

INDO ASIA DARIES

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INDO ASIA TOURS

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SPOT

NEWS
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IA SAYS



Dipti Pradhan

The only thing that Dipti Pradhan remembered of her country, which she left at the age of 4, were the large eyes on the Swayambhunath temple in Kathmandu. ***Back from the United States to rediscover her roots at 24, it was the little things in the off-beat villages that really made her feel at home – the endless paddy fields, thatched roofs of homes, sickle and sack cladded farmers and kids playing on the streets with abandon.*** She once met a clutch of chanting Buddhist monks, who immediately flashed a smile and took her in as one of her own and offered a cup of tea in the monastery. This is one of the most heartwarming memories of her trip to the Himalayan home she sorely misses, back in New York.



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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A SIMPLE SMILE LIGHTS UP THE ENTIRE VILLAGE

Photo Location : Kathmandu, Nepal

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Phewa lake in Pokhara

Tropical summers of the subcontinent should not be a deterrent for you to visit the region. The foot of the Himalayas is where you should be headed and there is no better place than the small nation, north of India – Nepal. ***The dramatic peak tower over the spiritual capital of Kathmandu and other tourist gems like Pokhara, Bhaktapur, Chitwan and Dhulikhel. Expect to be in the company of great vistas and soothing reverence to the divine.*** Here are the top five experiences that would enrich the journey many folds.

A Palette of Greens at Chitwan National Park – A safari in the Chitwan National Park will put all wildlife enthusiasts’ curiosity to rest. The dense jungle can be explored in many different ways in search for the elusive one-horned rhinoceros. ***Elephant backs, canoes or the industry of your own feet can unravel the beauty in the jungle at every bend in the dirt road.*** It’s a near ethereal experience to be in the midst of a thousand shades of green. The elephant interaction can be in one more way – you can actually help the mahout bathe and feed them – a perfect activity for children.

Wonders of Pokhara – The reasons for Pokhara’s popularity in the tourist sector get summarized in two words - gorgeous views. ***It’s laid back vibe is a seductive hook to book a guesthouse by the lake and sit in the balcony with a good book.*** What adds to the charm of the placid lake is the reflection of the mountains. The mirror calm waters and the lopsided mountains in them make for a great photo opportunity as well. In the evenings, head to the many cafes that skirt the lake and also try your luck at the casinos.



Elephant back safari to spot rhinos in Chitwan

Feel One With Nature at the Gokyo Lakes – Not everyone can manage to do the Everest Base Camp, but you have a worthy alternative – the Dudh Kosi Valley which houses the calm Gokyo Lakes. The Everest doesn’t seem too far from here and one almost imagines that the peak would be easy to climb. But leave that thought aside and enjoy the view instead and the proximity to one of the most picturesque place on the planet. Since the lakes are located at a high altitude, a little acclimatization is recommended.

The Spiritual Draw of Bhaktapur – An essential on the itinerary for culture and history enthusiasts, the town of Bhaktapur fails to disappoint all who step here. The charming medieval alleys of Bhaktapur transport you into a bygone era, almost 5000 years ago. ***The intricate carvings on the wooden walled temples, a shrine at every corner and important historical relics are why this town is known as the ‘city of devotees’ or the ‘city of culture’.*** Add to this the peaks in the vicinity and the picture almost fits that of paradise.

