

indianroutes

newsletter

July - August 2014

**Dear Industry Friends,**

### **Amazing Sites in Gujarat**

The state of Gujarat is both famous & infamous, as it has been in the news for the past decades for various reasons. It is a state that does not leave indifferent. Starting from the fact that it is Mahatma Gandhi's birthplace to the fact that it is the only state with prohibition in India, there are many fascinating facts about the less visited region. Today's relevant fact that our current Prime Minister is from this state and is looking at reviving tourism not only in Gujarat but actively promoting tourism in India; is positive news for the travel industry.

Gujarat has multiple sites and interesting areas to visit. For the nature lovers, the Rann of Kutch with its wildlife, the Gir Sanctuary with its Asiatic lions has wide appeal and its tribal villages offer a unique experience. For those that prefer to explore the authentic India, Gujarat is also a land of temples and mosques, with the living Jain temples of Palitana and the Hindu temples of Somnath and Dwarka among others; and the mosques of Ahmedabad.

From the purely cultural aspect, there are ofcourse the ancient sites of Lothal dating from 2400 BCE and Modhera Sun Temple built in 1026. The most fascinating sites are naturally the two world heritage sites: Rani kaVav, the 11th century Queen's Stepwell and the Champaner-Pavagarh Archeological Park. The park includes unexcavated archaeological, historic and living cultural heritage properties including prehistoric (chalcolithic) sites, a hill fortress of an early Hindu capital, and remains of the 16th-century capital of the state of Gujarat. The site is the only complete and unchanged Islamic pre-Mughal city.

To make the most of the visit to Gujarat, one can offer a tour during its festivals; one of the most popular being the colourful festival of Navratri that lasts 09 days and takes place usually in September. There are other smaller festivals that are equally interesting. Do contact us for further details on this region and allow us to hand craft the tours to Gujarat for your clients!

Warm regards,



**Kiran Joti**  
Executive Director



***Taj crowned worldwide favorites***

Some of Taj's iconic hotels featured on the prestigious Travel + Leisure USA World's Best Awards List 2014 - a list that recognizes luxury hotels across the globe for their exceptional standards and impeccable hospitality. Reaffirming its position as a firm favorite both internationally and in India, the magnificent Taj Lake Palace, Udaipur, was ranked 10th on the list of Top 100 World's Best Hotels, while it stood a proud 2nd on the list of Top Resorts in Asia with an overall score of 95.75. The others were Rambagh Palace, Jaipur, Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai, Taj Palace Hotel, New Delhi.

***Starwoods unveiled its second aloft property in Bengaluru***

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. recently unveiled its second aloft property in Bengaluru at Cessna Business Park. Managed by Starwood, it is the 6th aloft property in the country. The new property houses 191 guest rooms, including 13 suites.

***Keys Resorts continues aggressive expansion***

Keys Hotels, a brand of Berggruen Hotels, held by New York based Berggruen groups, has opened yet another resort in India. Located at the picturesque Silvassa, on the shores of river Daman Ganga, Keys Ras Resorts will be the 4th resort property under Berggruen Hotels' management business format. Keys Hotels already boasts of 36 hotels in India.

***Hilton Jaipur launches Aurum***

Hilton Jaipur launches Aurum, a brand new restaurant. Aurum will serve as the property's all-day global cuisine restaurant, offering an extensive menu of Indian, Asian and Western dishes. It also features a range of live cooking stations, a wood-fired pizza oven and a Tandoor kitchen. The most striking features of the restaurant are three 300kg gold bells, which have been handcrafted by Jaipur artisans and hang from the roof of the Tandoor kitchens, serving as huge chimneys.

***Dusit Devarana, New Delhi, in Condé Nast Traveler's 2014 Hotlist***

Within a year and a half of opening, Dusit Devarana, New Delhi, has been given this accolade for its customer service standards, impressive location, outstanding facilities and value-added services. Regally columned verandahs, elegant interiors, glimmering water bodies and spacious guest rooms equipped with state-of-the-art technology make Dusit Devarana an architectural marvel. The spa and culinary philosophies are in line with the grandeur of its architecture to take the guests on a truly multisensory journey.

