

We hope your travels this year are just as vibrant and fun as the Festival of Colors.



HAPPY HOLI!

Dear Industry Colleagues,

Namaste and a joyful and happy Holi from Peirce & Leslie in India!

This year India celebrates, Holi, the Festival of Colours on March 4th – a two-day festival celebrating the arrival of spring and the triumph of good over evil. Celebrations start with bonfires on the eve, symbolizing the burning of the demoness, Holika and the triumph of good over evil. The second day is celebrated communally, joyfully, and messily with folks playfully dousing each other with colours. Each colour symbolizes an aspect; red for love and fertility, green for new beginnings, yellow for happiness and prosperity and blue - which represents the divine energy of Lord Krishna, who is often depicted with a blue skin tone - signifying calmness, trust and infinity like the sky and the sea.

While Holi is referred to as the Festival of Colours, India remains a kaleidoscope of colours all year round. At Peirce & Leslie, all our journeys are thoughtfully designed to be just as vibrant, immersive and memorable. as India's myriad festivals.

We've had a wonderfully energetic start to the year, welcoming many guests to the subcontinent, curating meaningful journeys and memorable experiences – and keeping happily busy along the way (not that we're complaining!). It's been incredibly rewarding to see such strong enthusiasm for travel to the region, and we are deeply grateful for your continued trust and partnership.

This edition of our newsletter has a curated collection of extraordinary experiences across the Indian subcontinent – spectacular cultural festivals, heritage stays and deeply immersive experiences that connect travellers to the spirit of each destination.

Please note that our offices will remain closed on March 4th for the Holi holiday. For any urgent assistance or travel emergencies, kindly reach out to your Guardian Angel (for in-country guests) or to travel@peirceandleslie.com for new and on-going queries that require immediate attention.

Cheers,
Anil Pathak
Chief Storytelling Officer



Nallur Kandaswamy Kovil Temple Festival, Sri Lanka (August 16th - September 12th, 2026)

This summer, discover the vibrant northern heart of Sri Lanka during the spectacular Nallur Kandaswamy Kovil Festival. Held in Jaffna, the celebration centers on the revered Nallur Kandaswamy Kovil, dedicated to Lord Murugan – the Hindu deity of war, wisdom, and beauty. During this time, the region pulses with profound devotion, rhythmic music, and vivid cultural pageantry. This deeply symbolic celebration of divine grace and communal unity, offers travelers a rare opportunity to engage with living Tamil Hindu traditions, witness magnificent ritual processions, and immerse themselves in one of Sri Lanka’s most compelling spiritual experiences.

P&L recommends: The highlight is the *Ther Thiruvila*, a breathtaking chariot procession where thousands of devotees pull towering, flower-adorned temple cars through jubilant streets to the rhythm of resonant drumming, fervent chanting, and vibrant local dances. The sacred rituals and devotional performances are captivating and worth experiencing



Timeless Royal Splendour at The Oberoi Rajgarh Palace, Khajuraho (Madhya Pradesh)

Perched high atop the Maniyagarh Hills, the historic Oberoi Rajgarh Palace emerges like a dream carved from sandstone. The 350-year-old Bundela fortress has been masterfully restored by The Oberoi Group into one of India’s most atmospheric luxury retreats. Encircled by 76 acres of ancient *sal* and *palash* forests, it commands sweeping views of a serene rainwater-fed lake, and the distant, misty Vindhya ranges. There are 65 elegantly appointed rooms, suites, and private pool villas, seamlessly blending soaring vaulted ceilings, delicate hand-painted frescoes, and authentic Bundelkhand craftsmanship in line with Oberoi’s signature contemporary understated elegance. Dining at the property is a distinct experience in itself. Choose from royalty-inspired cuisine in palatial surroundings at Maanya, refined Indian and international fare beside the lake at Neerangan, and atmospheric courtyard dining complemented by curated cocktails at Amrava. Beyond its storied walls, the palace offers immersive experiences ranging from guided heritage explorations and cultural encounters to restorative wellness rituals, wildlife safaris in nearby Panna National Park, excursions to the dramatic Raneh Gorge and Ken Gharial Sanctuary, and visits to the UNESCO-listed temples of Khajuraho.

What we love about the palace hotel: The effortless convergence of royal grandeur, pristine wilderness, and Oberoi’s impeccable hospitality.



A Bespoke Jewel-Crafting Experience in Jaipur

Step into Jaipur’s storied gemstone world, where vibrant colored stones and centuries-old jewelry traditions continue to enchant discerning travelers. Visit the private studio of a master jeweler and discover the intricate artistry of *Kundan*, *Meenakari*, *Polki*, and *Jadau* – techniques once favored by royal courts. Participate in an exclusive hands-on workshop to design and craft your own piece (to take home as a souvenir) using traditional tools under her expert guidance. Conclude this experience over a cup of *chai* with your host while gaining insight into Jaipur’s living craft traditions.



The Sacred Art of Impermanence

Step into the serene stillness of a Bhutanese monastery and witness one of the kingdom’s most profound spiritual traditions – the creation of a sacred sand mandala. Over days of prayer and meditation, monks release colored grains through delicate metal funnels, forming intricate geometric patterns that mirror the universe in harmony. The process is slow, meditative, and deeply symbolic. Once complete, the mandala is gently dismantled and released into a flowing river, carrying blessings outward – a graceful expression of impermanence, beauty, and renewal at the heart of Bhutanese spirituality.



Meet one of our Guides

We are delighted to spotlight one of our most cherished guides, **Umesh Mall**. For over two decades, he has been far more than a guide – he is a passionate explorer and devoted custodian of India’s boundless spirit. A Ministry of Tourism–licensed, pan-India expert, Umesh welcomes travelers with genuine warmth and intuitive understanding that instantly puts guests at ease. His journey as a guide began with a deep fascination for India’s history, culture, and people – a curiosity that has deepened through years of traversing its vast landscapes, from majestic monuments and ancient temples to remote wildernesses and vibrant cities. Along the way, he has cultivated an intimate understanding of the country’s art, architecture, religions, textiles, cuisine, wildlife, and the subtle rhythms of everyday life. Umesh weaves these many layers into vivid, engaging stories, allowing guests to experience India not as observers, but as welcomed participants in its living heritage. Calm, attentive, and instinctively attuned to those he guides, he transforms travel into something deeply personal – an experience that lingers long after the journey ends.



In the news...

- The Taj Group’s latest additions include **Bandra House, Mumbai** (38 rooms and 1 suite) and **Vivanta Kochi, Aluva** (83 rooms and 9 suites). The group has also strengthened its experiential portfolio with the **acquisition of Brij Hotels**, a boutique brand offering immersive stays across Jaipur, Varanasi, Ranthambore, the Northern hills, the Northeast and Goa.
- **The Postcard Hotel**, a leading boutique hotel brand, has **launched its first Ayurveda retreat in Old Goa, in partnership with Sitaram Ayurveda**. This intimate 6-room wellness sanctuary is dedicated to immersive Ayurvedic therapies rooted in traditional healing practices.
- **Safari operations at Nagarhole National Park have resumed** with limited vehicle availability, following the November 2026 closure.

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