

# 1 IN CIRCULATION &amp; READERSHIP

SOUTH ASIA'S LEADING TRAVEL TRADE FORTNIGHTLY

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# TRAVTALK

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Talk  
Inside

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Published from : ★ India ★ Middle East

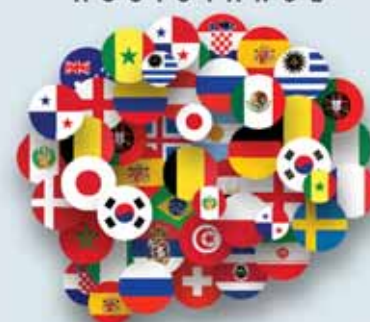
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# Agents do mean business

With a recent KPMG-Google study reporting that the Indian travel agents' market is expected to reach US\$40 bn by 2022, **TRAVTALK** spoke to industry leaders who said that this would be fuelled by aviation boom.



**Jyoti Mayal**  
Hony Secretary  
Travel Agents Association of India

“Such growth will soon be a reality in the way business is growing. The international travel growth last year was 9 per cent from India while the domestic growth was 23 per cent. Millennials are travelling a lot as they are working, making money and hoarding money. Tourism is already witnessing a growth in corporate, conferences, incentives as well as weddings.”



**Sanjay Narula**  
Vice President  
Travel Agents Association of India

“The demand for airline seats for Indians is going to triple in the next five years. A stable government after elections would spur economic growth. The tourism policy in India is not very beneficial to local operators for inbound business, a reason why great quality products, hotels and services are available at much affordable prices often.”



**Guldeep Singh Sahni**  
Founder & Immediate Past President  
Outbound Tour Operators Association of India

“The growth can be attributed to the increase in both outbound and inbound. People who want to go for a holiday are visiting agents and OTAs to know the offers, packages and consultation. Youngsters want to do bookings themselves after researching. There is again a segment of people who relies on agents.”



**Anil Kalsi**  
Managing Partner  
Ambe World Travels

“The paucity for seats in Indian aviation has not hampered the demand. The average person from a metro city is travelling at least twice a year. Second factor is the growth from Tier-II cities where people are increasingly travelling abroad. Students also travel outbound between August and September for admissions.”

Inputs by Nisha Verma

# Inbound to hit ` 35 trillion by 2029

According to a FICCI-Yes Bank report, tourism in India is bound to achieve a staggering growth in revenue after generating ` 16.91 trillion in 2018, which accounted for 9.2 per cent of the total economy.



TT Bureau

The recently released FICCI-Yes Bank Re-

port titled 'India Inbound Tourism: Unlocking the Opportunities' has underlined India as a tourism powerhouse. It revealed that by 2029, the Indian tourism sector is likely

to grow at 6.7 per cent per annum to reach INR 35 trillion with 9.6 per cent of GDP. The report claims that tourism in the country has generated US\$247.3 billion (INR 16.91

trillion) in 2018, with a growth of 6.7 per cent and accounting for 9.2 per cent of the total economy. Currently, it is the eighth largest country in terms of contribution to travel and

tourism GDP. The report also highlights that the tourism sector generated 26.7 million jobs in 2018. By 2029, the sector is expected to provide employment to nearly 53 mil-

lion people. Growing disposable income, increase in new millennial tourists, new travel destinations as well as new themes of tourism will further propel the growth.



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# Thai visa fee waiver extended

In a recent move, the Thai government has extended its the visa-on-arrival fee waiver scheme for 20 countries including India till October 31, 2019.

 TT Bureau

TAT has announced that the Royal Thai Government has approved the extension of the visa-on-arrival fee waiver for citizens of 20 countries for another six months, until October 31, 2019. The announcement was made on April 30, 2019 in a bid

extended for citizens of India as well as Andora, Bulgaria, Bhutan, China including Taiwan, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Fiji, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Papua New Guinea, Romania, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, and they will not have to pay the 2,000 baht visa-on-arrival fee

TAT recorded 1.6 million arrivals to Thailand from India in 2018 and is expecting to reach 2 million arrivals in 2019. This year, TAT will be focusing on niche segments

January 14, 2019, and was further extended till April 30, and has now been stretched till October 31, 2019.

The new visa policy would give a boost to the arrivals from India in the next few months with peak summer holiday season and would even allow people to travel from India to Thailand in the Navratra holidays in October. Fuelling this growth will be a number of airlines, both full-service carriers and low-cost carriers, which have recently launched new connections from various parts of India, including Tier II, III cities to Thailand.

TAT recorded 1.6 million arrivals to Thailand from India in 2018 and is expecting to reach 2 million arrivals in

2019. This year, TAT will be focusing on niche segments like women travellers, families and weddings from India. Last year, we welcomed 1.6 million Indians to Thailand, which is a growth of around 12 per cent. Particularly in December 2018, the market growth was about 63 per cent after the visa fee waiver.



to stimulate and promote tourism as well as to enhance the kingdom's attractiveness among foreign visitors. The visa fee waiver has been

for exploring Thailand as a destination for not more than 15 days. The visa-on-arrival fee waiver was first approved from November 15, 2018, to

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Jet's loss. Who's gain?

With Jet Airways suspending operations, LCC carriers as well as full-service ones are launching new routes to not only fill the vacant slots of Jet Airways but also grab its market share. However, this is at a time when the entire world is looking at India as the fastest growing aviation market. At its peak, Jet had the maximum domestic connections with codeshares, but what most people vouch for is the airline's service. The full-service carrier was a favourite amongst corporate and business travellers, especially in a scenario where national airline Air India was not doing too well. What worked against Jet Airways was the price-war currently being played in the Indian aviation market, and that it also tried to join the race. Today, as Jet's slots are being taken by other operators, its aircraft is also finding place in the fleet of other airlines. While many must still be grieving the loss of a prestigious full-service carrier, there are others who are trying to fill the gap and make profit in the process, which too is required in a country where demand of air travel is at an all-time high.

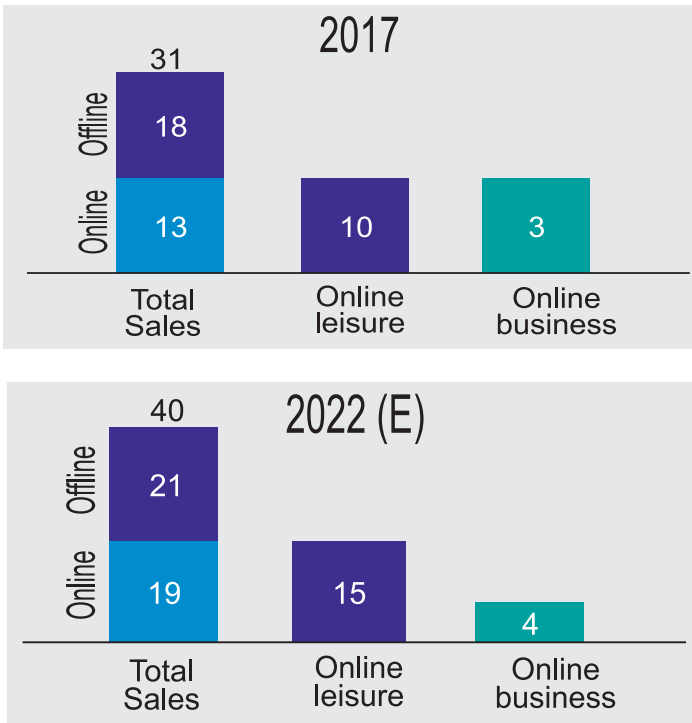
Mitigate overtourism

For years, residents living near New Zealand's top tourist attractions complained and warned that the rising numbers of tourists are affecting them and the nature significantly. Burgeoning numbers of tourists, dominated by millions of new middle-class travellers, are taking a toll on natural areas. As more countries and cities face growing numbers, a minority of the world's favourite destinations are increasingly viewing them as a burden. As an impact, the growth of tourists in recent years has already breached the UNWTO's forecast annual rise of 3.8 per cent for the decade 2010-20. On one side, the rising numbers indicate growth but the alarming question arising is if we are ready for this. Bhutan, for instance, wisely adopted a 'High Value Low Impact' approach with a daily visa fee. With a more select clientele, the Himalayan country earns revenue without enduring more crowds. Can India follow the same approach while dealing with rampant domestic travellers?

Agents' market to be \$40 bn by 2022

The Indian travel agents market is expected to reach USD40 billion by 2022, as per a latest study by KPMG and Google. The share of online travel agents (OTAs) is set to increase to 47 per cent in 2022.

Travel agents market in India to see 30 per cent growth over the next five years  
Travel agents sales in India –by purpose of visit (In USD bn)



- Growth is expected to be driven by online travel agents whose overall market share is likely to increase from approximately 41 per cent to approximately 47 per cent in the coming five years taking the online travel agents market to USD19 billion by 2022.
- Currently OTAs in India cater to a range of travel related booking services –airlines, accommodation and lodging, package holidays, cab rentals, cruise sales, travel insurance and other transport services.
- This includes both leisure and business travel sales. Leisure travel forms a majority of sales for OTAs and continues to remain the focus for major Indian OTAs in the near future.

Sources: Intermediaries in India, Euromonitor International, September 2017

Package tours take over

Unbeknownst to many, Guideline Travels has been selling Europe and US tours for many years and is looking to add more agents to its expanding list of channel sales partners pan India.



TT Bureau

It is perhaps the industry's best-kept secret. Mumbai-headquartered Guideline Travels, known for its cruise products, is equally successful in promoting its international tour packages. It has been selling Europe for more than 15 years and US for more than nine years. "We are more than cruises. In fact, we bring out our own brochure with global itineraries like Europe, US, Australia, and New Zealand," says Pradeep Saboo, Partner, Guideline Travels.

The company sells B2B as well as B2C packages. B2B is done through its authorised



Pradeep Saboo  
Partner  
Guideline Travels

agent partners called 'Channel Sales Partners' located pan India. "For B2B, I only sell group tours and not FIT tailor-made packages. We currently have 11 channel partners, apart from our own four offices in Hyderabad, Chennai and even

Raipur and are looking to add more in various cities. We train these agents in Mumbai and give them 25 of our brochures," Saboo adds.

Guideline has many departures which have been created by them and not outsourced from anyone. "You cannot compare these packages with anyone in the market today. Our packages are completely inclusive and we have a policy of no optional sightseeing on tour. All meals, tips, insurance are included as well," Saboo clarifies.

Moreover, all meals are vegetarian/Jain, except the breakfast which is at the

hotel. But this has not stopped non-vegetarian clients because of its all-inclusive deal. While it also sells to agents outside of its 11 channel partners, the commissions differ, giving more advantage to the partners. There is no joining fee for agents who are free to conduct their regular business except group tours. Saboo adds, "We need active agents. They don't need to be exclusive with us, except when it comes to package tours, which needs to be done only with us. We offer them continuous guidance and their clients can call us directly for clarifications. Moreover, we don't require a minimum guarantee." ↴



# India is key market for



India remains the fourth largest market for Ras Al Khaimah and is constantly growing year-on-year. The emirate wants to showcase its key assets to Indians whilst engaging in B2B and B2C campaigns.



TT Bureau

**H**ailtham Mattar, Chief Executive Officer, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority, attended Arabian Travel Market (ATM) for the eighth year in a row. "ATM is a platform to meet key partners and make announcements on the deals we have signed. We made an announcement on our signing with Turkey's Pegasus Airlines this year that is set to commence a direct service between Istanbul and Ras Al Khaimah. It will connect Ras Al Khaimah with 26 destinations. We also made an announcement on signing a deal with

Insisting that India also is a big source market, he shared, "India is our fourth largest market with a 22 per cent year-on-year (YOY) growth. Weddings in Ras Al Khaimah have grown from zero in 2017 to 16 in 2018. Two of those weddings were Bollywood actors' weddings."

