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The Konark Festival.

From the 1st to the 5th of December, the magnificent cultural heritage of India resides right here in Odisha.



at Open Air Auditorium Konark, Odisha, India

1st - 5th December



Also Enjoy! International Sand Art Festival

at Chandrabhaga Beach, Konark, Odisha 1st - 5th December





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Today's Traveller is published/printed by Kamal Gill on behalf of M/s Gill India Communications from Office No: 504-505, 5th Floor, Sheetla House, Building No. 73-74, Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110019

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

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Q&A with Dharamveer Singh Chouhan

CEO and Co-founder, ZO Rooms

Q&A with Ashish Kumar

Managing Partner Agnitio Consulting LLP

ACTE

Education Forum concludes in India

Knowledge Hour: A big success

Facility Managers witnessed yet another Knowledge Hour organised by FM Zone which was held at Hotel Park, New Delhi

Royal stay

Harikumar B, General Manager, Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel Mysore speaks about various business aspects of his hotel

Celebrating hospitality

In conversation with Monica Suri, General Manager, Le Meridien Kochi

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Turkey's rich and historic past makes for a stunning holiday destination

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Turkish Airlines debuts Miami

Festivals of Gujarat

A comprehensive guide to the Gujarat's major festivals

The Hornbill extravaganza

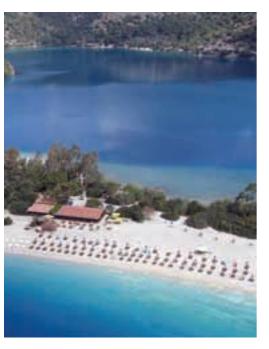
Explore the Hornbill Festival of Nagaland, one of the biggest cultural festivals in the Northeast

History revisited

Re-discover Jharkhand as a unique heritage tourism destination

In the heart of winter

Travel to some of the most popular winter destinations and feel enamoured by the beauty of winter snow







Corporate Business, Aviation, MICE & Leisure Travel Magazine | Volume 19 | No. 4

Road to happiness

Take the road to embark on a journey full of thrill and excitement

The Konark experience

Set out on a journey to experience the famous Konark Festival of Odisha, which truly reflects the cultural heritage of incredible India

India unrivalled

LH.com

A land where traditions reincarnate, music changes its rhythm, the weather plays differently, food acquires different tastes, and clothes shimmer in new trends—It's the magic called India

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The new Jaguar XF is classy, brimming with elegance and good speed, and plenty more to offer its buyers

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Punctuality: truly German.
Precision: truly German.
Hospitality: truly Indian.



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ATOUT FRANCE'S TOURISM PORTAL RECHRISTENED

Atout France – France Tourism

Development Agency's travel information
portal on destination France – www.
rendezvousenfrance.com has now been
rechristened as www.France.fr.

This announcement was made public by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development – Laurent Fabius during the first Annual Tourism Conference.

Welcoming this new development, Christian Mantei, Managing Director, Atout France, said, "This previously untapped domain name belonging to the Government provides many opportunities to showcase French to reinforce site referencing and provide a boost to uplift the viewership and audience."

The home-page of the site promotes not only global tourist sites that represent France abroad (Paris, Mont-Saint-Michel, Champagne), but also showcases major events that are strategically important for destination France. The website is available in 17 languages, with informative content showcasing various destinations and excellence clusters that are representative of France. By 2016, the tourism board's global branding RendezvousenFrance.com will give way to France.fr.

MINOR HOTEL GROUP ANNOUNCES DEVELOPMENT OF ANANTARA DESARU RESORT IN MALAYSIA

Minor Hotel Group (MHG), has announced its joint venture with Malaysian partner, Themed Attractions Resorts & Hotels Sdn. Bhd. (TAR&H), a subsidiary of Khazanah Nasional Berhad, to develop an Anantara resort in Desaru Coast in south-east Malaysia. MHG's shareholding of the 242 million MYR (USD 58 million) project is 60 per cent, with TAR&H holding 40 per cent.

Scheduled to open in 2018, the new-build Anantara Desaru Resort & Villas will be located in the heart of the new beachfront development in Desaru Coast

William E. Heinecke, Chairman and CEO, Minor International, commented, "Following our initial announcement earlier in the year of this collaboration with our Malaysian partners, we are excited to now move to the next stage of this project to bring our luxury Anantara brand to Desaru Coast. We believe Malaysia has a vast potential for growth in the tourism sector and we look forward to working with TAR&H for many years to come."

Dillip Rajakarier, Group COO of Minor International and CEO of Minor Hotel Group,

added, "The development of Anantara Desaru Resort & Villas, in partnership with TAR&H, represents MHG's first investment in Malaysia and we are confident that the new property will showcase the best that Anantara and Malaysia have to offer."

Tunku Dato' Ahmad Burhanuddin, Group Managing Director of Themed Attractions Resorts & Hotels, added, "Desaru Coast has been

APPOINTMENTS

KAUSHIK VARDHARAJAN has



been appointed as the Vice President, Development – India, Hilton Worldwide. Vardharajan holds a Masters in Hospitality Administration as well

as a Bachelor of Science in Hotel – Restaurant / Institutional Management from Johnson & Wales University, Providence, RI. A global veteran from HVS Hospitality Services, Kaushik's career with the firm spanned almost 15 years and included positions in North America and Asia.

conceptualised as the gateway to this premier luxury destination, with impressively expansive property such as Anantara Desaru Resort & Villas, planned with picturesque architecture overlooking the South China Sea."



MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL ENTERS TAIWAN WITH TAIPEI MARRIOTT

Marriott International is pleased to announce its debut into Taiwan with the opening of the Taipei Marriott Hotel. Combining Marriott Hotel's design and innovation with local Taiwanese warmth and hospitality. The Taipei Marriott Hotel is the first five-star international hotel in the dynamic Dazhi area of Taipei, the capital's new commercial hub. The largest integrated destination complex in Taiwan, the Taipei Marriot offers 320 luxury hotel rooms, a modern convention centre, a highend shopping mall and luxury apartments.

Henry Lee, Chief Operations Officer for Marriott International, Greater China,

remarks, "We are delighted to open our doors and welcome guests to Taiwan's first Marriott branded hotel. Our close proximity to important landmarks, gorgeous settings and modern facilities make the Taipei Marriott Hotel the ideal choice for business travellers and vacationers who want a high end experience and easy access to commerce, culture and recreation. Local elements of Taiwan's charm have been incorporated as a part of the first Marriott hotel in Taiwan while at the same time highlighting the quintessential brand characteristics that have made Marriott a worldwide success."



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DHARAMVEER SINGH CHOUHAN

CEO and Co-founder ZO Rooms

Q. How did you get the idea of starting such a unique venture?

A. ZO Rooms is the fastest growing budget hotel network in India today. It's a part of Zostel Hospitality Private Limited. The Indian hospitality industry has traditionally been known for luxury hotels despite having a huge budget hotel market. Budget hotels have always been around, however the category was never unified by any standard norms, rules or service guarantee that hotels could follow unanimously. Consumers could never rely or become comfortable booking a hotel in the budget category because of the ambiguity around service and standard. ZO Rooms partners with these hotels across India and standardise them to ensure that customers get same kind of superior quality and comfort across all properties.

The idea was generated during my college days at IIT and IIM. I always wanted to do something of my own. Me and all the other co-founders are avid travellers, and during one of our trips to Germany and Amsterdam, we stayed in backpacker's hostel as well as budget hotels. We were amazed to see the kind of backpackers hostel and budget hotels that these countries have which took us back to the problem of reliable and standardised hotels in our country.

We immediately realised the need to introduce a concept which could disrupt the Indian hospitality space. That gave birth to the idea of launching Zostel in the Indian market followed by ZO Rooms with a vision to revolutionise the way India travels.

Q. Please explain your business model further and how the company has grown?

A. Zostel hospitality has two brands under it – Zostel, which is the first backpackers hostel of India and ZO Rooms, which is the fastest growing budget hotel chain across India. At ZO Rooms, we identify and handpick suitable budget hotel across the country and standardise them, so that customers get superior and same service when they book ZO Rooms.

We have a large user base of more than 2,00,000 customers who have already stayed with us. As most of the customers who have stayed with us prefer to stay with us wherever they travel, at present we do more than 5,000 room nights a day. ZO Rooms is looking to create a presence of 7,500 hotels and 60,000 rooms across the country by 2016. Most of our properties are profitable within 2-3 months of launch.

A larger chunk of our customer are business travellers, however we want to cater to the entire ecosystem and become relevant to all kinds of travellers and hence, we are launching 4 new categories ZO Prime, ZO Apartment, ZO Homes, ZO Star. Currently we are more than 700+ hotels and 8000+ rooms across 51 cities in India.

Q. What is your biggest motivation?

A. Customer satisfaction is our biggest motivation. Every day we look forward to creating value for customers and enhancing our services for them. Our increasing user base of happy and satisfied customer is our biggest motivation.

Everyone behind the company are truly passionate about solving the cause of budget hotels in India by providing consumers with best in class, standardised services across price points. We are all aligned to the vision of providing best customer experience which is budget and location agnostic.

Q. What is the reason behind so many new players entering this segment? How do you differentiate yourself from the rest?

A. The budget accommodation space has always had the potential and scope with fewer choices available for the consumers in terms of branded and reliable accomodation. With Indian consumers opening up to the concept like that of Air-BnB also demonstrates the drastic shift in the consumer behaviour over the years. They have become more flexible and experimental. ZO Rooms was launched basis this research on the space with a vision to change the way people book accommodation in India.

Over the past few months ZO Rooms has been able to build and offer customised experience to each guest with the help of technology. It is currently maintaining over 80 per cent utilisation across all properties and 50 per cent bookings are coming directly from Mobile App. Going forward, ZO will provide a seamless 360 degree experience to anybody staying outside their home. The app is breathtakingly revolutionising any contemporary traveller's life. More than 42 per cent of ZO's customers are repeat guests who always stay at a ZO on their travel.

The value proposition that we bring to the table for

customers which differentiate us from our competitors is our services and the entire experience of booking and staying with us. We offer an experiential stay at a standardised and safe property backed by seamless technology is what differentiates us from our competitors. launched our new category- ZO Prime, wherein we are partnering mid-size hotels to standardise the experience at their properties. Our aim is to work with all sorts of accommodation properties to build on our categories by engaging with hotels.

Q. How your business model fits in as a part of hospitality industry overall. Are you killing business for popular budget/mid-size hotel chains like Ginger **Hotels and Lemon Tree?**

A. The Indian budget hotel industry is estimated to be 20 billion dollars, we believe that with such a huge scope and operating ecosystem, we can co-exist with the mid-size as well as other hotel categories. We recently

Q. Global expansions if any?

A. Recently we forayed into the international market with the launch of Zostel in Vietnam. We will continue to expand in India as well as globally. We plan to focus a lot on our services to provide customers a hassle free and memorable stay experience with us. We will focus on innovation to further enhance our value proposition and continue to expand.







ASHISH KUMAR Managing Partner Agnitio Consulting LLP

Q. How do you see the industry evolve in the last decade or so?

A. We believe the travel industry has come a long way in the last decade with fundamental transformation happening.

Digitalisation has completely transformed the landscape, making life better for users. With the advent of e-ticket more than 10 years back, we put in more efficiency in transactions as well as much needed price discovery ease and transparency. Then with the advent of smart phones and mobile apps in recent years, it has continued to fundamentally disrupt the operating model. More than 33 per cent of transactions of all OTAs are done through mobile now.

MakeMytrip has recently grown to a valuation of 1.1 billion dollars and listed in US, Yatra in a matter of eight years has grown to a 1000+ team and 5.5 million users per month and so on. Such a growth was unimaginable in a non digital world a decade back. Such is the power of digitalisation.

Customers today are spoilt for choices and more empowered than ever before. Travel companies have also been able to make their operations more streamlined and gain economies of scale in operations.

We work with lot of start-ups who are further pushing the boundaries of the technology disruption in travel space making user experience further better with integration of related location based services to the end user.

Q. What is your view of the OTAs growing business in India?

A. Online travel sales with the advent of MakeMyTrip back in 2005 completely changed the way ticketing was done in India. Online Travel Agency (OTA) shares in overall transactions have increased significantly and are threatening the traditional ticketing models and TMCs.

MakeMyTrip, Yatra, Cleartrip and Goibibo make up almost 90 per cent of the entire OTA market in India with MakeMyTrip leading the pack along with Yatra.

India OTA market is growing roughly at over 40 per cent CAGR. According to PhocusWright, in 2014, more than 39 per cent of bookings were done in India only through channels. Mobile accounted for nearly 20 per cent of booking transactions value and it is projected to hit \$3.2 billion by 2017, with OTAs accounting for the vast majority of that figure.

Q. What challenges you feel the industry is currently faced with? Are they ready?

A. We see travel being a largely unorganised sector with more than 20,000+ travel agents and hundreds of transport companies / car rental companies given the low barriers to entry. Although, OTAs and cab aggregators have tried to consolidate the market in some way, it still largely remains unorganised. In fact, we work with lot of traditional travel businesses whose second generation are not excited to continue in travel business. we have helped them get consolidated with larger players.

We see lack of processes, technology use and alignment to dynamic changes / user preferences as major challenges to travel companies. Most of them continue to run as small companies with lack of scalable operating model architecture. Despite a lot of potential, we see lot of these companies not living up to the expectations due to these challenges. Additionally, we see lack of skilled manpower and learning / training investment as a major impediment to growth of small travel companies in India.

