

LUXURY AND LIFESTYLE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

travel

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Editor's Letter

35th IATO Annual Conclave to showcase West Bengal as the gateway to the North-Eastern Indian states and South Asian circuit

The Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) convention is returning to Kolkata, the City of Joy, after 17 years with the 35th annual convention of the Association. With the epitome of opulence, *ITC Royal Bengal Kolkata* as the venue where business sessions and other functions will be held, the inaugural function is being organised at the state-of-the-art *Biswa Bangla Convention Centre*.

'Is Tourism Thriving? Challenges and Opportunities' is the convention theme and Durga Puja as dominant theme of the conference would be organised on the first day.

The Eastern Indian state, West Bengal, plans to launch a campaign to increase awareness of the many attractions and facilities for tourists coming to different parts of the state, which is rich in culture and heritage.

About 1,200 delegates are expected to attend the convention. **Attree Bhattacharya, Principal Secretary of Tourism for the State of West Bengal** has invited Travel agents and Tour operators to come to the event and visit places other than Kolkata and nearby tourism places like Darjeeling.

According to **IATO President, Pronab Sarkar**, the state of West Bengal and Kolkata has changed a lot for the better in recent years. Among the thrust areas for tourism promotion, the conference will discuss marketing the culture and heritage, cruises, and tea tourism. The Convention would strongly address Kolkata as an ideal

MICE destination. Zeroing on the challenges and opportunities that shall boost the growth of tourism, looking at key niche areas of cruise tourism, digital marketing, connectivity, synergy among Eastern states for tourism promotion and marketing, charting out unexplored destinations, listening to the new generation of tourism professionals, the tricky issues of taxation, presentation by state governments and above all, listening the ideas of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India will form the core areas of discussions during the event, IATO present said.

In addition, the main objective for this year's IATO Annual Conclave is to showcase the state of West Bengal as a global product. As the primary challenge has always been the fact that most of the stakeholders do not have a clear idea about the destination and its products. This convention would discuss in favour of West Bengal. Secondly, the conventions prime motive would be to highlight the possibility that West Bengal has as the gateway to the North-Eastern Indian states as well as South Asian circuit like Bhutan and Bangladesh. This year's event's theme is 'Durga Puja: Mega Carnival' as this festival is about to be declared as the World Heritage Festival by UNESCO. The conclave will focus on niche tourism products in a global perspective and the lesser-explored destinations around the state of West Bengal.

We are on



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Dance for nine nights to the rhythm of
the Dholak and the Nagara. Dance to beat of the Dandiya
dance to the claps of the Garba, dance with abandon and joy,
dance to celebrate the defeat of the demon
Mahishasura at the hands of **the Goddess Durga.**



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09 INDIA : Gujarat's Monsoon Festival: Soak up local culture at Saputara Monsoon Festival

The Monsoon Festival of Saputara is held in August-September. The festival aims to promote the beauty of the hills and tribal culture of the Dang. For one month, cultural programs are organized including the famous acrobatic dances of tribal communities Dang. The festival is organised by Gujarat Tourism to encourage tourism, promote Saputara as a hill resort destination and create awareness about its many natural and cultural attractions soon after the arrival of monsoon.



13 AIRLINES : Vistara starts daily flights to Bangkok from Delhi

Indian carrier Vistara launched its daily service to Bangkok from Delhi recently. The airline will now fly daily between Delhi and Bangkok, which is the carrier's third international destination. The other two international destinations are Singapore and Dubai.

18 INTERNATIONAL : Visit Malaysia campaign targets 30 million tourists by 2020

With the Visit Malaysia 2020 campaign in the works, Malaysia's Ministry for Tourism and Culture is targeting arrival figures 30-million and tourist receipts of RM100 billion by 2020.



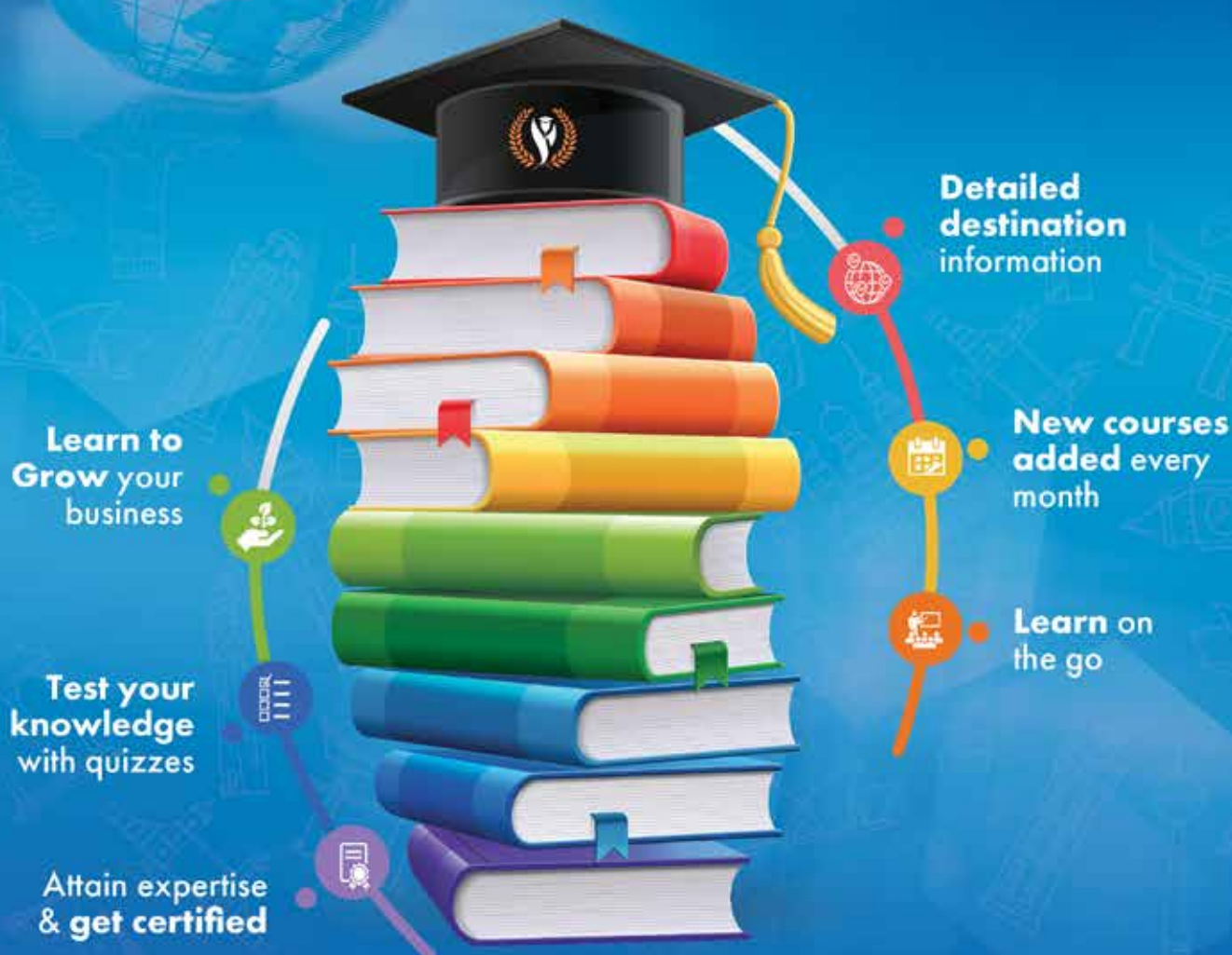
24 INTERNATIONAL : India currently stands third in Asia among the top source markets for Israel - Conducts Road Shows in Delhi and Mumbai

Israel offers a plethora of things to do and see to cater to the discerning traveller. From the historical city of Jerusalem to the beach city of Tel Aviv; from the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth, to the marvellous underwater marine life of Red Sea in Eilat, Israel is truly a dynamic destination.

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26 HOSPITALITY AND FOOD : The Oberoi Group announces the highly anticipated opening of The Oberoi, Marrakech

The Oberoi, Marrakech is located in twenty-eight acres of beautifully landscaped gardens, fragrant citrus orchards and olive groves with spectacular views of the snow – capped Atlas Mountains. The resort is located twenty five minutes from the Djema el-Fna square and the ancient walled city.

34 HOSPITALITY AND FOOD / INDIA : The spellbinding MAYFAIR Lake Resort, Raipur - Central India's New Luxury Destination is now Open!

The spellbinding MAYFAIR Lake Resort, Raipur, is located amid lush greenery and overlooks the gorgeous Jhangh Lake with sweeping panoramic views all around the property. The luxury resort offers lavish luxury accommodation, great banqueting and event space, world class facilities and some of the best restaurants in Raipur.



38 INDIA : Enchanting Kerala : A Lip-smacking Culinary Trip in a Houseboat

Houseboats are always the pride of God's Own Country. Besides hosting a laid back cruise through the tranquil waters, facilitating close-up views of the deft manoeuvres of our fishermen and the swaying coconut groves, these houseboats offer you mouth-watering, indigenous delicacies as well.



44 INDIA : Graceful Khajuraho - A celebration of love and life

Located in the heart of India with the backdrop of Vindhya mountain range, Khajuraho is a heritage city that impresses you with its unique craftsmanship of temples adorned with the Indo-Aryan architecture and erotic rock carvings.

50 INDIA : Here's why you should spend Navratri in Gujarat

Drenched in colours and steeped in tradition, there's no place like Gujarat to immerse yourself in the festive spirit of Navratri.

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your honeymoon, where you will have the most beautiful moments of your life...

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you take your first step into your most beautiful journey, you are brought to the hotel with a private transfer service. You are welcomed with Champagne and chocolate as you enter the hotel, and with wine, fruit, and appetizers in your room. As a special treat on to your first day, an in-room breakfast and or breakfast in a private area in the restaurant are just the beginning. Accommodation in a seafront Gazebo House, a massage in your room or the spa centre await you, all there to help you make beautiful memories during your honeymoon and your stay at the Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa.

Whether you choose to stay in the Honeymoon Duplex Suite or in one of the hotel's comfortable rooms ... all honeymoon couples married within two weeks - without any exceptions - are invited to enjoy dinner in an à la carte

restaurant, accommodation in a Gazebo House for one day, a fruit basket in the room, and other surprises in one day - as you select during your stay, and as you wish.

HILTON DALAMAN SARIGERME RESORT & SPA: THE NEW HONEYMOON DESTINATION FOR INDIAN TOURISTS

In recent months, guests from India have joined us at the Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa, embracing the unique geography of the region. The Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa was honoured to host a traditional, fabulous Indian wedding, while the happy couple enjoy their honeymoon privileges at the Hilton Dalaman Sarigerme Resort & Spa.



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Japan Airlines

Introduces 2019 Autumn Menus on International Flights



Passengers travelling with Japan Airlines on international flights will get to enjoy new meals starting September 1.

Japan Airlines (JAL) recently announced new autumn menus on its international flights from September 1, 2019. Highlights include a classic fricassee dish in Premium Economy and Economy Class, the return of AIR Yoshinoya Authentic Beef Bowl and the renewal of JAL's original rice crackers.

Welcoming New RED U-35 Chefs to JAL KITCHEN GALLERY - The carrier says it has welcomed five chefs from a Japanese culinary competition called Red U-35 to create meals for JAL's premium economy and economy class passengers. The Japanese flag carrier is introducing a number of new

dishes, including the classic fricassee dish and spicy stew dish.

The poussin and mushroom fricassee and the spicy stew dish will be available in premium economy and economy class cabins for three months on the following flights:

From Tokyo Narita to Chicago, Dallas Fort Worth, Boston, New York, Los Angeles, Seattle, San Diego, Vancouver, Frankfurt, Helsinki, Moscow, Sydney, Melbourne, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Delhi, Jakarta, Manila, Bangkok, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh.

From Tokyo Haneda to New York, San Francisco, London, Paris, Singapore (JL037), Manila, Bangkok (JL031)

From Nagoya Chubu to Bangkok

From Osaka Kansai to Los Angeles

JAL is also bringing back its Air Yoshinoya authentic beef bowl from September 1 to November 30 this year

for premium economy and economy class passengers

It will be served as a second meal on the following flights:

From Tokyo Narita to Chicago, Dallas Fort Worth, Boston, New York, Los Angeles, Seattle, San Diego, Vancouver, Frankfurt, Helsinki, Melbourne

From Tokyo Haneda to New York, San Francisco, London (JL043), Paris

From Osaka Kansai to Los Angeles

The Japanese flag carrier will also introduce a revamped version of its rice crackers starting from September 1. This is a "mixture of rice crackers, almonds, and Japanese bean confectioneries", says JAL. It will be available on international flights (excluding short haul flights to/from Korea) and its domestic first class service. The airline says it will gradually introduce the rice crackers to its Tokyo-New York routes (JL004/JL006).

A new menu will be available on flights from London and Frankfurt starting September 1. This "The Anytime You Wish menu" for first and business class passengers departing from London and Frankfurt will feature a "Grilled Seabream over Steamed Rice in Japanese Dashi Broth" and it will also include a "MUKU'S Roasted Pork-DON".



Vistara starts daily flights to Bangkok from Delhi



Vistara Airliens has launched its daily service to Bangkok from Delhi.

The airline will now fly daily between Delhi and Bangkok, which is the carrier's third international destination. The other two international destinations are Singapore and Dubai.

"We're delighted to enter another new geography with service to Bangkok, one of [the] world's most-visited cities with immense potential to further grow tourism as well as business. With Vistara, we introduce India's best airline to Bangkok that's committed to making a mark in global aviation with its world-class product and impeccable service," said **Vistara's CEO Leslie Thng**.

An A320neo was used on the inaugural flight and will be deployed on all flights on this route. The aircraft features a three class cabin configuration that includes premium economy, business class and economy class. Vistara says that it's the only airline to offer the choice of premium economy class for travel between India and Thailand.

The aircraft has a total of eight seats in Business class, 24 in premium economy and 132 in economy class. The width, pitch, and recline of the business class seats are 22.6 inches, 41 inches and seven inches respectively.

Vistara celebrated the occasion by giving each passenger a gift bag of memorabilia and chocolates during the flight. The Tourism Authority of Thailand extended a traditional Thai welcome to all Vistara customers as well, according to the airline.

"Customers from Bangkok can also take convenient onward connections on Vistara to several destinations within India including Amritsar, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai," the airline said.

The airline now connects 27 destinations with a fleet of 23 Airbus

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Bangkok	15:15	Delhi	17:55

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A320 and eight Boeing 737-800NG aircraft.

Earlier this month, Vistara launched its first international flight services to Singapore from Delhi and Mumbai. The airline also signed an agreement with Singapore Airlines (SIA) and its regional arm, Silkair to expand codesharing to international routes.

Vistara is a joint venture between Singapore Airlines (SIA) and Indian company Tata Sons.

Here is a schedule of the Delhi-Bangkok route:

Flight No.	Departure	Arrival	Time of Departure	Time of Arrival	Frequency
UK 121	Delhi	Bangkok	0825	1415	Daily
UK 122	Bangkok	Delhi	1515	1755	Daily

New satellite terminals



to propel Shanghai's ascent



*Shanghai's two airports
already handle more
passengers than Hong
Kong and Singapore*

*World's largest single-
building satellite
concourse ready to open
at Pudong Airport*

Pudong International Airport's new satellite terminal and other expansion projects have passed final inspections by China's civil aviation regulator and industrial authorities, and are now ready to be put into operation.

The third-phase expansion of the airport, which began in December 2015, includes the world's largest satellite terminal building, known as S1 and S2, as well as an underground subway system to connect them with terminals 1 and 2.

