

Aerocity LIVE

GMR AEROCITY MAGAZINE

TRAVEL, WORK & DINE



BW

September 2022
ISSUE 04
INR 300

EXPERIENTIAL CAPITAL OF NCR

As Covid cases abate and conferences, exhibitions, cultural shows and big weddings see a comeback, GMR Aerocity, just a stone's throw away from the airport, is all geared to cater to the MICE segment

Actor Samir Kochhar,
on his experiences with hotel stays,
especially in Aerocity



Luke Coutinho:
Why mindful eating is critical for self-
and environment care



Amit Rana,
GM, Holiday Inn, GMR Aerocity: Ideal
stay for MICE events anywhere in NCR



Chef Shailendra Singh
of Pride Plaza: Bringing Italian
and Awadhi to the table



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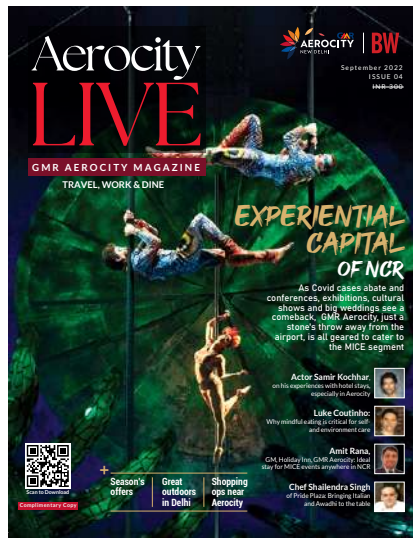
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The Importance of MICE



ANNURAG BATRA

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As the world recovers from the Covid onslaught, one sphere of activity that has helped pump up economy is the MICE industry. One gets a sense of the size of the market from a MICE study sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism in 2019, according to which, the market size of tourism is Rs 37,576 crore, 60 per cent of which comes from meetings, incentives and conferences. Add to that the component of weddings, which, even if the guest list is reduced, will remain a grand affair, with couples dreaming of a picture-perfect event.

This holds a great promise for hospitality. And the hotels in the GMR Aerocity ecosystem, close to the Delhi Airport, have also created an infrastructure and services that lend themselves very well to conferences, meetings, marriage and incentive tours. Our Cover Story this time highlights these facilities, and why this is the best location to opt for a big event.

This issue on MICE also features interviews with industry experts, including Naveen Kundu, MD, EbixCash, on the 75 years of Indian MICE, and Sukesh Jain, CEO of BI Worldwide (India), who describes his organisation's approach to planning of events. And Samir Kochhar, actor and host, describes what goes into the planning and execution of big events.

When it comes to big events, one of the most awaited sporting events is the FIFA World Cup, and Qatar is readying itself for the grand show in November-December. For the spectators who will make special efforts to visit Qatar during that time, there is great tourism potential besides the matches, including beaches, history, and modern architecture. Read our story 'Sun, Sand and FIFA' to know more.

As Indians get respite from the scorching heat September onwards, there is much to be explored in Delhi in terms of built heritage, culture and food offerings. You can spend an entire day in the Hauz Khas area, exploring 13th Century monuments, a man-made lake and the verdant Deer Park, and include shopping and eating at the Hauz Khas village in the same trip; or you can just veer off the beaten track to spend peaceful time at the most remote Sultan Ghari with some exquisite marble work, from eight centuries earlier. Or you can explore the brilliant crafts offerings at Dilli Haat or Nature Bazaar. This would also promote our country's crafts traditions.

As Luke Coutinho, renowned health and wellness expert writes in his column, there is a need to be mindful in consumption and to make right choices which are sustainable and which promote local trade.

Happy Reading!

Think MICE, Think Aerocity



AMAN KAPOOR
CEO Airports Land Development GMR Group

If tourism is an economic driver for a country, MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) is a driver for tourism. Countries across the world have realised the potential of MICE-related events and upgraded their infrastructure to host mega events that can host as many as 5,000 guests.

Though late, India is fast becoming a preferred destination for MICE events and Delhi is a favourite destination due to its unique warm hospitality, rich historical and cultural heritage, exotic business hotels, and other world-class infrastructure.

GMR Aerocity has emerged as a destination of choice for planning and organising such big events. It enjoys a strategic location close to the Delhi airport, has state-of-the-art event facilities, and a high inventory of internationally acclaimed hotels for flexible accommodation, which is a necessity for organising any large-scale event. Organisers and event managers can easily accommodate 100 to 2,000 guests in over 4,000 rooms in the 11 hotels of GMR Aerocity, where they are enthralled by the best décor and ambience, and can relish global as well as exotic cuisines by some of India's renowned chefs.

Moreover, it is very well accessible from Delhi and Gurugram, enabling visitors to also explore some high-end and historical places of the city for leisure.

Hosting an event at GMR Aerocity doesn't end with a visit to banquet halls or conference arenas. It allows the guest to step out and experience a whole new spectrum of delight without leaving the safe environs. Within the Aerocity ecosystem and in the close neighbourhood of south Delhi, there are options for exotic and global cuisine, and the best shopping and recreation experiences in one place.

Visitors from within Delhi NCR and outside have partaken of some of our flagship events in the past, and which we endeavour to continue, with Covid subsiding.

In the MICE special of *Aerocity Live* this month, we highlight not only the offerings of the Aerocity ecosystem and its constituent hotels, we provide to all of you discerning readers an overarching perspective of MICE and the road ahead, with interviews and columns of industry experts.

Our endeavour is also to provide well-thought out, rich and all-encompassing content, and this issue exemplifies that. From great travel spots and shopping locations to mindfulness advice from health and wellness expert Luke Coutinho, this issue has it all.

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CONTENTS

SEPTEMBER 2022 - ISSUE 4

5 Editor in Chief's Note

6 CEO's Desk

10 Buzz

12 Happenings

14 In Focus

Our Community

16 ● Chef Shailendra Singh

18 ● Sumit Suneja
Founder, Merlin Brands

Cover Story

20 MICE in Aerocity

Cover Interviews

36 ● Vikaas Gutgutia
MD, Ferns N Petals

40 ● Naveen Kundu
Managing Director, EbixCash

44 ● Sukesh Jain
BI Worldwide (India) Chief Executive Officer

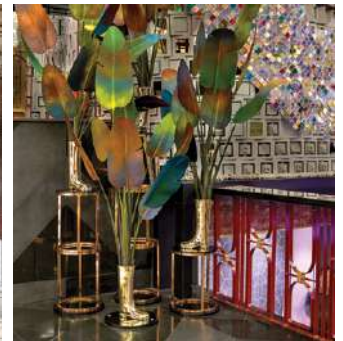
46 ● Parthip Thyagarajan
CEO of WeddingSutra.com

50 ● Raghubir Singh
MD of BMP Weddings

52 Sneak peek into
GMR Aerocity Hyderabad



54	Must Visit Spots
58	Shopping Spots
	The Big Interview
60	● Amit Rana GM, Holiday Inn
62	Spotlight
66	Offers
	Special Story
68	● J J Valaya
70	Across Boundaries Qatar
74	Art Event
78	In Pictures
	Celeb Talk
80	● Samir Kochhar
84	Insight into mindfulness by Luke Coutinho
86	Benefits of Panchakarma
90	Quiz



SOCIAL Lands In Aerocity

Imagine a flight without endless security checks, ample leg room, plenty of window seats and great food. All this is now possible, with the coming of SOCIAL in Aerocity. The newest outpost promises customers a delightful flying experience thanks to its aeronautical themed interiors and the classic SOCIAL experience which is popular among customers.

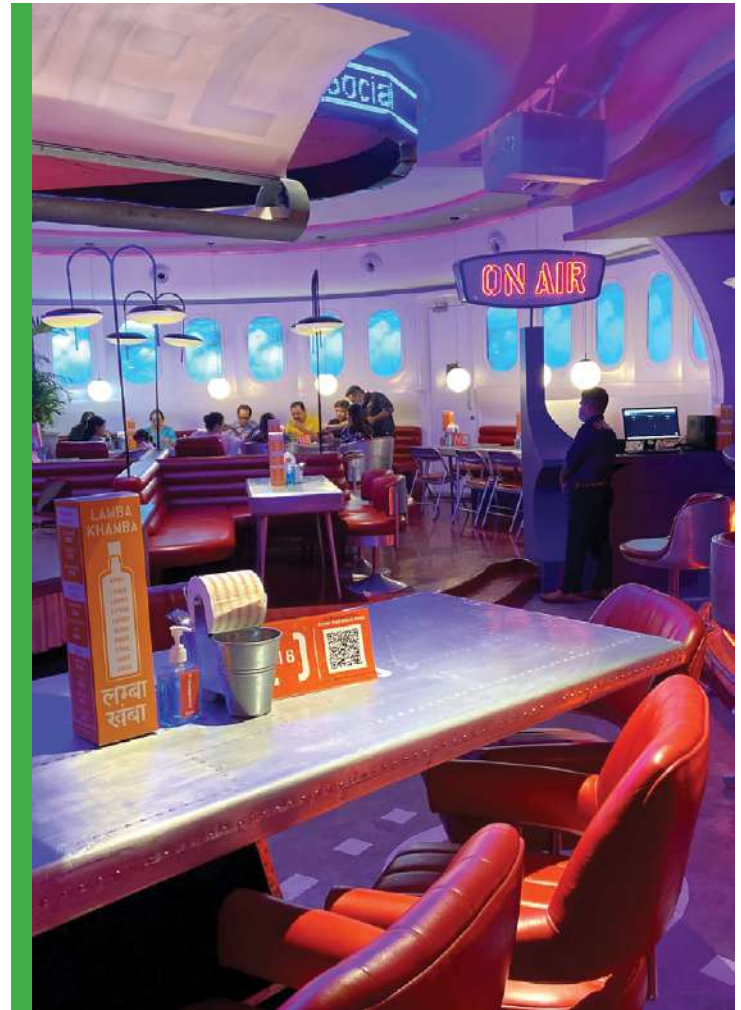
Located in the world hub of Aerocity in New Delhi, this outpost is set to be NCR's newest hangout spot, offering the ultimate balance between travel, work and play. Just like an airport, it's a microcosm of the world coming together.

The design is inspired by aeronautical theme. The interiors make the customers feel as if they are onboard a flight, including the thrill of getting a window seat.

One can sit back and relax with a plate of fully loaded nachos, topped with molten cheese and the most delicious salsa! They can also opt for crowd favourites like SOCIAL's famous butter chicken biryani, fish tacos, jalapeno cheese nads or pick the supreme sandwiches and burgers to end all hunger pangs. For those who like to have a big meal before they take off, there are the epic lunch thalis, biryanis, and OG SOCIAL substantials. The beverage section highlights exotic mocktails, iced teas, juice, and classic coffees.

"At SOCIAL we strive to create a hyper-local experience that is in keeping with the location of the outpost. That's exactly what we have done with the aeronautical themed, Aerocity SOCIAL," said Riyaz Amlani, CEO - Impresario Handmade Restaurants.

"Aerocity is a hub for businesses, locals and travellers alike. It seemed like a natural fit for us to set up an outpost here. We want to create a micro-hub where people can



come together to eat, drink, find community, showcase art, explore culture, listen to amazing music and just have fun," said Mayank Bhatt, Brand Head, SOCIAL- Impresario Handmade Restaurants. ■

Training Manager For Pride Plaza Hotel Aerocity



Shivani Ranaut, the newly-appointed training manager at Pride Plaza Hotel, is a passionate learning & development manager with experience of approximately 11 years in the industry. She started as a hotel operational trainee in Taj group. She worked as an associate manager in the pre-opening team of Vivanta by Taj Srinagar in 2011. In 11 years of her career, Ranaut has worked with reputed hotel brands like RHG, Taj, ITC, Hyatt and Sarovar groups. She also has had a brief stint in the education sector and joined Lovely Professional University as a professor for a year. ■



With Chef Ghai, Ibis India Adds Creative Flavours

Ibis India, an Accor group hotel, has appointed Supreet Ghai as Culinary Director. A seasoned epicurean with more than 14 years of experience in the hospitality and retail industry, Chef Ghai brings a creative flair to his dishes by adding a twist of traditional flavours and an elevated gastronomy.

Feeling excited to join Ibis India, he said, "I believe one should not feel intimidated by cooking. Everyone has it in their own unique way! Never underestimate your abilities because all of us know what good food tastes like and it's all about trusting that good feeling and giving it a shot."

Ghai is a gold medallist from Rizvi College of Hotel Management. He started his career with the Oberoi Hotels and was associated with Trident, ITC and Accor which gave him a great variety of experiences and a unique perspective that have contributed to his culinary leadership. His last assignment was with Food Hall where he was Culinary Country Head for four years. ■

Gute Reise For A Great Travel

Gute Reise translates to 'wish you a happy journey' in German. This Indian brand has recently launched its store in Aerocity. The store has the answers to all the travel needs. Customers can choose from a variety of world-class travel & lifestyle brands like Victorinox, Swiss Gear, Go Travel, Wenger, Maglite, Optimus, Katadyn, Laken and Muelan which are all engineered with state-of-the-art technology and features specifically crafted for safety, reliability and durability. The store has a large number of accessories that will make your travel and adventure all the more fun and memorable. ■



Ummeed Ke Pahiye, An Empowering Initiative

GMR Aerocity donates push carts to the needy, to enable them to stand up on their feet and lead a life of dignity



GMR Aerocity, in collaboration with GMR Varalakshmi Foundation (GMRVF), the CSR arm of the GMR Group, recently donated 10 push carts to the needy people under its CSR initiatives. These carts were distributed through GMRVF's VTI Centre at Dwarka, New Delhi.

In recent years, many low-income families have lost their sole breadwinners and have suffered indescribable hardships. There are many single-parent, low-income households, people with disabilities, and those rendered homeless as their house has been burned to the ground. Each of these individuals deserves to be presented with opportunities to earn and take care of their family. But with no savings or a business to run, they seem to be facing an existential crisis.

As a community partner, GMR Aerocity is dedicated to making the world a better place for all and bringing smiles to as many faces as possible. GMR Aerocity, along with GMRVF is always working towards creating a community where joy,



happiness and smiles are freely exchanged. It aims to build a community that helps people in need and elevates their living standards.

The beneficiaries benefitted by this programme namely, Kiran, Pramila, Jeera, Ramanti Devi, and Saroj lost everything to house fire. Rinki wants to earn and support her husband who works at a very low wage in a garbage plant; Sanjay

wants to start his own business to support his family; Sagiratha, a garbage picker, wants to make a better living; Karan, a specially-abled individual, is determined to work as right now he is dependent on his sister; and Gulab, a single parent, works as a househelp to provide for her children.

GMR Aerocity believes that the Ummeed Ke Pahiye initiative will assist these individuals and their families in their journey of life and enable them to one day achieve tremendous success. ■

Legacy Revisited

The butter chicken or daal makhani for which you place an order at **Daryaganj** isn't any ordinary item on menu card. It represents the country's food heritage and history



Kundan Lal Jaggi, who worked at a restaurant in Peshawar in the 1930s, came to Delhi as a refugee following partition and started a new restaurant in Daryaganj namely, Moti Mahal, along with two partners. It was here that the team 'invented' butter chicken and *daal makhani*. The fame spread fast and and the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru made them the official caterer of Republic Day gathering. The restaurant was sold in 1992 but his grandson opened the Daryaganj restaurant as a tribute to Jaggi, after his demise in 2018. Now, with many outlets, including the one in Aerocity, the restaurant is a happening place among food lovers.