CROSSING CULTURES

A SUMMER DESTINATION THAT SHOULD BE THERE ON YOUR ITINERARY

OFFBEAT IDEAS TO STEP INTO 2016



Soaltee Crowne Plaza, Kathmandu Pride of the Himalayan foothills



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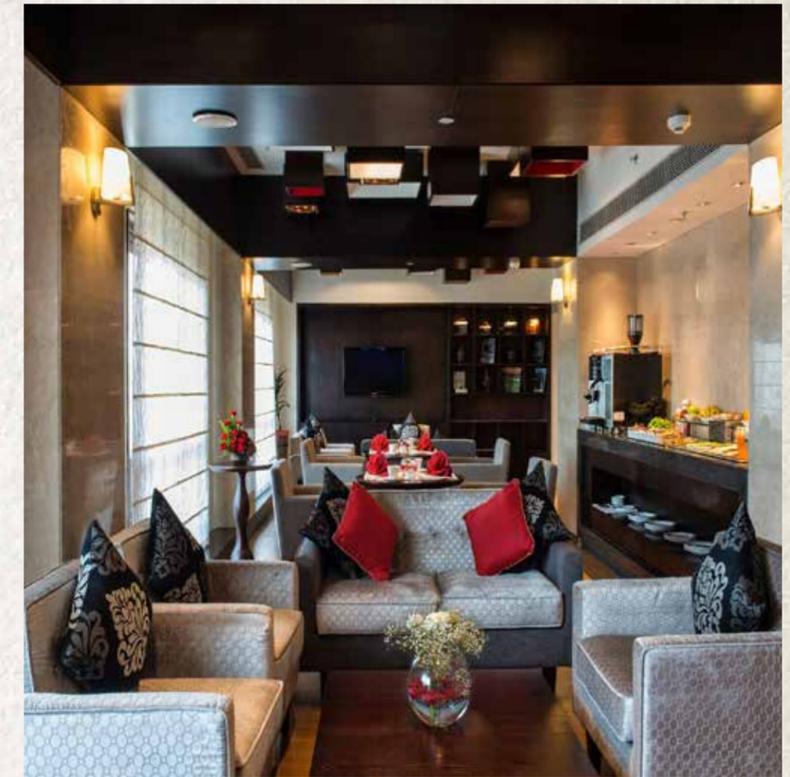
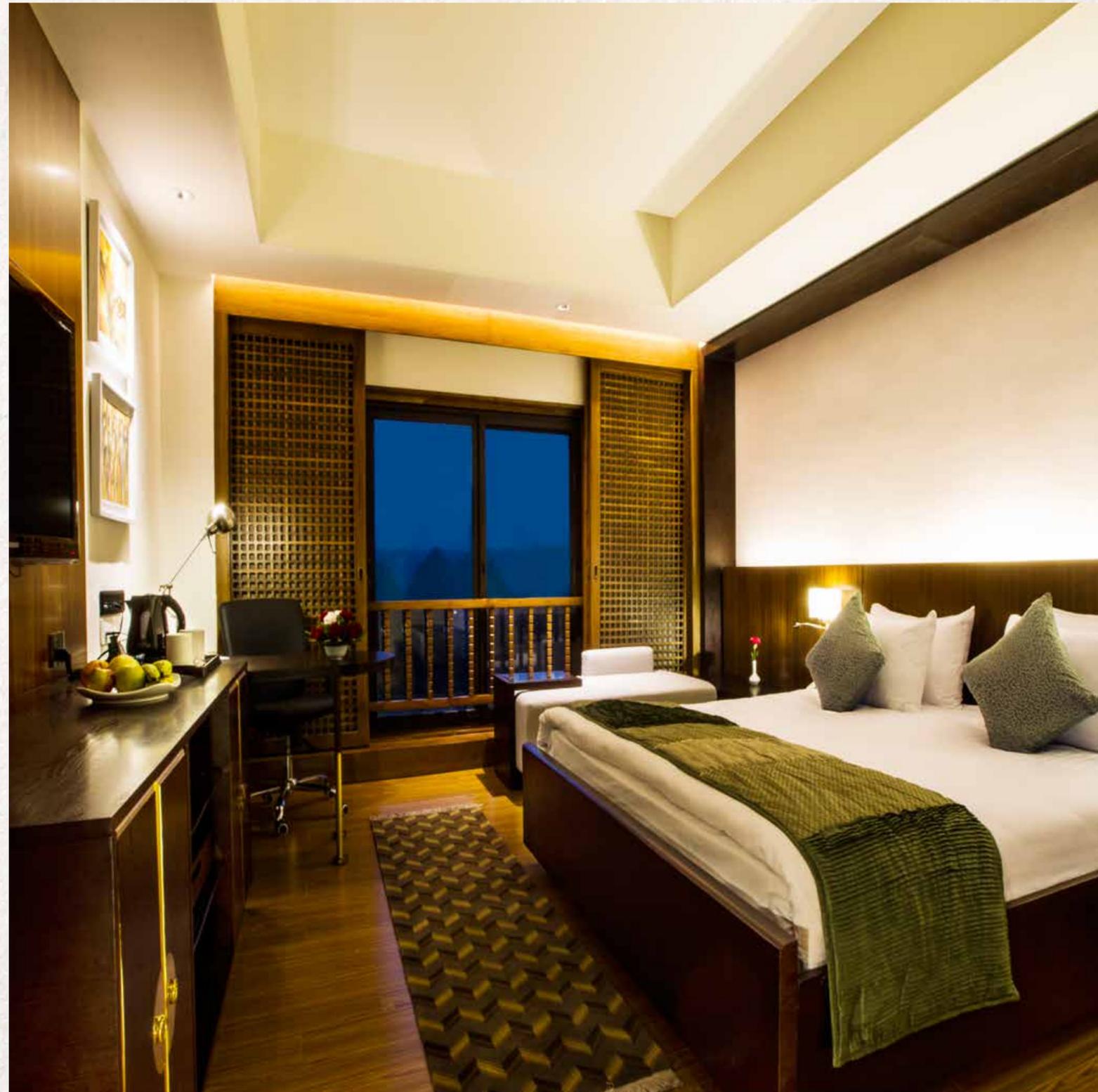
SOALTEE CROWNE PLAZA®

