

TRAVEL

# turtle



[www.travelturtle.world](http://www.travelturtle.world)

SATTE SPECIAL

## Paris

*Where history meets modernity*





# Saudi

Immerse in Serenity

Vibrant Corals & Unique Marine Life Await  
Explore the Depths of the Red Sea in Jeddah

Get inspired and explore the destination,  
log on to [www.VisitSaudi.com](http://www.VisitSaudi.com)





amazing  
**THAILAND**

**travelbullz**  
destination management company

# Thailand **Flash Sale**

**CENTARA WATERGATE PAVILLION  
CENTARA PATTAYA**



T&C apply

Package starting from  
**USD 199\***  
per person

For exclusive offers & availability visit  
**[www.travelbullz.com](http://www.travelbullz.com)**

Travel to Thailand  
**VISA FREE**

Call +91 87500 65466  
FIT : [online@travelbullz.com](mailto:online@travelbullz.com)  
MICE & Groups  
[groups@travelbullz.com](mailto:groups@travelbullz.com)



# Editor's Letter



Welcome to the unveiling of our debut issue from our brand-new sanctuary! Yes, we've finally nestled into our new den, amidst the whirlwind of creating this snug office space. Amidst the hustle, we've been tirelessly crafting our grand SATTE special issue. And you know what? Both endeavours feel nothing short of extraordinary and oh-so-special.

In the midst of life's hustle and bustle, it's crucial to savour the little victories, but this feels like a monumental milestone. I often remind myself to steer clear of philosophical musings, but today, I can't help but overflow with gratitude for the hearts and hands that have woven into the tapestry of our journey. And guess what? We're just getting started.

Just as we've meticulously balanced our office ambiance with both vibrancy and serenity, this issue of Travel Turtle strikes a harmonious chord with its diverse array of stories. Amidst our fervent discussions about idyllic locales like Lakshadweep and Maldives, it only felt fitting to delve into the pertinent topic of island tourism. Dive in, and let us be your guide through this fascinating segment.

We've had the privilege of conversing with some remarkable individuals from Oetker Collection, Merlin Entertainment, Ebix, Travclan, and beyond, ensuring you're always ahead of the curve. And let's not forget, our intrepid team embarked on journeys to Kuno National Park and Takasaki, so you can expect a comprehensive guide to these destinations.

So, dear readers, join us on this exhilarating voyage. Let's explore, discover, and revel in the wonders that await.

Do share your feedback at [bharti@travelturtle.world](mailto:bharti@travelturtle.world).

Happy Reading!

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Bharti Sharma".

**Bharti Sharma**  
Editor

   : [travelturtlemag](https://www.instagram.com/travelturtlemag)







# Superfast B2B Travel Portal



[www.fly24hrs.com](http://www.fly24hrs.com)

**Register Now**

**& Get The Best Deal on Flights**

Scan & Register



✈ One of the fastest growing travel company.  
✈ India's leading B2B travel portal.

✉ [sales@fly24hrs.com](mailto:sales@fly24hrs.com)

☎ 011-35938412





# Travel Turtle Team

Publisher: **Harish Chandra Uniyal**

Editor: **Bharti Sharma**

Executive Director: **Sudipta Saha**

Bureau Chief (West): **Naina Nath**

Sub-Editor: **Tripti Jain**

Contributing Editors:

**Inder Raj Ahluwalia**

**Misbaah Mansuri**

Marketing: **Tejas Sharma**

Art Director: **Pankti Anjaria**

**Rajas More**

Legal Consultant: **Aditya Singh**

Photographer: **Abhishek**

Circulation: **Pradeep Kumar**

Accounts: **Dinesh Kumar**



All information in Travel Turtle is derived from sources we consider reliable. It is passed on to our readers without any responsibility on our part. Opinions/views expressed by third parties in abstract or in interviews are not necessarily shared by us. Material appearing in the magazine cannot be reproduced in whole or in part(s) without prior permission. The publisher assumes no responsibility for material lost or damaged in transit.

Printed and Published by: Harish Chandra on behalf of Trouvaille Media & Communications Private Limited; Printed at Shree Ram Print O Pac, D 10/5 (Basement) Okhla Industrial Area Phase II, New Delhi 110020 ; Published at Plot No.1, 311, Vardhman Sunrise Plaza, Vasundhara Enclave, Delhi 110096.  
Editor: Bharti Sharma







*Where Grandeur Meets Innovation*

India's Premier Integrated Hotel, Redefining Luxury, Conventions and Exhibitions.



**Altus**  
Bar & Lounge



**Paprika** - all day  
dining restaurant



**Cafe Amaris**  
Patisserie & Brasserie



**Spa**  
by Hibiscus



**Convention**  
Hall

+91 120-6966555



info@expoinn.com



www.expoinn.com

India Exposition Mart Limited, Plot no 23-25 & 27-29, Knowledge Park 2, Gate no-12, Greater Noida



**Ministry of Commerce, Saudi Arabia signs agreement with VFS Global for visa services**

VFS Global, market leader in the outsourced visa and consular services space for governments, has entered an agreement with the Ministry of Commerce, Saudi Arabia, to provide visa application services through a centre operated within the premises of the Ministry of Commerce headquarters in Riyadh. The agreement was signed in the presence of Eng. Mohammed A. Al. Alwaily, Deputy Minister for Shared Services, Ministry of Commerce.



**Korea Tourism Organization boosts India presence at major travel fairs**

Determined to weave a tighter tapestry of B2B partnerships and to keep Korea at the top of Indian travellers' must-visit lists in 2024, the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) is marking their presence with a sizeable delegation at the country's upcoming leading travel trade shows. KTO is gearing up to participate in Outbound Travel Mart (OTM) in Mumbai from February 8-10, 2024, and the 31st edition of South Asia's Travel and Tourism Exchange (SATTE), which will be held from February 22-24, 2024 at Greater Noida in the National Capital Region.



**Air India SATS expands air cargo handling footprint to Ranchi Airport**

Air India SATS Airport Services Pvt Ltd (AISATS) announced that it has started domestic cargo handling services at Birsa Munda Airport, Ranchi as the airport's official Operator & Management (O&M) service provider. Partnering with AAI Cargo Logistics and Allied Services Company Ltd. (AAICLAS), AISATS Ranchi Cargo Services Private Limited will provide world-class domestic cargo handling services to ensure that Ranchi Airport's cargo throughput is ready to take off to new heights of service excellence.



**Saudi Tourism launches new global marketing campaign with Lionel Messi**

Saudi's national tourism brand 'Saudi Welcome To Arabia' has kicked off another global marketing campaign featuring football legend and Saudi Tourism Ambassador, Lionel Messi. Launching across key target markets in Europe, India and China, the "Go Beyond What You Think" campaign is anchored on consumer insights, which revealed there are still common misconceptions about the destination, and invites audiences to experience the incredible and vibrant cultural transformation taking place across Saudi. Those that know Saudi are encouraged to share positive experiences and memories on TikTok and social channels using the bi-lingual hashtags #ShareYourSaudi and in Arabic #كنوعبشيءدوعسا.





Looking for comfort and convenience for your clients' visa submission process?

Choose VFS Global's

# PREMIUM LOUNGE SERVICE



Our state-of-the-art, plush **Premium Lounge** offers a seamless experience during visa application submission.

- ✓ Personalised attention at every step
- ✓ Refreshments and beverages
- ✓ Photocopy & Photobooth services
- ✓ SMS Alerts

For exclusive deals and incentives, write to us on:

[b2bsales@vfsglobal.com](mailto:b2bsales@vfsglobal.com)



**Changi Airport has an 86 per cent increase in passengers**

While aircraft movements remained slightly below pre-pandemic levels, airfreight throughput experienced a modest year-on-year decline. December 2023 marked a peak, with the highest passenger movement and aircraft movement figures of the year, indicating a rebound in travel demand. North America led the pack in traffic recovery in 2023, exceeding 2019 levels by over 25 per cent, driven by domestic and international demand. Southeast Asia regains its familiar dominance, while China, Japan, and South Korea ignite the skies with their rapid ascent. Lim Ching Kiat, Changi Airport Group's Executive Vice President for Air Hub expressed confidence in the airport's full recovery to pre-pandemic connectivity and traffic levels by 2024.



**BRANDit to represent Mövenpick Resort Al Marjan Island in the Indian market**

Mövenpick Resort Al Marjan Island has forged a strategic alliance with BRANDit, a trusted leader in destination and hospitality representation, as the Marketing & PR agency in India. This partnership aims to introduce luxury travellers, adventure seekers and honeymooners to unique experiences that the resort has to offer. Nestled in the heart of Ras Al Khaimah, UAE, Mövenpick Resort Al Marjan Island boasts a diverse range of activities, world-class amenities and signature dining options. The resort also offers a perfect backdrop for lavish weddings, thanks to its beachfront location overlooking the Arabian Gulf and multiple venues.

**Tourism department of Bihar unveils benefits of Bihar Tourism Policy 2023**

Deputy Chief Minister Shri Tejashwi Yadav, along with other Ministers & Tourism Secretary Shri Abhay Kumar Singh addressed the stakeholders and tourist service providers regarding the benefits of 'Bihar Tourism Policy 2023.' In the presence of the esteemed ministers, the annual calendar and diary of the Bihar Tourism Department were also unveiled.



**Fortune Hotels increases its Tamil Nadu footprint with Fortune Hosur**

Fortune Hotels, a member of ITC's hotel group, announces the launch of its new upscale hotel, Fortune Hosur, in the historic city of Tamil Nadu. Nestled in the heart of the bustling industrial district of Krishnagiri, Fortune Hosur promises to be a haven of class and comfort, offering a seamless blend of enthusiastic hospitality and premium services. Strategically located off the Bangalore-Chennai highway, Fortune Hosur is beset in the commercial nucleus of the town offering easy access to key cities like Salem, Vellore, Madurai and Chennai- making it a perfect pit stop for transient guests.





# THIS SUMMER HEAD TO **EUROPE**

Starting at Only ₹ **65,399\***



## CHALO VIENNA, BUDAPEST, PRAGUE & FRANKFURT

6 N/7 D Starting From ₹ **65,399\***



## CHALO SPAIN

7 N/8 D Starting From ₹ **90,399\***



## CHALO ZURICH & PARIS

6 N/7 D Starting From ₹ **96,999\***



## CHALO CROATIA, BOSNIA & SLOVENIA

7 N/8 D Starting From ₹ **133,999\***



## CHALO SCANDINAVIA

7 N/8 D Starting From ₹ **122,999\***



## CHALO PARIS, ITALY & SWITZERLAND

9 N/10 D Starting From ₹ **135,999\***

*Inclusions:* Hotels, Daily Breakfast,  
Transport & Sightseeing

*Exclusions:* Airfare, Visa, Taxes, Insurance  
& Personal Expenses



LIVE WIRE

# ISLAND TOURISM

## Making waves in the deep ocean of tourism

Islands have always held a special place in the hearts of travellers, offering a unique blend of natural beauty, tranquility, and adventure. Let's delve into the global market share of island tourism, unravel the reasons behind travellers' affinity for islands, spotlight India's emerging prominence in island tourism, highlight destinations excelling in this niche, and discuss the imperative of preserving fragile ecosystems.

- *Bharti Sharma*





## THE GLOBAL ISLAND TOURISM LANDSCAPE

Island tourism represents a significant segment of the global travel industry, contributing substantially to the economies of island nations and regions. According to recent data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), island destinations accounted for approximately 20 per cent of international tourist arrivals globally. This figure underscores the enduring popularity of islands as premier travel destinations.

The appeal of island tourism transcends geographical boundaries, with travellers drawn to diverse offerings ranging from pristine beaches and lush rainforests to vibrant cultures and rich histories. Moreover, islands often provide a sense of seclusion and exclusivity, making them ideal for romantic getaways, family vacations, and adventurous escapades.

## UNDERSTANDING THE ALLURE OF ISLANDS

There are several factors contribute to the enduring allure of islands among travellers. Some of them are

- Islands boast unparalleled natural beauty, characterized by crystal-clear waters, picturesque landscapes, and diverse flora and fauna. The opportunity to immerse oneself in stunning surroundings is a major draw for travellers seeking relaxation and rejuvenation.
- Many islands offer secluded resorts and private villas, allowing travellers to escape the hustle and bustle of daily life and enjoy moments of solitude. The sense of exclusivity adds to the appeal, making island vacations feel like luxurious retreats.
- Islands are often synonymous with adventure, offering a plethora of outdoor activities such as snorkeling, diving, hiking, and wildlife encounters. Whether exploring coral reefs, scaling volcanic peaks, or discovering hidden coves, travellers relish the opportunity for exploration and discovery.

- Despite their small size, many islands boast rich cultural heritage and traditions passed down through generations. From vibrant festivals and local cuisine to indigenous crafts and music, islands offer immersive cultural experiences that captivate travellers seeking authenticity.

## INDIA'S EMERGENCE AS AN ISLAND TOURISM HUB

In recent years, India has emerged as a burgeoning hub for island tourism, capitalizing on its diverse archipelagos and coastal regions. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, and the pristine beaches of Goa are among the key attractions drawing domestic and international tourists alike.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands, with their unspoiled beaches, lush rainforests, and vibrant marine life, have seen a surge in tourist arrivals in recent years. The government's focus on sustainable tourism initiatives and infrastructure development has further bolstered the region's appeal. Lakshadweep, with its idyllic coral islands and turquoise lagoons, offers a tranquil escape for travellers seeking serenity and natural beauty. The region's eco-friendly resorts and emphasis on conservation have positioned it as a sustainable tourism destination.





## LIVE WIRE



### DESTINATIONS LEADING THE ISLAND TOURISM CHARGE

Several destinations around the world have distinguished themselves as leaders in island tourism, attracting discerning travellers with their unique offerings such as Maldives which is renowned for its overwater bungalows, vibrant coral reefs, and pristine beaches, the Maldives remains a top choice for luxury island getaways. The archipelago's commitment to sustainable tourism practices has garnered praise from environmentalists and travellers alike.

With its lush jungles, granite boulders, and azure waters, Seychelles epitomizes tropical paradise. The islands' focus on conservation and ecotourism has earned it a reputation as a responsible tourism destination. Fiji's warm hospitality, vibrant culture, and diverse marine life continue to attract travellers seeking authentic experiences. The archipelago's emphasis on community-based tourism initiatives has contributed to its appeal as a socially responsible destination.

### A CALL TO ACTION

While island tourism offers

unparalleled opportunities for exploration and relaxation, it also presents unique challenges, particularly concerning environmental conservation. Islands are often home to fragile ecosystems that are susceptible to damage from uncontrolled tourism activities, pollution, and climate change.

To ensure the long-term sustainability of island tourism, stakeholders must prioritize conservation efforts and adopt responsible tourism practices. This includes promoting eco-friendly accommodations, implementing waste management systems, supporting local communities, and establishing marine protected areas.

Island tourism continues to captivate travellers worldwide with its natural beauty, exclusivity, and cultural richness. As India emerges as a key player in the global island tourism market, it must balance tourism development with environmental preservation to safeguard its pristine islands for future generations to enjoy. By embracing sustainable tourism practices, we can ensure that islands remain havens of beauty and biodiversity for years to come.

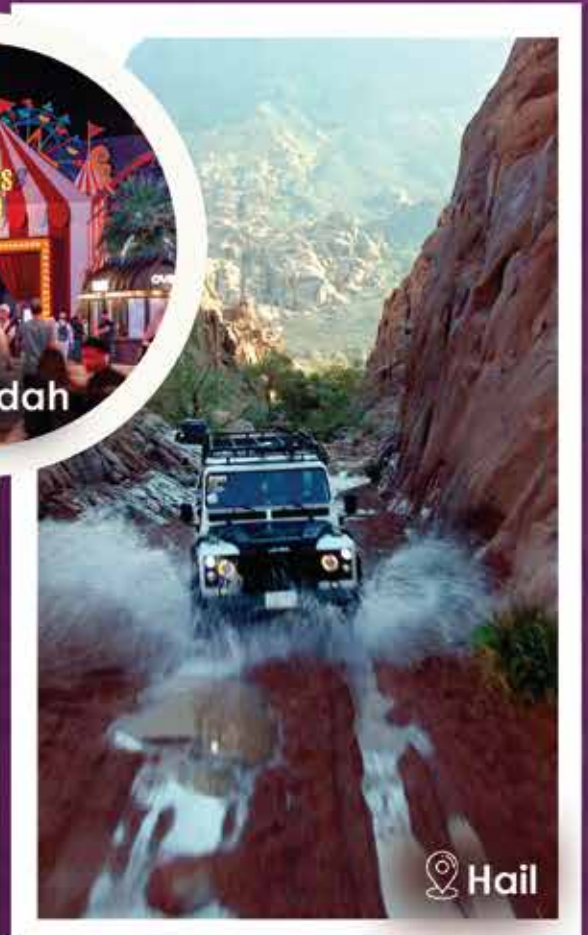




# Saudi

Welcome  
to Arabia

*Experience the World's Most Happening Winter in Saudi*  
with warm nights, exciting days filled with activities,  
and fuelled with happiness!



SCAN ME

**tbo.com**  
TRAVEL SIMPLIFIED



# Jharkhand

## DISCOVER THE BREATH TAKING SCENIC SPLENDOUR

Blessed with enticing natural beauty and enriched culture and heritage, the state of Jharkhand is a unique. An amalgamation of enchanting scenic landscapes, rich and vibrant fairs and festivals, the state is blessed with plethora of captivating experience making a perfect destination for travellers. Smt Anjali Yadav (IAS), Director, Jharkhand Tourism shares on how the department of tourism is planning to attract travellers to experience the majestic charm of Jharkhand.

*- Sudipta Saha*





## INDIAN SAGA

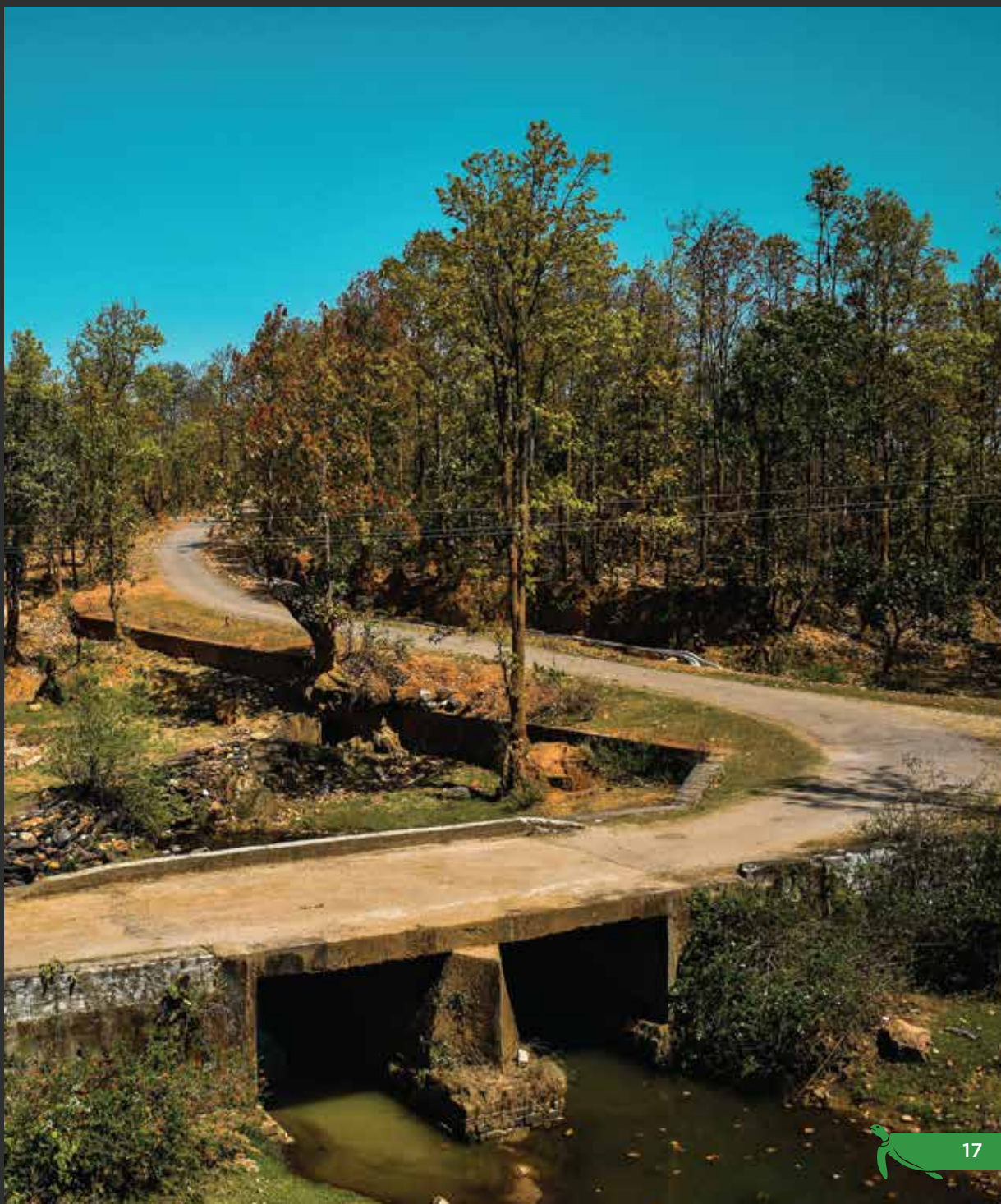


Anjali Yadav

The state of Jharkhand is popularly known for its scenic beauty, countless natural attractions, lush green forests and the array of vibrant festivals such as Karma, Sohrai, Sarhul. Home to several pilgrim sites such as Baidyanathdham Temple or Deoghar and Sammed Shikhar or Parasnath Hills located in Giridih have been attracting numerous of pilgrimages throughout the year. The state of Jharkhand is a true blend of charming natural beauty and divine spirituality.

### **STRENGTHENING ITS PRESENCE GLOBALLY**

The department of tourism is taking several initiatives to make its presence felt and attract travellers from all around the world. Jharkhand Tourism aims to enroot globally and make their presence feel amongst the global customers. "In the initiatives, we have come out with several rules and regulations to make our state friendly. We have launched Jharkhand Tourism policy 2021 in which single window system have been implemented to give capital subsidies to the corporates that desire to invest in the state. Other than that, we are also working on the rural homestays policy and will be launching the same very soon. We have come with registration rules for different stakeholders that include tour operators, adventure tour-operators, and other stakeholders," adds Smt Anjali Yadav.





