

# TODAY'S traveller

CORPORATE, BUSINESS, AVIATION, MICE & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

JULY - AUGUST 2019 - ₹50

**ANIRBAN CHAKRABORTY:  
THE INVESTMENT  
CATALYST**

**CANADA: RENDEZ-  
VOUS CANADA 2019**

**CORPORATE JET-SETTER:  
HIMANSHU GOEL**

**BIHAR: WILDLIFE  
WONDERS**

**CHASING THE  
MONSOONS**

**COVER STORY**

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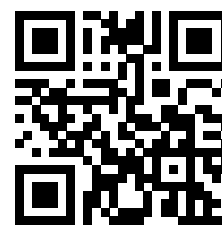
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#### FOUR SEASONS HOTEL BENGALURU IS NOW OPEN



Recently, Four Seasons Hotel launched its second property in India at Embassy ONE, encompassing the 230-room Four Seasons Hotel Bengaluru, 105 Four Seasons Private Residences and commercial and luxury retail space. Four Seasons Hotel Bengaluru at Embassy ONE brims with modern sophistication featuring interiors by Yabu Pushelberg, beautifully complemented by a carefully curated collection of paintings, prints and sculptures by more than 25 contemporary Indian artists throughout the hotel.

Inside Four Seasons Hotel Bengaluru, there are 191 rooms and 39 suites, a spa, 100ft. outdoor pool, and world-class dining options. Speaking on the occasion, Fredrik Blomqvist, General Manager, said, "We are delighted to welcome our guests, and particularly excited to showcase the modern city of Bengaluru to our visitors." He added, "It's such an exciting time in southern India, and we are proud to be at the forefront of the city's business and social lives."

#### PEMA BY REALM HOSPITALITY OPENS IN THIMPHU



Recently, Realm Hospitality opened its second hotel, The Pema by Realm, in Thimphu. This follows the launch of Dewa Thimphu by Realm in April 2019. The boutique hotel comes with 27 rooms, of which 14 are Suites. The hotel is designed to reflect a balance of traditional décor and contemporary design. The top floor is designated as the Heritage Floor adorned with Bhutanese art and motifs. The Suites are fully equipped with a kitchenette, dining table, living room and all modern conveniences.

The hotel features two restaurants and a bar. Zhago is the all-day dining restaurant serving artisanal fares. M Bistro is the street-front café, serving fresh-baked goodies, snacks and beverages. The Roof, Bhutan's first open rooftop bar, serves artisanal cocktails and a tapas-style food menu along with 360-degree views of the mountains. The hotel also caters to meetings and events for up to 150 guests. Zhiwa Spa features two treatment rooms, a fully equipped fitness centre and steam and sauna facilities.

#### TTB CONDUCTS ROADSHOWS TO PROMOTE TAIWAN



The Taiwan Tourism Bureau (TTB) recently hosted its trade colleagues at a series of roadshows held in New Delhi, Kolkata and Hyderabad. The events brought workshops where attendees learnt more about what Taiwan had to offer to both leisure and MICE travellers. They also interacted with workshop delegates, who included TTB officials and its airline and DMC partners.

In his opening remarks, Dr Trust Lin, Director, Taiwan Tourism Bureau, Singapore office, revealed plans to promote Taiwan as the ideal travel destination. Among the plans include partnerships with the Times of India Group to roll out radio and TV campaigns, as well as print advertisements in publications like Lonely Planet and The Economic Times.

#### IT'S FAMILY TIME IN MONACO



Monaco is an ultimate holiday destination for those who want the finer things in life. Make way for sparkling breakfasts and tasty brunches that will make your family smile! The Sunday brunches organised by the Le Deck restaurant, at Monte-Carlo Beach Hotel, offers a friendly and refined buffet lunch. Discover the Chef's cuisine at the famous 100% organic gourmet restaurant, Elsa. As the sun goes down, head to La Vigie Lounge & Restaurant for a captivating evening. This venue has dreamed up a unique experience for you and your family to enjoy from midday to midnight. Berth at the jetty and head for the terrace extending out over the sea, where you can enjoy some signature cocktails in a jazzy atmosphere or savour a Mediterranean-inspired meal.

Nestled in an exceptional setting between the pine forest and the Mediterranean, Le Tigre Monte-Carlo offers a unique package that offers wellness in the outdoors. Escape from the everyday life and treat your family to a bespoke experience! If your family enjoys sports and leisure activities, the Monte-Carlo Beach Club offers a wide array of water sports – parasailing, tubing, boating and more.





PUNE HINJAWADI

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## DEUTSCHE HOSPITALITY BANKS ON DISCOVER THE WORLD AS ITS GSA IN INDIA



**D**iscover the World recently announced that it now represents Deutsche Hospitality in India alongside the other countries of France, the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States and Russia. Deutsche Hospitality's Vice President of Group Sales, Daniela Lindner said, "We have great experience with Discover the World representing us in other countries. We wanted a trusted partner to enable us to expand our corporate and MICE opportunities."

Speaking on the announcement, Ian Murray, Discover the World's Executive Vice President, said, "We are pleased Deutsche Hospitality has put their trust in us once again and this time in India." He further added, "With us being so familiar with all of the hotel brands under the operation of Deutsche Hospitality, it will make it very easy to set up and begin selling and marketing their five well-known hotel brands – Steigenberger Hotels & Resorts, MAXX by Steigenberger, Jaz in the City and IntercityHotel and Zleep Hotels – in India."

## THE BANGARAM ISLAND RESORT OPENS IN LAKSHADWEEP



**I**n an exclusive presentation for key agents from Bengaluru, the administration of the Union Territories of Lakshadweep, officially announced the re-opening of the Bangaram Island Resort. Bangaram Island is an uninhabited Island at a mere 20-minute speed boat ride from Agatti. Spread over 30 acres, the resort brings out the verdant ethnic character of the area. Over the years, the Bangaram Island Resort has become a destination for discerning international visitors, who are looking for a complete remote island experience.

Bangaram offers spectacular coral reefs amid turquoise blue lagoons, silvery beaches and lush green coconut palms. Speaking on occasion of the launch, Mihir Vardhan, IAS, Secretary - Lakshadweep Tourism, said "The Bangaram Island Resort is an exclusive destination and the administration is making every effort to reach out to the travel agent community to explore mutually beneficial business opportunities".

## ITC ANNOUNCES THE LAUNCH OF ITC ROYAL BENGAL



**I**TC Ltd recently announced the inauguration of its new super-premium luxury hotel in Kolkata – the ITC Royal Bengal. Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee inaugurated the iconic hotel. The 456 keys ITC Royal Bengal is ITC Hotel's 14th Luxury Collection hotel in India. From a sprawling 16,400-sq.ft. pillarless magnificent ballroom, pre-function areas and outer courtyards attached to the Grand Ballroom together adding approximately another 33,000sq.ft, to exquisite arrival lobbies and huge lawns ideal for Kolkata socials, ITC Royal Bengal offers versatile banquet options for both the business meetings and events with total banquet and convention facilities covering an area of 61,000sq.ft.

The launch of ITC Royal Bengal, adjacent to ITC Sonar, marks the unmatched offering of two world-class hotels complementing each other. Together, the two hotels will offer 693 rooms, Suites and serviced apartments, 15 signature dining destinations, 22 meeting venues and a sprawling 1,00,000-sq. ft. banqueting space. In close proximity to the city's largest convention and exhibition venues, the ITC Royal Bengal and ITC Sonar duo will offer the best choice for large scale exhibitions, meetings and events in Kolkata.

## IHCL SIGNS A TAJ HOTEL IN AGRA



**T**he IHCL recently announced a Taj branded hotel in Agra. This hotel is owned by Sincere Developers Pvt Ltd under a management contract by Taj. The hotel is strategically located within walking distance from the Taj Mahal. The hotel comprises 239 spacious rooms as well as an all-day diner, an Indian specialty restaurant and a rooftop lounge overlooking the Taj Mahal. The hotel also has the largest banqueting space in the city.

Puneet Chhatwal, MD & CEO, IHCL, said, "This signing further strengthens our leadership in the leisure portfolio, as aligned to Aspiration 2022. Agra is one of the key cities in the famed Golden Triangle circuit. With this established hotel migrating to the Taj brand, the company will offer a multiple choice of hotels in all the three cities of Delhi, Agra and Jaipur. We are delighted to continue our growth in the fee-based business model."



## SKAL INTERNATIONAL INDIA ANNOUNCES RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS



Carl Vaz - 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President,  
Skal International India

Recently, Skal International India organised Skal International India - Recognition of Excellence Awards 2019 at Hotel Conrad, Bengaluru. Skal International India awarded the organisations doing sustainable work in the areas of: Women Empowerment; Girl Child Education (Beti Bachao, Beti Pado); Clean India, Green India; Education and Skill Development; and Heritage Site Management.

Ranjini Nambiar, National President, Skal International India, said, "Skal International India is pioneering a positive change in the way recognitions are awarded to organisations and people. This is an annual event and Skal International, through its 14,000 worldwide members, ensures that the recipients of the 'Recognition of Excellence Awards' are applauded world over."

Carl Vaz, 1st Vice President & Convenor for Skal International India Recognition of Excellence Awards, said, "At Skal India, we felt there are still many unsung heroes that work tirelessly towards uplifting sections of marginalised society. Government, semi-government, NGOs and outstanding corporates were the focus for the year 2019 nominations."

## BLOOM BAGS HOTEL OF THE YEAR AWARD



Tom Welbury  
of Bloom Hotel  
Group

The Bloom Hotel Group, one of Goa's leading hotel operators, has won 'Best Budget Hotel of the Year' at The Hospitality Leaders Industry Choice Awards 2019 recently. The ceremony was hosted at W Hotel in Vagator. The winning hotel, bloomrooms @ Janpath, is located in New Delhi and was well-publicised for opening in under 100 days, one the quickest hotel construction executions from signing to opening on record.

Tom Welbury of Bloom Hotel Group, in a statement, said, "We are delighted to receive the 'Best Budget Hotel of the Year Award' and it will be a huge confidence boost for the team who are well on track to grow to 100 hotels across South Asia by 2020. Bloom takes pride in being quality obsessed and is leading the affordable hotel space. The only thing budget about Bloom is the price, with a product that is premium and offers an ultra clean, crisp and comfortable experience to its customers."

## ADTOI ORGANISES B2B SHOWBIZZ ON NORTH EAST AND WEST BENGAL



ADTOI recently organised its first ever B2B Showbizz with Domestic Tour Operators of North East and Bengal at The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel in Delhi. The Showbizz was attended by approximately 110 participants. It is first ever endeavour of ADTOI to plan any event like this to generate pure business among members. Ashish Seghal, Chairman – Trade Shows & Road Shows and Travel Marts, Events Committee, ADTOI, conceptualised the event.

Arijit Purkayastha, Chairman of ADTOI, North East Chapter, made a very informative presentation on North East region and highlighted important tourist places in the Valley of Seven Sisters. PP Khanna, President, ADTOI, also addressed the gathering giving a brief account of recent activities undertaken by the association, including the launch of North East Chapter. ADTOI B2B Showbizz on North East and Bengal was a great opportunity for ADTOI members to meet their counterparts from North East and Bengal. The theme North East and the cultural programme were very well-organised and executed by Ved Khanna, Chairman – GH Cultivation & Recreation committee, ADTOI.

## DINE AT ROCK SALT, SRI LANKA'S FIRST DIY HOT LAVA ROCK RESTAURANT



Rock Salt, the signature restaurant of Cinnamon Bey Beruwala, is Sri Lanka's first eatery to offer hot lava rock cuisine wherein the meal is a toast to the coast – prawns, squids, and fresh fish. With an open show kitchen, guests have the freedom to don the chef's hat and prepare their own meals with the best of ingredients and fresh produce of the island.

With a trained chef for assistance, diners are presented with a variety of marinades, spices, oils and other ingredients, including meat, seafood and greens to try out different combinations and sizzle them to perfection with their very own red-hot lava stone. A shabu-shabu style pot is also provided for an altogether different DIY cooking experience. At Rock Salt self-cooking can be done on one's table or guests can opt for any of the delicacies from the menu.

## HYATT PUNE CELEBRATES GLOBAL WELLNESS WEEK



The week-long awareness campaign at Hyatt Pune, Kalyani Nagar commenced with a thought-provoking Panel Discussion on 'Wellness & You' with experts from various fields like Dance Therapy, Holistic Healing, Meditative Healing, Yoga and fitness expert. The hotel hosted events like Water Dance at poolside, and a calming and rejuvenating session on Yoga and Meditation. This was followed by a special talk organised for the Women of Pune, enlightening them about the importance of Mental Wellness and the steps that can be taken to attain wellbeing. The celebration concluded with Hyatt Pune Olympics, wherein the hotel team actively took part in various team-building activities focussing on how we function better together as a team on Global Wellness Day.

Speaking on the hotel's efforts towards Wellness, Sumit Kumar – General Manager at Hyatt Pune, Kalyani Nagar, was quoted saying, "At Hyatt, we think of wellbeing as an ecosystem, if our colleagues are well, they can better care for our guests and customers leading to the ultimate realisation of our purpose."

## LEMON TREE HOTELS ENTERS MUMBAI



Recently, Lemon Tree Hotels Ltd. held an exclusive preview of Lemon Tree Premier-Mumbai International Airport, to showcase their new hotel which will launch in the city shortly. Lemon Tree Premier-Mumbai International Airport will offer 303 plush rooms & Suites, innovative dining options and chic interiors. Located on Andheri Kurla Road, the hotel is in close proximity to key hubs like SEEPZ, Bombay Exhibition Center, Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) and is not far from Juhu Beach.

Commenting on the launch, Patanjali Keswani, C& MD, said, "We are happy to hold an exclusive preview of our upcoming hotel, Lemon Tree Premier-Mumbai International Airport. Mumbai is a key market for us and a prominent destination for both business and leisure travellers. With this hotel, we will also showcase a new design style of our upper midscale brand - Lemon Tree Premier, which blends nostalgia with chic interiors and modern amenities. Our customers can look forward to a refreshing stay at this stylish hotel."

## THRILLOPHILIA ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH TAT



Thrillophilia.com has tied-up with Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to promote Thailand's most unique and off-beat experiences focussing on adventure, art, culture and luxury. Thrillophilia aims to promote Thailand as a value-for-money niche destination and is also doing marketing and social media campaigns around the theme: 'Experience Thailand Differently.' The objective of this collaboration is to allow Indian travellers to explore the undiscovered parts of Thailand, to less popular and off-beat destinations such as Chiang Rai, Ko Samui, Khao Yai, Chiang Mai, etc. While working with TAT, Thrillophilia has brought more than 100 unique experiences online which are now available for booking on Thrillophilia.com.

Chitra Gurnani Daga, CEO of Thrillophilia, said, "Thailand has been one of the safest countries to travel in Asia. Thai people are some of the most kind, gentle and welcoming people on the planet. We are quite excited with this partnership, and I am really glad that some of the best local experiences of Thailand will now be available in India to book before one actually travels. We are also working on a series of videos to promote these experiences across different channels."

## HOTEL SAHARA STAR WINS THE CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE



Hotel Sahara Star has recently won the most prestigious award – TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence 2019. The luxurious and glorious hotel is known for valuing and celebrating Indian culture. Be it an occasion like Women's Day or festival of lights - Diwali, everything is celebrated here with gusto and finesse. This prestigious award honours hospitality excellence to establishments that consistently achieve outstanding traveller reviews on TripAdvisor and is extended to qualifying businesses worldwide.

Speaking on this achievement, Manish Sodhi, CEO, Hotel Sahara Star, said, "At Hotel Sahara Star, we strive for the best and keep working towards bigger goals. We like to serve our patrons with quality and an unmatched experience. Being awarded by TripAdvisor is an honour for us. We are thankful to TripAdvisor for rewarding us with this certificate and recognising our hardwork."



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## ABBA THE MUSEUM PRESENTS A NEW INTERACTIVE EXHIBITION



**R**ecently, ABBA The Museum proudly presented a new interactive exhibition – Mamma Mia! Behind The Movie Magic. The exhibition shows props, costumes including Meryl Streep’s famous dungarees, Stellan Skarsgård’s disco outfit and Lily James’s jeans, drawings and more from behind and in front of the camera. The idea is to show the work behind the films – Who was in the cast? Where were they filmed? Which technology was used? These are just some of the many questions that the exhibition answers. The exhibition runs at ABBA The Museum in Stockholm until April 2020.

In collaboration with the global producer of Mamma Mia!, Judy Craymer and Universal Pictures in Los Angeles, ABBA The Museum has received access to props and film clips never before shown in Sweden. “The exhibition will give visitors a look behind the camera lens using pictures, film clips, props, scenography and costumes, and, of course, interviews with the participants,” says Ingmarie Halling, Creative Director, ABBA The Museum.

