

VOLUME 1 | ISSUE 2
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- RAJASTHAN: THE LUXURY QUOTIENT
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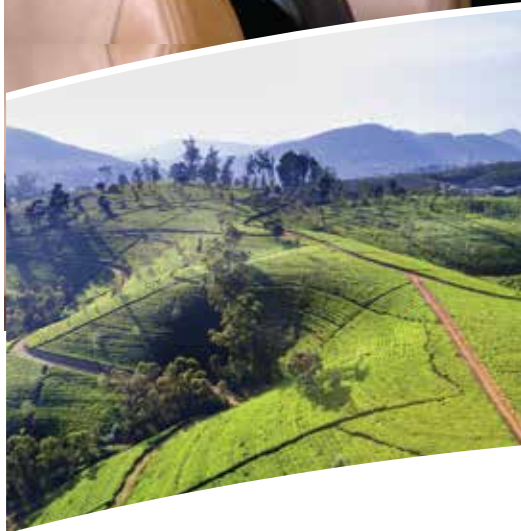
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Editor's Letter

Travel is not a diversion, but the road to liberation. When you have paved your path and hit the road, it is the motion of sanities and familiarity of mystique places. Travel is liberal, as it institutes acceptability and respect towards cultures that are different from one's own. For Travel Turtle's inaugural issue we have presented the cultural extension of our own travel world.

I am reminded of the song by the Rolling Stones, "You can't always get what you want". None of us had ever imagined how unprecedented 2020 can be, even in our wildest dream. Like many other businesses, and especially those in travel, our launch plan for March 2020 evaporated into thin air. We manoeuvred, Zoom'ed and brainstormed ideas but then all we needed to do was wait out the pandemic, for the economy to come roaring back, along with tourism. The road to normalcy was not straight as an arrow but I believe our focus was. Also, the fact remains that our industry still has itineraries to prepare, sales calls to complete, network at travel exhibitions, cocktails to toast and conversations to start. While all this is around the corner, we need you to go through our pages, captivate and unwind.

The time witnessed an increasing appetite for stories that showcase the authentic, intelligent, quirky, adventurous, thoughtful and sometimes debatable. We, at Travel Turtle, while still very much stumbled and humbled by the pandemic, are delighted to present the content that shines as bright as anything that brings gleam in our eye with the hope that we all will bounce back together.

Intriguing oeuvre has always been a true weapon of marketing; Team Turtle finds out to what extent Netflix caters to the travel audiences and how. Our enduring fascination with the luxury genre will be validated by an elite journey through the royal lanes of Rajasthan. Vast beauty and natural wonders, but it's also home to the most amazing wildlife in the world, Kenya makes the inaugural issue even more vibrant with its luxury offerings. Travel across pages and decades, and you may reach the tranquillity of Jagannath Temple admiring some mysteries.

The editorial team at Travel Turtle has curated the stories as per the industry prerequisite. We genuinely believe that you will enjoy reading every page of our inaugural issue as much as we enjoyed amassing it. Make sure you are following us on social media and receiving our weekly newsletter, so you don't miss a story. Do share your thoughts and suggestions post-reading, please write to us at info@travelturtle.world.



Bharti Sharma
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



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A 5-STAR VACATION IN THE CITY OF JOY

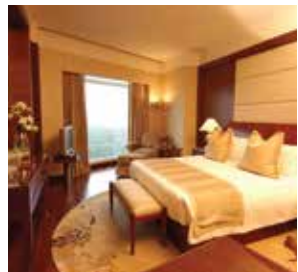


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Waterside Café

The stunning 24X7 café offers a midnight menu as well as a splendid global spread amidst an enchanting view of the waterside and the landscaped gardens.

COUCHHI

Named after the Kashmiri forest morel, this signature restaurant offers a variety of North-Indian and Bengali cuisine, as wide as its theatrical open kitchen display.



The Bakery

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Noida International Airport signs State Support Agreement with the Government of Uttar Pradesh

A state support agreement was signed between Noida International Airport (NIA) and the Government of UP in Lucknow in the presence of Honorable Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Yogi Adityanath, Shri Rajendra Kumar Tiwari, Chief Secretary, Government of Uttar Pradesh, Shri S.P. Goyal, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Arunvir Singh, CEO, NIAL, Mr. Christoph Schnellmann, CEO, NIA and Ms Kiran Jain, COO, NIA. The agreement lays down the State Government's support to establish and continuously improve surface access to the airport, establish and expand utilities required to run the airport (water, electricity, waste water), maintain law and order, including monitoring at the airport and grant the necessary clearances to build and operate the airport. The agreement marks another important milestone towards the implementation of Noida International Airport and the much-needed aviation infrastructure in the NCR region and in Uttar Pradesh. UP government's continued support towards the project has been integral in enabling YIAPL in building a world-class airport. This partnership will bring progress to the State of Uttar Pradesh and will bolster the Indian aviation's growth story.



Seychelles opens up to the world from March 25, 2021

The Indian Ocean island destination has recently announced that it will be welcoming visitors from across the globe, irrespective of their vaccination status, as from March 25, 2021. Visitors from South Africa will still not be permitted to enter Seychelles for the time being until further review. Visitors will now only be required to present a negative PCR test taken 72 hours prior to departure. There will be neither quarantine requirement nor restriction on movement upon entry into Seychelles. Additionally, the minimum stay in establishments upon arrival will no longer be applicable.

Minister Radeconde stated that the decision to review and relax the entry procedures in the country has been made possible in view of the success registered in the aggressive vaccination campaign that the country embarked on earlier in the year.





France has eased travel restrictions for seven countries

France has eased some restrictions on international travellers out of Europe. The countries are Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Australia, Britain, Israel, and Singapore. According to reports, France's Foreign Ministry has stated that people who are travelling to and from the countries mentioned above will not have to provide any document pertaining to the reason for travel.

So they are not required to have any compelling reason for their journey to France. As opposed to before, when travellers had to furnish documents suggesting the nature of travel and the urgency, such as family or medical emergency. The ease in travel restrictions are being implemented as these nations have shown an improvement in the Coronavirus situation.

Mauritius is offering free vaccine to long-term travellers

Mauritius has announced an expansion of its COVID-19 vaccination programme to include long-term international visitors who are over the age of 18. Mauritius has been offering free renewable long-term visas, and has now added another perk to facilitate their stay in the island nation. Reportedly, those willing to stay longer here will be included in the said vaccination drive. This vaccination drive is a part of an effort to reopen its borders fully. Mauritius, being one of the world's smallest countries by size, and located in the Indian Ocean off the southeast coast of Africa, it is home to nearly 100 miles of white, sandy beaches, two UNESCO World Heritage sites, and much more.



Kedarnath Temple to reopen for devotees on 17 May

The Uttarakhand Char Dham Devasthanam Management Board announced that the portals of Kedarnath Temple will be reopened on May 17. According to the board, on May 14, the idol of Lord Shiva will be moved out of its winter abode at Ukhimath's Omkareshwar. The renowned temple is all set to reopen for devotees at 5am on May 17. The famous temple was shut down for devotees on November 16, 2020.

And another renowned shrine, Badrinath Temple, which was closed on November 19 last year, is also ready to reopen to devotees on May 18, said the spokesperson. Gangotri and Yamunotri temples will open to devotees on May 14 and soon after the revered Char Dham Yatra will commence this year after the reopening of the famous four temples.





Greece aims to open up for tourism this May

According to latest guidelines, COVID-19 vaccinated tourists who have antibodies or test negative can travel to the country in the summer of 2021. The country led calls for an EU-wide vaccination certification that would allow tourism to thrive in the coming future.

Greece majorly depends on tourism, with about a fifth of the economy dependent on it. It has been reported that one in every five workers are involved in the tourism industry. The nation was gravely affected by the deadly

coronavirus that shut down the world in March last year. Foreign arrivals stopped in the midst of a pandemic, and the economy was largely hampered.

Now, the Minister of Tourism, Haris Theocharis, recently said in a press conference, "Always having in mind the faithful implementation of the health protocols, we aspire to open Greek Tourism on May 14. I emphasize, however, that all the opening dates are indicative and may change, depending on developments."

IATA says that travellers are regaining confidence to fly

According to a survey by the International Air Transport Association (IATA), eighty four percent of the respondents believed that the COVID-19 is here to stay, but travellers need to find a way to lead a normal life, and manage risks. This survey carried out by the airlines' trade body showed that 4700 passengers from 11 countries had at

least once boarded an aircraft in the past eleven months. The coronavirus lockdowns began sometime around March last year. The respondents to the survey belonged to India, the UK, Germany, Australia, Japan, UAE, Canada, Chile, France, Canada, and Singapore. 500 passengers from India responded to the survey



Indian Association of Tour Operators elects new team in record turnout

IATO, the national body of the tourism industry that has over 1,600 members pan India has elected Rajiv Mehra the president of IATO. E M Najeeb kept his position as Senior Vice President. Lajpat Rai, Lotus Trans Travel was pitted against Ravi Gosain, Erco Travels.

Elected IATO office bearers:

- President: Rajiv Mehra
- Senior Vice President: EM Najeeb
- Vice President: Ravi Gosain
- Secretary: Rajnish Kaistha
- Joint Secretary: Sanjay Razdan
- Treasurer: Sunil Mishra

EC members:

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'STRANGE(R) THINGS' NETFLIX DID TO TOURISM

Netflix commanding a streaming revolution that changed the way we watch TV and films. As television operators lost subscribers, Netflix gained them. A stage all the more symbolic because it has not only change the mode of entertainment for us but has also influenced our travel itineraries. So keep in mind, the next show you binge watch might well determine your next holiday.

-By Bharti Sharma



Emperors ruling in majestic castles, spies and intelligence agents conducting search operations and thieves robbing precious gems from grand museums, each one of us has felt our soul racing at the sight of these exotic wonders and suddenly thought of buying a plane ticket to these destinations. Netflix's famous series namely, Narcos and Money Heist have become famous worldwide attracting hefty

numbers of tourist to Colombia and Spain, respectively.

WHAT'S SEEN *is sold*

Notes fly in the air, jobless people march in the streets, and credits roll while 'Bella Ciao' plays. 'La Casa de Papel' or 'Money Heist' has enticed thousands of viewers in Spain, thanks to Netflix's diffusion. This series talks about the meticulous prepared robbery of the Royal

Mint of Spain in Madrid. Where exactly is it? The Royal Mint of Spain is on Jorge Juan Street, 106, in the Salamanca district. Yes, exactly the same place where you see hordes of tourists clicking selfies and posting them on Instagram with hashtag #LaCasadePapel.

Elisa Robles Fraga, Director at Tourism Office of Spain in Mumbai, India trusts that Indians have loved Spanish series always since not only Money Heist (La Casa de

Papel), but other series in Spanish such as 'Narcos', and Spanish film 'The Invisible Guest' have been quite popular amongst the Indian audience.

"Currently, as we are aware due to heavy digitisation and digital evolutions of the Indian market, with internet data available at really affordable prices and in bulk, several Indians consume a lot of content online and they watch several series on a number of



The Crown features some of England's most regal locations, all providing a lavish backdrop for the story of our reigning monarch's early years.

available OTT (Over The - Top) platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video," she adds.

First ever Turkish Netflix series, 'The Protector' features the capital city Istanbul

and series, The Gift showcases famous places such as Göbekli Tepe, the country's oldest archaeological which has witnessed tremendous increase in number of tourists.

A true instrument of success

Ever since the political situation has calmed down, Colombia has opened up to tourism. For past two or three years now, Colombia has repeatedly appeared in the top countries to discover. Well, who remembers Pablo Escobar? The drug cartel kingpin, Pablo Escobar's home city Medellin has made a miraculous recovery after decades of bloodshed, but his shadow remains, The Netflix series 'Narcos' is constantly cited as the number one reason to visit the city by foreign tourists. Former crime capital and stronghold of Pablo Escobar,



Elisa Robles Fraga

Medellin has seen a steady increase of more than 25 per cent of its tourist arrivals in recent years and visitors can now embark on various tours following the footsteps of the famous trafficker. The tourism

authorities of Colombia and of Medellin prefer not to dwell on this dark hour of their history and have even blew up the family residence, Monaco building. It was city's number one tourist attraction, with visitors from around the globe. As much as Pablo's existence impaired the country, Netflix managed to preserve it and bestowed with hordes of tourists. According to a study conducted by Barclays, the Netflix

series The Crown, which focus on the reign of Queen Elizabeth II, has also generated a real resurgence of interest for England with 63 per cent of international tourists surveyed more interested in visiting the country than in previous years.

Hitting the high notes

Nothing connects the world better than diversities in culture. With an inquisitiveness to dig in and experience different cultures, the travellers can connect and relate to the destination that they have seen in series. But question is why? Netflix viewing behaviour has now become one of the strongest predictor of entertainment driven tourism. As the viewers are more likely to be

exposed to the destination image for a longer period, crowd looks for landmarks shown in the series. Specialised tours such as, 'Protector Tours' inspired from The Protector, 'Narcos' inspired tours in Columbia, etc have begun flourishing everywhere in the local travel agencies of the city. Some foreign tour operators have also contacted the streaming service to create tours as faithful as possible to the locations depicted in the series. Weimar Berlin and the world of Gereon Rath and Charlotte Ritter, this tour is perfection. 'Babylon Berlin' took Germany and the world by storm drawing numbers of viewers. Talking about the interest of tourists in exclusive Babylon Tours Romit Theophilus,



Pablo Escobar's mansion in GuatapÇ, Colombia

Director - Sales & Marketing, GNT0 India says, "Fans can also explore the most exciting locations from the hit series such as Alexanderplatz and the Red Town Hall. A fascinating and elegant portrait of a city and period of time that is rarely explored in popular culture and it is worth exploring the destinations through the exciting tour."



