

TODAY'S traveller

CORPORATE, BUSINESS, AVIATION, MICE & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

MAY - JUNE 2019 - ₹50

**TIMELESS
WEDDINGS**

**LAND OF
INFINITE BLISS**

**ROMANTIC
RENDEZVOUS**

**WEDDING
TRENDS
IN VOUGE**

**INTERVIEWS WITH
GAME CHANGERS**

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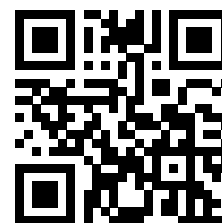
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THE POSTCARD ANNOUNCES A HOTEL IN SOUTH GOA



Kapil Chopra, Founder and CEO

After the splendid success of its three openings in Moira, Cuelim and Old Goa, The Postcard Hotel has signed a new boutique luxury hotel project in South Goa. Adding to the steady growth in its portfolio, The Postcard's new project would be its first bespoke ground up, design hotel in the state.

Kapil Chopra, Founder and CEO of The Postcard Hotel, said, "I believe Goa has the potential to be the next Bali and I also see Goa as an emerging design, architecture and culinary capital of India. Goa lives through its 334 villages and communities and we want our guests to experience and appreciate this variety through our hotels like they would have never done before."

The Postcard's new experiential hotel will be located on a pristine white sand beach in South Goa and will have 50 rooms and suites interspersed with hard and soft landscaped areas, with most rooms close to 700sq.ft, offering views of the Arabian Sea on one side and the quaint country side of South Goa on the other.

CELEBRATING 45 YEARS OF SINGAPORE CABLE CAR



One Faber Group recently marked the 45th anniversary of the Singapore Cable Car with the debut of 'Miraculous', an original multi-sensorial video-mapping show on the Angsana tree at hilltop restaurant Arbora at Faber Peak Singapore. There was also a line-up of exciting activities, events, F&B promotions at Singapore's only hilltop destination. The Singapore Cable Car connects Mount Faber to Sentosa Island and offers guests seamless access to a collection of unique leisure activities from the hilltop to the island. Since starting operations in 1974, close to 57 million riders have taken the Singapore Cable Car. For over four decades, the Singapore Cable Car has played host to the contestants of the Miss World Pageant (1989), offered Asia's first sky dining in a cable car cabin (1998), and the world's first Angry Bird-themed cable car (2012).

MARRIOTT LAUNCHES ITS FIRST EVER FOOD TRUCK

Marriott International Inc. recently announced the launch of Marriott on Wheels - its first-ever mobile food truck in India. Commencing its journey from Mumbai, the Marriott food truck will be seen travelling across six destinations in India, serving its patrons signature dishes and local favourites from Marriott properties in the respective cities. The food truck was flagged off in Mumbai by Craig Smith, President and MD, Asia Pacific, Marriott International and Neeraj Govil, Area VP, South Asia, Marriott International along with actor and producer Saif Ali Khan.

Cruising through the cities of Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Lucknow, Pune, Madurai and Kochi, this food truck will be covering a distance of 6761 km. over 40 days. Through this initiative, Marriott aspires to manifest on the

ACCOR BRINGS RAFFLES BRAND TO INDIA



Accor recently announced two majestic hotels in India – Raffles Jaipur and Raffles Udaipur – in the presence of Accor Chairman & CEO Sébastien Bazin and owner, Ratankant Sharma. Both hotels will deliver a palatial experience in an extraordinary setting along with the famously discreet and personalised Raffles service.

Commenting on this historic occasion, Sébastien Bazin, Chairman and CEO Accor, said, "It is with immense pride that we announce the arrival of the Raffles brand in India, a hallmark of luxury and sublime service in a country that is famous for delivering luxury at the highest level. With our strategic partners, we look forward to providing an oasis of calm and charm in two of the most incredible destinations in India. We thank Mr Sharma for bringing the first Fairmont to India in Jaipur and extending this partnership to the Raffles brand."

KHON PERFORMANCE ADDED TO GRAND PALACE TICKET



The Tourism Authority of Thailand recently informed all tourists to Thailand that the 500 Baht entrance ticket to the Grand Palace in Bangkok now includes a Khon performance at the Sala Chalermskrung Royal Theatre. Purchased onsite at the Grand Palace, the ticket has until now covered entry to the Grand Palace, Wat Phra Kaew (the Temple of the Emerald Buddha), and Wat Phra Kaew Museum. There are five performances daily of the 25-minute masked dance drama from Monday to Friday, at 10.30 am, 13.00 pm, 14.30 pm, 16.00 pm, and 17.30 pm. A shuttle bus is available to take one-way trip from the Phiman Deves Gate at the Grand Palace to Sala Chalermskrung. Thailand's Khon performance depicts the glory of Rama the hero and incarnation of the god Vishnu, is inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, where it is described as "a performing art that combines musical, vocal, literary, dance, ritual and handicraft elements."

F&B strength of its Select Serve Brands - Courtyard by Marriott, Fairfield by Marriott, Four Points by Sheraton and Aloft Hotels. Said Neeraj Govil, Area VP, South Asia, Marriott International Inc. said, "We are proud to launch Marriott's first ever mobile food truck in the country."



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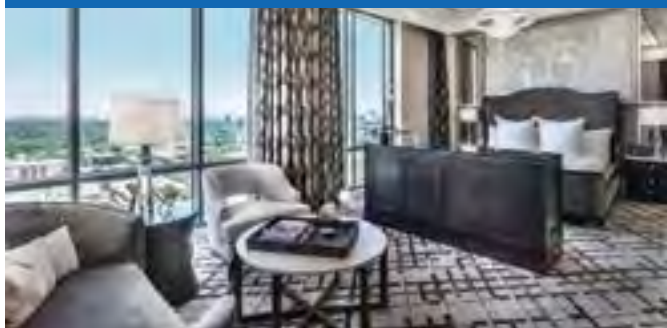
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PREFERRED LAUNCHES I PREFER ALLIANCE PROGRAMME



Preferred Hotels & Resorts recently announced the launch of I Prefer Alliance, an innovative new loyalty platform that allows independent hotels and regional hotel brands to extend full benefits of I Prefer Hotel Rewards to members of their distinctive guest benefit programmes. Featuring a straightforward point exchange structure, I Prefer Alliance allows partner hotels to incentivise their respective loyalty members by extending access to more than 650 additional destinations across 85 countries where they can earn and redeem points, while receiving other valuable benefits during every eligible stay. Preferred Hotels & Resorts debuts I Prefer Alliance with Tokyu Hotels as its inaugural partner.

Adding on, Seema Roy, Area Managing Director - South Asia, Middle East, Africa, and Australasia for Preferred Hotels & Resorts, said, "We are pleased to debut the I Prefer Alliance Programme in the Indian sub-continent. Looking ahead, we believe that this significant move will positively transform and enhance independent travel experiences in the region by empowering participating partner hotels with the tools to reward guest loyalty, and create positive demand for the industry from around the world."

SEYCHELLES TOURISM'S FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND GLOBAL CAMPAIGN



Seychelles Tourism Board (STB) has launched its global advertising campaign film that will be showcased across traditional and digital mediums in the India market. The film is a first-of-its-kind initiative of Seychelles Tourism Board, India Office and is directed and developed by digital content creators – TheVibe. The film captures the essence of Seychelles and highlights diverse aspects of the destination.

Speaking about this recent development on the Indian market, Sherin Francis, STB Chief Executive mentioned that the collaboration with TheVibe has been an opportunity to maximise on the destination's visibility in the Indian market.

Lubaina Sheerazi, COO, Blue Square Consultants, Seychelles Tourist Office – India further added, "The film is a big development for us, as it is an initiative from the India market which will be used for global distribution and promotional purposes. We are also delighted to say that Seychelles received 13,901 tourists from India in 2018, retaining India's position as the top 6th source market for the tourism board."

RAVNEET KAUR, C&MD, ITDC SHINES AT ITB BERLIN



Ravneet Kaur, Chairperson & Managing Director, ITDC, has been awarded with ISAW Women Achiever Award for "Professionalism in Management." The award was presented at the recently concluded ITB Berlin, by Taleb D Refai, Former Secretary General, United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Every year, Institute of South Asian Women (ISAW) honours exceptional women achievers, including ministers and women activists from various countries, on International Women's Day.

Kaur has been awarded for her professionalism and approach towards managing different tasks at the helm of the affairs. She is working towards establishing and positioning brand ITDC as a leading multi-activity and dynamic organisation dealing in various fields related to Hospitality, Tourism and Travel.

TAJ RISHIKESH RESORT & SPA DEBUTS IN UTTARAKHAND



The IHCL recently introduced the iconic Taj brand in Rishikesh with the opening of Taj Rishikesh Resort & Spa, Uttarakhand. This will be the company's third hotel in the state. The resort is spread over 12.5 acres of terraced gardens on the banks of the river Ganges in the shadow of the mighty Himalayas. Each of the spacious 79 rooms have panoramic views of the Ganges with its white sandy beach and the majestic mountains.

Puneet Chhatwal, MD & CEO, IHCL, said, "With its idyllic setting and unrestricted views of the Himalayas, the resort is well-positioned to tap into the growing potential of the wellness and spiritual tourism market. This is consistent with our commitment to offer global travellers new and unique experiences in hospitality."

Arjun Mehra, MD, Darrameks Hotels & Developers Pvt Ltd, said, "Rishikesh is an extremely popular destination across the world. We are delighted to partner with The IHCL."



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MONACO HAS IT ALL, IN ONE MONTE-CARLO



After 4 years of construction, Monaco presents a whole new exclusive and comprehensive luxury experience, the ONE Monte-Carlo district now reveals its light, fluid lines, its monumental panes of glass, its plant-covered facades and its tree-lined streets. With the biggest wonders in luxury lifestyle, unlike any other in the world, ONE Monte-Carlo aims to become the most exclusive destination in Europe, in a haven of greenery!

Speaking on the occasion, Jean-Luc Biamonti, CEO, Monte-Carlo SBM, said, "I feel sure that ONE Monte-Carlo will be a key driver in the development of our core activities – gaming, hospitality and fine dining. Not only through the residents of ONE Monte-Carlo, but also and above all, as a result of the valuable contribution it will make in securing Monaco's position as ONE of the most sought-after destinations for all lovers of gaming and l'art de vivre."

TOURISM MALAYSIA CONDUCTS 4-CITY PRODUCT BRIEFING



Tourism Malaysia, in association with Kesari Tours & Travel, successfully concluded their 4-city Product Briefing Seminar in Surat, Indore, Nasik and Pune. The Product Partners briefed and shared many attractive products with amazing discounts and incentives with the travel agents who attended the seminar.

Mohd Hafiz Hashim, Director, Tourism Malaysia – Mumbai, headed the Seminar along with Product Partners of Malaysia like Nepcare Hospitality, which represents Legoland & Lexis Hibiscus, Resorts World Genting, Desaru Coast, Malindo Air and Genting Star Cruises.

Mohd Hafiz Hashim said, "We are happy to be associated with Kesari Tours & Travel who assisted us in conducting our 4-city Product Briefing Seminar. We look forward to boost Indian tourists to visit Malaysia by organising more of such fruitful events like seminars, roadshow, FAMs, etc."

IHCL LAUNCHES A NEW BRAND –SELEQTIONS



The IHCL recently announced the launch of a new hotel brand - "SeleQtions". The vision for the brand is to celebrate individuality, by offering unique experiences through landmark hotels that have their own legacy and charm.

Speaking on the occasion, Puneet Chhatwal, MD & CEO, IHCL, said, "SeleQtions will allow IHCL to cater to a broader audience of travellers who prefer staying in hotels with a distinctive character. SeleQtions also includes hotels that have a slice of history, defining location or a differentiated theme. We believe the brand has immense potential to grow."

The 12 hotels in the first phase include properties present in seven key lodging markets of India: President, Mumbai; Ambassador, New Delhi; The Connaught, New Delhi; Blue Diamond, Pune; Cidade de Goa; Taj view, Agra; and Devi Ratn, Jaipur. The other hotels are Pratap Mahal, Ajmer; Savoy, Ooty; Gateway, Coonoor; Gateway Chikmagalur; and Gateway Varkala.

AKARYN HOTEL GROUP WEDDING USP'S IN THAILAND



Akaryn Hotel Group, the innovative hospitality company with a portfolio of boutique luxury hotels and resorts in Thailand, is sharing the love with a series of unique wedding and proposal experiences for couples at its properties in Thailand. The Group's creative operations team has come up with a selection of magical moments that are all about popping the ultimate question in a dynamic and decidedly different style, including an underwater gesture of love, a floating proposal, a request unveiled from a fisherman's net in the sea.

Anchalika Kijkanakorn, Founder and CEO, Akaryn Hotel Group, says, "From our hip beachfront resorts to the urban sophistication of our city hotels, an intuitive and creative approach to hospitality is at the heart of every guest experience. This sense of creativity runs through everything from our room designs to our culinary concepts, from our wellness offerings to our beach parties, which is why we're giving the age-old tradition of asking for a loved one's hand in marriage a contemporary fairy-tale twist."

#dreamweddingatLM



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THE FERN OPENS IN MANALI AND POLO FOREST



The Fern Hotels & Resorts has opened two hotels - The Fern Residency, Manali (Himachal Pradesh) and The Fern Sattva Resort, Polo Forest (Gujarat), thereby taking the tally to 58 hotels managed by the company.

The Fern Residency, Manali is a 37-room property situated in the picturesque hill state of Himachal Pradesh. Nestled far away from the hustle and bustle of the cityscape, the hotel is enveloped by a panoramic view of the magnificent Kullu Valley dotted with spectacular streams, apple orchards and rugged snow-capped mountains.

The Fern Sattva Resort, Polo Forest (Gujarat) is a 30-room resort located in Abhapur Village, Taluka Vijaynagar of Gujarat and is a two-and-half-hour drive from Ahmedabad. Surrounded by the lush green forests at one side and the gentle flowing Harnav River on the other, the resort is a perfect place to unwind and chill.

Commenting on the opening of both the hotels, Suhail Kannampilly, COO, said, "People visiting Manali and Polo Forest can now enjoy our eco-friendly hospitality. Manali hotel is the second hotel which we are managing in HP. In Gujarat we are now at 15 locations."

CYGNETT LAUNCHES CYGNETT INN GRAND, JAIPUR



Cygnett Inn Grand, designed on the lines of European Renaissance, situated at a close proximity to the Jaipur railway station and airport and is ideal for both business and leisure travellers. With every offering crafted to the minutest of details, the hotel promises an exceptional stay for astute guests. Boasting a modern and upscale design, this premium hotel offers spacious and stylishly designed rooms with all modern amenities and in-room services. The hotel offers a variety of offerings in terms of food and other services. Cygnett Inn Grand also offers conferencing and banqueting services. The banquet room, Columbia, is 1550sq.ft in size and can cater up to 150 guests. Tailor-made conference packages are also available to curate customised events.

Speaking on the occasion, Sarbendra Sarkar, MD, said, "Cygnett Inn Grand aspires to be a beacon in the industry with such comprehensive offerings and personalised services. The hotel promises its guests a wonderful cygnetture experience. The encompassing facilities ensure that all travellers get the best of their time and superior value of money spent."

RADISSON STRENGTHENS ITS FOOTPRINT IN SOUTH ASIA

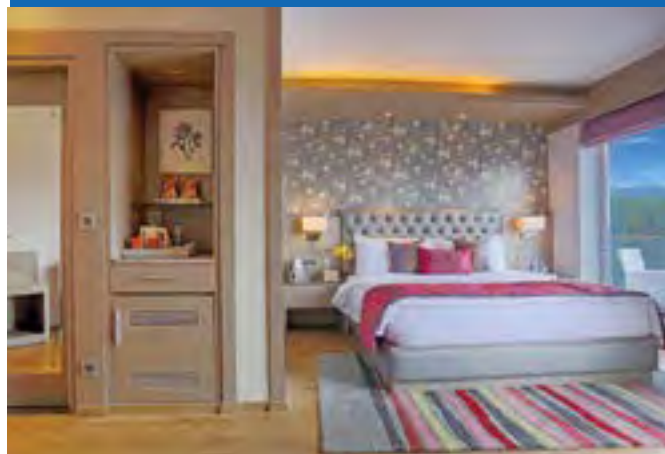
Zubin Saxena,
MD & VP of Operations, South Asia



Radisson Hotel GroupTM has reiterated its deep commitment to South Asia at the Hotel Investment Conference South Asia (HICSA) 2019. Now, with the support of Jin Jiang, the world's fifth largest hotel company, RHG is well-positioned for significant future growth.

Zubin Saxena, MD and VP of Operations, South Asia, said, "South Asia is one of the world's most dynamic regions, where huge populations meet soaring economic growth, creating unprecedented opportunities for investment and development. At Radisson Hotel Group, we have long since recognised the subcontinent's vast potential, and it is no coincidence that we are now one of South Asia's largest and most trusted hotel groups. We have very strong relationships with our owners and other stakeholders in South Asia, and we will continue to work tirelessly to drive profitability through operational excellence."

FIND YOUR FORTUNE IN MASHOBRA, SHIMLA



Fortune Hotels has recently opened Fortune Select Cedar Trail in the unspoilt hill station of Mashobra, Shimla. The hotel is located amidst a lush oak, cedar and pine tree forests and at an altitude of 2100m. above sea level with sweeping views of the majestic Himalayan range. Aiming to attract the leisure traveller and corporate off-sites, the hotel offers a host of modern amenities coupled with Fortune Personalised Services at great value to its guests.

Speaking on the occasion, Samir MC, MD, said, "We are extremely happy with our alliance with M/s Zed Infrastructure. We share a vision to promote this breathtaking property at Mashobra and see it grow into the most-visited destination in the region. This partnership will ensure that our guests are given the world-class service and experience. It's a win-win for us as well as our consumers."

TRAVEL & TOURISM Excellence Awards

August 23, 2019

The Lalit, Barakhamba, New Delhi

— CALLING FOR NOMINATIONS —



PANEL OF JURY



Kapil Kaul
CEO, South Asia,
CAPA Centre for Aviation



Mandeep Singh Soin
Founder, Eco Tourism
Society of India



Pronab Sarkar
President, Indian Association
of Tour Operators (IATO)



Dilip Chenoy
Secretary General
FICCI



Vinod Zutshi
Former Secretary Tourism,
Government of India



Sunil Gupta
Former CEO,
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ALITALIA: MOST PUNCTUAL AIRLINE IN THE WORLD



Alitalia ranked as the most punctual airline in the world in February 2019 with 90.12 per cent of flights landing on schedule, according to the report published by FlightStats. The analysis performed by FlightStats reported that the Alitalia's on-time performance was, in February, more than 12 percentage points higher than the average punctuality index of world airlines (77.6%).

The data related to the month of February confirms the Italian airline's excellent on-time performance in January when Alitalia had ranked second most punctual airline in the world. A positive trend was also registered during 2018 when the Italian airline, with 83.2 per cent of flights landing on schedule, had ranked second most punctual airline in Europe and eighth in the world.

ETIHAD INTRODUCE 787 DREAMLINERS TO ROME & FRANKFURT



From June 1, 2019, Etihad Airways will introduce a new two-class Boeing 787-10 Dreamliner, the largest variant of the technologically advanced aircraft, on its scheduled daily morning service from Abu Dhabi to Rome, complementing the second overnight 777-300ER departure. On July 1, the airline will introduce the Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner on its two daily services to Frankfurt.

The two-class 787-9 features Etihad Airways' next-generation Business and Economy Class cabins, configured with 299 seats - 28 Business Studios and 271 Economy Smart Seats. The 336-seat 787-10 features 32 Business Studios and 304 Economy Smart Seats.

Robin Kamark, Chief Commercial Officer, Etihad Aviation Group, said, "Rome and Frankfurt are two very important cities on the Etihad global network and have been popular with business and leisure customers alike. The introduction of more state-of-the-art 787s to our fleet is allowing us to further enhance the inflight experience, giving our guests the opportunity to enjoy the most highly customised Dreamliner cabins in the world, upgraded entertainment systems and connectivity, and our acclaimed service and hospitality."

AMERICAN AIRLINES AND HYATT ANNOUNCE LOYALTY BENEFITS

American Airlines and Hyatt Hotels Corporation recently announced plans to provide frequent travellers with more ways to earn miles, points and status when they fly with American Airlines or stay at Hyatt Hotels - making the travel journey more rewarding every step of the way. The enhanced loyalty collaboration is expected to launch later this year.

Through this relationship, elite members in both the American Airlines AAdvantage and World of Hyatt loyalty programmes will be rewarded with more access to earning both points and miles on qualifying American flights and Hyatt hotel stays.



FOUR AAI AIRPORTS AMONGST THE BEST IN THE WORLD

The unrelenting pursuit for excellence in concert with conviction for providing world-class airports by AAI has been acknowledged with four AAI airports getting the top honours in the recently announced ASQ awards. The airports viz. Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh and Indore won nine awards in different categories. ACI is an independent agency that carries out international benchmarking of airports through its participative programme known as Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Survey, measuring passengers' satisfaction across 37 key performance indicators that include 8 major categories such as access, check-in, security, airport facilities, food & beverage, retail, airport environment and arrival services.

