TRAVIOUR MEE

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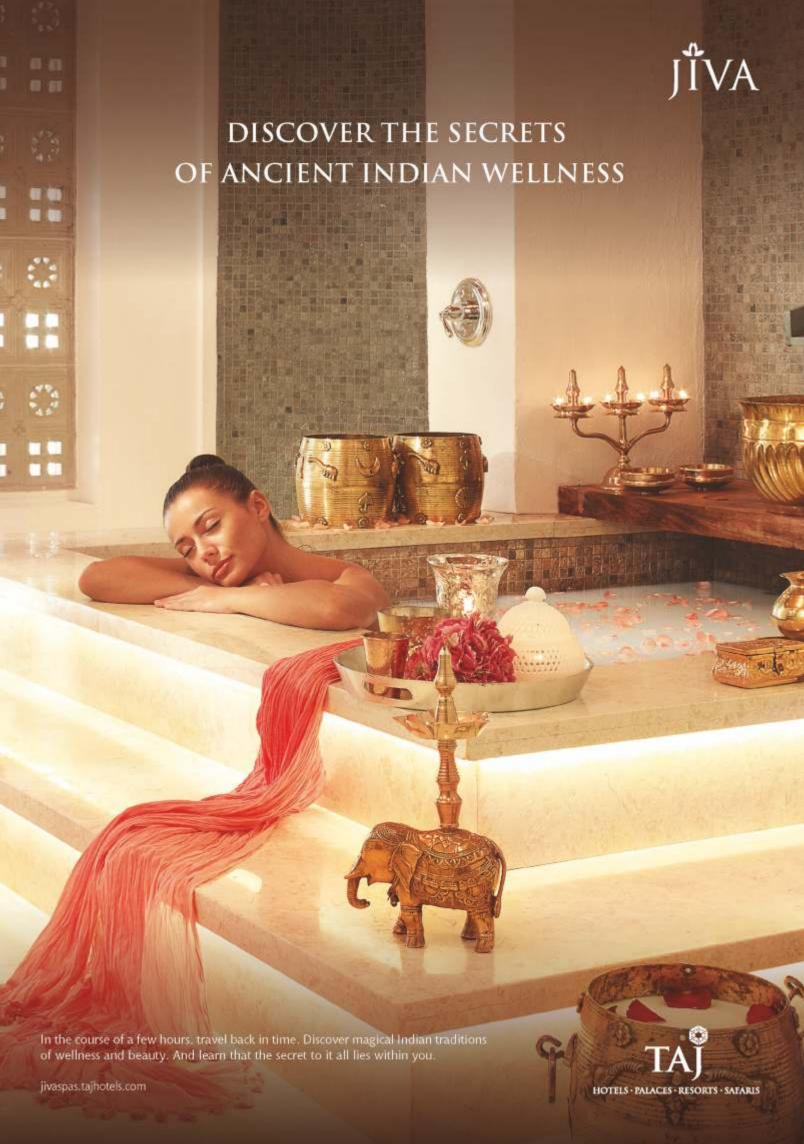


Cover Story
India MICE Awards 2017

Upcoming Event
Konark Dance Festival, Odisha

WTM LONDON SPECIAL

MICE the TAJ way



From the **Editor**

WELCOME TO INDIA

Dearreader,

We take immense pleasure in inviting the global travellers from all walks of life to visit our incredibly beautiful country i.e. India. Our respected Minister of Tourism, Govt. of India, Mr. K. J. Alphons goes hand in hand with us to invite you all to be our guest in the days to come. We are grateful for his best wishes sent for this WTM London November 2017 special edition through his welcome message placed in the very next page.

This MICE-centric November 2017 edition will give you a glimpse of our maiden INDIA MICE AWARDS 2017 ceremony that took place recently in New Delhi. With a view to choose the best MICE players in the business, we initiated this endeavour an year ago



which fueled the engine of our team and we finally did it. We invite you all to be a part of the second edition of INDIA MICE AWARDS which will be organised in February 2018. Indian states boast of incredible festivals and events during winters. One of the most popular festival in Eastern India is Konark Dance Festival of Odisha which is celebrated in the very first week of December. The story on the same can be read at page no. 8. This edition defines the uniqueness of Indian MICE Industry. We have placed a coverage on the MICE properties of Taj Group of Hotels at page no. 12. We have chosen three UNESCO World Heritage Sites that attract the tourists round the year to India. We have included a story on Sundarbans National Park in West Bengal at page no. 16. The story on Rani Ki Vav in Patan, Gujarat beautifies the contents at page no. 18. Page no. 20 describes the beauty of Khajuraho Group of Monuments in Madhya Pradesh. Our cover story on the recently concluded India MICE Awards 2017 comes with a wide coverage on participation from MICE and Hotel Industry including leading associations. It is being presented at page no. 27. We have selected 'Rajib Roy Choudhury' for our G.M.'s corner segment for this month. His interview about The Sonnet Hotel Kolkata is available at page no. 40. Like every edition this one too highlights the beauty of India's 365 days pilgrimage destination in Katra, Jammu i.e. Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine at page no. 42. The integral part of our editions, 'TravTour Associate Hotels' section with more than 250 star hotels across the country describes the in-depth information on India's hotel Industry and it awaits you at page no. 47.

Our organizational motto is to project India as the 365 days MICE destination. WTM London is the perfect stage to generate the awareness on the Indian MICE Tourism Players. This is the kind of platform we provide to all of our partners and business associates to market their products and services to the global community through us. We, the entire team of TravTour MICE Guide, sincerely thank all of our advertisers for believing in us. Have a wonderful season.

Happy reading.







पर्यटन राज्य मंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार) भारत सरकार, नई दिल्ली MINISTER OF STATE (IC) FOR TOURISM GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, NEW DELHI

Message

India is fortunate that it has been endowed by nature with an unending variety of backdrops for meetings, conventions, incentives and exhibitions — bustling metros, picturesque mountain hideouts, seaside resorts, spiritual environments, wellness centers for Yoga and Ayurveda and modern learning institutions of science, humanities and arts. The diverse cultural activities in the form of colours, festivals and fairs make India an attractive place for MICE events. Availability of world class venues, state-of-the art travel technology and professionally trained manpower can easily cater to the service demands of the MICE segment. India's rich cultural heritage, beautiful landscapes, snowcapped mountains, golden beaches and hospitable people offer ideal settings for MICE.

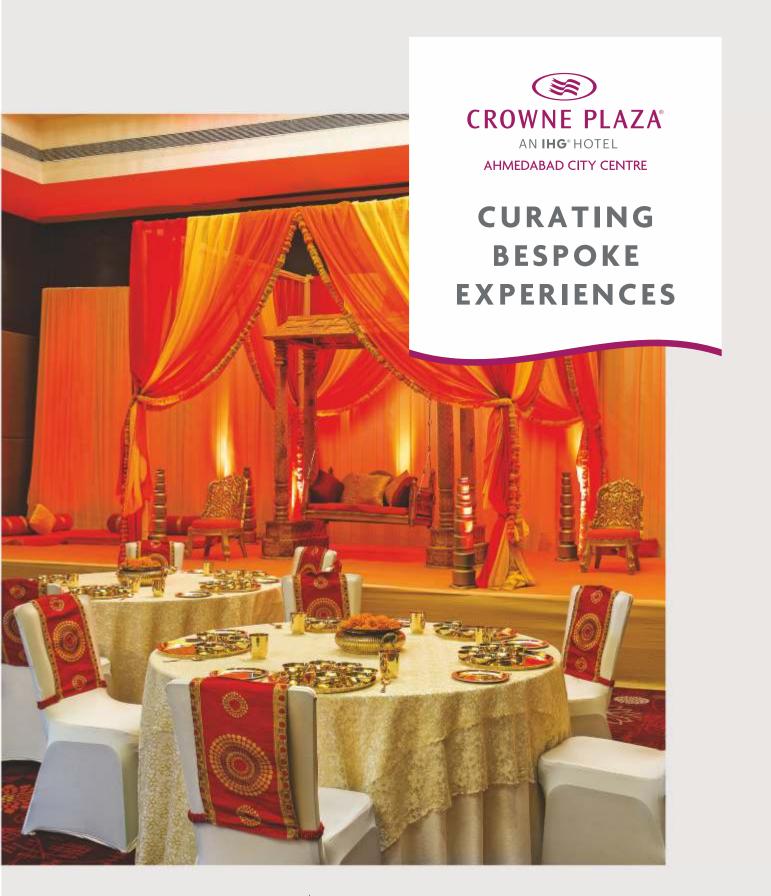
Over the last decade TravTour MICE Guide, being the inbound MICE sector magazine, has been paving the way to projecting Incredible India campaign on world's MICE map. Its efforts as a responsible print media house is commendable keeping in view that its presence in Dutch, English, French, German and Italian languages (both offline and online) has been attracting MICE buyers to our country.