From its ambience to servings, the restaurant strives to evoke all the five senses. While its signature dishes are 'The Original 1947 Butter Chicken' and 'The Original 1947 Daal Makhani', some other recipes that invoke nostalgia of that period are also served: The Original



“Daryaganj is a brand which we started from World mark Aerocity, and it laid the foundation for five more outlets. The reason why we could do so was the immediate runaway success that we had in Aerocity. It's all thanks to the development work done by GMR and Bharti Worldmark together. This place has changed the whole landscape of the city and people who wanted a different experience started coming here. We also got a big push because of this. Our brand also matched the expectations of the visitors coming here. Together, we made a big success out of it and today we are launching 10 more outlets.”

AMIT BAGGA

Founder
Daryaganj



Tandoori Chicken, The Original Chicken Pakora, The Original Butter Paneer, besides a host of soups, veg and non-veg appetizers, main servings, *rotis*, *naans* and *paranthas*, rice items, side dishes and desserts.

The innovative spirit of the restaurant is clear from their creative home delivery options. To ensure that all the five senses are satiated even if you ask for home delivery, Daryaganj sends the servings in a stylish manner, and offers a fragrant welcome note to smell, and a QR code to listen to the Daryaganj signature playlist. Then there is a *kulfi* protector in the form of a holder to avoid the mess that often happens when it starts melting.

Sure enough, the legacy of innovative and enterprising spirit of the forefathers has been well honoured by the young generation. ■

Bringing Italian & Awadhi To The Table



Chef Shailendra Singh joined Pride Plaza at Aerocity as Regional Executive Chef about three months ago — his second stint there. He talks to Aerocity Live about his strengths

Where did you get trained and previous experience?

I did my hotel management from BHM Mangalore University. I have worked for large hotel chains like Taj, Oakwood, Hyatt, Accor and Marriott's. I have 18+ years of professional cooking and kitchen management experience and believe in leading by example. I have worked under the menu guidance of George Blanc at Carnival Cruise. I had also gone to Jakarta & Korea for food promotion and training from Oakwood Premier Pune.



What is your strength – savouries or desserts? And which cuisine?

I love cooking anything and everything but my strength is Italian and Awadhi.

What work goes into deciding the menu? Any regional/ international cuisine that the restaurant is renowned for? Or a unique dish that is much talked about?

While deciding a menu there are many factors which need to be considered. Like for how many people are we designing, reason of designing – whether it's a wedding or a corporate lunch, and which meal period is it. Oriental spice is our pan Asian speciality restaurant and its dim sums are very famous.

Local and seasonal produce is much talked about now. How do you incorporate that?

I agree these days local and seasonal produce is preferred a lot. We also incorporate the usage of these stuffs in our daily menu like we use bottle gourd, brinjal or eggplant in our menu.

Any special food events/ menus that you offer thematically, round the year, to celebrate different occasions?

Yes we do plan a lot of food festivals and thematic menus in our hotels. We recently got over with our Bengali food

festival. And we plan special lunch every Wednesday for our hotel team members also. We are again planning something very big and special which we will reveal soon.

To ensure hygiene standards, what steps are taken, especially post-Covid?

We follow very stringent hygiene standards in our hotel as well as kitchen. We have set an alarm which goes after every one hour and all the staff in kitchen, especially who are food handlers need to wash their hands. The work stations in the kitchen are cleaned with a proper method. The kitchen is regularly sanitised with the prescribed method and chemicals given by WHO. The staff is always wearing their masks. Our guest safety is our priority.

How does the restaurant ensure minimal wastage and work in a sustainable manner?

We are very sensitive towards the wastage of food in our hotel. Our wastage is approx. 0.5 per cent entirely. We manage our buffet in *ala carte* style where we keep only 10-12 portion serving and once we see it is getting over we refill it with fresh food. Hence, we follow a new terminology – *ala carte* buffet – which helps us to reduce wastage of food.

What is the most memorable feedback that you have got as chef here?

I have got loads of them. But one memorable one was that my maternal grandmother also used to cook beetroot *halwa* and the coincidence is that it tastes the same, which touched my heart.

Can you cite any awards won?

I have won many awards like Chef of the year, Salad Chef of the Year and Great Hand Chef. I have been featured in many hospitality magazines, and did many certifications also. ■



An Office With Home Comforts

Sumit Suneja, Founder, Merlin Brands, on why he loves to operate out of the GMR Aerocity space

Sumit Suneja is a life-long learner who believes in educating himself everyday. He launched Merlin Brands with the belief that our food is only as good and healthy as the container in which it is kept. Drawing inspiration from the strict compliances in the US regarding making of food containers, Suneja decided to start making products for Indian market, *albeit* less costly, with more capacity and in brighter colours. The company makes two categories of products – Rabat for kids and Headway for adults. In an interview, he describes his ideal of an office space and environment, and how GMR Aerocity fits that definition. Excerpts:

What is your idea of an office space?

An ideal office space is one which feels like home. Why was work from home so nice? There were people around you, but they would also not bother you. They would respect



your privacy and would like you to do your work. There would be best tea and coffee from time to time.

What has been your experience with office spaces so far?

I run away from my office. In office you can't ignore anything. I was born in a business family and born to be nosy. So, to avoid poking into people's work, I barely go to sign papers or if someone needs me for specific purpose.

Why did you choose Aerocity location and what ambience does it provide?

I appreciate the ambience that has been created. It's like home space. People are enabling you to do your thing. And I can get anything I want to eat. There is plenty of infrastructure to choose from for holding meetings. And nobody, clients or team members, has a problem coming here if I ask them to come for a meeting.

I would have booked an apartment here, that's how nice it is.

How easy is it for team members or clients to commute?

It's fairly easily commutable both from Delhi and Gurugram. For that matter, even Mumbaikars are ready to fly down if the meeting is in Aerocity.

What would be your advice to corporates regarding providing proper working ambience to employees?

Every CEO or founder should create constructive environment and have space for themselves. Don't be in your regular workspace all the time. Be at a place where people are enabling you to do your best. In fact, here I have met people from all walks of life. I do this at least once a month for two days, that I check in, do not step out of the room and do my work with 100 per cent focus.

We also need co-working space for startups, if they want to utilise the space to do something new. ■



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The mega science conferences where experts deliberate on health or environment concerns, those big fat Indian weddings where the two- or three-day ceremonies could match the opulence of royalty, the exhibitions that bring B2B and B2C segment under one roof, and corporate incentive events to reward the best performers are all a serious business for hospitality, and post-Covid, a sign of good health for hospitality. The worth of MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions) is acknowledged globally, and the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) brings out a ranking of cities and countries, which is largely dominated by US, Germany, France, Spain and UK (in order as per 2019 rankings).

In comparison to 934 meetings held in the US as per the 2019 rankings, India, with 158 meetings, was ranked 28th. Its share in global MICE business is 0.96 per cent, as per an answer by the Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy in Lok Sabha in April 2022. In the ICCA rankings of cities, New Delhi is ranked 75th, Hyderabad, 159th, Bengaluru and Mumbai, 203rd and Chennai, 210th.

A MICE study sponsored by Ministry of Tourism in 2019 put the market size of tourism in India at Rs 37,576 crore, 60 per cent of which is attributable to meetings, incentives and conferences. Realising the potential of MICE industry, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India drafted a 'National Strategy and Roadmap for MICE Industry' in June 2021.

The strategy report too puts Delhi NCR in the leading position, followed by Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and Bengaluru.

The Critical Connectivity Link

The national capital region, with a concentration of polity, media and academia, a thriving industry, and a rich mixture of history, culture and nature, is ideally poised for international conferences, meetings and exhibitions. The most important link

of infrastructure availability, in terms of airport connectivity, conference and exhibition spaces, and accommodation for large number of delegates is now being well taken care of thanks to the Delhi Airport and the GMR Aerocity ecosystem.

The Delhi airport, with its three terminals – T1 and T2 for domestic flights and T3 for domestic and international flights – handled 4,60,424 aircraft movement and 69.23 million passengers in 2018-2019. As per Official Airline Guide, which was cited by many mainstream publications, the airport has become the second busiest airport in the world as of March 2022, in terms of number of international and domestic flights and seating capacity, replacing Dubai.

And situated just four km away from the IGI Airport Metro Station is the GMR Aerocity, with some of the most well-suited hotel locations for hosting big conventions.

Pavan Kumar, Director of Sales and Marketing at Pullman and Novotel, New Delhi Aerocity, describes an upsurge in corporate, government and social events since early this year when the third wave of Covid ebbed. And the



key reason why GMR Aerocity was among the first “micromarkets” to see an upsurge was, “It’s a secure campus, it’s close to business pockets of Gurugram and Delhi, it enables easy movement to locations like Cyber City in Gurugram, Chanakya Puri and even Connaught Place in New Delhi and that’s a huge psychological and practical benefit.”

Saumitra Chaturvedi, the GM of Ibis, is happy at the surge in MICE business since April and expresses hope that this segment will grow even more. Of course, the Covid-protocols will be followed, he says, and shares how Ibis is adhering to the safety guidelines of Bureau Veritas. About GMR Aerocity, he says, “People coming to Delhi for an event can stay here and avoid the hustle-bustle of the city and this is why it’s the most preferred location today.

The location provides the ease of being congregated with the professional fraternity for business; and with the peace of mind of being accommodated in the same premises, there is no last-minute rush to catch flight or to worry about traffic bottlenecks in Delhi.

For that matter, Amit Rana, GM of Holiday Inn informs that even delegates attending events in Noida, part of Delhi NCR which falls in Uttar Pradesh, prefer to stay in GMR Aerocity to catch the early morning flight after the event.

There’s Space For All

GMR Aerocity is an all-encompassing venue for mega cultural shows and exhibitions, as well as an apt outdoor option for guests who would be staying at one of the hotels for a conference or wedding in that respective hotel. It offers great space for leisurely walks, eating and shopping ops.

In particular, The Square is a vibrant urban public open



space located at the heart of GMR Aerocity. An amalgamation of futuristic design principles and sustainability, it has well-laid out public amenities, multi-cuisine restaurants, and is surrounded by 100+ F&B and retails brands.

The Square is a perfect venue for art, design or cultural events and has played a perfect venue for grand events such as Oktoberfest, Food for Thought Fest, Delhi Capitals Engagement Zone, Christmas and New Year activities and India Craft Week that attracted huge audiences.

The constituent hotels of GMR Aerocity are also well-equipped to host MICE events. Pavan Kumar says that the





one sq km stretch of GMR Aerocity provides 4,000+ rooms, 50 meeting spaces and the flexibility to clients to organise both huge format- and small events. He informs that his own hotel has 13 connecting rooms besides the main conference space, which is ideal for large conferences to break up for parallel sessions after the inaugural session.

Meeting Of Minds

Sure enough, GMR Aerocity is already hosting some significant international events. The 4th Global Congress of Biological Psychiatry (GCBP) 2022 was held on August 12-14 at Pullman even as this piece was being written, and the India CSR Summit is slated to be held in November at the same venue.



Building Bricks Of Great Events

While it goes without saying that all the GMR hotels are invested into indoor aesthetics, great F&B offers, high service level, and care for hygiene and safety, here's a look at the infrastructure that's available for big corporate and social events at the various hotels:



Aloft

A total event space of 14,660 sq. ft., 13 event rooms and 275 pax capacity, with outdoors for meeting breaks. The hotel ensures comfort with its infrastructure and services.

Contact (event specialist): 8448486882



Andaz

Offers more than 37,500 sq. ft. of meeting and event spaces for small-scale business meetings or large conferences. It has specially curated catering options and a dedicated host for each meeting or social event. Its event spaces are designed in a modern style with comfortable seating which can be customised to meet all discerning preferences or requirements.

Contact (MICE expert): 8588824562



Holiday Inn

Though it has long built its reputation in leisure travel, Holiday Inn is also renowned for its business-friendly meeting rooms and expansive events facilities and has a capacity for up to 450 guests for an event. Coupled with its world-renowned event planners, experienced culinary, and expert service teams, Holiday Inn ensures that all events are smoothly organised.

Contact (Gurbir Singh, Sr sales manager): 8130496070



JW Marriott:

Synonymous with luxury & comfort, it boasts of world-class meeting rooms coupled with business-centric amenities & facilities. Its meeting and conference space of over 30,000 sq. ft is among the largest in the city. The Grand Crystal Ballroom is spread across an extravagant area of 12,000 sq. ft. The Gallery Room at the hotel is an art-inspired event space that is a perfect venue to host art exhibitions and high-end corporate events.

Contact info: 011-45212121



Pullman

The Peacock Ballroom of Pullman offers 1,181 sq. mtrs (12,712.17 sq ft). pillar-less space accommodating up to 1,500 guests for conventions or banquets. The hotel's courtyard has space for up to 400 guests, ideal for personnel & employees training and team building sessions. It has modular spaces to meet varying needs of an event.

Contact (MICE expert): 9643100475



Ibis

The hotel has six large rooms at the lobby level, which can be combined to offer a space capacity of 467 sq. mtrs (5,026.75 sq ft)., apt for a gathering of 150 guests. It has spaces for different requirements, starting from a meeting of 8 to 10. Its poolside venue has also witnessed some great event being hosted. The guests don't even have to enter the hotel area for pool-side events, as there is a separate entry. Plus, it has a huge room inventory to accommodate guests. Ibis takes pride in its impeccable event planning and flawless execution, and curates events as per client requirements.

Contact (Nikhil Malhotra): 9999597514



Lemon Tree

The hotel has 280 rooms and suites, a business centre, a conference room with modern facilities, a well-equipped fitness centre and a refreshing swimming pool, besides custom curated menus, modern facilities and warm hospitality.

Contact (Daksh): 9599064900



Roseate

This property boasts of three aesthetically designed conference rooms. Its Business Centre, equipped with comprehensive conferencing, communication, and meeting amenities, is especially popular among Fortune 500 companies, corporates and start-ups. Its Ballroom has capacity of 175 guests in round-table setting and 450 guests in a theatre-style seating. The third facility is Roseate House.

Contact info: 11 71558800



Red Fox

This hotel has 1,121 sq ft area for corporate meetings and conferences. Its fully-equipped conference room has a seating capacity of 80.

Contact info: 011 45232323



The event that grabs media attention, Bridal Asia will be held at JW Marriott on October 1-2. The same hotel will also host Entrepreneur 2022 - India's Most Prestigious Entrepreneurship Honours by Entrepreneur Media on September 20-21; International Society of Nephrology (ISN) Frontiers Meeting in Infections and the Kidneys by the International Society of Nephrology on Sept 22-25; and Asian Oceanian Congress of Neurology and Annual Conference of Indian Academy of Neurology on November 3-6. The Holiday Inn will host the India Vehicles After Sales Summit in December.

The revival of big events is not only good news from business perspective, to use Pavan Kumar's words, "It also gives a sense of purpose to us. We are accustomed to meeting large number of people. To see them come back gives us immense pleasure."

Besides these events at individual hotels, large footfalls have also been witnessed at some mega events in GMR Aerocity pre-Covid period, such as:

- Blenders Pride Fashion Tour, where some leading designers showcased their creativity or graced the event, actress Sara Ali Khan was a show stopper, and several other prominent faces from the entertainment industry added glitz;
- Performance of 'Bazaar' by Cirque Du Soleil, a Canadian theatre troupe, involving trapeze, aerial, ropes, unicycles and Indian acrobatics like Mallakhamb (wooden pole), and stunts with fire;
- Delhi Capitals, which was a celebration of GMR sponsorship of IPL team Delhi Capitals, through a large number of activities and games on the GMR Aerocity grounds;
- India Mobile Congress, India's first, and the biggest

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- event, hosted by GMR Aerocity for consecutively two years;
- International Railway Equipment Exhibition, perhaps the largest event for rail transportation sector, which witnessed the presence of key decision makers and industry leaders;



Drivers of MICE Growth

Industries and sectors that see the greatest number of events, thus contributing to hospitality too

As per the 'Draft National Strategy and Roadmap for MICE Industry', STEM leads in this regard.