Romit Theophilus

throng from killing the town's charm. This directly results in mass tourism; city's heritage title gets at risk and has a bad impact on sustainability.

And the award goes to...
NETFLIX

It is evident that list of countries who credit Netflix for their good tourist figures are cumulating.

Elisa asserts, "We definitely credit several OTT platforms such as Netflix for helping host this invaluable, entertaining content which generates a great interest in the minds of the viewers for the destination showcased in their shows. Viewing of such content certainly helps increase tourism numbers to our destination." Netflix or in movies is becoming an important selling point, as it allows travelers to truly connect with the destination.

The majority of filming for The Protector took place on location in Istanbul, Turkey

"Considering the demand of Netflix in Indian market, we are glad to say that this has definitely increased number of Indian travellers, traveling to Turkey. The protector has defined Turkey in a unique way, tells Komal Seth, Director LINKIN Reps.



Komal Seth

The original Moka Efti was a cafe at the corne Leipziger Strasse -Friedrichstrasse.



Who's responsible for responsible tourism?

We all are aware of the scenario, when Game of Thrones happened to Dubrovnik. Just 42,615 people live in Dubrovnik, yet over two million people visit during the high season each summer. The Old Town is flooded with hot bodies and selfie sticks. Many people, especially those from the Old Town, feel that Dubrovnik's original spirit cannot be recovered. As the number of visitors keeps rising, local authorities are looking for ways to keep the



THE LUXURY QUOTIENT

Bypass the cost factor while signing in for a vacation and get yourself a kaleidoscopic plethora of grandeur sojourn in the sandy terrains of Rajasthan, experiencing heritage and history in style.

- By Sudipta Saha



INDIAN SAGA

Travellers nowadays are overlooking the price points just to check-in themselves into a luxurious, exclusive, and private vacation mode. Luxury tourism has risen with highly specialised demands in the exemplary land of maharajas and medieval forts, 'Rajasthan'. There are numerous ways to experience Rajasthan and one of the most swaying ways is through its luxury wing, royalty at its best. Tourism flow in the state has been on the upsurge and it's a never-ending saga. Almost every ace hotel brand has its presence in the state, making it an ideal destination for leisure, wedding, MICE, etc. You reveal your desire and Rajasthan will enthrall you with grand tourism options.

When we talk about luxury in Rajasthan, we confined ourselves to palaces and forts. An array of resplendent royal experiences awaits for you, whether it is wandering around the Umaid Bhawan Palace Museum with Champagne, caviar and your own butler or float along the shimmering Lake Pichola on a traditional Shikara boat in Udaipur. The timeless culture of the state is like a novel, every page is scripted with surprising experiences, luxury is not just restricted to the palaces, the luxurious camps set up in the desert of Jaisalmer offers an endless desert moments, in the row is another spectacular experience, the hot air balloon offering a breathtaking view. The story doesn't ends here, now royals have become hosts for the first time ever. The Gudliya Suite in the 300-year-old City Palace of Jaipur, home to Jaipur's Royal Family, is now available to rent on Airbnb.

Steep into luxury hospitality

Long corridors with huge pillars, stretching up your neck you see the grandest chandeliers and as you revolve your eyes, the wall showcase the fabulous artifacts from the past, a sign of welcome to the royal land of dunes. This imperial land has many exquisite stories to narrate and these palaces which now are converted into heritage hotels promise to take you in an era when royalty spelled magic. Luxury resides in the heart of Rajasthan with the charm and mysticism in the air.



Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar

"Both the words 'luxury' and 'tourism' are being defined as 'experiential'. It is neither the physical brand nor its price-tag, it is not the place or its rigorous promotion which makes it luxurious. It is the experience which the global audiences are craving for, searching for and are ready to pay any price for an original, authentic experience. For us at HRH Group of Hotels, the challenge always has been to make our guests 'Experience the original in the abode of Kings'. It is our USP and continues to guide us till date," adds Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar of Udaipur.

According to a report, a decade before the state government accorded Rajasthan the label of

an industry, Udaipur had put itself on the global tourism map. In 1979, the opening of the iconic Taj Lake Palace Hotel was considered a milestone in the hospitality industry's journey in the state. The conversion of white-as-marble Jag Niwas Palace, bang in the middle of Lake Pichola, into an iconic hotel, and the idea of luxury hospitality amidst royal setting sparked a movement across Rajasthan, with more palaces, mansions, Havelis and former hunting grounds were transformed into beautiful hotels. In Udaipur itself, Shiv Niwas and Fateh Prakash, part of the City Palace Complex, were converted into palatial hotels. Lately, the well-known luxury hotel brands have routed themselves towards the desert land of Rajasthan and mainly in Udaipur. After Taj Lake Palace Hotel, Jag Niwas Palace, Shiv Niwas, and Fateh Prakash, the new entrant in the market was the Trident and Oberoi Udaivilas. The entrance of the luxury brands in the Udaipur market modified the definition of timeless luxury hospitality.

The hotel industry saw a huge expansion between 2005 and 2010, not confined to luxury and upscale hotel brands. Gradually, a shift was noticed from Udaipur to Jaipur, with the entry of brands with large inventory was witnessed.

Outlining the percentage of luxury clientele, Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar of Udaipur states, "At the HRH Group of Hotels, our palace-hotels and sanctuary-resorts cater to both the luxury and budget clientele. It would be a 50:50 division in terms of revenues and guests from global and Indian destinations.

We continue to work on the luxury market and our marketing teams are networked with the best in the world."

Luxury on 'Wheels'

Out of all majestic experiences, discovering the royal land through a splendid train journey amidst the royal ambiance goes perfectly well in defining what we call 'Luxury'. Palace on wheels, a gleaming carriage personifies the Indian heritage transporting you in time. The week-long journey makes you feel a part of the prime royal era that once thrived the nation.



Sanjay Pande

Sanjay Pande, Additional Director (Development), Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan mentions, "The popular Palace on Wheel train, a high-end product of Rajasthan Tourism which is also seen as a most luxurious tourism product of the country, was launched in earlier eighties, offering an unparalleled luxury stay and dining experience onboard. This train has also been rated as one of the five best tourist trains in the world. Therefore, over a long period of time, Rajasthan Tourism by the sheer nature of its product offerings has become a dominant player in the luxury segment."



Fairy wedding story

When it comes to the wedding no bride or groom looks upon a copy-paste theme instead they develop nuanced and personal ideas making their wedding a grand and luxurious affair. Well, the wedding segment seems to be optimistic in the heritage state 'Rajasthan' offering its royal culture, ethnic cuisine, and huge palaces.

The breathtaking views, impeccable service, and mouth-watering regional cuisine are just the cherry on the cake. Amongst several grand venues in the states, it's a task to choose the best for 'D' day. Sharing on the best-preferred wedding venues, Kaveri Vij, Founder, Planner, Chief Dreamer, Designer Events Inc says, "The most sought after venues would have to be The Taj Lake Palace Udaipur, Umaid Bhawan Jodhpur, Leela Udaipur, Suryagarh Jaisalmer, Rambagh Palace Jaipur and the Jai Mahal Jaipur. Another property that has come in demand lately has to be The Alila Fort, Bishangarh for boutique weddings. Samode Palace Jaipur is also a great venue for weddings. Another gem

is Taj Ramgarh lodge, which is the ideal place to have a small wedding for 50 - 60 guests."



Kaveri Vij & Akshay Chopra

Every wedding comes with its own set of demands and requests. Be it a luxury wedding, a boutique wedding or a simple wedding. "We have planned almost 10 weddings in Rajasthan and keep getting endless queries for the entire state. The budgets again differ and range on the kind of venue they want to book. An average starting of 1 crore is what should be considered for planning a wedding in Rajasthan," explicit Kaveri Vij.

Rajasthan has been a host for several talked-about royal weddings such as Liz Hurley and Arun Nayar, Katy Perry and Russell Brand, Raveena Tandon



INDIAN SAGA



and Anil Thadani, Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas, and the Ambani pre-wedding events. Rajasthan is flooded with different shapes and sizes of forts and palaces which lately have been transformed into lavish stay for guests and travellers.



Parthip Thyagarajan

"Jaipur properties such as Fairmont Hotel, Rambagh Palace and Jai Mahal Palace have played host to many high profile weddings, from NRIs to families from all over India. The JW Marriott now renamed Leela Palace Jaipur will continue to be the top choice for those seeking a grand, ornate venue. 2019 witnessed new properties in Udaipur too. Umaid Bhawan continues to be the destination of choice for Ultra HNIs. Jaisalmer and Bikaner have also played host to many grand and magnificent weddings" shares Parthip Thyagarajan, CEO, Wedding Sutra.

The outlook

Rajasthan is well-positioned as a mega tourist destination with Royal Tourism, Heritage properties, and monuments as key drivers for its growth. Despite strong economic headwinds Rajasthan Tourism has sustained strong tourist footfalls in the state. "While the final data for 2019 is under computation, but it

will surpass the 2018 data by a good margin and also likely to cross the magic figures of 5 million tourist visitors arrivals in the state for the first time. Rajasthan Tourism has plans to further increase the tourist arrivals to 10 million in the next four-five years, by introducing a comprehensive New Tourism Policy shortly," elaborates Sanjay Pande.

A viable perspective is often needed to understand the clear picture and a reasonable answer comes from industry people itself. Bhim Singh, Managing Director, Rajasthan Tours mentions that out of total clientele, 50 per cent are luxury clients and the other 50 per cent is domestic clients. The luxury destinations in demand is all princely Palaces converted into hotels such as Rambagh Palace Jaipur, Umaid Bhawan Palace Jodhpur, Lake Palace Udaipur,



Bhim Singh

Lalgarh Palace Bikaner and some new campsites Jawai (Leopard sighting), Serai, (Jaisalmer) and Suryagarh are mostly in demand amongst the luxury clientele and also villa properties are included. Abhinav Sancheti, Director, Four Seasons India Tours who caters to about 20 per cent luxury clients out of which 80 per cent are international and 20 per cent domestic. While, in luxury

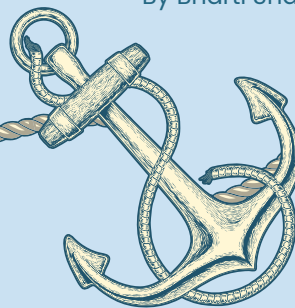
tourism, clients are skeptical and the major packages and services in demand are different from the regular clientele. "Luxury clientele do have special requirements such as arranging private dinners, private visits, butler service, and unique experiences. Hotels are mostly Oberoi, Taj and Sujan group but some clients come for luxury boutique properties as well. Destinations defer to each choice, but popular ones are Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Bikaner and Jaisalmer," supplements Abhinav Sancheti.



Anchoring in the Troubled Sea

The resilient travel industry had its share of gloom in the past one year. It was the first and the hardest hit from the pandemic and would be the last to recover. How did we hold on, what kept us moving and what has been our anchor in these constant high tides? Here's to each one of us, we've struggled like a fish in muddy water but we know the day will come soon, when we rise like a Phoenix.

- By Bharti Sharma



Maneuvering into fresh voyage

The past year has been like a nightmare for all of us, economies across the world came to a standstill due to the horrors of the COVID19. As lockdowns were enforced it compelled humanity to ponder over the choices they've made in the past decades, and a thread that stood out universally was

that our tourism industry was the most fragile and thus crumbled like a house of cards. Everything that we took for granted was easily snatched away from us, even our freedom to breathe fresh air. With the imposed lockdown, the industry started shattering and the losses we faced are etched in the books and our minds forever. Being travel professionals we were hit the hardest, not just in terms of business but our lifestyles too. Travelling! something that we

travel professionals hold most dear to us was taken away from us at the snap of the fingers. There came a point we started missing the boarding calls at the airport, site inspections at the hotels, late-night calls from the clients, walking carelessly on the streets of our favourite destinations and meanwhile planning the best holiday experiences for our clients. But, who knew this was just the tip of the iceberg. It was going to be the longest, most turbulent-hit flight

of our lifetime; that one flight we would have gladly missed the boarding call for!

Weeks into the lockdown, with overindulgence into banana bread and dalgona, missing our workplaces and meetings, the absence of in-person meetings and presentations, gave birth to a phase of webinars. None of us in the industry would've contemplated over the old guards of the trade embracing this technological shift so smoothly. With our traditional



WRECKING BALL

industry professionals who even detest the idea of using laptops for communication embracing technology, the acceptance of webinars augmented substantially. "Learning and discovery never stopped all this while. As a company, we engaged our teams constantly to better equip them with knowledge and concentrated on as much learning as possible during 'no business days in the past year.



