravaganza to a Taj-View-Phera – with style and grace that the guests will cherish forever. The spacious gardens, Gulbadan and

Sher Shah Suri can accommodate 1500 to 3000 people and are symbols of verdant space that'll take your breath away.

In terms of banqueting venues, the hotel also offers superbly appointed state-of-the-art meeting rooms and lush green lawns, in combination to derive the right spaces needed for conferences. These include,

Dewan-E-Khas, offering 636.54m<sup>2</sup> of conventional space is divisible in three equal parts and can accommodate 750 guests in theatre style seating. Majlis is 224.8m<sup>2</sup> in area and can accommodate 175 guests in theatre style, which can be further partitioned into two parts – Part 1 of 76.2m<sup>2</sup> in size, accommodating 50 guests in theatre style, and Majlis Part 2 of 148.6m<sup>2</sup> in size, accommodating 125 guests, also in theatre seating style.

Mughal magnificence now finds a new meaning at Kaya Kalp – The Royal Spa, a regal new addition to ITC's 35-acre resort hotel, ITC Mughal at Agra. The Pomegranate themed Spa is spread across an area covering more than 9200m<sup>2</sup>, where guests have an opportunity of experiencing traditional therapies, in interiors that celebrate the opulence and grandeur of the Mughal dynasty.







# CORPORATE JET-SETTERS

**MAJ. YOGENDRA PANDEY**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR,  
ADMINISTRATION & FACILITIES  
GLOBEOP FINANCIAL SERVICES

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

I love the Himalayas. There is certain calmness in the hills and so I must say my most memorable trip was to Nainital, Kausani and trekking in the Himalayan hills.

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

I would love to go to Switzerland because again, the hills attract me. Switzerland of course is considered to be one of the most beautiful destinations of the world, and so I would love to go there.

**Q: Favourite airline and why?**

I like travelling with Jet Airways; they are well-managed and very trustworthy.

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

Hotel Goan Heritage located in Calangute in Goa. It commands a superb location and has value for money.

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

I would want to go to Goa once again; it is simply one of the best vacations one can ask for.

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

Nainital was a memorable stay, the entire family had a great time there, couldn't have asked for more.

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

We had taken a trip to Alibagh, the coastal town. It is absolutely breathtaking. One must go there to experience a serene coastal life.

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

Malvani at Alibagh has some of the best seafood to offer. It was really delicious.

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

I think it is primarily important to be safe, and then there is the question of good hygiene and service provider credibility.

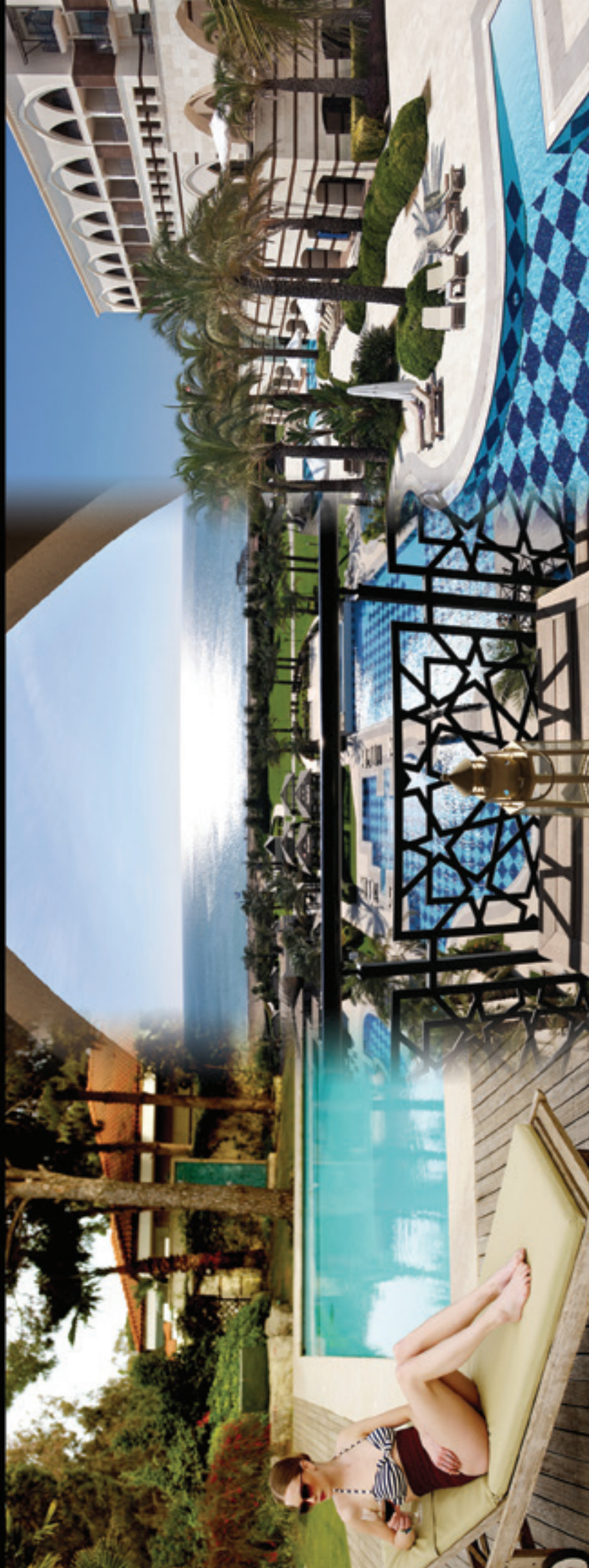
**Q: As a travel buyer, what's your philosophy?**

Ask yourself if you really need it, and then understand whether it is unique and has value for money.





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# CORPORATE JET-SETTERS

**ASHOK DOGRA**  
**HEAD- ADMIN**  
**IDEA CELLULAR**  
**MUMBAI**

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

My trip to Singapore was indeed a memorable one. Singapore is a thriving place with a variety of things to see and do, and also it is very exciting to live in the city.

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

Alps in Italy are a magnificent gift of nature that I always dream of going to. I hope that someday I get the opportunity to go there; I would love to explore the areas surrounding the Alps there in Italy.

**Q: Your favourite airline and why?**

I loved the Singapore Airlines, simply because of their excellent service. It is very satisfying.

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

I had a very pleasant stay at the Marriott Shanghai. It has great service and excellent amenities.

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

I would love to go back to Dubai and possibly Europe. Dubai is a great shopping destination and one cannot ignore the great Dubai malls.

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

A great way to spend some quality time with family is by going to a National Park. There is so much to see and do, these outings have always remained very precious to me.

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

We had taken a trip to Ooty, and it was simply mind-blowing. We had a great time there.

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

Shangrila at both Gangtok and Darjeeling have great foods.

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

It is important to make use of the place's infrastructure for convenience and absorbing its culture is a must.

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

It is very important to collect rare mementos from your trips.





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# RE-BUILDING HISTORY



Delhi gets its very own Haveli, as Vijay and Siddhant Goel adopt Haveli Dharampura and transform it into a luxury hotel managed by WelcomHeritage Hotels

## TT BUREAU

Delhi gets its very own Haveli in the old city of Shahjahanabad. Built originally around 1869 AD, the Haveli Dharampura, Delhi, New Delhi, managed by WelcomHeritage, is located close to the historic Jama Masjid and the famous jewellery markets of Dariba Kalan and Kinari Bazar. Vijay Goel and Siddhant Goel adopted this Haveli in association with Heritage India Foundation. Due to its distinctive features, such as, a central courtyard, arched entrances, sand-stone and marble pillars, it is attributed to Late Mughal, Hindu, and European architectural and design elements.