Based on the results of ASQ survey, awards won by AAI airports are for - Best Airport by size and Region: Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh and Indore Airports, catering to 2-5 million passengers per year in the Asia Pacific region. Best Airport by Environment and Ambience by size: Chandigarh and Ahmedabad Airports, catering to 2-5 million passengers per year and 5-15 million passengers per year, respectively.

Best Customer Service by size: Indore Airport and Ahmedabad Airport, catering to 2-5 million passengers per year and 5-15 million passengers per year, respectively.

Best Infrastructure and Facilitation by size: Indore Airport and Ahmedabad Airport, catering to 2-5 million passengers per year and 5-15 million passengers per year, respectively.



LANDOR HOPE AND GLORY: 747 TOUCHES DOWN AT HEATHROW



British Airways recently welcomed the arrival of the third in its series of four heritage liveries – a Boeing 747 painted in the Landor design, which will be recognisable for many as it flew on British Airways aircraft between 1984 and 1997. The 747, registration G-BNLY, will be flying to long-haul destinations served by the Boeing 747, with the design remaining on the aircraft until it retires in 2023. The aircraft marks the third heritage design to join the fleet, as the airline continues to celebrate its past while looking to the future in its centenary year. As with the British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) liveried 747, and the British European Airways (BEA) liveried A319, the aircraft can be followed using tracking website Flightradar24.

Alex Cruz, British Airways' Chairman and CEO, said, "The Landor livery is one of our most famous designs, and many will remember seeing it in the skies at some point in their lives. Introducing these liveried aircraft has been a huge honour, and we're excited to reveal details of the final design soon."

SRILANKAN SCORES SECOND HAT-TRICK AT AWARDS



SriLankan Airlines won three awards at Golden City Gates Awards 2019 at ITB Berlin, the world's largest tourism trade fair. The 19th edition of the awards saw a jury of 40 members judging over 148 submissions sent by 32 countries.

SriLankan Airlines was awarded a First Star award in the 'Airlines - corporate' category for its product video, another First Star for its India Outbound video in the TV Cinema spot category and a Third Star award in the same category for its Melbourne Marathon video 2018.

Vipula Gunatilleka, CEO, SriLankan Airlines, said, 'This is the third consecutive time that SriLankan Airlines was commended at this esteemed forum, and the second consecutive year that it has managed to bag three prestigious awards. These awards reaffirm the consistency and the global appeal of our marketing communication content. They will be an inspiration for us to explore new avenues in creative conceptualisation and creation of unique content to aptly portray SriLankan Airlines as a global brand with inherently Sri Lankan attributes.'

FLYDUBAI MARKS STARTS TASHKENT INAUGURAL

Flydubai recently inaugurated its new service from Dubai to Tashkent becoming the first carrier, based in the UAE, to offer direct flights to Uzbekistan. The inaugural flight departed from Terminal 3, Dubai International (DXB) and was welcomed on arrival at Tashkent International Airport (TAS).

On board the inaugural flight was a senior delegation from the UAE led by HE Eng. Sultan bin Saeed Al Mansoori, Minister of Economy in the UAE. On arrival at Tashkent, the delegation was received by the Deputy Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan Shuhrat Vafaev and HE Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the UAE to Uzbekistan Mohammed Al Mehairbi.

The inauguration of flydubai's direct route between Dubai and Tashkent represents an important step in the move to reinforce economic and trade ties between the two countries – expanding the UAE's economic partnerships with the Central Asian region and empowering the business community in both countries to intensify communication and visits, which helps create opportunities that are mutually beneficial to both UAE and Uzbekistan.



ETIHAD AND GULF AIR SIGN CODESHARE

Etihad Airways and Gulf Air have signed a codeshare partnership, for travel commencing with the summer schedule. The announcement follows the signing of a MOU between the two carriers at the Bahrain International Airshow in November last year and will further strengthen the strong ties between the two countries and carriers. The announcement was made at a signing ceremony held at Etihad Airways Headquarters in Abu Dhabi, attended by Tony Douglas, Group CEO of Etihad Aviation Group, and Krešimir Kučko, CEO of Gulf Air.

The agreement will see Etihad place its 'EY' code on Gulf Air flights from Bahrain to and from Abu Dhabi, Baghdad, Casablanca, Dhaka, Faisalabad, Larnaca, Malaga, Multan, Najaf, Peshawar, Saikot and Tbilisi. Gulf Air will place its 'GF' code on Etihad flights from Abu Dhabi to and from Bahrain, Brisbane, Chicago O'Hare, Jakarta, Lagos, Los Angeles, Melbourne, New York JFK, Sydney and Washington.



JAPAN AIRLINES ANNOUNCES NONSTOP SERVICE TO BENGALURU



Japan Airlines (JAL) recently announced to launch a new nonstop service between Tokyo-Narita and Bengaluru India, during the summer of 2020. As direct flights are currently not in service from Japan, the launch of this route will provide customers from North America a new option when travelling to the southern region of India. And, through the expansion of JAL's international network, the carrier looks to contribute to the further development and economic growth in both countries.

In order to realise the JAL Vision1, as introduced in the JAL Group Medium Term Management Plan, the carrier will continue expanding its network in order to become the world's most valued and preferred airline. The JAL Group will continue to embrace new challenges to deliver greater customer convenience, enhance its networks, and improve the quality of its products and services.

EMIRATES EXPANDS REACH WITH SPICEJET CODESHARE



Emirates and SpiceJet have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enter into a reciprocal codeshare agreement, which is set to open new routes and destinations for passengers travelling between India and popular destinations across Africa, America, Europe and the Middle East.

Adnan Kazim, Emirates' Divisional Senior VP, Strategic Planning, Revenue Optimization and Aeropolitical affairs, said, "This partnership with SpiceJet and the mutual expansion of our network will go a long way in further enhancing the travel experience of our customers in India as well as those heading into India, benefiting travellers and businesses alike."

Ajay Singh, C&MD, SpiceJet, said, "This new partnership should immensely benefit passengers travelling on both airlines. While SpiceJet passengers from across India will be able to enjoy seamless connectivity leveraging Emirates vast network across Europe, Africa, America and the Middle East those travelling to India on Emirates will be able to travel to 51 destinations across our domestic network."

AIR ARABIA WELCOMES THE FIRST A321NEO LR TO ITS FLEET

Air Arabia, the Middle East and North Africa's first and largest low-cost carrier (LCC), recently received its first Airbus (A321neo Long Range). The aircraft flew nonstop from Airbus's facility in Hamburg to Sharjah International Airport.

Air Arabia is the first Middle Eastern airline to operate the A321neo LR and this delivery is the first of six aircraft that will join Air Arabia's fleet that comprises 53 A320 Family aircraft serving more than 155 routes across the globe from four hubs in the UAE, (Sharjah and Ras Al Khaimah), Morocco and Egypt. The addition of the A321neo LR will enable Air Arabia to expand to new medium-haul markets in addition to strengthening the existing routes with increased seat capacity. Adel Al Ali, Group CEO of Air Arabia, said, "We are glad to welcome the first A321neo LR to our fleet, which marks another milestone in Air Arabia's journey. The addition of this new aircraft allows us to expand our service to farther and newer destinations while remaining loyal to our low-cost business model. We look forward to receiving the remaining aircraft in 2019 as we continue to offer our customers an excellent product with more destinations to discover".



ETIHAD PARTNERS WITH VISIT CALIFORNIA

Etiihad Airways has partnered with Visit California to promote the Golden State to travellers from around the world. The agreement was announced this week at the Arabian Travel Market in a signing ceremony with Robin Kamark, Chief Commercial Officer, Etihad Aviation Group, and Caroline Beteta, President & CEO for Visit California.

The partnership between Etihad Airways and Visit California will involve the organisations collaborating to promote travel to California as a destination from both Abu Dhabi and other key markets. The two sides will be developing a strategy and promotion plan to drive tourism and highlight the many attractions that California offers to international travellers.

Robin Kamark, Chief Commercial Officer, Etihad Aviation Group, commented: "The West Coast of America including Los Angeles is an important market for the Etihad Airways network and we are proud to partner with Visit California to showcase the many delights of the Golden State to our guests."





5th TOURISM INVESTORS MEET

*A Platform for Investment Opportunities in
Tourism Infrastructure Development*

JULY 1-2, 2019

FICCI, Federation house
New Delhi



The Investors from following sectors will be present

- Hotels & Resorts
- Real Estate Developers /
Mega Convention Centre
- Airport & Roadways
Developers
- Sound & Light Shows
organizers
- Ayurveda & Wellness Centers
- Tech Backed Cab Services
- Cruise & River Tourism
- Adventure Tourism
- Amusement Park
- Film Studios
- Sanitation & Civic Amenity
developers
- Ropeways
- Medical Tourism

Theme State



Partner State



Participating State



Dinner Host



Strategic Media
Partner



Premier Media
Partner



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www.ficci-tim.com



GUY ANTOGNELLI has been appointed as the new President of Monaco Tourism. He will be leading all missions of Monaco Government Tourist & Convention Authority to ensure a high level of tourism throughout the year and maximize the economic benefits for the destination.

He will be working closely with all partners in the Principality's tourism sector.



SANDRINE CAMIA has been designated as Deputy Director at the Monaco Convention Bureau. Camia has 20 years of strong experience in tourism working for luxury hotel brands. She has held the position of Director of Sales, Marketing and Communication for two independent

luxury hotels. In 2011, she was appointed head of Monaco Convention Bureau and has been in charge of the promotion and development of MICE.



SANJEEV JOSHI has been appointed as the President for Society of Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE) India Chapter for 2019-2021.



NIKITA DAS has been designated as the Senior Cluster Marketing and Communication Head for three hotels – JW Marriott Bangalore, Sheraton Grand Brigade Gateway and Renaissance Hotel Bangalore. In her new role, she will be handling the communications portfolio

for these hotels. She brings with her a rich experience in the marketing and advertising industry.



VISHAL SINGH has been designated as the General Manager of Hyatt Regency Gurugram. He brings 23 years of experience after having worked majorly with Hyatt and Hilton hotels. Prior to joining this, he was General Manager at Hyatt Regency Pune. In his new role, he

will oversee the entire hotel management and operations, and

set strategic plans to continue achieving the hotel's revenue, increasing guest satisfaction and enhancing the strong brand positioning of establishing Hyatt Regency Gurgaon as world-class global MICE destination.



NITINN SHARMA has been appointed as the General Manager at Holiday Inn Resort Kolkata NH6 by IHG South West Asia. He comes with 22 years of experience in the Hospitality Industry and is a long-time member of the IHG family. He has been instrumental in the opening

of both Crowne Plaza New Delhi Rohini and Crowne Plaza Today Gurgaon. His most recent assignment was as the Hotel Manager at Crowne Plaza Jaipur Tonk Road.



ASHISH KUMAR has been designated as the General Manager of Hyatt Regency Lucknow. With more than 20 years in the Hospitality Industry, he has grasped a notable hold over the nuances of the hospitality sector. He also possesses the knack of managing negotiations,

forecasting and revenue management, crisis management, and various other operation services.



KUMAR SHOBHAN has been designated as the General Manager of Hyatt Regency Kolkata. Shobhan has spent more than 19 years in the Hospitality Industry in a number of remarkable roles – from Food & Beverage to Rooms and Spa and Catering. Shobhan started his career as a Food

& Beverage Associate at Hyatt Regency Delhi. His last assignment was with Hyatt Regency Lucknow as its pre-opening General Manager.



SHALABH VERMA has been appointed as the General Manager at Hyatt Place Hampi. With over two decades of experience, Verma has been associated with the Hyatt Hotels & Resorts for 10 years. In his new role, he will be responsible for the entire operations and will spearhead the growth

and development of the hotel. His most recent position was as DOSM with Grand Hyatt Mumbai.



SUBHABRATA ROY has been appointed as the General Manager of Double Tree Suites by Hilton Bangalore. A seasoned professional with over 20 years of experience, Roy will spearhead business operations, overall implementation and

business development of the hotel. He will also be responsible for the hotel's performance in the market. Prior to this, he served as the General Manager of Four Points by Sheraton, Vashi, in Mumbai.



BHARAT RATANPAL has been appointed as the General Manager for Crowne Plaza Pune City Centre. Prior to this, he was Director of Sales and Marketing at the iconic JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu for over 2 years. With over 16 years in the Hospitality Industry, he has spent 12 years with the

Hyatt Hotels Corporation working with its numerous upscale and luxurious properties.



VRUSHALI V KUMMAR has been appointed as the Director of Sales at Fairfield by Marriott Pune Kharadi. She comes with 18 years of international brand experience and has seen numerous highlights in her career, including successfully launching Park Hyatt Goa,

Oakwood, Courtyard by Marriott and Keys Pimpri Pune. She will be crucial for the development and implementation of business strategies for Fairfield by Marriott Pune Kharadi.



PROJJWAL GHOSH has been appointed as Director of Sales and Marketing at Holiday Inn Resort Kolkata NH6. His key task will be to launch the resort successfully while creating adequate awareness and business opportunities through various sales and marketing

efforts. He will also be responsible for the smooth execution of the hotel business and marketing plan and meeting the revenue goals of the hotel. Prior to this, he was associated with Hilton.



DEEPPREET BINDRA has been appointed as the Director of Operations at Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield. He brings with him over 14 years of experience in the service industry. In his new role, he will oversee hotel operations and aims to focus on creating experiences for both

resident and non-resident guests. Prior to this, he worked as Director of Sales at JW Marriott at Aerocity New Delhi.



ABHAY SINGH has been designated as the Director of Operations at The Westin Pune Koregaon Park. He holds an experience of more than 10 years in the Hospitality Industry. He started his career as a F&B executive with Renaissance

Mumbai. In his current role, he will be responsible for heading and managing the hotel operations and maintaining high standards of guest satisfaction. Prior to this, he has served as the Director of Food & Beverage at Westin Langkawi Resort & Spa and Langkawi International convention center.



GK SHRIVASTAVA has been appointed as Director – Operation & Development at Tribeca Hotels & Resorts. Prior to this, he was GM-Operation for Palm Greens Club, a luxury resort in Gujarat. He has 30 years of vast experience of the Hospitality Industry. He has earlier worked with reputed

organisations such as Taj Group, Meridian, The Surya, HHI, Clarks, Baison Group of Hotels, Jaypee, Aman resorts, Carlson group.



SHIMOMURA KAZUYA has been appointed as the Head Chef of the award-winning modern Japanese restaurant Megu, at The Leela Palace New Delhi. Backed with 26 years of rich culinary experience, he is set to bring perfectly balanced flavours to discerning diners at Megu.



AKSHAY SOOD has been appointed as the Director of Food & Beverage at The Westin Mumbai Garden City. In his new role, he will be responsible for managing the overall operations of the F&B department and delivering excellent guest experiences.



DEEPAK BOONEADY has been designated as the Group Director of Business Development at Sun Siyam Resorts. In his new role, Booneady will oversee relationships with key partners, develop sales growth strategies together with revenue management,

and enhance brand development for properties of the group. He brings over 20 years of experience and success in Luxury Leisure Industry.



ZUBIN SUTARIA has been appointed as the Director of Sales at Hyatt Regency Pune. He comes with over 10 years of experience in Hospitality Industry. As the Director of Sales, he will be responsible for maximising hotel's revenue through result-oriented sales and marketing

strategies, exploring business opportunities through events, etc. Prior to this, he worked as the Director of Sales with the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel and Serviced Apartments, Pune.

AMAZING THAILAND: AN IDEAL HOLIDAY DESTINATION FOR SENIOR CITIZEN TRAVELLERS



Tourism Authority of Thailand organises Amazing Thailand Golden Experience in Dehradun

TT BUREAU



In order to promote the rapidly growing senior citizen travel segment to Thailand, TAT along with World Integrity Centre (WIC), Dehradun organised an exclusive event called "Amazing Thailand Golden Experience" at WIC on March 16, 2019. This event was organised specially for senior travellers with an aim to promote and showcase Thailand as a perfect destination for travellers who love exploring new destinations and creating unforgettable memories!

The afternoon started with a presentation on activities and attractions in new and popular destinations that senior travellers would visit in Thailand. From boutique hotels & resorts, Michelin star restaurants like Gaggan and Nahm, luxury dinner cruises like Manhora and Apsara, popular rooftop bars like Red Sky and Sirocco, a range of world-class spas, to a host of activities like shopping at the floating market or the newly opened ICON Siam, Benjarong painting, flower arrangement classes and Thai cooking

classes, Thailand is a perfect getaway for travellers to pamper themselves.

The afternoon focussed on "Opening to the New Shades of Thailand" and discovering various aspects of Thainess and gave the guests an opportunity to: learn recipes of making authentic Thai desserts, experience a traditional Thai massage, and enjoy delicious Thai food in lunch.

Senior citizen travellers or travellers above the age of 55 is a fast-growing segment that has high spends and like travelling in groups. Travel in this segment is becoming very popular due to the wide range of destinations and activities that Thailand offers. Factors such



as close proximity to India, availability of direct flights, visa on arrival facility and favourable warm climate throughout the year are some of the reasons that have made Thailand a preferred choice for senior citizen travellers.

According to Isra Stapanaseth, Director - TAT New Delhi, "Apart from the above, warm Thai hospitality and welcoming nature of the Thai people are the main reasons that make Thailand a favourite holiday destination among senior travellers."



CORPORATE

A HOSPITALITY COMPANY WITH A DIFFERENCE



It's never easy to take forward a legacy, especially when the stakes are high, as in Nepal's first and only Forbes listed company, CG Corp | Global

KAMAL GILL

In an insightful interview, Rahul Chaudhary, Managing Director of CG Corp | Global speaks of the rapport he shares with his father Binod Chaudhary. Today's Traveller explores how the father-son camaraderie is taking the company to another level and bringing the world back to Nepal with each passing year.

Talk to me about your plans? What moves you to do such a lot in such a short period of time?

After graduating, my father asked me what I wanted to do in life, to which I replied, "I want to be a soccer player," as I was proficient in sports through school and college. My father's advice was: "Be whatever you want to be, but make sure you are the best at what you do." Destiny, however, had other plans. I entered the hospitality world and have been deeply immersed in the business along with my father, who has been my guiding force throughout. His unending passion, foresight and astute business sense have placed our company on the global map through the

Forbes listing in 2013, making us the only Nepalese family in that list ever since. Our vision is to be innovative, grow the company and expand the business worldwide. Our goal is to be a hospitality company with a difference, which we hope to achieve with our target of establishing 200 hotels by 2021-22, with investments and assets across the world – from America to China.

So how did this journey start for the Group?

We began our sojourn in 2001 joining hands with Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), South Asia's largest and most iconic hospitality company which owns the Taj Brand; it included three assets – Taj Samudra in Sri Lanka, Taj Exotica Resort & Spa and Taj Coral Reef in the Maldives. It is a tribute to my father's sagacity and grit. Even when the Sri Lankans and Maldivians were sceptical to invest in these assets at the time, he seized the opportunity and realised it to its full potential. When I joined the business in 2006, we had three hotels, today we're at 127 hotels within a span of 12 years and we continue to grow. This year, we hope to reach the 150 mark.

What clicks with you when you decide that this is a good partner to have? Or this is a good asset to partner with?

Every single deal starts with strategy. Partnerships are not easy and managing them is even more difficult. You have to consider the area of expertise, the experience and the strategic fit with that partner, without any conflict of interests. I expect my local partner to be someone with developmental expertise, strong local presence, ability to deal with the local authority, have local knowledge and most importantly, someone who is well-intentioned. If all these qualities are in place, the rest is all about execution.

Does judgement play an important role in selecting a partner?

Judgement has a lot to do with your gut feel. I always believe that for an entrepreneur, gut feel and hunch lets you take a leap of faith. It's very important for an entrepreneur to have the right judgement to make a partnership successful.

Looking into the future, have you thought about 200 hotels and the kind of ethos that would string along all of them without any kind of break, because they would be in different classifications?

I'm not worried about getting the numbers, but all along our strategy has been to be in all the segments of hospitality. I work with different brands in different segments of the Hospitality Industry, but the only connection is that it is part of the company based out of Nepal and has a reach to different parts of the world.

Your partners have been one of your abiding strengths and that might be something that could endure across all classifications?

Absolutely! We are extremely proud of our partnership with IHCL. We would have never been where we are today, if it wasn't for our first partnership with IHCL. We have learned about hotels, luxury and partnerships through IHCL and other alliances that we have forged over the years. We continue to work through our partnership to make our growth strategy a reality.



