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THE MANY COLOURS OF

Trip on Culture

SWIMMING WITH WHALE SHARKS IN CEBU

6 PLACES TO VISIT IN ARGENTINA

The Wonderful West



Royal Rajasthan



Magnificent Maharashtra



Mesmerizing Madhya Pradesh



Glamorous Goa





TOURISM ONE

October - December 2016

Blessing in disquise

"And how did it just happen?" was the only possible reaction to the mistakenly booked flight ticket after a wild night-out. Anxiously, he checked that email from a flight company again to confirm if what he read was right. The hangover went progressively worse when he realized that he had even missed the 24-hour deadline to cancel the flight ticket and claim the refund.

The incident was like - a drunk Scottish banker had impulsively booked a £520 flight ticket from Glasgow to Rio De Janeiro after boozy night clubbing. His first reaction was to cancel the trip, but as he couldn't do so, his next instinct was to not go and just take the financial hit — about \$800. Besides the dilemma of an unplanned trip and worries of financial arrangements, the real challenge was setting off on his own. He frantically rushed to his dad and friends, only to enlighten himself with the fear of travelling alone for three long weeks.

Ignoring everyone's advice, he decided to embark on a trip. And it turned out, he had the time of his life. The traveller spent the three-week trip relaxing on Copacabana beach, hanging out at sloth sanctuary and trekking to the Machu Picchu trail in neighbouring Peru. In his own words, "People will put thoughts and fears into your head about going places, and doing activities. Maybe even your own mind will. But please overcome the fear and just go".

An absolute blessing in disguise! For all those, who would like to make such mistakes (even if consciously), we are here to guide you on the exotic locales around the world. In 'The Wonderful West', we take you to admire the astonishing beauty of west Indian states, while in 'Far Far Away', we roam around the streets of distant lands like locals. The bonus feature of this issue is – Trip on we roam around the streets of distant lands like locals. The bonus feature of this issue is – Trip on Culture. Wherever you go this quarter, it's all about celebrations – be it Navratri, Diwali, Durga Culture. Wherever you go this quarter, it's all about celebrations – be it Navratri, Diwali, Pooja, Hornbill, Muharram, Christmas in India or festivals like Día de Muertos, La Diablada, Fete Gede, Loy Krathong and many more in different parts of the world.

So take your pick from music, dance, culture, traditions, the world beneath the waters, heritage or wildlife, we have it all.

Read one!



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October - December 2016

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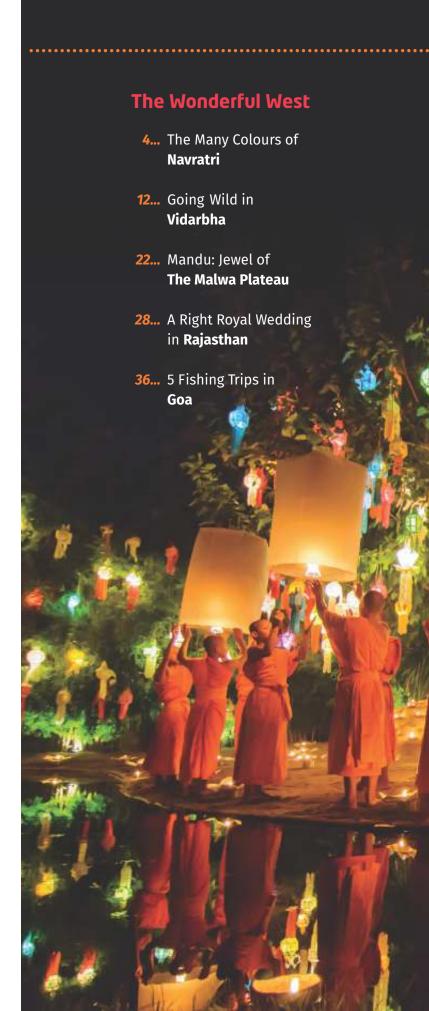
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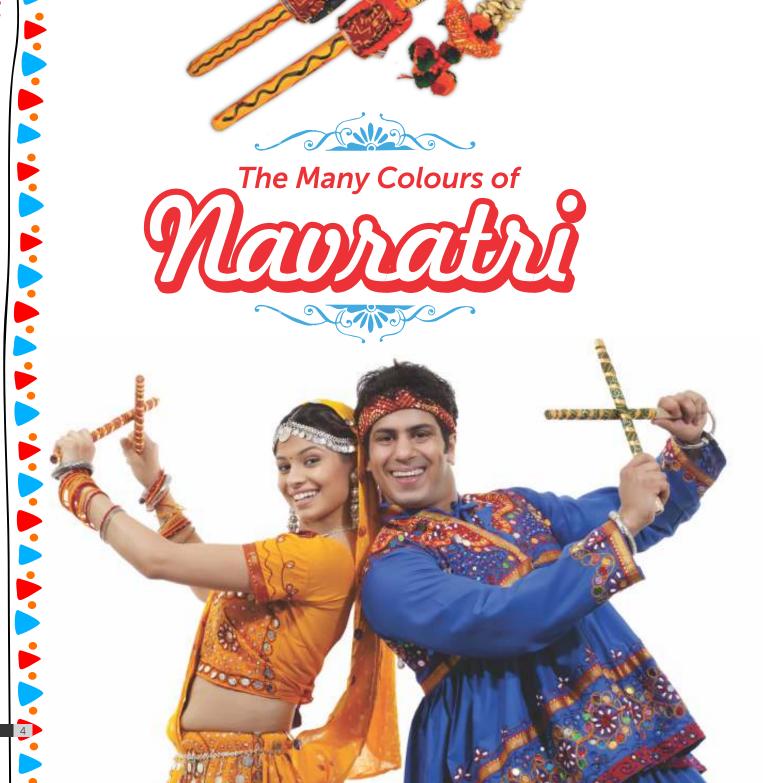
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Mannahi



avratri is certainly one of the most vibrant festivals of India. It is a nine-night festival that is participatory, colourful and a unique mix of fun, festivity and religious rituals like no other. A popular dance during Navratri is garba during which both men and women dance in a circle, clapping hands, snapping fingers or striking small sticks to the taal or beat. It is generally believed that garba gets its name from the perforated, illuminated pot called garbi, that is placed on the floor of every house during Navratri. Traditionally, the garbi pot was lit on the first night of Navratri, called Norta. And the members of the family would dance around it. Over a period of time, it became a social function and community activity with entire neighbourhoods becoming part of the event. Often women dance carrying the garbi pot or mandvi on their head. One of the best places to experience this is Gulbhai Tekra locality of Ahmedabad, where one of the women takes on the form of the Mother Goddess, and dances vigorously carrying a heavy bamboo mandvi on her head.

From the palaces of the erstwhile princely states to temple courtyards, from cities like Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat, Bhavnagar, Rajkot and Jamnagar to little villages of Gujarat, it is possible to see people dancing to the beat of traditional music. In Vadodara, large garba gatherings are held in the Naulakhi Grounds, Karelibaugh, Ankara Garba Ground, Nyay Mandir area, etc., while the Race Course Ground in Rajkot is well-known for its large Navratri programs.

The nine nights are dedicated to the many manifestations of the Mother Goddess. As Navratri is also believed to celebrate the monsoon harvest, a number of celebrations and food cooked at home reflect this period. Many people fast during this time and eat selected foods, which include cereal-less meals called farar or falhar. Many restaurants, where people gather at night after the garbas, offer farari food.

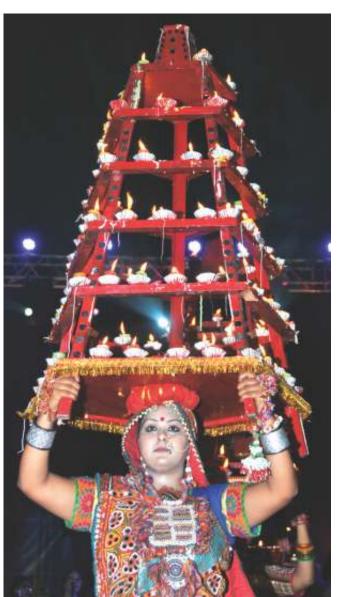
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Girls and women wear chaniya-choli-odhni sets, comprising a skirt, blouse and veil. The chaniya, also called lahenga or gaghra, is a heavily gathered drawstring

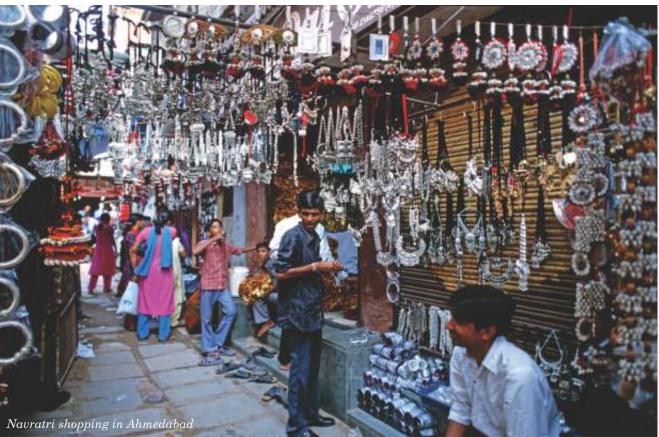
the dancer moves in circles for the garba. Exclusive chaniva-choli sets are lavishly embellished with embroidery, beads, tassels and brocade and can weigh several kilograms. Choli or blouse with cut-out backs, frontopening buttons, low or vnecklines, halter necks and string crisscrossing down the back of the choli are becoming trendy with figure-flattering cuts. Long before the festival, work begins on embroidery, mirror inlays, applique, tie-and-dye and prints for the best attires. The dresses are accompanied by artistic jewelry. Male dancers wear colourful turban, embroidered shoes, embellished jackets called kediyas, jhabba, kurtas and brightcoloured lahengas or pyjamas. The streets, lifestyle stores, shopping malls, garment showrooms and boutiques in cities like Ahmedabad, Vadodara (Baroda), Surat, Rajkot, Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, and other cities of Gujarat, as also the towns, are lined with costumes and ornaments for sale.