Q. There are lot of start-ups entering the travel space? What is your advice

A. Start-ups are very close to us as we are extremely start-up focussed and consider ourselves as a start-up as well. We work with a wide range of start-ups in travel with a focus on technology and see lot of great ideas coming through. What we have seen though is that focus gets shifted so much to the technology that sometimes founders lose sight of the user experience from a purely travel domain perspective. Also, there are nuances of the travel industry that these start-ups are unaware of and they feel clueless and waste a lot of costs in managing them. It is very important to ensure that adequate travel expertise is available in your team before you venture into this space.

Q. What problems are still unsolved in the travel industry from a customer standpoint?

A. The industry has solved the price discovery, options and operational efficiency / user experience problem but a lot still needs to be done around personalisation of travel through preferences learning, dynamic itinerary planning for users along with integrated third party locations based services. There is also a huge opportunity in vernacularisation services across the globe especially in India given the diversity we flourish in. Augmented Reality and predictive analytics will be a huge game changer in the years to come and we are already seeing lot of start-ups coming in this space.

Overall, we see ample opportunities around products and technology to disrupt the travel space and in fact we work with a large business house which is trying to integrate experience and provide a comprehensive travel bouquet to its customers.



DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM GOVERNMENT OF MANIPUR



November 21 - 30, 2015



"Travelling is not just an activity, it's the art of broadening your vision through the priceless experience."





The Government of Manipur, Spearheaded by the Tourism Department, celebrates the Manipur Sangai Festival from 21st to 30th of November. The Festival strives to showcase and promote the best of what the state has to offer to the world in terms of art and culture, handloom, handicrafts & fine arts, indigenous sports, cuisives & music, eco & adventure sports as well as the scenic natural beauty of the land.



Q. How do you see the transport space? Lot of cab aggregator companies are being setup?

A. We see a lot of potential and promise in the cab aggregation space with a majority of drivers / cabs in India still being unorganised. What we need to figure out is the security aspect of the journey, especially for the female passengers in India.

We believe in any industry in India, there are challenges that need to be addressed around security and compliances – travel and transport being no different. We strongly believe that industry has come back strongly after such stringent actions by the government and it has actually helped improve their processes and user experience.

We are seeing a lot of companies developing 24X7 security applications, panic button support related products and services, integrated in the car rental services to provide assurance to passengers that they are being tracked and any support as required is available at a short notice.

There are also significant efforts being put into the entire driver screening process to ensure that proper background checks and verifications are done before having a driver sit in a cab and carry passengers.

Q. What do you think of the corporate travel? Is that problem solved?

A. We believe that "Unmanaged Travel Spend" constitutes almost 70 per cent of all travel related expenses in the corporates. With the advent of OTAs, most of the employees prefer using an OTA for booking and then claim reimbursement for the booking as opposed to being managed through a TMC. There is a need for a better, efficient and transparent way of managing corporate travel integrated with expense management system. We are working with one of the largest corporate travel technology companies in India and helping them build a robust platform to address these challenges.

Q. Are you bullish about the future of travel industry?

A. India's Travel and Tourism market is USD 42 billion and growing at a CAGR of 10 per cent or so for the next decade, so it's a great space to be in. We see lot of international companies such as AirBnB, Uber etc. entering the Indian market so there are exciting prospects for sure. We see consolidation happening in future in both OTAs as well as transport space.

Q. How do you see the market changing in future?

A. We believe that the travel and transport industry is going under a paradigm shift and it will continue in a big way in the future. Technology has completely changed the canvas and continues to disrupt travel deeply. Who would have imagined that the largest car rental company is Uber (worth billions of dollars) with no fleet of its own, largest B&B properties company is AirBnB (even surpassing global hotel companies worth billions of dollars) without even owning any real estate and so on. Who would have thought such a disruption. Traditional companies have the tough task of reacting quickly or else perish. In the next 10 years, we will also see a lot of consolidation taking place, especially in the OTA space as well as in the car rental / radio cabs business. Large companies would need to diversify their portal of products and services to sell more to the customers.

Overall, we strongly believe it is an amazing time to be in the travel space and great things behold in the future for our sector and we are exciting to be part of this journey with our clients.



Cricketing legend and actor Brett Lee shares his favourite spots to visit in Sydney and NSW to celebrate the national release of unINDIAN, filmed exclusively in Sydney.



Westin Hotels & Resorts welcomes Lara Dutta as newest Well-being Brand Advocate for Asia Pacific



ACTE EDUCATION FORUM CONCLUDES IN INDIA

TT BUREAU

he Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE) hosted a successful education forum on October 15, 2015, at the ITC Maurya New Delhi. The ACTE Education Forum New Delhi welcomed business travel executives from all over the region, who came together to enhance their understanding of the corporate travel market, network with colleagues and openly discuss the future of the business travel industry.

The programme included discussions on 'Global Risk Profile,' 'Payments Best Practice for India and Beyond' and 'The Next

























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KNOWLEDGE HOUR: A BIG **SUCCESS**

TT BUREAU

t was a much awaited day. Facility Managers witnessed yet another Knowledge Hour organised by FM Zone which was held at Hotel Park, New Delhi. The event included various brainstorming sessions conducted by industry veterans on the agenda. The event also conducted excellent educational programmes in the Facility domain.

Naveen Gulia, renowned motivational speaker, made the evening an unforgettable experience. Glimpses from the event:













(Q) What are the facilities that your hotel offers to luxury and leisure travellers?

We offer contemporary and engaging hospitality through a range of signature amenities. The tone is set right at the lobby, which is wonderfully accentuated by Indo-Saracenic architecture, reflective of the grandeur of Mysore's palaces. Our rooms are extra-large with breathtaking views of the city and the golf course. In addition to the conventional welcome amenities, our rooms offer jars of regional specialties too. Our exquisite turndown service features a cup of hot chocolate and the sleep concierge offers guests a pillow menu featuring a wide selection to choose from. Our bathrooms sport designer tubs and for those who opt for a truly luxurious bath, we have a bath butler service in place. Food and beverage is another hallmark luxury at our hotel. Our global gourmet cuisines can be customised to individual tastes and features extensive health food options.

Those who look forward to swimming should find our pool with a mini island a refreshing experience. An energizing spa, well-equipped fitness and business centres and one of the largest ball rooms in the city are the other amenities designed to lure the leisure and luxury seekers. All these are exclusive and powered by highly personalised and attentive service.

(Q) What are the options for visitors to entertain their guests?

Business discussions are best done at our lounge, featuring plush cushions, Wi-Fi and a commodious ambience. Pleasure seekers can mix work at Spring, the All Day Dining. The restaurant is an amalgamation of the elegance of indoors and the balminess of outdoors, extending to the poolside. A range of Indian and international beverages are served here, in addition to sumptuous buffets thrice a day, through the week, featuring authentic global cuisines.

Our hotel has been blessed with a location which is just opposite the golf course and adjacent to the Mall of Mysore. The golf course is a wonderful venue to entertain guests, and of course the Mall of Mysore provides shopping and as well as dining and cinema options. Our guests have always found the hotel's proximity to these places to be an added advantage.

(Q) How has the last year been, since its opening?

As a team, when we look back at the last one year since we opened, we feel so much pride. We had fun opening this hotel and our conviction of becoming the most sought after hotel in the city has become a reality. We can proudly say that we are the preferred address for corporate and leisure travellers alike. We have also become an important organisation in the CSR space of Mysore and with our 'Responsible Business Initiatives,' we have been able to reach out to the community too.





TT BUREAU

(Q) What is your hotel's corporate positioning?

Le Meridien Kochi is uniquely positioned to outperform the competition by owning the global guest. Our corporate positioning involves GPS (Global Personalisation @ Starwood), with strong emphasis on "Connect" (Personalisation is a dialogue), "Sell" (Personalisation drives Profit) and "Deliver" (Personalisation is people helping people).

Le Meridien Kochi mixes contemporary culture with European heritage, and is committed to providing an interactive and culturally enriching experience to its guests. This is the very reason we are a favourite among progressive and orward thinking international travellers.

(Q) What are the facilities that your hotel offers to luxury and leisure travellers?

Le Meridien Kochi is one of Kochi's most exclusive addresses since 2000. The hotel is adorned in a contemporary style with modern amenities and its well-appointed 223 guest rooms and 13 banquet halls; they inspire a new perspective of discovery for both business and leisure travellers. For us, its more about benefits than facilities.

Le Meridien Kochi persistently strives to decode the evolving behaviours of individual luxury guests, but also the evolving facets of experience that luxury hotels and resorts like us can offer, be it our First Indian Museum Restaurant – "Ember," qualified Doctor for recommending the best Ayurveda Spa, personalised room amenities,

exclusive access to art and culture visits, club lounge access, wines of the world and making sustainability efforts, while at the same time engaging our guests with our associates. We ensure that our guests have iconic experience as they take on a stimulating journey of wellness.

Le Meridien Kochi endeavours to customise each experience and this is why we have associates who help to personalise each stay, bringing us closer to our Global Personalisation @Starwood vision of making each guest feel special and recognised, every time.

(Q) What are the options for corporate visitors to entertain their guests?

We have set up a hospitality culture of "Everyone Serves," through which we ensure that guests' expectations are matched. At Le Meridien Kochi, from casual beer at pool wherein our associates will engage guests in a game of pool to corporate visitors exploring our F&B outlets, the latest recipes amalgamated with concepts of Farmer Market Brunch, to inviting guests for Grape Stomping, or just offering guests soulful music while they are dining, we have everything in place for a great experience for quests. Also, if you want to challenge the cricket team, guests and their friends can join us in friendly matches. The idea is "more interactions rather than transactions."

The newest additions are invitation to organic farming, where Corporate visitors can learn lessons on organic farming and healthy diet and taking a boat for leisure sail around the mysterious backwaters of Kochi.

(Q) What is your corporate outreach programme?

Starwood Preferred Guest® (SPG®) is the proprietary, award-winning and multibrand loyalty program of Starwood properties. SPG program benefits and initiatives encourage guests to concentrate their stays within Starwood's ten distinct life style brands.

SPG program has been the most innovative and rewarding loyalty program in the hospitality industry. In each of its first seven years of existence, the SPG program has won prestigious travel awards based on votes from frequent travellers worldwide. SPG members can earn and redeem Starpoints® at over 1,200 properties, including, Le Meridien Kochi, operating under a Starwood brand.

SPG gives you the richest elite benefits in the industry, including the opportunity to achieve Gold or Platinum status for life:

- Free Night Awards Redeem for stays without blackout dates, even during holidays. Starting at just 2,000 Starpoints®. If a standard room is available, it's yours.
- SPG® MomentsSM Tee off with your favorite golf pro, head backstage with the band or walk the red carpet. Member's Starpoints give them VIP access like no other to sporting events, culinary experiences, concerts and more.
- Must-have Mobile Apps Travel smarter with the SPG Apps for iPad, iPhone and Android. Get the info one needs and access to your account automatically, no matter where guests are.





India is home to many exotic locales and challenging layouts which houses golf courses and are preferred destinations for both corporate and leisure travellers

TT BUREAU

he regular tourism platter of India has always served dramatic contours of nature, fascinating wildlife, spirit-renewing pilgrimages and, of course, colourful customs and traditions. Now, the country is fast gearing itself to add more zing to its traditional tourism platter. Slowly but steadily, India is heading towards catering to niche tourism areas. And, in this emerging sector, golf tourism seems to be standing at the forefront.

Like India, its golf courses, too, exhibit a magical diversity, making golfing in the country exciting and stimulating like never before—from teeing off in the mountains to eyeing for the holes in the plains and deserts, India offers a diverse range of golfing destinations.

Golf breaks in India go beyond tees and greens—besides testing your sporting skills, you get opportunities galore to savour the unique customs and rich heritage of Indian cities that house unique golf courses. Most of the country's golf courses are well-connected by road, rail, and air, and have excellent accommodation facilities. Today's Traveller brings you some of India's prominent golf courses.

GREEN MEADOWS GOLF ACADEMY

Housed in an eco-friendly park, the GMGA Golf Course is the first golf course of Gujarat's Saurashtra region. Set against the backdrop of water bodies, hills and colourful vistas of wild flowers, GMCA is one of the much-sought after golfing destination in western India. And, even for those who are not that keen in taking up golfing, the nine-hole golf course has a lot to offer.

The golf course boasts a natural lake that offers ample opportunities for exciting boating amidst serene locales. From the bird watching towers at the golf course, you can cherish the company of the winged friends. The golf course also has an amusement park for children and a food court.

QUICK VIEW

No. of holes 9

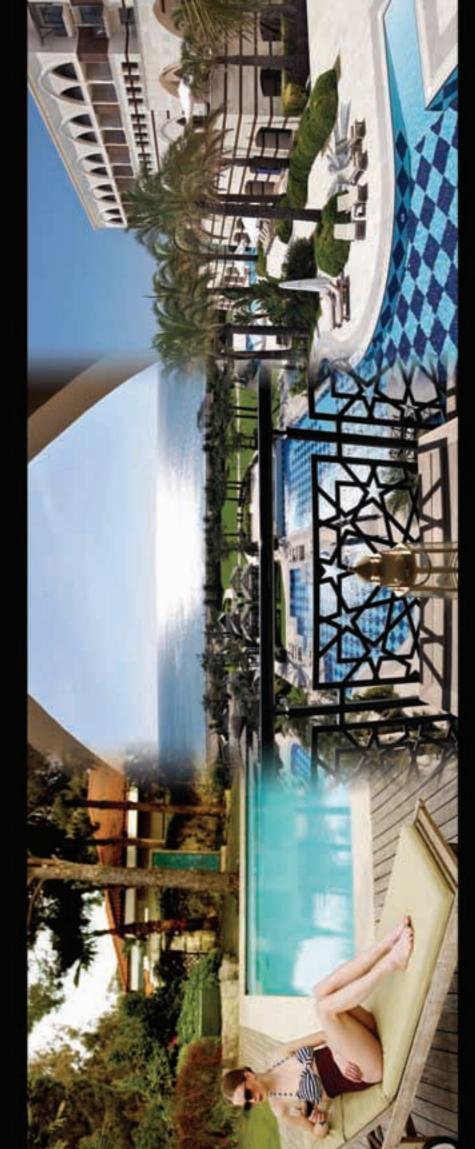
Yardage 1,841

POONA GOLF COURSE

One of the oldest golf courses in India, the Poona Golf Course is popular for its immaculate fairways, interesting undulation and slopes. The greens of this course are believed to be the



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fastest in the country. Dotted with mighty banyan trees and majestic flowering trees, the golf course is spread over a sprawling 100-acre.