With a representation office in Delhi and Mumbai, Ras Al Khaimah is set to become aggressive with more B2C campaigns in an endeavour to attract the Indian customers and agents. "Having worked with tour operators and engaging in B2B campaigns,

we now want to talk directly to the consumers, and ensure that we feature Ras Al Khaimah's key assets that are attractive to the Indian market. Even our models in photography are Indians that showcase the campaigns in India. Weddings, as I mentioned before,

are a key focus, for which we are now signing deals with some of large key wedding planners in India; some of who have a portfolio of about 65 million dollars a year." Going forward, the emirate will be chiefly focused on campaigns

and promotions in the Middle East. "Our upcoming campaign would focus on staycations and short trips. This is an opportunity for people to take advantage of some of the discounts that the hotels offer," he said. 🇦🇪



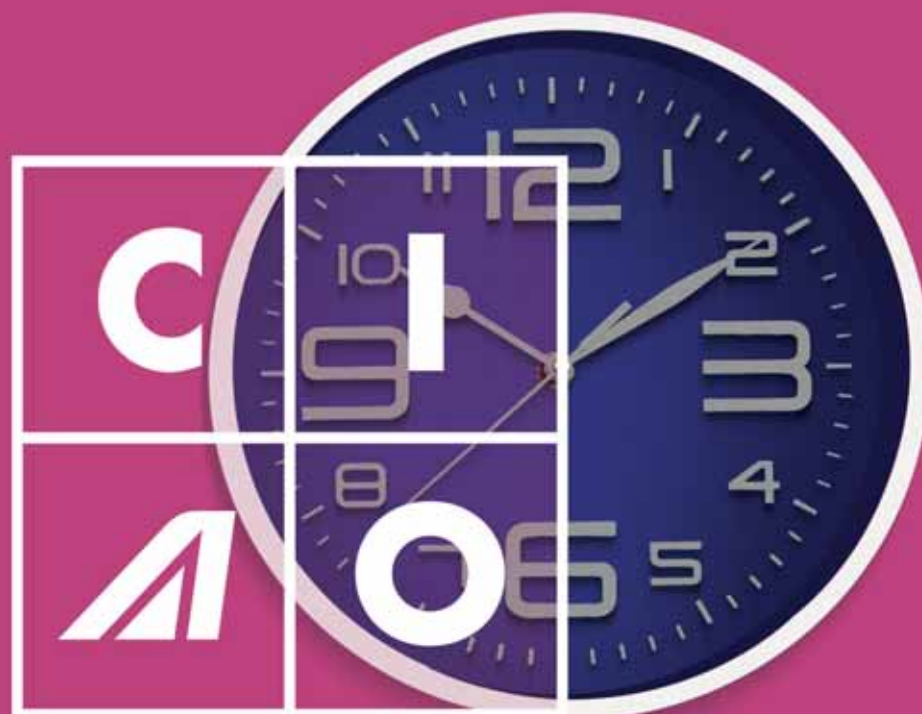
**Hailtham Mattar**  
Chief Executive Officer, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority

Bear Grylls Survival Academy, a popular brand with 20 locations in the UK, the US and across China. This resonates with our strategy to develop Ras Al Khaimah and position it as the adventure hub of tourism in the Middle East," he informed.

Mattar claimed that the emirate has witnessed a substantial growth from most Middle Eastern countries. "We have seen growth from countries like Egypt and Jordan. UAE is the number one market for us, representing 38 per cent of the overall tourists. Countries like Saudi, Kuwait and Oman show a great potential and a substantial growth," he added.

*Fuelled by the digital wave, Indian travellers are set to spend an additional \$24 billion on online travel bookings over the next three years*

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In March 2019, Alitalia was confirmed as the most punctual airline in the world with 89.31% of flights landed on schedule. In addition, it also reached top ranking for the overall first quarter of 2019. The on-time performance report was published by FlightStats, a US independent company which drafts, every month, a list of the on-time performance of airlines worldwide.

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# Russia hosts 120 Indian agents

The Russian Information Center in Mumbai conducted a chartered FAM flight of 120 agents from India to introduce two new regions of Russia and announce the Mumbai-Moscow flight of Ural Airlines. **Paresh Navani**, Co-Principle, Russian Information Center in India, talks about how they work closely with agents.



Peden Doma Bhutia from Russia

**Q**What was the thought behind hosting a large delegation of 120 agents to Russia?

Russian Information Centre (RIC) has conducted 12

Fam tours to Russia so far. The idea this time was to introduce two new regions of Russia and introduce Ural Airlines' new Mumbai-Moscow route. What better way than to make the first chartered Fam flight outbound from India to Russia! Fam tours are always challenging and our largest group size before this was around 50 travel experts with 12 tours under our belt. It was the best way to showcase the service, quality and extent of our capabilities to serve Indian guests in Russia.

## Outbound Tourists from India to Russia

Year	Tourist Visas	% growth
2015	33,000	—
2016	56,000	58
2017	71,000	20
2018	91,000	27

**Q**The Indo-Russian Tourism Exchange programme was launched in 2016. How has the tourism scenario changed ever since?

The Indo-Russian Tourism Exchange programme was launched with a view to influence the destination decisions of Indian travellers during the summer and holiday seasons. The programme started with

a defined marketing campaign aimed at the travel trade in India, announcing fixed departures. We also launched the Indian-Friendly programme in Russia to make Indian meals easily available to guests. We participated at all the major trade fairs as well as made destination presentations to travel agents from South, West and North India. In the first year itself, we saw a jump in tourist numbers to Russia.

**Q**In what way will agents benefit by working with you?

As a registered tour operator with Ministry of Tourism of the Russian Federation, we issue our own invitations and have our ground staff in nine Russian cities. We are a DMC with our management team con-

sisting of Indian and Russian directors. Our team provides the best source of information to travel agents. RIC has the honour to be the representative of the Government of Russia to promote its destinations. We are also now signed up to be the official representative of Film Commission of Russia, Crimea region. Working with RIC gives the travel trade the quality, price and safety they are looking for.

**Q**How closely will you be working with Ural Airlines?

RIC had the privilege to make the first announcement of Ural Airlines' debut in India. Having presented this opportunity at various forums in the travel community, we finally had the soft launch at a 'Round Table

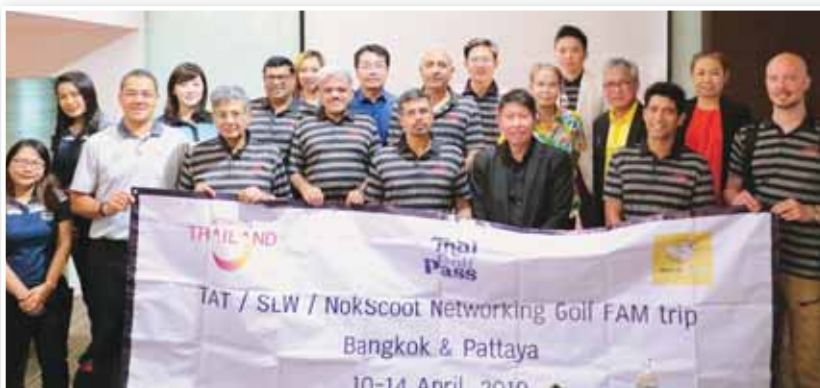
on Tourism' conducted by RIC during the visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to Delhi in October 2018. Going forward, we shall be assisting the airline in promoting the sector and creating demand from Indian tourists.

**Q**How do you intend to popularise Crimea among Indian trade?

Crimea has beautiful scenery, great weather, lovely people, economical shopping and rocking nightlife. The hidden jewel of Russia which was the holiday homes for the Russian Tsars and nobility will be further showcased to travel trade during trade events. We have already made the first big step with 120 travel agents touring Crimea and we hope to have further tours to the region. 🇷🇺

# Indian golfers tee off in amazing THAILAND

Tourism Authority of Thailand, New Delhi, organised a Fam trip to Thailand to explore the possible ways to make Thai Golf Pass a success. Besides networking with golf suppliers, delegates experienced the hospitality of The Zign Hotel in Pattaya and Centre Point Sukhumvit 10 along with teeing off at Chee Chan Golf Resort and Pattana Golf Club.





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# Pricing of Indian tourism

How important is it to get the pricing accurate for both the inbound and outbound sectors of the Indian tourism industry? TRAVTALK figures out if India got its pricing right...



**Rajiv Mehra**  
Vice President  
IATO

“India’s competitive countries are offering packages at prices we can’t match. Though India has streamlined its visa problem with the introduction of the e-visa regime covering 166 countries, this is dampened by visa charges increases from \$50.00 to \$80.00, indirectly increasing tourists’ holiday costs. Indian hotels, air tickets, rail fares and transportation have progressively increased.”



**Chitra Bhatia**  
General Secretary  
OTOAI

“Most prospective travellers have the price factor in mind even before they approach a travel agent. Luxury travellers with greater spending capacity look for deals that provide them value for money. To get the best possible prices, the youth do their research on many sites before finalising their travel. Just a few still prefer agents to avail a special discount.”



**Ravi Gosain**  
Managing Director  
Erco Travels

“The costs of hotels, tour packages, transportation, etc have risen substantially in the last decade, thereby turning away potential visitors. Higher prices are not a major deterrent for affluent visitors if the quality of products is in the right proportion. The experience or quality needs to be perfect and customers must feel they are getting value for their money.”



**Pinki Arora**  
Marketing Representative  
Tourism Authority of Thailand

“Traditionally, destinations that are selling well worldwide are those that have kept their overall pricing competitive. In the case of Thailand, pricing is not a major issue because the country caters to travellers from all segments, stretching from the budget category to luxury and super-luxury travellers. To an extent, this balances pricing.”



**Ajay Bakaya**  
Managing Director  
Sarovar Hotels and Resorts


“With India now possessing a growing economy backed with a range of culture and traditions, the diversified tourism package it offers attracts many domestic and international tourists. Against this backdrop, it is crucial to ensure that we get the pricing of products and services right. The right price must satisfy both the tourists and meet the profit objective of players in the business.”



**Sheetal Munshaw**  
Director  
Atout France India




“Today’s travel trends seem to indicate that the core focus for the discerning Indian traveller is more on experiences and paying a little extra for comfort. While price sensitivity may still play a crucial element in reserving tickets for the actual voyage, it is no longer the only deciding factor in choosing accommodation, activities or any other element related to the sojourn.”

*Inputs by Inder Raj Ahluwalia*



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## India: Hidden golf gem?

India is keen to explore golf tourism in an attempt to promote the country as a preferred golfing destination for international tourists.



Kanchan Nath

The Ministry of Tourism had identified 17 sites in 12 clusters in the country for development under Iconic Tourist Sites Development Project. These include Taj Mahal and Fatehpur Sikri (Uttar Pradesh); Ajanta and Ellora (Maharashtra); Humayun’s Tomb, Red Fort and Qutub Minar (Delhi); Colva Beach (Goa); Amer Fort (Rajasthan); Somnath and



**Suman Billa**  
Joint Secretary  
Ministry of Tourism

“India offers a pool of opportunities for golfers with some outstanding golf courses on a par with international standards”

Dholavira (Gujarat); Khajuraho (Madhya Pradesh); Hampi (Karnataka); Mahabalipuram (Tamil Nadu); Kaziranga (Assam); Kumarakom (Kerala) and Mahabodhi (Bihar).

**Suman Billa**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism says,

“We have selected the 17 most iconic sites in India to make them world-class tourist experiences. There is no doubt that tourism will emerge as an economic engine for growth for this country. Whatever work we have been doing and the way that the tourism sector

has been pulling together will continue to grow strongly.”

One of the critical engines for tourism growth, believes Billa, is golf tourism. “When golfers visit the country, they stay longer and spend more. We already have some outstanding golf courses in India with over 20 of international standards. So, whether you’re a tourist who’s coming for the sole purpose of playing golf or a tourist in the country and would like to pick up a game of golf — India offers a pool of opportunities. The idea is to see how we can connect the dots to ensure that we get adequate number of people to visit the country to play.”

