

I N D O A S I A  
**D A I R I E S**

Issue 01 | April | 2015

YOUR CLICK  
CAN BE THE  
NEXT COVER

— **AND** —

YOU CAN BE OUR

**GUEST!**



FRAMED

CROSSING  
CULTURES

TOP  
SPOT

NEWS  
& VIEWS

IA SAYS



### Vikram Panjwani

New Delhi based photographer and traveller, Vikram Panjwani, lets himself soak up inspirations from all over the world – whether it's cinema, illustrious photographers or just simple lives of people he meets on the road. He picked up a camera at the age of 13 after seeing a war photography exhibit by Steve McCurry from the first Gulf war.

In the years that followed, he jumped ship from working as a visual effects artist to shooting documentary films. Photography remains his first love

The 27 year old is a keen backpacker and finds himself most comfortable on the road, with a camera strap around his neck. *This picture was taken on a clear day in a small village called Nako, where the blue skies were juxtaposed with their reflection in the lake without a single ripple.*

Vikram's work can be seen on [www.500px.com/cobbcollective/sets/women\\_of\\_vietnam](http://www.500px.com/cobbcollective/sets/women_of_vietnam)

FRAMED

## THE HIMALAYAN VILLAGE OF NAKO

Photo Location : Himachal Pradesh, India

FRAMED CROSSING CULTURES TOP SPOT NEWS & VIEWS IA SAYS



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



*A Kolkata experience cannot be complete without a ride in the yellow and black taxis*

**India's repertoire of heritage gems is so rich, that no matter which city you visit, you are bound to be met with a melange of cultural, architectural and ancient treasures.** It's this vivid charm that makes wandering in the streets of India so interesting. Kolkata is one such city that is bound to leave you mesmerized. Even though the popular sightseeing haunts like the Victoria Memorial and Howrah Bridge yearn for your time, it is the streets of the old markets where the true vibe of the city hangs thick.

Although it is difficult to spot the Chinese population in the city, a walk in Tiretta Bazaar in the Old China Town makes you feel like you might have time travelled into another era and country. Arrive before 7a.m. to dig into authentic Chinese breakfast at Chhatawala Gali. Sausages, prawn fritters, Tai Pao (bread) and Shu Mai (dumplings) are not to be missed. You can also explore Chinese temples complete with their red tapestry, candles, Chinese artefacts and innumerable images of Gods & Goddesses on the walls. Stella's shop of Chinese artefacts and books makes for a valid stop to chat with the third generation Chinese owner, Stella, and drift with her into a world of tribulations of living between the cusp of two cultures.

A more cheerful air surrounds the busy Bow Barracks where the morning promise bumping into the water delivery 'Bhishtee', who walks with goatskin bags, delivering a daily supply of water to the locals here. Water pipelines are still elusive to this area, but that doesn't seem to create a blight to the cheer around. This is also home to a number of Anglo Indians, who live in red bricked homes which were originally built for the army in World War I. Christmas is especially a great time to walk around and get an impromptu invite for a party.

Skimming through other narrow streets will bring you to the likes of a Zoroastrian fire temple in Bandook Gali or a