- Rahul Chaudhary

A FAMILY AFFAIR

Guido Fiorentino, fifth-generation hotelier, President & CEO, Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria, Sorrento, shares valuable insights about present-day challenges in the Hospitality business

KAMAL GILL



For Guido Fiorentino, President & CEO, Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria, Sorrento, the business of hospitality runs in his blood. For more than 180 years, the Fiorentino family has looked after their luxurious properties across Italy that have hosted some of the biggest aristocratic families of Northern Europe. Fiorentino, who is a fifth-generation hotelier, faces the challenge of carrying on his family's mantle, being relevant in an increasingly competitive environment and adapting to rapidly changing technology. Today's Traveller spoke to the hotelier about the things he cherishes the most.

How does it feel to be a fifth-generation hotelier?

It is not easy to be a fifth-generation hotelier. My father always encouraged me to explore different options. I started my career at the Grand Hotel Vesuvio in Napoli. But, after a year, I changed course. With the help of my maternal grandfather, I entered the family's leather business.

In 1999, when I was called to join the company's board, I was truly delighted. In 2007, however, my father fell sick, so my family asked me to take up the family business. I spent a good one year working closely with my father. From the end of 2010, I was fully in charge of the hotels.

How were the initial years?

The initial period was not easy. The first thing I did was to prepare a speech for our close-knit family of employees, many of whom have been there for several years. After my speech, a delegation of employees met me to say, "Guido, we have known you since you were a kid. But, we are not sure that you are a good manager. We will do what you want for a year, but we want to be sure you are the right one."

After one year, they came back and said, "We see that you are really passionate, really focussed. So, we trust you. But, we have another problem. Your father was a 'second father' for us, but you are too young. You could be our younger brother though." Such is my relationship with my employees.

Tell me more about your family's involvement with the hotel and its clients?

As our family has run hotels for multiple generations, we take our hotel business passionately and seriously. When you grow up in a hotel, you meet and connect with your guests. Today, with the help of technology it is easier to connect and keep in touch. Let me recount a story. At 18 years, I was in New York, dining at a restaurant. I met an old lady who instantaneously recognised me, even though I had never seen her before. It was later revealed that she had been a regular patron of our hotel and recognised me from the portrait of Raphael Fiorentino, the Founder of the hotel, whom I resembled.

Carrying on our family's legacy is the most important thing for us. Our hotel was built by the family in 1834. At that time, there was a tourist boom from the aristocratic families of Northern Europe for a tour of Italian cities such as Venice, Florence, Rome, Naples and Sorento. My family saw this as an opportunity to expand the hotel business. Till now, we are carrying on the family's legacy.

What are the main challenges you are facing today?

There are two primary challenges – we have to protect our legacy, and we also need to be contemporary. Since I took over, I have added two new restaurants and two new bars to be at par with our competitors. Today, hotels are not the place you just want to sleep in, but have an experience at, too. We organise a lot of special events – from art exhibitions to live cooking sessions with award-winning chefs – to keep our guests engaged.

Another challenge is bureaucratic in nature. We had four hotel buildings. In 1980, one was damaged by an earthquake. We are still working with the government to rebuild the hotel in the same style. Finally, although we have run the hotel for five generations continuously, I think it is time for us to grow and expand.

Are there any noticeable trends that you foresee for 2020 and ahead?

Offering top-notch services will remain a priority. I have lived through the times of grand hotels and grand services. My aim is to provide the best services for our clients. So, we have invested a lot on training our staff. Technology is also an important area to focus upon.



- Guido Fiorentino



(From left) Raymond Bickson, Principal & CEO, Bickson Hospitality in conversation with Ratan Tata, Chairman, Tata Trusts.

POWER SUMMIT

HICSA 2019, held at Grand Hyatt, Mumbai, was a resounding success with business leaders highlighting the latest trends of this ever-changing industry

TT BUREAU

One of the most premier events for the Hospitality industry is HICSA (Hotel Investment Conference South Asia), where hotel owners, entrepreneurs, investors and industry experts gather to discuss the future of the industry. The event, which is now in its 15th year, is organised by Hotelivate, a new-age consulting firm. This year, the event was held from April 3-4 at Grand Hyatt, Mumbai.

The event saw the participation of 530 delegates from over 10 countries across 10 major industries, who came together to discuss best industry practices, the latest trends and the immense possibilities that the future holds.

THE SPEAKERS

This year's event laid special emphasis on independent hotel owners and small-scale entrepreneurs and how they can survive the shifting dynamics of the Hospitality industry. This year's programme featured a series of keynote addresses by the stalwarts of the Hotel industry. There was Ratan Tata, Chairman

of Tata Trusts; Sebastien Bazin, Chairman and CEO of Accor Hotels; Alan Watts, President of Hilton (Asia-Pacific region); Deepak Kalra, Chairman and Group CEO of MakeMyTrip; Aditya Ghosh, Chief Executive Officer of OYO Hotels and Homes (South Asia), among others.

HIGHLIGHTS

Topics discussed at the event were wide ranging. They included the ensuing battle between online travel agents (OTAs) and hotels for a higher chunk of the consumer's wallet, the immense potential of the Tourism industry, how Hospitality and Tourism industries can help in generating new jobs, the latest trends in room rates and revenue per available room and the need for 'intelligent capital' in the Hospitality industry.

The tete-a-tete with Ratan Tata was certainly the highlight of the event, with the veteran industrialist talking about his passion for Automobile and Hospitality industries and how companies such as Apple and Google have set the standards for ethical business practices.

MINE IS BIGGER THAN YOURS

Manav Thadani kick-started the event with a welcome address and a speech, titled 'Mine is Bigger than Yours'. Dealing with the issue of the ongoing battle between OTAs and hotels for a larger share of consumers' money, Thadani showed how the entry of online aggregators played the role of a disruptor, forcing hotels to come up with innovative marketing solutions to encourage customers to book directly through the hotel's site. Thadani added that the reason why hotel aggregators became so popular was that they could give consumers a better value for money on hotel bookings.

NEW ECONOMY, YOUNG INDIA

Amitabh Kant, CEO of NITI Aayog, highlighted the crucial role that Tourism and Hospitality industries will play in creating more job opportunities for the young Indians. "The population of India will keep getting younger while the rest of the world is getting older, and we need to capitalise on that," he said. The fact that the Tourism and Hospitality industries account for more than 9 percent of the total jobs created in the country is an encouraging trend, he added.

Sebastien Bazin talked about the changing trends in the Travel industry and how new entrepreneurs and existing players can use them to their advantage. Taking OYO Rooms as an example, Bazin said that OYO created a space, which combined hotel chain with online travel agency – something that has not been seen by Indian consumers.

CONVERSATION WITH RATAN TATA

Ratan Tata's conversation with Raymond Bickson, Principal and CEO, Bickson Hospitality, was the talking point of the summit with the doyen talking about his passions, his favourite industries and companies.

He said that although his business interests have changed over the years, working for automobile and aviation has given him the greatest pleasure.

Finally, the concept of 'intelligent capital' in the Hospitality industry was elaborated upon by Khushru Jijina of Piramal Capital, which has been providing the Hospitality industry with customised solutions and innovative structures.

AWARDS

Awards were announced for some of the best hotels in their respective categories. Ibis Pune, Hinjewadi was the winner of Budget Hotel category. Fairfield by Marriott Sriperumbudur was the top winner among mid-market hotels, while Taj Aravali Resort & Spa, Udaipur, won big in the Luxury Hotel segment.

Overall, the two-day event highlighted the fact while Tourism and Hospitality industries are great revenue generators, entrepreneurs need to constantly upgrade and keep track of the changing trends to keep healthy profit margins and give customers great value for money.



Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog, spoke about transforming India



'An Un-Affordable Luxury' moderated by Himmat Anand. Panelists included Dipak Haksar ITC, Parveen Kumar IHCL, Rajiv Kaul, Leela Group, Sameer Nayar, Oberoi Group and Sonica Malhotra, MBD, Steigenberger



Sebastien Bazin, Chairman & CEO, Accor Hotels spoke on 'Mastering the Future'.



(From left) Ratan Tata and Manav Thadani presented the lifetime achievement award to Raymond Bickson.

CORPORATE JET-SETTER

DR. ABHIJIT SARKAR

**Vice President & National Head -
CRE, Administration & Infrastructure
Sharekhan Limited, Mumbai**

TT BUREAU

Q: Most memorable trip to any destination?

Being someone who is always fascinated by nature, I love to travel to all those destinations where I can find myself surrounded with greenery all around. One of my most memorable trips was to Kerala.

Q: You dream of going to?

In India, North East for sure. Internationally, Europe.

Q: Favourite airline and why?

Emirates for their hospitality, service and, most importantly, great connectivity.

Q: Best hotel experience and why?

Taj, for its great hospitality, food and ambience.

Q: A place you plan to visit again?

Masai Mara, I am someone who is so attracted to nature and wildlife and hence would always like to visit that place as many times I encounter an opportunity to visit.



Q: A family vacation that stands out?

The family trip to Himachal was one of my most memorable trips. I would like to revisit the state again.

Q: Your best holiday with friends?

My best holiday trip was to Goa with friends. I loved the beaches, bike rides, food and awesome weather.

Q: Great food you enjoyed and where?

I am a foodie and always prefer South Indian delicacies, so rice, rasam, pudu and appam are some of the dishes I never miss whenever I travel to any destination in South India.

Q: What to watch out for while travelling?

Safety is the foremost factor which one should not ignore, and it's important to know the local law and culture.

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

Return with great experience and learnings.



TODAY'S
traveller **22**
YEARS
Celebrating

Weddings...
AS GOOD AS IT CAN GET



BRIDAL SKIN CARE

— SHAHNAZ HUSAIN

Looking beautiful on the wedding day is not merely a matter of make-up and attire. It requires weeks of care; skin with problems will need more time. You need to follow a skin care regime four to six weeks before the wedding. The skin type and the season should be taken into consideration before deciding on your bridal skin care routine. For instance, a summer bride, with oily or combination skin, may face a real problem. Skin care products should be selected according to the skin type and the season.

To ensure glowing skin on your wedding day, tone the skin daily with chilled rose water, using cotton wool pads. Keep rose skin tonic or rose water in the fridge, so that it is chilled and ready for use. Wipe and stroke the skin with them. Then, pat briskly with the rosewater-soaked cotton wool pads. This tones and tightens the pores and also stimulates blood circulation to the skin surface.

Face packs play a vital role for the bride to glow on her wedding day. They dissolve impurities, soften dead skin cells and remove them. This helps to refine the skin, making it clear and translucent. Create a mask at home and use it two or three times a week.

Most salons offer makeover for brides. If there is an acne condition, the treatment should be started 2 - 3 months in advance. If there are scars, it should be started earlier. Different kinds of facials and treatments are

also offered for bridal skin care to revitalise the skin.

In the olden days, "ubtan" was made at home for bridal skin care, both for the face and body. This usually consisted of wheat bran (choker), gram flour (besan), curd or cream of milk (malai) and a pinch of turmeric (haldi). All these were mixed together.

The washing off and scrubbing away of the ingredients helped to clear the skin of dead cells, leaving the skin smooth and bright, with a translucent quality.

Nowadays, spa treatments are becoming increasingly popular for bridal care. Among these is body polishing, a top-to-toe body care procedure that helps to remove dead skin cells through exfoliation, revitalising the skin and making it smoother, softer and brighter.

Sesame seeds soothe sun-damaged skin, help to remove tan and produce an even colour tone. Mint adds a glow to the skin, while honey moisturises and softens the skin. Start with exfoliation. Apply the scrub on the body and rub gently on the skin with circular movements. Pay attention to the knees, elbows and heels. Wash off with water.

A bridal skin care programme is very important, because every part of the body deserves attention. Neglected hands and feet can really mar the entire effect, no matter how beautiful your clothes and jewellery, or how skillfully your make-up has been applied.

Timeless Weddings

Renu Basu, Senior Vice President – Global Sales and Marketing, IHCL, shares an insightful perspective of the evolution of the wedding market in India and Timeless Weddings at the Taj

KAMAL GILL

Hotel chains have to contend with an increasingly competitive landscape, where achieving excellence is not an one-off event. It is a continual journey, which requires painstaking effort and ongoing nurturing. What separates excellent hotels from the others is not just how they leverage knowledge and technology for their own advantage, but how they continue to evolve and stay ahead of the pack to protect and nurture their direct business.

Professionals in the hospitality business have provided some answers, namely, to continually up the brand's image through signature experiences, to be innovative and to use collaboration to maintain an edge in technology and service. They understand that they have to provide personalised services and most importantly, curate the desired memorable experience.

Taj has successfully carved out its niche in the wedding market, defined its offerings and emerged as a winner. Operating under the aegis of the Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), the brand has a singular 'je ne sais quoi' quality in all its hotels. This is amply evident in the way the Group hosts its grand weddings.

Every aspect of a wedding – right from choice of venue and theme, to the exclusive menu, the rites of passage and the reception — bears the unmistakable hallmark of the brand, its warm hospitality, impeccable service and painstaking care over details.

In conversation with Today's Traveller, Renu Basu, Senior Vice President – Global Sales and Marketing, IHCL, shared her perceptive insights about the evolution of the wedding market in India, the rise of destination weddings and the latest trends that the new breed of millennials bring to the experience of the nuptials.



WEDDINGS: THE FULCRUM OF SOCIETY

For Basu, it all comes down to the importance that weddings command in Indian culture. It is not as if they are less important in Western countries, but in India, the fulcrum of social life, as it were, is marriage. Every parent or family considers marriage to be the most crucial duty one has to fulfil. Basu says that most parents put marriage at the top of their priority list. However, weddings, like all other aspects of the Indian social scene, have undergone a sea change. In the past, weddings were simple, intimate affairs. Today, they are mounted on a lavish scale. Sometimes, even if the ceremony is kept small and intimate, couples want the reception to be grand and ceremonious.

WORD-OF-MOUTH PUBLICITY

Basu is also keenly aware of the fact that marketing strategies have their limitations when it comes to weddings. "Weddings in India," says Basu, "are generally publicised via word of mouth. When it comes to weddings, most parents do not want to take chances. So, reputation, brand and overall competence of the hotel become crucial indicators while choosing the hotel partner." Fortunately for Basu, Taj has a long-standing tradition of hosting memorable weddings.

THE TAJ ADVANTAGE

What makes the Taj experience so special? Basu says, when it comes to organizing grand weddings, Taj has a couple of advantages. Apart from being an experienced player in the field, the Group is armed with a retinue of experts – expert planners, chefs, decorators, etc. Each is equipped with years of experience and knowledge about how to put a wedding together. Basu shares, "We have a whole team of people to help us in creating memorable weddings. Because we have a multi-geographical reach, it becomes easy for us to give our customers a wide variety of choices in terms of cuisine and the kind of experience you want. We have our presence in every port of call, in every city in India. We have our palaces, our beaches, our resorts and, of course, our iconic city hotels. So, the delivery that our customers are looking for is guaranteed."



“A wedding at the Taj has meant something special for generations. From the opulent to the intimate, from iconic locations to awe-inspiring venues and legendary services – for over a century, the most experienced wedding specialists have brought beautiful dreams to life with Timeless weddings at the Taj.”

-Renu Basu

INTERNATIONAL REACH

A distinctive asset of the Group is that they take their services internationally. Whether it is the old-world charm of The Pierre, a Taj Hotel, New York, the sophisticated Taj Dubai or the luxurious properties in London, Taj hotels have the wherewithal to create a wedding event that leaves a lasting impression. A large portion of the Indian diaspora favours the Taj wedding experience, while top corporates from the business world as well as professionals, such as doctors, lawyers and architects, also prefer the Taj brand for weddings.





CHANGING TRENDS

Today, Destination Weddings are trending. However, Taj may have started the trend quietly almost 20 years ago, in Taj Exotica Resort and Spa, Goa. The family concerned was an influential one and desired a quiet, low-key affair. Since then, the brand has been hosting destination weddings successfully. Gradually, Bollywood's celebration of Indian weddings ushered in the trend of big, fat and themed weddings.

Next, came the trend of royal weddings. Basu explains, "We are the custodians of the royal palaces of India. We can leverage that for our guests, who can choose from a variety of locations and settings, such as the iconic Umaid Bhawan Palace, Jodhpur; Rambagh Palace, Jaipur; Jai Mahal Palace, Jaipur; Taj Falaknuma Palace, Hyderabad; Taj Lake Palace, Udaipur and so on."

Apart from royal settings and exotic locations, urban destinations and outdoor weddings are also becoming popular. Vivanta Surajkund, NCR, which is favoured for its expansive gardens, and Taj West End, Bengaluru for its scenic setting, are both reputed for their outdoor wedding venues. On the other hand, The Taj Mahal Palace & Taj Lands End in Mumbai have become important for city-based destination weddings. Finally, when it comes to beach weddings, Taj Fort Aguada Resort & Spa and Taj Holiday Village Resort & Spa in Goa are the preferred choices.

THE TAJ EXPERIENCE

Given the fact that both the groom's family and the bride's family want to micromanage weddings, one would wonder where the Taj expertise comes in. Basu elaborates, "Taj has an excellent relationship with all its customers. But, in most cases,

the families of the groom and bride prefer to personally interact with the Chef, who in turn, assures them of the quality and choice of food."

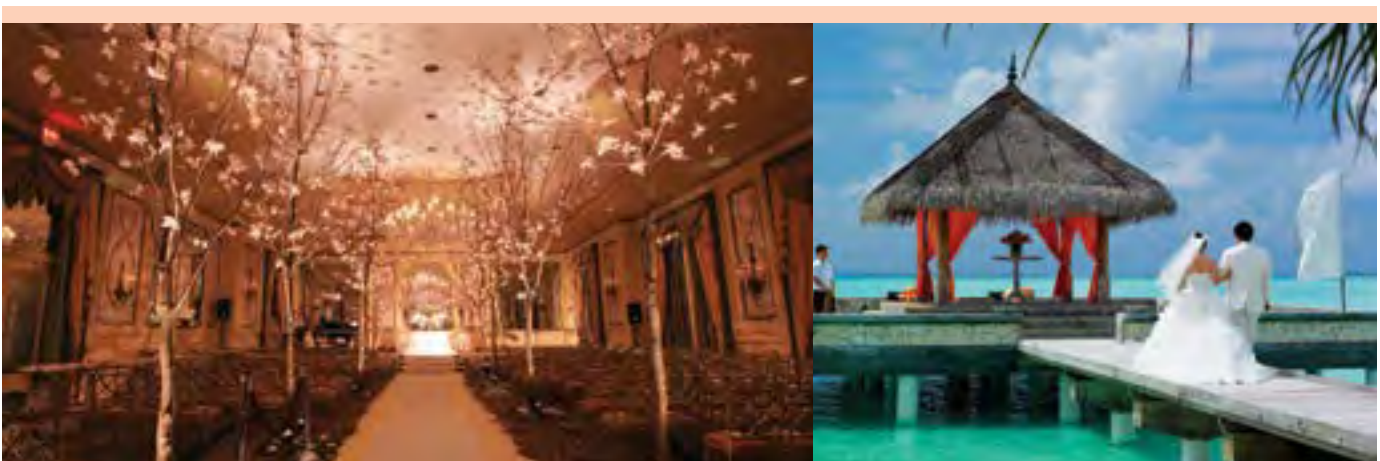
MILLENNIAL WEDDINGS

Each generation brings something of its own to the wedding experience. Wedding shoots, proposals and Western-style ceremonies and dinners are courtesy of the Millennials, who in turn, have been inspired by their global exposure.

TIMELESS WEDDINGS

Basu sums up the Taj wedding experience: "A wedding at the Taj has meant something special for generations. From the opulent to the intimate, iconic locations to awe-inspiring venues and legendary services — for over a century, the most experienced wedding specialists have brought beautiful dreams to life with Timeless Weddings at the Taj."

She continues, "The Taj provides expertise from a wide variety of specialists. The sales team is passionately devoted to weddings, whose intrinsic strength lies in its expertise. Whether it's to do with cuisine, florists, design fundamentals or ambience, our Taj team of planners takes care of everything. An infusion of Western culture brings many trends into focus, namely, wedding shoots, the wedding proposal, the bachelorette party and a Western-style dinner, along with speeches, the toast, and more. An experiential wedding, which is trending, stresses on authentic experiences." Finally, post-wedding stress stipulates the need for a getaway, which the Taj also handles adeptly.





CREATING LASTING MEMORIES

Marry in style at Courtyard Marriott, Bhopal, where every effort is geared towards making weddings extra special

TT BUREAU

Good plans shape good decisions. That's why good planning helps to make elusive dreams come true. You spend weeks to make your D-day special and resonate with the chimes of wedding bells. Courtyard Marriott, Bhopal has everything you need to make any celebration feel unique and fun. At Courtyard Marriott, Bhopal, the events team has spent a great time, learning about what couples need to make their wedding day extra special. From wedding decorations to food layout, the hotel offers the wedding supplies that allow your event to reflect your personal style. You'll love that you can easily search through a wide range of décor geared towards making any wedding theme successful. Whether you plan to have a classic, traditional or something in contemporary and quirky setting for your event, you'll be able to find unique wedding ideas to make it memorable.