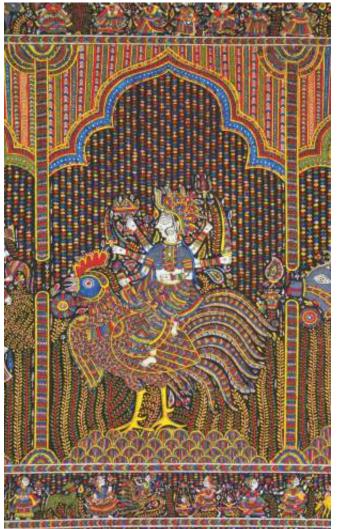
skirt, which swirls when

In Ahmedabad, Night
Market around Law
Garden gets a fancy
makeover with a wide
range of traditional and
trendy chaniya cholis on
display. Ratan Pol, in the
walled city of Ahmedabad,
remains one of the
traditional favourite
destinations to buy











The rare art of kalamkari is used to produce Mata Ni Pachhedi ritual cloths



dresses and jewelry for the garba nights. Ajanta Shopping Centre on Ashram Road and boutique stores on CG Road are also good options to look out for latest graba dresses. Ramakda Market near Teen Darwaja in the walled city of Ahmedabad is a good place to look for dandiya sticks and decorations. For inexpensive silver jewelry, dandiya sticks and accessories, Ahmedabad markets are worthexploring.





in North Gujarat is a shaktipith, one of the most important temples during Navratri, and the Shakti temples at Pavagadh - east of Vadodara, Bahuchraji - west of Mehsana, Ashapura Mata No Madh - west of Bhuj attract large groups of pilgrims. Dances break out in the temple courtyard and an ever-growing circle of

people, mainly women, join in the joys of garba.

NAVRATRI PILGRIMAGE

Nine forms of Shakti or the Mother Goddess are worshipped during the Navratras, the nine nights of Navratri. During this period, devotees make the pilgrimage to many temples. Some of the key places of pilgrimage are:

The Shaktipith of Ambaji

Ambaji, the principal shrine of Goddess Amba Bhavani in Gujarat, is situated in Danta taluka of Banaskantha district. It lies in the Arasur hills near the source of the river Saraswati at the south-western end of the

Aravali mountain range, and the goddess is also, therefore called Arasuri Amba.

Bahucharaji

Becharaji or Bahucharaji is a temple town and taluka capital in Mehsana district of Gujarat state. The largest temple/shaktipith was built by the maharajas of the Geakwad dynasty who



heard of the great fame of Bahucharaji and visited the shrine.

Pavagadh

Pavagadh hill, which is 2,500 feet high, covers about twenty-six miles in circumference. The distance from the foot of the hill to the Kalika Mata's temple, at its highest peak, is about 5 km. Saat Mahal or sevenstoreyed palace of the Chauhan rulers now in ruins has some architectural beauty. The other places worth-visiting are the Makai Kothar or maize granaries, Nav Lakha Kothar or nine

lakh granaries, the
Maulia or the Muslim
citadal, the palace of
Khapra Jhareri, the
mosques in ruins near the
Manchi, the fort, gates
and Telia, Chhassia and
Dudhia tanks, so called
because their waters are
said to resemble oil,
buttermilk and milk
respectively.

Ashapura Mata No Madh

This temple in Kutch district is dedicated to Ashapura, the main deity of the Maharaos of Kutch. This colourful temple with imposing domes was damaged in the earthquake. It attracts large crowds during Navratri.

Khodiyar Mata

Located near
Bhavnagar city, this is a
temple to the family deity
of the Gohil Rajputs who
reigned over Bhavnagar,
Palitana and other
princely states.

Chamunda Mata

It is a climb of about 700 steps to the crest of Chotila Hill on which is located this temple above sea level, with a view of the Chotila village. It is always flooded by pilgrims, and the largest crowds can be seen during

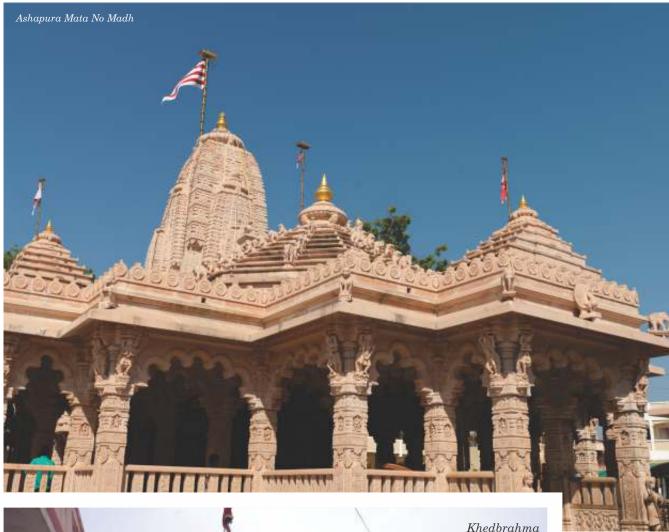
Navratri festival and other events.

Harshad Mata

En route Porbandar to Dwarka, this temple is an important place of pilgrimage.

Khedbrahma

Khedbrahma is an important place for devotees of Amba Mata. Her shrine at this place is held next in importance only to Ambaji (or Mota Ambaji) of Danta Taluka, and therefore called Nana Ambaji. Near Khedbrahma, there is the Triveni Sangam (confluence of the three rivers) of

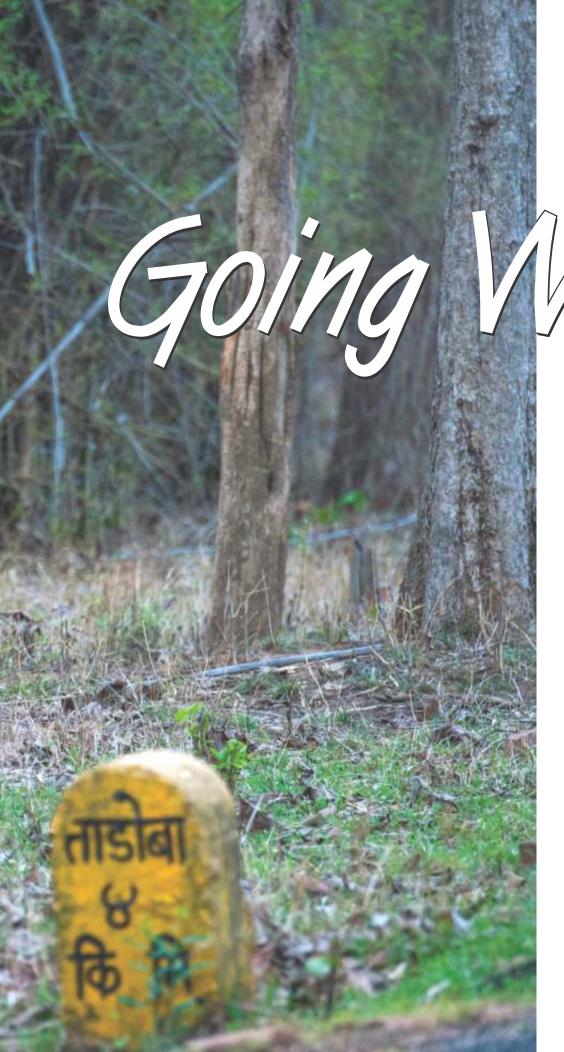


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Hiranyakshi of Harnav, Kosambi and Bhimakshi. There is a temple of Chamunda Mata with a tank nearby in Khedbrahma and three miles further up is the temple of Koteshwar Mahadev.



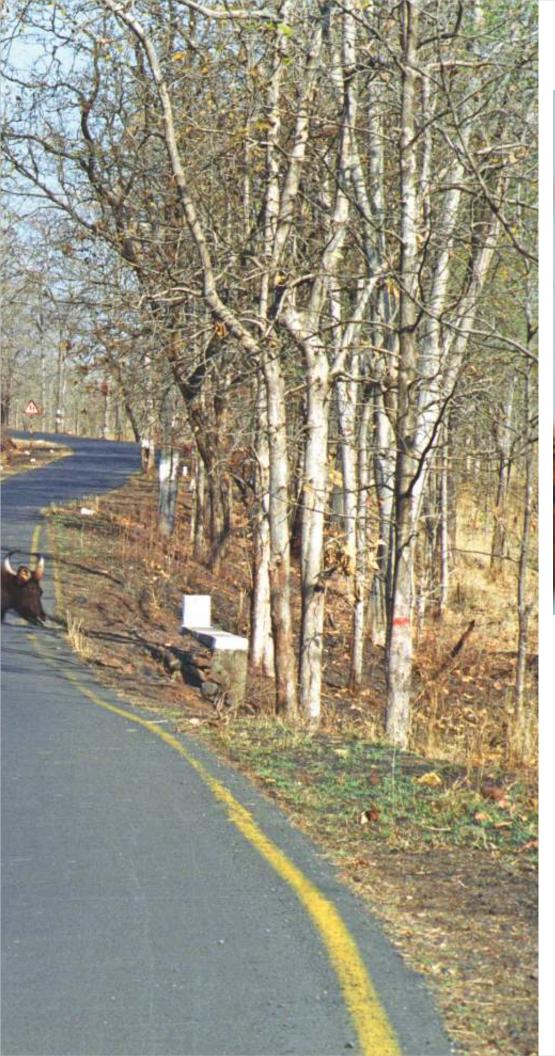


in Vidarbha

idarbha, the eastern region of Maharashtra, is one of the most exciting areas for wildlife safaris in India. The lush green deciduous forests are home to a variety of mammals, birds, reptiles and flora. The region is the land of tigers - Melghat Tiger Reserve, Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, Umred Karhandla Wildlife Sanctuary, Pench Tiger Reserve shared between Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary and Navegoan Bandh National Park are all home to tiger, leopard, sloth bear, wild dog and other carnivores.