I wish its Editor-in-Chief, Shri Arvind Sharma and his team for their patriotic endeavour which is much needed contribution to effective marketing of India as a premier MICE destination.

(K.J. Alphons) October, 2017

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Upcoming Festival Konark Dance Festival, Odisha

G.M.'s Corner Rajib Roy Choudhury

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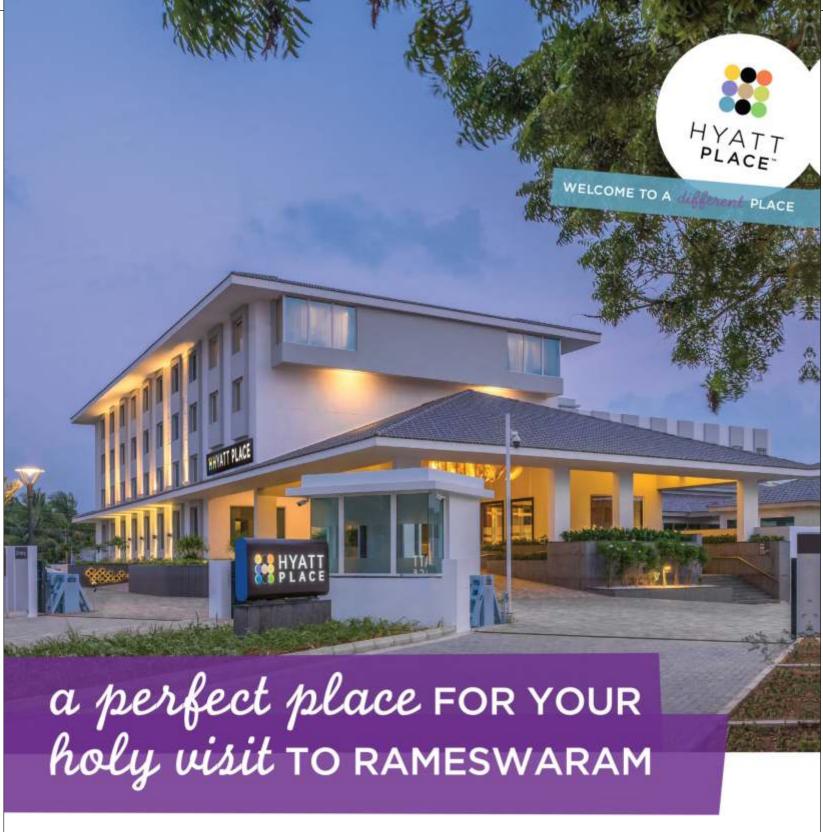
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First five days of December every year showcase the rich cultural heritage of India at Konark in Odisha. The Konark Festival is the most talked about contemporary festival of Odisha which brings the eminent artistes of national and international repute participate and perform in Konark. Be it 'Odishi', 'Bharat-Natyam', 'Manipuri', 'Kathak', 'Kuchipudi', 'Mohini-Attam' or even other classical, folk & tribal dances and music of India, Konark Festival has it all to bind India together at one place i.e. Sun Tmple Konark - the UNESCO world heritage site - about which the great poet Rabindranath Tagore once said that 'here the language of stone surpasses the language of man'. With all the greatest forms of Indian dances, this rhythmic tourism festival is held in Open Air Auditorium with the Sun Temple as the back drop. This annual event presents a unique blend of diversity of Indian culture and civilization in the form of costumes, jewellery and makeup of various dancers. The spiritual and aesthetic atmosphere in the natural ambience is one of its own kind attraction for the global tourists.

HOW TO REACH:

By Air - Nearest Airport is Bhubaneswar- 65 kms. By Rail - Nearest railway station is Bhubaneswar 65 kms. And Puri 35 kms.

By Road - Connected by National Highway from Bhubaneswar - 65 kms. Via Pipili and Puri (35 kms.) on Marine Drive. There are frequent and regular bus service from Bhubaneswar and Puri in addition to conducted tour services.

TravTour MICE's Recommended Hotel

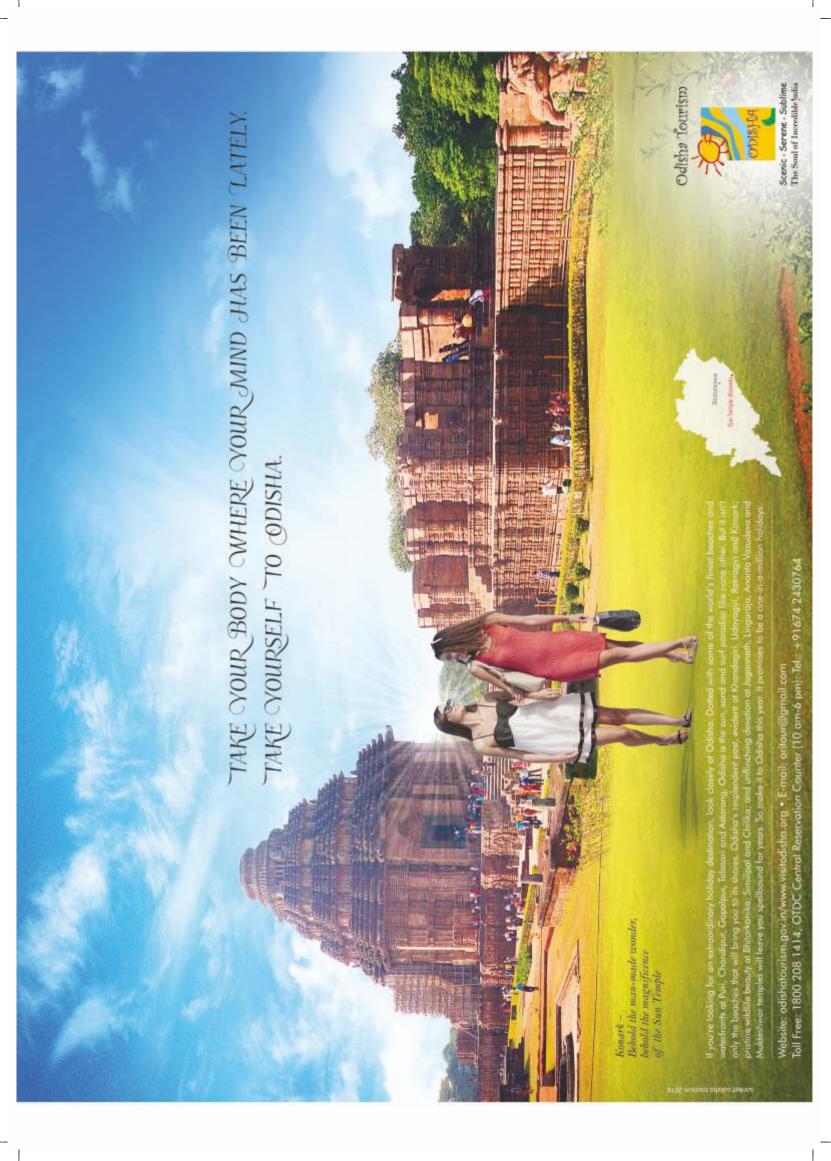
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Konark, Puri - 752111 Phone: 06758-236820 Email: otdc@panthanivas.com

For booking, please contact:

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MICE Hotel of the Month





Four Points by Sheraton New Delhi is a 70 room property built on nine acres of land. Set amidst lush green lawns and beautiful landscape, the hotel is host to business and leisure travelers who enjoy its natural environment and surroundings.

Located strategically in Delhi, the hotel is minutes away from Indira Gandhi International Airport as well as the business hub of Gurgaon. Well designed and carefully appointed rooms cater to every need of the discerning guests. The Eatery our multicuisine restaurant boasts of its ever popular buffet spread as well as international cuisine from its all carte menu.

The banquet halls with vast lawns are ideal for hosting conferences and social functions. The hotel has earned a reputation of being a leader in presenting some of the best in cuisine the city has to offer.