Our goal at Courtyard Marriott, Bhopal is to help you realise your feasible wedding vision with affordable deals and packages. Wouldn't it be great to come to a one-stop solution and save the stress of having to make ends meet? At Courtyard Marriott,

Bhopal, you get a wholesome package, everything from the grand air conditioned venues and banquet halls with delectable cuisines to the exquisite theme, and all that can be coordinated with your preferred colours and customised style in mind.

Not sure where to begin? Check out the hotel's website to see what's hot among today's brides and grooms. You can also contact the hotel's wedding planner, Ruchika Khair, for extensive details. Wedding hues are one of those memories which will surely bring back the blissful moments you witnessed with your loved ones. Enjoy your ceremonies and leave Courtyard Marriott, Bhopal to take care of the rest.

Reasons to get married at Courtyard Marriott, Bhopal:

- ◆ Bespoke wedding packages
- ◆ Largest hotel with room inventory of 160 rooms
- ◆ Marriott Bonvoy benefits
- ◆ Grand décor for every function
- ◆ Expert chefs presenting delectable array of aromatic cuisines and signature live counters
- ◆ Strategically located in the city center, adjacent to city's largest DB City Mall



THE GRAND RETREAT

At Grand Hyatt Goa, every experience is spectacular, surprises are to be expected and indulgence is a way of life

TT BUREAU

Sitting at the edge of Bambolim Bay and spread across 28 acres of tropical gardens and lush lawns, Grand Hyatt Goa is an exclusive destination for its unmatched style and luxury. Inspired by Goa's Portuguese heritage, the resort takes the state's distinctive architecture and gives it a modern twist. Its tiled roofs and minimal buildings are the ideal backdrop for your dream wedding that can hop between the bay, lush lawns and, of course, the large indoor banquet halls. Ideally located between North and South Goa, Grand Hyatt Goa's Bambolim location is ideal for those who want to explore Panjim and Divar Island.

EVENT SPACES

In addition to the Grand Ballroom, spread over 12,400sq.ft, there are six function areas, together covering over 32,000sq.ft, that are ideal for smaller events or family-specific functions. There's also a Jharoka, located above the entrance to the banqueting building, for those who want to shower the incoming wedding procession with flowers or confetti.

F&B

Under Executive Chef David Ansted, the kitchen is adept at turning out dishes from various cuisines and taking into account different dietary requirements. So, the taste buds of vegetarians, vegan and even the gluten intolerant will still be tickled by the variety of dishes being served. Before the wedding starts or maybe after the celebrations are over, make sure the bride and groom book a special Celebration Dinner, which is set overlooking the waters of Bambolim Bay.

Be spoilt for choice with seven brilliant, award-winning restaurants, bars and lounge that offer wide selection of authentic cuisines and flavours from across the globe. With multiple eateries, those looking to nosh are sure to find something that they can enjoy, with the fish curry and Goan fare high on most guests' lists.

ACCOMMODATION AND RECREATION FACILITIES

With the largest room inventory in all of Goa, the hotel's 313 rooms and suites are comfortable, modern and spacious, and are

well-equipped with all modern facilities and amenities to cater to the discerning tastes of today's travellers. Camp Hyatt, where kids can be kept entertained is a boon for parents, or those looking to make the most of all that hotel has to offer. The hotel has a special recreation team which organises team sports like cricket, football and volleyball, as well as individual games like Aqua Zorbing and Archery. There's an indoor and outdoor pool for complete rejuvenation, whether in private or under the sun, to ensure best of both worlds for leisure seekers.

SPA

Say goodbye to your daily stress as you indulge in the luxury spa oasis at The Shamana Spa, overlooking the calm waters of Bambolim Bay. The Shamana Spa is known to create tailored packages, especially for the bride and her bridesmaids, in addition to guests who just want to set up an appointment for a relaxing spa treatment.

With culture, cuisine, festivity and a collection of unique experiences, there's so much packed inside this luxurious resort that make it a top-notch holiday destination waiting to be discovered by you.





Bespoke Weddings

With large banqueting spaces, signature cuisines, specialised events team and world-class services, The Leela Ambience Gurugram is an ideal place for the big fat Indian Wedding

TT BUREAU

The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences is a world-class hotel with unmatched offerings to suit the needs of any social or business occasion. Located at the entrance of Gurugram, the hotel is at a very short distance from the Delhi International Airport. Part of a lifestyle complex, the hotel provides an easy

access to one of the best malls in the city catering to your last-minute shopping needs.

Strategically located, the hotel offers 411 rooms and suites with contemporary and traditional features, ready to redefine the comforts of modern, convenient living including all luxury amenities. With a total of 35,000sq.ft. of banqueting space,

the hotel is well-equipped to host any event with its flexible banqueting space, both indoors and outdoors. From an intimate gathering of 50 to 1,000 guests for a big fat Indian wedding, the hotel is ready to host any event ranging from a close-knit family affair to a gala celebration. The pillarless Ballroom, which can host up to 1,000 guests, is attached to a large open terrace for vedis and pre-function area, a perfect venue for elegant receptions and sophisticated weddings. The hotel also has its own separate exclusive entry for the baraat and special arrangements for sangeet and other related performances. The outdoor space, overlooking the Rajokri Greens, is another sought-after venue, which instantly adds on to the grandeur of the event.

For added services, the hotel is well-equipped with a spacious spa where the wedding entourage can pamper and calm their senses before the big day with signature treatments and therapies. The salon is a one-stop destination with a team of experts catering to the bridal needs keeping in mind the latest trends. No Indian wedding is complete without a great selection of cuisines. The hotel has award-winning restaurants and lounges, which offer innovative cuisines from across the world. From customised menus to themed spreads, the specialised event services team can cater to any demand owing to its expertise in food and beverage.

Not only is the events team well-equipped to cater to every need, it also aims to exceed your expectations by assisting you in every aspect of your wedding. The entire hotel team serve the guests with a unique essence of the true Indian hospitality, which the brand is known for. The hotel's team of empanelled décor vendors bring in their best to make the special occasion stand out with the latest trends and world-class services. Not to forget the bachelorette parties, for which Orbis, the hotel's lounge and bar, fully suits the requirement.



Commenting on the wedding segment, Jaideep Anand, General Manager, The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences, states, "The Indian wedding market is massive and on the rise. Today, weddings are no longer a family affair and a single-day event. Indian weddings are about pomp and show with every event standing out. There is also tremendous growth in destination weddings, guests are coming in from Dubai, Thailand, etc. to host their special day in India. The kind of queries and demands guests put across confirms that the segment has taken a 360-degree turn to what it was a decade back. It is imperative that the hotel also grows with the changing trends and influx of queries. The strength of The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences lies in its ability to make every wedding a bespoke affair to suit the likings of the discerning host, be it through its food and beverage offerings, accommodation options, personalised guest transportation and the salon services. For the hotel strongly believes in delivering the best, and with culinary skills and banqueting being its strength, The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences is an ideal place to take your vows."





CELEBRATE ON SAND & SURF

Get married in true Goan style and enjoy the romantic ambience of calm waters and white sands at Planet Hollywood Beach Resort

TT BUREAU

Located on Goa's unspoilt southern coast, Planet Hollywood Beach Resort is a 115-room and 15 luxury tent resort, situated on the white sands of pristine Uttorda Beach, in South Goa. The property is a tourist's paradise featuring elegant Goan style low-rise architecture, splendid landscapes, dramatic sculptures and gorgeous artwork. The most breathtaking features of this luxury beachfront hotel are its tropical gardens and the coconut orchard that span more than 10 acres.

With large indoor and outdoor banqueting facilities, Planet Hollywood Beach Resort Goa also serves as one of the most romantic destinations to tie the proverbial knot. It offers an array of services, including breathtaking sunset rituals and cocktail parties by the poolside. In addition, the property features a mix of eclectic boutiques, a fitness centre, spa, pools and Yoga retreats. The thriving party scene at the resort draws back guests to its gentle shores with the onset of each holiday season.

With uber-comfort and luxurious services, Planet Hollywood Beach Resort Goa replicates the same style as its sister property in Las Vegas, typically decorated with movie memorabilia, including props from famous films. Moreover, with a rich amalgamation of various international and Indian cuisines at its restaurants, Planet Hollywood Beach Resort Goa provides world-class dining options. A truly special occasion requires a truly special setting and excellent service. The team at Planet



Hollywood Beach Resort lives by this notion and understands how important it is for your day to be perfect and works seamlessly to ensure you have the wedding of your dreams. Whether you dreamt of a chic Paris theme for your special day or to incorporate your pheras with the spectacular sunset on the beach, Planet Hollywood's on-site experts will work with you or your wedding planner to make this dream come true. The team at Planet Hollywood Beach Resort Goa seamlessly plans your wedding itinerary, from menu design to the linen, and assists with other aspects of your wedding to create a one-of-a-kind experience for you and your significant other.



Kempinski Hotel
The Dome

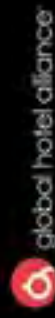
BELEK, TURKEY



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Kempinski
HOTELS SINCE 1897

SYMPHONY OF GRACE

A hallmark of efficiency and guest satisfaction, Pride Plaza Hotel Aerocity, Delhi is a traditionally luxurious and a truly Indian hotel

TT BUREAU



The Pride Plaza Hotel, standing tall in the heart of Aerocity, New Delhi, resonates true Indian hospitality by following the ideology of "Truly Indian, Traditionally Luxurious and Purely Pride".

The Pride Plaza Hotel Aerocity is the first luxury hotel in the capital by The Pride Group of Hotels. The beautiful hotel houses 385 majestically designed opulent rooms that are well-equipped with premium amenities and contemporary technology to serve the best for the comfort of the guests. Within a short span of time, the Pride Group has positioned itself as an eminently successful chain with fully owned hotels in Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata, Pune and Nagpur, and also manages hotels at Goa, Jaipur, Vadodara, Indore, Puri, Manali, McLeodganj and Rajkot.

The guests are welcomed to the beautiful vicinity of the hotel, with staff greeting them benevolently in time-honoured

traditions. The stunning paintings by Krsnaa Mehta, placed all over the hotel, give a resplendent, luxurious touch to the first impression of the hotel. The palatial rooms are decorated with the magnificent monumental images of India. The most striking aspect of the lovely images, highlighting the beauty of the country, is that they are absolutely authentic.

FIVE SENSES PROGRAMME

Being a quintessential traditional hotel, the Pride Plaza Hotel Aerocity offers its guests a host of opportunities to feel at home and relish the true Indian treat in the form of homemade jams, pickles, conventional chaats in buffet, the relaxing welcome drink, tamarind candies, hot water bottles, amongst many others. All these features are a part of the fabulous Five Senses programme, to ensure that the hotel marks an everlasting impression in the lives of its guests.

In order to achieve complete guest satisfaction, the Pride Plaza Hotel Aerocity has also initiated a guest-centric system, where every team member is well-trained to meet a guest's expectation and contribute to creating a lasting impression. All external and internal calls are received at the Pride Services desk for centralised and smooth communication.

WEDDINGS

Spread over 12,000sq.ft, the hotel has multiple banqueting spaces ideal for weddings, seminars or meetings, classy and elegantly designed with high ceilings and a sprawling of pre-function areas. The banquet halls fall under three seating categories – Theatre, Floating, and Cluster style – each having a different people capacity. These banquet halls are suitable for an intimate pre-wedding function to a royal and grand big fat Indian wedding. The in-house catering team at Pride Plaza Hotel Aerocity is known for its exquisite F&B style and can whip up some amazing delicacies as per your taste buds. The in-house decor team at the hotel adds that extra oomph factor to the venue look to make your dream wedding come true. There are several decor packages available at request.

F&B OFFERINGS

The host of dining options available at the hotel are a paradise for food lovers, who wish to experience the refinement of bona fide Asian recipes or relish the aromatic flavours of cosmopolitan cuisine. Indulge in fine gourmet meals at – Café Pride, the 24-hour dining restaurant; Aqua Grill, the seasonal poolside barbeque restaurant; Oriental Spice, the Pan-Asian restaurant; and Mr. Confectioner, the patisserie which offers an array of confectionaries and bakery products. Designed in an enticing décor, the lounge bar, Stallion, lets you unwind after a long day



with refreshing cocktails, mocktails and world-class beverages. Need a dose of tranquillity and relaxation? Head over to Spa, the wellness centre, for specialised treatments and therapies, with a fully-equipped fitness centre.

The Pride Plaza Hotel Aerocity, with all its eminent features from Five Senses programme to the One Point Contact programme, all together contribute to making it a traditionally luxurious and a truly Indian hotel.





HAPPILY EVER AFTER

Feel welcome to host your events and weddings at Ibiza The Fern Resort & Spa, Kolkata, which offers a bouquet of services and facilities to make your special day a unique affair

TT BUREAU

Spread over 20 acres, Ibiza The Fern Resort & Spa, Kolkata is a perfect mix of a place where luxury meets nature effortlessly. As you enter through a large driveway, you will find swaying palm trees on your left and a water fountain in the driveway offering a refreshing change from the humdrum of city life. The resort boasts having 120 guestrooms in different categories, one large banquet hall, two conference halls, one boardroom, a Mediterranean-themed multicuisine restaurant, sports bar, huge swimming pool with large deck area for pool party, discotheque, lake with an island, multiple beautifully landscaped lawns of different sizes to fit all occasions, a Western spa, numerous indoor and outdoor sports and adventure facilities.

Ibiza The Fern Resort & Spa, Kolkata is the first choice in Eastern India for luxurious destination weddings and all sorts of gala social events like anniversaries, birthdays, bachelor parties, and so on – you think of it and the team at the resort puts in every single effort to make your dream come true. Here, be assured to receive the best of services and facilities at a reasonable price tag. The Mediterranean-themed resort

gives you a feeling of being in Europe amidst natural beauty to quench your thirst for greenery.

The resort allows guests to bring their own caterer or they can take food from the resort – flexibility is the mantra at Ibiza The Fern Resort & Spa, Kolkata. Parking facility for more than 500 cars is an icing on the cake. If you are planning for your destination wedding, look no further. Ibiza The Fern Resort & Spa, Kolkata offers you all the services and facilities in one basket, so that you don't have to go anywhere further to make your elusive dream wedding come true.





AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER

Amanora The Fern Hotel & Club, Pune is a world of immersive experiences, be it for events, soirees, or weddings

TT BUREAU

Located at merely 8km from Pune Airport in Magarpatta City township, Amanora The Fern Hotel & Club, Pune is the pinnacle of premium hotels and clubs in Pune. Well-connected to key business, entertainment and leisure hubs of the city, the Hotel & Club offers top-notch facilities, making it the ideal destination for events and luxury stays for corporate and leisure travellers. The club features two full-size banquet halls of 7,000 and 5,000sq.ft, with 3,500 people capacity, open-air amphitheatre and lawn, which are the perfect venues to host weddings, parties, receptions and special occasions. With state-of-the-art comfort and custom-curated dining options, you can rest assured that your event will get its well-deserved Page 3 mention.

For your guests, the Hotel & Club has luxurious rooms with dedicated and cordial room services. Come, celebrate in grand style, as your peers idolise you and the paparazzi yearn for a photo-op. The club is all geared up for your big day!! The Hotel & Club has won many awards for being a great Wedding and MICE destination.

Achieve peak fitness levels at the club's world-class 7,000sq.ft. gymnasium. Do away with your daily stress at the 5,000sq.ft. spa facility that is based on the concept of five senses. The salon is dedicated to help guests rediscover inner peace and connect with the four elements – Water, Air, Earth and Fire. Expect modern

exposure in terms of service, style, well-being and serenity, nestled in a contemporary, cozy and intimate atmosphere. The spa will rejuvenate your mind and soothe your senses by using the most renowned products for its services. The Hotel & Club also comes with a 3,600sq. ft. business centre, 89-seater theatre, swimming pool, roof-top tennis court and squash court. In a nutshell, the Hotel & Club is your world of indulgent luxury, to let you fill your leisure time with pursuits and activities close to your heart. Showered with attention, pampered with comforts and open only for the chosen few, it is a status symbol everyone would love to flaunt, but only a few deserve to.



A GRAND AFFAIR

Well-known for its MICE facilities, Grand Hyatt Kochi Bolgatty celebrates one year of exemplary service

ARJUN GILL

The Grand Hyatt Kochi Bolgatty and The Lulu Bolgatty International Convention Centre celebrated their 1st anniversary on 29 April 2019. The luxury waterfront hotel is fast emerging as one of the most popular hotels among domestic and international travellers for its impeccable service and excellence in guest experiences. The Lulu Bolgatty International Convention Centre, adjacent to the hotel has more than 100,000 sq.ft. of indoor and outdoor meeting space. It has contributed significantly to the rise of MICE and leisure tourism in South India in general and Kerala in particular. In the span of one year, the hotel has hosted over 250 MICE events and 200 weddings and social events. It is noteworthy that 50

per cent of these events included corporate incentive groups, 20 per cent association events, while Business conclaves and exhibitions constituted 15 per cent.

Speaking on the occasion, Shrikant Wakharkar, General Manager of Grand Hyatt Kochi Bolgatty, said, "The past year has been exceptional and we are proud to be at the forefront of Tourism and Hospitality in Kerala. The city will be seeing more national and international events and conventions in the coming months."

The hotel has hosted some of the most prestigious events and conventions in the region, including the largest ever event – APICON – that had 9,000 delegates per day, for four days; Australian World Orchestra (AWO); Indian Ocean Naval Symposium and the World Advertising Congress.

Since its opening last year, Grand Hyatt Kochi Bolgatty has received many awards and honours. The most prestigious ones being Favorite Leisure Hotel by Conde Nast Traveller Readers' Travel Awards 2018, Best Wedding Hotel - South India 2018 and Best New Convention Centre - South India, 2018 by India MICE Award and Best Luxurious Spa (Resorts) by Global Spa Awards 2018.





INTIMATE INTERLUDES

For those desiring to tie the knot in a grand way, Hyatt Place Gurgaon is one of the finest wedding venues where dreams turn into reality

TT BUREAU

Hyatt Place Gurgaon, located in the heart of Gurgaon offers venues with an inviting ambience which make guests feel welcome. Personalised and uncomplicated services for all events are what sets the hotel apart. Hyatt Place Gurgaon features a total of 176 spacious and comfortable guestrooms measuring 30 square meter each along with a team of dedicated staff to take care of every need. From tastefully decorated ambience to an open-air lush green courtyard, Hyatt Place Gurgaon has lot to offer.

For your once-in-a-lifetime moment, the Chef team and the dedicated Events team take pleasure in designing customised menus and venue setups to meet your needs and deliver an unforgettable experience.

Apart from being a preferred wedding venue, Hyatt Place Gurgaon is a great place to spend leisure time with friends and family. Gallery Café, the hotel's spectacular multi-cuisine restaurant, serves delectable Indian, Western and Asian cuisines for a great dining experience, and expert bartenders at Coffee To Cocktails Bar mix up signature cocktails.



The property offers you a place for even the smallest affairs as its elegant meeting spaces have all the modern conveniences one needs for any kind of corporate/board meetings, social gatherings or private parties. Additionally, this property boasts an outdoor pool for guests to relax on the deck chairs by the poolside that offers an indelible impression on your mind.

Knotty Affairs

Feel the enchantment as you turn your dream wedding fantasy into a lifetime of happy memories with The Leela Mumbai

TT BUREAU

The city of Mumbai offers an ideal setting for a sublime exchange of vows and a dive into an all-night celebration. It is a perfect stage for a big fat wedding. Set amidst 11 acres of lush landscaped gardens, cascading waterfalls and a lotus fountain, The Leela Mumbai is lauded as one of the finest 5-Star hotels in Mumbai. A convenient 5-minute drive from the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport and 15-minute drive from the domestic airport, The Leela Mumbai is an oasis of greenery in the heart of Mumbai's commercial district. Contemporary comfort and functionality blend with extravagant opulence, inspired by India's rich history, make it an ideal wedding destination. This luxury hotel with its beautiful landscape, convenient location, versatile and multifunctional banqueting space, luxurious rooms, cutting-edge services, specialty restaurants, warm hospitality and

classic architecture promise to make your wedding celebrations wonderfully unique and truly distinctive.

THE GRAND BALLROOM

Whether you are planning a lavish wedding or a small intimate affair, The Leela Mumbai offers you a choice of venues to select from. The 12,000sq.ft. Grand Ballroom can cater to a traditional Indian wedding with 1,000 guests. This column-free ballroom can also be divided into five smaller function areas for events like mehndi and sangeet. Wooden panelling, Murano glass leaf chandeliers from Vienna, and plush wall-to-wall carpeting give the Grand Ballroom a regal touch. Well-equipped with state-of-the-art technology and a dedicated entrance ideal for traditional weddings, the ballroom can be seamlessly transformed to meet your varied needs.