As the course has over 35,000 trees, the real test for golfers is to manage to keep out the trees that line most of the fairways and holes. The course is widely appreciated for its lush green vegetation and extreme bunkers, which pose varied challenges before golfers. One of the major highlights of the golf course is its unique floodlit night driving range that offers practice facility in the dark. Quite popular among golfers in the country, the Poona Golf Course remains a busy place all year round.

QUICK VIEW

No. of holes 18 Yardage 6,820

ROYAL SPRING GOLF COURSE

Designed and laid out by the world-famous golf architect, Robert Trent Jones Jr. II, who has the unique distinction of designing about 500 courses, worldwide, the Royal Spring Golf Course in Srinagar is an eclectic combination of aesthetic delight and golfing pleasure. Set against the dramatic backdrop of the Zabarwan Hills, the 18hole golf course overlooks the picturesque Dal Lake.

Perceived as one of the best golf courses in the country, the Royal Spring Golf Course is turfed with cool weather grass of different shades. Widely acknowledged among the golfing community, both in India and outside, the golf course is known for posing challenges for all levels of the players. The much talked about hole on the course is the par-3 fifth, which offers panoramic views of the magnificent Dal Lake.

QUICK VIEW

No. of holes 18 6,985 Yardage

SHILLONG GOLF COURSE

Scenic, enjoyable and challenging, that's how the Shillong Golf Course can be summed up. Situated amidst one of the most attractive locales of the town, the golf course is set in an undulating valley covered with pine and rhododendron trees. The golf course is recognised for its tight fairways that are carpeted with ingenious species of local grass that hardens the soil, posing challenges for golfers.

While the tight fairways are difficult to negotiate, equally challenging are the greens that are acknowledged for their lightning fast speed. Unlike other golf courses, here obstructions don't come in the form of trees and bunkers only, but showers also—Shillong is one of the wettest places on the planet.

QUICK VIEW

No. of holes 18 Yardage 6,100

BANGALORE GOLF COURSE

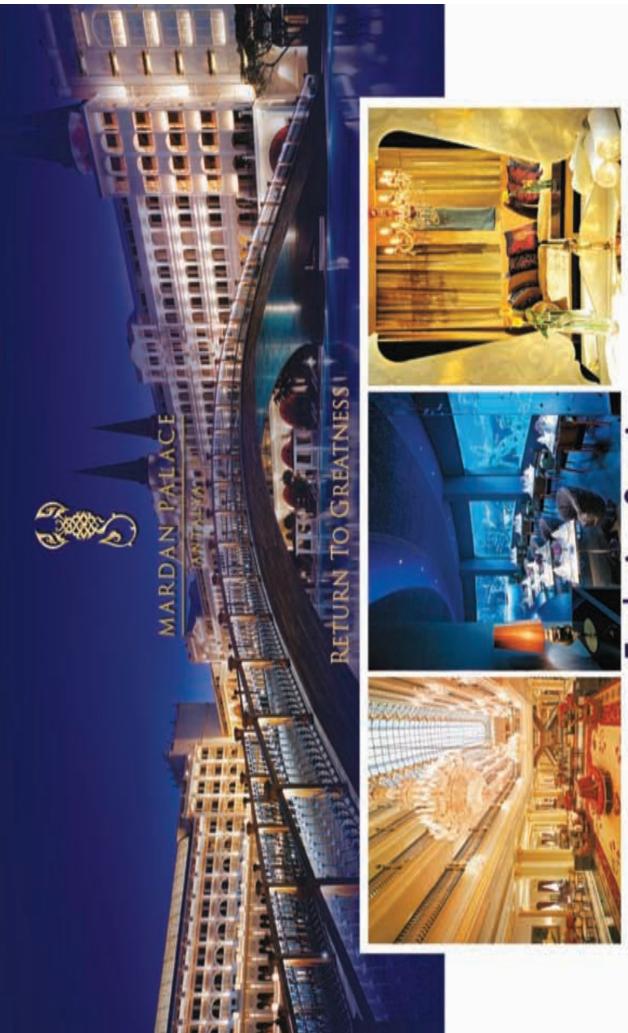
The second oldest golf course in India, the Bangalore Golf Course was redesigned by the renowned golf architect from Australia, Peter Thomson. Founded in 1876, the golf course has lush greens that re very well manicured. A large number of flowering trees, including gulmohar, palm and eucalyptus are found all along the tight fairways.

Besides trees and deep ditches, crows also serve as a major obstacle on this course. Yes, crows often take away the golf ball, mistaking it for an egg. So, it's no wonder why the logo of Bangalore Golf Club features a crow in its beak. Deftly packed in around 60-acre of land, the 18-hole course has very limited water constraints.

QUICK VIEW

No. of holes 18 Yardage 6,161







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ALL ABOUT **SOPHISTICATION**

The newly opened Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru, comes with promises of a sophisticated and luxurious stay, offering superlative experiences

ne Hong Kong based Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts has opened doors to a new address for sophisticated stay, at the Garden City of India, Bangaluru. The all new Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru, is located in the city's Palace Road, with the philosophy of "hospitality from the heart," instated at the centre of its framework.

The hotel occupies a lavish two acre land, located between the central business district and residential suburb and overlooks the Bangalore Palace and Cubbon Park. Located just 30 minutes from the international airport, Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru, is all of 19 storeys tall, with a lobby that romanticises the bygone era of Bangaluru royalty. Walking into the hotel, guests are welcomed by a lobby that is nine metre high, with alluring chandeliers hanging from its ceiling and marble columns highlighted by illuminating wall sconces. Add this to the colourful attire, such as, embroidered sari and jewel-toned long coats adorned by the staff, giving an impression of local colours and textures

Furthermore, the hotel goes on to impress its patrons with its stylish decor - marble from Italy, Turkey and China; textiles originating from the United Kingdom and Asia; and a glass elevator to shuttle guests to the function areas. The touch of India never ceases, as the Lobby Lounge includes sandstone wall installation sourced in from Rajasthan and depicts a goldstained palm leaf pattern.

For corporate and leisure guests, the hotel's 30 suites painted by gorgeous colours of gold, plum and green are available. These include three Governor Suites and the majestic Shangri-La Suite. Guests would have the privilege to access the Horizon Club Longue, and enjoy breakfast, tea, evening cocktails and the services of a concierge team.

DINE

Shangri-la Hotel, Bengaluru, has already made its mark in the city's social circuit, by presenting eight dining options, in both indoor and outdoor settings, headed by Executive Chef, Antonio Tardi.

Among all, guests should certainly try group's signature Chinese restaurant, Shang Palace, launched for the first time in India. This is just the right place for guests to enjoy a meal of Chinese specialities, from Cantonese dim sum to the flavours of Sichuan. All this, surrounded by a natural setting of greenery; the hotel's b Cafe is its all-day dining restaurant, which promises some of the best International and local cuisines. b Cafe has interactive kitchens, along with upholstered seating. Also, for those in the mood for something sweet can hop into the adjoining b Cafe Pastry, a haven for sweets and savouries.

Caprese, a restaurant dedicated to Mediterranean cuisine serves seafood, traditional Italian dishes, Middle Eastern fare and also, Spanish tapas. Also, dedicated to the spirit India, Ssafron serves both north and south Indian delicacies. Japanese cuisine lovers must try, Yataii – a Japanese restaurant offering a combination of traditional and modern Japanese cuisine.

SPA AND HEALTH

Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru knows quite well that guests need rejuvenation and relaxation, and this is why CHI, The Spa, group's signature Spa, has been brought to existence. The magnificent decor of the spa complements its dark timber floors, and is managed by professional therapists who take guests into a world of wellbeing and luxury. Here, signature treatments like Chi Journeys offer holistic wellness and Spa retreat to the wellness seekers. These treatments may be experienced in one of nine treatment rooms, including VIP couple suites and a dedicated Ayurveda room.

Also, adjacent to the spa is the health club and the kid's swimming pools. The 24-hour gym has all the latest

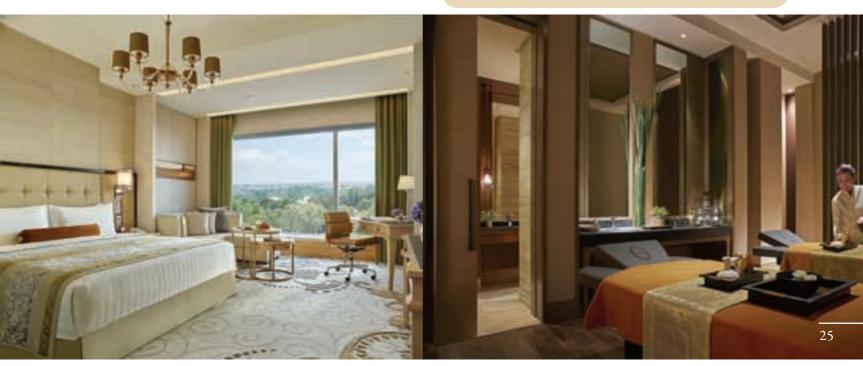


equipments for gym enthusiasts. Other hotel wellness facilities include a sauna, steam room and Jacuzzi, weekly yoga sessions and the Run Well programme – a running tour of nearby Bangalore Palace or Cubbon Park, accompanied by a health club associate.

Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru, is also well-equipped with function rooms which are spread over two levels. The Grand Ballroom has its own pre-function area, and a ceiling of 9.5m, covering 739sq.m. The venue can hold up to 900 guests for weddings and grand events.



Jens Corder, General Manager, Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru, comments, "Our diverse portfolio of accommodation, dining destinations and meeting space means we are perfectly positioned to set new standards and provide an elite urban lifestyle for our guests from the community and all over the world."



Welcome to Turkish Airlines Lounge Istanbul

Turkish Airlines Business Class travellers, Miles&Smiles Elite members with a guest, Miles&Smiles Elite Plus members with their families and Star Alliance Gold members can take advantage of our brand new CIP lounge.

Lounge Istanbul is exclusively designed for your comfort and entertainment. A buffet of mouth-watering sandwiches, croissants, pastries, tarts, soups, fruits, nuts and more await you along with a selection of hot and cold soft drinks, tea, coffee and fresh squeezed orange juice.

Listen to relaxing music as you play a round of pool at our billiard hall. Afterwards, you can surf the Internet on our free Wi-Fi, catch up on your favorite TV shows or even see a movie at our cinema. A business centre is available for those passengers who need a quiet place to concentrate on their work. In the mood for some light reading?

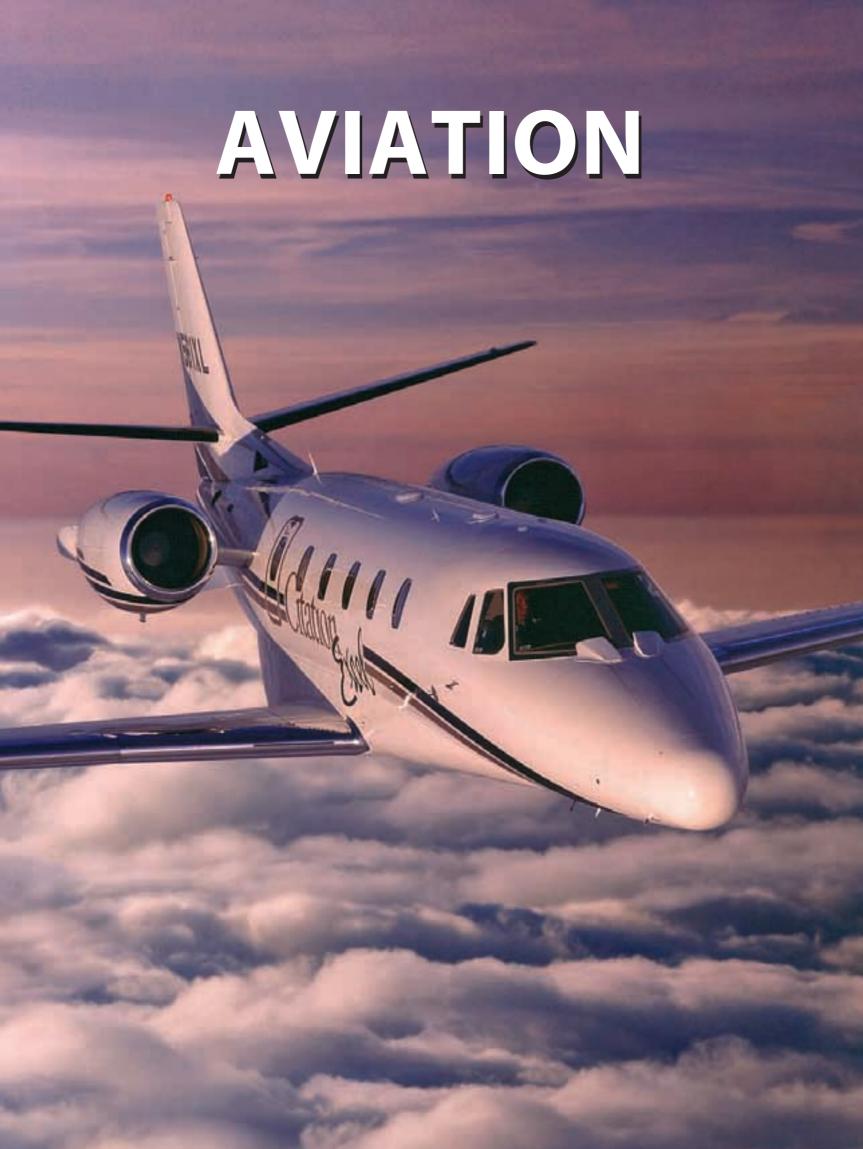
Leaf through local and foreign newspapers and magazines available in the media centre. Private rooms and shower facilities are available for those who need to freshen up or get some rest. Don't forget to ask for your personal bath kit and towel at the reception. Daycare services as well as a diaper changing trolley are available for parents. For your spiritual needs, a prayer room is also available.