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Shivaji Stadium Metro Station, Airport Express Line,  
New Delhi-110001

Corporate Office  
LG-07, Zygon Square, Plot No. 1, Block H-1A,  
Sector 63, Noida - 201307  
Ph. 0120-4566660, 0120-4566103



# Life changing places & experiences

Some places change us forever. They open our minds, reveal our passions, transform our perspectives. Just as New York changed Somnath's life. Read on to find out how...

New York is a place that's impossible not to love — a place that defies definition, impulsive whimsical and unpredict-

able. Most of all, the city is inclusive and diverse beyond compare, with over 200 languages spoken and millions from across the globe flocking to see its sensational sights. Manhattan, with its unmistakable skyline, is wrapped by the river Hudson. The pulsating beat of the city immediately captivated **Somnath Halder**, an IT consultant who spent a few months in the Big Apple. "The rhythm of this city was awesome. The shiny, powerful metropolis that everybody knows and loves. And on the other hand, there is this mysterious face of the city. Places only known by few," he says.

#### Magic of jazz

Halder discovered the magic of Jazz in the



city. Exploring the wide-open music scene in midtown

Brooklyn, he found himself drawn towards the innovative

beats of east coast Jazz. He always had a penchant for music. But so far, with his long business hours, he just never had the time to pursue anything other than work. Further, Halder was enthralled by the music workshops by jazz icon Barry Harris. Its spontaneity and freedom, instilling a happiness he had not experienced before. Welcoming a new rhythm of life, New York had transformed his perspective and his life. He could not think of going back to his earlier exist-

ence. He gave up his job and devoted himself fully to jazz. He found work as a music teacher on his return to the company. It made him feel free and kept him close to what he truly loved. He looks back fondly at his time in New York, the city that changed his life — the places and experiences that encouraged him to find what he truly loved, to follow his dream and make it his own. As he says today, "Life is like jazz; you never know what comes next."

Experience more #LifeChangingPlaces and get inspired for your next trip at [lufthansa.com/places](http://lufthansa.com/places).

# One Above celebrates in Mumbai



One Above hosted a party in Mumbai to mark three months of successful operations. The three partners – **BA Rahim, Vishal Somaia** and **Irshad Dadan** – reached their short-term goal of bringing 25 DMCs from all over the world into India. A roadshow along with a networking evening was conducted across India.





# Experiential talk

For the discerning traveller

**TASTE PARADISE  
IN EL NIDO**

**ONCE UPON A  
TIME IN EFTELING**

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## Experiential<sup>talk</sup>

### GO LOCAL

Even as more and more travellers discover the magic of exploring a destination through experiences, the experiences that they seek are also undergoing an evolution of sorts. They are getting increasingly specific – like visiting the local markets or attending a traditional wedding ceremony. Hyper-local is where tourism is heading towards.

According to TripAdvisor, taking workshops is one of the fastest-growing experiences. Learning the intricacies of the region's textile weave or studying the local dialect/dance form affords travellers huge bragging rights! However, one kind of experience is eclipsing all the others and it involves food! It is the most primal instincts that travellers like to indulge. Whether it is cooking classes or street-grub tours, food inspires the traveller in us. So it helps to have an 'insider' – a local – who can help travellers explore the destination and make it more interactive rather than it being just about gazing through the window of a tour bus.

#### EDITORIAL

**Devika Jeet**  
**Peden Doma Bhutia**  
**Hazel Jain**  
**Amrita Ghosh**

#### DESIGN

**Raashi Ajmani Girdhar**

#### MARKETING

**Harshal Ashar**  
**Karishma Khanna**  
**Priyanshu Wankhade**  
**Gaganpreet Kaur**  
**Arumita Gupta**  
**Susan Eapen**

#### COVER PICTURE:

El Nido Resorts

# NEWS IN BRIEF



## SAFARI CAMPS IN BOTSWANA

Great Plains Conservation has opened new safari offerings with new camps in Botswana and Kenya and new safari experiences in Zimbabwe. The company now has sales presence in India with Avant Garde Consulting, led by **Pooja Wadhwa** and **Kunal Munshaw**. Great Plains Conservation creates conservation and community initiatives through small, luxurious camps, lodges and safaris in Botswana, Kenya and Zimbabwe.



## Glamping in Ladakh with TUTC

Travellers can now experience Ladakh in all its splendour at the Chamba Camp, Thiksey (in the Leh Valley) with The Ultimate Travelling Camp (TUTC). With this, they can be a part of the region's unique rituals – enjoy the ancient sport of Polo, brought to Ladakh in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by the Royals. They can also try their hand at archery set amidst the most dramatic landscape and raft on the gentle Indus River, while stopping for a picnic lunch at a picturesque hamlet.

## Bush tours for the blind

Wellington's Zealandia has a new sensory-based tour guiding blind and visually impaired visitors through the stunning eco-sanctuary – through areas of bush home to some of New Zealand's most extraordinary wildlife.



## SWISS CHOCOLATE ADVENTURE

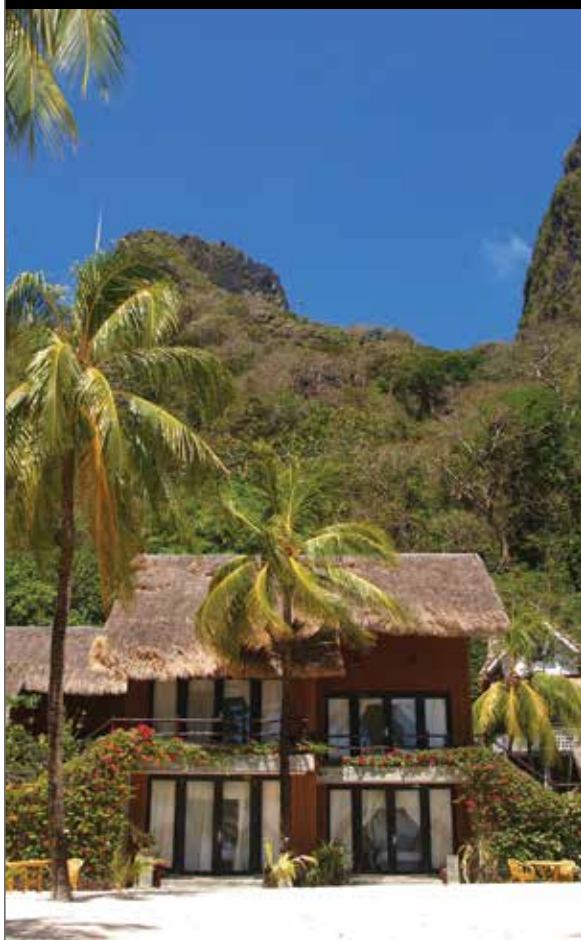
At the Swiss Museum of Transport in Lucerne, Switzerland

Learn more about the famous Swiss chocolate in a unique adventure ride. Immerse yourself in around 20 minutes in the world of sweetness. After the tour, you have the chance to taste and buy various creations provided by a Lindt master chocolatier.

Discover more on [www.swiss-chocolate-adventure.com](http://www.swiss-chocolate-adventure.com)







# Miniloc Island Paradise

Tucked away in a remote location in Palawan province in The Philippines lies a slice of heaven called Miniloc Island Resort.

HAZEL JAIN FROM THE PHILIPPINES

This spot is like a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma. Scattered in the South China Sea lies the archipelago of El Nido brimming with secret beaches, crystal-clear lagoons, coral reefs and tiny islands. After landing in Manila, one takes a short flight to El Nido on an AirSwift T6. Guests are ushered on an electric jeepney to the El Nido Resorts jetty lounge on landing at Lio Airport. While being welcomed to local snacks and songs performed by local singers, guests are then escorted to a boat that transfers them directly to Miniloc Island. Here lies a mini paradise that looks untouched by the baser emotions that plague city life. This looks like heaven!

Miniloc Island Resort, located in Bacuit Bay in El Nido, Palawan, Philippines, is one of the four luxury resorts operated by El Nido Resorts. It is famed for the clear waters of its Small and Big Lagoons. Nearby, the Shimizu Island has fish-filled waters. The area has many dive sites, including Dilumacad Island's long tunnel leading to an underwater cavern.

## NATURE NURTURED

This is an ecologically-gifted area and the group embraces a strong commitment to sustainability by exercising stewardship over the flourishing diverse environment and stressing the importance of preserving nature to all who visit. This resort is looked after by Mac Guerrero, or Big Mac as he likes to call himself, who is the Resort Manager at Miniloc Island Resort. He is also a huge proponent of environment-friendly hospitality and ensures that every development or operational efficiency is combined with an equally sustainable solution.

The 50 cottages are thatch-roofed and furnished with indigenous Filipino materials. The floors are wooden and walls are covered in woven bamboo slats, locally known as sawali. There are a few water-cottages as well that have been built on stilts.

## GET UNDER

Miniloc is an all-inclusive resort and include breakfast, lunch and dinner. It also includes some of the



activities that it offers but not all. Guests can undertake many water-borne activities such as snorkelling, scuba-diving, kayaking and island hopping. Guests can visit fascinating caves like Cudugnon and Cathedral caves, emerald lagoons including the famous Big and Small Lagoons, and pristine white sand beaches. Lunch barbecues and romantic dinners may be arranged on private islands, and relaxing spa and massage services are available upon request. Guests can also simply relax on the beach or enjoy cocktails at the bar while enjoying fabulous views of the sunset.

El Nido Resorts has been globally recognised for embracing nature-based guest activities and sustainable menus, and for providing environment education programmes for staff and guests, and employment opportunities for the local community. In fact, over the last couple of years, Department of Tourism, Philippines has been actively promoting the archipelago.

### BEING SUSTAINABLE

El Nido Resorts operates a state-of-the-art

sewage treatment plant (STP) combined with native reed bed filters. This ensures that no raw sewage and grey water are discharged into sea. Treated water is utilised in flushing toilets, watering the plants and supplying fire hydrants. Solid wastes go through strict segregation before reaching the resort's full cycle materials recovery facility (MRF). The MRF receives recyclable and organic wastes from the resorts and is looked after by the Garden Department. After segregation, the recyclable waste is stored in holding bins, while the organic waste is composted onsite and later packed for use in the resort gardens.

El Nido Resorts implemented a refillable drinking water system in 2008 to eliminate the purchase of bottled waters during activities. The Kitchen Department also implemented its own refilling system, whereas instead of buying cooking oils in new containers, they send the old containers to the supplier for a refill.

### KNOW?

DID YOU

Halo-halo is a popular Filipino cold dessert which is a concoction of crushed ice, evaporated milk and indigenous ingredients including ube, sweetened beans, coconut julienes, topped with ice cream



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### Jarada Island

For a unique beach experience in Bahrain, Jarada Island is the destination. Unlike any other beach, this island is completely submerged under water at night and resurfaces the next morning, revealing soft golden sand. A speedboat sets off from Amwaj island Yacht Club and makes its way to Jarada, where a day serenity, tranquillity awaits!



### Bahrain Fort

Enjoy the reflection of the rich trading history of a fort registered as a UNESCO World Heritage site. The fort is located atop a 17.5-hectare artificial hill that has been built over more than 4000 years of continuous occupation. The excavations over the past 50 years have revealed residential, public, commercial and military structures. You can look for oldest madbasa (a room where date molasses was produced) and learn about its history.



### Bahrain International Circuit

Even if you are not a motor-race fan, you will be caught up in the thrill of the planet's biggest race event - Formula One. When the Formula 1 Grand Prix isn't taking centre stage at the Bahrain International Circuit, you can take the wheel yourself on its state-of-art karting track or enjoy a thrilling ride in the passenger seat of a Land Rover.



### Ahmed Al Fateh Grand Mosque

With its architecture reflecting Middle Eastern elements, crowned by the world's largest fibreglass and blessed with an interior reserved for the holiest of holy places, the mosque truly lives up to its name. Able to accommodate 7,000 worshippers, the Al Fateh Grand Mosque welcomes non-Muslim visitors outside of prayer times.