THE EXPERIENCED STAFF

Weddings at The Leela Mumbai come with a liberal sprinkling of blissful fairytales. The hotel's experienced planners and staff ardently take over the planning of every minute detail and turn all your fantasies into a beautiful reality. From effortlessly transforming the spaces into stunning settings, to floral arrangements and custom-crafted menus and décor, the team has an eye for detail.

The expert chefs are adept at whipping up delectable cuisines and creating special wedding cakes. The menu promises to be a gala affair with specialised regional food, Continental, Mediterranean and Pan-Asian delights. With themed parties, engaging environment and entertaining props, your wedding will be one regal affair crafted with moments to savour and memories to cherish.

ROOMS AND SUITES

The Leela Mumbai offers bespoke experiences, distinctive spa sojourns, signature culinary delights, and a world of sophisticated luxury, and is an ideal place for the newlywed couple to unwind after the wedding celebrations. This sprawling property has 391 well-appointed rooms and suites to meet every mood and taste.



At The Leela Mumbai, experience the hallmark of timeless traditions and personalised service by opting for the suites. Traditional elegance combined with stunning design fill up the suites with effortless royal charm.

F&B OFFERINGS

With a host of specialty restaurants, The Leela Mumbai promises to expose you to unique gastronomical experiences. Enjoy an intimate dining experience at Le Cirque Signature, the fine dining Franco-Italian restaurant; or dine under the stars and enjoy balmy evenings by the poolside, sipping on your favourite drink at Six Degrees – the hotel's cosmopolitan bar. Make your way to the hotel's signature Indian restaurant Jamavar for a royal treat.

OTHER SERVICES AND AMENITIES

That's not all, this oasis of luxury offers many other amenities and services to ensure that the bridal couple and the guests have a time of their life with state-of-the art Spa with a special couple treatment room, beauty salon which specialises in bridal make up, and special rates on transportation, rooms, honeymoon suites, spa and salon services, to name a few.



The Leela Mumbai with its beautiful landscape and inimitable offerings promises a once-in-a-lifetime wedding experience full of love and captivating moments.

MEMORIES ARE MADE HERE

ITC Grand Goa Resort & Spa, with direct access to the pristine Arossim Beach, provides all the ingredients for an intimate wedding affair

TT BUREAU

Goa is one of the perfect and favoured destinations of couples ready to exchange vows, thanks to its beautiful sandy beaches, scenic views, exotic local cuisine and resorts along the coastline. Set amidst lush 45 acres of landscaped gardens, swaying coconut palms and shimmering lagoons, ITC Grand Goa Resort & Spa recreates the magnificence of Indo-Portuguese architecture against the backdrop of the pristine Arossim Beach.

CONVENTION FACILITIES

The ITC Grand Goa Resort & Spa offers elegant spaces that provide you an ideal setting for every occasion. The resort offers nine flexible indoor and outdoor function spaces. Salcete

is a majestic wood-panelled ballroom that can be divided into three separate sections, with theatre-style seating of up to 370 people. Colva and Loutolim are two separate event spaces with sophisticated ambience, which can accommodate up to 100 guests when combined. Spacious Benaulim has a distinct air of exclusivity that is perfect for small events and is ideal for hosting 30 people.

Cansaulim Room is conveniently located near the lobby and can accommodate up to 40 people. Magical Forest is a tropical garden surrounded by old pine trees and can host 400 people, while the beautiful Seaside Lawns spoil the couple for choice and can accommodate up to 750 people. Boathouse is an enchanting venue overlooking shimmering lagoons that can host up to 25 people.



F&B OFFERINGS

At ITC Grand Goa Resort & Spa, relish exceptional dining experiences at its 6 signature food & beverage destinations.

- ✦ **At Pavilion at the Village Square** treat your senses to the finest Indian and International fare in an ambience reminiscent of a casual street side café.
- ✦ **At Kebabs & Kurries** indulge in heritage cuisine fine-tuned through years of research by the celebrated chefs in a warm luxurious setting.
- ✦ **At Ottimo Cucina Italiana** treat your taste buds to specialties like wood-fired pizzas, artisanal pastas, endless selections of antipasti, delectable cheeses and more, in the rustic ambience of this Italian restaurant.
- ✦ **At Tempero** enjoy signature Goan delicacies by taking a culinary journey with indigenous recipes, traditional dishes and signature masterpieces on offer, in a décor resembling a colonial mansion.
- ✦ **At The Royal Afghan** feast on the charcoal-grilled flavours of the rugged North-West Frontier while soaking up the breathtaking views of the Arabian Sea from the pristine shores of Arossim Beach.
- ✦ Spread over two floors and commanding a stunning view of the sea, **Farol** is the perfect place to revel in a glorious sunset while sipping your favourite beverage.

OTHER SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The ITC Grand Goa Resort & Spa is the ultimate destination due to its mesmerising sunsets and tailor-made setups. The 252 rooms and suites can host your wedding guests effortlessly and turn your dream wedding into a reality. The dedicated events team will guide you through a personalised experience right from selecting your finest venues to bespoke food menus crafted by the MasterChef's of ITC Hotels.

The separate check-in section for wedding parties is a unique welcome experience available to the to-be-wed



couples. There have been memorable banquets with gourmet dining, grand layouts and personalised services, promising a celebration drenched in Goan culture.

Recently, many intriguing themes have been witnessed at the ITC Grand Goa Resort & Spa, such as the Goan Carnival, Casino Night, Cinderella & Fairytale, Royal Prince and Princess, Beach Bliss, Monsoon Magic and many more. Bachelor and Bachelorette parties/ Sangeet and dance events, leading to the wedding, have gained tremendous popularity here. ITC Hotels' signature concierge services play a crucial role in enabling these weddings.

This year, the hotel plans to organise more than 20 weddings which will contribute to its total revenue from the destination wedding segment.



WEDDING STORY



Integral to the Indian way of life, weddings remain a cornerstone of family tradition and lifestyle. It has always been a reflection of shifting societal values...as true to the times then...as now

KAMAL GILL

It's not called the big fat Indian wedding for nothing. The wheels of commercialisation have always been in place, albeit in a more discreet manner a couple of generations ago. Today's India has taken a leap of faith by crossing the Rubicon of heavy tradition and marrying it with a new-found elan. This in-your-face attitude, in turn, has greased the heavyweight spoke of ceremonial celebrations to an altogether new level. The new level brings new role models into play, although the traditional format of weddings as an occasion, which is the most celebrated and important lifetime event for families, holds good.

What's changed is the scale at which the planning and execution is made... it's the stuff dreams and legends are made of. It's also the bottom line of an evolving industry in what is now considered as one of the world's largest wedding markets.



Photo Courtesy:
The Leela Hotels, Palaces & Resorts

MAKING DREAMS COME TRUE

Across all income brackets, weddings continue to consume the maximum savings and spend. It is estimated that, the average Indian will spend 20% of total wealth earned at the time of the wedding on functions, needs, or wedding-related items.

The wedding business in India, according to KPMG, is worth \$40 billion, and growing by 20 per cent per year.

Statistics point to the fact that the Indian wedding industry is the second-largest in the world, just behind the U.S. market. The total value of the Indian industry is an estimated \$50 billion, compared to the \$70 billion in the United States. As an interesting aside, the UK, has an estimated 1.4 million people of Indian descent, who, in turn, create a supplemental wedding industry that is valued at GBP 12 billion.

According to inputs from wedding professionals, even by modest estimates, the size of the wedding market is as high as Rs 50,000 crore. For many analysts, the fact that the average number of weddings is more than 10 million in India each year, suggests that the Indian wedding industry can be categorised as recession-proof.

While the figures are not fully substantiated, there are estimates that big-ticket weddings with combined budgets of Rs. 60 million in metro cities account for around 20% of the marriage service market.

NEW WEDDING TRENDS

While the spend on weddings continues unabated, what is noteworthy is the mindset change that is reflected in spending patterns and planning, which are undergoing a sea-change. Weddings are becoming more creative, with personal choices, outsourcing to luxury hotels and wedding planners and popular trends like destination weddings creating important niches.

It is estimated that the Indian destination wedding industry is expected to reach a market size of INR 45,000 Cr by 2020, with a projected annual growth rate of 25-30%. Factors such as the rise of the middle class, a booming economy and celebrity endorsements — amply stirred by social media-induced aspirations — have contributed to this growth.

Mandeep Lamba, President - South Asia, HVS ANAROCK, shares, "Destination weddings have also given a major shot in the arm to wedding planners, banquet organisers and wedding apparel designers – who, in any case, had little to complain about in a country where all stops are pulled out for weddings. However, the biggest beneficiary of the growing destination weddings trend is the hospitality sector."

Lamba adds, "In India, people are often willing to spend almost a third of their life savings on weddings. Fed on a steady social and even mainstream media diet of opulent celebrity weddings, Indian millennials are more than eager to invest in 'curated weddings' and will choose the most exotic locales they can afford to celebrate their big day."

As per HVS ANAROCK data, 2018 saw the Indian hotel industry witness a country-wide RevPAR growth of 9.6% over 2017, to arrive at an absolute RevPAR of 3,927. In 2019, the RevPAR is expected to see 9.5% growth, with demand finally outpacing supply. Data also indicates that the period between 2014 and 2018 witnessed an upsurge in transaction volumes of approx. INR 64.4 bn – the previous peak being in 2015 at about INR 19.9 bn.

HITTING THE LIMELIGHT

With destination weddings becoming the rage, the sumptuous weddings services market has taken an explosive leap of fancy, with beaches, palaces and chapels, castles and parks being selected as venues and the wedding setup as distinctive as the list of celebrity performers and guests.



Although India is home to an astounding variety of wedding ceremonies, certain common functions are the Engagement, the Mehendi function, the Haldi ceremony, the Sangeet, the rituals of the wedding ceremony itself and the grand Reception.

New technology giants are offering their services for high-end video projection, while helicopter services are being pressed into service to lower the groom onto the mandap with flower petal showers to wedding artists creating mind-boggling mile-high chandeliers, floating mandaps in a Vienna lake, and the like. Wedding planners undertake turnkey projects, tailor-made experiences, curated themes from environment-friendly to colour-themed to royalty and so on.

Traditionally, wedding planners functioned as mom and pop shops, with word-of-mouth reputation being relied on. However the market has developed substantially over the last few years with organised players stepping in and the market getting accountable. The Ferns N Petals and KWAN collaboration,

for instance, heralds a step up with two professionally run companies offering high-end wedding planning with great entertainment.

Talented wedding planners and even international players are creating niche events and as the weddings service market continues to expand, the growth graph is taking a high curve. The 'wedding planning' market in India is expected to hit Rs 1.6 trillion by the year 2020. Many wedding planners have begun to charge up to 15% of the wedding budget as their consultation fee.

A Franchise India report puts the Indian wedding market growth curve at 25 to 30 per cent annually with an average cost of a wedding anywhere between Rs 5 lakh and Rs 5 crore.

With half of India's population being under 29 years of age, the marriage market is obviously looking at a boom over the next five to ten years, the report noted.

Betting big to tap a substantial portion of the flourishing wedding market is the global wedding portal Zank You which is set to make a foray into India. Headquartered in Spain, Zank You, as a premier wedding registry and reference platform will provide information and access to wedding vendors and venues in India and overseas.

"India being one of the largest wedding markets witnesses almost 10 million weddings per year and it's not an option for players like us to not be present in such a burgeoning market," Zank You co-founder and CEO Guillermo Fernandez Riba told PTI.

THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL

Would you fly down chefs from Dubai to set up Arabic counters? Perhaps kebabs from Lucknow, Biryani from Hyderabad, Jalebis from Old Delhi, Pethas from Agra?

How about a fly-past? A helicopter flower shower? Jennifer Lopez to set the stage on fire? Wedding planners charge top dollars to create the mood, the scene and the sequence exactly as the client might have dreamt it.

Entire hotel inventories on exclusive islands in Greece or a wedding party of 500 guests to China or Azerbaijan or booking an entire cruise ship and decorating the harbour when guests alight as well as creating mega themed (Jaipur in Mumbai or Rome in Delhi) city sets is how big-ticket planners make a reputation..not to mention a fortune.

Costs start at Rs 1 crore with obviously no upper limit as planning, production and execution take several months to complete. The logistics need an army of expert personnel to handle, say a fleet of 500 cars or 50 chefs or 209 entertainment artistes, green rooms, stage, lighting and all the technology back up that money can buy.

Clients for this kind of market are high net worth individuals (HNIs), for whom the wedding presents an opportunity to showcase influence, wealth, stature and spending power.

HONEYMOON FEVER

If the wedding market was not enough, it's the Indian honeymoon market that is showing a 20-25% growth particularly in the outbound segment. New trends reveal that newly-wed couples want to splurge top dollars for experiences and opt for long-duration stays.

Budget allocations for honeymoon vacations are generous as families treat honeymoon spend as part of the wedding budget. Honeymoon budgets range from Rs 75,000-Rs 1,00,000 per couple for a week for an Indian destination to Rs 5-10 lakh per couple for a week for an outbound destination.

Factors driving the outbound honeymoon segment are a demand for novel experiences and unconventional destinations ...to spark conversations, post on social media and get a bigger bang for their buck.



Photo Courtesy: IHCL

WEDDING TRENDS IN VOUGE



Photo Courtesy: IHCL

FOR G.O.T LIKE EXPERIENCES

Birju C Gariba, CEO & Exec Director, Platinum Incentives & Events (P) Ltd

Hosting a destination wedding is like a two-edged sword, wherein it drives large group gatherings for the wedding and generates additional revenues from guests who stay over to enjoy the same destination or a different one. Active engagement of the Tourism Board, special status & benefit for hosting weddings, demonstrating stellar support of immigration, customs, & several other requirements of weddings are a few things that can instantly help. In the last few years, we saw a lot of Game of Thrones inspired themes, to evergreen The Great Gatsby theme and Bahubali / Padmavat inspired themes in Indian wedding scenario. Our Weddings Division plays an active role in contributing towards our market share, which has risen to be at about 25% of our total revenues. An active Social Media engagement and having a Bollywood celebrity, a cricket personality or a corporate tycoon to host the weddings are the fastest means to capitalise on this growing trend. Movies, TV/Flix Series, Locations, Broadways, Colours & Festivals have always been a source of great inspirations for themes. We also saw the colours of Tiffany and design elements come alive but the year belonged to abstract floral work and one of the most amazing Cherry Blossom Theme.

LEAVE THE ORDINARY BEHIND

Sanjeev K Nayar, General Manager, WelcomHeritage

Indian weddings are known to be lavish and grand with larger-than-life celebrations. With more aspiring Indian travellers having growing spending propensity, this trend is further expanding with the choice of unique destinations.

Palace Weddings offer royal and magnificent experiences for couples as well as guests attending the weddings. WelcomHeritage has a range of properties which offer a unique experience of royalty mingled with a splendour which is not seen in conventional city hotels.

According to a report by New World Wealth, India was home to around 2,36,000 High Net Worth individuals (HNWIs) in 2015 and this number is set to grow by 135 per cent to reach around 5,54,000 by 2025. It is no wonder then that National Tourist Offices (NTOs) have been promoting themselves for destination weddings bearing in mind that the market is one that can afford the extravaganza.

Currently, the industry is over Rs 100,000 crore and is growing at 25-30 per cent annually. The estimated cost of a wedding with no expenses spared could be between Rs 5 lakh to Rs 5 crore, in India. It is believed that a family in India, spends one fifth of the wealth accumulated in a lifetime on a wedding ceremony. Considering the fact that majority of India's population is under

29 years of age, the marriage market is set to boom like never before over the next five to ten years.

Understanding the factor that Indians are seeking exclusive factor in making their wedding unique, Hotels are now aggressively promoting themselves as wedding destinations in India and the foreign tourism promotion boards are also aggressively eyeing this market by offering lucrative deals.

Weddings not only bring in revenue from the ceremony and party, these events bring in revenue to the entire asset. Food and beverage, retail, spa, group bookings, and more, are all areas of revenue weddings feed into. The taste of new age love birds is changing they are looking towards weddings in leisure and off beat destinations.

TURKEY: THE WEDDING PLAYGROUND OF THE RICH

H. Deniz Ersoz, Culture & Tourism Counsellor, Embassy Of The Republic Of Turkey

Destination weddings are a great way to explore various cultures and cities around the world. Once the wedding is over people like to extend their stay. For capitalizing this growing trend, travel businesses and wedding planners need to have thorough information about the destination and what it offers to the client. For instance, Antalya and Bodrum offers all inclusive facility,

therefore destination weddings are not expensive, unless of course you want it to be, with fewer guest list and complete package from start to finish, destination wedding is pretty light on your pocket as compared to regular weddings. The wedding market is huge. Last year we had 15 Indian wedding in Turkey and this year we are going to have 30 Indian weddings approximately. By the end of 2023 we are aiming to host 100 Indian weddings every year.

Turkey hosted 46 million tourists globally in 2018 out of which Antalya hosted 13 million and Istanbul hosted 12 million tourists.

With the growing trend of theme weddings, Turkey has a lot to offer and has also witnessed some Indian theme weddings, such as entrance of the bride and groom in a hot air balloon for their sangeet ceremony, Cappadocia has a lunar landscape; in that sense it is 100% guaranteed that you will have one kind of wedding pictures if you are getting married in Cappadocia. Other themes such as, winter wonderland, sailing through the Bosphorus in a private yacht with a splendid backdrop, or indulging in a fascinating palace wedding in Istanbul, retro theme and a laidback beach party in beautiful Antalya and Bodrum seaside location in Turkey, divine bays of blue water caressing creamy sand beaches with towns perched on the cliff tops.



Photo Courtesy: IHCL

MALAYSIA: THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER DESTINATION

Mohd. Hafiz Hashim, Director, India, Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, Mumbai

Travelling to a special destination to get married has become a trend in vogue with today's modern couples. Destination weddings are not just about the wedding couple, but often, it also involves the couple's family members and guests too. It's been observed that Malaysia is a popular wedding destination, and couples often have a theme such as a beach or lakeside wedding or getting married in the mountains or caves. Tourism Malaysia is promoting many themes and locations that could provide inspiring ideas to take their wedding photos or get married in Malaysia. These themes include Forest fantasy; Glorious gardens and lovely lakes; Idyllic islands and beaches; Under water; Majestic mountains and Mysterious caves.

Tourism Malaysia has been aggressively participating and promoting this segment through trade shows, seminars and exhibitions. We are now trying to increase our share in this segment which currently has under 5% of total share from tourist arrivals to Malaysia. Especially in India, where this segment is growing and we are trying to tap the segment as we have all the needs to cater for the Indian wedding. An Indian family needs an infrastructure. For a 600-people wedding, you will need 300-350 rooms at one location. Malaysia has such properties that host more than 1,000 people easily. Generally, hotels in Malaysia are quite flexible by allowing special care of arranging their own chefs, assist in custom clearance, etc.

THAILAND: YOUR WEDDING SPECIALIST!

Pinki Arora, Marketing Representative North & East India, Bangladesh & Nepal, Tourism Authority of Thailand

Amazing Thailand is well-known as 'A Dream Wedding Destination' and has always been one of the most popular destinations for the grand Indian wedding. The choice for a wedding in Thailand ranges from pristine beaches of Khao Lak, Koh Samui, Phuket, Krabi, Pattaya, Rayong and Hua Hin, to lush green mountains of Chiang Mai and Khao Yai or a city and riverside wedding in Bangkok that has world-class hotels and convention centres.

Over 400 Indian couples tie the knot in Thailand every year, with average number of guests ranging from approximately 200 to 500.

Thailand is a popular choice for Indian weddings because of factors like proximity to India; beautiful locales, value for money destination, world-class hotels, variety of Cuisines from in house chef to catering services or even brings your own chef!; modern excellence combined

with traditional details and because we serve all wedding needs. All this combined with reasonable pricing option and warm Thai Hospitality and the "Can Do" mind set of Thai people makes Thailand the ideal location for celebrating these special occasions.

To further promote Indian wedding celebrations in various destinations of Thailand, TAT New Delhi has launched a one-stop website for all things related to Thailand as a wedding celebration destination: E-training given to the Wedding Planners through www.myweddinginthailand.com.

TAT New Delhi has created a website to provide couples, wedding organisers, and travel agents in India with useful information to help plan the perfect Indian wedding celebration in Thailand. For couples, there is a detailed step-by-step plan on how to plan their wedding – right from the moment they decide Thailand as their preferred destination.

For event organizers or travel agents, this website includes a section where they can register their business, take a quiz and receive a "Wedding Specialist" certificate from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) New Delhi. Apart from this, to promote weddings in Thailand, TAT is offering incentive to wedding planner to encourage them to organize more weddings celebrations in Thailand. Thailand was the first country to market and promote the destination for Indian weddings. We have been very successful and now around 400 Indian weddings are held in Thailand every year.

RHG: A CLASS APART

Zubin Saxena, Managing Director & Vice President Operations, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group

It is estimated that the Indian wedding market is the second largest in the world and is growing at an annual rate of about 20 percent. This naturally makes it a highly attractive sector. At Radisson Hotel Group, we are focussed on creating unsurpassed wedding experiences for every couple.