Among the important themes are:

Environment & other SDG goals; food security; healthcare & medical; IT (AI, Big Data, Cloud, IoT); engineering & modern manufacturing (4.0. etc.); urban mobility & transportation; cyber security & homeland security; Defence; and textiles & fabrics.

Some important exhibition themes are:

Engineering, machine tools; building & construction; chemicals, plastics & rubber; healthcare & pharma; fashion, textiles & leather; IT & cyber security; printing & packaging; home decoration; food & agri; and energy, electricity & power, lighting

Leading cities for MICE events:

Delhi NCR (Delhi - Noida - Greater Noida - Gurugram); Mumbai; Chennai; Kolkata; Bengaluru; Goa; Hyderabad; Ahmedabad

Other challengers are:

Agra; Udaipur; Bhubaneswar; Pune; Thirunanthpuram; Varanasi; Indore; Jaipur; Kochi; Raipur; Lucknow; Guwahati

The Wow Factor for Wedding Vows

A sneak peek into the efforts that some hotels put in to make the D-day a memorable one

In a country where the occasion of a marriage is an equally big spending occasion as other events, and where grandeur is matched by attention to minute details, here's what some of the hotels at GMR Aerocity are offering:

Wedding In Andaz

One of the largest indoor and outdoor wedding spaces in Delhi, Andaz Delhi's pillarless oval shaped ballroom can host up to 1,500 guests. You get a blank canvas that can be customised according to your style and aesthetic for your special day. The hotel also houses an elegant and unique route for the baraat, known as the 'Elephant Path', that leads right into Andaz Delhi's central courtyard and goes up till the entrance to the Ballroom.

And some experienced wedding hosts add an extra zing to take the whole experience notches higher, be it a majestic celebration or an intimate gathering.



Pullman experience

The hotel takes care to customise the entire experience and align it to your vision – your colour preference, choice of flowers, etc. The Peacock Ballroom, which is the key attraction among people wishing to have their wedding at Pullman, is connected to a spacious pre-function area, and is also accessible from the lobby. One of the attractions is its peacock themed decor and the

rain shower installations. For smaller functions in the run-up to the wedding, like *mehndi* or cocktail, the ballrooms can be partitioned into smaller units.

No Indian wedding experience is complete without food and the hotel lays out a delectable breakfast spread, and some great servings for the cocktail, baraat, wedding feast and reception.

And what is in it for the bride? Well, the beautiful bridal suites, Pullman wellness spa & salon are all at her service, to help her look the stunning best for her special day.

Weddings at JW Marriott

Luxury, elegance and personalised service with attention to detail at Marriott make the most important day of a person's life truly a rich experience. The grandeur of the Grand Crystal Ballroom, the four adjoining studio rooms, and the Gallery Room designed by renowned Japanese architect Masafumi Sanada, equipped with Bose Acoustics, life-size Led screen, Swarovski crystal chandeliers and art pieces by some eminent artists contribute to the wow factor of the venue. Matching the grandeur of the venue is some great cuisine prepared by its expert chefs and personalised menu as per customers' preferences. The assorted gift items that Marriott offers, including the confections prepared by the patisserie team, and the wedding cake prepared by the executive pastry chef are some added attractions.

Aloft

The hotel has a total event space of 14,660 sq. ft., 13 event rooms and 275 pax capacity, besides a well-trained staff to cater to the needs of guests at the event.

Ibis

Besides six large rooms at the lobby level, which can be combined for a total capacity of 467 sq. mtrs, the hotel has a beautiful poolside venue for hosting social events.



- TECH 2 INNOVATE, a youth festival that celebrated technology, gadgets, culture, music, pop culture and more and saw the presence of youtubers, digital content creators and famous personalities like Carry Minati, Tanmay Bhatt, Dynamo, Raja Kumari, RitViz, Kusha Kapila, Rawknee, Mark Johnson, and Gaurav Taneja (Flying Beast);
- India Craft week, a celebration of finest craftsmanship that binds art, design and culture, which brought together the craftsmen, designers and brands through craft installations, live demonstrations and cross-talks; and
- Food For Thought, an all-encompassing gastronomical experience of South Asia cuisine, which saw some great chefs and food critics like Pushpesh Pant, Chef Vicky Ratnani, Amin Ali, Chef Gautam Mehrishi, Chef Prahlad Kakkar and Deepa Malik grace the occasion.

With optimism that the worst of Covid is behind us, and with due safety measures in the light of new strands of virus, GMR



Aerocity is set to host two mega events in the coming months. Global Assistive technology Expo & Conference- (GATEC – 2022), to be held on December 7-9, will witness exchange of ideas and networking on all aspects of science, practice and education associated with the assistive technology, medical sciences, rehabilitation engineering and related areas, and is expected to see a footfall of 3,000 people per day.

Happy Hotelier Club Bounce Back Run is an initiative of three passionate hoteliers that aims to bring hoteliers on a common platform to discuss issues of concern that hospitality is facing, as it recovers from the Covid crisis. Thirty per cent of those who lost their job in hotels and restaurants were women. The key objectives of the event, to be held on September 25, is to employ the women force and create a positive spirit in the hospitality sector. With a membership of 200+ hoteliers, 100+ hospitality industry people as guests, and a large number of volunteers, the event is poised for good response. ■

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PANDEMIC EFFECT ON INDIAN MICE INDUSTRY

An insight into the revenue potential of MICE, and how it contributes to the health of tourism and hospitality

By Aparajitha Nair

Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Exhibitions; that is practically what MICE stands for. To put it simply, MICE is everything related to business travel and tourism. This sector has the sole aim to bring together the industry stalwarts and top professionals from different sectors under a single roof of a customised hospitality experience. A closer look into the segments of MICE would include:

- 1. Meetings:** Formal congregations of professionals regarding business activities. These meetings range from board meetings to annual general meetings, and everything in between.
- 2. Incentives:** Usually vacations or leisure getaways that companies provide their employees for their remarkable work.
- 3. Conferences:** The next level of meetings, conducted on a larger level. These conferences not only include organisations and their employees but they also bring together guest speakers and other dignitaries.
- 4. Exhibitions:** Comprises trade shows, promoting key products and services.

It is a common phenomenon for industry specialists and professionals to trot the globe, for business prospective and expansion opportunities. There are countless conferences, seminars, summits and other related meetings, which pose the best opportunities to build on the company's presence and expansion strategies. The establishment of their brands in the market occurs majorly through such networking events.

The meticulous planning which goes into organising these corporate events is what leads to their success. This is where MICE comes into the picture. The success of corporate events depends primarily on the process of planning, organising, and conducting of the event, and MICE as a sector helps with it. As of date, this industry is growing phenomenally, with companies building on their expansion strategies and more start-ups mushrooming globally on a large scale. There are even specific websites for these business travels that focus on MICE as an industry and propose ways in which it can be leveraged for business purposes.

Statistics suggest that 2017 saw the generation of \$ 1 trillion by this sector. Experts predict the mark to reach \$ 1.5 trillion by 2025. Additionally, ICCA rankings show a potential

A recently published report by Research Dive predicts that the global MICE industry would experience a significant growth in revenue from

**\$1,07.2 billion
in 2020**

to over

**\$1,619.3 billion
by 2028**

at a stable CAGR of 5.9% from 2021-2028.



for India, which hosted 175 meetings in 2017 in contrast to 143 for the previous year. With such a scope, this Industry is definitely growing by leaps in the coming times.

Reasons for growth

The MICE industry is a major contributor to the tourism sector and the budgets of most companies are usually higher than those of casual travellers. The industry also ensures greater knowledge transfer to people in different parts of the world and promotes cultural understanding. In addition, various major organisations in the market see different

kinds of benefits to the industry in the form of networking, professional development, team encouragement, etc. MICE events provide opportunities for companies and employees to meet more people and build networks. This has become one of the most important factors in the growth of the industry.

A recently published report by Research Dive predicts that the global MICE industry would experience a significant growth in revenue from \$1,07.2 billion in 2020 to over \$1,619.3 billion by 2028 at a stable CAGR of 5.9 per cent from 2021-2028.



Revenue Implications

MICE events are time limited and can boost the economy of an entire city, country or region. Large international conferences exponentially increase hotel occupancy and consumption of local services. MICE travellers spend far more than leisure travellers, with profitable customers coming from the IT, banking, pharmaceutical, retail and hospitality industries. In short, hotel meetings and corporate events are a great way to increase sales and secure additional bookings. Finally, developing MICE services is a great opportunity to improve your hotel's reputation and profile along with profitability.

MICE travellers are often interested in staycations. This means that visitors and attendees can learn more about the place and its attractions after attending a corporate event. Looking at this, it is easy



Under the conditions of harsh travel restrictions and protocols of the pandemic, the MICE business faced a sharp reduction of demand by

78%. Our businesses too experienced significant losses. In particular, the drop in scheduled departure flights during pandemic had impacted the overall business.



PANKAJ KUMAR
Founder and COO
MICE Professionals

to understand that MICE is a powerful and inseparable interface between the tourism and event industries. Firstly, large groups always travel on business. Secondly, in modern times, DMOs (Destination Marketing Organisations) and DMCs (Destination Management Companies) are proving the power of MICE tourism. In recent decades, they have produced long-term economic growth and development towards their goals. It is estimated that the city-state hosts more than 800 conferences each year. In other words, this represents 8.5 per cent of the world's top international events. Hence, the MICE business model thrives on staying on top of corporate and entrepreneurial trends.

MICE Industry and the Pandemic

Pankaj Kumar, Founder and COO, MICE Professionals says, "Under the conditions of harsh travel restrictions and protocols of the pandemic, the MICE business faced a sharp reduction of demand by 78 per cent. Our businesses too experienced significant losses. In particular, the drop in scheduled departure flights during pandemic had impacted the overall business." However, the firm eventually recovered since March 2022 and witnessed four-fold growth in corresponding quarters over last year.

The industry has been financially strained, but adapting to the situation will inevitably allow it to innovate more while recovering from the past losses. Events should enforce

regulations in the future to keep guests safe while making it easy for guests to find what they need. As the world opens up to normal operations, the MICE industry wants to find better locations to host their events with all the regulations in place.

Gavin Dcosta, Director, MICEKart.com, explains how the company was built during the pandemic itself with an aim to provide technological solutions in this space, rather than just be a parallel player in the industry. "Our focus has always been to innovate & effectively use technology to enhance customer experiences at every stage in the MICE planning & execution process. Our ability to differentiate ourselves from conventional MICE companies by adding significant value at every stage is our competitive advantage. We are really happy with the progress we have made and hopeful that the initiative will transform MICE travel planning."

Despite the impact of the global pandemic on the tourism economy, with so many businesses and industries targeting both supply and demand for MICE events, this industry isn't going away anytime soon. As business recovers, it is imperative to bring together the world's best talent in a safe



environment. MICE provides the perfect structure for this. In fact, we may see competition for locations and vendors that excel each other in security measures. The MICE market brings together many of the essentials of modern business, motivating people and sustaining the economy. It is dynamic, versatile and has a growing number of professionals. There is good reason to believe that this is an integral sector of tourism and will continue to grow. ■

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Many Couples Opting For **GREEN** **WEDDINGS**

By Ruhail Amin



Vikaas Gutgutia, Founder & Managing Director, **Ferns N Petals Group**, describes the new trends in wedding planning, and the challenges that the industry need to address

“

During the meetings, we advise people to go for garden weddings to optimally utilise natural lights which not only saves the environment but also is cost effective



Ferns & Petals' phenomenal growth is closely linked to gifting and weddings. And now you have 70,000 product offerings & 10,000 daily orders online. How do you see this journey when you look back?

We have always been very sensitive about 'What Next?'. That is the approach we follow every day. So, to execute something new, to do something which has not been done, is a quest, and our driving force. This method has helped us expand in different directions, be it in gifting or wedding. In weddings, we take care of most of the segments in-house: from decor to hotels, banqueting to wedding planning; whatever goes into a wedding is done under the umbrella of FNP Weddings and FNP Venues. In gifting, we have taken an omni-channel approach and now we have diversified overseas too. We have also launched some innovative services like 'Baby Bless' and 'Last Journey' and both have been very well received.

Post covid the wedding industry has witnessed a robust growth. What is driving this growth?

Weddings have always been a celebration in India, it's a lifetime occasion where people go all out. During the pandemic, events were restricted and numbers were limited. At least 30 to 40 percent of weddings were held back as families were waiting for the pandemic to get over so that they could do justice to the big fat Indian weddings. This has automatically resulted in a robust comeback.

What are the latest trends in the wedding industry?

Firstly, destination weddings continue to be a big trend. I haven't seen any family coming back and regretting that they had a destination wedding. Look at Udaipur, Dubai and now Jaipur. Unlike the grand old big fat Indian weddings, youngsters today are opting for a gathering of 100-200 closely connected people, relatives and friends and not going overboard in inviting everyone.



Ferns N Petals (FNP) was established in 1994 and flower bouquet delivery was the first and only thing that the company was into. From just one flower shop in Delhi during 1994, FNP is now the largest florist chain with close to 400 stores (and still counting) across all the major cities and towns of India.

Today, Ferns N Petals Group encompasses FNP Retail & Franchising, FNP E-commerce- India, UAE, Singapore & Qatar, FNP Weddings & Events, Floral Touch- India & UAE, FNP Gardens, Handicrafts, The Flagship Store by FNP, WDH (Wedding Design Hub), FNP Cakes 'N' More and FNP Media.

Vikaas Gutgutia, Founder & Managing Director, FNP Group, talks about Indian weddings, which constitute a big market segment for the company, and his own venture into wedding hotels. Excerpts:



Also, when it comes to destination weddings, you can't invite 2,000 people, rather stick to 100 - 200 guests.

Wedding industry drives the economy too. In your view, how big is the wedding market in India and do we see it getting more organised as we move forward?

I may not be able to give you the exact size of the wedding industry in India, but in my view it will be close to USD 50 billion or more. Weddings are extravagant affairs in India. Here people start saving early for their weddings. I have witnessed certain families living a very ordinary life but when it comes to weddings, they tend to leave the big industrialists behind in terms of spends.

As far as the current state of the wedding market is concerned, it's gradually getting organised. When I started my business, many people in the industry did not even know what a bank cheque was. Things have changed greatly now and there exists greater levels of transparency. If there are right government policies implemented, within a few years the countless transactions in the wedding sector will become 100 per cent transparent. The industry will take a big leap.

What are the bigger challenges overall in the wedding industry?

I still feel the wedding industry is ill organised. It

remains scattered and a seasonal business where stakeholders operate for four to five months and the next seven months it becomes increasingly difficult for them to survive. Hence there has to be a steady flow of investment. The moment it evolves into an organised institution and some serious business houses start contributing, we will see the real growth.

To address this issue, we started a campaign called '*Har Din Shubh*'. The idea is not to have any fixed wedding dates. The day I'm born, there's no *mahurat* (auspicious day and time), the day I depart there will be no *mahurat*. Then why a *mahurat* for weddings? If you choose to get married on a day, which is not an auspicious day as per the calendar, your expenses are reduced by 50 per cent. This trend will gradually become prevalent.

A lot of young people get married as per their convenience, and interestingly, the success rate of such marriages are higher than the ones which follow the *Saya* dates.

