

# INDO ASIA DAIRIES

Issue 21 | Dec 2016



*INDO ASIA TOURS*

Since 1987

FRAMED

CROSSING  
CULTURES

TOP  
SPOT

NEWS  
& VIEWS

IA SAYS





Tony Deemer

*It was Melissa's first trip to India in January 2012 and most of it was themed after the wildlife parks of North India. **So serene were the saal, teak and mixed forests that just the company of the forests seemed cathartic.** And then there was the thrill of tracking the wildlife in the jungles on early morning safaris in the mist. She was grateful not to be hooked to the idea of sighting a tiger, and instead kept her eyes peeled for birds, reptiles and other animals. **She became an ardent fan of the Indian forested landscape when she spotted a pack of dholes (wild dogs) ravaging a deer. Of the ten or twelve, one of them sat away from the action, guarding the party. What a fine understanding.** This picture has been forever etched in her memory urging her to come each winter to explore the jungles of India.*



NUDGE THE STORYTELLER IN YOU  
TO SUBMIT A PHOTOGRAPH FROM  
YOUR TRAVELS AND WIN A TRIP TO  
EXPLORE THE MARVELS OF INDIA.

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FRAMED

## A DHOLE WAITS ON THE REST OF THE PACK

Photo Location : Ranthambore National Park, Rajasthan





Jeep Safari Ranthambore National Park

# CROSSING CULTURES

## THE BEST WILDLIFE EXPERIENCES OF RAJASTHAN

### MORE THAN PALACES AND FORTS

While Rajasthan holds sway in the number of palaces and forts that dot the state, the wildlife experiences here cannot be ignored. *The far stretched boundaries of the vast state hold in them the timeless secrets of the jungles. In the company of towering trees and near-opaque foliage, one feels enveloped in the arms of nature.* This cathartic experience is offered at more than 15 national parks and sanctuaries of the state. Here are our top five picks.

#### Ranthambore National Park

Located in the Sawai Madhopur district of Rajasthan, Ranthambore is one of the most popular sanctuaries of not only the state, but also the country. *Home to a robust tiger population and a declared Tiger Reserve, the sanctuary lies on a plateau and is skirted by the Chambal and Banas Rivers on either side. Apart from the tigers, visitors can hope to spot deer (chital), sloth bears, hyenas, sambars, wild boars, black bucks (nilgai) and leopards.* The foliage in the winter and early summer months is ideal to spot the tigers as the leaves turn sparse and the visibility heightens.

#### Sariska National Park

*Once the hunting grounds of the royals, Sariska Tiger Reserve now holds a different tenor. It is one of the best places in India to spot wildlife in the midst of the forest that is largely comprised of dry deciduous forests, scrub thorn and grasses.* The park lies as a part of the Aravalli Range with stunning scapes that offer the photographers plenty of opportunities. Sariska is well-known for its avian population, especially crested serpent eagle, golden backed woodpecker, tree pie, sand grouse, bush quail, grey partridge, peafowl and more. *The reserve also has remains of a number of historical sites like the Kankanwadi Fort, the Pandupol Hills and the Hanuman Temple on the Pandupol Hill.*

#### Keoladeo Ghana Bird Sanctuary

Many still refer to this wildlife reserve as the Bharatpur



#### Keoladeo Ghana Bird Sanctuary

bird sanctuary. The former has not faded from the memory and neither has the importance of this sanctuary for a number of migratory birds during the hibernation season. *Bharatpur hosts more than 230 species of birds, many of them taking advantage of the tropical climate of the country.*

#### Desert National Sanctuary

Make Jaisalmer as the springboard for the Desert National Park, one of the largest in the country at 3162 square kilometres. *In its vast sand dune dotted area, find commonly sighted birds such as the endangered Great Indian Bustard, sand grouse, kestrels, falcons, spotted eagles, tawny eagles, short toed eagles, vultures, buzzards, falcons, harriers and eagles.* Amongst the animals, the chinkara, black bucks, hedgehogs, wolves, desert cats, Bengal foxes and desert foxes are easily spotted.

#### Kumbalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary

*Stand atop the Kumbhalgarh Fort to see the sprawl of green hills below. These make for the 578sq km of forested land, a namesake of the fort.* A population of wild hare, chinkara, four horned antelopes, nilgai, sambhar, jungle cats, hyenas, sloth bears, leopards and wolves are found in this jungle. The scenic beauty of the forest amplifies a visit to the fort that stands as an oasis in the middle of the forest.