## 650 INDIANS TO VISIT IRELAND ON A MICE TRIP



**F**our groups, totalling 650, will travel to Ireland by early July. The visiting groups represent a key travel segment of MICE and are made up of top performing senior business executives, who travel to a different overseas destination each year, as a reward for their performance over the previous year. Each group is in Ireland for four days and will be visiting some of our top attractions, including Malahide Castle, the Guinness Storehouse and Trinity College. The groups will be staying at a premium property and their multi-cuisine meals are being curated by a fine dining restaurant in Dublin. In 2018, an estimated 45,000 Indian visitors India went to Ireland, according to Tourism Ireland.

Huzan Fraser Motivala, Tourism Ireland India, said, “Business tourism is one of the most lucrative forms of tourism, with visitors travelling here for business purposes spending almost three times more than a leisure visitor – so we are delighted that Thomas Cook India has chosen Ireland for the 2019 reward trip for these business executives.”

## EMBARK ON A NOMADIC JOURNEY WITH TUTC



**N**estled in the quaint hamlets of Ladakh, The Ultimate Travelling Camps (TUTC) widely popular uber-luxurious tented camps is inviting travellers to fully immerse in the thin airs of Ladakh while being cushioned by luxuries of a glamorous abode. Known to have introduced ‘glamping’ in challenging landscapes of India, TUTC’s seasonal camps in Leh and Nubra Valley are operational until the end of September, 2019, a favourable time to visit Ladakh. For those looking to deep dive into the soul of Ladakh TUTC’s signature itineraries promise experiential sojourns without compromising on luxury.

TUTC’s exceptional services cater to all the whims and fancies of its esteemed guests. Luxury is exemplified by the aesthetic tents furnished with wooden chandeliers, four poster beds, and exquisite linen to complement the wooden period furniture. The tents are triple layered and protected from the outside and the interiors are climate controlled to suit individual preferences. Each tent offers en-suite bathrooms with hot showers, and other amenities. TUTC’s in-house Chef uses garden fresh ingredients to prepare and pamper visitors with world-class cuisines – Regional, Indian and International.

## REGENTA & ROYAL ORCHID HOTELS OPEN NEW PROPERTIES

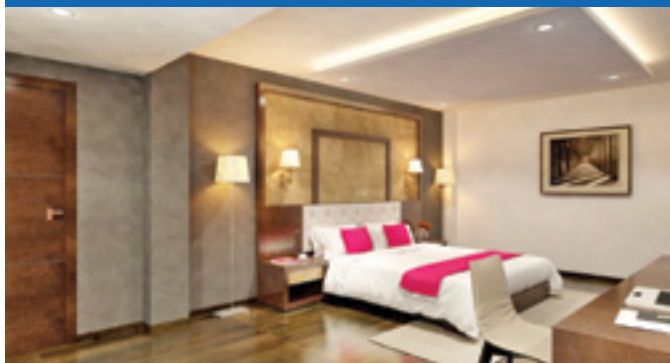


**R**egenta & Royal Orchid Hotels now operate 50+ properties across 35 locations in India. The brand recently opened three new hotels – Regenta Central Cassia in Zirakpur (Chandigarh), Regenta Central RS OMR in Chennai, and Regenta Inn Blossoms, Kullu-Manali. The Regenta Central Cassia is conveniently located in Zirakpur, near the international airport, offering 50 well-appointed rooms, a resto-bar and well-equipped banquets-cum-boardroom facilities. The Regenta Central RS is a luxurious business hotel and is strategically located on the Old Mahabalipuram Road (OMR), providing 120 rooms including 24 Suites, a lively multi-cuisine restaurant, Sky Lounge, well-equipped banquet and boardroom facilities, a full-service bar, and an infinity pool.

The Regenta Inn Blossoms, Kullu-Manali is strategically located on NH21, featuring comfortable rooms with a view of the Beas River, an in-house multi-cuisine restaurant, and offers several adventure activities to its guests.



## CYGNETT INN TRENDZ OPENS IN ITANAGAR



Cygnett Inn Trendz, at a close proximity to the Itanagar railway station, is ideal for both business and leisure travellers. Conveniently located and constructed in a contemporary design, this premium hotel offers spacious and stylishly designed rooms with all modern amenities and in-room services. Guests can enjoy the benefits of a well-equipped gym, a relaxing time in the swimming pool, or simply unwind at the spa. The hotel offers a variety of dining options. Cygnett Pavilion, an all-day dining restaurant, serves an impressive menu for breakfast, lunch and dinner with sumptuous buffet options at discounted prices. For children, the hotel offers a swanky game zone to ensure that they cherish their playtime. Cygnett Inn Trendz also offers conferencing and banqueting services. From catering to an intimate gathering of 30 to 50 guests, Cygnett Inn Trendz can cater to organising for both corporate events and social celebrations. Tailor-made conference packages are also available that one can avail to in order to curate customised events. Last but not the least, guests can unwind, relax and rejoice at the Metro Pub and enjoy a wide selection of chosen liquors and labels.

Speaking on the occasion, Sarbendra Sarkar, Managing Director, said, "Cygnett Inn Trendz is a place where guests of all groups can have a wonderful time. With all the modern facilities, great dining options, rejuvenation activities, active game zone for kids, Cygnett Inn Trendz aims to provide an unparalleled experience to all guests."

## GTDC COMMENCES MONSOON TREKKING EXPEDITIONS



Recently, GTDC commenced weekly monsoon treks to Zadani along the banks of River Mhadei. The trek will cover a distance of 4km through semi-forests and lush greenery. The trekking expedition is open to all, especially those with a spirit for adventure and nature lovers. Transport arrangements have been made from Mapusa and Margao at 7.30 a.m. and from Panjim at 8.30 a.m. Pick-up facility is also available from Old Goa, Banasthari and Sankhali. Yummy food will be served by the villagers of Dhavem, Sattari.

## INDIA: THE THIRD LARGEST MARKET FOR SINGAPORE



For the fourth time in a row, Singapore welcomed more than one million Indian travellers in 2018, reinforcing it as one of the most preferred destinations for Indian outbound travel. The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) announced that India retained its third position, after China and Indonesia, as a Visitors Arrival (VA) source market for Singapore. It recorded the second highest growth at 13%, after USA (14%). From India, Singapore continued to draw a high number of meetings & incentive (M&I) travel groups in 2018, including from prominent corporates like Amway India and Voltas.

Speaking to media in Chennai and Bangalore, GB Srithar, Regional Director SAMEA (South Asia, Middle East and Africa), STB, said, "We are grateful to all our partners who promoted Singapore actively in 2018, making us welcome a record 1.44 million visitors from India. With Singapore's diverse sightseeing and attraction offerings, array of exciting events and year-round festivals and celebrations catering to the different passion points of travellers, we look forward to welcoming more visitors from India to experience Singapore in 2019."

## IFCCI OPENS THE NEW HEAD OFFICE IN MUMBAI



The Indo-French Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IFCCI) recently inaugurated its new head office at One Forbes building in Fort, Mumbai. This office is shared with the official French Tourism Development Agency, Atout France and will be a hub for promoting Indo-French business and tourism. The office was inaugurated by Sonia Barbry, Consul General of France in Mumbai and Guillaume Girard-Reydet, President of IFCCI and MD, Pernod Ricard India. Spread across 6000sq.ft, the Chamber has also opened a new business centre to host French companies entering the Indian market.

Speaking on the sidelines of the inauguration, Sonia Barbry said, 'Our aim is to promote Indo-French relations and strengthen our ties in all areas of business. IFCCI and Atout France have been actively promoting Indo-French relations and are set to gain much with this newly established office'.

### TURKISH AIRLINES LAUNCHES 787-9 DREAMLINER



Recently, Turkish Airlines announced that up to 30 new Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft will join the airline's young and fast-growing fleet over the next four years, and each will feature the carrier's bespoke, all-new Business Class Cabins. The carrier had placed 25 firm + 5 optional orders in the last year for the 787-9 Dreamliner, which will gradually be added to its expanding fleet between 2019 and 2023. The Dreamliner has a seating capacity for 300 passengers, including 270 economy class seats and 30 business class seats. Regarded as one of the most advanced aircraft for its fuel efficiency and range flexibility, the 787-9 Dreamliner will open new routes for Turkish Airlines, reinforcing its status as the carrier that flies to more countries than any other. As part of the 787 Dreamliner family, the 787-9 is powered by a suite of new technologies and a revolutionary design. The new aircraft will offer passengers refined comfort during the longest journeys across 311 destinations in 124 countries.

### AAI SIGNS MOU WITH MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION



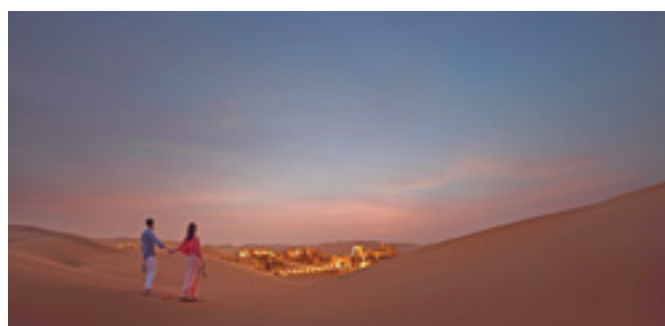
Airports Authority of India (AAI) signed its Annual Performance Contract, that is, Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the year 2019-20 with Ministry of Civil Aviation. The MoU was signed between Pradeep Singh Kharola, Secretary (Civil Aviation) and Dr Guruprasad Mohapatra, Chairman, AAI. On this occasion, senior officers from the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Board Members of AAI were also present.

MoU 2019-20 specifies various parameters and targets to be performed by AAI during the year. Apart from the targets in the field of Finance, Research & Development, Human Resource Development, Airport Service Quality (ASQ), Cargo and CPSE Conclave - 2018, AAI has undertaken an ambitious target of Rs 5160 crore towards Capital Expenditure on airport infrastructure development.

### ETIHAD EXTENDS ITS ABU DHABI OFFER

Etihad Airways recently announced the extension of its free Abu Dhabi stopover campaign to the end of the year due to the popularity of the special offer. Travellers flying through Abu Dhabi with the airline are invited to enjoy a free two-night hotel stay to break up their journey and explore the city's vibrant and diverse attractions.

Etihad is offering two free nights of hotel accommodation in Abu Dhabi for all guests booking flights to and from all Etihad destinations via Abu Dhabi. Guests can choose from a range of hotels located across the city, including the 5-Star Jumeirah at Etihad Towers, Intercontinental Abu Dhabi and Dusit Thani Abu Dhabi, as well as the Pearl Rotana, Courtyard by Marriott WTC, Crowne Plaza and Radisson Blu. The free Abu Dhabi stopover promotion is available for bookings online through [etihad.com](http://etihad.com) or via a travel agent made by 1st December 2019 for travel until 31st December 2019.



### AMERICAN AIRLINES ANNOUNCES NEW SERVICE

American Airlines continues to strengthen its presence in Jamaica with the launch of new service between Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay (MBJ) and JFK Airport in New York. Starting from November 21, 2019, the new route will be operated daily with a Boeing 737-800 aircraft.

Speaking on the occasion, Alfredo Gonzalez, MD for the Caribbean, American Airlines, said, "American Airlines' rich history in Jamaica spans more than four decades and we look forward to the launch of our new Montego Bay service this coming November, further strengthening Jamaica as a tourist destination by providing nonstop access to the extensive network that we operate out of JFK, which includes up to 111 daily flights to nearly 40 destinations around the world."





## GLOBAL DEMAND FOR PILOTS DRIVES GROWTH AT ETIHAD



Soaring global demand for airline pilots, with growing popularity of Airbus A320 and Boeing 787 aircraft, have jointly sparked major growth in the pilot training division of Abu Dhabi's Etihad Airways. In 2018, Etihad had won contracts to train pilots from more than 40 clients, with over half of the airlines being from the Middle East, Europe, Africa, Indian sub-continent and South East Asia.

The training for new pilots from ab initio stage is a growing activity at Etihad Aviation Training, which currently has over 100 cadet pilots and 22 training aircraft, including four Embraer Phenom 100 jets, all based at Al Ain, in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. But by far the fastest-growing segment of the business has become retraining pilots to fly new aircraft types, particularly the Airbus A320-family of narrow-body jets and the wide-bodied Boeing 787 Dreamliner, two of the most in-demand types.

## AAI SUCCESSFULLY COMMISSIONS SKYREV360 SYSTEM



Recently, AAI successfully commissioned SkyRev360 system, a cutting-edge technology for data gathering, invoicing and realisation at Lao Air Navigation Services (LANS), Vientiane, Lao PDR. The project for implementation of SkyRev360 was awarded to AAI in January 2018 for all 12 provinces of Lao PDR. AAI has successfully commissioned the system within a short time of less than one and half years. Suresh, Member (Finance), AAI, and Bountheung Soumontha, General Director (LANS) signed the commissioning certificate in a glittering ceremony at SkyRev360 Command Centre at LANS, Vientiane, Lao PDR in the presence of Vanpheng Chanthaphone, Director General, Department of Civil Aviation, Govt. of Lao PDR, and other senior officials from AAI and Govt. of Lao PDR. SkyRev360 will help LANS in bringing transparency and increase cash flows.

## AIR FRANCE UNVEILS AIRBUS A330

Recently, Air France welcomed the revamped travel cabins on board Airbus A330 on the Bengaluru – Paris route and on the Delhi – Paris route until end of October 2019. The aircraft is equipped with 36 seats in Business, 21 seats in Premium Economy and 167 seats in the Economy cabin. Completely redesigned, the new Business cabin combines comfort and elegance. The new Business seat offers total privacy thanks to a sliding panel separating the seats. The seats convert into a full-flat bed for a relaxed journey, Clarins beauty products, and services that include complimentary champagne and French candy upon arrival.

Speaking about this enhancement, Jean-Noel Rault, General Manager, Air France – KLM, Indian Sub-Continent, said, "This latest revamped offering from Air France is a testament of our commitment to provide best-in-class products and services to our customers in India. The new long-haul travel cabins are refreshing and will provide our valued customers with improved amenities making their travel experience more comfortable and satisfying."



## AIR ARABIA LAUNCHES FLIGHTS BETWEEN SHARJAH & VIENNA

Air Arabia recently announced the launch of direct flights between Sharjah and Vienna, capital of Austria, starting September 15, 2019. The nonstop 6-hour flight to Vienna, popularly known as the 'City of Music', will initially operate four times a week, on Sundays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, and will increase to daily flights starting mid-December. Air Arabia currently operates flights to more than 170 routes across the globe from four hubs located in the Middle East and North Africa. Adel Al Ali, Group CEO, Air Arabia, said, 'We are pleased to announce the new route from Sharjah to Vienna, one of Europe's leading cultural and economic centres. This new service linking the two cities will further strengthen the trade and tourism ties between both nations, while providing our leisure and business travellers with a new choice for value-for-money air travel.'

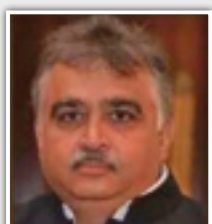




**BK MEHROTRA** has been designated as Executive Director (ED) - Key Infrastructure Development (KID) Group, Airports Authority of India (AAI). As ED (KID), he has undertaken corporate level responsibilities for development of infrastructure at various airports run by AAI through Public Private Participation. Prior to this, he was working as GM (Cargo) - AAI/Chief Operating Officer – AAI Cargo Logistics & Allied Services (An AAI subsidiary). Mehrotra has vast experience in Air Cargo field for over 36 years and has worked in different capacities at Mumbai, Chennai and Delhi Airports, handling crucial assignments in AAI.



**CAPT. RAJ K MALIK** has been designated as Executive Director (Regional Connectivity Scheme - UDAN) at Airports Authority of India (AAI). His key responsibility will include effective and smooth implementation of UDAN Scheme, which aims to provide air connectivity to currently under-served and un-served airports across the country, promoting balanced regional growth and making flying affordable for masses. Prior to this, Capt. Malik has served as General Manager (Security) at Corporate Headquarters (CHQ), HOD, Security at IGI Airport, Indian Aviation Academy (IAA). With rich experience of 30 years in Aviation, he has also held the post of Airport Director, Srinagar International Airport.



**SANJAY DATTA**, MD, Airborne, has been designated as the President at Skai Asia. In his new role, he will ensure that the voice of Asia gains further prominence and respect at international platforms; introduce a unique platform for business and interaction among Asian SKAL members; create a culture of harmony and transparency at all levels; facilitate inter-club twinning and interaction; organise a bigger and better Asian

conference with greater participation and networking; herald a digital transformation through the launch of a social networking app for SKAL Asia; and create a task force of stalwarts and recognised colleagues to envision a road map to 2025.