While abroad at airports around the world, Miles&Smiles Elite and Elite Plus members and a guest have access to all international CIP lounges that carry the Star Alliance Gold logo.









FOUNDATION STONE LAYING OF NEW TERMINAL BUILDING AT VIJAYAWADA

The Foundation Stone laying ceremony of the New Terminal Building at Vijayawada Airport by the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh in the august presence of P Ashok Gajapathi Raju, Union Civil Aviation Minister, recently concluded at Vijayawada airport.

The proposed New Terminal Building is a steel and glass structure having state-of-the-art modern passenger friendly facilities such as Baggage Handling System, Inclined Arrival Baggage Claim Carousels, Central Air-Conditioning, Public Address System, Fire Alarm System, Flight Information Display System, CCTV for surveillance, Check-in

counters with Common Use Terminal Equipment, Carp parking etc. The new terminal building will be capable of handling 500 pax (250 departing and 250 arriving) at a time.

Inspired around the rural-urban blend of Vijayawada's culture the interiors of the airport have been designed to portray a unique and smart Gateway to the region. The local environment and culture references as well as the historical artand architecture of the region are interpreted in a modern way to add grandeur to the space.



NEW DELHI WELCOMES BRITISH AIRWAYS' NEW BOEING 787-9 DREAMLINER

British Airways' inaugural Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner flight to New Delhi witnessed a grand celebration treating guests with an experience like never before! The first flight complete with a brand new First cabin touched down at Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi at 0855 hours on Monday, 26 October 2015.

Speaking on this momentous occasion, Robert Williams, British Airways', Head of Sales for Asia-Pacific, said, "Today marks a very special day for us at British Airways as we bring our state-of-the-art

Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner to New Delhi complete with a brand new First cabin. We invite our customers from New Delhi to experience our luxurious new Dreamliner series whilst enjoying British Airways' award-winning on board services."

Rahul Gambhir, Managing Director of Twinings India Limited said, "Twinings originated in London in 1706 and is today the most premium global tea brand. We believe in offering our consumers the finest tea experiences in all the markets we operate including India."









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TURKISH AIRLINES AND THE TURKISH TOURIST BOARD PARTNER ON NEW TRAVEL CAMPAIGN

Turkish Airlines, recently announced a partnership with the Turkish Tourist Board on a global campaign. The campaign features leading global creators from YouTube, Snapchat and Facebook and will see them embark on a mystery tour across Turkey.

The campaign will fly prominent global creators, including Snapchat star Jerome Jarre, Casey Neistat, German vlogger star Sami Slimani as well as soccer freestyle group F2, to Istanbul with the promise of a trip to an additional destination within Turkey.

The project follows on from 2014's #FortuneTraveller initiative, a Turkish Airlines project, managed by global MCN Rightster, which delivered over 10 million views and saw sales increase by 14 per cent during the campaign period.

Neset Dereli, Interactive Marketing Manager at Turkish Airlines, adds: "Following the success of the #FortuneTraveller campaign, we are really excited to launch another global social campaign featuring some of the world's most influential creators."



Irfan Onal, at the Turkish Tourist Board adds: "We have created a once-in-a-lifetime trip for the creators, in order to showcase the best of what Turkey has to offer."

lan Samuel, Managing Director of Brand Solutions at Rightster, comments: "We are delighted to be working with Turkish Airlines and the Turkish Tourist Board to deliver a global campaign."

TURKISH AIRLINES DEBUTS MIAMI

With existing services to Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Toronto, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Washington, Boston, Montreal, and San Francisco, Turkish Airlines adds Miami to its network as the 12th destination in the Americas.

"We're thrilled to name Miami as the newest gateway in the US and proud to serve to one of the most influential tourism centres in the world. Our global network and



award-winning service will make international travel easier and more convenient for both business and leisure travellers in this area." said Turkish Airlines' CMO Ahmet Olmuştur.

Miami flights will be operated 7 times weekly and for the first six months of operation, there is a special offer for Miles&Smiles members, with a 25 per cent reduction in the miles needed to redeem either award tickets or upgrades.

ETHIOPIAN TO LAUNCH NEW FLIGHTS TO NORTH AMERICA AND ASIA



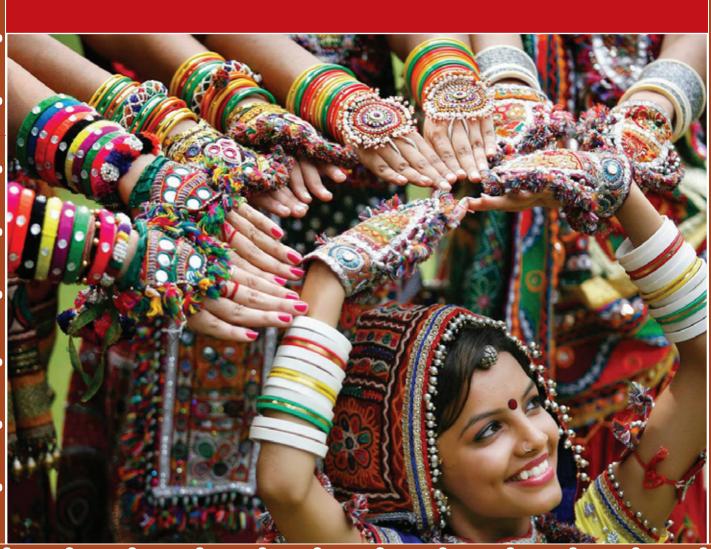
Ethiopian Airlines is set to expand its network to North America and Asia next year. The expansion is made possible by the delivery of Ethiopian's first batch of 343-seat A350-900s along with additional 270-seat Boeing 787-8s, according to a report by Centre for Aviation (CAPA).

As per the plan, New York will be Ethiopian's fourth destination in North America joining Toronto, Washington Dulles and Los Angeles as the new flights kick off in June 2016. The report added that Ethiopian is also looking at Chicago and Houston, which could be launched in 2017.

In Asia too, the Airline is planning to launch services to Chengdu (China), Ho Chi Minh (Vietnam), Jakarta (Indonesia) as well as Singapore. East Asia has been the main driver of Ethiopian's rapid expansion in recent years – with two destinations added in 2015 for a total of nine – and will continue to be the Airline's focus as it doubles its fleet over the next decade.

FESTIVALS OF GUJARAT







ndia's western most state with varied terrain, the image of India vividly reflects on the face of Gujarat. It is the glorious manifestation of a progressive nation, having all the natural resources to excel as a favourite tourist destination; Gujarat is a land of vivacity. It is here, where the chant of "Aavo Padharo," will promise you a great experience, one which is likely to leave an impression forever. Through its infinite warmth, the state of Gujarat knows how to charm its tourists in every possible way.

Its welcoming motto of, "Aavo Padharo," is replete with the promise of a great experience which is unlike any other, welcoming guests and initiating a sense of warm hospitality.

Derived from the word, "Gujjars (an ethnic Indian group)," who came in through Punjab to settle in Western India, Gujarat is weaved by geographical splendour, with the majestic Arabian Sea onto which

it stretches out, the Great Rann of Kutch and its Thar Desert, the famous beaches, and countless historical places. At the same time, the state has a rich culture of arts and crafts, sculpture and not to forget, festivals and fairs that bring forth the joie de verve of life. All this and much more intermingle with a future which is full of promises in the great land of Gujarat. The state is no less than a magnificent fiesta of sight and sound. Gujarat is also the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel, making it a beacon of hope and peace.

With such a vast reserve of natural resources and a hub of heritage and modernism, Gujarat celebrates its festivals and fairs like no other. Dwelling on the vision of a truly secular and democratic state, Gujarat has a wide range of year-round festivities which are much revered by tourists and locals alike. One of the many ways to celebrate the spirit of this state is by celebrating its festivals and fairs.

RANN UTSAV

Organised by the tourism department of Gujarat, the event is an opportunity for those who want to understand the spirit of Gujarat. Held in Kutch, one of the most diverse districts in terms of ecology and ethnicity, the utsav or festival reflects the convulsion of cultures. It is full of vibrancy, with a celebration of Gujarati arts, crafts, music, dance and much more.

The festival is held for ninety days, during the full moon night of the winter months. This year, the festival is held from 23rd December, 2015, to 29th February, 2016.

It is an extravaganza of all things India, and is brimming with hospitality and vigour. The festival, with close to about 2,00,000 visitors coming in from about twenty different countries, is an awe-inspiring celebration of sight and sound.

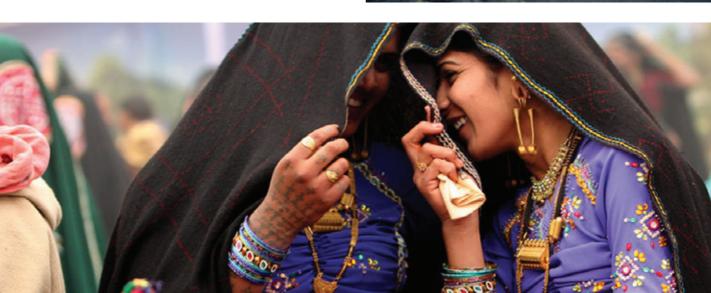
The festival begins in the famed White Desert of Dhordo at Kutch, covering an area of 5, 00, 000sq.m. While an array of folk music and dance performances organised in the shimmering moonlit landscape provides the most enchanting experience, the colorful fairs which are held near the beach or the banks of a lake are abound with the spirit of festivity.

A grand tent city of approximately 350 tents, consisting of air- conditioned and non-air-conditioned tents have been set up. Here tourists can opt from, Premium Tents, Deluxe AC Swiss Cottage, Non-AC Swiss Cottage and The Darbari Suite.

There are many recreations available for tourists here at the festival, these include, Para Motoring, ATV, Rifle Shooting, Star Gazing, Pool, Archery, and much







more. Also, during the festival, Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd arranges tours with transport, accommodations, food and guided sightseeing. It is a great opportunity to visit one of India's most colorful regions. There are some very interesting historical and natural attractions close to the festival. These are, Aina Mahal, Kala Dungar (at 1500ft., it is the highest point in Kutch), Vijay Vilas Palace, Mandvi Beach and the Swaminarayan Temple. Also, the Banni grasslands is the place to see the magnificent and mysterious Chir Batti Phenomenon – unexplained light that changes its colour to blue, red and yellow.

Kutch, the cultural district of Gujarat, has many attractions for tourists. The music here is influenced by Sufi and Folk songs, instruments such as Bhorrindo,

Manjira , Morchay, Jodia Pava and Rava are played here in this region. The language spoken in Kutch is Kutchi language.

NAVRATRI

Navratri, or the festival of "Nine Nights," is a widely celebrated festival in India, mainly practiced by the Hindus, but it is only in Gujarat where the vivacity of the whole thing comes under light. Gujarat is perhaps the only state which celebrates the festival for nine nights at a stretch in the form of dance. Tourists can witness how each night, every corner of Gujarat light up and people gather in open spaces to celebrate the divine goddess who is referred to as Shakti. The dance is popularly known as Ras Garba in









Gujarati, and originates from Lord Krishna's style of worshiping.

This festival's main point of attraction is the Goddess shrine which is erected by communities across the state to mark the start of the festival on the first day of the month of Ashwin.

Typically, such a shrine would include a garbo, an earthenware pot in which a betel nut, coconut and a silver coin are kept. Much like the festival of Durga Puja performed elsewhere during this time, Navratri also sees the worship of Goddess, which is broken down into three parts.

The first is the worship of Durga, the Goddess who destroyed the evil demon Mahishasura; the second is to seek the blessings of Lakshmi, the Goddess of prosperity; the third is for Goddess Saraswati, who is the Goddess of wisdom and art. The dance form which is typical during the time of Navratri is usually held after prayers have been offered.

The tenth day with which the festival concludes is known as Dashera, or Vijayadashami, as it is called in some other parts of India. It is a celebration of joy and laughter, shared with friends, families and



neighbours. This is also the time for Gujarati savouries – fafda, a salty fried crunchy snack and jalebi, a sweet fried sticky snack.

Regarded as a divine spiritual practice in the state of Gujarat, the Navrati nights form a circle of spirituality through garba. This is the time when women give up certain eatables as a ritual of purification, and practice spirituality through dance,



which often puts them in a state of trance. A typical garba during Navratri will have a circle moving around the central representation of a universal creative force, and dance in unison.