Start with Melghat Tiger
Reserve, one of the first nine
Project Tiger Reserves in India,
launched in 1972. The reserve
covers about 2030 sq.km. of lush
green forest in the Gawilgarh Hills
with a picturesque landscape of
deep valleys and wooded hills.
Gugamal National Park lies at the
core of the reserve. The Tapti River
and many streams ensure supply of
water here.

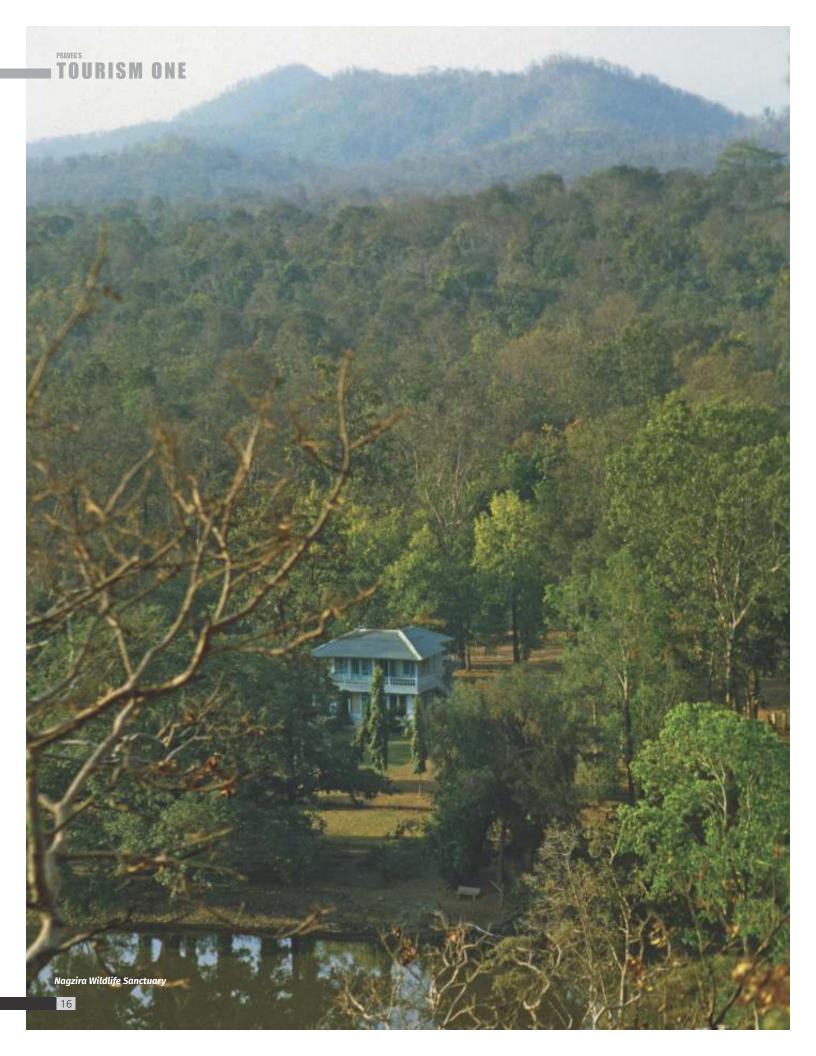


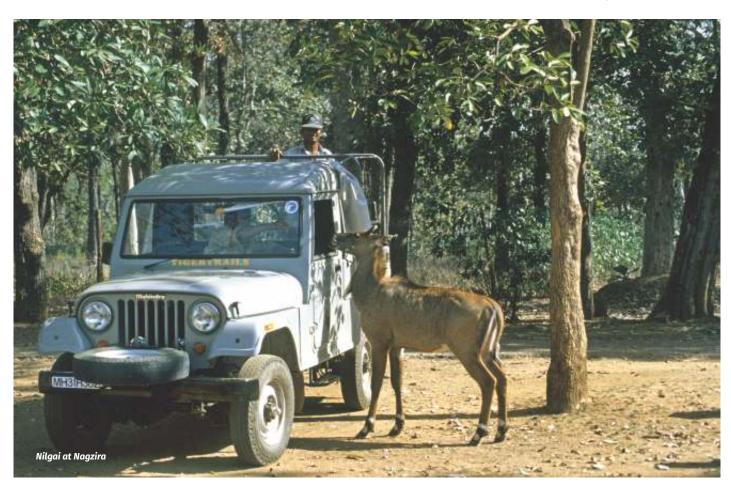




The endangered forest owlet is seen only in a few jungles of India

The park's information center is at Semadoh, which also has rest houses to stay. A safari bus ride from here is a good way to see much of the wildlife like gaur or Indian bison, sambar deer and birds like the grey jungle fowl and spurfowl. For leopard or tiger sightings, you need luck. Spend time here to see jungle owlet, brown fish owl and grey hornbill, and also the rare green avadavat. From here, it is a drive of about 25 km to the hill station of Chikhaldara with the road climbing about 600 meters through some good bird habitat. Chikhaldara is





one of the best habitats for sloth bear. There are some good hotels and resorts here.

From Semadoh, another route ends up to the Kolkas complex, which offers meals and accommodation. Indian bison and wild boar are likely to be seen drinking water along the river at Kolkas, while at night leopard or even tiger can be spotted. The Kolkas complex and rest house areas can be good for birdwatching. One of the star attractions of Melghat is the forest owlet that is endemic to the forests of central India. This bird is on the verge of extinction, but can be seen at forest patches of Melghat.

From here, drive east to Pench National Park, which is one of the premier tiger reserves of India, straddling across two states -Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.





The Meghdoot dam, built across Pench River at Totladoh, has created a large water body of 72 sq.km., out of which 54 sq.km. falls in M.P. and the rest in the adjoining state of Maharashtra. As summer approaches, the water recedes, leaving behind the lush green meadows, which are excellent for viewing sambar, spotted deer, nilgai, wild boar, Indian bison and other herbivores. Pench is the hunting ground for tiger, leopard, dhole or wild dog, jungle cat and small Indian civet.

From Pench, you can travel to
Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary, which has
good forests set around lakes – the
reason it is called the Green Oasis of
Vidarbha. There are simple accommodations on different sides of the main
Nagzira lake. This lake and Chorkhamara
tank are good for watching birds like
waterfowl and fish eagle, especially
during the winters. The lake is rich in
fish and amphibians. This sanctuary has
a sizable population of tiger and
leopard, but you need luck to spot the

big cats. Indian bison, sambar, nilgai, chital, wild boar, sloth bear and wild dog could be seen over two or three days' stay. Near Nagzira, Navegaon National Park has tiger, leopard, bear, jungle cat, civet, wolf, jackal, Indian bison, deer and wild dog, but the main highlight is the picturesque lake set among low hills covered with forests. It is said that the medieval Gond queen of central India, Rani Durgavati invited some experts from Rajasthan to construct this lake. Subsequently, the lake was maintained





by the Nizam of Hyderabad, Bhosale Kings and finally the British, before it became a reserve of the Maharashtra Government.

One of the most important tiger reserves in India, the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve is divided into three ranges: Moharli, Tadoba and Kolsa in West Chandrapur Forest Division. The Tadoba National Park was declared as a national park in 1955 and is one of the oldest national parks of India. With Andhari National Park, it forms a tiger



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reserve covering 62,540 hectare of land. The park gets its name from a ruler named Taru, who was killed by a tiger. There is a shrine built in his memory. The temple is frequented by tribals, especially during the fair held every year between December to January. The reserve comprises of southern tropical dry deciduous forests, which are interspersed with several large meadows that attract large herds of deer and Indian bison. The park's checklist includes 41 species of mammals, 30 species of reptiles, 5 species of amphibians, 74 species of butterflies, 26 species

of spiders, and 23 species of fish. The Tadoba, Kolsa and Jamni lakes here are visited by large flocks of winter migratory birds. Moharli lake, on the outskirts, also attracts birds. The lesser adjutant is one of the many interesting birds seen here. The park drives in Tadoba are excellent for watching mammals. There is a good chance for spotting tiger, leopard and sloth bear. Other mammals worth looking for are Indian bison, nilgai, dhole, striped hyena, small Indian civet, jungle cats, sambar, spotted deer, barking deer and four-horned antelope. Tadoba has a

wide choice of quality accommodations, including resorts, camps and lodges.

North of Tadoba and forming a corridor with it through forest along Wainganga River, Umred Karhandla Wildlife Sanctuary is a home to big mammals like tiger, leopard, sloth bear, wild dog, bison, nilgai, spotted deer, sambar, wild boar, and also small ones like flying squirrel.

From here, it is a drive of about 60 km to Nagpur. The lake at Nagpur can be good for bird spotting.