Hence, everyday is a good day. The hotels will give you a discounted rate. The caterer will give you an economical deal and you will manage to get a good bargain for decorations and floral arrangements. Everything will be less expensive and I feel gradually this trend will take over the tradition.

Tell us about Udman Hotels that you have launched.

Udman Hotels by FNP are a set of boutique hotels that are further categorised into business hotels and wedding hotels. Business hotels are city centric with small banquets meant for corporate conferences. While our wedding hotels come with large banquets where one can host residential weddings. We intend to add almost 10 new hotels every year to our itinerary. So, in the next 3 or 4 years, we are looking at adding 50 new hotels.



What is FNP's approach as far as sustainability and eco-friendly weddings are concerned?

The fact is that however hard we try, it's very difficult to fight the traditions. At FNP, we are super conscious of this fact and all our weddings follow this concept, right from the material used in the banquets for décor to vegan, organic menus.

Everything is utilised in a mindful manner to fight wastage while keeping the



health of our consumers in mind. From great looking eco-friendly décor we get down to the nitty-gritty, taking care of a lot of things to extend our sustainable approach. Indian weddings are known for their conspicuous consumption which is environmentally hazardous. To address this problem many couples are indeed opting for green weddings.

We have been curating weddings & events where everything from food to decorations to bridal outfits and even jewellery is sustainable. E-invites or physical ones made of recycled paper are opted at such nuptials. During the meetings, we also advise people to go for garden weddings to optimally utilise natural lights which not only saves the environment but also is cost effective.

For millennial brides opting for floral jewellery instead of traditional gold, we offer exquisite pieces crafted from fresh blossoms like rose and orchids.

Food buffets are one of the biggest waste generators at Indian weddings; hence we incorporate healthy plant-based dishes made from locally-grown organic produce to bring down food surplus. Biodegradable cutlery made from banana and bamboo leaves, as well as strategic placement of trash bins to segregate the wet and dry waste further minimises environmental degradation.



You have also expanded into international markets. What's your strategy for that?

FNP is directly operating in seven countries. We get some 1,200 orders a day from the UAE and Singapore operation. Indian origin residents staying in these countries contribute close to one-fourth of its revenue. The UAE, Singapore & Qatar arms are looking at a growth of 50 per cent in revenue generation. Recently we have launched our services and store operations in Saudi Arabia and Malaysia also. Soon

we will be expanding our presence in Middle east and APAC market and exploring Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Indonesia, Philippines as the next target market.

While you spoke about your expansion plans globally, what are your plans to cater to tier-1 two 2 cities in India?

We deliver to almost 99 per cent pin codes in India. There are 700+ districts in the country and we are expanding our footprint district wise. We currently have

400+ outlets - cakes and flowers put together and we are planning on opening two stores a week for the next financial year. We are undertaking extensive software upgradation in backend to make the process seamless. ■



G20 Summit

Will Test Indian MICE Next Year

With his rich and insightful travel and hospitality industry experience spanning more than 25 years, **Naveen Kundu**, Managing Director, **EbixCash**, describes the slow journey of Indian MICE 75 years since Independence, from banquet halls to a still illusive convention centre

It's been 75 years of Independence and we have celebrated Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav. So it's the right time to do an introspection of 75 years of Indian tourism vis-à-vis aviation, hospitality, MICE and inbound tourism. I am an India Bull and I would like revenue to come into India. And tourism is one of the most desirable ways of bringing forex into the country.

And MICE is the single-largest component of tourism. While the world is going digital, meetings and conventions need physical interaction. And it's an inclusive part of tourism. It involves a large number of people, it provides jobs, taxation for the government and business to small ancillary industries like taxi and bus operators.

What has happened in the last 75 years is that while



state tourism corporations and set up a Ministry of Tourism.

But despite the vast potential of MICE in revving up tourism, we do not have a large convention centre that can host a gathering of 5,000 people. If you go to the US, UK or Australia, or even to neighbouring Dubai or Thailand, they have built infrastructure for events, far bigger, superior and automated than us. India did not evolve on that front because that intent was not there. The priorities for every government were very different.

The lack of vision shows in the hotel infrastructure that has come up hitherto. Taj, ITC and Oberoi built hotels. And we have large chains coming into India post 1990s – Hilton, Sofitel, Hyatt and many others. But even those hotel chains, when they were pitching with builders to build hotels, did not have a vision for convention centres.

The first place that comes to mind when you think of tourism in India is Goa, but that destination doesn't have a large enough convention centre. Organisers who wish to schedule their events in Goa struggle to find large convention halls.

Even the country's capital doesn't have that facility, until Pragati Maidan comes up. For large exhibitions there is the NOIDA Expo Centre and the Jewar Airport is coming up, but where are the hotels? And there is no convention centre which is needed with expo centre. Coming to Aerocity, once the Dwarka Convention Centre comes up, the Aerocity hotels will fulfil the room requirement and see high occupancy. It has best quality hotels, it has Worldmark, and has best quality infrastructure coming up.

the journey has been very interesting, we are far from where we should have been. The journey from a banquet hall to a conference room to a convention centre has been far longer than it should have been. What we unfold in the next 25 years, as the Prime Minister called it the 'Amrit Kaal', is very important.

The Road Not Taken

So, what has not been done in the last 75 years? When we got Independence and embarked upon developing India, we didn't have a full-fledged tourism minister, tourism didn't get industry status, and never got the priority it deserved despite India having vast culture and heritage. Down the years, we did launch India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) and





Missed Opportunities in States

There is immense potential to develop convention centres though. Every state tourism board has a huge amount of land. That land bank is wasted on building those hotels, which nobody likes to visit, barring a couple of ITDC hotels. Their hotels are average even if their locations are fantastic. Not one STDC is trying to build a convention centre despite the land bank that they have.

India should have got a convention centre in every location where there is a state tourism corporation land. That should be privatised. And in this, the Madhya Pradesh Government has shown the way, by building a very big convention centre in Khajuraho. The hotels in Khajuraho used to struggle for occupancy in summers. The culture and heritage tourism there was confined to winters, whereas now they will do well, with the convention centre. What the state government did should become a prototype for all state governments. What we now need is connectivity, ie flight and train connections. We have to build that infrastructure, to be future ready in the next 25 years.

And state tourism corporations should only be enablers to bring tourism into their state and enhance facilities.

All the stakeholders, including the Ministry of Tourism, ITDC and

state corporations need to come together to prepare a roadmap, so that India becomes a MICE hub.

Quest for a Slice of MICE

We already lost out to destinations like Dubai and Singapore, when we missed the bus in 1960s. We could have become a hub of these activities between the East and the West. Now that opportunity is coming up again. The western countries offer a lot into incentive tours and conference-related travel opportunities to their workforce and their favourite destinations are Dubai, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. China used to be popular but is losing out, so

now is the opportunity for India, to attract MICE travellers from Europe and US to India. And to capitalise on that, we need to create small, medium and large convention centres in various cities.

With the realisation that MICE can be an employment enabler and make the country richer, the government can announce subsidies and remove GST for inbound MICE.

If we still don't have a plan, we will be caught napping in the next 25 years and the whole MICE opportunity will be lost. But I am glad that this government is working in the right direction. And what will be the game changer will be the G 20 Summit next year, to be hosted by India. It will test India's MICE, and Indian tourism in every way possible — aviation, transportation, hotel rooms, entertainment, F&B and event management. ■

— As told to Meha Mathur



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BRANDS OPTING FOR **HYBRID & ON-GROUND EVENTS**

BI Worldwide (India) Chief Executive Officer Sukesh Jain describes his company's approach to MICE events, and the resilience shown during Covid

By Aparajitha Nair

BI worldwide, that has global presence, works with corporates to come up with employee solutions. One function of the company is event management. Sukesh Jain, BI Worldwide (India) CEO, shares his thoughts on MICE and the challenges during Covid. Excerpts:

What is the business model of BI Worldwide? How does BI Worldwide contribute to the MICE Industry in India?

We are in the business of inspiration. We enable brands with loyalty and engagement strategies and solutions to inspire their employees, customers, channel partners and sales teams. We do this by running effective and results oriented employee rewards & recognition, sales & channel incentives and contest, and design impactful events based on behavioural economics, domain expertise and design thinking.

Our single focus is not on providing a single solution – it is on partnering with brands to understand what their business goals and objective are and combining our variety of solutions and expertise to help them achieve these business outcomes.

Recognition, rewards & incentive solutions, dealer events, retailer meets, travel incentives are very much integral to our business.



How did BI Worldwide fare in the pre- and post-pandemic era? Any challenges that were faced.

Globally, every industry has been forever changed by the pandemic; travel and event solutions were severely impacted. This impacted us partially in some of our markets, but our diverse and custom (not one size fit approach) set of solutions in loyalty and engagement domain helped us bounce back quickly and helped us grow at a steady pace pre- and post pandemic times. Brands realised the power of digitalisation, and started to move towards virtual events, social recognition, online incentives, gamification, virtual well-being to lead their engagement strategies.

We introduced digital platforms, products, virtual events, communication services, curated rewards, and incentives to enable clients run employee, customer, sales, and channel partner engagement programmes effectively, without getting impacted by the pandemic. Overall, BI Worldwide globally and in India did well during the pandemic by timely deploying a client and employee centric resilient framework.

Have there been any changes in the business strategies and models, after the pandemic was lifted in India?

Nothing drastically changed for us. All our people, agile operations, empathy driven client engagement models, value-led pre and post sales process, in-depth domain knowledge, behavioural economics best practices and our new-age digital technology platforms, long tenured and new clients are really consolidating towards our growth in India.

Post pandemic, we are still not completely out of the woods, though market in India has opened and brands

are getting back to looking at engagement, incentives, promotions, and on-ground events to engage with their key stakeholders. We have introduced new solutions to drive change in behaviour which includes sales contests & incentives, learning management, and brand merchandise solutions to amplify the next phase of growth.

What do you think is the future of the MICE industry in India, and would it also emerge as a prominent contributor on the global level?

Spike in demand for on-ground events: Though the world is still battling out the pandemic, restrictions have come down with precautions. Big conferences, industry events, product launches, music concerts, corporate offsites, dealer meets, distributors travel incentives – all of them are back in the business already. Globally, BI Worldwide travel and events business is picking up the pace across all markets. Brands are opting for hybrid and on-ground events, promotions, launching new products and having customer events – early signs for the MICE industry to emerge as a prominent contributor at a global level.

Hybrid and on-ground events are here to stay: There is definitely a lot of pent-up demand for on-ground events which is driving these early signs of recovery. However, hybrid events are going to stay till we are completely out of the pandemic. Technology and safety are going to be the main driving factors for on-ground events, brands will look at suppliers or partners with high end technology infrastructure, data security, vivid communication and creative (both online and offline), production capabilities, global presence, local market know-how, trained resources, cost effective solutions to make investments and drive return.

Measuring success and engagement is critical: Another critical factor driving growth for MICE industry is how does one measure engagement through events, travel incentive programmes and promotions. Which tools, automation, engagement devices to put in place to ensure engagement is getting measured and brands can look at the return on investments. Suppliers and partners should develop tools and frameworks to help brands measure engagement and thereby justify the ROI and cost effectiveness. ■



Destinations with Limited Flights Won't Take Off

Parthip Thyagarajan, CEO of WeddingSutra.com, outlines the strengths and challenges of wedding segment in India



Weddings are a serious business and can't be left to chances. Not only are they important to the couple and families who pin great hopes on that one day, they also drive economies of an ecosystem, with often millions of rupees riding on an event. Wedding portal WeddingSutra.com is a leading resource base and guide for ideas and execution pertaining to weddings. With his rich experience in the segment, CEO Parthip Thyagarajan discusses the new trends, and how prepared is Indian infrastructure for that. Excerpts:

How do weddings contribute to the whole MICE ecosystem?

For hotels in India, MICE and weddings are an important segment. Weddings became even more important during the pandemic phase. Most families chose to have an intimate

wedding close to their home. The change that happened post-Covid was that the entire movement that was happening in the Middle East, Bali and Sri Lanka, among other destinations, moved closer to the home town, or to a destination wedding location. Rajasthan, Goa, Mahabalipuram, Siliguri and Kerala among others were the hubs that are becoming popular.

Weddings are a fantastic promotion for a destination and the venue also. For example, if a family is invited to a destination wedding to Thailand, say in Chiang Mai, Phuket or Pattaya, they would like to stay on in the country for a few more days for a holiday. That is why, all international tourism boards are trying to woo Indian wedding segment aggressively. Imagine the impact of 200 guests at a destination, who are willing to spend to experience the country. It's another matter that in a wedding, a different



explored around, and where language is not a barrier. Middle East is doing very well for these reason. Dubai, Fujairah and Abu Dhabi all have luxurious resorts that are wooing Indian wedding segment. On the above parameters, Sri Lanka is also a favourable destination.

You have mentioned airport connectivity as an important factor in popularity of a wedding destination. What are your views about GMR Aerocity, which is so close to the Delhi airport?

Some of the constituent hotels like Andaz, Pullman and JW Marriott have really put in a lot of efforts and marketed themselves due to which they have become popular for destination weddings within hometown. And they will continue to get intimate hometown weddings or grand receptions.

What more can be done, if we want this market to be captured by Indian destinations, rather than overseas destinations?

The government needs to work with several stakeholders in tourism to cater to the vast upper middle-class market in India. Heritage properties can be identified with sufficient number of rooms to cater to wedding events. The owners of these properties, who might not be a professional chain, can be extended help in terms of promotion, and fund for infrastructure development. Since these property owners might not be trained in hosting weddings, a pool of freelancers can be developed for execution. ■

level of service and personalisation is required, which is not required for a typical MICE event.

What would you say about the infrastructure that is available for the kind of weddings Indian families now want?

There are some destinations with not enough flights. Those destinations will obviously have a challenge. But in terms of hotels, these destinations are very well prepared. Rajasthan has extensive infrastructure, including vendors. And if the family is not happy with the vendor, they can bring them from the closest town. But some destination will not do as well as Jaipur or Udaipur due to limited flights. Families prefer destinations close to the airport. That is one reason why many destinations have not taken off.

Dehradun is emerging as a wedding destination with airport connectivity and good number of hotels. But Mussoorie, even though the closest airport is one hour drive away, has surprisingly done really well during the pandemic.

As far as overseas destinations are concerned, the countries that are preferred are those where there is ease of getting visa, the flight is short, there are tourist spots to be



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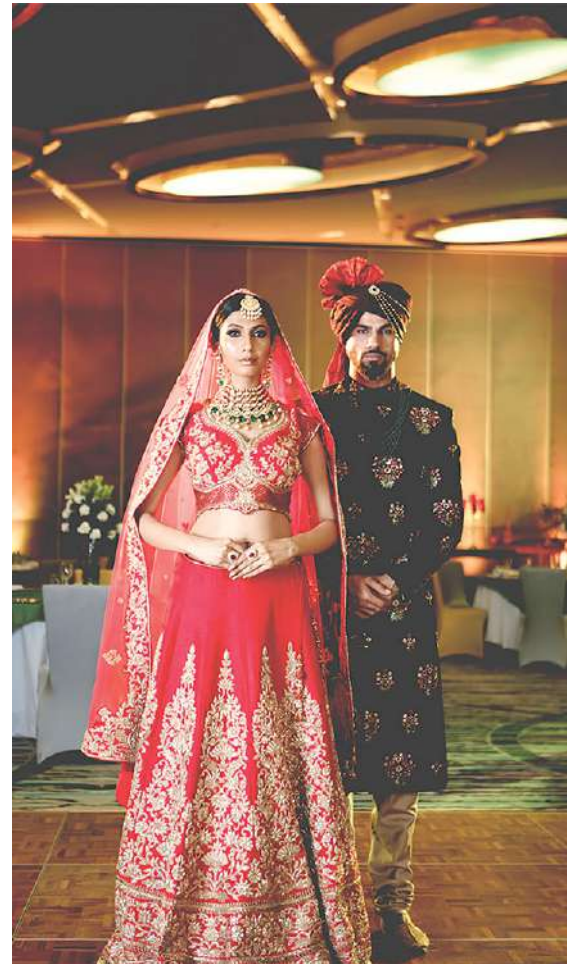
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Young Gen Wants **INTIMATE GRAND AFFAIRS**



**Raghubir Singh, MD
of *BMP Weddings*,
Delhi, talks about
the prospect for
the *MICE* segment
especially in the case
of weddings in the
post-Covid period**



What trend do you foresee in the post-Covid period?