The idea was that when the time comes, they could deliver more and much better. We consciously abstained from selling products and only focused on equipping our clients with more knowledge so that they too, in turn, could reformulate their products and optimise the existing ones to the best of their advantage," asserts Prateek Hira, President and CEO – Tornos and Co-founder & Director - River Rhapsody

We saw every branch of tourism from hotel chains to NTOs, from associations to agents and even

state tourism boards participating in the race, and how. "History, food trails, heritage, sustainability, optimism, unity, future prospects became an order of our daily lives through this new accepted medium of communication and publicity," Ravi Gosain, Managing Director, Erco Travels.

Where webinars took charge of our daily business interactions, more technology was waiting around the corner to equip the trade for keeping up the momentum. The next big technology happened and we got to see the biggest travel exhibitions online. Now, travel exhibitions to us industry professionals are like elections to political organisations "Hey, are you going for ATM Dubai?" has been a go-to ice-breaking line for every industry member alike. We wait for the exhibitions around the year, and why not it's where we get to meet hundreds, thousands of people under one roof showcasing the best of their products, and networking with people from around the globe with eternal energy. Everything about exhibitions smells like the sweet aroma of honey, right from travel arrangements to networking nights.

Though the pandemic was here to take away all this, the resilient industry had no plans of giving up this easy, even to the deadly virus. The path-breaking technology of conducting travel exhibitions online was a breath of

fresh air for the travel trade globally. The success of the platform can be seen as stalwarts like ITB, WTM, ATM and Pure chose the medium and connected the industry globally. This year has brought with it challenges, losses, hardships, fear none of us had anticipated in our lifetimes but this has also been a year of hope, re-analysing, finding strength, opportunities, humanity and has taught us some unforgettable life lessons.

Prateek believes it's still a long road ahead with a few opportunities as well. He comments, "Each adversary in business only makes a good professional wiser, who always treats it as a learning exercise to better manage the business in the future. When things are running fine we seldom care or relook at them. It's only when things slow down or stop, does one think of reengineering, rediscovering, realigning, up-skilling, strategizing, cost-cutting et al. I think we all just did that all this while and probably for the first time in our

careers in such a large measure. Looking at verticals we analyzed, what was an unnecessary flab in the business, what were the leakages and the means to plug these to better manage the show in the future."

The lifeguard we never got!!

The tourism sector is an ecosystem with varied constituents interacting as a system. If one constituent stops functioning, it creates a multiplying effect on the entire ecosystem. Somehow, the government failed to understand this phenomenon while drafting the much-hyped stimulus - 'Atma-Nirbhar' during the lockdown and again in the latest union budget, where the tourism sector was completely ignored and hung out to dry. The entire industry, with each of its constituents, had their hopes pinned on the stimulus after facing the wrath of the lockdown on their businesses with the government basically denying



the industry its right to earn a livelihood and as such a stimulus was our only hope to revive. Substantiating the context, Rajeev Kohli, Joint Managing Director, Creative Travel added,



RAJEEV KOHLI

"It has been over a year since our business came to standstill. The stress of being an employer, a business owner is enormous, especially in a country like ours where the government has been more than uncaring. We have all reached our breaking points. As each week passed, plans and ideas changed. Every idea we have had has been tested. I wish we could say that we did things differently, but the core fact is that there has been close to no business operation for the inbound industry. So even what we tried did not go far."

It felt like a labyrinth with new difficulty unwinding every passing day, it was only then the stimulus was announced by the Finance Minister and the whole sector was devastated with a question mark on our livelihood and future. "The pandemic has

been an enormous reality check for businesses across the world, across all segments. Conventional wisdom was turned upside down. All the rules we knew, all the systems we planned, all the ideologies we followed – everything hit the wall. When the pandemic started, I was very optimistic about a fast recovery and the resilience of our industry. But as the months passed, my mood has changed. Optimism has changed to exhaustion," emphasises Rajeev. Yet, there was a silver lining in this devastation too; it left us more united than ever before. Like a family, the whole industry united their efforts in reaching out to the government demanding support for the industry on the ventilator. The erstwhile calm and rhythmic industry demonstrated their revolutionary side, some got down on the streets of Delhi risking the already roaring Covid19, others took to Twitter expressing their apprehension on this social media application with

different hashtags trending every other day while all the trade associations unanimously lobbied for their members and industry as a whole. However, despite all the concentrated efforts of the many, the government ignored the tourism sector then and repeated the same performance again in the Union budget 2021. The once-booming tourism sector, contributing 10 per cent to the country's GDP and employing millions of workforce across the spectrum has been left to drown or find the shore by itself.

The darkest hour is just before the dawn...

Hope presented itself in the form of travel bubbles and unlocks progression. Domestic flights resumed operations with a rise in passenger numbers every passing day. Destinations such as Maldives, Dubai, Kenya, Qatar, Tanzania, Bahrain joined by a few others came forward like saviors for travel enthusiasts and

honeymooners roping in the chunk of Indian outbound. India is now the top source market for the Maldives while other countries with travel bubbles are witnessing great inbound from India as well. The tourism department of Maldives, Kenya and Dubai even hosted familiarisation trips for potential agents in India, which radiated hope among the fellow industry members.

However, with recent developments in the travel sector paving the way for the transition toward normalcy, associations and organizations are still reckoning with the pandemic's impact on the sector and beyond.



Travel Businesses are more of passion rather than just business, and it is very hard for a travel professional to change tracks and be out of it. It was always a myth that travel professionals will now shut and do something else. Most the businesses have survived without the business in the last year and many are now opening up. Some have already started to have a trickle while those in inbound and outbound are hoping for a trickle from this October on. This has been possible, as travel professionals are passionate about travel businesses and in spite of all adversaries they stood rock-strong with grit and determination.

- Prateek Hira



Unlocking newer shores

When the going gets tough, the tough gets going; and we travel professionals have proven that we're the toughest. Sitting and sulking is definitely not our way of life, even with the challenges of the pandemic, so we had to do something, right? "It might come as a surprise to many but we formed a new company too, 'River Rhapsody' that owns and operates riverboats and organises river-side camp-stays - quite a contrasting diversion from the traditional land products that we have been offering for the last 27 years. We all knew tourism will come back and it is on its way. It's time now for all of us, to be 'Tourism Ready'. Having no business was surely no reason to be lethargic, instead, we had and probably still have a bit of time, to look for opportunities within and around us and to better position ourselves in the tourism business than we ever were," shares the optimistic Prateek on roving into newer experiences.

With both agony and hope, the self-reliant industry went forward with the burden to settle it all on its shoulder. "There have been so many redundancies and organisational changes in the global travel industry that when we restart the business, we will in some ways be starting from scratch in many destinations. We also tried domestic travel with a new luxury facing brand, but the competitive landscape of selling to the domestic market has just made making serious margins unviable. So now the focus is on when we will reopen," opines Rajeev.



RAVI GOSAIN

"Going forward, we all should be open to adapt to new business techniques and come out of the past as quickly as possible. I strongly believe the situation keeps on changing; it may prolong but won't remain there forever. The tourism industry will surely survive and come back strongly. It was after six months we realised this pandemic will affect us longer than we all thought. But now since the majority of the countries including India is getting vaccinated, our hopes of survival and revival looks better, so we started communicating with our clients and working on the future roadmap. Still, we don't have a clear timeline when we will be able to start a business but our hopes are brighter than 2020," Ravi shares insights on hopes for 2021.



LEANING ON

BIG

BROTHERS

FOR GLOBAL REACH



How India's low cost airlines are dreaming big by partnering with Global aviation giants such as Emirates and Qatar Airways...

- By Shrinidhi Hande

It is always better to collaborate than compete. If there is one industry that has understood this concept early and implemented it successfully as well, it is the aviation industry. While airlines do seem to compete with each other in plain sight, they regularly shake hands to form partnerships that can assure mutual growth. Despite being in one of the largest aviation markets in the world, India's budget airlines haven't had any major international partnerships-but this scene is changing now, with Spicejet and Emirates inking a deal as well as Qatar Airways-Indigo partnership both signed late 2019 and effects of which we could'nt to see in 2020. While Emirates and Qatar Airways

are global players in aviation, their India coverage has been limited to very few cities (9 for EK, 14 for QR). Clearly there is more room to serve a large country such as India with ever increasing number of international fliers. At the same time, India's home grown budget airlines have international dreams but their ambition is limited by multiple factors such as funds and fleet limitations.

On November 25, 2019, Emirates signed a codeshare and interline agreement with India's Spicejet to give travelers to and from India a seamless access to a wider and a stronger route network. When this partnership comes into play - which was expected in early 2020, international flyers flying to and from India can get more flight

options on routes operated by both Spicejet and Emirates while also getting to book and fly seamlessly to/from the destinations operated only by Spicejet or Emirates. Similarly Qatar Airways has signed a one-way codeshare pact with India's largest airline, Indigo. Under the pact, Qatar Airways

The table below gives a snapshot of current reach, as of December 2019. When a full scale partnership comes into effect, a Spicejet customer can gain access to 150+ international destinations while Emirates customer can fly seamlessly to about 50 Indian cities.

AIRLINES	CITIES FLYING (TO INDIA)	CITIES FLYING (INTERNATIONAL)
QATAR	14	150+, 87 COUNTRIES
INDIGO	61	23
EMIRATES	9	150+, 80 COUNTRIES
SPICEJET	47	7

would be able to place its code on IndiGo flights between Doha and Mumbai, Delhi and Hyderabad. Qatar Airways also has expressed interest to invest in Indigo, hinting that they are aiming for much larger involvement and serious partnerships in the days to come.

Clearly the advantages are obvious: An Emirates customer flying in from Buenos Aires can fly all the way to Guwahati or Calicut or Pondicherry with final leg served by Spicejet from nearest metro Emirates flies to - such as Kolkata, Mumbai or Hyderabad.





Would Qatar's limited partnership with Indigo expand further in 2021

OPPORTUNITIES

International Reach:

Qatar and Emirates fly to over 150 destinations worldwide outside of India. Despite their best dreams, Indigo and Spicejet cannot have that kind of reach and command over global markets. Partnership is a great way to gain instant access to global market. Being able to collaborate with Qatar and Emirates will open up a whole new market and possibilities for India's LCCs.

By co-ordinating their promotional offers and discount sales, Qatar + Indigo or Emirates + Spicejet can offer extensive possibilities to Indian travelers looking to fly abroad. For example, assume Emirates is

offering discounted flights to Miami, USA from Mumbai in India. However if I am based in say a small town of Madurai in Tamil Nadu, I will have to plan a separate Madurai-Mumbai return ticket to make use of this Mumbai-Miami deal. Risk hitherto with such two separate tickets is that if my Madurai-Mumbai flight is delayed, I risk missing Mumbai-Dubai-Miami flight as Emirates has no obligation to wait for me or book me on next flight. In the new scenario of single PNR Madurai - Mumbai-Dubai - Miami ticket, I can book Madurai-Mumbai-Dubai-Miami in one PNR at discounted rates with assurance of free

rebooking if I am to miss the connecting flight due to late arrival of earlier flight. This peace of mind is the single largest benefit to passengers.

Cargo:

A huge potential is waiting to be untapped in the cargo space and interline partnership is a great start in the right direction. While we focus on passengers where margins are wafer thin, cargo space offers higher revenue potential if a reliable and time guaranteed service can be offered to shippers.

Journey of thousand miles begins with one step:

We have seen airline to airline relationships start with basic partnerships such as

interline/codeshare and over time growing to a more serious Joint Venture partnerships, one airline investing in another airline and so on. In case of Emirates-SpiceJet, Qatar-Indigo there are several ways both airlines can take their relationship to next level, so to speak. Qatar-Indigo partnership seems to be limited to select cities only at present- if it works well this could be extended to other cities Indigo operates to, just like Emirates-SpiceJet deal.

Mutual Growth:

As per DGCA report, over 80 per cent of India's international traffic is lifted by foreign airlines. ME3 or the three major carriers from the Middle East- Emirates, Etihad and Qatar together account for lion's share of outbound travelers from India. All three would have loved to expand their India footprint but there are limitations imposed by bilateral rules as to how many seats they are allowed to operate out of India as well as other challenges- many of India's tier II, tier III cities cannot support a wide-body plane that needs longer runway and more specific airport infrastructure. Hence it is a smart move to piggy back on India's leading airlines to pick passengers from these smaller airports and feed them either into their global hubs (Dubai, Doha) or to nearest metro. Giving convenient end to end option will boost their load factors and offer greater choices and convenience to passengers.





Bigger goals need bigger leap of faith

CHALLENGES

Interline partnerships are not exclusive. Emirates already has partnership with Air India. Indigo and Spicejet will have their task cut to ensure big brother and his passengers are not left dissatisfied in any way. All great things that can theoretically be possible need to be materialized on the ground with lots of efforts and coordination.

Premium cabins: Low cost carriers Spicejet and Indigo do not offer business or first class seats. This implies even when a passenger is willing to pay for business or first class seat for entire journey, they won't be getting it. Indigo and spicejet will most certainly offer best of their service to business/first class passengers flying with them for the final leg- such as most spacious seats possible, meals and priority boarding but it is still a missed opportunity.

Spicejet did have SpiceBiz on former Jet Airways 737s that had business class seats. However poor demand is understood to have forced Spicejet to reconfigure those aircrafts to have more economy seats, taking away a potential opportunity to differentiate with its rival and provide business class option to their international guests.

Frequency: Many smaller cities have flight connectivity only few times a week or just once per day. This could be a challenge when an international inbound flight gets delayed and passengers miss their connecting flights. If next flight is only after day, passengers will not be keen to wait a whole day to get home, particularly

when there are flights with other airlines or an overnight train option. Indigo and Spicejet will need some strategy to deal with this situation.