# Discover the pearl of Arabia

Bahrain attracts visitors with its culture, history, sporting extravaganza and even its shopping.

**MANAS DWIVEDI FROM BAHRAIN**



### Old Houses of Muharraq

Muharraq, the former capital of Bahrain, is known for its cultural splendour, and traditional Bahraini houses litter the town's narrow lanes. The Shaikh Isa bin Ali house is the country's most impressive example of Gulf Islamic architecture featuring four courtyards and beautiful carved wooden doors and perforated gypsum panels. The beautifully restored houses provide an important insight into Bahrain's heritage.



### Tree of Life

Nearly 400 years old and around 32ft high, the Tree of Life is a miracle tree standing tall in the middle of the Arabian desert, with miles of sand as its only companion. It's survival in the harsh conditions is a mystery and water source still undiscovered, which attracts swarms of crowd from across the globe. It is believed that anyone touching the Tree of Life will return to Bahrain again.

**T**he Kingdom of Bahrain is widely recognised for its rich culture and traditions and has upheld its reputation as one of the most welcoming countries in the GCC. The country has strived to solidify its status as an ideal destination for experiential travel to offer visitors unique experiences. Numerous attractions catering to various interests; from history lovers exploring the remnants of multiple civilisations, to those looking for a more cultural experience and a leisure-filled vacation, Bahrain has something for everyone, a feature which sets itself apart from other GCC countries.



### Bab al Bahrain

Bab al Bahrain marks the main entrance to the Manama Souq. The Souq's bustling marketplace is a shopping area with a large number of contemporary shops selling products ranging from textiles, spices, incense and perfumes, to handicrafts and souvenirs from all around the world, in addition to a number of old school coffee shops. Bahraini natural pearls are one of a kind and are available here.



## Experiences in Bahrain



### Arabian Horse Riding

The unique collection of pure-bred Arabian horses has been preserved on the island-nation for over 200 years and one can take a royal horse ride wandering on open trails to a ride towards Bahrain Fort for a picturesque view of the sunset.



### Pearl Diving

Known for its pearl industry, Bahrain allows visitors to dive for their own pearls with the help of scuba master, where you will be guided by professional and trained divers.



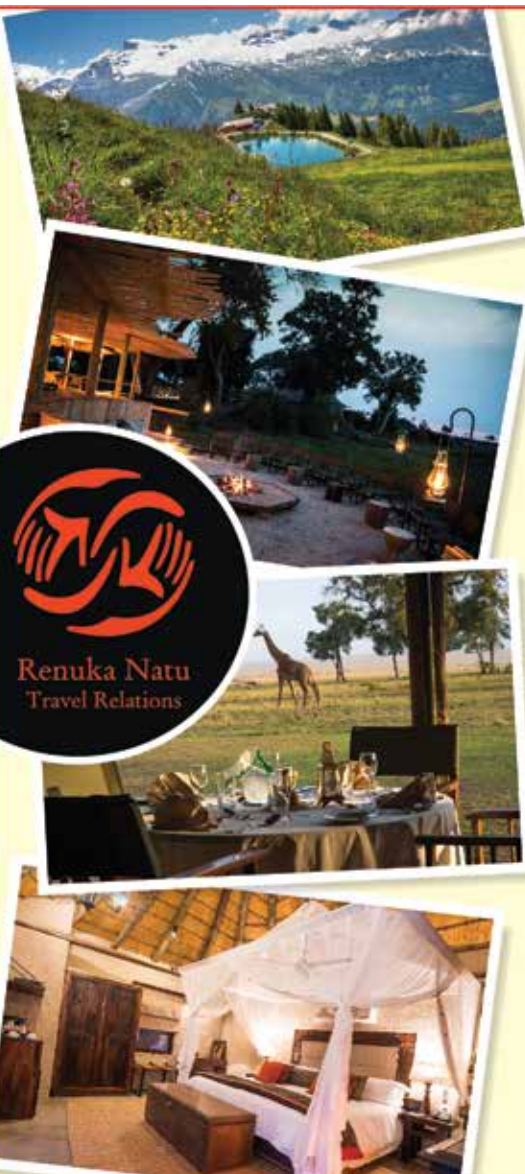
### Indoor Skydiving

Experiencing the incredible feeling of a freefall in of the tallest wind tunnels in the world; with an overall height of 12 metres, Gravity in Bahrain provides country's first indoor skydiving experience with a feel like you are jumping from an aircraft.



### Water Sport

From sailing, powerboating and windsurfing to kite surfing, paddle boating and kayaking, you are sure to find something that takes your fancy at one of the Bahrain's marinas and yacht clubs.



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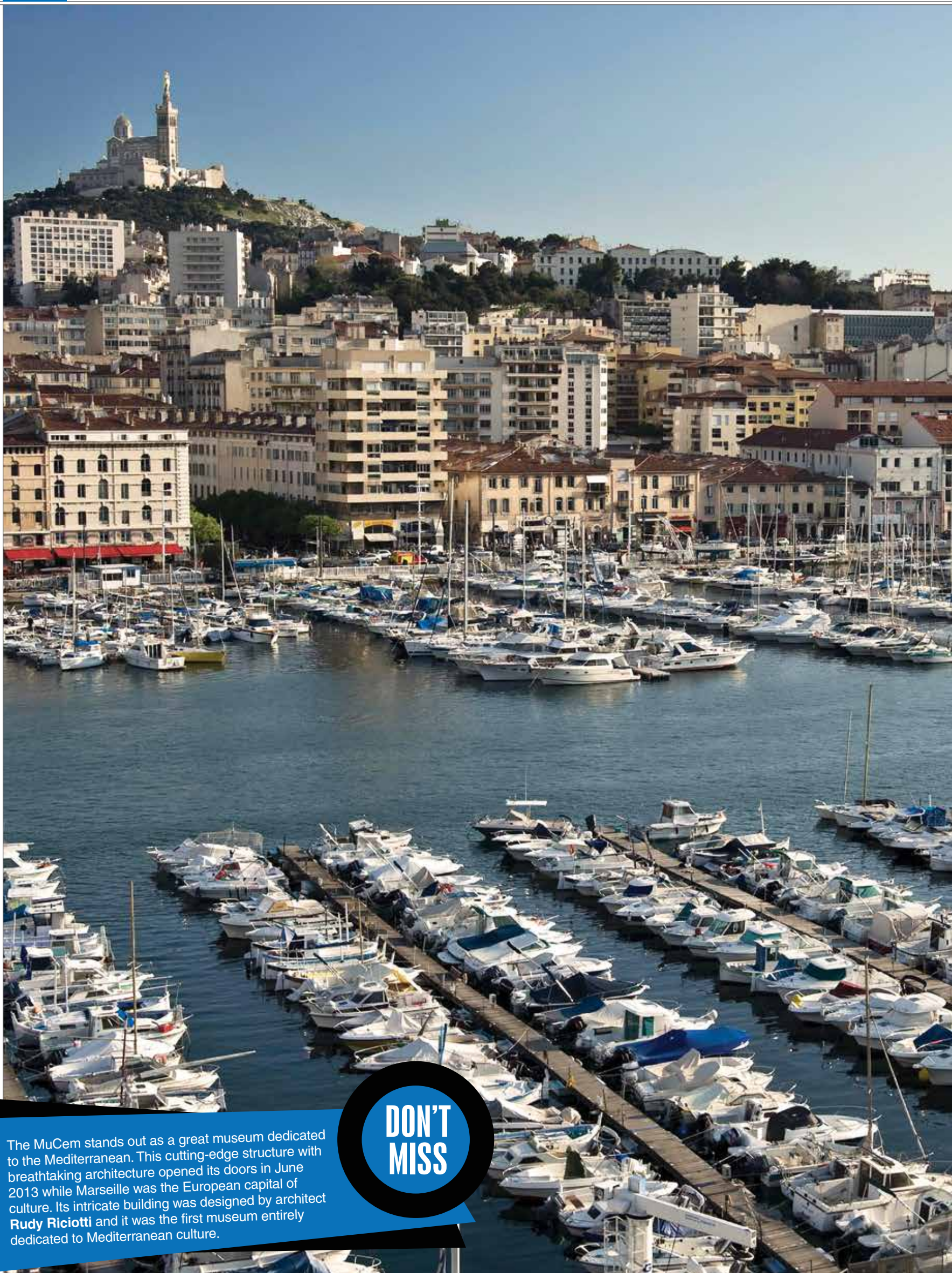
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DON'T  
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The MuCem stands out as a great museum dedicated to the Mediterranean. This cutting-edge structure with breathtaking architecture opened its doors in June 2013 while Marseille was the European capital of culture. Its intricate building was designed by architect **Rudy Ricciotti** and it was the first museum entirely dedicated to Mediterranean culture.



## KNOW?

DID YOU

Bouillabaisse is a traditional Provençal fish stew originating from Marseille. There are at least three kinds of fish in a traditional bouillabaisse

# As blue as Marseille

As with many a port cities, Marseille's populace today is a healthy mixture of the Corsicans, Italians, Armenians, the Algerians and others. In short, it combines big-city swagger and fishing-village sociability.

## HAZEL JAIN FROM MARSEILLE

**W**hat strikes immediately as you descend up on Marseille is how blue everything looks. The clearest skies are outlined by monochromatic land that instantly gives way to another shade of the deepest blue in the shape of the Mediterranean Sea. And then as you walk alongside the Old Port of Marseille, you realise that this was the setting that Ludlum chose to introduce his hero Jason Bourne who was found floating unconscious in the Mediterranean Sea near Marseille, located in southern France.

The city's economy is still linked to its commercial port. Cruise liners can be seen docking at the terminal with regular frequency to and from Algeria, Corsica, Sardinia, and Tunisia. Fishing obviously is an important part of Marseille life. At its heart is the Vieux-



Port (Old Port), where fishmongers sell their catch along the boat-lined quay. It comes as no surprise then that Marseille's most famous dish is a seafood dish called bouillabaisse!