KATHMANDU

With many esteemed guests to their list, Soaltee Crowne Plaza has established that it is the preferred address for heads of states, travellers with discretion and those like to be ensconced in the lap of luxury. It offers the incredible combination of outstanding hospitality, a peek into local culture and international standards. Choose this as your holiday haven for a number of reasons – on property entertainment, spa, excellent dining options with four restaurants and a bar, and out of this world, comfortable rooms. A Stay in Soaltee ensures that your trip to Nepal is going to be an exquisite one.

Highlights include:

- Contemporary architecture with a local essence
- Vantage location in the city to access sightseeing spots
- Personalized attention to guests
- A swimming pool for a relaxing swim
- Outdoor and Indoor pool
- Superior recreation facilities
- Five options with local delicacies & International cuisines
- Dedicated 'Quiet Zone' rooms for blissful sleep
- An on-site spa for weary travellers to relax
- An overall immersive experience of Nepal



**TOP
SPOT**



SUPRIYA SEHGAL

Footloose in Nepal

Walking On The Wild Side Of Nepal

Imagine traversing the entire length and breadth of the country on foot? One would think that this is geared for exceptional adventurers or not made for the faint-hearted, but the walking trails of Nepal can be done even by those who are reasonably fit. Besides, what better way of seeing a country than a slow paced long walk, stopping when you please. From highlands to Himalayas, the county offers spectacular vistas to soak in. And if you're walking through villages, you can be sure to see local life at close proximity. Who knows, you might also get invited for a cup of tea inside a local home. We've explored some of the best walking trails in the region for our adventure audience. Here are some of the best:

Makalu Base Camp – Usually, travellers do not think ahead of the Mt. Everest Base Camp. Thousands of travellers from across the world want to reach here, if not the peak. We take you on a journey, which is away from this scramble. **Try the Makalu Base camp. This peak is the 5th highest in the world and offers stunning scapes of dense rain forests over steep passes, to high pastures below glacier-clad peaks. Heaven on earth.** Ofcourse, to traverse this rugged trail, one should go with trained instructors, as all you see on the way is a handful of teahouses and villages.



Mardi Himal Trek – Just east of one the most popular routes, the Annapurna basecamp, the Mardi Himal Trek is delightfully untreaded. Evading the eyes of those who want to just tick off the list, this is made for those who want an easy pace to take in the stunning environs. **The trail wends along small dirt tracks, through a magical cove of rhododendron trees until you climb out of the forest at an elevation around**



3,300 m. The landscape changes quite abruptly to a rugged high mountain landscape, but what waits ahead makes it all worth it - amazing views of Mardi Himal, Machapuchre, Annapurna South and Hiunchuli.

Annapurna Sanctuary – It is just not about scaling high peaks, it's also about being immersed in the local life of Nepal. **The Annapurna Sanctuary trek, begins from Pokhara, and leads to the base of this impressive 8,091 m mountain. It is a long trail of 8-10 days, but one that is stunning.** The sanctuary was believed to be the home of several deities, from Hinduism and Buddhism, but that has nothing do with the spiritual connection that one feels. If you love the company of mountains, this experience is a moving one.