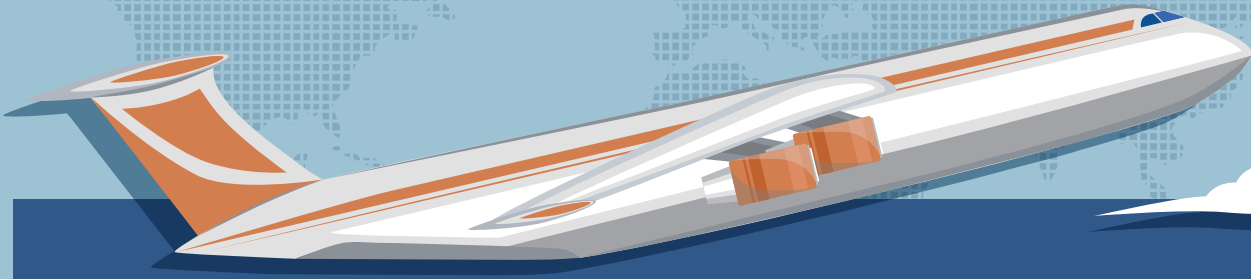
Smaller planes: I know for a fact international long haul passengers hate being put on a smaller turbo prop aeroplane for their final leg after a long journey in a wide body jet. Their cabin bag won't fit in overhead space in an ATR or Q400, space around, toilets everything suddenly feels so small compared to previous flight. Managing their expectations and giving them good quality service will be a challenge to low cost carriers.



Emirates signing a codeshare and interline agreement with Spicejet



AEROPHILE

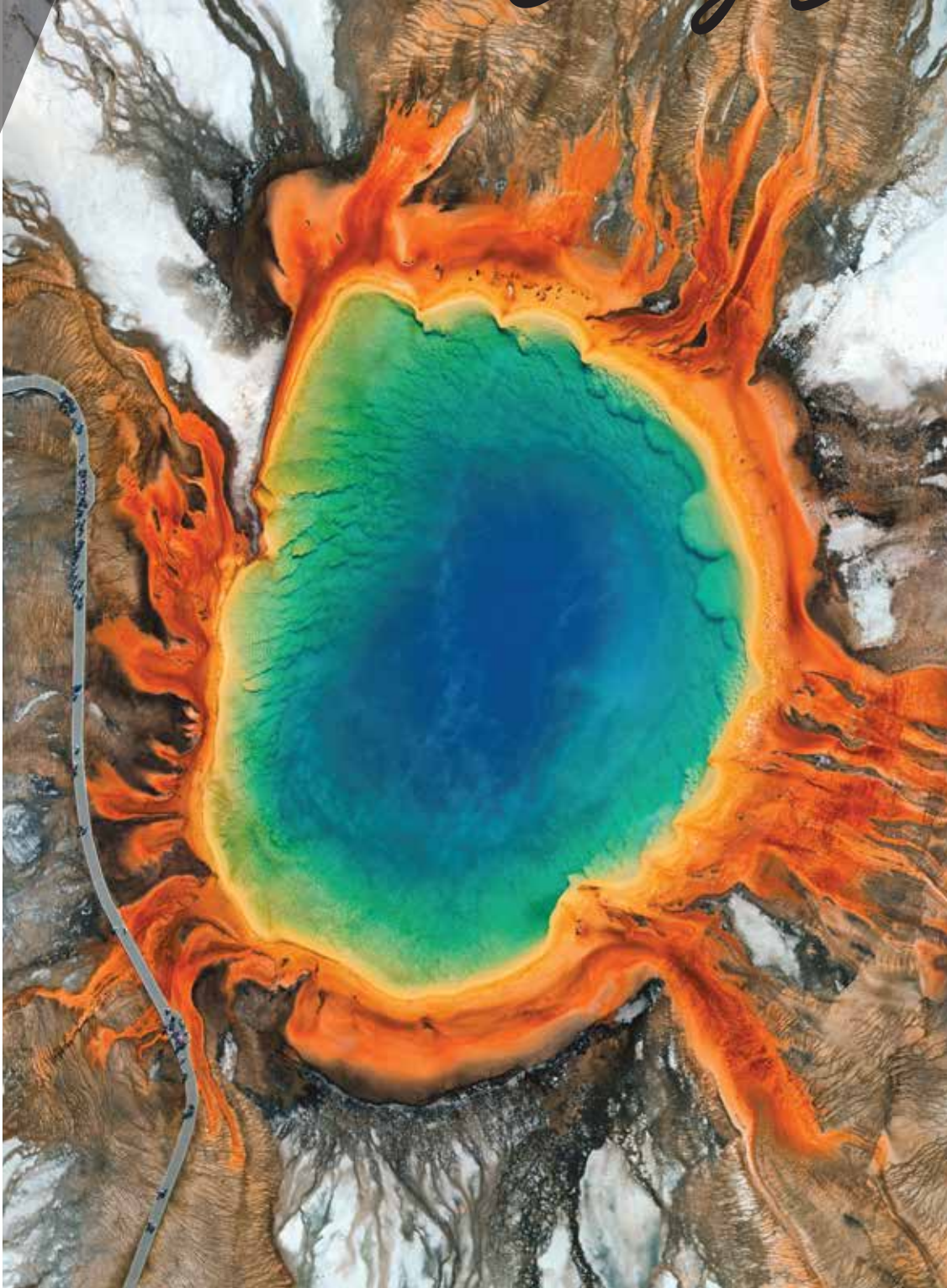


STRENGTH	WEEKNESS	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Collaborating is always better than competing- Combined reach will be phenomenal (Domestic reach of LCCs + international reach of ME3)- Maximum benefits with minimum capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Limited frequency to tier 2, tier 3 cities- No business/first class products	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Potential for stronger, deeper partnerships- Dubai and Doha can be reached on narrow body jets, hence LCCs can deploy more direct flights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Vistara growing strong with 3 cabin classes- Planned Air India stake sale- Non-exclusive partnerships

The pandemic had a somewhat positive impact on cargo business. With diminishing passenger revenue, cargo operations became the lifeline of airlines. Many passenger jets had their seats stripped off so that more cargo can be transported. Local partners who could offer last-mile connectivity were sought after, authorities actively supported cargo flights that carried essential goods. Spicejet-Emirates as well as the Qatar-Indigo codeshare partnership for cargo is still intact and is poised to grow in post covid era. We wish all the success to the airlines.



7 CONTINENTS WITH

Colby Brown

Colby is a photographer, photo educator and author based out of Eastern Pennsylvania. Specialising in landscape, travel and wildlife photography, his body of work spans the four corners of the globe and covers all seven continents. He is also the founder of the humanitarian photo organisation The Giving Lens, which blends the art form of photography with the focus and purpose of giving back to those in need around the world.

- By Team TT





Adelie Penguin - Antarctica

I love photography as it has forced me to slow down and pay attention to details that I often found myself overlooking and taking for granted in the past. It has also been a vehicle that allows me to share many unique and amazing experiences from around the world with other people that might not ever get those same opportunities. When other individuals connect and share in those experiences with me through my photographs, I know I have done something right.

WHAT DOES
photography
MEAN TO YOU?



Hidden Gems of the Outback - Karijini National Park, Western Australia





Wild african cheetah, Africa

WHAT
MAKES
The good picture
STAND OUT
FROM
THE
AVERAGE?



Road to Patagonia - El Chalten, Argentina

To me photography is about the pursuit of capturing a connection to the world around us. Regardless if we are photographing a sunrise rising over a mountain or a Jaguar hunting it's pray or my 8 yr old son smiling at the camera, it is that connection between the subject, the world and the photographer that helps the image stand out from everything else. When you allow for the viewer to join in on that connection and feel as if they themselves were there with you...that is when you have something truly special in your hands.



Rainbows & Eagle Hunters - Ulgii Province, Mongolia



Northern Lights Above the Lofoten Islands - Leknes, Norway



HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR
 A PHOTOGRAPHER TO
connect

WITH HIS SUBJECTS
 TO BRING OUT
 THEIR TRUE SELF?

Anytime you get the chance to know and connect with your subjects it is a good thing. For example, when photographing wildlife, I do my research to learn about my subject's traits, habits and characteristics. This gives me the opportunity to be well prepared to anticipate moments before they happen. As with most photography, the difference between a good and great image can sometimes be milliseconds.



A SYMBIOTIC *relationship*

The correlation between tourism and environment is complex and hard to comprehend but some theories are there that supplement their eternal dependency. Babul Supriyo, Minister of State for Environment, Forest & Climate Change in an exclusive conversation speaks on environmental performance to tourism.

- By Sudipta Saha

Can you throw some light on the intricate relation between environment and tourism?

Tourism in India is important for the country's economy and is on a rapid growth. The World Travel and Tourism Council calculated that tourism generated ₹16.91 lakh crore (US\$240 billion) or 9.2 per cent of India's GDP in 2018 and supported 42.673 million jobs, 8.1 per cent of its total employment. Heritage, religious and cultural uniqueness of the country attract foreign tourists and the domestic tourists. To cater to the need of

tourists, a tourist place attracts investments in transport, hospitality, recreation, health and adventure sectors.

Needless to say, infrastructure development and rampant construction in tourist places impacts the ecology, wildlife and ambient air quality of that place.

What are the initiatives taken to improve environment condition in the State?

Government is committed for the survival and sustenance of India's countless, varied range of natural

resources such as lakes and rivers, biodiversity, forests, animals and wildlife. For this purpose, our Ministry has taken the following steps:-

Eco-sensitive zones: Eco-Sensitive Zones or Ecologically Fragile Areas are areas within 10 kms around protected areas, national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. We have 662 protected areas in the country. We are notifying Eco Sensitive Zones around these protected areas aiming to regulate certain activities around national parks and wildlife sanctuaries so as to minimise the negative impacts

of such activities on the fragile ecosystem encompassing the protected areas.

Guidelines for Eco-Tourism in protected areas have been finalised which would help to effectively manage eco-tourism in the National Parks and Sanctuaries.

Ministry undertook a mass cleanliness-cum-awareness drive in 50 identified Beaches in 10 Coastal States UTs under the 'Swachh - Nirmal Tat Abhiyan' during 11 - 17 November, 2019.

Mass Awareness Programmes: Ministry has undertaken various



steps to create awareness among masses about environment and its impact on our day to day life. Government has evolved Good Deeds focusing on involvement of Citizens like saving energy, conserving water, planting trees, reduce-reuse and recycle, carpool, use public transport, cycling etc.

To prevent and control pollution, the Government has taken the following steps:-

- City Action Plan for Non-Attainment Cities: Central Pollution Control Board has identified 122 non-attainment cities, based on data for the period 2014-2018. Action plans for ground implementation for 102 non-attainment cities have been prepared.
- National Clean Air Programme : GoI launched NCAP as a national level strategy for pan India implementation to achieve national level target of 20 per cent to 30 per cent reduction of PM2.5 and PM10 concentration by 2024. GOI added six new cities of West Bengal besides Kolkata. These new cities are Asansol, Durgapur, Raniganj, Barrackpore, Haldia and Howrah.
- National Air Quality Monitoring Programme:- CPCB monitors ambient air quality at 793 monitoring stations located in 344 cities/towns.

Solid Waste Management:-

- Notifications of six Waste Management Rules covering solid waste, plastic waste, e-Waste, bio-medical waste, hazardous waste and construction and demolition waste.
- Ban on burning of Biomass/ Garbage
- Bioremediation and biomining of landfills
- Ministry amended the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016, keeping into consideration the 'Ease of Doing Business' and boosting 'Make in India' initiative.

Water Pollution:-

- Identification of Polluted River

Locations: 351 polluted river stretches on 323 rivers have been identified in 28 States and 03 UTs. Water Quality Parameter is Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD).

- Monitoring Stations: CPCB is implementing a National Water Quality Monitoring Programme through a network of 4022 monitoring locations.
- National Water Mission (NWM): It falls under the umbrella of NAPCC and aims to conservation of water, minimising wastage and ensuring equitable distribution both across and within States, thereby increasing water use efficiency by 20 per cent.
- Jal Jeevan Mission: Launched in August, 2019 to ensure Har Ghar Jal (piped water supply) to all rural households by 2024.
- Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA): a time bound, mission-mode water conservation campaign to enhance water security. Estimated 37 million people have already participated in the Abhiyan.
- National Mission for Clean Ganga (Namami Gange): A flagship initiative to accomplish the objectives of effective abatement of pollution of National River – Ganga. Implementation of 63 sewerage management projects, 28 river-front development projects and 33 entry level projects for renovation of 182 ghats and 118 crematoria.



ECO-TOURISM HAVE OFTEN ENVIRONMENTAL TENDENCY AND CAN PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN REFINING & PROTECTING ENVIRONMENT, YOUR SAY ON THE SAME?

Ministry has prepared Guidelines for Eco-Tourism in protected areas. In protected areas, certain activities which can impact fragile ecosystem of these areas, have either been prohibited or being allowed in regulated way.