1. The sprawling H-shaped satellite terminal covers 620,000 square meters at Pudong airport.
2. The departure level for international flights at the S1 satellite terminal building at Pudong
3. A station on the underground subway system that connects S1 and S2 with T1 and T2 at the Pudong airport
4. The "harbor tarmac" for aircraft in the north of the new satellite terminal building at Pudong
5. The central hall at Pudong's S2 terminal



Other newly built facilities to ensure faster transfers and better punctuality include an additional luggage transport system, aprons, taxiways, navigation lighting, a long-term garage, an energy center and other infrastructure.

The core project is a sprawling H-shaped terminal covering 620,000 square meters and 950,000 square meters of new "harbor tarmac," Shanghai Airport Authority said.

The satellite terminal, scheduled to open next month, has 83 boarding bridges and 125 aprons. It features huge glass curtain walls and a large inner space without a single supporting pillar.

When it is open, the Pudong airport will be able to handle 80 million passengers annually, 6 million more than last year.

Some new facilities are already in use. They include 11 remote boarding sites, four taxiway bridges and a new tarmac operation center for T1 and T2.

This has largely relieved the shortage of aircraft stands and capacity at the airport, the airport authority said.

After the terminal is fully operational, S1 and T1 will mainly serve China Eastern, Shanghai Airlines and other SkyTeam Alliance airlines. It can handle 36.8 million passengers a year.

S2 and T2 will handle 43.2 million passengers a year with China Southern, Air China, Star Alliance members and other airlines.

New subway trains are designed to carry 9,000 passengers per hour.

Each train is about 94 meters long with four compartments, two for domestic flight passengers and two for international travelers. They have screens for flight information and luggage racks.

Passengers will check in at one of the two existing terminal buildings and then take the subway — a ride

of about three minutes — to get to the new facility. The subway train will run every two minutes.

Shanghai's two airports have become overburdened with passengers and cargo. Together they handled over 117 million passengers in 2018, a 5.2 percent increase, making the city the world's fifth-busiest air hub after London, New York, Tokyo and Atlanta.

A series of expansions and renovations, including the building of the satellite terminal and the renovation of Terminal 1 at Hongqiao International Airport, are helping make services more efficient.

Shanghai also has another airport, Hongqiao, that mainly serves domestic flights and short-haul services to the rest of Asia.

Together the two hubs handled over 117 million passengers in 2018, up 5.2%, making Shanghai the world's fifth-busiest gateway after London, New York, Tokyo and Atlanta — ahead of Hong Kong, Singapore and Beijing's Capital International Airport.

Mumbai airport is changing terminals for domestic and international flights



Effective October 1, Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) will be merging domestic flight operations for Terminals 1 and 2. CSMIA will allocate all boarding bridges for domestic flights to Terminal 1 (T1).

The nine domestic airlines that operate from Terminal 2 (T2) will move operations to T1, making it a one-stop shop for all domestic operations. But there are some exceptions to the rule.

Airlines operating from Mumbai's Terminal 1 (T1) from October 1

Domestic flights only:

IndiGo
GoAir
TruJet

Airlines operating from Mumbai's Terminal 2 (T2) from October 1

SpiceJet
(International and domestic)

International flights only:

IndiGo
GoAir

T2 is also used by Vistara, Air India and AirAsia. This structural change is expected to streamline domestic and international operations and make airport navigation much easier for passengers. In the past, Mumbai airport has made several changes to facilitate passenger convenience, including food-ordering apps, paperless boarding passes and body scanners.



Israel's

El Al to launch routes to Dublin and Dusseldorf

Israeli flag carrier El Al will add new routes to Dublin and Dusseldorf in summer 2020. Tickets to the European cities will go on sale on September 4, with Dublin flights launching on May 26, 2020 and Dusseldorf flights on June 1, 2020. Dublin will run on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays and Dusseldorf will run on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The routes will be operated by Boeing 737s with economy and business class.

Michael Strassburger, El Al's Vice President for Commercial and Industry Affairs, told Business Traveller last year that the airline is currently focusing on renewing its fleet and expanding its network in North America and West Europe.

It restarted its Manchester-Tel Aviv route in May, with flights on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from the UK, and Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from Israel. It has also launched routes

to Nice, Lisbon, Las Vegas and San Francisco in the last 12 months.

In March 2020 it will begin flights to Chicago, which will be the only nonstop service from the central US region to Israel, according to the Chicago Department of Aviation. It will also launch a route between Tokyo and Tel Aviv in March 2020, running three times weekly. The carrier received its first Dreamliner in 2017 and has now taken delivery of 11 out of an order of 16.

The 787s feature a fully-flat business class seat from Recaro as well as its premium economy product, which CEO Gonen Usishkin said earlier this year was proving so successful he was considering adding an extra row. The airline has faced increased competition on some routes to Europe from low-cost carriers Easyjet, Wizzair and Ryanair.

Virgin Atlantic will begin daily flights from London Heathrow to Tel Aviv on September 25.

United to make Delhi-SFO flight

a year-round daily from December 5



United Airlines recently unveiled an expanded international schedule from its hubs in Chicago, Denver, New York/Newark and San Francisco. United's announcement includes brand-new service to Nice, France; Palermo, Italy; and Curacao. The airline also announced customers will have more options when planning travel to Europe with additional flights to Amsterdam; London; Frankfurt, Germany; and Zurich and will resume its seasonal summer service earlier to popular destinations including Athens, Greece; Naples, Italy; Porto, Portugal; and Barcelona, Spain. "United's global network is a tremendous source of pride for our employees and loyal customers – we're always looking for ways to grow and expand our

network to connect our customers to more destinations around the world," said United's International Network Vice President Patrick Quayle. "These new additions help position United as the airline of choice for customers planning their business or leisure travel."

India's direct connectivity with the west coast of US is all set to improve from December. Mega US carrier United recently decided to convert its seasonal Delhi- San Francisco (SFO) flight into a year round service. United had originally announced that the flight which is to start from December 5, would be a seasonal one with operations in winter. But given the massive demand for travel on this route – currently operated

only by Air India – it has changed that decision. SFO and Newark are United's west and east coast hubs, respectively.

Originally announced as seasonal service between SFO and New Delhi, United is expanding the route to year-round service. United will operate its first non stop service from the US west Coast (SFO) to India with a Boeing 787-9 Dream-liner aircraft beginning December 5, the airline said. United will resume its daily non stop on Newark (EWR)-Mumbai routes from September 6. United had suspended the Delhi flight on April 5 due to closure of Pakistani airspace and on June 21 the Mumbai one was suspended due to US curbs on flying over Iran.

Tourism Malaysia

is targeting 30 million arrivals and RM100billion in tourism receipts for **Visit Truly Asia Malaysia 2020**



The first half of 2019 has seen a 4.9% growth in tourist arrivals, recording 13.3mil arrivals and RM41.69bil tourism receipts.



A festive red hibiscus, a wild green fern, and a brilliant blue rhinoceros' hornbill has been designed by Tourism Malaysia to welcome visitors from across the world to Malaysia over the next 18 months with the launch of **Visit Truly Asia Malaysia 2020 campaign.**

The hibiscus flower is a very appropriate choice to promote the country: it's the bunga raya, the flower of celebration. Malaysia's national flower will be reaching out to the world to promote a proud and diverse culture, a lush flora and fauna, and a dynamic and dreamy holiday destination where visitors can soak up endless sunshine.

The 2020 campaign was inaugurated by Prime Minister of Malaysia Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad in a ceremony at Kuala Lumpur International Airport in July. Tun Dr. Mahathir set the ambitious goal of attracting 30 million international

visitors - this is a boost from 2018 when Malaysia welcomed a 25.8 million international tourists. But with growth in arrivals already up by 4.8% in the first five months of this year, the country is already well on its way to reaching its target.

"Without a doubt, tourism is one of the most important sectors to ensure the country's economic and service sector growth," "The 2020 campaign is an opportunity, as well as a challenge for us to attract record numbers of visitors to Malaysia, and make the country a destination of choice for leisure and business tourists."

Malaysia is truly playing on its strengths with this campaign: the focus of Visit Truly Asia Malaysia 2020 is ecotourism, arts, culture and beaches. A central element is the welcoming spirit of the people of Malaysia. "We will welcome visitors from all over the world to experience the uniqueness

and beauty of Malaysia's ecotourism attractions, including our rainforests, mountains, islands and beaches," said Datuk Musa H J Yusof Director General Tourism Malaysia in an interaction with

Thirty international media representatives from 11 countries who were in Malaysia to participate in a familiarization programme themed "It's Summertime in Malaysia-Let's go to the Beach 2020 Edition" from September 2 to 8. The participants, from Australia, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Taiwan, Singapore, Vietnam and Malaysia, were invited to experience first-hand feel of the attractiveness of the beaches and aquatic experience, as well as other tourism products such as culture, heritage and ecoadventure.

Tourism Malaysia has partnered with several private sectors such as Golden Sands Resort Penang by Shangri-La, KL Hop-On Hop-Off, Penang



Global Tourism, Terengganu Tourism Department, as well as Malaysia Airlines who has hosted 30 tickets.

Tourism is big business: the country made RM84.1 billion (USD 20bn) from tourism in 2018, and the first four months of 2019 saw this surge by 16.9%, trending strongly towards the 2020 target of RM100 billion (USD 24bn) in tourism revenues. To ensure these ambitious plans come to fruition, RM 500 million (USD 120m) have been set aside to aid handicraft and homestay businesses, and RM 1 billion (USD 240m) has been added to the country's Tourism Infrastructure Fund.

Tourism Malaysia sees positive

Tourism Growth: Tourists are staying longer and spending more in Malaysia, with Saudi Arabia as the nation with the highest expenditure per capita, says Tourism Malaysia.

The first half of 2019 saw positive growth in tourist arrivals and receipts with a total of 13.3 million arrivals, a 4.9% increase compared to the same period last year.

Tourism receipts generated during this period were RM41.69bil, an increase of 6.8% while the average length of stay had increased from 0.4 nights to 6.2 nights.

Tourism Malaysia Director General Datuk Musa Yusof said a tourist from Saudi Arabia spent an average of RM11,376, followed by those from Britain (RM5,241), Canada (RM4,593.10), China (RM4,546), and the United States (RM4,537).

Tourism Malaysia is targeting 30 million arrivals and RM100bil in tourism receipts for 2020 (VM2020).

Datuk Musa Yusof said the targets were much higher when VM2020 was first drummed up 10 years ago. "It had to be scaled down due to the spillover from the airline tragedies in 2014. When we first planned VM2020 back in 2009, we had set a loftier target of a whopping 36 million arrivals and RM160bil in tourism receipts.

"What happened was that our tourist arrivals dropped after 2014 because we had very bad incidents," he said, referring to Malaysia Airlines Flights

MH370 that went missing on March 8, 2014, and MH17, which was shot down in Ukraine later on July 17.

Musa said the downing of MH17 caused the biggest impact to the industry, adding that AirAsia Indonesia Flight QZ8501's crash in the Java Sea on Dec 28, 2014, also impacted on the industry. Further "People associate AirAsia with Malaysia. There was a perception that there was something wrong in Malaysia," he said, adding that the figures did not look well after these devastating tragedies.

"We saw from the International Air



Transport Association (IATA) that the arrivals of Asia Pacific travellers had dropped by 23%. "At that time, we were going full swing in advertising on Discovery, CNN, National Geographic. After that, we had to slow down advertising to reduce the 'noise,'" he said.

Musa said they had to then review the VM2020 targets to reflect the impact on the tourism industry, adding that current targets were achievable.

Last year, Malaysia hosted a total of 25.8 million tourists and raked in some RM84.1bil in tourism receipts.

Talking about the campaign logo

Musa said, The campaign logo, designed by Alfred Phua Hong Fook, is inspired by Batik, Malaysia's colourful and distinctive textile art. The featured fern is the paku pakis, an edible plant popular in local dishes and a nod to the country's multi-ethnic cuisine. "Visitors will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in our diverse culture, arts, heritage and history,"

The entire country is pulling together to make 2020 a reality. Government ministries and private sector organizations will support Tourism Malaysia, alongside corporate partners including Sharp Electronics, Malaysia Airlines, AirAsia, Firefly, and Malindo Air - the four airlines will all be flying with the new logo brandished on their tailfins. Malaysia Airports has partnered with Condor Air, Air Arabia and Busan Air in launching new routes into Malaysia from key international destinations.

Visa on Arrival facilities are now available in 13 entry points in Malaysia across land, air and sea, ensuring a hassle-free experience for visitors from countries such as China and India, two of Malaysia's fastest-growing tourist markets. E visa has been extended till December 2020 for India informed Musa.

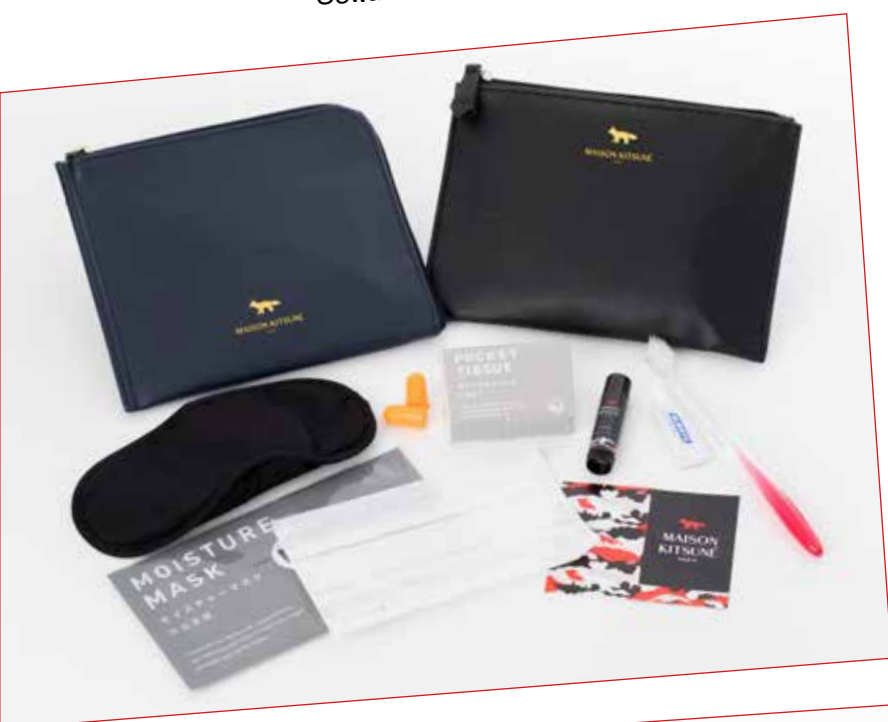
This isn't the first campaign - it was first launched in 1990 by Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir in anticipation of tourism's increasingly important role for the country's economy. The ROI has been that tourist arrivals have increased steadily, and Malaysia has truly become popular destination.

The success of the 2020 campaign is likely to stem from the hospitality that the local people in the country show; together with abundance of nature and culture of local people the tropical gardens, beaches, the remote islands, the peaceful monasteries, the bustling skyscrapers, shopping, best street food and about all the smile that percolates from Malaysians to the world.

Japan Airlines

Unveils New Amenity Kits for International Business Class

Collaboration with MAISON KITSUNÉ and BEAMS



Japan Airlines (JAL) recently unveiled plans to introduce new amenity kits for customers traveling on the carrier's long-haul international Business Class from the end of August 2019.

For flights departing Japan, an amenity kit designed in collaboration with MAISON KITSUNÉ will be provided for JAL's Business Class customers. MAISON KITSUNÉ was founded in 2002 in Paris by Gildas Loaec and Masaya Kuroki. The word kitsune is derived from a Japanese word for fox, and in Japanese folklore, it is said that foxes have the ability to shape-shift into various forms. Staying true to its name, MAISON KITSUNÉ is known as a fashion brand that expresses a fusion of modern and culture. This will be their first collaboration to create an amenity kit for the airline industry.

