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From the CEO's Desk



Dear Partners,

There is a lot happening here in India.

The Indian Rupee recently received a formalised symbol which is an elegant, simple and brilliant combination of a sanskrit 'Ra' and the Roman capital 'R' without the stem. The symbol (₹) reflects and captures Indian ethos and culture from an interesting angle. This would distinguish the Indian currency from its neighboring countries, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Indonesia — similarly known Rupee or Rupiah. With this, the Indian rupee will join the select club of currencies such as the U.S. Dollar, British Pound Sterling, Euro and the Japanese Yen that have a clear distinguishing identity.

The Company has been declared the winner of the 2010 PATA Gold Awards for its Child Protection initiative. It is indeed a proud moment for the Company to be recognised for its CSR initiative and nominated for this award which recognises exceptional achievements in a variety of endeavours in the industry. Our objective is to be a responsible corporate citizen and mitigate the existing or anticipated adverse impacts of our business. The winning project sets industry standards for excellence and innovation.

Yet another proud moment for us is the award received from Taj Hotels which recognised the Company for its Outstanding Contribution in 2009-10 in its first ever award ceremony to felicitate the contribution of its partners and suppliers.

Come explore with us.

Regards,

Dipak Deva



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Stay at



Mantra Veppathur, Kumbakonam

A very unique concept of eco friendly resort that blends together traditional values, faith & spirituality of Veppathur, with the ideals of relaxation & well being. The resort is located in the vibrant destination of Kumbakonam, Tanjore District in South India. The Mantra Veppathur Resort is located in the vibrant destination of Kumbakonam in Tanjore District. An oasis of luxury in the heart of nowhere country. There are 24 twin-sharing cottages; 4 deluxe cottages and 2 luxury suites. The cottages are a traditional Tamil affair with kolam, a popular floor art, done on the steps, fans on the veranda and a superb outdoor shower, where water gushes out of one of those stone mouths you see in temples. The food served is pure vegetarian which is prepared in a traditional way, with the right mix of herbs and spices that are healthy but delightfully delectable.

Shambala, Masinagudi

Tucked away in the little village of Masinagudi, a beautiful place on the foothills of Nilgiris just after the Bandipur Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka is Shambala a Swiss style chalet on stilts built with shale and rock from the area. An airy cabin with large open-to-the-jungle windows lets in the serenity of the valley. A cosy accommodation for two with additional space for two more, it is an ideal hideaway. A place to unwind! Alfresco dining on the deck is a magical experience with spectacular views of the forest. Spend the night out on the listening to the soothing night time rhythm which can very well put you to a peaceful sleep.



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Lifestyle



Flying Fox at Jodhpur & Neemrana

Flying fox aims to deliver India's most sensational travel experience. Something you can enjoy on a day out from the city. By stepping just a few hundred metres off the beaten track – and a little bit outside your comfort zone – you'll experience something that will stay with you for a lifetime. You'll be gliding fast enough to feel exhilarated, but slow enough to enjoy the breath-taking views of the Aravelli Hills and Neemrana Fort Palace or the spectacular view of the Mehrangarh fort. With zip line names like 'Where Eagles Dare' to 'Goodbye Mr Bond...' you are in for an exhilarating experience.



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Responsible Tourism



Sarai at Toria

The Sarai at Toria's uniquely designed accommodation is situated on a beautiful riverside site, close to Khajuraho and Panna National Park in Madhya Pradesh. This luxurious but earth-friendly small retreat is envisaged as the founding component of a wider project that seeks to play a positive role in the economic and social development of the local area; we also see it as a base for conservation activities and for wildlife and climate change research. The Sarai at Toria is located only half an hour's drive from Khajuraho. It lies on the banks of the River Ken, less than 2 kilometres from the entrance to the Panna Tiger Reserve at Madla. Khajuraho is well connected to major cities by road, rail and air.

The Sarai at Toria opens on 15th October 2010 with 6 independent cottage rooms, each having attached bathrooms, verandas and private courtyards. Additional rooms are planned for the future. Four of the present six cottages are especially suitable for families, as they have included tucked-away mezzanine bed spaces that are great for children. "With regard to our building – indeed the whole project concept – we are motivated by our environmental philosophy and a consciousness of the human species' tendency for mindless destruction of the planet! We aimed for our footprint to be as light as possible and for our project to provide an alternate example, that showed that being environmentally friendly did not necessarily mean returning to an over simple way of living but rather showed that it is still possible to enjoy the comforts and modern conveniences many are now used to, while being mindful of the true costs." say Joanna Van Gruisen and Raghu.

Almost all materials have been sourced locally, thus also reducing transport which is another environmentally costly item. Like many of the local village houses, their cottages are made from mud; however they have raised them on a stone and lime mortar plinth as they are next to a river and therefore in a potential flood area.

The thick mud walls and thatched roofs are ideal materials for the extremes of the central Indian climate which varies from frost to 46'C heat. They plan to use earth tunnels as the cooling system for the cottages, although the system will not be up and running until their second season. Their electricity requirements will come mainly from a 10kva capacity solar system. Some minimal back up from the grid is also available and keeping in mind tourist needs, they will have a small generator on site for emergency. A gohar gas plant will supply some of their cooking fuel and in time they hope later to expand this enough to cover all their cooking needs and generator fuel. Their building crew come almost entirely from the local community and after training, several of them will continue as staff when the Sarai opens as will majority of the staff. "We are hoping that the Sarai at Toria will be a foundation for, and one aspect of, a three-pronged vision which also includes academic research - on wildlife, climate change and conservation issues of the region - and local economic and social development activities. We believe these three aspects of our project have strong symbiotic potential and each can feed into and benefit from the others." - Joanna.