TRAVEL INFORMATION

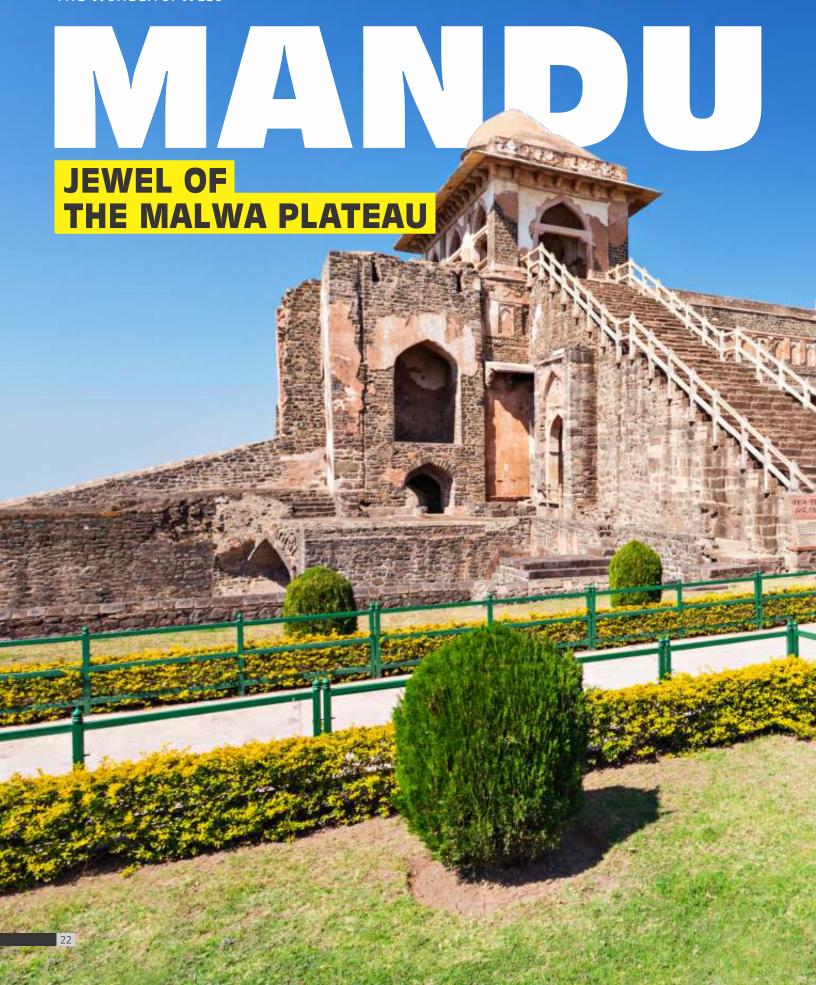
How to reach?

Nagpur is the major airport of Vidarbha. Nagpur, Wardha, Gondia and Amrawati are key railway stations.

Where to stay?

Tadoba has an excellent choice of resorts like Svasara Resort, Tiger Trails and Serai. Melghat has forest rest houses at Kolkas, Semadoh and Chikhaldhara, and many resort hotels at Chikhaldhara hill station. Muba Jungle Resort in Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary is situated in the forested areas. There are Forest Department-run properties along the lake.





hose who have gazed out from Rani Rupmati Pavilion of Mandu at the beautiful scenery of wooded hills will understand why the Sultans of Malwa called it Shadiabad, literally 'City of Joy'. The huge fort with palaces, mosques and mausoleums is certainly one of India's most atmospheric, picturesque, romantic and historical sites. This deserted citadel set on the crest of the Vindhyas has winding

walls that protected palaces, mosques and royal pavilions. It also has water bodies created during the reign of Sultans from 1401AD to 1529AD.

While it can be great to relax at the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Department's cottages by Sagar Kund, take time out to explore the three groups of monuments, Royal Enclave, Village Group and Rewa Kund Group. The Jahaz Mahal is named for its unusual ship-like shape and

location on a narrow strip between two large water tanks. Built by Sultan Ghiyauddin, the palace has a number of pleasure pavilions with conical and domed roofs. Another highlight of the palace is the intricate system of water channels in spiral shapes. The beautiful bath is surrounded by colonnades. The Sultan is said to have romped with a huge harem of 15000 women in this palace with its airy rooms, lookout posts and pools.

The majestic Hindola Mahal or The Jahaz Mahal named for its ship-like shape and waterside location

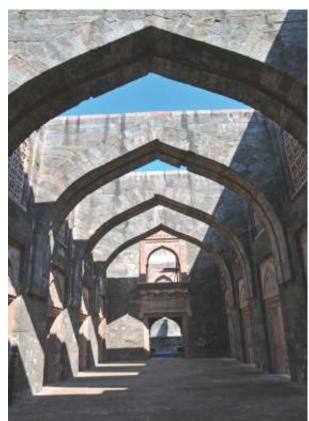


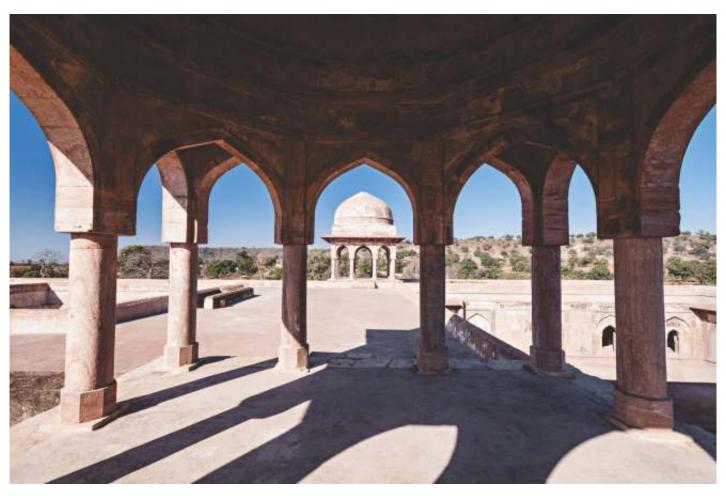
The majestic Hindola Mahal or Swinging Palace gets its name from the sloping walls buttressing the graceful but heavy stone arches that support the ceiling inside.

was built as the hall of audiences. Its major ornamentation is the jali-tracery screens next to arched windows. It adjoins Champa Baoli, a step-well. This well boasts an ingeniously complex ventilation and watersupply system. The Turkish bath called 'Hamam' has domed roofs with pierced star and geometric patterns. Gada Shah's House is a mansion with the remains of water channels, fountains and traces of the owners' portraits - a Rajput chieftain and his wife. The 'Shop' here was probably a warehouse for luxury goods and there is also an assembly area. See also the Mosque of Dilawar Khan, built in 1405, one of Mandu's early structures. The Taveli Mahal houses a museum

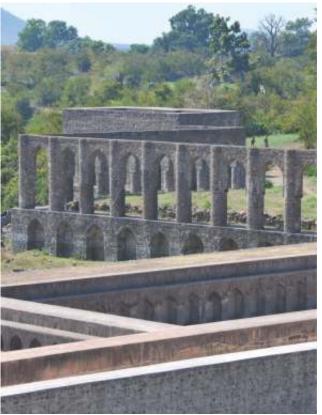
with sculptures and inscriptions.

Continue from here to Sultan Hoshang Shah's Tomb, which is considered to be India's first marble mausoleum, built in 1440. An inscription of 1659 shows that it was visited by Shah Jehan's team and therefore can be considered one of the inspirations for the great buildings of Agra. Nearby is the majestic mosque, 1454AD Jamma Masjid, which is said to have been inspired by the Damancus Mosque. The mosque has huge domes. Though it is rather austere and plain in design, it is considered a fine work of Afghan architecture. Inside, you can see beautiful calligraphy. The Asharfi Mahal has the remains of an Islamic school, crowned by a





Rani Rupmati Pavilion



victory tower, which is now in ruins but was once considered Mandu's finest building. You can still see intricate pillars.

About 4 km from the Village Group, the Rewa Kund Group has the Palace of Sultan Baz Bahadur built in the early-1500s, with an octagonal pavilion facing the remains of a royal garden, spacious courtyard fringed with halls and high terraces looking out to scenic surroundings. Near the palace is the palatial pavilion of Rani Roopmati. A herdswoman, Roopmati was a great singer and was married to the music loving king - Sultan Baz Bahadur. The ceremonies are said to have respected both Hindu and Muslim rites. She

wanted to live within the sight of her beloved and venerated river - Narmada and therefore, it is said, the reservoir of Rewa Kund was created with an aqueduct to supply water to Roopmati's Palace. The palace is said to have been the site for a military observation post. Standing at the top of a cliff, one can enjoy a view of the Sultan's Palace on one side and the Narmada ravines on the other. This is a gorgeous place to enjoy the sunset.

Among these groups of monuments and Sagar lake, there are several monuments like Malik Mugith's mosque, built in 1432, using pillars from ruined temples as well as Dai ki

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ka Mahal, the houses of nurses of the princes with pretty domed residences decorated with blue and yellow tiles.

Mandu went into decline after Baz Bahadur was defeated by the Mughal armies in 1561. During Akbar's reign, the citadel was largely used as an outpost between the northern Mughal capitals and the Deccan through his wife's palace called the Neelkanth Mahal, which was built in a ravine around 1574. The Shiva shrine here is again in use. The fortune of the City of Joy was revived briefly when Jehangir spent months here and renovated the properties. Sir Thomas Roe wrote about the festivities and big game hunts at Mandu during Jehangir's sojourn at the citadel.

In contrast to the largely Islamic structures of Mandu, the richly decorated Jain temples have jeweled images of the tirthankars. It has a Jain museum.

Mandu is also culturally interesting because of its tribal population. If you are here during a weekly market, called Haat, you can see many local people.

A short distance from Mandu, the National Dinosaur Fossil Park called 'Ashmedha' has many interesting paleontological exhibits from the Narmada valley. Combine a visit to Mandu with the Bagh Caves, built by Buddhist monks between 400AD and 700AD. The remains of murals can still be seen here.

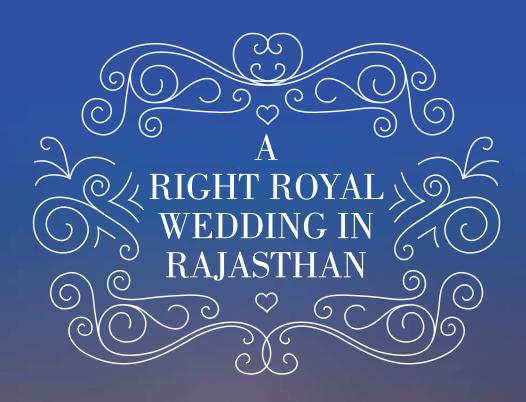
One more attraction here is - the Bagh Print, which is a traditional hand block print with natural colours. Bagh Print, as it is presently known in Madhya Pradesh, was started by the Muslim Khattri artisans of Malwa in 1962 when they settled on the banks of the Bagh River. The designs are patterned by skilled artisans. On completion of the printing process, the printed fabric is subject to repeated washing in the flowing waters of the river. The fabric is then dried in the sun for a specific period to obtain the fine luster that is its hallmark.