**ASHWANI NAYAR** has been appointed as General Manager at Crowne Plaza Greater Noida. A seasoned hotelier, Nayar has been comes with close to three decades of experience in the industry, having worked with some of the finest global Hospitality brands across South Asia and South East Asia. With a focus on creating best-in-class value for all stakeholders while setting benchmarks that compare to the highest global standards, he will now lead the largest Crowne Plaza in South East Asia to excellence.



**VIKAS AHLUWALIA** has been appointed as the General Manager and National Head at Zone by The Park. He brings over 22 years of rich experience in the Hospitality segment with expertise in the areas of hotel operations and development. In his new role, he will be responsible for heading and growing Zone by The Park brand. He will look after operations, sales and marketing and will be actively focussing on further expansion and development of the Zone by The Park brand. As a professional hotelier, he has earlier worked with Indian Hotels Company Ltd, Aloft Hotels, Four Points by Sheraton and Berggruen Hotels.

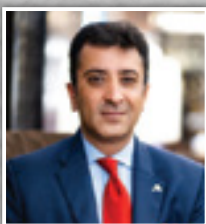


**SUNAINA SHARMA MANERKER** has been appointed as the General Manager at Grand Mercure Mysore. Manerker comes with over 19 years of Hospitality experience and is a seasoned hotelier, particularly in the luxury space. Prior to this, Manerker was the General Manager at Lebua, Lucknow. She has earlier worked with Le Meridien, Westin, Ramada, Lebua, as well as has pre-opening experience with IHG and Alila Hotels & Resorts.



**SRINIVAS GANDURI** has been appointed as the General Manager at Marasa Sarovar Premiere, Tirupati. Ganduri is a well-rounded professional with 23+ years of experience with an understanding of the Hospitality industry in areas such as sales and marketing, operations, cost, revenue management and Area responsibilities. His key strengths include improving commercial efficacies of the hotel, team building, sales, marketing, revenue, pre-opening and driving excellent customer services. He also possesses the ability to quickly understand complex concepts, identify and solve problems as well as turn ideas into logical strategies, and implement systems that optimise productivity and customer satisfaction. He also been a part of three pre-opening hotels and successfully launched 'Courtyard by Marriott', 'Marigold by GreenPark' & 'Avasa' hotels at Hyderabad.





**SANDEEP SAHDEV** has been appointed as the Director of Sales and Marketing at Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield. Bringing with him over 16 years of expertise in the Hospitality industry, Sahdev is a driven, meticulous and experienced professional. In his new role, he will be leading the management staff in planning and strategising sales objectives,

marketing communications, direct sales-force activities to increase profits and achieve desired targets. Recognised for his exemplary ability to demonstrate efficient decision-making, he is tactical and quick with solutions. Prior to this, he has been associated with reputed brands like The Den Bengaluru, Duet India Hotels (Asset Management), Four Points by Sheraton Pune, Sheraton Udaipur Palace Resort & Spa, The Oberoi Group, and Carlson Hotels, amongst others.



**ANOOP PANDEY** has been appointed as the General Manager at The Westin Sohna Resort & Spa. An enterprising and creative leader, he comes with nearly two decades of experience with expertise in all departments of Hospitality. Pandey began his journey with The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts and worked across its various properties in Mumbai, Kovalam and

Bengaluru. He later moved on to be a part of Starwood Hotels & Resorts (Now Marriott International) and adorned several capacities with The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace, The St. Regis Mumbai and The Westin Gurgaon. Prior to this, he served as Resident Manager at The Westin Gurgaon, where he was responsible for developing business plans and implementing new ideas to improve guest satisfaction and profitability.



**PRERNA DAGA** has been appointed as Multi Property Assistant Director – Marketing and Communications at The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi & The Westin Sohna Resort and Spa. She brings over 14 years of well-rounded experience in the realm of Marketing, Communications and PR within the luxury segment and Hospitality industry. Her last

assignment was with PVR Cinemas – The Luxury Collection, where she was heading Marketing & PR for the luxury arm of the company. Prior to this, she was part of the Hospitality industry for over 5 years with Aria Hotels & Consultancy Services Pvt Ltd, where she was pivotal in the pre-opening and launch of the hotel.



**MANISH SAINI** has been appointed as Chief Operating Officer at Ferns N Petals. He is actively involved in framing strategic plans for Ferns N Petals.



**MANOJ JAIN** has been designated as Chief Operating Officer at Ferns N Petals. Being proficient in financial intricacies, Jain will be responsible for overseeing FNP Gardens with a clear strategic vision for growth.

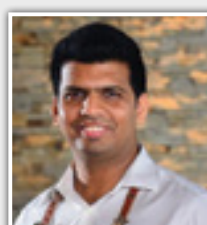


**ANIL SHARMA** has been designated as Chief Operating Officer at Ferns N Petals. He is associated with FNP since 2004 and has played a very important role in growing the retail business of the company.



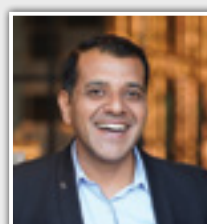
**ANURUDH KHANNA** has been designated as Multi-Property Executive Chef at The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi and The Westin Sohna Resort and Spa. With an illustrious career spanning over 21 years of working with renowned luxury hotels like The Shangri-La Bangalore, Hyatt Regency Delhi, The Taj Mahal Hotel New Delhi, The Park New Delhi and The

Westin Pune, he brings with him vast knowledge and understanding of the evolving Hospitality Industry and food trends. He will spearhead diverse dining venues, as well as oversee the in-room dining and banquet operations at both the hotels.



**DINESH BABU** has been designated as the Director of Beverages at The Westin Pune Koregaon Park. He holds an experience of more than 10 years in the Hospitality industry. He started his career at The Accord Metropolitan – Chennai. In his new role, he will be responsible for managing the daily operations of all outlets, maintaining established quality and service

standards and responding to customers trends and needs to ensure outstanding experience. Prior to this, he has worked as the Beverage Manager with The Westin Langkawi Resort and Spa.



**PUNEET SHARMA** has been appointed as the Director – Food and Beverages (F&B) at Renaissance Ahmedabad. He comes with over a decade of work experience and will be overseeing the complete operations of the F&B unit of the hotel. In addition to this, he would also be responsible for propelling strategic F&B branding and promotions for the

hotel. He has been affiliated with JW Marriott in Mumbai – along with its other properties such as Sheraton Grand Hotel in Bengaluru, Marriott Whitefield in Bengaluru and Courtyard by Marriott in Gurgaon, as well as other hotels including Novotel Ibis Chennai OMR. He has worked with three hotels during the pre-opening phase not just in the F&B segment but also in operations and events. Sharma has comprehensive understanding of international food and beverage trends, restaurant management and event operations.



**YAMAN RAI** has been appointed as the Food and Beverage Manager at Courtyard by Marriott and Fairfield by Marriott Bengaluru Outer Ring Road. Bringing over 9 years of hospitality experience to his new role, Rai will oversee the food and beverage operations at the hotel. His most recent role was Assistant

Director of Food and Beverage at The Grand New Delhi. As F&B Manager, he will bring his wealth of experience and innate skills to manage the restaurant operations with impeccable leadership and detail.

## ZONE BY THE PARK OPENS IN JAMMU



Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Ltd has recently opened 'Zone by The Park, Jammu'. This is the ninth hotel of its social catalyst brand, Zone by The Park. The 51-room hotel and is strategically located within 6km to the airport and is in close proximity to the nearby tourist destinations such as Dogra Art Museum, Raghunath Temple, Ranbireshwar Temple, Amar Mahal Palace, Mubarak Mandi Palace and Vaishno Devi temple. Zone Jammu will offer great food and beverage options to its guests. It boasts one of city's largest banquet spaces with 7500sq.ft. party hall with an open lawn of 1800sq.ft. making it ideal for weddings and large conferences. The hotel also has two large party halls for high-powered meetings and events.

Speaking on the launch, Vijay Dewan, MD, Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Ltd, said, "Drawing from The Park's design spirit, Zone by The Park envisions an interactive series of buzzing spaces using the best of contemporary design, with playful interiors and vibrant nightlife. We will cater to the needs of design-conscious, price-conscious guests, who are visiting the city to explore prevalent natural beauty, history and spirituality."

## RHG PROMOTES RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS IN ASIA



Radisson Hotel Group™ continues to secure a sustainable future for many of Asia's rapidly developing tourism destinations, with the launch of a series of environmentally and socially responsible initiatives at its beachfront resorts.

Underpinned by Radisson Hotel Group's Responsible Business ethos, meaningful action is being taken to preserve the environment and give back to local communities in several new Radisson Blu island destinations – Bali, the Maldives and two emerging Vietnamese beach resorts, Phu Quoc and Cam Ranh.

## QASR AL WATAN OPENS TO VISITORS IN ABU DHABI



HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, led the opening ceremony of Qasr Al Watan – the nation's newest cultural landmark housed within the Presidential Palace compound in the capital Abu Dhabi. The inauguration ceremony was attended by Crown princes and deputy rulers from the seven emirates, as well as ministers and senior officials.

Visitors to the UAE's newest tourist attraction will enjoy an enriching journey throughout their tour at the Palace, beginning at The Great Hall – the heart of the building. In the west wing of the Palace, they will learn about the formation of the UAE and its system of governance, and have access to halls typically reserved for official state guests such as the Spirit of Collaboration, a chamber where Federal Supreme Council and UAE Cabinet meetings as well as official summits are held. Visitors can also explore a collection of diplomatic gifts received from visiting Heads of State and foreign dignitaries, displayed to the public for the first time.

## GRAND MERCURE MYSORE OBSERVES INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY



Grand Mercure Mysore celebrated International Yoga Day with the concept of 'Desk Yoga' along with its employees. Desk Yoga on International Yoga Day was an effort to promote the health and well-being of its employees and guests while celebrating the spirit of Yoga which is very intrinsic to Mysore culture. Desk Yoga can be practiced in the office or a work environment without any elaborate settings. It includes simple steps that could be done on a daily basis while at work.

Speaking on the occasion, Sunaina Sharma Manerker, General Manager - Grand Mercure Mysore, said, 'Yoga is a time-tested and ideal way to stay healthy and happy, and we believe that rejuvenation in the form of Yoga is important in improving the wellness of our employees. This is our way of celebrating the spirit of this globally renowned exercise and de-stress activity while taking a positive step towards better fitness.'





**CORPORATE**

# THE INVESTMENT CATALYST

The Tourism Finance Corporation of India (TFCI) has been a leader in financing the Tourism and Hospitality Sector in India and has a direct bearing on the development of the industry

TT BUREAU



Anirban Chakraborty, Managing Director & CEO, TFCI



Sealing its position as the only specialised institution in the country which exclusively funds tourism projects, TFCI has been like a father figure for the Indian Tourism Industry since its nascency. Today's Traveller caught up with Anirban Chakraborty, Managing Director & CEO, TFCI, to discuss the importance of such an institution, his future plans, and work-life balance.

**Q: Please tell us about the services that TFCI has offered in the development of the Tourism Industry over its 30 years of existence?**

Tourism is a significant vehicle for the economic progress of a nation. In India, in recent times, the Tourism and Hospitality Industry has been one of the key drivers of growth in the services sector, contributing greatly to the country's GDP as well as Foreign Exchange Earnings. As such, the role of an all-India financial institution catering to the requirements of the Tourism Industry is crucial.

The TFCI has successfully played the role of an investment catalyst for the tourism sector and contributed significantly in terms of creation of tourism infrastructure in the country. The institution has assisted more than 897 projects till March, 2019.

We provide a unique business model, which offers services like Tourism Project Financing, Other Financing, and Tourism Advisory Services. Tourism Project Financing involves Financial Assistance in tourism sector, services sector and allied activities.

Other Financing includes Financial Assistance in urban infrastructure (hospitals, education etc.), Industrial/ Manufacturing, along with RE and BFSI on a selective basis, services sector and allied activities. Tourism Advisory Services include consultancy and encompasses project-related services for the private sector and institutional services for Central and State governments. The TFCI has been able to execute many prestigious assignments for the Ministry





of Tourism, Government of India, State governments and the private sector. In fact, every third room in the approved category hotels in the country has been funded by TFCI. We have funded more than 49,500 rooms in total. More than 40% of the room capacity in star-category hotels has been created with assistance from TFCI. Our financial assistance comes in a variety of forms – Corporate Loans, Rupee Loans, Bridge Loans, Working Capital Finance etc.

**Q: What will be the growth trajectory of TFCI 2.0? Please shed some light on TFCI Capital and its role in energising the Indian Tourism Industry?**

TFCI 2.0 is focussed solely on Product Diversification, with an aim to bring about overall efficiency in the system that will hopefully lead to better returns for all the stakeholders involved.

Further, we will try to leverage the sector expertise of Travel and Tourism and try to expand in other sectors in India. New avenues of growth and foray into sectors such as Acquisition Financing, Investment Banking and MSME segment are also in the pipeline. On the capital front, we have achieved Capital Adequacy Ratio of 40% till date. We plan to explore new funding options to bring about utmost Capital Efficiency by using the right mix of long and short-term borrowings.

We are also planning to restructure the organisation. We are investing in new resources and focussing on building a new leadership team, along with strong experience to drive growth. We are putting in place proper policies related to HR, credit, investment and borrowing. Investments in building IT infrastructure and software upgradation, both of which will improve competitiveness and lead to less turnaround time and improved efficiency, have also been undertaken.

**Q: What does Work-Life Balance mean to you? What are your interests other than work?**

Maintaining a work-life balance has its own set of challenges, especially for a CEO. To me, it's all about time management. It's about balancing the time needed to be effective at work, whilst ensuring that you have enough time left for personal interests, family life, and leisure activities.

On the other hand, as CEOs, we have huge workloads and are often called upon to create an example for the organisation. As such, we are never able to switch off completely from our corporate responsibilities. Therefore, to effectively implement a positive work-life balance a very structured approach is required.

Having a regular time away is crucial for me to think clearly, objectively and creatively about my overall business strategy. Delegation is also very important to maintain work-life balance. Delegation takes time to do work effectively but it's worthwhile to help the senior leadership team develop, so that you get can let go and ensure that the business is conducted smoothly.

A great CEO is one who enables the conditions for a business to run seamlessly, whether they are in the office or elsewhere. Finally, there is more to life than the corporate world. When you enjoy it, you are more motivated to be a good leader. When I am not working, I love to read fiction, particularly novels.



# CORPORATE JET-SETTER

**Faisal Nadeem Saiyed**  
**Director, People Services - APAC**  
**Expedia Group**

## TT BUREAU

**Q: Your most memorable trip to any destination, foreign and domestic?**

I love to visit places rich in history, art and culture. I absolutely love spending time in museums. But, that's not all. In a way, my soul feels nourished when I go for long walks in the hills and breathe the crisp air. From that context, Scotland has to be my most memorable trip. We booked a home and spent seven idyllic days walking through Scottish towns, lochs and also extended our visits to the Lake Districts in North England. Picture-perfect locales, lovely weather and loads to see make my Scotland trip the most memorable ever.

In India, I think it has to be Goa in the rains. Due to the off-season, the place was relatively less crowded and every day, we'd rent a car and drive up and down the Goan coastline to explore hidden restaurants and places to see. It was a very serene experience.

**Q: Your dream destination and why?**

I would love to do Scandinavia and explore the raw beauty of the Tundra and the Arctic region.

**Q: Favourite airline and why?**

Many, depending upon the reason for flying. I appreciate polite interactions, good service and a variety of food options.

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

Crabs in Colombo. The restaurant and cuisine was incredible!



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

The fundamental criteria to judge a hotel experience are exceptional service, ambience and location. Over time, I have realised that a key differentiator has to be personalised attention that makes for an exceptional experience. Regardless of whether one is travelling for business or leisure, it's the little things that matter and one feels welcome whenever the service quality bar goes higher.

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

Scotland, for sure.

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

Udaipur. We were young, the hotel was small and cosy, and the food was authentically local. We spent many days exploring Udaipur and went up to Mt Abu. I was pleasantly surprised with the quaint British era feel to certain parts of Mt Abu and the weather was just amazing.

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

This was more than two decades back, when we were in college. We took an overnight bus ride to Mussoorie and I daresay, painted the town red, as only young adults with nary a care in the world can do. That trip was indeed very memorable.

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

I like to choose quality of services offered, convenience and ambience more than anything else. I typically prefer a great experience, variety of cuisines or better connections over other things.