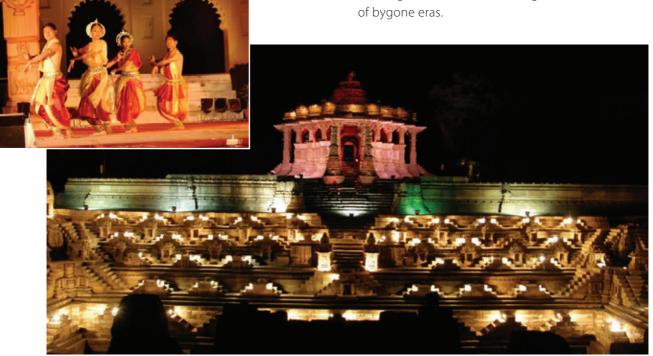
MODHERA DANCE FESTIVAL

The three day dance festival is held every year during the end of January after the Uttarayan festival at the premises of the Sun Temple in Modhera, which is located in the Southwest of Mehsana district. The historical temple from the Golden Age of the Solanki Empire acts as a background to the alluring hues of the festival, attracting tourists from all across the country and abroad. The festival of arts, dance,



music, and culture is one of the most celebrated ones in the country, presenting a unique opportunity for all to witness the state's rich cultural heritage through dance. The festival is hosted by the Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited (TCGL), to showcase and celebrate the inherited treasure of performing arts of the country.

Modhera, the temple of the Sun is just the right place for hosting this grand event. It is a relic of the past, whose patrons were the famous Solankis. The majestic architecture of the temple gives the festival its much needed glamour and grandiose. Modhera Dance Festival sees dance troupes and performers from all regions of the nation who come to showcase their regional art forms, narrating folklores and stories of bygone eras.







TANARIRI FESTIVAL

A festival held to honour the story of Tana and Riri, the singers from Vadnagar who were Naagar sisters, this festival is a classic interpretation of an age old story. History has it that Tansen, the famous court musician of Emperor of Akbar sang the Deepak Raag with such dedication and reverence that the unlit lamps were astonishingly lit and this led to him being stricken with fever. Tansen then went to Vadnagar to listen to

the Megh Malhar Raag sung by the famous singing duo, Tana and Riri.

This miraculously healed him and brought him back to health. Emperor Akbar was so impressed by the singers that he summoned them to his court, but due to the conservative norms of society, the sisters immolated themselves. It is in Vadnagar where a Samadhi has been placed in the memory of the sisters, called Tana Riri Samadhi. Every year,







the Tanariri Festival is held in Vadnagar near this Samadhi

The city of Vadnagar is a historical place with ancient fort walls, gates and street structures still intact. Hiu-en-Tsiang- the Chinese scholar, referred to Vadnagar as Anandpur in the 7th century A.D., as a major urban centre of Buddhist religious activities. According to a famous English historian, King Kanasen founded Vadnagar in 144-145 A.D.

INTERNATIONAL KITE FESTIVAL (UTTARAYAN)

The festival of Uttarayan is a joyful festival which celebrates the spirit of life and the nation as a whole. It is during this time when the Gujarat sky is adorned with colourful kites, marking the Indian festival of Makar Sankranti. The Uttarayan festival usually sees a bright and warm sunny day with just the right breeze to allow the kites to glide.

Kites in all shapes and sizes are flown, and the main competition is to battle nearby kite-flyers to cut their strings and bring down their kites. Participants of the festival get their preferred kite-makers to build the best kites and strings. It is during this time, when the bazaars of Gujarat are usually busy, as shopkeepers sell kites and kite-strings and kite-flyers flock to buy. Production of kites and kite supplies can be seen on the streets of Ahmedabad beginning in November to get ready for Uttarayan, especially so in the famous Patang Bazaar, the special kite market of the old city.

During Uttarayan, the atmosphere is wonderfully festive, as families gather on the rooftop, special foods like laddoos, undhyu or surati jamun are prepared for consumption over the course of the day, and friends and neighbors gather together for group kite-flying.

The city of Ahmedabad has been playing host to the International Kite Festival since 1989, as part of the official celebration of Uttarayan.

The festival is witness to master kite-makers and flyers coming in from all parts of the world to demonstrate their skills and expertise, as spectators gather to be awe-inspired. In past years, master kite makers from Malaysia have brought their wau-











balang kites, while llayang-llayang had come from Indonesia.

Also, kite innovators from the USA participated with their big banner kites, while the Japanese rokkaku fighting kites have rivaled with Italian sculptural kites. The festival has also seen the fascinating Chinese flying dragons, and the latest high-tech modern wonders. One of the classic attractions of the festival is a man named, Rasulbhai Rahmbhai, a resident of Ahmedabad, master kite-maker and flyer, who trains up to 500 kites on a single string.

SHAMLAJI FAIR

The Shamlaji fair sees a massive attendance every











year, as devotees arrive on foot or on carts, singing devotional songs. Held at the highly revered Shamlaji Temple during the month of November, attendees come to seek the blessings of Lord Vishnu.

Devotees go to worship the deity and bathe in the sacred waters of the Meshwo River. Among the tribal communities, the Bhil community has incredible faith in the powers of Shamlaji who they lovingly refer to as Kaliyo Dev (Dark Divinity). The fair which takes place during this occasion is an important trade destination for people to buy silver ornaments, metal ware, cloth and garments, along with many other annual household items.

The holy temple of Shamlaji is located on the banks of the river Meshwo River. The largely revered shrine is believed to be in existence for at least 500 years, and is a beautiful structure, built with white sandstone and bricks. The temple's attractive

architecture is interesting, as its outer walls have been delicately carved to engrave sacred epics of the Ramayana and Mahabharata.

The deity, Sakshi Gopal or Gadadhar is a black representation of Lord Vishnu worshipped at the Shamlaji Temple. Shamlaji is of great importance to Vaishnavites, as they consider the deity to be one of the hundred and fifty four most important places of pilgrimage in India.

According to legends, Lord Brahma once embarked on an epic journey to find out the best sacred site on earth. Having seen a number of places, he finally visited the current location of Shamlaji and was immediately enamoured by it. It is believed that he performed penance there for a thousand years. On seeing his dedication and love, Lord Shiva was pleased with him and asked him to perform a yajna (ritual). At the beginning of the yajna, Lord Vishnu



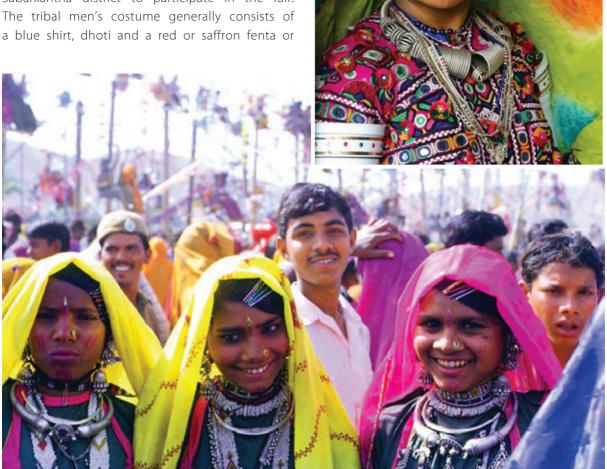


appeared in the form of Shamlaji, and was then enshrined at this place.

CHITRA VICHITRA FAIR

A tribal fair, Chitra Vichitra showcases the indigenous tribes of the state. The festival begins on the eve of new moon as women gather to mourn for their dead through the night. The fair is held in the village of Gujbhakhari and has a historical significance. According to legends, during the Mahabharata times, sons of King Shantanu, named, Chitravirya and Vichitravirya came to the triveni sangam (meeting point of rivers Sabarmati, Akul and Vyakul) to wash off their sins. The brothers immolated themselves here and the tribal mourn their death through the night before the festival begins.

Countless tribes, particularly the Garasis and the Bhil, from all parts of Gujarat converge at the Sabarkantha district to participate in the fair. The tribal men's costume generally consists of a blue shirt, dhoti and a red or saffron fenta or turban while women wear ghagharas which have a circumference of as much as 20 yards, and are covered from head to feet with ornate and heavy silver jewellery. Breathtaking performances are held by skilled jugglers, musicians and dancers. This is just the right platform to witness some very interesting tribal and folk forms of dance and music. Numerous stalls in the fair are put to display the best of rural handicrafts.



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The Hornbill Festival of Nagaland is one of the biggest cultural festivals in the Northeast. It is a week-long event held every year from Dec 1-10 in Nagaland. It is a celebration of colourful performances, exotic arts and crafts, tribal tradition & culture and delectable cuisine

TT BUREAU

agaland is a cultural mosaic of diverse multiethnicity sprung up by the several tribes that inhabit the state. Each community celebrates its myriad festivals revolving around the agrarian calendar that makes Nagaland, a land of festivals. During the Hornbill Festival, all the Naga tribes come together for a week-long celebration of their cultural and traditional plight. It's a time where all these tribes gather up to showcase their age-old traditions and come closer to knowing each other. The main events of the Hornbill Festival take place at the

Naga Heritage Village, Kisama which is about 10kms from Kohima, the capital city of Nagaland.

Traditional Naga huts and Morungs (boy's dormitories) typical to each of the Naga tribes are built and erected in a way that closely resembles their traditional euphoria on a small hillock in Kisama. The place itself is scenic and mystical, and the festival is simply grand. The Hornbill Festival celebrations are marked with a colourful display of traditional dances, sports, and songs of the various Naga tribes. Cultural dances, indigenous sports, and folk songs are the main highlights of the first three days of the Hornbill Festival. And one can get to see a colourful and vibrant celebration of a culture that's so mystic and intriguing. The warrior log drums, the colourful headgear, the soulful war cry, the exquisite costumes et al are simply remarkable in their own ways. Delicious local cuisines and delicacies that are typical to each of the Naga tribes are served in their respective Morungs along with the finest rice beer. The incredible food selections simply make it a gastronomic event.

The Hornbill Festival of Nagaland, over the years, has evolved from being just a celebration of the culture and tradition of the Nagas into one big cultural event for all the eight Northeast States. Cultural troupes from all the Northeastern states participate during this week-long celebration and it is such a delight watching all the different cultures coming together under one roof. Hornbill Festival is a great time to experience the cultural diversity of Northeast India on a go.

The Hornbill Festival is not just about reliving past, it is also a celebration of the present. The biggest Rock Festival of the country is hosted at Kohima every year during the Hornbill Festival. It is believed that singing and dancing is a way of life and comes naturally to the Nagas. And the biggest rock event is no doubt a part of the vibrant Hornbill celebrations. Apart from this, an adventure car rally and various other contest and events are organised during this festival.







HISTORY REVISITED

Jharkhand is a hot bed of heritage tourism in India due to its abundance of unique historic treasures

TT BUREAU

wo different worlds co-exist in the beautiful eastern Indian state of Jharkhand. It is a unique land where modernity blends with history. This aspect makes Jharkhand the most desired place in India to travel, where abundance and richness can be experienced everywhere. Time travel is still a distant dream, but if you are planning to travel Jharkhand, then you can get the exact feeling of going back to history. Jharkhand is a mine of rich cultural heritage which makes it a lucrative tourist destination, especially for those who want to get close to the richness of the bygone.

Numerous empires and civilisations flourished in Jharkhand since ancient times. The state is studded with ancient sites, prehistoric fossils and artefacts, which make it a hotbed of heritage tourism in India. As a single visit is not simply enough to explore the vast ocean called Jharkhand, you should surely visit few famous historic destinations of Jharkhand, to submerge yourself into the depth of antiquity.

ITKHORI

Itkhori can be referred as a launching pad from where you can initiate your journey. For history enthusiasts and heritage hunters, Itkhori is like an open air museum where stories of our rich past are scattered everywhere. Itkhori's history dates back to more than 1200 years and various archaeological relics from the Mauryan, Gupta and Pala period bear testimony to this. Besides, tourists can explore numerous stone carving remains and ancient sculptures. The place also has great religious significance as during the ancient times, Itkhori was regarding as an assimilation point of major religions. Itkhori is home to a major Buddhist site which attracts tourists from all over the world. Legends say that Lord Buddha had meditated in the site before proceeding to Bodhgaya.

CHATRA

Chatra is a major tourist attraction of Jharkhand and known for its distinct heritage. The place is famous for ancient caves which are dotted with pre historic paintings. The most prominent





among all is Sidpa rock shelter. The cave has red haematite drawings of bulls, horses and hunting activities, which tells a lot about the place's ancient inhabitants. Besides, the cave also has various complex ancient tattoo designs which are still used by the local tribal women. Another prominent site known as Nautangwa cave shelter is located in the Mohundi range of the upper Damodar valley. The cave features magnificent drawings which shed a lot of light on the contemporary household and social life. Apart from this, Jharkhand's preeminent megalith site is located in this region. Known as Barwadi Punkhri, the site lies within strange concentric circles with megalithic clusters around their rim. The surface of the site is strewn with flake tools and microliths.

DHANBAD

Dhanbad is known to the world as India's largest coal mining hub and the place is partly unexplored as a tourist destination. But if you go a bit away from the main old city of Dhanbad, you will come face to face with a rich history which will fully satisfy your appetite for quality heritage tourism. Situated on the northern bank of the Subarnarekha River, Dalmi is a wondrous destination near Dhanbad, studded with history and heritage. The place is scattered with various ancient Hindu relics and artefacts and contains relics of century old Shiva and

Ganesh temples. You can also visit a place called Katras which is just 16KMs away from Jharia. Recently ancient ruins have been unearthed by archaeologists along with pieces of statues and cut stones. While at Dhanbad you should never miss to visit Gopalpur. Located in Nirsa-cum-Chirkunda development block, this small village will mesmerize with its antique heritage. The place contains an ancient pillar which dates back to the time of Emperor Ashoka. There is also a large stone image said to be that of Ashoka himself.

PALAMAU

To conclude your journey on a good note and to take back loads of memories from Jharkhand, you must experience the splendour of Palamou. The district of Palamou is famous for many reasons. Apart from having the country's earliest tiger reserve known as Betla National Park, you will come across the Betla Fort – a tribal fortress of the 16th century Chero kings. If you are in Jharkhand for the purpose of heritage tourism, Palamou will deliver an extra gift of wild adventure. Built by Rajputs and Chandravanshis, the Betla Fort is perched on high ground in dense woodlands. The magnificent architecture and the environmental setting in which the fort is located, is surely a treat to those who want to explore history, sitting on the lap of nature.