- Prohibited activities: Commercial mining, saw mills, industries causing pollution (air, water, soil, noise etc), establishment of major hydroelectric projects (HEP), commercial use of wood, Tourism activities like hot-air balloons over the National Park, discharge of effluents or any solid waste or production of hazardous substances.
- Regulated activities: Felling of trees, establishment of hotels and resorts, commercial use of natural water, erection of electrical cables, drastic change of agriculture system, eg adoption of heavy technology, pesticides etc, widening of roads.
- Permitted activities: Ongoing agricultural or horticultural practices, rainwater harvesting, organic farming, use of renewable energy sources, and adoption of green technology for all activities.

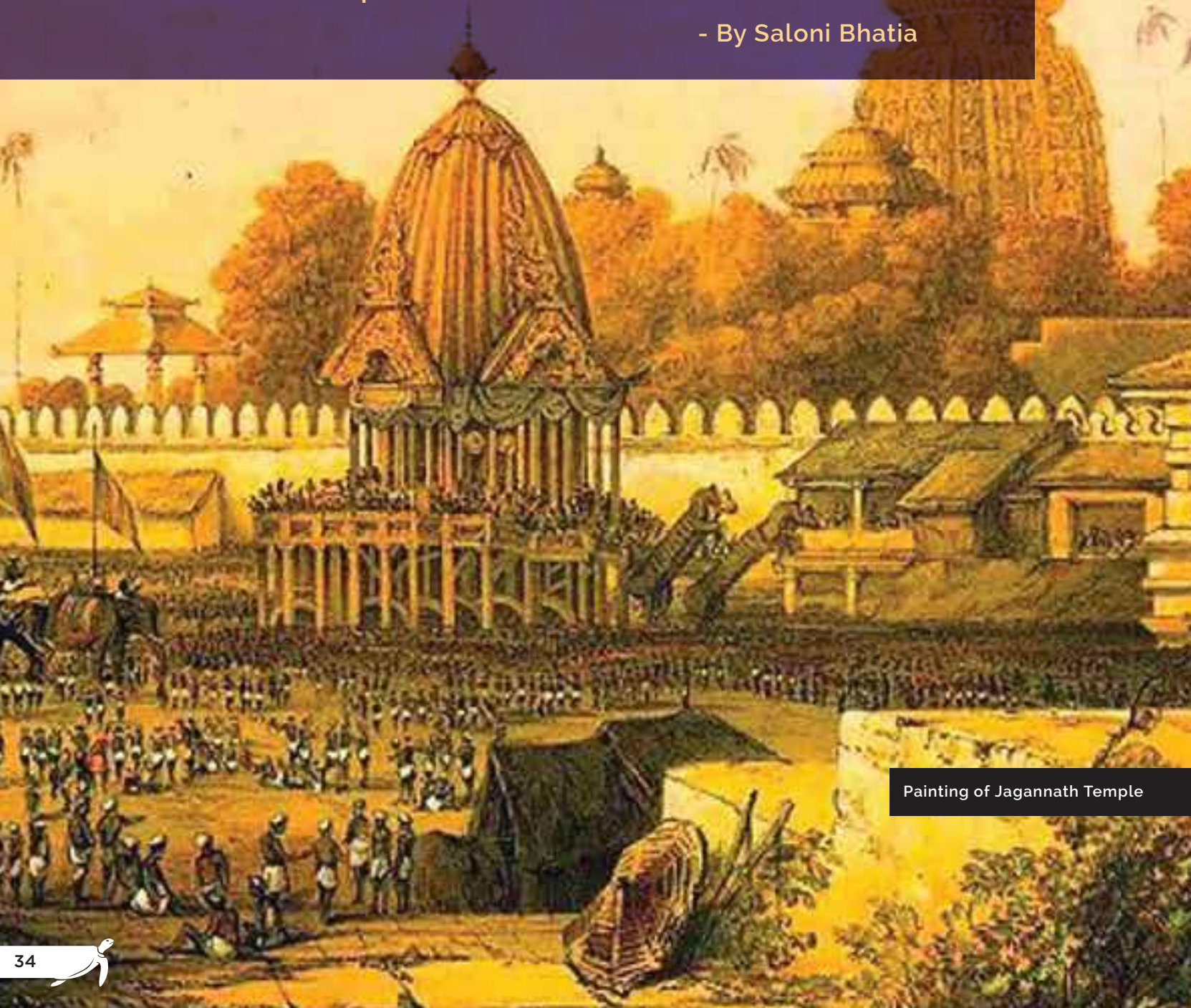


MYTHS VS MYSTERIES OF JAGANNATH PURI

Temple town of Odisha

One of the 'Char Dhams' in the country, an architectural marvel filled with mystical stories, the Jagannath Temple in Puri has not only attracted pilgrims from across the world but seekers of faith. Looking at what makes the temple the most visited destination in Puri.

- By Saloni Bhatia



Painting of Jagannath Temple



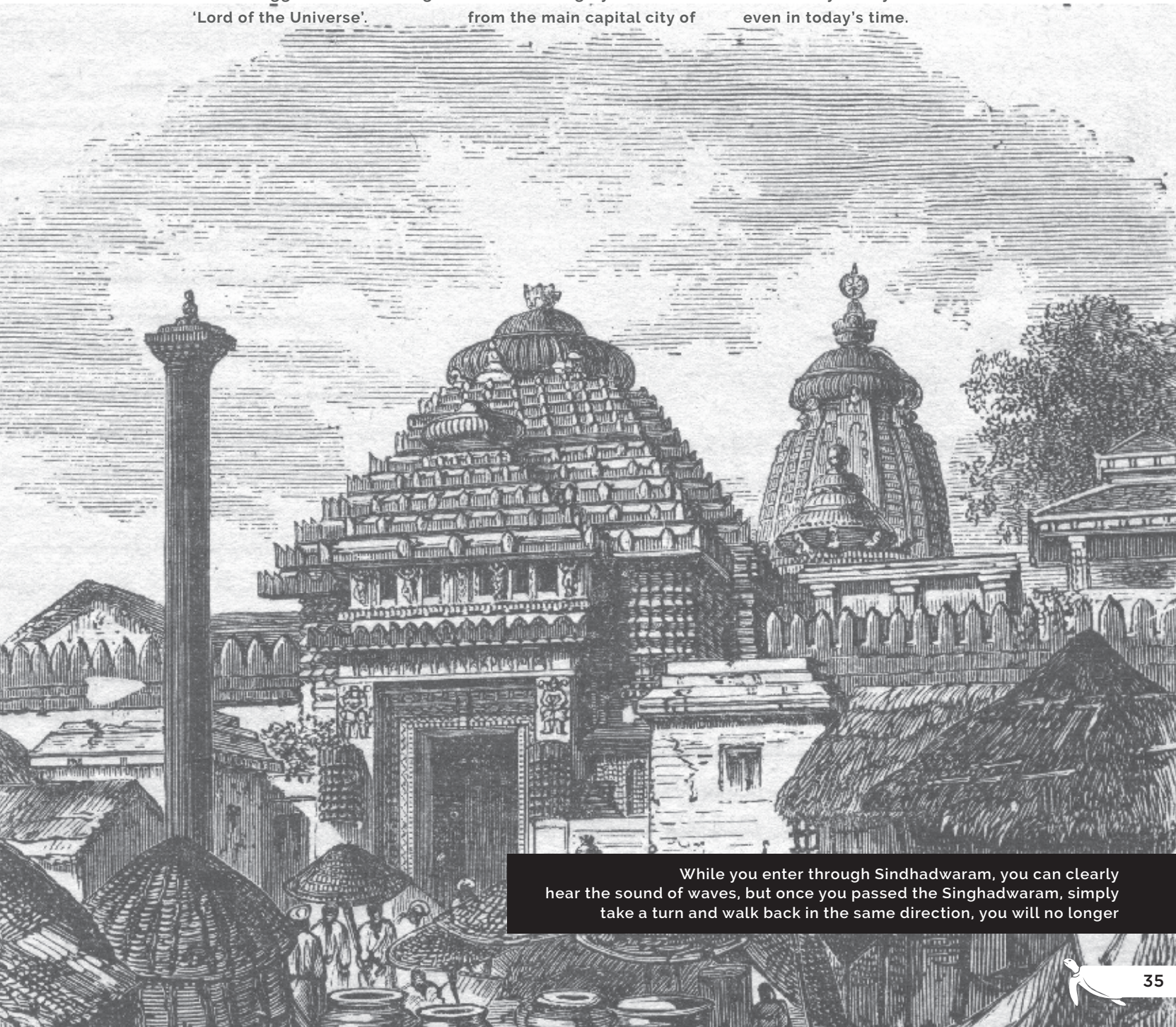
TRAVEL THERAPY

As a country that is dotted with unique spiritual locations, it is never difficult to pick where to travel in India. However, Jagannath Puri in Odisha stands out as a destination known to unlock the door to salvation as per Hindu beliefs, filled with mystical stories besides being a sight of brilliant architecture. Therefore thousands flock to Puri every year, seeking the blessings of Lord Jagannath meaning 'Lord of the Universe'.

According to the Mahabharata, as the Pandavas started their journey to Yamraj, the Sapt Rishis advised them to visit the 'Char Dham' to attain 'moksha' making Jagannath Temple on these four unique locations in India. Since then, Lord Jagannath's idol is hidden from people, only taken out once a year during the The Rath Yatra or The Chariot Festival.

Situated roughly two hours from the main capital city of

Bhubneswar, the temple was built in the 12th century AD, with more additions made later in the 16th century AD. Residing on a raised platform, the entire temple complex is bound by two concentric walls, the Kuruma Bheda and the Meghna Pachiram. The main structure of the temple is constructed in such a way that it does not cast a shadow at any given point in the day, making it an iconic marvel studied by many architects even in today's time.



While you enter through Sindhadwaram, you can clearly hear the sound of waves, but once you passed the Singhadwaram, simply take a turn and walk back in the same direction, you will no longer



The deities are buried from every 14 to 18 years, one above another, replaced by new ones. These deities are made up of neem wood and are believed to be disintegrated on their own.

MYSTICAL *Marvel*

The temple is guarded by four doors with main entrance through Singhadwara located in the Eastern Front of the temple with three other entrances along with four universal directions. The 33 ft monolith structure pillar in front of the Singhadwara- Aruna stambha- was originally located at the Sun Temple, Konark. Another unconventional fact about the temple is that as one enters through Singhadwara, the sound of waves are clearly heard, however the moment one crosses the door, takes a turn and walks back, the waves cannot be heard. Infact, in any other location in the temple, one will not be able to hear the sound of the waves. It is more evident in the evening time and the sound returns once you leave the temple. The local lore states that it was the will of the Subhadra Mayi, the sister of the two Lords wished for serenity within the temple gates. It is truly one of the kind firsthand experiences that fails human logic and only strengthens ones faith in the divine lord.

The Blue wheel perched on top of the temple known as the Nilachakra OR Sudharshan Chakra is made of eight metals or asta dhatu. For a monument build in the early centuries, it is

often wondered how such hard metal was taken at that height through just human force without any machinery. Another architectural mystery that remains unsolved about the Neelchakra is that no matter where one stands in Puri, the chakra will be facing them. Many devotees say that if you see the Nilachakra, it is as good as seeing the Lord himself.

Similarly the flag on the top known as the Patitapabana flows in the opposite direction. The ritual of changing the flag everyday by climbing 165 meters bare feet without any support has been rigorously followed for over 800 years. The feet of changing the flag's rests with a family appointed by the King.

Going beyond these designing intricacies of the temple, one keeps unravelling more stories. Like the Mahaprasad that is offered to the Lord is made on firewood using earthen pots placed one on top of the other as the pot on the top cooks first. While around 2000 to 20,000 devotees visit the temple in a day, the quantity of Mahaprasad remains the same and yet, nothing ever goes waste.



Rath Yatra



CELEBRATION OF *faith*

The idols of holy trinity are carved out of wood rather than stone or metal unlike other major temples of the country in Jagannath Temple. As per the regional beliefs there are many rituals and festivals that celebrate the Lord however, two main festivals namely Devasana Purnima and The Chariot Festival or Rath Yatra attract thousands of devotees to Puri. The holy Lord is brought out from the main temple, seating on a raised platform and bathed with purified water drawn from a well within the premises on the annual bathing ritual known as the Devasana Purnima.