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### **High Speed Train Trial runs between New Delhi-Agra**

The Indian Railways held a trial run of a semi-high-speed train between New Delhi and Agra. There are ten coaches altogether. The speed of the train is more than the Shatabdi that runs from New Delhi to Agra. It will start running from November, 2014. The trial run saw the train travelling up to a speed of 160 kmph. The semi-high-speed train would reduce travel time between Delhi and Agra by about 30 minutes to 90 minutes.



### **Etihad Airways to add more flights from the UAE to India**

Etihad Airways will start more flights from the UAE to India by increasing the frequency of flights to Kochi, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kozhikode and Hyderabad this summer. Due to strong demand from business and leisure travellers, a double-daily frequency will be operated to Bengaluru, Chennai, Kozhikode and Hyderabad from October 1, a statement released by the Etihad Airways said. Now travelers will have an option of daytime or overnight flights and improved connections between India and key markets in the GCC, Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America, it said.

### **Jet Airways Ltd. and Alitalia expanded code-share agreement**

Jet Airways Ltd. and Italian carrier Alitalia have expanded their code-share agreement. It will offer enhanced network connectivity between India and Italy and beyond to several cities of tourist and business importance in the two nations. The new code-share flights are on sale now for travel from 5th July, 2014; as per a release.

### **Spice Jet to resume services on two Dubai routes**

Spice Jet is set to resume services on two Dubai routes from 21st July, 2014. The Indian carrier launched services to the UAE city from Mumbai and Madurai in June, 2012 and November, 2013 respectively. But, both the routes were temporarily suspended in May this year due to runway work at Dubai Airport.

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### **SpiceJet is set to add service on its four existing sectors**

Spice Jet is set to add service on its four existing sectors with effect from 15th June, 2014. To meet increasing demand from passengers, the sectors added are Bengaluru - Mangalore, Chennai - Madurai, Bengaluru - Hyderabad & Delhi-Lucknow. All the new flights will be served with a 189-seater Boeing 737 aircraft.

### **SpiceJet launches new flight**

SpiceJet announces launch of Kolkata - Bagdogra - Kathmandu service starting 13th August, 2014. This flight will operate thrice a week - Monday, Wednesday and Friday. With the introduction of this flight, SpiceJet will become the first Indian airline to operate internationally from Bagdogra. This new Kathmandu flight is an addition to the 11 weekly direct flights SpiceJet already operates on Delhi - Kathmandu route.



**Guru Purnima**

Guru Purnima is celebrated by Hindus and Buddhists alike. On this day, people worship and pay respect to their Guru i.e. a teacher / preacher. Guru in India means a worshipped personality whose teachings enlighten in the journey of life. The relevance of this day lies on the fact that Guru holds the most important position in one's life, and to give respect to him, Guru Purnima is celebrated. Buddhists celebrate this day in the honor of Lord Buddha who gave His first preaching on this day at Sarnath in Uttar Pradesh. The Hindus celebrate this day in the sacred memory of the great ancient sage Vyasa. It is celebrated on 12th July.

**Eid-UL-Fitr**

Eid-ul-Fitr is one of the two major festivals in the Islamic calendar. It is observed by the Muslims to celebrate successful conclusion of holy month of Ramadan. After morning prayers, communal meals are organized on this day. People wear new clothes; traditionally kurta-pajama, visit family members, exchange greetings and give presents. This year it is celebrated on 30th July.

**Teej**

The Teej festival is an important festival for women, and much anticipated monsoon festival mainly celebrated in Rajasthan. It is also celebrated in parts of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Bihar. It commemorates the re-union of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. Women apply henna on their hands and feet, get dressed up, and parade around. Artists such as folk singers and dancers follow the procession. Caparisoned elephants, bullock carts, and chariots add to the spectacle. This year it is celebrated on 30th and 31st July.

**Rath Yatra (Puri)**

The exuberant 12 day Rath Yatra festival sees Lord Jagannath (a reincarnation of Lords Vishnu and Krishna), along with his elder brother Balabhadra and sister Subhadra, venture out of their abode in Puri's Jagannath Temple. The gods are transported on towering chariots. It will be held from 29th June to 7th July, 2014.