This will be their first season and we wish them all the best in realising their intentions and setting their vision in motion.



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Interesting India



One Hand On The Pen. One Hand On The Drum

The Merasi School is the educational arm of US non-profit Folk Arts Rajasthan (FAR). FAR is a community-driven arts and literacy classroom designed to create avenues of artistic and social empowerment for the marginalized Merasi (musicians) of Jaisalmer District, Rajasthan, India.

The School provides a community-powered arts and literacy education that enables Merasi children to celebrate their cultural past and chart their social future.

Lifting off the successful educational initiatives of FAR, The Merasi School integrates the Merasi's rapidly vanishing 37-generation-old musical legacy and communal desire for education into a cultural preservation and social justice curriculum.

The community objective of The Merasi School is to nourish the development of their artistic legacy and grow the possibility of their social landscape.



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Tourism Update



Tourists Can Patrol On Foot In National Parks

A 'Patrolling the Tiger Land' system is being introduced in Madhya Pradesh from the current year. Under the arrangement, tourists will be able to trek forests along with patrolling parties in the national parks.

Under the 'Patrolling the Tiger Land' system, tourists will get themselves registered at the gate of the national park/sanctuary. They will be allotted a patrolling party/trek by the concerning range officer or any other competent authority. Later, the tourists will take rounds of the jungles along with the patrolling parties.

The tourists can take food/drinking water along with them as per their requirements. The tourists will have to pay vehicle entry fees as per rules apart from separate charges for on foot tour. Only four tourists will be allowed to accompany a patrolling party. The patrolling tourists can also take rest in the patrolling camps of the forest department. Children below the age of 12 years will not be allowed under this system.

This arrangement will come into force from the next tourism season, which will commence from October 16, 2010.



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Destination Insider



Dear Friends,

I was booked on the flight to Leh this August where I was supposed to meet Chewang Norphel. This retired engineer who heads the Leh Nutrition Project, a local not for profit organization, has built 10 "artificial glaciers" in and around Leh to help farmers sustain their crops. Grateful farmers call him the "Iceman". Eighty percent of the people in Leh are farmers and depend on glacier melt water for their agricultural requirement. But less snowfall and the receding glaciers on account of global warming are badly affecting Leh's agrarian population.

For the past 22 years, Chewang has been single handedly building "artificial glaciers"— a system where in winter glaciers melt water is diverted through iron pipes into an embankment. The water freezes naturally forming an "artificial glacier" that can hold up to 10 hundred thousand cubic feet of ice, which can irrigate about 200 hectares of land. By early March when the temperature starts to rise, the "artificial glacier" melts, supplying water to the villages below. But Leh's 74-year old Climate Change Warrior humbly admits that he doesn't have much time and wants to pass on the knowledge of this simple concept managed with local manpower and material to anyone who may be interested before he dies.

However, I never made it to Leh on account of the recent cloudburst. As news of the flash floods trickled in to the control room of Kuoni's Crisis Management Team at the head office in Gurgaon, holding fort on ground zero for the Crisis Management Team were 4 brave employees of our Company, who were on a biking holiday and co-incidentally happened to be in Leh when the tragedy took place. They promptly responded to their call of duty and risked their lives to locate all our clients. They met everyone in person; reassured them and finally ensured that all our clients left Leh safely.

I call them the Fantastic Four and salute them for what they did. We chatted over coffee once they were back in office and resumed work, mercifully safe, and without their bikes. But they are already planning a "Travel to help rebuild Leh" charity bike ride in 2011. I have not been able to contact the "Iceman" as yet. Hopefully he is safe too.

[In conversation with the Fantastic Four](#)

Kuntil Baruwa



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Festivals



Durga Puja, 8th Oct- 17th Oct'10

The celebration of Durga Puja can be traced very far back in history with references of it in Indian literature from 12th century onwards. However, today Durga Puja is generally a community festival. The Puja celebration over the years has changed colour. Earlier, it was the most expensive of all festivals and could only be performed by the rich and the powerful like feudal lords, kings and big businessmen. However, it always evoked great enthusiasm and popular support. But in today's ethos, the evolution of many clubs, associations and societies has made the Puja cosmopolitan in character. The social and ritualistic significance of the Puja has also been modified to a great degree. Today, this festival has become an occasion for pageantry and extravaganza. But the age old conch shells and drums still prevail and the festival is one time when people mingle irrespective of class distinction.

Most of the Festival dates are decided by Solar / Lunar calendars practiced in India, due to which the dates are subject to change. You may plan some special departure based on these festivals. For any assistance please contact us.



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Dear Muskan,

You are welcome and thanks for such good work..

On behalf of the delegation, I would like to thank you and the team at Kuoni travel for the organisation of our trip to India.

We were all impressed with the excellent level of service we received from all of the Kuoni representatives that were involved in the airport reception and our daily transportation was also of high standard including experienced and helpful drivers.

I will have no hesitation in recommending Kuoni travel to my colleagues across the University to use when planning their travel to India.

Keep in touch!!

Sadhana Lalla
Marketing Manager - India
Melbourne Institute of Business & Technology Pty Ltd
at Deakin University