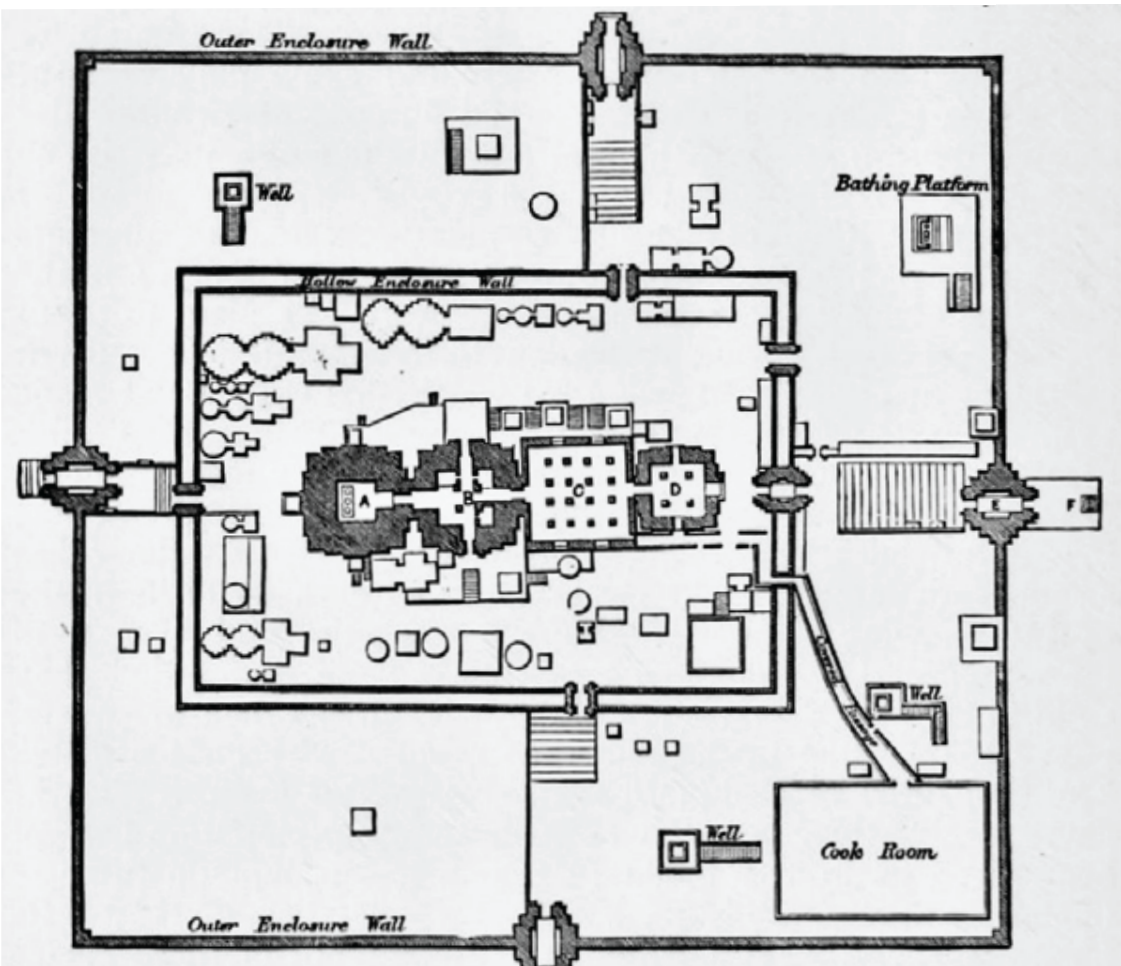
The month of June or July mark the Chariot Festival of Puri, one of the biggest celebrations of Lord Jagannath. The deities of the main temple Sri Mandira, Lord Jagannatha, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra are brought out from their sanctum for the ritual procession on their respective chariots. The grand Chariots or Raths are prepared months in advance, beautifully decorated with flowers of various colors. Thousands of devotees then follow the chariots as they Lords undertake a journey roughly two miles to the North to the Gundicha Temple. The idols stay there for seven days before

they have brought back to the main temple in a grand way. The local folklore educates you that it is similar to the Lords spending some time at their maternal grandmother's home, thus marking a huge celebration.

Thousands gather to catch a glimpse of Lord Jagannath on a chariot as it is considered to be very auspicious. Over the years many saints, poets and scriptures have repeatedly emphasized the sanctity of this festival, glorifying that even a touch of the chariot is a true blessing from the Lord himself. A regional Oriya song explains that on this occasion, the chariot, the wheels and the

grand avenue represent the Lord Jagannath himself.

Puri, known as the temple town of Odisha defies some of the major laws of universe. Like if you take any place on Earth during the daytime, the breeze from sea comes to land and the opposite happens in the evening. However, in the land of Lord of Jagannath, the breeze flows in from land to sea making it a surreal experience to witness and wonder.



Present day structure of Sri Jagannath Temple Puri is very different from the initial design of the temple. The main temple was first constructed by the Chola kings and the Meghanada Pac

While many still dig deeper to understand what makes the temple defy so many rules of scientific logic and still stand tall as a structure of architectural brilliance in today's time, it is the faith of Lord Jagannath's devotees that overshadows it all. Many spiritual travelers of the country have already visited or definitely wish to visit the temple at least once in their lifetime. They come to seek blessings of Lord Jagannath and leave with a spell binding experience of what Puri offers as a destination.

India needs another Goa, high time!

Goa has always been very close to my heart. It's actually not a place but a state of mind. I have been to Goa at least 50 times and it keeps pulling me back. The serene beaches, buzzing night life, hotel rooms for every budget, some real nice villas and apartments spoiling you for accommodation choices, just the right MICE facilities at hotels and more have always made Goa the most sought after destination in India. Right from corporate conferences to product launches, from beach weddings to romantic honeymoons, Goa has always been on top of the list. If a gang of boys or girls plan a fun trip, the destination wins the top spot there too.

But, now is the time, when India needs another Goa. With this traveller's paradise always running over capacity, flight prices surging more than its international competitors, it is actually high time to have another similar destination in India. We have amazing beach destinations such as Gopalpur

Beach, Marina Beach, Havelock Island, Gokarna, Pondicherry, Kovalam and many more amazing beach destinations in India. The major factor keeping these places to compete with Goa is the freedom, the liberty to be yourself. The relaxation in administrative rules and regulations, the night life, ample inventory of rooms, availability of liquor at every 50 metres - have made Goa a heaven for party enthusiasts.

Why can't we have more destinations like Goa? Today, tourism is a big opportunity to bring revenue to the country. This is the time when the Government should create more destinations which can give not only Goa but certain international destinations a run for their money. This will also infuse more foreign exchange revenue to the country.

We need to learn from Thailand tourism model. Today they have different specialised beach destinations at different budget levels. Pattaya, a major

competition to Goa, is more budget friendly than Goa today. They have realised and seized the pulse of the Indian market. Plethora of accommodation options at a cheaper price tag, Indian restaurants at every nook and corner, vibrant night life and the perfect feel of an International destination, at times becomes more enticing than Goa, and why not? In order to bring out the full potential, they've developed HuaHin for entertaining the Indian wedding market. With an array of Indian cuisine options at hotels, to perfect venues for a dream wedding décor, it is pulling a huge chunk of the big fat Indian weddings. Improving flight connectivity for the Indian market to Phuket has attracted upper middle class and opulent Indians to Phuket and Krabi.

Are we losing out? Yes, to a huge extent. But then why can't we have similar tourism models in India? We have no dearth of landscapes,

nature or tourist attractions, all we're lacking is the vision. It is time for creating new destinations, which are more tourist-friendly, ease out on administrative rules and interference, more hotels, better connectivity, fresher experiences and of course a spirited night life, which most of the tourists are looking for. Followed by improved showcasing of these destinations in the global market will definitely place India better on the International tourism map.



Saurabh Tuteja



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Paradise of wilderness and ancient vibrant culture

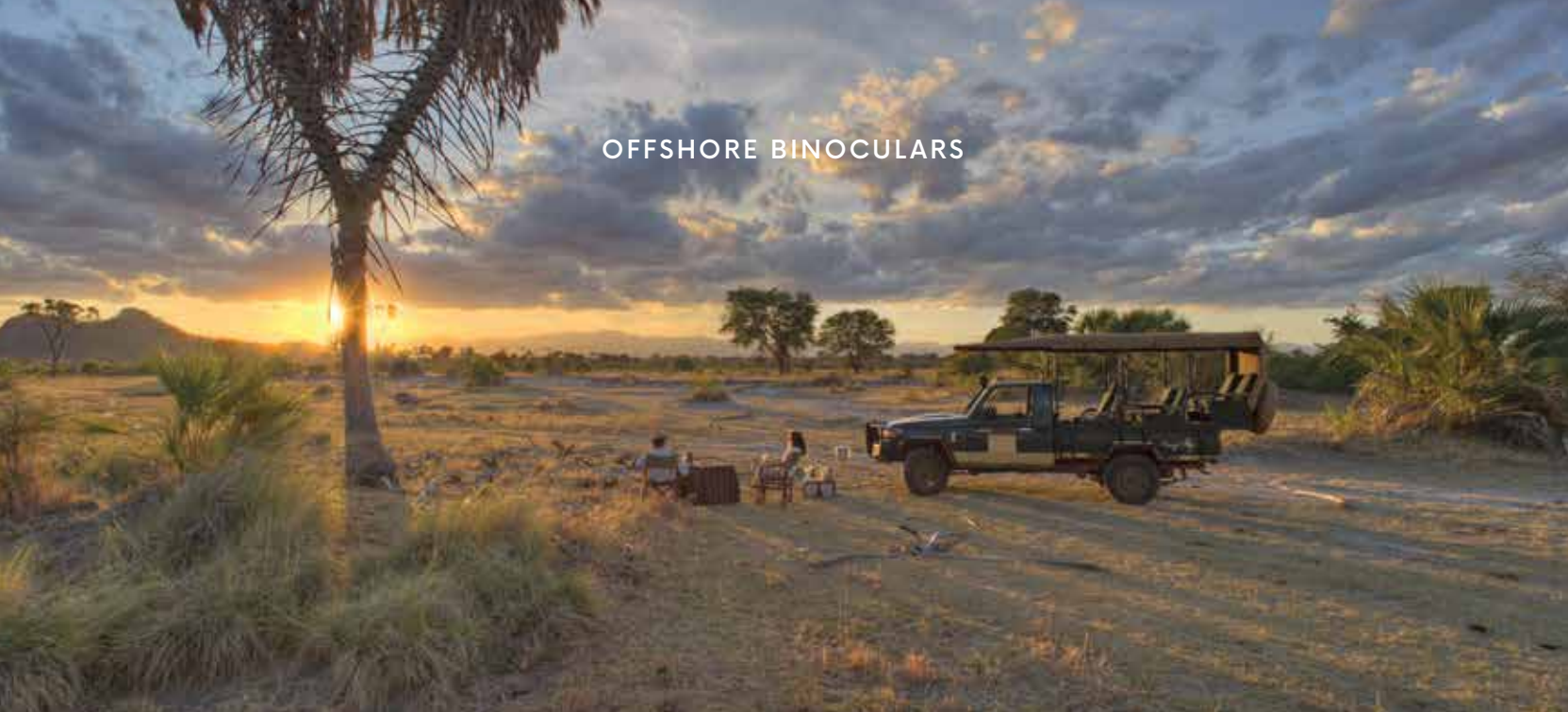


Broad and long pastures, breath-taking coastline, birds and animals running wild and baby elephants lapping around, you know it is Kenya when the sunset sky meets the roaring trees.

- By Bharti Sharma



OFFSHORE BINOCULARS



Lying in the lap of 'Mother of Mankind' continent Africa, Kenya is perfectly coveted with gorgeous coastline on one side and adventurous safaris on the other. Traveller's paradise and heart to vibrant Flora and Fauna, the country is a bustling home to savannah, Lakelands, the dramatic Great Rift Valley and

mountain highlands.

Situated on the Earth's equator, the country lies in eastern Africa, surrounded by South Sudan to the northwest, Somalia to the north-east, Ethiopia to the north, Uganda to the west, and Tanzania to the south. Circled by the coastline of the Indian Ocean it is home to a diverse range of birds

and animals. The capital city Nairobi is the gold leaf with an array of wildlife excursions and culturally enriched tribes.

You can find the land covered with different species of animals and the sky full of birds, witness safaris that are just a jeep ride away. Space where you can come eye to eye with elephants, flock

between tall pink flamingos and rejuvenate yourself with a peaceful evening by the white sands coastline. Stunning mountain ranges and sweeping valleys give way to a culturally extravagant show of communities that have come together to celebrate the wilderness that is Kenya.



The best of nature and wildlife

Landscape

Rising into central highlands, Kenya's terrain is composed of low plains bisected by the Great Rift Valley. The Rift Valley is a massive trench of natural resource ranging across Africa to Middle Eastern countries such as Jordan and Lebanon. Another epitome of the African wild is Maasai Mara National Game Reserve in Narok County. An amalgamation of human and wild, it is here that the Maasai community live side-by-side with the wild animals. Mt. Kenya, Kericho, Chyulu Hills are some of

the other landscapes with seemingly endless lush green hills with an abundance of trees and fresh air.

Wildlife

When we think of Kenya all you can think of are Wildebeest running and Safaris that are scattered in different parts of the country. Animals such as Impala, Reticulated giraffes, African bulls, and Black rhinoceros are some of the easy spotting in the wild. Not to forget, it is home to a wide variety of elephants that you can pet and also move around freely.

Birds

Think of a colourful palette when visiting the land of flocks and herds. You can witness some of the rarest species of birds surrounding the Safari jeeps and sitting afar at trees. Sunbird, storks, mouse bird, African fish eagle, superb starling are some of the many light feathered humans that fill your day with colours.

Culture

Grasslands, mangrove forests and mountain forests are the highlights of Kenyan vegetation. Due to the abundance of pastures and grassland, savannah and

parklands, the weather remains humid and wet which is perfect for a summer excursion.

Plant Life

The country not being a homogenous country ethnicity wise is primarily of 13 ethnic groups with an additional 27 smaller groups. Kenyans belong to 'Bantu' tribes such as the Kikuyu, Luhya and Kamba. There are also the 'Nilotic' tribes such as the Luo, Kalenjin, Maasai and Turkana.