On flights arriving into Japan, the amenity kit is designed in collaboration with BEAMS, a Japanese brand pioneering in lifestyle retailing. The kit features a unique pattern found in popular clothing materials and will introduce a new design every 3 months, as with the four seasons of Japan.

The JAL Group will continue to embrace the challenge of delivering an inspiring travel experience with new products and services.

JAL Business Class –Amenity Kit

Toothbrush /Earplugs /Eye Mask /Tissue / Moisturizing FaceMask / MAISON KITSUNÉ Lip Balm

Service Period – from late August 2019 onwards

Applicable Routes

- **Tokyo Narita** = Chicago, Dallas Fort Worth, Boston, New York, Los Angeles, Seattle, San Diego, Vancouver, Frankfurt, Helsinki, Moscow, Sydney, Melbourne
- **Tokyo Haneda** =New York, San Francisco, London, Paris
- **Osaka Kansai**= Los Angeles

Air Canada & Destination Canada

announce travel
trade promotion



Arun Pandeya – Country Head & General Manager, India Sub-continent, Air Canada



Carl Vaz – CEO & Strategy Director, Destination Canada India GSA

With the announcement of the nonstop daily flight, Destination Canada is happy to collaborate with Air Canada for this joint promotion.

Air Canada recently announced it will resume its daily, non-stop Toronto-Delhi flights on Oct 1, 2019 (eastbound) and Oct 3, 2019 (westbound). The Toronto-Delhi flights will be operated initially with Boeing 787 Dreamliners and beginning Oct. 27, additional capacity will be added to this route with 400-seat Boeing 777-300ER aircraft, featuring Air Canada's award-winning Signature Class, Premium Economy and Economy classes of service.

Destination Canada is extending its support to Air Canada by offering accommodation and ground arrangements in Canada for a lucky winner who book their passengers on Air

Canada flights through Amadeus GDS.

This promotion is effective from August 12 till October 12, 2019.

Arun Pandeya, Country Head & General Manager – India Sub-continent, Air Canada said, "As we have always reiterated, for Air Canada India is a very important market going forward and as part of its future plans. Air Canada's Delhi-Toronto flight (suspended due to the airspace closure) will start to fly you direct to Toronto nonstop starting 3rd October 2019."

He added, "You can be assured of the same international standards in service we have set and this is complemented by us being awarded yet again as the 2018 Skytrax Best Airline

In North America yet again, in fact for the third consecutive year."

Carl Vaz, CEO & Strategy Director, Destination Canada India GSA said, "As part of our Team Canada approach; Destination Canada is proud to partner with Air Canada to promote the re-introduction of the Delhi to Toronto daily service. We are confident that the vast number of retail travel agents and tour operators utilising the Amadeus GDS system will help us boost our passenger movement from India. This is an opportunity for senior, middle, frontline and owner driven agencies to win a wonderful trip to Toronto & Niagara. Wishing everyone happy selling Air Canada."



Accor appoints Karelle Lamouche as Chief Commercial Officer for Europe

Focused on leading the company's loyalty and customer experience, sales and distribution, marketing, revenue management and business analytics teams, Karelle will create a more holistic, integrated and customer-centred approach and deliver a consistent strategy for all Accor brands throughout Europe. Central to the role will be the launch and delivery of ALL, Accor's new loyalty programme which goes live late this year.

Franck Gervais, CEO, Accor Europe said: "In an increasingly complex and evolving market, it is vital that we continue to build on our strategic aims across the business to ensure we further strengthen our market-leading position and enhance the company's comprehensive portfolio and partnerships.

Karelle has been with Accor since 2003, most recently as SVP for Sales & Marketing, Distribution and Revenue Management across all its brands

in Northern Europe, which includes the UK, Benelux and Nordics. Prior to that she was SVP for Economy & Budget hotels in the UK, with overall responsibility for operations and marketing across the ibis family of brands – ibis, ibis Styles and ibis budget.

In this role she spearheaded the development of an innovative hospitality process, using proprietary technology to enable greater interaction between hotel talent and guest. The people-centric mobile technology makes employees less static and increases their interaction with guests and teams, using technology to empower staff and enable greater customer experience. The transformation to hotel and guest operations in the UK was extensive and this best practice is now being rolled out across Europe and beyond, in ibis and select Mercure and Novotel hotels.

Accor announces that Karelle Lamouche has been appointed Chief Commercial Officer for Europe. In this newly created role, Karelle will lead Accor's European commercial team with responsibility for driving the business revenue strategy for the company and its partners across all European markets. Reporting into Franck Gervais, CEO Accor Europe, Karelle will be responsible for the commercial strategy for the European business.

Los Angeles Tourism appoints first-ever Regional Director for India Market



Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board (Los Angeles Tourism) is deepening its foothold in the India Market with the appointment of Seema Kadam as its first-ever Regional Director, India. In 2018, Los Angeles welcomed 130,000 visitors from India, an increase of 5.1 per cent yoy making India 3rd highest year-over-year international growth market for Los Angeles. In her role, Kadam will develop and support air service for Los Angeles International Airport, and spearhead strategic travel trade engagement.

Israel Tourism

conducts a roadshow in Delhi and Mumbai



Israel Ministry of Tourism (IMOT) conducted a roadshow in Delhi and Mumbai to enhance commercial ties with the Indian travel trade fraternity. In an effort to retain the growth momentum of Indian arrivals to Israel, the team interacted with key travel and tour operators, MICE providers and up-market leisure operators. The event commenced with a presentation leading to an interactive session with the IMOT team. The roadshow included interactive B2B sessions, education programmes and workshops to aid trade members in planning itineraries and responding to customer queries. The Israeli delegation was led by the newly appointed **Director of Tourism for India & Philippines markets, Mr. Sammy Yahia** along with **Judah Samuel, Director – Marketing, Israel Ministry of Tourism, India** and included representative partners from the tourism industry of Israel.

Sammy is responsible to lead the

tourism board's initiatives in India while overseeing the development of policies and strategies to strengthen Israel's reputation as a world-class tourism and travel destination. He brings great expertise and know-how to the role with extensive and holistic experience in tourism marketing, strategic government relations and investment facilitation.

Commenting on the roadshow, Mr. Sammy Yahia, said, "The arrivals from India have exceeded expectations in the last few years and we have seen the same trend in 2019. India currently stands third in Asia among the top source markets for Israel. While keeping the current momentum going, the idea is to aggressively work towards increasing connectivity between India & Israel by introducing new airlines to service the route. I am delighted with this new position and foresee ample opportunities for us to push boundaries and reinvent the ever evolving and dynamic Indian traveller".

Israel Ministry of Tourism participated in various trade fairs and exhibitions this year including APEX, MILT, EXITO and SATTE to showcase the dynamic offerings of the destination to the travel trade community thereby luring travellers to consider Israel for a leisure holiday. Alongside, Israel has also quickly become Middle-East's newest business tourism destination, gaining popularity with the Indian corporate and MICE segment. MICE travel to the country is booming at a steady pace as a YPO delegation is expected to travel in September this year while a 25-person delegation from Aries Agro Limited will be visiting Israel in September. A massive MICE movement was the CREDAI 19th NATCON 2019 hosted by CREDAI Telangana & CREDAI Andhra Pradesh in August that witnessed 850 attendees.

Over the years, Indian cuisine has also taken centre stage with many celebrity chefs and culinary experts visiting the country for menu engineering, special collaborations and food festivals. While Chefs like Sanjeev Kapoor, Thomas Zacharias, Manish Mehrotra and Rakhee Vaswani have travelled to Israel in the past, winner of Master Chef India, Chef Shipra Khanna visited the country for the Indian Culinary Festival at the Sheraton Tel Aviv in July this year. Hosted by the Embassy of India, Chef Khanna recreated flavours of India with the hotel's Executive Chef for a special menu during the festival showcasing the best of India's authentic dishes.

Israel offers a plethora of things to do and see to cater to the discerning traveller. From the historical city of Jerusalem to the beach city of Tel Aviv; from the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth, to the marvellous underwater marine life of Red Sea in Eilat, Israel is truly a dynamic destination.



Indian tourist arrivals in Turkey

marks a 56% growth between January to July 2019

The Turkish Tourism Board in India recently revealed that between January to July this year, Turkey has registered a 56% increase in the number of Indian tourist arrivals in comparison to the same period last year, hosting 130,000 Indian visitors. With such positive growth rate and indicative data coming from ministry, the Turkey tourism board is expecting to host around 250,000 Indian tourists by the end of 2019

The latest official statistics show that more than 24 million foreign tourists visited Turkey within the period

of January to July, a strong 14.10 percent increase from the same period of last year.

Turkey has emerged as a popular destination for Indian Travellers across categories. From leisure travel to FITs, Indian weddings to MICE summits, there has been a significant increase in all segments. This year Turkey witnessed a substantial surge in the number of extravagant Indian destination weddings across Turkey. Similarly, MICE travel to Turkey increased at an incredibly fast pace.

The tourism board further announced that by the end of 2019, Turkey is expected to host around 30 Indian weddings and 30,000 MICE visitors. Basis the current arrival numbers, and the activities planned in months to come, the tourism board is hoping to reach a record number of Indian tourist arrivals in Turkey by end of this year. The first half has witnessed a record engagement in terms of FITs, weddings & MICE and this trend will only go up.

Turkey tourism board has been constantly engaging with Indian

audience by highlighting important festivals, summits & international events that are being held in Turkey. A number of fams and engagements are being held regularly from India market to different parts of Turkey with a focus on cuisine, culture, landscape, history and nature. Currently, festivals like Istanbul Coffee Festival, Istanbul Art Festival, Istanbul Biennial in Autumn are attracting tourists from India.

Straddling the continents of Europe and Asia, Turkey's strategically important location & geographical landscape has put it in the spotlight of global tourism. With a mix of popular destinations & hidden gems that has been attracting tourists from all over the world, Turkey, with its world-class hotels & infrastructure is becoming most frequented destination. From stunning architecture, history & incredible mosques of Istanbul to pristine beaches of Antalya, hot air ballooning in Cappadocia, salt pools in Pamukkale or paragliding at Turquoise coast in Fethiye, there is something for everyone in Turkey



The Oberoi Group

announces the highly anticipated
opening of **The Oberoi, Marrakech**

A luxury resort with warm hospitality and picturesque views of the Atlas Mountains



The Oberoi Group has announced that The Oberoi, Marrakech will open on 1st December, 2019.

The Oberoi, Marrakech is located in twenty-eight acres of beautifully landscaped gardens, fragrant citrus orchards and olive groves with spectacular views of the snow – capped Atlas Mountains. The resort is located twenty five minutes from the Djema el-Fna square and the ancient walled city.

The design of this luxury resort has been inspired by the magnificent history of Moroccan architecture. The courtyard of the main building incorporates the design of the historic Medersa Ben Youssef, built in the 14th century and one of Marrakech's most famous historic monuments.

The Oberoi, Marrakech has 84 spacious and luxurious rooms, suites and villas; seventy-six of which have large private pools and private gardens. The rooms and suites have been thoughtfully laid out for maximum privacy.

Announcing the opening of the resort, **Mr. P.R.S. Oberoi, Executive**

Chairman, The Oberoi Group, said, *"We are delighted to announce the opening of The Oberoi, Marrakech. We look forward to extending The Oberoi Group's presence in one of the world's most exotic destinations. Several Oberoi Hotels & Resorts have been recognised as amongst the best in the world. I am confident that The Oberoi, Marrakech, with its exceptional location, aesthetic design and committed team will offer the distinctive Oberoi service to travellers from around the world."*

Adding to this, **Mr. Fabien Gastinel, General Manager of the resort** said, *"Every facility at The Oberoi, Marrakech is being planned to create a flawless experience for our guests. From the luxurious rooms to the dining options; all aspects of the resort will offer our guests unparalleled luxury with exceptional service which is warm, personalised and heartfelt."*

The Oberoi, Marrakech has three restaurants featuring diverse International and Moroccan culinary experiences. The bar and the terrace

overlook the extensive gardens and the Atlas Mountains.

The Oberoi Spa with an indoor pool is an oasis of peace and tranquillity. The spa is located on a natural water body and is surrounded by orchards. The spa has private therapy suites offering authentic Moroccan and Ayurvedic treatments. Guests can also experience the Hammam and herbal therapies.

A children's activity centre is available for families travelling with children.

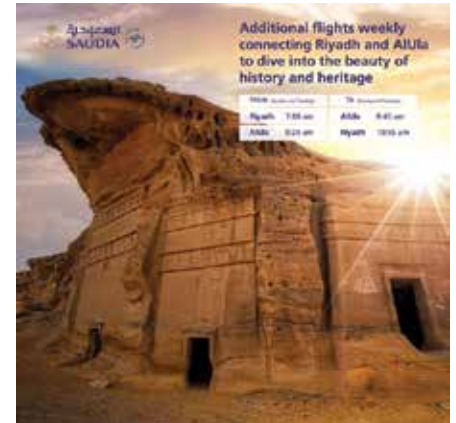
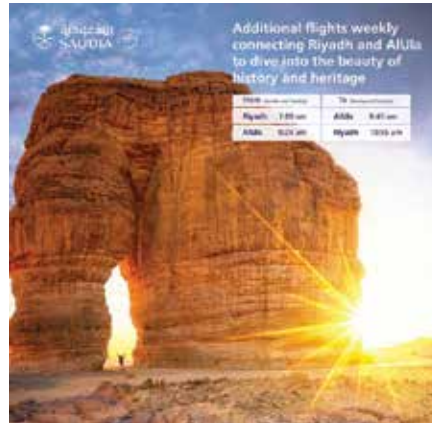
The Oberoi, Marrakech has a 300 square metre function room and smaller meeting rooms for social and corporate events.

The resort offers authentic Oberoi Experiences to enable guests to explore the best of the destination's vibrant culture and historic monuments.

Unparalleled luxury, exquisite design and Oberoi Hotels' legendary service make The Oberoi, Marrakech the preferred choice for discerning travellers looking for a unique and personalised way to experience Marrakech.

Saudia adds new flights to AlUla, A place of Heritage for the world

- Destination Is A Natural Archaeological Wonder; A Hidden Oasis In The Desert
- Two Additional Seasonal Flights from Riyadh to AlUla Until October 22
- Now Four Flights per week between Riyadh to AlUla; Two Flights from Jeddah



SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES (SAUDIA) the national flag carrier of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has added two new seasonal flights between Riyadh and AlUla, the Kingdom's growing hub for culture and heritage. *

AlUla, located in North-West Saudi Arabia, is a place of extraordinary natural and human heritage at the crossroads of civilization. The new SAUDIA flights have been added to meet the growing demand to visit AlUla.

The two seasonal flights from Riyadh

(RUH) to AlUla (ULH) take service to a four-times-weekly service from Riyadh, and two-times weekly service from Jeddah (JED).*

AlUla will become a dedicated open, living museum - the first of its kind in the world. A vast area of over 22,000sq km combines, AlUla offers lush oasis valleys and towering landscapes with sandstone mountains and ancient cultural heritage sites.

With the addition of two seasonal flights, this unique region of heritage,

natural beauty and archaeological wonder will be more accessible than ever, catalysing economic opportunities for the local community in line with the Royal Commission for AlUla's commitment to share this place of heritage with the world.

To book flights to AlUla, visit www.saudia.com.

*the additional two seasonal flights from Riyadh to AlUla will be operated until October 22, 2019.