The Haveli which once boasted grandeur and royalty had recently been reduced to an ordinary run down building with unrecognisable spaces and dilapidated structures. After 6 years of hard work and extensive research, Vijay Goel and Siddhant Goel – the restorers, worked tirelessly with the active association of Architect Kapil Aggarwal. The Haveli now stands completely restored and reinstated. This enormous effort of the restoration work at Haveli Dharampura has renewed hope for thousands of other Havelis in the lanes and by lanes of yesteryear's Shahajahanabad – today's Chandni Chowk.

Architecturally, the Haveli is a unique example of residential buildings built during the 18th century and was planned around a central courtyard, a standard feature of that era. There is an intricate use of stone brackets, marble inlays, jharokas, and multi foliated arched gateways, arches, carved sandstone facades and wooden doorways. The traditional style of construction with lakhori

bricks, along with mud and lime mortar, sandstone slabs, wooden joists, and planks; while the flooring has been done with lime concrete, and the use of marble pillars for spanning gives a distinct architectural contribution to the period.

The Haveli Dharampura, managed by WelcomHeritage Hotels, has become one of the most preferred cultural destinations of Delhi. It has thirteen fully functional rooms where

guests experience the royal hospitality of a grand Haveli. It also has two restaurants – Lakhori Restaurant, and the Rooftop Baradari Restaurant, to serve authentic food of Old Delhi, along with Indian, Mughlai and Continental food. Some other facilities include – a Hooka Room, a library, an Art Gallery, a handicraft shop, spa, and two courtyards for functions. One can enjoy Kabooterbaaji (Flying Pigeon),



Patangbaaji (Kite Flying), and can see the Red Fort, Jama Masjid, Gurudwara Shishganj, and Baptist Church from the Haveli's viewing gallery. Church from the Haveli's viewing gallery.



## RADISSON BLU KAUSHAMBI DELHI NCR CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Radisson Blu Kaushambi Delhi NCR hosted an eclectic evening of entertainment on the occasion of International Women's Day. The event was organised to commemorate the women from different walks of life like Academics, Fashion and Entertainment

Industry, for their achievements and contribution to the society. ADM Ghaziabad, Preeti Jaiswal; Joint Secretary Lok Sabha, Abha Singh Yaduvanshi and A Mona Sreenivas, IAS were the Chief Guests at the event. Another highlight of the evening was the presence of star cast- Himesh Reshamiya, Farah Karimi and Darshan Raval from the Bollywood movie – Teraa Surroor.



## INDIAN TRAVEL PARTNERS #MEETSOUTHAFRICA

South African Tourism, recently, hosted a delegation of 25 Indian travel partners in the country, giving them the opportunity to discover the various attractions and hues of the Rainbow Nation. The travel partners were selected after the successful completion of the Learn South Africa, a curated education and awareness programme for trade partners in India. Underlining the significance of the Indian market for South Africa, consultants and partners from renowned Indian travel firms across key cities including Mumbai, New Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Kochi, Pune, Nagpur, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Chennai, Trichy, Jalandhar and Goa were hosted as a part of the familiarisation programme.

Commenting on the FAM trip, Hanneli Slabber, Country Manager, South African Tourism, said, "Our Indian travel partners work with us relentlessly to promote and sell destination South Africa to Indian consumers. We wanted to provide our partners with an up-close and personal opportunity to discover and experience the various products on offer in South Africa. We believe such engagements are crucial to enable our partners better understand the destination and create itineraries tailored to suit the diverse set of Indian travelers. India continues to be an important market for South African Tourism and we are firm in our commitment to invest in partner engagements to develop the market."



## VISTARA CELEBRATES #WOMENWHOMAKEUSFLY

This year on the occasion of International Women's Day, Vistara thanks all the women in the world for making the world a better place, and honours the immense contributions of its incredible women employees who have helped the brand scale new heights in terms of reliability and service excellence in a short period of time.

Phee Teik Yeoh, CEO, Vistara said, "I wish all our women customers and employees a very Happy Women's Day. On this special occasion, we would like to recognise their contributions and celebrate the extraordinary role they play in the success of Vistara. We are proud that women make up the majority of the workforce at Vistara. They are the wind beneath our wings."



## DELHI TOURISM WELCOMES PAT FARMER AT THE SPIRIT OF INDIA RUN

Delhi Tourism in association with India Tourism and the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India organised the one of its kind ultra-marathon 'The Spirit of India Run' by Pat Farmer. Farmer an ultra-Marathon Runner from Australia who holds multiple world records for endurance running and has run from the North Pole to the South Pole, and across Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam, the Middle East and North America.

Tourism Minister Kapil Mishra said, 'The Spirit of India Run will not only help to project Delhi as a Tourist destination in Australia but it will brand Delhi globally. We are very fortunate to have Pat in Delhi'. Keshav Chandra, Secretary (Tourism), Government of Delhi and Chairman DTDC welcomed and facilitated him.

Pat Farmer is running over 4600 km in 65 days starting from Kanyakumari and finishing in Kashmir.







**AVIATION**



# JET AIRWAYS ANNOUNCES AMSTERDAM AS ITS NEW EUROPEAN GATEWAY

Jet Airways partnership with KLM and Delta Air Lines will enhance connectivity between India, Europe and North America

## TT BUREAU

**J**et Airways, India's premier international airline, is set to launch daily non-stop flights from India to Amsterdam resulting in significantly enhanced connectivity between India, Europe and North America.

Effective March 27th 2016, Jet Airways will operate two daily non-stop flights from its international hubs in Mumbai and Delhi, to Amsterdam Airport Schiphol. Jet Airways will also operate a daily flight to Toronto from Amsterdam. Schedules of all three flights have been planned to allow quick, convenient and seamless connections between India and Toronto via Amsterdam.

Jet Airways has also entered into a codeshare partnership with KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and Delta Air Lines to provide convenient connections for guests to and from destinations across Europe and North America via Amsterdam. The partnership will enable customers to enjoy enhanced connectivity and seamless travel across the combined networks of Jet Airways, KLM and Delta.



Gaurang Shetty, Wholetime Director, Jet Airways, said: "We are delighted to announce the launch of our new daily services to Amsterdam. This is a significant step for Jet Airways and demonstrates our continuous endeavour to provide greater choice and better connections for our guests. The strategic codeshare partnerships with KLM and Delta will enable us to offer wider access, unmatched connectivity and seamless travel from India to key destinations in Europe and North America."

Jet Airways has continued to ensure an impressive rate of profitability and outstanding delivery of services, while remaining India's favourite domestic and international airline. Shetty says, "From the perspective of Jet Airways, it's all about cost efficiency, and the need to become more efficient overall. Delivering value and ensuring maximum efficiency in terms of







profitability are the two main areas of focus.

Highlighting the need to expand both the domestic and international market, Shetty emphasizes, "Both markets are growing simultaneously. The domestic market is witnessing growth at a much faster rate, a development which can be attributed to the presence of market stimulation."

Shetty points out that not everything can be controlled by way of market-related strategies. He explains, "Airports are increasing at a fast pace, both private and government

owned, and the ensuing challenge is how to get the costs right and sorted out. Another related cost which plays an equally important role is distribution costs."

The continued improvement in technology is invariably linked to the profitability accrued by the aviation sector. India being one of the fastest growing economies of the world, collaborating with Etihad Airways seeks to benefit both companies, besides fuelling each other's economic growth. A partnership between the two is inevitably a profitable venture.