# *Anuraga Palace* *A Tree House Palace Hotel*

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*Offering an exquisite experience of royal Rajasthan on the fringes of the Ranthambore forest, Anuraga Palace promises best of both worlds. The upscale retreat is a sanctuary for wildlife lovers who don't want to stay too far from comfort.*

**Highlights include:**

- Enjoy in the meticulously recreated royal ambience
- Stay a tiger's roar away from the jungle
- In-between the safaris unwind at the pool and spa
- Experience an evergreen spring in the in-house restaurant with the same name.
- Let the children whet their love for the outdoors in a safe environ.
- Host large –scale events and conferences at the hotel

**TOP  
SPOT**

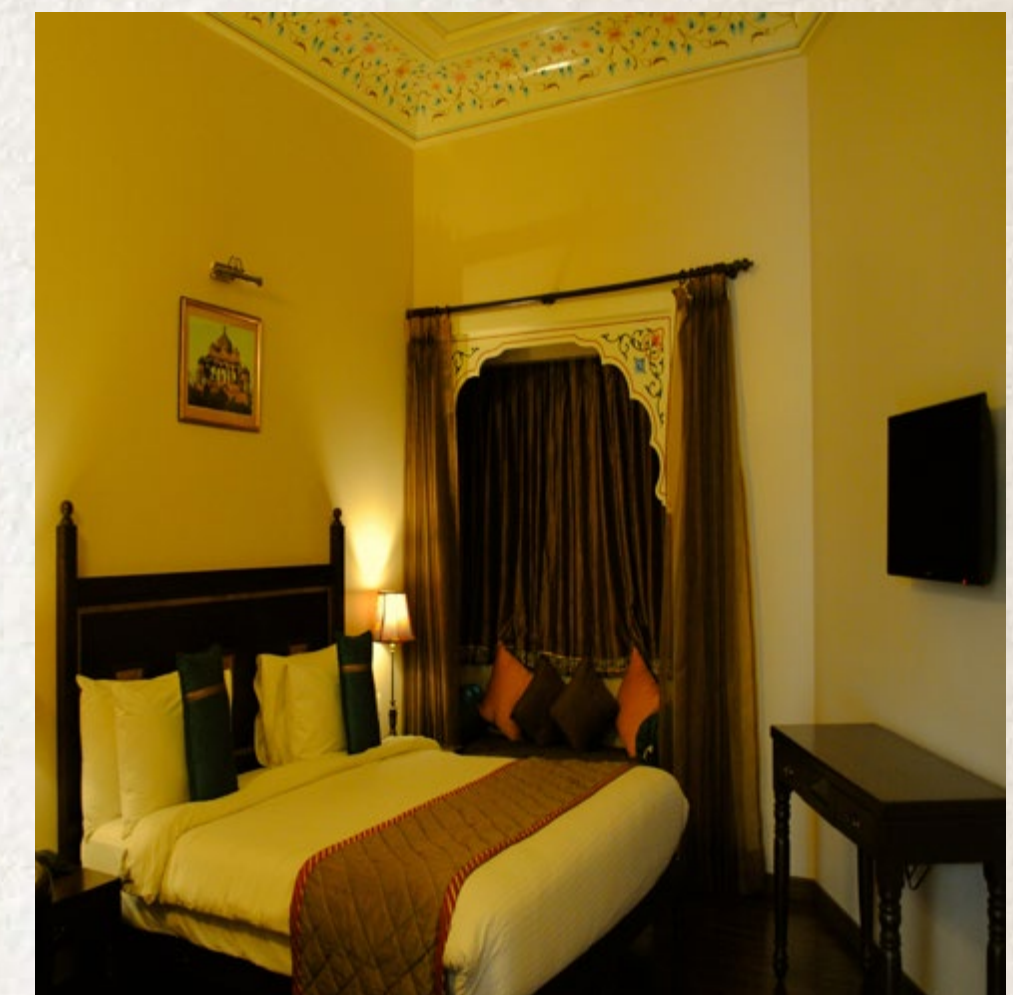
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**INDO ASIA TOURS**





SUPRIYA SEHGAL

# Footloose in Ranthambore

Beastly tales of the Jungle

*Ranthambore had been on the list for Supriya for a long time. Eager to see the wealth of the forest and places close by, she landed up in Sawai Madhopur last January and whetted these tips for us. It's not only the iconic forest that intrigues the travellers but also the villages close by and the experiences thanks to the atmospheric accommodations in town. Here are her top five picks to see and do near Ranthambore..*

## Safari

Naturally, on top of the list is the fist motive to go to Ranthambore – the wildlife safaris to spot animals and birds. Book a gypsy at the forest office or better still, let your accommodation take care of it. ***The best part of the safari is the muddy trail, on which the Gypsies bump along, breaking slowly to gauge a rustle in the bushes or let a family of nervous deer cross in front.*** With you, sits a forest guard who has ample stories from the jungle.