*Stella's shop is a Pandora's box for Chinese bric-a-bracs*

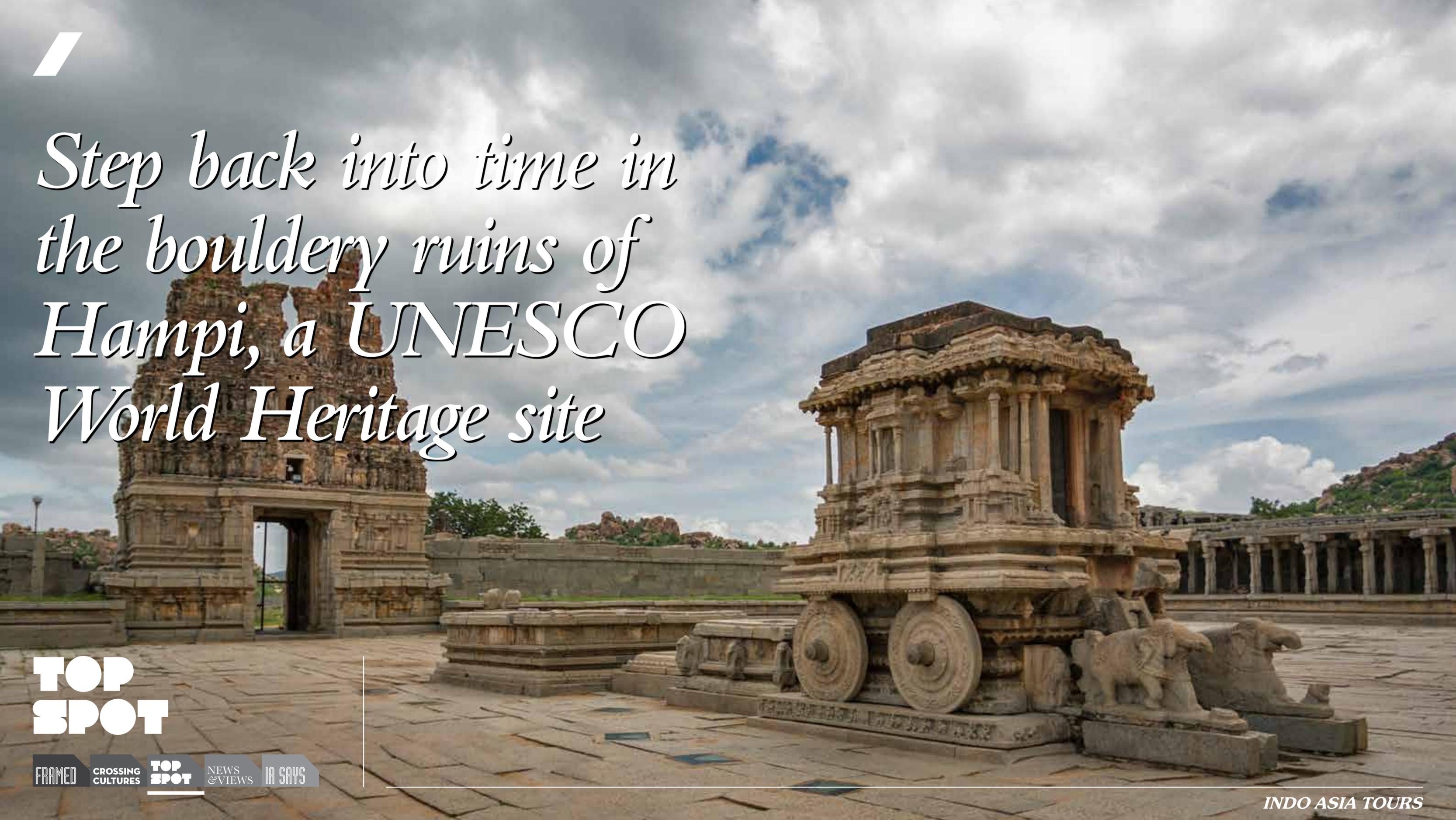
Jewish Temple, Jain Temple, a Portuguese Synagogue and even an Armenian Church on the way as you are walking into the bustling Chitpur area. The only thing that is recommended for respite is the slow but indulgent tram ride to cruise through the city, before hopping out again and disappearing into the streets.

*Other cities that should find a spot on your India itinerary are Fort Kochi and Mumbai. A mix of Portuguese, Dutch and Hindu influences converge at the satellite town of Fort Kochi, in Mattancherry. In Mumbai, it's the lure of the historic 16th century Mount Mary Church, Ranwar Village and the Bazaar Road to see the graffiti lined streets in Bandra.*

# CROSSING CULTURES

## TIRETTA BAZAAR AND OTHER KOLKATA TRAILS

STORIES FROM THE SUB-CONTINENT



*Step back into time in  
the bouldery ruins of  
Hampi, a UNESCO  
World Heritage site*