- Jet Airways will operate daily non-stop flights from Mumbai, Delhi and Toronto to Amsterdam
- Strategic partnership with KLM and Delta Air Lines will offer one stop codeshare access to 30 destinations across Europe and 11 destinations in the United States and Canada
- Guests travelling from North America and Europe via Amsterdam can connect onto Jet Airways' network across India





Jaipur Airport



Lucknow Airport

## AAI NAMED BEST SERVICE PROVIDER IN THE WORLD



Goa Airport



Trivandrum Airport

Airports Authority of India's persistent efforts to improve the services and passenger facilities at its airports have placed AAI amongst the best service providers in the world

### TT BUREAU

**A**irports Authority of India's (AAI) four Airports are amongst the top five airports in the category of 2 to 5 million passengers per annum, across the world. Based on the results of the survey carried out by the Airports Council International, (a global non-profit organization of Airport Operators) on Airport Service Quality (ASQ), AAI's Jaipur Airport has been rated as world's No.1 Airport in the category of 2 to 5 million passengers per annum and Lucknow Airport has been rated as world's 2nd best airport in the same category.

Further, Jaipur Airport has also been rated as the best airport by "Regions & Size" in the Asia Pacific Region in the category of 2 to 5 million passengers per annum. AAI's Goa and Trivandrum Airports are at 4th and 5th position in the same category.

In the category of Airports upto 2 million passengers per annum AAI's Srinagar Airport has been rated as the second best airport in the World.

All the 11 airports where ACI's ASQ survey is carried out AAI's Airports have been rated above the world average i.e. 4.13 on a scale of 5.



Srinagar Airport



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## LUFTHANSA GROUP CHOOSES AMADEUS TO DELIVER NEW LOAD CONTROL SYSTEM

Ensuring a stable and safe load control – or in other words, that the weight and balance of the aircraft is optimised – is one of the main operational challenges airlines face. Load control plays a vital role in increasing efficiency, on-time performance and reducing fuel costs. And so with this in mind, Lufthansa Group and Amadeus have reached an agreement that will see the group's airlines adopt Amadeus Altéa Departure Control Flight Management, starting with Lufthansa, Swiss International Air Lines, Brussels Airlines and Lufthansa Cargo.

"A stable flight handling for our worldwide operation is one of our main objectives, but so is using a flexible product," says Claus Filkorn, Postholder Ground Operations, Lufthansa German Airlines. "After evaluation of the available options, we have chosen an established, new generation flight management system. Our agreement with Amadeus means we can expect automated fuel calculations and functional improvements."

"Lufthansa was looking to replace its legacy system with a new, state-of-the-art flight management solution, and we are pleased that Amadeus Altéa Departure Control Flight Management was chosen," comments Julia Sattel, SVP, Airline IT at Amadeus. "Lufthansa is one of the first airline groups to adopt the solution across all of its network carriers. That will enable the group to further centralise its load control sites and improve operational efficiency."

In 2015, Lufthansa Group's airlines carried over 100 million passengers, whereas Lufthansa Cargo carried 1.6 million tons of freight and post.



## CSIA VOTED BEST AIRPORT IN INDIA AND CENTRAL ASIA

Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport (CSIA) has been voted as the Best Airport in India and Central Asia at the Skytrax World Airport Awards held at the Passenger Terminal EXPO in Cologne, Germany. Attended by CEOs, Presidents and Senior Management of airports from around the world, the prestigious awards ceremony recognised product and service quality in the world airport industry and provided further testimony to CSIA's continued excellence in customer service. The results reflect the world's best-in-class airports, as appraised by the passengers themselves in an online survey.

The Skytrax World Airport Award is the latest feather in CSIA's cap, which already won several prestigious awards over the past two years for its structure, design and world-class facilities and services.

## VISTARA UNVEILS ITS SIGNATURE LOUNGE AT DELHI

In a constant endeavour to make the flying experience joyful, Vistara is setting new service and customer experience standards, unveiled its exclusive signature lounge for its Business Class and Club Vistara Gold customers at New Delhi's award-winning T3 Terminal. The Vistara Lounge, located on the domestic departures concourse adjacent to Boarding Gate 41, was inaugurated today by India's much loved movie stars Kareena Kapoor Khan and Arjun Kapoor along with the critically acclaimed film director R Balki and PheeTeik Yeoh, CEO of Vistara and Dr Mukund Rajan, Director on Board, Vistara. Also present were Sanjiv Kapoor, Chief Strategy and Chief Commercial Officer, Vistara and Giam Ming Toh, Former Chief Commercial Officer, Vistara.

PheeTeik Yeoh, Vistara CEO said, "It gives me immense pleasure to unveil Vistara's first and one-of-a-kind signature lounge at our hub, Delhi. Our vision was to create an experience that unravels and gets richer each time our customers travel with us. We hope that our customers will appreciate this premium service we are offering, truly the best airline lounge in India today."



## AMERICAN AIRLINES AND TAL AVIATION GROUP EXPAND RELATIONSHIP

American Airlines has appointed TAL Aviation as its General Sales Agent for India. The new representation is expected to bring added benefits to the Indian market and travellers from India to the United States.

American's representation office, based in Gurgaon will be providing a wide range of services to cover multiple ports of departure from India, including marketing, reservations, sales and ticketing. TAL Aviation's team is excited to be partnering with American, offering attractive travel solutions across First Class, Business Class and in Main Cabin, to the Indian business and tourist community.

The team for American Airlines in India will be headed by Neha Soni as Commercial Manager who already has vast experience with the American product and in the airline industry.

Nissim Sagis, VP Commercial of TAL Aviation comments "We are excited in expanding our relationship with American Airlines to the Indian market. We are confident that with the success and synergy we already hold with American, coupled with the expertise and know-how of our team in India, we can place American as a leading airline in India for travel to the USA and beyond".

Parviz Ladha, Regional Offline Sales Manager EMEA and Southern Asia said, "We are pleased to be extending our agreement with TAL Aviation to India, a hugely important and growing market for American, and our Atlantic Joint Business partner British Airways. As we continue to invest \$3 billion in the customer experience, both in-flight and on the ground, we look forward to promoting this across the Indian market, in partnership with TAL Aviation."





## AIR FRANCE-KLM'S TO UNLEASH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND EMERGING MARKET GROWTH

Tata Communications, provider of A New World of Communications, recently announced that it has won a multi-million dollar contract with Air France-KLM, Europe's second largest airline, to provide next-generation network connectivity to 170 sites. The network will form the backbone for the company as it embraces the latest mobile, cloud, big data analytics and wearable technologies to enhance and personalise passenger experience. This investment underpins the airline's growth strategy, driven by organisation-wide digital transformation, delivery of next-generation aircraft, and expansion in emerging markets.

"Investing in emerging markets and cutting-edge digital technologies is at the heart of our growth strategy," says Jean-Christophe Lalanne, CIO of Air France-KLM Group. "We're introducing a range of innovative services, such as travel apps for

smart watches, to provide a seamless, personalised travel experience for our tech-savvy passengers."

"Airlines worldwide are starting to rethink their technology infrastructure to improve the passenger experience, and integrate cloud services and new applications to support the huge amounts of data coming from next-generation aircraft. In tandem, they're competing for their share of new revenue streams in emerging markets," says Genius Wong, President, Global Network Services, Cloud and Data Centre Services at Tata Communications.



## ETHIOPIAN TO START TWICE DAILY SERVICES TO DELHI

Ethiopian Airlines is delighted to announce that it will start twice daily flights to Delhi with the latest B737-800 New Generation Sky Interior aircraft, as of March 26, 2016.

Tewolde GebreMariam, Group CEO Ethiopian Airlines, said, "We are pleased to offer our customers a double daily service to Delhi. India being one of the strongest economic muscles zooming into the global economic picture, availing more frequencies would catalyze the channeling of investors from both countries and facilitating business. Moreover the addition of the flight would have a paramount significance in strengthening the growing economic, political, and social relationship of the two countries in particular and the two continents in general. Our customers will be able to make an immediate connection to cities like Hargeisa, Khartoum, Nairobi and some Southern African flights."

Tadesse Tilahun, Regional Director India Sub Continent, said, "We are really excited about the expansion plans of Ethiopian Airlines all over the world and in particular about the double daily operations not only from Mumbai but another Indian city- Delhi added to the list. We are striving to give our esteemed clients more convenient connections out of India."