Radisson Hotel Group has hosted weddings in a wide variety of stunning destinations, including some of India's most romantic settings, from the snowy mountains of Himalayas to the backwaters of Kerala, historic and cultural cities like Udaipur, Jaipur and Jodhpur, and beachfront weddings in Goa.

Our menus and themes have captivated our customers and created some truly spectacular occasions. We have hosted weddings based on the culture of each destination, as well as some more niche events based on Bollywood theme, beach theme, or biker theme. Every wedding is tailored according to the specific needs of each couple, including the décor, catering and more.

We need to focus on delivering services that resonate with wedding traditions, incorporating local accents and highlights which accentuate the destination, enhancing value derived from the destination. Wedding packages must be developed and promoted, including the effective use of online channels and third-party media, such as wedding magazines, blogs and



Photo Courtesy: Plush Events & Weddings

websites. We also need to develop strong partnerships and collaborations with event planners and suppliers to create an end-to-end service for all wedding planners, from pre-wedding arrangements and photo shoots to grand wedding celebrations and honeymoons. Every wedding guest is also a potential future customer and a source of word-of-mouth recommendations, so it's important to keep every guest happy.

Overall, weddings and banquets contribute a significant amount to our revenues.

YOUR PARTNER IN BLISS!

JB Singh, President & CEO, Interglobe Hotels

Destination weddings in India have seen a strong growth in recent years. According to the Wedding Tourism Report by MRSS India, the wedding market in India is currently pegged at INR 1,10,000 crore, out of which around INR 23,438 crore can be attributed to destination weddings. In addition to this, this figure is expected to double at a staggering rate to INR 45,000 crore by the end of 2020, growing at 25-30% annually.

Wedding travellers usually camp in a location for close to 3 nights and wedding planners make arrangements for the guests to explore the local destination through guided tours, meals at prominent eateries, exclusive local experiences and other activities. Wedding destinations support the local economy well, and we believe this sector is primed for growth in the coming years.

Cities like Jaipur, Kochi, Nashik and Coimbatore are some popular destination wedding locations in our portfolio of hotels which are well-equipped to have supporting wedding functions and have helped us generate good room night demand during the wedding season. Even our hotels in Tier-I Markets have been able to tap into this demand like in Mumbai, Gurgaon, Hyderabad, and Kolkata.

Key measures needed to ensure hotels can capture and benefit from this segment are, of course, the hotel's ability to be flexible for wedding groups. Wedding groups have large volumes and in some of our hotels, we have the ability to accommodate triple occupancy for wedding groups and we also work towards ensuring privacy for the groups by blocking

complete floors for them. Important members of the family and friends can also enjoy an upgrade to rooms with extra benefits.

Our new hotels are coming up with larger meeting spaces to cater to growing needs for MICE. In fact our latest hotel in Kolkata has one of the largest meeting spaces in the whole portfolio with around 2,457sq.ft. of event space.

Our hotels in Coimbatore, Kochi and Jaipur get close to 20-25 percent of their revenue from wedding groups during peak months. Our hotel in Mumbai sold close to 1000 room nights alone last month due to large wedding gatherings in the city. Going forward, our hotels will continue to monitor more such wedding groups as they are close to 60-80 wedding event dates a year and we see this as an important segment.

FOR TAILORED EXPERIENCES

Sumit S. Parasrampuriya, Founder, A More Entertainment

Recently, we organised a wedding wherein the bride, an Indian NRI, and the groom, a Spanish resident, had invited their friends and family to attend their tailor-made 2-day extravagant wedding event in Goa. We had guests flown from

Photo Courtesy:
Diksha Arya/Unsplash.com

*Weddings
Are trending
Brides bewitch
No more in Greenwich
It's all bets
On Bollywood sets
Goa for the ceremony
A beach party for the memory
Or Italy and France
For the pheras and dance*



Photo Courtesy:
Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)



Photo Courtesy: Atisuto Events

across the globe – Italy, Spain, Germany, USA, Singapore, Kenya, Uganda, UK and Hong Kong. We designed an exceptional wedding logo for the couple, provided customised wedding luggage tag to ease the luggage transfers at the hotel, prepared unique and stylish itinerary ‘Passport’ for every guest, which had the 2-day schedule along with a special message from the bride and groom’s parents. A customised cabana with floral décor was made especially for this occasion. The couple exchanged the rings followed by the Varmala ceremony in front of a customised floral backdrop.

Nowadays, the primary trend in Indian weddings is to modernise without disregarding time-honoured traditions. Spending has shifted from Jewellery, which may never be worn again, to trips that everyone can enjoy in a destination wedding. Spending on wedding is not a new thing in India. But what is changing is, it is getting more organised and professional, thus creating a new set of opportunities and professionals.

ATISUTO: THE TRENDSETTER

Sabah Shaikh, Founder & Creative Director, Atisuto Events

The size of the wedding market is growing every year. Currently, people are spending huge amounts on styling and décor for their wedding ceremonies. Without skimping on costs, weddings are now becoming smaller in size and more personal. Two years from now, people are going to spend more money on destination wedding, personalised décor, styling etc. The graph is on an all-time high in the wedding market.

New ideas and themes feature every season. A trend this season is “eco friendly” weddings, with mandaps made up of green foliage and flowers. Many of the giveaways are succulents or small plants with quirky tags on it. Minimal is the new trend, many couples are going for minimal setups at lavish venues, keeping their weddings very personalised. Another trend doing the rounds is neon signages, with various quotes or the couple’s initials. Couples are going for easy trends like boho picnics or boho decorations for their mehendi ceremony or other festivities. Along with this, pastel colours are making it high on

the list of the couples, who want simple but yet bold element at their functions. Many a times trends can be recurrent, as every few years down the line, themes come back into fashion creating a new hype.

HYATT: FOR DESIGNER WEDDINGS

Harleen Mehta, Vice President, Sales Operations India, Hyatt Hotels

In India, weddings have always been lavish and larger-than-life celebrations. The concept of destination weddings is gaining huge traction and is inevitably turning into a great pull for tourism as it helps showcase the food, culture, traditions and various other nuances of the region.

Location plays a key role in deciding a destination wedding. However, flexibility and building attractive and tailor-made unique experiences play an equally important part in attracting customers today. Couples prefer arranging everything their way, which makes it important to offer a wide spectrum of experiences that can be customised and improvised to suit different mindsets, cultural sensitivities, lifestyles and preferences.

We’re also observing that an increasing number of people are now planning the entire wedding process at hotels from pre-wedding shoots to wedding rituals and the reception. There is also a high degree of personalization with people focussing on enhancing individual guest experiences. Some of the factors which hotels can work upon to capitalize on inbound tourism from weddings would be to offer unique venues, customised services and personalized offerings - elevating the overall experience for the guests as well as the couples.

At Hyatt, it has always been our endeavour to create an unparalleled and aspirational wedding experience. Many of our hotels in key destinations such as Goa, Mumbai, Kochi, Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad and Kolkata, are known for their expertise in offering a one-stop wedding event solution. It is this exclusive and very hands-on experience that has ensured that our hotels are on the top of mind when it comes to the planning and execution of high-end weddings - and our bookings reflect that.



Photo Courtesy: A Mor Entertainment



Over the years, Grand Hyatt Mumbai has hosted some of the most talked-about, high-profile industrialist and Bollywood weddings with exotic themes and extravagant dining experiences.

At Andaz Delhi, we offer our guests a blank canvas in the form of our state-of-the-art event facilities and team of regional chefs as well as locally inspired F&B offerings. We encourage guests to create their own wedding experience in their own personal style (andaz). The larger-than-life installations and décor suspended from the high ceiling in the ballroom, to the dedicated elephant path for a majestic baraat arrival, as well as the residential studios for pre-and post-wedding celebrations at Andaz Delhi, have been witness to some of the most stylised and famous weddings in the city.

Over the years, the wedding market has become a significant contributor to the business of a number of our properties in India. This year too, we are looking forward to a robust wedding season.

A NEW STANDARD IN WEDDINGS

Bhavnesb Sawhney, Director, Wedniksha Wedding Planners

With every year passing the Indian wedding market is expected to get more dynamic. The size of the wedding keeps on increasing with each wedding being more luxurious and grand than the previous one. Over the next two years, the Indian wedding market is expected to grow exponentially.

Customisation is one of the biggest trends in India. Couples are opting to personalize their weddings in a way that feels natural to them. Be it at exotic destinations, bespoke wedding outfits of the bride and groom, wedding favors or minimal floral décor, the trend of customizing has taken the industry by storm.

Cross Culture Weddings: A fusion of rituals and ceremonies from two different cultures is becoming quite popular. Whether it's a 2 or 4-day celebration, a confluence of both the bride and groom's traditions is gaining popularity.

Exotic Destinations: Gone are the days, when people picked easily accessible ballrooms or beaches as wedding destinations. International destinations such as Tuscany, Santorini, Ras Al Khaimah and Sun City in South Africa are gaining popularity among many Indians. In India, currently many people are opting for old but timeless palace weddings. The massive palaces in Rajasthan are perfect for those opting for a royal wedding.

One of the most magnificent weddings handled by Wedniksha, an initiative of Wizcraft, was among the early weddings of 2019. Two of the most influential business families based out of Delhi came together for a grand wedding at the City of Lakes, Udaipur, when Aditya Munjal scion of Hero cycles group got married.

The celebration saw a slew of high profile industrialists, businessmen, politicians, celebrities and international guests present at the wedding. The 4-day wedding celebration was



Photo Courtesy: Taj Exotica Maldives

spread across prestigious hotels namely Oberoi Udaivilas, The Leela Palace, and Hotel Trident in Udaipur. The grand affair saw performances by artistes such as Kanika Kapoor, Gurdeep Mehndi, Harshdeep Kaur, Mika Singh and Pritam and the band, which made for an unforgettable event. With 24-hour hospitality lounges at all guest-residing hotels, to customized chartered flights from Delhi to Udaipur with personalized welcome message, tray menus, boarding passes and dedicated check-in counters, every aspect added towards an impeccable hospitality experience.

THE PLUSH TOUCH

Ruchika Arora, Director, Plush Events & Weddings

As per the estimate given by the market survey done by CNBCTV18, the value goes to Rs 4000-5000 crore with its ever-growing market for the same. With this trend, it is assumed to grow by another 25-30 % by next year. The Indian Wedding Market has expanded rapidly over the last decade with more exposure from internet; also people have a fair idea of the work they desire! Weddings have become more personal where people want everything from custom creations to musicals and entertainment, fancy cakes and personalised décor.

Destination weddings have taken the lead with the celebrity weddings spree last year while others focus on theme weddings, drama, accent floral, floral installations and interactive décor. Pantone announced the colour of the year

i.e. Living Coral that can rule the themes with other colour trends like Dusty rose, Silver sage and Mustards complimented by décor like neon lights, metallic details, layering of floral and fabrics and pop of colours! The Indian Market is now exploring their creative side.

FOR PICTURE-PERFECT MOMENTS

Achint Nag, Managing Director, Krayonz Entertainment

Weddings indeed mark an exceptional moment for the couple. It is a beautiful ode to their next adventure together, which needs to be celebrated! Recently, we organised a wedding at Fairmont Ajman where the entire event was conceptualized and managed by us and wedding coverage was done by WeddingNama. The three-day wedding extravaganza began with rousing Mehendi Function with Emcee Dilruba Pandey and DJ Taher, and some special activities including bhangra dancers dancing on the tunes of Bollywood numbers and games like Jenga for all youngsters. There were Pre-wedding Rituals, Safa Bandhai ceremony and Groom's entry was magnificent and guests danced enthusiastically to the beats of desi dhol and DJ Taher in a DJ Truck. The Reception, on the last day, was planned in such a manner that the Event started with a lovely Sundowner followed by the guests dancing on the Dance Floor on tunes of DJ Manoj.

From pristine beaches, regal hotels, city landscape and customized services by Krayonz Entertainment, the couple was appeased with the wedding of their dreams coming true.



Photo Courtesy: IHCL



ROMANTIC RENDEZVOUS

Couples today are choosing to tie the knot at exotic locations. From the pristine, sun-dappled shores of Thailand to the glamorous seaside resort of Monaco, here are some of the top choices for a memorable destination wedding

TT BUREAU



ITALY: Italy is a great choice for couples who are looking to tie the knot abroad. Great wine, wholesome food, warm and sunny Mediterranean climate — all come together to make the most important day of your life even more special. Choose from a range of picturesque destinations in the country — from the sun-kissed Tuscany to the breathtaking Amalfi Coast to the more popular destinations such as Rome, Florence and Milan.

DESTINATIONS: The picturesque Lake Como in Northern Italy, the medieval setting of Umbria, the lush green towns of Tuscany and the Mediterranean villages of Napoli.

VENUES: Villa Sola Cabiati and Villa Pliniana in Lake Como region, Villa La Massa in Florence, Villa Lena in Tuscany and La Posta Vecchia in Rome.

EXPERIENCES: Must-have experiences include a trip to the wine-producing regions of Veneto, exploring the Colosseum, a gondola ride in Venice, feeling blessed at the Sistine Chapel, just to name a few.

COST: Depending on the venue, expect to shell out up to 10,000 Euros. Food is expensive and may cost almost 100 to 200 Euros per person.





SWITZERLAND: The land of cheese, chocolates and fine watches is also great for saying, 'I do.' From the icy heights of Jungfrau to the picturesque Lac Leman, Switzerland has no dearth of Instagram-worthy venues that can double up as honeymoon spots.

DESTINATIONS: The region in and around Lake Geneva, the fairytale setting of Lenzburg, the upscale Zurich or even the icy mountains of Schilthorn are great choices to tie the knot.

VENUES: Schloss Lenzburg, the cable-car station of Trubsee or Paxmal at Walensee Lake.

EXPERIENCES: Go wine-tasting in the Lavaux, take a Euro Rail trip through the Swiss countryside, climb up the Alps to the top of Europe or sample the delectable cheeses and wines of the country.

COST: Switzerland is one of the most expensive countries in the world. A nice wedding can easily leave you poorer by about 15,000 Swiss Francs.



TURKEY: For an exotic experience, head over to Turkey, the land which combines the mysticism of the East with the sophistication of the West. Towering mountains, azure seas and a warm welcoming climate make Turkey the perfect destination for taking your wedding vows. The country may not have the villas and chateaus of Europe, but it has award-winning, luxurious seaside resorts, known for their out-of-the-world services. From Antalya to Istanbul, from Marmaris to Oludeniz, Turkey will leave you spoilt for choices when it comes to selecting your wedding venue.

DESTINATIONS: The old harbour town of Kaleici, the gorgeous lagoon of Oludeniz or the beautiful resort town of Antalya.

VENUES: Green Park Beach Blue Lagoon, Susesi Luxury Resort, Limak Lara and Yacht Classic Hotel, among others.

EXPERIENCES: Seeing and experiencing Hagia Sophia, enjoying the swirling Dervishes, digging into authentic Turkish delights and Baklavas, and taking a hot-air balloon ride over the hilly Cappadocia

COST: On average, wedding packages provided by most hotels start from 7,000 to 10,000 Euros.



MONACO: Once the go-to destination for all the celebrities and the aristocratic families, Monaco today has reincarnated itself as family-friendly destination. It is full of luxury hotels and resorts, glamorous spas and casinos where you can make your fortune. Several hotels provide wedding packages, thereby offering peace of mind and a hassle-free experience. From the grand Hotel De Paris to the luxurious Salle de Etoiles, Monaco is the perfect place to add a touch of glamour to your nuptials.

VENUES: Café de Paris, Monte Carlo Bay Hotel and Beach Resort, Le Meridian Beach Plaza, Hotel Hermitage are specialists in putting together weddings to remember.

EXPERIENCES: Enjoy the annual Formula One Grand Prix, live life king size in one of the luxurious hotels, gamble away to your heart's delight and experience royal lifestyle at Palais Princier De Monaco.

COST: An average wedding package starts from around 23,000 USD, while the sky is the limit.



THAILAND: Stunning beaches, picture-perfect islands, warm hospitable people make Thailand a great wedding option, especially for those who don't like to burn a hole in their pockets. Reasonable air fares, plenty of popular tourist resorts and a fabulous tourist infrastructure make Thailand a popular wedding destination.

DESTINATIONS: Ayutthaya in Northern Thailand, seaside resorts of Phuket and Pattaya, islands of Koh Samui and Koh Phi Phi etc.

VENUES: Phulay Bay Ritz Carlton in Krabi, So Sofitel in Bangkok, Naka Island Resort, The Phi Phi Beach Resort

EXPERIENCES: Water sports in Phuket and Krabi, shopping in Bangkok and lounging on the sands of Phi Phi Islands.

COST: An average Indian wedding would set you back by 10 million Thai Baht or 340,000 USD, according to a TAT report.



SOUTH AFRICA: Rustic elegance and quaint sophistication define South Africa, which is blessed by chalk-white cliffs, wind-swept meadows, expansive waterfronts, and rustic barns and lodges. The favourite wedding locations cover some of South Africa's most beautiful regions, including Drakensberg, the Cape Coast, the Whale Route and the cosmopolitan cities of Cape Town and Johannesburg.

DESTINATIONS: The mountainous region of Cape Town, the forestlands of Eastern Cape, the tribal areas of KwaZulu Natal, and the seaside resorts on the South, including Camps Bay, Simon's Town and Langebaan.

VENUES: Cathedral Peak Hotel in Drakensberg, Tintswalo Atlantic and Suikerbossie in Cape Town, Morrells Boutique Venue in Johannesburg, etc.

EXPERIENCES: Enjoy wildlife safari in Kruger National Park, soak in the breathtaking scenery of Cape Town, and indulge in some old-fashioned wine tasting in Stellenbosch and Franschhoek.

COST: Anywhere between 130,000 to 170,000 South African Rand, found a survey.



CANADA: A romantic wedding in the Great White North entails witnessing the Northern Light, getting up close in with Beluga whales and reindeers, enjoying the cowboy experience in Calgary and exploring the historic towns of Quebec and Montreal.

DESTINATIONS: The wind-swept towns of Newfoundland and Labrador, historic cities of Quebec and Montreal and the picturesque province of British Columbia.

VENUES: Nita Lake Lodge in Whistler, Notre Dame Basilica in Montreal, Fairmont Chateau in Lake Louise, Chateau Frontenac in Quebec.

EXPERIENCES: Beluga whale watching in Newfoundland and Labrador coast, the Rocky mountain train ride, Calgary Stampede in Alberta and skiing in Whistler.

COST: A typical wedding in Canada will cost you about 42,000 CAD





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ROCK YOUR WEDDING!

Write your own love song and hit all the right notes as you get hitched in style at Hard Rock Hotel Goa

TT BUREAU



Music and travel are inseparable and this synergy readily translates to the hotel scene as well. Music inspires us to have new experiences – so, hit all the right notes when you choose your wedding or holiday destination. Check out a music-inspired hotel, one that is married to rhythm and is rife with rock n’ roll vibes. Welcome to Hard Rock Hotel Goa, where you can flaunt your swag and indulge in all things fine, get whacky at the poolside, shake a leg and bring down the house as you say your ‘I Dos’ in style.

Hard Rock Hotel Goa is India’s first Hard Rock Hotel, a unique music-inspired resort offering the perfect setting for every occasion. It boasts 135 well-appointed, chic rooms and suites and a priceless collection of music and fashion memorabilia

from artists across the globe. What stands out is the carefully curated music scene, with legendary live performances, customised playlists, guitar jam sessions and your favourite vinyl records with The Sound of Your Stay® programme. Tune into the sweet life, with world-class accommodations, stunning venues, delectable cuisine and an uncommon vibe like none other.

Hard Rock Hotel Goa indulges your inner party animal and helps you celebrate your most awaited day seamlessly, from setup to showdown. So, gather your gang and give them the time of their lives at a party they won’t stop talking about.