TRAVEL FACTS

Mandu is about 105 km from Indore. The MPTDCrun Malwa Resort has a beautiful lakeside location and many facilities like children's play area, comfortable cottages, pool, restaurant and garden. Malwa Retreat is MPTDC's budget option. If you want to stay at the fort, Hotel Rupmati has a/c rooms, each with a private balcony overlooking the ravine with a passable restaurant and bar. The Maharaja Hotel and Rama **Guest House are budget** options. Shivani is a place to have North and South Indian dishes.







The palaces and other stately homes of Rajasthan have made the state a hotspot for destination weddings where invited guests stay in a vacation location for several days.

daipur offers a luxurious setting for a wedding venue, destination wedding or other special events of all sizes. Not surprisingly, many celebrities and big industrialists have held royal weddings in Udaipur. Set around lakes with a backdrop of the Aravalli hills, the sheer romance of this city is unbelievable, especially when you consider the beauty of its palaces. Decorated boats ferry guests to the beautifully illuminated Jag Mandir for a

memorable reception or party in the middle of Lake Pichola. Also located amidst Lake Pichola, the Taj-run Lake Palace is certainly one of the world's most romantic hotels – an 18th century island palace in the middle of a lake with gardens, lily ponds, ornate balconies and delicate arches. Enjoy an intimate evening by the lily pond or ascend to the terrace for a large event with a spectacular view of the palaces and havelis along the lakeside.

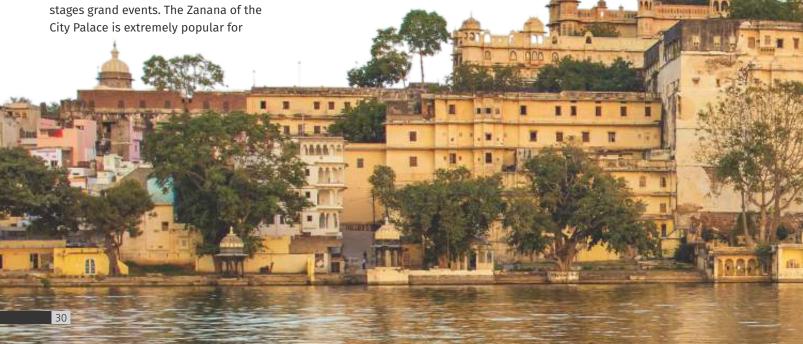




Along the lake, the Shiv Niwas and Fateprakash Palace hotels are two of the most recent wings of the City Palace Complex. The suites at both the properties are indeed exclusive and offer commanding views of Lake Pichola. Fatehprakash Palace Hotel has a huge multi-ton chandelier lit Durbar Hall that stages grand events. The Zanana of the City Palace is extremely popular for

Mehndi and Sangeet parties and other functions.

Apart from the palaces, a number of modern hotels like Trident, Sheraton, Ramada, Radisson Blu Udaipur Palace Resort & Spa and Anantha Spa have also become popular for weddings. The Oberoi Udai Vilas in Udaipur is one of the most luxurious hotels in India. The Leela Palace Hotel in Udaipur is another idyllic location for a regal wedding with venues for anything from an intimate champagne party to a large lakeside reception by the lake.



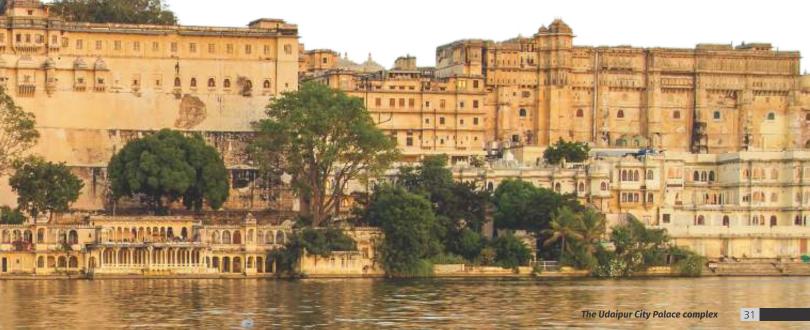
A few minutes from Udaipur, Fatehgarh commands a superb location on a hill with a panorama of the Udaipur cityscape with its lakes and gardens. Built from scratch using architectural fragments from havelis and forts, this sprawling property has fabulous lawns, pools and pavilions on terraces that look out to a breathtaking view of Udaipur. A short distance from Udaipur, Raas Devigarh is a splendidly luxurious fort hotel with uber-cool interiors and lovely views.

A number of new hotels and resorts offer less expensive wedding venues in the attractive scenery of Udaipur.

Rajasthan's popular hill station, Mount Abu has palatial houses of the Maharajas that can make for an intimate wedding destination. One of the most majestic of these, the Palace Hotel was built as the retreat of the Maharajas of Bikaner, and retains its historic architecture. With sprawling grounds and turreted terraces, this can be a good option for those who love the hills.

One of the grandest palace hotels in Rajasthan, the Umaid Bhawan Palace is managed by the Taj Group of Hotels. This 357-room palace, one of the largest residences in the world and among the grandest palaces in India, combines its historic grandeur with modern facilities. A destination wedding can combine Umaid Bhawan Palace Hotel, Mehrangarh Fort and other venues. Cocktails by the royal pool, a reception on the palace lawns, sangeet, mehndi and other traditional functions at the fort, all these can be part of the palace's wedding arrangements. The Balsammand Lake Palace with its acres of gardens is another delightful venue for a royal theme party. Among newer hotels, The Ummed Jodhpur has





TOURISM ONE







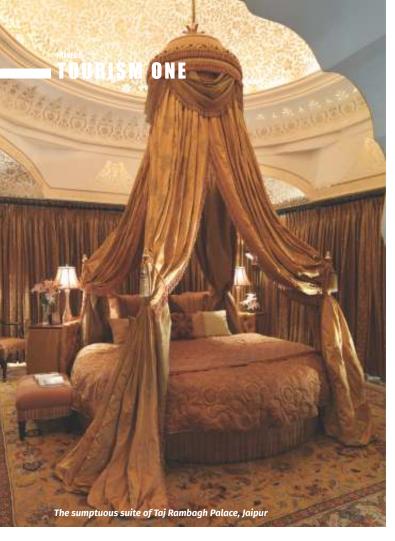


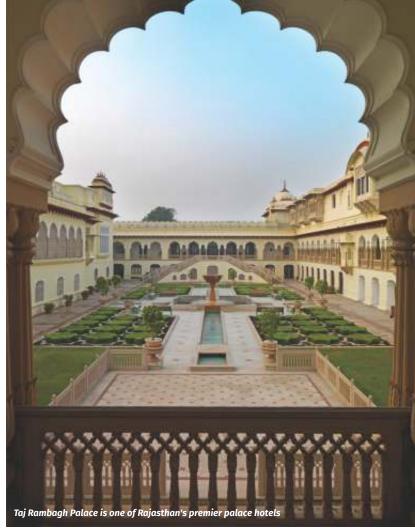
excellent wedding venues. The Taj Hari Mahal is a modern palatial hotel with extensive conference facilities and a terrace where guests can enjoy meals under the stars.

For a small but unique event, Decchu between
Jodhpur and Jaisalmer has some superb resorts, set among sand dunes like the Manvar Camp, Samsara Dechu Luxury Resort and Thar Oasis Resort. A party can be combined with camel safaris on the dunes and jeep safaris in the desert countryside.

Pushkar has recently become a hotspot for weddings and parties with the mushrooming of resorts on the Ajmer-Pushkar highway. The USP of Pushkar include the sceneries of dramatic rocky hills and sand dunes, combined with the highway-side location offering easy access







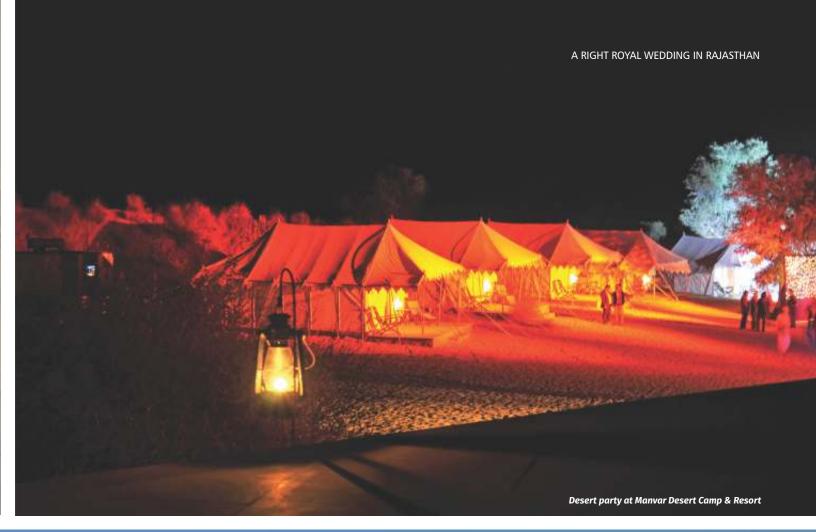
for coaches, cars and lots for the guest or delegate to see and do between the events. Caparisoned camels, camel carriages, big cars, folk dancers, musicians, all are available for royal theme events and grand weddings. Some resorts have been designed keeping events in mind - the bride and bridegroom can make a dramatic entry seated on the howdah of an elephant. Bhanwar Singh Palace, Aaram Bagh, even royal tented camps host weddings in Pushkar. The popularity of Pushkar as a wedding destination is pushed up by its proximity to cities like Aimer, Jaipur and industrial areas.