## SITES AND SOUNDS!

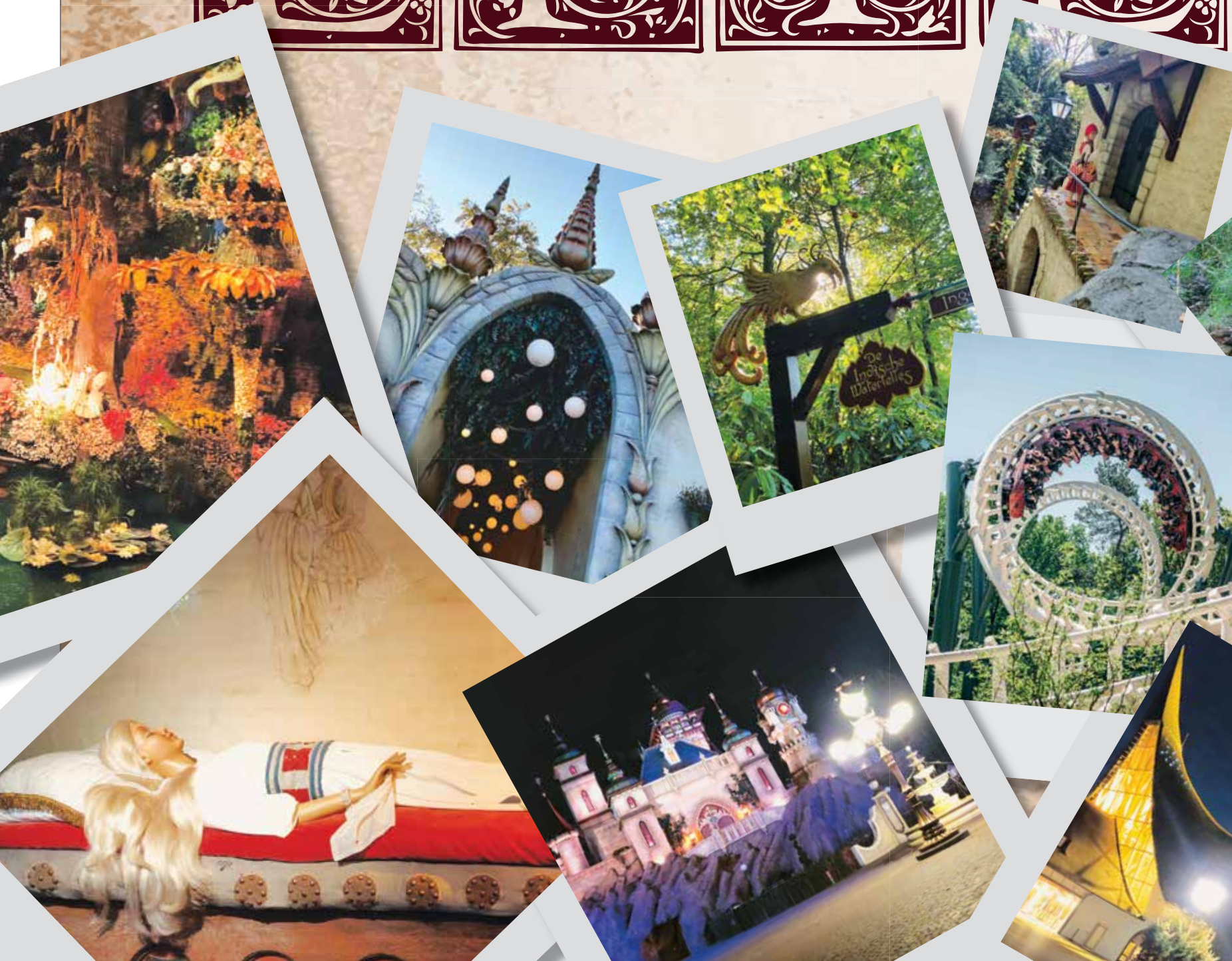
It will be blasphemy to not talk about the mother of all noteworthy sites in Marseille – the Notre-Dame de la Garde or Our Lady of the Guard. This Catholic basilica is the city's best-known symbol and can be seen from anywhere in the city. Another point on the axis which is worth exploring is Chateau D'If made so famous by Alexandre Dumas. It is the fortress (and later a prison) made famous by his novel 'The Count of Monte Cristo' and is just about a 20-minute boat ride from the port.






# Once upon a time in

**F****E****L****E**








**Efteling:** World of Wonders in The Netherlands brings to life our earliest childhood friends, read Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Rapunzel and a host of fairytale characters in a setting even more authentic than what our imagination would allow us to dream up.




PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA FROM THE NETHERLANDS



Once upon a time, in a land far, far away, there lived a girl who loved fairy tales, so much so that she would often wish to be transported to that enchanted world of pumpkins that turned into magnificent carriages, spindles that spun hay into yarns of gold, and houses made of gingerbread! Imagine her surprise when, as an adult, she found herself in the company of Sleeping Beauty, Red Riding Hood, Hansel and Gretel and Rapunzel! And no, it wasn't all in her imagination.

People returning from a visit to The Netherlands often wax eloquent about the art—thanks to the Dutch masters Van Gogh, Rembrandt and Vermeer—and the beauty, mesmerised as they are by the windmills and tulips. For me, those boxes were ticked of course, but the trip did something more. I came back reliving my childhood and wanting to be a child all over again. (I've been told the world of fantasy that lies ensconced in Efteling Theme Park does that to many.) Holland has much to showcase to discerning travellers, but if the world of fairies, ghouls and elves enchants you, then Efteling is your mecca.



Your initiation into this magical world starts as soon as you slip through Efteling's slightly spooky-looking entrance that resembles a witch's hat. (See? Imagination at work already!) Once inside, you feel pretty much like Alice; only, in this Wonderland, instead of the Mad Hatter and the March Hare, are the much-loved fairy tale characters you grew up with. The Fairytale Forest has been bringing fairy tales to life for almost 65 years now. In 1952, Efteling started with 10 fairy tales, today there are no less than 29. No prizes for guessing why Efteling is often called the 'Keeper of fairy tales.'



## KNOW?

**DID YOU** The park has a well-themed pancake house called Polles Keuken. The restaurant which offers a variety of both sweet and savoury pancakes

While ambling in the Fairytale Forest, pay special attention to a bespectacled man, who looks a bit like a wizard carrying a huge bag stuffed with branches and twigs. He plucks stories from these branches and twigs and writes these down in his book. If you happen to catch him, don't leave without hearing a few of his tales. Rumour has it, he knows every single fairy tale ever written.

Ever heard of dreaming with eyes wide open? If you just scrunched up your nose, you surely need a ride down Droomvlucht, which in English means 'Dreamflight'. Once strapped in, your first introduction to the ride is through a star-spangled entrance. As you travel through the World of Wonders in this six-minute ride, you encounter fairies on swings, elves swaying from branches and trolls playing harp—it's a living storybook unfolding before your eyes.

Follow up this pleasant reverie by heading to Ruigrijk. In 1999, the park was divided into four realms:

Ruigrijk, the adventure realm; Reizenrijk, the travel realm; Marerijk, the fairy realm; and Anderijk, the alternative realm. The adventure realm has enough to whet any adrenaline junkie's appetite and it is here that the Baron 1898 awaits you. This

daredevil's delight of a ride drops you 37.5 m into a mineshaft at a breakneck speed of 90 km per hour. Definitely not recommended for the faint-hearted!

All that excitement is sure to build up an appetite, so why not head to one of the many restaurants at the park! Pancakes on your mind? Try Polles Keuken (Polle's Kitchen). Polle is the Sous Chef of the Palace kitchen where he'll rustle up delicious, fluffy pancakes, sweet and savoury crepes and other mouthwatering goodies for you. The décor here is also a constant reminder of the fairy world that you are in. Every 15 minutes, the oven standing in the middle of the restaurant goes a little "crazy"—the kitchen utensils begin to move about and the wheels above the stove turn faster and faster. Post a hearty meal, walk over to Aquanura to witness the largest water show in Europe. Or, if you are in the mood for some action, try Ravelijn, a 20-minute show complete with stunt horse riders, a disappearing princess and a fire-breathing dragon.

Fairy tales and mystical stories are an inherent part of childhood. But we don't have to leave them behind as adults. No matter what wonders our phone and tablet screens unlock for us, they cannot rival the thrill of seeing our earliest childhood friends in a setting even more authentic than what our imagination would allow us to dream up. So, if you want to believe in magic, you know where to find it.

Here's to happily-ever-afters!

Polle is the Sous Chef of the Palace kitchen and he'll rustle up delicious, fluffy pancakes, savoury crepes and other mouthwatering goodies





# JAPAN as we know it

Hiroshima is a treasure-trove of historical buildings and locations where the surviving remains from the atomic bomb in 1945 are painstakingly painted. Read on to make the most of your time in this corner of Japan...

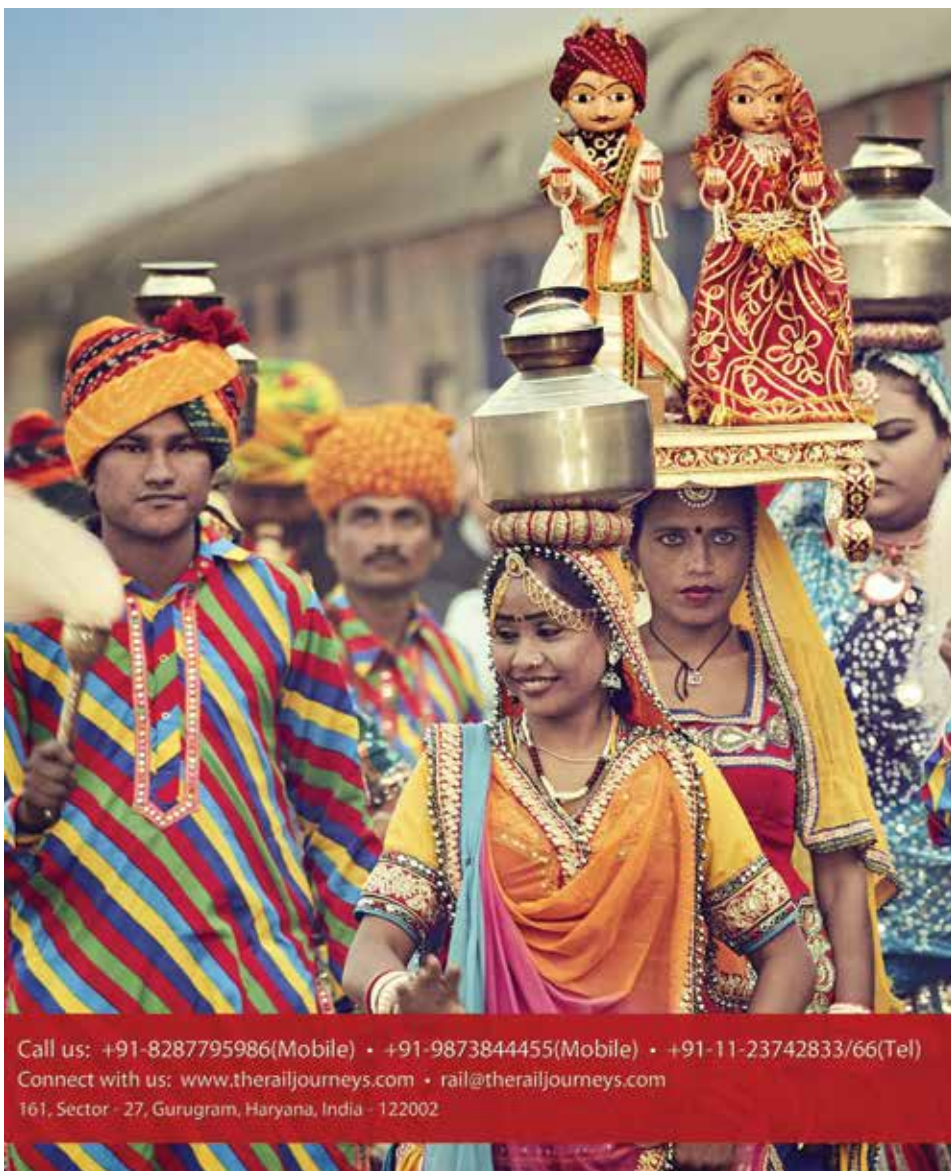
**ANUPRIYA BISHNOI FROM JAPAN**



Picture Courtesy: JNTO

## Hiroshima (Hiroshima Prefecture)

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum displays belongings and photographs of victims of the world's first atomic bombing in 1945. An interesting video clipping exhibits Hiroshima before and after the bombing. The entire tour will help you understand what transpired that day. The bomb exploded approximately 600 metres above the Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall Atomic Bomb Dome, now A-bomb Dome, ripping through and igniting the building, killing everyone in it, instantly. Because, the blast struck from almost directly above, some of the centre walls remain standing, leaving enough of the building and iron frame to be recognisable as a dome. Besides this, one can find plenty of shopping and eating joints in the city. The city houses a lot of Indian restaurants as well.



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# JAPAN beyond its CLICHÉS

What's the first thing that comes to mind when I say 'Japan'? Tokyo and sushi, perhaps? Everything you read on from here will change your perception of visualising the country. Let us take you through it!

I am sure a lot of you will regret not seeing Tokyo while visiting Japan; so, I suggest you do and can plan the length of your stay strategically. Couple of hours spent in Tokyo helped me get a foretaste of what the city has to offer. The skyscrapers, blue sky and the perfectly engineered bridges sans any traffic were an absolute delight! Not to forget, the high-class Japanese food which is close to a work of art created by expert chefs. Enjoy food from countries around the world — whether its Ramen, Kaiseki Ryori or Sushi, your culinary journey will be an unforgettable one! There are countless ways to experience Tokyo, but to truly experience the pulse of the city, a walking tour is recommended which allows you to explore sites and sounds of the city. Glance through some of the must-visit destinations in Japan beyond Tokyo.