# *Traditional Wonders*

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# CORPORATE JET-SETTER

**Himanshu Goel**  
**Managing Director, MEA & India**  
**Syniverse, Gurgaon**

TT BUREAU

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

As part of my job and vacation trips, I travel to 12-15 countries every year. This year, however, I decided that my vacation ought to give me a sense of achievement, push me physically/emotionally and take me out of my comfort zone. My recent self-driving motoring expedition from Lhasa to the Third Pole – Mt Everest base camp (Tibet side), along with my 16-year-old son, not only met all the objectives, it became, without doubt, our most memorable trip ever.

Our journey started in Beijing with the touristy Great Wall of China, Summer Palace, Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City, etc., then heading to Chengdu and touring the Panda Research Center before reaching Lhasa, the capital of mystical Tibet. We drove from Lhasa to Xigatse to Tingri to Base Camp and then to Karola, the hanging glacier, to the holy Yamdrok Lake and back to Lhasa. The trip included a 150km drive, mostly in dried river beds, over rocks and crossing small streams of water.



The captivating landscapes, mesmerising view of Milky Way, the twinkling stars, the pure air and, of course, the occasional mountain goats at unthinkable heights, herds of sheep crossing the roads, yaks with colourful flags and a must mention – the incredible infrastructure by the Chinese government. This trip was a rollercoaster ride on multiple dimensions –

**Weather** – Sunny 30°C (with sun shining so bright that it would peel off your skin) to -5°C (with wind chills that could freeze your toes and numb your nose!).

**Luxury** – Super luxury in St. Regis, Lhasa, to basic amenities in a monastery at Base Camp.

**Food** - Premium Indian food in Lhasa to yak butter tea, yak meat, boiled cabbage and noodles at most places.

**Altitude** – Oxygen is a rare commodity at 12000 to 17000ft. above sea level and its scarcity can make every step, every syllable, extremely difficult.

**Landscape** – The entire landscape is a wonderland in itself, from lush green and yellow mustard fields to barren, grey snow-covered mountain peaks and water streams flowing through the mountains, fields and farms.

**I must add though** – having Venky from Nomadic Road as our expedition organiser made this 12-day vacation a truly memorable one. He not only organised Tibet entry permits and our Chinese driving licence, but also pushed us to reach Base Camp in spite of all the challenges along the way.



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

I now dream of the following over the next 2-3 years:

- ✦ A motoring expedition over the frozen Siberian Lake Baikal at -25°C
- ✦ Driving around the beautiful Patagonian landscape
- ✦ Experiencing African safaris during wildebeest migration
- ✦ A cruise in the Brahmaputra River, with a visit to Kaziranga National Park

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

My best hotel experiences have been in Bay Island, in Andaman, Manu Maharani in Nainital and Fortune resort in Ooty, where I vacationed with my family in the 1990s and early 2000s. These experiences were made unforgettable by the hotel staff going beyond their usual duties to make us feel special.

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

I would definitely like to visit Big Island in Hawaii again. The landscape, weather, the volcano in all its glory, the ocean, adventure activities and the luxuries are all very stunning.

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

Our family vacation to Ooty, in 2005, when our kids were very young, is perhaps the most memorable one. The weather, hotel staff, food, activities were all beyond amazing and truly relaxing.

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

I think discovering a Punjabi dhaba at an obscure

Malaysian hill station during a driving tour will remain our most favourite food excursion. The simplest combination – Aloo parathas and Masala Chai – 6000km away from home is simply delightful!

**Q: As a frequent traveller, what's your philosophy?**

As a frequent traveller, I like to experience a place, the way the locals would – whether it's the stay, food, shopping, airlines, transport or social circles. As an example, in Tuscany and Salzburg last year, we stayed in local hotels or apartments and had their local cuisine. I also like to spend time understanding the local customs and traditions. Learning about the history of different places also gives insights into how the world works.



Photo: Basecamp (Tibet Side) Pic 3  
Photo Courtesy: Nomadic Road



# CORPORATE JET-SETTER

**Major Warren Gladstone**  
Vice President Chief Security Officer,  
Hinduja Global Solutions, Bengaluru

TT BUREAU

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

Visiting Andaman and Nicobar Islands has been my most memorable trip ever. The history and beauty of the islands captivate one's memories just like the Cellular Jail captivates the minds of historians.

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

Paris, for its wonderful sights, Eiffel Tower and the beautiful language. With a history steeped in romanticism, the opportunities for having a fulfilling time are endless in Paris.

**Q: Favourite airline and why?**

Undoubtedly Emirates. Hospitality and Gourmet experiences at Emirates are unparalleled to any other airline. The airline provides great support, comfort and ground handling services compared with other airlines.

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

The Marriot stands out on the international front, while I fancy ITC group of hotels in the Indian Subcontinent. Classy ambience and delectable food options are the best and consistent all over the world.

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

Las Vegas and Grand Canyon. The Grand Canyon captivates and mystifies you with what nature can do. The old adage "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas" truly emboldens the fact that Vegas is the place to indulge and try your luck at the Casinos.

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

My trip to Andaman and Nicobar Islands has been the most



memorable. The serenity, civic sense and pristine beauty touch the right cords on arrival. The 572 odd islands make it indeed magnificent. The mesmerising experience is worth the money and a perfect getaway from the normal hustle and bustle of city life.

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

Ladakh trip has been the best holiday with all my friends. The camaraderie that was built during the trip has enabled us to have wonderful times. We were lucky enough to have access to places that were not open to the general public. The views from 12,000ft. above mean sea level were breathtaking. Pure air, azure blue skies, nature's spring and the clouds make it the perfect destination and closest to heaven.

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

The Barefoot Bayside at Havelock Islands in Andamans is worth mentioning. The smoked lobsters make it one of the best places to indulge in seafood.

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

I would say we should not be hasty travellers and enjoy every bit of our travel.

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

A well-planned trip is worth the millions. I love collecting souvenirs – they refresh my memories of all the good times.

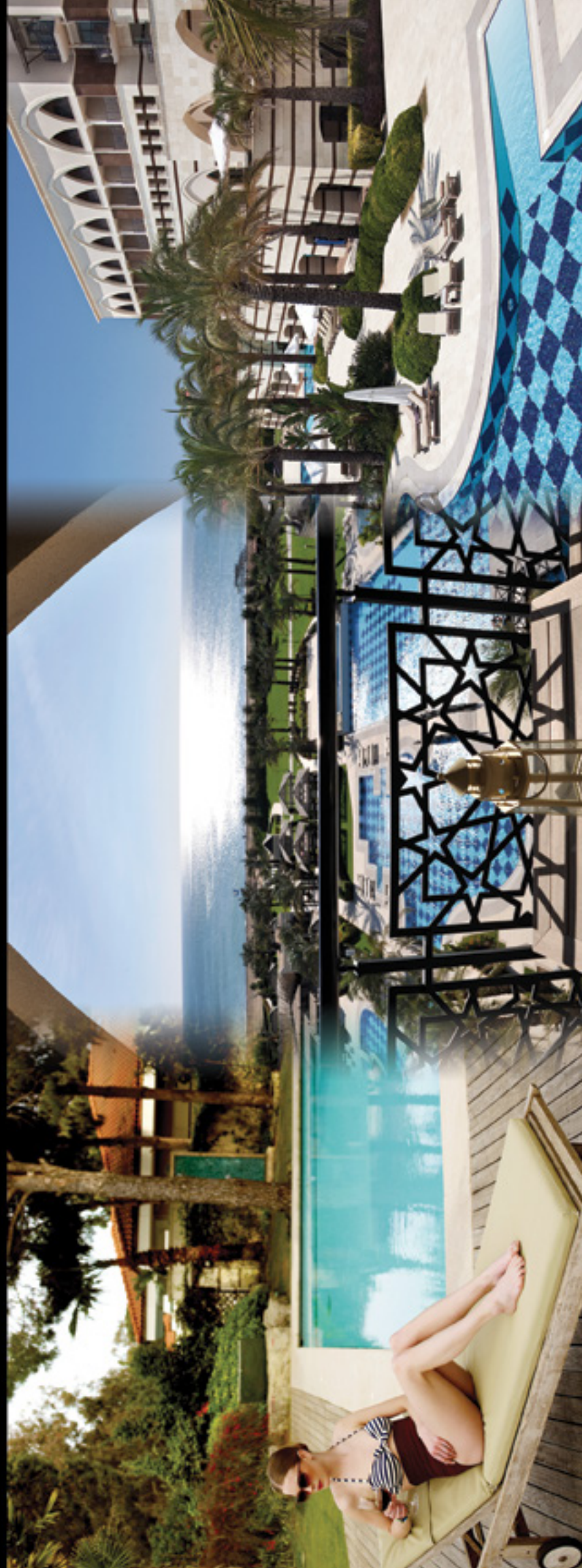






Kempinski Hotel  
The Dome

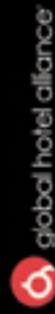
BELEK, TURKEY



## *Beyond Your Expectations*

Located in an exquisite corner of Turkey's Mediterranean coast, Kempinski Hotel The Dome Belek, delivers a complete luxury resort experience with an extensive beachfront, two 18-hole golf courses (PGA-approved) and 3600 m2 unique Spa and Thalasso facilities.

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HOTELLERS SINCE 1897



# CORPORATE JET-SETTER

**Chanda Malvankar**  
**Manager - Administration**  
**Mahindra Logistics Ltd, Mumbai**

## TT BUREAU

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

My most memorable trip was to Turkey, where I visited the glorious and stunning Hagia Sophia. Places like Esentepe or Pigeon Valley viewpoint are famous for perfect views while trekkers love the Ihlara, Pigeon, and Red Valleys. Cappadocia is one of the best hot air ballooning destinations in the world. Given a choice, I would really like to visit Turkey again. Ascending early in the morning, I had an impressive bird's-eye view of the famous lunar landscape, small towns and valleys.

### Q: You dream of going to?

I dream of having a holiday with my family in Switzerland. A perfect tourist attraction, Switzerland attracts me because of its pristine lakes, beautiful mountain ranges, snowfall and many interesting places that are worth the visit.

### Q: Favourite airline and why?

I had the chance to fly Emirates' brand new 777 first class, which I consider to be the best in the world. This product is not only blingy beyond belief, but actually well-executed. Emirates' new first class has individual cabins (not just doors, but rather truly fully enclosed suites), temperature and lighting controls like I've never seen before on a plane, and even a 'hatch' through which they can serve you champagne



### Q: Best hotel experience and why?

Suhan360 Hotel & Spa. With the combination of innovation and creativity, Suhan360 Hotel & Spa is a shining star at the deep heart of Kusadasi. I went there with my friends and it was way better than what we had expected. The food was great and hotel staff was super gentle and helpful to us. The room was very comfortable and clean with a beautiful view of the sea and swimming pool. Everything was super nice. I totally recommend this hotel for holidays.

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

Barcelona, for it has the most unique and inspiring architecture in all over the world. So, the tours to museums, churches and parks is a given. Don't miss to see La Sagrada Familia and Parc Guell, and the picturesque views of the Mediterranean.

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

My family trip to Jaipur trip was super relaxing. Known for its grand forts and palaces, the city exudes a distinct aura of royalty through the splendour and magnificence of its architecture. A visit to Jaipur is incomplete if you don't indulge in some Rajasthani delicacies to taste its scrumptious cuisine culture.

### Q: Your best holiday with friends?

My trip to Singapore and Malaysia with my friends was special for many reasons. It was a trip where we celebrated our birthdays and anniversaries. I was amazed by the kind of experiences we all had there. The personal itinerary made by our travel agency was a welcome touch that made all the difference.

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

I had heard about this place a lot and decided to visit it during my visit to Bangalore in Feb 2019. The food items are good and similar to other hotels of the MTR Group in quality and taste.

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

Travelling is an exciting and soul-stirring experience that takes us out of our comfort zone and ushers in us a new perspective of the world. However, packing, planning and preparing for it should be done carefully and after thorough research.

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

One of the things I feel about returning travellers is that travel helps them increase their confidence levels.



# UN-CONVENTION-ALLY





# ROYAL RETREAT

Taj Hari Mahal provides the differentiating edge, with its skilful combination of the old and the new, impeccable services, outstanding hospitality and unparalleled experiences

**TT BUREAU**



Positioned at the edge of the stark Thar Desert, Jodhpur, or the Blue City, is the veritable jewel in India's crown, with its rich tapestry of culture, tradition and architecture. The larger-than-life Meherangarh Fort towers over the city and within its precincts is the buzz and excitement of the old world and the new.

In sync with this majestic heritage stands the Taj Hari Mahal, gracing Jodhpur's skyline and celebrating the splendour of Rajput and Mughal architecture. No cookie-cutter 5-Star hospitality, Taj Hari Mahal offers experiential luxury, which is unique and is therefore Jodhpur's most sought-after destination for business and leisure. Located on Residency Road amidst a sprawling 6







acres of lush green landscape, Taj Hari Mahal is within close proximity to the city airport, making it convenient for business travellers. The hotel's regal ambience in no way detracts from its geniality. Ornate, filigreed arches lead to edgy, drop-dead palatial rooms, where luxury translates to comfort. The royal metaphor continues with the traditional rites of passage offered by the hotel. Consider this: your fiancé is led by a royal escort, with a retinue on horseback, while you get ready in style in an exquisite suite that's fit for a princess. Avail the whole palace experience as you get master chefs to create a bespoke menu.

### ROYAL ROOMS

Taj Hari Mahal offers 400-sq.ft. of garden and pool-facing contemporary rooms boasting elegant Rajasthani accents with impeccable services – perfect for business and leisure travellers. Live life king-size in one of 900-sq.ft. premium Suites and 400-sq. ft. luxury rooms that feature avant-garde facilities.

### BEST FOR BUSINESS

Designed to cater to 50-150 persons, the pillarless 2050-sq.ft. Meherangarh Hall is an ideal venue for hosting mid-size events, with the option for various configurations and customised settings. Located on the third level of the palace, the hall opens out to Meherangarh Terrace and can be booked for a larger event. Meherangarh Terrace is a 20,177-sq.ft. wraparound terrace, that has a seating capacity of up to 1000 guests, and is the city's numero uno spot to host wedding receptions and lavish parties. The terrace offers a splendid view of the palace, showcasing Rajasthani architecture with elevated chhatris and arched jharokhas. The striking backdrop is matched by superior catering from the hotel's renowned multi-cuisine and specialty restaurants, backed by impeccable services. Amar Hall is a sprawling 5,560-sq.ft. pillarless space. The 3,038-sq.ft. pre-function area can be converted into three breakaways, which allow arrangements for wedding events to larger corporate conferences.

Board Room 1 is a 264-sq.ft compact and chic space, ideal for casual, small group meetings. The contemporary sunlit room accommodates 8 to 12 persons.

Board Room 2 is a 407-sq.ft. sunny and modern room, ideal for corporate meetings, accommodating a maximum of 12 people. Its compact design is backed by efficient service and modern amenities.

### OUT-OF-THE-BOX EXPERIENCES

Taj Hari Mahal is the premier choice for a rendezvous with Jodhpur, whether for business or leisure. Make your business event memorable as you introduce your guests to the hotel's vibrant themes a la Rajasthani style.

The Rajput Royal Dinner Theme incorporates a Baraat procession, a Kachhi-Ghori Welcome and a welcome drink at the Terrace entrance. The Rajasthani Thematic Dinner at Chess Board Terrace is a Maharaja-style dinner experience, including a Rajasthani Thali and a musical ambience. The Meherangarh Terrace Gala makes for a spectacular event space featuring folkdance performances and exciting stalls. The Sand Dunes Experience is al fresco dining at its best, with mashals, bonfire, barbecue and fireworks. The *piece de resistance* is the Haveli Theme Dining, where authentic Rajasthani cuisine is served in havelis, which are architectural marvels, where the ancient structure has been restored to recreate old-world charm with modern-day hospitality. The prized possessions of one of the premier nobles of the house of Jodhpur, the havelis showcase antique furniture and medieval Rajasthani style-décor, which charmingly enhance your Rajasthani experience.



# ELEGANCE PAR EXCELLENCE

A sense of exclusivity, impeccable facilities, great location and a vibrant culture make Vivanta New Delhi, Dwarka the favoured choice for business and leisure travellers

## TT BUREAU

What makes a hotel more successful than others? Prime location that includes the perfect business mix of work and leisure and the ability to satiate guests' craving for a unique experience, Vivanta New Delhi, Dwarka ticks off all the boxes on a traveller's checklist. The hotel's avant-garde design boasts 250 well-appointed rooms and Suites, a 24/7 state-of-the-art Fitness Centre with sauna and outdoor Jacuzzi, experienced Yoga and Zumba instructors, swimming pool, badminton and golf courses, an award-winning spa, salon, themed restaurants and vibrant bars.