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### **Hemis Festival (Ladakh)**

The two day Hemis Festival commemorates the birth of Guru Padmasambhava, who founded Tantric Buddhism in Tibet. There's traditional music, colorful masked dances, and a fair full of striking handicrafts. Ceremonies begin with an early morning ritual atop the Gompa where the portrait of Dadmokarpo or Rygyalsras Rimpoche is put on display amid the beat of drums and the resounding clash of cymbals. The most esoteric of festivities are the mystic mask dances. This year it will be held from 7th to 8th July, 2014.

### **Raksha Bandhan or Rakhi**

Raksha Bandhan is a Hindu festival that signifies the bond of love and responsibility between brothers and sisters. It is a special occasion to celebrate this emotional bonding by tying a holy thread - Rakhi around the wrist. The ritual is observed on a full moon day when ladies are dressed vividly. In exchange of Rakhi, brothers give presents to sisters. Festive mood can be seen in markets too in the form of colorful silk threads hanging in shops. It will be celebrated on 10th August, 2014.

### **Independence Day**

India's Independence Day is observed on 15 August every year. It is a national holiday, commemorating country's independence from the United Kingdom same day in 1947. India attained independence following a lengthy and rough independence movement noted for largely non-violent resistance and civil disobedience under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The holiday is observed across the country with flag-hoisting ceremonies, parades and cultural events.

### **Janamashtmi**

Janamashtmi is a Hindu festival that marks birth of the Hindu deity Krishna, the eighth avatar of Vishnu. It is celebrated with great zest across the nation. People observe fast and stay up until midnight, the time when Krishna is believed to have been born. Images and live size idols of Lord Krishna are placed in swings and cradles in temples and homes. At midnight, devotees gather around for devotional songs and dance. Temples are decorated with lights and welcome devotees with recitation of Bhagwat Gita. This year it will be celebrated on 18th August, 2014.



***French Foreign Minister Honors Shah Rukh Khan with 'Knight of the Legion of Honour'***

Visiting French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius presented the Prestigious and the Highest French Civilian Award 'Knight of the Legion of Honour' to Shah Rukh Khan in Mumbai this month for his outstanding contribution to Indian Cinema. Receiving the Honor Shah Rukh said, "I feel very humbled and grateful for this prestigious honor. I accept this award not as an individual but on behalf of hundreds of filmmakers who have worked tirelessly for hundred years contributing to the Indian film industry, if it wasn't them I wouldn't have been standing here today".

***Government announces Airports e-visa facilities***

In order to further promote the visa-on-arrival facility, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, in his Budget speech, stated that - e-Visa would be introduced in a phased manner at 9 airports in India where necessary infrastructure would be in place within the next 6 months.

***Introduction of e-ticketing for Indian Monuments***

To improve visitor experience and make access to monuments and national museums simpler, the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, is set to introduce electronic ticketing system. The Ministry is considering several options for the delivery service including engaging a private service provider or through already existing portals or launching a mobile application to access and obtain information about popular cultural events that is set to take place is part of this plan.

***Ganga will be developed as a major tourist attraction***

Government to develop Ganga as a major tourist attraction. The river holds immense spiritual value for many people specially Hindus. The ambitious mission to rejuvenate Ganga comprises of making the sacred river pollution free and introducing river cruising facilities, floating hotels and moving light and sound shows.

***Not just cricket***

India may be a cricket crazy nation, but the current football fever swept across the country. The whole country watched the FIFA World Cup, 2014 with full enthusiasm and supported their favorite teams. Millions went crazy with excitement when Germany lifted the world cup on 13th July.



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### ***Summer Break***

Continuing with the summer vacations, some more team members of Indian Routes went on their annual vacations. Mr. Deepak Vats went to Kinnaur in Himachal Pradesh on a biking trip, Mr. Arvind Bhatia went to Tamil Nadu & Pondicherry and Mr. Sumeet Verma went to Ranchi, his hometown.

### ***Weekend Getaway***

The entire team of Indian Routes took time out along with their families and spent an overnight stay at Heritage Village, at Manesar, 45 kms from Delhi on 12th & 13th July. Unlimited food, drinks, games were enjoyed throughout the trip with Barbeque Dinner and DJ.

### ***Go Gujarat***

Few Indian Routes team members decided to explore the fascinating region of Gujarat. They came back with insights into the region and some great ideas of discovering Gujarat!

### ***You may contact us***

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