Jaipur has excellent infrastructure to be a leading event destination, from grand palace hotels to modern convention centres. The Taj-run Rambagh

Palace has few rivals as a regal and opulent destination venue with spectacular locations that range from the gilded halls to an amphitheatre and sprawling lawns. Jaipur's Jai Mahal Palace is a gorgeous heritage palace hotel dating back to 1745 with acres of lush Mughal-style gardens ideal for an outdoor wedding reception. Apart from the palace hotels and havelis, ITC Rajputana is also a luxe place for a wedding event. A wedding event can include unusual activities like an exhibition polo match.

The City Palace of Jaipur is the perfect place for a fairy tale wedding. This palace consists of beautiful palaces like Chandra Mahal and Mubarak Mahal with courtyards that offer a dream wedding setting. Jaipur's historic gardens can also be booked for a charming wedding.









oa is a home to some of the world's most beautiful beaches. Considered by many as a tropical paradise with a difference, this small state in India offers guests a chance to enjoy a relaxing and well-deserved vacation away from the hustle-bustle of everyday life. The nightlife scene, coupled with exotic beaches and delectable local cuisines makes it a favored tourist destination. The beaches here are quite different from those found in other states of India owing to their universal appeal.

For adrenaline junkies, Goa offers everything from jet skiing, snorkeling as well as deep water diving. Also, for those who love fishing, the place offers some of the best fishing trips too.

Listed below are some of the best places for fishing in Goa:

1) Sport Fishing in Panjim

Sport fishing is one of the attractive

and fly fishing. Each method adopted to catch fish is effective and will help you catch one almost immediately if you are lucky.

Some of the main tools used for sport fishing include a rod, reel, line and a few hooks. Goa is ideal for sport fishing because it has cordoned off particular areas, which are dedicated to fishing. Its rich marine life is also a major contributing factor, which has helped boost the popularity of this activity.

You can learn more about these different techniques if you choose to opt for various fishing trips in Goa. With sport fishing, you will get an opportunity to catch the Mangrove Jack as well as Barramundi. Sport fishing in Panjim is best enjoyed alone as the surroundings are peaceful and quiet without the likelihood of a party going on somewhere.

equipment, which should be checked before you actually start fishing to avoid any hiccups later on.

Boats will take you mid stream and will give you ample time to fish. If you are interested, you can also explore the coastal side of the state during these fishing expeditions and take in the sights and sounds that the place has to offer. Away from the hustle-bustle of the main city, the backwaters provide you with the required peace and quiet time to relax and unwind.

The operators that guide you on these trips have sound knowledge of fishing and will help throughout the expedition. If you manage to get a good catch, the chefs on the shore will be obliged to rustle up a delicious fish curry for you.

3) Spear Fishing

If you decide to opt for spear fishing,

activities in Goa. It usually entails fishing for recreational purposes or for competitions as opposed to commercial fishing, which is aimed at making profit. This experience offers an opportunity to the tourists to try out professional techniques of angling, which include popping, casting, trolling, bottom fishing

2) Fishing in Candolim, Goa

The Candolim Beach, located just 15 km from Panjim, is one of the famous tourist spots in Goa. A variety of fish are found here like king mackerels, groupers, barracudas and red snappers, among other fish. During this trip, you will be provided with the best of

you will be taken to Grand Island, Sail Rock as well as Bat Island and other reefs in addition to spectacular dropoffs, which are perfect for spear fishing. Spear fishing is an ancient art, which has been modified with the use of elastic powered spear guns and slings as well as compressed gas pneumatic powered

spear guns, which are effective tools to catch the fish.

Goa has some of the best diving spots that hold abundant fish. This makes the fishing trip more successful. The waters here will offer a good visibility between 6-20 metres and depth of 8-15 metres, which is perfect for spear fishing. The best time to go

for spear fishing. The best time to go
for spear fishing in Goa is
between October to January.
During the spear fishing
trip, you can expect to catch
reef fish like groupers, red
snappers, jacks, barracudas,
mackerels, cobia, leather skin,
sweet lips, spade fish, surgeon

big trevally.

4) Offshore Fishing

fish or even an occasional

Offshore fishing is apt for those who enjoy exploring the deep waters. It is an important aspect of fishing trips in Goa. One can opt for a tour package, which includes fishing and snorkelling.

You will also be provided with the latest fishing equipment. A professional crew will take care of all the fishing needs. Offshore fishing trips can be

customized to suit specific tourist preferences. In order to conserve the underwater biodiversity, it is requested to adopt the notion of 'catch and release' if you choose to.

5) Inshore Fishing

In Goa, one can also opt for inshore fishing and can fish in locations such as Sinquerim Bay, Cabo Bay, Mormugoa Bay, Amee Shoal, Sunchi Reef, St George Islands, River Zuari, River Mandovi headland reefs. These areas will also offer you stunning views of the natural

landscape and will give you some much needed peace and quiet.

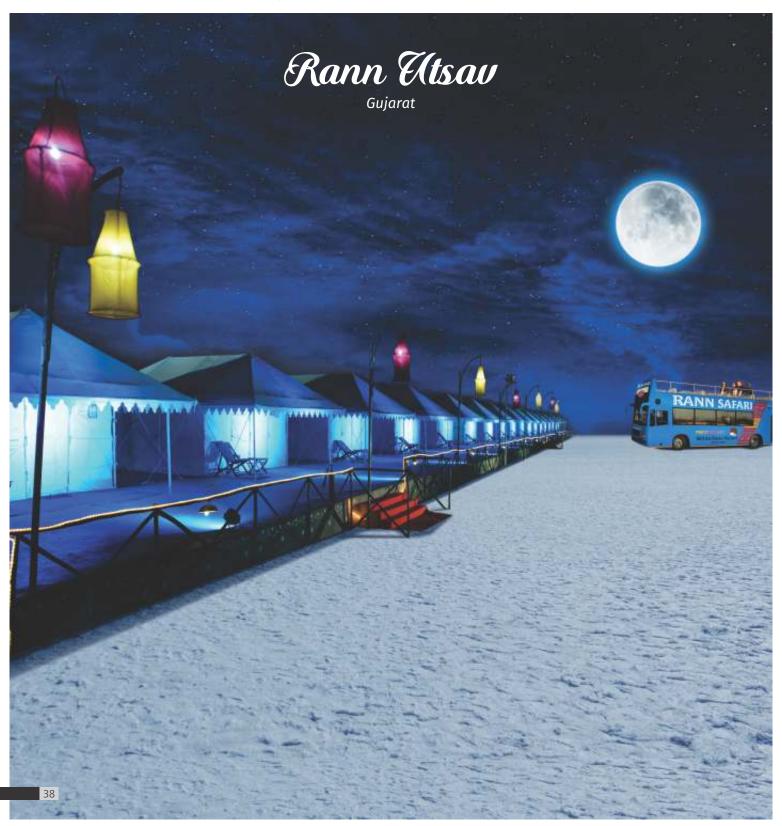
For inshore fishing, you have an option of using live baits, which may include prawns, sardines, mullets or even some freshly cut baits in order to attract fish.

Therefore, inshore fishing is an important aspect of Goa fishing trip.

Due to the nature of the sport and the experience it provides, fishing in Goa has become an important attraction for tourists who enjoy such leisure activities.

Trip on Culture

Amazing time of the year- plenty of holidays, year-end celebration mood, and some of the amazing festive celebrations in India and around the world, which offer a unique way of experiencing a destination and bonding with like-minded folks. Witness some of the most unique and fabulous festivals that have gathered millions of people from different parts of the world.









WHAT

Amidst the breathtaking and divergent landscape, during the full moon night of the winters, the threemonth long festive event - Rann Utsav brims with dynamism, hospitality, vigor and traditional flavor of the splendorous Kutch.

WHERE

Dhordo, Kutch, Gujarat

WHEN

30th October, 2016 to 31st March, 2016

ATTRACTIONS

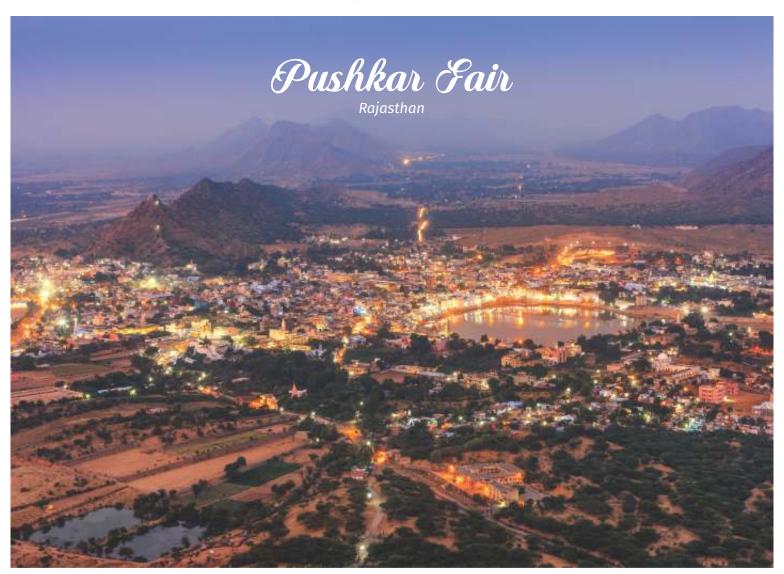
Rann Utsav hosts traditional tent facility to offer first-hand local life experience to the tourists. The traditional stay at White Rann Resort's Premium Tents/Rajwadi Bhungas (the traditional circular mud-huts) offers the best opportunity to explore Kutch in all forms.