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INDO ASIA TOURS



SUPRIYA SEHGAL

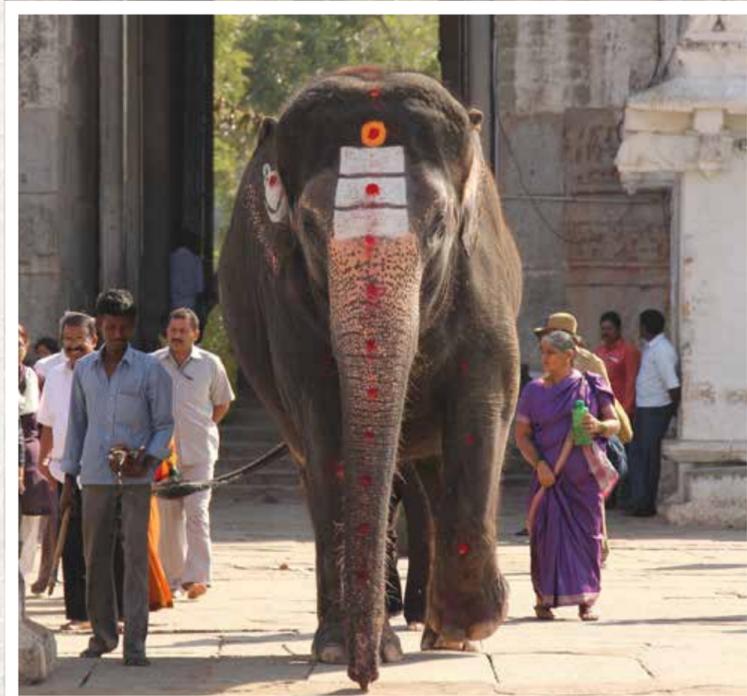
## Footloose in Hampi Journey into the heart of India.

A traveller for the last decade, Supriya started her journey from Bangalore, in an overnight train to the gateway for Hampi – a small town called Hospet. From here she head out to the brown scaped Hampi, with banana plantations and large sandy boulders flanking the road for 30 minutes. Once she reached the gate of the Hampi town, the old Virupaksha temple ushered her into thousands of years old history. *A wondrous next few days ensued as she walked on the edge of the Tungabhadra, spinned in a coracle and found serene spots that transported her to the Vijayanagara Kingdom.* The newly established Heritage Resort Hampi became her pad for the next few days, a great place to really soak in stories, after a day of sightseeing. Luxurious cottage styled rooms is where Indian aesthetics synthesize with modern amenities to make the stay comfortable. She woke up to the sound of birdsong or the intense silence for a restful retreat.



Lotus Mahal

The iconic bouldery terrain of the Vijayanagara ruins of Hampi are **UNESCO** protected monuments and structures. Add to this the vagaries of the sinuous Tungabhadra River, and the trip is bound to be exhilarating. Elaborate temples, now crumbling, still bear testimony to a time of grandeur and the adjacent village of Anegundi, the



Elephant Lakshmi at Virupaksha Temple

birthplace of Lord Hanuman, has a unique spiritual vibe to it. Ranking top on the list of her favourite monuments was the Lotus Mahal & Elephant Stables. Its blend of Hindu and Muslim architectural styles and sprawling green grass were the highlights. A morning climb to the Mathanga Parvath is what left her speechless. The city in ruins sprawled in front of her in browns with a splattering of green. A bird's eye view from here was breathtaking. In the middle of a meshwork of monuments and farmland rose to the Virupaksha temple. The young elephant of Virupaksha Temple, Lakshmi, ambles every morning from temple to the stepped ghats to have its morning bath. This ritual has slowly grown into a photographic event where many tourists wait for her each day on the steps. It is recommended to arrive here at 7.30am to watch her arrive slowly and walk down the steps to the river. Keep plenty of bananas handy to feed her; she returns the favour by a quick pat of blessing on your head. Other riveting experiences included climbing to the Mathanga Parvath, visiting the village of Anegundi and taking a 17km ride from Hampi town, to the Daroji Bear Sanctuary. Immaculately clean and well maintained, the sanctuary is home to 120 sloth bears amongst other animals and can be seen roaming a wide gorge from a watch tower.

In tune with its Bohemian status, thanks to the backpacking subculture that exists in the town, Hampi is sprinkled with small shack like shops for clothes and jewellery which define the shopping landscape. You can find flowing harem pants, string tops, jewellery and typical Lambani crafted bags at the shops beside the Virupaksha temple. Along these shops, a handful of restaurants dish out western as well as Kannadiga fare. While pancakes and spaghettis are common, it is the local fare like holigae, jowar roti, yene badnekai, shenga chutney, kempu khara and mosaranna that is sure to leave your taste buds delighted.



Hampi Ruins

All in all, Hampi is all about chronicles in stone, that too, ancient ones that are as old as time itself. For a traveller that needs a constant supply of stories for the soul, there could be no better destination that Hampi. This is true not only from an Indian traveller's lens but the thought resonates with world travellers too.