The hotel has performed well from its inception in 2012 and has shown a steady growth year on year. Having stabilised well it is a clear leader in its competitive set. The financial year of 2016 has been exciting with high occupancies and increased revpar's. We

hope to see similar growth in 2017. One of our key focus areas continues to be the MICE segment. In respect of MICE the hotel has had a dream run despite many of new hotels having opened in the vicinity. Increase infrastructure to manage large conventions in the area is likely to bring more business to all the players in the region of the airport.

Another important key segment is the business traveler, both from within India and overseas. This ever increasing segment thanks to the vibrant Indian economy will remain a main stay.

The frequently asked question is that of challenges faced in the hospitality industry. Without doubt is about acquisition and retention of good skill. We at Four Points constantly engage with the teams at all levels to contain rising attrition levels. Training and inculcating best practices also play a major role in keeping employee morale high.

Four Points by Sheraton New Delhi should see a lot happening in 2017. We hope to start work on adding an additional 100 rooms , a 10,000 sqft banquet hall and increased food & beverage services.

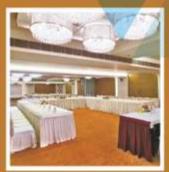






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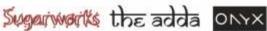


















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Postcard-perfect beach resorts, exquisite palaces, island paradises, lands of lush natural wonders and the energetic vibrancy of the world's most bustling cities form the backdrops. The wonderful locales are matched by state-of-the-art business facilities – including 24-hour secretarial assistance, wireless internet access, videoconferencing and the most advanced telecommunication systems. This is accompanied by exquisite cuisine from the Taj's pioneering restaurants, luxurious accommodations and the trademark Taj hospitality.

Once the business end of the day is complete, your guests are treated to enthralling entertainment and unique experiences that let them savour the flavour of the destination.

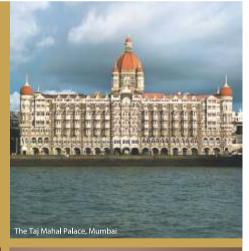


In **Mumbai**, experience service that harks back more than one-hundred years at a venue that has hosted historic meets, royal banquets, elite ballroom dances, landmark international conventions and magnificent assemblies honouring heads of state. Then, in an about turn so typical of the city, leave behind the stately professionalism for the carefree frolic of Mumbai's street food an unabashedly over the top Bollywood night or skip back in time for a trip to

Take care of business at:

- The Taj Mahal Palace Taj Lands End
- Taj Wellington Mews Luxury Residences
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In New Delhi, conduct business in venues that have hosted some of the most prestigious international congresses, while lavish theme dinners provide food for thought, banquet gardens form an elegant backdrop and historical city sights stimulate the soul.

From smaller gatherings of around 40 to sumptuous receptions for up to 2000, the state-of-the-art meeting rooms, sprawling 32,000 square foot Convention Centre and lawns have what it takes to make your event a memorable and successful one.

Take care of business at:

- The Taj Mahal Taj Palace
- Vivanta by Taj Ambassador



In **Hyderabad**, soak in the historical grandeur and modern efficiency of the City of Pearls. Whether you're holding an intimate business tête-à-tête or a large-scale conference or a more informal cocktail reception. Along with enchanting themed events, a full-fledged event planning team and bespoke culinary experiences.

Take care of business at:

- Taj Falaknuma Palace Taj Krishna
- Taj Deccan Taj Banjara
- Vivanta by Taj Begumpet

In the other bustling city destinations, accompany business with the pleasures of architectural grandeur, sparkling poolsides, some of the most beautiful beaches in the country, fishing and snake- watching trips, folk dances, charming cultures and historical sites.

Take care of business at:
Chennai: Taj Coromandel • Vivanta by Taj Connemara • Vivanta by Taj - Fisherman's
Cove • Taj Club House

Kolkata: Taj Bengal

Surat: The Gateway Hotel Athwalines Ahmedabad: The Gateway Hotel Ummed Vadodara: The Gateway Hotel Akota Gardens

Lucknow: Vivanta by Taj - Gomti Nagar Chandigarh: Taj Chandigarh Varanasi: Nadesar Palace

• The Gateway Hotel Ganges

Agra: The Gateway Hotel Fatehabad Road

Madurai: • The Gateway Hotel Pasumalai Visakhapatnam: • The Gateway Hotel Beach Road

Vijayawada: The Gateway Hotel M G Road Nashik: The Gateway Hotel Ambad Jodhpur: • Umaid Bhawan Palace

- Vivanta by Taj Hari Mahal
- The Gateway Hotel

Jaipur: • Rambaah Palace

- Jai Mahal Palace
- The Gateway Hotel, Jaipur. Udaipur: Taj Lake Palace

In Goa, get ensconced in a tropical world of blues and greens stretching languidly along the Arabian Sea. Build camaraderie at a beach camp, imbue a spirit of challenge with adventure sports or conduct business by sparkling poolsides or inside charming cottages. Drink in the local flavour with trips to grand old churches and ancestral homes, treks and irresistible coastal cuisine.

Take care of business at:

- Vivanta by Taj Fort Aguada
- Vivanta by Taj Holiday Village
- Vivanta by Taj Panaji Taj Exotica





In **Kerala**, hold a conference in the midst of winding backwaters, on a gliding houseboat or aboard a luxurious yacht. Host a banquet overlooking the Arabian Sea or conduct a meeting next door to a wildlife paradise. Backwater cruises, midnight fishing expeditions, bird-watching excursions, village tours, trips to spice and coffee plantations, a chance to try your hand at Kalaripayattu, one of the world's oldest martial arts and other wondrous experiences round things off nicely.

Take care of business at:

- Vivanta by Taj Kovalam Vivanta by Taj Kumarakom
- Vivanta by Taj Trivandrum
 Vivanta by Taj Malabar,
 Cochin
 Vivanta by Taj Bekal
- The Gateway Hotel Marine Drive, Ernakulam
- The Gateway Hotel Janardhanpuram, Varkala
- The Gateway Hotel Beach Road, Calicut

In Bangalore, a rich cultural heritage coexists with a vibrant modern flair – both in the city, and in its conference spaces. Banquet halls that echo a royal past with silks and chandeliers, boardrooms, poolside or garden-facing venues that can go from casual chic to elaborate elegance, depending on your needs; the Garden City has the best of all worlds

Take care of business at:

- The Taj West End Vivanta by Taj -M.G. Road • Vivanta by Taj - Whitefield
- Vivanta by Taj-Yeshwantpur
- The Gateway Hotel Residency Road
- Kuteeram



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Official Release of TravTour MICE's November 2016 edition at WTM London by Dr. Mahesh Sharma, Hon. Minister of Tourism, Govt. of India and Mr. Dinesh Patnaik, the Acting High Commissioner of India to UK.



TravTour MICE's official release at WTM London 2014 by Shripad Yesso Naik, the then Minister of Tourism, Govt. of India



TravTour MICE's official release at ITB Berlin 2012 by Subodh Kant Sahay, the then Minister of Tourism, Govt. of India



TravTour MICE's official release at WTM London 2011 by Subodh Kant Sahay, the then Minister of Tourism, Govt. of India



TravTour MICE's official release at WTM London 2009 by Kumari Selja, the then Minister of Tourism, Govt. of India



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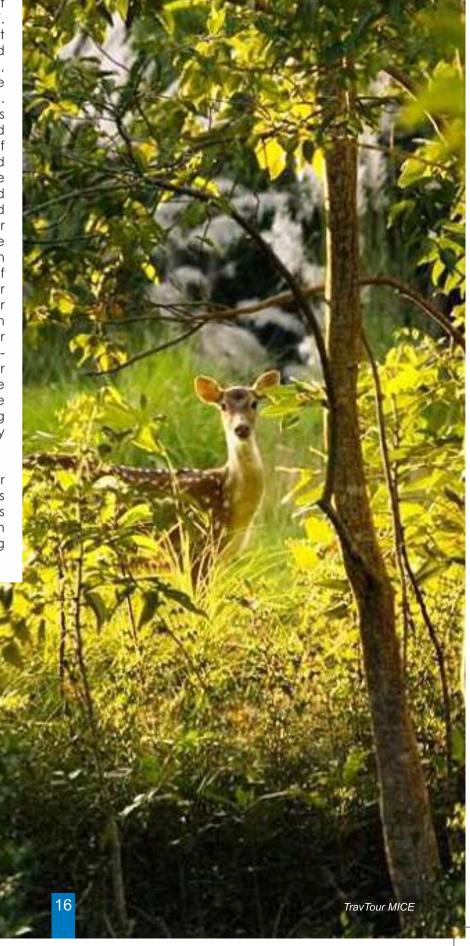