Flight Schedules

Turtles makes their way back to sea in celebration of “World Sea Turtle Day” at Jumeirah Al Naseem

In honour of World Sea-Turtle Day, Jumeirah Group's Turtle Rehabilitation Project released 60 rescued and rehabilitated turtles back into the ocean on the pristine beach of Jumeirah Al Naseem. With hotel guests from Burj Al Arab, Jumeirah Beach Hotel and Madinat Jumeirah watching in awe, the turtles started their new life in the deep blue with the second release of 2019 after a

very successful event that took place last April with 75 turtles released back to sea.

Marine specialists at the Dubai Turtle Rehabilitation Project (DTRP) have been working diligently around the clock rehabilitating sick and injured turtles which were washed up onto the shores of the UAE. Now healthy, these endangered turtles have been released back into their natural habitat in the Arabian Gulf.

The total number of released turtles by DTRP has now reached more than 1,792 since the project began back in 2004. The main mission of the project is to rescue, rehabilitate and release any sea turtles that are found injured or sick throughout the region. The team also aims to educate on sea turtle biology and the local and global plight of the beloved sea turtle.

RateTiger expands in Mauritius with



Beachcomber Resorts & Hotels

Mauritian luxury hotel chain Beachcomber Resorts & Hotels has implemented RateTiger Connect by eRevMax for managing online distribution effectively across multiple OTAs and get reservations delivered directly into its PMS.

The hotel group aims to scale their online business over the next few years with the help of seamless distribution technologies customised and integrated for the group by the hotel connectivity leader.

Mauritius is a unique market where over 60% of the bookings come from

B2B tour operators, while the rest comes from direct sources or online channels. The hotel sector is looking to manage online business effectively to have more control over their rates and inventory.

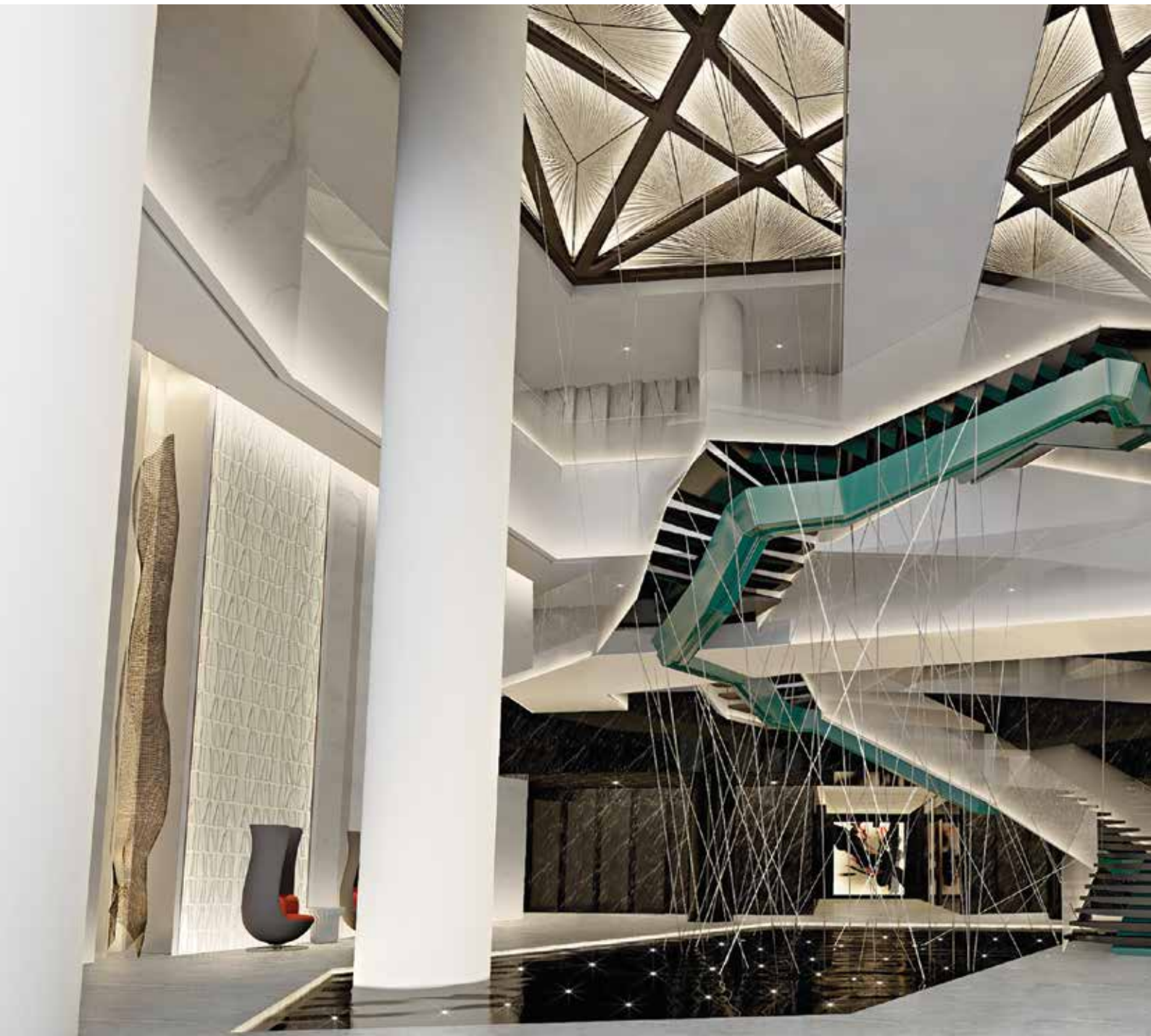
Beachcomber had in the past tried a couple of well-known hotel channel management solutions, but it didn't work for them. They continued to make manual updates on OTAs over the last few years. Now with the introduction of more rate plans and offers, it was becoming increasingly difficult for them to update rates and inventory manually.

"When we were looking for a channel manager, we came across RateTiger and immediately liked it. While the product demo was great, what we liked even more was the approach and flexibility. We have our in-house booking engine, so it was important for us that we work with a partner that was open to our requirements. RateTiger instantly agreed to integrate while other channel managers wanted us to change the booking engine. This is what puts RateTiger apart – they focus on the client's need and cater to them accordingly, even though if it means going an extra mile," says Benoit Pierre, Digital Solutions & Web Development Manager at Beachcomber Resorts & Hotels.

"We have been using RateTiger for a few months now and I can say that we are happy with our decision. RateTiger is a great tool that offers customization and great support. It is intuitive and easy to use, making the team much more efficient in their work. We save a lot of time and effectively manage our distribution strategies which has led to better online visibility through its width of channels leading to improved sales results," signed off Benoit.

"We are glad to have Beachcomber as one of our esteemed clients. RateTiger is committed to providing world class products and top-notch customer support to ensure our partner hotels grow from strength to strength. We look forward to assisting the hospitality industry in the region including Madagascar, Seychelles, Réunion, Zanzibar, Mauritius & Mayotte," said Mohnish Singh, Regional Sales Manager - APAC & Africa, eRevMax.

RateTiger, powered by LiveOS, continues to be the distribution partner of choice for hoteliers providing real-time connectivity between CRS/PMS and around 400 online sales channels including GDS, OTAs, IDS, Metasearch Engines, Wholesalers, Tour Operators and other travel sales companies processing online hotel bookings. It supports full enterprise integration with 2-way XML connectivity; all delivered in a Software-as-a Service (SaaS) model for the large independent and group hotels.



Radisson Blu

Makes Debut In

Hangzhou



Radisson Blu, the upper-upscale hotel brand that delivers personalized service in stylish spaces, has expanded its portfolio in China with the opening of its first hotel in Hangzhou, the captivating capital of Zhejiang Province.

Radisson Blu Hangzhou Xintiandi is located in the city's commercial district, surrounded by shops, offices

and just 10 kilometers from West Lake, the enchanting UNESCO World Heritage landscape. This exceptional 18-story hotel features a contemporary design, with artistic interiors and a stunning free-standing staircase that creates a dramatic centerpiece in the lobby.

The hotel's 265 rooms and suites are equipped with state-of-the-

art facilities, including multimedia connectivity and refined amenities. Every guest's journey underpinned by Radisson Blu's unique "Yes, I Can!" service philosophy. For elevated stays, the top floor Executive Lounge provides a full range of bespoke business services and all-day refreshments.

Covering the entire fourth floor, the hotel's conference and banqueting facilities include a 450-guest grand ballroom and four function rooms, all supported by the latest audio-visual equipment. Special occasions can also be enjoyed at a choice of restaurants and bars, including a classical Chinese restaurant with nine private dining rooms and an authentic Japanese dining destination, along with a casual café and a lobby lounge. Leisure facilities include an indoor swimming pool, a Thai-style spa and a modern fitness center.

Leisure travelers can easily access West Lake, Ban Shan Forest Park, Lingyin Temple and many other attractions, while the only resident Cirque du Soleil show in Asia is just 100 meters away from the hotel. Hangzhou East Railway Station can be accessed in just 20 minutes and Xiaoshan International Airport is 50 minutes away by car.

"Hangzhou is one of China's most dynamic cities; a booming provincial capital that is rapidly becoming an international hub of trade and tourism. This makes it the perfect location for Radisson Blu, which is focused on expanding in the world's most desirable destinations. We look forward to introducing new hotels into China's fast-growing cities in future," said Gary Ye, Vice President, Operations, China, Radisson Hotel Group.

Radisson Blu Hangzhou Xintiandi becomes Radisson Hotel Group's second property in the city, following Radisson Hangzhou Qiangjiang, which opened earlier this year. This demonstrates the company's successful strategy of introducing its world-renowned brands into key business and leisure markets in China, and all across Asia Pacific.

HOSPITALITY AND FOOD / INTERNATIONAL

Radisson Blu



to break new ground in Turkey with first signing in Sakarya



Radisson Hotel Group is delighted to announce the signing of the first ever Radisson Blu hotel in Sakarya, one of the largest automotive and industrial hubs in Turkey. With the signing of the Radisson Blu Hotel, Sakarya (Turkey), the group is getting closer to 30 hotels in operation and under development across the country – further accelerating its ambition to have more than 50 properties within the next five years.

Expected to open before the end of the year, the hotel will be the perfect place for business travelers and leisure guests seeking the best possible hotel experience.

In addition to 139 modern guest rooms and suites, the new-build property will offer the guests an inviting restaurant – including a terrace for guests to enjoy a meal in refreshing environments. The hotel will also feature 800sqm of meetings and events space, plus a health club and a swimming pool giving guests the chance to relax and recharge.

Elie Younes, Executive Vice President & Chief Development Officer, Radisson Hotel Group, said: “A great Radisson Blu joins our family in Turkey in a new city: Sakarya. This project will be our 16th Radisson Blu and 27th Radisson Hotel Group property in Turkey, reinforcing our network in the country where Radisson Blu remains the largest upper upscale brand in the capital.”

Sakarya is one of Turkey’s most promising provinces as a hub for Turkey’s domestic automobile production and booming employment opportunities in the sector. In addition, Turkey’s hospitality landscape is re-emerging from the downturn witnessed in 2015 and this project constitutes an excellent opportunity to secure a strategic location in Sakarya.

The hotel owner, Ege Ticari Yatırım ve Turizm İnşaat Sanayi Ticaret A.Ş. (“Aegean Investments”), led by Hikmet Bülent Güneş, said: “It is a true pleasure to collaborate with Radisson Hotel Group on this project and jointly bring the first Radisson Blu property to the city. With the combination of Radisson Hotel Group’s international hospitality and our local expertise, we are confident of creating memorable moments and world-class experiences for our guests.”

The Radisson Blu Hotel, Sakarya (Turkey) will be operated by Radisson Hospitality AB under an International Franchise Agreement.

The spellbinding **MAYFAIR Lake Resort, Raipur** - Central India's New Luxury Destination is now Open!



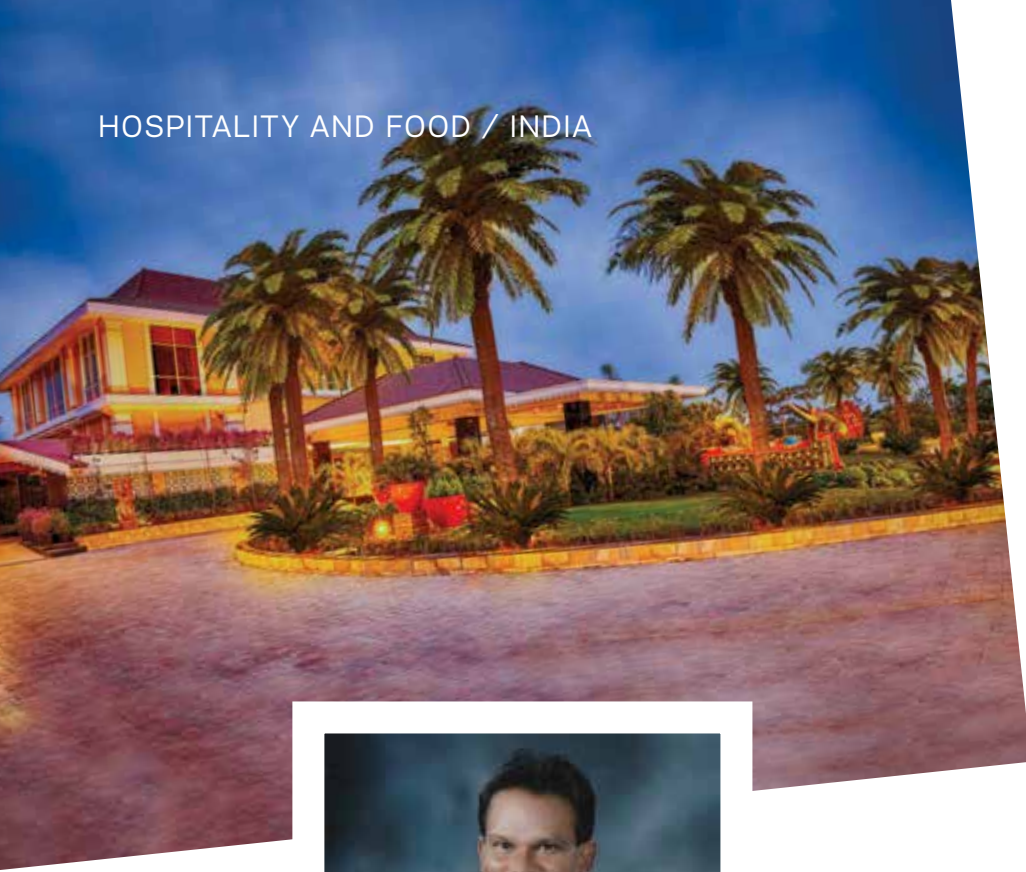
MAYFAIR Hotels and Resorts, a leading Hospitality chain of luxury Boutique properties opened its 11th Resort- **MAYFAIR Lake Resort** in Raipur on 27th August, 2019. The Group now runs 11 properties across 9 destinations- Bhubaneswar (MAYFAIR Lagoon & MAYFAIR

Convention), Darjeeling, Gangtok, Goa, Gopalpur-on-Sea, Puri (MAYFAIR Heritage & MAYFAIR Waves), Rourkela, Kalimpong & Raipur.

MAYFAIR Group widely acknowledged and admired for its architectural concept of low rise properties that highlights plush

greenery, was founded by Shri Dilip Ray in 1982, with its first property at Rourkela. Over these years, the Group has earned a unique niche for itself in the Hospitality industry for its personalized services, luxurious accommodation, designer properties and eco-friendly environment





that welcomes guests to a truly unforgettable experience.

The Resort is located amid lush greenery and overlooks the pristine and gorgeous **Jhangh Lake** with sweeping panoramic views all around the property. The luxury resort offers lavish luxury accommodation, great banqueting and event space, world class facilities and some of the best restaurants in Raipur. It is conveniently located only 10 kms away from Swami Vivekananda Airport, 15 kms from the Main Market and 25 kms away from the Railway Station.