IN THE HEART OF WINTER

Travel to some of the most popular winter destinations and feel enamoured by the beauty of winter snow

ARKA ROY CHOWDHURY

t is during the winters when bare trees stand immaculately on stoned roads, and the weakening sunlight entangles with careless fog. But in the midst of winter, as Albert Camus had once said, you could find an "invincible summer," by reaching out to the heart of winter. Unravel the beauty of winter through all its dampness and coldness, through its snowy wonder and peaceful grace. This winter season travel to some of the most beautiful winter destinations, and bathe in the glory of the grey sky. Create extraordinary memories of a season that entices the heart and forsakes the body.

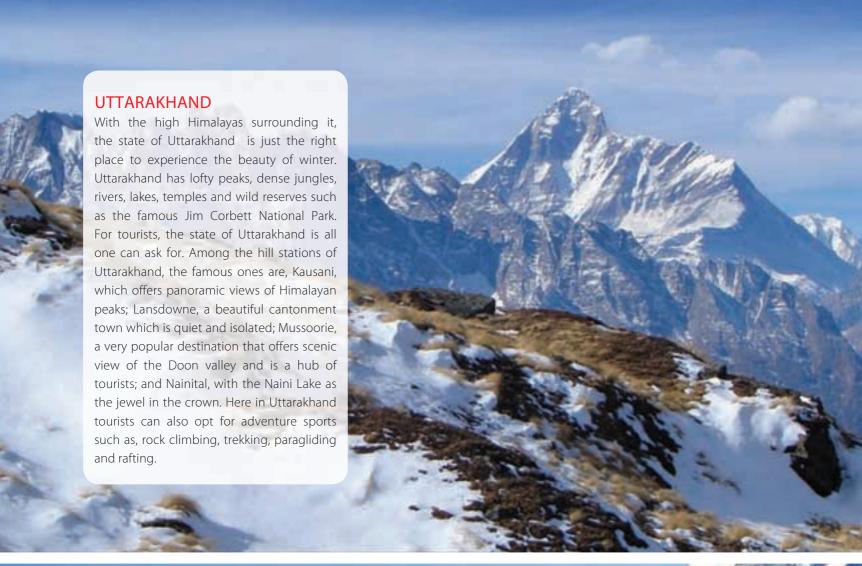


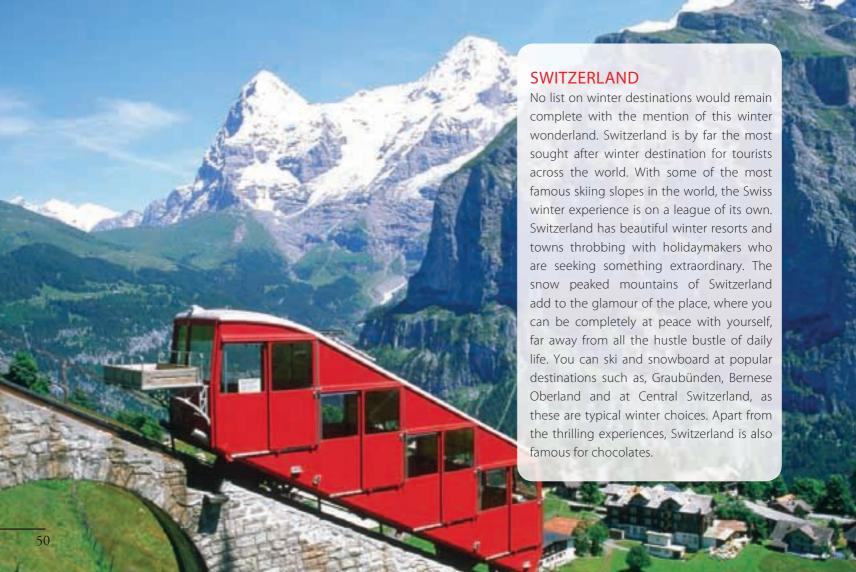
NORWAY

The Norwegian winter charm is an experience that will forever be etched in your memory. Norway during the winters is a far cry from anything you might have experienced in life. Norway, with a similar latitude as that of Alaska, Greenland and Siberia is less intense in terms of being cold. But temperatures here can fall drastically and you will not have dearth of snow. Norway allows you to experience some of the most exciting winter sports, such as, skiing, snowboarding and dog sledging, or a thrilling ride on your own snowmobile. Perhaps, the most exciting attraction of Norway is the surreal Northern Lights, which can be an experience of a lifetime. It is advisable that you experience Norway through one of its coastal cities, as the winter in these areas tend to be less extreme.











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ROAD TO HAPPINESS

Take the road to embark on a journey full of thrill and excitement

TT BUREAU

here can't be anything better than a road trip if you want to add an element of thrill to your travel. Being a nation of vast landscapes, India has some fine roads that pass through some of the most scenic and spectacular places. The best part is that, in India, you can plan a road trip in any season. In summer, you can go for a road trip to Ladakh or the breathtaking Himalayas, while in winter, you could take in Goa's famous beaches or Munnar's tranquil landscape. Zipping through the pristine hills, dense forests, snow-clad mountains, exotic flora and fauna, and lush green vegetation is enough to rejuvenate your senses and maximise your travelling experience.

MUMBAI TO GOA

Fantastic roads, lush green ghats and beautiful hill stations—a road trip from Mumbai to Goa is pure magic. Hitting the 582-kilometre stretch from Mumbai to Goa on NH 17 is a smooth and picturesque drive through numerous towns and villages, hills and plains, coastlines and grasslands. Once you turn from Panvel to NH17 for Goa, the road becomes a two-lane highway, surrounded by forests. If you are a birdwatcher, stop at Karnala Bird Sanctuary, which is home to over 150 species of birds, including Drongos, Paradise flycatchers and Red-vented bulbuls. Zip from Pen to Mahad in almost a straight line, and right turns at road junctions invariably lead to coastal towns like Murud, Shrivardhan and Harihareshwar. Chiplun in Ratnagiri District is a popular halfway halt for most Bombay-Goa travellers.



GUWAHATI TO TAWANG

The road trip from Guwahati in Assam to Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh is full of amazing stretches of lush green sloping valleys and verdant forest-covered mountain peaks. High ranges, sharp bends, streams between the ridges, rivulets running alongside the road, dead ends, thick fog, all make the journey an outstanding experience. On the way to Tawang, the road passes through Bomdilla, Dhirang, with Sela Pass and an ancient dong fort. The journey becomes more interesting after crossing the Sela Pass, wherein one can halt and sample local meat/vegetable momos and cream buns.

MANALI TO LEH

The sheer magnificence of the mountains, snow-capped peaks and some patches of green—the road trip from Manali in Himachal Pradesh to Leh in Ladakh is an unforgettable drive. The road crosses some of the highest mountain passes in the

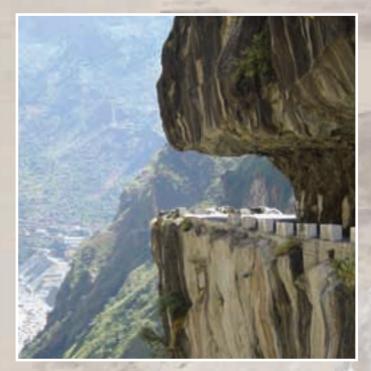


world, including Rohtang La, Baralacha La, Lachulung La and Taglang La. The trip begins from Manali, which glows like a rare emerald against the dramatic setting of dazzling snow-clad peaks and the sparkling waters of River Beas. The second highest road in the world winds from the pine-clad Kullu Valley through breathtakingly raw, high-altitude scenery to the stark moonscape of Ladakh. Beyong Keylong, the road follows the river through juniper and scented herbs before climbing to Baralachla at 4850m. It is a spine-chilling drive, with windswept panoramas and clusters of parachute tents, made of discarded army stock, serving noodles and tea. Taglung La is the highest pass along the way, buffeted by dust-laden winds and garlands of tattered prayer flags. The majestic Himalayas rise high on the horizon and the road winds down to Jammu Kashmir and Upshi, the gateway to Ladakh.

KOCHI TO MUNNAR

The road to Munnar is narrow, with plenty of bends and curves. With lush green foliage, interspersed with tea plantations enshrouded in cool mist is Munnar, located about 135 kilometres from the coastal seashore of Kochi. From the rich carpets of tea bushes to the silver green of the oak, the mountains of Munnar are a marvel to behold. After crossing Kochi, enjoy the beautiful countryside along Muvattupuzha and Kothamangalam. From Kothamangalam to Adimali, experience the natural forest with numerous waterfalls in between. As soon you reach Adimali,





you can see tea plantations and the breathtaking views of the Western Ghats.

HINDUSTAN - TIBET ROAD

The historic Hindustan – Tibet road, which passes through the Kinnaur valley along the banks of the River Satluj and finally enters Tibet, was initiated by Lord Dalhousie in 1850. The NH22, where the Hindustan – Tibet road is located, is an engineering marvel—parts of the road are chiselled out of sheer rock and descend into deep ravines and hillsides densely covered with deodar forests. When passing through the Hindustan – Tibet road during November, Lavi Fair is a must-visit to sample the social, economical and cultural legacy of Himachal Pradesh. Shimla is the ideal place to start the journey on this road. From Shimla, make your way through the meadows of Mashobra, the apple orchards of Kothgarh, across Wangtu Bridge, past Rekong Peo and Kalpa, through high-altitude Spiti and finally, to Kaza, which is the administrative headquarters of Spiti.



THE KONARK EXPERIENCE



The famous Konark Festival of Odisha showcases various dance forms which truly reflect the cultural heritage of incredible India

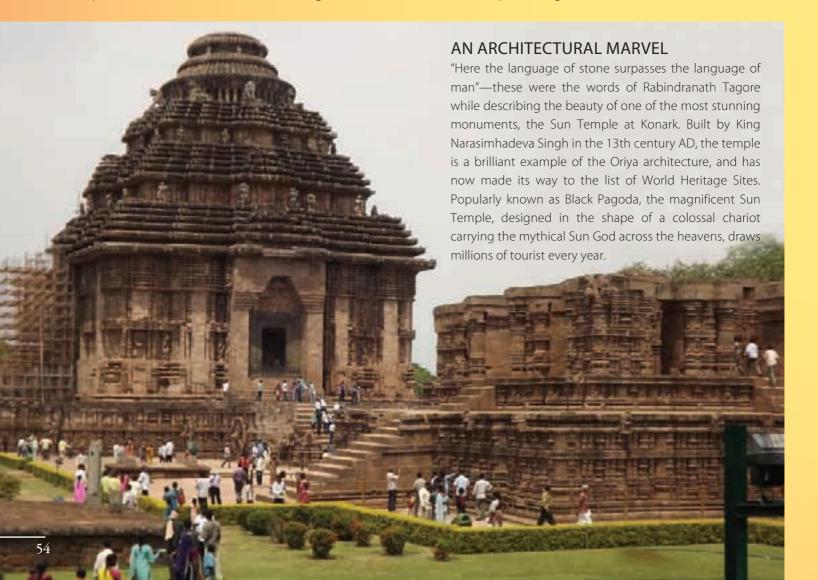
TT BUREAU

he melodies of vocal and instrumental ragas and tales, tinkling of anklets and beautiful movements of dancers' feet – all this with the majestic Sun Temple at the backdrop makes a serene ambience for the fascinating Konark Festival. Held over a period of five days, the festival is an endeavour of Odisha Tourism and Odissi Research Centre for the revival, preservation and continuation of unique temple dance tradition of Odisha. During the festival, eminent classical dancers and from the entire nation and their troupes mesmerise audience with their brilliant performances.

The Konark Dance Festival was first organised in 1989 at the Open Air Auditorium, at Konark, as a conglomeration of the

classical dances of India to patronise the Sun temple of Konark and Odisha as a place of tourist destination. At the time of its inception, the festival was organised for three days. But owing to its growing popularity, the span of period was extended to five days. Today, this classical extravaganza draws aficionados from all over the country who visit the place to enjoy dance presentations as varied as the Bharatnatyam, Kathak, Odissi, Manipuri and Chau. The dance forms, styles and gestures inspired from temple sculptures, acquire grace that can be simply referred to as poetry in motion, and are accompanied by innovations and synchronisations.

The spellbinding festival is held at the ethereal



G | Today's Traveller • November 2015 • DESTINATIONS

Natyamandapa (dancing hall) of the shrine. The Natyamandira will greet you with two fierce-looking lions, one on each side of the steps and elephants sitting atop writhing men. It is said that the lion signifies power, the elephant connotes wealth and man stands for justice. The walls are also beautifully carved with images of deities, celestial bodies, musicians, dancers, lovers and military battles.

Besides the dance performances, the visitors are treated to an Artist Camp, an exhibition of Orissan temple sculptures, which are often described as poetry inscribed on stone.

Another attraction of the festival is the Craft Mela and Handicraft Exhibition. Organised by the State Industry Department since 1991, this fair boasts

of trendy handicrafts, artists camps, rural handlooms and potteries, where skilled artisans and craftsman display their skills in a rural setting.

The International Sand Art Festival is also an added highlight. Held at the pristine Chandrabhaga beach, is firstof-the-kind festival that sees participants of both national and international repute.



HOW TO REACH KONARK

Biju Patnaik Airport, in Bhubaneswar, is the By air:

nearest airport.

By rail: The nearest railheads are Puri and Bhubaneswar.

