

January - March 2015

A high-end quarterly magazine

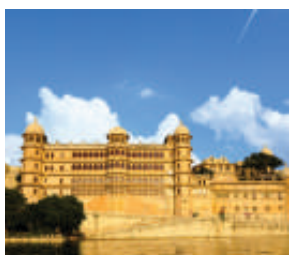
PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

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THE NEW LOOK OF TOURISM IN GUJARAT

The Wonderful West



Royal Rajasthan



Magnificent Maharashtra



Glamorous Goa



Mesmerizing Madhya Pradesh



Discover
New Stories...
TRAVEL!



From the Editorial Desk

Why do we travel? Whatever propel us to travel, it is surely not the oracle, the pilgrimage or the Gods, it is the compulsion to be elsewhere, anywhere but here. Travelling is discovering oneself more than any place. It reveals an unusual side of a person surrounded with new languages, new people and new situations.

Just like an adventurous traveler, Praveg Communications Pvt. Ltd. entered in the field of Travel & Tourism more than a decade back. With the zest of discovering innovative ways of performing any task, the organization has been appending diverse hues and shades to the Exhibitions, Huge Events and Road Shows of Gujarat Tourism. Taking a step forward, the launch of Praveg's Tourism One magazine is a new endeavor of the adventure-seeking spirit of the organization. An adventure - which will eventually pave the way to success for Praveg's Vibrant Tourism Expo.

Every travel has a purpose. Praveg's thrilling travel to contribute to the Tourism Sector is rooted deep in its admiration of the country's natural beauty. The beauty of enthralling beaches, foggy hills, spiritual stories, marvelous scenic beauty, exotic flora and fauna, prosperous culture, dynamic traditions, exciting festivals and alluring food culture.

Of course, no splendors ever got underlined without appropriate promotional activities. Indian Tourism Sector, contributing 6.8% to GDP, obtained great highlights through the campaigns like Incredible India and Atithidevo Bhava. The wonders of the country's landscapes have been further embossed by the unique facilities like Visa-on-Arrival and Medical Visa. The sector, one of the biggest employment generators, is promised to get the best professionals through 21 government-run hotel management and catering technology institutes and 14 food craft institutes.

Praveg's Tourism One, amid all these gigantic endeavors, is a tiny effort to present different facets of Travel & Tourism to the readers. To begin with, the inaugural issue of Praveg's Tourism One - The Wonderful West is embracing the beauty of West Indian states. So what are you waiting for? Pack your bags and get ready to fly with Praveg's Tourism One to enjoy the exquisiteness of Glorious Gujarat, Magnificent Maharashtra, Glamorous Goa, Mesmerizing Madhya Pradesh and Royal Rajasthan.

We hope the virtual journey thrills you with some truly unforgettable and fantastic moments! Lastly, keep in touch and send us your views. We love to hear from you.

Cheers!

The Tourism One Team



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Share with us some enthusiastic inputs like photographs, essays or anything related to tourism.

Have some suggestions for us?

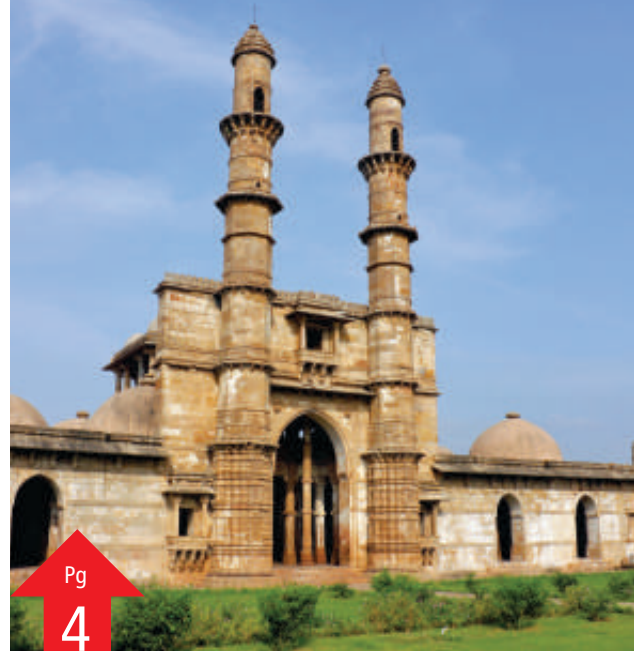
Go ahead and send us your ideas, valuable opinions or topics you would like to see more coverage on

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THE NEW LOOK OF TOURISM IN GUJARAT



The New Look of Tourism in
Gujarat

Contents



Pg
12

Rann Utsav
A Unifying Fest of Celebration
& Adventure



Pg
14

Experience The Lavish Expedition
With The Deccan Odyssey



Pg
16

Magnifying the 'Wild' Maharashtra



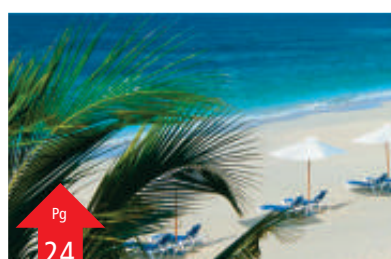
Pg
19

You Know What...



Pg
20

IMAGICA
Let the Child Within You Awake !



Pg
24

GOA - Churches, Beaches & Beyond



Pg
30

The Spiritual Touch
The Ancient City - Ujjain



Pg
33

ITB Berlin



Pg
34

Revive Grandeur of the Royal Stay



Pg
38

Medical Tourism
The Midas Touch



Pg
40

All That Matters!

PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE





THE NEW LOOK OF TOURISM IN GUJARAT

Cover Story by: Anil Mulchandani

A long coastline along with beaches, shore temples and sacred summits, palaces and forts, some of India's finest wildlife reserves and birdwatching sites, the unique white desert landscape of Kutch, colourful handicrafts, tribal villages and thriving cities, Gujarat is indeed a tourist paradise. Today, number of initiatives are bringing many destinations and tourism products into global spotlight.



GIR ROARS

Gir, the last abode of the Asiatic lion, is one of the destinations that has recorded exponential growth of tourist flow in the last few years. Taj Group's The Gateway Hotel Gir Forest, rising up beside the Hiran River, does not look very different from other riverside resort hotels in India. But for the stakeholders in Gujarat's Tourism Industry, this hotel, opened in October 2011 by reviving a closed Taj hotel, is a landmark that reflects the growth in tourism that the Gir Wildlife Sanctuary has experienced in the last couple of years. Built by the Indian Tourism Development Corporation, this hotel was run as the Lion Safari Lodge by Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd in the 1980s and '90s before being taken over by the Taj Group and renamed as Gir Lodge. When Taj closed operations of this property in 2005-06, many felt this marked the end of tourism in Gir. "Today, we have re-opened this property under The Gateway brand

because we believe that Gir is a big destination in Gujarat and with our experience in the leisure segment, we feel we can explore its full potential", says P K Mohankumar, COO of The Gateway Hotels, "Since we have hotels in three cities of Gujarat, Gir is a logical extension of the state's experience". The property has been given a makeover with improved interiors, modern conveniences and a pleasantly located river-facing swimming pool. One of the highpoints of the property is the lounge upstairs looking out to a panoramic view of the river and forested hills.

Located in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat, Gir Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park together encompass an area of over 1312 sq km, comprising deciduous and scrub forests, grasslands and water bodies. This wildlife reserve is the only protected habitat of the Asiatic lion, which numbers 411

according to the 2010 lion census, and most visitors do get to see one over a two or three stay at one of the properties in or around Sasan, the headquarters of the Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary. It is also one of the likely places to see a leopard, with the census yielding a substantial figure of over 300 in the reserve. The permissible driving routes in the Gir Wildlife Sanctuary go through a cross-section of habitats, populated by spotted deer, sambar and other species. This sanctuary is known for its crocodile population and rich birdlife.

"Considering all this, I was surprised during my visit to Gir in 2003-04 to find very few places to stay compared to many of the Tiger Reserves in India," says Mohit Aggarwal who owns Asian Adventures. "My company specializes in birdwatching and natural history group, Gir was like a missing link in the wildlife circuit of Gujarat, which has resorts near other important bird sites like the Little Rann of Kutch. Yet, this is the wildlife reserve, where I have really enjoyed going for wildlife viewing drives – there is a

lot of drama because of the large population of both prey and predators, and you keep tracking pugmarks of lion or leopard, listening to alarm calls of deer or langur that rent the air. It is good for watching eagles, vultures and other birds". Looking at the potential, Aggarwal says he met Naveen Modha who owns a mango orchard in an enviable location along the sanctuary boundary. They collaborated to start Gir Birding Lodge in 2004-05. "The fruit trees in the complex bring in birds from the sanctuary's forests and balconies of the farmhouse look out to the wildlife in the sanctuary. So we decided to specialize largely in offering facilities for natural history enthusiasts, like birdwatching guides, safari arrangements and field guides to birds", says Aggarwal.

Like Aggarwal, Ranjit Singh Parmar of Palaces of India realized that Gir was a gap in the Gujarat itinerary because of paucity of quality accommodations. Parmar shares, "If Africa is known for its Big Five, India is the land of three big cats – Tiger, Lion and Leopard. Gir is the only site for the lion in Asia and a top site for the leopard in India. Gujarat's neighbouring states of MP and Rajasthan have India's most productive tiger sighting areas, therefore a good tour is possible to see wildlife in Gujarat and its neighbouring states. This was not being exploited". As Parmar specialized in palace hotel bookings, he decided to start a company called Camps of India, with properties in Gir and other wildlife reserves targeting upmarket travellers. Designed and developed like an African safari camp, this property on the river shores started in November 2004 has luxe tents among shady trees. "This move has paid off as Gir has become a big destination", says Parmar, adding, "The increased facilities of niche resorts has helped bring international tourists to Gir".

While Gir was earlier largely visited by foreign tourists and wildlife enthusiasts, it is now becoming a destination attracting weekenders from Gujarat and holiday tourists from other states, believes Mahesh Dhudakiya of Shakti Travels. This is the reason why Shakti Travels has started the Vanvaso Resort on the river-shores near the sanctuary. "When we started work on building Vanvaso a few years ago, with



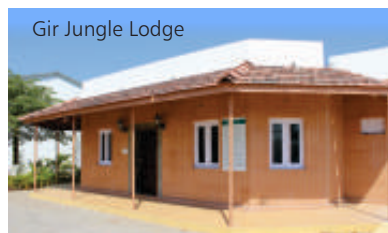
Vanvaso Resort, Gir

recreational facilities for families like swimming pool, children's amusements, coffee shop, etc, many felt we were making a mistake in investing in Gir. However, since we have a lot of tour group movement of our own in this part of Gujarat, we believed there was a need for such a property. We are now happy with our decision", says Dudakiya. He believes that the publicity received by the park has helped – the news reports of good census records with rising lion and leopard populations, and the visits of important dignitaries including former President Pratibha Patil and the then-Chief Minister and present Prime Minister Narendra Modi, being cases in point. "Another huge impact has been the Khushboo Gujarat Ki advertisement campaign on Television, which shows Amitabh Bachchan watching lions in Gir. This has caught the imagination of many families all over India specially because Gir is close to the holy temple town of Somnath, the Island of Diu, the magnificent Jain temples of Girnar and historic Junagadh

making a complete holiday experience of wildlife, culture, heritage, beach and pilgrimage". Sanjeev Chajjer, Vice President of Cox and Kings, agrees, "Gir has become a hot destination for families in Ahmedabad, and many are now opting for weekends in this and other wildlife reserves, because there are good resorts and the places have received publicity".