MAYFAIR Lake Resort offers various categories of accommodation spread across 124 well-appointed luxuriously furnished Executive Rooms, Deluxe Suites and a Presidential Suite that is luxury personified. Almost all the rooms either are lake facing or canal facing with lovely pleasing garden views.





MAYFAIR Lake Resort makes for the perfect wedding destination in Raipur offering excellent outdoor and indoor banqueting space. The property is also home to the excellent **MAYFAIR Spa** which has been aesthetically designed in such a manner that induces a sense of calm and peace in visitors. The Spa houses a bridal make-up room, a manicure and pedicure station, a unisex salon and a well-equipped adjoining fitness centre.

MAYFAIR Lake Resort, Raipur offers the best options in terms of dining destinations in the city. The wonderful choices include a magnificent all day dining multi-cuisine restaurant, a handsome looking bar, a lovely poolside bar as well as a charming and chic cafe.. Other facilities include a stunning swimming pool with a rain

dance area, Kid's Play Area, a well-stocked library and oodles of space. MAYFAIR Lake Resort is one of the best luxury hotels in Raipur and really promises to be an exquisite holiday experience waiting to be savoured by savvy vacationers and corporate travellers alike.

The property is designed to cater to the requirements of the growing MICE Segment and will be a key player in the development of a new Central Indian Travel Circuit. It has a number of indoor and open air venues with capacities of hosting 15 to 2000 guests. The hall with elegant decors and exotic wedding venues, that exude regal charm, makes it an ultimate address for Destination-wedding and MICE events, promising a flawless picture-perfect event experience.

Enchanting Kerala

**A Lip-smacking
Culinary Trip in
a Houseboat**



Think of Kerala, and chances are that pictures of majestic houseboats moving elegantly through the emerald backwaters will popup in your mind. This image of Kerala is embedded deep in the hearts of every single traveller who has visited the green state.

Houseboats are always the pride of God's Own Country. Besides hosting a laidback cruise through the tranquil waters, facilitating close-up views of the deft manoeuvres of our fishermen and the swaying coconut groves, these houseboats offer you mouth-watering, indigenous delicacies as well.

From spicy **Karimeen pollichathu** (marinated and steamed pearlfish) to **Kappa biriyani**, the houseboats bring to you a platter of zesty tastes! The traditional dishes of Kerala seem to acquire a new taste in the kitchens of these regal boats. There is a great demand for exotic

items of native cuisine – like **duck roasted** on a banana leaf, **puttu**, spiced freshwater **fish wrapped** inside plantain leaves and fried in coconut oil, squids and **prawns** sautéed on a leaf, kakka or freshwater clams, etc.

The aromas of heated clove, cardamom, pepper, dry coconut and masala on meat that arise from the cooking area of the houseboat are nothing but heavenly.

Gifted with a seemingly endless coastline, Kerala has much to offer for tickling the olfactory and gustatory senses, and her special houseboats have a veritable smorgasbord of lip-smacking fish curries. The catch of the day, fresh from the backwaters, is brought to your plate by the staff of houseboats.

On your way, you will certainly get a chance to see huts where toddy – a local brew made from the sap of the coconut tree – is served. These small shops are a ubiquitous part of Kerala's landscape.



Onam Celebrations

to get off on Sept. 10

State to host State Tourism Ministers' Conclave on Sept 16



Kerala Tourism's week-long cultural extravaganza to mark this year's Onam celebrations will kick off on September 10, showcasing the state's vibrant classical and folk dances, modern art and performing traditions at multiple venues in the state capital and various District Centres.

As part of the Onam celebrations, the capital city will also host the State Tourism Ministers' Conclave, to be inaugurated by Chief Minister

Shri Pinarayi Vijayan on September 16, the concluding day of the festival. Union Minister of State for Tourism and Culture Shri Prahlad Singh Patel will be the chief guest at the meet at Leela Raviz, Kovalam.

Besides deliberating on key topics like sustainable tourism, challenges faced by the industry, and branding and promotion of State Tourism Boards, the amazing story of Kerala's postflood resurgence will be presented before

the entire country at the conclave, Tourism Minister Shri Kadakampally Surendran told a press conference here on Friday. Last year, Onam Week Celebrations were dropped as the state was overwhelmed by the devastating floods.

"No calamity is going to dampen our spirit to survive and forge ahead. This year also, there had been heavy downpours, spawning devastation and loss of lives. That was very unfortunate.

in Kerala



But we are not going to be halted in our track. We will survive adversities and move forward. This is the message of the Onam celebrations,” the minister added. The Chief Minister will inaugurate the celebrations at Nishagandhi Auditorium on September 10 at 6 pm. Kerala Assembly Speaker Shri P Sreeramakrishnan will give the Onam message. Leader of the Opposition Shri Ramesh Chennithala will deliver the keynote address.

Shri Surendran said an amount of Rs 6 crore has been earmarked for the conduct of the festival. Of this, Rs 4 crore would be for events in and around the state capital and Rs 2 crore for the districts.

Heralding the festivities, the Tourism Minister will unfurl the ‘Onam flag’ on September 8 at 6 pm in Kanakakunnu. Shri C K Hareendran, MLA will switch on the illuminations in the city on September 9 at 6pm. Shri K

Sabarinathan, MLA will inaugurate the food festival. National award winning actor Keerthy Suresh and popular star Tovino Thomas will be the Chief Guests on the inaugural evening, whose highlight will be a musical performance by singer K S Chitra and team.

The festival will feature over 5,000 artists of different genres. There will be performances of dance, music, percussion ensembles, plays, yoga display, literary competitions and





recitals besides staging of diverse folk, martial and contemporary arts. The state capital will have programmes in as many as 29 venues. While Nishagandhi Auditorium and Central Stadium are the principal venues, programmes will also be staged at Vylloppilli Samskrithi Bhavan, Gandhi Park, Kanakakunnu Palace Auditorium and other cultural venues.

A long list of popular singers, including by MG Sreekumar, Karthik, Sreenivas, Madhu Balakrishnan, Unni Menon, Kavalam Sreekumar, Vidhu Prathap, Sudeep Kumar, Rimi Tomy, Jyotsna, Ramesh Narayan, KG Marcos, Jassie Gift, Manu Thampi, Mrudula Warrier and a musical ensemble by Thaikkudam Bridge, will enthral audiences at various venues on different days.

The Central Stadium will host mega shows by various media houses like Jaihind, ACV, Mangalam, Deshabhimani, Kerala Kaumudi and Metro Vartha. There will be stage presentations of popular TV show D for Dance by Malayala Manorama and Johnson Night by Mathrubhumi at Nishagandhi, where Rathrimazha, a tribute to film director Late Lenin Rajendran will also be featured.

Kazhakoottam Greenfield stadium will host performance of danseuse

and cine artist Asha Sarath and team. Musical shows will be held at Poojapura Maidan, Kanakakunnu Palace Auditorium, Sooryakanthi Stage and Public Office vicinity. Classical performing traditions will be showcased at Theerdhapaada Mandapam (Kathakali, koothu, Kudiattom), Bharat Bhavan (Classical Dance), and Vylloppilli Samskriti Bhavan (Classical Dance). Stages like Thiruvavangur and Sopanam at Kanakakunnu are dedicated for folk art performances, while Shankhumugham will host the performances of women and children. Theerdhapaada Mandapam will also host Aksharaslokam and VJT Hall, Museum Compound and Gandhi Park will have other recitals and theatre performances. Museum Compound will stage Yoga and kalaripayattu also.

For the first time, the festival has been extended to Vellayani, on the outskirts. Other venues include Kanakakunnu Gate, Veli Tourist Village, Akkulam, Sree Chitra Thirunal Park Kottakkakam, Neyyatinkara, Kazhakoottam, Attingal, Nedumangad, Sreevaraham, Peroorkada Bappuji Library and Mudavoorpara boat club yard.

Athapookkalam competitions for the public will be held at St. Joseph's

School, Palayam. The Onam Trade Fair will be inaugurated at Sooryakanthi grounds by Shri C Divakaran, MLA on September 8. The district-level Onam Week Celebrations will be organised by district administrations and District Tourism Promotion Councils in all other districts.

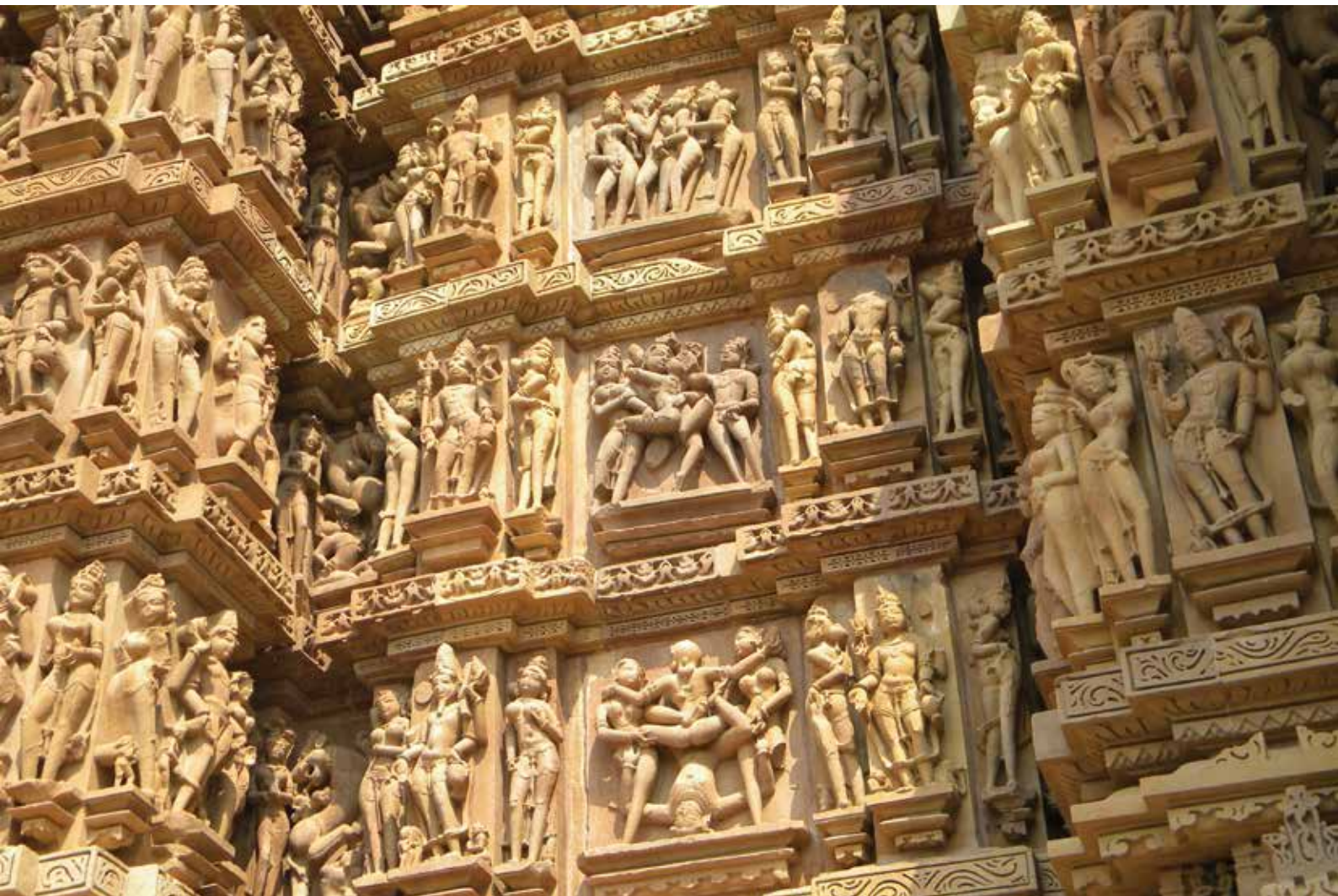
The festival will conclude with a colourful cultural pageantry depicting the history and culture of Kerala, to be flagged off from Keltron Junction, Vellayambalam on September 16.

The minister also launched a promotional video of the ongoing Champions Boat League (CBL) at the press meet. Top-notch composer A R Rahman has done the background score for the video, made by Bharat Bala. Shri Surendran also released the logo of Chaliyar River Paddle 2019, an expedition of 68 km along the Chaliyar river from Nilambur to Beypore, organized by Jellyfish Association with the support of Kerala Adventure Tourism Promotion Society from September 20-22. Shri C Divakaran, MLA, working chairman Onam celebrations committee, Tourism Director Shri P Bala Kiran IAS and KTDC MD Shri Rahul R IRS were also present during the media briefing.



Graceful *Khajuraho*

A celebration of love and life



Khajuraho will amaze you with its unique temple structure that is lined in perfect symmetry boasting of the finest sandstone carvings and erotic sculptures that attract people from different parts of the world. Even if you are not an art-lover, you will be taken aback with the detailed artwork of the temple.

Khajuraho Temples are a Spectacle of Passion, History and Creativity

Situated nearly 50 kilometres away from Chhatrapur city of Madhya Pradesh, there lies a cluster of temples, famously called the Khajuraho Temples. This site is considered by some as an embodiment of human imagination, history,

architecture, heritage, love and passion. Khajuraho is not only a UNESCO World Heritage Site but is also believed to be one of the Wonders of India. Rich in historical myths, stories, artistic creativity and architectural marvel, these temples are a representative of the art and architecture of ancient India.

Built between 950 AD and 1050 AD by the rulers of the Chandela Dynasty, the Khajuraho Temples were a cluster of 85 Hindu and Jain temples, out of which only 25 are still surviving. These temples are intricately and beautifully embellished and decorated with sculpture and art. Carved from hard river sandstone, one of the main allures of these walls is the erotic art. But this world-famous erotic art constitutes only 10% of the total sculptures of Khajuraho.

These sculptures are not chiselled but are mobile and liquid, representing

the people who exult in the joy of living, with all its fascinating variety. In fact, there is hardly any other place like Khajuraho where sculptures portray all kinds of human emotions with such great excellence. These temples also seem to celebrate women in her varied forms. They are depicted as yawning, scratching, disrobing, removing thorn from feet, playing with babies and pets like parrot, looking at mirror to do make-up etc.

There are two special sculptures that feature women playing the flute and the veena (Indian musical instruments) and writing letters, depicting women's education and rich culture in those days.

The temples are divided into three complexes-the Western, the Eastern and the Southern. Among these the Western complex is the largest and best known, containing the magnificent Shaivite temple, Kandariya Mahadev.

Monuments to see in Khajuraho **Western Group of Temples**

The Khajuraho Temples has a number of marvellous medieval Hindu temples and are famous for their erotic sculptures. The main temples in this group are Lakshamn, Jagdambi, Vishwanath, Chitragupta and Kandariya Mahadev. The beautiful walled garden that surrounds the structures is among the most notable features of the western group. The western complex of the Khajuraho group of temples houses the most important temples in Khajuraho. Kandariya Mahadeo it is the largest temple which is dedicated to Lord Shiva. The height of the temple is 31 meters. The depictions of gods and goddesses on the main shrine are very popular. Chaunsat Yogini Temple is the popular granite temple which is dedicated to Goddess Kali. Lakshamana Temple is dedicated to the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Vishwanath





Temple this temple has enshrined the three headed image of Brahma.