Sundarbans National Park

Sundarbans National Park, in West Bengal, is one of the seven natural World Heritage Sites of India recognized by UNESCO in the year 1987. Containing the largest area of mangrove forest in the world and the only one that is inhabited by more than 250 Royal Bengal tigers, Sundarbans covers more than 10000 Square KM of land and water in the Ganges delta. However, the land area in the Sundarbans is constantly being changed, moulded and shaped by the action of the tides. It boasts of almost 78 species of rare and endangered tigers, aquatic mammals such as the Irrawaddy and Ganges River dolphins and reptiles including the king cobra and significant populations of the endemic river terrapin which was once believed to be extinct. The Sainakhali area, listed as an Important Bird Area, contains a wealth of waterfowl and is of high importance for migratory birds. It contains a wealth of water birds, noteworthy residents including Asian open-bill stork, black-necked stork, greater adjutant, white ibis, swamp francolin, whitecollared kingfisher, black-capped kingfisher and brown-winged kingfisher. About half of the Sundarbans is under water and the rest of the landscape is characterized by low-lying alluvial islands and mudbanks, with sandy beaches and dunes along the coast.

The Sundarbans is situated within a larger UNESCO Biosphere Reserve that was designated in November, 2001. The property is currently in a good state of conservation with regular maintenance undertaken according to a set maintenance schedule.

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How to reach:

By Water: The Sundarbans is only accessible by waterways. The nearest railhead is Port Canning. The other route is through Basanti that is connected by bus service to Kolkata. From here, one can take boats to Sajnekhali. One can also come via Port Canning and Gosaba or from Sonakhali to Sajnekhali.

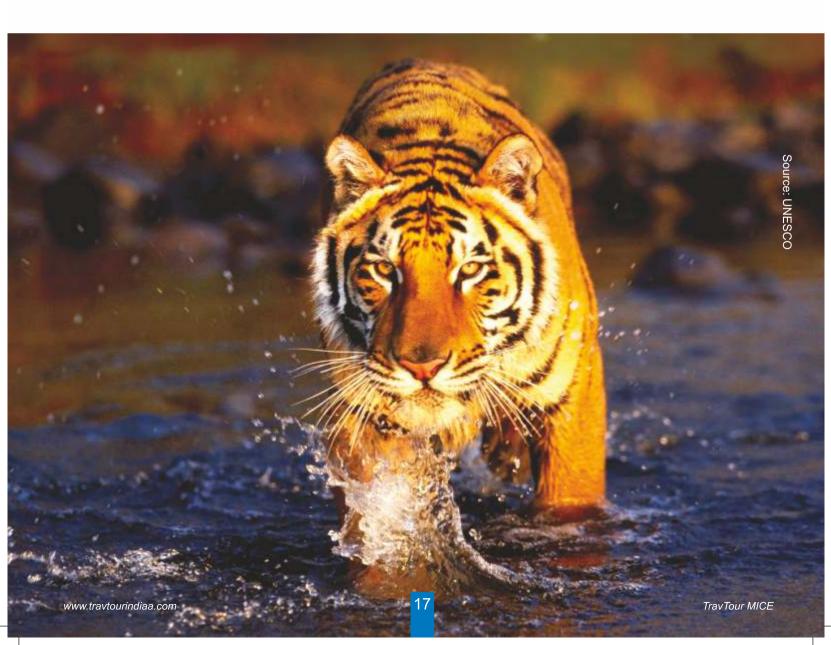
By Train: The nearest railway station is Kolkata. There are Sundarbans trains to Canning and buses to Namkhana, Raidighi, Sonakhali, and Najat, from where motor launch services are available for Sundarbans.

By Air: The nearest Airport is Kolkata.

Where to stay:

Sajnekhali Tourist Lodge is run by West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. Tourist Lodge and forest rest houses are available at Sajnekhali. There are some private lodges also. WBTDC also has exciting Tour Packages to the Sundarbans starting from Kolkata.





Rani-Ki-Vav (the Queen's Stepwell)

Relive the golden times and bask in the wondrous architecture...

Rani-ki-Vav (the Queen's Stepwell) is the latest entrant to the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India, Recognized in the year 2014 by UNESCO under cultural Rani-Ki-Vav in Patan of category, Gujarat is considered to be the Queen amongst the stepwells of India. Rani-ki-Vav is a single-component, water management system divided into seven levels of stairs and sculptural panels of high artistic and aesthetic quality. It is one of the finest stepwells of India and one of the most famous legacies of Patan which used to be the ancient capital city of Gujarat for over 600 years between the 8TH and 14TH centuries. Rani-ki-Vav is not just a subterranean structure with steps leading down to the water level and collecting water and socializing but simultaneously hold great spiritual significance. The functional aspects of this architectural typology were combined with a temple-like structure celebrating the sanctity of water as a venerated natural element and the depiction of highest-quality Brahmanic

deities. Rani-ki-Vav was built at the height of craftsmen's ability in stepwell construction and the Maru-Gurjara architectural style, reflecting mastery of this complex technique and great beauty of detail and proportions. It is oriented in an east-west direction and combines all of the principle components of a stepwell.

Rani Udayamati of Solanki dynasty commissioned this Vav (stepwell) in 1063 in the memory of her husband king Bhimdev I. The Vav was later flooded by the nearby river Saraswati and silted over until the late 1960s, when it was excavated by ASI, with the carvings found in pristine condition. The architectural brilliance and elegance of the Vav is represented in its

ornamental work. Designed as an inverted temple highlighting the sanctity of water, it is divided into seven levels of stairs with sculptural panels of high artistic quality; more than 500 principle sculptures and over a thousand minor ones combine reliaious, mythological and secular imagery, often referencing literary works. The fourth level is the deepest and leads into a rectangular tank 9.5 m by 9.4 m, at a depth of 23 m. The well is located at the westernmost end of the property and consists of a shaft 10 m in diameter and 30 m deep. The beautifully proportioned sculptures of gracefully carved Mahishasurmardini, Goddess Parvati and other Shaiv sculptures, Lord Vishnu's Dashavtaras – as Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parashurama, Ramchandra, Krishna, Buddha, Kalki and other forms adorn the walls of the well, being ample testimony to the mastery of Solanki sculptors in depicting rhythm, vigour, beauty and various moods in stone. The female figures have been depicted in various poses of Apsaras, Nagkanya, Yogini etc..





Rani-ki-Vav impresses not only with its architectural structure and technological achievements in water sourcing and structural stability, but also in particular with its sculptural decoration, of true artistic mastery. The figurative motifs and sculptures, and the proportion of filled and empty spaces, provide the stepwell's interior with its unique aesthetic character. The setting enhances these attributes in the way in which the well descends suddenly from a plain plateau, which strengthens the perception of this space. Rani-ki-Vav is preserved with all its key architectural components and, despite missing pavilion storeys, its original form and design can still be easily recognized. A majority of sculptures and decorative panels remain in-situ and some of these in an exceptional state of conservation. Rani-ki-Vav is a very complete example of the stepwell tradition, even though after geotectonic changes in the 13th century it does no longer function as a water well as a result of the change to the Saraswati River bed. It was however the silting of the flood caused during this historic event, which allowed for the exceptional preservation of Rani-ki-Vav for over seven centuries. All components including the immediate surrounding soils which adjoin the vertical architecture of the stepwell are included in the property. In terms of intactness, the property does not seem to have experienced major losses since its flooding and silting in the 13th century.

Visiting Hours: 08:00 AM to 06:00 PM every day

How to reach:

By Air: Nearest Airport is Ahmedabad.

By Train: Nearest railway station is Mehsana. Buses and taxies

are available for Patan from Mehsana.

By Road: Patan is 126 km away from Ahmedabad. The distance can be travelled by own vehicle, bus and taxi. It takes





KHAJURAHO GROUP OF MONUMENTS

-ETERNAL EXPRESSIONS OF LOVE

Khajuraho Group of Monuments was recognised by the UNESCO as World Heritage Site in 1986. The temples of Khajuraho are India's unique gift to the world, representing, as they do, a paean to life, to love, to joy, perfect in execution and sublime in expression. Life, in every form and mood, has been captured in stone, testifying not only to the craftsman's artistry but also to the extraordinary breadth of vision of the Chandela Rajputs under whose rule the temples were conceived and constructed.