Interesting facts of **Kenya**

- It is the Safari hub of the world.
- Huge exporter and producer of coffee.
- It has a car-free island, named Lamu Island.
- There are two old languages of Kenya, namely Swahili and English.
- It has more to it than just the big 5, home to the largest overland migration, called The Great Migration.



Travel *wild*, experience *high*

Since Kenya is brimming with fields it is recognised for giving a perfect land for golf enthusiasts and is a gorgeous golf excursion paradise. It has the ideal setting for anybody to unwind and intimately embrace nature and its uniqueness. Being set in Africa, Kenya is additionally home to different cultures, so one can appreciate ancestral walks, ancestral food and surprisingly

camp with them to get a holistic feel. Leisure and adventure go hand in hand and when in Kenya, you can experience white sand beaches by the seashore or a spa to unwind those knots. Outdoor safaris, jeep rides, landscape visits offer you a package of things to venture into the country that is a land for tourists from all over the world. Africa Mecca Safari offers a

retreat for all kinds of accommodations, whether you want to sleep under a canvas or reside in a contemporary lodge with world-class amenities or book a hotel room in the brimming cities. The hotels and lodges in the country make sure that your travel experience brings you back and uplifts your vacation spirits. Safari accommodations include Masai Mara, Amboseli,

Chyulu Hills, Tsavo East, Tsavo West, Shimba Hills, Laikipia, Samburu, Shaba, Buffalo Springs, and Northern Frontier etc. Beach accommodation includes Islands of Lamu, Mombasa, Chale and Funzi, Malindi, Watamu, Kilifi amongst others. The city of Nairobi is an insignia of topmost Hotels and luxurious experience.

Get filmy in the jungles

Who wouldn't want to capture the grandeur and wild green pastures on the wide lens? Kenya is a century-old love for production houses to venture and film the forests and beaches with Flora and Fauna. Some of

the Classics that featured the grasslands are The Snows of Kilimanjaro starring Gregory Peck, King Solomon's Mines with Stewart Granger and Mogambo featuring Clark Gable and Ava Gardner.

Sustainability is the mother of all

Since Kenya's independence in 1963, Kenya has been at the front line for maintaining a standard of living and culture that is preserved and cherished all across east Africa and the African mainland. This is the reason for

the acknowledgement that adheres to the requirements and goals of the current age, we should likewise secure the climate and assure the people in the future to address their issue.



Neeti Bhatia
Director, Intrepid
Marketing
& Communications

What is great about Kenya that makes it so worthwhile visiting?

Kenya is a multi-experiential destination with breath taking landscapes, rich culture, mild climate all year round and luxury lodging and services. What makes it even more unique is the immense opportunities for intimate and responsible connections with nature, diversity of wildlife set amidst the savannah, serene sundowners, enriching cultural encounters with friendly people, an exotic coastline, vibrant cities for active and passive pursuits and exhilarating activities both inland and at the coast.

Which is the best time of year to visit and why?

Kenya is an easy sell when it comes to the weather; it is a destination ideal for visiting at any given time of the year! There are two rainy seasons, but showers are often short lived and make for dramatic game drives. Additionally, the migration period between July to October every year is an exciting window for wildlife enthusiasts to witness a stellar natural phenomenon.

Which is your preferred method of reaching from India?

Kenya Airways the national carrier has direct connections from India to Kenya, besides middle east carriers also offer connectivity for the same via several Indian cities.

What is the question agents ask most often about Kenya? Are there any funny questions they have, because Kenya has a lot of stereotypes?

Most of the agents are currently checking with us on COVID related protocols and the destination's readiness to welcome Indian visitors. Most Indians identify Kenya as a destination ideal for wildlife excursions; hence many of them are surprised to know about the long Kenyan coastline and cultural experiences in the cities clubbed with various bespoke luxury and experiential accommodations.

What new initiatives and strategies are in place to boost Kenya amongst the travel trade?

We are looking at various modes of communication - digital as well as physical to expand our reach to the trade as well as direct consumers. Educating the travel trade on the diversity Kenya is on priority; in order to enable the same, we have designed various programmes like region-specific webinars, training sessions and Kenya specialist programs which are charted on our calendar in the next few months.





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PALM SPRINGS WRAPPED MUSIC

THE COACHELLA

festival

Dedicate this year's April to the royalty of all Music festivals at the Coachella Valley and transcend yourself to the land of Music.

- By Tripti Jain

Feet popping with every little bubble of drinks, music that roars your name aloud from the distance, colours that transcend you to the lands of rainbows and ambience that makes you want to spread your wings and float, you know you are in Coachella Valley when your heart beats to the rhythm of the music. Amongst the beautiful palm springs of California lies the Coachella Valley that transforms into a whole new magical world of music and arts every spring.

Yes! We are talking about The Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival or simply Coachella. I can already sense the smile on your face as you go back to your bucket list of to-do things and spot the name of the festival. This Indo music festival is growing to be one of the most loved and happening International festivals of all times. Started in the year 1999 at the splendid desert of Coachella valley at the Empire Polo grounds Indio, California by Pearl Jam. We all need to give a huge shout out to Pearl Jam for their V's tour and the feud over ticket prices that made them discover this magnanimous festival that wakes up and blooms your spring.

STARTING THE SUMMER WITH MUSICAL DAYS

Every year around April our social media is flooded with trending bohemian fashion and raging crowd tripping over the lights, colours and beats of the famous artists showcasing their music. Coachella sports not only music but breath-taking art installations by budding artists; it's a perfect amalgamation of music and art and is a treat for the eyes and ears.

Spread across five main stages - Coachella Stage, Outdoor Theatre, Gobi tent, Mojave tent and Sahara tent; the festival is gushing with eye candies starting from your favourite artists playing for you and celebrity spotting that makes the festival all the more special. But remember not to forget to break a leg on your favourite band's music while spotting Kylie Jenner and the Kardashian sisters. The festival has become the new go-to place of the year for many celebrity faces including names like Leonardo DiCaprio, Justin Bieber, Jared Leto, Cameron Diaz, Venessa Hudgens etc. You can spot them in the crowd with flashy Boho fashion and bobbing heads to the tunes of some of the world's most famous music artists.



LA LA LAND



THE SEASON'S LINE-UP

The line-up for next season is beyond just crazy, where Frank Ocean rage against the Machine and Travis Scott, Calvin Harris top the list. Run the Jewels, Flume, Thom Yorke and Lana Del Rey are some of the other top names amongst many other artists both big and small that will rock the weekends with eclectic indie rock, electronic and hip hop music. For the ones who can't make it this year, YouTube does special live streaming of the festival for both the weekends to which you need to subscribe.

GET YOUR TICKETS!

Due to the pandemic The Coachella Valley Music and Art festival has now been rescheduled. It is has now been shifted from October 2021 to Arpil 2022.

So, now mark your calendar and plan a trip of a lifetime. The festival was attended by almost 5,79,000 people in the year 2014 and since then the numbers have been growing and the Coachella festival has become a bigger deal. How can we Indians be far behind! Check the Coachella official website for more updates on the tickets.

LA LA LAND

The sun goes down, the stars come out

REACHING

the festival

MADE
EASY

Music has always brought people, countries and nations together, the festival witness's people from all parts of the world. If you are planning to travel from India to the Empire Polo grounds, there are few things you need to check the box for - Consider flying to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) rather than Palm Springs International.

In addition to the fact that it is less expensive, Coachella offers transports from LAX to Coachella Festival. LAX is the fourth busiest airports of the world is well accommodated with almost everything you need. The terminal has a wide variety of retail stores and lounges with an amazing dining range to explore.

Safari Tent lodgin at Coachella Valley Music Festival in Indio, California, April 23, 2016.



While visiting the lands of the angels, one needs to plan and explore things apart from the festival. For a smart spender, if you are spending the lot why not go all the way and make the most of it. When visiting Coachella, take a stop in Los Angeles to visit the famous Hollywood sign and get clicked, the rooftop movie in Hollywood is another must on the list.

Don't forget to explore

A visit to the Grammy's Museum and the last minute shopping for outfits and accessories to become Coachella ready!



Grounds of Coachella and its vibrance

lets talk MONEY!

Now let's talk about the elephant in the room, how much will it cost? Starting with the general passes that cost approx. 500 dollars or 35, 000 Indian rupees. Plan the tickets way ahead! The flight tickets prices vary from 25,000 to 30,000 depending upon the place you choose to

commute from. Not to forget the gorgeous city of angels, which is the most feasible option. For the festival lovers, the trip will dial down to somewhere between 1.5 to 2 lakh. A festival with such magnitude deserves a low down on the pocket and experience of a lifetime.

Get your travel bags ready and start shopping for all things trendy cause this year The Coachella Festival is going to bigger than ever, it's the place to be this April 2022. Check it off your bucket list and experience, live, love life at the Coachella.





HEADS IN BEDS

Extravagant Idyll

IN THE HEART OF DELHI

Opulent setting, extravagant art, elegant menus and thoughtful service, set aside time to indulge in a one-of-a-kind hospitality at the iconic ITC Maurya, New Delhi.

- Bharti Sharma

With an unforgettable taste of magnificent life right in the heart of diplomatic quarter, ITC Maurya - a premier luxury hotel is absolutely the haven of luxury that too the finest. To support this, let me tell you that it is recognized as the favoured 'Residence for world leaders and global icons' for over decades. Lavishly sleek, from its vast flower-flecked drive to the property's palatial feel, this is a hotel that likes to make an entrance. The splendid 437 room property epitomizes extravagance and warm

hospitality. The eccentric art installations scattered around the area celebrates beautiful niches.

The hotel is a paradise for art cognoscente as it houses a significant art collection by great Indian artists such as Krishen Khanna, MF Husain, Yusuf Arakkal, A R Ramachandran, Tyeb Mehta and Akbar Padamsee. It is steeped in a strong sense of place, taking inspiration from the grand Mauryan dynasty in the past.

Once you satiate your yearning for luxury at the lobby, which is little

difficult to get over, the room will tinkle you. The elegantly appointed suites are extremely comfortable with king-size bed, smart televisions and every minute item you'll need during your stay. The rooms are tucked meticulously overlooking the sweeping views of the surrounding landscape, gardens or shimmering pool.

If you're looking to relax, grab your robe. The rather exquisite spa Kaya Kalp, offers a number of tranquility-inducing treatments designed to simply unwind in. rejuvenate your mind, body and soul



HEADS IN BEDS

by option for relaxing massages, therapeutic rituals which are crafted using a mix of traditional and modern techniques.

With five dining options to whet your appetite, many guests choose to eat in rather than venture outside. Gourmet aficionados are in for a treat at Bukhara, the most celebrated restaurants in India known for its most sumptuous tandoor-cooked

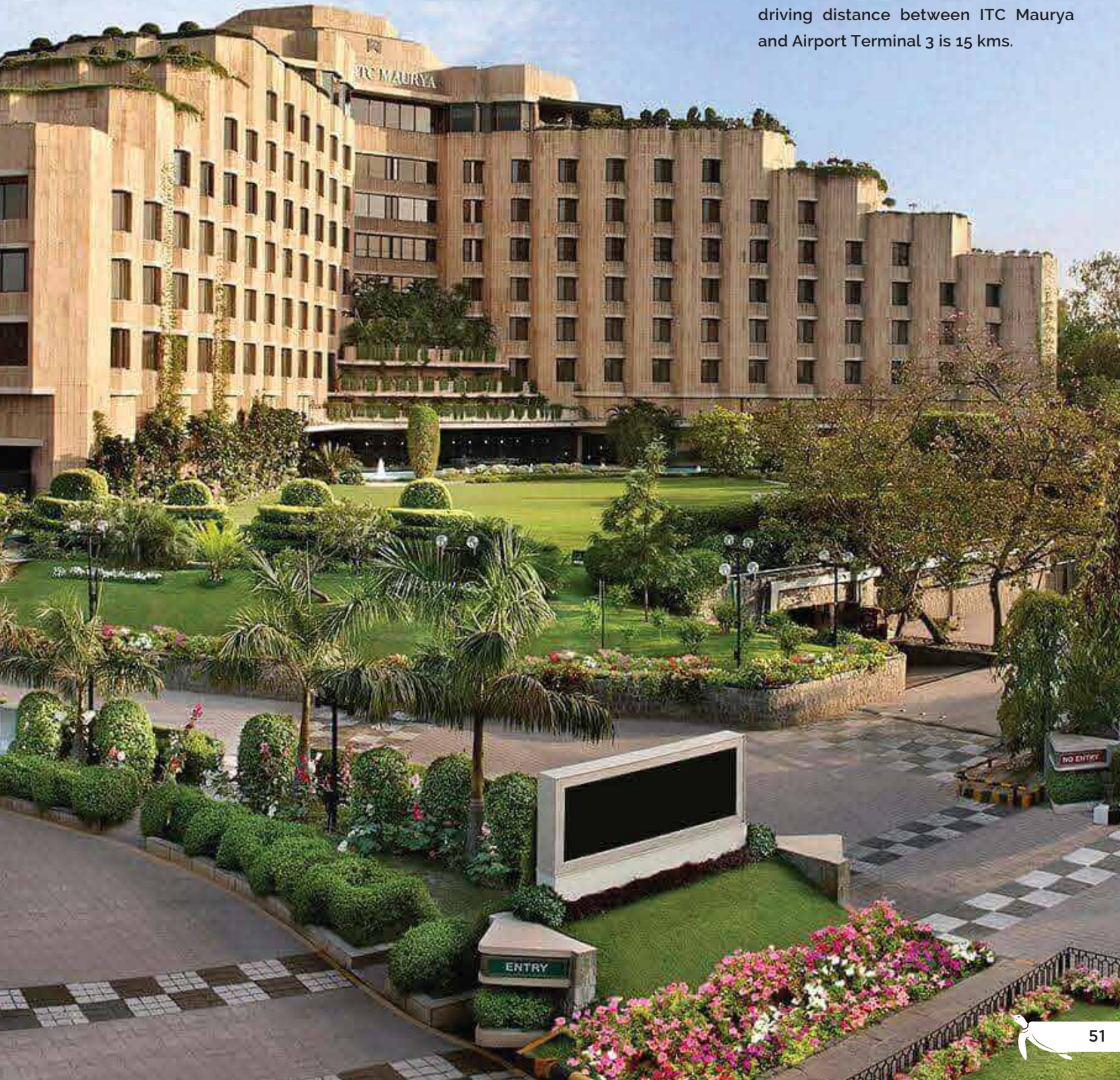
kebabs and dal. Dig into an array of noble delicacies made using the freshest ingredients whipped up by the master chefs at Dum Pukht, The Pavilion and Tian-Asian. If you're after relaxation in suave surroundings, the Golf Bar has your answer. Regardless of which restaurant you choose to dine at, rest assured, the flavours will linger on your palate long after you've bitten into your last morsel.

