

'ARRANGED' COUPLES SNEAK OUT FOR DATES ABROAD

Men and women are arranging matrimonial meet-ups abroad, to get to know each other better with the freedom such trips give; parents and families are not invited

● Preeja Prasad

It is no secret that parents get their children registered on matrimonial sites once they've come of age. Meet-ups of boy and girl are then arranged but under strict parental supervision. But, Bengaluru is seeing a change in trend where matrimonial meet-ups are being held abroad in countries such as Thailand, Singapore and Maldives where the two can spend time to get to know each other.

Inderjit Kaur, 29, air hostess got married earlier this year. Being an air hostess, she travels every day and was finding it difficult

to meet men accompanied by her family. "With my work routine, it was impossible to meet my now-husband, travelling from Bengaluru to my hometown in Punjab. So we decided to go to Maldives and stayed there for five days. I'll admit it was without my parents' knowledge at the time," she says, though her family was told of the trip after the wedding. She said it works well for arranged alliances because it helps you gauge compatibility between partners.

Most often, families are not informed of these trips and the couple give office trips or tour with friends as an excuse. Destination where you get visa-on-arrival is chosen, so that advance planning is not required. Countries such as Thailand and Maldives are popular, where a 10-day trip inclusive of flight, stay and food expenses can cost anywhere between ₹20,000 and 30,000.

"I am very thankful that I got to meet him," says Anjana Nair (name changed), who works in the HR department for a

known company in the city. Her former prospective groom, an engineer based in the US, met her for the first time in Thailand after two weeks of conversation over the phone. "It was all butterflies in my tummy during the first two weeks and so I decided to go for a 10-day trip with him. Everything changed when we finally met," says 26-year-old Anjana who travelled to the destination last year.

Red meet

It was a disaster for me because all the butterflies just vanished. I just knew we could not be together, it just wasn't meant to be. Anjana says. She rejected the groom's proposal after returning to Bengaluru and is currently planning another matrimonial meet-up to the same destination.

Anjana says that if she hadn't gone on the trip, she may have accepted his hand and ended up with an arranged marriage. "The trip helped me understand the kind of person he is and at the end of the day, being in a happy, healthy marriage is important I believe," she says.

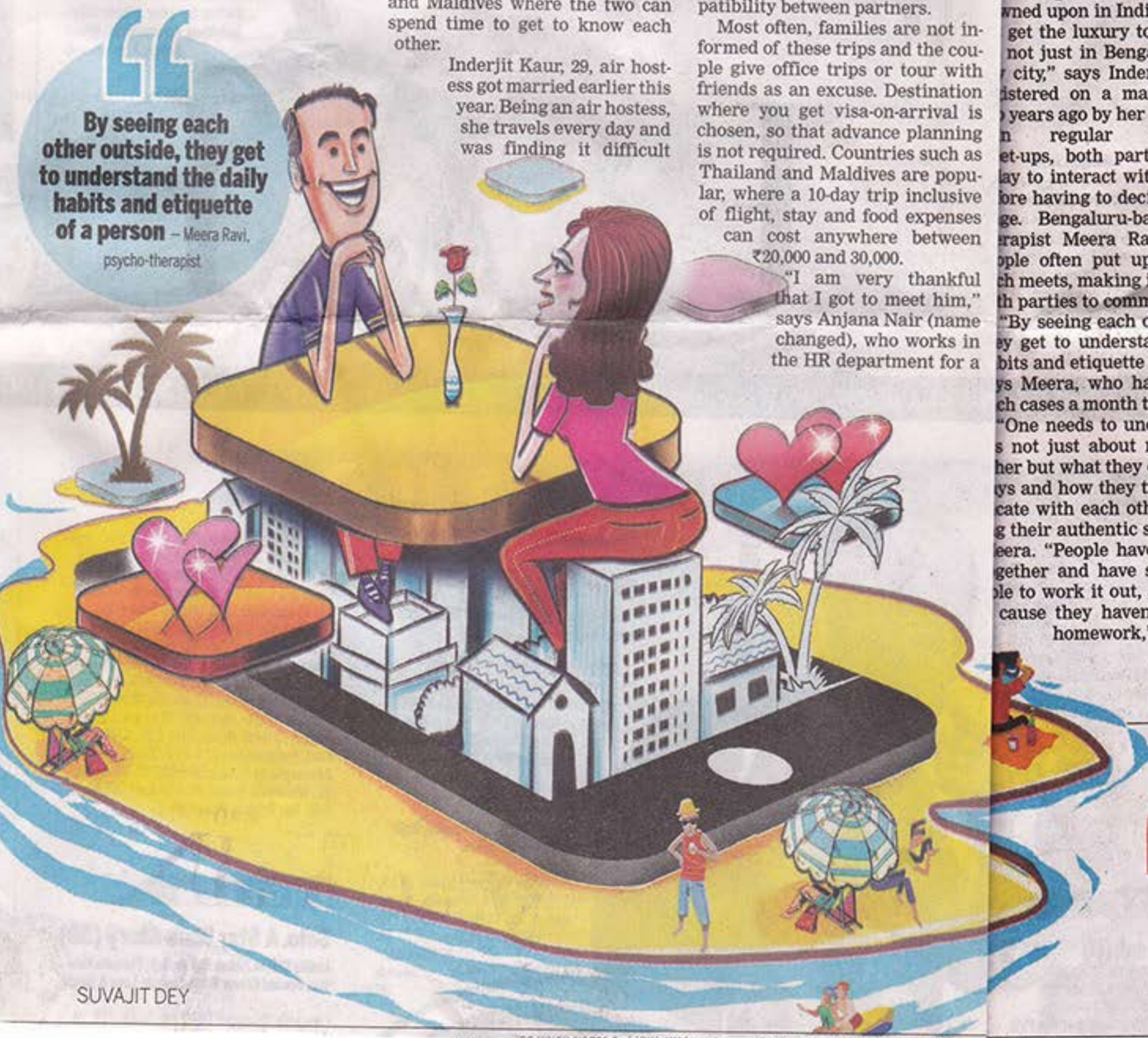
Different cities

People choose locations abroad because both parties travel from two different places. "Such trips are frowned upon in India and you do not get the luxury to spend time. It's not just in Bengaluru, but in any city," says Inderjit who was registered on a matrimony site two years ago by her family.

In regular matrimonial meet-ups, both parties only get to interact with each other before having to decide on a marriage. Bengaluru-based psycho-therapist Meera Ravi says that people often put up a front for such meets, making it difficult for both parties to communicate freely. "By seeing each other outside, they get to understand the daily bits and etiquette of a person," says Meera, who has seen three such cases a month this year.

"One needs to understand that it's not just about meeting each other but what they do in those 10 days and how they try to communicate with each other by revealing their authentic self," explains Meera. "People have spent years together and have still not been able to work it out, and that's because they haven't done their homework," she adds.

By seeing each other outside, they get to understand the daily habits and etiquette of a person — Meera Ravi, psycho-therapist



SUVAJIT DEY

FRIENDLY-TIPS



Meet in a public space so it's safe



Advisable to inform someone trustworthy who you are meeting and where -- safety is important



Find out basic details about the other person and chat for a while before agreeing to meet the person



Keep a check on how much the person drinks

SETBACKS

- 1 People could act impulsively.
- 2 If there is incompatibility, it should be communicated clearly.
- 3 In most cases, both parties tend to keep their options open in the hope of meeting someone better
(B MEERA RAVI)



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