By road: Konark is easily accessible from Bhubaneswar

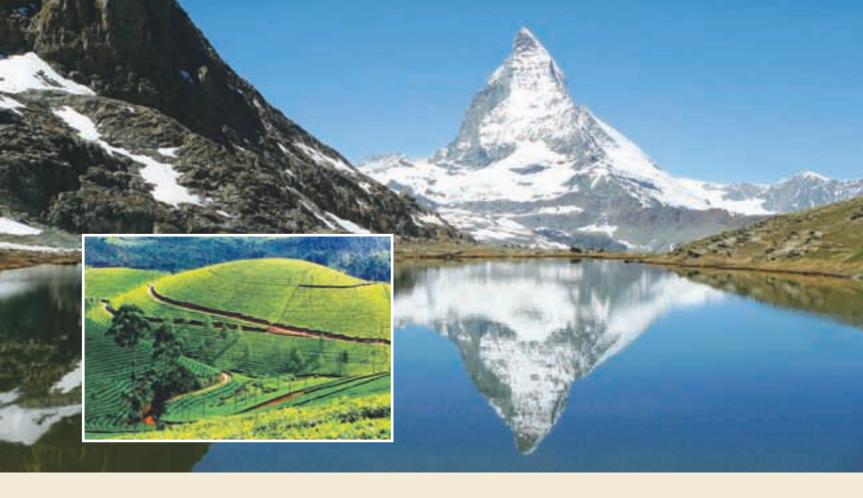
(65 kilometres) and Puri (35 kilometres).











NATURE: SPLENDID COLOURS IN WILDERNESS

India, a land of great variety, showcases almost all the natural wonders. From the scenic backwaters in Kerala to the cascading waterfalls in Uttaranchal, from the endless stretch of sand in Rajasthan

to the snow-clad mountains in Himachal Pradesh, India is replete with innumerable spellbinding natural beauty that is therapeutic for mind and body. And, when it comes to unsurpassed natural beauty, you just can't help but think of Kashmir, also referred to as the 'Paradise on earth'. Redefining the world 'beauty', Kashmir is virtually a multi-faceted diamond, changing its hues with the seasons—always extravagantly beautiful.

running north to east, the Aravalli and Vindhya ranges across western and central India, and the Western ghats in the western and southern parts, India is surrounded by hills, which are mesmerising because of their majestic beauty. From unconquered peaks of tremendous heights, uncharted glaciers

and valleys, to an unbelievable range of vegetation, the mystical and serene hill stations in India offer some of the most spectacular landscapes in the world. Shimla—branded as the `Queen of Hills', Nainital, Ooty, Coorg, Darjeeling, and Mussoorie are some captivating hill stations with old-world charm.

ADVENTURE: STRETCHING THE LIMITS

If you enjoy the rush of adrenalin and are ready to meet challenges,

India offers you the prefect scenario for an array of adventure sport options. From taking a dive to the watery depths of the sea world with scuba diving, surfing, canoeing and snorkelling in Kerala, Karnataka and Goa, defying gravitational force while

HILLS: TRANQUILITY ABOUNDS

With the highest mountain ranges in the world, the Himalayas,





trekking the astounding heights of the Himalayas, to braving the dizzy heights of summits clothed in radiant white, in Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and parts of Uttaranchal, the country is never short of providing the thrills and spills that are a part of adventure sports.

BEACHES: THE POWER OF AQUA

Blessed with a pristine coastal stretch expanding to 7,000 kilometres, India offers the finest beaches of the world. Indian beaches provide visitors an excellent opportunity to explore the myriad colours of nature. The west coast with the Arabian Sea and the east coast with the Bay of Bengal offer verdant vistas to the ever-seeking discerning traveller. Some of the most





scenic and diverse are to be found in Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Gujarat, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep. Be it for romance, a family picnic, water sports, solace, or a vivacious nightlife, India has beaches to suit every desire and need.

WILDLIFE: CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

Wildlife sanctuaries and national parks spread across India offer an enthralling diversity of terrain, flora and fauna. From striped predators lurking amidst the tall grasslands, to majestic Asiatic elephants moving in herds, to peacocks dancing in all their splendour, India's forest reserves, like Ranthambore, Corbett,

Sunderban, Kanha and Gir, support a staggering array of wildlife. Offering immense opportunities for wildlife tourism, India has over 70 national parks and about 400 wildlife sanctuaries. A home to 500 species of mammal, India is the last refuge of the one-horned rhino and the Asian lion. From the Himalayas to Kerala or Gujarat, virtually every nook and corner of India showcases scores of species of the avian kind. With around 1,200 species of birds, including colourful and conspicuous varieties of quail, jungle fowl and pheasant, India is a paradise for bird watching.

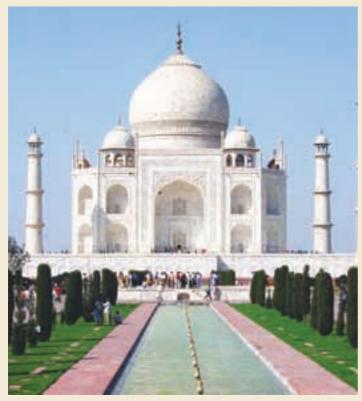
HISTORY: ...ALWAYS IN THE MAKING

The rich history of India, spanning a period of more than 4,000 years, provides a glimpse into its amazing evolution. A meeting









ground between the East and the West, India has been an invaders' paradise till it attained freedom in 1947. Having been ruled by various dynasties (Maurya, Gupta, Maratha and others), the country has a marvellous heterogeneity, which makes it a subject of study for scholars across the globe. No matter how many Persians, Greeks, Chinese nomads, Arabs, Portuguese, British and other raiders had their way with the land, local Hindu kingdoms invariably survived their depredations, living out their own sagas of conquest and collapse. From a country reeling under colonialism to emerging as a leading economy in the global scenario within a period of 50 years—the transformation of India has made its foreign counterparts sit up and take notice.

ARCHITECTURE: AWE AND ADMIRATION

India offers a bounty of artifacts and monuments dating from pre-historic days to modern times. Housing some of the world's most magnificent architectural masterpieces, majestic edifices rise from every corner of India.

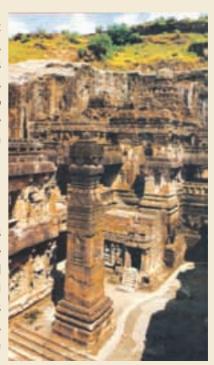
From monuments dedicated to gods and maharajas, India has the world-famous Taj Mahal—the monument dedicated to love. One of the Seven Wonders of the World, the 17th-century



marvel is a magnificent exemplar of the Islamic architectural tradition. The great Stupa at Sanchi, India's finest surviving Buddhist monument, is another awe-inspiring masterpiece. The carnal, erotic, delicate and divine reliefs of the Khajuraho group of temples in Madhya Pradesh are one of the most illustrious manifestations of Indian architecture.

CRAFTS: KALEIDOSCOPE OF COLOURS AND TEXTURES

The diverse ethical customs and varied cultures of India have made it a home to innumerable arts and crafts that are highly acclaimed throughout the world for their aesthetic appeal and magnificence. From shells to paper, stones to clay, bamboo to terracotta, bones to brass, wood to leather, artisans in India are adept in







crafting out breathtaking creations from all kinds of materials. The flamboyant wooden carvings of Arunachal Pradesh, the fine and intricate chikan embroidery of Uttar Pradesh's Lucknow, stunning stone carving of Jharkhand, and votive terracotta figurines of Gujarat are some of the popular crafts forms in India.

CUISINE: UNFORGETTABLE AROMAS

It's not just from scented flowers like roses and jasmines, India also derives its unforgettable aroma from the multitudes of spices that go into the making of delectable, mouth-watering recipes. Indian cooking reflects a perfect blend of different cultures and ages. From delicious pavement snacks to palace gourmet, India offers some of the world's greatest cuisines. Some of the culinary gems which visitors can check out include vegetarian sweet-sour Gujarat dishes, mustard-spiced curries of Bengal, and the rich, Mughal-styled biryani of Hyderabad or Lucknow. India also offers an amazing collection of sweets, including gulab jamuns, jalebis, sandesh and kulfi.





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SPIRITUAL: REDISCOVER YOURSELF

Spirituality and mystical charm have always drawn myriads from various parts of the globe to India. Be it in search of inner peace, discerning the true self, or attaining salvation—perhaps all this is possible in India. While a mere dip in the Sangam—the divine confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati rivers—in the holy city of Allahabad, is believed to absolve one of all sins, it is also deemed that staying in Varanasi, one of the oldest cities in the world, during ones the last days, allows one's soul to escape the endless cycles of rebirth and suffering. As the world becomes increasingly materialistic, hordes of people from different countries visit India to seek peace of mind. Numerous cultures





and religions have thrived and flourished together for ages in India. From time to time, several saints and spiritual leaders have shown the people the right way to engage in spiritualism, by instilling a sense of compassion, love and respect in them for all, including trees, animals, and even stones.

FESTIVALS: BINDING INDIA'S CULTURAL FARRIC

The multitudes of festivals in India and their elaborate rituals to mark the celebrations awe people from the western world. Be it Holi, Deepawali, Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid-ul-Zuha, or Christmas, festivals, here, are akin to a golden thread, which weaves together different religions. Taking into account the size of the country, the vast diversity of its people, religions, cultures and languages, it is often said that there are more festivals in India than the number of days in a year.

WELLNESS: REJUVENATING EXPERIENCE

With the unique trinity of Yoga, Ayurveda, and meditation prevailing here, it's hard to compete with India when it comes





to blending healthcare with spiritual well-being. Impressed by the traditional and alternative form of wellness therapies, hordes of people from across the globe choose India as their choice destination, either to avail of Kerala's traditional 'Panchkarma' treatment for purifying the body, or practise Yoga for attaining dynamic fitness, or meditate for discovering their inner self. Moreover, with spas and rejuvenating centres coming up in several parts of India, wellness tourism in the country is expected to grow by leaps and bounds.

SHOPPING: OFFERS GALORE

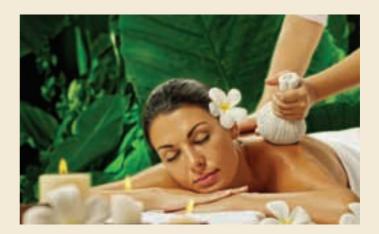
With a staggering array of fabrics, carpets, jewellery, furniture, and a host of other items depicting exquisite craftsmanship,



hotels in India, or feel like royalty just by boarding India's luxury trains. While the heritage hotels, including forts, palaces and havelis in several states, including Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, offer the perfect mix of aesthetic and natural beauty, along with amazing state-of-the-art facilities. Luxury trains like Deccan Odyssey, Fairy Queen, and Place on Wheels allow you to experience all the luxuries worthy of the Indian maharajas of yore. From the finest of spas, offering various massages, therapies and vitalising solutions, luxury trains offers you plush interiors, sumptuous cuisines, well-stocked bars, sparking chandeliers, and Persian carpets-all for that royal touch.

LEISURE: EVERYTHING FOR THE PERFECT





India is a shopper's paradise. Craftsmen have been perfecting their art here for centuries, passing down traditions and techniques from generation to generation. Every region has its own unique offering for visitors. Indian silks, cottons and wools are deemed as the best in the world.

Brocades from Varanasi, shawls from Kashmir, world-famous heavy jewellery from Gujarat, ornamental plates from Agra, and traditional, antique furniture from Rajasthan, are some of the hot picks from Indian bazaars and state-run emporiums.

LUXURY: THE ROYAL WAY

If you want to live life king-size, India is the perfect place. Stay in the boudoirs of erstwhile maharajas at the numerous heritage



Tagged as an ultimate travel destination, India, offers a host of leisure activities for that perfect break. From tucking yourself away in pleasant seclusion at numerable hill stations in the salubrious Himalayas or Nilgiris to gliding along the backwaters of Kerala—`God's own country', from exciting angling experiences in Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka, to gripping a teeing off amidst the dramatic backdrops of Coonoor, Naldehra and Darjeeling, India offers endless leisure activities.

Not to forget the pristine beaches in the South, which offer perfect locales for sun bathing, boating and other leisure activities. Kanyakumari, at the southernmost tip of India, provides the rare spectacle of setting sun and moon rise, simultaneously.

ALLURING TURKEY

The historical nation of Turkey has some of the most fascinating destinations for tourists

TT BUREAU

n amazing combination of heritage and nature gives us the best of modern Turkey. The country which has been on the crossroads of history, is today one of the finest examples of a great tourist destination. The Bosporus and the Dardanelles, connects this magnificent landscape with its surrounding Black Sea, the Mediterranean, Aegean and Marmara seas. Thereby, functioning as a bridge, connecting the lands of the region almost like silk threads. On one hand, the enthralling natural resources of the nation beckons its tourists from far and wide, while its history of Sumerians, the Hittites, the Lyndians, the Byzantines, the Seljuks and the Ottomans have left behind marvels of their respective by gone eras. Amidst all its amazing destinations, it is indeed difficult to choose the best, so here are a few fascinating cities of Turkey.

CUMALIKIZIK

An enigmatic town, Cumalikizik is one of the first settlements of the Ottoman Empire, and is one of the most visited destinations. Praised for its unique architecture, the village is a fascinating historical marvel. The houses here are made of rubble, stone, brick or wood and are painted in white, yellow, purple and blue, while the streets are cobblestoned. It also has Cumalikizik Ethnography Museum and Art House which showcases furniture, lighting, kitchen appliances and weapons. The Cumilikizak Mosque, estimated to be about 300 years old is also an important historical structure.