ITC Maurya promises to make your experience exclusive and intimate with their impeccable service and irreplaceable comfort.

Make it happen

Where: ITC Maurya, Sardar Patel Marg, Diplomatic Enclave New Delhi

Fact File: ITC Maurya offers a range of venues to suit every occasion, from the intimate to the grand. Approximate driving distance between ITC Maurya and Airport Terminal 3 is 15 kms.



HEADS IN BEDS

Can you tell us about the hotel in terms of rooms, f&b outlets and the other elite offerings?

Situated in the heart of Delhi's exclusive Diplomatic enclave, ITC Maurya is a tribute to the great Mauryan Dynasty which gave Indian history the Golden Age of art and architecture. ITC Maurya is recognized for its luxurious rooms and suites, signature cuisines, impeccable banqueting services and leisure facilities.

One of Delhi's most popular dining destinations, the hotel houses the internationally acclaimed Bukhara for Indian North-West frontier cuisine, which has been consistently voted amongst the Top 50 Restaurant in the World and the Top 20 in Asia, and the Dum Pukht for royal Awadhi cuisine, recognized as one of the World's Best Classic Restaurants by Conde Nast Traveler Gold Standard.

How well is the hotel equipped in terms of business meetings and MICE deliverables?

With a reputation built on excellence, ITC Maurya offers a wealth of experience in setting up meetings and events for both local and international executives coupled with a dedicated team of professionals who work with the guests at every step of the way. With valuable high-tech facilities and state-of-the-art amenities along with air-conditioned facilities and high speed wi-fi that is available throughout the Hotel - ITC Maurya makes sure that the purpose of every business traveller is met with utmost care.

What are the factors that shape up your brand's appeal to the ever evolving and changing customer needs?

Sustainable business practices that respect the environment and society have always been the DNA of ITC Hotels. Since pioneering the concept of 'Responsible Luxury' in 2009, ITC Hotels has commissioned numerous planet positive initiatives, which range from the use of renewable energy which today powers more than 57 per cent of ITC Hotels electrical requirement to an over 50 per cent reduction in water consumption over the last five years to name a few and amongst the first hospitality chains to discontinue use of 'Single-Use Plastic' across its operations. We are also delighted to inform you that ITC Maurya is a Green Hotel endorsing Responsible Luxury. It is certified as the world's first largest LEED EB* Platinum Rated Hotel by the US Green Building



Benita Sharma, Area Manager,
Luxury Collections Hotels (North) & General Manager,
ITC Maurya

Council. ITC Hotels has also been focused on initiatives addressing health and wellbeing and over the years introduced many initiatives such as heightened focus on Indoor Air Quality, installation of Radiation harmonizers that mitigate the harmful effects of radiation at all ITC Hotels and the Sleep Program which addresses multiple parameters aimed at enhancing the quality of sleep from interventions on controlling decibel levels in the room to lighting, fragrance and aromas to introduction of a sleep menu designed to promote the biological aspect of sleep quality using select food ingredients from across the world. With changing customer preferences, ITC Hotels has designed takeaway menu - Flavours, Gourmet Couch, Biryani and Pulao collection etc for customers. All these safety practices under 'WeAssure' programme have been put in place to ensure memorable dining experience for the guests at the comfort of their home.

How according to you is the demand for upscale and uber luxury brands in India? How different is ITC Maurya from others?

The first step towards driving footfalls is to provide an assurance on the guests well-being. The response to our safe protocol has been very encouraging with a natural pull for our signature restaurants Bukhara, Dum Pukht, Ottimo at West View - to mention a few. Curating and customising each experience with moments of trust will drive footfalls. Service designs have been created and keep evolving to address the demand for staycations, workcations, wellness travel; virtual banquets/wedding feasts, low touch service to keep both the guest and our internal customer safe.

Any interesting development?

Our guest will continue to be drawn towards hotels that take care of their wellbeing. We are fortunate to have a head-start as the Responsible Luxury initiative which has been our guiding premise for over a decade. As part of this ethos, we welcome guests with the 'WeAssure' protocol. Through this, guests will be reassured by accreditation from the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH). ITC Hotels has also partnered with DNV GL Business Assurance, a leading certification body, for stringent clinical levels of hygiene and safety.




The Oberoi
MARRAKECH

The Oberoi, Marrakech. Nestled within twenty eight acres of citrus orchards and centuries old olive groves, The Oberoi, Marrakech has beautifully landscaped gardens and authentic Andalusian architecture inspired by traditional Moroccan palaces. Enjoy luxurious accommodation, personalised wellness experiences and authentic Moroccan and international cuisines. Picturesque views of the snow capped Atlas Mountains are complemented by our warm, sincere hospitality. *Heart. Felt.*



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Tourism Authority of Thailand New Delhi organises Products Presentation in Kolkata

Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), New Delhi Office conducted a product presentation and situation update followed by networking lunch at The Oberoi Grand, Kolkata on March 5, 2021. Around 45 guests including travel agents, wedding planners, travel media and mainstream local media in Kolkata were present. Limited numbers of guests were invited keeping COVID situation and social distancing measures in mind.

The session started with an opening address by Ms. Sweeya Santipitaks, Consul General, Royal Thai

Consulate-General, Kolkata who welcomed the guests and thanked the travel trade for their continuous support to Amazing Thailand. This was followed by an update on current situation in Thailand by Director TAT New Delhi, Mr Vachirachai Sirisumpan who also gave information on COVID protocols and measures taken by the tourism authorities in Thailand to ensure health and safety. Ms Pinki Arora, Marketing Representative (North and East India) made a presentation on the new destinations and products information. The session

continued with Thailand visa update by Mr Kasemsan Thongsiri, Deputy Consul-General, Royal Thai Consulate- General, Kolkata. The programme ended with a Q&A session.

The Networking session was a great way to re-connect with the travel agents, update them on latest travel guidelines including visa processes and keep Thailand as 'top of the mind destination'. It also helped to get an understanding of the trend of domestic and international tourism from India at present especially from Kolkata.



ADTOI 10th Annual Convention-Cum Exhibition 2021 held at Kevadia

To build public confidence to travel for the revival of domestic tourism in the country ADTOI with the support of Gujarat Tourism took the initiative to organise two day ADTOI 10th Annual Convention-cum-Exhibition from February 12-14, 2021 at Statue of Unity, Kevadia, Gujarat with the theme- 'Domestic Tourism – Hope for the revival'. Delegates from across the country arrived as per the flight schedule in Vadodara and Ahmedabad and arrangements to transfer from Airports/ Railway station were made for them to reach the Convention venue at Kevadia. On arrival they proceeded to Statue of Unity followed by registration and check in at the Tent City.

Close to 400 delegates comprising of senior government officials including a delegation from Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India along with PIB delegation, travel media across PAN India, invitees, ADTOI members from across the country, stakeholders and team of press participated in the convention. The convention was inaugurated in the evening of February 12 2021 at the Convention Hall, Tent City Kevadia with the lighting of the inaugural lamp in the august presence of Chief Guest Shri Arvind Singh, Secretary (Tourism), Smt Rupinder Brar, Addl Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, Smt Mamta Verma, Principal Secretary (Tourism & Civil aviation) Govt.

of Gujarat, Mr. Jenu Devan, Commissioner Tourism & MD, TCGL and other officials of TCGL participated in the Convention and exhibition.





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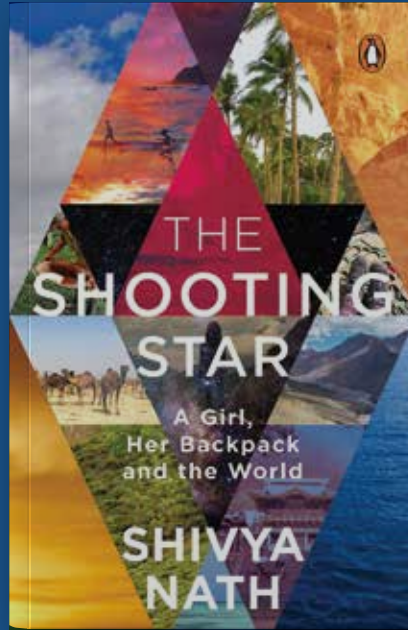
THE SHOOTING STAR

BY SHIVYA NATH;

A travel book with rare insight and depth

This travel book by Shivya Nath, *The Shooting Star* is a song of freedom, adventure, and voyages; both inner and outer.

- Mariellen Ward



"As his anklet shone in the moonlight, it suddenly struck me that this man, just a humble fisherman with a worn-out sweater and no slippers, was a dreamer and explorer at heart. Perhaps the same heart that had made me board the flight, alone, to a place like this. And yet, we were different, not because he lived in 'paradise' and I came seeking for it. But because he realised that paradise is just the place where your heart belongs."

The *Shooting Star* travel book by Shivya Nath captures everything I love about her writing. The sensitively observed scene, the way she weaves her own personal quest and the insight she draws from the experience. Very few travel writers get all of these things right.

Writing that inspires with passion and compassion

I knew the broad strokes of her life story, but not the details until I read the book. In it, Shivya generously shares her personal journey, as well as many of the immersive travel journeys she has taken to places like Ecuador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Costa Rica,

Dominican Republic, Mauritius, Ethiopia, Georgia, and her motherland, India.

Whether she is writing about meeting a fisherman on a beach in Mauritius, or diving into a secret waterfall with a guide in The Dominican Republic, or going through the rigours of the Ayahuasca ceremony in the Amazonian rainforest, or sharing her own story of rebellion in the pursuit of freedom and adventure, Shivya is always telling a bigger story. Her writing is beyond the travel writing norms because it is informed both by compassion for the people she meets and passion for actualising her dreams and her potential.

The hero's quest

Shivya's writing is more than just informative, it is inspiring. I've learnt a lot about the life of young Buddhist nuns in the Himalayas and the indigenous Quechua people of the Ecuadorian Andes through her writing. The underlying subtext, the message, is one of wonder, curiosity, and deep respect for the diverse people of the world. Her travel experiences and her writings are filled with a deeply felt humanism, driven by her

own 'hero's quest', and her thirst for adventure, knowledge and self-awareness.

As a traveller and a writer, Shivya has made a name for herself and built a strong following of people who admire her strength, courage, and perseverance. She defied a lot of odds, and the concerns of her protective family to strike out at the young age of 23, to follow her dream of world travel and creative storytelling. She shares her story not with the intention to fulfill an ego-based desire for fame or fortune, but to inspire others – especially other young Indian women who are similarly burdened by cultural traditions and societal expectations. To them, she is a hero, a pioneer, a role model, and indeed, a shooting star.

My life is my message

There's a famous saying, "My life is my message." The same could be said of Shivya. Her life is a message. The way she tirelessly pursued her travel and storytelling career is a message in itself. It's a message of brotherhood/sisterhood and hope, a vision of a smaller world where people care for each

other and mother earth, and where everyone – young Indian women included – are free to discover and manifest their potential.

For me, Shivya is a role model because of the way she has maintained her vision and her values. In a world that has become increasingly superficial, she has continued to seek out the authentic. In a world that is obsessed with consumption, she has become a vegan who owns few possessions. In a world of mass tourism, she is dedicated to finding the off-beat and the unexplored. In the world of pithy listicles, she writes lyrically of meaningful experiences.

Shivya has focus, integrity, talent, and awareness much beyond her years. Her writing is lyrical, insightful and alive with carefully observed details. She draws the reader deeply into the places and the scenes she describes, both the exterior world of landscape and culture, and the interior world of the people she meets and her own journey. She's not just a brave traveller, but a brave writer too, as she chronicles inner and outer journeys.

I hope this book is just the first of many and I'm sure this book is just the first of many.

About the reviewer:

Mariellen Ward is a travel writer and digital storyteller. She is the voice behind Breathedreamgo.com, an award-winning travel blog focusing on India and the spiritual journey behind travel. It was launched in 2009 and focuses on transformative travel, travel in India, travel in Canada, responsible travel, and solo female travel.





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