The Fern resort in Gir has even incorporated a spa, a swimming pool, recreational areas, conference and banquet facilities, party lawns, performance areas, in the resort keeping this market in mind.

"From a few places to stay in Gir five years ago, we now have about 40 accommodation options, including hotels, resorts, lodges, camps and guesthouses, enough to satisfy various tourist categories from school groups to honeymooning couples", says Mukesh Mehta, owner of the Gir Jungle Lodge.



Gir Jungle Lodge



The Fern Resort, Gir



THE WHITE DESERTS & GOLDEN BEACHES OF KUTCH

One of the greatest success stories of Gujarat is the phoenix like growth of Kutch after the 2001 earthquake that destroyed thousands of houses and buildings. Today, Kutch is known for its ports, industrial parks and fast growth of tourism.

One of the major events in Kutch promoted by Gujarat Tourism, Rann Utsav promises the unique experience of visiting the vast open desert, travelling across open desert plains in a camel cart during the sunset, and watching a full moonlit folk concert on the shimmering white desert landscape. This annual event offers the opportunity to visit a stretch of the Great Rann of Kutch, the expanse of salt-encrusted white desert that lies along the India-Pakistan border. The festival also spotlights the rich culture of Kutch, a district of Gujarat that is shot through by the brilliant colours of the embroidery, tie-dye and block-printed fabrics that are produced by craftspeople of the villages that fall between the desert wilderness of the Rann of Kutch and the beautiful sea beaches lining the Gulf of Kutch.

The district capital, Bhuj, offers an introduction to Kutch in its monuments, museums, markets and craft parks. Bhuj's 18th century Aina Mahal and 19th century

Pragmahal palaces have richly painted and decorated interiors that offer an insight into the craftsmanship of Kutch. It also has fascinating collections of art, archaeological finds, musical instruments, historic artifacts and shipping displays at the Kutch Museum and folk art exhibitions at the *Bharatiya Sanskriti Darshan*.

A short distance from Bhuj, the village of Bhujodi is a centre for *pitloom* weaving, embroidery and woodcarving. Further down the same road are Ajrakhpur and Dhamadka, known for their vegetable dye block-printing and exquisite *Ajrakh* craft. Dhaneti is the place, where *Ahir* women do fine embroidery. Place like Padhhar is known for its embroidery work. While Ningal is famous for its single ikat silk weaving. The Crafts Resource Centre at Kukma and the town of Anjar are the centres for *bandhani* tie-dye and metalcrafts.

North of Bhuj, the grasslands of *Banni* are scattered with villages of pastoral groups. As the women of these groups do embroidery for their personal use and a second income, this is one of the highest concentration areas of craftswomen in the world. In Banni, the *Sodha Rajputs* practice the *Sindhi* styles of *suf*, *khaarek*, and *paako*, while Islamic pastoral groups like the Jaths

and Mutwas have their own ethnic styles of embroidery. The Hindu pastoral groups like the Rabaris also have their distinct embroidery style. It is possible to tour a number of villages, like Hodka, Dhorodo, Gorewali, Ludia and Bhirendiara, in the Banni region by staying at Hodka or Dhordo.

Travelling west from Bhuj, the road leads to Nirona, which is the centre for the rare art of rogan, now practiced only by the family of Khatri Abdulgaffoor Daud, who has won a national awards for this art. *Rogan* is the art of painting fabrics using castor oil-based colours. Much work goes into creating the castor-oil based paint, which is then rubbed between palms to create a stringy gooey paste from which the colour can come off on an iron rod or wooden stick like threads. He and his nephews create rogan masterpieces for wall hangings and decorations, sarees, tablecloths, skirts, etc in silk and cotton clothes. At Nirona and nearby villages like Zura, it is possible to see '*Vada-kaam*', the work of carpenters who create wooden products, which they lacquer in various colours, and the making of melodic bells, cast in iron and covered with copper.

Continuing from here, the road leads to the ancient Buddhist site of Siyot - the fortified



The Grand Tent City, Rann Utsav, Kutch



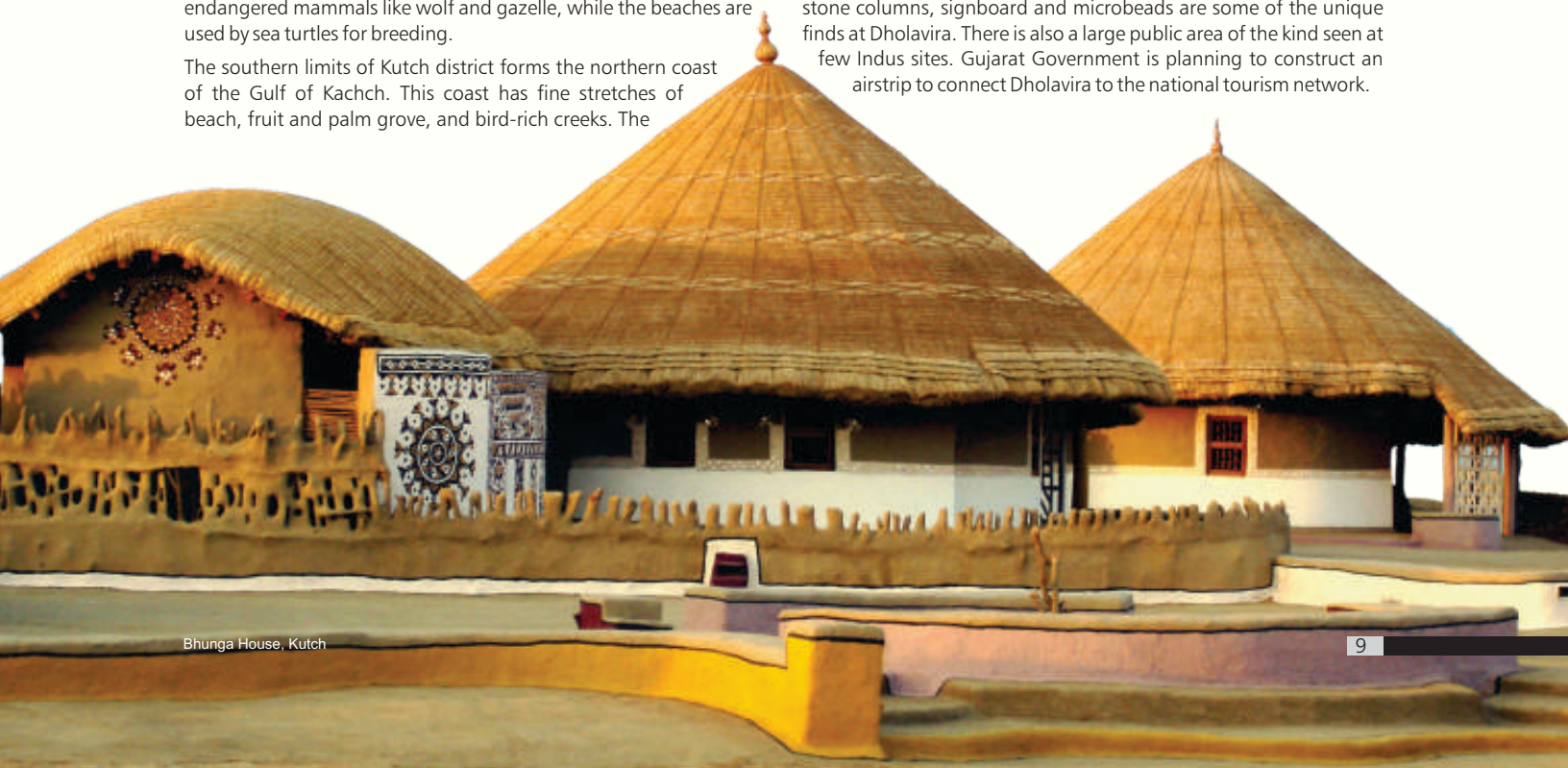
town of Lakhpat best known for its historic Gurudvara. Places like the sacred lake of Narayansarovar, divine temples, heritage village of Tera, historic fort, holy mosques, and an interesting water-harvesting system lure the attention of any visitor.

The western talukas of Kutch like Nakhatrana and Abdasa are among the best birdwatching areas in India. The Lala Sanctuary and the grasslands and scrub that surround it, support endangered birds like the Great Indian Bustard, Black-naped Tit, Stolikza's bushchat, White-backed and Long-billed Vultures, and the Lesser Florican, while the Chhari Lake and its surrounding grasslands form one of the most important highways for migratory birds. This is also the only region in India where the Grey Hypoculius is seen. Besides birds, the Narayan Sarovar and Lala Sanctuaries also support endangered mammals like wolf and gazelle, while the beaches are used by sea turtles for breeding.

The southern limits of Kutch district forms the northern coast of the Gulf of Kachch. This coast has fine stretches of beach, fruit and palm grove, and bird-rich creeks. The

key destination is Mandvi, about 50km from Bhuj airport, which has the majestic Vijay Vilas Palace and beautiful beaches. Once a major port, Mandvi still supports a thriving dhow-building industry at its creeks. It is a market for the handicrafts produced in nearby villages. There is a deluxe tented beach resort in the palace estate. Toward Ashapura beach and Pingleshwar, which has a good beach, coastal birdlife and sea turtle nesting areas.

The main focal point of Eastern Kutch is Dholavira, the excavations that provide an insight into the Indus Valley or Harappan Civilisation, which was specially mature about 2500-1900BC. This site shows the town planning of the period, specially the sanitary drainage systems and the water-harvesting structures, like reservoirs, wells and canals, that were surprisingly sophisticated for the period. The smoothed stone columns, signboard and microbeads are some of the unique finds at Dholavira. There is also a large public area of the kind seen at few Indus sites. Gujarat Government is planning to construct an airstrip to connect Dholavira to the national tourism network.



Bhunga House, Kutch

RELIGIOUS TOURISM

Gujarat's major destinations are its pilgrimage destinations. Along the northwest tip of Saurashtra, Dwarka is one of the holiest temple towns for all Hindus and part of the *Char Dham Yatra*. The coastal road from Dwarka leads to Somnath, one of the 12 *Jyotirlingams*. Recent promotions have led to rising tourism in both these temple towns, resulting in growing facilities like hotels and restaurants.

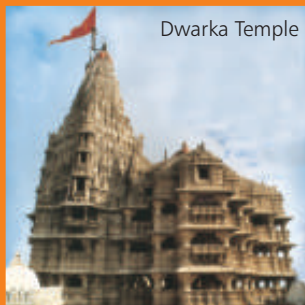
While both Dwarka and Somnath are situated on the coast of Saurashtra, the hilltop temple sites of Shatrunjaya over Palitana and Mount Girnar outside Junagadh are among the most important religious destinations for Jains. Ambaji in the Aravalli hills is one of the 51 *Shaktipiths* revered by all Hindus. Gujarat also has the most sacred *Parsee* fire temple in India at Udvada.



Ambaji Temple



Girnar



Dwarka Temple



Palitana Jain Temples



Somnath Temple



Ranchhodrai Temple, Dakor

GUJARAT GOVERNMENT'S RECENT TOURIST-FRIENDLY INITIATIVE

HOME STAY POLICY

Since accommodation is the mainstay for Tourism to thrive, Gujarat's new policy for home stay facilities is a promising move. It encourages people to open extra rooms in their residential properties for tourists. This will be ideal for tourists who want to experience first-hand culture of Gujarat and the life of Indian family.