Today's travellers are increasingly seeking to experience the surroundings and nearby amenities of their lodgings and Vivanta New Delhi, Dwarka obliges admirably. Located across 7 acres on the cusp of Cyber City Gurgaon, the luxurious property offers excellent connections with the rest of Delhi – the International and Domestic airports are a stone's throw away and Lutyens' Delhi is at a 20-minute drive.

Stay amidst a sophisticated ambience of great architecture and art at the award-winning Vivanta New Delhi, Dwarka. Discover the Capital's heritage via tech-powered storytelling experiences, invite business colleagues for a delectable North West Frontier feast at the Chef's table, in the Indus Express restaurant; party with friends at Tipple, the appropriately named modish lounge, and be whisked away into an upscale lifestyle that is equal parts work and play.

With over 20,000sq.ft. of indoor and outdoor space dedicated to events, Vivanta New Delhi, Dwarka is the premier choice for business conferences, social soirees and weddings. Five well-equipped, tech-powered meetings rooms and venues that can accommodate 18 to 700 persons are designed to cater to

diverse requirements, from a cozy meeting room with state-of-the-art conferencing facilities to a grand pillarless ballroom and a plush al fresco area for a glamorous wedding reception, and every manner of corporate events and weddings. Avant-garde digital audio systems, soundproofing, immaculate service and unrivalled, customised catering options ensure that each event is managed in-house, giving clients exceptional value and peace of mind.



*Tango Wallroom*







# *The Ritz-Carlton, Istanbul*

Located in the heart of the city overlooking the Bosphorus, The Ritz-Carlton, Istanbul features 243 guest rooms with its impeccable service and luxurious comfort.

More than 2,403 square meters of meeting and conference space including 11 meeting rooms and 1 Ballroom, highlighted by a magnificent Bosphorus view, are available for memorable events with superb catering, high-speed internet, state-of-the-art audio-visual services and technicians.

Guests at "Bleu Lounge" can enjoy full views of the Bosphorus while sampling creative cocktails and Mediterranean inspired dishes at our terrace restaurant.

The Ritz-Carlton Spa offers 8 treatment rooms, a unique 17-metre indoor pool and authentic Turkish Hammam, spread over an area of 1,500 sqm as well as 'Open Air Spa' terrace with jacuzzis, a sunbathing terrace, massage rooms and a pool.

**Experience the stay of a life-time at The Ritz-Carlton, Istanbul**

*Please contact with us for more information and reservation via  
+90 212 334 444 or visit [ritzcarlton.com/istanbul](http://ritzcarlton.com/istanbul)*



**THE RITZ-CARLTON**

ISTANBUL

# EXTRAORDINARY ENTERPRISE



Hyatt Regency Pune is a brand that constantly innovates to provide energised experiences through contemporary vibes, impeccable services and sumptuous cuisine

TT BUREAU

In an increasingly competitive landscape, where guests are becoming more diverse, both demographically and in their expectations, it becomes imperative for a hotel to deliver, in terms of its commitment, essence and values, as well as in the quality of its staff and services. When it comes to business, today's customers seek unique and individualised experiences. A brand's success rests on its ability to innovate and maintain an edge in technology and service. The Hyatt Regency Pune ensures this in a myriad ways.

## EQ:IQ – UNIQUE BUSINESS CONCEPT

Being one of the most sought-after business and leisure hotels in Pune, Hyatt Regency Pune offers state-of-the-art conveniences to create the perfect settings for conferences, events, trade shows, and business meets. Equipped with 39,826 sq. ft. of meeting spaces, accessible location, avant garde audio-visual equipment make Hyatt Regency Hotel an elite place to stay and work concurrently.

Giving new meaning to the way business is held, Hyatt Regency Pune offers a dynamic space that integrates work and leisure in a novel way. EQ:IQ, at the lobby level, has a contemporary vibe, complemented by gourmet cuisine. The design fundamental ensures the entry of natural light in the interiors, plus maximum privacy through blinds.

- ◆ The 19,000 sq. ft. EQ:IQ, or Emotional Quotient : Intelligence Quotient, is a unique product, comprising four distinct zones – event, recreation, dining and social spaces, skilfully combining public and private zones.
- ◆ The elegant Hyatt persona permeates all the meeting spaces, which are contemporary and chic.
- ◆ Delectable food with live counters and interactive spaces takes fine dining experience to another level.
- ◆ Impeccable services, including highly trained personal meeting concierge, ensure seamless flow of events.
- ◆ At EQ:IQ, you get the quintessential backdrop to host your meetings, conferences, social events, trade shows and corporate events with élan.

The hotel's expansive banqueting services include the 6,888 sq. ft. Regency Ballroom, a 4,305 sq. ft. Regency Club Terrace, and 7 meeting rooms for different occasions. Clearly, the hotel has the largest covered event space in Pune. The innovative EQ:IQ concept has successfully broken the monotonous way of organising meetings and events traditionally.

The chic interiors and contemporary design style of EQ:IQ lend themselves perfectly for seamless business interactions in luxurious surroundings, complemented by Hyatt's top-notch hospitality code. The unique break-out zones complemented by state-of-the-art conferencing facilities, along with a private





restaurant and a well-stocked bar, make for a lavish setting to host your event in style. What makes Hyatt Regency Pune a top choice among corporates is the hotel's separate arrangements for the events including – a dedicated entrance, unique pool of rooms and residences, huge underground parking facilities, in-house eclectic dining options, and a rejuvenating spa and fitness centre – which go a long way in adding to the hotel's suitability as a meetings and conferences destination.

The hotel being a reference point for the traveller, location becomes a significant point for choice of hotel. Hyatt Regency

Pune is conveniently located on Nagar Road, at a mere distance of 2.5 km from the Lohegaon International Airport and is in close proximity to the city's entertainment areas of Koregaon Park and Kalyani Nagar – perfect for business and leisure travellers.

One of the most luxurious and premier properties in the city, Hyatt Regency Pune is motivated to create a memorable stay experience for its patrons. Plush accommodation, lavish amenities and proximity to the International Airport make it an ideal choice for a stay in the city, be it for business or leisure.

With amenities such as a world-class fitness centre, a temperature-controlled swimming pool and a swanky Spa offering you revitalising therapies, Hyatt Regency Pune leaves no stone unturned for you to experience the good life.

This experience is only augmented by the array of eateries serving you gourmet food and beverages from across the world. The Cafe, Gourmet Avenue, Single Malt & Co and Zeta bring to you fine food preparations that will both tantalise and satisfy your taste buds.





PROMOTION

# THE SUITE LIFE



Convenient location, pleasing aesthetics, and avant garde facilities make Country Inn and Suites By Radisson, Goa Candolim a top choice for meetings and events in Goa

TT BUREAU

When you think of Goa it's all about laidback living amidst natural surroundings. And, when it comes to accommodation, guests seek comfort and relaxation as well as a personalised experience. An anonymous hotel room is most unpalatable – guests need a sense of place. The Country Inn and Suites By Radisson, Goa Candolim, gives you exactly this – a home away from home in pristine surroundings and comfortable ambience.

Conveniently located near the famous North Goan beaches of Candolim, Calangute and Baga and 35km from Dabolim Airport, the hotel features 24 Standard Rooms, 48 Superior Rooms, 48 Deluxe Rooms, and 2 spacious Suites. All the rooms and suites are upholstered with modern furnishing, in bright colours and well-appointed with modern amenities.

Satiate your gastronomic cravings at the hotel's several dining options. At the Poolside Chill & Grill, enjoy a wide range of beverages and variety of food options under the shade of coconut groves. Quench your thirst with expertly mixed cocktails at the Lobby Bar. Open 24 hours, Mosaic Restaurant serves global cuisine, exotic cocktails and premium liquor.

Explore like a local as you visit the nearby tourist places – Bom Jesus Church and Museum in Old Goa; Mangueshi Temple; Dudhsagar Waterfalls; Goa Spice Plantations; Night Life at Candolim, Calangute and Baga; Saturday Night bazaar at Arpora; and the Lighthouse and Fort Aguada at Candolim.

The hotel plays the perfect host to all your meetings and banqueting needs, with its versatile meeting facilities. Boardroom is the perfect venue for all your business meetings or smaller events and can accommodate up to 10 people, while the hotel's Girasol Ballroom can comfortably seat up to 250 people and meets the needs for both small and large groups in different setup options. Both the meeting spaces come well-equipped with avant garde facilities.

For guests who don't wish to venture out of the hotel, the 1810-sq.ft. outdoor pool is the ideal place to relax and cool off amidst swaying palm trees, while the fully equipped fitness centre takes care of your workout routine. There's also a 144sq. ft. baby pool for kids to have some fun time.





PROMOTION

# BLEISURE PERFECTED

Mixing work and play in equal measure, Hyatt Centric Candolim Goa offers seamless hospitality, making it a perfect launchpad for guests to step out and enjoy their stay in Goa

TT BUREAU

## JADE VINE

Spread over 2,991sq.ft, Jade Vine is a one-stop solution for corporate events, off-sites, meetings, trainings and celebrations. An elegant pillarless three-part flexible space, Jade Vine has a clear ceiling height of 18ft, a pre-function area and superior in-built technology that can host multiple layouts.

## ISLE DE SOL

Isle De Sol is a 663sq.ft. comfortable space for reunions, intimate gatherings, special occasions, private or boardroom meetings.

## JARDIM

At 2,411sq.ft, the property's outdoor space, Jardim is a perfect venue for the non-monsoon months of the year and is perfect for weddings, gala evenings and group activities.

All-inclusive events packages are available that come with a dedicated events team to ensure personalised, hassle-free experiences combining customised menus, comfortable guestrooms and friendly upbeat services.

With its sun, sea, sand, seafood, laidback lifestyle and warm ambience, it is not surprising that Goa is the idyllic holiday destination for leisure and business travellers. Corporates and leisure seekers can combine work and play against the alluring backdrop of pristine beaches, architectural heritage and Goa's 'susegad' lifestyle. In sync with the spirit of Goa is the newly launched Hyatt Centric Candolim Goa, which regales both millennial travellers and corporates with their every whim and desire, so that their Goa experience becomes truly memorable.

Hyatt Centric Candolim Goa provides chic and contemporary accommodation just steps away from Goa's famous beaches, culture, entertainment and other local hotspots, making it convenient for guests to step out and make the best of their time in Goa. With 167 spacious rooms equipped with modern amenities and an in-house restaurant GROK, the property also has up to 6,000sq.ft. of flexible event spaces with a unique mix of business-friendly services and amenities. All event spaces offer state-of-the-art technology, complimentary Wi-Fi and tailor-made experiences inside and outside the hotel.





# SUN, SAND & BUSINESS



The Resort is the ultimate, soul-restoring beach destination that not only pampers with its indulging amenities, but also excels in hosting special events, beachfront parties and conferences

## TT BUREAU

If you're looking to escape the madness of the Maximum City or perhaps to enjoy a quiet, unhurried existence away from the chaos that's Mumbai? Look no further – head to The Resort, located at Madh Island, that gives you your 'me time' just the way you want it. If you've a big event coming up and crave a memorable experience of luxury, comfort and relaxation amid natural surroundings, alongside impeccable amenities, then The Resort is the right place to come to.

Located in the quaint Aksa village, The Resort is an exciting beachfront resort overlooking the unspoilt Aksa Beach and offering a range of facilities and amenities to make your events successful and memorable. It is situated 23km away from Domestic Airport, Mumbai.

## WELL-APPOINTED ROOMS

The Resort features garden-facing rooms that boast avant garde facilities; its beach and pool-facing rooms come with a private balcony, so you can enjoy panoramic views of the setting sun as you sip your favourite sundowner. Located on the 5th and 6th floors, the Club Rooms provide unobstructed views of the Arabian Sea, stretching far into the horizon. Whichever stay you may opt for, The Resort will enfold you with its warm welcome. Live life king-size at The Resort's magnificent Suites located on the top floor, which feature a living room, a master bedroom that opens out to a balcony, and a sundeck. Catch the sound of splashing waves, enjoy the crisp sea breeze caressing your temples, or revel in unlimited sunbathing, all from the comfort of your deckchair



in your own personal terrace. Naturally, you want some fun and relaxation while you're on vacation. Live the sweet life at The Resort, as a life of luxury opens up at its Duplex Villas, which include 2 bedrooms, 1 living-cum-dining room, steam, sauna and Jacuzzi, private lawn and terrace overlooking unparalleled views of the beach. The villa is an unmatched combination of privacy and luxury.

### EPICUREAN PLEASURES

At The Resort's lobby-level restaurant, High Tide, indulge in lip-smacking cuisines amidst a cool and tranquil ambience in a fresh and contemporary setting. Take in the pool or sea views from this restaurant while you enjoy some delectable cuisine. Open 24 hours, Lobby Lounge is an anytime casual dining option, serving finger food, freshly squeezed juices, traditional teas and coffees and sandwiches.

The bar, Upper Deck, is also located at the lobby level and is upholstered with modern furnishings, providing a comfortable seating area along with scenic views of the Arabian Sea. Choose a drink that suits your mood from The Resort's fine collection of spirits and sit back and relax as you lose yourself to the rhythm of the waves. There's nothing like flopping down on a deckchair or languishing in a hammock to de-stress yourself as you down sumptuous snacks at Waterworld, by the poolside.

### EVENTS & CONVENTIONS

Whether it's a big business gathering or a big fat Indian wedding, The Resort comes well-equipped with its nine spacious banquets and conference halls for all your needs. The Resort's spacious indoor and outdoor facilities can accommodate up to 1200 guests. Multiple banquet halls with an easy availability of rooms make The Resort an ideal choice to host your events. Spacious halls, customised seating options and state-of-the-art conferencing facilities make The Resort a top choice among business magnates for conferences, seminars, business meetings and exhibitions. The



dedicated events team is always ready to carry out your every desire to make your event a gala affair.

For family occasions and other major events like pre-wedding functions, a wedding or a reception, The Resort will blow you away with its heartfelt arrangements and give you and your family a memorable time to remember forever. Feast on a variety of culinary offerings from a vast array of mouth-watering dishes, sumptuous desserts, and exotic drinks prepared by professional bartenders and renowned chefs.

### SPA

At Aristo, experience a spa service that is all about luxury and pampering in sylvan surroundings. Try holistic treatments like Charcoal Therapy, Aromatic Back Massage, Detox Body Massage, Deep Tissue Massage and other facial massages aimed at detoxing and rejuvenating your body and soul.

### ADVENTURE SPORTS

Enjoy an exhilarating time with your friends and family at The Resort's adventure zone, GRAVITY. Rock Climbing, Rappelling, Air Rifle Shooting, Archery, String Balance, Commando Bridge, Air Obstacle, Swing Crossing, Burma Bridge, Horizontal Ladder and much more can be enjoyed overlooking the placid Arabian Sea.





# Un-Convention-*Ally*

## ACE YOUR SPACE

KAMAL GILL

Photo Courtesy: Board Room, Leela, Bangalore



Laoshi, the ancient Chinese philosopher, said that when making a clay vessel, what we really need is the emptiness formed by the vessel. The same applies to the shape of a room, where what we really need is the emptiness, not the walls. Emptiness is space and it dictates the real value for any building. Function in turn, is the activity within the space.

'Ace your Space' is how we refer to the imaginative and versatile use of space. It's an interesting and intelligent way to proactively respond to the rapid change in social and economic environments.

### INTERACTIVE DESIGN TRENDS

One of the hottest trends in hotel design is how to



reimagine the lobby – the first area that the guest steps into. Lobbies, more than ever, serve as a focal point of interaction in the entire hotel. So, technology is available with plug-ins and comfortable seating, a drinks corner, a coffee section, any number of places to meet and discuss, a stand-up counter, and some greens to rest the mind.

The new Destination Resorts culture offers full recreation and sports areas within the hotel, nursery, playroom, shopping arcade and even a combination of meeting space, corporate conference facility and ballroom.

This creates the ability for a resort to transform into an all-season, multi-use destination that can attract different segments of guest traffic, from business to leisure and family events.

In order to accommodate change and adjust to changing needs, hotels and public spaces must work with interactive areas for meetings and interaction for communities and guests alike. Spaces need to seamlessly shift between entertainment and work and be prepared for conversion into different functions to integrate with current lifestyles.

Because guests hunger for new experiences and spaces, the Hospitality Industry needs to embrace a more sustainable design

solution to allow frequent design changes within timelines and budgets. Adaptive reuse is a practical solution.

Versatile space offers multi-functional options and allows fixed zones to merge. These are alive spaces, where visitors of any age can meet, explore and experience a number of cultural, recreational and commercial activities.

## HOTELS AND HYBRID SPACES

Multi use of space serves a multitude of purposes under clever curation and delicate design.

Hybrid spaces are in vogue, because they use an area to its full potential and because they present interesting and innovative opportunities for design.