VISIT, IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR

Culture, tradition, regional delicacies, adventure, romantic getaway, leisure, fun or simply sight-seeing



······ Trip on Culture ······







Pushkar Fair





WHAT

Pushkar Fair is an annual livestock fair, held each November during the full moon. The Camel Fair exhibits everything from jewelry items for cattle, ranging from saddles, saddle-straps, beads, strings and cowries to items specifically exhibited for the human folks. The array of artifacts exhibited is just endless.

WHERE

Near Thar Desert, Pushkar, Rajasthan

WHEN

8th November, 2016 to 14th November, 2016

ATTRACTIONS

Pushkar Fair offers an exciting range of activities like Hot Air Ballooning, Camel Safari and many more to its visitors. Shop for unique items like beads, lovely colorful bangles, leather goods, camel cover and much more.

VISIT, IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR

Art & crafts, adventurous activites, exciting competitions, cultural events, fun, sight-seeing



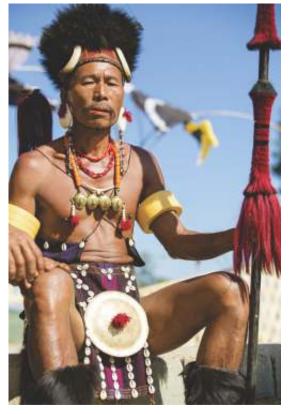


Hornbill Festival Nagaland













WHAT

Hornbill Festival unites one and all in Nagaland and people enjoy the colourful performances, crafts, sports, food fairs, games and ceremonies. Traditional arts, which include paintings, wood carvings and sculptures are also exhibited.

WHERE

Naga Heritage Village, Kisama, Nagaland

WHEN

1st December, 2016 to 10th December, 2016

ATTRACTIONS

Traditional Naga morungs, exhibition of arts and crafts, food stalls, flower shows, display of herbal medicine, fashion shows, beauty contest, traditional archery and wrestling, local games, musical concert, elaborate dances and folk songs.

VISIT, IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR

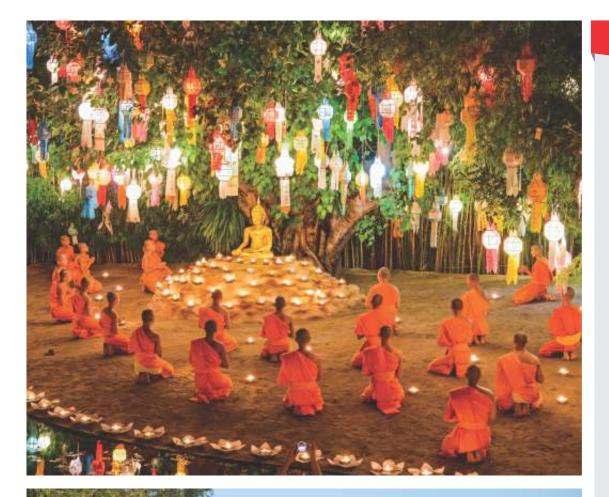
Tribal tour, cultural events, art & crafts, regional delicacies, band performances, exciting competitions



Loy Krathong Thailand







WHAT

The Loy Krathong festival is celebrated throughout Thailand to mark the end of the rainy season. Every year, thousands of paper lanterns are released into the night sky to ward off bad luck. The rivers are covered by floating flower lanterns, adorned with candles and joss sticks, cast into waterways to wish for good luck.

WHERE

Celebrated nationwide, but Nai Harn Lake and Patong Beach usually have the most activity.

WHEN

14th November, 2016 to 16th November, 2016

ATTRACTIONS

The main attraction of the event is - on nearly every expanse of water, be it a river, lake or the ocean, you'll notice thousands of lights drifting across the water like fairy dreams, making it a spectacular sight.

VISIT, IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR

Trip that brings good luck for the years to come or enjoy the settings of fairytale fantasies.





Dia De Los Muertos (Day of The Dead) Mexico









Dia De Los Muertos

WHAT

The Mexican Day of the Dead celebration is similar to other culture's observances of a time to honor the dead. The Mexican tradition includes festivals and parades as well as gatherings of families at cemeteries to pray for their deceased loved ones.

WHERE

Mexico

WHEN

31st October, 2016 to 2nd November, 2016

ATTRACTIONS

Traditional foods, unique decorations, cultural performances, regional music and Mexican artisans

VISIT, IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR

Thrilling experience to explore something exciting, wild and offbeat



6 places to visit in Company of the Company of the

rgentina is a beautiful country situated in South America. Statistics have shown that this country is the second largest on the South American continent. On the ranking of the largest countries in the world, it is found on the 8th position.

Argentina is famous because it is here that tango was born, it is home to diverse forms of marine animals & birds, namely whales, penguins, sea-lions and many more! It is also known to serve the best beef in the world. Apart from this fact, Argentina is also famous for its geographical position, which makes it a

country with the highest peak in the American continent and holds the southernmost city in the world.

Argentina has a rich cultural heritage. This wonderful country consists of friendly and very hospitable people who treat anyone they come across like family. Today, Argentina, as a country, is serving as a home to lots of tourists from all around the world. If you are the type that loves a trip filled with diverse options and surprises, a trip to Argentina is what you should be looking at. As the saying goes "Variety is the spice of life", a trip to Argentina will give you just that!

The 6 most exciting places you need to visit if you ever decide to visit Argentina are:



Buenos Aires

Buenos Aires is a very famous and popular city in the whole of Latin America. In case you never knew this, Argentina's most famous and seductive dance form - Tango has its origin traced back to this beautiful city. Apart from the dance part, it is also regarded as a top notch city in the world because it possesses great infrastructure. Some of these amenities are beautiful restaurants, good roads, clubs, museums, theatres and many more. If you are a football lover, you must not miss out on Buenos Aires because it houses world-class stadiums, where you can go to watch a game, catch maximum fun and mingle with







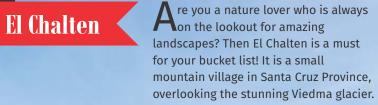
Puerto Madryn











In the year 2014, it was ranked second by travel guide Lonely Planet for "Best Cities in the World to Know". It falls within the Los Glaciares National Park, which is the second largest national

park of Argentina and also falls under UNESCO world heritage sites. The park derives its name from glaciers that are born on ice caps. El Chalten is also known as the trekking capital of the world and one of the most beautiful treks can be taken in the Lago del desert - that is a lake with spectacular landscapes of intense green trees, waterfalls & glaciers. The lake also offers various options for navigation and

















ne more reason why you should not miss out a road trip to Argentina is a chance to visit a city that is located at the end of the world. Ushuaia is one of the best places to visit in Argentina with lots of historical antecedents behind it. This city is acknowledged as the southernmost city on planet earth and is an adventure hub with activities like skiing, sailing, scuba diving. It is also close to Antarctica, so people who visit Antarctica also converge here. A well-planned Argentina road trip will never be complete without a visit to Ushuaia. 🚾



It does not matter why or when you go on a trip to Argentina; everyone has lots to gain. If you want a chance to be able to visit all of the places listed here, go for a driving expedition.





Far Far away



Swimming with Whale Sharks in Cebu

It is one of the largest fish in the world, and the Phillipines is one of the places in the world where you can see these mystical goliaths. Yes, we are talking about the whale sharks. Watching and swimming with the whale sharks in Oslob, Cebu has become a popular pastime, and one of the top things to do for many tourists in the Philippines. Get up close with the world's largest fish - the whale sharks. It is a unique wildlife

encounter, totally enjoyable and memorable.

The Philippines is an aquatic playground for any water sport. Within the country's waters, you will find the world's biodiversity, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with presence of a shark airport and schools of dancing sardines.

If you're the one who loves the ocean and its exotic marine life, let's find out more about Cebu as the Whale Shark interaction destination.

What is it that makes Cebu the destination to dive with whale sharks?

Cebu is one of the most popular dive destinations in the Philippines. The marine life in Cebu and the surrounding islands are so colourful and diverse that they keep divers coming back for more. Cebu also offers excellent shore-based diving and a rich variety of dive sites.

Best season for swimming with whale sharks:

September to early June. Rainy season should be avoided.

Is training required for this activity or anyone can take this up?

Boatmen assist the tourists for whale shark interaction activity. Only the certified divers are allowed for underwater view of sharks.

The air-connectivity between India-Cebu:

There are connecting flights from India to Cebu via Singapore and Hong Kong.

The Mactan-Cebu International Airport serves various international destinations of Philippines Airlines (PAL), Cebu Pacific, Asiana Airlines, Silk Air, Malaysia Airlines, and domestic destinations of PAL, Cebu Pacific, SEAIR, Asian Spirit and Air Philippines.

The cost factor:

Rates for whale shark interaction activity:

- · P 1000/ pax for 30 minutes snorkeling
- · P 1500/ pax for 1 hour diving

Where to stay?

There are plenty of choices to stay near the Whale Shark Interaction Center, Oslob. From resorts to budget stays, Cebu offers a variety of pleasant stays. MB Sunshine View Resort, Sumilon Bluewater Island Resort, AJ's Place and Whale Watch Ocean Beach Resort are some of the good places located very near to the whale watching centre.









Shri Pronab Sarkar President, IATO

Q. Few months after taking over as a President, how would you like to describe your journey with IATO?

A. My journey as a Secretary of IATO was very smooth with great support from the entire team of IATO and the then President Mr. Subhash Goyal. Now as a President, my aim is to keep IATO stronger.