The Khajuraho temples were built in the short span of a hundred years, from 950-1050 AD in a truly inspired

burst of creativity. Of the 85 original temples, 22 have survived till today to constitute one of the world's great artistic wonders.

Chaunsath Yogini: The only granite temple and the earliest surviving shrine of the group (900 AD), it is dedicated to Kali. Only 35 of the original 65 shrines remain . Another Kali temple (originally dedicated to Vishnu) is the Devi Jagdambe Temple.

Chitragupta Temple: Facing eastwards to the rising sun, the temple is dedicated to the sun god, Surya. The image of the deity in the inner sanctum is particularly imposing: five feet high, and driving a horse- drawn chariot. The group scenes depict royal





Architecturally too, they are unique, being different from the temple prototype of their period. Each stands on a high masonry platform

with a marked upward direction in the structures, further enhanced by vertical projection to create the effect of grace and lightness. Each of the chief compartments is mounted by its own roof, grouped so that the highest is in the centre, the lowest over the portico; a highly imaginative recreation of the rising peaks of the Himalayas, abode of the gods.

Three geographical divisions group the temples: western, eastern and southern.

WHAT TO SEE: WESTERN GROUP

Kandariya Mahadeo: The largest and the most typical of the Khajuraho temples, it soars 31 m high. Dedicated to Shiva, the sanctum sanctorum enshrines a lingam. The main shrine is exquisitely carved and features in delicate details, gods, goddesses, celestial maidens and lovers. Particularly noteworthy are the entrance arch, the ceilings and pillars of the interior compartments.

processions, hunting scenes and group dances, reflecting the lavish lifestyle of the Chandela courts.

Vishwanath Temple: A three headed image of Brahma is enshrined in this temple. The approach is equally impressive, with lions flanking the northern and elephants the southern steps that lead up to it. A Nandi bull faces the shrine.

Lakshmana Temple: The lintel over the entrance of this beautiful Vaishnavite temple shows the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva with Lakshmi, Vishnu's consort. The finely carved sanctum has a three-headed idol of Vishnu's incarnations, Narasimha and Varaha. This boar incarnation also appears in a nine-feet high statue at the Varaha Temple.

Matangeswara Temple: Still a living place of worship, the temple is dedicated to Shiva, has an eight feet high lingam and is outside the precincts of the Western Group.

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TravTour MICE

EASTERN GROUP

Parsvanath Temple: The group's largest Jain Temple and exquisite in detail. The sculptures on the northern outer wall are particularly noteworthy. The themes depict, in charming detail, everyday activity. Within, a throne faces the bull emblem of the first tirthankara, Adinath. The Parsvanath image was installed in 1860.

Ghantai Temple: This Jain temple has a frieze which depicts the 16 dreams of Mahavira's mother, and a Jain goddess on a winged Garuda.

Adinath Temple: Dedicated to the Jain saint, Adinath, the temple is lavishly embellished with sculpted figures, including yakshis.

minute show runs in Hindi and in English every evening. Amitabh Bachchan, the Indian superstar, narrates the story of Khajuraho in his mesmerizing voice.

State Museum of Tribal and Folk Arts: A fine collection of masterpieces of tribal and folk arts and artifact from all over Madhya Pradesh is on display at the Chandela Cultural Complex. The state museum has more than 500 representative items of terracottas, metal craft, woodcraft, tribal and folk paintings, tattoos, jewellery and masks.

New Temples Excavated: In recent excavations at Bija Mandal, located 3 km south-east of the western group of

temples, remains of several temples even older than the originally known



The three Hindu temples of the group are the Brahma, containing a four-faced lingam, the Vamana, which is adorned on its outer walls with carving of apsaras in a variety of sensuous attitudes; and the Javari, with a richly carved gateway and exterior sculptures.

SOUTHERN GROUP

Duladeo Temple: Dedicated to Shiva the apsara and ornamented figures are the temple's most striking features.

Chaturbhuj Temple: This temple has a massive, intricately-carved image of Vishnu in the sanctum.

Sound & Light Show: This fascinating Son-et-Lumiere spectacle evokes the life and times of the great Chandela Kings and traces the story of the unique temples during 10th & 11th centuries. Mounted in the complex of the Western Group of temples, the 50-

HOW TO REACH:

By Air: Regular services link Khajuraho with Delhi and Varanasi.

By Rail: Khajuraho has its own railway station linking it to Delhi, Jhansi (172 km), Harpalpur (94 km) & Mahoba (64 km), Satna (117 km) which is on the Mumbai-Allahabad line of the Central Railway is a convenient rail link for those coming from Mumbai, Kolkata and Varanasi.

By Road: Khajuraho is connected by regular buses with Satna, Harpalpur, Jhansi and Mahoba.

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The Konnect





Best General Manager – North India Vivek Sharma (GM – The White Hotels Katra, Jammu)



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Best General Manager – East India
Rajib Roy Choudhury
(GM – The Sonnet Kolkata)





MICE Person of the Year Manish Tandon



Best Wedding Hotel – North India
Radisson Blu Hotel New Delhi Paschim Vihar

Best MICE Hotel – North India The Ashok, New Delhi





Best New Hotel – South India Hyatt Place Rameswaram



Best New MICE Hotel – North India
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Best Convention Centre – North India
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Best New Hotel Chain of the Year Howard Johnson Hotels by Unique Mercantile Pvt. Ltd.



Best Hotel – Jammu & Kashmir Region
The White Hotels Katra

Best New MICE Management Company
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Best Wedding DestinationRadisson Blu Resort & Spa Karjat

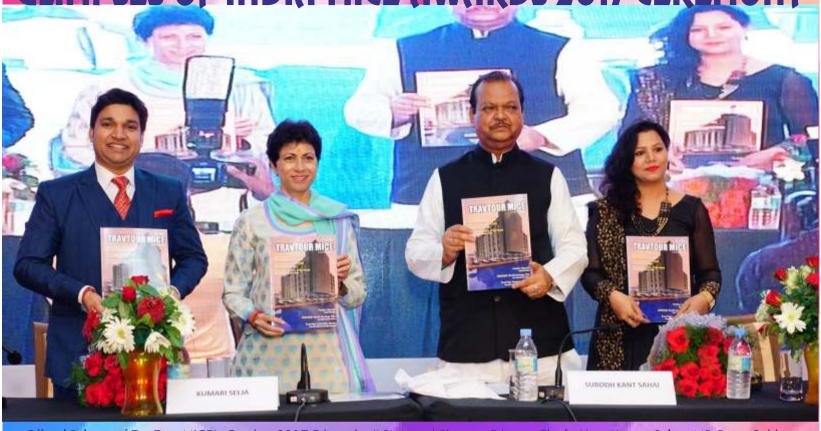


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GLIMPSES OF INDIA MICE AWARDS 2017 CEREMONY



Official Release of TravTour MICE's October 2017 Edition by (L-R) Arvind Sharma, Editor-in-Chief; Hon. Kumari Selja, MP-Rajya Sabha; Hon. Mr. Subodhkant Sahai, Former Minister of Tourism, GOI and Mrs. Manisha Sharma, MD - TravTour MICE Guide



Mrs. Manisha Sharma presenting momento to Hon. Kumari Selja, Chief Guest



Arvind Sharma presenting momento to Hon. Subodhkant Sahai, Guest of Honour



Hon. Kumari Selja addressing the awardees.



Hon. Subodhkant Sahai addressing the awardees.



Arvind Sharma Presenting momento to S S Rath of Odisha Tourism, Gold Sponsor.



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Chander Mansharamani, Vice-Chairman ICPB delivering Keynote address



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INDIA MICE AWARDS 2017



















Pin



13















Rajib heads The Sonnet Kolkata as General Manager, a proud and only member in the East of the global brand Preferred Hotels & Resorts. An alumni of St Xaviers and IIAS school of Hotel Management, has been instrumental in establishing it as one of the most preferred Business and Corporate Conferencing destination in Salt Lake. TravTour MICE Spoke to Rajib. This is what he elaborates about his property:

1. What are the USP's of The Sonnet Hotel Kolkata's business amenities and facilities?

The Sonnet Kolkata has established itself as a preferred venue for the business travellers. Facilities of international standards like High Speed Internet, Bandwidth on Demand, Well equipped business centre, Video Conferencing facility, Rooms with International Travel Adapter, 24hrs travel desk, 24hrs multi-cuisine restaurant, round the clock room service, specially curated menu, home style food on demand are few of the facilities and amenities which gives us an edge as a leading business hotel. By the virtue of our association with Preferred Hotels and Resorts, we have one of the best loyalty programme world-wide, the I-Prefer Loyalty Programme.



