

Indian adventurers blog their way through SA

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Five Indian adventurers explored some of South Africa's famous destinations this week for an online travel series to promote the country.

India's first online travel series, Fantastic Five, is the collaborative brainchild of Network 18, India's leading media company, and South African Tourism.

The five Indian travellers set out on their journey through the country on Monday and ended their adventure on Friday.

Equipped with cellphones, video cameras and laptops, the group, comprising senior consultant Hrish Thota, photographer Rohit Barooah, production designer Swapnali Das, photographer Zishaan Hayath and Chhavi Sachdev, who runs an audio production house, captured their experiences on their travel blogs.

They went to Johannesburg, Sun City, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Knysna, Oudtshoorn and the Kruger National Park.

Das wrote on her blog about her stay at Sun City: "So this man (Sol Kerzner) made the wonder that is Sun City, which has four hotels. I am inside the Sun City Hotel about to have an Indian meal overlooking the casino.

"When I had my dal makhani and pudina paratha, I realised this is indeed bliss. Tasted the Amarula! Yes, guys, it's divine. Will have some African breakfast in the morning."

Hayath told of his experience of "swimming with Great White sharks" off the Cape coast.

He said: "Got into the cage. The water of the Atlantic was cold. I took a deep breath and dipped into the ocean. And there she was! A huge three-metre Great White.

"All the sickness, cold and salt was worth this one view. She circled the boat and, with a quick dash of her tailfin, vanished into darkness."

Medha Sampat, the India head of SA Tourism, said the contestant with the best votes for his or her blog would receive a photographic assignment with an international publication.

South Africa, said Sampat, was chosen as the destination for the unique show because of its popularity among Indians as a holiday spot.

"This is our first tryst with the online medium, and with this in mind, we partnered Web18 to develop a concept exclusively for South Africa, which would help us reach out to the web community in a matter that is most akin to them," she said.

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