Hotels often create collaborative workspace in the same space as a private social club. Apart from a fully-serviced workspace – offering executive suites, showcase areas, conference rooms and boardrooms – hotels can merge an all-day casual dining area, bar and lounge – not to speak of an extension to a rooftop overlooking the Indian Ocean or a green forest. The real winner could be the addition of an ultimate entertainment centre.



Photo Courtesy: The Taj, Banquet Outdoor



Photo Courtesy: Prague.eu



Photo Courtesy: Google Office Architecture, Zurich



Photo Courtesy: Cigar Room, Leela, Bangalore





Photo Courtesy: IHG Hotel Room

Photo Courtesy: Jordan Parnass Digital Architecture



## LEADING THE WAY

Last year, IHG made waves when they patented their new hotel room available at Crowne Plaza Hotels and Resorts brand, because it was so thoughtfully created. Called the “WorkLife Room” it is part of a multi-million dollar renovation plan and offers a scientifically integrated welcome space, work area and sleeping zone.

For that matter, so do newer boutique properties like the upper mid-tier Blooms brand, where rooms maximise space and comfort and open out to common areas offering refreshments and practical utilities.

The Fern Group has similarly created a niche with its eco-friendly and well designed interiors.

Take the ITC Hotels, which have created hospitality benchmark standards of their own with their Green Luxury

initiative, blending technology with sustainability in virtually every property that is constructed ground up.

Or the Taj, with its remarkable ability to offer a business experience in a resort property and vice versa. Almost like a flag bearer, the Taj has successfully morphed luxury heritage palaces into wedding and convention centres, complete with full business facilities.

Radisson Hotels’ easy and effortless offer of new age technology solutions well-knit into its rooms and public spaces across its portfolio creates multi-functional spaces that shift from business to casual without disturbing the balance and look of the space.

Going its distinct way is the Hyatt brand, which is literally a valued brand on account of its lively interactive bespoke spaces which have been precursors to the change now sweeping the







industry. Part art and part science, the Hyatt's efficient use of creative design illustrates its ability to deliver value through its use of space.

Delivering unique experiences through iconic and sophisticated buildings and spaces, the Leela has a well thought-out strategy of creating multiple use of space within its luxe environment. The Leela design story revolves around customer delight and plugs into the latest technology to pull together work and leisure facilities.

Marriott, on its part, has gone so far as to launch a Hotel Design Program with Cornell, New York. Design is at the core of the Marriott experience.

Aiming at customer satisfaction, the brand applies innovation and technology to appeal to the millennial customers of today. The Marriott has built-in features that facilitate guest experience,

be it work or entertainment, through virtual and augmented reality, AI and robotics, to increase user experience and brand performance.

## URBANISATION AND TECHNOLOGY

In the face of rapid urbanisation and constant change in lifestyle and the market, it becomes difficult to predict the requirement of the potential user for a space. Hotels and buildings have often to respond to the change simultaneously. That's where versatile space is needed.

Consider how much digitised society has changed the way we live. Form changes constantly with changed functions. Banks were built as imposing edifices, but today they have morphed into convenient ATMs. As the process of digitisation continues to erode space and time, it forces us to make function more adaptable.

Today, for instance, multi-faceted units are winners. Co-working spaces have become commonplace, just like retail stores provide coffee and food alongside their products.

Versatile space helps to develop sustainable hotels and public spaces. The more adaptable the space that is constructed, the more valuable it will remain all through its life span. Instances of multi-use of space to accommodate new functions simultaneously, while maintaining its own character, is the order of the day.

Ingeniously undesigned communication between communities makes the space more vital and interesting, more human and more organic.

## LINKAGES OF SPACE AND TIME

When you link spaces, it becomes enjoyable. So, a dining and work area can be linked as easily as rest and recreation are as – contrary though they may sound. One of the most attractive linkages is access to nature. Imagine the change in people's personalities when activities take place in sunshine and fresh air!



There are several instances in our metros and hotels of multi-functional amenities which unite diverse community members, all of whom converge – activists, artists, academics and social entrepreneurs. This interaction acts almost like an incubator – creating innovation, exchange of knowledge, shared experience and all forms of experimentation.

Imagine how inspirational such connected thinking can be! Imagine the kind of opportunities it creates for partnerships cutting across boundaries.

### TO BE OR NOT TO BE

Multi-use spaces are everywhere in cities where defunct warehouses and mills now offer hubs of energy through creative spaces let out for meetings, lectures, dining, bars and party/social events.

Public spaces can be wonderfully integrative. An example can be found in Winnipeg, Canada. Here, a riverside site comprises a farmer's market, several dining options, children's theatre and public entertainment.

Another instance is the High Line in New York City, which is a creative combine of public art and local vendors within a park visited by residents and tourists alike.

Similarly, a dynamic and multi-faceted structure in Burgundy, France, houses an art and conference centre, offers inter-generation recreation and includes a Tourist office.

Interesting spaces can include a quirky-style space called "Her Majesty's Pleasure," in downtown Toronto, Canada, where the most happening place is a cafe, boutique, beauty salon and bar, all integrated in one flowing space.



Photo Courtesy: Ace Hotel & Swim Club, San Jacinto Mountains



Photo Courtesy: Simon Stock, AER Rooftop Bar, Four Seasons Hotel, Mumbai

## TRENDS IN THE EVENT MARKET

### BESPOKE AFFAIRS

**Birju C Gariba, CEO & Executive Director, Platinum Incentives & Events (P) Ltd, Mumbai**

The Meetings and Banquet Event spaces have, since time immemorial, been unable to keep pace with the growing needs of the market, especially in large cities. Globally, we see that many iconic spaces and places of historical importance, like museums, heritage sites, castles, palaces, and so on, are given out for Special Events. But, these spaces are almost unavailable in India, except in places like Rajasthan. Moreover, the Banquet Spaces offered by hotels do not usually have the right mix of size, ceiling height and pre-function spaces.

There is a huge requirement of these spaces, along with some in-built technological facilities, like intelligent lighting, projections, sky trusses/hooks to take on the lightings, etc.

Very recently, we came up with the concept of Meetings By the Sea, where we encouraged the corporates/wedding planners and hosts to think beyond the box and host their events on board a new vessel, 'Odyssey,' from the Bandra Reclamation.

Nowadays, corporates and wedding clients are both frustrated with the four-cornered boxed venues for their events, so venues like 'Odyssey' break the monotony while creating a unique experience for the guests on board.

We are in the process of bringing a lot of these fresher venue concepts to the city and hopefully to the country. Globally, we have hosted evening galas and meetings in path-breaking venues, such as castles, chateaus, museums, national art galleries and so on. In fact, one of our events in Bucharest was hosted in Parliament Palace, where Heads of State are hosted for gala events. We hired the venue and not only had our gala, but also





Photo Courtesy: Swarovski Kristallwelten

some unique performances during dinner. We have successfully hired such exclusive venues almost everywhere in the world, except India.

The future of this market is great, however, along with innovation in Food and Beverage offerings, the spaces will have to incorporate plenty of technological advancements to keep up with the global trends. Standalone venues across new developments, like wharfs, etc., will have to be created along the lines of international ports.

### FOR NONPAREIL EXPERIENCES

**Christine Mukharji, Market Manager India, Austrian National Tourist Office**

**T**he interest of Indian companies holding their annual conferences, felicitation ceremonies and meetings in Austria is increasing steadily every year. We can offer new and innovative venues nearly every year to host such events. One of them is the Swarovski Crystal Worlds, which keep inventing themselves every year. This very special place, with its unique combination of architecture, art, and innovative design, can also be booked for events, accommodating up to 800 guests. The events team at Swarovski Crystal Worlds ensures that gala dinners, product launches or any other celebratory functions in this dazzling setting are perfectly organised.

In addition to the extensive park landscape, there are also nine different event spaces available to create the perfect atmosphere, whatever the occasion. The Blue Hall takes visitors into a magical world of fantasy, while the special features of the Crystal Dome are its acoustics and lighting effects.

The Forum is equipped with state-of-the-art technology that can transform it into a banqueting hall or movie theatre and the

VIP Lounge is ideal for a relaxed conversation. The Crystal Bar is the perfect meeting place for aperitifs, while the Crystal Studio, with its outdoor terrace, offers an inspirational creative setting. Culinary treats are the focus of Daniels Kristallwelten – with a great view of the Crystal Cloud.

The addition of the Beletage takes dining excellence to a whole new level – up to 180 guests can be accommodated in a unique ambience, where the interior and the outside landscape are perfectly in tune with each other. With one of the largest Swarovski stores in the world, a spacious retail landscape with a uniquely sparkling ambience can also be reserved as an event location.



Photo Courtesy: Taj Falaknuma Palace



## REACHING FEVER PITCH

**Lubaina Sheerazi, India Representative, Ministry of Tourism, Oman**

**T**he Ministry of Oman Tourism is fully committed to enhancing the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism component and to help Oman achieve its potential in becoming a first-class destination for the Business Tourism segment.

Oman has seen a significant increase in this sector with the launch of the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC) in Muscat, which supports international and local organisations in hosting large events.

The OCEC includes ultra-modern theatres, conference rooms, and will eventually have four hotels with almost 1,000 rooms, along with major exhibition halls that can cater to tens of thousands of people at one time. Oman is not only seeing a surge in MICE travel, but is also being looked at as a preferred wedding destination for many.

Muscat is a well-endowed city with modern infrastructure, and provides perfect set-ups within various urban world-class hotels for lavish wedding ceremonies. Located at less than a three-hour journey from India, Oman is an ideal destination for big fat Indian weddings, boasting excellent air connectivity with various cities in India and easy visa process.

## GOING BEYOND THE CONVENTIONAL

**SD Nandakumar, President & Country Head – B2B & Foreign Exchange, SOTC Travel Ltd**

Recently, India has emerged as one of the strongest markets for MICE travel, with its perfect blend of cultural experiences, world-class accommodations, and other conference support facilities to hold successful business/corporate events. With a rise in innovative demands from corporates, we look to expand

destination options, provide exclusive relationship managers and customise itineraries and programmes.

At SOTC Travel, we customise and curate exclusive themed events to cater to the needs of our consumers. We go beyond the travel realm while planning Rewards and Recognition/Travel Incentive programmes for our customers, by understanding their objectives and drive personalisation in line with their needs. We look towards not only adding new destinations to MICE, but also newer experiences within these destinations.

Corporates are increasingly focussing on an incentive programme that entails fun with excitement, and also has meetings and conferences as an essential part of the incentive itinerary. Our plan includes a strong focus on product development and incorporating a vibrant combination of unexplored destinations and unique experiential elements. Corporates today seek destinations with experiences to strengthen bonds and connect with fellow members of their organisation. It is thus, no longer just a 'Rewards and Recognition' programme.

We have organised events that include unconventional experiences, such as theme-based high teas, gala dinners, energy-packed power breaks, relaxing foot or shoulder massage during breaks, and so on.

Another feature which adds to the ambience is reclining chairs used in banquet halls for guests to have relaxing sessions, along with free Wi-Fi connectivity. In addition, special in-house spa treatments are offered to the delegates.

Luxury space is making a comeback and emphasis is given on team-building activities. Certain destinations offer unique experiences, like kayaking, parasailing, deep-sea fishing and scuba diving, Beach Safaris, Raft Racing, Beach Yoga, and Sand Sculpting are some of the much preferred activities of MICE travellers.



Photo Courtesy: The Taj, Sunset Deck, Goa





Photo Courtesy: Library Bar, Leela, Bangalore



Photo Courtesy: Lobby Bar, Radisson Blue

## THE MARKET DISRUPTORS

**Shyam Sundar Nagarajan – Founder and CEO – GoFloaters**  
**Srivatsan Padmanabhan – Cofounder & COO – GoFloaters**

GoFloaters is an on-demand space provider platform. We are disrupting the meeting space and banquet space market by providing affordable and flexible spaces to meet or organise events. Our spaces cater to events and meetings from 2 to 100 attendees. We partner with businesses that have under-utilised spaces and make them available for users to book through our website and mobile app. We take a special focus on catering to the space needs of trainers, independent consultants, hobbyists, creative professionals, and generally anyone whose voice needs to be heard.

Currently, multi-location event spaces, meetings with purposes and sustainability are in trend. We provide an array of choices for quirky, creative and immersive spaces that are a delight for organisers.

Clients looking for spaces choose our app for three core reasons: Venue, Multi-location Spaces and Experiences.

**Venue:** Users and clientele are embracing non-traditional meetings and event spaces, like café and restobars. These trendy collaborative spaces tend to boost interaction and engagement amongst audiences.

**Multi-location Spaces:** Today, the organiser and attendees want multi-location options. We have had meet-up clubs and groups to host events/sessions at different locations each time, so that it breaks the monotony and moves across the cities to cater to wider audiences.

**Experiences:** Experimenting and unconventional spaces are the new norms. Engaging, interactive and personalised event spaces are in demand today. Business meetings over music, unconferencing over beer, workshop over pizza, are being

explored. Such collaborative and informal spaces for meetings and conferences are playing a key role in the decision-making for participants and organisers.

We are experimenting by organising many events and workshops for our own brand and at our partner spaces. Quirky and flexible spaces are leaving behind the expensive and not-everyday affordable spaces. We have been space partners for trainings, brainstorming events, panel discussions, art events, meet-ups, etc.

Some of the most intriguing events that we have organised are:

- ◆ A networking session for startups and freelancers in a restobar
- ◆ A meet-up of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning at a cafe
- ◆ A training on Blockchain in a cafe
- ◆ A board game design workshop in a restaurant
- ◆ Hosted TEDx Salon event in one of our event spaces

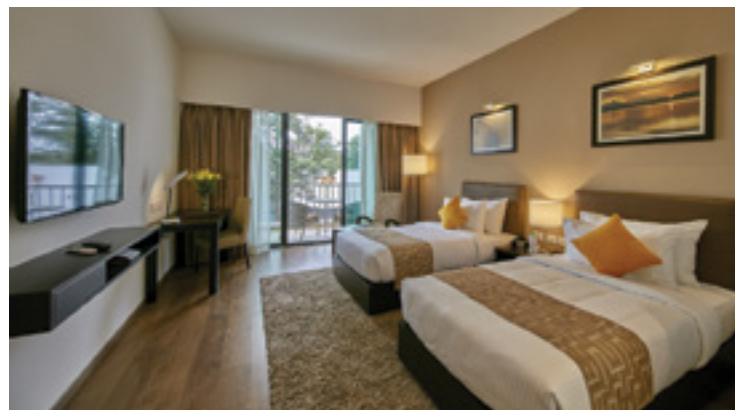
Some of the other popular types of events conducted at our spaces are for: Community Meetups, Technical and Non-technical workshops, Pop events, Brainstorming discussion, Meeting Rooms, Networking Dinners, Small exhibitions, Launch Parties, etc.

We see a lot of potential in the events and banquets market. From a non-technical point of view as Space Partners for smaller events, meetings and workshops, we think Experiential Events are taking the lead. Organisers will be exploring a wider range of strategies to best integrate their participants into the meetings and events to upsurge their interest towards their events, thus creating #memorableexperiences, #thinkdifferent in terms of space locations, convenience, accessibility, space characteristics and service quality, which will be the critical factors for any successful venture.

# SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES

Exceptional location, stimulating activities and bespoke corporate events make Signature Club Resort a unique getaway in Bengaluru

TT BUREAU



The niche tourism segment – MICE is booming in Bengaluru and the reason is not difficult to understand. And, when it comes to choosing the landmark venue to host a wide array of meetings, events or seminars in Bengaluru, there's no place to beat Signature Club Resort.

Packed with the latest amenities and modern technology, the venue offers multipurpose banqueting facilities, expertise, and attention to detail. The resort features a multi-activity hall, Jasmine, to host smaller and intimate affairs for up to 30 guests. Hosting a large banquet? Book the resort's Silver Oak Ballroom, that is replete with modern conveniences and can seat up to 250 guests. For an exceptional social gathering, book your space at the 12,000-sq.ft. Signature Lawns for surreal set-ups and a world-class banqueting experience. The different halls can be customised for any kind of MICE event and are complimented with high-speed Wi-Fi and state-of-the-art audio-visual displays.

Located in close proximity to Bengaluru Airport, the resort is favoured by corporates who are always on the lookout for a corporate retreat venue or quick summer getaway. Signature Club Resort ensures your stay is comfortable and the experience unique and memorable. The resort houses 45 well-furnished rooms, including five Suites.