## INDIAN SAGA



### **GLIMPSE OF CULTURE THROUGH FAIRS & FESTIVALS**

Jharkhand is a land of ethnic culture and therefore it is blessed with ample of colourful festivals and customs. The festivals celebrated in the state are an integral part and have been attracting several visitors. Speaking on the same line, Smt. Anjali Yadav mentions, "In the past year, we have been organising several events such as New Year Festival, World Tourism Day, Kite Festival on Makar Sankranti in order to attract tourists from the nearby states and offer them the glimpse of this beautiful state. We are coming up with wellness retreat, hot air balloon festival, the objective is to celebrate maximum festivals and engage different audience through these festivals."

### **ENCOURAGING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR A DIVINE EXPERIENCE**

The unique topography of the state makes it a preferred destination for all kind of travellers, the state not just boasts wildlife or spiritual travellers but also encourages the adventure seekers to go on an exotic treks and enjoy the lush forests and enchanting

waterfalls. The department is working vigorously towards the upfitment of the infrastructure in order to offer a comfortable and memorable trip to its visitors.

There are two airports in the state-one in Ranchi which is centrally located in Jharkhand and the other in Deogarh, a holy sacred place of Hinduism because of the Jyotirlinga and a lot of tourists have shown their interest in exploring the destination especially during the Sawan Month. For Parasnath, an important site for Jain, good train connectivity is available. "In respect to investment promotions and properties, we have a world-class property in Patratu which is designed to cater to MICE tourism and destination wedding. We have upgraded our infrastructure in Netarhat which is a hill station and several new properties have come up in this mesmerising location also referred to as the 'Queen of Chotanagpur'. Since a lot of interests were shown by different hotel chains to invest in Jharkhand, we have engaged Deloitte as our transaction advisor for engaging a PPP partners in three properties in Patratu, Netarhat and Deogarh," shares Smt. Anjali Yadav, Director, Tourism NSW







# MANCHESTER, DUBLIN, MUNICH, BRUSSELS, STOCKHOLM AND MORE.

Connect to over 230 destinations in Europe.  
Fly non-stop with Air India to 8 cities\*  
in Europe and onward on our partner network.

**BOOK NOW ON [airindia.com](http://airindia.com)**  
OR CONTACT YOUR TRAVEL AGENT



Through check-in  
of baggage\*\*



Seamless connections

\*London, Frankfurt, Milan, Paris,  
Copenhagen, Vienna, Birmingham, Amsterdam.

\*\*Subject to applicable statutory requirements.



Map for illustrative purpose only.

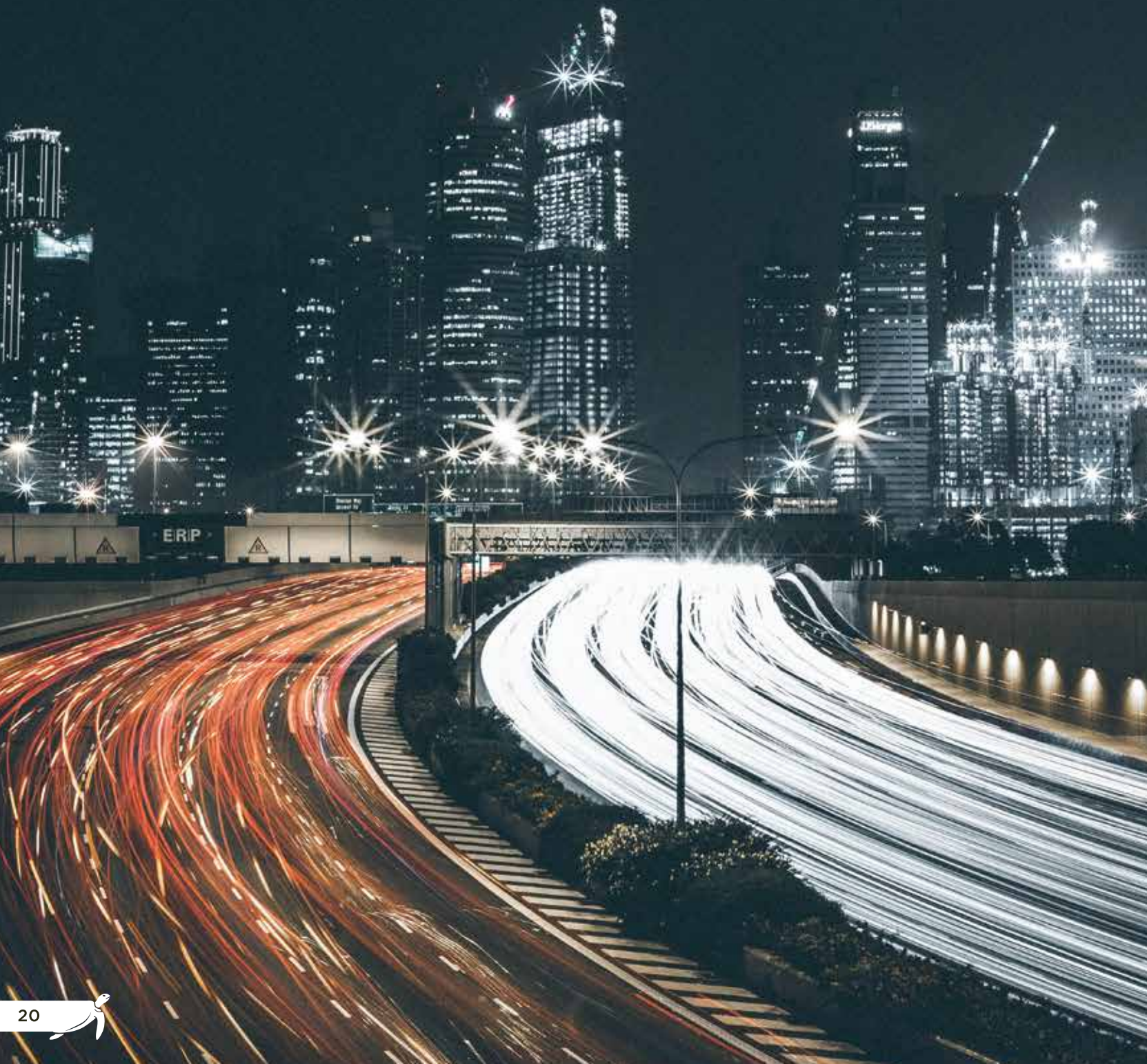


# Mumbai to Miami

## Exploring opportunities in the sunshine state

Miami, a lively centre in the sunshine state of Florida radiates youthfulness. Joe Docal, Director of Travel Industry Sales, Greater Miami Convention Visitor Bureau shares his experience about visiting India.

- Naina Nath





## OFFSHORE BINOCULAR

From the vibrant city vibes to the trendy beaches, this hot destination buzzes with a welcoming culture and a magnetic atmosphere that attracts people from all corners of the globe. Recognising the substantial potential India holds for the US and the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau, they aim to elevate their focus on the Indian market compared to previous efforts.

### *The Mumbai meet*

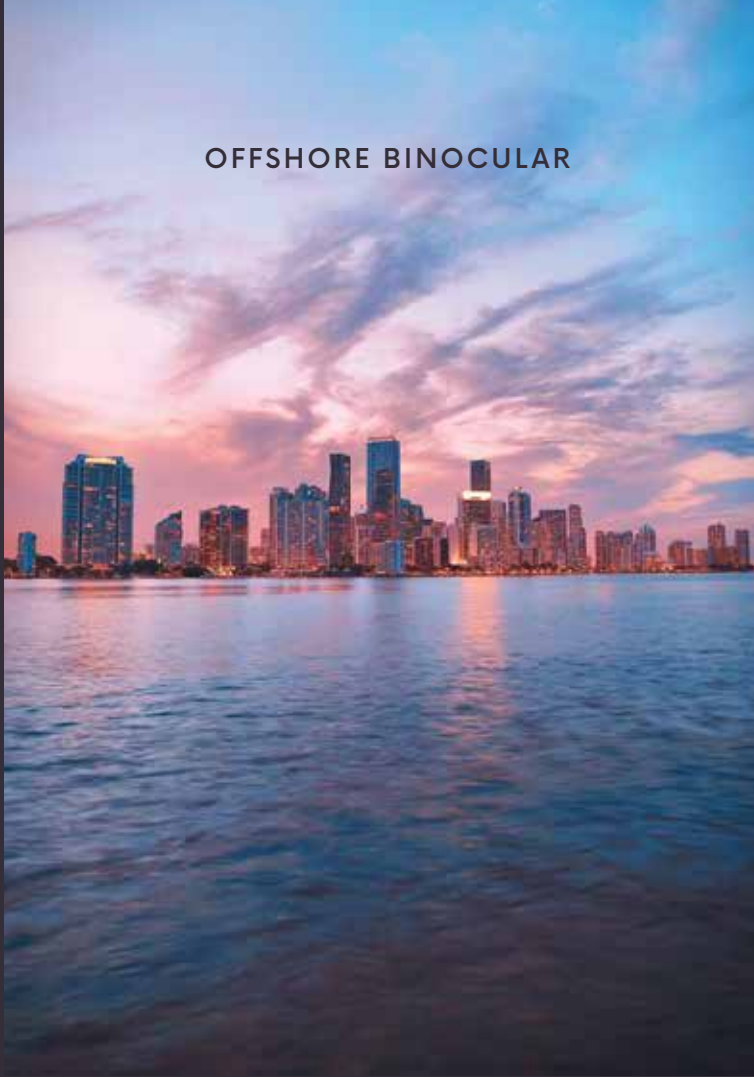
The trade seminar that took place in Mumbai, India gathered over 20 travel agents. Joe shares "I presented and connected with 20 agents and media representatives specialising in diverse segments such as FIT, luxury, and MICE. The focus of the event was to reconnect with the Mumbai trade and share insights with the travel industry, creating opportunities for mutual growth and development."

### *India market engagement*

In 2024, Miami's marketing approach in India centres on staying relevant. Recognising the country's immense market potential, Joe comments, "The BrandUSA sales mission in Goa and participation in larger events is crucial for our outreach. Ongoing connections through training sessions remain important. While other KOL collaborations are not currently planned, our India representatives, AVIAREPS, consistently work to uphold our brand's relevance, tapping into extraordinary opportunities within the Indian market."

### *Enhancing direct connections*

"Due to the absence of direct flights from India to Miami, obtaining specific visitor numbers remains a challenge. Despite exploring alternatives, the indirect travel connections complicate precise figure estimation." Joe acknowledges the hindrance in accuracy due to the lack of direct routes, prompting the deployment of diverse strategies. Simultaneously, discussions with



Joe Docal

Indian carriers for a direct flight to Miami are ongoing, addressing the need for improved accessibility. Recognising India as a high-priority market, Joe emphasises the active pursuit of streamlined airline connectivity to strengthen ties and cater to market potential.

### *Visa improvements, repeat interest*

"While the visa process has improved from last year, we acknowledge the challenges faced by Indians without prior US visas. To address this, we're strategically focusing on encouraging repeat visitors to include Miami in their USA itinerary." Despite visa-related challenges beyond their control, targeting those familiar with the process enhances the likelihood of successful visits, fostering a connection between Miami and seasoned travellers from India.







### *Miami: MICE and wedding aspirations*

The Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau is strategically eyeing Tier II and III cities in India for MICE business expansion in 2025. Despite the absence of direct air connectivity to Miami Airport, the focus in 2024 involves engaging in direct sales activities, B2B roadshows, and exhibitions in key gateways. The aim is to establish a foothold in the market before venturing into additional cities. Miami is particularly interested in attracting MICE groups, emphasising its capabilities in servicing incentive movements and the existing hotel infrastructure. While leisure travellers form a significant portion, the bureau is actively diversifying its engagement. "While we currently don't facilitate weddings directly, our destination features hotels with beach facilities, ideal for destination weddings. Although the full potential hasn't been tapped, the scenic settings and available amenities position Miami as an attractive prospect for memorable destination weddings and MICE travel from India. As the demand grows, we aim to further explore and enhance our offerings in this segment."

### *Top things to do in Miami*

- **Discover Art:** Visit the Wynwood Walls' vibrant murals by global artists. Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) showcases contemporary masterpieces against bay views. Art Basel Miami Beach, an annual international event, highlights Miami's artistic portfolio.
- **Indulge in Food:** Savor Michelin-starred "Elcielo Miami" for innovative Latin American cuisine. "Zuma" offers Japanese izakaya sophistication. "Ghee Indian Kitchen" provides authentic yet modern twists, catering to diverse culinary preferences in Miami. Notably, an impressive eleven restaurants in Greater Miami & Miami Beach have received one MICHELIN star and one restaurant – L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon, located in the Miami Design District – received the only two-star rating in the state of Florida.
- **Experience Nature:** Explore Everglades National Park's thrill with airboat tours among alligators. Miami's iconic beaches, especially South Beach, captivate with lively scenes and watersport activities. Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden offers a serene escape amidst diverse plant life.
- **Retail Therapy:** Miami's diverse shopping scene ranges from luxury boutiques like Bal Harbour Shops to trendy South Beach boutiques. The Design District showcases high-end brands and contemporary art. Miami offers a dynamic and cosmopolitan shopping experience for every taste.
- **Soak in the Diversity:** Miami's cultural richness is evident in Little Havana's Cuban influence. The Calle Ocho Festival celebrates Latin American culture with music, dance, and authentic cuisine. Carnaval Miami further embraces global traditions, reflecting the city's multicultural essence.
- **Party till you drop:** Miami's nightlife is a vibrant blend of energy and inclusivity. The city features a rich mix of clubs with world-class DJs, trendy lounges, and Latin-inspired dance spots. Miami's nocturnal playground ensures the party never stops, and the music keeps everyone grooving.

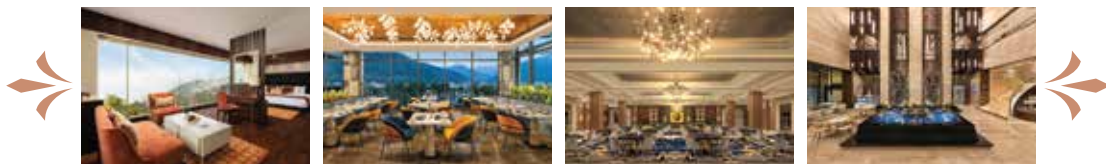




E X P E R I E N C E



DIVERSE LOCATIONS



FOR  
Seamless Stays | Unique Dining Experiences | Memorable Celebrations  
ACROSS 51 HOTELS IN 44 CITIES

Let FORTUNE take you to **NEWER** places

Become Club ITC Member Today to Unlock Exclusive Offers and Benefits  
Book Direct on [itshotels.com/fortunehotels](http://itshotels.com/fortunehotels) or call 24x7 Toll Free 1800-102-2333, 1800-419-6444





# Cuba believes in creating warm friendships!

Indulge in the enchanting Cuba, where time seems to stand still amidst vintage cars and colonial architecture. HE Alejandro Simancas Marin, Ambassador of Cuba, shares his India stint as a wonderful experience, thanks to several factors, namely, culture, heritage, and the people themselves.

- Inder Raj Ahluwalia





Feel the pulse of the Caribbean as you wander through lively plazas, encountering friendly locals and lively street performers. Dive into crystal-clear waters teeming with marine life, or trek through lush tobacco fields in Viñales. Whether you're seeking relaxation or adventure, Cuba promises an unforgettable journey filled with warmth, beauty, and authenticity. As we interviewed the ambassador, he shares his time in India as a memorable one.

### **How important is your India assignment?**

India is a priority for Cuba, so being Ambassador here was a huge responsibility for me. Developing bilateral ties between the two countries is a key objective. India represents friendship with Cuba, and in my capacity, it was my job to strengthen this strong friendship-based relationship and take it further.

### **How exactly did India shape up for you?**

India is quite unique, with its wealth of history, culture, and heritage, the country is a huge, permanent learning experience. One of the country's greatest assets and attributes is its people, who possess great positivity. India

is its people! I made many friends here and my perspective of the country is shaped by their nature.

### **Cuba has been striding forward in terms of recognition and progress.**

#### **What are your views on this?**

Yes, there have been many positive things. Cuba was recently selected as the 'main destination in Latin America', and the city of Havana has been labelled as 'wonder city'. Apart from all the natural attributes of the country, its main offering is the 'warmth' and friendly nature of Cubans, which has been widely noticed and appreciated.

### **How would you describe the India-Cuba relationship?**

The relationship between the two countries is old, time-tested, and useful. The two share views in international forums, and can play a positive role in current world affairs.

### **Is there any new-era thinking today?**

The past few years had a huge impact on the world, changed things, and taught us how fragile life is. It taught us that the human aspect is important, and there should be more 'rights' for everyone. We need to share more by changing the world order.

### **How important and pivotal is tourism for Cuba?**

Tourism is the main industry in Cuba, and is extremely important. It is the key sector in the national economy, and has a wide-reaching and highly beneficial multiplier effect. There were 5 million annual arrivals in pre-covid times, and hopefully the industry will grow. The aim is to promote this sector in every possible way.

### **Is there some sort of national tourism plan?**

Tourism is top-priority, and is being treated as such. The full potential has not yet been exploited, so we want to tap more segments, thereby increasing the overall size, dimension and value of the national tourist product.

### **What are Cuba's main tourist attractions?**

There are several attractions, but I'd say the main one are the beaches, which offer the space and beauty beach-combers want. In particular, Varadero Beach is exceptional, and then of course, there are other attractions, such as Cuban Rum, Cuban Cigars etc. which are world-famous. Enhancing all this is the fact that the country is reasonably priced for tourists.



# TRAVCLAN

## Evolving and innovating through time!

A dynamic player in the tourism landscape is edging towards change and innovations, Chirag Agrawal, Co-Founder, TravClan, reflects on the company's journey, highlighting key achievements, challenges and plans for the future.

-Tripti Jain

As TravClan reflects on the triumphs of the past year, the vision and focus for the future continuously broaden. Their focus will remain on providing a comprehensive range of services, expanding their offerings to new destinations, and enhancing the overall travel experience for their partners and their customers. The company's ability to adapt to the changing dynamics of the travel industry, coupled with a commitment to technological excellence and strategic partnerships, positions it as a key player in the years to come.

### DIVERSIFIED ON-GROUND TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

In the previous year the company was responsible for creating a space for itself in the tourism market. Chirag shares, "The entire travel industry witnessed a significant rebound in 2023, and we strategically positioned ourselves to leverage this momentum. We focused on providing the best-on-ground travel experience, a move that resonated well with both our travel partners and end customers."

The emphasis on on-ground experiences became a cornerstone of TravClan's strategy, distinguishing it from platforms primarily reliant on flight bookings. This unique approach contributed to over 70 per cent of their revenue being generated from the Hotels & Holidays verticals, showcasing the effectiveness of their diversification strategy.

### LEISURE TOURISM CREATES RIPPLES

TravClan's expansion in leisure tourism marked a significant achievement as they secured close to 5 per cent market share in some of the most sought after destinations. Sharing on the same lines Chirag says, "We witnessed substantial growth in leisure

tourism, particularly in destinations like Dubai, Maldives, and Southeast Asia. The company's success in these regions was driven by a keen understanding of traveller preferences and a commitment to curating seamless travel experiences. By solidifying its presence in these destinations, we not only expanded the market share but also strengthened the reputation as a reliable travel partner."

### BECOMING A CATALYST FOR INNOVATION

In the ever-evolving landscape of the travel industry, technology catalyses innovation. They have

consistently demonstrated its commitment to staying at the forefront of technological advancements. Chirag being an IITian himself emphasises the use of technology in the industry and shares, "As a young tech company, innovation is ingrained in our DNA. We've pioneered several industry firsts, and there's every reason to believe we will continue this trend."

The introduction of the Holiday Package Booking System is a prime example of their commitment to leveraging technology for the benefit of travel agents. This system revolutionises the process of creating and

customising holiday packages, providing real-time pricing and streamlining the booking process.

### COLLABORATIONS EXTEND BEYOND TRANSACTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

TravClan's journey involves harnessing strategic partnerships and collaborations to enhance its reach and capabilities. Chirag mentions the important collaborations and highlights, "We are actively engaged with key entities such as Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism, Abu Dhabi Department of Culture, Saudi Tourism Authority, and Oman's Ministry of Heritage and Tourism." Delving into the intricacies of destinations and fostering strategic ties with various stakeholders gives them an edge in the tourism space. By partnering with renowned attractions like Dubai Park & Resorts and Louvre Abu Dhabi, they not only broaden its reach but also enrich the travel experience it offers.

### VISIONARIES IN THE MAKING

TravClan is moving quickly towards expanding its Rolodex by valuing the new partnerships and creating a better presence. The launch of visa vertical and ongoing developments aimed at improving the on-ground travel experience showcase their commitment to continuous growth and evolution. The upcoming partnerships with Sentosa, Western Australia, and the Hong Kong Tourism Board further align with the company's expansion plans.

The previous year was of resilience, innovation, and strategic growth for the company. The vision for 2024 underscores their dedication to providing unparalleled travel experiences and staying at the forefront of industry trends. As the world continues to embrace a new era of travel, TravClan stands ready to navigate new horizons and shape the future of the industry.



Chirag Agrawal





# Atmosphere

KANIFUSHI MALDIVES

## Atmosphere Kanifushi

**Booking Validity** - Until 31st Mar 2024

**Travel Validity** – 01st Mar 2024 - 30th Apr 2024

**Discount:** 20% (Only for sunset beach villa)

**Note:** Minimum stay 04 nights & above.



# OBLU

## XPERIENCE

Ailafushi

## OBLU XPERIENCE Ailafushi

**Booking Validity** - Until 30th June 2024

**Travel Validity** - 12th Apr 2024 – 31st Oct 2024

**Discount:** 20%

**Note:** Minimum stay 04 nights & above.

**For Enquiries & Bookings**

Please contact below

# ARK Islands

Creating Memories

✉ mounera@thearktravelgroup.com

✉ ops.islands@thearktravelgroup.com

✉ saroj@thearktravelgroup.com

☎ +91-98111 90446



# NAVIGATING THE SEAS NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE



Norwegian Cruise Line, a leader in global cruise travel with a rich legacy of 57 years of innovation, caters to a diverse range of cruise enthusiasts. Manoj Singh, Country Head, Norwegian Cruise Line shares his thoughts on navigating the seas.