We have noticed that the pace for weddings is picking up and festivities have started up again. The fear that Covid created is gone and the upcoming wedding season is going to be good one.

People are shifting to the idea of destination weddings now. Even if the wedding is in the hometown, families prefer to shift to a hotel and have all the ceremonies there. This trend is taking over as compared to having the events at different venues. The city itself becomes a destination. A perk with such organisation of the wedding is that all the people are in the same venue and it makes safety an easier option. Covid slowed down the industry but the nature of marriages is such that it can't be stopped. The number of people being invited has been reduced; the multi venue idea is now centered around a single venue. A single venue also adds to the element of residential weddings.





What has irrevocably changed? What are the long term-things that need to be kept in mind, and protocols to be followed like table arrangements?

The approach to the way weddings are celebrated and planned has changed. The idea of uncertainty is definitely irrevocable. Covid taught us a lot, one of the most important things being to maintain hygiene and cleanliness, washing hands and being cautious of our surroundings. Another long-time change would be the provision of safety kits at all venues. There has to be implementation of safety protocols on the venues and regulations like proper replacement of masks and gloves at regular stipulated intervals are put in place.

Social distancing being a factor in the people's mind and in view of the changing guidelines regarding guest capacity, people are looking for bigger venues so that people can be accommodated. Sit-down dinners and fine dining options are being considered over buffet dinners.

What are the company's plan with respect to GMR Aerocity hotels?

GMR Aerocity has shown the potential and has a good number of wedding-friendly hotels. As it is close to the airport and has a range of facilities in the complex, it is now a desirable spot. GMR Aerocity hotels have shifted from the perspective of being solely business-centric hotels. The hotels give a destination wedding feel with the inhouse wedding teams, thus making it flexible to plan a wedding. Properties like JW Marriott and Andaz have teams dedicated to weddings and for wedding

guests. The aspect of exploring more properties is a very realistic one as the demand for such destination weddings is increasing.

What are the changes in customer preferences, especially among the young generation?

The biggest shift that is noted is that even though they want a grand wedding, there is a tone of intimacy with the number of people invited. It can be considered an intimate grand affair. The idea of residential and destination weddings has hit an all-time high. Also, due to Covid there is an undertone of uncertainty when it comes to lockdown situation. In many ways the client looks to be on the safer side of the expenses.

What is your forte?

We are a company in the occasion-based sector for luxury weddings. We want to be a part of creating an experience for the wedding party. We cater to making a unique experience. ■

A PORT FOR **Luxury & Mega Events** IN THE DECCAN



Aerocity Hyderabad provides multi-purpose venue for conventions, launches, weddings and parties

GMR Aerocity Hyderabad, located at Hyderabad International Airport, is an integrated and premium ecosystem including mixed-use development zones such as retail, commercial, education, healthcare, industrial, logistics and hospitality. With a stellar line of established players in the ecosystem under each asset class, the Aerocity, spread across 1,500 acres, is creating a unique urban development in South Hyderabad which is unparalleled not only in India but also in the World.

The Aerocity is well connected with a signal-free eight-lane Outer Ring Road as well as an elevated corridor with the primary and secondary business districts of Hyderabad. Single window clearance for all building plan approvals, 24*7 power and water supply, flexible lease terms, robust security, air cargo services, hotel, affordable transport options, emergency services and multiple F&B options help businesses focus on their core areas.

‘GMR Hospitality Port’ comprises a Convention Centre,



a 5-star Novotel Hyderabad Airport, large outdoor open land for concerts and proposed additional hotels. Located five minutes away from Hyderabad International Airport, the Hospitality Port provides the flexibility to create and customise any event whether indoors or outdoors. Spread across 45,000 sq ft of pillar-less indoor air-conditioned area and outdoor space including lawns, the magnificent Convention Centre with the backdrop of Airport can host an event unlike any other venue in the country. Independent kitchen area, 2000+ car parking available including VVIP car parking makes every event manager to choose GMR Hospitality Port as a must go to location.

Together with Novotel Hotel, the Port can offer a customised package to corporates



that includes rooms as well as multiple venue options. The Port has already hosted some of the country's best events like Zomaland, Sunburn, DJ Yellow Claw, DJ Snake, Dimitri Vegas and Like Mike, Afrajack, AR Rahman Live and Farhan Akhtar Live, with every event proven mighty successful. In addition, the venue has hosted some of the most lavish weddings in Hyderabad City. The Port is also very popular for new Auto launches, including a natural 4x4 drive test track. GMR Hospitality Port is truly an impeccable location for conferences, conventions, corporate meetings, expositions, award ceremonies, private parties, weddings and events. ■



EXPLORE THE CITY

with its rich cultural and natural hues

By Meha Mathur

The World Of the First Citizen Of India

The Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum captivates visitors' attention with rich display of history, culture and personalities, and multimedia effects

The World behind the massive iron gates is accessible to the general public too. Besides the Mughal Gardens in the president's estates, which are open to the public during the spring season, a glimpse into the world of the head of the state is also possible through a visit to the Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum. The museum is housed in the Presidential Stable and the Presidential Garage, both heritage buildings which have been renovated.

To the history buffs, keen to explore how the plan for the whole complex was conceptualised and implemented, there is an entire gallery of documents, blueprints and photographs from that period, showcasing the preconstruction landscape, broad layout of the premises and of the North and South Block, and the purpose for which different wings were constructed, where do the dignitaries stay today, and the quarters occupied by the President and his family today.

A diorama of the freedom struggle showcases the important dates and personalities associated with it, especially the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. Through the use of multimedia, a number of patriotic songs that were composed in the heady years of freedom movement can be heard.

A carriage and a Mercedes Benz used by some of the presidents are a major for photo ops. But the most fascinating exhibits are the rich collection of gifts that the presidents of India have received over the decades, and personal objects, including the Veena of President APJ Abdul Kalam.

Yet another section is that of the kitchenware and crockery for presidents, with some fascinating tea and dinner sets. Again, a diorama shows a kitchen in operation. But a huge display of the archaic cooking woks, pans and stirrers make one pause to reflect on the changes that have come in over the decades, even in the kitchen of the highest authority of the land.

Entry through online bookings on any of the following websites:

www.rashtrapatisachivalaya.gov.in

www.presidentofindia.gov.in

www.rbmuseum.gov.in

Photo Courtesy: The Presidents Secretariat, Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum

- The museum is closed on Mondays
- Nearest Metro Station: Central Secretariat
- Ticket cost: Rs 50 per person per circuit; no charge for children below eight years



 Distance from Aerocity to Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum: 14.4 km

In Memory Of A Son

Eight Centuries ago, ruling sultan Iltutmish of north India built a mausoleum for his departed son. Today, the complex is a testimony to the architectural ethos of that era

Sultan Iltutmish (ruled 1211-1236) had great expectations that his son Nasiruddin will take over his mantle one day. But when Nasiruddin departed prematurely in 1229, the crestfallen king did what any loving father would do – he built a grand resting place and sought to preserve his son's memory for eternity. It was Nasiruddin's sister Razia Sultan who briefly ascended the throne after Iltutmish's demise.

Today, eight centuries later, Sultan Ghari, constructed in 1230-31, and considered the first tomb in the city, is a secluded spot. But that doesn't deter die-hard heritage lovers from visiting it. On a rain-soaked day, one can also spot a few joggers visiting the compounds. The locals who revere Nasiruddin as a 'pir' make regular offerings at the grave.

The grave is housed in a quadrangle building raised on a plinth, the entrance gate of which is imposing. Inside, the square construction has colonnades on east and west side, and arches on north and west, from where you can observe the surrounding area, undisturbed, except by a few dogs. At the corners of the enclosure are four bastions, almost like a fort.

On the west side of the enclosure is the *mihrab*, with extensive use of marble and beautifully carved Quranic verses. The use of

marble in *mihrab* would be unusual for the structure of that era, but as per heritage conservation body INTACH's 'A Walk Around Sultan Ghari Complex', it can be explained as a later addition, at the behest of Firoz Shah Tughlaq (ruled 1351-1388), who took a keen interest in restoration of buildings. Atop the *mihrab* porch is a conical dome, indicating an early

stage in the development of circular domes. (In fact, south of the main enclosure is another grave in an octagonal chhatra, of Iltutmish's another son, with a perfect circular dome, and this is again attributed to Firoz Shah Tughlaq's efforts, as per INTACH).

The main grave of Nasiruddin is housed in a huge octagonal chamber in the centre of the quadrangle building, taking up much space. The roof of this chamber is a flattened dome, almost like a disk, and one has to descend a few stairs to approach the grave.

The core monument is complemented by the surrounding greenery, and by ruins of a massive residential quarter with courtyards and verandas, and a residential colony, a gated settlement which was inhabited till the Mughal times.

Completing the experience is the delight of watching the planes from close quarters in the enclosure as they descend towards the Delhi Airport. The spot is that close to the Delhi Airport, yet retaining its pristine beauty. ■



Distance from Aerocity to Sultan Ghari: 3.8 km

History Meets Nature In The City's Heart

The Hauz Khas Lake, Monuments and Village provide a rich cultural and green experience in a day visit



For a traveller looking to take in the most of nature, heritage and shopping opportunities in a single outing during their Delhi visit, the Hauz Khas monuments, the Hauz Khas village and the Deer Park are an ideal spot for day-long exploration.

The originating point and nucleus of this whole heritage-nature ensemble is a man-made lake, Hauz Khas (ie special tank) that was dug up at the behest of Allauddin Khilji at the end of 13th century, to provide water to the residents of near-by Siri village. according to heritage expert Swapna Liddle, in her book *Delhi: 14 Historic Walks*.

While the dynasty fell, the successor dynasty of Tughlaqs, especially Firoz Shah Tughlaq, kept up the work that had been done by the earlier dynasty. Firoz Shah had the tank desilted, and had a *madrassa* built along its bank. The remains of the *madrassa*, with students' rooms, a few tombs in the shape of *chhatris*, and a view of the lake draw a large number of tourists and heritage lovers now. Firoz Shah's own tomb is located in this



premises.

The Deer Park is the second attraction of this itinerary. It provides a rich blend of nature and heritage. Amid the dense vegetation with native trees and shrubbery, you will chance upon centuries old ruins, invariably the final resting places of persons who would have mattered to the ruling kings.

It is from this park that you can actually reach the Haus Khas

Lake. A leisurely walk along the circumference of the lake provides a spectacular view of the monuments, just as the monuments afford a great view of the lake. The lake, especially a tiny island in the middle of it, is home to a large number of aquatic birds, including migratory ones in winters. The drooping branches of *peepal* trees gently hugging the water ripples and ducklings gliding effortlessly on the water surface provide a touch of serenity, almost taking us back to our childhood picture storybook days.

If you're still tired after this refreshing walk, you can head

to the adjoining Hauz Khas Village for a relaxed meal in a restaurant serving your choice cuisine. The village, a centuries' old settlement, has seen a transformation happening over the last three decades or so. The road is flanked by tony boutiques with artistic facades, art marts and cafes and restaurants offering a range of dining experiences. For even larger range of food and shopping options, the Green Park Market and Aurobindo Market in close vicinity are a great bet. ■

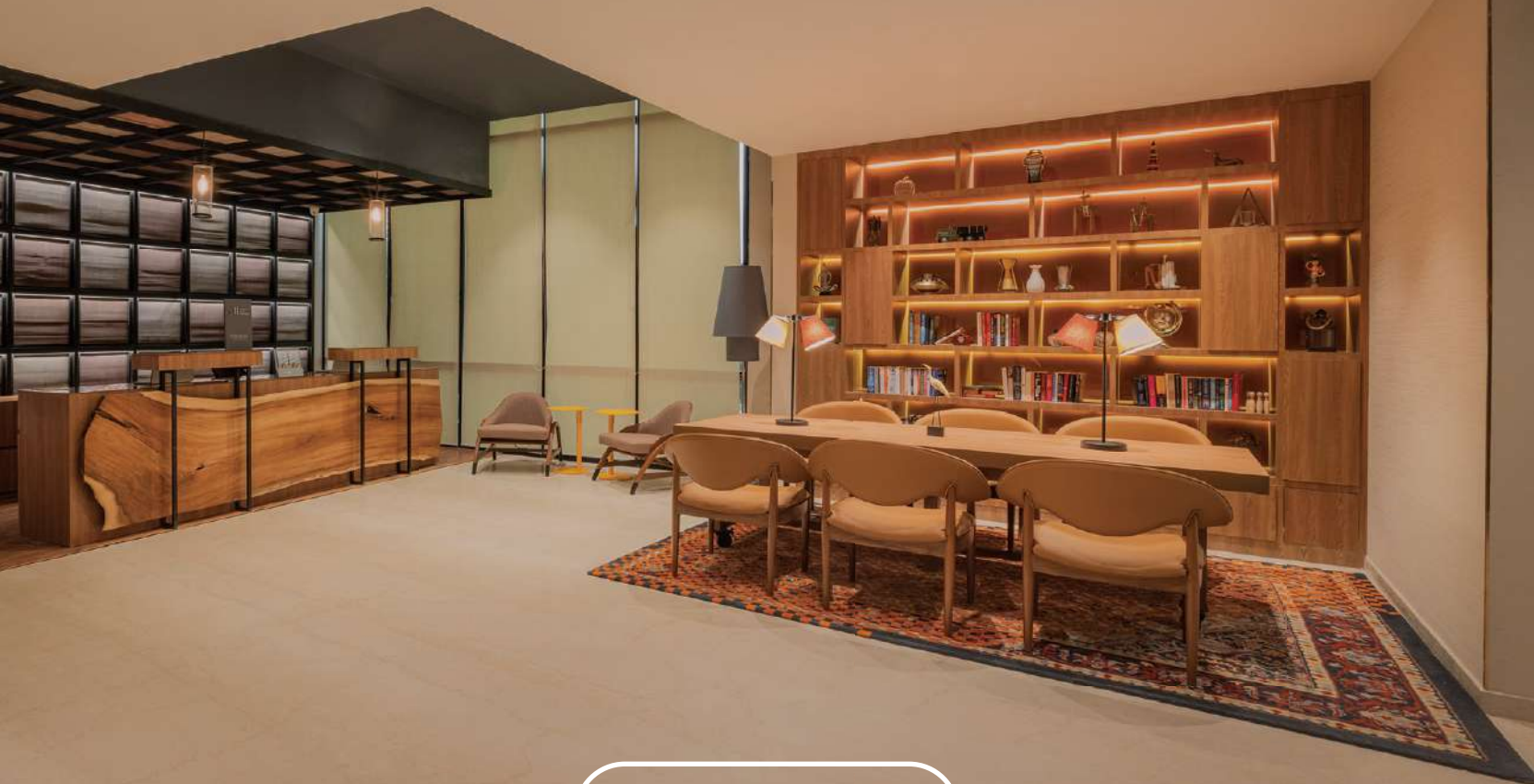


Distance from Aerocity to Hauz Khas Village: 13.6 km



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Dilli Haat

Open Air Celebration of Indian Crafts & Food



Nearest Metro Station: **Dilli Haat – INA Metro Station**

Launched in 1994 as a joint initiative of several government agencies, including the Union Ministries of Textiles and Tourism, and Delhi Tourism, this open-air enclave in south Delhi invites some of the most celebrated and honoured artisans and craftsmen of India on rotation basis. From weaves and traditional jewellery to toys, furniture items, bags, metalware, terracotta and papier-mâché, durries and carpets, wood carvings, and even pickles and papads – name an Indian crafts product and it's available there, some of it made by master craftsmen, in two parallel rows of shops. An alert though. Credit cards still don't work in many of the outlets so come prepared with other payment options.