## Ranthambore Fort

Many centuries ago, the region was ruled by Kings, the remnants of which still lie here in the form of ruins of forts. The Ranthambore Fort stands in the middle of the reserve. Prior permission is required to get off the Gypsy and trek till the fort. Ensure that you take a guide and a forest guard with you. ***Watching deer, sambhar, peacocks and many birds is even better when you're walking through the jungle on foot. The fort is a reminder of the royal lineage of Sawai Madhopur. The Ganesh temple inside still holds the draw card for the spiritual.***



## Dastkar

***Ranthambore's craft backdrop is equally important as the forest, and making a massive effort in collating the various handicrafts of the region is an organization called Dastkar.*** You can shop at the store in Sawai Madhopur town. Find unique tiger and wildlife themed home furnishings, paintings and curios along with Rajasthani crafts like tie and dye shawls, bedcovers, wall hangings and other things.

## Kacheeda Valley

Located inside the forest, this small valley is well known for its panther population. A jeep safari is the only way to get inside this section of the forest. ***Since both species of the cat family cannot stay in the same area, the panthers hold sway here and the tigers are not to be spotted.*** You can also spot black bears in this region. Even though the panthers are usually elusive animals, the graceful cats have been spotted here many times.

## Surwal Lake

If you need a breather from the forested landscape, head straight to Surwal Lake, 25 km away from the city. ***Here, sit on its edge to see the reflection of the tall grass around and the bright blue of the sky. In parts, notice the shimmering silvery base of the water.*** On the banks of the Surwal Lake, recuperate, unwind and plan another safari.



TOP SPOT





## ITC's new address in Kolkata

A 490-room property by ITC is all set to open doors in the eastern city of Kolkata. ITC Hotel, Kolkata will lie next to the already present ITC Sonar and will represent the rich history of Bengal and Kolkata. ***It is being built with aesthetics from the colonial time, as Calcutta (former name) was the 'Imperial Capital of the British India'. This will be one of the tallest buildings of the city with a sweeping view of the entire scape.***



## NEWS & VIEWS



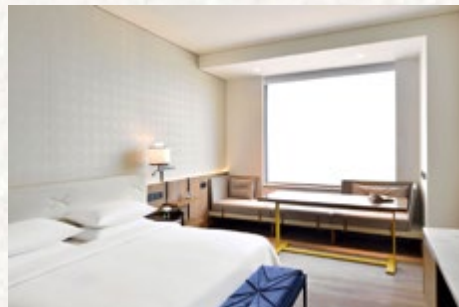
## India opens its skies to 6 nations



***India has signed open skies agreement with six countries. Jamaica, Guyana, Czech Republic, Finland, Spain and Sri Lanka will be the nations that will enjoy an open skies agreement. This was signed at the International Civil Aviation Negotiations (ICAN) 2016. The agreement allows unlimited number of flights to six metro airports namely Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Chennai.*** R.N. Choubey, Secretary, Civil Aviation mentioned that 106 countries out of ICAO membership of 191 countries attended the conference. India held negotiations with 17 countries and ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ was signed with 12 countries. India resolved major issues at these negotiations as per the directions in National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP 2016). Firstly, India renegotiated traffic rights with Oman increasing the entitlements with 6,258 seats effective from Summer 2017, as the existing entitlements were nearly exhausted. The points of call remained unchanged. India agreed with Saudi Arabia to increase the capacity by 8000 seats per week from IATA season when Indian carrier’s utilization reaches 80 per cent. This was in response to the needs of increasing traffic between the two countries where Indian carriers have been utilizing open sky in Damman to mount more flights than the Saudi Arabian side. Indian also agreed with Ghana to increase the present allocation of 2 frequencies to 7 frequencies per week to encourage connectivity between the two countries. ***This arrangement will facilitate better connectivity and travel between India and the six countries.***

## Andaz Delhi Aerocity opens doors

Hyatt Hotels Corporation has announced the opening of Andaz Delhi at the Aerocity region of the capital. This marks Andaz brand’s first hotel in India and 16th worldwide. At the moment, Andaz Delhi will open with a partial inventory of its 401 guestrooms, including 45 suites. The hotel will also offer 129 serviced apartments. Other cities that have a unit each are London, New York, Tokyo and Shanghai. Hyatt’s luxury lifestyle brand is set to make its mark in India’s vibrant capital with the opening of Andaz Delhi in Aerocity, with a focus on local culture. Similar to the brand’s other hotels, Andaz Delhi offers fascinating experiences through the neighbourhood’s rich history and culture, helping guests get to know their surroundings better. ***“Andaz derives its name from the Hindi word for ‘personal style,’ and each location offers guests a fresh and stimulating hotel experience that fuels creativity and inspires them to engage in their own personal sense of luxury and style,”*** said Kurt Straub, Vice President of Operations, India, Hyatt. “The opening of Andaz Delhi marks a significant milestone for the brand.”