- Naina Nath







With a fleet of 19 ships across six distinct classes—Sun, Dawn, Jewel, Breakaway, Breakaway Plus, and Prima—featuring unique vessels like Norwegian Epic, Pride of America, and Norwegian Spirit, the brand ensures a varied and engaging experience for all. As part of its revitalised operations in Asia, Norwegian Cruise Line presents a compelling selection of itineraries aboard its renovated ships—Norwegian Jewel, Norwegian Spirit, Norwegian Sun, and Norwegian Sky. This diverse range of journeys covers multiple destinations, promising immersive experiences for travellers.

**SETTING SAIL WITH NCL**

Norwegian Cruise Line, a pioneer in contemporary cruising, features a fleet of 19 innovative ships, with 16 falling under the categories of Sun, Dawn, Jewel, Breakaway, Breakaway Plus Class, and Prima Class. Noteworthy additions such as Norwegian Epic and Norwegian Spirit enhance the diversity of the fleet. The cruise line covers 450 destinations globally, offering exclusive retreats such as Great Stirrup Cay in the Bahamas and Harvest Caye in Belize. The introduction of Norwegian Viva in 2023, the second ship in the ground-breaking Prima Class, attests to on-going innovation. With four more ships scheduled from 2025 to 2028, Norwegian Aqua, launching in March 2025, leads the next-generation Prima Class Plus. Manoj shares, "Targeting the MICE segment, Norwegian Cruise Line seamlessly integrates work and play on its ships, providing state-of-the-art

facilities for corporate events and catering to diverse consumer needs, including solo travel, leisure, and weddings."

**NCL'S ALL-INCLUSIVE FAMILY RETREATS**

Norwegian Cruise Line presents a golden opportunity for Indian families to unite and recharge. With port-rich itineraries providing immersive experiences at each destination, NCL's innovative fleet caters to families of all sizes, ensuring many options. "From onboard racetracks to Broadway shows, fine dining, casual eateries, diverse accommodation choices, and exceptional event venues, NCL guarantees that every family member, spanning multiple generations, can craft unforgettable moments during their cruise," adds Manoj. Aboard Norwegian Cruise Line, guests, including those from the Indian market, relish an extensive range of dining options tailored to diverse preferences. Renowned for its Freestyle Dining concept, NCL offers the freedom and flexibility to enjoy a four-course meal with a great bottle of wine or grab a freshly grilled burger—all without the constraints of fixed dining times or pre-assigned seating. The entertainment line-up features Broadway shows such as 'Beetlejuice,' 'The Donna Sommers Musical,' and 'Burn The Floor,' alongside daily entertainment, contributing to the dynamic atmosphere for an unforgettable cruise experience.

**PIONEERING ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY IN CRUISE TRAVEL**

NCL fully appreciates the growing importance of environmental responsibility and sustainability in the cruise industry. The corporation has taken major steps to incorporate sustainability and environmentally friendly practices into its operations, making significant expenditures in cutting-edge technology to reduce its environmental effects.

Manoj shares, "We have launched an ambitious climate action strategy with clear targets to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, emphasising efficiency, innovation, and collaboration, and aiming for net-zero emissions by 2050. We are actively working towards a 10 per cent reduction in GHG intensity by 2026 and a 25 per cent reduction by 2030, measured against a 2019 baseline on a per-capacity day basis."

NCL's commitment to decarbonisation is underscored by its adoption of green methanol as an alternative fuel source. The company has modified its upcoming Prima Class ships, slated for delivery in 2027 and 2028, to be methanol-ready. While further adjustments are necessary to enable the use of methanol alongside traditional marine fuel, this decision exemplifies NCL's determination to embrace sustainable fuel solutions.



Manoj Singh

**STRATEGIC APPROACH TO CRUISE PROMOTION IN INDIA**

"To promote the Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) in India, we prioritise collaborations under the 'Partners First' philosophy. We are committed to enhancing our support for the travel trade and our investment in this area includes the development of tools and resources aimed at empowering our travel partners to maximise their sales potential," shares Manoj.

Currently, NCL offers two dedicated platforms for their trade partners: 'Book-A-BDM' and 'Norwegian Central Asia.' Additionally, they maintain a dedicated Partners First Facebook Group to connect with agents in the region. 'Book-A-BDM' allow agents to arrange sessions with BDMs through phone, Zoom, or in-person meetings. At the same time, 'Norwegian Central-Asia' offers resources and single log-in access to NCL University (NCLU). This commitment extends to consumer marketing, inspiring travellers to engage with trusted agents and highlighting diverse destinations and itineraries offered by their 19 ships, including the Prima Class Plus will debut in March 2025, making cruise travel an accessible and exciting choice for Indian travellers.



**NCL'S VISION FOR INDIAN TRAVELLERS**

"The vision for cruise tourism aligns with the changing desires of Indian travellers who view cruise holidays as an avenue to embark on adventures and create memorable family bonds. The allure lies in traveling, reconnecting, and exploring diverse destinations," shares Manoj.

Despite being a vital market, challenges persist in reaching a broader Indian audience. The key is tapping into immense growth potential as more discover the value of cruising with NCL. Recognising India's importance, NCL invests in consumer marketing to inspire travellers to connect with trusted agents for dream cruise holidays. The vision extends beyond meeting the current demand to informing a growing number of Indian travellers about NCL's enriching offerings in the world of cruise tourism.

**SETTING SAIL INTO THE FUTURE**

In 2024, NCL is set for exciting developments, offering exceptional cruise experiences and global exploration. The recently refurbished Norwegian Spirit will embark on 14 immersive Asia Pacific itineraries from September 2024 to April 2025, featuring four to 14-day voyages from ports like Manila, Singapore, Taipei, Tokyo, and Seoul. Additionally, NCL unveils the inaugural vessel of the expanded Prima Plus class, Norwegian Aqua, with seven-day Caribbean itineraries starting March 2025 from Port Canaveral, Florida. Destinations include Puerto Plata, Tortola, Saint Thomas, and NCL's private island, Great Stirrup Cay, promising unforgettable adventures in diverse and captivating locales

"India holds a distinctive position for Norwegian Cruise Line, serving as both a key source market and destination. Our firm commitment to the Indian market is rooted in recognising its substantial growth potential. The travel trade is integral to our strategic vision, guided by the principle of 'Partners First.' This philosophy signifies our unwavering dedication to valued travel partners in India," he adds.



These thoughtfully crafted itineraries blend cultural exploration, natural beauty, and historical discovery, allowing travellers to visit iconic landmarks, savour diverse cuisines, and witness the mesmerising cherry blossoms in Japan. Norwegian Cruise Line's renewed operations in Asia promise an exciting and enriching adventure for those seeking a unique cruising experience.

• **Norwegian Jewel:**

Embarking on its inaugural Asian season, Norwegian Jewel explores 11 countries, departing from nine different ports. These include exotic locations such as Bangkok (Laem Chabang), Kuala Lumpur (Port Klang), Singapore, Taipei (Keelung), Bali (Benoa), Tokyo, Yokohama, and, in a historic first for NCL, Seoul (Incheon) in South Korea.

• **Norwegian Sun:**

Presenting a six-month Asia Pacific season from October 2024 to April 2025, Norwegian Sun unveils 13 captivating itineraries covering Japan, Korea, Thailand, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia. Departing from key ports like Melbourne, Sydney, Auckland, Honolulu, and Papeete, the ship promises a rich and diverse travel experience.

• **Norwegian Spirit:**

Taking the spotlight with 14 Asia Pacific itineraries spanning eight months from September 2024 to April 2025, Norwegian Spirit departs from Manila, Singapore, Taipei, Tokyo, and Seoul. These journeys, ranging from four to 14 days, feature immersive experiences such as a 12-day Japan round-trip from Tokyo and a 10-day Asia journey from Seoul to Tokyo, showcasing iconic destinations.

• **Norwegian Sky:**

During its four-month Asian season, Norwegian Sky embarks on seven cruises from various ports, including Manila, Singapore, Taipei, Tokyo, and Port Louis, Mauritius, between December 2024 and March 2025. With itineraries spanning 10 days, travelers can enjoy overnights in enchanting locations like Phuket, Osaka, and Bali (Benoa).





# PARADISE AWAITS



W MALDIVES



# EBIXCASH

## Travel distribution with Brick-and-Mortar expansion

EbixCash expands its wings with experience centre in every nook and cranny of the country. Naveen Kundu, Managing Director, EbixCash spearheads this transformative shift in the travel industry.

- Tripti Jain





The strategic move marks a departure from the traditional online model, aiming to provide personalised experiences and support to travel partners across India. The expansion into such outlets is a testament to the company's commitment to empower travel partners and enhance accessibility to their services.

### **EMPOWERING TRAVEL PARTNERS**

Naveen emphasises the importance of empowering travel partners, particularly those in Tier II, Tier III, Tier IV cities. He shares, "This expansion initiative is designed to provide comprehensive support and training to travel partners, enabling them to thrive in a competitive market." By offering personalised assistance and aggregating power, they aim to level the playing field for smaller travel businesses.

### **COMMITMENT TO GROWTH AND EXCELLENCE**

As the company embarks on its nationwide expansion journey, Naveen Kundu reiterates the company's commitment to growth and excellence. He shares, "Our vision is to become

the leading provider of travel services in India, known for our unwavering commitment to customer satisfaction and partner success. With plans to open 30 outlets in the next three to four months and potentially reaching a hundred in the future, we are poised to make a significant impact on the travel industry landscape.

### **IMMERSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE**

The focus for the expansion is driven by a desire to enhance the overall customer experience. According to Naveen, "Our goal is to bridge the gap between online convenience and personalised service, ensuring that customers receive the highest level of support and assistance. By establishing physical outlets in key locations, they plan to create a more immersive and accessible experience for travellers."

### **ACCESS TO TRAVEL SERVICES**

The expansion strategy prioritises inclusivity and accessibility, particularly in underserved regions. Naveen shares, "We are committed to democratising access to travel services, especially in Tier II, Tier III, and Tier IV cities where

traditional options are limited. The idea is to open outlets in these areas, the company seeks to empower local communities and foster economic growth.

### **INNOVATION IN DISTRIBUTION**

The expansion into a strategic shift towards innovation in travel distribution is the goal behind creating a space which is reliable for the consumers and well as the agents. Naveen Kundu explains, "By combining digital technology with physical presence, we are redefining the traditional distribution model and setting new standards for the industry. This hybrid approach enables us to offer a seamless and integrated travel experience to customers and partners alike." EbixCash marks a significant milestone in the journey towards revolutionising travel distribution in India. With a focus on empowerment, innovation, and inclusivity, they are all set to reshape the industry landscape and enhance the overall customer experience. The expansion is not just about opening physical outlets; it's about building lasting relationships, driving innovation, and creating value for the customers and partners."



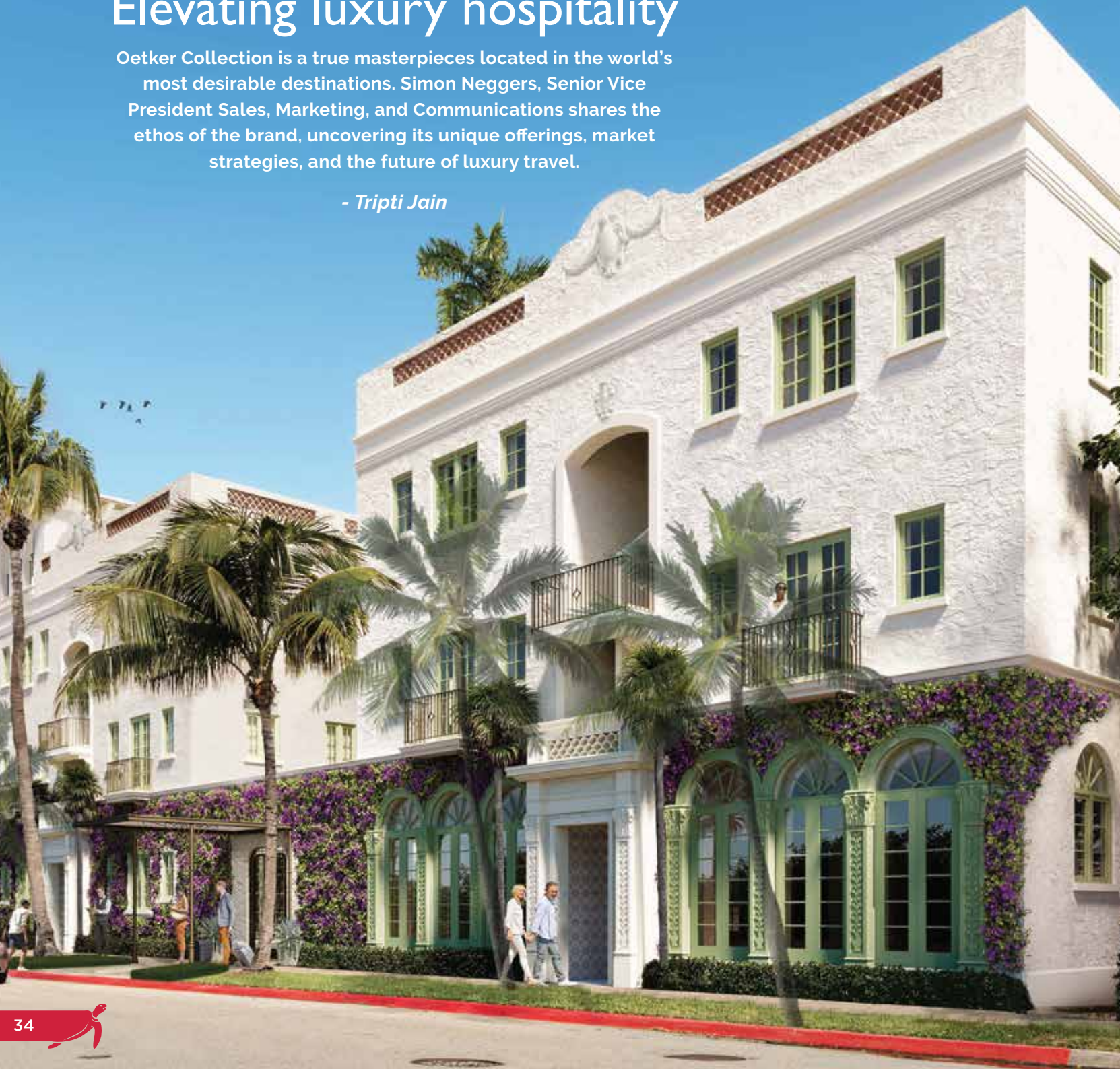


# Oetker Collection

## Elevating luxury hospitality

Oetker Collection is a true masterpieces located in the world's most desirable destinations. Simon Neggers, Senior Vice President Sales, Marketing, and Communications shares the ethos of the brand, uncovering its unique offerings, market strategies, and the future of luxury travel.

- Tripti Jain





## HOTELLIGENCE

In the realm of luxury hospitality, where excellence is not just a goal but a standard, the Oetker Collection stands out as a beacon of sophistication and service. At its helm, guiding the brand's global presence and strategic vision, he ensures a smooth sail. With a wealth of experience in the hospitality industry, Simon brings a nuanced understanding of market dynamics, consumer preferences, and the essence of luxury.

### Tapestry of iconic destinations

The Oetker Collection has curated a portfolio of iconic properties that epitomise luxury and refinement. From the historic elegance of Brenner's Park in Germany to the timeless allure of The Lanesborough in London, each hotel is a masterpiece in its own right. Simon emphasises the importance of selecting destinations that resonate with the brand's discerning clientele and shares, "We go to places where we know our clients go. This strategic approach ensures that guests experience the pinnacle of luxury in destinations that captivate the imagination." The allure of the brand lies in its ability to evoke a sense of wonder and enchantment, transporting guests to a world of unparalleled luxury and refinement. Speaking on the selection process for new properties, Simon explains, "We tend to go to destinations where our clients travel to. This keen understanding of consumer preferences allows the brand to curate a collection of hotels that embody the epitome of luxury hospitality."

### Cultivating global markets

As the global landscape of luxury travel evolves, so too does the Oetker Collection's approach to market



Simon Neggers



expansion. He highlights the significance of key markets such as India and others, noting their growing importance in the luxury hospitality sector. He elaborates, "The volume of the market into our hotels from China and from India is substantial. By recognising and catering to the unique preferences of these markets, we continue to foster meaningful connections with discerning travellers worldwide."

In the industry it is eminent to understand the nuances of global markets to success. Simon emphasises the need for adaptability and foresight and shares, "We focus on different markets around the world, depending on the time of year and the properties that we are pushing. This strategic approach allows the brand to stay ahead of market trends and maintain its position as a leader in luxury travel."

### Exclusivity with luxury

In an era where personalised experiences reign supreme, the brand excels in anticipating and exceeding guest expectations. Simon highlights the importance of personalisation and adds, "Personalisation is a true key to what we do. Whether it's crafting bespoke itineraries, offering exclusive amenities, or anticipating individual preferences, the brand's commitment to personalised service sets it apart in a competitive landscape."

The cornerstone of luxury hospitality lies in the ability to create tailor-made experiences that resonate with each guest on a personal level. He highlights the role of empathy and intuition in delivering exceptional service and shares, "You have to have empathy to feel like what people are really looking for. This human-centric approach ensures that guest's feel valued and understood throughout their stay, fostering long-lasting relationships and loyalty."





### Nurturing partnerships and experiences

Central to the Oetker Collection's success is its ability to cultivate strategic partnerships and deliver unparalleled experiences. From exclusive pop-up restaurants to collaborations with renowned chefs, the brand continuously seeks to elevate the guest experience. Simon discusses the importance of forging meaningful partnerships and shares, "It's been a great partnership with Oberoi between Artifaction and Oberoi. By leveraging synergies with esteemed partners, we offer guests access to unique experiences that resonate on a deeper level." In the competitive landscape of luxury hospitality, collaboration is the key to creating memorable experiences that leave a lasting impression. Simon emphasises the value of authenticity and creativity in partnership endeavours and

shares, "We had the executive chef of The Woodward, our hotel in Geneva, and do a partnership with Oberoi in Mumbai. This collaborative approach allows the brand to showcase its culinary excellence while offering guests a taste of luxury from around the world."

### Pioneers of innovation and growth

Looking towards the future, Simon envisions continued innovation and growth for the brand. With upcoming projects such as the opening of the Venetta Hotel in Palm Beach and the renovation of Brenner's Park, the brand remains at the forefront of luxury hospitality. He emphasises, "We hope to see some growth in the numbers from India, highlighting the brand's commitment to expanding its presence in key markets while maintaining its signature standards of excellence." In an ever-evolving landscape

of luxury hospitality, innovation is essential to staying ahead of the curve. Simon discusses the importance of adapting to changing consumer preferences and market dynamics and shares, "We focus on different markets around the world, depending on the time of year and the properties that we are pushing. This agile approach allows the brand to remain relevant and continue offering guest's unparalleled experiences that exceed their expectations."

The Oetker Collection stands as timeless elegance and unparalleled service. Guided by a visionary leadership the brand continues to redefine luxury travel, offering guests unforgettable experiences that transcend the ordinary. Luxury is about time well spent in a great place with people you love the most. With a steadfast commitment to excellence and innovation, the brand remains poised to shape the future of luxury hospitality for generations to come.





Madame Tussauds  
SINGAPORE



Get close to more than 80 unique celebrity wax figures! Be inspired by legendary icons like Modi, Virat Kohli, Mahesh Babu and many more!

Hop on board Madame Tussauds' ONLY boat ride "Spirit of Singapore".

Join Marvel's Avengers in the fight against evil in our Marvel Universe 4D experience, the first in Southeast Asia!



Scan to  
find out more!

# A WORLD OF FUN IN THE UK!



**SATTE**  
South Asia's Leading Travel Show  
Feb 22-24, 2024  
India Expo Mart  
Greater Noida, Delhi NCR, India

BOOTH NO: C 96

For Trade queries contact: [Gaurav.Seth@merlinentertainments.biz](mailto:Gaurav.Seth@merlinentertainments.biz)  
or [Kedar.Shinde@merlinentertainments.biz](mailto:Kedar.Shinde@merlinentertainments.biz)



# Paris

## Where history meets modernity

Paris Region is going to be the pinnacle in international sports in 2024. On their visit to India **President Valérie Pécresse** and **Chairwoman Alexandra Dublanche** strategically shares about the economic, technological, and cultural ties, along with opportunities and the upcoming 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris.

- *Naina Nath*





In a strategic move to foster economic, technological, and cultural ties, Valérie Péresse, President of Paris Region, alongside Alexandra Dublanche, Chairwoman, Choose Paris Region, undertook a diplomatic mission to India from 5th to 10th January 2024. The purpose of this visit was to engage with Indian decision-makers, presenting diverse opportunities in innovation, technology, academic collaboration, tourism, and culture while shedding light on the forthcoming 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris.

### PARIS REGION'S ECONOMIC ASCENDANCY POST-BREXIT

Since the aftermath of Brexit, the Paris Region has emerged as the economic and financial powerhouse of Europe, a 2022 study by EY reveals that over 2,800 bankers and financiers have relocated to Paris, creating more than 7,000 jobs. The Paris Stock Exchange now features Europe's largest market capitalisation, surpassing London and Frankfurt. This economic transition positions Paris as an attractive destination for international businesses and investors.

### STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN INDIA AND THE PARIS REGION

India, a crucial partner for the Paris Region, sees planned partnership sessions aimed at fostering collaboration in deep tech, innovation, university cooperation, film culture, and tourism. During its visit, the delegation engaged with Indian investors, R&D centres, tech start-ups, and banks, highlighting Paris' financial



*"As India continues to play an important role in the global economy, the Paris Region emerges as an inviting partner, offering a blend of economic opportunities, technological innovation, and a rich cultural experience for Indian businesses and tourists alike."*

*- Madame Valérie Péresse-President of the Paris Region*



strength and the diverse business opportunities available.