Commenting on the government's initiative, Bhuvaneshwari Makharia of Sidhpur Smruti says, "When I visited Sidhpur a few years ago, I was amazed to see the stunningly beautiful facades of *Dawoodi Bohra houses*. During my visit, I spoke to Asger Shahpurwala, who is involved with philanthropic work in Sidhpur, about the importance of forming an organisation to conserve their ancestral homes. Thus, the Sidhpur Smruti Trust was formed with a focus on preserving the rich but neglected architectural and cultural heritage of Sidhpur, making it viable through a Heritage Tourism plan that includes heritage homestays, heritage walks, spiritual tours and promoting *Bohra* cuisine and culture. We are now working to open many of these houses for tourists who will get to eat the

family's home style food and stay in these heritage properties". From *havelis* in Ahmedabad to palatial properties in Kutch and Saurashtra, or even village homes, many appropriate properties are being opened for tourists by operators. "Professionals will train house owners willing to open their residential premises for tourism in various aspects of the Hospitality Industry so that they can provide a comfortable experience for the visitors, who will also get a better feel of local culture," says Sanjay Kaul, MD of Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd.

Gujarat also boasts an outstanding collection of heritage hotels that offer character-rich accommodation facilities in renovated palaces, castles or colonial-period mansions near many destinations of architectural, historical or ecological importance. These converted properties represent the heritage of princely and mercantile families of Gujarat, a state positioned on the west coast of India that has enjoyed maritime trade with overseas countries since millennia. The prosperity of the state during the medieval and British

colonial period resulted in it having a high concentration of princely and petty states, some of which were among the wealthiest in India, ruled by *Maharajas*, *Nawabs* and *Thakore Sahebs*, who commissioned palaces and mansion guest houses in Islamic, Hindu or European styles, even a fusion of various architectural elements that are noted for the grandeur of their facades and interiors. During the colonial period, the merchant families built for themselves mansions ranging in style from courtyard houses called *havelis*, from fine stonework and woodcarvings, to European-style mansion residences. The result of the building activities is a wealth of architectural buildings that can be seen while travelling through Gujarat.

Making the most of their living legacy, many of the owners of these architectural buildings have converted them into heritage hotels with sympathetic restoration of the facades and renovation, keeping with the history of the property to offer their guests an insight into the culture, cuisine and lifestyle of Gujarat's landed gentry besides an attractive accommodation base from which to explore the countless places to see in the state.





rann utsav

A Unifying Fest of Celebration and Adventure

The profusion of culture and tradition, superfluity of colors and celebration, cornucopia of joy and beauty, together all reflect the magnificence of the eccentric spirit of Kutch. The diverse land of Kutch, one of the most ecologically and culturally abundant districts of the state, is a festive land of rich culture and traditions, folk dances and music, arts and crafts, people and nature.



Amid the tremendous and divergent landscape, during the full moon night of the winters, three-day festive event brimming with dynamism, hospitality, vigor and traditional flavor of the area is hosted and known as Rann or Kutch Mahotsav.

The Rann Mahotsav is not only festive extravaganza of the district but it is celebration of life that crams colors into the otherwise-dry land of desert. The celebratory event with the glimpses of affluent Kutchi culture, intricate handicrafts and outdoor activities make this desert carnival a perfect holiday destination.

While the grassland Banni hosts the most glorious exhibition of the speckled range of arts and crafts of the region, the colorful fairs held near the beach or the banks of a lake embrace the spirit of festivity. The Grand Tent City with approx 350 luxury tents at Dhordo near Bhuj makes live-in tents a life-time experience for tourists.

The splendid amalgamation of bright light of moon and white sand along with the carnival of music and dance is a heavenly experience to cherish. With traditional dance forms and musical moments, many thrilling activities like cultural act shows, camel safari, parasailing and dirt biking append different colors to the festivity. The affluent handicraft culture of the district like folk textiles, exquisite embroidery, bandini sarees, traditional ornaments and mirror work entice shopaholics to visit the place.

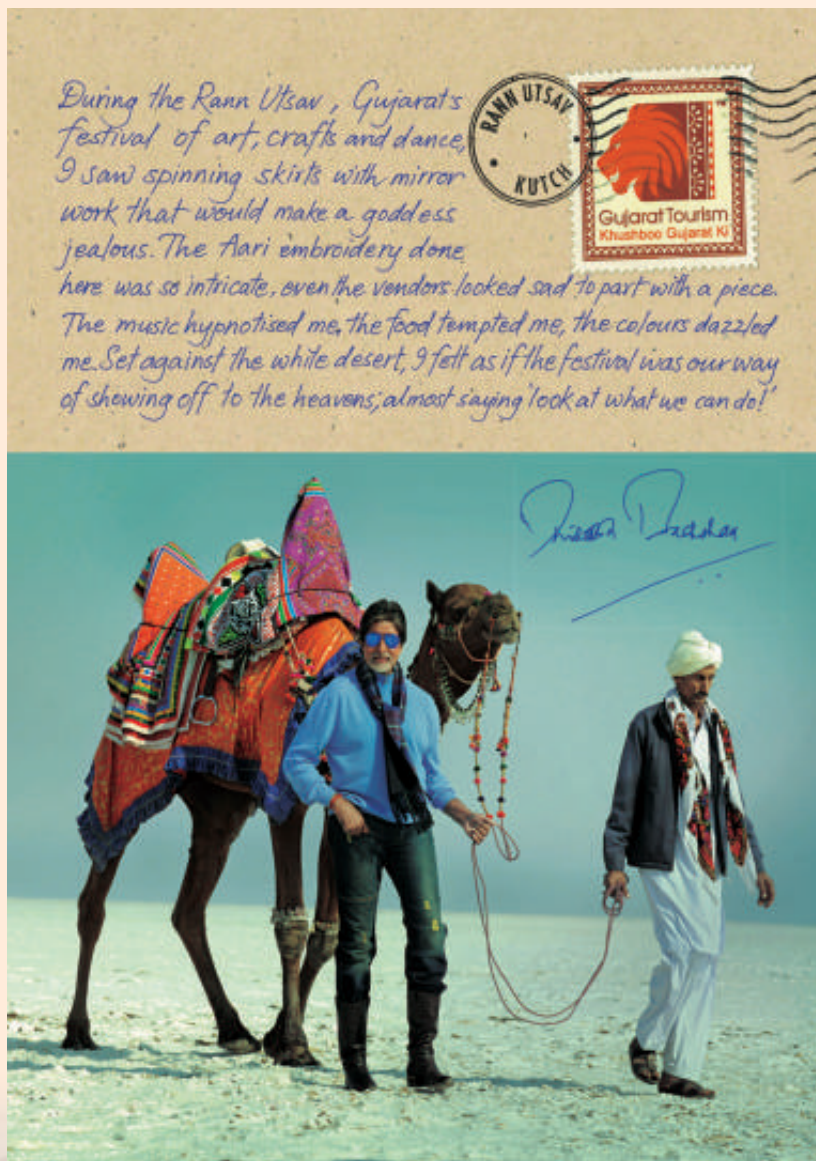
Rann Utsav is the name of distinctive celebration of life and the memories, colors and plain desert, contemporary and ancient traditions, acculturation and isolation.

The Grand Celebration of Rann Utsav:

1st Dec 2014 to 07th March 2015

How to Reach:

Dhordo village is the home to Rann Festival. The village is at a distance of 79 km from both Bhuj Airport and Bhuj Railway Station.



Full Moon Dates and Festivals During Rann Utsav:

January 2015	February 2015	March 2015
05 th Jan - Full Moon	04 th Feb - Full Moon	05 th Mar - Full Moon
14 th Jan - Kite Festival	14 th Feb - Valentine Day	05 th Mar - Holi
15 th Jan - Kite Festival	17 th Feb - Shivratri	06 th Mar - Rain Dance



PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE



As fantasizing as it may seem to be treated as the royal personalities, Deccan Odyssey is carrying forward the custom of royal treatment through different packages to discover adorable and rich blend of architectural treasures, spiritual plots, flora and fauna, adventures and thrilling wildlife of Indian tourist destinations.

The concept of Deccan Odyssey is not restricted to the amazing destinations only. To make your journey time a lifetime experience, Deccan Odyssey bestows the feeling of a majestic hotel stay with all its state-of-the-art interiors, magnificent exteriors, ultra-modern facilities and grand hospitality. Let's take a ghost tour of the luxurious Deccan Odyssey. The intricate interior of the train is a grand resemblance of the emperor era with enormous space to explore the grandeur and affluent furniture. As the name reveals, the décor portrays history of Deccan region of the country. To offer a wide-ranging experience, the 21 coaches of the train are well-decorated

based on various themes depicting various royal eras. The artistic accommodation is designed to present a king-size experience to the guest with all the top-notch opulence like personal safe, attached bathroom, telephone, air-conditioning and a personal attendant to serve the guest round the clock. The delicacies of the multi-cuisine restaurants, Peshwa I & Peshwa II, with all the regal treatments, brilliant decoration and large choice of Indian, oriental and continental delicacies will be a wholesome experience in itself. Additionally, the lavish bar named Mumbai Hi with its stylish interiors and diverse collection of some of the world's best wines and spirits is a space to replenish your energy. The bar also offers a dazzling enjoyment through its scrumptious non-alcoholic beverages. The extravagant sitting lounge is a place to loosen up by chit-chatting with your fellow travelers and dwelling into the world of amazing books from top-class authors. The grand train has all to offer to





Deccan Odyssey Dining Cabin

people with diverse taste and preferences. For shopaholics, the state-of-the-art shopping arcade to get hold of different arts and articles from all around the world is a time of pleasure. The Deccan Odyssey runs a Health and Spa Center with it. Using the great and proven method of India, Ayurveda, Guests can experience the lighter part of themselves by revitalizing all the senses. The amenities of the royal train are so detailed and personalized that your business will not be hampered during your holidays as a conference cabin also runs with you on your journey.

Started as an effort to promote Konkan route of Maharashtra, Deccan Odyssey has also started offering ten more packages to unfold the beauty of diverse regions of the country. Apart from Maharashtra, places like Delhi, Rajasthan, UP, Karnataka, Hyderabad, Gujarat and many more have been part of Deccan Odyssey journey to make you embrace the hills, touch the beaches, feel the archeological beauty, experience the adventure of wildlife and drench in divinity of the spiritual souls.