## Hakone (Kanagawa Prefecture)

Less than 100 kilometres from Tokyo, Hakone is famous for hot springs and the view across Lake Ashinoko of nearby Mount Fuji. A major attraction here is the Hakone open-air museum with hundreds of 19th and 20th century sculptures by western and Japanese artists. For me, it was a transit, turned into a few moments of 'zen'. To experience the panoramic view, one can also experience 4 kms long Hakone Ropeway which provides magnificent views of Owakudani Volcanic Valley.







## EXPERIENCES IN SHIMANE PREFECTURE



### Adachi Museum of Art

Housing one of the most exquisite gardens of all times, Adachi Museum is a combination of restful atmosphere and Japanese paintings. Azaleas in spring, fresh greenery in summer, red leaves in autumn and snow-covered gardens in winter — this garden is a delight to the eyes.



### Matsue Horikawa boat ride

Enjoy the nostalgic landscape of 400-year-old Matsue on the hour-long Horikawa sightseeing boat tour. The tour will show you places associated with writer Lafcadio Hearn. The roof of the boat doesn't only protect you from rain and wind but also adjusts height under low bridges.



### Matsue Castle

Matsue Castle was built over a five-year period by Yoshiharu Horio, founder of Matsue city. It is one of the last remaining feudal castles in Japan and one of the only five castles designated as a national treasure. Visitors can enjoy the panoramic view and locate 'Sleeping Buddha'—natural mountain in shape of a sleeping Buddha.



### Shimane Winery

Shimane wine is made from the choicest Delaware grapes harvested in Izumo city. Visitors to the Shimane winery can tour the facilities and sample many varieties free of charge. Two giant wooden wine barrels are right outside the entrance to remind you where you are.



### Sake

Shimane boasts of many sake breweries due to the high-quality taste of local rice. Like sushi, sake is an integral part of Japanese cuisine that foreign visitors often appreciate. Generally, Japanese sake has an alcohol content of around 15% and sometimes even as high as 17%.



### Izumo-Taisha

Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines are aplenty in Japan. While they both look similar, they are different in nature. An hour and a half's drive from Matsue, Izumo-Taisha is one of the most venerated shrines in Japan. The inner shrine is constructed in the Taisha-zukuri style, Japan's oldest form of shrine architecture.



# The bourns of Borneo

A gateway to North Borneo Island, Kota Kinabalu in Sabah, Malaysia, promises a journey of exploration! The city is packed with hiking trails and rafting routes besides a gorgeous beachfront.

**TRIPTI MEHTA FROM SABAH**



The rafting expedition allows moments of rest as you let your gaze wander to Mount Kinabalu. We stopped twice to take in the beauty of what we were witnessing

## ATTRACTIONS

TOP TOURIST



### Kinabalu Park

Kinabalu Park is Malaysia's first UNESCO World Heritage Site. It boasts of more than 5,000 vascular plant species and around 90 lowland mammal species. The park surrounds Mount Kinabalu, which stands at 4095.2 metres and is the highest mountain in Malaysia. Visitors who wish to climb Mount Kinabalu are advised to make reservations six months in advance.



### Mari Mari Cultural Village

Five different ethnic tribes in one village! Visitors get a chance to witness Sabahan traditional delicacies from each ethnic group. Travellers need to book their trip to the Village in advance as it does not accept walk-ins.





In an age where everything is available on the internet, there is little that's left to the imagination. Exceptions, however, almost always exist! Our journey into the unknown began with a trip to Sabah, a Malaysian state that lies in the North of Borneo Island. We travelled to Kota Kinabalu, Sabah's capital city, from Kuala Lumpur. A rush of adrenaline overwhelmed us as we stepped onto the island, in awe of the grandeur of the surrounding mountains.

Sabah's recent history can be traced to 1881, when the British North Borneo Chartered Company was set up to rule North Borneo (the state's old name). The Company administered the state until 1942 when the Japanese invaded and took control. After World War II, the British returned and turned Sabah into a Crown Colony. In 1963, Sabah gained her independence and joined Malaysia.

### RIDING THE RAPIDS

We began the day with white-water rafting in Kadamaian River. A novice such as I had little to fear as the instructor assured me. We were handed our gear, got the mandatory 'I'm-embarking-on-an-adventure' photograph clicked, and hastily stepped onto the raft that was to carry us on a breathtaking ride for the next two and a half hours. The waters gushed and so did our excitement!

Kadamaian River offers rafting for beginners and children. The grade-I and II rapids are considered fairly safe for neophytes of all ages.

The river has a moderately rocky bed and as you meander through, you

spy glimpses of the spectacular Mount Kinabalu and its highest point, ironically named Low's Peak. In 1851, Hugh Low, a British colonial administrator, led an expedition to the region and was the first recorded man in history to summit the peak, now named after him.

The rafting expedition allows moments of rest as you let your gaze wander to Mount Kinabalu. We stopped twice to take in the beauty of what we were witnessing, but the instructor's puckish smile indicated that we step onto the raft again. Overhead suspension bridges and a few local inhabitants passed us by as we carried on the ride. On reaching our 'port of arrival', lunch awaited our starving selves and tired limbs.

### THE TRAVELLER AND THE SEA

Sabah is surrounded by South China Sea to the west and Sulu Sea to the east. It has world-class accommodation facilities for the leisure traveller and state-of-the-art MICE facilities for business travellers. A trip to Kota Kinabalu would be incomplete if one didn't voyage over the South China Sea. It is of strategic significance with a third of the world's shipping passing through it. We took a North Borneo Sunset Dinner Cruise from Sutera Marina, which lasted a little over two hours and took us around the islands of Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park and down the central coast along the city's famous waterfront.

Sabah is known for its gorgeous sunsets, and visitors often take an evening cruise to witness their splendour. While the cruise ships provide entertainment, dance and great food within, the outside is just as alluring. Though the ride concluded the day, it did not cease the pounding heart!

Picture Courtesy: Sabah Tourism



### Kota Kinabalu City Mosque

By far the largest mosque in Kota Kinabalu, the City Mosque has a prayer hall that can accommodate between 9,000-12,000 people at a time. The floating mosque is surrounded by a man-made lagoon that gives it a dramatic look on a full moon night.

### KNOW?

DID YOU

Tuaran noodles is a popular delicacy in Sabah. Soft and springy, eggy yellow noodles are fried, topped with a selection of barbecued pork

### Tunku Abdul Rahman Park

If you're looking for a place to dip into salty waters, snorkel or sea walk, Tunku Abdul Rahman Park is the place to go. The five islands – Gaya, Sapi, Manukan, Mamutik and Sulug, which make up the marine park – are all located within a short boat ride from each other. Experience Coral Flyer, Borneo's largest island-to-island zip line at 250 metres from Gaya Island to Sapi Island.





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## SRI LANKAN LUXURY AT ANILANA

Anilana Pasikuda and Anilana Nilaveli are two luxurious properties located on the beaches of Sri Lanka's east coast. They are represented in India by Iris Reps, which always strives to bring the best tourism experiences into India. Guests at Pasikuda can visit Sigiriya, Dambulla Cave Temple, enjoy elephant safaris and wildlife safaris, and indulge in water sports. Anilana Pasikuda is located on the beach at Pasikuda Bay, about 300 kms from Bandaranaike International Airport.



## Dine with the royals in Lucknow

This four nights/three days tour from Cox and Kings is dedicated to gourmet and heritage. While the Nawabi culture of Lucknow is a glory of past, there are descendants of rajas and nawabs who are keeping the old traditions alive. This tour is all about the refinements and delicacy of the state of Awadh.



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## The Outpost Hotel

The Outpost Hotel is an upscale accommodation that exclusively caters to adults. Inspired by Sentosa's Heritage as a colonial military base, the 193 guest rooms are a stylish interpretation of black and white design, with crisp lines and a sharply contrasting palette. Offering personalised services and amenities, the hotel is built for adults and couples seeking exclusivity, privacy and appreciate the attention to detail. Room amenities include toiletry kits by Australian beauty brand APPELLES Apothecary & Lab, pillow mist kits for turn down service, and customised mini bars from a selection of premium snacks and drinks, with compliments from the hotel. A welcome drink mixed specially for them will also be served upon checking in.

## Village Hotel at Sentosa

Energetic, fun, and vibrant – the family-friendly Village Hotel at Sentosa offers an experiential stay for families, as well as leisure and meeting groups. The hotel offers 606 cosy guest rooms themed with sun-washed hues of nature by the sea. The Family Rooms, ideal for guests travelling with children, come with two interconnecting rooms, two bathrooms and can comfortably cater to a family of four. The pool deck in the hotel has four themed pools as well as activities from beach games to face painting ensuring that everyone has a fun-filled day.

## The Barracks Hotel

Housed in a conserved colonial building, The Barracks Hotel is an exclusive heritage hideaway and is a window to the rich history of Sentosa. Its 40 well appointed guest rooms and suites are simply striking. Exquisite service and the attention to detail for every pampering creature comfort are paramount.

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# Austria appeals to families

Strengthening its presence in the Indian market, Austria has registered 8.6 per cent growth in the number of tourists from India in 2018. The Austrian National Tourist Office (ANTO) is looking to focus on families this year.

 Manas Dwivedi

The central European country welcomed over 192,000 visitors in 2018. Christine Mukherjee, Director—India, ANTO said, “Almost 40 million tourists from over the world travel to Austria every year. India is a very crucial market for us. Overnight stays by Indian travellers in Austria has doubled over the last one year. Continuing our approach to focus on taking more travellers to Austria from India, we are looking to position ourselves as a family destination. In 2019, we will promote the destination among families and FIT travellers.”



Christine Mukherjee  
Director—India  
ANTO

ANTO organised a three-city workshop in India in Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Delhi. According to Mukherjee, 140 tour operators attended the workshop in Mumbai, while over 100 and 110 agents turned up for the workshops in Ahmedabad and Delhi, respectively. Industry partners and representatives from Vienna, Innsbruck, Salzburg and Swarovski Crystal World showcased their products to the travel trade. Thomas Bachinger, Market Management, Vienna Tourist Board; Andreas Reiter, Market Management—Spain, India and Arab Countries, Innsbruck Tourism; Klemens Kollenz, Sales and Marketing Manager, Salzburg Tourism; and Christiane Gasser, Head of Marketing & Communication, Swarovski Tourism Services; showcased what each destination had to offer to Indian tourists.

The tourist board has also partnered with online travel agencies to promote Austria among the FIT segment. “We have started 2019 with big

campaigns and promotions with Yatra, MakeMyTrip and other OTAs to target the FIT travellers. Our online training programme Austria Certified Travel Specialists has attracted a large number of certified agents participating from the Indian market.

“ We have started 2019 with big promotions with Yatra, MakeMyTrip and other OTAs to target the FIT travellers ”

We are trying to reach out to the India B2C audience with our promotional campaign

with Ola,” said Mukherjee. Austrian capital Vienna will also focus on family travellers

in 2019 as the tourism board thinks that there is something for every age group and interest in city, laced with heritage and culture. The Vienna Tourism Board added that it had also received 7.7 per cent more Indians in 2018. Of its inbound tourism numbers,

Vienna saw 7.5 million arrivals from across the globe, 6 per cent up compared to the previous year. According to the board, the past year has been the most successful one, with 16.5 million overnight stays recorded in the timeless city. 



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# Nearly 300 tour operators from

The Great Indian Travel Bazaar, in its 11<sup>th</sup> year, witnessed over 290 foreign tour operators from 47 countries meet, interact and do business with 260 Indian exhibitors with around 11,236 pre-scheduled B2B meetings. The event was inaugurated at The Lalit, Jaipur while the two-day trade show was held at Jaipur Exhibition & Convention Centre.