The experience is just incomplete without savouring some regional cuisine at a series of stalls – be it *daal-baati-choorma* of Rajasthan stall, *sabudana vada* of Maharashtra stall or *wazwan* at the Kashmir stall. And if you are in the right place at the right time, you can also watch a dance or music performance on special festive occasions. Or else, just soak in the forever atmosphere of the place, amid tourists and locals of all age groups. The place is open all days of the week.

Nature Bazaar

A Movement Involving Craftsmen

Located on a tiny hillock at Andheria Mod near Qutb Minar in South Delhi, Nature Bazaar is an initiative of Dastkar, a non-government organisation founded in 1981 by chairperson Laila Tyabji among others. The aim of the organisation is to empower and mainstream artisans and craftsmen, and to provide a link between them and the urban consumer. Investing in capacity building and in innovations in designs, Dastkar has helped artisans and craftspersons to create products that have contemporary appeal.

And, as the name suggests, the bazaar popularises organic food and beauty products. While a few stalls are open round the year, the bazaar really comes alive during special exhibitions organised by Dastkar round the year. So, in September, it organises its 'Nature' fair, selling products inspired by nature and using natural material; in October, during the 'Festival of Lights', festive collections are sold; and during the Grand Handloom fair in November, some of the best regional handloom products are displayed and sold.



Nearest Metro Station: **Chhatarpur**

Santushti Complex

Luxury On The Lawns

On the round-about of Ashoka Hotel in south Delhi, near the Prime Minister's residence is the Santushti Complex, which has been a go-to place for the city's who-is-who for many decades now. It's a great place for leisurely shopping experience and soaking in the green ambience. Amid the lush green manicured lawns along pathways you will find a great number of boutiques, showrooms and home décor and furnishing stores, from Anokhi, Tex Indus, Christina, Roodraa, Tulsi and Bhumi for clothing, to Tribes of India, selling apparel to craft items, Shehnaz and Noor Jehan for furnishing and décor; to Modern Art. The Diggin and San-Cha tea boutique are popular joints among regular visitors. Remember to carry an identity card though, as the shopping complex is located in a high security zone.



Nearest Metro Station: **Race Course**

The Dhan Mill

Representing The New Ethos of Delhi



Nearest Metro Station: **Qutb Minar**

This address of uber luxury represents the story of changing face of a city. Located in the neighbourhood of Chhatarpur in a semi-urban settlement taken over by the expanding city, the enclave was earlier a warehouse. Now the same place houses some of the most exquisite displays in fashion and luxury, besides offering some fine dining experience. Strolling through the lanes, you will be awestruck by the magic that has been created through a change in space usage. Designers like Astha Narang, Abhinav Mishra, Mahima Mahajan, Sameer Madan, Sureena Chowdhri, showcase their craft at this address. You will witness some haute brands like Nappa Dori, selling bags, shoes and accessories; Spin, that is into home décor space; Delhi Vintage Co selling grand bridal *lehngas* and sarees; and Bloni by Akshat Bansal selling apparel in black and white. There are art studios like Claymen; photography studio Karma; contemporary art gallery Nature Morte; fitness facility CrossFit Himalaya; and Shed9, a great option to host events. A visit to the premises would be incomplete without having an experience of the F&B offerings at the Palette, Café Dori, or the Quick Brown Fox.

BIG EVENTS

Anywhere in Delhi

Impact Aerocity

Amit Rana, GM, Holiday Inn at GMR Aerocity, on his hotel's USP, and the great location advantage



Amit Rana has a global experience of 22 years in hospitality, including in some prominent hotels in Australia, US, Middle East and India. Based on his rich experience, Rana describes why the strategic location of GMR Aerocity works, and how the MICE segment will positively impact hospitality overall. Excerpts from an interview:

What are the biggest rewards of working in hospitality?

If you love the industry and the work, you can survive in it. If you don't love it, you can't survive. That has been the biggest reason why I've been successful. As a company, IHG is very performance-driven organisation. You perform and you grow.

How has the hotel leveraged its location in the Aerocity and what are the infrastructure advantages of this location?

Aerocity is the most strategic location in Delhi NCR. Not just within the country, but outside too, nothing like this exists. It's very unique in its offering. If you are coming to Delhi NCR for work in Noida or Gurugram, the most convenient location where people are looking to stay is this. With the offering of hotels, from big scale to guest houses, I think that this diversity does not exist anywhere.

And how does your hotel position itself vis-a-vis other hotels in this geography? What is the unique feature of your hotel?

Our inventory is 265 rooms. We have banquet facility, which is about 8,500 sq ft, which has multiple rooms like pre-function area and a terrace. That dynamic is very unique in terms of its offering. It's value for money. The brand goes a very long way back with its generational and emotional connect. When people started travelling, Holiday Inn was one brand that existed for a lot of people who did not know hotel business that much. This was a brand which taught people how to travel and stay.

Also, if you can elaborate on what are the major events in the national capital that boosted the business and if you can shed light on some of the MICE events that have happened pre-Covid.

Among the biggest events that happened here was the telecom event. Even though there was no convention but there was a dedicated space curated for that just opposite the hotel area.

But even events that happen elsewhere in Delhi, or even Noida, impact Aerocity. Anybody who has to take a flight, domestic or international, for them the biggest challenge is to be at the airport on time. It takes three hours from Noida to Delhi. If someone staying in Noida has an early morning flight, he probably would not be sleeping in the night. So they prefer to attend the event, come back to Aerocity, stay here and then fly off.

Post-Covid what is the strategy that hotel will have in the next few seasons, and what has changed?

Dynamics have changed phenomenally. Domestic market probably didn't catch our attention pre-Covid, but the pandemic has really taught us that this is an important segment to focus on. We probably were relying on business which was coming from outside. Covid has taught us that we were highly mistaken.

And will you be also factoring in MICE events in the scheme of things?

Even though we don't have huge convention space, we have a huge inventory and we support conventions and those guests who book with us. MICE will play a big role in terms of demand

“**Domestic market probably didn't catch our attention pre-Covid, but the pandemic has really taught us that this is an important segment to focus on.**”



when the Convention Centre gets developed in the backyard in Dwarka. I think Aerocity will get highly benefited out of that.

Could you tell us about the overall ambience and interiors of the hotel?

It's very modern. Holiday Inn has a very unique brand hallmark which includes the arrival experience, sleep experience, and so on. That's very connected to Holiday Inn as a brand. That promise is something that makes the guest feel that he's coming back home. Be it Delhi or any other city in the world, the guest knows what is expected, and that's the most unique part about the brand.

And what are the prominent food and beverage offerings?

We have got Viva, an international cuisine restaurant for all day dining which offers breakfast, lunch and dinner; Hanger which is our bar and lounge; and Viva Deli in the lounge area that has some phenomenal coffees and tea offerings. Soon, we will have a relaunch of Bella, our Italian restaurant.

What is the hotel's commitment to environment and reducing carbon footprint?

As a brand we have very strict norms and protocols. We've said no to plastic completely and in times to come we will do away with the culture of disposable plastic bottles like small shampoo bottles. We are also launching a couple of eco-friendly energy saving initiatives, including buying green power.

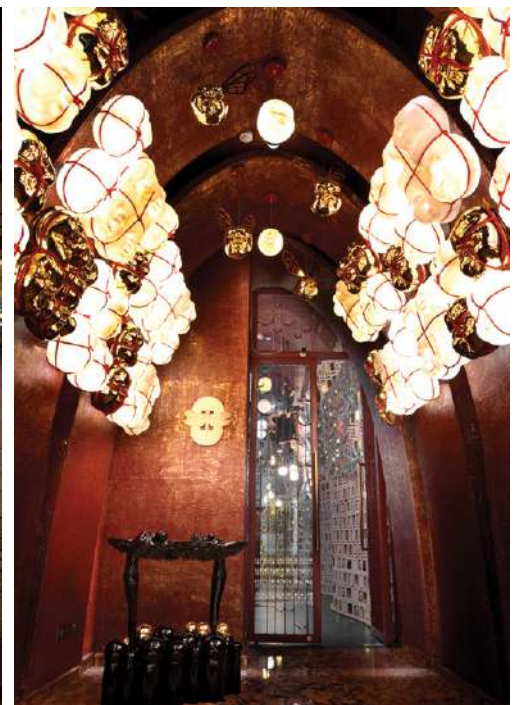
And what steps are being taken for inclusion and diversity?

Gender diversity is the top most priority in the hotel, so we've started working very hard on it. I'm not saying that we are 100 per cent there, but I can assure you before the end of the year we will have a very healthy gender diversity culture. ■

ENTER THE DRAGONFLY...

For a unique gourmet experience at this hidden jewel

By Deep Majumdar



As one of the most innovative and out-of-the-box concept restaurants in the capital city, the Dragonfly Experience, situated in GMR Aerocity, utilises the idea of loud music, theme décor and quirky drinks to give an aura of sophistication and charm, and infusing it with a lot of energy. The restaurant has a total area of 10,000 square feet, a ceiling height of about 35 square feet, and an overall premise spanning across three levels, each equipped with a bar, making Dragonfly Experience one of the largest restaurants in Delhi.

The resto-bar doesn't fool around and starts the attention-grabbing at the very beginning. At the entrance itself, reddish-brown walls laden with

artistically-shaped lamps direct straight towards the glitzy interiors of the Dragonfly Experience. Inside the restaurant, everything from the mirror work to the glowing LED butterflies sets the mood for a night well spent.

Ecstatic Ambience

The restaurant's décor gives the place a perfect theme that is suited for keeping guests in high spirits. The lively atmosphere in the restaurant-bar makes the guests drool with excitement and have a sense of ease at the same time.

The premise has a huge Dragonfly-shaped ceiling right at the centre, giving the place a theme that stays true to its name.



MD & CEO of First Fiddle Restaurants, Priyank Sukhija is well-known for revolutionising the hospitality industry in India with brands such as Lazeez Affaire, Lord Of The Drinks, The Flying Saucer Cafe, MisoSexy, Diablo, Bougie, Plum By Bent Chair, and more. With Dragonfly Experience, he intends to bring about another revolution.



Cocktails With A Japanese Twist

Dragonfly Experience takes their cocktail game to a whole other level with uniquely crafted drinks based on their 'Manga Mixology' concept. This concept focuses on implementing world-class mixology practices by Richard J Hargroves. With a vast array of tempting options, the restaurant-bar offers a stacked menu with 12 signature drinks.

The 'Saitama', just like the Manga character, packs a powerful punch and always delivers on its promise. The passion fruit can truly be felt in this citrus ordeal of a drink. The Shinigami on the other hand, once again justifying its moniker, is mischievous, witty, and quick on its feet. Gin, Japanese Shochu, and lemon infused with green apple juice, orange bitters, and honey. That is one concoction that you need to try. Last but not least, we had the All Might. That is a drink you get when Enso whisky meets lemongrass and Martini Rosso meets mausambi. A powerful, charismatic,

and cheery cocktail that smiles in the face of adversity, just like the superhero from the popular Japanese Manga.

Food That Is Worth Drooling Over

The old saying that the way to someone's heart is through their tummy is something that Dragonfly Experience seems to take very seriously. The restaurant's soul-satisfying food is all the evidence you need to prove this hypothesis. The chefs at Dragonfly have tailored a menu that flaunts fusion dishes from Asia and Europe. Some items that we recommend are the Charred Thai Curry Chicken, the Mutton Pad Kar Bao, and the Dragonfly Sushi Donut.

This is a place where your inner glutton will finally be at peace. The service is impeccable, the bartenders can hold a conversation, and most importantly, the food portions are huge. ■



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Festive Hampers at Pullman New Delhi Aerocity

This festive season, Pullman & Novotel New Delhi Aerocity has launched Utsav Diwali hampers with a range of seven types of hampers. The stylish and beautiful hand-designed baskets are filled with enticing Indian sweets, homemade chocolates, tea hampers, exotic nuts, incense sticks, an idol of Lord Ganesha amongst other delights.

Guests can choose from this exquisite assortment or tailor-make their very own festive composition. Exclusive bespoke hampers are available, which can be personalised based on guest requirements and preferences. Surprise your loved ones and business associates with a unique hamper that has been handpicked and crafted by our culinary artists.

- Readymade Hampers start from Rs1999/- onwards
- Customised Hampers - Price on request

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Dimsum Brunch at Pullman New Delhi Aerocity

Chic and elegant in every aspect, Honk is a Pan-Asian restaurant located in the heart of Aerocity, at Pullman. This signature restaurant serves authentic food from the major rice-growing countries of the world, including Thailand, southern and central China, Japan, Vietnam, Malaysia & Burma. Honk is particularly known for a diverse variety of dimsums, Sushi, and Peking Duck. While the food takes inspiration from the street-style cuisine popular in Asia, the presentation and décor are distinctly natural.

Honk, a popular favourite for scrumptious Pan-Asian food, has launched its exclusive Dimsum Brunch with more than 22 types of dimsums and starters. The launch comes with a bliss of unlimited servings. A perfect deal to make the Sunday brunch plans even better. Offered every Sunday from 12pm to 3:30pm is the city's latest eat-it-all brunch.

Price: Rs 1850+ Taxes

- Magazine readers can get 15 per cent off on Dimsum Brunch by revealing code – **GMR15HONK**



Himachali Thali By Monsoon

Monsoon, situated in GMR Aerocity in New Delhi, is a retreat from the fast life. As you step into a calm corner of the bustling commercial expanse of Aerocity, simply slow down and savour the rich, diverse, and understated flavours of modern and regional Indian cuisine. With beautiful hues of blue, the warmth of wood, and hand-painted murals of scenes from a life close to nature, Monsoon offers culinary gems, old and new, from across India that celebrate the very joy that the rain offers our Earth - life.

The Signature Himachali Thali is an ode to the culinary heritage of Himachal Pradesh. This preparation borrows from the rich traditions of the Dham Thali, which dates back to the time of King Jaistambh of Chamba Valley, and is still prepared during local festivals or weddings to this day. The thali offers an authentic taste of valley-grown red rice, minced-chicken stuffed *siddu* served with pure *ghee* sourced from the villages of the Kullu Valley, comforting *kaali dal*, and a special home-style Himachali Chicken Curry - all making for a beautifully simple meal that is wholesome, hearty, and one to remember!



Sunday Brunch at Farmers Basket

Brunches are a great way to catch up with friends and family. Pullman makes your Sunday afternoon memorable with a variety of dishes and refreshing beverages from all across the globe. So, whether you want to soak up the afternoon sun or enjoy refreshing culinary concoctions, brunch at Farmer's basket is what your Sunday plans desire!