Guests looking for a short duration stay in the city or looking to host large corporate bookings, Signature Club Resort's luxurious villas are an ideal venue. Ranging from 3BHK to 4BHK, the villas come fully furnished with premium facilities. If you want your international clients or business partners to enjoy business with travel, make tracks to Devanahalli Fort, Bhoga Nandeeshwara

Temple, the scenic Nandi Hills, and the nearby vineyard, located in close proximity to the resort. To take care of your taste buds, the resort has three restaurants. Add to that the custom-made menus for your corporate gatherings, and you get it all perfect to host a flawless event.

The resort has won accolades and recognition, including the 'Customer Choice Award' from the MakeMyTrip in the 'Upscale Hotel and Resort Segment'. Additionally, it has also received a 'Certificate of Excellence' from TripAdvisor for consistently great reviews.

  
SIGNATURE  
CLUB RESORT





TEA BOARD OF INDIA  
[www.teaboard.gov.in](http://www.teaboard.gov.in)



World's Gold Standard

## CELEBRATE LIFE WITH INDIAN TEA AND YOGA

Set out on a fulfilling journey of wellness, healing and peace through the two invaluable gifts from India — Yoga and Tea. Scientific studies have shown that both Tea and Yoga help relieve stress and anxiety, and have proven health benefits for the patients with diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases.

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



# THE ECO-FRIENDLY RETREAT

Opened in 2009, The Aananda Imperial Bilaspur is celebrating 10 years in the Hospitality Industry. Located at Vypar Vihar Road, Bilaspur, the hotel prides itself on its hotel-guest relationship with its defining philosophy – ‘A hotel that serves from the perspective of the guest.’

In the Hospitality industry, where changes are so dynamic and sustenance seems like a distant dream, The Aananda Imperial Bilaspur has done everything in order to remain a key player in the state of Chhattisgarh and has emerged as one of the leading business-friendly hotels in the region. This eco-friendly hotel is the preferred choice of business and leisure travellers, thanks to its high guest satisfaction scores.

Customer satisfaction is key to the success of a hotel and satisfied guests are more likely to be repeat guests. This is true of The Aananda Imperial Bilaspur, which is the undisputed leader in terms of its delectable F&B offerings, comfortable stays and remains the numero uno choice for high-star ventures in the city. Clearly, “Aananda is the hotel you would like to find at your

Celebrating its 10th Anniversary and the traditional host-guest relationship, The Aananda Imperial Bilaspur is an eco-friendly hotel favoured by business and leisure travellers

TT BUREAU

destination whenever you travel.” The hotel has refurbished its rooms and event spaces and upgraded its services to ensure best-in-class hospitality for its guests.

The hotel features 70 tastefully decorated rooms, to meet guests’ needs, five naturally-lit event spaces and a grand lawn, a multi-cuisine restaurant, and the only round-the-clock coffee shop in the city and a well-stocked bar to unwind in style. The hotel aspires to continue with its upgradation of facilities, keeping in sync with the new technologies and automations available.

To keep up with the city’s uber-gastronomic trends, the hotel is currently focussed on a campaign to further enhance the hotel’s fabulous F&B offerings, reinventing its richly elaborated cuisine line along with its tradition. The hotel team is currently identifying new ways to go beyond guest expectations.

Concludes, Rajib Roy Choudhury, General Manager, The Aananda Imperial Bilaspur, “With a clear-stated mission and vision, The Aananda Imperial Bilaspur will continue to offer leisure and business travel experiences through personalised services, commitment to holistic wellness and world-class cuisines.”







TODAY'S  
traveller  
Celebrating

22<sup>nd</sup>  
YEARS  
1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018

EXPLORE



# RENDEZ-VOUS CANADA 2019 BREAKS RECORDS!

Rendez-vous Canada 2019, which was held from 28-31 May 2019 in Toronto, broke all attendance records with 1,918 delegates, the most in Rendez-vous Canada's 43-year history

**ARJUN GILL**

Canada's premier tourism marketplace, Rendez-vous Canada (RVC), is an annual event that brings together Canadian tourism providers and buyers from all over the world. RVC provides a unique platform to launch new tourism products, share market insights, network, and increase the range of tourism experiences that the industry offers.

This year, the hosts Destination Ontario and Tourism Toronto exceeded all expectations as they welcomed over 580 international buyers from 30 countries and highlighted the true spirit and energy of Toronto, Ontario and Canada.

Some details:

- ◆ Rendez-vous Canada 2019 broke all attendance records: 1,918 delegates attended—the most in Rendez-vous Canada's 43-year history.
- ◆ Global interest is higher than ever before: there was more than one buyer for every seller in attendance, from 30 international markets.
- ◆ All provinces and territories were represented, showing that tourism really is from coast to coast to coast; 571 tourism organizations promoted Canadian products and services this year.
- ◆ Delegates conducted over 31,000 face-to-face business appointments during the four-day event, a new record for Rendez-vous Canada.
- ◆ The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada brought together 33 indigenous tourism businesses in the indigenous pavilion, a new record for Rendez-vous Canada.







“

Rendez-vous Canada continues to draw record attendance, that means buyers from around the world and sellers from across the country will be driving more international travel to Canada. Congratulations to both the Destination Ontario and Tourism Toronto teams for welcoming over 1,900 attendees to experience your incredible hospitality.”

— David Goldstein, President and CEO, Destination Canada







Panel discussion at RVC 2019



Ben Cowan Dewar, Chairperson of Board of Directors, Destination Canada

# RVC 2019: PHOTO ALBUM

Canada's premier tourism marketplace, Rendez-vous Canada (RVC), is an annual event that brings Canadian tourism providers together with buyers from all over the world. This year, it was held from 28-31 May 2019 in Toronto, Canada

ARJUN GILL



Panel discussion at RVC 2019



Gloria Loree, SVP Marketing Strategy & Chief Marketing Officer, Destination Canada



A broad view of the exhibition area at RVC 2019





Exhibition area



Exhibition area



Delegates at a hosted lunch at RVC 2019



Niagra Pre-Fam Group



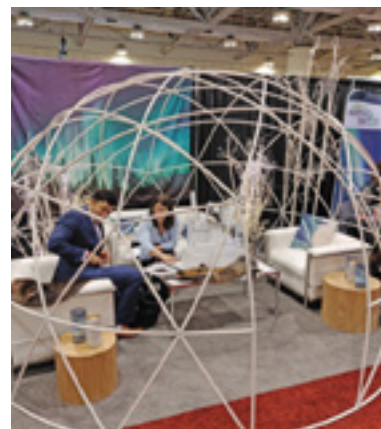
Niagra Pre-Fam Group



Productive meetings at RVC 2019



Indian travel agency delegates at RVC 2019



An innovatively designed booth at RVC 2019



The delegation from India at RVC 2019



# WILDLIFE WONDERS

Take a break from life and visit the wildlife sanctuaries in Bihar for an enriching experience of real wilderness in all its shades and colours

TT BUREAU



Valmiki Tiger Reserve



Kanwar Lake Bird Sanctuary

This season escape the heat with a trip to wildlife reserves in the state of Bihar, which presents you fantastic opportunities for witnessing many wild encounters. The state boasts many wildlife reserves that can pique your interest if you're a true nature lover, ready for some exhilarating experiences. So, don't hold back and set on for Bihar to experience those thrilling moments amidst your wild adventures.

## VALMIKI TIGER RESERVE

Located in West Champaran district of Bihar, Valmiki Tiger Reserve is located at the India-Nepal border on the banks of River Gandak. It is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna belonging to the Himalayan Terai landscape. The reserve is one of the natural virgin recesses in east India and comprises Valmiki National Park and Valmiki Wildlife Sanctuary. Total forest cover comprises 901sq.km. and encompasses cliffs, ridges, gorges, hills, streams, open woodlands, grasslands, swamps, riverine fringe and valleys.

Valmiki Tiger Reserve offers memorable experiences to nature lovers and a lot to see and discover. You can also book a stay at eco-huts, forest rest houses or even a tree hut to enjoy your wildlife experience to the fullest by being in the middle of it all.

**Attractions:** Jeep Safari, Border Trek to view snowclad Himalayas, Jungle Camp, Tiger Trail, Cycling, visiting Bhikhna Thori for viewing Pandai River, Boating, Trekking to

Someshwar Peak, visiting nearby temples and places of historical importance, and rafting in River Gandak.

## KANWAR LAKE BIRD SANCTUARY

Situated in Begusarai district of Bihar, Kanwar Lake Bird Sanctuary is Asia's largest freshwater oxbow lake. Defining the natural beauty of the state, the sanctuary is one of the greenest havens in the region providing shelter to beautiful population of over 100 species of indigenous and 60 species of migratory birds. The best time to visit the lake sanctuary is from October to March end, when the mercury levels are moderate. To experience lush greenery of the sanctuary and surrounding region, it's best to come here in the monsoons when the entire landscape is laden with pouring rains.



Established in 1987 and covering an area of 68sq.km, the sanctuary is visited by vacation mongers, wildlife photographers and birdlife enthusiasts. The lake sanctuary makes for a lovely weekend getaway to take a break from life and enjoy the serene atmosphere amongst the colourful species of birds.

**Attractions:** Long-billed vulture, Oriental white-backed vulture, Greater spotted eagle, Lesser kestrel, Sarus crane, Painted stork, and much more.

#### KAKOLAT WATERFALL

Located on the border of Bihar and Jharkhand, on Kakolat hill, and about 33km from Nawada, Kakolat Waterfall is a splendid spectacle. Cascading from a height of between 150-160ft, this natural wonder forms a reservoir or lake at the base of the waterfall. Tourists come here from all over the state and adjoining areas to spend their leisure time, especially in the summer months. The scene is panoramic with lush forest area all around.

**Attractions:** Kakolat Falls has legendary folklore and myth woven around it, which makes it attractive to visitors. The Pandavas are said to have visited here and removed the curse that had caused a king to have morphed into a python. The Kakolat hills, surrounded by green forests and the natural reservoir, are highly conducive for picnics. The place also hosts a large fair during the festival of Chhath or Baisakhi Shankranti.

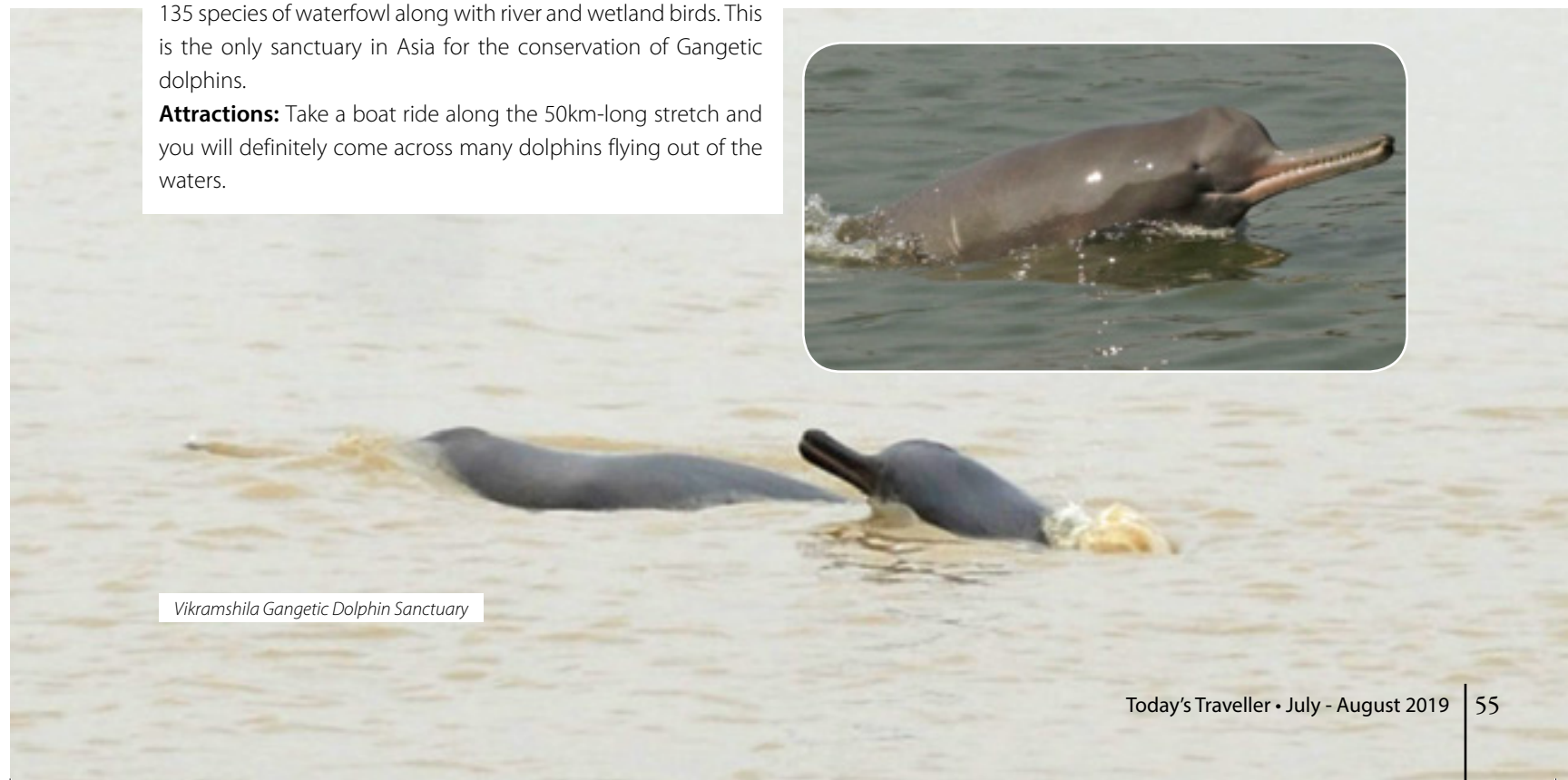
#### VIKRAMSHILA GANGETIC DOLPHIN SANCTUARY

Located in Bhagalpur district of Bihar, Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary is a 50km-long protected stretch of the Ganges River from Sultanganj to Kahalgaon housing the endangered Gangetic dolphins. The best time to visit this dolphin sanctuary is from October to June. Major attractions include the Ganges River dolphins and other threatened aquatic wildlife – Indian smooth-coated otter, gharial, a variety of freshwater turtles, and 135 species of waterfowl along with river and wetland birds. This is the only sanctuary in Asia for the conservation of Gangetic dolphins.

**Attractions:** Take a boat ride along the 50km-long stretch and you will definitely come across many dolphins flying out of the waters.



Kakolat Waterfall



Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary

# 8 Travel Gadgets You Can't Live Without

From the best drone in the budget category to a water bottle that keeps liquids insulated for hours, here is a list of eight tools that will make your travel easier

TT BUREAU



## DJI MAVIC AIR QUADCOPTER WITH REMOTE CONTROLLER

The new play toy for travel lovers, DJI Mavic Air Quadcopter is the best drone available in the budget category. The drone supports 32.0MP sphere panorama shots, 4K videos and shot-and-edit options. Control your drone from a distance of 6562 feet away with a dedicated remote controller and instantaneously share videos and photos with your friends on Instagram and Facebook. Sleek and unique, this drone is an absolute must for holidays on the beach, where the tracking shots of the shimmering sands will surely make your friends green-eyed with jealousy.



## S'WELL TEAKWOOD INSULATED STAINLESS STEEL WATER BOTTLE

If you are always on the move, then this portable bottle, which keeps cold liquids cold for 24 hours and hot liquids hot for 12 hours, is an absolute must. It not only keeps you hydrated, but you can also fill up with ice cubes. Easy to wash and clean, this vacuum-sealed, toxin-free bottle is a great travel companion for adventure lovers for hiking, biking and hiking trips.



## SKYROAM SOLIS — SMART MOBILE WI-FI COMPANION

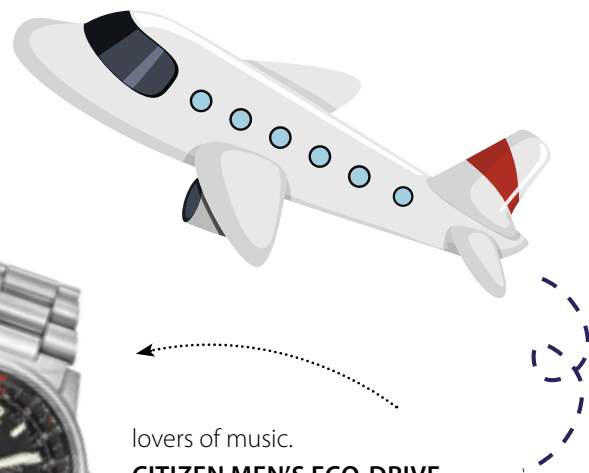
Stop worrying about buying expensive SIM cards or paying a fortune for roaming data plans when travelling the world. With Skyroam Solis 4G LTE Wi-Fi Hotspot and Power bank, you can now get the benefits of high-speed internet and superfast charging anywhere in the world. This bright orange-coloured device comes with 6000 mAh power bank, USB-C connection, 4G LTE Wi-Fi hotspot and host of other smart features. Unlimited data plans start from \$9 a day.