Deccan Odyssey Bar

Deccan Odyssey Packages

Maharashtra Splendor Journey

Duration: 7 Nights / 8 Days
Destinations Covered: Mumbai - Aurangabad - Tadoba - Ajanta Caves - Nashik - Kolhapur - Goa - Mumbai

Indian Odyssey Journey

Duration: 7 Nights / 8 Days
Destinations Covered: New Delhi - Sawai Madhopur (Ranthambore) - Agra - Jaipur - Jodhpur - Udaipur - Vadodara - Mumbai

Golden Treasure Journey

Duration: 3 Nights / 4 Days
Destinations Covered: New Delhi - Agra - Sawai Madhopur (Ranthambore) - Jaipur - New Delhi

Soul Quest Journey

Duration: 2 Nights / 3 Days
Destinations Covered: Mumbai - Shirdi - Mumbai

Spiritual Sahyadri Journey

Duration: 4 Nights / 5 Days
Destinations Covered: Mumbai - Nashik - Shirdi - Mumbai

Jewels Of The Deccan Journey

Duration: 7 Nights / 8 Days
Destinations Covered: Mumbai - Badami - Aihole - Pattadakal - Hampi - Bijapur - Hyderabad - Mumbai

Maharashtra Wild Trail Journey

Duration: 7 Nights / 8 Days
Destinations Covered: Mumbai - Ajanta Caves - Nagzira - Tadoba - Aurangabad - Mumbai

Hidden Treasures Of Gujarat Journey

Duration: 7 Nights / 8 Days
Destinations Covered: Mumbai - Vadodara - Bhavnagar - Sasan Gir - Little Rann of Kutch - Modhera - Ahmedabad - Delhi

Indian Soiree Journey

Duration: 7 Nights / 8 Days
Destinations Covered: Mumbai - Ajanta Caves - Sanchi - Sawai Madhopur - Jaipur - Agra - New Delhi

Indian Sojourn Journey

Duration: 7 Nights / 8 Days
Destinations Covered: New Delhi - Sawai Madhopur - Jaipur - Agra - Sanchi - Aurangabad - Mumbai

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
www.deccan-odyssey-india.com

Magnifying the 'Wild' Maharashtra

Nature has always remained an alluring factor for the mankind. The surprising and wonderful creations of God have added astonishing colors of excitement and adventure to the human life. Maharashtra is one such idyllic place to indulge the beauty of diverse flora and fauna. From the wonders of Western Ghats to exquisiteness of Vidarbha Forest, the diversified geographical location of the state makes it inflated with the diverse wildlife like Tiger, Crocodile, Bison, Gawa, Neelgai, Wild Deer, Sambars and rare migratory birds.

The state is an abode to four major tiger reserves, six national parks and 36 wildlife sanctuaries. So accelerate and explore tiger reserves like Tadoba, Melghat, Pench and Sahyandri, visit the Mowgli Land and enjoy the beauty of the backwaters of Totladoh Lake in Pench National Park.

Pench Tiger Reserve

Travel around the scenic land of the Pench Tiger Reserve, situated near the southern reaches of Satpuda hills. Spanning across 257 sq. km of area, the reserve's natural beauty has inspired great short story-writer Rudyard Kipling for his renowned work – The Jungle Book. The national park is an astonishing blend of the shady trees and backwaters of Totladoh Lake.

The '25th Tiger Reserve of India' has the highest herbivores in India along with 164 species of birds, 33 species of mammals, 10 species of amphibians, 30 species of reptiles, 50 species of fish and a wide variety of insect life. Tiger, Jungle Cat, Dhole, Leopard, Small Indian Civet, Striped Hyena, Jackal, Sloth Bear and common Palm Civet represent the carnivore fauna of the reserve.

The best seasons to unfold wildlife safari of Pench National Park are Winters (December to February) and Summers (March to May). Both seasons lead to change the safari time due to varying daylight hours. Safari in Winters is allowed from 07.00 AM to 10.30 AM and 02.00 PM to 05.30 PM. While for Summers, the entry starts from 06.30 AM to 10.00 AM and 03.00 PM to 06.00 PM*.

Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve

An infinite treasure trove of numerous species of trees and plants, Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve was developed under the 'Project Tiger'. The reserve is an amazing formation of Tadoba National Park, also known as 'The Jewel of Vidharbha' and Andhari Wildlife Sanctuary. The Project Tiger land comprises of 1727.6 sq. km of area with the core area 625.82 sq. km and the rest 1101.78 sq. km.

Located in the district of Chandrapur in Maharashtra, wildlife of the reserve includes around 65 of the keystone species Bengal tiger and mammals like Indian Sloth Bears, Leopards, Nilgai, Gaur, Dhole, Small Indian Civet, Striped Hyena, Sambar, Jungle Cats, Barking Deer, Spotted Deer, Chausingha and Chital and reptiles like Indian Python, Terrapins, Indian Star Tortoise, Indian cobra and Russell's viper. The reserve has recorded 195 species of birds and 74 species of butterflies.

Best time to visit the reserve is during February to May. If you're flying, Nagpur is the nearest airport with 140 km distance. The nearest railway station is Chandrapur, which is at a distance of 45 km.

*Please confirm safari hours before visiting the tiger reserve.





Umred-Karhandla Wildlife Sanctuary

Bound by the Wainganga River and the Gosikhurd Dam, Umred Karhandla Wildlife Sanctuary is positioned at a distance of 58 km from Nagpur.

The sanctuary, covering 180 sq. km, is a home to resident breeding Tigers, Gaur, Wild Dogs and also rare animals like Flying Squirrels, Pangolins and Honey Badger. The wildlife sanctuary is abundant with 29 species of mammals, more than 180 species of birds and 26 species of reptiles. In 2009, Umred-Karhandla was identified as a sanctuary with the source population of tigers.

There are 3 gates, Karhandla, Pullar and Gothangaon, to enter the sanctuary. Safari from Karhandla gate can be booked in advance from Maharashtra Tourism website.

Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve

Plan a tour to Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve if you are a crazy bird-watcher. Feel the proximity to Mother Nature through its scenic landscapes. The reserve, spread over 152 sq. km of area, has inspired many authors like Mr. Vyankatesh Madgulkar and Mr. Kiran Purandare to write books on Nagzira.

Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve has a good population of herbivorous. Wildlife of the reserve includes Wild Dogs, Tigers, Leopards and mammals like Spotted Deer, Barking Deer, Four Horned Antelope, Indian Guar and Gliding Squirrel. One can cherish various types of fishes in the Nagzira Lake and have an awesome birdwatching experience with the presence of 166 species of birds like Gray-Headed Fish Eagle, Orioles, Woodpeckers, Owls, Eagles, etc. Teak, Arjun, Dhawda, Moha are some of the dominant floras of the reserve. The best time to visit the sanctuary is in Summers i.e. from March to June, when tiger sightings are at their peak.

Positioned at a distance of 22 km from Sakoli on the NH 6 (Bombay – Calcutta), Gondia is the nearest railway station to visit Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve.

Melghat Tiger Reserve

Melghat Tiger Reserve is nested on the northern extreme of the Amravati District on the border of Madhya Pradesh. The tiger reserve encompasses an area of 1,676.93 sq. km, which includes the 788.75 sq. km area of Melghat Sanctuary and the 361.28 sq. km of Gugarnal National Park in the Vidharba region of

Maharashtra. The area is known for its natural beauty ornamented with the splendor of craggy hill forests and shady trees. The beautiful manifestation of nature makes Melghat Tiger Reserve a must-visit place.

The main attraction of the reserve is the tigers that stay quite interior of the forest. It is also well-known for Leopard, Nilgai, Sloth Bear, Sambar, Wild Dog, Jackal, Gaur, Chital, Barking Deer, Ratel, Flying Squirrel, Rhesus Monkey, Wild Boar, Chausingha, Pangolin, Mouse Deer, Porcupine, Python, Langur, Blacknaped Hare and Otter. The reserve, a paradise for carnivorous birds, has recorded 250 species of birds. Hawk-Eagles, Owls, Vultures, Crows, Rufous, The Golden Oriole, Gold-mantled Leafbird, Grey Francolin and Jungle Bush Quail are some of birds enriching the reserve's beauty.

Plan a trip to Melghat Tiger Reserve during December to May. Akola is the nearest airport, which is 160 km away from the reserve. Badnera is the nearest railway station. If you're driving, Melghat Tiger Reserve is at a distance of 230 km from Nagpur and 100 km from Amravati.

Bird Centuries

Maharashtra is embellished with many species of birds. Bulbul, Cuckoo, Parakeet, Shama, Wagtails Flycatchers, the great Indian Bustard, Purple Sunbirds, Grey Jungle Fowl Drongos and the adorably stunning Peacock. Bird sanctuaries like the Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary in Kolhapur, Karnala Bird Sanctuary near Matheran and Mayani Bird Sanctuary near Vaduj are the epitome of the great bird-watching experience.

Canada is an Indian word meaning 'Big Village'

Disney World in Orlando, Florida covers 30,500 acres (46 square miles), making it more than double the size of Nadiad, Gujarat

Europe has no deserts - it is the only continent without one

It is forbidden for aircraft to fly over the Taj Mahal of India

The Eiffel Tower was built for the 1889 World's Fair

The only continent without reptiles or snakes is Antarctica

The world's tallest mountains, the Himalayas, are also the fastest growing. Their growth - about half an inch a year - is caused by the pressure exerted by two of Earth's continental plates (the Eurasian plate and the Indo-Australian plate) pushing against one another

The Sphinx in Egypt lost its nose in 1798 when Napoleon soldiers used it for target practice

Go whale watching if you happen to be in San Diego, USA mid-December to mid-March. At this time over 15000 whales swim their way down from freezing Alaska to the warmer waters of Baja California

Get in touch with your wacky and insane side at the 'No Pants Day' that is celebrated by New Yorkers, usually in May and January. Hordes of people, without pants get into the subway and roam all over the city!

The most popular museum in the world is in Washington, DC-the National Air and Space Museum, which in the first 25 years of its existence, received a whopping 219 million visitors!

For centuries, the Ajanta Caves in Maharashtra lay hidden, known only to the local tribe people and were discovered by accident only in the 19th century by a British army officer John Smith when he was out hunting

ADLABS

IMAGICA!

LET THE CHILD WITHIN YOU AWAKE!

ADLABS

IMAGICA

There's a child in everyone! If you don't agree to this, head to Imagica. The place brimming with thrilling rides, famous cartoon characters, happening performances, appetizing delicacies served by the cartoon characters and the astonishing water park is a synonym of fun. Esthetically designed based on various themes, Imagica is the place to discover a child in you.

In an open prairie-like plain in Khopoli sits Adlabs Imagica, a theme park that has been touted as India's Disneyland. Dispersing the colors of excitement for diverse age groups, Imagica offers various rides for kids, adults and families. Let's explore the crazy rides...

Scream Machine Ride

Scream Machine

As the name suggests, Scream Machine is meant to make you scream like insane. How? Well, the ride will start with a friendly spinning. As soon as you will get a grip, the ride will change its move to surprise you. Now it will start swinging too. Don't take this easy as in the next few minutes, the rotating pendulum will gear up, spin and swing you high in the mid-air till the time you literally SCREEEEAAAMM.

Nitro

Nitro, the brisking roller coaster, offers the crazily-spinning flying chair that takes you with it on the topsy-turvy ride of 2800 feet of track length. The complete 150 seconds' stimulation will make you look for balance. The amazing moment of Nitro starts from a 132-feet height and leaves you searching for the ground.

Deep Space

Do you want to touch the galaxy? If yes, the crazy Deep Space will throw you to the moon and catch you back from the same. Travel through the different planets and forget the law of gravity as the ride can toss you in the Black Hole during your ride. Expect an accelerated first climb and hold the chair tightly to experience the world of the Sun and the Moon.

D2 - Dare Drop

Get launched into the sky like a rocket and get dropped from the height of 132 feet. Be ready to get out of control through an unexpectedly-fast drop at the speed of 73 km/hr. In a matter of seconds, this thrilling ride will make you go through all the ups and downs, quite literally.

Gold Rush Express

The family roller coaster will ride you through the world of the old American West. Passing through the deep valleys, high mountains and the land of cowboys, experience the grand fall from the height of 66 feet. The Gold Rush Express will hop you the tunnels and drop you in the mines.