### CULTURAL SYNERGY AND TOURISM APPEAL

Recognising India's emergence as a burgeoning tourism market, Paris Region, a global tourist hotspot, aligns perfectly with the preferences of Indian tourists. The diplomatic relations between France and India, coupled with a streamlined visa management system, facilitate the flow of tourists. Paris Region's diverse offerings, including heritage, shopping, gastronomy, and cultural events, make it an ideal destination for Indian travellers.

### CINEMATIC INFLUENCES ON TOURISM

Cinema tourism, particularly driven by Bollywood, plays a significant role in inspiring travel choices among Indians. The Paris Region delegation toured the iconic Yash Raj studios, engaging with influential film producers. This initiative aims to leverage the influence of Indian cinema to promote Paris as a prime filming location and a cultural hub.

### PARIS 2024 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

The Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games stands as a crucial moment in global sports, marking the largest event ever organised in France. Set to unfold from 26th July to 11th August 2024, the Olympic Games will create a historic spectacle, positioning Paris as the focal point of the world. Hosting 4,400 of the world's elite Paralympic athletes over 12 days, from August 28th to September 8th, 2024, Paris will

not only showcase its commitment to hosting top-tier competitions but also exemplify its hospitality, cultural richness, and organisational prowess. As the City of Lights prepares to welcome the international sports community, it embodies Paris Region's dedication to becoming a hub for innovation, collaboration, and global engagement. This monumental occasion underscores the city's ambition to make history and leave an indelible mark on the global sporting landscape.

### VOLOCOPTER: TRANSFORMING URBAN MOBILITY IN PARIS

In tandem with the excitement around the Paris 2024 Games, Volocopter, a pioneering pre-revenue air taxi company, is poised for a commercial launch in the French capital during the summer of 2024. The VoloCity air taxi, strategically chosen by Volocopter, aims to address the pressing public transportation challenges faced by densely populated Paris. Given the city's substantial population and the added influx of tourists during peak travel seasons, Paris requires innovative mobility solutions, a void that the Volocopter aims to fill. By prioritising launching its commercial services in Paris, Volocopter aligns itself with the city's commitment to innovation and progress, further emphasised by the imminent Olympic and Paralympic Games. This integration of cutting-edge air mobility solutions and major sporting events underscores Paris's dedication to providing efficient and futuristic transportation options for residents and visitors.

### EXPANDING BEYOND LUXURY

Contrary to popular belief, Paris Region is not just about luxury and couture. It is the leading region in Europe for R&D investments, hosting events such as VivaTech, an annual technology start-up conference. The region's commitment to technology extends beyond hosting events – it actively assists investors in finding suitable locations, and partners, and navigating the entire investment process.

### FUTURE COLLABORATIONS WITH INDIAN BUSINESSES

In a recent meeting with the Ambani family and the Chairman of Tata Sons, discussions revolved around their plans for investments in France. Whether it is in hotels, technology, energy, or training programs, there is a mutual interest in fostering collaboration. Notably, the Reliance Foundation is set to build the India House in Paris during the Olympic Games, creating a platform to showcase Indian culture and cuisine to the world.

### ENHANCED CONNECTIVITY AND TOURISM APPEAL

Recognising the geographical advantage between India and France, there is an expressed desire to increase flights, allowing more tourists to fly directly to Paris. With the 'You Only Live Once' effect driving travel aspirations, Paris is positioned as the ideal destination for Indians looking to explore beyond iconic landmarks, encouraging them to delve into the rich cultural and historical tapestry of the region. The visit of the Paris Region delegation to India is a testament to the region's commitment to strengthening ties and fostering mutually beneficial collaborations.







 **Travel Validity**

**11<sup>th</sup> MAR '24 - 30<sup>th</sup> APR '24**

**FREE**

**Meal Upgrade Offer**





# BWH Hotel's visionary path in the Indian subcontinent



BWH Hotels stands as a beacon of innovation and growth. **Atul Jain, COO, India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh**, provides insights into the strategic initiatives propelling the brand forward and shaping the future of hospitality in the subcontinent.

- Tripti Jain





As BWH Hotels charts its visionary path in the Indian subcontinent, the brand is being steered towards growth by setting a paradigm for excellence in the ever-evolving hospitality industry. In every aspect – from brand dynamics to sustainability initiatives – it is not merely a hotel chain; it's a curator of experiences, a custodian of values, and a pioneer in shaping the future of hospitality.

### Recognising success

"Tradition meets innovation in the Best Western experience," shares Atul as he delves into the brand dynamics. With a legacy spanning 77 years, traditional brands alongside newer additions such as SureStay are making waves. He reflects on the success, and adds, "Recognition comes not just from a name but from the experience we provide. Six Points, World Hotels, and Vibant – each has its unique charm, adding to the diverse tapestry of our offerings."

### Stepping stones

With 44 hotels in India, including 27 operational ones, the brand has been navigating challenges and capitalising on opportunities for steady expansion. "Our resilience is a testament to our commitment to delivering unparalleled experiences to our guests. At BWH, challenges are not

obstacles but stepping stones to success," shares Atul.

### A holistic approach

"Our commitment goes beyond segmentation; it's about delivering a holistic experience," says Atul as he discusses Best Western's approach to market segmentation. The brand doesn't pigeonhole itself but aims to provide comprehensive services. Furthermore, he emphasises, "We are not just in the business of rooms; we are in the business of creating lasting memories. From rooms and meals to meeting spaces, our focus is on quality, ensuring each guest receives an unparalleled experience."

### Extending boundaries

Success in the north is just the beginning for BWH Hotels. With a positive outlook on potential expansion in every city, Atul's vision extends beyond geographic boundaries. "Our success is not confined to one region; it's a global vision with roots deeply embedded in the hospitality ethos we bring to each location," he adds, offering a glimpse into their future trajectory.

### Sustainability: Reflection of dedication

"Sustainability is not just a trend; it's our responsibility," says Atul, discussing their

commitment to eco-friendly practices. The introduction of solar panels and electric chargers aligns with the brand's forward-thinking approach. He adds, "Our sustainability initiatives are not just about being environmentally conscious; they are a reflection of our dedication to creating a positive impact on the communities we serve."

### Beyond numbers, towards excellence

"Our success is measured in relationships, not just numbers," shares Atul. The brand's unique perspective emphasises the value it brings to customers and the enduring relationships forged with hotel owners. He further adds, "Our journey is a testament to our commitment to quality, sustainability, and the communities we operate in. We are not just building hotels; we are crafting experiences, fostering lasting relationships, and setting new benchmarks in hospitality excellence."

In the ever-evolving landscape of hospitality, their journey is about more than expansion. It's about creating a legacy of excellence, sustainability, and unwavering commitment to guest satisfaction. Every hotel they operate is a testament to the values we uphold and the experiences they aim to provide.





BIZ



# Merlin Entertainments

## A journey through iconic attractions

Merlin Entertainments offers innovative and enchanting experiences and is expanding its global footprint; it remains committed to providing unparalleled experiences for guests worldwide. Gaurav Seth, Head of Trade Sales, India Outbound, Merlin Entertainments shares insights on their rolodex.

- Tripti Jain







Gaurav Seth

Merlin Entertainments stands as a beacon of family-friendly entertainment on a global scale, captivating audiences with its diverse portfolio of attractions. From the enchanting LEGOLAND Parks to the immersive experiences at Madame Tussauds, Merlin has solidified its position as a leader in location-based entertainment. With a presence spanning 25 countries and four continents, the company continues to draw millions of visitors annually, offering memorable experiences that transcend cultural boundaries.

### A global phenomenon

"Merlin Entertainments is dedicated to delivering unforgettable experiences to our guests worldwide," shares Gaurav. Indeed, with over 140 attractions and 20 hotels, Merlin's reach extends far beyond its origins in Europe. The company's ability to adapt its offerings to diverse markets has been instrumental in its success, with each attraction tailored to resonate with local audiences while maintaining a universal appeal.

### A strategic focus

Indian travellers are becoming focused travellers, with an agenda and explorative itineraries. "India holds immense significance for Merlin Entertainments. With its vibrant mix of traditional and modern travellers, India has emerged as a key strategic market for the company. Since establishing a presence in India in 2019, Merlin has invested in partnerships with the travel trade industry, recognising the country's potential as a thriving hub for tourism," says Gaurav.





## Iconic experiences

"Merlin brands bring imagination to life, offering a range of experiences for guests of all ages," shares Gaurav. Whether exploring the LEGOLAND Parks' whimsical landscapes or rubbing shoulders with wax figures at Madame Tussauds, visitors are transported to a world of fantasy and wonder. With over 120 midway attractions worldwide, including SEA LIFE aquariums and the London Eye, Merlin ensures there's something for everyone to enjoy.

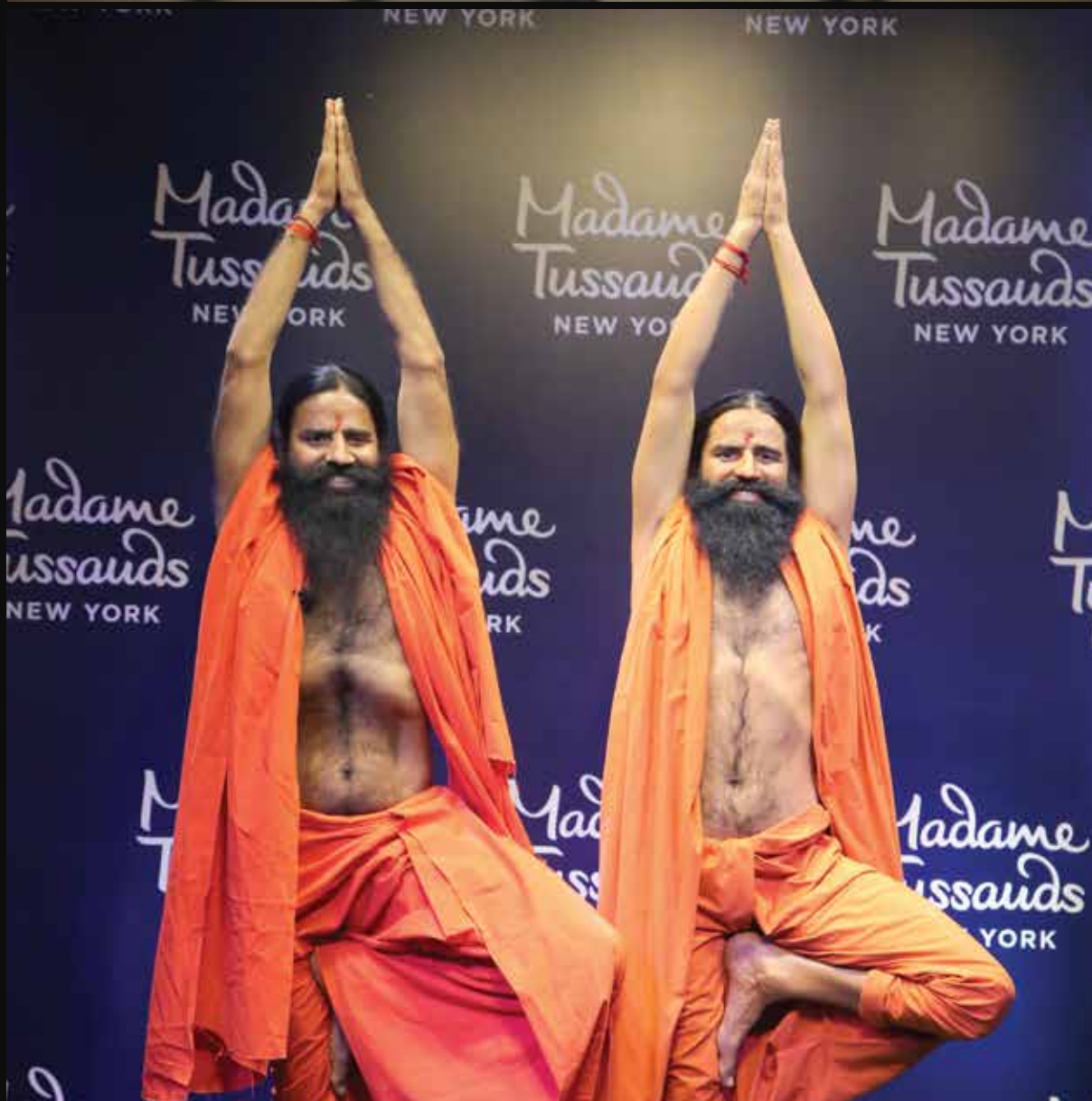
## What do travellers want?

"For Indian travellers, Madame Tussauds remains a standout attraction. The opportunity to interact with lifelike wax figures of global celebrities resonates deeply with Indian audiences, who are also drawn to attractions such as Warwick Castle and Cadbury World. With the rise of edu-tainment tourism, LEGOLAND Resort Theme Parks have become increasingly popular among Indian families seeking immersive learning experiences," shares Gaurav.

## Growth curve

In 2024, Merlin is focused on enhancing their presence in India and expanding the reach to Tier II cities. Gaurav shares, "Merlin's marketing strategies include offering attractive combo deals and incorporating Indian-centric elements, such as serving Masala Chai at select locations. By partnering with Indian trade partners and participating in travel shows, the company aims to connect with a wider audience and capitalise on India's burgeoning middle-class segment."

From iconic attractions to immersive themed experiences, Merlin's portfolio reflects a dedication to creativity, imagination, and above all, the joy of shared moments with loved ones. With India poised to play an increasingly vital role in the company's growth trajectory, the future promises even greater adventures and memories to cherish.







MAYFAIR LAKE RESORT, RAIPUR



## WEDDINGS AT MAYFAIR: SIMPLY ELEGANT, UNIQUELY YOURS

Experience a magical and elegant wedding at MAYFAIR Hotels & Resorts. Whether you prefer a serene lakeside, a pristine beachfront, the tranquillity of hills and tea gardens, or a tailor-made setting, our venues offer the perfect balance of luxury and sustainability.



Stay With Us, Stay With Nature

[www.mayfairhotels.com](http://www.mayfairhotels.com) | +91 9237500101 | [reservations@mayfairhotels.com](mailto:reservations@mayfairhotels.com)



# Thailand's luxury renaissance by TravelBullz and Tourism Authority of Thailand

Thailand is poised to captivate the hearts of discerning Indian travellers, offering them a tapestry of unforgettable luxury experiences. Siriges-a-nong Trirattanasongpol, Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) New Delhi Office and K D Singh, President, TravelBullz highlight the luxurious experience of Thailand.

In a bold move to revolutionise Thailand's luxury travel landscape, TravelBullz, a prominent name in the travel industry, has partnered with the Tourism Authority of Thailand, New Delhi, to unveil an exclusive campaign. This strategic collaboration aims to position Thailand as the quintessential luxury destination for Indian travellers, ushering in a new epoch in opulent travel experiences.

## Elevating Thailand's luxury status

The joint initiative underscores a commitment to meeting the discerning needs of high-net-worth clients from India. With a focus on unique experiences, wellness, and world-class shopping, the campaign aims to showcase Thailand's diverse and opulent offerings that resonate with the luxury market. The endeavour aligns with the vision of the Tourism Authority of Thailand and TravelBullz to elevate Thailand's position in the global luxury market.

## Curating unforgettable experiences

Recognising the evolving preferences of Indian travellers,

the campaign will spotlight bespoke experiences, ranging from serene wellness retreats to exclusive culinary journeys and luxury shopping extravaganzas. Thailand's rich cultural tapestry, combined with modern luxury amenities, positions it uniquely to offer an unparalleled travel experience. This curated approach seeks to entice travellers with a blend of traditional charm and contemporary luxury. KD shares, "The Luxury Escapes project is more than just a showcase; it manifests TravelBullz's commitment to enhancing Thailand's positioning as a destination with vast choices of luxury experiences."

## Collaboration for the win

The Luxury Escapes project is more than just a showcase; it manifests TravelBullz's commitment to enhancing Thailand's positioning as a destination with a myriad of luxury experiences. Siriges shares, "This collaboration brings together the Thailand Luxury Supply Chain and Stakeholders to showcase their products and offer exclusive deals for the B2B

travel agent fraternity in India. The campaign not only aims to spread awareness but also is an initiative to train and upskill luxury sellers, familiarising them with the diverse luxury product portfolios in Thailand.

## An impactful endeavour

The primary objective of the campaign is to increase awareness and bookings from India. KD explains, "By bringing together the Thailand Luxury Supply Chain and stakeholders, the campaign strives to create a collaborative platform for industry players. The objective is to not only showcase products but also to offer exclusive deals, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship between the B2B travel agent fraternity in India and Thailand's luxury market." The joint venture between TravelBullz and the Tourism Authority of Thailand heralds a new era for luxury travel in Thailand. With a focus on unique experiences, curated offerings, and collaboration with industry stakeholders, the campaign seeks to elevate Thailand's status as the ultimate destination for luxury escapes.



Siriges-a-nong Trirattanasongpol



K D Singh





# NATURE MEETS MODERN LUXURY

#goodstay #goodfood #goodpeople



**AIRiQ**  
[www.airiqonline.in](http://www.airiqonline.in)

[Airiqonline.in](http://Airiqonline.in) the most user friendly  
National FIT Travel outline platform.

[Airiq.in](http://Airiq.in) our online Fixed Departure  
platform offering more than 275 routes



TRAVEL THERAPY

# A JOURNEY THROUGH KUNO NATIONAL PARK



Nestled amidst the verdant hills of Central India, Kuno National Park beckons with promises of adventure and discovery.

- Tripti Jain





In this sanctuary of biodiversity, where lush green canopies conceal nature's secrets, lies the heart of the Kuno Forest Festival. Join me on a journey through this enchanting landscape, where wildlife, culture, and luxury converge in perfect harmony.

### EXPLORING KUNO NATIONAL PARK

As dawn breaks over the misty landscapes of Kuno National Park, a symphony of nature's sounds greets the eager traveller. Guided by skilled naturalists, we embark on safari adventures, traversing dusty roads in search of elusive wildlife. The park's rich biodiversity, boasting over 800 species of plants and a plethora of mammals, birds, and reptiles, captivates our senses at every turn. From the graceful leopards surveying their domain to the elegant chital deer leaping through the grasslands, Kuno National Park is a sanctuary for nature enthusiasts.

The dense forests of Kuno are home to a variety of flora, from towering teak trees to delicate wildflowers. The air is filled with the heady scent of jasmine and lilies, while the grasslands teem with vibrant hues of green and gold. Every corner of the park holds a new surprise, from hidden waterfalls to secluded streams where wildlife gathers to drink.

### A CELEBRATION OF CULTURE AND WILDLIFE

At the heart of Kuno National Park, the Kuno Forest Festival unfolds, offering a kaleidoscope of cultural experiences and wildlife encounters. Organised by Madhya Pradesh Tourism in collaboration with Evoke Experiences, the festival celebrates the rich heritage of Central India while highlighting the importance of wildlife conservation. Visitors of all ages are invited to partake in thrilling adventure sports, guided nature walks, and cultural programs showcasing

local art, music, and dance. As the sun sets over the wilderness, the festival comes alive with the glow of bonfires and the rhythm of traditional drumbeats, creating an atmosphere of joy and camaraderie.

The festival also serves as a platform for environmental education and awareness, with workshops and seminars on conservation practices and sustainable living. Visitors can learn about the challenges facing endangered species like the cheetah and the efforts being made to protect their habitats. Through interactive exhibits and informative talks, the festival aims to inspire a deeper appreciation for the natural world and encourage stewardship of our planet's precious resources.

### LUXURY AMIDST NATURE

Adjacent to Kuno National Park lies the Kuno Forest Retreat, a luxurious sanctuary amidst nature's embrace. Here, guests are welcomed with spacious luxury cottages and private balconies overlooking the wilderness. The resort's commitment to eco-friendly practices and sustainability resonates with travellers seeking a deeper connection to the natural world. From hot air balloon rides to moto-para sailing adventures, there are endless opportunities to explore the beauty of Kuno while indulging in luxurious amenities. In the evenings, cultural programs and culinary delights await, offering a taste of Central India's rich heritage.

The Kuno Forest Retreat also serves as a hub for wellness and relaxation, with spa treatments and yoga sessions amidst the tranquil surroundings of the forest. Guests can rejuvenate their bodies and minds, surrounded by the sights and sounds of nature. Whether lounging by the pool or exploring the nearby hiking trails, the retreat offers a sanctuary for weary travellers seeking refuge from the hustle and bustle of modern life.





### THE HISTORIC REINTRODUCTION OF CHEETAHS

One of the highlights of the Kuno Forest Festival is the historic reintroduction of African cheetahs into the park. After years of meticulous planning and habitat evaluation, these magnificent creatures take their first tentative steps on Indian soil, marking a milestone in wildlife conservation. Visitors are invited to witness this momentous occasion and learn about the efforts to protect and preserve these endangered species. Through responsible tourism practices and community-based conservation initiatives, the festival aims to promote harmony between humans and wildlife while ensuring the long-term survival of these majestic animals. The reintroduction of cheetahs into Kuno National Park is not only a triumph for conservation but also a testament to the resilience of nature. It serves as a beacon of hope for endangered species around the world, demonstrating that with dedication and determination, we can protect and preserve our planet's precious biodiversity.



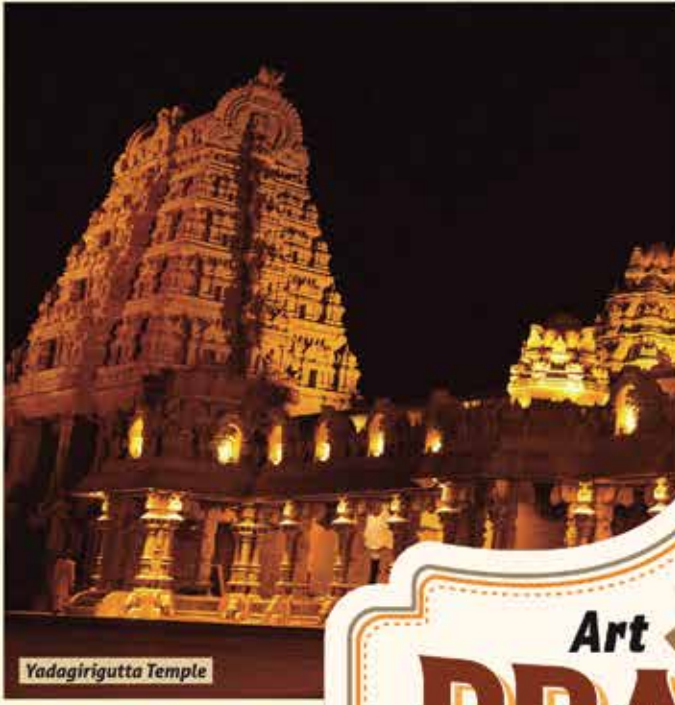
### SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PRACTICES

As we reflect on our journey through Kuno National Park and the Kuno Forest Festival, we are reminded of the importance of sustainable tourism practices in preserving our planet's natural heritage. By minimising our ecological footprint and supporting conservation efforts, we can ensure that future generations will continue to experience the beauty and wonder of places such as Kuno. Whether through volunteering, donations, or spreading awareness, each of us has a role to play in protecting our planet's precious ecosystems.