A team of experts are dedicated to cater to events and weddings and has made a name for the hotel as one of the best venues in the city. Our professional yet personal approach, equipped with international amenities yet with an Indian touch makes us different. We specialize in food presentation and menu planning. Our Chefs and service personnel are experts in catering to delicate and mega events. We bag the pride of catering to outdoor events like Mercedes Benz launch programme, Procam Tata Steel 25K Marathon Catering etc. We have even done volumetric events in the hotel where we have catered 1200 quests at dinner. Our team is proficient enough to not only cater to events and weddings but also work as a wedding planner for a lot of NRIs and foreign nationals hosting their events in Kolkata.

3. What are the challenges in tapping domestic MICE market in your opinion?

Among all good things there are a few matters of concern and attention when it comes to tapping domestic MICE market, especially in Eastern India, like:

- a. Taxation is one of the biggest hindrances. High and different Tax levels have been one major challenge. Though after the implementation of GST it has been simpler but the rate of GST in India is way beyond other countries like Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore etc to whom we are losing the MICE business.
- b. Cost of logistics is also very high compared to countries of South East Asia.
- c. Infrastructure in Eastern India needs to be improved in terms of better convention centers, amusement parks, better roads etc.



d. Multiple permissions and licenses is another challenge. Though the authorities presently are working very aggressively to make things much more easier and simpler.

4. Is The Sonnet Kolkata on the verge of being a MICE focused Hotel in the region?

Yes, The Sonnet have started focusing on MICE and started working on the same. As a result we are doing big events of Procam, Mercedes Benz. We are also working with bodies like CII, Lions Club etc.

5. What is your strategy to target the corporates? Is there any special MICE package available?

Strategies:

- a. Establishing The Sonnet Kolkata as one of the best business hotel in the region.
- b. Tapping different segments like Medical Tourism, FMCG, FMCD, Engineering & Infrastructure companies etc.
- c. The hotel is tied-up with platforms like Cvent, Lanyon etc. The Sonnet is on GDS platform as well.
- d. The hotel is directly tied-up with global TMCs like CWT, BCD Travels, AMEX, HRG Danata, GTA, HEXA Travel etc.
- e. The aggressive and robust sales presence and relationship management, Pan-India, helps us to get a helps us get more of corporate business.
- f. The hotel's strategic tie-up and affiliation with Preferred Hotels and Resorts make the home grown brand go international. By the virtue of this we are a Globally Tied-up hotel of blue chip companies like Ericsson, HSBC, Cognizant, Medtronic, Pepsico, Eaton industries, Rockwell Automation, Capgemini etc.

The professionals in the hotel are always ready to extend MICE special packages as well as customized on demand packages.

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Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine

A Spiritual Journey

Visiting India in search of peace and spirituality is nothing new. What is novel and exciting is that never before has its rejuvenating spirituality been packaged with such an ease. Ascetics and seers in India renounce worldly pleasures and live in austere surroundings in the hills. In this context, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, Jammu is the most sought after pilgrimage destination for devotees in India and abroad. The number of visitors of holy shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi is now exceeding 10 million pilgrims annually for this divine meet.

The pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji is considered to be one of the holiest pilgrimages of our times. Popular the world over as the Mother who fulfills whatever Her children wish for. Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji resides in a Holy Cave located in the folds of the three peaked mountain named Trikuta (pronounced as Trikoot). The Holy Cave of the Mother is situated at an altitude of 5200 ft in Trikuta mountains. The Pilgrims have to undertake a trek of nearly 12 km from the base camp at Katra. At the culmination of their pilgrimage, the pilgrims are blessed with the Darshans of the Mother Goddess inside the Sanctum Sanctorum- the Holy Cave. These Darshans (visits) are in the shape of three natural rock formations called the Pindies. There are no statues or idols inside the Cave. Towards the right of the devotee is the Holy Pindi of Mata Maha Kali in the colour associated with Her i.e. black. In the centre is the Holy Pindi of Mata Maha Lakshmi with a yellowish-red tinge, the colour associated with Mata Maha Lakshmi. The Pindi to the extreme left of the viewer is worshipped as the Holy Pindi of Mata Maha Saraswati. It has a whitish tinge when looked at attentively.

The Holy Cave attracts millions of devotees every year. This is due to the unflinching faith of the devotees who throng the Shrine from all parts of India and abroad. It is also a matter of experience by almost all those who visit the Holy Shrine that upon the Call of Mata, a person needs to just take one step and leave the rest to Her and his journey gets completed with Her divine blessings. Simultaneously, it is also believed that unless there is a call no one can visit the Shrine or have Her blessings, howsoever high or mighty one may be. Holy Visits are open round the clock throughout the year. More than 6512239 pilgrims have visited the Holy Shrine till 30 September 2017. The table depicts the annual figures of visitors over the last ten years:

Year	No. of Pilgrims (In Lakhs)
2007	74.17
2008	67.92
2009	82.35
2010	87.49
2011	101.15
2012	104.95
2013	93.24
2014	78.03
2015	77.76
2016	77.24



Getting There:

By Air

Jammu is well connected to the rest of India by air. Several Airlines operate daily flights to Jammu. The average flying time from New Delhi, the capital is about 80 minutes.

By Train

Jammu is connected to other parts of country on broad gauge and numerous passenger trains ply from various parts of the country to Jammu. In the peak season of summer and other holidays, the Railways introduce special trains for Jammu for the comfort of the pilgrims. Many superfast trains also ply on this route and one can reach Jammu overnight from New Delhi.

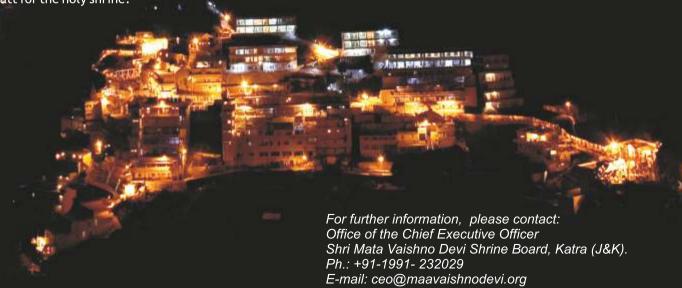
By Road

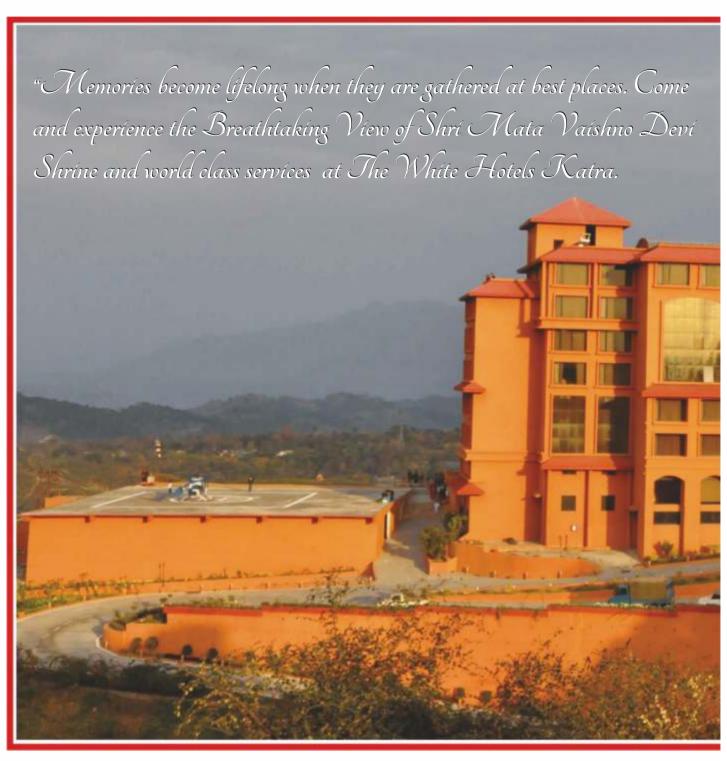
Jammu is well connected through road also to rest of India. National Highway No. 1A passes through Jammu towards Srinagar. Regular bus services from all major North Indian cities are available for Jammu as well as Katra. Many standard and deluxe buses of various State Road Transport Corporations as well as private operators connect Jammu with important cities and towns of North India.