Mambo Chai Chama-Crazy Tea Cups

All the tea-lovers out there are going to love this ride. The crazily spinning tea cup-shaped ride is going to be an adventurous experience. Get hold of your tea cup and start spinning, swinging, swirling and twirling. The family ride is a joyful experience for the adventure-seeking spirits.

Splash Ahoy!

If you love action films, this is the ride for you. Go on a combat, jump on the boats and target other participants to shoot them through your water gun. Err, don't get wet from the opponent's gun. Experience childlike fun and crazy splash of water through this crazy ride.

Bump It Boats

The water-based ride resembles the 'Bumpin's cars'. Pick your motored raft, choose your target and speed up to follow him. Once you grab him, just bump! The ride gives a gigantic experience of laugh, water spatter and bumps.

Save the Pirate

For those wannabe heroes, this ride will you the chance to act as one. Go crazy to save your pirate friend trapped on the top of the tower. To win the game, be the first in rescuing your friend, tot!

The Detective Bow Wow Show

Join the imprudent detective Bow Wow in solving the case for Adlabs Imagic. The dumb detective often creates problems for himself and solves mysteries by chance. The insane journey to solve the case of Imagic's precious dragon stolen from the museum is mad enough to leave you rolling on the floor laughing.

The Nitro - Roller Coaster Ride

Loch Ness Explorers

The mythical Loch Ness monster has emerged in Imagica to give you exhilarating fun. The ride will be filled with the crazy water splashes all over you. The amicable Loch Ness monsters will create all the flumes through your water ride.

Happy Wheelss

It's time to learn something with loads of fun. A kids' ride, Happy Wheels, is all about driving rules. The first-time little drivers can get all the fun of speed through this ride, while touching basic rules of real life driving. So accelerate, use pedal, drive a double-sear rider and have fun!

Humpty's Fall

Humpty's Fall is for your little humpty. The rotator moves at 360 degrees, goes up and down. With each giggle of your humpty, experience your childhood again!

Wagon-O-O-Wheel

Wagon-O-O-Wheel is a small ferris wheel. The kids' ride is not more than 10 meters in height equipped with the 6 carts.

The Magic Carousel

Get lost in the world of your imagination. The Magic Carousel will be a nostalgic experience for you. The luring paintings and the artistic seating arrangements will make you go back in your childhood.

Zooballoo

A unique band with fun-filled wild members like Elephant, Alligator, Baboon and Kangaroo will play mesmerizing music for your kids. Not only music, the splash of water will make them go crazy with their dances. Zooballo offers fun filled with music and water to the little ones.

Rajasaurus River Adventure

Imagica is a new address of Rajasaurus. Land in the pre-historic times to search mighty Rajasaurus. Enjoy the exciting journey full of twists and turns to the world of vicious dinosaurs through the boat ride.

Cinema 360- Prince of The Dark Waters

Explore the world of underwater with mermaids and look for the Dark Prince's secret. The massive screen of 3100 sq. ft. will make you dive deep into the seawater. Feel the world of waters. Observe the huge mermaids swimming around you. Join the journey of cursed prince through the visual storytelling.

Salimgarh

Live the fairytale. The Salimgarh is a fortress with trapped princess inside it. The fort is filled with dark secrets and mysteries. The adventurous ride is all about entering the fortress and solving the mystery. Will you dare to go inside?

Motion Box Theatre

Give your weekend a 4D experience. Imagica with its Motion Box Theatre is adding forth dimension to your movie experience in terms of sound, aromas or vibration. Experience the thrill of 4D effects and realize your movie!

I For India

The sights of India never looked this wonderful before! The 90 ft. wide screen will show various sights of India through a film shot from a helicopter. Fly through the beautiful scenes and landscapes through this large movie-viewing experience.

Wrath of the Gods

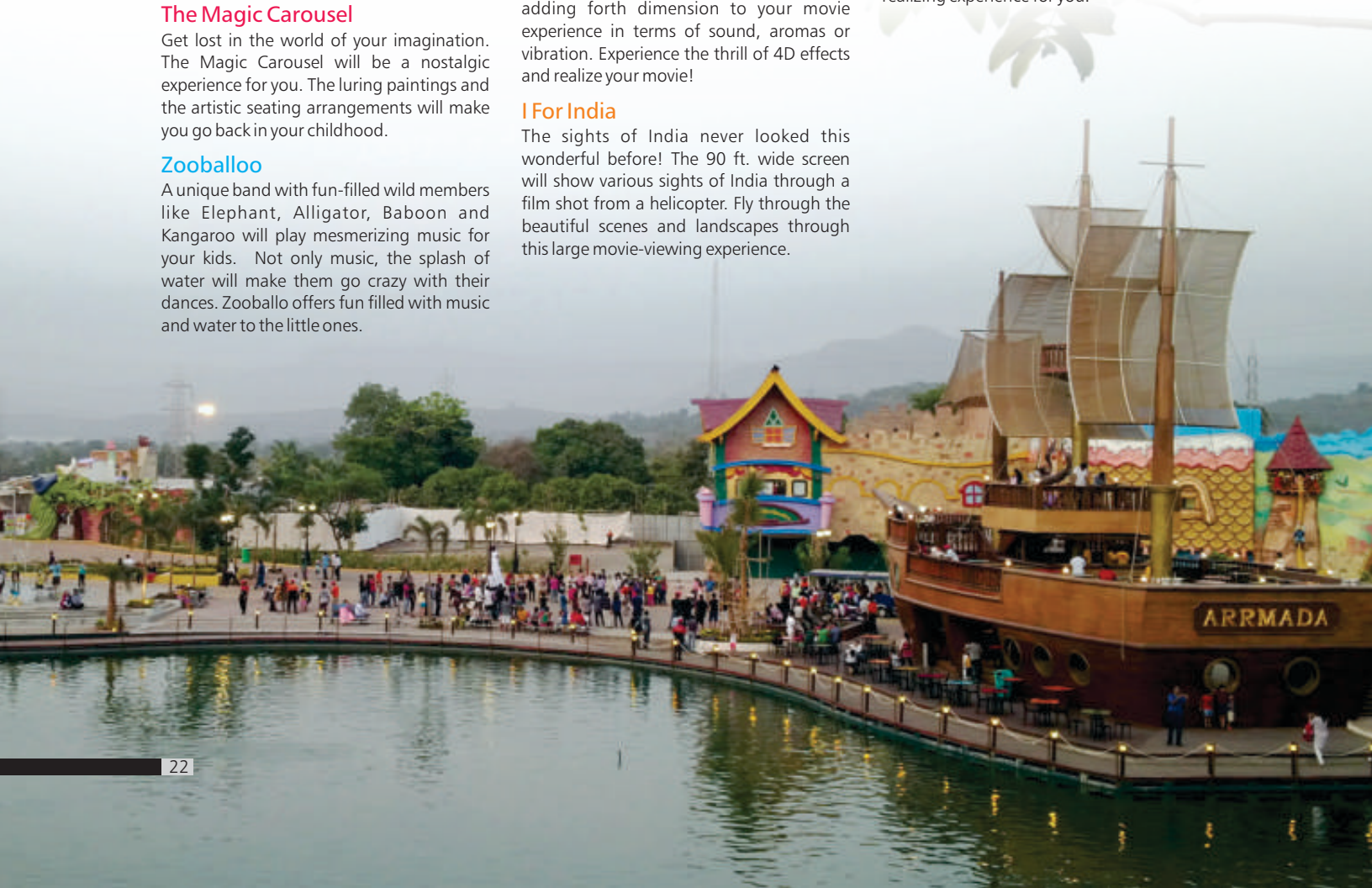
Wrath of the Gods is a special effects show based on the story of destruction by the deities due to human cause. The special effects of the show will slide land from your feet quite literally. So be ready to have this unusual experience.

Alibaba Aur Chalis Chorr

The famous tale of Alibaba Aur Chalis Chorr is taking a shape of reality. Go on a ride and save Alibaba from the forty thieves using your laser guns. Quite exciting as the description here, the ride will realize the video game effect for you. Shoot the thieves as you see them and collect maximum points. Enjoy the ride and feel like a video game hero.

Mr. India

The ride for Mr. India film lovers. Dwell in the filmy world of dialogues, drama and the great Moogambo. Based on the Motion Stimulation Technology, the film viewing experience gets utterly different with the wide screen. After few dialogues, riding through Mr. India's car and helping him fight against the evil will be a movie-realizing experience for you.





Everything at Adlab's Imagica is a direct manifestation of your fantasies. The wholesome experience of thrilling rides, awe-inspiring water park, breathtaking water rides, luscious delicacies at the theme-based restaurants and copious fun is a visit away...





CHURCHES, BEACHES & BEYOND

Goa is a lush green paradise, in its true sense. With the promises of the shimmering beaches, azure waters and crimson sun and palms, Goa is a tourist destination three hundred sixty five days a year. This tiny state situated on the west coast of India, between the borders of Maharashtra and Karnataka, is better identified to the world as the former Portuguese enclave on Indian soil. Today, some of the most beautiful beaches in the world are located here.





Viceroy's Arch Velha Goa

Little Bit of History

In 1510, the Portuguese defeated the ruling Bijapur sultan Yousuf Adil Shah with the help of a local ally, Timayya. They set up a permanent settlement in Velha Goa or Old Goa. This was the beginning of Portuguese rule in Goa that lasted for four and a half centuries, until 1961.

After India gained independence from the British in 1947, India requested that Portuguese territories on the Indian subcontinent be ceded to India. Portugal refused to negotiate on the sovereignty of its Indian enclaves. On December 19, 1961, the Indian Army began military operations resulting in the annexation of Goa, Daman, and Diu into the Indian union. Goa, along with Daman and Diu, was organized as a centrally administered union territory of India. On May 30, 1987, the union territory was split, and Goa was made India's twenty-

fifth state, with Daman and Diu remaining a union territory.

Goa is India's smallest state by area and the fourth smallest by population. Goa is India's richest state with a GDP per capita two and a half times that of the country as a whole. Panaji is the state's capital, while Vasco da Gama is the largest city. The historic city of Margao still exhibits the cultural influence of the Portuguese, who first landed here in the early 16th century as merchants and conquered it soon thereafter. Goa is visited by large numbers of international and domestic tourists each year for its beaches, places of worship and world heritage architecture. It also has rich flora and fauna, owing to its location on the Western Ghats range, which is classified as a biodiversity hotspot.



Basilica of Bom Jesus, Goa

Pilgrimage Tourism

Goa is famous for its 16th and 17th century churches. These places of worship have been architecturally influenced by the Gothic styles of the Middle Ages and the baroque styles of the Renaissance. Most of the churches are located in old Goa. Hence no visit here is complete without a visit to Old Goa, the Golden Goa of the 16th century, when it was the "Rome of the Orient". Magnificent churches, sumptuous buildings, stately mansions and broad streets once characterized this 8 sq. km land. Among the many splendid buildings of Old Goa, the Se Cathedral (Cathedral of St. Catherine) remains one of the greatest monuments of the period. It was completed in 1619 and till date is the largest Christian church in Asia.

Within the compound of the cathedral lies the Church of St Francis of Assisi with a stucco ceiling and a plethora of carvings. The inner sides of the buttressed walls have been designed with frescos of intricate floral designs. These have been painted in a hybrid style combining Indian and European elements. Another church that is worth visiting is the Church of St. Cajetan. With its two belfries and cupola in the centre, it was modelled on the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome by its Italian architect. Also near the river bank stands the Chapel of St. Catherine built on the site of the bitterest fighting during Albuquerque's conquest of Goa in the year 1510.

