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Reality T.V. – Indian Style

To a visitor, India could seem caught in a time warp when faced with some ever present traditions like arranged marriages. India today is in fact defined by ancient customs percolating into modern day rites.

In ancient India, a unique custom existed known as 'Swayamvara'. This Sanskrit word defines the practice where a girl chooses her life partner from a list of suitors. This was mainly a royal tradition whereby the King sent for suitable candidates to present themselves at a given venue. Often the suitors performed certain tasks to impress the bride. Once she identified the husband and garlanded him, the marriage ceremony was immediately held.

Hindu Mythology offers well known examples of many such 'Swayamvaras'. The epic Ramayana tells that of the Lord Ram & his bride Sita; the Mahabharata that of Princess Draupadi & Arjuna.

A few weeks ago, Indians were reminded of this ancient tradition. In a reality T.V. show, Rakhi Ka Swayamvar, the actor, Rakhi Sawant, will choose a husband from among several prospective grooms who are from cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, Rishikesh, Jaipur and Kanpur and even far off Toronto. The venue is the fabulous new hotel, Fatehgarh Place in Udaipur.

In the first week of the still running show; it ranked number 8 among the top 10 rated shows. Obviously there's no business like show business!

The interesting aspect is the success of presenting a modern day version of an ancient tradition and that too via the ultimate modern tool – The Reality T.V. Show.

(Kiran Joti signature)

Vice President & Business Head



New Developments

Jet Air-Kingfisher alliance finally takes off. After an eight-month delay, the alliance between the country's two largest private carriers, Jet Airways and Kingfisher Airlines, will start code sharing as well as sharing infrastructure at the domestic airports to reduce operational costs.

The Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation (MPSTDC) has decided to launch hot air ballooning in Bhopal and Orchha. The launch will be held by end of August this year. The Corporation will target foreign and domestic tourists for hot air ballooning and plans to make it a part of the tourism package that they will provide tourists.

Kingfisher Airlines plans to launch flights on eight international routes from October this year. The airline will start flying on the Mumbai-Hong Kong, Mumbai-Singapore sector effective September 16, 2009. The six routes on which Kingfisher Airlines intends to launch services are Delhi-Bangkok, Delhi-Dubai, Delhi-London, Mumbai-Bangkok, Mumbai-Colombo and Mumbai-Dubai.

Jet Airways to introduce second daily service to Bangkok from Mumbai, effective August 16, 2009. The airline currently operates a daily service to Bangkok from Mumbai, as well as from Delhi and Kolkata. The airline currently flies to 18 international destinations, including New York (both JFK and Newark), Toronto, Brussels, London (Heathrow), Hong Kong, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Colombo, Bangkok, Kathmandu, Dhaka



Big Brands

Hilton Garden Inn-Saket opening in August. Chic & contemporary, the hotel is in New Delhi's most famous shopping mall complex of Saket District Centre. The hotel will have 116 guest rooms of standard category and will have Pavilion Pantry -24 Hours convenience Mart, Swimming Pool, India Grill restaurant and a bar.

WelcomeHeritage to launch hotel in Gangtok in September. The Welcom Heritage Denzong Regency will have 26 rooms is a sprawling century-old wooded heritage property with views of Kanchenjunga. The hotel will offer two restaurants, a pub, a banquet hall, a conference hall and a health club with sauna and steam baths.

Starwood Hotels & Resorts to open 14 hotels in India by 2011 under three brands - Aloft, Westin and Sheraton. This should bring their total inventory to around 2,500 rooms in 2011. Three new Westin hotels are scheduled to open this year in Pune, Hyderabad and Mumbai.

Best Western plans 15 new franchisee properties in India. They plan to establish the new franchisee properties in India by the end of 2009 with a focus on North India. Managed by Cabana Hotel Management Pvt Ltd, the hotel chain already has 11 hotels under its banner in India

Additional capacity in Pondicherry. Currently Puducherry has no five-star hotel, although there are a number of good three-star properties (around 600 rooms in all). Accord Metropolitan's upcoming property with 150-plus rooms is one of the biggest 5 five star projects under way. Anandha Inn is expanding its operations and adding 70 rooms to its current 60. Hotel Annamalai International's new 70-room Shenbaga Residency and CGH Earth's new 18-room project are the others in the pipeline that are expected to be ready by early next year.



Celebration Time

The Commonwealth Games in Delhi from 03-14 October 2010. The majority of rooms in Delhi are already taken over from 30th Sep till 15th Oct'2010 by the Government of India & the Sports Authority. Leisure business would probably avoid Delhi as an overnight stop since not only would the rates be very high but room confirmations may prove to be a challenge

The Dalai Lama turns 74. The Tibetan community all over India celebrated their spiritual leader Dalai Lama's birthday this month. The Dalai Lama has been in exile and living in India since the past five decades.

Delhi Court Ruling on Gay Rights. In a judgment that has aroused strong reactions from religious and political groups, the Delhi High Court has ruled that homosexual intercourse between consenting adults is not a criminal act. The ruling overturns a 148-year-old colonial law which describes a same-sex relationship as an "unnatural offence". Homosexual acts were punishable by a 10-year prison sentence.

Three three-day Wine Festival in Bangalore. The state, which became the first state in the country to introduce a wine policy, organised the festival at the Lal Bagh botanical garden this month, to give the public a taste of a variety of wines, a step it hopes would encourage and boost sales in a big way.



Summer Activity

- SPAIN INCENTIVE
Photograph of the group members in tradition Indian attire
- SOUTH AMERICAN FAM TOUR
20 agents from South America travelled with us on Delhi-Orhca-Khajuraho-Agra Ranthambore-Jaipur-Delhi sector.
- FIXED DEPARTURES
Please contact us for Winter 2009/2010 fixed departures.