Eastern Group of Temples

Eastern group of Khajuraho temples is a mix of Jain and Hindu temples with intricate carvings. The main temples in this group are Parsvanath Temple, Ghantai Temple, Adinath Temple, Hanuman Temple, Brahma Temple, Vamana Temple and Javari Temple. The Eastern Group of Temples of Khajuraho can be divided into two categories: the temples dedicated to the Jain pantheon and the temples dedicated to Hindu Gods and Goddesses. The Jain Temples include: Parsavanath Temple - is the largest and well decorated temple, Adinath Temple - famous for the sculpted figures of Yakshis, Ghantai Temple - it is well known for the sculpture of a Jain goddess on a winged Garuda and for the sixteen dreams of Mahavira's mother. The Hindu Temples include: The Brahma Temple - the granite stone temple

has a four-faced idol of Brahma, The Vamana Temple - famous for the sculptures and carvings of celestial beauties and the Hanuman Temple - features 8 feet tall statue of Hanuman (the monkey God).

Southern Group of Temples

The Southern group of temples in Khajuraho is located slightly away from the other groups of temples. Southern group of temples consists of Duladeo Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva and Chaturbhuj Temple, dedicated to Lord Vishnu. There are just two temples in the Southern Group of Temples: the first, known as Duladeo Temple, is one of the last to have been built in Khajuraho and features the obligatory erotic sculptures; the second is Chaturbhuj Temple, which is notable for its 3m-high image of Lord Vishnu and the only temple that is devoid of any erotic carvings.

Archaeological Museum

Constructed in the year 1910, the

Archaeological Museum features the loose sculptures and architectural remains of the 10th and 12th century temples. The objects reflect the influences of Hindu and Jain religions. The museum now houses more than 2000 objects. The Archaeological Museum gives insight into the royal past of India. The museum houses architectural ruins and loose sculptures, which once belonged to the temples of Khajuraho. The most important sculptures of this museum represent Brahmanical, Jaina and Buddhist faiths and are displayed in the five galleries inclusive of the main hall.

As per the historical facts, it is believed that the temples were not made by a single Chandela ruler, but the building of temples was followed as a tradition. Every ruler built at least one temple in their lifetime. This continued until the fall of the Chandela Dynasty in 12th century, after which foreign invaders caused much destruction at and around the temples, forcing the citizens to leave



the area. The temples were under forest cover from the 13th to 18th century, and were later discovered by a British engineer, T.S. Burt.

Khajuraho - its Nomenclature

It is believed that during the 11th century, each gate of Khajuraho was flanked by two date/palm trees. Due to the presence of these date trees, Khajuraho got its name Khajura-Vahika. In the Hindi language, "Khajura" means 'Date' and "Vahika" means 'Bearing'.

Temple Architecture

Be it the erotic sculptures, the impeccable symmetry or the sandstone carvings; you are bound to be speechless by the magnificence of the temples in Khajuraho.

Sound and Light Show

The light and sound show is held every evening in the Khajuraho temple complex. The show is entertaining and informative about the construction, history and importance of the temples. This fascinating show spectacle evokes the life and times of the great Chandela Kings and traces the story of the unique temples from the 10th century to the present day. The first show is in English language and the second one is in Hindi. It is held in the open lawns in the temple complex.

Food

You name the cuisine and they have it. From Italian, Chinese, Thai, Continental to Indian; you would find plenty of

restaurants serving different varieties.

Getting there:

By air:
Khajuraho Airport, officially known as Civil Aerodrome Khajuraho is only 5kms away from the main temple.

By rail:
Khajuraho Railway Station is also 5

kms away from the main temple, but it is connected to few major cities like Bhopal and Delhi, and towns directly. Various other railway stations like Satna, Jhansi and Katni, located around 130-200 kms away, can be good alternatives.

By road:

Well-built roads are connected to most of the major cities of India, and are easily accessible.

Things to do after seeing the beautiful temples - In Khajuraho

Share

When it comes to exploring the architecture and history in Madhya Pradesh, Khajuraho turns out to be one of the most preferred destinations. You simply cannot get over this town that was founded long, long ago and has accumulated a historical and natural landmark over the centuries.

The temples of Khajuraho, no doubt, do get a lot of attention from the dedicated travelers but capturing the beauty of this place doesn't stop here.

Apart from exploring its beautiful temples, you can also look forward to taking a tour to other points of interest in and around Khajuraho. Come to this beautiful UNESCO World Heritage Site and explore Khajuraho beyond temples.

Meet the Artist RajkumarJatoliya @ Art Wild Studio

'Art wild studio' is the creative space of local artist RajkumarJatoliya in the

beautiful town of Khajuraho. His work mainly includes fine techniques of charcoal, acrylic, watercolor and pencil drawings. Raj paints and portrays paintings majorly on wildlife as he is an animal lover and loves to do his bit for wildlife conservation through his art.

Pamper Yourself @ KairaliAyurgram

KairaliAyurgram offers a tranquil journey into the world of ayurvedic massage therapy, yoga, and meditation. The entire campus is designed in a way that you experience the peace all around. Come, dedicate a little time to yourself and pamper your mind and body in the splendid settings of this land.

Sound and Light Show- A Magical Evening with The Past

The fascinating sound and light show evokes the life and times of the great Chandela Kings and traces the story of unique temples from the 10th century to the 11th century. The show runs in English (7.30 pm) and Hindi (8.40 pm) at the Western group of temples. You get to listen to the history of Khajuraho in the voice of none other than Mr. Amitabh Bachchan. The light makes full use of the corners and niches of the temples and all in all it is a beautiful experience to watch the sound and light show at this mesmerizing World Heritage Site.

Raneh Waterfalls

Situated about 20 km from Khajuraho, Raneh is a picturesque waterfall. Tourists from all over the country and abroad come here to enjoy the natural beauty. This is also a place to witness rare and breathtaking views around. The cascading waterfall looks stunning thereby giving an opportunity to the nature lovers to sit and adore beauty at its best. The waterfall is also close to Panna Tiger Reserve.

Panna National Park and Tiger Reserve

Panna National Park is completely engrossed by natural beauty. Beyond tigers, one can explore a variety of birds and animals here. The dense teak forest adds to its many charms and lends it a wonderfully mystic touch.

IHG

signs a Holiday Inn hotel in Dehradun

InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), one of world's leading hotel companies has signed a management agreement with Devatva* for Holiday Inn Dehradun Mussoorie Diversion Road. Located on the main road that leads to Mussoorie, one of the most popular hill station in northern India, the hotel will open its doors and welcome guests in 2023.

Popularly known as the gateway city of Uttarakhand, Dehradun is home to some of the most prestigious education institutions in India and is a popular tourist destination attracting domestic travellers for holidays. The city has grown in popularity as a destination for MICE, attracting business from both corporate and social events segments. Additionally, setting up of small to medium scale industries in the state, in the last five to six years has boosted corporate travel into Dehradun and neighbouring regions. Adding to the convenience of the guests, the new Holiday Inn hotel will be located at a 20 minutes' drive from the city centre and only a 50 minutes' drive away from the nearest airport. Given the strategic location, the hotel will be well positioned to cater to the demands from both leisure and corporate travelers visiting Dehradun.

On opening, the newly built hotel will feature 140 well-appointed rooms and will offer an array of facilities including an all-day dining restaurant, a bar & lounge, an outdoor pool and a gym. The

Continues growth momentum for the brand in key markets across the country

guest experience will be enhanced with the signature Holiday Inn hospitality. Additionally, the hotel will feature a business centre, boardrooms and an events venue to accommodate over 500 guests, in order to cater to the demands coming from MICE and corporate segments.

Commenting on the announcement, Sudeep Jain, Vice President, Development, South West Asia, IHG said: "We are delighted to partner with Devatva for our first Holiday Inn hotel in the capital city of Uttarakhand. Dehradun is one of the gateways to a number of pilgrimage, tourist destinations and cantonments in the upper and lower hills of Himalayas, and is visited by travelers in significant numbers. We see this as a great opportunity to offer

a world-class, quality accommodation option to the travelers, with the launch of our popular brand Holiday Inn in the city.

He added, "Holiday Inn brand family has picked up tremendous momentum in India, in the last couple of years and the brand footprint has expanded significantly across key cities in the country. As the Holiday Inn brand gains further popularity with the guests as well as our owners and partners, we will continue to increase our presence and strengthen our position as an eminent player in the Indian hospitality industry."

Sumit Dhawan from Devatva commented "We are pleased to partner with a leading hospitality player such as IHG to develop Holiday Inn Dehradun Mussoorie Diversion Road. Over the years, the popularity of Dehradun as a destination has increased which has led to a upsurge in demand for high quality accommodation. We believe that Holiday Inn brand is a great fit for this market and a perfect option to cater to the needs of guests with different requirements. With availability of large banqueting space the complex will be the most sought after destination for large gatherings/events.

He added: IHG is a trusted name in the Indian hospitality sector and we are confident that together, we will offer a great experience to our guests when we open our doors in 2023."

*IHG® currently has 36 hotels operating across four brands in India, including InterContinental Hotels and Resorts®, Crowne Plaza®, Holiday Inn® and Holiday Inn Express®, and a strong pipeline of 43 hotels due to open in the next 2-3 years.***

***Figures as of June 30th, 2019*







Here's why
you should
spend

Navratri in Gujarat

Drenched in colours and steeped in tradition, there's no place like Gujarat to immerse yourself in the festive spirit of Navratri

The colourful attires, exciting buffets, melodious tunes and unmatched fervour; Navratri surely doesn't get bigger than in Gujarat. As the entire state dresses up in pop coloured, embroidered fineries and crowd the various garba and dandiya raas venues, the vibrant nine days of celebrations make it one of the longest dance festivals in the world. Experiencing Gujarat during the Navratri festival is one of the most colourful encounters.

Navratri, meaning 'nine nights', is one of the most popular and widely celebrated Hindu festivals in many parts of India. Gujarat, however, is the only state that erupts into a nine-night dance festival, perhaps the longest in the world. Each night, all over the state, villages and cities alike, people gather in open spaces to celebrate feminine divinity, referred to as Shakti.

The dance form known as ras garba (also joined sometimes by dandiya, which uses small wooden sticks), comes from Lord Krishna's worship rather than Goddess worship, from the Gop culture of Saurashtra and Kutch. Stories of relationships between Krishna and the Gopis, and their emotions, also often make their way into the ras garba music.

Nevertheless, the focal point of every garba circle is the small Goddess shrine erected by each community to mark the beginning of the festival, on the first day of the Hindu month of Ashwin. The shrine includes a garbo, an earthenware pot, in which a betel nut, coconut, and silver coin are placed.

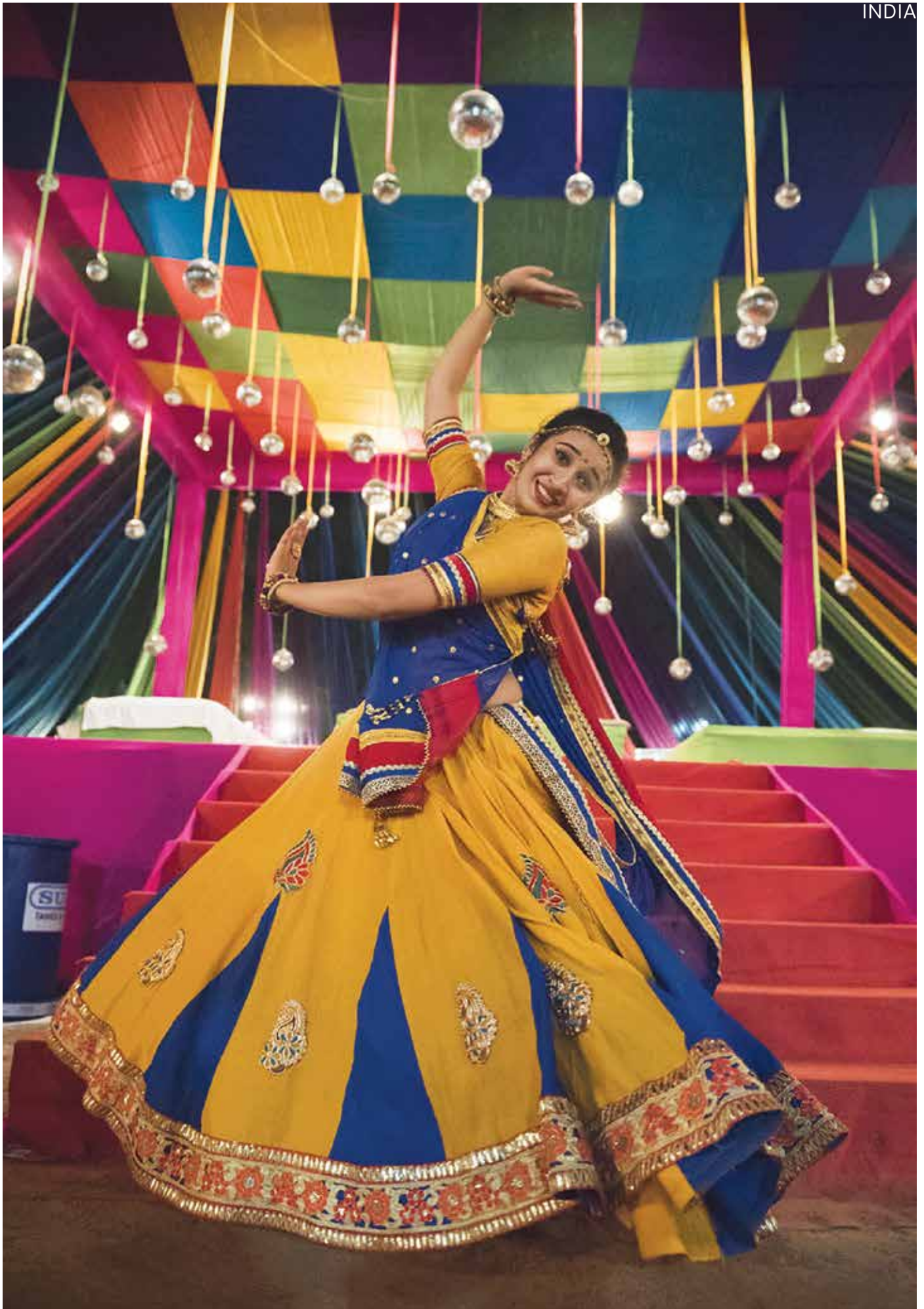
Each night the village or urban neighborhood gathers to perform a puja to one of the nine forms of Goddess. The nine nights are also broken up into sections of three; the first is for Durga, the goddess who destroyed an evil force represented by the demon Mahishasura, and who destroys human impurities; the second is for Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity; the third is for Saraswati, the goddess of wisdom and art. It is a time to celebrate fertility

and the monsoon harvest, represented by a mound of fresh soil in which grains are sown.

After the puja begins the music; it is unmistakable to those who are familiar with the style and irresistible to many. People begin to dance in a circle, whirling away till late into the night. It is not uncommon to find dancers with swords or lit flames and other spectacles.

The traditional dance steps are simple, though over the years people have been inventing more complex steps. Similarly, the music was traditionally acoustic, principally composed of drums and singing, but most people now use amplified sound systems or a blend in the form of a live band with modern instruments.





Vadodara is a good place to find the full range of these styles, traditional to modern, acoustic to amplified, simple to complicated, each one represented in its extreme somewhere in the city.

The tenth day, Dashera, also known as Vijayadashami in South India, is celebrated by doing a puja to bless one's vehicle, and is also the day to buy new vehicles, if necessary. It's also celebrated, probably after getting up far later than usual, by unabashedly eating lots of *fafda*, a salty fried crunchy snack and *jalebi*, a sweet fried sticky snack.

Religion and tradition aside, a garba circle can take on a surprising spiritual power. Women often give up certain eatables during these nights, which can be quite a purifying experience, if done right. It is a time for even the most traditional and housebound women to be out of the house and whirling, uninhibited, towards the divinity that hides within her own body. Many of the songs begin slow and gradually speed up, sending the dancers into a trance, especially when the music and dance is in its rawest form. When you come to a garba, wherever in Gujarat you may find yourself for Navratri, imagine this: A circle, or concentric circles, moving around the central representation of a universal creative force, the source of life; everybody performing the same step; a mandala of energetic potential; the Mother Goddess unleashed.