The church of St. Anne is another popular destination for the Christians who come from various countries to offer their prayer here. The Basilica of Bom Jesus located in old Goa is of great religious significance. It is a World Heritage Monument in India. The church is renowned all over the world for the preserved mortal remains of St. Francis Xavier. He was the member of Society of Jesus and came to India to spread Christianity with the Portuguese. Every year thousands of people visit the cathedral especially in the month of December.

Hindus also form a considerable part of the population in Goa. There are many temples which are of utmost religious importance. Sri Mangueshi temple at Ponda in Goa is the most well-known among temples. It is one of the most visited religious centers of the Hindus. Shri Mahalakshmi temple at Bandora is regarded as the dwelling place of the original Goddess of the *Shakti* cult. Its significance lies in the fact that it was the first Hindu temple to be built in this Indian state.



Dudhsagar Falls

Nature Tourism

Goa is a nature lover's dream destination. Visitors holidaying in Goa can take pleasure in the large assortment of waterfalls, parks, and popular wildlife sanctuaries. Goa is a luxuriant natural bliss bounded on the one side by the foothills of the Sahyadri range and on the other by the Arabian Sea. Goa is gifted with lakes, waterfalls and springs of abundant beauty. They are situated far from the hustle and bustle, away from the coast, in the interiors.

There are three major waterfalls of Goa which emerge from great heights and flow through the uneven terrains. These three rippling streams of silvery water draw innumerable tourists who desire idyllic solitude of secluded nature. The Arvalem waterfall of Goa looks stunning with the roaring cascade of water gushing down the rocky topography of the mountain behind it. The Dudhsagar fall is one of the most interesting falls of India and the largest and highest fall of Goa. The Kesarval waterfall is another magnificent spectacle for the nature lovers.



Dolphin Cruise

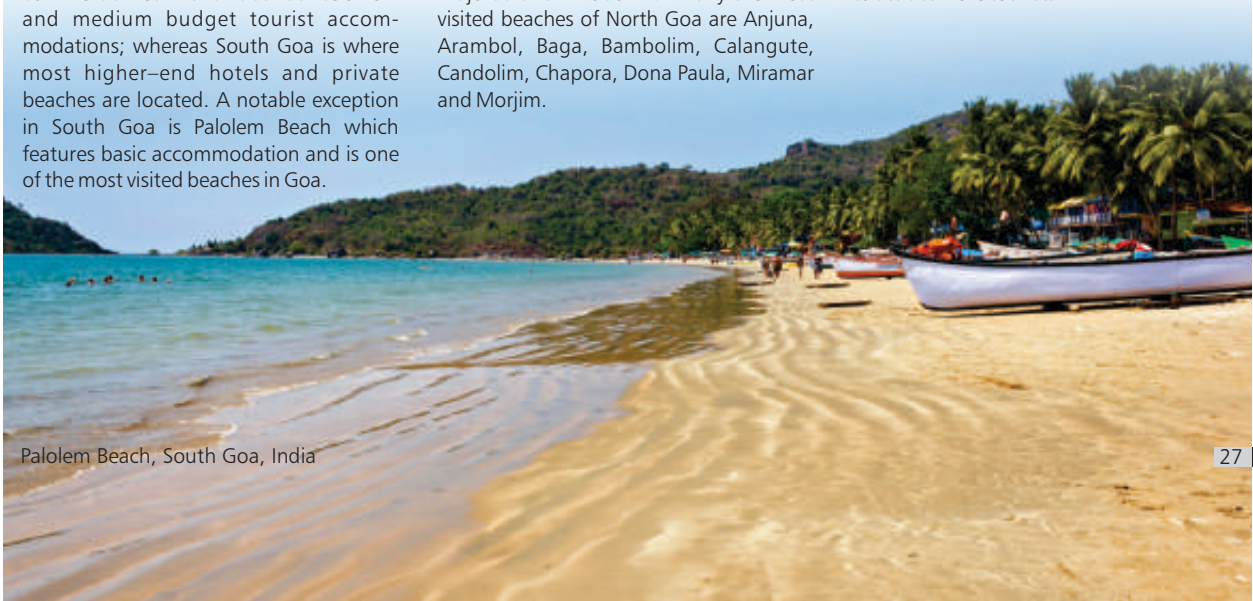
While in Goa, you can have a very special experience of small-group dolphin-watching cruise. As you cruise along the Arabian Sea, you can brightly coloured kingfishers and watch dolphins perform acrobatics and frolic below you. You can also see Fort Aguada, a former Portuguese fort and prison set high up on rocks, and take a dip in the sea — you may even get to swim with a dolphin!

Beach Tourism

Goa's beaches cover about 125 km. of its coastline. These beaches are divided into North and South Goa. North Goa is more commercialized with an abundance of low and medium budget tourist accommodations; whereas South Goa is where most higher-end hotels and private beaches are located. A notable exception in South Goa is Palolem Beach which features basic accommodation and is one of the most visited beaches in Goa.

Some of the more popular beaches of South Goa are Angoda, Benaulin, Bogmalo, Canaguinim, Cavelossim, Colva, Majorda and Mobor. Similarly the most visited beaches of North Goa are Anjuna, Arambol, Baga, Bambolim, Calangute, Candolim, Chapora, Dona Paula, Miramar and Morjim.

Many of these beaches are lined with shacks that provide fresh sea food and drinks. Some shacks arrange special events to attract more tourists.



Palolem Beach, South Goa, India

Brief details of some of the prominent hotels, resorts and spas in Goa are covered here for the convenience of visitors:



The Lalit Golf & Spa Resort Goa

The Lalit Golf & Spa Resort Goa is an all suite resort nestled on 85 acres along the pristine Goan coastline. The resort, cradled by the majestic Sahyadri range along the confluence of the Talpone River, offers breathtaking view of the Arabian Sea. With a kilometre-long exclusive beachfront, it is truly one of the most exquisite beach resorts in Goa.

Amidst grand Baroque-Portuguese style architecture, meticulously landscaped gardens, international standard Double 'T' 9-hole Links golf course and Rejuve – the signature spa, one can enjoy the luxury of oceanfront privacy and seclusion.



Park Hyatt Goa Resort and Spa – Cansaulim

Situated on a private beach steps from Arossim Beach, Park Hyatt Goa is 20 km from Goa's biggest city, Vasco da Gama. This 5-star "village-style" resort boasts one of India's largest pools: a lagoon-style series of pools featuring lush landscaping and spacious lounge areas with sea views.

At the beach, guests can reserve private seaside cabanas with a thatched roof and food/beverage service. The modern fitness center organizes water sports and yoga classes, and a tennis court is onsite. Camp Hyatt is a unique onsite day-camp for children ages 5 to 12, offered daily. Spa enthusiasts won't be disappointed by the Sereno Spa, specializing in Ayurvedic and Yogic practices. Guestrooms take full advantage of the tropical scenery with balconies overlooking the lagoon, pool, or Arabian sea.



Goa Marriott Resort & Spa

It would be worth taking time to relax and rejuvenate at Goa Marriott Resort & Spa. The hotel has elegant decor and wide range of amenities to suit your needs, whether for business or leisure.

Many of the recently refurbished 180 rooms offer sweeping views of the bay or of the hotel gardens. The hotel provides versatile event space to suit gatherings of every size and style with many dining options.



The Leela Goa

The hotel is set in 75 lush acres with a pristine beach, a 12 hole golf course and world class dining making it the finest 5 star hotels in Goa. The Leela Goa with the natural beauty and Portuguese heritage of South Goa is the right destination for the ultimate beach holiday.



Taj Exotica Goa

Located on the southwest coast of Goa, overlooking the Arabian sea, this Mediterranean-style 5 star resort is one of the best five star hotels in Goa and has a way of slowing down time to a tranquil tempo. Set amidst 56 acres of lush gardens, Taj Exotica is a showcase for relaxation with tropical-inspired design touches, grand architecture, a sun-drenched atrium, wide shady corridors, and flower lined patios for a memorable stay.



In Goa, there are no extremities in temperature and no distinct contrasts from one season to the other, except for the monsoon. So the best time to visit Goa is almost anytime. However to get a glimpse of Goa in its best attire, then mid July to September and November to mid February would be the ideal time.

TRAVEL FOR THE UNKNOWN



THE SPIRITUAL TOUCH

The Ancient City

UJJAIN

The ancient city of Madhya Pradesh proposes a supreme spiritual experience for you. Drench into spirituality by visiting a city of temples and embrace the beauty of the almighty by exploring *Ramghat* (Shipra River), temples like *Char Dham*, *Bade Ganeshji*, *Harsiddhi*, *Mangalnath*, *Gadkalika*, *Kal Bhairava*, *Sandipani Ashram* and many more. The visit to the holy city will find you deliverance from the bondage of life and rebirths like other *mokshapuris* of India - Kashi (Varanasi), Ayodhya, Kanchi (Kanchipuram), Mathura, Mayapuri (Haridwar) and Dwaraka.

Famous for its cultural and spiritual importance, the city is waiting to unfold the mysterious stories of the legends like King Vikramaditya and great poet Kalidas. The former capital of Malva region also holds importance because of the *Kumbh Mela* - the world's largest religious gathering. Organized every 12 years, when the zodiac sign Scorpio (*Vrishchik Rashi*) indicates the presence of Jupiter and Sun, the *Kumbh Mela* adorns Ujjain with the divinity and spiritual aroma through the visuals of millions of pilgrims worshipping and taking dips into the sacred River Shipra. The celestial atmosphere of the heavenly city touches its peak during this time.