*Ms. Yvonne van Mierlo, recalls her time in Hampi as , "A stranger in paradise". She reminisces, "I have travelled already for so many years through India and have seen so much of Indian life and history but Hampi is a must. From the imposing Vittala temple, there is a historic walking route along the Kings Balance and other beautiful temples. If you sit on the boulders along the Tungabhadra River, a landscape of millions of years volcanic erosion sprawls in front of you. The grandeur and the enormous power of Vijayanagar kings, the common life of a big city with 500,000 people in that time and other nuances don't fail to mesmerize".*

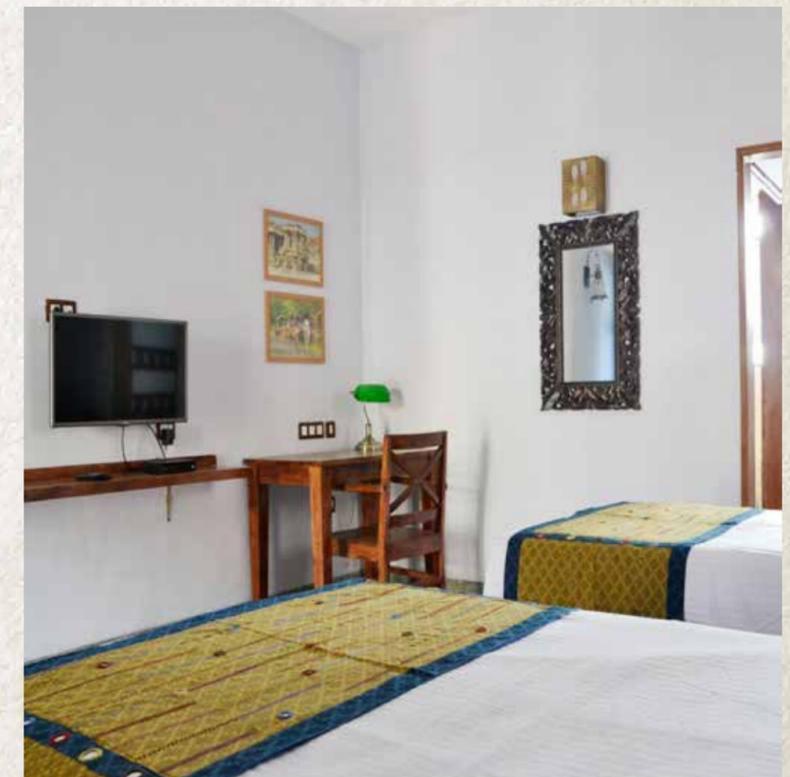
TOP SPOT



*Nestled between mango and banana plantations, the Heritage Resort in Hampi is the perfect retreat to unwind and get immersed in the epic views of the historic town. Ideal for families, corporate off-sites or even solo travellers, the resort provides a customised ambience for everybody.*

- Located 6 Kms away from Hampi Ruins
- 40 Cottages
- Suites with Plunge pool & Jacuzzi
- Multi-cuisine restaurant
- Well equipped bar
- Conference hall to seat 200 people
- Banquet hall to accomodate 500 people
- Free internet at public places
- Money exchange facilities
- Outdoor swimming pool
- Spa & wellness center
- Doctor on call
- Childrens activity room

[www.heritageresorthampi.com](http://www.heritageresorthampi.com)



**TOP  
SPOT**





Photo Courtesy: Yatrik Sheth

## Cheer in the Indian Skies

Air India welcomed its 19th Boeing 787 Dreamliner on the Indian soil on 24th February. This special delivery from Boeing's production line in Charleston, South Carolina promises more comfortable time in the skies for travellers. The twin aisle jet is a B 787-8 model that comes equipped with 256 seats in two classes, namely business class, which has 18 seats and economy with the larger piece of the pie with the balance. Air India now boasts of a sizeable fleet of 39 twin aisle aircrafts and has ordered 27 more to spruce up the ensemble. Air India

also operates 62 other models.

Redefining the passenger experience, creating environmental harmony and ability to achieve a more optimal operating cost, the Dreamliner is the most advanced aircraft in the sky. More so, fuel consumption and lower cost of maintenance make it an essential asset for air transportation companies. For Air India, this purchase marks an impactful decision to create superior customer experience and help the company keep an eye on the costs.