Q. What are the key goals and initiatives of IATO for 2016-17?

- A. Tourism growth is a continuous process. We have many more miles to go. Some of the key goals and initiatives are:
 - To ensure inclusion of many more countries, which are not included in the e-tourist visa facilitation like Italy, Saudi Arabia, the Maldives and Lebanon, etc.
 - To get the charter norms revised, especially reduction in landing fees, etc.
 - To abolish dual tariff for luxury trains like Palace On Wheels, Deccan Odyssey, Chariot On Wheels, etc.
 - GST implementation with maximum support to Tourism
 - To ensure service tax exemption for Tourism on foreign exchange earning

Q. What are the significant milestones achieved in 2015-16?

- A. With IATO's dedicated efforts, the idea of e-tourist visa transformed into reality for which we had been pleading for over two decades. Now, 150 nationals can take advantage of this facility. Other milestones are:
 - IATO's intervention in the ASI's proposal to increase monument entry fee led to defer the hike till 31st March 2016. Later, it was increased by 50% of the proposed fee hike, which was implemented from 1stApril, 2016
 - With the efforts of IATO, Air India increased free baggage allowance from 15 kg to 25 kg
 - Biometrics implemented upon arrival instead of originating country. Saved cancellations of groups and FITs
 - Handled all Ministry of Tourism sponsored hospitality guests; Tour operators, media

- members, TV teams, decision makers from overseas
- Marketing Development Assistance Scheme Q. of the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India was revised as per the IATO recommendations covering accommodation
- Played key role in organizing the first-ever Global Travel Mart (GET India) under the aegis of Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Tourism, Government of India from 23-25 April, 2015 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi
- Made useful contributions in the Ministry of Tourism's New Tourism Policy, Civil Aviation Policy, Clean India Campaign, new initiatives like Prasad and Swadesh Darshan, skill development programme 'Hunar Se Rozgar', Cruise Policy, revision of guidelines for classification of hotel, bilateral meets with foreign delegations and all such areas where IATO was duly considered as a think tank for tourism development plan
- Contributed to the Ministry of Tourism's "Study of Taxes/GST levied on Tourism Sector Visà-vis Export Sector" and its comparison to neighboring countries
- Gave its valuable inputs for finalizing the National Tourism Policy guidelines to the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, which was announced on 27th September 2015 at the function held at The Samrat Hotel on the occasion of World Tourism Day
- With many other initiatives, IATO contributed A. significantly in decision-making process of government, like
 - Availability of CENVAT credit on service tax charged on tour packages
 - Increased benefits under SFIS scheme
 - Reduction in value added tax (VAT) on Air Turbine Fuel
 - Harmonization of state entry/road tax for commercial vehicles so that travel is seamless across India. Infrastructure (air/rail connectivity/stay facilities and issues of important places like Buddhist Circuit, etc.)
 - IATO ensured with the help of Ministry that movement of commercial tourist vehicles is not affected due to Odd-even Formula of Delhi Government

Q. What major challenges are you facing and what are the suggested solutions?

A. Challenges like overall hygiene at all tourist places, safety norms, high road taxes, multiple loads of taxes on the tourism sector, lack of language guides, bumpy road (construction blockades), traffic jams and noisy streets have A. been continuous in nature.

Ministry of Tourism as a nodal ministry is doing its best, but many of these issues are linked with civic governance and need better coordination with various governments and ministries.

Q. What are your expectations from the soon-tobe-unveiled National Tourism Policy?

A. We are quite optimistic that National Tourism Policy will focus on new segments of Tourism like Cruise Tourism, MICE, Spiritual Tourism, Culture and Eco-tourism, Rural Tourism, Tourism

- Education, skill development programme and financial incentives for tourism investments.
- Q. There have been reports that India's image as a tourist destination took a beating last year after overseas arrivals grew at the slowest pace in three years and foreign currency earnings dipped as e-visas failed to attract visitors in large numbers. Do you think we lacked in promoting India in the overseas market?
- Yes, headless foreign offices have done the damage to the growth of Tourism in India due to lack of marketing and not creating awareness about the e-visa facility. There is no demand creation for Indian Tourism in foreign countries, which was possible only with aggressive marketing, advertisements and promotions. Secondly, the e-tourist visa need to be given window of 180 days to apply from foreign land and should be valid for 60 days with multiple entry options. The tourists are reluctant to cumbersome Indian visa rules and opt for other Asian countries where visa is available on arrival. Thirdly, negative publicity by the Indian print and electronic media creates hurdle in attracting more foreign tourists.

Q. According to you, what are the pros and cons of technological advancement in the development of tourism sector and its brickand-mortar players?

- Technology has taken over the key marketing and operational activities of Tourism. On the one side, there are lots of benefits, while on the other side. there are threats to lose business to dot com companies/fly by night tour operators who use only technology to lure tourist to their kitty. We have improved on our marketing and promotional activities and product presentations. More volume of business can be handled with the help of technology. Fastest communication is the key advantage of technology, which helps in developing business from the source markets and tapping new markets. Global accessibility is now possible in shortest span of time with less energy and money. Social media campaigns have become more friendly with its direct reach to the customers via Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, etc.
- Q. Like Switzerland and Sweden, do you think India should tie up with other Asian countries to integrate the region into one large tourism market? Will such step help in expanding its tourism in the international market?
- i. Finally, India should tie up with its South Asian neighbors in order to integrate the region into one large tourism market. Countries such as Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives are already tourist hotspots and would stand to benefit greatly if India will spearhead the launch of a common tourist visa on some scale. This would also help in boosting tourist arrivals in India by offering foreign tourists a package deal of multiple countries. Just as importantly, the initiative would also help India nurturing better relations with neighbors.

What's Travelling

3 new UNESCO heritage sites in India

According to The Hindu,
Khangchendzonga National Park
(KNP) in Sikkim has been named a
world heritage site by the World
Heritage Committee (WHC) of
UNESCO. Recently, the archaeological
site of Nalanda Mahavihara (Nalanda
University) in Bihar was also marked
as a heritage site. The Capitol
Complex in Chandigarh also made it
to the list, thus bringing all three
nominations this session into the
heritage roll of honour.

India allocates US\$68m for tourism circuits

Travel India Daily reported that India's Ministry of Tourism has approved the development of new tourism circuits in five states, worth a total of INR4.5 billion (US\$68m). The funds, which have been allocated under the country's Swadesh Darshan Scheme, will go towards the improvement and creation of tourism infrastructure in Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Sikkim.

India leads BRIC nations in Luxury Travel

According to Media India Group, the report titled 'Shaping the Future of Luxury' suggests that India, with the highest CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 12.8 pc among the BRIC countries, promises to harbour the most inspired luxury travel tribes in the coming years. Empowered by the growing middle class, India will likely lead the way in luxury travel, presenting a great potential for investments over the coming decade, the report states.

India to greet foreign tourists with free SIM cards

According to CNTraveler, international visitors to India using the electronic Tourist Visa (eTV) facility will soon get

SIM cards on their arrival in the country. It is proposed that the SIM cards will be part of the tourist kit that will also include maps, tourism booklets and information about tourist destinations, guidelines relating to do's and don'ts, and details of whom to contact in case of emergency.

IRCTC joins hands with SBI to promote rail ticketing

As reported by Press Trust of India, Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has joined hands with the State Bank of India to chalk out a detailed plan for promotion of rail ticketing activities, including internet ticketing and unreserved ticketing system. The MoU was signed by IRCTC CMD, A K Manocha and Arundhati Bhattacharya, CMD, SBI on July 18.

Tourism gets 'industry' status in Haryana for land use

Times of India reported that Haryana Government has given 'industry' status to Haryana-Kurukshetra
Tourism for land use purpose. The tourism projects identified under land use are activities relating to amusement, recreation, theme parks, adventure tourism projects, heritage hotels except, standalone hotels, tourist resorts, food streets, outdoor dining areas, food courts, restaurants, commercial components within recreational and commercial activities, etc.

Gujarat Tourism to manage Dandi route

Following TOI's report on the condition of Gandhi Ashram at Kankapura village, 35 km from Anand, that was lying unused since last five years, a High Level Dandi Memorial Committee (HLDMC) of Government of India assigned management of Dandi heritage route to Gujarat's Tourism department in March, 2016.

Rajasthan to rent out luxurious trains to host weddings

As per the Deccan Herald report, Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (RTDC) is all set to introduce wedding packages in two of its luxury locomotives 'Palace on Wheels' (POW) and 'Royal Rajasthan on Wheels' (RROW). It is now possible to charter the entire POW for USD 370,000 for seven nights and eight days. The charges for RROW are yet to be decided.

JoinMyWedding.com to sell wedding tickets to tourists

As reported by The Hindustan Times, JoinMyWedding.com is a new start-up that allows tourists to experience cultures with a close up view of one of the biggest ceremonies in any culture: a wedding. For anyone who wants to experience weddings, but isn't invited can buy the tickets from JoinMyWedding.com.

Affordable tented accommodation for Rann Utsav tourists

To present traditional stay experience to people from all classes, Gujarat Tourism has introduced tented accommodations at 40% lower rates. With the help of White Rann Resort, the official operator for Rann Utsav, Gujarat Tourism is offering equally luxurious but affordable tents equipped with all modern facilities and amenities for the Rann Utsav tourists. This year, White Rann Resort will operate from 30th October, 2016 to 31st March 2017.





Golden Opportunity for Business Promotion in the



27 - 28 May, 2017 NJ Expo Center, New Jersey, USA

- A 2-day B2B and B2C Business-cum-Culture Show to promote India's Culture, Trade and Tourism
- 1st ever Mega Indian Show with Pan India Presence
- Participation of over 500 Indian organizations
- Congregation of over 5000 entrepreneurs and technopreneurs under one roof
- Over 10,000 'Made in India' products on display
- Participation of over 100 CXOs
- Live Video-conferencing sessions with at least 15 key policy makers of Indian States
- 5,000 B2B Meetings
- Special promotion of India-based Start-ups, Make in India and Digital India programmes

Exhibitor Profile

- **Tourism**
- Handloom and Handicraft
- Garments
- Gems & Jewelleries
- Real Estate
- IT & IT-enabled Services
- Infrastructure
- **Business & Financial Services**
- Government Organisations
- Food Products & Technology And many more...

Organized by:

PRAVEG

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