From lip smacking grills and barbecues to live dimsum and sushi bars, Sunday brunch at Pullman Aerocity offers a variety of mouth-watering global flavours. At their all-time favourite farmer's table they follow a "You Choose, We Cook" concept for their guests. Here, they can pick from a wide range of fresh & organic ingredients, select the cooking & cuisine style – Indian, Asian or Continental and their team of culinary experts cooks sumptuous dishes as per their preferences of taste and spices. Most of the produce used in the dishes is sourced from our in-house 5,000 sq. ft. kitchen garden.

There are live counters for homemade pasta and Neapolitan pizzas which will be customised according to guest preferences. Not to miss is the live seafood counter and homemade pasta station, the finger-licking *chaat* items like *dahi puri* and *papri chaat* to *golgappas* with the option to pick the flavour of water.

Some of the house favourites to enjoy at the Sunday Brunch are lamb chops, nigiri sushis, pizza verdure, ravioli and Indian street food assortments.

Where: Farmer's Basket at Pluck, Pullman Aerocity

When: Every Sunday

Timings: 12:00 PM - 3:30 PM

- Magazine readers can get 15 per cent off on Farmers Basket by revealing code – **GMR15FB**



Grandeur's Bar Raised Higher

Luxury's new address is the *World of Valaya*. This leading designer's store is a testimony to his artistic sensibility

Housed at the JW Marriott Hotel In Aerocity New Delhi, the World of Valaya is a 12,000 square feet, two-story concept store that features the designer's three primary loves under one roof — fashion, home, and photography.

Designed by Valaya Home, the luxurious multidisciplinary space remains rooted in quintessential Valaya sensibilities. Every product at the store has been designed, developed or curated by the master couturier, reflecting the synergy of modern, maximalist, and multi-cultural elements.

Among the rich collections that the store showcases are womenswear & menswear collections, a couture museum showcasing single-edition masterpieces, a precious jewelry showcase, the JJ Valaya line of precious jewellery (drafted in association with Jagdish Jewellers Chandigarh, creators of the maharaja's jewels since 1866); and the Valaya Home section.

The interiors lend themselves well to the collection, with Art Deco staircase, Jamawar lobby using the original Jamawar shawls, resplendent lights and grand flooring. In addition, rare vintage finds handpicked by the designer himself, sourced from the Far East, Turkey, the orient and the interiors of India, as well as the complete oeuvre of the designer's fine art photography enhancing the ambience of the store. ■

“The whole concept of having a Valaya home experience as part of the World of Valaya is to showcase the look and feel of what our sensibilities can create in spaces. We are here to introduce to the world a VALAYA lifestyle in our own unique language of sophisticated grandeur. We strongly believe that whoever comes to shop with us for clothes would have a natural affinity towards Valaya Home and vice versa



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Sun, Sand And FIFA

Qatar is all set to host the Football World Cup. While there, visitors can enjoy the culture, history and adventure offerings of the country



When it comes to mega events, is there any match for sports, especially the FIFA World Cup? As the world readies for the opening of the World Cup on November 21, the host city, Doha in Qatar, is leaving no stone unturned to host the one million visitors who will visit during the event. The host country has revved up its infrastructure, built more hotels and has publicised the other offerings that visitors can enjoy.

This Persian Gulf country has a range of attractions, from museums, galleries and markets to sports, beaches, and desert safaris by the spectacular Inland Sea. For history and heritage enthusiasts, there are the Al Jassasiya Rock Carvings and UNESCO-listed Al Zubarah Fort too. The National Museum is an architecture marvel, the Museum of Islamic Art provides a rich insight into the history and culture of the region, and the Qatar National Library is a jaw-dropping



display of books in a unique design.

New theme parks have also recently opened, including the Desert Falls Water & Adventure Park at Hilton Salwa Beach Resort & Villas, the country's largest water park with 28 exhilarating rides and slides. There is also the Quest theme park, which is home to the world's tallest indoor shot and drop tower and the world's tallest indoor roller coaster.

Berthold Trenkel, Chief Operating Officer of Qatar Tourism, said, "The countdown to the World Cup is well underway and there's lots of world-class attractions to come before the matches begin. There are new beaches for those looking for sun, sea and sand, theme parks and water sports hotels for the adventurous, and lots of new resorts, spas and restaurants for visitors seeking a more relaxing getaway."

The resort is designed around the kitesurfer's lifestyle with everything you need for the water and even more when you are out of it. There will be a yoga studio, fully equipped gym, restaurants, pool and much more.

The Outpost Al Barari

A unique resort in the globally unique Inland Sea nature reserve. Surrounded by soaring sand dunes and desert wilderness, 21 luxury lodges with private pools will provide the perfect retreat from hectic city life. Stargazing, hot air ballooning, and immersive desert walks where you will learn about the local wildlife will be among the experiences on offer, alongside "Emerge in Nature" spa treatments and sensational culinary experiences.

New Openings

Winter Wonderland

Situated near Lusail City just north of Qatar's capital, the upcoming 200,000 square metre attraction will feature seafront chalets, restaurants, festival games, 50 rides, and cafes, bringing the festive spirit to the Middle East. Travellers to Doha Winter Wonderland will be able to relax on the beach under delightful average temperatures in the mid 20°Cs.

Fuwairit Kite Beach (FKB)

FKB is an upcoming state-of-the-art kite beach resort in Fuwairit. Fuwairit is a coastal village an easy hour drive north of Doha with excellent kitesurfing conditions thanks to consistent winds, ideal ocean water and powder-soft sands.





Shopping & Eating Ops

With regards to F&B, Qatar is home to a vibrant scene that weaves together a range of options – from Michelin-starred restaurants to traditional Qatari cuisine to family-style restaurants to casual cafes and eateries and moreish street food. There is something for every budget and taste. There is a plethora of shopping malls to visit such as the Al Khor mall, Galeries Lafayette, Lagoona mall, and Villaggio to name a few along with souqs and other markets that facilitate great shopping experiences. Then we just saw the opening of a huge high-end luxury mall Place Vendôme Mall which will house the best brands of the world in a French setting.

Qetaifan Island North

Billed as the first “Entertainment Island” in Qatar, Qetaifan Island North will feature floating hotels, beach clubs and a water park with 36 rides – including “The Icon Tower” zone, featuring an 85-metre-high slide set to become the highest of its kind in the world.

Set over 1.3 million square metres, the island is close to the Lusail Stadium, where the final of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ will take place.

West Bay North Beach Project

West Bay North Beach is an extensive new tourism development being constructed, covering 40,000 square metres of a premium beachfront in the heart of Doha. The public and private beach areas will offer three distinct beach experiences with a wide variety of food and beverage offerings, to create a sought-after city beach experience for everyone to enjoy.

Besides this, in March 2022 the 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum was launched as one of the world's most innovative sports museums. In 2021 one of the region's largest theme parks called Desert Falls Water & Adventure Park was launched with 28 slides and rides. And last summer the now-popular Quest Doha was unveiled featuring the world's tallest indoor roller coaster.

The India Angle

Popularised as a destination by an OTT show featuring Indian film industry celebrities visiting the destination, Qatar definitely has a lot of potential for Indian corporates looking at conference or incentive destinations, or for Indian families who are looking at a destination wedding. Or simply, looking for a vacation option.

And to bring home the point, Qatar Tourism successfully conducted its first roadshow in India since the pandemic.



The events in Delhi and Mumbai were attended by notable participants from the Indian travel industry, including trade partners, associates, and travel affiliates. Around 120 travel industry companies from Delhi and Mumbai attended the event, which aimed to connect local travel agents with destination management companies, hotels, and attraction operators in Qatar.

The roadshow intended to fortify and strengthen travel trade relationships to increase visitor arrivals from India. Qatar Tourism drew industry and visitor attention to the infrastructure, attractions, and amenities being built for the prestigious FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™, which Qatar will host in November/December this year.

Berthold Trenkel of Qatar Tourism said, "India plays an integral role to achieve the sights Qatar Tourism has set for the 2030 strategy. India continues to be one of Qatar's top markets, and we effectively engage with the travel trade on a regular basis through our agency partner, who promote Qatar as a major travel destination, both as a hub and a final destination."

He further added, "Qatar Specialist Programme is a brand new and interactive online training module that we recently launched. The platform, which is available in 11 languages, is created to help travel trade partners better understand Qatar's diverse product offerings while also providing them with relevant knowledge and a globally recognised qualification."



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14 flights in a week
i.e 2 flights on daily basis

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Covid Norms

Travellers must comply with the travel and health policy laid out by the Ministry of Public Health in Qatar. All citizens, residents and visitors need to activate 'Ehteraz', the official contact tracing application for the State of Qatar, provided by the Ministry of Public Health, which aims to protect and safeguard the health of citizens, residents and visitors and supports in preventing and reducing the spread of Covid-19. Everyone is required to have Ehteraz and show a green health status to enter the country and enjoy Qatar's hotels, restaurants, cafes and shopping malls. ■

Public Art Initiative

Second Edition of this Initiative showcases an exhibition of *Kulwant Roy's* photographs of pre-Independence India, brought to the light a quarter of century after his demise



Kulwant Roy was a photo journalist who captured some significant events leading up to Independence. Born in 1914 in Ludhiana, he worked at a studio in Lahore and also had a stint at the Royal Airforce as aerial lensman in Kohat near Quetta. He later launched his own photography agency called Associated Press Photos and shifted base to Delhi.

He was fortunate enough to observe history in making and the key actors behind those decisive moments.

A box full of photos and negatives with detailed notes lay undiscovered and it was only 25 years after his death in 1984 that this treasure trove was brought to light by his nephew Aditya Arya, himself a photographer.

The exhibition of his photographs was displayed at the Square, as part of the Public Art Initiative, launched in February 2022, to showcase a vast spectrum of art. ■





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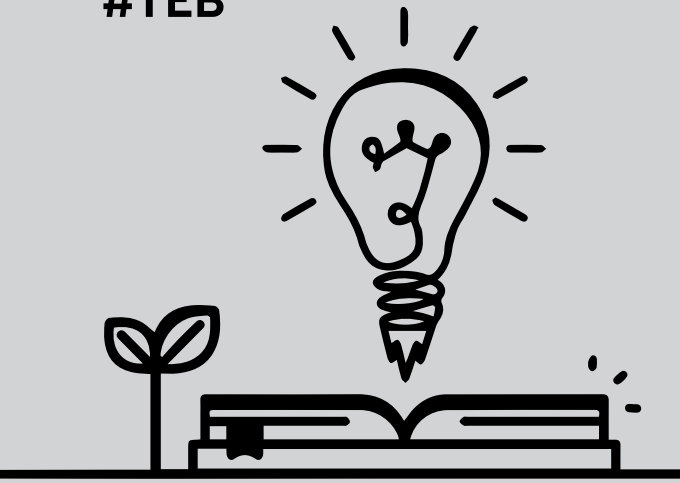
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PRIDE PLAZA'S **'MONUMENTAL'** EFFORT

The modern comforts offered by the hotel are aesthetically juxtaposed with the art work showcasing India's built heritage



How would you cherish an experience of sleeping under the pavilions of a medieval palace, or observing the intricate *jaali* work that was an integral part of the buildings of yesteryears? Well, that is an experience that Pride Plaza offers in its various spaces, common areas as well as rooms. This ambience has been made possible by artist Krsnaa Mehta, who has done paintings and other art works based on monuments of India. The idea behind using this theme was to create the cultural ethos of India and to provide right ambience to guests. And that message should come across in every space, including rooms.

Artist Krsnaa Mehta is known for liberally using the idiom of Indian motifs in items of everyday use, like home décor, fabrics, fashion, furnishings and wall decorations. His depiction of our heritage, including monuments, natural scenes and flora and fauna exemplify Indian art sensibility. Among the recurring themes are the panorama of Fatehpur Sikri, smaller nooks and corners, *chhajjas*, *jharokhas*, Indian birds and flowers and natural splendours. And Pride Plaza has very wonderfully incorporated some of these art works into its spaces. ■



AEROCITY Vibe Is Amazing

Actor and host of IPL's Extraaa Innings T20, *Samir Kochhar* shares his inspiration behind acting career, the travel experience, his impression regarding Aerocity and advice for mega events

Delhi boy Samir Kochhar did his schooling from St Columbus and BCom from DU, struggled in Mumbai to carve a niche for himself and has attained stature as actor and host thanks to his persistence. In an interview to *Aerocity Live*, he provides a glimpse into his journey, the travels that he gets to do, his admiration for Indian hospitality, including Aerocity, and his life mantra. Excerpts:

What is the inspiration behind your film career?

I come from a family which is very academically inclined. My mom is a PhD and dad is a CA. But movies were a very essential part of my upbringing. I would see a movie multiple times, especially those of Amitabh Bachchan, Tom Hanks or Robert De Niro, and I would dream that someday, I would do what they are doing. My parents were very supportive, and encouraged me to pursue what I wanted to do.

What was the challenge in the process of shifting to Mumbai?

It was very hard, being used to space and comfort of the city, being used to parents. I was only 20 when I left for Mumbai. I never envisioned myself as someone who will make the move. When I got the call, I initially lived in my producer's house, then moved to PG accommodation.



“In India we have the best hospitality across the world. There is a lot of love and warmth and that makes everything special.”

I had to make my initial 4-5 years really count, going from one production house to another. There was no OTT then, only films, TV and ad films and I didn't want to do TV. It was hosting that kept me afloat. You value what you have now, because you have been through that.

How do you straddle the two worlds of hosting a cricket show and acting?

I have been fortunate to host a sport show that's loved by everybody. Acting and hosting entail different skill sets, different requirements, different kinds of pressures. Hosting a show on TV, it's all live and one has to figure out how to deal with situations. You are talking to multiple people at the same time.

Whereas as an actor you are playing somebody else. You need to do a lot of study in terms of how you are portrayed, to get into the role. So, for my next role I am doing a workshop for a month and a half with my director, trying the look, and so on, and the shoot will be in Lucknow.

As part of acting and hosting you would have travelled a lot. So, what is your experience during those travels, especially your experience with hospitality?

Yes I have done several events in several parts of the world, and sometimes it has been very enjoyable, and sometimes very hectic.

In India we have the best hospitality across the world. There is a lot of love and warmth and that makes everything special. Our hotels think out of the box.

Have you been to Aerocity?

Yes, in fact I have hosted a show at Pullman a year ago. When Aerocity was coming up I was quite confused as to how will these hotels, so close to each other, be occupied. But when I went and stayed there, I saw the number of people staying there; I realised that the vibe and feel of the place is amazing. I believe some of the famous night spots of Delhi are also located there. And when I am doing an event in Delhi and have to do in and out of the city, I would rather stay at one of those hotels and catch a flight.



What is your experience of mega events, and what makes it a success, including also safety aspects?

A lot of work has to be first put in by event teams for formulating the look and feel for the show. You need a great team to execute it; you have to choose the right venue in view of the number of people you are expecting; you have to think in terms of camera work, the lights and music; there is a show flow that must be followed and there has to be a great attention to details. The emcee has to engage with the person not just at the front but at the back too. And also, there have to be safety procedures. One small error and everything can go wrong.

Finally, what is your success mantra?

I don't have a success mantra, but happiness mantra. And my happiness is linked to having good thoughts about life, and spending time with those who give me joy, which is my family and friends. If you are happy, you will find your version of success in life. That changes along the way. What I am striving to be is the best version of myself as an actor and someone who can deliver great roles. ■

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Mindful consumption- A true path to a sustainable future

By Luke Coutinho



Taking steps to live mindfully is admirable, but the journey is not without its challenges. Today, advertisers attempt to take advantage of our thirst for more in order to make a profit.