By Helicopter

From Katra, there is a regular helicopter service available till Sanjhichhatt for the holy shrine.



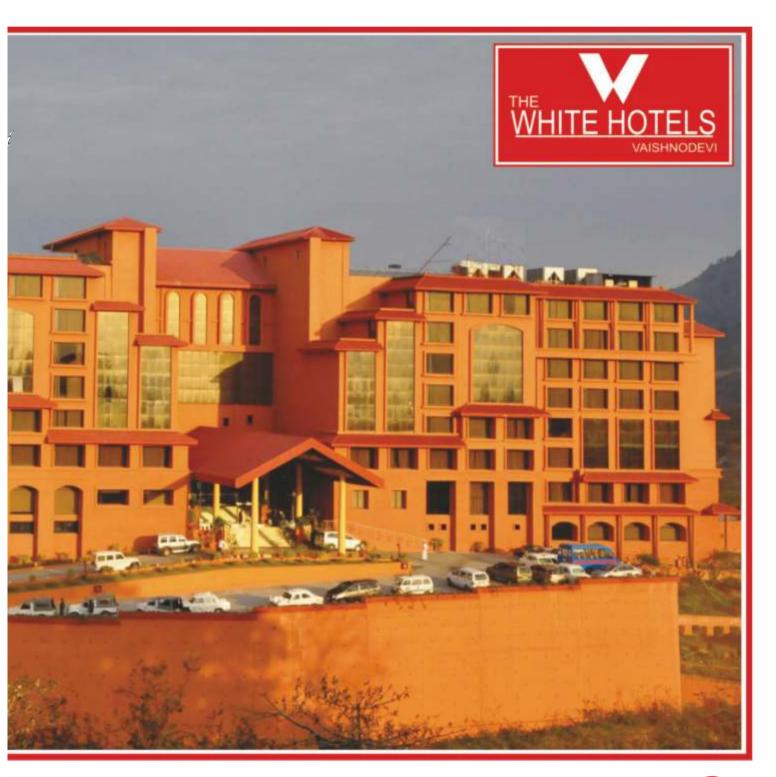






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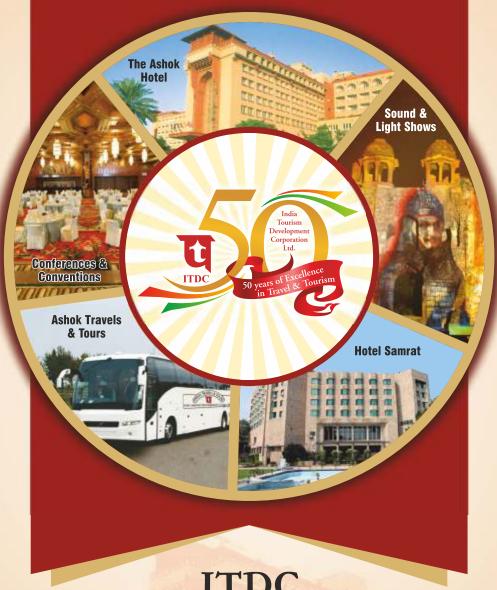
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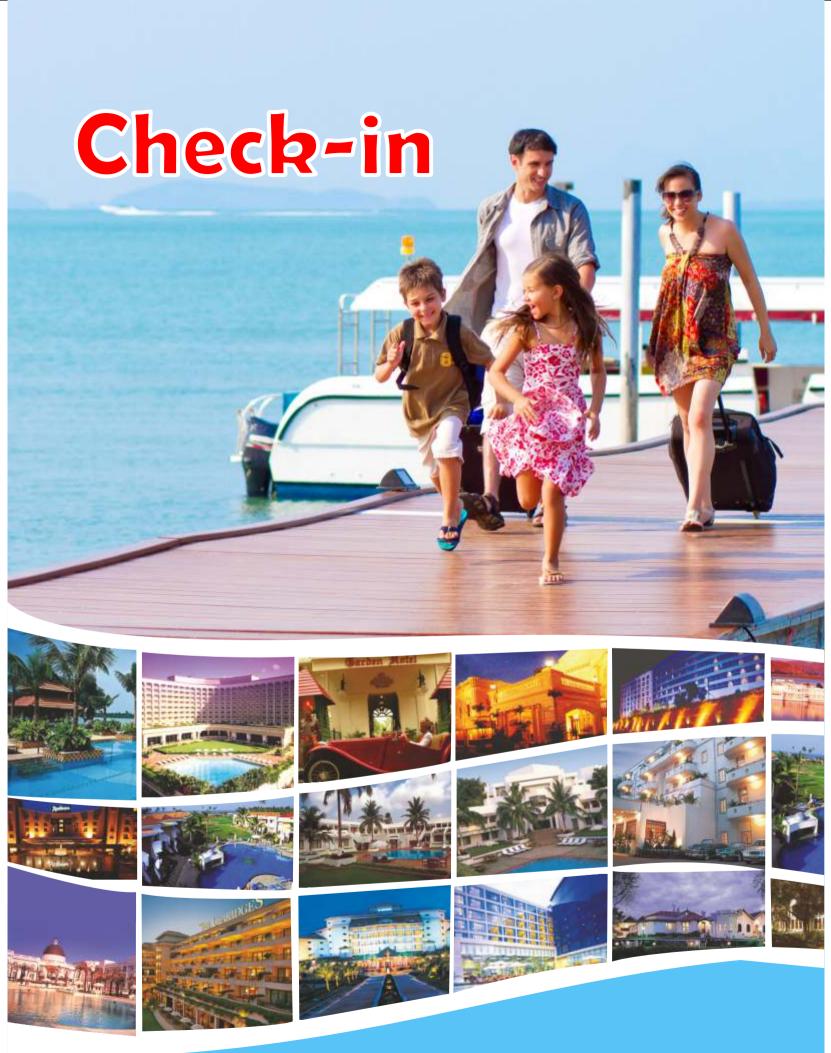
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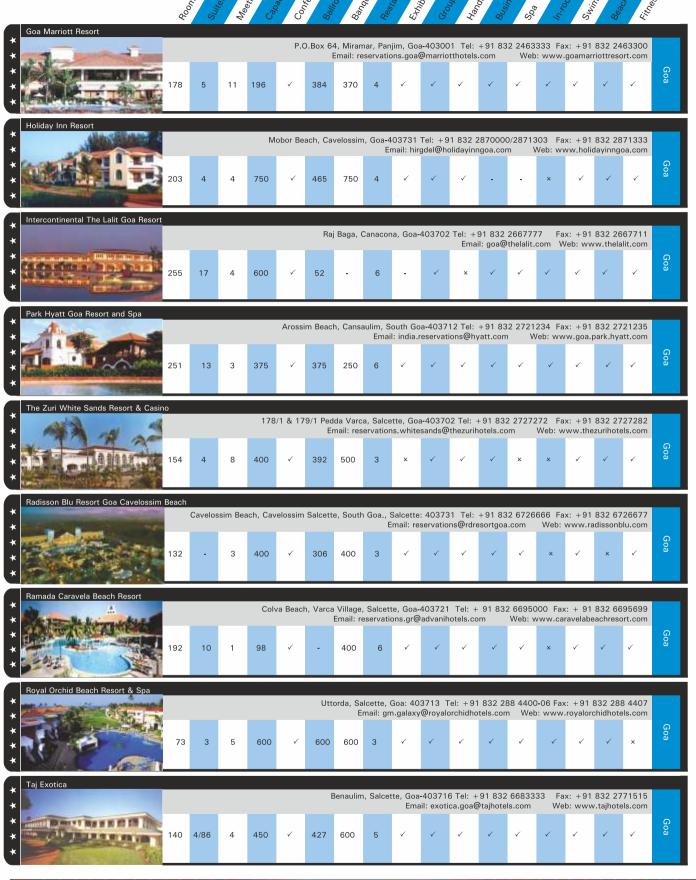
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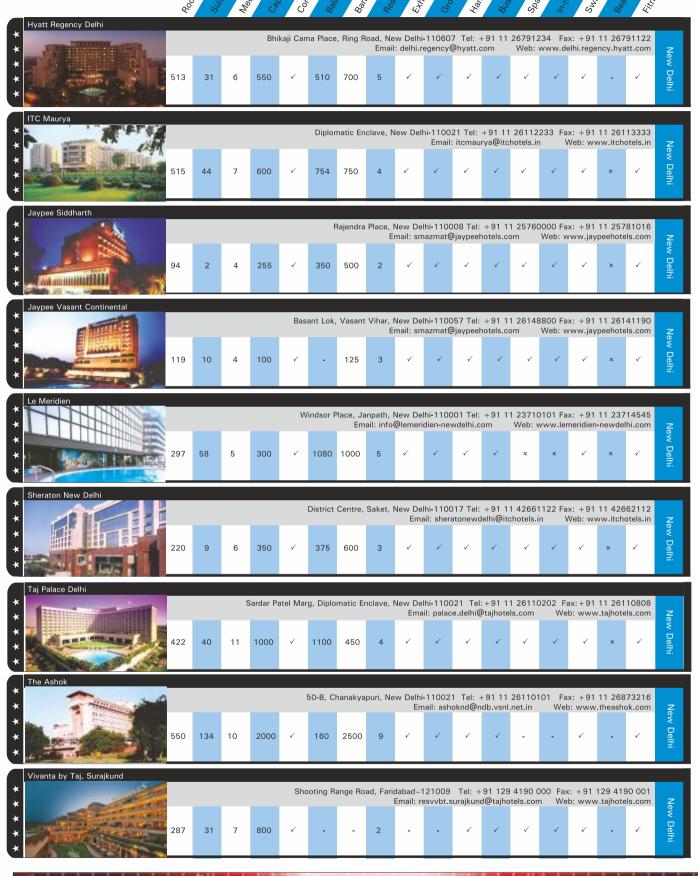