Bright lights, drapes of varied hues, the soft sounds of folk music in the background are a common occurrence in Gujarat - also, a plausible scenario during the time of festivals. But as it goes from dawn to dusk, Gujarat too, takes on a new façade - one that quickly moves from sly deception to outward extravagance - leaving you in a tizzy. What begins as a faint sound of a group of anklets lurking in the background at the beginning of the night turns into blaring vibrations of folk music perfectly mixed with the tunes of today. While all of India celebrates Navratris with much enthusiasm, nothing beats the fervour of Gujarat during the nine-day festival. Night after night, people from this state gather around in different cities

to celebrate the feminine divinity referred to as 'Shakti.' Along they bring a palette of unimaginable colours and a heart so full of festive excitement; it can bring anything to life.

The spirit of the festival overpowers Gujarat in such a way that it makes it impossible for someone to not blend in with the quintessence of the state to worship and celebrate the power of one-true-Goddess in her nine avatars.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

The celebrations of Navratri in Gujarat go beyond the excitement of Ras Garba. The festival comes from a place of great devotion for the Almighty, which is evident from the enthralling myths and legends associated with the festival.

There are many enthralling legends and myths attached to the history of Navratri:

One version says that - The demon Mahishasur, after being given a boon by the fire god Agni that he wouldn't be killed by weapons bearing masculine names, caused grave destruction and terror. The gods sought the help of Lord Shiva, who advised the invocation of the goddess Shakti. With the gods' prayers, a divine luster sprang from the heart of Lord Shiva and the bodies of all the gods and formed the goddess Adhya Shakti. The gods gave her ornaments, arms and a lion as a vehicle. She fought with the evil Mahishasur for nine long days and nights, and at last, resulted in the beheading of Mahisa on the tenth. The nine nights came to be known as Navratri, while the tenth day was called Vijaya Dashami, the tenth day that brought the triumph of good over the evil.

Second story narrates - Sati (also known as Uma) married Lord Shiva against the wishes of her father, King Daksha Prajapati. In revenge, Daksha organized a huge yagna and invited all the gods and deities except his new son-in-law. Sati decided to attend the yagna despite Lord Shiva's attempt to persuade her not to. The King ignored his daughter's presence and publically abused Lord Shiva. Unable to bear her father's insults, Sati committed suicide

by jumping into the yagna fire. However, she was reborn and again won Lord Shiva as her groom and peace was restored. It is believed that since then Uma comes every year with her four children Ganesh, Kartik, Saraswati and Laxmi and two of her best friends or 'sakhis' called Jaya and Bijaya, to visit her parent's home during Navratri.

These legends and story are part of the history that surrounds the festival of Navratri and are going to be around as long as the festival continues.

Also, signifying a time of soil fertility and monsoon harvest, a mound of fresh soil with grains sown is kept in every house that worships the Goddess and it is well-watered till the very last day of the festival.

A festival that initially began as a token to honour the greatness of the Adhya Shakti has today metamorphosed into an event of outrageous proportions with thousands of people coming together to sing, dance, and make merry. The Goddess is worshipped in different forms in the nine-day long festival, which is also one of the world's longest and most celebrated dance festivals.

Garba happens at night in villages and neighborhoods all around Gujarat, so just step outside and follow the booming garba music. Vadodara is considered the cultural capital of Gujarat, and the most sought after location for celebrating Navratri. Try to visit at least one village garba too, for a range of experience.

Religious pilgrimage during this festival focuses mainly in the Shakti Peethas: Ambaji, Pavagadh and Bahuchraji near Mehsana. There are also major celebrations in temples such as Ashapura Mata-no-Madh in Kutch, Khodiyar Mandir near Bhavnagar, and Chamunda Mata Mandir at Chotila on the Ahmedabad-Rajkot National Highway.

Begin your journey at the cultural capital of Gujarat, Vadodara. The United Way of Garba, one of the most-well known Ras Garba events in the country, takes place here and witnesses as many as 30,000 people (at least) every night for nine nights. The cheeriness of



the crowd at this event is contagious and so wide-spread, that even the most popular celebrities cannot keep away from it. Began for a good cause to raise charity, the event continues to donate the money to 140 charitable organizations around the state. From good food to dance competitions, the event is a one-stop destination for dance, dine and everything fine.

Ahmedabad is another destination that attracts a huge crowd during Navratris alongside a number of famous singers and popular faces from films and television, who dance to the tunes of folk music perfectly synced with modern-day tunes. An atmosphere of merriment quickly takes over the city during this time, especially at the Pals area. A must-attend event

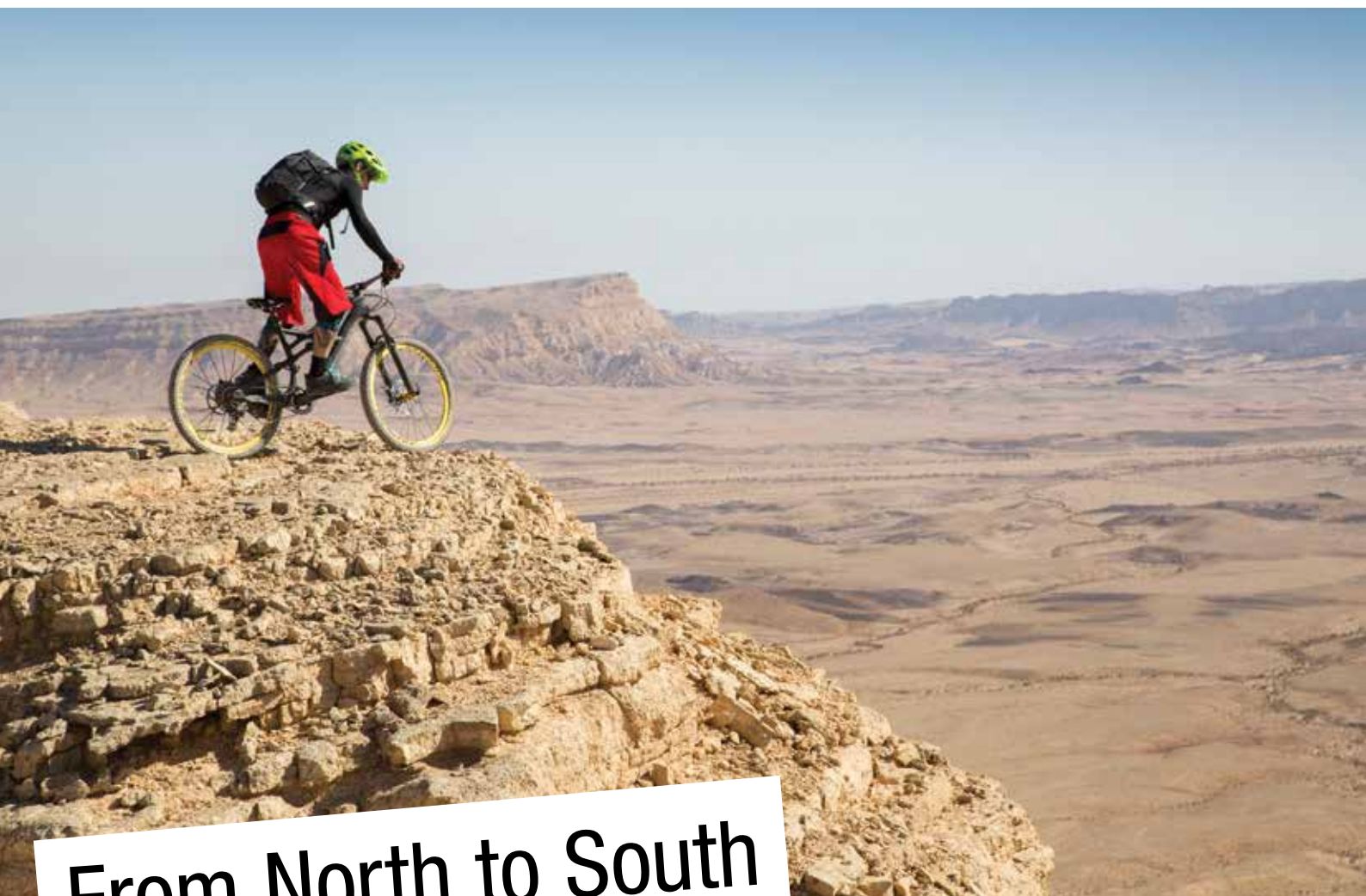
in Ahmedabad during this time is the Vibrant Gujarat Navaratri festival that is organized at the GMDC Ground every year.

Gujarat's best-kept secret (for visitors to the state), Somnath's Navratri event - the Navratri Mahotsav at Somnath Mahadev Temple in Somnath is a delightful sight and should be a part of your itinerary. As long queues finish up after prayers, the place takes a 360-degree turn with bright lights, stalls serving authentic Gujarati food, and people dressed in beautiful Ghagra Cholis and Dhosis swaying to the loud music.

Other popular destinations that should be a part of your sojourn are Rajkot and Surat. Rajkot's Leo-Pioneer Group Navratri Event and the event

at Race Course Club are much-loved by not just locals and tourists, even celebrities. A riot of colours, you will find different troupes here performing folk dances and participating in events to identify exceptional dancing and singing talent.

Gujarat welcomes you with open arms and takes you in its embrace, filling your heart with joy, and eyes with wonderment at the sights you witness during this time. Navratri is celebrated for nine nights, beginning on the first day of the bright fortnight of the Hindu month Ashwin, roughly corresponding to dates in the Gregorian calendar in September/October. This also usually coincides with the end of the rainy season. Dasara/Vijaydashami, is the tenth day of Ashwin.



From North to South and East to West, **Israel** is the Land of Adventure

Tourists are taking notice of Israel's diverse landscape and the adventurous activities it offers

Beyond Israel's most popular tourist attractions – such as Jerusalem's Old City, the Dead Sea and Tel Aviv's White City – the diverse country has lush forests to the north and a vibrant desert to the south, offering ample opportunities for adventure travelers to explore. Whether visitors are looking to rappel off an arch into a great and beautiful abyss, hike cross country or swim among the dolphins, adventure tourism in Israel is booming.

Spanning only 263 miles, adventure-seekers will appreciate Israel's offerings for adventurers of every level and interest, whether they are traveling north, south, east or west.

In the North

• **Rappelling at Keshet**

Cave: Keshet Cave, one of the lesser



known rappelling sites in Israel, offers a beautiful view of Israel from the highest point in the Western Galilee, with a vista that extends to the Mediterranean Sea, Akko, Haifa and the entire Galilee. Travelers will rappel off the high natural stone arch through the air and down 130 – 165 feet with an amazing panoramic view.

- **Skiing in Golan Heights:** Israel isn't known for having snow, but during the winter months, avid skiers have the opportunity to enjoy their favorite sport and jump slopes at the Mount Hermon Ski Resort in the Golan Heights. Mount Hermon has 14 ski runs and 5 chair lifts attracting about 300,000 visitors between January and March.

- **Bird Watching:** Bird-watching enthusiasts will love this nature reserve, as 500 million migrating birds pass

through Hula Valley Nature Reserve wetlands each year. In the springtime you can find more than 390 different species of birds passing through and stopping in this valley, which truly makes for a magical site to see.

- **Hot air balloon ride** - If adrenaline isn't calling out to you, enjoy a leisurely Hot Air Balloon ride in the Jazreel Valley as you watch the sun rise over the horizon with champagne breakfast

In the South

- **Sand Boarding:** With a significant part of Israel being covered by desert, travelers can jeep across the

dunes in the Negev Desert. Throughout the area are a variety of clear and suitable sand dunes that are perfect for sand surfing.

- **Swimming with Dolphins:** The famous Dolphin Reef in Eilat is an ecological site that is a natural habitat for dolphins, allowing animal-lovers to get up close and swim along with the dolphins as they enjoy the beautiful coral reef.

- **Snorkeling and Scuba Diving:** Known for its crystal-clear waters and vibrant marine life, Eilat's coral reef is one of Israel's most popular areas for snorkeling and scuba diving. Home to over 250 coral species and



more than 1,200 fish species, travelers can expect to see a variety of turtles, rays, butterfly fish, parrotfish, octopus, lionfish and more. Perfect for families with kids, the Underwater Observatory Park allows visitors to explore its marine life 40 feet below the surface with two submerged observation decks.

- **Tandem skydiving** - Enjoy a birds' eye view of the Mediterranean, Dead or Red Sea when you go skydiving in Israel

- **Rapelling on the cliffs of the world's largest natural crater** - The Ramon Crater in Israel's Negev Desert is the world's largest natural erosion crater or makhtesh. Go rappelling on the cliffs of the crater, camel ride or horseback ride along its rim or hop on a jeep tour and head to Bio Ramon, home to 40 species of desert wildlife. Sleep beneath the stars at the only campsite in the makhtesh, Be'erot campground, to experience Bedouin hospitality in its true spirit

Cross-Country

- **Hiking the Israel National Trail:** Covering Israel from top to bottom, hikers will traverse a wide range of landscapes as they trek roughly 683 miles from north to south and east to west. From the green hills of the Galilee to the orange desert in the Negev, backpackers will enjoy all the beauty Israel has to offer. Wadis are magnets for hikers and bikers alike and canyons are ideal for wild ibex and gazelle sightings. Alternatively, cycle on the Dead Sea shore or the Nahal Pratzim River Valley Trail that offers stunning mountain scenery and a possible stop in the Flour Cave, a definite thrill as it is spookily white inside

- **ATV or Jeep Tours:** ATV and Jeep tours offer thrill-seekers the opportunity to explore Israel in style, whether they want to explore the Golan, the Galilee, the Judean or Negev deserts. Each tour is custom

tailored to leave every traveler speechless as they explore the adventurous side of Israel. Take a jeep tour to Timna Park in Eilat, home to the world's first copper mine, with beautiful hikes in the Red Canyon.

- **Windsurfing and Kite surfing:** A popular activity in Tel Aviv, Eilat and the Sea of Galilee, travelers have the opportunity to experience this favorite sport in different conditions. Beginners can take a course at the prestigious windsurfing and kitesurfing school north of Tel Aviv.

- **White water rafting** - True adrenaline rush can be experienced while rafting on the River Jordan with incredible rapids that have narrow passages bordered by overhanging trees. If the rapids are too intense, one can go water-skiing, stand-up paddle boarding, surfing, parasailing or enjoy a number of water activities all year round in the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and the Sea of Galilee



Azerbaijan Tourism Board underpins commitment to Indian tourists with a three-city roadshow

Tourism from India to Azerbaijan increased by 80% in 2019 compared to the same period last year Delhi, Bangalore and Mumbai roadshows' showcase Azerbaijan as a unique, high-quality and affordable destination

Azerbaijan Tourism Board (ATB), the national body that supports Azerbaijan's growing tourism industry, is holding a three-city roadshow in India. Running from 9-13 September and visiting Delhi, Bangalore and Mumbai, the event will bring together key travel industry leaders in the region to build valuable connections between the countries.

H.E. Mr. Ashraf Shikhaliyev, Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to India, Officials from the Azerbaijan Tourism Board, led by CEO, Florian Sengstschnid and Mr. Nazim Samadov, Deputy Director Executive of Azerbaijan Airlines / Buta Airways Director attended the roadshow. The unique platform gave Indian trade partners and travel agents an opportunity to learn about the diverse experiences that Azerbaijan has to offer. Similar setups took place in Mumbai and Bangalore, with delegates interacting with over 900 Indian retail partners including tour operators, travel agents, cruise specialists, wedding planners and MICE representatives.