# 47 countries at GITB 2019





# EVENT TALK



Media Partners:



## MAY 2019

ILTM Latin America	Sao Paulo	14-17
Tourism Malaysia event	Bhubaneswar	14
PATA India's Tourism Masterclass	Delhi	15
IMWF	Antalya	15-16
ITB China	Shanghai	15-17
Tourism Malaysia event	Raipur	16
ADTOI GHM & Roadshow	Delhi	18
IMEX	Frankfurt	21-23
ILTM Asia Pacific	Singapore	27-30
India Travel Awards- South	Chennai	27
Oman Tourism Roadshow	Bengaluru	27
Oman Tourism Roadshow	Pune	29
IBTM Americas	Mexico City	29-30
Oman Tourism Roadshow	Mumbai	31

## JUNE 2019

75th IATA Annual General Meeting	Seoul, South Korea	1-3
Best of Australia roadshow	Pune	4
Best of Australia roadshow	Ahmedabad	5
Dubai MiCE Workshop	Hyderabad	10
Dubai MiCE Workshop	Chennai	11
Dubai MiCE Workshop	Bengaluru	13
Dubai MiCE Workshop	Kolkata	14
Beijing International Tourism Expo 2019	Beijing	18-20
Asian Destinations Expo 2019	Malaysia	21-24
GPS	Hyderabad	26-27
Asian Destinations Expo 2019	Singapore	26-29

## JULY 2019

Asian Destinations Expo 2019	Indonesia	2-5
GPS	Ahmedabad	3-4
International Conference on Tourism and Hospitality (ICTH)	Singapore	4-5
TTF	Hyderabad	5-6
Kiwi Link India 2019	Mumbai	8-9
Kiwi Link India 2019	Kolkata	11
Kiwi Link India 2019	Delhi	12
TTF	Kolkata	12-14
Travel Wedding Show	Mumbai	13-14
GPS	Chandigarh	17-18
MICE INDIA and Luxury Travel congress	Delhi	17-18
Amazing Thailand Roadshow to India	Ahmedabad	22
MICE INDIA and Luxury Travel congress	Mumbai	23-24
Amazing Thailand Roadshow to India	Pune	24
GPS	Lucknow	24-25
TTH Expo	Vadodara	26-28
TTF	Ahmedabad	30-1 Sept

## AUGUST 2019

IITM	Bengaluru	2-4
Qatar Tourism Roadshow	Mumbai	6
GPS	Kochi	6-7
Qatar Tourism Roadshow	Delhi	7
Qatar Tourism Roadshow	Ahmedabad	8
Tourism Australia India Travel Mission	Kochi	8-11
IITM	Chennai	9-11
Tourism Australia India Travel Mission	Mumbai	12
Tourism Fiji Roadshow	Mumbai	20
GPS	Kolkata	21-22
Tourism Fiji Roadshow	Ahmedabad	21
Tourism Fiji Roadshow	Chennai	22
Tourism Fiji Roadshow	Delhi	23
Hong Kong Tourism Roadshow	Bengaluru	26
Hong Kong Tourism Roadshow	Ahmedabad	27
Hong Kong Tourism Roadshow	Mumbai	29
GPS	Pune	29-30
Hong Kong Tourism Roadshow	Delhi	30

For more information, contact us at: [talk@ddppl.com](mailto:talk@ddppl.com)

# ASSOCIATION TALK

## ATOAI to open new chapters

The new team of Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) is already set for expansion along with plans of opening new chapters, beginning with Maharashtra and Kerala.



Nisha Verma

One major change in the new team, according to Tejbir Singh Anand, Vice President, ATOAI, is the presence of two members from Kerala in the association's Executive Committee (EC). "We have always been considered a Delhi-centric association for many years, but we wanted to prove to the country and to the trade that we want to be inclusive and not exclusive. We are now playing with technology and even have our EC meetings on digital platforms to exchange and brainstorm ideas across the country. Inputs from members of South India will definitely help this new team in taking it forward," he claimed.

As part of reaching out to members across India, ATOAI is now planning to open new chapters. "The unorganised sector of adventure travel trade pegs at around 15,000 tour operators across the country, while the MOT figures report that we are only 100 approved adventure



Tejbir Singh Anand  
Vice President  
ATOAI

tour operators. This means that the gap is phenomenal, and we need to fill in 14,900 operators to reach the figure of 15,000. As a national body, it's our endeavour to ensure that we encourage people to become recognised tour operators and come under the fold of ATOAI. Initially, we are planning to open a chapter in Maharashtra, followed by Kerala, because these are mature markets with genuine operators," revealed Anand.

The association will also organise events in the future. "We are now looking at our next convention. We haven't

finalised the destination yet but always try to trailblaze into a new destination. We will also be looking at many new international marketing events, which we managed to pull off last year. We also have come out with the safety guidelines adopted by MOT. We want to ensure that every state adopts them and encourages stakeholders in the state to not

That's when ATOAI came in as the training partner. We will be replicating this model across the country in different states so that everyone is trained at the skillset," he stated.

MOT designated last year as the 'Year of Adventure Tourism' in association with ATOAI and many events were organised in line with the same. Anand

“We are now playing with technology and even have our EC meetings on digital platforms to exchange ideas. Inputs from members of South India will definitely help this new team in taking it forward”

only look into the guidelines but also adhere to them and run their business on the same ethos. We trained over 300 guides in Uttarakhand as rafting agencies, which was required as under the new ban; the beach camps were swiped out and the rafting agencies came under a lot of pressure.

agreed, saying, "2018 was a spectacular year for ATOAI as two international events were introduced in the country—AdventureNEXT in Bhopal and PATA Adventure Travel Mart in Uttarakhand. Many states are keen to host the former, including Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, etc.”

## ADTOI to organise 1<sup>st</sup> roadshow

ADTOI is set to organise its first-ever B2B Roadshow West Bengal & North East 2019 in New Delhi. Representatives of around 12-13 tour companies from the region will meet members from Delhi.



TT Bureau

The B2B roadshow organised by ADTOI will be held at Radisson Patparganj, New Delhi on May 18, 2019 that will coincide with the association's General House Meeting.



PP Khanna  
President, ADTOI

“The agenda is to trigger connectivity between the members in different states. This way members in Delhi can learn to sell products in the state accordingly”

PP Khanna, President, ADTOI, said that this roadshow will be focused on their latest chapter in the Northeast inaugurated in Guwahati last month. The B2B Roadshow West Bengal & Northeast 2019 will be a joint roadshow of the West Bengal Chapter and Northeast chapter, which used to be a single chapter previously. "The idea behind the roadshow is to connect people

and promote the state from where the chapter representatives come. We have earlier organised state specific themes at our General House Meeting for states like Punjab, West Bengal and Maharashtra, where we used to have cultural programmes and interact with tour operators from the state chapters. Around 12-13 companies with 20-22 representatives will have table space to conduct meetings with the members in Delhi," he shared.

Khanna added, "The agenda is to trigger connectivity between the members in different states. This way members in Delhi can learn to sell products in the state accordingly. This time members can learn about wildlife, temples, tea tourism along with a range of other products and get educated on how to sell packages for the same.”



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## Indian Association of Amusement Parks and Industries (IAAPI)

### Rajkot, Gujarat



IAAPI has elected **Sohansinh Jadeja** as its National President for the term 2019-20. He joined IAAPI as Director in the 2005 and over the years has worked as Regional Chairman of Western Region and Chairman of Membership Committee. Jadeja is a civil engineer by profession and has over 28 years of experience in amusement and water park industry. He joined Saya Group of Companies in 1992 as Director which pioneered in the field of manufacturing rides, water slides and also owned and operate amusement parks and water parks in Gujarat.

## Pride Plaza Hotel Aerocity, New Delhi

### Delhi

Pride Hotels has announced the joining of **Mohammad Shoeb** as Associate Vice President of Pride Plaza Hotel Aerocity, New Delhi.



Shoeb brings with him over 30 years of hospitality experience, having held senior management positions in premium hotel brands across the country. He is a hotel opening specialist and has opened four hotels from 2005 till 2015 in the southern part of India. In the past, he has worked with Radisson Hotel Group, AccorHotels, InterContinental Hotels Group and ITC Welcom Group. Shoeb is responsible for providing strategic guidance in operating the hotel in line with international brand standards.

## Hilton Chennai

### Chennai, Tamil Nadu

**Ruban Das** has been appointed as General Manager for Hilton Chennai. In his capacity, Das will be overseeing all operational and commercial aspects of the hotel and will also be responsible to drive the hotel's performance in the market through innovative strategies. Prior to his current role, he had been a General Manager with DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Bangalore where he helped the hotel to gain considerable market share through consistent performance. Das has more than 19 years of experience in the hospitality industry which includes assignments in different cities across India.



## DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Bangalore

### Bengaluru, Karnataka

A seasoned hospitality veteran with over 20 years of industry experience, **Subhabrata Roy** has been appointed as the General Manager of DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Bangalore. In his new role, he will spearhead business operations, overall implementation and business development of the hotel. Demonstrating the highest levels of quality, service and engagement, he will also be responsible for the hotel's performance in the market. Prior to this, Roy served as General Manager of Four Points by Sheraton, Vashi in Mumbai. He has also been associated with Keys Hotels as Director of Rooms/General Manager Operations.



## Hyatt Regency Kolkata

### Kolkata, West Bengal

**Kumar Shobhan** is the newly appointed General Manager of Hyatt Regency Kolkata. His focus will be to bring in innovative concepts in Food & Beverage, social events and enhance the overall experience for guests. Shobhan has spent more than 19 years in the hospitality industry in a number of roles – from Food & Beverage to Rooms and Spa and Catering. His last assignment was as a pre-opening General Manager for Hyatt Regency Lucknow. He has grasped a notable hold over the nuances of the hospitality sector and possesses the knack of managing negotiations, forecasting and revenue management, crisis management and various other operation services.



## Holiday Inn Chandigarh Panchkula

### Chandigarh

**Gayatri Bist** has been appointed as General Manager of Holiday Inn Chandigarh Panchkula. Her last assignment was with Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad as Executive Assistant Manager. Having worked at different reputed hotels across India, Bist brings with her 18 years of rich experience in various domains in the hospitality industry. She has an extensive background in senior leadership roles in both Sales and Operations. She has a well-defined vision for the hotel and is committed to taking it forward by adding more energising experiences at the property. Her pleasing personality and can-do spirit make her a competent leader for the team.



## Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park

### Bengaluru, Karnataka

Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park has announced the appointment of **Sushma Khichar** as the new Hotel Manager. Bringing more than over 14 years of experience to the table, Khichar would be responsible for heading the overall hotel operations and create new business opportunities, develop talent, create business development plans and guidelines for maintaining market leadership. She helps in building meaningful relationships with both customers and other members of the hotel industry that will complement and enhance the hotel's ability to meet the needs of clients while continuing to provide innovation and expertise.



## Hyatt Regency Pune

### Pune, Maharashtra

Hyatt Regency Pune is pleased to welcome **Zubin Sutaria** as Director of Sales. An industry expert, Sutaria holds an experience of more than 10 years in hospitality industry converting strategic vision into measurable results at various hotels. He will be responsible for maximising hotel revenue through result-oriented sales and marketing strategies, exploring business opportunities through events, etc. Prior to joining Hyatt Regency, he worked as Director of Sales with Four Points by Sheraton Hotel and Serviced Apartments, Pune. He has completed his Post Graduate Diploma in Culinary Arts from The Culinary Institute of America, USA.



## Top 3 Lords Resort Bhavnagar

### Bhavnagar, Gujarat

**Varun Kumar Nishant** has joined Top 3 Lords Hotels and Resorts as Operations Manager. He had spent his initial days at Taj Hotels, Ramee Guestline Mumbai & Dubai, Ramada Powai – Mumbai, Kohinoor Continental, The Pride Hotel Ahmedabad, Sarovar Rajkot, to name a few. His last assignment was with The ISCON Club and Resort – The Fern - Bhavnagar as a Food & Beverage Manager, before joining Top3 Lords Resorts Bhavnagar. His specialties include skills in catering, menu engineering, food & beverage, budgeting, and operations management, luxury hospitality, strong business strategy, financial management, forecast analysis, budget management, among others.