## AIR INDIA ANNOUNCES SUMMER SCHEDULE 2016

Air India's Summer Schedule for 2016 comes with increased frequencies and new routes for its passengers. This schedule offers a daily return flight from Bengaluru to Trivandrum which has been planned by A321. The flight from Bengaluru will depart at 0700 hrs, while the return flight will depart from Trivandrum at 0855 hrs.

On its international routes, Air India will start operations on the Delhi-Vienna sector with flights operating thrice a week on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday by B787 commencing April 06, 2016. The Delhi-Vienna-Delhi flight will have a convenient departure at 1400hrs from Delhi arriving Vienna at 1845hrs. The return flight will have a night departure from Vienna at 2245hrs arriving Delhi at 0925hrs (+1).

Air India is increasing its frequency on the domestic sectors by adding a daily return flight on the Mumbai – Bhopal sector. The flight will offer day-return facility to its passengers with a flight from Mumbai departing at 1930 hrs. The return flight from Bhopal will take off at 2130 hrs. Frequency on the Delhi- Pune sector is also being enhanced with number of flights added to and from Pune. The flight from Delhi will depart at 1830 hrs whereas; the flight from Pune will depart at 2120 hrs.

Passengers looking for more options to Punjab will also be able to enjoy the fourth



frequency with return flights on Delhi (Del)-Amritsar (ATQ) vv sector. The flight from Delhi will depart at 0500 hrs while the return flight from ATQ will depart at 0650 hrs.

The existing thrice a week flight from Delhi to Milan has been increased to four flights per week. Customers flying to Russia will now have a facility of a third frequency on the Delhi-Moscow vv sector.

Passengers travelling on the Mumbai-Delhi-Hong Kong-Seoul/ Osaka route and back will now have the comfort of the state-of-the-art B787 aircraft. The same aircraft will operate on the Mumbai-Delhi and Delhi-Mumbai leg of AI 310/ 314 and AI 315/317.

To continue expanding its 'Connect India' program, Air India will now offer new routes to Vijaywada from Bengaluru with five return flights a week on its ATR 42. Kolkata will also be connected to Agartala by an ATR 42 with five return flights per week. Tourists to Himachal have a daily frequency from Delhi to Kullu in lieu of the existing six days a week. The Delhi-Kullu vv route will be operated by ATR 72 aircraft.



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# EXPLORER





# DARJEELING UNLIMITED

The serenity of this Himalayan town brings you closer to nature, leaving a lasting impression and gifting you with infinite memories

## TT BUREAU

An amorous wind blows past the trees at the onset of spring and standing on the long and winding Mall Road where dandelion seeds make a fleeting impression of sorts, in the deafness of it all, some would say they have found the God. Darjeeling, West Bengal's "Queen of Hills," located in the Himalayan region with the mighty Mount Kanchenjunga standing at its backdrop, is certainly the romantic proclamation of God's love. The hill station of Darjeeling stands as one of the most popular destinations of West Bengal, with an incredible reputation as the British Raj's preferred summer destination. Today, the colonial era architectures, Buddhist monasteries and the indigenous Nepali community come together to create a new Darjeeling that is modern and yet hinging on a glorious time gone by.

In Darjeeling, nature plays out its most defining tune, unbridled joy surrounds tourists and locals alike, while crooning birds and red headed rhododendrons pose strikingly at obscure street corners. If holiday is what you seek, head to where the clouds loom overhead and the vivacity of nature is strikingly attractive.

## ENJOY NATURE

When in Darjeeling, nature is your constant companion as there is no dearth of natural wonders. So whether it is watching the sunrise or going on a trek, Darjeeling has it all. You can head to the Tiger Hill, to watch the magnificent sun rise on the Himalayan horizon. It is from here that you can

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DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL







watch some of the highest peaks of the world, including the highest peak, Mt. Everest. The others are Makalu, Kanchenjunga, Kabru, Jannu and Pandim. To reach the Tiger Hill, you can either book a taxi or you could hike all the way up.

There are also some very exciting treks around Darjeeling. The most popular among all is the Darjeeling-Maneybhanjyang-Tonglu-Sandakphu and return trek. The route offers some spectacular views of the Himalayan range, especially from the last halt, Sandakphu. You will be taken to Maneybhanjyang, a small village resided by Tibetan Sherpas, which is about two hours away from Darjeeling, from where you will start your trek. From there you head to Tonglu, having crossed beautiful wild forests and some of the most stunning views, going further to Sandakphu in a span of five days.

### MONASTERY HOPPING

There are some beautiful monasteries in the region and it is in the best interest of tourists to explore Buddhism through these serene monasteries. Each of these monasteries belongs to a specific sect of Buddhism and can come as a revelation for those interested. Here in Darjeeling, the Bhutia Basti Monastery, originally built in 1761 at the Observatory Hill is the oldest monastery. Other monasteries include the Yiga Choeling

Monastery or the Old Ghum Monastery, created in 1850. Here, the main attractions include a huge statue of Maitreya or Future Buddha that was created with clay brought from Tibet. The Dali Monastery belongs to the Kargyupa sect of Buddhists where prayers, chants and drums evoke a sense of spirituality. The Samten Choling Monastery is yet another famous monastery located in Ghum, about 7km from Darjeeling town, while Alooabari Monastery is located 3km away from the main town and is originally called Mak Dhog Monastery. The Alooabari Monastery was dedicated to world peace as the construction coincided with World War I.

### JOY RIDE

Probably the best way to experience nature in Darjeeling is the Toy Train of Darjeeling Himalayan Railways. The train received UNESCO World Heritage status for being a special Himalayan treat and having a historic past. The narrow gauge railway follows the Hill Cart Road, offering scenic views along the way as you ascend to the majestic Himalayan town of Darjeeling. This is the quintessential Darjeeling experience, a must for tourists.

Apart from the many attractions of Darjeeling, you also have some splendid cuisines to explore, most notably the indigenous Nepali and Tibetan cuisines. You can find some sumptuous food at Kunga's Restaurant, Penang Restaurant, The Park, Dekeva's and Glenary's. You can stop by at the very popular Joey's Pub for some drinks in the evening and head to Keventer's for an amazing breakfast on its rooftop.

### HOW TO GO

**By Air:** The nearest airport to Darjeeling is Bagdogra, which is approximately 95 miles away. Taxis are available from the airport to reach the city.

**By Rail:** The nearest railway station to Darjeeling is New Jalpaiguri Station. All major cities are connected to it through railways.

### BEST TIME TO VISIT

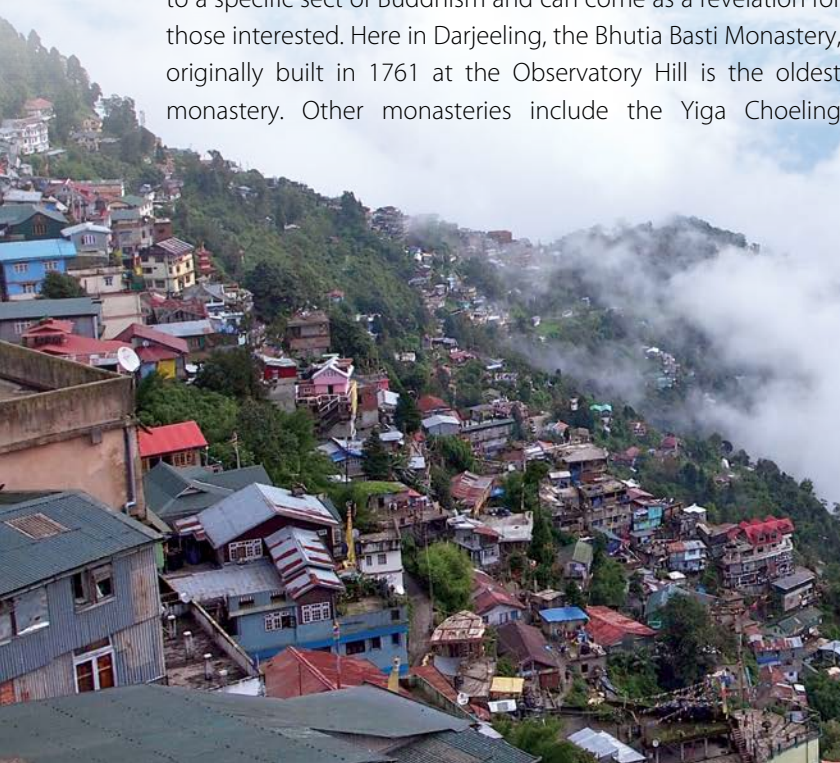
Spring season – March to April  
Autumn season – September to November  
Summer season – May to June

### WHAT TO BUY

Darjeeling Tea, Tibetan masks, Laughing Buddha, local jewellery items, Khukri, woollen items and scroll paintings called Thankas.