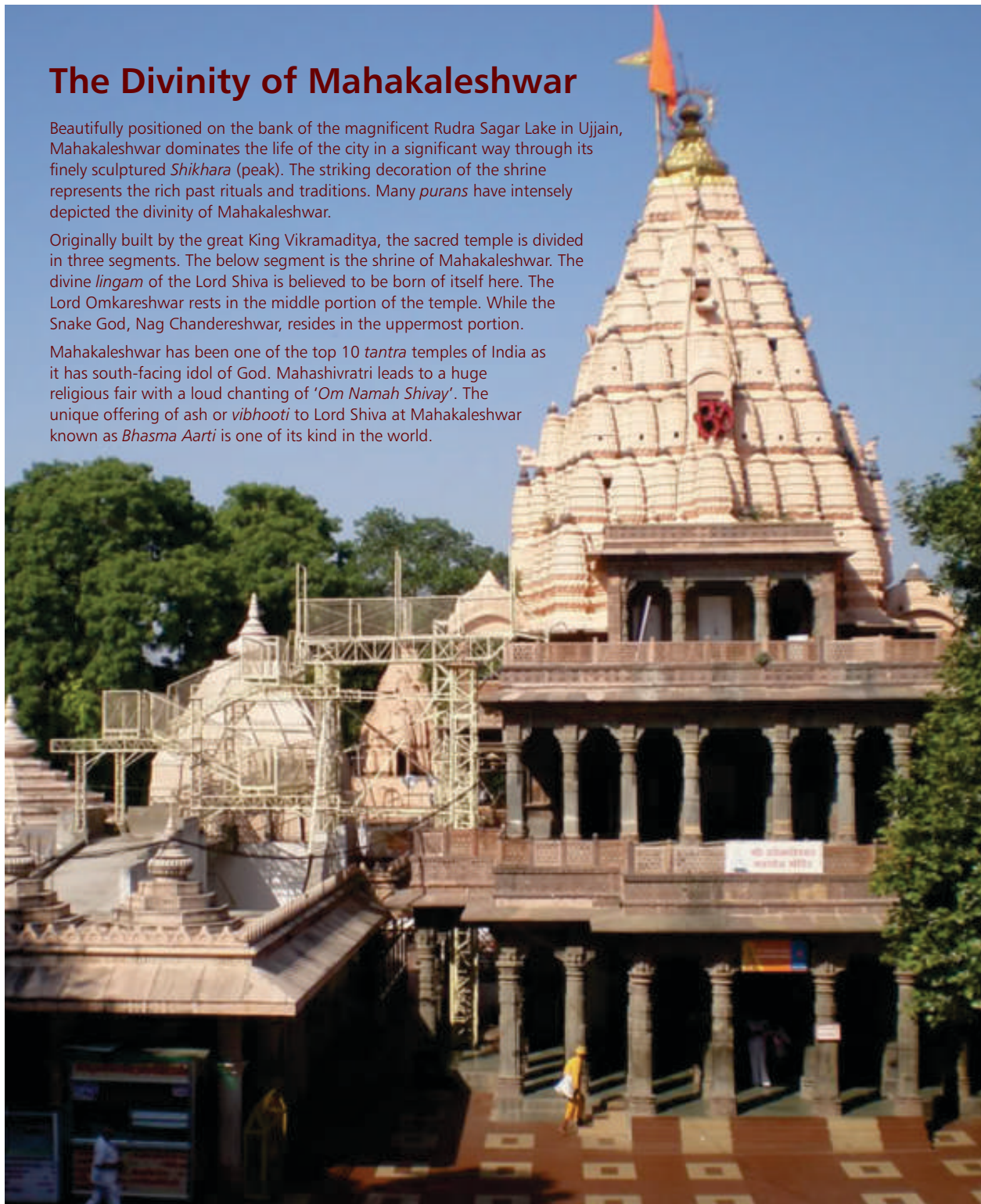
The city is a habitat to one of the twelve *dyotirlingas* of India - Mahakaleshwar. The Mahakal is considered to be the God of all deities and demons. *Mahashivratri*, celebration of marriage anniversary of Lord Shiva and Parvati, is another occasion to sight the indivisible devout spirit of the city and the Lord Shiva.

The Divinity of Mahakaleshwar

Beautifully positioned on the bank of the magnificent Rudra Sagar Lake in Ujjain, Mahakaleshwar dominates the life of the city in a significant way through its finely sculptured *Shikhara* (peak). The striking decoration of the shrine represents the rich past rituals and traditions. Many *purans* have intensely depicted the divinity of Mahakaleshwar.

Originally built by the great King Vikramaditya, the sacred temple is divided in three segments. The below segment is the shrine of Mahakaleshwar. The divine *lingam* of the Lord Shiva is believed to be born of itself here. The Lord Omkareshwar rests in the middle portion of the temple. While the Snake God, Nag Chandereshwar, resides in the uppermost portion.

Mahakaleshwar has been one of the top 10 *tantra* temples of India as it has south-facing idol of God. Mahashivratri leads to a huge religious fair with a loud chanting of '*Om Namah Shivay*'. The unique offering of ash or *vibhooti* to Lord Shiva at Mahakaleshwar known as *Bhasma Aarti* is one of its kind in the world.





Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga



The Enchanting *Bhasma Aarti*

When in Ujjain, reserve your morning time from 4 AM to 6 AM for the enthralling *Bhasma Aarti* at the *Garbha Griha* of Mahakaleshwar. Get carried away with the captivating sounds of cymbals, *damroo*, conchs along with the harmonious vedic chants and *stotras*. The beautiful ambience, where the Lord is beautified with the *bhasma* by 10 *Naga sadhus*, demands unstitched clothes like *dhotis*. Be a witness of the process of transforming each speck of sanctum into *bhasma* starting from the head monk's offering of the holy ash to the *shivlingam*. Get billowed in the air with the mesmerizing and uplifting blend of the *bhasma*-filled sanctum and the continuous loud chanting. The beautiful amalgamation of the two will surely hypnotize you. Though women are not allowed to enter the *Garbha Griha*, all devotees can offer their prayers sitting in the *Sabha Griha*. As Mahakaleshwar is a famous *tantra* temple, *bhasma aarti* holds great importance for the *tantriks*.

The Unique Offering - *Bhasma*

The destructor of the universe, Lord Shiva, is believed to reside in the cremation ground and very fond of ash i.e. *bhasma*. It is believed that offering of *bhasma* ensures acceptance of the prayer.

Conducted as the first ritual every morning, *Bhasma Aarti* takes place to awake the Lord Shiva. With the ash billowing in the air of the divine temple, the beautiful and exhilarating chants of praises to the lord, the harmonious sound of cymbals and the religious people drowned in the prayers, attending mesmerizing *Bhasma Aarti* is an impeccable feeling for the devotees of Lord Shiva.

Bhasma Aarti is renowned for its offering of ash to Lord Shiva. The tradition of *Bhasma Aarti* has been followed from the time immemorial. In *Dwapar* and *Sat Yuga*, the *bhasma* was brought from the funeral ashes of *Aghoras* from the cremation ground. The hot *bhasma* was showered on the *jyotirlinga*. Nowadays, the ash obtained by burning cow dung in a sacred fire is offered to Mahakaleshwar.

How to reach:

Pack your bags and explore the well-connected city through railway, roadway or airway. Ujjain is situated in the state of Madhya Pradesh at a distance of about 180 km from the state capital, Bhopal. The nearest airport is in Indore, 53 km away from Ujjain. The city has direct trains from major cities of India. Ujjain is connected to Indore through SH-27 and SH-18.

Where to stay:

MP Tourism has two hotels - Shipra Residency and Hotel Avantika (*Yatri Niwas*). Shipra Residency is a 3-star accommodation, while Hotel Avantika (*Yatri Niwas*) is a budget accommodation. The Mahakaleshwar temple authorities also have accommodation facilities, both AC as well as non AC. The rooms are within the temple compound, and are well-maintained and comfortable. The rooms can be booked by calling: 0734-2550563.

ONE WORLD.

ONE INDUSTRY.

ONE TRADE SHOW.

4–8 March 2015



ITB Berlin is an annual trade show organized during March in Germany. The trade fair is looking at the long term opportunities for tourism, its high and growing economic value, whilst addressing key issues. ITB Berlin also organizes exhibition for the tourism products, which acts as a grand platform to promote brands extensively.

ITB Berlin 2015 will be held from 4th March'15 to 8th March'15. The event will consist of the biggest-ever trade show in parallel with ITB Berlin Convention. The largest tourism fair is a premier meeting place for the Travel Trade Industry and a forum for establishing high-quality customer contacts and

conducting businesses. It aims to give a platform to more than 11,163 exhibitors from over 180 countries.

Tourism segments like Tourist Organizations, Traffic Carrier, Tour Operator, Hotel Business, Research Institute, Tourism Associations and Institutions, Travel Technology, Information and Reservation Systems, Travel Agency, Business Travel, Publisher, Press and Telecommunications are expected to participate in the show. The biggest trade show will cover a huge exhibition area of about 1,60,000 square meters with numerous exhibition booths.

The success of the trade show can be measured by the enormous number of exhibitors it had attracted last year. A total of 10,644 exhibitors from 187 countries displayed their products and services to 174,000 visitors, which included 114,000 trade visitors. The promotional stage has been successful in magnetizing the attention of media on a large scale.





Revive Grandeur of the Royal Stay

No tour to Rajasthan is complete without a stay at one of its delightful heritage hotels. For anyone who wants to feel the imperial treatment and revive the historical stories of heroism, the City Palace of Udaipur is one such lavish experience of royal treatment.



THE CITY PALACE

The beauty of City Palace is shining in the state from last 400 years. Reflecting the blend of artistic sense and culture of 76 generations, City Palace was built over a long period of 300 years by the enervations of Sisodia Rajputs or Suryavanshi Rajputs to get into the present shape. The gigantic palace comprises of 11 wonderful palaces, which are now used to display various ancient and unique arts, culture and armory. The two regal guest houses of the City Palace, Fateh Prakash Palace and Shiv Nivas Palace, have taken a shape of grand heritage hotels to offer a touch of royal life.

FATEH PRAKASH PALACE HOTEL

The Fateh Prakash Palace is an epitome of the impeccable hospitality and scrupulous services. Constructed during the time of *Maharana* Fateh Singh, the palace has been awarded the National Tourism Award for the best heritage hotel in the year 2001-2002. With the history-soaked interiors, adorable miniature paintings, armory of the Mewar and regal arts, the Fateh Prakash Palace seems to have hovered straight from the fairytale.

The grand Fateh Prakash Palace Hotel consists of 21 Dovecote Rooms, 4 Regal Lake Facing Suites and 3 Regal Suites. The lavish rooms of the palace are ornamented with the arts like mesmerizing paintings and period furniture from the *toshakhana*s i.e. royal storerooms. The gigantic windows of the royal rooms keep you updating about the hues and colors of the lake at every single hour. The ethnic and world cuisine of Gallery Restaurant offers taste of a lifetime. Equipped with all the indoor and outdoor recreational activities, Fateh Prakash Palace Hotel is an ideal destination to have memorable holidays.

Durbar Hall: The very specialty of the Fateh Prakash Palace is the majestic Durbar Hall. Earlier used for meeting and state banquet, the hall is an abode to many weapons of the *maharanas*. Built in 1909, the Durbar Hall is ornamented with the large chandeliers and special lights. Many portraits are depicted here to highlight the glorious past of the palace.

Crystal Gallery: Another attraction of the palace is the world-famous Crystal Gallery. With the vast collection of crystal items, the gallery is dazzling the upper-portion of the Durbar Hall. The collection of the gallery includes crystal chairs, sofas, crockery, table fountains and dressing tables. The crystals also carry an interesting story about *Maharaja* Sajjan Singh as to how he ordered crystals from London and died before its arrival. The crystal remained unopened for the next 110 years. Mysterious as the history itself, isn't this making you more curious?

SHIV NIVAS PALACE HOTEL

Maintaining the imperial indulgence, Shiv Nivas Palace has been an evidence of the royal treatment of *Mewar* royal family. The crescent-shaped palace is a tremendous blend of elegance of the last century and ultra-modern facilities of 21st century. A casual walk in the palace consisting of pavilions, terraces, courtyards, rooms, corridors and hanging gardens will act as a transom to peek into the *maharana* era. The 3 levels of the palace are situated in a hemispherical arc with an internal courtyard in the center. The palace explores all the directions through its large windows and open terraces. The interior features ivory and mother-of-pearl inlay work, glass mosaics and frescoes, many of them produced by Khaja Ustadh and Kundan Lal, whom the *maharana* had sent to England to learn the art of

glass-mosaic design and to study fresco painting.

The grand palace hotel consists of beautiful, yet differing accommodation of 19 deluxe rooms, 8 terrace suites, 6 royal suites and 3 imperial suites with royal furniture and portraits of the royal generations. The scenic landscapes of garden, Lake Pichhola, island resorts of *Jag Mandir* and famous Lake Palace keep peeping into your room through gigantic windows and balconies. The restaurant with all the Indian and continental cuisines serves the ultimate royal taste. With all the scenic beauty, the hospitality of this palace hotel is the same as from its *maharana* period.

Planning to Visit City Palace?