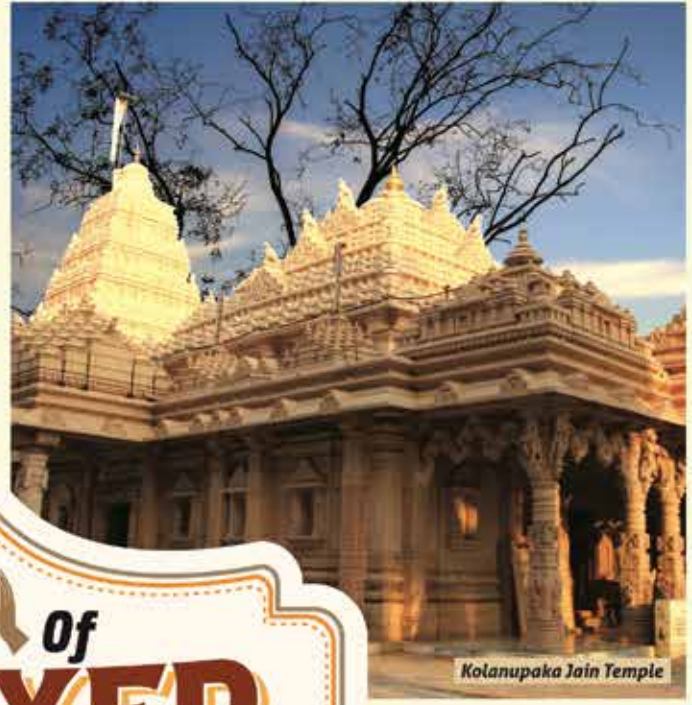
As we bid farewell to Kuno National Park and the Kuno Forest Festival, we carry with us memories of adventure, culture, and wildlife encounters. The enchanting landscapes, diverse fauna, and vibrant festivities have left an indelible mark on our souls, reminding us of the interconnectedness of all living beings. In the end, our journey through Kuno was not just a physical one but a journey of the heart, reaffirming our commitment to preserving and protecting our shared home, Earth. As we look to the future, let us continue to celebrate and cherish the wonders of nature, ensuring that they remain for generations to come.





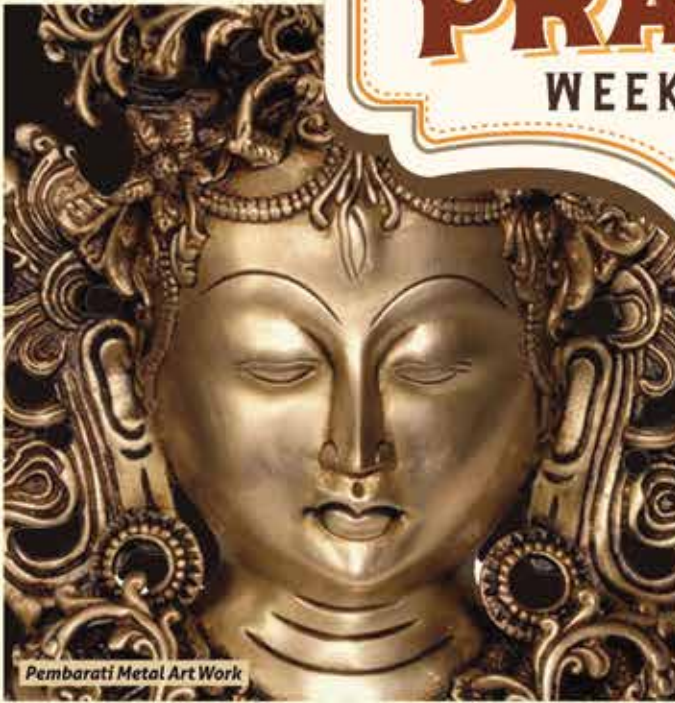


Yadagirigutta Temple

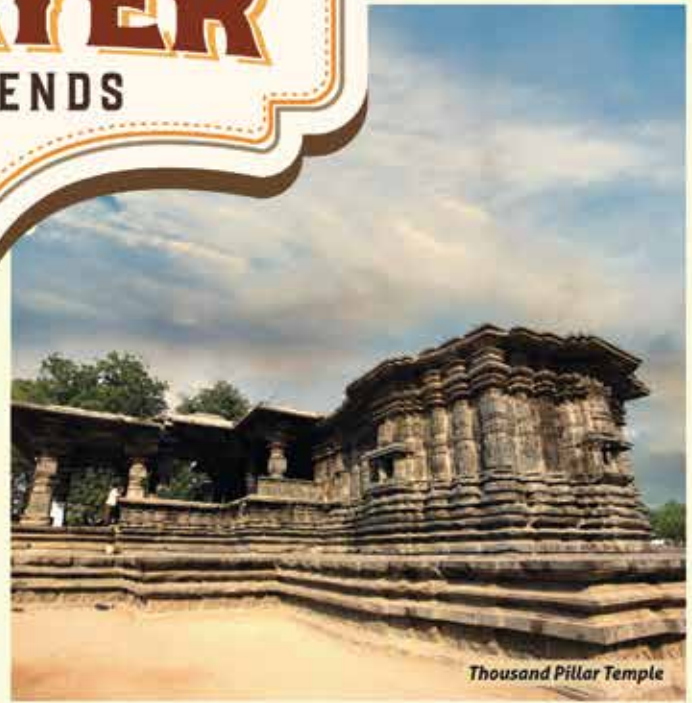


Kolanupaka Jain Temple

Art  Of  
**PRAYER**  
 WEEKENDS



Pembarati Metal Art Work



Thousand Pillar Temple

Discover a temple that is adorned with the Sudharshana Chakra of Lord Vishnu. Get ready to be awed by the Jade statue hidden inside an ancient Jain Temple. Meet age-old sheet metal master craftsman whose trade once adorned the temples of the Deccan and the chariots of the Kings . It is amazing what you can experience over a weekend in Telangana. Book now to discover Telangana like never before.

 HYDERABAD → 64kms	 YADAGIRIGUTTA TEMPLE → 18kms	 KOLANUPAKA JAIN TEMPLE → 10kms
 PEMBARTI METAL ART WORK → 72kms	 THOUSAND PILLAR TEMPLE → 147kms	 HYDERABAD SHOPPING



**Telangana**  
 THE HEART OF THE DECCAN







Time out in  
**TAKASAGO**

Wearing two faces, it is a well-planned, symmetrical city that doesn't take much unravelling.

- Inder Raj Ahluwalia





## TRAVEL THERAPY

Yes, it sports a commercial bustle and is home to business establishments, but the buck doesn't stop here. It is also home to the Gunma Symphony, making it one of a select few Japanese regional cities to have its own orchestra. And it has welcomed, and is in touch with nature, best reflected by numerous onsens (hot springs), and parks. Adding to all this is the fact that it is a city tailor-made for pleasant interludes that provide a close glimpse of authentic Japanese lifestyle.

In the august company of Lajpat Rai, the man I credit with opening the door to Japan, I found myself amidst the myriad charms of the city and its environs. The fact that Rai knew a lot about Japanese customs, helped.

The ride on the Shinkansen 'bullet train' from Tokyo had been a 'forty nine minutes' travel odyssey, and all it took was a few short steps to be deposited at Metropolitan Hotel which is located at the rail station itself.

I don't know who planned this, but first up on our sightseeing and discovery agenda was a lunch stop at a delightful Indian restaurant, with the venerable name Mahatma. Tandoori chicken; chicken curry; prawn curry; mutton curry; daal and naan, made for a memorable meal worthy of a connoisseur.

With the said delectable meal under our belt, it was now time to give the city and region the 'once over', and we couldn't have started off at a better venue. A short drive up the hill deposited us at the Byakui Dai-Kannon that is perched on the Kannon-Yama Hills. Built to bring good luck to the city, the Goddess smiles benevolently as she keeps watch over Takasaki. The Goddess' imposing, angled concrete statue is 41 metres tall (equivalent to a 9-story building) and weighs 6, 000 tonnes. A climb up the steps in her hollow interior, right up to her shoulder, presented stunning views of the city and



surrounding mountains that shone in the crisp sunshine.

Back on the road, we drove up to Dokutsu, a major visitors' site. This is a cave with a stunning interior embellished with Buddha and other deities' images, carefully placed and displayed in special settings. Concealed and surface lighting provides a special effect, giving the place a somber dignity.

The day had gone by rather quickly, and as darkness set in, it was time for dinner, an activity whose value depends on the dining venue. The fact is that one can't ask for a better venue for a Japanese meal than Kappo Uonaka, a 140 year-old authentic Japanese restaurant. Barefoot, we were led into a private dining room. Then the tastefully served dishes came and went each more delectable and exotic than the other. Soup; salad; sweet potato; eel fillets; raw fish; and dessert!

Day two turned out to be as hectic as it was exciting. A short drive brought us to a Daruma factory. Daruma dolls are popular in Japan as a form of good luck charm, and 80 per cent of the country's Daruma dolls are manufactured in Takasaki. The local Darumas are characterised by their eyebrows, which are symbolised by cranes, and by their noses and moustaches, which are symbolised by turtles. Because they're modelled after these two animals, both of which are associated with long life, the faces are considered to be extremely auspicious. There's a small ritual involved. You make your wish to the Daruma by first filling in its right eye, while you say a prayer for what you want. When the wish comes true, you fill in the other eye as a token of appreciation. Simple yet poignant!

The Daruma outlet where we had performed the ritual was a short walk from the Shorinzan Daruma Temple. This is where the Darumas originated, and the fact that we visited during the annual two-day Daruma Market held on January 6 and 7 made it





## TRAVEL THERAPY

special. It turned out to be a bustling, heavily crowded bazaar replete with stalls hawking souvenirs, food, and drinks.

A major site not to be missed is Kamitsuke Sato Hatubutsukan (Archaeological Museum). With the region's geographical origins on vivid display, the tastefully done up establishment comprises an indoor and outdoor section, and offers a cheery atmosphere while it traces the history of nature in the region. Artefacts of nature illustrate the central theme of evolution.

A sweet treat came our way in the form of the nationally famous Gateau Festa Harada, a confectionery factory and shop. Housed in a swanky building, the factory works with the clockwork precision that's the hallmark of Japanese existence. It was fascinating and educative to view the assembly-line functions, as various different sweets and chocolates were manufactured and packed right there. If the factory was interesting, the shop was an absolute delight. Row upon row of assorted sweets and chocolates stared us temptingly in the face, and we simply had no choice but to do the decent thing. Taste and savour them all. Now came a Japanese highlight. No visit to the country can be complete without a local sushi restaurant experience, and ours left nothing to be desired. The drill is simple. You order your menu from the control monitor at your table, and the dishes slide up to you on a conveyor. Once you're done, you just put the dishes into a container, and your billing is done via reference to the numbers mentioned on the plates' bottom. It's all organised and simple.

With so much happening all around us, it wasn't surprising that three days had gone by with the speed of a bullet train. The curtain was coming down on a fabulous experience, and it was time to say goodbye to this delightful city. But not before

### Travel Facts

- Takasaki is located in Gunma Prefecture, and is an hour's journey from Tokyo by the Shinkansen train.
- The city's accommodation options include a range that stretches from deluxe to standard hotels and inns.
- Local transport comprises buses and metered taxis, but walking around is a pleasant way of discovering local sites.
- From Japanese and sushi restaurants to Indian, snack-cafes, and fast-food outlets, there's a meal for everyone.
- Shop boldly. All parts of the city offer outlets. The best buys are local souvenirs such as Daruma dolls; noodle stew; sake; and Japanese plums.

meeting and breaking bread with its most important resident. Our meeting with Kenji Tomioka, Takasaki's Mayor, was a grand finale to a pleasant excursion. A man with a highly progressive nature and vision for the future, Tomioka expressed his desire to open up Takasaki to the world. And invited us to visit again! Being a good sport, I intend to. The place had charmed me beyond measure. And besides, one can't really turn down a Mayor's invitation, can one?



### About the author

Inder Raj Ahluwalia is a world-renowned international travel journalist & author. His professional profile features awards from several European and Asian countries, among others.







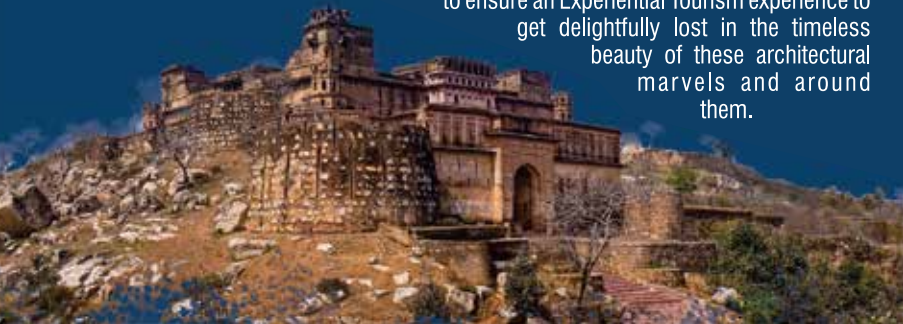
The heart of  
Incredible India



# Madhya Pradesh

## WHERE FORTS WHISPER TALES OF BYGONE ERAS

Madhya Pradesh is a land of rich history and culture, and its forts are some of the most impressive in India. Delve deeper into the forts to get dazzled by a kaleidoscope of architectural wonders. Discover the courtyards adorned with intricate carvings, colonnaded arcades casting cool shadows, and hidden chambers whispering tales of the past. If you are a traveller who lets his curiosity be a guide! Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board is committed to ensure an Experiential Tourism experience to get delightfully lost in the timeless beauty of these architectural marvels and around them.



### **GARH KUNDAR FORT**

#### A Meticulous Architectural Gem

A mysterious and impressive yet lesser-explored fort, situated on a high hill-top at a small village, nestled in Tikamgarh district just 48 kms from Jhansi, narrates the tragic love story of Nagdeo and Rookunwar. This tremendous architectural gem is located in such a way that from 12kms, it remains visible to the naked eye but once you get closer, it disappears and becomes difficult to locate. Unfold the endless treasures - Murlī Manohar's grace, Rani Ka Mahal's secrets, Andhkoop's mystery. From ancient temples to royal chambers, stables to prisons, Garh Kundar's tapestry awaits your touch.  
Nearest Airport – Khajuraho (150 km)  
Nearest Railway Station – Jhansi (48 kms)



### **ASIRGARH FORT**

#### A Fortress Trio Etched in Stone

Asirgarh, the Satpura giant, stands defiant! Asirgarh Fort built by a zamindar, this 15th-century marvel hides secrets within its 60-acre embrace is situated in the Satpura Range about 20 kilometres north of

Burhanpur. More than one, it's three: Asirgarh, Karmargarh, Malaygarh, a fortress trio etched in stone. The mosque, gurudwara, and Shiva temple whisper tolerance within its walls. Folk tales of Ashwathama, immortal and devout, offering daily flowers to the Lord are prevalent, leaving a mystery to bloom: who brings these sacred gifts before dawn. Asirgarh's history and myth captivates you to unravel its whispers.  
Nearest Airport – Indore (163 kms)  
Nearest Railway Station – Khandwa Junction (50 kms)

### **NARWAR FORT**

#### A Legacy from Mythology

Embark on a safe and exhilarating exploration of Narwar Fort positioned on top of an irregular hill 500 feet above the town just 84 kms away from Jhansi, undoubtedly a sight to behold. The fort's history stretches back centuries as Narwar was once the capital of Raja Nala, a valiant king from the Mahabharata epic. The well-preserved fort offers stunning views of the surrounding countryside. This destination is a sprawling testament to architectural ingenuity with a nearly 8 kms circumference. Exploring its entirety will lead you through a labyrinth of pathways, alleyways, and captivating structures. Let go of the map and experience the true magic of this magnificent fort.  
Nearest Airport & Railway Station – Gwalior (90 kms)

### **GWALIOR FORT**

#### Over a Thousand-year-old Magnificent Fort

A towering testament to history, Gwalior Fort rose in the 8th century, boasting of natural defence on a steep hill. Legend speaks of King Suraj Sen, cured by a saint named Gwalipa, naming the fort and the city in his honour. The tales of Tomar kings etched within the walls of Gujari Mahal's love story, Man Mandir's turquoise gleam, Jahangir's palace splendour. In its stones, legends come alive, beckoning you to witness its epic saga.

Nearest Airport & Railway Station – Gwalior Airport (10 kms)



### **MANDU FORT**

#### Not Just a Destination, But Rather an Experience

Spanning 82 kms and situated in Dhar district just 95 kms from Indore, this fort beckons with tales of unsinkable ships, love-struck kings, and the echoes of ancient empires. Jahaz Mahal, Mandu's crown jewel: once a royal harem with 15,000 women is a palace resembling a majestic ship, frozen in time on a shimmering lake. Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage City, Mandu's historical and cultural significance is undeniable. From the Jami Masjid's towering arches to the Nilkanth Mahal's serene lake, every corner promises a discovery. Mandu isn't just about stone and steel, rather it's about the epic love story of Queen Rookmati and King Baz Bahadur.  
Nearest Airport & Railway Station – Indore (95 kms)  
The state waits eagerly, embrace the majestic forts and feel the stateliness of yore. Don't let these legendary historical panoramas be a missed encounter on your Madhya Pradesh map.



# Evolution of outbound tourism with **SAFFRON WORLD**

Saffron World has been at the forefront of the tourism evolution, adapting strategies to cater to changing preferences and emerging trends. Ravi Gosain, Managing Director, and Utkarsh Kumar, Sales Head, APAC, Saffron World B.V. share insights on expanding their reach.

**-Tripti Jain**



Ravi Gosain

The outbound tourism industry in India has undergone a remarkable transformation. Despite facing financial setbacks and emotional challenges, travellers have demonstrated resilience, fuelling a surge in outbound tourism. The shifting landscape of outbound tourism allows the opportunity

### Embracing new horizons

One of the striking trends observed in recent years is the exploration of lesser-known European destinations by Indian travellers. Mr Ravi shares, "We have witnessed a growing interest in South, Southeast, and Central Europe among our clientele. This shift signifies a desire for unique experiences beyond conventional tourist hotspots. By venturing into uncharted territories, travellers seek authenticity and immersion in diverse cultures, paving the way for a more enriching travel experience."

### Accessibility and connectivity

Enhanced air connectivity has played a pivotal role in facilitating outbound travel from India. With airlines like Air India and Lufthansa expanding their routes, travellers now have more options at

competitive prices. Utkarsh shares, "Increased flight frequencies and reduced fares have contributed to a surge in outbound tourism. This accessibility has made distant destinations more reachable, opening up avenues for exploration and discovery."

### Personalising experience

In response to evolving consumer preferences, companies have adopted targeted marketing strategies to engage with their audience effectively. Saffron World focuses primarily on the B2B market, catering to leisure and MICE segments. Mr Ravi emphasises, "Our one-to-one sales trips and participation in trade fairs allow us to forge meaningful connections with our partners. By understanding the needs of their clientele, companies can tailor offerings and create personalised experiences, thereby fostering long-term relationships."

### Off beaten pathways

While traditional destinations like France and Italy remain popular among Indian travellers, there is a growing interest in diversifying travel experiences. "We have observed a shift towards exploring Eastern and Central European countries such as the Czech Republic and Hungary. This diversification reflects a desire for novelty and a willingness to venture off the beaten path in search of hidden gems and cultural immersion," adds Utkarsh.

### Responsible steps

As awareness about environmental conservation grows, there is a heightened emphasis on promoting sustainable tourism practices. Saffron World is incorporating eco-friendly initiatives into their offerings to minimise the impact on fragile

ecosystems. "We are committed to promoting responsible tourism and preserving the natural beauty of the destinations we operate in," shares Mr Ravi. By prioritising sustainability, companies can contribute to the preservation of natural resources and support local communities.

The evolution of outbound tourism in India is characterised by resilience, adaptation, and innovation. Through strategic initiatives and targeted marketing efforts, Saffron World has navigated the changing landscape, catering to the evolving needs of travellers. As the industry continues to evolve, embracing new destinations, enhancing connectivity, and promoting sustainable practices will be the key to driving growth and ensuring memorable travel experiences. Their journey is guided by a commitment to excellence and a passion for creating unforgettable memories for their clients.