### WHERE TO STAY

Visitors can opt to stay at Darjeeling Tourist Lodge run by West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation. Other hotels include Windamere, Cedar Inn, Viceroy, Sinclairs and Sterling Resorts.





# IN THE LAP OF NATURE

Look towards Scandinavian region for some extraordinary experiences that would last a lifetime

## TT BUREAU

If nature is what you seek then visit Scandinavia. The historical northern European region is home to some of the most fascinating sights and sounds, which includes The Fjords, Northern lights, Midnight Sun, royal history, Nordic cuisine, design, sustainable living, UNESCO World heritage Sites, Sami Culture and the Vikings. To fully understand the dreamlike romanticism of the Scandinavian region one could visit its capitals, each with its effortless magnetism pulling travellers from all across the globe. Surreal Scandinavia beckons one and all to witness its ethereal beauty and leave with lasting memories.

### COPENHAGEN

The most populated city of Denmark, it is undeniably one of the most environment friendly cities of the world. The streets of Copenhagen take you from one excitement to another, from



the birthplace of famous author Hans Christian Anderson to the many castles and manor houses spread across its countryside. Copenhagen's striking architecture, museums, galleries, canals and trendy cafes come together to create a much desirable destination. Here at Copenhagen, The Strøget stands as the longest pedestrian shopping street in Europe, while Tivoli is one of the oldest amusement park. Among the many palaces and castles, visitors must visit the Christiansborg Palace, the Amalienborg Palace, and the Rosenberg Castle and Frederiksborg Castle. Day visits from Copenhagen include a trip to Odense the birthplace of Hans Christian Anderson, Roskilde – one of the oldest cities of Denmark where you can go sailing like a Viking to going



across the spectacular Øresund Bridge connecting Copenhagen to Malmö, Sweden in less than 30 minutes.

### BERGEN

A beguiling call to beauty, Bergen presents its seven hills and seven fjords for the discerning traveller. It is the gateway to Norway's fjords and is steeped in history. With such natural beauty that includes mountains and sea, one can only be lost in its charming disposition. The city also has a thriving cultural life and has fostered some of Norway's greatest bands and artists. One of Bergen's best attractions is Bryggen, which is included on UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites. You could hop in a train from Oslo to Bergen to enjoy the picturesque sceneries; the train ride is famous for being one of the top five most scenic train journeys of the world. The city of Oslo is set amidst striking nature that allows traditional outdoor activities, especially on the sea.

### STOCKHOLM

Stockholm is yet another fascinating Scandinavian city, referred to as one of world's most attractive cities. The city presents its very many charms through its 14 islands which are connected by 57 bridges. Here in Stockholm, visitors can visit the old town of Gamla Stan, which is one of Europe's most fascinating historical destinations; it has storybook buildings, stunning palaces and cobblestone streets to guide you through its heart. Stockholm also has the world's first open-air museum, Skansen. The dramatic beauty of Stockholm combines with its historic splendour to attract tourists every year. Other places include Uppsala – a drivable town an ancient capital, and the medieval town Sigtuna – Sweden's first town along the lake Malaren. Also, Vaxholm is popular gateway to the archipelago.





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# LIVING IT UP IN THAILAND

The quintessential Thai experience is a treasure trove of adventure and exploration, while enjoying the spicy and aromatic Thai cuisine

## TT BUREAU

A fun loving nation enjoying the centre of tourist attraction in Asia, Thailand has it all. From being the bastion of Buddhism to the glorious fun-filled attraction of Bangkok, Thailand never lets you down. Located at the centre of the Indochinese peninsula in mainland Southeast Asia, Thailand offers dramatic locations for the discerning tourists. The history of Thailand dates back to the Neolithic civilization situated at the modern-day UNESCO World Heritage Site in Ban Chiang. Over the early centuries of the Common Era, tribes of Mon, Khmer, and Tai peoples established realms within the borders of modern Thailand. However, the history of Thailand as we know it began when the kingdoms of Lan Na (Chiang Rai/Chiang Mai) and Sukhothai, the first truly independent Thai Kingdoms, established highly developed societies in the North and Central regions of Thailand in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries.

In the modern context, the historical nation of Thailand offers its vibrant hues to its tourists through its many adventures that unfold. If you are indeed planning to take a holiday here, then take a look at some of the most interesting adventures you can experience.



## KOH SAMET ISLAND

A beautiful small island just 5km off the coast is about 45 minutes from Pattaya, here the beaches are famous for attracting hordes of tourists during summer holidays. Bangkok residents flock here every weekend to enjoy the water and various other attractions. Thai and foreign visitors return to Koh Samet to enjoy the excellent weather on the island, while enjoying the beachside bars and restaurants at the same time. The island is home to exotic wildlife species, including monkeys, hornbills, gibbons, and butterflies.



### KO CHANG

One of Thailand's most beautiful islands with long sandy beaches, here the wildlife is diverse. One can find a good selection of birds, deer, elephants and more. For those interested in beach activities can enjoy snorkeling, diving and jungle hiking. The island is a great summer destination and is far quieter than places like Phuket or Ko Samui, but then again, it is far from quiet in high season.

### KOH SAMUI

A thriving melting pot for budget travellers who can laze around for a month in simple beachside bungalows and also for wealthy holiday makers opting for luxury resorts and villas for the weekend, Koh Samui is just the perfect summer destination. The attractions here include Chaweng Beach, Lamai Beach, Bophut Fisherman's village and the tropical beach paradise Maenam. Expect a delightfully relaxed beach setting here, far from the madding crowd.

### TRANG

Trang is a province in southern Thailand on the coast of the Andaman Sea. Largely unspoiled, Trang has some of the most exciting destinations, with beaches in Sikao District, such as Pak Meng Beach, Chang Lang Beach, or Ban Chao Mai. Trang has three main piers for island-hoppers – Pak Meng Pier, Ban Chao Mai Pier, and Kuan Thung Kuu Pier. The mainland coast is a stretch of rugged limestone cliffs, mangrove-lined beaches and remote caves. Its offshore islands include the beach resort Ko Kradan and Ko Muk, known for its Morakot (Emerald) Cave.



### KRABI

Located on Thailand's Andaman seaboard, Krabi lies on the west coast of Southern Thailand and the most developed beach here is the Ao Nang beach, which is less crowded and has a very serene atmosphere. Also, there are 83 islands scattered all over the bay of this beach so tourists are never really bored. Each island presents its own charming beauty.

### HUA HIN

People call it Thailand's original beach resort, and is arguably the most exciting one too. It is a very exciting mixture of markets, street foods, long beaches and urban infrastructure. Bustling by all means, Hua Hin finds itself entertaining Thailand's aristocrats every weekend. A lot of activities go on here at Hua Hin, tourists would only be spoilt for choice.