### BANG & OLUFSON'S BEOPLAY P2

If music is your constant companion, then do consider buying Bang & Olufson's Beoplay P2 — a set of state-of-the-art Bluetooth speakers that allow you to listen to your favourite tracks on the go. The gadget is smart, sleek and fits nicely in your pocket. With features such as voice control, dust-and-splash resistant design and 10 hours of playtime per charge, these speakers are a must for all



lovers of music.

### CITIZEN MEN'S ECO-DRIVE PROMASTER NIGHTHAWK

The watch takes inspiration from the pilots of yesteryears. However, it improves upon the existing features, by adding a highly technical-looking dial with integrated slide ruler Chapter ring operated by an extra crown. The Nighthawk features quartz analog display, second-time zone and eco-light power zone.



### CANON POWERSHOT G9 X MARK II

Smart, ultra-slim with a cool retro look, this Canon PowerShot G9 X Mark II is the perfect companion for uploading your photos on social media. The camera packs quite a punch with 20.1 megapixel lens with DIGIC 7 image processor. The light weight body (only 260 grams) is perfect for popping the camera into your luggage and using it as you move.



### HERO7 BLACK GO PRO CAMERA

The best video camera for travel vloggers, the all-new Hero 7 Black Go Pro Camera is the newest offering. The sleek and small camera is known for capturing hyper-smooth videos and then live-streaming them on social media platforms. Rugged and waterproof, the camera is known for its state-of-the-art video stabilisation technique. So goodbye shaky images, welcome crystal-clear 4K videos.



### VICTORINOX SWISSCARD LITE POCKET TOOL

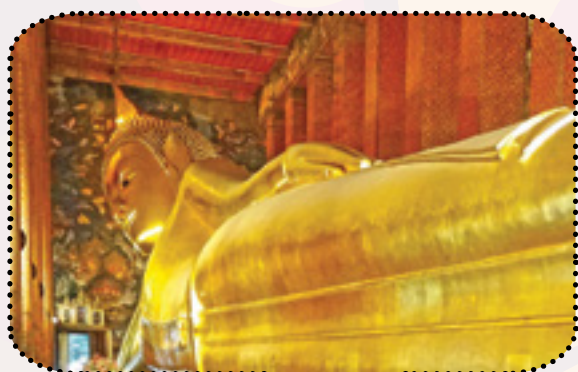
World's favourite multi-tool and pocket-knife kit, Victorinox Swisscard Lite Pocket Tool comes in a brand new sleeker design. Made in Switzerland, this award-winning product contains all the essential tools that will see you through a trip. From letter opener to scissors, from rulers to tweezers, this multi-functional tool is a must-have for all travellers.

# 24 HOURS

## IN BANGKOK

This summer, fly to Thailand for a perfectly laidback vacation and discover the colourful city of Bangkok and its sumptuous cuisine culture

**ABHISHEK PATHAK**



### THE RECLINING BUDDHA

An incredible sight for anyone visiting Wat Pho is the 15-m tall and 46-m long Reclining Buddha statue covered in gold leaf, with the feet alone measuring at over 5m. Feel the mesmeric effect swoon over you as you get up close to the statue. You can also buy coins on the way to the temple for the 108 bowls inside the temple. These bowls represent 108 positive actions that Lord Buddha completed on his way to becoming perfect. Whilst you are at the temple, take a break from your tour and rejuvenate yourself with a traditional Thai massage.

### GRAND PALACE

Bangkok is full of architectural marvels, but what steals away the limelight is – Grand Palace. Your Bangkok trip is considered incomplete if you don't visit this landmark in the city. The grande dame edifice is a complex of buildings originally housing the official residence of Kings of Siam and his royal government until 1925. Since then, it is an important tourist attraction featuring intricate craftsmanship. A trip to the palace takes many hours to explore, so make sure you've enough time in your hands to visit this iconic place.







### ERAWAN SHRINE

Constructed in the 1950s, Erawan Shrine is dedicated to four-faced Lord Brahma. Situated in one of the most chock-a-block areas of Bangkok, the shrine was constructed to appease the land spirits, who, it was believed by the workers, were causing problems in the construction work of the old Erawan Hotel back in the mid-1950s. Today, a famous Brahmin shrine it is thronged by tourists and features a magnificent image of the deity especially cast and gilded for the shrine.

### THE BANGKOK NATIONAL MUSEUM

Home to largest collection of artefacts and Thai art, The Bangkok National Museum was first opened by King Rama V to show off all the gifts that his father had given to him. Try to visit the museum on a Thursday, so that you can have the comprehensive understanding of the collectibles through a guided tour in English. Look out for those curious Chinese weapons, precious stones, puppets, clothing and textiles and Khon masks and much more.



### CHINATOWN: FOOD HAVEN

Almost every major city is home to its own Chinatown and Bangkok is no exception to it. Walk down the ceremonial Chinese gates and you know you have arrived into its den, flanked by streets stalls and restaurants. A gourmand's paradise, it is here where you find a variety of lip-smacking Chinese food options to try out at affordable prices. Visit Chinatown during festivals like Chinese New Year to experience exciting vibes, high energy levels, bustling with packed market stalls. Mark this in your itinerary, if you haven't already.



### WAT ARUN

Out of more than 31,000 Buddhist temples spread out across Thailand, Wat Arun is something really special. Named after Lord Aruna, the God of Dawn, the temple is an architectural delight featuring ceramic-tiled Tower, coloured porcelain, colourfully decorated spires and standing majestically on the banks of the River Chao Phraya. Entry to the temple is 100 baht and is open from 8.30 to 17.30 hours.



# CHASING THE MONSOONS

From the rain-lashed Konkan Coast, to the wet and wild Northeast, the country has no dearth of choices when it comes to monsoon destinations

## TT BUREAU

Each year, at the end the summer, monsoon winds envelope the country with their wet, wide arms, bringing in incessant rainfall, lightning and thunderstorms over a period of three months. From the beginning of June to the end of August, the country turns into a lush, green paradise. From the backwaters of Kerala to the misty mountains of Uttarakhand, from the rain-soaked streets of Mumbai to the rolling meadows of the Northeast, there are plenty of places, where the monsoon can be enjoyed in its fullest glory. Today's Traveller has rounded up the best places where the wet season can be enjoyed to the hilt.

## KERALA

God's own country comes alive in the rain. The backwaters, with their labyrinthine network of brackish lagoons, coconut trees and rustic huts, beckon the traveller to experience the ethereal play of the dark clouds. This is also the time when traditional Ayurvedic texts recommend healing treatments to rejuvenate the body and the soul.







#### Places to Visit

**Munnar:** The emerald-green tea gardens of Kerala hold immense promise for travel lovers. In the morning, mist covers the hill slopes of the region, while the beautiful and ferocious waterfalls nearby provide the perfect opportunity for an outdoor trek or a hike. The best part is that hotels are crowd-free and the rates are discounted.

**Alleppey:** Alleppey is divine during the monsoon season. The backwaters are filled to the brim, while the vegetation, nurtured by the soothing touch of the rains, turns lush green. The best way to explore the region is atop a houseboat, where you can even enjoy pungent fish curries cooked in authentic Kerala style.

**Wayanad:** Bountiful rains, greenery and exotic flora and fauna make Wayanad a must-visit place during the monsoon. The Neelakurinji flowers, that bloom once in 12 years, are a special treat.

#### GOA

This pleasure paradise of India is great in the monsoon, although tourists prefer the winter season. Off-season discounts, virtually empty beaches, availability of rooms and lush greenery are some of the reasons why you should visit Goa during the monsoon. On the flipside, the beach shacks are often dismantled and there are no water sports available on the beaches. However, outdoor adventures like hiking, adventure trips and nature trails are available aplenty.

##### Places to visit

**Dudhsagar Waterfalls:** Goa's pride, the Dudhsagar Waterfalls, is at its best during the monsoon season. Perched atop the Western Ghats, the 600-m falls provides the perfect opportunity for a day trip. Take the train in the morning, hike up the mountainous trail and soak in the beauty of the surrounding areas

**Beaches:** The rain-swept beaches of Baga, Calagunte, Candolim and Arambol have a different charm in the monsoon than they do in winter. The beaches are free from throngs of tourists and strikingly clean. Swimming might be prohibited, but long afternoon strolls are great. Some of the shacks may open in the weekend, where you can catch a beer or two, along with golden fried prawns.

#### MAHARASHTRA

Nature comes alive during the wet season in Maharashtra. The rain-swept Western Ghats, the lush vegetation of the countryside, the beautiful Konkan coast, all throw up captivating vistas and challenging trails. Choice places to visit in Maharashtra include Matheran, Amboli, Lonavla and Khandala.

##### Places to visit

**Matheran:** India's smallest hill station is a lush paradise, covered with thickets of evergreen trees. Its proximity to many cities in Western India means that the hill station can be easily reached via car over the





weekend. Alexander Point, Charlotte Lake, One Tree Hill Point and Hart Point are some of the major tourist attractions.

**Lonavla and Khandala:** Charming waterfalls, lush green vegetation and the rugged mountains of the Western Ghats make Lonavla and Khandala perfect weekend retreats. Monsoon time is especially pleasant at these places, as the rain-drenched mountains come alive in all their glory.

**Mumbai:** Monsoon in Mumbai often receives bad press for waterlogging and torrential rains. However, beyond the hyperbole, Mumbai is a great city destination to enjoy the rain. The rain-swept beaches, the quaint streets of the old quarters, the plentiful options for street food, are some of the highlights of the monsoon.

### Uttarakhand

The rains reach Northern India usually in the last week of June and July. The hills become verdant and green, while the streets become wet and shiny from the first spell of rain. Hill stations like Almora, Mussoorie and Lansdowne are some of the most beautiful places to visit during the monsoon season

#### Places to visit

**Almora:** Also known as the 'Switzerland of India,' Almora is blessed with panoramic views of the majestic Himalayas, charming pine forests and a range of exotic flora and fauna species.

**Valley of Flowers:** Located in Northern Chamoli, Valley of Flowers is known for its rare breed of orchids, and animals like snow leopard, musk deer, brown bear and blue sheep. Great for hiking and trekking, this difficult-to-access valley holds great promise for those willing to tread the extra mile.

**Mussoorie:** Perched atop a hill, Mussoorie is the crowning jewel in Uttarakhand's tourism landscape. The rolling hills, lush vegetation, the quaint streets of the hill station, the charming cafes – all create a pleasant atmosphere, allowing you to enjoy the monsoon in its full glory.

### The Northeast

The crowning jewel in India's monsoon destination is the Northeast. The states of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Manipur are at their most beautiful state during the rains. The rain-washed hills, the verdant expanse of the lush green vegetation, the distant growl of thunder in the cloudy sky, the manicured tea gardens – all add up to a great experiential travel during the monsoon.

#### Places to visit

**Meghalaya:** From the picturesque town of Shillong to the wettest places on earth, like Cherrapunjee and Mawsynram, Meghalaya offers an out-of-this-world experience when it comes to monsoon travel. Explore the cascading beauty of the Seven Sisters Fall or the dark, cavernous Arwah Caves. Walk down the Roots Bridge for a breathtaking view of the surrounding forest area.

**Nagaland:** The largely monsoon climate of the state means that it remains wet throughout the year. Kohima, Dimapur and Kohonoma are places that offer a range of experiences – from museum-watching to outdoor activities.

**Manipur:** This charming state with its friendly people is a must-visit place when it comes to travel. Rain or no rain, Imphal and its surrounding areas, Shirui Hills, Zeilad Lake and Khoupum Valley are the main attractions.







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## SYLVAN OUTDOORS

Famous for its natural beauty, seafood, historic towns, sandy beaches and much more, New England is the perfect destination to discover this summer!

TT BUREAU

- ❖ Enjoy earthly splendour with a hiking and camping trip at the popular Acadia National Park, in Maine.
- ❖ In New England, cycling is one of the popular activities, for the state offers challenging mountain passes and easy day trips for the families. There are eight different biking trails to enjoy in Connecticut.
- ❖ Have an appetite for culinary exploration? The six states in the New England region play perfect host with incredible dining options to satisfy your taste buds.
- ❖ Feel like soaking up an aerial view of Rhode Island? Well, go for skydiving or take Tandem jumps to enjoy breathtaking views.
- ❖ Love white river rafting? Well, New England boasts some serious class III, IV and V rapids for a complete thrilling adventure.
- ❖ For world-class experiences, New England region offers memorable outdoor adventures, like kayaking past islands and lighthouses along the Atlantic Ocean.
- ❖ Wanting to feel the thrill down to your bones? Visit Ramblewind and swing from the trees with eight distinct self-guided, tree-to-tree aerial courses. Do try the ZipTour at Attitash Mountain Resort and zip through the valley at the top speed of 65+mph.
- ❖ Would you like to sample some fine wine while enjoying a Bike ride? Well, try the five-day Coastal New England Wine Trail Bike Tour that begins in Rhode Island, with stops along the way for wine tasting at the vineyards.
- ❖ Finally, no visit to New England is complete without stuffing yourself with the world's best seafood. Try lobster bakes, Maine's tiny shrimp, stuffies in Rhode Island, etc. Sample the best!



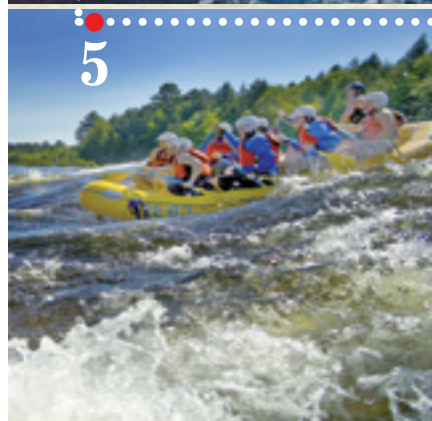
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# PICK OF THE MONTH

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

## BOOK: MOSTLY DEAD THINGS BY KRISTEN ARNETT



For the family at the heart of her outlandish, distressing, and very much alive first novel, Arnett has chosen a profession that works on so many levels. Her narrator, Jessa-Lynn Morton, is carrying on the family business of taxidermy, even after her father kills himself (she discovers his body); her brother's wife (also Jessa's lover) skips town; and her mother expresses her grief by arranging her late husband's animals into pornographic dioramas. Like her characters, Arnett makes art out of kitsch, converting the uncanniness of death (and Florida) into a monument to memory and queerness and love.

**Genre: Humour/LGBT**

## MOVIE: LITTLE WOODS

Set in fracking country in North Dakota, Nia DaCosta's debut film is a modern-day, female-led western centering on two estranged sisters who reunite when their mother dies. One (Lily James) is dealing with an unexpected pregnancy, and the other (Tessa Thompson) is on the verge of leaving their small town and going legit after paying the bills by running prescription drugs over the Canadian border. But with the mortgage on their mother's house due, she faces a choice between family and escape. Little Woods received good reviews at its Tribeca debut a year ago—with critics especially praising both leads—and it finally reached theaters this spring.

**Genre: Drama/Thriller**



## MUSIC: DON'T YOU THINK YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH?

Bleached returned with 'Shitty Ballet', their first song since 2017. The punk/garage rockers have now announced a new album on which that single is set to appear. Titled Don't You Think You've Had Enough?, it's due on July 12th through Dead Oceans. The follow-up to 2016's solid Welcome the Worms LP, Don't You Think serves as the first full-length album that

Bleached have 'written from a place of sobriety.' Sessions began in early 2018, taking place in both Nashville and their hometown of Los Angeles. With the assistance of producer Shane Stoneback, Bleached have helmed what's described as their most 'courageous' project, one that 'radiates the power and bravery of facing addiction, of letting go of the past.' Those themes are already deeply embedded in the album's latest single, 'Hard to Kill'. According to the band, it's about 'staring down the road towards death and realising I needed to wake up and get out of my selfish patterns of self destruction.'

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



## GAME: MANSIONS OF MADNESS - MOTHER'S EMBRACE

In 1926, a team of investigators try to uncover the dark secrets of an eerie mansion. Finding weapons, tools, and information will be the only way to solve complex puzzles and fight living nightmares, insanity, and death. It will take more than just survival to conquer the evils terrorizing the town. Will the team make it out alive and solve the mystery?

Inspired by the award-winning board game, Mansions of Madness, this Lovecraft-inspired third-person game combines horror, mystery and adventure, where investigators, searching for answers in cursed places, will be struggling to survive with their minds intact. Do you dare enter the Mansions of Madness?

**Genre (s): Adventure, horror & mystery**





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# TODAY'S traveller

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