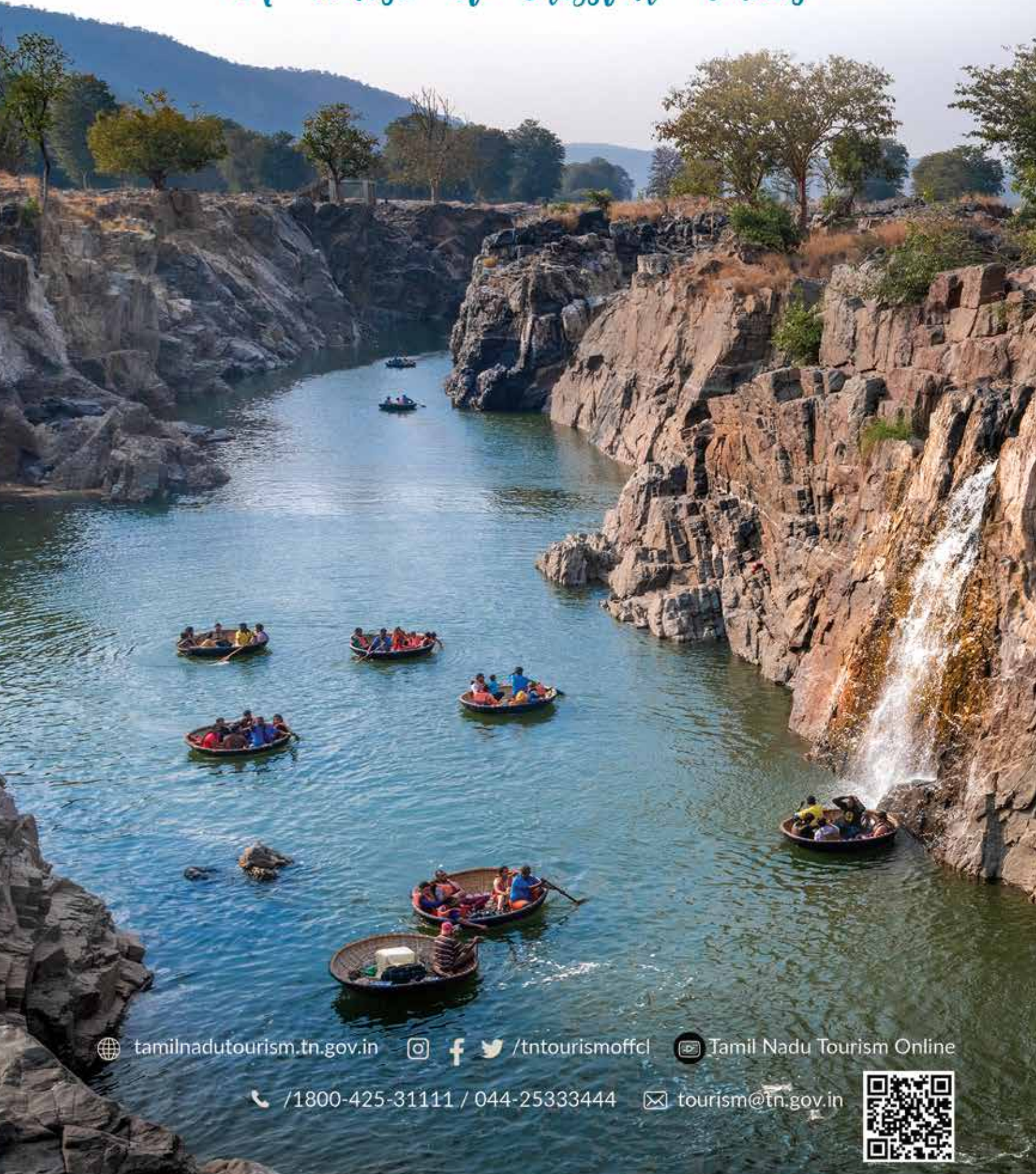
Utkarsh Kumar





# Hogenakkal Waterfalls

A course of blissful waters





# Unlocking the charms of Central Asia with Travels Mantra

Leading the way for CIS countries, Travels Mantra is delivering package combinations for Five Stan countries. Amit Sharma, Founder, Travels Mantra shares insights on the working of the DMC.

-Tripti Jain

Nestled at the crossroads of history, culture, and adventure lie the enigmatic lands of Central Asia. Here, amidst the breath-taking landscapes and rich tapestry of traditions, Travels Mantra emerges as the beacon for discerning travellers seeking to uncover the hidden gems of the region. The company stands as a distinguished player in the travel industry, dedicated to curating unforgettable experiences across Central Asia.

## Embarking on a tailored expedition

"At Travels Mantra, we believe in crafting journeys that resonate deeply with our client's preferences, ensuring every moment is infused with wonder and delight," shares Amit. With a steadfast focus on personalised service, exclusive itineraries, and handpicked accommodations, Travels Mantra ensures that each expedition is a reflection of the traveller's unique desires. From traversing the ancient Silk Road in Uzbekistan to immersing in the nomadic traditions of Kyrgyzstan, every experience is meticulously curated to captivate and inspire.

## Guiding the way

"Our dedicated team of professionals stands ready to guide our clients every step of the way, ensuring a seamless and enriching journey. With professional guides at the helm, travellers are treated to insider knowledge and unparalleled insights into the culture and history of each destination," shares Amit. Moreover, the company's commitment to seamless logistics ensures that every aspect of the journey – from transportation to accommodation – is flawlessly orchestrated, allowing travellers

to focus on soaking in the splendour of Central Asia.

## Round-the-Clock support

"Beyond crafting itineraries, we are committed to curating experiences that linger in the hearts and minds of our clients long after their journey has ended," emphasises Amit. With round-the-clock support, travellers can rest assured that their needs are always attended to, providing peace of mind throughout their expedition. Additionally, the company goes above and beyond by offering a range of value-added services that elevate the travel experience, ensuring that every moment is truly extraordinary.

## Diverse destinations wait!

"Central Asia is a treasure trove of diverse landscapes, rich history, and warm hospitality, offering a myriad of experiences waiting to be discovered," shares Amit. From the architectural wonders of Uzbekistan to the nomadic traditions of Kyrgyzstan, each country boasts its own unique allure. Whether it's tracing the footsteps of ancient merchants along the Silk Road or marvelling at the natural splendour of Tajikistan, travellers are invited to embark on a journey of discovery unlike any other.

## Adapting to the evolving landscape

"In an ever-changing landscape, it is essential to stay attuned to market trends and evolving consumer preferences," shares Amit. As the demand for sustainable tourism practices, off-the-beaten-path experiences, and wellness-focused trips continues to rise, Travels Mantra remains committed to innovating



Amit Sharma

and adapting its offerings accordingly. By embracing authenticity, safety, and flexibility, the company ensures that each journey is not only memorable but also meaningful.

## Charting a course

"Central Asia beckons with its allure and mystique, inviting travellers to embark on a journey of discovery and adventure, with Travels Mantra as your trusted

companion, the wonders of Central Asian countries are yours to explore. From personalised service to professional expertise, each expedition is crafted with care and attention to detail, ensuring that every moment is infused with magic and wonder," shares Amit. Travels Mantra lead the way, travellers can rest assured that their journey through Central Asia will be nothing short of extraordinary.





# AANANDA HOLIDAYS

A B2B WHOLESALER DMC, UTTARAKHAND



NAINITAL



CORBETT NATIONAL PARK



VALLEY OF FLOWERS



HEM KUND SAHIB



AULI



MUSSOORIE



RISHIKESH



KAUSANI



BINSAR



CHOPTA

TOUR PACKAGES | HOTELS/RESORTS | CHARTERS BOOKING | CAR RENTALS

**OWN FLEET**



**9359973227**

**9456563021**

**info@aanandaholidays.com**



ASSOCIATES MEMBER





# A journey with Travel India Tourism

Travel India Tourism has been a pioneering force in the Indian tourism industry, offering unparalleled travel experiences for over a decade. Mahendra Pratap Singh, Founder, Travel India Tourism share insights on the shift in traveller preferences.

-Tripti Jain



Mahendra Pratap Singh

Embark on a journey of discovery with Travel India Tourism as we delve into the mesmerizing landscapes and rich cultural tapestry of Madhya Pradesh. Travel India Tourism was founded with a commitment to excellence and a passion for showcasing the hidden treasures while travelling and gives the travellers an opportunity to explore.

## Offbeat Odyssey

The state of Madhya Pradesh is an apex for travel and tourism with wildlife, spiritual, heritage tourism taking the centre stage. "In the midst of popular tourist spots lies a world of undiscovered wonders waiting to be explored, with an increasing number of travellers seeking unique and offbeat experiences, Madhya Pradesh emerges as an ideal destination. From the serene beauty of Pachmarhi to the ancient charm of Chanderi,

our carefully curated itineraries promise unforgettable adventures off the beaten path," shares Mahendra.

## Embracing sustainable travel

Sustainability isn't just a trend; it's a responsibility we owe to our planet. Mahendra highlights, "At Travel India Tourism, we are committed to promoting responsible travel practices that minimise our environmental footprint and support local communities. From eco-friendly accommodations to carbon-neutral transportation options, every aspect of our tours is designed with sustainability in mind."

## Culinary delights and wildlife encounters

India is a feast for the senses, with its tantalising cuisine and abundant wildlife. "Madhya

Pradesh has it all, from the spicy flavours of Indore's street food to the tranquil wilderness of Kanha National Park, the state offers a diverse array of experiences for foodies and nature lovers alike. Our expertly crafted tours showcase the best of Madhya Pradesh's culinary and wildlife attractions, ensuring a truly immersive journey," shares Mahendra.

## Heritage havens and spiritual sanctuaries

History and spirituality intertwine seamlessly in Madhya Pradesh. Mahendra shares, "From offering a glimpse into India's rich cultural heritage, with iconic landmarks such as the majestic Gwalior Fort and the sacred temples of Ujjain, the state is a treasure trove of historical and spiritual significance. Our heritage tours and pilgrimage packages provide travellers with the opportunity to explore these

timeless treasures and connect with the soul of India"

## Empowering communities

At the heart of every journey are the people who call India home. "Through initiatives such as rural tourism and introducing homestays, we aim to empower local communities and create meaningful opportunities for cultural exchange. By staying with local hosts and participating in traditional activities, travellers not only gain a deeper understanding of the region but also contribute to its sustainable development," shares Mahendra.

Madhya Pradesh is a land of endless possibilities, where every traveller can find something to cherish and remember. With Travel India Tourism as your guide, you can embark on a journey of discovery through this captivating state, where every moment is filled with wonder and adventure.





Host State



RAJASTHAN

The Incredible State of India!



Ministry of Tourism  
Government of India



13<sup>th</sup> Edition

® ©

THE GREAT INDIAN

# travel bazaar'24



May 5-7, 2024 | Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

**BLOCK YOUR DATES**  
FOR INDIA'S BIGGEST INBOUND TRAVEL PLATFORM



**HIGHLIGHTS**

Presence of more than **250** Foreign Tour Operators across the globe

More than **11,000** Pre-Scheduled Structured face to face business meetings

**300** Exhibition booths comprising of Indian DMC's, State Tourism Boards, Hotels and many more

Power Packed Inaugural Session Networking Dinner

For Sponsorship & Exhibition Please contact  
Hina Gupta / Dolly Issar

91- 9560664465/8826275246

gltbstall@ficci.com

www.greatindiantravelbazaar.com

**PARTNERS**

Diamond Partners



Gold Partner



Le Passage to India

Silver Partners



Supported By

Media Partner





# SYNERGI HOSPITALITY PRIORITISING UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

Synergi Hospitality solidifies its presence as a source of innovation and adaptability in the hospitality industry. Shruti Pandey, Founder, Synergi Hospitality shares the next steps for the organisation.

-Tripti Jain



With the evolving perception of tourism shifting from a luxury to a necessity, Synergi Hospitality is at the forefront of revolutionising the travel experience. By prioritising unique experiences at their properties over traditional accommodation, the company is setting new standards for hospitality in 2024.

## Embracing evolution

Synergi Hospitality's success in 2023 was marked by its adeptness in embracing the evolution of tourism. According to Shruti, "Emphasis was on a balance of marketing and operational delivery. Every guest stay and feedback was important." By understanding the significance of catering to both domestic and inbound bookings, Synergi ensured a cosmopolitan outlook towards guest stays. This adaptability not only fuelled growth but also solidified the company's reputation as a trendsetter in the industry.

## Vision for 2024

Looking ahead to 2024, Synergi Hospitality envisions strengthening its market presence through a multifaceted approach. She elaborates, "Our vision for 2024 is to implement collaborations, events, and multimedia promotions that resonate with our guests. By leveraging partnerships and embracing innovative marketing strategies, the company aims to offer unparalleled experiences at its properties. Additionally, renovations and launches at select properties, such as those in Gujarat, will further enhance the guest experience."

## Commitment to guest experience

Synergi Hospitality's collaborations epitomise its commitment to offering more than just accommodation. Shruti talks about a recent partnership with Aagman India, renowned for their glamping options at festivals and rural locations. Furthermore she shares, "Future collaborations will focus on properties that reflect local

culture, hospitality, and experiences. These partnerships not only enrich the guest experience but also contribute to the exploration of offbeat destinations."

## Inbound market dynamics

The inbound market continues to show promise, with a surge in travel enthusiasts from Europe, Asia, and the US. "With the introduction of new travel sectors and accommodation options, there is much more to explore," shares Shruti. Synergi Hospitality remains poised to capitalise on this growth by offering diverse experiences tailored to the preferences of inbound travellers. By staying attuned to market dynamics, the company ensures sustained relevance and growth.

## Changing needs of the travellers

The company's strategy for strengthening its market presence revolves around innovation and collaboration. "We brainstorm, discuss, and plan new offerings to enhance guest experiences," she adds. Through upgrades, renovations, and dynamic collaborations with tour operators, the company continuously evolves to meet the changing needs of travellers. This proactive approach not only solidifies Synergi's position in the market but also sets the stage for future growth and success. As Synergi Hospitality charts its course through 2024, it remains steadfast in its commitment to redefining travel experiences. Through innovative partnerships, strategic marketing initiatives, and a relentless focus on guest satisfaction, the company continues to set new benchmarks in the hospitality industry. Their journey is driven by a passion for delivering exceptional experiences, and they are excited to embark on this journey with their guests. With a blend of vision, adaptability, and unwavering dedication, Synergi Hospitality is poised to shape the future of travel in 2024 and beyond.



# SYNERGI HOSPITALITY MARKETING

## Rajasthan Hotels

- Godwad Safari Camp, Jawai
- The Lavitra, Udaipur
- TatSaraasa Resort & Spa, Udaipur
- LilyPool The Heritage Jal Mahal, Jaipur
- Atithi Camp & Resort, Pushkar
- Jhalamand Garh, Jhalamand
- The Desert Resort, Mandawa
- Abhaneri Village Safari Camp

## Maharashtra Hotels

- Hotel Goradia's, Shirdi



## Gujarat Hotels

- Kutch Safari Resort, Bhuj
- Royal Safari Camp, Bajana
- Darbargadh, Poshina
- Mani Mansion, Ahmedabad
- Asiatic Lion Lodge, Sasan Gir
- Blackbuck Safari Lodge, Velavadar

## Aagman India Glamping

- Luxury Mobile Camping



## CALL US TODAY

- ☎ +91 9650633339, 7428699578
- 📘 @SynergiHospitalityMarketing
- ✉ reservations@synergihospitality.com
- 📷 @Synergi\_hospitality\_marketing

[www.synergihospitality.com](http://www.synergihospitality.com)



HEADS IN BEDS

# An enchanting escapade

*Awe-inspiring heritage meets opulence at The Chedi Al Bait, Sharjah. Sharjah, a jewel in the United Arab Emirates, often stands in the shadow of its flamboyant neighbour, Dubai.*

*- Misbah Mansuri*





Sharjah has its own tale to tell – a story of heritage, culture, and now, of luxurious hospitality, thanks to the spectacular property, Chedi Al Bait Sharjah. This Leading Hotels of the World property transforms the emirate's accommodation scene, offering an enchanting alternative to Dubai's contemporary dazzle.

### The setting

The property, managed by GHM – known for their expertise in luxurious Asian-themed resorts like the Chedi Muscat in Oman – is set along a scenic waterfront canal. Stepping into The Chedi Al Bait is like walking into a living history book. The hotel feels like a walled village – a labyrinth of alleyways, lantern-lit paths, and secluded courtyards. The property boasts a hammam and spa, two restaurants, a café, and unique facilities like a library, museum, and an ice cream shop offering homemade camel-milk ice cream.

I am immediately struck by the beauty and tranquillity of the hotel's surroundings. Stepping outside the hotel's entrance, I was transported into the vibrant

life of an ancient souk, a place where Bedouins once gathered on camelbacks. Today, it serves as a bustling marketplace, housing an eclectic mix of textile shops, tailors, modern boutiques, and perfumeries, all nestled within vaulted storefronts. The contrast between the traditional and contemporary, the old and the new, is fascinating, providing a unique experience that blends history with modernity.

### Accommodations

The hotel's 53 rooms and suites are homage to the heritage of Sharjah. Each room is built upon the original foundations of houses belonging to prominent local families. The interiors showcase a blend of traditional Arabic and modern luxury, with floor sofas, palm-frond ceilings, hand-carved wood furniture, and decorative brass elements. The suites offer a royal experience with amenities like frankincense-infused air and rose-petal adorned bubble baths. The hotel in 2023 also announced an extension of the property with the addition of The Bait, Khalid bin Ibrahim at The Serai Wing, a

thoughtful restoration of former pearl merchant Khalid bin Ibrahim's residence from over a century ago.

Walking through the Serai Wing felt like stepping back in time, yet with all the comfort and luxury of modern hospitality. The restoration has been done with such care and attention to detail that every corner tells a story of Sharjah's rich history and the lives of its people in the 20th century. The traditional architecture and residential design, characterised by high ceilings, exposed wooden beams, original stonework, and elegant modern lighting, all painted in calming neutral hues, create an ambiance of serene luxury that is hard to find elsewhere.

Each of the 12 guestrooms and suites across the two main houses spanning 1,000 sqm is a testament to the Emirati culture and its ancient heritage, offering a stay that is both luxurious and culturally immersive. The design elements are thoughtfully integrated, ensuring that while each room boasts its unique character, and they all resonate with the theme of traditional

Emirati home, making Al Bait, which means 'home' in Arabic, a fitting name for this magnificent wing.

We love how the amenities elevate the stay to a new level of luxury and exclusivity. Our accommodation featured a large temperature-controlled swimming pool, offering a private oasis to unwind under the clear blue skies of Sharjah. The private Jacuzzis and lounge areas are perfect for relaxing after a day of exploring the city or engaging in the various cultural activities the hotel offers. The addition of a yoga studio aligns well with the serene surroundings and heritage ambiance, providing a peaceful retreat for mind and body rejuvenation. Moreover, the dining room is designed to host big convivial gatherings, making it an ideal setting for guests traveling in groups to enjoy meals together, fostering a sense of community and shared experience.

### Cultural immersion suffused with modern luxury

Beyond the architectural beauty and luxurious amenities, what sets





## HEADS IN BEDS

the Serai Wing apart is its ability to offer guests a genuine immersion into the culture of Sharjah. The wing acts as a bridge between the past and present, allowing guests to live through the history of a family in 20th century Sharjah while enjoying the comforts of modern luxury accommodations.

The property positions itself as a gateway to the rich culture of Sharjah. A short walk from the hotel, the Sharjah Art Foundation offers a vibrant art scene, and the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization showcases a remarkable collection. The property's location makes it easy to explore historical sites, bustling souks, and more.

### Dining

In terms of F&B offerings, The Restaurant offers a diverse menu, from traditional Arabic dishes to international cuisines. The breakfast choices are vast, catering to all palates, and the lunch and dinner menus feature exquisite dishes like seared scallops, spiced prawns, and honey glazed duck breast. The highlight is the lavender-based welcome drink – a decadent start to the experience.

As I stepped into the heritage enclave of Bait Majlis Ibrahim Al Midfa, home to The Café, it was as if time itself had folded, transporting me to an era where the elegance of tradition met the comfort of the present. There, under the watchful

gaze of the UAE's only remaining circular wind tower, I found myself cocooned in a world where every detail whispered stories of the past. The Turkish coffee arrived first, a fragrant promise in a delicate cup, its steam rising like whispers of ancient tales. With each sip, the robust, earthy notes danced on my palate, a testament to centuries-old coffee rituals that still captivate the senses.

Then comes the Wagyu Beef Burger, a masterclass in culinary excellence. The wagyu beef, tender and juicy, was a revelation, its marbled richness melting effortlessly in my mouth. Paired with artisanal bread, fresh, crisp lettuce, and a secret sauce that was both bold and enigmatic, the burger transcended mere nourishment to become an experience, a moment of pure, unadulterated joy. Accompanying this gastronomic delight was the coffee, a brew so exquisite, so full of depth that it seemed to capture the essence of the region's rich coffee heritage in every sip.

At The Restaurant, East meets Middle East amidst the chic, understated dining room adorned with classic Emirati design details. As dawn broke, I revelled in breakfast by the charm of the open-air courtyard, kicking off the day under the soft glow of the rising sun. I loved the shakshouka—each spoonful of the perfectly spiced tomato and pepper stew, with its

poached eggs nestled gently within, speaks of a heritage that spans continents, yet feels right at home in the understated elegance of The Restaurant.

For the dinner, I sank my teeth in the delectable falafel--risp on the outside and tender within, each falafel ball is a bite of history, rich with the flavours of chickpeas, herbs, and spices that have been celebrated across generations. Served with a side of tahini sauce and a fresh salad, it's a dish that satisfies the soul as much as it does the appetite, offering a taste of the Middle East that is both authentic and refined.

Another highlight is the Arabic shawarma--thinly sliced, marinated meat, roasted on a vertical spit, is wrapped in a warm, soft flatbread—a simple composition that belies the complexity of flavours within. Each bite is an exploration of the rich, savoury spices that define this beloved dish and this whimsical destination.

### Amenities and Activities

The hotel's spa is a sanctuary for relaxation, offering treatments like the Ancient Balinese Massage. The presence of hot and cold plunge pools, a well-equipped gym, a museum, and a library enriches the guest experience. For those interested in local crafts, there's also an Emirati-inspired jewellery shop on the premises.

### Final thoughts

One of the most memorable aspects of my stay was the sense of community that permeates this neighbourhood. Emirati men, adorned in their traditional flowing white dishdasha, could be seen leisurely sipping coffee and playing cards in the social club next door. Their relaxed demeanour and the friendly interactions among them offered a glimpse into the local way of life, making me feel more like a participant in the culture rather than just a visitor.

The evocative call to prayer from the adjacent mosque was a poignant reminder of the spiritual heritage of the area. Its melodic tones piercing the desert air added another layer to the rich tapestry of experiences Al Bait offers. This blend of the spiritual, cultural, and historical creates a uniquely immersive atmosphere that is both enlightening and serene.

The service at The Chedi Al Bait is impeccable. The staff is attentive and knowledgeable, ensures a personalised and memorable stay. The hotel's commitment to preserving Sharjah's heritage while providing luxury hospitality makes it an enchanting destination. In a landscape cluttered with shiny hotels, this one a cultural immersion, a luxurious retreat, and a window to the emirate's rich history. It offers an experience that's both deeply rooted in tradition and generously sprinkled with modern luxury.