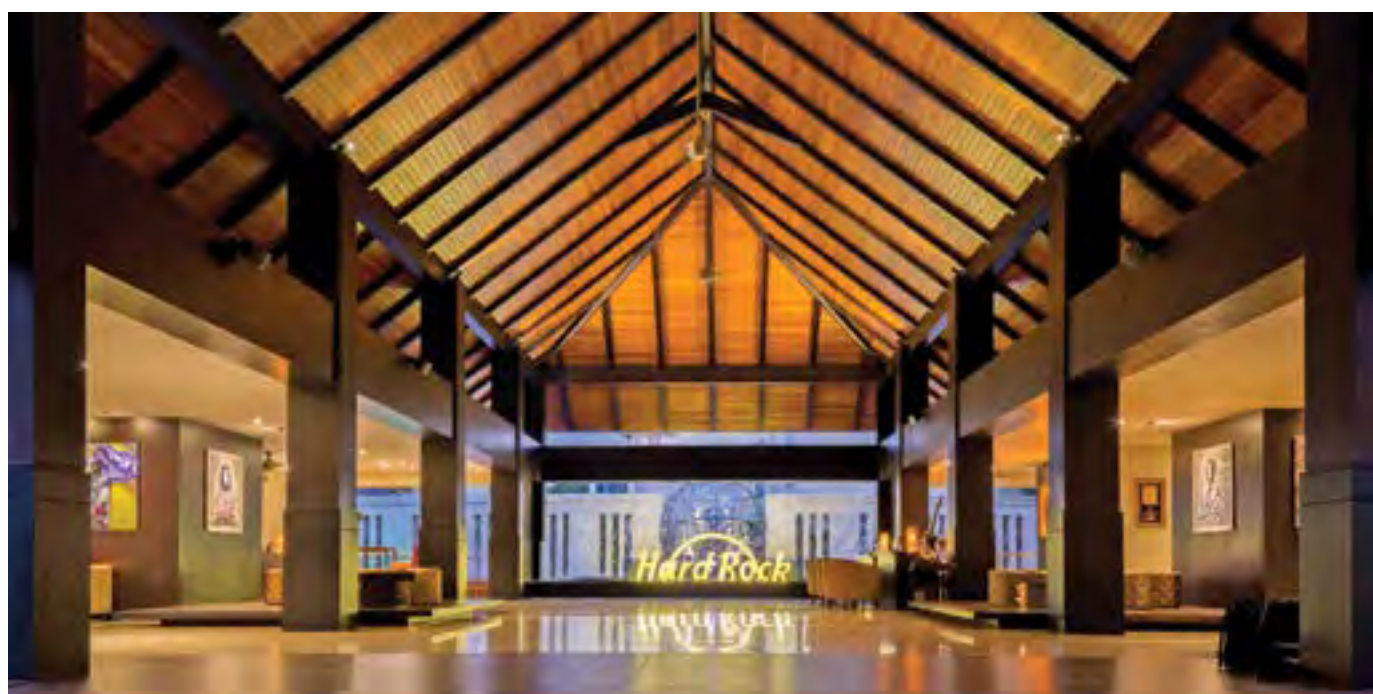
Choose from the hotel’s stylish banquet spaces for dinners and gatherings or party all night by the poolside. The hotel’s impeccable team will ensure that your every wish is fulfilled and that your event is unforgettable. Whether it is setting up

audio visual equipment, arranging exotic buffets, providing bar facilities or DJ services, Hard Rock Hotel Goa caters to every whim with its customary élan and expertise. The hotel's skilled culinary team leaves no stone unturned in creating a showstopping experience and adding additional pizzazz to your celebrations.

Hard Rock Hotel Goa makes sure that your stay is unforgettable with its repertoire of Rockstar amenities. You can party hard and not worry about the aftermath as the hotel's Body Rock® fitness centre offers a perfect workout therapy.

Treat yourself to a little retail therapy at Rock Shop®, the hotel's merchandise closet, which features cool tees, pins, caps and trendy accessories. Get sassy, chic and ready for the show at the rejuvenating Rock Spa® or get yourself back on track with Rock Om® Yoga programme. Be surrounded by music that is crafted to enhance your experience at Hard Rock Hotel Goa.

Let the good times begin as you clink your glasses and celebrate your special moments, action-packed with non-stop music, electrifying performances, live food stations and a carousel of selfies. So, be feted and feel on top of the world as Hard Rock Hotel Goa puts you in the spotlight and rolls out the red carpet for you. Come live the Rock n' Roll Life at Hard Rock Hotel Goa!





PROMOTION

A PICTURE PERFECT WEDDING

Find your perfect wedding planner in the upscale Radisson Blu Pune Hinjawadi, which goes an extra mile to make your big day a big success

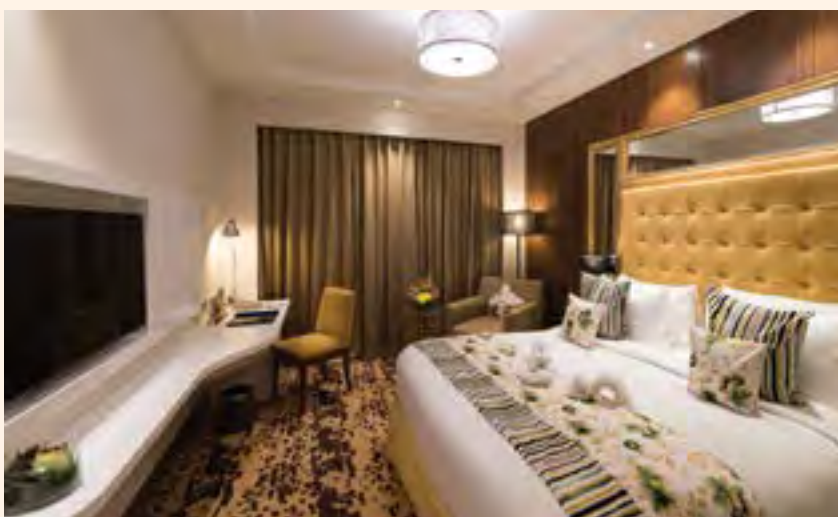
TT BUREAU

Nestled in the heart of Pune's IT Hub, Radisson Blu Pune Hinjawadi is located at a 45-minute drive from Pune International Airport near Mumbai-Pune Expressway. The hotel offers elevating experiences with its matchless services and top-notch facilities, providing its patrons with upscale comforts.

WEDDINGS

Planning your big day? Let Radisson Blu Pune Hinjawadi take up the baton and plan the wedding of your dreams from start to finish, with Radisson Blu's refreshing Something Blu concept. Perfect in every detail, the hotel's highly professional Wedding Specialists

will take expert care of you – and all your arrangements – every step of the way, with carefully crafted menus and other important details. The friendly Yes I Can! team will help you turn your individual vision into a beautiful reality.



The special Something Blu wedding package can be customised with an excellent range of elegant choices, including an unrivalled menu selection and complimentary anniversary offerings. The superbly stylish celebration menus are carefully crafted by the hotel's head chefs with attention to every detail. The uber-chic hotel features well-appointed 151 rooms and suites.

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Radisson Blu Pune Hinjawadi stands for highly flexible spaces, perfect for all styles and sizes of weddings. The Lawns, spread over 11,000sq.ft. of open-air venue under the stars, caters to Large Weddings, Social Gatherings, Corporate Get-togethers and Black-Tie events. The hotel can accommodate events for up to 950 guests. Host your memorable events and meetings in Radisson Blu Pune Hinjawadi with two levels of expansive banquet halls spread over an area of 5,318sq.ft, additional pre-function areas, and an exclusive entrance.

Offering 2658sq.ft. of pillarless carpeted ballroom space and 1011sq.ft. of pre-function area, Ballroom 1 is an ideal venue for meetings and ceremonies. Ballroom 2 (identical to Ballroom 1) can be divided into two parts to make a breakout room for your conferences.

The hotel's proficient and resolute team make every conference, meeting or social event seamless and spectacular.



FORTUNE BRINGS YOU

Romantic Holidays

As the months go by, we're fast heading to those days when the sun becomes blazing hot and you've no respite from the scorching heat. It's that time of the year when you yearn to spend some solitary days in the cool comfort of the hills and mountains, or on the beach lounging with your favourite book. In comes "Fortune Hotels", with its wide variety of properties, to provide you with a refreshing seasonal experience that's sure to take you away from the heat of the moment. So, come and indulge in romantic holidays with Fortune Hotels, in each of these captivating locales, to enjoy a perfect summer break with your partner.

TT BUREAU



FORTUNE SELECT CEDAR TRAIL, MASHOBRA, SHIMLA

Location: Amidst the subtle beauty of the captivating locales of Mashobra stands the winsome Fortune Select Cedar Trail. The exquisite rooms feature a contemporary décor and offer sweeping views of the Himalayas, the valleys and clear blue skies.

F&B: At Zodiac, be spoilt for choices with Indian, Oriental and Continental favourites.; Neptune Bar & Lounge, relax and unwind with an excellent selection of spirits.

Tourist Attractions: Unique experiences in Mashobra, Shimla are – Bird watching at the Reserve Forest Sanctuary; Trekking expedition to the Shali Tibba; Rock climbing and Rappelling; River rafting at Tattapani; Quad biking through rivers; Skiing in winters, snow fights or building snowman; Kufri 12km; Mall Road 16km; Jakhoo Temple 10km; Lakkar Bazar 12km; Golf/ Horseback Riding at Naldhera; Adventure Sports at Kufri; and The Ridge 13km.



FORTUNE SELECT FOREST HILL, MAHIYA, KASAULI

Location: Situated 60km from Chandigarh Airport and 25km from Kalka Railway Station, Fortune Select Forest Hill, Mahiya, Near Kasauli, brings flawless service, multiple high-end amenities and a wide choice of fun activities for all age groups amidst picturesque beauty of Solan valley.

F&B: Zodiac, for lip-smacking food; Fortune Deli, for freshly baked and oven-fresh goodies; and Neptune, for excellent selection of spirits, wines and beers.

Tourist Attractions: Trekking to the surrounding forest range; Cookery classes at Zodiac; Sunset Hi-tea; Bonfire with music at Zodiac Lawn; Kasauli 20km; Shimla 70km; and Solan 25km.

FORTUNE ACRON REGINA, CANDOLIM, GOA

Location: Located at a 45-minute drive from Goa Airport, Fortune Acron Regina is a contemporary upscale full-service hotel at Candolim, North Goa. Fortune Acron Regina is a place where vibrant energy blends with comfortable architecture, offering an ideal destination for a memorable holiday or a perfect business trip.

F&B: Orchid, the multi-cuisine restaurant; A Verandah, an open air extension to orchid, by the poolside; Earthen Oven, for North Indian specialty; and Neptune Lounge & Bar and Poolside Barbeque.

Tourist Attractions: Candolim Beach 700m; Fort Aguada 5km; Calangute Beach 5.6km; Baga Beach 6.5km; Anjuna Flea Market 12km; and Old Goa 20km.



FORTUNE PARK MOKSHA, MCLEOD GANJ

Location: Situated at a 45-minute drive from Dharamshala Airport, Fortune Park Moksha is located against the scenic backdrop of the snow-capped Dhauladhar mountain range. The hotel provides easy access to all the main tourist attractions in and around McLeod Ganj – the modern-day sanctuary of spirituality.

F&B: Orchid, the multi-cuisine restaurant; Neptune bar & lounge; and Fortune Deli, for bakery delights and delicacies.

Tourist Attractions: Dalai Lama Temple Complex 6.5km; Trekking, mountaineering and paragliding activities in close proximity; nearby local arts and crafts bazaars; War Memorial and Kangra Art Museum 13.5km.



FORTUNE MIRAMAR, GOA

Location: Located 27km from Goa Airport, in Panaji, Fortune Miramar is a contemporary hotel for the modern-day traveller featuring beautifully furnished rooms, a selection of dining outlets and a fully-equipped board room. The hotel offers easy accessibility to local shopping district, casinos, beaches and other areas of interest.

F&B: Orchid – the multi-cuisine restaurant; Neptune bar & lounge; and Fortune Deli, for bakery delights and delicacies.

Tourist Attractions: Dona Paula Jetty 3km; Boat Cruise (at Mandovi River) 3.5km; Panjim Market 3.5km; Old Goa 11km; Fort Aguada 12km.

ACRON WATERFRONT RESORT, BAGA, GOA

Location: Acron Waterfront Resort in Goa is an amalgamated mix of finesse, leisure and hospitality beyond excellence. The resort is conveniently close to all the fun, happening places and nightlife that North Goa has to offer!

F&B: At The River Restaurant, savour the mélange of cuisines, like Akoori Pao stuffed with Goan Chorizo, Dukkah Dusted Prawns, Chicken Cafreal, Vegetable Xacuti and Pulled Assado of Pork.

Tourist Attractions: Candolim Beach 7.7km; Baga Beach 1.7km; Fort Aguada 12.6km; and Old Goa 25.7km.

FORTUNE RESORT SULLIVAN COURT, OOTY

Location: Situated at a 3-hour drive from Coimbatore Airport and set on the gentle slopes of Ooty, Fortune Resort Sullivan Court is a perfect destination to unwind and relax. This beautiful family resort offers contemporary rooms with most of them providing scenic view of the slopes and is an ideal getaway for a fun-filled vacation with family and friends.

F&B: Pavilion, the multi-cuisine restaurant; and Selbourne's Bar, a contemporary bar & lounge offering a fine selection of spirits, wines and beers.

Tourist Attractions: Walkable distance from Rose Garden; City Centre 1km; Botanical Garden 2km; Ooty Lake 4km; Tea factories 6km.



FORTUNE JP PALACE, MYSORE

Location: Situated at 15km from Mysore Airport, Fortune JP Palace embodies the exuberance of Mysore with its palatial-style architecture, landscaped gardens, aesthetically done interiors and a magnificent view of the famous Chamundi Hills. The hotel is an ideal retreat for travellers looking to experience the real magic of the city.

F&B: Orchid, the multi-cuisine restaurant; Neptune bar & lounge; The Oriental Pavilion, for authentic oriental cuisine; and The Terrace Grill & Tandoor, the roof-top restaurant providing a unique romantic setting for a memorable meal.

Tourist Attractions: Mysore Palace 2km; St Philomena's Church 700m; Wax Museum 5km; Brindavan Gardens 25km; Shopping hubs 3km; Railway Museum 4km; Nearby attractions of the Laughing Buddha at Happy Man Park and the Ranganthittu Bird Sanctuary.



FORTUNE RESORT HEEVAN, SRINAGAR

Location: Situated 24km from Srinagar Airport with a magnificent view of the Zabarwan Mountains, Fortune Resort Heevan is a wonderful blend of traditional Kashmiri architecture with new-age conveniences and a wide selection of culinary venues.

F&B: Earthen Oven, for authentic Peshawari Cuisine; Café Chinar, a multi-cuisine restaurant offering a delightful selection of cuisines as well as handpicked local specialties; Kehwakhana, the on-site tea lounge at the lobby; and Fortune Deli, a contemporary outlet serving oven-fresh goodies.

Tourist Attractions: Dal Lake 1.5km; Shalimar Bagh 2km; Nishat Bagh 1.5km; Chasm-E-Shahi 7km; Indira Gandhi Tulip Garden 6km; and Hazratbal Shrine 6km.





FORTUNE SELECT METROPOLITAN, JAIPUR

Location: Situated at 10km from the airport, at Bais Godam Circle, this hotel is the preferred choice for travellers in the Pink City of Jaipur. The rooms and suites at the hotel are designed in rich architecture and modern styling, keeping the comfort of guests in mind.

F&B: Zodiac, the 24-hour coffee shop; Aqua Grill, the Continental and Indian grilled specialty restaurant; and Nostradamus, the lounge & bar.

Tourist Attractions: Walled City with its Bazars (Bapu Bazar, Johari Bazar) 5km; The City Palace 5km; Amber Palace and Fort Complex 16km; Jal Mahal 12km; Jantar Mantar 5km; Hawa Mahal 5km.



FORTUNE RESORT BAY ISLAND, PORT BLAIR

Location: Situated at a 15-min drive from the Port Blair Airport, Fortune Resort Bay Island is a beautiful, sea-front family resort in Port Blair overlooking the pristine blue waters of the Bay of Bengal. With rooms overlooking the sea and a lighthouse, this hotel is ranked among the top 5 best hotels in Port Blair.

F&B: Mandalay, is an open-deck multi-cuisine restaurant with glorious sea view, serving island specialties and exotic seafood favourites; and Nico Bar, offers excellent selections of spirits along with lip-smacking snacks. Must try – The fruity concoctions served in coconut shells.

Tourist Attractions: City centre 1km; Water Sports Complex 1.5km; Anthropological museum 1.5km; Corbyn's Cove Beach 7km; Wandoor Beach 25km; and Cellular Jail 1.5km.



FORTUNE RESORT GRACE, MUSSOORIE

Location: Situated at the Library End of the Mall Road, Fortune Resort Grace, Mussoorie, is a family-friendly resort in Mussoorie and offers an enchanting view of the Doon Valley.

F&B: Orchid, the multi-cuisine restaurant; Terrace, is an extension of Orchid overlooking the pine-covered hill slopes of Mussoorie; and Nostradamus, the bar & lounge.

Tourist Attractions: Dehradun 34km; Mall Road 50m; Gun Hill 2km; Company Garden 5km; Cloud's End 8km; Kempty Falls 15km; 4-5 km from other local attractions – Lal Tibba, Sister Bazaar, Chaar Dukkan, Landour Market, Sir George Everest House, Wax Museum, Lake Mist, and Mussoorie Lake.

FORTUNE

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LAND OF INFINITE BLISS

On a tourist trail to Bihar? Discover these exciting journeys with Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, Ramayana and Eco Circuit.

TT BUREAU

Famous for being the birthplace of two major religions, Buddhism and Jainism, the state of Bihar is rich in spiritual legacy spanning its entire geographical contour. With the vacation season just round the corner, it's perhaps the best time to pack your bags and set out to explore these historical sites of great significance, rich with impressions of Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Hindu Mythology.

RAMAYANA CIRCUIT

This circuit includes the places mentioned in the legendary epic Ramayana. On this trail, you will find many places holding

spiritual importance and being mentioned in our numerous mythological tales. On the Ramayana Circuit, you can witness the sites right from the birth of Goddess Sita to demon slaying by Lord Ram and rescuing a lady like Devi Ahilya from a curse.

PLACES TO VISIT: Tar (Bhojpur), Ahirauli (Buxur), Ram Rekha Ghat (Buxur), Pretshila Hills (Gaya), Giddheshwar (Jamui), Kako (Jehanabad), Singheshwar Asthan (Madhepura), Phullahar (Madhubani), Sita Kund (Munger), Ramchaura (Vaishali), Ahilya Asthan (Darbhanga), Janki Temple (Sitamarhi), Haleshwar Asthan (Sitamarhi), Panth Pakar (Sitamarhi), Chanki Garh (West Champaran), and Valmiki Nagar (West Champaran).

GURU CIRCUIT

Guru Circuit covers important pilgrimage spots for Sikh pilgrims, like Takht Sri Harimandir Ji Patna Sahib, Gurudwara Guru Ka Bagh, Gurudwara Gai Ghat, and Gurudwara Handi Sahib. Bihar has been closely associated with Sikhism and is thronged by tourists to explore these wonderful and significant relics from the past.

PLACES TO VISIT: Takht Sri Harimandir Ji Patna Sahib, built to commemorate the birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj, the 10th Guru of Sikhs; Gurudwara Guru Ka Bagh, a commemorative shrine built to signify the first meeting of young Guru Gobind Singh Ji with Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, the 9th Guru of Sikhs, when the latter returned from his four-year-long journey; Gurudwara Gai Ghat, dedicated to Guru Nanak Dev Ji; and Gurudwara Handi Sahib, built in memory of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji after he left Patna for Punjab with his family.

Takht Sri Harimandir Ji, Patna Sahib



Jalmandir, Pawapuri



JAIN CIRCUIT

Bihar has long been hailed as the cradle of Jainism. The state is endowed with some of the beautiful Jain temples, which are of historical importance to the community. Pawapuri is one of the most sought-after destinations of Jains, where Lord Mahavira was cremated.

PLACES TO VISIT: Sri Digambar Jain Mandir (Patna), Jain Mandir Lachhwar (Jamui), Jain Temple (Pawapuri), Shwetambar Jain Mandir (Bhagalpur), Jain Mandir (Ara), Kamaldaha Jain temple in Patna and Shwetamber Jain Mandir, Rajgir.

BUDDHIST CIRCUIT

Buddhist Circuit in Bihar has long been in trend for its tremendous contribution to tourism in the state. It was here in the city of Bodh Gaya that Lord Buddha attained Enlightenment, discovered the purpose of life, and gave sermons to his disciples. Thus every Buddhist traveller definitely visits Bihar, in order to seek ultimate bliss.

PLACES TO VISIT: Bodh Gaya (famous for Mahabodhi Temple and Bodhi Tree), Patna (Buddha Smriti Park), Rajgir (famous for many archeological sites, and Shanti Stupa), Nalanda (famed for first residential university of the world), and Vaishali (Lord Buddha preached his last sermon here).



Muchalinda Lake, Bodh Gaya

ECO CIRCUIT

A slew of activities have been rolled out to attract more tourists to the state, interested in nature walks, wildlife sanctuaries, jungle safari, boating, canopy walk, cycling in the jungle, and trekking. Cottages are also being developed for tourists interested in experiencing nature at close hand through Eco Circuit.

PLACES TO VISIT: Valmiki Nagar Tiger Reserve, Kanwar Lake, Ghora Katora Lake, Rajgir, and Kakolat Waterfall.



Ghora Katora Lake



HUMAN BY NATURE

Kerala Tourism's 'Human by Nature' campaign film offers new perspective on Kerala's interconnectedness of Human with Nature

TT BUREAU

Kerala Tourism's latest brand campaign, Human by Nature, which encapsulates the state's spectacular charm in dramatic visuals and offers refreshing insights into the interconnectedness of its people and the bountiful nature, has received wide acclaim in international markets, firmly pushing post-floods Kerala back into the itinerary of global travellers.