BODRUM

Also known as "the land of eternal blue," Bodrum is a stunning town located on the coast of Aegean Sea. Bodrum supposedly dates back to the year 1000 BC and is famous for its beach towns and resorts. Here in Bodrum tourists can visit the Tomb of King Mausolus, which is one of the Seven Wonders of the World. A dreamy place, Bodrum is the right place to enjoy serenity. Its narrow streets and white houses lined up along the shore are sure to captivate tourists. Bodrum is usually hot and dry during summer and rainy during the winter.

SAFRANBOLU

A historical place reminiscent of the Ottoman Empire, Safranbolu is yet another gem of Turkey. The houses of Safranbolu which have inspired the construction of similar houses in other parts of the country, has been well-preserved with the help of its UNESCO World heritage status. Tourists can also visit the historical bazaars, such as, Yemeniciler Bazaar, Bakırcılar Bazaar, Semerciler and Demirciler Bazaar. Also, the Safranbolu City History Museum is another must-see place that displays a collection of artifacts of the area and sheds light on the history of Safranbolu.





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Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT owners have come to expect – and appreciate – a vehicle that is powerful and refined, luxurious and functional, muscular and stylish

TT BUREAU

he new Red Vapor special edition package introduces unique exterior and interior styling cues to enhance the distinct, performance-oriented looks of the award-winning SUV and is available on three body colors: Redline Red Pearl Clear Coat, Brilliant Black Crystal Pearl Coat and Bright White Clear Coat.

EXTERIOR

The Grand Cherokee SRT sports its signature, seven-slot upper grille with black screen insert flanked by slimmer, adaptive, bi-xenon headlamps that are surrounded by a signature LED character lamp treatment. The headlamps feature a unique black background to distinguish the SRT from other 2015 Jeep Grand Cherokee models while further accenting

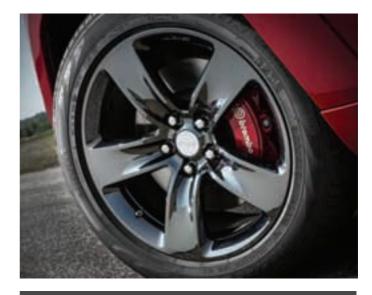
their jewel-like appearance. The styling enabled designers to incorporate the headlamp washers into the headlamp housing – rather than on the bumper – for a cleaner more functional appearance. A Grand Cherokee badge, along the vehicle's sides, features a distinct, pronounced font. The 2015 Grand Cherokee SRT's front light treatment is mirrored in back for a cohesive styling appearance, and features larger tail lamps with signature LED lighting. To further emphasize SRT's performance heritage, the tail lamps feature a black surround, creating the illusion of floating lamps.

The 2015 Grand Cherokee SRT is available in the following exterior colors: Billet Silver Metallic Clear Coat, Bright White Clear Coat, Brilliant Black Crystal Pearl Coat, Deep Cherry Red Pearl Coat, Granite Crystal Pearl Coat, Maximum Steel Metallic Clear Coat and Redline Red Pearl Clear Coat.

INTERIOR

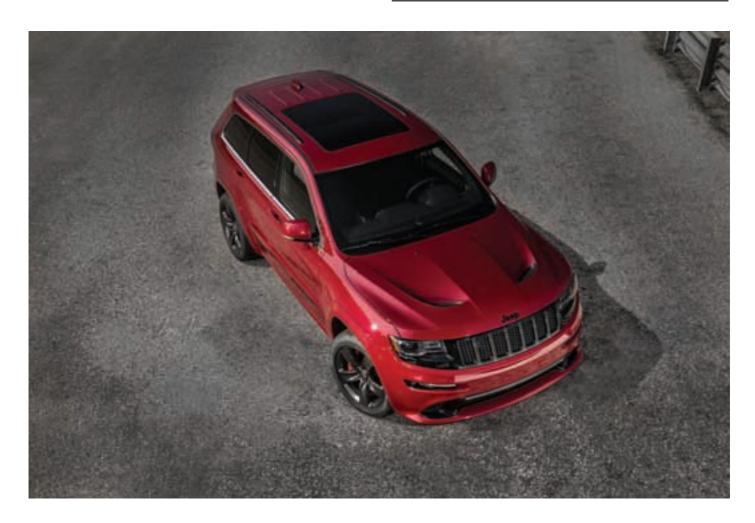
On the center console, drivers will find the leather-wrapped T-handle shifter for the eight-speed transmission that allows the driver to select two driving modes including Drive and Sport. The SRT-exclusive heated three-spoke steering wheel with a flat bottom features a bevy of comfort, convenience and connectivity controls and more pronounced, more ergonomically efficient paddle shifters.

The steering wheel is designed and positioned to provide optimal view of the gauge cluster that features a 7-inch, fullcolor, customizable instrument display. This screen allows drivers to select from a multitude of layout and information to be shown in the center of the gauge cluster. True carbon fiber trim accent sweeps across the driver's door, instrument panel and front passenger door. The available 825-watt, 19-speaker premium SRT performance audio surround-sound system from Harman Kardon offers world premier innovation, featuring a 32-lt tracking power supply (TPS)2-channel Class D amplifier that delivers outstanding acoustics and brings multidimensional, quality sound for all interior occupants. The 2015 Grand Cherokee SRT Laguna leather interior is available in two distinctive colors: Torque (black) and Sepia. advanced safety features from Forward Collision Warning, which alerts the driver to rapidly approaching traffic, to Blind-spot Monitoring and Rear Cross Path detection, which aid drivers when changing lanes or in parking lot situations.



FEATURES:

- New Active Noise Cancelling technology
- Acceleration: 0-60 miles per hour (mph) in 4.8 seconds; quarter mile in mid-13 second range; top speed of 160 mph; 0-100-0 in 16.3 seconds; 60-0 mph braking in 116 feet
- Features state-of-the-art safety technologies such as Forward Collision Warning and Rear Cross Path detection





HERE ARE SOME OF THE BEST UTILITY APPLICATIONS FOR ANDROID SMARTPHONES WHICH CAN REALLY MAKE YOUR LIFE EASY

IONROAD AUGMENTED DRIVING

save your life. The app provides an onroad assistance by providing collision warnings, alerts and other crucial data. The app is programmed with visual radar which uses your phone's sensors and camera to track your speed and distance of cars in front of you. The app provides audio visual lane departure alters, speeding alerts and collision warnings. You can also record your drive, take geotagged snapshots and access driving analytics through the app.

Platform (s):

VALET

Locating your car from an overcrowded parking space is really a pain. But Valet can make it really easy for you. The car locator app can help you remember your exact parking location using Maps and Google's location API. Valet also provides helpful alarms and timers to help avoid parking tickets or fines. The best part is, this app can be paired with your car dock or Bluetooth audio systems for automatically dropping a map pin when you lose connection or undock.

Platform (s):

Al

NYMOTE

Anymote is a useful app which can enable you to control any device that accepts IR commands. The app works perfectly on smartphones which are mounted with IR blaster. Anymote turns your blaster-equipped smartphone into a universal remote for a wide variety of appliances – TVs, set top boxes, DVD players or just about any device that accepts IR commands. The app is compatible with certain models like HTC One M8, Samsung Galaxy

Platform (s):



VIEWRANGER GPS AND TOPO MAPS

For adventure enthusiasts, this app is like a blessing. ViewRanger is a useful offline mapping, navigation, and guided trail app for Android devices. The app comes with a variety of open source map data, with detailed topographic maps. ViewRanger uses GPS which can save your maps for offline use, with provision for route guides, track recording, sports computing stats and location sharing.

Platform (s):



SMART TOOLS

essential apps that can really ease your measurement related tasks. The series consists of Ruler apps for length, angle, and levelling, measurement apps for height, distance, and area, along with a compass, metal detector, GPS, sound level meter and vibrometer, flashlight and magnifier. The app functions with a phone's sensor and is pretty accurate.

Platform (s):



FIRST AID

Red Cross Society, First Aid can be really useful during emergencies. The app can be operated in two modes – Learn Mode and Emergency Mode. The Learn mode lets you read up on a type of injury, basic first aid treatment, and a Q&A section, while the Emergency mode dispenses with the extra information while providing concise first aid instructions in a single page, sometimes accompanied by videos and diagrams, as well as a one-button shortcut to call 911.

Platform (s):







The greatest luxury is time



WHAT: MELBOURNE CUP CARNIVAL **WHEN:** 3 NOVEMBER

WHERE: MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

The Melbourne Cup Carnival is an iconic Australian thoroughbred horse race, which is celebrated in a unique manner. The festival exudes all the glitz and glamour of a Hollywood premiere. Every year the greatest thoroughbreds make their way to Flemington racecourse to win the prestigious title and a prize money of 6.2 million Australian dollars. The event is more than a race and is celebrated in a grand way, combining the best of Australian food, wine, sport, fashion and gambling.



WHAT: Iceland Airwaves **WHEN:** 4-8 NOVEMBER WHERE: REYKJAVIK, ICELAND

Iceland Airwaves is a one of a kind festival. The festival was started in 1999 as a party sponsored by Iceland's favourite airline, Icelandair, throwing a music concert in an airplane hangar. This homegrown festival has outgrown the original venue and now transforms downtown Reykjavík into a city-wide festival full of art, music, fashion and fun. Apart from alternative rock music you are also bound to be introduced to some great local music you have never heard before.



WHAT: DIWALI **WHEN: 11 NOVEMBER** WHERE: INDIA

Also known as the 'festival of light', Diwali is the most vibrant festival of India, celebrated in autumn. Though Diwali is a major part of Indian festivities, it is widely celebrated in all other parts of the world. During the festival, people celebrate amidst extreme brightness and radiance. As Diwali marks the beginning of a new phase, full of radiance and fresh perspectives, people indulge in numerous activities which complement the underlying philosophy of the festival. During the festival, people buy new things, clean their houses, burn crackers and decorate their premises with earthen lamps and decorative lightings.



WHAT: PUSHKAR CAMEL FAIR WHEN: 15-19 NOVEMBER WHERE: PUSHKAR, INDIA

Pushkar Fair is an annual five-day festival held in the town of Pushkar in the state of Rajasthan. It is the world's largest camel and livestock fair which is also locally known as Pushkar Ka Mela. The festival is not only a major tourist attraction, but also a melting pot of cultural assimilation. During the festival various aspects of rich Rajasthani culture is highlighted through folk dances, music and traditional exhibitions. Pushkar Fair also has a spiritual significance, as pilgrims from all over India gather to take dips in the holy Pushkar Lake.



WHAT: YI PENG AND LOY KRATHONG (LANTERN FESTIVAL) WHEN: 22-25 NOVEMBER **WHERE:** CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

Yi Peng and loy Krathong is a Thai festival of light and it holds immense spiritual significance. The ancient spiritual festival highlights the spellbinding show that happens when thousands of people converge to release Khom Loi – lit lanterns into the night sky. As part of the festival, people also float small vessels into rivers known as Krathong which are made from banana stalks and decorated with incense, offerings, flowers and candles. Besides, the festival also includes bright parades, musical performances, traditional dances, lantern-making contests, fireworks, and lots of food.



WHAT: STEREOSONIC WHEN: 29-30 NOVEMBER WHERE: SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Stereosonic is a large set of music festivals and a major electronic dance music event of Australia. The event showcases some of the biggest names in the electronic dance music industry such as Calvin Harris, Tiesto and Diplo. Though Stereosonic is produced at five different locations of Australia, Sydney Showground is the most popular and largest venue for Stereosonic. it is equipped with seven stages, one including an open-air arena that fills with trippy lasers and light shows at night.



BOOK: THE FESTIVAL OF INSIGNIFICANCE

The latest book from the acclaimed writer Milan Kundera, of The Book of Laughter and Forgetting, and The Unbearable Lightness of Being fameisan



"unserious" novel. The writer narrates the story of four friends who run into each other at the Luxembourg Gardens, in Paris, who go on to attend parties and discuss matters of sex, desire, history, art and the meaning of human existence. Kundera is critical about the sense of self-importance that humans attach themselves with, and embraces the comic and laughter of life through his characters. He proposes how men should be able to recognise their own insignificance.

Genre (s): Fiction



MUSIC: SERMON ON THE ROCKS

Recorded in two weeks' time at The Parlor Recording Studio in New Orleans, the all new Josh Ritter album is a far-cry from his previous ones. The sound is more confident, and the lyrics are as good as they can get. Compared to previous albums, Ritter's latest is largely electric and upbeat. Add some background vocals, electronic noises and a whole lot of joyfulness, and you have Sermon on the Rocks. Longtime fans of the singer would be in for a surprise as Ritter shows a different side of him with his new album. The eighth album by Ritter can be called a mixed bag of surprises, that would surprise you out-and-out. It's music for the soul.

Genre (s): Narrative Music



DVD: MASAAN

A movie that received standing ovation at the Cannes Film Festival, Masaan is an example of great cinema. The story revolves around four intersecting lives along the Ganges in present day Varanasi, a low caste boy who is deeply in love, a daughter ridden with the guilt of a tragic sexual encounter, a father who is fighting with his fading moral virtue and a child who is yearning for a family. The film was screened under the Un Certain Regard section at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival winning two awards. The movie is a must-have for those who like to watch quality cinema.

Genre (s): Drama

GAME: MAD MAX

The story of a lone warrior in a savage world, Mad Max is a single-player action game. This adventure game is a nail-biting epic, which will take you through the Wasteland. The game includes brutal marauders who will go to any extent to obtain precious scrap, and you are all alone, fighting to survive through the game. When caught in a quandary, you worry whether to fight or flee, and this choice you make could haunt you forever.Mad Max demands you to battle your way through the ruthless Scrotus – the wasteland's lord and the blood-thirsty marauders because you are there to build the ultimate survival vehicle, called the Magnum Opus.

Genre (s): Action Adventure



17 December 2015 The Ashok, New Delhi



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