The Humla Circuit- Humla is one of the most untouched places in Nepal. The villages here have never been inundated with western influence. The only tourists that one might spot are the on the border town of Hilsa in Tibet. **This is the old salt trading route that used to go all the way**

up to Tibet. Be ready to be mesmerised by the simple living of the Thakuri women in heavy gold jewellery and the livestock roam on the undulating hillsides with abandon. This is one of the most rewarding walking trails in Nepal.

Rara and Humla – **This is a special trail for birding enthusiasts as almost 250 species of birds surround the Rara Lake, the largest in Nepal.** The trek offers many deviations - from here, trekkers can head along the old salt route to Humla, the



royal highway to the plains, or take any of several adventurous paths into neighbouring Dolpa. This place is what adventurer's dream is made of – authentic culture, a wealth of natural beauty and the trails largely to yourself.

TOP SPOT

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Helicopter tourism starts in Madurai



Tamil Nadu tourism is all set to launch a helicopter service for tourists on the temple trail of the state. The Commissioner of

Tourism & Managing Director, Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC), said, **“Hopefully, we will be coming up with adventure tourism products like helicopter services. Right now we are planning these services between Madurai-Rameshwaram, Madurai – Kanyakumari and Madurai- Kodaikanal.** The plan is already in the pipeline and once a few issues are cleared, we will launch it. We also want to focus on rural tourism, especially Kumbakonam, Thanjavur, Madurai, Thiruvavur, Nagapattinam, which are less visited areas as compared to other parts of the state.” He also mentioned that the state is trying to develop beach tourism as well.

Look Forward to the Odisha Travel Bazaar



In order to boost the state’s tourism, Odisha Tourism has planned to organise the ‘Odisha Travel Bazaar’ on the lines of the Great Indian Travel

Bazaar (GITB) and Kerala Travel Mart (KTM). Dr. R K Pattanayak, Tourist Officer, Department of Tourism, Govt of Odisha, said, “We are still on the verge of finalising this but we are going to have it by the end of this year or next year beginning. We look forward to attract more investments and tourists through the ‘Odisha Travel Bazaar’.” ***Utpal K Pati, Deputy Director, Department of Tourism, Govt of Odisha, says, “We are expecting travel agents as well as tour operators and 10-15 states and Union Territories to participate in the exhibition.”***

Fortune Hotels add to the Preferred Hotels & Resorts List

Preferred Hotels & Resorts ***expands its partnership with Fortune Hotels by announcing the addition of seven new properties to its portfolio, bringing its partnership with the group to a total of nine properties across key destinations in India. These include Ahmedabad, Bengaluru,***



Chennai, Gurgaon, Navi Mumbai and Noida. The association between Preferred Hotels & Resorts and Fortune Hotels began in 2014 when My Fortune Bangalore and My Fortune Chennai joined hands to amp up the brand. Since January 2016, the seven Fortune Hotels additions to the Preferred Hotels & Resorts portfolio include Fortune Select Trinity, Bengaluru; Fortune Park, Ahmedabad; Fortune Select Global, Gurgaon; Fortune Inn Grazia, Noida; Fortune Select Exotica, Navi Mumbai; Fortune Select Grand, Chennai; and Fortune Select Excalibur, Gurgaon. Fortune Hotels, a wholly owned subsidiary of ITC Ltd, caters to the mid-market to upscale market segment in business and leisure destinations. With this addition, Preferred Hotels & Resorts has its presence in India with a total of 32 member hotels across the country.

146-room Grand Mercure has an address in Mysuru



Accor Hotels and Brigade Group, Bangalore announced the opening of Grand Mercure Mysuru. ***The hotel has 146 spacious rooms and suites and is located within close proximity of all major tourist***

attractions as well as the central business district. The sixth floor of the hotel features a viewing gallery overlooking the Dasara procession, which happens in October. Given that Mysuru is a central town from where many top Karnataka destinations emanate, the hotel is sure to be a successful one.