Some of the features of the Dreamliner include a spacious entryway, soothing cabin atmosphere with dynamic LED cabin lighting scheme, large windows for better view, state-of-the-art In-Flight Entertainment system, better performance in higher altitudes and larger overhead bins for the comfort of fliers.

## Upswing in the Travel Trade

With the new government's travel agenda being strongly focussed towards trade, higher footfalls and safety, the first heartening news came in the sphere of online visas. Dr. Lalit K Panwar, Secretary, Tourism, Government of India announced the launch of eVoA (e- visa on arrival), under which 10,000 Indian Visas have been issued online. Additional facilities include a toll free tourist helpline.

The roadmap will include suggestions from the industry stakeholders that are directly impacted by the policy. In order to drive the industry forward and grow it in leaps and bounds, it is imperative to bring about changes to the policy that was generated more than a decade ago in 2002. With the dynamic and rapid change in the industry, a step towards online visas is refreshing and welcome. With the rail budget announced in end of February, travellers can breathe a sigh of relief as no fares have been increased. New trains will be introduced only after assessment. Even in the rail sector, there is a clear leaning towards e-solutions.



## India records world's 3rd highest air passenger growth rate

India saw an eight per cent growth in air passenger traffic in 2014 in comparison to 2013, the highest after China and Russia. Global traffic saw a rise of 5.9 per cent, according to data released by International Air Transport Association (IATA). The passenger carrying capacity in India also saw a rise by 5.7 per cent in 2014 with a 76.3 per cent load factor or capacity utilisation.

## First Holiday Inn Express opens in Hyderabad with 232 rooms



InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) has launched its first Holiday Inn Express in Hyderabad. Holiday Inn Express & Suites Hyderabad Gachibowli is located in the heart of the city's IT and financial district and close to Hitech City as well as the

HITEX Exhibition Centre. Holiday Inn Express & Suites Hyderabad Gachibowli is the third Holiday Inn Express in India. The 232-room hotel also includes 39 suites comprising of 30 Junior Suites with large living and bedroom areas and 9 Executive Suites, with separate living and bedroom areas.

## NEWS & VIEWS



# MEET US AT



Indo Asia Tours participated in the recently concluded ITB Berlin, Rheingolf 2015 and the first edition of Uttar Pradesh Travel Mart in Lucknow which attracted buyers from 24 countries. You can also find us in the following upcoming event:

**Great India Travel Bazaar, Jaipur from 19 to 21 April, booth no. 99 & 94 and GET India from 23 – 25 April, in Delhi, booth no. C5. Asia Golf Tourism Convention in Jakarta from 27-30 April and at IMEX Frankfurt from 19-21 May, booth no a280**

## IA SAYS



*“Take home a slice of India- not as a tourist, but as a friend”.*

*hospitality home – not as a visitor, but as a friend.*

Each step taken in the country should result in marvelous experiences and indelible memories for the traveller, whether it is in the shadow of the mighty Himalayas or the deep southern edge of the country. The effort towards excellence is not only for the service towards the guests into our country, but the thought percolates all levels and touched each employee of Indo Asia Tours. We also encourage our employees to excel with the combination of independence and guidance. It is imperative that they enjoy work and strive for ingenuity at workplace and at their personal time.

We strongly believe in giving back to the local community in various forms like adopting an entire village in Madhya Pradesh, providing medical help in underprivileged areas and facilitating vocational training for kids in Udaipur. It is in these small acts that we feel that we can give back to this wonderful nation.

Sunirmol Ghosh

Indo Asia Tours are rooted in the world of travel, striving to blur the boundaries and provide access to world travellers across countries or within the national boundaries. It has always been our endeavour to strictly follow some key tenets since our inception, and believe that these will advance and maintain the standard that we would like to maintain.

*Impeccable personalized service of a superior standard through efficient operations is our first pillar of the business. We strongly believe and practice that each tourist in the country should take a slice of our*

EMPLOYEE  
OF THE MONTH!



Lalit Atrish | Manager, Presales

When off duty from his integral business development responsibilities, Lalit can be heard humming the latest tunes or planning his next getaway. The passionate traveller brings the same level of energy into the business as he would on a gruelling trek!