# LOUNGING BY THE BEACH

Scattered all across the globe, these beaches have ensured that they retain their loyalty amongst their visitors, and continuously attract newer ones

TT BUREAU



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

into an entirely different world, described by the unique settings that define them. Sinking your feet into the moist sand, even while attentively listening to the harmonious medley created by the chirping of birds, can transport you to a heavenly solace. Every beach located in every popular destination or spot in the world carries its peculiar characteristic that contributes in a great measure towards its overall allure and attractiveness. But, as with all things earthly, some of the beaches have endeared themselves in a tremendous way to the vast group of beach lovers.





### **PALOLEM BEACH, GOA**

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

### **ANSE SOURCE D'ARGENT, SEYCHELLES**

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



### **BAIA DO SANCHO, BRAZIL**

Baia do Sancho is the king of all beaches, quite literally so. Crowned as the best beach in the world by various travel websites, it has endeared itself to countless visitors and travellers. The marvellous beach, adorned by comforting white sand, is grandly spread out on a secluded bay on the main island of Fernando de Noronha, which is an archipelago of 21 smaller islands. The tempting aquamarine waters overlooked by the lush tropical forests covering the towering cliffs only serve to enhance its overall allure, and increase its mysticism greatly.

### **ELAFONISI BEACH, GREECE**

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







### WHITEHAVEN BEACH, AUSTRALIA

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

### GRACE BAY BEACH, CARIBBEAN

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







### **RADHANAGAR BEACH, ANDAMAN, INDIA**

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

### **CHAWENG BEACH, THAILAND**

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

### **PLAYA PARAISO BEACH, CUBA**

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





# OUTING ON A WEEKEND

These destinations are the perfect retreats to escape to, after that long and harrowing week, for both mental and physical rejuvenation

## TT BUREAU

**T**he overbearing commotion and the annoying bustle, worsened by the shrilling noise emitted by the blaring horns of vehicles, takes its inevitable toll on the body and the mind. The monotony of commuting to work, going through the motions helplessly, and coming back with a haggardly appearance, this repetitive routine sparks a desire to escape into a haven of pure bliss and unmitigated solitude. Weekend getaways are an escape into such an unadulterated sanctum of tranquillity and quietude, where the stillness of the mornings is only affected by the chirping of birds, the rustling of leaves and the gentle splashing of the flowing waters. Whether it's doing absolutely nothing but only whiling away one's time in leisurely observation, or taking a relaxed stroll amidst the comforting company of Nature, these places ensure that you savour every passing moment, and cherish every fleeting second with infinite pleasure and delight.



## PALAKKAD, KERALA

Palakkad, located in the Palakkad district in the picturesque state of Kerala, appears to have been stuck in the wheels of time. The gracefully rolling verdant hills, with gleefully flowing streams cutting between them, the lushness enveloping the tropical forests, and the numerous tourist attractions, embraces you with all its warmth and love. Whether it's the incredible view that meets you at Seethargundu Viewpoint, revisiting history at Palakkad Fort, getting thrilled by the Dhoni Waterfalls, or, having the privilege of catching a glimpse of the exotic wildlife inhabiting the Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary, Palakkad offers an exciting combination of perfect relaxation with outdoor activities.





### SHANTINIKETAN, WEST BENGAL

Shantiniketan, immortalised in the pages of history largely due to its association with the legendary Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, and his creation, the Viswa Bharti University, rests near a town called Bolpur in the Birbhum district of West Bengal. Located about 212km from Kolkata, it bears the imprints of the highly cherished legacy of Tagore,



which is clearly visible through the various frescoes, murals, sculptures and the fabulous paintings embellishing the gracious ambience. Earlier known as Bhubandanga, named after the local dacoit, Shantiniketan attracts an enthusiastic flow of visitors throughout the year for the various colourful festivals which are held amid fervent enthusiasm and fervour. Walking along the lanes and by-lanes leaves one with a feeling of nostalgia, a feeling that lingers long enough long after you have left the place.

### COORG, KARNATAKA

The gentle clouds form a blanket over the majestic hills, the meandering streams and rivers trail into the distance, the pristine lakes reflect the mesmerising beauty above, and the perfectly manicured plantations proudly occupy the sloping terraces. Coorg, located about 120km away from Mysore in the city of

Karnataka, has aptly been named the “Scotland Of The East”. Coorg allows you to remain secluded, seated completely in the lap of Nature. Nisargadhama, a man-made island, coupled with the Iruppa and Abbey Falls, entice visitors with their unique architecture and natural beauty. The Dubare Elephant Camp and the Nagarhole National Park are some of the other added attractions that define this region.





### KHAJJJAR, HIMACHAL PRADESH

Located about 60km from the hill station of Dalhousie, Khajjiar instantly reminds you of the exquisite beauty typically associated with Switzerland. Lush green meadows spread out wonderfully over several acres, along with the dense forests adorned with deodar and pine trees. The wonderfully designed small huts seated evenly, and the outline of the majestic Himalayas appear in the distance, showcasing a panoramic view. Khajjiar leaves you intoxicated with its mesmerising beauty, a place where time appears non-existent. The Khajjiar Lake, surrounded by the lush meadows and a floating island, leaves visitors enthralled with the breath-taking view that greets them at first sight. The Khajjinag Temple, which depicts the images of the Pandavas and Kauravas in distinct avatars, also attracts both the spiritually inclined and the curious. And, if one is an avid trekking enthusiast, the 6 kilometres trekking route, starting from Khajjiar on the Dalhousie-Khajjiar road and ending at Pholani Devi Temple at Dainkund, offers one of the ultimate trekking experiences.





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# ROMANCING SPRING BY THE LAKES



This spring, enjoy the gift of nature through some of the most alluring lakes of the world

## TT BUREAU

Spring brings delight in the air. After the harshness of winter, it is time for the warm sun and light breeze to enchant human life. Providence has also caused spring to allow the revival of nature, when lilacs bloom and bougainvilleas look strikingly red. The season of spring is quite naturally the most alluring time for a holiday, to a particularly romantic destination, somewhere to sit back and enjoy the grandeur of life. The environs of a beautiful lake are most romantic in this regard. The clear crystal water surrounded by trees and chirping birds can take your mind off the chaos of life. Unhindered and natural, these lake destinations are the most sought after when spring comes blooming with life.

### LAKE PICHOLA, UDAIPUR, INDIA

The bastion of Indian royalty, Udaipur's main attraction is the City Palace built by Maharana Udai Singh and the artificially created Lake Pichola. The lake is surrounded by palaces, temples,



bathing ghats and hill on all its sides and can be ferried by boats. Tourists coming to Udaipur must visit the lake for a boat ride, one of them start at Rameshwar Ghat and it stops at Jagmandir Island, where you can rest before returning to the point of origin. The other is a 30-minute long boat ride which starts at Lal Ghat. The best time of the day to take a boat ride is during sunset.







#### LAKE ATITLAN, GUATEMALA

The beauty of western highlands of Guatemala comes alive through its mystical water body, Lake Atitlan. The beautiful Volcanic Lake has always been a favourite among backpackers, especially hippies of the 1970s and still continues to attract travellers from all across the world. Lake Atitlan is situated at an altitude of 1,560m and sits amidst the enchanting Sierra Madre de Chiapas, a major mountain range of Central America. The Lake is surrounded by many Mayan villages where the Mayan culture is still prevalent. Needless to say, when heading to Guatemala, it is essential to visit the stunning Lake Atitlan.

#### LAKE KAWAGUCHI, JAPAN

The fascinating Lake Kawaguchi with the iconic Mt. Fuji perfectly set at its backdrop is where you would want to be when in Japan. Just a 90 minutes drive from Tokyo and you can get stunning views of Mt. Fuji, especially during Cherry Blossom bloom. The lake is situated at approximately 800m, which is why summers here are relatively cool and winters are icy. It also has the longest shoreline of any of the Fuji Five Lakes. The enchanting Lake Kawaguchi definitely comes alive every spring when Cherry Blossom festivals are held all around Japan and is a must visit for tourists.