The three-minute destination campaign film, part of a marketing blitzkrieg to refurbish Kerala's touristy appeal beyond the Indian shores, showcases the state's signature assets, and

celebrates local people as heroes. The film subtly depicts warm, authentic human stories that travellers rummage through this land for a liberating experience.

The global brand campaign, which was recently launched by Kerala Tourism Minister, Kadakampally Surendran, in New Delhi, packs soul-stirring images of the state where life moves at a leisurely pace in tranquil environs, where culture flourishes in syncretic traditions, where tradition complements modernity in the context of everyday life, all strung together in a visual tapestry.

Alongside, it offers a spectacular snapshot of the state – tranquil backwaters, beaches, houseboats, catamarans, Theyyam artistes, hill stations, exotic wildlife, magical festivals, and scrumptious cuisines, and there is a surreal feel to it that is both real and fantastical for tourists.

In essence, Human by Nature presents Kerala as ‘the courtyard of the world’, where no one is an outsider, not even the traveller; where the land and the people create a fabric of tolerance and interconnectedness; where you speak with no words and listen from the heart; where you can explore Magic in Everyday and Eternity in the Ordinary – all of which can make us human, all over again.

Describing the latest campaign as a powerful multimedia outreach, the minister said it would act as a trigger to put Kerala Tourism on a higher pedestal in a competitive global marketplace.

brand agency for Kerala Tourism for several years, and directed by Vivek Thomas, Director of Miramar Films. It was shot in the enchanting locations like Kumarakom, Alappuzha, Arthungal, Chellanam, Fort Kochi, Munambam, Wayanad, Kannur and Thaliparambu.

The 360-degree integrated campaign has also a strong print component, and it was shot by the renowned New York-based Canadian photographer Joey L, who is known for his work that straddles the worlds of photojournalism and commercial photography. He travelled extensively across the state to create a set of stunning portraits that showcase the people and the terrain they live in - like never before.

Tourism Secretary, Rani George said that Kerala Tourism keeps reinventing itself with fascinating ideas. She added, “The film is both sophisticated and emotive. It shows Kerala in a wider spectrum as vibrant and welcoming, underlined by a powerful



He further added, “I am sure it will strike an emotive chord with travellers and position Kerala as an essential fixture on the international travel circuit. It will appeal to both high spenders and backpackers. Tourism is a major contributor to Kerala’s economy and a significant source of foreign exchange. The increase in footfalls can have transformative effect on the lives of our people.”

The film, which was shown as part of Kerala Tourism’s roadshow in the American cities of New Jersey, Chicago, Houston and Los Angeles, drew an enthusiastic response. The film has been conceived and scripted by Stark Communications, the

human touch. This will further firm up Kerala’s position in the itinerary of international travellers as one of the most fancied global destinations”.

The campaign would run in Kerala Tourism’s key markets, such as USA, the UK, Gulf countries, Germany, France, Italy, Sweden, Spain, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Belgium.

In 2018, the state’s tourism netted record revenue of Rs 36,528.01 crore, clocking an increase of Rs 2,874.33 crore from the previous year, while the number of domestic and foreign tourist arrivals stood at over 167 lakh.

The film can be viewed on Kerala Tourism’s Facebook page.

NOVEL INDULGENCE



With a wealth of unique experiences to unravel, Chiang Mai is a breathtaking mosaic of distinctive architecture, delectable cuisine, and beautiful landscapes

TT BUREAU

One of Asia's most attractive tourist destinations, Chiang Mai is one of the few places in Thailand where past meets present, in various avatars, from the centuries-old pagodas and temples to modern high rise buildings and boutique hotels. A transit point for many trekking and rafting destinations in the nearby hill tribe villages and other provinces, Chiang Mai is a hotspot of tourism activities, which you may not be able to cover in even two weeks' time.

Chiang Mai is the hub of Northern Thailand region and the capital of Chiang Mai Province. Situated amongst the highest mountains in the country, Chiang Mai was the former capital of the Kingdom of Lanna, 700km north of Bangkok. With a population of over 170,000, it is Thailand's fifth-largest city and sits astride the Ping River. Located on a plain at an elevation of 316m, surrounded by mountains and lush countryside, it is much greener and quieter than the capital, and has a cosmopolitan air and a noteworthy expat population – factors which have led many from Bangkok to settle permanently in this 'Rose of the North.'

A land of misty mountains and colourful hill tribes, Chiang Mai is a playground for seasoned travellers, a paradise for shopaholics and a delight for adventurer seekers. On a trip to the city, curious travellers can expand their horizons with Thai massage and cooking courses. Others will be bowled over by a variety of handicrafts and antiques on offer. The wild child will find plenty of options for enjoying a lively nightlife in the city, and the epicure can indulge in sampling some wonderful cuisine. Despite its relatively small size, Chiang Mai truly has it all to lure hordes of tourists to savour its cool climes and natural beauty.

Chiang Mai International Airport (CNX) caters to both domestic and regional international flights.





Schedules vary with the seasons and tourist demand.

A week can easily go by sightseeing, enrolling in holiday courses, engaging in numerous outdoor activities and, of course, exploring delectable dining options while in Chiang Mai.

A FEW MUST DO'S IN CHIANG MAI ARE TO:

- Visit the beautiful Doi Suthep Temple
- Learn the art of Umbrella Painting at Borsang Umbrella Making Centre
- Pamper yourself at the spas with traditional Thai massage - Lanna style
- Shop at Chiang Mai Night Bazaar
- Visit the 3D museum/art gallery - Art in Paradise
- Enjoy the Scorpion Tailed River Cruise
- Experience a traditional Khantoke Dinner with Lanna-style seating. Khao Soi is a must try!
- Enjoy traditional Thai classical dance performance
- Learn to cook Northern Thai food
- Bathe and feed elephants at the Elephant Orphanage
- Play a round of golf
- Visit the beautiful Chiang Mai Flower Market
- See various kinds of butterflies at Bai Orchid-Butterfly Farm

Chiang Mai is also a great destination for Indian wedding celebrations. It has become a growing hotspot for tying the knot, hosting an average of 10-15 Indian weddings each year. When it comes to location, luxury is key and the year-round nice cool weather is a major plus for Chiang Mai. Luxury resorts and hotels, like the Dhara Dhevi, Four Seasons and the Shangri-La, have become the most popular locations for Indian weddings in Chiang Mai. Their opulent style and old-world glamour match perfectly with the fantasy celebration that the clients have on their minds. The warm Thai hospitality and personalised services in these luxurious properties also add to the charm of hosting wedding celebrations there.

Apart from these, the spacious Chiang Mai Convention Centre and the beautiful Royal Floral Rajapruek Park are also favourable venues to accommodate a large number of guests at Indian weddings.



AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA BEST YET, SAYS SOUTH AFRICAN MINISTER OF TOURISM HANEKOM

Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom's optimistic trade floor opening speech set the tone for what turned out to be, in his words, the best Africa's Travel Indaba hosted yet. Hanekom's speech focussed on the future of Africa's tourism industry, saying that by 2030, the continent would be welcoming some 126 million international tourists. This year's Africa's Travel Indaba brought together over 6,500 delegates, including 1,033 exhibitors and 1,502 buyers at Durban ICC. President Cyril Ramaphosa made a surprise visit to the event, addressing tourism industry and media delegates. Throughout his address, Ramaphosa emphasised the tourism industry's importance in growing Africa's economy and promoting a country's identity.

HIGHLIGHTS OF AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA 2019

The Green Stand Awards recognised eight companies with environment-friendly stands. The winners included Classic Safari

Africa, which won the Platinum Pavilion Award, and Thompson's Tourism, which walked away with the Platinum Award in the large stand category. This year's Business Talks was a great hub for sharing knowledge and ideas. The discussions also featured speakers from outside of the African continent.

The Unveiling of a Wall Mural at the African Tourism Indaba 2019 represented a big step forward in driving the opportunities culture can bring to tourism. Africa's Travel Indaba 2019 Speed Marketing session saw buyers from all over the world come together to hear what South African exhibitors had to offer. South Africa has been named best safari experience in Africa by the Safari Awards Africa 2019. South Africa won the award as it came out tops in 10 of the 18 categories of the Awards.

Sthembiso Dlamini, acting CEO, South African Tourism, thanked all involved for making Africa's Travel Indaba 2019 a success. Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN) was equally thrilled by its participation at Africa's Travel Indaba 2019.

BUILDING A BRAVE NEW WORLD

Appreciating the beauty of Africa, South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa spoke at length about various initiatives that need to be taken to enhance guest experiences

TT BUREAU

During his address at Africa's Travel Indaba 2019, South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa said, "In today's world, Tourism is the New Gold. African countries are taking the lead in sustainable tourism and eco-tourism. We need to expand tourism in our continent, to contribute to economic growth, to increase our foreign earnings, and to boost related industries." He emphasised that tourism is not only associated with pleasure motives, but it can also embrace business, education, health or religion as a basis for travelling.

Earlier this year, President Cyril Ramaphosa said South Africa is looking to welcome 21 million international tourists by 2030 from the current 10.5 million. He added, "We have set ourselves a bold target to raise over \$100 billion in new investment over five years. Tourism plays a critical role in that strategy. In South Africa, the annual growth rate of tourism is currently exceeding the goals in our national tourism strategy and it is expected to grow even further."

He further said, "Tourism is one of the most international of industries for it is an industry that tends to showcase a country's identity and offerings to the world."

He said to enhance guest experiences, there are many challenges to overcome. He mentioned ten issues that need attention:

- ❖ To streamline tourist visa regimes and overhauling visa dispensation for tourists and introducing a world-class e-visa system.
- ❖ To deal with crime and counter the perception that Africa is an unsafe tourism destination, by introducing initiatives like Tourism Police in Uganda.
- ❖ To promote domestic tourism and get the citizens of our countries to travel and see the beauty of their own countries.
- ❖ To seek out private sector partners for the establishment of



new tourism products and offerings. To do this, it is must to forge stronger public-private partnerships.

- ❖ Tourism must be seen as each country's combined national effort to enhance Inter-governmental cooperation between different departments and agencies.
- ❖ To develop organisational systems and the provision of a supporting infrastructure of facilities and personnel able to run the tourism business.
- ❖ To position this industry as a key empowering sector of the economy whose power should be unleashed and used to change the lives of people in urban and rural areas.
- ❖ To be aspirationally united to build and brand Africa as a continent of success that will shine as a tourist destination.
- ❖ To embrace technology in the era of the fourth industrial revolution. Artificial intelligence, blockchain and the internet of things require that our tourism offerings must be well-aligned with enveloping technologies.
- ❖ To drive-up the standards, competitiveness and the quality of our domestic tourism industry based on international benchmarks.

Indaba 2019 is a great platform to showcase our respective countries and continent at the forefront of progress, technological advance and innovation in the tourism sector. This Indaba, with all that it offers, is a testimony to the fact that Africa is a continent of innovation with a strong focus on the future. We want to build a brave new world that will attract the world to come back home to Africa.

- Cyril Ramaphosa, President of South Africa //

MOVING TO AN e-VISA SYSTEM

At Africa's Travel Indaba 2019, Derek Hanekom, South Africa's Minister of Tourism, said Tourism in Africa grew by more than 7% as a whole in 2018, but yet remains to realise its full potential

TT BUREAU



Recently, Derek Hanekom, South Africa's Minister of Tourism, inaugurated Africa's Travel Indaba 2019, where he welcomed over 1,000 exhibitors and 1,500 buyers to the event, held at the Durban ICC. In 2018, Africa reached 67 million international tourist arrivals, a growth of 7% on 2017, comfortably ahead of the world average growth of 6%. This represents 5% of all global international arrivals, up nearly 14 million from the low of 2015, a year when Ebola outbreak happened.

Africa grew on average by almost 8% for three years in a row. In total, directly and indirectly, tourism sector contributed 8.5% to African GDP in 2018, supporting more than 24 million jobs on the continent, or 6.7% of all jobs.

Speaking on the growth of African nations, Hanekom said, "Ethiopia was Africa's fastest growing travel economy (and the world's, for that matter) growing by 48.6% in 2018! This extraordinary growth is mostly attributed to Ethiopia's success in establishing itself as regional transport hub. Air Ethiopia must be acclaimed for bringing volumes of tourists to the whole African continent."

He added, "Visa relaxation also played a significant role in spurring Ethiopia's growth, something again which many of our countries could learn from, especially South Africa."

He also remarked that Kenya saw excellent performance in 2018, with tourist arrivals growing by a whopping 37% to surpass the 2 million mark for the first time ever. While these figures are impressive, the overall tourism contributions to GDP in Africa are still well below the global average of 10.4% of GDP, which means that the continent has huge unrealised potential to unlock. Hanekom emphasised that Indaba's 2019 theme, Africa's Stories, Your Success brings into focus "the importance of telling our own stories and showcasing our successes." The Minister called on leaders to action the AU Agenda 2063 – especially with

respect to free movement of people and the easing or dropping of visa requirements in the next few years to enable this.

He carried forward these encouraging thoughts in an exclusive tête-à-tête with invited media from South Asia and East Asia. The Minister of Tourism put his mission in a nutshell: "In the South African context, growth has to be underpinned by the principle of inclusivity to drive tourism-sector transformation."

He quoted the UNWTO report that 1.8 billion people will be travelling globally by 2030, and that Africa will increase its share from the current 5% to 7% of all global arrivals. This would be 126 million arrivals, almost double the current numbers.

Hanekom intended to make the forecast a reality: "Without doubt, the 2019 edition of the Africa Travel Indaba will move us towards this goal – which has the potential to support 2 million additional jobs in South Africa."

To facilitate these goals, the Minister was intent on addressing issues like better air connectivity, sustainability and regulatory barriers around visa requirements. The Minister shared his observations from feedback of Sellers and Buyers and Media that, "The Tourism sector has massive potential, but to unlock this potential the Visa dispensation must be overhauled."

// We are a united industry, and an industry that unites, connects, builds bridges, and overcomes barriers. We're an industry that is performing exceptionally well, contributing more than 9% to the GDP and employing more than 1.5 million people across the value chain. We've chosen to unite the people of our country, in all our magnificent diversity.

- Derek Hanekom, Tourism Minister of South Africa //



TOURISM: THE X FACTOR OF SOUTH AFRICA'S ECONOMY

Sihle Zikalala, Acting Premier of the Province of Kwa-Zulu Natal, shared details on what makes the province a happy hunting ground for travellers and revellers from across the world

TT BUREAU



Recently, during Africa's Travel Indaba 2019 edition, held at Durban ICC, Sihle Zikalala, Acting Premier of the Province of Kwa-Zulu Natal, expressed his appreciation for the President of the Republic of South Africa, HE Cyril Ramaphosa, and the entire national cabinet, in their efforts to showcase the best of South Africa through tourism.

He said South Africa offers myriad experiences as a prime tourist destination, where people create lasting memories and become ambassadors of South Africa. He added, "Kwa-Zulu Natal is going to host Africa's Travel Indaba for the next four years to come. We want to pledge as the Government of the Kwa-Zulu Natal, together with the city, our commitment that we will keep ensuring that the standard of the Indaba grows to become one of the best exhibitions in the world and not only in Africa."

He further added, "We're grateful to our traditional market, of Europe and America, and also of the humble support from all countries of our continent that continue to support these exhibitions. Indaba is part of tourism and it is the only industry within the economy that has not even shrunk with the global financial constraints that we've been going through."

On speaking about tourism in Kwa-Zulu Natal, he said, "Tourism is contributing more than 9.5% to the GDP of the province and it helps in increasing jobs and even SMMEs are getting space to participate." The contribution of tourism in the local economy continues to grow. In 2014, tourism's contribution to the provincial GDP was at R9 billion, and by 2017 it had grown by 4.25% to R 9.4 billion. While the country has been experiencing an economic downturn, tourism is one of the sectors that have been steadfast and has not shed any jobs.

While mentioning the work done by KwaZulu-Natal Convention Bureau, he said "We have hosted more than 80 major

conferences, exhibitions and meetings. These have contributed approximately R4.5 billion to the local economy. We have also ensured that these economic benefits impact communities across the province by both encouraging and facilitating for geographic spread of hosted business events."

A total number of over 38 business events will be hosted by the Convention Bureau in 2019 and 2020, with a total estimated economic impact of R2.1 billion. He mentioned that KwaZulu-Natal receives about 60% of visitors come from sister African countries, and the province is determined to continue to work with the region and other markets in Europe, Asia, and America to contribute towards the growth of this sector.

Several projects have been undertaken to ensure that the province of KwaZulu-Natal becomes a tourism and economic destination of choice always ready to host sports lovers, business tourists and all other categories of visitors.

The most recent achievement is the British Airways direct flight from London to Durban, which launched in October 2018. After only two months of operation, arrivals at Durban Airport grew by 42%. The UK remains one of the strategic tourism source markets, with 7, 6% of tourists being from the UK and 24% from the whole of Europe. He reported that in 2018, 10 million tourists visited South Africa and that South Africa plans to raise this figure to 21 million by 2030 targeting growing markets like India, China, and our own African continent.

- Sihle Zikalala, Acting Premier of the Province, Kwa-Zulu Natal

PICK OF THE MONTH

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

MUSIC ALBUM: I AM EASY TO FIND

I Am Easy to Find is the upcoming eighth studio album by American indie rock band – The National, scheduled to be released on May 17, 2019, via 4AD. The follow-up to the band's 2017 album, *Sleep Well Beast*, it is supported by the lead single, "You Had Your Soul with You", and will be accompanied by a 24-minute short film directed by Mike Mills, starring Alicia Vikander. A trailer was released for the companion film along with the announcement of the album. A tour promoting the album is scheduled to begin in June 2019. The bulk of the album was recorded at Long Pond studio in Hudson Valley, New York. Parts of it were recorded in other cities, including Paris, Berlin, Dublin, Cincinnati, Austin, and Brooklyn. The album and film, while having influenced each other, were essentially made separately. The album will feature female vocalists, including Lisa Hannigan, Sharon Van Etten, Mina Tindle and Kate Stables, and the Brooklyn Youth Choir.

Genre(s): Pop



MOVIE DVD: THE CURSE OF LA LLORONA (2019)

The Curse of La Llorona (also known as *The Curse of the Weeping Woman* in some international markets) is a 2019 American supernatural horror film directed by Michael Chaves in his directorial debut, and written by Mikki Daughtry and Tobias Iaconis. James Wan served as a producer through his Atomic Monster Productions banner. It stars Linda Cardellini, Raymond Cruz, and Patricia Velásquez. The film is also set in the *Conjuring Universe*, serving as its sixth entry. Things go bump in the night — and, as an occasional change of pace, in the middle of the afternoon — with a frequency that will neither surprise nor disappoint genre fans throughout "The Curse of La Llorona," an efficiently formulaic shocker inspired by the centuries-old Mexican legend of the titular bogeywoman. It's set in Los Angeles during the early 1970s, for no readily apparent reason other than to justify the what-the-hell inclusion of Curtis Mayfield's "Superfly" theme on the soundtrack.

Genre(s): Drama



GAME: MORTAL KOMBAT 11

Mortal Kombat 11 is an upcoming fighting video game developed by NetherRealm Studios and published by Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment. It is the eleventh main instalment in the Mortal Kombat series and a sequel to 2015's *Mortal Kombat X*. Announced at The Game Awards 2018, the game released in North America and Europe on April 23, 2019. Alongside the returning Fatalities and Brutalities, new gameplay features are introduced, such as Fatal Blow and Krushing Blow. Fatal Blow is a special move that deals a large amount of damage, but only becomes available when a player's health drops below 30%. Fatal Blows act as a replacement of X-Ray super move and can only be performed once per match. Krushing Blow is a special cinematic variation of a given special move, triggered when certain requirements are met. Also new is a Flawless Block mechanic, which allows for a comeback window after blocking an attack with precise timing. Mortal Kombat 11 also introduces a Gear system, similar to Netherrealm Studio's latest DC fighting game *Injustice 2*.

Genre(s): Combat



BOOK - WHITE ELEPHANT BY JULIE LANGSDORF

This novel begins with the construction of an enormous house that looms over the neighbourhood that surrounds it. When its owner cuts down the beloved maple tree of his neighbours, a wave of resentment rushes through the subdivision. *White Elephant* is an uproarious, tangled-web tale of neighbour hating neighbour (and neighbour falling head over heels for neighbour). Soon, peaceful Willard Park becomes a tinder box with nowhere to go but up in flames. Newcomers and long-time residents alike begin to clash in conflicting pursuits of the American Dream, with trees mysteriously uprooted, fires set, fingers pointed, and lines drawn. Clearly, this is a dark comedy tale with more darkness than comedy, so hold on to your hats if you love suburban drama.

Genre(s): Poetry, LGBT



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