## TALKing People

The best way for **Kunal Sampat**, General Manager (India), MSC Cruises, to let his hair down has always been watching movies, especially superhero movies! "A lot of people are not aware that I have decent cooking skills.



*Ghar ka khana* has always been my soul food, however given a choice I will never say no to Oriental cuisine," he says. He also loves travelling and being a part of the travel industry helps him to indulge this passion. Sampat adds, "One of my most beautiful travel moments was in Lachung in Sikkim when I watched raindrops turn into ice flakes in front of my eyes!"

**Anmol Ahluwalia**, General Manager (North Goa), Taj Fort Aguada Resort & Spa and Taj Holiday Village Resort & Spa, IHCL, likes to de-stress by indulging in shopping, reading, wellness and gardening. "I



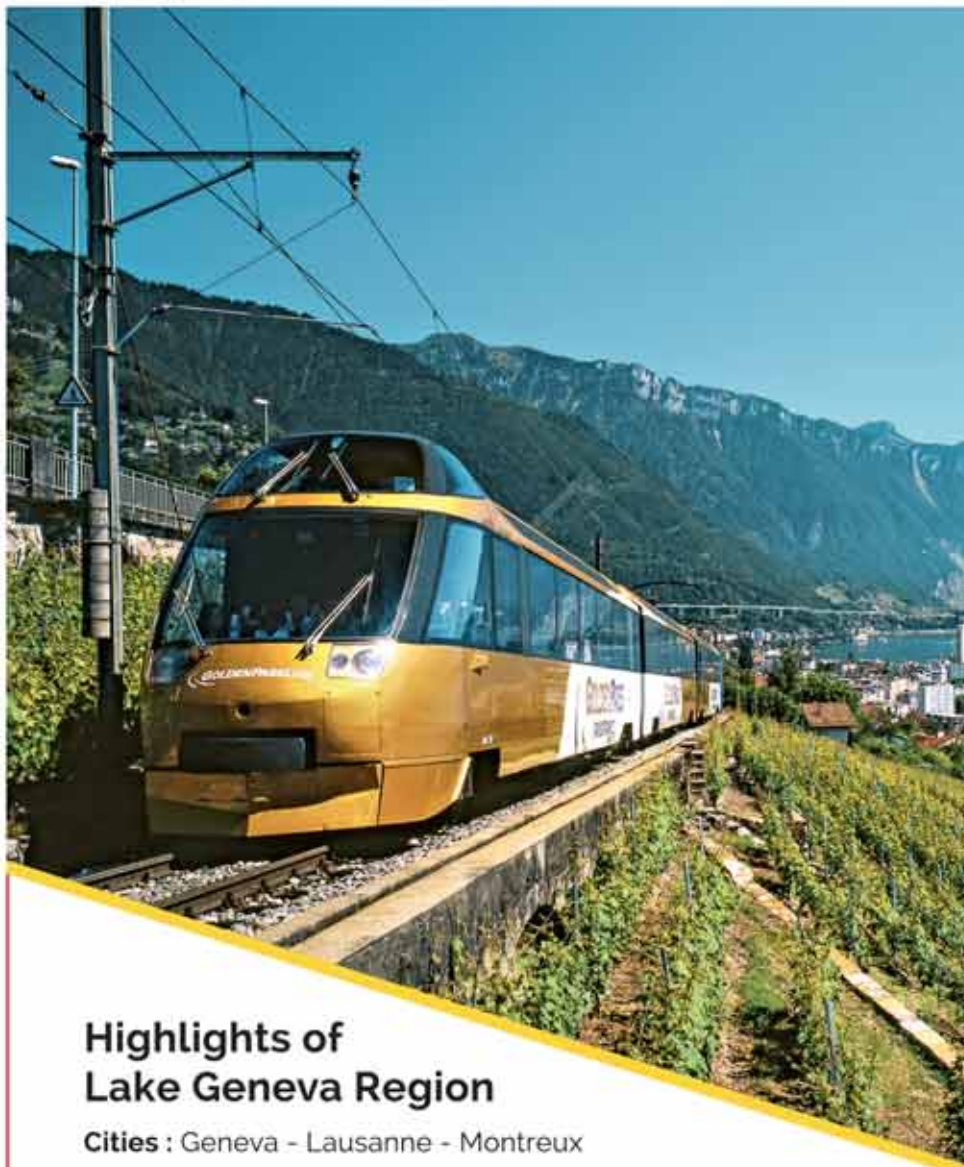
love to collect curious, collect art and artefacts and experience and learn various aspects of wellness. At some stage in life, I want to open my own spa or nursery. I love interacting with NGOs and doing CSR work. I believe in the concept of paying it forward," he shares.

Cooking for **Salil Fadnis** Hotel Manager, Hotel Sahara Star, is therapeutic. "I love to experiment with food. I also like to write down my thoughts during leisure time and spend quality time with my family. I love to travel



too — be it abroad or exploring cities and cuisines in India. I also enjoy trying different cuisines too. On weekends, I mostly take my family to outings and extract some time out for myself by practise yoga. While unwinding, I listen to music as it is very soothing," he shares.





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# Time to rediscover Rajasthan

Developing new destinations in Rajasthan's countryside is the primary thrust area for **Sreya Guha**, Principal Secretary—Tourism, Art & Culture, Government of Rajasthan.



Manas Dwivedi from Jaipur

The potpourri of rich cultural heritage certainly makes tourism as one of the most important industries in Rajasthan. "We have been endowed with the opportunity to preserve both our tangible and intangible heritage and showcase it through tourism. We boast of eight UNESCO World Heritage sites including various iconic forts, lakes and palaces. Apart from our built heritage, the state of Rajasthan is fortunately blessed by unique cultural conditions linked to its royal paths. As the only desert state in the country, its music, dance, cuisine and craft, all are unique and considered best in the world, explained **Sreya Guha**, Principal Secretary—Tourism, Art & Culture, Government of Rajasthan"

## New tourism policy

Guha informed that the policy is at its draft stage currently and details will soon be shared with all the stakeholders. She said, "We have recently started working on formulating the new tourism policy in the state. Once all our political functionaries come back after the General Assembly Elections, I will be able to concretise more in detail. But the thrust areas are to develop new destinations, to go into the countryside, into the hinterland to develop rural destinations and generate maximum employment in rural areas."

## Business on Wheels

Rajasthan's luxury train, 'Palace on Wheels' has bagged the first bulk booking of the season with a deal worth ₹5.2 crores during GITB 2019 on account of 20 per

cent advance bookings for the next two seasons of 2019-20 and 2020-21. The first draft of ₹4 crores was presented by Arun Kundu, Director—Incoming, The Rail Journeys, Mercury Travels while the second draft worth ₹1.5 crore was presented by Manish Saini, CEO, Worldwide Rail Journeys on account of 20 per cent advance booking for the next two seasons. The total business from Ebix Group will be ₹20 crores in the season. The next two upcoming seasons of the heritage train already have a

**“We have already received our first bulk booking of the season for 'Palace on Wheels' and we are hoping to have a full season next year”**

total advance booking of 80 per cent. "We have received our first bulk booking of the season and we are hoping to have a full season next year. We have had a very good season this year as well, and we are also planning to revamp the train as per feedback received from travellers," Guha mentioned.

## Niche festivals

Many traditional festivals, which are indigenous to the state, have been promoted all around to showcase Rajasthan's cultural heritage. Guha reiterated, "The Pushkar Festival and Desert Festival, are quite popular. We are also introducing niche festivals. Taking this initiative forward, we will develop more such festivals across other destinations of the state."

Rajasthan's tourism industry has witnessed a record growth of 9.4 per cent in domestic arrivals and 8.97 per cent in international arrivals in 2018. "We have done much better than the national average. The state government is currently focused on creating an all-inclusive digital database for the state. This will provide a seamless experience to the traveller," she stated.

## New destinations and products

In order to provide new experiences to visitors, a case in point here is Sambhar, a village very close to Jaipur. Guha

we have created a new destination around the Salt Lake. The state government has now taken efforts to develop the area. I must mention the thrust we are giving to ecotourism and nature tourism. We are developing new products like leopard safaris and other activities in the area."



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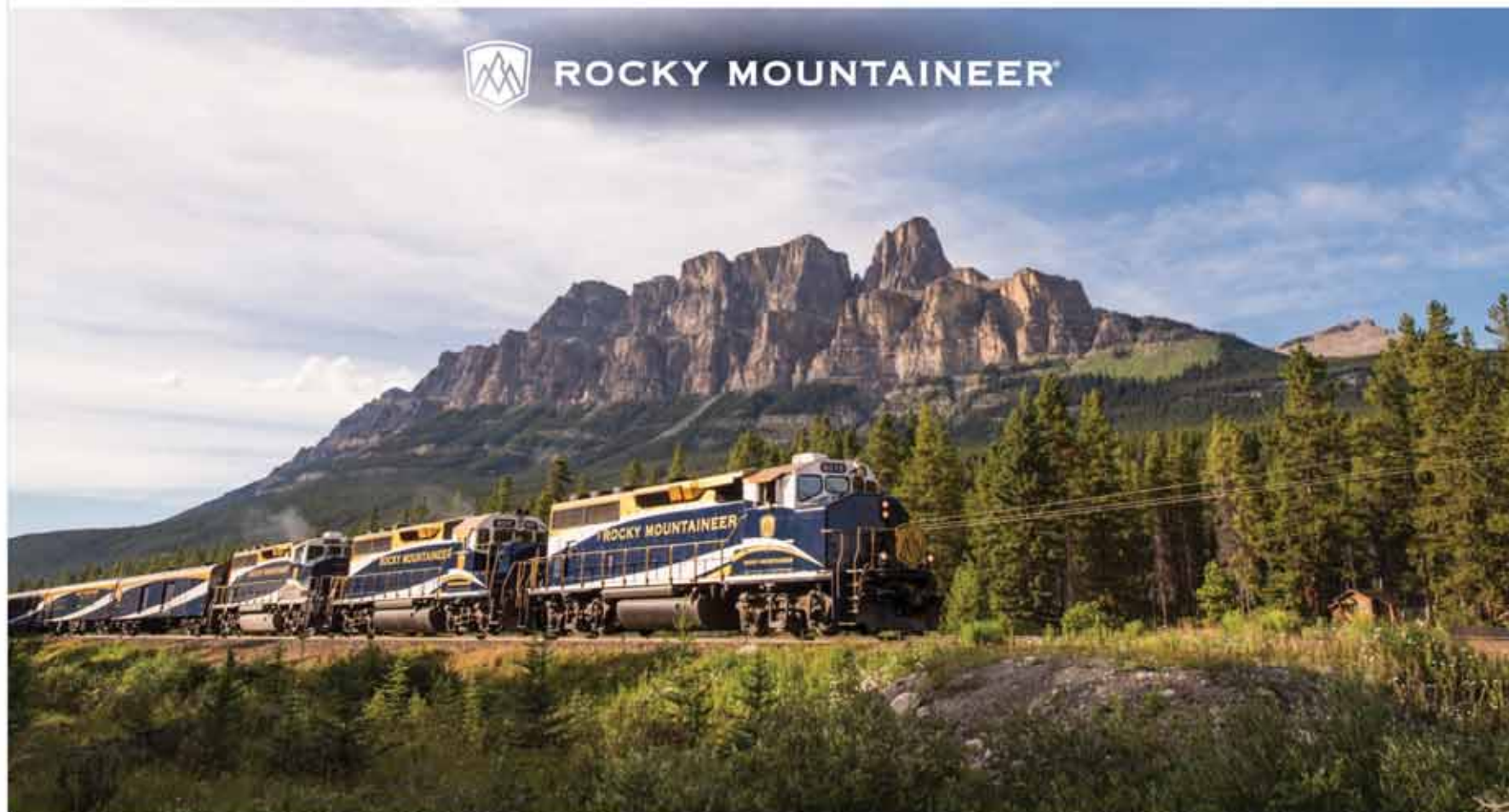
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Add:

05 Breakfast

CAD 230 Per Person\*

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