### LAKE LUCERNE, SWITZERLAND

The Swiss experience comes alive here at Lake Lucerne in central Switzerland where breathtaking mountain scenery and the alluring blue water mingle with surrounding forests and wildlife. The best possible way to enjoy the serenity of the lake is by taking passenger boats of the Schiffahrtsgesellschaft des Vierwaldstättersees (SGV) that provide services on the lake, including many run by historic paddle steamers. There are many hotels and resorts along the shore of the lake, thereby making it the perfect romantic destination for this spring.



### LAKE COMO, LOMBARDY, ITALY

One of the most spectacular lakes in the snow-covered Rhaetian Alps, Lake Como is located Northern Italy. You can enjoy the waters by hiring a vintage Riva speedboat to visit the lake's villas and villages. The lake is shaped like an upside down Y and measures 120km with villages scattered on its shores. Where the southern and western shores converge is the lake's main town, Como. Another town, Lecco, sits where the southern shore meets the lesser-explored eastern shore. Lake Como is known to have big names visiting every year to enjoy its beauty.

### DERWENTWATER, KESWICK, ENGLAND

The stunning Cumbria countryside, also known as The Lake District is perhaps one of the best destinations for a beautiful spring. It is here where you will find the idyllic Derwentwater. The lake is part of Borrowdale and is situated immediately south of the town of Keswick and is fed and drained by the River Derwent. You could opt for a stroll along the Friar's Crag for a good view of the lake, mountains and the tiny islands. The islands here are Derwent Island, Lord's Island, St Herbert's Island, Rampsholme Island, Park Neb, Otter Island, and Otterbiel Island.





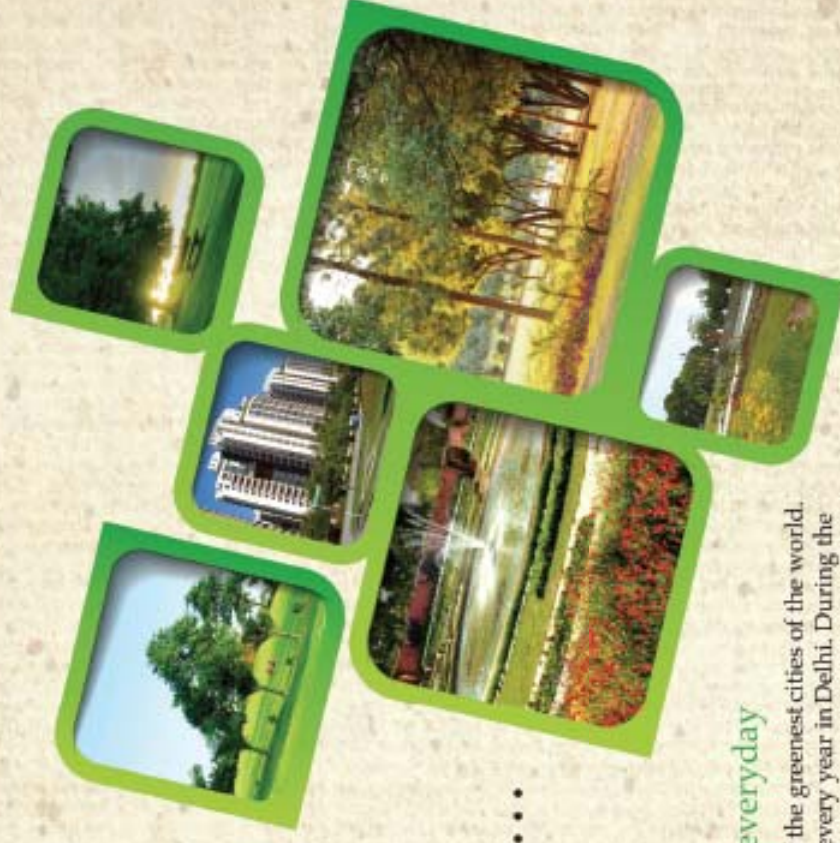


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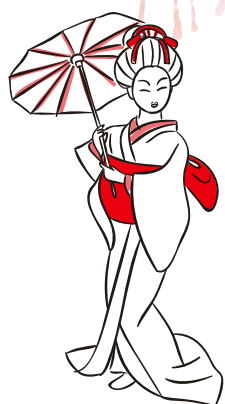


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# 24 HOURS IN TOKYO



Glamourised in the recent years by Haruki Murakami, Cherry Blossom and Sushi, Tokyo is an Oriental delight

## TT BUREAU

### TSUKIJI FISH MARKET

If you are in Tokyo, you should not miss this essential experience! Moreover, this needs to be the first thing on your 24 hours list because the Tsukiji Fish Market is famous for its tuna auction for which people start queuing from 3am. You could head to the small sushi bars here for some delightfully fresh platter which includes salmon, tuna, shrimp and cuttlefish. This famous fish market is located between Sumida River and the upper market Ginza shopping district.







### SENSOJI TEMPLE

Located in Asakusa in Tokyo, this is an ancient Buddhist temple which is also supposedly Tokyo's oldest. This temple is dedicated to bodhisattva Kannon and the first temple was founded in 645 CE. The temple is also the centre of Tokyo's largest festival, Sanja Matsuri. The festival takes place over 3-4 days and is held in the honour of Hinokuma Hamanari, Hinokuma Takenari and Hajino Nakatomo, the men responsible for establishing the temple.



### TOKYO DOME CITY

Referred to as Big egg City, it is a massive entertainment complex in Bunkyo, Tokyo. There is also a spa resort here for those wanting some luxury. The place is open 22 hours a day and has some of the most exciting amusement parks, shops, restaurants and a baseball hall of fame. You can also opt for sauna, spring and massage bubble bath.

### GHIBLI MUSEUM CLIPART

Japan has a massive market for anime and here at the Ghibli Museum tourists can experience the work of famous Japanese anime studio, Studio Ghibli. The film studio has created movies such as, Spirited Away in the past. Five of the studio's films have received Academy Award nominations in the United States. The museum allows a good look into the world of anime and is essential to the Tokyo experience.



### ROPPONGI

A district of Minato in Tokyo, Roppongi literally means six trees and is considered to be a happening destination of the city. The area is largely popular for its many upscale restaurants, nightclubs, bars and more. But for those running on a limited budget, heading deeper into Roppongi will allow them to explore more affordable bars and clubs filled with ex-pats, tourists and Japanese students.



### SAKE AND KARAOKE

The Japanese love their Sake and Karaoke and you cannot leave Tokyo without trying either of them. There are many Karaoke bars and fast food restaurants which are known as izakayas on every corner of Tokyo. However, there are a few that combine both Karaoke and Sake and that is what you should look for. Do not forget to indulge in some tasty sushis.





**WHAT: CANNES FILM FESTIVAL**

**WHEN: 11 MAY 2016**

**WHERE: CANNES, FRANCE**

This glamorous festival celebrates the art of cinematography and provides a floor for honouring the works of accomplished professionals. Besides all the glitz surrounding the red carpet, where drooling fans can catch a glimpse of their favourite celebrities, the festival screens some of the most distinguished movies, belonging to different genres. Woody Allen's latest film is set to open the festival this year.



**WHAT: MT. ABU SUMMER FESTIVAL**

**WHEN: 21-23 MAY, 2016**

**WHERE: SIROHI, RAJASTHAN**

Held each year during the auspicious occasion of Budh Poonima, this colourful festival is marked by a variety of exciting events, the experience of which is further embellished by the warm hospitality showcased by the locals. A ceremonial procession marks off the event, which then witnesses a series of traditional folk dance performances. Skating Race, Boat Race, CRPF Band Show, and Tug Of War are some of the other added attractions.