**Fabio Marigliano**

### How was 2023 for The Chedi Al Bait?

In 2023, The Chedi Al Bait experienced a promising start and proved to be yet another exhilarating year. We actively collaborated with local entities to organise various events, facilitated important delegations, and remained steadfast in supporting the shared vision. Our commitment to promoting the destination is unwavering, and we hosted numerous events to strengthen our ties within the community. The hotel remains dedicated to providing a haven for relaxation and enjoyment, embodying the essence of Emirati hospitality and local spirit.

### As a GM, what will your approach, strategy and leadership style be like for the property?

Part of my leadership style is to work with the team and the GHM core ethics that is to make sure all the teams in the hotel work together to provide the best services for our guests.

As a leader, I have taken the positive experiences from the leaders I have worked with and shared the same with my team members. Additionally, I have taken the negative experiences, channelled them and made sure not to repeat them in my own leadership style. Moving forward, my vision for the future

as a leader is to continue to be a mentor for others and share my own experiences, both good and bad, as a learning opportunity for others.

### What was your approach during the pandemic?

During the pandemic, our hotel took a strategic approach by choosing to remain open and actively contribute to the local community. Despite the prevailing health restrictions, we continued our operations, supporting local businesses and providing services to meet the needs of the community. This decision reflected our commitment to being a stable and reliable resource during challenging times. We implemented strict adherence to health guidelines to ensure the safety of our guests and staff, while striving to make a positive impact on the local economy by sustaining business activities.

### UAE overall is inundated with properties, what gives the property an edge over the rest?

Our property offers a range of major services that set us apart in the competitive landscape and provide added value to our guests. These distinctive features include: **Unique Culinary Experience:** We provide a unique a la carte dining

experience, unlike traditional buffets, where every meal is freshly prepared upon request, and some dishes even feature gold coating.

**True Heritage Experience:** As the only authentic heritage hotel in Sharjah, we offer guests an opportunity to immerse themselves in the rich cultural history of the region.

**Exclusive Transportation Fleet:** Our Company boasts its own fleet of Mercedes vehicles, ensuring the convenience and comfort of our guests during transportation.

**Signature Welcome:** Upon arrival, guests are greeted with our signature silver lavender welcome drink, setting the tone for their exceptional stay.

**Personalised Service:** We go the extra mile by getting to know our guests before their arrival, enabling us to provide personalised services such as having their luggage delivered to their rooms before check-in.

**Exclusive Check-In Experience:** Our exclusive check-in process involves personally escorting guests to their rooms, making them feel truly valued and cared for from the moment they arrive.

**Guest Comfort:** We prioritise guest comfort with thoughtful amenities, including complimentary handcrafted popsicles, fresh fruit cuts, detox water, and scented cold towels, ensuring a delightful and refreshing stay.

These services not only distinguish

us from other hotels in Sharjah but also contribute to creating a one-of-a-kind and unforgettable experience for our guests.

### If you were a guest at the property, what would your 24 hour itinerary look like?

As a guest at The Chedi Al Bait Hotel, my 24-hour itinerary would begin with a leisurely breakfast, followed by exploring nearby historical sites. The afternoon would include a relaxing spa session, indulging in delightful afternoon tea. In the evening, I'd take a leisurely stroll around the property, enjoy an exquisite dinner, and immerse myself in the rich cultural offerings such as the hotel's library and museum. Finally, I'd retreat to my well-appointed room, looking forward to a restful night's sleep.

### What are your big plans and focus areas for the year ahead?

Our key focus for the year ahead is to strategically tap into emerging markets, with a particular emphasis on China, which has been underrepresented in recent years. Simultaneously, we aim to strengthen our collaboration with the GCC to actively promote our destination. This approach aligns with our commitment to expanding our market reach and solidifying our presence in both established and growing markets.







TRAVERSING THE SPIRITUAL TAPESTRY OF THE JAIN CIRCUIT IN

# Tamil Nadu

*Experience the transformational power of spirituality and culture with The Jain Circuit in Tamil Nadu, as a tribute to the lasting legacy of Jainism.*

## Arittappatti

The Jain Circuit is an exclusive and revered voyage for followers of Jainism in Tamil Nadu, a state well-known for its spiritual legacy and abundance of culture. The circuit weaves together the spiritual and historical fabric of Jainism in the area by leading pilgrims and enthusiasts through a series of historic temples, caves, and monuments. Travellers can discover the architectural wonders and hidden treasures that make up the Jain Circuit as they set off on this spiritual journey. Each location provides an insight into the deeply ingrained Jain customs.

## CHITHANNAVASAL, PUDUKOTTAI

In Pudukottai District, Chithannavasal stands out as a well-known tourist destination, situated approximately 17 kilometres away from Pudukottai

via the Annavasal-Pudukottai Road. The Jain Monks lived an austere lifestyle in the past by residing in caves and on hillsides Sittannavasal and the neighbouring areas have these kinds of Jain temples and beds. Over 17 beds can be found on the eastern side of the Sittannavasal hill. Close to the beds are the uncommon Brahmi Tamil script inscriptions. The term 'Ezhadi pattam' refers to the group of Jain beds. The Entrance fee for the cave temple and Jain Bed for Indian travellers is five rupees and for international travellers is two dollars.

## SAMANAR MALAI, MADURAI

Standing tall as a testament to the Jain influence in the area is Samanar Malai in Keelakuilkudi. Just 12 km from the Madurai railway station and 24 km from the Madurai International Airport this hill is renowned for its rock-cut



Samanar Malai







Ladan Kovil



Chithannavasal



Yanaimalai hill

beds and monolithic sculptures that are connected to Jain mystics. The Lotus Pond, nestled at the base of Samanar Malai's hills, is a captivating archaeological site, featuring sculptures dating back from the second century BCE to the twelfth century CE. Adorned with depictions of Gomateshwara, Mahavira, Yakshi, and Yaksha, this historical treasure provides a visual journey into ancient religious and artistic practices. Surrounding attractions like the Settipodavu and Pechipallam sites further enrich the experience, unveiling additional layers of India's cultural heritage in this serene setting.

**YANAIMALAI HILL – MADURAI**

Explore the revered Ladan Kovil dedicated to Lord Muruga nestled in the Yanaimalai hills of Madurai. The site, which once housed Jain ascetics during the Pandyan Dynasty, is affectionately referred to as Yanaimalai, owing to its distinct resemblance to an elephant. At the pinnacle of Yanaimalai, discover Jain bas-relief sculptures portraying Mahavira and Gomateshwara. Stand in awe at the detailed sculptures adorning the site, including the unique dwarf-structured goblin freeze (boothkangal), depictions of peacocks and roosters, and the elaborate embellishments of fully blossomed lotus flowers on pillars and cave walls. Yanaimalai is of particular significance for Jains,

recognised as one of the eight Jain centres in proximity to Madurai.

**ARITTAPATTI, MELUR**

Arittappatti, nestled in the Melur block of Madurai district, is a mesmerizing destination renowned for its rich Jain heritage, showcasing the Samanar Hill Cave Temple from the 8th century CE. As you explore this historical site, you'll be enchanted by the temple's sublime beauty and captivated by the intricate craftsmanship on display. Another noteworthy site is the Panchapandavar Cave, a rock-cut retreat once used by Jain ascetics. The cave is adorned with sculptures of Tirthankaras and inscriptions in Tamil and Brahmi scripts. The journey to Arittappatti offers a unique opportunity to witness the fusion of history and tranquillity in this Jain pilgrimage site in Melur.

**TIRUPPARUTHIKUNDRAM JAIN TEMPLE- KANCHEEPURAM**

In the vibrant city of Kancheepuram, the Tirupparuthikundram Jain Temple, known as the Trilokyanathar Temple, bears witness to the flourishing presence of Jainism, earning Kancheepuram the nickname 'Jina Kanchi.' Renowned for its intricate paintings on the mandapam ceilings and walls, the temple complex primarily features depictions of three

Tirthankaras – Adinath (Rishabhath, the first Tirthankara), Neminath (22nd Tirthankara), and Vardhman (Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara) – along with Yakshi Ambika (Dharma Devi, the Yakshi of Neminath). The central focus of the Mandala-style decoration is the 24th Tirthankara, Mahavira.

**JAIN CAVE AND ROCK-CUT TEMPLE - TIRUMANGALAM, MADURAI**

Visit Kongar Puliyankulam in Tirumangalam of Madurai district, where travellers can explore a Jain cave and a rock-cut temple. The cave, adorned with sculptures depicting Jain deities, provides a serene setting for meditation and reflection. The nearby rock-cut temple adds to the spiritual ambience, making Tirumangalam a significant stop on the Jain Circuit. A rock carving featuring a Mahavira image dating back to 9-10 CE can be found here. As travellers pilgrimage through the Jain Circuit of Tamil Nadu, one can reflect on the profound spiritual journey that has unfolded. From the ancient artistry of Chithannavasal to the tranquil surroundings of Tirumanagalam, each destination encapsulates the essence of Jainism in the region. The circuit offers a unique blend of history, spirituality, and architectural brilliance, inviting pilgrims and travellers to connect with the roots of Jain tradition.



Chithannavasal



Tirupparuthikundram



# Celebrate your love story in luxury with **MAYFAIR HOTELS**

Dreaming of a wedding that seamlessly blends luxury, natural beauty, and impeccable service? Look no further than Mayfair Hotels, where every venue is meticulously designed to elevate your special day to unforgettable heights.

Your wedding day is a celebration of love, and Mayfair Hotels understands the importance of creating unforgettable memories. With their exquisite wedding destinations, luxurious accommodations, and unparalleled service, they are committed to making your special day truly magical. From enchanting lakeside retreats to beachfront paradises and mountain hideaways, Mayfair Hotels offers a diverse range of breath-taking destinations for your dream wedding.

## **Mayfair Lagoon and Convention, Bhubaneswar**

Nestled amidst the tranquil lagoon, Mayfair Lagoon and Convention in Bhubaneswar sets the stage for a fairy-tale wedding. With multiple banquet halls, luxurious suites, and exquisite dining options, this venue offers the perfect blend of elegance and opulence. Express your love surrounded by lush greenery and serene waters, creating memories to last a lifetime.

## **Mayfair Lake Resort, Raipur**

Exchange vows by the tranquil lake at Mayfair Lake Resort in Raipur, where every moment feels like a romantic escape. This lakeside retreat offers exclusive Indian weddings in a serene setting, with luxurious accommodations, expansive banquet halls, and sustainable decor options that highlight the natural beauty of the surroundings.

## **Mayfair Tea Resort, Siliguri**

Embark on a journey of love amidst the breath-taking tea gardens of Siliguri at Mayfair Tea Resort. With its hillside charm and panoramic views, this venue offers a unique backdrop for your special day. Indulge in



luxurious accommodations, delectable cuisine, and sustainable decor options inspired by the lush tea gardens.

## **Mayfair Palm Beach Resort, On-Sea**

Experience the magic of a beachfront wedding at Mayfair Palm Beach Resort in Gopalpur-On-Sea. With its pristine sandy shores and stunning ocean views, this venue offers a slice of paradise for your celebration. Luxurious accommodations, expansive banquet halls, and sustainable decor options create the perfect setting for a romantic seaside affair.

## **Mayfair Oasis Resort and Convention, Jharsuguda**

Discover the finest resort in western Odisha at Mayfair Oasis Resort and Convention in Jharsuguda. This luxurious venue offers a picturesque backdrop for your tailor-made wedding, with elegant accommodations, spacious banquet halls, and attentive staff dedicated to making your special day truly unforgettable.

## **Mayfair Spa Resort and Casino, Gangtok**

Elevate your wedding to new heights amidst the serene beauty of the Himalayas at Mayfair Spa Resort and Casino in Gangtok. This luxurious venue offers a blend of natural charm and modern amenities, with elegant accommodations, gourmet dining options, and a luxurious spa and casino experience for you and your guests. Whether you envision a lakeside retreat, beachfront paradise, or mountain hideaway, Mayfair Hotels offers the perfect setting for your dream wedding. Say 'I do' in luxury and style at Mayfair Hotels, where every moment is a celebration of love.







*It's time to*  
**Travel**  
*to Europe*

Saffron World is a full-fledged DMC for Europe tours having our base office established in Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

**CONTACT US:**

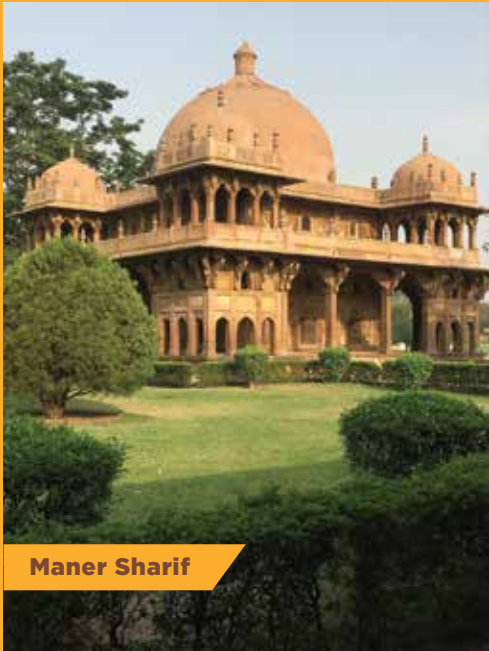
Email: [operations@saffronworld.travel](mailto:operations@saffronworld.travel)  
Kumar Utkarsh: +91 99998 07969  
Prince: +91 95558 42672



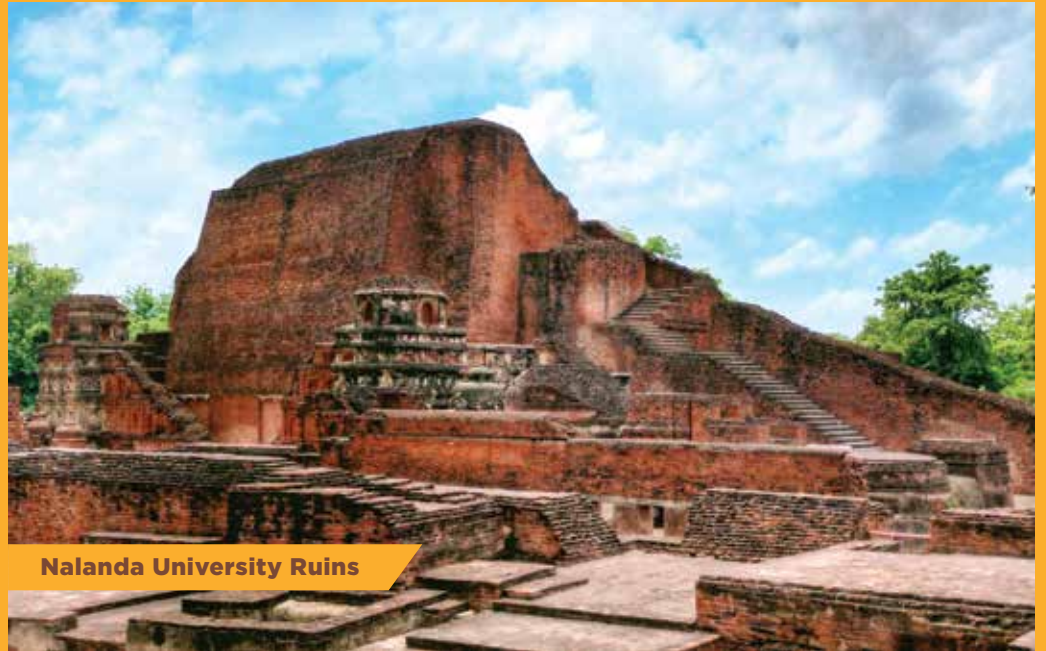
Address: Dordtselaan 144d, 3073 GL Rotterdam, The Netherlands



# EXPLORING BIHAR'S RICH HERITAGE



Maner Sharif



Nalanda University Ruins

## A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

Bihar's heritage tourism is a captivating journey that unfolds the layers of its rich history and cultural diversity where each site tells a unique story.

Bihar, situated in the heart of India, is a state steeped in history and culture. It is a treasure trove for heritage enthusiasts, offering a fascinating journey through time. From the sacred Mahabodhi Temple to the ancient Ruins of Nalanda University, the majestic Sher Shah Suri Fort to the serene Vikramshila, Bihar's heritage tourism offers a glimpse into the diverse and glorious past of this region. Exploring these heritage gems in Bihar provides not just a historical adventure but a deep connection to the roots of India's past.

### Mahabodhi Temple

The Mahabodhi Temple, located in Bodhi Gaya, holds unparalleled significance for Buddhists worldwide. It is believed to be the spot where Siddhartha Gautama attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. The temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, stands as a symbol of the profound spiritual journey of Lord Buddha. Pilgrims and tourists flock to this sacred site, admiring the intricate architecture that reflects the diverse influences over the centuries.

### Ruins of Nalanda University

Nalanda, an ancient seat of learning, once attracted scholars and students from across the world. The Ruins of Nalanda University bear testimony to an era when Bihar was a centre for intellectual pursuits. The archaeological site showcases the remnants of monasteries, temples, and lecture halls, providing a glimpse into the flourishing Buddhist culture and educational excellence that characterized the region over a millennium ago.

### Maner Sharif

Known for its historical significance and architectural brilliance, Maner Sharif is a revered Sufi shrine in Bihar. The site is home to the tomb of the Sufi saint Hazrat Makhdoom Sharfuddin Ahmad Yahya Maneri. The complex features a magnificent mosque and a lofty minaret, attracting both pilgrims seeking spiritual solace and architecture enthusiasts appreciating the intricate design.

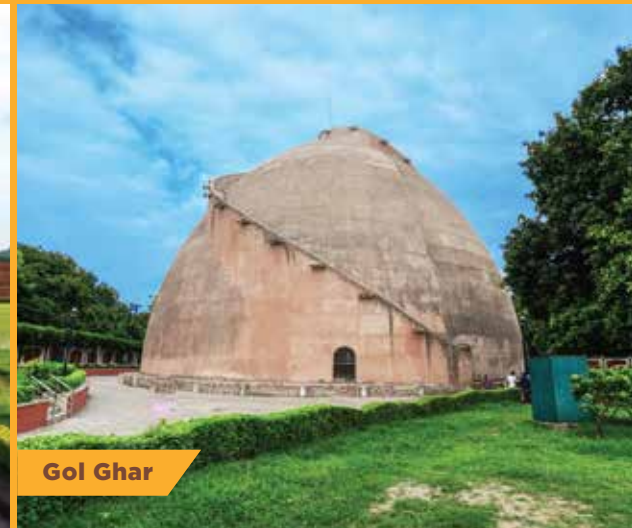




**Mahabodhi Temple**



**Vikramshila**



**Gol Ghar**



**Sher Shah Suri Fort**



**Rohtas Garh Fort**

**Gol Ghar**

Gol Ghar, located in Patna, is an architectural marvel that stands as a testament to Bihar's colonial past. Built by Captain John Garstin during the devastating famine of 1786, Gol Ghar is a granary designed in the shape of a beehive. The structure offers panoramic views of the city and the Ganges River. It is a reminder of Bihar's resilience in the face of historical challenges.

**Sher Shah Suri Fort**

The Sher Shah Suri Fort, situated in the Sasaram district, is a formidable fortress that reflects the military power of Sher Shah Suri, the Afghan emperor. The fort's strategic location and robust construction make it an imposing sight. Visitors can explore the various structures within the fort, including the grand mosque and the royal tomb, providing insights into the region's martial history.

**Vikramshila**

Vikramshila, an ancient Buddhist university, once rivalled Nalanda in terms of academic excellence. Located near Bhagalpur, Vikramshila was established by King Dharmapala in the 8th century. The remnants of the university complex and the surrounding landscape offer a serene setting for reflection and exploration.

**Rohtas Garh Fort**

Rohtas Garh Fort, built by the Afghan king Sher Shah Suri, stands as a symbol of military architecture and strategic brilliance. Situated near the town of Sasaram, this fort served as a defensive stronghold against the Mughals. The impressive fortifications and intricate design make Rohtas Garh a must-visit for history enthusiasts.





# MTF Premier League 2024

Many triumphs and a list of culinary delights, a recap of the MTF Premier League 2024 where Otila Superchargers came out as winners.



The MTF Premier League Cricket Tournament Season 2, held at the District Sports Complex, Bandra East was a grand celebration of sports, entertainment, and camaraderie. Twelve dynamic teams showcased their cricket skills, with Otila Superchargers emerging as the champions for the second time. The event, organized by Mr Pradeep Saboo, Mr Rajat Bagaria, Mr Sameer Karnani, and Mr Sanjay Arya, received special sponsorship from the Singapore Tourism Board, adding a touch of international flair, besides a whole range of global sponsors from Otila International, Soneva, Global Destinations, Cordelia Cruises, etc. Joshiley Jawan secured the runner-up position, while Bangkok Knightriders and Heritance Hawks showcased their talent as semi-finalists. Trip Jack Warriors, Power Hitters, Cruise Kings, and Excel Smart

Titans fought gallantly as quarterfinalists. The balance teams, Nordic Navigators, ULD Dragons, Roaring Red, and Cutting Edge Strikers, added to the competitive spirit. The atmosphere at the District Sports Complex was electric, filled with laughter, delicious food ranging from dim sums to chaat, and an array of beverages. The event was graced by the special presence of Chief Guest Makus Tan, making it a day to remember in the world of Mumbai Travel Fraternity cricket. Pradip Saaboo, Managing Director, Guideline Travels Holidays India Pvt Ltd shares, "MTF has doubled in size compared to last year. Our sponsors have shown exceptional enthusiasm and commitment in 2024, and both our team owners and the industry as a whole have gathered here to network with the entire Mumbai travel fraternity!"





# Romantic February

Candle Light Dinner



Experience the enchantment of a candlelit dinner, accompanied by soft music and cozy weather, with your special someone. Let Truly India hotels be your host, welcoming you to cherish each moment in pure magic.