It is because of this that we have become so disconnected from where our products come from. As a result, our decisions are destroying the lives of people and the environment around us.

The concept of mindful consumption refers to the

application of mindfulness to inform the choices that consumers make in the world. One strategy advocated to change society, the marketplace, and individual well-being is to apply mindfulness through mindful consumption.

The global outbreak has made consumers increasingly mindful of their lifestyle choices, making conscious decisions by adapting to environmentally friendly solutions.

Sustainability and conscious living are two aspects of a very vast lifestyle concept. People have different interpretations of what it means, but at the end of the day, there is one common goal - a greener planet for all.

The choices we make every day have an impact on the environment and its inhabitants. Whether it is what we wear and eat to how we travel to work, every decision we make affects the environment. While the current generation is the most environmentally conscious in history, much work still needs to be done.

Here are a few easy ways to make responsible choices every day if you're interested in living a more sustainable lifestyle:

Go for Organic Foods:

Foods grown organically are produced without the use of artificial chemicals, toxic pesticides, or even genetically modified organisms. Additionally, when a product is formulated using natural ingredients and contains no synthetic components, it can also be considered organic.

Invest In Local Businesses:

This is one of the most important steps to leading a more sustainable lifestyle. However, it is often overlooked. Many smaller, independent, and local businesses are more environmentally friendly than the more giant global corporations, so supporting them is a meaningful way to become an eco-friendlier consumer.



Shop Groceries Mindfully:

It would help if you always looked for fair trade or organic food when you shop for daily groceries. Doing this encourages the production of eco-friendly and environmentally friendly products. Fair trade products are free of genetically-engineered ingredients and produced with limited pesticide and fertilizer use, making them more environmentally friendly and better for consumption or use.

Do Not Buy Products with Palm Oil:

When buying products, keep an eye out for palm oil in the ingredients. Palm oil plays a significant role in deforestation, killing and displacing many species of animals on the planet. Palm oil is commonly found in foods, drinks, toiletries and cosmetics, making it difficult to avoid and hence find out those products devoid of palm oil.

Reduce Your Food Waste:

If you are cooking for yourself or your family, prepare as much as you need. It is in this way that you can consume fresh foods and also reduce the amount of food that is wasted.

Consider Using Soap, Shampoo, And Conditioner Bars:

There is no doubt that the concept of bar soap is not new. With advanced formulas made with moisturising ingredients specifically designed for different hair textures, it is a wash-

day alternative that is both practical and earth-friendly, without compromising on the good stuff your curls need to thrive. Having no liquid means there are no plastic bottles you may forget to put in the recycling bin.

Buy Fair-Trade Products:

Look for fair-trade certification when purchasing items imported from all over the world, such as coffee, cocoa, sugar, tea, chocolate, and fruit. It indicates that these items are grown using sustainable methods of agriculture and that local people receive fair prices for their goods.

Founded to transform consumer lifestyle and spread awareness around wellness through fair trade practices, You Care Lifestyle is a curated e-commerce platform.

To promote sustainable living, the marketplace offers an array of healthy, chemical-free, and natural products under one roof.

Whether you're purchasing clothing, housewares, or food, it's a good idea to prioritise health and lifestyle. It is possible for your lifestyle to inspire others and have a significant impact on the world. By purchasing responsibly created goods, supporting our farmers, and refusing to contribute to environmental degradation, you can help protect our planet. ■

The author is **Co-founder of youcarelifestyle.com**

Panchakarma for Rejuvenation

Explore the benefits of holistic cleansing and detox practices, in the midst of nature

Consumers are increasingly taking their health into their own hands. These past few years, while unprecedented, have accelerated the growth of the global wellness industry; a \$1.5 trillion market with a forecasted growth of 5- 10 per cent annually. Consumers are looking at health and well-being beyond the conventional approach and through a more holistic lens that incorporates the importance of mind, body, and spirit for healthy living.

One such approach is Panchakarma, which is an effective detoxification method for the body, and the mind, which also strengthens the immune system, and restores health and wellbeing.

What are the five interventions?

Vamana: Expulsion of aggravated *doshas* or humours from the body through the upper route or the mouth by providing medication that induces such expulsion of toxins.

Virechana: Purgation or the elimination of aggravated *doshas* through the downward route or the rectum with the oral administration of medicines.

Basti/Vasti: This is a medicated enema, which is introduced through the anus, urethra, or vagina using Vasti instruments.

Nasya: Medicines administrated through the nasal cavity. This treatment is indicated in the diseases of the head and neck.

Rakta Moksha: Bloodletting indicated for treatment in the blood or skin diseases.

Benefits

It helps to gently clear the body channels. The mind and body are connected according to Ayurveda. So, what you do to one, affects the other. For example, if you are stressed, you might feel a physical manifestation of that stress somewhere in the body, or if you've had a great workout, your mind feels light and clear. According to Ayurveda, good health depends



upon one's body, and the mind's ability to metabolise all of life's experiences; both good and bad.

This is why digestion or *Agni* is important, as it relates to the metabolism of life on all levels. *Agni* means gastric fire, enzymes, and metabolism. It determines how efficiently the body can convert information in the form of food, emotions, and experiences into nourishment. When *Agni* in the gastro-intestinal tract (GI tract) is strong, everything is appropriately broken down and absorbed into the mind, body, and physiology. Anything that is not useful is eliminated from the body and the mind.

Then we notice how you personally metabolise the world around you and how it affects you.

You don't have to be sick to benefit from Panchakarma. If you're healthy, you become stronger, and increase your energy. If you're sick, it will slowly encourage you back to

health and wellness in the natural way.

Here are some of the benefits of doing Panchakarma:

- It eliminates impurities from the body and mind.
- It restores your mind, body constitutional balance, and improves health and wellness.
- It strengthens the immune system and thus we become more resistant to illnesses.
- It reverses the negative effects of stress on the body and mind, thereby slowing the aging process.
- It enhances our strength, energy, vitality, and mental clarity.
- It brings deep relaxation, and a sense of health and wellbeing.

Any person in the age group of 18-70 years can do Panchakarma, after a detailed consultation with an Ayurveda doctor.

Some of the other benefits are:

- Opening up of blocked channels
- Completely purifying the body
- Speeding up of one's metabolism
- Enhancing the strength of one's digestive fire
- Relaxing the mind and body
- Rejuvenation of the tissues
- Reducing body weight

In short, complete wellbeing can be achieved through Panchakarma.

CGH Earth Experience

CGH Earth Experience Wellness centres which are world renowned for their holistic and authentic practices are in some of the most unique and breath-taking locations in Kerala & Karnataka.

Sidarth Dominic, CEO, CGH Earth Experience Wellness, says, "CGH Earth's wellness philosophy is centred around



the fact that it treats the source and not just the symptoms. Our centres are in the midst of pristine natural surroundings which lends itself to the overall healing journey. Combining the power of ancient medicinal systems and traditional therapeutic practices, the Ayurveda and Naturopathy centres offer an inclusive approach to disease free living."

The Ayurveda Centres offer cleansing and detox therapies, corrective treatments for specific conditions, cell rejuvenation therapies and herbal medicines, Sattvic diet, yoga, and meditation as part of the course of treatment.

The art of healing meets the science of health at CGH Earth Experience Wellness – with experiences that heal your body, mind, and soul. Combining the power of ancient medicinal systems and traditional therapeutic practices, CGH Earth Wellness offers holistic healthcare based on Ayurveda, Naturopathy, and Yoga. It also addresses one's overall state of well-being through experiences that are fulfilling and enriching for the self.

With a credible background spanning over five decades in offering uniquely immersive travel experiences, CGH Earth diversified into wellness with the start of Ayurveda Healthcare 17 years back at Kalari Kovilakom, followed by Kalari Rasayana. Subsequently, Prakriti Shakti was started in 2018, which offers naturopathy healthcare, another system of holistic healing with roots in indigenous wisdom. These centres are certified and accredited by National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare providers (NABH). While the Ayurveda and Naturopathy healing centres primarily addressed the body, SwaSwara was CGH Earth's quest towards redefining the meaning of a true holiday. Embraced by the wilderness on the seashore of Om beach, SwaSwara addressed the mind by offering rejuvenating and immersive experiences to release, re-focus, and recalibrate the self. ■



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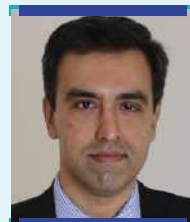
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Events & Exhibitions

1. It was at the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago that Vivekananda gave his famous speech, introducing Hinduism to the US. Which city hosted the World Congress of Religions in 2012 to commemorate 150 years of Vivekananda?

- a. Washington DC
- b. New York
- c. Chicago
- d. New Delhi

2. India last won its last hockey gold (its 6th consecutive one) in the Moscow Olympics event held in the year that was boycotted by the western block.

- a. 1976
- b. 1980
- c. 1984
- d. 1988

3. The Academy Awards, first presented in 1929 and first televised in 1953, have had their share of criticism over the decades over inclusivity. Hattie McDaniels, the first African-American to win an Oscar for the role of Nanny in an epic 1939 movie, sat segregated at the Award show in 1940. Which movie was this?

- a. Adventure in Sahara
- b. Adventures of Marco Polo
- c. Cowboy from Brooklyn
- d. Gone with the Wind

4. While the Frankfurt Book Fair is the biggest book fair globally, the city of Guadalajara hosts its country's book fair for Spanish publishing. Which country are we talking about?

- a. Cuba
- b. Chile
- c. Guatemala
- d. Mexico

5. Literary fests are not without fireworks. In the International Festival of Indian Literature in 2002, this Nobel Prize winning author sparred with author Nayantara Sahgal, saying, "My life is short. I can't listen to banality." Name him.

- a. Amartya Sen
- b. Günter Grass
- c. VS Naipaul
- d. Gabriel García Márquez

6. WorldSkills is a global bi-annual skills competition, in wide-ranging areas of skills, from baking and jewellery to cloud computing and cyber security. The 2022 event is being held as a special edition with events spread across 15 countries as the host city is reeling under fresh Covid wave. Which city was the original venue?

- a. Shanghai
- b. Beijing
- c. Tokyo
- d. Kuala Lumpur

7. The Kumbh, held once every four years, sees humongous gatherings of people. In the 2019 Kumbh at Allahabad, more than 20 crore people visited Prayagraj, the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati. The other kumbh events are at Haridwar on the Ganges, Ujjain on Shipra River and Nashik on

- a. Krishna
- b. Cauvery
- c. Godavari
- d. Mahanadi

8. The foundation stone laying ceremony of this premium university of India in 1916 was blessed by Viceroy Lord Hardinge, who laid the foundation stone, Maharaja of Darbhanga and Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi, who was starting to emerge as a leader with potential, made a point on the heavy police cover for the occasion and expressed anguish that he was made to deliver the speech in a language that was foreign to him. Name the University.

- a. Jamia Millia Islamia
- b. Banaras Hindu University
- c. University of Delhi
- d. Panjab University

9. While Konark and Khajuraho are prominent locations for dance festivals, a few other tourism sites are also associated with dance festivals. Which of the cities is not associated with a dance festival?

- a. Indore, Madhya Pradesh
- b. Sirpur, Chhattisgarh
- c. Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu
- d. Mukteshwar, Odisha

10. Political rallies and marches across the world have been major events in themselves, seeing congregation of protesters for weeks or months at end, like the Arab Spring (2010), Tiananmen Square (1989), the Long March in China (1934-35), and the Anna Hazare Movement (2011). The 1963 March on Washington was led by which legendary figure?

- a. Rosa Parks
- b. Martin Luther King
- c. Harry Hay
- d. Dorothy Height

Answer key

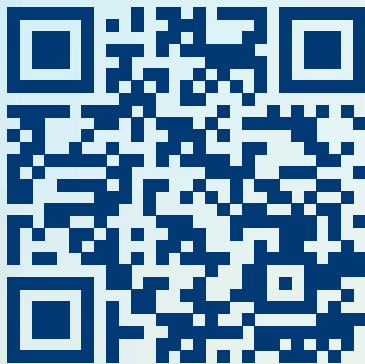
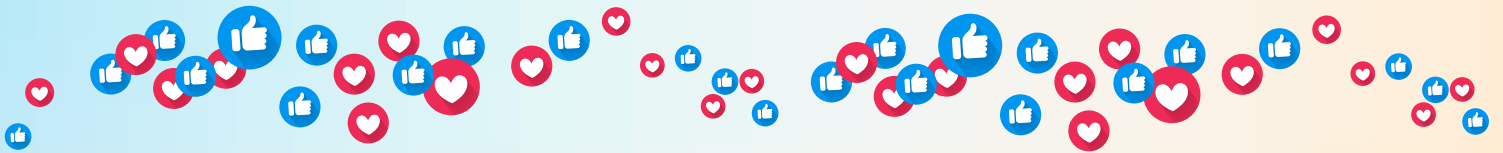
- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Washington DC | 6. Shanghai |
| 2. 1980 | 7. Godavari |
| 3. Gone with the Wind | 8. Banaras Hindu University |
| 4. Mexico | 9. Indore, Madhya Pradesh |
| 5. VS Naipaul | 10. Martin Luther King |



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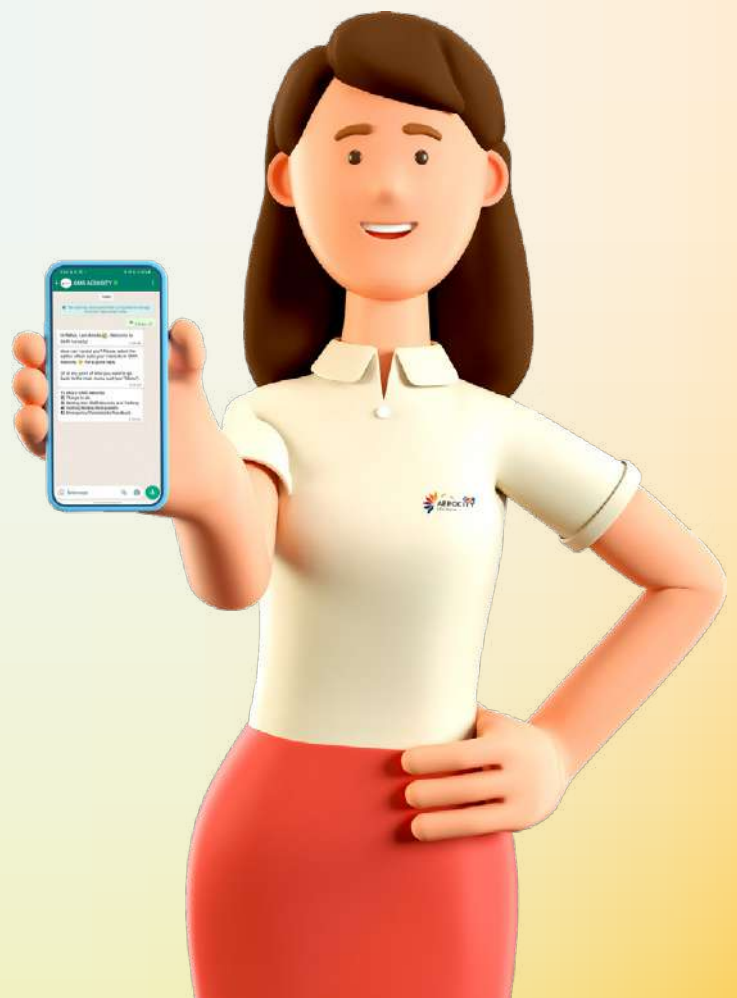


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