Golden Tulip Salt Lake Hotel opens in Kolkata



Golden Tulip Hotels South Asia announced the launch of its first property in the eastern region of India—in the city of Kolkata. Golden Tulip Salt Lake Hotel Kolkata is a four-star contemporary luxury hotel will offer 55 rooms. It also offers a multi cuisine restaurant and a coffee shop for both in house guests and outside guests. A variety of different styled meeting rooms make it an ideal choice for social and corporate events in the region. ***The hotel is located just 20 kms from the airport and 5 minutes walking distance from the City Centre shopping mall and activity hub. Given the location of the hotel, it is likely to be on the top of the list for travellers.***



MEET US AT



Indo Asia Tours is participating in the below mentioned upcoming roadshows in 2016. You can schedule an appointment at marketing@indoasiatours.com to meet us in person at these shows :

- **PATA & MOT Roadshow to USA/Canada:**
24 May-01 June, 2016
 25th May, 2016 (Wed)-Los Angeles (Orange County)
 26th May, 2016 (Thur)- Los Angeles (Beverly Hills)
 31st May, 2016 (Tue) -.Vancouver
 1st June, 2016 (Wed) - Seattle

IA SAYS



India's is evolving at a great speed in the changing tourism canvas of the world. **With millions of tourists stepping in to experience the delightful culture, forests, food, history and adventure, the Govt. of India and the private companies are striving towards sprucing up the infrastructure. This is bound to have a superlative affect on business in the long run.** In this month's Indo Asia Diary, I'd like to take you through some of the most heartening activities towards a goal of better tourism facilities.

The Government has decided to put an end to the made-to-order buses in India in order to control the emission norms and enforce better safety guidelines. **In the coming years, you are likely to see only high-end Marcopolo,**

Volvo or Mercedes buses. With this, the safety norms are only going to be more enhanced. Even though the cost is likely to get notched up, this will be a long-term investment for safer travel in India.

The Supreme Court of India has ordered all public transport to be converted to gas based energy vehicles in order to have less dependance on petrol and run on a less polluting fuel. This may have a considerable impact on the availability of cars for the tourist and add to the cost. However, Indo Asia guests will not be impacted by this as we have a large network of trusted transportation partners.

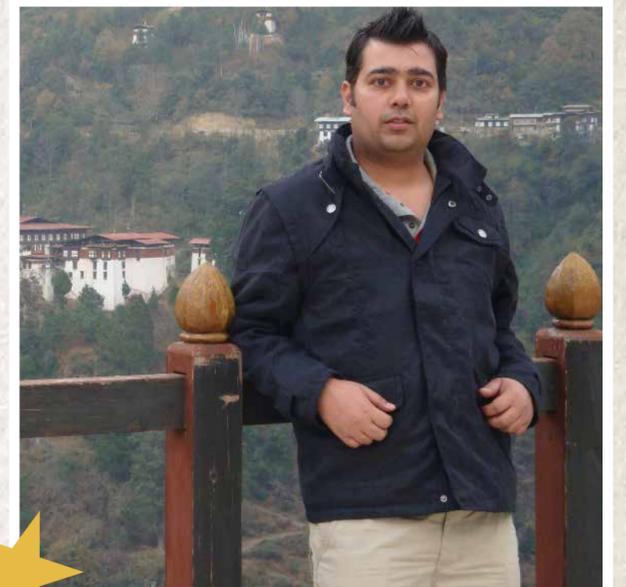
Speaking of travel infrastructure, the Indian aviation scenario is going through a rapid change. Smaller airports all along the Indian borders are opening up, making connectivity and access extremely simple. Same goes for trains. Bullet trains in India will become a reality very soon. The first stretch is being built between **Ahmedabad and Mumbai. There is yet another concept imerging. This is geared towards connecting all old and economically important port towns of the Indian on the coasts via the sea, road and rail routes – this will make for a great trip.**

From an Indirect Taxes perspective, India is crawling towards the implementation of GST (VAT). There will be only one tax on all tourism services. **The tourism fraternity is trying hard to ensure that tourism products are taxed at the lowest slab so the final customer is not impacted.**

It's been over a year since you have been receiving the monthly Indo-Asia Diary. We'd love to hear feedback from you on the different sections - if they have been helpful in planning or given you ideas for your next trip. Do mail us to let us know how we can change or add new things.

Sunirmol Ghosh

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH!



Mayank Pancholi | Deputy General Manager

Mayank Pancholi, Deputy General Manager is one of the most credible leaders in the organisation. His love for the outdoors translates into everything he does at Indo Asia Tours - which is plan and execute excellent travel ideas.