With a direct flight from Delhi and a simplified electronic visa procedure for Indian passport holders, tourism from India to Azerbaijan increased by 80% in 2019. The new initiatives are expected to improve Azerbaijan's ranking among countries with a high tourism contribution towards national GDP, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council 2018 Impact Report. It is forecast to be at 6% per annum over the course of the next 10 years ranking

it amongst the world's top 20 high potential countries.

This follows the launch of ATB's marketing campaign '**Take another look**' which encourages travellers to discover Azerbaijan's hidden gems and aims to double current in-bound tourism by 2023.

Situated at the crossroads of Eastern Europe and Western Asia, Azerbaijan has nine of the world's eleven climate zones, offering travellers an affordable European experience all year round. From Baku's modern Flame Towers to the depths of its UNESCO-listed Old City, there is something for everyone in Azerbaijan. Whether travelling as a group or as a solo traveller, its life and energy are infectious. With bazaars and jazz clubs, it's also an ideal destination for family holidays, honeymoon travel and destination weddings.

"Azerbaijan is the ideal destination for numerous reasons. With excellent connectivity and a wide variety of experiences, Baku is an affluent city with modern infrastructure. It is still a relatively unexplored destination, which is a key selling point for Indian tourists who want a unique experience. We are seeing a surge in business events and wedding travel – Azerbaijan provides the perfect set up for weddings with world class hotels and gorgeous indoor and outdoor locations. With over 15 million weddings each year, the Indian wedding, honeymoon and milestone celebrations market offers tremendous potential," said **H.E. Mr. Ashraf Shikhaliyev, Ambassador of the**

Republic of Azerbaijan to India.

"These roadshows underpin our commitment to India and its residents. The Azerbaijani people are excited to share their culture, cuisine and country with visitors from India. We encourage everyone to indulge their palate with unique flavours and expect a plethora of gourmet vegetarian options that will delight food connoisseurs. We look forward to enhancing our tourism proposition in the industry and becoming a leading destination brand in the world, as we continue to provide tourists with unique, authentic experiences that will leave them with lasting memories for a lifetime. Tourism is the cornerstone of Azerbaijan's diversified economic growth and the recent investments in tourism and country promotion are testimony to the fact that Azerbaijan is poised to become a premium MICE destination with a well-developed corporate infrastructure equipped to host large-scale business meetings and conferences," commented **Florian Sengstschnid, CEO of the Azerbaijan Tourism Board.**

"Azerbaijan Airlines route network is constantly analysing demand from tourists and looking at launching direct flights to these destinations. The national air carrier AZAL is known for its high level of service and safety and in the coming years, we are working towards expanding and adding flights to more destinations in the Asian region," said **Mr. Nazim Samadov, Deputy Director Executive of Azerbaijan Airlines / Buta Airways Director.**

OTOAI

expands its footprint in 2019



OTOAI, the Outbound Tour Operators Association of India, is a non-profit organization working towards developing and promoting highest professional and ethical standards in the tourism industry. With every act, it aims at providing consumer protection and market efficiency. Here is an exclusive interview with Mahendra Vakharia, President OTOAI, highlighting how far OTOAI has come and what all it plans to achieve in the near future.

Q Tell us something about OTOAI, Travel Trends and how did 2018 fair for OTOAI?

A OTOAI's mission is to lead the travel industry in India by setting the highest standards of ethics and professional excellence while propagating an ideology of collective ambition of selling travel through effective representation, shared knowledge and collaboration with stakeholders. To these code and standard, the integrity of and trust in travel industry will improve. As you know, OTOAI is a national, not-for-profit organization comprising India's outbound tour operators and travel agents as its members. With a targeted membership base of over 2000 members, and regional chapters around India, we are dedicated to develop and promote the highest ethical and professional standards in the travel and tourism industry. We aim to foster an environment of collaboration with various stakeholders through our ideology of collective ambition. The organization aspires to be the leading voice on national and global issues of travel, tourism and hospitality industry while propagating

fairness, market efficiency, and customer protection.

2018 was a good year and definitely a progressive year for us. Going into the objectives and mission of the Association we Facilitated various events, workshops, round tables, discussions and expert opinions. To name only a few these include -

- We had arranged for training sessions in soft skills, selling skills, communications skills for members in Delhi and Ahmedabad more than once in collaboration with professional trainers and certificates were handed over to the participants.

- Southern and Western Chapter had arranged for various destination training workshops for members along with the NTO's / DMC / Consulate for visa discussion and briefing.

- We had 2 Members meet in Delhi and Ahmedabad. The Ahmedabad meet was in cooperation with ACCOR Hotels for its product presentation and training for the members.

- We also had our maiden EC meeting in Colombo in January, sponsored and arranged by Sri Lankan Airlines and Accor Hotels.

- In addition to this, we had a very successful and eventful 4th Convention in the beautiful City of Cape Town in August 2018, with pre and post tours visiting the beautiful regions of South Africa like Garden Route, Kruger Park etc...the event was well attended by members and also the inaugural session had eminent personalities like the Shadow Minister of South Africa for Tourism, Consul General of the Indian Consulate in Cape Town, CEO of South African Tourism, The South African Tourism Hub Head, Middle East, India and Southeast Asia based in Mumbai, and prominent International Speakers.

- We also saw a good increase in the number of membership and welcomed more than 80 new members to the OTOAI family.

- We had meetings with the Ambassador of Cuba / Ambassador and Consul Officials of Philippines / meeting with the visiting Scotland's Deputy First Minister / meeting with

Ministry officials from Greece Tourism during OTM / meeting with NTO's senior most officials of Azerbaijan and Qatar.

- Through my personal initiation and followup, for the first time OTOAI was invited by the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, to be part of the very high profile and important Indo-Japan Joint Working Group, Tourism Council on Tourism Promotion meeting held in New Delhi in January 2019, to discuss, deliberate and decide measures, systems, challenges etc for the bi-lateral promotion between the two countries

Q What challenges OTOAI face for promotion outbound tourism?

A There are different levels and types of challenges that we face in promoting Outbound Tourism -

- Each summer season, there is a lot of difficulty and challenge in getting the appointments with the VFS office of Schengen Consulates for bio metrics. This leads to a lot of delays and rescheduling of the clients travel plans. We are trying to discuss this issue with the Consulates and see what best and how best it can be resolved.

- Delays in visa processing time by certain consulates and obtaining bio-metrics dates from VFS office for Schengen Countries has always been a great challenge and frustration both at the clients end and with the consulates. We are in communication with the Consulate and respective tourism boards to resolve this.

Q TV- What Tourism trends do OTOAI look into in 2019-2020?

A All of the members have their own strengths and focus areas of destinations. For us majorly we focus on the long-haul sectors like Europe, Canada, USA, Australia, New Zealand, Alaska Cruise and South Africa as the major flow of our clients is to these destinations.

**** Training in soft skills for the members of the association is equally a very important activity and**

this we have been doing regularly and addressing it

Q What challenges do you face in the aviation industry.

A The major challenge in the aviation industry is the turbulence faced by Jet Airways – and the delay in the immediate rectification of the same from the Government as well as the Airline has led to a lot of disruption in clients travel plans, due to cancellation of flights leading to a lot of loss of time and money. Also, the grounding of the Boeing MAX 8 aircraft in Spice Jet lead to some challenges in the domestic skies.

Q What issues and trends you would like to focus on 2019-2020 for the members, for the industry and with the government?

A We will be trying to work closely with the Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India for the Outbound Sector representation and contribution to whatever needs to strengthen the Bi Lateral Tourism from Countries where outbound tourism from India is very strong. For the coming year we will like to focus a lot more in getting the Women and Youth of our Industry and members to be in the focus and highlight their achievements and contributions and play the role of Mentor to the Next Gen in our Industry

Q Kindly highlight upcoming activities that are in pipeline.

A We just concluded a Members Meet in Ahmedabad on 27 March. The coming months of April and May everyone is very busy with the summer holiday season. So, our next activities will be focused and planned for in June onwards. We are working on a Mega EduFam Trip for the members and once it is confirmed we will announce it. Looking after the interests of its members, OTOAI has made it big in the travel trade industry. The organisation has come a long way and it can be said that sky is the limit for them.



Bangkok and Hua Hin shine for “redefined” MICE of Thailand

Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau's (TCEB) annual international media familiarisation trip 2019 is showcasing the new strength of Bangkok's and Hua Hin's dual destination dynamism as product development continues to create new attractions and activities at a community level. Mrs. Nichapa Yoswee, TCEB's team members and media representatives during this year annual international media familiarisation trip. TCEB's Senior Vice President - Business Mrs. Nichapa Yoswee said: "TCEB is using this to help redefine business experiences for MICE travellers in both destinations. The brand-new attraction at ICONSIAM, the new venue - True ICONSIAM Hall, together with the latest exclusive Michelin starred culinary experiences, are helping to strengthen international MICE business in Thailand. While innovative attractions and activities in local communities, like coconut palm sugar production in Samut Songkram, salt spa in Phetchaburi, both in the vicinity of Hua Hin, and herbal products in Hua Hin, present redefined business opportunities and experiences often not previously available."

This redefined idea of TCEB comes amidst the stronger role of MICE in Thailand's national development. MICE is now incorporated as a new growth driving engine in the government's 20-year national development plan, plus the recent government policy to promote more local and community attractions beyond the established destinations.

"The positive development in Thailand's MICE policy is reflected in

TCEB's record performance in the 2019 financial year. TCEB has won bids for 11 international conferences while attracted 17 new trade shows and 12 mega-sized meeting and incentive groups of over 100,000 delegates," Mrs. Nichapa said.

This year also sees Thailand hosting two global MICE events: the UIA Asia Pacific Round Table 2019 scheduled for 19 to 20 September in Pattaya and the 86th UFI Global Congress 2019 scheduled for 6 to 9 November in Bangkok. In 2020, TCEB will continue to focus on key markets around Southeast Asia, Europe, USA, China and India supported by new development of MICE infrastructure and products. This includes increased function space of new venue hotel opening and expanded and upgraded transportation options in Bangkok and nationwide. The development is in conjunction with TCEB's '7 MICE Magnificent Themes', BizConnect Application and the Online Request for Support (RFS) among many other initiatives to promote new ideas for MICE and tools to facilitate events located in Thailand.

"Another key direction of TCEB in 2020 is deepening private-public sector partnership and collaboration, such as the Thailand Incentive and Convention Association (TICA), Thai Exhibition Association (TEA) and Thai Hotels Association (THA), to find creative MICE solutions and new MICE experiences for clients hosting events in Thailand, which we believe will enhance redefined business experiences of our clients" Mrs. Nichapa concluded.

TCEB president Mr. Chiruit Isarangkun Na Ayuthaya (front row,

centre) also joined the international media representatives in one of the many activities during the four-day familiarisation trip.

FACTS & FIGURES

So far in 2019, Thailand's MICE sector continues to display vibrancy as it moves from strength to strength. Overall overseas visitor arrivals and revenue (Q1 to Q3 2019) recorded 967,828 travellers (up 6.25% over same period in 2018) and revenue of 70,438 million baht (approximately US\$ 2.3 billion, up 2.23% over the same period last year).

By sector, MICE arrivals to Thailand showed amazing resiliency across the board. Meetings accounted for a total of 249,371 travellers (+4.44% over 2018) and revenue of 22,022 million baht (+6.53%); Incentives totalled 274,093 travellers (+3.28%) with revenue of 15,255 million baht (+0.15%); Conferences totalled 228,592 travellers (-3.05%) on revenue of 17,902 million baht (-3.48%); Exhibitions totalled 215,772 travellers (+20.02%) with total revenue of 15,259 million baht (+5.63%)

Asia is the top source market by geographical region with 852,640 arrivals to Thailand, followed by Europe with 41,357 arrivals, Oceania with 35,571 arrivals and the Americans with 24,834 arrivals. After that the Middle East and Africa came in with 7,655 and 5,771 arrivals respectively.

In 2020, the number of overseas MICE visitors to Thailand is expected to increase by 11% to 1,386,000 arrivals and revenue by 5% to 105,600 million baht.



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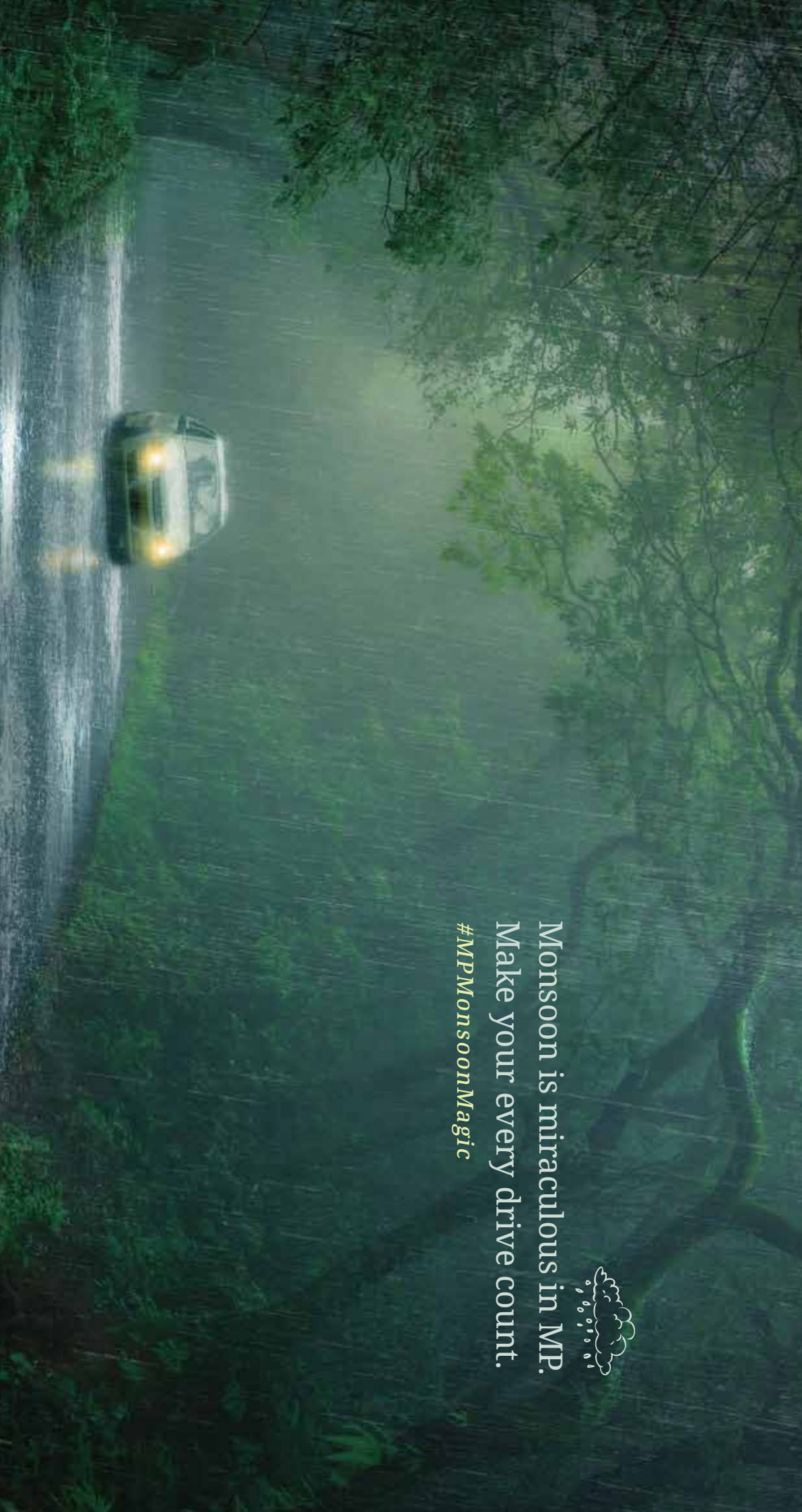


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