## India and Bangladesh connect via rail



***A new cross-border rail service to connect India with Bangladesh is set to be operational in January, to coincide with Bangladeshi Prime Minister Shaikh Hasina’s state visit to India.*** The

route will connect Kolkata with Khulna and will span a distance of 155km between Kolkata and Bangladesh’s third largest city. The passenger train is a step towards bridging a gap between the two nations.

## Two more hotels to Royal Orchid's list



***Royal Orchid Hotels will open two hotels under its brand Regenta Inn in Vadodara and Kolkata, expanding to 40 hotels.*** Regenta Inn Vadodara is located at Ved Transcube Plaza adjacent to the Central Bus Terminal. This is walking distance to the Vadodara Railway Station and a short ride to the airport, making it a convenient option. 94 well-appointed rooms will be offered. The access to Ved Transcube Plaza promises access to different shopping outlets, a flea Market, an Indian Heritage Lane, an Art Cafe, PVR Cinemas, a Thematic Food Court and Kids Game Zone. The hotel offers multiple banquet and conference facilities for upto 500 guests with state-of-the-art business facilities and Wi-fi services. Chander K. Baljee, MD of the Royal Orchid Hotels said, ***“We are glad to bring our brand of hotels in these cities. Kolkata has always been an important market for hoteliers in terms of both business and leisure segments. Whereas Gujarat tourism is already witnessing a boost and we intend to tap this segment with our existing portfolio along with our second property in Vadodara.”*** Kolkata’s Regenta Inn will be a budget friendly hotel consisting of 45 well-appointed rooms making it ideal for business & leisure travelers’ seeking accommodation next to the airport in new Kolkata city.





## MEET US AT



Indo Asia Tours is participating in the below mentioned upcoming roadshows in 2017. You can schedule an appointment at [marketing@indoasiatours.com](mailto:marketing@indoasiatours.com) to meet us in person at these shows :

- FITUR (Madrid, Spain) 18-22 Jan, 2017
- Matka (Helsinki, Finland) 19-22 Jan, 2017
- Destination East (Kolkata, India) 27-28 Jan, 2017

# IA SAYS



Many of you will agree when I say that a destination is nothing without its natural splendor. In fact, an experience falls pale if one cannot admire the landscapes and sights, which have nothing to do with human intervention. **To those who appreciate this taste, India delivers well – especially when you talk about its dense forests and the rich biodiversity.** I would like to put this in a more positive and informative approach – such as saying that India is not only about history, culture, monuments & religions but there is a waste area under green cover which also forms part of many game sanctuaries and parks. Ranthambore is one such exciting place or something of this sort.

It gives me immense pleasure to shift your gaze to a destination introduce to you a wonderful destination that I love and have a deep connection with. Ranthambore. **My relationship with the forest of Ranthambore goes back to the late 70's when Indian tiger conservationist, Fateh Singh Rathore took the baton of converting this region into a national park and getting it under the purview of Project Tiger.** This meant a whole lot of hurdles, which he negotiated with ease. He was especially well known for the relocation of villages that lay inside the jungle and ensuring that the locals have a buy-in to why this was necessary. **The process of educating them about conservation and moving them from the forest to take up something that gainfully employable was an arduous but gratifying task.** Till now, the legacy of the man lives in the success of the jungle. I deeply admired his work and got interested in the trajectory of Ranthambore from that period.

India has a plethora of green belts, replete with wildlife. I would then change the text to saying Aravali range has some dense forests such as Mount Abu, Sariska & Ranthambore. But there is something special about Ranthambore. **Apart from the royal legacy, remnants of which are still spotted in the jungle, this had a unique aura. It was a place that was (and still isn't) zoned into various parts so tourists could enjoy the entire length and breadth of it. It was excellent for photo opportunities; I myself propped my camera on the tripod and waited many an hours for the right time.**

**Ranthambore has always been a stalwart in its right and offered glorious views of wildlife and the jungle to its guests.** Now, the region is dotted with luxury and basic properties, giving travellers ample options and ideas to spend more time here. One of my favourites is Dev Vilas that is run by the honorary warden of the forest, Mr. Balendu Singh and his wife. Not one evening can be boring here, as he regales his guests with stories of the forests.

For me, Ranthambore is a constant on my annual travel list. As one of the most cathartic places in North India, this is where I can truly unwind in the company of bird song and nostalgia.

Gajendra Singh Panwar

## EMPLOYEE of THE MONTH!



Amit Kuriyal | Asst. Manager

Part of the Indo Asia family for over 8 years, Amit's passion for life is contagious. Not only is he an excellent professional but a wholesome colleague who brings a lot of fun to the team. He is an ardent fan of Pink Floyd and the more recent psychedelic music. To unwind, he takes off to the hills for treks and camping. Snooker features high on his list of interests.