**WHAT: BOTTLE ROCK NAPA VALLEY**

**WHEN: 27-29 MAY, 2016**

**WHERE: CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES**

A perfect amalgamation of foot thumping music, exquisite cuisines and the surrounding delightful ambience makes this event a truly happening one. Unlike other music festivals, this one stands out due to its close proximity of its stages, an impressive line-up, and its occurrence in the middle of the charming little town of Wine Country.







**WHAT: SASQUATCH**

**WHEN: 27-30 MAY, 2016**

**WHERE: WASHINGTON, UNITED STATES**

Sasquatch mixes a generous amount of comedy and brilliant music, both of which extend into the late hours of the night. The Gorge, which serves as the main venue for the event, provides some spectacular views of the Columbia River and the vast river canyon. Some of the most hailed figures in the music industry, including Pearl Jam, The Dave Matthews Band and Coldplay enthrall the audiences with their power packed performances.



**WHAT: COOPER'S HILL CHEESE-ROLLING AND WAKE**

**WHEN: 30 MAY, 2016**

**WHERE: BROCKWORTH, ENGLAND**

This exciting event is all about scores of people scampering down a sloping hill, each vying to grab the rolling piece of cheese first. A hard cheese, resembling the shape of a wheel, and encased with a wooden covering, is thrown down a 295 foot hill located in the countryside. The event has garnered a significant attention with each increasing year.



**WHAT: HAY FESTIVAL**

**WHEN: WALES**

**WHERE: 26 MAY-5 JUNE, 2016**

Hay Festival is a literary bonanza that attracts intellectuals, bibliophiles and anyone possessing a passion for the pursuance of literary pursuits. Now in its 26<sup>th</sup> year, this literary event has been hailed by Bill Clinton as "the Woodstock of the Mind". Held amidst the scenery setting of the countryside, this event also witnesses incredible performances by folk singers and other noted artists.



# PICK OF THE MONTH

Here are the latest arrivals in the market, ranging from books, games, audio CD's and DVD's. Enjoy them all!

## BOOK: LADY MIDNIGHT (THE DARK ARTIFICES #1)

The Shadowhunters, who found themselves on the verge of extinction, due to the events brought about by the City of Heavenly Fires, witness a gradual resurrection in this book, which is a sequel to the internationally bestselling *Mortal Instruments* series. Emma Carstairs, the main protagonist in the story, is on a mission to trace the killer of her parents and avenge the losses brought upon her. With her parabatai, Julian Blackthorn to accompany her, Emma sets out to uncover a demonic plot gripping the city of Los Angeles. Dark, mysterious and captivating, it promises to keep you on your toes constantly.

**Genre (s) :** Fiction



## MUSIC: ALL MY DEMONS GREETING ME AS A FRIEND

Shockingly submissive and disturbingly frank, Aurora Aksnes's recent album "All My Demons Greeting Me As A Friend", is an adventurous exercise in exploring the dark side infused with the occasional rays of optimism. However, listeners are treated to a wonderful concoction of meaningful lyrics combined with the contrasting tracks throughout the album. While songs like "Under The Water" are accompanied by heavy beating, stunning vocal chopped chord progression, songs like "Black Water Lilies" have a relaxed and soothing tone underlying them. Other than the heavy and repeated emphasis on death, this is a brilliantly composed album sure to win many hearts.

**Genre (s) :** Art Pop, Indie Pop



## DVD: CREED

Just when Rocky Balboa fans thought they had seen it all, here he is again! However, this time, he dons the role of a mentor and an inspirational coach, guiding Apollo Creed's son, Adonis Johnson, to the path of victory. Adonis Johnson, played by Michael B. Jordan, is depicted as a talented but deviant fighter, eager to taste success, but lacking in the required discipline. Director Ryan Coogler, not wanting to isolate the devoted fans of the series, rakes up a few moments of emotionally charged scenes, which effectively portray Stallone's acting at its finest.

**Genre (s) :** Action-Drama



## GAME: SHARDLIGHT

The storyline of Shardlight occurs in a post-apocalyptic setting, in a world devastated due to a failed nuclear war. The plot of the game revolves around Amy Wellard, a young woman afflicted with a disease called Green Lung, who sets out to cure herself from it. A puzzle solving adventure game, it belongs to the classic point and click category of games. The game's background and graphic details, which are impressive and satisfactory, are the result of the pixel art aesthetics. Abandoned locomotives, dilapidated houses, skyscrapers and sooty houses, unravelling this puzzle is one difficult challenge!

**Genre (s) :** Adventure



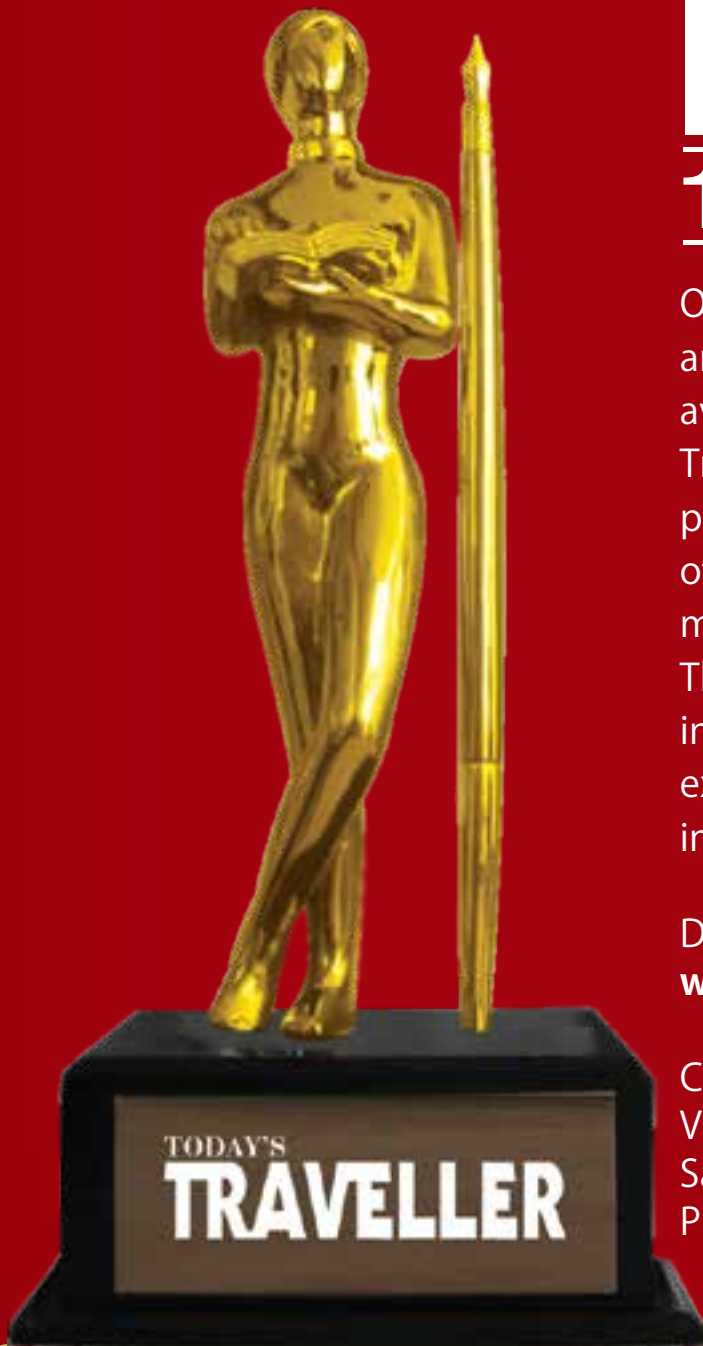
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