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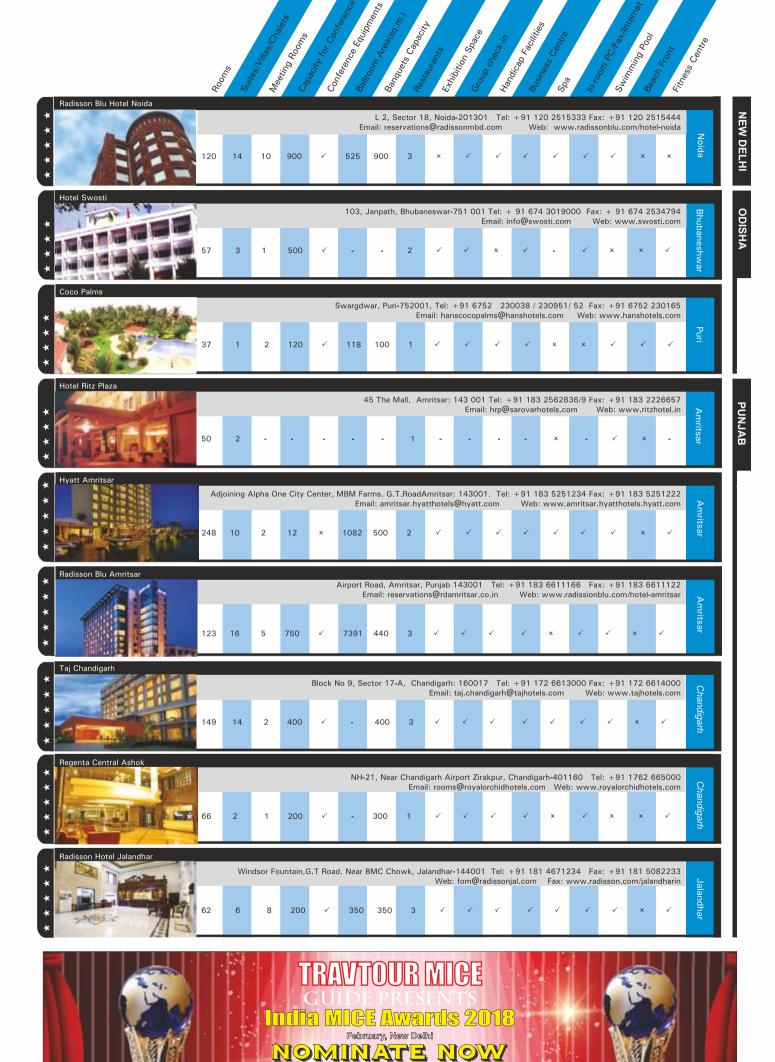


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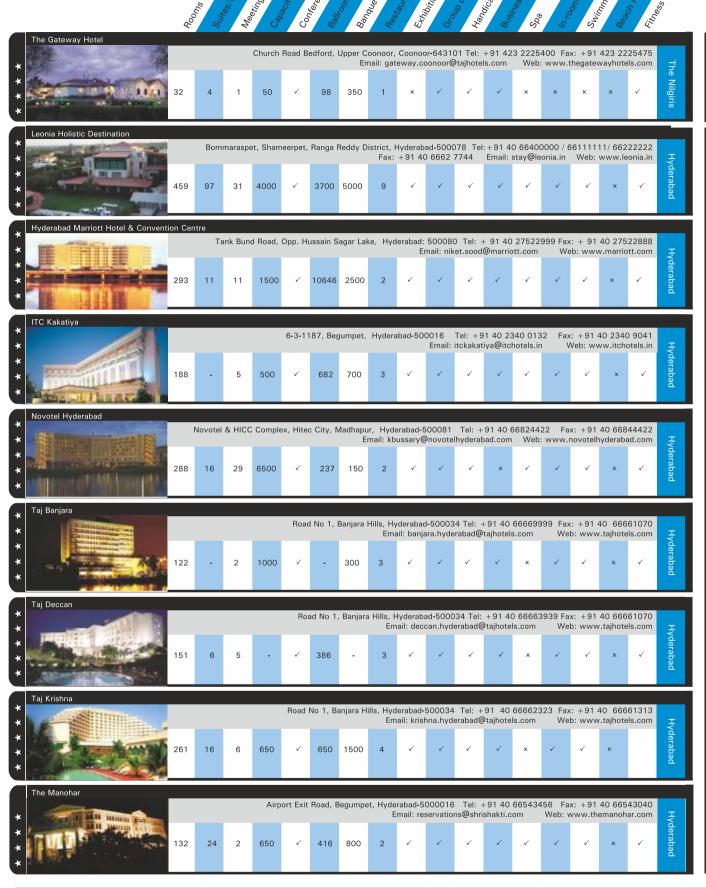


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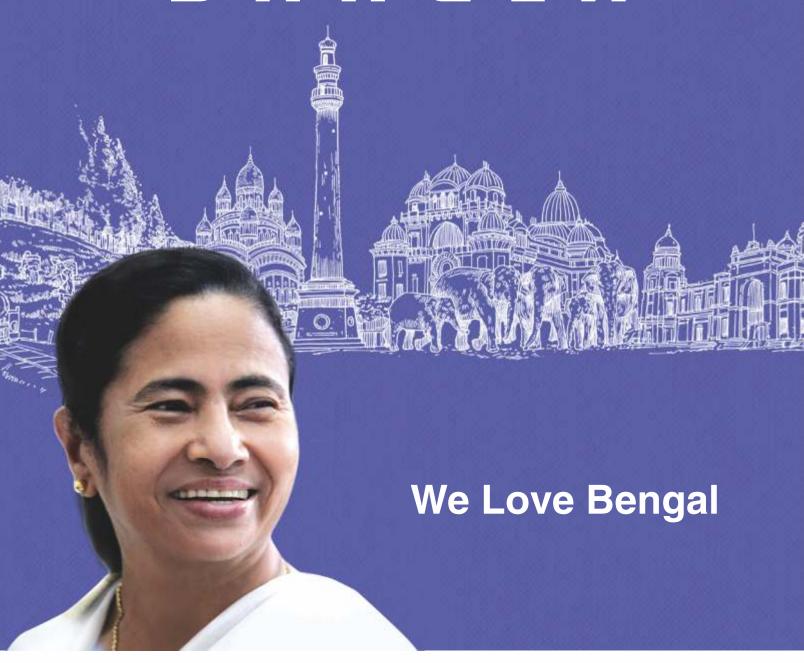








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