To Know More +91 079 2397 7600

## Our Destinations:

Udaipur | Kumbhalgarh | Jodhpur | Jaipur | Jaisalmer | Ranthambore | Sasan Gir | Jawai | Velavadar



# Swosti Premium Beach Resort

## AN EPITOME OF UNPARALLELED LUXURY & COMFORT

Known for its excellent hospitality services, Swosti Group has been at the forefront in Odisha since the past 4 decades. Committed towards making a difference every day; the group has been acclaimed with several laurels and awards. Swosti Group is all set to unveil a world class first 5-star luxury beach resort, centrally air-conditioned 'Swosti Premium Beach Resorts' in Puri.

Are you ready for an ultimate coastal experience? Continuously offer luxury hospitality, the Group is now all set to unveil a world class first 5-star luxury beach resort, centrally air-conditioned 'Swosti Premium Beach Resorts' on the banks of the Golden Beach of Puri. Endowed with super-class amenities, the Swosti Premium Beach Resorts is equipped with luxury and seamless services making your stay memorable and cherishable. Scheduled to open in 2024, the property is designed with an objective to position Puri as a prominent MICE destination, the property comes equipped with all modern facilities to host mega conferences and elaborate wedding ceremonies with large open-air landscaped lawns.

Nestled on the shores of the Bay of Bengal, just a leisure 60-minute drive from Bhubaneswar Airport and Railway Station, the Swosti Premium Beach Resorts Puri is a true gem on the Blue Flag Beach, Puri. This seaside paradise offers a perfect blend of luxury, comfort, and natural beauty, making it an ideal destination for both leisure and business travellers.

Swosti Premium Beach Resorts, Puri is more than just a luxurious getaway; it's a complete coastal experience. With its beautiful rooms, mega conference facilities, wellness amenities, and diverse dining options, the resort caters to all your needs. Whether you're seeking a serene beachside retreat, a destination for special events or a place to indulge in relaxation and adventure, this resort offers it all. Come and discover the charm of this coastal gem on the eastern shores of India.

One of the standout features of Swosti Premium Beach Resort is its versatility as a wedding and event destination. The resort boasts four wedding venues (namely Boita Voyage at Ground Floor, Mahari Courtyard at 3rd floor and Panaroma, Portrait at 1st floor) with open-air landscaped lawns at different heights, ensuring that your special day is set against a backdrop of unparalleled natural beauty. The mega banquet halls, complete with pre-function areas, can host up to 750 people, and the open landscaped lawns overlooking the sea and sky create a dreamlike atmosphere for any MICE or Wedding event.





# tamassa

BEL OMBRE, MAURITIUS

# GOOD TIMES, TOGETHER



[tamassaresorts.com](http://tamassaresorts.com)



# Heartfelt travel

## AN ENLIGHTENING JOURNEY ACROSS TELANGANA

*Explore depths of spirituality through Hindu and Jain Temples across Telangana while finding your inner peace away from the chaotic throws of everyday life.*

Our journey starts right in the middle of Hyderabad, where the resonant spirit of the present merges with the spirits of the past. See the lovely Birla Mandir, a peaceful shrine perched on a mountaintop with panoramic city views.

### *Hyderabad - Yadagirigutta*

Nestled amidst picturesque hills, around 64 kilometres from Hyderabad, Yadagirigutta is our first stop. Believed to be the abode of Lord Narasimha, this temple is known for its spiritual significance and architectural beauty. One of the most popular and frequently visited Hindu temples dedicated to Lord Vishnu, devotees flock here to seek blessings and experience the serene atmosphere that surrounds the temple. The journey to Yadagirigutta offers a peaceful escape from the bustling city life, allowing visitors to connect with their spiritual side and appreciate the natural beauty of the surroundings.

Known as "Vaidya Narasimha," or the doctor, Lord Narasimha is thought to be able to heal anyone who visits the temple of any persistent or chronic illness. The 14 acres that make up the temple complex are all composed of stone. In addition to its religious significance, the temple's hilltop setting offers breath-taking scenery and unique adventures. Ascend the steps, breathe in the sacred air, and feel the divine presence overlooking the town.

### *Kolanupaka Jain Temple*

As the day unfolds, make your way to Kolanupaka, home to the historic Kulpakji Jain Mandir. Situated just 18 kilometres from Yadagirigutta, Kolanupaka Jain Temple is a

significant pilgrimage site for Jains, attracting devotees from all over the world. Immerse yourself in the rich cultural heritage and marvel at the architectural brilliance of this ancient temple.

### *Pembarthi*

As the sun begins to set, arrive in Pembarthi, a town renowned for its metal craftsmanship, just 10 kilometres from Kolanupaka. Most of the temples built under the Kakatiya dynasty bear the signature style of intricate filigree work in Pembarthi. The interplay of light and shadow on the metalwork creates a spellbinding atmosphere, making it a truly unforgettable experience.

The village is known for its exquisite sheet metal art. The brassware of Pembarthi is world famous and the air resounds with the continuous clink and tap of mallets beating out brass sheets into fascinating and wonderful objects of art and utility. Pembarthi Metal Crafts Museum, located in the village. The village also has a museum showcasing the evolution of the craft and the various techniques used by the craftsmen. You can also purchase some of the exquisite brassware and idols made by the craftsmen at the museum.

### *Thousand Pillar*

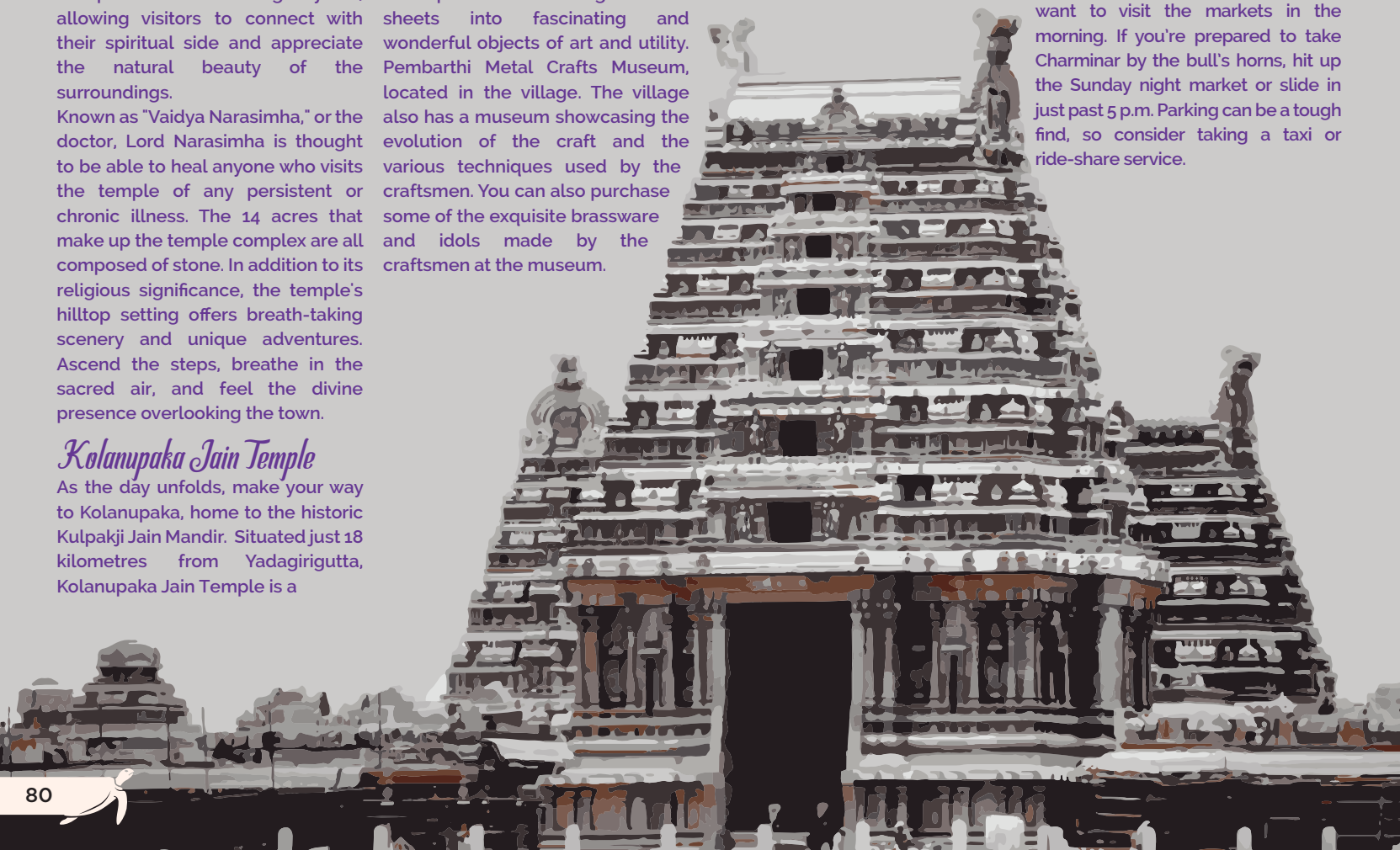
Our spiritual journey brings us to the Thousand Pillar Temple in Warangal. Located 72 kilometres from Pembarthi, the temple was built during the Kakatiya dynasty in the 12th century by King Rudra Deva. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva, Vishnu, and Surya. Known for its exquisite architecture, intricate sculptures, and calm ambiance, the temple has one thousand pillars, which are so close-knit that they almost look like a wall around the temple. The richly carved pillars, perforated screens, exquisite icons, rock cut elephants, and the monolithic dolerite Nandi make up the main attractions of the temple.

### *Hyderabad Shopping*

Following your spiritual journey, you can end your weekend adventure in Hyderabad, where spirituality meets shopping. The markets surrounding Charminar are filled with vibrant bazaars and antique shops, making it an ideal place to pick up spiritual mementos, traditional artefacts, and handcrafted souvenirs.

Charminar, a neighbourhood in Hyderabad's Old City, dates back centuries. The area is known for its historic buildings, rich culture, delicious food, and old-world charm. The markets in and around Charminar are a weekly jumble of pop-up stalls crammed next to street vendors. Here you can find primed-up wedding gowns, hand-embroidered cloths, hot pink and lipstick-red bangles, good china, pearls, and more.

For a quieter experience, you may want to visit the markets in the morning. If you're prepared to take Charminar by the bull's horns, hit up the Sunday night market or slide in just past 5 p.m. Parking can be a tough find, so consider taking a taxi or ride-share service.





# Explore

## Central & Eurasia

Uncover The Undiscovered world travel of Distinction



**RUSSIA**



**TASHKENT**



**ARMENIA**



**GEORGIA**



**ALMATY**



**BISHKEK**

**Connect and Save Now!** 

Call Now:

**1800 2121 225**

Email Now:

**b2b@travelsmantra.com**

YOUR TRUSTED DESTINATION MANAGEMENT COMPANY FOR CENTRAL ASIA SINCE 2008.

**SHARE ALL YOUR FIT,GIT,SERIES & M.I.C.E QUERIES**

KAZAKHSTAN | UZBEKISTAN | RUSSIA | BELARUS | AZERBAIJAN | TURKEY | KYRGYZSTAN | TAJIKISTAN | GEORGIA | ARMENIA



# A journey of innovation and growth with

# AIR iQ

Ajay Kumar Wadhawan, Executive Director, AIR iQ and Udaan Hotels & Resorts shares the way they have embraced innovation as a catalyst for growth and resilience.

## -Tripti Jain

The travel and hospitality industry stands at a pivotal juncture, poised for transformation. The industry is experiencing a major shift and so are the companies. The key to staying updated and swinging right on top of the curve is changing with the technology. Today innovation and technology hold the highest stakes and transforming a company's growth.

### Sustaining the momentum

As the travel landscape underwent unprecedented shifts, AIR iQ embraced agility and innovation. Ajay shares, "In times of crisis, adaptability becomes paramount. Leveraging our extensive network, we launched specialised portals and cultivated strategic partnerships, empowering agents and travellers alike. Our ability to evolve and cater to changing market dynamics has been pivotal in sustaining our momentum."

### Extended journey

Udaan Hotels & Resorts has embarked on a journey to redefine hospitality. "Innovation and guest-centricity lie at the heart of our philosophy and we aim to abide by it. With boutique properties nestled in scenic locales, Udaan offers unparalleled experiences. Our expansion plans reflect our commitment to setting new benchmarks in luxury and personalised service," adds Ajay.

### Triumphant era

The path to recovery in the travel industry is fraught with challenges. Ajay shares, "Navigating regulatory hurdles

and fluctuating consumer confidence have been formidable obstacles. However, through resilience and strategic foresight, AIR iQ and Udaan Hotels & Resorts have persevered. Our ability to adapt, innovate, and collaborate has been instrumental in overcoming adversity."

### Forging pathways to success

It is truly said that innovation flourishes in collaboration, Ajay adds, "We believe in the power of partnerships. Through collaborative endeavours with industry stakeholders and investment in technological advancements, the organisations have pioneered new frontiers. Together, we chart a course towards sustainable growth and enhanced customer experiences."

### Vision for the future

Looking ahead, a vision for the future guides AIR iQ and Udaan Hotels & Resorts. Ajay shares, "Our journey is one of continuous evolution and excellence. With a steadfast commitment to innovation, service excellence, and sustainability, we aim to redefine the travel and hospitality landscape. As we navigate the complexities of the world, our unwavering dedication to our patrons remains unwavering."

The narrative of AIR iQ and Udaan Hotels & Resorts epitomises the resilience and vision necessary for success in the evolving travel and hospitality industry. As they chart their course forward, their commitment to excellence and customer-centricity promises a future defined by limitless possibilities.

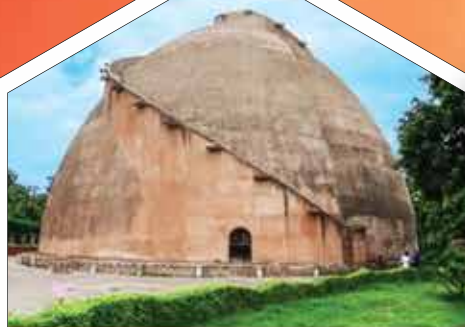


Ajay Kumar Wadhawan





# Bihar: A walk through Ancient Charms



Gol Ghar



Sher Shah  
Suri Fort



Nalanda University  
Ruins



Maner Sharif



Vikramashila



Rohtas Garh  
Fort



Mahabodhi  
Temple

FOR MORE DETAILS, PLEASE VISIT:-  
[www.tourism.bihar.gov.in](http://www.tourism.bihar.gov.in)

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM. GOVT. OF BIHAR

[www.tourism.bihar.gov.in](http://www.tourism.bihar.gov.in)      /tourismbihargov



# FITUR 2024 wraps up its 44th edition in Madrid, Spain



The 44th International Tourism Fair concludes a successful edition whose data reflects the growth experienced by the global tourism sector in the past year, laying the groundwork for its consolidation in this 2024. FITUR has announced that throughout its five days, it has welcomed a total of 250,000 visitors, 153,000 has been professionals and 97,000 visitors attending during its two open-to-the-public days. These figures represent a 13.7 per cent increase compared to 2023. FITUR 2024 has also stood out for breaking the record for exhibition space, with a total of nine pavilions, as well as for the consolidation of its international character. It has gathered 152 countries and 96 official country participations. Organised by IFEMA MADRID, the Fair, inaugurated on January 24 by their Majesties the Kings of Spain, had Ecuador as the Country Partner of FITUR and the participation of all players in the tourism industry value chain, showcasing the sector's dynamism through numerous business transactions, expanded networks, and the exchange of best practices and knowledge.





# THE PLACE TO BE

The world is yours to explore. Across Thailand, Laos, the Maldives, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, the Middle East or Japan, you can find a place you want to be. This is the essence of Centara Hotels & Resorts. Whether your clients are planning a family beach holiday, an immersive cultural experience or an exciting urban getaway, Centara's signature hospitality, warm Thai family values and world-class service will be at the heart of their stay anywhere in the world.



**GET TO KNOW CENTARA**  
WITH UNBEATABLE TRAVEL INDUSTRY RATES

 Centara Grand Island Resort & Spa Maldives



CENTARA RESERVE



CENTARA  
GRAND

CENTARA

CENTARA  
LIFE



**CENTARA**  
HOTELS & RESORTS



## Madame Tussauds New York unveils Ramdev wax figure in Delhi

Baba Ramdev gave his photographs and measurements to the Madame Tussauds Wax Museum in London to a 20-member team to prepare his wax statue. He also tweets a series of photographs of himself at the museum, including a yoga pose of vrikshasan (standing on one leg), which is the current statue's pose as well. Baba Ramdev after being hesitant initially, agreed to the idea 'in the hope that the statue may arouse curiosity about yoga among international tourists.' Other Indians who have their wax figures at the New York Museum are Mahatma Gandhi, Priyanka Chopra, Ranveer Singh, Varun Dhawan, Kareena Kapoor, Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif.



## RWC unveils their technology platform, 'RW Cruise Buddy'



RWC unveils their state-of-the-art technology platform, 'RW Cruise Buddy,' during a Press & PSA briefing in Mumbai. This innovative tool aims to provide travel partners with immediate access to real-time inventory of RW Cruises along with fare details, transforming the booking process. Naresh Rawal, VP - Sales & Marketing - India & Middle East, Resorts World Cruises, highlighted the platform's ability to meet the diverse requirements of travel partners and agents across India. Naresh stated, "In today's tech-driven landscape, we recognise the importance of simplifying the real-time inventory (cabin) availability for travel agents across India. Thus, we are thrilled to introduce Cruise Buddy, which not only streamlines booking but also features all our PSA Partners for added convenience."





# TRAVEL turtle



MAGAZINE



SUPPLEMENTS



TABLET AND MOBILE



WEBSITE



EVENTS



VIDEO



- [travelturtlemag](https://www.travelturtlemag.com)

 ROUVILLE

For advertising contact:

+91 98189 65684

info@travelturtle.world

312, Vardhman Sunrise Plaza, Vasundhara Enclave, New Delhi 110096.

[SUBSCRIBE NOW](#)



## APPOINTMENTS



### ***NCL announces Jeff Cuellar as new CEO of Sixthman***

Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL), the innovator in global cruise travel, and Sixthman, the global leader of festival-at-sea vacation experiences, announced Jeff Cuellar to succeed Anthony Diaz as its new chief executive officer (CEO). As the new CEO of Sixthman, a wholly owned subsidiary of Norwegian Cruise Line, Cuellar will focus on continuing the Company's upward trajectory of growth by focusing on bringing passionate communities together through diverse and exciting experiences. He will also be responsible for continuing to position Sixthman as the leader in the entertainment-based cruise space.

### ***Sun Siyam Iru Veli appoints Masdhooq Saeed as the new GM***

The announcement of Masdhooq Saeed's appointment as General Manager by Sun Siyam Iru Veli, Maldives, marks a significant turning point in the resort's pursuit of providing visitors with an unforgettable, yet genuine, tropical island escape. Masdhooq has a stellar 22-year history in the hospitality sector with a plethora of experience from well-known companies including One&Only Resorts, Jumeirah Hotels and Resorts, and Six Senses Hotels, Resorts, and Spas. His broad experience includes managing all aspects of the Rooms Division, spearheading pre-opening initiatives in China and the Maldives, and being instrumental in the rebranding of Diva Maldives as LUX\* South Ari Atoll in 2011.



### ***Minor Hotels welcomes Vijay Krishnan Vazhvelil as VP – Operations, India***

Minor Hotels, a global leader in hotel ownership, operation and investment, is delighted to announce the appointment of Vijay Krishnan-Vazhvelil as Vice President – Operations, India, effective from 21st December 2023. As Minor Hotels embarks on an ambitious journey to expand its presence in India, Krishnan-Vazhvelil's appointment to the newly created position is the key to the successful launch and positioning of the group's first Anantara property in Jaipur and ensuring a robust growth trajectory across the country.

### ***Finnair appoints Turkka Kuusisto as CEO***

Finnair has appointed Turkka Kuusisto (44, MSc. Tech) as CEO of Finnair and he will start in this role on 11 July 2024 at the latest. Kuusisto joins Finnair from Posti Group Corporation, where he has served as the CEO since 2020. Prior to his role as the CEO at Posti Group Corporation, Kuusisto served in senior leadership positions at Posti Group Corporation and in Lindorff Group.





# RW CruiseBuddy

## Set Sail with Ease!

Your Ultimate Hub for Instant Quotes,  
Exclusive Rewards, and Comprehensive  
Cruise Information

[www.rwcruisebuddy.com](http://www.rwcruisebuddy.com)



RW CruiseBuddy is crafted exclusively for travel partners,  
designed to revolutionize your cruise booking experience with  
Resorts World Cruises.



### REWARDS

Upload RWC  
bookings and  
achieve unique  
rewards at  
every level



### AVAILABILITY

Real-time  
inventory and  
cruise fares.  
Get instant  
quotes



### RESOURCES

Explore and  
Download  
treasure trove  
of promotional  
resources



### LATEST NEWS

Access to  
latest Promos  
& News from  
Resorts World  
Cruises

## REGISTER TODAY

UNLEASH THE POWER OF SEAMLESS NAVIGATION



 Resorts World Cruises



# LUX\*

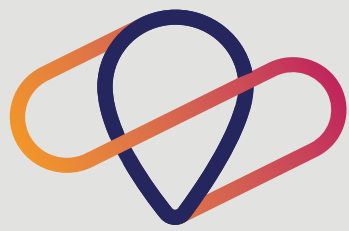
*Life Extraordinary*



LUX\* BELLE MARE • LUX\* LE MORNE • LUX\* GRAND GAUBE  
MAURITIUS

[luxresorts.com](http://luxresorts.com)





India  
assist

# India, SEAMLESSLY YOURS!

24x7

Assistance Guaranteed



 **8826345664**

 [www.indiaassist.com](http://www.indiaassist.com)  [travelalliances@indiaassist.com](mailto:travelalliances@indiaassist.com)



?

## Feeling lost in a New City?



Don't feel like a  
stranger anymore!



ತುಲಗು

ತುಢಿಢ್ಢಿ

हिंदी

اردو

অসাম্যেসে

ଓଡ଼ିଆ

डोगरी

कॉकणी

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ

ગુજરાતી







# GREENER CONFERENCES

MADE IN SINGAPORE

Our City in Nature offers easy access to sustainable venues, experiences and services, so your business event can achieve great results with a smaller footprint.

[VisitSingapore.com/MICE](https://www.visit-singapore.com/mice)