The City Palace is well-connected by road, rail and air links. The city of Udaipur lies on the Golden Quadrilateral, midway between Delhi and Mumbai NH8. Rajasthan Railways connects Udaipur station with all the other cities of Rajasthan as well as India. Udaipur Airport, known as Maharana Pratap Airport is located near Dabok at a distance of 22 km from the city of Udaipur



Medical Tourism

The Midas Touch

The candid conversation unfolds different aspects of Medical Tourism from the view point of hospital, state and country as a whole. Stay tuned to explore Apollo's journey, strengths and weaknesses of Gujarat as well as India's position in the field of Medical Tourism.



Medical Tourism is an emerging sector of India. However, there are number of areas, India still needs to work on, affirms Shahid Parwez, Dy. General Manager-Health Care Services, Apollo Hospitals International Ltd.

Please brief us on Apollo's journey in the field of Medical Tourism and elaborate on efforts carried out to encourage the sector

Undaunted and unfazed by the obstacles faced, Apollo Hospitals opened its doors in 1983 with the goal nurtured by Dr. Prathap C Reddy, the visionary Founder, Chairman of Apollo Hospitals, which says "Our mission is to bring healthcare of international standards within the reach of every individual. We are committed to the achievement and maintenance of excellence in education, research and healthcare for the benefit of humanity". It is widely credited as the architect of modern Indian health care.

Apollo Hospitals receive patients from 120 countries and so far it has touched 39 million lives.

The group has continuously led by example in flourishing private healthcare space. We have redefined standards of patient care in every possible aspect of the healthcare delivery chain.

Reputed as a concept leader in the field of Medical Tourism, the group is well-equipped with all the top-notch requirements. Initiatives like world-class infrastructure, skilled medical manpower, observer ship, continued exchange programs, 8 JCI-accredited hospitals,

elegant international patient lounge along with 24-hour helpline and presence of interpreters, individual care of patients, availability of local cuisine, Wi-Fi enabled rooms, telemedicine, web-based service and quick inquiry response have placed the organization much ahead in the field of Medical Travel.

The group has initiated overseas awareness campaigns to encourage health and wellness program.

What is the USP of brand Apollo and what is the biggest challenge the organization is facing?

In addition to the excellent team of clinicians, the latest and continuously-upgraded medical equipments and technologies have been the USP of brand Apollo. Moreover, its high class technology-driven health care delivery coupled with tender loving care and medical breakthroughs define the brand.

The organization has been facing challenges in attracting more number of medical tourists; India as a country holds negative perceptions about its hygiene and sanitation. Additionally, non-availability of attendants, delay in issuing medical visas and immigration facilities are some of the significant areas in which our country still needs to grow at par with the expectations.

Poor infrastructure of the country, less number of direct flights, connectivity issues and lack of efficient airport facilities are going against development of the sector.

Approximately how many medical tourists visit Apollo in a year? What factors make foreign patients visit India for the treatment?

Approximately, 50,000 international patients visit Apollo hospitals in a year for variety of reasons.

India with its state-of-the-art technology, presence of well-trained and reputed doctors, qualitative and patient-centric care at reasonable cost attracts patients from overseas. In some cases, recommendations from family or friends lure foreign patients to visit India for medical treatments.

How do you engage your patients? Do you think having language translators in organization make them feel comfortable?

We carry out patient engagement programs through Service Excellence. Quality-focused patient care is possible in Apollo Hospitals because of an engaged workforce that takes pride in its day-to-day responsibilities. The compliant staff is capable to alleviate feelings of stress and fear in patients, while instilling in them a positive approach towards treatment.

Apart from language translator, personal care for every patient remains in the center of our services. In addition to that, factors like airport pick-up and drop-off facilities, availability of money exchange, local SIM card on arrival, regular updates on patient's condition to relatives and assisting patients for sightseeing make them feel comfortable in a faraway country.

What are the foreign patients' main priorities and concerns when traveling for medical treatment?

When traveling foreign country for medical treatments, patients are concerned about the kind of attention to their medical problems, the level and cost of treatments as well as connectivity and accessibility of the place.

Apart from selling points like low-cost treatment, do factors like political instability or riots hamper India's Medical Tourism Sector?

Without a stable government in place, tourism is far too risky. Political unrest in the form of terrorism or riotous protesters will definitely have effects on Medical Tourism. For instance, Jordan in Middle East and many others are affected badly due to such unrest and unstable government set up. Riot-free, litter-free and pollution-free India would definitely pull more medical travelers into the country.

Talking about Gujarat, what are the strengths of the state? What are the areas Gujarat still needs to work on?

Gujarat contributes 31% of country's Health Care Industry. The well-connected state has excellent infrastructure and airport facilities. It is relatively litter-free and less polluted. The state has good strength of NRGs (approx. 32% of NRI diaspora), which leads to increase the number of medical tourists in the state. Besides, the state's colorful fairs, festivals, distinctive lifestyle, attires and cuisines act as blissful respite for the patients.

Talking about the areas of improvement, the state needs more investments in high-end technologies like cyber knife or robotic surgery. Gujarat should be well-connected to the countries like Africa through frequent direct flights.

Negligible presence of internationally-accredited hospitals hampering the growth of Gujarat's medical tourism. Please share your views

International accreditation like JCI-accredited hospitals in Gujarat would be an added advantage. Patients from developed countries like USA prefer to get treatment through JCI-accredited hospitals. Since 1999, JCI has accredited more than 140 hospitals in 27 countries. Some countries are adopting their own accreditation standards. For instance, India is practicing QCI stamp NABH-accredited hospitals on elaborative aspects and extensive measures of quality of patient care. If we implement best practices under NABH banner along with the quality patient-care (both Medical & Non Medical), we are at par.

The pool of well-trained, highly-skilled and English speaking Medical and Non Medical staffs apart from foreign certified doctors will increase the level of satisfaction in patients. The opposite will lead to reverse the effects.

Focusing on the future of medical tourism, are there any scope of improvements in terms of government's efforts, infrastructural development, well-trained human resource or etc.?

Yes, there are many issues that require attention to stimulate the growth of India's Medical Tourism Sector. Like...

- Improving visa rules
- Dealing with traffic congestion problem on roads and airport by marking separate lanes for medical ambulance, resulting in reducing travel time from airport to hospital
- Forming more relaxed rules on foreign currencies for medical travelers

ALL THAT MATTERS!

GUJARAT



What:

An international art and culture festival

When:

From 23rd January 2015 to 26th January 2015

Where:

At the cultural capital of Gujarat, Vadodara

Highlights:

With the presence of legends like Yanni, Sunidhi Chauhan, Kailash Kher, Sonu Nigam, A.R. Rahman, Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia, Rahul Sharma, Buddy Wells, Sivamani Trio, the 4-day event marked a great amalgamation of 50 events across 15 venues consisting of Marvelous Music Performances, Amazing Concerts, Theatre, Arts & Handicraft, Dance, Food Festival, Vintage Car Show, Heritage Bus Ride and Fine Arts.

For More Information:

<http://vadfest.com/index.php>



What:

Pravasi Bhartiya Divas, which is celebrated on 9th January every year to mark the contribution of the Overseas Indian Community in the development of India

When:

From 7th January 2015 to 9th January 2015

Where:

Mahatma Madir, Gandhinagar, Gujarat

Highlights:

The hundredth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's return to India from South Africa set Gujarat as the destination for Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2015.

The grand event arranged forums to discuss key issues concerning the Indian Diaspora.

For More Information:

<http://www.pbd-india.com/>



IKF 2015

What:

The International Kite Festival is part of Gujarat Tourism's strategy to showcase and promote culture and tourism offerings of the state.

When:

From 7th January 2015 to 15th January 2015

Where:

Sabarmati Riverfront, Ashram Road, Ahmedabad

Highlights:

Since 1989, the annual event is hosted by Ahmedabad. Coinciding with the festival of Uttarayan or Makar Sankranti, IKF evidences a large number of kite flyers from different parts of the country as well as from other countries in the world participate in it. This year, the kite flying international event has diversified by adding value to event with laser and sound shows, kite making workshops and more.

The Kite Festival is also significant for the Vibrant Gujarat – Global Investors Summit held during this time. Since 2003, the word 'Vibrant' has become associated with Gujarat in yet another manner, enhancing the national and international reputation of the state. Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2015, organized from 11th January 2015 to 13th January 2015, at Mahatma Mandir, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

For More Information:

<http://www.gujarattourism.com/fairs-festivals/cultural-festivals/international-kite-festival-uttarayan>



What:

To celebrate the New Year's Eve, Saputara Paragliding Festival is a perfect celebration in the lap of nature.

When:

From 20th December 2014 to 15th January 2015

Where:

Saputara, Gujarat

Highlights:

The adventure of paragliding and parasailing attracted huge enthusiastic crowd from the nearby cities.



Modhera Dance Festival

What:

Garba Dance Festival

When:

From 9th January 2015 to 11th January 2015

Where:

Modhera Temple, Mehasana, Gujarat

Highlights:

A temple of the eleventh century is in Modhera of Mehsana district. The cultural department of Gujarat organized the Modhera festival in the temple premises. The festival reflects India's rich culture of dance and music.

For More Information:

<http://www.gujarattourism.com/fairs-festivals/cultural-festivals/modhera-dance-festival>

(Coutersy:Gujarat Tourism,Maharashtra Tourism,Rajasthan Tourism and Goa Tourism)

ALL THAT MATTERS!

GUJARAT

HOME STAY POLICY

What:

The Government of Gujarat has announced a policy to facilitate tourists stay at home of localites. The basic idea behind Home Stay Policy is to provide a clean and affordable place to foreigners and domestic tourists alike, including an opportunity for foreigners to stay with an Indian family, experiencing tradition and culture of Gujarat and relishing traditional cuisine of Gujarat

When:

Declared on 20th November 2014

Who:

Gujarat Government

Highlights:

- Gujarat Tourism will scrutinize the properties and residents who applied for Home-stay facility
- Based on the scrutinization, Gold or Silver category will be allotted to property depending upon the standards of services offered to tourists
- Gujarat Tourism will provide short-term training and marketing help to the applicants
- Home-stay provider is permitted to rent maximum 6 rooms as per the policy

For More Information:

http://www.gujarattourism.com/file-manager/news-updates/home_stay_policy_1416499808.pdf

GOA

GOA'S VISA-ON-ARRIVAL FACILITY

What:

To attract more foreign tourists, the Central Government has launched the much awaited Visa-on-Arrival facility

When:

Declared on 28th November 2014

Highlights:

The Goa Dabolim Airport is one of the nine airports in India, which has been included in the list for providing the facility. 43 countries are considered for Visa-on-Arrival facility.

For More Information:

<http://www.goatourism.gov.in/travel-news/details/162/248>

GOAN FLAVOURS IN THE CAPITAL

What:

The capital state of India can now taste authentic Goan dishes at Incrivel Goa, a food stall which was inaugurated

When:

25th November, 2014

Where:

Dilli Haat (opposite INA market), Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi

Highlights:

Incrivel which means 'welcome' in Portuguese, is a reflection of Goa's rich heritage. The food stall was inaugurated by Shri. Dilip Parulekar, Hon. Minister for Tourism, Govt. of Goa and Shri. Nilesh Cabral, Chairman – Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC).

MAHARASHTRA



What:

The Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation is promoting state's tourism through the television appearance.

When:

The weekly show is telecasted every Saturday at 8 pm from 1st November 2014

Where:

DD Sahyadri

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